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Excitation function measurements of 12C(4He,8Be)8Be, 12C(4He,12C[7.65, 0+])4He, and 12C(4He,12C[9.64, 3-])4He reactions

Soylu, A; Freer, Martin; Ashwood, Nicholas; Curtis, Neil; Munoz-Britton, Tomas; Spencer, Simeon; Wheldon, Carl; Ziman, Victor; Brown, S; Thomas, J; Wilson, G; Goldring, G

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Excitation function measurements of ¹²C(⁴He, ⁸Be)⁸Be, ¹²C(⁴He, ¹²C[7.65, 0⁺])⁴He, and ¹²C(⁴He, ¹²C[9.64, 3⁻])⁴He reactions

A. Soylu

Department of Physics, Nigde University, 51240, Nigde, Turkey

M. Freer, N. I. Ashwood, N. Curtis, T. Munoz-Britton, S. Spencer, C. Wheldon, and V. Ziman *School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, UK*

S. Brown, J. S. Thomas,* and G. Wilson

School of Electronics and Physical Sciences, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 7XH, UK

G. Goldring

Weizmann Institute of Science, 234 Herzl Street, Rehovot 76100 Israel (Received 3 July 2012; published 15 November 2012)

In the present measurements a 12 C target was bombarded by a 4 He beam with energies from 14 to 21 MeV and the excitation function measurements for the reactions of the 12 C(4 He, 8 Be) 8 Be, 12 C(4 He, 12 C[7.65, 0+]) 4 He, and 12 C(4 He, 12 C[9.64, 3-]) 4 He were obtained using an array of 6 double-sided silicon strip detectors. The excitation functions are used to gain an insight into possible α -cluster structures in 16 O.

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In recent times there has been renewed interest regarding the potential α -particle structure of light nuclei. It is known that both the ground-state of ⁸Be and the second excited state of ¹²C have a well-developed α -cluster structure. The latter state is the 7.65 MeV 0⁺ Hoyle state which plays a crucial role in the synthesis of carbon in stars. Its properties are extremely hard to reproduce in models which do not explicitly contain clustering. For example, the no-core shell model [1] requires an extremely extended harmonic oscillator basis for the theoretical energy to even approach the experimental value. This has led to the description of such states in terms of a Bose gas of α particles, or even a Bose condensate [2].

Progress in identifying similar, highly clustered states in ¹⁶O is less advanced. The structure of oxygen nuclei above the 4α decay threshold remains an open question. The evidence that there might be an extremely exotic structure in ¹⁶O composed of a linear arrangement of 4α particles dates back to the 1960s. Chevalier and coworkers performed an excitation function measurement of the ¹²C(⁴He, ⁸Be)⁸Be reaction [3]. The data show a number of resonances above the 4α decay threshold (14.44 MeV), some of which are broad and some which were classified as narrow. The energy-spin systematics of the narrow states appeared to fall on a rotational I(I + 1)trajectory. The same reaction was also used by Brochard et al. to extend the measurements to higher energy [4]. Ames has also observed similar resonances in $\alpha + {}^{12}C$ scattering measurements [5], where the 12 C was excited to the 0_2^+ state. Furthermore, a measurement of the ${}^{12}C({}^{16}O, 4\alpha){}^{12}C$ reaction was performed by Freer et al. [6]. Finally, the 12 C(12 C, 8 Be + 8 Be) 8 Be reaction has been used to characterize ¹⁶O excited states that decay to two ⁸Be nuclei over the excitation energy region 19 to 40 MeV [7].

From a theoretical perspective, it has been speculated that the 0^+ excited state at 15.1 MeV may be a good candidate. One might expect that states with a well-developed cluster structure in 16 O decay to similar states in 8 Be and 12 C. This feature is illustrated in the case of the 0_6^+ 15.1 MeV state in Ref. [8], and this will be exploited in the current measurements.

In the present measurement we repeat the measurements of Chevallier *et al.* using the ${}^4\text{He} + {}^{12}\text{C}$ reaction and simultaneously examine the ${}^8\text{Be} + {}^8\text{Be}, {}^{12}\text{C}(7.65 \text{ MeV}, 0^+) + \alpha$, and ${}^{12}\text{C}(9.64 \text{ MeV}, 3^-) + \alpha$ decay channels.

