



THE LAST FRENCH DIPLOMATIC AGENT IN SAMSUN: RAMIRE VADALA AND HIS CONSULATE (1925-1934)*

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Introduction

From the point of French consulate system in the Southern Black Sea region, it can be said that the French have started to show their interest in Samsun since the early years of the 19th century. The French consulate or commercial commissariat which was established in Sinop in 1803 included his consular region Samsun and its vicinity. As the first French consul in Sinop, Fourcade whose primary task was to use the commercial potential of the region for French interests pointed to the importance of the region in his reports and made major plans for the commercial future of France. However, the forced departure of Fourcade from Sinop in 1809 nullified these expectations of France.¹ Of course, the unsuccessful Sinop experience did not come to an end in terms of French interest in the region and after the 1830s when the ports of the South Black Sea were more intensely engaged with international trade, the French consuls in Trabzon began to speak about opening a French representative in Samsun which was commercially rising port of the Black Sea. The establishment of the British consulate in Trabzon in 1830 and the opening of a British representative in Samsun in 1841 as the branch of this consulate also

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¹ For the establishment of early French consulates in the Southern Black Sea and consular activities see Yılmaz: 2014d; 223-268; Yılmaz: 2016: 87-120.

brought the French attention on this port again. Of course, the most important support of this attention was the trade potential of Samsun and the interests of the French traders.²

Although Austria, Sicily, Russia and Iran followed Britain in Samsun, French initiative for opening of a consulate could take place in the second half of the century. In this process, the launch of the French steamships in the Black Sea was an important milestone.³ In 1857, the Messageries Maritimes Company's steamships started to voyage between Istanbul and Trabzon. This new French investment accelerated the process of establishment of a French consulate in Samsun. Two important developments that ultimately affected the process were the death of M. Kühn, the Swedish and Norwegian vice-consul and the Messageries Maritimes Company's agent in Samsun, and the leaving of Eduvard Barker from Samsun because of abolition of the British consulate which was also responsible for French interest in the city. In the end, the French authorities, in accordance with the demands of the French Consuls in Trabzon, decided that a consular officer was required in Samsun and appointed Numa Doulcet to Samsun as a consular agent in September 1863.⁴ Doulcet, depending on the Consulate in Trabzon, continued his duty in Samsun until 1890. As successor of Doulcet, Sparado from 1890 to 1894, Henri de Cortanze from 1894 to 1907 served both as a French consular officer and as an agency of the Messageries Maritimes Company in the city. After Cortanze, Coulomb from 1907 to 1910 and final between 1910 and 1914 Edouard Bertrand, who retired from the First Class consulate, carried out this task. The agency was sometimes directly administered by the French embassy or the consulate of Trabzon before 1914.

For the French investments, the first quarter of the 20th century was very lucrative that railroads, ports, roads and other investments intensified in the Ottoman Empire. But the beginning of the World War I suspended this fruitful process for the French. Because the Ottoman Empire entered into the World

² Yılmaz, 2014c: 64.

³ For the establishment and activities of the French Messageries Maritime Company in the Black Sea ports see Uygun, 2015: 194-260.

⁴ Yılmaz, 2014c: 63-76.

War I by the side of Central Powers, the French consular agent in Samsun was closed. Most of the French families had to return to France after the declaration of war. During the war, the rights of the French who retained the inner parts of the Anatolia cared by Swiss citizen Peter; and in the city, the French interests were carried out by the Iranian consulate. In 1918-1919 Favereau and De Laage de Meux, as representatives of the Occupation forces, took over the French interests there. In this period, De Meux also represented the Messageries Maritimes Company in Samsun. But in the period of the National Struggle, Meux moved to Istanbul together with the archives of the consulate in 1920.⁵ However, for the French, this interruption period did not last long and a positive picture emerged for the future with the rapprochement of French and the Ankara government.

As it is known, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a new Turkish state started a new era in terms of Turkish-French relations.⁶ Although the French occupied Syria, Lebanon and Cilicia after the Armistice of Mondros, and also occupied Istanbul with the British, they could not resist Cilicia and had some conflicts with Britain. The French government had also worried about the relations that Soviet Russia developed with the Ankara government. More importantly, the achievements of the Turkish Army in the National Struggle and especially after the great battle of Sakarya, France needed to approach the government of Ankara.⁷ By this rapprochement, the Ankara Agreement, which was signed between the Ankara government and France on October 20, 1921, ended the war between two countries. The treaty opened a new era in Turkish-French diplomatic relations.⁸ The terms of this treaty have also been included in the Treaty of Lausanne. However, after the Treaty of Lausanne, there were many issues to be resolved in terms of Turkish-French relations as French cultural institutions, the Ottoman debts, the Ottoman Bank and the French companies.⁹ Anyway, the relations between two

⁵ "Notice historique sur le poste de Samsoun", AMAE, CADC, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

⁶ For the beginning of the French-Turkish relations in the Republican Era see Soysal, 1985.

⁷ Soysal, 1990: 464.

⁸ Histoire de la République Turque, 1935: 104-105.

⁹ On this subject, see Thobie, 1981: 109-159.

countries began to recover gradually. As an indication of this normalization, with a decree of 6 March 1925, the French government appointed Albert Sarraut to Ankara as the first ambassador to the new Turkish state.¹⁰ In this context, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Sarraut signed the Ankara Treaty on May 26, 1926, which brought about a resolution to the Syrian conflict to large extent.¹¹ Another topic of the negotiation was the future of Turkish-French relations. The good relations that started in this process were not limited only to the appointment of Sarraut in Ankara. To understand of this softening process, it is enough to look at the reopening of the French representatives in the Southern Black Sea ports. In 1925 the consulates of Zonguldak, Samsun and Trabzon were re-established with the decision of the French government. Ramire Vadala came to Samsun in July, Charles Lecouteur to Trabzon in October and Alfred Graulle to Zonguldak in November 1925.¹²

After this brief introduction, it will be appropriate to make some determinations about the subject of this study. As it is known, the most important reflection of the history of diplomacy on the local scale is the studies examining consulates and activities of consuls. Studies especially based on consular correspondences on this area appear to be another new area of research in our country. Moreover, this area is mostly concentrated on studies related to the Ottoman period. However, it can be said that because of unchanging mission of the consulates, these studies, based mainly on foreign resources could be continued in the republican period as a new research field. This study aims at revealing this claim by the correspondences of Vadala from Samsun. In this context, to understand Vadala's consulate, the study aims to look at the city from different sources in the early periods of the Republic.

For the nine-years consulate of Vadala, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives have some classifications in Paris and Nantes. The classification of *Correspondance Politique et Commerciale Série E Levant 1918-1940* in the centre of Paris (La Courneuve) include the correspondences of Vadala, between

¹⁰ Bacqué-Grammont-Kuneralp-Hitzel, 1991: 80.

¹¹ Soysal, 1983: 977.

¹² Annuaire Diplomatique: 1926: 77-78 ; Sources de l'histoire du Proche-Orient, 1996: 1219.

1925 and 1929 in the file number 21. Therefore, this file lacks the remaining five-year documents until 1934. To fulfil this gap, another important classification is Samsun 73, located in *Postes consulaires en Turquie* in the *Ankara Embassy Archives* located in the archive centre of Nantes.¹³ Compared to the first file number 21, the latter contains more documents. Besides these archival documents, it is also seen that the consul prepared a work related to Samsun. It is known that apart from their correspondences, French consuls published their impressions on their posts as memoirs or specific research.¹⁴ As an example of this tradition, Vadala has also prepared on Samsun entitled “*Samsoun: passé, présent, avenir*” with some historical information about his city by his own personal efforts.¹⁵ By this important book which was prepared from some selected reports of Vadala and published in 1934, the author reveals the situation of Samsun in the first year of the Republic. In fact, this work was translated and published by The Republican People’s Party’s Gaziantep Organization in 1944.¹⁶ The work contains some chapters on the historical, current status, economic resources of Samsun, the relations between Samsun and France and the sections for the future of the city. Besides Vadala’s official correspondences, this work is an important source to be used in this study.

1. Ramire Vadala and Beginning of the Consulate

Vadala was born in Benghazi in 1879 as the son of a diplomat of Italian origin, Joseph Vadala. His father was dealing with trade, maritime transport and finance in Benghazi, Tripoli and Malta, and was serving as the consul of Belgium in Tripoli and Malta and as vice consul of France in Benghazi. Ramire Vadala received his first education from the French missionaries in these three locations. Then, he went to Paris where he studied law. At the same time, he learned Turkish, Persian and Arabic at the *École des langues orientales vivantes*, one of the most important oriental schools in France. In 1901, he acquired French nationality and two years later, he started his diplomatic career as “*élève consul*” and his first

¹³ AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹⁴ As an example of this tradition, see Fontanier, 2015.

