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MEASUREMENTS OF NEUTRON ELASTIC
SCATTERING FROM CARBON IN THE ENERGY
REGION OF 0.50 TO 2.00 MeV

by

N. AHMED, M. COPPOLA and H.-H. KNITTER

1970



Joint Nuclear Research Centre
Geel Establishment - Belgium

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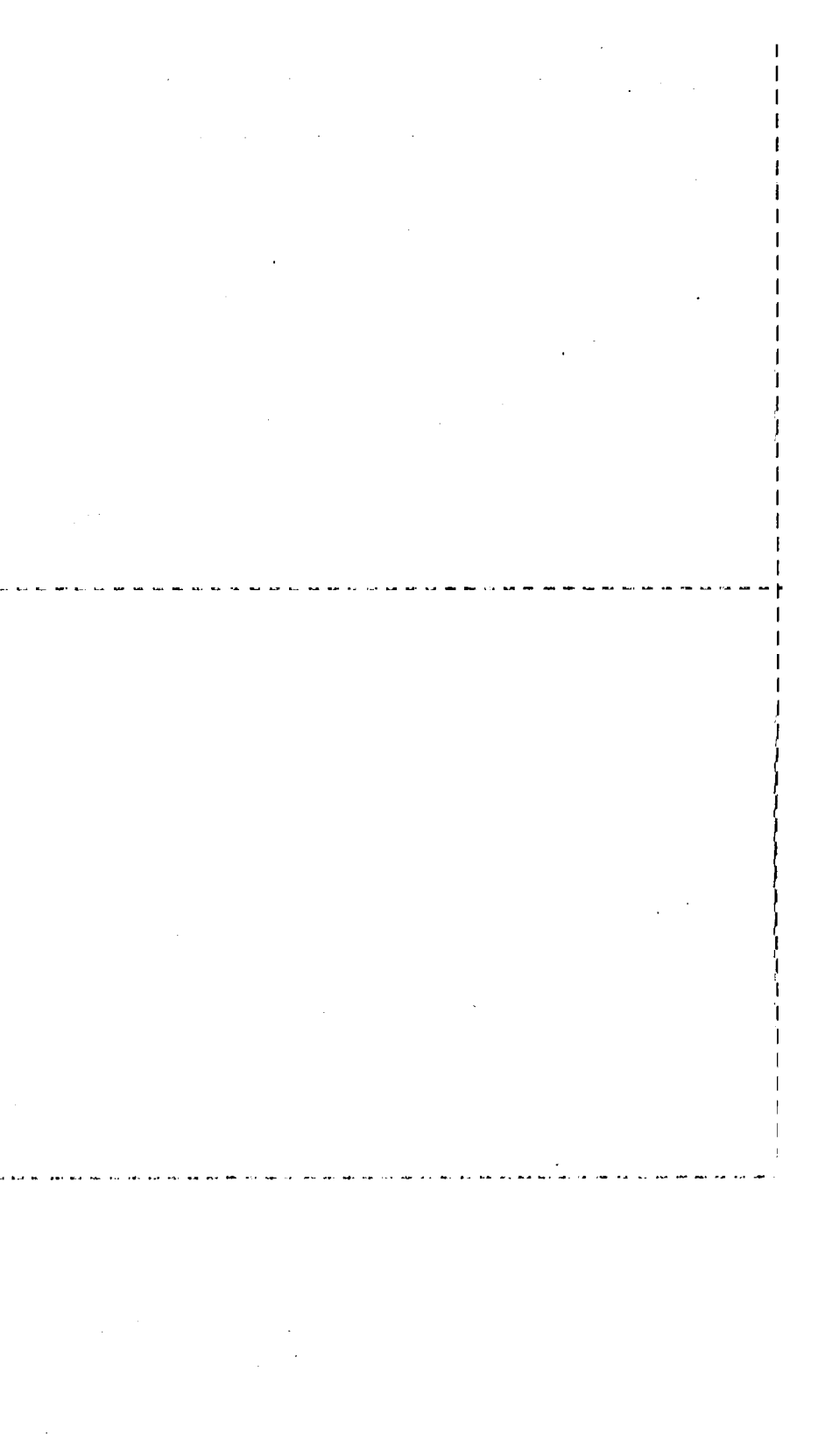
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ABSTRACT

Differential cross sections for the elastic scattering of neutrons from carbon have been measured at primary energies between 0.50 and 2.00 MeV in steps of 50 keV. The experimental cross sections were fitted with a five term Legendre polynomial expansion. The obtained B_L -coefficients were then fitted with suited functions of the energy in order to obtain a smooth dependence of the differential cross sections on the primary neutron energy, using a limited number of parameters. A set of recommended differential elastic cross section curves, based on the present measurements, is given.

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KEYWORDS

MEASUREMENTS	ENERGY
NEUTRONS	LEGENDRE FUNCTIONS
ELASTIC SCATTERING	EXPANSION
CARBON	MATHEMATICS
CROSS SECTIONS	

1. INTRODUCTION ^{x)}

The accurate knowledge of the neutron cross sections of carbon is of actual importance and usefulness in the field of neutron scattering measurements. The ^{12}C nucleus has its first excited state at 4.4 MeV and the nuclear reactions that can be induced by neutrons with lower energies are elastic scattering and neutron capture. The (n, γ) cross section is 1.86 mb in the neighbourhood of 0.1 eV [1] and becomes negligible as the incoming neutron energy increases. So the contribution from (n, γ) cross sections is not to be taken into account in the present investigation. The total neutron cross section of carbon shows no resonance structure below 2 MeV and can be represented by simple parametric expansions. For these reasons the neutron cross section of carbon below 2.00 MeV is well suited to be used as a standard for the determination of the neutron scattering cross sections of other elements.

In addition, carbon samples are very easy to be prepared and analysed. Their use as standard samples is especially indicated in neutron scattering experiments, when the $^7\text{Li}(p, n)^7\text{Be}$ neutron producing reaction is used above 0.5 MeV. In fact, the other most commonly used standard material, that is polyethylene, can hardly be utilised when more than one primary neutron group is present. In the past, neutron elastic scattering cross sections of carbon up to 4.1 MeV have been measured by several authors [2-7], using methods other than time-of-flight.

In the recent years, the use of the time-of-flight technique has considerably contributed in improving the knowledge of neutron elastic and inelastic scattering processes. Such a technique substantially increases the experimental response rate resulting in a significant improvement of the energy resolution and of the precision of the measurements.

In the present investigations the time-of-flight technique has been used and an extensive study of the neutron elastic scattering measurements on carbon has been performed in the neutron energy region from 0.50 to 2.00 MeV.

2. EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURE

The measurements were carried out at the 3 MV Van de Graaff accelerator of CBNM using fast neutron time-of-flight technique. A pulsed ion beam of 1 ns pulse width and 1 MHz repetition rate was focussed on the neutron producing target. The layout of the experimental set up is shown in Fig. 1.

For the production of neutrons two different reactions were used. Between 0.50 and 0.70 MeV neutrons were produced through the $^7\text{Li}(p, n)^7\text{Be}$ reaction using a solid LiF target. Above 0.75 MeV neutrons were obtained by the $\text{T}(p, n)^3\text{He}$ reaction with occluded Ti-T targets. The target thicknesses and the scattering geometry were chosen in such a way that the total neutron energy spreads

x) Manuscript received on 2 June 1970

were between 30 and 45 keV for all the measurements. The neutrons emitted from the target around zero degree with respect to the direction of the incoming ion-bursts were scattered from the sample and collimated towards three detectors kept in large shieldings at an equal distance of 141.0 cm from the scatterer. The sample was positioned 15.0 cm away from the target.

The detectors consisted of cylindrical NE 102A plastic scintillators, 5.0 cm x 2.5 cm mounted on AVP 56/03 photomultipliers. The fast outputs of the detectors provided the start signals for the time-to-pulse height converters. The stop signals were taken from a pick-up loop placed before the target at a distance of about 30 cm. The output pulses of the converters were registered in three different memory sections of a 4096 channel pulse height analyser. The overall time resolution of such a neutron time-of-flight spectrometer, including the ion pulse width of the accelerator, was around 2.3 nsec. The relative neutron fluence was measured by means of an additional time-of-flight spectrometer with the detector kept in a shielding collimating the neutrons coming directly from the neutron producing target. This detector was placed at a distance of 5 m from the target, at an angle of 20° with respect to the direction of the incoming ion bursts. The portion of the neutron time spectrum corresponding to the neutrons emitted directly from the target was selected by a window discriminator to monitor the measurements. A functional block diagram of the electronics associated with the time-of-flight spectrometers is shown in Fig. 2.

The relative efficiency of the detectors was measured by comparing the yield of neutrons scattered on a hydrogenous sample at several angles between 20° and 67.5° and the known n-p differential cross section [8]. The hydrogenous sample was a polyethylene cylinder of 1.00 cm outside diameter, 0.60 cm inside diameter and 4.00 cm height. Its weight was 1.840 g and the content of hydrogen was $(14.31 \pm 0.06)\%$. The relative efficiencies of the detectors were measured twice, at the beginning and at the end of the scattering measurements on carbon. Within the experimental errors no variation of the efficiencies was found. The experimentally observed efficiency of detector 1, fitted with a semiempirical expression, is shown in Fig. 3.

The dimensions of the carbon samples used in the present measurements are shown in Table I. They were chosen in such a way that the corrections due to beam attenuation and multiple scattering do not change appreciably with the incident neutron energy.

The isotopic composition of the samples was 98.893% ^{12}C and 1.107% ^{13}C .

3. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Angular distributions of neutrons scattered from carbon were measured at incident neutron energies between 0.50 and 2.00 MeV in energy steps of 50 keV. The scattered neutrons were detected between 20° and 150° with an angular spacing of 10°. The neutron scattering from the polyethylene sample was measured at +30° and -30° for the energies between 0.50 and 0.85 MeV and at +40° and -40° for

the energies between 0.90 and 2.00 MeV. In this way the presence of eventual experimental asymmetries of the neutron yield around zero degree was checked. No such asymmetry was observed within the experimental accuracy.

The absolute values of the differential cross section of carbon were determined comparatively to the $H(n, n)H$ differential cross section. A typical time-of-flight spectrum of neutrons scattered from carbon is presented in Fig. 4.

A number of corrections were applied to the observed angular distribution data. The variation in the intensity of the ${}^7\text{Li}(p, n){}^7\text{Be}$ and $T(p, n){}^3\text{He}$ neutron yields as a function of angle and energy due to the finite target-to-sample geometry were taken into account.

The attenuation of the incoming neutron flux in the scattering samples and multiple scattering of neutrons within the polyethylene and carbon samples were also considered. The evaluation of the corrections were performed by a Monte Carlo Program (MAGGIE) in the version modified at the CBNM [10]. The applicability of this program is illustrated elsewhere [11-15] in several cases.

In evaluating the errors to the individual experimental points, the ones introduced by the counting statistics and those originating from the statistical nature of the Monte Carlo method were considered. A list of the error sources and their representative values is given in table II.

The differential elastic scattering angular distributions are shown in Figs. 5 to 35. The full circles represent the corrected experimental data in the laboratory system and the error bars are the total uncertainties.

A fit through the corrected differential scattering cross sections was made with a Legendre polynomial expansion of the form

$$\frac{d\sigma}{d\Omega}(\theta) = \sum_{L=0}^4 B_L P_L(\cos\theta) \quad (1)$$

The B_L -coefficients obtained from (1) were then fitted using an expression of the type

$$B_L(E) = \sum_{i=0}^3 A_{L_i} E^i \quad (2)$$

where the expansion on the right hand side of (2) was truncated after the second term for B_3 and B_4 .

The values of $\sigma_{el} = 4\pi B_0$ and of B_1 to B_4 obtained from the least squares fits (1) are given in table III together with their errors and are shown as full circles in Fig. 36 along with the fitted curves from (2). The numerical values of the measured differential elastic scattering cross sections are available at the ENEA Neutron Data Compilation Centre (France).

Using the $B_L(E)$ -coefficients from (2) a consistent set of neutron differential cross section curves were calculated and are plotted as solid lines in Figs. 5 to 35. They are also shown in the form of a three dimensional plot in Fig. 37.

The explicit expression valid for σ_{el} in the energy region from 0.50 to 2.00 MeV is

$$\sigma_{el}(E) = (4.513 \pm 0.243) - (2.343 \pm 0.637)E + (0.465 \pm 0.520)E^2 + (0.012 \pm 0.133)E^3 \text{ barn,}$$

where E is the incoming neutron energy in MeV. The overall error per point, including the computed error from the fitting procedure and errors from other sources is evaluated to about 3%.

In Fig. 38 the integrated elastic scattering cross sections from the present measurements are compared with the cross section results of other workers [4, 15-17]. The agreement between all these measurements, although made with different techniques, is good within the quoted errors.

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

- Fig. 1: Lay out of the experimental set-up.
- Fig. 2: Block diagram of the electronic equipment.
- Fig. 3: Relative efficiency of detector 1 measured at the beginning and at the end of the present experiment.
- Fig. 4: Time-of-flight spectrum at $E_{\text{lab}} = 1.10 \text{ MeV}$ and $\theta_{\text{lab}} = 150^\circ$.
- Fig. 5-35: Neutron differential elastic scattering cross-sections of carbon in the Lab. -system. Solid lines are calculated using the fitted B_L -coefficients from equation (2).
- Fig. 36: Integrated neutron elastic scattering cross-sections of carbon and B_1 to B_4 coefficients. Full circles are the results of the present measurements and solid lines are the fits with equation (2). Triangles are the experimental values of Lane et al. [18].
- Fig. 37: Three dimensional plot of neutron scattering angular distributions of carbon calculated using fitted B_L -coefficients.
- Fig. 38: Comparison between σ_{el} results from the present measurements and those of other workers.

TABLE I

Carbon sample dimensions				Neutron energy region (MeV)
Outside diameter (cm)	Inside diameter (cm)	Height (cm)	Weight (g)	
2.00	0.86	3.505	15.462	0.50 - 1.25
1.41	0.00	3.500	9.375	1.30 - 1.70
1.72	0.00	3.500	13.897	1.75 - 2.00

TABLE II

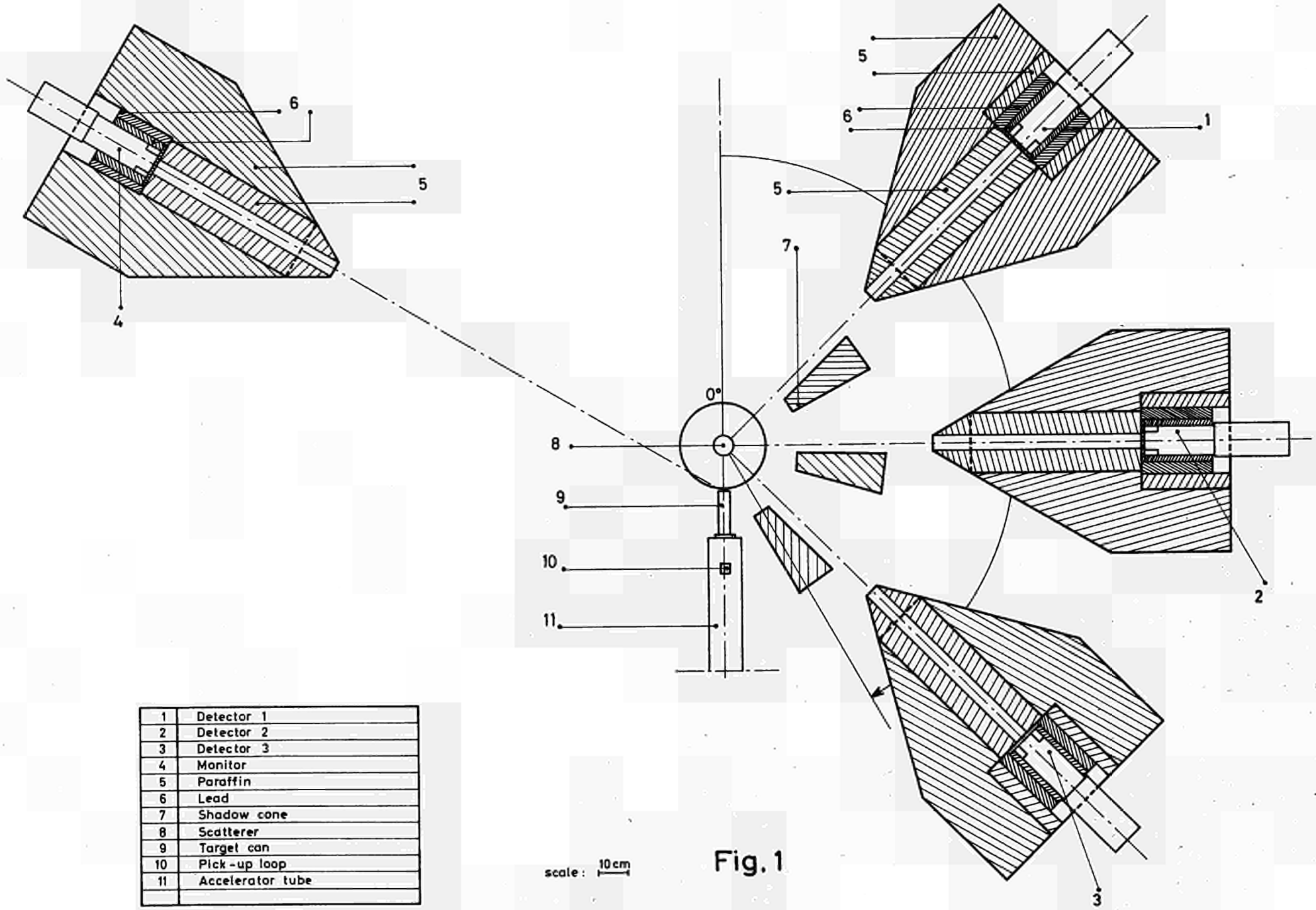
Sources of errors for the differential elastic cross sections and their representative relative errors

Sources of errors	Errors (%)
Detector efficiency	2.00
Total n-p scattering cross section	0.50
Counting statistics on H	1.00
Flux factor in C-sample:	
1) due to fluctuations in flux calculations	0.45
2) due to uncertainties of σ_T	0.70
Multiple scattering correction in carbon	0.70
α -factor in CH ₂	1.00
Hydrogen content in CH ₂	0.5
Sum of the errors	2.8
Counting statistics on carbon	1 - 3

TABLE III

Integrated elastic scattering cross sections and Legendre polynomial coefficients of carbon in the laboratory system