The experiment was performed at the Orsay Tandem Accelerator in Paris, France. A 4 He beam was used to bombard a $100~\mu \rm g/cm^2$ carbon foil. The excitation functions were measured over the energy range $E_{\rm lab}=14$ to 21 MeV, with steps, $\Delta E\approx 100~\rm keV$.

The aim of the measurement was to populate resonances in 16 O which decay via 8 Be emission to states in 8 Be or α decay to states in 12 C above the 3α decay threshold. The 8 Be nucleus is unbound to decay with respect to two α particles by 92 keV and the ${}^{12}C[0^+]$ and ${}^{12}C[3^-]$ excited states are unbound to decay with respect to ${}^{8}\text{Be} + \alpha$ threshold by 283 keV and 2.27 MeV respectively. The measurement of the ${}^{8}\text{Be} + {}^{8}\text{Be}$ decay channel involves the detection of two α particles from the ${}^8\text{Be}$ decay. The measurement of the ${}^{12}\text{C}^* + {}^4\text{He}$ channel involves the detection of three α particles with the first α particle resulting from the decay to ⁸Be and then two more from the decay of ⁸Be. To reconstruct these complex final states, an array of six double-sided silicon strip detectors (DSSSDs), each $50 \times 50 \text{ mm}^2$ in area and $500 \mu \text{m}$ thick, was used for the experiment. All detector faces possessed 16 strips, each \sim 3 mm wide, with the direction of the strips on the front and back faces mutually perpendicular. Such detectors are ideal

^{*}Current address: The School of Physics and Astronomy, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, UK.

TABLE I. Distances of detectors from the target position and the central angles of detectors measured with respect to the beam direction.

Detector	Distance from target (mm)	Center of detectors (Degrees)
1	158 (2)	-16.7(2)
2	155 (2)	-16.7(2)
3	160 (2)	-39.7(2)
4	157 (2)	-39.7(2)
5	151 (2)	22.5(2)
6	155 (2)	22.5 (2)

for breakup reactions, as the detection of multiparticle events within a single detector as well as between different detectors is possible [9]. Table I shows the distances of the detectors from the target and their angles measured with respect to the beam direction. All the detectors lay with their centers in a single horizontal plane. The energy calibration of the detectors was performed using alpha sources (239 Pu, 241 Am, and 244 Cm) and elastic scattering of the 4 He beam from a 197 Au target.

Analysis was performed for events in which there were two hits corresponding to 8Be decay and three hits from $^{12}C^*$ decay in the 6 detectors. For these multiplicity-2 and -3 events it was assumed that each hit corresponded to an α particle and the momentum of each particle was deduced from the recorded energy and position.

For the multiplicity-2 events which were ascribed to the $^{12}\text{C}(^4\text{He}, {}^8\text{Be})^8\text{Be}$ reaction, the momentum of the ^8Be nucleus can be written as

$$\mathbf{P}_{^{8}\text{Be}} = \mathbf{P}_{\alpha_{1}} + \mathbf{P}_{\alpha_{2}},\tag{1}$$

where \mathbf{P}_{α_i} is the momentum of the *i*th α particle. The energy of the ⁸Be nucleus is then given by

$$E_{^{8}\text{Be}} = \frac{(\mathbf{P}_{\alpha_{1}} + \mathbf{P}_{\alpha_{2}})^{2}}{2m(^{8}\text{Be})},$$
 (2)

where $m(^8\text{Be})$ is the mass of the ^8Be nucleus and the decay energy of ^8Be to two α particles is then given by

$$E_{\rm d}(^{8}{\rm Be}) = \sum_{i=1}^{2} E_{\alpha_{i}} - E_{^{8}{\rm Be}},$$
 (3)

where E_{α_i} is the kinetic energy of *i*th alpha particle.

