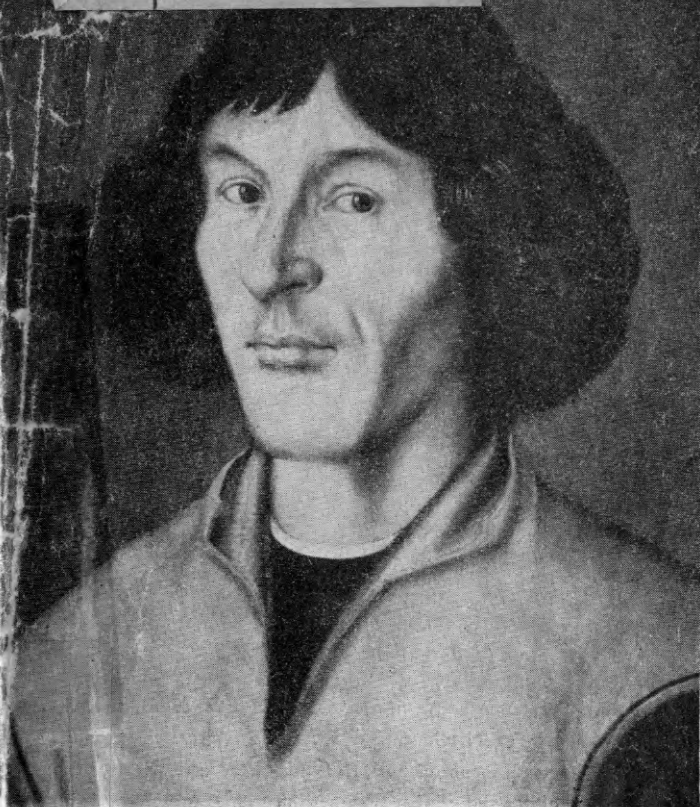


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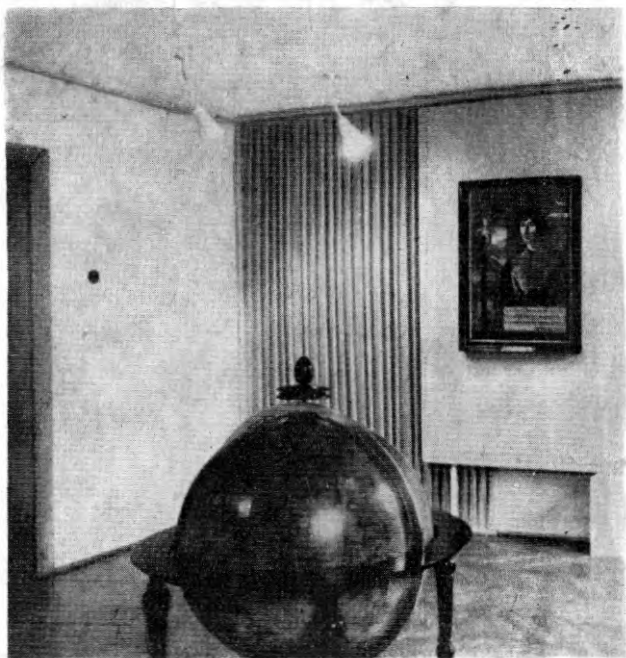
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## The "Copernicus House"

A Department of the District Museum

at Toruń



*Copernicus House (A fragment of exhibition)*

Toruń, the home – town of Mikołaj KOPERNIK, internationally known as Nicolous COPERNICUS, cultivates since centuries the traditional memories of this great astronomer. It has been uphold to the present time and incarnated visibly by various objects of which the most important ones are:

An epitaph with the painted portrait of Copernicus founded about 1580 by the philanthropist and medical doctor Melchior Pirnesius of Toruń, and a marble bust of Copernicus founded in 1766 by Jabłonowski made by the sculptura Wojciech Rogowski of Cracow. Both these monuments have been erected, and can be seen, in the church of St. John at Toruń. In addition, there is in front of the old Town Hall a great monument designed by the German sculptor Frederic Tieck, and built in 1853.

