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Abstract
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**Role and activities of the dragomans. The Austrian branch of the
Testa family in the second half of eighteenth and the beginning of
nineteenth century**

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The text consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, appendices and a bibliography, in total the dissertation has 215 pages.

I. General characteristic of the dissertation

Topics related to the specific stratum of dragomans, who had a great influence on diplomacy and international relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, have become increasingly popular in recent years. This is due to the heterogeneous nature of the activities that the dragomans carry out. These activities are generating a growing interest in them from a number of scientific fields. Besides history, these include diplomacy and international relations, political science, law and languages. Each provides information about dragomans, helping to build the overall image of the profession and its practitioners.

The present dissertation finds its place among other scientific works. Despite the diverse scholarly literature, that has explored the dragoman institution. There is no comprehensive work covering all aspects of the profession.¹ The dissertation focuses on the dragoman institution and explores the complex nature of its specific characteristics. The focus is on the dragoman family of Testa, and in particular, the Austrian branch, whose representatives occupied some of the highest dragoman positions in the Empire. For more than a century, the dragomans served as a bridge between Austrians and Ottomans.

The dissertation attempts to give a comprehensive description of the job and the peculiarities of the institution of the dragoman. In addition, to reconstruct the activity and the important place occupied by the representatives of the Austrian branch of the Testa family in the period of the second half of the 18th century - on the basis of the archival documents on the personalities under study, which are stored in the State Archives of Vienna. These documents provide important information not only about the professional activities of the dragomans in the

¹ Rothman, E. Natalie. *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul*, Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 2011; Rothman, E. Natalie. *The Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism*. Cornell University Press, 2021; Krstic, Tijana. "Of translation and Empire Sixteenth-century Ottoman imperial interpreters as Renaissance go-betweens". In: *The Ottoman World*, Routledge, 2012, pp. 132-142; Баръмова, Мария. *Транслация на могъщество. Договаряне на мира между Хабсбургите и Високата порта 1547–1747 година*. Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски“, София, 2019; *The Journal of Early Modern History*, published by Brill, devotes an entire issue to researching the topic. It is entitled „Cross-Confessional Diplomacy and Diplomatic Intermediaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean“ <https://brill.com/view/journals/jemh/19/2-3/jemh.19.issue-2-3.xml?language=en>

service of the Austrian Empire during this period, but also about the influence of the Empire on the private lives of these officials.

The **object** of the dissertation is divided into two levels, and the two questions posed are indicated in the title. First, the question of the role and activities of the dragomans as a special kind of subject of the sultan is examined. The stratum is set in the context of the development of the Ottoman Empire and its relations with the West. The second is the Austrian branch of the Testa family and the important place they occupied as a bridge and intermediary between the Sultan and the Emperor. As one of the large and stable dragoman families, they have their own distinctive characteristics.

The **subject** of the dissertation is the institution of the Dragomans - its development, peculiarities and the formation of prominent dragoman families and clans such as Testa. The primary focus lies on the Austrian branch of the Testa family, through which an example is given of the important place dragomans occupied in international relations as a link between East and West. The dissertation puts a special focus on the connection with this profession and to the founding of the Austrian branch by Bartolomaus I Testa (1723-1809) in the second half of the 18th century. The dissertation examines professional activities of the founder of the branch and of four representatives of the next two generations of dragomans in the service of the Austrian Empire in detail.

The main reason why I chose this topic is the lack of research that traces the history of the Testa family from its association with dragoman activity and its subsequent division into several branches, the most prominent of which are the Austrian and the Dutch. In recent years, research was conducted on the Dutch branch of the family, with the help of descendants who have opened their family archives to interested researchers. Unfortunately, the Austrian branch remains outside of scientific interest.²

² Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. Une inscription inédite d'Arab-Djami. In: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 28, n°156, 1929. pp. 407-413; Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. LE PIETRE SEPOLCRALI DI ARAB GIAMI (Antica Chiesa di S. Paolo a Galata), Genova, 1940; Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. Traité entre les Génois de Galata et Mehmet II (1er juin 1453). In: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 39, n°197-198, 1940, pp. 161-175; Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. Les origines dominicaines du couvent des Saints-Pierre-et-Paul à Galata : un texte décisif. In: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 29, n°160, 1930. pp. 459-474.

² Вж: De Groot, Alexander H. "The Dragomans in the Embassies at Istanbul, 1785-1834". In: eds. van Gelder, Geert and de Moor, Ed Eastward Bound: Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East, , Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994, pp. 130-158; De Groot, Alexander H. "9. Dragomans' Careers: The Change of Status in Some Families

The **main aim** of the thesis is to prove the importance of the Testa family and its representatives in the diplomatic relations of the Austrian Empire. The branch of the family founded by Bartolomaus I consolidated its position and extended its influence through the brilliant and loyal service of the next two generations of dragomans. The dragomans are successful because of the outstanding knowledge and skills they have acquired over the years. The networks of influence and contacts that dragomans build play a very important role in their rise. The extensive research on the Testa family takes this process to another level. Seeking to ally themselves with Austrian noble families to ensure their place in the Empire.

In relation to the objective set, the research has the following **tasks**:

- To study the institution of the dragoman in the Ottoman Empire, taking into account all the peculiarities of its origin, status, legal framework, professional division and subsequent development.
- To trace the origins of the Testa family, their settlement in Constantinople and their subsequent involvement in dragoman activity, and the factors that influenced this decision.
- To trace the founding of the Austrian branch of the Testa to Bartolomaus I, who served the Habsburg monarchy for many years and repeatedly testified his loyalty and received

