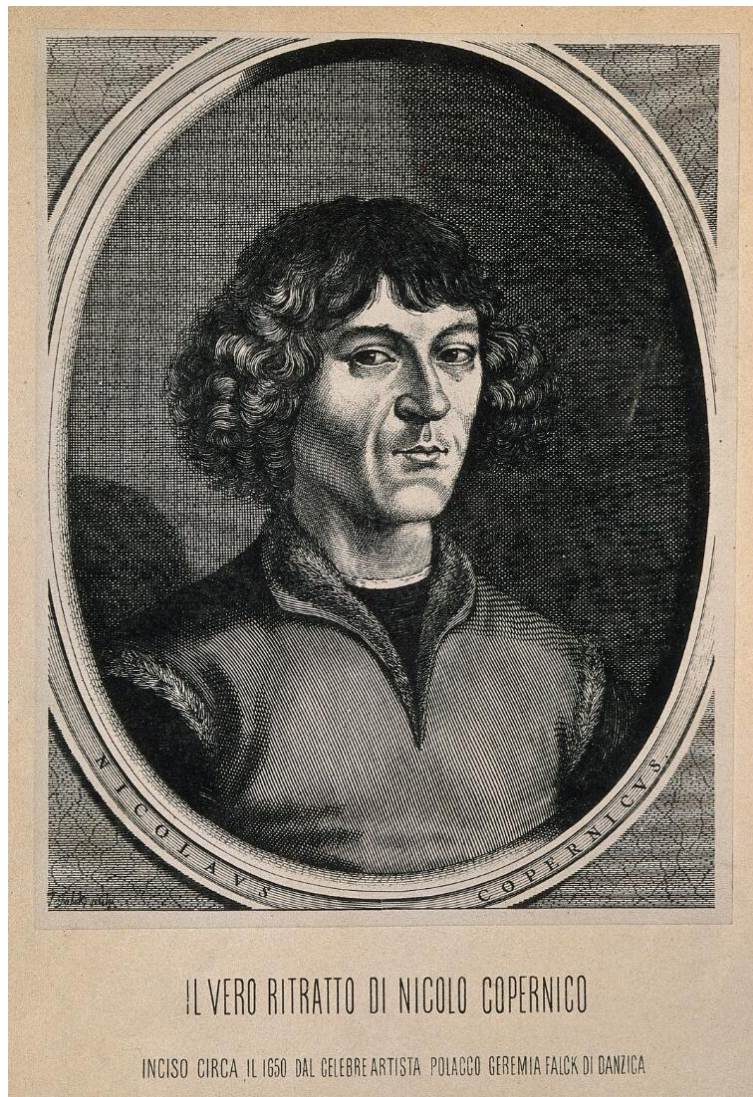




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## NICOLAUS COPERNICUS - introduction



Nicolaus Copernicus was born in Toruń in 1473. As he was 10 years old, his father died. It was then, that his uncle, who later became the bishop of Warmia, took care of him and his brother Andrew. The uncle sent the brothers to study in Kraków, where Nicolaus took interest in astronomy. He later studied canon law and medicine in Italy. It was there that Copernicus formulated the basic approach to his heliocentric theory. He was aware of this theory by the time he returned to Warmia. Copernicus was a canon of Warmia, i.e. a member of the Warmia Chapter. He spent his entire adult life, that is 40 years, in Warmia. As a canon of Warmia, he had different functions and here in Warmia, in Frombork, he died in 1543 at the age of 70 years.

**In 2023, we are going to celebrate 2 anniversaries: 550th anniversary of the birth of Nicolas Copernicus and 480th of his death.**

## Nicolaus Copernicus in Lidzbark Warmiński



arch. Pracownia Wydawnicza ELSET

After his studies, in the autumn of 1503 Nicolas Copernicus returned to Warmia, to Lidzbark Warmiński, where his uncle the Bishop of Warmia were residing. In the following years, Copernicus accompanied his uncle on numerous journeys and on diplomatic missions among others to the Polish king and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights. Then Copernicus wrote down the final version of his Commentary on the hypotheses on the celestial movements (the so-called “Little Commentary”), which included the first outline of his theory. Later, the manuscript spread around the world in copies, heralding the work 'On the Revolutions'. Before leaving bishop's court in Lidzbark, Nicolaus wanted to placate his uncle. Hence he translated Teofilakt Symokatta`s (moralizer from the 6<sup>th</sup> century) letters from Greek to Latin. The text was preceded by a lofty dedication for the bishop. From 1510, we already meet Nicolaus among the Frombork canons. As in 1512, on his way from Kraków, his uncle died in Toruń, his nephew was not with him.

