Azimuthal distributions of fission fragments and $\alpha$ particles emitted in the reactions $^{36}\text{Ar} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 20$ and 35 MeV and $^{14}\text{N} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 50$ MeV


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Azimuthal correlations between coincident fission fragments and $\alpha$ particles were measured for the reactions $^{36}\text{Ar} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 20$ and 35 MeV and $^{14}\text{N} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 50$ MeV. At all energies, coplanar emission is enhanced. The azimuthal distributions for fission fragments and $\alpha$ particles are decoupled using a simple parametrization. Both azimuthal distributions are highly anisotropic at lower incident energies; these anisotropies decrease with energy. At the highest incident energies, energetic $\alpha$ particles emitted at large transverse momenta appear to be more suited than fission fragments to tag the orientation of the entrance channel reaction plane.

Intermediate energy nucleus-nucleus collisions exhibit a subtle interplay between mean-field and nucleon-nucleon collision dynamics. At low incident energies, the mean field is largely attractive. As a consequence, light particles are predominantly emitted to negative deflection angles in the entrance channel reaction plane. With increasing energy, individual nucleon-nucleon collisions are less hindered by the Pauli exclusion principle and the azimuthal distribution of the emitted particles should become more isotropic. A number of measurements are in qualitative agreement with such expectations. To be more quantitative, however, one must locate the entrance channel reaction plane experimentally and know how accurately it has been determined. Well-calibrated techniques for determination of the orientation of the reaction plane are also essential for measurements of triple differential cross sections $\sigma(E, \theta, \phi)$ and for transverse flow analyses.

In order to explore the distribution of particles in and out of the reaction plane and to explore techniques for reaction plane determination, we have investigated correlations between coincident fission fragments and $\alpha$ particles emitted in the reactions $^{36}\text{Ar} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 20$ and 35 MeV and $^{14}\text{N} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 50$ MeV. The experiment was performed with beams from the K500 cyclotron of Michigan State University. A $^{238}\text{UF}_4$ target of 400 $\mu$g/cm$^2$ areal density was used. Charged particles were detected with 96 plastic CsI(Tl) phoswich detectors of the "Dwarf-Ball-Wall" array developed at Washington University, which has an angular coverage of about 85% of $4\pi$. Two coincident fission fragments were detected with two $X$-$Y$ position sensitive multwire detectors covering angular ranges of $\theta_1 = 36^\circ - 116^\circ$ for $\phi_1 = 0^\circ \pm 10^\circ$ and $\theta_2 = 39^\circ - 89^\circ$ for $\phi_2 = 180^\circ \pm 30^\circ$. Further details of the experimental setup can be found in Refs. 11 and 12. In order to reduce contributions from peripheral collisions, all data were filtered placing the following gates on the fission fragment folding angles $\theta_1 \leq 159^\circ$ and $160^\circ$ for $^{36}\text{Ar} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 20$ and 35 MeV, and $\theta_1 \leq 170^\circ$ for $^{14}\text{N} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 50$ MeV. Unless otherwise stated, all angles and energies are given with respect to the laboratory frame of reference. Polar angles with respect to the beam axis are denoted as $\theta$ and azimuthal angles are denoted as $\phi$.

