1. Aims

However, Hungarians arrived to the Carpathian basin from the East, right after the state foundation, the nation became Western oriented. That is the reason why the Hungarians got, and still get their standards and models from the West. The main aim of the modernization is basically to implement the Western civilization and reach the higher standards of living.

Therefore, it is not surprising that when the Hungarian historian examines the story of the nation and its role in the world politics, the observations mainly concentrate on the connections between Western great powers and Hungary.

There are only relatively few papers available that deal with connections to the East, however, the Turkish (Turkic)–Hungarian cultural, diplomatic and military relations have a more than thousand years old history. During the long lasting ethnogenesis Hungarian tribes have had different relations with different Turkic people. The state foundation did not change this, as Pechenegs, Oghuz Turks and Cumans became part of the nation, as they were basically integrated. In the 14th century Ottoman Turks arrived to the South-Eastern border region of the Hungarian Kingdom. This fundamentally changed bilateral relations between the two nations. After the Mohács battle the Medieval Hungarian state collapsed. Until the 18th century it was the battlefield of the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire. During the Ottoman occupation the ethnic composition of the Carpathian basin has remarkably changed. This fluctuation is-as a matter of fact- still visible. Despite of the ethnic changes, this was the period when Hungarian language became first language in cultural sense.

After the Great Turkish War, the new political system was disappointing for the Hungarian nobles. The aggravation manifested in Rákóczi’s War of Independence and the next period also had several Ottoman Turkish relations (Thököly, Ilona Zrínyi, Mikes, Bercsényi, Rákóczi, Ibrahim Mütefferika and many more). The nationalism as an ideology ruled the whole 19th century. The European power balance shifted and all these changes led to the fact that Turks and Hungarians happened to have more and more common aims. This process was intensified by the growth of Russia and the Pan-Slav movement also influenced it. On one hand side the sultan was a great support for Kossuth, Bem, Kmety, Ödön Széchenyi and many more. On the other hand, this group of people enriched the Turkish culture and Ottoman Empire in many ways.
The bilateral relations and sympathy in general between the two nations was strengthened by the official Hungarian Turkology studies founded in 1870. During World War I, the Ottoman and Hungarian soldiers had been fighting together in Galicia, Palestine and at the Syrian fronts. At the end of World War I many new forces occurred on the territory of the two countries that formerly had shaped the history of the region. Hungarians and Turks shared detriments. Due to unfair decisions of great powers they both lost their historical hegemony from Asia Minor to the Carpathian basin.

Taking into consideration the above matters, I realize the importance of dealing with the modern history of Turkish-Hungarian relations. The aim of my dissertation is to focus on the mentioned relationship between 1920 and 1945. These two dates are significant and outstanding for both countries. In 1920 Hungary signed the Trianon Treaty and with that accepted the newly appointed borders. At the same time the Turkish War of Independence escalates country-wide. The terminus of the mentioned period, 1945 shall not need further explanation, as after World War II a completely new world order occurred.

In a wider sense, the analysis of the bilateral relations between Ankara and Budapest, shall not only help the better understanding of the history of the mentioned two nations, but the Turkish-Hungarian relations might help us to see a wider picture of the foreign policy and the political sphere of the whole Middle European region. Also, it may be a good help with the Balkans and Asia Minor history studies. Ankara was a great example in the region as an independent nation, especially, if we compare it with the surrounding countries. The so called Turkish model was desirable not only for Afghanistan and Iran but Syria as well. The Hungarian diplomats could also track the Russian, British and the French political affairs from Istanbul, and later on (after 1932) from Ankara. Apart from Turkey, Hungary only had embassy in Egypt (established in 1939) in the Near East region. Taking the above into consideration, Ankara’s point of view influenced the Hungarian diplomats with regards to the Near East. Moreover, the Hungarians got closer to the whole world’s political actions by having diplomats in Ankara and Istanbul.

One of my goals was to contribute to the existing picture we have about our history between the two world wars, by presenting the efforts of the Hungarian foreign policy with its results and failures. I did not intend to introduce or analyse the social, political and economical changes that occurred during the twenty five years of the Horthy regime. I
described some details only if it was necessary in order to clarify the background of the bilateral relations.

