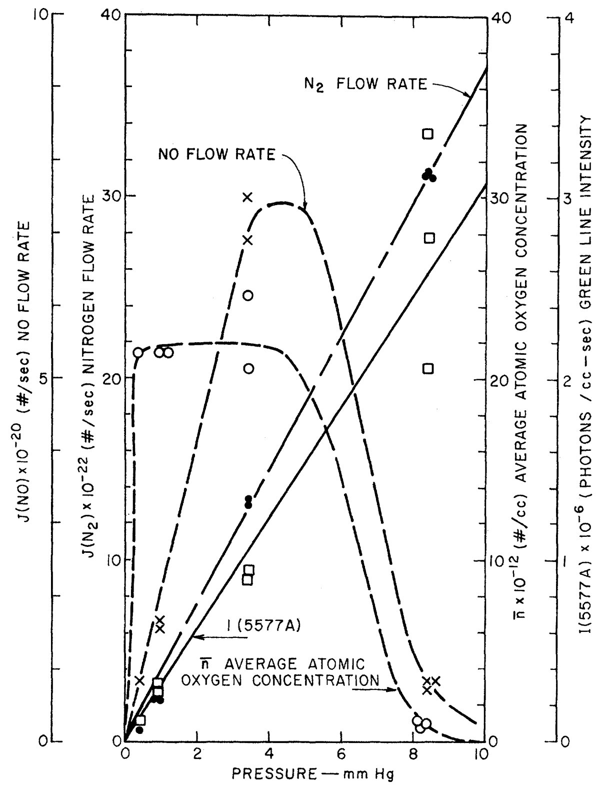

FIG. 1. Experimental results showing that I(5577A) does not vary as $\bar{n}^3$. All ordinates are in absolute units.

atomic oxygen concentration. The Chapman reaction (1), if present, could excite at most only 10% of the observed emission. At a pressure of 0.4 mm Hg we have $\bar{n} = 2\times10^{13}$ atoms/cc, while the upper limit of the 5577A flux attributable to the Chapman reaction is 1.5×10^4 photons/cc sec. Therefore the rate coefficient is less than 2×10^{-36} cc^2/sec, which is insufficient by two orders of magnitude for producing the observed airglow intensity.

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COMPARISON OF THE β-α ANGULAR CORRELATIONS IN Li^8 AND B^8 †

M. E. Nordberg, F. B. Morinigo, and C. A. Barnes
Kellogg Radiation Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California
(Received September 6, 1960)

Although the radiations following allowed β decay of unoriented nuclei are uncorrelated in angle with the β rays, forbidden effects may produce correlations of the form $1 + B\cos^2\theta$, where the small coefficient B depends on the details of the matrix elements involved. As a possible test of the conserved vector current (C.V.C.) theory,[1] various authors[2,3] have suggested a measurement of the difference, δ, of the B coefficients in the β-α correlations of the two decays: $Li^8(\beta\bar{\nu})Be^{8*}(\alpha)He^4$ and $B^8(\bar{\beta}\nu)Be^{8*}(\alpha)He^4$. Assuming an average strength for the relevant $M1$ matrix element, Bernstein and Lewis[2] predicted $\delta = 0.015W_\beta$, where W_β is in Mev and we neglect m_0^2/W_β^2. Our preliminary result,[4] $\delta \cong (0.003 \pm 0.004)W_\beta$, conflicted with this prediction and indicated either the failure of the C.V.C. theory or that the value assumed for the $M1$ matrix element was too large. Since our preliminary measurements, the $M1$ matrix element has been calculated on an intermediate-coupling model.[5,6] Weidenmüller's calculations[6] predict $0.005W_\beta \leq \delta \leq 0.009W_\beta$ on the basis of the C.V.C. theory, or a similar but smaller effect, $0.001W_\beta \leq \delta \leq 0.004W_\beta$ on the basis of the Fermi theory. In view of these calculations we have remeasured δ with improved statistical accuracy and with special emphasis on reducing systematic errors, and we find $\delta = (0.0069 \pm 0.0008)W_\beta$, in agreement with the C.V.C. theory.

