Title

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Authors

Tanaka, S.
Moody, K.J.
Seaborg, G.T.

Publication Date

1984

Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Submitted to Physical Review C

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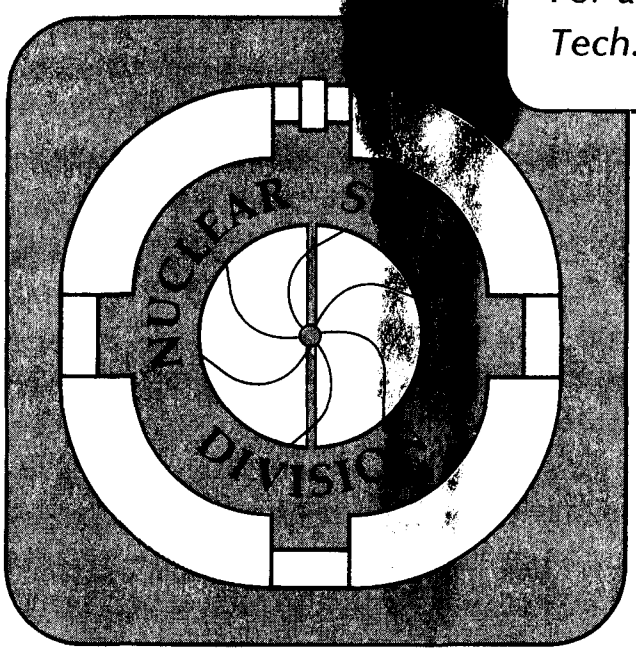
January 1984



Prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy under Contract DE-AC03-76SF00098

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Transfer Reaction Cross Sections from the Interactions of ^{20}Ne and ^{22}Ne with ^{232}Th

Satoru Tanaka*, Kenton J. Moody† and Glenn T. Seaborg††

*University of Tokyo, Nuclear Engineering Reserch Laboratory, The Faculty of Engineering, Tokai-Mura, Naka-Gun, Ibaraki-Prefecture, Japan

† Gesellschaft Für Schwerionenforschung mbH, Postfach 11 05 41. 6100 Darmstadt 11, West Germany

†† Nuclear Science Division, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720

This work was supported by the Director, Office of Energy Research Division of Nuclear Physics of the Office of High Energy and Nuclear Physics of the U.S. Department of Energy under Contract No. DE-AC03-76SF00098.

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Satoru Tanaka[+], Kenton J. Moody, and Glenn T. Seaborg

Nuclear Science Division, Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory,
University of California, Berkeley, California 94720

Abstract

A target of ^{232}Th has been bombarded with 114 MeV ^{22}Ne and with 114 MeV and 129 MeV ^{20}Ne beams. Recoiling reaction products were chemically isolated and the cross sections for protactinium, uranium and neptunium isotopes were determined. The width of the cross section distributions for a given Z and their neutron-richness are the same as those for similar transfers in Ne + ^{248}Cm reactions. Population of low spin isomeric states is favored in these reactions over population of high spin states. As was seen in reactions with heavier targets, an increase in reaction energy does little to shift the evaporation residues toward neutron deficiency. The implications are that only primary products with little or no excitation energy and angular momentum survive the fission process to become evaporation residues in these systems, and that the production of these nuclides is more controlled by the change in the identity of the projectile than by the corresponding change in the target.

Keywords: NUCLEAR REACTIONS $^{232}Th(^{20}Ne,X)$, $E(^{20}Ne)$=114, 129 MeV; $^{232}Th(^{22}Ne,X)$, $E(^{22}Ne)$=114 MeV; measured σ and isotopic distributions for Z=91-93.

I. Introduction

There has recently been a lot of interest in the possibility of synthesizing new neutron-rich actinide and transactinide nuclides in transfer reactions of light heavy ions ($A \leq 40$) with actinide targets[1,2,3]. In these reactions, the complicated way in which the energy and angular momentum states in the primary products are originally populated and then deexcite by the emission of particles or photons or by fission makes the extremes of the cross section distributions of the evaporation residues hard to predict theoretically. In order to pick the optimum projectile/target/reaction energy combination, it is important to systematize the reaction product cross sections in the known regions of nuclear mass and charge.

Most of the work on these transfer reactions in the actinide region has been concentrated on bombardments of the heaviest available target materials; very little work has been done in the light actinide region except for that concentrating on projectile-like reaction components[4,5,6]. In order to further systematize these reactions in the actinide region, we have bombarded a target of ^{232}Th with ^{20}Ne and ^{22}Ne and chemically isolated the reaction products, concentrating on those elements with one, two and three more protons than the target, at energies not far in excess of the calculated Coulomb barrier of $\sim$ 105 MeV.

II. Experimental

A uniform target of 1.0 mg/cm^2 ^{232}Th was electroplated[7] in a 7 mm diameter spot on a 2.3 mg/cm^2 beryllium substrate. This target was irradiated with 0.5 to 1.0 electrical microamperes of $^{20}Ne^{5+}$ (two experiments) and $^{22}Ne^{5+}$ (one experiment) at the 88-inch Cyclotron of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. The target system has been described previously[1]. Table 1 describes the experiments performed for this work. Recoiling reaction products between 0° and roughly 50° to the beam direction were collected with a 2 mg/cm^2 nickel foil and isolated chemically.

