



MISCELLANEA

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There is no place like home. The house of Nicolaus Copernicus – the largest preserved Copernican monument in the collection of the District Museum in Toruń and its marketing ramifications*

Wszędzie dobrze, ale w domu najlepiej. Dom Mikołaja Kopernika – największy zachowany zabytek kopernikański w kolekcji Muzeum Okręgowego w Toruniu i tego marketingowe skutki

Überall ist es gut, aber zu Hause ist es am besten.

Das Nikolaus-Kopernikus-Haus – das größte erhaltene kopernikanische Denkmal in der Sammlung des Bezirksmuseums in Toruń (Thorn) und seine Auswirkungen auf die Vermarktung

Keywords: communication, museum, Copernicus, Nicolaus Copernicus House, culture marketing

Słowa kluczowe: komunikacja, muzeum, Kopernik, Dom Mikołaja Kopernika, marketing kultury

Schlüsselwörter: Kommunikation, Museum, Copernicus, Nicolaus Copernicus-Haus, Kulturmarketing

ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the presentation of the Nicolaus Copernicus' House, a branch of the District Museum in Toruń, in the context of its historical, communication and marketing values.

* The article is an extended version of the paper presented on September 28, 2023 at the Museum of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn during a scientific conference: "Birthdays and active life. How Olsztyn and Toruń argue about Copernicus...", organised by the Museum of Warmia and Mazury and The Wojciech Kępczyński Northern Institute.

The above considerations regarding, in particular, 2023, the 550th anniversary of the birthday of Nicolaus Copernicus, which was celebrated grandly throughout the country, especially in cities associated with Copernicus, including Toruń. The text presents a wide range of activities related to the Nicolaus Copernicus House and the astronomer himself on many levels, including exhibition, event, educational, marketing and communication. These descriptions were supported by the results of attendance and tourist traffic surveys, which clearly show the potential of this place and the public's interest in it.

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł poświęcony został prezentacji Domu Mikołaja Kopernika, oddziału Muzeum Okręgowego w Toruniu, w kontekście jego walorów historycznych, komunikacyjnych i marketingowych. Powyższe rozważania dotyczą w szczególności roku 2023, czyli roku jubileuszowego 550. urodzin Mikołaja Kopernika, który to obchodzony był hucznie w całym kraju, a w sposób szczególny w miastach z Kopernikiem związanych, w tym oczywiście w Toruniu. W tekście zaprezentowany został szeroki wachlarz działań związanych z Domem Mikołaja Kopernika i samym astronomem na wielu płaszczyznach m.in. wystawienniczej, eventowej, edukacyjnej, marketingowej i komunikacyjnej. Opisy te zostały poparte wynikami badań frekwencyjnych i ruchu turystycznego, które w czytelny sposób pokazują potencjał tego miejsca i zainteresowanie nim publiczności.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Artikel widmet sich der Präsentation des Nikolaus-Kopernikus-Hauses, einer Zweigstelle des Kreismuseums in Thorn, im Zusammenhang mit seinen historischen, kommunikativen und marketingbezogenen Werte. Diese Überlegungen beziehen sich insbesondere auf das Jahr 2023, das Jubiläumsjahr des 550. Geburtstags von Nikolaus Kopernikus, der im ganzen Land und insbesondere in den mit Kopernikus verbundenen Städten, darunter natürlich auch in Thorn, groß gefeiert wurde. Der Text stellt eine breite Palette von Aktivitäten vor, die mit dem Nikolaus-Kopernikus-Haus und dem Astronomen selbst in Verbindung stehen, und zwar auf vielen Ebenen, darunter Ausstellungen, Veranstaltungen, Bildung, Marketing und Kommunikation. Diese Beschreibungen wurden durch die Ergebnisse von Erhebungen über die Besucherzahlen und den Fremdenverkehr untermauert, die das Potenzial des Standorts und das Interesse der Öffentlichkeit an ihm eindeutig belegen.