E_{Lab} [MeV]	$\sigma_{\text{el}} \pm \Delta\sigma_{\text{el}}$ [mb]	$B_1 \pm \Delta B_1$ [mb/sr]	$B_2 \pm \Delta B_2$ [mb/sr]	$B_3 \pm \Delta B_3$ [mb/sr]	$B_4 \pm \Delta B_4$ [mb/sr]
0.50	3304 ± 97	121.2 ± 5.1	26.8 ± 5.1	5.8 ± 6.3	-5.1 ± 7.7
0.55	3385 ± 100	111.1 ± 5.2	7.9 ± 5.8	0.7 ± 7.2	4.9 ± 8.8
0.60	3312 ± 96	117.6 ± 3.9	9.7 ± 3.0	12.4 ± 3.7	18.4 ± 4.5
0.65	3291 ± 95	102.8 ± 3.8	16.4 ± 6.4	14.7 ± 7.8	-3.3 ± 9.7
0.70	3085 ± 94	93.0 ± 6.3	9.3 ± 8.0	10.5 ± 10.0	-1.5 ± 12.1
0.75	3059 ± 89	107.9 ± 4.3	22.2 ± 4.3	7.3 ± 5.3	-4.3 ± 6.5
0.80	3017 ± 87	90.7 ± 3.7	29.7 ± 3.8	2.2 ± 4.6	-0.4 ± 5.7
0.85	2882 ± 84	93.0 ± 4.0	26.0 ± 4.1	-2.3 ± 5.2	-8.4 ± 0.3
0.90	2819 ± 83	89.3 ± 4.2	19.6 ± 4.8	1.5 ± 5.7	1.9 ± 7.6
0.95	2724 ± 79	89.9 ± 3.7	24.0 ± 3.6	12.2 ± 4.5	-5.9 ± 5.6
1.00	2655 ± 78	81.6 ± 4.6	30.7 ± 5.8	-4.2 ± 6.5	4.9 ± 7.5
1.05	2662 ± 76	85.4 ± 3.0	22.4 ± 2.5	-4.4 ± 3.1	-1.9 ± 3.9
1.10	2399 ± 70	77.6 ± 3.3	21.2 ± 3.5	6.8 ± 4.4	2.9 ± 5.3
1.15	2429 ± 72	75.5 ± 3.7	19.0 ± 4.3	7.3 ± 5.4	10.4 ± 6.5
1.20	2271 ± 65	67.6 ± 2.7	10.2 ± 2.7	1.4 ± 3.4	-1.3 ± 4.1
1.25	2299 ± 68	67.6 ± 3.4	18.4 ± 3.9	7.8 ± 4.9	4.0 ± 6.3
1.30	2291 ± 68	73.7 ± 3.6	18.4 ± 4.0	2.1 ± 5.0	-10.6 ± 6.3
1.35	2290 ± 67	69.6 ± 3.3	26.9 ± 3.8	7.0 ± 4.6	3.7 ± 5.7
1.40	2194 ± 64	73.6 ± 3.1	25.7 ± 3.1	-1.7 ± 3.8	-0.5 ± 4.7
1.45	2138 ± 63	65.2 ± 3.3	27.1 ± 3.8	10.6 ± 4.6	0.4 ± 5.7
1.50	2117 ± 61	58.3 ± 2.7	19.3 ± 2.9	11.6 ± 3.6	-3.4 ± 4.4
1.55	2023 ± 59	62.9 ± 2.7	22.7 ± 2.8	6.6 ± 3.6	0.5 ± 4.5
1.60	2017 ± 58	54.7 ± 2.4	28.2 ± 2.5	8.1 ± 2.9	0.0 ± 3.4
1.65	1978 ± 60	56.3 ± 3.5	29.2 ± 4.3	2.4 ± 5.3	1.7 ± 6.5
1.70	1931 ± 57	52.2 ± 3.2	18.6 ± 4.5	5.4 ± 5.1	-15.0 ± 6.3
1.75	1935 ± 55	54.7 ± 2.2	29.8 ± 2.1	6.3 ± 2.5	-1.3 ± 3.1
1.80	1876 ± 53	52.9 ± 2.3	32.0 ± 2.4	4.8 ± 3.0	-2.7 ± 3.6
1.85	1849 ± 53	48.5 ± 2.3	32.6 ± 2.5	7.6 ± 3.0	-1.9 ± 3.8
1.90	1826 ± 52	49.5 ± 2.5	32.3 ± 2.9	14.4 ± 3.2	-5.0 ± 4.0
1.95	1806 ± 54	48.1 ± 3.0	36.0 ± 4.3	16.2 ± 4.9	-8.4 ± 5.7
2.00	1769 ± 53	41.0 ± 3.1	39.8 ± 3.9	-11.2 ± 4.6	-0.4 ± 5.7



1	Detector 1
2	Detector 2
3	Detector 3
4	Monitor
5	Paraffin
6	Lead
7	Shadow cone
8	Scatterer
9	Target can
10	Pick-up loop
11	Accelerator tube

scale: 10cm

Fig. 1

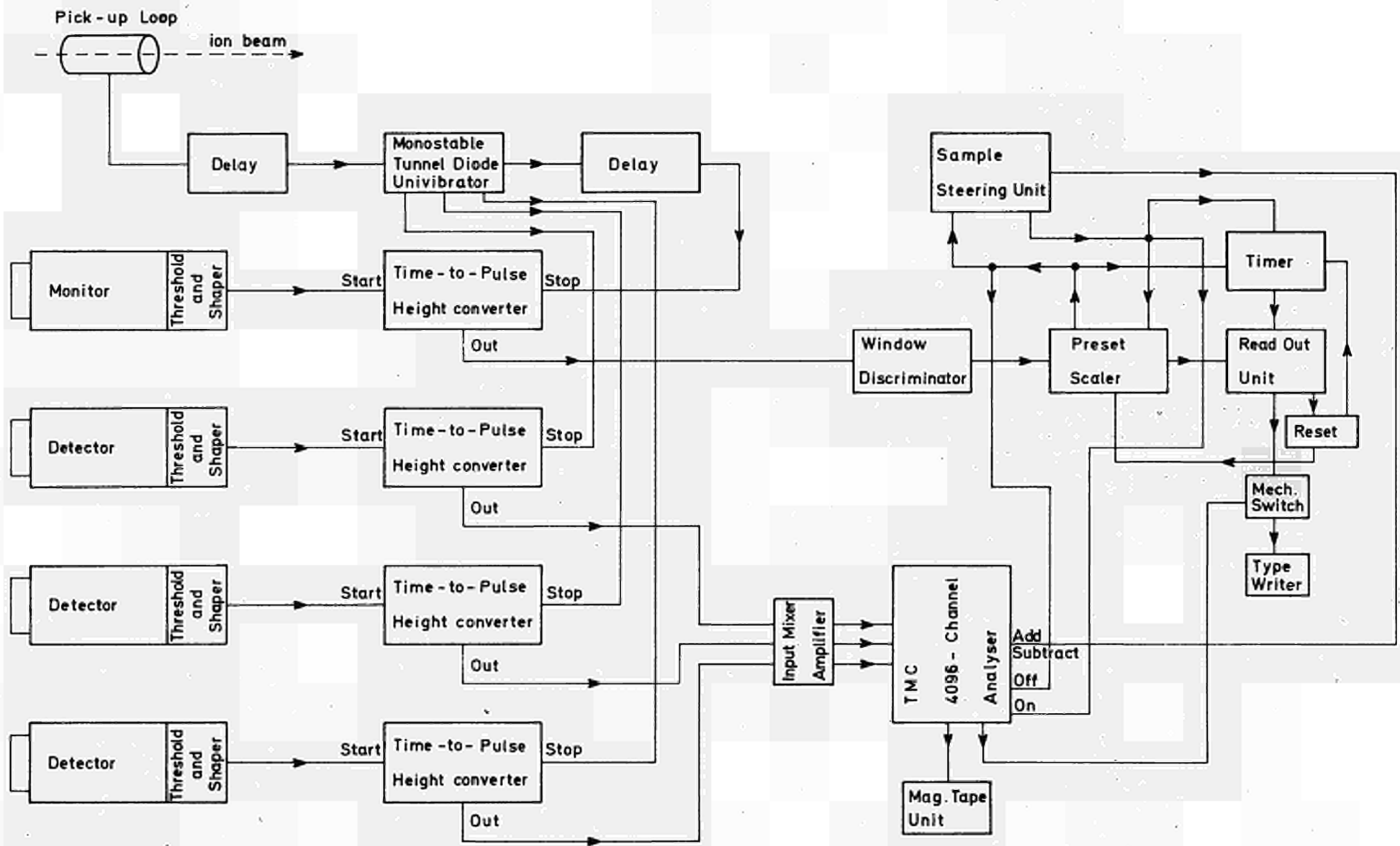
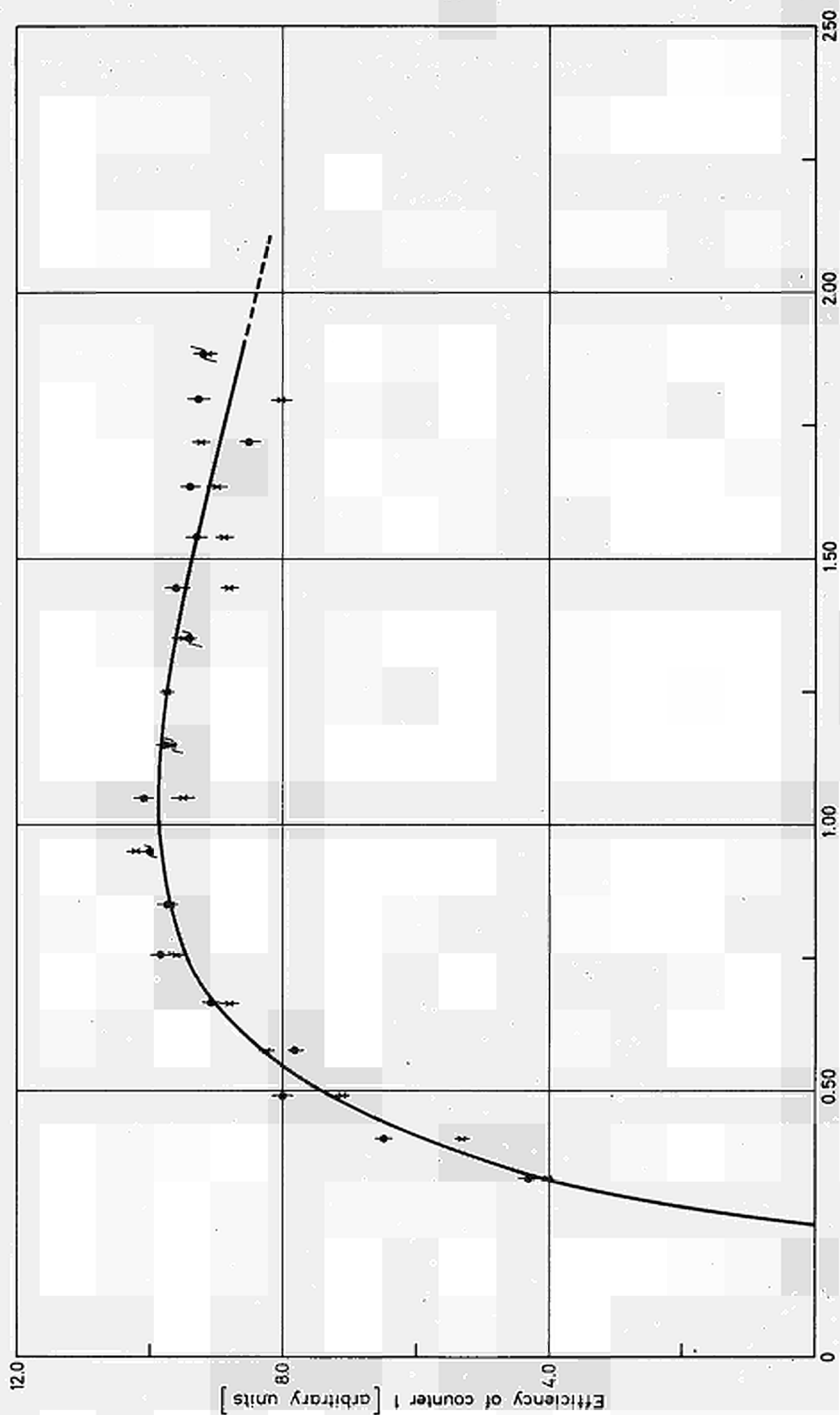


