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# THE ZAMOYSKI FAMILY LIBRARY IN WARSAW AS AN INSTITUTE OF POLISH HISTORY

Libraries as such are an object of research for library and book scientists who explore the *sui generis* role of these institutions, or, more specifically, their unique role within the meaning of today's standards. The social, cultural and scientific role of Polish libraries remains practically outside the scope of interest of scholars, and almost completely outside the scope of interest of scholars specializing in the history of historiography. The existing synthetical and analytical literature about the history of research projects, general scholarly activity, or the historical education of society, contains explicit reservations that it will not dwell on the role of libraries and the collections development of national memorabilia, thereby narrowing the scope of interest to the activity of historians in areas specific to today's historical science: academic seminars, scientific societies and scientific or popular science periodicals.<sup>1</sup> Is this the right approach for exploring Polish historiography of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? Let the Zamoyski Family Library in Warsaw serve as an example in this discussion.

The first Zamoyski book collection, established by Jan Zamoyski (1542-1605), Chancellor and Great Hetman of the Crown and one of the richest and most powerful men of that time in Poland and in Europe as well, played a functional role in the best meaning of the term. Printed and hand-written books were to serve their owner and his scholarly environment, which was composed of professors of the University and some equally well-educated courtiers and clients of the Chancellor.<sup>2</sup>

They were also to serve those who dealt with describing the national history. The founder of the Zamoyski libraries, both the palatial and the university ones (which upon having been

1 See J. Maternicki, *Kultura i edukacja historyczna społeczeństwa polskiego w XIX w. Zarys problematyki i postulaty badawcze* [Historical Culture and Education of Polish Society in the 19th Century. An Outline and Suggestions for Future Research] In: *Edukacja historyczna społeczeństwa polskiego w XIX w. Zbiór studiów* [Historical Education of Polish Society in the 19th Century. A Collection of Studies], ed. J. Maternicki, Warszawa 1981, p. 121.

2 T. Makowski, *A brief history of Jan Zamoyski's library [in] J lag med böcker. Festschrift till Ulf Göranson*, Uppsala, 2012, pp. 243-251. *Zarys dziejów biblioteki Jana Zamojskiego* [History of the Jan Zamoyski Library. An Outline] "Zamojsko-Wołyńskie Zeszyty Muzealne", 3, 2005, pp. 91-100; *The Zamoyski Library: from Jan to Jan.*, ed. T. Makowski, Warszawa 2005, pp. 40-47.

moved to Warsaw formed the nucleus of the Zamoyski Family Library), pursued an active policy of presenting the past of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was based upon the collected source material.<sup>3</sup> These historical interests did not subside with subsequent generations of the Zamoyski Estate owners holding the title of Ordynat. After having been moved to the Blue Palace in Warsaw in 1811, the combined Zamoyski book collections – those of the palace, the former Academy, ex-Chancellor Andrzej, Ordynat Aleksander XI, and his successor Stanisław Kostka Zamoyski – gave rise to the Zamoyski Family Library (Polish abbreviation: BOZ).

Let us have a closer look at the Warsaw-based Zamoyski Family Library under the rule of Józef Przyborowski and Tadeusz Korzon. The scientific situation for Polish scholars in Warsaw was very different from that in Cracow and Lwów, due to the loss of independence by Poland in 1795 – which was regained in 1918 – and the different approaches of the new rulers: Russia, Prussia and Austria. For instance, in Cracow, the university had existed from the 15th century. In Warsaw, under the Russian occupation, the situation was very hard for those who wanted to do any research on Polish history or literature. Stefan Kieniewicz distinguished three stages of the development of science in Warsaw in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or rather three successive scholarly milieus working under various conditions that, in each case, relied upon different institutions. The first stage, after the third partition, was connected with the activity of the Society for the Advancement of Sciences, and, later on, the University of Warsaw. That period lasted until the November Uprising of 1830, whereupon the Society was disbanded. The following, post-Uprising generation was not to find a historical milieu in Warsaw. Reintegration of the historical community started in the 1840s in the editorial boards of several scientific journals, first among them the “Biblioteka Warszawska.” The meetings of the editorial board were a stopgap for the meetings of scientific societies. It is worth remembering that at that time only every sixth scholar was connected with some kind of a scientific institution. In historiographical writings, the Main School – founded in 1862 and closed down seven years later – basked in glory, while in actual fact outstanding professors, such as Adolf Pawiński or Karol Estreicher, were exceptions to the rule. One fourth of the lecturers had no publications at all. In 1869, the Main School was replaced by the Tsar Alexander University. In this third stage, history professionals made a living from

