

## **Sport And Literature: An Overview of the Wrestling Combats in the Early Literary Texts**

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### **Abstract**

*Sport has always inspired different artists, starting from the art of painting and the art of sculpture to literature. Form its early beginnings, different wrestling combats have been described in literary texts. Some of them are real wrestling combats and some of them are symbolic. The aim of this study was to present, in the chronological order, wrestling combats in epic texts in different cultures. For their analysis, the authors have chosen ten texts from the Mesopotamian to Middle ages literature. Yet for all these challenges, the authors believe that this study of literary representation of wrestling was worthwhile because it provided us insight into the ways which literature and sport were always connected.*

**Key words:** literature; sport; wrestling

### **1. Introduction: Culture and play – the entire lifestyle of a society**

Umberto Eco once wrote "Sport is Man, Sport is Society" wishing to emphasize that sport represents a central cultural place in the mankind civilization (Eco, 1994). Etymologically, the word sport comes from the Latin word *deporto* (*deportare*), i.e. to carry around, to deliver, and to convey. Referring to Eco's words, sport and physical activities can be traced to the beginnings of recorded history i.e. from the days when people organized feasts and various games. In those days sport was not an institutionalized type of a game, but it was a part of everyday life. Or as Kokovic explains: "Sport was workers' game, ludic and magical lifestyle of working class people, 'qualified curs' whose aim was to prepare people for certain activities such as hunting, war, etc." (Koković, 1969). Two things led to a conclusion about the connection of sport and culture (Osmond & Phillips, 2011). On the one hand, fast growth of all kinds of sport led to a conclusion that sport was slowly becoming mass phenomenon, whether it was just concerning spectators or active participants. On the other hand, faster development of science and fields dealing with sport have been trying to explain the core and the function of sport in socio-cultural changes that have led to higher interest in sport.

When we say culture we immediately think about literature, art, painting, music, etc. Professor Huizinga, from the Leiden University, explained culture in a very picturesque way. He said the following: "in the process of development, every big form of collective life there is, primarily active and fertile [...] was born in a play, and continues to live in a form of a play. Wisdom and science were born from sacred competition games. Law was born from society play. Armed fight rules, and aristocracy convention lifestyle were also based on various forms of play. In a word, in its beginning phases culture was played. Culture is born from a play as a living fruit being cut of the mother plant, it develops in a play and as a play" (Huizinga, 2003). Therefore, according to the professor's words culture emerges from the play, i.e. play is the factor and the picture of every culture. Or as Haralambos and Holborn claim that culture is the entire lifestyle of a certain society (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

## 1.1 When the two worlds collide

Wrestling is one of the oldest sports that can be traced back to the beginnings of recorded history. In this article, the authors will bring an overview of ancient wrestling combats recorded in many different literary works and legends from all over the world. Some of the literary works and legends are over thousand years old. As it is impossible, for this stage of the study, to list all the literary works from all over the world in which we can read about the wrestling combat, we will present the chosen literary texts in a chronological order as they appear in today's literature from different cultures. In this way we will try to confirm hypothesis that wrestling, through art, connects different places and periods of time, as well as cultural and religious differences.

Weaponless combat sports have existed since prehistoric times. Some of the earliest accounts of wrestling can be found in wrestling mythology (F. P. Miller, Vandome, & John, 2010b), therefore we are not surprised that the descriptions of the wrestling competitions can be found in the early stages of literacy. As it has been, for thousands of years, the most popular combat sport, the strength and heroism of the ancient heroes and their memorable fights and competitions have been sung in many different earliest cultures (Mesopotamia, Egyptian, Greek, etc.) and their literary texts such as epics, epopees, essays, novels, etc. Many of those texts still live today written in the language of the time, never being transcribed into today's writing. Today we know for sure that wrestling is one of the oldest forms of combat with references to it as early as the Iliad, in which Homer recounts the Trojan War in the 13th or 12th century B.C. The origins of wrestling can be traced back 15,000 years through cave drawings in France. Babylonian and Egyptian reliefs depict wrestlers using most of the holds known to the present-day sport. Wrestling was a big part of ancient Greek literature, too. Wrestling competitions, brutal in many aspects, were the number one sport of the Olympic Games. The ancient Romans adopted the sport from the Greeks wrestling eliminating much of its brutality. During the Middle Ages (fifth century to fifteenth century) wrestling still remained popular. It even enjoyed the patronage of many royal families, including those of England, France, and Japan.