¹⁵ Vadala, 1934.

¹⁶ Vadala, 1944.

post was Tripoli.¹⁷ Prior to his appointment to Samsun, Vadala served for the French Foreign Ministry in various places such as Casablanca, Tabriz, Mosul, Rabat, Istanbul, Bombay and Muscat.¹⁸

Vadala worked as an interpreter in the French Embassy in Istanbul between 1905 and 1910, and later served as acting consul in Tabriz between 1910 and 1912. In the same year, after he served for a while in Rabat, returned to Istanbul and continued to work there. During the World War I (1914-1918), Vadala was consul in Buşehr and later between January 1921 and April 1922 in Bombay.¹⁹ A new adventure of Turkey began in 1925 for Vadala, who spent three years of rest in Paris due to health problems. As seen in the example of the Samsun Consulate, Vadala prepared some works about previous duty places.²⁰ It appears that Vadala concerned with the strengthening of the economic situation of France in the Persian Gulf and the commercial and intellectual expansion of the country.²¹

When Vadala was appointed to obtain a suitable environment for opening the French consulate in Samsun, he was residing in Paris. At the end of June 1925, he departed from Marseille and arrived in Istanbul where Cilie acting in the French Embassy told him that by the instruction of Sarraut, French Ambassador to Ankara, he had to stay and attend for arrival of the ambassador Sarraut to İstanbul. In this way, Sarraut wanted to negotiate with Vadala and to give him verbal instructions on the way that he would follow in Samsun. For this reason, Vadala had to wait in Istanbul about ten days, and after Sarraut came to Istanbul and delivered the instructions to the consul, he could move to Samsun with the next steamship of the Paquet Company. He reached to Samsun on July, 25.²²

In the first reports from Samsun, Vadala stressed that France had already realized Samsun's current and future significance and preferred to appoint a

¹⁷ Pouillon, 2008 : 1005.

¹⁸ *Annuaire Diplomatique*, 1934 : 371; « Etats de Service de M. Vadala », AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹⁹ *Annuaire Diplomatique*, 1926: 336.

²⁰ For these works, see Ramir Vadala, 1919: 177-288; Vadala, 1922; Vadala, 1911; Vadala, 1920.

²¹ Pouillon, 2008: 1005.

²² Vadala to the French Consulate in İstanbul, 1 January 1927, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

consul there. According to the consul, political, intellectual, commercial and financial relations between the Ottoman Empire and France were also indicators of the future relations between Turkey and France under the new regime. His mission and opening of the French consulate in Samsun was the clear reflections of these expectations.²³ As far as we understand from the consul's first reports, he had collected some information on Samsun when he was in Paris to prepare his book on the city. He mentioned in his reports the publication of this work which allows the consul to make some comparison between past and future of his consular region. With some annexes, he could publish this draft book in 1934. When we try to draw a picture on Samsun in the first years of the republic, Vadala's correspondences and his book were consistent with each other. However, he did not mention the political life in Samsun and the French-Italian competition and other important events in his book; but added some commercial statistics to show Samsun's economical life. It is necessary to say that besides this work, the consul mentioned in his last reports that he was preparing another book on Turkey bearing the name "*La Turquie Actuelle vu par un orientaliste sous tous les aspects réels*". However, it is understood that the consul could not complete this work.²⁴

The main topics of the first correspondences of each consul often consist of first impressions on the new place of duty. It is difficult to say that Vadala, as his predecessor who appointed as consuls in the Black Sea coasts before, was met a very good environment in Samsun. We can understand from his reports that Vadala faced with major problems in his early years in Samsun. Of course, one of the most important of these problems was the cold attitudes of the local authorities of the city towards the French consul. According to Vadala, although the people of Samsun welcomed the arrival of a French consul, local authorities had a very cold attitude towards him despite the orders of the Ankara government. Not only they did not congratulate him with this new mission,

²³ Vadala to the French Embassy, 9 January 1927, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

²⁴ This project book was consisted of these chapters as: the history of Turks, Atatürk and his struggles, the republic and its reforms, statistics about Turkey, the economic situation and resources of the country, military and other national institutions, history and language congress, religion-related sections. Vadala to Kammerer, 18 October 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

but at every opportunity they raised difficulties in his task in Samsun. As an example of the difficulties, he wrote to French embassy that his luggage was seized by local police and the French flag was removed from consulate's balcony.²⁵

Another issue of Vadala was to find a suitable building for the consulate. Beside this, he also had difficulty in finding a place to stay and had to reside in the pension of missionaries of *Collège des frères maristes* which run by the Swiss in Samsun. As to the consulate building, Vadala had to settle in a French residence in Samsun for seven months and finally found a building in one of the city's main streets in March 1926.²⁶

It is understood that the features seen in the first reports of each consulate were also seen in Vadala's first correspondence that the consul explained the current state of the city as follows:²⁷

"I had seen Samsun in 1910, and I found here a great deal of progress: beautiful houses, clean streets, lots of cars, wharfs, electricity, railways, banks, commercial activities, etc. Only the Christian, Greek and Armenian elements were completely missing and it represented about 15.000 people who occupied with trade. They have been replaced by Muslim emigrants from Europe who occupy their beautiful houses. The present population of the city must be 40 and 50.000 souls, all Muslims, with the exception of Israelites and Christians from America, Europe and Turkey".

According to Vadala, the population of Samsun was nearly changed that only %5 per cent of the previous population of the city was rested.²⁸ As he stated in the example of Samsun, the population exchange had caused a serious change in the urban population.²⁹ However, the presence of many strangers as French, Italians, Germans and Swiss in Samsun was a source of hope for him. Insisting on the riches of the city and its environment in different reports, Vadala was trying to attract the attention of the French investors and inviting them to become once again an important market owner in this region where they

²⁵ Vadala to Chambrun, 31 July 1928, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

²⁶ Vadala to Chambrun, 31 July 1928, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

²⁷ Vadala to Foreign Affairs, 20 August 1925, AMAE, CADC, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

²⁸ According to the census of 1927, the population of the city was 30.333. Vadala, 1934: 41-42.

²⁹ İpek, 2000: 161-162.

were formerly very active. In Samsun, lucrative investments were possible; but the country was lacked the necessary capital which created a good opportunity of French investments. As for these lucrative investments area, Vadala mentioned the Samsun-Sivas and Samsun coastal railway, port construction, power plant, telephone, tramway, sewerage and hotels. In addition, the German merchants were benefiting a great portion of the Samsun's trade.³⁰

According to Vadala, if the French investors interested in this market, they would be able to sell French goods cheaper than their competitors on the market. In fact, the French had a necessary infrastructure for this profitable trade. The Paquet Company had regular voyages between Samsun and Marseille every fifteen days. This could be the most important means of purchasing goods from Samsun and establishing commercial relations. The Turkish merchants also wanted to develop the Franco-Turkish relations on the economic and intellectual ground. As stated by Vadala, Samsun had an important place in the eyes of the Ankara government too, which frequently hosts important officials like president of the republic, Atatürk, parliament speaker and ministers. In other words, Samsun was seen in the eyes of the government as "*national port*". In this respect, Vadala stated that based on this political support, Samsun became the most important port of the Black Sea. He also stressed that the Turkish government did not wish to disperse its efforts towards Trabzon, which had lost much from the economic point of view. Therefore, the French effort must be focused on Samsun.³¹

In terms of the institutions of French in Samsun, Vadala draws a dark picture that *L'Ecole des Sœurs de Saint-Joseph de l'Apparition de Marseille* was closed and the school building was destroyed. Although the Catholic Church in the city did not suffer any destruction, the walls of the Catholic graveyard were destroyed and turned into a dump site.³² The consul also negotiated with the governor, Fahrettin Bey (Fahrettin Kiper) on this condition of the cemetery. Later, he gave the governor 6.500 livre Turk for the

³⁰ Vadala to Foreign Affairs, 20 August 1925, AMAE, CADC, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

³¹ Vadala to Foreign Affairs, 20 August 1925, AMAE, CADC, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

³² Vadala to Foreign Affairs, 20 August 1925, AMAE, CADC, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

necessary repairs in the cemetery, but he still continued to complain about the bad conditions of the cemetery.³³ As the French schools were closed in Samsun, French education was only made by Turkish teachers in Turkish schools. Therefore, Vadala demanded French teachers to teach children of the French and Turkish families in Samsun, and materials such as books, newspapers, magazines, cinemas to keep French culture alive. He also requested that brochures of the relevant products sent in order to promote French products. In this context, Vadala who mentioned about the French in Samsun, states that only five French families remained in the city, as Vighier, Saint-Paul, Mille, Pench and Summa. Vadala demanded the help of the embassy in order to support the French colony in every respect in an environment of increasing number of Americans, Germans, Italians and Swiss.³⁴