3 Jan Zamoyski was the student of Professor Carlo Sigonion who “broke away from the old rhetorical approach, and switched not so much to purely philological studies as to historical ones. Right now, after the war, some Italian scholars found that he is the predecessor of Muratori, who to a great extent – like August Bielowski in Poland – was the first to establish the foundation of source materials for studies in the history of Italy, covering the period since the 5<sup>th</sup> century until his contemporary times. He recovered a huge amount of chronicles, documents etc. He put a special emphasis on the Middle Ages, i. e. the period so much neglected and held in contempt during the Renaissance” – H. Barycz, *Studia zagraniczne Jana Zamoyskiego* [Foreign Studies of Jan Zamoyski]. In: *Czterysta lat Zamościa. Materiały sesji naukowej zorganizowanej przez Wydział I Nauk Społecznych PAN, Uniw. Im. M. Curie- Skłodowskiej w Lublinie, Zamojskie Tow. Przyj. Nauk, 12-13 czerwca 1980 r. w Zamościu* [Four Hundred Years of Zamość. Proceedings of a Scientific Session Organized by the Department of Social Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Zamość Society for the Advancement of Sciences, 12-13 June, 1980, in Zamość], ed. J. Kowalczyk, Wrocław 1983, p. 231. Zamoyski owned not only the fundamental source material for studies in Polish history, such as Górski's 16<sup>th</sup> century “Files” from the Royal Chancery, the chronicles of Gallus Anonimus and Jan Długosz, but also the five-volume inventory of the Archives of the Crown Treasury on the Wawel Hill which came into being under his direction. To find more about his historiographic activity, see S. Lempicki, *Polski Medyceusz XVI w.* [The Polish 16<sup>th</sup> Century Medic], in: *Mecenat wielkiego kanclerza. Studia o Janie Zamoyskim* [Patronage of the Great Chancellor. Studies on Jan Zamoyski], ed. S. Grzybowski, Warszawa 1980, pp. 494-499; idem, *Śladem komentarzy Cezara (hetman Jan Zamoyski współpracownikiem Heidensteina)* [In the Footsteps of Caesar's Comments (Hetman Jan Zamoyski as a Collaborator of Heidenstein)], in: *ibid.*, pp. 381-402; idem, *Hetman Zamoyski – miłośnik starożytności* [Hetman Zamoyski – The Lover of the Antiquity], in: *ibid.*, pp. 581-585; H. Barycz, *Szlakami dziejopisarstwa staropolskiego. Studia nad historiografią w. XVI-XVII* [In the Footsteps of Old Polish Historiography. Studies in 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Century Historiography], Wrocław 1981, pp. 45-67.

various sources: legal and illegal pedagogical work, journalism, or work in a variety of social institutions. The post-1870 period saw a revival of periodicals that attracted scholars.<sup>4</sup>

Under these circumstances, control of the estate was assumed by Tomasz Franciszek Zamoyski (1832-1889), the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordynat. In 1868, he erected a new building to house the BOZ collections. He hired the poet Gustaw Ehrenberg (1818-1895) as the librarian, and the archivist Leopold Hubert (1832-1884) became his plenipotentiary. However, they failed to cope with the duties and both were dismissed in 1870, a fate that also befell their successor, Professor Władysław Okęcki. Only the new librarian nominated in July 1872, Professor Józef Przyborowski (1823-1896) - a philologist, historian and former director of the Main Library in Warsaw - managed to organize the collection, assisted in this task by his helper Feliks Miński, a library employee since mid 1871 (he died in 1897). Call numbers were assigned, and over 50 thousand books, etchings, maps and atlases were entered in the inventory books. The team also catalogued the collection of manuscripts (around 2,000 volumes) and the uncatalogued part of the archives. The arrangement of the inventories and stacks developed under Przyborowski's direction was preserved until World War II. This is not, however, the example that I will use to convince you of the exceptional role of libraries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1897, after Przyborowski's death, the new Ordynat, Maurycy Zamoyski (1871-1939), appointed a new librarian to the Zamoyski Estate, Tadeusz Korzon (1839-1918), the founder and most eminent representative of the Warsaw historical school. After Feliks Miński, who died a year after Przyborowski, the post of librarian's helper was assumed by the then already well-known writer, Stefan Żeromski (1864 - 1925).