Connected with the British and Dutch Embassies at Istanbul, 1785–1829". In: *Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Levant from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, eds. Hamilton, Alastair, De Groot, Alexander H., Boogert, Maurits H. van den, Brill, 2000, pp. 223-247; De Groot, Alexander H. *The Netherlands and Turkey*. 1st ed, Gorgias Press, 2010; Testa, G, Tütüncü, M. *Van de Bosporus naar de Zuiderzee Reisverslag van Constantinopel naar Wijhe in 1793*, SOTA, 2022; Kroll, H., Tütüncü, M. *Tussen Constantinopel en Holland: Het Dragomannen- en Diplomaten-gelacht Testa*, SOTA, 2021; The main information about the Austrian branch in published sources can be found in old printed editions of biographical lexicons of the Austrian noble families: Kneschke, E.H., *Die Wappen der deutschen freiherrlichen und adeligen Familien in genauer, vollständiger und allgemein verständlicher Beschreibung: mit geschichtlichen und urkundlichen Nachweisen*, Weigel, 1885, s. 411.; von Müehlfeld, J.G.M., *Österreichisches Adels-Lexikon des achtzehnten u. neunzehnten Jahrhunderts enthaltend alle von 1701 bis 1820 von den Souveranen Österreichs ... in die verschiedenen Grade, des deutsch-erbländischen oder Reichs-Adels, erhobenen Personen*, Morschner, 1822, s. 89, 148.; von Wurzbach, C., *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, Band 44, Verlag der Universitäts-Buchdruckerei von L. C. Zamarski, 1882, ss. 38-39.; Kneschke, E.H., *Neues allgemeines Deutsches Adels-Lexicon*, Band 9, Leipzig, 1870, ss. 167-168.

a hereditary title of nobility from the ruler as a token of gratitude.

- To study the professional activities of the next two generations of dragomans of the Testa family in the service of the Austrian Empire.
- To analyze archival documents relating to their activities in embassies and consulates, in order to demonstrate the important place they occupied for a century as a link between the Sultan and the Emperor, as well as with other European rulers.
- To trace the vast networks of influence that the Testa managed to create and maintain, which included both prominent dragoman families and those of the Austrian nobility.

The **methods** used in the thesis are the historical method, analysis of archival documents, chronological analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization. In the study of the dragoman institution, the thesis applies a thematic-chronological analysis. While the study of the origin of the Testa family, the parallel development of the Testa and the Genoese colony in Constantinople was traced back. The work attempts to follow a chronological order in the study and analysis of the activities and roles of the prominent members of the family.

The **geographical scope** of the work includes the territory of the Ottoman capital - Constantinople, the imperial capital Vienna, as well as important European centres where the representatives of the family carried out their activities. The **time span** covered by the study relates to the activities and career development of the members of the Austrian branch of the Testa between the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. The research period is linked to the establishment of the branch. The dissertation traces the professional development and activities of the prominent representatives of the next two generations of the branch. They managed not only to consolidate the family's important position in the Empire, but also to deepen and develop their connections and contacts there.

In the course of writing this dissertation, a variety of materials were used, which can be divided into three main groups - archival documents, old printed publications and a considerable amount of secondary literature. The first group is particularly important for reconstructing the activities of the representatives of the Austrian branch of the Testa family and is of particular relevance to the work.

The dragoman institution and its peculiarities, studied in the first chapter, have their place in the scientific literature. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the subject from various scientific directions. The studies published on the subject so far have focused on only one aspect of the work or legal status of the dragomans at the Ottoman court or in Western European diplomatic missions, concentrating on their role as diplomats and cultural figures. In general, three main thematic areas can be identified. In the study of the dragomans - as part of the Ottoman administrative and legislative system, as a bridge between East and West on which diplomatic relations were based, and as cultural actors who engaged in the bilateral exchange of literature.³ What is lacking is a comprehensive work that explores and brings together the disparate information on the multifaceted nature of their status and the full range of activities they undertake.

The British historian Bernard Lewis undertook a more comprehensive study of the nature, role and activities of the dragomans. In his scholarly work entitled „From Babel to Dragomans Interpreting the Middle East“⁴ he contributes to the study of the nature of the dragomans and of their institution. The study reveals information about the recruits, status and types of dragomans in the Sultan's empire. The historian also examines the social groups from which the dragomans came and the circumstances in which their services were required. The work outlines the two main types of interpreters in the Ottoman Empire, those working for the Sublime Porte and those in the service of foreign missions. Lewis develops the profile and job description of the stratum, paying attention to its specific characteristics. The work traces the main stages in the development and transformation of the dragoman institution chronologically until its decline.

Natalie Rothman also looks at dragomans and in particular their status as individuals who simultaneously inhabit the worlds of East and West. She defines them as trans-imperial subjects,

³ Цановска, Доника. „Проблемът за драгоманите като умели преводачи и дипломатически актьори с голямо влияние – историографски преглед“. в: Анамнеза, 2020, кн. 3, с. 1-18. <http://anamnesis.info/node/1684>

⁴ Lewis Bernard, *From Babel to Dragomans Interpreting the Middle East*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

“actors who straddled and brokered - and thus helped to shape - political, religious, and linguistic boundaries between the early modern Ottoman and Venetians”.⁵ This view of the dragomans provides a broader perspective and reveals new aspects of their activities. On the downside, it focuses mainly on Venetian dragomans.⁶ Emrah Safa Gürkan⁷ also supports the assertion of the status of the dragoman as an individual caught between two worlds, acting as a go-between to guide European diplomats through the maze of Ottoman protocol and ceremonial.

The topic of the legal status of dragomans in the Ottoman Empire, which is of particular importance for understanding the important place they occupied, is addressed by the Dutchman Maurits van den Boogert in his book “The Capitulations and The Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beratlıs in the 18th Century”.⁸ He examines the status of the dragomans in relation to their possession of the berats (patents of office) in detail. The Sultan issued those directly.⁹ There is also the question of the dragomans in the service of European embassies and consulates, who, in addition to being bearers of the berats, are protected by the privileges given to them by the foreign country in question legally receives from the Sultan by virtue of the so-called capitulations.¹⁰

The dragomans are also involved in studies of the transfer of culture and information between East and West. This is the subject of research of Tijana Krstic, who has made a significant

⁵ Rothman, E. Natalie. “Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean”. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (4), 2009, p. 773.

⁶ For more information: Rothman, E. Natalie. *The Dragoman Renaissance*. 2021; Rothman, E. Natalie. “Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean”. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (4), 2009, pp. 771–800; Rothman, E. Natalie. “Conversion and Convergence in the Venetian-Ottoman Borderlands”. In: *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41 (3), 2011, pp. 601–633; Rothman, E. Natalie. “Dragomans and ‘Turkish Literature’”. In: *The Making of a Field of Inquiry, Oriente Moderno* 93 (2), 2013, pp. 390–421.

