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## **WRESTLING LODGE CULTURE IN THE OTTOMAN STATE AND EDIRNE SHEIKH CEMALEDDİN WRESTLERS LODGE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Wrestling is the national sport of the Turks and has maintained its importance from Central Asia to modern times. When the Turks came to Anatolia, they brought wrestling with them. Here, the Central Asian Turkish wrestling tradition took a new form by being influenced by the Persian wrestling tradition. In this way, the Turkish wrestling lodge culture came into being. As a result, wrestling huts were opened in the period of the Anatolian Seljuks and Principalities. The tradition of wrestling huts continued with the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans established wrestling lodges in Bursa, Edirne, İstanbul, Manisa and throughout the Ottoman territory. Professional wrestlers were trained in these lodges for centuries. Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge is one of these institutions. According to Evliya Çelebi Seyehatnamesi and Ottoman archival documents, the lodge, which was an important institution for wrestling in Edirne, was still in operation for a long time. There are many official records of the lodge from the period in question. Detailed information about the lodge can be obtained from these records. In light of the analyzed primary philological sources, the importance of the lodge in the background of Edirne wrestling becomes understandable.

**Keywords:** Wrestling lodge, wrestling history, wrestling in the Ottoman Empire.

**INTRODUCTION**

Wrestling has been a sport that has never lost its importance in terms of Turkish history and culture. It has also been involved in every stage of socio-economic and socio-cultural structure. In ancient Chinese sources, travelogues, epics and palace chronicles, it is stated that wrestling was practiced in the process of preparing for war, during festivals and wedding festivities (Özcan, 1996). In all geographies where Turks lived, wrestling and being a "pehlivan" was seen as an honorable behavior. Turkish society has characterized wrestling, wrestling places and wrestling squares as 'worship, place of worship, and battlefield' (Türkmen & Demirhan, 2014).

The Turkish Language Association (TDK) defines wrestling as "The attempt of two people to bring each other down by force and various games within certain rules" (TDK, 2023). In a broader definition, wrestling is defined as a sport in which two opponents of the same weight class perform on the wrestling mat within the rules set by the World Wrestling Union to win in terms of points or touches, etc. (Turgut, 2022).

Turks carried Turkish wrestling to Anatolia. According to the records, wrestling was an active sport during the Anatolian Seljuk and Principalities Period. During these periods, wrestling activities were carried out through wrestling lodges (Yozcu & Demirkol, 2019). However, after coming to Anatolia, the Central Asian wrestling tradition was influenced by the Persian wrestling tradition. This is exemplified by the Persian origin of the word "pehlivan/pehlevan", which is used today instead of wrestler in folk language. In addition, wrestling lodges started to be opened in different parts of Anatolia, modeled after the Persians. During the Seljuk Period, there are four lodges in Anatolia. These lodges are Ahi Pehlivan Zaviyesi, Keçeci Baba Zaviyesi, Pehlivan Gazi Zaviyesi and Dede (Camel) Baba Zaviyesi (Özdemir & Çalışkan, 2018). The wrestling lodge culture continued after the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. The first wrestling lodge of the Ottoman Empire was established by Orhan Bey in Bursa. Later, Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Tekke was established by Murat I (1363-1389). Depending on the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, the number of wrestling lodges increased. As a matter of fact, Şüca Pehlivanlar Lodge was established in Istanbul by Mehmet II (Fatih). Another wrestling lodge opened in Istanbul was the Pehlivan Demir Wrestlers Lodge. Yet another wrestling lodge was opened in Manisa (Aras, 2015). Unlike the lodges of the Seljuk Period, wrestling lodges spread throughout the Ottoman geography and contributed to the development of wrestling (Gül, et al., 2019). Wrestling lodges differ from each other in terms of physical and wealth. These lodges are established in three ways. These are: Lodges established by the ruler, lodges established through private foundations (Gölbaşı, 2018) and lodges established by the people in small settlements (Soyer, 2004). Wrestling lodges are generally institutionalized structures.

