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Dr. R. Trevor Wilson

Camel Wrestling in Turks



VENI
VIDI
VICI
YAYINLARI



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Orhan YILMAZ

He was born in 1962. He graduated from Ankara University, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Animal Science in 1984. He completed his MSc degree at University of Aberdeen in 1997 and his PhD degree at Ankara University in 2007. He still works as a scientist.

During thousands of years of Turkish History, camels were always important in their life. In the past camels were used as transport, pack, ride, war, food, and sport animal by Turks. After industrialization and modernization since 20th century, camel lost their importance and nowadays they are only a sport and tourism tool and the camel population in Turkey decreased in number of about 1.000 recently. The camel population is mostly used for camel wrestling events in Regions of Aegean and partially in Marmara and Mediterranean. The camel wrestling events are organized about in 60-70 places annually during winter season. Wrestling events are on Sundays and followed by not only men spectators but also women and children. Although camel wrestling equipments, accessories, ornaments, wages of takecarers, transport for wrestling from city to city, accommadation, catering are quite expensive, camel owners are not so rich people, but low or middle income people.

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He was born in 1962. He graduated from Ankara University, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Animal Science in 1984. He completed his MSc degree at University of Aberdeen in 1997 and his PhD degree at Ankara University in 2007. He still works as a scientist at Ardahan University.

Books Published

1. Kangal Köpeği (2003, 2004, 2005, 2008)
2. Her Yönüyle Tokat Zile Küçükközlü Köyü (2004)
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Canakkale, Can (17 February 2013)

CAMEL WRESTLING

in TURKS*

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Figure 1. Association of Bergama Camel Breeding Culture and Camel Wrestling.

1. INTRODUCTION

Because of geographical position Turkey is like a bridge between ages, nations, cultures and civilisations besides continental of Europe and Asia. In Turkey there are reared some native domesticated animals including bee, camel, cat, cattle, dog, donkey, duck, goat, goose, guinea fowl, hen, horse, mule, partridge, pheasant, pig, pigeon, rabbit, sheep, silkworm, turkey, and water buffalo.



Figure 2. Camel Wrestling in Balikesir, Burhaniye.(4 October 2012).



Figure 3, 4. Camel Wrestling in Canakkale, Karacaören (3 March 2013) (above) and Camel Wrestling in Canakkale, Umurbey (9 February 2014) (below).



2. CAMEL

Even though camel was not reared recently, it was a crucial animal before industrialization and motorization in human life. In the history camel even used to be reared in Europe. Some camel bones were found in some archaeological sites from Austria, England, France, Germany, Hungary and Switzerland. Camels were used in those countries for military and trade purposes during Roman Empire.



Figure 5. Camel Wrestling in Canakkale, Can (17 February 2013).



Figure 6, 7. A leg is tied to stabilize the camel (above) a camel in heat season (below).



The origin of the word camel likely is derived from the Greek word 'Kremal' or from the Sanskrit word 'Kreluk' which means 'throw away legs'. The genus of Camelus was likely among one of the last domesticated animal species. It is believed that camels were domesticated in Saudi Arabia peninsula around 1.500 B.C. and spread to Anatolia (Asian part of Turkey) around 300 B.C.. Camel is not widely reared recently and the numbers critically decreased in 20th century continuously (Table 1). Nowadays camels are used in small numbers as pack animal in provinces of Antalya, Mersin and Mugla. The majority of camel population is used for camel wrestling in 21st century in Turkey. The camel is also used as a sacrificial animal for slaughtering.



Figure 8. Yoruk women in Canakkale, Ayvacik, Camkabalak Village

Figure 9, 10.
Association of
Bergama Camel
Breeding Culture
and Camel
Wrestling. (above)
nomad yoruks
while migrating to
highland (below)
(Photo Muhammet
Karakoyun).



2.1. Camel in Turks

Turks used to use Camels beside mule for transport for public and army issues. In ancient time food, tents, weapon and other supplies of army used to be transported by using camels and mules. Nomad Yoruk Turks also used to use camels to transport their family stuff during migration times. Hence every Yoruk family used to have average 7-8 camels. Some families used to have extra camels to rent them to other people who need camels.





Figure 11, 12. A newborn baby camel with its mother (above) and Camel Wrestling in Canakkale (19 January 2014) (below).



2.2. Camel in Islam

In the Holy Koran, camel was mentioned about in good way. Camel was also a pack and ride animal for Mohammed, thus Turks respected the camel. After Turks began to become Muslim around 10th century, camel seemed as the second holy animal apart from horse.



Figure 13. Spectators next to arena.



Figure 14. Children spectators.

2.3. Mating Methods of Camels

Mating ways of camels as seen in the image below.

Tulu (Tuylu) Camel: It is F_1 progeny of double-humped male buhur camel and single-humped female yoz camel. Male tulu is called as besrek and female tulu is called as maya. They have longer hair and life other than single-humped camels. Tulu camel has typical hump. This hump is called as “badem horguc” (almond hump) because shape of hump looks like almond shape.

Tavsi Camel: It is G_1 progeny of double-humped male buhur camel and almond humped F_1 female maya (tulu) camel. They are double-humped because 75% buhur genotype. They are not wrestled but they are used just for to be worked.

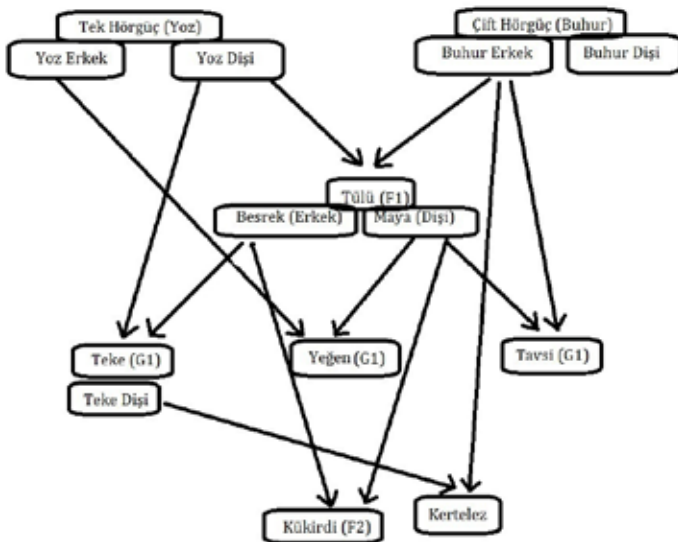


Figure 15. Mating Methods of Camels.



Figure 16. Camel Wrestling in Canakkale, Umurbey (9 Şubat 2014).

Teke Camel: It is G_1 progeny of almond humped male besrek (tulu) camel and single-humped female yoz camel. They have shorter hair and suitable for hot and humid areas such as southern Anatolia.

Kertelez Camel: It is reciprocal crossbreed of double-humped male buhur camel and G_1 progeny female teke camel. They are suitable for hilly and highland areas such as Taurus Mountains.

Yegen Camel: It is G_1 progeny of single-humped male yoz camel and almond humped female maya (tulu) camel. Breeders generally did not prefer too much this type of camel in history.

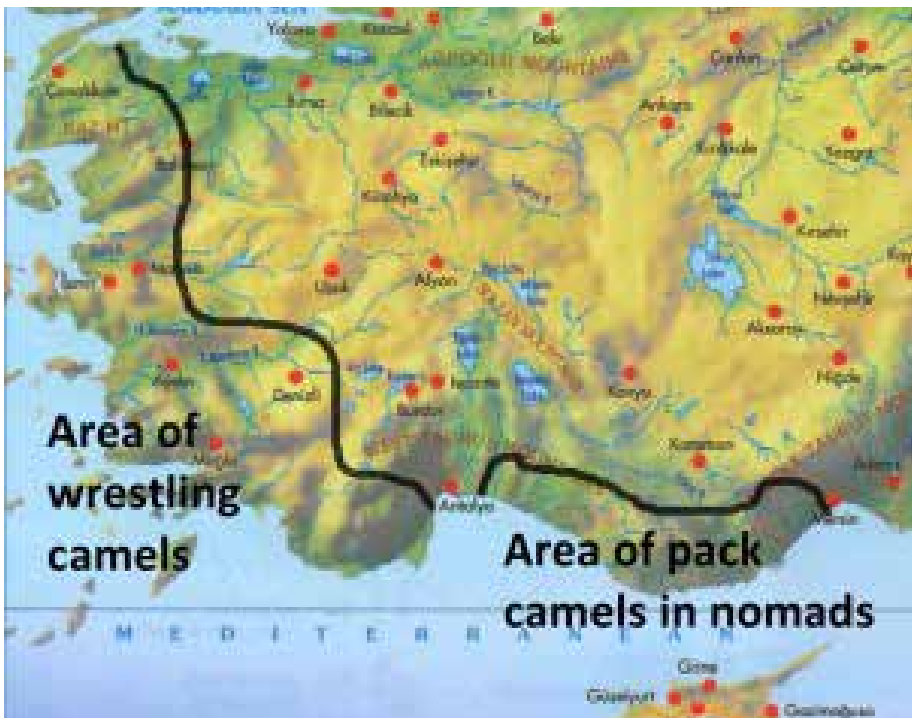
Kukirdi Camel: It is F_2 progeny of almond humped F_1 male besrek (tulu) camel and almond humped F_1 female maya camel. In this crossbreeding various different kinds of camels happen because of genetic variation. Hence this crossbreeding did not prefer too much in history.