⁷ Gürkan, Emrah Safa. “Bir Diplomasi Merkezi Olarak Yeni Çağ İstanbul’u” In: *Antik Çağ’dan 21. Yüzyıla Büyükİstanbul Tarihi: Siyaset ve Yönetim I*, eds. Feridun M. Emecen and Coşkun Yılmaz (İstanbul:İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yayınları, 2015), pp. 372-399.

⁸ Boogert, Maurits H. van den. *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, Leiden: Brill, 2020.

⁹ The term berat refers to a document used to record the orders and duties given by the Sultan to persons appointed to various public and official positions in the Ottoman Empire. (*Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, Infobase publishing, 2008, p. 376.)

¹⁰ Capitulations were peaceful agreements between certain European countries granting their citizens exclusive legal and commercial protections and rights. The first capitulation of the Ottoman Empire was conducted with France in 1535. (Angell James B., *The Turkish Capitulations*, *The American Historical Review* Vol. 6, No. 2 (Jan., 1901), p. 254)

contribution to the study of the cultural activities of this class.¹¹ The influence of dragomans on the symmetry of translation and its distortions in the process of establishing diplomatic relations is the subject of a study by Maria Baramova.¹²

The historiography dealing with the institution of the dragomans and its representatives is extremely heterogeneous. Only certain aspects of the dragomans activities and nature are highlighted, which does not provide a complete picture of the class and its place in international relations. With the increased scholarly interest in these figures in recent years, and the emergence of new ideas and visions of diplomacy in early modern Europe, opportunities are opening up for the construction of a complete picture of the dragomans.

The focus of this thesis is the Testa family, and in particular its Austrian branch. In the process of researching the origins and development of the family, I have found that information about them is limited and mainly found in old printed publications, as well as in those researching the history of the Genoese colony in the Galata district of Constantinople.¹³ Individual dragoman families, their professional activities and development have been the subject of studies by researchers such as Eugène Dallegio d'Alessio (known also as Evgenios Dalezios), which deals in detail with the development of the Genoese community in Constantinople and provides important information on many of its members, including the Testa family studied here.¹⁴ There is also

¹¹ Krstic, Tijana. *Of translation and Empire. The Ottoman World*, Routledge, 2012; Krstic, Tijana. "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization". In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Jan., 2009), p. 35–63.

¹² Баръмова, Мария. *Транслация на могъщество*. София, 2019.

¹³ Mitler, Louis. "The Genoese in Galata: 1453-1682." In: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1979, pp. 71–91; Buchon, J. A. C. *Recherches et matériaux pour servir à une histoire de la domination française aux XIIIe, XIVe et XVe siècles dans les provinces démembrées de l'Empire Grec à la suite de la quatrième croisade*, Paris, 1840, pp. 462-472; Mercan, F. Ö. "From the Genoese to the Perots: The Genoese Community in Byzantine/Ottoman Constantinople (14th–15th C.)." *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 36, 2021, pp. 591-61; Zacour, N. P. *A history of the Crusades: Volume VI: The impact of the Crusades on Europe*, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989; Belgrano, L. T. *Documenti riguardanti la colonia Genovese di Pera* ("Prima serie di documenti riguardanti la colonia Genovese di Pera", pp. 99-417, "Seconda serie di documenti riguardanti la colonia di Pera", pp. 932-1003), *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* (Vol. XIII, 1877-1884), Genoa, 1877; Belin, A. *Histoire de L'église Latine de Constantinople*. Challamel, 1872; Buchon, J. A. C. *Recherches et matériaux pour servir à une histoire de la domination française aux XIIIe, XIVe et XVe siècles dans les provinces démembrées de l'Empire Grec à la suite de la quatrième croisade*, Paris, 1840, pp. 462-472.

¹⁴ Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. *Une inscription inédite d'Arab-Djami*. In: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 28, n°156, 1929. pp. 407-413; Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. *LE PIETRE SEPOLCRALI DI ARAB GIAMI* (Antica Chiesa di S. Paolo a Galata), Genova, 1940; Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. *Traité entre les Génois de Galata et Mehmet II (1er juin 1453)*. In: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 39, n°197-198, 1940, pp. 161-175; Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. *Les origines dominicaines du couvent des Saints-Pierre-et-Paul à Galata : un texte décisif*. In: *Échos d'Orient*, tome 29, n°160, 1930. pp. 459-474.

evidence of the genus in the works of Alexander de Groot.¹⁵ The genealogical and social ties that these individuals created and maintained among themselves are central to his research.

The information on the Austrian branch of the Testa family that can be found in printed works during the period under study is mainly found in biographical lexicons listing the noble families of the Empire. Much of the information on the most prominent members of the family is contained in Volumes 9, 37, 40 and 44 of the Biographical Lexicon of the Austrian Empire (*Biographische Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*) by Constant Wurzbach von Tannenberg (1818-1893) and Volumes 13 and 14 of the Austrian Biographical Lexicon 1815-1950 (*Österreichische Biographische Lexikon 1815–1950*). Information about members of the family who carried out dragoman activities in the Imperial Army is found in the military collections of the Empire (*Militär-Schematismus des österreichischen Kaiserthums*).

The study of the prominent representatives of the Austrian branch of the Testa family in the period between the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century and the reconstruction of their activities in that period are based on primary documents in the Austrian State Archives in Vienna. Information about them in the period under review is mainly contained in the House, Court and Judicial Archives departments (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv) - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State Chancellery 1500-1860, Manuscript Collections and General Administrative Archives (Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv). The archival documents I have researched not only reveal data on Testa's professional life, but also those on their private life, which shed a different light on the life of the dragoman. They also reveal data on the structure of the Austrian high administration and, in particular, the structures dealing with foreign affairs. The relationship between the higher magistrates and the dragoman of Testa's rank can be felt. Many of the archival documents studied and analysed are used for the first time in this thesis.

