

## Historical stratotypes, Global Boundary Stratotype Sections and Points (GSSP) and Nature Reserves

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In the context of stratigraphy (*i.e.*, the study of the succession of strata), a stratotype is a geological section serving as a world reference for a geological stage, being a succession of strata of a given age. The name of the stage is deduced from that of the locality – or even the region – of its description, with the addition of the suffix "ian". Thus, the Burdigalian was defined near Bordeaux (*Burdigala* in Latin). Therefore, a stratotype is obviously a site of geological heritage. Most stratotypes were defined during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, largely in Europe, including about 40 in France, of which only 19 are still in use today (*e.g.*, Wever & Cornée, 2008-2018). A revision of the stratotypes is in progress, under the authority of the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) of the International Union of Geological Sciences, with the aim of defining markers for the stage limits (base and top). We then speak of "global stratigraphic point" or "golden nail". For the moment, 5 have been defined in France, some of which are protected, like the Campanian-Maastrichtian limit located in Aquitaine at Tercis-les Bains (Landes). These international historical references that are the stratotypes deserve to be preserved, because they are pages of the history of our Earth. Thus, 8 French stratotypes are protected as national nature reserves, true holders of a label of scientific notoriety.

De Wever, P., Cornée, A. (Eds.) (2008-2018). Collection Patrimoine géologique [9 books dedicated to various stratotypes]. Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, Biotope, Mèze.