Study of the $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ decay and measurement of the $B^- \to X(3872) K^-$ branching fraction

B. Aubert,[1] R. Barate,[1] D. Boutigny,[1] F. Couderc,[1] J.-M. Gaillard,[1] A. Hicheur,[1] Y. Karyotakis,[1] J. P. Lees,[1] V. Tisserand,[1] A. Zghiche,[1] A. Palano,[2] A. Pompili,[2] J. C. Chen,[3] N. D. Qi,[3] G. Rong,[3] P. Wang,[3] Y. S. Zhu,[3] G. Eigen,[4] I. Ofte,[4] B. Stugu,[4] G. S. Abrams,[5] A. W. Borgland,[5] A. B. Breon,[5] D. N. Brown,[5] J. Button-Shafer,[5] R. N. Cahn,[5] E. Charles,[5] C. T. Day,[5] M. S. Gill,[5] A. V. Gritsan,[5] Y. Groysman,[5] R. G. Jacobsen,[5] R. W. Kadel,[5] J. Kadyk,[5] L. T. Kerth,[5] Yu. G. Kolomensky,[5] G. Kukartsev,[5] C. LeClerc,[5] G. Lynch,[5] A. M. Merchant,[5] L. M. Mir,[5] P. J. Oddone,[5] T. J. Orimoto,[5] M. Pripstein,[5] N. A. Roe,[5] M. T. Ronan,[5] V. G. Shelkov,[5] W. A. Wenzel,[5] K. Ford,[6] T. J. Harrison,[6] C. M. Hawkes,[6] S. E. Morgan,[6] A. T. Watson,[6] M. Fritsch,[7] K. Goetzen,[7] T. Held,[7] H. Koch,[7] B. Lewandowski,[7] M. Pelizaeus,[7] M. Steinke,[7] J. T. Boyd,[8] N. Chevalier,[8] W. N. Cottingham,[8] M. P. Kelly,[8] T. E. Latham,[8] F. F. Wilson,[8] T. Cuhadar-Donszelmann,[9] C. Hearty,[9] N. S. Knecht,[9] T. S. Mattison,[9] J. A. McKenna,[9] D. Thiessen,[9] A. Khan,[10] P. Kyberd,[10] L. Teodorescu,[10] V. E. Blinov,[11] A. D. Bukin,[11] V. P. Druzhinin,[11] V. B. Golubev,[11] V. N. Ivanchenko,[11] E. A. Kravchenko,[11] A. P. Onuchin,[11] S. I. Serednyakov,[11] Yu. I. Skovpen,[11] E. P. Solodov,[11] A. N. Yushkov,[11] D. Best,[12] M. Bruinsma,[12] M. Chao,[12] I. Eschrich,[12] D. Kirkby,[12] A. J. Lankford,[12] M. Mandelkern,[12] R. K. Mommsen,[12] W. Roethel,[12] D. P. Stoker,[12] C. Buchanan,[13] B. L. Hartfiel,[13] J. W. Gary,[14] B. C. Shen,[14] K. Wang,[14] D. del Re,[15] H. K. Hadavand,[15] E. J. Hill,[15] D. B. MacFarlane,[15] H. P. Paar,[15] Sh. Rahatlou,[15] V. Sharma,[15] J. W. Berryhill,[16] C. Campagnari,[16] B. Dahmes,[16] S. L. Levy,[16] O. Long,[16] A. Lu,[16] M. A. Mazur,[16] J. D. Richman,[16] W. Verkerke,[16] T. W. Beck,[17] A. M. Eisner,[17] C. A. Heusch,[17] W. S. Lockman,[17] T. Schalk,[17] R. E. Schmitz,[17] B. A. Schumm,[17] A. Seiden,[17] P. Spradlin,[17] D. C. Williams,[17] M. G. Wilson,[17] J. Albert,[18] E. Chen,[18] G. P. Dubois-Felsmann,[18] A. Dvoretskii,[18] D. G. Hitlin,[18] I. Narsky,[18] T. Piatenko,[18] F. C. Porter,[18] A. Ryd,[18] A. Samuel,[18] S. Yang,[18] S. Jayatilleke,[19] G. Mancinelli,[19] B. T. Meadows,[19] M. D. Sokoloff,[19] T. Abe,[20] F. Blanc,[20] P. Bloom,[20] S. Chen,[20] W. T. Ford,[20] U. Nauenberg,[20] A. Olivas,[20] P. Rankin,[20] J. G. Smith,[20] J. Zhang,[20] L. Zhang,[20] A. Chen,[21] J. L. Harton,[21] A. Soffer,[21] W. H. Toki,[21] R. J. Wilson,[21] Q. L. Zeng,[21] D. Altenburg,[22] T. Brandt,[22] J. Brose,[22] T. Colberg,[22] M. Dickopp,[22] E. Feltresi,[22] A. Hauke,[22] H. M. Lacker,[22] E. Maly,[22] R. Müller-Pfefferkorn,[22] R. Nogowski,[22] S. Otto,[22] A. Petzold,[22] J. Schubert,[22] K. R. Schubert,[22] R. Schwierz,[22] B. Spaan,[22] J. E. Sundermann,[22] D. Bernard,[23] G. R. Bonneaud,[23] F. Brochard,[23] P. Grenier,[23] S. Schrenk,[23] Ch. Thiebaux,[23] G. Vasileiadis,[23] M. Verderi,[23] D. J. Bard,[24] P. J. Clark,[24] D. Lavin,[24] F. Muheim,[24] S. Playfer,[24] Y. Xie,[24] M. Andreotti,[25] V. Azzolini,[25] D. Bettoni,[25] C. Bozzi,[25] R. Calabrese,[25] G. Cibinetto,[25] E. Luppi,[25] M. Negrini,[25] L. Piemontese,[25] A. Sarti,[25] E. Treadwell,[26] R. Baldini-Ferroli,[27] A. Calcaterra,[27] R. de