

# CAMEL CULTURE IN TURKEY AND THE LEGAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE CAMEL WRESTLING UNION

Aysun KOÇ<sup>1</sup> and Devrim ERTÜRK<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Adnan Menderes University, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Efeler, Aydın, Türkiye

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Dokuz Eylül University, Efes Vocational School, Selçuk, İzmir, Türkiye

## ABSTRACT

Camels have been used in transportation in Turkey as in all geographies. The struggle of male camels with each other has been turned into wrestling matches over time and has gained an institutional dimension for people who own camels. As a result of the matches, camel culture has been able to reproduce itself today. Camel wrestling has become widespread and increased its popularity in the western coast of Turkey and in the provinces close to the coast. With the spread of camel wrestling especially after 1980, a demand and search for institutionalisation and organisation emerged. In this process, coffeehouses where camel owners came together had an important function. These coffeehouses, which can be regarded as the first step of the organisation, have first transformed into associations and then into a union with the merging of the associations. The organisation steps of camel wrestling, which has been maintaining its traditional structure for centuries in Turkey, were taken in 2012 and 2013. As a result of the corporate identity and organisation requirement of camel wrestling, which continues to exist in the coastal provinces of the Aegean, Marmara and Mediterranean Region, the "Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union (CCCWU)" was formed in 2012, with the merging of eight camel wrestling associations in Aydın. The Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture has been established by five camel culture associations in İzmir with the decision of the Governorship of İzmir dated 31.10.2013 and numbered 96462 and the union started to work with the approved statute. The CCCWU gained its legal structure after it was approved by the Aydın Governorship Animal Protection Board in 2014.

This study examined the content and principles of the regulations and by-laws of both unions and evaluated their structure in terms of animal rights and animal welfare. The study also aimed to reveal the contributions of the legal qualities of camel wrestling, whose sustainability is important due to its traditional structure, to camel breeding and organisations. Furthermore, the study aimed to analyse the representation capability of the union by involving the members of the Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board, who are on duty since the establishment of the union, in the study. Our study aimed to reveal the economic structure of the unions and its contributions to the economy of camel culture by including the budget information of the unions (income-expense table and donations, membership fees, income from wrestling, etc.).

**Key words:** Camel associations, camel owner coffee houses, camel ownership, camel wrestling, organisation, union

Camel ownership and camel wrestling have emerged in time in Turkey and have gained a traditional structure and become a cultural element. Camel wrestling has primarily become an organisation which has ensured the continuation of camel existence by maintaining camel culture in Turkey.

The functioning of the traditional structure has continued with its own traditional rules. With the spread of settled life and entertainment culture, the camel, which has primarily been used in transportation, has started to be a part of camel wrestling, which involves the leadership struggle

among male animals in a controlled way. With the impact of the solidarity observed in the Yörük (nomads in Anatolia) culture, camel wrestling has been organised for charity (Kılıçkiran, 1987; Ertürk, 2019; Yılmaz *et al*, 2014).

Camel wrestling organisations which has a history of about two hundred years in Turkey (Kılıçkiran, 1987; Ertürk, 2017; Çalışkan, 2010) started to increase their popularity in the 1980s. This period, which corresponds to a period in which traditional elements started to gain importance on a world scale, revealed the demand and necessity of organisation in the camel and camel wrestling culture (Ertürk, 2018).

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It has been observed that the coffeehouses, where camel owners came together, were the basis of the organisation demand for camel breeding and camel wrestling. Prior to organisation period, camel owner coffeehouses emerged as areas where camel owners came together, talked about their common problems, and socialised (Ertürk, 2018). In parallel with the increase in interest in camel wrestling after the 1980s, the number of people engaged in camel breeding has also increased. This increase has led to being organised under an association (Ertürk, 2018; Çalışkan, 2016). The need for organisation that emerged over time facilitated the transition from coffeehouse to association. The social sphere formed around the camel culture showed itself on the way to become an association both with its internal dynamics and as a result of the need to gain a legal identity.

As a result of the necessity of forming an organisation of camel wrestling, which continues its existence in the provinces of the Aegean, Marmara and Mediterranean Regions of Turkey and preserves its traditional structure for centuries, two unions were established in 2012 and 2013. With the merging of eight camel associations in Aydın, "Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union (CCCWU)" was established in 2012 and gained its legal entity as a result of the approval and enforcement of the Aydın Governorship Animal Protection Board in 2014 (Anonymous, 2020a). In Izmir, five camel culture associations merged and established the "Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture" with the decision of the Governorship of İzmir, dated 31.10.2013 and numbered 96462, and the union started to act with the approved statute structure (Anonymous 2020b). The study aims to examine the legal and socio-economic structure of the unions established in 2012 and 2013 and to evaluate the steps taken towards institutionalisation, their contribution to the camel breeding and camel wrestling culture.