Fig.2



$E_{lab} [MeV]$

Fig.3

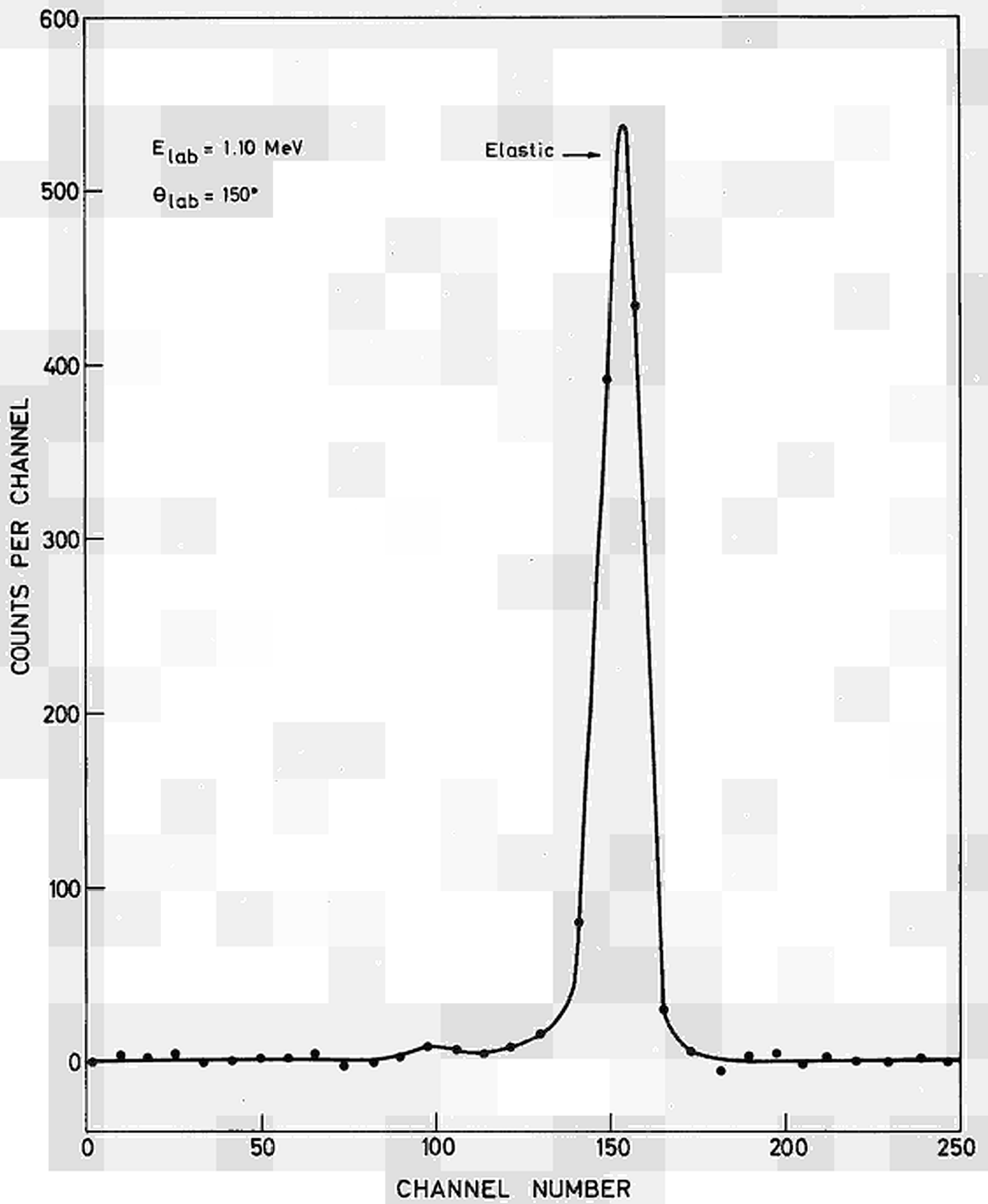
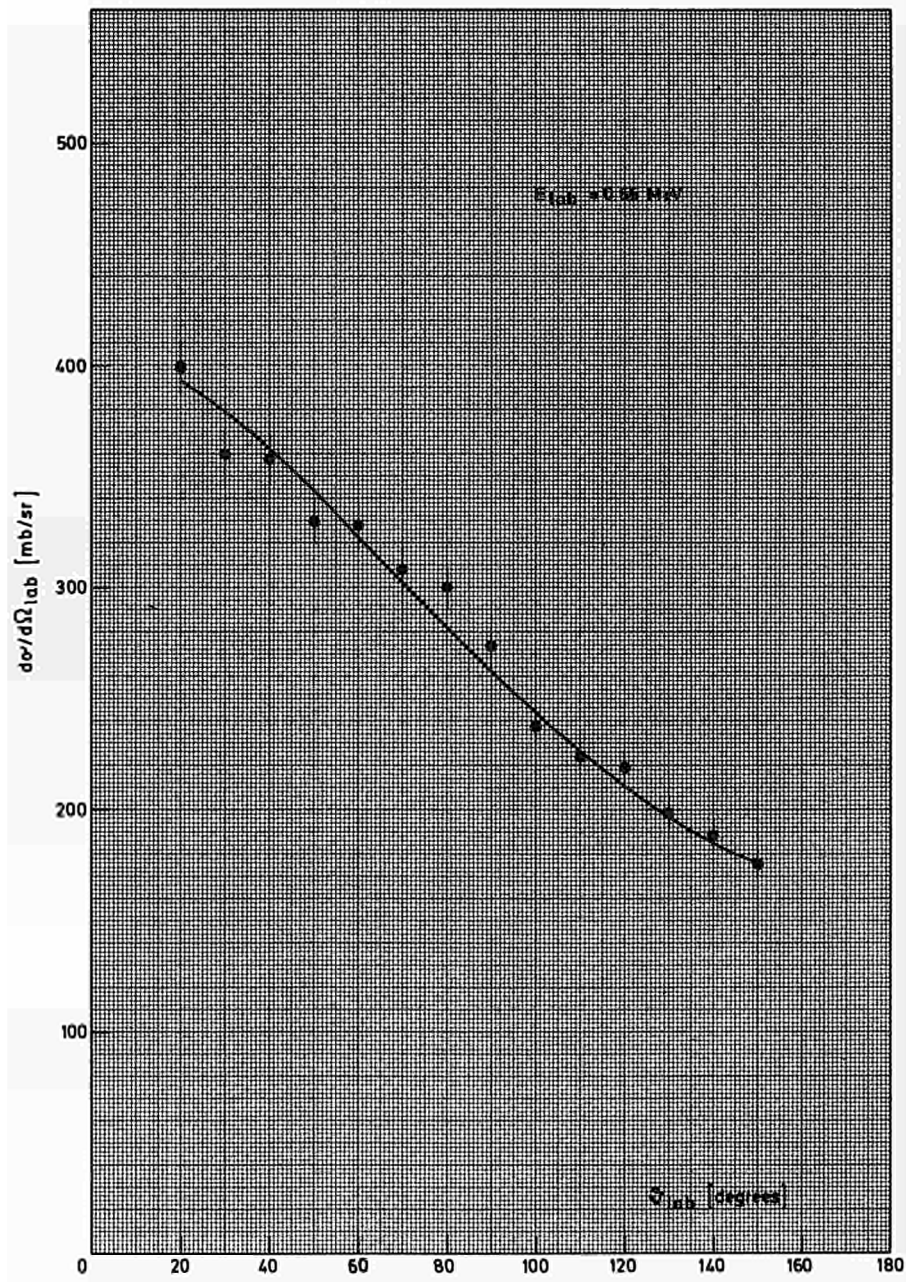
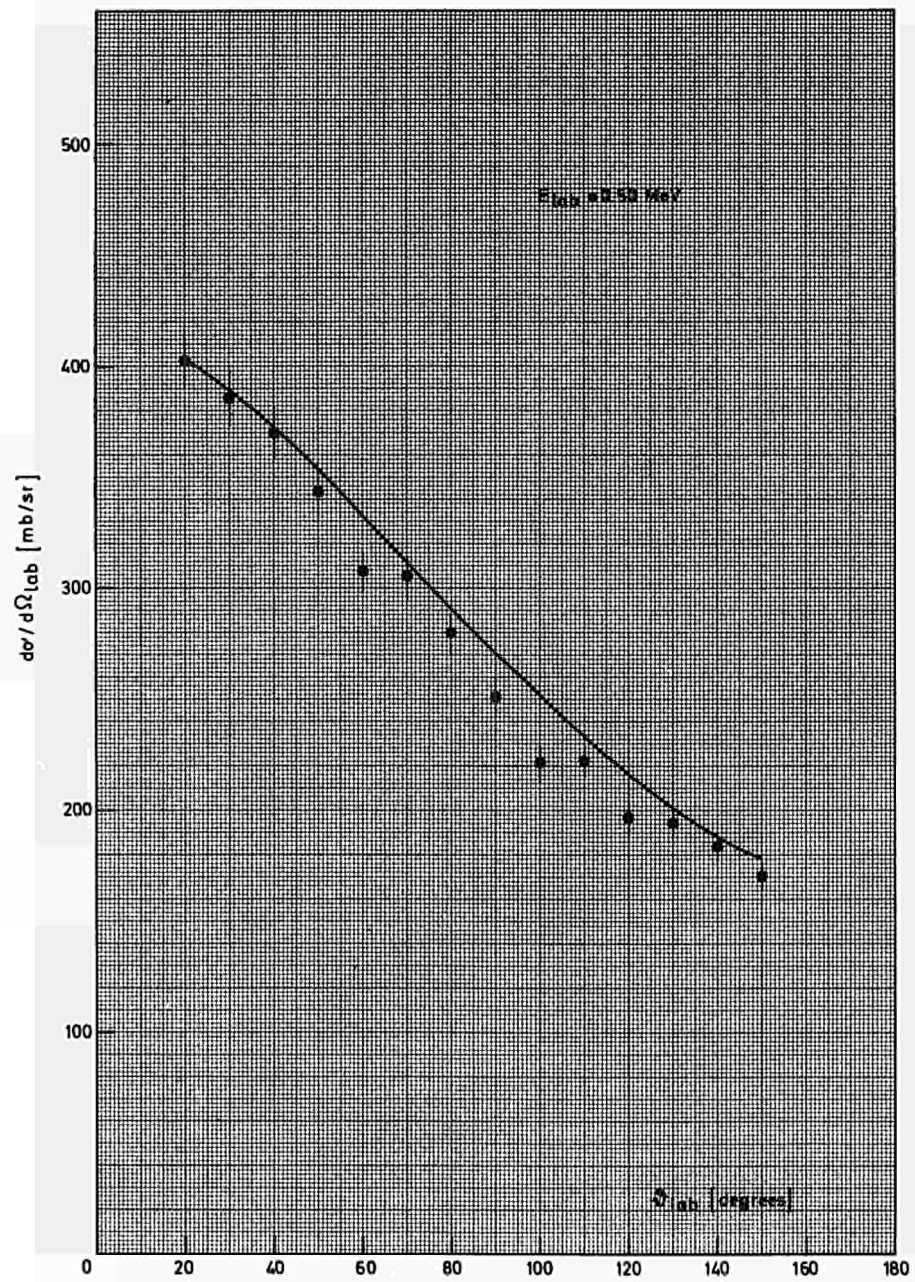
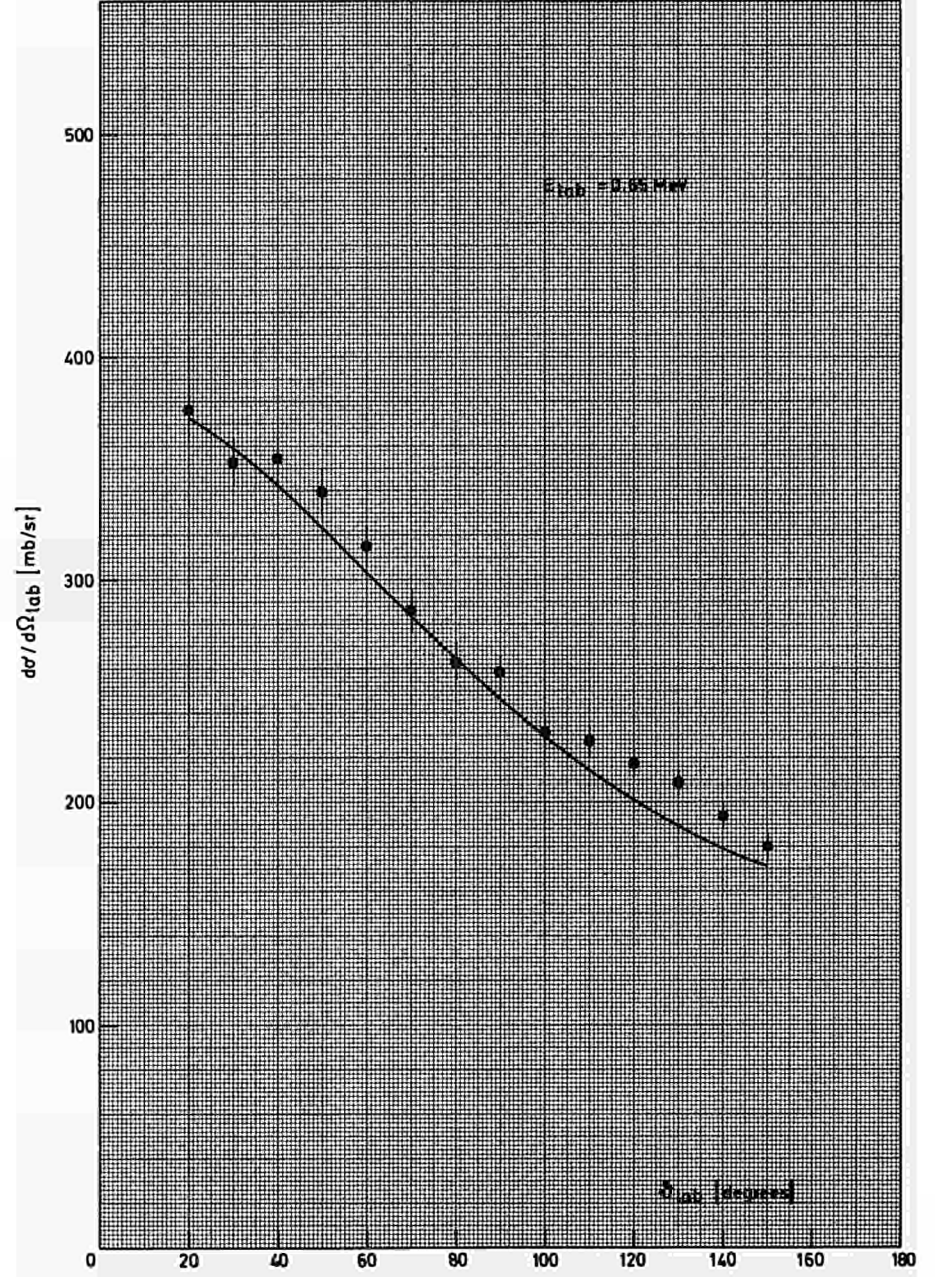
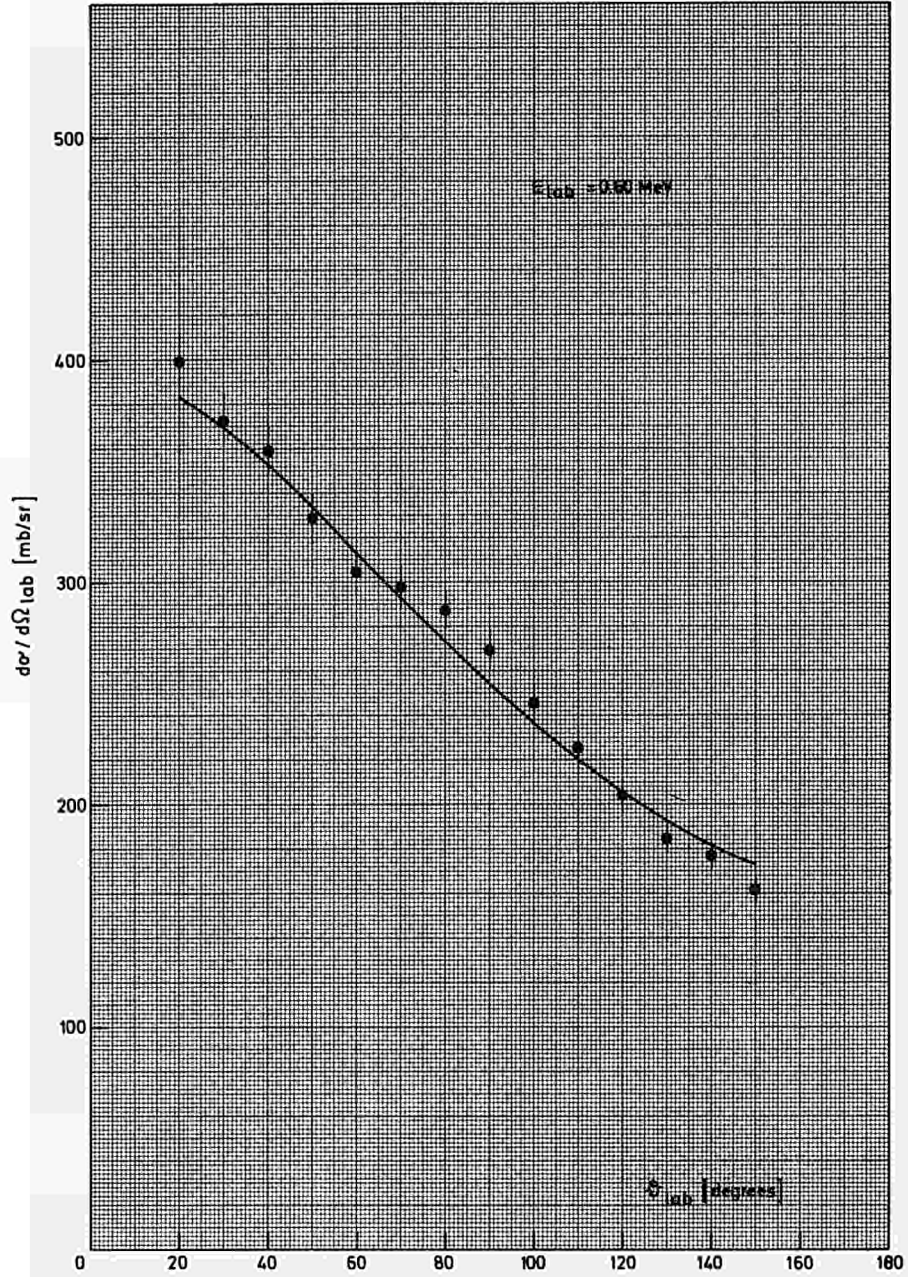
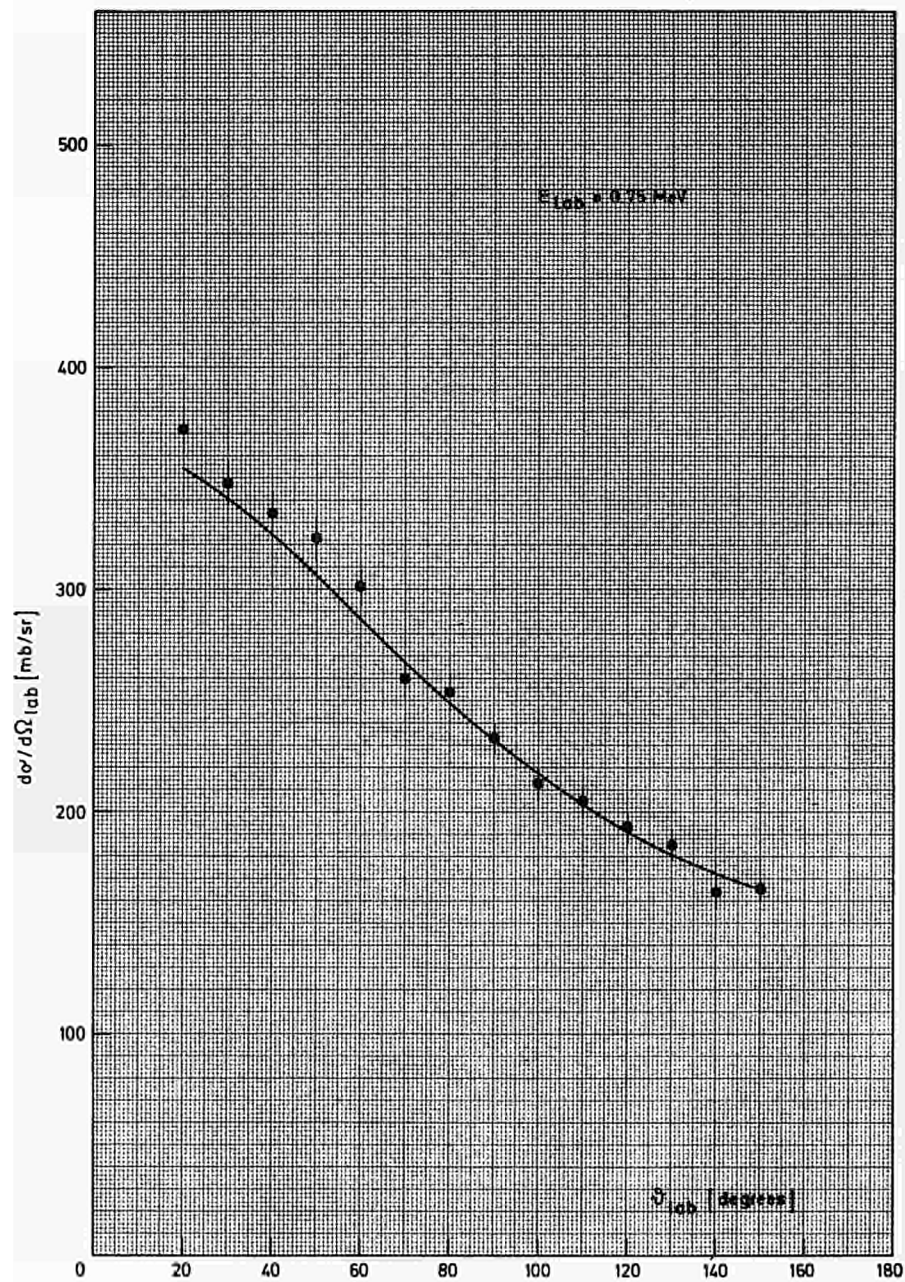
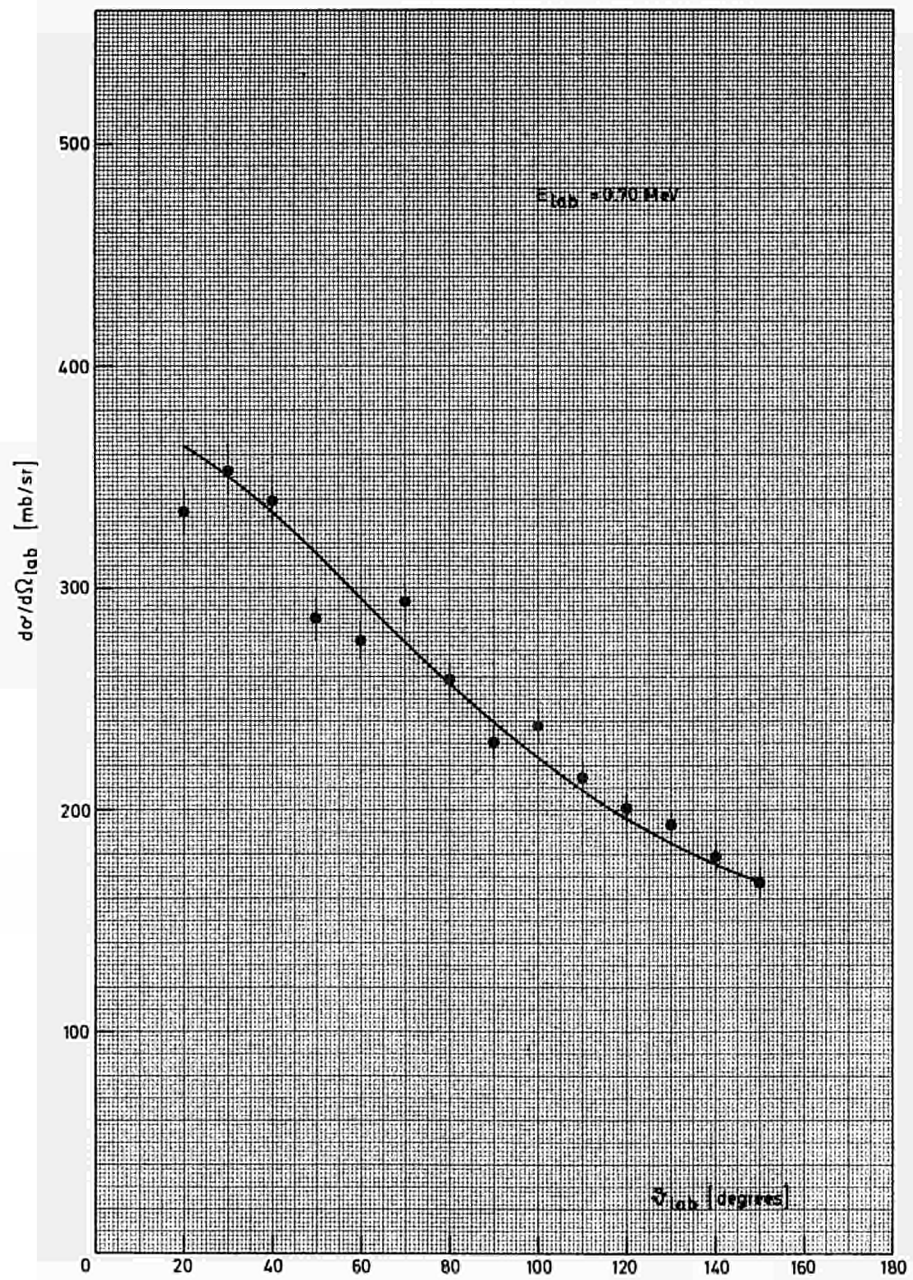
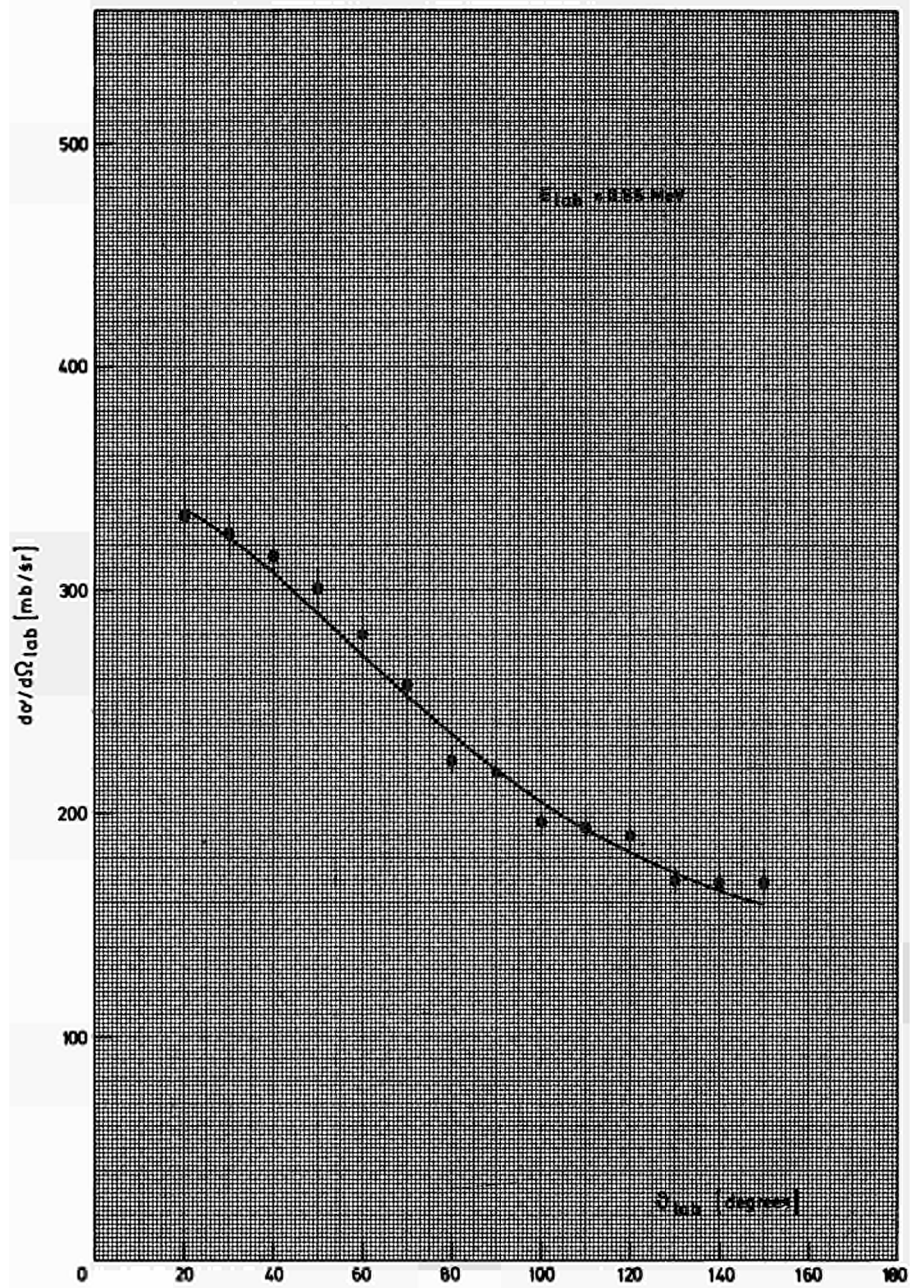
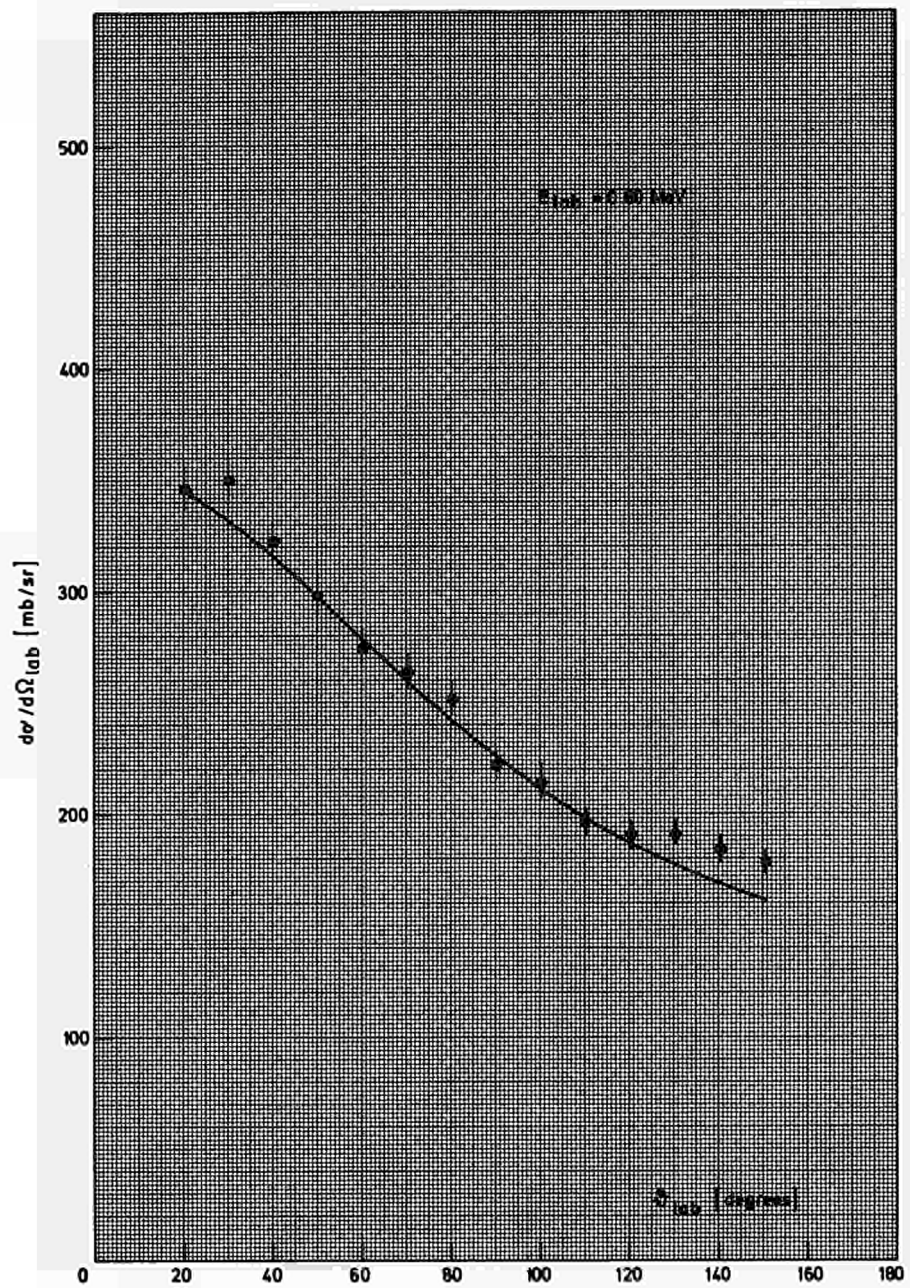


