

ROMANIA BETWEEN ISTANBUL AND ANKARA: THE BEGINNING OF THE ALLIANCE IN THE FIRST DECADE OF THE KEMALIST REPUBLIC

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Summary

The premise that designed the Kemalist regional policy, has considered the reconciliation and cooperation between the South-Eastern Europe. The reasons, highly pragmatical, have contributed significantly to shaping an important regional power in the late interwar period, that promoted the concept formulated by Atatürk – “Turkey is an element of force and international peace.” After a mandatory review of the past and prospects of bilateral relations, a concept has been theorized in Ankara and Bucharest on a long term. The Romanians’ decisions have outlined some of the coordinates from the Romanian –Turkish relations from 1927-1928 that would promote bilateral and regional interests ensuring flexibility. Pictures are clearly marked in the two capitals, even before the Balkan Entente (in 1934) built a strategic axis that should have been very active, functional and pragmatic. The concepts of peace and neutrality, promoted by Bucharest and Ankara would remain foreign policy dogmas until the general European War, in 1941, even with the risk of cancelling the alliances concluded during the two interwar periods.

Keywords: Romania, Turkey, bilateral relations, Embassy of Romania, Ankara

Öz

Kemalist bölgesel politikanın tasarımında öncelikli ilkelere birisi Güneydoğu Avrupa’da uzlaşma ve işbirliği olmuştur. Böylece, Atatürk’ün “Türkiye, gücün ve uluslararası barışın bir ögesidir” konseptini benimseyen Türkiye, dünya savaşları arasındaki dönemde bir bölgesel güç olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Ankara ve Bükreş, geçmişteki ilişkilerini değerlendirdikten sonra geleceğe yönelik politikalar yürütmüştür. Romenlerin 1927-1928 yıllarında aldığı bazı kararlar ikili ilişkileri ve bölgesel çıkarları göz önünde bulundurarak esnekliği sağlamıştır. Başkentlerdeki durum, bu tabloyu Balkan Antantı’nın kuruluşundan (1934) önce sergiliyordu. Barış ve tarafsızlık konseptleri Romanya ve Türkiye için, 1941’e kadar dış politikanın ana ilkelerini oluşturmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Romanya, Türkiye, ikili ilişkiler, Romanya Büyükelçiliği, Ankara

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All the worldly people that could be gathered in the Anatolian capital in a cold spring day in March 1937, could be found in the reception room in the Palace Ankara to greet the small Romanian official delegation headed by the foreign minister, Victor Antonescu. Indisputably, no one of those present believed in the strategies developed by Titulescu's vapid predecessor, but it was after all, a good opportunity of bilateral relations, after more than a decade of delays, chronic lack of stable, consistent collaborative projects and formal alloying between the two countries. At the same time, Grigore Gafencu noticed that it was not much to do in the new town. He was welcomed by the same people, in the same place, because "*the members of the foreign diplomatic corps led a separate existence in the capital of Turkey; they were forced to meet daily in the same places because of the space constraints*" (195).

Despite the mediocre but triumphant rhetoric of the leaders from Bucharest and Ankara, the establishment of Balkan Entente in 1934 failed to build a credible and solid Romanian-Turkish strategic partnership in order to ensure regional security and a motivating bilateral policy in the Balkans. In this regard, Romanians have taken into account the opinion of their allies: the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom considered, for example, that an expansion of the alliance in the Balkans, where disputes happened frequently, would have damaged their ability to reach the objectives (Vanku, 1979: 44-45). Thus, the Yugoslav minister in Athens reported a discussion with King George in the summer of 1923, according to which Greece was not ready to act with military forces in the north of the Danube, as Czechoslovakia, for example, wouldn't have done it in the south (A.M.A.E, fond 71/1920- 1944 Grecia, vol. 48, f. 20- 21).