I was mainly working with uncommon sources, as my goal was to deal with less well-known aspects of the Hungarian foreign relations. I find it extremely important to mention that by being able to cover the Turkish language sources, I could gain knowledge regarding not only the Hungarian, but the Turkish political aspects as well.

2. Sources

During my research I used primary sources which can be sorted as follows. The sources in Hungarian are mainly primary sources. I used the documents of the Hungarian National Archive, the Ministry of Defence Military History Institute and Museum, the Foundation of Political History, the Archive and Library of the Jesuits and the Balaton Museum of Keszthely. In my dissertation I used data of the Hungarian Parliamentary Diary and some information of the Hungarian News Agency. I spent time with some relatively rich memoirs and personal legacies, and I have to mention the importance of the writings of embassies like Mihály Jungerth-Arnóthy, Lászó Tahy, the consul of Istanbul, György Barkóczi and Imre Németh, who was appointed as a military attache in Ankara.

From the documents of the Hungarian National Archive, especially the fonds of K63, K64, K66, K69, K79 and K653 has been processed. Most of these documents were written in Turkey, but also there are some reports dated in Athens, Belgrade, Sofia, Rome or London. The main reason behind this is that the Turkey-related documents mainly happened to be collected into the same files. Unfortunately the documents written between 1920 and 1945 have been partly destroyed during the World War II. That is the reason why the reports from 1925, 1927-1928 and 1942 are quite deficient.

Regarding the sources in Turkish, I made my research mainly in the State Archive of the Prime Ministry (Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi) and in the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu). Most of the bibliography was collected from the Boğaziçi University, Bilgi University and Hacettepe University Atatürk Institute. Among the memoirs written in Turkish language, Behiç Erkin’s (Turkish embassy of Hungary) memoirs can be considered as an outstanding source.
In addition, I observed the Turkish and Hungarian press. Also, I used English, Turkish, Hungarian and partially Czech sources of the given period.

3. **Methods**

Turkish geographical names and proper nouns were spelt phonetically during the whole document in order to make the pronunciation easier. I used the same method in case of Arabic, Persian names, however, right behind the names I stated the original Arabic or Persian version in brackets as well. In case of the European (French, Italian, German or English) terminology, I used the original spelling without any changes.

4. **Structure**

The dissertation is focusing on chronological aspects, which means that it presents parallel matters of a given period of time. In order to have a better understanding of the bilateral relations, the dissertation gives a wider picture about the political and historical acts of the mentioned time period. One of my main goals was to not only focus on the Turkish-Hungarian relations in details, but also to partially cover the international relations of Budapest and Ankara. This, in my opinion, makes possible to understand the importance of the two countries’ historical actions and decisions. I aim to give a context to Hungarian-Turkish relations, so that the relevancy of it can become more understandable.

5. **Results**

Until the end of the World War I, the Ottoman Empire owned territories from Edirne to Bagdad and Mecca. The Ottoman Sultan was the caliph of the Muslim world from this point of time. He considered himself as the defender of the Muslims from Bosnia to India. At least after the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, the split an exploit of the empire was an obvious goal of the great powers. As a reason of that, all interested powers – Brits, Americans, French, Italians, Germans and Russians – tried to purchase as much of an influence as possible. Finally, in 1919 the Entente forces had the opportunity to reorganize the related states territories according to their preferences. It seemed they lost control and without being rational enough, they tried to verify a new, immodest power balance. Only the inner territories of Anatolia – a region less urbanized, also lacking raw materials - would have remained within the new Turkish borders. The country would have lost its strategic meaning, while the only coast would have been to the Black sea. The headwater of Euphrates and Tigris, the
Aegean and Mediterranean regions, the narrows and the strategic mountains of East Anatolia would have been lost.