Figure 17. A camel in Burhaniye Camel Wrestling (4 October 2012).



Figure 18, 19. Spectators next to arene (above) and habitat of camels raised in Turkey (below).



2.4. Habitat

The wrestling camels are reared in provinces of Canakkale, Balikesir, Manisa, Izmir, Aydin, Denizli, Mugla, and Antalya from north to south. The most crowded camels are in province of Aydin. Those provinces are at seashore except Denizli. Different numbers of camel wrestling in those provinces. On the other hand there are a small quantity of pack camels which are reared by nomadic Yoruks Turkmens who live in provinces of Antalya and Mersin. These Yoruks live in Taurus Mountains in Antalya and Mersin in cold seasons. They migrate Karaman and Konya provinces in warm seasons to graze and browse their goat flocks. These Yoruks live in tents whole year and reject to live in houses.

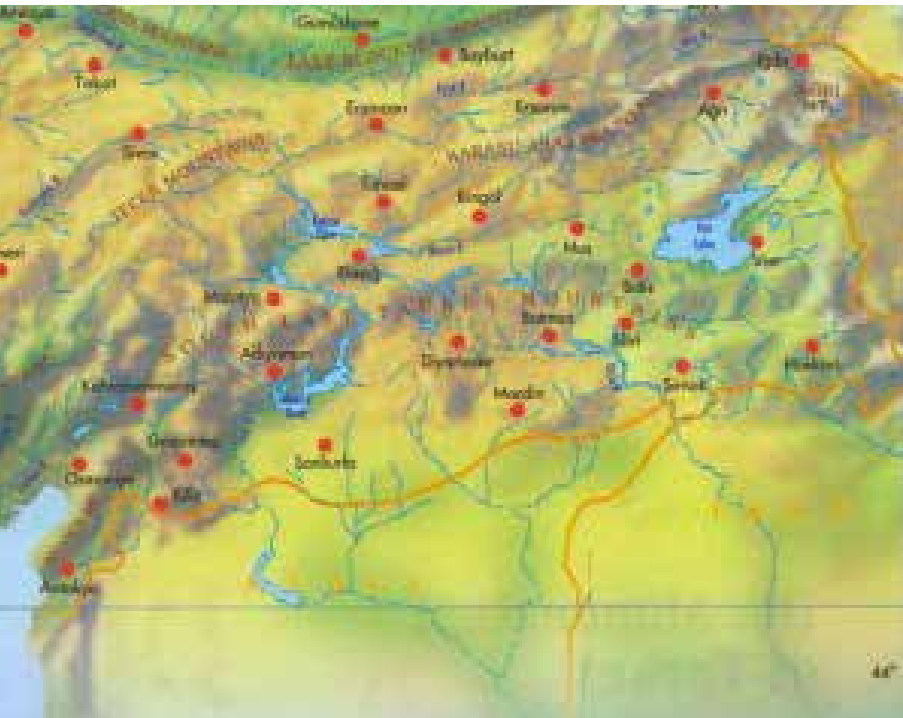




Figure 20, 21. Spectators next to arene with barbecue (above)
Spectators for Camel Wrestling in Canakkale, Can (17 February 2013).



2.5. Some Practical Applications

Camels have soft footpad, therefore shoes cannot be applied to camels like horses. Asphalt and sand are mixed and warmed and then camel step on the mixture which sticks to footpad. This footpad can stand about 10-15 days. There is a practical way for disease protection of camels. Camels are greased by a mixture

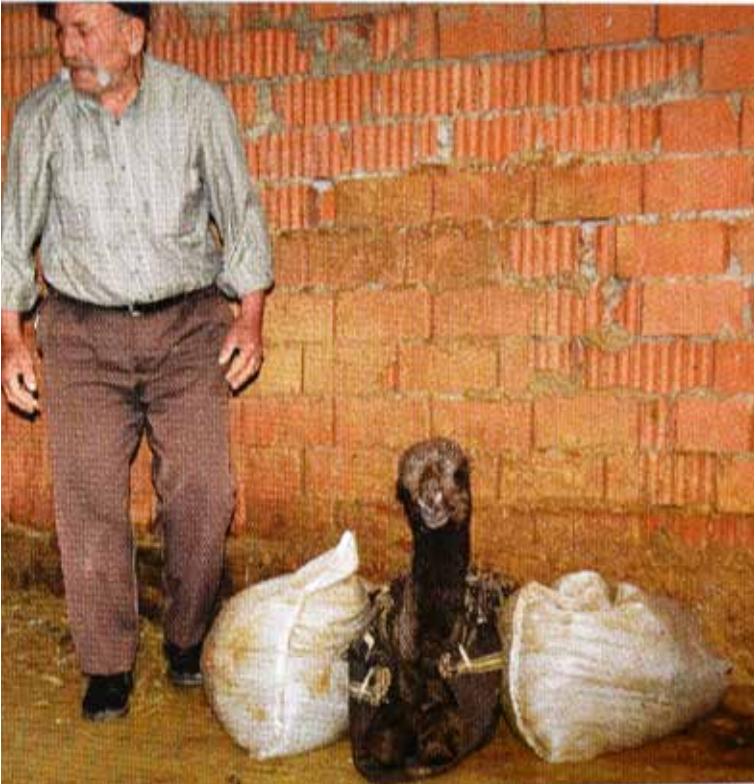


Figure 22. New born baby camels are tied up 2 sacks to protect their weak legs (Gulsoken 2010).



Figure 23, 24. Spectators next to arena.



of olive oil and pine or juniper resin. About 300 ml of pine or juniper resin are added into about 2.000 ml olive oil. This mixture is boiled and after cooled. The camel is greased by using this mixture which prevents the skin from germs and microbes. In summer season before camel begin to graze, a piece of pine resin is put into each nostril. Camel carers believe that camels cannot separate each smell of plants and they eat every plant in that way. They also give to camels some whey as laxative in order to clean digestive system and better digestion.



Figure 25.
Turkish
spcy
sausage
made from
camel
meat.



Figure 26, 27. Camels to wait for wrestles (above) and spectators next to arene.(below).



2.6. Diseases

The major diseases are foot injuries and diseases, scabies, Helminthiasis, annelids, night blindness, chronic cough and pneumonia, neck pain, mastitis, and contagious skin necrosis. Camels are highly sensitive against to Trypanomiasis which is infected by mosquitoes. They cannot remove mosquitoes because they have short tails and no dorsal muscles. Camels also have diarrhoea because of malnutrition. Although their huge body and muscles, they can easily be affected by heat changes and become ill especially while they are transporting on a vehicle for wrestling events.



Figure 28. A camel just arrived to arena.



Figure 29, 30. A wrestling camel (above) and fans for photographs (below).



3. WRESTLING CAMEL

All wrestling camels are illegally imported when they are 8-9 years old age from Iran, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan to Turkey. They illegally pass the border between county of Maku (Iran) and county of Dogubeyazit (Turkey). A wrestler camel is called as 'tulu' which is crossbred of a single-hump Arabian female camel (*Camelus dromedary*) and double-hump Asian male camel (*Camelus bactrianus*).



Figure 31. One of the famous wrestling camel called as Cesur Yurek (Brave Heart).



Figure 32, 33. Camels in Canakkale, Bayramic Camel Wrestling (12 January 2014)(above and below).





