

Conodonts in the Ordovician biostratigraphy of the British Isles: an update

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Because much of the classic Ordovician biostratigraphic work was performed in the British Isles, it may seem surprising that conodonts, which along with graptolites are the most useful Ordovician index fossils, have played only a limited role in the Ordovician biostratigraphy of that region. The obvious reason for this is the dominant clastic facies, in which dissolvable carbonates are rare or missing in most intervals. Hence, conodonts are known from just a few British Tremadocian, Floian, and Dapingian localities, all in Scotland. Darriwilian and early Sandbian faunas are more widespread, having been described from South Wales (Llandeilo area), northwestern Wales (Anglesey), Welsh Borderland (Caradoc type area), and South Scotland (Girvan, Tweeddale). The best known, and biostratigraphically most useful, faunas are of Katian age.

Previous work, mainly by Rhodes, Lindström, Bergström, Savage and Bassett, Orchard, and Armstrong, has in recent years been revised and significantly expanded by us in investigations of the Portrane (Ireland), Sholeshook (Wales), Keisley (England), and Garn (Wales) limestones, and the Ffairfach and Golden Grove (Llandeilo; Wales) groups. Although some Hirnantian conodont taxa have been recorded from South Scotland (lowermost Birkhill Shale) and the Keisley Limestone (England), British Hirnantian conodonts are very poorly known. The Early-Middle Ordovician Hebridean Platform faunas are best classified in terms of North American conodont biostratigraphy. Although they have their own faunal aspect, for faunas from other parts of the British Isles, the Baltoscandic zone classification can be used.



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Abstracts

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