The left-hand-side panels of Fig. 1 show the azimuthal distributions $Y_\theta^f(\phi_\alpha)$ of $\alpha$ particles emitted at $\theta_\alpha = 70^\circ$ and with energy $E_\alpha = 46-70$ MeV in coincidence with two fission fragments; in our convention, $\alpha$-particle emission in the fission plane corresponds to either $\phi_\alpha = 0^\circ$ or $180^\circ$. (Azimuthal distributions presented in this Rapid Communication are normalized to an average value of unity.) Consistent with previous observations, $\alpha$ particles are preferentially emitted in the fission plane. For the decay of residues with large angular momenta, the fission plane is closely correlated with the entrance channel reaction plane (which is perpendicular to the semiclassical entrance channel orbital angular momentum vector). In order to extract the azimuthal anisotropies, $R_\theta^f = Y_\theta^f(\phi_\alpha = 0^\circ)/Y_\theta^f(\phi_\alpha = 90^\circ)$, we have fitted the azimuthal distribution with a simple functional form: $Y_\theta^f(\phi_\alpha) \propto \exp(-\kappa \sin^2 \phi_\alpha)$, where $\kappa$ was treated as an adjustable parameter. Examples of such fits are shown by the dash-dotted curves in the left-hand side panels of Fig. 1. The anisotropies provided by the fits are shown on the right-hand side of Fig. 1, as a function of $\alpha$-particle kinetic energy $E_\alpha$ for $\theta_\alpha = 70^\circ$ (top panel), and as a function of emission angle $\theta_\alpha$ for $E_\alpha = 46-70$ MeV (bottom panel). The most pronounced azimuthal asymmetries are observed for high energy $\alpha$ particles emitted at $\theta_\alpha \approx 70^\circ - 90^\circ$. The enhancement of $\alpha$-particle emission in the fission plane becomes less pronounced with increasing projectile velocity.

Decreasing values of $R_\theta^f$ correspond to less enhanced emission in the entrance channel reaction plane, for fission fragments, $\alpha$ particles, or both. In order to assess the degree to which emission is enhanced in the entrance chan-
FIG. 1. Left-hand-side panels: Azimuthal distributions $Y^a_\theta$ between fission fragments and $\alpha$ particles for $E_\gamma = 46\text{--}70$ MeV and $\theta_\alpha = 70^\circ$. Right-hand-side panels: In- to out-of-plane ratio $R^a_\theta$ for coincident fission fragments and $\alpha$ particles. The top panel shows the dependence of $R^a_\theta$ on the kinetic energy of $\alpha$ particles emitted at $\theta_\alpha = 70^\circ$; the bottom panel shows the dependence of $R^a_\theta$ on the emission angle for $\alpha$ particles with $E_\gamma = 46\text{--}70$ MeV. Open squares, solid points, and open circles show data for the reactions $^{36}\text{Ar} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 20$ and 35 MeV and $^{14}\text{N} + ^{238}\text{U}$ at $E/A = 50$ MeV, respectively. The solid, dashed, dotted, and dash-dotted lines depict calculations described in the text.

In the reaction plane, we assumed that the measured azimuthal correlations result from a convolution of the individual emission patterns of $\alpha$ particles and fission fragments, both of which are enhanced in the entrance channel reaction plane. The two emission patterns were described with respect to the orientation of the entrance channel reaction plane and parametrized as in Refs. 1 and 4. These parametrizations, given below, are chosen because of their simplicity and because they can fit the experimental data rather well. Different functional forms are not expected to change our qualitative conclusions.

The probability distribution $P(\phi)$ for the angle $\phi$ between the entrance channel scattering plane and the fission plane was parametrized as

$$P_f(\phi) \propto \exp(-C \sin^2 \phi).$$  

(1)

Semiclassically, $C = h^2 J^2 / 2I_f I_{eff}$, where $J$, $T_f$, and $I_{eff}$ are the angular momentum, temperature, and effective moment of inertia, respectively, of the fissioning nucleus, and $\theta_f$ is the emission angle (in the rest frame of the fissioning nucleus) of one fragment with respect to the beam direction. For heavy ion induced fission at high angular momenta, the effective moments of inertia are larger than expected from the transition state model. Moreover, important properties of the fissioning nuclei (recoil velocity, excitation energy, mass, charge, effective moment of inertia, and angular momentum) are not accurately known because of pre-equilibrium emissions. Thus we treat $C$ as an adjustable parameter.

The emission of $\alpha$ particles was described using an expression for the emission from an ideal gas of temperature $T$, rotating with angular velocity $\omega$ perpendicular to the reaction plane, and moving with a velocity $v_0$ parallel to the beam axis: 

$$P_\alpha(E_\alpha, \theta_\alpha, \phi_\alpha - \phi) \propto [(E_\alpha - V_c) E_\alpha]^{1/2} \times \frac{J_1(iK)}{iK} \exp(-E_i / T).$$

(2)

