

Adam F. Kola / Wojciech Piasek (eds.)

# Nicolaus Copernicus in the Culture of Memory

Sedimentation of Knowledge



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Sedimentation of Knowledge

With 60 figures

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and Henryk Siwicki, located in Toruń, created in connection with the celebrations of the  
500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus in 1973. Photo: Adam F. Kola.  
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## Introduction

This volume seeks to explore Nicolaus Copernicus, not primarily through the lens of his scientific achievements, but rather through the multifaceted ways in which his legacy endures in cultural memory. Instead of focusing solely on his life and work, we shall investigate the diverse forms of his remembrance and how his presence continues to influence various cultural contexts. By doing so, we uncover how Copernican heritage remains embedded in cultural practices over time, revealing layers of memory that persist and evolve in the present.

Memory studies, one of the most rapidly growing interdisciplinary fields globally, serves as the primary framework for the articles in this book. The field's recent developments underscore its wide-ranging and inclusive nature, encompassing numerous dimensions: cultural, social, collective, and individual memory.<sup>1</sup> This broad approach enables us to present Copernicus through a spectrum of research proposals and methodologies, all within the expanding domain of memory studies.

At the heart of this volume lies Christoph Cornelißen's concept of the culture of memory, which emphasizes inclusivity and variation within memory studies. Cornelißen's framework has been further expanded by contemporary scholars such as Astrid Erll and Aleida Assmann, who focus on how cultural memory is created, transmitted, and transformed across different social and historical settings.<sup>2</sup> This conceptual expansion allows us to trace Copernicus's presence

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1 The study of memory is already such a developed approach to research in contemporary humanities that it does not make sense to list the numerous published works here. These studies have also already become the object of historiographical research and analysis. However, it is worth highlighting the contribution of Polish researchers to memory studies. See Kończal et al.: *Polskie badania pamięcioznawcze*, pp. 11–64; Eadem: *À la croisée des traditions*, pp. 125–171.

2 The culture of memory encompasses all imaginable forms of conscious remembrance of historical events, persons, and processes. As the researcher points out, the bearers of this culture are individuals, social groups, and nations, which, in this respect, can agree and conflict. We would also like to draw attention to the nature of the relationship between science and memory within the concept of memory culture. Cornelißen emphasises that historians

across various cultural domains – academic, aesthetic, political, and popular – and to examine how these domains have contributed to the construction of historical narratives and collective identities.

As we reflect on the 50 years since the global celebrations of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth in 1973, we engage with recent scholarship in the history of knowledge. Authors such as Rens Bod and Johan Östling<sup>3</sup> have expanded our understanding of knowledge as a dynamic and socially constructed entity.<sup>4</sup> This perspective helps us to examine Copernicus not merely as a historical figure in science but as a cultural icon, whose legacy has been continuously shaped, contested and reimagined over the centuries. Rens Bod's work, especially his *A New History of the Humanities*, highlights how knowledge systems evolve with cultural, social, and political contexts. This invites us to explore Copernicus beyond his scientific contributions, offering insight into how his ideas have been mediated and appropriated in various cultural and historical frameworks.

The metaphor of sedimentation, articulated by Krzysztof Pomian<sup>5</sup> and further elaborated by Adam Sharr<sup>6</sup> in his study of memory in architecture, provides a particularly poignant lens through which we can understand the historical continuity and transformation of Copernicus's legacy. In geological and archaeological terms, sedimentation refers to the gradual accumulation of layers over time, preserving traces of past environments and events. In memory studies, we metaphorically dig through these layers of cultural memory, moving from the present to the deep past, and uncover how Copernicus's legacy has been interpreted, commemorated, and reshaped across different epochs and societies.

Michel Foucault's concept of the archaeology of knowledge<sup>7</sup> further enriches our understanding of Copernican memory. Foucault's methodology encourages us to peel back the layers of discourse and knowledge that underlie cultural memory, revealing how Copernicus has been instrumentalized and memorialized in various historical contexts. Foucault's insights help us navigate the intersection of memory studies and the history of knowledge, shedding light on how Copernicus's scientific legacy has shaped broader cultural narratives and social discourses.

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and their works should be seen as an integral part of the memory culture of contemporary societies, which does not affect their claims to a sovereign interpretation of the past; see Cornelißen: *Remembrance Cultures*; also, Idem: *Was heißt Erinnerungskultur*; see also Assmann: *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*; Erl: *Memory in Culture*.

3 Östling et al.: *The History of Knowledge*.

4 Bod: *A New History of the Humanities*.

5 Pomian: *Lectio doctoris*.

6 Sharr: *The Sedimentation of Memory*, pp. 780–796.

7 Foucault: *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

Contrary to abrasive approaches that see history as a series of ruptures, a sedimentary view acknowledges the continuity of history as a process where the past is neither dismissed nor forgotten but rather layered into the present. Each new moment builds upon the past, transforming it while retaining its imprint. This volume adopts a 'stratigraphic' approach to Copernicus's cultural memory, with chapters arranged like layers of archaeological excavation – from the most recent interpretations to the oldest representations. This allows readers to trace the evolving relationship between these layers, reflecting Krzysztof Pomian's notion of history as a sedimentary process.

By viewing Copernicus through the dual lenses of memory studies and the history of knowledge, this volume offers new insights into how cultural memory shapes and reshapes our understanding of historical figures. It reveals the enduring relevance of Copernicus in modern culture, highlighting how his legacy continues to inform both scholarly and popular discourses, making his contributions as significant in the present as they were in his own time.

The book opens with Marcin Jaworski's article *Copernican Retrotopias: Anthropology of Visual Representations of Nicolaus Copernicus in Contemporary Visual Culture*. In this, the author deals with representations of the figure of Nicolaus Copernicus in contemporary visual culture. Images of famous scientists as references to the past encourage the purchase of certain consumer products, a playful commentary on reality, and the construction of a tribal-essentialist perception of the world with a simple division into the familiar and foreign.

In the article *Copernicus: Memory and Place Marketing. Between Toruń and Olsztyn*, Rafał Kleśta-Nawrocki and Radosław Sierocki focus on the connection between the memory of Copernicus and marketing activities, showing the presence of Copernicus in the contemporary space of Toruń and Olsztyn in the socio-cultural practices of the inhabitants of these cities. The marketing of locations is treated broadly in the article. The authors deal with the activities, not so much of official cultural institutions or municipal authorities, but of less official communities, urban movements, commercial entities, and even individuals.

Michał Pszczołkowski, in his article *Campus of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń: Architectural Value and Preservation Challenges*, addresses the issue of the 'university town' created in connection with the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nicolaus Copernicus' birth. Situated on 82 hectares, it is one of the most outstanding works of late modernism. At the same time, as one of the 'tainted' buildings created during the communist era, it is burdened with a memory that fosters a negative perception as an architectural work.

The following two articles by Wojciech Piasek and Adam F. Kola deal with the local and international nature of the 1973 celebrations of the astronomer's 500<sup>th</sup> birthday. Piasek, in an article entitled *Nicolaus Copernicus in Public and Official Memory on the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Birth: Inhomogeneity and Varia-*

bility, deals with the public-official memory of Copernicus during the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. He draws attention to its lack of homogeneity and variability. By examining public-official memory, he addresses the activities undertaken by the state, using the press to model collective memory and to exercise control over it to fulfil ideological and political tasks. Adam Kola's article *Copernicus Globalised: Remembering the 1973 Anniversary Celebrations* shows how these local celebrations, through both the interest of the scientific community and the actions of the propaganda apparatus of the communist state, reached a global scale. The links between local celebrations in 1973 in Toruń and Poland and those celebrated worldwide are pointed out. The article uses classical concepts from memory studies to show different aspects of the globalised Copernican anniversary.

Florian Jan Ostrowski, in his article *From Poland to the World: Nicolaus Copernicus as (Polish) Ambassador of Science on Stamps and Currency*, takes up the issue of the use by the state of images of Copernicus, from the Renaissance genius scientist to the Polish scientist and then Polish 'ambassador' of science to the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. In this case, the medium of remembrance is stamps, banknotes, and coins, which are used to build national identity locally and globally.

In the article *The Origin and Youth of Nicolaus Copernicus in the Light of a Literature Analysis: Yesterday and Today*, Krzysztof Mikulski takes up the issue of the academic discussion in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries around the origin and youth of Copernicus. He juxtaposes the views on the astronomer's origins and youth of Copernicus' biographers' writing before 1973 with the most recent findings.

In the article *Copernicus in the Historiography of the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Subject of Dispute, Analysis and Commemoration*, Krzysztof Zamorski deals with the presence of Copernicus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries until the outbreak of the Second World War in the deliberations of historiography, for which he became a place of memory. In the article, the author seeks answers to three questions. Firstly, is it possible to discern an evolution of Polish historiography in historical research and works on Copernicus, and what characterised it in this case? Secondly, to what extent, when studying Copernicus, do we study the place of memory and the role of his thought in the changing and long process of human imagining of the world? Thirdly and finally, how have the forms of publicising Copernicus' image changed in historical literature?

Magdalena Niedzielska, in her article *The Copernicus Monument in Toruń: A Memory of a Place*, addresses the issue of the construction of a monument to Copernicus in Toruń in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus' death in 1843. Associated with its construction were discussions about the shape of the monument and the issue of Copernicus' nationality, whether he was a German (Prussian) at all, and what form the inscription on the monument commemorating him should take. The 1840s in Prussia and other German states

were still a time when, alongside an increasingly strong sense of German community, there were still local solid particularisms, and in the discussion on Copernicus conducted between the initiators in Toruń and the Berlin authorities and academia, both these elements appeared forcefully.

In the article *From Culture of Curiosity to National Pantheon: Who Was Nicolaus Copernicus in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century?* Agnieszka Wieczorek and Stanisław Roszak present Copernicus' place in the culture of memory of the eighteenth century in the communities with which he was associated: Toruń, Warmia, and Kraków. They analyse in detail how he was commemorated and the changing role of Copernicus in the culture of curiosity, Sarmatian culture, and national culture, as well as the new significance acquired by his figure during the period of partitions and the loss of statehood. They point out the reasons that determined the change in his significance from the level of curiosity to that of a national hero.

In his article *Early Monuments Commemorating Copernicus*, Jacek Tylicki discusses the works of art erected in Copernicus' memory before 1800, pointing out that they were not numerous at the time and that most of them were founded by Protestants. For a long time, Copernicus was remembered on a larger scale, rarely and almost exclusively at the local level, near the places where he was active. This situation was probably due to a cautious recognition of his theory of the universe.

Barbara Bienias, in her article *Copernicus in the Cultural Memory of Early Modern England*, discusses the place of Copernicus in the various discourses of English culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in its scientific, literary, and artistic aspects. The reception of Copernicus – through his often-idiosyncratic vernacular works and later references to Newton – helped cement his place in English collective memory and created a collective (complex) Copernican identity.

The sedimentary layers of the history of Copernicus's presence in the various forms of memory culture described in the monograph submitted above make it possible, on the one hand, to trace his detailed and multilevel presence in it and its forms and, on the other hand, to work through this memory, its uses and applications in the long term.

Finally, we thank the authors for entrusting their research results to us. We would also like to thank Dr. Marta Sikorska for her editorial supervision, patience and editorial work. Without her commitment and professionalism, this monograph would not have been published.

Adam F. Kola  
Wojciech Piasek  
Toruń, 16. 10. 2024

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Marcin Jaworski

## Copernican Retrotopias: Anthropology of Visual Representations of Nicolaus Copernicus in Contemporary Visual Culture

### Abstract

In contemporary culture, many people look towards the past in the search for lasting foundations for collective or individual life. According to Zygmunt Bauman, this tendency can be described as 'retrotopia'. The traditional image of Nicolaus Copernicus is also subject to such interpretations and may take the form of political commentaries, football T-shirts, advertising narratives, memes, and so on. The aim of the article is to present and analyse some selected examples of visual representations of Copernicus in contemporary visual culture.

Keywords: Copernicus; retrotopia; representation; visual culture; anthropology

Everyone sees something in today's chaos. Only the historian does not understand. He takes refuge in the past, because he is afraid of the present. There could be so many different stories, instead of just the one with which he is accustomed!

Noica: *Philosophical Journal*, p. 35.

The fascination with social media, widespread in contemporary culture, that locks their users in the here and now would suggest that people today are mainly interested in the present or the future. It turns out, however, that contrary to this, many people today direct their interest towards the past, devoting a lot of attention to various forms of memory. It can even be said that the category of memory is so important today that it organises many people's thought about their present. Yet the cultural aspects of memory and the physiological mechanisms of its operation prove that "the basic function of memory is not so much to store the past, but primarily to adapt it in such a way as to be able to enrich and control the present."<sup>1</sup> This keen preoccupation with the past also extends to history, including historical figures such as Nicolaus Copernicus. It is therefore not surprising that the Toruń

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1 Lowenthal: *Przeszłość to obcy kraj*, p. 151.

astronomer is an element of the past that is still recalled in various contexts, not always in connection with interests aimed at acquiring or transmitting knowledge. These numerous references express the irresistible need to gaze through the prism of the past in order to better find ourselves in the present. However, further presentation must be preceded by an explanation of why the past and memory absorb the focus of people today to such an extent.

## A Time of Memory and a Time of Retrotopia

It is incontestable that many people worldwide today have a strong need for memory of the past, one that demands fulfilment. The era of commemoration that has lasted now for several decades – the phenomenon of almost universal interest in the past – was described by French historian Pierre Nora. The trend he analysed involved multiple and varied phenomena, including

[...] critiquing official versions of history, discovering parts of history consigned to oblivion, reclaiming traces of the erased or confiscated past, the cult of roots and the development of genealogical research, the mania for all kinds of anniversary celebrations, judicial settlements with the past, the proliferation of various museums, increased focus on the preservation and accessibility of archives, and a resurgence of attachment to what the Anglo-Saxons call 'legacy' and the French 'héritage'.<sup>2</sup>

This tendency, described by the French historian as a deep wave of memory, very closely linked “faithfulness of the real or imagined past with a sense of belonging, collective consciousness with individual consciousness, memory with identity”<sup>3</sup> and had three main causes. Firstly, political inspiration, which concerned memory and collective consciousness and the discovery of a common historical memory that had previously been falsified or hidden – as was the case, for example, after the fall of communism in Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Secondly, it concerned the tendency to democratise history and memory, as well as the related processes of decolonisation of memory – its recovery by local groups, previously marginalised, who, as they strove for emancipation in the past, decided to seek foundations upon which a recovered (and at the same time feverishly constructed) identity could stand. This aspiration referred to the activity of minority groups: ethnic, religious, sexual, etc. And finally, it involved the rapid civilisational changes occurring in the modern world. Their dynamics, unknown to previous generations, meant that, as Nora said: “The form of our life is no longer continuity, but change.”<sup>4</sup> The pace of change has

2 Nora: *Czas pamięci*, p. 168 [translations of all quotes in this article by Steve Jones].

3 Ibid.

4 Nora et al.: *Epoka upamiętniania*, p. 185.

left us “unable to imagine the future. And the uncertainty of the future causes us to turn to the past.”<sup>5</sup>

This final element combined the reflections of the French academic with the global epidemic of nostalgia analysed by the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. Retrotopia is – briefly put – a yearning for the past when the present does not meet its assigned expectations, and the future brings nothing but anxiety that threatens and torments.

This turn of events caused the pendulum of social sentiment to swing in exactly the opposite direction: from investing hope for an improved standard of living in an uncertain and all too clearly doubtful future to a renewed investment in a barely remembered past, valued for its presumed stability, and therefore for the impression that it can be trusted. As a consequence of such a radical turn, the future transforms from a natural refuge of hope and legitimate expectation into a nightmare space [...].<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, this is a space filled with concern for material and social status and, above all, about our children’s future: “The road to the future disturbingly appears as a trail marked by decline and degeneration. Perhaps then the path back, the path to the past, will transform into a path of purification, removing the harm caused by the future as soon as it turns into the present.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, only a nostalgic version of the past could protect contemporary man from the nightmare of the future; probably not a perfect one, but predictable since it is over and done with. Something that one may rely on when building a life strategy on the shifting sands of postmodernity. As mentioned, part of this thinking included the historical past, and along with it historical figures such as Nicolaus Copernicus.

In order to present selected examples of how Copernicus has been interpreted in contemporary culture, in the context of a desire to return to the past, it should be explained in what form it was most often manifested. This is crucial since (at least to some extent) it also explains the incredible ease with which the various incarnations of the Toruń astronomer were created. These were primarily visual representations. This fact was closely related to the special status of images in contemporary, visually dominated, culture.

## Contemporary Visual Culture and the Meaning of an Image

It is a truism to say that we live in a world dominated by visual representations of reality. For at least several decades, the iconosphere surrounding us has been increasingly saturated with images. And there is much truth in the statement that

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5 Ibid., p. 186.

6 Bauman: *Retrotopia*, p. 15.

7 Ibid., p. 16.

life today occurs largely on screens, constantly producing and transmitting fresh images. This means – as one researcher of visual culture aptly put it – “looking is not just part of everyday life, it is everyday life”.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, this looking, which is everyday life, is not neutral. In this context, one comes to mind a statement made by the former Prime Minister of Italy, Sylvio Berlusconi, a politician and powerful media magnate, who stated that if it is not on television, it does not exist. However, his political friend, Russian President Vladimir Putin, went a step further in his thinking, declaring that what does not exist can become real thanks to the power of television. If we add to this the unlimited possibilities enjoyed by modern governments or corporations to collect, store and process huge amounts of data on the activities of citizens or consumers, combined with the achievements of biotechnology, it gives us some idea of the enormous impact of images in contemporary culture.

On the other hand, rapid civilisational changes have remarkably democratised image creation in today’s world and is no longer the sole domain of official institutions or global corporations. This means that even the most ‘branded’ and semantically hermetic images can be resurrected in subsequent interpretations that distort or even reverse their original meanings. Some good examples of this are offered by Maria Poprzęcka in her book *O złej sztuce* [*On Bad Art*]. She pointed out that sometimes such impulses to blur an essential image came from artists. In this context, she recalled Marcel Duchamp’s famous Mona Lisa with a moustache from 1919.<sup>9</sup> The French artist’s ironic travesty triggered a wave of subsequent interpretations (transcending artistic circles) increasingly distant from the Renaissance original.

Duchamp’s gesture opens a new chapter in the history of the Mona Lisa. So far, no matter what had been written about her, whatever had been seen in her, the image itself had remained untouched. From then on, it became material for countless travesties, alterations, mockeries and jokes, of a more or less successful nature. ‘The only image in the world recognised by everyone’ was reduced to the role of a template for making other paintings, advertisements, posters, postcards...<sup>10</sup>

Poprzęcka then listed a whole plethora of examples of visual modifications of the famous work, the most intriguing of which was probably “Mona Lisa – a chimpanzee holding a half-eaten banana (and the title *A Little More Mysterious, Please!*).”<sup>11</sup> Regardless of how such interpretations of famous works of art may be interpreted (and unlike the above-mentioned images generated by official institutions, governments or corporations), their power is no longer persuasive, but

8 Mirzoeff: *Czym jest kultura wizualna?*, p. 158.

9 See fig. 1 at the end of the chapter.

10 Poprzęcka: *O złej sztuce*, p. 92.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 92–116.

lies in the ability to create wide vistas of interpretation for visual messages. The anthropological dimension of such images is revealed whenever the potential of the image intersected with the potential of the recipient-interpreter. The modern creator of images resembles Sisyphus but, unlike his mythological predecessor, “before he begins to roll his stone, he must first tinker with it [...]”.<sup>12</sup> And because he is Sisyphus, he does it over and over again. Therefore, it is not only a question of specific interpretations of the meaning of images, but also about their specific everyday application. As a result of such, the source meaning of the image – its truth – is no longer important. What does matter was the reality of the image – how it is interpreted in the subjective experience of the viewer. Therefore, the anthropological dimension of images in today’s visual culture is also expressed in saying more about their creators and recipients than about what they originally communicated in terms of meaning and visuals. This also means that in today’s visual culture, there is no end to the process of creating new subjective stories about images or rather, creating images from images. The Mona Lisa’s modifications are a good example of this, but this also applies to historical figures, whose old images are constantly subjected to various transformations. This also occurs within discourse on the past, memory and retrotopia. Therefore, it is worth proceeding to a discussion of specific examples related to the Toruń astronomer.

## The Museum of the Past and Its Visual Representations

The first area in which Nicolaus Copernicus was interpreted in the context of a return to the past corresponded well with the aforementioned tendency to democratise history, privatise its memory and interpret it in the form of specific images. One might say that people following this road referred to the resources of the past familiar to them and subjectively used, including historical figures. At the same time, they constituted part of another trend in contemporary culture (closely related to the first one) referred to by Hannah Arendt as breaking the authority of tradition. From this perspective, the history of culture and art is also a powerful reservoir of the past. It is a source of knowledge about outstanding figures, works of art, texts, paintings and at the same time a huge storehouse of historical memory. According to Arendt, the problem is that in contemporary culture, these extraordinary resources are no longer directly accessible to potential recipients because the thread of tradition that once connected contemporary culture and the past has been broken. Breaking the authority of tradition in today’s world is described by Arendt as an ambivalent situation. On the

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12 Marquard: *Rozstanie z filozofią*, p. 36.

one hand, modern man has lost the competence to enjoy direct (i. e. primary) contact with, for example, Greek culture, and in this sense it has become inaccessible to him. On the other hand, he might draw on these enormous resources without the rigid framework that would once have imposed on him the respectable authority of the past. That means he can do it on his own terms – subjectively, according to his own preferences. Therefore,

according to Arendt, lack of authority of tradition is primarily disadvantageous, because it deprives us of a common point of reference in making all kinds of judgments: from moral to aesthetic. However, it does also have some good sides, because it allows us to treat the entirety of human thought as if it were a warehouse full of theatre props, from which we can select any item we like and then use it, regardless of any historical order. So we are free to delve into anything that people have thought and written, and this allows us to reject all traditional and binding categories.<sup>13</sup>

When discussing today's culture's need to return to the past, we cannot ignore the above-mentioned consequences of losing the authority of tradition. In today's democratised visual culture, this tendency has sometimes taken surprising forms – for instance, ludic. Memes referring to art or history and posted on the Internet may serve as an appropriate example here. The heroes of such images also include famous historical figures. Their egalitarian and ludic nature underpins how these respectable personalities are represented. For Internet users, they are items in the inexhaustible warehouse of theatre props from the past, described by Marcin Król, from which one draws – not to honour History and Memory, but to transform, alter and deform them as one wishes, to toy with these resources. Such journeys into the past are peculiar, in the sense that distant history offers ludic inspirations for the present. The past is necessary – very much so – but not for the purpose of exploration, but as a means to comment on the present. It is worth giving a few examples of references of this kind to Nicolaus Copernicus.

A good example of this egalitarian approach to historical figures in visual culture is the use of Copernican images to express opinions about active socio-political figures in Poland, especially those who (perhaps) also dream of becoming important historical personas one day. It was probably with this intention that a meme was created using the image of Copernicus to comment on the current economic situation in the country. It presented the head of the National Bank of Poland (NBP), Adam Glapiński, as Nicolaus Copernicus, appearing on a thousand zloty banknote from the times of the end of the Polish People's Republic – an era of soaring inflation.<sup>14</sup> The Glapiński-Copernicus image probably suggested that, at least according to the authors of this meme, the

13 Król: *Filozofia polityczna*, p. 153.

14 See fig. 2 at the end of the chapter.

original economist Copernicus had more success in this field than the current head of the NBP.

Another interesting example of a reference to Copernicus – this time on the border between the worlds of politics and commerce – is the hybrid depiction of Copernicus/politician. This was about mugs sold online featuring images of famous Polish politicians. One of them, former Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki, was presented as the ‘new Copernicus’ who, as the ironic inscription on the cup reads, ‘Stopped Development. Started a Crisis’.<sup>15</sup> Contrary to appearances, this picture should not be considered a particularly scathing political satire. When advertising their products, the company selling the mug emphasizes the strong functional and technical features of the item, rather than the irreverent content. For example, the unusual size of the mug is emphasised: “The 330 ml capacity means a noticeably larger cup size compared to the standard 300 ml”.<sup>16</sup> Customers’ opinions about this product were also not very politically engaged: “Ok, not very distinctive, but fits this kind of mug collection.”<sup>17</sup>

A meme featuring Copernicus with another contemporary Polish politician, Ryszard Petru, was certainly based on the poetics of political satire.<sup>18</sup> It probably alludes to a certain gap in this politician’s general knowledge, which he should – according to the author(s) of this image – work on. Next up, a meme featuring Lech Wałęsa was a commentary on the immovable personality traits of the former president of the Republic of Poland, his stubbornness and his passion for (not always constructive) polemics.<sup>19</sup> This time, Wałęsa was arguing with Copernicus. Meme creators remember that Copernicus was also a politician (a royal official). No wonder then that he is not immune from online comments. The meme, headed: ‘Father of Modern Astronomy Has No Kids’, falls within the ‘philosophy’ category and reflects on the paradoxical achievements of the astronomer.<sup>20</sup> The last example from this group comes from a souvenir shop in Toruń. A postcard with an expressive slogan: *Kopernik rozpierniczył system* (Copernicus blew up the system)<sup>21</sup> and the light of dawn, heralded by Copernicus, had a more universal appeal; it announces some radical change on the horizon.<sup>22</sup>

15 See fig. 3 at the end of the chapter.

16 *Produkt: kubek czarny Morawiecki.*

17 *Opinie o produkcie: kubek czarny Morawiecki.*

18 See fig. 4 at the end of the chapter.

19 See fig. 5 at the end of the chapter.

20 See fig. 6 at the end of the chapter.

21 This slogan is an untranslatable play on words that wittily connects Toruń – the city of Copernicus, the scientific revolutionary who destroyed the old ‘system’ – with Toruń, the city of gingerbread (Pol: *piernik*; the verb *rozpierniczyć*, which means ‘to blow up’, uses *piernik* as a root word to replace the swear word *pierdolić*, which means ‘to fuck up’; swear word replacement is a common practice in Polish).

22 See fig. 7 at the end of the chapter.

As written in a comment on the store's website, "the revolutionary concept of Copernicus requires revolutionary-looking gadgets".<sup>23</sup>

## Commercialised Retrotopias

The final example links another area where Copernicus images have appeared, namely advertising. In this context, references to the past have served to promote specific consumer goods more effectively. This is a strategy based on associating a given product with a famous historical figure whose fame, great achievements and prestige are meant to trickle down to the products being advertised, thereby legitimising them in the eyes of potential customers as equally reliable (i. e. solid and qualitatively excellent) as their patrons from the past. At first glance, it might seem that this type of mercantile and instrumental approach to history has little to do with the frantic scouring of the past to find lasting foundations upon which to build a more stable present. Perhaps apart from cleverly building financial foundations based on past discourse. However, it is not that obvious. It is worth emphasising that the marketer's hope to successfully combine the old with the new arises from a belief that potential buyers might share the same deep-seated belief in the superiority of the past over the present. From this perspective, historical figures not only guarantee market success for enterprises selling goods or a successful purchase for customers who might buy such goods (as the marketing narrative would suggest). The idea is that products sold in this way carry additional symbolic value. They are a kind of link connecting producers and buyers in nostalgia for the good old days, which are worth recalling through appropriately designed sales strategies (and sometimes also production) and through conscious consumption choices. All this to better find one's way in the hostile present.

It was probably Poland-specific that historical figures have been used so often by the spirits industry. Someone might say (not without reason) that subsequent generations of consumers have become acquainted with Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Fryderyk Chopin, Henryk Sienkiewicz or Stefan Batory from a less educational perspective... The same is true for Nicolaus Copernicus. It would take a long time to list all the alcoholic drinks endorsed by the Toruń astronomer, but here are some examples: *Toruńska from Copernicus's Borough*, *Copernicus Platinum*, *Nicolaus Copernicus White Premium Vodka*, *Copernicus Quince*, *Copernicus Hazlenut*, *Copernicus Premium Gold*, *Copernicus Premium Gold Potato*, *Copernicus Cranberry Liqueur* or *Copernicus Black Coffee Liqueur*. The latter appears to have been created for exploring the starry night sky, because, as the

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<sup>23</sup> *Kopernik rozpierniczył system.*

advertisement states, it is a perfect drink for celebrating special occasions and for evening relaxation. Apart from the fact that the names of these alcoholic beverages might disgust or even amuse us with the sometimes extravagant inventiveness of marketing strategists, it should be noted that they have tried to construct their advertising message in such a way as to refer to a nostalgia for the past, personified by Copernicus. A visual sign of this past is an appropriately designed bottle bearing a sticker featuring the Toruń astronomer gazing at the sky.<sup>24</sup> This image is a kind of logo of the past.

In this context, it is worth analysing some other examples of products and noting that the commercial return to the past and the associated nostalgia are not limited only to the design of bottles bearing the ‘Copernicus’ slogan, but also concern various related practices.

The *Spirits* website, devoted to “promoting the culture of degustation” and education about the “rich history, production and diversity of alcoholic beverages,”<sup>25</sup> once announced a tasting event dedicated to products from the Copernicus Manufacture of Quality Spirits [*Manufaktura Alkoholii Gatunkowych Copernicus*]. In this case too was the slightly snobbish name Copernicus supposed to evoke associations with a venerable past, personified by the great scientist. Therefore, Copernicus products (although of course making no reference to scientific discoveries) are included in the discourse of returning to the past. More precisely, they are presented as products based on the resources of the past, as traditional products. They are handmade by craftsmen and not in a modern automated industrial (and therefore soulless) plant. Moreover, they are not mass produced in limitless amounts, but in restricted quantities. They are the work of specific people (local craftsmen), not anonymous employees of international corporations. This strategy – as suggested – allows specialist craftsmen to maintain proper control over the course of the alcohol production process. In this case, maintaining proper control means not only controlling the technological side of the production process, but also ensuring that this production is still embedded in the context of the past. Likewise, the report on the degustation did not resemble a modern business meeting dominated by pragmatic discourse on economics (profits and losses). On the contrary, the atmosphere was of an exclusive but friendly encounter of enthusiasts and connoisseurs of spirits. The pace was leisurely and, as announced on the website, the event was held in an atmospheric place – an old cellar under a tenement houses in the Old Town of Warsaw. The descriptions of the drinks reviewed (the shape of the bottles and the graphic design of the stickers were also in the old style) did not include any incomprehensible technical data about the components and technology used in

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24 See fig. 8 at the end of the chapter.

25 *O marce*.

production. However, terms referring to the past prevailed, such as: recipe, history, ageing, liquor, ingredient, home production, distillate, etc.<sup>26</sup> Such terms aimed to direct readers' attention towards the good old days, when food and drink – including alcohol – was handmade by masters who had spent years on a passionate quest for the best recipes to make their own original products, and when buying and drinking alcohol was also part of a leisurely and orderly life. The Copernicus logo might evoke a specific vision of a stable, predictable past in consumers as they enjoy a drink. Furthermore, the Copernicus logo on bottles was a stamp symbolising a kind of retro-comeback. It should be emphasised that such an advertising strategy could only prove effective if it was a response to a strong nostalgia for the past that was already there.

## Retro-tribalism

Another manifestation of contemporary culture's return to the past is the rising 'wave of tribalism'. According to Bauman, this is one of the consequences of erosion of sovereign state due to ongoing globalisation. The wrenching of politics from power and the resulting diminishing agency of the state has undermined its legitimacy in the eyes of many citizens, and their distrust and frustrating sense of powerlessness are additionally fuelled by fears of a disturbing future. Therefore, nowadays people have sought the need for agency outside the state, within smaller – sometimes isolated – groups that could be described as modern tribes. Members of these tribes are also united by the desire to belong to a community whose tribal identity is based on the opposition between their own people and those outside the group:

In territory settled by tribes, parties to a conflict avoid contact and refrain from convincing others that they are right, from spreading their views, from conversion. Members of the enemy tribe will always have to carry the burden of inferiority from which they will not be able to free themselves, or at least that is how they must be perceived and treated accordingly. The assumed subordinate status of the enemy tribe must be irreversible, its indelible mark constantly present – and any attempts at rehabilitation ineffective. When the division into 'us' and 'them' is performed according to the above rules, encounters between antagonists no longer aim to resolve the conflict; they merely become an opportunity to obtain or create further evidence that all attempts to alleviate the dispute no longer make sense and are ruled out.<sup>27</sup>

The ideological basis and what unites the tribe members is an equally illusory and nostalgic vision of the heritage they have been seeking through various layers of

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26 *Manufaktura Alkoholii Gatunkowych*.

27 Bauman: *Retrotopia*, p. 90.

the local past. They operate under a cast-iron tribal logic that effectively separates them from other groups. So, in order to satisfactorily carve one's place in the fluid and dynamic present (over which an ominous future looms), one must immerse oneself more deeply in the past, and this past should also be sufficiently expressive. Such communities are also interested in historical figures whom they interpret as their famous ancestors or patrons of contemporary forms of action. A good example of this model of return to the past are fan groups that use Nicolaus Copernicus to build their tribal identity. In such cases, the representation of the legacy in which the Toruń astronomer played a part may certainly seem like a caricature, but this does not change the fact that for members of tribal fan groups he remains an attractive point of reference when building their local mythology and actually satisfies the aforementioned need for identity and integration. It is worth providing some examples of this type of return to the past.

There can be no doubt that Nicolaus Copernicus is an extremely important person for today's residents of Toruń. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that 'Toruń – city of Copernicus' is a popular slogan. It turns out that football fans from Toruń also express their fondness for the scientist. However, what distinguishes them from the rest of the city's citizens is the radical extreme of this feeling. This zeal stems from the fact that Copernicus is not just an important historical figure for them; Copernicus is their only historical figure. Identification with the famous scientist does not involve an exploration of his monumental scientific achievements, but a reflection on the greatness of Copernicus, which is also the greatness of their city (because Copernicus is Toruń) and the greatness of their tribe, because they are contemporary Toruń. Therefore, the great astronomer represents not only a glorious historical past, but above all, he supports the admirable present, as created by Toruń football fans. The only true Torunians. In other words, this is about identifying with the great past in order to appreciate the local Toruń football tribe and football fan present. This idea was expressed in a clear and unambiguous way by the Elana Toruń Ultras themselves: "It's us, the fans, who make up the elite of Copernicus City!"<sup>28</sup> A visualisation of this slogan can be found on club T-shirts.<sup>29</sup> Copernicus appears in these images not as an astronomer, but as the famous progenitor of the local fan movement: an ultra masked with a scarf bearing the club emblem and the slogan 'Football Fanatic'. Radical identities intertwine in this image – the Bydgoskie Przedmieście district of Toruń, the town itself, the club allegedly patronised by Copernicus – the creator of a fanatical lifestyle, worshiped by fans.

However, the tribal return to the past would not be as complete or distinct were it not complemented by the appearance of an outsider who questions the Co-

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28 *To My Kibole Elany.*

29 See fig. 9 at the end of the chapter.

pernican football fan heritage. As David Lowenthal, quoted by Bauman, rightly wrote: “Heritage builds collective pride and sets a common goal, but it also highlights the differences between the good guys (us) and the bad guys (them). Belief in heritage, all products and rhetoric of heritage ignite mutual hostility, especially when our unique legacy is threatened.”<sup>30</sup> In this case, the outsiders are from an enemy football tribe – Zawisza Bydgoszcz supporters. And since for Zawisza fans, Elana Toruń supporters are the outsiders who lend credence to their own heritage and football identity, both tribes, when confronting each other, look at themselves in the distorted mirrors of their identities, where one is the opposite of the other. Therefore, if the Toruń supporters rely on Copernican heritage as an important component of their current identity, Copernicus is the opposite of this identity for the Bydgoszcz opposition. And that is why this heritage has to be fought.

A good example of this is an event thus described by the local media: “A controversial situation occurred on Saturday in Toruń. Some Zawisza Bydgoszcz fans arrived in the Old Town.”<sup>31</sup> It turned out that the Zawisza Bydgoszcz supporters decided to attack Elana Toruń fans by striking the very foundations of their identity. For this purpose, they gathered at the Old Town Square, specifically (and not coincidentally) at the monument of Copernicus, who, in their interpretation, was not a famous astronomer, but Copernicus the Torunian and ancestor of Elana. The Zawisza fans provocatively announced that they, the people of Bydgoszcz, are the real rulers of Toruń, not the people of Toruń or Elana supporters. Standing under the Copernicus statue, they symbolically appropriated Copernicus, the icon of Elana Toruń.

It is worth noting that football animosities ‘involving’ Copernicus did not only involve Toruń and Bydgoszcz, who have been traditionally at odds with each other. Other local media – this time Silesian – wrote the following headline: “Boisterous Sunday at the Kopernik estate. Brawling fans separated by police.”<sup>32</sup> The image and significance of Copernicus had been transformed once more, although still a component of local heritage and tribal identity – this time in a more limited space, namely in a housing estate inhabited by Górnik Zabrze supporters. Every time other fans violate the borders of this territory means a physical and symbolic attack on local identity, symbolised by the name of the ‘Kopernik’ estate. First of all, it was the outsiders – Piast Gliwice supporters – who threw down the gauntlet: “Since our opponents [...] have decided to prove to everyone that Kopernik belongs to Górnik and they organised a meeting there before the Wisła Kraków match, we decided to make this sunny Sunday a little more interesting for them. We’ve come together,

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30 Bauman: *Retrotopia*, pp. 104–105.

31 *Kibole Zawiszy Bydgoszcz*.

32 *Niespokojna niedziela*.

with the support of our leader, and are heading to where the Górnik fans meet.”<sup>33</sup> A response appeared on the Górnik Zabrze supporters’ Facebook page: “We kicked off today with a meeting, bringing together Kopernik and Łabędy, with about 40 + guys from the former and about 80 people from the latter, but in the end we got around 150 people, which is a satisfactory result and shows that Kopernik has always been, is and will be Górnik.”<sup>34</sup> And once again there was an appropriate visual representation of this situation. The image of astronomer and scientist Nicolaus Copernicus transformed into a football banner with the inscription ‘Kopernik’, wielded with pride and determination by Górnik fans in their tribal territory named ‘Kopernik’.

There are more examples of such references to Copernicus. The nature of the tribal model of retrotopian football communities has been aptly summarised by Bauman. It involves “a return to the idea of an original/pure self, conditioned by forces free from culture and resistant to its influence, and a departure from the current worldview [...] that there are necessary, non-negotiable, *sine qua non* features of ‘civilised order’.”<sup>35</sup>

## Closing Remarks

The examples of Nicolaus Copernicus images in contemporary visual culture presented in the article are ambiguous. Images of the famous scientist have been designed to encourage people to buy specific consumer products, to playfully comment on reality, or to build a tribal-essentialist perception of the world with a simple division into ‘us’ and ‘them’. Above all, these are examples of contemporary references to the past. These sometimes surprising revocations of Nicolaus Copernicus, as a symbol of this past, convey specific information about today’s users and creators of visual culture, who are only seemingly involved in the present, but actually poised somewhere between the past and contemporary times, preoccupied by retrotopic visions of the good old days. Finally, the discussed images of Copernicus also say a lot about the famous scientist’s relevance in contemporary culture. It is not just Copernicus the astronomer, but also Copernicus the football fan and Copernicus the politician, who in new incarnations seems to be expressing an old but still valid maxim (which almost begs to be turned into a meme with the image of the Toruń astronomer): ‘If I haven’t died then I’m still alive today.’

[Translated by Steve Jones]

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33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Bauman: *Retrotopia*, p. 20.

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Fig. 1. Marcel Duchamp: L.H.O.O.Q. Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/68/25/3e/68253e18fcca7ffd239be61f1a9f080.jpg> (2. 1. 2024).



Fig. 2. A meme presenting Adam Glapiński, CEO of the National Bank of Poland, as Nicolaus Copernicus. Source: <https://paczaizm.pl/?s=Kopernik> (2. 1. 2024).

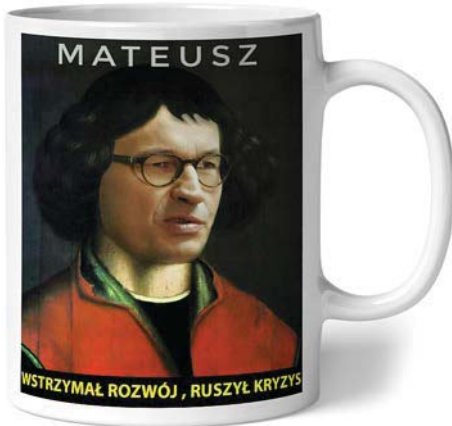


Fig. 3. A mug presenting former prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki as Nicolaus Copernicus. Source: <https://allegro.pl/oferta/kubek-czarny-morawiecki-kopernik-pis-kaczynski-11556312784> (2. 1. 2024).



Fig. 4. Meme featuring Copernicus and politician Ryszard Petru. Source: <https://paczaizm.pl/page/2/?s=Kopernik> (2. 1. 2024).



Fig. 5. Meme featuring former Polish president Lech Wałęsa. Source: <https://paczaizm.pl/page/2/?s=Kopernik> (2. 1. 2024).

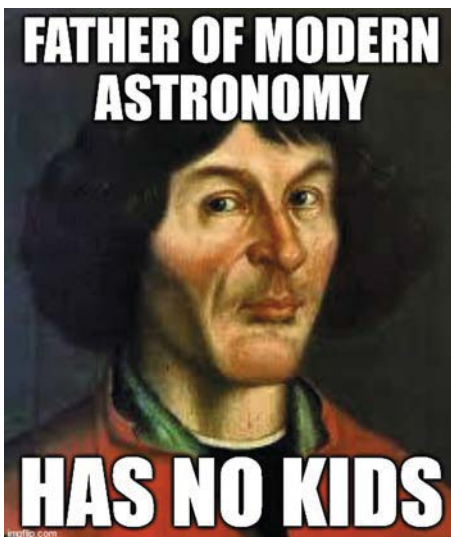


Fig. 6. Meme about Nicolaus Copernicus. Source: <https://imgflip.com/tag/copernicus?sort=top-2022-03> (2. 1. 2024).

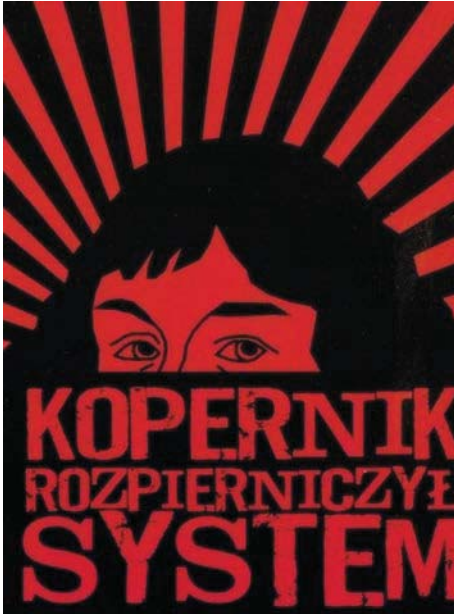


Fig. 7. Postcard from 'Emporium', a Toruń souvenir shop.



Fig. 8. A range of vodkas and liqueurs under the 'Copernicus' brand. Source: <https://spirits.com.pl/siedem-razy-copernicus/> (2.1.2024).



Fig. 9. Elana Toruń Ultras T-shirt depicting Nicolaus Copernicus. Source: <https://pl-pl.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=567777023404781&set=koszulka-elita-grodu-kopernikacena-35-z%C5%82> (2. 1. 2024).



## Copernicus: Memory and Place Marketing Between Toruń and Olsztyn

### Abstract

Copernicus is linked with marketing activity using his presence in the contemporary space of Toruń and Olsztyn and the socio-cultural practices of the inhabitants of these cities. Place marketing involves campaigns run by official institutions or city authorities. Still, it is also part and parcel of subtle and unpredictable actions undertaken by less formal communities, urban movements, commercial entities, and individuals. Some selected place marketing strategies related to Copernicus are presented, discussed and analysed in this article based on observations and original research.

Keywords: politics of memory; anthropology of memory; place marketing; Nicolaus Copernicus

This article links the memory of Copernicus with marketing activity showing the presence of Copernicus in the contemporary space of the cities of Toruń and Olsztyn and in the socio-cultural practices of the inhabitants of these cities. Place marketing means the application of marketing instruments to geographical locations, such as cities, towns, regions and communities, to create a positive image of this place, promote it and build its brand. This involves creating a vision, establishing development goals, running related projects and action strategies, as well as managing the image of the place/city. There is a strong connection between branding and city development policy.<sup>1</sup> The key elements are usually promotional, spatial-functional, organisational and financial, but also incorporate design, advertising, services and attractions – including major cultural events. Brian Graham proposes a vision of two cities: external and internal. The former refers to the material layer, visible at first glance, shaped by characteristic buildings, monuments and other important visual elements. In the context of

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1 Kavaratzis: *From City Marketing*, pp. 59–60.

place marketing, the external city is treated as a product, an attractive commodity, offered for purchase to both residents and visitors. The internal city is a subjective layer existing in the minds of those involved, including sensations, experiences, feelings, lifestyle, and cultural diversity. Marketing viewed from the perspective of the internal city focuses on building emotional relationships with residents and co-shaping their perception of the place.<sup>2</sup>

As we suggest, it is extremely important to refer to cultural heritage, more or less spectacular traces of the past, references and reconstructions of history. These tangible and intangible 'historical products' are often a source of pride for the local community, adding credibility to marketing strategies and integrating created image into long-term structure.<sup>3</sup> Here, reference may be made to Jan and Aleida Assman's concepts of cultural memory and communicative memory. Cultural memory is petrified and refers to the distant past, while communication memory is the memory of living generations and is rooted in everyday communication.<sup>4</sup> Wulf Kansteiner believes that cultural memory may occur in the mode of potentiality, when objects and records about the past are collected in archives or museums, and in a mode of actuality when representations of the past are taken out of storage, recalled and used for *ad hoc* purposes related to politics or identity, for example.<sup>5</sup> Cultural memory once activated becomes communicative memory and loses the value of objective knowledge, while gaining the ability to create new meanings, thus becoming the domain of social ideas about the past, 'social memory' socially produced, processed and negotiated depending on the interests of the community. Accordingly, the past becomes a function of the present.<sup>6</sup> Place marketing is, alongside memory policy, an important area that institutionally activates and instrumentalises the resources of cultural memory.<sup>7</sup>

Michalis Kavaratzis lists three levels of communication within place marketing. Primary communication refers to the communicative effects of actions that are essentially non-communicative in nature: (1) landscape strategies relating, in general terms, to public spaces (monuments, buildings, green areas), (2) infrastructure projects, (3) organisational and administrative structures, (4) behaviour and actions of leaders related to the place, their visions for development, events and projects. Secondary communication is formal, purposeful and takes place through traditional marketing practices, using internal and external advertising, public relations tools, graphics and logos. Tertiary communication is word of mouth, what 'people say', amplified by the media and the communi-

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2 Graham: *Heritage as Knowledge*, pp. 1009–1012.

3 Cf. Kamosiński: *Historia miejsc*, pp. 26–28.

4 Assman: *Cultural Memory*, pp. 36–41.

5 Kansteiner: *Finding Meaning*, pp. 182–183.

6 Golka: *Pamięć społeczna*, p. 15; Szacka: *Czas przeszły*, p. 19.

7 Assman: *Religion*, p. 24; Stopa: *Elementy pamięci*; De Frantz: *Tourism Marketing*.

cation of competition. This is an area beyond the control of marketing specialists. The model assumes that branding and the first two levels of image communication are intended to induce and strengthen positive tertiary communication. This applies primarily to the city's residents, "who are at the same time the most important target audience of city branding and the most important city marketers".<sup>8</sup>

In place marketing thus understood – using historical heritage and reference to the past as a resource for building identity and image – famous historical figures associated with the place/city play an important role. Such is the case of Copernicus in the context of Toruń and Olsztyn. Nowadays, famous people associated with a given place are often elements of its marketing strategy. Such campaigns are multi-channel, designed with a broad appeal, incorporate numerous areas of culture (official and unofficial, high and popular, memorial sites, conflicts over memory, memory politics) and are today shaped externally (e.g., for tourists, investors, new residents), as well as internally – to those who already live in the place/city. In this sense, this serves to distinguish a given city, enhancing recognition among outsiders as well as its own residents.

Many endeavours of this type are lacking in this respect, as discreet and sometimes private ideas, conversations and practices are what shape the final relationship between the famous figure and the city, used in marketing. Today, place marketing does not only mean the actions of official cultural institutions or city authorities, but also falls within the realm of subtle and unpredictable activities undertaken by less official communities, urban movements, commercial entities, and even individual people. Laura Oswald writes in this context about signscapes – a dialectical game somewhere between reading cultural codes contained, for example, in architecture, art, symbols, and individual manipulations of these codes based on one's own memory, associations, and identity.<sup>9</sup>

Such selected place marketing strategies related to Copernicus, which also serve to commemorate him, are presented, discussed and analysed in this article based on observations and original research. Our interest in researching the relationship between memory and city dates back to joint field research conducted in Olsztyn since mid-2013. Naturally, during our research, some references to the Copernican commemorations emerged, and the scope of our monographic study also included a section devoted to Copernican conflicts of memory.<sup>10</sup> We treat the figure of Nicolaus Copernicus as a memory resource that is transferred from cultural memory to communicative memory with varying intensity at different times. We focus on the two cities of Toruń and Olsztyn

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8 Kavaratzis: *From City Marketing*, p. 69.

9 Oswald: *Marketing Semiotics*, p. 153.

10 Sierocki et al.: *Praktykowanie pamięci*, pp. 342–360.

because, firstly, they were important points in the astronomer's biography and, secondly, both cities use him for marketing purposes, to build their identity and image. Copernicus's Toruń roots seem more obvious, while Olsztyn's attempts to 'take over' or 'recapture' this resource are more interesting.

Treated in this way, Copernicus is present in virtually every level of marketing communication indicated by Kavaratzis – most visibly in terms of city landscape (monuments, murals) and least visibly with regard to infrastructure. However, the level that really requires examination is 'what people say and think'. Balancing between different levels is, in a sense, our objective in this article; we aim to draft a comprehensive description of them from the diverse and multifarious forms of Copernican commemoration and marketing, taking into account material culture, statement and action. In terms of the overall topic, we attempt to point out the similarities and differences between the two cities. To this end, we first present the collected material and subject it to a preliminary analysis in separate parts – *Copernicus in Toruń* and *Copernicus in Olsztyn* – in order to finally formulate some comparative conclusions, how memory and place marketing are used regarding this distinct, historical figure.

## Copernicus in Toruń

The fundamental public commemoration of Nicolaus Copernicus in the city of Toruń is undoubtedly the monument in his honour located on the Old Town Square in the immediate vicinity of the Town Hall. The pedestal, created by the Berlin sculptor Christian Friedrich Tieck, was unveiled and placed in its current location in 1853. Copernicus is presented here as a professor and astronomer, symbolised by a gown, an astrolabe held in his left hand and right hand pointing to the sky. The front of the plinth bears a Latin inscription (*Nicolaus Copernicus Thorunensis. Terrae motor, Solis Caelique stator*) while the back gives the dates of his birth and death. There are stone benches around the plinth and a stone well in front. Historical narratives about this monument depict it as the culmination of long-term efforts to erect such a memorial in the city and the complex political, national and even class or personal contexts of its final conception.<sup>11</sup> However, tourist narratives sometimes emphasise Copernicus's youthful face and the outline of a moustache revealed mainly after the monument was cleaned and renovated in 2003 on 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

This monument is a kind of urban reference point for the residents of Toruń and is often used as a meeting place. It is also a location for speeches, protests and demonstrations, as well as official work conducted by the city authorities, uni-

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11 Niedzielska: *Pomnik Kopernika*.

versities and other institutions. Here is the focal point for some of their formal practices – for example, inaugurating the academic year at the university, honouring the university's patron on the anniversary of his birth, or annual meetings held by the president of Toruń with students of the best school classes.

The monument also fits the city's annual rhythm and the residents' life cycle. In these practices, it is adapted and assimilated. Although it retains its dignity and seriousness, it is decorated with elements of clothing or even an entire outfit, associated with the upcoming Christmas holidays, student youth festivals, etc. For various city events, it is girded with various types of sashes, and in special periods, such as the pandemic or outbreak of war in Ukraine, it wears a mask or national colours. Residents also take photos of themselves at this monument at important moments in their lives, such as weddings, and students take similar photos after graduating. From a tourist perspective, this monument is the most frequently photographed object in Toruń.

At this point, another monument also deserves attention: the bust of Nicolaus Copernicus, currently located in the Chapel of the Guardian Angels in St. John's Cathedral in Toruń and is sometimes referred to as the oldest Copernicus monument in the world.<sup>12</sup> This memorial, made by Krakow sculptor Wojciech Rojowski at the behest of Prince Józef Aleksander Jabłonowski in 1765, is frequently mentioned in academic and tourist narratives, while escaping the contemporary collective memory of Toruń's inhabitants. According to historical descriptions, the origin of this monument lies in a series of efforts to commemorate Copernicus in the city center, on the Old Town Square, which proved unsuccessful due to political and national conditions. It is worth emphasising that in this case aesthetic assessments were passed. The erstwhile Toruń Council rejected the finished item as 'without artistry or taste' and bearing a 'bizarre inscription' ('To a Pole born in Prussia', 'to a Polish philosopher') and ordered it to be hidden away somewhere. Only at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did Stanisław Staszic, who had also initiated the creation of the Copernicus monument, endeavour to publicly display the hidden bust in St. John's Church in the immediate vicinity of the Copernicus epitaph, which had existed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This bust still stands there today, although its political and national meaning have somewhat blurred. The value and context of the monument and its dating are now a kind of tourist curiosity.

Some smaller memorials scattered around various parts of Toruń also refer to Copernicus either directly or indirectly, and mainly in the context of Copernicus the astronomer. Such items include *Helios*, a stone monument referring to the heliocentric system, erected in 1973 in the green area on Rapacki Square on the great jubilee of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus. Here on

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12 *Pomnik – popiersie Mikołaja Kopernika.*

the pedestal we can read the Latin inscription – *Sol omnia regit* – as long as the monument is not overgrown by the conifers planted nearby, because it was originally designed as the dominant feature of the square with a background of flower carpets.<sup>13</sup> A remnant of the anniversary year of 1973 is also *G-nomon I*, a spherical sundial, which is currently located in the Valley of Dreams park in the center of Toruń. The clock consists of a large sphere, lined with granite-basalt cubes and composed of thirteen bronze plaques around the circumference, illustrating the hours from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. It is also a somewhat forgotten commemoration, and one that was damaged. The connection with Copernicus and the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations is obvious to specialists, while the installation is rather a curiosity or even a mystery in the minds of residents. The *De revolutionibus* memorial, referring to the work of Nicolaus Copernicus, is similar in nature – a sculpture made of red sandstone, also unveiled on the anniversary of 1973 on the university campus that was being created at that time, which was itself a kind of monument to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth. The shape of the monument, consisting of two blocks, imitates a book; one of the slab-pages bears the Latin inscription *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*.

It is worth mentioning the *Cosmopolis Fountain*, because this is also a reference to Copernicus's written work. The direct inspiration here is the well-known Copernican heliocentric system. The fountain is arranged around it, with water nozzles placed on successive circles resembling orbits, from which water spurts combined with light and musical effects. The fountain, launched in June 2008, is now a popular attraction in Toruń, especially from April to October, when evening sessions take place. A musical piece named *Cosmopolis* was composed by Krzesimir Dębski for the opening of the fountain, but in subsequent years, screenings have also been accompanied by other musical, such as film melodies from *Love Story* or *Gladiator*, *Ode to Joy*, and even game soundtracks.

A specific public installation related to Copernicus is Stefan Knapp's *Panneau* on the front wall of the Nicolaus Copernicus University Hall in Toruń, created and funded by the artist himself and also installed in this place on the occasion of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth.<sup>14</sup> The compositionally intriguing project includes a portrait of Copernicus, a sundial and other celestial bodies arranged in 255 square elements, made in Knapp's characteristic, colourful style and method. The installation was intended to be a gift from an artist of Polish origin, living and working in England, which was something of a rarity in the 1970s. The mosaic is still a colourful and distinctive element of the university town, often photographed and currently serves as a popular background for selfies.

13 *The Helios Sculpture*.

14 See Pszczołkowski: *Panneau auli uniwersyteckiej*.

Stefan Knapp's modular painting composition with planets, a clock and the image of Nicolaus Copernicus undoubtedly preceded the contemporary idea of a mural in terms of size and exhibition concept. In recent years, large-format murals referring to Copernicus have appeared in Toruń. Two were directly related to the celebration of the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. The mural *Synthesis of Copernicus's Teachings* is located on the facade of the Specialist City Hospital in Toruń, next to the ambulance driveway. It depicts a portrait of Copernicus with an astrolabe against the background of the sky, celestial bodies and elements of his studio. In turn, the 340 square meters mural *Nicolaus Copernicus Sets Toruń and the World in Motion* was created on the facade of a skyscraper in Toruń's Na Skarpie district, using ecological paints. Interestingly, the author intended this bold project to present Copernicus as a kind of angel, revolutionary and alchemist, combining the earthly with the unearthly, is a reference to Stanisław Szukalski's never-completed project for the huge *Stopping the Sun/Copernicus* monument, designed for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth in 1973. A slightly different type of mural is the large-format image entitled *Copernicus the Beekeeper*, also located in the Na Skarpie district. In this case, the astrolabe is replaced by a honey dipper and the stars by bees. This non-standard approach is intended to refer to the entire Rubinkowo district's past, where hard-working insects would pollinate the rape fields in the fields that once stood here.

Copernican murals in Toruń are mainly the result of competitions, campaigns by foundations and associations, and the creative ideas of artists in consultation and often on the initiative of the city authorities. In the case of several other Toruń murals, Copernicus also appears there, as one of several components. Many smaller paintings and graffiti in the city space directly reproduce, transform or create images of Copernicus. Analogous references are present on city stickers and virtually countless posters promoting various events around the city.

The figure of Copernicus also appears on various occasions as the hero of situational video murals – for instance, as part of the International Light Festival 'Bella Skyway Festival' in Toruń. The 14<sup>th</sup> edition of this festival in 2023 featured an installation created to celebrate the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, entitled *Super Copernicus*.<sup>15</sup> The overall intention is partially educational and explains, in the form of comic bubbles, that the monumental Copernicus was an outstanding astronomer, born in Toruń, pointing towards the sky and stars. Then, Copernicus as Superman appears in interstellar spaces, where, among other things, he moves the earth and stops the sun, and then returns to the Old Town Square in Toruń to once again turn into the central, aforementioned monument by the Berlin sculptor Christian Friedrich Tieck.

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15 *Super Kopernik*.

Mikołaj Kopernik Street in Toruń is, of course, one of the streets in the old town and not only commemorates an outstanding resident but almost from the outset tried to designate his specific place of birth and residence. In this sense, Kopernik Street is directly related to house of Copernicus. In fact, today Nicolaus Copernicus' House, which is a branch of the District Museum in Toruń, is simply located at 15/17 Kopernik Street and includes two historic tenement houses. This causes no confusion, in the sense that Copernicus was born and lived in the current Copernicus house, at the current Kopernik Street. The name of the street itself and this type of commemorative initiative occurred during the times of the Duchy of Warsaw; in 1809, when a part of St. Anna Street was renamed Kopernik Street. It was here, at what is now no. 40, that Copernicus's house was located, where the form of a pyramid-shaped well with a globe on the top was designated as a kind of memorial for the astronomer. This birthplace, already renamed Kopernik Street, was visited by Napoleon in 1812. After accepting further historical arrangements, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the name of Kopernik Street included all of St. Anna and former Starotoruńska Street, thanks to which the tenement house at no. 17 was also located on Kopernika street. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the inscription *Dom Kopernika* (House of Copernicus) was placed on this very tenement house, although it turned out that, according to sources, it more likely indicated the more lavish tenement house at no. 15. Therefore, the *House of Copernicus* inscription was moved a few metres. Currently, Kopernik Street, with Copernicus House, a tourist attraction, runs from St. John's Cathedral to Aleja Jana Pawła II. Historical and specialist discourse indicates that Copernicus could have been born in a sumptuous tenement house on the Old Town Square, called Glaze House. These discoveries have not currently caused any reimagining of urban space, including the relocation of the memorial site associated with Copernicus's house.<sup>16</sup>

Today, Copernicus House itself is a significant point on the city's tourist map and shown to guests by Toruń residents, even just from the outside. After thorough modernisation, it has also incorporated a wide range of modern museum technologies into the narrative of the life and work of the Toruń astronomer. This means smartphone applications, 3D cinema, holograms, a night sky show and other visualisations with a Copernican theme.<sup>17</sup>

Many institutions in Toruń refer to and commemorate the name of Copernicus. Here, the important Provincial Public Library is called the Copernicus Library, and its current building was put into use in 1973, on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the patron's birth. The oldest high school in Toruń, the 1<sup>st</sup> General Secondary School, is named after Nicolaus Copernicus. The Specialist City Hospital, es-

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16 Mikulski: *Watzenrodowie*; Górski: *Dom i środowisko*; Jasiński: *Dom rodzinny*.

17 *Dom Mikołaja Kopernika*.

tablished by the Municipality of Toruń, is also named after Nicolaus Copernicus. The Toruń troop of the Polish Scouting Association is, of course, named after Nicolaus Copernicus and organises the Scout Copernicus Rally, whose 40<sup>th</sup> edition coincided with the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the patron's birth. Furthermore, inaugurated on the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus, the university facility, open to the academic community and residents, which also embodies the idea of community gardens, is named the Copernican Integration Center. There are many such institutions and associations in Toruń. They also use narratives, logos and even award prizes that directly refer to Copernicus, his image or elements related to his life and work. For example, the Copernican Library awards the *Stella Copernicana* award, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Secondary School organises an association of alumni and supporters named after him (the 'NICOLAUS' Association of Alumni and Supporters of the Nicolaus Copernicus 1<sup>st</sup> Secondary School in Toruń). Even one of the city's trams is named after Nicolaus Copernicus, occasionally ridden by an actor dressed as the patron.

In Toruń, however, not only municipal institutions make Copernican references. Here we have the *Kopernik* Confectionery Factory, famous for its ginger-flavoured cakes and biscuits. Hotels are named *Kopernik*, *Copernicus* and *Nicolaus*, and many others emphasise Copernicanness through decorative elements placed, for example, in the main hall. One of the real estate offices in the city is also called *Copernicus*, and one of the housing cooperatives is named *Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa Kopernik* (Copernicus Housing Cooperative). There is also a *Kopernik* accounting office and a *Kopernik* beauty salon. The main taxi company, *Copernicus Halo-Taxi*, has cars with a recognisable yellow sign and side sticker bearing the word Copernicus, often faked and exploited by other enterprising taxi drivers by using similar markings. The largest shopping mall, opened in 2005 and expanded in 2015, is called *Galeria Copernicus*. Many of these entities also refer to the image of Copernicus or other elements related to it in terms of logos, design, awards and distinctions.

Various types of events and festivals in Toruń, small- as well as large-scale, permanent or temporary, refer to the Copernican nomenclature. The range of events of this type is vast, from an elite celebration of choral music in the form of the *Nicolaus Copernicus International Choral Festival – Per musicam ad astra* to the pop culture *Copernicon Games and Fantasy Festival*.

Of course, in this Nicolaus Copernicus memorial panorama, the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń plays a significant role. The presence of Copernican accents and traces of memory today, which create a kind of attachment to the place, in documents, physical space and events, is countless and would require a separate study. The preamble to the current statute begins with the words: "The Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, established in 1945 in the

hometown of the great scientist, its patron [...]”<sup>18</sup> One point defines the University’s mission, reducing it to the motto *Veritas in omnibus quaerenda est* (seek the truth in all things), which is a direct reference to a letter addressed to Pope Paul III, which was included as an introduction to *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*. This motto was used in 2013 during the University Day, traditionally celebrated on the birthday of Nicolaus Copernicus on 19 February by the university’s rector, Prof. Andrzej Tretyn. Pointing out the relevance of the patron, he spoke:

The patron fundamentally defines and shapes the character of the university, and is a point of reference for its employees and students. This may seem irrelevant in the case of a person who lived five centuries ago, who – we may think – operated in an incomparably different world and faced different challenges. This is not true. Nicolaus Copernicus is not just a great figure from history books and Wikipedia, but an example, an example of genius, courage, versatility and timeless values that still inspires.<sup>19</sup>

The Nicolaus Copernicus University is present in the minds of Toruń residents and the city space. The very foundation and construction of the university town and campus in Bielany is the result of a logistically and politically complex enterprise related to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the patron’s birth in 1973.<sup>20</sup> In this sense, the Nicolaus Copernicus University campus is a kind of monument. Through co-organised events throughout the city, one-off or regular ceremonial celebrations, the university is a permanent element of the urban landscape. All the more so because Toruń, as a small city with 200,000 inhabitants, is essentially an academic and student town, and the city authorities and various associations join forces with the university in cultivating the memory of the Copernicans and the symbolic meaning of spaces in this regard. The university celebrates its patron’s birthday, lays flowers at the monument in the Old Town Square, organises the *Juwenalia* student festival, awards the *Convallaria Copernicana* distinction, etc. All these quasi-ritualistic gestures apply Copernican symbolism and Copernicus as a figure of memory is present throughout.