Only in a few months, in the summer of 1936, along with the negotiation and conclusion of the Straits Convention, in Montreux, the two countries established more precisely that regional interests are almost identical, they are linked to the same external challenges (U.S.S.R., Germany, Great Britain, France) and, equally important, they want an excellent bilateral cooperation. During the long and tedious negotiations in the idyllic Swiss health resort, Titulescu had transmitted the Soviet and French foreign ministers interested in the Black Sea Straits, that "*Romania and Turkey represent a country*"¹ in mainland major problems. This statement immediately provoked extremely nervous reactions in Warsaw, Poland being very unhappy at the thought that a total empowerment from

¹ The report of the discussion between Nicolae Titulescu, Maksim Litvinov and Paul Boncour, 11 July 1936, at Constantin Argetoianu, *Însemnări zilnice*, vol. I (2 February 1935-31 December 1936), edition by Stelian Neagoe, București, 1998, p. 394.

Bucharest could support Turkey² and that the dogmas of the Romanian-Polish anti Soviet alliance signed in 1921 and renewed for several times, could be dropped out.

In March 1937, the Romanian minister's visit required a friendly attitude of the almighty President of the Republic in order to outline the state of bilateral realities and the gratitude for the unconditional support at Montreux. The audience, not necessarily lavish, but highly receptive to messages from this sensitive region, listened to Kemal Atatürk, who spoke carefully: "*I'll always declare and I'll always remain faithful to my words that Romanian power is as valuable as our own power. Above pacts, it is the feeling that unites us. In our hearts, Romania is cherished.*"³

It should be remembered that the premise that designed the Kemalist regional policy, has considered the reconciliation and cooperation between the South-Eastern Europe. The reasons, highly pragmatical, have contributed significantly to shaping an important regional power in the late interwar period, that promoted the concept formulated by Atatürk – "*Turkey is an element of force and international peace.*" (Ciachir 1141)

Since the completion of Republican political power in 1923, Turkey has established several strategic priorities for an urgent conclusion of bilateral documents with all the Balkan states, regardless of their international status after the World War I. Thus, on December 15, 1923 the treaty of friendship with Albania was signed in Ankara, followed by those with Bulgaria (October 8, 1925) and the Serb-Croat-Sloven Kingdom (October 28, 1925). By structuring the Balkan Entente, unmatched by any other state in the region, Turkey succeeded to conclude bilateral treaties with almost all the South Eastern European countries. There wasn't so much to do as long as

² Mirosław Arciszewski, the Polish Minister, was instructed at the end of May to ask Nicolae Titulescu how the Romanian consent was given so easily to rearm the Straits. This was also a Poland's interest, which got used to consider the Black Sea a commercial outlet to East. The possibility of closing the Straits puts the trade at risk and consequently the Polish transit through Romania is endangered". Constantin Argetoianu, *op. cit.*, p. 324. Florin Anghel, "Romanian-Polish Goals and Strategies in relation to the USSR and the Black Sea in the Inter-War Period", *Historical Yearbook*, III, 2006, pp. 91-98; Idem, "Portrait Of A Necessary Ponto- Baltic Alliance: Polish Commercial Road Projects Towards The Balkans And The Black Sea, 1919- 1926", *Revista Română pentru Studii Baltice și Nordice*, no. 2, vol. 2, 2010, pp. 175- 202.

³ A discourse of the Turkey's president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, on the occasion of the foreign minister's visit, Victor Antonescu, at Ankara, in March 1937. See Mustafa Ali Ekrem, *Relațiile româno-turce între cele două războaie mondiale (1918-1944)*, București, 1993, p. 73.

these capitals lacked not only a vision on the regional cooperation (in diplomatic, political, military and commercial spirit) but on the other hand, terrible internal tensions were meant to destroy any solid credibility. Thus, in Greece, King George II had been forced to leave the country in the late 1923, and on March 25, 1925, the Orthodox Annunciation, Pavlos Koundouriotis was proclaimed President of the Republic. In Sofia, in June 1923, the Aleksandăr Stambuliiski's terrible dictatorship had been liquidated and the new prime minister, Aleksandăr Ţankov, struggled to rebuild the institutions affected by the defeat in the World War. However, in Bucharest, with no real targets between the official diplomacy and the Royal House policy, King Ferdinand and Queen Maria concluded matrimonial contracts with the Greek and Serbian dynasties between 1921-1923. Mariaora became Queen in Belgrade and Elizabeth in Athens, while the Crown Prince Charles had a wife called Helen, the daughter of King Constantine⁴.