The District Museum in Toruń (Muzeum Okręgowe w Toruniu, MOT) is a multi-departmental institution with 8 branches, 14 buildings and over 300,000 museum objects. It is a well-known institution which encompasses several strong brands, namely: the Old Town Hall with a 40-meter tower, the gallery of gothic art and the equally interesting gallery of polish painting and sculpture from the end of the 18th century until the beginning of the 21st century, Museum of Toruń Gingerbread located in the former Gustav Weese gingerbread factory, and finally the House of Nicolaus Copernicus (DMK), located in two tenement houses at ul. Mikołaja Kopernika 15 and 17. DMK is our most frequently visited branch, a kind of museum “blockbuster” in which Nicolaus Copernicus was... not born¹. At least as indicated by

¹ K. Mikulski, *Mikołaj Kopernik. Środowisko społeczne, pochodzenie i młodość*, Toruń, 2015, p. 319.

the current state of knowledge². Prof. Mikulski argues that “it may (...) be stated with a high degree of certainty that Nicolaus Copernicus was born in a house at the Market Square [at No. 36 – author’s note] and that tenement house was the only family home of the young Copernicus in Toruń”³.

But why is this not common knowledge and why queues of visitors do not line up to see this place? There are at least two reasons. First of all, the key reason – the tenement house has been significantly rebuilt and in no way resembles medieval architecture, so it cannot bring to mind a house from the times of Copernicus’ life. Secondly, the owner of the tenement house at Stary Rynek 36 is neither the District Museum in Toruń nor any other institution dealing with heritage protection. Currently, it houses a PDT department store.

So why do crowds of guests visit the place where Nicolaus Copernicus was not born? Again, there are several reasons. First of all, the Nicolaus Copernicus House in Toruń, as a branch of MOT, is located in historic tenement houses, including the very well-preserved one at No. 15, with a clear architectural layout. Thanks to this, MOT is able to tell the guests and show the reality of a late medieval merchant house in Toruń, i.e. at the time when young Nicolaus lived there.

Second of all, the tenement house at No. 15 belonged to the Copernicus family in the years 1464–1480 and young Nicolaus certainly frequented there⁴. When visiting the House, the guests travel along the same routes and experience the same space as the scientist-to-be. One of the objectives for such activities is to convey the message that Copernicus visited these authentic spaces, not significantly damaged over time and that they are unquestionably related to his person. The Nicolaus Copernicus House is the largest and most valuable Copernican monument, a magnet for attracting visitors. All the more so because – as is well known – just a few of the astronomer-related artefacts have survived.

Third of all, the interior of DMK was restored in 2017–2018, with the tour sequence changed, and, above all, a new, modern and interactive exhibition added. As its authors write, “(...) it was a project combined with the modernisation of a historic tenement house belonging in the 15th century to the Watzenrode family, and then to the Copernicus family. The scope of work performed may be compared with the adaptation of the building for museum purposes carried out in 1972–1973”⁵. The concept of the exhibition is based on three themed areas: *Nicolaus Copernicus – his life and work; science – modern and contemporary*, and *the everyday life of a middle-class*

² K. Mikulski, *Mikołaj Kopernik. Życie i działalność*, Toruń, 2014, p. 20–24 ; See P. Łopuszański, *Mikołaj Kopernik. Nowe oblicze geniusza*, Warszawa 2022.

³ K. Mikulski, *Mikołaj Kopernik. Środowisko społeczne...*, p. 319.

⁴ K. Mikulski, *Mikołaj Kopernik. Życie i...*, p. 20–24.

⁵ M. Kłosiński, *Między muzeum narracyjnym a muzeum templum. Koncepcje i sposoby narracji wystawienniczej w wybranych muzeach biograficznych w Polsce*, “Nowoczesne Muzeum – relacje i narracje” 2023, 1, Toruń 2023, p. 61–62.

family in a late Gothic Hanseatic household. The means of presentation adopted in the exhibition exploit a wide range of possibilities, from classic presentations of objects, through extensive arrangement solutions, to modern technologies. In this way, a place combining new multimedia tools with the historical fabric of a historic medieval house, which is the main actor of the show entitled “Nicolaus Copernicus”⁶, was established. “To sum up, the recreated spaces of the former house of the Copernicus family reflect the atmosphere and ambience of the time when late medieval townspeople led affluent lives. At the same time, they allow the visitor to be emotionally transported to the period of the second half of the 15th century. Visitors to the Nicolaus Copernicus House are able to access previously unreachable places, especially the truss of the late medieval building”⁷.

Fourth of all, as Marta Cobel-Tokarska writes, “sociology is quite eager to deal with this house, describing its social meanings and functions. The basic social group lives in such a house – the family. The house is a place of socialisation, a centre of norms, values, customs and even aesthetic preferences.”⁸ A house not only triggers good memories, among others, related to our childhood, being carefree and safe, but also tells us who we are and where we grew up. Going further, by getting to know the family home, we are able to learn more about its inhabitants and understand a little better what influenced their persona in adult life. In the opinion of this paper’s author, this is the reason for the popularity of houses-museums of famous people, including the Nicolaus Copernicus House.