## Materials and Methods

The fundamental material of the study is the regulations and sub-regulations of the Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union and the association charter of the Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture, which was established in Izmir in 2013 and started its activities<sup>1</sup>. In order to add detail to the work, the bylaws of the accessible camel culture associations, which are affiliated to the Union, were also included in the work. The structure and content of the regulations were evaluated in terms of the Animal Rights

Law. The study also includes information on the administration and supervisory board since the establishment of the CCCWU and the budget of the union between 2012-2020.

## Findings

For the first time in the world, the foundations of modern animal breeding were laid in England in 1760, and the organisations for those breeding animals were established by the state in Turkey with the "Islah-ı Hayvanat Kanunu (Animal Breeding Law)" in 1926 (Pekel and Ünal, 1997). In the years following the establishment of the breeders' union in Turkey in 1926, many animal associations were established and they carried out their activities.

The Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union in Aydın, the foundations of which were laid with the establishment of an association, was approved by the Aydın Governorship Animal Protection Board and started its activities. The purpose, scope, basis and definitions section of this regulation includes a definition in Article 1- (1): "Protecting camels within the framework of Animal Protection Law and arranging camel wrestling organisations within the framework of this regulation." The Board of the Union determined the principles under eight titles as "Observer Regulation, Mouth Strap Controller Regulation, Mouth Treadmill Regulation, Chief Tether Regulation, Discipline Instruction, License Regulation, Referee Regulation, Presenter (Cazgır) Regulation." In addition, the principles and objectives of the Regulations of the CCCWU also constitute the legal structure of the union. Today, the union in Aydın continues its activities actively with its 135 delegates, and based on the regulation, three people from each association participate in the union elections (Anonymous, 2020a).

With the decision of the Governorship of İzmir, dated 31.10.2013 and numbered 96462, the Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture was established as the second union. In Article 2 of the Regulations, the aim of the union was stated as follows: "The Union was established to gather everyone who is interested in camel breeding and wrestling, which is the most deep-rooted cultural tradition in our country, under one roof and thus to ensure unity and solidarity, and to support people and organisations working on this culture and other organisations and volunteers who are interested in this culture." The Regulations

1. Aydın Governorship Provincial Animal Protection Board Decision, Date: 12/02/2012, Decision no: 21.



Fig 1. Camel Wrestling: A view of traditional camel wrestling in Turkey (Devrim Ertürk's archives).

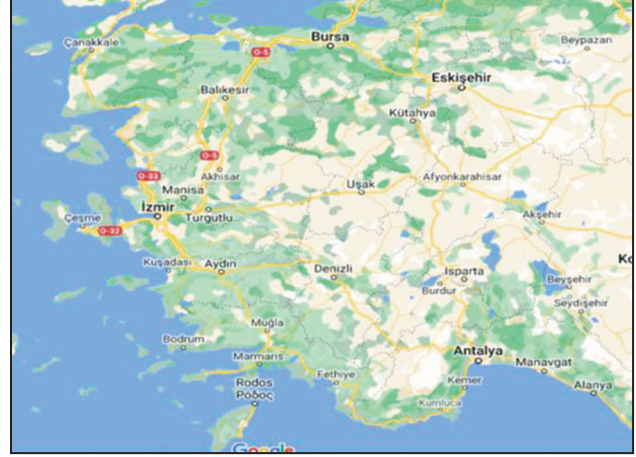


Fig 3. Cities where Camel Wrestling activities are organised.



Fig 2. Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union's Logo

include the organs of the Union, the membership conditions, the duties and powers of the board of the union, and the procedures and principles. In the Regulations, it is stated that three members representing each association participate in the elections of the union, formed by the five camel culture associations, and the first member needs to be the president of the association and the other two should be the delegates of the union.

### The Regulation of the Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union in Aydın

With the approval of the Union Regulation by the Aydın Governorship Animal Protection Board in 2014, the infrastructure and principles of the camel breeding and camel wrestling culture gained a legal entity. The regulation of the union includes fifteen main sections.

