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WEAPONS PRODUCTION IN KALKANDELEN (TETOVO) IN THE NINETEENTH AND BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

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Abstract. *Tetovo is located in North Macedonia today. Known as Kalkandelen during the Ottoman period, it was one of the most important Balkan cities, where the inhabitants produced a considerable number and quality of weapons in their private workshops from the eighteenth century onwards. In the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, the large number of gunsmiths in the town were highly skilled. During the reign of Sultan Mahmut II, pistols were produced in the town for the new Ottoman army. Some manufacturers also traded in these weapons. The central government took various measures to monopolise the production of these weapons. Despite all the measures, weapons manufacturing and repair processes in the town could never be completely stopped.*
Keywords: *Kalkandelen*, *weapons production*, *Rumelia*, *Ottoman period*, *census registers*.

Introduction

Tetovo is a city that today lies within the borders of the Republic of North Macedonia. In the fourteenth century, the city came under Ottoman rule. It was first attached to the Pasha sanjak, then to Skopje, and in the second half of the nineteenth century to the province of Kosovo. From the eighteenth century onwards, the Ottoman city of Kalkandelen (Tetova) emerged as one of the most significant urban centres in the Balkans, where local artisans produced a substantial number and high-quality of weapons in private workshops.[1] From the nineteenth to the twentieth century, there was a notable increase in weapon production and trade in Kalkandelen. In the early 1900s, weapons production in Kalkandelen began to exceed 50 rifles per week and more than 5,000 rifles annually.[2] During the nineteenth century, separatist movements in Rumelia were gaining momentum. A significant portion of the weapons produced in the city ended up in the hands of separatist groups aiming to detach Macedonia from Ottoman rule. These weapons were largely used against the Ottoman government.

Although there are previous studies on this subject, this study examines previously unexplored census registers/population registers related to Kalkandelen. Unlike profit registers (*temettüat*), which aimed to register only

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[1] Külçe 1944, p. 382.
[2] BOA, Meclisi Vükela Mazbataları 113/48, H.28.02.1324/M.23.04.1906.

taxpayers, census registers aimed to identify the entire male population of a city. These population registers are among the most valuable sources for understanding the socio-economic conditions of the Ottoman provinces.

The city's first detailed population register (*mufassal nüfus defteri*), dating from 1833, contains significant data related to the guild of gunsmiths in Kalkandelen. Based on the 1833 register, it appears that, contrary to the dividend profit register, weapons production by the inhabitants of Kalkandelen in the first half of the nineteenth century was not limited to the manufacture of rifles. The city housed masters and apprentices from nearly every branch of the weapons industry, particularly pistol. Although weapon production and trade activities in Kalkandelen are mainly associated with the latter half of the nineteenth century, entrepreneurial activities in this field were widespread in the first half of the nineteenth century. In fact, both the census register and the semi-annual register (*yoklama defterleri*) indicate that even as early as the 1830s, there were many entrepreneurs in the city, primarily pistol merchants, who travelled to different cities in the Ottoman region to sell weapons and to trade in rifles and pistol parts (gunstock, barrels, etc.). In our study, newly discovered census registers are used for the first time to explore this subject, supplemented by additional profit registers from two different neighbourhoods of the city. Consequently, it has been determined that in 1842–1843 there were many individuals within the city's population who earned their livelihood through weapons production.

After the abolition of the Janissary Corps, the state became one of the customers of Kalkandelen's weapon production industry, which members of the city's population had carried out for centuries in order to support themselves. However, from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, when the Ottoman regime was trying to re-establish a central administration, these activities, which were closely monitored by the Ottoman government and caused great difficulties for Istanbul, especially in the era of nationalist revolts. Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the city became a black market for weapons in the Balkans, and was used by the separatist groups in Rumelia. Despite measures taken by the Ottoman government, such as bringing weapons producers to Istanbul or closing their shops, by 1910, Kalkandelen had evolved into a huge weapons shop within the province of Kosovo and became known as a place where weapons were manufactured and repaired.

An evaluation of the use of weapons in the Ottoman Empire

Gábor Ágoston notes that during a series of campaigns in the late fourteenth century in the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire began to encounter firearms, and suggests that Serbian forces, who intermittently served in the Ottoman army from 1386 onwards, might have transferred these new weapons to the

