

**Equestrian Games in Turkish History\***

**Abdullah ÖZEN<sup>1</sup>**  
**Sebahattin DEVECİOĞLU<sup>2</sup>**  
**Rahşan ÖZEN<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Fırat Üniversitesi,  
Veteriner Fakültesi,  
Veteriner Hekimliği Tarihi  
Deontoloji ve Etik  
Anabilim Dalı,  
Elazığ, TÜRKİYE

<sup>2</sup>Fırat Üniversitesi,  
Beden Eğitimi ve Spor  
Yüksekokulu,  
Elazığ, TÜRKİYE

The horse as one of the fundamental aspects of the daily life of Turks caused formation and accumulation of a significant social and cultural values and later the emerging of the sportive activities based on the horse as a natural result. The Turks of the Middle Asia developing such skills in the horse equestrianism and archery as horse breeder and hunter shepherd to survive, showed themselves off in the books of history and generated the first forms of the horse related sportive activities in early periods.

This study was carried out to put forth and analyze the equestrianism activities that have a noteworthy place in the history of the Turkish folklore as well as to state the reasons of creating such a culture, the application methods, its functions within the society and the changes in these functions through the history and to determine the contributions of the Turkish folklore to the current application methods of the horse related games.

**Key Words:** Horse games, equestrian games, Turkish folklore, Turkish culture.

**Türk Tarihinde Atlı Oyunlar**

Türk tarihinde, gündelik yaşamın en vazgeçilmez unsurlarından bir olan at, önemli bir sosyal ve kültürel birikim oluşmasına, bu birikimin doğal sonucu olarak ise at kültürüne dayalı sportif aktivitelerin doğmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. At yetiştiricisi, avcı çoban olarak varlıklarının devamı için binicilikte ve okçulukta özel beceriler gösteren Orta Asya Türkleri, sadece tarih olaylarında boy göstermekle kalmayıp sportif faaliyetlerin ilk formlarını da oldukça erken dönemde geliştirmişlerdir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türk folklor tarihinde oldukça önemli bir yere sahip olan binicilik faaliyetlerini, bunların ortaya çıkış sebeplerini, uygulama biçimlerini, toplumda yerine getirdiği fonksiyonları ve tarihsel süreçte bu fonksiyonlarda meydana gelen değişimleri incelemek ve atlı oyunların bugün uygulanan şekillerinde, Türk folklorunun katkılarını ortaya koymaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Atlı oyunlar, atlı sporlar, Türk folkloru, Türk kültürü.

**Introduction**

The equestrianism training in the ancient Turkish life used to begin from the early ages of the childhood and as the time passed the children became almost a part of the horse with an intensive training on the back of the horse. Following the equestrianism training and exercises on sheep or goats plus acquiring bow stretching skill, the Hun children went out hunting to improve their skills of targeting with arrow (1). Even it has been noted that the Turks trained their children for the equestrianism beginning from the very early ages. They used to train the child at the cradle by putting a piece of wood between their legs, following the child's crawling on all fours by letting the him ride the animals such as sheep or dog or exercising on the horse model made of woods (2). These trainings, started from the early ages, prove that the Turks performed equestrianism and archery in a planned way and by strictly following a program at the period of teenage and maturity (1). All these phases of preparation caused Turkish children to grow within an atmosphere of equestrianism culture and became master riders. These skills in equestrianism were transformed into the mastership by games and sportive competitions played with horse (3).

This study was carried out to put forth and analyze the equestrianism activities that have a noteworthy place in the Turkish folklore as well as to state the reasons of creating such a culture, the application methods, its functions within the society and the changes in these functions through the history and to determine the contributions of the Turkish culture to the current application methods of the horse related games.