The purpose, scope, basis and definitions section of this regulation is stated in Article 1-

(1) as follows: "Protecting camels within the framework of Animal Protection Law and ensuring the organisation of camel wrestling activities within the framework of this regulation." The legal basis of the regulation is the Law on Associations<sup>2</sup> dated 4.11.2004 and numbered 5253, the relevant provisions of the Turkish Civil Law<sup>3</sup> dated 22.11.2001 and numbered 4721, the Animal Rights Law<sup>4</sup> No.5199 and dated 2.6.2004, the relevant provisions of the Law on Charity<sup>5</sup> dated 23.6.1983 and numbered 2860, the relevant provisions of the Veterinary Services, Plant Health, Food and Feed Law<sup>6</sup> dated 11.6.2010 and numbered 5996, and the relevant provisions of the Regulation on the Transport of Animals and Animal Products in the Country<sup>7</sup>. In Article 3 of the Regulation, the Union determined some provisions regarding the rules and operation of camel wrestling with this regulation text. In the second part of the regulation, the concepts of "Camels, Camel Breeding and Camel Breeding in History" have been explained in detail. In the third chapter, detailed information was given on how camels are grouped, classified, and rated. Section 4 states that the Union consists of ten different bodies: General Assembly, Board of Directors,

2. Official Gazette, Date: 4.11.2004, Issue: 25649, Law No: 5253. Law on Associations.
3. Official Gazette, Date: 22.11.2001, Issue: 24607, Law No: 4721. Turkish Civil Law.
4. Official Gazette, Date: 01.07.2004, No: 5199, Issue: 25509, Animal Rights Law.
5. Official Gazette, Date: 01.07.2004, No: 5199, Issue: 25509, Animal Rights Law.
6. Official Gazette, Date: 11.06.2010, No: 5996, Issue: 27610, Veterinary Services, Plant Health, Food and Feed Law.
7. Official Gazette, Date: 17.12.2011, Issue: 28145. Regulation on the Transport of Animals and Animal Products within the Country.



Supervisory Board, Disciplinary Board, Arbitration Board, Inspection Board, Health Board, Board of Referees, Matching and Classification Board, and Education Board. In the fifth section, a definition was made for the “Organisational Structure and Duties and Authorities of the Disciplinary Board”. Section 6 includes the Organisational Structure, Duties and Powers of the Arbitration Board. In the seventh section, the organisational structure of the Inspection Board, its Duties and Authorities, and the Procedures for Assignment are explained in detail. “The Organisational Structure, Duties and Powers of the Health Board and Appointment Procedures” and the Organisational Structure, Duties and Powers of the Board of Referees and the Procedures for Appointment were explained in Section 8 and 9, respectively. In Section 10, the organisational structure, duties and authorities of the Matching Board and the Appointment Procedures have been explained. Section 11 includes information on the “Organisational Structure, Duties and Powers of the Board of Education”. The organisational structure, duties and powers of the Investigation and Observation Board are shared in Section 12, while section 13 gives information about the “Definition, Duties and Powers of Chief Referee, Midfield Referee, Scorekeeper, Field Commissioner, Mouth Fastener, Mouth Fastening Controller, Tether/ Separator, and Presenter.” In Section 14, the “Form and Conditions of Arrangement of Camel Wrestling Organisations” are explained and in Section 15, a legal definition has been made under the headings and subheadings of “Various Provisions, Enforcement, and Execution.”

Apart from the main regulation of the Union, there are also regulations and disciplinary instructions that set the principles under eight headings, namely “Observer Regulation, Mouth Fastener Controller Regulation, Mouth Treadmill Regulation, Chief Tether Regulation, Discipline Instruction, License Regulation, Referee Regulation, and Presenter Regulation”, which were prepared in accordance with the Animal Protection Law No. 5199. According to the laws, the Union determined “The procedures and principles regarding the registration and visa procedures of the institutions and organisations organizing the protection of animals, observing animal rights and wrestling.” According to the main regulation of the Union and Article 11 of the Animal Protection Law; “Animals cannot be trained in ways that exceed their natural capacity or strength, or cause them to injure, cause unnecessary pain, or

encourage them to bad habits. It is forbidden to make animals fight with another living animal. Traditional demonstrations for folkloric purposes, which do not include violence, can be organised by obtaining the approval of the Ministry and obtaining permission from the Provincial Animal Protection Boards.” These regulations and instructions are concluded with the statement that they are executed by the CCCWU and the Provincial Representatives of the Union (Anonymous, 2020a).

### **The Statutory Rules of the Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union in Aydın**

In the statutory rules, the foundation purpose and administration of the Union and the steps to be taken for the establishment of the Camel Culture Research Institute, which aims to spread the camel culture, are explained<sup>8</sup>. This has been detailed under the heading of the studies to be carried out by the Union. Founding associations of the Union (Aydın Camel Breeders’ Association; Incirliova Camel and Camel Wrestling Lovers Association; Çanakkale Çan District Camel Owners, Organisers and Audience Association; Çanakkale Ezine Camel and Camel Wrestling Lovers Association; İzmir Bergama Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Association; Kuşadası Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Association; Balıkesir Burhaniye Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Association; Association for the Protection, Research and Promotion of Domestic Breeds-Manisa). In the statutory rules, the union’s bodies, membership conditions, duties and powers of the general assembly, and procedures and principles are specified (Anonymous, 2020a).