In the process of working with the documents, a problem arose relating to the poor condition of some of them and the impossibility of making full use of them. It is interesting to note

¹⁵ Вж: De Groot, Alexander H. "The Dragomans in the Embassies at Istanbul, 1785-1834". In: eds. van Gelder, Geert and de Moor, Ed Eastward Bound: Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East, , Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994, pp. 130-158; De Groot, Alexander H. "9. Dragomans' Careers: The Change of Status in Some Families Connected with the British and Dutch Embassies at Istanbul, 1785–1829". In: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Levant from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century, eds. Hamilton, Alastair, De Groot, Alexander H., Boogert, Maurits H. van den, Brill, 2000, pp. 223-247; De Groot, Alexander H. The Netherlands and Turkey. 1st ed, Gorgias Press, 2010.

that most of the material is written in German, but there is also a large proportion in Italian (Testa's mother tongue), Latin and French. This, in turn, demonstrates the high linguistic skills of the dragomans of the genus.

II. Structure and main content of the thesis

The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, appendices and a bibliography, with a total of 215 pages.

The **introductory part** of the dissertation presents the subject, the chronological framework, the main objectives, the tasks, the methods and the methodology used. It also includes the archival documents on which the thesis is based, as well as a historiographical review of the literature. Attention is paid to some of the historiographical issues related to the topic.

The **first chapter** of the dissertation - "The Dragoman Institution - Emergence, Status and Characteristics" has eight subchapters. They deal with the main features of European and Ottoman international law, the origins of the dragoman institution, as well as an in-depth analysis of its place in the Ottoman Empire and its characteristic features. The presentation of the dragomans, with all the peculiarities of their nature and activity, is fundamental for a better understanding of their importance in the sphere of international relations, on the one hand, and why the representatives of the Testa family occupied such an important place in the Austrian Empire, on the other hand.

The first subchapter presents the establishment, development and main features of European and Ottoman international law. The radically different view of diplomacy held by the Ottomans is highlighted. It is largely based on religious grounds, involving the Islamic legal system and principles of treatment of non-Muslims. It also traces the development of diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the Europeans and the difficulties they encountered in establishing this ongoing process. The second sub-section explores the origins and roots of the name "dragoman" from the earliest known records, as well as its spread across Europe. The next section examines the origins and development of the office of the dragoman, reaching the earliest

records relating to the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610- 641).¹⁶ The focus is on the perception of this important position in the Ottoman Empire and its influence. Evidence of the first use of dragomans by the sultans is examined, as well as the subsequent development of the spheres of activity that this class served in the following decades. This, in turn, necessitated the legal regulation of their status. The fourth section examines the origins and social status of the people involved in this activity, drawing on the research of Bernard Lewis and Natalie Rothman. These include slaves, refugees, renegades, prisoners of war, Jews, merchants and sailors.¹⁷ The Levantines stand out as a group of their own, and their representatives are studied in the work on the members of the genus Testa.¹⁸ The important conclusion that can be drawn from this is that all the groups mentioned profess a religion other than Islam, which is one of the most characteristic features of the dragomans. In the following subchapter is discuss the main activities of the dragomans and the types of dragomans that emerged in the Ottoman Empire as a result of the legal regulation of their status in the sixteenth century. The first level at which dragomans proved necessary was that of establishing a link between the subject population and the central authority. With the gradual introduction of ad hoc missions of an extraordinary nature, the practice of establishing a permanent structure and a professional division of staff began to be established. Interpreters in the Empire are thus divided into two groups: the dragomans, who are in the service of the Sultan's Imperial Council¹⁹ (Dîvân-ı Hümâyûn tercümanları), and the second group includes those who serve foreign missions and consulates. Each of the two groups is characterised by specific features which will be discussed in this part of the chapter. The focus will be on the Sublime Porte dragomans and their activities, while the characteristics of the other group will be revealed through an examination of the Austrian branch of the Testa family and their service in

¹⁶ İslam Ansiklopedisi: İslam Âlemi Tarih, Coğrafya, Etnografya Ve Biyografya Lugati. İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 12/1. Cilt, 1978, p. 176.

¹⁷ For more information: Lewis, Bernard. *From Babel to Dragomans Interpreting the Middle East*. Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 19; Rothman, E. Natalie. *The Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism*. Cornell University Press, 2021.

¹⁸ Mitler, Louis. "The Genoese in Galata: 1453-1682." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1979, pp. 71–91; Mercan, F. Ö. "From the Genoese to the Perots: The Genoese Community in Byzantine/Ottoman Constantinople (14th–15th C.)." *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 36 (2021): 591-619; Mansel, Philip. *Constantinople : City of the world's desire 1453-1924*, John Murray, London, 1995; De Groot Alexander, *Dragomans in Istanbul, 1785-1834, Eastward Bound: Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East*, Rodopi, 1994.

¹⁹ The divan was a supreme legislative body, deliberative council or court in the Ottoman Empire and other Middle Eastern countries, as defined by the official Oxford Dictionary. For further information: (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/divan>) (15.3.2022r.)

the following chapters. The recruitment and training of dragomans takes its place in the next subchapter. The main methods of recruiting officers are discussed, as well as the changes that occurred in this process as the Empire and its diplomatic relations developed. As these deepened and the need for trustworthy dragomans increased, European states, driven by the idea of the importance of their loyalty, acted to establish institutions to train their subjects for the office. The penultimate chapter focuses on the legal status of dragomans in the Empire. It is fundamental to understanding the institution itself and the place it occupies. They belong to the group of so-called *beratlii* (*berathli*), which in turn means that they have a patent on the performance of the office they have assumed. Dragomans in the service of foreign legations, on the other hand, came under the protection of the privileges that the foreign country was legally granted by the Sultan through the so-called capitulations, which placed them in the situation of privileged officials. Attention is also given to the pernicious 18th century practice of the sale of *berats* and its influence.²⁰ Over time, as the dragoman's influence grows, they begin to use it for their own ends. It is not uncommon for these employees to betray the trust of their employers and use sensitive diplomatic information for personal gain. This led to the discrediting of the institution, creating a negative opinion of them among the public, which to some extent led to their disappearance in the Empire. This is the subject of the last subchapter, which examines the reasons for the gradual decline of the activity of the dragomans around the middle of the 19th century.