## 2. *An overview of the early epics with references to wrestling combats*

The first epic in which we can read about the wrestling combat is the Epic of Gilgamesh, the earliest known works of literature today. Scholars believe that it originates as a series of Sumerian legends and poems about a protagonist of the story, Gilgamesh, the king of Uruk, which were, later on, fashioned into a longer Akkadian epic. The epic became well known thanks to its many themes, plot elements, and characters that can be found in the Hebrew Bible in two places - in the stories of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (both stories involve a serpent), as well as in the story of Noah (A. R. George, 2003). Although today we can read a revised version based on newly discovered and published information, the epic is still not complete (A. George, 2003).

This literary work of art tells a story about a relationship between Gilgamesh and his close male companion, Enkidu. According to the story, Gilgamesh was one-third man and two-thirds god. On the one hand he was very wise, strong and handsome but, on the other hand, he was a very cruel ruler who oppressed the citizens, tortured his aliens, and raped women. At one point Gods decided to make him an equal opponent. They created a primitive man, Enkidu, covered with hair, who lived in the wild with animals. When the shepard trapper first found him he brought him a temple prostitute, Shamhat, in order to do the first step in his civilization so he could be taken to town. Gilgamesh and Enkidu met in Uruk at a wedding where Gilgamesh attempted to visit the wedding chamber. Enkidu blocked his way and they immediately started wrestling. The wrestling fight lasted all night, and when the morning came they became friends. Later on Gilgamesh and Enkidu fought in many dangerous quests that incurred the displeasure of the gods. In their final fight together they killed the Bull of Heaven sent by the goddess Ishtar. The result was disastrous. Gods decided to kill one of the heroes, Enkidu. Gilgamesh distressed and swallowed with sadness took a long and perilous journey to meet the immortal flood hero, Utnapishtim. Eventually, Gilgamesh got killed in that journey.

Furthermore, Iliad and Odyssey is one of the most important epics of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The main problem is that we still do not know anything about its author, Homer. He may have lived around 800 B.C. or somewhat earlier or later. One common legend about him was that he was blind. That story leans on the hypothesis that Demodokos, a blind poet in Odyssey, is the incarnation of Homer himself. Beyond this, there is no solid information. In his epics Homer speaks about semi-mythical events that happened between 1200 B.C. and 800 B.C.

Two wrestling matches, the first between a mythological Greek hero Ajax and Odysseus and the second between Peleus and Atlanta, epic are of our particular interest. When Achilles was killed, Ajax and Odysseus brought his body and weapons into a camp. At the funeral ceremony, held in honor of the deceased hero, the sport events were held. Goddess Thetis, mother of Achilles, decided that who won in a wrestling match may take with him Achilles' armor and weapon. Ajax and Odysseus, drawn by the reward, decided to fight. After a long and exhausting match there was no winner. Nestor suggested that the Trojans prisoners, who witnessed the match, should decide on who the winner should be. They decided that it should be Odysseus. Furious Ajax suddenly lost his common sense. He took out his sword and slaughtered all the cattle standing in front of the camp thinking it were the enemies. Seeing what he had done, he took his own life.

There is, in addition, another wrestling combat recorded in the same epics. This story concerns Peleus, Thetis's husband, and Achilles' father. According to Apollodorus, Greek scholar and grammarian (Smith, 1880), at the funeral games honoring Pelias, Atlanta entered the wrestling contests. Here she gained more fame by scoring a victory over Peleus.

Another significant wrestling combat can be traced in The Bible. Today we know that the Bible, referring to any one of the collections of the primary religious texts of Judaism and Christianity, was written between 1513 B.C. and 98 A.D. In it one wrestling match has been in the focus of many discussions between the Muslims, on one side, and the Christians and the Jew, on the other. Jacob wrestling with the Angel is a biblical story commonly depicted in art. The story appears in the Chapter 32 of Genesis, and in the Chapter 12 of the Book of Hosea. Depending on the source text, the being with which Jacob wrestled is variously described. Once that being is an angel, once a man, and sometimes even God. However, the event occurred during Jacob's journey back to Canaan. He rose up that night, and took his two wives, two women servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. Jacob was left alone.