Here, 

$$E_i = E_\alpha - V_c + E_0 - 2[E_0(E_\alpha - V_c)]^{1/2} \cos \theta_\alpha,$$

$$K = (R_0 / T) [2m_\alpha E_i (E_\alpha - V_c) \sin^2 \theta_\alpha \sin^2 (\phi_\alpha - \phi)]^{1/2},$$

and $E_0 = \frac{1}{2} m_\alpha v_0^2$; $J_1$ denotes the first-order Bessel function; $E_\alpha$, $m_\alpha$, $\theta_\alpha$, and $\phi_\alpha$ are the energy, mass, polar angle, and azimuthal angle, respectively, of the emitted particle; the parameter $V_c$ corrects for the Coulomb repulsion from the heavy reaction residue, assumed to be at rest in the laboratory. For comparison to measurements, one must sum over all possible orientations of the reaction plane. Accordingly, the correlations between coincident fission fragments and $\alpha$ particles are given by

$$Y^a_\theta(E_\alpha, \theta_\theta, \phi_\alpha - \phi) \propto \int_{0}^{2\pi} d\phi P_f(\phi) P_\alpha(E_\alpha, \theta_\alpha, \phi_\alpha - \phi).$$

(3)

### TABLE I. Parameters used for the calculations shown in Figs. 1 and 2.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>$E/A$ (MeV)</th>
<th>$v_0$/$c$</th>
<th>$T$ (MeV)</th>
<th>$R_0/c$</th>
<th>$C$</th>
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<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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*Extracted from Ref. 17.

*In accordance with Ref. 4, this parameter was taken as 0.6 times the slope parameter extracted by a nonrotating moving source analysis of the kinetic-energy spectrum of the emitted particle.*
Three calculated correlations between α particles and fission fragments, \( Y_a^{\alpha}(\phi_a) \), are shown by the solid, dashed, and dotted curves in the left-hand-side panels of Fig. 1. The parameters used for these calculations are listed in Table I. The results of these calculations are nearly indistinguishable. Considerable ambiguities remain concerning the individual α-particle and fission fragment azimuthal distributions because wider fission distributions, \( P_f(\phi) \), can be compensated by narrower α-particle distributions, \( P_\alpha(E_\alpha, \theta_\alpha, \phi_\alpha) \), without significant effect on the α-fission correlation. In order to reduce these ambiguities, one may explore the azimuthal correlation function for two α particles detected in coincidence with two fission fragments:

\[
Y_a^{\alpha}(\theta_1, \phi_1, \theta_2, \phi_2) \propto \frac{Y_a^{\alpha}(\theta_1, \phi_1, \theta_2, \phi_2)}{Y_a^{\alpha}(\theta_1, \phi_1)}.
\]

An example of such a correlation function for the reaction \(^{36}\text{Ar} + ^{238}\text{U}\) at \( E/A = 35 \) MeV is given in the top panel of Fig. 2. Here, the dependence is shown for the variable \( \Delta \phi = \phi_2 - \phi_1 \) for fixed angles \( \phi_1 = 104^\circ \), \( \theta_1 = 42^\circ \), and \( \theta_2 = 63^\circ \). The dotted, dashed, and solid curves show calculations performed with the same sets of parameters as for the corresponding curves in Fig. 1. Much of the parameter ambiguity which existed in Fig. 1 for the description of \( Y_a^{\alpha}(\phi_a) \) is now removed in the correlation function \( Y_a^{\alpha}(\theta, \phi_1, \theta_2, \phi_2) \). Rather than fit a large number of α-α correlation functions measured with moderate statistical accuracy, we have constructed averaged α-α azimuthal distributions, \( Y_a^{\alpha}(\Delta \phi) \), defined by

\[
Y_a^{\alpha}(\Delta \phi) \propto \sum_i Y_a^{\alpha}(\theta_1, \phi_1, \theta_2, \phi_2) e_i(\Delta \phi) / \sum_i e_i(\Delta \phi),
\]

