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LHCb Collaboration; De Bruyn, K.; Mulder, Mick; Onderwater, C. J. G.

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Observation of the $B^+ \rightarrow J\psi\eta'K^+$ decay



The LHCb collaboration

E-mail: Ivan.Belyaev@cern.ch

ABSTRACT: The $B^+ \rightarrow J\psi\eta'K^+$ decay is observed for the first time using proton-proton collision data collected by the LHCb experiment at centre-of-mass energies of 7, 8, and 13 TeV, corresponding to a total integrated luminosity of 9 fb^{-1} . The branching fraction of this decay is measured relative to the known branching fraction of the $B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+$ decay and found to be

$$\frac{\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow J\psi\eta'K^+)}{\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+)} = (4.91 \pm 0.47 \pm 0.29 \pm 0.07) \times 10^{-2},$$

where the first uncertainty is statistical, the second is systematic and the third is related to external branching fractions. A first look at the $J/\psi\eta'$ mass distribution is performed and no signal of intermediate resonances is observed.

KEYWORDS: B Physics, Branching fraction, Charm Physics, Hadron-Hadron Scattering

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1 Introduction

In the last twenty years a plethora of new hadron states have been discovered in decays of beauty hadrons to charmonium, including the enigmatic $\chi_{c1}(3872)$ state [1], numerous pentaquark states in $J/\psi p$ [2–6] and $J/\psi \Lambda$ [7] systems as well as tetraquarks in the $\psi(2S)\pi^+$ [8–12], $J/\psi\phi$ [13–17], $\eta_c(1S)\pi^-$ [18], $J/\psi\pi^+$ [19], $J/\psi K^+$ [16] and $J/\psi K_S^0$ [17] systems. Transitions among charmonium or charmonium-like states have been studied in beauty-hadron decays, including transitions with emission of one photon [20–23], two pions [24–27], ϕ [13–17], ω [27, 28] and η [29] mesons. The transitions with emission of an η meson have also been studied in $e^+e^- \rightarrow J/\psi\eta$ processes [30, 31]. In general, studies of various hadronic transitions in the charmonium and charmonium-like sectors can shed light onto the internal structure of these particles, which is largely unknown for newly discovered hadronic states [32–35].

Transitions with an emission of an η' meson in the charmonium and charmonium-like systems have not yet been observed [32, 36, 37]. Since the η' meson may have a glueball contribution [38–55], processes involving this particle are of particular interest [56, 57]. The $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ decay¹ is a good candidate to explore the $J/\psi\eta'$ system in detail, offering the opportunity to search for possible intermediate resonances. The decay itself has never been observed and an upper limit on its branching fraction of

$$\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+) < 8.8 \times 10^{-5} \text{ (90\% CL)},$$

was set by the Belle collaboration [58].

¹Inclusion of charge-conjugate states is implied throughout the paper, unless otherwise stated.

This paper reports the observation of the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ decay using proton-proton (pp) collision data collected by the LHCb experiment at centre-of-mass energies of 7, 8, and 13 TeV, corresponding to a total integrated luminosity of 9 fb^{-1} . The measurement of its branching fraction normalised to the well-known branching fraction of the $B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+$ decay [37],

$$\mathcal{R} \equiv \frac{\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+)}{\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+)}, \quad (1.1)$$

is performed using the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ decay. The observation of the signal is confirmed using the $\eta' \rightarrow \eta\pi^+\pi^-$ decay mode, which is also used as a cross-check.

2 Detector and simulation

The LHCb detector [59, 60] is a single-arm forward spectrometer covering the pseudorapidity range $2 < \eta < 5$, designed for the study of particles containing b or c quarks. The detector includes a high-precision tracking system consisting of a silicon-strip vertex detector surrounding the pp interaction region [61], a large-area silicon-strip detector located upstream of a dipole magnet with a bending power of about 4 Tm, and three stations of silicon-strip detectors and straw drift tubes [62, 63] placed downstream of the magnet. The tracking system provides a measurement of the momentum, p , of charged particles with a relative uncertainty that varies from 0.5% at low momentum to 1.0% at 200 GeV/ c . The minimum distance of a track to a primary pp collision vertex (PV), the impact parameter is measured with a resolution of $(15 + 29/p_T)\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, where p_T is the component of the momentum transverse to the beam, in GeV/ c . Different types of charged hadrons are distinguished using information from two ring-imaging Cherenkov detectors [64]. Photons, electrons and hadrons are identified by a calorimeter system consisting of scintillating-pad and preshower detectors, an electromagnetic and a hadronic calorimeter. Muons are identified by a system composed of alternating layers of iron and multiwire proportional chambers [65].

The online event selection is performed by a trigger [66, 67], which consists of a hardware stage, based on information from the calorimeter and muon systems, followed by a software stage, which applies a full event reconstruction. At the hardware trigger stage, events are required to have a muon track with high transverse momentum or dimuon candidates in which the product of the p_T of the muons has a high value. In the software trigger, two oppositely charged muons are required to form a good-quality vertex that is significantly displaced from every PV, with a dimuon mass exceeding $2.7\text{ GeV}/c^2$.

Simulated events are used to describe signal shapes and to compute the efficiencies needed to determine the branching fraction ratio. In the simulation, pp collisions are generated using PYTHIA [68] with a specific LHCb configuration [69]. Decays of unstable particles are described by EVTGEN [70], in which final-state radiation is generated using PHOTOS [71]. The interaction of the generated particles with the detector, and its response, are implemented using the GEANT4 toolkit [72] as described in ref. [74]. The p_T and rapidity (y) spectra of the B^+ mesons in simulation are corrected to match distributions in data. The correction factors are calculated by comparing the observed p_T and y

spectra for a high-purity data sample of reconstructed $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi K^+$ decays with the corresponding simulated samples. In the simulation, the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+$ decays are generated as phase-space decays and corrected using a gradient boosted decision tree reweighting algorithm [75] to reproduce the $J/\psi \eta'$ and $\eta' K^+$ mass spectra observed in data. To describe accurately the variables used for kaon identification, the corresponding quantities in simulation are resampled according to values obtained from calibration data samples of $D^{*+} \rightarrow (D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+) \pi^+$ decays [76]. The procedure accounts for correlations between the variables associated with a particular track, as well as the dependence of the kaon identification response on the track's p_T and η and the multiplicity of tracks in the event. To account for imperfections in the simulation of charged-particle reconstruction, the track reconstruction efficiency is corrected using a sample of $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ decays in data [77]. Samples of the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi K^{*+}$ decays with $K^{*+} \rightarrow K^+ (\pi^0 \rightarrow \gamma \gamma)$ are used to correct the photon reconstruction efficiency in simulation [78–81].

3 Event selection

The $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+$ candidates are reconstructed with η' decays to either $(\rho^0 \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^-) \gamma$ or $(\eta \rightarrow \gamma \gamma) \pi^+ \pi^-$ final states. The difficulty of reconstructing photons in the $\eta \rightarrow \gamma \gamma$ decay leads to a sample with fewer events. The $B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S) K^+$ normalisation decay is reconstructed using the $\psi(2S) \rightarrow J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-$ decay. In both signal and normalisation channels, the J/ψ meson is reconstructed in its decay to two muons. As explained in detail below, an initial loose selection is applied for both signal and normalisation channels. Subsequently, for the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+$ candidates, where the background level is large, a multivariate estimator is used to select higher purity subset of candidates. The normalisation channel has a high purity after the initial selection, therefore no further selection steps are applied.

To reduce systematic uncertainties, the initial selection criteria for both signal and normalisation channels are kept the same whenever possible. The selection criteria are chosen to be similar to those used in previous LHCb studies [20, 21, 23, 29, 53, 78, 79]. The muon, pion and kaon candidates are identified by combining information from the Cherenkov detectors, calorimeters and muon detectors [82] associated with the reconstructed tracks. To reduce the combinatorial background, only tracks that are inconsistent with originating from any reconstructed PV in the event are considered. The transverse momentum of the muon candidates is required to be greater than $500 \text{ MeV}/c$ and their momenta must exceed $6 \text{ GeV}/c$. Pairs of oppositely-charged muons consistent with originating from a common vertex are combined to form $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ candidates. The reconstructed mass of the muon pair is required to be between 3.056 and $3.136 \text{ GeV}/c^2$.