That night he wrestled with a man until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. The man asked Jacob to let him down but Jacob refused to give in and pleaded for a blessing from his opponent. The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon (Publishers, 2008).

For well over 1,000 years, sacred stories and heroic epics have also been a part of the Hinduism mythology (Dowson, 1870). It is interesting to mention that the history of sports in India dates back to the ancient times with references found in the Vedas and Indus Valley Civilization. In Villas Mani Majra, Tiruvudacharya describes many fascinating games (Bloomfield & Sūrya, 1964), namely, archery, equitation, hammer-throwing and chariot-racing. In Manas Olhas (1135 A.D.), Someshwar writes about bhrashram (weight-lifting), bhramanshram (walking) and also about Mall-Stambha wrestling (Rao).

In addition, the Vedas being a large body of texts, composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism, contain an anecdote on the wrestling match (Dallapiccola, 2002). Krishna, the central figure of Hinduism, is traditionally attributed the authorship of the Bhagavad Gita, also more simply known as Gita. Gita is a 700-verse Hindu scripture that is part of the ancient Sanskrit epic, the Mahabharata, but is frequently treated as a freestanding text, and in particular, as an Upanishad in its own right, one of the several books that constitute general Vedic tradition. Among its eighteen chapters, chapter forty-four brings the wrestling match between Krishna and Kamsa. Kamsa or Kansa was the brother of Devaki, and ruler of the Vrishni kingdom. His father was King Ugrasena and his mother was Queen Padmavati. However, upon the advice of his personal confidante, Banasura, Kamsa decided to overthrow his father and install himself as the King of Mathura. Kamsa was told in a prophecy that the eighth child of Devaki would kill him one day. As he did not want to kill Devaki he decided to imprison both Devaki and her husband, Vasudeva. In the confines of the prison, Devaki repeatedly conceived, and an enraged Kamsa murdered the first six children. The seventh child, Balarama, was saved when he was moved to Rohini's womb.

The eighth child born to Devaki and Vasudeva was Krishna. Krishna was saved from Kamsa's wrath and raised by a cowherd couple, Nanda and Yasoda. But when Kamsa heard that Krishna, the eight children, was alive he decided to kill him. He called Krishna and Balarama to the "Harbour festival" where a wrestling match was to be held. The two brothers defeated Kamsa's wrestlers in a match. Kamsa was prepared for Krishna's attack, for he knew from the beginning that He was to be the cause of his death. He immediately unsheathed his sword and prepared to answer the challenge of Krishna with sword and shield. As Kamsa wielded his sword up and down, hither and thither, Krishna caught hold of him with great force knocking the crown from his head. He then dragged Kamsa from his seat to the wrestling dais and threw him down. Then Krishna at once straddled his chest and began to strike him over and over again. Simply from the strokes of Krishna's fist, Kamsa was killed (Prabhupada, 1970).

Another example of the connection between sport and literature can be found in the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana (Datta, 1988). The oldest preserved parts of the Mahabharata are not thought to be appreciably older than around 400 B.C., though the origins of the story probably date between the 8th and 9th centuries B.C. It is in this epic that we find the longest described wrestling match. It happened between Bheema, one of five Phandva brothers, and Jarasandha, a great and legendary king of Magadha.

Yudhisthira, king of Indraprastha and later of Hastinapura (Kuru) and the leader of the Pandava side in the Kurukshetra War, was planning to make a Rajasuya yagna, a sacrifice performed by the ancient kings of India who considered themselves powerful enough to be an emperor (Dowson, 1870), in order to become an emperor himself. Krishna convinced him that Jarasandha was the only obstacle to oppose Yudhisthira from becoming an emperor. Krishna planned a clever scheme to make Bheema wrestle with the proud but ageing Jarasandha. The wrestling match lasted 27 days. They wrestled in the Malla-yuddha way, i.e. in a way that was to become the traditional South Asian form of combat-wrestling (Alter, 1992). Krishna knew the secret by which Jarasandha could be killed. Since Jarasandha was brought to life when the two lifeless halves joined together, conversely, he can be killed only when his body was torn into two halves. Krishna took a stick, broke it into two and threw them in both directions. Bheema got the hint. He tore Jarasandha's body into two and threw the pieces in two directions. But, these two pieces came together and Jarasandha was able to attack Bheema again. Bheema got tired after several such futile attempts. He again sought the help of Krishna. This time, Krishna took a stick, broke it into two and threw the left piece on right side and the right piece on the left side. Bheema precisely followed the same. Now, he tore Jarasandha's body into two and threw them in opposite directions. Thus, Jarasandha was killed as the two pieces could not merge into one.