Ottomans.[3] In the Battle of Ankara (1402), the majority of the reinforcements sent to support Bayezid I (1389–1402) from Serbia were also infantry armed with rifles.[4] Recent research has conclusively proven claims that in the fifteenth century, starting with the rebellion of Düzmece Mustafa, followed by the capture of Thessaloniki and the Battle of Varna in 1444, cannons and rifles were indeed used.[5] This establishes without doubt that the Ottoman infantry was equipped with rifles at least as far back as the Battle of Varna.[6] It also establishes that the Ottoman military had a broad inventory, particularly in terms of rifles. Within the palace organisation, there were masters known as the rifleman community (*tüfengciyan cemaati*) who were responsible for manufacturing and repairing rifles. Throughout both the classical and modern periods, the empire produced rifles and various other weapons through state-owned workshops which employed personnel regardless of religious differences.[7] The empire also often acquired rifles and other weapons as war booty and frequently procured them through trade routes.[8] Additionally, in many cities in Anatolia and Rumelia, weapons were produced in private workshops. Sources indicate that the Janissaries preferred those made in these civilian workshops over those produced by the state.[9] In various cities of Rumelia, there were towns where light weapons such as rifles, pistols, etc. were produced in almost every period, as cited in many sources.[10]

The Ottoman central administration tried to keep weapons and their production under control in every period, given they were among the most important elements that could lead to violence. In the sixteenth century, various measures were taken by the state to prevent possible public order problems due to the widespread use of weapons, especially rifles, among the population. With an order issued by the imperial Ottoman Council (*Divan-ı Hümayun*) in 1568, it was forbidden for rifle-makers in the capital to produce rifles in their own workshops, to erase the markings on the state-owned rifles, or to sell them to individuals.[11] Therefore, from the sixteenth century onwards, it can be inferred that the Ottoman central administration attempted to minimise private-sector involvement in weapons production as much as possible.

In the seventeenth century, there were 400 workshops of various sizes of the Ottoman Imperial Armoury (*Tüfenkhane-i Amire*) in Unkapanı,

[3] Ágoston 2020, p. 121.
[4] Aydüz 1998, p. 787–788.
[5] İlgürel 1979, p. 301.
[6] Emecen 2019, p. 342.
[7] Soyluer 2018, p. 273. For the Ottoman arms imports and land warfare industry in the nineteenth century, see also Tetik, Soyluer 2017, p. 141–172.
[8] Soyluer 2018, p. 269.
[9] Ágoston 2020, p. 162.
[10] For examples, Nigbolu, Herek, Taşlıca and Pazarcık (Emecen 2011, p. 94).
[11] Demir et al. 2021, p. 32.

Istanbul, and state-owned rifle manufacturing workshops in Odunkapısı and Divanyolu.[12] During the Nizam-ı Cedid reforms[13] in the eighteenth century, alongside the centralisation of the army, efforts were made to consolidate control over the weapons industry. A workshop was established at Levent Çiftliği initially, and later a new rifle manufacturing centre was built in Dolmabahçe. These centres not only aimed at mass production but also at training Turkish weapon-makers by employing foreign experts.[14] Despite all efforts, due to the inadequacy of production in Istanbul, weapons and weapon components made in places like İslimye (Sliven) in the Balkans were also sent to the capital.[15]

There were still attempts to produce weapons in Istanbul during the reign of Selim III (1789–1807) but these efforts did not achieve the desired level of success. Things continued in a similar state during the reign of Mahmut II (1808–1839). A correspondence dated February 1821 shows that the capital's gunsmiths were only able to produce 50–60 rifles per week, thus failing to meet the needs of the Ottoman Imperial Armoury, a product of the classical period, in the nineteenth century.[16] Therefore, after the disbandment of the Janissary Corps, efforts were made to meet the urgent need for weapons required by the newly established Victorious Soldier of Muhammad (*Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*) through both imports[17] and local/civilian weapon-makers. In this context, based on a decree dated 22 November 1827, it is understood that gunsmiths in the capital were employed at the Ottoman Imperial Armoury.[18] Additionally, after 1826, Sultan Mahmud II had the majority of pistols and rifles manufactured for his new army primarily by Rumelian master weapon-makers, especially those based in Kalkandelen.[19]

After 1826, the Ottoman central administration began to rely on civilian manufacturers for weapons production, but this was a short-term solution. In the early 1830s, in order to centralise and monopolise the production of weapons, a plan was hatched to expand the Imperial Armoury to produce rifles and light weapons and to train qualified personnel.[20] The English woman Julia Pardoe, who was in Istanbul in 1836, recorded in her observations on weapons

[12] Seetzen 2017, vol. 1, p. 72.
[13] Nizam-ı Cedid – the name of the modernisation movements initiated by Sultan Selim III.
[14] Yeşil 2016, p. 131–140; Soyluer 2018, p. 269–270.
[15] For the weapons built and sent to the capital by Ismail Aga, voivode of Islimye, see BOA, Cevdet Askeriye 991/43307, H.29.07.1220/M.2310.1805.
[16] Yıldız 2009, p. 438–439.
[17] During this period, large quantities of weapons were purchased from European merchants in Istanbul, Belgrade and Izmir (Yıldız 2009, p. 190–191). For the 4,000 Dutch rifles purchased from a Dutch merchant, see BOA, Cevdet Askeriye 77/3606, H.14.06.1246/30.11.1830.
[18] Yılmaz 2019, p. 354.
[19] Yıldız 2009, p. 440–441. For the 400 cavalry pistols manufactured in Kalkandelen in 1832 at 40 piastres each and delivered to Istanbul, see BOA, Cevdet Askeriye 243/10260; see also, Olgun 2016, p. 623–626.
[20] Kırlı 2009, p. 235–236.