The Q value for the 12 C(4 He, 8 Be) 8 Be reaction is then given by

$$Q_{\rm ^8Be} = E_{\rm tot} - E_{\rm beam},\tag{4}$$

where

$$E_{\text{tot}} = \sum_{i=1}^{2} E_{\alpha_i} + E_{\text{rec}}.$$
 (5)

Here E_{rec} is the kinetic energy of the undetected ⁸Be recoil nucleus. This was calculated from conservation of momentum

$$\mathbf{P}_{\text{rec}} = \mathbf{P}_{\text{beam}} - (\mathbf{P}_{\alpha_1} + \mathbf{P}_{\alpha_2}),\tag{6}$$

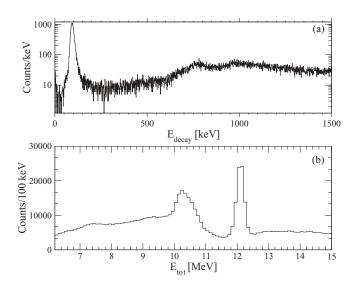


FIG. 1. (a) The decay-energy spectrum for multiplicity two events at $E_{\text{beam}} = 19.6$ MeV. The peak close to 92 keV corresponds to the decay of the ^8Be ground state. (b) The total energy spectrum for $^{12}\text{C}(^4\text{He}, ^4\text{He} + ^4\text{He})^8\text{Be}$ reaction and $E_{\text{beam}} = 19.6$ MeV.

$$E_{\rm rec} = \frac{\mathbf{P}_{\rm rec}^2}{2m(^8\text{Be})}.\tag{7}$$

Similar expressions can be obtained for carbon channels, but with there being three detected particles rather than two.

For the events in which two particles were detected the ⁸Be decay-energy spectrum was reconstructed [see Fig. 1(a)]. There is a clear peak close to 92 keV associated with the decay of the ⁸Be ground state. The total energy spectrum for the ${}^{12}\text{C}({}^{4}\text{He}, {}^{4}\text{He} + {}^{4}\text{He}){}^{8}\text{Be reaction is shown in Fig. 1(b) for}$ the beam energy of 19.6 MeV. There is a strong peak close to 12.2 MeV ($E_{\rm beam}+Q$) associated with the $^{12}{\rm C}(^4{\rm He}, ^4{\rm He}+^4{\rm He})^8{\rm Be}_{\rm g.s.}$ reaction. The peaks at lower energies correspond to the formation of excited states in the second (undetected) ⁸Be and contributions from the ${}^{12}\text{C}({}^{4}\text{He}, {}^{12}\text{C}*({}^{4}\text{He} + {}^{8}\text{Be})){}^{4}\text{He}$ reaction which contaminate the spectrum. The resolution of the peak in the ⁸Be decay spectrum is 20 keV [[full width at half maximum (FWHM)] and the resolution in total energy is 270 keV. In order to evaluate the yield for the ¹²C(⁴He, ⁸Be_{g.s.})⁸Be_{g.s.} reaction the number of events which simultaneously fell within the 92 keV and 12.1 MeV peaks in the Figs. 1(a) and 1(b) were evaluated as a function beam energy (see Sec. C).

Figure 2 shows the equivalent analysis for the detection of three particles in the array. The reconstructed 12 C excitation energy spectrum is shown in Fig. 2(a). The peaks associated with the 7.65 MeV, 0^+ and 9.64 MeV, 3^- states are clearly observed. The corresponding resolutions (FWHM) are 55 and 180 keV, respectively. The total energy spectrum corresponding to the 12 C(4 He, 4 He + 4 He + 4 He) 4 He reaction is shown in Fig. 2(b). The peak at 12.1 MeV (FWMH = 630 keV) corresponds to the reaction leading to the $^4\alpha$ final state. Again events associated with the 12 C(7.65, 0^+) + α and 12 C(9.64, 3^-) + α final states were selected by gating on the peak in Fig. 2(b) and then integrating the number of counts in the 7.65 and 9.64 MeV peaks in Fig. 2(a).

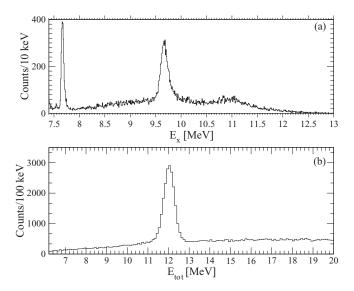


FIG. 2. (a) The 12 C excitation energy spectrum for multiplicity three events at $E_{\rm beam}=19.6$ MeV. The peaks close to 7.65 and 9.64 MeV correspond to the decay of the 0^+ and 3^- states, respectively. (b) The total energy spectrum for 12 C(4 He, 4 He + 4 He + 4 He) 4 He reaction and $E_{\rm beam}=19.6$ MeV.

