Triscutum pricatillus de Kaenel & Bergen (1993)

Derivation of name: From Latin prior, first and catillus, small dish.

Diagnosis. A small to medium-sized, elliptical species of Triscutum with a small central area nearly filled by an axial cross structure. The rim is uniformly birefringent (an inner wall is not recognizable).

Description. A small to medium-sized, narrowly to normally elliptical placolith constructed of three shields. Each shield is formed by a single cycle of non-imbricate elements with radial sutures. The relatively low distal shield is constructed of upright elements which extend laterally in their distal portion to form a flat distal shelf (L-shaped elements). The horizontal proximal and intermediate shields are constructed of tabular elements and are of different widths (the proximal one being much smaller). The small central area is nearly filled by a thin axial cross structure that is attached to the proximal surface. A small opening is present in the center of the cross.

In the LM, the rim displays a faint, uniform birefringence. The outer peripheries of the unequal-sized shields are distinct in cross-polarized light. The axial cross structure is faintly birefringent, but is not frequently preserved intact.

Discussion. The figured specimens of Triscutum pricatillus, which were recovered from the Pliensbachian, are 5.8 and 7.3 μm in length. However, smaller specimens down to 3 μm have been observed in the Sinemurian section at the base of DSDP Site 547 B. Mazaganella is also present at the base of this section. Thus both of these taxa represent the oldest known placolith species.

Differentiation. Triscutum pricatillus and Triscutum protensum have similar central area constructions and rim morphologies. Triscutum protensum is distinguished by its prominent inner rim wall, which appears as a highly birefringent, wide inner rim cycle. Triscutum pricatillus is distinguished from Mazaganella pulla by its vertically extended distal shield and the unequal widths of its three shields. Triscutum pricatillus differs from Triscutum sullivanii and Triscutum tiziense by its axial cross structure, smaller size.
and absence of a birefringent inner rim cycle.


**Holotype.** Plate 5, Figures 9a, b (same specimen: FSU-LEM-38-Ja, FSU-LEM-38-Jb).

**Type level.** Sample SP 28, lower Pliensbachian (*davoei* Zone).

**Type locality.** Sao Pedro de Mal, Portugal.