Sangro,[27] G. Finocchiaro,[27] P. Patteri,[27] M. Piccolo,[27] A. Zallo,[27] A. Buzzo,[28] R. Capra,[28] R. Contri,[28] G. Crosetti,[28] M. Lo Vetere,[28] M. Macri,[28] M. R. Monge,[28] S. Passaggio,[28] C. Patrignani,[28] E. Robutti,[28] A. Santroni,[28] S. Tosi,[28] S. Bailey,[29] G. Brandenburg,[29] M. Morii,[29] E. Won,[29] R. S. Dubitzky,[30] U. Langenegger,[30] W. Bhimji,[31] D. A. Bowerman,[31] P. D. Dauncey,[31] U. Egede,[31] J. R. Gaillard,[31] G. W. Morton,[31] J. A. Nash,[31] G. P. Taylor,[31] G. J. Grenier,[32] U. Mallik,[32] J. Cochran,[33] H. B. Crawley,[33] J. Lamsa,[33] W. T. Meyer,[33] S. Prell,[33] E. I. Rosenberg,[33] J. Yi,[33] M. Davier,[34] G. Grosdidier,[34] A. Höcker,[34] S. Laplace,[34] F. Le Diberder,[34] V. Lepeltier,[34] A. M. Lutz,[34] T. C. Petersen,[34] S. Plaszczynski,[34] M. H. Schune,[34] L. Tantot,[34] G. Wormser,[34] C. H. Cheng,[35] D. J. Lange,[35] M. C. Simani,[35] D. M. Wright,[35] A. J. Bevan,[36] J. P. Coleman,[36] J. R. Fry,[36] E. Gabathuler,[36] R. Gamet,[36] R. J. Parry,[36] D. J. Payne,[36] R. J. Sloane,[36] C. Touramanis,[36] J. J. Back,[37] C. M. Cormack,[37] P. F. Harrison,[37,*] G. B. Mohanty,[37] C. L. Brown,[38] G. Cowan,[38] R. L. Flack,[38] H. U. Flaecher,[38] M. G. Green,[38] C. E. Marker,[38] T. R. McMahon,[38] S. Ricciardi,[38] F. Salvatore,[38] G. Vaitsas,[38] M. A. Winter,[38] D. Brown,[39] C. L. Davis,[39] J. Allison,[40] N. R. Barlow,[40] R. J. Barlow,[40] P. A. Hart,[40] M. C. Hodgkinson,[40] G. D. Lafferty,[40] A. J. Lyon,[40] J. C. Williams,[40] A. Farbin,[41] W. D. Hulsbergen,[41] A. Jawahery,[41] D. Kovalskyi,[41] C. K. Lae,[41] V. Lillard,[41] D. A. Roberts,[41] G. Blaylock,[42] C. Dallapiccola,[42] K. T. Flood,[42] S. S. Hertzbach,[42] R. Kofler,[42] V. B. Koptchev,[42] T. B. Moore,[42] S. Saremi,[42] H. Staengle,[42] S. Willocq,[42] R. Cowan,[43] G. Sciolla,[43] F. Taylor,[43] R. K. Yamamoto,[43] D. J. J. Mangeol,[44] P. M. Patel,[44] S. H. Robertson,[44] A. Lazzaro,[45] F. Palombo,[45] J. M. Bauer,[46] L. Cremaldi,[46] V. Eschenburg,[46] R. Godang,[46] R. Kroeger,[46] J. Reidy,[46] D. A. Sanders,[46] D. J. Summers,[46] H. W. Zhao,[46] S. Brunet,[47] D. Côté,[47] P. Taras,[47] H. Nicholson,[48] N. Cavallo,[49] F. Fabozzi,[49,†] C. Gatto,[49] L. Lista,[49] D. Monorchio,[49] P. Paolucci,[49] D. Piccolo,[49] C. Sciacca,[49] M. Baak,[50] H. Bulten,[50] G. Raven,[50] L. Wilden,[50] C. P. Jessop,[51] J. M. LoSecco,[51] T. A. Gabriel,[52] T. Allmendinger,[53] B. Brau,[53] K. K. Gan,[53] K. Honscheid,[53] D. Hufnagel,[53] H. Kagan,[53] R. Kass,[53] T. Pulliam,[53] A. M. Rahimi,[53] R. Ter-Antonyan,[53] Q. K. Wong,[53] J. Brau,[54] R. Frey,[54] O. Igonkina,[54] C. T. Potter,[54] N. B. Sinev,[54] D. Strom,[54] E. Torrence,[54] F. Colecchia,[55] A. Dorigo,[55] F. Galeazzi,[55] M. Margoni,[55] M. Morandin,[55] M. Posocco,[55] M. Rotondo,[55] F. Simonetto,[55] R. Stroili,[55] G. Tiozzo,[55] C. Voci,[55]