production in the capital during the reign of Mahmut II that as many as 70 rifles were produced daily in the Imperial Armoury, which employed 1,500 personnel of all nationalities.[21] However, the facility was only fully operational by 1838, and by 1848, rifle production had been shifted to a factory in Zeytinburnu.[22]

Although they gained momentum with the rule of Mahmut II and his successors, efforts to establish and maintain a self-sufficient weapons production system were never successful to the desired extent. One of the reasons for this was the administrative, financial and military problems experienced by the empire in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the inadequacy of the raw materials and the number of technically skilled personnel required for the production of modern rifles used by modern armies in a period of technological development should not be ignored.[23] Consequently, unsatisfactory production and competition between states pushed the central administration to import weapons to a great extent. It has been established that the Ottoman army was equipped with rifles purchased first from the USA and then from Germany towards the end of the nineteenth century.[24]

Kalkandelen and its weapons production

In the late fourteenth century, Kalkandelen, which came under Ottoman administration and was organised as a *nahiye* (township), was initially part of the Pasha Sanjak (Pasha District) administrative division. In the sixteenth century, it became part of Üsküp (Skopje), and in the second half of the nineteenth century it was included in Kosovo Vilayet (Province of Kosovo). In the early twentieth century, the city had largely detached from Ottoman central administration in many aspects and fell to the Serbs in 1912–1913.[25]

Kalkandelen developed in the fifteenth century, and towards the end of the sixteenth century its population increased significantly compared to past eras.[26] In the seventeenth century, parallel to population growth, Kalkandelen evolved into a *kaza* (district) within the Ottoman administrative structure. However, it is noted that the city's economic situation was not particularly prosperous until the early nineteenth century. In this period, under the governance of Recep Pasha and his son, Abdurrahman Pasha, the city developed economically.[27] During this period the population increased again,

[21] Pardoe 2004, p. 443–444.
[22] Soyluer 2018, p. 277–289.
[23] Tetik 2017, p. 139, 239. For the assignment of those who were willing to repair and make rifles while serving in the military service to the Ottoman Imperial Armory, see, BOA, İrade Dahiliye 629/43732, H.24.12.1287/M.17.03.1871.
[24] Grant 2002, p. 9–36.
[25] Aruçi 2001, p. 85; Jahjai 2020, p. 41–43.
[26] Ademi 2022, p. 821–842; Taç 2012, p. 87–88.
[27] Aruçi 2001, p. 262.

and by the 1830s the total male population of Kalkandelen, both Muslim and non-Muslim, exceeded 20,000.[28] In 1839, the total number of Muslims in the neighbourhoods and countryside of the district was slightly more than 10,000.[29] By the end of the nineteenth century, the population of the district centre was noted to be 15,000, with a total population of approximately 40,000.[30]

The reason for Kalkandelen's relatively poor economic situation until the nineteenth century was likely agricultural inefficiency during the era of agrarian empires. In a study prepared from the cadastral record books (*tahrir defterleri*) of Pasha Sanjak (district) dating back to the sixteenth century, it is noted that Kalkandelen had the least number of *timar* (agricultural lands granted to a ruler to provide income) within the entire sanjak, totalling 64. Moreover, the income generated from these lands was much lower than in the other *kaza* of the *sanjak*.[31] The small number of people engaged in agriculture within the population of Kalkandelen suggests that the region was not agriculturally productive throughout most periods.[32]

Therefore, it can be posited that the production and repair of weapons as a financial resource developed particularly from the late seventeenth century to the eighteenth century among the local population.[33] It is known that in the year 1200 Hijri (1785/1786 CE) there were 450 workshops in Kalkandelen engaged in the manufacture of rifles.[34] In the nineteenth century, during the establishment of the Mansûre army, orders were placed with gunsmiths from Kalkandelen. Moreover, the central administration was aware of the existence of gunsmiths in the city even before the census was taken.[35]

One of the most important sources to be consulted in order to understand the number and diversity of gunsmiths in Kalkandelen in the first half of the nineteenth century is the census registers, which reflect the socio-economic situation of Ottoman cities. The 7 March 1833 census register for Kalkandelen shows that – with its various problems – the vast majority of the population in the neighbourhoods of the city centre were engaged in the manufacture and repair of weapons, particularly pistols. It shows that branches of the weapons industry, such as gunstock-making and barrel-making, were also carried out as family businesses.[36]

