

## (272–275) Is wrong better than nothing? Proposals to change or make more precise Article 41.6

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It is both the common sense and the information theory view, that wrong (incorrect) information is worse than a lack of information, the latter being zero, but the former being negative (“below zero”) knowledge. However, the literal meaning of Art. 41.6 would imply, that *any* error in the citation of a basionym or replaced synonym is permissible, as long as it is not an omission of elements enumerated in Art. 41.5. In the Ex. 14, a case of wrong publication date is given as not preventing valid publication. So, it may be inferred, that if the citation includes wrongly given page (or plate) number, it would not make the citation invalid either, although this will cause the same problem for the reader as the omission of this number altogether, i.e. necessity to search for the right page/plate throughout the cited paper. Moreover, this may cause ambiguity, if descriptions or plates that might refer to a potential basionym or replaced synonym were to be found in multiple places within the same work. Therefore I would propose two alternative changes (one being Proposals 272 to 274, the other Proposal 275) to be considered.

### (272) Amend Art. 41.6 as follows (new text in bold, deleted text in strikethrough):

“41.6. For names published on or after 1 January 1953, errors in the citation of the basionym or replaced synonym, including incorrect **but not omitted** author citation (Art. 46), ~~but not and bibliographic~~ omissions (Art. 41.5), **as far as they do not cause ambiguity as to the real place of the protologue or valid publication of the basionym or replaced synonym within the cited work**, do not preclude valid publication of a new combination, name at new rank, or replacement name.”

This would lessen the strictness of Art. 41.6, with a clause of condition under which this situation (bibliographic omission) would be permissible, allowing citations of works where page(s)/plate number are omitted to be acceptable if there is only one place in the publication where the name and/or protologue of the basionym/replaced synonym is printed (tables of contents and indexes notwithstanding). This would however affect also Note 1 and Example 12 under Art. 41.5, as the situation depicted there, i.e. giving the reference of the whole paper’s pagination, would be equivalent to citing a separate publication without reference to a particular page. So, if the Proposal

(272) is accepted, then the two following Proposals should also be voted:

### (273) Convert Note 1 under Art. 41 into Rec. 41A.2, amended as follows (new text in bold, deleted text in strikethrough):

“41A.2. For the purpose of Art. 41.5, a page reference (for publications with a consecutive pagination) **is should be** a reference to the page or pages on which the basionym or replaced synonym was validly published or on which the protologue appears, but not to the pagination of the whole publication unless it is coextensive with that of the protologue (see also Art. 30 Note 2).”

### (274) Amend Ex. 12 under Art. 41 as follows (new text in bold, deleted text in strikethrough):

“Ex. 12. When proposing “*Cylindrocladium infestans*”, Peerally (in Mycotaxon 40: 337. 1991) cited the basionym as “*Cylindrocladiella infestans* Boesew., Can. J. Bot. 60: 2288–2294. 1982”. **As Although** this refers to the pagination of Boesewinkel’s entire paper, not of the protologue of the intended basionym alone **(which was on p. 2290, but nowhere else in the paper an alternative protologue could be found)**, the combination was ~~not~~ validly published by Peerally; **this practice is however strongly discouraged.**”

Another way of making the Article 41.6 more consistent would be:

### (275) If Proposals (272–274) fail, amend Art. 41.6 as follows (new text in bold):

“41.6. For names published on or after 1 January 1953, errors in the citation of the basionym or replaced synonym, **as far as they do not cause ambiguity as to the real place of the protologue or valid publication of this name within the cited work**, including incorrect author citation (Art. 46), but not omissions (Art. 41.5), do not preclude valid publication of a new combination, name at new rank, or replacement name.”

This would make the Art. 41.6 more strict, by excluding also citation errors that would render the identification of the real place of valid publication of a name ambiguous.