



ATLI CİRİT

THE ANCIENT TURKISH EQUESTRIAN JAVELIN SPORT

A LEGACY FROM THE STEPPES

From Military Training to National Heritage

ROOTS IN CENTRAL ASIA & EMPIRE

ANCIENT FOUNDATIONS

Originating from the nomadic Turkish tribes of Central Asia, **Cirit** was brought to Anatolia in the 11th century. It served as a vital method for warriors to hone their battle reflexes on horseback.

OTTOMAN PROMINENCE

During the Ottoman era, it became the empire's foremost martial sport. Sultans like Bayezid I used Cirit to train their cavalry, producing a superior class of riders known as *Cüнди*.



FIELD, TEAMS, AND EQUIPMENT

THE ARENA (ALAN)

Matches take place on a rectangular field typically 120-140m long. Soft soil or sand is used to ensure the safety of the horses during high-speed maneuvers.



THE JAVELIN (STICK)

Constructed from poplar, oak, or date wood, the javelins are 70-100cm long. Modern sticks have rounded tips and are lighter to minimize injury risks.

TEAM COMPOSITION

Teams usually consist of 7 main players and 2 substitutes. Riders wear traditional regional costumes reminiscent of Ottoman Sipahi cavalry.

THE VIRTUE OF MERCY

"To forgive an opponent when you have a clear shot is the highest form of victory in the Cirit field."

— Traditional Turkish Sporting Proverb

*Unlike most competitive sports, Cirit awards points for **restraint**. Choosing not to strike a vulnerable or fleeing opponent demonstrates the "honor" (erdem) central to the game.*

STRENGTH, SPEED, AND SYNCHRONY



THE MASTER RIDER

A Cirit player must possess exceptional balance and reflexes. They often hang from the side of the horse or lean under its neck to dodge flying javelins.

THE NOBLE STEED

Medium-height horses are preferred for their agility. Arabian and Turkoman breeds are common, trained specifically to be fearless during the chaos of the chase.

THE FLOW OF BATTLE

THE CHALLENGE

A rider gallops toward the opposing line and shouts the name of an opponent.

THE ATTACK

The javelin is thrown while galloping at high speed towards the target.

THE RETREAT

The attacker turns back immediately to escape to their own safety zone.

THE PURSUIT

The challenged player chases the attacker to strike back before they reach home.



A PRECISION-BASED SCORING SYSTEM

Action Performed	Point Impact	Classification
Hitting an Opponent with the Javelin	+4 Points	Successful Attack
Forgiving (Not hitting a vulnerable opponent)	+10 Points	Sportsmanship (Affetme)
Catching a Flying Javelin in Mid-Air	+3 Points	Reflex Skill
Hitting the Opponent's Horse Intentionally	-3 Points	Serious Foul
Throwing from Inside the Forbidden Zone	-1 Point	Technical Error
Falling off the Horse during Play	-3 Points	Loss of Control

PRESERVING LIVING HERITAGE

 Wide Stadium View Erzurum



UNESCO RECOGNITION

Atlı Cirit is recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, protected by the Turkish Traditional Sports Federation.



GLOBAL APPEAL

Beyond competition, Cirit serves as a major draw for cultural tourism, showcasing the deep-rooted Turkish bond with the horse.

NATIONAL CENTERS

Today, Erzurum, Kars, and Uşak are the hearts of the sport, hosting grand festivals that draw thousands of spectators.

QUESTIONS?

Thank you for exploring the world of Atlı Cirit.

TRADITIONAL SPORTS FEDERATION | ANKARA, TURKEY

IMAGE SOURCES



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Source: www.youtube.com



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