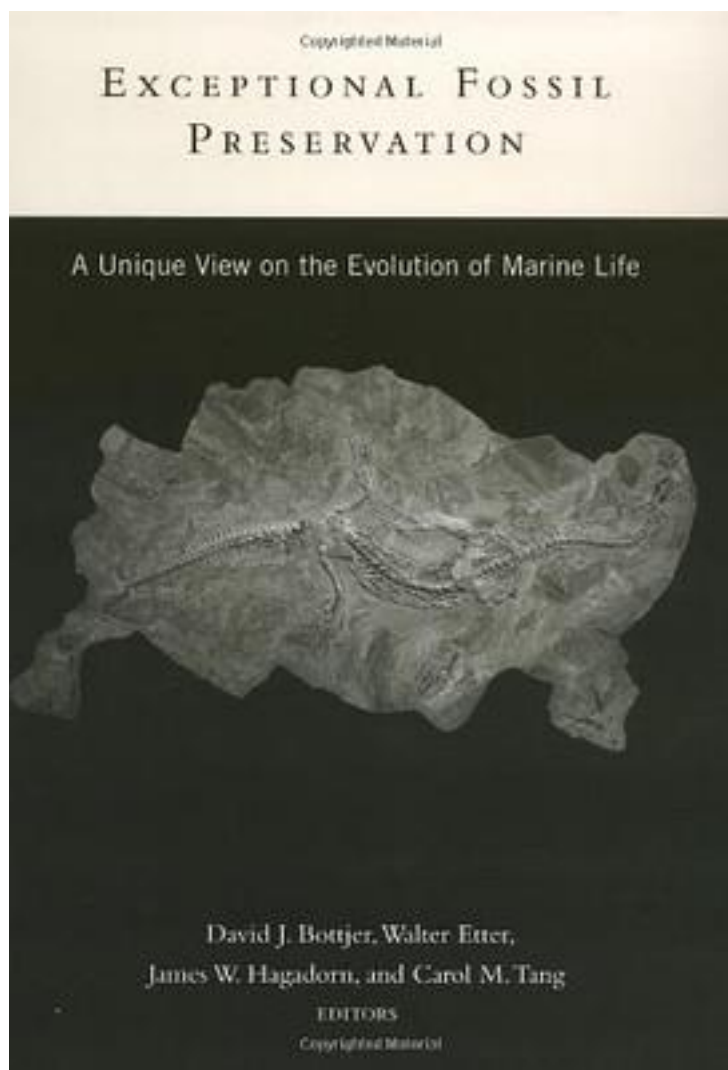


Exceptional Fossil Preservation



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Most nonscientists are usually aware of fossils, and it is commonly believed that they are extremely rare. In fact, fossils are exceptionally common in many sedimentary rocks and are used extensively in geology for age dating, interpretation of ancient environments, and the discovery of natural resources. However, there is another type of fossil deposit that is truly rare. These rare fossil deposits, called Lagerstätten, preserve the remains of the soft tissues or the articulated skeletal remains of ancient creatures in truly astonishing fine detail. Some of these deposits are world-famous, such as the Burgess Shale, or Solnhofen but there are others dating from many different geological eras from the Paleozoic, up to the Eocene. Recently, a concerted effort has been made to understand the overall significance of these rare fossil deposits. Whereas in the past these deposits were considered novelties, modern researchers are trying to understand what they can tell us about ancient life and environments. New sophisticated techniques (including image and geochemical analyses) are providing enormous new contributions to our knowledge of Lagerstätten sites and to paleobiology in general. This volume describes many of the most famous Lagerstätten locations worldwide and is complete with over 70 superb halftones showing some of these exotic fossils in all their glory. Paleontologists are beginning to understand why such deposits occur, how they have varied since the advent of marine metazoan life, and how their presence effects our understanding of the evolution of life in the Earth's oceans. In this way, the study of Lagerstätten continues to move towards the mainstream of paleobiological, biological, and geological research, and away from its former status as the examination of mere curiosities. All those interested in these beautiful and sometimes enigmatic deposits will want to own this book.

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