And finally, fifth of all, the District Museum in Toruń conducts constant and consistent communication supported by educational and event activities, aiming at spreading knowledge about the life and work of the master.

The Nicolaus Copernicus House has been a frequently visited branch of the Toruń Museum for years. The scale of interest in DMK is illustrated in Table and Chart No. 1, which present turnout data from the last 15 years⁹. They show a stable increase in attendance at the Nicolaus Copernicus House, disturbed by two events: the exclusion of the branch from sightseeing during the renovation in 2017–2018 and the COVID-19 virus pandemic in 2020–2021.

⁶ The exhibition won many awards and distinctions, including: Special Mention in the National Competition for the Museum Event of the Year Sybilla 2018, Special Award in the competition for the European Museum of the Year Award EMYA 2022 and an award in the MUSEJON Kuyavian-Pomeranian Museum Event of the Year 2020.

⁷ M. Kłosiński, *Między muzeum narracyjnym...*, p. 66.

⁸ M. Cobel-Tokarska, *Przestrzeń społeczna: świat – dom – miasto*, in: *Krótkie wykłady z socjologii. Przegląd problemów i metod*, A. Firkowska-Mankiewicz, T. Kanash, E. Tarkowska (eds.) Warsaw 2011, p. 57.

⁹ *Raport z działalności Muzeum Okręgowego w Toruniu w latach 2007–2020*, Toruń, 2020, p. 105–106; and MOT reports for 2020–2022.

| Year | DMK |
|------|---------|
| 2008 | 72 852 |
| 2009 | 75 259 |
| 2010 | 66 120 |
| 2011 | 83 976 |
| 2012 | 89 937 |
| 2013 | 96 800 |
| 2014 | 97 933 |
| 2015 | 97 088 |
| 2016 | 102 926 |
| 2017 | 78 324 |
| 2018 | 55 293 |
| 2019 | 106 594 |
| 2020 | 45 748 |
| 2021 | 68 281 |
| 2022 | 109 212 |

The importance of this branch for the institution is indicated in Table and Chart No. 2, tracking the popularity of DMK in relation to other MOT branches in the years 2019–2022, i.e. after the renovation¹⁰. There is a clear prevalence in attendance at the DMK if compared to other branches, a tendency changed during the pandemic by the only attraction in MOT’s offer which in a sense may be described as “open-air”, namely the tower of the Old Town Hall. For obvious reasons, it enjoyed the greatest interest during the pandemic, just like other “open-air” museum facilities, which were the “safest” solution for museum guests during that time.

| Year | DMK | MTP | Town hall | Tower | MHT | MSDW | MP | MTT |
|------|---------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2019 | 106 594 | 90 889 | 52 113 | 87 195 | 22 982 | 12 723 | 25 032 | 0 |
| 2020 | 45 748 | 36 499 | 21 617 | 52 830 | 11 887 | 7 884 | 13 537 | 1 275 |
| 2021 | 68 281 | 57 558 | 29 021 | 68 692 | 9 519 | 9 160 | 25 295 | 19 298 |
| 2022 | 109 212 | 99 149 | 44 235 | 80 854 | 17 177 | 40 192 | 39 429 | 22 026 |

Recent years have been very dynamic, not only for museums. The year 2016 was a record time for MOT in terms of attendance, as it exceeded 400,000 visitors and reached the astounding number of 413,569 people¹¹. In the next two years, i.e. 2017–2018, DMK was excluded from visits due to modernisation works, which lowered overall annual attendance. In 2019, the turnaround started to grow again and just

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Ibidem.

when the thought occurred that in 2020 (after the great results of the first quarter) DMK would again exceed 400,000 visitors, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Public institutions, including museums, were closed, and attendance dropped in 2020 to 196,720 people¹². In the transitional year 2021, it amounted to 296,177 people, and the previous year (2022) broke an absolute attendance record of the District Museum in Toruń – 468,898 people, to which the DMK significantly contributed¹³.