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M. Benayoun,[56] H. Briand,[56] J. Chauveau,[56] P. David,[56] Ch. de la Vaissière,[56] L. Del Buono,[56] O. Hamon,[56] M. J. J. John,[56] Ph. Leruste,[56] J. Ocariz,[56] M. Pivk,[56] L. Roos,[56] S. T'Jampens,[56] G. Therin,[56] P. F. Manfredi,[57] V. Re,[57] P. K. Behera,[58] L. Gladney,[58] Q. H. Guo,[58] J. Panetta,[58] F. Anulli,[27,59] M. Biasini,[59] I. M. Peruzzi,[27,59] M. Pioppi,[59] C. Angelini,[60] G. Batignani,[60] S. Bettarini,[60] M. Bondioli,[60] F. Bucci,[60] G. Calderini,[60] M. Carpinelli,[60] V. Del Gamba,[60] F. Forti,[60] M. A. Giorgi,[60] A. Lusiani,[60] G. Marchiori,[60] F. Martinez-Vidal,[60,‡] M. Morganti,[60] N. Neri,[60] E. Paoloni,[60] M. Rama,[60] G. Rizzo,[60] F. Sandrelli,[60] J. Walsh,[60] M. Haire,[61] D. Judd,[61] K. Paick,[61] D. E. Wagoner,[61] N. Danielson,[62] P. Elmer,[62] Y. P. Lau,[62] C. Lu,[62] V. Miftakov,[62] J. Olsen,[62] A. J. S. Smith,[62] A. V. Telnov,[62] F. Bellini,[63] G. Cavoto,[62,63] A. D'Orazio,[63] R. Faccini,[63] F. Ferrarotto,[63] F. Ferroni,[63] M. Gaspero,[63] L. Li Gioi,[63] M. A. Mazzoni,[63] S. Morganti,[63] M. Pierini,[63] G. Piredda,[63] F. Safai Tehrani,[63] C. Voena,[63] S. Christ,[64] G. Wagner,[64] R. Waldi,[64] T. Adye,[65] N. De Groot,[65] B. Franek,[65] N. I. Geddes,[65] G. P. Gopal,[65] E. O. Olaiya,[65] R. Aleksan,[66] S. Emery,[66] A. Gaidot,[66] S. F. Ganzhur,[66] P.-F. Giraud,[66] G. Hamel de Monchenault,[66] W. Kozanecki,[66] M. Langer,[66] M. Legendre,[66] G. W. London,[66] B. Mayer,[66] G. Schott,[66] G. Vasseur,[66] Ch. Yèche,[66] M. Zito,[66] M. V. Purohit,[67] A. W. Weidemann,[67] F. X. Yumiceva,[67] D. Aston,[68] R. Bartoldus,[68] N. Berger,[68] A. M. Boyarski,[68] O. L. Buchmueller,[68] M. R. Convery,[68] M. Cristinziani,[68] G. De Nardo,[68] D. Dong,[68] J. Dorfan,[68] D. Dujmic,[68] W. Dunwoodie,[68] E. E. Elsen,[68] S. Fan,[68] R. C. Field,[68] T. Glanzman,[68] S. J. Gowdy,[68] T. Hadig,[68] V. Halyo,[68] C. Hast,[68] T. Hryn'ova,[68] W. R. Innes,[68] M. H. Kelsey,[68] P. Kim,[68] M. L. Kocian,[68] D. W. G. S. Leith,[68] J. Libby,[68] S. Luitz,[68] V. Luth,[68] H. L. Lynch,[68] H. Marsiske,[68] R. Messner,[68] D. R. Muller,[68] C. P. O'Grady,[68] V. E. Ozcan,[68] A. Perazzo,[68] M. Perl,[68] S. Petrak,[68] B. N. Ratcliff,[68] A. Roodman,[68] A. A. Salnikov,[68] R. H. Schindler,[68] J. Schwiening,[68] G. Simi,[68] A. Snyder,[68] A. Soha,[68] J. Stelzer,[68] D. Su,[68] M. K. Sullivan,[68] J. Va'vra,[68] S. R. Wagner,[68] M. Weaver,[68] A. J. R. Weinstein,[68] W. J. Wisniewski,[68] M. Wittgen,[68] D. H. Wright,[68] A. K. Yarritu,[68] C. C. Young,[68] P. R. Burchat,[69] A. J. Edwards,[69] T. I. Meyer,[69] B. A. Petersen,[69] C. Roat,[69] S. Ahmed,[70] M. S. Alam,[70] J. A. Ernst,[70] M. A. Saeed,[70] M. Saleem,[70] F. R. Wappler,[70] W. Bugg,[71] M. Krishnamurthy,[71] S. M. Spanier,[71] R. Eckmann,[72] H. Kim,[72] J. L. Ritchie,[72] A. Satpathy,[72] R. F. Schwitters,[72] J. M. Izen,[73] I. Kitayama,[73] X. C. Lou,[73] S. Ye,[73] F. Bianchi,[74] M. Bona,[74] F. Gallo,[74] D. Gamba,[74] C. Borean,[75] L. Bosisio,[75] C. Cartaro,[75] F. Cossutti,[75] G. Della Ricca,[75] S. Dittongo,[75] S. Grancagnolo,[75] L. Lanceri,[75] P. Poropat,[75] L. Vitale,[75] G. Vuagnin,[75] R. S. Panvini,[76] Sw. Banerjee,[77] C. M. Brown,[77] D. Fortin,[77] P. D. Jackson,[77] R. Kowalewski,[77] J. M. Roney,[77] H. R. Band,[78] S. Dasu,[78] M. Datta,[78] A. M. Eichenbaum,[78] M. Graham,[78] J. J. Hollar,[78] J. R. Johnson,[78] P. E. Kutter,[78] H. Li,[78] R. Liu,[78] F. Di Lodovico,[78] A. Mihalyi,[78] A. K. Mohapatra,[78] Y. Pan,[78] R. Prepost,[78] A. E. Rubin,[78] S. J. Sekula,[78] P. Tan,[78] J. H. von Wimmersperg-Toeller,[78] J. Wu,[78] S. L. Wu,[78] Z. Yu,[78] and H. Neal[79]