Copernican ideas and traces of memory are revived by institutions established within the Nicolaus Copernicus University, which refer to Copernicus, at least in name, or are involved directly in his memory. The Copernicus Integration Center has already been mentioned here, officially opened in 2023 during the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the patron’s birth. Another initiator of many campaigns, not only strictly academic, is the Copernican Research Center, established in 2015, which actively participated in the World Copernican Congress in 2023, especially

18 *Uchwała Nr 37 Senatu Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu*, Preamble [translations of all quotes in this article by Steve Jones].

19 *Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika ma swoją dewizę*.

20 Pszczółkowski: *Z dziejów budowy*.

in the Toruń section. Although it was a scientific event, it was accompanied by cultural initiatives, and the city space, advertising columns, bus stops, etc. were covered with the congress's visual identification and logo, which achieved good recognition among Toruń residents. Also noteworthy here is a digital project conducted in cooperation with the University of Toruń, the Institute of the History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Copernicus Library, the District Museum in Toruń and the Nicolaus Copernicus Museum in Frombork. This is the *Nicolaus Copernicus Thorunensis* online portal,<sup>21</sup> administered and edited by the University Library in Toruń. This online version deserves attention because it is intended to be a publicly accessible project, hosting a wide range of materials and information – archives, books, works of art, images, photos – for anyone who might be interested. In this sense, the portal in question exemplifies one of the attempts to transfer the memory of Copernicus into the realm of new technology and the digital world.

The commemoration of Copernicus at the Toruń university is, in a sense, total. The names of university institutions, events, conferences, symbols, logos, emblems, awards, images, decorations, sculptures, etc., referring to the patron in the Nicolaus Copernicus University space have a strong, permanent presence. These motifs are also transferred, used and adopted in student practices, both officially and unofficially. Finally, the visual identification of the University – inspired by Copernicus's well-known drawing of the heliocentric system from *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* and mandatory for all units and people at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in terms of space markings and promotional materials and even the form of presentations made by employees at conferences and lectures – also refers to Copernican ideas, constituting an ideological connection with the patron who, although unaware of it, is constantly present on an aesthetic level. In this sense, one can risk the thesis that the ideological and aesthetic connection between the patron and the university is extremely strong in the case of the Nicolaus Copernicus University, if not the strongest among all Polish universities.

This is also quite well illustrated by the scope of Nicolaus Copernicus University promotional materials created, sold and distributed on various occasions, with Copernicus themes, including the astronomical logo of the Nicolaus Copernicus University. The merchandise runs the full gamut: pens, mugs, glass water bottles, bamboo coasters, bags, backpacks, sweatshirts, badges, hats, scarves, notebooks, briefcases, playing cards, ties, graduate bags with the image of the patron, masks, snoods, even a pendrive in the shape of Copernicus's silhouette or a cardboard model to assemble. This array also includes Knapp's

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21 *Nicolaus Copernicus Thorunensis*.

mosaic series, where characteristic graphic pannaean elements appeared on bags, mugs and socks.

Of course, gadgets are not the exclusive domain of the University. Other institutions, city authorities, private companies and small souvenir dealers reproduce the image of Copernicus and various motifs for their own promotional, advertising and commercial strategies. Many city institutions – museums and art galleries – sell such souvenirs.

A special category of commemoration is food and drink referring to Copernicus – of course, in terms of the nomenclature itself, as in the case of *Copernicus Pizza*, which is a typical pizzeria, but referring to Copernicus in name. However, in this case, apart from the typical names of pizzas, the menu does include the chef's special – the *Copernicus* pizza featuring tomato sauce, cheese, pineapple, corn, chicken, leek, curry and ham. In this city, you may be tempted to try some freshly roasted coffee by *Palarnia Kawy Kopernik*, which also sells takeaway drinks, even in the form of specially ordered personalised labels on coffee packaging according to the customer's own design. *Browar Toruń Regionalny*, which has been operating since 2020, brews beer – including *Piwo Kopernikańskie* – on a contract basis and features an interesting and minimalist logo, referring to the bust of Copernicus.

The *Narzeczona Kopernika* (Copernicus's Fiancee) restaurant was an interesting enterprise that operated over ten years ago in Toruń. Perhaps its name somehow referred to the mysterious role of Anna Schilling in Copernicus's life. Doubtlessly, however, the name of the restaurant itself offered some food for thought in Toruń, while also causing a certain promotional provocation and joking in a rather unusual way. The restaurant was located in the Old Town of Toruń, with a garden during the summer season, so it must have caught the attention of residents and tourists alike. The stylised logo of a townswoman combined with the name of the restaurant *Narzeczona Kopernika*, displayed as an outdoor advertisement on one of the main streets leading to the Old Town Square, was undoubtedly a gastronomic provocation. Another interesting project is one currently underway: *Galeria Smaku Kopernik*, the first Food Hall in Toruń, a gastronomic initiative, a place for general use with an extensive schedule of events and a space to meet over food. It is significant that the initiators of this Toruń enterprise, an open and modern, but also fully commercial venture, decided on a name that so closely and directly refers to a resident of this city from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

In the context of the presence of Copernican references, the fate of vodka and its contemporary Toruń links with Copernicus may also be instructive. *Fabryka Wódek Kopernik* (Kopernik Vodka Factory) tried to take over and revive Toruń's Polmos (an acronym for 'Polish spirits monopoly'), with a tradition stretching back over 100 years but went bankrupt in 2009, by launching vodka bottling

under its brand in a leased factory and with ambitious plans. Moreover, they wanted to transform *Copernicus* vodka, a former product of Toruń's Polmos, into *Kopernik* vodka. In 2011, the state-owned Polmos was finally auctioned off and bought by a company that began operating under the banner of *Toruńskie Wódki Gatunkowe* (Toruń Quality Vodkas) in its place. The flagship product of this factory was *Wódka Toruńska* (Vodka of Toruń), although they also offered a private label project created for a concession client under the name *Astronom*. The rights to the *Copernicus* vodka name were finally won by *Fabryka Copernicus* after 2014, running since 2017 under the name *Manufaktura Alkoholii Gatunkowych Copernicus* (Copernicus Manufacture of Quality Spirits), located in Nieszawa, near Toruń. The former *Copernicus* vodka with honey was bottled in a satin-finished glass bearing the image of Nicolaus Copernicus. In this case, the history of post-transformation evolution reveals a complex combination of marketing efforts to maintain references to Copernicus in Toruń vodka production. The situation is even more complicated because there are other spirits on the market, including vodkas, which also refer to Copernicus but which are not related to his birthplace.

## Copernicus in Olsztyn

There are two monuments to Nicolaus Copernicus in Olsztyn. The more famous is Copernicus's Bench, located in front of the entrance to the Castle of the Warmian Chapter, unveiled in 2003 on the 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Olsztyn being granted city rights and on the 530<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth. Copernicus sits on a marble wall, gazing at the Castle, holding an astrolabe and a book. The author of the monument is Urszula Szmyt, a sculptor from Olsztyn. As Marta Karkowska writes, this new form – despite some critical voices – reflected how the astronomer was currently perceived by Olsztyn's residents at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, because “Copernicus, as can be seen from press and popular science texts, was less frequently referred to as a ‘great Pole’, more often and as ‘the city's most distinguished resident’, a world-famous scholar whose long-standing presence in the city is also a source of pride for his contemporaries”.<sup>22</sup> The bench form makes the monument more open and accessible to the everyday experience of residents and tourists.

The location of the monument (on the corner of Zamkowa and Okopowa streets) was a matter of public debate in 2003. Thanks to the monument/bench, Copernicus had returned to a prominent place in Olsztyn. Although it does not occupy a central place in the city space, but is instead an object passed by along

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22 Karkowska: *Pamięć kulturowa*, p. 86.

the way to the castle, the bench has become an important topographic point in Olsztyn and sparked a trend among tourists of sitting on Copernicus's lap and rubbing his nose. One Olsztyn resident said this about the monument: "This is where I see him the most, on this bench sitting in front of the castle. I see him here, I pass him every day. Sometimes I rub his nose to get him to come back."<sup>23</sup>

It is worth adding that similar Copernicus benches have been installed in other cities. In Frombork (2015) and in Ełk (2014) they have an astronomical context, and Copernicus sitting on a bench in Grudziądz (2015) holds a purse and a book. The monument reminds us that Copernicus was also an outstanding economist, and in Grudziądz in 1522 he announced his treatise on money: *Monetae cudendae ratio*.

Olsztyn's first monument to Copernicus – a bust of the astronomer made in 1914 by Johannus Goetze – originally stood in front of Olsztyn Castle. The idea of installing a monument occurred in 1903 for the celebration of the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Olsztyn being granted city rights. The bust is believed to have been unveiled in November 1916 on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's arrival in the city, although there is some controversy about this date.<sup>24</sup> The monument bore three inscriptions. The first read: *Medicus – Astromus – Clericus*, the second – *Nicolaus Coppernicus Statthalter auf Schloss Allenstein 1516–1519 und 1520–1521* (Nicolaus Copernicus administrator at Olsztyn Castle 1516–1519, 1520–1521), and the third: *Geistesgewaltig wieset zuerst du die Bahnen der Erde; dieser Stadt und der Burg brachtest du Segen und Schutz* (Spiritually powerful, you first set the path for the Earth, and brought blessing and defence to the city and the castle).<sup>25</sup> During World War II, the monument was hidden in the Castle, and in 1946 it was placed at its rear, replacing the German inscription with a new maxim in Polish, which translates as: *Defenders of the Olsztyn stronghold against the Teutonic invader. To the great Pole Nicolaus Copernicus – grateful compatriots*.<sup>26</sup>

The image of Copernicus can also be found on a tenement house located on Zamkowa Street, a dozen or so steps from *Copernicus Bench*. The tenement house is located on the corner of Zamkowa Street and Stare Miasto Street. In the mid-1960s, it was decorated with six graffitied portraits of people associated with the region. From Stare Miasto Street: Michał Kajka (1858–1940), a Masurian folk poet, Andrzej Samulowski (1840–1928), a Warmian poet and activist, Feliks Nowowiejski (1877–1946), a composer and conductor. And from Zamkowa Street: Jan Dantyszek (1485–1548), bishop of Warmia, Nicolaus Copernicus and Ignacy Krasicki (1753–1801), a poet and bishop of Warmia.<sup>27</sup> Astronomical

23 Sierocki et al.: *Praktykowanie pamięci*, p. 345.

24 Jasiński: *Tradycje kopernikańskie*, p. 520.

25 Ibid., pp. 520–521.

26 Karkowska: *Pamięć kulturowa*, p. 85.

27 Czernik: *Dekoracje architektury*, p. 66.

motifs can also be found on the tenement house where the former Awangarda cinema once operated: four symbolic paintings depicting sailing ships, planets, stars and a globe. The decorations were created in 1974, so it can be assumed that they coincided with the celebration of Copernicus Year.<sup>28</sup>

Kopernik Street is one of the few streets that retained its name after 1945 – it refers not so much to Nicolaus Copernicus, but to the pre-war *Kopernikusstrasse*. There are several important monuments nearby – for instance, the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – but they have little to do with Copernicus himself. The street connects the Provincial Office (on the corner with Marshall Józef Piłsudski Avenue) with the District Office in Olsztyn (on General Józef Bem Square, which was called *Kopernikusplatz* before World War II). Closer to the other end stands the Copernicus Oncology Center and the Nicolaus Copernicus Botanical Alley.

The alley is located next to the building of the District Office and was established on its initiative in 2021. Flowers were planted in the square with names referring to Nicolaus Copernicus: *Nicolaus Copernicus* (rose, clematis, tulip, daylily, lily), *Kopernik* (daylily), *Copernicus* (clematis, winter rapeseed). There is also a lily of the valley in May – a floral symbol of Nicolaus Copernicus, knowledge and medical art too. Only the most visible palm of the *Copernicia* species (described by Charles F. Martius in 1824) is artificial.

The Olsztyn House of Copernicus (*Haus Kopernikus*) is where the Olsztyn Association of the German Minority is based. Before the war, the Financial Office was located in the building on *Partyzantów* Street. The building was bought in 1996 by the Association of Former Residents of Olsztyn from *Gelsenkirchen*. It was put into use in 2000. The Olsztyn Association of the German Minority website states: “Our headquarters was named after Nicolaus Copernicus – a world-famous person and an important figure for both Poles and Germans”. A portrait of Copernicus can be found on an external side wall of the building – just next to the entrance. The inscription announces the name of the building and the association. Inside there is a bas-relief of Copernicus with the inscriptions: *1473–1543* and *Nicolaus Copernicus. Clericus – Medicus – Astronomus*.

The equivalent of the Copernicus House in Toruń is the Warmian Chapter Castle in Olsztyn – the place where Copernicus lived and where he served as an administrator during the years 1516–1521. One of the castle walls features an astronomical table used by an astronomer to present the apparent movement of the sun on days close to the spring and autumn equinoxes.

Copernicus is also present in academic and student life. The University of Warmia and Mazury (UWM) in Olsztyn cannot be named after Nicolaus Copernicus, but Copernicus is the patron of Olsztyn science in many places. He is referred to in the Preamble of the UWM Statute:

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28 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

We – the *Almae Matris Warmienseis et Masurienseis* community – aware that the world-famous scientist Nicolaus Copernicus lived and worked in Warmia, remember that thanks to the achievements of the Olsztyn scientific community and the local traditions of higher education on 1 September 1999, the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn was established.<sup>29</sup>

Students mention Copernicus when taking their oath. In joining the University community, “mindful of academic ideals and traditions”, they vow “to persistently acquire knowledge and skills, just like Nicolaus Copernicus, a scientist from Olsztyn”.<sup>30</sup> In the case of medical students, the oath takes place in the courtyard of Olsztyn Castle, which Copernicus administered, and students take the oath on Copernicus’s incunabula containing two medical treatises. The logo of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Warmia and Mazury depicts Copernicus against the background of Olsztyn Castle and the rod of Asclepius, and Wikipedia states that Copernicus is the patron of this faculty.

To mark the Year of Copernicus, a mural depicting the astronomer as a university student appeared on a University of Warmia and Mazury hall of residence. It states:

The University of Warmia and Mazury considers itself the heir to the ideas of Nicolaus Copernicus [...]. Copernicus, long associated with Olsztyn and this region, offers [students] an example of perseverance in acquiring knowledge and skills. From now on, this mural will remind them of this [...] the one that appeared in the center of the Kortowo district, which depicts the most popular Polish astronomer as a University of Warmia and Mazury.<sup>31</sup>

The mural’s tagline is ‘if Copernicus studied in Kortowo today’. Małgorzata Śpiewak, the author of the project, emphasises that the vision of Kortowo’s Copernicus is student-friendly since they create the atmosphere of a university town, which is why ‘the style of the mural is related to the motif of joy and fun’. Therefore, Kortowo’s Copernicus listens to UWM.FM radio through headphones, reads *Wiadomości Uniwersyteckie* (the student newspaper) and takes part in *Kortowiada* – a youth festival for University of Warmia and Mazury students.

Copernicus is mentioned several times in the *University of Warmia and Mazury Student Guide* – for example, the section about *Copernicus Bench* in the Old Town mentions the dispute between Olsztyn and Toruń over the astronomer.<sup>32</sup>

29 *Uchwała Nr 494 Senatu Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego*.

30 *Wiadomości Uniwersyteckie*, p. 2.

31 Bruszecka-Przytuła: *UWM gotowy*.

32 *Informator dla studentów UWM*, p. 27.

One aspect of Copernicus the scientist is Copernicus the doctor. Copernicus the doctor is the patron of the ‘Kopernik’ Municipal Hospital and Oncology Center. In 2013, the hospital named after him organised the 1<sup>st</sup> Nicolaus Copernicus Hospital Congress. The hospital director said at the time that Copernicus is known as a brilliant astronomer, but his achievements were broader: “Contemporaries appreciated the Canon more for his medical knowledge than his astronomical passion. He treated bishops and his friends, and his reputation as a physician was enormous. Undoubtedly, the institutions that bear his name also enjoy this reputation”.<sup>33</sup> Similar narratives emerge and recur in other institutions on different occasions. For example, when in 2021 the District Office in Olsztyn, in cooperation with the Mazurskie Miody company, made their *Sublimat Winny* (wine infused with dried fruit and spices) according to a recipe by Copernicus, the company’s website stated that although Copernicus is primarily known as a brilliant astronomer who created the foundations for the development of modern civilisation:

[...] for his contemporaries, he was above all a doctor whose fame reached far beyond the borders of Warmia, where for forty years he lived, worked, observed the sky and treated people, helping the poorest, sick and suffering. Doctoris Nicolai left behind several medical books, copious medical notes and several original formulas.<sup>34</sup>

The following schools are named after Nicolaus Copernicus: primary school no. 19 (since 1966), Secondary School no. 3 and the School of Economics. In 2023, the City Council adopted a resolution to name primary school no. 9 after Copernicus. The school principal justified this step as follows:

Like a person, a school should have a name. It may develop and thrive, but it would lack the distinctiveness and identity that a name can give. [...] The name of Copernicus combines the past (what he accomplished), the present (what we benefit from) and the future (what future generations will gain). The history of his name will forever be associated with Warmia, says Jolanta Lubojemska. Nicolaus Copernicus was the most outstanding person to have lived in Warmia. He became a symbol of Poland’s contribution to the development of world civilisation. His name is known in the farthest corners of our globe. We would also like those who graduate from our school to think like a citizen of Europe and the world, but at the same time be attached to this small place we call home and to Poland too [...]. The school also needs a special day when our entire community can meet. So far, there has been no banner for us to build a school ceremony around. At a certain age you don’t notice it, but there comes a time when it seems to be missing.<sup>35</sup>

33 *I Zjazd Szpitali im. Mikołaja Kopernika.*

34 *Sublimat winny; Powiat świętuje.*

35 Romanowska: *Mikołaj Kopernik.*

This action was part of a tradition of granting the patronage of Copernicus in a year dedicated to his memory.

In the context of science, it should also be mentioned that Olsztyn hosts one of the colleges of the main Nicolaus Copernicus schools operating within the Copernican Academy – the College of Medical Sciences. The other Colleges are: the College of Astronomy and Natural Sciences in Toruń, the College of Economics and Management Sciences in Warsaw, the College of Philosophy and Theology in Kraków and the College of Legal Sciences in Lublin.<sup>36</sup>

Some facilities related to Copernicus are disappearing from the city map. In 2006, the largest cinema in Olsztyn – the *Kopernik* – was demolished, after operating since 1983. An apartment complex was built in its place, named *Kopernik Park*. However, the name refers more to the cinema than the man (as in the case of Kopernik Street). There was also a *Kopernik Hotel* in Olsztyn, which underwent a thorough renovation and reorganisation in the early 2020s. In 2021, it was taken over by the Best Western Hotels & Resorts chain and was renamed Best Western Plus Hotel Olsztyn Old Town. An article appeared in the local newspaper with the title: *An International Brand Has Changed the Name of the Hotel. Copernicus Not ‘Global’ Enough*.<sup>37</sup>

The character of Nicolaus Copernicus has been played in Olsztyn since the late 1990s by Marian Czarkowski, an actor from the Stefan Jaracz Theatre. Initially played occasionally as a castle attraction, the role became regular fixture of the educational *Thursday with Nicolaus Copernicus* meetings organised by the Museum of Warmia and Mazury (located in the Castle of the Warmian Chapter), as well as part of Czarkowski’s personal repertoire. The actor takes part in various festivals and events related to Copernicus – for example, the defence of Olsztyn Castle staged during the opening of the Copernicus Year (January 2023), welcoming Copernicus arriving at the castle (September 2023), knights’ festivals, as well as the continuation of the Thursday educational meetings.

Copernicus is referenced in new technologies. On 19 February 2019, the CoperniCoin token was launched on the Waves platform. A cryptocurrency functioning as loyalty points obtained at various tourist attractions, field games, conferences and exchangeable for prizes in kind was an idea intended to promote the region. The token was to be integrated with the Copernicus Trail connecting the Kuyavian-Pomeranian, Warmian-Masurian and Pomeranian voivodeships.

The Copernicus Trail runs through towns connected in some way with Copernicus’s presence, and its website provides information about how to collect stamps related to his specific roles and skills. The running order given on the

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36 *Ustawa z dnia 28 kwietnia 2022.*

37 *Kurs: Światowa marka.*

website is: cartographer, translator, administrator, lawyer, canon, doctor, economist, astronomer, strategist, student, diplomat.

In 2022, the Museum of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn received funds from the Regional Operational Point of Warmia and Mazury to make a computer game and mobile application about Olsztyn Castle and Copernicus. The game is designed as a guide to the castle and places related to the astronomer. There will also be an animated film using Full CG technology, which will tell the story of how Copernicus's astronomical table was created and will be shown under this table.

In order to promote Olsztyn and the region, some flavours from Copernicus's times have been reconstructed: lavender beer (*Gruit Kopernikański*) made by Olsztyn brewery Kormoran (2013), the aforementioned *Sublimat Winny* (2021) initiated by the District Office according to a recipe by Copernicus and recreated by a company that produces mead, and *Copernicus* ginger porter brewed by Kormoran.

Since 2007, the Local Government of the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship has organised a competition to create a regional souvenir. In 2021, two of the three best works involved Copernicus: first place went to the *Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* ceramic lantern, while the aforementioned Copernicus *Sublimat Winny* came third.

Since 2022, submissions are accepted for two categories: 1. Souvenir of the Warmia and Mazury region and 2. Nicolaus Copernicus chose Warmia. The aim of the latter is to create a souvenir related to Nicolaus Copernicus, his life, achievements and connections with Warmia.<sup>38</sup> Submissions, as the competition regulations state, "should refer to the life and work of Nicolaus Copernicus in Warmia, promote his achievements and places related to the great scientist's stay in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship".<sup>39</sup> In 2022, the following submissions were accepted: a *Dreamer from Warmia* bag, a *Sky of Copernicus* necklace, a *Warmia spins me right round* spinning top, *Discover Copernicus!* cut-out post-cards, a *Warmian Copernicus* paperclip, *Copernicus* ginger porter beer, a T-shirt with the print 'Face to face with Nicolaus Copernicus only in Warmia', astronomical puzzles, Copernicus chose Warmia 'He stopped the Sun and moved the Earth' – a set consisting of a baseball cap, T-shirt and socks.<sup>40</sup>

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38 Szydłowski: *Marszałek szuka*.

39 *Pamiętka regionu 2023*.

40 Szydłowski: *Wakacje 2023*.

## Conclusions: Working Theses

The above analysis and examples of the use of Copernicus's images in Toruń and Olsztyn lead to conclusions regarding the mutual relations between memory and place marketing, which is the essence of this article. These comparative remarks also generate working theses about the operation of memory and place marketing in general, based on detailed reference to practices related to Copernicus. Therefore, what may seem to be of particular interest to us here are conclusions on Copernicus in the contexts of his various assigned roles, the importance of memorials, the vernacular aspect, urban and regional references, disputes between cities and, finally, the dynamics of the city's memory in place marketing.

Nicolaus Copernicus is remembered primarily as an astronomer and as such he is recalled by various institutions located in Toruń, primarily by the Nicolaus Copernicus University, which uses a reference to the solar system in its logo, and by the Nicolaus Copernicus Astronomical Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Toruń's attachment to the astronomer is also manifested by the Copernicus monument marking the city's central point, and numerous small architectural objects and decorations (e.g. murals) referring to the astronomer and the galaxy. However, the versatility of Copernicus's interests offers a wide scope for creating associations with his other roles. In 2007, in an interview for the Olsztyn *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the director of the Toruń planetarium said that – from a marketing perspective – Toruń is based on Copernicus the scientist and advised that a different direction should be taken by Olsztyn:

Why not show his excellence in diverse fields, not only in astronomy. In Olsztyn, he became mostly famous as a good administrator and manager. The defence of the city, which he commanded, against the Teutonic Knights can be used as an element of the Warmian tradition. I would advise you to take an approach to Copernicus that reflects this town, not astronomy. There is no point in competing in a space where you have no chance of becoming a leader. It's better to create your own category.<sup>41</sup>

The variety of roles and categories is to some extent reflected in the tourist passport,<sup>42</sup> which can be used to travel along the Copernicus Trail. Olsztyn offers the following stamps: astronomer, economist, administrator and strategist, while Toruń – surprisingly – only gives a student stamp, because – as it is argued – he began his education in Toruń, and here, on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, the campus of the university bearing his name was established. Frombork offers the most stamps: astronomer, administrator, cartographer, doctor and canon.<sup>43</sup>

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41 Brzezińska: *Spór*, p. 2.

42 *Szlak Kopernikowski. Paszport turystyczny.*

43 *Szlak Kopernikowski.*

The spectrum of Toruń institutions, projects, ventures, initiatives and enterprises bearing, or referring to, the name of Copernicus is immeasurably broader than in the case of Olsztyn. If we were to draw conclusions about the role attributed to Copernicus based on who or what is named after him, Copernicus was not only an astronomer, but also a confectioner, a bookkeeper and a cosmetologist – to name just a few examples. In Olsztyn, the name of Copernicus is not so widely used. Copernicus is primarily referred to as a doctor and scientist, mainly thanks to the University of Warmia and Mazury. His name appears in the Preamble to the University's Statute; Copernicus is mentioned by students in their oath; Copernicus was chosen as the patron of the Faculty of Medicine and appears on its logo, and he is also the patron of the Municipal Complex Hospital and the Oncology Center.

An opportunity to emphasise Copernicus as a Renaissance man is provided by the Botanical Alley in Olsztyn, which aims to promote knowledge about Copernicus. The spokesman for the District Office noted that “many products of science and manmade objects” have been named after Copernicus and added that “the memory of Copernicus is revered, among others, by botanists”.<sup>44</sup>

Copernicus's role is highlighted on monuments where he is most often immortalised with the attribute of an astronomer – an astrolabe. Thus is he presented in Toruń, Warsaw and Olsztyn. It should be noted, however, that the second Olsztyn monument to Copernicus located to the rear of the castle is a bust (therefore without attributes), and the Polish inscription, which replaced the pre-war German one, reads: *Defenders of the Olsztyn stronghold against the Teutonic invader, the great Pole Nicolaus Copernicus, grateful compatriots*. Here, Copernicus is primarily a defender of the city. Let us also note that the Grudziądz monument is a monument to Copernicus the economist.

This brief overview of how Copernicus is cast in various roles and presents his various faces illustrates the vastly diverse contexts and resources available for cities to use. Although, paradoxically, Olsztyn and Frombork are more closely related to Copernicus's astronomical works, and Olsztyn has a unique astronomical table made by Copernicus, the associations between Copernicus, the astronomer and Toruń meant that his city of birth is linked with the achievements that secured his place in history.

The possibility of assigning Copernicus various roles according to town politics applies not only to the person himself, but also to his specific memorials. Monuments are significant points in the city space and are generally associated with official memory, so they become an important element of place marketing. This type of commemoration creates urban centres of gravity, and tourist strategies often identify a specific monument with the city itself. In this sense, the

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44 Kiewisz-Wojciechowska: *Skwer*.

two become synonymous. This is undoubtedly the case with the monument in Toruń located on the Old Town Square and *Copernicus Bench* in Olsztyn in front of the entrance to the Castle of the Warmian Chapter. Both monuments, fundamentally poles apart, connect the figure of Copernicus with their city. The dignified monument in Toruń, with a clear reference to the astronomical context, depicts Copernicus, who was not present in Toruń as such in the monument's vision, while the monument in Olsztyn takes a more modern approach that potentially aligns with everyday life of this city's erstwhile resident. However, we also noticed that both monuments ultimately became part of everyday life in Toruń and Olsztyn as well as tourist features, and as such they are used in various ways by the city and its residents. Both monuments mentioned above, despite their different form and history, today mainly communicate the presence of Copernicus in a given space, his connections with the place and the vitality of his urban memory. The various practices of residents and tourists such as rubbing his nose, sitting on his lap, meeting at the monument, photographing it, replicating its image etc. only confirm the vitality of these commemorations in the city space and their marketing potential.

This seems to be the case with other memorials. The bust from Olsztyn, the work of Johannus Goetze, or the bust from the St. John's Cathedral in Toruń are today urban and tourist curiosities, items recognised by connoisseurs. Their often complicated origins, the national and political circumstances surrounding their creation, as well as park and church locations have somewhat consigned them to obscurity today. The national or even state-related entanglements of these memorials may one day be analysed regarding the variability of the contexts of Copernicus's role in the historical perspective, but today they seem somewhat empty semantically and in this sense unsuitable for general urban transformations and use. This does not mean, of course, that they do not have potential in this area, but at this point in time we would describe it as dormant or restricted. Therefore, these memorials have rather been forgotten by residents, are not referred to in contemporary murals or art, and are not included in urban marketing.

At this point, it is worth noting Toruń's saturation with numerous smaller monuments scattered throughout the city that refer to Copernicus, mainly in the context of Copernicus the astronomer, which is not the case in Olsztyn. The commemorations of this nature mentioned in this article – *Helios*, *G-nomon*, *De revolutionibus*, *Cosmopolis Fountain*, Stefan Knapp's *Pannaeau*, smaller monuments in various Toruń institutions and even subsequent murals – mark the entire city with Copernicanism. In this sense, these memorials equate Toruń with the city of Copernicus. The visibility and legibility of these objects varies, but their presence is strong and multiplies Copernican references, including in more or less secluded areas, housing districts, parks and university space.

A review of the Copernican commemorations operating in Olsztyn and Toruń also leads to conclusions regarding the vernacular dimension of memory and place marketing. Here this means the entire range of places and popular activities, often of a less official, sometimes anonymous and unprofessional nature. The memory of Copernicus is subject to these processes and takes place in both cities, although to different degrees. It is also reflexive in nature, in the sense that the values created, felt and disseminated across grass-roots practices are captured in the official marketing strategies of authorities, institutions and commercial entities. This almost ludic dimension of Copernicus is currently being used and developed. The multidimensionality of Copernicus's roles offers extraordinary potential in this respect, while also provoking further semantic shifts, enabling further unpredictable uses.

In Olsztyn, such phenomena are already noticeable in official strategies. The aforementioned *Copernicus Bench* itself and the practices associated with it are a good example. The idea of a friendly Copernicus, approachable, human-sized, sitting and contrasted with the monumental shape of the castle creates the figure of an ordinary resident who sat down here for a moment. This kind of figure offers an invitation to sit on his lap or rub his nose. Similarly, the portrayal of Copernicus by Marian Czarkowski, an actor from the Stefan Jaracz Theatre, creates a level of approachability and ludic perception, which is fun in itself. Olsztyn's initiative for the Kormoran brewery to make *Gruit Kopernikowski* or *Copernicus beer* has a similar dimension. Olsztyn's previously mentioned technological initiatives in the form of a computer game and mobile application are also, in a sense, intended to introduce the Olsztyn Copernicus and what he did 'when he was here'.

Copernicus spent his early childhood and youth in Toruń, but this theme is not used excessively, and the young Copernicus does not feature in the city space, for example, in the form of images, small architecture or narratives. In Toruń, Copernicus is the outstanding astronomer and scientist; in the popular imagination, the adult and successful Copernicus is linked with the city. In this sense, we can even joke that in Copernicus's home, wherever it may be, we see the Copernicus we know: a brilliant adult of international fame. This Copernicus is also used and presented in the vernacular imagination. In this sense, Copernicus suffices even as just a label or a slogan. Hence the extraordinary popularity of the names Kopernik and Copernicus, used, as mentioned, in marketing and commercial ventures: the *Kopernik* Confectionery Factory, hotels (*Kopernik*, *Copernicus* and *Nicolaus*), *Kopernik* housing cooperative, *Kopernik* accounting office, *Kopernik* beauty salon, *Copernicus Halo Taxi* company, *Copernicus* shopping mall, etc. Hence, there are countless events, murals, games and gadgets featuring Copernicus. In this sense, the very act of naming and marking something in relation to Copernicus bestows value and synonymously equates it with Toruń, creating

recognition and an attractive local reference. This game is clearly visible in the above-cited example of vodka and its contemporary Toruń connections with Copernicus, where on the one hand such a connection moves the product in time, making it traditional, and on the other hand, equates it with Toruń, lending it the status of 'from here'. References of this type have recently disappeared from Olsztyn somewhat, with the closure of the *Kopernik* cinema and the construction of the *Kopernik Park* housing estate, which is more based on sentiment towards the cinema. Furthermore, the renaming of *Kopernik Hotel* to Best Western Plus Hotel Olsztyn Old Town proves that 'Kopernik' as a marketing ploy does not evoke clear associations with the city of Olsztyn.

The vernacular dimension of memory and place marketing is also associated with an entire range of rituals, sometimes in ceremonial form. For example, local customs related to the monument in Toruń have been mentioned. Here, for example, the Juvenalia student festival period creates a kind of inversion of time whereby the monument is transformed, and the figure of Copernicus is sometimes creatively reimagined, for example, by wearing a Juvenalia T-shirt. In Olsztyn, medical students of the University of Warsaw make an oath referring to Copernicus in the courtyard of the castle, the argument here being the residence of the most famous physician in Warmia and doctor of the Warmian bishops. In this sense, a certain student ritual uses the figure of Copernicus in both cases for its own popular festive and ceremonial forms of an official and unofficial nature.

This vernacular level is also visible in its ultimate form: the mural. Let us recall that the one in Olsztyn, presenting Copernicus as a university student, bears the slogan 'if Copernicus studied in Kortowo today', and the 'Kortowski' student Copernicus wears headphones and takes part in youth festivals. In turn, one Toruń mural depicts Copernicus as a beekeeper, thus referring to the past of the Rubinkowo housing estate. Both cases make a fluid and creative transformation, creating a semantic surplus that, in a metaphorical transfer, builds a new, unexpected meaning – a sense, one should add, constructed by modernity and the city.

Another interesting aspect in the contemporary take on the memory of Copernicus, from the perspective of both cities, involves, on the one hand, building its strong and inseparable connection with the city, and on the other hand, creating a kind of larger regional reference.

Krzysztof Mikulski states that the discussion on Copernicus's nationality may be concluded by stating that:

He was of Toruń origin, a Prussian (i.e. a resident of his small homeland – Royal Prussia) and a German-speaking Pole. [...] By political choice, the astronomer was a

faithful subject of the Polish king, but also a committed defender of the autonomy of Warmia, or more broadly, Royal Prussia, within the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>45</sup>

Copernicus's affiliation with Toruń seems to be somehow inscribed in the natural order of things. The director of the Toruń City Center Office said in 2009: "I do not deny Copernicus's connections with Warmia, but the hierarchy was created by God and history. 'Toruniensis' appeared everywhere next to his name".<sup>46</sup> The Monument to Nicolaus Copernicus in Toruń and the Copernicus Museum located in his family home seem to be the main points connecting the man with his memory. The Copernicus Monument is also an obvious demarcation of the city centre, an important topographic and symbolic point where events important to the history of the community, as well as private happenings, take place. The history of the monument shows that efforts to permanently include Copernicus in the city's space and memory date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The current monument is the result of efforts that began in the Duchy of Warsaw at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, after Toruń joined the Kingdom of Prussia in 1815, it was finally funded by collections from a German scientific society.<sup>47</sup> The Latin inscription on it mentions Copernicus as a resident of Toruń. Meanwhile, interest in Copernicus as an image resource that could potentially serve to promote Olsztyn grew in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century on the occasion of the celebration of the 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city's location. Previously, Copernicus was a figure whose image was managed centrally and used by the state rather than locally. In the interwar period, his Polishness was emphasised, and after the war, he was included in socialist propaganda<sup>48</sup> and anti-German narrative, highlighting his patriotism and presenting him as a 'fighter for freedom and Polishness'. In the 1960s and 1970s, he was recalled in Olsztyn in the context of resistance against the Teutonic invasion and as a good host of the castle, therefore from a perspective of emphasising the Polish identity of Warmia and the Olsztyn Voivodeship, or more broadly: the 'recovered' lands.<sup>49</sup>

In 2003, *Copernicus Bench* was installed, which would become one of the town's tourist attractions.<sup>50</sup> In the mid-2000s, Copernicus began to be actively promoted as a figure from Olsztyn, then Warmia, and the possibility of symbolically snatching the figure from Toruń was tested. The District Office was involved in promotional activities using Copernicus, taking the astronomer outside the city and assigning him to the entire district. For instance, in 2009, the

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45 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 13.

46 Kurs: *Toruń prowokuje*, p. 1.

47 Niedzielska: *Pomnik Kopernika*.

48 Lewandowska: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 369.

49 Karkowska: *Pamięć kulturowa*, p. 84.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

District Office's Promotion Department, in a desire to show his connections with Warmia, started a controversial campaign, one of the elements of which was a logo with Copernicus wearing a Che Guevara beret and the inscription: 'Copernicus. Free Your Mind' or 'I Love Warmia'. Copernicus was emphasised to have been a resident of Olsztyn Castle and the founder of some Warmian villages. Similarly, in the Nicolaus Copernicus Botanical Alley there are, among others, inscriptions recalling the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the defence of the bailiff against the Teutonic Knights and that 'Copernicus was a Warmian'.

The links between Copernicus and Warmia are also built through competitions run by the Provincial Government with the aim of 'finding' souvenirs from Warmia – the Copernicus region. Although nominally these are souvenirs referring to the tagline 'Nicholas Copernicus chose Warmia', because of the institution involved in organising everything, the idea of involving Copernicus in building a regional identity applies to the entire voivodeship.

An important place in the history of Copernicus was Frombork, located in Warmia and where he spent 40 years of his life. He also wrote *De revolutionibus* there. He was reburied in Frombork in 2010. The Metropolitan of Warmia then – as the director of the Toruń City Center Office earlier – mythologised the astronomer's naturalisation, attributing him to Warmia: "Copernicus was born in Toruń, but as a genius he was born in Frombork and Olsztyn".<sup>51</sup> In 2015, a Copernicus bench was built in Frombork – similar to the one installed 13 years earlier in Olsztyn. The benches standing on the Market Square in Frombork symbolise the planets – Copernicus sits on the third one, gazing towards the Cathedral Hill, and at his feet lies a plaque with a quote from *De revolutionibus*. It is worth adding that a year earlier, a Copernicus bench was built in Ełk Educational Park. There sits Copernicus, holding an astrolabe and surrounded by granite spheres making up the Solar System. Although Ełk has little in common with Copernicus, locating a bench in this town may be interpreted as assigning Copernicus not only to Warmia, but to the entire Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship: from north-west to south-east.

Doubtlessly, in terms of commemoration processes and place marketing, the dispute as well as its potential consequences and possibilities deserve attention, and Toruń and Olsztyn definitely, to some extent, do compete over Copernicus. Students arriving in Olsztyn are informed about this in the *University of Warmia and Mazury Students' Guide*. The dispute is about a valuable resource – the astronomer, his image, history and legend, which pulls in tourists and history lovers. It evokes positive associations with the place. While the connection between Copernicus and Toruń may appear to be obvious and natural ('Toruń, Copernicus and ginger biscuits'), the memory of his connections with Olsztyn

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51 Kurs: *Spokój*, p. 2.

and Warmia requires care and constant maintenance. Conflict – even if for marketing purposes to create the image of a place – is a convenient tool that translates into building identity. While, in the post-war period, Copernicus was a ‘national treasure’, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century he began to be perceived as one of the main frameworks for building the image policy of Olsztyn and the region. A period of increased interest in the astronomer among the inhabitants of Olsztyn took place in 2003, when the 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary of obtaining city rights was celebrated. *Copernicus Bench* was then built. In 2005, Copernicus’s remains were found in Frombork Cathedral. The scientist began to gain a stronger presence in the city’s public space in 2009. In 2010, the astronomer was reburied in Frombork Cathedral. Earlier, his remains made a symbolic journey from Toruń to Olsztyn, and then to his resting place. Both in Toruń and Olsztyn, they were accompanied by public ceremonies and tributes. The local governments of both voivodeships announced 2013 as Copernicus Year.

Since 2007, local journalists have been actively trying to raise awareness of Copernicus among Olsztyn residents. They wrote articles pointing out the lack of a clear symbol for the city, proved that Olsztyn can use Copernicus for promotional purposes and encouraged breaking the Toruń ‘monopoly’.<sup>52</sup> For example, they wrote:

Let’s not give up, because we have more ammunition. Although Copernicus grew up in Toruń, it was here that he worked on his treatise on minting coins and the heliocentric theory, and also defended the castle against the Teutonic Knights. [...] So let’s look for some ‘tidbits’ on Copernicus: this might be a plaque, but it could also be the original castle privy that he used. Let’s find an idea for a souvenir and, above all, create a ‘Copernican strategy’ for Olsztyn and Warmia in general.<sup>53</sup>

Significantly, at that time Toruń and Olsztyn employed the same agency to work on the image and vision of the cities’ development, including their marketing strategy. The representative of the agency explained to the Olsztyn authorities that Copernicus was not suitable as a symbol for the city because he is too strongly associated with Toruń, and encouraged Toruń’s residents to fight for Copernicus:

I don’t know if you are fighting for it in the best way, because you have competition: Frombork and Olsztyn. So far, Toruń has had no idea how to use Copernicus. We need to approach it anew, with a fresh head. And we must win the duel once and for all that Copernicus was not a woman,<sup>54</sup> but a ‘Toruńer’.<sup>55</sup>

52 Brzezińska: *Spór*; Kurs et al.: *Dla kogo Kopernik?*.

53 Kurs et al.: *Dla kogo Kopernik?*, p. 2.

54 The sentence refers to popular quote from the Polish movie *Seksmisja* (*Sexmission*, 1984, dir. Juliusz Machulski). The movie is comedy science fiction. The plot is about the two men, that go to the future world (2044), where there are only women. Men are even erased from the

In 2009, the District Office in Olsztyn joined the struggle for Copernicus, trying to include not only Olsztyn but the whole of Warmia under the astronomer's patronage, represented by the Olsztyn district. A promotional campaign was then initiated, which was considered controversial (e.g., Copernicus the revolutionary was depicted wearing Che Guevara's beret). The Director of the Promotion Department of the District Office in Olsztyn said, "It's time to win Copernicus for Warmia, because his revolutionary theories were created here, not elsewhere."<sup>56</sup> Action was met with reaction: for three days, a car with an advertising board displaying the Nicolaus Copernicus monument in Toruń and the slogan 'Toruń is moving' drove through the streets of Olsztyn. The director of the Toruń City Center Office then stressed that Toruń does indeed care about the good image of Copernicus and only on special occasions, such as student festivals, does it take a less serious approach to his character.<sup>57</sup> The District Office's response to Toruń's mobile advertising campaign was to place the 'revolutionary' image of Copernicus on a rally car that was to take part in a race in Otwock. The driver said, "Copernicus was ahead of his time and I suppose that if he were alive today, he would be racing in car rallies, designing engines or spaceships."<sup>58</sup>

The Toruń-Olsztyn 'Copernicus war' – in which several similar episodes could be mentioned – might be summarised with a statement made by the director of the Toruń City Center Office: "The dispute isn't real. Any unconventional action that remind people of a champion is good for Toruń and Olsztyn [...]. When it all started, I read some posts on internet forums with great amusement. Such disputes, unless forced, always help reveal new fields of action and promotion."<sup>59</sup>

Ultimately, the connections between the memory of Copernicus and marketing campaigns locating Copernicus within the contemporary space of the cities of Toruń and Olsztyn and in the socio-cultural practices of their residents would appear to be extremely volatile. By examining the characteristics of Copernican commemorations and place marketing campaigns, this article attempts to indicate the circumstances, creative transformations and strategies that show to what extent current needs, sensitivity and urban policy of various kinds actually create a community of memory.

The range of vibrant, purposeful commemorations of Copernicus in both cities is truly impressive, and the entrepreneurship of authorities and in-

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history. When one of the protagonist argue, that the greatest scientists in the human history were men, i.e. Copernicus, the famous words are being spoken: "That is the lie! Copernicus was a woman".

55 Hołub: *Pojedynek*, p. 2.

56 *Mikołaj "Che" Kopernik*.

57 Kurs: *Toruń prowokuje*, p. 1.

58 Kurs et al.: *Popartowy Kopernik*, p. 2.

59 Kurs: *Wojna kontrolowana*, p. 1.

stitutions, as well as enterprises and residents, is sometimes surprising. In this respect, we have attempted to present the similarities between Toruń and Olsztyn, as well as the differences. The latter, in terms of the variety of Copernican themes, clearly show how the memory of the same person can be differentiated in two other cities. Contemporary multi-channel marketing appeals to many diverse recipients, on various cultural levels – official and unofficial, so-called high culture or pop culture, set in the context of conflicts over memory and memory politics, or finally directed externally or internally. This co-creates the contemporary urban memory of Copernicus – a dynamic process and an act in creation.

These fresh, creative and urban markets of memory also influence areas that, in the contemporary city landscape, might be embarrassing, constrained, omitted or neglected, thus creating Copernican spheres of oblivion. We have also attempted to reveal these areas. They may be noticed when certain objects disappear from sight, cease to be cared for or are even removed from the city space. They are also revealed in the changing contexts of the memory of Copernicus, which are subject to start transformations in the policies of a modern city, focused on tourism, events or commercialism, transforming the previous meanings of Copernican memory into useful practices.

Nowadays, memory is also becoming an extremely important area of competition between cities in terms of shaping the urban structure and raising the awareness of the residents, and the example of the memory of Copernicus in Olsztyn and Toruń is a clear example of this. A large diversity of initiatives, jubilee events, media publicity, recording and archiving specific commemorations, in a sense, show the greedy face of modernity, whereby city institutions, organisations, formal and informal groups all want to go down in history, to perpetuate themselves, as it were, by contributing to the Copernican series of perpetuations. Using existing forms such as monuments, refreshing them periodically or during jubilees, adding new elements of oneself to what already exists, adding new technology – all this puts those living in a specific time in the here and now, in a specific place and city, within the framework of an apparent a great timeless history and a series of everlasting memories.

In relation to Copernican memory and marketing efforts, the cities of Toruń and Olsztyn today constitute in this sense memory communities of sorts that include the figure of Nicolaus Copernicus in accordance with their own cultural practice, determined by the needs of these towns and their residents. They materialise, perpetuate, create, transform, destroy and forget Copernicus as a symbolic element of contemporary and urban cultural memory.<sup>60</sup> Ultimately, it is not some eternal and universal memory of Copernicus that creates a city, but the

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60 Assmann: *Cultural Memory*.

city and its community that create the memory of Copernicus. However, place marketing associated with Copernicus turns him into a place of memory.<sup>61</sup>

[Translated by Steve Jones]

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Fig. 1. Copernican monuments (on the left: Toruń, photo: Rafał Kleśta-Nawrocki; on the right: Olsztyn, photo: Piotr Olejnik).



Fig. 2. Copernican monuments / cultural practices (on the left: Toruń, photo: Rafał Kleśta-Nawrocki; on the right: Olsztyn, photo: Radosław Sierocki).



Fig. 3. Other Copernican monuments (on the left: Toruń, photo: Rafał Kleśta-Nawrocki; on the right: Olsztyn, photo: Radosław Sierocki).



Fig. 4. Copernican houses (on the left: Toruń, photo: Rafał Kleśta-Nawrocki; on the right: Olsztyn, photo: Radosław Sierocki).



Fig. 5. Copernican murals (on the left: Toruń, photo: Rafał Kleśta-Nawrocki; on the right: Olsztyn, photo: Radosław Sierocki).



Fig. 6. Copernican occasional exhibitions (on the left: Toruń, photo: Rafał Kleśta-Nawrocki; on the right: Olsztyn, photo: Radosław Sierocki).



Fig. 7. Copernican beer (on the left: Toruń, photo: Browar Toruń Regionalny; on the right: Olsztyn, photo: Browar Kormoran).



## Campus of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń: Architectural Value and Preservation Challenges

### Abstract

This article examines the university campus in Toruń, built in 1967–1973, as the main government investment for the global Copernican celebrations. The text mentions its architectural value as well as the underestimation of this value and the need to protect it. For a long time, post-war architecture was not perceived as art or part of cultural heritage. Only in recent years has this perspective changed, but this process is slow and requires awareness-raising campaigns.

Keywords: university campus; Toruń; Ryszard Karłowicz; post-war architecture; conservation of monuments

– Uniwersytecka Street – the student announced – is the main artery of the new district, nestled between Chelmińskie and Bydgoskie Przedmieście. [...] Ah, there it is – he continued – That little castle, proudly flying the flag, is the Rector’s Office building. The elegant villa beside it is the residence of His Magnificence the Rector. Stretching behind it is the University’s official airport and hangars, brimming with cutting-edge equipment. In mere minutes, one can be at any fraternal university around the globe, engaging with scholars in a seamless exchange of knowledge. Our University Library boasts a second such airport, and there is a third dedicated exclusively to students. Look over there – he pointed to a massive structure amidst the trees – the edifice with the dome and the soaring tower. That is our astronomical observatory, currently the tallest tower in Toruń. The building standing nearer to us, a smaller six-storey palace, is the Atomic Research Institute. [...] And just beyond, the first block on the forest side marks Akademicka Street, home to all the Students’ Residences. There are but five now, but more are under construction. Currently, there are about 20,000 of us students. The second block is Profesorska Street, where each lecturer resides in a separate villa, replete with all modern comforts. [...] At present, every scholar owns an automobile, but soon, it is hoped that each will be equipped with their own plane. Our world, since the joyous UN conference that abolished wars and borders and established eternal peace, now truly

appreciates the power of science. It is this reverence for knowledge that has enabled us to reduce the working day to four hours, ensuring prosperity and leisure for all.<sup>1</sup>

The quote referenced above is an excerpt from the visionary musings of a Toruń journalist, published in the 1946 issue of *Głos Demokratyczny* [*Democratic Voice*]. However, the early years of the university presented a more mundane reality. Established in 1945, Nicolaus Copernicus University initially operated in repurposed buildings within the downtown area. Over time, its facilities spread further across the city, leading to an increasingly dispersed campus. The journalist's vision reflects a long-standing aspiration among Toruń's scientific and cultural circles, dating back to the interwar period, to establish a university<sup>2</sup> as a self-contained complex akin to the American campus model. This envisioned campus would centralize all university functions in one location. As the university grew, so did the challenges associated with its facilities, prompting recurring discussions about creating an 'academic town' or 'academic estate'. Efforts to realize this vision were made in 1946, 1951, and 1957,<sup>3</sup> but each attempt fell short of fruition. The breakthrough came with the global celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth, planned for 1973.

This text examines the campus of Nicolaus Copernicus University not only as an architectural work but also as a case study in the underestimation of the value of postwar architecture. The historical significance of the campus has gained recognition in recent years, as reflected in academic literature.<sup>4</sup> This recognition highlights the architectural merits of the campus<sup>5</sup> and the pressing need to protect them.<sup>6</sup> This article will explore these issues within the broader context of post-war heritage, focusing on the (un)awareness of its importance and the challenges associated with its preservation. Although I am not a scholar in memory studies, and initially found the editor's suggestion to approach this topic from such a perspective somewhat perplexing, I will attempt to connect the discussion to the concept of memory – or, more appropriately in this case, the lack thereof.

1 St. Mat.: *Wizja miasta uniwersyteckiego*, p. 7 [translations of all quotes in this article by Tomasz Leszczuk].

2 *Pomorski program pracy kulturalnej*, p. 6.

3 Sudziński: *Przekształcenia*, p. 133.

4 Pszczółkowski: *Przegląd piśmiennictwa*, pp. 237–244; Idem, *Z dziejów budowy kampusu*, pp. 151–172; Supruniuk et al.: *Uniwersytet*, pp. 911–913.

5 Czarnecki: *Pierwsze w Polsce*, pp. 24–25; Pszczółkowski: *Kampus*, pp. 39–52; Idem: *Panneau*, pp. 129–156.

6 Ziółkowska: *W poszukiwaniu nowoczesności*, pp. 139–162.

## Construction of the Campus

The university authorities recognized that conducting research and teaching in a disparate array of facilities was unsustainable and could only address immediate needs. In 1960, another attempt was made to build a large complex of university buildings. After numerous committee meetings, evaluations, and expert reports,<sup>7</sup> the Senate of Nicolaus Copernicus University approved a proposal to locate the campus on Bielańska Street, on the northwestern outskirts of the city.<sup>8</sup> Optimism for the future was bolstered by the central government's decision in March 1962 to finance the construction of the campus. This investment was deemed prestigious and was closely tied to the planned 1973 celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nicolaus Copernicus's birth.

In 1964, correspondence between the rector, Antoni Swinarski, and the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology, Piotr Biegański, led to the latter undertaking the urban-architectural documentation for the university. The project team, led by Ryszard Karłowicz as the general designer, included several chief designers for the various facilities: Marek Różański (rector's office building and auditorium), Witold Benedek (library), Józef Łucki (later replaced by Andrzej Jaworski, Faculty of Chemistry), Bogdan Popławski (Department of Biology and Earth Sciences), Wincenty Szober (students' houses, staff houses, canteen) and Zenon Buczkowski (health clinic).<sup>9</sup> Entrusting the project to an academic body was necessary due to the lack of experience in Poland with implementing such large-scale projects. Thus, the decision was made with the realization of the fact that extensive study and research would need to be carried out. The team assembled by Karłowicz was carefully selected, as each designer was concurrently working on a doctoral thesis focused on the design challenges of academic buildings or complexes with specific functions.

Due to the project's extensive scope, a decision was made to implement it in three stages: 1967–1970, 1971–1975 and 1976–1980. This division was aligned more with the rhythms of the 'five-year plans' and state budget policy than with the actual progress of the construction, as in reality, the cut-off date was set for 1973. The scheduling aimed to create a functionally complete complex by 1973, encompassing all elements necessary for the university's comprehensive operation. This included: general university facilities (rector's office building, library), research and didactic facilities (Department of Chemistry complex,

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7 Bełkot: *Uniwersytet*, p. 57; Karłowicz: *Koncepcja urbanistyczna*, pp. 10–16; Kaczmarek: *Geneza powstania*, p. 165.

8 Bełkot: *Uniwersytet*.

9 Karłowicz et al.: *Organizacja prac projektowych*, p. 111.

Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences) and residential and social facilities (students' residences, staff houses, canteen, gyms, health clinic). The long-awaited decision came on 23 March 1967: The Council of Ministers, by resolution no. 57/67, incorporated the construction of the university campus into the programme celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nicolaus Copernicus's birth. They approved the first stage of expansion and allocated 215 million PLN for this purpose.<sup>10</sup>

The official start of campus construction began on 9 June 1967, marked by the laying of the cornerstone at the southwest corner of the foundation of Student Residence no. 7, which had already been under construction since 18 April. The construction process extended over five years, with the total cost eventually surpassing 540 million PLN. The construction site saw the involvement of dozens of teams from nine construction and assembly companies, along with independent teams from specialized firms. The prestigious and internationally significant nature of this investment necessitated the full implementation of the approved plan. Despite numerous difficulties and delays characteristic of a socialist economy,<sup>11</sup> all 13 buildings envisioned in the first phase of campus construction were completed within the five-year timeframe. During this period, comprehensive land and legal documentation, investment documentation, and construction work were completed. Additionally, equipment and furniture were procured, underground utilities were installed, and a network of roads, squares, pavements, townscape elements, site lighting, and greenery was established over a 45-hectare area, all generally according to plan and within the allotted time. The ceremonial handover of the campus was conducted by representatives of the Polish United Workers' Party and the Government of the People's Republic of Poland on 2 October 1973.<sup>12</sup>

## Spatial and Architectural Value

The Nicolaus Copernicus University (NCU) campus stands as a prime example of how architects in the People's Republic of Poland, operating within the technical and economic constraints of the time, pursued high-quality outcomes that combined thoughtful functional and spatial solutions with artistic effects. The spatial design of the first stage of construction was an original concept with no national precedents, featuring optimal functional characteristics developed in

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10 Bełkot: *Uniwersytet*, p. 59; Kaczmarek: *Geneza powstania*, p. 166; Pszczółkowski: *Przegląd piśmiennictwa*, p. 239.

11 More on the subject: Pszczółkowski: *Z dziejów budowy*.

12 Kaczmarek: *Geneza powstania*, p. 167.

strict accordance with prevailing global, primarily Western, design trends. The phased implementation was meticulously planned so that each completed section formed a coherent whole. Undoubtedly, it was anticipated that once the Copernican celebrations came to an end, the funding might dwindle; therefore, it was crucial to finish both the general university facilities and some teaching facilities, as well as essential social buildings, in the initial stage. This approach resulted in the creation of Poland's first unified campus on a new site, encompassing the full functionality of the university.

A fundamental characteristic of the campus's spatial concept, evident from the outset of the design process, is its clear functional design. This involves the creation of two perpendicular axes of approximately equal length, along which the research and didactic facilities were aligned with housing and social facilities.<sup>13</sup> The didactic and research axis is a unified complex, initially planned to comprise five faculty buildings. Two of these – the Department of Chemistry Complex<sup>14</sup> and the Department of Biology and Earth Sciences<sup>15</sup> – were prioritized for implementation in the first stage of construction. The department buildings are concentrated along both sides of a pedestrian walkway, which is covered with a roof extending its entire length, including branches leading to the main entrances of the buildings and the public transport stop.

The general architectural designs of the didactic and research buildings are similar, in contrast to the residential and social zone, which is characterized by heterogeneity. This diversity stems from the broad utilitarian profile envisaged here – residential, gastronomic, medical, leisure, sports, cultural and entertainment functions – each associated with different architectural designs of individual facilities and complexes. The western part of this zone is more homogeneous, owing to its strictly residential function. Here, a complex of six students' residences was planned, with the compositional basis being a pair of buildings repeated three times: a five-storey, horizontally elongated block of flats and an eight-storey tower block. Despite some variation achieved by differing building heights, this subzone forms a formally homogeneous whole, highlighted by a rhythmic, repetitive arrangement of cuboidal blocks. The eastern part of the zone is the most functionally and formally diverse sector of the entire establishment. This area includes staff houses, a canteen with a gym, a health clinic with an outpatient health spa, and a students' club (completed according to a revised design later). Unlike the rigorously designed residential section, the buildings in this area are laid out in a casual, dispersed manner. The multiplicity of functions and the freedom of composition are evident through the distinct architectural

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13 See fig. 1 (all illustrations at the end of the chapter).

14 See fig. 2.

15 See fig. 3.

designs of the individual facilities. Nevertheless, the overall spatial idea is maintained, expressed in the juxtaposition of the extensively planned low-rise social buildings with a compact cluster of staff houses. The slender tower blocks (four were planned, but only two were completed) on the eastern edge of the complex serve as a framing device, decisively closing the overall composition.

The most literal element that binds the different zones together is the library, rector's office building, and auditorium complex, which serves as the university centre in the scientific, administrative, and cultural senses, situated at the confluence of the two axes. The central complex consists of three parts: the parking square area, the entrance patio, and the so-called Main Forum.<sup>16</sup> The design of the entire complex was intended by its authors to be based on the principle of an enfilade.<sup>17</sup> The parking square, planned with grandeur, serves as an external representation, offering a wide vista of the rector's office building and auditorium complex from approximately one kilometre away along the axis of Reja Street. In contrast, the Main Forum is strictly internal – enclosed on three sides, with the fourth side opening to the residential and social area. It serves as a modern variant of the courtyard, reminiscent of medieval colleges and 19<sup>th</sup> century universities. Between these two squares lies a connecting element: an open patio that functions as the main entrance or open hall. By manipulating the sizes and spaces of the different sections, a distinctive spatial expression was achieved. The outer, spacious square with its open character contrasts with the smaller, clearly defined patio, which in turn offers a view of the Main Forum. This arrangement creates an expressive, yet non-literal and symbolic, feature of the central complex: the function of a gateway to the university, serving as the main entrance to the university grounds. In this design, the parking square constitutes the exterior, the Main Forum represents the interior, and the enclosed patio forms the boundary between the two parts. This is where one enters the university.<sup>18</sup> The motif of the gate is a traditional element of academic space, familiar from both historical and post-war designs. It often becomes a dominant feature of the entire complex or is at least clearly emphasized formally.

To enhance the representative nature of the university centre, careful attention was given to its setting. Despite the democratic architecture of the individual facilities, consistent with the post-war philosophy of the university, the spatial design of the central complex reflects the traditional reverence for science and the university as a 'temple of knowledge'. This is underscored by the expressiveness and artistic individuality of this zone. The impression of monumentalism was achieved through a system of wide, terrace stairs, layered on

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16 See fig. 4.

17 Karłowicz: *Koncepcja urbanistyczna*, p. 34.

18 Idem: *Architektura szkół wyższych*, p. 297.

multiple levels.<sup>19</sup> The central character of the site was further emphasized with artistic elements. Dominating the parking square is a colourful *panneau* designed by Stefan Knapp, an English artist of Polish descent, which adorns one of the auditorium's pylons.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the patio space features a stone sculpture by Witold Marciniak, depicting Copernicus's main work *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* in a stylized manner.<sup>21</sup>

The undisputed compositional focal point of the campus and an element of the highest artistic class in the entire establishment is the Main Forum.<sup>22</sup> The three frontages of the Main Forum are formed by the facilities of the rector's office building and auditorium (south), the Faculty of Chemistry (west), and the library (north). The eastern frontage consists of a wall of forest and open space, extending to the buildings of the residential and social zone. A significant portion of the square is occupied by water, described as "the main compositional theme of the Forum".<sup>23</sup> This large area of water was justified for functional reasons, serving as a dry air humidifier (since the NCU complex was located on a sand dune) and as a potential reservoir for firefighting purposes. The surface of the square was developed using a wide array of measures, emphasizing its central, crowning character while also organizing the traditional function of an academic courtyard as a place for social contact, recreation, and leisure. The space between the pool, the Faculty of Chemistry building, and the library was arranged with a system of viewing terraces, intended to serve as an amphitheatre<sup>24</sup> with steps and seats. These elements, shaped by faults in cuboidal forms, were designed to form a cohesive composition with the water, especially in the the scene-stage planned on the periphery. The pursuit of monumentalism is evident in the drawing of a grid of squares on the surface of the square. The central point of artistic culmination was to be a giant aluminium sphere (4 metres in diameter), intended by the creators as a symbol of an astral body rising above the water.<sup>25</sup> However, the idea of installing the sphere was ultimately not realized. The complex, intended to be a showcase of the university, representing its integrity and solemnity, was refined down to the last detail. The detailed solutions are characterized by individuality and exceptionally careful workmanship for the time. Greenery plays a very important role in the architectural and spatial creation of the square, aesthetically designed in the form of brick parterres and flowerbeds.

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19 See fig. 5.

20 See fig. 6.

21 See fig. 7.

22 See fig. 8.

23 Karłowicz: *Koncepcja urbanistyczna*, p. 34.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

The compositional idea of two perpendicular axes was grounded in functional considerations.<sup>26</sup> The designers, who were also scientists and teachers, recognized that the university would continually evolve, expanding its activities and changing the organization of scientific and didactic work. This ongoing evolution necessitates new spaces and frequent transformations of existing ones. The campus design preserves land reserves, creating optimal conditions for the university's expansion in directions perpendicular to the main axis, while maintaining the clarity of the compositional idea. The central complex (the Main Forum with the rector's office building and auditorium) has limited potential for spatial development due to its primarily representative and administrative functions. However, the need for such development is minimal, as the central complex's value lies in its formal constancy and immutability, reflecting the university's identity as a serious and venerable institution with centuries-old traditions. Moreover, the perpendicular layout effectively combines the principle of flexible development with the principle of economy. This approach minimizes the need for roads, optimizes functional links, and maximizes land use.

The creators of the campus designed it with simplicity, clarity, and homogeneity to correspond with the architectural and urban values of old Toruń, particularly the compactness, clarity, and simplicity of the historic centre. This respect for the city's historical values included a moderate use of high-rise buildings to avoid competing with the distinctive downtown skyline.<sup>27</sup> The clear spatial layout also aimed to align with the principles of socialist pedagogy, intending to have an educational effect on the student community by "fostering a sense of order".<sup>28</sup> However, features associated with pedagogy or the desire to refer to the historical values of Toruń's architecture are, in fact, typical properties of modernist urbanism. The aspiration to shape human personality through architecture, the simplicity and regularity of composition, and the creation of a system of open and closed interiors and vertical and horizontal buildings, emphasised by their height, were fundamental elements of urban-architectural planning at the time. It is evident that the design also drew on universal principles of spatial design developed over centuries of planning thought, albeit translated into modern forms. Analogies of this kind were a consequence of the pursuit of monumental effects, with an important source of inspiration being the spatial-architectural solutions of modern public squares, representative meeting places, and monumental architecture. The architectural setting of the squares was designed to be viewable from multiple perspectives, a basic feature of modern Italian squares that can be seen in the spatial solution of the Main Forum.

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26 Ibid., p. 31.