The yields extracted from the integration of the peaks were normalized by the integrated beam exposure for each energy and then plotted in Fig. 3. It should be noted that the data have not been corrected for detection efficiency since to do so would require a detailed understanding of the angular distributions for the various reaction channels. The threshold

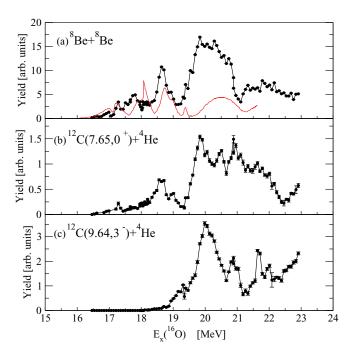


FIG. 3. (Color online) Excitation functions for (a) ${}^8\text{Be} + {}^8\text{Be}$, (b) ${}^{12}\text{C}(0^+) + \alpha$ and (c) ${}^{12}\text{C}(3^-) + \alpha$ final states. The solid (red) line in (a) corresponds to the measurements of Chevallier *et al.* [3]. Error bars reflect the statistical uncertainties.

for the ${}^{8}\text{Be} + {}^{8}\text{Be}$ and ${}^{12}\text{C}(0^{+}) + \alpha$ decay channels are 14.62 and 14.81 MeV and that for the ${}^{12}\text{C}(3^-) + \alpha$ channel lies nearly 2 MeV higher (16.80 MeV). The yields in the first two channels extend down to $E_x = 16.5 \text{ MeV}$ and the latter starts close to 18.5 MeV. At these low energies, the yields are dominated by the Coulomb barrier. The excitation function from the previous measurements of Chevallier et al. [3] which corresponds to the $\theta_{\rm c.m.}=90^\circ$ component is presented in Fig. 3(a). The present data correspond to $\theta_{\rm c.m.}=20^{\circ}$ to 80° (or equivalently $\theta_{\rm c.m.} = 100^{\circ}$ to 160°) and so does not overlap completely with the previous measurements. The current data therefore represent more closely the total yield—which will contain both resonant and transfer components. Nevertheless, a comparison with the angular distributions in the present measurements and those in Ref. [3] show good agreement over the angular range which the data-set overlap. It is possible to correlate some of the structures in both measurements. For example, between $E_x = 16.5$ and 17.5 MeV, the two spectra have peaks close to 17.0 and 17.3 MeV. Between 17.5 and 18.0 MeV there are additional peaks in the present data which are broadly not found in the earlier measurements which were limited to 90°. The strong peaks in the Chevallier data close to 18.1 MeV are found to have reduced strength in the angle integrated yield. The peak close to 18.6 MeV in the present data is shifted to slightly higher energies in the 90° yield. Finally, the broad bump between 19.5 and 21 MeV is shifted slightly higher in energy in the earlier measurements [3].

The comparison with the $^{12}\text{C}(0^+)$ and $^{12}\text{C}(3^-)$ channels is interesting. For the $^{12}\text{C}(0^+) + \alpha$ decay channel it is possible that resonances with negative parity $(1^-, 3^-, 5^-, \ldots)$

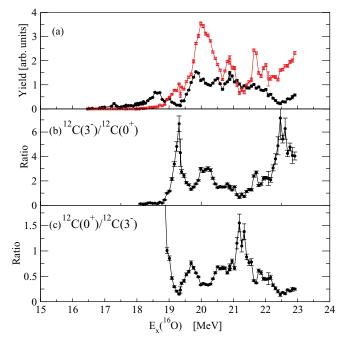


FIG. 4. (Color online) (a) Comparison between the $^{12}C(0^+) + \alpha$ (black) and $^{12}C(3^-) + \alpha$ (red) decay channels. (b) The ratio of the normalized yield in the $^{12}C(3^-)$ channel to that in $^{12}C(0^+)$ and (c) the yield associated with the $^{12}C(0^+)$ final state divided by that in $^{12}C(3^-)$.

contribute, whereas due to the decay to identical spinzero bosons only even spin and parity states may contribute to the 8 Be spectrum. The peaks at $E_x = 17.28$ (5), 18.65 (5) MeV are found in both the 8 Be and 12 C(0⁺) final states, where as the structure at 19.00 (5) MeV only appears in the spectrum associated with the 12 C(0⁺) final state. It is possible that this indicates an odd-spin, odd-parity state. At excitation energies above 19.5 MeV both spectra in Figs. 3(a) and 3(b) reveal broad structures. The 12 C(0⁺) spectrum indicates that there are again additional components not distinguishable in the 8 Be spectrum. The 12 C(3⁻) spectrum [Fig. 3(c)] shows some features which overlap with those in the 12 C(0⁺) channel, but there are clear differences.