Under Korzon's management, BOZ became an important scholarly centre, and as Bogdan Horodyski rightly put it, "an unofficial and clandestine institute of Polish history."<sup>5</sup> The BOZ source material - crucial for the exploration of the past - plus an excellent collection of historical works, convenient conditions of access, and the authority of the librarian attracted the intellectual elite, while on Wednesday evenings Warsaw intellectuals turned up at the Professor's flat. Korzon took BOZ over as a recognized scholar, following the publication of his greatest work, *Wewnętrzne dzieje Polski za Stanisława Augusta* [The Internal History of Poland under King Stanisław August] (1882-1888), and his criticism of the Cracow school, which he disparaged in the paper *Wady historiografii naszej w budowaniu dziejów Polski* [Shortcomings of our Historiography in Building the History of Poland] (1889). Historiography has adopted the view that he "stood aside" as a "loner in the [Warsaw] historical milieu." This view finds no confirmation in the preserved fragment of Korzon's correspondence - probably never quoted up to now - which plainly indicates that he was in the midst of numerous scholarly and social initiatives. Likewise, no confirmation has been found for the opinion that he obstructed access to the holdings. Some scholars were indeed sent away with the words "Darling, there is nothing of interest for you here." However, this was not due to his ill will but rather to his excellent knowledge of the holdings.

In Przyborowski's and Korzon's times only two people worked at BOZ - Przyborowski and Korzon themselves together with their helpers, and a janitor. That was the entire staff

4 S. Kieniewicz, *Trzy etapy rozwoju nauki w Warszawie w XIX w* [Three Stages of the Development of Science in Warsaw in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century], in: idem, *Historyk a świadomość narodowa* [The Historian and National Awareness], Warszawa 1982, pp. 143-161.

5 B. Horodyski, *Zarys dziejów Biblioteki Ordynacji Zamoyskiej* [History of the Zamoyski Family Library. An Outline] in: *Studia nad książką poświęcone pamięci Kazimierza Piekarskiego* [Studies in Book Science Dedicated to the Memory of Kazimierz Piekarski], Warszawa 1951, p. 336.

on whose shoulders rested first of all the organization of the existing resources, followed by acquisition work, frequent purchases of huge collections (such as those of Władysław Trębicki or Karol Beyer), access and reader supervision, and queries for the Ordynat and members of the Zamoyski family. Tadeusz Korzon described one day (Monday, 14th June 1903) in a letter to Stefan Żeromski: “Moreover, since yesterday Professor [Jan] Czubek, dumped here from the Academy [of Skills in Cracow], has made himself at home in the Library. Also unusual visits occur. Today, as we were both in the course of rewriting a funeral speech, in tandem and in great haste, Deotyma [Jadwiga Luszczewska, a well-known writer] entered, followed soon after by Marya Gorecka [a writer and daughter of Adam Mickiewicz].”<sup>6</sup>

According to Jerzy Maternicki’s estimates, around 500 historians worked within Poland’s territory in 1905-1914, including ca. 320 in Galicia, and ca. 115 in the Russian partition.<sup>7</sup> It was only the regaining of Poland’s independence in 1918 that principally affected the geography of Polish scholarly life. It was then that Warsaw gained most of the positions for historians engaged in scholarly activity.

Visits of historians at BOZ were indeed meetings of a scholarly nature, or seminars, where the librarian himself was a professor, while his helper was a professor’s assistant. Whether Żeromski was a suitable person for the position of assistant or not is a completely different matter. It is hard to agree that there was a growing tension in their relations.<sup>8</sup> The situation should rather be associated with a change in the writer’s attitude, who during his work at BOZ published *Ludzie Bezdomni* (Homeless People) and *Popioły* (Ashes).<sup>9</sup> These novels not only paved his way into the literary elite, but first of all ensured him financial independence. Korzon watched this with understanding. However, he did not intend to do the work which Żeromski was obliged to perform. There is no trace in the historical sources of any confrontation between the two gentlemen. It seems that Korzon had a soft spot for Żeromski. Even in the case of an evident offence, when Żeromski took a valuable book to Nałęczów without obtaining Korzon’s permission, Korzon showed a far-reaching tolerance.<sup>10</sup> They shared an interest in history. Tadeusz Korzon is considered to be the person who inspired Żeromski’s vision of the Polish past,<sup>11</sup> although one should remember the difference in sensitivity – for the historian, truth was a matter of principle.<sup>12</sup>

The Zamoyski Family Library engaged in independent publishing initiatives. In 1899 it published collected prayers written by Zygmunt Krasiński under the title *Myśli pobożne*

6 A letter of Tadeusz Korzon to Stefan Żeromski of 15th June 1903 – BN, MS 17218 vol. 18.

7 J. Maternicki, *Warszawskie środowisko historyczne 1832-1869* [The Warsaw Historical Milieu 1832-1869], Warszawa 1970, p. 125.