These beneficial, quick and peaceful developments led to a rapprochement between the Balkan states (Romania, Greece and the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom mainly) coupled with highly executive discussions among the three capitals. There were many rumours that the two main directions (starting from Ankara and Bucharest) would have been perfectly compatible and would have targeted a Balkan regional pact because after the World War I, the foreign policy philosophy was to sign a peace treaty designed to build the so-called „collective security”. Being overwhelmed by the Western insistence to understand these developments and to learn about the strategies of the regional developments, I.G. Duca, the Romanian Foreign Minister, felt compelled on December 8, 1924 to ask the Romanian minister in Istanbul, Gheorghe Filality, to agree with the Turkish Foreign minister, Şükrü Kaya, on an official statement that “*the Turkish-Greek-Romanian alliance news is inaccurate*” (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 82-85).

⁴ A very detailed report of the dynastic period and of the Romanian-Greek links established immediately after the World War I, at Arthur Gould Lee, *Regina Mamă Elena a României, Prințesă de Grecia și Danemarca. O biografie autorizată*, București, 2008; Hannah Pakula, *Ultima romantică. Viața Reginei Maria a României*, București, 2003, pp.384- 385. See, also, Regina Maria a României, *Însemnări zilnice (1 ianuarie- 31 decembrie 1923)*, vol. V, edition by Vasile Arimia, București, 2006, p. 243; Daniel Citirigă, “Tronuri între strategii diplomatice și interese politice. Proiecte româno-bulgare de căsătorii dinastice, in Florin Anghel, Mariana Cojoc, Magdalena Tiță (ed.), *Români și bulgari. Provocările unei vecinătăți*, București, 2007, pp. 201-222; Daniel Citirigă, Florin Anghel, “Fighting the Odds: Dynastic Projects of the Romanian Monarchy during the Interwar”, in Porfirio Sanz Camanes, Jesus Garcia Molero ed., *De las Monarquias autoritarias a la Democracia (siglos XIV- XX)/De la monarhia autoritară la democrație (secolele XIV- XX)*, Târgoviște, 2009, pp.171- 190.

1. The melancholy of the ruins: Romanian diplomats don't leave Istanbul

The young Republican Turkish political elite invested great sympathy and trust in the state authorities by reason that after the World War II, the two countries, even if in different international camps, did not establish a consistent contentious. Romania, concerned with strategies for the international recognition of its new state framework paid little relevance to the interests adjacent to this problem, refusing to intervene in the balance of forces within Turkey, after 1918-1919. On one hand, a long tradition of foreign policy in Bucharest was respected, no one intervened in domestic disputes of other countries and on the other hand, the Romanian government was motivated to look sympathetically at the republican movement as long as it announced the unconditional escape from Ottoman traditions⁵.

We can argue the Ankara's opening towards Romania, in the sense of looking for allies and alliances, through a document originated within the Romanian Legation in Sofia, and elaborated by the Minister, Constantin Langa-Rășcanu, at the end of February 1924. According to this, the Prime Minister, Ion I.C. Brătianu, and the Foreign Minister, I.G. Duca were informed of Kemal Atatürk's great speech given in the National Assembly in Ankara. He remarked, unusually but flattering, that "*our representatives were badly received all over the world. Only one state has friendly welcomed our envoy: and that is Romania.*" (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 63)