In our study, the Lodge of Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers is analyzed. In the Evliya Çelebi Seyahatname<sup>1</sup> and Ottoman archival documents, there is a lot of information about the Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge

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<sup>1</sup> Evliya Çelebi lived between 1611-1684, was born in Istanbul, visited the Ottoman Empire and some of its neighbors and wrote his work called "Seyahatname". For detailed information see: Tezcan, N., & Tezcan, S. (2011). *Evliyâ Çelebi*. TC Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayımları.

founded in Edirne (Çelebi, 2006b; BOA C.EV. 127-6345; BOA C. MF.23-1140; C. MF.46-2283; C. MF.101-5047; C. MF.143-7107; C. MF.156-7756; BOA AE.SOSM. III. 6-379; BOA TS.MA.e/767-2). These sources provide detailed information about the Tekke. According to this information, this tekke existed for many years. A foundation was established to cover the income of the lodge, which was still used for training wrestlers for a long time. There was a lot of correspondence with the central administration about the management of this foundation. In addition, archival documents contain information about the administrators of the lodge and the wrestlers in the lodge.

The aim of our study is to examine the wrestler lodge culture in the Ottoman Empire and the Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Lodge. For this purpose, the literature, the Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi, who lived in the period in question, and Ottoman archival documents are examined.

#### **WRESTLING LODGE CULTURE IN OTTOMAN**

The functional importance of lodges and dervish lodges in the Ottoman state structure is quite great. Especially since the foundation years of the state, they played a great role in the spread of Islam (Ocak, 1981) both on the borders and in the conquered regions and in the development of the region. It is known that there were also wrestling lodges established to train wrestlers in the same structure as the lodges and zawiyyas with religious missions (Çelebi, 2006a). It is seen that before the Ottomans, activities related to the sport of wrestling in Anatolia in terms of cultural structure were carried out through such lodges. Especially established from the Seljuk period: Ahi Pehlivan Zaviyesi, Keçeci Baba Zaviyesi, Pehlivan Gazi Zaviyesi and Dede (Deve) Baba Zaviyesi are examples of this. These lodges continued their activities in wrestling sports in their regions for centuries and laid the foundation for the wrestling lodges that would later be established in the Ottoman Empire (Özdemir & Çalışkan, 2018).

It is known that two sporting lodges were established in Bursa during the reign of Orhan Gazi for the first time in the Ottoman Empire. The lodge of the shooters is located in the Arrow Square. The Wrestlers Lodge, on the other hand, was located in an area near the Bey Palace (Kahraman, 1995) inside the castle and became the first Ottoman wrestling lodge where wrestling activities were conducted. This lodge is also referred to as Küste-giran (Wrestlers Lodge) in Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatname (Çelebi, 2006a).

Another wrestlers lodge established in Bursa is the Bursa Ahmed-i Dâ'î Wrestlers' Lodge. According to Türkmen, this tomb is different from the first wrestlers lodge established by Orhan Gazi. As evidence of this, Türkmen cites the fact that, according to records, the two lodges were located in different parts of the city. While the first lodge built by Orhan Gazi was located in the castle and near the Bey Palace, the lodge of the Ahmed-i Dâ'î wrestlers of Bursa is located in the Ahmed-i Dâ'î district, from which it takes its name. This situation shows that there were two separate lodges in the city of Bursa (Türkmen & Demirhan, 2014; BOA, İE. EV: 39/4515).

Another wrestling lodge that was established during the Ottoman period and continued its wrestling-related activities is the Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge (Çelebi, 2006b). This lodge was the second lodge established in the Ottoman Empire (Kahraman, 1995). Since the subject of our study is related to this lodge, it will be described in detail in the following sections.

The third wrestling lodge established during the Ottoman Empire was the Pehlivan Şüca Lodge, which was founded by Fatih Sultan Mehmet after the conquest of Istanbul. The lodge is located near Küçükpazar, close to Unkapanı Street (Zorba, 2014). The other lodge for wrestlers in Istanbul is Pehlivan Demir Lodge. It is located near the Şebsafâ Kadın Mosque at the foot of Zeyrek Yokuşu. The fifth wrestling lodge built in the Ottoman Empire was located in Manisa (Aras, 2015).

These lodges, where wrestling was practiced in the Ottoman Empire, form the main basis for today's Turkish wrestling. Wrestling lodges spread throughout the Ottoman geography: Akhisar, Amasya, Ankara, Baghdad, Balıkesir, Bergama, Bursa, Jeddah, Diyarbakır, Edirne, Gelibolu, Aleppo, Alexandria, Maraş, Konya, Kütahya, Latakia, Mecca, Damascus, Tire, Tokat, Urfa, Skopje, Yenice and other cities. The Lodges were instrumental in the nation's adoption of wrestling and its transmission to the present day (Begiç 2021).

