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Stratotypes for the public

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The protection of geoheritage is generally conditioned by two type of factors: financial and legislative. Both affect the citizen: the general community accepts a kind of freedom restriction (constrained access to a site) and a fiscal contribution. Nobody easily accepts this type of sharing, so we therefore have to improve the degree of acceptance. For such an objective, we launched a collection of books devoted to a specific type of geoheritage: stratotypes.

Stratotypes are international standards for the geological time scale. Western Europe was a cradle of stratigraphy, and thus a number of stratotypes were established in these countries. Approximately 40 stratotypes are known in France, most of them still valid, while the others still keep their historical value. To increase their acceptance, we launched a collection of outreach books, abundantly illustrated, and describing the geology (stratigraphy, sedimentology, palaeontology...), all the scientific aspects, as well as the historical perspective, mentioning famous pioneers, conceptual changes, etc. Other parts deal with the value of the stratotype as geoheritage, and with the local public use for economy, architecture, and eventually the social aspects, in order to highlight that these rocks are not only interesting for geoscientists, but may even be of regional importance. The book is accessible to non-specialists, but includes a CD-ROM with more detailed information, such as full lists of fossils, their occurrence in museums or universities collections, etc.

The first book was published in 2008 in French, as these books are devoted to the general public, and deals with the Lutetian stage. Since then, other stages have been published: Albian, Hettangian, Stampian, Aquitanian and Cenomanian. The Givetian stage is in press. The collection has been supported by UNESCO and IUGS, and that is why it bears their logos. Ten other stages are in progress: Barremian, Aptian, Turonian, Brioeverian, Sinemurian, Coniacian, Toarcian, Danian, Autunian, and Campanian.

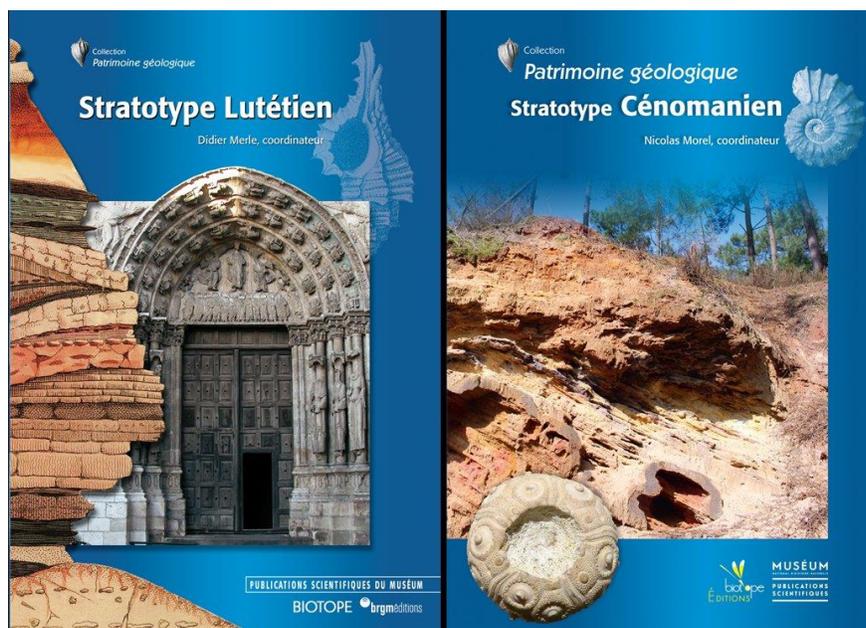


Figure 1: Covers of two of the books on stratotypes, the first and the last one issued, in 2008 and 2015, respectively.

References:

- [1] Merle D et al. (2008) Stratotype Lutétien: MNHN/Biotope/BRGM, 288 p.
- [2] Morel N et al. (2015) Stratotype Cénomannien: MNHN/Biotope, 384 p.