The current year may be even better in terms of attendance, as shown by the data so far – from the beginning of January to the end of August, turnout amounted to 381,056¹⁴ people, which is over 30,000 more compared to the previous year. This situation should not be surprising, especially in the context of DMK and the jubilee year. It is worth asking the question – where would it be better to celebrate the 550th anniversary of birth of Nicolaus Copernicus if not in the place (city) where this great man came to this world?

Due to the uniqueness of the above-mentioned anniversary, the presentation of communication and event activities will focus on the projects carried out this year, referring in several situations to earlier or previously initiated events.

Let us advantageously start the description of activities carried out around DMK and Copernicus itself with communication. Since October 2020, DMK runs a branch profile on Facebook and is currently followed by 3.5 thousand people¹⁵. It should be added here that this is not a unique solution within the MOT structures as three other branches also run their own accounts¹⁶. The situation in social media is extremely dynamic and it is important to react to it quickly enough. On June 23 this year, another Facebook profile was created for Nicolaus Copernicus, this time related to the main exhibition prepared for the Copernican Year entitled “Misterium Słońca. Kopernik syn renesansu”¹⁷ [Eng. “Mystery of the Sun. Copernicus, son of the Renaissance”]. The above-mentioned exhibition also encompassed an Instagram account¹⁸, which, next to the MOT profile, is currently the second profile on this platform administered by the institution. The issue of profile management should be clarified here – a person specialising in this type of communication was hired to handle the accounts of the “Mystery of the Sun...” exhibition on social media, prepare and post contents on both accounts. When the project is completed (mid-November 2023), the Instagram profile will be taken over by DMK, and the Facebook page will be closed since DMK already has its own account.

¹² Reporting data of the District Museum in Toruń for the year 2020.

¹³ Reporting data of the District Museum in Toruń for 2021–2022.

¹⁴ Reporting data of the District Museum in Toruń for the year 2023.

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/DomMikolajaKopernika> [access: August 25, 2023].

¹⁶ These are: Museum of Toruń Gingerbread, Museum of the History of Toruń and Toruń Fortress Museum.

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/misteriumslonca> [access: August 25, 2023].

¹⁸ https://www.instagram.com/misterium_slonca/ [access: August 25, 2023].

The Nicolaus Copernicus House, of course, has a separate tab¹⁹ on the MOT website, which is positioned by an external SEO company. It is also featured among the Google business profiles, frequently visited by people interested in visiting the Museum. While discussing digital reality, it should be mentioned that DMK offers a virtual tour²⁰ in Polish and English, enriched with short films in which the curator of the Nicolaus Copernicus House introduces individual thematic issues of the exhibition.

As the authors of the DMK guide state, the very well-preserved tenement houses “(...) form a wonderful Gothic complex, distinguished not only by its beauty but also by its stylistic unity. The house of the Copernicus family is the so-called house-storage. It has survived from the Middle Ages to the present day in a rather unchanged condition. Its walls, layout and decorations reflect the history of the city and its inhabitants, Toruń trade routes and artistic contacts, and the changes taking place in the mentality, tastes and way of life of Toruń inhabitants. In addition, the original interiors and furnishings allow you to travel back to the era of Copernicus and learn about the everyday life of a wealthy bourgeois family.”²¹ The question of how and for what purposes, apart from exhibitions, the most important monument related to Nicolaus Copernicus is used by the District Museum in Toruń might be answered here.

The issue is complex, because many different projects were carried out within DMK. At the same time, “the sky is the limit” and many more initiatives and activities that have not been thought of to date will probably appear in the future. However, returning to modern times, a catalogue of activities undertaken by MOT shall be presented.

The interior of the Nicolaus Copernicus House, especially the High Hall, is extremely attractive for various types of events, including media ones. In January 2023, a media conference announcing the museum’s plans to commemorate the Copernican Year was held there. During *The Second Copernicus Breakfast*, as this activity was called, the participants ate snacks and discussed the museum’s plans, talked with journalists about the details of the prepared events. The atmosphere was very friendly, which resulted in positive media coverage. Also in the same place, a month earlier – on New Year’s Eve 2022 – together with Program 1 of the Polish Radio, the institution carried out a three-hour broadcast announcing the upcoming year of Nicolaus Copernicus. Moreover, in early autumn of 2023, it was the place of recording footage with the Marshal of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, Piotr Całbecki and Pascal Brodnicki regarding... goose meat, but with Copernicus in the background.

¹⁹ <https://muzeum.torun.pl/dom-mikolaja-kopernika/> [access: August 25, 2023].