### **Board of Directors and Supervisory Board Members of the Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union in Aydın**

Members of the Union Administration and Supervisory Board, which continue their activities in their third term (2012-2021), are shared in the tables below.<sup>9,10,11</sup>

The Union has member associations in provincial and district centres where camel wrestling takes place. Considering the geographical distribution of the forty-five associations that are members of

8. Official Gazette; Date: January 8, 2018, Issue: 30295

9. Table 1 and 2 Source, CCCWU Board of Directors; Date 26.05.2013, Decision no: 8

10. Table 3 and 4 Source, CCCWU, Board of Directors; Date 29.05.2016, Decision no: 24

11. Table 5 and 6 Source, CCCWU, Board of Directors; Date 29.12.2016, Decision no: 48

the Union, it is seen that there are 14 associations in Aydın, 8 in İzmir, 3 in Manisa, 1 in Denizli, 7 in Balıkesir, 6 in Çanakkale, four in Muğla, and 2 in Antalya. The associations within the union are those in the provincial and district centres where wrestling takes place. It can be said that depending on the places where wrestling takes place, camel owners formed associations, which were then affiliated with the Union for representation.

Our data also revealed that the members who can be present in the Union's administrative and supervisory boards are also from the geographical regions where wrestling takes place. It can be said that those who are capable of representation in the Union are mostly camel owners, and those who are not camel owners are closely related to the camel breeding and camel wrestling culture.

**Table 1.** Board Members in the First Term (2013-2016).

Name/Last name	Connection with Camel Culture	Hometown
Metin ÇETİN	Camel Owner	Efeler/AYDIN
Hüsamettin BAŞOĞLU	Not a Camel Owner	Kemalpaşa/İZMİR
Murat AYDINLIGİL	Camel Owner	Burhaniye/BALIKESİR
Aytekin KAYA	Camel Owner	İncirliova/AYDIN
Recep PULAT	Camel Owner	Çan/ÇANAKKALE

**Table 2.** Supervisory Board Members in the First Term (2013-2016).

Name/Last Name	Connection with Camel Culture	Hometown
Necati SARICA	Camel Owner	Demre/ANTALYA
Ercan SEVİNÇ	Not a Camel Owner	Bergama/İZMİR
İbrahim GÖR	Camel Owner	Gömeç/BALIKESİR

**Table 3.** Board Members in the Second Term (2016-2019).

Name/Last Name	Connection with Camel Culture	Hometown
Aytekin KAYA	Camel Owner	İncirliova/AYDIN
Halil AĞLAR	Camel Owner	Çan/ÇANAKKALE
Çağrı UZUN	Not a Camel Owner	Milas/MUĞLA
Musa SEZEK	Not a Camel Owner	Köşk/AYDIN
İbrahim ARSLANTAŞ	Camel Owner	Kumluca ANTALYA
Metin KAHVECİOĞLU	Camel Owner	Efeler/AYDIN
Ali ÇAKIR	Not a Camel Owner	Edremit/BALIKESİR

**Table 4.** Supervisory Board Members in the Second Term (2016-2019).

Name/Last Name	Connection with Camel Culture	Hometown
Vedat ÖZTÜRK	Not a Camel Owner	Kuşadası/AYDIN
Şeref CANBOLAT	Camel Owner	Bergama/İZMİR
İbrahim GÖR	Camel Owner	Gömeç/BALIKESİR

**Table 5.** Board Members in the Third Term (2019- ongoing).

Name/Last Name	Connection with Camel Culture	Hometown
Özgür DÜLGER	Camel Owner	Germencik/AYDIN
Fidel AKGÜN	Camel Owner	Bodrum/Muğla
Mehmet YAVAŞ	Camel Owner	Torbali/İZMİR
Feridun BALKIŞ	Camel Owner	Kepez/ÇANAKKALE
Ali Enisi ISPARTA	Camel Owner	Edremit/BALIKESİR
Mehmet YİĞİT	Camel Owner	Sarayköy/DENİZLİ
Üzeyir KOTAN	Camel Owner	Biga/ÇANAKKALE
İsmail DURAL	Camel Owner	Ayvalık/BALIKESİR
Sadettin BALCI	Camel Owner	Bergama/İZMİR

**Table 6.** Supervisory Board Members in the Third Term (2019-2021).

Name/Last Name	Connection with Camel Culture	Hometown
Mehmet YAVAŞ	Camel Owner	Selçuk/İZMİR
İlker ŞAHİN	Not a Camel Owner	Sarıgöl/MANİSA
Hakan ÇELEBİ	Not a Camel Owner	Sultanhisar/AYDIN

In the light of all these data, it should be stated that the CCCWU has reached an important representation power in terms of camel breeding and camel wrestling culture. The presence of actors in the union administration and supervisory boards from provincial and district centres where wrestling is performed confirms this. In addition, the geographical distribution of the union's member associations shows that the camel culture in Turkey has started to reach an important level of representation.