When Vadala was appointed to Samsun as a consul, consular officers represented Italy and Belgium, and the British consul was in Trabzon. As for the Russian consulate, the Russian consul had left the city a long time ago. The consul stated that the other great powers would close their diplomatic agencies in Trabzon and transfer them to Samsun. It was because the port gained importance each passing day with the ongoing railway construction that the city would attract more attention from foreign investors. French capitalists should not have overlooked this region, which was rich in agriculture, forests, mining and fishing, as well as investments in ports, trams, electricity, water lines, telephones, slaughterhouses and hotels in Samsun.³⁵ During the first days in Samsun, Vadala also communicated with Knight, the British consul of Trabzon. Knight stated him that although there were Persian, British, Italian and Russian consuls in Trabzon, the great project as railway and port could flourish Samsun.³⁶

Among the difficulties with which Vadala faced during his early days in Samsun, there was not only finding a building to use for the consulate but also the attitude of the local government. He was exposed to humiliating expression in the absence of

³³ Vadala to French Embassy, 21 February 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

³⁴ Vadala to Foreign Affairs, 20 August 1925, AMAE, CADN, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

³⁵ Vadala to Sarraut, 21 August 1925, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

³⁶ Knight to Vadala, 29 September 1925, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

strangers in the celebration of the Republic Day in 1925 that military officials expressed the words “We hunted the government of Istanbul and its allies like dogs”. In this respect, the Vadala complained that the Turks express their hatred from the past in an environment where foreigners do not exist. Besides, it is understood from the consul’s reports that the French in Samsun revealed a frosty attitude towards the consul. None of the Kapuchins, the director of the Ottoman Bank, agency of the Paquet Company helped Vadala in these early periods.³⁷

Vadala faced with a new obstacle after finding a place to use as the consulate building in Samsun and realizing the opening of consulate on March, 1, 1926. He complained mostly about hostility towards foreigners in Samsun and especially the pressures of the local administrators. Although he found the consulate building, the local authorities did not want to accept it and they tried to take him out from Samsun. In this environment, the consul tried to avoid any possible conflict with them because the police and judicial authorities consistently controlled him. By expressing these conditions in Samsun to Sarraut, Vadala wanted the French embassy to take necessary initiatives by the Ankara government.³⁸ In this regard, the crucial issue of his correspondences was the French flag on the consulate building. When Vadala was absent from the consulate, a commissioner with several police came to consulate and told the kavas, Hüsni Bey and the interpreter, Niyazi Bey to lower the French flag on the grounds that the Turkish and French flag must be at the same place.³⁹

Later, Vadala accused director of the Police, Şerif Nimet and the director of the Tribunal, Nuri Bey for this incident. However, according to a letter from the Turkish Foreign Ministry, the pretext of this action was confusing of the French Consulate and the Tobacco Company which used the same building. This issue was the subject of many correspondences between the consulate, the French Embassy and the Turkish Foreign Affairs. Having finally arrived at the signboard of the consulate, Vadala did not face any reaction from the Turkish authorities on this issue.⁴⁰

³⁷ Vadala to Daeschner, 1 January 1927, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

³⁸ Vadala to French Embassy, 20 February 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

³⁹ Vadala to Sarraut, 11 May 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁴⁰ Vadala to Sarraut, 14 March 1926, AMAE, CADN, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

In his subsequent reports, Vadala provided information to the French authorities, especially about the local authorities. In particular, he has made long evaluations on the relations with the governor of Samsun and his loyalty to Mustafa Kemal and his regime.⁴¹ For the other officer in Samsun, Vadala said that despite the reform program in Ankara, the young and inexperienced officers in Samsun used methods left from the empire; bribe and tip were used as the most important means. In this atmosphere, according to Vadala, the military officers were showing a pro-innovation image. At every opportunity, the authorities, by saying, “the capitulations repealed”, they treated Vadala like a Turkish citizen. Vadala expressed that there was a group in Samsun who behaved badly against foreigners to pretend as patriotic.⁴²

According to the Vadala, although this negative environment, it should not be suspected about the future of Samsun. He believed that Samsun as the most important port of the Black Sea will catch İzmir and even will pass it in one day. In a report to Sarraut, Vadala stated that, after this difficult period that faced first days of the consulate, “*I am the only consul in this port and the French flag is the only foreign flag floating in Samsun*”.⁴³ However, according to Vadala, the establishment of the consulate was not enough for France. It was necessary to crown the consulate with the future interests of French entrepreneurs and capitalists. Vadala was so hopeful from the commercial future of Samsun that even he stated that the consulates in Trabzon and Zonguldak should be closed and converted into agents affiliated to Samsun.⁴⁴

Sometimes, Vadala reported his interesting observations about important events in Samsun as the Republic Day celebrations in the city. The first impressions of Vadala on the first celebration that he witnessed in the city were as following:⁴⁵

“The celebration of the proclamation of the Turkish Republic was celebrated in Samsun with great éclat

⁴¹ Vadala to Sarraut, 19 November 1925, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73

⁴² Vadala to Sarraut, 19 April 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁴³ Vadala to Sarraut, 11 June 1926, AMAE, CADC, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

⁴⁴ Vadala to Sarraut, 17 June 1926, AMAE, CADC, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

⁴⁵ Vadala to Daeschner, 29 October 1925, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

and enthusiasm. The whole population participated in this solemnity and we never saw so many hats in the streets of this city. If this movement continued for several years, it is certain that Turkey will definitely enter modern civilization..... I took advantage of this public fete to make my official visits in full uniform and to display our pavilion. Everything went well, but being here the only consul they do not understand my quality well, and I hope that the principal officials will receive precise instructions in my regard”.

From the point of view of Vadala's consular district, it is seen that beside Samsun, his region covers a wide area such as Sinop, Amasya, Tokat, Sivas and Kastamonu. According to the consul, this vast region had great richness in every respect. However, long wars, diseases, declining populations and heavy taxation were the main obstacles for the development of the region. Forests, mining and fishing were other important items in the region where economic structure based on agricultural products. The agriculture-based structure determined the purchasing power of the people because of the changes in the yearly production rates. A possible drought could worsen the economic situation of agricultural sector.⁴⁶ As for the Samsun's economic situation, Vadala did not draw a very bright picture. The Samsun-Sivas railway could only be completed up to Kavak and no attempt was made on the port. On the other hand, the highways became unusable in the winter and the bridges were in bad conditions not only for the vehicles, but dangerously for the bucks. These conditions made commercial transportation difficult. Agriculture was quite backward and there were few agricultural machines. The fact that tobacco harvest, the main source of income of the region, was low in 1926 deprived the people from the most important source of income. In sum, Vadala emphasized that there were many things to be done in order to improve Samsun's infrastructure firstly.⁴⁷

After the difficulties in the early periods in Samsun and especially the cold attitude of the local authorities, Vadala imposed himself in the city. Indeed, we can understand from his later correspondences that

⁴⁶ Vadala to Sarraut, 26 July 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁴⁷ Vadala to Daeschner, 9 November 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara, (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

the consul begun to receive good treatment as an important officer in the protocol of Samsun. However, this time the threat came not from the local authorities but from the Italians who did not want to share the same world. Until the end of Vadala's consulate, the Italians, who had increased in Samsun day by day, opened a consulate in the city and they caused very serious troubles in parallel with the developments in Europe against the French consulate.

2. Samsun in the First Years of the Republic: Future "*Smyrna of the Black Sea*"

Vadala's reports from 1927 onwards focuses on economic situation, political developments and other states' activities and investments in Samsun. However, we can see in the consul's correspondences, there were two periods of economic life in Samsun. The first of this in Vadala's word was the "period of high expectation between 1925 and 1929" and the second was the post period of the Great Depression. As Vadala stated, the global crisis hit the development of Samsun. However, Samsun continued to survive even in this crisis environment thanks to the activities such as transportation infrastructure which is connected to the railway and exportation potential of the port. This crisis conditions suspended activities of foreign entrepreneurs as the French and this statist economic policy restrained private enterprises. The following part of the study will examine Vadala's determinations on the conditions of Samsun and his efforts to attract the attention of French investors to richness and opportunities of the region.

