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ABSTRACTS



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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR QUATERNARY RESEARCH
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THE PLIOCENE-PLEISTOCENE BOUNDARY IN CONTINENTAL
NORTH AFRICA AND NORTH WEST SAHARIAN MARGIN

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In southern Marocco, on the piedmont of High-Atlas and Anti-atlas, the principal sedimentary continental deposits are: high terrasses, torrential fans and old pediments. The material of these formations are conglomerates with altered pebbles granit and thick calcareous crusts.

These deposits are affected by the orogenic phase of the lower Quaternary. They lay out old hydrographic systems which were independant of the quaternary systems which are the same as the actual.

On the foot-hills or depressions in intra atlasic areas of Algeria, these highest levels are sealed by contineous and hardened calcareous crusts of paludial and fluviatil origin.

The southern piedmont of the Aures mountains is caracerised by 200 to 300 m of conglomerates (R. Guiraud 1973) probably contemporaneous to the first lacustrine phase in the Melrhir and Merouane chotts. Like in the marocco mountains they are affected by the orogenic phase of the lower Quaternary.

In the region of the large tunisian chotts, the Tertiary ended with the deposition of the Continental Terminal complex consisting of several hundreds meters of sandstones, clays and conglomerates. At the top, gypsiferous deposits containing *Cerastoderma glaucum* representing a first lagoonal phase dated as lower Villafranchian. These deposits were often deformed during villafranchian and lower quaternary tectonic phase (J-L Ballais 1991).

Finally, in the field of chronostratigraphy there are more difficulties to define the subdivisions inherent to the Pliocene-Pleistocene boundary (Villafranchian). However the geological formations and the landforms

attributed to the Tertiary-Quaternary transition are quite distinct from those of the Quaternary. This transitive period is characterised in North-Africa by orogenic movements and climatic changes which gave rise to the major features of the present landscapes.