

Pennsylvanian fusulinids from Placitas, New Mexico

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Foraminiferida are an order of protists that secrete a shell (usually called the “test”) around their protoplasm. Fusulines were relatively large foraminiferids of the late Paleozoic (Mississippian–Permian). They had perforate tests made of microgranular calcite. Chambers inside the test were arranged planispirally to form a discoidal to fusiform shape. Fusulines were thus highly specialized foraminiferids, and they usually lived in carbonate to reefal facies.

The short stratigraphic ranges of many fusuline taxa have made them extremely valuable to the correlation of upper Paleozoic strata. Indeed, in New Mexico, fusulines have long been used in such correlation. Articles on New Mexican fusulines published by Claude Needham (1937) and M. L. Thompson (1948), both of whom worked for the New Mexico School of Mines, are classic contributions to the development of fusuline biostratigraphy.

The exceptionally preserved fusulines illustrated here were collected from the uppermost Madera Formation at Placitas, Sandoval County, New Mexico. They belong to species of *Triticites* Girty, 1904 indicative of a Late Pennsylvanian (middle Virgilian) age (Garner Wilde, written comm. 1996). Relatively large (tests are as much as 7 mm long), these specimens of *Triticites* show the fusiform to subcylindrical test shape characteristic of this Middle Pennsylvanian to Early Permian genus. The upper photograph shows the hand sample collected in the field (scale in cm). The lower photograph is a close-up of some of the fusulinids in the lower left corner of the hand sample (scale in mm).

References

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