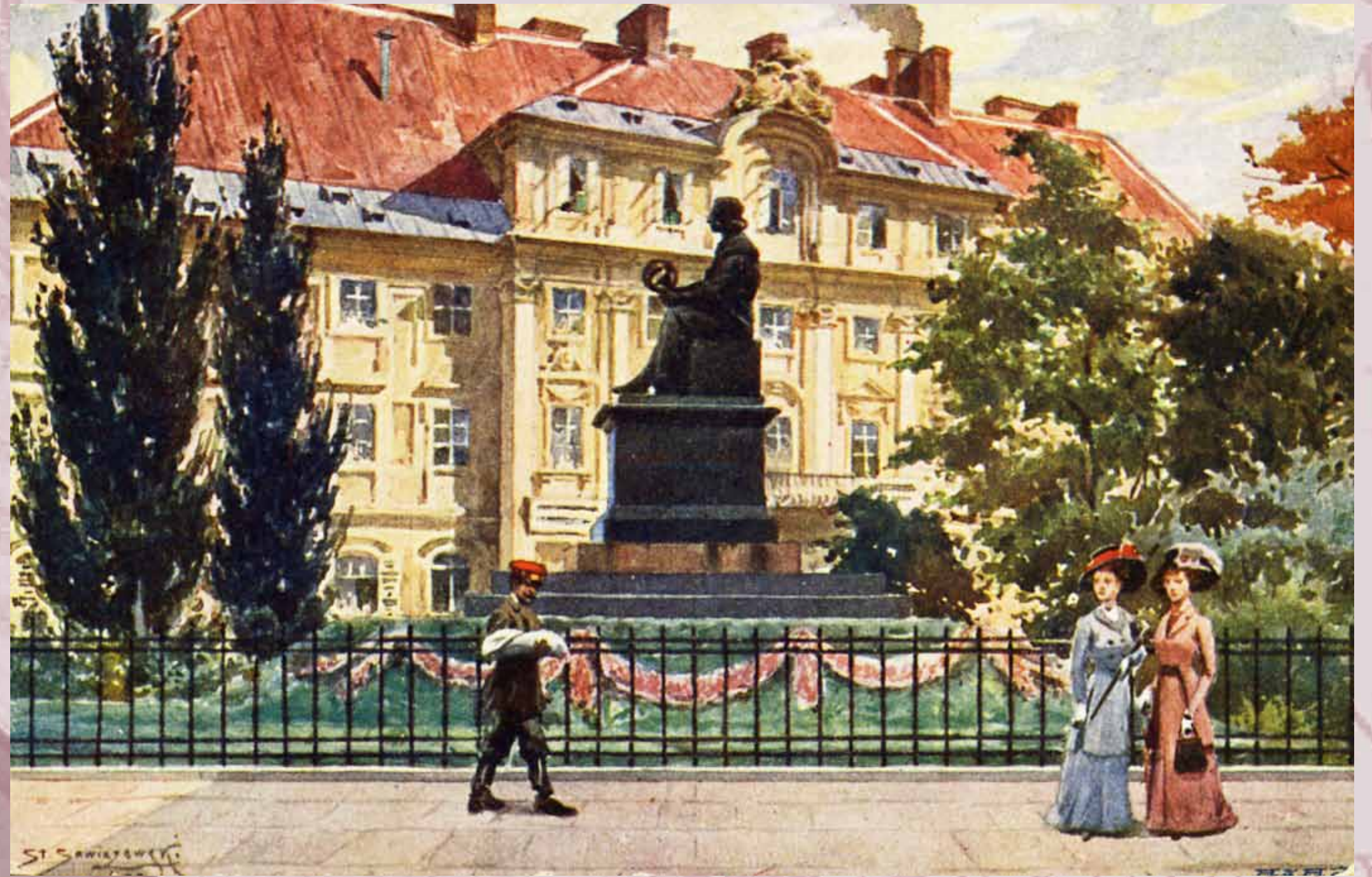




Unrealised design of Nicolaus Copernicus' monument by Zygmunt Vogel



Stanisław Sawiczewski, *Nicolaus Copernicus' monument* against a background of the non-existing Karaś Palace

