

A new *Metapolygnathus* platform conodont species and its implications for Upper Carnian global correlations

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A rich conodont fauna from two Neotethyan sections, Pizzo Mondello (western Sicily, Italy) and Pignola 2 sections (southern Apennines, Italy) includes conodonts described herein as a new species. *Metapolygnathus praecommunisti* sp. nov. is transitional between *Paragondolella noah* and *Metapolygnathus communisti*. The genus *Metapolygnathus* (including *M. praecommunisti*) is now characterised by posterior prolongation of the keel termination, associated with a centrally located pit and with a weak ornamentation confined to the anterior part of the platform margins. The establishment of *M. praecommunisti* addresses the problems related to the origin and the peculiar, probably facies-controlled, distribution of its descendant species *M. communisti*. Since *M. praecommunisti* occurs in the entire Tethys and in North America, we propose the species as a good guide fossil for global correlations, characterised by a short temporal range limited to the uppermost Tuvanian (upper Carnian). The stratigraphic occurrence of the genus *Metapolygnathus* is restricted to the Tuvanian–Lacian (upper Carnian–lower Norian), excluding its presence in the Julian substage (lower Carnian).

Key words: Conodonts, *Metapolygnathus*, phylogeny, Carnian, Late Triassic.

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