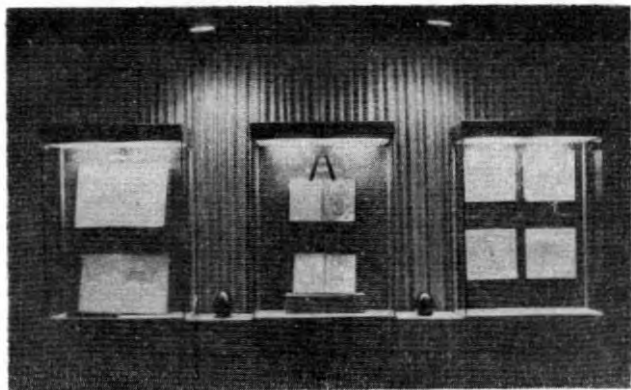


The question of organising a Copernicus Museum at the home town of this great astronomer was already raised and lively discussed in various daily and scientific papers since the 19 century. Different schemes of building such institution were considered at certain meetings and Copernicus's anniversaries in the years of 1873, 1923 and 1953. There were several obstacles in the way of materializing these plans. The most important were:

- 1) A hot dispute to establish the proper house in which Copernicus was born. This dispute existed for a long time between the German and Polish community at Toruń. It was definitively brought to an end by professor Karol Górski who summarized all findings, which were then published, in a special edition, under the title: "Domostwo Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu" (The Home of Nicolaus Copernicus at Toruń), and concluded that the proper house where Copernicus was born is that of the present number 17 Kopernika Street. This conclusion was mainly based on a document in the "town - book of services" of the 15th century, found by the town clerk and amateur historian Bender in the year 1881.

- II) A very small amount of relics and historical souvenirs left directly from the time of the great astronomer.

Not until 1960, in connection with the celebrations of the Polish millenium, the Country Council of Bydgoszcz decided to carry out a renovation of the house in which the author of the world wide known „De Revolutionibus...” was born, and also to adapt it as a Copernicus Museum. The house was built in the second half of the 15th century. Its original, late gothic architecture was replaced by humble classical forms during a rebuilding at the turn of the 18th and 19th century. Changes were then also made in the inner structure and the height of the stores. During adapting works of these premises in 1960, original parts of the former gothic architecture and also paintings were discovered. After thorough examinations it was decided to make a reconstruction of the original building. It



*Copernicus House (A fragment of exhibition)*

was made in the years of 1962 and 1963 to the great satisfaction of all citizens cultivating the memory of Copernicus. The house, especially its front, regained the former, late gothic character and the original height of the stors. The inner structure has been built along modern designs, in accordance with the requirements of contemporary exhibitions.

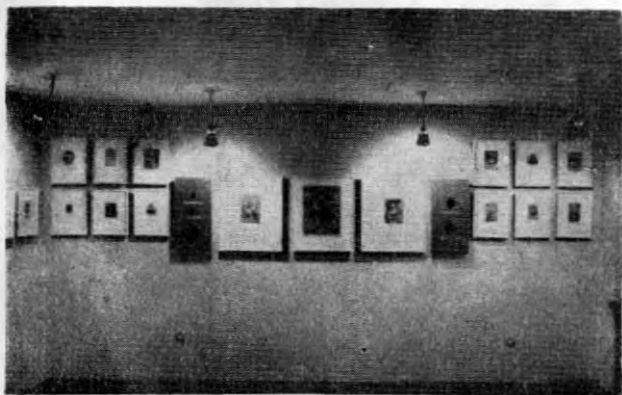
In 1973 we are planning to celebrate the 500 hundred anniversary of Copernicus's birthday, and have also in view to create at Toruń a world centre for the cult of the great astronomer. The plans in view provide a substantial extension of the present Copernicus Museum by adapting the neighbouring house of 15 Kopernika Street, which is an almost perfect example of a town house of the 15th century at Toruń. The intention is to show a midcentury citizen's home, to reflect in a realistic way the old time life of this town, which gave to the world new inspirations in the field of astronomy. Until then, the present exhibition in the house of Copernicus will keep its passing character.

Small rooms, relatively few exhibits, gave the present exhibition a rather limited, didactic meaning. Besides authentic objects, there are also exhibits included just as an illustration, like photos, photoprints of documents, diagrams, etc, connected with the family, the life, and the manifold activities of the genial astronomer.