(*BaBar* Collaboration)

[1]*Laboratoire de Physique des Particules, F-74941 Annecy-le-Vieux, France*
[2]*Università di Bari, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-70126 Bari, Italy*
[3]*Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing 100039, China*
[4]*University of Bergen, Inst. of Physics, N-5007 Bergen, Norway*
[5]*Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, USA*
[6]*University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom*
[7]*Ruhr Universität Bochum, Institut für Experimentalphysik 1, D-44780 Bochum, Germany*
[8]*University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1TL, United Kingdom*
[9]*University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z1*
[10]*Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH, United Kingdom*
[11]*Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk 630090, Russia*
[12]*University of California at Irvine, Irvine, California 92697, USA*
[13]*University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California 90024, USA*
[14]*University of California at Riverside, Riverside, California 92521, USA*
[15]*University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, California 92093, USA*
[16]*University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California 93106, USA*
[17]*University of California at Santa Cruz, Institute for Particle Physics, Santa Cruz, California 95064, USA*
[18]*California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California 91125, USA*
[19]*University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221, USA*
[20]*University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, USA*
[21]*Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523, USA*
[22]*Technische Universität Dresden, Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, D-01062 Dresden, Germany*
[23]*Ecole Polytechnique, LLR, F-91128 Palaiseau, France*
[24]*University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ, United Kingdom*

[25]*Università di Ferrara, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-44100 Ferrara, Italy*
[26]*Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, Florida 32307, USA*
[27]*Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati dell'INFN, I-00044 Frascati, Italy*
[28]*Università di Genova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-16146 Genova, Italy*
[29]*Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, USA*
[30]*Universität Heidelberg, Physikalisches Institut, Philosophenweg 12, D-69120 Heidelberg, Germany*
[31]*Imperial College London, London, SW7 2AZ, United Kingdom*
[32]*University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, USA*
[33]*Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-3160, USA*
[34]*Laboratoire de l'Accélérateur Linéaire, F-91898 Orsay, France*
[35]*Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California 94550, USA*
[36]*University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 72E, United Kingdom*
[37]*Queen Mary, University of London, E1 4NS, United Kingdom*
[38]*University of London, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, United Kingdom*
[39]*University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292, USA*
[40]*University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom*
[41]*University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, USA*
[42]*University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003, USA*
[43]*Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Laboratory for Nuclear Science, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA*
[44]*McGill University, Montréal, QC, Canada H3A 2T8*
[45]*Università di Milano, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-20133 Milano, Italy*
[46]*University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi 38677, USA*
[47]*Université de Montréal, Laboratoire René J. A. Lévesque, Montréal, QC, Canada H3C 3J7*
[48]*Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075, USA*
[49]*Università di Napoli Federico II, Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche and INFN, I-80126, Napoli, Italy*
[50]*NIKHEF, National Institute for Nuclear Physics and High Energy Physics, NL-1009 DB Amsterdam, The Netherlands*
[51]*University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, USA*
[52]*Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831, USA*
[53]*Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA*
[54]*University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403, USA*
[55]*Università di Padova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-35131 Padova, Italy*
[56]*Universités Paris VI et VII, Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, F-75252 Paris, France*
[57]*Università di Pavia, Dipartimento di Elettronica and INFN, I-27100 Pavia, Italy*
[58]*University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104, USA*
[59]*Università di Perugia, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-06100 Perugia, Italy*
[60]*Università di Pisa, Dipartimento di Fisica, Scuola Normale Superiore and INFN, I-56127 Pisa, Italy*
[61]*Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas 77446, USA*
[62]*Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08544, USA*
[63]*Università di Roma La Sapienza, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-00185 Roma, Italy*
[64]*Universität Rostock, D-18051 Rostock, Germany*
[65]*Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 0QX, United Kingdom*
[66]*DSM/Dapnia, CEA/Saclay, F-91191 Gif-sur-Yvette, France*
[67]*University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina 29208, USA*
[68]*Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, Stanford, California 94309, USA*
[69]*Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305-4060, USA*
[70]*State Univ. of New York, Albany, New York 12222, USA*
[71]*University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996, USA*
[72]*University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, USA*
[73]*University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas 75083, USA*
[74]*Università di Torino, Dipartimento di Fisica Sperimentale and INFN, I-10125 Torino, Italy*
[75]*Università di Trieste, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-34127 Trieste, Italy*
[76]*Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37235, USA*
[77]*University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada V8W 3P6*
[78]*University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA*
[79]*Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06511, USA*

[*]Now at Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom
[†]Also with Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy
[‡]Also with IFIC, Instituto de Física Corpuscular, CSIC-Universidad de Valencia, Valencia, Spain
[§]Deceased

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We study the decay $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ using 117×10^6 $B\bar{B}$ events collected at the $Y(4S)$ resonance with the *BABAR* detector at the PEP-II e^+e^- asymmetric-energy storage ring. We measure the branching fractions $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-) = (116 \pm 7(\mathrm{stat.}) \pm 9(\mathrm{syst.})) \times 10^{-5}$ and $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872)\mathrm{K}^-) \times \mathcal{B}(X(3872) \to \mathrm{J}/\psi\pi^+\pi^-) = (1.28 \pm 0.41) \times 10^{-5}$ and find the mass of the $X(3872)$ to be 3873.4 ± 1.4 MeV/c^2. We search for the h_c narrow state in the decay $B^- \to h_c K^-$, $h_c \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-$ and for the decay $B^- \to J/\psi D^0 \pi^-$, with $D^0 \to K^-\pi^+$. We set the 90% C.L. limits $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to h_c K^-) \times \mathcal{B}(h_c \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-) < 3.4 \times 10^{-6}$ and $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to J/\psi D^0\pi^-) < 5.2 \times 10^{-5}$.