Wrestling lodges had highly functional structures and formed the basis of today's wrestling clubs (Gölbaşı, 2018). The physical conditions of wrestling lodges may also differ depending on their size and wealth. Some lodges have a meeting hall, an outdoor sports field, a library, a museum, a soup kitchen, and an area built for important people to watch the competitions. The administrators who head the lodges are called "sheikhs" in today's sense and the wrestling athletes are called "murids". The criteria to become a sheikh are success, intelligence, and being of age (Soyer, 2004).

According to archival documents from the Ottoman Empire, great importance is attached to wrestling by state rulers. Presence wrestle matches were often organized by rulers and statesmen. According to the archival documents we examined, the fees paid to the victorious and defeated wrestlers and the prayers of the wrestlers are part of the presence wrestle. As a rule, the losing wrestler and the prayer leader received half of the fee paid to the winner. These Presence wrestle competitions were held regularly and the fees were officially recorded. The fact that wrestling matches were held regularly and recorded is indicative of the value placed on wrestling in the Ottoman Empire (BOA. TS.MA.d 2352: H, 09.12.1117 (AD 24.03.1706); H, 29.12.1118 (AD 03.04.1707); H, 05.11.1119 (AD 28.01.1708); H, 07.11.1119 (AD 30.01.1708)).

Within the Ottoman Empire, wrestling lodges spread almost throughout the Ottoman geography. If the lodges were built by the ruler, the cost of these lodges was covered by the ruler's endowments, and if the lodge was built by a private endowment, the cost was covered by the income of that endowment (Gölbaşı, 2018). However, in settlements with small populations, instead of large multifunctional wrestler lodges, smaller structures were built, the costs of which were borne by the local population. Wrestlers lodges were very effective socio-cultural

institutions during the establishment and rise of the Ottoman Empire. Even during the Tanzimat period, they continued to exist, although they were not as active as before. However, during the collapse, they lost their social functions and began to operate in a misappropriated manner (Soyer, 2004).

One of these lodges is Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge. Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge has been an important institution for the continuation of the Turkish wrestling tradition in Edirne.

## METHOD

This study has been prepared to examine the culture of the Wrestling Tekkesi in the Ottoman Empire and the Edirne Şeyh Cemaleddin Tekke. Our research was conducted using the document analysis method. Document analysis method is defined as the analysis of written materials containing information about the situation to be investigated (Aydın & Kılıç Moçan, 2019). In this study, primary sources such as books written during that period and Ottoman Archive Documents, along with secondary sources such as academic studies prepared on this topic found in the literature, were used to investigate the topics under consideration.

## FINDINGS

### **Wrestling Lodge Culture in Ottoman**

**Wrestlers** The functional importance of lodges and dervish lodges in the Ottoman state structure is quite great. Especially since the foundation years of the state, they played a great role in the spread of Islam (Ocak, 1981) both on the borders and in the conquered regions and in the development of the region. It is known that there were also wrestling lodges established to train wrestlers in the same structure as the lodges and zawiyyas with religious missions (Çelebi, 2006a). It is seen that before the Ottomans, activities related to the sport of wrestling in Anatolia in terms of cultural structure were carried out through such lodges. Especially established from the Seljuk period: Ahi Pehlivân Zaviyesi, Keçeci Baba Zaviyesi, Pehlivân Gazi Zaviyesi and Dede (Deve) Baba Zaviyesi are examples of this. These lodges continued their activities in wrestling sports in their regions for centuries and laid the foundation for the wrestling lodges that would later be established in the Ottoman Empire (Özdemir & Çalışkan, 2018).

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<sup>2</sup> Wrestling made in the presence of Ottoman rulers is called "presence wrestle". For detailed information, see: Mert, Ö. (1991). II. Abdülhamit, güreş ve güreşçiler. Ondokuz Mayıs University Journal of Education Faculty, 6(1), 167-177.

in the Ottoman Empire (BOA. TS.MA.d 2352: H, 09.12.1117 (AD 24.03.1706); H, 29.12.1118 (AD 03.04.1707); H, 05.11.1119 (AD 28.01.1708); H, 07.11.1119 (AD 30.01.1708).

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#### **Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge**

One of the most important wrestling lodges in the Ottoman Empire is the Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge. The lodge is also known as Pehlivan Cemaleddin Lodge and is mentioned in the records of Hazîne-i Evkâf-ı Humâyûn under the name "Wrestlers Duâci Zâviyesi" (Bâdî, 2014).

