

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The unknown Greek roots of the term OrthopEdics/OrthopAEdics. It is time to establish a universally acceptable and unique writing only with an E.

Dear Editor,

Over these last twenty years EEXOT's attempts to establish the modified term "Ορθοπαιδική" (with an "αι") in the place of the term ορθοπαιδική (with an "ε") have been, questioned, ignored, rejected, or overlooked. The majority of people of letters, writers, translators, linguists, teachers of all levels of the Greek language, as well as, the Center of Hellenic Language (KEΓ), the legal, judicial and other services of the Public Sector of the Greek State, etc. refuse to use the proposed by EEXOT form for orthopedic specialty. In English as well, the question of which of the two types of writing is the appropriate one, "Orthopedics" or "orthopaedics", so far, remains unanswered; in order to shed some light into the problem, one needs to examine and evaluate all historical and etymological data concerning the Ancient Greek origins of the word. As it is well known the term "Ορθοπαιδική" ("Orthopaedics" in English) is based on the French term "Orthopédie" used in Andry's book (written in 1741) which provides instructions for preventing deformities in children; this term comes from the combination of the Ancient Greek words "ορθός/orthos" (straight) and "paidion" or "paedion" (child), translated "Ορθοπαιδεία" in Greek. The term «Ορθοπαιδική» (**Orthopedics**) with an "E" derives from the Ancient Greek word "ορθός" (orthos) and the ancient Greek verb "πιδ-ώ"/ped-o (to prevent a distortion, to keep something motionless, bind) and its derivatives, e.g. "πέδη"/pedi, "πιδιον" / pedion and in combination with the word ορθός (orthos) the verb "ορθοπιδώ"/orthopodo (raising someone upright on "pedion"

that means plain, field). The term "ορθοπαιδικός" (orthopedic-os) was initially used in the 1900s, by the first Greek orthopedic surgeons, at the first orthopedic Hospital in Greece, the "Asclepeion" of Hellenic Red Cross, to express their attempts to raise upright on "pedion" bedridden patients suffering mainly from tuberculosis of the joints of the lower limbs and spine, using splints or "πέδ-ες"/ped-es in Ancient Greek and "εμπ-πόδ-ια"/em-podia, im-ped-es in English, derived from the ancient Greek roots "-pEd" and "-pOd". The Ancient Greek verb "πιδώ" (pedo) is already found in Homer, the Ancient Greek poet and author of Iliad and Odyssey; In Iliad's N435, the poet writes: "*pedisse de faidima gyia*" (he bound the brilliant members, limbs). Other Ancient Greek words relative to the term "orthopedics" are also the "Ορθό-πους" (ortho-pous), "Ορθο-ποδ-ητώ" (ortho-pod-ito), "Ορθο-ποδ-ίζω" (ortho-pod-izo), "πιδ-αιρώ"/ped-airo (I get up and go to another place), "πιδ-άρορος"/ped-aoros (elevated above the ground), "πέδ-η"/ped-i (Bind, bond, cuff, barrier, fetter), "εμπ-πόδ-ιον/em-po(e)d-ion" (obstacle, prevent), and the Latin derivatives "ped-ica", "ex-ped-io", "im-ped-io. The alternative use of "o" and "e" letters in the same word was very common in Ancient Greek language e.g. "Λόγος/Légo". Almost every Greek dictionary, except from that of Prof. Babinotis, include the term «Ορθοπαιδική» (Orthopedics) with an «E» as a first choice. Even though this term is not deriving from the ancient Greek words Ορθοπιδέω/Orthopodeo, πιδώ/pedo and their derivatives and it was, etymologically, based only on Andry's term «*orthopédie*», it would still have to be written with an «ε»=epsilon/=

e according to the center of Greek language (KEE) and many linguists. This is the answer I obtained, following personal communication, from some renowned Greek professors of Linguistics, for example, Prof. Zoi Gavriilidou, Prof. Maria Arapopoulou, Prof. Spiros Moschonas and many others who do not agree with the Babiniotis' Lexicon writing. The main, so far, unanswered question is, why in Greek, do we consider, as correct, the word «Ορθοπαιδική» (orthopaedics) from Andry's term «*Orthopédie*» (from paidion/paedion) and as false the self-evident adjective and derivative word «ορθοπεδικός» (orthopedics) of the Ancient Greek verb «ορθοποδῶ» (ortho-ped/-pod-o) that pre-existed Andry's period and is directly related to the whole field of Orthopedics? In addition, the writing with an "E" is visually similar to Andry's original term "orthopEdie" for his book for children and the "E" is actually used in many languages for orthopEdic specialization. The term «Ορθοπεδική» (Orthopedics) is used in Veterinary medicine also; The veterinarians use this term to express the im-ped-e of deformities in animals e.g. the use of «ορθοπεδικούς» (orthopedic) splints for dogs or cats' fractures. Is it normal to use the term «ορθοπαιδικοί» (orthopaedic) from paidion/child for animals? Dear Editor, we do not use children or "paid-ia/paed-ia" to correct deformities especially in adult patients. «Ορθοπεδικοί» (Orthopedic) surgeons do not "play" with children or "paidia/paedia" nor do they try to "become" and or «behave» like children. We are adults who try to correct and impede deformities in every patient, not only in children. Italian orthopedic surgeons are called «*ortopedici*» and not "Orto-bambini", "Corretto-bambini" or "Dritto-bambini", English or American ortho-pe(ae)d-ic surgeons did not change into "Ortho-childish", "Ortho-infantile", "Straight-childish" or "Straight-infantile" and French orthopedic surgeons did not become "Ortho-enfantains" or "Enfant-droi-

tique". Then, why the modern Greek Orthopedic surgeons must become "ορθο-παιδι-κοί"? Is it this normal and logic? If a French physician had written two centuries ago, the term "*glossopédie*" in a children's book related to children's linguistics based on the Ancient Greek words γλώσσα/glossa and παιδίον/paidion does anyone believe that the Greek linguists e.g Babiniotis, would change and transform their title to «γλωσσοπαιδικός» (glossopaedic)? EEXOT must abolish the funny and unsuitable title "ορθο-παιδι-κή" as soon as possible. The twenty years experiment with "paidia" has failed. The Greek Society EEXOT must also inform all foreign medical societies about the unique for all languages writing of the term ORTHOPEDICS with only an "E" and not the opposite because it is very difficult for them to know and understand the difference between the un-correct Greek root "-paid" ("-péd" in French) and the correct "-ped/-pod" one. We are not "paid-ikoí", "paed-ikoí", childlike or childish! The new Lexicon of Athens Academy has the word orthopEdics as correct and is non-dignified and non-polite EEXOT to exclude members, like the signatory, which write correctly their specialty. Many historical and etymological data related to this issue are included in my recently published in USA article: «Orthopedics» not «Orthopaedics»: If it's all Greek to you, let a Greek explain it. Nikolaos Christodoulou, BAOJ Ortho, 2:2;2:013, 2017. <https://bioaccent.org/orthopaedics/orthopaedics13.pdf>.

Sincerely

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