27 Ibid., p. 33.

28 Ibid., p. 26.

The Toruń campus exemplifies the characteristic elements of modern academic spaces, closely linking the complex to similar projects in Europe and America. The use of these elements was deliberate rather than intuitive. Although the term ‘campus’ was officially avoided in the People’s Republic of Poland and appeared infrequently even in specialized works, with publications such as magazines and the daily press preferring the term ‘academic town’ (a linguistic calque of the Russian ‘akademgorodka’, intended to suggest the socialist origin of the idea), the NCU expansion project was directly influenced by Western campuses. Karłowicz’s travels in Western Europe exposed him to and fascinated him with the ideas implemented there. Similarly, Marian Kaczmarek, the director of administration at Nicolaus Copernicus University, had comparable experiences.<sup>29</sup>

The basic feature determining the spatial arrangement of the NCU campus – a clear functional design – is a constant principle in the planning of academic institutions, with a tradition dating back to the early American campuses. This principle shaped the plan for the first comprehensive establishment of this type, such as the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.<sup>30</sup> The Toruń campus shares notable similarities with this academic complex. The simplicity of the division, where the two basic functions of the university are separated along independent development axes (running in parallel in Charlottesville). Both campuses feature a representative centre that serves as a hierarchical focal point (in Charlottesville, this role is played by the Rotunda). In both Europe and beyond, similar solutions emerged, adhering to strict functional divisions, compositional principles, and hierarchical effects. These often involved the creation of a central complex, typically a main square or forum, housing key buildings such as the rector’s office building, *auditorium maximum*, and library. These modern courtyards and their associated buildings are distinguished by individualism and high artistic quality. Notable examples of such post-war projects include the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, the ‘university towns’ in Caracas and Brasilia, and universities in Orleans, Jyväskylä, Bochum, Regensburg, Würzburg, and Twente, as well as technical universities in Otaniemi, Lyngby, Sussex University, Bradford University, and Surrey University. Among Eastern Bloc countries, the technical university in Bratislava and the University of Agriculture in Nitra stand out, with the latter recognized in 2001 as the most outstanding Slovak project of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The architectural solutions implemented at Toruń’s Bielany Campus reflect the most characteristic trends of the 1960s. The campus features a range of styles, including the Bauhaus-inspired white facades, Miesian glass and steel archi-

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29 Cf. Kaczmarek: *Geneza powstania*, pp. 164–165.

30 See fig. 9.

ecture, brick motifs reminiscent of Alvar Aalto and Frank Lloyd Wright, and expressive forms influenced by Eero Saarinen. There is much less concrete and fewer elements of Corbusian brutalism, but a modicum is also present. The postmodern winds of change have also affected the designers' creativity. Despite incorporating many characteristic features of socialist construction, the buildings that make up the Nicolaus Copernicus University Campus reflect global trends in academic architecture of the time. The formal, structural, and functional solutions used in these buildings exemplify the original branch of academic architecture that emerged during this period.

## Challenges of Memory, Awareness and Preservation

Awareness of the importance of preserving post-war architecture emerged relatively early in Western countries. In 1987, the modernist city of Brasilia was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. University campuses also gained this elite status: the University of Virginia complex in Charlottesville was listed in 1987, the post-war university establishment in Caracas in 2000, and a similar campus in Mexico in 2007. In contrast, Poland did not recognize the historical and artistic value of its Polish People's Republic heritage during this period. This lack of awareness led to the demolition of important and often outstanding post-war designs. In Warsaw alone, over a dozen such buildings were razed, including the *Praha* cinema (1948–2005), the *Moskwa* cinema (1950–1996), the 10<sup>th</sup>-Anniversary Stadium (1955–2008), the *Skarpa* cinema (1960–2003), and the *Sezam* department store – the largest cooperative department store in the capital and home to Poland's first McDonald's (1969–2014). Other notable demolitions include the *Feniks* department store (1972–2009) and *Uniwersam Grochów*, the first district shopping and service centre in the capital (1977–2016). Several buildings were destroyed despite objections from specialists. These included the *Supersam* in Warsaw, Poland's first supermarket, noted for its unique arch and cable construction and awarded a distinction at the 1962 São Paulo Biennale (1962–2006); the *Chemia* (1960–2008) and *Emilia* (1969–2016) department stores in Warsaw; the *Barbara* pavilion in Szczecin (1961–2002); and the railway station in Katowice (1972–2011), one of the best examples of brutalist architecture by the renowned 'Tigers'. Countless other buildings underwent unceremonious modernisation: original designs were removed, woodwork replaced, facades covered with Styrofoam, and painted in bright colours, thereby erasing the quality of their composition.

In the early 1990s, the Toruń campus was recognized by the International Society of City and Regional Planners from the Netherlands as the most outstanding work of late modernism in Poland and one of the best in Central

Europe.<sup>31</sup> In 2018, it was included in a list of the 100 most important buildings of the century by the *Architektura-Murator* monthly, celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland's independence. On 20 January 2020, the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Provincial Monument Conservator entered the campus into the register of monuments. A representative of Nicolaus Copernicus University public relations proudly commented:

We are very proud that what has not been appreciated before – the post-war architecture that makes up the campus – has been recognized. [...] This recognition also provides us with opportunities for additional funding for various investments, primarily for renovations aimed at preventing the destruction of this architecture.<sup>32</sup>

It might seem that the era of underestimating the value of postwar architecture has passed, but the spokeswoman's words have diverged significantly from the facts. The entry of the Toruń campus into the register of monuments was not initiated by the Rector's Office but was instead an intervention aimed at halting the ongoing devastation resulting from insensitive renovation activities that disregarded its historical value. For several years, the original window woodwork, an integral part of the facade, had been removed. The original colour scheme, essential to the architectural designs, had been altered. Elegant facade textures made of natural materials were used as large-format advertising surfaces. The modernisation of students' residences eliminated the original facade divisions, which disappeared under a layer of Styrofoam, and altered the functional layout. A similar approach, coupled with a complete transformation of functional divisions, was applied to the canteen building, which was repurposed for the theological faculty after the elimination of state subsidies for student lunches. The renovation of the rector's office building, undertaken after 2000, resulted in the removal of almost all the hall's original decor, replaced by a postmodern aesthetic, featuring a plasterboard ceiling with halogen lighting and wall panels imitating wood. The only remnants of the original design are the marble and mosaic, now distorted by coloured spotlighting.<sup>33</sup>

The apogee of these activities occurred in 2013–2014, during a large-scale renovation of the auditorium. Following extensive works, the hall and foyer were dramatically transformed, with no element of the original decoration or furnishings surviving except for the marble.<sup>34</sup> The auditorium, designed by Prof. Lech Kłosiewicz, also suffered significant alterations: all original components were removed and replaced with contemporary materials and furnishings, including a ceiling made of sound-absorbing boards with integrated LED lighting

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31 Czarnecki: *Pierwsze w Polsce*, p. 25.

32 Prętkowska: *Kampus UMK*.

33 More on the subject: Ziółkowska: *W poszukiwaniu nowoczesności*.

34 See fig. 10.

and new chairs.<sup>35</sup> Paradoxically, the interior of the auditorium was destroyed for the same reasons it was built, as the renovation was part of the *Copernicus 550* programme, which envisaged the campus's renovation by 2023, in connection with the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the astronomer's birth.<sup>36</sup> To make matters worse, a portrait of Copernicus by Stefan Knapp, the author of the *panneau* on the auditorium's facade, was stolen during the renovation. The portrait's absence was not noticed until a year later, and the theft was reported to law enforcement authorities only after another year. Consequently, the perpetrators were never identified, and the artwork could not be recovered.<sup>37</sup>

The university authorities were aware of the campus's importance and architectural value, as a group of Toruń social activists protested during the renovation of the auditorium.<sup>38</sup> In response, the auditorium manager explained that the materials used in the auditorium's construction "were no longer practical or fashionable, which necessitated their replacement".<sup>39</sup> These words can be considered a diagnosis of the problem: post-war architecture is not seen as art and part of cultural heritage. It is difficult to imagine advocating for the liquidation of the interiors of a baroque palace in favour of modern solutions due to the impracticality or 'unfashionability' of the original decor. These interiors, despite not being fashionable for over 200 years, are valued precisely because they represent the aesthetics of past eras and thus hold historic value.

Perceiving artistic value in postwar architecture is neither an easy nor an obvious matter. It requires a certain level of preparation and sensitivity, so the average observer typically does not recognize postwar modernism as an artistic creation. This problem is well illustrated by an anecdote about a Picasso exhibition, where the artist was approached with the following comment:

Sorry, maestro, but I completely do not understand these works of yours.

Picasso replied: And do you understand the Chinese language?

The answer was: Well, no, I don't. You see – said the artist – art is like the Chinese language. You must learn it to understand it.

Furthermore, the positive reception of postwar architecture is hindered by the well-known fact that modernism 'ages poorly'. Deprived of ongoing care, it soon begins to appear as a facility that is worthless and defaces its surroundings. These aspects were highlighted by sociologist Stella Grotowska, who examined per-

35 See fig. 11.

36 *Wizytówka do remontu*, p. 15.

37 Oberlan: *Kto ukradł portret Kopernika?*

38 The initiators of the public debate on protecting the auditorium were Marta Kołacz and Cezary Lisowski, founders of the Tormiar group, which was active at the time at the Centre of Contemporary Art in Toruń.

39 *W Auli UMK rewolucji nie będzie*.

ceptions of socialist modernist architecture in the context of the press debate surrounding the demolition of Katowice train station.<sup>40</sup> The results of the survey revealed a significant difference between the views of professionals and city residents. While experts advocating for the preservation and protection of the station focused on its unique form and design, emphasizing its importance to art history, residents primarily pointed to non-architectural issues: poor management, a poor state of preservation, and negative associations, including the presence of homeless people.

The lack of recognition for the artistic value of postwar architecture is exemplified by the demolition of several notable structures in Warsaw, while their sculptural details were preserved. For instance, during the demolition of Warsaw's *Praha* cinema, elements of the sculptural design by Stanisław Sikora were saved. Similarly, columns with mosaics from the *Skarpa* cinema were relocated to a hospice in Ursynów, and two lions by Józef Trenarowski from the *Moskwa* cinema now stand in front of an office building that replaced the cinema. Additionally, postwar architecture is often not regarded as a historic monument. This is evidenced by the fate of Kraków's *Forum Hotel*, built between 1978 and 1988, which was one of the most modern hotel buildings of its time with a very intriguing design. Closed in 2002 due to alleged structural defects (unconfirmed by a 2007 expert report), it has been deteriorating because current building regulations prevent its use as a hotel. The floor height varies between 2.20 and 2.42 meters, while regulations require hotel rooms to be at least 2.70 meters high. If the building were declared a historic monument, exceptions to these regulations would be possible, as has been done with historic townhouses adapted for hotel use.

Nevertheless, awareness of the value of postwar architecture is gradually increasing, albeit slowly. In 2003, the Warsaw branch of the Association of Polish Architects compiled a list of postwar architecture deserving protection.<sup>41</sup> Other cities, including Kraków<sup>42</sup> and Poznań,<sup>43</sup> have followed suit. Texts on the subject have also been published by ICOMOS.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, postwar architecture has become the subject of historical-architectural inquiries, such as those undertaken since 2007 at the cyclical conference *Modernism in Europe – Modernism in Gdynia*. Initially focused on prewar modernism, the conference expanded its scope to include postwar heritage after 2014.<sup>45</sup>

40 Grotowska: *Czy architektura czasów PRL ma znaczenie?*, pp. 33–44.

41 *Mapa obiektów*.

42 Rozenau-Rybowicz et al.: *Atlas dóbr kultury*.

43 Grzeszczuk-Brendel et al.: *Prolegomena*.

44 Szymgin et al. (eds.): *Modern Heritage*.

45 Sołtysik et al. (eds.): *Architektura do lat sześćdziesiątych*; Eadem et al. (eds.): *Architektura XX wieku i jej waloryzacja*; Eadem et al. (eds.): *Architektura XX wieku, jej ochrona*; Eadem et al.

The increasing scientific interest in postwar modernism has positively impacted its preservation. The number of postwar buildings on the historic register is steadily increasing, although their representation remains marginal compared to other historic buildings. Currently, several dozen structures are registered out of approximately 78,000 recognized historic sites. Notable examples include the *Cepelia* pavilion in Warsaw, the *Warszawa Centralna* and *Warszawa Ochota* railway stations, the department store in Mława, the exhibition hall in Chorzów, the *Cracovia Hotel* in Kraków, and the *Mezonetowiec* in Wrocław.

In recent years, more buildings have undergone appropriate renovation. These include Poznań's *Okrągłak*, Gdańsk's *Hala Olivia*, Wrocław's *Sedesowce*, and Katowice's *Superjednostka*. The successful revitalizations of the *Warszawa Powiśle* and the *Warszawa Centralna* train station pavilions, which preserved original elements like woodwork and neon signs, have been well-received by residents. These examples demonstrate that maintaining modernist buildings in good condition enhances their perception, allowing the public to recognize and appreciate the qualities of postwar modernism.

The attitude of the Nicolaus Copernicus University authorities toward the campus has also evolved. The adaptation of the student clinic for the Institute of Psychology, completed in 2021, was carried out with respect for the original structure.<sup>46</sup> In 2023, in connection with the celebration of the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth, Stefan Knapp's *panneau* on the facade of the NCU auditorium underwent conservation work. The author of this text had appealed for this renovation a few months earlier.<sup>47</sup> After several months of meticulous work, the refreshed composition was reinstated on the auditorium's facade.

What about memory? The problems discussed are related to a paradoxical situation from the standpoint of memory studies: it is precisely memory that makes it difficult to objectively assess the value of post-war architecture. The burden of memory – recollections of the political, economic, and social pathologies of the 'bygone era', often tied to personal experiences – fosters a negative perception of the architectural legacy of that period. Conversely, oblivion promotes a more impartial and detached perception.

This latter perspective is characteristic of a generation of researchers who grew up after 1989. Scholars such as Michał Wiśniewski (born 1976),<sup>48</sup> Anna Cymer (born 1978),<sup>49</sup> Grzegorz Piątek (born 1980),<sup>50</sup> Filip Springer (born 1982)<sup>51</sup> and

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(eds.): *Architektura XX wieku: jej badania*; Eadem et al. (eds.): *Architektura XX wieku: zachowanie*; Eadem et al. (eds.): *Architektura przemysłowa*.

46 Lewicka et al.: *Ciągłość i zmiana*, pp. 95–115.

47 Pszczółkowski: *Panneau*, p. 155.

48 Wiśniewski: *Budowanie świata*.

49 Cymer: *Architektura w Polsce*.

50 Piątek (ed.): *AR/PS: architektura*.

Błażej Ciarkowski (born 1982),<sup>52</sup> possess the temporal distance necessary to shed an objectified light on the history of Polish post-war architecture and to highlight its previously overlooked values. On the other hand, researchers such as Adam Miłobędzki (1924–2003) and Andrzej Basista (1932–2017), although undoubtedly important pioneers in the study of post-war architecture,<sup>53</sup> often evaluated it critically, recognizing positive values only in selected individual designs. The younger generation of researchers undertakes more frequent activities in the field of popularization, generating mass-media interest and social Internet activity, thus providing valuable content. The result of these activities is a growing public awareness. As Grzegorz Piątek aptly noted, “writing about a building does not yet protect it from demolition, but when you name it, say who built it and when, and who lived in it, then it stops being just another block in the city – it takes on a life of its own, and is harder to kill”.<sup>54</sup>

Interest in post-war architecture is particularly evident among the younger generation, which has no memory of the People’s Republic of Poland and treats it as a closed historical era in the full sense of the word. The high-profile demolitions and the media storms that ensued have certainly contributed to this interest. Perhaps the loss of buildings such as *Supersam* and Katowice train station was the price that had to be paid for the survival of other valuable structures.

To conclude, let me address the concept of memory from a different perspective: in 2001, a bust of Prof. Ludwik Kolankowski, the organizer and first rector of Nicolaus Copernicus University, was unveiled in the Main Forum of the campus. This significant figure undeniably deserves commemoration. However, his monumental presence might be more fitting against the backdrop of the downtown Collegium Maius, where he worked and laid the foundations of the university. The Main Forum would be more appropriate as a backdrop for monuments to three other key figures. Although the campus realization likely hinged on the Copernican celebrations, the true catalyst was the personal determination of the university’s authorities. Securing funds for such a significant investment required actions beyond official channels, especially within the socialist context. University employees’ recollections particularly emphasize the efforts of Rector Witold Łukaszewicz in advocating for and overseeing the campus construction<sup>55</sup> and its subsequent completion and equipping.<sup>56</sup> The behind-the-scenes efforts of the campus’s chief designer, Karłowicz, and the deputy of the university’s administrative director, Marian Kaczmarek, a former ministry

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51 Springer: *Żle urodzone*; Idem: *Zaczyn*.

52 Ciarkowski: *Odcienie szarości*; Idem: *Miastoprojektanci*; Idem: *Słowo architekta*.

53 Miłobędzki: *Architektura ziem Polski*; Basista: *Betonowe dziedzictwo*.

54 Sańczuk: *Uchronić modernizm*.

55 Kaczmarek: *Geneza powstania*, p. 166; Kalembka: *Witold Łukaszewicz*, p. 204.

56 Bełkot: *Uniwersytet*, p. 61.

employee, were also crucial.<sup>57</sup> Due to the deep commitment and personal qualities of these individuals, the Toruń campus project was approved and realized. Unfortunately, their contributions are largely forgotten today.

[Translated by Tomasz Leszczuk]

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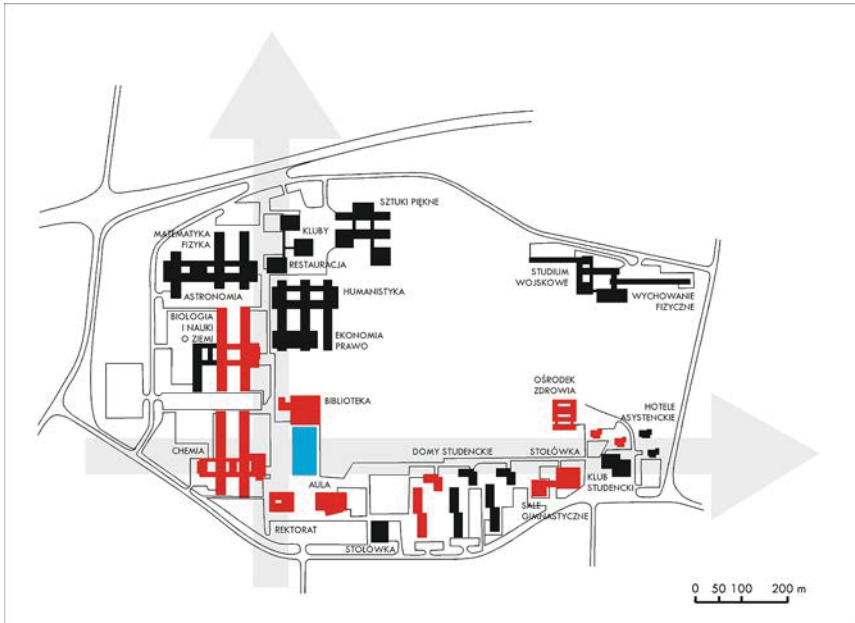


Fig. 1. Nicolaus Copernicus University campus – spatial assumption according to the 1967 concept (red colour indicates buildings completed in the first stage). Drawing: Michał Pszczółkowski.



Fig. 2. Faculty of Chemistry, designed by Andrzej Jaworski. Photo: Michał Pszczółkowski.



Fig. 3. Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences, designed by Bogdan Popławski. Photo: Michał Pszczółkowski.



Fig. 4. Central complex, designed by Ryszard Karłowicz, Witold Benedek, Marek Różański. Photo: Michał Pszczółkowski.



Fig. 5. View of the rector's office building from the parking lot, designed by Marek Różański.  
Photo: Michał Pszczółkowski.

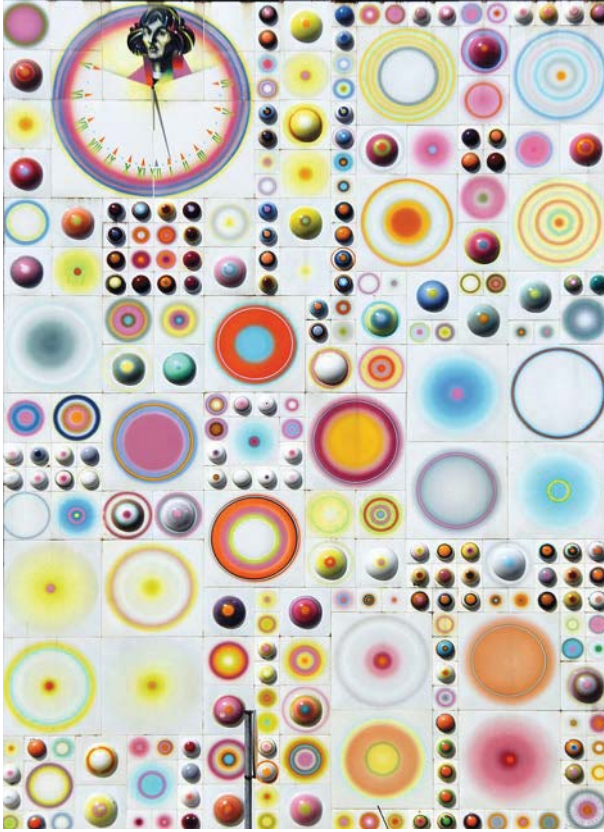


Fig. 6. *Panneau* on the facade of the auditorium, designed by Stefan Knapp. Photo: Michał Pszczółkowski.



Fig. 7. *De revolutionibus* monument, designed by Witold Marciniak – the University Library in the background, designed by Witold Benedek. Photo: Michał Pszczółkowski.



Fig. 8. The Main Forum. Photo: Michał Pszczółkowski.



Fig. 9. Virginia University in Charlottesville, designed by Thomas Jefferson (1817). Source: Rückbrod, Konrad: *Universität und Kollegium. Baugeschichte und Bautyp.* 1977, p. 92.



Fig. 10a–c. Foyer of the Auditorium, photo from: a) 1973, b) 2013, c) 2015. Photo a) by Julita Świtalska, from the collection of the Nicolaus Copernicus University Archives, b) by Michał Pszczółkowski, c) by Emilia Ziółkowska.

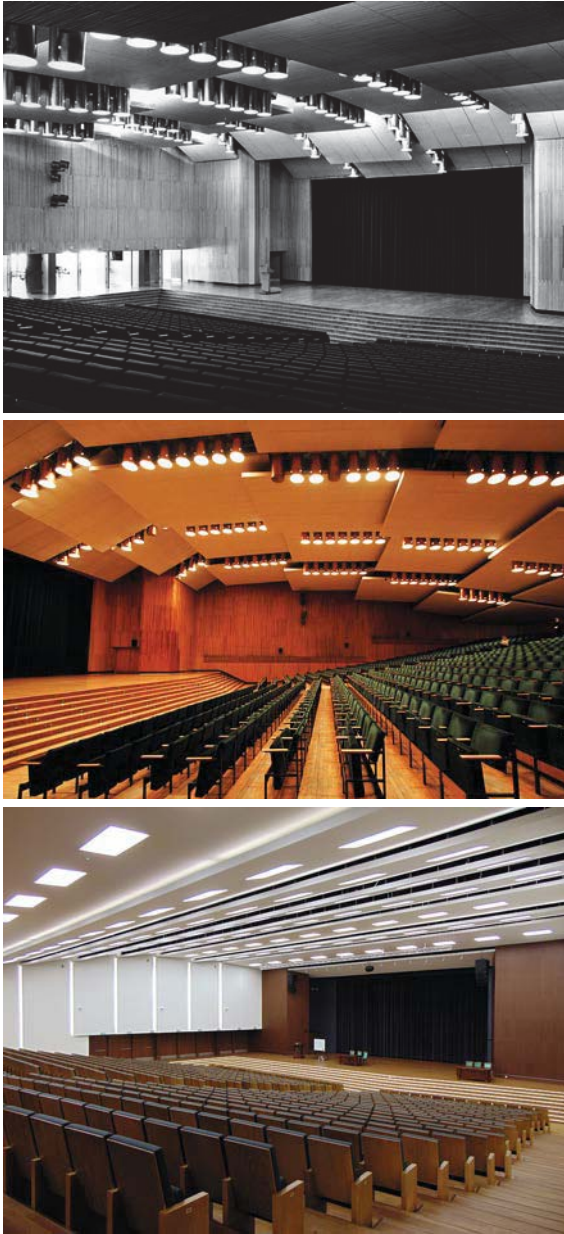


Fig. 11a–c. Interior of the Auditorium, photo from: a) 1973, b) 2013, c) 2015; Photo: a) by Julita Świtalska, from the collection of the Nicolaus Copernicus University Archives, b) by Michał Pszczółkowski, c) by Emilia Ziółkowska.

## Nicolaus Copernicus in Public and Official Memory on the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Birth: Inhomogeneity and Variability

### Abstract

This article addresses the question of the inhomogeneity and variability of the public and official memory of Nicolaus Copernicus during the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. In examining official and public memory, I investigate action undertaken by the state that uses the press to model collective memory and exercise control over it in order to execute ideological and political tasks.

Keywords: Nicolaus Copernicus; public and official memory; 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of birth of Nicolaus Copernicus

This article deals with the public and official memory of Nicolaus Copernicus on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, focusing on its inhomogeneity and variability, and based on the press as carriers of memory.<sup>1</sup> I investigate action undertaken by the state that uses the press to model collective memory and exercise control over it in order to execute ideological and political tasks connected with legitimising power and related to social order.<sup>2</sup> The article is based on a collection of press articles kept in the District Museum in Toruń – Nicolaus Copernicus’s House. The museum houses approximately 25 running metres of press material regarding the celebration of Copernicus’s 500<sup>th</sup> birthday. To illustrate the findings gleaned from analysing this material, I quote fragments of articles from the national and regional press, weeklies, dailies, including evening newspapers, and monthly magazines. These are informative and socio-cultural publications aimed

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1 Carriers of memory are a concept specific to Polish humanities. In other languages, this term only exists somewhere in the margins. “Carriers of memory are [...] all objects and activities that can stimulate – both currently and potentially – any memory of [...] the past, important or not. From the point of view of how carriers of memory function in culture, it is important to distinguish two types: intentional and involuntary. This division is accompanied by a distinction between media according to their form: material and immaterial” [translations of all quotes in this article by Steve Jones]; Szpociński: *Nośnik pamięci*, p. 278.

2 Malczewska-Pawelec et al.: *Rewolucja w pamięci*, p. 18.

at the general public as well as some specific social groups such as farmers and the military. These periodicals were published by the Polish United Workers' Party as well as its satellite parties and licensed social organisations.

In 1966, the Honorary Committee for the Celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Nicolaus Copernicus was established, headed by some leading figures from the communist authorities: Marian Spychalski, Zenon Kliszko and Józef Cyrankiewicz. The jubilee was co-organised by provincial and town councils, committees of the National Unity Front and the following ministries: Construction and Building Materials Industry, Communications, Education and Higher Education, and Foreign Affairs. A Government Plenipotentiary for Investments was appointed in connection with the celebrations. Key decisions regarding the Year of Copernicus were made by the National Committee of the National Unity Front. The Chairman of the Council of States and the National Committee of the Front of National Unity, Edward Ochab, formed the Preparatory Committee in July 1967.<sup>3</sup> In the following years, various initiatives were run as part of the celebrations, culminating in 1973.<sup>4</sup>

Public and official memory encompasses two of the three domains of collective memory. Having evaluated the concepts and approaches explored during research on collective memory, I chose one that can be divided to establish the distinction between official and unofficial forms of commemoration as the main criterion.<sup>5</sup> Public memory means “various forms of public recollection of past events, available and disseminated by the mass media, such as television programs, films, newspapers, books, etc. Here, the scope of memory is the key factor”.<sup>6</sup> Official memory is “institutionalised manifestations of hegemonic, public memory narratives. The typical media of official memory include museums, monuments, commemoration ceremonies and speeches delivered by government representatives. Here, memory narratives are chosen arbitrarily to help achieve specific political goals”.<sup>7</sup>

3 Chmielak et al.: *Rok Kopernika*, pp. 107–108.

4 In March 1967, the government adopted a resolution on the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus, which defined in detail the scope and nature of the jubilee. Gross et al.: *Obchody pięćsetnej rocznicy*, pp. 29.

5 Astrid Erll correctly notes a two-fold division of memory as conceived in contemporary thinking. It is undoubtedly the result of researchers emphasising various issues related to the study of collective memory. She writes that these divisions arise from a need “to distinguish references to events from the era in which a given person lives from references to a more distant era; to distinguish between the unofficial and the official, between modifiable and negotiable everyday memory and tradition laden with specific meaning; between oral forms of remembrance and one that relies on other, more sophisticated media techniques”. Erll: *Kultura pamięci*, p. 56.

6 Breuer et al.: *Jak jest zrobiona pamięć?*, p. 28.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 28–29.

These two domains of collective memory are combined in the titular *public and official memory* because, on the one hand, the article deals with public recollections of the past – in this case, in the press – and on the other hand, the press as a medium of memory at that time was completely dependent on the state. Consequently, when investigating public and official memory during the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus’s birth, I deal with action undertaken by the state that not only shapes collective memory via the press, but also exercises control over it, motivated by ideology and in order to legitimise its authority and the social order associated with it.

Due to the undemocratic system of the Polish People’s Republic (*Polska Rzeczypospolita Ludowa*), all commemorations presented in the mass media at that time were completely dependent on the state. The essence of the mass media in the Polish People’s Republic, including the press, is aptly illustrated by one party activist: “the press, radio and television must be a tool for dialogue between the authorities and society. But not the other way round”.<sup>8</sup> Then the press was subordinated to the ‘Prasa’ Workers’ Publishing Cooperative (since 1973, the ‘Prasa-Książka-Ruch’ Workers’ Publishing Cooperative) established in 1948 by the Central Committee of the Polish Workers’ Party.<sup>9</sup> Through it, the state directly exercised party leadership over the entire press, encompassing areas such as the political selection of journalistic staff, control of the structure of the press according to the type of publications and control of distribution. An important duty of the Workers’ Publishing Cooperative was also to ensure that party newspapers held a privileged position on the press market.<sup>10</sup> The Central Office for the Control of the Press, Publications and Entertainment supervised the compliance of press content with the political and ideological goals of the authorities. It monitored individual publications and assessed the content according to the current political and ideological goals of the authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Collective memory thus divided has a third domain, not analysed in this article, but nevertheless worthy of mention: vernacular memory. Here, “individuals make use of the ‘material’ given them by public (or official) memory, processing it according to their needs. This process often involves reduction or simplification – elements of memory are narrowed down to fit the experience [...] of the world”.<sup>12</sup> This aspect of memory is largely based on the acquisition

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8 Qtd. after: Domska: *Ograniczenia wolności*, p. 98.

9 In 1973, the ‘Prasa’ Workers’ Publishing Cooperative merged with the ‘Książka i Wiedza’ publisher and the ‘Ruch’ Press and Book Distribution Company.

10 Drygalski et al.: *(Nie) realny socjalizm*, p. 224.

11 Romek et al. (eds.): *Cenzura w PRL*.

12 Breuer et al.: *Jak jest zrobiona pamięć?*, p. 29.

and application of elements of official and public memory so that they become meaningful for individuals.<sup>13</sup>

Researchers studying collective memory emphasise the interconnection of the three areas mentioned above and the purely analytical nature of the division. Importantly, the relationship between them is not unidirectional.<sup>14</sup> However, this article does not trace this mutual relations and influences, focusing instead on public-official memory. This means that when examining public and official memory, this is the recollection postulated about Nicolaus Copernicus – the one that the state wanted to impose on society.<sup>15</sup>

However, one may scarcely suppose that the mass media's communication of the past unilaterally modelled by the state had no impact on content or on how society thought during the times of the Polish People's Republic. When considering to what degree the public and official memory of Copernicus was postulated and the extent of its societal presence, one must take into account not only the fact that the press was subordinated to state authority, but also that in the late 1960s and early 1970s – despite the grand progress of television – the press (dailies and magazines) superseded both television and radio as a source of information that society would accept and rely on.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the press was growing at that time. Between 1963–1974, the number of copies of newspapers and magazines *per capita* grew by approximately 4.1% *per annum*. A clear trend of press expansion occurred in the years 1971–1974. During the 1963–1975 period, 70–110 copies of newspapers or magazines were issued per person.<sup>17</sup>

Since the press, as a carrier of memory, was completely subordinate to the state and was also the dominant and most popular source of information for society, one may assume that the reconstruction of the public and official memory of Nicolaus Copernicus in the period of interest here is not only a reconstruction of the postulated memory, but also also an attempt to reach an important area of the social experience of people living at that time.<sup>18</sup> Another question is how this message was adapted within the framework of vernacular memory. This issue should be addressed by researchers.<sup>19</sup>

13 Ibid. See Napiórkowski et al.: *Kultura wernakularna*, pp. 14–26.

14 Breuer et al.: *Jak jest zrobiona pamięć?*, p. 29.

15 Malczewska-Pawelec et al.: *Rewolucja w pamięci*, pp. 22–23.

16 Nowak et al.: *Zasięg społecznego odbioru*, p. 60.

17 Siwek: *Wielkość i struktura*, pp. 38, 43.

18 Malczewska-Pawelec et al.: *Rewolucja w pamięci*, p. 24.

19 The huge database resource at my disposal included trace information that could be used in research on vernacular memory. In *Dziennik Polski* [*The Polish Journal*], in the *Za rogatkami Krakowa* [*Beyond the Turnpikes of Kraków*] column, the journalist, reporting on Copernicus celebrations in small towns and villages, describes one meeting with people taking part in the events. “My grandson”, one woman tells her, “drew the head of Copernicus from a ten-złoty note as a homework assignment [...] and then pencilled in some horns. ‘Felek,’ I said, ‘are you

While reconstructing the presence of Nicolaus Copernicus in the public and official memory associated with the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, I would like to draw attention primarily to its inhomogeneity and changeability during that era.<sup>20</sup> One may distinguish two public and official memories during these celebrations. The first refers to the celebration of the Millennium of the Polish State and was covered by the press until the end of 1970. The second encompasses the period from 1971 to 1973. When it comes to cultural phenomenon, dates are rarely specified so precisely and this may arouse surprise. In this case, however, it is possible. The shift in the public and official memory of Nicolaus Copernicus in this period is correlated with political changes within the leadership of the Polish People's Republic and the replacement of Gomułka's national communism with Edward Gierek's communism of modernisation.<sup>21</sup>

Before moving on to a presentation of two public and official memories of Copernicus, two more reservations should be made. The analysis focuses on public and official memory from 1971–1973, with only brief mention of the 1966–1970 period in order to illustrate the inhomogeneity and changeability alluded to above.

As previously noted, official preparations for the anniversary began in 1966 with the establishment of the Honorary Committee for the Celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Nicolaus Copernicus. However, Nicolaus Copernicus was also commemorated as part of the celebration of the Millennium of the Polish State.<sup>22</sup> The idea of organising the Copernicus jubilee was conceived as part of these celebrations. Tadeusz Kotarbiński, who was the chairman of the Academic Committee for the Millennium Celebration of the Polish State, was interviewed at the beginning of January 1966 in *Trybuna Ludu* [*The People's Tribune*], the organ of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party:

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crazy?' And he said, 'Don't worry, grandma, I'll just draw the sun around the head and it will be fine.' 'But, how will you explain at school what the horns mean?' [...] 'It's like this [...] The sun means that Copernicus was, and is, a saint, and the horns show that some scholars thought he was the antichrist, because he caused a revolution in astronomy.' Lewicka: *Za rogakami Krakowa*.

20 The sparse literature devoted to the celebration does not focus on this. When reconstructing the meanings given to Copernicus at that time, or its use in propaganda, no distinction between the time of the announcement of the celebrations to their culmination in 1973. See Chmielak et al.: *Rok Kopernika 1953 i 1973*, pp. 105–114; Gross et al.: *Obchody pięćsetnej rocznicy*.

21 Zaremba: *Komunizm*, pp. 263–382; Idem: *Wielkie rozczarowanie*.

22 The 'crucial' points of the celebration of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jagiellonian University included recollection of the most outstanding professors and graduates of the Jagiellonian University. Nicolaus Copernicus was one of the main figures mentioned. Młynarczyk-Tomczyk: *W kręgu polityki*, pp. 471–472.

[...] what we are doing within the scope of the celebrations for the Millennium in terms of Copernicus will undoubtedly have to extend beyond these celebrations, because 1973 will mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of this outstanding astronomer. We shall therefore step up our work [...] We need to start preparing for this now.<sup>23</sup>

A speech given by a representative of the Bydgoszcz local authorities published in *Gazeta Toruńska* [*The Toruń Newspaper*], the organ of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, states:

[...] we reckon that the period of Copernicus celebrations (1966–1973) should be treated as an extension of the celebration of the Millennium of the Polish State, as a period for strengthening the achievements of these celebrations, especially in terms of extracting from Polish history all that is progressive, constructive and that serves the development of Poland [...].<sup>24</sup>

One report on the celebrations announces that the initial decision to organise the central Copernicus celebrations had already been made in 1963.<sup>25</sup>

Few researchers studying the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birthday note its connection with the celebration of the Millennium of the Polish State. Those who do notice this link only mention that the former was organised as part of the latter. They believe that it was conceived as a result of the authorities' efforts to correct mistakes that had arisen from the reactive campaign against the Millennium of the Baptism of Poland organised by the Catholic Church.<sup>26</sup> I believe that the state celebration of Copernicus's birthday was related to the celebration of the Millennium of the Polish State not only because it happened to be included in the general organisational concept, but also due to its commemorative dimension.

During the celebration of the Millennium of the Polish State, one of the most important points, referred to as 'crucial', was the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald, depicted as a conflict affecting the Western Territories.<sup>27</sup> This is perfectly reflected in a statement made while preparations for this anniversary were underway: "today, when more than ever we can be sure of the freedom and Polishness of these lands [Recovered Territories – note by Wojciech Piasek] for which our ancestors fought at Grunwald, the better can we feel the weight of their decisions and the magnificence of their victory".<sup>28</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century concept of *Drang nach Osten* was also recalled, translated as the the 'German push towards

23 *Tysiąclecie Polski – w nauce.*

24 *Byliśmy, jesteśmy.*

25 Chmielak et al.: *Rok Kopernika 1953 i 1973*, p. 107.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 105–108; Gross et al.: *Obchody pięćsetletniej rocznicy*, p. 9.

27 Młynarczyk-Tomczyk: *W kręgu polityki*, pp. 67, 161.

28 Qtd. after: *Ibid.*, p. 161.

the East'.<sup>29</sup> The public and official memory of Copernicus in the first period of the jubilee celebration was, in one aspect, set in the same political and ideological context – proving the historical Polishness of the Recovered Territories.

Between 1966–1970, Copernicus was presented as one of the historical representatives of 'progressive traditions'. Let me remind you that this concept incorporated "selected and defined threads of the national past that were supposed to 'objectively' transport society closer towards the era of socialism. From this point of view, certain eras, events and figures from the history of Poland were positively evaluated, seeking in them predictions of contemporary changes".<sup>30</sup> Copernicus's biography is presented at this time as an example of progressive traditions in the context of the struggle with two eternal enemies. One is the Church, which attacked Copernicus, a scientist, and his groundbreaking work, included in the index of prohibited books. The second enemy, 'even more persistent', was Germany, with which he fought militarily and which had denied, and continued to deny, his Polishness.

The first attack was provoked by the fact that, according to *Gazeta Pomorska* [*The Pomeranian Newspaper*] – an organ of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party – thanks to his work "the tower of the medieval hierarchy collapsed, at the top of which stood God with his Heaven, with Earth and Man below, and on Earth: the Pope, emperors, kings, cardinals, princes, bishops [...]"<sup>31</sup> as well as religious barriers that "prevented human thinking from moving forward".<sup>32</sup> This enemy desisted from attacking Copernicus the scientist and removed this works from the index of banned books in 1828. With the second enemy, the situation was different – defeated by Copernicus in an armed confrontation, yet they would not give up the fight with him by continuing to question his Polish origin. *Dziennik Wieczorny* [*The Evening Journal*], writes about undermining the Polishness of "a learned, heroic defender of the Olsztyn Castle against the German Teutonic Knights [sic!] during the war between Poland and the Teutonic Order, fought in 1520–1521 and ending with the Prussian Homage".<sup>33</sup> In *Kierunki* [*Directions*], the weekly publication of the PAX Association, we read:

For German revisionist historians, the very thought that a brilliant astronomer could have turned out to be... a Slav was unbearable. This contradicts both the words and the spirit of the German slogan *Drang nach Osten*, with all their revisionist intentions towards our Western Lands, including Toruń and Bydgoszcz.<sup>34</sup>

29 Ibid.

30 Stobiecki: *Historiografia PRL*, p. 63.

31 *Kopernik zobowiązuje*.

32 Ibid.

33 *Zamach na Kopernika*.

34 *Copernicus Vereinigung*.

Undermining Copernicus's Polishness is presented as a continuation of the 'German push towards the East' (*Drang nach Osten*), which the Polish scientist opposed militarily. It had taken, and continued to take, the form of an attack on his Polishness and, consequently, the Polishness of the lands with which he was associated and which he defended.

Of the two aspects of Copernicus's biography – a scholar whose work questioned the existing social order dominated by religion with the power of the church standing in the way of any social changes, and a Pole fighting against the 'German Teutonic Knights', "defender of Polishness [...], the piece of land where he was born"<sup>35</sup> and worked – the latter comes to the fore in public and official memory. The former is mentioned marginally. Articles entitled *Attack on Copernicus*, *Thieves of Copernicus* or *Sights aimed at Copernicus* were common.<sup>36</sup> Concluding the reconstruction of the public and official memory of Copernicus in the years 1966–1970, let us recall, that the main events of the anniversary were planned in Toruń, Olsztyn and Frombork, i.e. part of the Recovered Lands officially annexed to Poland after World War II.

From the beginning of 1971, there was a shift in the public and official memory of Nicolaus Copernicus. The issue of nationality is rarely discussed in his biography and if it was mentioned, it was not in the context of the fight against the 'Teutonic Germans' and the eternal Polishness of the lands associated with them. If this theme arises, it is not in the context of him proving his Polishness and the Polishness of the Recovered Territories. During this period, academic work on Copernicus prevailed, understood differently than in previous years. Moreover, his administrative work was highlighted and treated as the result of his civic attitude and involvement in the life of the nation. Copernicus's biography was presented from the perspective of his scientific and civic action.

As mentioned previously, Copernicus's scientific work was of key importance in public and official memory at this time. His findings in the field of astronomy were emphasised to have marked the beginning of modern science. In *Chłopska Droga* [*The Peasant Way*], the journal of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party addressed to rural Poland, we read: "The great astronomer unwaveringly believed in the boundless possibilities of the human mind. He claimed that it is through reason that man can learn about the universe. However, the basis for such knowledge must be scientific experiments and observations".<sup>37</sup> Another article in *Dziennik Rzeszowski* [*Journal of Rzeszów*], the organ of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, states:

35 *Kopernik zobowiązuje.*

36 *Zamach na Kopernika; Złodzieje Kopernika; Mierzą w Kopernika.* See also: Staniek: *Wschodnie aspiracje; Niedyskrecje; Omyłka.*

37 Tumanowicz: *Przed wielką rocznicą.*

It is not only a question of [...] recalling that he ‘stopped the Sun and moved the Earth’, but the deeper meaning of this term. [...] Astronomy is only one aspect of Copernicus’s vast role. [...] By making a breakthrough in this one area, he paved [...] the way for scientists in other fields. He revolutionised the way of thinking.<sup>38</sup>

The same article continues: “Copernicus [...] paved the way for modern science and a scientific view of the world [...]. He initiated [...] modern scientific research [...]”.<sup>39</sup>

In presenting the biography of Copernicus as a scientist, an analogy is made between his era and the present day and the contemporary époque is noted to be as groundbreaking as the times of the Renaissance in which he lived. It is mentioned that the era of scientific and technological revolution had now arrived, and that science would impact social life and culture stronger than ever before.<sup>40</sup> “Copernicus’s thinking,” states one article in the daily *Gazeta Olsztyńska* [*The Olsztyn Newspaper*], an organ of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party, “at the same time informed people of the role of science, whose influence on all areas of life is a characteristic feature of modern civilisation. The Copernican Revolution laid the foundations for the development of this very civilisation”.<sup>41</sup>

In presenting Copernicus as the creator of modern science, the *Żołnierz Wolności* [*Soldier of Freedom*] daily – newspaper of the People’s Army of Poland – emphasised, in the context of the jubilee, that for the contemporary Pole, science should be, “an asset and a great opportunity to accelerate the pace of the country’s development [...] to keep pace with other states and nations”.<sup>42</sup> “The point,” the article goes on to say, “is to understand the role of science and technology in contemporary life and in [...] efforts to realise the vision of a new Poland”.<sup>43</sup>

It is worth noting that in November 1972 the authorities decided to organise the Second Congress of Polish Science in the year of Copernicus’ 500<sup>th</sup> birthday, during which the memory of Copernicus as a scientist was recalled in a similar manner and for the same purpose as during the 1971–1973 celebrations. In the previously quoted organ of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party, *Trybuna Ludu* we read:

[...] this year, several anniversaries of momentous events coincide. First of all, the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the greatest intellect and the most famous son of Poland

38 *Rewolucjonista nauki*.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*

41 *Mikołaj Kopernik – patriota*.

42 *Mikołaj Kopernik – tradycja*.

43 *Ibid.*

– Nicolaus Copernicus. His discoveries were of great scientific importance [...] and have gone on to become the foundation of modern research.<sup>44</sup>

In the *Za i Przeciw* [*For and Against*] weekly – a magazine published by the Christian Social Association, approved by the authorities of the Polish People's Republic, uniting Christians of various denominations – announces: “In its territory [during modern times – note by Wojciech Piasek] a battle rages for tomorrow, in which science is an indispensable weapon. Great tradition obliges. The needs of the scientific and technological revolution are urgent. [...] Science [...] corrects, supports, [...] in many cases resolves”.<sup>45</sup>

I indicated above that the topic of Copernicus's nationality was marginalised in public and official memory after 1970. Nevertheless, let us devote some space to it, because at this time it is closely associated with Copernicus as a scientist. At the same time, it loses its national and ethnic character. It is emphasised that Copernicus, due to his scientific discoveries, was not only a Pole, but also a great European and an important figure for nations around the world. He became a common good of world culture. *Trybuna Ludu* writes that

Copernicus as a person and in terms of his work [...] has universal significance, representing outstanding achievements in this sphere of Polish culture, which has remained free from parochialism and remains open to universal values. Copernicus is the property of our nation, our culture, but he is also the property of all humanity. [...] Even then, centuries ago, Copernicus was a citizen of our homeland and at the same time a great European, a Renaissance man in full bloom.<sup>46</sup>

The theme of nationality associated with Copernicus as a scientist is also woven into the dilemma of the Polish romantic tradition and armed action. As we are informed by one article in *Tygodnik Demokratyczny* [*The Democratic Weekly*], a satellite organ of the Democratic Party of the Polish United Workers' Party: “German chauvinists [sic!] trying to annex Copernicus wanted to prove that our cultural circle is incapable of producing Copernicus”.<sup>47</sup> To quote a long passage from this article:

Without questioning the historical significance of our armed campaign ‘for our freedom and yours’, we should realise today that the ‘Nation of Freedom Martyrs’ has a slightly different meaning than the term ‘Nation of Copernicus’. Western nations ea-

44 Siedlecki: *Nauka – Ojczyzna*.

45 Tkaczuk: *Wiedzieć więcej*.

46 *Mikołaj Kopernik – syn polskiego odrodzenia*. The state authorities managed to give the ceremony an international character. Polish representatives in UNESCO and other international organisations were advised to use their official speeches and unofficial contacts to mention the upcoming anniversary and the need to focus its main celebrations in Poland. UNESCO declared 1973 the year of Copernicus. Gross et al.: *Obchody pięćsetnej rocznicy*, pp. 29–30.

47 Lenkiewicz: *Nawet ich sądem*.

gerly saw us as a ‘bulwark’ and were willing to accept the model of Polish cultural development perpetuated by the Romantic tradition. This tradition does not undermine their self-righteous opinion of their superiority, that they are unquestionably in the lead in terms of scientific and cultural development in general. Copernicus is, of course, not the only representative of our [...] scientific achievements, but he most perfectly defines the possibilities and prospects for the development of our nation – this is the most convincing example of success and the model of a Pole who rejected the ‘division of labor’ according to the principle: we in the West will develop science, philosophy, industry, and you Poles will feed and defended against the East.<sup>48</sup>

Let us now move on to the second aspect of public and official memory, in the years 1971–1973, of Copernicus as a citizen. The *Za wolność i Lud* [*For Freedom and the People*] weekly – an organ of the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy – states: “For us, Nicolaus Copernicus is not only a model scientist, but also a citizen profoundly sensitive to the fate of the state, and especially Royal Prussia -- the district where he worked for most of his life”.<sup>49</sup> The monthly *Nowe Drogi* [*New Ways*], the theoretical and political organ of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party, emphasised that “with Copernicus there is no division between ‘pure’ science and action, between civic work [...] and research at the astronomical observatory”.<sup>50</sup> The daily *Trybuna Robotnicza* [*The Workers’ Tribune*], the organ of the National Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party, wrote an article about Copernicus, enumerating his merits as a scientist, then highlighting that

[...] at the same time, while delving into the secrets of the universe, making complex calculations, he did not neglect his duties, but served his homeland [...]. He stood in the ranks of those who defended it against the Teutonic Knights [...]. His civic involvement is evidenced by a letter to King Sigismund I, in which he asks for help in safeguarding it from the Teutonic Knights.<sup>51</sup>

Copernicus’s non-scientific activities, including the aforementioned defence of Olsztyn, which had previously been included in the context of the fight against

48 Ibid. It was similar during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Polish Science. Here, too, achievements in the field of science were emphasised in comparison with ‘military action’. In *Nurt* [*The Current*] – a monthly socio-political magazine – we read: “In the period when the role of science was becoming increasingly important in social development, the progressive layers of the nation were almost completely absorbed by the dilemma of regaining independence. It was much easier to enter the national consciousness [...] through the glory of war struggles than a scientists laurels. [...] The Year of Polish Science may help fairly recognise Polish scientists [...] for their great contribution to the universal achievements of science and the role of science in the history of our nation”; *Z problemów Roku Nauki Polskiej*.

49 Centkowski: *W obronie Warmii*.

50 Groszkowski: *Refleksje nad jubileuszem*.

51 *Syn polskiego odrodzenia*.

the ‘Teutonic Germans’, now appear as one of the links in the chain of Copernicus’ civic work. To quote *Gazeta Olsztyńska*:

We should remember that he served the country not only through science and not only by fighting. All of Copernicus’s earlier and later civic activities prove that he involved himself in public affairs not only when his homeland was in danger. In this context, the heroic episode of his life is like a natural consequence of the attitude of a man who defends himself in a moment of danger and then, when peace comes, works for the country.<sup>52</sup>

The daily *Głos Robotniczy* [*Worker’s Voice*], the organ of the Polish United Workers’ Party, underlines that Copernicus performed various civic duties (for which he was not paid) and, in addition to defending Olsztyn and Warmia, he is estimated to have been “entrusted with the office of inspector eleven times, and the office of chancellor seven times. [...] he was the administrator of the common goods of the chapter in the districts of Olsztyn and Pieniężno [...]. [...] He was characterised by integrity and selflessness in his performance of civic duties”.<sup>53</sup>

The public and official memory of Nicolaus Copernicus during the celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth between 1966–1973 is not homogeneous and does vary. Two forms may be distinguished. In the first period until the end of the 1970s, Copernicus was presented as an example of progressive traditions struggling with two eternal enemies. One is the Church, which attacked Copernicus, the scientist, because his work questioned the existing social order dominated by religion and the power of the church that stood in the way of any social changes. The second enemy was Germany, against which he had fought militarily, and which undermined his Polishness. This attack arose from the ‘German push towards the east’. Undermining the Polishness of Copernicus was tantamount to undermining the Polishness of the lands with which Copernicus was associated and which he defended (the Recovered Territories). Of these two aspects of public and official memory, the main one is the aspect of the Pole who fought the ‘German Teutonic Knights’.

In the second period, from 1971 to 1973, Copernicus’s work as a scientist came to the fore in public and official memory, understood differently than in previous years. Copernicus is presented as one who paved the way for modern science and the scientific view of the world, initiated modern scientific research and informed people of the role of science in social life. Moreover, his administrative work is strongly emphasised and treated as the result of his civic attitude and involvement in the life of the nation. The question of Copernicus’s nationality, dominant in the previous period, fades into the background and lies beyond the ethnic context – the dispute over which nation he belonged to. This is associated with

52 *Mikołaj Kopernik.*

53 Wegner: *Pasja naukowa.*

Copernicus as a scientist who, due to his scientific discoveries, as a Pole, is also a great European, an important figure for the nations of the world as a whole. Moreover, the issue of Copernicus's nationality is intertwined with the dilemma of the Polish romantic tradition and armed campaigns. This tradition is presented as benefiting the 'Western countries', which wish Poland to be perceived as the 'Nation of Freedom Martyrs' and not a 'Nation of Copernicuses' developing culture.

[Translated by Steve Jones]

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Adam F. Kola

## **Copernicus Glocalised: Remembering the 1973 Anniversary Celebrations**

### **Abstract**

This paper examines the commemoration of Nicolaus Copernicus during the 1973 anniversary celebrations (with a digression into those of 1953) in Poland and beyond. While focusing on select examples, the study illustrates how these local commemorations, propelled by the involvement of the scientific community and the propaganda efforts of the communist state, resonated globally. Situated at the intersection of memory studies, particularly anniversaries and commemorations, and the history of knowledge, the paper applies a memory studies perspective to explore Copernican thought and the evolving historical narratives surrounding Copernicus.

Keywords: Nicolaus Copernicus; 1973 anniversary celebrations; memory studies; history of knowledge; commemoration; anniversaries; propaganda

### **Introduction: The Anniversary Celebrations of 1973**

The title of this chapter combines two significant elements: the 1973 anniversary celebrations and the concept of memory – specifically, the remembrance of Nicolaus Copernicus and the events surrounding these commemorations. These aspects warrant detailed exploration as they provide a unique lens to understand Copernicus and his enduring legacy.

The narrative presented here aligns with memory studies, a dynamic academic sub-discipline that examines collective memory within communities rather than individual recollections. This focus on social or cultural memory intersects intriguingly with the history of knowledge, which encompasses a broad spectrum of human understanding beyond traditional academic histories, including humanities, popular, non-professional, and indigenous knowledge.

Integrating these perspectives – memory studies and the history of knowledge – offers a comprehensive approach to understanding the memory of significant

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figures in scientific history like Copernicus. This paper explores the intellectual legacy of Copernican thought, analysing how subsequent generations have engaged with his work, what aspects are remembered or forgotten, and how they are interpreted across different historical contexts.

The focal point is the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus' birth, a landmark event in post-war communist Poland's commemorative landscape. The extensive organisation and preparation of these celebrations underscored their political importance to the Communist Party. Simultaneously, these events were designed to resonate globally. Polish diplomatic units worldwide orchestrated events, while grassroots initiatives provided local depth.

This text illustrates the interplay between local, national, and global dynamics surrounding the Copernicus anniversary celebrations. Scientists participated, driven by a universal quest for truth and recognition of Copernicus' scientific impact, while political dimensions sought to mobilise communities towards specific goals, symbolically and practically.

In this context, Toruń's local celebration of Copernicus' 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary – a medium-sized university town in northern Poland – illustrates the concept of 'glocal'. Drawing from Zygmunt Bauman's glocalisation theory,<sup>1</sup> this term highlights how global phenomena like Copernicus' legacy manifest locally in diverse and sometimes divergent ways. These differences stem from local specifics, cultural contexts, languages, and the people involved, encapsulating the intricate interaction between global recognition and local identity formation.

## Social Memory: Copernicus in Ecuador

Maurice Halbwachs, a seminal figure in the field of memory studies, introduced the concept that memory is not merely an individual phenomenon but is deeply embedded within social contexts. In his influential work *The Social Frameworks of Memory*, Halbwachs argued that while individual memory is rooted in personal experiences and recollections, social memory is constructed collectively by groups such as nations, religious communities, and social classes.<sup>2</sup> This collective memory is not a simple aggregation of individual memories but is shaped by the group's social structures, interactions, and cultural norms.

Halbwachs posited that social memory is maintained and transmitted through social frameworks, which include the rituals, traditions, and symbols shared by a community. These provide a structure within which individuals recall their past, ensuring that personal memories are aligned with the collective narrative. This

1 Bauman: *On Glocalization*; Idem: *Globalization*.

2 See Halbwachs: *On Collective Memory*.

alignment is crucial as it helps to maintain a cohesive group identity and fosters a sense of belonging among its members.

Each community carries its distinct memory baggage, influenced by its unique historical experiences, educational systems, and value orientations. These collective memories are not static but evolve over time, reflecting changes in the group's social, political, and cultural contexts. How a community remembers the past can serve various functions, from reinforcing group solidarity to legitimising current social structures and power relations.

In the case of Nicolaus Copernicus, the collective memory of his life and work has been shaped by different communities' historical and cultural contexts, leading to divergent interpretations of his identity. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, debates over Copernicus' ethnicity reflected broader nationalistic sentiments and political agendas. Polish and German communities each claimed Copernicus as their own, emphasising aspects of his biography that supported their national narratives. This debate illustrates how collective memory is about preserving the past and shaping it to serve present needs and aspirations.

Halbwachs' concept underscores that memory is a social construct influenced by the collective frameworks within which individuals are embedded. It challenges the notion of memory as a purely personal, internal process, highlighting its dynamic and communal nature instead. By examining how different groups remember Copernicus, we can see how social memory operates, revealing the interplay between individual recollection and collective identity and how historical figures are continually reinterpreted to align with contemporary values and objectives.

This seemingly local issue of nationality can have far-reaching implications. For instance, during the 1973 anniversary celebrations of Copernicus, a diplomatic incident arose in Ecuador. Jan Janiszewski from the Polish embassy in Quito disputed with Dr. Ricardo Descalezi, asserting that Copernicus was born in Polish Toruń, not German Thorn, and worked in Frombork, not Frauenburg.<sup>3</sup> This passionate defence by the Polish diplomat reflects the national sentiments in Poland. It highlights the broader goal of unequivocally Polonising Copernicus globally, even in distant South America.

However, the perception of such actions varies based on context and the agency of the socialist state. In Ecuador, journalist Joaquin Bravo noted the extensive efforts by Poland to commemorate Copernicus' birth anniversary, stating, "Poland, as his country of origin, spares no effort to raise the importance of Copernicus' birth anniversary, involving all its official propaganda machine".<sup>4</sup> Bravo's observation underscores the propaganda element in Poland's activities

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3 Muzeum Okręgowe w Toruniu: Dział Dom Mikołaja Kopernika: Janiszewski [Letter].

4 Bravo: *Cinco siglos* [all quotes in the article translated by the Author].

while recognising Copernicus' universal contributions to human knowledge.<sup>5</sup> The focus on Copernicus' revolutionary impact on science often overshadowed discussions of his national identity.

From Halbwachs' perspective on social frameworks of memory, it is clear that different communities interpret Copernicus' identity through varied lenses. In Toruń, he is celebrated as a local resident, as inscribed on his monument near the Old Town Hall. Academic communities in Kraków, Bologna, and Padua regard him as an esteemed alumnus. Warmia, a region in northeastern Poland, emphasises his professional connections to the area. Copernicus is a global thinker for Ecuador, Afghanistan, and Ethiopia whose work transcended national boundaries. In Spanish-speaking Ecuador, his writing in Latin aligns him with the broader community of Romance languages.

These diverse interpretations highlight that Copernicus is associated with multiple identities and communities, with different claims over him. Since we cannot ask Copernicus about his views on these matters, our modern questions about his identity might be alien to him, as the categories of national identity we use today did not exist in his time.

The 1973 anniversary celebrations of Copernicus were organised on a truly global scale. Countries from friendly Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia to Western European nations and the United States, as well as distant Chile and the People's Republic of China, commemorated the astronomer. This worldwide participation underscores the universal appeal and recognition of Copernicus' scientific contributions'. Polish expatriate and emigrant communities played a crucial role in these celebrations. For example, Czechoslovakia's Polish Cultural and Educational Union organised a Copernicus knowledge competition for Polish schools. In Chicago, a Copernicus monument inspired by Bertel Thorvaldsen's 19<sup>th</sup>-century statue was unveiled on 14 October 1973, in front of the Adler Planetarium on Solidarity Drive.

Memory serves as a space for creating meaning in the contemporary community by reflecting on the past. This is how we should understand who Copernicus was as we look back on the 1973 anniversary from half a century ago. Similarly, in 50 or 100 years, people will examine the 2023 celebrations, considering how Copernicus' legacy was used for political or marketing purposes.

Halbwachs' concept shows that memory is a social construct dynamically shaped by collective frameworks. This perspective helps us understand how different groups remember historical figures like Copernicus, revealing the interplay between individual recollection and collective identity. The 1973 anniversary celebrations of Copernicus, which involved a diplomatic dispute in Ecuador and extensive efforts by Poland to promote his legacy, illustrate how

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5 Ibid.

social memory operates on a global scale, serving diverse and sometimes conflicting purposes. This example underscores how memory shapes contemporary identity and objectives, reflecting broader social and political contexts.

## Sites of Memory: Our Contemporary Copernicus

Pierre Nora, another seminal French researcher, introduced the concept of ‘sites of memory’ (*les lieux de mémoire*), a term that encompasses more than its literal translation suggests.<sup>6</sup> While this can indeed refer to physical locations like monuments, commemorative plaques, cemeteries, and museums, Nora’s concept is much broader and more nuanced. He argues that sites of memory are not just geographical places but also ‘knots’ or ‘weaves’ of memory that include significant historical events, figures, and even elements of daily life that are pivotal to a community’s collective remembrance.

Nora’s expanded notion of memory sites includes various cultural artefacts and practices that hold importance for a community. These include specific dishes, characteristic music, iconic images, and well-known catchphrases. By incorporating these everyday elements, Nora emphasises that memory is deeply embedded in the fabric of daily life and is integral to constructing communal identity. In Nora’s view, memory is a collective phenomenon and a dynamic process that continuously shapes and reshapes our sense of belonging and identity.

In the context of the Copernicus celebrations discussed in this paper, Nora’s concept of sites of memory is particularly relevant. The anniversary of Copernicus’ birth in 1973 is a prime example of how a historical figure can become a focal point in the collective memory of a community, nation, and even the world. This celebration was not confined to physical monuments or plaques but extended to various forms of commemoration, including academic lectures, publications, and media coverage. These diverse forms of remembrance illustrate how Copernicus’ legacy was woven into the collective memory of different communities, both locally in Poland and globally.

Moreover, Nora’s idea that memory includes elements of daily life resonates with the multifaceted ways Copernicus was remembered. In Poland, his legacy was intertwined with national pride and socialist ideology, transforming him into a symbol of modernity and scientific progress. Globally, he was celebrated as a pioneering scientist whose work transcended national boundaries and contributed to humanity’s collective knowledge. This dual remembrance under-

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6 Nora: *Realms of Memory*.

scores Nora's argument that memory is not only about the past but is actively engaged in shaping the present and future.

In the context of the celebrations from half a century ago, Copernicus is one of the most influential figures in our collective remembrance. At this focal point, various threads of knowledge, education, history, memory, identity, dreams, and imaginations intertwine. The past transforms into the present.

This perception was evident both in Poland and abroad fifty years ago. For instance, on 15 March 1973, *The Ethiopian Herald* reported on a lecture by Prof. Pierre Gouin from the Geophysical Observatory of the University of Addis Ababa.<sup>7</sup> Gouin, known for his work on seismic tremors and earthquakes in Africa, called Copernicus a 'man of our times'. This indicates that, globally, Copernicus was not just a historical figure but a legacy of enduring relevance to contemporary people. This view was shared in distant Ethiopia as well as in Poland.

In *Dziennik Polski*, Jan Adamczewski wrote about the contemporary expansion of Nicolaus Copernicus University and the charm of Toruń's preserved architectural monuments.<sup>8</sup> The most significant text is Józef Tejchma's *Kopernik nasz współczesny* [*Copernicus, Our Contemporary*].<sup>9</sup> Tejchma, a key figure in culture and education in the People's Republic of Poland (*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*, PRL), served as a vice prime minister in the 1970s, a long-term minister of culture and fine arts as well as education, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, a member of parliament, and an ambassador. Besides the identity issues, Tejchma emphasised the message behind the anniversary and the reinterpretation of Copernicus as a modern, creative, original, and courageous figure relevant to his contemporaries.

In his writing, Tejchma drew parallels between Copernicus' revolutionary scientific contributions and the ideological framework of scientific socialism, stating, "In the social sphere, scientific socialism, whose ideas give us directions, was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a discovery as challenging and great as the Copernican discovery of the physical order of the world."<sup>10</sup> Thus, Copernicus served as a pretext for ideological considerations, an empty figure that could be imbued with various meanings. Globally, he became a symbol of scientific advancement, while in Poland, he was framed as an ideological precursor of socialism.