There is no clear information about the exact date of the founding of the Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge. However, it is believed that it was founded by Sultan Murat I (1363-1389) after the conquest of Edirne (Gül et al., 2019). After Sultan Murat I built the lodge, he appointed Başpehlivan Cemaleddin Efendi as its sheikh (administrator). Pehlivan Cemaleddin gave wrestling lessons and trained wrestlers in this lodge for many years. Therefore, the lodge was named after Pehlivan Cemaleddin. When Cemaleddin Efendi passed away, he was buried in the lodge. The lodge is located in a place called Bayırbaşı, formerly Mevlânâ Veliyyüddîn and nowadays in Metropolit neighborhood, on Kule Kapısı Street, number thirty-three (Bâdî, 2014; Şimşek, 2008). Since the building material of this lodge was wood, it has not been preserved until today. Today, this place is known as Pehlivanlar Cemetery in the area called Keleici. Evliya Çelebi states in his Seyahatname that the tekke was located near Ali Pasha Bazaar, on the inside of Balıkpazarı Gate (Türkiye Gazetesi Publications, 2004). Evliya Çelebi gives detailed information about the tekke of Edirne wrestlers in his work:

*"Küste-gîrân yani Güreşçiler Tekkesi, Seyyid Cemaleddin Sultan âsitanesi: Fetihten sonra Gazi Hudavendigâr İslâm askerleri canlansın ve renklensin için bu tekkeyi gürbüz, genç, güçlü kuvvetli,*

<sup>3</sup> The Tanzimat Period: It starts with the declaration of the Ottoman Sultan's Tanzimat Decree on November 3, 1839 in the Ottoman Empire, there are different opinions about when the period ends. For detailed information, see: Coşkun Çakır, "Test of Turkish Intellectuals with the Tanzimat: Studies on the Tanzimat and the Political History of the Tanzimat Period", Turkish Studies Literature Journal, Vol 2, Number 1, 2004, 9-69, p. 9.

*yıgit ve korkusuz kahraman erler için yapmıştır, ama gerçekten de İslâm askerine revnak vermiştir.*

*Hâlâ burada olan Rumeli yiğitleri toplanıp haftada bir kere cuma günüde bir araya gelip 70-80 çift yağa bulanmış geçmişin [158b] sahibkiranları (hüküm-darlar!) gibi Rüstem gibi cesur ve güclü genç pehlivanlar birbiriyle el sıkışıp el öptükten sonra koç gibi baş tokuşup gülbâng-ı Muhammedi çekilip muhabbet meydanında güreş tuttuklarında insan hayran kalıp susup boynunu büker. Gerçekten de pîr-i perver-leri olan Hazret-i Mahmud Piryâr-ı velînin mübârek ruhunu yâd edip bütün Müslüman gazileri gaza yoluna teşvik ederler. Bu tekke zemini siyah taş gibi yağı ile bulanmış bir arbede meydanıdır. Ehil olmayan adamlar o tekkeye ayak bassa yağı üstünde tepesi üzere gelip kendi kendine yenilir, ama iki yiğitlik meydam sahibi yiğitler yalnızak ve gömeksiz bu meydanda iki üç saat bu yağı üzere elbeşti ederler. Değme hâl ile birbirine galip gelemez 360 çeşit pehlivanlık hileleri yaparlar. Elbette bir oyun ile hasminin ya kesebend hanesinden ya künde atmasından veya şirazîden veya asmanışından veya sarmadan veya kesmeden veya ters kepçeden veya kavak dikmeden veya taşlamadan veya Cezayir sarmasından veya karakuşdan veya havalamadan veya kiretten veya boğmadan veya sıkıdan veya kapanatmadan, ..... (1.5 line is blank) ..... Kısacası bu yazılan güreşçi hilelerinden birini yaparak rakibinin bir yerini gafil yakalayı ondan atıp intikam alır. Zira peh-livanlar arasında bilek gücü erliktir, ama hile yapmak erlikten erliktir. Zira atalar dilinde "Erlik on, dokuzu hile" demişler. Niceler buna zâhib olmuşlar. "Belî on, dokuzu da hiledir" demişler. Gerçekten de savaşçı olup yiğit olanlara silâhşörlük ve güreşçilik çok çok gereklidir. Zira Peygamber Efendimizin sünnetidir ki Hazret-i Mefhar-i Mevcudat Ebu Leheb ve Ebu Cehil melunlar ile güreşip ikisini de taşlamadan yenip pis suratları mezbahada kan yalamış azgin köpek ağızına dönmüşler idi. Heybetli ve salâbetli bir sanattır. Bu Edirne Tekkesi'nde yaz ve kış yüz çift pehlivan dervişler hazır olup Piryâr-ı Velî töresi üzere idman ederler. Bu tekke gerçi kârgir kubbeler ile yapılmış değildir ama bakımlıdır. Pek çok odaları, mutfağı ve biraz bahçesi vardır. Ve meydanında geçmiş zaman pehlivanlarının demirden yayları, okları, gürzleri ve türlü türlü seçilmiş kemankeş darbaları, salıkları, zerdeste ve matrakları, kırkar ellişer okka gelir camuz derilerinden yağlı kisbetleri ve nice türlü pehlivan âletleri muhabbet meydanları üzerinde asılıdır. Bu güreşçiler dergâhı Ali Paşa Çarşısı yakınında Balıkpazarı Kapısı'nın iç yüzünde kurulmuş Güleşciler Tekkesi'dir (Çelebi, 2013)."*