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[28] Karal 1995, p. 199.
[29] İpek 2020, p. 265.
[30] Aruçi 2001, p. 262.
[31] Çağ 2004, p. 87.
[32] Ademi 2022, p. 821.
[33] Islami 2021, p. 169.
[34] Külçe 1944, p. 382; see also, Hünoğlu 1985, p. 16.
[35] Yıldız 2009, p. 439–440.
[36] Since the first pages of the population register is torn, it is not possible to identify all the gunsmiths in Yeni Mahalle. There are also various misspelling. For example, while page 12 ends with the number 385, page 13 starts with the number 385. See BOA, Nüfus Defteri 5565, fol.

	Yeni Mahalle	Köprü	Salih Çelebi	Tekye	Ahmet Bey	Selçuk Bey	Cami Atik	Şeyh	Total
Açgıcı[37]	6	25	4	3	-	3	4	1	46
Eğeci/ metalworker	1	7	2	-	8	-	3	1	22
Kundakçı/ gunstock-maker	11	45	39	25	-	9	17	8	154
Namlucu/ barrel-maker	1	30	6	2	12	-	1	2	54
Fişekçi/ cartridge-maker	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	4
Tabancacı/ pistol-maker	3	31	7	7	6	-	3	6	63
Tüfekçi/rifle-maker	-	7	-	-	-	-	1	-	8
Tüfek Yazıcı[38]	2	31	20	3	8	4	7	2	77
Tüfek Takımcısı[39]	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Pištov Tüccarı/ pistol trader	-	3	6	1	3	-	-	-	13
Total	24	184	84	41	38	17	38	20	446
Neighbourhood population	232	511	314	156	341	160	254	102	2,070

Table 1. Population engaged in the weapons industry in Kalkandelen in the year 1833

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the weapons produced in Kalkandelen were first transported to Istanbul and marketed to the state through pistol merchants.[40] The marketing activities of the merchants extended as far as Belgrade, Skopje, Thessaloniki, Plovdiv, Siroz, Kavala, Edirne in Rumelia[41] and Izmir in Anatolia.[42] It should also be noted that in the mid-1830s, gunsmiths were employed in Istanbul in the service of the state; they also participated in fairs organised in the region for trade in weapons and

12–13. 15 Şevval 1248/M.7 Mart 1833; for summary of the census register, see also BOA, Nüfus Defteri 5622.

[37] The person who makes a tool used for enlarging holes in blacksmithing.

[38] The person who writes names name on the rifle.

[39] The person who maintains rifles.

[40] BOA, Cevdet Askeriye 808/34340.

[41] Apart from the pistol merchants, there were also craftsmen, such as barrel and gunstock makers among those who travelled to different regions for trade. BOA, Kamil Kepeci 6389, fol. 84–85.

[42] Bakırcılar 2017, p. 362; BOA, Kamil Kepeci 6389, fol. 85.

weapon parts.[43] Based on the data from the census records and archival documents from 1836–1842, products manufactured in Kalkandelen were primarily traded between Anatolia and Rumelia, suggesting they served only the domestic Ottoman market. However, in the eighteenth century, it is claimed that the trade in weapons manufactured in the city extended to India via Mosul, Baghdad and Iran, through intermediaries from Mosul.[44] From this, it can be seen that Kalkandelen's entrepreneurs and their economic activities were not limited geographically to territories under Ottoman control.[45] If we return to the city's census registers, considering that more than 400 people were engaged in the production and repair of weapons, and half of them worked in their own workshops, it can be asserted that there were about 200 gunsmith workshops in the city in 1833. Excluding the age group of 0–11 years, which accounts for almost no participation in the workforce from the total population in the city centre, it is clear that that the proportion of those engaged in weapons production and repair in Kalkandelen was going to increase significantly.[46] Therefore, it is obvious that the economic activities of the city in 1833 centred on the production, repair and sale of weapons. Similar data can be found in the census register between 1836 and 1842. However, a census register likely from around 1838–1839 indicates a significant decrease in the number of gunsmiths in the city. For instance, in 1833 there were a total of 184 people engaged in the firearms sector in the Köprü neighbourhood, but by 1838–1839 this number had dropped to just 11.[47]

Given that the population of the neighbourhoods was very similar in both censuses, it is not unusual that the number of gunsmiths decreased so much. There may be several reasons for this change. The first one is incorrect data as a result of carelessness or insufficient attention paid to their work by the census takers. The reluctance of the locals to state their professions in the new census might be another reason. In this period, the Ottoman government, which did not want to relinquish control over the production of weapons, frequently sent orders to the provincial authorities to send those who were skilled in this type of work to Istanbul in order to employ Rumelian gunsmiths in the capital. One of the cities where these masters were densely settled was undoubtedly Kalkandelen.[48]

