



Nicolaus Copernicus

1473-1543

Early Life

- Nicolaus Copernicus was born on 19 February 1473 in Torun, Poland
- His family was ethnically German
- When his parents died, his uncle cared for him and his siblings, and he later proved to be influential on his studies and eventual career in the church

Professional Life

- Copernicus first studied astrology at the University of Cracow (1491-94)
- He then went on to the University of Bologna where he studied canon (church) and civil law
- In 1503 he earned a doctorate in canon law from the University of Padua (Italy)
- In 1514 he was advised on potential changes to calendar reform

Accomplishments and Contributions



Copernicus's model of the planets – Note that the Sun is in the center

Source: <http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/starry/copernicus.html>

- Copernicus was known as a capable mathematician
- His theories on how the planets revolve around the sun, termed a *heliocentric* system influenced our understanding of how our universe is arranged
- When he first introduced the idea, many of his contemporaries disagreed with him.

Resources for further reading

- Copernicus Biography: <http://www-history.nics.st-and.ac.uk/Biographies/Copernicus.html>
- <http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/starry/copernicus.html>
- <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/136591/Nicolaus-Copernicus>