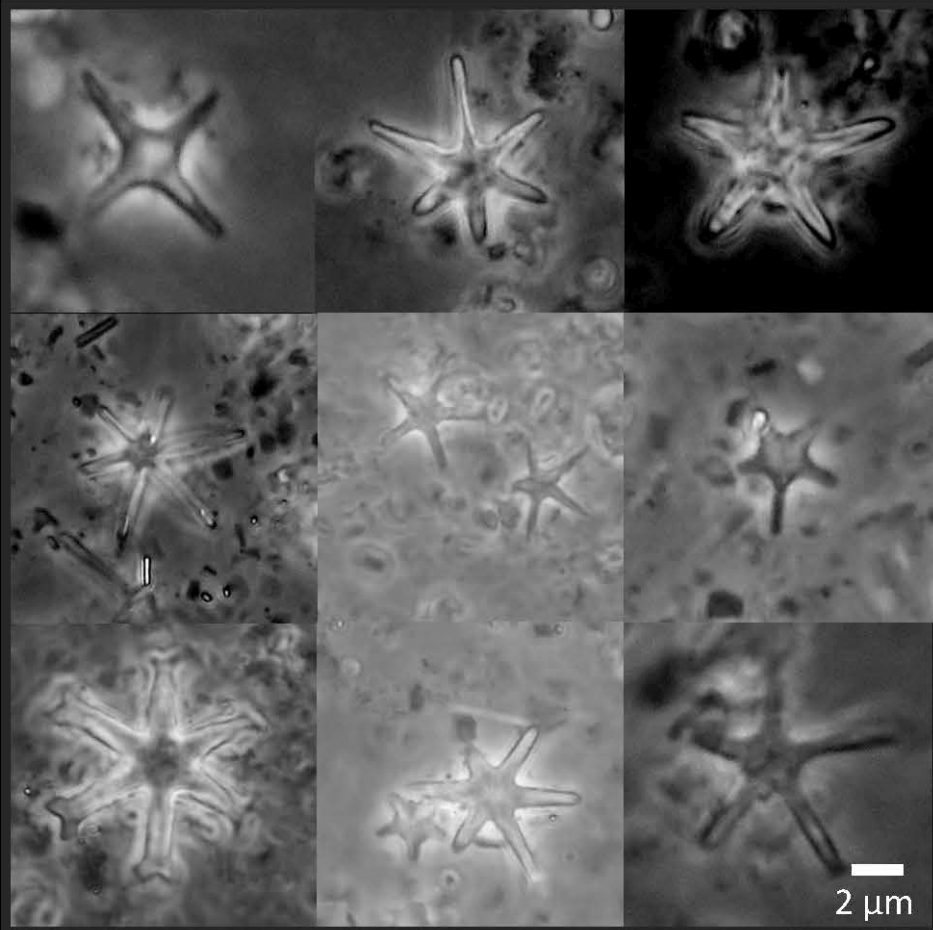


Discoasters: THE STARS THAT LIT THE ANCIENT SEAS

By: Deborah Tangunan, *GLOMAR PhD Student*



Discoaster is a genus under the coccolithophore group. They are extinct star-shaped marine haptophyte algae whose fossil record is very significant in biostratigraphic studies.

Let me tell you a story from millions of years ago
while stars illuminated the skies
there were organisms that glittered below
From low, to mid, to high latitudes
these natives of the ancient seas
had their own glorious times
as every organism should.

In the Paleocene, there appeared their first kind
Many species followed, some stayed for a while
Each with its own significant place
in the time slice when they occurred
until they disappeared, one by one
in the Pliocene, the last died out
and then there was none.

Yet today, their light is shining on us still
with every tale that their remains tell
From the remnants of the era when they were first born
part of the Earth's past is made known
From their bodies that were buried underneath
layer by layer, with each centimeter
the story became complete.

So now you see
how fortunate it is for a student like me
to witness their light and write this story
and to someday use them
as zonal markers in biostratigraphy
Under this microscope, I gaze at them in awe
Now it's time to ID these Discoasters that I know.