Figure 4 shows the comparison between the two ^{12}C decay channels. Figures 4(b) and 4(c) show the ratio of the two yields $[^{12}\text{C}(3^-)/^{12}\text{C}(0^+)$ and $^{12}\text{C}(0^+)/^{12}\text{C}(3^-)]$. In principle one would expect states with a well-developed cluster structure in ^{16}O to preferentially decay to the 7.65 MeV, 0^+ state in ^{12}C . It can be seen from Fig. 4(b) that there are structures at 19.30 (5), 20.14 (5), and 21.67 (5) MeV which might be associated with the $^{12}\text{C}(3^-)$ decay channel. Conversely, the structures at 19.70 (5) and 21.27 (5) MeV appear to be most strongly associated with decays to $^{12}\text{C}(0^+)$. There is some evidence that there are corresponding structures in the ^{8}Be + ^{8}Be decay channels at the same energy as those in the $^{12}\text{C}(0^+)$ channel.

The data for the $^8\text{Be} + ^8\text{Be}$ decay channel are compared in Fig. 5 with those previously from the $^{12}\text{C}(^4\text{He}, \, ^8\text{Be})^8\text{Be}$ reaction [3] and the spectrum for the $^{12}\text{C}(^{12}\text{C}, \, ^8\text{Be} + \, ^8\text{Be})^8\text{Be}$ measured at a beam energy of 84 MeV [7]. The resolution of the latter measurement is clearly not sufficient to resolve much of the structure in the excitation function measurement. Nevertheless, there is good agreement between the structure observed in all measurements at $E_x = 20.1$ (1) MeV. In the measurements of the $^{12}\text{C}(^{12}\text{C}, ^8\text{Be} + ^8\text{Be})^8\text{Be}$ reaction, this state was found to have $J^\pi = 6^+$. However, the $^{12}\text{C}(^{12}\text{C}, ^8\text{Be} + ^8\text{Be})^8\text{Be}$ reaction shows an additional component at 21.2 (1) MeV which is not found in the excitation function measurements. The $^{12}\text{C} + ^4\text{He}$ reaction would most strongly populate 4p - 4h excitations; it is thus possible that this additional structure is associated with a more complex particle-hole structure.

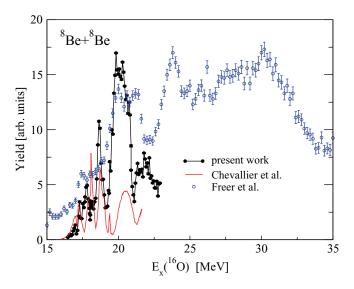


FIG. 5. (Color online) ¹⁶O excitation energy spectra for the ⁸Be + ⁸Be decay channel. The data from the ¹²C(⁴He, ⁸Be)⁸Be reaction from the present measurements and those of Chevallier *et al.* [3] are compared with the spectrum for the ¹²C(¹²C, ⁸Be + ⁸Be)⁸Be measured at a beam energy of 84 MeV [7].

Excitation function measurements of the $^{12}\text{C}(^4\text{He}, ^8\text{Be})^8\text{Be}, ^{12}\text{C}(^4\text{He}, ^{12}\text{C}[7.65, 0^+])^4\text{He}$ and $^{12}\text{C}(^4\text{He}, ^{12}\text{C}[9.64, 3^-])^4\text{He}$ reactions have been performed, populating ^{16}O between excitation energies of 16.5 and 23 MeV. A comparison has been made between $^{12}\text{C}(7.65 \text{ MeV}, 0^+)$ and $^{12}\text{C}(9.64 \text{ MeV}, 3^-)$ final states which contain strongly developed α cluster and more compact structures respectively. There is some evidence for components in the ^{16}O excitation energy spectrum, at 19.70 (5) and 21.27 (5) MeV which mainly decay to $^{12}\text{C}(7.65 \text{ MeV}, 0^+)$. Correspondingly, these may be associated with α -particle-like states in ^{16}O .

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