Tejchma's speech, delivered on 18 February 1973, at the opening of the fifth centenary celebrations of Copernicus' birth, highlighted what was essential for Nicolaus Copernicus University: "The Copernicus University pursues at an ad-

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7 *Copernicus Described*.

8 Adamczewski: *Współczesność*.

9 Tejchma: *Kopernik*.

10 *Ibid*.

vanced level the exact sciences and humanities, that is, these disciplines which – as the university’s patron says – are intertwined in a joint search for truth and joint action, making the world of humans and the world of things more perfect.”<sup>11</sup> He also addressed issues crucial for the entire town of Toruń: “Here the great traditions and monuments of the past are concentrated, as well as modern, fast-developing industry.”<sup>12</sup> He further suggested, “It is possible and necessary to create in Toruń an example of a great alliance between economy and science to strengthen the socialist development of Poland.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, Copernicus became a pretext for socialist modernisation. Celebrations in PRL times often focused on the future, modernity, and development rather than solely on historical commemoration. This differentiated the state-organised celebrations from, for example, the Church Millennium of 1966. Memory was not just a reconstruction of the past or celebration of the present but an ideological vision of the socialist state’s future. This vision materialised in projects like creating the first modern university campus in post-war Poland at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń during the 1973 anniversary.

Socialist Poland was oriented toward modernity – both achieved and anticipated. The past intertwined with memory, creating a vision of the present and future community. Through its links with the Global South, socialist Poland pursued an ideological project of modernisation associated with Copernicus. The countries of the Eastern Bloc maintained extensive relations with decolonising countries, creating a network of mutual support – military where necessary (as in Korea, Vietnam, or Cuba), developmental (in the Middle East and North Africa), and ideological. They formed an alternative network of globalisation and modernisation in a socialist manner. In these countries, emerging from colonial domination often through military liberation or revolution, the socialist states aimed to fill the ideological vacuum with their own program. This included modernisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, and the promotion of modern science. While it might seem irrelevant to include historical Copernicus in such discourse, positioning him as a contemporary figure became a global means of ideological influence on decolonising states. Copernicus was reframed not as a distant scholar from the transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance but as a modern explorer from a peripheral country who initiated a revolution – both scientific and symbolic.

Nora’s framework helps us understand how Copernicus’ memory served different purposes in various contexts. In Ethiopia, as reported in *The Ethiopian Herald*, Copernicus was presented as a ‘man of our times’, highlighting his en-

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11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

during relevance to contemporary scientific discourse. In Poland, figures like Józef Tejchma used Copernicus to draw parallels between his revolutionary scientific contributions and the ideological goals of scientific socialism. These interpretations reflect how memory can be mobilised to support diverse and sometimes divergent narratives.

By examining Copernicus through the lens of Nora's sites of memory, we can see how his legacy was appropriated and adapted to fit the needs of different communities. This memory-making process reveals the complex interplay between history, culture, and identity. It demonstrates that memory is not a static repository of the past but a dynamic and contested space where different groups negotiate their place in the present and their vision for the future. In this way, Nora's concept of sites of memory provides a valuable tool for analysing the multifaceted ways in which Copernicus has been remembered and commemorated across different times and places.

### Politics of Memory: The Knots of Celebrations

This leads us directly to the politics of memory, illustrating the intricate ways memory can be used politically. While my earlier inspirations came from French scholars Halbwachs and Nora, it is also valuable to consider the German intellectual tradition, particularly the contributions of Aleida and Jan Assmann to memory studies.<sup>14</sup> In post-war Germany, memory became central to historical politics, fostering reconciliation, forgiveness, and supranational dialogue – what can be termed 'dialogic memory'. Germans sought to move beyond their troubled history and practice this dialogic remembrance. In contrast, as we have seen, Poland heavily nationalised the memory of Copernicus.

Jan and Aleida Assmann's communicative and cultural memory concepts provide a profound understanding of how societies remember and use the past. They distinguish between communicative memory, which encompasses everyday, informal memories shared within a community, and cultural memory, which is institutionalised and ritualised, often involving formal commemoration and symbols. This framework helps to explore how different societies shape their historical narratives and collective identities.

In post-war Germany, the Assmanns' theories became particularly relevant as the country grappled with the legacies of Nazism and the Holocaust. The emphasis on dialogic memory involved integrating these traumatic pasts into a collective consciousness that could promote healing and understanding. Dialogic memory, as envisioned by the Assmanns, involves an openness to multiple

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14 Assmann et al.: *Memory*; Assmann: *Cultural Memory*.

perspectives and an engagement with other nations and cultures to create a more inclusive historical narrative. This approach contrasts sharply with the Polish nationalisation of Copernicus' memory, which aimed to assert a singular, nationalistic interpretation of his legacy.

The Assmanns' work also highlights the role of memory in identity formation. In Germany, the post-war period necessitated a re-evaluation of national identity, moving from a monolithic and exclusive narrative to one that could accommodate the complexities of its history. This process involved not only remembering the atrocities committed during the war but also recognising the contributions of various groups within German society and fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collective guilt. This shift was crucial for Germany's reintegration into the international community and for building a foundation of trust and cooperation with its neighbours.

In contrast, Poland's approach to memory politics, especially regarding Copernicus, was characterised by a more exclusionary and nationalistic perspective. The Polish state sought to claim Copernicus as a symbol of national pride and to reinforce a narrative of historical continuity and resilience. This involved emphasising his Polish identity and scientific contributions in ways that excluded other possible interpretations or claims. The nationalisation of Copernicus' memory strengthened national unity and asserted Poland's place in the historical and scientific landscape.

By examining these differing approaches to memory politics, we can see how the Assmanns' concepts of communicative and cultural memory can be applied to understanding how historical narratives are constructed and used. In Germany, the emphasis on dialogic memory facilitated a process of coming to terms with the past and fostering reconciliation, while in Poland, the nationalisation of Copernicus' memory reinforced a more rigid and exclusionary national identity. These differing approaches reflect broader trends in how societies use memory to navigate their histories and shape their futures.

The politics of memory is therefore a powerful tool in shaping collective identities and historical narratives. The Assmanns' work underscores the importance of considering multiple perspectives and fostering dialogue in constructing these narratives. In contrast, a more nationalistic approach, as seen in Poland's remembrance of Copernicus, can lead to a more insular and exclusionary view of history. These dynamics are crucial in understanding how memory is used to serve contemporary political and cultural objectives, illustrating the complex interplay between past and present in the formation of collective memory.

An example of dialogic or even polyphonic (a term borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin) remembrance can be found in how the Polish People's Republic celebrated modern anniversaries and state holidays. These included 1 May, 22 July,

and the anniversary of the October Revolution on 7 November. Delving deeper into these memory reconstructions reveals how politics and propaganda shaped celebrations based on historical events. Significant anniversaries, such as the Battle of Grunwald, the Millennium of the Polish State (counter-celebrations to the Millennium of Christianity in Poland), the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peace of Thorn, and the 1973 celebrations of Copernicus' birth, were all imbued with ideological undertones, often portraying the Germans as Poland's perpetual enemies. This nationalistic propaganda aligned with Poland's post-war anti-German policy and the rise of national communism.

A common enemy was as crucial as the positive messages evoked by these anniversaries. However, historical interpretation was always intertwined with a message of modernisation. For instance, the Millennium of the Polish State also symbolised the construction of new schools, residential areas, and factories, while Copernicus' 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary marked the development of a modern university campus.

This reflects a non-dialogic memory: the Polish portrayal of Copernicus opposed to the German narrative. At the same time, it shows a dialogue between past and present, history and modernity. These dialogic or polyphonic memory weaves continue influencing us today in public and private spheres. They are present in debates about communism's legacy, highlighting its positive aspects (emancipation, fighting inequality, accessible education, industrialisation, modernisation) and its drawbacks (persecution, violence, fear).

In contemporary politics, the politics of memory often impose their forms on individual memories, historians' research, historical truth, and the nuanced stories of human lives. Such focused politics of remembrance can be exclusionary, depriving whole communities of their memories and denying them a place in public space. This was evident during the Copernican anniversary celebrations half a century ago and remains true today, including in the celebrations of Copernicus' 550<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2023.

Despite the grand political slogans and projects, the everyday commemorative practices of 1973 were more modest and localised – scouts' hikes, philatelist meetings, talks, lectures, school gatherings, exhibitions, and art competitions. For example, during the Year of Polish Science, young philatelists from Czechoslovakia participated in a meeting in Rzeszów titled *Nicolaus Copernicus – his life and works*. According to *Nedělná Pravda*, on 25 May 1973, the Soviet Union issued a commemorative 10-kopeck stamp featuring Copernicus, while the United States issued a similar 8-cent stamp, reflecting the Cold War race even in philately.<sup>15</sup> Fifty years ago, these diverse local and global events created a jubilee of unprecedented scale, incomparable to present celebrations.

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15 *Kopernika si pripomina*.

In conclusion, the politics of memory reveal the complex and multifaceted ways in which memory can be used for political ends. Drawing from the intellectual traditions of Halbwachs, Nora, and the Assmanns, we see how different societies construct and employ historical narratives to serve contemporary needs. The Assmanns' communicative and cultural memory concepts provide valuable insights into how post-war Germany embraced a dialogic approach to reconcile with its past, fostering a more inclusive and multifaceted historical narrative. This starkly contrasts Poland's nationalisation of Copernicus' memory, which sought to assert a singular, nationalistic interpretation of his legacy.

The Assmanns' emphasis on dialogic memory underscores the importance of openness to multiple perspectives and engagement with other nations and cultures to create a more inclusive historical narrative. In Germany, this approach facilitated accepting the past, fostering reconciliation, and promoting shared responsibility. In Poland, however, the nationalisation of Copernicus' memory reinforced a more rigid and exclusionary national identity, emphasising historical continuity and resilience in ways that often excluded alternative interpretations.

This dynamic is further illustrated by the contrasting approaches to commemorative practices in post-war Germany and the Polish People's Republic. While Germany sought to integrate its traumatic past into a collective consciousness that could promote healing and understanding, Poland's commemorative practices were heavily influenced by nationalistic and ideological undertones. Significant anniversaries and celebrations were imbued with propaganda messages, often portraying the Germans as perpetual enemies and emphasising modernisation achievements alongside historical commemorations.

The politics of memory, as seen through the lens of the Assmanns' theories, highlights the powerful role of memory in shaping collective identities and historical narratives. It also underscores the potential for memory to be used in inclusive and exclusionary ways, depending on the political and cultural contexts. By examining the differing approaches to memory politics, we gain a deeper understanding of how societies navigate their histories and shape their futures, illustrating the complex interplay between past and present in the formation of collective memory.

As we reflect on the 1973 Copernican anniversary celebrations and their contemporary counterparts, we see how memory continues to be a contested and dynamic space. While grand political slogans and projects often dominate the narrative, everyday commemorative practices reveal the localised and personal ways people engage with history. These practices, from scouts' hikes to philatelist meetings and educational events, demonstrate memory's diverse and multifaceted nature and its enduring impact on both public and private spheres.

In summary, the politics of memory remains a crucial tool in understanding how societies construct and use historical narratives. The Assmanns' work provides a valuable framework for exploring these dynamics, highlighting the importance of dialogic and inclusive approaches to memory in fostering a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the past. As we move forward, it is essential to recognise the potential for memory to serve both unifying and divisive purposes, shaping our collective identities and influencing our interpretations of history in profound and lasting ways.

## A Postscript About a Pre-Sequel

In 1953, New York celebrated a Copernican anniversary. Albert Einstein, over 70 years old, did not attend the events but sent a letter on 28 November to Professor Manfred Kridl, organiser of the celebrations at Columbia University. In his letter, Einstein expressed joy and gratitude for commemorating the memory of the man who, more than any other, had liberated human minds from clerical domination and laid the foundations of Western scientific thought.<sup>16</sup> Einstein emphasised that no single nation could claim exclusive ownership of him due to the uniqueness of Copernicus's scientific contributions. He critiqued national pride as a trivial sentiment unworthy of a man as intellectually independent as the great astronomer.

Einstein's sentiments resonate especially when contrasted with how propaganda in the PRL exploited Copernicus in 1953 and 1973, persistently portraying him as Polish. This narrative continues into 2023, where yet another anniversary is being used for political purposes. The debates over Copernicus's nationality in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries stirred strong emotions among Poles and Germans, reflecting broader discussions on memory and national identity.

The commemoration of Copernicus's 550<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary highlights the delicate nature of historical memory and its susceptibility to political manipulation. The establishment of the Copernican Academy in 2023 serves as a contemporary example of propaganda reminiscent of the PRL era, marking a poignant conclusion to this discourse on the politics of memory surrounding Copernicus.

This lecture underscores that the politics of memory is just one facet of Copernicus's enduring social and cultural legacy. It reminds us that historical figures like Copernicus can be appropriated to serve present-day political agendas, shaping public narratives and influencing collective identities. Einstein's insight

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16 Columbia University Libraries: Bakhmeteff Archive, Ms Coll Kridl: Einstein [letter to Manfred Kridl].

continues to provoke reflection on how societies commemorate their past, urging us to consider the ethical dimensions of memory and the responsibilities that accompany historical remembrance.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, exploring Copernicus's memory within the framework of glocalised dynamics illuminates the intricate interplay of memory construction, national identity, and political influence at local and global scales. Drawing upon the insights of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Jan and Aleida Assmann, and Zygmunt Bauman's glocalisation theory, we explore how diverse cultural and historical contexts have shaped Copernicus's legacy.

Maurice Halbwachs's concept of collective memory elucidates how societies weave individual recollections into a shared narrative influenced by social frameworks and historical contexts. In Toruń, Poland, commemorations of Copernicus highlight the everyday transmission of memories within the community alongside formalised, ritualised commemorations that define local identity. Pierre Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire* expands this framework to encompass physical sites and intangible cultural elements that embody national identity and historical consciousness. Toruń's celebrations of Copernicus emphasise museums, monuments, and cultural practices that reinforce the city's claim to Copernicus's legacy within the global context of scientific history.

Jan and Aleida Assmann's distinction between communicative and cultural memory provides further depth, highlighting the everyday transmission of memories within Toruń's community alongside the formalised, ritualised commemoration that shapes cultural identities. Their concept of dialogic memory, particularly relevant in post-war Germany, illustrates attempts to reconcile national traumas through inclusive historical narratives and transnational dialogue – a reflection seen in Toruń's efforts to engage with global commemorations of Copernicus.

In contrast, Poland's nationalisation of Copernicus's memory underscores a more exclusionary approach, emphasising his Polish identity during the 1973 anniversary celebrations to reinforce national pride and historical continuity. This narrative construction reflects ongoing debates over historical interpretation and the politicisation of memory within the glocalised framework of global and local influences.

Albert Einstein's poignant critique of the nationalistic appropriations of Copernicus reminds us of the ethical dimensions of memory and historical remembrance within Bauman's glocalisation concept. His perspective challenges us to navigate the complexities of commemorating historical figures like Co-

pernicious within a glocalised framework that fosters dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation rather than division and exclusivity.

The contemporary resonance of these debates is evident in the commemoration of Copernicus's 550<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary and the establishment of the Copernican Academy by the right-wing Polish government, reflecting ongoing struggles over memory and identity within Toruń's local context and its interaction with global perspectives. These discussions extend beyond academic inquiry to shape public discourse, influencing how societies remember their pasts and envision their futures within the tension of localisation and glocalised memory.

Ultimately, the study of Copernicus's memory within glocalised frameworks serves as a microcosm for broader discussions on the politics of memory, demonstrating how historical narratives are constructed, contested, and reshaped over time within local and global contexts. By critically examining these processes, we gain insights into the power dynamics of memory and its implications for collective identities, social cohesion, and international relations in the ongoing dialogue between local celebrations of Copernicus and global perspectives.

As we continue commemorating Copernicus and other historical figures within glocalised frameworks, Einstein's words remind us to approach memory with humility, acknowledging its potential for unity and division. The challenge lies in fostering a memory culture within glocalised contexts that promote inclusivity, dialogue, and historical integrity, transcending narrow nationalistic agendas to embrace the richness and diversity of human experience in the localisation of Copernicus's legacy.

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Florian-Jan Ostrowski

## From Poland to the World: Nicolaus Copernicus as (Polish) Ambassador of Science on Stamps and Currency

### Abstract

The chapter examines the strategic use of Nicolaus Copernicus's image and his biography, mainly on Polish stamps and currency from the 1920s until today, for identity reasons. Whereas Copernicus first appeared on stamps as a Polish astronomer and genius against German claims, in communist Poland, he became a (Polish) ambassador of science and predecessor of modern cosmology on a global scale. Copernicus still has stamp issues, but the issuing is limited now to birth anniversaries and pure collectors' markets.

Keywords: Copernicus; memory culture; stamps; currency; identity

### Introduction

'From Poland to the World' (*Polska światu*) is a phrase used in Poland to make scientists from Poland or with a Polish background visible who contributed to the knowledge and progress of the world and made their ground-breaking work a 'Polish gift' for everyone.<sup>1</sup> The title of the chapter refers to a series of the Polish Mint (*Skarbnica Narodowa*), who launched in 2023 a medal series called *From Poland to the World – The Greatest Discoveries of Polish Scientists (Polska światu – Najważniejsze odkrycia polskich naukowców)* to honour Polish scientists with a worldwide significance. The first issued memorial medal was designed by Robert Kotowicz and is dedicated to the 550<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543). The presentation box for the medal series was so arranged that Copernicus, as the historically oldest scientist in the series, had its place in the centre of the box and would be then surrounded like in a solar model by other

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1 See for example: *Polska Światu* website.

scientists such as Johannes Hevelius, Maria Skłodowska-Curie and Ludwik Hirsztfeld.<sup>2</sup>

The figure of Nicolaus Copernicus is a well-established part of memory culture in the history of science and the development of humanity, not only in Poland and the western hemisphere but worldwide. Copernicus is still used in different contexts, to a various extent and in diverse media, from references to his life and thesis in historiography, the reproductions of his work on anniversaries, the erection of monuments, to the naming of observatories and streets after him. The image of Copernicus, fixed by historical portraits after his lifetime, and his visualisations of the solar system model are known beyond the Polish state borders, also due to representations on stamps, medals and currency.<sup>3</sup>

The appreciation of Copernicus has a centuries-long history and is a tradition in Poland. Copernicus and his work were already recognised in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, partly during his lifetime (but not always positively). His teachings found their way to some universities shortly after, and his works saw several printed editions and translations. The first epitaph memorising Copernicus was made in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast, the erection of standing monuments for him began only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the heliocentric model was already well accepted. In 1763, a sugar factory was erected in Toruń and named after his most famous inhabitant, 'Kopernik'. Also, since the late 18<sup>th</sup>/beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, medals have been produced to commemorate Copernicus (e. g., for the opening of the Copernicus monument in Warsaw in 1830 and his 400<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1873 in Poznań). Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a more intense academic engagement in the life and work of Copernicus, which received the Polish name *kopernikologia*, accompanied by the foundation of societies in the name of Copernicus and newly opened museums about his life.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, in 1923, when the image of Copernicus appeared on the first stamps in Poland, his commemoration was not new. However, what was new was the use of Copernicus by the Polish national state in representational media. All other initiatives before World War I for the commemoration of Copernicus were private or semi-private, either by the Catholic Church, German or Polish-oriented associations, individual enthusiasts or city governments.

In this chapter, I shall examine the strategic usage of the figure and images of Copernicus on Polish and selected international stamps from the 1920s to the present. My interest lies in the role that stamps and currency, in connection with Copernicus, played in Polish and global cultural memory. What can we say about

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2 In the anniversary year 2023, people could order the Copernican medal for free if they could provide a Polish delivery address.

3 See for the portraits and paintings about Copernicus: Metzke: *Die Entwicklung*.

4 See Łopuszański: *Mikołaj Kopernik*.

the cultural memory of Copernicus by looking at the context of stamp issues and the stamps themselves? Which aspects of Copernicus' life have been memorised on stamps, where and how?

Analysing stamps and currency of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or looking at them from a cultural memory perspective is not yet a widespread historical method or view.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, historians and those working in the humanities should take the opportunity to use the printed and digital resources established by philatelists and collectors and take contemporary stamps and currency seriously as sources and media of memory for studying the memory culture of Nicolaus Copernicus.

In the following chapter, I shall first give some theoretical implications about stamps and currency as historical sources, state representation and media of memory. Then, I shall look at the first stamps with Copernicus, which played a role in Polish and German nationalism. In the third part, I shall show how communist Poland portrayed Copernicus on stamps and currency in the 1950s and 1960s as a Polish revolutionary genius. In the fourth part, I want to show how the prepared Polish narratives about Copernicus were adopted and re-arranged by other states globally in the 1970s. Finally, I shall summarise and place the issue of stamps with Copernicus as a Polish and international practice of cultural diplomacy and memory.

## Stamps and Currency as Historical Sources and Media of Memory

From a superficial view, stamps are graphic and textual receipts for payments, and currency is a means to purchase things. In my understanding, stamps and currency are more than this. On the one hand, they are a form of media. Here, media is understood practically as cultural products, whose subjects are used to interpret and get meaning about the other.<sup>6</sup> It is noteworthy that the meaning of the other is not ascribed or transmitted within the media; even those who produce media (in the case of stamps and currency, predominantly the state) prefer one reading of them. On the other hand, they are essential state monopolies and artistic but functional representatives of national countries, territories or organisations.

Therefore, stamps and currency are highly political matters. Not everyone is allowed to create, distribute, and control them. Issuing stamps and currency is a national state agenda as long the stamps and currency circulate within the whole country and abroad. Burkhard Müller said stamps show the 'physiognomy of

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5 For a rare exception see Smolarski et al. (eds.): *Gezähnte Geschichte*.

6 Zahlmann: *Die Wirklichkeit der Steine*, pp. 22–23.

countries'.<sup>7</sup> The state or state committees chose the materiality, the iconic programmes, the denominations and the textual messages on both. However, the production and distribution are mainly outsourced to state-controlled postal services.

In Poland, since 2012, everyone has been able to suggest which stamp should be issued. There are a few criteria for suggestions: the topic must be related to the 'cultural identity' of Poland, and the commemorated events must have a 'countrywide' relevance. Themes may include Poland's cultural heritage and history, essential anniversaries and personalities, special events or Polish representatives to the world, and themes from nature, technique, sports, youth or religion. What officially cannot be issued are death anniversaries, anniversaries of living people, and themes of commercial or political character, which will injure national, ethnic or religious feelings. A commission at the Polish Post evaluates the suggestions, and the minister responsible must approve the printing plans once per year.<sup>8</sup>

Stamps and currency might then show, in a way, how the state as the other wanted to be seen and which persons, events, and motives should be memorised in the canon of national culture and history. The issuing of stamps and currency can then be described as a 'condensed discourse'<sup>9</sup> in a limited space, where topics like legitimation, power and identity are discussed, as well as memory culture and belonging. Stamps and currency are excellent examples of how history and memory are not separated spheres but are intertwined.<sup>10</sup> They showcase historical or contemporary persons, events, and themes with whom the state wants to be associated, where national memory exists or should be strengthened. At the same time, by issuing stamps and currency relating to these persons, events, and themes, the state reflects and 'responds' to them and keeps the memory alive. Stamps and currency have material, symbolical and functional aspects and fulfil the criteria of Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* (sites or realms of memory), standing between active memory and historiography.<sup>11</sup>

Stamps and currency are not only receipts for payments and means to purchase things but are media of memory and symbolic tools for the state to support the nation-building process and compete with other states for prestige and recognition. What makes stamps and currency unique is their possibility to reach a wide range of people over a vast geographic region and, during many decades, not only inhabitants within the national borders but also tourists and collectors

7 Müller: *Verschollene Länder*, p. 6.

8 The emission plan is done by the Polish Post two years in advance. See *Plany emisji*.

9 Smolarski et al: *Gezähnte Geschichte. Die Briefmarke als historische Quelle: Zur Einführung*, p. 14.

10 Niven et al.: *Introduction*, p. 4.

11 See Nora: *Between Memory and History*, p. 19.

worldwide. Whereas stamps and currency can circulate over a comprehensive time and space, they are a historical source for the time of the issue and are embedded in a context. From a historian's perspective, stamps and currency must also be treated like other historical sources. And even if stamps and money do not speak on their own, historians can analyse narratives and iconography and, with the help of these tiny objects, tell stories such as the memory culture of Nicolaus Copernicus.

## Copernicus Between Polish and German Nationalism: 1920s–1940s

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the commemoration of Nicolaus Copernicus was not restricted to one state, but there was a struggle between Poland and Germany for his identity. A leading question since the 19<sup>th</sup> century was (and partly still is) if Copernicus was a 'Polish' or 'German' astronomer.<sup>12</sup> In the part of Poland which belonged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to Prussia, Copernicus was 'Germanised', whereas the Poles 'Polonised' him, especially around 1873, his 400<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary.<sup>13</sup> After Poland gained independence in 1918 with 'new' (former German-speaking) territories and borders, the dispute about the identity of Copernicus was still ongoing. This is the context of the first stamp issue with the image of Copernicus in 1923.

The stamp was issued as a special series for the 450<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Copernicus, together with the 150<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Stanisław Konarski, a Polish enlightenment thinker. It was still in German Marks and, due to the economic crisis of the time, printed on cigarette paper. Copernicus got two stamps with the denominations 1,000 and 5,000 Marks, which were identical, only separated by colour. They show a portrait of Copernicus, first hanging in the grammar school in Toruń (from around 1580), in the middle, between two stone pillars surrounded by a laurel wreath. The reference to Copernicus is made only by his name, 'Kopernik', which was placed directly between his portrait and the national symbol of Poland – its eagle. The iconology suggests that Copernicus and Poland belong somehow together.

After World War I, the Polish Post issued the first stamps with national symbols but started in 1919 to showcase personalities, even if initially more contemporary politicians than historical figures. The stamps with Copernicus from 1923 were then designed as an intermixture in the Polish Post's approach.

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12 For a complex answer about the origins and 'self-assessment' of Nicolaus Copernicus see Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik. Środowisko społeczne*.

13 For a pro-Polish view on Copernicus at that time see Polkowski: *Czterowiekowy jubileusz*; also Birkenmajer: *Mikołaj Kopernik*. For a pro-German view see Prowe: *Nicolaus Copernicus*.

Copernicus was among the first historical personalities commemorated on a nationwide Polish stamp four years earlier than, for example, Frédéric Chopin. Whereas the first Copernicus stamps had an issue of 20–40 million, they were only in circulation until 1924.<sup>14</sup>

Like the stamp edition, there were plans for a 100 zloty coin, which would show Copernicus on the reverse. In the idea competition for the coin in 1925, Stanisław Szukalski designed a futuristic and abstract-looking Copernicus, who grabs the sun with his left hand while giving his right hand a push towards the Earth.<sup>15</sup> This is a clear reference to the famous Polish epigram by Jan Nepomucen Kamiński about Nicolaus Copernicus, which was first published in 1828 as: *Polskie wydało go plemię, Wstrzymał słońce, ruszył ziemię* (Born as a Pole, he stopped the Sun and moved the Earth).<sup>16</sup> However, a regular coin with the image of Copernicus was not minted in Poland during the interwar period.

Twenty years later, the territorial situation changed again in Eastern Europe. The Nazi regime occupied Poland. In the territories not directly incorporated into the Third Reich (the so-called General Government), a stamp was issued in 1943 for the ‘German’ astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, commemorating his 400<sup>th</sup> death anniversary. The designer, Wilhelm Dachauer, chose a portrait after a painting of Jeremiah Falck from 1644, who called himself *Polonus* or *Gedanensis* in a central element of the stamp. What is new on the stamp is that Copernicus appears with his first and surname, the years of his birth and death are given, he is described as an ‘astronomer’, and a solar model is outlined in the background. Additionally, the date of his death on the left corner (24 May 1543) was linked to the present-day stamp issue on the right corner (24 May 1943), which, in a way, established continuity.<sup>17</sup>

The commemoration of Copernicus on stamps for his 400<sup>th</sup> death anniversary, even though the Polish state did not exist within its territory, was not solely left to the Germans. In the camp for officer prisoners of war in Woldenberg (today Dobiegniew), a camp post was operating. In 1943, the camp prisoners issued stamps under difficult circumstances depicting the monuments of Copernicus in Cracow (at the University’s Collegium Maius) and Copernicus in front of the Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. The prisoners not only remembered the death anniversary of Copernicus but could also cite correctly one of his main works (*De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*), published in 1543 in the same year of his death. Issuing stamps with references to Copernicus in an officer prisoner’s camp

14 Michel: *Europa-Katalog 1972*, 2, p. 1070f.

15 Only few coins of this blueprint were produced. For an image of this coin idea from Szukalski see *Mikołaj Kopernik na medalach i niezwyklej monecie*.

16 Sternik: *Popularny dwuwiersz o Koperniku*, pp. 34–35.

17 See fig. 1 at the end of the chapter.

while the Third Reich celebrated the Germanness of Copernicus can then be read as a sign of resistance and active Polish memory culture.

Several elements of the memory culture of Copernicus on stamps and currency can be observed through the first issues in Poland and the German General Government. Stamps were a relatively new medium at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast, the images of Copernicus used on stamps had already been established and tested before on medals. The iconography is orientated towards historical paintings and engravings; his name is always written together with his images. In the first period of stamps with Copernicus, he is remembered as either a Polish or German astronomer from Renaissance times. His 'image', the birth and death years, were well-known in educated circles. Overall, the first stamps issued in the 1920s and 1940s were limited to anniversaries related to Copernicus's life, which did not reach the dimensions of later anniversary celebrations in communist Poland and the global world.

### **Copernicus as a Revolutionary Genius in Communist Poland: 1950s–1960s**

Shortly after World War II (still in 1945), the newly established University in Toruń was named after Nicolaus Copernicus, and there were local debates about his monuments and whether they should return to specific places in Cracow and Warsaw. Poland did not abandon Copernicus as its cultural heritage but had to 'Polonise' him again under the ideology of Marxism. Copernicus, therefore, could remain a national hero but had to be utilised as a revolutionary figure who legitimised teleologically the development of science from the Renaissance to Communist times in the present.

From a stamp perspective, Nicolaus Copernicus was not directly a national symbol of Communist Poland after World War II.<sup>18</sup> In 1949, in the stamp series *Famous Poles*, issued by the Polish Post, Copernicus was not included – Adam Mickiewicz, Frédéric Chopin and Juliusz Słowacki were. Two aspects marked the 'return' of Copernicus on Polish stamps in 1951: he was seen as a Pole *and* an influential revolutionary scientist. In the series issued to commemorate the first science congress held in Poland, Copernicus appeared together with the enlightenment figure Stanisław Staszic, physicists Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Zyg-

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18 With the exemption of the monument of Copernicus in the library courtyard (Collegium Maius) of the Jagellonian University in Cracow, which had already appeared on a stamp series in 1945 on the occasion of the liberation of Cracow.

munt Wróblewski, Karol Olszewski, and the chemist Marcei Nencki. In the 1950s, Copernicus became part of a scientific line of revolutionary progress.

The 480<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Copernicus in 1953 became an excellent opportunity to present him as a national Polish and revolutionary symbol, especially after the Communist Party called the year the ‘Year of Copernicus’.<sup>19</sup> To commemorate the 480<sup>th</sup> birthday and the ‘Year of Copernicus’, the Polish Post issued two stamps and chose as a motive the painting of Jan Matejko *Astronom Kopernik, czyli rozmowa z Bogiem* (The Astronomer Copernicus, or a Conversation with God) from 1873. Whereas the stamp with the entire painting of Matejko on it had a lower denomination (20 groszy) but 60 million were issued, 100,000 stamps were issued with the higher denomination (80 groszy) and a detail of the painting. Like in the interwar period, stamps with an image of Copernicus reached all people using stamps in Poland during that time.

In 1953, the People’s Republic of China also issued a stamp commemorating the birthday of Copernicus; they reproduced a lithography of Jan Feliks Piwarski from 1852. A country outside Poland or Germany had remembered Copernicus and his heliocentric model on a stamp for the first time. The Soviet Union acknowledged Copernicus as a Polish representative and scientific revolutionary two years later. To celebrate the tenth anniversary of Polish-Soviet friendship, in 1955, the Soviet Union Post showcased the same Matejko painting of Copernicus from 1873, supplemented by a picture of the painter himself. The third stamp with a Copernicus image outside of Poland, and the only one in a democratic country during the 1950s, was issued in France in 1957, where Copernicus was part of a European ‘famous people’ series but had the lowest denomination (8 francs).<sup>20</sup>

In 1966 (for the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christianisation of Poland, celebrated as the ‘existence of the Polish State’), Copernicus was already part of Polish identity everywhere. His image on coins started appearing in 1959 and on banknotes from 1965, following an established iconography from the stamps: a half-portrait of Copernicus, his name, and a schematic model of his solar system. We can observe a similar strategy on the currency, like on stamps: Copernicus appears on both coins with a low denomination (10 złotych) and on banknotes with a high denomination (1,000 złotych). Like on stamps, Copernicus on coins and banknotes should reach as many people as possible in their everyday and special payments.

19 Kleinschrodt: *Copernicus*.

20 From a French perspective Michelangelo (10 francs), Cervantes (12 francs), Rembrandt (15 francs), Newton (18 francs), Mozart (25 francs), and Goethe (35 francs) were ranked nominally higher. See Michel: *Europa-Katalog 1972*, 1, p. 421.

Copernicus had on Polish stamps in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s various contexts: from *Warsaw Monuments* (1955) to *Famous Scholars* (1959)<sup>21</sup> to *Famous Poles* (1961)<sup>22</sup> until the celebration of the 600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cracow University (1964).<sup>23</sup> The Polish Post tried not to repeat the portraits on the stamps but used the same iconography: a historical half-portrait with his name. Diplomatic communication, communist rule, and the ideology of Marxism helped memorise Copernicus over the (communist) world. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Copernicus was already recognised as a famous person, scholar, and Pole. Nonetheless, Copernicus remained mainly a Polish phenomenon on singular stamps, celebrated for his revolutionary genius but always as a part of a series about science, scientists or great Poles.

Communist Poland not only issued stamps and currency with the image of Copernicus, but the state also started to intensify the commemoration through a revitalisation and reconstruction of cities, places, and buildings associated with Copernicus during the 1960s. From 1963–1966, for example, the alleged birth-place house of Copernicus in Toruń, erected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, got a gothic-style façade to appear more ‘authentic’ from the time of Copernicus. Besides the historicism of architecture, new monuments for Copernicus were built, like in 1966 in the village of Koperniki, where, following one theory, the family of Copernicus should come from. Making the origins of Copernicus more rural was an accepted reading under Communist rule.<sup>24</sup> The peak of making Copernicus a Polish ancestor with global impact came in the 1970s, especially in 1973, for the 500<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Copernicus. How was the memory of Copernicus expressed on stamps during that time?

## Copernicus as (Polish) Ambassador of Science to the World: 1970s–Now

For the 500<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary, the old towns of the Polish cities Frombork and Toruń, related to Copernicus, were renovated. Other places like Pieniężno (earlier Melzak), destroyed during the Copernican lifetime by the Teutonic Knights, got their city rights back, and others created remembrance plaques for

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21 In this series Copernicus was represented together with Charles Darwin, Dmitri Mendeleev, Albert Einstein, Louis Pasteur, and Isaac Newton.

22 In the series about ‘famous Poles’ Copernicus was together with the rulers and kings Mieszko I, Casimir III, Casimir IV Jagellon, the Renaissance writer Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, and the general and revolutionist Tadeusz Kościuszko.

23 In 1964 also, the Polish philatelist exhibition was held in Cracow (*Jagellonica 64*) and a seal with a Copernicus monument was used on First Day Cover postcards.

24 Łopuszański: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 23.

Copernicus (e.g. Malbork) or opened observatories and named them after him (e.g. Olsztyn). New editions of Copernicus' writings, popular books, and exhibitions were also prepared, and a feature film about his life emerged.<sup>25</sup> In 1973, the Soviet-produced aeroplane Ilyushin (Il-62), named after Copernicus in 1972, operated regularly on the prestigious route from Warsaw to New York.<sup>26</sup> The Polish government chose, not by accident, 1973 as the Year of Polish Sciences (*Rok Nauki Polskiej*), where international student meetings and local school competitions were organised.<sup>27</sup>

The preparations and organisation of Copernicus' 500<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary started years before the anniversary. Looking again from a stamp perspective, the celebrations for the anniversary also began years before the year 1973, in 1969, when the Polish Post issued a whole series with Copernicus for the first time. Next to the 'classical' elements like historical half-portraits, his name and biographical data, half of the stamp was reserved for other objects associated with Copernicus's life, time or the memory culture about him: a poem, a globe or models of heliocentrism.

In 1970, the Polish Post issued another series to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Copernicus. Following the style of the previous year's issue, the stamps showed in the left corner (other) historical portraits of Copernicus, but in the lower part, late-medieval silhouettes of the Italian cities where Copernicus studied both canonical and Roman law (Bologna, 1496–1501), medicine (Padua, 1501–1503) and received his doctorate for canonical law (Ferrara, 1503). The duration of his study time and the city names were placed below the city silhouettes. In this stamp series, some aspects of Copernicus' biography were represented for the first time.

Another series in the following year (1971) utilised the major Polish cities in the life of Copernicus for tourism: Toruń (birthplace; youth), Cracow (family of the father; the town of his first study), Frombork (canon; residence town; observations; death place), and Olsztyn (residence town; uncle as bishop; defender of the city).<sup>28</sup> The stamp series suggests the following on the traces of Copernicus and showed already what to visit: in Toruń, the house of his 'birthplace' (*Dom Kopernika*); in Cracow, the university (*Collegium Maius*); in Frombork, the ca-

25 For the celebrations in 1973 in Poland see chapter by Adam F. Kola in this volume and Kleinschrodt: *The Copernicus anniversary*.

26 A hydrographic research and survey ship (ORP) was named already in 1971 'Kopernik'.

27 For example, the scientific society in Płock announced a competition for the middle schools with the topic 'Copernicus and cosmos', so that students will know Copernicus not only as a great European scholar but the aim is, to bring him closer to their local hearts. See Chrostowski: *Kopernik i Kosmos*, pp. 45–48.

28 The touristic route on the traces of Copernicus in Poland (*Szlak Kopernikowski*) is nowadays more and more extended and developed. An astrolabe figures as common route symbol. See: *Szlak Kopernikowski*.

thedral and in Olsztyn the castle of the Bishops of Warmia. Finally, the stamp series also showed instruments or objects associated with Copernicus and his activities during his stay: in Toruń, the so-called ‘Toruń portrait’; in Cracow, a replicated text from Euclid, which belonged to the items of Copernicus; in Frombork a drawn heliocentric model, and for Olsztyn an astrolabe.

In 1972, the Polish Post issued another regular special stamp edition commemorating Copernicus. Like in the previous series, the Polish Post tried to reference other aspects of Copernicus’s life, not only the heliocentric worldview. In the series from 1972, there is a stamp showing next to a Copernicus portrait, a Latin printed translation of the Byzantine historian Theophylactus Simocatta from 1509, which Copernicus did during his study time in Cracow. Another one depicted, next to the obligatory Copernicus portrait, a six-groschen piece of the Polish king Sigismund I, referring to the coin treatise Copernicus wrote in 1517.<sup>29</sup>

It was a strategic, carefully considered decision by Polish authorities to organise the International Stamp Exhibition (*Exposition Philatelique Mondiale*) in 1973 in Poznań. Hundreds of philatelists came, and many countries issued an occasional stamp for this event related to the guest land where the exhibition was held. Poland chose, surprisingly, Copernicus and his heliocentric model as motifs to commemorate the International Stamp Exhibition (issued in 1972). Similarly, for the Day of the Post stamp in 1973, the Polish Post issued a stamp with a Copernicus portrait of Marcello Bacciarelli from 1786.

Furthermore, Toruń, as the place of the national philatelist meeting, was chosen wisely and named after Copernicus (*Torphilex Copernicana* 73). In the accompanying exhibition catalogue, the connections between Nicolaus Copernicus and the city were explained first.<sup>30</sup> Finally, the Polish Post issued 1973 one more series with stamps commemorating Copernicus through historical portraits.

1973 was in the commemoration of Nicolaus Copernicus, not only in Poland or for the Polish Post apogee but worldwide. Even the celebrations took different outlooks across ideological borders from East to West. The Polish efforts to commemorate Copernicus as a Polish astronomer who contributed to modern astronomy and the development of humankind were acknowledged. The popularity of Copernicus also resulted from the moon landing just a few years earlier (1968), where he was seen as a pioneer without whom space travel and the discovery of other planets and galaxies would not have been possible.

From a stamp perspective, over 80 countries issued stamps for the 500<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of Nicolaus Copernicus. The Polish astronomer and his heliocentric

29 See for both: Czartoryski (ed.): *Collected Works*.

30 Polski Związek Filatelistów Okręg w Bydgoszczy, Oddział w Toruniu (ed.): *Krajowa Wystawa Filatelistyczna*.

model were celebrated worldwide, from Brazil to Mongolia and from Rwanda to the Maldives. This says a lot about Polish cultural relations in the 1970s and the acceptance of heliocentrism. It shows which countries communist Poland had good relations and diplomatic contacts with and which countries ‘confirmed’ or re-arranged the Polish narratives about Copernicus.

First and foremost, Poland had good relations with socialist fellow states in Europe (like Bulgaria, Romania, GDR, and Hungary) and the Soviet Union. The iconography on the issued stamps of the socialist fellow states and the Soviet Union repeated those of Poland in previous years: a historical half-portrait of Copernicus together with one aspect of his life, mainly representations of the heliocentric model. Not only did the other socialist states in Europe replicate the Polish efforts, but also the Socialist Fellow states in the Americas (like Cuba or Venezuela), Africa (like the People’s Republic of the Congo or Libya) and Asia (like Mongolia or Vietnam) commemorated Copernicus in a mainly ‘Polish setting’.<sup>31</sup> Notably, many Socialist countries did not use the biographical dates of Copernicus on stamps but established continuity by writing 1473–1973 on them, seeing Copernicus as a revolutionary ancestor for their socialist projects and modern technologies.

In 1973 and 1974, there were not only socialist states but also democratic states of the Western world issuing stamps with Copernicus and his solar model (e.g. West Germany, France, and the USA). Furthermore, the Vatican issued a series on Copernicus. Whereas some few hundred years ago, the work of Copernicus was placed in the Church Index, in 1973, he was good enough to be commemorated as a catholic canon and astronomer from Toruń and sold to stamp collectors. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, stamp collectors and the issue of stamps was (and partly still is) a vast industry. Issuing stamps and currency has not only functional, symbolic and ideological reasons but is also a practice done for profit. This explains at least partly why Copernicus was also issued on stamps for his 500<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary in military dictatorships and autocratic countries, small countries and autonomous regions without significant economies at that time (like the Comoros and Togo).

The new aspect of commemorating Copernicus around 1973 on global stamps is the lineage from the Polish astronomer to satellites, space travel and space-ships, from astronomy to astronautics.<sup>32</sup> After the first humans landed on the

31 See fig. 2 at the end of the chapter.

32 The Copernican lineage started already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Giovanni Riccioli named first a lunar crater after Copernicus. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ‘Copernicus’ as nomenclature for the lunar crater was established. See Holden: *The Lunar Crater Copernicus*, pp. 114–117. It was not until 1935, when the International Astronomical Union (IAU) named the lunar crater officially after Copernicus. In 1973 a crater on the planet Mars was named after Copernicus. See Whitaker: *Mapping and Naming the Moon*.

moon, humanity was still fascinated by space and the new pictures of the galaxy. Whereas until then, Copernicus was the end of a lineage – from ancient observations to his heliocentric revolution – he became, after the moon landing, the beginning of a new lineage – from heliocentric revolution to visiting other planets at the end of the galaxy. Copernicus became, on stamps, a (Polish) ambassador of science.

This jump from astronomy to astronautics is beautifully exemplified on a stamp series from Guinea in 1973. Copernicus is placed in oval historical portraits in the corner of the stamps, while the central part is reserved for surrealistic images of planets, their surfaces and satellites. Copernicus looks like a small figural ancestor there, observing with satisfaction and some distance how humanity and new technology are creating new knowledge about the universe. In another example from a stamp series from Equatorial Guinea from 1974, Copernicus is not only the silent observer but also in the middle of the contemporary world, intertwined with new technologies and discoveries.<sup>33</sup> Like many other countries in the global south, Equatorial Guinea followed the direct Copernican lineage, from Renaissance astronomy to high-tech astronautics in modernity.

In the 1980s, the ‘hype’ for Copernicus was gone, but the memory culture, particularly in Poland, was still alive. The intense issuing of stamps with images of Copernicus stopped; in 1983, Poland issued no stamp to commemorate Copernicus. However, he remained on the 1,000 zloty banknote, which in 1975 was given a new look and was in circulation until 1995.<sup>34</sup> In the 1990s, after the Fall of the Soviet Union, Copernicus returned as a (Polish) ambassador of science on stamps: he represented Poland for the Expo in Sevilla (1992) and on common European stamp issues on discoveries in 1994. As far as I know, his 450<sup>th</sup> death anniversary in 1993 was commemorated only on a single Polish stamp. At the beginning of the new millennium (2001), he was shown together with the current Polish astronomer Aleksander Wolszczan, who discovered an extrasolar planet. Last but not least, Copernicus (or his monument in front of the city hall) was chosen to represent Toruń on stamps in the ‘Polish Cities’ series (2003). In the 1990s and 2000s, Copernicus was still commemorated on stamps, but the issues were reduced. Therefore, Copernicus functioned again more as a Polish ambassador of science on a European scale than a global figure of memory culture.

To sum up, the memory culture of Copernicus was at its peak for his 500<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary in 1973. The Polish Post started in the late 1960s to issue a whole stamp series to commemorate only Copernicus. Especially in Poland, the postal service tried to emphasise not only his astronomical observations

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33 See fig. 3.

34 See fig. 4.

but to give credit to his multifarious life, starting from being a translator from Greek to Latin in Cracow, his study time in Italy, being a canon in Frombork, writing coin treatise, doing duties for the bishop in Warmia, defending Olsztyn against the Teutonic Knights, and being a loyal citizen of the Polish crown. As for the stamps themselves, we can observe diversification in the memory culture of Copernicus, which should also be utilised for tourism. While Poland accentuated the biographical aspects of Copernicus, stamps in the global south celebrated Copernicus as a (Polish) ambassador of science, making space travel possible. Currently, Copernicus does not often appear on stamps or currency anymore but is still an essential part of Polish representation on a European scale and included in the lineages of sciences and discoveries.

## Summary

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nicolaus Copernicus is still an essential figure in Polish and global memory culture. Regardless of his many biographical aspects, he is mainly remembered for his astronomical observations and the heliocentric model. For this reason, there are planetariums (e.g. in Chorzów) and schools (e.g. in Austrian Steyr) named after Copernicus and monuments erected in front of planetariums (e.g. in Chicago). An Austrian TV programme looking for ‘the Mysteries of the Galaxy’ is named after Copernicus.<sup>35</sup> However, memory culture has shifted from astronomy to climate change and weather. For example, the German government chose ‘Copernicus’ for projects with climate-friendly solutions.<sup>36</sup> On an EU level, the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) offers data and tools about climate change.<sup>37</sup>

In this chapter, I showed how Poland utilised images of Copernicus on stamps and partly on currency for representation in a strategic manner. The iconography on stamps and currency mainly depicts, from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a younger Copernicus in a half portrait, taken from historical paintings and engravings. Copernicus is illustrated in Renaissance, theological and scientific clothing, with the astrolabe as an attribute. Additionally, since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, elements referring to astronomical sciences, astrological signs, the heliocentric model, and poems associated with him are cited, and there are references to the buildings, places, and spaces of his life. From a media theoretical

35 The programme shows mainly British productions and operates under the title *Kopernikus – Rätsel der Galaxie* in Austrian *Servus TV* since 2013.

36 *Kopernikus Projekte*.

37 *The Copernicus Climate Change Service*.

perspective, it shows that stamps and currency refer to other media and operate within a memory culture.

In comparison, Copernicus was first represented as a Polish or German astronomer. After World War II, he was made solely a Polish astronomer, who contributed to humanity. This institutionalisation of Copernicus in memory culture intensified in communist Poland during the 1960s. In 1973, for his 500<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary, Copernicus reached national users, international visitors to Poland and stamp collectors worldwide. Not only did the global stamp issues make Copernicus a (Polish) ambassador of sciences, First Day Covers (FDC), special envelopes and seals, postcards and special stamp exhibitions, as well as the historical methods of transport of the postal service (like by horse carriages, a glider, and balloons) accompanied the anniversary and created a philatelist media and memory culture. Tracing the history of stamp issues with Copernicus allows us to outline his lineage from a Renaissance scholar and genius to a (Polish) ambassador of science and astronomy to the world as the predecessor of modern cosmology and the discovery of new galaxies.

During my stay at the World Copernican Congress 2023 in Toruń, I could see that Copernicus was at least omnipresent at his birthplace. Besides the events organised through the World Copernican Congress, you could see school contests with handicraft work on themes related to Copernicus, a historically inspired ‘Copernican menu’ was offered at a restaurant in the old town,<sup>38</sup> an exhibition was on display in the town hall, his portrait was on many products in souvenir shops and on posters all over the city. Also, there was a ‘Taxi Copernicus’ operating; the seats in the trams had a heliocentric model cover on them, and quotations from Copernicus were on their windows. Additionally, one of Toruń’s hospitals was named after Copernicus and displayed murals of him on the hospital’s wall.

Copernicus, for the 550<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary in 2023, was remembered on a regional level<sup>39</sup> and countrywide.<sup>40</sup> Poland again issued stamps, medals, and currency for this occasion. Copernicus is still the great Pole from Renaissance times, making modern astronomy possible and changing the course of history. In the advertising text for the medal from the series *From Poland to the World* mentioned in the introduction, we can read: “Our genius astronomer and hero of scientific revolution”. Even the text says that Copernicus had many talents: in

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38 *Zjedz jak Kopernik*.

39 The Polish Region of Warmia issued in 2023 an own paper banknote to commemorate Copernicus and calls him *Kopernik Warmiakiem* (Copernicus from Warmia). For the multiple regional identities on Copernicus and its potential for conflict see chapter by Rafał Kleśta-Nawrocki and Radosław Sierocki in this volume.

40 There are still stamp issues in foreign countries commemorating Copernicus, but not on a global scale anymore. Stamp issues are known only from Bosnia and Hercegovina, Czechia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Poland and the Vatican.

astronomy, maths, being a medical doctor, working as a lawyer, economist, administrator and clergyman, who wrote several texts; the medal was issued to honour the 550<sup>th</sup> birthday of the ‘great Polish scholar’.

The commemoration of Copernicus, as this chapter showed on stamps and currency, has dynamic contexts. However, as the stamp market and the stamp audiences are changing rapidly, there must be new ways to address Copernicus as a (Polish) ambassador of science to the World if the commemoration of Copernicus should not be limited to decadal birth anniversaries. Looking holistically at Copernicus, his time and legacy offer at least one opportunity to keep his significance and memory alive.

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Fig. 1. The nationality of Nicolaus Copernicus has been contested between Poland and Germany since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Third Reich issued a stamp to commemorate the ‘German’ astronomer Copernicus in the territories of the General Government in 1943. Source: collection of the Author.



Fig. 2. In 1973, Nicolaus Copernicus was commemorated on stamps worldwide. The Mongolian People’s Republic stamps show the iconography like on other stamps of that time but give no reference to who is depicted or the occasion of the stamp issue. Source: collection of the Author.



Fig. 3. Past, present and future are intertwined. In the Equatorial Guinea stamp series from 1974, the astronomical activities of Copernicus in the Renaissance are visualised as overlaying with space travel, satellites, and the landing on the moon. Source: collection of the Author.



Fig. 4. Copernicus appeared on Polish banknotes in 1965 with a portrait of Jeremiah Falck. The issue from 1975–1995 showed the most often-used Toruń painting on the front and a stylised solar system on the back. Source: collection of the Author.



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Krzysztof Mikulski

## The Origin and Youth of Nicolaus Copernicus in the Light of a Literature Analysis: Yesterday and Today

### Abstract

This article compares the views of Nicolaus Copernicus's biographers on the origins and youth of the astronomer, who wrote before 1973 (Prowe, Birkenmajer, Wasiutynski, Górski), with the theses put forward by the author of this text in his 2015 monograph as well as several smaller studies. In separate sections defined as theses, the following topics are examined: the origin of the surname 'Kopernik', the Kraków and Nysa genealogy of the Kopernik family, the relocation of Mikołaj Kopernik (the astronomer's father) to Toruń, the origin of the Watzenrode family, the origin of Copernicus's grandmother, Katarzyna, the relationship of Łukasz Watzenrode senior (the astronomer's grandfather) to the Thirteen Years' war, Copernicus's birthplace, the seniority of the children in the Kopernik family, Nicolaus Copernicus's school years, the illegitimate son of Łukasz Watzenrode (the astronomer's uncle). In the summary, the author mentions some new publications that significantly expand our knowledge about subsequent periods of Copernicus's life, published on the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

Keywords: Nicolaus Copernicus; Toruń; Kraków; Koppersmed; Watzenrode

Prior to 2010, our knowledge about the origin and life of Nicolaus Copernicus had been shaped by the great biographies of the astronomer by Leopold Prowe,<sup>1</sup> Jeremi Wasiutyński,<sup>2</sup> Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer,<sup>3</sup> and in a sense, a general summary of this knowledge was offered by the more popular biography written by Karol Górski.<sup>4</sup> Many detailed findings were also included in works by Jerzy Sikorski on Copernicus's private life<sup>5</sup> and the timeline of his stay in Warmia,<sup>6</sup>

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1 Prowe: *Nicolaus Copernicus*.

2 Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*.

3 Birkenmajer: *Mikołaj Kopernik*; Idem: *Stromata Copernicana*.

4 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*.

5 Sikorski: *Prywatne życie*.

6 Idem: *Mikołaj Kopernik na Warmii*.

while Marian Biskup wrote about the astronomer's public activities,<sup>7</sup> and Teresa Borawska investigated the community of Warmian canons in Copernicus's era.<sup>8</sup> Background for Copernicus's biography was also provided by the biographies of some outstanding people associated with him: his uncle Łukasz Watzenrode (penned by Karol Górski)<sup>9</sup> and his friend Tiedemann Giese (penned by Teresa Borawska).<sup>10</sup>

In this text, I decided to combine the findings from these earlier studies and contrast them with the conclusions from my work on Copernicus's social environment, origin and youth.<sup>11</sup>

## Thesis 1: The Origin of the Surname 'Kopernik'

Karol Górski summed up the debate on the etymology of the surname 'Kopernik' (En: Copernicus): "The prevailing view among scholars is that the surname of the astronomer's family comes from the village of that name (Koperniki) located in Central Silesia in the episcopal territory of Nysa".<sup>12</sup> However, this outlook was not unanimously accepted by all Copernicus's biographers. Leopold Prowe entertained the possibility that this term might be related to the German word for copper (*Kupffer*), acknowledging the purely German origin of the name.<sup>13</sup> Jeremi Wasiutyński accepted that the surname originated from the name of the village of Koperniki, but tracing it back further, he thought it might have come from the Polish word for 'dill' (*koper*) or the German word for 'copper'. He mentioned a town not far from Koperniki, called *Kupferhammer* in German, and on this basis he formulated a thesis about the mixed origin of the surname: "Kopernik became Koppernik, combining an idyllic-Slavic herb with Germanic copper in one word."<sup>14</sup>

According to the current state of knowledge, it should be assumed that the astronomer's surname probably referred to a profession and was a linguistic hybrid consisting of the element 'copper' from the German word *Kupfer* and the Slavic ending 'nik', designating a person involved in the production or processing of copper. This surname may have originated on the Polish-German ethnic border in Silesia, in the area between the Owl Mountains and the Jeseníky

7 Biskup: *Działalność publiczna*, pp. 177–258.

8 Borawska et al.: *Mikołaj Kopernik i jego świat*.

9 Górski: *Łukasz Watzenrode*.

10 Borawska: *Tiedemann Giese*.

11 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*.

12 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 51; Bender: *Heimat und Volkstum*.

13 Prowe: *Nicolaus Copernicus*, p. 18.

14 Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, p. 23 [translations of all quotes in this article by Steve Jones].

Mountains, where copper ore was probably mined, along with the gold and silver deposits there. It is not impossible that a surname with a similar meaning and origin may also have emerged in neighbouring Lesser Poland at the same time, but the astronomer's direct ancestors would have probably hailed from Silesia.<sup>15</sup>

There is no evidence to connect the Kopernik family, the astronomer's ancestors, with the inhabitants of the village of Koperniki, much less with the village headmen of Koperniki and Iława near Nysa.<sup>16</sup> The genealogy of these families is relatively well known and does not include any possible ancestors of the astronomer. One representative of the family of village headmen from Iława and Koperniki also called himself 'Czawdener', which could have been the original family name. In most cases, representatives of this family referred to themselves as 'z Koperników' (*de Coppernic*; En: from Koperniki) and did not use the 'professional' form of the surname.<sup>17</sup>

The Kopernik family, present in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Silesia, Lesser Poland, Toruń and even in Brandenburg, belonged to different professional and social groups, and it is unlikely that they came from one place and one ancestor. This confirms the 'professional' origin of the surname. Thoughtless repetition of literature findings leads to the erroneous statement that one of the Koperniks came from Silesian (in today's understanding of that term) Zgorzelec (*Görlitz*), whereas in fact he came from German Brandenburg (according to Birkenmajer, rendered in a Slavic translation as Zgorzelec).<sup>18</sup>

## Thesis 2: The 'Kraków' and Nysa Genealogy of the Koperniks

Karol Górski concluded briefly: "Undoubtedly, the son of Jan and Bastgertówna, and the grandson of Mikołaj [a stonemason – author's note] was also Mikołaj, residing in Kraków since 1447 as a wholesale merchant. He has business ties with

15 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 253–257.

16 This possibility was mentioned by Georg Bender, see Bender: *Heimat und Volkstum*, followed by Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, p. 24.

17 The theory about the profession-oriented origin of the surname Kopernik had been discussed more fully earlier: Rospond: *Polskość Mikołaja Kopernika*. Although Rospond argued for the 'local' origin of the astronomer's ancestors' surname, he also drew attention to the 'professional' nature of the name of the village of Koperniki as a servant village. In a polemic with Rospond, Władysław Dziewulski put forward a theory (following Stanisław Grzybowski) about the Lesser Poland origin of the surname Kopernik from the village of Kopernia on the Nida in the Pińczowski powiat, see Dziewulski: *Problematyka*; Grzybowski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 10, 12. This view, perhaps difficult to defend geographically, also suggested the 'non-professional' nature of the surname from the Polish name for copper (*koper* = *kopernia*, from German *Kupffer* = *Kupfferhammer*).

18 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 264–270, 340; About the Kopernik family from Brandenburg: Birkenmajer: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 413–414, 421–423.

the same circle of merchants as his father – the Sweidniczers, the Teschners and others”.<sup>19</sup> The author of the ‘Kraków’ Kopernik genealogy was Adrian Krzyżanowski, who in the first half of the the 19<sup>th</sup> century already acknowledged the Mikołaj from 1396 as the astronomer’s great-grandfather.<sup>20</sup> This view was adopted by Leopold Prowe, although he identified Mikołaj (incorrectly) as a blacksmith.<sup>21</sup> Jeremi Wasiutyński was more careful in his investigations into the astronomer’s ancestors. It is true that he mentioned the Kraków Koperniks and concluded that they were one family that had grown affluent in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and advanced from the category of poor craftsmen to merchants-wholesalers, but he did not repeat the thesis about the relationship between the stonemason Mikołaj and the merchant Mikołaj, the father of Kopernik. However, he no longer had any doubts about the potential son of the same Mikołaj, Jan, a Kraków merchant, whom he considered to be the father of the merchant Mikołaj and the grandfather of Nicolaus the astronomer.<sup>22</sup>

There is no evidence, however circumstantial, stating that Mikołaj, a stonemason from Kraków, admitted to the town charter there in 1396, was the astronomer’s great-grandfather. Apart from two mentions from 1395 and 1396, he no longer appears in Kraków sources. He could not have been the astronomer’s ancestor for social reasons too. In those times, it was unlikely that the son of a stonemason could have achieved the status of a wealthy merchant, especially in affluent Kraków.<sup>23</sup>

Jan Kopernik, known from Kraków sources from 1429–1442, could not have been the astronomer’s grandfather due to his low social status and young age in the years 1429–1433 (he was a servant, then a household member of Jan Banke, then a younger partner of Jan Sweidniczer),<sup>24</sup> and the fact that he only took Kraków citizenship in 1437. This moment must also be linked with his marriage to the daughter of Piotr Bastgert, of unknown name. This set of dates shows that Jan could not have been the father of Mikołaj, a merchant from Kraków (and the astronomer’s father), mentioned in the sources since 1447 and already an adult at that time, but without civil rights.

Jan Kopernik did not hail from Kraków. He stayed there as a servant and journeyman of Wrocław resident and episcopal starosta of Nysa, Jan Banke, and

19 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 55.

20 Krzyżanowski: *Mikołaja Kopernika*, pp. 8–9.

21 Prowe: *Nicolaus Copernicus*, p. 37.

22 Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, pp. 24–25.

23 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 270–271.

24 Jan Banke, a peasant (*Knawe*) or servant (*Diener*) who appeared without a surname, can be identified with Jan Kopernik, who appeared by name from 1433. This issue was mentioned by Prowe: *Nicolaus Copernicus*, pp. 39–41, but he did not draw the correct conclusions regarding Jan’s age.

performed commercial transactions on behalf of his principal. It should be assumed that Jan Kopernik completed his apprenticeship as a merchant in Jan Banke's company, and after gaining independence in 1434, he entered into a partnership with Jan Sweidniczer from Kraków and Waclaw Reczil from Wrocław. Over the next three years, he probably accumulated appropriate wealth and married, which allowed him to obtain Kraków citizenship.

The reason for renouncing this citizenship a year later, in 1439, and regaining it in 1440 was not that he left Kraków, but due to his failure to procure a document confirming his 'good' birth within the 'statutory' one year and one day. After fulfilling this obligation, Jan became a citizen again. These facts confirm that Jan Kopernik came from outside Kraków.<sup>25</sup>

Jan Kopernik could be identified as Jan Koppersmed of Nysa, the son of Jerzy, who appeared as his father's heir in his hometown in 1442. At the beginning of this year, Jan was mentioned for the last time as a Kraków burgher, more importantly in a letter addressed to the Wrocław bench. It can be assumed that Jan headed from Wrocław to Nysa, where he took over his father's inheritance and finally settled down. Reference to him, his ancestors and descendants with the surname 'Koppersmed' was very typical in the Nysa court ledger. This book was written in German, and the Slavic names of the people entered in it, especially if their meaning was understandable in German, were translated into the official language of the ledger. Examples of such are provided by the Toruń court ledgers (Guttwort = Dobreslowo; Wachsbläger = Woszczyk, etc.). However, while this translation was natural in Nysa, beyond this area in Silesia this surname was written phonetically in its Slavic version, without translation into German, as 'Kopernik'. In Wrocław, Kraków and Toruń, the authors of books written in German no longer had the surname 'Kopernik' or 'Kopperrnik' so clearly associated with the German 'Koppersmed'. Here, the double 'p' in the surname 'Kopperrnik' does not prove that the entire surname was German, but that the first part was borrowed from German (German: *Kupfer*, in the Middle Ages *kopper* => Slavic Kopper-nik, although Koper-nik was also very common).<sup>26</sup>

The identity of Jan Kopernik and Jan Koppersmed is also supported by the relationship of the former with Jan Banke from Wrocław, first the bailiff and later the episcopal starosta in Nysa. Jan Kopernik could have found a merchant internship with the Banks thanks to his principal's relationship with Nysa.

Another premise for the identity of the Koperniks and Koppersmeds from Nysa is the criterion of name. Jerzy Koppersmed's brother was Andrzej, who died

25 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 273–275.

26 Ibid., pp. 276–281. Jeremi Wasiutyński also pointed to the possible 'identity' of the surnames Koppirnik and Koppirsmede, although he treated this concept as a 'tenuous guess', see Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, p. 24.

before 1436, leaving behind some dependent children. One of them could have been the astronomer's father, Mikołaj. In this case, the name Andrzej, given to the astronomer's younger brother, seems all too obvious. He would have received it from his grandfather. The Nysa Koppersmed family had some 'family' names. The son of Jerzy I was Jan III (after his grandfather), and his son was Jerzy II (again, named after his grandfather). It was therefore justified by family tradition that Mikołaj Kopernik name his younger son Andrzej.<sup>27</sup>

Jan Kopernik *alias* Koppersmed could therefore have been the cousin and not the father of Mikołaj Kopernik, the astronomer's father. Their kinship is indicated by their relationship with Kraków merchant Jan Sweidniczer. Before or immediately after his return to Nysa, Jan could have presented his cousin Mikołaj to his partner Sweidniczer, to take him as a merchant's apprentice.