Tracks that are consistent with the pion or kaon hypotheses are required to have transverse momentum greater than $200 \text{ MeV}/c$. Photons are reconstructed from clusters in the electromagnetic calorimeter, with transverse energy above 350 MeV . The clusters must not be associated with reconstructed tracks [83, 84]. Photon identification is based on the combined information from electromagnetic and hadronic calorimeters, scintillation pad, preshower detectors and the tracking system.

For the reconstruction of the $\eta' \rightarrow \eta\pi^+\pi^-$ candidates, two photons are first combined to form an η candidate. The diphoton mass is restricted to lie within $\pm 60 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ around the known mass of the η meson [37]. Each η candidate is then combined with two oppositely-charged pions to form an η' candidate. The mass of the combination is required to lie within $\pm 45 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ around the known mass of the η' meson [37]. For an η' candidate reconstructed in the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ decay mode, the ρ^0 candidate is formed from two oppositely-charged pions. The mass of this candidate is restricted to lie between 500 and 900 MeV/c^2 . This asymmetric region around the known mass of the ρ^0 meson [37] takes into account the shift of the ρ^0 line shape, due to the electric-dipole nature of the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ transition [85–90]. A photon is combined with the ρ^0 candidate in order to form the η' candidate, whose mass is required to lie within $\pm 30 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ of the known η' mass [37].

Each selected J/ψ candidate is combined with a kaon track and either an η' candidate or two oppositely-charged pions to form a B^+ candidate decaying into the signal or normalisation modes, respectively. For the $B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+$ candidates the $J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-$ mass is required to be between 3.66 and 3.71 GeV/c^2 . To improve the B^+ meson mass resolution a kinematic fit [91] is performed, which constrains the masses of the J/ψ , η' and η candidates to their known values [37], and the B^+ candidates to originate from its associated PV. The decay time of the B^+ candidates is required to be greater than 100 $\mu\text{m}/c$ to suppress the large combinatorial background from tracks created in a PV.

Further selection of the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ decays is based on a multivariate estimator, in the following referred to as the multi-layer perceptron (MLP) classifier. The classifier is based on an artificial neural network algorithm [92, 93], configured with a cross-entropy cost estimator [94]. It reduces the combinatorial background to a low level while retaining a high signal efficiency. Two MLP classifiers are trained separately for the two different η' meson decay modes. The list of variables used for classifiers includes the χ^2 of the kinematic fit; transverse momenta of the η' , kaon and pion candidates; pseudorapidities of pion and kaon candidates; transverse momentum of the photon from the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ decay or minimal transverse momentum of photons from the $\eta' \rightarrow (\eta \rightarrow \gamma\gamma)\pi^+\pi^-$ decay; decay time of the B^+ candidate; variable related to the quality of kaon identification [64, 82] and, for the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ decay, cosine of the angle between momenta of the π^+ and η' candidates in the rest frame of the ρ^0 candidate. The classifiers are trained using simulated samples of $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ decays as signal proxy, while the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ candidates from data with mass above 5.35 GeV/c^2 are used to represent the background. The $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi(\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma)K^+$ candidates with the $J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-K^+$ mass consistent with the known mass of the B^+ meson are vetoed to avoid contamination from the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-K^+$ decays with a random photon added.

The requirement on each of the MLP classifiers is chosen to maximise the figure-of-merit defined as $S/\sqrt{B+S}$, where S represents the expected signal yield, and B is the expected background yield within a $\pm 15 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ mass window centred around the known mass of the B^+ meson and corresponding to approximately three times the mass resolution on both sides of the peak. The background yield is calculated from fits to data, as described in section 4, while the expected signal yield is estimated as $S = \varepsilon S_0$, where ε is the efficiency of the requirement on the response of the MLP classifier determined from simulation,

and S_0 is the signal yield obtained from the fit to the data, with a loose requirement applied on the response of the MLP classifier.² The mass distributions for the selected $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ candidates are shown in figure 1, where clear signal peaks corresponding to B^+ decays are seen in data for both η' decay modes.

4 Signal yield determination

The signal yields are determined using an extended unbinned maximum-likelihood fit to the $J/\psi\eta'K^+$ mass distributions with a two-component function. The signal component for both cases is modelled by a modified Gaussian function that combines a Gaussian core with power-law tails on both sides of the distribution [95, 96]. The background component is parameterised by a second-order positive polynomial function [97] for the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ decay mode and by an exponential function in case of the $\eta' \rightarrow \eta\pi^+\pi^-$ decay mode. The parameters of the detector resolution function are taken from simulation, and the width of the Gaussian function is further corrected by a scale factor, s_{B^+} , that accounts for a small discrepancy between data and simulation [15, 26, 29, 98, 99]. To account for the uncertainty in the tail parameters and resolution, the fit is performed simultaneously for data and simulated samples, sharing the same tail parameters, and allowing the correction factor s_{B^+} to vary. The resulting fit functions are overlaid with data distributions in figure 1 and the signal yields are found to be

$$N_{B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+} \Big|_{\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma} = (1.11 \pm 0.11) \times 10^3, \quad (4.1a)$$

$$N_{B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+} \Big|_{\eta' \rightarrow \eta\pi^+\pi^-} = (0.228 \pm 0.028) \times 10^3, \quad (4.1b)$$

where the uncertainties are statistical only. The resolution correction factors s_{B^+} are found to be 1.08 ± 0.12 and 1.03 ± 0.16 for the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ and $\eta' \rightarrow \eta\pi^+\pi^-$ samples, respectively. In both cases, the statistical significance of the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ signal is calculated using Wilks' theorem [100] and found to exceed 17 and 12 standard deviations for the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ and $\eta' \rightarrow \eta\pi^+\pi^-$ samples, respectively. However, as the signal yield is much lower for the η' meson decays to the $\eta\pi^+\pi^-$ final state, all subsequent studies are performed using only the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ decay mode.

The background-subtracted $J/\psi\eta'$, $\eta'K^+$, and $J/\psi K^+$ mass spectra from the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi(\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma)K^+$ decays are shown in figures 2(a-c), where the *sPlot* technique [101] based on the fit results is used for background subtraction. The $J/\psi\eta'$, $\eta'K^+$, and $J/\psi K^+$ masses are calculated using a kinematic fit with J/ψ , η' and B^+ mass constraints and a PV constraint applied [91]. While for the $J/\psi K^+$ mass the distribution largely agrees with the shape expected from the phase-space model, for the low-mass region of the $\eta'K^+$ mass spectrum and the high-mass region of the $J/\psi\eta'$ mass spectrum a striking difference from the phase-space model is observed. These differences are potentially due to contributions from decays via intermediate heavy excited strange mesons, such as $K_0^*(1430)^+$, $K_2^*(1430)^+$ or $K^*(1680)^+$ mesons, decaying into the $\eta'K^+$ final state. The decays of the B^+ mesons into

²The optimal requirement is found to be largely independent on the choice of the normalisation point.