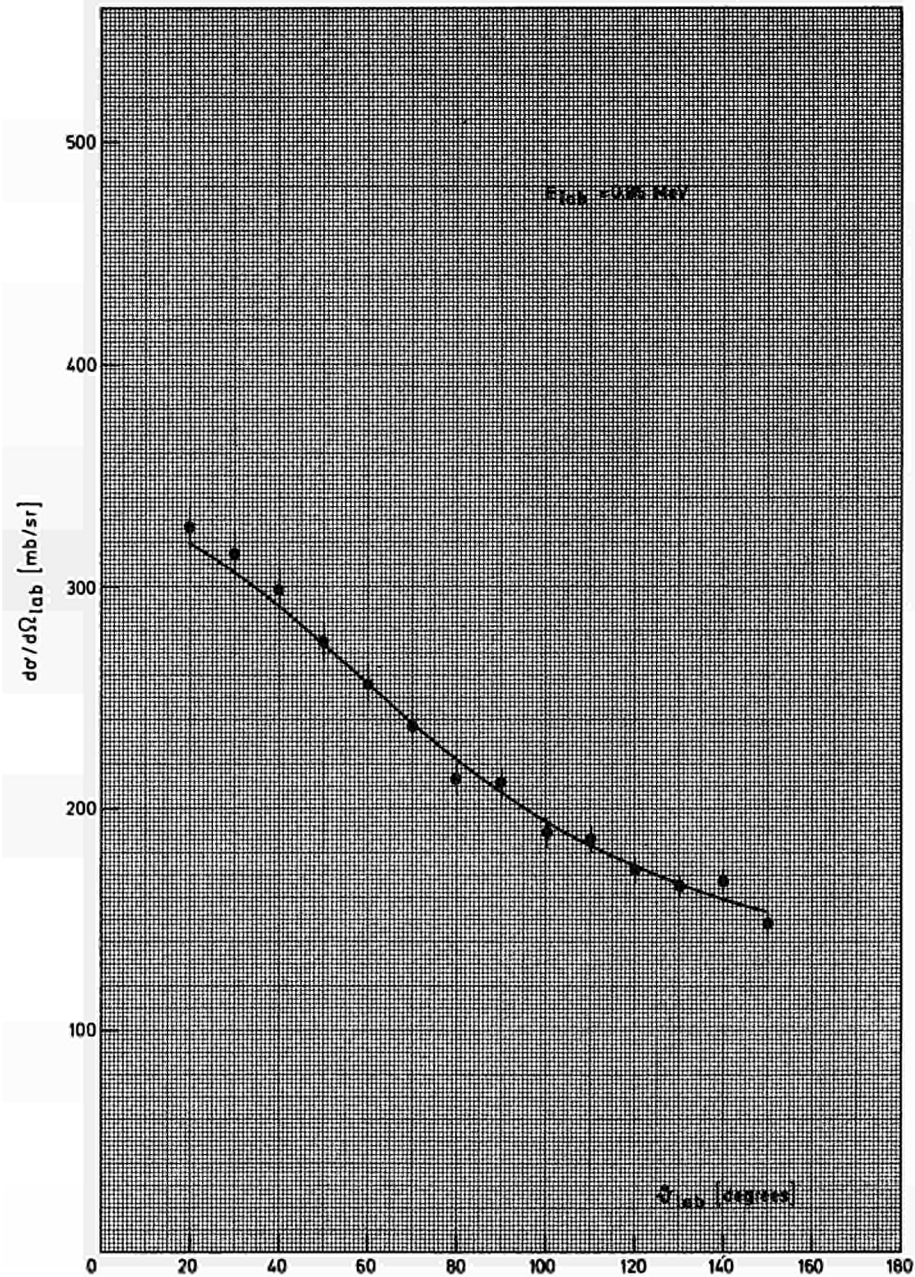
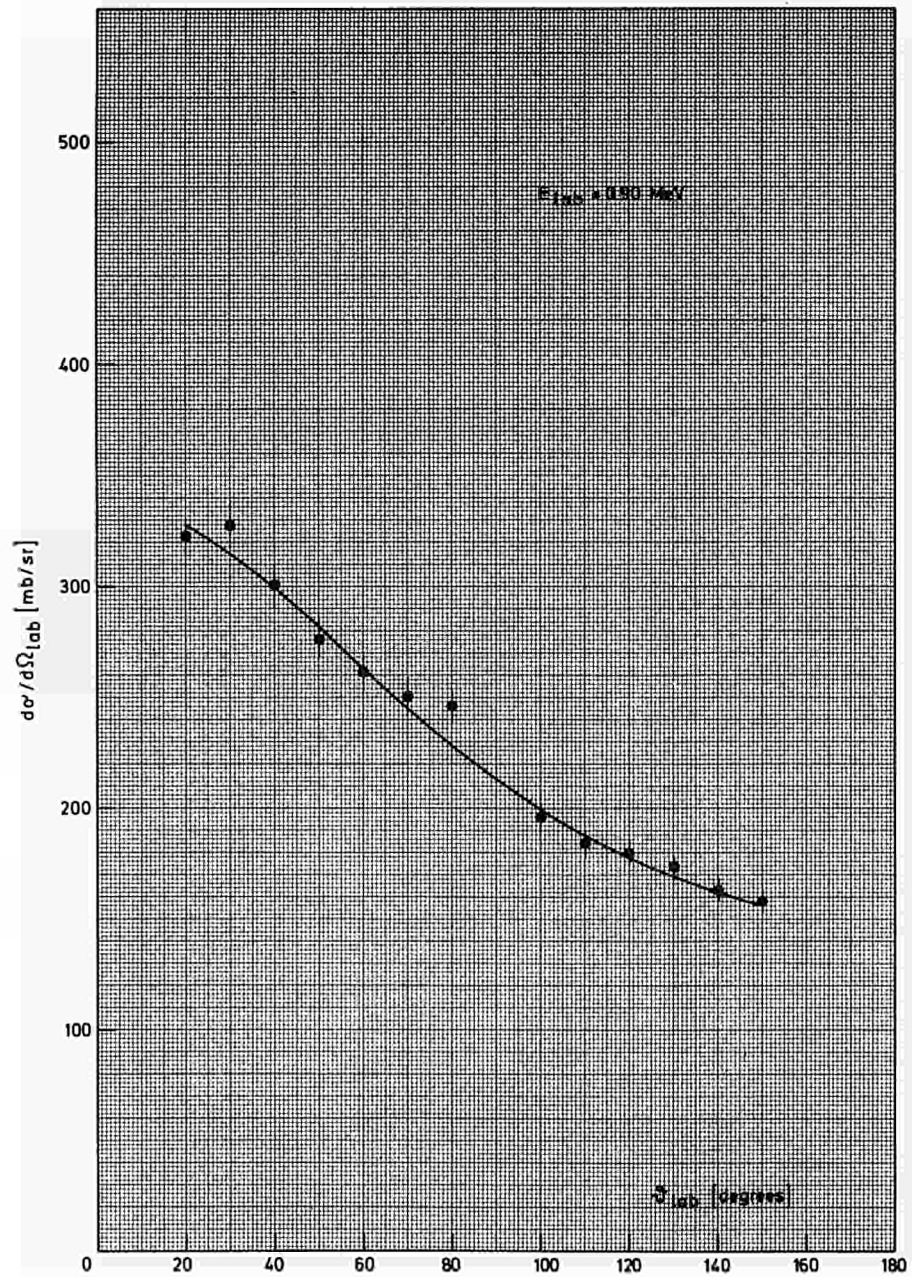
Fig. 4

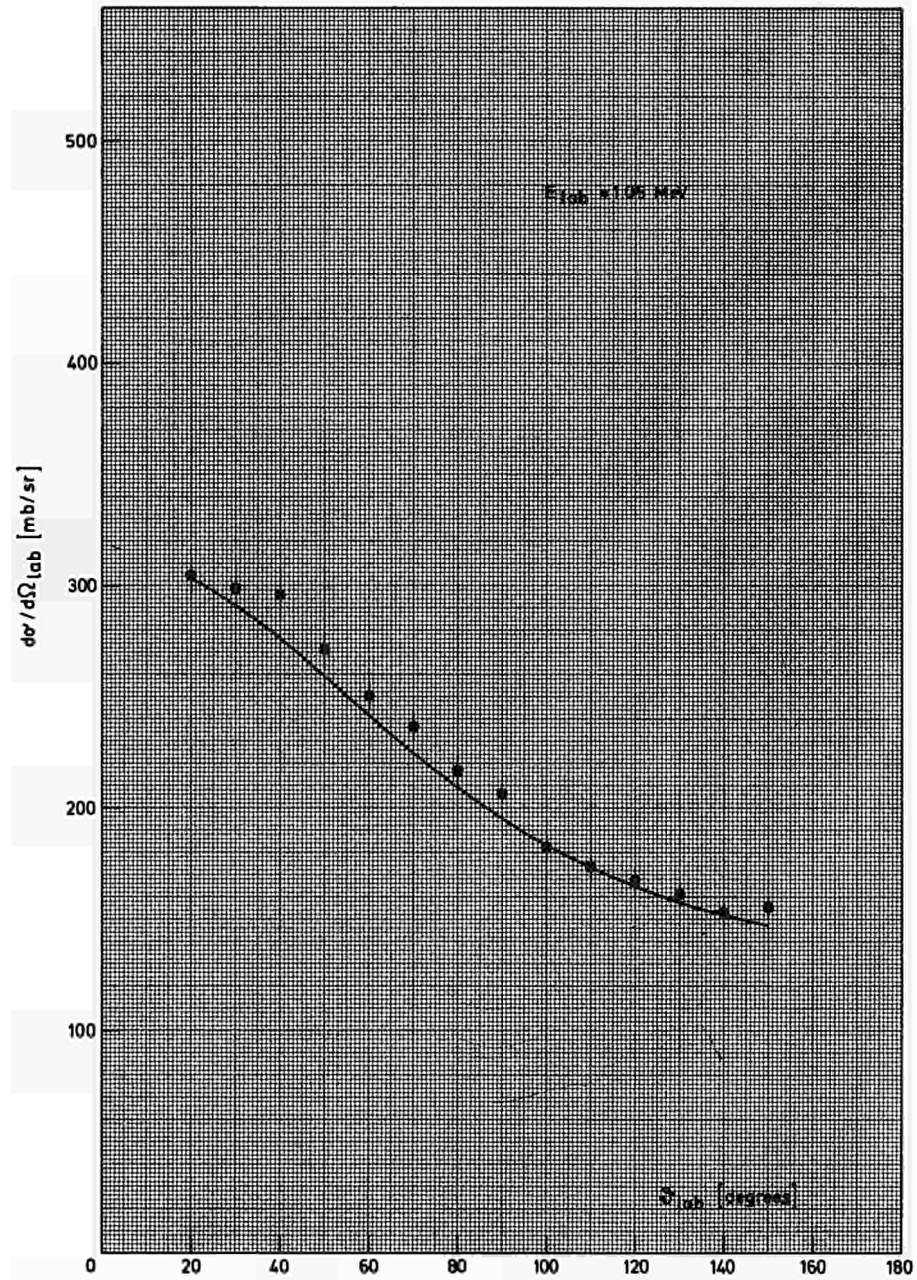
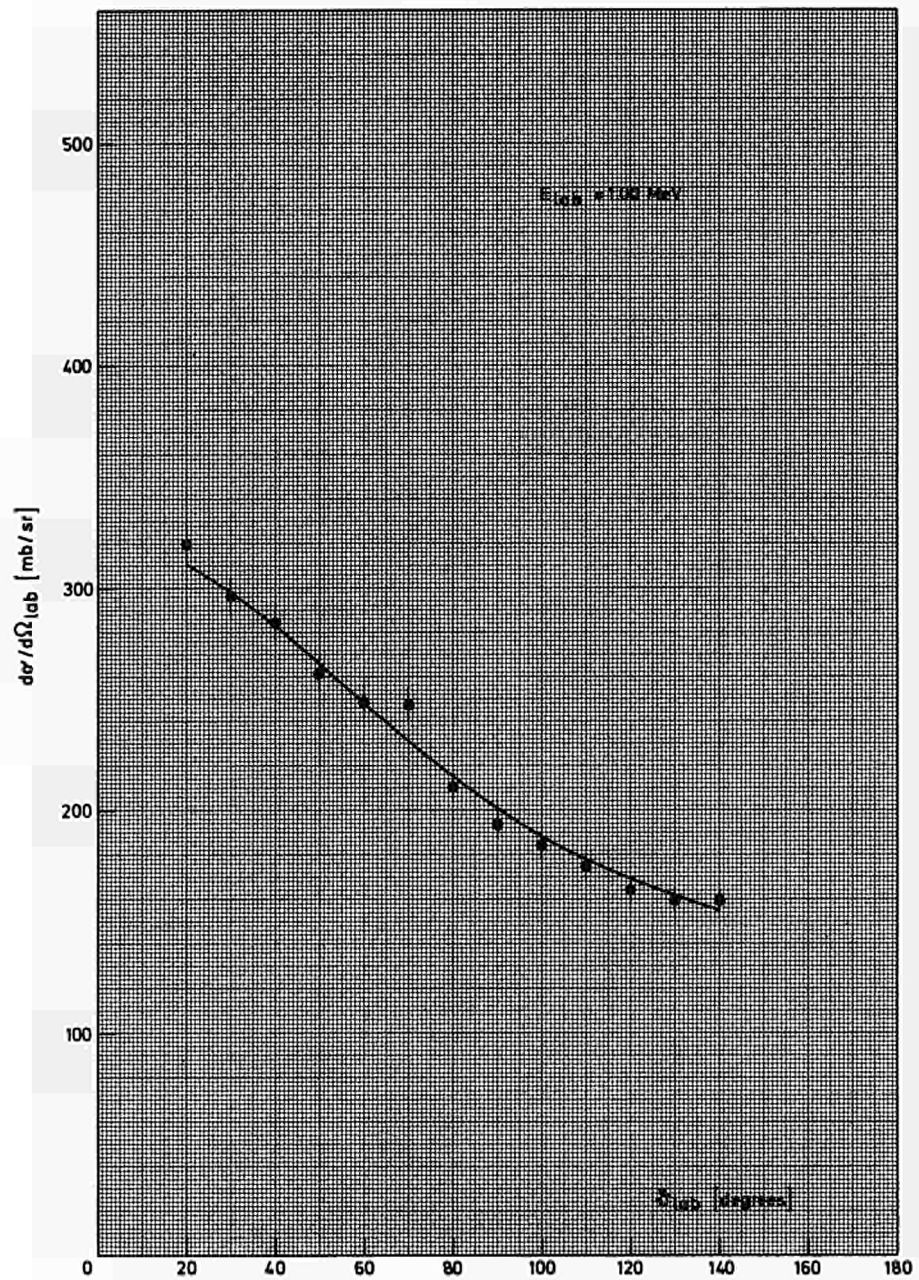