The most important **conclusions** that can be drawn from this chapter are the following:

- There are great contrasts between European and Ottoman international law, which necessitate the use of dragomans to establish good diplomatic relations.
- The dragoman institution has deep roots that can be traced back centuries before it started to be used and developed in the Ottoman Empire.
- Dragoman institution was an important part of the Ottoman administrative system. This was due to the important activity that these officials performed, mainly as a link between the East and the West.

²⁰ Boogert, Maurits H. van den. *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System*, Leiden: Brill, 2020. pp. 76-81.

- For centuries, it was the dragomans who were responsible for the establishment and maintenance of good relations between the Europeans and the Ottomans.

The **second chapter** of the dissertation, "The Origin of the Testa Family and the Founding of the Austrian Branch by Bartholomaus I Testa (1723-1809)", is divided into three sub-chapters. The first subchapter deals with the roots and origins of the Testa family. They were of Genoese origin and worked in trade and notarial services.²¹ They can be traced back to the period of the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204), when the Genoese arrived in Constantinople, driven by the opportunities for trade. In order to better understand the actions of the Testa family, the development of the colony from the 13th to the 16th century and that of the Testa family are traced in parallel. They settled in the Pera/Galata area and were granted great privileges by the Byzantine emperors. A highlight in this regard was when the colony was granted the status of imperium in imperio by Emperor Michael IX Paleologos (1295-1320), which gave its governor the right to be present at the Byzantine court.²² This led to the creation of the Latin Community, which has become known as the *Magnifica Communita di Pera*.²³ The representatives of the Testa family most probably decided to migrate in the period of XII-XIII centuries. The first written evidence of their presence is connected with the name of Pascal/Pascual Testa, who put his signature to the treaty of Nymphaeum signed in 1261.²⁴ This means that by this time the family was already established in the capital and held a high position in the Latin colony. Information about their activities in Byzantium is scarce, as the next reference to members of the family relates to a tombstone commemorating Tommaso Testa and his wife Lucinetta Spinola, which was placed in the Roman Catholic Church of St. Paul (now the Arab Mosque).²⁵ After the conquest of the city

²¹ <https://vivanti.it/2020/03/06/titoli-trattamenti-e-nobiltà-nella-turchia-degli-ottomani-cenni-e-spunti/> (29.12.2023)

²² Mitler, Louis. "The Genoese in Galata: 1453-1682." In: International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol. 10, no. 1, 1979, p. 73.

²³ Magnifica comunità di Pera represents the community of Genoese living and doing business in the Pera neighbourhood.

²⁴ Търкова-Заимова, В, Димитров Д, Павлов, П. Хронологична енциклопедия на света том 6/ Византия, Елпис, Велико Търново, 1995 (https://electronic-library.org/books/Book_0023.html)

²⁵ De Groot Alexander, Dragomans in Istanbul, 1785-1834. p.148; Dallegio d'Alessio Eugène. LE PIETRE SEPOLCRALI DI ARAB GIAMI (Antica Chiesa di S. Paolo a Galata), Genova, 1940, p. 114.

by the Ottomans, the Latins maintained their position. They were able to obtain capitulations that established their basic rights and obligations. The fact that representatives of the clan have a copy of this treaty clearly shows their important place in the colony. Its members continued to hold high positions in the decades that followed, as can be seen from their active participation in the life of the colony and the measures taken to develop it, as well as from the fact that they were entrusted with the task of preserving the archives of the *Magnifica Communita di Pera* for centuries.²⁶ A turning point for the Genoese in the capital, including Testa, came with the deepening of Ottoman diplomatic relations with the Europeans and the growing need for dragomans. The family in question has all the necessary qualities to be associated with this activity, which became a reality in the second half of the 18th century. Only a century after the Testa entered the dragoman world, they held important positions in the diplomatic representations of various European countries and managed to create several branches of the family. One of the most prominent is the Austrian branch, whose development and prominent members are researched in the work. The genus was founded in the second half of the 18th century by Bartholomäus I Testa. He was the first member of the family to commit himself to the Habsburg monarchy and to determine the future of his successors. He joined the embassy in 1740, where he was able to demonstrate his brilliant qualities and abilities and prove his loyalty. During a career spanning more than 60 years, he held the highest dragoman posts in the embassy, undertook important diplomatic missions and safeguarded the interests of Habsburg subjects in the Padishah's empire. As a result, in 1782 he was appointed to the office of Habsburg emperor. Bartholomäus was given the title of Court Counsellor (*Hofrat*²⁷), and the following year he was knighted and given the family coat of arms. The latter event marked the official attachment of the Dragoman to the Habsburg nobility. On the basis of the archival documents I have examined in the State Archives in Vienna²⁸, it is possible to reconstruct some of Testa's activities at the embassy. The information, although sparse, reveals important aspects of

²⁶ De Groot Alexander, *Dragomans in Istanbul, 1785-1834*. p.148.

²⁷ For further information: <https://austria-forum.org/af/AustriaWiki/Hofrat> (10.08.2023)

²⁸ AVA, Adel HAA AR 986.28, Testa, Bartholomäus, k.k. Rat und Dolmetsch an der Ottomanischen Pforte, Ritterstand; HHStA, Or HS 571, Bartholomäus von Testa, Johann Frank von Negelsfürst, Johann Lipka: Sammlung osmanischer Fermeane, Urkunden und anderer amtlicher Schreiben, Sultansmonogramme und Steuerlisten, mit lateinischer Übersetzung, Fragment; HHStA, StK Vorträge 143-3-12, Fol. Vortrag des Staatskanzlers über einen Bericht des Herrn von Testa aus Konstantinopel; ²⁸ HHStA, StK Interiora Personalia 11, Fol. Personalia Testa; HHStA, KA StR Fassbenderakten 16-11-6, Note von Erzherzog Karl Hof- und Staatskanzlei, mit welcher der mitgeteilte Internuntiationsbericht samt einem Schreiben des k. k. Rats von Testa an den Feldmarschallleutnant Soro mit dem Bemerken zurückgestellt werden, dass die vom Rat geäußerten Sorgen durch die Entschlossenheit des Hauptmanns Hönig und dessen gute Aufnahme in Widin behoben seien.