### Thesis 3: Mikołaj Kopernik's Relocation to Toruń

Karol Górski concluded:

When the Thirteen Years' war broke out in 1454, Cardinal Oleśnicki lent the Association 2,000 florins. This amount was repaid to him by a consortium of Kraków merchants that collected the debt from Prussia. On behalf of this consortium, Mikołaj Kopernik, a merchant from Kraków, appeared in Gdańsk on 14 August 1454 and collected 400 florins towards the debt. [...] Rychło, before 1458, settled in Toruń, which during the Thirteen Years' War was a particularly important trading point on the edge of the war-torn areas. [...] In 1458, Kopernik was already a citizen of the city. [...] Rychło also married Barbara, the daughter of Łukasz Watzenrode, a magistrate in the Old Town of Toruń.<sup>28</sup>

As for the interpretation of the debt incurred by Prussian cities towards the 'consortium of Kraków merchants', Karol Górski applied a certain element of the 'Radio Yerevan'<sup>29</sup> jokes. Cardinal Oleśnicki was involved in this issue – not as a lender, but as a recipient of this money. Jeremi Wasiutyński interpreted this issue correctly.<sup>30</sup> Here is the sequence of events: after Mikołaj Kopernik gained financial independence around 1447, he probably remained in partnership with Kraków merchants Jan Sweidniczer, Bartłomiej Graudentz and Stanisław Gorteler. As a result, he was sent by his partners to Prussia in 1454 to collect the

27 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 281–282. On the importance of the name criterion in determining family relationships in Toruń (and, as the above facts show, in Silesia too, and probably also in other cities of the Hanseatic League), see: Idem: *Kryterium imionowe*, pp. 307–318.

28 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 55.

29 A type of question-and-answer joke existing in the Soviet Union and the former Communist Eastern bloc countries, featuring the fictional broadcaster called the Radio Yerevan.

30 Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, p. 25.

receivables that the inhabitants of Kraków were owed from the authorities of Gdańsk and Toruń. This indicates that it is difficult to overestimate the role of Jan Sweidniczer and his son Jerzy in Mikołaj's move to Prussia and his decision to settle in Toruń.<sup>31</sup>

Mikołaj Kopernik was already living in Toruń in 1455, not just from 1458.<sup>32</sup> He came there directly from Gdańsk on the same business for which he had been there a year earlier – repayment of the so-called *Cardinalen schuldt* – a debt of 2,000 Prussian zlotys incurred by the councillors of Gdańsk and Toruń with the above-mentioned Kraków merchants, as a 'gift' to Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki, from whom they sought support for the Prussian Union and the plan to incorporate Prussia into the Kingdom of Poland. None of Copernicus's earlier biographers paid attention to this direct reason for his father's arrival in Toruń. Jeremi Wasiutyński tried to connect it with 'limiting the autonomy of cities in Poland', especially in Kraków.<sup>33</sup>

Mikołaj Kopernik married Barbara Watzenrode no later than 1458, rather than three years later, as suggested by earlier studies. Describing Mikołaj as a citizen of Toruń in 1458 shows that his social status must have been regulated by then; therefore, he had obtained citizenship and was married (i. e., to Barbara Watzenrode). Her older sister, Krystyna, had been married since January 1459. In 1459, the Kopernik family received a tenement house from Łukasz Watzenrode on St Anna Street (Kopernika 15), which officially became their property under the latter's will in 1464.<sup>34</sup>

31 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 296–301; Jan Sweidniczer even moved from Kraków to Toruń and lived there between 1442–1447, which had not been previously noticed in the literature. The reason for this move was that Jerzy's son had settled in Toruń and set up a trading post, necessary for the free transfer of goods from Kraków to Gdańsk and bypassing the burdensome Toruń warehouse law. Mikołaj Kopernik would later play the same role as an agent of Kraków merchants in Toruń and Gdańsk. Due to such close relations between Jan Sweidniczer and Jan Kopernik, and then Jan and Jerzy Sweidniczer with Mikołaj Kopernik, one can suspect that they may have been related to each other. Maybe Jerzy Sweidniczer (family name among the Koperniks = Kopersmeds of Nysa!) was the son of Jan and the sister of Jerzy and Andrzej Kopersmed? This would obviously explain the protection that Jan Sweidniczer, and then his son Jerzy, gave Mikołaj Kopernik in Toruń. It would also explain the ease with which Kopernik (for whom Jerzy Sweidniczer would have been a cousin) joined the merchant elite of Toruń immediately after arriving in this city.

32 He was registered as a tenant at Szewska Street no. 4, together with another member of the Sweidniczer family – Mikołaj. It is true that he is mentioned without a first name as 'Coppernick', but identifying him as the astronomer's father is all too obvious – Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 304.

33 Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, p. 25.

34 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 303–306.

## Thesis 4: The Origin of the Watzenrode Family

Karol Górski's biography follows the view proposed in the literature by Ludwik Birkenmajer:

The Watzenrode family hailed, like the Koperniks, from Silesia. In Lower Silesia, in the then Duchy of Świdnica, there is a village today called Pszenno, and in German Watzenrode. This is probably where the Watzenrode family came from, whose members lived in Toruń since 1371. Before that, they could be found in Silesian cities, including Wrocław. It has not yet been possible to ascertain the genealogy of the Toruń Watzenrode family. [...] Gdańsk genealogies state that the father of Łukasz, the father-in-law of Nicolaus Copernicus, was Tiedemann, and his uncle Albrecht, who died in 1438 and 1440 respectively.<sup>35</sup>

Jeremi Wasiutyński also mentioned that the Watzenrodes came from Pszenno, pointing out the hereditary ownership of the prelature at the Collegiate Church of the Holy Cross in Wrocław by members of the Wierzbnow (von Weitzenrode) family. He even wrote that “the Wrocław scholastery can certainly be considered his [referring to Mikołaj Kopernik – note by Krzysztof Mikulski] official legacy of the Silesian Watzenrodes, a place he occupied for nearly forty years”.<sup>36</sup>

The family of the astronomer's mother, the Watzenrodes, undoubtedly came from the Holy Roman Empire, most likely – like many other patrician families from Toruń – from one of the Westphalian towns located in County of Mark. The most likely place from which the family took its surname was the village of Wazerath on the Prüm River, located today in Rhineland-Palatinate, Bitburg County, which was written in the 15<sup>th</sup> century as Watzenrode, Watzenroet and Watzenradt.<sup>37</sup>

There is no evidence to link the Silesian and Prussian Watzenrode families, primarily because of the different choice of Christian names in both families. Whereas in the Silesian branch this was quite arbitrary, in the Prussian branch it followed a clear pattern and names were inherited from ancestors, along both the male and female lines. Perhaps both families descended from common ancestors, but they migrated eastwards largely independently of each other, directly from

35 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 55; Birkenmajer: *Stromata Copernicana*, pp. 15, 21–22. The conviction about the links between the Wierzbnow family and the Watzenrode family and the Polish origin of the owners of Pszenno was recently refuted by Tomasz Jurek, who also pointed out that the Quas family came from Meissen, see Jurek: *Panowie z Wierzbnej*; Idem: *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 269.

36 Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, p. 26.

37 Georg Bender (see Bender: *Archivalische Beiträge*, pp. 64–65) was in favour of this town being the place of origin, as was Leopold Prowe (see Prowe: *Nicolaus Copernicus*, p. 57).

Westphalia. In the case of the Silesian branch, it is equally probable that they came from Hesse, located closer to Silesia.<sup>38</sup>

The Watzenrode family probably came to Toruń in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, with the second wave of Westphalian migration, one generation earlier than they appeared in local sources. The clear preference for the name ‘Fryderyk’ in subsequent generations leads to the hypothesis that this was the name given to the father of three brothers (Frederick II, Albrecht I and Jan), mentioned in the court ledger from 1369.

The wife of this Frederick I must have been an unnamed representative of the Wenke family, perhaps the daughter of Jan I (c. 1270–after 1312). The name Jan, which was also given to one of the brothers, may have come to the Watzenrode family from the maternal grandfather. Such affinity is clearly indicated by both families’ joint ownership of at least three tenement houses in the Old Town of Toruń (including tenement house no. 36 on the Old Town Square, which is extremely relevant in terms of Nicolaus Copernicus’s birthplace).

The Wenkes came from Soest, which additionally testifies to the likely Westphalian origin of the Watzenrodes. Therefore, it might be argued that the astronomer’s great-great-grandmother came from the Wenke family.<sup>39</sup> The ancestor of all later, male members of the Watzenrode family – and so the astronomer’s great-grandfather – was Albrecht I (c. 1340–1399), one of the three brothers (along with Frederick and Jan) mentioned in Toruń sources from 1371. His youngest son, and not the son of Albrecht II or Tylman as suggested in earlier literature, was Łukasz I (c. 1395–1462). Łukasz was the youngest child of Albrecht I; perhaps his mother died in childbirth. At the time of the death of the children’s mother, Albrecht invested the inheritance of his minors in 1395 in a house which he sold to Mikołaj Susenberg.<sup>40</sup>

## Thesis 5: The Origin of Copernicus’s Grandmother – Katarzyna

Traditionally, a short quote from Karol Górski’s book might be of value to start this discussion: “Łukasz [Watzenrode] married Katarzyna Peckau, a widow. She was from the house of Russe and had a son and two daughters from her first

38 Georg Bender also pointed out the possibility of the Watzenrode family coming from Hesse, see: Bender: *Archivalische Beiträge*, pp. 64–65.

39 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 84–85, 129–135.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 336–338. The genealogy of the Watzenrods was more correctly defined by Jeremi Wasiutyński, who knew the reference from 1417, which mentioned the brothers Albrecht (II), Tylman and Lucas, whom he considered (rightly) to be the sons of Albrecht (I), see Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, pp. 26–27.

marriage, one of whom was a nun in Chełmno, and the other married Hans Jelin from Toruń”.<sup>41</sup>

This indication of affinity with the Russe family turned out to be absolutely correct. Only it happened one generation earlier. The astronomer’s great-grandmother was the unknown daughter (c. 1350–before 1395) of Toruń councillor Łukasz I Reusse (c. 1315–1384). This is confirmed by the several references to his son Łukasz II (c. 1370–1443) as the uncle of Albrecht I Watzenrode’s children. The Reuss (Russe) family probably came to Toruń at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century from Russian lands. Perhaps they were of Russian origin.<sup>42</sup>

The astronomer’s grandmother Katarzyna (c. 1408–1476) came from the patrician Rusop family and was the daughter of Jan I (c. 1382–1416) and the sister of Jan II (c. 1411–1451).<sup>43</sup> Her origin is indicated by the fact that Łukasz and his wife inherited several properties in the city after Jan II (including the baths on Piekary Street, in the area of today’s remand center), that Łukasz I Watzenrode took care of Jan II’s widow, and the claims filed by Łukasz II to the manor in Papowo (Gerhardsdorf), which Jan II Rusop bequeathed to the Order. The Rusops came to Toruń at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, probably from Livonia. Another branch of this family, descending from Jan I’s brother, Herman I (c. 1387–1451), later settled in Piwnice near Toruń.<sup>44</sup>

Katarzyna’s mother was the unknown daughter (the astronomer’s great-grandmother) of mayor Jan I von Putten (c. 1340–1406, the astronomer’s great-great-grandfather) and Jutta Rubit (c. 1365–after 1418, the astronomer’s great-great-grandmother). After the death of her first husband in 1416, during the great plague, she married twice more – around 1417 to Jan von der Mersche (c. 1355–1422) and around 1425 to Habundius Winter (c. 1386–1460). The von Putten family came to Toruń in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, probably from Westphalian Dortmund. The Rubite family settled in Toruń at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. They may have come to Toruń from Silesia. In any case, there is no information that they hailed from Westphalia.<sup>45</sup>

41 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 56.

42 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 157–165.

43 Earlier, I tried to associate her origin, which turned out to be absolutely wrong during further research, with the Lodel and Kordelitz family, see Mikulski: *Watzenrodowie i kapituła*, pp. 358–371; Idem, *Wokół toruńskich*, pp. 97–127. In the case of the Kordelitz family, I was misled by the name Andrzej, which was rare among the Toruń patricians at that time (which could have been the reason for giving the name to the younger brother of Nicolaus Copernicus).

44 Idem: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 177–190.

45 Ibid., pp. 165–176.

## Thesis 6: Łukasz Watzenrode Senior's Stance Regarding the Thirteen Years' War

Karol Górski concluded:

Łukasz Watzenrode senior played [...] a lively role in the war against the Teutonic Order in 1454–1466. He was wounded during the siege of Łasin. He lent large sums of money to his hometown [...] His stepdaughter's husband, Hans Jelin, had conspired with supporters of the Teutonic Knights and was executed. [...] There is no doubt that he [Łukasz Watzenrode senior – note by Krzysztof Mikulski] stood faithfully on the Polish side. He died in 1462.<sup>46</sup>

It seems that the views held by the astronomer's grandfather on the Polish-Teutonic war were not so grounded. It would appear that Jeremi Wasiutyński's position on this issue was more accurate regarding the sources. Łukasz I Watzenrode (c. 1390–1462) may have been more closely associated with the anti-council opposition in Toruń in the initial period of the Thirteen Years' War. He may have avoided death for supporting the 1455 revolt by lending the city significant sums to wage the war. However, until the end of the conflict, he remained a firm advocate of ending hostilities as quickly as possible.<sup>47</sup>

## Thesis 7: Nicolaus Copernicus's Birth Place

Even after 1972, Karol Górski could not come to terms with the fact that Copernicus's house in Toruń had not been accurately identified. He wrote two more books about the history of these investigations.<sup>48</sup> He described this process in his biography:

The learned writer, Samuel Luther Geret, in a calendar published in 1760, reported that the astronomer was born in a corner house at today's Kopernika Street no. 30. [...]. When Napoleon came to Toruń in 1812, he called upon the city fathers to show him Copernicus's family home. [...] The terrified magistrate took Napoleon to a house which stood at today's Kopernika Street no. 30. [...] In 1871, Copernicus-Verein mounted a commemorative plaque into the wall of the house [...]. [...] Ten years after the plaque was placed, the legend collapsed. [...] Based on a very detailed examination of all sources, [Georg] Bender [later the mayor of Toruń] established beyond any doubt that Mikołaj Kopernik senior was the owner of the house adjacent to the homes of a cooper named Grawdenz, and Stefan Olsleger. Today, the address is Kopernika Street no. 17. [...] In 1923, a Polish commemorative plaque was placed on the wall of house no. 17. [...] In the atmosphere of awakened nationalisms, Copernicus was divided: the

46 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 56.

47 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 116–118.

48 Górski: *Domostwa*; Idem: *Dom i środowisko*, pp. 139–175.

German Copernicus was born in one house, and the Polish one in another. This was the case until 1939. Then, in the face of the approaching troops of the Third Reich, the Poles hid their plaque. In 1945, the Germans, as they retreated, took theirs. From then on, there was only one family home of Copernicus.<sup>49</sup>

Another ‘revolution’, this time on a slightly smaller scale, was provoked by some research by Tomasz Jasiński, who studied a larger number of tax registers and in 1986 verified Georg Bender’s assertions regarding one particular house. He determined that the tenement house belonging to Mikołaj Kopernik senior (the astronomer’s father) was located on St. Anna’s Street (cadastral no. 189, currently Kopernika Street no. 15). It should be clearly emphasised here that Jasiński’s findings regarding the location of this house are beyond question and should be considered final. This is confirmed by the lists I have prepared of the owners and tenants of all the houses on this frontage of St. Anna’s Street (today Kopernika Street). However, while the location of the plot on St. Anna’s Street is final, the issue of astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus’s place of birth is still open.<sup>50</sup>

Nicolaus Copernicus was probably not born in the house on St. Anna’s Street (today Kopernika Street no. 15), but in a tenement house on the Old Town Square (no. 36). Half of this tenement house already belonged to the Watzenrode family at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Only half of the tenement house, which belonged to the Wenke family at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, was the subject of a purchase and sale transaction in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. There is no evidence that the Watzenrodes sold the other half of the house. It should therefore be assumed that in 1468, Mikołaj Kopernik (the astronomer’s father) bought the other half of the tenement house and was able to move in there immediately with his family, as it was located in a much more exclusive place than the house on St. Anna’s Street.<sup>51</sup>

## Thesis 8: The Seniority of Children in the Kopernik Family

Karol Górski, cited here repeatedly, wrote:

She [the astronomer’s mother Barbara née Watzenrode – note by Krzysztof Mikulski] could have been helped by her older son, Andrzej, in business matters. He was, as researchers assume, the oldest of the children. [...] Two surviving sisters were born between Andrzej and Nicolaus [...] Andrzej would have been at least 16 years old at the time of his father’s death [1483]. [...] Eight years after his father’s death, Andrzej and

49 Idem: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 65–71; Bender: *Archivalische Beiträge*, pp. 116–123; Idem: *Weitere archivalische*, pp. 99–116.

50 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 316–317; Jasiński: *Dom rodzinny*, pp. 861–884.

51 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 316–319.

Nicolaus, then eighteen years old, enrolled at the University of Kraków. He would have been 24–26 years old then. What he did during those 8 years [...] is unknown.<sup>52</sup>

We owe all the confusion about the seniority of children in the Kopernik family to the genealogical table made by Stanisław Bornbach in Gdańsk. In the case of the better-known genealogy of the von Allen family and their Gdańsk descendants, Bornbach knew the exact dates of birth and – in most cases – death of the people included in the table. In the case of the children of Mikołaj and Barbara Kopernik, he only gave their first names. Leopold Prowe assumed that the order indicated there was consistent with the chronology of the children's birth.<sup>53</sup> Following his lead, this solution was accepted by Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer and Jeremi Wasiutyński.<sup>54</sup> The previously cited Karol Górski tried to explain Andrzej's seniority and such a long delay in the continuation of his education in a very specific way: "It should be assumed that Andrzej had been involved in trade – with apparently poor results, if he enrolled at the university and chose a clerical career. It could not have been easy for him to learn, since he was no longer young."<sup>55</sup> This outstanding researcher 'handled' the next problem – Andrew's subsequent departure to university – even more easily: he stated that it would have been impossible to extend the period of Andrzej's studies in Italy indefinitely, and sent him there together with his brother in 1496.<sup>56</sup>

All Copernicus biographers seem to have made one basic mistake: they uncritically approved Bornbach's chronology of the children, when they could have simply been listed in alphabetical order (Andreas, Barbara, Catharina, Nicolaus). Bornbach simply did not know their birthdates. This assumption shows that Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) was not the youngest child of Nicolaus and Barbara née Watzenrode. Andrzej was probably two years younger than him (approx. 1475–1516/1518). In all the documents in which they are both mentioned, the brothers appear in this order of seniority. This explains, simply and more rationally, Nicolaus's rapid promotion to the group of Warmian canons and his departure to study in Italy two years earlier.<sup>57</sup>

During Mikołaj and Barbara Kopernik's marriage, several children could have been born and died in infancy. This is suggested by the time interval between the date of marriage and the possible birth of the eldest daughter (Barbara – around 1460) and three younger siblings (Katarzyna – around 1471, Nicolaus – 1473,

52 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 79.

53 Prowe: *Nicolaus Copernicus*, pp. 84–90.

54 Birkenmajer: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 7; Wasiutyński: *Kopernik*, p. 28.

55 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 79.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

57 I conducted a more extensive analysis of this issue in: Mikulski: *O starszeństwie dzieci*, pp. 653–666.

Andrzej – around 1475). At least four children may have been born between 1460 and 1471.<sup>58</sup>

## Thesis 9: Nicolaus Copernicus's School Years

Referring to the biography written by Karol Górski, one may cite:

We have no information or even a trace of tradition as to what school Nicolaus Copernicus attended before he and his brother left for the University of Kraków in 1491. This leaves room for hypotheses and disputes between researchers. There are three cities at stake: his hometown of Toruń, Włocławek and Chełmno. Birkenmajer ruled out the school in Toruń since, in his opinion, it was a low-level 'school'. According to him, Copernicus went to school in Włocławek. [...] Barbara Kopernik moved here to her brother, after losing her husband, and she ran a farm and educated her sons.<sup>59</sup>

This thesis had already been rejected by Karol Górski himself, following Schmauch's lead, pointing out that Łukasz Watzenrode rarely stayed in Włocławek.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, one might add that the young Nicolaus must have started his education around 1480, and at that time his father was still alive and his uncle Łukasz was not required for child care. Copernicus's relationship with Mikołaj Wódka of Kwidzyn (d. 1494) should also be relegated to the realm of legend.<sup>61</sup>

Our contemporary knowledge about the parish school of St. Johns in Toruń is already extensive enough that there is no need to question its potential role in Nicolaus Copernicus's education. It must have ensured students a level of education that was high enough for many sons of Toruń's bourgeois (not only merchant) families for them to continue their education at universities. The astronomer could have attended it between 1480–1488/1489, or perhaps even until 1491. At the beginning of his education, the rector could have been Albert Teschner, a brother of the previous rector, Jan Teschner M.A., and then in 1486 a certain Herbodus M.A. Karol Górski also pointed out that during Copernicus's studies, the school could have been managed by the later parish priest of St. Johns, Hieronim Waldau, undoubtedly a man of wide intellectual pursuits, and Jan Grundentcz, master of arts and bachelor of law, known from a document

58 Idem: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 309–314.

59 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*.

60 Ibid., p. 78; Birkenmajer: *Stromata Copernicana*, pp. 50–51; Schmauch: *Die Jugend*, pp. 100–131; Barycz: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 19.

61 Mikulski: *Wątki włocławskie*, pp. 652–664; see also Chachaj: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 143–144, where Birkenmajer's insinuations are criticised regarding the appearance of Mikołaj Wódka in Włocławek around 1488, so as to 'give him a chance' to meet Nicolaus Copernicus, cf. Birkenmajer: *Mikołaj Wódka*, pp. 38, 42–43, 125–129, 132–133.

from 1493. In any case, the position of rector of the parish school in Toruń was filled permanently (with short breaks at the most) between 1483 and 1507.<sup>62</sup>

The thesis regarding the low level of education at the Toruń school suggests that somehow Copernicus was encouraged to look for other schools outside his hometown, before leaving to study in Kraków. Apart from Włocławek, which should be definitely rejected, the only such place could have been the Brethren of the Common Life school in Chełmno, which was distinguished by a high level of teaching and strict discipline in the boarding schools for students run by monks. The choice of Chełmno to continue his studies could also have been influenced by the presence of the astronomer's close relatives – aunt, sister, and probably also mother – in the local nunnery. A possible direct cause of Copernicus's choice of Chełmno was the impossibility to go to Kraków in 1489 due to the conflict between his uncle Łukasz Watzenrode and King Casimir over the bishopric of Warmian. Sending his nephew to the capital at such a moment could have been treated by the ruler as a provocation.

Further studies on the history of the Toruń school in the times of Copernicus's youth, however, lead us to consider Karol Górski's thesis: that Copernicus only studied in Toruń, although he did not exclude the possibility that he continued his education in Chełmno.<sup>63</sup> Copernicus could just as easily have waited for a more favourable political situation in Toruń as in Chełmno – for instance, by serving as an alumnus and helping to teach younger students.

## Thesis 10: Łukasz Watzenrode's Illegitimate Son

Some details from the life of his uncle Łukasz Watzenrode, especially his youth spent in Toruń, lie on the margins of research on Copernicus's biography. Łukasz II Watzenrode (1447–1512), son of Łukasz I and later bishop of Warmia, the astronomer's uncle, had an affair with Elżbieta (c. 1450–before 1496), daughter of wealthy merchant Paweł Rackendorff. Earlier literature suggested that this affair took place after Łukasz's return from his education in Italy after 1474. The future bishop's bride was to be the daughter of Albert Teschner, rector of the Toruń school.<sup>64</sup> Both Prowe and Górski sought the father of the 'mistress' of the future bishop in the Teschner family, because this was the surname of the bishop's natural son Filip. They were wrong about at least two things – the timing of the affair and the mother's origins.

62 Archiwum Państwowe w Toruniu: *Akta miasta Torunia*, Kat. II, dz. III/79, fols. 8, 11v, 15v, 20, 27, 32v, 37v, 41, 43; information for the years 1483–1491.

63 Górski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 80–82.

64 Prowe: *Nicolaus Copernicus*, pp. 80–81; Górski: *Łukasz Watzenrode*, p. 9.

This affair happened in 1469, after Łukasz II returned from his education in Cologne, when, as a newly graduated M.A., he became the rector of the parish school at the church of St. Johns. The affair produced a son, Filip (c. 1470–1523/1534), who received his surname from his adoptive father, Jan Teschner, a Toruń councillor (c. 1448–1483). So far, attempts were made to trace his mother from this family. The identity of the mother of the natural son of the later bishop was established on the basis of a note from 1496 in which Mikołaj Kober, the second husband of Elżbieta Rackendorff, settled disputes over the inheritance of his deceased wife with his stepson Filip Teschner. By marrying off the probably still pregnant Elżbieta to Jan Teschner (to cover up the scandal?) Łukasz was able to continue his studies in Bologna and rise to high church positions in the future. Another element of the transaction concluded between Łukasz's relatives and the Teschner family was the transfer of the management of the St. Johns' school to another Jan Teschner (c. 1440–c. 1474), the cousin of Elżbieta's husband.<sup>65</sup>

## Summary

The origin and childhood of Copernicus has been researched by biographers of this outstanding astronomer at least since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first academic approaches in this regard were made around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Leopold Prowe's biography, written in 1883, remained the basic source of information about Copernicus's life until the end of the 1970s. Jeremi Wasiułyński's pre-Second World War study and the popular biography by Karol Górski usually repeated Prowe's findings, introducing some additions, primarily based research by Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer – I hasten to say, not always methodologically correct, leading to erroneous conclusions, at least in biographical terms. The culminating moment in research on Copernicus in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the astronomer's birth in 1973. After that date, research on this topic gradually faded. It became 'fashionable' in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Interestingly, this resulted primarily in subsequent editions of previous monographs or the publication of collections of previously published articles and brochures in connection with the approaching subsequent anniversary of Copernicus's birth, falling in 2023. In a sense, this spurred my work on the social environment, origin and youth of Copernicus starting from 2015, which opened a new stage in research on the astronomer's biography, critical of previous findings. This study was supplemented in 2023 with at least two new, critical studies of the previous historiography, regarding Copernicus's

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65 Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 120–123, 328.

education (Marian Chachaj)<sup>66</sup> and his contribution to the creation of Gresham's law (Miroslaw Bochenek).<sup>67</sup> It may also be worth supplementing these findings about the later periods in Copernicus's life with my study of Anna Szilling, who is considered to have been Copernicus's 'femme fatale' in the last years of his life. I offer a thesis that the astronomer's relationship with this woman was close and not necessarily merely of an erotic nature.<sup>68</sup> During the celebration of the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the astronomer's birth, several new versions of earlier studies appeared (including the previously cited timeline of Copernicus's stay in Warmia by Jerzy Sikorski, significantly expanded compared to the previous publication) and new topics related to his biography, which will probably result in further publications in the coming years.

[Translated by Steve Jones]

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66 Chachaj: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 3.

67 Bochenek: *Mikołaj Kopernik*.

68 Mikulski: *Życie prywatne*, pp. 207–212.

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Krzysztof Zamorski

## Copernicus in the Historiography of the 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Subject of Dispute, Analysis and Commemoration

### Abstract

This article strives to answer three questions. Firstly, can the evolution of Polish historiography be seen in historical research and works on Copernicus and, if so, how may it be characterised? Secondly, when studying Copernicus, to what extent do we examine his place of memory and to what extent do we examine the role of his thoughts in the long, evolving process of how man imagines the world? Thirdly, how has the manner in which Copernicus was presented publicly changed in historical literature?

Keywords: Nicolaus Copernicus; place of memory; Polish historiography; professionalisation; representation

### Introduction

When I worked as the secretary of the late Rector of the Jagiellonian University Józef Andrzej Gierowski, a symbolic coincidence occurred. It was 1984 or 1985, and the secretariat received numerous books posted to the rector by various authors. A large package also arrived. As secretary, my task was to present the correspondence to the rector, underlining the salient points. So I had to analyse and sort the correspondence, and often write replies. Not only did this package contain huge volumes of typescript – two volumes, as far as I remember – but it was also accompanied by a cover letter indicating that the author was sending his work, the fruit of many years' effort, to the rector of the oldest Polish university, whose pride was, is and will be Nicolaus Copernicus. Throughout its numerous pages he refutes the theory of our greatest star. What was one to do with such an important discovery? The rector sent them to the manuscripts department of the Jagiellonian Library, where a response was written for the 'discoverer' informing him that the rector had received this most important work with tremendous

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interest, and that it would be the jewel in the crown of a collection created especially for it, bearing a fine and telling name: *Extravagantia*.

Over time, when I started studying material for this essay, the thought occurred to me that, given the considerable scope of literature and subject matter, the task I had undertaken might yield a result similar to the one mentioned above.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, I decided to limit the study period to the outbreak of World War II. This subject appeals to me due to the specific nature of its historiographic literature, especially in relation to the development trends of our historiography, which from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the outbreak of the Second World War embarked upon an extensive and bumpy journey leading from history as a branch of rhetoric to history as a science. Therefore, if I were to specify the research questions that I asked myself, they would read as follows.

Firstly, considering the fact that Copernicus in context of Polish historiography of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries witnesses several important periods of its development, an important question arises as to whether this evolution is visible in historical research and works on Copernicus and, if so, how it is characterised?

Secondly, I am one of those historians who approaches the mutual relations between historical memory and history as a narrative about the past with great restraint, because I distinguish memory from history while also noticing numerous connections between them. I must admit that the nature of Polish historiographical literature on Copernicus put me in a very difficult situation. Indeed, memory and commemoration are ubiquitous, not to say decisive for the progress of research, both in terms of its development and limiting this development. In fact, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Copernicus became a kind of place of memory, as Pierre Nora would call it. An interesting issue from the point of view of history as a science is the question to what extent the memory of Copernicus determined historical research at that time? When examining Copernicus, to what degree do we examine the place of memory and to what extent do we examine the role of his thoughts in the long, evolving process of how man imagines the world?

Thirdly, Polish historiography on Copernicus throughout the analysed period has broadly entered into what we today call public history. How it may influence a wide audience is changing, and, as is always the case when history is strongly related to commemoration, this does not depend on research findings in a straight and singular manner. It is therefore interesting to ask how the manner in which Copernicus was presented publicly has changed in historical literature.

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1 We already have several historical bibliographies of Copernican literature in Poland, each of which contains from several hundred to several thousand items on Copernicus written in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

I would like to make some observations on these substantive issues for the aforementioned time periods, taking into account the specificity of the development of Polish historiography in general and the specificity of changes in the literature on Copernicus. The outstanding contemporary Copernicologist and historian of science, Michał Kokowski, distinguishes the following periods in Copernican research: 1795–1918, 1918–1945, 1945–1989, and from 1989 to the present day.<sup>2</sup> I do not intend to question this entirely sensible division, but I do see it from a slightly different perspective than Kokowski. From the point of view of the development of historiography, I have modified it slightly. Firstly, I see a need to add an initial period running from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to 1873, preceding the full professionalisation of historical research. The second period, from 1873 to the outbreak of World War II, was a time when historical research became more professional thanks to the widespread adoption of historicism model, which arrived in Poland mainly from German historiography. In Poland, this would also be the moment when Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer set the foundations for reliable history of science as a branch of historical research. The third period of Copernican research covers the Second World War – a poorly researched topic from the historiographic point of view, marked by an intense Polish-German identity dispute, temporarily focused mainly on the four hundredth anniversary of Copernicus's death in 1943. I would view the fourth and fifth periods in line with Kokowski's proposal. Here, I shall tackle the first two time frames.

### **'Copernicalia' in Polish Historiography From the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Until 1873**

To start with, it should be remembered that for the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Copernicus's main oeuvre was condemned to the List of Forbidden Books (*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*). There it landed in 1616 thanks to Galileo's trial, but in fact, due to the ongoing dispute between supporters of the heliocentric theory and Ptolemy's system, the banning of the book did not end the debate, especially since its entry on the list bore the annotation *doc corrigitur* (until corrected).<sup>3</sup> It is worth adding that Copernicus's work was equally critically received by the big names of the Protestant church in Germany – Luther as well as Melanchthon. Discussion also raged in the Holy Office itself. On 7 May 1757, the Congregation of the List of Forbidden Books approached Pope Benedict XIV with a proposal to remove from the list all works

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2 Kokowski: *Co dalej z Kopernikiem?*, p. 54.

3 Pawluk: *Na marginesie*, p. 244.

(except those by Galileo) that dealt with Earth's rotation. Copernicus's theses were to be treated as hypotheses that required proof.

Nevertheless, Copernicus's name and work appeared on the list until 1819.<sup>4</sup> Formally, the provision in the church censorship office acknowledging Copernicus's theory as a hypothesis was abolished by Pius VII. The Congregation for the List of Forbidden Books issued an appropriate decree on 16 August 1820, which the Pope approved in 1822. In the same year, he formally authorised the publication of Copernicus's work.

In Catholic Poland, Copernicus and his theory became an important point of patriotic reference during the Enlightenment. From the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Polish opinion largely viewed the inclusion on the forbidden list as a formal, almost non-existent record. Copernicus, his theory and his memory occupied an increasingly important place in patriotic references to the past, a visible embodiment of the former might of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

It seems that the first anniversary of Copernicus that was of significance for Polish memory was the celebration of the bicentenary of his death in 1743, commemorated not so much in Poland but at the court of Augustus III in the presence of members of the ruling house. Johann Christoph Gottsched then gave a lecture about Copernicus. In terms of shaping how recollection of Copernicus would function in terms of identity in Poland, it is relevant that the Grand Chancellor of the Crown, Andrzej Stanisław Załuski, took part.<sup>5</sup>

One of the first Polish supporters of Copernicus's theory who took steps to popularise it despite the provisions of the forbidden book list was Prince Józef Aleksander Jabłonowski. As Barbara Bienkowska writes:

He published as many as two books devoted to Copernicus's theory, but actually it is only one book in two editions. [...] Kołłątaj believed that Jabłonowski simply bought this book from some Italian scholar and then published it under his own name. Regardless, the book was published in several editions and fulfilled its intended role. Jabłonowski dedicated the 1763 edition to the Pope. This imposed an appropriate attitude towards religion on the book, which Jabłonowski adheres to everywhere.<sup>6</sup>

Prince Jabłonowski's 'Copernicological' endeavours may be perceived in various ways, but his merits are in no doubt regarding the commemoration of the astronomer. In addition, he funded the world's first monument in the form of a bust of Nicolaus Copernicus by the Kraków sculptor Wojciech Rojowski.<sup>7</sup>

4 Ibid.

5 Śniadecki: *O Koperniku*, p. XXV.

6 Bienkowska: *Kopernik i heliocentryzm*, p. 222 [translations of all quotes in this article by Steve Jones].

7 This precedence is emphasised by Krzysztof Mikulski, see Mikulski: *Mikołaj Kopernik. Życie i działalność*, p. 59. However, we must remember the two previous attempts. The first was a design of a tomb epitaph by Marcin Kromer from around 1589, the second was a monument in

Another example of reviving Copernicus's memory is Adam Naruszewicz's *Historia narodu polskiego* [*History of the Polish Nation*]. In volume VII of this important Polish historical work published in 1788, he added a short, separate note at the beginning of the volume preceding a dedication to the king, where he concludes, *inter alia*, that Copernicus "invented and revealed outstanding world systems which all enlightened nations accepted and which consigned his name to immortality".<sup>8</sup>

Jan Śniadecki was of fundamental importance for the social positioning of the Copernican question in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the Polish-Lithuanian state, regardless of the examples mentioned above, knowledge about Copernicus's theory was very diverse until he started working in this field. It was undoubtedly expanded by Piarist schools, and – as Mirosława Chamcówna points out – even in Jesuit circles statements were made that of all theories describing the cosmos, Copernicus's theory was the most difficult to refute.<sup>9</sup> However, at the University of Kraków, a supporter not of Copernicus's theory but of Tycho Brache's was none other than Józef Alojzy Putanowicz, one of the most eminent representatives of the Enlightenment in Poland. A silent supporter of Copernicus was Jakub Niegowiecki, whose observations of the sky based on Copernicus's calculations, according to Chamcówna, were unfairly ridiculed by newer historiography based on an unflattering opinion expressed by Kołłątaj.<sup>10</sup>

A presentation by Jan Śniadecki (1756–1830) in 1782 at the inauguration of the Physical College, which he had just started running next to the department of higher mathematics he already directed, proved to be a breakthrough moment. At that time, this young scholar, who had just returned from extensive education outside the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and was the first to teach physics in Polish, gave a lecture entitled *Pochwała Mikołaja Kopernika* [*In Praise of Nicolaus Copernicus*].<sup>11</sup> Here, for the first time in Polish, Śniadecki presented to the audience not only the fate of Copernicus's discovery and the attitude of great scientists towards it, but also outlined the foundations of his theory. He believed that the greatness of Copernicus's discoveries would contribute to the realisation of ideas standing before the linchpins of the Polish Enlightenment in creating a national identity for a wide group of educated citizens. He said:

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the church of St. Johns founded by Toruń citizen and doctor Pyrenius. All were compiled by Ignacy Polkowski, see Polkowski: *Pomniki*, pp. 82–83. Jabłonowski's endeavours in this field have recently been described in more detail by Stanisław Roszak and Agnieszka Wieczorek, see Roszak et al.: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 38–40.

8 Mostowski (ed.): Naruszewicz: *Historia narodu*, p. VII.

9 Śniadecki: *O Koperniku*, p. XXVIII.

10 Ibid., p. XXVII.

11 Śniadecki: *Pochwała Mikołaja Kopernika*, pp. 146–268; Chamcówna (ed.): Śniadecki: *O Koperniku*.

Knowledge of physics skills, most carefully adopted by the Illustrious Educational Commission, supported by the king and fuelled by the charity of his lordship, the prince, the bishop of Płock [Michał Jerzy Poniatowski 1736–1794 – note by Mirosława Chamcówna] will best extend the glory of Copernicus and revive the lost memory of so many of our great fellow countrymen, when they wake the nation from its lethargy in which luxury and ignorance, having lulled it to sleep, have cast it as prey to violence and jealousy, when they will enrich the country with their benefits, when, having instilled nobler feelings in the citizens, they will wipe away the tears the oppressed homeland sheds over the graves of its former glory and power.<sup>12</sup>

However, other work by Śniadecki is of greater significance for Copernicus's fate in Polish historical memory. It grew from the trends accompanying the birth of professional history mentioned in the introduction. One was the establishment of scientific societies that strove to promote science per se, including knowledge and memory of the past, and often also cooperate and assistance in gathering memorabilia of the past according to the described principle of collecting antiquities.

Specifically, this concerns the endeavours of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Sciences, established in 1800. Jan Śniadecki became one of its first and most illustrious members. Bearing in mind his famous speech from 1782, he was entrusted with the mission of preparing a broader treatise. He was to deal with the following issue: “By paying homage to Nicolaus Copernicus, demonstrate how much the mathematical sciences, namely astronomy, owed him during the era in which he lived, which predecessors he drew from and how, and how much they owe him presently”.<sup>13</sup>

The matter seemed even more pressing because in 1800, in the third volume of *Panteheon der Deutschen*, a serious analysis of Copernicus's life and work by physicist and mathematician, freethinker and aphorist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg was published posthumously.<sup>14</sup> Śniadecki completed his essay and sent it from Kraków on 31 August 1802, and presented it on November 16 at a public session run by the Society. It was published in the second volume of a periodical widely known in the history of Polish science – the *Roczniki Warszawskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk* [*Yearbooks of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Science*]. The essay touched on a number of issues, including the state of astronomy before Copernicus, the astronomer's biography, how Copernicus “had come to recognise old mistakes and correct them, and what dangers he had had to avoid”.<sup>15</sup> Next, he outlined the basic, key elements of the astronomer's discovery

12 Chamcówna (ed.): Śniadecki: *O Koperniku*, p. 165.

13 Ibid.; title page of the essay.

14 Lichtenberg: *Nicolaus Copernicus*, pp. 1–116. Subsequent editions were reprinted three times in 1805, during anniversary celebrations in 1943 and in 2008.

15 Chamcówna (ed.): Śniadecki: *O Koperniku*, p. 15.

and their importance for the subsequent development of science. An important and interesting element of his considerations is the inclusion of letters in a footnote, which include, *inter alia*, a description of the results of an expedition made by Tadeusz Czacki and Marcin Wolski to Copernicus's burial place in Frombork (*Frauenburg*). This trip had been organised under the auspices of the Warsaw Scientific Society. This is how Czacki describes its results in the letter quoted by Śniadecki:

We entered the church; next to the altar dedicated to its canonry lies a gravestone, partly covered by a marble porch surrounding the central church altar. Clumsily carved spheres and the letters spelling *Nicol* mark the resting place of the esteemed remains. The honourable chapter, composed of both kindness and zeal for the glory of the common nation, allowed us to remove the obstacles. After washing the stone, we found the letters *Nicol...Cop...us* along with *Obiit An... M...* in the second line. The other letters had been worn out. After removing the stone, we were present at the digging (because canons and bishops had not had any graves in this cathedral before the 18<sup>th</sup> century), we only found some fragments of rotten bones; the chapter kept some for itself, gave us five pieces together with the solemn signatures of the first prelates of the certificate on them. We both have these souvenirs. We send one part to the church in Puławy and two we return to the Congregation.<sup>16</sup>

This work highlights several important issues related to the development of our historiography. First of all, it was not written by a historian but evolved from the natural sciences and was penned by a young, flourishing scientist after a long period of education in countries at the center of the Enlightenment. It may be characteristically compared with the 'commemorative supplement' by historian Adam Naruszewicz. The difference is enormous. Naruszewicz's work contains nothing more than memory, but here knowledge and rational justification have a chance to change what is essentially involuntary historical memory into historical consciousness. However, one ought to emphasise the infrastructure of science that was already in progress. Śniadecki quickly advanced in the structures of the reformed Kraków Academy, and the text cited here was written because of his work for the Warsaw Scientific Society. It should be underlined that this was the first lecture in Polish to present the essence of Copernicus's discoveries and their significance so broadly. It refers to the Polish Renaissance, where Copernicus found understanding from Wapowski, Marcin Kromer, Marcin Biem of Olkusz or Walenty Fontana, not forgetting the earlier Wojciech of Brudzew or the later Jan Brożek. On the other hand, Śniadecki emphasises the role and importance of memory of the great astronomer, but he does not give memory the exclusive right to discover the past, as did Naruszewicz. For Śniadecki, memory arises from a qualitative analysis of achievements. At the same time, these were actions typical

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 125–126. The trip took place in 1802. The letter was sent on 12 August of that year.

of a period of growth that combined discovery about the past with building the foundations of civic identity based on historical memory (not to be confused with national consciousness as understood today), which mark the beginning of the modern concept of nation. These endeavours supplement memory with material evidence of the past as its visible sign. This is observable in the souvenirs and bones from Copernicus's grave, which were sent to Puławy and the Warsaw Society. In his opinion, history has much in common with what he calls 'heritology'. This was expressed in the collection of national antiquities, and historians themselves were referred to as researchers of antiquities. This term, as Rafał Swakoń points out, was also used by Antoni Zygmunt Helcel and Józef Szujski.<sup>17</sup> Let us recall that, according to Swakoń, we find ourselves in a period when 'heritology' holds significance for narratives about the past.

Let us return to the essay on Copernicus itself, which would have multi-layered meaning for the years to come.<sup>18</sup> Firstly, for many decades it was the only serious source of knowledge about astronomy in Polish. Secondly, it played an important role in spreading knowledge about Copernicus beyond Poland. Its numerous translations into French, Italian, English and finally into Latin became the basis for knowledge about Copernicus as a Pole. In the historiographic tradition, the essay is considered to have played a huge, even fundamental role in the growing Polish-German dispute over the astronomer's nationality. Some of the later Copernicologists attribute particular relevance to it in this regard.<sup>19</sup>

Śniadecki himself was very emotionally involved, especially in the French translation of his work on Copernicus. Until 1820, there were three French editions of his Copernicus text thanks to his scientific contacts with the then French astronomy and the role this community played in his education as a scientist, as well as the intensifying dispute about the origin of the astronomer, which increasingly overshadowed considerations about the importance of his ideas for world science.

Therefore, it seems that the dispute over Copernicus's nationality grew in importance as the process of forming the modern concept of the nation as an ethnic community intensified. I am convinced that the dispute over Copernicus's nationality would serve as an example that would help create an extremely interesting academic work on the characteristic features of this phenomenon. An important stage in this process was the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the issue of civic

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17 Swakoń: *Profesjonalizacja badań historycznych*, a doctoral dissertation written under my direction within doctoral procedure that is currently undergoing. The dissertation is not yet published. I cite it with the permission and knowledge of the Author.

18 Recently, Wojciech Kaliszewski wrote interestingly about the importance of this dissertation for the development of Polish science, see Kaliszewski: *Mikołaj Kopernik okiem Jana Śniadeckiego*.

19 E.g. Piotrowski: *O uznanie*, pp. 169–176.

nationality was raised. On the one hand, it was not so important at that time, because in 1773, Frederick the Great had no doubts that Copernicus was a Pole, although in 1778 in a letter to Voltaire he already saw him as a great Prussian.<sup>20</sup> In the *Républic des Lettres*, a cultural space existing in Europe since the Renaissance, one that transcended national borders, the appearance of such information in print in the posthumous edition of Frederick II's correspondence had a huge impact on the consciousness of scholars during that era. In *Bibliographie astronomique, avec l'histoire de l'astronomie depuis 1782 jusqu'à 1802*, published in 1803 by Jérôme Lalande, former director of astronomical observatories in London, Berlin, St. Petersburg and Bologna, Lalande does not refer to Frederick, but sees Copernicus as the son of a Prussian subject named Zepernick.<sup>21</sup> As a source of information, he mentions one of the most important causes of the later acerbic Polish-German misunderstandings in this respect – a work entitled *Tornische Chronik* published in 1727 by the then mayor of Toruń, Jakub Zerneck. This was the reason for the first, rushed translation of Śniadecki's French work by Tęgoborski. Corrected by Śniadecki himself, it was republished in 1818 due to the increasing attribution of German origins to Copernicus in the Francophone sphere. The latest, third edition of this work in French is in turn related to the history of the Copernicus medal.<sup>22</sup>

In 1818, a project was launched in Paris by the French medalist Amadée Durand to mint 100 medals and publish biographies of 150 outstanding people. In the original version, Copernicus appeared on the medal as a Prussian. The matter was publicised by mathematicians Adrian Krzyżanowski and Wincenty Karczewski.<sup>23</sup> They managed to explain to Durand that Copernicus was not a Prussian, and here Śniadecki's text, among others, proved most helpful. In exchange, they both agreed to share 100 Copernicus medals. Śniadecki's work was also significant when it came to raising the issue of Copernicus's relationship with Poland in English and Italian translations. Two erroneous German translations also appeared where the issue of Copernicus's relationship with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was omitted.

Besides Śniadecki's work, 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature on Copernicus was supplemented with 28 biographies by 1873, according to Ignacy Polkowski.<sup>24</sup> One of the most interesting is the one written by the above-mentioned Adrian Krzyżanowski, entitled *Kopernik w Walhalli* [*Copernicus in Walhalla*]. This text was

20 Information according to Walerian Piotrowski, *ibid.*, p. 169.

21 Lalande: *Bibliographie astronomique*, pp. 62–63.

22 According to Piotrowski: *O uznaniu*, pp. 170–173. Mirosława Chamcówna also writes about this in: Chamcówna (ed.): Śniadecki: *O Koperniku*, p. XLVI.

23 They later argued about precedence in this matter, see Piotrowski: *O uznaniu*, p. 175.

24 Polkowski: *Kopernikijana*, 1, p. VIII. It is worth noting that Fr. Polkowski himself says that he presents 30 biographies, when in fact he managed to present a total of 29.

published in *Kurier Warszawski* on 7 February 1843, and was later reprinted numerous times in other Polish newspapers of the era.<sup>25</sup> What was it about? Between 1830–1842, a German memorial was erected on the Bräuberg hill above the Danube in the town of Donaustauf near Regensburg in Bavaria – a wonderful edifice honouring the greatest representatives of the German nation. The name Valhalla itself comes from the Nordic sagas about the place of glory for fallen warriors. The monument was built by the Bavarian king Ludwig I, and the first list of heroes was established by German historian Johannes von Müller. Nicolaus Copernicus appeared among the busts of the greatest figures in German history. This provoked Krzyżanowski's article. He wrote as follows:

In vain did Ludwik Wachler, on behalf of the German nation, announce in his esteemed work *Handbuch der Geschichte der Literature*, Leipzig 1824, volume IV, page 207, the following: 'Von den andern Nationen ist die Polnische mit vollem Rechte stolz auf ihren Nicolaus Copernicus aus Thorn, Schüler des Albert Brudzewski in Kracau'. And in vain did he repeat the same words in a later edition of this work. In vain did Dominic Francis Arago, known in Europe as a great astronomer and a righteous man, speak in an eulogy for his compatriot Laplace, published in a periodical entitled *L'Institut*, 26 May 1842, about our Copernicus in the following manner: 'Il s'éteignit tenant, dans ses mains défaillantes le premier exemplaire de l'ouvrage qui devait répandre sur la Pologne une gloire si éclatante et si pure.' The Bavarians liked to assign Copernicus the Pole to the Germans, giving him an *Ehrenplatz* between Walhall's Genossen, and this violence unworthy of the nineteenth century was proclaimed by an article from München on 15 July 1842, published by German newspapers. And could it be that Valhalla, from the realm of mythology as a word, and as a building dedicated to German memory that stands today on the Danube near Regensburg, belongs to poetry, so that I may say that Valhalla is the grave of truth?<sup>26</sup>

It is always worth remembering that Copernicus received great recognition from Alexander von Humboldt. He was present in Warsaw at the meeting of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Sciences in 1830 in connection with the exhibition of the Copernicus monument. He then publicly stated that "our country is rightly proud to have such a famous compatriot. But even in his correspondence with the same society he offered assurance that Copernicus was a native of Poland and nowhere else. (Evidence in volume XXI, *Roczniki T[owarzystwa] P[rzyjaciół] N[auk]*. 1830, page 5)."<sup>27</sup> It is worth underlining that his comments on the im-

25 Krzyżanowski: *Kopernik w Walhalli*.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

27 See note to *Kosmos* by Alexander Humboldt in Baranowski (trans.): *Obraz postępu*, p. 210. Information about Humboldt's position is confirmed by Rychlicki, see Rychlicki z Wilczej Woli: *Pomnik Kopernika*. The note I refer to contains quite intentional and pretentious information that, spiritually speaking, von Humboldt had already seen Copernicus among the Germans, which, to be honest, is not fully confirmed in Humboldt's text. Its author wanted to repeat in *Kosmos* what Humboldt had said about Copernicus in Warsaw in 1830.

portance of Copernicus's theory included in the largest of his published work, *Kosmos*, constitute, after Lichtenberg and Śniadecki, an important and erudite explanation of the theory itself at that time and its role in the development of astronomy and natural sciences.

The opening ceremony of the monument to Nicolaus Copernicus in Warsaw exemplifies this particular form of his commemoration. Rojowski's bust in Toruń has already been mentioned, as has the one in Bavarian Valhalla. In the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of commemorating a great compatriot with a monument grew in popularity in Polish lands. Kraków played a leading role here. Even before the formal removal of *De revolutionibus* from the index of prohibited books in 1820, Father Canon Mateusz Dubiecki erected a modest monument to the astronomer in the garden of his manor house in Kraków. However, the funerary monument established in the side wall just in front of the main altar in the academic church of St. Anna enjoyed much greater fame and importance. It was created on the initiative of Father Sebastian Sierakowski, former rector of the University of Kraków.

During the period of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, projects were already underway to build a large monument in Toruń, inspired by the invaluable Warsaw Society of Friends of Sciences. After the Congress of Vienna, the location of the monument had to be changed. A decision was then made about Warsaw. Its author was a Danish sculptor of Icelandic origin named Bertel Thorwaldsen. It was he who decided to place the statue on Krakowskie Przedmieście Street in front of the house of the Society of Friends of Sciences. The monument's unveiling ceremony took place on 11 May 1830.

Upon a signal from the President [Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, then president of the Warsaw Scientific Society – note by Krzysztof Zamorski], the veil was removed and the splendid features of the great man were revealed, while music played with a cantata by Mr. Kurpiński, a member of the Society, and the sun broke through the clouds for a moment to illuminate the face of Nicolaus Copernicus.<sup>28</sup>

The history of another large monument that still exists today is partly related to scientific work. In 1853, Leopold Prowe, a professor at the secondary school in Toruń, later an outstanding expert on Copernicus's life and work, publisher and author of comments on the German edition of the astronomer's writings and letters, as well as contributor to the German edition of *De revolutionibus* in 1873, published one of his first, major works on Copernicus – a biography.<sup>29</sup> For decades, the Polish reception of this work was mostly influenced by the fact that

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28 *Kuryer Polski*, 155. 12.5.1830, quote from Polkowski (ed.): *Kopernikijana*, 3, p. 75.

29 Prowe: *Zur Biographie*. See Idem: *Monumenta Copernicana*.

Prowe argued that Copernicus was German. This affected the reception of the other claims he made, until Birkenmajer's time.

Meanwhile, the idea of a monument to the astronomer in his hometown, conceived during the administration of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, remained alive among the citizens of Toruń. In 1839, a society was established for the construction of the monument and fundraising began.<sup>30</sup> Incidentally, Prowe was the one most in favour of writing the Latin version of Copernicus's surname with two p's. The statue was made in 1851, according to the design of the Berlin sculptor Fryderyk Tieck, and although it was brought to Toruń in 1852, it was unveiled in the market square on 25 October 1853.<sup>31</sup> The ceremony was attended by guests from various parts of the world. Jan Baranowski, director of the Warsaw astronomical observatory, came from the Kingdom of Poland. Shortly before the unveiling of the monument, the society responsible for its construction was renamed *Copernicus-Verein für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn* (Copernicus Association for Science and Art in Thorn). The following year its statute was published.<sup>32</sup>

In Poland, the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's death was notably celebrated in 1843. A number of articles were published presenting Copernicus as a person and the significance of his work.<sup>33</sup> It was on this anniversary that the idea of publishing a Polish translation of Copernicus's work was conceived. The idea most likely stemmed from the famous artistic and literary salon of the Łuszczewski family, which was frequented by Adrian Krzyżanowski, a student of Jan Śniadecki, philosopher and historian Dominik Szulc, and Jan Baranowski. The young astronomer, Jan Baranowski, a promising employee at that time, and director of the Warsaw Astronomical Observatory from 1848, dealt with the substantive aspects of the project. He also undertook the translation of the original *De revolutionibus*, which then lay in the hands of the Nostiz family in the Czech Republic – in the private library of Count Erwin Nostiz from Mierzyce, to be more precise. The first Polish edition of Copernicus's works was published in the original Latin and in Polish translation in 1854.<sup>34</sup> Dominik Szulc, the author of a thesis about Toruń's original Slavic name of Tarnów Mazowiecki, was originally asked to write Copernicus's biography for this edition. However, he did not have

30 Niedzielska: *Dzieje Toruńskiego*, p. 115.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

32 See *Statut des Copernicus-Vereins*.

33 *Kopernik (Mikołaj)*, reprinted in: Polkowski (ed.): *Kopernikijana*, 2, pp. 107–110; Oleszczyński: *Wspomnienia o Polakach*, pp. 149–155, reprinted in: Polkowski (ed.): *Kopernikijana*, 2, pp. 121–125; Skimbrowicz: *Mikołaj Kopernik Polak*, pp. 37–38; Czyński: *Prospekt na żywot Mikołaja Kopernika*, pp. 327–328; Idem: *Żywot Mikołaja Kopernika*; Krzyżanowski: *Dawna Polska*; Idem: *Kopernik w Walhali*; Idem: *Mikołaja Kopernika założyciela*; Wiszniewski: *Historia literatury polskiej*, pp. 391 and 476–494.

34 Baranowski (ed.): *Nicolai Copernici Torunensis*.

time to write it, although it was in fact published later in a very extensive version in *Gazeta Warszawska* in 1855.<sup>35</sup> Given this, the Warsaw edition published a biography written by Julian Bartoszewicz, a Polish supporter of the Lelewelian school of history, who had already printed Copernicus's biography in the 1852 Calendar a few years earlier. He corrected and significantly expanded the earlier biography. The publication of Copernicus's works was also accompanied by a substantive introduction written by Baranowski, which – albeit broadly related to Śniadecki's work – was, and remains, another important Polish explanation of Copernican theory. It is important that the publication of the works was not limited to *De revolutionibus*, but also included Copernicus's treatise *O monecie* [*On money*], which was important for economic thought.

The publication of Copernicus's works in 1854 contributed significantly to the possibility that his ideas might be presented more substantively. Perhaps this is not clearly visible in the article on Copernicus by Joachim Lelewel, considered by some sections of Polish historiography to be the father of scientific history in Poland. He published a treatise entitled *Kopernika tudzież jinnych astronomów polskich w jeografii zastuga* [*Copernicus and Other Polish Astronomers in Geography*] in 1857 in the *Przyroda i Przemysł: tygodnik poświęcony przystępnemu wykładowi wszystkich gałęzi nauk przyrodniczych, praktycznemu ich zastosowaniu do potrzeb życia, tudzież najnowszym odkryciom i wynalazkom* [*Nature and Industry: Weekly Devoted to Publicising Thought On All Branches of Natural Sciences, Their Practical Application to Everyday Needs, As Well As the Latest Discoveries and Inventions*]. This was a key journal for the popularisation of knowledge on natural sciences in Poland during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> The above-mentioned dissertation by Lelewel constitutes an insightful study on historical geography as it relates to the history of maps and the representations of Polish lands therein, intertwined with a debate about latitude and longitude, where the starting point for the considerations was Copernicus's calculations according to which Kraków and Frombork are located on the same meridian.

While one may wonder to what extent Lelewel pushed our historiography onto modern tracks, there are no such doubts regarding the head of the first ever faculty of Polish history, established in 1869 at the Jagiellonian University by Józef Szujski. His fundamental *Dzieje Polski* [*History of Poland*] only mentions Copernicus in brief summaries outlining the cultural background of the Renaissance in Poland.<sup>37</sup> However, this is not all that Szujski did to broadcast Copernicus's achievements and his place in the historical identity of Poles. The fact

35 Szulc: *Życie Mikołaja Kopernika*, reprinted in Polkowski (ed.): *Kopernikijana*, 2, pp. 235–287.

36 See Lelewel: *Kopernika tudzież jinnych astronomów*. The treatise was later published separately in Poznań in 1862, and was also included in Lelewel: *Polska dzieje i rzeczy jej*, 19, 1865, pp. 271–294.

37 Szujski: *Dzieje Polski*, 2, pp. 78, 184; *ibid.*, 3, pp. 81, 208.

that the first meeting of the Kraków Academy of Learning, having transformed from the Kraków Scientific Society, took place on 18 February 1873 and was entirely devoted to the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth is considered symbolic. The agenda included the opening ceremony led by the president of the Academy, Dr. Józef Majer, followed by a ceremonial lecture given by its first secretary general, Józef Szujski. The latter titled his lecture *Polska w wieku Kopernika* [*Poland in the Age of Copernicus*]. He was followed by the then professor of the Jagiellonian University and soon to be Minister of Finance of the Austrian Empire, Dr. Julian Dunajewski, who devoted his speech to his work on money. Finally, Lucjan Siemieński delivered a poem entitled *Wizerunek Kopernika* [*The Image of Copernicus*].<sup>38</sup> In the lecture he gave, Szujski honestly emphasised that his knowledge of natural sciences and astronomy did not allow him to fully and clearly present the merits of Copernicus's achievements. He began with the issue of Polish-German disputes over the origins of Copernicus. He wrote something that is worth remembering and quoting today, knowing that when these words were uttered, they marked an actual transition of history as a branch of knowledge in Poland from a rhetorical state to a mature science. Szujski wrote:

Perhaps the near future, by clearing out all contemporary tendencies from historical research, will witness a struggle between the barren and the ridiculous, and will introduce a more correct criterion for assessing whose great historical names belong. We do not mean here a platitude about humanity. We do not want to move Copernicus, as an astronomer, to the field of cosmopolitanism; we only wish that his connection with Poland and the history of Poland would cease to be a matter faltering behind the discovery of this or that detail of his life, when the main features, when his entire plight announces that his name be emphatically linked with the name of Poland.<sup>39</sup>

However, realising the importance of the discovery, he strove to outline the political, social and cultural changes in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the reign of Casimir IV Jagiellon to the last Jagiellon dynasty. He devoted considerable attention to the Warmian chapter and Bishop Łukasz Watzenrode himself in the light of his correspondence with the Jagiellonians from 1499 until the bishop's death.

Szujski, in addition to historical dissertations, is known to have written plays popularising the most important events in the history of Poland. One of these dramas is dedicated to Copernicus<sup>40</sup> and took place the day after the above-mentioned meeting of the Academy of Arts and Sciences on 19 February 1873. It became another important point of Copernicus celebrations in Kraków. Apart

38 *Dwa pierwsze publiczne posiedzenia*.

39 Szujski: *Polska w wieku Kopernika*, p. 133.

40 *Idem: Kopernik*, pp. 178–220.

from the Academy of Arts and Sciences, the anniversary was also celebrated at his alma mater – the Jagiellonian University.<sup>41</sup>

The Kraków celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth was, of course, not the only one. Polish and German celebrations took place at the same time in Toruń.<sup>42</sup> The initiator of these celebrations was Fr. Ignacy Polkowski. His efforts resulted in a specially appointed commemoration committee in Toruń to write an album for 1873 with several artistic reproductions and an explanatory text in two languages, a biography and a commemorative medal.<sup>43</sup> Besides this program, Polkowski himself prepared a monumental publication. I took the term *Kopernikijana* from that epochal edition of *Materiały do pism i życia Mikołaja Kopernika* [*Materials on the writings and life of Nicolaus Copernicus*] by Fr. Ignacy Polkowski.<sup>44</sup> Polkowski was a clergyman, historian, archivist and biographer, and – towards the end of his life – a librarian at the Chapter Library and director of the episcopal archives in Kraków. Few today remember that he was also one of the main organisers of the First General Congress of Polish Historians in Lviv, which took place on the anniversary of Jan Długosz's birth in 1880. Polkowski was also a well-known bibliophile and the owner of the largest collection of Copernican works in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was second only to that collected in Rome by Artur Wołyński.<sup>45</sup> This publication is a kind of *silva rerum*, the first volume of which contains translations of Copernicus's minor writings and letters into Polish, the first account about *De revolutionibus* and a preface to trigonometry by Jerzy Joachim Rheticus, three dissertations by Jan Baranowski, then director of the astronomical observatory in Warsaw, and the works of 19<sup>th</sup>-century historians, two dissertations by Dominik Szulc and one by Joachim Lelewel.<sup>46</sup> The second volume is a collection of 29 biographies of Copernicus, written from the time of Szymon Starowolski to 1873. Volume no. 3 was only published in 1875 – delayed, compared to the previous two. It is a collection of texts written about Copernicus in 19<sup>th</sup> century literature (the Copernicus medal in France, translations of Jan Śniadecki's work) and Polkowski's own works. Polkowski was preparing great anniversary celebrations in Toruń. Jan Matejko was supposed to create a painting for this ceremony, but had no time to finish it, although his work still holds a special place in the pantheon of the Copernican

41 *Natalem Nicolai Copernici*.

42 Wencel-Kalembkova: *Polskie obchody*, p. 214.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 215. See also *Album*.

44 Polkowski (ed.): *Kopernikijana*, 1–3.

45 Bender: *Ignacy Polkowski*, p. 323. Artur Wołyński founded the Nicolaus Copernicus Museum at the University of Rome, where his *Kopernikana* were held.

46 Baranowski: *Przedmowa do dzieła Mikołaja Kopernika*, the first Polish edition of Copernicus with Polish and Latin texts; Szulc: *O Tarnowie Mazowieckim*; Idem: *O znaczeniu Prus dawnych*.

imaginarium. The celebrations themselves, especially the church part with the speeches of Father Jażdżewski and Polkowski, ended with a lawsuit for both of them. As a result of this trial, Polkowski was sentenced to a fine of 50 thalers and three months in prison.<sup>47</sup> The anniversary celebrations in 1873 outside Poland were organised by emigrants in France and England after the November Uprising.