Evliya Çelebi explains in his Seyahatname that "Küste-gîrân", the Lodge of Wrestlers - Seyyid Cemaleddin Sultan - was founded by Sultan Murat I to keep the dynamic structure of the army intact and alive. It also mentions in the Seyahatname that he had the Lodge built for robust, young, strong, powerful, brave and fearless heroic soldiers. It is further said that the Lodge really benefited the soldiers.

The Seyahatname goes on to say that on Fridays 70-80 pairs of wrestlers wrestle. During this wrestling match, the wrestlers chant "Gülbâng-ı Muhammed", shake hands, kiss hands and bump heads. The expression "Gülbâng-ı Muhammed'i" here means loud, enthusiastic shouting, the soldiers' shout during the battle and the call to prayer (Üçer & Sarı, 2020). It is said that the wrestling rituals of the aforementioned young and strong wrestlers,

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which aroused admiration among the spectators, attracted all the Muslim veterans present to such an extent that they encouraged them to follow the path of war.

They would also commemorate the blessed spirit of "Hazret-i Mahmud Piryâr-ı Veli", who was considered a master by the wrestlers in these rituals. It would be important for our study to mention Hazret-i Mahmud Piryâr-ı Veli here in a few lines. According to the sources, Hazret-i Mahmud-i Piryâr-ı Veli lived in the 13th-14th cent. Century. He was probably born in Khiva in Khwarezm region in 1255 and died in the same city probably in 1322. According to the surviving sources, he was an important Pehlivan of that time with a strong spiritual aspect. He wrote his own poems. In the area where he lived, he was also considered a "wise man" and stories were written and miracles were attributed to him. He became such an important person for wrestlers that his name was mentioned in wrestling matches and various rituals in Ottoman geography (Mukaddem, 2022). The person in question is frequently mentioned by Evliya Çelebi when he describes the wrestlers lodges.

According to the information in the Seyahatname, wrestling in this lodge lasts at least two to three hours. During this time, the wrestlers use 360 different wrestling techniques to defeat each other. Some of these techniques are "Kesebend Hanesi, Künde Atması, Şirazî, Asmanış, Sarma, Kesme, Ters Kepçe, Kavak Dikme, Taşlama, Cezayir Sarması, Karakuş, Havalama, Kiret, Boğma, Şıkıdan, Kapan Atma" and the opponents are victorious if they use any of these techniques during the wrestling. Evliya Çelebi called these wrestling techniques as wrestling tricks. However, he explains that these trick techniques are more necessary than strength and must be used in order to be victorious. It is reported that in Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge trained hundred pairs of wrestlers in summer and winter.

Finally, Evliya Çelebi mentions the physical characteristics of the lodge. According to him, the building is not masonry, but it is well preserved. It has more than one room. It also has a kitchen and a small garden. He explained that on the walls of the building, weapons used during the war can be seen in addition to the materials used by the wrestlers in wrestling.

In Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatname, in the section "Visiting places of the Awliya of Edirne", the second throne center of the Ottoman Empire, information is given about the lay wrestlers of Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge (Çelebi, 2013)."

