

Recent α decay half-lives and analytic expression predictions including superheavy nuclei

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New recent experimental α decay half-lives have been compared with the results obtained from previously proposed formulas depending only on the mass and charge numbers of the α emitter and the Q_α value. For the heaviest nuclei they are also compared with calculations using the Density-Dependent M3Y (DDM3Y) effective interaction and the Viola-Seaborg-Sobiczewski (VSS) formulas. The correct agreement allows us to make predictions for the α decay half-lives of other still unknown superheavy nuclei from these analytic formulas using the extrapolated Q_α of G. Audi, A. H. Wapstra, and C. Thibault [Nucl. Phys. A729, 337 (2003)].

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The α decay process was described in 1928 [1,2] in terms of a quantum tunneling through the potential barrier separating the mother nucleus energy and the total energy of the separated α particle and daughter nucleus. To describe the α emission two different approaches have been developed. The cluster-like theories suppose that the α particle is preformed in the nucleus with a certain preformation factor while the fission-like approaches consider that the α particle is formed progressively during the very asymmetric fission of the parent nucleus. The experimental investigation cannot unambiguously distinguish these two formation modes. However, the possible one-body configurations play a minor role because in the quasi-molecular decay path investigated in the α decay process the potential barrier is governed by the balance between the repulsive Coulomb forces and the attractive proximity forces and the Q_α value; consequently the barrier top is more external and lower than the pure Coulomb barrier and corresponds to two separated fragments. The difference between the two approaches appears mainly in the way the decay constant is determined. In the unified fission models [3,4] the decay constant λ is the product of the constant assault frequency v_0 and the barrier penetrability P while in the preformed cluster models [5,6] a third factor is introduced: the cluster preformation probability P_0 .

Before the theoretical explanation and description of the α decay process, Geiger and Nuttall [7] observed a dependence of the α decay partial half-life $T_{1/2,\alpha}^{\text{expt}}$ on the mean α particle range for a fixed radioactive family and Geiger-Nuttall plots are now an expression of $\log_{10} T_\alpha$ as a function of $ZQ^{-1/2}$, because different new relations have been proposed [4,8–12] to calculate $\log_{10} T_\alpha$ from the measured kinetic energy of the α particle via $E_\alpha = Q_\alpha A_d / (A_\alpha + A_d)$ or from Q_α given or extrapolated from mass formulas or tables.

Recently, isotopes of the elements 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, and 118 have been synthesized in fusion-evaporation reactions using ^{209}Bi , $^{233,238}\text{U}$, $^{242,244}\text{Pu}$, ^{243}Am , $^{245,248}\text{Cm}$, and ^{249}Cf targets with ^{48}Ca and ^{70}Zn beams and observed via their α decay cascades [13–19]. These recent experimental

results have led to new theoretical studies on α decay, for example, within the relativistic mean field theory [20], the Desity-Dependent M3Y (DDM3Y) interaction [21,22], the generalized liquid drop model (GLDM) [23,24], and the Skyrme-Hartree-Fock mean-field model [25]. The predicted half-lives against α decay of these transuranium nuclei obtained with a semiempirical formula taking into account the magic numbers have also been compared with the analytical supersymmetric fission model results and the universal curves and the experimental data [12].

In previous studies [4,26] both theoretical description and analytical formulas were presented for the α emission. Within a generalized liquid drop model including the proximity effects between the α particle and the daughter nucleus and adjusted to reproduce the experimental Q value, the α emission half-lives were deduced from the WKB barrier penetration probability as for a spontaneous asymmetric fission. The RMS deviation between the theoretical and experimental values of $\log_{10} T_\alpha$ was 0.63 for a data set of 373 emitters having an α branching ratio close to one and 0.35 for the subset of 131 even-even nuclides. A fitting procedure led to the following empirical formulas, respectively, for the 131 even(Z)-even(N), 106 even-odd, 86 odd-even, and 50 odd-odd nuclei. A and Z are the mass and charge numbers of the mother nucleus. The rms deviations are, respectively, 0.285, 0.39, 0.36, and 0.35.

$$\log_{10}[T_{1/2}(s)] = -25.31 - 1.1629A^{1/6}\sqrt{Z} + \frac{1.5864Z}{\sqrt{Q_\alpha}}, \quad (1)$$

$$\log_{10}[T_{1/2}(s)] = -26.65 - 1.0859A^{1/6}\sqrt{Z} + \frac{1.5848Z}{\sqrt{Q_\alpha}}, \quad (2)$$

$$\log_{10}[T_{1/2}(s)] = -25.68 - 1.1423A^{1/6}\sqrt{Z} + \frac{1.592Z}{\sqrt{Q_\alpha}}, \quad (3)$$

$$\log_{10}[T_{1/2}(s)] = -29.48 - 1.113A^{1/6}\sqrt{Z} + \frac{1.6971Z}{\sqrt{Q_\alpha}}. \quad (4)$$

Because new α decays have been observed and their partial α decay half-lives $T_{1/2,\alpha}^{\text{expt}}$ have been measured [15–19,25,27–32], they are compared in Tables I and II with the calculated

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