

The Tomasz Zan Library in Interwar Wilno

Summary

The aim of the article is to throw light on the establishment and activities of the Tomasz Zan Library that functioned in Wilno during the interwar period, the growth of its stocks, its educational and cultural role, the support provided by the state, municipal bodies and the public to the library, as well as to mention its founders and employees. The Tomasz Zan Library was founded in Wilno on the initiative of the Polish Educational Society of the Eastern Lands. The reading-room opened in the Old Town of Wilno on 21 December 1920 called „*Samokształcenie*“ [Self-education] gave rise to it. The reading-room started work having only 158 books and several periodical publications at its disposal, however, with the support provided by the State, the Municipality of the city of Vilnius

and the public, it expanded rapidly and in 1923 was reorganised into the Tomasz Zan Library. In 1925, the Library received more spacious premises in the centre of Vilnius. In the autumn of 1936, the Library moved to a new house specially built for it at the foot of Tauras Hill. At that time, it already had 15 135 volumes of books and 1055 volumes of journals. The publications were kept in proper manner, an inventory of all the files was made and their catalogue was produced. Users of the Library were mainly pupils, as well as students of teacher's seminaries, preparatory and refreshment courses. In this way the Library contributed greatly to the dissemination and promotion of education and culture. The Library was liquidated in the years of World War II.

Keywords: interwar Wilno, Wilno libraries, the Tomasz Zan Library in Wilno, the Polish Educational Society of the Eastern Lands.