### The Economic Structure of the Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union (Income Sources-Expenses)

The CCCWU's entire income and expenses have been recorded since 2012, the date of establishment,

and have been declared open to inspection by the “Aydın Governorship Associations Department.” Between the years 2012-2020 (2013-2014-2015-2016-2017-2018-2019-2020), in the eight-year period, the total official registered revenue was 46.950 TL and the revenue comes from donation, membership fee, and the participation fee received from wrestling. The annual membership fees are 250 TL, the entrance fees to be taken from the associations to be registered are 250 TL, the donations from individuals or institutions and the participation money received for each camel wrestling constitute the sources of income.

The total official registered expenditure of the union was 21.700 TL<sup>12</sup> (aid to wrestling, rent, personnel, equipment purchase, etc.) in the eight-year period between 2012 and 2020.

The income of the CCCWU within the framework of its legal structure is composed of elements such as the fees received from the member associations. The expenses include the Union’s rent and the activities carried out regarding camel culture.

It is also noteworthy that the total budget of the Union is not at a very large level. With the increase in institutionalisation and representation ability, it can be said that the budget and income sources of the Union as a supreme control mechanism will increase, consequently the expenses will increase, and the budget will be higher as the camel breeding and wrestling culture develops and becomes widespread.

### **The Statutory Rules of the Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture**

As a result of the application made by the Union to the Provincial Associations Directorate of the Governorship of İzmir on 07.10.2013, a registration number (35.061.030) was given and the Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture was established. Upon the examination of the necessary documents regarding the establishment and the statutory rules, the Union was approved on the basis of Associations Law<sup>13</sup> No. 5253 dated 4.11.2004, Turkish Civil Code<sup>14</sup> No. 4721 dated 22.11.2001 and Associations Regulation<sup>15</sup>

12. CCCWU Board of Directors, Date 21.04.2021, Decision no: 66.

13. Official Gazette, Date: 4.11.2004, Issue: 25649, Law No: 5253. Associations Law.

14. Official Gazette, Date: 4.11.2004, Issue: 25649, Law No: 5253. Associations Law.

15. Official Gazette, Date: 4.11.2004, Issue: 25649, Law No: 5253. Associations Law.

No. 25772 dated 31.03.2005. The aim of the Union was stated as “to create a common solidarity among the camel breeders in the Mediterranean, Aegean and Marmara Regions and to serve this deep-rooted cultural heritage with all the stakeholders”. It has been put under legal judgment that the centre of the Union is İzmir and that it cannot have a branch. The Union was formed by 5 associations, namely “Harmandalı Camel and Camel Wrestling Lovers Association, Kemalpaşa Town Camel Owners Association, Menemen Türkelli Camel Owners Association, Pınarbaşı Camel Breeding and Camel Wrestling Lovers Association, and Torbalı Camel Breeding and Camel Wrestling Culture Lovers Association.” The Statute has established the legal structure of the bodies of the board of directors, giving details about their operations and procedures, and the elections to be held, and the Union started to work in 2013. It is understood that the Union specifically aims to organise and promote camel wrestling by being in contact with central and local governments in Anatolia and Thrace provinces, districts and towns. When the Statutory Rules are evaluated in general, it is seen that the Union aims to contribute to the development of the camel culture and to the region both culturally and economically (Anonymous, 2020b). The list of the members of the board of directors and supervisory board and the data on budget sources could not be reached through the negotiations with the Union.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Throughout history, issues such as the human-animal relationship, the legal status of animals, the responsibilities of humans towards animals, crimes against animals and the penalties for these crimes have been included in the oldest legal texts. The oldest known laws were uncovered in Mesopotamian clay tablets. These are Ur-Nammu Laws (2100 BC), Lipit-Ishtar Law (900 BC), Eshnunna Laws (1920 BC) and Hammurabi Laws (1728 BC) (Gürler & Osmanağaoğlu, 2009). In Ottoman history, in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, establishments under the name of “Zoos” were established for the purpose of animal breeding and production, and it is seen that steps were taken to ensure that animal husbandry was supported and controlled by the state, and it was encouraged to raise high-quality animals (Edhem, 1918). Again, it is reported that the first association related to the racing competitions of animals in the Ottoman Empire was established in the time of Sultan Abdulaziz, according to the newspaper “Ceride-i Havadis” dated 1280 (1864 in the Gregorian