Declamatory gestures of friendship were accompanied by flimsy facts: so, only at the beginning of 1925, Ankara decided to send as a representative, one of the youngest and most influential diplomats of the Republic, Hussein Raghıb. As his name was unfamiliar to the clerks from

⁵ The relations between Romania and the Ottoman Empire have been marked by many frictions immediately after the end of World War I. We bring into discussion a verbal note of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed to the French High Commissioner on May 24, 1919, in which the Romanian authorities invited the Ottomans from Romania to reside a statement of a detailed report with their movable and immovable properties. The Court of First Instance in Constanta began immediately to confiscate all the things declared the very same day. Disadvantaged and almost completely bare of employment, the Turkish inhabitants from Dobrogea were forced to abandon their homes and belongings, fact that resulted in a strong current of emigration to Anatolia. See National Archives County Constanta, Constanța Prefecture, dosar 1/1919, f.134; Ion Rîșnoveanu, "Mutații geografice în Dobrogea interbelică", *Anuarul Muzeului Marinei Române*, Constanța, vol. X, 2007, pp. 48- 49; Metin Omer, "Romanya'da Çıkan Türk Bir Gazete: *Türk Birliği*", *Cumhuriyet Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 17, 2013, pp. 171-186.

Sturdza Palace, the Romanian Legation from Istanbul was directly asked by I.G.Duca about the influence and the career of the new Minister. “*The Turkish government – said Gh. Filality – can count on Raghib in every circumstance.*” (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 84-95)

After taking over the Foreign affairs portfolio, in July 6, 1927 (in terrible circumstance: the agony of King Ferdinand and the dynasty crisis caused by the Carol’s exclusion from the throne), Nicolae Titulescu wrote the Turkish counterpart referring to Atatürk: “*He has the right to be proud of his work and there is nothing more natural that people consider him the new Mahommed.*” (Ciachir 1141)

The only reason of the blatant inconsistency between the statements of politicians and diplomats, the projects, many gestures of friendship and the extremely low level of achievements, was the repeated refusal of Bucharest to transfer the diplomats from Istanbul to Ankara, the new capital of the Republic, an action that would have brought deep symbolic values to kemalist authorities. The Romanian government was dissatisfied with the poor conditions that the inhospitable anatolian urban center offered: there was no infrastructure (electricity, sewer, telephone, telegraph, radio, railways and modern roads), or buildings for diplomatic missions. In addition to the unfavourable climate, there were no hospitals, highschools, clubs, libraries in Ankara⁶. Republican officials were highly offended and tried to find why Romania did not keep its promise to move the representative institution in the capital.

Many Turkish officials insisted on the symbolic relevance, while Romanian diplomats constantly reminded that they did not find the minimal comfort for mundane activities in Ankara, except the splendid local from Istanbul⁷.

⁶ After two decades, in 1946-1948, the Minister’s wife, Viorica Moisil, arrived at Ankara, recognising that it was difficult to compare life in Istanbul with life in Ankara. “*Ankara – Viorica Moisil remembered-, the new capital of the country, chosen by Ataturk for its geographical position in the centre of Anatolia, took the place of Istanbul. Comprising the administrative sector, the ministries, the legations, it started to create abodes of culture and art. It looked like an artificial capital. Ankara was devoid of the magnificent beauty of Istanbul. The current affairs were held in diplomatic offices. The receptions, visits, meals and cocktails took the place of the theater, cinema or other entertainment, almost inexistent in this young capital.*” *Manuscriptum*, year XVI, no.1 (58), 1985, p.128.