Figure 34. Camels in Canakkale, Bayramic Camel Wrestling (12 January 2014).



Figure 35, 36. Camels in Canakkale, Bayramic Camel Wrestling (12 January 2014)(above and below).



3.1. Selecting a Champion Candidate

Camel wrestling fans agree that, a champion is born and not made. According to Muhsin, a saddler from Burhaniye, a perfect camel is lower in front part, but higher in rear part of body. The camel has long neck, small head, symmetric hump, thin tail, balanced testicles, and bigger penis. Wrestling camels can be trained, but no amount of training can make up for a weak or overly peaceful character. A wrestler camel morphologically should have in shorter front legs, but longer rear legs. Hump of wrestling camel should be in almond shape and it is so called as 'badem horguc' (almond hump).

Normally camels do not attack to human. If somebody hit or kicks to the camel, the camel never forget the attacker and want to hurt him and attack to him. Camels can know people by smelling, hearing or seeing.



Figure 37. A piece of hair is accepted for camel breeders as a sign of champion camel.



Figure 38, 39. Sole (above) and feet of camel (below).



3.2. Biology of Wrestling Camel

Although other large ruminants have horns, camel does not any horn which is good for camel wrestling. Temporary teeth fall around 7 years old age and permanent teeth come out around 8 years old age. Between 5-8 years old age, the camel is begun to wrestle but he should not be mauled until 10 years old age. After 12 years old age, a wrestler camel is accepted as adult. They wrestle effectively from the age around 10 to 20. Although some of them can live up to 40 years old age, after 25-30 years old age, they can have front leg disorders which cause walking difficultly and limping.



Figure 40. Callus on knees.

Figure 41,
42. A camel
rolling on the
ground
against
to itching
(above) and
legs of camel
(below)



Weight of wrestling camels is normally 400-500 kg, but under good feeding and care this amount increase up to 1000-1200 kg around fall season. In fall season camel should be exercised and must lose weight up to around 900 kg. In this season they started to rut and 'havut' (camel packsaddle) is put on the camel. Havut is put on the camel on the day of Republic Day, 29 October which is called as 'Havut Giydirme Toreni'. All wrestling camels put on packsaddles are adorned and taken for a walk in that settlement. After putting havut, camel begins to be exercised. Also havut helps to exercise, so lose weight to around 900 kg. Heat signs can obviously be seen. For example a kind of oily liquid called as 'mislik' is secreted from his neck.



Figure 43. A camel rolling on the ground against to itching.



Figure 44. Two glands on head which secrete "Mislik".

3.3. Why Do Camels Wrestle

In fact camel wrestling is a way of finding a female completion. This behaviour can also be observed among various kinds of wild animals such as deer, wild sheep and goat. In mating season camels generally open their back legs and wave their tail, or cock their head back and moan. This is the kind of posing “I am looking for my opponent to select my female”. Organizers arrange a female camel just outside the fighting ring to provoke the male wrestlers. When the camel is brought to the arena, he should erect his ears. If he droops his ears, this means the camel does not want to wrestle. If a camel is crushed and screamed by his adversary, that camel does not want to wrestle again at least 2-3 weeks. During wrestle a camel sometimes droops his ears, erect his tail and look for the gate which means he will flee. On the other hand the camel owners try to find a good spot in the fields outside, where their camels can size each other up for the contests.



Figure 45. A female camel (maya) next to male camel in order to courage to wrestle.



Figure 46. A male camel urinating by opened rear legs

3.4. Terms

The camel wrestling is a very rich term vocabulary.

Agiz bagci: Attendant who bind the muzzle of the camels.

Agiz bagi kontrolcusu: Attendant who check the muzzle binding of the camels.

Atan: Castrated male camel.

Bagci: Camel which takes the head of adversary camel under their chest and then tries to sit on them.



Figure 47. Agiz bagci in arena.



Figure 48, 49. A head of camel (above) and two young camels (daylak) for training wrestle (below).



Besrek: Another saying of 'tulu' camel especially in nomadic people.

Bodur: Birth-1 year old camel.

Buhur: Double-hump camel.

Cal: Baby camel.

Cazgir: Speaker who announces the names and gives extra information of the wrestling camels.

Cengelci: Camel which trip the adversary camel by using foot tricks.

Daylak: 7-12 years old camel.

Doru: 1-6 years old camel.

Dorum: Baby camel.

Havut: Packsaddle of camel.

Havut giydirme: Day of 29 October when packsaddles are put on camels.

Kosek: Baby camel.

Kukurd: Male very short haired light coloured wrestling camel.

Lok: Male hairless wrestling camel.

Maya: Female single-hump camel.

Mislik: Greasy liquid which secreted from neck of camel by beginning to rutting season.

Nacir: Male short curly haired wrestling camel.

Ogur: Mating time of camels.

Pes: Embroidered piece of cloth which put on packsaddle of camel where name and place of camel written on.

Potuk: Baby camel.

Sagci: Camel which attack from the right side.

Savran: Trainer and takecarer of camel.

Solcu: Camel which attack from the left side.

Tavinda: Female camel which erects her tail when she



Figure 50, 51. Urganci teams during wrestles (above) and a female camel (maya) next to male camel in order to courage to wrestle (below).



sees the male because of being in heat season and ready to mate.

Tekci: Camel which push their rivals to make them beat a retreat

Topak: Lump of dough which is mixture of grains with water. Camel does not eat anything in heating season in winter. Hence topak is tucked in to the throat of camel forcedly by owner or savran.

Torok: Baby camel.

Tulu: Male long haired wrestling camel by crossbreed of single-hump and double-hump camels. Wrestling camels are called as 'tulu' after 12 years old age. The term 'besrek' may also be used instead of tulu where the camel is reared by nomadic people.

Urganci: Attendant who handles the ropes used to guide and split up the camels.

Yelek: Offspring \leq 1 year old of a camel

Yoz: Single-hump camel.



Figure 52. An urganci team.



Figure 53. "Pes" which some information about camel on.

3.5. Naming

Every wrestling camel traditionally has to have a name. The name of the camel is written on a piece of cloth which is put on rear of the havut (packsaddle). Under the name there is his place name. At the bottom there is written Masaallah (May God protect him). The camels usually bear names chosen to reflect valour, fearlessness, well known trick, movie or TV stars, politicians, and world leaders by given their owners. Sometimes the spectators give a name it based on how it apply trick or behaves during the matches. For example in Incirlioiva county of Aydin province, there was an Okculu camel named by his owner, but later spectators liked his movements and tricks, so they named his as Kolombo by inspiring TV star of Detective Colombo showed between 1968-2003. After Colombo was died, he was buried in a grave by his owner.



Figure 54. "Pes" which some information about camel on.



Figure 55, 56. Grave of famous wrestler of Kolombo (above) (Gulsoken 2010) and one of the most succesful camel, Cilgin Hasan (below) (Foto Muhammet Foto)



Some famous wrestling camel names were Adali (Islander), Agir Dag (Heavy Mountain), Almanyali (German), Butun Dunya (Wide World), Cakal (Jackal), Camkiran (Pine Tree Breaker), Cayirli (A place name), Cesur Yurek (Brave Heart), Ceylan (Gazelle), Cilgin Hasan (Crazy Hasan), Civan (Adonis), Dagdeviren (Mountain Overthrower), Donmez (Undaunted), Dozer (Dozer), Felek (Destiny), Firat (Euphrates), George Bush, Gezer (Walker), Hasan Efe (A male name), Ipci (Rope Maker), Kankardes (Blood Brother), Kara Ali (Swarthy Ali), Kara Cennet (Black Heaven), Kara Murat (Swarthy Murat), Kara Osmanoglu Tulusu (Tulu of Kara Osmanoglu), Kara Sumbul (Black Hyacinth), Karakas (Black Eyebrow), Karka Kartali (Eagle of Karka), Kayacan (A male name), Keles (Baldhead), Kiris (Rafter), Kolombo (Colombo), Kuzey Ege (North Aegean), Onderhan (Leader Khan), One Minute, Ozen (A male name), Ozge (A female name), Poyraz (Borealis), Saddam Hussein, Saglikci (Sanitarian), Sahin (Falcon), Sahintepesi (Falcon hill), Sari Zeybek (Blond Zeybek), Serkan (A male name), Simsek (Thunderbolt), Sofor (Chauffeur), Takmakol (Artificial Arm), Talanci (Looter), Yarimdunya (Half the World), Yoruk Ali (Nomad Ali), Zumrut (Emerald). In 2007 at Selcuk, George Bush fought Saddam Hussein and they tied.