the dragoman's professional life, some of his activities and the reasons for his career progression. The documents examined provide details of the translation work that Testa carried out, some of the reports that he submitted to the embassy in his capacity as a dragoman, and personal information that shows the reality of the dragoman's life. In 1802, the last year of his professional life, Bartholomaus played an important role in maintaining good diplomatic relations between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans during the acute crisis that erupted over the personality of Osman Pazvantoglu.²⁹ His skills, experience and the wide network of influence he built up over the years were the main factors in his success. He retired in 1803 and, as a token of his esteem, was given the hereditary title of baron by Emperor Franz II (1792-1806).³⁰ Baron Testa died in 1809, leaving his mark on the history of the Habsburg embassy in Constantinople. His skills and the loyalty of his dragomans, which was repeatedly demonstrated, led to the establishment of the Austrian branch of the family. "This branch of the family thus made the transition from the Orient to the West"³¹, which proved decisive for the future of all its members. Subsequent generations of the family followed in the footsteps of the founding father, consolidating their place in the empire and increasing their influence many times over.

The **conclusions** that can be drawn from this chapter are as follows:

- Since the migration of the family from Genoa during the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204), members of the family have occupied high positions in Latin society.
- Thanks to their skills, the Testa have been able to occupy the most important positions in the Magnifica Communita di Pera for centuries.

²⁹ For further information on this case: HHStA, KA StR Fassbenderakten 16-11-6, Note von Erzherzog Karl Hof- und Staatskanzlei, mit welcher der mitgeteilte Internuntiatursbericht samt einem Schreiben des k. k. Rats von Testa an den Feldmarschallleutnant Soro mit dem Bemerken zurückgestellt werden, dass die vom Rat geäußerten Sorgen durch die Entschlossenheit des Hauptmanns Hönig und dessen gute Aufnahme in Widin behoben seien; Мутафчиева, В. Кърджалийско време. Издателство на Българската академия на науките, София, второ издание 1993 г.; Gradeva, Rossitsa. "Osman Pazvantoglu of Vidin: Between old And New" In War and Peace in Rumeli: 15th to Beginning of 19th Century, 11-50. Piscataway, NJ, USA: Gorgias Press, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.31826/9781463226046-002>

³⁰ Schmied-Kowarzik Wolfdietrich: Verstehen und Verständigung: Ethnologie, Xenologie, interkulturelle Philosophie. p. 122.

³¹ Schmied-Kowarzik Wolfdietrich: Verstehen und Verständigung: Ethnologie, Xenologie, interkulturelle Philosophie. p. 122.

- After the conquest of the capital by the Ottomans in 1453, they continued to maintain their high position and established close contacts with the Ottomans.
- Their entry into the stratum of the dragomans marked the beginning of their career development in this field, which would last for several centuries.
- Their qualities and skills did not go unnoticed by the European ambassadors residing in Constantinople, who turned to them to carry out dragoman activities.
- Through their success, several branches of the family developed, the most prominent of which was the Austrian one.
- The strong foundations laid by Bartholomaus I Testa for the Austrian branch were a prerequisite for his successors to have the opportunity for high professional development in the Empire, which lasted for more than a century. The Testa family had a brilliant career in the Empire, which left its mark on international relations and diplomacy.

The **third chapter** "Prominent Representatives of the Austrian Branch of the Testa Family" introduces the next two generations of the Austrian branch and their active work in dragoman circles. They were one of the highest-ranking families with great influence in international relations and diplomacy in the Austrian Empire. The chapter is divided into two sub-chapters which examine the professional activities and development of four members of the family, two of the founder's sons and two of the third generation of the Austrian branch. Most of the information presented is based on the archival material about them contained in the Austrian State Archives. The first subchapter examines the activity and development of two of the descendants of the founder of the branch, Bartholomaus I Testa. His sons were named Johann Anton Testa (1768-1839) and Caspar Testa (1777-1814). The founder's eldest son, Johann Anton, made a career in the embassy of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in Constantinople, holding the post

of chancellor.³² Archival information on his activities is limited to a few documents in the "General Administrative Archive" (Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv) of the Austrian State Archives, relating to his professional activities and the high honours the dragoman received for his loyal and highly qualified service. Documents relating to Testa's private life, on the other hand, reveal his connections with members of two prominent dragoman families from Ragusa: the Beneveni and the Chirico. After Anton's death in 1839, his second wife, Lucia Chirico (1790-?), was forced to turn to the Empire for help in supporting her two minor sons, Theophilus (1820-1873) and Charles (1823-1895).³³ The request was granted to her thanks to the networks of contacts that her husband had built up during his lifetime, to his brilliance, which gave the family a prominent position in the highest administrative circles, and also to the help of his elder sons, who already held high public positions. The second son of Bartholomäus I Testa I I have researched is the youngest - Caspar Testa. Information about his life is scarce, both in Austrian biographical lexicons and in archives. We know that he worked as a dragoman in the imperial army, holding the rank of lieutenant. The second son of Bartholomäus I Testa I I have researched is the youngest, Caspar Testa. Information about his life is scarce, both in Austrian biographical encyclopaedias and in archives. We know that he worked as a dragoman in the imperial army, holding the rank of lieutenant.³⁴ Many of the documents relating to him are police reports from 1813. They show the authorities watched Testa closely for questionable behaviour related to his insistence on obtaining a passport to stay in the Kingdom of Bavaria.³⁵ The authorities suspected him of spying. The representative of the family died on 24 February 1814. The details of his succession, the drawing up of the necessary documents and the distribution of his movable and immovable property among the family members are preserved in the archives in Vienna.³⁶ They provide information on the

³² Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950 (ÖBL). Band 14, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 2014, s. 262.

³³ Kneschke, Ernst H. Neues allgemeines deutsches Adels-Lexicon Band 9. s. 167-168.

³⁴ AVA, Inneres PHSt 98.1813, Testa, Kaspar Freiherr von – Passangelegenheit.