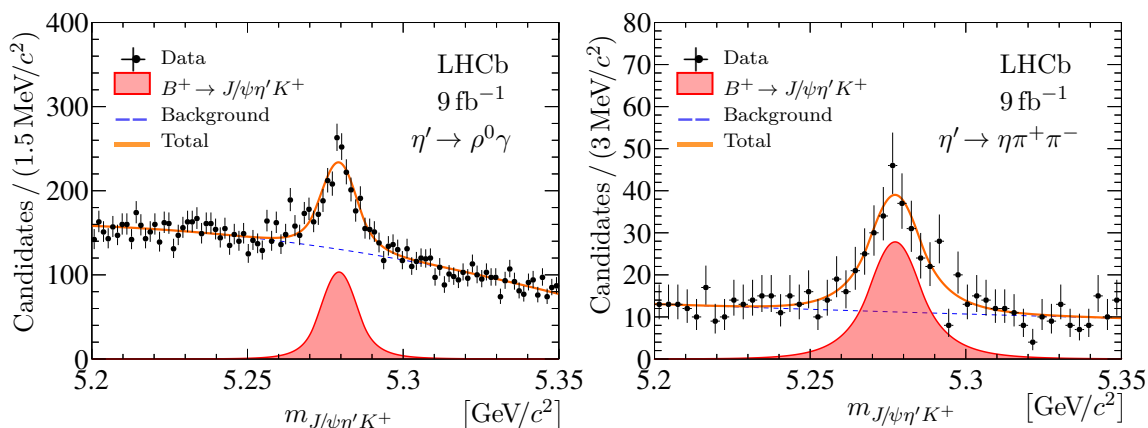


Figure 1. Mass distributions for selected $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ candidates with η' decays to (left) $\rho^0\gamma$ and (right) $\eta\pi^+\pi^-$ final states. The resulting fit functions are overlaid with data distributions.

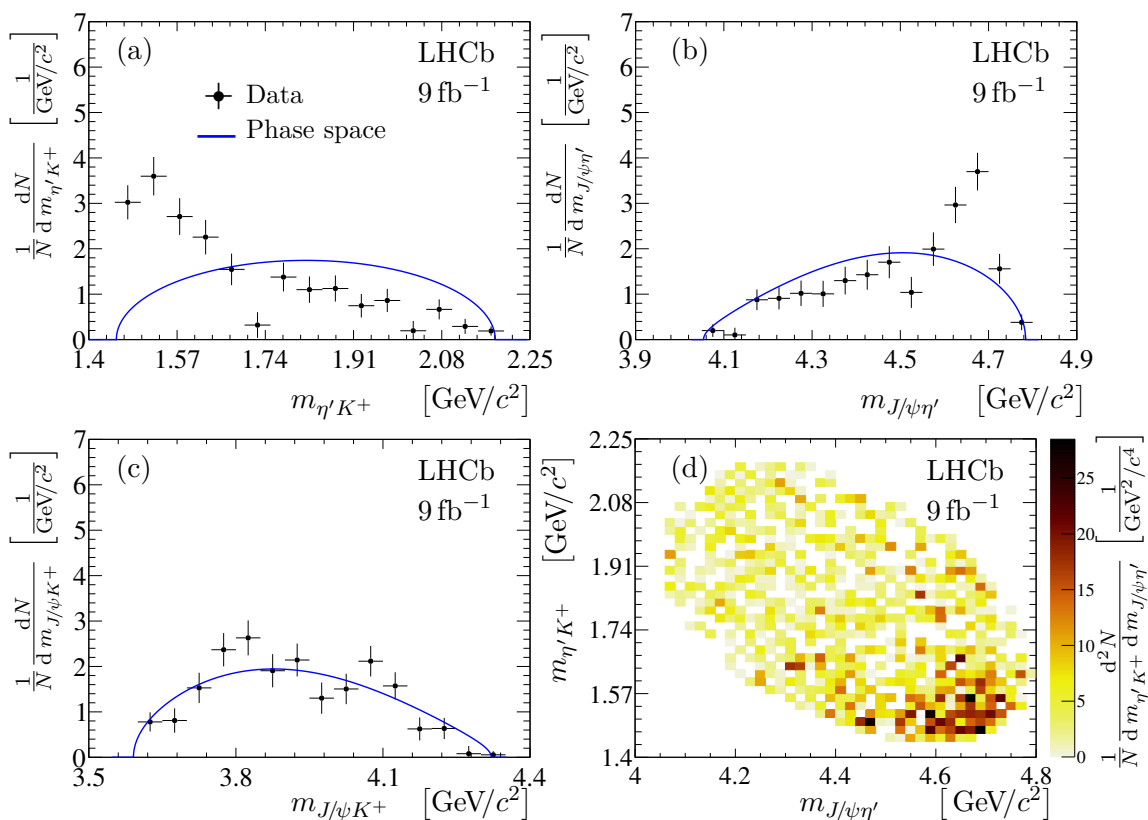


Figure 2. Normalised background-subtracted (a) $\eta'K^+$, (b) $J/\psi\eta'$, (c) $J/\psi K^+$ mass spectra and (d) two-dimensional mass distribution of $\eta'K^+$ vs $J/\psi\eta'$ from the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ decays. Superimposed curves are the expectations from a phase-space model.

a J/ψ meson and heavy excited strange mesons have been studied in refs. [13, 14, 16]. The decays via intermediate excited kaons also contribute to the higher mass region of the $J/\psi\eta'$ mass spectrum, as shown in figure 2(d). The $J/\psi\eta'$ mass region below 4.7 GeV/c^2 is explicitly inspected for possible contributions from decays via excited charmonium or charmoni-

um-like states into the $J/\psi\eta'$ final state. Fits to the background-subtracted $J/\psi\eta'$ mass distribution are performed in individual mass windows, corresponding to the well-established $\psi(4160)$, $\psi(4230)$, $\psi(4360)$, $\psi(4415)$ and $\psi(4430)$ resonances [37]. For each fit, the resonance shape is parameterised with a relativistic Breit-Wigner function convoluted with a mass resolution function. The non-resonant contribution is modelled by a first order positive polynomial function. The known masses and widths of the resonances [37] are introduced in the fits as Gaussian constraints on the corresponding parameters. The resolution function is modelled by the modified Gaussian function with parameters obtained using simulation as a function of the $J/\psi\eta'$ mass. No statistically significant signals are observed for the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ decays via intermediate resonances, listed above. To probe the contribution of the resonances with higher masses, more advanced fit techniques accounting for complicated background shape and the distortion of the signal Breit-Wigner shape are required.

For the determination of the resonant structure of the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ decay, a full amplitude analysis, similar to those used in refs. [14, 16], is required. Large signal yields and low background levels are important prerequisites for such analysis. The relatively large level of combinatorial background for the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ signal decays with the η' meson reconstructed via the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0\gamma$ decay mode, makes it difficult to carry out an amplitude analysis. With a larger data sample, expected from future data-taking periods, it will be possible to perform the full amplitude analysis using the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+$ signal decays with the η' meson reconstructed via the $\eta' \rightarrow \eta\pi^+\pi^-$ decay mode, where the combinatorial background is smaller.

5 Normalisation channel

The $J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-K^+$ mass distribution for selected $B^+ \rightarrow (\psi(2S) \rightarrow J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-)K^+$ candidates with $J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-$ mass between 3.66 and 3.71 GeV/ c^2 is shown in figure 3(left). An extended unbinned maximum-likelihood fit is performed, where the signal component is modelled by the modified Gaussian function and the background is described by a first order positive polynomial function. The result of this fit is used to obtain the background-subtracted $J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-$ mass distribution from $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-K^+$ decays. This distribution is shown in figure 3(right). The yield of the $B^+ \rightarrow (\psi(2S) \rightarrow J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-)K^+$ signal candidates is determined using an unbinned fit to this distribution with a two-component function. The component corresponding to the $B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+$ decays is parameterised by the modified Gaussian function. The component describing the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\pi^+\pi^-K^+$ decays without intermediate $\psi(2S)$ state is modelled by a phase-space function,³ modified by a first order positive polynomial function. The tail and resolution parameters for the signal component are taken from simulation with the resolution further corrected by a scale factor, $s_{\psi(2S)}$, that accounts for a small discrepancy between data and simulation [26, 103]. The fit is performed simultaneously to data and simulated samples, as for the signal mode described

³The phase-space mass distribution of a k -body combination of particles from an n -body decay is approximated by $\Phi_{k,n}(x) \propto x_*^{(3k-5)/2} (1-x_*)^{3(n-k)/2-1}$, where $x_* \equiv (x - x_{\min})/(x_{\max} - x_{\min})$, and x_{\min} , x_{\max} denote the minimal and maximal values of x , respectively [102]. Here, $k = 3$ and $n = 4$ are used.

