

## WRESTLING COMPETITIONS AND WRESTLING CHAMPION WRESTLERS AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES HELD TO HONOR GOD ZEUS

### COMPETIÇÕES DE LUTA LIVRE E CAMPEÕES DE LUTA LIVRE NOS JOGOS OLÍMPICOS REALIZADOS EM HOMENAGEM AO DEUS ZEUS

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#### Abstract

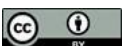
Ancient Greek society organized sports events to honor leaders and heroes. With the development of the belief structure, local events became more comprehensive. There were mythological gods in ancient Greek society that were connected to the belief system. However, festivals were organized only in honor of the great gods. As in civilizations throughout human history, ceremonies and festivals were organized in ancient Greek civilization to honor gods. The most important of the ceremonies organized for Zeus, one of the important gods of ancient Greek society, were the Olympic Games. Although the sports category was few when sports competitions in ancient Greek society began to be organized, new games were added in later periods. The most important of these games were wrestling competitions. Citizens who participated in the Olympic Games made superhuman efforts to honor God Zeus. As the popularity of the Olympic Games, which were initially held locally, increased, people came to compete, especially in wrestling. This study aims to explain the wrestling competitions in the Olympic Games organized in the name of God Zeus in the Ancient Greek and Hellenistic periods and to provide information about the wrestlers who managed to become champions in these competitions.

**Keywords:** Ancient Greece. God Zeus. Olympic Games. Wrestling.

#### Resumo

A sociedade da Grécia Antiga organizava eventos esportivos para homenagear líderes e heróis. Com o desenvolvimento da estrutura de crenças, os eventos locais tornaram-se mais abrangentes. Existiam deuses mitológicos na sociedade grega antiga que estavam ligados ao sistema de crenças. No entanto, festivais eram organizados apenas em homenagem aos grandes deuses. Como em civilizações ao longo da história da humanidade, cerimônias e festivais eram organizados na civilização grega antiga para honrar os deuses. A mais importante das cerimônias organizadas para Zeus, um dos deuses importantes da sociedade grega antiga, eram os Jogos Olímpicos. Embora as categorias esportivas fossem poucas quando as competições esportivas começaram a ser organizadas na sociedade grega antiga, novos jogos foram adicionados em períodos posteriores. Os mais importantes desses jogos eram as competições de luta. Os cidadãos que participavam dos Jogos Olímpicos faziam esforços sobre-humanos para honrar o deus Zeus. À medida que a popularidade dos Jogos Olímpicos, que inicialmente eram realizados localmente, aumentava, as pessoas vinham competir, especialmente na luta. Este estudo visa explicar as competições de luta nos Jogos Olímpicos organizados em nome do deus Zeus nos períodos da Grécia Antiga e Helenística e fornecer informações sobre lutadores que conseguiram se tornar campeões nessas competições.

**Palavras-chave:** Grécia Antiga. Deus Zeus. Jogos Olímpicos. Luta Livre.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

Although there is little evidence available concerning athletics in ancient Greek culture prior to the written period, the first games were most likely conducted during funeral rites. Funeral games were held with individual participation, such as running games and wrestling matches based on foot strength, and it is known that the objective of the games was to memorialize a departed hero or leader, depending on the belief system. With the evolution of Greek culture, events organized to commemorate departed persons and heroes in funeral rites took on heavenly honors, evolved into more extensive festivals, and achieved a new level.

As a result, the games that began as local events became into festivals in honor of the gods they worshipped. The Olympic Games were the first celebration to form in ancient Greek civilization based on a belief foundation. The Olympic Games are a national event founded largely to commemorate the God Zeus. Although the Olympic events were the earliest known celebration, they were conducted in a rudimentary format when they initially took place, and other events, particularly wrestling competitions, were added subsequently. The Nemean Games are another event honoring God Zeus. Chronologically, the Nemean Games took place after the Olympic Games at Zeus' vast temple. The Isthmian Games and Pythian Games were held to celebrate Apollo, another major deity in ancient Greek culture. As the number of game categories in the festivals grew, many individuals from surrounding areas, in addition to local athletes, competed for the title.

These games were also referred to as Crown Games, Period Games, and Sacred Games. The primary reason for these titles is because, while the games were held in the name of a deity and were founded on religion, the festivals lasted an average of four years. Wrestling tournaments were held at various festivals, similar to the Olympic Games, and rewards were given to athletes who became champions in each category, in line with the games' renown. Although these holidays originated with the Greek religion, they persisted until the Hellenistic and Roman centuries.