In the mid-nineteenth century, gunsmiths, estimated to have numbered 700–800 hundred households in cities such as Kalkandelen and Prizren,

[43] BOA, Kamil Kepeci 6389, fol. 87; BOA, Kamil Kepeci 6389, fol. 58.
[44] Külçe 1944, p. 382.
[45] Elgood 2009, p. 190, 205.
[46] For example, this rate is around 35% in Tekke neighbourhood.
[47] BOA, Nüfus Defteri 5567.
[48] Olgun 2016, p. 626–628.

continued to produce weapons in large quantities.[49] The Ottoman Imperial Armoury's need for personnel such as gunstock-makers, lighter-makers (*çakmakçı*) and so on was met by inviting craftsmen from these cities to Istanbul.[50] The central administration was not satisfied with the production of weapons outside the capital, nor was it satisfied with the sale of these weapons to Muslims and non-Muslims. For this reason, a number of measures were taken.[51] However, it is understood from the records of the period that these efforts were not successful to the desired extent and both Muslims and non-Muslims continued to produce and trade in arms.[52] In fact, since the classical period, the Ottoman Empire was almost always concerned about collecting weapons held by its citizens, especially in cases of rebellion, and tried to prevent products such as rifles, pistols and bombs from entering the country from outside. Many of its decisions were in this direction.[53] Similar measures were in place during the reign of Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909), when separatist attempts in the empire reached their peak.[54] By 1886, these initiatives had also spread to Rumelia, and a new decision came into effect to prevent the production of military weapons in the region.[55] However, it is clear that this decision could not be implemented, because the gunsmiths of Kalkandelen continued to produce guns in the nineteenth century and their commercial activities continued into the early twentieth century without slowing down. American-made Henry Martini rifles,[56] which were used in the Ottoman army from the 1870s onwards, were the most important product of interest for the gunsmiths of Kalkandelen in this period.

The information provided by Albanian sources on the subject shows the development of large-scale arms production in Kalkandelen. In this context, imitation Henry Martini rifles, which were produced in the city from 1875 onwards, were produced using the hydro-energy provided by the Shkumbin River and were called "Huta" by Albanians.[57] According to the technical specifications of the Huta rifle, the weapon was about 1.3 metres long, weighed 4.1 kg and had an effective firing range of 850 metres.[58] This information is very close to the technical specifications of the Henry Martini rifles used by the Ottoman army.[59] In 1886, the production and sale of rifles –

[49] BOA, İrade Mesail-i Mühimme 17/384, H. 13.03(?).1260/M. 2.04.1844; BOA, İrade Mesail-i Mühimme 17/384, appendix 2.
[50] BOA, Sadaret Deavi Evrakı 15/28; BOA, Sadaret Mektubi Kalemi Evrakı 100/94.
[51] BOA, İrade Mesail-i Mühimme 17/384, appendix 3, 19 Recep 1261/M.24.07.1845.
[52] BOA, Sadaret Meclis-i Vala Evrakı 53/64.
[53] BOA, Hatt-ı Hümayun Tasnifi 1256/48612.
[54] BOA, Hariciye Nezareti İstişare Odası 162/57.
[55] Olgun 2016, p. 630.
[56] For detailed information on the subject, see Gencer et al. 2008.
[57] Külçe 1944, p. 383; Elgood 2009, p. 208.
[58] https://www.tetovamuzeuvirtual.org/histori/arm%C3%ABt-tetovare, accessed 14 April 2024.
[59] Bayındır 2022, p. 859–885.

or more accurately, imitation Henry Martini rifles made by cutting iron and reducing the diameter – was banned in Kalkandelen. However, this decision was quickly reversed in 1887 in order not to harm the local craftsmen who made their living in this way.[60]

According to archival documents from the period 1887–1890, the central administration was unable to reach a definite decision on the production and sale of arms in the provinces. Moreover, rifles manufactured in Kalkandelen were bought and sold in almost every region of the vast Ottoman lands. For example, according to a report dated 2 February 1889 and prepared by the Samsun Port authorities, 35 Henry Martini rifles produced by Abdurrahman Usta from Kalkandelen arrived in Samsun on an Austrian steamer. Another rifle chest, also produced by the same master, was sent to Trabzon. Although the state authorised the production of weapons in the provinces in accordance with the decision taken in 1887, it is noteworthy that it was requested to investigate how these weapons arrived in Anatolia.[61] In correspondence dated 25 February and 5 March 1889, it was ruled that the trade in weapons produced in these places was legal and that the confiscated products should be returned to their owners. The reason for the decision was that the people of Kalkandelen had been engaged in the manufacture of weapons for a long time.[62] Abdurrahman Usta, the manufacturer of the rifles, and Mehmet Zühtü, the buyer, requested the return of the rifles with petitions dated 1 January and 16 January 1890, respectively. Although their request for return was not accepted, they demanded repayment to the sum of 98 liras, which was the value of the 28 confiscated weapons.[63]