*"Güleşçiler Tekkesi içinde Küştégirân yolunda Hazret-i Pîr Mahmud-ı Yâr-ı Velîfukarası, Hakk yoluna yakın, cennet burcunun hüması, Şeyh Seyyid Cemaleddin. Yine bu tekke içinde Pehlivan Demir ustası, arslanlar arslanı, güreşçiler önderi, düvâz-deh-i yâr-ı dilîrân, Hazret-i Er Sultan, bir günde Fatih Mehmed Han huzurunda Azerbaycan şahı Uzun Hasan'nın yetmiş adet seçkin pehlivanına galip gelen Er Sultan'dır ki Sultan I. Selim Han huzurunda dört arslam da ikişer parça eden Pehlivan Demir'in ustası olan Er Sultan'dır (Çelebi, 2013)."*

According to Evliya Çelebi, the tomb of Sheikh Seyyid Cemaleddin, the founder of Edirne Wrestlers Lodge, is also located in Wrestler's Lodge. It is also said that other wrestlers were buried in this lodge. The grave of Er Sultan, the founder of Pehlivan Demir Tekke in Istanbul and the master of Demir Pehlivan, is also in this Lodge. He even mentions a story about this wrestler. Er Sultan, who is described in praise, defeated 70 elite wrestlers of Uzun Hasan, the Shah of Azerbaijan, in one day in the presence of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. In the presence of Sultan Selim Khan, Er Sultan broke four lions into two and witnessed the time of three important rulers of the Ottoman Empire (Mehmet the Conqueror, Bayezid II and Selim I). It is clear that Er Sultan, who wrestled in the presence of these rulers, was an important figure both in terms of practicing his profession as a wrestler and his fame. The fact that the wrestler in question is buried in this lodge means that he was trained here or worked as a sheikh (trainer).

As far as we can find in the Ottoman archives, the first information about this lodge is found in an entry in the Edirne Land Registry dated 29.12.973 (AD 17.07.1566) with the number BOA TTd 370. In the document, the lodge is registered as Küste-giran Zaviyesi among the 24 lodges in Edirne (BOA TTd. 370, p.6). The second entry appears 13 years later in a decree to the Edirne cadi dated 27.07.986 AH (AD 29.09.1578) (BOA A. {DVNSMHM.d /35-678}). According to this ruling, the wrestlers of Dergâh-i Muallam had previously drafted a petition regarding the lodge. According to this, the administration of the wrestlers lodge and the school in Edirne belonged to the wrestlers, but the management of the lodge was given to a foreigner who was still in charge. Due to the negligence of this foreigner, the institution in question is facing ruin and it is therefore demanded that this task be transferred to "Recep Nam Pehlivan". Moreover, a noteworthy point in the continuation of the document is the statement that whoever the wrestlers in Istanbul want as administrator should take over the office. The most general conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the wrestling lodges in Istanbul had supremacy over the wrestling lodges in Edirne.

Since we have no meaningful data about the lodge from H. 27.07.986 (AD 29.09.1578) to H. 02.07.1166 (AD 05.05.1753) (BOA TS. Mad. 7737), no information about the institution could be found in this period. However, available documents indicate that the lodge was active between H. 1166 (AD 1753) and H. 1317 (AD 1899/1900). Moreover, in the work *Riyâz-i Belde-i Edirne* by Ahmed Badi Efendi, who lived between 1839-1910, it is mentioned in the founding documents of the lodge that the institution in question was rebuilt after its destruction in 1890 (Bâdî, 2014).

As a result of the archival research, nearly 20 documents about the Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge were identified. According to the official Ottoman archival documents, there were various correspondences between the lodge and the central administration. Most of these correspondences relate to administrative appointments at the establishment of the lodge (BOA C.EV. 127-6345; C. MF.23-1140; C. MF.46-2283; C. MF.101-5047; C. MF.143-7107; C. MF.156-7756; AE.SOSM. III. 6-379; TS.MA.e/767-2). However, two of them refer to the lodge 's annual budget report (revenues and expenditures) (BOA TS. Mad. 5617; 7737). These documents show

that the lodge supported itself financially through foundations<sup>4</sup>. It is also clear from these documents that the foundation in question was established in the Veliyüddin district of Edirne (BOA C. MF 156-7756).