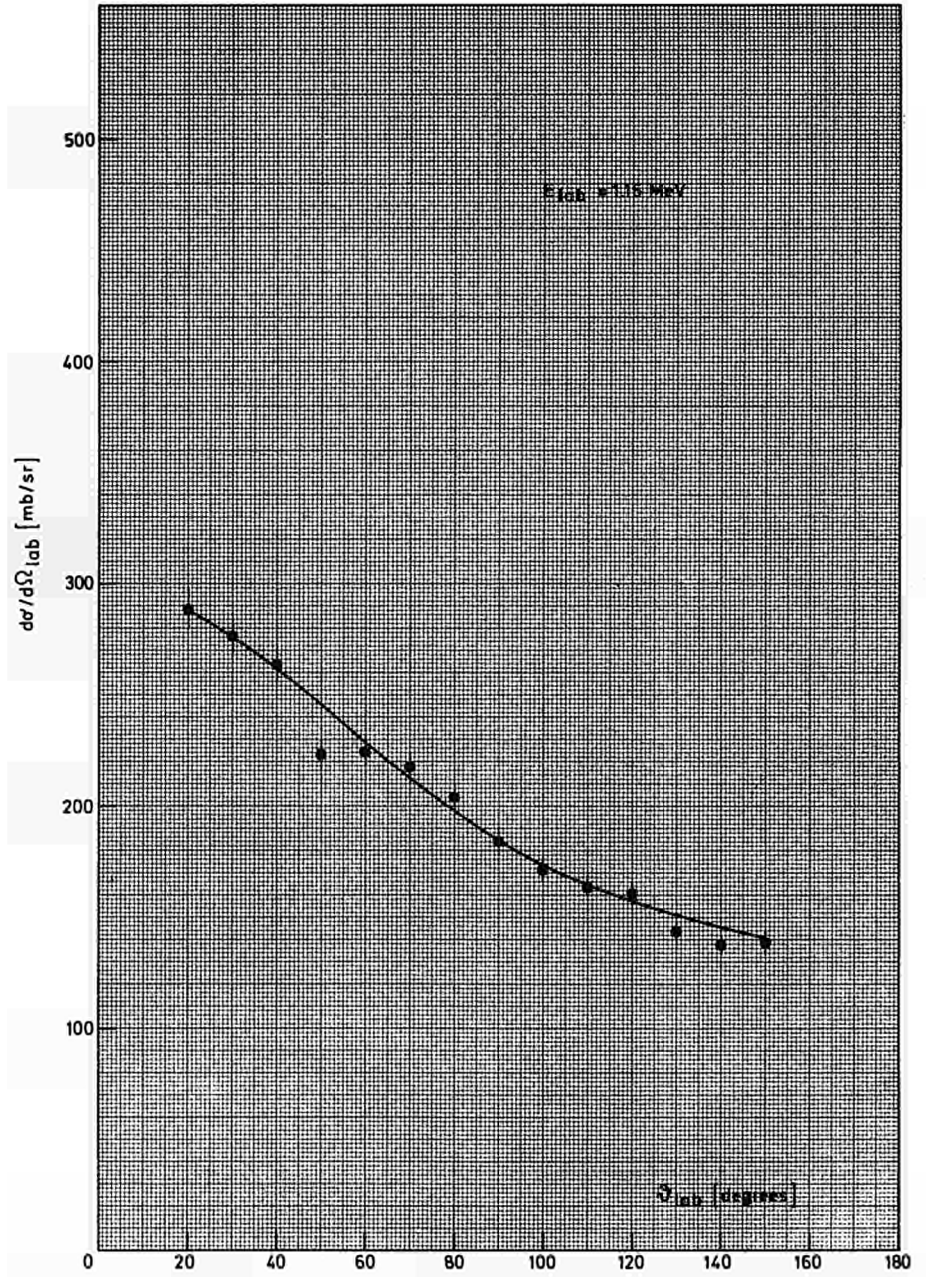
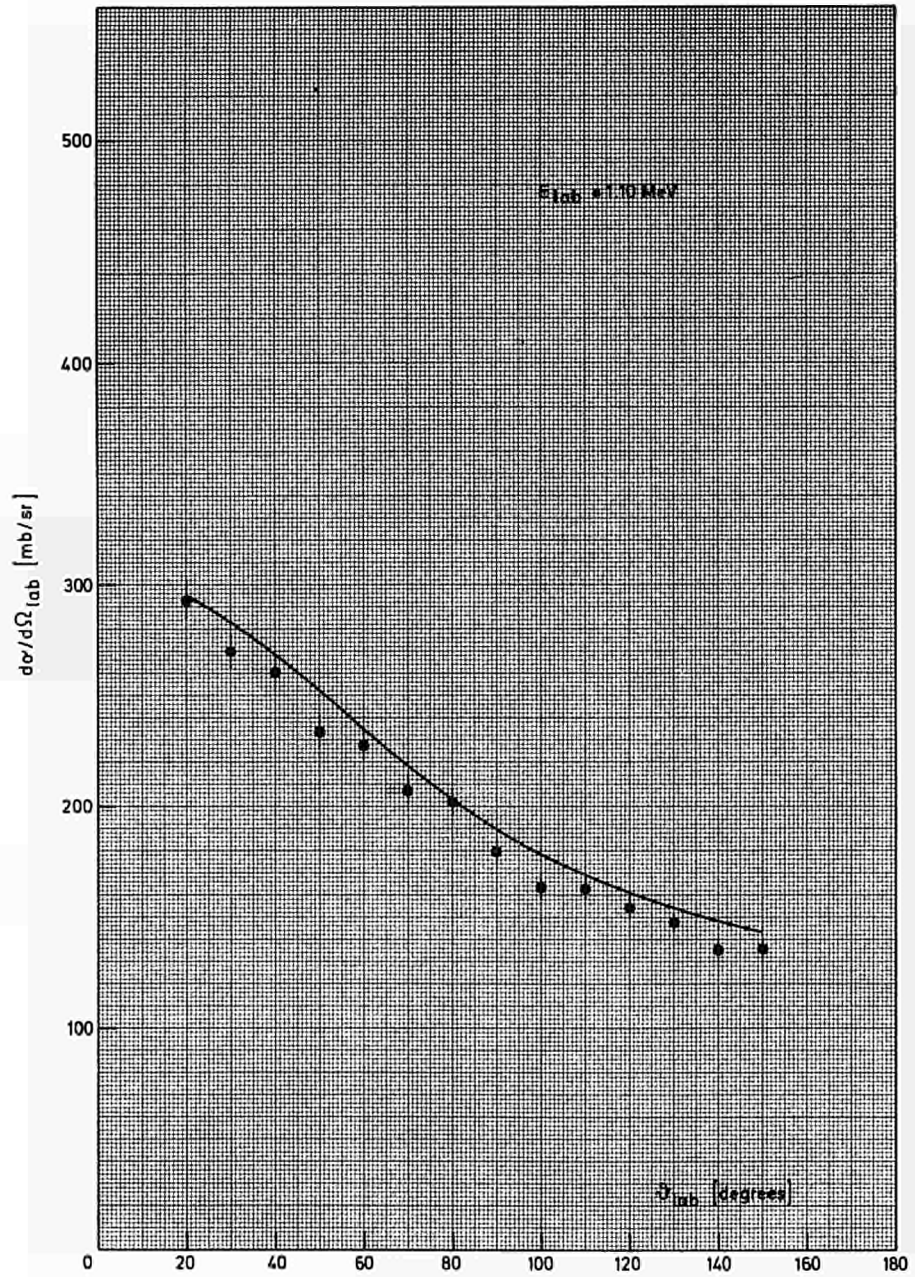


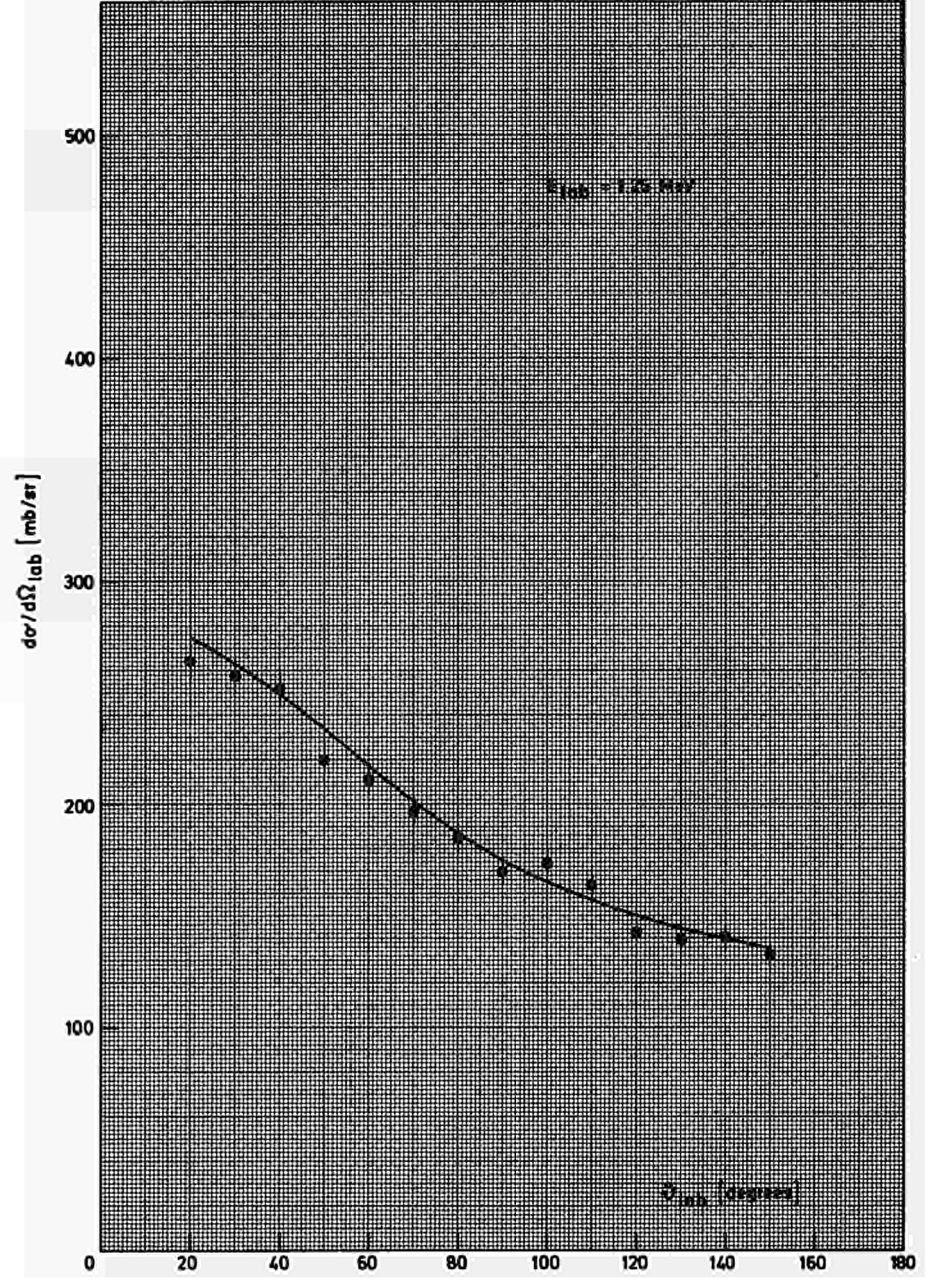
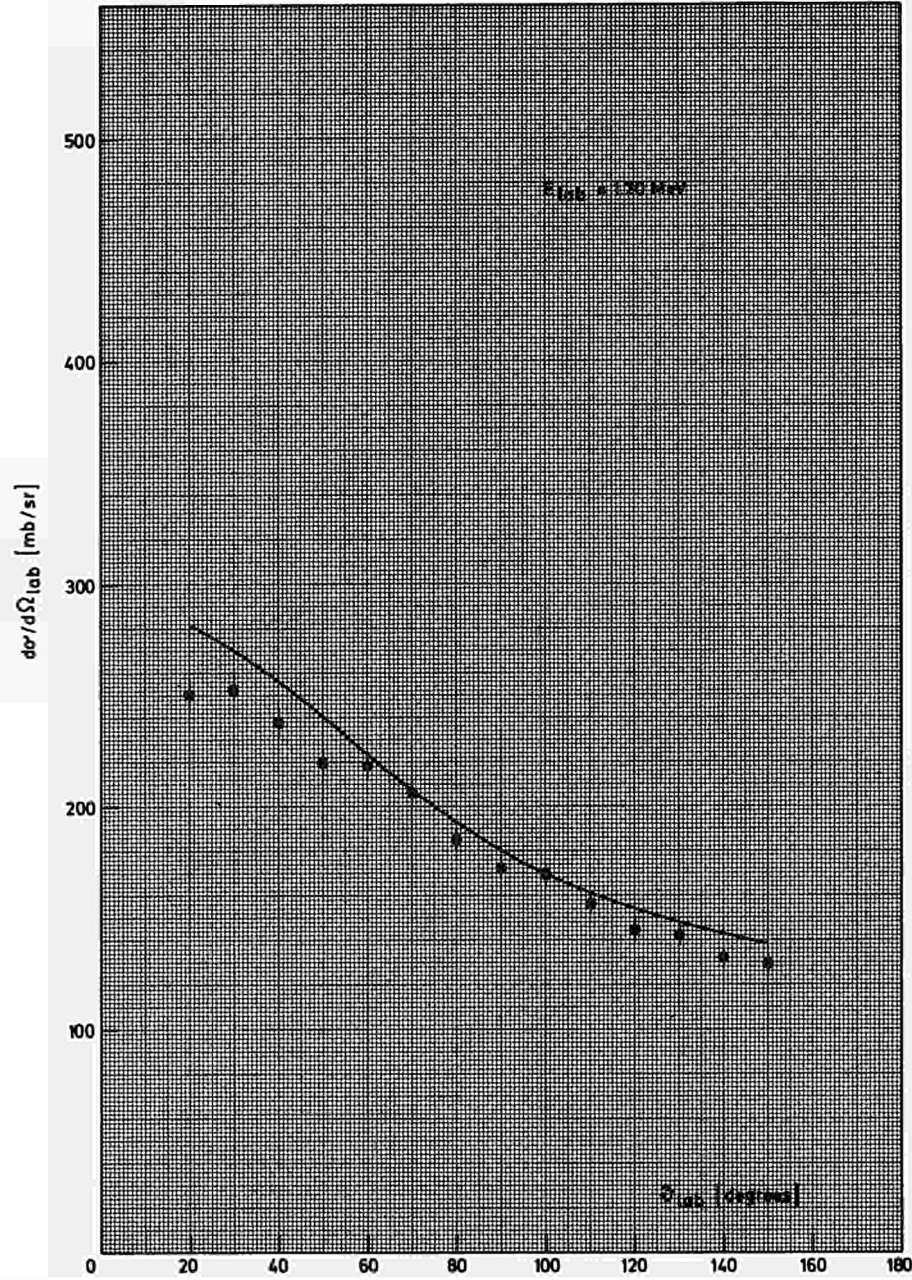


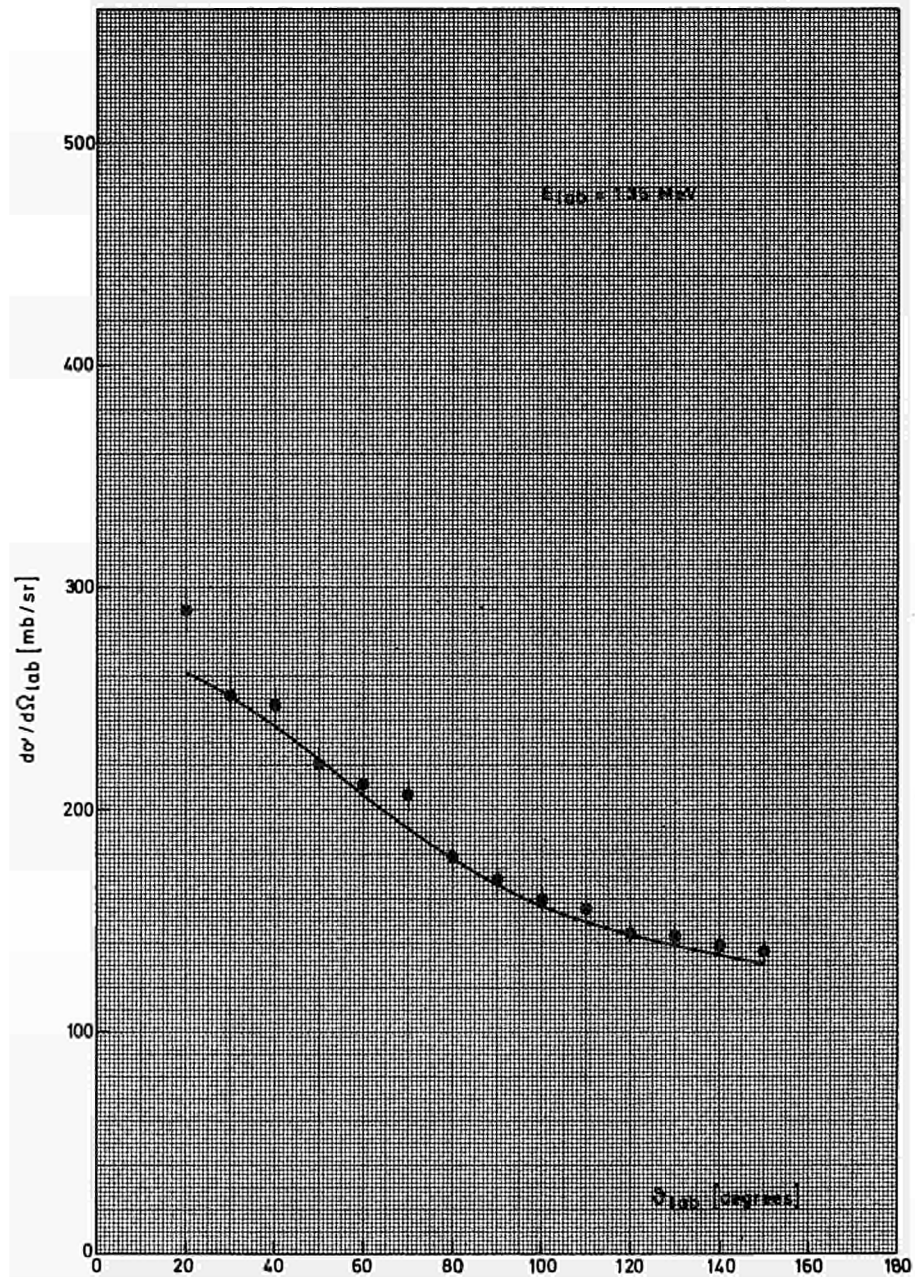
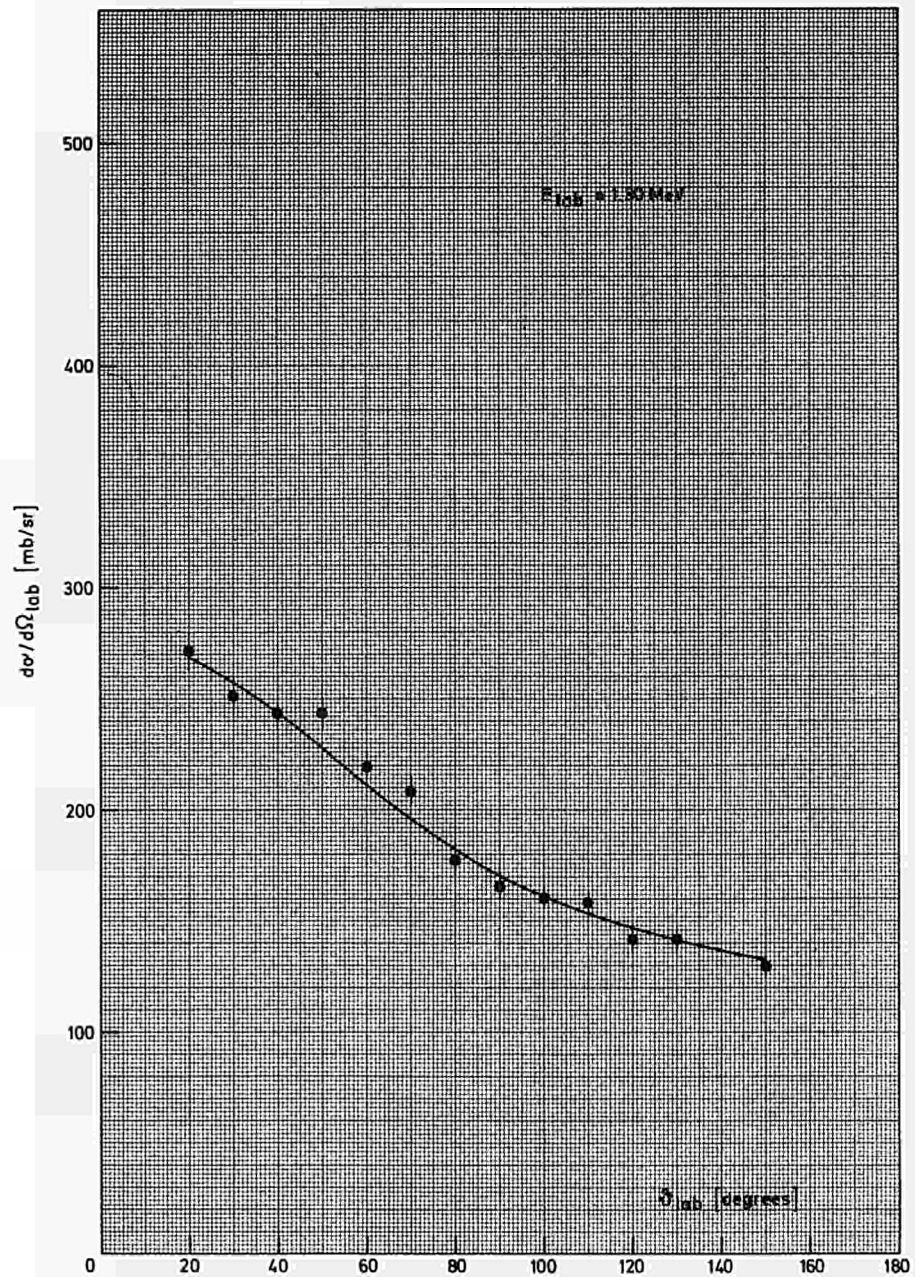