With the well-known tactic of the Ottoman foreign policy (splitting the enemy), Mustafa Kemal managed to win over great powers. By the failure of the tsar, Kemal found new federates. Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership became Ankara’s partners. Kemal mainly managed to complete his plans, however, the majority of the territories inhabited by Turks – the ones rich in oil and natural gas fields- Musul, Aleppo and agricultural regions like Hatay and Idlib remained in British and French hands. The new Turkish state could keep only a small section of Europe, as most of Western Thracia – with its Muslim minority - became part of Greece and Bulgaria.

The establishment of modern Turkey was controlled by upper decision makers that used a lot of revolutionary slogans. However, the new establishment kept the imperial conscience and the strong belief that in terms of global culture they have responsibility and efflux capacity. As the Ottomans were not able to extend the control of the state in many fields, the new Republic was forced to make the state more effective. The state governance lacked effectiveness and that became obvious even for the Hungarians who visited Turkey at that time. Despite of the fact that there was a quite a huge development -especially in the urbanization and industrialization- Hungary did not manage to reach the European life standards until 1914 as well. Between 1867 and 1914 Hungary was narrowing the gap regarding economical productivity. After 1920, the so called Bethlen consolidation - the country’s reconnection to the European economic circulation- was a success, but unfortunately after 1938 a faster economic downturn started.

There was a lot to do in Turkey as well, especially because the Turks had been constantly in war for more than ten years. After 1919, the infrastructural investments and the nationalization as a process started step by step. This process was not welcomed by the French and British interests. It is also true, that during the recovery period, Ankara highly promoted the cooperation with other nations, like Checks, Belgians and Hungarians. This was one the reason why Turkey avoided the one sided foreign policy. In general we can state regarding the Turkish foreign policy that they were often afraid of becoming victims or scared of getting sacrificed. Economically Hungary and Turkey happened to get into the same half peripheral category. From Turkish point of view, this was a definite development. However, Budapest was hardly able to keep its place in the global economy.
The foreign policy of Turkey during the World War II is usually described as ‘playing with balance’, or ‘rope-dancing’. In reality, there was a strong will from the Turks to keep and protect the independence of the country and to avoid any kind of one sided obligation. Of course, it was mainly based on Byzantine phenomenas. Thanks to the neutrality the infrastructure and production capacity remained intact and Turkey only joined the war, after the defeat of the Nazis became obvious. Turkey declared war in February 1945. Just one day later the Hungarian News Agency reported: ‘neutral military experts’ stated that ‘well trained and equipped’ Turkish military would also be able to operate in Hungary. This sentence reflects very well how the country developed by 1945 described by Imre Németh became.

It would worth a research to study how Halk Evleri was effective in creating nation of group of people. At the same time the Hungarian Kingdom had difficulties with this topic as well. Was it possible to create an obligate, new identity on the foundation of the multi-ethnical Ottoman Empire? How did they manage to or did they even manage to create a modern Turkish nation? Questions like the above are still unanswered, especially because in the last fifteen-twenty years we witnessed the process of the Atatürk’s axioms' disappearing.

Hungary followed different ways in the mentioned twenty-five years. Apart from the Middle Ages, the capital of Hungary was never a centre of an empire, especially not ruling different continents. During the World War none of the mentioned countries had a sweep. Unfortunately, the Carpathian basin was much smaller, not even the half of the new Turkish Republic (approx. 325 000 km² vs. 778 000 km²) that also could not reach the borders of Misak-i milî. Therefore, withdrawal and armament were not among the options. Also, our positions were weakened by the fact that the political pressure was coming not directly from the winners. It came from our neighbours who did not want to miss the chance to gain territories. These circumstances were different in Turkey, at least Kemal and his government got the USSR behind them.

After the Trianon Treaty was signed, the condition of the Hungarian industry, agriculture and infrastructure was poor. However, still much better than the Turkish situation. In 1933 László Passuth wrote in his memoirs that from Hungarian point of view Spain looked like a stranded country considering other European states as well. Hungary had the strength to re-establish the whole country and preserve the high level functions of the establishment.
The already mentioned intellectual superiority of the Hungarians still could not gain ground. We even had difficulties to get along with the citizens becoming again part of the kingdom between 1938 and 194. Apart from Albert Szentgyörgyi, the intellectuals awarded by Nobel prize could only predominate abroad. The Hungarian lobby had limited success not only regarding world politics, but even in our own region. Hungary was not able to keep its general influence in the Carpathian basin, however, indicated “historical right” to it.

