

RESEARCH NOTE

SYNONYMY OF THE PSEUDOSCORPION *CHERNES INSUETUS* WITH *AMERICHERNES OBLONGUS* (CHELONETHI, CHERNETIDAE): AN UNESTABLISHED INTRODUCTION TO BRITAIN

Chernes insuetus was described by O.P. Cambridge (1892) from two specimens found in an oil mill in Dover, Kent (England). The mill was later demolished (Kew 1911) and this species has not been recorded since. Kew, who examined one of the types, noted that this species belonged to “a group with polished integuments, almost simple bristles, non-granulate tergites, and with a tactile hair near extremity of tibia IV.” Although this would have placed *C. insuetus* in the Lamprochernetinae (as then defined), Beier (1932) listed it as a doubtful species of *Allochernes* Beier 1932, in which he was followed by Roewer (1937).

The name *insuetus* did not appear again in the literature until Legg & Jones (1988) synonymized it with *Lamprochernes chyzeri* (Tömösváry 1882). Although no justification was given for this synonymy, it was accepted as the *status quo* by Harvey (1991). However, the identification of *insuetus* with *chyzeri* is hard to accept in view of the fact that Kew – a competent specialist – had examined British material of both species and found them to be quite distinct.

In 1980 I was able to study the two female syntypes of *Chernes insuetus*, deposited in the Hope Entomological Collections of Oxford University Museum (HECO). The specimens were lent to a third party at the Natural History Museum, London, under whose supervision they were studied. Afterwards, the types were left on a desk, to be mailed the next day. Unfortunately, they disappeared before this could be done and must be presumed lost. The material of *C. insuetus* which Cambridge sent to E. Simon (who first identified it as new to science) was evidently returned, there being

no trace of this species in the collections of the Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle, Paris.

Although the spermathecae could not be examined, the external morphology of the types of *C. insuetus* was found to agree with Muchmore’s (1976) redescription of *Americhernes oblongus* (Say 1821). *Chernes insuetus* Cambridge is therefore considered to be a junior subjective synonym of *A. oblongus*.

Americhernes oblongus (Say 1821)

Chelifer oblongus Say 1821:64. Neotype ♂ from Havana, Illinois, USA; designated by Hoff (1949) (Illinois Natural History Survey, not examined).

Americhernes oblongus (Say): Muchmore 1976: 153–156, figs. 3–9; Harvey 1991:542 (complete synonymy up to 1989).

Chelifer communis var. *pennsylvanicus* Ellingsen 1910:366 (synonymized by Muchmore 1991:80).

Chelifer n. sp. Cambridge 1884:103.

Chernes insuetus Cambridge 1892:225–226, pl. C fig. 17; Kew 1916:130–131. Syntypes 2♀, from debris and refuse in oil mill, Dover, Kent, England, leg. W.P. Haydon, 1880 (HECO, examined; now lost). NEW SYNONYMY.

Chelifer (Chernes) insuetus (Cambridge): Kew 1911:41 (footnote 1).

Allochernes(?) insuetus (Cambridge): Beier 1932: 154; Roewer 1940:298.

Lamprochernes chyzeri (not Tömösváry): Legg & Jones 1988:102 (in part); Harvey 1991:588 (in part).

As the derivation of its junior synonym implies (Latin *insuetus*, unaccustomed), Cambridge (1884) regarded this species as alien to the British fauna, perhaps having been imported with oilseeds used in the mill. *Americhernes oblongus* is widely distributed in the United States (Muchmore 1976; Harvey

1991), and it is likely that the Kentish population originated from the eastern seaboard of North America. It is worth noting that they were found in company with the first known British specimens of *Withius piger* (Simon 1878) (syn. *Chelifer subruber* Simon 1879), another introduced species (Cambridge 1884, 1892).

Americhernes Muchmore 1976 is currently known from the Americas, Australia and the Pacific (Muchmore 1976; Harvey 1990), but there have been no subsequent records of this genus from Europe. Although several European pseudoscorpions have been found in North America (Muchmore 1972), this appears to be the first record of an introduction in the opposite direction. In this case, however, it is clear that *A. oblongus* did not become established in Britain.

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