Neglecting smaller terms, the β-α angular correlation in the laboratory is of the form $W(\theta) = 1 + A\cos\theta + B\cos^2\theta$. The coefficient A arises from the transformation from Be^{8*} to laboratory coordinates because of the recoil of Be^{8*} from the β decay; it may have small contributions from various forbidden vector and axial-vector matrix elements. To first order in P_β/P_α, neglecting forbidden terms,[7] $A = -P_\beta/P_\alpha \cong -0.0093W_\beta$. The values for A measured in the present experiment are slightly smaller:

$$A(\mathrm{Li}^8) = -(0.0087 \pm 0.0002)W_\beta,$$

$$A(\mathrm{B}^8) = -(0.0088 \pm 0.0005)W_\beta.$$

The difference $\delta = B(\mathrm{Li}^8) - B(\mathrm{B}^8)$ arises from the small forbidden vector matrix elements of the β decay. As shown by Weidenmüller,[6] considering only the $M1$ matrix element:

$$\delta \propto (P_\beta^{\ 2}/W_\beta)\frac{\langle \| l \| \rangle + \langle \| \sigma \| \rangle}{\langle \| \sigma \| \rangle},$$

$0.001W_\beta \leq \delta \leq 0.004W_\beta$ for the Fermi theory;

$$\delta \propto (P_\beta^{\ 2}/W_\beta)\frac{\langle \| l \| \rangle + 4.7\langle \| \sigma \| \rangle}{\langle \| \sigma \| \rangle},$$

$0.005W_\beta \leq \delta \leq 0.009W_\beta$ for the C.V.C. theory. Other second-forbidden vector matrix elements which could contribute to δ, such as the $E2$, are predicted to be at least an order of magnitude smaller. With an average β energy of 11 Mev the measured values for B are

$$B(\mathrm{Li}^8) = (0.0029 \pm 0.0003)W_\beta,$$

$$B(\mathrm{B}^8) = -(0.0040 \pm 0.0007)W_\beta,$$

$$\delta = (0.0069 \pm 0.0008)W_\beta,$$

where the standard deviations quoted are statistical in origin only. The less precise values of our earlier experiment,[4] $B(\mathrm{Li}^8) = (0.003 \pm 0.002)W_\beta$ and $B(\mathrm{B}^8) = (0.000 \pm 0.004)W_\beta$, are consistent with these new measurements. The recent work of Krebs et al.[8] gives $B(\mathrm{Li}^8) = (0.0054^{+0.0027}_{-0.0017})W_\beta$ at $W_\beta = 7.5$ Mev.

The apparatus and techniques of this experiment were similar to those of the previous one[4] but improved in several important ways to reduce and check systematic errors. The angle of the target to the beam was changed from 45° to 15° (see insert in Fig. 1) in order to minimize the depth of recoil of B^8 nuclei into the target backing. Previously, this recoil had produced a loss in energy of the α particles in escaping from the target which was much more severe