The most important issue of the city of Samsun during the Ottoman period was the swamps around the city. The drying out of these marshes revealed a significant success against malaria; however, the humid weather in Samsun, especially in the summers, made the city's sanitary conditions difficult. Besides fever, rheumatic and lung disorders were also common in Samsun which has a humid climate. Though Samsun was exposed to the cold winds blowing from the north, only two climates, summer and winter were felt.⁴⁸ As for the urbanization, Samsun had a new settlement system which was tried to be constructed according to a new plan since the Ottoman

⁴⁸ Vadala, 1934: 37-38.

period.⁴⁹ Urbanization activities in Samsun continued in a more planned manner during the early periods of the Republic. Firstly, the railways provided a new transportation opportunity to the city. The water network and power plant built by European entrepreneurs were the most important infrastructural actions. In this state of affairs, as Vadala personally observed, there was “a totally reconstructed life” in Samsun.⁵⁰

One of the most important indicators in this reconstruction was the changing demographic structure of the city. After World War I, Samsun had lost the Greek population, and they replaced by the Muslims from Anatolia, Rumelia, Crimea and Caucasus. In particular, since 1924, an important population flow has begun to be observed in Samsun by the Population Exchange Agreement between Greece and Turkey.⁵¹ As Vadala witnessed, there were many problems arising from the settlement of the immigrants in the city⁵² where there were a few Armenian and Jewish populations. According to the census of 1927, the population of city was around 31 thousand but Vadala stated that it was necessary to add this amount with not recorded in Samsun.⁵³ Parallel to the investments, a significant foreign population (495 people) consisting of Levantines, Europeans, Americans and Iranians was also gathered in Samsun.⁵⁴

Undoubtedly, the most important public work that made Samsun leading port of the Black Sea was railway. For the first time, for the construction of the Samsun-Sivas line a concession granted to the Belgians in 1891 and work on this line began with the arrival of Dumas with an eleven engineer in 1909. However, only 14-15 kilometres could be completed from the beginning of the construction until 1914, when the concession was granted to the Company Régie Générale des Chemins de Fer, but the commencement of the First World War left this initiative fruitless.⁵⁵ However, with the Chester Project, the

⁴⁹ On this topic, see Erler, 2007: 541-581.

⁵⁰ Vadala to Sarraut, 7 March 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁵¹ On this topic, see İpek, 2000; Duman, 2010.

⁵² Vadala to Daeschner, 9 November 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁵³ Vadala to Sarraut, 7 February 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁵⁴ Diğiroğlu, 2014a: 232-233.

⁵⁵ Yavuz, 1999: 545.

construction of this line come to the agenda again and with the official inauguration ceremony held on November 9, 1923, the construction began for the second time. One year later, the first locomotives started to operate on this line.⁵⁶

As Vadala's economic reports show, the consul attached a special importance to the construction of this line. According to these reports, there was a Turkish director and a German chief at the beginning of the construction. However, works continued slowly in the first period because of land structure and shortage financial resources. A great portion of the materials used in this line came from Germany. As soon as he came to Samsun, Vadala went to the first 25-kilometers section of the line to observe the construction work personally and saw that his work slowed down from time to time due to the tunnels.⁵⁷ Despite these difficulties, however, the work continued. The line reached Kavak, located on the 48th kilometres of the railway in April 1926. Vadala who travelled by rail to Kavak with the British Military Attaché, Herenç, stated that by railway one could go to Kavak and return from there in the same day, in his words, it was a record for transportation of Samsun.⁵⁸ The railway line reached in September 1927 to Havza; in November 1927 to Amasya and in August 1928 to Zile. Finally, on April 23, 1932, the construction of the line was achieved in Sivas.⁵⁹

Another important railway project was the coastal railway that would connect Samsun to Çarşamba, which was based entirely on Turkish capital. The most important factor in the construction of the line was the agricultural potential of the region. In order to connect these production centres to the port and the city centre, some initial work to construct a land route was done in the Ottoman period. However, in addition to these initiatives, during the Republican period, the conditions of the routes in the region were improved and projects on the railway were prepared. The Nemlizâdeler, the owner of the biggest tobacco export company in Samsun, prepared a project on a 150 km railway linking Samsun to Çarşamba and Bafra. Later, they signed a contract

⁵⁶ Arı, 1991: 609-622.

⁵⁷ Vadala to Sarraut, 24 July 1925, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁵⁸ Vadala to Sarraut, 16 June 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁵⁹ Topal, 2001: 54.

with the Ministry of Public Works. For the construction of the line, the Joint Stock Company of Samsun Coast Railways was founded with one million Turkish livres capital.⁶⁰ With the ground-breaking ceremony that took place with the participation of Atatürk on September 21, 1924, the work started on this line.⁶¹

The Samsun-Çarşamba line, 35 km long, was opened on September 1, 1926. However, this line was not limited to Çarşamba, it was planned to extend this line Terme; on the other side from Bafra to Alaçam. In every report, Vadala emphasized that this railways investments, which linked these important agricultural production centres to the port, will contribute to the commercial importance of Samsun by carrying products such as tobacco, grain and vegetables to the centre.⁶² The Samsun-Çarşamba line, which was constructed with great expectations, could not resist the competition of the land route transportation and did not bring desired income. This unpleasant experience in the Samsun-Çarşamba line seems to be effective in building the other line of Samsun-Bafra. Moreover, the line between Samsun and Çarşamba were dismantled in 1955.

It is seen that since the last period of the Ottoman Empire, parallel to the development of trade and economic activities, banking and insurance also developed in Samsun. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were approximately 16 insurance companies' agencies in Samsun.⁶³ The Ottoman Bank and Ziraat Bank, which was opened in 1890, served as financial institutions in the city. In Vadala's consular period, there were two foreign banks, Ottoman Bank and Thessaloniki Bank had an important business volume. Ziraat Bank was the only Turkish bank until the opening of the branch of the İşbank in March of 1927. The latter reached a significant turnover in a short time. As these banks did not do business with foreigners, Vadala stated that it would be especially beneficial to establish a French bank.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ İpek, 2006: 339.

⁶¹ Akbulut, 1999: 15-16.

⁶² Vadala, 1934: 55; Vadala to French Charge d'affaires, 17 November 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁶³ Yılmaz, 2014a: 420.

⁶⁴ Vadala to Sarraut, 24 August 1925, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Ankara, Vol. 73.

There was an unfair competition between the banks in Samsun that the local authorities were directing Turkish merchants to the Turkish banks. In 1933, the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey opened a branch in Samsun.⁶⁵ As well as the banks, there were representatives of large insurance companies in the city. Among these companies, there were only three French companies as the Union Insurance Company (Hochstrasser); the Phénix Insurance Company (Süleyman Kuğu Bey) and the Fonciere Insurance Company (Alemdarzade).⁶⁶

As far as we have seen in Vadala's reports, the main struggle of the French consul was to attract the French investors to profitable investments in Samsun. For this reason, Vadala preferred to emphasize in many reports that with railway lines, agricultural production potential and the banks, Samsun became the most important ports of the Black Sea. In this context Vadala jealously watched that the important investments in Samsun were being started by the other European investors. First of these investments was the establishment of a power plant which was launched with a contract between the Samsun Municipality and the German Bergmann Company in 1925. By observing this example, Vadala pointed out that the French should not ignore other important investments not only in Samsun but also in many coastal cities.⁶⁷ The water system was also given out by contract to the Austrian Rumpel Company. But more interestingly, Vadala blamed for this choice to the governor of Samsun, Kazim Pasha who replaced Fahrettin Bey on August 22, 1926.⁶⁸ The consul said that the German admiration of the pasha was the main cause of this contract. However, in the first day of the new governor in Samsun, Vadala was hopeful for future relations with him as a governor who resided in Europe and knew many foreign languages.⁶⁹

According to Vadala, his effort was not enough to create a market for the French in Samsun. Although the Paquet Company's vessels voyaged between Samsun and Marseille every fifteen days, the French

⁶⁵ Vadala, 1934: 55.

