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The New Elements Einsteinium and Fermium, Atomic Numbers 99 and 100

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Radiation Laboratory  
Berkeley, California

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THE NEW ELEMENTS EINSTEINIUM AND FERMIUM,  
ATOMIC NUMBERS 99 and 100

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and

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G. L. Pyle, J. R. Huizenga, A. Hirsch, and W. M. Manning  
Argonne National Laboratory

and

C. I. Browne, H. L. Smith and R. W. Spence  
Los Alamos, New Mexico

June 9, 1955

The New Elements Einsteinium and Fermium,  
Atomic Numbers 99 and 100

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This communication is a description of the results of experiments performed in December, 1952 and the following months at the University of California Radiation Laboratory (UCRL), Argonne National Laboratory (ANL) and Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory (LASL), which represent the discovery of the elements with the atomic numbers 99 and 100.

The source of the material which was used for the first chemical identification of these elements was the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory which provided uranium which had been subjected to a very high instantaneous neutron flux in the "Mike" thermonuclear explosion. Initial investigations at ANL showed the presence of the new isotope  $\text{Pu}^{244 1}$  and investigations at ANL and LASL showed the presence of  $\text{Pu}^{246}$  and  $\text{Am}^{246 2}$  in this material pointing to the presence of neutron excess isotopes in greater abundance than expected.

This led the UCRL group to look for isotopes of transcalifornium elements in material from the same source. Samples were subjected to chemical procedures to separate the actinide from the lanthanide fraction, <sup>3</sup> tracer  $\text{Cf}^{246}$  (36-hour, 6.75-Mev alpha particle <sup>4</sup>) was added.

and a separation of the tripositive actinides was effected using the cation-exchange resin Dowex-50 and elution at 87° C with ammonium citrate solution.<sup>5</sup> These experiments showed the elution in a transcalifornium position of a 6.6-Mev alpha activity and hence proved conclusively that a new (transcalifornium) element had been found. Before the atomic number identification for the newly discovered element was completed (i. e., the correct choice between atomic numbers 99 and 100 had been made) a tentative assignment to " $100^{254}$ " was made and this information was communicated to the ANL and LASL Laboratories. Immediately following this, further ion-exchange elution separations were carried out at both UCRL and ANL resulting in essentially simultaneous identification of the 6.6-Mev alpha activity as belonging to the element with atomic number 99 (i. e., elution in the eka-holmium position). The results of these definitive elution experiments are shown in Fig. 1.

Further measurements on material from the same source by the LASL group led to the observation of a 7.1-Mev alpha activity (at an intensity of about 4 percent of that of the 6.6-Mev alpha activity) without chemical identification beyond proving that it was due to a transplutonium element. This 7.1-Mev alpha activity was first shown by the UCRL group in ion-exchange elution experiments of the type described above to be an isotope of element 100 (i. e., elution in the eka-erbium position just ahead of the 6.6-Mev element 99 alpha activity) and was shown to have a half-life of about a day sustained by a longer-lived element 99 parent. This establishment of the isotope responsible for the

7.1-Mev alpha activity as having the atomic number 100 was confirmed in a similar experiment by the ANL group somewhat later. The elution data for the experiments that established this atomic number are shown in Fig. 2. The californium, berkelium, and curium radioactivities will be discussed in a forthcoming publication.

Isotopic assignments which were made as the result of this early work were largely confirmed by the later work on the intense neutron irradiation<sup>6-9</sup> of Pu<sup>239</sup>. Thus it can be said that the mass number for the 6.6-Mev 99 alpha activity is 253, corresponding to the decay sequence  $\text{Cf}^{253} \xrightarrow[\sim 20 \text{ d}]{\beta^-} \text{99}^{253}$  (~20-day, 6.6-Mev alpha particle), the Cf<sup>253</sup> originating from the beta decay of U<sup>253</sup> and daughters. Also, the mass number for the 7.1-Mev 100 alpha activity is 255 corresponding to the decay sequence  $\text{99}^{255} \xrightarrow[\sim 30 \text{ d}]{\beta^-} \text{100}^{255}$  (~16-hour, 7.1-Mev alpha particle), the 99<sup>255</sup> originating from the beta decay of U<sup>255</sup> and daughters.

We suggest for the name for the element with the atomic number 99, einsteinium (symbol E) after Albert Einstein and for the name for the element with atomic number 100, fermium (symbol Fm), after Enrico Fermi.

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<sup>1</sup>Hess, Pyle, Fried, and Inghram, to be published.

<sup>2</sup>Asprey, Browne, Engelkemeir, Fields, Fried, Pyle, Smith, Spence, and Stevens, to be published.

<sup>3</sup>K. Street, Jr. and G. T. Seaborg, J. Am. Chem. Soc. 72, 2760 (1950).

<sup>4</sup>Ghiorso, Thompson, Street, Seaborg, Phys. Rev. 81, 154 (1951).

<sup>5</sup>See, e. g., Thompson, Street, Ghiorso, and Seaborg, Phys. Rev. 80, 790 (1950).

<sup>6</sup>Thompson, Ghiorso, Harvey, and Choppin, Phys. Rev. 93, 908 (1954).

<sup>7</sup>Harvey, Thompson, Ghiorso, and Choppin, Phys. Rev. 93, 1129 (1954).

<sup>8</sup>Studier, Fields, Diamond, Mech, Friedman, Sellers, Pyle, Stevens, Magnusson, and Huizenga, Phys. Rev. 93, 1428 (1954).

<sup>9</sup>Fields, Studier, Mech, Diamond, Friedman, Magnusson, and Huizenga, Phys. Rev. 94, 209 (1954).



**FIGURE CAPTIONS**

**Fig. 1. Elution of element 99 relative to californium (citrate eluant).**

**Fig. 2. Elution of element 100 relative to other actinide elements  
(citrate eluant).**