⁷ Even a less mundane diplomat, the Romanian Minister in Turkey, Grigore C. Moisil (1946-1949), recognised in a private letter on August 23, 1946, that “*the local of the consulate in Istanbul is big and beautiful. It is the ex-Legation.*” In addition, he was leaving Ankara

Undoubtedly, it is about a psychological impact. Istanbul has been an unavoidable reference to the Romanian foreign policy capital for centuries. Even after the War of Independence from 1877-1878, relations between Romania and the Ottoman Empire were rarely touched by conflicts often without major consequences. Immediately after the World War I and even decades later, Istanbul went through the most fragile perch days, being defined only by the feeling of the Ottoman Empire's collapse. The melancholy of the empire that set was everywhere –as one of the brightest inhabitants (Pamuk 41) describes. The westernization effort did not mean the desire of modernization as the rush to get rid of some things that bear the burden of sad and painful memories caused by the collapse of the empire. (Pamuk 41)

Caught between the two sides and stressed by the constant protests of the Turkish mission in Bucharest, the Foreign Minister, I.G. Duca, asked the Plenipotentiary minister in Turkey, (in the fall of 1925) to compile a formal and detailed report in order to inform and find a convenient solution in the difficult process of the Legation's transfer. The text written by Filality in the last month of 1925, was an invitation for the Romanian Foreign minister to persist in the denial to go from Istanbul to Ankara because of the serious discomfort found again in Anatolia, and to suggest an extension *sine die*: “*It is clear that Ankara, as it looks today, cannot offer shelter to people gathered there; the hotel where I stayed last time, burned and it seems that another one was opened - the only one in which someone could stay- and the travellers fight for its five rooms.*” (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 80-81). Gh. Filality insisted that the denial of moving the diplomat representative must not affect the upward evolution of bilateral relations. He explained to his superior in Bucharest, in a text written on October 29, 1925, that “*because of the total lack of confort in inns, we can't go more often in the Turkish capital. Therefore, frictions and misunderstandings occur. These could be settled in a few minutes through a sincere explanation of both sides.*” (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 1, f. 59-60; *România-Turcia. Relații diplomatice*, 2011: 25).

anytime he could, to be part of the diplomat representatives on the banks of the Bosphorus. Grigore C. Moisil, “Jurnal. Scrisori din Turcia”, edited by Viorica Moisil, *Manuscriptum*, XVI, 1 (85), 1985, p.139. See also, Silvana Rachieru, “A Social Perspective on the History of Modern Romanian Diplomacy: the Case of the Royal Legation of Romania to Istanbul”, in Gh. Cliveti, Adrian- Bogdan Ceobanu, Adrian Vitalaru, Ionut Nistor ed., *Romanian and European Diplomacy. From Cabinet Diplomacy to the 21-st Century Challenges*, Trieste, Iași, 2012, pp. 125-139.

Horrified by what he was reading, but also relaxed at the thought that the end of his term as a Minister was close (the liberal government of Ion I.C. Bratianu completed four years in March 1926), I.G. Duca waited for a decision, requiring understanding from the Turkish Legation in Bucharest. The reasoned waiting of the Romanian diplomacy caused a highly nervous reaction of the Turkish authorities: the Minister Filality's official travels were denied under the pretext of "*terrible shortage of housing*" (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 80-81) while no Turkish Foreign Ministry official attended the party organised in the Romanian salons in January 1926, in order to celebrate the Union of Principalities (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 80-81).

During his first term as a Foreign Minister, 1927-1928, Nicolae Titulescu did not find the Legation transfer necessary in Anatolia: his solution was to obtain from the liberal Vintila Bratianu, the head of the government, the financial support regarding the design of a new diplomatic mission in Ankara. Thus, Titulescu thought that the bilateral relations were meant to a quick and necessary thaw in unusual circumstances (the death of King Ferdinand in July 1927, the setting of Regency and the death of Prime Minister Ion I.C. Bratianu in November, 1927).