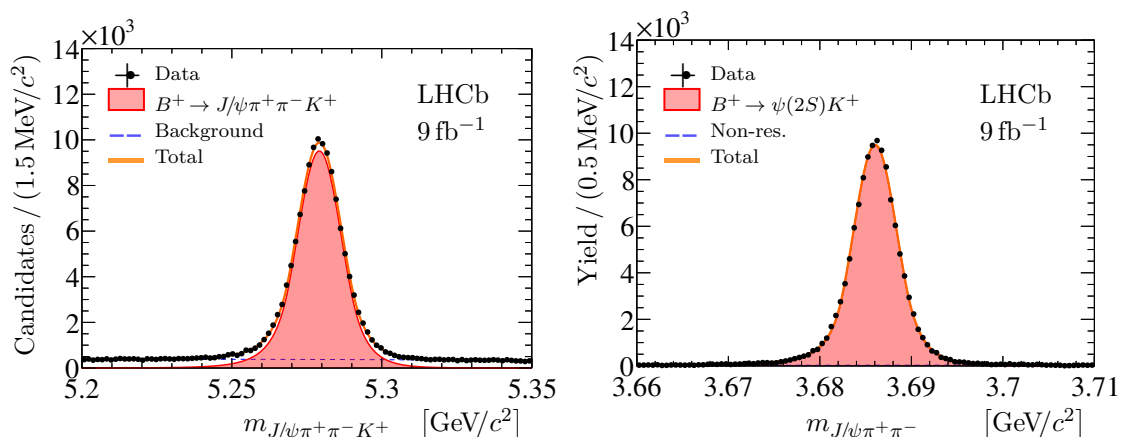


Figure 3. Left: mass distributions for selected $B^+ \rightarrow (\psi(2S) \rightarrow J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-) K^+$ decays, with $J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-$ mass between 3.66 and 3.71 GeV/c^2 . Right: background-subtracted $J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-$ mass distribution from selected B^+ decays. The resulting fit functions are overlaid with data distributions.

in section 4. From this fit the number of $B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S) K^+$ decays is found to be

$$N_{B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S) K^+} = (121.40 \pm 0.14) \times 10^3, \quad (5.1)$$

where the uncertainty is statistical only. The correction factor $s_{\psi(2S)}$ is found to be 1.057 ± 0.008 , which is in good agreement with results from refs. [15, 26, 98, 99, 103, 104].

6 Branching fraction ratio computation

The ratio of the branching fractions \mathcal{R} , defined in eq. (1.1), is calculated as

$$\mathcal{R} = \frac{N_{B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+}}{N_{B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S) K^+}} \times \frac{\mathcal{B}(\psi(2S) \rightarrow J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-)}{\mathcal{B}(\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0 \gamma)} \times \frac{\epsilon_{B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S) K^+}}{\epsilon_{B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+}},$$

where $N_{B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+}$ and $N_{B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S) K^+}$ are the yields from eqs. (4.1a) and (5.1), and $\epsilon_{B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+}$ and $\epsilon_{B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S) K^+}$ are the efficiencies to reconstruct the observed final states. The efficiencies are the products of detector acceptance, reconstruction, selection and trigger efficiencies, and are calculated using simulated samples, calibrated to match the data as described in section 2. The branching fractions for the $\psi(2S) \rightarrow J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-$ and $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0 \gamma$ decays, $\mathcal{B}(\psi(2S) \rightarrow J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-) = (34.68 \pm 0.30) \%$ and $\mathcal{B}(\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0 \gamma) = (29.4 \pm 0.4) \%$, are taken from ref. [37]. The ratio of branching fractions \mathcal{R} is found to be

$$\frac{\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+)}{\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S) K^+)} = (4.91 \pm 0.47) \times 10^{-2},$$

where the uncertainty is statistical only.

As a cross-check, the ratio \mathcal{R} is also calculated for the $\eta' \rightarrow \eta \pi^+ \pi^-$, using the signal yields from eqs. (4.1b) and (5.1). The ratio of branching fractions \mathcal{R} is found to be $(4.98 \pm 0.61) \times 10^{-2}$, where the uncertainty is statistical only. This value is in good agreement with that calculated for the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0 \gamma$ case.

7 Systematic uncertainties

The signal and normalisation channels share the same set of final-state charged particles, and the same trigger and preselection requirements are applied to both. This allows many systematic uncertainties to cancel in the ratio \mathcal{R} . The remaining nonnegligible contributions are listed in table 1.

Several systematic uncertainties are associated with the corrections applied to the simulation. The finite size of the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi K^+$ signal sample used for correction of the simulated transverse momentum and rapidity spectra of B^+ mesons induces an uncertainty on the B^+ meson p_T and y spectra. In turn, this uncertainty induces small changes in the ratio of efficiencies. The corresponding spread of these changes amounts to 0.1% and is taken as the systematic uncertainty related to the B^+ meson kinematic.

The decay model corrections for the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+$ decay are obtained using the algorithm described in ref. [75]. The systematic uncertainty related to the correction method is estimated by varying the configuration parameters of the algorithm. The largest deviation of the efficiency value from the baseline tuning is found to be 1.1%, which is assigned as systematic uncertainty associated with the B^+ decay model.

There are residual differences in the reconstruction efficiency of charged-particle tracks that do not cancel completely in the ratio of total efficiencies given the slightly different kinematic distributions of the final-state particles. The track-finding efficiencies obtained from simulated samples are corrected using calibration channels [77]. The uncertainties related to the efficiency correction factors are propagated to the ratios of the total efficiencies using pseudoexperiments, and are found to be 0.7%. This value is taken as the systematic uncertainty due to the tracking efficiency calibration.

Differences in the photon reconstruction efficiencies between data and simulation are studied using a large sample of $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi K^{*+}$ decays, reconstructed using the $K^{*+} \rightarrow K^+ (\pi^0 \rightarrow \gamma\gamma)$ decay mode [78–81]. The uncertainty due to the finite size of the sample is propagated to the ratio of the total efficiencies using pseudoexperiments and is found to be less than 1.0%. The uncertainty due to the accuracy of the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi K^{*+}$ branching fraction [37] is 3.5%. These two values are added in quadrature to obtain a systematic uncertainty related to the photon reconstruction of 3.6%.

The kaon identification variable used for the MLP estimator is drawn from calibration data samples and has a dependence on the particle kinematics and track multiplicity. Systematic uncertainties in this procedure arise from the limited size of both the simulation and calibration samples, and the modelling of the particle identification variable. The limitations due to the size of the simulation and calibration samples are evaluated by using bootstrapping techniques [105, 106], creating multiple samples and repeating the procedure for each of these. The impact of potential mismodelling of the kaon identification variable is evaluated by describing the corresponding distributions using density estimates with different kernel widths [76, 107]. For each of these cases, alternative efficiency maps are produced to determine the associated uncertainties. A systematic uncertainty of 2.8% is assigned from the observed differences with alternative efficiency maps.

A systematic uncertainty related to the knowledge of the trigger efficiencies has been previously studied using large samples of $B^+ \rightarrow (J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-) K^+$ and $B^+ \rightarrow (\psi(2S) \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-) K^+$ decays by comparing the ratios of the trigger efficiencies in data and simulation [108]. Based on this comparison, a relative uncertainty of 1.1% is assigned.

The remaining inconsistency between data and simulation, not covered by the corrections discussed in section 2, is estimated by varying the requirement on the response of the MLP classifier in ranges that lead to changes in the measured signal yields as large as $\pm 20\%$. The resulting difference in the data-simulation efficiency ratio is found to be 3.0%.

A different class of systematic uncertainties directly affects the fit itself, namely uncertainties associated with the fit models used to describe the $J/\psi \eta' K^+$, $\psi(2S) K^+$ and $J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-$ spectra. The systematic uncertainty is accounted for by fits with alternative models. The list of alternative models to describe signal B^+ and $\psi(2S)$ components includes a modified Apollonios function [109], which has exponential instead of power-law tails, a generalised Student's t -distribution [110, 111] and a modified Novosibirsk function [112]. For the combinatorial background for both the signal and the normalisation channels, a third order polynomial function and an exponential function multiplied by a first order polynomial function are chosen as alternative models. For each fit only one component (either signal or background) is replaced at a time, and the same fit function is used for both signal and normalisation channel. The largest deviation of the ratio of signal yields is found to be 0.6%. As alternative background models for $J/\psi \pi^+ \pi^-$ candidates, a first order polynomial function and a product of an exponential function with a first order polynomial function are used. The largest deviation of the signal yield is found to be 1.5%. The two deviations are added in quadrature to obtain a 1.6% systematic uncertainty due to imperfect knowledge of the signal and background shapes.