When considered in a systematic way, it is possible to classify the equestrianism activities during the Turkish history under three categories. These categories are indicated below:

**Geliş Tarihi :** 27.06.2012  
**Kabul Tarihi :** 18.10.2012

**Yazışma Adresi  
Correspondence**

**Abdullah ÖZEN**  
Fırat Üniversitesi,  
Veteriner Fakültesi,  
Veteriner Hekimliği Tarihi  
Deontoloji ve Etik  
Anabilim Dalı,  
Elazığ - TÜRKİYE

**aozen1@firat.edu.tr**  
**abdullahozen@hotmail.com**

\* II. Ulusal Atçılık Sempozyumu, 3-6 Haziran 2004, Nevşehir/TÜRKİYE.

1. Skill shows on horse: Standing on a galloping horse, sitting and then standing on a horse, slipping towards the abdomen of the horse, bending and taking anything on the ground while still riding the horse, rider's taking off and dressing his clothes on horse, taking off and putting back the saddle on horse and shooting arrows to the targets on the front and back on a galloping horse.

2. Horse races: Generally long distance horse races.

3. Games played on horse: *Çöven* (polo), *cirit* (jeered), *gökbörü*, *kızbörü*, *beyge* (*babiga*), *kolbörü* and *kızkavar-bike*.

Although there are lots of games in the Turkish history and they all can be mentioned under these three categories, we will first of all and mainly discuss the games played with horse based on a sportive form and competition in this study. To this end, we will analyze the horse race, *çöven*, *gökbörü* and *cirit* games respectively, and then, we will make a general evaluation of the all the games related with horse.

### Horse races

The first examples of the horse races were observed during the religious ceremonies. The meetings by the Hun Turks (Hsiung-nu) held at a place called *tai-lin* were the first meetings where the horse races were organised. Sacrifices were given to the Gods and a census for the people and animals were conducted during this meeting and other similar meetings. The most important part of the ceremony was circling around a forest for three times by the horse –in case there was no forest, around a model of forest made by willow branches on the ground. The Göktürks applied a similar ceremony at the funeral service. During these ceremonies, they were riding their horses for seven times around the tent where the corpse of the deceased was at rest. The purpose of the horse race was usually to express their gratitude to the God. The horse races held only at this mentioned religious ceremonies at the beginning, were performed later at the activities such as fest, wedding ceremonies, bazaar and fairs, preparations of war, mourning ceremonies and other celebrations and rites held owing to the various reasons by gaining a sportive meaning. The horse races were one of the most significant activities performed at these ceremonies besides the music and dance (4, 5).

It has been observed that there were two different ways of competition in the Turkish history. One of them was the competition with an aim of "winning". Such kinds of competitions were the essential motives of the wedding ceremonies, and feasts. The second competition was the competition performed with the aim of "fighting". When two armies came face to face to make a war, a bilateral agreement was approved. Mostly two wrestlers or warriors from both sides step forward and a representative "*savaş güreşi*" (war wrestling) is arranged. The winning wrestler also won the battle for his army; the winning side also deserved the victory (6). The horse races that the participants were from various countries and which were held for different purposes were fairly

important for the Turkish people. Because the horse winning a degree in a race meant the glory of the nation or a matter of honour of the clan, and therefore the award was of secondary importance. Usually big fights were experienced at the end of the horse races and even sometimes it was a reason to declare a war (7).

One of the most ancient sources defining the horse races in the terms of the sportive competition is Tonyukuk (725 AC) inscription of the ancient Turks. The expressions in these epitaphs such as "*Let's meet at the race plain...*" or "*A hundred thousand soldiers were met at the plain where the race will take place*" (8) give clues about the facts that the horse races were held at the early eighth century and the plains in question were named after these horse races.

The horse races kept their importance during the times of Seljuk and Ottoman Empire. The races were held especially on Fridays at the religious festivals as well as the wedding ceremonies, feasts and appropriate days of the spring and autumn and it was one of the most ancient traditions of the Turks. There was a racecourse in the surroundings of almost every Turkish city (9). Organizing a horse race at the wedding ceremonies and the feasts plus in the honour of the ambassadors became one of the established customs during the Ottoman times (10).