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The study of B decays to final states containing charmonium and strange mesons is especially suited to the search for new charmonium states and for intrinsic charm. In particular, the decay $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ [1] can occur via the production of charmonium states decaying into $J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-$ or possibly via $B^- \to J/\psi D^0 \pi^-$, with $\mathrm{D}^0 \to \mathrm{K}^-\pi^+$. Recently the Belle [2] and CDF [3] collaborations have observed a new state, the $X(3872)$, decaying into $J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-$. This state is either a charmonium candidate or even possibly a molecule of charmed D and D^* mesons [4]. In this paper, using 117×10^6 $\Upsilon(4S)$ decays into $B\overline{B}$ pairs, we confirm the observation of the $X(3872)$ and search for the unconfirmed charmonium $^1P_1$ state $h_c(3526)$ [5]. In addition, we study the final state involving a D meson to test models developed to explain the excess of low momentum J/ψ mesons in inclusive B decays [6]. The presence of intrinsic charm in B mesons could explain this excess if $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to J/\psi D^0\pi^-)$ exceeds 10^{-4} [7].

The data were collected at the PEP-II asymmetric-energy e^+e^- B-factory with the *BABAR* detector, which is fully described elsewhere [8]. The detector includes a silicon vertex tracker and a drift chamber in a 1.5-T solenoidal magnetic field, which detect charged particles and measure their momentum and energy loss. Photons, electrons, and neutral hadrons are detected in a CsI(Tl)-crystal electromagnetic calorimeter. A ring-imaging Cherenkov detector is used for particle identification. Penetrating muons and neutral hadrons are identified by resistive-plate chambers in the steel of the flux return. We use a Monte Carlo simulation of the *BABAR* detector based on GEANT4 [9] to validate the analysis procedure and to estimate efficiency corrections.

The event reconstruction and selection follow closely those described in an earlier paper [10]. The present analysis has been optimized to maximize the sensitivity to $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ decays. We reconstruct $J/\psi \to e^+e^-$ candidates from pairs of tracks selected with criteria that are 98% (7%) efficient for electrons (pions). To account for energy losses, we combine the electron pairs with bremsstrahlung-photon candidates and use an asymmetric mass window, $2.95 < m_{ee(\gamma)} < 3.14$ GeV$/c^2$. We reconstruct $J/\psi \to \mu^+\mu^-$ candidates from pairs of tracks selected with criteria that are 77% (8%) efficient for muons (pions), satisfying $3.06 < m_{\mu\mu} < 3.14$ GeV$/c^2$. The nominal J/ψ mass [11] is imposed as a constraint on J/ψ candidates, thereby improving the resolution on the B four-momentum and on any charmonium states in its decay. Kaons are identified using criteria that have an efficiency of 97%, with a 15% pion-misidentification rate. B-meson candidates are formed by combining a J/ψ candidate with a kaon candidate and two additional oppositely charged tracks. To suppress further the background from light-quark production, which is characterized by back-to-back jets, the angle θ_T between the thrust axes of the reconstructed B candidate and the rest of the event in the center-of-mass system is required to satisfy $|\cos\theta_T| < 0.8(0.9)$ for $J/\psi \to e^+e^-$ ($J/\psi \to \mu^+\mu^-$) candidates.

Signal and combinatorial background are discriminated using two kinematic variables: the beam-energy-substituted mass, $\mathrm{m_{ES}} \equiv \sqrt{(\sqrt{s}/2)^2 - p_B^{*2}}$, and the difference of the B candidate's measured energy from the beam energy, $\Delta\mathrm{E} \equiv E_B^* - (\sqrt{s}/2)$. Here E_B^* (p_B^*) is the energy (momentum) of the B candidate in the center-of-mass frame and $\sqrt{s}$ is the total center-of-mass energy. The signal region is defined to be $|\Delta\mathrm{E}| < 3\sigma$, where the resolution σ, determined with data, is 12 MeV. A binned likelihood fit to the m_{ES} distribution [Fig. 1(a)] is used to separate the signal, taken as a Gaussian distribution with a fitted width of about 2.5 MeV$/c^2$, plus a small low-mass tail to account for energy losses [12], from the combinatorial background distributed as an ARGUS threshold function [13]. We have checked with Monte Carlo simulation that there is no significant background from B decays that has the same m_{ES} distribution as the signal.

To reduce systematic uncertainties, we measure

$$R = \frac{\mathcal{B}(B^- \to J/\psi\mathrm{K}^-\pi^+\pi^-)}{\mathcal{B}(B^- \to \psi(2S)K^-)} = \frac{N_{\mathrm{events}}}{N_{\psi(2S)}} \frac{\epsilon_{\psi(2S)}}{\epsilon} \mathcal{B}(\psi(2S) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-), \quad (1)$$

where $N_{\mathrm{events}} = 2540 \pm 72$ is the number of $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ signal events extracted from the fit to the m_{ES} distribution. The number of $\psi(2S)$ events, $N_{\psi(2S)} = 556 \pm 30$, is obtained by fitting the $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$ distribution, after subtracting combinatorial background [14], with two Gaussian distributions representing the $\psi(2S)$ signal and a