The authorities in Ankara were convinced to patiently wait the result of the decision even after the new national government of Iuliu Maniu was established in Bucharest, in November 1928 and that of Nicolae Titulescu was obviously replaced. Only after a year, in November 1929, Theodor Scortescu was asked by the Prime Minister to convey the Turkish Foreign Minister, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, that Romania was ready to transfer the diplomatic interests and the Legation, in the new capital of the Republic in Ankara. Rüştü Aras, visibly surprised by this "*bonne nouvelle*" wanted to point out that "*the lack of contact-for many years- between Romania and Ankara has always grieved the Turkish government and it did not facilitate the understanding of the real situation of the Turkish Republic.*" (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 80-81)

2. Romanian-Turkish relations in 1927-1928 as a „state of spirit”

When Titulescu was invited to say his priorities and took over the term of Foreign Minister in July 1927, he stated that he wanted peace as a "*state of spirit*"⁸ (Titulescu, 1967: 240). "*The Romanian's foreign policy seek to maintain peace in the treaties in force.*" (Vanku, 1986: 39) Undoubtedly,

⁸ See the discourse held at the University of Bratislava, on June 19, 1937, on the occasion of Doctor Honoris Causa award, in Nicolae Titulescu, *L'ordre dans la pensée*, Bratislava, 1937, pp. 2-14.

there were no deviations from this dogma of diplomacy in Bucharest until the war against U.S.S.R started in June 1941. At the same time, we can agree on numerous inconsistencies between the rhetoric of Foreign Ministers and the action itself, between the projects and objectives and the geopolitical reality. Turkish-Romanian relations were part of this paradigm too: Ankara and Bucharest never mentioned any problem in their bilateral ties and strove to institutionalize their friendship. On the other hand, a strategic relationship to eliminate the regional threats, could not be carefully and flawlessly structured not even when the Balkan Entente was established.

Such an effort of recovering the bilateral relations is noteworthy during Nicolae Titulescu's first term as Minister of Foreign Affairs (July 1927-November 1928). In August 24, 1927, when Nicolae Titulescu was present at the League of Nations in Geneva, he conveyed I.G. Duca, member of the Liberal government, an important diplomatic instruction designed to renew the relations between Romania and the young Republic Turkey which was offended by the denial of relocating the Romanian diplomats in Ankara. "*I agree to tell the Turkish Minister that we are willing to have a real friendship.*" (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 140) After a long meeting with Hussein Raghıb, a few days later, I.G. Duca informed the Foreign Minister, Nicolae Titulescu, that together with Prime Minister, Ion I.C. Brătianu, "*we told the Turkish minister to communicate in Ankara that we are willing to have more friendly relations with Turkey.*" (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 141)

Tevfik Rüştü Aras answered quickly to the proposal. He agreed with the idea that Turkey and Romania were doomed to be managed by major regional geopolitical issues because they promoted together "*a policy of peace and rapprochement between the Balkan states.*" (Ekrem, 1981: 883) The Turkish Foreign minister recalled Brătianu, Duca and Titulescu that the foreign policy objectives of postwar Romanian government couldn't offer credit to the Republic, in spite of all friendly statements, thus the confidence and the consolidation being only theoretical priorities. Rüştü Aras was convinced that only the new course of Romanian policy, designed by Nicolae Titulescu, turned out to be the most expected in bilateral relations: "*I can not be asked to create a policy of insensitivity when it comes to the interests or the prestige of my country.*" (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 136-138) "*There is a distinction between the former Ottoman Empire and the current Turkish Republic not only regarding the constitution but also the foreign policy-* insisted the Republican diplomat in an interview with Vasile Anastasiu, consul in Istanbul, on August 5, 1927. This information immediately came to the attention of Nicolae Titulescu. -

The old Empire refined upon the conflicts and disagreements between the foreign powers, while Turkey not only that it doesn't seek to take advantage of such litigation, but it sincerely wishes that harmony reign among states which maintain good relations." (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920-1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 136-138; *România- Turcia. Relații diplomatice*, 2011: 43-44)

In his endeavour, Nicolae Titulescu started with the assumption that the Kemalist Turkey was a possible regional strategic partner, as long as it controlled the Black Sea Straits that were necessary for Romanian commercial and security policy. The Romanian diplomat motivated his rapprochement with the hope that Ankara will mediate in the near future the negotiations on the establishment of correct neighborhood relations between Romania and the U.S.S.R., given the fact that the Polish diplomacy, which was primarily interested in the Pontic area⁹, brought insignificant results in this respect.

