



Series Stratotypes
tome 3
165 x 240 mm paperback
text in French
248 pages
ISBN 978-2-38327-049-2
35 € incl. tax | 33€ excl. tax

Published on 11th June 2026

Stratotype Briovérien

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THE BOOK

The Briovarian is a complex geological unit, situated mainly in the late Precambrian (Ediacaran period of the Neoproterozoic), but extending locally into the base of the Cambrian. The Precambrian or Cambrian positioning of its terminal part thus remained uncertain for a very long time, but U/Pb radiometric dating applied to its detrital sequences, and the accompanying volcano-sedimentary deposits, has recently provided some more precise benchmarks. When Charles Barrois named and defined the Briovarian in 1895, he perhaps did not imagine the difficulty geologists would face in his wake in working on a series so difficult to date and stratigraphically subdivide. The choice of a stratotype series at Saint Lô, a site that does not reflect the diversity and full range of Briovarian facies, further complicated the identification, chronological dating and palaeoenvironmental interpretation of these facies. However, the extensive geographical distribution of Briovarian outcrops in the Armorican Massif—primarily in Ille-et-Vilaine, the Cotentin Peninsula and the Côtes d'Armor—has gradually led to a better understanding of this Briovarian complex. It is now regarded as a key geological milestone for our understanding of the Precambrian, and particularly for the earliest fossilised traces of life. The phanerozoic sequences of the Early Briovarian (over 600 million years ago) thus contain some of the oldest single-celled organisms known from the fossil record in Europe. Meanwhile, the Late Briovarian (540 to 530 million years ago) documents the biological revolution that occurred at the boundary between the Proterozoic and Phanerozoic eras.

This book presents the full scope of current knowledge on the Briovarian period, both in Brittany and Normandy, and brings together, for the first time, illustrations of its remarkable fossils.

THE SERIES

France possesses a very rich geologic heritage, which deserves to be known and preserved. Among the geologic sites which must be protected, there are those representing international standards, also called stratotypes. These sections, which allowed to divide the geological time scale in intervals internationally recognized, are about forty in France. Every book of this collection will aim at making discover a stratotype through various aspects: history, geology, paleontology, monuments...

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