## 2 METHODS

In this research, the Olympic games organized to honor the God Zeus in the Ancient Greek and Hellenistic Periods, the wrestling competitions in the games and the wrestlers who became champions were examined. In the explanation of the study, methods suitable for the historical methodology were followed. In this direction, ancient and modern sources related to the research topic were scanned. As a result of the scans, the classification of ancient and modern sources related to our research topic was made. After the classifications, first the ancient sources related to our topic were examined and then the examination of modern sources was made. After the examinations made, our research topic was explained by processing it in accordance with the historical chronology.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Wrestling competitions at the Olympic Games held in honor of god Zeus

Games conducted locally in the 8th century BC became popular over time because they were devoted to the gods. Games in honor of Zeus, who was revered as the supreme god in ancient Greek civilization, became a tradition. Since the temple of the deity Zeus was located in the Olympia region, this village served as the hub of the games, and the name of the Olympic Games is derived from here. According to historical records, the first Olympic Games were staged in 776 BC to honor the deity Zeus. Initially, the Olympic Games only had a flat-running competition. The majority of those who participated in the running competition were citizens living in the Messene and Elis regions, which were close to the temple of Zeus. Since there was no other event in the program of the first Olympic Games, the festival ended on the same day and the next Olympic Games were to be held four years later and this four-year period concept was continuously applied. Besides, athletes competing in the games made great efforts to present all their skills at the highest level in order to honor the gods (Waldo, 1987: 217; Adkins-Adkins, 2005: 377-378; Martin, 2000: 46; Anderson, 2012: 31; Budin, 2004: 299;

Pearson, 2007: 65; Moulton, 1998: 82; Sacks, 2005: 230-231; Nardo, 2009: 65; Williams, 2009: 77; Williams, 2009: 9-10; Mikalson, 2010: 115; Baker – Baker, 1997: 47).

Even though the Olympic Games had a limited numbers of games at first; other events and sports contests were eventually introduced. In 724 BC, a new running event was added to the program of the 14th Olympic Games, and in subsequent Olympics, distances were added to these races, increasing the diversity of events (Miller, 2006: 47; Waldo, 1987: 217-236; Anderson, 2012: 31; Mikalson, 2010: 115). While the variety of running lengths changed over time, the wrestling category was established for the first time as a distinct game activity than running in the 18th Olympic Games, held in 708 BC. Although the term "wrestling" is often used now, it was known as "Pale" in antiquity. The location where wrestling training, training, and exercises were held was known as "*Palaestra*" or "*Palaistra*". Palaestra centers were essential social gathering places for many men to participate in sports. Palaestra facilities, in addition to serving as sports centers in several Ancient Greek towns, played an essential role in people's sociability. Moreover, boys were sent to Palaestra centers trained by trainers named "*Paidotribês*". The ancient name for the word wrestling, Pale and Palaestra, mean "*palm*". The origin of this meaning is based on the fact that wrestlers use their palms the most during the game (Plut. VIII, II. 4. 638; Gardiner, 1906: 4; Miller, 2006: 48-176-249; Sweet, 1987: 111-112; Adkins-Adkins, 2005: 236; Dillon - Garland, 2010: 9; Garland, 2009: 258-259; Batchelor, 2008: 216; Pearson, 2007: 33; Robinson, 1934: 112-140-142; Dombrowski, 2009: 24; Sacks, 2005: 367; Nardo, 2009: 244; Fain, 2010: 181; Williams, 2009: 50; Williams, 2009: 91-92; Mikalson, 2010: 105).

Wrestling events, in addition to running competitions, were active in the early stages, although they were not classed by height, weight, or age. The wrestlers would apply olive oil to their whole bodies before to the competition. The competition would start with two people standing opposite one another. Originally, the two opponents facing each other were referred to as "*systasis*" or "*standing together*". During the game, the athletes would lean in so that their foreheads touched, and the stronger player would hold the other person's shoulder and perform maneuvers from below and above the opponent. With these moves, when the opponents made counter-moves at the same time, they would try to throw each other to the ground. The rivals' move is referred to as "*meson echein*" or "*meson la bein*," with the terminological meaning of "holding the middle" or

"possessing." Another wrestling maneuver is a sort of neck hold in which leverage is utilized on the upper body by holding, known as "trachelizein" or "ankyrzein". The name "hooking" or "fasten" has been reported to refer to this move. The major objective of taking this action was to break the rival's balance.