8 M. Ruszczyc, *Praca biblioteczna Stefana Żeromskiego* [Library Work of Stefan Żeromski], in: *Bibliotekarz*, 31, 1964, No. 7/8, p. 223.

9 Korzon read *Ashes* at the beginning of August 1903. He was hardly enthusiastic about it. “Amongst idle playing, almost every day I hold a session of reading *Ashes* out loud and each time I evoke loud symptoms of indignation and condemnation.”

10 The letter of Tadeusz Korzon to Stefan Żeromski of 15th June 1903 – *ibid.* Żeromski used the book while writing *Ashes*. See A. Grodzicki, *Źródła historyczne “Popiołów” Żeromskiego* [Historical Sources of Żeromski’s “Ashes”], in: *Rocznik Wydziału Filozoficznego UJ*, 1, 1930-1934 (copy, Kraków 1935), p. 78.

11 K. Wyka, *Żeromski jako pisarz historyczny* [Żeromski as a Historical Writer], in: *Stefan Żeromski*, Warszawa 1951, pp. 167-168; A. Hutnikiewicz, *Żeromski*, Warszawa 2000, p. 209. Cf. S. Zabierowski, *Udział Askenazego i jego szkoły w genezie „Popiołów”* [The Role of Askenazy and His School in the Genesis of “Ashes”], in: *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 56, 1965, f. 1, pp. 216-217.

12 See the letter of Tadeusz Korzon to Wanda Prószyńska of 6th August 1903 – BN, MS II 5947 f. 18.

Zygmunta Krasińskiego [Pious Thoughts of Zygmunt Krasiński].<sup>13</sup> This bibliophilic edition, containing facsimiles of one of the leaves, and bound in amaranth velvet, includes a brief foreword signed by Tadeusz Korzon.<sup>14</sup> Printing must have been finished before 24<sup>th</sup> June of that year, because the issue “Prawda” of that day covered the publication and ran a brief review.<sup>15</sup> On Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1899, “Kurier Warszawski” ran a column by Ferdynand Hoesick<sup>16</sup> dedicated to this edition, written at the order of the editor, Wincenty Korotyński, already in September.<sup>17</sup> In his memoirs, Hoesick described in detail the news that reached him upon the book’s publication. By the next day Korzon was to complain about the column, and three days later the editor, Korotyński, informed Hoesick that “Korzon together with Żeromski are preparing some kind of a protest.” Within a few days, specifically on Friday, he learnt from Antoni Pietkiewicz (Adam Pług) that “the Zamoyski Estate sent a very unpleasant *protestation* to *Kurier Warszawski* because of my column, inspired by Korzon and *very fiercely written* by Żeromski.”<sup>18</sup> The authorship or co-authorship of Żeromski was confirmed, because the protestation was not only signed by Korzon himself, but by the “Management of the Zamoyski Family Library.” “Kurier Warszawski” ran the *Protestation* and Hoesick’s *Reply* on Sunday, 31st December 1899,<sup>19</sup> and despite Hoesick’s bragging that many had congratulated him, it was evident that BOZ was correct, and that the response to the polemic was in Korzon’s favour. Hoesick himself presents the situation as follows: “However, since Korzon had a huge clique behind him, and I was all alone, it was not long before our polemic caused quite a stir in various magazines, inspired in several cases by Żeromski, who became severely offended in his inflated ambition as an author.”<sup>20</sup>

The Library’s landmark publication was the *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego kanclerza i hetmana wielkiego koronnego* [The Archives of Jan Zamoyski, Chancellor and Great Hetman