Figure 57,
58. Famous
wrestler of
Kolombo
(Gülsöken
2010).



Figure 58. Bergama camel wrestling (above ve below) (23 February 2014).

3.6. Equipment

The main equipment is 'havut' (packsaddle) and it weighs about 150-200 kg. The second important equipment is halter to lead and the control the camel. A number of accessories such as neck bead, haircloth, under stomach felts and etc. required for the wrestling camels. Ropes for tying the mouth are supplied from Tire (Izmir), haircloth and felt from Bozdogan (Aydin), Balikesir and Tire (Izmir), reed from Civril (Denizli) and woven clothes to be embroidered from Buldan (Denizli). The number of masters dealing with packsaddle and adornments for wrestling camels are rather few today.



Figure 59. A camel in arena.



Figure 60, 61. Some small bells called as zilgur (above) and “havan” on havut.



3.7. Ornaments

Ornaments and accessories are grouped into two categories as clothing and bells. The name of the competing camel is written on a piece of embroidered cloth called as 'pes' which is hung behind the packsaddle (havut). Pes gives some information about name, and place of the camel. Beneath the camel's name is also written the word of Masaallah (May God protect him). Some carpet or rug is put on havut and some body parts of the camel. Nomadic Yoruk Turkmen are very good at weaving rug (kilim), sack, saddlebag and haircloth besides carpet weaving. Production of some metal materials like rings and bells called as 'dizgor' are also hung on the camel. The rings and bells can be in different sizes from small size called as 'zilgur' to big size called as 'havan'. Glass beads made by prisoners are also largely used for camel embellish. Some neck collar, embroidered cloth and bags are also used). Mirrored blankets covering their backs and colourful pompoms woven into their tails are also used for ornament. They are provided from the settlements in the region of wrestles. All those equipment, ornaments and accessories are so expensive and can cost up 1.500 (500 USD) to 15.000 TL (5.000 USD).



Figure 62. A camel Canakkale, Bayramic camel wrestling druing parade (12 January 2014).



Figure 63. Camel owners in traditional clothes.

3.8. Owners

The owners of wrestling camels are almost all rural people. If the owner lives in a city, he should originally be from rural area. First of all the camel needs a shelter besides grassland for grazing which cannot easily be found in urban area. When his camel wins, the owner of a wrestling camel is invariably a celebrity in his village. He leads the whole village in celebration. Children admire him, men defer to him, and women compete for his attention. It is definitive that the owner gains prestige and respectability after his camel wins. The camel owners are also closely interested in 'yagli gures' (greasy wrestling) sport. They are either graduated from primary school or uneducated. They are also not rich people. Although camel rearing and wrestling are quite expensive, they do this business because of their strong traditional spirit. Hence they wear old traditional 'efe' or 'zeybek' cloths during wrestling events. Those old



Figure 64. Camel owner in traditional clothes.



Figure 65. A close bond between camel and owner.

traditional 'efe' or 'zeybek' cloths includes some pointed caps, traditional scarves worn around their necks, distinctive jackets, special trousers and long leather boots. Some camel wrestling enthusiasts who don't actually own camels themselves also dress in the same style. Except wrestling days, the other days they gather in some 'deveci kahvehanesi/kiraathanesi' (cafes for the camel owners). They spend their free time especially in winter season when rural people are generally free. The camel owners organize a Hali Gecesi (Carpet Night) party on the night before the big event. In this party camel owners meet with new friends and old acquaintances. They eat, drink, sing songs native to their particular region, dance, entertain their guests and also sell rugs at an auction. The most of the wrestling camel owners tend to look after his camel for the rest of his life. They consider the camel is like a member of his family.



Figure 66. YA close bond between camel and owner.



Figure 67, 68. A camel in arena (above) and a camel rolling on the ground against to itching (below)



3.9. Barn

Camels have separate barn split other animals up. The most important thing is to plan the barn higher because of his taller body than the other livestock. The door also should plan higher and wider in order to pass the camel safely. The barn should be ventilating well. Camel can be affected by cold wind and get cold, thus window should be left open in wind direction. The best ground is hard soil ground which is good for camel when he lies down. Camel feces does not take away from the barn in winter season, because feces keep warm the camel via microbial decomposition.





Figure 69. A camel in arena

3.10. Nutrition

In out of heat season the wrestling camels are usually fed by wheat, barley, oat, and vetch.. About food mixture of 1,5 kg is enough for one day. It also grazes outside. During heat and also wrestling season he loses his appetite and does not want to eat food. A lump of dough which is mixture of grains called as 'topak' is given to camels some days. It is important that rye is not given to the wrestling camels in heat season, because rye affects the camels out of heat season in a short time. After heat and also wrestling season, he lost his about 30% of weight and quite lean. His havut is taken out and some grains and pulses are given to him in order to put on weight again.



Figure 70. A camel in arena



Figure 71. Camels waiting for wrestling.

3.11. Beauty Contest

The camel beauty contests are organized in some countries such as Saudi Arabia and Gulf States. In those countries, camel fans are typically held alongside competitive camel racing which are big business rather than wrestling. A camel was sold for 2.7 million USD in United Arab Emirates in 2010. In a beauty contest one entrant of 10,000 camels was awarded for 10 million USD. The camel beauty contests are a new event in Turkey. The 1st camel beauty contest was organized in Selcuk the day before camel wrestling event in 2011. The 'Savas Arabasi' (Chariot) won the first place in the competition.



Figure 72. A camel is going to arena to wrestle.

Figure 73, 74. To slaughter is a ram before games is a tradation (above) and a shepherd dogs next to arena (below)



4. CAMEL WRESTLING

The camel wrestling events are real folk festivals. Those events are definitely not organized for self-interest of people and there are no cheating, match-fixing, or gambling. The events cover commercial activities, special rituals, traditions, costumes, music, and dance. Common people organize those camel wrestles and there are very good opportunities for cultural exchanges.





Figure 75, 76. The stone amulet dated in 2.000 B.C. found in Margiana, Sulekskaya, Khakassia Republic, Russia (Adamova 2004) (above) and the bronze plaque dated in 6th or 5th century B.C. found in Besoba kurgan, western Kazakhstan (Adamova 2004).



4.1. In Middle Asian Turks

Camel used to be so important among Turks and a male camel was a cult and totemic animal in Middle Asian Turkish Culture. Dede Korkut Oguzname was an important work for the history of Middle Asian Turkish culture. In the story of Bogac Khan of Dede Korkut Oguzname, Bayindir Khan wrestled to a bull and bugra (a male camel) twice annually, once in summer and once in fall. Even though origin of camel wrestling cannot be known definitely, it is believed that the origin goes back to ancient nomadic times of Turks in Middle Asia. The oldest evidence was a stone amulet dated in 2.000 B.C. found in



Figure 77. The bronze plaque dated 5th or 4th century was found in barrow burial at Filipovka, southern Urals, Russia (Adamova 2004).

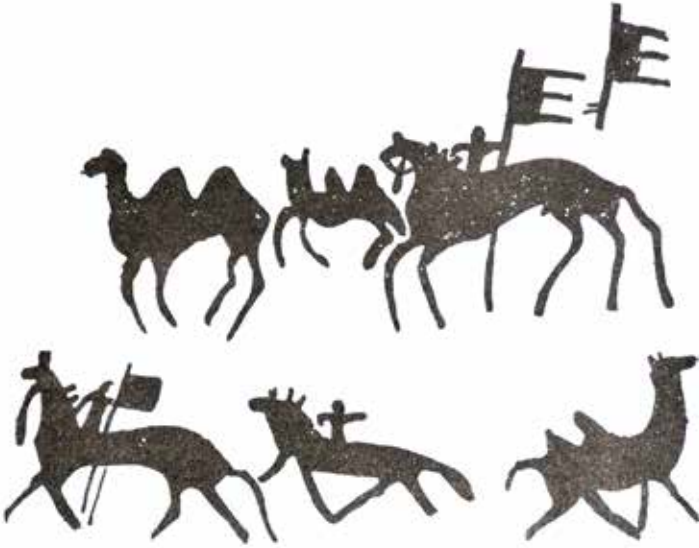
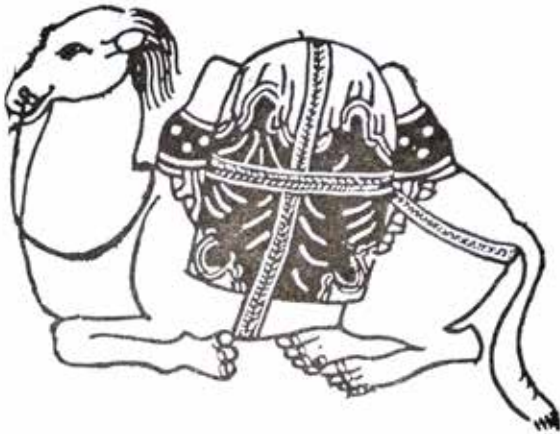


Figure 78, 79. Camel figures on Gokturk rock paints dated between 6-8th centuries (Ogel 2000) and a drawing on wall painting in Uigur Turks (below) (Ögel, 2000).