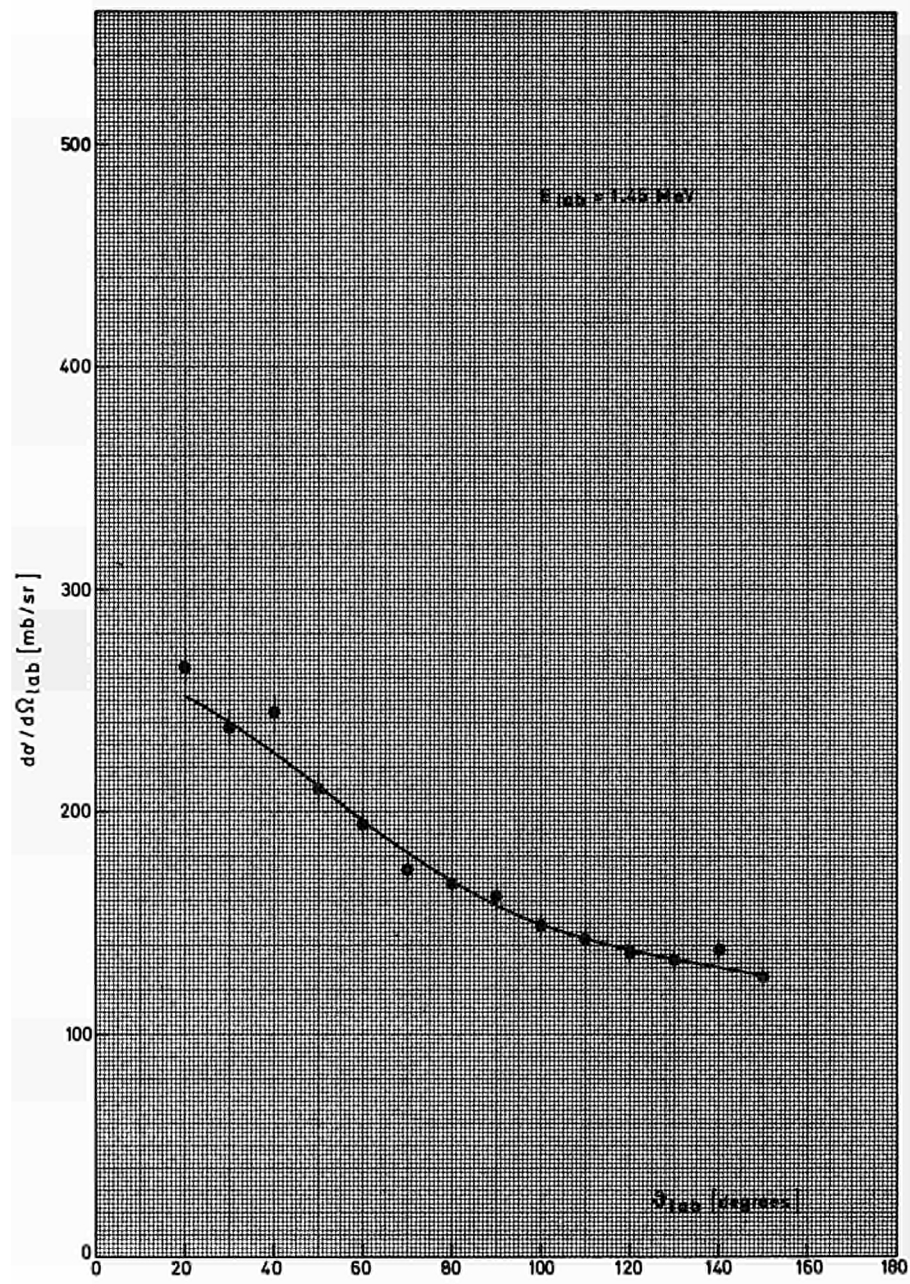
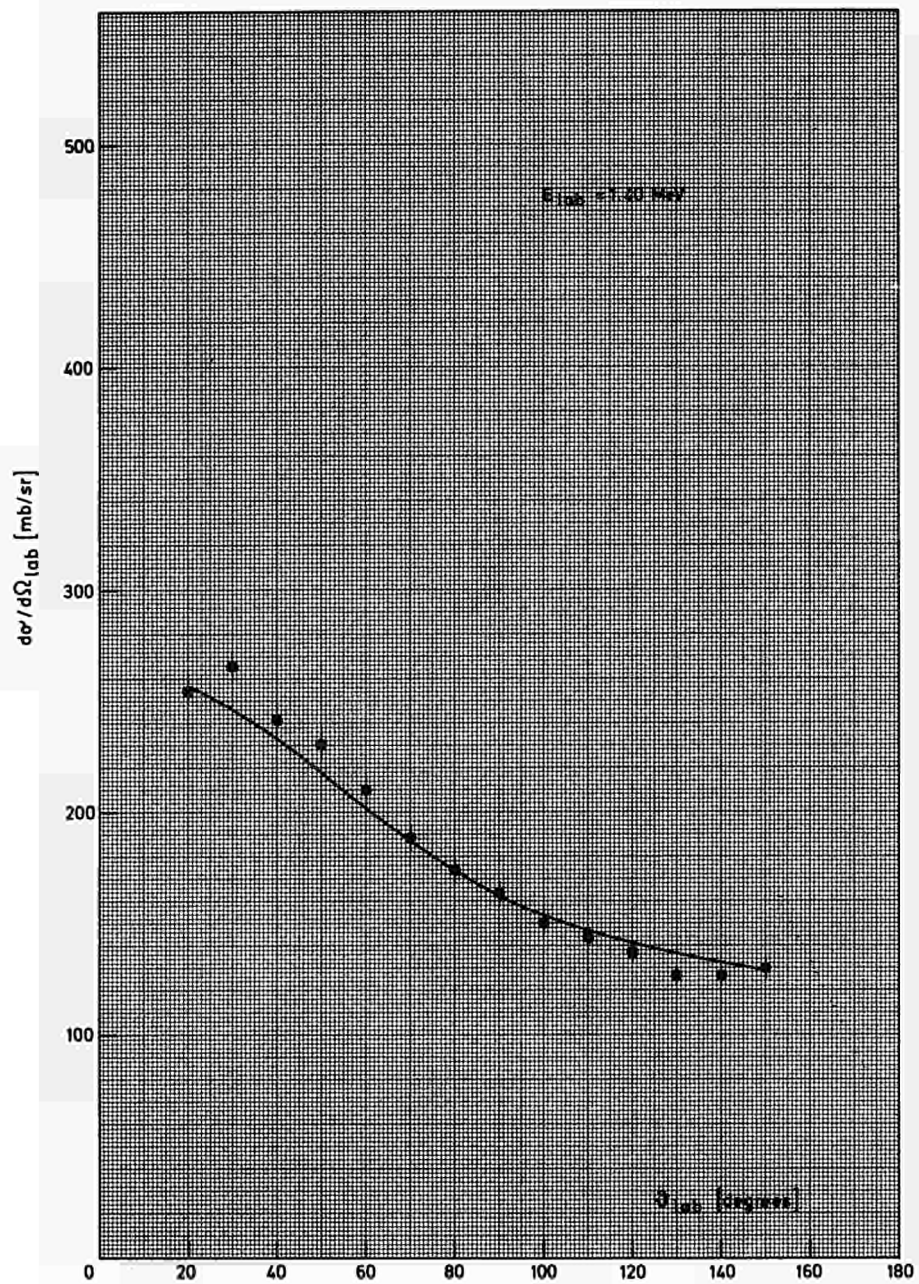


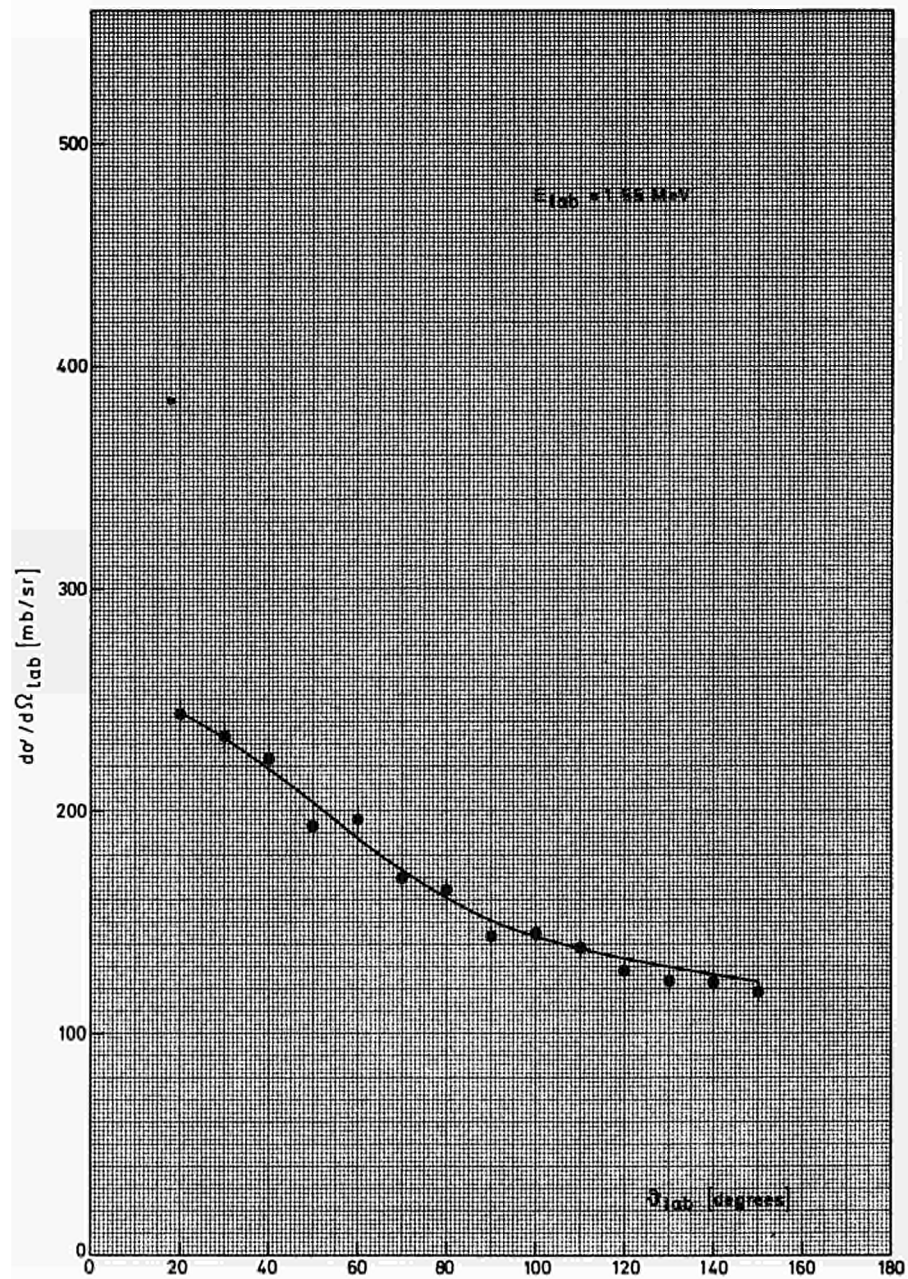
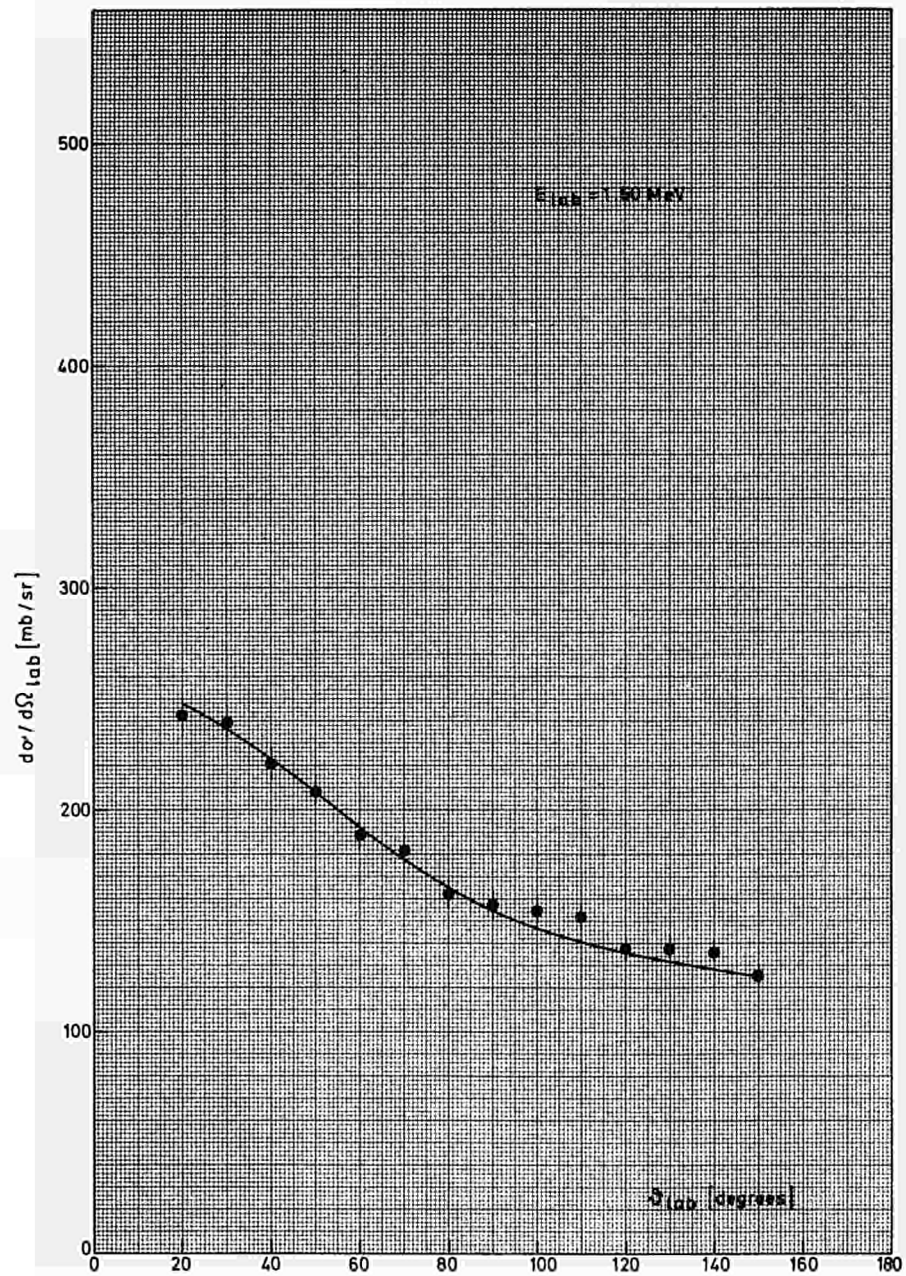


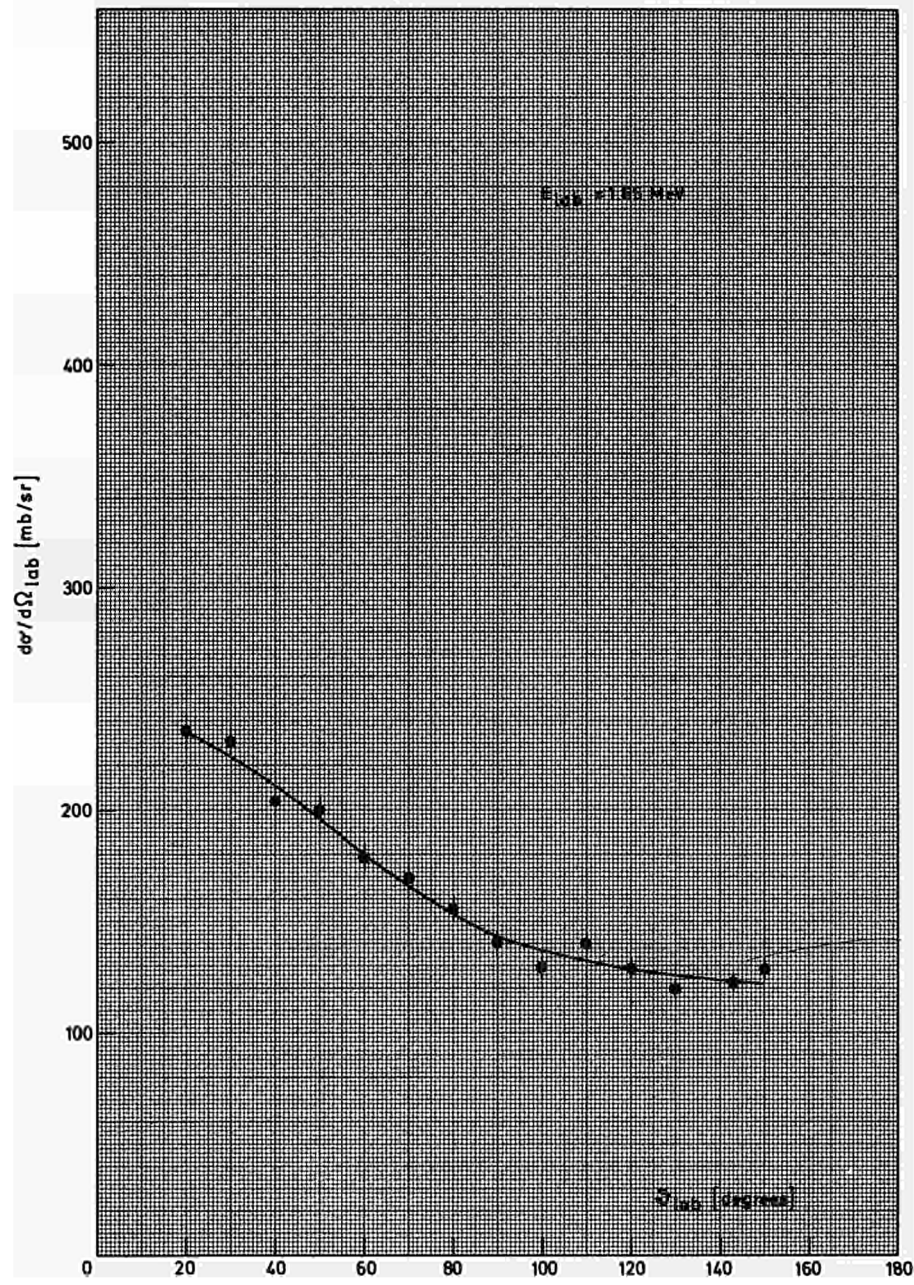
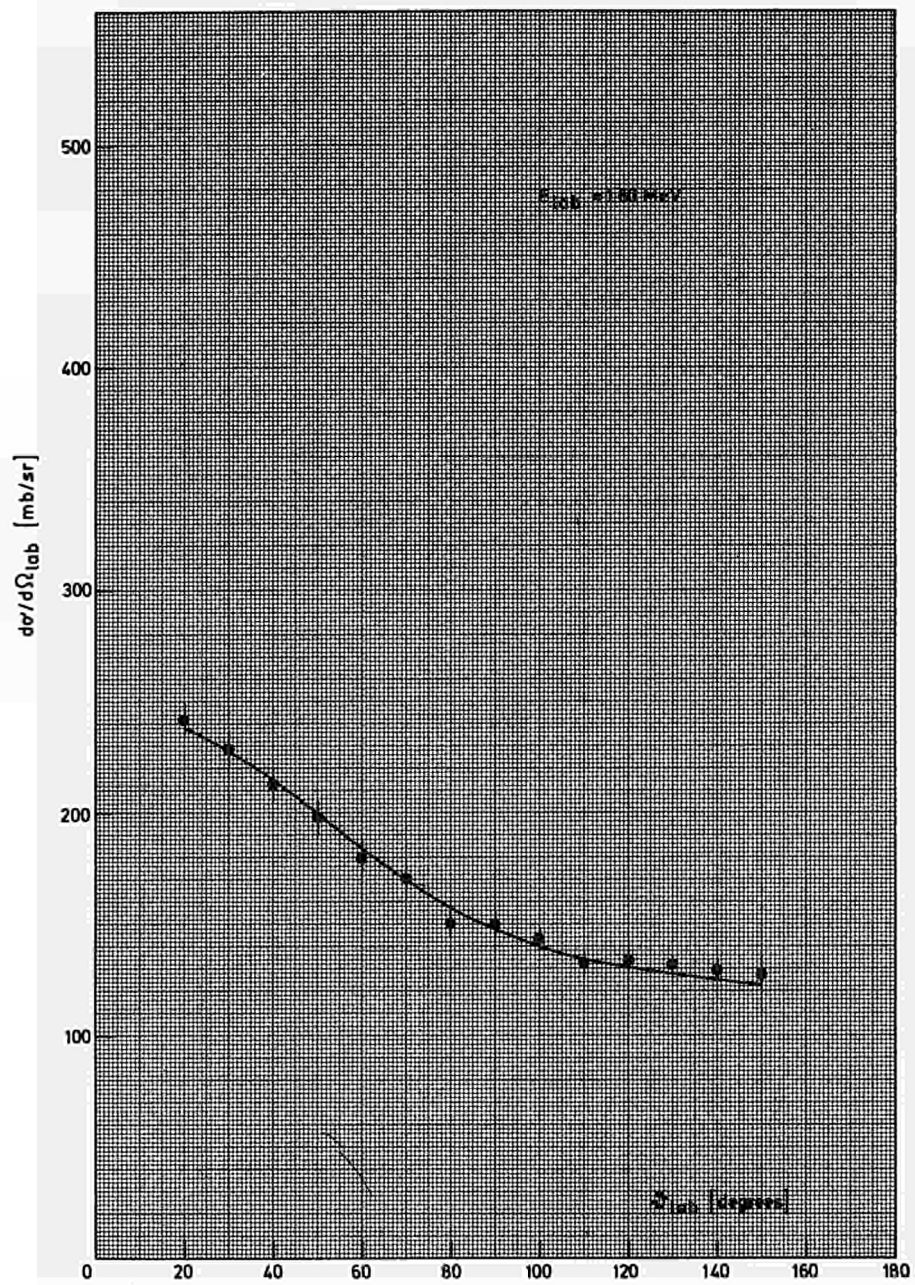