³⁵ The Kingdom of Bavaria was founded in 1806 and lasted until 1918, with Munich as its capital. Its origins lie in the Franco-Bavarian Treaty of Berne of 10-12 December 1805 and the Peace of Pressburg of 26 December 1805, concluded between representatives of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) and the Austrian Emperor Franz II (1768-1835). Its king at the time was Maximilian I Joseph of Bavaria (1756-1825), who ruled Bavaria until his death. For further information see: Schmid, Alois., Weigand, Katharina. Bayern mitten in Europa. Vom Frühmittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert. Beck, München 2005; Körner, Hans-Michael. Geschichte des Königreichs Bayern. Beck, München, 2006.

³⁶ AVA, Inneres NÖLR Allgemein A 53.14, Testa, Adolf Kaspar Freiherr von, 22127.

financial situation of the dragoman, as well as on the relationships with his brothers and sisters mentioned in his will.

The third generation of the Austrian branch of the Testa was represented by Bartholomaus III von Testa (1804-1859) and Heinrich von Testa (1807-1876). The former was the eldest son of Anton Testa, who had a distinguished career in Austrian service. He served at embassies in Constantinople, Athens, Kassel (now Germany), Hanover (temporary post) and Florence. Throughout his career, Testa testifies his allegiance to the Emperor, demonstrated his remarkable diplomatic skills and abilities, and consolidated the important place his family held in the Empire. As a result of his merits, he was repeatedly decorated by the Emperor, the Pope and others. One of the dragoman's greatest honours came in 1852, when Bartholomaus III became a member of the Imperial Council (Reichsrat).³⁷ He died on 30 May 1859 in Hitzing (now the 13th district of Vienna). With 34 years of service, Testa undoubtedly left his mark in diplomatic circles. His services to the other embassies in which he served have not gone unrecognised. He was posthumously awarded Greece's highest order of merit, the Order of the Redeemer³⁸, and a month later the Order of the Red Eagle 3rd Class of the Kingdom of Prussia.³⁹ Heinrich von Testa was the second son of Anton von Testa, who also left his mark on the diplomatic life of the Austrian Empire, devoting his entire life to the activity of a diplomat. During his career, which lasted more than 50 years, he worked for embassies and consulates in Constantinople, Jassy, Hamburg and Athens. In each of these positions he displayed the enviable qualities and loyalty to the Empire that ran in the family. The greatest professional success of his career was undoubtedly the rescue of the three free cities of the Hamburg Hanseatic League from the economic crisis that broke out in 1857. Thanks to Heinrich Testa's intervention, the cities received financial aid from the Austrian emperor, thus ensuring their survival.⁴⁰

³⁷ The Imperial Council (Reichsrat) was established in 1851 during the absolutist reign of Emperor Franz Joseph I in place of the Imperial Parliament. The members of the Imperial Council were appointed personally by the monarch.

³⁸ The Order of the Redeemer (Τάγμα του Σωτήρος) is also known as the Order of the Savior. It is the oldest and highest award bestowed by the modern Greek state.

³⁹ The Order of the Red Eagle (Roter Adlerorden) is a knightly order of the Kingdom of Prussia. It is awarded to both military personnel and civilians in recognition of bravery in battle, outstanding military leadership, long and faithful service to the Kingdom, or other merit.

⁴⁰ For further information: Baasch, Ernst. „Zur Geschichte der Handelskrise von 1857“. In: Sonderdruck aus: Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte, Bd. 30, Hamburg 1929, ss. 81–105.

The Testa family managed to maintain its high position in Austrian diplomatic circles for a century. The solid foundations laid by Bartholomäus I Testa laid stable base and those were developed and built upon by subsequent generations. The Testa family possessed all the qualities required for the office of dragoman, in addition to considerable experience and extensive networks of influence both within the Ottoman Empire and in Austria.

- The representatives of the Austrian branch of the Testa family had a great influence on the diplomatic life and the development of the international relations of the Austrian Empire during the period under consideration.
- Thanks to the efforts of the members of the family, a bridge was established that connected the two empires and served to maintain and develop good diplomatic relations between them for centuries.
- Testa carried out translations at various levels and helped to establish and maintain good diplomatic relations between the Austrian Empire and the rest of the world.
- The important place that the Testa hold in the Austrian high administration, as well as the many awards and medals they have received, are testimony to their outstanding qualities and abilities, as well as the loyalty they have shown.

The final **fourth chapter**, "Dragomans and their Networks of Influence. The Austrian branch of the Testa family as an example" draws attention to the networks of influence and contacts that dragomans are building. The chapter consists of three sections. The first examines the process of the emergence and development of dragoman networks of influence. At an early stage in the development of this stratum, its representatives became aware of the risks of the profession due to the nature of their legal status, the nature of their activities and their position between the world of Islam and the world of war. This is why they gradually began to converge, exchanging information and experiences and trying to keep the professional monopoly in their hands. Despite their differences and the competition for higher positions, common interests come to the fore and eventually prevail. For each member of the class, the most important thing is to guarantee the protection and rights of the whole community, which in turn guarantees its future. In the early

stages of the formation of the dragoman institution, Venice acted as a distribution centre for the information that was spreading throughout Western Europe.

The culmination of this process of cohesion occurred around the 17th century. The dragomans achieved this cohesion through marriages between members of different dragoman families. This strengthened the ties between them, which became blood ties, ensuring the continuation of important families and the preservation of the office in the hands of these particular families. This allows information to flow freely between them. Established links bring security and the possibility of accumulating a greater volume of valuable information from different countries. The resulting network of influence covered the entire Ottoman Empire and gradually spread across Europe. The middle of the 17th century marked a new period characterised by an intensive increase in intermarriage between representatives of different dragoman families and the creation of strong dragoman dynasties.⁴¹ The new dynasties created by the union of two dragoman clans were key to the formation and development of trans-imperial kinship networks that extended beyond the borders of the empire. The genealogical ties created by marriages between different dragoman families are of great importance in transforming the class itself and making it a strong and unified social group of great importance.