The study of the documents related to the above lodge and foundation has revealed that in the case of the wrestling lodge foundation, as in the case of other lodges and foundations, there is a team of administrators. These wrestling lodges were also headed by an administrator called Sheikh (BOA C. MF 46-2283). It is also known that there was more than one official. It has already been mentioned that there was a foundation associated with the Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge. Again, the person or persons who managed the foundation were called trustees<sup>5</sup>. According to the documents in question, there were collectors called "cibâyet/cabi" in this foundation (BOA C. MF. 23-1140). At the same time, there are also officials such as "muallim" and "school khalifesi" and "mutasarrif". Looking at the salaries of these officials between 1166 AH (AD 1753) and 1317 AH (AD 1899/1900), we find that the endowment administrator was served with two Akçe per day. In addition, the collector was paid one Akçe per day, the khalifa of the school was paid one Akçe per day, the teacher was paid four Akçe per day, and a mutasarrif was paid 40 Akçe per month. It is also known that one official held more than one position in the foundation (BOA TS.MA.e/767-2).

From the documents studied, it appears that the officials appointed to establish the wrestling lodges were selected from the wrestlers who were members of the lodges and that this was a tradition. However, it was observed that sometimes these officials were chosen from people outside the lodge and that there were problems with the functioning of the foundation (BOA A.{DVNSMHM.d /35-678). According to another document, there were some irregularities in the administration of the foundation attached to the lodge, and this situation was not welcomed by the officials and ringers in the lodge, so the people in question were removed from the administration and other wrestlers were put in their place.

Another Ottoman archival document from Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge also provides important information about the Lodge. The document in question dates back to the reign of Mustafa III (AD 1757-1774). The document shows the income and expenses of the Sheikh Cemaleddin Foundation between October 29, 1753 and September 24, 1756. Of particular interest is the part that mentions the food and beverage expenses of the pehlivans in the lodge. The total food expenditures for three years amounted to 1800 Akçe. In addition, according to the document, the sheikh in the lodge, that is, the trainer in today's sense, received 1920 Akçe for his work.

<sup>4</sup> "The word "Foundation/Vakf" as a term means "allocating one's property in perpetuity for a religious or social purpose." Foundations are institutions that provide various social and public services as religious and social institutions. For detailed information, see: Buluş, A. (2009). A historical example of non-governmental organizations: Ottoman foundations. *Journal of Social Economic Research*, 8(16), 20-36.

<sup>5</sup> The dictionary meaning: the word trustee, who takes care of a place, works on behalf of someone else, shows friendship and has similar meanings, and as a term, it refers to a person who takes responsibility for the functioning of the foundation in accordance with the conditions written in the foundation charter of a foundation and the Shariah provisions. This duty and authority is called *velayet* (*vilayet*), and assignment is called *televiyet*. In the Ottoman state, the term "*taliyet*" was generally used for this task. For detailed information, see: Öztürk, N. (2006). *Mütevelli. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Vols. 32). Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları.

The document also mentions the salary of the servant in the lodge. Other information in the document is the value of the total assets of the foundation and the income that accrues to the foundation (BOA, TS.MA. d. 5617). Like other archival documents, this document shows that the lodge in question was an important institution. Evliya Çelebi and Ottoman archival documents show us that the Lodge of the wrestlers of Sheikh Cemaleddin was an institution that contributed to wrestling for many years.

### **CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION**

Wrestling is a sport that has always played an important role in Turkish sports history. The adventure of Turkish wrestling, which began in Central Asia, spread to almost all areas to which Turks immigrated. After Turks came to Anatolia, they replaced the old Central Asian traditions of wrestling with Persian traditions. From that time on, wrestling became a more disciplined sport. According to the information from the archives, wrestling was practiced in wrestling lodges during the time of the Anatolian Seljuks and the Principalities. There are wrestling lodges that were established from this period and continued their activities in the Ottoman Period.

The Ottoman Empire attached great importance to wrestling since its foundation and the lodges where wrestling was practiced were founded by the ruler himself. The first wrestling lodge in the Ottoman Empire was established by Orhan Gazi in Bursa. The most important account of this tekke is found in Evliya Çelebi Seyahatname. In the Seyahatname, the lodge is mentioned under the name Küste-giran (Wrestlers Lodge). Another lodge was established in Bursa under the name Ahmed-i Dâ'î Wrestlers Tekke. There is important information about this lodge in Ottoman archival documents. After the conquest of Edirne in the Ottoman Empire, the Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge was established in Edirne by Murat I (1363-1389). After the conquest of Istanbul by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, wrestling lodges were also founded in Istanbul. The first wrestling lodge to be established in Istanbul was the Pehlivan Şüca Lodge. The other lodge was the Pehlivan Demir Wrestlers Lodge. The other lodge that was recorded by the Ottoman Empire was the Manisa Wrestlers Lodge. Along with these lodges, many wrestling lodges were established in the Ottoman geography. Thanks to these lodges, wrestling got an institutional structure.