Finally, the finite size of the simulation samples contributes an uncertainty of 0.9% on the ratio of total efficiencies. The total systematic uncertainty for the ratio of branching fractions \mathcal{R} is calculated as the sum in quadrature of all the values listed above and is found to be 6.0%.

The statistical significance for the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+$ decay is recalculated using Wilks' theorem for each alternative fit model, and the smallest values of 17 and 10 standard deviations for the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0 \gamma$ and $\eta' \rightarrow \eta \pi^+ \pi^-$ cases, respectively, are taken as the significance including the systematic uncertainty.

8 Results and summary

The $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+$ decays are observed for the first time using proton-proton collision data collected by the LHCb experiment at centre-of-mass energies of 7, 8, and 13 TeV, corresponding to a total integrated luminosity of 9 fb^{-1} . In the analysis, the η' meson is reconstructed from the two $\rho^0 \gamma$ and $\eta \pi^+ \pi^-$ final states. The signal significance exceeds 10 standard deviations for both modes. The branching fraction of the $B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi \eta' K^+$ decay is measured for the $\eta' \rightarrow \rho^0 \gamma$ sample through normalisation to the known branching fraction

Source	Value [%]
B^+ kinematics	0.1
B^+ decay model	1.1
Tracking efficiency correction	0.7
Photon reconstruction correction	3.6
Kaon identification	2.8
Trigger efficiency	1.1
Data-simulation agreement	3.0
Fit model	1.6
Simulation sample size	0.9
Total	6.0

Table 1. Summary of systematic uncertainties on the ratio of branching fractions \mathcal{R} . The overall systematic uncertainty is calculated as a sum in quadrature of all the sources.

of the $B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+$ decay [37]. The ratio of branching fractions is found to be

$$\frac{\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+)}{\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+)} = (4.91 \pm 0.47 \pm 0.29 \pm 0.07) \times 10^{-2},$$

where the first uncertainty is statistical, the second is systematic and the third is related to the uncertainties on the branching fractions of the intermediate resonances. The absolute branching fraction is determined using the known branching fraction of $B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+$ decays, $\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow \psi(2S)K^+) = (6.24 \pm 0.20) \times 10^{-4}$ [37], and is found to be

$$\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow J/\psi\eta'K^+) = (3.06 \pm 0.29 \pm 0.18 \pm 0.04) \times 10^{-5},$$

where the first uncertainty is statistical, the second is systematic and the third is due to external branching fractions uncertainties. The measured branching fraction is consistent with the upper limit previously set by the Belle collaboration [58]. An inspection of the $J/\psi\eta'$ mass spectrum shows no significant contributions from the decays via intermediate charmonium or charmonium-like resonances.

