Lecture 2: How to Make the Heaviest Elements





Periodic Table



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Chart of the Nuclides: 2019





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Periodic Table

Question: How are new elements made?





Three techniques for making elements

Sequential neutron capture and beta decay

- Oldest (and natural) methods for production of new elements
- Used beginning 1940



Compound Nucleus Reactions

• Add two nuclei together!



Multi-nucleon Transfer Reactions









How to make heavy elements – Nuclear Reactors





Making Transactinides: Problems Arise

Fermium gap

- Consists of short-lived, SF/alpha decaying Fm isotopes
- Impedes formation of nuclei with Z>100 in nuclear reactors
- Nuclear and supernova explosions have higher neutron fluences → gap may be bypassed in nature

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Pushing Beyond Mendelevium: Compound Nucleus Reactions



Fuse two lighter nuclei to make heavier ones

- What are compound nucleus reactions
 - How to experimentally make/study
- Types of compound nucleus reactions





Process of SHE formation modeled by three-step process

Production
$$\sigma_{EVR}(E_{c.m.}) = \sum_{J} \sigma_{cap}(E_{c.m.}J)P_{CN}(E_{c.m.}J)W_{sur}(E_{c.m.}J)$$

cross section Capture Fusion Survival
cross Probability
section

Fusion = (sticking) x (diffusion) x (survival)





Process of SHE formation modeled by three-step process

$$\sigma_{EVR}(E_{c.m.}) = \sum_{J} \frac{\sigma_{cap}(E_{c.m}, J)P_{CN}(E_{c.m}, J)W_{sur}(E_{c.m}, J)}{\text{Capture}}$$



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Step 1: Capture

- Probability of colliding nuclei to overcome the Coulomb barrier and come in close contact with overlapped nuclear surfaces
- Competes with elastic and quasi-elastic scattering, few nucleon transfers
- Strongly depends on collision energy and impact parameter

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Process of SHE formation modeled by three-step process

$$\sigma_{EVR}(E_{c.m.}) = \sum_{J} \sigma_{cap}(E_{c.m}, J) P_{CN}(E_{c.m}, J) W_{sur}(E_{c.m}, J)$$
Fusion



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Step 2: Compound Nucleus Formation

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 Accounts for probability of two (nearly) touching spheres to fuse

Process of SHE formation modeled by three-step process

$$\sigma_{EVR}(E_{c.m.}) = \sum_{J} \sigma_{cap}(E_{c.m}, J) P_{CN}(E_{c.m}, J) W_{sur}(E_{c.m}, J)$$
Fusion



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Step 2: Compound Nucleus Formation

- two touching nuclei is transformed into more or less spherical configuration of compound nucleus (CN)
- Competes with quasifission
- CN formed in excited state → has excitation energy and angular momentum





Process of SHE formation modeled by three-step process

$$\sigma_{EVR}(E_{c.m.}) = \sum_{J} \sigma_{cap}(E_{c.m}, J) P_{CN}(E_{c.m}, J) W_{sur}(E_{c.m}, J)$$
Fusion



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Step 2: Compound Nucleus Formation

- Accounts for probability of two (nearly) touching spheres to fuse
- Or deformed nuclei



Process of SHE formation modeled by three-step process

$$\sigma_{EVR}(E_{c.m.}) = \sum_{J} \sigma_{cap}(E_{c.m}, J) P_{CN}(E_{c.m}, J) W_{sur}(E_{c.m}, J)$$

Survival



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Step 3: Survival

- CN formed in excited state → has excitation energy and angular momentum
- Deexcitation via neutron and gamma emission competes with fission



Process of SHE formation modeled by three-step process

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How can we test portions of this theory?





How to Measure

Position-sensitive MWPCs can measure position, angle, mass and total kinetic energy (TKE) of reaction products



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Banerjee, K., Phys. Rev. Lett **122** (2019) 232503: <u>https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevLett.122.232503</u> du Rietz, R., Phys. Rev. C **88** (2013) 054618: <u>https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevC.88.054618</u>



Measuring

Mass-energy distributions for reaction fragments





Kozulin, E.M., Phys. Rev. C 90 (2014) 054608: <u>https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevC.90.054608</u>





Experiment vs Theory: Capture Cross Sections



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Comparison with Experiment

- Limited experimental calculations of capture cross sections in SHE production
- Triangles, circles, squares = experimental data
- Solid line = model w/ deformation
- Dash line = model w/o deformation

Nishio, K: Phys. Rev. C, 86 (2012): <u>https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevC.86.034608</u>



Experiment vs Theory: Fusion Probability



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Comparison with Experiment

- Limited experimental calculations of fusion probability in SHE production
- Triangles, circles, squares = experimental data
- Solid line = model with error bars

Cap, T: Euro. Phys. J. A, 58 (2022) 231: https://doi.org/10.1140/epja/s10050-022-00891-8





Experiment vs Theory: Survival



Comparison with Experiment

- Probed indirectly by comparing production cross sections
- Predictions seem to converge on correct solution *after* experiments

Zagrebaev, VI: Nucl. Phys. A, 944 (2015), 257: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nuclphysa.2015.02.010





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Predictions for ⁵⁰Ti + ²⁴⁹Cf → E120 Excitation Function



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Theory is difficult Lets try experiment





How to make new elements



Fuse two lighter nuclei to make heavier ones

Step 1: Chose beam/target combination Step 2: Create and accelerate ions Step 3: Bombard target Step 4: Be lucky Step 5: Separation Step 6: Detection and Science!