The Romanian Minister in Turkey received instructions from the prime minister, Ismet Inönü from Bucharest to go more frequently to Ankara to discuss with the President of the Republic, and to justify in polite terms the continuance of the diplomat representation in Istanbul. Titulescu insisted that beyond this incident, the republican authorities had to know that Romania considered prior its relations with Turkey and that it was ready, in this sense, to initiate any necessary discussions.

By following these guidelines, the plenipotentiary minister Gh. Filality asked to be received by Kemal Atatürk, the president of the Republic, on November 30, 1927. Filality mentioned his intentions to hasten the bilateral rapprochement in order to conclude a bilateral alliance that could solve two major problems: moving the Romanian Legation from Istanbul to Ankara and, finding a solution for the right Turkish emigration from Dobrogea to Anatolia. Pleasantly surprised by the Titulescu's courage, Kemal Atatürk assured Filality that Turkey was ready to discuss all the submitted subjects from the Romanian agenda. At the same time, the president of the Republic sent an encouraging message to the Foreign Minister assuring him that "*he (n.n - Kemal Atatürk) and his ministers would offer sincere friendship to all the neighbour countries that would do the same thing for them.*" (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920- 1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 148-149)

⁹ I presented a synthesis of the common pontic strategies in Florin Anghel, "Romanian-Polish Goals and Strategies in relation to the USSR and the Black Sea in the Inter-War Period", *Historical Yearbook*, III, 2006, pp.91-98.

In the last day of November 1927, the Romanian Minister in Turkey had a long confidential talk with Rüştü Aras, to transmit that Romania was ready to start a bilateral collaboration in the region. The document states clearly that Filality failed to convince the Kemalist diplomat of the good intentions of his counterpart in Bucharest. On the other hand, the diffidence of the Turkish partner was disguised through a key step in the negotiation of a favorable Romanian solution. Aras had a lot of reproaches, and Filality, very angry because of the failure made no bones about attacking his companion exactly in his formal report. The Turkish Foreign Minister was to narrow to understand the proposals from Romania and in addition, he was “*too talkative*”, wrote Filality. Besides these major problems, Rüştü Aras “*believes that he does a great foreign policy, he knows everything and especially he predicted all the things.*” (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920- 1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 148-149)

If we think about it, the Romanian plenipotentiary minister’s feelings seem to be caused by the Kemalist’s confession that Turkey was aware of a Soviet project about the establishment of a political alliance in Central and South-Eastern Europe (between states like: U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom and Bulgaria). This action of Kremlin-said Rüştü Aras, would have undoubtedly dismembered both the Little Entente and the alliance systems supported by France and Great Britain and it would have put Romania and Poland in great difficulty. “*Turkey- said the Kemalist Foreign Minister- is not willing to support such a plan, therefore it requests Romania and Poland to adopt a converged position towards the expanding of the Soviet influence.*” (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920- 1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 148-149)

We couldn’t identify so far the Rüştü Aras’s source of information and we haven’t heard any discussion on this project. Moreover, at least in the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom case, an alliance (or even agreements of political collaboration) with the U.S.S.R. in the late 20s, was possible, given the fact that the dynasty and the political class in Belgrade opposed the establishment of diplomatic relations with Kremlin. Such a project couldn’t avoid Romania, as long as there was a strong alliance between Romania, Belgrade and Prague- the Little Entente. This strength persisted even in the second half of 1927 during the major political and institutional crisis in Bucharest caused by the death of King Ferdinand, Prime Minister Ion I.C.Brătianu and by the instauration of a Regency that could make decisions. We would rather be tempted to believe that the deliberate indiscretions of Rüştü Aras, were typical oriental in Ankara’s effort to attract the interest of Romania in the Turkey’s international system, and to hasten the negotiations

to reach a political diplomatic consensus. This hypothesis is closer to the truth, if we consider the fact that the kemalist diplomacy was always informed that Bucharest was seeking channels of discussions with Moscow in order to achieve a friendly solution to reconstitute the treasure sent in Russia in winter 1916-1917.