Another action employed in wrestling contests is for athletes to grip each other, spin them around, and attempt to hurl each other to the ground. This maneuver is commonly utilized and referred to as "*Hedranstrephein*," which means "*turning the back*." However, if the athlete manages to grip the opponent's waist as a defensive maneuver, both may fall to the ground at the same moment, rendering the technique ineffective. Furthermore, biting and gouging the opponent's eyes were absolutely prohibited during Ancient Greek festival wrestling contests. According to the rules of wrestling, it was considered as heavy games and was seen in the dangerous sports category (Pearson, 2007: 44; Miller, 2006: 48; Adkins-Adkins, 2005: 454; Batchelor, 2008: 218; Moulton, 1998: 79; Sacks, 2005: 368; Williams, 2009: 75; Dombrowski, 2009: 18).

### **Figure 1**

*The "Systasis" position, which is the initial position in wrestling where two opponents stand together (Gardiner, 1905: 263).*



**Figure 2**

*Image is dated to approximately 510 BC “Black Figure Stamnos” Standing position in wrestling “Systasis” (Miller, 2006: 47).*

**Figure 3**

*In the image, the wrestler on the right uses his hands to unbalance his opponent by attacking with his left foot. The wrestling position in the image is probably “Hedranstrephein” (turning the back) (Miller, 2006: 49).*



In the wrestling match, the opponents tried to gain superiority over each other with these moves, and the person who managed to throw or knock down his opponent three times in a row without falling to the ground won the wrestling match. In the game, this approach is referred to as "triacter". This maneuver is also historically known as

"trilateral"(Miller, 2006: 50; Williams, 2009: 75; Batchelor, 2008: 218; Sacks, 2005: 368; Dombrowski, 2009: 18).

#### Figure 4

*In the image, he is trying to throw his opponent to the ground by holding his knee on the ground and grabbing his waist. This vase depicting a wrestling scene is dated to approximately 520 BC - 510 BC and was drawn by Phintias (Miller, 2006: 49).*



Though winning an Olympic competition was monetarily essential for the athlete, it was seen as a tremendous honor, particularly in terms of spirituality, and the competitor's home city was highlighted in terms of stature (Budin, 2004: 299). Many various trophies were awarded to athletes who won wrestling championships, but no honor was given to the competitor who finished second. Despite no financial award was granted at first, wreaths and crowns made of wild olive trees growing in the area where the Temple of Zeus, which had a spiritual value, was located, began to be given as awards (Phil. I, V. XXVI; Adkins-Adkins, 2005: 378; Sweet, 1987: 3-4; Martin, 2000: 46; Sacks, 2005: 231; Nardo, 2009: 66; Raaflaub - Wees, 2009: 527; Miller, 2006: 19).

Yet, when the winning athlete got back home in the Olympic Games held later, a victory procession was organized in his name by the people of the city as another means of reward and a certain amount of money was also given (Pomeroy - Burstein - Donlan - Roberts, 2004: 88). It is known from historical sources that the amount of financial reward

given to the winning athletes was approximately 500 drachmas (Sweet, 1987: 120). In addition, although financial rewards were given to the winning athletes of the Olympic Games, no participation fee was charged from male athletes participating in competitions in all categories, including wrestling. However, there were some special conditions regarding the participation of women. Married women were not permitted to attend the festivals due to the fear of death. Nevertheless, unmarried women could participate the festivals organized in honor of Hera, the wife of God Zeus (Martin, 2000: 46; Budin, 2004: 299; Dombrowski, 2009: 22).

### **3.2 Wrestlers who won championships in the Olympic Games**

The Olympic Games were the first complete celebrations organized by ancient Greek civilization to worship the gods. The Olympic Games, conducted every four years in honor of the deity Zeus, had records for athletes who competed in the festivals and won championships. Although the list of champion wrestlers in historical sources has not survived to the current day in its entirety, according to extant sources, Eurybatos of the Lysio area was the champion in the first game in which wrestling contests were held. Yet, since the alphabet was not completely established in ancient Greek civilization at the time of the wrestling bouts, and the documented list of winners is incomplete, it is unclear if Eurybatos was a wrestling champion. Despite these uncertainties, it is believed that the wrestler known as Eurybatos is linked to the King of Thessaly Eurytos in Greek mythology and was the first champion wrestler at the Olympic Games, according to extant records. Another contentious topic with Eurybatos is his participation in the competition. It is alleged that Eurybatos was not from Lysio but a citizen of Sparta. (Paus. II, V. VIII. 5-9; Fentonrose, 1968: 82; Sweet, 1987: 217-236; Christesen, 2007: 208-209; Christesen – Torlone, 2006: 84; Russo, 1999: 389; Golden, 2005: 65).