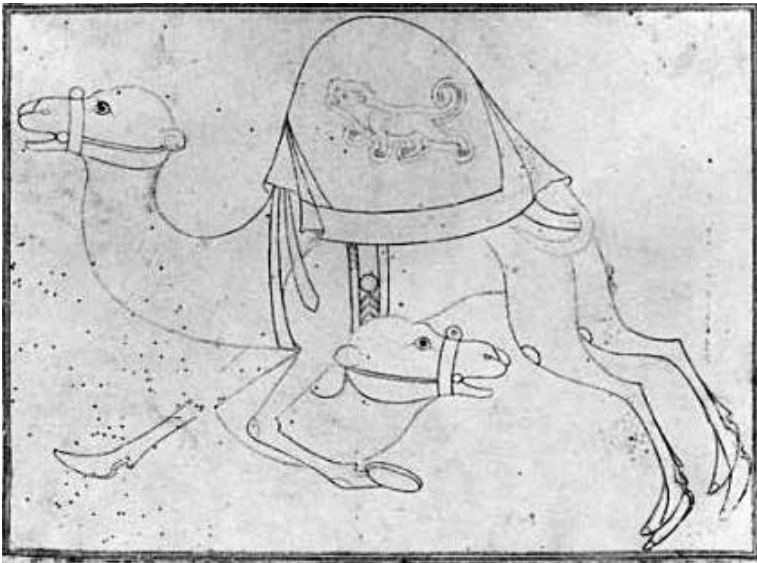
Margiana, Sulekskaya, Khakassia, Russia on which there were two two-humbed camels wrestling. The second oldest evidence was a bronze plaque dated 6th or 5th century found in Besoba kurgan, western Kazakhstan. The bronze plaque is now in Archaeological Museum of Ufa, Bashkortostan, Russia. On the bronze plaque two camels were at different heights, with one of them biting the hump of its adversary. Another bronze plaque dated 5th or 4th century was found in barrow burial at Filippovka kurgan, southern Urals. This bronze plaque is also now in Archaeological Museum of Ufa, Bashkortostan, Russia. On the bronze plaque two camels were biting the rear legs of them mutually. There are also some drawings, tinted drawings, and miniatures dated between 15th and 17th century made by Turkmen artists.



Figure 80, 81. Camel figures on wall painting in Uigur Turks ve yüklü bir deve (left and above) (Ögel, 2000).



Figure 82, 83. Camel wrestling miniatures dated in 15th century (above and below) (Adamova, 2004).



4.2. In Ottoman Empire

During Ottoman Empire camels were one of the crucial animals for different purposes such as food, military, sport, and trade purposes. Camels dubbed 'Military Heavy Transport Vehicle' was used up to 60.000 camels by the Ottoman Army. Although the existence of camels dating back to very early times in Turkey, there were not enough information about where, when and how camel wrestles originated. Evliya Celebi (1611-1682), the very famous traveller in Ottoman Empire lands in 17th century, wrote his experiences in the book of Seyahatname. The Seyahatname mentioned about places, people, cases, traditions etc. extremely detailed, but there is not information about camel wrestles. He mentioned about 'deve kirkici' (camel shearer) in Edirne region. Evliya Celebi also reported that camel feces was burned for cooking or getting hot in camel caravans.



Figure 84. Camel wrestling miniature dated in 17th century (Adamova, 2004).

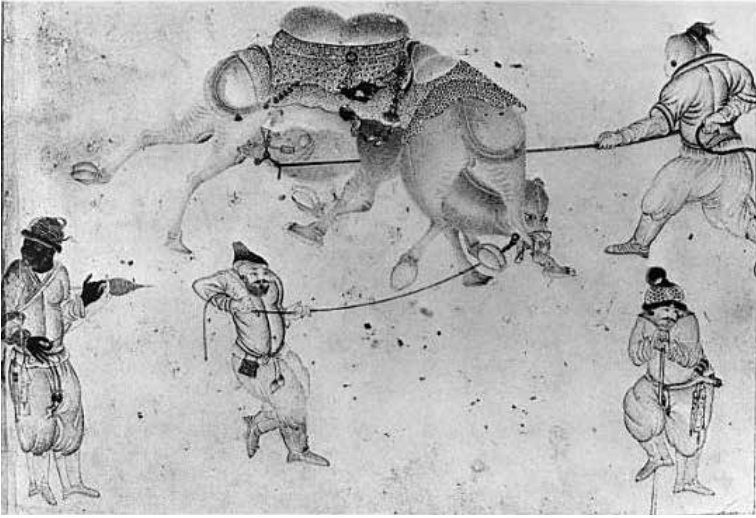


Figure 85, 86. Camel wrestling miniatures dated in 15th century (above and below) (Adamova, 2004).





Figure 87, 88. Camel wrestling miniatures dated in 16th century (above and below) (Adamova, 2004).

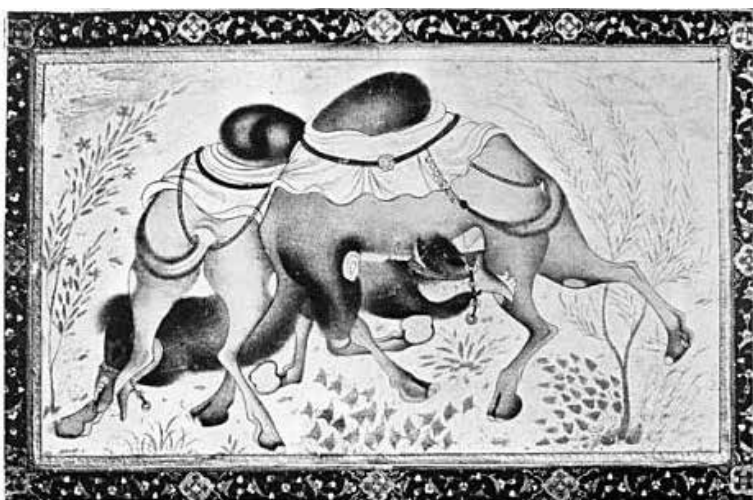




Figure 89, 90. Camel wrestling miniatures dated in 16th century in Uzbekistan, Buhara (above) (Anonim, 2014b) and camel wrestling miniatures dated in 15th century (below) (Adamova, 2004).

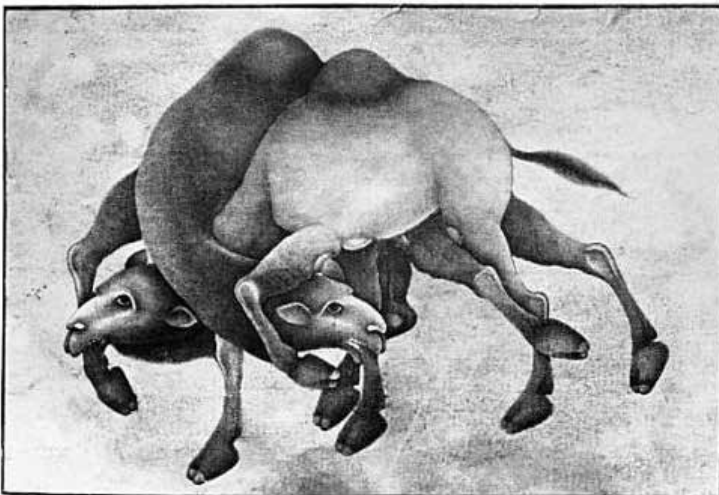




Figure 91, 92. Camel wrestling miniature dated in 16th century (above) (Adamova, 2004) and an engraving illustrating a camel caravan (below) (Çalışkan 2010b).