Other early literary descriptions of wrestling matches, in the ancient epics of India, include the story of Balarama, and the Ramayana's account of the vanara king Vali defeating Ravana, the king of Lanka, in a wrestling contest. Also, there are stories describing Krishna report that he was sometimes engaged in wrestling matches where he used knee strikes to the chest, punches to the head, hair pulling, and strangleholds (Green & Svinth, 2010).

Persian poet Hakim Abol-Ghasem Ferdowsi Toosi (c.977 and 1010 A.D.) left us the work of central importance in Persian culture, also regarded as a literary masterpiece and the classics of the world, The Shahnameh or Shahnama, in translation "The Book of Kings". The Shahnameh is a long epic poem consisting of some 60,000 verses (Davis, 2006). In it the poet immortalizes the ancient legendary kings and heroes of Iran from the creation of the world until the Islamic conquest of Persia in the 7th century. In the epic tale, Suhrab and his father Rustam, the preeminent protagonist of the Shahnama, have never met. Suhrab was in perpetual search of his father, whom he knew to be Rustam, but whose face he did not know. When they finally do meet, it was on the war battlefield between Iran and Turan, neither knew that they were father and son. As no one else dared to fight Rostam, Sohrab, known as the best young fighter of Turan army, was sent to wrestle with the legendary Persian hero. His plan was to attack Iran, install Rustam on the Iranian throne and then they would attack Turan and together rule the world. They started to wrestle. After the first day of battle, Suhrab's taste of victory and boast was contrasted with Rustam's dread of possible defeat. For him to withdraw from battle was unthinkable; on the other, to continue in battle meant possible defeat and therefore lost of his reputation before two watching armies, which was also unthinkable. On the battle field, without stating the reason, Sohrab told his rival that he would not fight against Rostam. Thus Rostam did not reveal his name. After a very long and heavy wrestle, Rostam felt weak and afraid to spoil his reputation, so he stabbed his son in the heart. Tahmina, who came to the field to keep them from bloodshed, was too late and Sohrab died on his mourning father's hands (Arnold & Trent, 2005).

Vision of Saint Perpetua – Martyr from Carthage, offers a very significant wrestling match between good and evil. Vibija Perpetua is a 22-year-old Cristian from noble Cartage family (Roman province of Africa). In the morning of the 7th March 203, because of her religious convictions, she was executed in arena with other martyrs (Barker, 2010). Saturus companion of Perpetua recorded their own visions. Her last vision was:

*On the eve of the martyrdom Perpetua has yet another vision: she sees herself, as a male athlete anointed with oil, wrestling and overcoming an immense Egyptian in the arena, - a symbol of the devil (Shaw, 1993).*

Another example of sport being a part of a literary work can be found in the Old English heroic epic poem, Beowulf. Beowulf consists of 3182 alliterative long lines, and is often cited as one of the most important works of Anglo-Saxon literature. The name of the poet who assembled from tradition the materials of this story and put them in their final form is still unknown to us. Nobody knows for certain when the poem was first composed. It is believed that the work was composed between the 8th (Heiatt & Heiatt, 1988; Tolkien, 1974) and the early 11th century (Kiernan, 1997). In more than 3,000 lines long, Beowulf, a classic tale of the triumph of good over evil, relates the exploits of its eponymous hero neatly into three acts i.e. three successive battles - with a monster, named Grendel, with Grendel's revengeful mother, and with a dragon which was guarding a hoard of treasure. The poem opens in Denmark. Grendel, a troll-like monster, was terrorizing the kingdom. The Geatish prince Beowulf heard of his neighbors' plight, and sailed to their aid with a band of warriors (sec I-II). Beowulf and his men spent the night in Heorot. Beowulf bore no weapon as Grendel was immune to human weapons. After they fell asleep, Grendel entered the hall and attacked, devouring one of Beowulf's men. Then he clenched Grendel's hand. The two wrestled until it seemed as though the hall might collapse. Finally, in a wild wrestling match Beowulf tore Grendel's arm from his body (III-XII) at the shoulder and Grendel ran to his home in the marshes to die. Victorious, Beowulf went home to Geatland in Sweden and later became king of the Geats.