How New Elements are Discovered



Fuse two lighter nuclei to make heavier ones

Challenges

1. Finding two nuclei:

Nuclei are small compared to atoms $\rightarrow \sim 10^{-15}$ m vs 10^{-10} m Atoms are mostly empty space

1. Fusing them together

Nuclei are positively charged \rightarrow repel each other

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Places capable of producing the heaviest elements



Steps 1: Accelerate

How do you accelerate atoms to 10% the speed of light?





Steps 1: Accelerate – Turn Atoms into Ions



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Steps 1: Accelerate – Turn Atoms into Ions



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Steps 1: Accelerate – Use electric fields to accelerate ions







Step 1: Accelerate Ions





GSI UNILAC (universal linear accelerator)





Step 1: Accelerate lons



What if you want to reach high velocities, but don't have a lot of space?





Step 1: Accelerate Ions



What if you want to reach high velocities, but don't have a lot of space?

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Add a magnetic field!

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Centripetal Force: $Fc = mv^2/r$ Magnetic Force: F = qvBRadius of curvature: r = mv/qB



m=mass v=velocity r=radius q=charge state B=magnetic field

Step 1: Accelerate Ions



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88-Inch Cyclotron

r = mv/qB



How to Make New Elements



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How Thick Should Our Targets Be?





Step 2: Targets

Things to consider:

Energy loss → width of excitation function, heating of the target



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Energy loss of ⁴⁸Ca in ²³⁸U

| Energy (MeV) | dE/dx (MeV/mg/cm²) | Range (um) |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 200 | 7.485 | 14.46 |
| 210 | 7.396 | 15.16 |
| 220 | 7.307 | 15.87 |
| 230 | 7.220 | 16.60 |
| 240 | 7.134 | 17.33 |
| 250 | 7.048 | 18.06 |
| 260 | 6.965 | 18.81 |

Step 2: Targets

Things to consider:

- Energy loss → width of excitation function, heating of the target
- How to detect a SHE after it has been made







Steps 2: Bombard Targets

Thin targets \rightarrow 0.25 – 0.8 mg/cm² 0.2 – 0.7 um



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Step 3: Be Lucky





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Step 4: Separation







Two Types of Separators with Complementary Capabilities





Step 4: Separation: Vacuum Separators



Step 4: Separation: Gas-filled Separators

BGS **Standard Configuration:** Beam Dipole **Targe** Detector Quadrupole doublet Station Beam + Everything Else Examples: DGFRS, GARIS(I-III), RITU, Q_V SASSY, TASCA Rotating Target TASCA **Transfermium Elements** D_H ⁴⁸Ca ions 1) **Other Configuration:** D • Quadrupole Focusing dipole • Dipole Detector **Examples:** BGS Recoils Station Office of

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Step 4: Separation







Why two different types?





Step 4: Separation

- Evaporation Residues leaving the target have a distributions in:
- Energy
- Charge State

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Charged Particles in Electric/Magnetic Fields

- Different charges, velocities and masses will take different trajectories
- Distributions in charge and energy limit transmission efficiency of vacuum separators







Vacuum Mode Separators



Gas-filled Separators

Recoils passing through He take on a welldefined average charge state. (100% charge acceptance)

The average charge state is nearly proportional to velocity. (large velocity/energy acceptance)

Efficiency of gas-filled separator can be double that of vacuum separator

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Step 4: Separation

Why would you choose a vacuum separator?





Two types of compound nucleus separators have complementary capabilities

| | Vacuum Separators | Gas-filled Separators | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Examples | FMA, SHIP, VASSILISSA, etc | BGS, DGFRS, GARIS, RITU, TASCA, etc | | | | | |
| Angular acceptance | Moderate (up to 16 msr) | Large (up to 45 msr) | | | | | |
| Velocity acceptance | Moderate (up to ±25%) | Large (up to 100%) | | | | | |
| Charge acceptance | Moderate (up to ±7%) | Large (up to 100%) | | | | | |
| Efficiency: ⁴⁸ Ca+ ²⁰⁸ Pb | Up to 30% | Up to 70% | | | | | |
| , | | | | | | | |
| Mass resolution | Good (M/△M>200) | Poor (M/∆M <30) | | | | | |





Step 5: Detection



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Step 5: Detection

Decay of SHE:

- Known SHE north of the line of stability
- Most SHE have been observed to decay via alpha decay or spontaneous fission
- Some evidence for electron capture
- Leave target with ~ 0.05 0.2 MeV/A

Detectable with silicon detectors







Step 5: Detection – BGS Focal Plane Detector







What hits the detector?