Figure 1 shows an outline of the chemical separation scheme. The chemical yields of protactinium and uranium isotopes were determined by the addition of standard aliquots of ^{231}Pa and ^{233}U at the beginning of the chemical procedure. Neptunium yields in the first two experiments were determined from a ^{237}Np tracer from which the ^{233}Pa daughter was removed just prior to the experiments. In the third experiment, the ^{239}Np in equilibrium with ^{243}Am was used as the tracer. In the full procedure, depicted in figure 1, samples were ready for counting 40 minutes after the end of irradiation. An abbreviated chemistry performed for the third experiment resulted in a neptunium fraction after 20 minutes. Typical chemical yields from the procedure are 80% for protactinium, 50% for uranium and 70% for neptunium. The protactinium and uranium fractions were essentially free of contaminants. The neptunium fraction often contained small amounts of protactinium and thorium which did not seriously interfere with the activity measurements.

The decay of the nuclides in the chemical fractions was followed for about two weeks. Gamma-ray photons were observed with a Ge(Li) detector whose efficiency at various energies was determined with a mixed radionuclide standard source mounted with the same geometry relative to the detector as the experimental samples. A given data acquisition interval was shorter than the half-lives of the species of interest which remained in the sample. Gamma ray peaks in the PHA spectra of high intensity and good statistics were integrated with the SAMPO computer code[8]. Those peaks which were too small for this procedure were integrated by hand, subtracting a background averaged over several PHA channels, both above and below the peak in energy. The areas of the gamma-ray peaks were analyzed as a function of time to give a set of initial activities which were converted to cross sections. It was assumed that the fraction of the reaction products of interest which stopped in the target or which were emitted at angles not collected by the nickel catcher foil was negligible; we consider the cross sections to be of absolute magnitude. No corrections were made for parent-daughter feeding during the irradiation or before chemical separation; this is a negligible effect except in the case of the ^{233}Th-^{233}Pa pair, where much of the observed intensity of ^{233}Pa is due to decay from the 22-minute ^{233}Th produced via simple neutron pick-up or stripping reactions.

Absolute gamma-ray intensities were determined using data from the Table of Isotopes[9].

III. Results and Discussion

Cross sections obtained from these bombardments are given in Table 2, and are plotted in figures 2,3 and 4.

Comparison of figures 2 and 3 shows the difference between ^{22}Ne and ^{20}Ne irradiations at roughly the same energy relative to the Coulomb barrier. For the neptunium isotopes, the maxima of the isotopic yield distributions are shifted about two mass numbers from one another. The same result was observed in massive transfers of ^{20}Ne and ^{22}Ne to ^{248}Cm, and ^{16}O and ^{18}O to ^{248}Cm[1]. It was not possible in the experiments reported here to determine enough cross sections for the protactinium and uranium nuclides to be able to make the same direct comparison, but the cross sections do seem to be shifted toward neutron excess in the ^{22}Ne experiment.

The full width at half maximum of the cross section distributions for the neptunium isotopes is roughly 2.5 mass units in each experiment, the same as that for an equivalent transfer in the reactions of $^{20,22}Ne$ with ^{248}Cm. In the Ne + ^{248}Cm systems, it was observed that at the same energy relative to the Coulomb barrier, transfer cross sections were enhanced in ^{20}Ne reactions over those from ^{22}Ne reactions. A similar effect is observed in this work; the ^{20}Ne + ^{232}Th peak cross sections are larger than those from ^{22}Ne + ^{232}Th for an equivalent number of protons transferred. In the Ne + ^{248}Cm work, products with two more protons than the target were formed with enhanced cross sections relative to those products with only one more proton than the target. Insufficient information was obtained on the cross sections of the uranium isotopes in the experiments reported here to be able to establish whether the same effect occurs in the Ne + ^{232}Th systems. However,

since the ground state Q-values[10] and Coulomb potentials of these reactions are dominated by changes in the mass and charge of the relatively light projectile, and since the fission barriers of the products of interest are roughly the same across this section of the actinide nuclides[11], it would not be surprising to find that the Ne + ^{232}Th cross sections strongly mimic the behavior of the Ne + ^{248}Cm cross sections in this regard as well as in the others.

Figures 5 and 6 show the behavior of product cross sections with projectile energy for the reaction of ^{20}Ne with ^{232}Th. The increase in reaction energy causes an increase in the product cross sections for all the observed products; this increase is roughly the same for all the observed products, with few exceptions. The ^{233}Pa (^{233}Th) cross section is roughly constant, implying that the neutron pick-up cross section to make the ^{233}Th parent activity is not as energy dependent as those processes involving the transfer of charge. The expected depletion of neutron-rich products relative to neutron-deficient products with an increase in projectile energy is not seen in these data, implying that most of the observed products arise from primary products on the low energy tails of the excitation energy distributions. In fact, the steepest increase in product cross section with reaction energy is for ^{234g}Pa (J^{π} = 4+), the most neutronrich protactinium nuclide observed in these experiments. We propose that this is due to an increase in the fraction of the reaction cross section going to form ^{234}Pa which results in the high spin (4+) ground state, and a corresponding decrease in

the fraction which forms the unobserved J^{π} = 0- metastable state. For ^{236}Np, where only the low spin isomer (^{263m}Np) was observed, we would expect a decrease of the fraction of the total ^{236}Np cross section going to form ^{236m}Np with an increase in projectile energy. Our data for this nuclide is not of a quality which lets us state this unequivocably.