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R. Aaij [ID](#)³², A.S.W. Abdelmotteleb [ID](#)⁵⁷, C. Abellan Beteta⁵¹, F. Abudinén [ID](#)⁵⁷, T. Ackernley [ID](#)⁶¹, B. Adeva [ID](#)⁴⁷, M. Adinolfi [ID](#)⁵⁵, P. Adlarson [ID](#)⁸⁷, H. Afsharnia⁹, C. Agapopoulou [ID](#)¹³, C.A. Aidala [ID](#)⁸⁸, Z. Ajaltouni⁹, S. Akar [ID](#)⁶⁶, K. Akiba [ID](#)³², P. Albicocco [ID](#)²³, J. Albrecht [ID](#)¹⁵, F. Alessio [ID](#)⁴⁹, M. Alexander [ID](#)⁶⁰, A. Alfonso Alberio [ID](#)⁴⁶, Z. Aliouche [ID](#)⁶³, G. Alkhozov³⁸, P. Alvarez Cartelle [ID](#)⁵⁶, R. Amalric [ID](#)¹³, S. Amato [ID](#)², J.L. Amey [ID](#)⁵⁵, Y. Amhis [ID](#)^{11,49}, L. An [ID](#)⁴⁹, L. Anderlini [ID](#)²², M. Andersson [ID](#)⁵¹, A. Andreianov [ID](#)³⁸, M. Andreotti [ID](#)²¹, D. Andreou [ID](#)⁶⁹, D. Ao [ID](#)⁶, F. Archilli [ID](#)^{31,t}, A. Artamonov [ID](#)⁴⁴, M. Artuso [ID](#)⁶⁹, E. Aslanides [ID](#)¹⁰, M. Atzeni [ID](#)⁵¹, B. Audurier [ID](#)¹², I.B. Bachiller Perea [ID](#)⁸, S. Bachmann [ID](#)¹⁷, M. Bachmayer [ID](#)⁵⁰, J.J. Back [ID](#)⁵⁷, A. Bailly-reyre¹³, P. Baladron Rodriguez [ID](#)⁴⁷, V. Balagura [ID](#)¹², W. Baldini [ID](#)^{21,49}, J. Baptista de Souza Leite [ID](#)¹, M. Barbetti [ID](#)^{22,j}, R.J. Barlow [ID](#)⁶³, S. Barsuk [ID](#)¹¹, W. Barter [ID](#)⁵⁹, M. Bartolini [ID](#)⁵⁶, F. Baryshnikov [ID](#)⁸⁵, J.M. Basels [ID](#)¹⁴, G. Bassi [ID](#)²⁹, V. Batozskaya [ID](#)³⁶, B. Batsukh [ID](#)⁴, A. Battig [ID](#)¹⁵, A. Bay [ID](#)⁵⁰, A. Beck [ID](#)⁵⁷, M. Becker [ID](#)¹⁵, F. Bedeschi [ID](#)²⁹, I.B. Bediaga [ID](#)¹, A. Beiter⁶⁹, S. Belin [ID](#)⁴⁷, V. Bellee [ID](#)⁵¹, K. Belous [ID](#)⁴⁴, I. Belov [ID](#)⁴⁰, I. Belyaev [ID](#)⁴¹, G. Benane [ID](#)¹⁰, G. Bencivenni [ID](#)²³, E. Ben-Haim [ID](#)¹³, A. Berezhnoy [ID](#)⁴⁰, R. Bernet [ID](#)⁵¹, S. Bernet Andres [ID](#)⁴⁵, D. Berninghoff¹⁷, H.C. Bernstein⁶⁹, C. Bertella [ID](#)⁶³, A. Bertolin [ID](#)²⁸, C. Betancourt⁵¹, F. Betti [ID](#)⁴⁹, Ia. Bezshyiko [ID](#)⁵¹, J. Bhom [ID](#)³⁵, L. Bian [ID](#)⁷⁵, M.S. Bieker [ID](#)¹⁵, N.V. Biesuz [ID](#)²¹, P. Billoir [ID](#)¹³, A. Biolchini [ID](#)³², M. Birch [ID](#)⁶², F.C.R. Bishop [ID](#)⁵⁶, A. Bitadze [ID](#)⁶³, A. Bizzeti [ID](#)^{22,n}, M.P. Blago⁵⁶, T. Blake [ID](#)⁵⁷, F. Blanc [ID](#)⁵⁰, J.E. Blank [ID](#)¹⁵, S. Blusk [ID](#)⁶⁹, D. Bobulska [ID](#)⁶⁰, V.B. Bocharnikov [ID](#)⁸⁴, J.A. Boelhaeve [ID](#)¹⁵, O. Boente Garcia [ID](#)¹², T. Boettcher [ID](#)⁶⁶, A. Boldyrev [ID](#)⁸⁴, C.S. Bolognani [ID](#)⁸¹, R. Bolzonella [ID](#)^{21,i}, A. Bondar⁴³, N. Bondar [ID](#)^{38,49}, F. Borgato [ID](#)²⁸, S. Borghi [ID](#)⁶³, M. Borsato [ID](#)¹⁷, J.T. Borsuk [ID](#)³⁵, S.A. Bouchiba [ID](#)⁵⁰, T.J.V. Bowcock [ID](#)⁶¹, A. Boyer [ID](#)⁴⁹, C. Bozzi [ID](#)²¹, M.J. Bradley⁶², S. Braun [ID](#)⁶⁷, A. Brea Rodriguez [ID](#)⁴⁷, N. Breer [ID](#)¹⁵, J. Brodzicka [ID](#)³⁵, A. Brossa Gonzalo [ID](#)⁴⁷, J. Brown [ID](#)⁶¹, D. Brundu [ID](#)²⁷, A. Buonauro [ID](#)⁵¹, L. Buonincontri [ID](#)²⁸, A.T. Burke [ID](#)⁶³, C. Burr [ID](#)⁴⁹, A. Bursche⁷³, A. Butkevich [ID](#)³⁹, J.S. Butter [ID](#)³², J. Buytaert [ID](#)⁴⁹, W. Byczynski [ID](#)⁴⁹, S. Cadeddu [ID](#)²⁷, H. Cai⁷⁵, R. Calabrese [ID](#)^{21,i}, L. Calefice [ID](#)¹⁵, S. Cali [ID](#)²³, M. Calvi [ID](#)^{26,m}, M. Calvo Gomez [ID](#)⁴⁵, P. Campana [ID](#)²³, D.H. Campora Perez [ID](#)⁸¹, A.F. Campoverde Quezada [ID](#)⁶, S. Capelli [ID](#)^{26,m}, L. Capriotti [ID](#)²⁰, A. Carbone [ID](#)^{20,g}, R. Cardinale [ID](#)^{24,k}, A. Cardini [ID](#)²⁷, P. Carniti [ID](#)^{26,m}, L. Carus¹⁴, A. Casais Vidal [ID](#)⁴⁷, R. Caspary [ID](#)¹⁷, G. Casse [ID](#)⁶¹, M. Cattaneo [ID](#)⁴⁹, G. Cavallero [ID](#)²¹, V. Cavallini [ID](#)²¹, S. Celani [ID](#)⁵⁰, J. Cerasoli [ID](#)¹⁰, D. Cervenkov [ID](#)⁶⁴, A.J. Chadwick [ID](#)⁶¹, I.C. Chahrouh [ID](#)⁸⁸, M.G. Chapman⁵⁵, M. Charles [ID](#)¹³, Ph. Charpentier [ID](#)⁴⁹, C.A. Chavez Barajas [ID](#)⁶¹, M. Chefdeville [ID](#)⁸, C. Chen [ID](#)¹⁰, S. Chen [ID](#)⁴, A. Chernov [ID](#)³⁵, S. Chernyshenko [ID](#)⁵³, V. Chobanova [ID](#)⁴⁷, S. Cholak [ID](#)⁵⁰, M. Chrzaszcz [ID](#)³⁵, A. Chubykin [ID](#)³⁸, V. Chulikov [ID](#)³⁸, P. Ciambriano [ID](#)²³, M.F. Cicala [ID](#)⁵⁷, X. Cid Vidal [ID](#)⁴⁷, G. Ciezarek [ID](#)⁴⁹, P. Cifra [ID](#)⁴⁹, P.E.L. Clarke [ID](#)⁵⁹, M. Clemencic [ID](#)⁴⁹, H.V. Cliff [ID](#)⁵⁶, J. Closier [ID](#)⁴⁹, J.L. Cobbledick [ID](#)⁶³, V. Coco [ID](#)⁴⁹, J. Cogan [ID](#)¹⁰, E. Cogneras [ID](#)⁹, L. Cojocariu [ID](#)³⁷, P. Collins [ID](#)⁴⁹, T. Colombo [ID](#)⁴⁹, L. Congedo [ID](#)¹⁹, A. Contu [ID](#)²⁷, N. Cooke [ID](#)⁵⁴, I. Corredoira [ID](#)⁴⁷, G. Corti [ID](#)⁴⁹, B. Couturier [ID](#)⁴⁹, D.C. Craik [ID](#)⁵¹, M. Cruz Torres [ID](#)^{1,e}, R. Currie [ID](#)⁵⁹, C.L. Da Silva [ID](#)⁶⁸, S. Dadabaev [ID](#)⁸⁵, L. Dai [ID](#)⁷², X. Dai [ID](#)⁵, E. Dall’Occo [ID](#)¹⁵, J. Dalseno [ID](#)⁴⁷, C. D’Ambrosio [ID](#)⁴⁹, J. Daniel [ID](#)⁹, A. Danilina [ID](#)⁴¹, P. d’Argent [ID](#)¹⁹, J.E. Davies [ID](#)⁶³, A. Davis [ID](#)⁶³, O. De Aguiar Francisco [ID](#)⁶³, J. de Boer [ID](#)⁴⁹, K. De Bruyn [ID](#)⁸⁰, S. De Capua [ID](#)⁶³, M. De Cian [ID](#)⁵⁰,