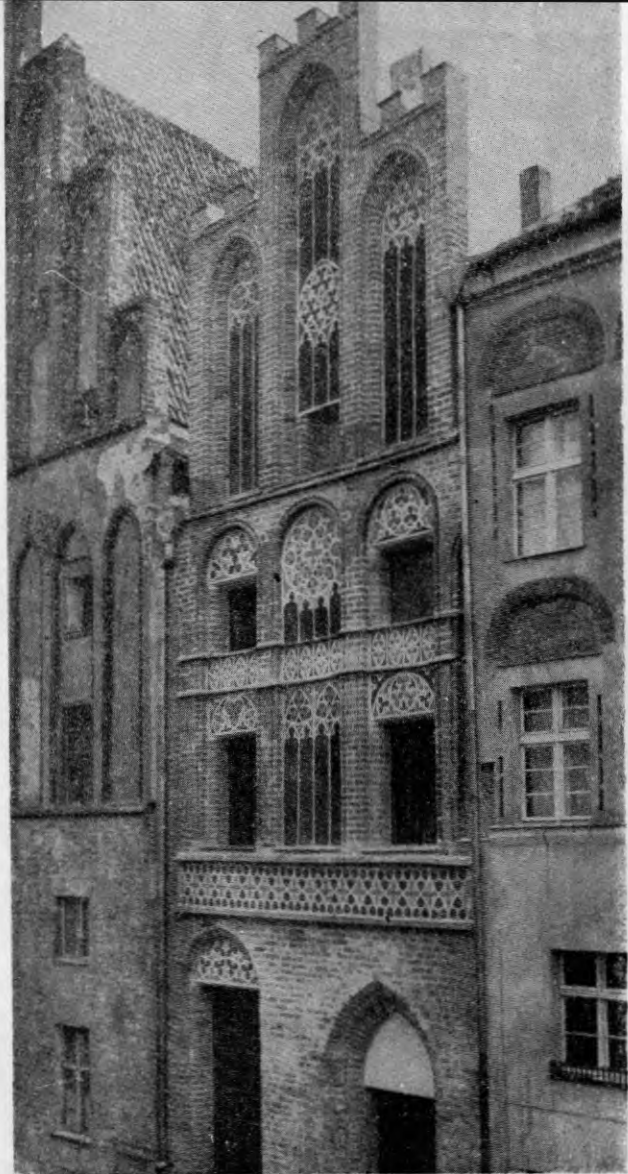
This exhibition consists of 5 parts, each organised as a separate whole:

The first part: "Toruń the town of Copernicus, his family, his home" includes a picture of the oldest known general view of Toruń, almost contemporary with Copernicus's time, a coloured diagram illustrating the places where his family lived, before they settled down at Toruń, a photocopy of their house before and after reconstruction, and 19 century drawings of the home which was supposed to be the birthplace of Copernicus.

The second part entitled: "Working places and creative activities" is composed of synthetic biographic information illustrated by pictures of towns and places where Copernicus lived and worked, and also by photoprints of appropriate documents. The third part shows him as the great philanthropist he was, the man of the Renaissance with all his interests reflected in his manifold activities in the field of social life and sciences like astronomy, exonomy, medical science, geography, philosophy and gnomonics. Exhibited are also several copies of his greatest, many times reedited work, describing his discoveries in astronomy, having as its centre his theory of the heliocentric system in the sphere. An engraving of Rödlich "Copernicus lecturing in Rome" shows him also as a teacher. A photo print



*Copernicus House (A fragment of exhibition)*



*Copernicus House after the renovation*

of a prescription personally written by Copernicus reminds us of his activities as physician among the population in the country of Varmia in Poland. His interests in the field of social economics are illustrated by his treaty on monetary problems. A map, made in cooperation with his friend Bernard Wapowski represents one of the oldest cartographic works in the history of Polish geography.

The third and fifth room contains exhibits dedicated to the personal cult of the great astronomer. There are his oldest effigies. A copy of his portrait from the epitaph at St. John's Church. It is an exceptional expressive portrait painted in the 16th century by an unknown, but able painter. It is not, as it was supposed to be, a selfportrait, but it has all features of a great work of art. A set of effigies representing different graphic technics, previously used to illustrate books, contains the oldest wood engraving by Thomas Stimmer of the 16th century. Here are also placed all publications concerning the life and work of Copernicus of such authors as Jan Sniadecki, Ignacy Polkowski, Adolf Prowe and Alexander Birkenmajer.

In the last room, the attic room, there is an exhibition of model astronomic instruments; the quadrant, the astrolab, and the triquetrum used by Copernicus during his astronomic studies.

In order to help us in materializing our plans regarding the extension of this Museum we appeal to all people, especially the youth, to collect and bring here everything connected in some way with Copernicus, and which still is kept in private possession. It will be gladly accepted in the form of gifts, deposits or offers for sale. This, of course, will enable us to enrich the collection of exhibits, and to bring our Museum up to a higher level for the benefit of giving a more detailed picture of the life and work of Copernicus the genial astronomer and great scientist of the Renaissance in Poland.

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NICOLAUS COPERNICVS  
Mathematicus.



*Quid tam? si mihi terra mouetur, Solis: quiescit,  
Ac coelum: constat calculus inde meus.*

M. D. XLIII.

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Copernicus Portrait T. Stimmers woodcut, XVI c.

Opracowała: Janina Mazurkiewicz

Zakłady Graficzne



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