

THE LIFE AND TRAGIC DEATH OF JAKUB KAROL PARNAS, A PROMINENT POLISH
BIOCHEMIST, CO-DISCOVERER OF GLYCOLYSIS

Summary

The contribution of Jakub Karol Parnas (1884–1949), a prominent Polish scientist, to the understanding of muscle biochemistry, including ammonia and carbohydrates sources and nucleotide metabolism, is described. Among his main achievements was the discovery of glycogen phosphorolysis, the first use of radioactive phosphorus in biological studies,

and formulation and proof of phosphate transfer between glycolytic intermediates and ATP. The rewarding and successful life led by this man of great scientific and intellectual abilities up to the beginning of the Second World War, his dramatic fate during the war, and his tragic death in a Soviet prison reflects the turbulent 20th history of the region.