U. De Freitas Carneiro Da Graca [ID](#)¹, E. De Lucia [ID](#)²³, J.M. De Miranda [ID](#)¹, L. De Paula [ID](#)²,
M. De Serio [ID](#)^{19,f}, D. De Simone [ID](#)⁵¹, P. De Simone [ID](#)²³, F. De Vellis [ID](#)¹⁵, J.A. de Vries [ID](#)⁸¹,
C.T. Dean [ID](#)⁶⁸, F. Debernardis [ID](#)^{19,f}, D. Decamp [ID](#)⁸, V. Dedu [ID](#)¹⁰, L. Del Buono [ID](#)¹³,
B. Delaney [ID](#)⁶⁵, H.-P. Dembinski [ID](#)¹⁵, V. Denysenko [ID](#)⁵¹, D. Derkach⁸⁴, O. Deschamps [ID](#)⁹,
F. Dettori [ID](#)²⁷, B. Dey [ID](#)⁷⁸, P. Di Nezza [ID](#)²³, I. Diachkov [ID](#)⁸⁵, S. Didenko [ID](#)⁸⁵,
L. Dieste Maronas⁴⁷, S. Ding [ID](#)⁶⁹, V. Dobishuk [ID](#)⁵³, A. Dolmatov⁸⁵, C. Dong [ID](#)³,
A.M. Donohoe¹⁸, F. Dordei [ID](#)²⁷, A.C. dos Reis [ID](#)¹, L. Douglas⁶⁰, A.G. Downes [ID](#)⁸, P. Duda [ID](#)⁸²,
M.W. Dudek [ID](#)³⁵, L. Dufour [ID](#)⁴⁹, V. Duk [ID](#)⁷⁹, P. Durante [ID](#)⁴⁹, M. M. Duras [ID](#)⁸²,
J.M. Durham [ID](#)⁶⁸, D. Dutta [ID](#)⁶³, A. Dziurda [ID](#)³⁵, A. Dzyuba [ID](#)³⁸, S. Easo [ID](#)⁵⁸, U. Egede [ID](#)⁷⁰,
A. Egorychev [ID](#)⁴¹, V. Egorychev [ID](#)⁴¹, C. Eirea Orro⁴⁷, S. Eisenhardt [ID](#)⁵⁹, E. Ejopu [ID](#)⁶³,
S. Ek-In [ID](#)⁵⁰, L. Eklund [ID](#)⁸⁷, M.E Elashri [ID](#)⁶⁶, J. Ellbracht [ID](#)¹⁵, S. Ely [ID](#)⁶², A. Ene [ID](#)³⁷,
E. Eppele [ID](#)⁶⁶, S. Escher¹⁴, J. Eschle [ID](#)⁵¹, S. Esen [ID](#)⁵¹, T. Evans [ID](#)⁶³, F. Fabiano [ID](#)²⁷,
L.N. Falcao [ID](#)¹, Y. Fan [ID](#)⁶, B. Fang [ID](#)^{75,11}, L. Fantini [ID](#)^{79,p}, M. Faria [ID](#)⁵⁰, S. Farry [ID](#)⁶¹,
D. Fazzini [ID](#)^{26,m}, L.F Felkowski [ID](#)⁸², M. Féo [ID](#)⁴⁹, M. Fernandez Gomez [ID](#)⁴⁷, A.D. Fernez [ID](#)⁶⁷,
F. Ferrari [ID](#)²⁰, L. Ferreira Lopes [ID](#)⁵⁰, F. Ferreira Rodrigues [ID](#)², S. Ferreres Sole [ID](#)³²,
M. Ferrillo [ID](#)⁵¹, M. Ferro-Luzzi [ID](#)⁴⁹, S. Filippov [ID](#)³⁹, R.A. Fini [ID](#)¹⁹, M. Fiorini [ID](#)^{21,i}, M. Firlej [ID](#)³⁴,
K.M. Fischer⁶⁴, D.S. Fitzgerald [ID](#)⁸⁸, C. Fitzpatrick [ID](#)⁶³, T. Fiutowski [ID](#)³⁴, F. Fleuret [ID](#)¹²,
M. Fontana [ID](#)²⁰, F. Fontanelli [ID](#)^{24,k}, R. Forty [ID](#)⁴⁹, D. Foulds-Holt [ID](#)⁵⁶, V. Franco Lima [ID](#)⁶¹,
M. Franco Sevilla [ID](#)⁶⁷, M. Frank [ID](#)⁴⁹, E. Franzoso [ID](#)^{21,i}, G. Frau [ID](#)¹⁷, C. Frei [ID](#)⁴⁹, D.A. Friday [ID](#)⁶³,
L.F Frontini [ID](#)^{25,l}, J. Fu [ID](#)⁶, Q. Fuehring [ID](#)¹⁵, T. Fulghesu [ID](#)¹³, E. Gabriel [ID](#)³², G. Galati [ID](#)^{19,f},
M.D. Galati [ID](#)³², A. Gallas Torreira [ID](#)⁴⁷, D. Galli [ID](#)^{20,g}, S. Gambetta [ID](#)^{59,49}, M. Gandelman [ID](#)²,
P. Gandini [ID](#)²⁵, H.G Gao [ID](#)⁶, R. Gao [ID](#)⁶⁴, Y. Gao [ID](#)⁷, Y. Gao [ID](#)⁵, M. Garau [ID](#)²⁷,
L.M. Garcia Martin [ID](#)⁵⁷, P. Garcia Moreno [ID](#)⁴⁶, J. García Pardiñas [ID](#)⁴⁹, B. Garcia Plana⁴⁷,
F.A. Garcia Rosales [ID](#)¹², L. Garrido [ID](#)⁴⁶, C. Gaspar [ID](#)⁴⁹, R.E. Geertsema [ID](#)³², D. Gerick¹⁷,
L.L. Gerken [ID](#)¹⁵, E. Gersabeck [ID](#)⁶³, M. Gersabeck [ID](#)⁶³, T. Gershon [ID](#)⁵⁷, L. Giambastiani [ID](#)²⁸,
V. Gibson [ID](#)⁵⁶, H.K. Giemza [ID](#)³⁶, A.L. Gilman [ID](#)⁶⁴, M. Giovannetti [ID](#)²³, A. Gioventù [ID](#)⁴⁷,
P. Gironella Gironell [ID](#)⁴⁶, C. Giugliano [ID](#)^{21,i}, M.A. Giza [ID](#)³⁵, K. Gizdov [ID](#)⁵⁹,
E.L. Gkougkousis [ID](#)⁴⁹, V.V. Gligorov [ID](#)^{13,49}, C. Göbel [ID](#)⁷¹, E. Golobardes [ID](#)⁴⁵, D. Golubkov [ID](#)⁴¹,
A. Golutvin [ID](#)^{62,85}, A. Gomes [ID](#)^{1,a}, S. Gomez Fernandez [ID](#)⁴⁶, F. Goncalves Abrantes [ID](#)⁶⁴,
M. Goncerz [ID](#)³⁵, G. Gong [ID](#)³, I.V. Gorelov [ID](#)⁴⁰, C. Gotti [ID](#)²⁶, J.P. Grabowski [ID](#)⁷⁷,
T. Grammatico [ID](#)¹³, L.A. Granado Cardoso [ID](#)⁴⁹, E. Graugés [ID](#)⁴⁶, E. Graverini [ID](#)⁵⁰,
G. Graziani [ID](#)²², A. T. Grecu [ID](#)³⁷, L.M. Greeven [ID](#)³², N.A. Grieser [ID](#)⁶⁶, L. Grillo [ID](#)⁶⁰,
S. Gromov [ID](#)⁸⁵, C. Gu [ID](#)³, M. Guarise [ID](#)²¹, M. Guittiere [ID](#)¹¹, P. A. Günther [ID](#)¹⁷,
A.K. Guseinov [ID](#)⁴¹, E. Gushchin [ID](#)³⁹, A. Guth¹⁴, Y. Guz [ID](#)^{5,44,49}, T. Gys [ID](#)⁴⁹,
T. Hadavizadeh [ID](#)⁷⁰, C. Hadjivasiliou [ID](#)⁶⁷, G. Haefeli [ID](#)⁵⁰, C. Haen [ID](#)⁴⁹, J. Haimberger [ID](#)⁴⁹,
S.C. Haines⁵⁶, T. Halewood-leagas [ID](#)⁶¹, M.M. Halvorsen [ID](#)⁴⁹, P.M. Hamilton [ID](#)⁶⁷,
J. Hammerich [ID](#)⁶¹, Q. Han [ID](#)⁷, X. Han [ID](#)¹⁷, S. Hansmann-Menzemer¹⁷, N. Harnew [ID](#)⁶⁴,
T. Harrison [ID](#)⁶¹, C. Hasse [ID](#)⁴⁹, M. Hatch [ID](#)⁴⁹, J. He [ID](#)^{6,c}, K. Heijhoff [ID](#)³², F.H Hemmer [ID](#)⁴⁹,
C. Henderson [ID](#)⁶⁶, R.D.L. Henderson [ID](#)^{70,57}, A.M. Hennequin [ID](#)⁶⁵, K. Hennessy [ID](#)⁶¹, L. Henry [ID](#)⁴⁹,
J.H Herd [ID](#)⁶², J. Heuel [ID](#)¹⁴, A. Hicheur [ID](#)², D. Hill [ID](#)⁵⁰, M. Hilton [ID](#)⁶³, S.E. Hollitt [ID](#)¹⁵,
J. Horswill [ID](#)⁶³, R. Hou [ID](#)⁷, Y. Hou [ID](#)⁸, J. Hu¹⁷, J. Hu [ID](#)⁷³, W. Hu [ID](#)⁵, X. Hu [ID](#)³, W. Huang [ID](#)⁶,
X. Huang⁷⁵, W. Hulsbergen [ID](#)³², R.J. Hunter [ID](#)⁵⁷, M. Hushchyn [ID](#)⁸⁴, D. Hutchcroft [ID](#)⁶¹,
P. Ibis [ID](#)¹⁵, M. Idzik [ID](#)³⁴, D. Ilin [ID](#)³⁸, P. Ilten [ID](#)⁶⁶, A. Inglessi [ID](#)³⁸, A. Iniukhin [ID](#)⁸⁴, A. Ishteev [ID](#)⁸⁵,