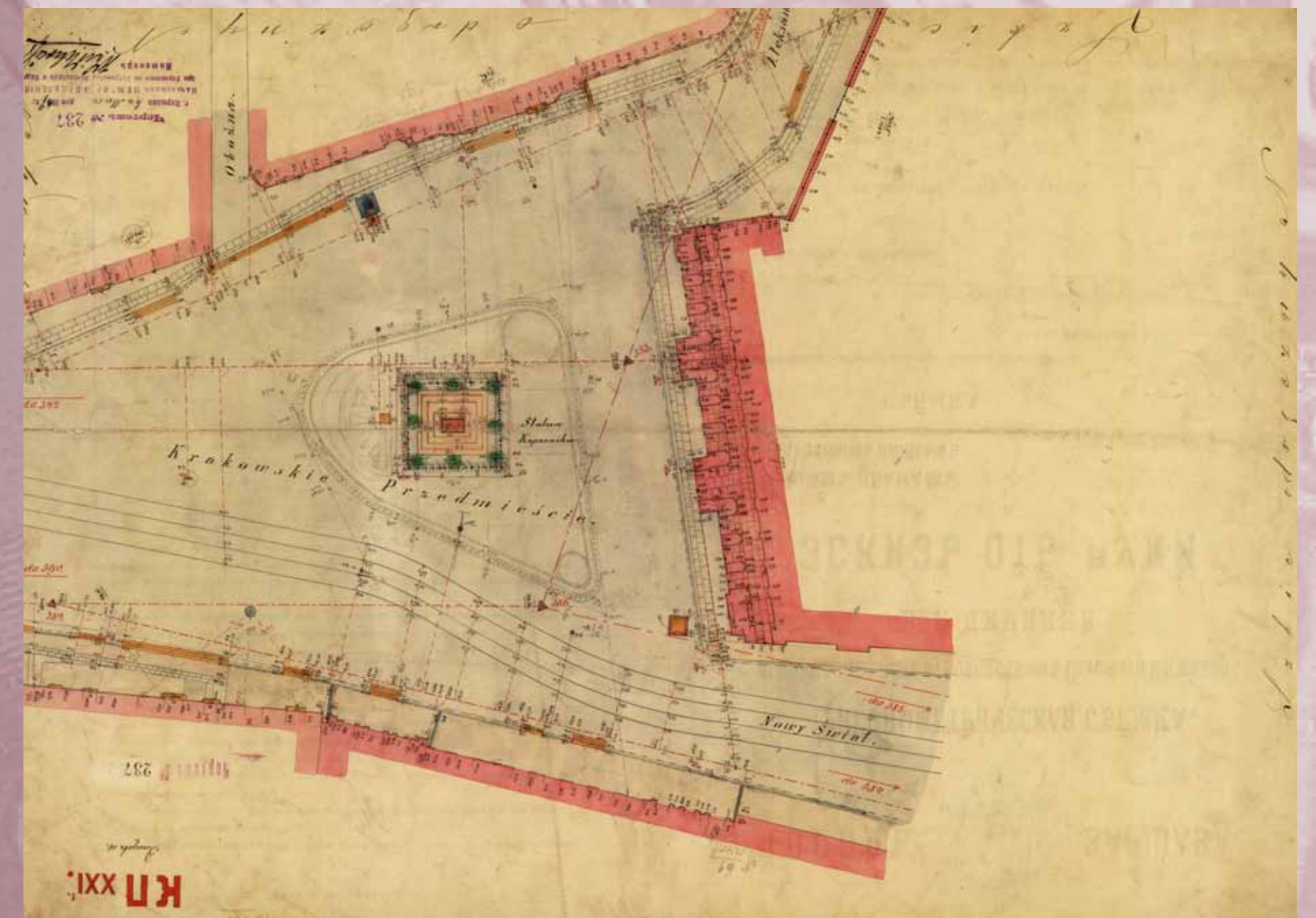
# MONUMENT IN WARSAW

The erection of the Copernicus monument in the capital city of his homeland took 20 years. The delay was partly caused by the design creator, Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. Many artists prepared projects of the pedestal, among others Zygmunt Vogel, Piotr Aigner and Hilary Szpilowski; eventually, Adam Idzikowski's design was selected.

Stanisław Staszic contributed 170 thousand Polish zlotys to the building of the monument but did not live to see it finished. The cast was prepared by a French bronze sculptor Jean-Baptiste Grégoire, his father Claude François and his brother Emil. The unveiling ceremony, led by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, president of the Society of Friends of Science, took place on 11 May 1830. The monument was renovated in 1894. It was surrounded by a flower bed and a fence that was removed in the interwar period.

During World War II the Nazi occupants covered the inscription in Polish "Mikołajowi Kopernikowi – Rodacy" ("To Nicolaus Copernicus from his compatriots") with a bronze plaque with the same inscription in German. The heavy plaque, although mounted with four screws, was removed in a daring action by young Warsaw underground soldiers. In 1943 (400th anniversary of Copernicus' death) three young poets laid flowers in the national colours at the monument. That manifestation had a tragic end: one of the participants, Waclaw Bojarski, was shot dead during a skirmish with the Nazi police. The monument was damaged during the Warsaw Uprising and the Germans carried it off to melt it.

