

subsequently added by Böhlsche¹ after the type had been accorded generic rank by Dujardin and Hupé,² who improved considerably upon Müller's definition of it. The German zoologist had not considered the position of the mouth as a point of any systematic importance; but he referred to *Alecto* both species like *Antedon rosacea* and *Antedon eschrichti*, which have five symmetrically distributed ambulacra radiating from a central mouth, and also species with an equally symmetrical grouping of the ambulacra, but with an excentric mouth. Dujardin and Hupé, however, took no account of the number of ambulacra diverging from the peristome, to which Müller attached so much importance; but they pointed out that the distinctive character of *Actinometra* rather lay in the excentric position of the mouth, which determined the course of the ambulacra round the margin of the disk, instead of towards its centre. Nevertheless, they did not transfer to *Actinometra* the various species of *Alecto* described by Müller with an excentric mouth and symmetrically grouped ambulacra; so that they did not make any real addition to the genus, although they recognised its characters better than Müller had previously done. Single species were subsequently added to it by various writers, but it was never properly defined.

Having assigned a generic value to *Actinometra*, Dujardin and Hupé did the same for Müller's type *Alecto*, for which, however, they preferred Lamarck's name *Comatula*. But three years later Mr. Norman replaced this by *Antedon*, a name which was originally proposed earlier than either *Alecto* or *Comatula*; and at the same time he restricted it to those species only in which the mouth is central or subcentral and the anus lateral. Very nearly all subsequent writers have accepted this definition of *Antedon*; but no attempt was ever made to modify the Müllerian descriptions of *Comatula* in accordance with it.

Towards the end of 1875, ten years after the publication of Mr. Norman's precise definition of *Antedon*, I had the opportunity of studying a large collection of tropical Comatulæ which had been obtained by Professor Semper in the Philippine Islands; and it soon became evident that the number of ambulacra diverging from the peristome is so variable as to be useless for the purposes of generic discrimination. At the same time other characters seemed to be correlated with the central or excentric positions of the mouth respectively; and I came to the conclusion that the real distinction between *Antedon* and *Actinometra* respectively is based upon this feature of their organisation, the number of groove trunks connected with the peristome being a character of very minor importance.³ I soon learnt that Professor Lütken had held this opinion for some time past; and he also pointed out to me certain characters of the oral pinnules which are always associated with the excentric position of the mouth. Since that time I have

¹ Ueber *Actinometra Bennettii* und eine neue *Comatula* Art (*Antedon Dubenii*), *Archiv f. Naturgesch.*, 1866, Jahrg. xxxii. Bd. i. p. 90.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 208.

³ *Trans. Linn. Soc. Lond.* (Zool.), 1879, ser. 2, vol. ii. pp. 17, 18.