Johannes Broscius (1585–1652), Jan Brozek in Polish, is one of the most outstanding individuals in 17th-century Polish science (Fig. 1). An erudite humanist with broad scientific interests, he was connected with the Krakow Academy throughout his entire life. The scholar’s personality, as well as his achievements, although marginal on the scale of world science, had a tremendous influence on the development of Polish science.

Broscius began his studies in the faculty of liberal arts at the Krakow Academy in 1604. It was a period of decline from the high level of mathematics recently practised in Krakow. Besides Broscius, the exact sciences were represented in 17th-century Poland by such scholars as Walenty Fontana (1545–1618), Stanisław Pudłowski (1597–1645), and in the second half of the 17th century by Adam Amady Kochanski (1631–1700). Broscius was a pupil of Fontana, who lectured on Nicolaus Copernicus’ theory. Later, Broscius made his own contribution to the knowledge of the great astronomer, writing his first biography based on his own personal discoveries of Copernicus’ legacy. He also made a journey to the places where Copernicus had stayed. From the library in Hielsberg he transcribed 20 letters that Thiedemann Giese (1480–1550), the Bishop of Chełmno and Warmia, had written to his friend Copernicus, including some describing changes to the text of the first edition of the *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*.1

In 1614 Broscius became the head of the Astronomy and Astrology Faculty, which he directed until 1629. Later, between 1632–1638, he curated the Academy Library, documenting the book and manuscript collections. At the end of his career he became the rector during the plague epidemic in Krakow, of which he himself was a victim in 1652.

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1 The letters have not survived, we know about them only from Broscius’ notes; see Henryk Barycz, *Jan Brożek: Wybor Pism*, Warsaw, 1956, vol. I, p. 138.
Fig. 1. Painting of Johannes Broschi, unsigned: Jagiellonian University Museum, inv. 2592,524/II.