²⁰ <https://muzeum.torun.pl/dmk/> [access: August 25, 2023].

²¹ M. Kłosiński, A. Lubowicka, *Dom Mikołaja Kopernika*, Toruń 2018, p. 3.

A little earlier, in May, content for the Great Test about Nicolaus Copernicus prepared by TVP was recorded at DMK. The house also “appeared” in the online program Onet Rano, or more precisely, it was the background for a conversation with its curator, Michał Kłosiński.

Copernicus was strongly connected with Toruń as demonstrated by, among others, the results of research monitoring tourist traffic in the city. Among the total sum of associations related to Toruń in 2022, the second place was taken by “Copernicus” with 25.4%, overtaken by “pierniki” by only 2.2%²². In the study on “percentage distribution of indications for visited monuments within Toruń in 2022”, DMK was in 6th place with a result of 27.6%, losing with, among others, the tower of the Old Town Hall – 1st place with a score of 51.5% and “Museum in the Town Hall” (original entry from the Report) – 2nd place and a score of 44.6%²³. These constituents of the District Museum are pointed out because the institution has precise attendance data, which show something completely different. The Nicolaus Copernicus House, ranked 6th in the above-mentioned study, was visited by 109,212 people, while the Town Hall Tower, ranked 1st, was visited by significantly fewer people – 80,854; the Old Town Hall, which takes second place, has almost 2.5 times fewer visitors, only 44,235. The above data comparison is only intended to indicate that DMK is one of the most important and most frequently visited tourist facilities in Toruń; therefore, it is not surprising that the tourism industry is keenly interested in cooperating with this MOT branch. An example of this may be the participation of the Nicolaus Copernicus House in the event taking place on April 18–20 this year, namely 5th *Regional Tourism Forum*. The programme of the conference organised by the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Tourism Organisation, despite the tight schedule, could not overlook one of Toruń’s main brands. The Local Tourist Organisation in Toruń, in cooperation with the Toruń City Hall and the Foreign Centre of the Polish Tourism Organisation in Paris, organised the stay of the French TV ARTE crew at the Nicolaus Copernicus House, where they shot some material for a film as part of their “Invitation au voyage” [Eng. Invitation to travel] series. According to the information on the DMK Facebook profile, this program is watched each time by approximately 700,000 viewers in France and Germany, each reportage is broadcast twice in France and twice in Germany and via satellite in 47 countries²⁴.

In addition to the permanent exhibition, DMK also prepares small temporary exhibitions with the goal to, on the one hand, address topics not explored in the main exhibition, and, on the other hand, attract viewers with a changing offer. In 2023,

²² *Monitoring ruchu turystycznego “Turystyczny Toruń 2022”. Raport końcowy*, Toruń 2023, p. 23.

²³ *Monitoring ruchu turystycznego...*, p. 28.

²⁴ https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02XfAYSz26Hj7Wm9vB7u1ystsYafKbJnsKHsbkg7xefy-biX3gEtte5zTSEKu1NuGHfl&id=100030548510389 [accessed: August 25, 2023].

the exhibition “Pamięć bardzo rzeczowa. Wystawa pamiątek kopernikańskich” [Eng. A very tangible memory. Display of Copernican memorabilia] presented the phenomenon of memorabilia created on the occasion of the astronomer’s birthday over almost 100 years²⁵.

The most important event for MOT in the anniversary year was the exhibition “Misterium Słońca. Kopernik, syn renesansu”²⁶, opened on September 8, 2023. It was held not in the DMK, which would be impossible due to the lack of exhibition space, but in the Old Town Hall. The exhibition was one of the greatest challenges in the 162-year history of the institution. Nearly 650 objects from well-known museums and institutions in Poland and Europe were presented on almost 1,000 m², including: items from the Royal Castle in Warsaw, the Wawel Royal Castle, the National Museums in Kraków, Warsaw, Poznań and Gdańsk, the Nicolaus Copernicus University Library in Toruń, the Vatican Apostolic Library, the Uppsala University Library, the National Gallery in Lviv and the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice²⁷. The exhibition, focusing on the influence of young Nicolaus Copernicus’s travels to Italy on his later achievements, told the story of the scientist, showed the Renaissance wealth of Italian art and the immeasurable mosaic of cultures in the Veneto and Emilia-Romagna areas. It included significant works in painting, graphics and artistic crafts created in Italy between the 15th and 16th centuries. Thanks to the considerable budget, it was also possible to plan and carry out an extensive promotional and advertising campaign based on, among others: creating and running social media channels and advertising activities on Facebook and Instagram, outdoor advertising and press releases, as well as production of promotional films. This allowed for the information about Nicolaus Copernicus to spread through many channels. Although the messages did not appear directly in the context of DMK, they indirectly pointed to the Nicolaus Copernicus House as the additional beneficiary of the large increase in communication in the media space.