In previous work[2], where the excitation functions of actinide products were determined in the reaction of ^{18}O with ^{248}Cm and ^{249}Cf, only the low spin isomeric species ^{248m}Bk and ^{254m}Es were reported because the high spin species could not be observed. There was little discrepancy observed between the behavior of the excitation function for these nuclides and those of neighboring nuclides. There was also no difference observed between the magnitude of these cross sections and what one would expect from extrapolation if all of the product cross section were in the low spin state. The magnitude of the cross sections for ^{236m}Np in our own work is also consistent with representing most of the ^{236}Np cross section. We use this evidence, and the evidence of the ^{234}Pa cross sections, to state that the primary reaction products formed in these reactions which de-excite to form actinide products are all of very low intrinsic angular momentum, on the order of the spins of the isomers themselves[12,13]. The bulk of the reaction cross section resulting in a particular isomer pair will lie in the low spin state at these reaction energies. An increase in projectile energy, resulting in an increase in the average angular momentum of the composite system, will remove some of the cross section to the high spin state; this seems to have a smaller relative effect on the cross section of the low spin isomer than on the cross section of the high spin isomer, consistent with the relative sizes of the cross sections.

IV. Conclusions

In reactions of light heavy ions with actinide targets, actinide transfer products arise from those processes which result in primary fragments of very low intrinsic excitation energy and angular momentum.

Across a broad selection of possible actinide targets, the cross section of a given transfer is more a function of the change in the identity of the projectile than of that of the target. In these reactions, cross sections from ^{20}Ne bombardments are enhanced over those from ^{22}Ne bombardments, and the stability of the Z = 8 reaction components enhance the transfer of two protons into the target.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank K. Gregorich, R. Welch and D. Lee for their help and for useful discussions. The support and assistance of the staff and crew of the 88-inch Cyclotron was invaluable.

S. Tanaka would like to thank the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory for its hospitality and the Kajima Foundation in Japan for financial assistance.

This work was supported by the Director, Office of Energy Research Division of Nuclear Physics of the Office of High Energy and Nuclear Physics of the U.S. Department of Energy under Contract No. DE-AC03-76SF00098.

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+Permanent Address: Nuclear Engineering Research Laboratory, University of Tokyo, Tokai-mura, Ibaraki-ken, Japan.

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Table 1. Experimental systems

Target	Thickness	Projectile	Center-of-target Projectile Energy (MeV, lab)	Irradiations
^{232}Th	1.0 mg/cm^2	^{22}Ne	114	Recoil catcher - chemistry
^{232}Th	1.0 mg/cm^2	^{20}Ne	114	Recoil catcher - chemistry
^{232}Th	1.0 mg/cm^2	^{20}Ne	129	Recoil catcher - chemistry, long run and fast chemistry run

Table 2. Measured Cross Sections (mb)

Nuclide	114 MeV ^{22}Ne	114 MeV ^{20}Ne	129 MeV ^{20}Ne
^{227}Pa			$(6.9 \pm 6.6)10^{-3}$
^{228}Pa		$(1.6 \pm 1.3)10^{-3}$	$(2.2 \pm 2.0)10^{-2}$
^{229}Pa	$(5.1 \pm 2.2)10^{-3}$	$(2.9 \pm 1.6)10^{-2}$	$(4.6 \pm 1.8)10^{-2}$
^{230}Pa	$(1.2 \pm 0.8)10^{-2}$	$(3.7 \pm 0.6)10^{-2}$	$(8.1 \pm 0.9)10^{-2}$
^{232}Pa	$(1.08 \pm 0.12)10^{-1}$	$(3.7 \pm 0.5)10^{-1}$	$(8.1 \pm 0.9)10^{-1}$
^{233}Pa	(1.29 ± 0.09)	(2.8 ± 0.1)	(2.6 ± 0.1)
^{234g}Pa	$(1.98 \pm 0.22)10^{-2}$	$(1.1 \pm 0.1)10^{-2}$	$(4.2 \pm 0.6)10^{-2}$
^{231}U		$(2.2 \pm 1.6)10^{-2}$	$(3.8 \pm 2.0)10^{-2}$
^{237}U	$(1.0 \pm 0.7)10^{-2}$	$(1.7 \pm 1.5)10^{-3}$	$(7.3 \pm 5.8)10^{-4}$
^{239}U	$(1.0 \pm 0.8)10^{-2}$		
^{240}U	$(3.1 \pm 2.7)10^{-3}$		
^{232}Np			$(2.7 \pm 2.3)10^{-3}$
^{233}Np		$(5.0 \pm 4.6)10^{-3}$	$(1.1 \pm 0.9)10^{-2}$
^{234}Np	$(9.3 \pm 7.3)10^{-4}$	$(3.2 \pm 0.2)10^{-2}$	$(4.2 \pm 0.3)10^{-2}$
^{236m}Np	$(9.2 \pm 4.7)10^{-3}$	$(3.7 \pm 2.2)10^{-2}$	$(3.1 \pm 2.0)10^{-2}$
^{238}Np	$(1.04 \pm 0.16)10^{-2}$	$(1.9 \pm 1.5)10^{-4}$	$(3.6 \pm 3.0)10^{-4}$
^{239}Np	$(1.6 \pm 1.3)10^{-3}$		