⁶⁶ Vadala to Chambrun, 13 September 1930, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁶⁷ Vadala to Sarraut, 10 December 1925, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁶⁸ Vadala to Daeschner, 15 July 1927, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁶⁹ Vadala to French Charge d'affaires, 10 October 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Ankara, Vol. 73.

capitalists could not use this facility enough. In this regard, Vadala advised that the Paquet Company's agency in Samsun to be managed by a person directly addressed by the French government. He also complained that Nemlizâde Mithat, the agent of the company, did not make any effort to introduce French products. Under these conditions, the French products could not be introduced in Samsun market and France could not make a profit from this region. In this regard, a French company, which would act as an agent of Paquet Company and serve to import and export potential in Samsun and its surroundings, could be the best choice for French maritime trade in the region.⁷⁰

However, the Great Depression of 1929 interrupted these expectancies. The Paquet Company, which was the most important means for the future French investments in Samsun, faced with the competition of companies such as Hochtrasser & Cie, Levant Line and Alberto Rossi which voyaged between Samsun-Hamburg and Samsun-Trieste. Because of the Great Depression, at first the Paquet Company reduced its voyages one per month as a precaution and later, as the effects of the crisis deepened, it had to cut off their voyages altogether.⁷¹

As an agent of the French interests in Samsun, Vadala was also evaluating French products on the local market. However, from the perspective of the competition conditions of French products on the market, the situation was not different from the 19th century. By the end of this century, the cheap German and Austrian goods commanded the market. On the other side, French goods, which were famous for their quality, lost their share in the market because of their high prices.⁷² This situation did not change much during the Republican period. Emphasizing that the trade between France and Samsun took place through the port of Marseille, Vadala was concerned about the import-export imbalance between these two ports. While 60.000 tons of goods were shipped from Samsun to Marseille, Marseille could send only 2.000 tons of goods to Samsun in 1927.⁷³

⁷⁰ Vadala to Daeschner, 15 February 1928, AMAE, CADC, CPC, Série E Levant 1918-1940, Vol. 21.

⁷¹ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 30 December 1833, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Ankara, Vol. 73.

⁷² Yılmaz, 2013b: 63.

⁷³ Vadala to Chambrun, 13 September 1930, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

The products, which were exported from the Black Sea coasts to Marseille, were mainly cereals and various agricultural products. The other secondary products of exportation were leather, tobacco, manganese, carpets, eggs and timber. On the other side, the port of Marseille exported especially French products. According to Vadala, the main reason of the imbalance between importation and exportation was the economic level of local people who did not have enough purchasing power to buy high priced French goods. Therefore, other cheap goods such as American, German, Italian, Austrian, Swiss, Russian and Czech goods were already dominant in Samsun market where “*prices were more important than quality*”.⁷⁴

As Vadala stated before, this table was in fact a complete contrast to the possibilities of France. More importantly, France was the only state, which had consulates in Zonguldak, Samsun and Trabzon. However, as Vadala noted, these consulates were not useful for French trade. In this case, Vadala stated once again that the French commercial houses had to open their agents in Samsun to defend the commercial interests of France.⁷⁵ Later, in accordance with the expectations of Vadala, the branches of Marseille commercial houses, the Amaraggi and the Farkoa Commercials, which run by Venezia and Schwartz, were opened in Samsun. However, under the effects of the Great Depression of 1929 which influenced the Samsun market as well as the whole country, the local population, who had difficulties in meeting their basic needs and were in a great economic misery, restricted the consumption of luxury goods to save money.⁷⁶ The economic trend based on this savings narrowed the market for goods coming from Europe. Like his predecessor who resided Trabzon and Samsun and made same calls by French investors in the 19th century, Vadala could not witness the development of French trade in the region, as in the other centres of Turkey.⁷⁷ Despite the improvement of political relations between France and Turkey, France’s share in Turkey’s imports was negligible.

⁷⁴ Vadala to Chambrun, 13 September 1930, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁷⁵ Vadala to Chambrun, 15 February 1928, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁷⁶ Vadala, 1934: 105-109.

⁷⁷ Başaran, 2013: 475.

On the other hand, exports from Turkey to France showed an upward trend.⁷⁸

Vadala stated that a wide range of investment opportunities such as commerce, railway, port, dock, etc. and especially Samsun's natural resources in Samsun and its consular region waited French capitalists.⁷⁹ In this regard, he explained to the governor of Samsun about interest of the French investors on the region and stated that with a minimum of 5 thousand lira capital, French investors could benefit from Samsun's resources. There was much to do for the French because Turkish entrepreneurs did not have enough capital. Despite all these favourable conditions, the consul expectations did not find any response in his consular period. However, for him the French who came to region were as a source of hope like Potier who came to Sivas from Casablanca to build wheat silos on behalf of the Froment Clavier Company. Another French citizen was Casalonga who charged with to work on the railway line, which was under construction between Sivas and Erzurum. Casalonga started to work with a large number of French, Belgian, Swiss, Austrian and Italian engineers.⁸⁰

Vadala did not neglect to make determinations about the agriculture potential and natural resources of his consular region. As he stressed in many reports, the most important economic resource of the region was agriculture; however, the sparse population of the region still caused a more important area to remain untouched. According to the figures of agricultural production in 1927, grain production was 58.272.145; the vegetables were 646,400 and the industrial plants, mainly tobacco, had a potential of 5.180.510 kilos.⁸¹ However, in terms of agricultural techniques in the region, Vadala stated that agriculture was made in a primitive manner that mechanization in agriculture was not provided in the region. The fact that basic livelihood was based on agriculture; the economic welfare was dependent on crops. When yield was good, it could be seen in all aspects

⁷⁸ Thobie, 1981: 113

⁷⁹ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 7 February 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁸⁰ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 5 October 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁸¹ Vadala, 1934: 62.

of the economy; but in the case of a drought, the economic conditions of the population worsened and external purchasing from Europe was reduced.⁸²

In terms of tobacco production, which was the most important income source of the region, the yield was not enough from time to time. As a major product for the foreign market, tobacco was an item that was affected the global crisis. Although three major America companies in Samsun (Gary, American Tobacco and Alston) purchased regularly tobacco from Samsun via the American Export Line Company, the global crisis in 1931 and the competition of Russian tobacco caused a great tobacco stock in Samsun market. These conditions devastated the local traders who bought tobacco with more than 3 million liras from the four banks in Samsun.⁸³ According to Vadala's economic reports, this economic picture, which created negative consequences for the Samsun market, continued until the last period of Vadala's consulate.

Vadala's consular region was productive in terms of forest resources. Even the official reports of this period revealed that there was an important area consisting of oak, elm, beech, hornbeam, alder and pine forests; but these resources could not be exploited enough.⁸⁴ As Vadala noted, the inadequacy of transportation opportunities was an important factor. In addition, the forest laws could not be fully applied. However, the Zinggal Company started to exploit the 53,000-hectare area in Ayançık with Belgian Capital. Timbers were transported to the port, from which lumber was produced by means of sawmill. The lumber was exported to Turkish and German vessels and to Egypt and France. As Vadala indicates, 4,000 people, including European technicians, were working in this lumber industry.⁸⁵ In addition, another lumber factory, which was established by a private entrepreneur in Bafra, was manufacturing lumber for export. The region was also productive in mineral resources. These were coal manganese, manganese, silver lead, copper iron, silver and other minerals.⁸⁶ However, Vadala emphasized at every opportunity

⁸² Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 24 July 1927, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁸³ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 15 June 1931, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁸⁴ Başkaya 2013:538-539.

⁸⁵ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 17 March 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁸⁶ Topal, 2001: 117-118.

that these mining deposits of the consular district were not operated and could be exploited by French entrepreneurs.⁸⁷

Vadala mentioned also the situation of the local industry. As well as in the agricultural sector, the industry in the region was back, but at a small scale, there was an industrialization struggle in Samsun. As seen in the industrial census carried out in 1927, among the employees working in the industrial sector in Samsun, the proportion of those who working in agriculture, domestic animals and hunting products was 64%; the proportion of mining was 15%; the rate of construction sector is 9%; the weaving sector was 7% and the vegetable products and wood sector was 4%. This shows that in 1927, the industry in Samsun was largely dependent on the agriculture and livestock sector.⁸⁸ Vadala observed that, in the Kızılırmak and Yeşilirmak valleys, the livestock was developing; but as in agriculture, with primitive methods; Turkish entrepreneurs gradually expressed interest in American and European methods.⁸⁹ In Vadala's consular period, the industrial enterprises of Samsun took place with both state and individual initiatives and devoted to flour, sugar, liquor, mining and printing sectors.⁹⁰ By interpreting the data of industry census of 1927, Vadala admitted that there was no real industrial development in Samsun; but only a small amount of primitive production activity which consists of tile, brick, pottery, sand and gravel extraction, manufacture of wooden articles, pottering, rope making, cereals, tobacco, flour and egg trade.⁹¹

In the economic report of March 1934, Vadala stated that the most important income source of Samsun was agriculture; but some important industrial investments sectors appeared in Samsun. The municipality of Samsun operated a power plant built by the German Bergmann Company and costed about 3 million francs. This power plant, which was powered by diesel imported from Russia, could produce 200 volts by three dynamos. Under his circumstances, electricity in the city was more expensive compared

⁸⁷ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, January 1930, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁸⁸ Dıġıroġlu, 2014b: 205.