Educational activities conducted at DMK are also highly developed. During classes for different age groups, Nicolaus Copernicus and his achievements are

²⁵ <https://muzeum.torun.pl/aktualnosci/pamiec-zdrowie-rzeczowa-wystawa-pamiatek-kopernikanskich-w-domu-mikolaja-kopernika/> [accessed: August 25, 2023].

²⁶ The exhibition “Misterium Słońca. Kopernik, syn renesansu”, focusing on the influence of young Nicolaus Copernicus travelling to Italy on his later achievements, was organised by the District Museum in Toruń in the Old Town Hall on September 8, 2023 and lasted until November 12, 2023.

The main partner of the exhibition was the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship. The partner of the exhibition was the City of Toruń. The honorary patronage over the exhibition was held by the following institutions and people representing them: the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Mr. Piotr Gliński, the Marshal of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, Mr. Piotr Calbecki, the Mayor of Toruń, Mr. Michał Zaleski, and the Italian Ambassador to Poland, His Excellency Luca Franchetti Pardo.

The exhibition was co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage from the Culture Promotion Fund and the “Supporting museum activities” programme. Additionally, the project was financially supported by the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship Local Government and the Municipality of Toruń.

²⁷ <https://muzeum.torun.pl/aktualnosci/misterium-slonca-kopernik-syn-renesansu/> [accessed: August 25, 2023].

discussed, along with his family and the trade conducted in his times, and about space. Classes are conducted in a way that engages participants by, for instance, using historical costumes (merchants, sailors and skippers) which they may put on.

Another educational element entails the organisation of various events at the Nicolaus Copernicus House, during which storytelling activities are often carried out in the form of improvised performances of MOT employees dressed – of course – in historical costumes. Such activities carried out, among others, during the Long Nights of Museums, enliven the historical space of the House and allow the visitors to feel at least a little bit of what the life of Toruń townspeople might have been like at the end of the 15th century. This particular event is warmly welcomed by the audience, who (as has been observed) enjoys storytelling events and eagerly takes photos with costumed museum employees. It is a pity that these are just once-a-year events and it is not (currently) possible to introduce them as a permanent element of DMK offer.

A particularly important event for MOT in the jubilee year was the birthday of Nicolaus Copernicus, celebrated in several ways. One of them was an event called *Dies Natalis Copernici*, celebrated annually since the 1960s around February 19. With this year's edition, the District Museum in Toruń joined the organisation of *The Polish Science Day*. Its ceremonial Gala, prepared by the newly established Copernican Academy, took place at the Cultural and Congress Center Jordanki. On this occasion, the institution hosted in Toruń Nobel Prize winners in physics: Prof. Philip James Edwin Peebles – American scientist, lecturer at Princeton University, one of the pioneers of the theory of the formation of cosmic structures, who received this highest distinction in 2019; and Prof. Michel Mayor – Swiss scientist and lecturer at the University of Geneva. The end of the *Dies Natalis Copernici* celebration was enriched by the performance of a duo of artists – Jakub Józef Orliński, a world-famous countertenor, and Michał Biel, a pianist²⁸. The second event was *Nicolaus's Birthday*, organised at DMK with a birthday cake for museum guests and educational animations based on storytelling. The third one is the opening of the exhibition “Ze wszech ksiąg najbardziej godna przeczytania... Wokół De revolutionibus Mikołaja Kopernika” [Eng. Of all books worth reading... Around De revolutionibus by Nicolaus Copernicus] devoted to the opus magnum written by Nicolaus Copernicus²⁹. The halls of the Old Town Hall presented, among others, the first, second and third editions of “De revolutionibus orbium coelestium.” The activities related to the above-mentioned exhibition were to combine visits to the exhibition with “visits” to the Nicolaus

²⁸ <https://muzeum.torun.pl/aktualnosci/dies-natalis-copernici-2023-r/> [accessed: August 25, 2023].