The first records ever found regarding the horse races during the Ottoman times goes back to the period of the Sultan (King) Orhan Bey (1324-1362 AC). The first work of Orhan Bey following his invasion of *Bursa* was to assign and make over a charitable foundation in the area located between the centres currently called *Balıklı Village* and *Atıcılar Square*, as racecourse. The people of *Bursa* used to celebrate their feasts here by organizing races and playing games with horses. This area is accepted as the first playing field (for sport events) built by the Ottomans. The Turks had also built racecourses in *Edirne*, *İstanbul*, *Kütahya*, *Manisa*, *Karaman* and *Amasya* other than *Bursa* (2, 11).

Horse races, where a kind of strong steppe horse was used, were more like a field race performed in long distances from 10-14 km to 100 km (3). It has been noted that the horse races mentioned in the *Epic of Manas* was held for much longer distances and continued for approximately eight days. "*...After the horses had gone, each division ate their meals coming back to their places and started wait the return of the racehorses. The horses would come after eight days later ...*" (7). Later on, the races came a form based on competition thus a rope was pulled at the finish line and the horse that passed the finish line firstly was deemed as the winner of the race.

In order to increase the number of the people participating in the race, announcements were made in a vast area. The *cazgırs* (person who announces the wrestlers and recites a prayer before a greased wrestling match) were hired to announce the characteristics of the horses and the players; and cavalymen with bayonets

were ready to ensure the race be applied by the rules (7).

The horses to be used at the race went under the training in the fields assigned especially for this purpose. These horses were cross breeding of mating the wild stallion and domesticated mare. They were called *arkun* (12). It has been noted that the horses were the horse having maximum amount of first degree in the race.

Although the games were emerged as a religious activity, gaining a systematic order by the time, turning into a regular training process, gaining an award-based structure, assuring the security by the rules through judges with bayonets and marking the finish line by pulling a rope are the evidences proving that the horse races were transformed into sportive events based on the competition within the historical circumstances. However much the researchers set forth the idea that these sportive events in the Turkish history were not organised to "improve the race" such as the events of the present time (13), we can say that breeding activities and studies on the improvement for the horse race had the purpose of "improvement of the race". In addition to these, inviting every single person to the ceremonies including the horse without making any discrimination shows the importance attributed to the horse related sports by the authorities. This approach had helped to spread such sportive activities to each class composing the society from the lowest class to the highest. It is a well-known fact that the Turks are talented riders, the fundamental reason lies beneath such a fact is the support for the sportive activities by the whole society from the lowest class to the highest (14).

#### Çöven (Çöğen, Çevgan, Çevgen or Polo)

Çöven is a ball game played on horse. It spread over different regions around the world from Asia and it was the game mostly seen in the history of the many Asian societies. There is no certain evidence proving which nation discovered the game first. According to Ülkütaşır (15), the exact time of the games leave the Middle Asia and spread over India goes back to the times of Babur-Shah. On the other hand, although it has been claimed that the Chinese was playing the game since the early times and that it passed to China from Iran, Eberhard (4) emphasizes the probability that the Chinese learnt çöven from the Middle Asian Turks. According to the author, çöven was seen as a game of ball. When taking into consideration of the dimensions of the role played by the Turkish culture in the formation of the Chinese Culture (16, 17), we can say that the opinion supporting çöven's being taken to the Chinese by the Turks is getting stronger.

According to the argument accepted in the Turkish resources, it is a game formed by the hunting culture (18). Likewise the other games in the Turkish history such as *gökbörü* and *cirit*, it was a game with intent to prepare the drive hunt organised for the military purposes and the game was also played with an

intention to avoid the performance loss and it became a body culture by the time (19, 20).

Although there is no note in the great work by Mahmud of Kashgar, regarding the format of the game played with horse, he mentioned a game called *cevgan* in the explanations of some words and noted that the game had a Turkish origin. However, frequent repeat of the word *cevgan* may not only prove the prevalence of the game in the Turkish world of the 11<sup>th</sup> century but also non-mentioning of the game format "played with horse" makes us to consider the possibility that this game was an another game played among the Turks without horse (21).

