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The Copernican and Astronomical Museum of the INAF-Astronomical Observatory of Rome: Heritage and Research

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It was 1873 when the Roman celebrations of the 4th centenary of the birth of Copernicus were organized at La Sapienza University. Domenico Berti, professor of Philosophy, proposed to Minister of Education Antonio Scialoja the foundation of a museum dedicated to the astronomer.

It was to be hosted by the Observatory of Collegio Romano and directed by the Polish historian Artur Wołyński, an exile and scholar of Copernicus and Galileo. The man possessed a collection of materials related to those astronomers and encouraged his countrymen to donate Copernican relics to the new Institution. Among donors there were renowned artists such as Viktor Brodzki, Aleksander Lesser and Henryk Siemiradzki. Wołyński, appointed conservator of the Museum, donated his collection to the Italian state in 1882.

In 1935, the Copernican Museum and its Historical Archive and Library were transferred in Rome Astronomical Observatory in Monte Mario and since then they have been preserved there, enriched by the instrumentation and the documents of Roman Astronomy. After a period of renovation and a pandemic pause, the Museum has reopened on March 2023 to the public, re-establishing a connection between Rome and the Father of Modern Astronomy.

We will present the main holdings of the original collection, illustrating even some Copernican research recently done at the Observatory.

Primary author: GANDOLFI, Giangiacomo (Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF))

Co-authors: ANTONELLI, Lucio Angelo (Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF)); DANIZI, Roberto (Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF)); FACCINI, Marco (Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF)); MACALUSO, Tiziana (Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF)); POPPI, Francesco (Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF))

Presenter: GANDOLFI, Giangiacomo (Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF))

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