

Z historii uniwersyteckiego obserwatorium astronomicznego we Lwowie

From the history of university observatory in Lviv (Lvov)

SUMMARY

Lviv was and still remains an international city. The nations of Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, Jews, Armenians and in more recent times also Russians have been living here together. This fact has some important implication also for the history of Lviv astronomy. The period of time is discussed when Marcin Ernst and, later, Eugeniusz Rybka worked in the Lviv University Observatory.

The observatory was founded in 1769 by Jesuits for the Lviv Academy, which in 1860 acquired the status of a university. By the end of the 19th century, however, the observatory was completely in decay. Marcin Ernst, who started his activity in the Observatory in 1901, re-established systematic scientific activity in the observatory. The Chair of Astronomy was re-established in 1908. The first modern telescope (a 135mm refractor) was put in operation in 1921. Miss Helena Połowska was among the best disciples and collaborators of Marcin Ernst, who died in 1930. The candidates for the professorship of astronomy in Lvov following Ernst's death were: Tadeusz Rakowiecki, Eugeniusz Rybka, Stanisław Szeligowski, Antoni Wilk and Józef Witkowski. The position went to Rybka. His best collaborators were Jan Mergentaler and Antoni Opolski.

Activity in the realm of scientific (theoretical and instrumental) development of astronomy at the Lviv University is discussed. Special mention is made of the heroic endeavours of the observatory staff during the Second World War. The Observatory was relinquished by Poles and passed to the Ukrainian Staff in 1945. The coexistence and cooperation of Polish, Ukrainian and German astronomers in Lviv is a beautiful example of overcoming of nationalistic tendencies in the very difficult times of Hitlerism and Stalinism.

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