Figure Captions

1. The chemical separation scheme for preparing samples of protactinium, uranium and neptunium suitable for use in cross section determinations by means of gamma-ray detection.

2. Product cross sections from the reaction of 114 MeV ^{22}Ne with ^{232}Th. Cross sections for nuclides of the same element are connected only to guide the eye.

3. Product cross sections from the reaction of 114 MeV ^{20}Ne with ^{232}Th. Cross sections for nuclides of the same element are connected only to guide the eye.

4. Product cross sections from the reaction of 129 MeV ^{20}Ne with ^{232}Th. Cross sections for nuclides of the same element are connected only to guide the eye.

5. Partial excitation functions for the protactinium isotopes produced in the bombardment of ^{232}Th with ^{20}Ne. Projectile energies are center-of-target in the laboratory frame.

6. Partial excitation functions for the neptunium isotopes produced in the bombardment of ^{232}Th with ^{20}Ne. Projectile energies are center-of-target in the laboratory frame.

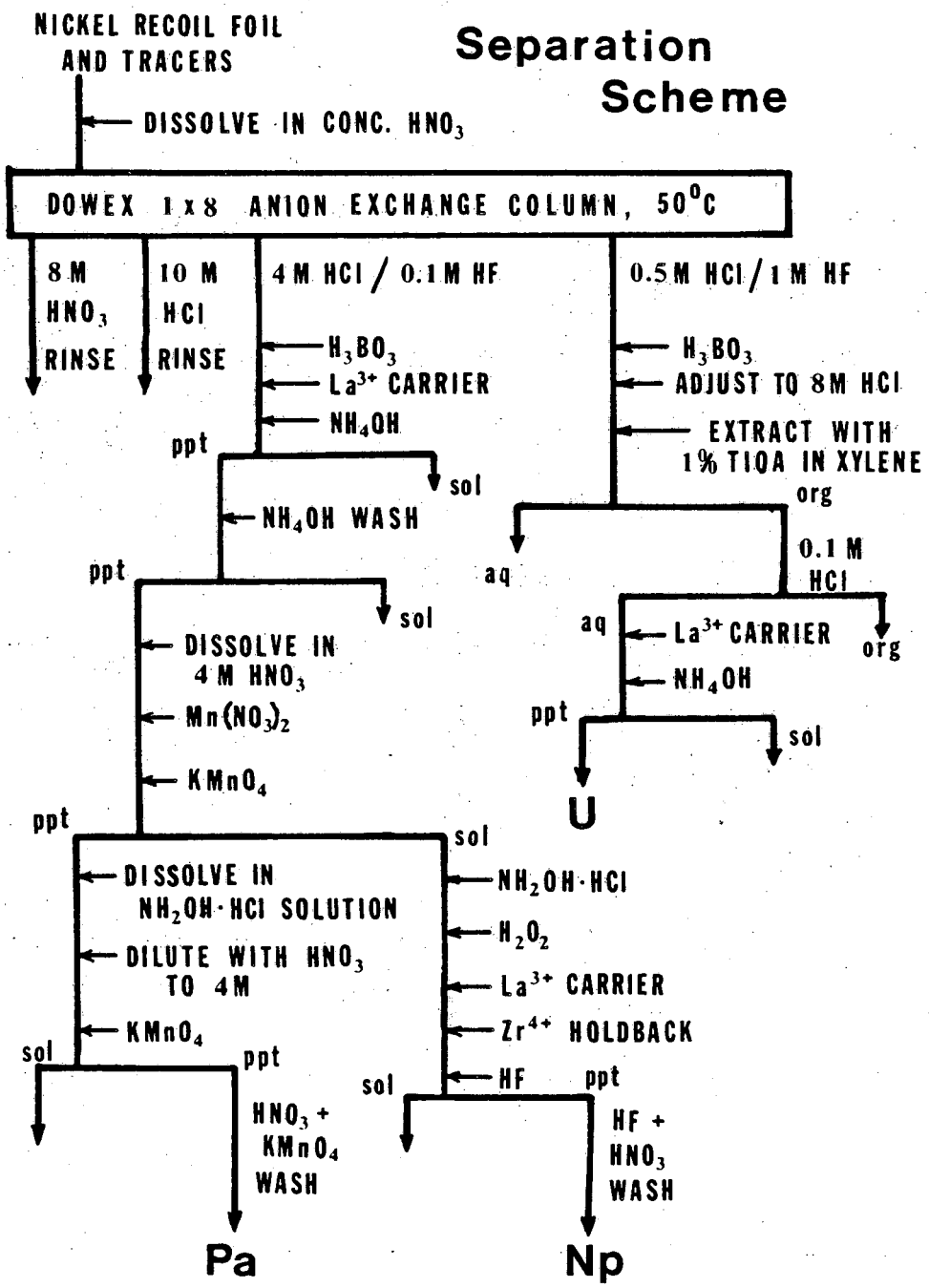

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Figure 1

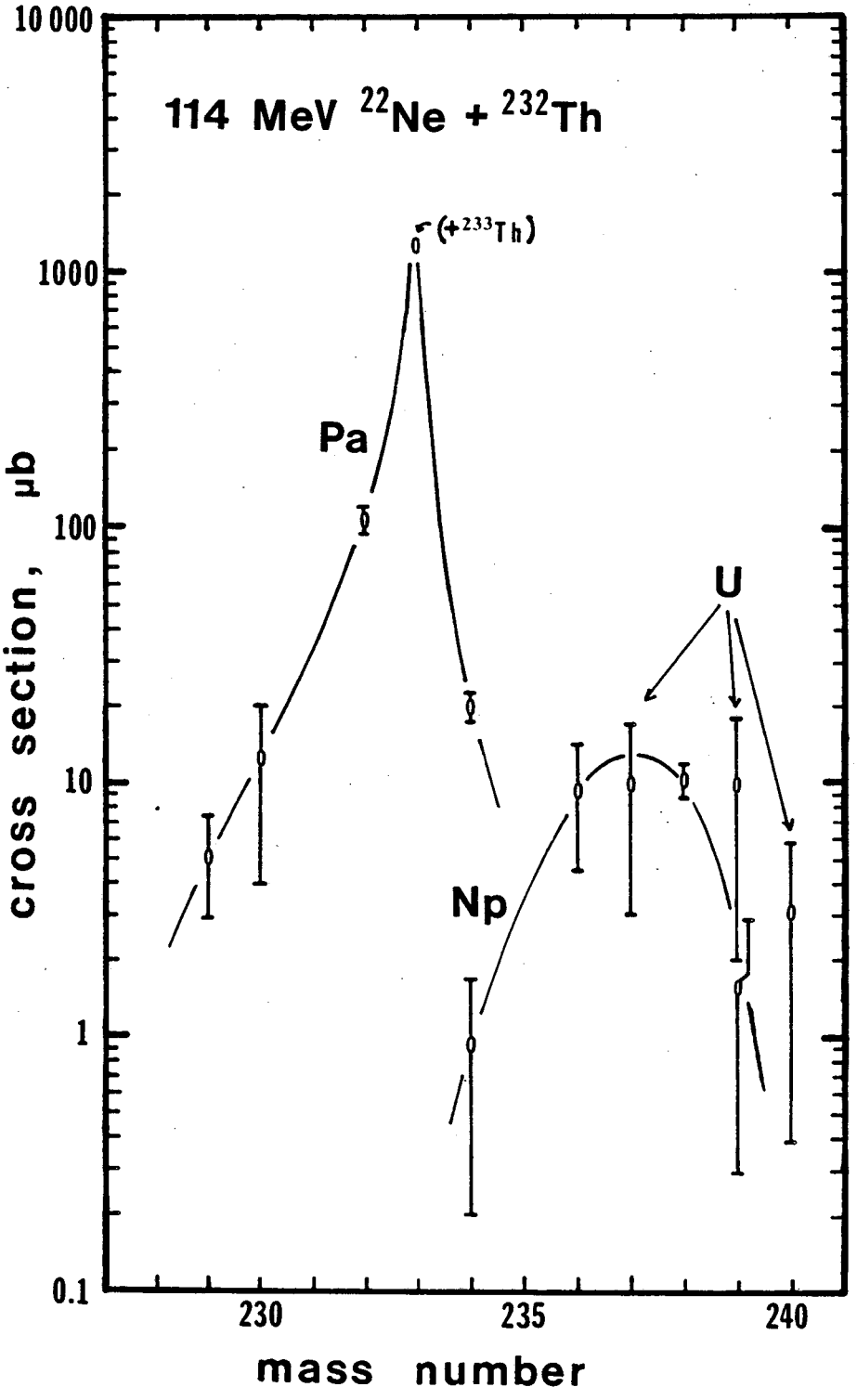

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Figure 2

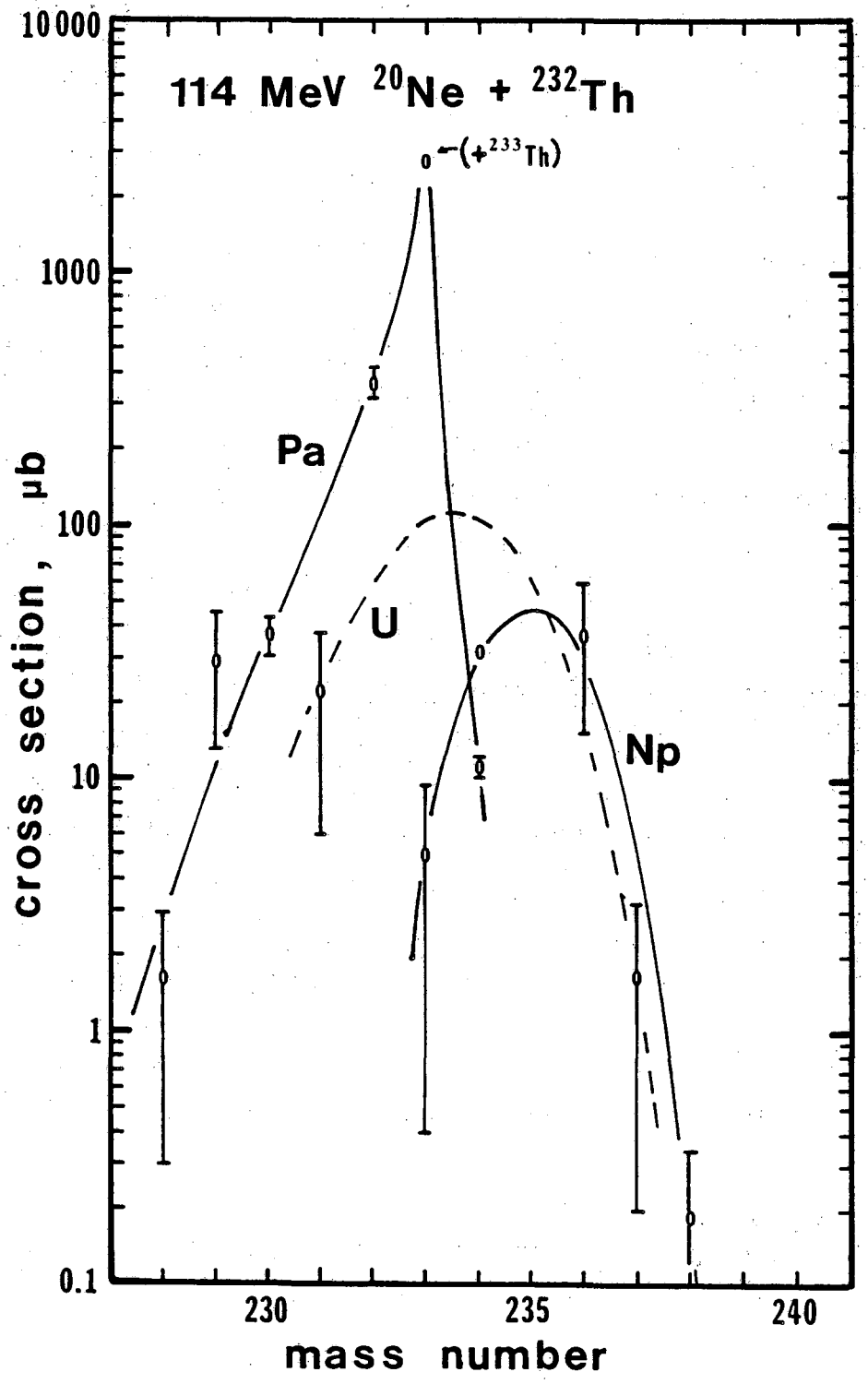

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Figure 3

