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PROTOTAXITES – THE ENIGMATIC FOSSIL ORGANISMS

Summary

Prototaxites are an extinct genus of living organisms, the representatives of which occurred all over the world from the Late Silurian to Late Devonian Period (420–370 million years ago). They became extinct with the development of shrubby and woody plants. They had cylindrical, upright form, resembling a column up to 8 m in height and 1 m in width with single, short branches in the top part. Over the centuries, the question of interpretation of their fossils was the subject of intense scientific debate. Currently, it is considered that most likely they were symbiotic organisms, which consisted of a fungus and an alga.

Key words: Devonian, fossils, fungi, lichens, paleobiology, plant cover