

Obituary

Aksel Tovborg Jensen 1911–1981

Professor Aksel Tovborg Jensen died 8 February 1981 in his sleep, the night following the 70th anniversary of his birthday. He was about to retire, apparently in good health, and had made plans to continue his scientific work.

Tovborg Jensen was the youngest of 12 children in a well-known farming family. Being no good at farming, as he put it himself, he was sent to the Technical University of Copenhagen where he received a degree in chemical engineering in 1934, obtaining unusually high marks in the examinations. Shortly after his graduation he was offered a position at the Veterinary and Agricultural University as an assistant to Professor Niels Bjerrum, who encouraged him to specialize in X-ray crystallography. Tovborg Jensen studied crystallography with W. L. Bragg at Manchester in 1936, with C. A. Beevers at Edinburgh in 1938 and with G. Hägg at Uppsala in 1940, becoming the pioneer of X-ray structure analysis in Denmark. He solved the structures of several salt hydrates, and in 1949 succeeded Niels Bjerrum as professor of chemistry. His later work was based mainly on the application of the powder method to problems

connected with minerals in clays and soils and with inorganic components in fertilizers and feed additives.

The chemistry laboratory at the Veterinary and Agricultural University was for some time the only one in Denmark equipped for single-crystal X-ray analysis, and many young people from other departments in Copenhagen as well as his own came to Tovborg Jensen to learn from him, to use his equipment and to enjoy the inspiration that emanated from his colourful personality. Later, as research money flowed more readily, some of his pupils founded new X-ray crystallographic centres in Copenhagen and at the new universities in Odense and Aarhus.

Tovborg Jensen's personality and integrity were highly appreciated. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the IUCr from 1954 to 1957. He became a fellow of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters and served on numerous councils and committees concerned with research and teaching in Denmark. He was a gifted scientist, skilful pianist, and had a deep knowledge of art and literature. Above all, he was ever helpful as a person and unflinching in his friendship. He will be deeply missed, especially in the Danish scientific community.

On behalf of several Danish Crystallographers
BODIL JERSLEV

International Union of Crystallography

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Communicated Abstracts

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