

Poland- Nicolaus Copernicus's masterpiece "De revolutionibus libri sex." (ca 1520)

Mikolaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus), who studied at the University of Cracow and at several Italian universities, is considered to be one of the fathers of the Renaissance, along with such illustrious names as Leonardo da Vinci, Michaelangelo Buonarrotti and Galileo. Being a humanist, philologist, doctor and father of modern economy, he found his place in the pantheon of the world's greatest thinkers thanks to his heliocentric theory of the universe. He also analysed the consequences OF the refutation of the geocentric theory for astronomy. His theory revolutionised man's comprehension of the world and became the foundation of many branches of science.

Kopernik's autography "De revolutionibus libri sex." from ca 1520 is by far the most important treatise to be found in the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow.

PART A - ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1. Identity and location

1.1. The manuscript of Nicolaus Copernicus's masterpiece "De revolutionibus libri sex." (ca 1520).

1.2. Poland

1.3. The Cracow Province

1.4. PL - 30-059 Cracow, Mickiewicza 22 (The Library)

1.5. The Jagiellonian University:

- The Jagiellonian Library

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2. Legal Information

2.1. The Jagiellonian University, the Jagiellonian Library

2.2. The Jagiellonian Library PL - 30-059 Cracow, Mickiewicza 22 (The Library)

2.3. -(a) The Jagiellonian University;

(b) The Libraries Law of 9th April, 1968 and Executive Regulations; the Statutes of the Jagiellonian University; the Rules and Regulations of the Jagiellonian Library;

(c) Only for research purposes; in the Jagiellonian Library there is a separate storehouse equipped with an alarm system where the manuscripts are stored in a separate strongbox, the key to which is kept by the Manuscript Department Manager; the records are made available only in special cases under the supervision of an authorised librarian;

(d) The Jagiellonian University, the Jagiellonian Library;

2.4. President of the Jagiellonian University.

3. Identification

3.1.

Nicolaus Copernicus, De revolutionibus libri sex. An original manuscript (ca. 1520) containing the memorable work created by Copernicus, the most prominent representative of the Renaissance in Poland. In his work Copernicus presented the heliocentric theory which claimed the existence of circular orbits of planets and 48 epicycles. In 1543 Retyk persuaded him to publish his work in Nuremberg. A manuscript; 28 x 19 cm; 217 pages; *Inwentarz rękopisów Biblioteki Jagiellonskiej* (The inventory of the Jagiellonian Library), No. 9001-10000, Part 3, eds. J.Grzybowska, Cracow 1986, pp.717-718

3.2. Call number: Rkp. BJ 10000

3.3. Black and white microfilm; a CD-ROM edition: Neurosoft, Cracow, 1996.

3.4. The manuscript passed through a number of hands: Tiedeman Giese (1480-1550, Warmia), Georg Joachim Retyk (G.J. von Lauchen de Porris, 1514-1574, Leipzig, Cracow and Koszyce), Walenty Otho (ca. 1545, ca. 1603, Koszyce and Heidelberg), Jan Amos Komenski (1592-1670), the Nostitz-Rieneck family, (Jawor Slaski and Prague)(1670? –1945), the Library of the National Museum in Prague (1945-1956). In 1956 the government of Czechoslovakia gave it to the government of the Polish Peoples' Republic. It was registered at the time as: Rkp. Przyb. 69/56

3.5. (in alphabetical order)

A.Birkenmajer, *Biem Marcin* [in:] Polski slownik biograficzny (The Polish dictionary of biographies), vol. 2, Cracow, 1936, pp.68-69;

L.A.Birkenmajer, *Mikolaj Kopernik*, Cracow 1900;

J.Dobrzycki, **L.Hajdukiewicz**, *Mikolaj Kopernik* [in:] Polski slownik biograficzny (The Polish dictionary of biographies), vol. 14, Wroclaw 1968, pp.3-16;

Mikolaj Kopernik, *Dziela wszystkie* (The collected works), (a facsimile edition in five languages, whose publication began in 1972).

Furhermore, an exhaustive bibliography (excluding publications in Polish) was also presented by **Th.S.Kuhn**, *The Copernical Revolution*, Cambridge 1985.

3.6. The Institute of the History of Science, the Polish Academy of Sciences (IHN PAN), 00-330 Warsaw, Nowy Świat 72,

Prof. Pawel Czartoryski PhD, IHN PAN, 00-330 Warsaw, Nowy Swiat 72.

Prof. Jerzy Dobrzycki PhD, IHN PAN, 00-330 Warsaw, Nowy Swiat 72,

Prof. Mieczyslaw Markowski, PhD, IHN PAN, 00-330 Warsaw, Nowy Swiat 72,

Jan Mietelski PhD, the Jagiellonian University, the Astronomical Observatory, 31-120 Cracow, Mickiewicza 13/5,

Prof. Grazyna Rosinska PhD, IHN PAN, 00-330 Warsaw, Nowy Swiat 72,

Prof. Zofia Wlodek PhD, ret., 31-148 Cracow, Wróblewskiego 5/2,

Wünsch Thomas PhD, Universität Konstanz, Philosophische Fakultät, Fachgruppe Geschichte, Universitätstr. 10, D-78434 Konstanz.