Eutelidas, a Spartan, won both the wrestling and pentathlon championships in the Olympic Games in 632 BC. Although little is known about the wrestler Eutelidas, the ancient writer Pausinas' narration and epigraphic finds have offered enough material (Paus. II, V. IX. 1-4; Golden, 2005: 65; Mahaffy, 1881: 173; Gardiner, 1903: 61; Christesen, 2010: 39; Sweet, 1987: 245). Although there is little information in historical sources about the wrestler Hetoemocles, who resided in the Sparta region in the sixth

century BC, he won several titles, just like his father Hipposthenes. Between 592 BC and 576 BC, he most likely won five Olympic wrestling championships, including his first in the young men's category (Paus, III, XIII. 9 - XIV. 2; Golden, 2005: 81-82; Hyde, 1914: 478; Hyde, 1911: 54; Hyde, 1914: 159).

Milo of Croton is the individual whose name is most known and about whom the most information has been acquired from sources dating back to the ancient Greek period. Milo, a resident of Crotona, a Greek colony in the Gulf of Southern Italy, competed in the first Olympic Games, held in 536 BC, and received the wrestling championship. Milo, who won his first championship in the Olympics in 536 BC, became champion in the wrestling category of the Olympic Games held from that date until 512 BC, and although some sources state that the number of championships was six, the general consensus is that he was champion seven times in total, one in the youth and one in the adult male category. Besides the Olympic Games, Milo of Croton became champion in the wrestling category of the Pythian Games, another Panhellenic festival, seven times, and became champion approximately 25 times in total. The greatest and most popular wrestler of the ancient world, Milo of Croton, attended in the Olympic Games in 512 BC to add another victory to his list, but was defeated by Timasitheus, who was also from Croton, and his long-standing championship and undefeated streak came to an end (Sweet, 1987: 244; Miller, 2006: 160; Garland, 2009: 264; Baker – Baker, 1997: 47; Batchelor, 2008: 220; Martin, 2000: 46; Sacks, 2005: 96; Fain, 2010: 224; Miller, 1979: 111; Bourantanis, 2019: 729).

Milo of Croton's renown has spawned several mythical and legendary legends about him. According to one myth of Milo of Croton's power, he carried a four-year-old cow on his shoulders around the stadium during the Olympic Games and then ate the animal himself. Similarly to this narrative, he carried the four-year-old cow on his shoulders to strengthen his shoulder muscles. Another famous narrative about Milo of Croton is that he was able to break a cord tied around his head by enlarging his veins while holding his breath. In addition, the Ancient Greek society says that Milo could stand firmly on a greased disc and that no one could throw him over the greased disc (Sweet, 1987: 244; Miller, 2006: 160; Dillon – Garland, 2010: 46; Garland, 2009: 264; Baker – Baker, 1997: 47; Batchelor, 2008: 220; Martin, 2000: 46; Moulton, 1998: 80; Fain, 2010: 225).

Milo of Croton is said to have won the championships without falling to his knees, and in other events, no one could oppose him owing to his power. Milo wrestled alone in one of his triumphs, and because there was no one else to continue, the championship crown had to be awarded in accordance with the regulations. However, Milo of Croton tripped and fell on his back while stepping up to accept his award. The crowd in the stadium chanted that he should not accept the prize since he fell. However, Milo of Croton defended himself by saying, “*A wrestler must fall three times to lose, I fell once.*” This situation was taken into consideration and according to the rules, Milo of Croton was given the championship crown (Sweet, 1987: 63-244; Miller, 2006: 50; Fain, 2010: 225; Miller, 1979: 29). Based on the legend about the death of Milo of Croton, Milo came across an old tree near Croton and, out of arrogance of his power, tried to split it by putting his hand in the crack. However, Milo got stuck in the tree with the branches that fell from the tree and was found and killed by wolves. An odd detail about Milo of Croton is the rumor that the Persian King Darius was an admirer of him (Georges, 1994: 199; Sweet, 1987: 244; Batchelor, 2008: 220).

