

14 March 2009

Professor Stan Finney, Chair
International Commission on Stratigraphy

Dear Stan,

Inquiry regarding the exclusive position of the SQS

I have been catching up with the current, most interesting discussion on the status of the Quaternary and Neogene. I write here to ask whether I/we could have a further clarification from the supporters of a Quaternary system.

I was in the field in Egypt until recently, with an international group of colleagues. We were conducting geological mapping. Naturally the question of the status of the Neogene and Quaternary was raised, and there were colleagues as supportive of the Tertiary as a formal chronostratigraphic unit in the time scale as others colleagues are of a formal Quaternary. These colleagues had very reasonable arguments, and they supported strongly the Tertiary as a subera. Reasons to save the Tertiary were discussed in recent papers quoted in several of the papers you distributed on the behalf of SNS and SQS to the voting members on the Q-N problem.

My question therefore is: why does the Quaternary community insist on the Quaternary being included in the time scale at the level of system (in which the Tertiary has no place)? The broad community would expect the Quaternary community be as committed to meet the demands of other stratigraphic communities, as the Neogene community is. Altogether the community working on the Tertiary is at least as large as that working on the Quaternary.

I would be grateful if you would forward this message to all parties involved in the resolution of the Neogene-Quaternary dilemma, and look forward to a clarification on this point.

Best regards,



Marie-Pierre Aubry
Professor