4. Management Plan

4.1. *Statement of significance:*

The autography of *De revolutionibus*, midway between a draft and a final copy, is the work of a prominent scholar. It is now kept in the Jagiellonian Library. After Copernicus' death on 24 May 1543 the autography, together with all his papers and books were taken over by his friend Tiedemann Giese(1480-1550) who was the bishop of Chelmino at the time. Even though Giese bequeathed his library to the Warmia Chapter, the autography remained in the collection of Jerzy Joachim Retyk(1514-1574), an astronomer and one of Copernicus' disciples. Retyk prepared *De Revolutionibus* for publication, but it was based on a copy and not on the original. In 1956 after numerous problems (ef, p.3.4.1) the autography was transferred to the Jagiellonian University library where Copernicus had studied and laid the foundations of his memorable work. His other works are also of great importance for the history of mankind notably the measuring of time and the social and economic system of Europe.

4.2. *Access policy:*

- Available only for research or editorial purposes.

4.3. *Preservation procedures:*

- B Budgetary resources cover the cost of storeroom equipment, preservation activities and staff salaries. There are no financial resources for protective measures.
- The Jagiellonian Library is to be refurbished and equipped with air-conditioning. The records are to be stored in a special strongbox located in a new building. The old building has been fitted with an air humidifier and is protected by fire warning and electronic security systems. Readers do not have access to the storerooms.
 - The Archives building (No: 1, 3) has barred windows, a humidifier, and is protected against fire. It is to be fitted with an electronic security system. Readers do not have access to the storeroom. Only part of the building is occupied by the Archives.

4.4. *Preservation facilities:*

- The Jagiellonian Library has its own department for preserving archival materials but the department cannot meet all the needs.
- All archival materials have been divided into different categories in case of evacuation.
- In the Jagiellonian Library the records are the responsibility of seven people, two of whom hold university degrees in preserving archival materials. The staff are qualified to perform the tasks they are required to carry out and they also receive additional training.
- The protection of records is one of the most important statutory obligations of the Jagiellonian University and Library.

5. Assessment according to the Selection Criteria

(Nicolaus Copernicus, *De revolutionibus...*) It meets criteria No 1,2,4,6,7 and two supplementary ones.

1. Influence:

Commentariolum, Wojciech de Brudzewo's masterpiece (1483, Cracow) in which he questioned the widely accepted theories of eccentrics, epicycles and equants. Even though the author was an advocate of the geocentric theory his views constitute another step towards the creation of the heliocentric image of the world. His doubts and critical remarks on the system of eccentrics and epicycles contributed to an atmosphere of criticism and distrust in university education in Cracow subsequent to 1482 regarding school astronomy and the geocentric system created by Ptolemy. It was in this atmosphere that Mikolaj Kopernik studied in Cracow.

Mikolaj Kopernik was not only a scholar and researcher but also a humanist, philologist, doctor and a pioneer in the economic field. With his heliocentric theory which became the greatest achievement in the history of natural science, Mikolaj Kopernik greatly contributed to the development of human thinking. The most important point in the Copernican breakthrough was the explanation of three astronomical phenomena and the acceptance of the fact that the Earth moves in three directions: around its axis (explaining the existence of day and night); around the sun on an annual basis (the most interesting from the mathematical point of view) and the movement of the axis of the earth (which explains the phenomenon of precession). The new notions replaced the fictitious and complex models of spheres thought to be located above the stars which existed in geostatic astronomy. He carried out an analysis of all the consequences that the refutation of the geocentric theory would have and proved that all astronomical phenomena which could be observed were in accordance with the new theory. Apart from its importance for the

development of natural science, the new theory also exerted great influence on the worldwide outlook which questioned the anthropocentric theory of the universe.

2. *Time*: The beginning of the period dominated by the heliocentric model of the world.

4. *People*:

Nicolaus Copernicus was one of the greatest thinkers in the world.

6. *Form*:

Original manuscript.

7. *Social Value*:

They are related to the life and works of people who greatly contributed to the history and culture of the world.

Supp.No 1:

The authenticity of the exemplar is not questioned by researchers

Supp.No: 2

It is unique.

6. Consultation

6.1.

(a) The Jagiellonian University

(b) The Jagiellonian Library

(c) The Polish Memory of the World Committee of UNESCO

7. Nominator

7.1. The Jagiellonian Library,

7.2. Director of the Jagiellonian Library Krzysztof Zamorski PhD

7.3. Deputy Director for Special Records of the Jagiellonian Library Marian Zwiercan PhD

7.4. BJ: 30-059 Cracow, Mickiewicza 22, phone/fax: 33-09-03

7.5.ZAMORSKI@if.uj.edu.pl, <http://www.bj.uj.edu.pl>

PART B - SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8. Assessment of Risk

The building of the **Jagiellonian Library** is located near a bypass; humidity in the storeroom of the Jagiellonian Library is too low; the building has two receptionists; it is to be refurbished; the storeroom for manuscripts has been fitted with an alarm system and all storerooms have been fitted with bars; it also has a fire warning system and equipment for monitoring climatic conditions.

9. Preservation Assessment

The Jagiellonian Library and the Archives have their own department for preserving its records.