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

 Chernez 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 (Tömősváry 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 δ from Havana, Illinois, USA; designated by Hoff (1949) (Illinois Natural History Survey, not examined).
Chelifer n. sp. Cambridge 1884:103.
Chelifer (Chernes) insuetus (Cambridge): Kew 1911:41 (footnote 1).

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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**LITERATURE CITED**


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