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Introduction

On 22–23 February 2010 a scientific conference “The Nicolaus Copernicus grave mystery. A dialogue of experts” was held in Kraków. The institutional organizers of the conference were: the European Society for the History of Science (hereafter the ESHS), the Copernicus Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (CCIS), the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAAS) with its two commissions: the Commission of History of Science of the PAAS (CHS PAAS), and the Commission of Philosophy of Natural Sciences of the PAAS (CPNS PAAS); the Institute for the History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IHS PAS); and the Tischner European University (TEU). Moreover, the author of these words was the initiator and scientific manager of the conference.

The conference took place in the building of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, where all papers were presented, and in the Jagiellonian Library, where an exhibition of the autograph of *De revolutionibus* was organized specially for this occasion. On behalf of the organizers, Rev. Professor Michał Heller opened the conference and handed the chair of the meeting to the author of these words, who began by outlining the basic ideas of the conference.

The purpose of this conference was to discuss the controversy surrounding the discovery of the grave of Nicolaus Copernicus and the identification of his remains. For this reason, all the major participants of the search for the grave of Nicolaus Copernicus and critics of these studies were invited to participate in the conference. It was the first, and so far only, such meeting when it was possible to speak openly and *on equal terms* for both the supporters and the critics of the thesis that the grave of the great astronomer had been found and the identification of the found fragments of his skeleton had been completed. It was the intention of the organizers of the conference that the central idea of this meeting was a creative scientific *dialogue* and a courageous struggle with different interpretations of the

same facts and issues. All this was to serve a better understanding of the hitherto results of the search for the grave of Nicolaus Copernicus and the identification of his remains, and possibly show new opportunities to deepen this kind of research.

What is referred to in the word “dialogue”, mentioned here? What does it mean? To explain it, I will use the words of one of my teachers and an outstanding philosopher, Rev. Professor Józef Tischner, who in his *Ethics of Solidarity* wrote:

Dialogue means that people have come out from their undergrounds, have come closer to each other, have started exchanging words. The beginning of dialogue, emerging from a hiding place, is already a significant event. One needs to reach out, cross the threshold, offer one’s hand, find a common place for conversation. (...) How many obstacles does one need to overcome sometimes to begin a dialogue! How much patience in order to continue! One needs not only overcome fear and dispel prejudice, but also one must find a common language. It cannot be the language of any one group, much less a language of insinuation, slander, nor even a language of accusations. (...) the language of reliable dialogue is a “concrete language,” that is, a language that fits things. What is black is called black, what is white is called white. (...) The first condition of dialogue is the ability to sympathize with the other’s point of view. It is (...) about (...) a recognition that the other, from his point of view, is always to some extent right. No one voluntarily shuts oneself up in the underground, evidently one must have a reason for it. It is necessary to accept this reason. In the first word of a dialogue, there is hidden a confession, “you must be to some extent right.” This goes along with the second no less important confession, “surely I am not entirely right.” Both sides surpass themselves in these confessions, striving to the unity of one and the same point of view on things and matters. (...) Dialogue is the building of reciprocity (Tischner 2007, pp. 41–42).

To build this reciprocity, the first day of the conference was devoted to the fullest possible presentation of views of people involved in the search for the grave of Copernicus and the identification of his remains, while the second day to the presentation of views of commentators of these studies. The sessions of the first day were chaired by the author of these words, and of the second by the said author and also by Rev. Dr. Wojciech Grygiel (from the Pontifical University of John Paul II, and Copernicus Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies).

On the first day, as part of the introduction to the conference, three videos describing the search for Copernicus’s grave were shown:

1. *Tajemnica grobu Kopernika / Copernicus Tomb Mystery* (60 min), written and directed by Michał Juszcakiewicz (Michał Juszcakiewicz Art’s Agency, 2008).
2. *Światowe odkrycie archeologów z Pultuska. Poznana tajemnica grobu Kopernika / A world discovery of archaeologists from Pultusk. The uncovered secret of the grave of Copernicus* (6 min 13 s), written and directed by Józef

Śniegocki, Paweł Kiela (Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. A. Gieysztorą w Pułtusku, 2008).

3. *Misterium cranii Nicolai Copernici* (29 min 12 s), written and directed by Marcin Stefaniak (Fundacja Kronenberga przy Citi Handlowy, 2008).

These were documentary films, depicting various phases of the search for the grave of Nicolaus Copernicus and the identification of his remains by a team of Professor Jerzy Gąssowski. They are all therefore very valuable sources of information, especially for the first of these films, as the film crew accompanied the researchers for nearly one hundred days in Poland and Sweden, from the moment of finding the skull to the DNA analyses (Juszczakiewicz 2009).

After the film session the following papers were presented:

1. Dr Jerzy Sikorski (The Provincial Office of Historic Preservation in Olsztyn), “The location of Nicolaus Copernicus’s burial in the light of the contemporary practice” (in Polish; on behalf of the author, the text was read by Michał Kokowski, head of the conference).
2. Prof. Krzysztof Mikulski (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń), doctoral students: Joanna Jendrzewska (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń) and Anna Stachowska (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń), “Ancestors and closest relatives of Nicolaus Copernicus and their female offspring” (in Polish);
3. Dr Wojciech Branicki (Institute of Forensic Research & Jagiellonian University, Kraków), Dr Tomasz Kupiec (Institute of Forensic Research Kraków), “The analysis of nuclear DNA markers in the remains from grave 13/05” (in Polish);
4. Dr Tomasz Kupiec (Institute of Forensic Research, Kraków, Poland), Dr Wojciech Branicki (Institute of Forensic Research & Jagiellonian University, Kraków), “The application of the mtDNA analysis to the identification of human remains from grave 13/05” (in Polish).

