



KAJ ULRIK LINDERSTRØM-LANG

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1896–1959

Through the death of LINDERSTRØM-LANG on May 25 Denmark has lost one of her greatest sons and science one of its greatest biochemists. The number of institutions that have been deprived of one of their leaders and pillars of support is large. In the first place, the Carlsberg Laboratory has been bereft of the director of its Chemical Department. Further, to cite only a few instances, the Danish Academy of Technical Sciences and the International Union of Biochemistry have lost their president. Finally, this journal may be mentioned; it loses the support of one of its founders and editors.

The number of scientists, biochemists in particular, who will have been deeply moved by this decease is impossible to estimate. For LINDERSTRØM-LANG was not only a man who was accepted undisputedly by them as one of their leaders, but he was also bound to countless fellow-scientists by strong ties of friendship. His gifts of character and wisdom were as great as his intellectual and creative powers. Notwithstanding the many honours conferred upon him and the central position which he occupied in biochemistry he retained his innate simplicity and modesty. Thus everyone could approach him without fear and share in his knowledge and wisdom.

His premature death has left a void in the biochemist's world that seems well-nigh impossible to fill.

LINDERSTRØM-LANG's body of work has mainly been concerned with two fields of investigation, the properties of proteins and micro-histochemistry. In the first field he has carried on the tradition of SØRENSEN, his great teacher and predecessor, as Director of the Chemical Department of the Carlsberg Laboratory. It seldom happens that the work of a great man is continued by his successor in a manner that is so consistently in keeping with the foregoing as LINDERSTRØM-LANG has done with regard to SØRENSEN's work. LINDERSTRØM-LANG's work has been of just as much fundamental importance for the advancement of the knowledge of proteins and proteolytic enzymes in his lifetime as SØRENSEN's work was in his day. The work of both scientists has a strong physico-chemical flavour. Owing to LINDERSTRØM-LANG's great mathematical gifts his work ranks among the most exact published in the field of biochemistry.

Ovalbumin, on which much work of fundamental importance has already been done in the Carlsberg Laboratory in SØRENSEN's time, remained one of LINDERSTRØM-LANG's favourite objects of study. His discovery of the formation of the protein plakalbumin—so called because of its platelet-shaped crystals—from ovalbumin by an enzyme in *B. subtilis*, called subtilisin, aroused widespread interest. Among other proteins to which he gave his attention, lactoglobulin and insulin may be mentioned.

LINDERSTROM-LANG had already entered a completely new field of research during SORENSEN's directorate by his development of quantitative micromethods for histochemical investigations. His Cartesian diver technique bears witness to his great originality; in collaboration with H. HOLTER and E. ZEUTHEN it was brought to a high state of precision and sensitivity. In HOLTER's hands in particular the application of these new methods has already brought forth results of considerable biological significance, and they still open up great possibilities for the future.

LINDERSTROM-LANG attracted large numbers of students and professional biochemists from all over the world, either to become proficient in the micromethods, or to carry out research on proteins. However, the very special atmosphere of the Carlsberg Laboratory, on which he left the impression of his personality, will also have exercised a great attraction. The significance of LINDERSTROM-LANG's work for the development of biochemistry therefore far surpasses estimates to be made from the *Comptes rendus des travaux du Laboratoire Carlsberg*. In many places in the world nuclei have formed, into which the influence of a sojourn at the Carlsberg Laboratory has permeated and will continue to make itself felt.

Finally, as regards this journal, *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta* is deeply indebted to its editor LINDERSTROM-LANG. As has already been mentioned, he was one of the founders, and his influence on the general editorial policy has always been very great. His opinion on papers submitted for publication was always detached and clearly expressed. The editors left behind have lost a dear and highly esteemed colleague, whom they will sadly miss.

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