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- 13 *Myśli pobożne Zygmunta Krasińskiego* [Pious Thoughts of Zygmunt Krasiński]. Edition of the Zamoyski Family Library containing facsimiles of the cover and a leaf of the manuscript. Printed by P. Laskauer and W. Babicki, Warsaw, 1899, pp. VIII, 72. Published on the basis of an autograph handed over to BOZ by Maria Zamoyska née Potocka. The manuscript has not survived. It was probably destroyed in 1944.
- 14 Dated 21st March 1899 and signed “The Zamoyski Family Library.” Both copies are held by the National Library, in one the binding’s facsimile is missing.
- 15 “It is not known why the Zamoyski Family Library has waited until now with the publication of the pious book that Z. Krasiński wrote for Madame Bobrowa. So long as its late librarian, J. Przyborowski, safeguarded the manuscript treasures and did not allow any curious eyes to even look at them, various tales went around about the content of the unpublished letters of the author of *Irydion* and this book of prayers. [the content is described further]” – *Modlitewnik Z. Krasińskiego* [Z. Krasiński’s Prayer Book], in: *Prawda*, 19, 1989, No. 25, p. 295.
- 16 F. Hoesick, *Modlitewnik dla ukochanej* [Prayer Book for a Sweetheart], in: *Kurier Warszawski*, 79, 1899, No. 351, pp. 1-2.
- 17 F. Hoesick, *Powieść mojego życia (dom rodzicielski): pamiętniki* [The Story of my Life (Family Home): Memoirs], Wrocław-Kraków 1959, 2, p. 365.
- 18 *Ibid*, p. 370.
- 19 F. Hoesick, in: *Kurier Warszawski*, 79, 1899, No. 359, pp. 3-4; Hoesick, *Powieść...*, p. 378
- 20 *Ibid*, pp. 379-380. In the ensuing polemic, there were also voices trying to balance the arguments; “Głos” ran an ironic column *P. Hoesick w kłopotach* [Mr Hoesick in Trouble], where we read: “Poor Mr Ferdynand Hoesick! For all the browsing in the book collections, for all the bows to all the counts and barons, for all the tender and sweet smiles to all the journalists – only tirades, complaints, and a *protestation* of the Zamoyski Family Library! The poor thing was sure that he managed to tickle the vanity of some persons and circles in a pleasing manner by telling engaging stories about the attitude of Zygmunt Krasiński to Madame Bobrowa and Delfina Potocka, and all he got instead are grudges, sulks, snide remarks bordering on invectives, and the certificate of an *indecent* man! (...) It is befitting to say one more thing about the dispute of Mr Hoesick with the Family Library: His sensitivity is slightly hysterical; having offered his charms, it is strange that now he blames and harangues his adorners for tasting them. Whereas he, while using the sources for a more detailed unravelling of his romance plots, does it too unceremoniously and simply without taste.” – in: *Głos*, 15, 1900, No. 3, pp. 41-42.

of the Crown]. Already the 12<sup>th</sup> Ordynat had thought of publishing the historical sources on Jan Zamoyski's life.<sup>21</sup> The initiative came from Waclaw Sobieski, gained Korzon's support and was financed by Ordynat Maurycy Zamoyski. Only three years passed from the moment the motion was passed at a historians' congress to the printing of the first volume in 1903. The next two volumes were published by Józef Siemieński (1909 and 1913), and the fourth by Professor Kazimierz Lepszy in 1948. The publication covers sources for the study of Jan Zamoyski's history up until 1588. Unfortunately, work on the subsequent volumes has not been continued.

Another series, overshadowed by the above publication, is the *Acta Tomiciana*, published by the Kórnik Library, which, as it is known, is largely based on documents from Górski's "Files," the collation of which took place at BOZ with the participation of Korzon and Waclaw Sobieski.<sup>22</sup>

Upon Korzon's death in 1918, his daughter-in-law, Jadwiga Korzon (1871-1942), who had helped in the Library from 1904, assumed control of the collection together with the historian of literature Tadeusz Newlin-Wagner (1891-1934) and Stefania Miszewska. It was a difficult time for the Library due to the impoverishment of the Estate after the war and its poor management by several plenipotentiaries in succession. The Ordynat, who fulfilled state functions as the vice-president of the Polish National Committee and later on as the Polish envoy to the French government and the minister of foreign affairs, could not offer his support until he withdrew from active politics in 1924. As of the 1st May 1929 he appointed Professor Ludwik Kolankowski (1882-1956), the historian of the Jagiellonian era, as the Librarian. Professor Kolankowski undertook a major renovation and adaptation of the building's annexes to create new library space: new stacks, a catalogue room and a 50-seat reading room. Upon his request, the Ordynat increased the personnel to 3 full-time librarians, 3 janitors, and 3-4 scholarship holders from the University of Warsaw who repaid their financial aid with three hours of daily work for the Library.<sup>23</sup> One of these, for example, was Bogumił Kupść, co-editor of the correspondence of Józef Andrzej Załuski. It was only under Kolankowski's management that BOZ became an actual library within today's meaning of the term, where readers conduct research in the reading room and where the director may pursue his tasks regardless of what is happening in the library.