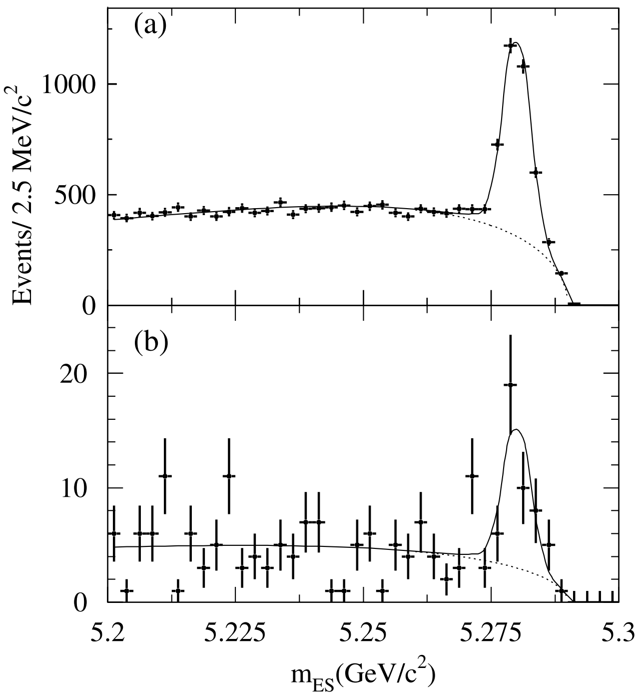

FIG. 1. Distribution of m_{ES} for (a) $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ candidates, and (b) events in the $X(3872)$ region, $3862 < m_{J/\psi\pi\pi} < 3882$ MeV$/c^2$. The solid curves represent the binned likelihood fits described in the text; the combinatorial components are indicated by the dashed curves.

flat distribution representing the remaining background (Fig. 2(c) shows the corresponding unsubtracted distribution). This binned χ^2 fit gives a resolution on $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$of 3.1 ± 0.2 MeV$/c^2$ for the core Gaussian containing 70% of the events and 12 ± 3 MeV$/c^2$ for the broader Gaussian. The total $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ and the $B^- \to \psi(2S) K^-$ selection efficiencies, ϵ and $\epsilon_{\psi(2S)}$, are extracted from Monte Carlo simulation: we obtain $\epsilon_{\psi(2S)}/\epsilon = 1.17 \pm 0.03$. We use $\mathcal{B}(\psi(2S) \to J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-) = (31.8 \pm 1.0)\%$ [11].

We estimate the systematic error due to the choice of the signal m_{ES} shape function by replacing it with a simple Gaussian. We estimate the uncertainty on the fit to the $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$ distribution by using the signal resolution function as measured on Monte Carlo and by varying the background shape. Including all these errors, we measure $R = 1.70 \pm 0.10(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.09(\text{syst.})$ which, combined with $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to \psi(2S) K^-) = (6.8 \pm 0.4) \times 10^{-4}$ [11], yields

$$\mathcal{B}(B^- \to \mathrm{J}/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-) = (116 \pm 7(\text{stat.}) \pm 9(\text{syst.})) \times 10^{-5}. \quad (2)$$

Note that this measurement includes $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to \psi(2\mathrm{S})\mathrm{K}^-)$.

To investigate the possible presence of narrow charmonium states decaying to $J/\psi \pi^- \pi^+$, we have studied the distribution in $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$ [Fig. 2(a)]. We observe an excess in

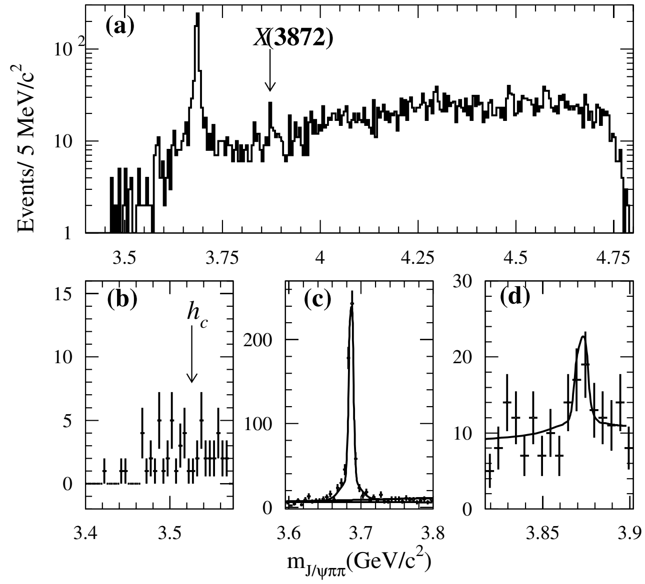

FIG. 2. Distribution of $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$ (a) in the entire range, (b) in the h_c region, (c) at the $\psi(2S)$, and (d) in the region of the $X(3872)$ with the projection of the unbinned likelihood fit superimposed. The requirement $m_{ES} > 5.27$ GeV$/c^2$ is applied.

the region of the $X(3872)$ [Fig. 2(d)], but do not find any excess in the h_c region [Fig. 2(b)]. The mass of the $X(3872)$ state is extracted from an unbinned maximum likelihood fit to the two-dimensional distribution in m_{ES} and $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$. The probability density function (PDF) is taken to be the sum of four terms. The first three describe $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ decays that peak in m_{ES} at the B-meson mass. The PDF of these three terms contains a Gaussian function in m_{ES} times a function of $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$ that describes: (i) $\psi(2S)$ candidates, distributed as a double-Gaussian resolution function around a mean value that is allowed to float; and (ii) $X(3872)$ candidates, with the same resolution function as the $\psi(2S)$ but with a mass that floats relative to the $\psi(2S)$ mass; (iii) nonresonant events, distributed as a first order polynomial. This represents an improvement with respect to the Belle branching fraction measurement [2] which omitted the latter component. The fourth term of the PDF describes the combinatorial background, distributed as an ARGUS threshold function in m_{ES} and as a first order polynomial in $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$. From the $\psi(2S)$ mass value, $m_{\psi(2S)} = 3685.96 \pm 0.09$ MeV$/c^2$ [11], we find $m_{X(3872)} = 3873.4 \pm 1.4$ MeV$/c^2$, consistent with the previous measurements by Belle [2] and CDF [3]. Since we are actually measuring a mass difference we neglect systematic errors on the absolute mass scale.