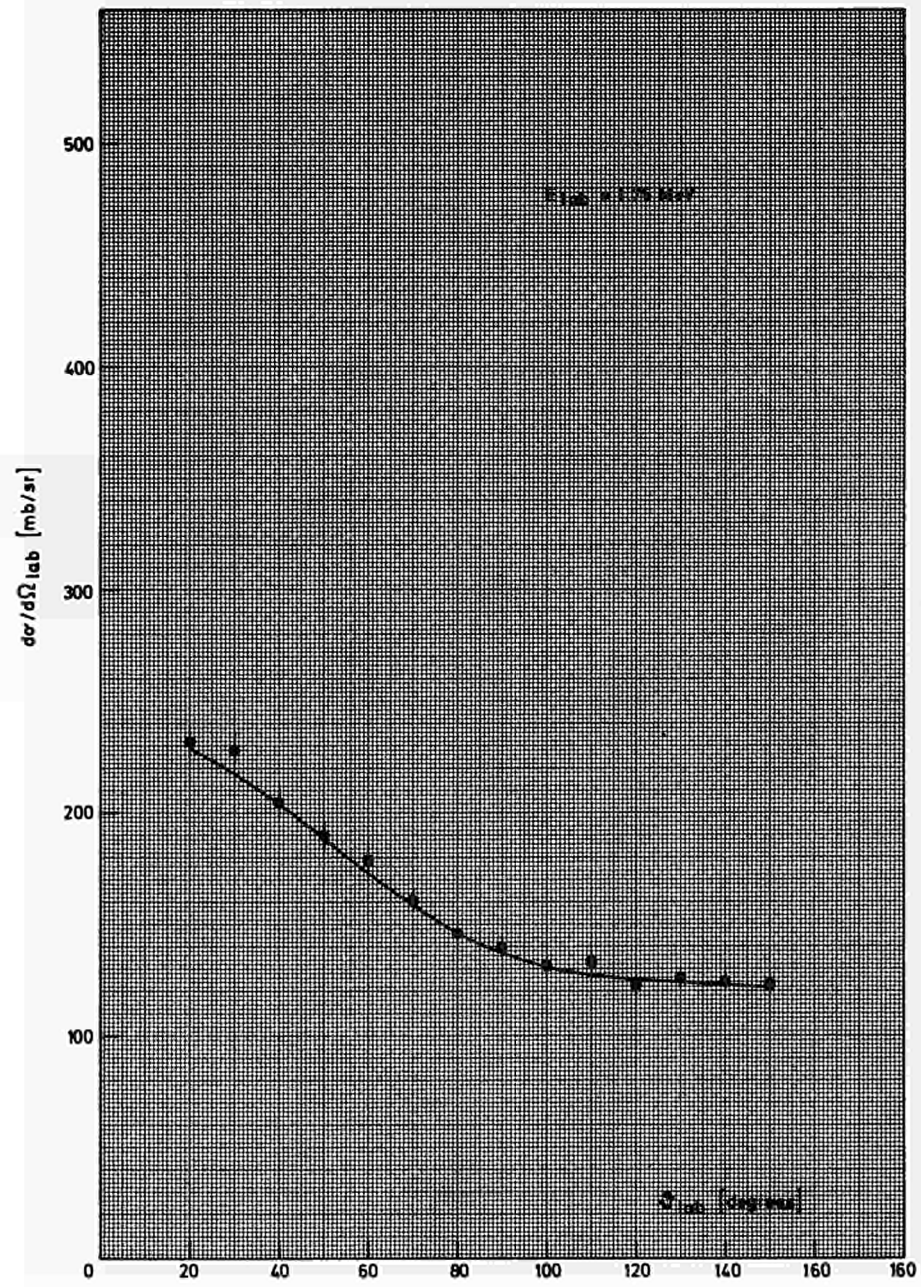
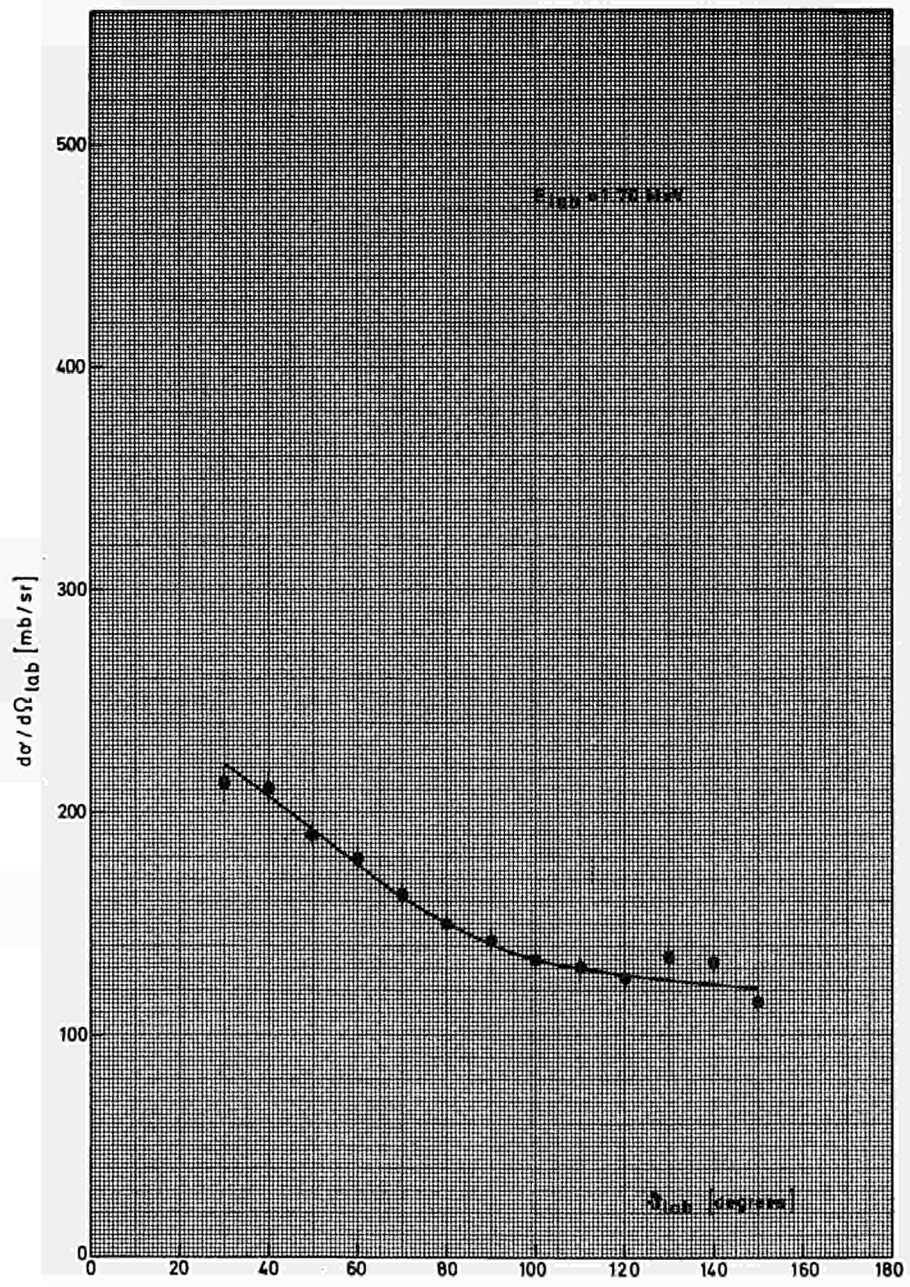


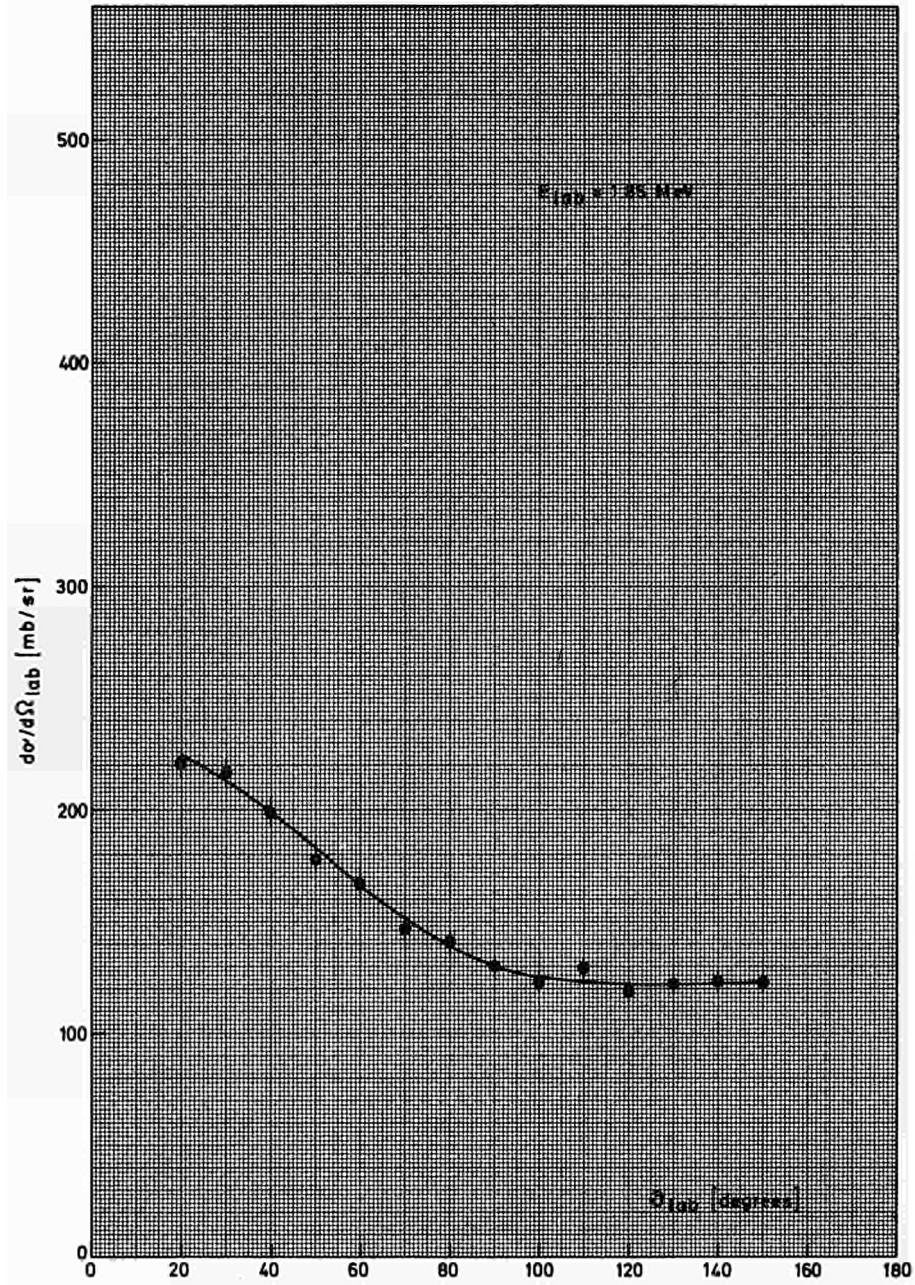
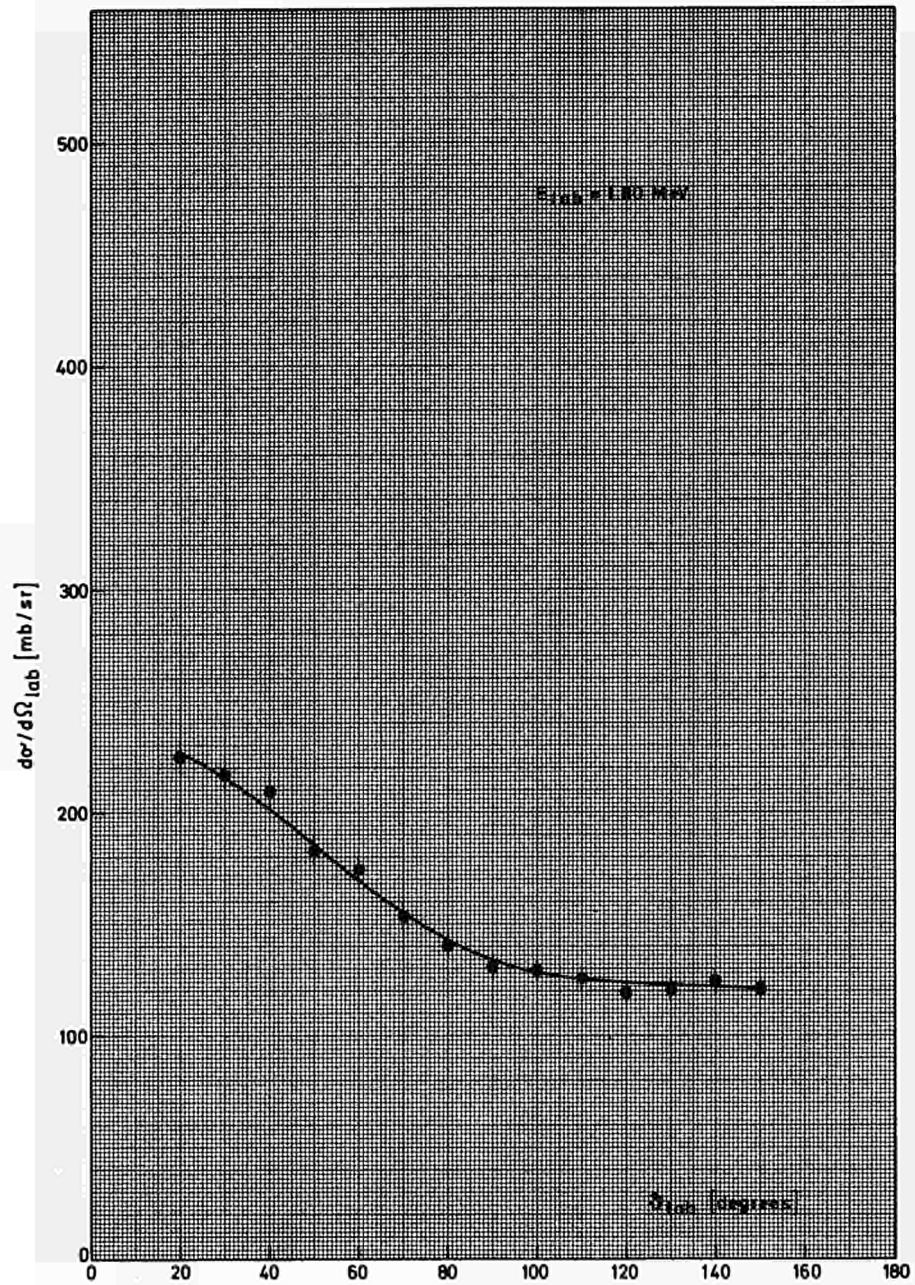