### Monuments connected with Copernicus in Lidzbark Warmiński

*There is a castle of the bishops of Warmia from the 14th century (the centre of their secular and ecclesiastical authority) in Lidzbark Warmiński. Four wings surround an inner quadrangle courtyard with storied arcaded cloisters - a world-*

class architectural gem. Nicolaus Copernicus lived in the castle in Lidzbark Warmiński. A luxury four-star hotel is located in the bailey.

[www.lidzbark.muzeum.olsztyn.pl/](http://www.lidzbark.muzeum.olsztyn.pl/)

[www.hotelkrasicki.pl/](http://www.hotelkrasicki.pl/)

## Nicolaus Copernicus in Olsztyn



arch. Urząd Miasta Olsztyn, Marcin Kierul

Copernicus was an administrator in Olsztyn between 1516 and 1521. The administrator's duties included the management of the cathedral chapter's property in Olsztyn and Pieniężno bailiwicks. The administrator in these areas managed the land, exercised judicial authority and was responsible for fiscal matters. An excellent legacy of such activity is his 'Locations of abandoned lans' (Locationes mansorum desortorum) - a document certifying the acquisition of land belonging to the chapter by tenant peasants. Copernicus spent his time in Olsztyn doing administrative duties, preparing the inventory of chapter's archive. Moreover, he prepared the first treatise about money, which bore fruit in the formulation of the law that 'inferior money drives superior ones out of circulation'. It was also here, within the walls of the Olsztyn castle, that he wrote down the text of the first book of "De revolutionibus..." - his life's work which "stopped the Sun and pushed the Earth from its foundation". An astronomical board made by Copernicus has been preserved in the Olsztyn castle. It was used to determine the vernal equinox, which was needed to reform the calendar. Despite the fact that Nicolaus Copernicus determined the vernal equinox on a board in Olsztyn, the calendar reform was not carried out immediately. In Poland, it was conducted after the death of Nicolaus Copernicus in 1582. The reform was implemented by Pope Gregory XIII, therefore the calendar changed

from Julian to Gregorian. Nicolaus Copernicus is known as a defender of Olsztyn Castle and the city against the Teutonic Knights during the last Polish-Teutonic war.

### **Monuments associated with Copernicus in Olsztyn**

*The castle of the Warmia Chapter* is a Gothic defensive structure, with an 18th-century Baroque wing. It was the seat of the chapter clerk – the canon-administrator. This dignity was held by Nicolaus Copernicus in 1516-1519 and 1520-1521. The castle houses Copernicus' only original observational instrument in the entire world - an astronomical board for determination of the moment of the vernal equinox. There is the Prussian Woman (Baba) - one of the symbols of Olsztyn - in the courtyard of the castle. There is the museum in the structure today.

[www.muzeum.olsztyn.pl/1031,Zamek-Kapituly-Warminskiej.html](http://www.muzeum.olsztyn.pl/1031,Zamek-Kapituly-Warminskiej.html)

The planetarium was opened on the 500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus in 1973. The author of the project is the Olsztyn architect Lodomir Gosławski. The planetarium has been showing astronomical projections for both teaching and entertainment.

[www.planetarium.olsztyn.pl/](http://www.planetarium.olsztyn.pl/)

### The bench with Copernicus in the Old Town

The bench with Copernicus was unveiled in 2003, on the occasion of the 650th anniversary of the city and Copernicus' 530th birthday. The sculpture, by Urszula Szmyt, depicts the astronomer gazing at the sky, holding an astrolabe in one hand and a scroll of parchment in the other.

### The bust of Nicolaus Copernicus in Olsztyn

The decision to build the monument was taken by the Olsztyn City Council on 15 September 1913. It was officially reported that the initiator of the project was Kaiser Wilhelm II, who probably donated 10,000 marks for the purpose. The author of the work was the Berlin sculptor Johannes Goetz. The bronze bust was placed on a stone plinth. The inscription on it in Polish translation says: Nicolaus Copernicus, administrator in Olsztyn Castle 1516-1519, 1520-1521. After the war, the bust, together with the plinth, was moved to a new location. The inscription on the plinth was also changed at that time and now you can read:

To the defender of Olsztyn Castle against Teutonic invaders. To the great Pole Nicolaus Copernicus, grateful countrymen.

