2015 European Nuclear Physics Conference
European Physical Society · university of groningen
Groningen · 31 August - 4 September 2015 · www.EuNCP2015.org

Activation cross section measurement of the $^{17}O(p,\gamma)^{18}F$ reaction in a wide energy range

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Introduction

• The **CNO cycles** are fusion processes in stars that convert hydrogen to helium. These **hydrogen burning processes** occur in several sites and stages of stellar evolution, such as **red giants**, asymptotic giant branch **(AGB) stars**, **massive stars**, and **classical novae**.

• One of the important reactions in the **CNO-III** and **CNO-IV** cycles is the **$^{17}O(p,\gamma)^{18}F$** [1]. The only available total cross section measurement in a wide energy range for this reaction dates back to several decades ago [2] which makes the theoretical extrapolation to astrophysical energies more difficult and introduces uncertainty.

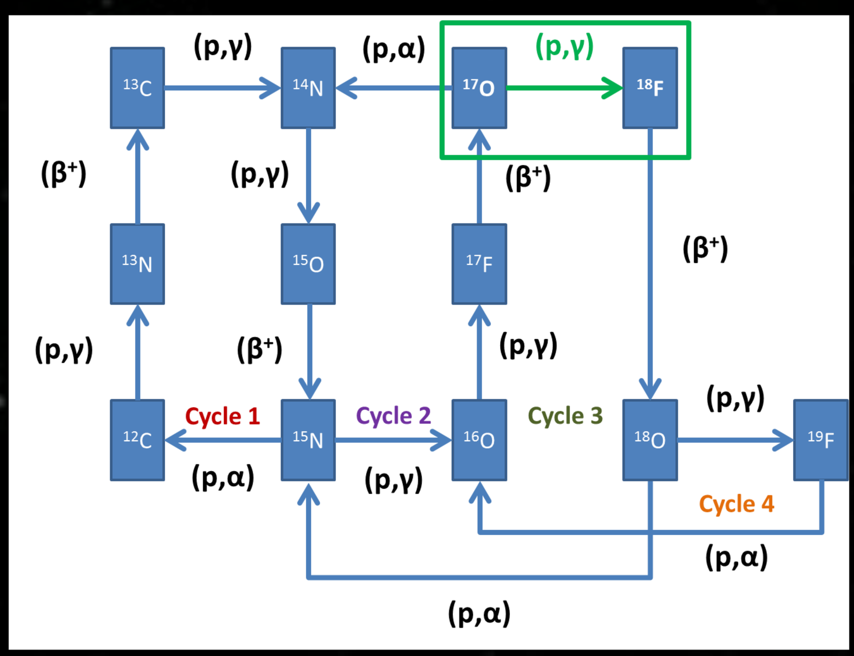

Fig. 1 – CNO cycles.

• The aim of the present work is to provide precise total cross section data in the energy range between about 500 keV and the 2 MeV using the **activation method**. The experimental campaign at the new tandetron accelerator of Atomki is in progress.

Experiment

• The present experiment is the first scientific project on the new accelerator (Fig. 2-3), the beam energy calibration was carried out using resonances in the $^{27}Al(p,\gamma)$ reaction.

• The Ta_2O_5 targets were produced by **anodic oxidation** of tantalum backings in isotopically enriched water [3]. The target thicknesses were measured with **RBS** technique, using an alpha beam of 1.6 MeV. In Fig. 4 the typical spectrum can be seen, clearly showing the Ta_2O_5 layer on the Ta backing.

• Target stability is monitored with $^{17}O(p,\gamma)$ and $^{18}O(p,\gamma)$ resonance scans detecting the prompt gamma radiations, as shown in Fig. 5.

• The targets were irradiated by proton beams of **several** μA intensity for a few hours, after which they were transported to an offline detector for the measurement of the ^{18}F decay (see Fig. 6).

Fig. 2 – Tandetron accelerator at Atomki.

Fig. 3 – Experimental setup.