Figure 93, 94. Camel caravans near Canakkale, Cimenlik Castle (above) and Ankara railway station (below) (Çalışkan 2010b).





Figure 95, 96. Camel caravan in Izmir Port (above) and Atatürk together with camel owners during Independence War (below) (Çalışkan 2010b).





Figure 97, 98. A postcard for Aydın, Germencik camel wrestling in 1927 (above) a camel wrestling in İzmir, Konak, Sarikisla Square (below) (Çalışkan 2010b).



4.3. In Republic of Turkey

Armagan reported that during Ottoman King of Mahmud II. (Reigned 1808-1839) there were camel wrestles organizations in city of Tire, Izmir and it's near. A camel wrestling competition was reported that it took place in the village of Hidirbeyli, county of Incirlioiva, province of Izmir, about 200 years ago. During the early years of the Turkish Republic, the camel wrestling events were discouraged since it did not suit with the modern, European image to which the state aspired. But after a military coup dated 12 September 1980 it was revived as a tourist attraction and promoted Turkey's pre-Islamic heritage. Hence the number of camel owners has risen from 200 to more than 2,000 today.



Figure 99. A photograph in 1940s in Balıkesir, Gonen (Çalışkan 2010b).



Figure 100, 101. Camels during parade in Canakkale, Bayramic camel wrestling (12 January 2014).



4.4. Present

The camel wrestling events are real folk festivals. One day before wrestling a parade is organized by playing drum (Davul) and 'zurna' to 'Zeybek' tunes. The Zeybeks were a bandit community in Aegean region who are regarded as Robin Hood type heroes. Aegean region has a special music and culture associated with Zeybeks.

The day before the wrestling day a special meeting called as 'Carpet night' (Hali gecesi) is organized to enable the camel owners to meet.



Figure 102. Camels during parade in Canakkale, Bayramic camel wrestling (12 January 2014).



Figure 103, 104. Camels during parade in Canakkale, Bayramic camel wrestling (12 January 2014).



During wrestling events drum and zurna are continuously played. At the end of the wrestling events there are no financial reward. The prize of champion camel is usually a cheap machine-made rug. Roughly between 100-150 wrestling camels take part in these events, with each camel competing in only one match. Specific locations and popularity of the events are the main factors which affect which camels may participate in which areas. Another factor is transportation costs.



Figure 105. Camels during parade in Balıkesir, Burhaniye camel wrestling (4 October 2012).



Figure 106, 107. Camels during parade in Canakkale, Bayramic camel wrestling (12 January 2014).





Figure 108, 109. Camels during parade in Balıkesir, Burhaniye camel wrestling (above ve below) (4 October 2012).





Figure 110, 111. Tradational Zeybek Team (above) and Camel wrestling in Afhganistan without havut and mouth tie up (below) (Anonim 2014g)

4.6. Wrestling or Fighting?

Some people claim that camel wrestling is a camel fighting and barbaric like Spanish bullfighting but it not true. In bullfighting there are joy and pain together. At the end the bull is killed by a human. In Afghanistan and Pakistan there are also camel wrestling organizations but in those events camels do not wrestle, but they fight each other. The camels are not muzzled and wear 'havut', but in Turkey wrestling camels are securely muzzled. Hence they do not try to win each other but they try to bite and injury each other. In camel wrestling there is only joy. A human does not interfere the wrestling and kill the camel/s. The camels are wrestling with each other and besides that the camels with tight halters to prevent them biting each other before the game.





Figure 112, 113. Camel wrestlings in Afghanistan without havut and mouth tie up (above and below) (Anonim 2014g)





Figure 114, 115. Camel wrestling in Afghanistan without havut and mouth tie up (above) (Anonim 2014g) and a camel is going to arena to wrestle (below) (4 Ekim 2012).





Figure 116, 117. A sample of injury which is very rare during wrestlings (Canakkale camel wrestling, 19 January 2014)



4.6. Camel Wrestling Places in Turkey

Camel wrestling organizations are generally made in regions of Southwest Marmara, Aegean and West Mediterranean.

Çizelge 1. Places where camel wrestlings are organized (for 2015).

Province (Number of Place)	Place
Canakkale (12)	Ayvacık, Bayramiç, Biga, Büyüktepe, Çan, Çanakkale, Çardak, Ezine, Geyikli, Karacaören, Lapseki, Umurbey
Balikesir (7)	Altınoluk, Altınova, Ayvalık, Burhaniye, Karaağaç, Pelitköy, Sarıköy
Manisa (4)	Gökkaya, Gölarmara, Sarıgöl, Turgutlu
İzmir (12)	Armutlu, Bağyurdu, Bayındır, Bayraklı, Bergama, Harmandalı, Haydarlı, Kemalpaşa, Menemen, Pınarbaşı, Tire, Torbalı
Aydın (21)	Atça, Bağarası, Bozdoğan, Buharkent, Çine, Didim, Germencik, Işıklı, İncirliova, Köşk, Kurtuluş, Kuşadası, Kuyucak, Nazilli, Ortaklar, Osmanbükü, Selçuk, Söke, Turanlar, Yazıdere, Yenipazar
Denizli (4)	Acıpayam, Buldan, Sarayköy, Yenicekent
Muğla (13)	Bodrum, Dalaman, Gökova, Karaçulha, Konacık, Milas, Mumcular, Ören, Ortakent, Selimiye, Turgutreis, Yalıkavak, Yatağan
Antalya (2)	Demre, Kumluca



Figure 118, 119. A member of organizing committee providing accommadation for camel owners (above ve right).



4.7. Preparations

Wrestling organizing committee (WOC) which consist from several persons invites camel owners and negotiates about cost of truckage. The cost of truckage is not fixed and it depends on according to the camel's reputation. The WOC should pay a fair price for truckage of camels. If they agreed about the truckage, they prepare a contract and sign it for each side. The contract includes a fine against to the possibility of camel's absence. If owner of camel does not bring his camel, he must pay the fine which mentioned into the contract. The fine is about 3.000 TL (1.500 USD). WOC also promise to pay about 300-500 TL (about 150-200



Figure 120. The last controls before the game.



Figure 121, 122. People pray for games (above) and the last controls before the game (below)



USD) to the owners to provide their attendance. WOC also should find accommodation for camel, owner and 'savran' (caretaker of camel). If there is any cost for accommodation, WOC should pay the cost.

The day before wrestling, WOC assign a board of referees which consist of about three to five people. The one of them board of referees is field referee who manages the matches. And then they decide two



Figure 123. Agiz bagci guys in arena.



Figure 124, 125. Urganci teams on duty (above and below).



'urganci' groups. The urganci attendants carry a piece of rope to split up the locked and still camels. Each group consist of 10 to 20 attendants. Thirdly WOC determine 2-4 of 'agiz bagci' (muzzle guy) who fitted the camels with tight halters to prevent them biting each. Besides them WOC also determine 2 of 'agiz bagi kontrolcusu' (controller of muzzle) who check muzzle whether it is securely muzzled or not. The camel has to securely muzzled before the match. WOC also assign a 'cazgir' (announcer)). Cazgir is a very important because he is not only announcing the camels, but also he gives some details about camels, tells mania poems and makes jokes. The most colourful person of wrestling is the cazgir. WOC finally chooses enough ticket sellers and security personnel. Those attendants are announced by WOC the day before wrestling. WOC also organize 'Hali gecesi' (Carpet night) and a carpet is sold by auction to supply to pay some expenses.



Figure 126. Urganci team on duty.



Figure 127, 128. Resting after game (above) and spectators next to arena. (below).



4.8. Arbitral Tribunal

The wrestling day the board of referees is gathered in early morning and prepares a list to wrestle for a pair of camel. While deciding the pairs of camels, age of camel is ignored, but wrestling style and applying certain tricks are definitely considered. A weight difference of 150-200 kg can be tolerated. This list cannot be changed except by the board of referees. Sometimes the board of referees is gathered the day before wrestling to prepare the list to. All attendants should carry armbands in order to be known.



Figure 129. Arbitral tribunal arranging pairs.



Figure 130, 131. Scenes from Carpet Night in Izmir, Bergama in 23 February 2014 (above ve below).



4.9. Carpet Night

In the evening of the same day a special meeting is organized to enable the camel owners to meet. In this meeting a carpet is sold to provide financing the organization therefore this meeting is called as 'Carpet night' (Hali gecesi). In carpet night belly dancers also show their performance.