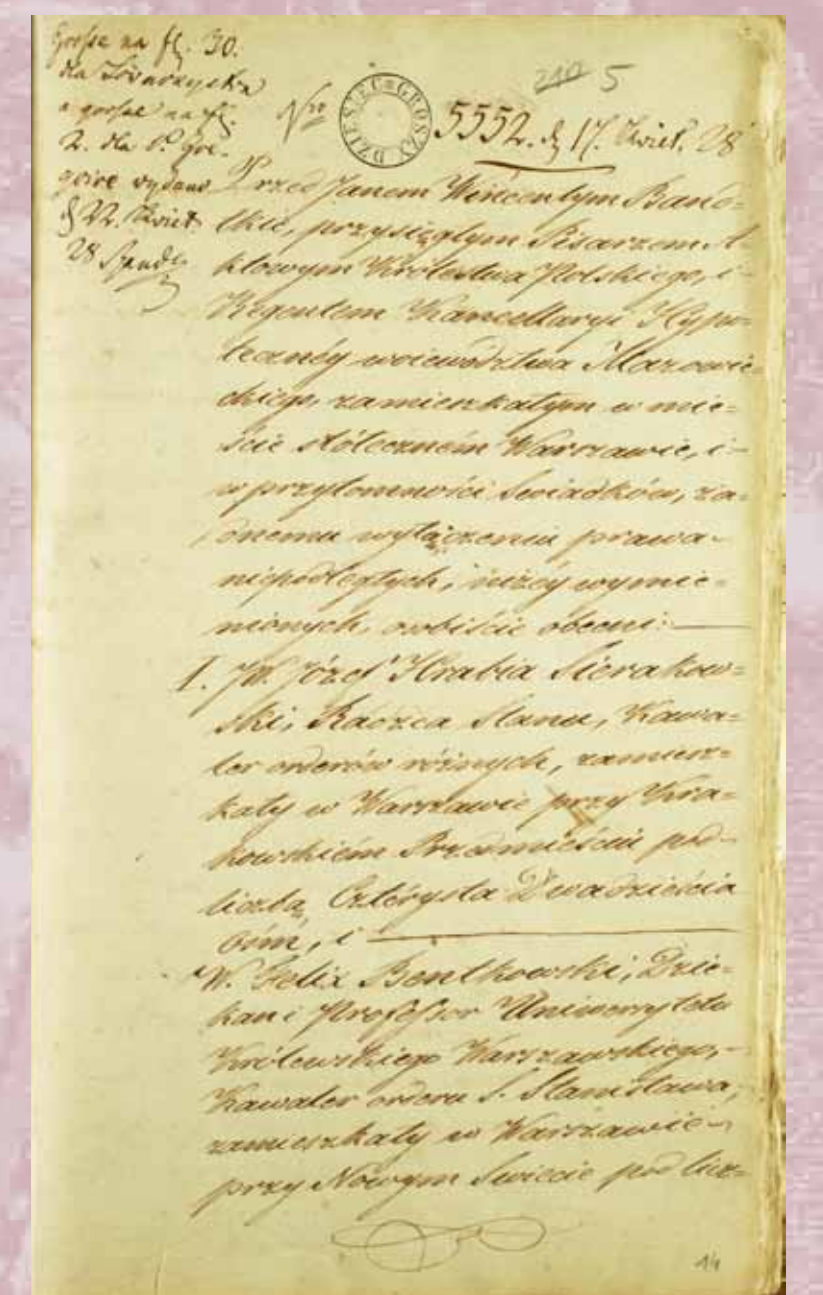
After the war, in 1945, the damaged monument was found in Silesia and brought back to Warsaw to stand on the original spot. In 1949, under the supervision of professor Stanisław Jagmin, it underwent a thorough renovation in Łopieński Brothers Cast Workshop. 28 fragments were reconstructed, 108 patches were applied, 168 holes required riveting. In 2007, during the renovation of Krakowskie Przedmieście Street, the pavement around the monument was ornamented with a map of the sky with the planets of the Solar system (design by Antoni Grabowski).



Krakowskie Przedmieście Street and the monument of Nicolaus Copernicus on Lindley's maps, 1880



Bertel Thorvaldsen, *Nicolaus Copernicus*



Jan Śniadecki's invitation to the ceremony of unveiling Nicolaus Copernicus' monument in front of the Staszic Palace, 1830



Nicolaus Copernicus' monument destroyed during World War II, against a background of the ruined Zamoyski Palace, 1945



Nicolaus Copernicus' monument in front of the Staszic Palace, 1966



Nicolaus Copernicus' monument seen from Staszic Palace windows, 2011