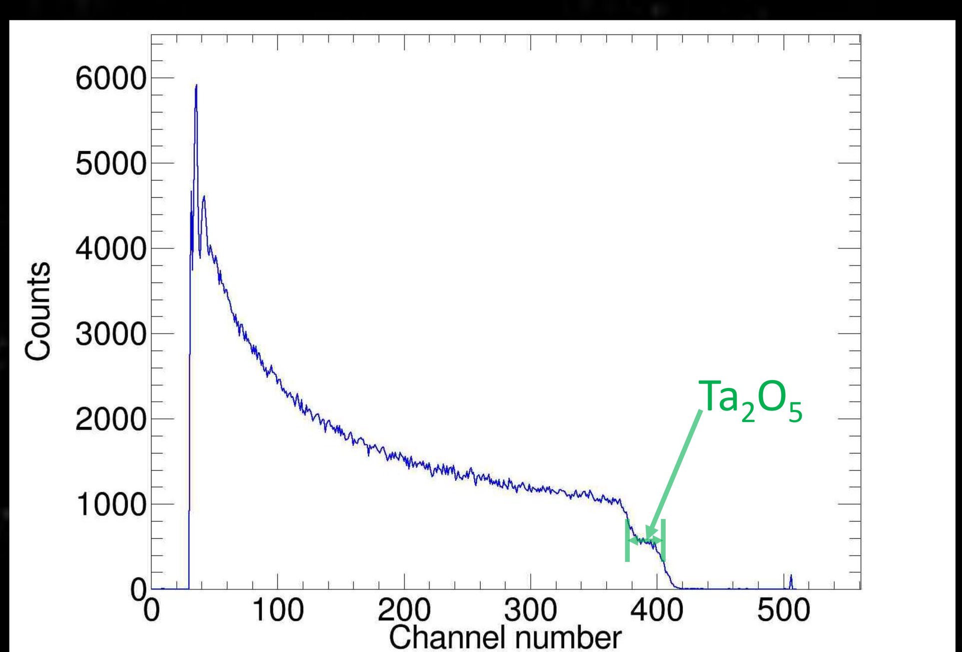

Fig. 4 – RBS spectrum of a Ta_2O_5 target, measured E_α = 1.6 MeV, with detector at 135°.

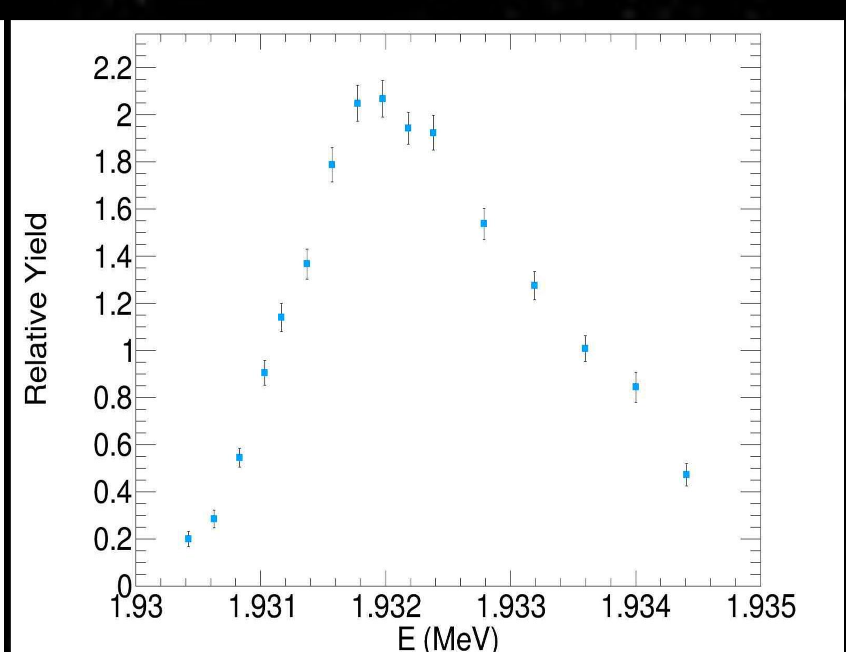

Fig. 5 – $^{18}O(p,\gamma)$ resonance.

Analysis

• The main decay path of the ^{18}F is by β^+ emission (96.7%) with half-life of 109.77 minutes. To track this β^+ decay curve, several 10-minute gamma-spectra were taken to measure the 511 keV annihilation radiation, allowing the calculation of the activity after the activation of the Ta_2O_5 target.