The Copernicus Association (*Copernicus-Verein*) was also responsible for organising the German celebrations in Toruń. The fruit of these efforts was a German edition of Copernicus's works. Provego's involvement should also be mentioned. Besides him, three other professors from the Toruń high school worked on the publication. From an academic point of view, this edition aroused universal respect. It was based on the Nostitz manuscript and subsequent printing editions differed. Later, in 1879, it formed the basis for the first translation of Copernicus's writings into German.<sup>48</sup> This anniversary received wide publicity. It was carefully reported in the Polish and foreign press.<sup>49</sup>

I focus a great deal on Father Polkowski and his work because it reflects a certain 19<sup>th</sup>-century specificity in terms of the development of professional historical research. Rafał Swakoń, when investigating the professionalisation of history as a science based on the example of the Kraków milieu, points out that professional historiography has been undergoing a fundamental transformation since the 1970s. Therefore, I consider the year 1873 to be a breakthrough in the shift in Copernican historiography during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Although in the publications produced on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth in 1873 (celebrated so widely for the first time) as well as in the period preceding it, Copernicus's thought was obviously given some serious consideration, one should admit that in most cases these were the work of people associated with science. Historical works, of which there is no shortage, revolve mainly around the topic of Copernicus's origins and attempts to include Copernicus in historical communication memory in the discovery and creation of national identity. The works written during this period basically ignore Copernicus's achievements in economics, law and medicine, tending to merely mention that such achievements were made. Copernicus accompanied some purely historical works in popular tales or in the correspondence of the great Polish writers.<sup>50</sup> Copernicus and his work are cautiously introduced to the narrative summarising the history of Poland. How Copernicus is featured in Józef Szujski's work is characteristic, where his play about Copernicus competes with

47 Wencel-Kalembkova: *Polskie obchody*, p. 222.

48 Borawska: *O wydaniach De revolutionibus*.

49 Powidaj: *Czterechsetletnia*, pp. 450–460; *Die vierte Säcularfeier; Rocznica Kopernikowska* [1873].

50 Siemieński: *Wieczory pod lipą*; Kraszewski: *Beiträge zur Beantwortung*, pp. 205–208.

the anniversary lecture. The discussion regarding Copernicus's identity heated up in this period in obvious connection with the process of shaping the nineteenth-century vision of the ethnic nation. On the other hand, the celebrations of 1873 showed that knowledge about Copernicus was clearly expanding. Here I mean a paper given by Dunajewski, an otherwise outstanding financier of the era. During this period that commemorated the anniversaries of Copernicus's birth and death, a trend finally emerged to embed Copernican research in historiography (not only Polish). This would gain traction over the years to come.

## Copernicus in Times of Professional Historiography in Polish Historicism 1873–1939

1873 ushered in the era of scientific historiography, during which historians themselves would make significant research achievements in Polish historiography. Unfortunately, this would not put an end to disputes over nationality. In professional knowledge, however, an attitude is increasingly observed, emphasised so clearly by Szujski in his paper at the ceremonial meeting of the Academy of Learning. In German academia at this time, two serious Copernican studies were made. These were the fruits of further research on a person about whom I wrote extensively for the previous period, the great and oft-quoted work of Leopold Prowe. He is joined by Adolf Müller.<sup>51</sup> However, in Polish and international Copernican literature, a separate niche would be carved out for the studies made by the real creator of the Polish history of science, Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer.

Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer (1855–1929) received appropriate training in the field of natural sciences. In 1881, he became *doctor habilitus* in theoretical physics and professor at the first history of science faculty in Poland.<sup>52</sup> This gave him good grounding for involvement in the history of science at a level practically unattainable for a historian, even the best educated in this profession. At the same time, it must be underlined that Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer was deeply

51 Prowe: *Nicolaus Coppernicus*; Müller: *Nicolaus Copernicus*.

52 Details about the life and career of Ludwik Antoni are presented in *Birkenmajer Ludwik Antoni*, pp. 102–104. The first significant research on Birkenmajer's biography was made by Tadeusz Wąsowicz, and then Jan Garewicz, and especially recently Mieczysław H. Markowski, see Wąsowicz: *Życie i działalność*; Garewicz: *Między marzeniem a wiedzą*; Markowski: *Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer*. I do not intend to deny these undoubted achievements, but I must say that, apart from fragmentary statements in works on the history of historiography of this era, his work seen from a historical and historiographic perspective has not been seriously analysed. A major exception here is the only collective work: Kokowski (ed.): *Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer* and Kokowski's research postulates included in a dissertation from 2012. See Idem: *Co dalej z Kopernikiem?*

involved in the mysteries of professional historical research. His work overlapped with the natural sciences, which he pursued in parallel with his interests in the history of science. He began by studying Marcin Biem of Olkusz, an outstanding astronomer and lecturer at the University of Kraków at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As a professor at the same University, Birkenmajer began studying the most outstanding student of the University of Kraków, Nicolaus Copernicus, in connection with 1900, which marked the approaching 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the restoration of the university by Queen Jadwiga. He dates the start of his research on Copernicus, to which he devoted his entire life, to 1892.<sup>53</sup> The Academy of Sciences supported his research by creating a special commission to assist him. This visible help turned out to be particularly important during scientific trips, mentioned in more detail later.<sup>54</sup> Many years of studies led to what is undoubtedly Birkenmajer's greatest work: *Mikołaj Kopernik. Część I: Studia nad pracami Kopernika oraz materiały biograficzne* [*Nicolaus Copernicus. Part I: Studies on Copernicus's Works and Biographical Materials*], published by the Academy of Learning as a gift to the Jagiellonian University on the occasion of his jubilee.<sup>55</sup>

This in-depth volume included an analysis of the resources held by many Polish and European libraries (the Czartoryski Library, the Jagiellonian Library in Kraków, the Ossoliński Library in Lviv, the court library in Vienna, the royal library in Munich, Dresden, the libraries in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Lund, Wrocław, Leipzig, Frombork, Nuremberg, and finally a consultation of the original *De revolutionibus* at the Nostitz family. Experienced palaeographer Aleksander Czuczynski helped with the concordance of the manuscript and print. The entirety of the research on Copernicus he conducted is described substantively as follows:

Two standout points here: the nationality of the great man, which formed the background of his upbringing, education and subsequent civic activity, and secondly the genesis of his immortal discovery and the internal process that ultimately turned his thoughts into tangible action. He unravelled one of nature's mysteries and went down in history. These two different points are unevenly considered in biographies. The lack of balance between the two was certainly not conducive to a faithful representation of this person as a whole.<sup>56</sup>

53 Birkenmajer: *Stromata Copernicana*.

54 Kokowski: *Co dalej z Kopernikiem?*, p. 55. Kokowski rightly emphasises Birkenmajer's contribution to the institutionalisation of the history of science in Poland. In 1905, the Commission for the History and Bibliography of Mathematical and Natural Sciences was established, which he chaired, and in 1910, the Commission for the History of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, where he acted as secretary.

55 Birkenmajer: *Kopernik*.

56 *Ibid.*, p. VII.

In his studies on Copernicus, he broadly applied the principle – developed among historians associated with the Kraków Academy of Learning – of conducting research in loco through frequent trips to archives and libraries. As he himself enumerates, while researching Copernicus's life and work, he made a total of two expeditions before the publication of the work discussed above. Subsequently, he undertook a third research trip to Germany, Sweden, Finland and Petrograd, and in the case of Sweden this was his second visit. In later years, he continued his travels, making a total of five trips altogether.<sup>57</sup>

The scope of research on Copernicus conducted by Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer is remarkable and remained unrivalled for many years, and even today it is difficult to write about Copernicus without referring to his findings. Birkenmajer's studies excelled both in terms of documentation, in the sense that he accessed and read previously unknown sources, and in terms of interpretation. His interpretations extend back to the various life circumstances of the great star as well as the scientific and philosophical background of Copernicus's discoveries. The sheer quantity of research is impressive.<sup>58</sup> Significantly, his work was translated into a number of European languages, partly executed in Poland and partly abroad. French, German and English translations were made, which awaited review.<sup>59</sup>

As previously mentioned, research on Copernicus at the turn of the century significantly expanded its scope. First of all, one may notice studies on Nicolaus Copernicus the economist, which focused on the importance of Copernicus's famous work *Monetae cudendae ratio* on the minting of coins, unveiling the law today known as Gresham's law.

The value of this research was espoused at the turn of the century by some outstanding Polish economists distinguished for developing this discipline and initiating economic history: Stanisław Głąbiński (professor of political economy at the Jagiellonian University in Lviv), Marian Gumowski, the most outstanding historian of Polish numismatics so far (Professor at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), Adam Szelański (outstanding historian at the Jagiellonian University, head of the economic history faculty before Bujak took over) and Adam Krzyżanowski (professor and rector of the Jagiellonian University, pres-

57 Birkenmajer: *Stromata Copernicana*, p. V; Wąsowicz: *Życie i działalność*, p. 9.

58 Birkenmajer: *Wiadomości*; Idem: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, 1: *Studia nad pracami*; Idem: *Marco Beneventano*; Idem: *Mikołaj Kopernik*; Idem: *Nowe wiadomości*, pp. 22–23; Idem: *Filozoficzne podłoże*; Idem: *Leonardo da Vinci*; Idem: *Mikołaj Kopernik i Zakon Krzyżacki*; Idem: *Kopernik jako uczony*.

59 Anneliese Birch-Hirschfeld made a German translation, with manuscript rights, see review of this work: Brachvogel: *Ludwig Anton Birkenmajer*, pp. 548–556.

ident of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences).<sup>60</sup> Studies in this area came to the fore not only in Poland, but also in Germany, England and the USA. In England, Henry Dunning Macleod wrote about Copernicus's theory of money.<sup>61</sup> In Poland, research on Copernicus as a doctor and lawyer also became apparent at that time. In fact, the first linguistic study of his Latin was published.<sup>62</sup>

Poland's independence brought further and numerous studies on Copernicus by Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer. After his death, the faculty he established at the Jagiellonian University was taken over by his son Aleksander Birkenmajer for two years, and in 1932 it was dissolved. This is a sad episode in the development of Polish historical science during this period, especially because other areas of history were thriving, as evidenced by the fact that Poland was entrusted with the organisation of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Historical Sciences, which took place in Warsaw and partly in Kraków in 1933.

Even in Birkenmajer's research, the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's birth was a standout moment, celebrated in Poland in 1923 on a grand scale. As part of the celebrations, another play, *Nicolaus Copernicus*, was performed in Kraków, this time written by Ludwik Hieronim Morstin. In my opinion, the most valuable fruit of these celebrations, apart from the aforementioned monograph on Copernicus written by Birkenmajer, was a commemorative book written entirely by a Lviv academic centre.<sup>63</sup> It was published by the Lviv Committee for the Celebration of the 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Nicolaus Copernicus, written especially to commemorate the anniversary. It consists of a number of studies of varying substantive importance.<sup>64</sup> As we know today, both Bruchnalski and Jan Kasprowicz were wrong in attributing the poem *Septem sidera* to Copernicus. Moreover, Bruchnalski's erudite study is not bad until he repeats a mistake committed by Jan Brożek, who, as we know, sent the poem to Pope Urban VIII in good faith, treating it as a work by Copernicus. Kasprowicz, on the other hand, undertook to translate the poem. For the history of historiography, however, the

60 Głabiński: *Wykład*, pp. 790–793; Idem: *Ekonomika społeczna*, pp. 191–194; Idem: *Historia ekonomiki*, pp. 191–194; Gumowski: *Moneta złota*, pp. 78–86; Szelański: *Pieniądz*; Krzyżanowski: *Pieniądz*, pp. 7–8.

61 Macleod, *The Theory*. In America, it is worth mentioning here Balch Thomas Willing's text, *The Law*, pp. 18–29.

62 Brandowski: *O łacinie*.

63 Birkenmajer: *Mikołaj Kopernik*; Idem: *Kopernik*.

64 Ernst et al.: *Mikołaj Kopernik*. It consists of the following dissertations: Ernst: *Mikołaj Kopernik jako astronom*; Grabowski: *Poprzednicy Kopernika w starożytności*; Żyliński: *Kopernik jako matematyk*; Ganszyniec: *Mikołaj Kopernik jako lekarz*; Bujak: *Traktat Kopernika o monecie*; Kasprowicz: *Mikołaj Kopernik: Siedm gwiazd*; Bruchnalski: *Mikołaj Kopernik jako uniwersalista i autor poematu "Septem Sidera"*; Kowalski: *Mikołaj Kopernik jako filolog i pisarz łaciński*; Hahn: *Kopernik w poezji polskiej*; Bruchnalski: *Bibliografia Kopernikowska*.

text written by Franciszek Bujak, the father of Poland, still holds great significance to this day.

In the interwar period, a controversial book by the outstanding Polish astronomer, philosopher and science writer, Jeremi Wasiutyński, attracted wide attention.<sup>65</sup> After its publication, it became an important point of interest globally.<sup>66</sup> However, even before its publication, a scandal broke out and Wasiutyński himself was accused of insulting Copernicus. This happened specifically after lecturing on his thoughts regarding Copernicus's ethnic origin in the article *Rzekome znieważenie postaci Kopernika* [*Alleged insult to Copernicus*], published in 1937 in *Wiadomości Literackie* [*The Literary News*]. He wrote, *inter alia*:

So many contradictory things were once written about Copernicus's nationality and with such excessive enthusiasm that the topic is reviewed today with reluctance. Yet in Polish literature this matter has not been explained comprehensively; patriotic spotlights were trained on Copernicus's attitude towards the Teutonic Order, overshadowing his family, friends and even the writing of the great astronomer [...] So who was Copernicus? A Prussian patriot, a loyal Polish citizen and a German-speaking townsman of Toruń. As a medieval man, he did not feel the need to specify his nationality in more detail. He was associated with the Polonophiles among the Prussian patriciate (the Gis, Ferber, Allen and Watzenrod families), but the Catholic rigour of the Dantyszek and Hozjusz families and the intrigues of the Płotonowski family undoubtedly cooled his attitude towards the Poles.<sup>67</sup>

A German translation of this article appeared in the 1937 *Deutscher Heimatsbote in Polen* calendar, from where it was reprinted by many German magazines. In Poland, Wasiutyński's thesis was supported by the Polish *Wiadomości Literackie*, in an article entitled *Czy Kopernik był Polakiem?* [*Was Copernicus a Pole?*],<sup>68</sup> and by Ludwik Hieronim Morstin reacted sharply against Wasiutyński's thesis.<sup>69</sup> It seems that despite denials from both sides that the issue of nationality was approached differently in Copernicus's times, deep down both sides spoke and thought along linguistic lines whereby the term *nationality* had a purely ethnic resonance. Wasiutyński undoubtedly tried to fight the myth of Copernicus's 'Polishness', but in many cases he deliberately set the cat amongst the pigeons, sometimes without always exactly referring to serious Polish research on the matter. Wasiutyński's text predates the times when the question of Copernicus's origins became, in fact, another type of ammunition in the terrible war unleashed by German Nazism. During the war, the origins of Copernicus completely do-

65 Wasiutyński: *Mikołaj Kopernik*.

66 Rose: *Kopernik*, pp. 481–484.

67 Wasiutyński: *Spór o narodowość Kopernika*.

68 See *Czy Kopernik był Polakiem?*

69 Morstin: *Wyprawa po laury*.

minated studies about the circumstances surrounding, and significance of, his great discovery. Time to summarise.

## The History of Copernicus in the Claws of Memory?

At the beginning of this essay, I set some questions to answer having conducted the above analysis. So I asked whether the evolution of Polish historiography can be seen in historical research and works on Copernicus and, if so, how it may be characterised. It is obvious that knowledge about Copernicus throughout the period under study unquestionably progressed. However, the problem remains to what extent this occurred solely through the participation of historians and to what extent this progress resulted from the development of natural sciences and, over time, from the emergence and development of social sciences, in particular economics. Jan Śniadecki, Adrian Krzyżanowski, Jan Baranowski and even Franciszek Karliński were not historians, and it was mainly thanks to their work that the scientific significance of Copernicus's discoveries reached a wider audience. On the other hand, it is impossible not to discern differences in the approach to historical research on Copernicus and his era adopted by Adam Naruszewicz, Joachim Lelewel, Domik Szulc, Julian Bartoszewicz and Józef Szuj-ski. Szuj-ski rightly spotted the limitations of historical knowledge in Copernican research – a lack of knowledge in the area of natural sciences. Our historiography overcame this problem thanks to Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer who, at the turn of the century, gave it a fully professional dimension. It is also difficult not to notice the fact that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the interwar period, the approach to Copernicus would become professional in the form of the newborn economic history (Franciszek Bujak, Adama Szlągowski, Marian Gumowski).

I also asked to what extent the memory of Copernicus determined historical research at that time. From a historical point of view, Copernicus research remains largely a study of historical memory. This is because Copernicus has been a place of memory in Poland for several centuries. As such, since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it has become an important point of reference in shaping the identity of Poles, first as a citizen of the Republic of Poland (end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) and then more in terms of national identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly when it blossomed in its second half. Copernicus as a place of memory is an important point of reference for the conflictual Polish-German memory. Polish national identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was formed largely in opposition to Germanity. The dispute over Copernicus's origins was one of the clearest examples of how conflict of memory affected the shaping of national identity. On the other hand, since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after Jan Śniadecki, researchers of Copernican thought have noticed a contradiction between research on Copernicus

as a place of memory and historical knowledge. Virtually everyone sees how much memory and the category of memory, always embedded in the present, are incommensurable with historical categories. This was expressed by Śniadecki and Ludwik Antoni Birkenmajer. Wasiutyński writes about it. From the perspective of the theory of history, the relationship between memory and knowledge about Copernicus seems to be an excellent clinical example of the rapport between historical memory and knowledge. It does not negate the value of either. According to Krzysztof Pomian, research on Copernicus is also automatically connected with the analysis of historical memory.

The third and final question I posed at the beginning concerned how the manner in which Copernicus was presented publicly changed in historical literature. I am convinced that the analysis presented here has sufficiently demonstrated that, besides transformations in the form of communication (apart from magazine articles and published scientific work, an increasing proportion of work that is occasional but also the result of daily toil), some elements change and some remain the same. Besides serious studies, historians also consider some more popular ways of presenting Copernicus. An interesting example here is the fact that he inspired Józef Szujski and Ludwik Hieronim Morstin to write stage plays. Over time, popularisation became the domain of magazines, while academic work began to gain increasing importance as a specific and somewhat more sophisticated form of disseminating knowledge about Copernicus and his achievements. At the same time, scientific societies played a no less significant role. In the case of the Polish tradition of Copernican research, their function throughout the period was practical. We can see this in the example of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Sciences or in the later phase of the Academy of Learning in Kraków. We see the role of these societies in local celebrations commemorating Copernicus. The traditions of celebrating Copernican anniversaries date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They evolved over time, and at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they came to dominate work and research on Copernicus. Over time, these celebrations grew similar to the ones familiar today. Evidence of their durability is the World Copernican Congress, which took place in Toruń in 2023.

[Translated by Steve Jones]

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Magdalena Niedzielska

## The Copernicus Monument in Toruń: A Memory of a Place\*

### Abstract

The three-hundredth anniversary of Copernicus's death in 1843 marked the beginning of a significant discourse on the astronomer's contributions, his impact on science, and potential forms of commemoration. In 1839, an association, composed of representatives from Toruń's German elite, was established to organize the celebration and outline its framework. The discussions surrounding the monument's design and inscription are particularly noteworthy. A central theme emerged: the debate over whether Copernicus was a German (Prussian) and how this should be reflected in the monument's inscription. Keywords: Nicolaus Copernicus; Toruń; monument; 19<sup>th</sup> century

Monuments serve as quintessential embodiments of the 19<sup>th</sup> century spirit. From the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, there was a discernible drive to redefine the scope of art, manifested in the establishment of theatres, museums, archives, and libraries, alongside the transformation of public spaces within cities and the evolving aesthetics of communal areas. The acceleration of these processes throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century culminated in the German territories during the 1890s, yet the early part of the century had already indicated the emerging trends. While the monuments themselves were not novel, their purpose shifted. The traditional role of commemorating rulers, clergy, and military leaders expanded to include the re-imagining of public spaces, converting them into public memorials. New mechanisms and forms of commemoration began to pervade cities and spaces not previously associated with political authority. Medieval and early modern European cities had their own forms of collective memory: heraldry, symbols, plaques, epitaphs, holidays, and city chronicles. However, the early 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the construction of monuments intended for entire urban

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communities, situated in publicly accessible spaces, articulating local and, eventually, national identities.

Toruń, a city without residential significance for the authorities, reflected these broader European processes. The city's elite, deeply rooted in their past, preserved their heritage through urban design, edifices, institutions, chroniclers, and archival collections. Before the apogee of monument-building initiatives in Germany following the 1871 reunification and peaking in the 1890s, the early 19<sup>th</sup> century had already borne witness to this new trend. Monuments were transformed from being mere tools of authority to symbols reflecting the burgeoning regional and urban identity. This transformation was also intertwined with a growing national consciousness, initially manifesting at the cultural level. In 1821, a monument to Martin Luther, designed by Johann Gottfried Schadow, was erected in Wittenberg. This was followed by the erection of monuments to Gutenberg in Mainz (1837), Friedrich Schiller in Stuttgart (1839), Albrecht Dürer in Nuremberg (1840), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in Salzburg (1842), Johann Wolfgang Goethe in Frankfurt am Main, Ludwig van Beethoven in Bonn (1845), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in Brunswick (1849), and a double statue of Goethe and Schiller in Weimar (1857). The selection of these illustrious figures of German culture was deliberate, signifying the incorporation of new elements into the social value system. The initiative in Toruń to erect a statue of Nicolaus Copernicus in 1839 was part of this broader trend.

The aspiration to honour Copernicus, a distinguished native of Toruń, began as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Forty years after the astronomer's death, the city physician Melchior Pirnesius founded a symbolic epitaph in the Church of St John. The concept of erecting a more prominent monument, one that would serve as a public testament to Copernicus's origins in Toruń, was first conceived in the 1730s. However, the project proposed by the Italian diplomat Marquis de Monti remained unrealized. More promising was the interest shown by Duke Józef Aleksander Jabłonowski, a patron of science, who commissioned a marble bust from the Cracow sculptor Wojciech Rojowski during his brief visit in 1765. Intended to be placed at the northwest corner of the city hall, the bust arrived in Toruń in 1766. However, the City Council, deeming it too modest in size, did not display it publicly, relegating it to the storage rooms of the City Hall. It was not until the era of the Duchy of Warsaw that the bust was installed in the Church of St John, beneath the epitaph by Pirnesius, where it remains to this day. Both ventures, however, were largely driven by 18<sup>th</sup> century cultural patrons and were intended for locations that were only partially public.

Another attempt occurred during the Duchy of Warsaw, initiated by the Polish state authorities. However, the Russian army's occupation of the Bydgoszcz Department in late 1812, and the subsequent dissolution of the Duchy in 1815, halted the fundraising efforts for the monument. The 1809 project primarily

demonstrated Copernicus's inclusion in the Polish national pantheon but was also an external initiative, disconnected from the Toruń community.

After 1815, Toruń faced severe economic difficulties, exacerbated by war debts and the devastation from the Duchy of Warsaw period, compounding a financial crisis that had persisted since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and worsened after the Partitions of Poland. This dire situation precluded any significant investments or even repairs of Napoleonic war damage during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was only in the 1830s that signs of recovery began to emerge in the urban community. Among these signs of internal transformation and consolidation within Toruń's small social elite, predominantly of German descent, was an initiative likely proposed as early as late 1838 by Dr. Rudolph Brohm, a historian and professor at the Toruń Gymnasium. He suggested that the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nicolaus Copernicus's death in 1843 should be commemorated by erecting a monument in his hometown.<sup>1</sup> On 19 February 1839, eight representatives of the city's elite, led by Mayor Karl Popławski, endorsed Brohm's proposal and drafted the initial charter for the formation of an association dedicated to constructing the monument, initially named the Copernicus-Verein.<sup>2</sup>

The association's charter was submitted to Königsberg on 10 March 1839, for approval by Theodor von Schön, the Supreme President of the Prussian Province. This request sought authorization to commence operations and fundraising within the Prussian monarchy and internationally.<sup>3</sup> On 20 April, provincial authorities forwarded the request to the Interior Ministry in Berlin, as the establishment of the association required royal approval. The Secret Civil Cabinet (*Geheimes Zivilkabinett*) expressed their approval on 29 April 1839.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, Frederick William III gave his assent through a Cabinet Order (*Kabinetts-Ordre*) on 9 May 1839, which was forwarded to Prussia's Interior Minister, Gustav von Rochow. On 14 May, von Rochow signed a decision permitting the Toruń association to begin its activities, and this decision was communicated to the association by Theodor von Schön in a letter dated May 28.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, on 9 June 1839, the association requested the heir to the throne, later King Frederick William IV, to become the patron of the monument. In a letter dated 18 September 1839, addressed to Supreme President Theodor von Schön, the heir to the

1 Archiwum Państwowe w Toruniu: Copernicus-Verein (further: APT: CV), no. 1, fol. 2.

2 Ibid.

3 Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku (further: APG): I, 6, no. 453: *Errichtung eines Denkmals für den Astronomen Copernicus in Thorn*, fols. 2–7; APT: CV, no. 1, fol. 10.

4 Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (further: GStA), I. HA, Rep. 89 (2.2.1), no. 20026: *Acta betreffend den Copernicus-Verein für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn, 1839–1904*, fol. 1.

5 Ibid., fol. 4; APG: I, 6, no. 453, fol. 10.

throne tentatively accepted this role.<sup>6</sup> His acceptance of the patronage was ultimately confirmed in a letter dated 5 May 1840, just before he ascended to the Prussian throne following the death of King Frederick William III on 7 June 1840.

By the early 1840s, the plans for the monument had not yet been finalized. Despite this, there was an optimistic yet naive belief that the monument could be erected by 1843, or at the very least, that the cornerstone could be laid on the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Copernicus's death in May. Alongside fundraising, which was a primary task for the association, in the early summer of 1840, correspondence was initiated with notable figures, such as Alexander von Humboldt, and, on 24 June 1840, Johann Gottfried Schadow, the prominent Prussian sculptor and director of Berlin's Academy of Arts (*Akademie der Künste*), soliciting their assistance in developing a plan for the monument. Schadow responded to the association in a letter dated 3 July 1840.<sup>7</sup> Establishing correspondence with Schadow was vital, given his stature as the preeminent sculptor in Prussia, with the hope that he would contribute to the monument project for Toruń. Although Schadow's response did not explicitly commit him, he referred to his earlier sculptural works related to Copernicus. Schadow provided the association with a sketch of a plaster model, which had likely been created in 1806 at the behest of Friedrich Leopold von Schrötter, the then minister of the Prussian Province and a significant political figure associated with the reformist camp of the Hohenzollern monarchy. Schadow had reportedly produced the first wax model for the Copernicus monument as early as December 1804.

This project merits particular attention, as it will be referenced multiple times in the history of the Copernicus monument in Toruń. According to Schadow, it was intended to serve as an epitaph in a church.<sup>8</sup> It featured an arch-shaped frame adorned with the signs of the zodiac, and its central elements were three bas-reliefs. The first bas-relief depicted Urania with measuring instruments, while the second showed Copernicus standing beside the Sphinx, holding an image of the solar system, a detail that may have influenced Friedrich Tieck's later Toruń design.<sup>9</sup> The centrepiece of the composition was a bust of Copernicus.

The precise intentions of Friedrich Leopold von Schrötter, who commissioned Schadow to design the epitaph, remain somewhat ambiguous. It is plausible that Schrötter envisioned Toruń and St John's Church as the epitaph's destination, as

6 APG: I, 6, no. 453, fol. 18.

7 APT: CV, no. 1, fols. 96–97; printed in: Heuer: *Das Thorner Copernicus-Denkmal*, pp. 2–3.

8 The project was titled by Schadow as *Entwurf zum Denkmal des Nicolaus Copernicus nach der Bestellung des Staats Minister von Schrötter im Jahre 1806 zu placiren an einer Kirchenwand*.

9 Maaz: *Christian Friedrich Tieck*, p. 383.

suggested by Schadow in one of his theoretical works published in 1849.<sup>10</sup> Schadow also conceptualized another variant of the monument: a pyramid with four bas-reliefs (partially repeating motifs from the epitaph) and a sphere crowning the structure. In 1807, Schadow sculpted a marble bust of Copernicus, commissioned by the then heir to the Bavarian throne, later King Ludwig I. This bust was intended for the Walhalla near Regensburg, a pantheon commemorating prominent figures in German culture, science, and politics. Completed in 1842, the bust remains in the Walhalla to this day.

In his letter to the Copernicus-Verein, dated 3 July 1840, Schadow emphasized the significant role played by a sketch of Copernicus from the Toruń portrait, made for him by Dominique Vivant Denon, in recreating the image of Copernicus for the bust destined for Walhalla. Dominique Denon (1747–1825), a French artist and diplomat who participated in Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt, published a richly illustrated book in 1802 that greatly popularized ancient Egyptian art motifs in Europe. He also served as the organizer and general director of the Musée Napoléon in Paris, which later became the Louvre. Denon gained notoriety as a plunderer of cultural property from countries conquered by Napoleon. Schadow's letter appears to confirm Denon's presence in Toruń in late 1806 and early 1807. This is plausible, as Denon accompanied the emperor during his entry into Berlin on 27 October 1806 and subsequently conducted a search for art objects in the Prussian capital for the French collection. Among the items transported to Paris on his orders was the quadriga from the Brandenburg Gate, also a work by Schadow, dismantled between 2–8 December 1806. Additionally, Hans Memling's *The Last Judgement* from Gdańsk was incorporated in the Paris collection.

Despite an extensive promotional campaign, fundraising for the monument proceeded slowly. By the end of 1842, the Copernicus-Verein had amassed a substantial sum of 4,783 thalers, but this was insufficient to commence practical operations. Consequently, the idea emerged to celebrate the upcoming Copernican anniversary in 1843 in a different manner, given the optimistic plans drawn up at the association's founding in 1839 to unveil the monument or at least lay its cornerstone by that date. Ernst Lambeck, a Toruń printer and publisher, approached the association on 11 January 1843, with a proposal to publish Copernicus's astronomical treatise, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*.<sup>11</sup> After deliberation and approval at a meeting on 1 February 1843, the Copernicus-Verein, through the Supreme President of the Province Theodor von Schön,

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10 Schadow: *Kunstwerke und Kunstansichten*, p. 80. The aforementioned plaster models have survived to the present day, albeit with some damage incurred during World War II. They are now part of the collection at the Astrophysikalisches Institut in Potsdam.

11 APT: CV, no. 3, fol. 123.

requested permission and financial assistance from the state authorities.<sup>12</sup> The reply, in a letter from Königsberg dated 7 March 1843, was critical of the Toruń plans, citing the existing editions of Copernicus's work, which were considered to be of more historical than scientific significance due to subsequent advancements in the field. Consequently, provincial authorities favoured honouring Copernicus by erecting a monument in Toruń.<sup>13</sup> The Ministry of Education sought opinions on the proposed edition of *De revolutionibus* from prominent figures in German science, including Johann Franz Encke, the director of the Potsdam Astronomical Observatory.

Encke's expert opinion, issued on 8 March 1843, was negative. He argued that, from a formal perspective, Copernicus should be regarded as a Pole, since Toruń became part of the Polish state after the Second Peace of Toruń in 1466, several years before Copernicus's birth.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, he deemed it inappropriate to support the Toruń publishing initiative actively. On 12 April 1843, the association was informed by the Supreme President of the Ministry of Education's refusal to issue the treatise. However, monetary assistance was promised for the erection of the monument.<sup>15</sup> The idea of publishing *De revolutionibus* was revisited only after the establishment of the scientific association Copernicus-Verein für Wissenschaft und Kunst in 1853. This initiative was eventually realized in connection with the jubilee of Copernicus's birth in 1873.

Friedrich Tieck, recommended by Schadow, proved to be a challenging collaborator for the Copernicus-Verein, with difficulties arising from the outset. In the initial months of their cooperation, Tieck significantly delayed the presentation of the monument model, originally scheduled for April 1843, repeatedly postponing its delivery to Toruń. This prompted the board of the Copernicus-Verein to notify Schadow at the Berlin Academy of the delays. A further point of contention was Tieck's proposal to portray Copernicus in an antique costume, emulating the attire of ancient philosophers. Despite extensive correspondence, a compromise was eventually reached, and Tieck completed a preliminary draft in October 1843. This allowed the association to forward the draft to the monarch through the official channel of the Supreme President of the Prussian Province, Karl von Bötticher.

In a letter dated 13 December 1843, Bötticher informed the Copernicus-Verein of the King's approval of the monument, as documented in a Cabinet Order dated 6 December 1843. The King also granted an additional 2,000 thalers for the

12 GStA, I. HA, Rep. 76Vc, Sekt. 8, Tit. 23, no. 3, fol. 36.

13 Ibid., fols. 37–38.

14 Ibid., fols. 34–35: "denn [...] war Copernicus ein Pole, weil Thorn im Thornerfrieden (1466), sechs Jahre vor der Geburt des Copernicus (1472) von dem Orden an Polen abgetreten wird".

15 Ibid., fol. 39; APT: CV, no. 3, fol. 158.

project.<sup>16</sup> Frederick William IV, known for his keen interest in the arts, reserved the right to personally influence the artistic design of the monument.<sup>17</sup> The King subjected Tieck's design to critical review, particularly disapproving of the bourgeois costume in which the astronomer was depicted. Frederick William IV deemed the concept of portraying Copernicus in Old German attire as ridiculous (*ridicül*) and historically inaccurate. He preferred that the astronomer be depicted in the robe of an ancient sage or the draped cloak of a clergyman.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Tieck, summoned for a detailed discussion with the King, was instructed to prepare new designs.

At that time, after some hesitation and search for the appropriate model, it was decided that the basis for the image of Copernicus would be his portrait housed in Toruń City Hall. In late July 1844, copies of this portrait – an oil painting and a drawing – were sent to Berlin. Additionally, Tieck was provided with an image of a 16<sup>th</sup> century canon's attire, based on a painting from Frombork Cathedral.

Tieck's failure to meet his obligations and the months-long delay in the design work led the association's board of directors to increasingly doubt his ability to complete the monument. Consequently, in the autumn of 1845, they asked the Supreme President of the Province for permission to potentially entrust the work to another sculptor, suggesting the Berlin artist August Kiß (1802–1865). Despite repeated official reminders, it was not until November 1846 that Tieck notified the board of having completed the final design for the monument and plinth and submitting it to the king.

Frederick William IV, who took a keen interest in the Toruń project, approved the model of the monument and plinth on 15 November 1846. The plinth was designed by the renowned Berlin architect Johann Heinrich Strack, a student of Karl Friedrich Schinkel, who collaborated with Tieck. In accordance with the association's wishes, bronze reliefs based on Schadow's 1806 design were to be placed on the plinth.<sup>19</sup>

After Frederick William IV approved the design of the monument, the cooperation with Tieck entered a new phase. According to a preliminary contract between Tieck and the Berlin caster Heinrich Fischer, dated 21 April 1847, the terms for casting were established, and work on the full-scale model of the monument finally commenced in July 1847. Concurrently, Tieck informed the association of the actual costs, which significantly exceeded previous estimates, amounting to 7,570 thalers, excluding the price of the plinth. Faced with this troubling financial situation and the protracted nature of the work, the associ-

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16 GStA, I. HA, Rep. 89 (2.2.1), no. 20026, fol. 23.

17 APG: I, 6, no. 453, fol. 126.

18 *Ibid.*, fol. 126.

19 *Ibid.*, fol. 308, letter from 26. 11. 1846.

ation decided to intervene directly with Tieck. Gustav Weese, authorized by the Copernicus-Verein, played a crucial role in negotiating new financial terms with Tieck to reduce the price, as the association lacked the funds specified by the sculptor. Weese had been in the Prussian capital since April 1847 as a deputy of the parliament of the Prussian Province for the so-called Unification Parliament (*Vereinigter Landtag*), which convened in Berlin. After closely examining the progress of the work, Weese, who had formed a very unfavourable opinion of Tieck in Berlin, insisted that the contract with Tieck be terminated and suggested employing another sculptor, Gustav Bläser, who was a student of Christian Daniel Rauch. Bläser (1813–1874), who was presumably recommended by the draughtsman and painter Eduard Gärtner, prepared a new design. However, this design did not gain significant approval among the association's members and was eventually rejected by Ignatz Franz von Olfers (1793–1871), the general director of the Berlin museums. With no other viable options, the Copernicus-Verein formally concluded a contract with Tieck on 3 July 1847, for 1,400 thalers, to complete the model of the monument within 13 months.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, the association's efforts were thwarted when the model of the monument was severely damaged or even destroyed in 1848.<sup>21</sup>

In the summer and autumn of 1848, during the March Revolution, Hermann von Besser, the Landrat of Toruń and a member of the Prussian National Assembly, became another plenipotentiary of the association in Berlin. The following year, Theodor Körner, the Mayor of Toruń and a deputy to the Upper House (*Herrenhaus*) of the Landtag of Prussia, assumed the task of overseeing the work. Despite persistent urging by the association and its envoys, who had been regularly visiting his studio since 1847, Tieck did not deliver the finished model of the monument for further moulding and casting until 2 August 1849.

With the model finally ready, Körner took control of the project on behalf of the association and, on 19 September 1849, agreed on a draft contract with Heinrich Fischer, a caster from Berlin, to make the cast of the monument. This contract was formally signed by both parties on 6 October.<sup>22</sup> Due to deficiencies in the model handed over by Tieck and delays to finishing the work, the association decided in late 1849 and early 1850 to have another Berlin sculptor, Hermann Wittig, continue the work. The plaster model was eventually handed over to Fischer in early February 1850. After the casting mould was made, it was divided into several parts and offered for sale in 1851 to the Potsdam astronomical observatory, the bishop of Ermland, and the municipal office of Grudziądz, but all declined the offer.

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20 APT: CV, no. 2, fol. 198.

21 *Ibid.*, no. 3, fol. 5.

22 *Ibid.*, no. 4, fol. 39.

The casting was to be carried out at the royal foundry in Berlin, which was placed at Fischer's disposal.<sup>23</sup> However, unexpected complications arose that hindered the completion of the project. With the anticipated outbreak of war with Austria and the announced mobilization of the army, the foundry was requisitioned for military purposes, and the Minister of War ordered it to be vacated. Only through ministerial intervention and the influence of the heir to the throne, later King William I, was the association granted permission to complete the main section of the casting in the foundry, where work was already in progress.<sup>24</sup> This crucial phase of the work took place in November 1850,<sup>25</sup> with the sculptor Christian Daniel Rauch supervising both the casting and the chasing of the monument, in lieu of Tieck. The entire process was completed on 1 November 1851. The astrolabe, crafted by Hermann Wittig, was gilded. Tragically, Tieck, beset by illness, personal troubles, and debts, died on 12 May 1851, without witnessing the installation of the monument in Toruń.<sup>26</sup> The involvement of multiple sculptors in the final stages of the monument raised questions regarding the work's authorship among contemporaries. Tieck's limited participation in several key phases of the project, particularly the finishing work, which was primarily executed by Wittig, contributed to these uncertainties.<sup>27</sup>

The completed casting remained in Berlin for an extended period because Friedrich Wilhelm IV desired to view it in the studio.<sup>28</sup> Only after the monarch's wish had been satisfied did preparations for its shipment to Toruń commence. On 13 February 1852, the monument was dispatched by rail to Bydgoszcz.<sup>29</sup> Mayor Theodor Körner, who was in Berlin at the time, oversaw the loading of the monument.<sup>30</sup> The monument arrived in Bydgoszcz on the evening of 14 February around 8 pm, but unloading did not begin until the following morning for safety reasons. Ultimately, the shipment reached Toruń on Monday, 16 February, around noon, and at 3 pm, a ceremonial introduction of the monument into the city walls took place.

A contemporary witness, landowner Natalis Sulerzyski, described the event of welcoming the monument in the streets as follows:

Whilst in Toruń, in the early afternoon, I beheld a solemn procession traversing the Market Square, enshrouded in a haze of smoke. Curiosity compelled me to inquire of a German acquaintance regarding the significance of this spectacle. He informed me that

23 Körner: *Bericht über die Errichtung des Copernicus-Denkmal*, p. 53.

24 APT: CV, no. 4, fol. 177, a report for the Supreme President A. von Eichmann of 16.12.1852.

25 GStA, I. HA, Rep. 89 (2.2.1), no. 20026, fol. 24.

26 Egger / Egger: *Christian Daniel Rauch*, 4, p. 347.

27 APT: CV, no. 2, fol. 220; Hildebrandt: *Friedrich Tieck*, p. 148.

28 *Thorner Wochenblatt*, no. 12, 11.2.1852, p. 48, information from Rudolph Brohm.

29 APT: CV, no. 11, the monument consignment note of 12.2.1852.

30 *Ibid.*, no. 8.

it was a monument dedicated to the illustrious Copernicus, and that the smoke emanated from torches. He further elucidated that the previous evening, the monument had been conveyed from a ship on the Vistula River amidst the light of the said torches. However, the announcer had imbibed excessively, which rendered his speech incoherent. Consequently, the monument was returned to the ship. Today, to preclude a recurrence of such embarrassment, the ceremony was conducted in daylight, allowing the orator to deliver his address while sober. The torches, having already been procured, were ignited despite the broad daylight. The procession ultimately halted before the Lutheran church, where another speaker once more extolled the virtues of the great German astronomer. I, however, did not join the throng to listen to these ravings, but rather waited at a distance to observe the subsequent fate of the monument. To my astonishment, I witnessed them conveying the Catholic canon into the Lutheran church for the night.<sup>31</sup>

Sulerzyski's remarks were not devoid of malice; the question of Copernicus's nationality was a contentious political issue, dividing Germans and Poles, with the author himself being a prominent West Prussian activist within the Polish national movement. Today, it is difficult to ascertain whether his opinion about the reasons for the delay was accurate. Nevertheless, the ceremony was indeed postponed from evening to afternoon, and the torches prepared beforehand were carried by middle school students.<sup>32</sup> The monument was welcomed by city authorities, professors, and students of the gymnasium. A welcome speech was delivered by Rudolph Brohm, secretary of the Copernicus-Verein.<sup>33</sup>

At the time the finished cast was shipped from Berlin to Toruń, the primary issue of the monument's location in the Old Town Square had not yet been definitively resolved. Any other location was out of the question, as the Market Square was the most prominent place where the city's collective memory was concentrated. This matter had been under consideration since the association's inception but was more formally addressed in a letter to the Berlin Academy of Arts, dated 13 December 1842.<sup>34</sup> The letter proposed the western side of the Old Town Square near the Evangelical Church, given that the central part of this side of the square was used for city guard reviews, military parades, and other ceremonies. A smaller monument might also be suitably placed at the southeast corner of the City Hall, where it would be surrounded by tenement houses not as tall as the other frontages of the Market Square. Additionally, it would symbolically commemorate Copernicus as a builder of waterworks. However, this proposal was deemed unfavourable by most association members due to the

31 Kalebka (ed): Sulerzyski: *Pamiętnik*, pp. 186–187 [translation of quote by Tomasz Leszczuk].

32 *Thorner Wochenblatt*, 16. 25. 2. 1852.

33 Marquart: *Das Copernicus-Denkmal in Thorn*, p. 15.

34 APT: CV, no. 3, fol. 115.

heavy urban and market traffic converging at that point. Despite the position stated in the letter to the Berlin Academy on 3 April 1843, the association members tentatively indicated the southeast corner of the City Hall as the preferred location. This shift was decisively influenced by the monarch's opinion. Friedrich Wilhelm IV had inspected the proposed site during his visit to Toruń on 24 July 1842. His preference led to the selection of this site by Johann Heinrich Strack, the designer of the plinth, and its subsequent approval by a special commission appointed in Berlin.

However, the proposed location at the southeast corner of City Hall raised significant concerns in Toruń due to technical challenges associated with relocating the well and water supply situated there. Additionally, it was noted that there was insufficient space to properly display the monument, which would stand too close to the City Hall wall. The historical significance of this site, where the cornerstone had been laid in 1809, may have also played a role in the deliberations. After the monument was completed and transported to Toruń, the need for a final decision on its placement prompted renewed discussion. During a meeting on 3 March 1852, three potential locations for the Copernicus monument were considered, balancing practical needs with aesthetic considerations.<sup>35</sup> However, no decision was reached. At the subsequent meeting on 17 March, the option of placing the monument at the southeast corner and integrating it with the well was ruled out.<sup>36</sup> With no consensus achieved, the matter was revisited on 31 March 1852, narrowing the options to either the western part of the Market Square or the middle of the left side of the front wall of the Evangelical Church. Finally, on 17 April 1852, the association resolved to erect the monument on the west side of the Market Square.<sup>37</sup>

Given the persistent divergence of views among the members of the Copernicus-Verein and the municipal authorities, as well as the earlier arrangement of 1843 which had received royal sanction, Lord Mayor Theodor Körner sought the king's final decision on the monument's location on 15 April 1852, even before the municipal office had made its own determination on the matter. The monarch was a strong proponent of situating the monument next to the well, and, at his behest, Strack developed an alternative, slightly more economical plinth design that incorporated this architectural element. However, it was not until the autumn of 1852 that a final decision on the new plinth design was reached. In a cabinet order issued on 19 September 1852, Friedrich Wilhelm IV resolved both the design of the monument – emphasizing its connection to the well, which he

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35 Ibid., no. 4, fols. 138–140.

36 Ibid., fol. 143.

37 APT: *Akta miasta Torunia 1793–1920* (further: AmT), C 7409: *Die Errichtung des Denkmals für Copernicus*, fol. 70.

strongly advocated – and its location at the southeast corner of City Hall.<sup>38</sup> In light of the monarch's unequivocal ruling, all proposals to place the monument in the western part of Market Square near the Evangelical Church were rendered obsolete. Concurrently, the ruler granted the association the remaining sum of 1,466 thalers needed for the plinth.

The discussion regarding the monument's location was an attempt to reshape the Market Square, a central component of the city's public space. The monument was intended to render this space symbolic, marking the most significant spot in the square's topography, while complementing its existing functions – the hub of local government (City Hall) and a centre of economic activity (warehouses, trade areas). The goal of creating a beautiful view was rooted in aesthetic considerations rather than utility.

The association then faced a final task: selecting the inscription for the plinth. Early in 1853, Copernicus-Verein engaged in vigorous correspondence with prominent representatives of German academia, seeking advice from luminaries such as Alexander von Humboldt (letter of 7 January), Berlin linguist August Böckh (11 January), astronomer Prof. Johann Gottfried Galle from Wrocław (25 January), Prof. Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg of Berlin, as well as philologist Christian August Lobeck of Königsberg. The society sent several versions of the inscription, initially presented at the meeting of 3 January 1853 by Prof. Rudolph Brohm, to these scholars and solicited alternative suggestions. Following these consultations, the association's members reviewed the proposed options at a meeting on 7 March 1853. Initial designs, that proposed inscriptions on all four sides of the plinth, were ultimately discarded in favour of inscriptions only on the front and back. A vote was held, resulting in the rejection of the following two proposals, which garnered the least support: *Civitas Mundus / Patria Prussia / Ars Caelestia / Memoria immortalis* and *Patria Mundus / Domus Terra / Studium natura / Stientia, Caelum*. Instead, the following inscriptions were accepted for final selection: *Nicolaus Copernicus Torunensis Natus Anno 1473, obiit Anno 1543* and *Nicolaus Copernicus Torunensis/Terrae motor solis coelique stator, Natus Anno 1473, Obiit Anno 1543*.

The phrase *Patria Prussia*, referring to Copernicus's homeland, was among the most contentious proposals. Prof. Johann Gottfried Galle, an astronomer from Wrocław, highlighted the national implications of this term.<sup>39</sup> Members of Copernicus-Verein shared this concern during a subsequent discussion on 9 March 1853, which reviewed previous versions of the inscription. The meeting's report explicitly excluded any reference to the astronomer's nationality in the in-

38 APT: CV, no. 4, fols. 151, 179.

39 According to Prof. Galle, he may "zu neuer Erregung der bekannten Streitigkeiten in Betreff Polens führen", *ibid.*, fols. 209–210, letter from 19. 1. 1853.

scription, as such a reference would have provoked unnecessary discord within the Polish community.<sup>40</sup>

It must be highlighted that, from the outset, the association endeavoured to avoid tensions with the Polish community concerning Copernicus's nationality. This sensitivity was evident in the association's 1844 correspondence with Edward Raczyński in Poznań, following his refusal to contribute to the monument on the grounds of Copernicus's Polish heritage.<sup>41</sup> In its letter, the association asserted that it was beyond its purview to resolve the issue of Copernicus's nationality.<sup>42</sup>

Criticism of Polish efforts to commemorate Copernicus emerged only in a text by Lord Mayor Theodor Körner in 1853, issued shortly after the monument's unveiling. Körner negatively assessed the motivations behind the monument's foundation in Toruń during the Duchy of Warsaw period.<sup>43</sup> Significantly, the choice of Latin for the inscription, aside from conforming to the era's trends, served as a deliberate gesture. It underscored the universality of Copernicus's scientific achievements, transcending national identities. By opting for Latin, the text was placed in a neutral sphere, above German and Polish divides. The final version of the inscription on the plinth was approved by the monarch in accordance with the proposals submitted to him by Humboldt.

On 24 May 1853, a meeting of the Copernicus-Verein was convened to prepare the programme for the cornerstone-laying ceremony.<sup>44</sup> On that day, the anni-

40 Ibid., fol. 223: "muß durch den Satz Patria Prussia die Frage und der Streit über die Nationalität von Copernicus angeregt werden, was im Interesse der Wissenschaft zu vermeiden [ist]". According to Körner, this option was rejected as "die einseitige Frage über die Nationalität von Copernicus, wie bei dem Denkmal desselben in Warschau in den Vordergrund gestellt, angeregt werde", Körner: *Bericht über die Errichtung*, p. 63.

41 Edward Raczyński's words from a letter written in German of 10.6.1844 are worth quoting: "Im Jahre 1820 habe ich das Meinige dazu beigetragen, um dem Copernicus als Polen ein Denkmal in Warschau zu errichten. Zu einem zweiten Denkmal, wo derselbe als Deutscher erschienen soll, beizutragen, würde daher meinerseits eine Inconsequenz sein. Aus diesem Grunde sehe ich mich außer Stande, der unterm 23<sup>ten</sup> Mai an mich erlassenen Aufforderung nachzukommen. Dagegen erkläre ich mich bereit, wenn Sie den Copernicus als Polen anerkennen wollen, die ganze fehlende Summe allein zu tragen", APT, CV, no. 3, fol. 229; the letter was also published in: *Thorner Wochenblatt*, 75. 17.9.1845, p. 605. In the end, Raczyński donated five thalers for the monument.

42 "Der Verein erwiderte hierauf, dass es ausser den Grenzen seiner Wirksamkeit liege, über die nationale Herkunft des grossen Astronomen ein Anerkenntnis abzugeben", Körner: *Bericht über die Errichtung*, p. 44.

43 "In den vorerwähnten Bestrebungen, das Andenken des großen Mannes äusserlich zu feiern, giebt sich nach Maasgabe der Inschriften und Urkunden die Absicht kund, seine religiöse, oder, und ganz besonders, seine nationale Seite zu dem Zwecke hervortreten zu lassen, ihn als Sprössling polnischer Abkunft zu bezeichnen, als ob – abgesehen von seiner erweislich deutschen Abstammung – die zeitweise polnische Herrschaft über die Stadt Thorn ein hinreichender Grund wäre, über seine Nationalität zu entscheiden", Ibid., p. 41.

44 APT: CV, no. 6, fol. 33.

versary of Copernicus's death, the association formally 'took possession' of the square at the corner of the City Hall where the monument was to be erected and fenced it in. Work on preparing the foundation was completed within a month, and a stone-laying ceremony took place at 9 am on 28 June.<sup>45</sup> Lord Mayor Theodor Körner was the first to perform the symbolic laying-in, extending his good wishes to the king, to all those who supported the association in its work, and to the people of the arts. Both gymnasium professors, Rudolph Brohm and Leopold Prowe, who also spoke later, along with Pastor Benjamin Friedrich Gessel, called for tolerance and the abandonment of fanaticism. Notably, none of the speeches delivered during the ceremony referenced Copernicus's German nationality. This omission is significant, especially considering the years following the Revolution of 1848, when the Polish-German national conflict had become increasingly apparent.<sup>46</sup>

A barge carrying the stone elements of the monument arrived in Toruń from Wrocław using the waterways on 3 September 1853.<sup>47</sup> The unloading process took two days, after which the transport of these elements to the monument site commenced. The entire cargo weighed 800 hundredweight, which presented a significant technical challenge. The crate containing the main part alone weighed approximately 160 hundredweight, and it took nearly four days to move it to the market square. Twelve artillery soldiers were recruited for this arduous task, while smaller stone parts were transported by carts. The completion of the plinth was projected to take four weeks.

Following joint discussions between the municipal office and the Copernicus-Verein at a City Council meeting on 17 August 1853, it was decided that, given the importance of the event, the organizational responsibilities, including the financing of the ceremony, would be undertaken by the municipal authorities.<sup>48</sup> A special committee of councillors was established which, in collaboration with the association's members, began organizational work on 6 September 1853.

45 Marquart: *Die Grundsteinlegung*, p. 6.

46 The text by Rudolph Brohm, the initiator of erecting the monument, read: "Möge, so lange die Urkunde hier fest liegt in ihrer steinernen Hülle, in den Mauern dieser Stadt und in den Herzen ihrer Bürger Achtung und Geltung, Schutz und Schirm finden in den Mauern jenes Hauses, dessen Thurmzinnen auf uns herniedersehen: 1. Das Recht freien Geistes, 2. Das Licht der Wahrheit, 3. Die Muth der Ueberzeugung"; pastor Benjamin Friedrich Gessel, a well-known democrat and active participant in the events of the 1848 revolution, called for tolerance: "Den zweiten [Hammerschlag] – der versöhnenden Eintracht, welche bei eigener Ueberzeugung auch fremde Ueberzeugungen zu achten weiss", Körner: *Bericht über die Errichtung*, pp. 71–73.

47 *Thorner Wochenblatt*, 73. 7.9.1853.

48 Körner: *Bericht über die Errichtung*, fol. 80: "Die Größte Ehre bei dieser Feier wird der Stadt Thorn als dem Geburtsorte des Copernicus zu Theil. Ihr wird das Denkmal desselben zum Gewahrsam für künftige Jahrhunderte überliefert, sie erhält dadurch Ihre schönste Zierde".

On 12 September, the king was officially notified of the monument's completion and invited to visit Toruń.<sup>49</sup> The association also extended invitations to the provincial, city, and university authorities, requesting their representatives to join the festivities.

In preparation for the celebrations, the city authorities undertook extraordinary measures to enhance the city's appearance, starting in the summer of 1853. By August, plans were made to restore several facades of buildings in the Old Town Square, demolish sections of the wall at St John's Church, and cut down the old linden and chestnut trees, which, according to the authorities, obstructed the view of the Market Square. In the lead-up to the celebration, a police order, issued on 22 October 1853, mandated several directives: the prohibition of the traditional market on the eve of the holiday, the wet-washing of all streets, the closure of the parade route to vehicular traffic, the prohibition of any carts standing along the route, and the closure of street-level cellar entrances.<sup>50</sup>

On 25 October 1853, the city of Toruń welcomed the festivities with warm and sunny weather. The monument, draped in a cloth of Toruń's white and blue stripes, stood at the centre of the celebration, surrounded by three grandstands: one for distinguished guests on the south frontage of the Market Square, another for choirs on the west side, and a private grandstand with seats for rent on the east side. A newly commissioned city flag was unfurled at the City Hall, and the Market Square was adorned with numerous smaller flags.<sup>51</sup> Among the official guests were the presidents of the Kwidzyn and Bydgoszcz governmental districts. Although King Frederick William IV was invited by a letter dated 12 September 1853,<sup>52</sup> it was confirmed on 17 October that he would not attend. The day's events began at eight o'clock in the morning with a chant from the city hall tower and half an hour of tolling bells. By eleven o'clock, various representatives had gathered, lining up around the monument by 11:30. Official guests, municipal office members, council members, and municipal officials took their seats near the Pharmacy under the Eagle, donning black tailcoats and trousers with white waistcoats and neckerchiefs. The speech on behalf of the state authorities was delivered by Eulenburg, the president of the Kwidzyn governmental district.<sup>53</sup> Following the Market Square ceremony, a procession of about a thousand people formed. Leading the procession were sixteen members of the Copernicus-Verein, the city council, councillors, city officials, representatives of city districts, professors and students of the Gymnasium, teachers at other city schools, members

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49 Ibid., fol. 82.

50 *Thorner Wochenblatt*, 86. 22. 10. 1853, p. 365.

51 APT: AmT, C 7409, fol. 88.

52 Ibid., fol. 81.

53 *Thorner Wochenblatt*, 88. 29. 10. 1853; Ibid., 89. 2. 11. 1853, the description of the monument unveiling ceremony.

of the Chamber of Commerce, guild representatives, representatives from city-affiliated villages, village teachers, and members of the Brotherhood of the Rooster. The procession moved through Szeroka Street and the Bridge Gate towards the Vistula, then returned to the city walls, eventually reaching the house at the corner of today's Kopernika and Piekary streets, believed to be Copernicus's family home. The procession retraced its steps along Szeroka Street and concluded at the New Town Square.

Following the main ceremony, the official guests were treated to a luncheon at 3 pm in the halls of the Hôtel Sanssouci at the Old Town Square. During the luncheon, in addition to offering well-wishes to the reigning monarch and the initiators of the venture, Rudolph Brohm proposed a toast to *Alma Jagellonica*, the University of Cracow, whose representative had been invited to Toruń. In the evening, the city's community gathered for a grand ball at the City Hall, reportedly attended by 2,300 people and lasting until two in the morning.<sup>54</sup> At 7 pm, the monument was dramatically illuminated with Bengal fires in white, green, and red, and houses throughout the city were similarly lit, creating a festive and vibrant atmosphere.

The unveiling of the Copernicus monument was a grand celebration for the community of Toruń, a theatrical event vividly captured in the iconography by Berlin-based cityscape painter Eduard Gaertner. The day of 25 October 1853 marked the culmination of a vision that had inspired the establishment of the Copernicus-Verein society over 14 years earlier by a group of Toruń citizens. The significant delay in erecting the monument was primarily due to a scarcity of funds, despite the association's vigorous efforts from the outset to attract numerous allies to the cause. On 28 March 1840, a proclamation was issued calling for a collection of funds for the monument.<sup>55</sup> This appeal was directed primarily to provincial and district administrative authorities throughout the Prussian monarchy, as well as to universities, gymnasiums, and military commands. When the Prussian foreign ministry refused to act as an intermediary in raising funds from abroad, Copernicus-Verein independently reached out to authorities in other countries for assistance. In 1841, correspondence was exchanged with European courts.<sup>56</sup> Letters were also sent to the states of the German Confederation, though some, including the Kingdom of Hanover, Anhalt-Dessau, and the Senate of Lübeck, refused. The Bavarian authorities, in a response dated 18 March 1841, indicated that they had already commemorated Copernicus by

54 Marquardt: *Das Copernicus-Denkmal in Thorn*.

55 Initially, these appeals were also published by the Polish press, such as in Poznań's *Tygodnik Literacki*, 18. 1840, p. 144.

56 APT: CV, no. 1, fol. 162.

including his bust in the German pantheon in Walhalla. Austria similarly did not approve the distribution of subscription lists.

As a result of collections, subscriptions, and donations conducted both domestically and internationally, the association raised the largest amount – 2,761 thalers – in the Prussian state. However, the sums from the Prussian provinces, including Toruń, were not particularly substantial. In total, 206 thalers were collected in the Kwidzyn governmental district (outside of Toruń and the Toruń district), 259 in the Gdańsk governmental district, 129 in the Königsberg district, and only 35 in the Gąbin district. Residents of Toruń contributed a modest portion to the monument's fund, raising 482 thalers, with an additional 43 thalers collected in the district. In the neighbouring Grand Duchy of Posen, donations amounted to 244 thalers. In Berlin, the state capital, contributions totalled 380 thalers, including 209 thalers from the heir to the throne. Receipts from other German states were also modest, totalling 396 thalers. Additionally, Copernicus-Verein received 145 thalers from funds collected for the monument in 1810/1811 in the Bydgoszcz Department of the Duchy of Warsaw. Contrastingly, an astonishingly high contribution of 2,332 thalers came from abroad. Some of these funds were donated by former residents of Toruń who had established businesses in other parts of Europe or other continents. Surprisingly, the majority of the foreign contributions (1,995 thalers) came from the Russian Empire. This was largely due to the support of Tsar Nicholas I, who, upon receiving information from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a letter dated 28 December 1840, authorized a year-long collection within the empire. This task was administratively delegated to the authorities of individual governorates. The tsar's command reached even the remotest corners of the Russian state, resulting in contributions flowing to St. Petersburg, where the collections were managed. The efficiency of this system, rooted in absolute power, yielded significant results: 456 thalers were collected in St. Petersburg, 137 in the Grand Duchy of Finland, 33 in the Governorate of Livonia, 97 in Moscow, 29 in Tver, 27 in Tambov, 44 in Novgorod, 49 in Arkhangelsk, 47 in Oryol, 53 in Vladimir, 38 in Nizhny Novgorod, 67 in the Governorate of Kiev, 76 in Taganrog, 365 in Kazan, 131 in Astrakhan, 99 in Siberia, and 266 in other regions.<sup>57</sup> Contributions came even from Bessarabia, with the Caucasian civilian governor donating 5 thalers. Contributions from the Kingdom of Poland amounted to 83 thalers, with an additional 16 thalers donated in 1844 by Samuel Bogumił Linde, who resided in Warsaw. It is important to note that the realization of the monument's construction would not have been possible, or would have been significantly delayed, without the financial support of Prussian monarch Frederick William IV. He

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57 Ibid., no. 7; Körner: *Bericht über die Errichtung*, pp. 48–50.

provided substantial sums twice: 2,000 thalers in 1843, and 1,477 thalers in September 1852, the latter enabling the construction of the plinth.

Expenses related to the monument amounted to 12,874 thalers, with 10,499 thalers directly allocated to the design, bronze casting, and plinth. The cost of the plinth was particularly significant, totalling 4,145 thalers. Of this amount, the maker received 3,680 thalers, while the remainder covered the cost of the foundations (100 thalers), granite polishing (253 thalers), forging the inscription, and gilding the letters. Additionally, the maker of the dolphin was paid 353 thalers.<sup>58</sup> Smaller sums related to the packing of the monument's elements contributed to the overall expenses, which also included the management board's costs, amounting to 560 thalers.

To contextualize these costs, it is essential to compare them with the values of the time. In 1853, the Lord Mayor of Toruń, Theodor Körner, had an annual income of 2,000 thalers. Thus, the total expenses for erecting the monument, nearly 13,000 thalers, were equivalent to more than six years of his salary. According to tax records, the wealthiest resident of the city earned 3,200 thalers annually. In the second half of the 1850s, average townhouses in the Old Town were valued at around 2,500–4,000 thalers. For example, in 1857, the *Hôtel Sanssouci* on the Old Town Square was valued at 17,600 thalers.

Following the monument's unveiling, the new Copernicus-Verein für Wissenschaft und Kunst, which had evolved into a Society of Arts and Sciences, re-established contacts at the end of 1853 with the Berlin painter and draughtsman Eduard Gärtner (1801–1872). This collaboration resulted in commissioned prints depicting the Old Market, producing the first artistically successful images of the Old Market with the Copernicus monument. Gärtner, a typical painter of cityscapes, was influenced by English watercolourists and gained significant popularity in the 1830s. His oeuvre includes numerous cityscapes of Berlin; he also visited Russia in 1837 and 1838, creating paintings of Moscow and St. Petersburg. However, after Friedrich Wilhelm IV acceded to the Prussian throne in 1840, Gärtner lost his protector. Under the new monarch's influence, public tastes shifted towards Romantic themes and Italian art, resulting in a decline in the popularity of Gärtner's style of painting. Gärtner harboured considerable hopes that the general heritage monuments protection officer in Prussia would commission him to prepare a series of illustrations depicting the architectural monuments of the Teutonic Order in the Prussian province. When these plans failed to materialize, Gärtner collaborated with the Copernicus-Verein, producing several sketches and a watercolour of the Old Market Square and the Copernicus monument during his trips to West Prussia between 1847 and 1853.

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58 APT: AmT, C 7409, fol. 95.

The Copernicus monument in Toruń faced criticism from contemporaries, who noted its inadequate proportions, schematic representation, unnecessary pathos, and the use of antique costume.<sup>59</sup> Despite these artistic critiques, over the 150 years since its erection, the monument has become an integral part of Toruń's cityscape, emerging as the city's most distinctive symbol. It serves not only as an urban memorial but also as a creator of collective memory.<sup>60</sup> The history of the monument stands as a testimony to the benefits of civic initiatives, which often operate against external constraints and the necessity of prioritizing essential needs over those perceived as whims. It highlights enduring values over transient ones, a lesson clearly illustrated by the observation of monuments in general.

The monument's history is a fascinating chapter in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century history of Toruń, where many architectural and cityscape elements, both visible and subtle, persist despite being created by the city's German inhabitants. The presence of German community in Toruń was not merely an offshoot of the Prussian state's partitionist rule but had integrated with the Pomeranian lands and Toruń over the centuries, forming a significant part of their identity and historical legacy. The politically 'non-violent' monuments, such as those dedicated to the scholar, the raftsmen from a local legend, and the Bavarian defenders of the city in 1813, have survived the vicissitudes of time. In contrast, monuments associated purely with the Prussian state, such as those commemorating Emperor Wilhelm I, Chancellor Otto Bismarck, and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, have disappeared.

[Translated by Tomasz Leszczuk]

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59 Egger / Egger (ed.): *Briefwechsel zwischen Rauch und Rietschel*, 2, p. 299.