Çöven played by the Turks at earlier times, was later adopted by the Iranians who were settled on the road of the caravan and it was named *çevkân*; it was turned into much more professional form by the Iranians who had modern standards of the said era. The game did not remain just as a sportive activity in the new geographies it was adopted; it became a subject of the art and literature at the same time. Thus the game was an opportunity to create unique examples of miniatures and epic poems. Its' way of playing and the required materials such as ball and stick became common themes addressed in the literature and philosophy (3).

It has been observed that two different forms of çöven were played in the Turkish history. These were *tokmak polosı* (polo of mallet) and *kaşık polosı* (polo of spoon). These names were derived from the shape of the sticks used in the game. *Tokmak polosı* was a tagging and ball handling game, the *kaşık polosı* was a skill and balance game. But there were two teams who competed with each other in both of the games (19).

The game was played by a ball covered with leather having a diameter of 10-15 cm made of maple or willow, and it was called *güy*. The ball was handled by a stick with a bent end called *çevken* or *çöven*, the aim of the game was to pass the goal line of the opposing team or to hit a definite target by the ball. The game depended on the principle to take the maximum scores. Hence çöven required a quite well skills and excellent equestrian training and it was played by two groups of four and six persons in a vast square (15). However, sometimes the number of the riders was changeable between 4 and 20, and there were also times the number of the players was not limited. At the latter, the essential thing was the equality in the number of the players. The game was played in two sets of approximately half an hour (twenty four minutes per each) per each, sometimes it took almost two hours. And it was generally played during the late hours of the day close to the sunset. There were goal posts on the both sides of the playing field made of stones or javelins stuck into the ground. When the ball passed the goal post and the player hitting the ball dismounted from his horse and held the ball up, the goal was achieved. All kinds of hits to the ball were free. However, these hits should be made on the course of the ride and before the ball touched the ground. If the ball over passed the goal line, it was not a record for the

score. The game was started by one of the players' throwing the ball upward and his hitting the ball before it fell on the ground in the midfield. The women might sometimes participate in the games. Colliding into the horse of the opposing team member, blocking the way of the rival and hitting the rival or his horse with the stick were among the prohibited actions during the game (22).

The horses to be used in *çöven* should be trained specially. The horses were given a special training regarding the movements and acts such as capability to make short turns, making a sudden halt, having the skill to get free of the rivals with swift movements, abrupt accelerating, not getting shy against the noise and sudden movements (23).

A smooth field was enough to play the game. On the other hand, well-kept and orderly *çöven* fields were constructed by the time; in these fields there were separate places for the kings and the princes. It was important to clean the stones and the foreign grasses in the field. A coating preserved the playing field during rainy weathers. There were games quite simple and there were games where the kings were participated. These games were played in the fields with colourful decorations and accompanying music as a feast. Although it was played generally toward the evening hours, after the game became rather widespread, there were night matches that were played in illuminated fields (19). It became a fairly popular game between the elite society and highest level of administrators in both Turkish and Iranian people. Accordingly, the kings, princes, administrators and ambassadors had to be skilful *çöven* players. As a natural result of this, there were also games organised specially for the training of princes. Due to all these reasons, the *çöven* was called the 'play of the kings' (14).

So, the games institutionalization by the state support where all people used to participate from all ages in the early years (24), taking the pulse of all classes and great deal of interests, seems quite natural. Moreover, *çöven* having a purpose to avoid the performance loss in the first place gained the purposes to give physical training for war and to display the skills regarding the horse-human relation with time. And all these things assured the game to institutionalize thus it became a cultural and ethnological product.

### Gökbörü

*Gökbörü* was one of the ancient and national games of the Turks. It was related with the *Bozkurt* (gray wolf) respected as totem. While it was a religious ceremony or a rite in the times of the totemic belief, then it became a horse related sport following the foundation of the large empires. Currently the game is still played in Tajikistan, where it is called *buzkashi*, Uzbekistan (ulak or kupkari), Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, some areas of Kazakhstan (kopkar tartu), Kirgizia, and in some parts of Afghanistan where Uzbeks live (14, 15).