Despite historical records provide little information about Timasitheus of Croton, who lived in the sixth century BC, it is known that he was the most famous wrestler of his day and won several wrestling competitions. Timasitheus overcame Milo, a Croton native, in the wrestling contests of the Olympic Games held in 512 BC and became the champion, ending Milo's long-standing title run. (Golden, 2005: 166; Linde, 2007: 22 – 44; Miller, 1979: 111; Sweet, 1987: 244; Kouřil, 2013: 770). Calliteles of Sparta, who lived in the 6th century BC, participated in the Olympic Games held approximately in 508 BC and became champion in the wrestling category (Nicholson, 2005: 37; Golden, 2005, 32). Epharmostus, a wrestler from the Opus area in the fifth century BC, won the wrestling championship at the Olympic Games in 468 BC. Epharmostus also won the championship in several Panhellenic games staged in conjunction with the Olympic Games. The Greek poet Pindar also wrote a joyous ode<sup>1</sup> to praise Epharmostus for

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<sup>1</sup>“*The song of Archilochus that echoed in Olympia,  
That triumphant hymn that swelled with three choruses,  
It was enough for Epharmostos to head towards the summit of Kronos,  
while he celebrated with his close friends.*” (Pindar, IX. 1-18; Pavlou, 2008: 541).

winning the Olympic Games (Pindar, IX. 1-18; Golden, 2005: 60; Philippides, 2009: 11; Christesen, 2007: 30–204).

Alcimedon, the son of Iphon from Aegina, participated in the wrestling category at the Olympic Games in 460 BC, defeating four of his opponents to win the championship. He has competed in other festivals and the Olympic Games, winning six championships (Golden, 2005:6; Golden, 2008:28). According to historical accounts, the wrestler known as Amesinas or Alesias, who lived in the Barce district, competed in the Olympic Games in 460 BC, defeating his opponents in the wrestling disciplines and winning the championship. A notable feature about this wrestler is that before becoming the Olympic Games champion, he prepared himself by battling a bull in preparation for the wrestling tournaments. (Brophy – Brophy, 1985: 176; Golden, 2005: 8). Yet, according to historical sources, there are some uncertainties regarding Amesinas' championship in 460 BC. In addition, in the inscription found and transferred by Kendal Smith, there is information that Agias' brother Telmaccuhus was the wrestling champion in the Olympic Games held in 464 BC. Based on this information, Julius Africanus is accepted as the wrestling champion in the Olympic Games held in 460 BC and Amesinas is thought to be the champion in the Olympic Games held in 444 BC (Smith, 1910: 174).

Leontiscus, a wrestler from Messena (Sicily), lived in the 5th century BC and became the champion in the wrestling competitions of the Olympic Games held in 456 BC and 452 BC. However, despite Leontiscus not being very strong physically, he managed to become the champion thanks to his finger bending skill. In addition, although finger bending was forbidden in wrestling matches, Leontiscus managed to adjust the level of it well. In addition, the finger bending method enabled Leontiscus to win the championship in the wrestling competitions of the Pytian Games. The finger bending method was later used by the wrestler Sostratus (Brophy – Brophy, 1985: 179-180; Gardiner, 1905: 271; Golden, 2005: 96; Miller, 2006: 50; Sweet, 1987: 84). Chimon from Argos won the championship crown by defeating Taurosthenes in the final of the wrestling competitions at the Olympic Games held in 448 BC (Golden, 2005: 37).

Amertas of Elis is considered to have lived in the 5th century BC, and according to historical sources, he participated in the Olympic Games held in 420 BC and won the championship in the wrestling category. He also participated in the Pytian Games held in Delphi and won the championship in the wrestling category (Crowther, 1988: 307;

Golden, 2005: 8). Aristodemus, a wrestler who lived in the Elian region, lived in the 4th century BC and became the wrestling champion in the Olympic Games. He also earned championships in other Panhellenic festivals (Gardner, 1879: 243; Golden, 2005: 16).

Chareon, a wrestler who lived in the Pellene region in the 4th century BC, won four championships in the wrestling competitions held in the Olympic Games between approximately 356 BC and 344 BC. In addition to being a wrestler, Chareon was also involved in philosophy and was a student of famous philosophers such as Plato and Xenocrates. After conquering the Peloponnese region, Macedonian King Alexander the Great appointed Chareon as a tyrant<sup>2</sup> to the Pellene people. However, the Pellene people living in the Peloponnese region did not show Chareon the respect he deserved (Golden, 2005: 33; Gottschalk, 1973: 98; Algra, 1999: 48).