Figure 132. Scene from Carpet Night in Izmir, Bergama in 23 February 2014.



Figure 133, 134. Scenes from Carpet Night in Izmir, Bergama in 23 February 2014 (above ve below).



4.10. Rules

Even though camel wrestling has certain accepted rules, those wrestling rules can change by depending on places. Those rules generally cover some precautions in order camels not to be injured and hurt or rare. Camels are wrestled once a week and for 10 minutes. In 1980s, match time was 15 or sometimes 30 minutes for prominent pair of camels. This match time is decided shorter for 'Cengelci deve' (Camel that trip the other by using foot tricks). As a matter of fact, most games today end in a draw since the period was shortened.

In wrestling events, camels used to be categorized into four group including 'ayak' (lightweight), 'orta' (middleweight), 'basalti' (Light heavyweight), and 'bas' (Heavyweight) class. The camels are usually categorized into three group including 'ayak', 'basalti', and 'bas' class recently. Only Tulu camels which are older than 12 years old can wrestle in 'bas' (Heavyweight) category. Winning is into three ways by 'yikarak' (overthrowing),



Figure 135. Camels struggling to win (Bergama camel wrestling 23 February 2014).

'bagirtarak' (screaming), and 'kacirtarak' (bolting) his opponent. For overthrowing win they crash into each other and begin a shoulder-to-shoulder pushing match that resembles an outsize version of sumo wrestling. The screaming win is mostly seen when one of the camel applies trick of 'bag' (tie) or 'catalkapan' (fork). There is another winning by abandoning the owner of adversary camel. Sometimes a camel owner feels that his camel may lose the game, or the camel writhes with pain, and moreover to be injured or hurt. He throws a piece of rope to be abandoned, when the camel writhes with pain. Camels often cannot win the adversary camel in time and they tie up.



Figure 136. Camels struggling to win (Bergama camel wrestling, 23 February 2014).

4.11. Calendar

There are roughly 60-70 annual wrestling events each year. The preparing calendar of camel wrestles throughout the year is closely related with seasonal features. The wrestling season runs from December to March because of the biological properties of camels. The wrestling season is limited to the winter months when camels begin to rut during their mating period. Events are publicised via posters, telephone and internet. The great organizations are generally held in December and January because the wrestling performance of camels is at the highest level in these months. The dates of great wrestles are now adopted and do not change so much. For example Selcuk which is the biggest wrestling

2015 2016 Sezonu Deve Güreşi Takvimi

2015 2016 SEZONU DEVE GÜREŞİ TAKVİMİ

15.11.2015.....	DİKİLİ KIRATLI
22.11.2015.....	KARPUZLU..ZEYTİNDAG
29.11.2015.....	SÖKE..ATÇADERNEK..BAFA ..KOZAK..FURUNLU.Gölmamara
06.12.2015.....	KOÇARLI..OVAKENT.HARMANDALI.. GÜLLÜK..TURGUTLU
13.12.2015.....	DİDİM.KÖŞK DERNEK...
20.12.2015.....	BUHARKENT..SARIGÖL..AYVALIK
27.12.2015.....	AYDIN ..DİKİLİ..EZİNE.KEMALPAŞA
03.01.2016.....	İNCİRLİOVA ..ÖDEMİŞ.SARIKÖY.BODRUM ..MENDERES
10.01.2016.....	GERMENCİK.SARAYKÖY.MENEMEN .BAYRAMIÇ
17.01.2016.....	SELÇUK YATAĞAN ÇANAKKALE
24.01.2016.....	ATÇA..BERGAMA DERNEK..BAYINDIR .KUMLUCA,(.BAYINDIR CANLI)
31.01.2016.....	BAĞARASI..BURHANİYE..DEMRE
07.02.2016.....	KUŞADASI.YENİPAZAR.BERGAMA.BİGA
14.02.2016.....	KUYUCAK.TİRE.MİLAS..EDREMİT
21.02.2016.....	NAZİLLİ.SÖKE.ÇİNE
28.02.2016.....	BOZDOĞAN.TORBALI.SALİHLİ.ÇAN.KÖŞKERLER.POYRACIK
06.03.2016.....	KÖŞK.KARESİ.ALTINOVA KARACAÖREN
13.03.2016.....	ORTAKLAR.BAYRAKLI..BULDAN
20.03.2016.....	YAZIDERE. PINARBASI.GÖKKAYA

Figure 137. Camel Wrestling Calender for season of 2015-2016.

organization in Turkey is made in middle of January. The camels, owners and carers travel from one organization to another by trucks throughout the season. However, the organizations with social purposes and for help, the examples of which are gradually decreasing, are held as of the second week of March, when the wrestling will of camels begin to alleviate. Wrestling is always executed on Sundays. Thus, wrestling events are held in three, four or five distinct places in the region on the same day. However bad weather condition sometimes causes the wrestling events to be cancelled. Temperature is another determinative factor on wrestling events. Low temperatures are observed to have a negative effect on spectators. However, camels perform better in cold weather.



Figure 138. Camels struggling to win (Burhaniye camel wrestling, 4 October 2012).

4.12. Tricks

Tricks of wrestling camels are called as 'tek' (single), 'makas' (scissors), 'cengel' (hook), 'cirpma' (fling), 'bag' (tie), 'catal' (fork), 'kol atma' (leg put), and 'kol kaldirma' (leg lift). Generally a wrestling camel performs only one of them. Rarely some camels can perform two or more tricks. The board of referees pay attention to trick type of the camel while choosing the pairs. The board of referees mind to match camels which apply the same trick. Also camels are divided into two groups as 'sagci' (right side attacker) or 'solcu' (left side attacker) by depending on attacking to the adversary from right side or left sight.



Figure 139. Camels struggling to win (Burhaniye camel wrestling, 4 October 2012).



Figure 140, 141. Camels struggling to win (Burhaniye camel wrestling, 4 October 2012).



Tek (single) trick: When two camels are side by side, a camel attacks to leg/s of the adversary camel by his head and force to him to fall down or flee. According to the camel wrestling experts the most effective trick is 'tek' (single) trick. If a camel knows this trick, he wins.

Makas (scissors): Both camels push each other by using their heads and havuts and they rotate about the axis. This trick generally ends with tied.

Cengel (hook): A camel trips to the adversary camel by using his leg and forces to him to squat. It is divided into two groups as 'duz cengel' (straight hook), and 'bicak cengel' (knife hook). Bicak cengel is fairly dangerous trick which can break the leg, so a cengelci deve (hooker camel) is the most unwanted wrestling camel type. Camel owners do not want his camel to wrestle to a 'cengelci deve' (hooker camel) because of possibility of leg breaking.



Figure 142. Camels struggling to win (Burhaniye camel wrestling, 4 October 2012).



Figure 143, 144. Tam bag trick during camel wrestling in Canakkale, Umurbey (9 February 2014)..



Cirpma (fling): When a camel applies the trick of 'bag' (tie), the other camel pull his head, gets away from the trick, and then he put his neck on the neck of the other camel.

Bag (tie): A camel pins the opponent's head with his knees and forces to him to squat. It is divided into two groups as 'tam bag' (full tie) or 'catal bag' (fork tie) and 'yarim bag' (half tie)

Catal (fork): Both camels put the head of adversary camel his body. Generally the camel applied the trick later wins.

Kol atma (leg put): A camel put one his leg on head of adversary camel and forces to him to squat.

Kol kaldirma (leg lift): A camel applies the trick of Kol Kaldirma, but the other camel pushes and fall him down.



Figure 145. Spectators next to arena (Umurbey Deve Güreşleri, 9 February 2014).



Figure 146, 147. Camel Wrestling in Canakkale, Can (17 February 2013).



4.13. Arena

The wrestling areas are mostly on flat soil football fields or mini football stadiums which are usually amphitheatre-shaped. If there is not available football field for the venue, any field can be used for wrestling unless there is a cliff near to field. An asphalt, concrete, gravel, hard core, or lawn wrestling areas are never preferred just in case camels are injured or hurt. Basically two factors are determinative on the choice of location of the venue. The space should bear the characteristics to enable camels to wrestle and spectators to watch wrestles. They are generally areas with soil ground and where a broad plain is surrounded by slopes. The slopes surrounding the area function as a stand for spectators. The wrestling places are rather unkept since they are used once annually. In Turkey, Selcuk has the largest wrestling area where is about 25.000 spectators of capacity. In spite of in small amounts, rain makes the ground slippery and may cause camels to be hurt or injured. Therefore, rainy weather has a negative effect on wrestles and in such cases, wrestles are cancelled.



