



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' portrait modelled on the original from Toruń, series "150th anniversary of the creation of the National Education Commission and 450th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", 1923



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' image by Jeremiasz Falck, series "3rd anniversary of the creation of the Nazi General Governorate", 1943



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus monument in front of the Staszic Palace in Warsaw, series "Monuments of Warsaw", 1955



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' portrait modelled on a wood engraving by Tobias Stimmer, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", 1969



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' portrait modelled on a miniature by Wincenty de Lesseur; below the view of medieval Padua, series "Life and work of Nicolaus Copernicus", 1970



Stamp with an image of Copernicus' House in Toruń, series "Tourism – on Copernicus' route", 1971

NICOLAUS COPERNICUS IN PHILATELY

The tradition to issue stamps honouring Nicolaus Copernicus dates back to the 1920s. The first Polish stamp showing the image of Copernicus was issued in 1923. During the World War II occupation of Poland, Germans introduced a number of stamps with Copernicus. The aim of the Nazi propaganda was to convince Poles that Copernicus was German.

In 1954 the post of the People's Republic of China issued a stamp with the image of Copernicus on the occasion of the 410th anniversary of his death, and in 1955 the post of the USSR did the same to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Agreement on friendship and cooperation between Poland and the USSR. The post of the French Republic issued in 1957 a series of seven stamps featuring the most eminent representatives of science and arts, including Copernicus.

In the years 1970–1973 the Copernican theme in the philately blossomed. At that time, philatelists from all around the world prepared for postal stamp exhibitions honouring the 500th anniversary of Copernicus' birth. UNESCO provided patronage for these celebrations, ensuring their international prestige. This was a great opportunity for the whole world to get acquainted with the life and work of Nicolaus Copernicus. Also, it was perceived as an occasion to advertise Poland, Polish national heritage, as well as scientific and cultural accomplishments of our country. Postal stamps played an important role in that process.

Many Copernican decorative motifs were printed on notelets and envelopes, and used on date stamps. The first – German – postmark with Copernican motif commemorating the astronomer's 400th death anniversary appeared during World War II, in 1943. A depiction of an astrolabe was surrounded by an inscription "400. Todestag des Deutschen Astronomen" and another one was placed below: "Nikolaus Kopernikus Krakau 24 Mai 1943". As a response to that, Polish soldiers in the POW camp in Woldenberg prepared their own postmark representing the Earth surrounded with an inscription in Polish "400-lecie Kopernika" ("400th anniversary of Copernicus").



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' portrait by an anonymous painter from the end of 16th century, next to it a coin indicating Copernicus' interest in state economics; series "500 anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", 1972



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' image similar to the Toruń portrait and with Nicolaus Copernicus disputing with Aristotle and Ptolemy, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", Liberia, 1973



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' portrait modelled on the original from Toruń, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", Maldives, 1973



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' portrait modelled on a drawing by Sabin Kaufmann and the work *De revolutionibus*, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", German Democratic Republic, 1973



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' image by Jeremiasz Falck, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 1973



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' portrait by Marcello Bacciarelli, series "Stamp Day", 1973



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus, portrait from the painting by Jan Matejko, *Astronomer Copernicus, conversation with God*, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", Mongolia, 1973



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' image modelled on the original from Toruń; on the supplement, Poznań coat of arms and Poznań city hall, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", Romania, 1973



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' monument by Bertel Thorvaldsen and the Staszic Palace in the background, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", Cuba, 1973



Stamp with Nicolaus Copernicus' portrait modelled on the original from Toruń and the heliocentric model, series "500th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus", Rwanda, 1973