

# The crooked tree

## Carlos María Autorino

*Hospital Universitario Austral*  
*Head of the Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology (2000-2023)*  
*Consultant (since 2023)*  
*Universidad Austral School of Biomedical Sciences*  
*Professor of Orthopedics and Traumatology*  
*Director of the OT Specialization Program*  
*Asociación Argentina para el Estudio de la Cadera y la Rodilla*  
*Accredited Member. Honorary Member. Former President (2012-2013)*  
*Asociación Argentina de Ortopedia y Traumatología*  
*Consulting Specialist. Presidente (2024)*



## A tree

Since ancient times, the tree has symbolized defined circumstances for human beings. Thus, it is possible to establish analogies with personal, family, social, and academic structures.

The **roots**, either hidden underground or, depending on the plant species, partially visible, are the body's sustenance. They symbolize the founding principles.

The **trunk** represents the column that supports and contains the nutritive ducts. In some species, it is erect, in others, it is curved and at the same time elastic: in both cases, solid. It symbolizes organizational stability.

**Leaves** are a source of shade. They symbolize immanent protection; we will find shelter beneath them. Their temporary color change and fall identify natural cycles.

The **branches**, temporarily bare, represent the autumn; definitely bare, the final drought.

The **fruits** symbolize seasonality and the bounty of providence.

“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

## A logo

A logo is a distinctive graphic symbol for a company, commemoration, brand, or product.

What is the Asociación Argentina de Ortopedia y Traumatología logo's distinctive tree?

- The roots are hidden.
- The trunk is crooked, braced to a stake.
- No fruits are visible.

I will try to answer the following question:

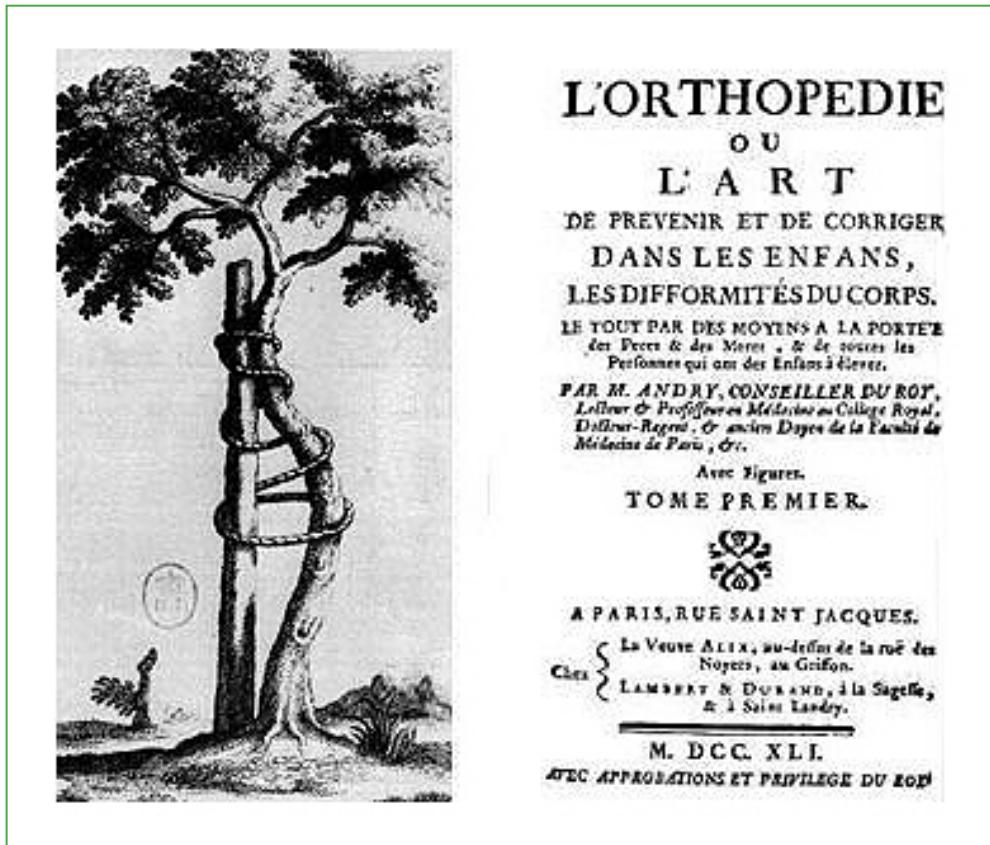
**Is the current AAOT logo representative of its background, role and strategic vision?**

## Origin of the AAOT logo

Nicolas Andry de Boisregard (Lyon 1658-Paris 1742) published in 1741 his work *L'Orthopédie, ou l'Art de prévenir et de corriger dans les enfants les difformités du corps* (*Orthopaedia: Or, the Art of Correcting and Preventing Deformities in Children*) (Figure).

Dr. CARLOS M. AUTORINO • carlos.autorino@gmail.com  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6410-3816>

**How to cite this article:** Autorino CM. The crooked tree. *Rev Asoc Argent Ortop Traumatol* 2024;89(1):1-4. <https://doi.org/10.15417/issn.1852-7434.2024.89.1.1919>



The name ‘Orthopedics’ originates by linking two words of Greek origin: ὀρθός *orthos* (“correct”, “straight”) and παιδεία *paideia* (“education or training”).

The image chosen by the author to symbolize “the correction and prevention of deformities in children” is precisely the one adopted two centuries later by the AAOT.