⁸⁹ Vadala, 1934: 65.

⁹⁰ Topal, 2001: 62; Bařkaya, 2013: 540.

⁹¹ Vadala, 1934: 68.

to other cities. The other company was a cigarette factory belonging to the Turkish Monopoly Direction. Each of the 13 electricity-operated machines in this factory could produce 42,000 cigarettes per hour. Besides, there were eight machines in the factory called Mollens that packed the cigarettes. Each machine could make 3,800 packs of cigarettes containing 20 cigarettes per hour. Beside these, there were five machines called Rose which makes 3,200 packs of cigarettes per hour.⁹²

There were also a soap and oil factory in the city, an electrical saw, an electric powered flourmill, and an electric machine to distribute the city water built by the Austrian Rumpel Company. Thousands of tobacco employees were working in the factory of American Gary Company. In Samsun four printing houses, an ice factory; in the districts, there was a power plant, an ice factory and a sawmill set up by a private entrepreneur in Bafra. In Çarşamba, a power plant, flour mill and drinking water network; in Havza there was a flour mill. In addition, American Standard Oil Company opened a factory in Samsun. The company was selling the oil products bought from Russia. However, due to both the global crisis and the extreme taxation and difficulties from the municipality, the factory had to cease operations in 1933.⁹³

Due to its geographical position, which was an exit gate of large hinterland, Samsun served as import and export port in every period. In the 19th century too, the significance of the port of Samsun derived from being as export gate of a large agricultural production area. The port was not only an export gate for the Sanjak of Canik, but also for products coming from the inner regions of Anatolia such as Merzifon, Amasya, Tokat, Sivas, Yozgat, Şebinkarahisar, Kayseri, Harput, Kırşehir and Diyarbakir.⁹⁴ In this regard, the development of Samsun in the second half of the 19th century occurred in parallel with the increase of the Ottoman agricultural production potential.⁹⁵ With this agricultural export potential and

⁹² Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 25 January 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁹³ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 25 January 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁹⁴ Issawi, 1980: 121.

⁹⁵ On this topic, see Dıġıroġlu, 2011: 53-121.

its steady development, Samsun became the most important port of southern Black Sea.⁹⁶

The port continued its importance during the Republican by exporting agricultural products especially to Istanbul and European ports. Especially after the railway communication, Samsun's importance increased visibly. As Vadala expressed, Samsun was "*one of the most active places in New Turkey, wanting to play a role in the contemporary economic world*".⁹⁷ In addition to the trade made with the railway and highway, the classical trade with caravans from Sivas, Malatya and Diyarbakir to Samsun also continued during the period. As a result, there were two kinds of commerce in Samsun, namely transit and local commerce. The railway communication revitalized the former commercial activity of Samsun. From the standpoint of exportation, tobacco was undoubtedly the foremost product.⁹⁸ The other products exported by Samsun were wheat, opium, beans, corn, barley, egg, poppy, mahlab, various plants, honey, empty sack and containers, lentil, walnut, kernel, okra, leather, intestines, mohair, wool, lumber and untreated mines.⁹⁹

Although the consul mentioned the commercial importance of Samsun at every opportunity, he did not prepare many reports in terms of statistical data. The evaluations that he made were based on the official figures. However, the main issue for the consul was the conditions to which trade were exposed. In this regard, the consul's first determination was the lack of modern port in Samsun that could crown the railway lines. The maritime trade was carried out by the existing wharfs until the construction of the modern port. According to their function, these wharfs were the custom, passenger, tobacco, gas and flour.¹⁰⁰ However, they were wholly destroyed by the Russian bombardment in 1915.¹⁰¹ After the war, one of the most important efforts of the local government in Samsun was to repair these wharfs.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Baskıcı 2005: 86; Yılmaz, 2014c: 59-60.

⁹⁷ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 13 September 1930, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

⁹⁸ Özcan, 2013: 555-568.

⁹⁹ Topal, 2001: 31.

¹⁰⁰ Dıġıroġlu, 2011: 59.

¹⁰¹ Köse, 2007: 96-101.

¹⁰² Baytal, 2013: 390-391

In each report, the consul emphasized the city's need for a modern port. When the port was suffered from the winds blowing from the northwest in winters, the maritime trade was halting. For example, in December 1933 a very violent storm arose and caused many lives, ships and commercial articles to be lost. An important area in the coastal area, 801 small boats, 52 houses and railway lines were destroyed by the storm. There was a significant loss of life both in the sea and on the land. This storm, which had a loss of about 2 hundred thousand livres, made the economic conditions even worse for Samsun under the influence of the global crisis. Therefore, Vadala repeated the lack modern port in Samsun by stating that if the modern port had been built, the destruction of the storm could not be in these dimensions.¹⁰³ In his report on November 2, 1926, Vadala stated that the Rossi and Nemlizâde companies had signed a contract to build Samsun port on behalf of the government and that French engineers were expected to come to Samsun in the near future. However, this initiative has failed.¹⁰⁴ A year later, in the presidency of Comte de Broqueville, a group of Belgian capitalists established a company and offered a proposal for the port and railways to the Ankara government. However, this offer was not accepted too.¹⁰⁵

In addition to the inadequacies of ports and transportation infrastructure, the most important event affecting Samsun's trade during this period was the Great Depression of 1929. This crisis, which shook the world markets, caused a sharp fall in the market prices of agricultural products in particular. Turkey's foreign exchange revenues, which were based largely on traditional agricultural products, also fell sharply. The depreciation of the Turkish lira along with the crisis caused the merchant section to suffer significant losses and the workers in the agricultural sector to become poor.¹⁰⁶ This rapid impoverishment process was observed by Vadala in Samsun. The local traders were barely doing their business. As traders' export opportunities decreased, the necessary

¹⁰³ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 6 December 1933. AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹⁰⁴ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 2 November 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹⁰⁵ These companies were as follows: 1) Société industrielle des travaux à Paris; 2) Société des ciments de Vise; 3) Société de Ateliers métallogiques; 4) Société de Acières Allard; 5) Société des Ateliers de la Meuse. Vadala to Daeschner, 10 February 1927, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73; Baytal, 2013: 392.

¹⁰⁶ Gözcü, 2013.

capital for imports could not be obtained, which led to misery of the local people and the producers. As mentioned above, the contraction, which caused by the crisis in the sales of tobacco, affected all the sectors in Samsun from the producers to the artisans and banks.¹⁰⁷ In sum, Samsun did not benefit from the advantage provided by the Samsun-Sivas line due to the absence of a modern port and port facilities, and has suffered commercial losses due to the impact of the global crisis. The impact of the Great Depression of 1929 on Samsun can also be seen in import and export data as follows:

Export and Import of Samsun (1927-1931)

Years	Export (Lira)	Import (Lira)
1927	18.156.443	12.883.586
1928	22.554.550	15.341.279
1929	15.403.569	13.028.510
1930	14.192.601	8.763.513
1931	8.961.959	5.964.992

Source: Vadala, 1934: 81-82; Topal, 2001: 31.

Vadala observed the development of egg trade which started to become an important item of the commerce of Samsun. As it is known, the Black Sea region was the centre of Turkey's egg export in this period. Eggs produced in Havza, Kavak, Merzifon, Amasya, Çorum, Zile and Sivas was exported to Barcelona, Marseille, Piraeus and Trieste by the ships of Lloyd Triestine, Cenovase and Ellerman companies. However, global fluctuations affected also egg trade that egg producers in the region organized an "Egg Congress" in Samsun on February 11-14, 1934 to discuss their issues. At this meeting, the producers, who decided to continue the export private enterprises, demanded the support of the government and determined a roadmap of nine articles.¹⁰⁸

In addition, another interesting issue that we have encountered in consular reports of Vade is early touristic activities in Samsun. For the first time in May 1931, a ship belonging to Cunard Peninsulaire Company came to Samsun with British tourists. These tourists travelled by rail to Amasya. Vadala expressed that the Europeans were not only satisfied with Istanbul, but also came to Anatolia to see "real

¹⁰⁷ Vadala to Chambrun 15 June 1931, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹⁰⁸ Vadala to Kammerer, 15 February 1934, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

Turkey".¹⁰⁹ As the Paquet Company's trips were suspended, Vadala's call by French ship-owners for French tourism did not find a response; but some French tourists who travelled by Italian ships came to Samsun in 1932-1933.¹¹⁰

Of course, correspondences of Vadala, who spent nine years in Samsun, are not limited to this topic. Although they are not very detailed, we found some reports that testify to the political and social life in Samsun. Among these, more interesting are especially the reforms made in the social field, namely the dressing practices and local security. Vadala also observed Atatürk's third and fourth visits in Samsun. His visit in September 1928 was met with the enthusiasm of the people.¹¹¹ However, after the victory of the Free Republican Party against Şefik Avni Bey and the Republican People's Party in the Samsun Municipal Elections, the visit that took place in November 1930 resulted in the removal of a number of officials from their posts.¹¹² Celebrations of the feast of the republic in Samsun, the construction of the municipal park and the placement of the statue of Atatürk there, the destruction of some mosques and masjids in the name of urbanization, people's reaction, statist policies which started to threaten private entrepreneurs in Samsun after the global crisis and opening of a branch of masonic lodge which was opened by the Grand Orient de Turquie in April, 1933 were another subjects of the reports. Vadala prepared reports on the activities of Capuchin Priest Michel and fascist Italians in Samsun in large proportions. Therefore, we will examine these reports under a separate chapter.