Figure 148. Arena of Izmir, Bergama.



Figure 149, 150. Arena of Balikesir, Burhaniye (above) and Canakkale, Karacaören Village.



4.14. Spectator

Camel wrestling matches are quite different from other sporting activities inasmuch as they attract people of all ages. Sometimes settlements seem as deserted because everyone is at the camel wrestling event. These features are not encountered within the framework of any sporting activities in Turkey. Camel wrestles quite differentiate from other sporting activities also as an event gathering spectators composed of children or the elderly and women or men. Hence a number of female spectators are encountered in the wrestles. This is another characteristic which is not observed in many sporting games in Turkey. Enthusiasts are mostly poorer people from Turkish villages or towns. A major part involved in the sport worry that this group, who form the heart and soul of the tradition, are being priced out.



Figure 151. Women spectators.



Figure 152, 153. Spicy sausage from camel meat.



In the morning, crowds of people begin to come to the wrestling arena by trying to get a good viewing place for themselves and their families. There are no sitting places for spectators on the slopes mostly covered by bush or grass. Hence spectators bring their cushions, footstools and portable chairs etc. with them. It is not easy to move due to the picnickers on the slopes and the crowd. Fans jostle for a view at the front and lay out their picnics and the scent of sizzling 'deve sucugu' (camel-meat sausages). Deve sucugu is the main dish eaten at the event. Another essential element is the drinking of raki (a traditional Turkish alcoholic spirit. Sometimes the firms producing raki undertake the sponsorship of wrestles. The Aegean folk tunes of Zeybek and Harmandali are played in traditional forms by playing 'zurna' (a traditional Turkish clarion) and 'davul' (a traditional Turkish drum). On the other hand the sound of the boom of the commentator is heard.



Figure 154. Spicy sausage from camel meat.

Spectators from the surrounding villages generally attend in whole family groups. At the same time, fans come to arena by cars, pick-ups, trucks, buses, minibuses and tractors. They are parked and the top of the area of those vehicles are used as small restaurants for eating while people watch the event from a high up position. It can be called as “Health and Safety nightmare” in British terms. The activity among the spectators begins to focus on the field of the competition. During this entire hubbub, loudspeakers blare the names of the favourite camels. Camel owners begin to bring their camels into the vicinity of the wrestling arena. Not only local people, but also native or foreign tourists are spectators of camel wrestling events. For example some big organizations like Selcuk are watched by foreign tourists. They mostly came from the western culture presented countries. For example English, Dutch and American tourists constituted approximately half of the foreign visitors in Selcuk Camel Wrestling Festival in 2009, but unfortunately there were no visitors from Arabian countries, where camel contests were popular.



Figure 155. Spectators playing together.

4.15. Culture

Lots of traditions, dances, songs, poems, proverbs, idioms, sagas, tales, and riddles can often be seen in Turkish culture related with camel wrestling, because Turks deal with camels wrestling for thousands years. Bridal dowry used to be carried on a camel in wedding ceremony until 21st century. There are plenty of folk dances related with camels. The Deve Oyunu (Camel Dance) is performed in province of Elazig, Erzurum, Isparta, Izmir, Kars, Siirt, and Sinop. There are also



Figure 156. Traditional Yoruk shawl in orange and white colours.

different dance types in some provinces by including Kor Deve (Blind Camel) in Adiyaman, Yedideve (Seven Camels) in Gaziantep, and Camala in Kirklareli. In a quatrain male likened as a drake:

Deve sunadir (Camel is drake)

Koyun berber (Sheep is barber)

Keci cercidir (Keci is huckster)

At server (Horse is leader)

In nomadic Yoruk culture, another function of wrestling events is finding a mate for boys. The boys and girls generally cannot communicate in villages because of strict traditions and wrestling arenas is a good place to find a mate for boys. Sometimes parents come to wrestling events to find a 'hayirli bir kismet' (A nice girl) for their son.



Figure 157. Musicians collecting tips from fans.

4.16. Economy

Camel wrestling events contribute to economy via camel raising, feeding, equipment, accessories, ornaments, clothes and finery, eating, drinking, wages etc. A camel consumes approximately five tons of feed in a year. Depending on the feed type, the annual feeding costs of camels vary between 2,000 and 5,000 TL. Savrans receive a salary varying between 500 and 1,000 TL. Hence only the caring cost of a camel varies between 8,000 and 17,000 TL yearly excluding its accessories. These rich elements and relationships create an almost special wrestling economy and cultural fabric that



Figure 158. Women spectators.



Figure 159, 160. Women spectators (above) and men spectators for barbecue (below).



supports each other's existence. Some camel wrestling organizations or association use income of wrestling events for establishing for school, bridge, village hall or holy places. In addition, beyond being traditional events, camel wrestling events are a rich attraction for international tourism. Tourism economy in Turkey, the policy of combining festivals and tourism began to become evident after 1980s.



Figure 161. Spectators at Canakkale, Can camel wretsling.

The quality of wrestling has increased recently with the contribution of very well-bred camels. This has meant an increase in the cost of buying and caring for these camels. Camel wrestling is no longer a sport for low income people. The beginning price for a wrestling camel is between 20,000 and 50,000 TL (7.000 and 17.000 USD). Superstars like 19 years old Cilgin Hasan, in Burhaniye county of Balikesir province, can fetch up to 300,000 TL (100.000 USD). On the other hand, if a camel is badly injured or retired because of age, he is generally sent to be slaughtered. Carcass yield is about 50%.



Figure 162. Spectators.

4.17. Cultural Tourism

The tourism is to travel for knowing, seeing and learning for new things. Unlike 3S (sea, sun, sand) tourism, people travel for cultural tourism for knowing, seeing and learning for new historical, ancient, cultural, traditional or national items. In this frame, the camel wrestling events can be evaluated in cultural tourism. Touristic places are generally close to big cities. The organizers of this kind of events try to draw domestic and even some foreign tourists, so that they can become professionally organized festivals. Small organizations like camel wrestling events in small settlements arrange those events for social reasons. Those camel wrestling events are largely held in villages and small towns and far away from commercial concerns. The small organizations try to preserve their traditional identity and struggle to survive if they only have a rural audience. For example Selcuk Camel Wrestling Festival is attend by about 20.000 domestic and foreign tourists, because Ephesus ruins are in Selcuk and very close to wrestling arena which is on the main road of Aydin-Izmir.



Figure 163. Some images in Association of Bergama Camel Breeding Culture and Camel Wrestling.



Figure 164, 165. Men spectators for barbecue (above) and young camel wrestling fans (below).



5. CONCLUSIONS

In an organization, cost of transport the camels, accommodation and catering of owners and savrans, arranging a 'Hali Gecesi' (Carpet Night) Party, embellishing of camels, wages of 'hakem heyeti' (board of referees), 'urganci's, 'agiz bagci's, 'agiz bagi contolcusu's and 'cazgir' are important expenses factors. Even though all cost is expensive about wrestling camels, the most of the camel owners are low or middle income people. Another problem is import of the camels from Iran, Afghanistan etc., because those camels are not native domestic animals of Turkey. The imported camels which



Figure 166. Men spectators for barbecue.

are mostly 7-8 years old are very expensive, in addition owners have to spend too much money, until they reach to wrestling age of 12-13 years old. In some provinces, the governorship usurped 40-50% of ticket income gained by camel wrestling organizations or association. In the past, communication was a horrible problem for camel owners, but nowadays mobile phones and internet solved this problem. Another benefit is about following weather forecasts easily, because wrestles were cancelled in cases of unfavourable weather



Figure 167. The Mayor of Canakkale, Ulgür Gokhan, with camel owners.

conditions in the past. In spite of economic, social and cultural advantages of camel wrestling events, there have been no institutions or organizations, which are interested in and plan camel wrestles at regional or national scale in Turkey. All events are organized by local instrument excluding Selcuk events. The most common problem is to overcome the financial problems of the continuing these wrestling events. At the present situation local municipalities help those events but it is not enough but in fact that many settlements are organized wrestles with financial difficulties. The state should support those events.



Figure 168. Gendarme forces for security.



Figure 169. Spectators.



Figure 170. Musicians collecting tips from fans.

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