calendar) and numbered 829. On this date, the horse racing association was established (Erk, 1962). In the Ottoman Empire, "Specialisation Laws", which can be defined as municipal laws containing regulations regarding the goods and services produced and sold in the city, came into force. These laws, which were prepared on the basis of customs and traditions and religious laws, also include issues regarding the protection of animals. For example, in Bursa Specialisation Law (1502), which is one of these laws, it is stated that; "*And porters will not use horses without horseshoes and will not bring more than two burdens of the vineyard load. The mule wood should be three feet wide and camel wood should be six feet wide. And it should come to the city just as it was loaded in Uludağ. The load should be divided and shortened. This was determined by law*". In the "Kanunname-i Osmanî" prepared before 1630, the standards of the wood load were determined as follows: "*And the woodsmen should make the mule wood four feet long, donkey load three feet long and camel load six feet long*". In addition, it was stated in a law code of 1680 that "The mule wood load should be four feet long, the camel load six feet long, and the donkey load two and a half feet long" (Gürler and Osmanagaoglu, 2009). The first association for the protection of animals in Turkey, "Istanbul Himâye-i Hayvânât Society" (Istanbul Animal Protection Society), was established in 1912 with the initiatives of military and civilian bureaucrats who played important roles in Ottoman history (Melikoğlu, 2009). With the first laws passed, it can be concluded that legislators took initiatives for the protection of animals, and activities including animals were carried out. Based on this information, it can be said that at that time, it was aimed to bring animal rights to a legal status and to develop them.

Apart from the state organisation, it can be said that non-governmental organisations also carry out a number of activities centered on animals. The essence of non-governmental organisation includes factors such as friendship, sense of achieving something together, collectiveism, and people coming together voluntarily and trying to do something. "Civil society", which includes a sense of synergy and unity of power, represents unity, volunteering and solidarity, meaning that people do things together that they cannot be done individually (Talas, 2011). Non-governmental organisations undertake important roles in the formation and raising of public awareness and in carrying the discussions to the political field (Ertürk, 2005). Countries that are members of the European Union have very effective

non-governmental organisations on issues such as animal welfare, agricultural production, marketing, trade, food hygiene, environmental protection, and rural development in the agricultural sectors (Arabacı, 2005). It is seen that there are organisations related to animal breeding among non-governmental organisations that have emerged as a new concept in time.

Camel wrestling, which continues its existence in a traditional structure, has been organised since the 1980s, when the effects of modernity were rapidly felt. The association process started and unions were established in 2012. The Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Unions have been legalized by taking steps towards institutionalisation (Ertürk, 2018). Similar to camel wrestling in Turkey, races with animals operate under the "Turkish Traditional Sports Union"<sup>16</sup>. These races are Rahvan Horse Riding, Equestrian Javelin, Kökbörü, Horse Sleigh, and Equestrian Archery, which are included in the "Traditional Sports Union." The Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union, on the other hand, has been institutionalised as an independent Union.

With the adoption of the regulation in accordance with the 6th article of the Animal Protection Law numbered 5199 and the decision of the Animal Protection Board of Aydın Governorship dated 12.02.2014 and numbered 12, "*Weak animals cannot be used for commercial and demonstration purposes or for riding and transportation in any way*". It can be concluded that the regulation approved by the Board is prepared by taking into account the appropriate age, quality of life and health conditions of the animals for demonstration-commercial purposes and will only be subject to permission on the basis of the protection of all kinds of rights of animals.

In Article 1 of the Union Regulation (Anonymous, 2020a), it is seen that the statement "ensuring the regulation of camel wrestling organisations by protecting camels" was created on the basis of the Law on the Protection of Animals. As stated in Article 1 of the Law, the aim is "*ensuring comfortable lives of animals and good and appropriate treatment of animals, protecting animals against suffering in the best way possible and preventing all kinds of victimization*." It is seen that importance is given to the prevention of suffering and to the continuation of sustainable lives, and the union administration aims to organise these competitions within the framework

16. <https://www.gsdf.gov.tr/tr/spor-dallari>; Retrieved 25.11.2020.

of animal rights and constitutes legal sanctions. The statutes and regulations of both Unions in our study confirm these statements.

As stated in Section 3 of the regulation, camels to wrestle should be classified according to measurements (height and weight) and the principle of equality should be taken as basis during the competitions. The structure, duties and powers of the Union board of directors and supervisory boards are defined in Sections 4 and 5 of the Regulation. It has been observed that the Union has been established in accordance with the Associations Law<sup>17</sup> and has a legal structure.