As we approach Bankowy square (plan Bankowy) along Marszałkowska street (ulica Marszałkowska), without even knowing it we cut through the space where the Zamoyski Family Library once stood. Attached to the Blue Palace were annexes that surrounded two courtyards. They housed the manuscript and rare book stacks, library offices, catalogue rooms, employees' flats and a 50-seat reading room. The Second World War, which broke out less than four months after Jan Zamoyski (1912-2002) entered into possession of the Estate, brought about a nearly complete destruction of the BOZ resources. Already on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1939, a bomb hit the manuscript stacks, and on 25<sup>th</sup> September the Blue Palace burnt down together with the museum gallery and the new library space, including the offices, the reading room, the catalogue, most of the manuscripts, and collections of periodicals and calendars. Almost the entire art collection of the Zamoyski family was destroyed

21 Central Archives of Historical Records AGAD in Warsaw, MS AZ 123 pp. 2-14.

22 The letter of Tadeusz Korzon to Stefan Zeromski of 25th August, 1901 – BN, MS 17218 vol. 18. Two letters of Tadeusz Korzon to Zygmunt Celichowski of 2nd and 10th June, 1903. – The PAN Kórnik Library, Library Archives MS 245, ll. 35-36.

23 Horodyski, *Zarys...*[An Outline...], pp. 338-340.

then, including the collection of 400 paintings and miniatures. However, the most precious part of the holdings, situated in the main hall, survived. During the Nazi occupation, the Library managed to maintain some independence. In the basement the cataloguing work of the surviving collection started and continued. Some user access was even provided. Next to eminent scholars, “the Library served also students studying at the clandestine Universities of Warsaw and Poznań, as far as possible. And not only that: After Professor Stanisław Kętrzyński was arrested in November 1943, the meetings of the Polish Historical Society and also the meetings of the Council of the University’s Faculty of Humanities held in his flat moved to the quiet venue of the Zamoyski Family Library. It was here that M. A. exams were held in the Librarian’s office. It was also here that the postdoctoral examination of Dr Stanisław Bodniak took place.”<sup>24</sup> During the war years BOZ hired Professor Zofia Libiszowska, Asst. Professor Lucja Charewiczowa, and Professor Maria Dembowska.

On 8th August 1944 the Library building was set on fire by the Nazis. Nearly everything burnt down: ca. 120,000 rare books, a major part of the manuscripts including uncatalogued items, and an unknown number of loans from private persons who for security reasons deposited their collections at BOZ. Only incunabula, part of the manuscripts and rare books of the first half of the 16th century (over 1,800) survived. The surviving manuscripts left Warsaw in 85 chests on 15th November 1944. The two most precious manuscripts – the *Tyniec Sacramentary* and the *Zamoyski Codex* – were hidden in the Collegiate Church in Łowicz. A large part was saved by Jan Zamoyski himself: he took 128 manuscripts, 435 rare 16<sup>th</sup>-century books and 11 volumes of the King Zygmunt August collection<sup>25</sup> to the Paulines’ monastery at Jasna Góra. The holdings taken to Goerbitsch were then taken over by the Red Army. Their journey back to Warsaw through Moscow lasted from 1947 until 1958.

The best testimony of what BOZ meant to scholars is given in the gesture of Majer Bałaban, the eminent Jewish historian. In the memoirs of the keeper at BOZ, and the National Library’s first post-war acting director, we read: “The most (...) touching gifts were a few copies of his own works brought by Professor Majer Bałaban, an emaciated old gentleman with the star of Zion on his arm who stayed in the ghetto. It seems that through this gift, while sensing his death, he wished to document his emotional bond with the institution where he spent so many hours of his life studying, and where he always offered his help in the cataloguing of *hebraica*. (...) Two or three days later Majer Bałaban died.”<sup>26</sup>

24 Idem, *Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej w latach wojny* [The Zamoyski Family Library in the War Years], Ed. H. Łaskarzewska in cooperation with A. Leszyńska, Warszawa 2005, p. 48.

25 The letter of Bogdan Horodyski to Ludwik Kolankowski of 2nd January 1947. – Warsaw, PAN Archives, vol. 56, l. 55.

26 Horodyski, *Biblioteka...* [The Library...], p. 51.