In sum, **in Nicholas Andry’s original conception, the “crooked tree” conceptually represented deformity.** It was not intended to identify a curriculum, a training level qualification, a Code of Ethics, or an Association.

### AAOT Background

**The title of this Editorial is not intended to be derogatory, far from it:**

- I love the specialty and devote my life to it.

I entered medical school with a definite vocation to become an orthopedist. As a child, I witnessed my father’s (an exponent of the Finochietto School, one of the founders of the Specialty at the Cosme Argerich Hospital) commitment to serving those in need and continuing his training every day.

- I respect the AAOT and the separate entities that stem from the original trunk.

I am concerned about any distortions in ethical professional practice.

### I propose to reflect on fundamental milestones in the historical evolution of the AAOT

Until the first part of the twentieth century, Orthopedics and Traumatology were unified, both clinically and academically, into the Clinical Surgery Services. In 1922, the Chair of our specialty was created at the School of Medicine of the University of Buenos Aires.

Second quarter of the 20th century:

On May 8, 1936, the *Sociedad Argentina de Cirugía Ortopédica* (Argentine Society of Orthopedic Surgery) was created. In 1949, the institutional name was changed to *Sociedad Argentina de Ortopedia y Traumatología* (SAOT).

**The specialty was no longer part of Clinical Surgery, but rather recognized as an independent specialty with its own set of theoretical training and skill acquisition requirements.**

On July 13, 1982, the *Asociación Argentina de Ortopedia y Traumatología* (Argentine Association of Orthopedics and Traumatology - AAOT) was founded.

<b>Sociedad Argentina de Cirugía Ortopédica</b>		<b>1936</b>
<b>Sociedad Argentina de Ortopedia y Traumatología</b>		<b>1949</b>
SAMECIPP	Leg, ankle and foot	1969
AACM	Hand and Upper Limb	1974
SAPCV	Spine	1976
SAOTI	Pediatric orthopedics	1979
<b>AAOT</b>	<b>Asociación Argentina de OT</b>	<b>1982</b>
ACARO	Hip and Knee	1983
AATD	Sports	1986
AAA	Arthroscopy	1987
ASAMI	Lengthening and reconstruction	1989
AAHC	Shoulder and Elbow	1992
AATO	Trauma	1994
AAOO	Orthopedic oncology	1994
SANEO	Neuro orthopedics	1996
AAOT	Trade union	2021

### The “crooked tree”

Based on the above, I believe that **the AAOT logo does not objectively represent the historical essence of the institution: the roots are hidden, the trunk is weak, there are no fruits.**

On the contrary, the AAOT tree has evidently been healthy and has provided abundant and good fruits.

The originally named ‘Guest’ and then ‘Member’ Associations originated within the AAOT, but they are no longer identified in the same way. Following the current denomination in Spain, it is reasonable to recognize them as ‘Monographic’.

When compared to a family, the AAOT is similar to a vital paterfamilias who has been prolific and generous. Its offspring (the ‘Monographic’ societies) are already qualified entities in advanced post-basic specialized training. They are similar to grown children who leave their parents’ homes to forge their own path while maintaining the family bond.

The AAOT continues to bear fruit:

- The AAOT has concentrated its work on guiding and consolidating the training stages in the basic and post-basic specialty,
- the AAOT has led the standardization of a Reference Framework,
- The AAOT attracts colleagues from other latitudes to train in Argentina,
- the Library, the Journal and the Congress are national and regional references,
- The Skills Committee has consolidated a repertoire of workshops of great educational value,
- The Association directs the implementation of legitimate policies and collective action measures in defense of shared interests, in accordance with current regulations.

*Guild* is not intrinsically a bad word. Neither is *union*.

In terms of national life, the front pages of newspapers have repeatedly served as examples of **what not** to be. Those who walk the streets of Florence recognize in their names the guilds that existed in Dante’s day.

Anyone who passes through Salzburg and other historical European cities recognizes the guild banners in the bars. These were then used to identify primitive Masonic lodges; this is not surprising given that *maçon* is the French term for masons.

When I think of an exemplary leader (it is very difficult for me to identify a contemporary Argentinian one), I immediately think of Lech Walesa, former President of Poland and a fervent Catholic. He was a shipyard electrician who led the Union after working during the day.

His role was instrumental in the fall of communism in Poland. It was not in vain that the great Saint John Paul II trusted him and rewarded him with his friendship.

Being an orthopedist entails not just implanting prostheses, but also **working with patients**.

Since the beginning of my professional practice, my family's livelihood has been based on my work. I personally experienced severe problems in overcoming the last 7 to 10 days of the month when patacones were in circulation and there was hyperinflation. I overcame this difficult situation with the help of my wife and by working harder, sometimes to the point where my eyelids collapsed while holding retractors. Today, I reflect on how helpful a trade union would have been back then.

Before I say goodbye, I would like to share with the reader a memory of my youth. My father, an exemplary person, was a personal friend of one of the founding members of the *Asociación Argentina de Anestesia, Analgesia y Reanimación* (Argentine Association of Anesthesia, Analgesia, and Resuscitation).

At the time, professional practice consisted of hospital mornings (many years without an appointment) and private office afternoons. This anesthesiologist had been criticized by colleagues for leading a project with a holistic perspective that included, as I mentioned before, *working with patients* in addition to medical care. **Today, I see him as a role model.**

*I thank my parents for the example they have set for me since I was a child.  
I thank my wife and daughters for their love and patience.*