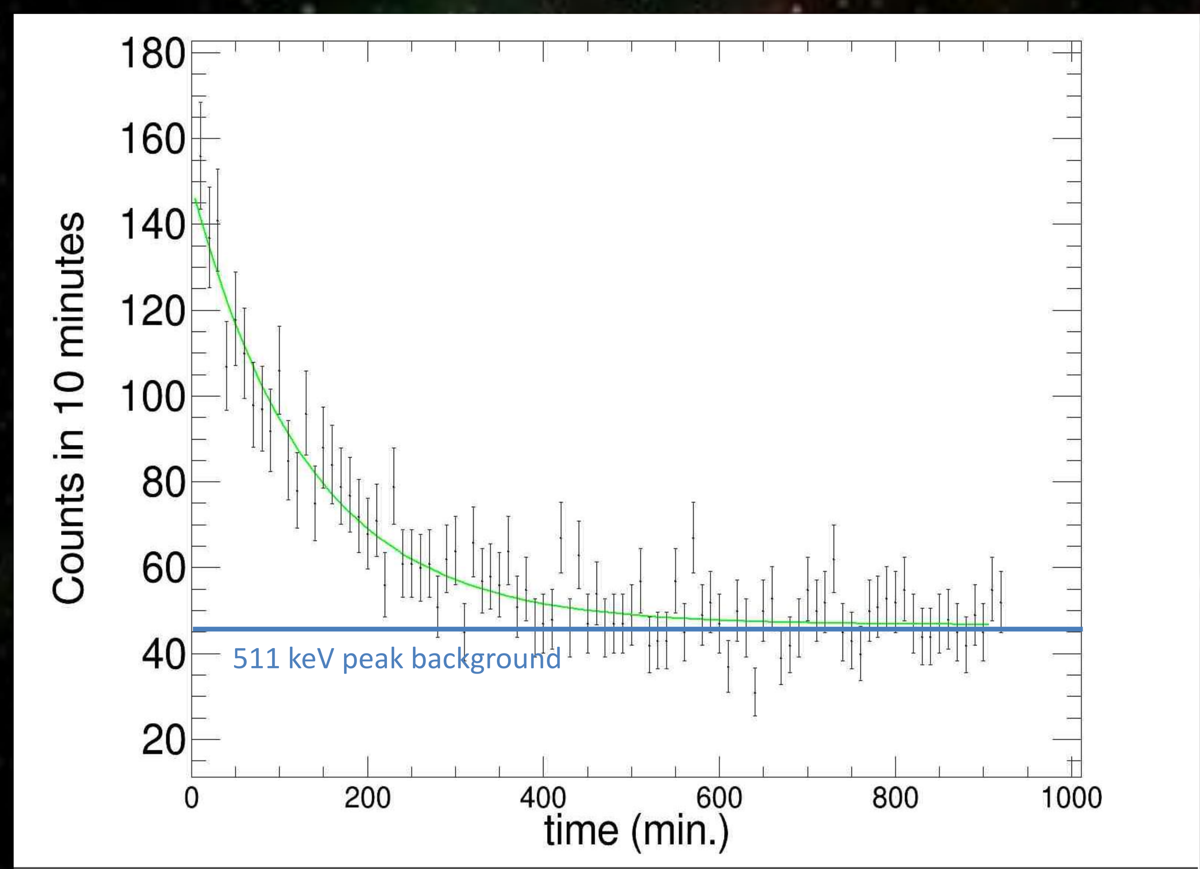

Fig. 6 – β^+ decay curve of ^{18}F after activation with 1 MeV protons.

Preliminary Results and Outlook

• A few test irradiations were carried out between E_p= 580 keV and E_p= 1800 keV in order to study the feasibility of the measurement. Some preliminary total cross sections (between E_p= 880 keV and E_p= 1800 keV) where calculated and measurements are shown in Fig. 7. compared to the data of [2].

• The results are still preliminary and the experimental campaign is ongoing.