²⁹ Exhibition “Ze wszech ksiąg najbardziej godna przeczytania... Wokół De revolutionibus Mikołaja Kopernika”. Exhibition duration: February 22, 2023 – May 14, 2023; exhibition location: Old Town Hall in Toruń, Royal Hall, hall in front of the Royal Hall; exhibition organisers: University Library in Toruń, District Museum in Toruń, Provincial Public Library – Copernicus Library in Toruń, State Archives in Toruń.

Copernicus House. This practice applied in particular to special groups and invited guests, who were also shown around the department dedicated to the astronomer. Activities of this type are another important communication element that translates into promotional effects, because the recipients were informed about many such meetings in social media, in line with the marketing strategy called *brand ambassadors*. An example of such an approach was the coverage of the United States ambassador, Marek Brzeziński, visiting DMK or the meeting with the above-mentioned Nobel Prize winners: Prof. Philip James Edwin Peebles and Prof. Michel Mayor.

An important, although somewhat side activity that brings significant financial profits for the Museum, is the production and sale of various types of museum gadgets and souvenirs, which have been developed significantly for several years, just like among other top museum brands. In 2023, particular emphasis was placed on the production of unique gadgets featuring Nicolaus Copernicus, with currently 65 models on sale, including 5 special series for adults and children. These activities, apart from economic benefits, also have a promotional value, building both the brand of Nicolaus Copernicus and the Nicolaus Copernicus House, as well as the District Museum itself. Such undertakings are also expected by the recipients (which is carefully recorded) who want to commemorate, even in the form of a gadget, their stay in Toruń and the Museum. The assortment is expanded every year to meet this need.

The museum shops offer a significant collection of publications related to Copernicus. When publishing new titles, meetings with their authors and attempts to promote knowledge about astronomy cultivated in Toruń are arranged³⁰. MOT was also involved in creating comic books about Copernicus. For instance, the consultant for the comic book “Kopernik. Centrum wszechświata” [Eng. Copernicus. Center of the Universe] published by the Egmont publishing house as part of the “Najwybitniejsi naukowcy” [Eng. Most Outstanding Scientists] series was Michał Kłosiński, an employee of MOT. In addition, DMK hosted the author of the comic book – Jordi Bayarri, who became acquainted with our branch, gave an interview to Radio 357 and finally created a drawing of Copernicus, of course.

In April 2023, Nicolaus Copernicus himself appeared in his House, or more precisely, a Nicolaus Copernicus doll made by Justyna Kędzierska. The doll stayed in the House for a month. Via social media and in the company of Museum employees, it invited people to events organised at that time, primarily *the European Night of Museums* (September 13, 2023), where it was one of the attractions.

The MOT Promotion Department had a slightly similar communication idea at the turn of 2022 and 2023. Then, a gingerbread version of Nicolaus Copernicus was created, combining the two largest brands of the Museum. Gingerbread Copernicus

³⁰ <https://muzeum.torun.pl/aktualnosci/mikolaj-kopernik-czasy-studenckie/> [accessed: August 25, 2023].

appeared in various places, departments and circumstances, informing about exhibitions and expressing wishes for Christmas and Women's Day.

Finally, it is worth asking about the costs of such activities and endeavours. The biggest ones are undoubtedly: the popularity of the Nicolaus Copernicus House and the high annual attendance, which, on the one hand, make the MOT team very happy, but on the other hand, especially at the height of the tourist season, make visiting this branch difficult, sometimes even impossible. In the case of DMK, too many people willing to visit at the same time is a frequent situation, which results in, among other things, long queues or even resigning from the visit, and consequently visitor dissatisfaction. This problem is difficult to solve because the branch, a complex of two historic tenement houses, has a maximum capacity which cannot be increased. The Nicolaus Copernicus House is therefore a victim of its own success.

What are the plans for the future? Certainly, one area is presenting the Nicolaus Copernicus House externally in various aspects and contexts, aiming at various audiences. In addition, the plan is to develop a Visual Identification System for DMK and several other branches that do not yet have a logo, and continue to consistently communicate the legacy of Copernicus and his times in various ways and using all possible tools. These activities aim to encourage people to visit (all year round) the House which was owned by the family of Nicolaus Copernicus, is undoubtedly tied to him and managed to survive to this day. Returning home is always a unique and emotional experience, which is why guests are encouraged to travel together to the era of Copernicus and experience "touching" history with their own hands.

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