Wrestling lodges can be physically different from each other. The wealth of lodges is usually directly proportional to their financial income. The administrators at the top of these institutions are called "sheikhs" and the wrestling athletes are called "disciples." The most important criterion for becoming a sheikh, i.e. a manager, is to be successful, intelligent, and of legal age. Wrestling lodges were founded by the Ottoman ruler or by private foundations. There are also lodges that were founded by the population in smaller settlements. The wrestling lodges existed until the end of the Ottoman Empire. These lodges were effective institutions both in socio-cultural terms and in terms of the development of wrestling.

Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Tekke is one of these lodges. The lodge in question is recorded in the records of the Hazîne-i Efkâf-ı Hümâyûn of the Ottoman state under the name "Wrestlers Duâci Zâviyesi". Edirne Sheikh

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Cemaleddin Lodge was founded by Murat I (1363-1389). It was named after Pehlivan Cemaleddin Efendi, who was appointed the supreme wrestler after its establishment. Pehlivan Cemaleddin Efendi trained many wrestlers in this lodge. When he passed away, he was buried in the lodge. Various sources, especially Evliya Çelebi, provide information about the location of the lodge.

One of the most important sources that provides us with detailed information about Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge is Evliya Çelebi Seyahatname. In his travelogue, Evliya Çelebi describes in detail the location of the lodge, that its founder was Murat I, that the purpose of establishing the lodge was to train strong soldiers and wrestlers, and that the lodge was a wrestling lodge. It also gives information about how many wrestlers stayed in the lodge and the physical condition of these wrestlers. One of the most important information in the travelogue is that 70-80 wrestlers held their religious rituals and wrestled once a week on Fridays. Another important point described here is how many hours the wrestling lasted and 360 different techniques were used in wrestling.

Evliya Çelebi mentions this lodge of wrestlers again in another section of his Seyahatname. In this section, he mentioned the wrestlers whose tombs were found in the lodge along with Sheikh Cemalaeddin.

Among these wrestlers was Er Sultan. Er Sultan was the teacher of Demir Pehlivan, the founder of Istanbul Pehlivan Demir Tekke. Er Sultan wrestled in the presence of Mehmet the Conqueror, Bayezid II and Selim I and achieved great success. The fact that the wrestler in question is buried in this lodge indicates that he grew up in this lodge or that he was a sheikh (coach).

Other records belonging to Edirne Şeyh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge are Ottoman archival documents. There are many official documents belonging to this lodge in the Ottoman archives. The earliest archival document we have reached is the Edirne Land Registry Book dated H. 29.12.973 (AD 17.07.1566). In the document, the lodge is mentioned as Küste-giran Zaviye among the 24 lodge in Edirne. In other documents, the management of the lodge, its budget, location, the salary of the officials and food and beverage etc. Information on expenses is available. According to another source, Ahmed Badi Efendi, it was mentioned that the institution was rebuilt in 1890 as a result of its destruction.

Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge has existed for many years and has contributed to the development of Edirne and Turkish wrestling. By examining Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatname and Ottoman archival documents from the period, it becomes clear that the wrestlers lodge was a place with an institutional structure. Important wrestlers who were trained in Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge participated in the peace wrestling organized by rulers and statesmen. Therefore, it can be said that Edirne Sheikh Cemaleddin Wrestlers Lodge is also in the background of the value given to wrestling in Edirne from the past to the present.

## SUGGESTIONS

This study has been prepared with the aim of examining the wrestling lodge culture in the Ottoman Empire and the Edirne Şeyh Cemaleddin Lodge. In the Ottoman Empire, there are other wrestling lodges like the Edirne Şeyh Cemaleddin Lodge. However, many lodges in the Ottoman Empire, such as wrestling lodges or sports lodges (like the archery lodge), have not yet been studied. Furthermore, comparing these historical institutions with their counterparts in other countries will contribute to the literature.

## ETHICAL TEXT

This research was prepared on the subject of Turkish sports history using the document analysis method. For this reason, ethics committee permission was not obtained. In this article, journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics rules, journal ethics rules were followed. Responsibility for all kinds of violations related to the article belongs to the authors.

**Authors Contribution Rate:** In this research, first author's contribution rate to the article is 70%; second author's contribution rate to the article is 30%.

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