The measurement of the branching fraction $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872) K^-) \times \mathcal{B}(X(3872) \to J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-)$ is performed with a counting technique. We select events in a ± 10 MeV$/c^2$ window around $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi} = 3872$ MeV$/c^2$, and find the number of events with $m_{ES} > 5.27$ GeV$/c^2$ to be $N_{\text{data}} = 63$. We estimate the number of these events due to combinatorial background ($N_{\rm comb} = 22.0 \pm 4.3$) from a fit to the $m_{\rm ES}$ distribution [Fig. 1(b)]. The number of events with the same final state $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$, but not belonging to the $X(3872)$ signal, is estimated to be $N_{\rm peak} = 10.5 \pm 3.2$ from a fit to the $m_{\rm ES}$ distribution in the symmetric sideband $15 < |m_{J/\psi\pi\pi} - 3872| < 45\ {\rm MeV}/c^2$. The resulting number of signal events is 30.5 which agrees within the errors with the number of signal events, 25.4 ± 8.7, obtained from the fit to the $X(3872)$ in Fig. 2(d). The branching fractions are determined using a frequentist confidence level [15]. This technique treats properly the small number of events and includes the systematic errors directly in the computation of confidence intervals or limits. The confidence level, α, a function of $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872)K^-) \times \mathcal{B}(X(3872) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-)$ is computed as the fraction of times that a random number generated according to a Poisson distribution with a mean value of

$$\mu = N_{bkg} + N_{\psi(2S)}\epsilon_w \frac{\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872)K^-)\mathcal{B}(X(3872) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-)}{\mathcal{B}(B^- \to \psi(2S)K^-)\mathcal{B}(\psi(2S) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-)} \tag{3}$$

exceeds the observed data. For a given value of $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872)K^-) \times \mathcal{B}(X(3872) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-)$ the variables N_{bkg}, $N_{\psi(2S)}$, $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to \psi(2S)K^-)$, and $\mathcal{B}(\psi(2S) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-)$ are randomly generated to determine a value of μ, which is then used in a Poisson distribution to generate a new value of the number of detected events. The generation is repeated many times and the fraction of times the random number exceeds $N_{\rm data} = 63$ yields the value of α. The variables N_{bkg}, $N_{\psi(2S)}$, $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to \psi(2S)K^-)$, and $\mathcal{B}(\psi(2S) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-)$, are generated according to Gaussian distributions. The mean of $N_{\psi(2S)}$ is 556 and $\sigma = 30$. The mean of N_{bkg} is $N_{\rm comb} + N_{\rm peak} = 32.5$ and $\sigma = 5.9$, which includes a systematic error on $N_{\rm peak}$ calculated by varying the boundaries of the sideband. We use published values [11] for the remaining branching fractions and their errors, assumed to be Gaussian. Finally, $\epsilon_w = (92 \pm 1)\%$ is the fraction of events that fall in the $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$ window, from applying the same mass window cut to the $\psi(2S)$ and assuming the same efficiency. From the values of $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872)K^-)$ at which $\alpha = 16\%$ and 84% we measure

$$\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872)K^-) \times \mathcal{B}(X(3872) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-) = (1.28 \pm 0.41) \times 10^{-5}. \tag{4}$$

The probability that the observed events are a background fluctuation in the considered mass window is 5.4×10^{-4}, corresponding to 3.5 Gaussian standard deviations. As a check, we performed the same measurement on the $J/\psi \to e^+e^-$ and $J/\psi \to \mu^+\mu^-$ samples separately, obtaining $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872)K^-) \times \mathcal{B}(X(3872) \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-) = (1.94 \pm 0.62) \times 10^{-5}$ and $(0.52 \pm 0.46) \times 10^{-5}$ respectively, consistent within 1.8 standard deviations.

The decay of a charmonium state into $\rho J/\psi$ is a strongly suppressed isospin-violating process. In order to investigate the nature of the $X(3872)$ state, we plot the invariant mass of the $\pi^+\pi^-$ system in both the $X(3872)$ and the $\psi(2S)$ region (Fig. 3). In the $\psi(2S)$ case, the events are concentrated near the kinematic limit. Such behavior is not excluded for the $X(3872)$, but the statistics are too small to allow a clear conclusion. Measuring both the $m\pi^+\pi^-$ and angular distributions with significantly greater statistics would provide important information on the nature of the $X(3872)$.

The search for the h_c is performed with the same frequentist technique in a $\pm 10\ {\rm MeV}/c^2$ mass window centered on $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi} = 3526\ {\rm MeV}/c^2$ [5]. With $N_{\rm data} = 9$, $N_{\rm comb} = 6.9 \pm 3.5$, $N_{\rm peak} = 0.6 \pm 1.5$, and assuming the same efficiency $\epsilon_w = (92 \pm 1)\%$, we set a 90% C.L. limit $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to {\rm h_c}K^-) \times \mathcal{B}({\rm h_c} \to J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-) < 3.4 \times 10^{-6}$. The probability that we would see a signal as large as the one observed from background fluctuations alone is 39%.