3. Challenges in Samsun: Fascist Italian Activities

As we have briefly mentioned above, the beginning of the Vadala's consulate had some difficulties especially in finding the consulate building and attitude of the local administrations. It is necessary to add to these difficulties the problems arising from the lack of enough payment by the French government, to Vadala, the late arrival of the chancellery of the consulate, and the lack of a consular contract between

¹⁰⁹ Vadala to Chambrun, 14 May 1931, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹¹⁰ Vadala to Kammerer, 5 September 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹¹¹ Vadala to Chambrun, 19 September 1928, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹¹² Vadala to Chambrun, 28 November 1930, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

the Turkish and French governments. But more interestingly, it was the attitudes of the Kapuchins, the French and Italians that left the consulate even more difficult in Samsun.

Vadala's first report on the attitudes of the Italians in the city came from a ceremony in Samsun due to the death of King Margarita. Here, the Italian priest, Père Michel, who was from Trieste, used a very nationalist and fascist language, which had disturbed the French consul in the early days. Moreover, these Italians in the city decided to request from Italian authorities to establish an Italian consulate in Samsun.¹¹³ As the French schools in Samsun were closed, Vadala was observing that the place of French culture was replaced by that of Italians and Germans. According to Vadala, this would be more dangerous for the future of France.¹¹⁴ In fact, the consul was in such a negative atmosphere in Samsun that by stressing his age and fatigue, he requested from Ambassador Daeschner to be replaced by younger consul. To show his difficult conditions in Samsun, he wrote to Ambassador Daeschner as follows: "If you had spent a week in this port, you could see that this place was still in the middle Ages, despite the misconception in the eyes of the Europeans".¹¹⁵

The consul complained mostly about Père Michel, who was the subject of gripe of the Catholic community in Samsun. Later, the community demanded Vadala's intervention on this matter. In his later reports, Vadala spoke in detail on Père Michel who had been living in Samsun since 25 years. Père Michel ignored the agreement between France and Vatican and made rumours about the consul. In fact, according to the consul, Père Michel was spending most of his time with three or four married women and neglecting the clerical duties. This attitude of Père Michel, which harmed the respect of the Catholicism and the church in Samsun, was causing the anger of the Catholic community in the city. On this matter Vadala informed the French embassy in İstanbul and also wrote a letter to the French Embassy at Vatican on behalf of the Catholics in the city.¹¹⁶ Although Vadala stated Père Michel was taken from Samsun in

¹¹³ Vadala to Sarraut, 18 January 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹¹⁴ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 19 Avril 1926, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹¹⁵ Vadala to Daeschner, 1 and 9 January 1927, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

March 1828, it is understood from later correspondences of the consul that Père Michel continued to stay in Samsun. The consul lastly mentioned Père Michel in his report dated February 1933 that he was taken from his post, Supérieur de la Mer Noire, and sent from Samsun to Bulgaria.¹¹⁷

Vadala watched jealously the German and Italian plans for Samsun. He reported that the German and Italian consuls, Holstein and Liberati, came to Samsun and made an examination about the economic situation of this port. As for the Italians the consul stressed that there were Italian missionaries, merchants, workers, entrepreneurs both on the coast and in the inner parts of Anatolia. Turkish-Italian trade was very active through the Lloyd Company's ships from Trieste. Germans also did not cut off their commercial relations with the region. Even though the Germans did not buy too many products from this side, they have a good reputation in the region through their low prices products. The Deutsche-Linie company's ships in Hamburg voyaged monthly between Samsun and Hamburg. In other words, Vadala emphasized that there was an increasing competition between the German and the Italians in Turkey which he observed in Samsun.¹¹⁸ In this context, the Italian government decided to transfer the consulate in Trabzon to Samsun. Vadala was worried about the fact that the Italians would increase their fascist activities in Samsun by this attempt.¹¹⁹

As a reflection of the Italians' concern on Samsun, Italian government began to send officials to make purchases of tobacco. In April 1931, an Italian representative came to Samsun and resided a long time for his affairs. However, his residence became a source of pride for the capuchin and fascist Italians. According to Vadala, the ceremony for this officer turned a fascist propaganda meeting where all the participants proposed a toast to Musollini. Besides, the French consulate in Samsun and himself was another subject of this meeting where they did not fall back from cursing themselves and their wife. Another reason of these anti-France attitudes of the

¹¹⁶ Vadala to French Embassy at Vatican, 17 February 1927. AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹¹⁷ Vadala to French Foreign Affairs, 25 February 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹¹⁸ Vadala to Daeschner, 25 February 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹¹⁹ Vadala to Chambrun, 9 May 1928, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

capuchins and fascist Italians was fascist propaganda newspapers that constantly came to Samsun from Italy. In this context, the consul states that the fascist Italians and the capuchins of Samsun tried jointly to curb his activities in the city.¹²⁰

The conflict between the Italian government and the Vatican broke the co-operation of the two groups in Samsun for a while. Père Michel was the head of the capuchins and Bianchi (Manager of the Ottoman Bank) was at the head of the fascists. Women, boys and children who were often came together under the direction of Père Michel and Bianchi and this community created not only Catholic but also Italian conscience. In Samsun, both secularists and clerics requested to establish three institutions in Samsun: 1) Italian consulate 2) Italian bank 3) An Italian school in the garden of the capuchin church. Under this anti-France atmosphere in Samsun, the fascists and the capuchins acting with the directives of the Italian government tried to remove the French influence which established for a long time in Turkey, not only in intellectual but also in economic and political life.¹²¹

In accordance with the demand of Italian community in Samsun, the Italian government sent another agent to Samsun who resided for a while in the city and spoke to the Italians in the city.¹²² More importantly, the Italian government sent to Samsun Ettore Minniti as the Italian consul who was welcomed enthusiastically by the fascists and the capuchin in Samsun. Ettore Minniti realized the inaugural ceremony on December 10, 1931 with the participation of many invited. Vadala regarded this attempt of the Italian government as result of the Italians struggle to deactivate traditional French influence in the region. According to Vadala the Italian consul, who tried to be effective here, would face with obstacles in a short time, because contrary to consular convention between Turkey and Italy, Ettore Minniti hanged the Italian flag outside the consulate building as the period of the Ottoman.¹²³

¹²⁰ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 29 April 1930, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹²¹ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 28 September 1931, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹²² Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 24 October 1931, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹²³ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 11 December 1931, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

Comparing his early conditions in Samsun with his Italian colleague, Vadala stated that by means of help of the Italian colony, Ettore Minniti did not have any difficulty in establishing a consulate there. However, he had to fight many obstacles without anyone's support. Minniti could easily find a consulate building and complete establishment process of the Italian consulate. But according to Vadala, the biggest obstacle of Minniti was that he did not know Turkish, and his seven-year residence in Samsun could give him an advantage over his Italian counterpart.¹²⁴

The fact that Père Michel was replaced by another Italian, Giovanni da Finoziano from Parma in April 1933, also worried Vadala, because with this appointment, the Italian community could become stronger. On the other hand, many Italian ships were also cruising to Samsun and the Italian embassy and the Italian Apostolique institution supporting the Italian activities in Samsun and trying to create a political, economic and religious domain for their interests.¹²⁵ In another report in April 29, Vadala stated that Fascist General Campaner and agency of the Lloyd Triestiono Company came to Samsun and intensified the Italian activities in the city. Besides, this delegation also visited other Black Sea ports and carried out observations there, because they could not have any influence on inner parts of the country. The most important event that made Vadala happy in this process was the abandonment of the Italian consul, Ettore Minniti who could reside only 20 months in Samsun. According to Vadala, the Italian consul who did not even know a single word in Turkish was not an agent who could cross with the Turks and understand their affairs. As his words "the Italian consul, who understood that he could not do anything here, chose to leave". However, despite this development, Vadala noted that Italy continued to deal with the Black Sea ports more intensely than ever before.¹²⁶ Vadala gives the following information about increasing fascist propaganda in Samsun:¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 3 January 1932, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹²⁵ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 23 April 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹²⁶ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 29 June 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

¹²⁷ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 12 September 1933, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

“The fascist party of this city has received from Rome five pretty brochures of propaganda: three in French entitled “Mussolini, a vision of life”, “Europe cannot die, the foreign policy of Mussolini”, “The pact of the four powers occidental, speech of Mussolini in the Senate on June 7th”; two in Italian entitled “Fascism in Freemasonry”, “Fascism and Religious Freedom”. These five brochures have been widely distributed and sent even to this consulate. I have already made it known to your Excellency that the most influential member of fascism at Samsun is the director of the Ottoman Bank that everyone regards as French”.