60 Despite this, the Copernicus monument has so far only received two modern Polish studies: Tujakowski: *Kopernikowskie pomniki* and Kalemka: *Toruńskie pomniki Kopernika*.

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Fig. 1. Rudolph Brohm (1807–1887), Gymnasium professor, historian, author of the inscription on the monument's plinth. Photo from the collections of Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna – Książnica Kopernikańska w Toruniu.



Fig. 2. Johann Gottfried Schadow – design of the Copernicus monument from 1806. Present state.  
Source: Leibniz-Institut für Astrophysik Potsdam.



Fig. 3. Johann Friedrich Schadow – design of the Copernicus monument from 1806. Present state.  
Source: Leibniz-Institut für Astrophysik Potsdam.



Fig. 4. Gustav Bläser – design of the Copernicus monument from 1847. Drawing from the collection of Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna – Książnica Kopernikańska w Toruniu.



Fig. 5. Johann Heinrich Strack – design of the monument’s plinth from 1846. Drawing from the collection of Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna – Książnica Kopernikańska w Toruniu.



Fig. 6. Eduard Gaertner, the monument unveiling ceremony from 25 October 1853. Source: Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna – Książnica Kopernikańska w Toruniu.



Fig. 7. Copernicus monument, 1880s. Photograph from the Author's collection.



Fig. 8. Copernicus monument from before 1899. Photograph from the Author's collection.



Fig. 9. 'Tamed' memory. Copernicus monument, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Photograph from the Author's collection.



## From Culture of Curiosity to National Pantheon: Who Was Nicolaus Copernicus in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century?

### Abstract

The authors identify the main areas of discussion about Copernicus and his work. They have analysed the changes that have taken place in attitudes to Copernicus and his role in Polish and European science and culture. Copernicus becomes an important argument in regional discussions (Toruń, Royal Prussia) for the strengthening of local identity. He is also an important argument for strengthening the thesis on the achievements of Polish culture and the renewal of science among the elites of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is also an argument in the discussion of the philosophers of the Enlightenment, shown as an example of the development of science and the progress of civilisation.

Keywords: Nicolaus Copernicus; culture of Enlightenment; National Pantheon

### Introduction

2023 was of particular significance for consolidating Copernican memory, because it was this year marked the celebration of the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of this great astronomer. In three cities, where the memory of the astronomer is symbolic, the festivities were particularly poignant. They are Copernicus's places of memory:

- Toruń as the place of his birth and youth, the memory of a great countryman, ancestor;
- Olsztyn, the capital of Warmia and Frombork, where he was the canon of the Warmian cathedral, the administrator in the bishopric of Warmia, where he wrote his most important work: *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*;

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- Kraków as the place where he studied between 1495–1499 and learned about mathematics, philosophy and astronomy, the period when his interests were formed.

Perhaps a short historical and geographical introduction is necessary in order to understand the specifics of the region where the astronomer lived and worked. Copernicus was born in Toruń in 1473 in the province of Royal Prussia belonging to the Polish Crown, and died in 1543 in Frombork in Warmia (the bishopric of Warmia formally belonged to the province of Royal Prussia, but it enjoyed tremendous autonomy, under the rule of the bishop and the Warmia chapter). At the time of his birth, Royal Prussia neighboured the Teutonic State, but at the time of his death it was already the secular Duchy of Prussia.

In 1466, after the Polish-Teutonic 13 Years' War, two parts of Prussia were created as a result of the Second Peace of Toruń – the first part, Royal Prussia, belonging to the Polish Crown, and the second part, Teutonic Prussia, belonging to the Teutonic state. In 1525, Teutonic Prussia became a secular principality when the Grand Master of the order, Albrecht Hohenzollern, paid homage to King Sigismund the Old of Poland as he became a secular prince.

In 1772, as a consequence of the first partition of Poland, the province of Royal Prussia and Warmia were occupied by the Kingdom of Prussia of Frederick II. Frombork – the place of Copernicus's death was occupied by Prussian troops, but Toruń, like Gdańsk, remained in Poland (until the second partition in 1793).

In her book *The Other Prussia*, Karin Friedrich explained how the province of Royal Prussia, part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with its own legal autonomy and provincial assembly, differed from the Kingdom of Prussia ruled by the Hohenzollern dynasty.<sup>1</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after this Polish province had been incorporated into the Kingdom of Prussia as a result of the First Partition, the existence of two Prussias – an autonomous province and a kingdom ruled along absolutist lines – was sometimes forgotten.

This article presents Copernicus's place in the culture of memory of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the communities associated with Toruń, Warmia, and Kraków, where the astronomer is still remembered today. The main objective here is to outline the methods of commemoration and the changing role of Copernicus in the culture of curiosity, the culture of Sarmatism and national culture, as well as the fresh meaning he acquired during the partitions and loss of statehood. Here we analyse the reasons that determined the shift in his meaning, the transition from the level of curiosity to the level of a national hero.

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1 Friedrich: *The Other Prussia*.

## Copernicus in the Culture of Curiosity

In the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Nicolaus Copernicus joined the culture of curiosity. The school environment played an important role in this regard, as exemplified by a treatise from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1697, a school debate between the headmaster of the Academic Gymnasium (*Gymnasium Academicum*) in Toruń, Jerzy Wende<sup>2</sup> and his students – Jacobus Meissner, Michael Schade, Johannes Zimmermann and Daniel Gerlach<sup>3</sup> – was published. The dispute, which was a kind of exam during which students presented their knowledge and skills by answering the professor's questions, consisted of 15 theses.<sup>4</sup> From the topic of the discussion, a picture of curiosities related to the history of Toruń emerges, divided into several different topic areas: history, architecture and geology, as well as culinary curiosities. Therefore, the historical set included information about the white marble tombstone erected in memory of Anna Vasa (daughter of King John III of Sweden) in the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary (thesis I) and the development and expansion of the town hall by mayor Henryk Stroband (thesis II). Moreover, Wende included information referring to the rescue of the city during the siege and bombardment in 1658, during which neither the town hall nor any of the churches were damaged (thesis III). The curiosities also included the famous Academic Gymnasium (thesis V) and information about wax tablets kept in the gymnasium library, with the explanation that they were not Cicero's letters (thesis X). The list of curiosities also included information on architecture, including information about the Leaning Tower (thesis VII), which was leaning, threatening to collapse (it was explained that the tilt itself was caused by its construction rather than its old age), and a house on a high linden tree in the area New Town Garden (thesis VIII). Difficulties related to the construction of a new brick bridge over the Vistula River were also mentioned (thesis XII), where the obstacle was not the width of the river, but the instability of its banks. Another interesting feature was an edible bird's nest (a so-called Chinese nest) on the roof of the library of the Toruń Gymnasium (thesis XI). There is no doubt that Wende attached great importance to the culinary arts, appreciating their importance in Europe. In the last two points, he added ginger cakes, which are famous throughout Europe (thesis XIV), and asparagus, which is normally grown in gardens, but near Toruń can be found in large quantities in fields and in forests (thesis XV).

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2 Jerzy Wende (1635–1705) served as rector of the Academic Gymnasium between 1695–1705. For more on his teaching and scientific work see Salmonowicz: *Toruńskie Gimnazjum Akademickie*, pp. 39–48; Mokrzejcki: *Zainteresowania historyczne Jerzego Wendego*, pp. 237–267.

3 Wende: *De notabilibus*.

4 For more on the importance of Toruń curiosities in relation to the history of Toruń: Roszak et al.: *Od kultury ciekawości*, pp. 43–64.

Interestingly, when preparing the school debate, Jerzy Wende pointed out the need to interest students in one more piece of information. In among the historical, archaeological, geological and culinary curiosities, he also mentioned Nicolaus Copernicus (thesis IV): “Nicolaum Copernicum meritò tantum non omnes illustre Thorunensium decus vocitant, sed pauci eiusdem philosophiam sectantur, paucissimi intelligunt” [Nicholas Copernicus, whom everyone calls the illustrious man of Toruń, yet few follow his philosophy and even fewer understand it].<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting here that the astronomer appeared as one of heroes of Toruń (along with Mayor Stroband), but was the only ‘curiosity’ from the world of science.

Nicolaus Copernicus, in joining the culture of curiosity, also began to appear in scientific journals. The aforementioned school debate, first published at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, after the death of Jerzy Wende (1705), caught the attention of two editors from Toruń and was republished twice in the 1720s. It first came out in 1723 in *Das Gelahrte Preussen*,<sup>6</sup> as a German-language text, and then in a Latin version in 1726 in *Meletemata Thorunensia*.<sup>7</sup> Those behind the publishing of Toruń curiosities in academic journals in Toruń in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were two representatives of the intellectual life of Royal Prussia. The originator of the idea to popularise curiosities in *Das Gelahrte Preussen*, the first scientific magazine in Toruń, was its founder – Jerzy Piotr Schultz (1680–1748), professor and vice-headmaster of the Academic Gymnasium and also an editor and publicist of eighteenth-century Toruń academic journals.<sup>8</sup> Jerzy Piotr Schultz explained the reasons for this publication in the introduction to the first part of *Das Gelahrte Preussen*. When defining the journal’s profile, Schultz clarified that it would publish *Kleine Schrifften* (small papers), and therefore *disputationes* too.<sup>9</sup> So let us examine the fourth thesis according to the version published by Schultz: “Den Nicolaum Copernicum nennen alle eine sonderbare Zierde der Stadt Thorn wenig aber folgen seinen Principiis Mathematicis, und die wenigste verstehen sie.”<sup>10</sup>

5 Wende: *De notabilibus*.

6 *Das Gelahrte Preussen*, 1. The journal was published in the years 1722–1725. It contained scientific material in the area of history – including articles, scientific reviews and discussions, mainly related to the scientific life of Royal Prussia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – as well as geography, physics and mathematics. For more information about the journal’s content, editing and readership see: Dunajówna: *Pierwsze toruńskie czasopismo naukowe*, pp. 241–269.

7 *Meletemata Thorunensia*. For more about the circumstances in which curiosities were published in Toruń journals see: Roszak et al.: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 32–36.

8 For more about Jerzy Piotr Schultz’s editing, teaching and academic work, see: Salmonowicz: *U progu Oświecenia*, pp. 53–88.

9 *Das Gelahrte Preussen*, 1, preface.

10 *Ibid.*, 1, p. 283.

Piotr Jaenichen (1679–1738), editor of *Meletemata Thorunensia* and headmaster of the Toruń Gymnasium (1706–1724), devoted equal attention to the debate, considering Wende's works to be an important source of knowledge. All the more so because few works from the rich academic achievements of this distinguished professor have survived. For Jaenichen, publishing the debate would serve to remind readers of the works of Jerzy Wende – an outstanding scientist who lived among the inhabitants of Toruń.<sup>11</sup> It should be emphasised that reprinting Wende's debate in eighteenth-century journals resulted in some changes in the part about Copernicus. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century version, Copernicus is referred to as a philosopher, while in the 18<sup>th</sup> century German version he is called a mathematician, the author of the *Principiis Mathematicis*, and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Latin version he was once again called a philosopher. Jaenichen's thesis on Copernicus ran as follows: "Nicolaum Copernicum merito tantum non omnes illustre Thorunensium decus vocitant, sed pauci eiusdem philosophiam sectantur, paucissimi intelligunt."<sup>12</sup> A common and constant feature of these three versions presenting Copernicus and his achievements was a focus on how his work was received. Wende, Schultz and Jaenichen emphasised that few people followed his thinking (work), and even fewer people understood it.

Nicolaus Copernicus also began to appear in cabinets of curiosities, which were becoming very popular in the modern era. At the behest of rulers, princes, scientists or wealthier townspeople, they were established in palaces and residences (often in gardens).<sup>13</sup> They collected various curiosities, including: globes, telescopes and coins, that were objects of fascination for their owners and travellers. Therefore, these diverse and unique collections included items from many corners of the world and from various fields of knowledge: history, nature and geography. In this regard, cabinets of curiosities also served educational purposes. An example is the school in Halle founded in 1698 by August Hermann Francke (1663–1727),<sup>14</sup> a German theologian and representative of Pietism. The cabinet of curiosities established there played an extremely important role in the education of young people. In accordance with the principle of visualisation, this cabinet supported the teaching program and had a measurable impact on the educational content. Therefore, this collection was, on the one hand, a selection of curiosities (including fossils, zoological specimens, astronomical instruments), and on the other hand, it served as a teaching facility. The exhibits presented in the so-called *Waisenhaus* in Halle also contained a Copernican

11 *Meletemata Thorunensia*, 1, p. 4.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

13 About collections, cabinets of curiosities and their creators' interests, see: Pomian: *Zbieracze i osobliwości*; Brzezina-Scheuerer: *Między wiarą a wiedzą*, pp. 89–107.

14 Zaunstöck et al.: *Im Netz des Waisenhauses*, pp. 123–159. For more about place of Copernicus in the culture of curiosities, see Roszak et al.: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 142–144.

model, as witnessed by Heinrich Sander in the course of his travels around Europe in the 1780s. During his visit to Halle, he was presented with the Copernican model, already damaged, along with other teaching aids, including a Bible written on palm leaves, fish-skin shoes from Iceland and models of the city of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple.<sup>15</sup>

An example of Copernicus's place in the culture of curiosity is also the work of Jakub Kazimierz Haur (1632–1709), who created a kind of cabinet of curiosities in the form of an encyclopaedia – the poetic compendium *Merkuriusz polski* from the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Here Haur referred to Nicolaus Copernicus as an outstanding mathematician (“Copernicus, the bold mathematician”), sandwiching him between the entries *Kopacze* (diggers) and *Korale* (corals)<sup>16</sup> and including the astronomer in the company of outstanding Polish and European scientists and travellers – including Aristotle, Seneca, Christopher Columbus, Jan Kochanowski, Samuel Twardowski, Wespazjan Kochowski and Łukasz Górnicki.

Travelogues provide a rich source of information and a means of consolidating Nicolaus Copernicus's position in the culture of curiosity. Travellers often sought and then reported what they found strange, surprising, and what made a given region or city unique. Traces of the astronomer's memory emerge primarily in the description of two cities – Toruń and Frombork – the places where Copernicus was born, worked as a scientist and died. What is puzzling and at the same time a characteristic feature of travellers' accounts on Nicolaus Copernicus are reiterations about his appearance, location of birth and death, and the place where he made observations. They rarely discuss Copernicus's theory, and only a few pay attention to its great importance in the history of science, as was the case with the English diplomat Nathaniel William Wraxall, staying in Toruń in 1778, who emphasised that the heliocentric system had been confirmed by Newton.<sup>17</sup> Most accounts primarily reveal interest in places related to the astronomer. Therefore, travellers seeking traces of Copernicus in Toruń headed to three characteristic places. They mainly visited the tenement house on the corner of St. Anna and Piekarska streets, considered at that time to be the place of his birth. The above-mentioned diplomat Nathaniel William Wraxall, looking at around this birth place, stated that “The room where Copernicus was born, despite the destruction of most of the building by fire, is surrounded with almost religious veneration to this day.”<sup>18</sup> Moreover, travellers were interested in the pyramid-shaped well with a globe on the top, located in front of Copernicus's

15 Sander: *Beschreibung*, p. 123.

16 Partyka (ed.): Haur: *Merkuryjusz polski*, p. 201.

17 Wraxall: *Wspomnienia z Polski*, p. 553.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 554 [translations of all quotes in this article by Steve Jones].

house.<sup>19</sup> The epitaph in St. Johns' Church also aroused great excitement among them, because of the portrait of the astronomer, which revealed to them his image. They noted both his appearance – slim figure, hair, black eyes and hands folded in prayer – as well as the attributes accompanying him: “He has a crucifix in front of him, a skull at his feet, and a globe and a compass at the back.”<sup>20</sup> In Frombork, the place of his burial is of particular interest. Travellers emphasised that it was difficult to locate because “the canons’ coffins were placed one by one in the vault, so after so many years it is impossible to tell which one belongs to Copernicus.”<sup>21</sup> Also noteworthy was the room where the “great cosmologist and astronomer” worked and the porch from which Copernicus observed the sky.<sup>22</sup> The water supply system, supplying water from the Bauda River to the hill where the canons lived, was presented as a curiosity. Interestingly, the attribution of this construction to Copernicus was so firmly established in the minds of Frombork’s residents that at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one traveller named Butler mentioned Copernicus as a great engineer and listed his achievements in this field.<sup>23</sup> Thus, not only was incorrect information perpetuated (the system was created after his death), but Copernicus was perceived more as a constructor than as an astronomer.

## Copernicus: An Erudite Discovery

In 1747, brothers Józef Andrzej and Andrzej Stanisław Załuski ceremonially opened the Public Library in Warsaw. Two private collections of books previously owned by magnates switched role and became accessible to a wider audience. The Public Library was the materialisation of a postulate from the erudite trend, which from the 1730s had proclaimed the need to make up for the cultural backlogs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The program published in Warsaw in 1732 as *Programma litterarium* called for the creation of a Public Library, the development of a national bibliography, the publication of sources for the history of the nation and the history of the Catholic Church, and the establishment of a book-readers’ association. This program developed in the

19 Biester: *Kilka listów o Polsce*, p. 240. The Copernicus Well was the brainchild of Samuel Luther Geret (1730–1797) – a professor at the Toruń Gymnasium, publicist, mayor of Toruń and astronomy enthusiast. In the 1780s, he erected a pyramid in front of Copernicus’s house. At the top he placed a scale held by an astronomer’s hand, in which he put a ball symbolising the Earth, in reference to his discovery. Roszak et al.: *Od kultury ciekawości*.

20 Wraxall: *Wspomnienia z Polski*, p. 554. See fig. 1 at the end of the chapter.

21 Bernoulli: *Podróż po Polsce*, p. 471.

22 Ibid.

23 Pacevičius et al. (eds.): *Dziennik podróży Butlera*, p. 63.

1740s and 1750s thanks to the involvement of magnates and representatives of teaching orders – the Theatines, Piarists and Jesuits. The creation of the Public Library gave a new impulse to implement scientific plans. An intellectual community centred around the library, and its members communicated regularly through correspondence or at meetings in Warsaw. The correspondence circle included Crown referendary Józef Andrzej Załuski, his older brother, Bishop of Kraków Andrzej Stanisław Załuski, Bishop of Vilnius Józef Stanisław Sapieha, Grand Chancellor of Lithuania Jan Fryderyk Sapieha, Voivode of Nowogródek Józef Aleksander Jabłonowski, Franciszek Bohomolec from the Jesuit Order, Stanisław Konarski from the Piarist Order.

One of the basic responsibilities of this intellectual trend, which sought to emphasise the role of tradition and historical heritage, was to consolidate knowledge about all publications published in the Republic of Poland and concerning the Republic of Poland. Józef Andrzej Załuski worked on editing the bibliography throughout his life, but failed to publish it. The bibliography named *Bibliotheca Polona Magna Universalis* remained in manuscript form.

Nicolaus Copernicus was one of the forgotten figures at that time. The was not because his *De revolutionibus* had been placed in the ‘Index of Forbidden Books’, but more due to the fact that his books and correspondence were missing from library collections. The erudite milieu treated the astronomer as a writer, underlining that any type of work known and recognised throughout the world gave the author the right to such a title. And Copernicus, although marked as a heretic as the author of a ‘false, absurd and heretical’ hypothesis, was one of the most famous writers. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Szymon Starowolski had already included him on the list of one hundred outstanding Polish writers.<sup>24</sup> In addition to his mathematical and astronomical works, his achievements were highlighted as a translator of Theophylact Simocatta’s *Moral Letters* from Greek into Latin, and as the author of numerous letters to bishops and friends.

During the erudite heyday, the concept of ‘writer’ was very broad. Jan Daniel Janocki, secretary of the Public Library and unquestionable authority in the field of literature and editing, believed that writers were simply people who cared about knowledge and books.<sup>25</sup> Benedykt Chmielowski – the creator of *New Athens*, a popular encyclopaedia from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century – treated the concept of ‘literate’ even more broadly, including physicians, philosophers, orators, poets, theologians and lawyers in the same category.<sup>26</sup> In the light of these definitions, Copernicus belonged among writers, creators of literature and culture,

24 Starowolski: *Scriptorum Polonicorum Hekatonas*. In the 1627 Venice edition, Copernicus’s biography was corrected and supplemented. The author of these corrections was probably Jan Brożek, professor of the Jagiellonian University.

25 Kozłowski: *Leksykon*, p. 5.

26 Chmielowski: *Nowe Ateny*, 1, pp. 280–283.

and therefore, according to Załuski, he should be included in the bibliography of Polish literature.

Józef Andrzej Załuski's work on the bibliography progressed slowly and remained in manuscript form. The first draft of the bibliography was made by Załuski's collaborator, voivode Józef Aleksander Jabłonowski. In 1752, *Museum Polonum* [Polish museum] was published in Lviv and represented a compilation of the achievements of national literature according to the authors.<sup>27</sup> Importantly, it was a bibliography that included the achievements of writers who had lived and died in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – writers from the Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.<sup>28</sup> The first edition proves that the voivode knew little about the astronomer's achievements, and the search for his works had only just begun. The 1752 edition, which appeared in the Jesuit typography in Lviv under the name *Kopernicus Nicolaus Torun[ensis] Canon[icus] Varm[iensis]*, included:

- the second edition of *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium*, Basel 1566;
- *Narratio prima* by Jerzy Joachim Rheticus, Gdańsk 1540;
- mention of letters written by Copernicus to his uncle Łukasz Watzenrode, among others.

The voivode pointed out that Copernicus's letters were self-penned and discovered by Jan Brożek, a professor at the Kraków Academy.<sup>29</sup>

Jabłonowski's search continued during the following years, because in the second edition of *Museum Polonum*, published in Elbląg in 1766, the voivode provided an extended bibliography of the astronomer's works:<sup>30</sup>

- the second edition of *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium*, Basel 1566;
- the third edition of the book entitled *Astronomia restaurata*, Amsterdam 1617;
- *De lateribus et angulis triangulorum*, Wittenberga 1542;
- *Epistola de tempore annuo* (a letter from Copernicus to his friend Bernard Wapowski, found in the collection of the English astronomer Henry Savile in Oxford);
- *Epistolae morales, rurales et amaturiae* by Theophylact Simocata (translation from Greek into Latin);
- *Chronostichus*, which contains the date of the astronomer's death:  
eX hoC eXCessit trIstI CopernICUs aeVo  
IngenIo astrorVM et CognItIone potens.<sup>31</sup>

27 Jabłonowski: *Museum Polonum*. 1752.

28 Janocki: *Polnischer Büchersaal*, p. 43: "noch lebenden, als bereits verstorbenen polnischen und litauischen Schriftstellern".

29 Jabłonowski: *Museum Polonum*. 1752, p. 118.

30 Idem: *Museum Polonum*. 1766, p. 119.

31 Ibid.

Jabłonowski held these books in his collection, in one of three libraries. The exception was Copernicus's letter to Wapowski, the existence of which he probably learned from a bookstore catalogue. Jabłonowski copied the information from one of the manuscript catalogues, probably *Bibliotheca graeca* by Johann Fabritius, where the chapter *Veterum Mathematicorum scripta* mentions Copernicus's letter kept in the library of the University of Oxford, in the collection of the astronomer Savile.<sup>32</sup> Henry Savile is an extraordinary figure. He was a writer, philologist and translator of the New Testament into English. He established a department of geometry and astronomy at Oxford, and donated his collections to the university in 1619. The books included manuscripts and books by European mathematicians and astronomers, including Copernicus's *De revolutionibus*.<sup>33</sup>

Uniqueness and rarity as qualities of work in the collection were particularly valued by the erudite community. Therefore, the prefect of the Public Library, and at the same time Józef Andrzej Załuski's secretary, was tasked with finding the first edition of the *De revolutionibus* treatise from 1543. An additional impulse for the search was the influx of immigrants from Saxony to Warsaw during the Seven Years' War, who were fleeing Dresden and the Prussian troops and sought refuge in the capital of an allied country. Janocki recalled that the newcomers were interested in this rare edition of Copernicus's book. The library prefect referred to it as "Rarissima inter libros rarissimos" [the rarest among the rarest books].<sup>34</sup> Searches in the library of the Kraków Academy and in the library of the Warmian bishops in Lidzbark Warmiński were not especially successful. Janocki admitted that he had never seen this copy, just like the greatest expert on rare books in Poland, the crown referendary, Józef Andrzej Załuski. So he wrote in the hope that the bishop of Kraków, Andrzej Stanisław Załuski, would find a rare copy either in the library of the Kraków Academy or in the bishop's library in Lidzbark Warmiński. However, this attempt also ended in failure and the first edition of *De revolutionibus* still remained a collector's dream.

Discovering Copernicus also began in his hometown of Toruń. While in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century he was honoured as the pride of the city, and his heliocentric theory was mentioned by professors of the local Academic Gymnasium, systematic research on his biography began in the 1760s.<sup>35</sup>

Fresh impetus for research on Copernicus's biography came from Gotfryd Centner, professor of history at the Toruń Gymnasium. In 1763, he published a short biographical dictionary of Toruń scholars at Paul Bergmann's printing

32 Fabritius: *Bibliotheca graeca*, 3, p. 576.

33 Birkenmajer: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, pp. 494–497, 577.

34 Rossijskaâ nacional'naâ biblioteka: *Listy i bruliony listów J. D. Janockiego do Andrzeja i Józefa Załuskich z lat 1756–1773*, J. D. Janocki to A. S. Załuski, undated, probably 1753, mf. BN 15996.

35 Salmonowicz: *Mysł oświecenia*, pp. 42–47.

house.<sup>36</sup> The dictionary confirms the poor knowledge, or rather ignorance, about the astronomer in his hometown. It is worth emphasising here that Copernicus was the only Catholic on the lists and dictionaries published among Toruń Protestants. Centner attempted to establish the genealogy of the Copernicus family. However, based this purely on the chronicles of Hartknoch and Zerneck, as well as the biography by Pierre Gassendi. He offered some information about his father, Mikolaj, and his mother, Barbara Watzenrode. He had no knowledge about Copernicus's siblings – two sisters and a brother named Andrzej, whom he confused with another Copernicus named Georgi. The attempt to establish the genealogy ended in failure, which the author himself summed up as follows: “so ist der Knoten schwer auszulösen” [it is difficult to untie this knot].<sup>37</sup> Centner continued his research, which soon helped determine the brother's name and discover a mention of him in the court book in the Municipal Archives.

Another interesting theme appeared in Centner's work, namely an appeal to commemorate the great resident of Toruń. The pretext was a celebration organised in Leipzig in 1743. The professor of the Academic Gymnasium complained that his compatriots in Toruń were unable to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the astronomer's birth, but the professor of the University of Leipzig, Johann Christoph Gottsched had managed to do so. He emphasised the importance of the commemorative speech delivered on this occasion by Gottsched in Leipzig in the presence of Prince Xavier of Saxony, mentioning the presentation of the Copernican model. He proposed to make up for lost time and build a monument to Copernicus that this great scientist deserved.<sup>38</sup> He also mentioned that scholars meet various fates – sometimes unappreciated during their lifetime, they have to wait many years or centuries to be discovered by future generations. An example of such a revival of memory is the case of Copernicus. Although his heliocentric system was once rejected, today everyone accepts it. The professor of the Toruń school emphasised that after many years it was the strength of the astronomer's arguments that made the difference.

At the same time, research on Copernicus's biography was conducted by city secretary Samuel Luther Geret.<sup>39</sup> In the 1760s, as a resident of the city of Toruń, he stayed at the royal court in Warsaw and there he encountered the intellectual milieu of the Public Library. Geret's involvement with the history and structure of the city led to his fascination with the astronomer and desire to write his biography. He collected materials using the Toruń archives and extracts from the

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36 Centner: *Gehrte*.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

39 About Geret's historical oeuvre and interests cf. Dygdała: *Geret Samuel Luther*, pp. 90–93.

court ledger, and also used files from the Warmian chapter.<sup>40</sup> He found the first mention of the Copernicus family in Toruń from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He also copied fragments of Frederick II's correspondence with Voltaire, which referred to plans made by the ruler of Prussia to build a mausoleum in honour of Copernicus in Frombork. On his initiative, a well in the shape of a pyramid was established in front of Copernicus's house, with a globe and a compass on the top, in reference to Copernicus's theory.<sup>41</sup> The secretary not only eagerly discussed Copernicus and the places associated with him, but also showed the guests around, presenting, for example, the astronomer's room in the tenement house at the corner of St. Anna and Piekarska streets and the epitaph in St. John's Cathedral.

The 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth presented another opportunity to restore his memory. Preparations for the ceremonial celebrations in Toruń were initiated by city secretary, Samuel Luther Geret. The plans included the construction of a monument in the market square in front of the town hall (modelled on the Erasmus of Rotterdam monument on the main square in this city), writing a biography of Copernicus, as well as publishing a book on the astronomer's scientific achievements. In 1772 and 1773, Geret stepped up his correspondence with scientists from all over Europe as he wanted, on the one hand, to interest them in the preparations for the anniversary and, on the other hand, to ascertain the importance of Copernicus in the history of mathematics and astronomy. Correspondents and consultants included Jean-Nicolas Allamand, member of the Royal Society and professor of mathematics at the University of Leiden,<sup>42</sup> Jean Jérémi Brackenhoffer, professor of mathematics at the University of Strasbourg, Jean Euler, professor of mathematics and member of the Academy of St. Petersburg, Franz Huberti, Jesuit and professor of mathematics at Würzburg, Franz Jetze, professor of physics at the Knights' Academy in Legnica, Jesuit Christian Mayer from Heidelberg, Johann Andreas Segner, professor of mathematics and physics at the University of Halle, Johann Titius from Wittenberg, Jesuit Franz Zeno, director of the astronomical observatory in Prague. Despite gathering some interesting information about the life and works of Copernicus, Geret did not complete his ambitious plans, thwarted by political turmoil and financial problems caused by the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

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40 Biblioteka Naukowa Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie: *Papiery rodziny Geretów*, sig. 3222.

41 See fig. 2 at the end of the chapter.

42 J. N. Allamand to S. L. Geret, 28.12.1772, in: Biblioteka Naukowa Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności i Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Krakowie: *Papiery rodziny Geretów*, sig. 3222, fols. 1–2v.

## Copernicus in the National Pantheon

After the first partition of Poland in 1772, the perception of Copernicus shifted. Previously, he had been mentioned primarily in scientific works – in treatises by philosophers and astronomers – and had also emerged in the culture of curiosity. After the first partition, he was not only a scientist, but also a national hero. The 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the astronomer's birth fell in the shadow of the country's partition. Toruń, his place of birth, remained in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (it only came under Prussian rule in 1793), but his place of work and death, Warmia, had come under Prussian rule. Interestingly, the initiative to commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth occurred in three communities. In Toruń, the celebrations were organised by the previously mentioned Samuel Luther Geret, who strove to attract the attention of scholars from all over Europe and the interest of King Stanisław August Poniatowski. In Warmia, Bishop Ignacy Krasicki, an outstanding poet and admirer of Copernicus, planned to build a tombstone in the cathedral in Frombork. The third initiative came from Prussia. The new ruler of Warmia, Frederick II, declared that a cenotaph would be built in Frombork, a symbolic empty tomb, in honour of the outstanding scientist who had worked in a region that now belonged to the Hohenzollern dynasty: “j'érigerai dans une petite ville de la Warmie un monument sur le tombeau du fameux Copernic, qui s'y trouve” [I will erect a monument in a small town in Warmia on the grave of the famous Copernicus, located there].<sup>43</sup> The Copernicus cenotaph had a symbolic meaning – on the one hand, it emphasised the connection of the conquered lands with the Hohenzollern dynasty (how the dynasty cares for its new regions) and, on the other hand, it showed the ruler's emotional bond with the great astronomer. The cenotaph was a continuation of the tombs erected by the King of Prussia for outstanding scientists, and for his friends – the philosopher Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, the Marquis d'Argens and the mathematician and physicist Francesco Algarotti. None of these anniversary initiatives came to pass. In 1773, there was no monument to Copernicus in Toruń, nor a tombstone or cenotaph in Frombork.

Despite these failures to commemorate Copernicus, he entered Polish national culture as a symbol of a great tradition and an example of great ancestral achievements. His new role was clearly visible in literary and artistic creations, where the astronomer was presented as an outstanding Pole, a role model, even though his work still lingered on the 'Index of Forbidden Books'. No Polish patriot's ideal library would be complete without *De revolutionibus*. In Ignacy Krasicki's novel *Pan Podstoli* from 1778 and in Michał Dymitr Krajewski's novel *Podolanka* from 1784, which would create the model of a Polish patriot, there is a

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43 *Frederick II to Voltaire, 12.08.1773.*

description of such an ideal library,<sup>44</sup> with a list of books that every nobleman should have and read. Copernicus's work was given pride of place, which proves the astronomer's transition into the sphere of symbolic culture. In fact, *De revolutionibus* was a book exclusively read in scientific circles. For a wider readership, it was a hermetic mathematical treatise, too difficult to read and, additionally, still suspicious for religious reasons. In creating the model of a patriot after the First Partition, however, the author was clearly separated from his work. Copernicus as a canon and astronomer proved the magnitude of spirit and mind of Poles, which was enough for his treatise to find a prominent place in the symbolic Polish library.

The attitude towards the astronomer and his treatise at the Kraków Academy is also changing. While in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, professors Jan Brożek and Marcin Radymiński were interested in the biography of the Kraków alumnus and promoted his work, in the following century both he and his work fell into oblivion. The academy, dominated by supporters of Aristotle's philosophy, rejected the heliocentric system and only in private lessons could one hear about Copernicus and his theory. A breakthrough came after the First Partition, when the Ministry of Education (*Komisja Edukacji Narodowej*) was established and incorporated the former schools of the dissolved Jesuit Order. Two Academies in Vilnius and Kraków were transformed into the so-called Main Schools. Teachers open to new intellectual currents came to Kraków, including mathematician and astronomer Jan Śniadecki. Śniadecki, as a supporter of the heliocentric theory, also became interested in Copernicus. The establishment of the first chair of astronomy in 1782, dedicated to Copernicus, was of symbolic significance. In his inaugural speech, Śniadecki stressed, on the one hand, that Copernicus was a graduate of the Kraków Academy, and on the other hand, that he was a reformer who revived the science of astronomy. Therefore, he would be the best patron for the astronomy department at the Kraków Academy.

In the broadest dimension of state memory, initiated and supervised by King Stanisław August Poniatowski, Copernicus appeared after the renovation of the Knights' Hall in the Royal Castle in Warsaw. The Knights' Hall, founded in 1786 by the king, is an example of the new policy of commemorating heroes – outstanding leaders, clergymen, writers and scholars.<sup>45</sup> Preparations for it began in 1781, and it was officially put into use on the anniversary of the coronation on 25 November 1786. The sculpture designs were made by outstanding artists André Le Brun and Giacomo Monaldi, and the work was completed by court painter Marcello Bacciarelli and architects Dominik Merlini and Jan Chrystian

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44 Stasiewicz (ed.): Krasicki Ignacy: *Pan Podstoli*, pp. 30–31; Krajewski: *Podolanka*, p. 83.

45 On the ideological program of the Knights' Hall of the Royal Castle in Warsaw cf. Getka-Kenig: *Pomniki publiczne*, pp. 42–63.

Kamsetzer. Stanisław August consulted the choice of heroes with historian Adam Naruszewicz, leaving him with the final decision. Ultimately, there were ten portraits and 22 marble busts. What the exhibited leaders, bishops and scientists had in common was their patriotic attitude and contributions to the homeland. Copernicus was given a place of honour, as his portrait was hung above the statue of Chronos, the god of time.

The third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the fall of the state brought another version of Copernicus's commemoration. The astronomer became a cult figure, a reminder of the 'fallen homeland'. An urn with Copernicus's ashes was displayed in the museum in memory of Polish heroes, built by Izabela Czartoryska on her estate in Puławy. The Temple of the Sibil, as Czartoryska herself called the museum, was supposed to be a spiritual continuation of the homeland, and the memorabilia collected there took on the characteristics of cult relics. They were intended to recall the great heroes of the past, but at the same time they were to ensure cultural continuity and a bond between ancestors and contemporary patriots.

The places of Copernicus's birth and death also became objects of veneration. In 1802, two professors, envoys of the Warsaw Society of Friends of Sciences, Tadeusz Czacki and Marcin Molski, headed to Warmia. They themselves described their journey as an expedition undertaken "to collect souvenirs of the extinct homeland".<sup>46</sup>

In a letter addressed to Jan Śniadecki, professor of the Kraków Academy, they emphasised that a great deal of memorabilia pertaining to the famous astronomer had been lost due to the negligence of subsequent generations. Czacki and Molski treated Frombork as one of the national necropolises, not only taking souvenirs of one of the national heroes (including bones as relics), but also striving to maintain ties with this place. It was to this end that Jan Śniadecki sent copies of a eulogy in honour of Copernicus from Kraków to Frombork. He emphasised that the members of the Warmian chapter should lay them "on Copernicus's grave".<sup>47</sup> Similarly, copies of this speech came to Toruń as a gift to the city hall where the outstanding astronomer was born.

The increased demand for patriotic souvenirs also found a commercial outlet. The owner of the tenement house on the corner of St. Anna and Piekarska streets, at that time considered the birthplace of the astronomer (today historians confirm that Copernicus was born in a tenement house on the Old Town Square) arranged a special room where travellers could admire, among others, Nicolaus's cradle. Bricks from Copernicus's house were sold to Polish magnates as a precious souvenir from the former homeland, a reminder of the great scientist and

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46 Chamcówna (ed.): Śniadecki Jan: *O Koperniku*, p. 131.

47 T. Czacki to J. Śniadecki, 17. 11. 1802, in: Chamcówna (ed.): Śniadecki: *O Koperniku*, p. 205.

countryman.<sup>48</sup> The military commandant of Toruń, Stanisław Wojczyński, donated one of the bricks to the Temple of the Sibil in 1809.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it did not matter that Copernicus was born in a different house than the one from which bricks were sold as national souvenirs. It did not matter that the astronomer's bones brought from Frombork did not belong to Copernicus. What did matter was the fact that Copernicus had become a symbol of the achievements of Polish science and culture, a man who, in times of subjugation and collapse of the state, was remembered 'to embolden heart and mind'.

[Translated by Steve Jones]

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48 Wernicke: *Wegweiser durch Thorn*, pp. 19–20.

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Fig. 1. Nicolaus Copernicus' epitaph in St. John's Church in Toruń, founded by Melchior Pirnesius around 1580. Photo: Krystian Chyrkowski.



## Early Monuments Commemorating Copernicus

### Abstract

The paper deals with several large scale works of art erected to the memory of the groundbreaking astronomer before 1800, which were not plentiful at that time, as the learned canon was then not universally acknowledged, and most of them were founded by Protestants. The conclusion confirms that there are no certain true-to-life images of the renowned scholar, and the ones in his native town – Toruń – cannot be named as such. Keywords: Copernicus; commemoration; monuments; modern period

Strange as it may seem today, commemorations of Copernicus before the 19<sup>th</sup> century in form other than prints, medals or miniatures were not numerous. In today's Poland we know of only two epitaphs, located in Toruń (*Thorn*), and Frombork (*Frauenburg*), i. e. localities to which he was tied by birth and work and where he was obviously remembered best.

The Toruń painted wooden cenotaph in the Old Town Parish church, now known as the cathedral of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, which existed in its primary form in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, probably acquired its contemporary shape<sup>1</sup> in 1601 when it was provided with a secondary, but ennobling function of a memorial to King John Albert, who had died in Toruń exactly a century earlier.<sup>2</sup> The *aediculum*, originally hanging a bit lower than today, was placed on a pillar in the southwestern corner of the church where the intestines of the monarch were said to be buried, and which adjoined the west-

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1 See *Epitaph of Nicolaus Copernicus and King John Albert, 1573? 1601? and 1733*, fig. 1 in chapter by Roszak et al.: *From Culture*, p. 243.

2 Apart from Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, an extensive discussion of the memorial is provided by Domałowski et al.: *Bazylika*, pp. 165–170. Many authors have placed the reconstruction of the epitaph at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but the exact anniversary of the king's passing away as the relevant occasion has not yet been mentioned.

ernmost chapel of the south aisle, devoted to Guardian Angels.<sup>3</sup> The idea of commemorating the learned canon in his birthplace was carried out by Melchior Pirnesius (1526–1589), a local medic and intellectual, living in Toruń from 1570, who had several common family traits with the renowned scholar (ties to Cracow, studies at same Italian universities). He was a member of the learned town elite leaning towards Lutheranism,<sup>4</sup> and the epitaph he ordered was hung in the temple, which was practically Protestant at the time, and, starting in 1583, simultaneous with regard to religious confessions.<sup>5</sup>

Pirnesius also had another epitaph made in the same church for his daughter Anna, who died at the very young age of four in 1576.<sup>6</sup> It contains an interesting vanitative, portrait-like depiction of St. Hieronymus, made after works by Dürer and Quentin and Jan Metsys. Despite being modelled on such famed artists, the quality of the painting is rather provincial, as it was supposedly produced either on the spot, or in Gdańsk (*Danzig*), the closest large artistic centre, which provided some other works of art for Toruń at the time.<sup>7</sup> The same may be said of the nearby epitaph image of Copernicus,<sup>8</sup> which however was retouched during one of the ensuing reconstructions and restorations of the monument, not allowing for a thorough judgement.<sup>9</sup> The most important of these changes was made, as already mentioned, in 1601. It was then that the Jesuits, who in the meantime took over part of the temple, apparently decided to elevate the rank of the commemorated scholar by making him share his monument with the King of Poland (this perhaps also emphasised the canon's confession by linking him to the

3 Ibid., pp. 165–166 (the chapel of Dormition of Mary – church plan, pp. 114–115). Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, p. 5, name the chapel as devoted to Guardian Angels.

4 His biography is more recently summarised by Domaśłowski et al.: *Bazylika*, pp. 169–170.

5 Ibid., p. 20 [Krzysztof Mikulski].

6 See fig. 1 at the end of the chapter.

7 The epitaph of Anna Pirnesius is discussed by Domaśłowski et al.: *Bazylika*, pp. 163–165, ill. 84. Józef Flik assessed that the Toruń depiction of St. Hieronymus was directly modelled after Jan Metsys' version of the composition in a private collection in Spain, Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, pp. 176–177. Such a painting is unknown to Buijnsters-Smets: *Jan Massys*, but it's rather a composition by a follower of Quentin, sold in 2009 at Bonham's San Francisco – see *Bonham's San Francisco*, Lot 6026 – that seems an exact match.

The close artistic ties of Toruń to Gdańsk, notably in the 16<sup>th</sup> and earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century, have been emphasised by several authors, recently by Tylicki: *Historia malarstwa*, pp. 41–47.

8 See fig. 2 at the end of the chapter.

9 Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, p. 383, recall Franz Schwarz forwarding in 1943 an attribution to Fabian Neisser (1559–1605), a Gdańsk painter that decorated the family epitaph in St. Mary's church in Toruń. Apart from doubts regarding the formal side of the comparison, an early date for the astronomer's monument forwarded here would exclude this authorship. Józef Flik mentioned the name of Hans Michel from Amsterdam, who has been present in Toruń at that time, Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, p. 53; his name is however only known from written sources. Kruszelnicka (Ibidem, pp. 120–123) judges the painter's manner as simple, uneven and in part medieval. Indeed, it cannot be classified as an outstanding work of art.

Polish, that is Catholic, monarchy), but also underlining his activities as an astronomer: this happened before placing Copernicus' most famous publication on Church book index.<sup>10</sup> To this end, appropriate scientific instruments were additionally painted on the portrait and its architectural frame, as Pirnesius tended to see the cleric from Toruń as a fellow representative of medicine and as a mathematician, according to the original shape of the image and the existing inscription, which was moved to the current location after the undertaken changes.<sup>11</sup>

Another major remodelling of the monument occurred in 1733, financed by Jakub Kazimierz Rubinkowski (1668–1749), Catholic councillor, postmaster and the king's representative in the town, an intellectual evidently fascinated by the local history, who added some inscriptions further honouring the commemorated as well as dealing with his own role.<sup>12</sup> Rubinkowski commissioned several other memorial works of art, including a painted written panel dedicated to two bishops of Warmia/Ermland originating from Toruń, including Lucas Watzenrode, Copernicus' uncle and patron. He placed it close to the refurbished epitaph,<sup>13</sup> thereby creating a distinctive space centred around the person of the astronomer.

In spite of the changes that fortunately spared the facial features,<sup>14</sup> it can be established that the depiction of Copernicus in the discussed object was made after a woodcut by Lucas Cranach the Elder from 1515, depicting a Saxon religious reformer, Johannes Spalatinus.<sup>15</sup> This surprising fact apparently testifies to the circumstance that neither Pirnesius, nor the artist he hired, could gain access to any depictions of the Warmia canon, kept in Catholic ecclesiastical possession, on which some more information shall follow. A copy of one, installed in the

10 Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, pp. 44–47, 56–58, and 127–128, citing also 17<sup>th</sup> century historian, Christoph Hartknoch, who interpreted the joining of memorials in a similar way.

11 The original form of the cenotaph, including painted floral decoration, symbolic decorative heads and/or coats-of-arms in place of later astronomical instruments, a shelf with such instruments missing in the earliest version of the portrait and crowning by a triangular pediment, under which the first commemorative inscription was inserted, has been disclosed by x-ray examination by Józef Flik and reconstructed by him in form of drawings, Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, pp. 41–48, 127–128, 146–164 and 167–173, ills. 17–30 and tables 9–11; Domasłowski et al.: *Bazylika*, p. 169.

12 Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, pp. 58 and 165–166. A summary of well researched Rubinkowski's biography is given by Domasłowski et al.: *Bazylika*, pp. 212–213.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 214.

14 Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, p. 59. This publication cites x-ray research by German conservator Kuchel during World War II, which did not disclose head form other than now visible.

15 See fig. 3 at the end of the chapter; *ibidem*, pp. 65 and 82–89. Janina Kruszelnicka, who first turned attention to the graphic pattern, accentuates extraordinary similarity of the physiognomies in both depictions, while the composition of the woodcut, although recognisable, was employed in the epitaph painting more freely and in a simplified manner. Discussion of the woodcut: Koeplin et al.: *Lucas Cranach*, pp. 492–494, no. 343, ill. 271.

Strasbourg cathedral, and also discussed later on, must have not yet existed as well; this, in pair with comparison to the first architectural shape of the monument to the epitaph of Anna Pirnesius, allows to date the Toruń epitaph early, most probably to the centennial of the astronomer's birth in 1573.<sup>16</sup> At that time, Copernicus on the portrait was dressed in a simple black robe with buttons, and held in his folded hands some plants testifying to his scientific interests that were intended to be commemorated.<sup>17</sup>

This form of his representation, especially as far as physiognomy is concerned, initiated an interesting development: Tobias Stimmer, who painted the aforementioned copy in Strasbourg around 1574, is also believed to have made a sketch for an image of the astronomer cut in wood possibly by Christoph Murer for the publication *Icones sive imagines virorum literis illustrium*, commented by Niklaus Reusner and published 1587 in Strasbourg in Latin and German versions.<sup>18</sup> One of the artists, however, altered the physiognomy somewhat, as compared with the Alsatian painting in its original form, to make it look more like the one in the Toruń epitaph.<sup>19</sup> This was supposedly caused by the belief that the scientist's facial traits would be best remembered in his birthplace. The same graphic work served in turn as pattern for several other representations, including the most renowned portrait of Copernicus now in the Toruń museum, discussed later as well.

By 1601, when the Jesuits decided to reconstruct the object in question, a typical Copernicus image was already circulating, which caused them to provide the epitaph likeness with a red sleeveless overcoat visible in practically all of the portraits.<sup>20</sup> The inscription tablet accompanying the figure was almost certainly included originally; it contains fragment of a self-demeaning Latin religious ode by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1464), the Italian humanist who became Pope Pius II. His stance could be appealing to Pirnesius, but it is probably also not

16 Janina Kruszelnicka recounts the discussion on date of creation of the epitaph, which mostly tended to be placed in the 1580's, especially by citing the date of birth of the scholar, indicated in the memorial inscription according to Gregorian calendar, used after 1582. She turns, however, attention to the fact, that this inscription has been moved to a different place, and possibly changed and updated in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, as befitting astronomical competences of the commemorated. For stylistic reasons, mainly concerning the shape of the architectural frame (see above and footnote 11), she therefore allows for a dating earlier than the epitaph of Anna Pirnesius, Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, pp. 47–53 and 123.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 83, 161–162 and 164–165, ills. 17–18.

18 See fig. 4 at the end of the chapter.

19 Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, pp. 337–339, no. P 2, ill. 3. The authors note that due to differences in face and dress, there is little probability that the print was based on the cathedral painting.

20 Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, noticing the change of costume (pp. 83 and 161–162), point to the Toruń museum portrait as the direct inspiration (p. 83).

without meaning that in 1457, shortly before ascending to papacy, Piccolomini was nominated Bishop of Warmia, even if he never arrived there.<sup>21</sup>

A somewhat similar situation occurred in the Frombork cathedral, where Copernicus was buried and which contained an epitaph devoted to the most famous of local canons in 1581, commissioned by Bishop of Warmia, Martin Kromer (1512–1589). Its form is unknown, as it was removed in 1732 and replaced in 1735 by the present one located in a different place, a relatively simple construction commissioned by the cathedral chapter.<sup>22</sup> The inscription particularly eulogised the local clergyman as an astronomer and is decorated only by laurel festoons and garlands, derived from a Regency ornamentation, but which can already be cited as a very early example of Neoclassical art. This renewed interest in the explorer of the Universe is most certainly due to the advancing trends of the age of Enlightenment. The painter of the likeness in the crowning tondo is perhaps Johann Ernst Knopke from Königsberg (c. 1700–1779), one of the artists patronised by the local bishops,<sup>23</sup> although it must be stated that the quality of the painting does not exactly match the discreet elegance of the sculpted part. The composition of the portrait is evidently modelled after the painting from the much earlier Toruń memorial.<sup>24</sup>

Moving away from the only two explicit epitaphs towards other forms of commemoration, one encounters the depiction made fittingly for the decoration of the famed great astronomical clock in the Strasbourg cathedral, then Protestant.<sup>25</sup> Since its construction was finished in 1574, the painting, made about that time, can be regarded as the earliest monumental public recognition of Copernicus' role in the history of astronomy, underlined by depicted scientific instruments. Signed by the Upper Rhine artist Tobias Stimmer, it has been also long held as a credible *vera effigies*, both because of its early date and the inscription stating it being a copy of self-portrait of the Prussian intellectual. This

21 A detailed analysis of the inscription, its idea and function: *Ibid.*, pp. 60–74. These authors see a resemblance of its meaning to the text being Spalatin's profession of faith, printed beneath his graphic representation by Cranach that served as a pattern for the epitaph image (see footnote 15). Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, p. 385, recount that the verses were regarded as Copernicus' poem, until correctly identified by Hipler: *Die Porträts*, p. 93. On pope Piccolomini, see, for example, Mitchell: *The Laurels*.

22 See fig. 5 at the end of the chapter; Prowe: *Das Andenken*, pp. 354–359; Arszynski et al. (eds.): *Katalog zabytków*, Text, p. 81; Illustrations, ill. 447.

23 Attribution by Wróblewska: *Malarstwo*, p. 42, no. 74. On Knopke: *ibid.*, p. 21.

24 Directly, however, the image followed a lost portrait of the astronomer that was copied from the epitaph in Toruń and founded by Canon Tomasz Ujejski in 1677 for the chapter chamber in Frombork, Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, pp. 393–394, no. P 53, and pp. 391–392, no. P 50. The 1735 document cited by Prowe: *Das Andenken*, p. 359, states that the painter was paid eight florins for copying the portrait for the epitaph, although the pictorial source is not mentioned.

25 See fig. 6 at the end of the chapter.

conviction cannot be upheld anymore, as the clock underwent a major reconstruction in 1838–1842, whereupon the image in question was moved to a different place and repainted to make it more similar to depictions circulating at that time,<sup>26</sup> broadly based on the 1587 woodcut, the composition of which is also attributed to Stimmer. Recent examinations revealed that the original rendering included a more elongated face and rather straight than wavy hair,<sup>27</sup> which is, most interestingly, like the lost image from Gołuchów, made during Copernicus' lifetime and discussed later on. The lily-of-the-valley, held by the depicted in Strasbourg, and denoting his further qualities as a medic and philosopher of nature,<sup>28</sup> was transmitted – at times accompanied by some other herbs – to many other copies of the portrait, including the slightly later woodcut. In the latter, the facial characteristics were however modified,<sup>29</sup> possibly to make them resemble the likeness from the epitaph in Toruń, believed to be most true to life, which it was not, as we have seen. The question of the self-image or self-images of the astronomer is complicated, and while it is mostly believed that the cleric-humanist could be capable of handling art, none of such depictions can be identified now with certainty. One of the narratives functioning in literature supposes that there existed one such likeness in the possession of the cathedral chapter in Warmia, which was lent to Strasbourg to prepare the painting, as testified by a contemporary document, but then returned, and consequently presented in 1584 to the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe. Kept in the latter's Uranienborg observatory on Hven island, it would have been destroyed with it in 1597.<sup>30</sup>

A bust portrait on pedestal, executed in beige-greyish stone<sup>31</sup> is probably the least known of large-scale commemorations of Copernicus made prior to 1800, and the only sculpted one. Commissioned by Duke Józef Aleksander

26 Batowski: *Wizerunki*, pp. 15–24, ills. 1–3; Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, pp. 331–337, no. P 1, ill. 1. The former of the authors supposes some earlier, 17<sup>th</sup> century repainting, especially of the inscription tablet. Janina Kruszelnicka (Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, p. 122) wrote expressly about the urge felt by restorers to adapt the image to the commonly known version.

27 Flik: *Portrety*, pp. 69–72, ills. 6 and 9; Flik et al.: *Epitafium*, pp. 94–98, ills. 6–8; the somewhat different shape of the face is evident even today. Flik: *Portrety*, p. 72, saw the immediate source of repainting in an image in Paris Astronomical Observatory, a 1735 copy made after the portrait now in Toruń District Museum (Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, pp. 353–354, no. P 18), discussed here later.

28 Batowski: *Wizerunki*, p. 22.

29 As noticed by Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, p. 338.

30 See above and footnote 26. Other authors wrote that if Tycho possessed the image indeed, it would have rather been acquired along with his other belongings by Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, from where it would disappear due to plunder after the battle of White Mountain in 1620. One image of Copernicus, perhaps a copy of the self-portrait, is also listed in an inventory of the Frombork chapter library in 1598. This would become victim of a Swedish robbery in 1626, *ibid.*, pp. 335–336.

31 See fig. 7 at the end of the chapter.

Jabłonowski (1711–1777), a scientist-amateur from Lithuania, later living in Leipzig, and, according to signature, made in 1766 by the Cracow sculptor Wojciech Rojowski (died after 1778), it represents a rather mediocre artistic standard. Born of new fascinations in the emerging Age of Reason, it was presented as a gift to the City Council of Toruń, with the expressed intention that it be exhibited close to the Old Town city hall. Put off by its quality, as well as the lengthy inscription on black stone pedestal, extolling equally the depicted as a philosopher and astronomer, and the founder, the Council relegated it to the cellars of the building. It was excavated from there before 1812 and located in the present place in the cathedral,<sup>32</sup> thereby contributing further to the symbolic church space dedicated to the famous Toruń citizen, consisting in general of the chapel now named after him. The facial features of the representation allow us to suppose that it was inspired both by the likeness from the neighbouring epitaph, and by the painted image from the Academic Gymnasium in Toruń, now in the local district museum,<sup>33</sup> currently perhaps the most renowned, which even served as pattern for a couple of depictions on Polish coins and banknotes.<sup>34</sup>

The latter can also be named a commemorative object, as it once constituted part of a gallery of renowned persons connected in various ways with Toruń as well as its benefactors, which has been formed in the library of the Protestant educational facility, starting in 1594.<sup>35</sup> Despite the obvious temptation to treat that date as a *terminus post quem*, the time of its creation is still disputed. It should be observed, in any case, that the image must have been made no earlier than around 1580, as it displays a softer contour and some synthetic character inspired by contemporary Venetian art that was beginning to be adopted by Northern European painters about that time.<sup>36</sup> Even if it was evacuated to western

32 Domaśłowski et al.: *Bazylika*, pp. 208–209, ill. 85.

33 See fig. 8 at the end of the chapter.

34 See fig. 4 in chapter by Ostrowski: *From Poland*, p. 145; for the ten zloty coin with a somewhat altered image, struck in two diameters in the years 1959–1969 and designed by Józef Gosławski (1908–1963), see, for instance, Parchimowicz: *Monety*, pp. 56 and 58, no. and ills. 224 and 232. The banknotes employing the image include the 1,000 zloty note first printed in 1962, but issued in circulation quantities in 1965, designed by Julian Pałka (1923–2002) and Henryk Tomaszewski (1914–2005), and a different 1000 zloty piece, designed by Andrzej Heidrich (1928–2019), with issue dates from 1975 to 1982, see Miłczak: *Banknoty*, pp. 186–189, no. and ills. 141 A and 141; pp. 198–199, 216–217, 232–233, no. and ills. 145, 154, 162. The depiction on latter note is based on the museum likeness more directly.

35 The contents of the gallery are barely known, as its detailed inventory from 1761 in the town archive disappeared during World War II, Gąsiorowska: *Toruński portret*, p. 14 and footnote 17.

36 Many earlier researchers tended to place its execution in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or even in the first quarter of that centennial, i. e. still in the lifetime of Copernicus; only Gwido Chmarzyński and Zygmunt Batowski differed (c. 1580 and turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, respectively), Gąsiorowska: *Toruński portret*, pp. 35–37. Conservator Józef Flik upheld the dating to c. 1580 (Flik: *Portrety*, p. 66) or c. 1585 (Idem: *Portret*, p. 105) on the basis of

Poland in 1943, recovered damaged to some extent (the physiognomy remained largely intact), and restored in Warsaw in 1946–1948,<sup>37</sup> its rather good artistic quality, also visible in a 1930's reproduction,<sup>38</sup> allows for considerations regarding the authorship. This was initially defined as the circle of Dürer,<sup>39</sup> but more recently another, and more concrete attribution has gained much ground, pointing to Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder (c. 1520–c. 1590), an Elizabethan portraitist of Flemish descent. This opinion seems to have been based on the fact that Johann Theodor de Bry, who made an engraving of Copernicus in 1598 after the woodcut by Murer/Stimmer, worked in some instances after models by Gheeraerts.<sup>40</sup> Such an argument cannot be regarded as strong, especially as it does not seem plausible that a commission from Toruń would have been directed to the English court, and, above all, Gheeraerts' portraits and figures display different traits, much more graphic and engaged in detail.<sup>41</sup> The Toruń likeness seems to have been made instead by the very hand that executed the image of Bishop Tiedemann Giese (1480–1550) from the same gallery, now lost.<sup>42</sup> I once proposed an attribution of both depictions to Hans Heffner (Hefener), a master from Königsberg active at the court of the Warmia bishops.<sup>43</sup> It remains problematic, however, as both the painterly milieu of the time as a whole and the artist himself are far from being well researched.<sup>44</sup> Another proposition is a painter from Gdańsk, which would be well corroborated both historically and by comparisons of portraits included in some contemporary epitaphs from that city.<sup>45</sup> Un-

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technological analyses. Dendrochronological research undertaken by Tomasz Ważny disclosed that the tree from which the picture panel was made was felled not earlier than in 1571, *ibid.*, p. 60, footnote 44, and p. 105, footnote); at least a dozen years or so would then be required for the seasoning of the material.

37 Gašiorowska: *Toruński portret*, p. 33.

38 Batowski: *Wizerunki*, ill. 10.

39 Torwirt: *Zagadnienie*, p. 46.

40 Flik: *Portrety*, pp. 66–68 (the author writes mistakenly that the engraved portrait of Copernicus was made by father of Johann Theodor, Théodore de Bry). On Gheeraerts see Hodnett: *Marcus Gheeraerts and Marcus Gheeraerts (I)*. He is believed to have lived permanently in England since 1568, although an Antwerp period starting with the late 1570's is also supposed.

41 See fig. 9 at the end of the chapter. The attribution was earlier rejected by Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, p. 351.

42 See fig. 10 at the end of the chapter. Gašiorowska: *Toruński portret*, pp. 18 and 105, no. II, ill. III.

43 Kluczward et al.: *Sztuka nowożytna*, pp. 220–221, ill. 187. The attribution of the Giese image to Heffner was first forwarded by Gašiorowska: *Toruński portret*, pp. 18 and 105, no. II.

44 Due to heavy war losses in archival sources, there is little hope for augmenting the information on 16<sup>th</sup> century painting in former Ducal Prussia provided mainly by Ehrenberg: *Die Kunst* and Ulbrich: *Kunstgeschichte*. Heffner is essentially known from a couple of mentions in documents.

45 See fig. 11 at the end of the chapter. On the illustrated, anonymous Georg Hojer epitaph in St. Mary's church in Gdańsk from 1585, Cieślak: *Tod und Gedenken*, pp. 21–22, 19–20, ill. 16;

fortunately again, the names of Gdańsk painters from the 16<sup>th</sup> century have been forwarded to posterity only in exceptional instances. The image in question was cut on the right and at the lower edge, initially being supposedly similar to the Murer/Stimmer woodcut,<sup>46</sup> which is even the case in its present form; it should then be dated after 1587.

One more image of Copernicus, rather less known, and the whereabouts of which is unclear at present,<sup>47</sup> had an expressly commemorative quality, perhaps awarded at a later stage, as the Latin inscription on it – R.[EVERENDO] D.[OMINO] NICOLAO COPERNICO – is formulated in the dative, denoting some form of homage.<sup>48</sup> The picture has had a turbulent history: allegedly acquired by Adam Stanisław Grabowski, Bishop of Warmia, in the early 1740s from the Ducal Saxon collection in Gotha; after his death in 1766, it remained in different hands in Gdańsk, where a copy for the Royal Society in London (1775) – one of several executed – was made according to it. After 1863, it went to Berlin by inheritance, from where it was sold in 1880 to the Gołuchów collection of the Dukes Czartoryski and kept there until World War II. Confiscated in 1939 by the German authorities and placed in a museum in Poznań (*Posen*), it was evacuated west in 1944 and has not surfaced since.<sup>49</sup> In 1977, however, the government of East Germany proposed to present Communist Poland with a copy of the object, remaining in its possession,<sup>50</sup> and it should be presumed that the picture is still kept in Germany. A stamp with an illustration of another copy by Nora Zinck (1904–1978) was issued for the Copernicus anniversary in 1973.<sup>51</sup> This may

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Roll et al.: *Katalog zabytków*, Text, p. 109, Illustrations, ill. 875; Tylicki: *To, co widzimy*, p. 136. The latter sees some influence of the Pourbus family (Pieter, Frans the Elder) in the epitaph's figures.

46 Already Batowski: *Wizerunki*, p. 56, noticed interdependence of the image with contemporary graphic portraits (Falck) and supposed shortening of the panel. This was confirmed based on traces of sawing by Flik: *Portrety*, p. 69, then by Idem: *Portret*, pp. 108–109 (the left plank of the picture panel that went missing during WW II was reconstructed in 1948). Flik places the reduction in size at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as a lost painterly copy from the early 1600's once in the possession of Warsaw Astronomical Observatory showed a longer composition. Gašiorowska: *Toruński portret*, p. 39, mused if the likeness could have been shortened as early as 1594, when it entered the Gymnasium collection.

47 See fig. 12 at the end of the chapter.

48 Batowski: *Wizerunki*, pp. 69–70, wrote that the inscription, which he regarded as added a few dozen of years later, is either in crude Italian, or in Latin, noting the dative form, which he rather thought to be a personal dedication, and therefore excluding the depiction of the canon. The lettering on the portrait seems however too large and conspicuous for such a function. Franz Schwarz, cited by Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, p. 400, placed the inscription still in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

49 Batowski: *Wizerunki*, pp. 68–76; Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, pp. 399–401, no. P 60, ill. 26.

50 *Portret Mikołaja Kopernika*.