The game was played by almost every Turkish clans and called with different words such as *gökbörü*, *kök-*

*börü*, *kökpâri*, *oğlak/ulak*, *kökbar/kökpar*, *posteki*, *öndül kapmaca*, *buz-kaşı* in the geographic regions where the Turks were settled (6). The games such as *kızbörü*, *beyge (babiga)*, *kolbörü* and *kızkavar-bike* that are still being played among the Turkish communities are all derived from *gökbörü*. However, they do not have any sportive characteristics.

The game depends on the struggle to take a weighted young goat or any animal that is beheaded and whose legs are cut and then filled with straw or sand (30-50 kg), to the circle which is drawn in the middle of the playing field. It is performed by one of the riders without being caught and having his hunt snatched by the other riders (25).

*Gökbörü* was a game especially played during spring times. Everybody used to prepare and train his horse for *gökbörü* before the springtime. The day when the games began would be announced everywhere. Everybody gathered together in the field where the game would take place, wanting to join the competition (26). Generally it was played with 20 or 40 riders; there were games where hundreds of riders participated. There were games that everybody competed alone; there were also games where two teams were opposed to each other. A game (*gökbörü*) endured hours even days according to the number of the players (3).

A rather large circle was drawn in the middle of the field, called *halhal* (anklet) or *adalet çemberi* (justice circle). The players were lined up around this circle. The young goat was taken to the highest point of the field by the judges. When the signal was given, the judges threw the young goat towards the players. The purpose of the riders leaving their place at the same time was to snatch the animal as fast as they could (25, 26). The early catch of the young goat was closely related with the power of the horse. As a matter of fact, because it was a hard game, the tall horses with broad chest were preferred. However, the sole power of the horse was not enough. The riders also should be strong physically and they should be able to think practically. After the young goat was gripped more than one player and pulled at both ends for a while, it remained in the hands of the strongest or most technical player. The player, who had the young goat, used to place it on the saddle and tighten his legs to hold the goat, because the reins were in his left hand, while the whip was in his right hand. This holding and gripping process was accepted as the most significant point for the *gökbörü*. Despite standing on the horse in this situation was too hard to do, the purpose of the rider was to reach the place swiftly where the circle (in some regions where the sign post is) was, without any unfortunate incident (14). The player who managed to take a stroll around the restricted area in spite of the pulling, squeezing and pushing of the other players, threw the goat in the middle of the circle. Then the next struggle began from the all over again by another player's snatching the goat and his heading towards the vast field. The player getting the highest score was considered as the winner of the game (25). The young

goat or the animal used for the game even though it was roughed up fairly would be the lavish meal of a main feast at the end of the game (27).

*Gökbörü*, even though derived from a religious origin, subsequently gained a military characteristics and/or it was applied for avoiding the performance loss and training the body physically. Taking into consideration the form based on the rules as a result of the evolution throughout its history to date and looking back from this standing point, we can say that *gökbörü* may be accepted as a sportive activity within the present terms.

### **Cirit<sup>1</sup> (Jeered)**

*Cirit* is one of the most popular and preserved horse related sports, which is still being played today, in the Turkish history. It has been considered that *cirit* had a religious origin as the other horse related games and varied and developed by the hunting and fighting culture. It has been noted that the Middle Asia Turks (28). Within a general term, *cirit* was adopted and reflected to the other geographies mostly during the times of Anatolian Seljuks. At this time, special fields were assigned for the game. *Cirit* was not a game just played among the people; the Sultans and other state authorities also played it and it became a sportive activity where the Sultans and state authorities took place. Hence it has been noted that Anatolian Seljuk Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad I (1220-1237 AC) liked playing the *cirit* game in person (10).

*Cirit* has been a game mostly accepted especially in the Ottoman times. Playing *cirit* on every Friday in the public squares and in places where the armies spending their nights became a tradition (10). Since the times of the Sultan Orhan Bey (1324-1362 AC), *cirit* has been the most supported activity by the Ottoman Dynasty. Ottoman sultans, viziers and state authorities encouraged the people to play *cirit* in every opportunity and they participated in the games in person (29). For it was played frequently at the Ottoman period, *cirit* was called *harhari*. The games in the palace mostly had a military purpose and played by the riders called *cundi* (10).