Two other moments placed in November-December 1927, after the meetings of Filality with Atatürk and Rüştü Aras, help us identify the invitation of Titulescu received from the Turkish diplomacy. The Romanian Foreign Minister read his envoy's report in Ankara because beyond the rhetorical fuss, he understood perfectly that he should be aware of all relations between Ankara and Moscow, as they would represent: "*a vein that could be exploited to adjust our relations with Romania in the most convenient way.*" (A.M.A.E., fond 71/1920- 1944 Turcia, vol. 58, f. 148-149)

At the end of the same year, 1927, Ankara unequivocally disclaimed the project of the Polish Foreign Minister, August Zaleski, that proposed efforts to outline an Anti-Soviet defensive strategy in South-Eastern Europe to create relations between Poland, the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom and Turkey, and possibly France (Garlicka, 1976: 103). Warsaw expected to attract some of the U.S.S.R. Asian neighbours, including Iran and Afghanistan. Romania was excluded from August Zaleski's plan because of the suspicions favored by internal weaknesses and because of Poland's efforts to become the leader in a region Joseph Beck would name: "The Third Europe."

In parallel with the political efforts in the fall of 1927- spring 1928, bilateral negotiations were held in Ankara to build the project of a *commercial treaty*. The Romanian delegation headed by Gheorghe Filality was composed of experts from the Ministry of Industry and Trade and Ministry of Finance and it was carefully monitored from Bucharest by the Prime Minister Vintila Bratianu, who was very interested in success. In this respect, Romanian representatives opened the discussions proposing a mutual granting, an initiative supported by Turkish people¹⁰. The political,

¹⁰ The legal terms of the document were almost identical to those that were in the draft of the Treaty of Commerce and Friendship between Turkey and the U.S., that was initialed in 1927 by Joseph Grew and Ismet Inonü. The text of the Treaty was rejected in 1927 by the U.S. Senate, largely due to a sustained campaign of Armenian emigration against Turkish. See Emanuel Ploeanu, *Politica Statelor Unite față de Turcia între anii 1943 și 1952. De la neimplicare la alianță*, Iași, 2009, p. 22. For all Inter-War period about Romanian-Turkish

rather than economic and diplomatic offers from Romania failed to stimulate the negotiations. This happened because of the Turkish grievances towards the delay of moving the Romanian Legation from Istanbul to Ankara. At the same time, the Romanian political spectrum was affected by the National Peasant Party, which favored the overturning of the liberal government led by Vintila Bratianu. Therefore, an obvious blockage of most foreign policy projects occurred. They were initiated by the two brothers Ion and Vintila Bratianu and General Alexandru Averescu.

The end of Nicolae Titulescu's first term as Foreign Minister in November 1928, marked a defining stage in the foundation of a new strategy for the evolution of Romanian-Turkish relations to temper the Romanian diplomats' constant denial to leave Istanbul and move in the least hospitable Ankara. After a mandatory review of the past and prospects of bilateral relations, a concept has been theorized in Ankara and Bucharest on a long term. The Romanians' decisions have outlined some of the coordinates from the Romanian –Turkish relations from 1927-1928 that would promote bilateral and regional interests ensuring flexibility. Pictures are clearly marked in the two capitals, even before the Balkan Entente (in 1934) built a strategic axis that should have been very active, functional and pragmatic. The concepts of peace and neutrality, promoted by Bucharest and Ankara would remain foreign policy dogmas until the general European War, in 1941, even with the risk of cancelling the alliances concluded during the two interwar periods.

relationships see recently: Ionut Cojocaru, *România și Turcia actori importanți în sistemul de relații interbelice (1918- 1940)*, Târgoviște, 2014.

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