Chilon, a wrestler who lived in the 4th century BC, won the championship in the wrestling category twice in the Olympic Games, approximately between 332 BC and 328 BC. Chilon also won the championship many times in other Panhellenic Games (Golden, 2005: 37). Colophonian wrestler Hermesianax lived in the 4th century BC. Hermesianax won the championship in the wrestling competitions in the Olympic Games held in 320 BC or 304 BC. Hermesianax's success was honored by Athenian and Colophonian ambassadors by erecting a monument in the Temple of Apollo in Claros (Catling - Kanavou, 2010: 109; Brunet, 2010: 117). Cratinus, a wrestler who lived in the Achea region in the 3rd century BC, participated in the Olympic Games held in approximately 272 BC and became champion in the young men's wrestling category. In addition, statues of Cratinus and the instructor were made, and he was described by Pausanias, one of the ancient writers, as the most handsome man and talented wrestler of his time (Lehmann, 2009: 190; Golden, 2005: 45). Euanoridas, who lived in the Elis region in the 3rd century BC, became champion in the wrestling category in the Olympic Games held in approximately 240 BC. Wrestler Euanoridas won the championship in the Nemean Games as well as the Olympic Games (Crowther, 1988: 308; Golden, 2005: 63). Paeonius, the son of Damatrius of Elis, became the champion in the wrestling competitions of the Olympic Games held in 216 BC. Yet, he later lost to Caprus (Kapros) in the wrestling

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<sup>2</sup>People who rebelled against the aristocrats who ruled the ancient Greek cities and took over them were called tyrants. The word tyrant, which comes from the root Tyrannos, was adopted as someone who seized power by force (Nardo, 2009: 334-335; Sacks, 2005: 357).

competition of the 212 BC Olympics. Wrestler Paeonius won the championship in the wrestling and boxing categories of the Delphic Games (Golden, 2005: 121; Crowther, 1988: 306-308).

Although there is not enough detail about him in historical sources, the Elian heavyweight athlete considered as Caprus or Kapros, who is known to have lived in the 3rd century BC, became champion in the wrestling category at the Olympics held in 212 BC by defeating Paeonius of Elis. In addition to wrestling, he became champion in the "*Pankration*"<sup>3</sup> category by defeating Clitomachus. Kapros was the first person to win two different championships in the heavyweight competition category (Paus. II. 507-509; Golden, 2005: 33; Forbes, 1939: 474; Christesen - Torlone, 2006: 58-88; Richards, 1893: 290; Christesen, 2007: 246; Young, 1989: 274).

Cleitostratus, who was from Rhodes, succeeded in the wrestling category at the Olympic Games held in 192 BC. Moreover, Cleitostratus is well known for grabbing him by the neck and strangling him (Gardiner, 1910: 401; Bedrasian, 2008: 68; Golden, 2005: 40; Kertész, 2009: 29). Hagesistratus, a wrestler who lived in the Lindus (Rhodes) region in the 2nd century BC, became champion in the youth wrestling category of the Olympic Games held in approximately 172 BC by defeating three of his opponents without a single fall. Hagesistratus father Polycreon, who was the first champion athlete from the Rhodes region to participate in the Olympics in the youth men's category, also won championship in the wrestling category at the Nemea Games (Golden, 2005: 76; Fuhrer, 1993: 92).

#### 4 CONCLUSION

In ancient Greek civilization, games conducted locally in the name of kings and heroes gradually evolved into games in honor of gods, taking on a national aspect. Citizens attended festivals and ceremonies to commemorate the gods they believed in, with the Olympic Games in the name of Zeus standing out above the others. The earliest Olympic Games consisted solely of running races, but as cultural development progressed, other sporting activities, particularly wrestling, were added to the schedule.

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<sup>3</sup>"*Pankration*", a type of combination of Wrestling and Boxing, was seen as a dangerous sports category. As a result of the moves made in Pankration matches, serious injuries occurred and sometimes the moves made led to death (Waldo, 1987: 4; Nardo, 2009: 66-246).

The wrestling division on the Olympic Games schedule was viewed as a risky and heavy sport. Wrestling was a hazardous sport, thus contests were held under certain restrictions. Furthermore, sports facilities for wrestling training were constructed, allowing players to undergo instruction under the supervision of instructors and better themselves via frequent training. In ancient Greek civilization, these athletic facilities where male wrestlers trained also served as social gathering places.

Initially, only individuals from local regions competed in the Olympic events, but as the events gained popularity, participation from more distant places was included. Competitors who were Olympic Games winners gained public recognition, and the city in which they competed rose to prominence. An attempt was made to expand the number of participants by not charging a participation fee to athletes competing in the Olympic Games, and those who participated were permitted to engage in subsequent Panhellenic Games at their leisure and fight for championships.

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### **Authors' Contribution**

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

### **Data availability**

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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