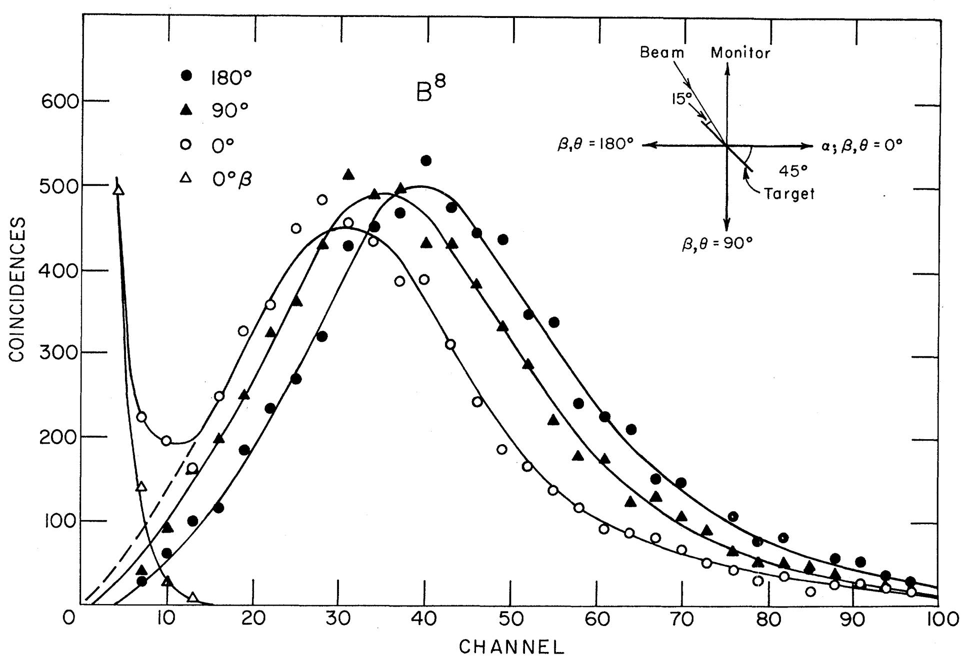

FIG. 1. Pulse-height spectra of α particles coincident with β rays at 0°, 90°, 180°, following the β decay of B^8. The low-energy end of the $\theta = 0°$ spectrum is extrapolated by subtracting β-β coincidences (curve marked 0° β) as explained in the text.

for B^8 than for Li^8. During bombardment, a shield around the target protected the α counter from any sputtered target material and from any recoiling B^8 or Li^8 ions which left the target. The spectra of α particles from the Be^{8*} coincident with β rays from the B^8 were much improved by these changes, as compared with the earlier experiment, and were in fact very similar to the Li^8 spectra. Figure 1 shows the B^8 α spectra for a typical case.

New α counters, thin to β rays, permitted measurements to be made when the angle between the α momentum and the β momentum was $\theta = 0°$ as well as 90° and 180°. However, at $\theta = 0°$, a small fraction of the β rays going through the α counter and into the β counter, produced small pulses in the α counter in coincidence with the β counter. For this reason the low-energy tail of the $\theta = 0°$ coincident α spectrum was extrapolated by subtracting these β-β coincidences, as determined by stopping all the α particles from the target. (See Fig. 1.) Errors produced by this extrapolation would be expected to be in the same direction for both $B(Li^8)$ and $B(B^8)$, and tend to cancel in the difference δ. To estimate the possible magnitude of this error, we have also determined δ by analyzing only the $\theta = 90°$ and 180° data and find δ decreased by $0.0002W_\beta$.

The lithium targets were evaporated in a narrow 2-mm wide vertical strip on the thin aluminum backing to minimize changes in geometry due to lateral motion of the incoming beam. A check for motion of the target spot relative to the α counter was also made with a monitor counter. From the ratio of monitor counts to noncoincident α counts, we conclude that the α-counter solid angle was constant to within 0.002, which when divided by the average β energy, $\overline{W}_\beta \cong 11$ Mev, represents an uncertainty of $0.0002W_\beta$ in δ. The determination of $\overline{W}_\beta$ could be in error by ~5%, which would produce an error in δ of $\sim 0.0004W_\beta$. We estimate the systematic error from all these sources to be less than $0.001W_\beta$ in δ.

Including the statistical and estimated systematic errors, our experimentally determined value for δ lies within the range predicted by the C.V.C. theory based upon intermediate-coupling calculations. An experimental determination of the relevant $M1$ and $E2$ matrix elements is desirable, as a check on the theoretical estimates.

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ft VALUE OF O^{14} AND THE UNIVERSAL FERMI INTERACTION*

R. K. Bardin, C. A. Barnes, W. A. Fowler, and P. A. Seeger
W. K. Kellogg Radiation Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California
(Received September 6, 1960)

The experimentally observed near equality of the coupling constants in the nuclear beta-decay and in muon decay has suggested the attractive idea that all of the "weak interactions" proceed by a universal Fermi interaction.[1] The fact that the coupling constant in nuclear beta-decay is not considerably decreased by virtue of the neutron or proton existing part of the time as a proton or neutron plus pion cloud finds an elegant explanation in the conserved vector current hypothesis of Feynman and Gell-Mann.[1,2] It is thus of considerable interest to establish the degree to which the coupling constants G_V for the vector nuclear beta decay and G_μ for the muon decay are equal.[3-5] Recently the precision with which G_μ is known has improved considerably due to