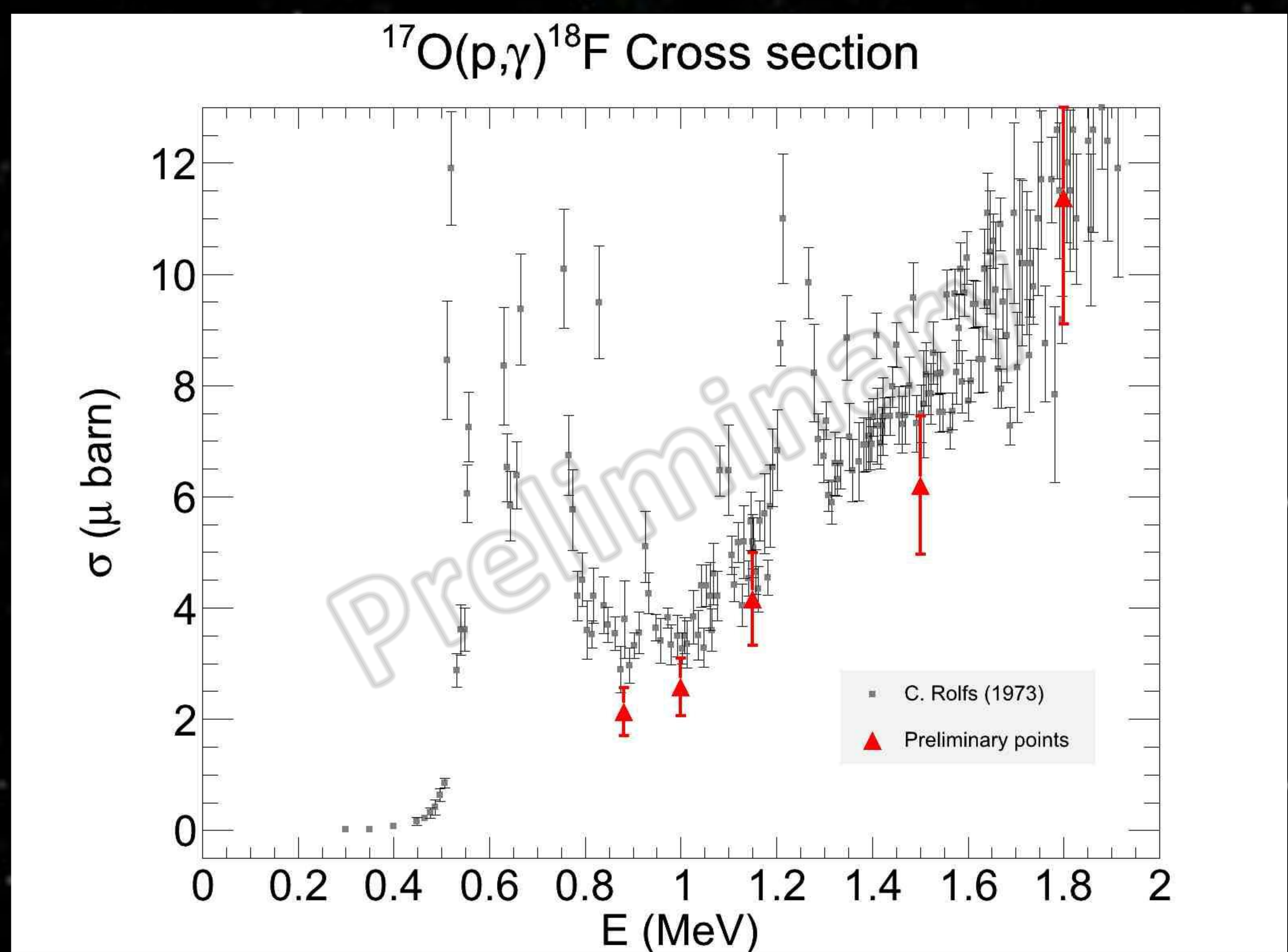

Fig. 7– Total cross section of the $^{17}O(p,\gamma)^{18}F$ reaction.

Acknowledgments

• We thank A. Formicola and the LUNA collaboration for giving us access to the Ta_2O_5 target preparation device.

• The publication was supported by the SROP-4.2.2.B-15/1/KONV-2015-0001 project. The project has been supported by the European Union, co-financed by the European Social Fund.

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