Clustering features of the $^7$Be nucleus in relativistic fragmentation

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Abstract

Charge topology of fragmentation of 1.2 A GeV $^7$Be nuclei in nuclear track emulsion is presented. The dissociation channels $^4$He + $^3$He, $^2^3$He+ n, $^4$He + $^1$H are considered in detail. It is established that the events $^6$Be + n amount about to 27 % in the channel $^4$He + $^1$H.

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Stacks of pellicles of nuclear track emulsion provide a special opportunity to explore clustering of light nuclei (reviewed in [1]). The presented results on dissociation of $^7\text{Be}$ nuclei are demonstrate the progress in research carried out by the BECQUEREL Collaboration. The $^7\text{Be}$ nucleus is a source for the study of the states $^3\text{He} + ^4\text{He}$, $^3\text{He} + ^3\text{He} + n$, $^6\text{Li} + p$ and $^6\text{Be} + n$. The pattern of fragmentation is important for understanding of the structure features of the nuclei $^8\text{B}$, $^9\text{C}$ and $^{12}\text{N}$ because the $^7\text{Be}$ nucleus plays the role of a core in them.

Nuclear track emulsion was irradiated at the Nuclotron of the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR, Dubna) by a mixed beam of $^7\text{Be}$, $^{10}\text{C}$, and $^{12}\text{N}$ nuclei which was created by selecting products of charge-exchange and fragmentation processes involving $^{12}\text{C}$ nuclei accelerated to an energy of 1.2 GeV per nucleon [2], [3], [4], [5]. Viewing of the exposed pellicles and the track classification made it possible to establish the charge topology of the $^7\text{Be}$ nucleus. Peripheral fragmentation distribution of the 289 found events $N_{\text{ws}}$ not accompanied by target fragments (“white” stars) is presented in Table 1 over the fragmentation channels as well as 380 events $N_{\text{tf}}$ accompanied by target fragments.

The distribution of the 79 events $^2\text{He}$ which were successfully identified by multiple scattering is presented in Table 2. It gives an idea about the relationship configurations $^3\text{He} + ^4\text{He}$ and $^2^3\text{He} + n$ in the $^7\text{Be}$ structure, as the identification was carried out without bias. The channel $^3\text{He} + ^4\text{He}$ dominates over $^2^3\text{He}$ indicating on a higher probability of the two-body configuration $^3\text{He} + ^4\text{He}$ in the $^7\text{Be}$ structure compared to $^2^3\text{He} + n$. The probability of the $^2^3\text{He} + n$ channel is significant, amounting to about 30%.

One of the tasks of this study consisted in searching for narrow pairs $^2^3\text{He}$ with values $Q_{^2^3\text{He}}$ in a range of 100 – 200 keV the indication to which was obtained for dissociation $^9\text{C} \rightarrow ^3^3\text{He}$. The obtained distribution includes four events with values in the range of 200–400 keV (Fig. I, dotted histogram in insertion). These data do not exclude a possible existence of the resonant state $^2^3\text{He}$ discussed in [6].
TABLE I: Distribution over the dissociation channels of $^7$Be nuclei for “white” stars $N_{ws}$ and events with target fragments or produced mesons $N_{tf}$.

| Channel $\text{He + He + H + Li + H}$ | $N_{ws}$ | $N_{tf}$ |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                                      | 115     | 154     |
|                                      | 157     | 226     |
|                                      | 14      | -       |
|                                      | 3       | -       |

TABLE II: Distribution over the dissociation channels of $^7$Be nuclei for “white” stars $N_{ws}$ and events with target fragments or produced mesons $N_{tf}$.

| Channel $\text{He + + He + He}$ | $N_{ws}$ | $N_{tf}$ |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                                 | 32      | 24      |
|                                 | 14      | 9       |

There is an opportunity of $^7$Be fragmentation via an unstable $^6$Be nucleus with a threshold 1.37 MeV above $^4$He + 2p. Fig. 2 shows distribution of events $^4$He + 2p over the difference of the invariant mass of the produced $\alpha$-particle and two protons and their mass sum $Q_{^4He+2p}$. The region $Q_{^4He+2p} < 6$ MeV indicates the presence of about 27% events $^7$Be $\rightarrow$ $^6$Be $\rightarrow$ $^4$He + 2p. Thus, contribution of the configuration $^6$Be + n to the $^7$Be structure is estimated at a level of $8 \pm 1\%$.

The question about the contribution of the $^5$Li resonance decaying to $\alpha + p$ with an energy of 1.69 MeV and width of 1.5 MeV has a significance independent of $^6$Be since the production threshold of $^5$Li + p is 0.35 MeV higher than the one of the ground state $^6$Be. Despite of the absence of a clear signal the distribution $Q_{\alpha p}$ (Fig. 3) does not contradict to a possible contribution of $^5$Li decays.

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FIG. 1: Distribution of events $^7\text{Be}\to^3\text{He} + ^4\text{He}$ and $^2^3\text{He}$ over the excitation energy $Q_{^2\text{He}}$ (solid and dotted histograms, respectively). Histograms for values $Q_{^2\text{He}} < 1\text{ MeV}$ are on the insertion and $^2^3\text{He}$ over the excitation energy $Q_{^2\text{He}}$ (solid and dotted histograms, respectively). Histograms for values $Q_{^2\text{He}} < 1\text{ MeV}$ are on the insertion.

FIG. 2: Distribution of events $^7\text{Be}\to^4\text{He} + 2p$ over the excitation energy $Q_{^4\text{He}+2p}$. 
FIG. 3: Distribution of events $^7\text{Be} \rightarrow ^4\text{He} + 2p$ over the excitation energy $Q_{^4\text{He}+p}$ (events related to the $^6\text{Be}$ decays are excluded from this histogram.)

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