51 *500 rocznica urodzin*. The stamp, depicting a copy by Nora Zinck from c. 1942, now kept at the Toruń District Museum as a deposit of the National Museum in Warsaw, is a part of series

constitute the most worthwhile of Copernicus' existing commemorations, being most probably the earliest, painted on a wooden panel and displaying stylistic traits of being made in Northern Europe sometime in 1510–1520. It would therefore date back to the astronomer's lifetime – the physiognomy characteristics are consistent with his age then – and certainly qualify as a *vera effigies*. Although questioned before,<sup>52</sup> such a notion is confirmed by both unflattering rendering of the model and – most interestingly – his resemblance to the facial reconstruction of the purported skull of the astronomer, unearthed in Frombork in 2005.<sup>53</sup> One could ask, however, if the reconstructors did not use the image in question to their advantage.<sup>54</sup> The earliest pedigree of the representation is unknown, but it could be supposed that it once formed part of galleries of the bishops of Warmia in Lidzbark (*Heilsberg*), or the bishops of Chełmno (*Culm*) in Lubawa (*Löbau*), which are known to have existed.<sup>55</sup> It might be telling that Bishop Tiedemann Giese, a friend of Copernicus, exercised his episcopal power at both locations.<sup>56</sup>

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- devoted to oldest depictions of Copernicus designed by Henryk Chyliński (b. 1936). For the Zinck copy, see also Mazurkiewicz: *Muzeum*, ill. p. 54, and Kokowski: *O wadliwości*, ill. 3.
- 52 Batowski: *Wizerunki*, p. 69, evaluates the age of the portrayed at around 40; he could however be also 50, which would situate the execution of the image in 1513–1523. Such a date correlates with formal traits of the likeness, however not so much following Lucas Cranach the Elder, as *ibid.*, p. 70, is stated, but rather Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531) from Augsburg, see two portraits by the latter from 1503 and 1508 in Von der Osten et al: *Painting*, ills. 97 and 99. Inconsistent dating by Batowski, *Wizerunki*, p. 71, to mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, or some opinions moving the creation of the image as far forward as 1580 (while regarding it a copy, which cannot be verified at present), Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, pp. 399 and 401 – are rather difficult to accept, unless the painter used older patterns.
- 53 See fig. 13 at the end of the chapter.
- 54 For a short *résumé* of the process of reconstruction, carried out by Central Laboratory of Criminology of the Polish State Police, see Zajdel: *Czy tak*. The author claims that the supposed identity of the skull was not communicated to the police team on purpose. The arguments of the involved archaeologists and anthropologists, as well as the methods of reconstruction were however strongly questioned; see, for instance, Kokowski: *O wadliwości*.
- 55 These were drawn up by the bishop, poet and diplomat Johann von Höfen (Dantiscus), who held the episcopal dignity in Chełmno in the years 1530–1537 and in Warmia from 1537 until his death in 1548, see Nowak: *Jan Dantyszek*. His collection that included an image of Erasmus by Holbein and consisted of paintings purchased during his diplomatic voyages, as well as of portraits of local church dignitaries was displayed in his both successive residences, Hipler: *Die Porträts*, pp. 77–78. Batowski: *Wizerunki*, p. 72, suggests that the image might once have formed part of a new type of collection of depictions of famous personalities, like the one by [Thomas] Rhediger in Wrocław/Breslau. This has been, however, formed in Cologne starting with 1571 and transferred to Wrocław not earlier than 1581, see Lipińska: *Brothers*. One should rather consider as pattern the pioneering collection of this type, formed by bishop Paolo Giovio in Como since 1536, see Rave: *Das Museo*.
- 56 See, for instance, Borawska: *Giese*. Giese was bishop of Chełmno from 1538 to 1549 and bishop of Warmia from 1549 until death in 1550.

Some form of commemorative function was probably originally inherent in a wooden relief now in Jagdschloß Grünewald near Berlin (on display in Bode-Museum, Berlin),<sup>57</sup> that was until 1945 kept in the destroyed Königsberg castle, first in the castellan's quarters, and then – since 1894, framed over the entrance to the living quarters of the building, in its east wing.<sup>58</sup> An old oral tradition identified the portrayed man as Copernicus,<sup>59</sup> and this account in itself, combined with the early dating of the object (second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century) suffice to mention it here. It is true that there are many uncertainties surrounding it. The hypothesis regarding the depiction of the astronomer, that would here be portrayed as a medic, with accompanying skull and a skeleton (though these could also be more general transient symbols), was repeatedly rejected, notably on grounds of lack of similarity to known portraits and his lay costume.<sup>60</sup> The later forwarded identity, namely of bishop Tiedemann Giese, was also immediately rejected,<sup>61</sup> even if it seems to be upheld to this day.<sup>62</sup> It is in any case wrong to see in the depiction a copy of the engraved self-portrait of Jacob Binck, as has been proposed.<sup>63</sup> The author of the panel was said to be the aforementioned Binck (1494/1500–1569), who is however rather known for his painterly and graphic works;<sup>64</sup> the name of a Saxon sculptor working in Königsberg, Hans Schenck *alias* Scheußlich (1500–1571), is now more commonly mentioned.<sup>65</sup> Not aiming to resolve all the above issues at present, one may be tempted to note that some resemblance of the man from the relief to the model from the lost Goluchoń image discussed above certainly occurs and simultaneously keep in mind that Copernicus travelled to the Königsberg court in 1541 to offer medical counsel and that he was allegedly portrayed by Jacob Binck, as Hermann Ehrenberg reported.<sup>66</sup>

57 See fig. 14 at the end of the chapter; *Bildnis des Tiedemann Giese*.

58 Ehrenberg: *Die Kunst*, pp. 45–46, ill. and p. 125, note 180.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

60 Ehrenberg: *Die Kunst*, p. 46.

61 Rohde: *Königsberg*, p. 44 and ill. 45, who seems to be referring to then as yet unpublished dissertation on Hans Schenck by Hans Joachim Seeger (Leipzig 1930).

62 *Bildnis des Tiedemann Giese*.

63 Ehrenberg: *Die Kunst*, p. 46. The not quite similar self-portrait by Binck, perhaps engraved by Simon Frisius, was included in Hendrick Hondius the Elder's: *Pictorum aliquot celebrium, praecipue' Germaniæ inferioris, effigies* from 1610; see *Self-portrait of Jakob Binck*. On the publication: Woodall et al.: *Picturing*.

64 *Binck, Jacob*.

65 Rohde: *Königsberg*, p. 44; *Bildnis des Tiedemann Giese*. On the sculptor, see Cante: *Der Bidhauer*.

66 Ehrenberg: *Die Kunst*, p. 46. This author cites the information after Curtze: *Das Portrait*, p. 762, regarding a portrait sold in Berlin a few years before 1869, of which at some point a copy was made that was acquired for the collections of the Uffizi before 1784. The latter Florentine picture could not be identified by Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, p. 400, but its short description by Curtze: *Das Portrait*, p. 762, allows for considering, whether the Berlin

In conclusion, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there also existed a more unusual monument to the astronomer's achievements, namely a decorated street water pump erected at the crossing of Copernicus and Piekary Streets (formerly St. Annen- and Bäckergasse) in Toruń, close to a house where, as it was believed then, Copernicus was born.<sup>67</sup> This construction was first erected in wood c. 1770 by the learned Toruń burgomaster and Copernicus researcher, Samuel Luther Geret, and, after becoming decrepit, reconstructed in marble by another local intellectual, Lutheran pastor Johann Jacob Haselau, in March 1787. A pen drawing probably made by that clergyman himself and once forming part of his iconographic collection, depicts the more solid version of the pump as an edifice rich in astronomical symbolism: an elongated pyramid-shaped pedestal is crowned with a sundial in the form of an armillary globe held in compass by a dressed hand, presumably meant to represent the astronomer's arm.<sup>68</sup> The loss of this next product of intellectual interests of the age of Enlightenment should be placed in the early 1840s.<sup>69</sup>

This brief presentation of some of the oldest memorials to the astronomer did not include dubious representations, such as the portrait by Marco Basaiti from 1512, once in the Lubomirski collection in Lwów,<sup>70</sup> nor painterly copies. The

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painting was identical with the Gołuchów likeness, as also Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, p. 400, have remarked. If Binck, who had many ties to the Königsberg court and painted in a bit outdated manner (see footnote 52 and 64) indeed depicted Copernicus in 1541, creating the Gołuchów painting and producing or inspiring the image on the wooden plaque, he must have done so largely on basis of older works, perhaps one of the already mentioned self-sketches of the scholar, as both the painting and the relief show a man younger than in his late sixties.

67 See fig. 2 in chapter by Roszak et al.: *From Culture*, p. 244.

68 Tylicka et al.: *Thorunensia*, pp. 107–108, no. C. 8, ill. 53.

69 The text Skonieczny: *Studzienka* from 2019, although not devoid of mistakes, brings together some interesting iconographic material. A steel engraving by Adam Piliński (1810–1887) after drawing by Teofil Mielcarzewicz, made c. 1840, and showing Napoleon in Toruń in 1807 in front of supposed Copernicus' house, still depicts the 1787 pump in simplified form, but an 1846 lithograph illustrating J. E. Wernicke's guide to Toruń (by Wilhelm Loeillot after drawing from life by Eduard Gärtner, Męczekalska et al.: *Kopernikana*, p. 114, no. and ill. 84), displays a new stone construction from rectangular blocks, crowned by a genius holding an armillary sphere. An anonymous wood engraving from c. 1850–1860 reproduced by Skonieczny depicts however the 'Copernicus well' as a largely polygonal cast iron Neo-Gothic construction, also crowned with a sphere. According to this author, a photograph from c. 1871 shows in its place an ordinary pump.

70 The signed portrait by Basaiti once in the Lubomirski collection in Lwów (now Lviv) was bought in Vienna in 1819 by Duke Henryk Lubomirski complete with identification of the depicted person forwarded by the dealer, which was accepted by the buyer and found its way into literature and graphic copies, Batowski: *Wizerunki*, pp. 67–68, ill. 18. Batowski rejects the identity of the model for physiognomic reasons, which should be agreed upon while also pointing to small probability of conceiving the purported contents of the painting at the time of its execution in purely historical categories. The much-repainted likeness is still in Lviv in the possession of the Boris Voznitskiy Lviv National Gallery of Arts and was also recently

material shown here allows us to state that the Toruń scholar and scientist was for a long time commemorated on a grander scale only rarely and almost exclusively on a local level close to the area of his activity. Such a situation was supposedly caused by caution in recognising his theory of the universe, which, since 1616, was contrary to the official stance of the Catholic church, and it is surely not coincidental that most of the earliest monuments were commissioned by Protestants. In addition, it was Copernicus' capacities as a medic, mathematician, or simply a cleric that were commemorated. It was first the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with its renewed interest for scholarly work and learned individuals, that led to more numerous new foundations, which were continued and much extended in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The above deliberations once again confirm the thesis already present in literature that a certain depiction of Copernicus deriving from his lifetime is lacking, given many doubts surrounding even the reported existence of his supposed self-portrait, its discussed history and the lack of its identification at present. More strongly than in the past, however, the supposition concerning the lost Gołuchów portrait as a possible early and true representation is now made, considering several circumstances, not least the general similarity to the original version of the Strasbourg likeness. On the contrary, the Toruń epitaph image, even if probably somewhat earlier than hitherto postulated, seems to be – together with its numerous copies and imitations – a fantastic likeness, based on the graphic portrait of Johannes Spalatinus and therefore of little historical value.

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Batowski, Zygmunt: *Wizerunki Kopernika*. 1933.

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shown at the Toruń District Museum as a part of the exhibition *Misterium Słońca. Kopernik, syn renesansu* [*Mystery of the Sun. Copernicus, Son of the Renaissance*], September–November 2023. There also existed a Copernicus depiction once in the possession of William Drury Lowe Esq. (1803–1877) in Locko Park, Derbyshire, which was attributed in 1873 by a Polish author, Ignacy Polkowski, to Ridolfo Ghirlandaio (1483–1561). Both this likeness, however, and its copy in the National Museum in Poznań, are likely 19<sup>th</sup> century works derived from earlier prints, Batowski: *Wizerunki*, p. 55; Kühne et al. (eds.): *Biographia*, p. 409, note 14.

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Fig. 1. Epitaph of Anna Pirnesius, 1576, Toruń, Cathedral church of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Photo: A. Skowroński.



Fig. 2. Epitaph of Nicolaus Copernicus and King John Albert, Toruń, Cathedral church of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, fragment: portrait of Copernicus. Source: <https://toruntour.pl/4988/epitafium-mikolaja-kopernika-torun-katedra> (11. 12. 2023).



Christo Salvatori Deo Opti. et Max.  
Georgius Spalatinus. Peccator

Quas tibi peccator, pro tanto munere, gratias  
Solvare Christe potest, quod tibi ferre satum.  
Quid non inferius tam dira morte rependat.  
Que faciat casum, victima cesa, parenti.  
Ista tibi pietas superos summisit et horum.  
Et Mundum tanta religione regis.  
Morte tibi tanta mortalis adfers omnes  
Et facis ad sumum posse venire patrem.  
Inde tibi placuit primi reparare parentis  
Occasum, et miseris insinuare Patris.  
Inde tibi placuit defunctis querere vitam.  
Inde patere polos, inde salutis iter  
Istac ad patrem, et felicia regna, vocasti.  
Istac ad celos, agmina cuncta, trahis.  
Hoc hominum vitas, hoc omnia sidera vincit.  
Vincit id angelicas, ambrosia sqaq; manas.  
Ergo tibi corpus, mentem, Deus Optime, debet.  
Ergo tibi supplex offero Christe precia.  
Quod si plura velis, da vitas, queso, clienti.  
Ut tibi pro meritis munera digna feram  
¶ D XX.

Fig. 3. Lucas Cranach the Elder: *Johannes Spalatinus*, 1515. Woodcut. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Georgius\\_Spalatinus.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Georgius_Spalatinus.jpg) (11.12.2023).



Fig. 4. Christoph Murer [?] after Tobias Stimmer: *Nicolaus Copernicus*, 1587. Woodcut from publication: *Icones sive imagines virorum literis illustrium*. 1587. Source: <https://www.lindahall.org/about/news/scientist-of-the-day/nicolaus-copernicus> (11.12.2023).



Fig. 5. Nicolaus Copernicus' epitaph in the Frombork Cathedral from 1735. Photo: Stanisław Roszak.

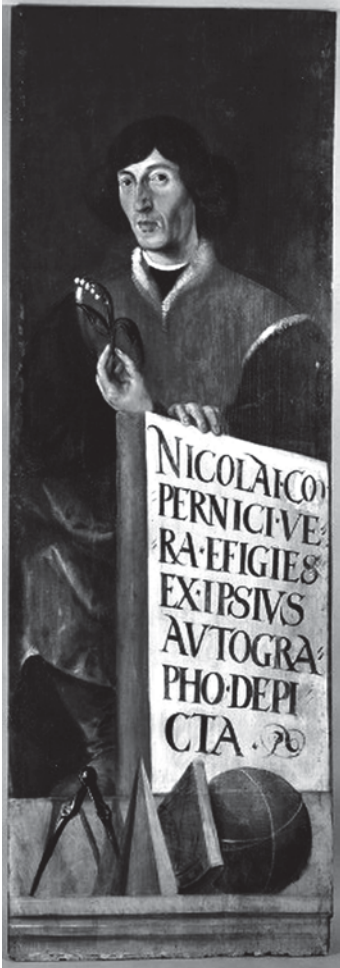


Fig. 6. Tobias Stimmer: *Portrait of Nicolaus Copernicus*, c. 1574, Strasbourg, Cathedral church of Our Lady, astronomical clock, left turret. Repr. from: Oestmann, Günther: *The Astronomical Clock of Strasbourg Cathedral. Function and Significance*. 2020.

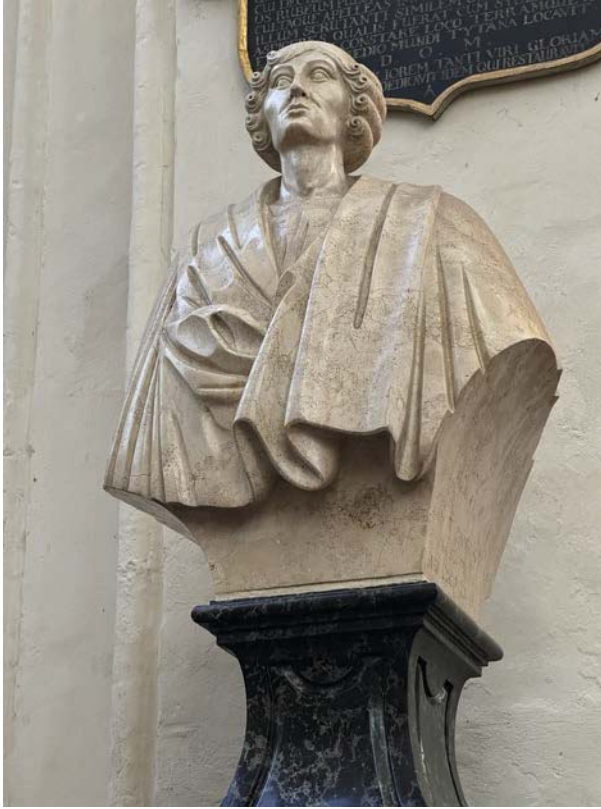


Fig. 7. Wojciech Rojowski: *Bust portrait of Nicolaus Copernicus*, 1766. Toruń, Cathedral church of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, Copernicus chapel. Photo: Marta Sikorska.

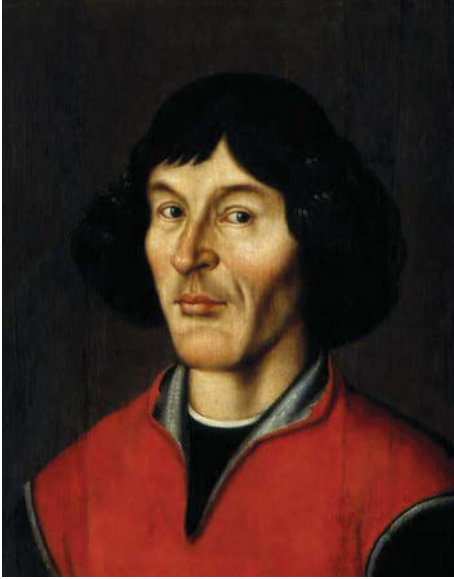


Fig. 8. Unknown artist: *Portrait of Nicolaus Copernicus*, after 1587, Muzeum Okręgowe w Toruniu. Source: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portret\\_Miko%C5%82aja\\_Kopernika#/media/Plik:Nikolaus\\_Kopernikus.jpg](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portret_Miko%C5%82aja_Kopernika#/media/Plik:Nikolaus_Kopernikus.jpg) (11. 12. 2023).



Fig. 9. Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder: *Portrait of Elizabeth I of England as Pax*, 1578, Welbeck, Nottinghamshire, The Harley Gallery, Portland Collection. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elizabeth\\_I\\_of\\_England\\_Marcus\\_Gheeraerts\\_the\\_Elder.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elizabeth_I_of_England_Marcus_Gheeraerts_the_Elder.jpg) (11.12.2023).

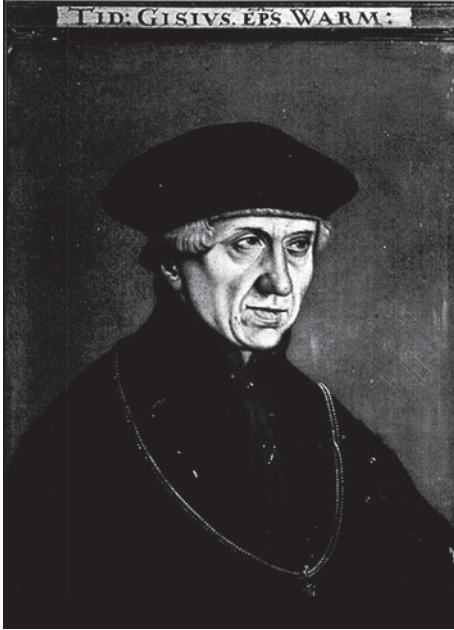


Fig. 10. Unknown artist: *Portrait of Tiedemann Giese, Bishop of Warmia*, c. 1590. Before 1939 Toruń, Państwowe Gimnazjum Męskie im. Mikołaja Kopernika (Nicolaus Copernicus State Male Gymnasium). Source: [https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiedemann\\_Giese#/media/Fil:Giese,\\_Tiedemann.jpg](https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiedemann_Giese#/media/Fil:Giese,_Tiedemann.jpg) (11. 12. 2023).

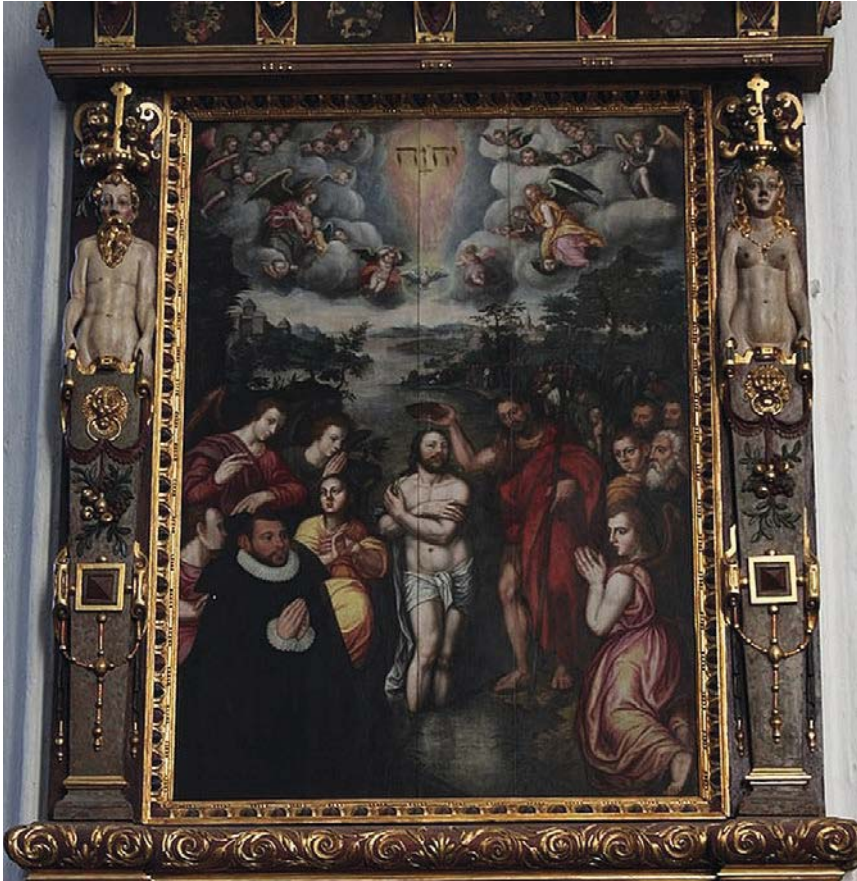


Fig. 11. Unknown artist: *Baptism of Christ*, 1585, Gdańsk, St. Mary's church, epitaph of Georg Hojer. Photo: Ludwig Schneider / Wikimedia, URL: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gdansk\\_Kosciol\\_Mariacki\\_048a.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gdansk_Kosciol_Mariacki_048a.jpg) (11.12.2023).

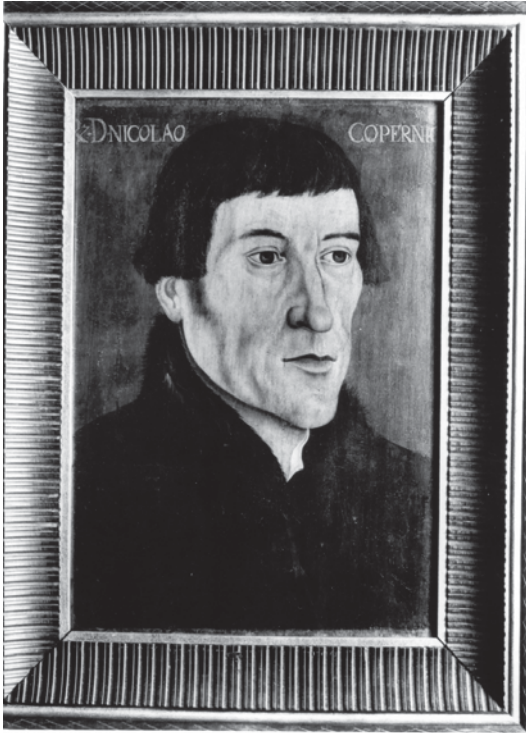


Fig. 12. Unknown artist: *Portrait of Nicolaus Copernicus*, c. 1510–1520. Before 1939 Gołuchów, Czartoryski collection. Source: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Nicolas\\_Copernicus\\_Polish.JPG](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Nicolas_Copernicus_Polish.JPG) (11.12.2023).

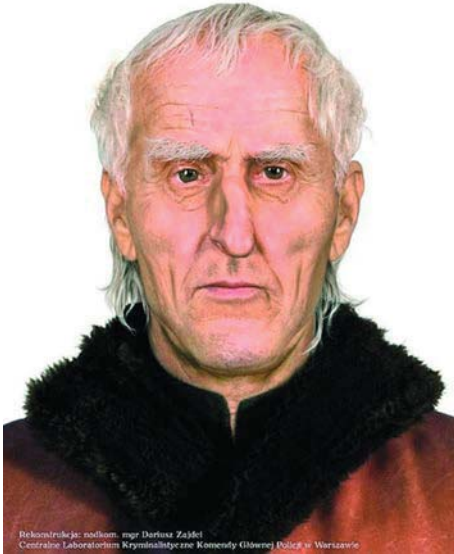


Fig. 13. Reconstruction of facial traits of Nicolaus Copernicus at the age of 70, based on his skull identified in Frombork cathedral tomb in 2005–2006, by Senior Commissioner Dariusz Zajdel, MSc from Central Criminal Laboratory, Police HQ in Warsaw. Source: [https://clkp.policja.pl/dokumenty/zalaczniki/4/4-311172\\_g.jpg](https://clkp.policja.pl/dokumenty/zalaczniki/4/4-311172_g.jpg) (11.12.2023).



Fig. 14. Hans Schenck alias Scheußlich after Jacob Binck [?]: *Portrait of Nicolaus Copernicus* [?] on *Architectural Background*, sculpted wooden relief from the Königsberg castle, c. 1540? Berlin, Jagdschloß Grünewald. Source: [https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Schenck\\_Bildnis\\_Tiedemann\\_Giese.jpg](https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Schenck_Bildnis_Tiedemann_Giese.jpg) (11. 12. 2023).



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Barbara Bienias

## Copernicus in the Cultural Memory of Early Modern England

### Abstract

The article discusses the place of Copernicus within various discourses in early modern English memory culture. The text presents some examples of the early reception of his scientific achievements but also focuses on literary and artistic representations of Copernicus within the social, intellectual, and material dimensions of culture. The basic premise is that the reception of Copernicus in England – which was often idiosyncratic – and later links to Newton helped to secure his place in English collective memory and created his ‘collective identity’ in this culture of remembrance.

Keywords: Nicolaus Copernicus; memory culture; early modern England; collective identity; collective memory

### Introduction

This paper investigates the role of Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) and his scientific achievements in the cultural memory of early modern England. Whereas the reception of Copernican astronomical theory in England is a recurring topic in historiography, other aspects of Copernicus’s influence within this intellectual culture are a path less travelled.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it seems prudent to analyse this presence and its function within the methodology of memory studies with an attempt to present a preliminary, though comprehensive, view on various aspects of Copernicus in early modern English memory culture.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Johnson: *Astronomical Thought in Renaissance England*; Russell: *The Copernican System in Great Britain*, pp. 189–239; Westman: *The Copernican Question*; Cetera-Włodarczyk et al.: *UnspHERed, Disorbed, Decentred*, pp. 400–427. The only monograph published in Polish on the Copernicus’s influence on the intellectual life in Shakespeare’s England, authored by Henryk Zins in 1972, has since been revised by more recent studies (see Zins: *Mikołaj Kopernik*).

Astrid Erll's framework on the culture of remembrance offers valuable insight into the complex nature of memory culture. With reference to Roland Posner's semiotic views, she presents an integrated outlook on the three dimensions of culture: material, social, and mental (i. e. intellectual). The material dimension encompasses artefacts, media, symbols, architecture, and images; the social aspect focuses on mnemonic practices such as religious rites and university culture; and the mental dimension pertains to various forms of encoding, expressions of values and norms, and modes of communication.<sup>2</sup>

In the context of early modern England, Copernicus's influence can be observed across all these areas, albeit with varying degrees of prominence. In this study, I shall primarily concentrate on the social and intellectual dimensions – in what form and by whom was the knowledge of Copernicus and his achievements spread? The material dimension, which I will briefly touch upon here, involves tangible aspects such as portraits and graphic representations of the Copernican system. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Copernican portraits found their way into the Royal Society, some of which remain relatively unexplored. For example, in the Royal Society collection, there is a copy of Friedrich Anton Lohrmann's portrait of Copernicus (Royal Society P/0027), an oil-on-panel that was donated to the Society by Nathanael Matthäus von Wolf, FRS (1724–1784), a Gdańsk astronomer, in 1776.<sup>3</sup> Detailed in the *Philosophical Transactions*, this copy traces back to a mid-16<sup>th</sup> century painting by an unknown artist, once part of the Collections of the Czartoryski Princes in Gołuchów (Division of the National Museum in Poznań), regrettably taken to Germany in the 1940s.<sup>4</sup> Further investigation and examination of the first and second editions of *De revolutionibus* (1543 and 1566), as read in the British Isles, is also needed, especially given that some of these copies are heavily annotated.<sup>5</sup>

Erll also draws on James Clifford's metaphor of 'travelling culture' to speak of a 'travelling memory'. In this view, memory is not a 'site' (as defined by Pierre Nora's *lieu de mémoire*<sup>6</sup>), but "seems to be constituted [...] through the movement of people, objects and media."<sup>7</sup> She further proposes that such 'journeys' of memory (*voyages* or *mouvements de mémoire*) can be understood both locally

2 Erll: *Memory in Culture*, pp. 102–104.

3 Cf. *An Account of a Portrait of Copernicus*, pp. 33–37.

4 Cf. *Portret Mikołaja Kopernika*; see also: *Portrait of Nicolaus Copernicus*. Intriguingly, the *Catalogue of Paintings Removed from Poland by the German Occupation Authorities during the Years 1939–1945, 1: Foreign Paintings*, compiled by Władysław Tomkiewicz in 1950 does not list this painting, see Tomkiewicz (ed.): *Catalogue of Paintings*. I am grateful to Ms. Izabela Przepałkowska, curator of Old Prints from the Print Room of the University of Warsaw Library, for her help with establishing this.

5 Cf. Gingerich: *An Annotated Census*.

6 Cf. Nora: *Between Memory and History*.

7 Erll: *Memory in Culture*, pp. 65–66.

(for example, as everyday interactions of various social groups) and globally (for example, in transnational encounters, trade, or war).<sup>8</sup> In other words, just as knowledge and ideas, memory would travel with people, books, letters, and other outputs of human activity.

One must be very careful when applying current views on memory culture to pre-modern periods. As Judith Pollmann and Erika Kuijpers have observed, between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, we have grown used to “hegemonic nationalist memory” and “the hybridity and chaotic individuality of postmodern memory practices.”<sup>9</sup> At the same time, as they propose in their edited collection of essays titled *Memory Before Modernity* (2013), these academics would like more attention to be paid to the “organic, local, traditional and communal”.<sup>10</sup> However, such a distinction implies that pre-modern memory practice was local, focused, and minimalistic. In contrast, it is my understanding that even though it could not ‘travel’ as easily as it does now and could be devoid of the magnanimity of national and political narrations, it was still part of the enormous, complex, collective, and social machine.

Koen Scholten suggests that with the advent of print, the cultural visibility of early modern learned communities (for example through the icons, images or collections of lives of scholars) rapidly grew.<sup>11</sup> This widespread dissemination accounts for the “collective identities and memory cultures”, which can be traced within the correspondence networks and material artefacts of the Republic of Letters.<sup>12</sup> On top of these considerations, I would like to propose a thesis that the members of early modern communities not only crafted their own collective identities as groups but also created such collective identities for historical figures whose lives and work they remembered or described. I believe that this occurred in the case of Copernicus – through collective memory, he acquired a collective (i. e. compound) identity.

Andrew Hiscock has noted that attempts to “memorialise” others in “textual monuments” were widespread in the early modern period.<sup>13</sup> The need to commemorate greatness and exceptional talent (common also throughout antiquity) went together with the urge to preserve and recover the personal past, which Jeffrey Olick links to the “rising sense of individuality”.<sup>14</sup> Copernican English early modern ‘textual monuments’ are scant. Henry Savile (1549–1622), an Oxford professor of mathematics who introduced the Copernican hypothesis to the

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8 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

9 Pollmann et al.: *Introduction*, p. 2.

10 *Ibid.*

11 Scholten: *Introduction*, p. 17.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

13 Hiscock: *Debating*, p. 80.

14 Olick: *The Politics of Regret*, pp. 185–187; cf. Pollmann et al.: *Introduction*, p. 2.

university curriculum, brought a copy of Copernicus' letter to Bernard Wapowski (1450–1535) from his tour around Europe, yet this did not translate into substantial biographical exploration by English scholars.<sup>15</sup> Copernicus's life was principally known through 17<sup>th</sup>-century accounts by Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) or Ismaël Boulliau (1605–1694), discussed below. As the reception of Copernicus in England bifurcates into two distinct strands – that of his work and that of his persona – what follows tries to connect these various cultural representations into a more homogenous discourse of memory.

## Copernicus's Scientific Theory in Early Modern England

Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Copernicus's mathematical skills were recognised across Europe. England, propelled by political ambitions, not solely warfare but also territorial expansion, found itself in need of an improvement in navigational and surveying techniques. This period witnessed a flourishing of mathematical sciences within London, spurred on by the need for refined methods in instrument making.<sup>16</sup> Copernicus's geometrical concepts, presented in *De lateribus et angulis triangulorum* (1542) – later included in the first edition of *De revolutionibus* – found practical applications in navigation and navigation treatises. His mathematical prowess improved astronomical tables, giving more precise positions of celestial bodies and simplified calculations.<sup>17</sup> In the *Ephemerides* for 1556 and 1557, John Dee and John Field used the Copernican Prutenic tables, devised by Erasmus Reinhold in 1551. The extent to which his earliest known formulation of the heliocentric theory, i. e. *Commentariolus* (before 1514), was known prior in England (and Scotland) remains a subject requiring further inquiry.<sup>18</sup>

Still in the pre-telescopic era, Thomas Digges (c. 1546–1595) – a mathematician, statesman, and astronomer – boldly asserted that Copernicus's system was not a useful hypothesis simplifying mathematical calculations but a physical model of the universe.<sup>19</sup> His observations, such as the study of the new star in Cassiopeia in 1572, led him to question the unchangeable Aristotelian cosmos.<sup>20</sup> He articulated these ideas in an Addition to his father's Prognostication, *A Perfit Description of the Coelestial Orbes*, which went through at least eight editions

15 The manuscript copy of Copernicus's letter to Bernard Wapowski (3 June 1542) – of which the first two pages are in Savile's hand – is held at the University of Oxford, Bodleian Libraries: MS Savile 47, fols. 28r–32v. See: Poole: *Sir Henry Savile*, pp. 7–8.

16 Cf. Jardine: *The Social Life*, pp. 100–123; Bennett et al.: *London 1600–1800*, pp. 183–196.

17 Cf. Westman: *The Melanchthon Circle*, pp. 166.

18 Cf. Dobrzycki et al.: *On the Transmission*, pp. 25–28.

19 Cf. Lerner: *Traduttore-Traditore*, pp. 262 et passim.

20 See Digges: *Alae seu scalae*.

between 1576 and 1605 and contained the first English augmented translation of the fragments from Book I of *De revolutionibus*.<sup>21</sup> Digges's diagram of Copernicus's cosmos surpassed the astronomer's vision, particularly in its depiction of the infinite, spherical distribution of the stars.<sup>22</sup> This concept of an unbounded, infinite universe may have influenced other thinkers, even though Michel-Pierre Lerner believes Digges's Copernican cosmology had little influence on English academic circles.<sup>23</sup>

However, the reception of Copernican theory extended beyond the academic realm, encompassing a broader community of mathematical practitioners, instrument makers, and writers of almanacs. With the advent of mathematical pursuits and an expanding corpus of practitioners who distilled academic theories into more accessible forms, the establishment of Gresham College in 1597 served, among other things, as a conduit for disseminating Copernican theory.<sup>24</sup> Prominent figures such as Thomas Blundeville (c. 1522–c. 1606) and Thomas Hill (born c. 1528) viewed heliocentrism as a hypothetical model devised by Copernicus for more accurate calculations. Thomas Harriot (1560–1621) and William Gilbert (1544–1603), both renowned mathematicians and empiricists, played important roles in this evolving landscape.<sup>25</sup> Edward Gresham (1565–1613) and Thomas Bretnor (1570/1571–1618), well-known almanac-makers in early modern London, significantly contributed to the dissemination of Copernican ideas and fully supported heliocentrism in their prognostications.<sup>26</sup> Gresham's writings have revealed that these ideas had an even more profound impact than previously believed, as recent studies on his astrological and astronomical treatise, *Astrosterion* (1603), have demonstrated.<sup>27</sup>

Intriguingly, the astronomical debate in early modern England often shifts its lens from a direct engagement with Copernicus's work towards its English ad-

21 See McLean: *Humanism*, pp. 146–147.

22 See fig. 1 at the end of the chapter.

23 Lerner: *Traduttore-Traditore*, p. 269.

24 Cf. Poole: *Sir Henry Savile*, pp. 12–14; Hill: *London Science and Medicine*, pp. 15–76.

25 Johnson: *Astronomical Thought*; Russell: *The Copernican System*; Taylor: *The Mathematical Practitioners*; Hill: *London Science and Medicine*, pp. 15–76.

26 Cf. Johnson: *Astronomical Thought*, pp. 249–250.

27 Cf. Włodarczyk et al.: *Edward Gresham*; Włodarczyk: *The Pre-Telescopic Observations*; Idem: 'Out of a Greate Laborinth of Errors'; Bienias: *The Place of Edward Gresham's Astrosterion*. The investigation of *Astrosterion* was made possible through a grant-funded project: *Tradition and Novelty: Copernicanism, the Idea of a Plurality of Worlds, and Astrology in Edward Gresham's (1565–1613) Astrosterion*, financed by the National Science Centre, Poland (OPUS 8, DEC-2014/15/B/HS3/02490), led by Prof. Jarosław Włodarczyk (Institute for the History of Science, Polish Academy of Sciences). The project's ultimate aim is to publish the first critical edition of Gresham's *Astrosterion*.

herents, who become subjects of critique in their own right.<sup>28</sup> With time, the discourse evolved in the almanacs, prefaces, and dedicatory letters, along with abundant and often eclectic models of Copernicus's system.<sup>29</sup> The English interpretation of heliocentric theory can be scrutinised to see how freely new scientific ideas could be discussed in public discourse.<sup>30</sup> This suggests that the nation's perspective on Copernicus can be understood as idiosyncratic whilst simultaneously being woven into the broader tapestry of pan-European scientific discourse.

## Copernicus Within Other Discourses

Early modern discussion of Copernicus is a process of critical evaluation, emphasising his work, which was rigorously analysed, utilised, and debated – particularly within the vibrant Protestant community. These debates sought to reconcile new scientific observations with ancient authorities and Scripture. Hiscock's contention that historical observances and reverence may have compensated for the loss of Catholic rituals following the Reformation in England holds merit.<sup>31</sup> With the loss of purgatory and the communion of saints, the everyday practice of remembering the past was altered.<sup>32</sup> The post-Reformation landscape was nourished by new puritanical practices or Protestant forms of worship, infusing this religious milieu with a more zealous and militant spirit. Such fervour was channelled into a broader context. Hence, the proto-scientific discourse within England, intertwined with the immutable world depicted in Scripture, adopted the rhetoric of Protestant sermons and biblical interpretation. This was particularly evident when confronted with Copernican theories, where an escape from religious orthodoxy seemed impossible.<sup>33</sup>

As Astrid Erll reminds us, “cultural memory rests on narrative process”,<sup>34</sup> and different forms of remembering – manifesting, for example, in various discourses – are “closely linked to different modes of (narrative) representation”.<sup>35</sup> One of

28 See, for example, Edward Gresham's complaint in his letter to the reader in: Gresham: *A New Almanack and Prognostication*, sig. B2r.

29 Apart from Digges's augmented diagram, we have also, for example, William Gilbert's diagram in *De mundo* (published in 1651 but composed c. 1600–1603). For the discussion of Gilbert's cosmology, see Freudenthal: *Theory of Matter*, pp. 22–37, esp. 33–35.

30 The question of embracing new scientific ideas within Protestant countries is analysed in Harrison: *The Bible*.

31 Cf. Hiscock: *Debating*, p. 73.

32 Cf. Greenblatt: *Hamlet in Purgatory*, pp. 19, 62, 305.

33 See Howell: *God's Two Books*; Hiscock: *Debating*, p. 74.

34 Erll: *Memory in Culture*, p. 146.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 158.

the strongest forms of such representation is literature, which, according to Erll, “permeates and resonates in memory culture”,<sup>36</sup> having the ability to integrate various discourses (such as history or theology).<sup>37</sup>

In early modernity, literature was regarded as a powerful tool in scientific discussions, and even lighter literary forms, such as pamphlets, songs, and epigrams, conveyed commentary on contemporary philosophical or cosmological debates. Among English authors, those who completely refuted Copernicus’s views, such as Alexander Ross (1591–1654), called his opinion “erroneous, ridiculous, and impious” and “false, absurd, and dangerous”.<sup>38</sup> In other circles, both the scholars who were leaning toward his ideas and those more sceptical called him “a man of incomparable wit”<sup>39</sup> and “learned”.<sup>40</sup>

Regarding intellectual culture, Copernicus’s ideas were strategically employed for rhetorical purposes, giving rise to what is known as ‘the Copernican paradox’. This paradox played a distinctive role in early modern culture. The movement of the Earth around the Sun and the stability of the Sun itself became subjects of paradoxical discourse, often used to juxtapose against other unconventional ideas of the time.<sup>41</sup> And thus, for example, Thomas Nashe (1567–1601), in a pamphlet *Have with You to Saffron Walden* (1596) – written against Gabriel Harvey, derides his opponent with the words:

[...] when hee is inuventing a new part of *Tully*, or hatching such another *Paradoxe*, as that of *Nicholaus Copernicus* was, who held, that the Sun remains immouuable in the center of the World, & that the Earth is moou’d about the Sunne, he would be so rapt, that hee would remaine three dayes and neither eate nor drinke, and within doores he will keepe seauen yeare together, and come not abroad so much as to Church.<sup>42</sup>

The rich pamphleteering and satirical culture of early modern England frequently depicted Copernicus as a figure whose ideas were perceived as eccentric or foolish. For example, in Robert Heath’s (fl. 1636–1659) epigram titled *On Copernicus His Opinion of the Earths Turning Round*, the astronomer is presented as somebody who must have been either drunk or on a ship when forming the idea of the Earth’s motion:

Copernicus was of opinion  
That the Earths globe by spherick motion  
Turn’d round, and that the Heav’ns were fixt: the man  
Was drunk sure or on shipboard, when his brain

36 Ibid., p. 144.

37 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 150–151.

38 Ross: *The New Planet No Planet*, title page; p. 2.

39 Carpenter: *Geographie Delineated Forth*, p. 76.

40 Hill: *The Schoole of Skil*, p. 42.

41 Bienias: *Edward Gresham’s Astrostereon*; Colie: *Paradoxia Epidemica*.

42 Nash: *Have with You to Saffron-Walden*, sig. P1r. Original spelling retained.

Hatcht this *Maeander*; for to such the land  
Doth only seem to move when they do stand.<sup>43</sup>

In Thomas Bancroft's (fl.1633–1658) two epigrams, Copernicus appears as an expert on the Earth's movement, and this time the reference is deprived of negative connotations:

84. *Our Grandames infirmities.*  
Earth had her dropsie in th' all-drowning Flood,  
And now expects her burning Feaver neare:  
Her Plurisies effusions are of blood  
By wars: her Agues, tremblings of her Spheare:  
Which whether yet it proove vertiginous  
With round rotations, aske *Copernicus*.<sup>44</sup>

Here, the "tremblings" of the sphere are compared to the vertigo of the personified Earth, who suffers from various bodily ailments, caused, among other things, by wars. Similarly, in epigram 110, the Earth's movement is linked to its suffering, while the heavens remain still, i. e. unresponsive:

110. *Copernicus his opinion.*  
Copernicus did thinke those Orbes above,  
Stood as Spectators, while the earth did move:  
Nor did he farre from ground of reason stray,  
Sith earth takes paines, and Heav'n keeps holy-day.<sup>45</sup>

In both poems, the author refers the reader to Copernicus as the one who knows if the Earth moves, himself presenting a moderate or neutral stance on the matter.

With a lighter mood, Alexander Brome (1620–1666), in the song *On Copernicus* describes the circling of the goblet of wine among the wedding guests and states that it should make the whole round and get back to the starting point, like the Earth:

Then see that the Glass  
Through its circuit do pass,  
Till it come where it was,  
And every nose has been within it,  
Till he end it that first did begin it,  
As Copernicus found,  
That the Earth did turn round,  
We will prove so does every thing in it.<sup>46</sup>

43 Heath: *Clarastella*, p. 5. Original spelling retained.

44 Bancroft: *Two Bookes of Epigrammes*, sig. C3v. Original spelling retained.

45 *Ibid.*, sig. D1r.

46 Brome: *Songs and Other Poems*, Song XIII, pp. 72–73. Original spelling retained.

In this case, he acknowledges and supports Copernicus's role in proving the Earth's movement. As we can see, the 17<sup>th</sup>-century literary references to Copernicus's cosmological theory varied from complete denial through moderate consideration to acceptance.

## Translation and Domestication

The dissemination of Copernican theory in England must consider the vernacular aspect. Notably, the mention of Copernicus in Robert Recorde's *The Castle of Knowledge* (1556), the availability of Digges's translation, and multiple references to him and his theory in almanacs and popular verse facilitated the familiarity of the English audience with his work. Additionally, Thomas Salusbury's translation of Galileo's *Dialogo* (Florence, 1632) into English, along with Kepler's works, further spread the knowledge of Copernican theory. Of course, among the learned, Latin remained the *lingua franca*; however, the accessibility of these works in English allowed a less-specialised audience to acquaint themselves with Copernican ideas. In this case, translation constitutes an act of domestication.<sup>47</sup> As Salusbury stated in his translation of Galileo, by bringing the words of the astronomer "in English habit", he aimed to make the works familiar to those who could not read the originals, unlike his learned patron, Sir John Denham:

For 'tis all-most impossible to think what *Your Matchless Wit* is not able to Conquer, would *Your known Modesty* but give leave: therefore *Galileus, Kepler*, and those other Worthies in Learning are now brought before You in English Habit, having chang'd their Latine, Italian and French, whereby they were almost Strangers to our Nation, unless to such as You, who so perfectly master the Originals.<sup>48</sup>

Despite linguistic peculiarities and challenges in capturing subtleties, translation inevitably involves a reconfiguration or rearrangement of some ideas. Through this process, Copernicus was domesticated – 'Englished' – not only linguistically but also culturally.

Another example of such 'translation' – this time visual – can be found in the title page of the 1640 edition of John Wilkins's *Discovery Concerning a New World and Another Planet*, in which we see the sphere of scattered stars (akin to that in Digges's or Gilbert's diagrams) and the depictions of Copernicus, Galileo,

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Venuti: *The Scandals of Translation*, p. 67.

<sup>48</sup> Salusbury: *Mathematical Collections*, sig. A4v. Original spelling and italics retained. It is also worth mentioning that Salusbury translated Galileo from Italian, introducing corrections of Matthias Bernegger's Latin 1635 translation in the margins. For the analysis of Salusbury's translation methods see Plescia: *Now Brought Before You in English Habit*, pp. 286–307.

and Kepler.<sup>49</sup> As Volker Remmert has observed, “Like Galileo, Wilkins never tired of propagating the Copernican world system in the vernacular, and he remained a convinced Copernican all his life.”<sup>50</sup> If we compare the figure of Copernicus in this edition of Wilkins’s text with the frontispiece to the Latin edition of Galileo’s *Dialogo*, published as *Systema cosmicum* by Thomas Ducas in London in 1663,<sup>51</sup> we can see that they both draw on the Leiden Latin version (1635) of Galileo’s *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, with the image of Copernicus after Stefano della Bella.<sup>52</sup> Such visual multiplications of the image of Copernicus and his system reinforced his position in English cultural memory.

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, familiarity with Copernicus’s theory in England was primarily achieved through the publication of Galileo’s and Kepler’s works and subsequently through Isaac Newton’s (1642–1727) *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) and works of other members of the Royal Society, such as John Flamsteed (1646–1719), the first Astronomer Royal.<sup>53</sup> Copernicus’s biography was relatively well-documented by the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The information gleaned from *De revolutionibus* and Pierre Gassendi’s biography of Copernicus gave English scholars a fairly comprehensive image of his life.<sup>54</sup> They knew of his birthplace, his role as a Canon in Frombork (*Frauenburg*), his Italian studies, and his formulation of the heliocentric hypothesis, which was often dated to 1536, the year of Johannes Schöner’s letter published in *De revolutionibus*.<sup>55</sup> He is also referred to as a Borussian or Prussian who “revived the long-neglected Systeme of the World excogitated by Pythagoras”.<sup>56</sup>

For example, in John Brinley’s *A Discovery of the Impostures of Witches and Astrologers*, there is a biographical passage on Copernicus derived from Ismaël Boulliau’s *Prolegomena in Astronomia philolaica* (1645), quoted in Latin:

In the year One Thousand Five Hundred Thirty Six, *Nicolaus Copernicus* became Eminent, one who revived many Opinions that had for a long time been Buried in obscurity; of whom *Ismael Bulialdus* in his *Prolegomena*’s to *Phylosophical Astronomy*, gives this Character, *Nicolaus Copernicus vir absolutae subtilitatis, non solum ob-*

49 See fig. 2 at the end of the chapter.

50 Remmert: *Picturing the Scientific Revolution*, p. 55.

51 See fig. 3 at the end of the chapter.

52 See fig. 4 at the end of the chapter; cf. Remmert: *Picturing the Scientific Revolution*, pp. 60–64.

53 Cf. Gassendi: *Petri Gassendi Institutio astronomica juxta hypotheses tam veterum quam recentiorum: cui accesserunt Galilei Galilei Nuntius sidereus et Johannis Kepleri Dioptrice*. 1643; the second edition under a changed title: Gassendi: *Institutio astronomica, juxta hypotheses tam veterum, quam Copernici et Tychonis, dictata a Petro Gassendo regio matheos professore*. 1653; Newton: *Philosophiae Naturalis*; Horrocks: *Opuscula Astronomica*.

54 Gassendi: *Tychonis Brahei*.

55 Cf. Seller: *Atlas Caelestis*, sig. A2r.

56 Leybourn: *An Introduction to Astronomy*, p. 3. Original spelling retained.

*servator fuit, sed etiam Hypotheseos Pythagoricae antiquae instaurator. Per eum enim ex humanis cogitationibus exemptae Ptolomaicarum Hypotheseon tricae, & circulorum multiplicium involutiones, & ad Physicam simplicitatem revocatae sunt hominum mentes.*<sup>57</sup>

In this quotation, Copernicus is introduced as a man of absolute precision who restored the ancient Pythagorean hypothesis, freed the men's minds from complicated Ptolemaic hypotheses and circles, and turned them to the simplicity of physics. Consequently, in 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century England, such accounts predominantly mediated and shaped the understanding of Copernicus and his theory.

Furthermore, although historiography could be interpreted, after Paul Ricoeur, as artificial,<sup>58</sup> or perhaps even prosthetic memory, Gassendi's life of Copernicus seems to differ in the methodological approach to presenting an astronomer's biography. In his detailed evaluation of Gassendi's text, Claus Zittel points out that "Copernicus' image differs largely from the glorifying hagiographies of the nineteenth century and the fictional eulogies of earlier and later biographies of scientists."<sup>59</sup> He hastes to add that Gassendi aimed his work at experts, strived for historical accuracy, paid attention to detail, and remained as objective as possible.<sup>60</sup> As a result, the reader receives:

a characterisation of Copernicus after the humanist ideal of the *uomo universale*: Copernicus was good, philanthropic, erudite, 'exceedingly versed in all branches of science,' from numismatics and astronomy to medicine (a second Asclepius), worldly wise and philologically well grounded in the ancient languages.<sup>61</sup>

Gassendi's *Vitae* circulated within the learned community, fostering discussion and strengthening Copernicus's position within the collective memory.

Yet, the most prominent Copernican 'English connection' lies with Isaac Newton (1643–1727), who is a figure directly linked to Copernicus and his astronomical thought in the historiography of science. Moreover, British accounts of Newton (from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward), one of the most prominent scholars and national symbols, can be likened to Polish narratives about Copernicus. In the essay *Newton as a National Hero*, Maureen McNeil writes that to understand the *meaning* of Newton, one should investigate:

[...] not only his writings and their influence, but also other places within the culture where Newton is used as a symbol or lodges as a folk-memory. It is about understanding the active creative process whereby cultural meanings are generated about who Newton

57 Brinley: *A Discovery of the Impostures*, p. 95. Original spelling retained.

58 Ricoeur et al.: *Memory, History, Forgetting*, pp. 141–142.

59 Zittel: *Copernicus Found a Treasure*, p. 263.

60 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 255, 263.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 268.

was, why he matters, and what he has come to signify. In this sense, there is no single Newton.<sup>62</sup>

All these facets (and more) account for Newton's collective identity, as I have proposed for Copernicus as well. As stated above, these identities were also entangled – there was no single Copernicus.

Let us now take a leap. Within the archives of the Royal Society lies the *Collectanea Newtoniana*, an assemblage of the papers, illustrations, and prints associated with Isaac Newton and amassed by Charles Turnor (1768–1853), a Fellow of the Society, astronomer, and custodian of Walthorpe Manor – Newton's ancestral home. Among this collection is a portrait of Copernicus from 1682, featured in Isaac Bullart's *Académie de Sciences et des Arts*.<sup>63</sup> Another graphic is a 1644 print by Jeremias Falck.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, there is also an engraved portrait of Copernicus by Nicholas Dandeleau,<sup>65</sup> a copy dated to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Intriguingly, this engraving carries a French inscription with erroneous birth details for Copernicus (19 January 1472) – a discrepancy that prompts reflection on the veracity and persistence of historical detail within collective memory. With time, such errors necessitated corrections in historiography, as left unchanged and multiplied false narratives, some of which persisted throughout centuries.<sup>66</sup>

The Royal Society's repository also includes insights into how figures like Copernicus and Newton are enshrined in cultural remembrance. The Newtonian collection not only comprises portraits and prints relating to Newton's heritage but extends to individuals whose intellectual pursuits paralleled or intersected with those of Newton – from Copernicus onwards. Each astronomer is accompanied by memoirs that provide context and narrative to their eminent lives. The *Memoir of Copernicus* is most probably written in Turner's hand on two folios with exquisitely decorated margins. The text is an abridged version from David Brewster's *Life of Sir Isaac Newton* (1831), popularised in *The Tourist* magazine a year later.<sup>67</sup> Subsequently, Brewster included the extended version of Copernicus' life in his *Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton* (1855).<sup>68</sup> Turner's version shall be quoted at length here:

62 McNeil: *Newton as a National Hero*, p. 223.

63 Royal Society Archives: *Collectanea Newtoniana*, MS 648/6: anonymous artist: *Portrait of Copernicus*, vol. 6, p. 5. The same engraving can be found in Bullart: *Académie de Sciences*, p. 75.

64 Royal Society Archives: *Collectanea Newtoniana*, MS 648/6: Jeremias Falck: *Portrait of Copernicus*, vol. 6, p. 7.

65 Ibid.: Nicholas Dandeleau: *Portrait of Nicolaus Copernicus*, vol. 6, n.p.

66 Cf. Roszak et al.: *Mikołaj Kopernik*, p. 116.

67 See Brewster: *Life of Sir Isaac Newton*, chapter X, pp. 111–115; see also the text in *The Tourist* magazine: *Ancient Astronomers. No. 1. Copernicus*, p. 139.

68 Brewster: *Memoirs of the Life*, 1, chapter XI, pp. 252–253.

*Nicolaus Copernicus*

In the century immediately preceding the birth of Newton, the science of astronomy advanced with rapid steps. Before that time, the apparent motion of the Sun was considered as real and the Earth was thought immoveable, and forming the center of the system ... a notion that well accorded with the vulgar prejudices, which a false interpretation of Scripture had excited against a belief in the motion of the Earth. Doubts however were still entertained by some of the truth of this theory, particularly by Alphonso King of Castile, and by astronomers whom he patronised, but yet they were unable to establish a better system. ... The honor of restoring true astronomy was reserved for Copernicus. ...

He was born and born at Thorn in Prussia and bred to the practice of Medicine, which he soon relinquished for the study of Astronomy, a pursuit more agreeable to his taste. He first went to Bologna, to study that Science, and Mathematics under Dominic Maria, and made such progress, that he went to Rome as a teacher of Mathematics. Here he devoted much attention to observations on the heavenly bodies. After carefully examining the systems of his predecessors, he found them to rest on false hypotheses and after the labor of more than thirty years, he discovered the true system of the heavenly bodies. The Sun he considered ... immovable in the center of the system, while the Earth revolved between the orbits of Venus and Mars, and produced, by its rotation about its axis, all the diurnal phenomena of the celestial sphere. The precession of the equinoxes was thus referred to a slight motion of the Earth's axis, and the stations and retrogradations of the planets were the necessary consequence of their own motions combined with that of the Earth about the Sun. These views were the result of numerous and accurate observations; and in 1530 he finished his immortal Work of the Revolutions of the heavenly Bodies. The... prejudices existing against such a system, would have deterred the author from publishing it, had not George ... Rheticus Professor of Mathematics at Wirtemberg [sic] repaired to Frauenberg to make himself master of his discoveries under Copernicus himself, where he, at last, prevailed upon him to publish his Manuscript. The Work accordingly ... appeared at Nuremberg 1543 printed at the expense of Cardinal Schenberg, but its illustrious offer did not live ... to peruse it. ... It was dedicated to the Pope himself, a circumstance that silenced the clamors of those, who opposed new system on the ground of it being contrary to the Christian Religion. Thus introduced, the Copernican system gradually made its way, and was generally adopted in spite of the ignorance of the age. It is worthy of remark, that Copernicus had just received a perfect copy of his work, when he died the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1543, aged 70 years. It's entitled "De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium," a large body of Astronomy printed in VI Books.<sup>69</sup>

69 Royal Society Archives: *Collectanea Newtoniana*, MS 648/6: *Memoir of Copernicus*, vol. 6, fols. 10 and 12; my transcription and edition: lowercase instead of uppercase has been introduced; all the abbreviations have been expanded; lineation has not been retained. Otherwise, original spelling and punctuation has been kept; '...' represents omissions introduced by the author of the *Memoir*. I am very grateful to Mr. Rupert Baker, Library Manager at the Royal Society, who kindly shared the photos of this archival material with me.

The author of this eulogy recounts biographical details known from 17<sup>th</sup>-century accounts, yet conveys a 19<sup>th</sup>-century sense of superiority over past times perceived as full of “ignorance” and “vulgar prejudices”. Copernicus is portrayed as the restorer of “true astronomy” and the discoverer of the “true system of the heavenly bodies”. In terms of biographical representation, historical texts and a memoir within the Newtonian collection at the Royal Society primarily acknowledge Copernicus’s astronomical legacy, positioning him among the great astronomers who paved the way for Newton’s achievements. This mode of commemoration can be compared to Italy’s veneration of Galileo or England’s own Newton – each figure emblematic of their respective nation’s scientific advancements and prowess.

## Conclusions

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, English intellectual focus was predominantly directed towards Copernicus’s astronomical achievements. By the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, he was more widely acknowledged as an initiator of revolutionary cosmological thought. The physical model of Copernican cosmology, as expounded in *De revolutionibus*, encountered substantial scepticism. With rare exceptions, throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was either dismissed or acknowledged merely as a hypothesis within academic circles. In 1630, in a Latin discourse prepared for George Hakewill’s *An Apologie for the Power and Providence of God*, Henry Briggs formulated what was called “a kind of collective Oxford statement on modern intellectual achievement”, dubbing Copernicus’s theory “much simpler and more accurate” (“multo facilius & accuratius”).<sup>70</sup>

The presentations of Copernicus’s thought in the vernacular (both as translations and popular discourse) proved indispensable for a wider audience seeking comprehension of its contents and implications and spurred further discussion and the development of astronomy in England. This period also witnessed a notable negative reception of Copernicus’s cosmology, especially among religious authorities rejecting the notion of Earth’s movement around the Sun as being contradictory to the Bible. Nonetheless, this rejection is also a form of reception indicative of the fluctuating nature of ideas within the social discourse of the time.

While general information concerning Copernicus’s background and education was acknowledged, it was his cultural representation that garnered significant attention. Portrayed as a rhetorical figure embodying the paradox between truth and opinion, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, Copernicus became en-

70 Qtd. in Poole: *Sir Henry Savile*, p. 17.

tangled in philosophical discussions and the satirical pamphleteering culture of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

With the establishment of the Royal Society in 1660, Copernicus's legacy attained further reverence, as manifested in material culture artefacts held in the Society's collections. His intellectual lineage eventually linked to Newton, who advanced Copernican ideas, solidifying the Polish astronomer's place in collective memory as an integral part of English intellectual culture.

The remembrance of Copernicus in early modern England involved practices of repetition, erasure, ridicule, praise, and the travel (*voyage*) and reinvention of existing biographical writing and visual representations. The plethora of Copernican narratives in England, intertwined with other prevalent discourses of the time, meant that the incorporation of his ideas into treatises on navigation or the framing of the Copernican paradox in rhetorical discourse became localised and homogenous.

Although Copernicus is figuratively remembered differently throughout Europe and beyond, some universal references regarding his achievements are shared globally, making him one of the fathers of the 'Scientific Revolution' – if we still prefer to use this term. This suggests that Copernicus's persona is not merely imported but reconstructed within the fabric of its new cultural setting. This involves crafting collective memory, textual heritage, and integration into the living societal tissue. In the case of early modern England, Copernicus must have undergone a transformation, becoming embedded within various discourses, initially scientific yet quickly enriched by religious, artistic, and literary narratives, shaping his collective identity in English cultural memory.

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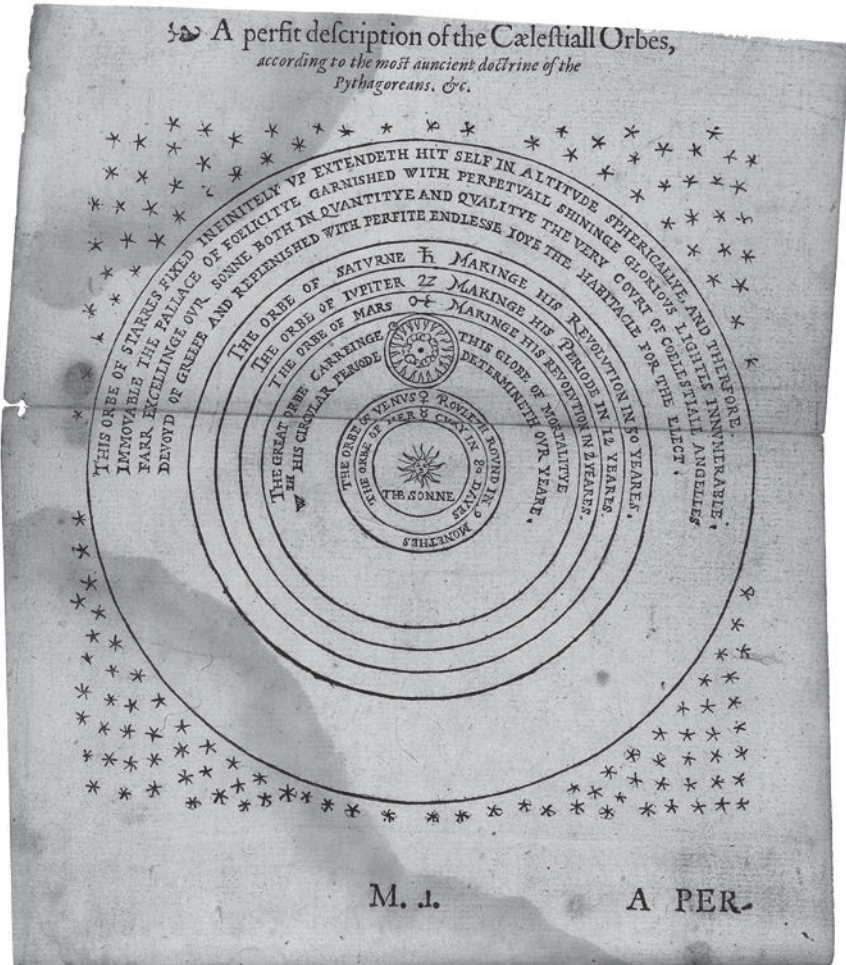


Fig. 1. Thomas Digges’s diagram of Copernicus’s universe, from Leonard Digges: *A Prognostication Euerlastinge of Right Good Effecte*. 1576, foldout between sig. M2 and N1. STC 6864. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.



Fig. 2. Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler, from John Wilkins: *A Discourse Concerning a New World and Another Planet in 2 Bookes*. 1640; engraved title page. STC 25641. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.



Fig. 3. Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Copernicus discuss their respective views on the movements of the Sun and the Earth, from Galileo Galilei: *Systema cosmicum*. 1663; engraved title page. Source: Wellcome Collection, URL: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/pq9equ45> (3.10.2024).



Fig. 4. Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Copernicus (after Stefano Della Bella), from Galileo Galilei: *Systema cosmicum*. 1635; engraved title page. Source: Pomorska Biblioteka Cyfrowa, URL: <https://pbc.gda.pl/dlibra/publication/8392/edition/4305> (3.10.2024).



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