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The Astronomical and Copernican Museum: From the Original Collection to Later Developments

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The idea of founding a permanent museum dedicated to the illustrious Polish astronomer dates back to 1873, the year of the fourth centenary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), and was the result of an initiative proposed by former Minister of Public Education Domenico Berti and Filippo Serafini, rector of the University La Sapienza. Since then, a series of intricate events followed one after the other, leading to the inauguration of the Museum in its definitive location –Villa Mellini in Monte Mario –only on 28 October 1938.

Through a number of documents consulted in the historical archives of the Astronomical Observatory of Rome, the Accademia dei Lincei and the Department of Astronomy of the University Bologna, this contribution aims to reconstruct step by step the exciting history of the Astronomical and Copernican Museum between continuous relocations of sites, renovation and/or expansion works, and even the attempt to move the Museum to the city of Bologna.

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