The above example shows that the bureaucratic process on the subject contains contradictions within itself and that the central administration never reached a clear decision on the issue. As stated before, although the manufacture and sale of these weapons was authorised due to the fact that they were locally produced, in another example from the same year – this time in Antalya – it is stated that weapons manufactured in Kalkandelen were also seized.[64] On 23 April 1889, in Izmir Bergama, four imitation Henry Martini rifles manufactured in Prizren were seized once again.[65] The fact that a free trade is reflected in the official documents as "seizure" reveals Istanbul's contradictory attitude towards the production and sale of weapons, even

[60] Olgun 2016, p. 630–631; BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi 1657/72.
[61] BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi 1590/49, H.01.06.1306.
[62] BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi 1598/47; BOA, Yıldız Perakende Dahiliye 3/19. See also, BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi 1610/55.
[63] BOA, Yıldız Resmi Maruzat 50/28, appendix 4, 6. Based on the fact that the price requested for the return of 28 guns in the document is 98 liras, it can be assumed that the rifles produced in Kalkandelen were 3.5 liras each.
[64] Olgun 2016, p. 632–633.
[65] BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi 1618/82. For another Kalkandelen-made rifle captured in Konya in 1889, see BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi 1662/32 and 1695/127.

considering it as smuggling. There are multiple reports from between 1887 and 1890 of weapons produced mainly in Kalkandelen or other Rumelian cities being exported to different parts of Anatolia and seized by local authorities.[66]

In a correspondence dated February 1890, it was decided to completely ban the production of imitations of battle rifles and to collect the rifles currently held by members of the public by determining the cost and paying the owners.[67] After this decision taken in 1890, it can be assumed that the production of rifles in the city was prevented, based on the fact that no archival documents that mention this topic from the years 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894 have been identified. However, weapons continued to be exported from Rumelia to Anatolia continued in the following years, especially via Trabzon and Samsun. In 1895, local authorities seized 68 Henry Martini imitation rifles purchased in Kalkandelen and taken to Trabzon and Samsun.[68]

Impact of the state and the reaction of locals at the turn of the twentieth century

The Ottoman government's decisions and policies in the late the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to control weapons production in the provinces in general, and in Kalkandelen in particular, were undoubtedly primarily aimed at maintaining the modern state's monopoly on legitimate violence. In addition, they were related to the endeavour to maintain the existence of the empire by any means necessary. The modernisation efforts initiated by the reformer Mahmut II in the early nineteenth century and continued voluntarily or involuntarily by his successors in an attempt to restore order in the chaotic latter part of the century were not as productive as expected. Following the advent of the Age of Nationalism and in response to the efforts of separatist groups, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire embarked on a struggle for survival that went beyond modernisation efforts.

Looking at the big picture, in the context of modernisation and civilian weapons production, the central administration's efforts to ensure public order and ensure state authority (not just at the turn of the twentieth century but in fact in every era), while positive in theory, in practice presented a wide variety of dilemmas for both the administration and its subjects. The Ottoman Empire's efforts to monopolise weapon production to alleviate its security concerns meant, first and foremost, that in places like Kalkandelen, where it was the sole livelihood for many, people risked losing their livelihood.

In the early twentieth century, as in the nineteenth century, efforts were made to employ gunsmiths from Kalkandelen almost every year in the

[66] Mersin, Ödemiş, Bayındır can be given as examples of these cities (Öztan 2016, p. 160–165).
[67] BOA, Yıldız Resmi Maruzat 50/28, appendix 1.
[68] BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi 326/37.

gun factories of Istanbul in order to overcome the economic difficulties caused by decisions to control the production of weapons in the city.[69] However, this caused even greater discontent among the locals. Many people were brought to Istanbul from Rumelia to be employed but then sent straight back to their hometowns because there were not enough jobs for them in the state-owned facilities. This led to disappointment. The gunsmiths of Kalkandelen, unhappy with this practice, frequently protested against the central administration.[70]

In short, in addition to addressing its security concerns, the state tried to protect the livelihoods of those who made their living from arms production, but it could not provide a clear solution. In the face of this ambivalent attitude, the number of rifle workshops in the city increased from 20 in 1901 to 60 in 1906, implying that the gunsmith community in the city grew uncontrollably. The reason for this was that the state's inconsistent approach: sometimes the authorities permitted unemployed gunsmiths returning from Istanbul to practice their profession, and at other times banned them. Given that 60 workshops, which could provide a livelihood for almost 3,000 people, had been rendered unusable by the state, it is clear that the situation had become an insurmountable problem for both Istanbul and the people.[71]

Although the Ottoman government banned them from working, the gunsmiths' numbers increased. The reason for this is that the state sometimes allowed local producers for whom it could not provide employment in Istanbul to carry on working when they returned, and other times it banned them. This ambivalent attitude led to the situation getting out of control.