- Separators are great, but not perfect!
- Detectors behind separators operate at 1-2 kHz
 - Compton scattered photons
 - Elastically scattered He, H fill gas
 - Protons from beamstop
 - Deuterons
 - Scattered beam
 - Primary beam
 - Transfer reaction products
 - Decays (alpha, beta) from transfer reactions

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Question: How do you detect SHE implantation over background?





Step 5: Segmented Detectors

Silicon detectors are segment!

- EVR implants in specific location → know location w/in 1-2 mm (depending on detector)
- Decay happens in same location







Step 5: Detection – Genetic Correlations



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Periodic Table

Question: How do you pick beam/target combinations?





Types of Fusion Reactions

Hot Fusion

Fusion of light ion beams (¹⁸O, ²²Ne, ⁴⁰Ar, ⁴⁸Ca) with actinide targets

²⁶Mg ²⁴⁸Cm fusion ²⁷⁴Hs ^{269,270}Hs 1×10^{17} Projectiles on target 1 atom

Cold Fusion

Fusion of transition metals (⁴⁸Ca, ⁵⁰Ti, ⁵⁴Cr, etc) with Pb or Bi targets



Excitation energy for a reaction:

$$E^* = E_{cm} - \left(m_{beam} + m_{target} - m_{product}\right)$$





Types of Fusion Reactions

Hot Fusion

Fusion of light ion beams (¹⁸O, ²²Ne, ⁴⁰Ar, ⁴⁸Ca) with actinide targets



Bass barrier $\approx 125 \text{ MeV E}_{cm}$ E^{*} $\approx 40 \text{ MeV}$

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Cold Fusion

Fusion of transition metals (⁴⁸Ca, ⁵⁰Ti, ⁵⁴Cr, etc) with Pb or Bi targets



Bass barrier $\approx 225 \text{ MeV E}_{cm}$ E^{*} $\approx 10 \text{ MeV}$





Chart of the Nuclides: 2000



Discovery of Elements: Pre 2000



Discovery of Elements: Pre 2000



Extension of Chart of Nuclides

New reaction type (re)discovered: ⁴⁸Ca+Actinide targets



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Superheavy Elements from ⁴⁸Ca+Actinide targets:

- Cross sections increase with E114>E112>E110
- Cross sections peaked Z~114-115

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Chart of the Nuclides: 2019



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Latest Elements Discovered



For Release 8 June 2016

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PURE AND APPLIED CHEMISTRY

IUPAC is naming the four new elements nihonium, moscovium, tennessine, and oganesson

Following earlier reports that the claims for discovery of these elements have been fulfilled [1, 2], the discoverers have been invited to propose names and the following are now disclosed for public review:

- Nihonium and symbol Nh, for the element 113,
- Moscovium and symbol Mc, for the element 115,
- Tennessine and symbol Ts, for the element 117, and
- Oganesson and symbol Og, for the element 118.

| 87 | 88 | 89-103 | 104 | 105 | 106 | 107 | 108 | 109 | 110 | 111 | 112 | 113 | 114 | 115 | 116 | 117 | 118 |
|----------|---------|--------|---------------|---------|------------|---------|---------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| Fr | Ra | | Rf | Db | Sq | Bh | Hs | Mt | Ds | Rg | Cn | Nh | FI | Мс | Lv | Ts | Oq |
| Francium | Radium | | Rutherfordium | Dubnium | Seaborgium | Bohrium | Hassium | Meitnerium | Darmstadtium | Roentgenium | Copernicium | Nihonium | Flerovium | Moscovium | Livermorium | Tennessine | Oganesson |
| 223.020 | 226.025 | | [261] | [262] | [266] | [264] | [269] | [278] | [281] | [280] | [285] | [286] | [289] | [289] | [293] | [294] | [294] |

6 new elements discovered in the last 2 decades







⁴⁸Ca+Actinides

We've reached the end of the road with ⁴⁸Ca+Actinide reactions

Heaviest target available = 248 Cf (Z=98)



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Summary and Conclusions

How to make new elements:

- Actinides: neutron absorption \rightarrow beta decay \rightarrow high-flux nuclear reactors
- Z>100: Add 2 lighter nuclei together

Two reaction types:

- Hot fusion
- Cold fusion

Tomorrow:

- What do we know about SHE?
- How can we push towards even heavier elements?