In Section 6, the duties and powers of the Arbitration Board are clarified and it is stated that the Board includes seven lawyers with at least three years of professional experience. In Section 7, the details regarding the Inspection Board are shared and it is stated that it is composed of seven individuals who are inspectors with at least three years of professional experience. Section 8 gives details about the duties and powers of the Health Board, and it is stipulated that it should include seven veterinarians with at least three years of professional experience. Section 11 gives details about the duties and authorities of the Board of Education, which includes five educators with at least three years of professional experience. Under the relevant heading in each of the four sections, it is stated that experts and authorized persons are appointed and qualification rules are followed.

In the Organisation Structure of the Arbitration Board and the Organisation Structure of the Matching Board, which are the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> sections of the Regulation, it is seen that the boards consist of five members, and the principles of the selection of the referees in the competitions and how the competition of animals will be conducted have been clarified by legal provisions and trying to prevent favorable situations.

Section 12, on the other hand, states that the Examination and Observation Committee consists of four persons and includes their duties and powers. It also includes provisions regarding the care and feeding conditions of camels on certain dates of the year. It can be said that this provision coincides with the principles of animal welfare rules that should be applied during camel wrestling and similar animal races, according to Koç (2018).

17. Official Gazette, Date: 4.11.2004, Issue: 25649, Law No: 5253. Associations Law.

In Section 13, the definition, duties and authorities of the Chief Referee, Midfield Referee, Scorekeeper, Field Commissioner, Mouth Fastener, Mouth Fastening Controller, Tether/Separator, and Presenter are given and the limits of the authority of each official are drawn; the rules of the competitions are shared, and unlawful acts are tried to be prevented.

In Section 14, the legal duty definition of the delegation, which is assigned to ensure that camel wrestling activities are carried out under legal responsibilities and according to the Terms and Conditions of the Regulation. In order to prevent any negative effects that may occur in the organisations, the rules have been written in detail and it has been observed that they are bound by the provisions of the regulation.

Section 15 includes Various Provisions, Enforcement, and Execution. It has been observed that the Union is trying to achieve a legal structure and an institutional vision regarding the competitions.

It has been determined that the Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union has been created by taking all regulations and instructions from the Animal Protection Law<sup>18</sup> No. 5199 and adhering to its practices. It is seen that the legal content of the regulations is based on animal rights and the use of animals in traditional non-violent demonstrations for folkloric purposes. In this context, it can be said that camel wrestling activities, which are a part of traditional culture, set an example for animal races that are not legally defined and that do not violate the laws by adhering to the Animal Rights Law.

However, it is noteworthy that how the camels should be moved to wrestling areas or what animal welfare norms should be followed/applied during wrestling were not mentioned at any point in the regulation. Although this situation is not directly stated in the bylaws and regulations of the Union, it can be said that the statutes and regulations take animal welfare into consideration. Even if the bylaws and regulations of the union seem to be incomplete in this respect, specific indicators for assessing camel welfare in the world have not yet been developed and camels have been clearly neglected by international legislation. The "World Animal Health Organisation" included camels in its land transport recommendations document, but the welfare aspects of camel breeding systems were not addressed in

18. Official Gazette, Date: 01.07.2004, No: 5199, Issue: 25509, "Animal Rights Law, Law."



the special parts of the “Terrestrial Code” and the first European project called the “Welfare Quality” project, although they focused on other species, It is stated that it does not appear in the Animal Welfare Indicators Project (AWIN), the second largest project in Turkey (Padalino and Menchetti, 2020). Again, in the studies of Prevet *et al* (2016), although camels have needs to be taken into account in order to protect their welfare, there appears to be a lack of interest in the Directive 98/58 / EC (Council of Europe 1998), which has a wide scope and implemented in Italy by Legislative Decree 146/01 (Italian Law 2001). In this context, it can be concluded that the absence of animal welfare within the scope of the union regulation is in line with the animal welfare legislation and literature in the world.