## Nicolaus Copernicus in Frombork



Urząd Miasta i Gminy we Fromborku

In Frombork, Nicolaus Copernicus spent nearly 30 years. Copernicus began his true life as a canon after 1510 after he had left Lidzbark Warmiński and his uncle. He was almost 40 years old at that time. At the end of 1521, he returned permanently to the Vistula Lagoon and remained here for the rest of his life, i.e. until 1543 (sometimes he left Frombork). He is said to have finished writing his work “On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres” around 1530. However, he did not intend to publish it in print. He explained his reluctance about publishing of the finished work with his 'fear of ridicule'. During his stay in Frombork, he actively participated in the life of the chapter. Nine years later, in 1539, Georg Joachim Rheticus, a famous professor from the University of Wittenberg, paid him a visit. Some scholars believe that without Rheticus' visit, knowledge of the heliocentric theory would have been delayed by a century, wrote Austrian scholar Karl Heinz Burmeiester in his book about this Wittenberg mathematician. The young man gave the old man the courage. After a stay of more than two years in Prussia, Rheticus returned to Nuremberg, taking the manuscript with him to have it printed. The work was printed before 21 Mai 1543. Heavily ill, Copernicus was probably no longer able to read the book, as he suffered a stroke and paralysis of the side in early December 1542. He died in Mai 1543 and was buried in the Frombork Cathedral.

Did the work reach Warmia in time? We do not know. Legend has it that it did, but even if it had been on his bed, Copernicus would not have been able to read it.

### **Monuments related to Copernicus in Frombork**

In Frombork, the greatest attraction are the buildings of the cathedral hill. The cathedral was built between 1329 and 1388. In the second half of the 14th century and in the 15th century it was surrounded by a wall with gates, defence

towers and drawbridges. Thus, a defensive fortress was created. Since 1992, it has been the cathedral of the Archdiocese of Warmia. Copernicus was a canon and lived in Frombork for a long time. He has been also buried there. The place of his burial was, until recently, unknown. During archaeological excavations at the cathedral in 2005, his skull and bones were found. On 22 May 2010, his ceremonial burial took place in the cathedral.

[www.frombork.art.pl/pl/wzgorze-katedralne/](http://www.frombork.art.pl/pl/wzgorze-katedralne/)

St Stanislaus Kostka Canonry in Frombork - a historic canonry located in Frombork, at 2 Krasickiego Street. This building was erected in 1565. There was a canonry on this site as early as 1439, and it belonged to Nicolaus Copernicus between 1510 and 1543. Only parts of the cellars have survived from this time. It was later rebuilt several times. The structure belonged to Nicolaus Copernicus. There was once a pavement in the garden of the canonry from which Nicolaus Copernicus made observations of the sky. The building belonged to Nicholas, he acquired it because it met his conditions related to astronomical observations.

The Copernicus Tower is located in the north-western part of the hill, it is the oldest element of the Cathedral Hill fortification. It was built before 1400, the upper storeys were rebuilt several times in the 15th-18th centuries. The structure burnt down in 1945, after World War II it was reconstructed - the work was completed in 1965. The tower belonged to Nicolaus Copernicus between 1504-1543. According to the statutes, he should have had a house inside the walls. Because any house in the courtyard didn't meet his astronomical needs, and each cost a lot, he bought this defensive tower for a pittance and in this way fulfilled the demands of the charter.

Nicolaus Copernicus Monument in Frombork is located at the foot of the Cathedral Hill in Frombork. It depicts Nicolaus Copernicus. The monument was erected in 1973, on the 500th anniversary of the great astronomer's birth.

Nicolaus Copernicus' Bench in Frombork - Nicolaus Copernicus is sitting on the Frombork Town Square on a bench symbolising the planet Earth, and the bench itself stands on one of the lines resembling orbits. Our famous astronomer's face is turned towards the Cathedral Hill in Frombork. The statue was cast in bronze and placed in the town's central square as part of the revitalisation of the market square in 2015. On the plaque at the astronomer's feet, a quotation from his work 'De revolutionibus orbium coelestium' (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres) is placed under his name, surname and years of life.