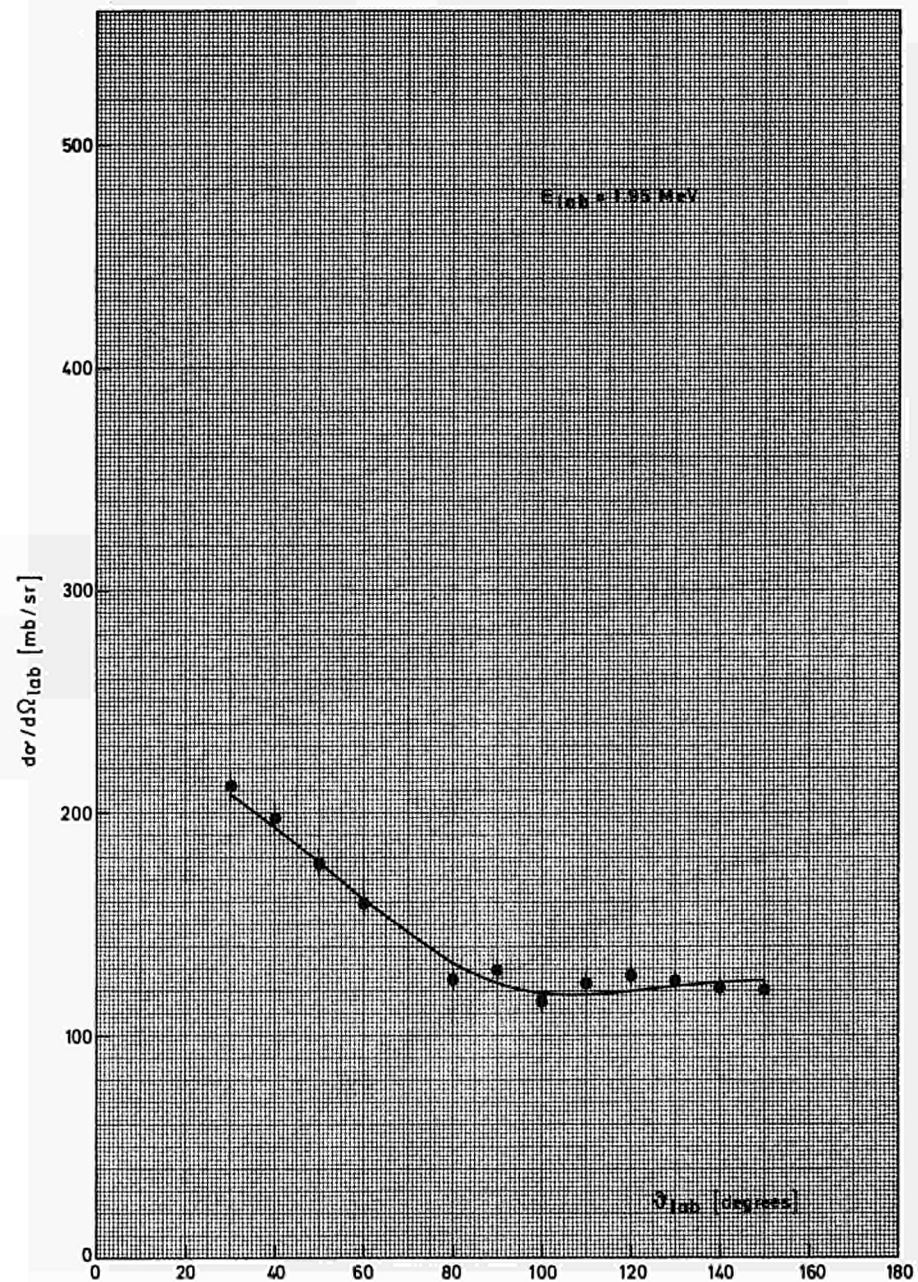
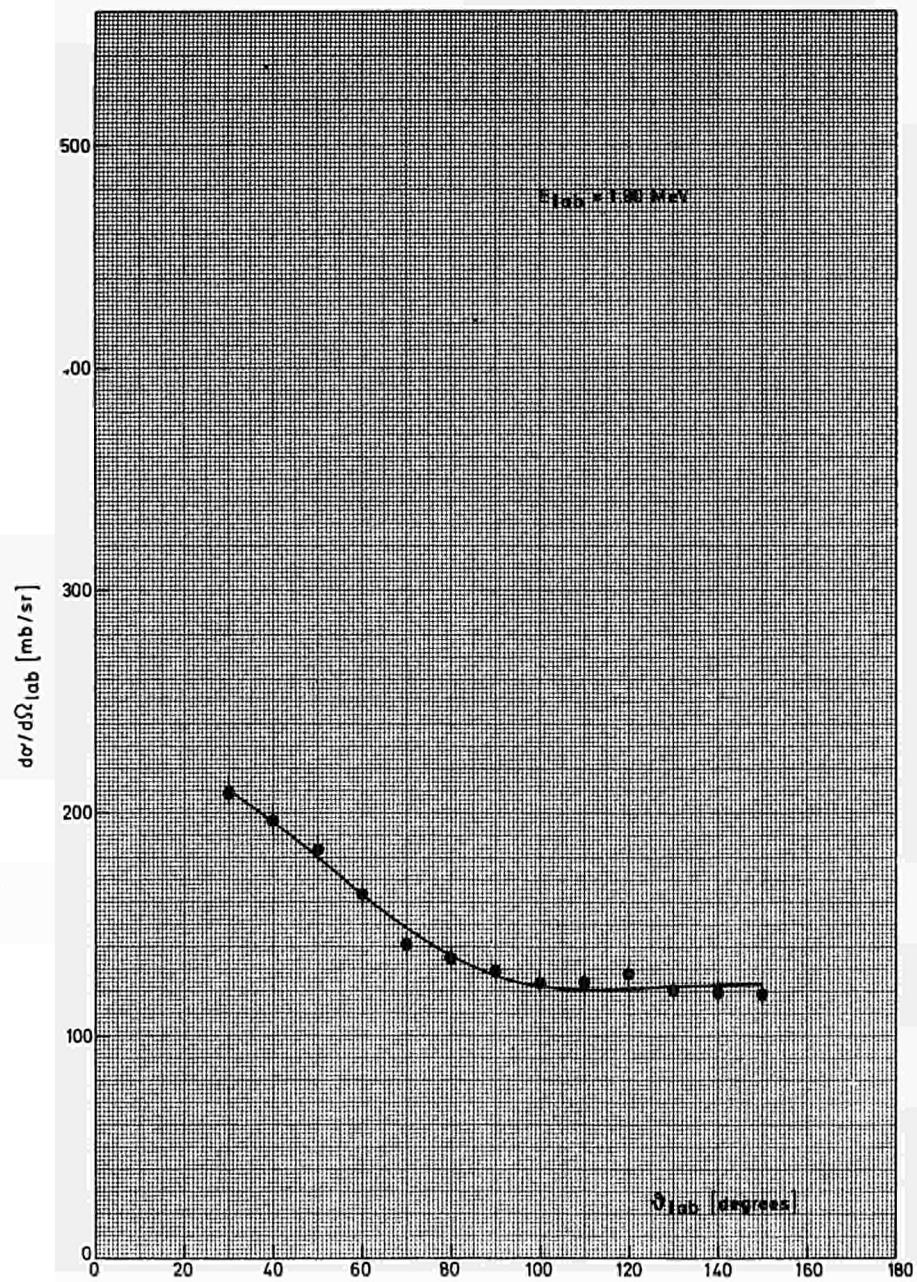












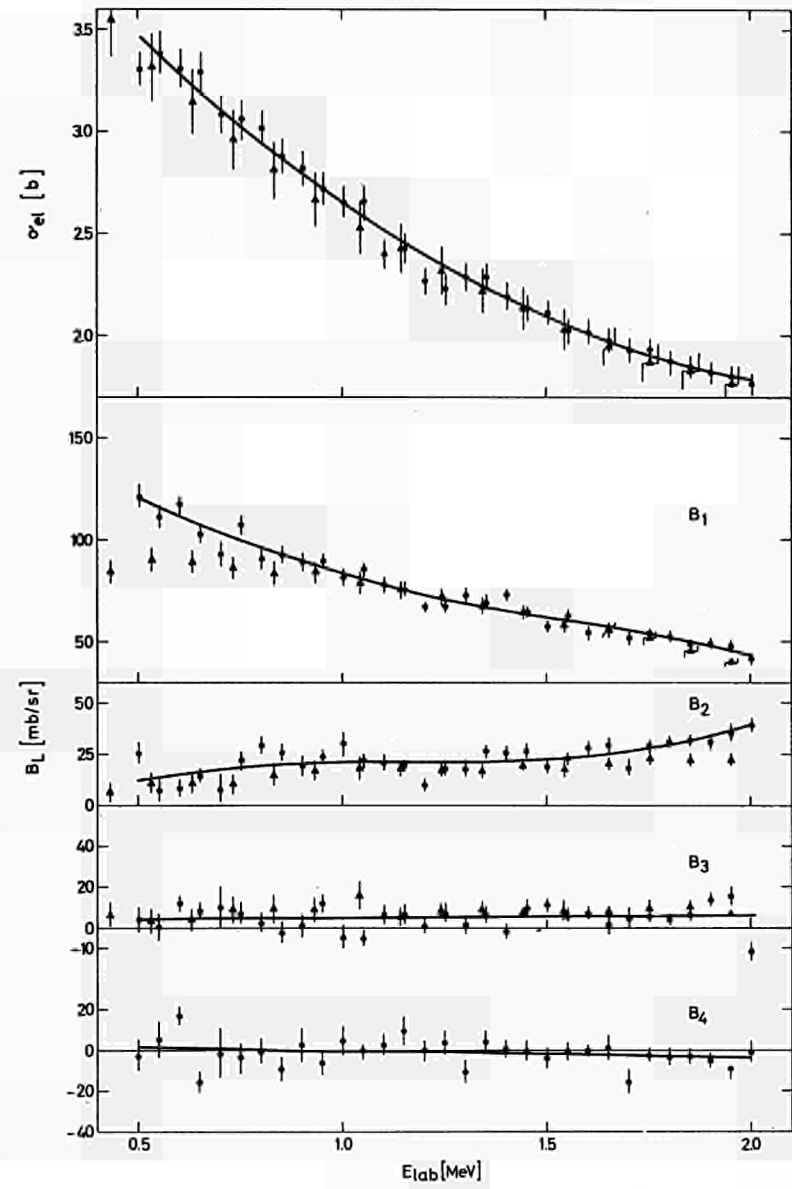
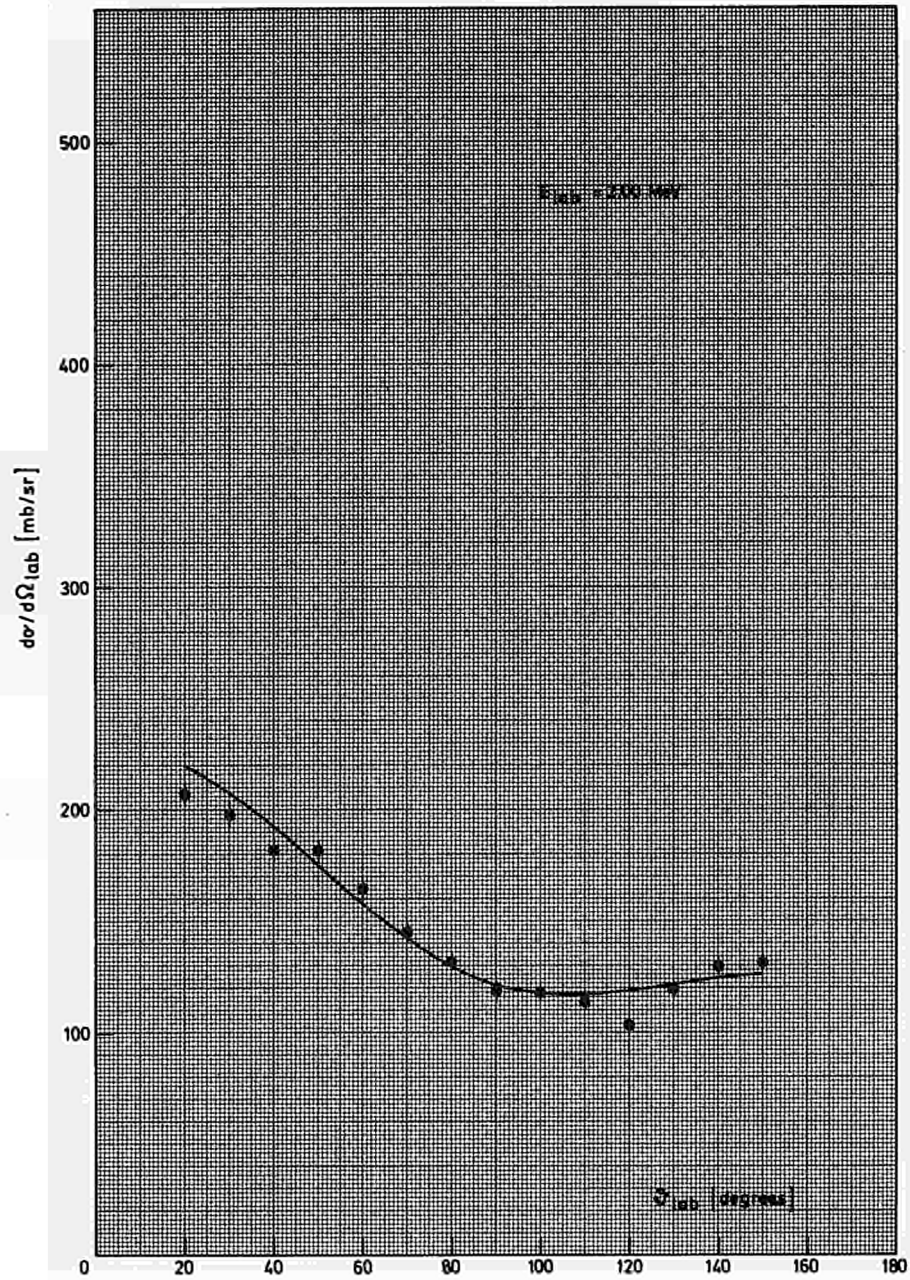


Fig. 36

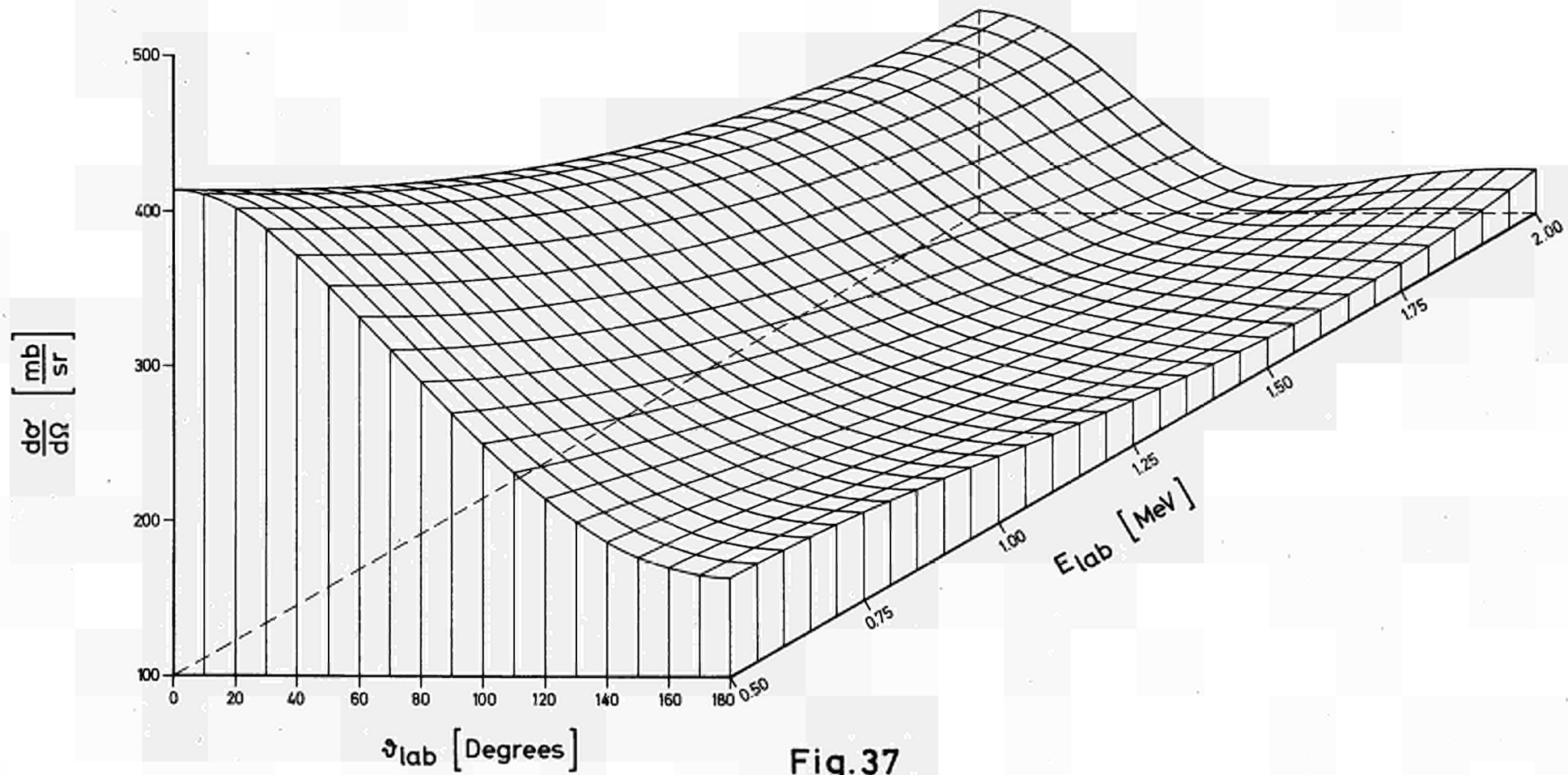


Fig.37

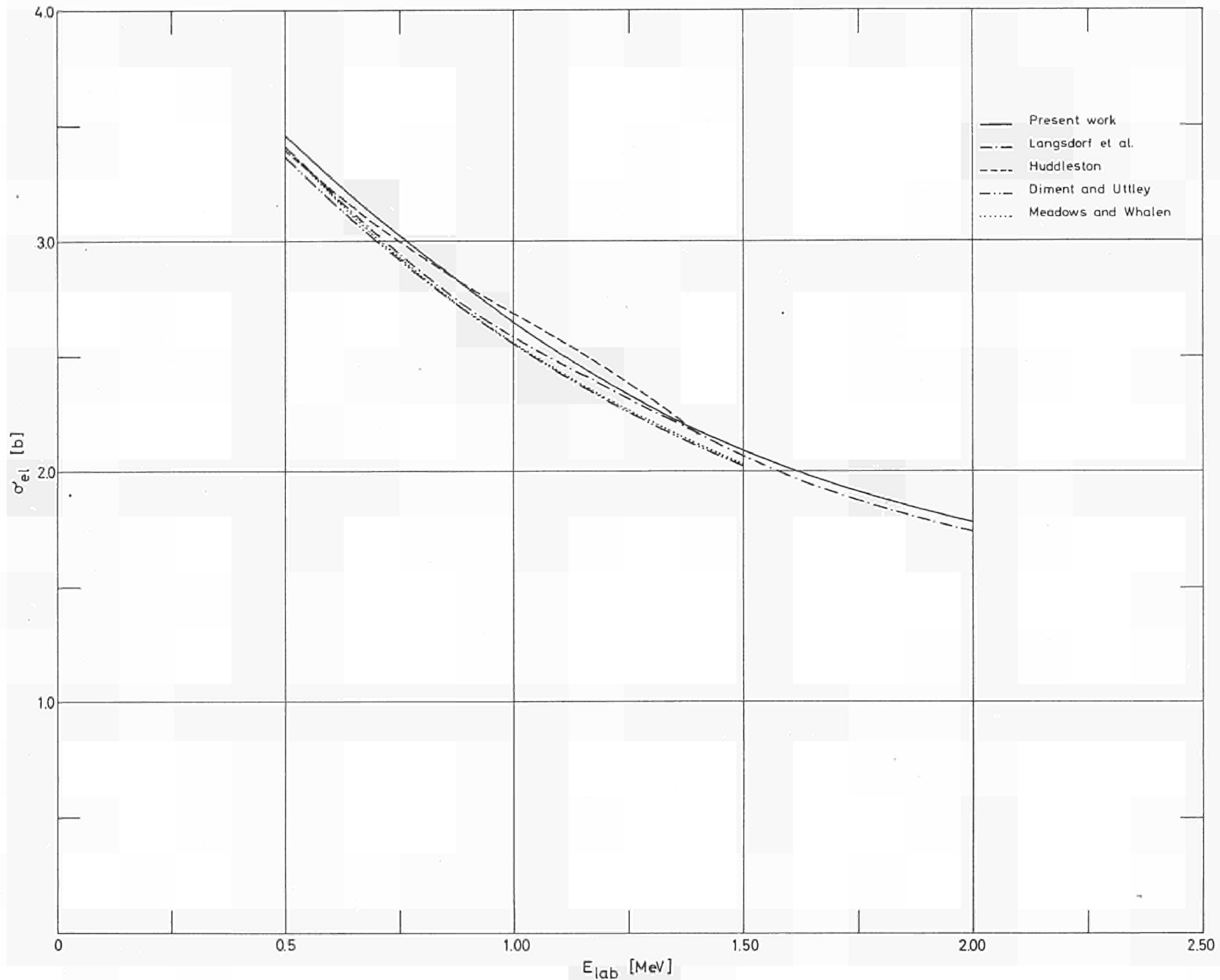


Fig.38

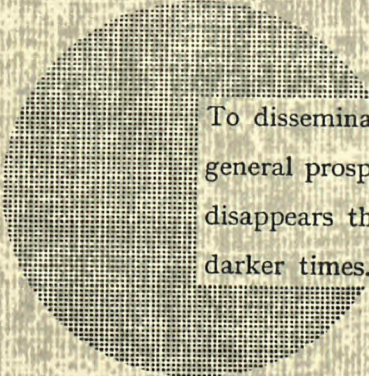
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Alfred Nobel

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