Very short, but nevertheless less important story comes from Japan. Kojiki, the oldest extant chronicle in Japan which dates from the early 8th century (Chamberlain, 2008), is a collection of myths concerning the origin of the four home islands of Japan, and the Kami. According to the story Japanese Emperor Temmu, during the 7th century, set about to correct inconsistencies within the national history contained in the various Teiki and Kyūji circulating with the nobles. He sorted through them and commanded Heido-no-Are to memorize them all. He was renowned for his intelligence and brightness. Later, Empress Gemmei ordered Ō no Yasumaro to compile the Kojiki based on what Are had memorized. This was completed in 712. What is of a particular interest for this study is a story that describes two Japanese gods, Takemikazuchi and Takeminekata. As the Japanese coast was so beautiful each of the two gods wanted it for themselves. They made an agreement. One who wins in a wrestling match gets to rule over that part of a land. They wrestled at the Izumo coast. The winner set his own deputy to rule that area. That deputy was the future Japanese emperor.

The last notable written document that we took as an example of the connection between sport and literature dates from the 12th century. It tells the story about Gogmagog, a legendary giant of such prodigious strength in British folklore, who, to the 12th Century *Historia Regum Britanniae*, was a giant inhabitant of Albion thrown off a cliff during a wrestling match with Corineus, a companion of Brutus of Troy (F. P. Miller, Vandome, & John, 2010a; Monmouth & Faletra, 2007). According to Geoffrey of Monmouth's account when Brutus was holding a feast with his companions in Totnes some twenty giants led by Goëmagot descended on the company who made a dreadful slaughter. At last the giants were routed and slain except for Goëmagot who was captured so that Corineus could wrestle with him. At the beginning of the encounter, Corineus and the giant, standing, front to front, held each other strongly in their arms, and panted aloud for breath, but Goëmagot presently grasping Corineus with all his might, breaking three of his ribs, two on his right side and one on his left. At which Corineus, highly enraged, roused up his whole strength, and snatching him upon his shoulders, ran with him, as fast as the weight would allow him, to the next shore, and there getting upon the top of a high rock, hurled down the savage monster into the sea; where falling on the sides of craggy rocks, he was torn to pieces, and colored the waves with his blood. The place where he fell, taking its name from the giant's fall, was, and still is, called Lam Goëmagot, that is, Goëmagot's Leap, to this day (Evans, 2008).

### 3. Discussion

It is an interesting fact that, in ancient times, athletes anointed their bodies with oil as Perpetua saw in her vision (Christoph, 1979). During the Ancient Greek Olympic games wrestlers first anointed their bodies with olive oil then they dusted them with powder to make them easier to grasp. There is a variant of oil wrestling in the modern Turkey, called *Kirkpinar*. National Turkish wrestling is a very old sport so it is possible that it may be the west-Anatolian variant of Greek wrestling in ancient times (C. Miller, 2004). When the Romans conquered the Greeks, they absorbed Greek wrestling and competitions that took place in the Roman Arena just as Perpetua saw in her vision. Wrestling combats took place along with more brutal and more popular gladiatorial combats and other usual arena activity. Even the immense Egyptian, Perpetua's opponent, is a logical choice. In ancient Egyptian culture wrestling was extremely popular. Wrestling motif was common in Egyptian literary and material culture (Poliakoff, 1987). To overcome a Nubian wrestling champion, during the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaton-a (1353 - 1336 B.C.), was a great honor (Carroll, 1988). We can assume that in the ancient Rome (1500 years after) approximately the same honor was to overcome the Egyptian wrestling champion.