where \( e_i(\Delta \phi) = 1 \) for \( \Delta \phi = |\phi_1 - \phi_2| \pm 30^\circ \) and \( e_i(\Delta \phi) = 0 \) otherwise; the function \( e_i(\Delta \phi) \) selects only those detector pairs for which the difference in azimuthal angles lies within \( \Delta \phi \pm 30^\circ \). The summation in Eq. (6) is performed over all detectors \( i \) and \( j \) which are centered at polar angles \( \theta_1 = 40^\circ - 50^\circ \) and \( \theta_2 = 60^\circ - 80^\circ \), respectively. Averaged azimuthal α-α distributions obtained from Eq.
(6) are shown in the three lower panels of Fig. 2. The dotted, dashed, and solid curves represent calculations, using Eq. (5), for the averaged azimuthal distributions using the same parameter values as in Fig. 1 and taking the individual detector locations into account according to Eq. (6). Most of the parameter ambiguities which existed in the description of the a-fission correlations of Fig. 1 are therefore removed by additional measurements of the average azimuthal a-a distributions. The solid curves in Figs. 1 and 2 represent calculations with an optimum choice of parameters. These calculations also reproduce other overall trends of the data rather well, including the energy and angular dependences shown by the solid lines in the right-hand-side panels of Fig. 1.

Additional insight can be gained by examining the distributions \( P_f(\phi) \) and \( P_a(E_a, \theta, \phi) \), calculated for different orientations of the entrance channel reaction plane, using Eqs. (1) and (2) and the parameters which provide the best description of the experimental data. The a-particle distribution was calculated for \( \theta_a = 70^\circ \) using Eq. (2) where the integration is over the a-particle energy range \( E_a = 46-70 \text{ MeV} \). The left-hand-side panels of Fig. 3 show azimuthal distributions for a particles (top) and fission fragments (bottom) calculated with the optimum parameters for the three reactions. Both fission and a-particle emission become less concentrated in the reaction plane as the projectile energy is increased. Emission out of the reaction plane appears to increase more rapidly for fission than for energetic a particles. The mechanism causing the rapid broadening in the fission distributions is not certain. Broader fission azimuthal distributions could arise from more compact or hotter fission transition states.

\[
Y_{aa}(\theta_1, \theta_2, \Delta \phi) \propto \int_0^{2\pi} d\phi \int_{\Delta E_1} dE_1 P_a(E_1, \theta, \phi) \int_{\Delta E_2} dE_2 P_a(E_2, \theta, \phi + \Delta \phi).
\]

Here, \( P_a \) is calculated from Eq. (2) and \( \Delta E_1 = \Delta E_2 = 46-150 \text{ MeV} \); one a particle is detected at \( \theta = 70^\circ \) and the other a particle is detected at the polar angle \( \theta \). These calculated azimuthal a-a correlations also decrease strongly with projectile velocity, a trend which has been experimentally observed.\(^2,5,16\)

In summary, we have investigated azimuthal correlations between a particles and coincident fission fragments. A simple parametization has been used to extract the degree to which fission and a-particle emission are enhanced in the entrance channel reaction plane. Both emission patterns become broader as the projectile velocity increases. The most pronounced azimuthal anisotropies are observed for energetic a particles emitted at

\[
\theta_a \approx 70^\circ-90^\circ; \quad \text{these particles appear to be better suited than fission fragments to tag the orientation of the entrance channel reaction plane.}
\]

Recent measurements of the multiplicities of pre- and postfission neutrons from intermediate energy heavy ion reactions suggest, however, that fission occurs at a rather low temperature during the final stages of these reactions.\(^14\) Therefore, misalignments of the residue angular momentum caused by pre- or postfission light particle emission may contribute significantly to the broadening of the fission azimuthal distribution. Energetic a particles, emitted with large transverse momenta during an earlier stage of the reaction, remain strongly aligned in the reaction plane and therefore could be a trigger of choice for tagging the entrance channel reaction plane.

The upper right-hand-side panel in Fig. 3 shows the calculated angular dependence of the ratio \( R_{aa} = \frac{Y_{aa}(0^\circ)}{Y_{aa}(90^\circ)} \), where \( \theta_a \approx 70^\circ-90^\circ; \) these particles appear to be better suited than fission fragments to tag the orientation of the entrance channel reaction plane.

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AZIMUTHAL DISTRIBUTIONS OF FISSION FRAGMENTS AND . . .


