

EDITORIAL

The Gelasian question: options in the definition of Pleistocene for manuscripts submitted to our journals

Until further notice, the authors of manuscripts submitted to *Micropaleontology* and *Stratigraphy* will have the choice of two options in characterizing the age of later Cenozoic events and strata. The options are:

- 2.6 Ma option: Pleistocene defined in the Gelasian GSSP.

This option conforms to the recent proposal by INQUA, subsequently approved by IUGS (Gibbard, Head and Walker, 2010), in which the recognition of a formal Quaternary Period/System in place of the latter part of the Neogene leads to redefining the base of the Pleistocene Epoch/Series in the San Nicolás GSSP of the Gelasian Age/Stage, currently calibrated to 2.588 (2.6) Ma.

- 1.8 Ma option: Pleistocene defined in the Calabrian GSSP.

This option conforms to the previous usage of Pleistocene, most recently exemplified in “GTS 2004” (Gradstein, Ogg and Smith, 2004), wherein the Pleistocene is defined in the Vrica GSSP of the Calabrian Age/Stage, currently calibrated to 1.801 (1.8) Ma.

Authors who use the terms **Pleistocene** and **Pliocene** in their submitted manuscripts will be asked to clearly identify which

option is in use. The recognition of **Neogene** and **Quaternary** will be at the discretion of the authors.

We are adopting this policy because the “Gelasian shift”, which results in a 44% expansion of the Pleistocene, has met with very wide concern as to the stability of the literature. In the absence of consensus, a return to the Calabrian is an open possibility, and we believe that for the time being it is appropriate to allow authors to choose which convention to follow with regard to the base of the Pleistocene.

REFERENCES

- GIBBARD, P. L., HEAD, M. J., WALKER, M. J. C. et al., 2010. Formal ratification of the Quaternary System/Period and the Pleistocene Series/Epoch with a base at 2.58 Ma. *Journal of Quaternary Science*, 25: 96-102.
- GRADSTEIN, F. M., OGG, J. G. and SMITH, A. G. eds., 2004. *A geologic time scale 2004*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 524 pp.