

FOREWORD: GAJA ALAGA  
OTTO W. B. SCHULT

This book is dedicated to Gaja Alaga in memoriam of a great physicist and a close friend who passed away on September 7, 1988.

With his death the Yugoslavian nuclear research community has lost one of the leading scientists and the international community of nuclear physicists one of their colleagues, who contributed very much to our present knowledge about atomic nuclei and who helped them enormously to find an easy way to the understanding of nuclear structure by introducing the application of what students now learn as »Alaga's rule«. Two features were characteristic for his scientific life: he carried out excellent work by himself and he had always time to help others. And during his interaction with other people he had infinite patience and kindness. He talked to me always like a fatherly friend. Now we must accept the sad fact that we cannot hear his voice any more.

Gaja Alaga was borne in 1924 in Svetozar Miletić. As far as I know, his family originates from a Turkish officer, who deserted to the Austrian empire in Croatia, and who had won nobility. Gaja began his studies at the Technical Faculty in Budapest in 1943 and continued his academic education in Zagreb after the war. He studied physics at the Faculty of Sciences, got his B. S. degree in 1950 and the Ph. D. degree in 1958. In the year 1968 he became member of the Yugoslavian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Gaja Alaga was Head of the Department of Theoretical Physics of the University of Zagreb, he served as Dean of the Faculty of Sciences of his University, he worked as Chairman of the Scientific Council of the Institute Ruđer Bošković and as Chairman of the Mathematical-Physical Society of Croatia. He was Editor of the scientific journal *Fizika*.

Gaja Alaga realized very early that science benefits most from exchange of ideas and cooperation not only within the national borders but much more on an international basis. He carried out research at the Niels Bohr Institute from 1950 to 1952, at Berkeley from 1958 to 1959, at the State University of New York at Stony Brook from 1964 to 1965 and at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich from 1973 to 1974. He worked at many other places during shorter periods. The scientific results of his work have been made available to everybody in a large number of publications, part of which have appeared in Yugoslavian Journals, the others in International Journals and Conference Proceedings. Much of his effort has also been devoted to the improvements of the University structure so that scientific work could be carried out under optimal conditions.

Gaja Alaga's interest has always been to arrive at a deep understanding of nuclear excitations. Although he was basically a theoretician, his cooperation with experimentalists has always been excellent. His approach was preferentially analytical and this made it easier for him to explain his thoughts to colleagues who did not normally use big programs.

Gaja Alaga's too early death leaves it to his students, to carry on his work. All of them are together with us grateful that there had been the person and scientist Gaja Alaga and that he went with us on part of our way through life. He does now live on in a warm place of our hearts.