On the Italian activities in Samsun Vadala continued to inform the French authorities. In this context with the trade agreement between Turkey and Italy, a significant rise in the commercial activities of the Italians could be seen from Samsun. As a result of this intensified relations, the Italians who constantly purchased tobacco from Samsun sent a permanent delegate with his staff. But the Italian consul eased a Jewish Turkish citizen a job in this delegation. This choice of the consulate disrupted the Italians in Samsun, where many Italian families were unemployed.¹²⁸ The last report of Vadala on Italians’ attitudes gives us a brief assessment of the problems caused by the Italians and important messages about the impending threat in Europe.

“As soon as the secular and religious Italians of Samsun learned that I would soon leave this city in a definitive way, they seemed to rejoice because they know well that being antifascist I knew all their affairs and intricate. They all came for the reception of the 14th of July, and overwhelmed me with amiability and regret. However in *cauda venenum*Since 9 years in Samsun, I have not stopped to report to the department and the embassy the Italian activity and intrigue in the Black Sea. Italian seculars and religious only seek to dispossess us on all grounds (maritime, commercial, religious, intellectual). It’s even more dangerous than ever before. I usually see an agreement between Mussolini and Hitler heading against France. For me, these two dictators are obviously acting against us everywhere and a lot of little things I have observed a certain connivance. I think that I am not forbidden to report what I saw and observed during a long stay in these regions. Roman double diplomacy seems to be more and more in agreement with Hitler, in spite of some deceptive and passing appearances. It is a pain for me because I

¹²⁸ Vadala to French Foreign Ministry, 18 June 1934, AMAE, CADN, APD, Ankara (Ambassade), Vol. 73.

always dream of a Latin agreement against our enemy, pan-Germanism”.

Conclusion

Of course, it is possible to analyse Vadala’s nine-year consular post in different aspects. However, as we observe from the French archives, despite the nine-year period between 1925 and 1934, Vadala’s correspondences are not very rich. For this reason, the draft of this paper was prepared according to the documents that we could find in different classification. In fact, Vadala had important problems in Samsun. First of all, his consulate began in such an environment where the effects of the wars, in which of the Turks and the French fought against each other, were still alive. Moreover, his consular task was in Samsun, whose demographic structure changed greatly, and which city had played important role in the Turkish National Struggle, and gained a national character. As seen in consular correspondences, this environment disturbed Vadala for a long time in Samsun. However, the process of establishing a new “national state” and its reflections in Samsun, the limited availability of economic resources and global influences were other obstacles which we could add the reasons why his mission in Samsun failed.

Despite the long-term plans and high expectations that Vadala made for the future of Samsun, nearly none of them did not find a satisfactory response by the French. Not only the French trade region did not show any vigour, but also nor did the French investors have any interest in the region in his consular period. Thus, it was seen once more that the decision of the French government to create French representatives in Samsun, Zonguldak and Trabzon was not enough to provide new trade opportunities and to protect interests of French. Just as in the 19th century, the consuls made similar determinations in the early periods of the Republican Period and reiterated that France could not gain a political influence without the support of French investors. In this regard, we can examine the consulate of Vadala in two terms; the first is the high expectations period between 1925 and 1929, and the second is stagnation period under the influence of the global crisis in 1929-1934. Not only in terms of France but also in other countries’ trade and investments, the Great

Depression of 1929 had a great impact and caused the emergence of a statist economic policy in Turkey that foreign investors did not want invest under these conditions.

Finally, although Vadala was very proud of waving the French flag in Samsun until 1934, the expectations about Samsun, especially those that left Trabzon behind and saw Samsun as the most effective diplomatic center in the region, were wasted. Contrary to Vadala's foresights, the French consulate in Trabzon served as the only French representative in the Southern Black Sea coasts until 1947. Nevertheless, Vadala's impressions on Samsun in the first years of the republic are important in many ways. Firstly, they show us the difficulties of being a foreign consul in Turkey in the early periods of the new Turkish state. Secondly, they reveal the economic potential of Samsun which was trying to be the most important port of the Black Sea, from a foreigner's eyes. More importantly, they expose that the situation of the French consuls, who have started to settle on the Black Sea coasts since the beginning of the 19th century, did not change much during the republican period. To sum up, his correspondences with the French authorities reveal that Samsun tried to develop under limited conditions and a great crisis, and there was an increasing economic activity of the Italians and the Germans.

Vadala's residence in Samsun was depended on the decision of the French government about the consulate and the development in the economic relations between Turkey and France. Despite the improvements in Turkish-French relations, the developments in Europe seem to directly affect the consulate of Vadala. As we evaluated above, parallel to the developments in Europe, Vadala faced fascist attack in Samsun and had to struggle with the increasing activities of the Italians in Samsun. In other words, in his consular region, Vadala felt the reflections of the threat of Hitler and Musollini against France in Europe. However, this political pressure from Italy and Germany did not last very long for Vadala. In 1934 the consul was retired by French government and the French consulate in Samsun was closed. The archives of the consulate were sent to Trabzon.

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**THE LAST FRENCH DIPLOMATIC AGENT IN SAMSUN:
RAMIRE VADALA AND HIS CONSULATE (1925-1934)**

Abstract: After the Treaty of Ankara, with the appointment of Ramire Vadala as the first French consul, the French government reopened the consulate in Samsun in 1925. This was the clear evidence of the great expectation of the French government from Samsun. As Vadala stated, as the most important port of the Black Sea, Samsun, which was seen as “Smyrna of the Black Sea”, had very bright future for the French. Vadala also stressed in his reports that French entrepreneurs need to draw attention to invests in Samsun like railway, ports, electricity, telephone, tram, sewage and hotel. As soon as Vadala arrived to Samsun, he began to prepare important reports on socio-economic and political structure of the city, which was one of the icon cities of the Republic. In this regard, the consul’s correspondences give the opportunity to look from a different perspective on Samsun in the first years of the Republic. The aim of this study was to evaluate the consulates of Vadala from his correspondences with the French authorities. The primary sources of the study are the documents located in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives.

Keywords: Samsun, French Consulate, Consular correspondences, Vadala.

**SAMSUN’DA SON FRANSIZ DİPLOMATİK TEMSİLCİ:
RAMIRE VADALA VE KONSOLOSLUĞU (1925-1934)**

Öz: Ankara Antlaşması’ndan sonra Fransız hükümeti Samsun’daki konsolosluğu 1925’te yeniden açtı ve Ramire Vadala’yı buraya tayin etti. Bu atama Fransız hükümetinin Samsun’dan büyük beklentiler içinde olduğunu kanıttır. Vadala’nın da belirttiği gibi Fransızlar açısından Karadeniz’in en önemli limanı olan ve “Karadeniz’in İzmir’i” olarak ifade edilen Samsun için parlak bir gelecek söz konusuydu. Bu bakımdan Vadala Samsun’da demiryolu, liman, elektrik, telefon, tramvay, kanalizasyon ve otel gibi yatırımlar için Fransız müteşebbislerin dikkatlerinin çekilmesi gerektiğini ifade ediyordu. Bu doğrultuda Vadala Samsun’a gelir gelmez Cumhuriyet’in simge şehirlerinden biri olan Samsun’un sosyo-ekonomik ve siyasi yapısı hakkında önemli raporlar kaleme almaya başladı. Bu bakımdan, konsolosun yazışmaları Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında Samsun’a dair farklı bir açıdan bakma imkânı vermektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Vadala’nın konsolosluğunu Fransız makamları ile yapmış olduğu yazışmalar üzerinden değerlendirmektir. Çalışmanın temel kaynakları Fransız Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivleri’nde yer alan konsolosluk yazışmalarıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Samsun, Fransa Konsolosluğu, Konsolosluk Yazışmaları, Vadala.