It is interesting how we can connect Perpetua's vision with the wrestling history and wrestling matches described by Homer (Cowper & Johnson, 1791). All other mentioned literary works do not pay too much attention on wrestling details, but they rather talk about the strength of the heroes, intensity of the battle and/or about the duration of the battle. For example, we read about Gilgamesh and Enkidu holding each other like bulls shattering the doorpost. Also, during the Corineus and Goëmagot's fight was so loud and fearful that all the people around them thought there must have been an earthquake somewhere. Today, matches between equal opponents can also last very long. Let us remember the match held during the Olympic Games in Sweden 1912. It was a match between Martin Klein representing from Russia and Alfred Asikainen representing Finland. The match lasted 11 hours and 40 minutes. It is the longest match in the modern wrestling history. Yudhisthira and Bheema wrestled for 27 days, Rustam and Sohraba wrestled for 2 days, Jacob and Angel wrestled until dawn, while Ajax and Odysseus wrestled in a long and exhausting match.

In the considered literary texts all the main characters win their duels, except the Odysseus. Rustam, Bheema, Krišna and Corineus solve the fight by killing the opponent; Bheema even pulls apart the opponent's body into two. Beowulf does not kill Grendel but he pulls apart Grendel's arm from his body. Even Angel hurts Jacob's thigh. In ancient times, wrestling, as the most popular sport, had lot of forms. Malla-yudha South Asian form of combat-wrestling was very brutal. In ancient China the Shuai jiao was a form of folk wrestling, and Jiao li was a form of a very brutal match of Shuai jiao which supplemented throwing techniques with strikes, blocks and joint locks. Wrestling was also a part of ancient Greek Pankration (combination of wrestling and boxing) which was a brutal martial art with recorded deaths (Galen & Singer, 1997; Nomikos, Nomikos, Mavrogenis, & Papagelopoulos, 2008; Poliakoff, 1987).

There are also different forms of wrestling which are based on rules which forbid brutality and potentially dangerous grips. We find the examples of such matches in literary texts. For examples, Homer describes a hero overcoming his opponent by the rules, while in the Japanese fight of the gods and Gilgamesh the match is also won by the surrender of the opponent. In ancient Greek wrestling fights and also wrestling trainings were very painful and sometimes very brutal. But as the audience knew the rules very well they preferred a fair fight. Judges and even audience influenced on regularity of the wrestling fights in Homer's Greece (Nomikos, et al., 2008; Poliakoff, 1987). So the outcome of the fights which he described is quite logical.

In all epic fights we expect the fair fight from the main hero; these works often carry an educational message to the reader, but not in all these battles. After all night of wrestling Angel injured Jacob to end the fight. When Rostam realized that he could lose the fight and his honor he stabs the dagger in Sohrabas heart. These endings do not coincide with modern moral principles but we must take into consideration the time and conditions when these works are written as well as plot of the tale. The heroes of these epic fights had different motives. Odysseus fights to win the Achilles's armor and weapon, Krišna, Jarasindha and Japanese gods wrestle for land, Corineus and Beowulf wrestle to save their people from monstrous terror. Atlanta wrestles just to overcome the opponent, while Gilgamesh ends the fight with epic friendship. Even with interesting wrestling details, Perpetua's fight is a pure symbolic one. In her struggle she overcomes the evil and prepares herself for martyrdom in the Roman arena. As we can conclude, differences caused by the temporal, geographic, cultural and religious distances have been connecting wrestling through history from the early beginnings of the humankind.

#### 4. Conclusion

Stories are used to present different contents from life. We can retell something from the everyday life, ancient history, or even something that never happened (Peleš & Marotti, 1999). Written analyses of literary representation of sport of the past, in our case of wrestling, are demanding and very complex tasks. First of all, they require finding translations of the original literary works. The complexity of history and ancient literary texts require from the writer to contextualize and recontextualize the period in which they were written. Yet for all these challenges, examination of literary representation of wrestling was worthwhile because it provided us insight into the ways which literature and sport were always connected, presented, and transmitted. By reading the abovementioned literary works in the present we are able to understand better the literary works of today that present the same connection of sport and literature, in a slightly different way, as did those from the past. In addition, the authors believe that there is a need for the further research that would gather new international references to advance this argument.

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