*Cirit* was produced to develop the skills of using javelin as a fighting instrument; but as the time passed it became a traditional sport (29). This game has purposes to boost the morale, to improve the equestrianism skills, to take courage, to improve the fighting and sporting qualifications and to give well trained and sharp skills (14).

The game depends on the essential of the throwing the javelin to and hitting the moving target (rival) or escaping from the javelin thrown by the opposing party. The game has been played between the two different groups having equal number of players since its early applications. It was generally played by two teams

composing four or twelve persons. The team including 4 or 5 persons was called *bölük* (company) and the team including 6 or 8 persons was called *alay* (regiment). As the names, which were used to define the teams were derived from military terms, it is plausible to suggest that the game was played from the very first time as a preparation of war. Today *cirit* is played with teams composing seven persons per each according to the standardized rules within the frame of the Directive for Competition of Equestrian Jeered issued by the Turkish Traditional Sports Federation (30).

The Ottoman Sultans gave the order to construct a field in order to play *cirit* inside or within the periphery of the palace. Because the *cirit* fields in the palace and castles used to change according to the geographical structure or the place of the fields to be used within the palace or castles, no standardization was brought for the sizes of the fields (10). Today the *cirit* playing fields consist of rectangular fields with the width of 30-40 meter and the length of 90-140 meter. The game composes two different midfields restricted by the drawings as in a football field; the midfield is also divided within itself according to the rules of the game (30).

There are positions causing the gain and loss of score. Positions resulting in the score gains: A successful hit of the player from the opposing team, catching the javelin thrown by the opposing team member in the air, catching and forgiving the opposing team member, renouncing the score in the positions that can be very dangerous. The positions resulted in the score loss: Catching but not forgiving the opposing team member, colliding his horse to the horse of the opposing team member, demounting the horse, entering into the borders of the opposing regiment, passing the side line. The regiment taking the maximum score is considered as the winner of the game (14, 29, 30).

*Cirit* having an important place in the Turkish history as an application performed during the religious ceremonies, a training of war, a training of encouragement and a sportive activity has come to the scene as a social necessity taking into consideration its functions in the society. Awarding the attempts in compliance with the fair play together with additional points, punishing the behaviours against the fair play with negative points, encouraging and/or awarding the merits such as honesty, bravery, courage and forgiving capacity, are all significant to show the social responsibility attributed to this game. Within this frame, we can claim that *cirit* and all horse related sports mentioned here and observed in the Turkish societies through the history first of all have gained a qualification of a training institution that contribute to the establishment of the morale values.

### **Conclusion**

The horse as one of the most important part of the economic, political and military history of the Turks was a dominant element in the Turkish culture. Equestrianism was the centre of this culture based on horse (31). We

<sup>1</sup>*Cirit* (javelin) is a wooden made stick at the length of 100 cm, the head part has 2.5 cm diameter, oval, decreasing 1.5 cm diameter moving backwards.

can say that equestrianism activities having a central status in the society resulted in rooted social and cultural structure, as in the beginning of the sportive activities based on horse culture and forming historical varieties.

The Turks who were quite well riders and who produced and awarded to the world culture the harness parts such as stirrup, bit (of a bridle) and saddle proved their capabilities and successes in the games played with horse and turned these games into sportive activities. Thus the acceptance of the horse related sports such as

*çöven*, *cirit* and *gökbörü* in various places of the world for hundreds of years may be the evidence proving that these sportive events had become distinguished sports under the influences of the Turkish culture and an example for the common culture of the world.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that Turkish history is full of the first examples in the matters of the arising, developing and varying of the horse related sports that are still alive in the entire world or certain regions of the world.