The Regulation of Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union is composed of twenty-three articles and a temporary article. It is seen that the Union’s statutory rules, which were formed by the eight member associations that established the union, includes the objectives of the Union and the activities to be carried out, aiming to ensure development of the camel culture and to gain a national identity. Especially placing the word “Turkey” at the title of the Union and targeting the establishment of Camel Culture Research Institute are the most important indicators of this. In addition, it can be said that it aims to develop relations in the international arena and to bring its prevalence to the world scale as understood from the statement “Producing projects related to the culture of camel wrestling and camel wrestling, providing support from public and private institutions and organisations, local governments and international organisations”. Under the heading of the “projects to be continued” is “Creating a common platform with the Unions, foundations and other non-governmental organisations having the same purpose.” The statement of “sharing opinions on” Animal Protection Laws “with relevant official institutions and non-governmental organisations” is remarkable. It can be said that trying to achieve partnerships with institutions and non-governmental organisations with a similar structure, i.e., stakeholders and uniting on the basis of animal rights are the goals. In the continuation of the statutory rules, the conditions for membership, the principles of general assembly election and the duty of the general assembly are regulated within the framework of the Associations Law<sup>19</sup>.

19. Official Gazette, Date: 4.11.2004, Issue: 25649, Law No: 5253. Associations Law.

It has been observed that since the establishment of Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union in 2012, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Term Board of Directors and Supervisory Board has been established<sup>20,21,22</sup>. In Article 72 of the Turkish Civil Code, the board of directors is defined as a mandatory body that performs administration of internal affairs such as the implementation of association decisions, the fulfillment of daily current affairs, and the representation duty outside. It also fulfills the duties and powers of execution and representation in accordance with the laws and regulations of the association. Another mandatory body included in the Turkish Civil Code is the supervisory board. Supervisory boards serve as the association’s internal audit bodies (Sabuncu, 2020). It has been observed that the Union Board of Directors and the Supervisory Board have continued without interruption from its establishment to the present day with its activities in accordance with their legal status in terms of duty-scope and internal relations.

When the profiles of both the board of directors and the members of the supervisory board are examined, it has been observed that it was formed by people who are closely related to camel culture and its geographical distribution is composed of people living in the coastal strip of the Aegean, Mediterranean and Marmara Regions and regions where camel wrestling is performed. It has been determined that 20 of these people are camel owners, while 10 of them are not camel owners, but they are raised within camel culture; they are interested in camel breeding, and they are involved in the Union activities. It can be said that the service provided on a voluntary basis for the continuation of camel wrestling, which is a cultural heritage, and to support its corporate structure, is meaningful and has made great contributions to the livestock sector in Turkey.

The income source of the Union is donations, membership fees, wrestling revenues and 500 TL participation money received for each camel wrestling. On the other hand, Union expenditure items are aid for wrestling, rent, personnel expenses, and equipment purchase. When the eight-year budget of the Union’s economic structure is evaluated, it was concluded that it could balance its income and expenditure, especially by spending money in camel

20. CCCWU Board of Directors; Date:26.05.2013, Decision no: 8

21. CCCWU Board of Directors, Date: 29.05.2016, Decision no: 24

22. CCCWU Board of Directors Date:29.12.2016, Decision no: 48

wrestling organisations and completing the services with this budget.

The Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture was established in 2013 in accordance with the Law on Associations, the Turkish Civil Code and the Associations Regulation. It is noteworthy that although it is an association established on the basis of the development of animal husbandry and to support of breeders, the Animal Rights Law No. 5199<sup>23</sup> has not been included in the legal structure. However, while determining the relevant principles in the Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union in Aydın, animal rights provisions have been included and compliance with the rights of animals is legally guaranteed.

When the regulation is examined in general, it is seen that it consists of twenty articles and is structured according to the law of associations. It has been drawn up within the framework of the establishment, operation, procedures and principles of the associations. The Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Federation in Aydın, with all its legislative structure, can be said to be in an important organisation not only for the establishment of a union but also for the development and encouragement of sustainable camel breeding.

As a result, it can be said that the existence of the Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union in Aydın and the Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture, which were established in 2012 and 2013, is very important for both camel breeding and camel wrestling to have a legal and institutional structure. The Union in Aydın has been established in a manner that serves the purpose with all legal structures and in accordance with all relevant laws.

The Camel Culture and Camel Wrestling Union in Aydın continues its activities with the participation of forty-five associations established in the regions where wrestling takes place as of 2021. On the other hand, the Union of Anatolian Camel Owner Nomads and Camel Wrestling Culture has completed the establishment phase but has not reached the effective representation power yet.

It has been observed that the main purpose of both organisations is to ensure the continuity of activities of camel wrestling on a legal basis. Based on all these developments, it can be judged that it is promising in terms of carrying the camel culture, which is a traditional element in Turkey, to the future,

23. Official Gazette, Date: 01.07.2004, No: 5199, Issue: 25509, Animal Rights Law.

gaining the ability to represent, promoting it on national and international platforms, and keeping the camel breeding and wrestling culture alive. Finally, as an institution that will ensure that camel wrestling is carried out within the framework of animal welfare and animal rights issues in the future, the activities of the camel unions are extremely important.

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