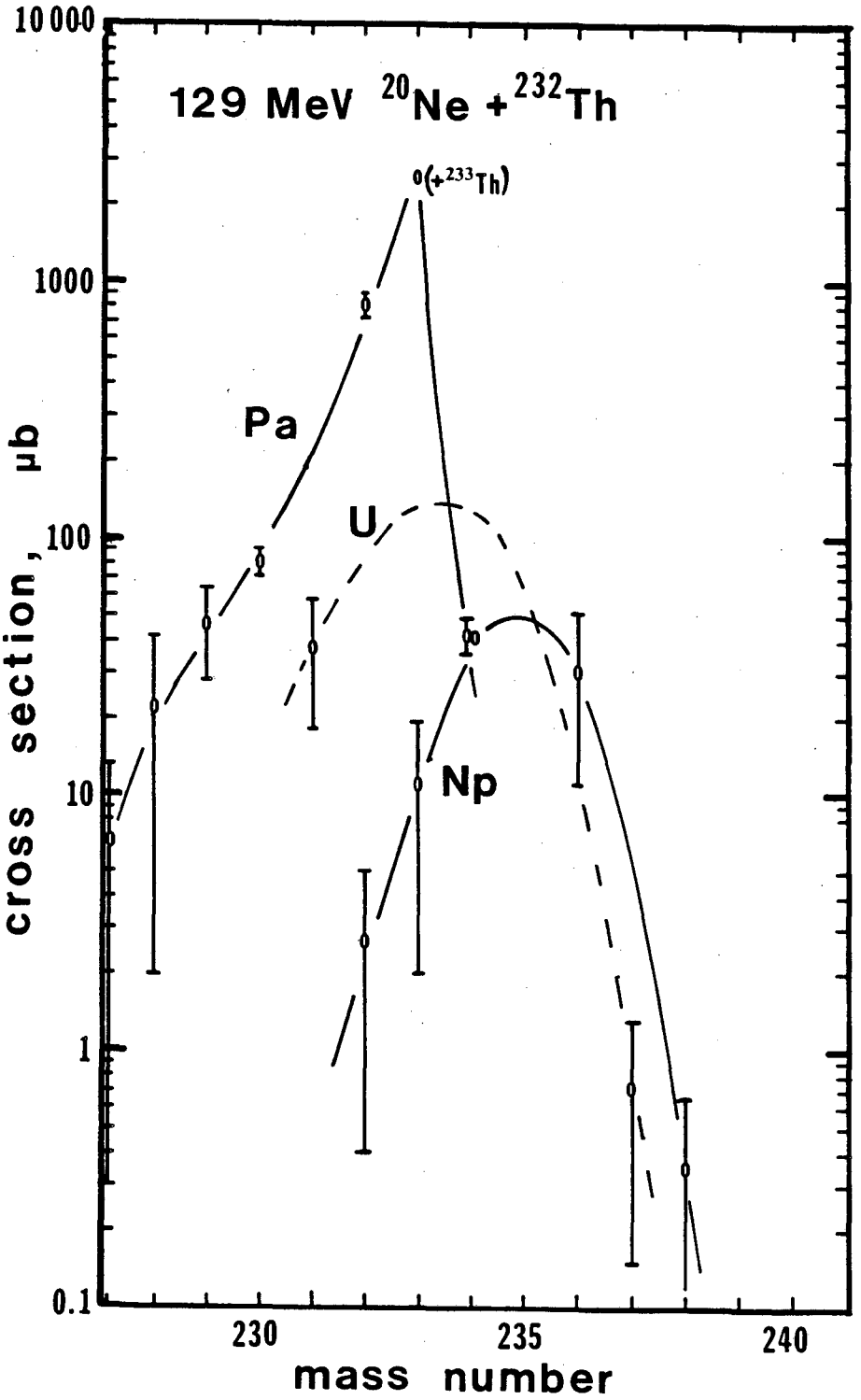

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Figure 4

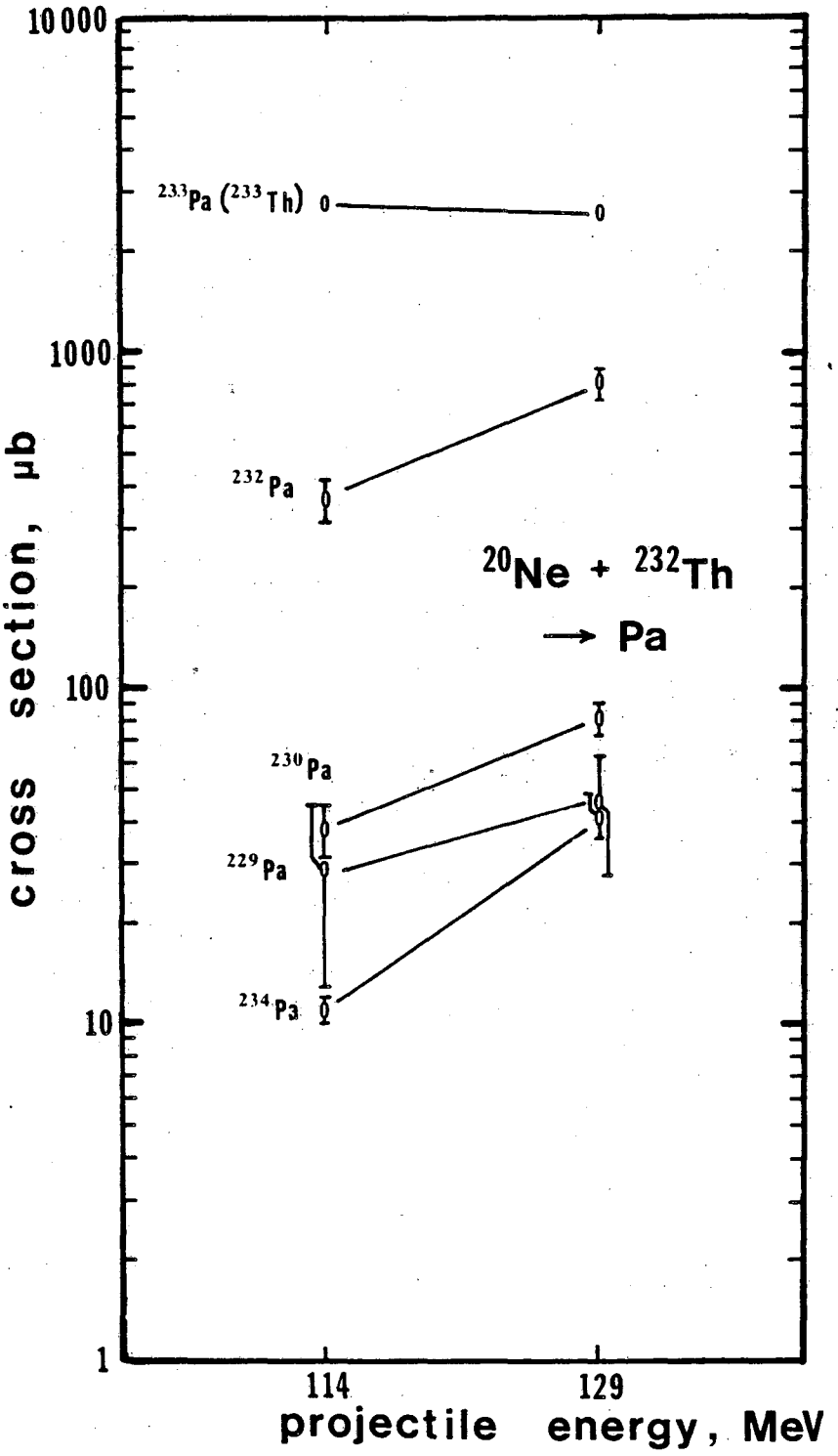

Figure 5

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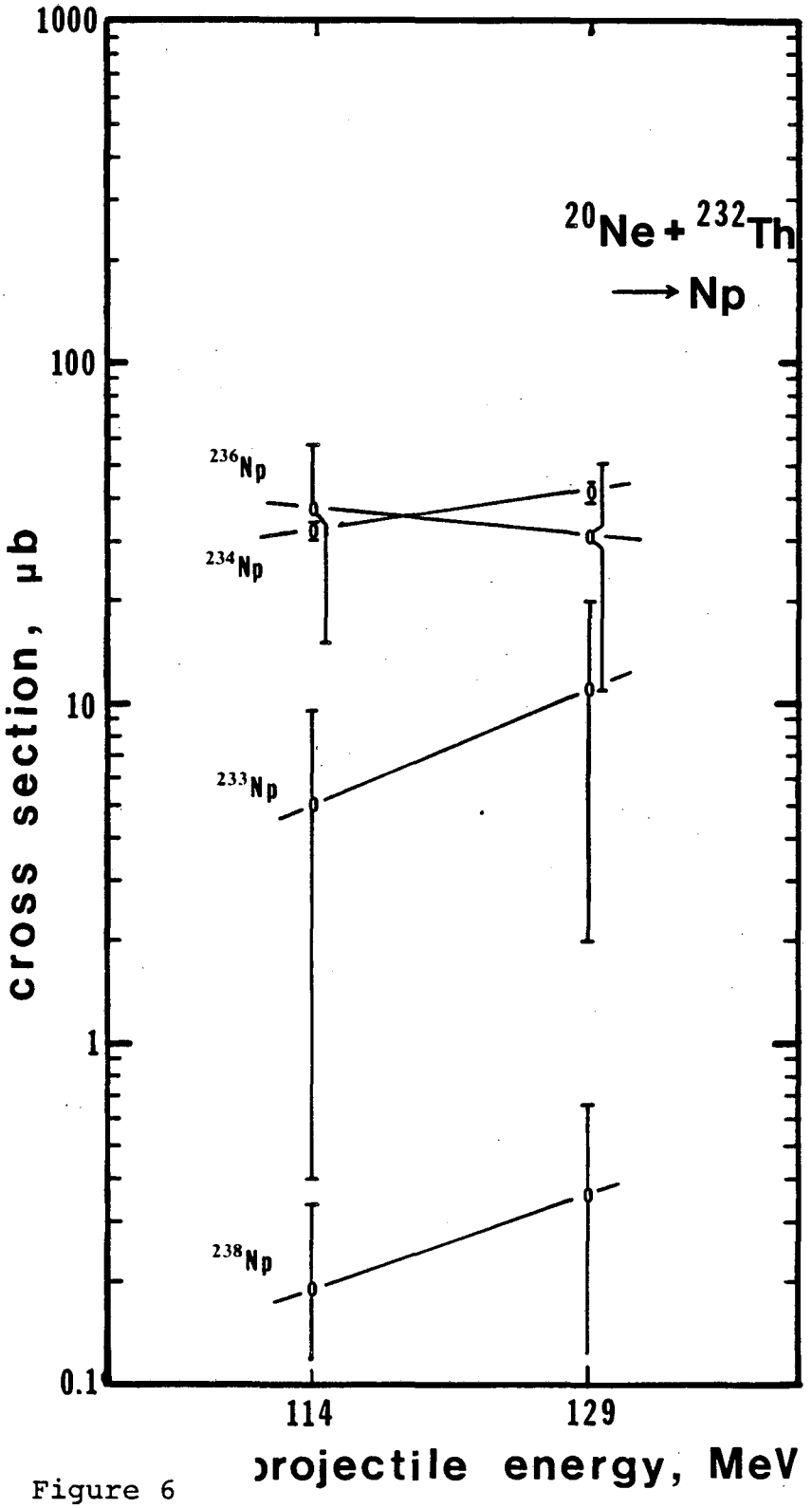

Figure 6

XBL 839-11841

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