The Hungarian ruling class – except just a few – could not realize the paradox existing between the historical perception and the new actuality. In other words, they could not accept the conditions of the Trianon Treaty. László Németh and Sándor Márai in their works emphasised the new Hungarian role in the modern world, but seemed like only a few agreed to it. Just like at end of the 1930’s Géza Féja and Dezső Szabó who wanted to keep their home out of the World War and avoid different political ideologies. It is also possible that the above mentioned plans and opinions could not be enough to prevent or avoid the collapse.

It is interesting how the above mentioned writers or the impressive intellectual, László Németh saw the future of the country. Németh, for instance, even in 1943 could not imagine that after the war, the new leaders and government would not cooperate with the ‘old’ intellectuals. As we saw it a few years later, this idea was quite naive.

Did we even have any chance to change our fate? In some aspects for sure, we had. For example in 1941 Horthy and Bárdossy also understood the meaning of Teleki’s suicide. The Prime Minister’s death indicated that if Budapest follows the foreign policy started previously, the nation is going to get to a dead end. Gyula Kádár had an informal conversation with Horthy in the summer of 1943. According to Kádár’s memoirs the governor was talking poorly about the Nazis. Regarding the personal changes taking place at that time, both in political and military levels, Horthy emphasized his support. It is hard to do anything without the Germans resistance – he added – but, in the near future the Hungarians turn will come.

If we take the above mentioned symptoms into consideration, we can easily justify the responsibility of the elite. A good example for that is the memoir of Minister of Justice, Gábor Vladár (1881–1972). Vladár describes how all should understand, they tried to postpone the signing of armistice with the USSR until there was only a very little chance to have an agreement with the western powers. This attitude shows perfectly how Vladár wishes to
explain himself how they tried their best for the sake of the nation, even though their decisions seemed reckless and unthoughtful in some cases.

That is the reason why the sympathy of Hungarians towards the Turks was quite indisputable for every kind of political attitudes in the mentioned era. On one hand, for Hungarians Turks acted as great examples to recall the memories of the medieval kingdom, when, despite the crises, the Hungarian state was flourishing. On the other hand, after 1920 the Hungarian society in a way turned away from the West. These two actions were merged by Ferenc Herczeg in one of his novels (1920, the Gates of Life).

Taking into consideration all of the above, it is still hard to declare that the role and importance of Turkey in the European politics was evaluated realistically by the Hungarians working in the country. According to the sources, the emotions turned down the political calmness, however, they wanted to avoid it very much. Tahy and Jungerth-Arnóthy are still outstanding from this perspective. Máriássy and Vörnle arrived to Turkey in a very different political situation. In case of Vörnle, his breadth of view is obvious, however, his reports sent from Turkey are definitely narrow-minded. The Hungarian sources after 1934 seemed to blame the Turkish politics for changing their minds regarding many matters they previously agreed on. Unambiguously the Hungarian diplomats in Turkey tried to be very loyal firstly to the Italians (after 1927), and later on to the Germans (after 1941).

Through the history of the Turkish-Hungarian bilateral relations between the two world wars, the self-determination related dilemmas of Middle Europe and Balkans caused by the peace treaties in 1920 (and in 1945) stand out very well. The struggle of the national existence, especially for these two countries, was a huge challenge. As their thousand years old states had a significant influence on the history of their region. After 1990 the willingness to expand the cultural and political spheres of the region occurred again. On one hand side there stands József Antall’s speech in which he mentions to be responsible for 15 million Hungarians. On the other hand, Turgut Özal did his best to reinforce the Turkish presence in Middle Asia and Balkans. To sum it up, the history “never ends” and we tend to deny it, but we still stick to our old habits and customs when it comes to decision making.