Acantholyctus semiermis (Lesne, 1914), a new synonym of Acantholyctus cornifrons (Lesne, 1898) (Coleoptera: Bostrichidae)

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Abstract. Synonymy of two species of the genus Acantholyctus Lesne has been established: A. semiermis (Lesne) proved taxonomically identical to A. cornifrons (Lesne). For A. semiermis neotype has been designated, currently housed in the collection of Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris.

Key words: entomology, nomenclature, Bostrichidae, Lyctinae, Acantholyctus semiermis, A. cornifrons, new synonym, neotype designation.

In 1898 French entomologist Pierre Lesne described a new species of African beetle under the name Lyctus cornifrons. The description was based on single specimen from Obock (now in Djibouti).

The same author in 1914 described the subspecies Lyctus cornifrons australis from Okahandya, Damaraland, what is now Namibia and another species, Lyctus semiermis, from Capetown. In 1924 Lesne transferred both species to his newly erected genus Acantholyctus Lesne.

In the original description of Lyctus semiermis (Lesne, 1914) the author mentioned that the unique type had been deposited in the South African Musem in Cape Town. However, according to the information received from Dr. M. Cochrane, neither that type nor any other specimen labeled as Lyctus (or Acantholyctus) semiermis could be found in that collection.

While the holotype has not been located, in the course of the revision of the Lyctinae in the collections of the Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris the authors discovered a
specimen determined by Lesne as Acantholyctus semiermis. As the type has been almost surely destroyed, for the sake of nomenclatural stability the Paris specimen has been designated the neotype. It comes from RSA and is labeled (Fig. 1) as follows:

a) “Colonie du Cap, Hope Town”
b) “Lyctus semiermis Lesne, P. Lesne vid.”
c) “Neotypus, Lyctus semiermis Lesne, 1914, des. J. Borowski & P. Węgrzynowicz”.

Having examined numerous specimens of A. cornifrons from almost all Africa and southern part of Arabian Peninsula, we have ascertained a considerable individual and geographical variability: the smallest individuals (body length 1.6 mm) were collected in Yemen and Tunisia, the largest (3.4-3.5 mm) in RSA and Namibia. Variable was also the size of frontal tubercles, denticles and emargination at middle of anterior margin of pronotum, and punctuation of the body (Figs. 2-4). Thus, presence or absence of outgrowth at middle of front cannot – despite the common belief – be used as diagnostic character to distinguish between A. cornifrons and A. semiermis; as the other characters (pronotal sculpture, punctuation of elytra or colouration) do not exceed the range of individual intraspecific variability, we consider both names synonymous:

**Genus Acantholyctus Lesne, 1924**


_Acantholyctus cornifrons_ (Lesne, 1898)

_Lyctus cornifrons_ Lesne, 1898: 139. Type locality: Obock. Type depository: MNHN.
_Lyctus cornifrons australis_ Lesne, 1914: 335. Type locality: Okahandya (Damaraland). Type depository: ZMUH.
_Lyctus semiermis_ Lesne, 1914: 333. Type locality: Hope Town. Type depository: MNHN, new synonymy.

**Distribution**: Whole Africa, Arabian Peninsula (Borowski and Węgrzynowicz, 2007).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are greatly indebted to M. Cochrane (SAM, Cape Town) for the essential information, as well as to Mr. Th. Deuve and Mrs. A. Taghavian (MNHN, Paris) for enabling the verification and loan of the specimen photographed for the present paper. We are wish to express our sincere thanks to Dr. Roman Holyński (Milanówek) for English translation and comments on the text, and Dr. Magdalena Kowalewska-Grośkowska for taking photo of specimens. This publication was supported by the grant N N 309 137135 given by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

2. Acantholyctus cornifrons - heads (above and oblique) and theirs sculpture (magnified). Scale = 0.1 mm
3-4. *Acantholyctus cornifrons*: 3 - pronota and theirs sculpture (magnified); 4 - sculpture of elytra. Scale = 0.1 mm

REFERENCES


