

# Nicolaus Copernicus

The year 2023 will mark the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus, outstanding astronomer, creator of the heliocentric theory, physician, economist – author of one of the versions of the law governing the circulation of money (bad money always drives out good money), and faithful subject of Polish kings – defender of Olsztyn against the Teutonic Knights.

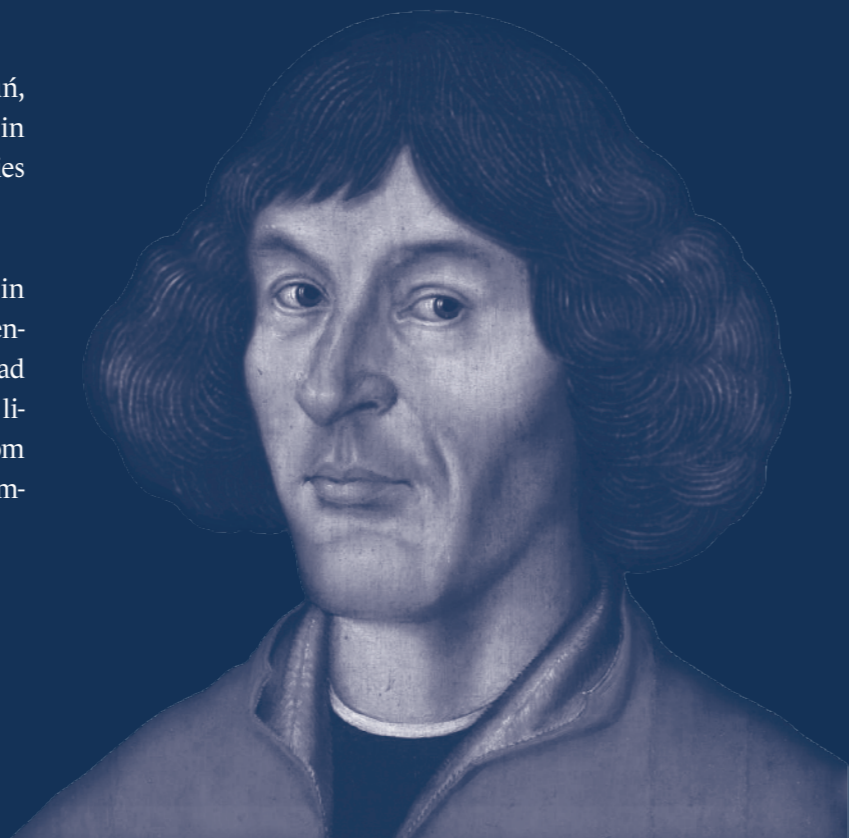
Nicolaus Copernicus was born in Toruń on 19 February 1473 to the family of a wealthy merchant Nicolaus Copernicus and Barbara née Watzenrode. His father came from Silesia and his mother from a patrician Toruń family.

The future astronomer was first educated in Toruń, then probably in Chełmno. In 1491–1503, he studied in Kraków, Bologna and Padua. He completed his studies with a doctorate in canon law in Ferrara in 1503.

In 1503 Copernicus returned to Poland and settled in Warmia, where his uncle and patron Łukasz Watzenrode was bishop. Before, in 1495, the astronomer had become a canon of Warmia. From 1503 to 1510, he lived with his uncle in Lidzbark Warmiński, and from 1510 onwards he basically stayed permanently in Frombork, and only in 1519-1521 in Olsztyn.

Copernicus's most important work is *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* [On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres]. Copernicus is believed to have started writing it in 1514 and to have finished it around 1530. He delayed its publication for a long time – it was published in 1543 thanks to the efforts of the German scholar Joachim Rheticus. It is uncertain whether the author saw his work before he died in May 1543.

Krzysztof Mikulski, PhD, DSc, ProfTit



NARODOWY BANK POLSKI



NBP collector banknote

*Nicolaus Copernicus*





On 9 February 2023, Narodowy Bank Polski is putting into circulation a collector banknote “Nicolaus Copernicus”, with a face value of 20 zloty. It is the second polymer collector banknote issued by NBP.

**Face value:** 20 zł  
**Material:** polymer  
**Dimensions:** 150 mm × 77 mm  
**Volume:** up to 100,000 pcs  
**Designer:** Krystian Michalczuk

**Issuer:** NBP  
**Manufacturer:** Polish Security Printing Works (PWPW S.A.), on behalf of NBP

The front side of the banknote features the most popular (so-called Toruń) portrait of Nicolaus Copernicus and stylised images of a quadrant and a fragment of the heliocentric system.

The back side of the banknote features the images of historical coins: the obverse and reverse of the Gdańsk szóstak (six grosz), the obverse of the Elbląg szóstak (six grosz), the obverse of the Prussian (Toruń) schilling and an image of a fragment of the heliocentric system.

The background also features the Castle of the Warmian Cathedral Chapter in Olsztyn.  
 The fragment of the image of the heliocentric system was taken from the manuscript of Nicolaus Copernicus's treatise “On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres” (*De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*), held in the Jagiellonian Library (Manuscript 10,000).