During this turbulent period, Kalkandelen became one of the most significant cities where the government's indecisive policies regarding weapons production undermined both the abovementioned state monopoly on arms production and people's livelihoods. At that time, Kalkandelen was one of the places which produced, sold and repaired the weapons needed by the Rumelian separatist groups that were fighting for independence from Istanbul. As mentioned before, measures such as banning gunsmiths in the city or demolishing their workshops did not work, and the manufacture and repair of weapons continued. On 11 June 1903, during a search conducted on the basis of intelligence received from the city of Gostivar, four members of a Bulgarian separatist group were found to be in possession of rifles made in Kalkandelen.[72] During the Ilinden Rebellion, which started in August 1903 and caused great turmoil, gangs used many rifles manufactured in

[69] BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi 2539/74.
[70] BOA, Teftişat-ı Rumeli Kosova Evrakı 80/7919; BOA, Teftişat-ı Rumeli Evrakı Arzuhaller 89–8823.
[71] Öztan 2016, p. 160, 166.
[72] BOA, Teftişat-ı Rumeli Kosova Evrakı 19/1893.

Kalkandelen.[73] In December of the same year, a total of 618 Henry Martini rifles manufactured in Kalkandelen were found in Kalkandelen, Gostivar, Kirchova and Ohrid.[74] The city produced around 5,000 rifles annually and most of them fell into the hands of Serbian and Bulgarian separatists, making Kalkandelen a willing or unwilling actor in a mass uprising movement against the state.[75] A report by Mahmut Şevket Pasha[76] (b. 1856 – d. 1913) prepared in 1906 highlights the failure of central administration decisions aimed at hindering weapons production. It points out that rifles were still being manufactured in Kalkandelen and falling into the hands of separatist Serbs and Bulgarians via Muslim and Christian merchants.[77]

A report, probably from late nineteenth/ early twentieth century, examining the situation in Albania offers important information about the production of Henry Martini imitation rifles in the region. It emphasises that the Kiga[78] were very successful in making this new type of rifle. Each rifle – each part of which was made by a different worker with technical knowledge and fine calculations in European factories – was manufactured by a single Albanian craftsman. Albanian craftsmen found a way to melt steel in a crucible without using complex machines, and thus were able to imitate Henry Martini rifles by forging cast iron heated in furnaces. In fact, every weapon produced in Europe could be made in Albania.

The report indicated that a complete ban on weapons production in the region was not possible and examined the damage it would cause to the public in multiple dimensions. Economic damage was the first issue emphasised. It was predicted that those who lost their jobs would join bandit groups in the region and, moreover, that Albanians who were prevented from producing their own weapons would start to buy weapons from abroad, thus switching from being producers to consumers. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it was predicted that banning the production of arms by Albanians would cause the Albanian population to become disenchanted with the Ottoman Empire. It was foreseen that Austria and Italy, which had initiatives in the region, would launch counter-propaganda in the event of a ban on arms production, saying that "Devlet-i Aliyye is forbidding you from your art," and thus further estranging the Albanians and the state.[79]

With the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy and the political turmoil that followed, one of the most important activities

[73] Adanır 2001, p. 141.
[74] BOA, Teftişat-ı Rumeli Kosova Evrakı 19/1893, appendix 3.
[75] BOA, Meclisi Vükela Mazbataları 113/48, H.28.02.1324/M.23.04.1906.
[76] He was a soldier and statesman in the Ottoman Empire. He was the governor of Kosovo in 1906.
[77] Öztan 2016, p. 168.
[78] The tribes in the north of Albania are called Geg/Gega/Kiga, while the landbound extended families in the south are called Tosk/Toska.
[79] BOA, Yıldız Esas Evrakı 38/87, appendix 4–6.

undertaken by the state to restore peace in Ottoman Rumelia was searching for weapons, which was carried out on a much larger scale than in the past in the important provinces of the region. The events that started in April 1910 with the tension between an Albanian and a soldier in the city of Pech continued into May and the government decided to confiscate weapons in the region and to close the gun workshops.[80]