## References

1. Meyer H. Zur kultursoziologie der leibesübungen der früheren reitervölker. In: Geschichte der Leibesübungen. Ed. Horst Überhorst. Band 2. Berlin-München-Frankfurt: Verlag Bartels&Wernitz 1978.
2. Kepecioğlu K. Türklerde spor. Uludağ Bursa Halkevi Mecmuası 1935; Temmuz 16-17.
3. Alpman C. Eğitimin Bütünlüğü İçinde Beden Eğitimi ve Çağlar Boyunca Gelişimi. İstanbul: Gençlik Spor Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 1972.
4. Eberhard W. Çin kaynaklarına göre Türkler ve komşularında spor. Uluğtuğ NT (Translation). Ülkü Halkevi ve Halkodaları Dergisi 1940; 15 Mayıs: 209-215.
5. Tayga Y. Türk Spor Tarihine Genel Bakış. Ankara: Gençlik Spor Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 1990.
6. Ögel B. Türk Mitolojisi. I'inci cilt. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1993.
7. İnan A. Manas Destanı. İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1972.
8. Orkun HN. Eski Türk Yazıtları. Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1986.
9. Kepecioğlu K. Türklerde spor 5; At Yarışları. Uludağ Bursa Halkevi Mecmuası 1936; Ocak: 19.
10. Kahraman A. Osmanlı Devletinde Spor. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1995.
11. Kahraman, A. Cumhuriyet'e Kadar Türk Güreşi. II'inci cilt. Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989.
12. Kaşgarlı Mahmud. Divanü Lügat-it-Türk Tercümesi, I'inci cilt. Atalay B (Translation). Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1998.
13. Köstem R. Tarihsel Sürecinde Atçılığımızın Yapısı ve Yarışçılığımızın Oluşumu. İstanbul: Türkiye Jokey Kulübü Yayınları, 2000.
14. Güven Ö. Türklerde Spor Kültürü. Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1999.
15. Ülkütaşır MŞ. Çevgân ve gökbörü. Türk Kültürü 1967; 5: 663-665.
16. Koppers W. İlk Türklük ve İndo-Germenlik. Belleten 1941; 5: 439-480.
17. Eberhard W. Eski Çin kültürü ve Türkler. Berk İ. (Translation). Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi 1943; 1: 19-29.
18. Yıldırım İ. Tarihi Kaynakları Açısından Türk Spor Kültürü. Unpublished Msc thesis. Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1986.
19. Ögel HB. Türk Kültür Tarihinde Spor. Ankara: TC Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2001.
20. Yıldırım İ. Uygulama nedenleri ve fonksiyonları bakımından Türk kültürünün erken devrelerinde bazı sportif aktivitelerin görünümü. Gazi Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi 1996; 1: 47-57.
21. Genç R. Kaşgarlı Mahmud'a Göre XI. Yüzyılda Türk Dünyası. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi-Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1997.
22. Akıncı İA. Osmanlı Atları. Ankara: Matbaa-i Amire, 1917.
23. Atabeyoğlu C. Polo aslında bir Türk oyunudur! Yıllar Boyu Tarih Dergisi 1984; Mart: 669.
24. Al-Cahiz. Hilafet Ordusunun Menkıbeleri ve Türklerin Faziletleri. Şeşen R (Translation). Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1988.
25. İnan A. Gök-Börü oyunu. Gökbörü 1943; 1: 6.
26. Çay AM. Türk Ergenekon Bayramı Nevruz. 3rd Edition. Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1989.
27. Kunter HB. Eski Türk Sporları Üzerine Araştırmalar. İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1938.
28. Gezder N. Geleneksel Sporlarımızdan Atasporu Atlı Cirit. Erzurum: Hakikat Ofset, 2002.
29. Öztelli C. Cirit ve cirit oyunu üzerine. Geleneksel Türk Sporları Semineri Toplantı Kitabı. Ankara: Güven Matbaası, 1976.
30. Anonim. "Geleneksel Spor Dalları Federasyonu Atlı Cirit Müsabaka Talimatı". <http://www.gelenekselfed.gov.tr/tur/rsayfagor.asp?id=11/> 25.06.2012.
31. Batu S. Türk Atları ve At Yetiştirme Bilgisi. 3üncü Baskı. Ankara: Rüzgârlı Matbaa, 1962.