Finally, we search for $B^- \to J/\psi D^0 \pi^-$ decays with $D^0 \to K^-\pi^+$. The decay $D^0 \to K^-\pi^+$ would have an r.m.s. width of $5.4\ {\rm MeV}/c^2$ in $m_{K^-\pi^+}$ as determined from Monte Carlo. We study this distribution in the same way we studied $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$. The $m_{K^-\pi^+}$ combinatorial-subtracted distribution (Fig. 4) shows no significant structure, and it is therefore used to set a limit. We fit the

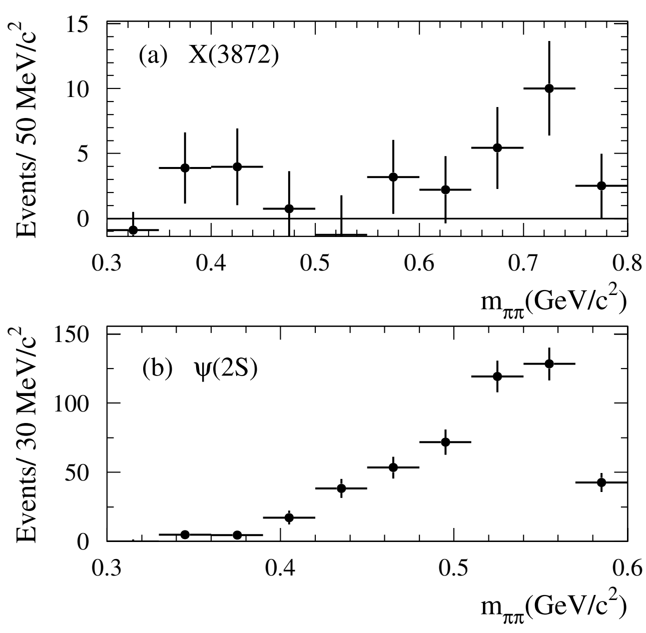

FIG. 3. Distribution of $m_{\pi^+\pi^-}$ (a) at the $X(3872)$ and (b) at the $\psi(2S)$, after subtraction of combinatorial and peaking background.

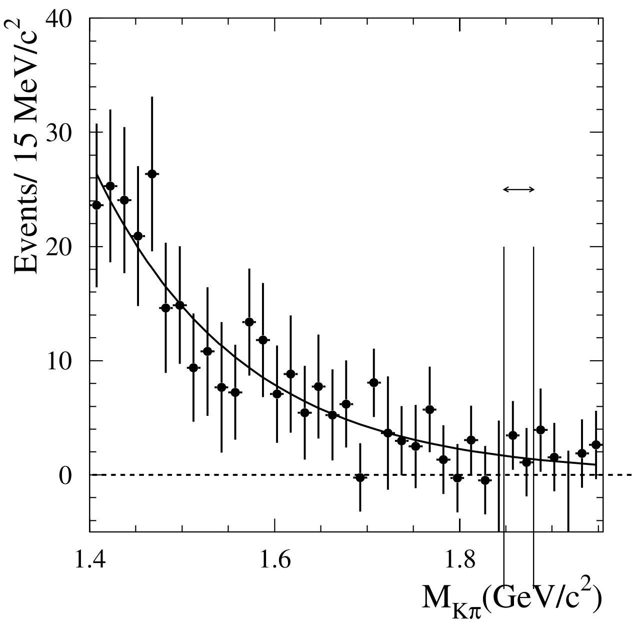

FIG. 4. Distribution of $mK^-\pi^+$ in events $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$, with combinatorial background removed. Overlaid is an exponential fit. The arrow indicates the 3σ region expected for $D^0 \to K^- \pi^+$.

background from other $B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-$ decays with an exponential function of $m_{K^-\pi^+}$ and obtain $N_{\rm peak} = 2.9 \pm 1.4$. The frequentist approach described above, with $N_{\rm data} = 10$, $N_{\rm comb} = 7.8 \pm 2.8$ and $\epsilon/\epsilon_{\psi(2S)} = 1.00 \pm 0.07$ yields the 90% C.L. limit $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to J/\psi D^0 \pi^-) < 5.2 \times 10^{-5}$.

In summary, we measured $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to J/\psi K^- \pi^+ \pi^-) = (116 \pm 7(\text{stat.}) \pm 9(\text{syst.})) \times 10^{-5}$ with an error almost a factor two smaller than the present average [11] and we confirmed the observation of $B^- \to X(3872)K^-$ [2,3]. We performed an accurate measurement of the branching fraction $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to X(3872)K^-) \times \mathcal{B}(X(3872) \to J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-) = (1.28 \pm 0.41) \times 10^{-5}$ and of the mass $m_{X(3872)} = 3873.4 \pm 1.4\ \text{MeV}/c^2$. We also studied the $m_{J/\psi\pi\pi}$ distributions searching for $B^- \to h_c K^-$ decays and set limits on their branching fractions, $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to h_c K^-) \times \mathcal{B}(h_c \to J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-) < 3.4 \times 10^{-6}$ at 90% C.L. Finally, from the $m_{K^-\pi^+}$ distribution we find $\mathcal{B}(B^- \to J/\psi D^0 \pi^-) < 5.2 \times 10^{-5}$ at 90% C.L., thus ruling out the explanation of the inclusive J/ψ momentum spectrum with intrinsic charm proposed in [7].

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