The detailed census register (*mufassal defteri*) and books/summary census register (*icmal defteri*) – which include the number of rifles, pistols, dynamite and bombs seized in the provinces of Kosovo, Iskodra and Bitola after the abovementioned decision – reveal that in this period Rumelia was a boiling cauldron. A document dated 27 June 1910 reveals details of the arms production in Kalkandelen, which continued despite all obstacles. According to the report, 19 people (in our opinion, these are only the ones identified by the state) were engaged in the manufacture of rifles in the city centre of Kalkandelen. A total of 547 different types of tools and equipment were seized from the workshops. In addition, six rifles and 34 cartridges were seized from the town, while a search in the surrounding villages resulted in the seizure of 845 rifles of various types and 2,066 cartridges. The number of rifles collected from the province of Bitola was 87,953, while the number of rifles collected from Iskodra was 193,433.[81] According to a report of 12 November 1910, more than 150,000 rifles were seized in the province of Kosovo, while the total number of rifles seized in these three provinces, including Bitola and Iskodra, was close to half a million.[82] With 56,564 rifles, Loma was the city with the highest number of weapons seized in the province. A total of 13,614 rifles were seized in Prizren and Ipek, and 13,431 in Akova, Kolashin and New Varosha. Kalkandelen ranked fourth in the whole province, with 9,227 rifles seized. No dynamite, revolvers or pistols were found in the city, but 30,484 cartridges were seized. Up to this point, it could be assumed that the city was not very important in the province of Kosovo in terms of the number of rifles. However, there is a very striking element in the report. Among the 24 settlements included in the report (Loma, Prizren, Ipek, Kumanovo, Yeni Pazar, Skopje, Taşlıca, Pristina, Gostivar, Ishtip, Seniçe, Köprülü–Osmaniye–Radovishte and its castlet, Karatuva, Koçana, Rahofça, Targovishte, Mitrovica, Yakova, and the centre), Kalkandelen is the only place where the abovementioned tools for the manufacture of weapons were found.[83] Thus, this report from 1910 reveals that, despite all obstacles, Kalkandelen was the only place in Kosovo province where large-scale weapons production was carried out.

[80] Ekrem 2006, p. 250–251.
[81] BOA, Hariciye Siyasi 2900/124.
[82] Külçe 1944, p. 381.
[83] BOA, Hariciye Siyasi 137/7, appendix 5.

Conclusions

Kalkandelen was one of the cities in Rumelia with a well-documented capacity for the manufacture and repair of weapons from the eighteenth century onwards. Following the abolition of the Janissary Corps, the city's potential for weapons production attracted the attention of Istanbul. As a result, in the 1830s, the entrepreneurs of Kalkandelen added the modernising state of Mahmut II to their client portfolio. From a purely commercial point of view, it can be argued that it was a remarkable achievement for local producers to receive orders from the central Ottoman government. Moreover, the factories established by the bureaucracy offered new job opportunities for the skilled craftsmen of the provinces.

The Ottoman government was at this point struggling to cope with internal and external turmoil, caused by the fact that the empire harboured many different elements and governing it involved various calculations. The regime did not like the free economic order created by capitalism. Above all, it was aiming to establish centralised administration throughout the empire in which it held a monopoly on legitimate violence. Under these circumstances, the existence of cities capable of producing weapons and skilled artisans was only desirable as long as they served the state unconditionally.

To illustrate the situation through an external example, one of the most important factors determining the outcome of the struggle between the north and the south in the American Civil War was the superiority of industrial facilities and arms factories owned by the north compared to the south. With the help of companies such as Springfield,[84] Colt[85] and Harpers Ferry, which were established and supported by the government, the northern troops gained a great advantage over those in the south. After the war ended, these companies continued production despite the initial difficulties in finding customers, and today they continue to supply weapons to almost the entire world. Historians reach conclusions by investigating the subject they are interested in based on archival documents and existing studies, while also taking into consideration many different conditions of the time. For this purpose, reaching a conclusion with an inference such as "it could have been like this had it not been like that" does not generally have any significance in terms of the science of history. On the other hand, the fact that the aforementioned American factories were established in the nineteenth century and developed very rapidly, whereas the arms industry in Kalkandelen had been in existence since the eighteenth century, makes one wonder whether history might have developed differently had the Ottoman central administration been able to implement an American-type production

[84] https://www.springfield-armory.com, accessed 14 April 2024.
[85] https://www.colt.com, accessed 14 April 2024.

system in Kalkandelen or Prizren. Ekrem Bey of Avlonyalı, one of the witnesses of the period, was of a similar opinion.[86]

However, as mentioned above, the outcome was quite different. Kalkandelen became one of the most important Rumelian cities in the geography of the empire to challenge the monopoly of legitimate violence held by the modern state and to nurture and develop the armed violence that the Ottoman civil and military authorities were trying to combat, and it maintained this position until Kalkandelen broke away from the empire.

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[86] Ekrem 2006, p. 251.

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