On the second day of the conference a trip was organized to see the exhibition of the autograph of *De revolutionibus* in the Jagiellonian Library. Later, in the Great Hall of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, the following papers were delivered:

1. Dr Arkadiusz Sołtysiak (Warsaw University, Warsaw), “Magical thinking in archaeological interpretation. Examples, an attempt of classification, and perspectives” (in Polish);
2. Dr Jarosław Bednarek (Collegium Medicum, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Bydgoszcz), “A trap of anthropological typology” (in Polish);
3. Dr Tomasz Kozłowski (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń), “Reflections of an anthropologist on the identification of bone remains found in

- the Frombork Cathedral as those of Nicolaus Copernicus. An attempt at a critical interpretation” (in Polish);
4. Habilitated Dr Bronisław Młodziejowski (University of Warmia and Mazury, Olsztyn), “The efficiency of facial reconstruction methods in the light of contemporary forensic anthropology” (in Polish; a summary of paper; on behalf of the author, the text was read by the head of the conference);
 5. Prof. Józef Flik (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń), “The 16th century portraits of Nicolaus Copernicus” (in Polish; on behalf of the author the text was read by the head of the conference);
 6. Habilitated Dr Tomasz Grzybowski (Collegium Medicum, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Bydgoszcz), “A statistical and phylogenetic interpretation of research results of mtDNA of the alleged Nicolaus Copernicus remains from the Frombork Archcathedral” (in Polish);
 7. Dr Peter Gwozdz (independent scholar, Cupertino CA, USA), “Copernicus Y-DNA is Haplogroup R1b1b2a1” (in English);
 8. Habilitated Dr Adam Walanus (AGH University of Science and Technology, Kraków), “Radiocarbon dating and the case of Copernicus grave” (in Polish);
 9. Prof. Lidia Smentek (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń; Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA), “Lost OR found?” (in English);
 10. Habilitated Dr Michał Kokowski (Institute for History of Science, Polish Academy of Sciences; Copernicus Center for Interdisciplinary Studies; Commission History of Science and of Philosophy of Natural Sciences of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, Kraków), “A procedure of identification of remains no. 13/05 as belonging to Copernicus in the light of rationality of justification and rhetorics of persuasion” (in Polish).

At the invitation of Rev. Prof. Michał Heller, Dr Owen Gingerich, Prof. Emeritus of Astronomy and History of Science at Harvard University also took part in the conference, at the end of which he spoke to summarize the meeting.

As the initiator and scientific manager of the conference, I would like to express my gratitude to all the speakers and participants and all the institutions and individuals who contributed to its organization. Special thanks (listed in chronological order) extend to:

- The Authorities of the European Society for the History of Science for recognizing this conference as one of the conferences of the Society;
- The Authorities of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, including the Authorities of the Commission of the History of Science of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Commission of the Philosophy of Natural Sciences of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences for their ac-

tive involvement in the financial support of this conference, its organization and financing the costs of publishing conference proceedings in both Polish and English;

- The Authorities of the Tischner European University for funding the majority of the costs of the conference and the accommodation of the speakers;
- The Authorities of the Copernicus Center for Interdisciplinary Studies for involvement in the financing of the conference and co-financing the costs of publishing conference proceedings in Polish;
- The Authorities of the Institute of History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences for involvement in the financing of the conference;
- Rev. Prof. Michał Heller, Director of the Copernicus Center of Interdisciplinary Studies for issuing invitations to potential speakers to attend the conference;
- Habilitated Dr Bartosz Brożek (JU), Vice Director of the CCIS, and Habilitated Dr Janusz Mączka (JPII PU), Director of the Foundation of the CCIS, for coordinating the conference;
- Prof. Zdzisław Pietrzyk, Director of the Jagiellonian Library for organizing the exhibition of the autograph *De revolutionibus* for the participants of the conference;
- Prof. Jerzy Gąssowski for enabling the presentation of the film *Światowe odkrycie archeologów z Pułtuska. Poznana tajemnica grobu Kopernika / A world discovery of archaeologists from Pułusk. The uncovered secret of the grave of Copernicus*;
- Mr Michał Juszczakiewicz for enabling the presentation of the film *Tajemnica grobu Kopernika / Copernicus Tomb Mystery*;
- Mr Krzysztof Kaczmar, Director of the Fundacja Bankowa im. Leopolda Kronenberga, for enabling the presentation of the film *Misterium cranii Nicolai Copernici*;
- Rev. Dr Wojciech Grygiel (JPII PU, CCIS) for chairing the part of the session on the second day of the conference.

In this book, we present the aftermath of the conference – full texts or summaries of them, sent by the authors. In the latter case, where possible, additional information is included on other texts published by the author(s) on the same subject.

The texts of articles presented in this monograph were subjected to several stages of review process, both explicit and implicit.

The authors of the work presented here are recognized experts in many different disciplines and are responsible for the content of these texts.

I would like to draw the attention of the readers of this collective monograph to the fact that on its pages one can find contrary theses proclaimed by various

authors. By no means does it constitute a flaw in this study. It emphasizes a conscious decision: the idea was to show the diversity of opinions present in the scientific community, and thus to create the possibility of a future creative exchange of views – because the progress in science entails continuous improvement of the theses propounded and enriches the argumentation in favour of them.

The evaluation of the texts published here is left with the readers. I would like to emphasize the need to read these texts carefully, since they touch upon complex issues of various scientific disciplines. I would like to use this occasion to encourage readers to under-take more intensive Copernican studies, which are unfortunately becoming scarce in Poland (see the description of the problem: Kokowski 2009).

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