The second sub-section examines the establishment and development of the Testa family's network of influence in Constantinople immediately after their association with dragoman activity. The members of the family were clearly aware of the importance of networks for their development. Therefore, the first Testa family dragomans turned to associating with dragomans of Venetian origin. Subsequent generations greatly expanded the family's network of influence, adding blood ties with dragomans serving mainly in France and England. These included the Salvaggio (Venice), de Negri (France), Dane (France and England), Fortis (Venice and France), Fornetti (France) and Tarcia (Venice) families. Through Testa's family connections with dragomans working at various embassies, they have the chance to receive important and up-to-date information on developments in international relations. During this period, information was also more valuable than gold, and the dragomans clearly realised this, with Testa actively using his connections. This gave them an advantage over other interpreters and cemented their position

⁴¹ Rothman, E. Natalie, *Interpreting Dragomans*. p. 779.

as one of the most influential dragoman families in Constantinople, with a well-developed network of influence and access to vital diplomatic information.

The final subchapter focuses on the network of influence that the Austrian branch of the Testa family managed to create. The granting of a hereditary title to Bartholomäus I of Testa heralded changes for generations to come. One of the most important was in the network of influence. Essentially, the practice remained the same - aligning with prominent families to ensure Testa's place in diplomatic circles and their access to important information flows. The only thing that has changed is the environment they are targeting. The future generations of this branch turned their attention to the clique of the Austrian nobility. Gradually, the representatives of the Testa clan began to associate themselves with this group of personalities. The most successful marriage for the family was that between Elisabeth Testa and Ignaz Lorenz von Sturmer (1750-1829). Sturmer was educated at the Oriental Academy and held high positions in the Foreign Office in Vienna. While in Constantinople in the early 1780s, he made contact with Bartholomäus I Testa and his daughter, whom he married in 1786. This union brings great benefits to both spouses. For Sturmer, it is an opportunity to benefit from Testa's wide and influential network of contacts. This was a great help in his rapid rise in diplomatic circles. On the other hand, Elisabeth's family strengthened its position in high state circles by joining forces with a high-ranking Habsburg official. In 1802, Sturmer was appointed as ambassador to the embassy in Constantinople.⁴² Although by this time Bartholomäus I Testa had retired and was no longer serving as First dragoman in the Ottoman capital, control of this important post for the Austrians remained in the hands of the family. The most striking example of the influence the family acquired through this marriage came very soon after the engagement of Elisabeth and Ignaz Lorenz. It is expressed in the conflict that broke out between Sturmer and Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1856)⁴³. The network continued to expand in the following generations of Testa. By establishing kinship ties with the nobility of the Austrian Empire, the Testa consolidated and expanded their important

⁴² Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950 (ÖBL). Band 13. s. 445.

⁴³ Wagner, A., Koitz-Arko, G., Kowatsch, S. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall 1774–1856 Ein altösterreichisches Gelehrtenleben. Eine Annäherung Band 52/1. Graz, 2021., Wagner, A., Koitz-Arko, G., Kowatsch, S. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall 1774–1856 Ein altösterreichisches Gelehrtenleben. Eine Annäherung Band 52/2. Graz, 2021., Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph Frh. von (1774-1856), Orientalist. https://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_H/Hammer-Purgstall_Joseph_1774_1856.xml (27.11.2023)

positions in the highest administrative circles. They thus successfully completed the East-West transition by adopting a fully Austrian national identity and commitment to the Empire.

- The dragoman networks of influence are a specific mechanism of protection for the class and its members that emerges in the early stages of its formation.
- This process developed and deepened over the centuries as the influence of the dragomans on diplomacy and international relations between the Ottomans and Europeans increased.
- The networks that were established spread not only within the Ottoman Empire, but also throughout Europe, and served to transmit valuable information that was used for the personal needs of members of the class.
- The Testa family also created a network of influence immediately after their involvement in dragoman activity, which greatly helped their career progression.
- The Austrian branch of the Testa created a dense network of influence, based not only on links with other dragoman families, but also with high Austrian dignitaries, enabling the representatives to rise professionally and consolidate their high public positions.

The dissertation **concludes** with several main findings on the subject of dragomans and their important place in international and diplomatic relations. The dissertation places a special emphasis on the activities of the representatives of the Austrian branch of the Testa family and their great influence in maintaining good relations between Austrians and Ottomans. For a century, they served as a bridge between the two empires, maintaining diplomatic relations. The Testa had the greatest influence on these relations, but the posts they held in various European countries attest to their enviable skills and qualities upon which the Emperor relied.

The dissertation also includes **six appendices** (picture of a dragoman, genealogy of the Testa family representatives in Pera, tombstone of the Testa family representatives, coat of arms of the Austrian branch of the Testa family, family tree of the Austrian branch of the Testa family, networks of influence of the Testa family in Constantinople in the period 1570-1720).

III. Contributions of the dissertation

- Presents to the academic community a little known and researched part of the dragoman family of Testa - the Austrian branch with its prominent representatives in the period from the second half of the 18th century to the first half of the 19th century.
- Brings unused archival documents from the Austrian State Archives into the circulation of the scientific community.
- Explores the important place that the dragomans of the Austrian branch of the Testa occupied as a bridge between Austria and the Ottoman Empire, ensuring good diplomatic relations.
- It attempts to construct a complete picture of the dragomans and the institution of the dragoman, taking into account all the characteristics of the stratum.

IV. Publications related to the dissertation topic

1. *Цановска, Доника.* „Проблемът за драгоманите като умели преводачи и дипломатически актьори с голямо влияние – историографски преглед“. в: Анамнеза, 2020, кн. 3, с. 1-18. <http://anamnesis.info/node/1684>
2. *Цановска, Доника.* „Драгоманите от холандския клон на фамилията Теста през втората половина на XVIII – началото на XIX в. като дипломатически мост между холандци и османци“. в: Мартенски студентски четения, т. 8, 2022, с. 327-337.
3. *Цановска, Доника.* „Йозеф фон Хамер-Пургшал и конфликтът му с интернунций Игнац Лоренц фон Щурмер в периода 1802-1806 г.“. Статията е представена на XII Мартенски студентски четения и е одобрена за публикуване (под печат)