K. Ivshin ³⁸, R. Jacobsson ⁴⁹, H. Jage ¹⁴, S.J. Jaimes Elles ⁴⁸, S. Jakobsen ⁴⁹, E. Jans ³²,
 B.K. Jashal ⁴⁸, A. Jawahery ⁶⁷, V. Jevtic ¹⁵, E. Jiang ⁶⁷, X. Jiang ^{4,6}, Y. Jiang ⁶,
 M. John ⁶⁴, D. Johnson ⁶⁵, C.R. Jones ⁵⁶, T.P. Jones ⁵⁷, S.J. Joshi ³⁶, B. Jost ⁴⁹,
 N. Jurik ⁴⁹, I. Juszcak ³⁵, S. Kandybei ⁵², Y. Kang ³, M. Karacson ⁴⁹, D. Karpenkov ⁸⁵,
 M. Karpov ⁸⁴, J.W. Kautz ⁶⁶, F. Keizer ⁴⁹, D.M. Keller ⁶⁹, M. Kenzie ⁵⁷, T. Ketel ³²,
 B. Khanji ⁶⁹, A. Kharisova ⁸⁶, S. Kholodenko ^{44,85}, G. Khreich ¹¹, T. Kirn ¹⁴,
 V.S. Kirsebom ⁵⁰, O. Kitouni ⁶⁵, S. Klaver ³³, N. Kleijne ^{29,q}, K. Klimaszewski ³⁶,
 M.R. Kmiec ³⁶, S. Koliiev ⁵³, L. Kolk ¹⁵, A. Kondybayeva ⁸⁵, A. Konoplyannikov ⁴⁴,
 P. Kopciewicz ³⁴, R. Kopecna ¹⁷, P. Koppenburg ³², M. Korolev ⁴⁰, I. Kostyuk ³², O. Kot ⁵³,
 S. Kotriakhova ^{21,i}, A. Kozachuk ⁴⁰, P. Kravchenko ³⁸, L. Kravchuk ³⁹, M. Kreps ⁵⁷,
 S. Kretzschmar ¹⁴, P. Krokovny ^{43,w}, W. Krupa ³⁴, W. Krzemien ³⁶, J. Kubat ¹⁷, S. Kubis ⁸²,
 W. Kucewicz ³⁵, M. Kucharczyk ³⁵, V. Kudryavtsev ^{43,w}, E.K. Kulikova ⁴², A. Kupsc ⁸⁷,
 D. Lacarrere ⁴⁹, G. Lafferty ⁶³, A. Lai ²⁷, A. Lampis ²⁷, D. Lancierini ⁵¹,
 C. Landesa Gomez ⁴⁷, J.J. Lane ⁶³, R. Lane ⁵⁵, C. Langenbruch ¹⁴, J. Langer ¹⁵,
 O. Lantwin ⁸⁵, T. Latham ⁵⁷, F. Lazzari ^{29,r}, C. Lazzeroni ⁵⁴, R. Le Gac ¹⁰, S.H. Lee ⁸⁸,
 R. Lefèvre ⁹, A. Leflat ⁴⁰, S. Legotin ⁸⁵, O. Leroy ¹⁰, T. Lesiak ³⁵, B. Leverington ¹⁷,
 A. Li ³, H. Li ⁷³, K. Li ⁷, P. Li ⁴⁹, P.-R. Li ⁷⁴, S. Li ⁷, T. Li ⁴, T. Li ⁷³, Y. Li ⁴,
 Z. Li ⁶⁹, X. Liang ⁶⁹, C. Lin ⁶, T. Lin ⁵⁸, R. Lindner ⁴⁹, V. Lisovskiy ¹⁵, R. Litvinov ²⁷,
 G. Liu ⁷³, H. Liu ⁶, K. Liu ⁷⁴, Q. Liu ⁶, S. Liu ^{4,6}, A. Lobo Salvia ⁴⁶, A. Loi ²⁷,
 R. Lollini ⁷⁹, J. Lomba Castro ⁴⁷, I. Longstaff ⁶⁰, J.H. Lopes ², A. Lopez Huertas ⁴⁶,
 S. López Soliño ⁴⁷, G.H. Lovell ⁵⁶, Y. Lu ^{4,b}, C. Lucarelli ^{22,j}, D. Lucchesi ^{28,o},
 S. Luchuk ³⁹, M. Lucio Martinez ⁸¹, V. Lukashenko ^{32,53}, Y. Luo ³, A. Lupato ⁶³,
 E. Luppi ^{21,i}, A. Lusiani ^{29,q}, K. Lynch ¹⁸, X.-R. Lyu ⁶, R. Ma ⁶, S. Maccolini ¹⁵,
 F. Machefer ¹¹, F. Maciuc ³⁷, I. Mackay ⁶⁴, V. Macko ⁵⁰, L.R. Madhan Mohan ⁵⁶,
 A. Maevskiy ⁸⁴, D. Maisuzenko ³⁸, M.W. Majewski ³⁴, J.J. Malczewski ³⁵, S. Malde ⁶⁴,
 B. Malecki ^{35,49}, A. Malinin ⁸³, T. Maltsev ^{43,w}, G. Manca ^{27,h}, G. Mancinelli ¹⁰,
 C. Mancuso ^{11,25,l}, R. Manera Escalero ⁴⁶, D. Manuzzi ²⁰, C.A. Manzari ⁵¹,
 D. Marangotto ^{25,l}, J.M. Maratas ^{9,v}, J.F. Marchand ⁸, U. Marconi ²⁰, S. Mariani ⁴⁹,
 C. Marin Benito ⁴⁶, J. Marks ¹⁷, A.M. Marshall ⁵⁵, P.J. Marshall ⁶¹, G. Martelli ^{79,p},
 G. Martellotti ³⁰, L. Martinazzoli ^{49,m}, M. Martinelli ^{26,m}, D. Martinez Santos ⁴⁷,
 F. Martinez Vidal ⁴⁸, A. Massafferri ¹, M. Materok ¹⁴, R. Matev ⁴⁹, A. Mathad ⁵¹,
 V. Matiunin ⁴¹, C. Matteuzzi ²⁶, K.R. Mattioli ¹², A. Mauri ⁶², E. Maurice ¹²,
 J. Mauricio ⁴⁶, M. Mazurek ⁴⁹, M. McCann ⁶², L. Mcconnell ¹⁸, T.H. McGrath ⁶³,
 N.T. McHugh ⁶⁰, A. McNab ⁶³, R. McNulty ¹⁸, B. Meadows ⁶⁶, G. Meier ¹⁵,
 D. Melnychuk ³⁶, S. Meloni ^{26,m}, M. Merk ^{32,81}, A. Merli ²⁵, L. Meyer Garcia ²,
 D. Miao ^{4,6}, H.M. Miao ⁶, M. Mikhasenko ^{77,d}, D.A. Milanes ⁷⁶, E. Millard ⁵⁷,
 M. Milovanovic ⁴⁹, M.-N. Minard ^{8,†}, A. Minotti ^{26,m}, E. Minucci ⁶⁹, T. Miralles ⁹,
 S.E. Mitchell ⁵⁹, B. Mitreska ¹⁵, D.S. Mitzel ¹⁵, A. Modak ⁵⁸, A. Mödden ¹⁵,
 R.A. Mohammed ⁶⁴, R.D. Moise ¹⁴, S. Mokhnenko ⁸⁴, T. Mombächer ⁴⁷, M. Monk ^{57,70},
 I.A. Monroy ⁷⁶, S. Monteil ⁹, G. Morello ²³, M.J. Morello ^{29,q}, M.P. Morgenthaler ¹⁷,
 J. Moron ³⁴, A.B. Morris ⁴⁹, A.G. Morris ¹⁰, R. Mountain ⁶⁹, H. Mu ³, E. Muhammad ⁵⁷,
 F. Muheim ⁵⁹, M. Mulder ⁸⁰, K. Müller ⁵¹, C.H. Murphy ⁶⁴, D. Murray ⁶³, R. Murta ⁶²,
 P. Muzzetto ²⁷, P. Naik ⁵⁵, T. Nakada ⁵⁰, R. Nandakumar ⁵⁸, T. Nanut ⁴⁹, I. Nasteva ²,

M. Needham ⁵⁹, N. Neri ^{25,l}, S. Neubert ⁷⁷, N. Neufeld ⁴⁹, P. Neustroev³⁸, R. Newcombe⁶², J. Nicolini ^{15,11}, D. Nicotra ⁸¹, E.M. Niel ⁵⁰, S. Nieswand¹⁴, N. Nikitin ⁴⁰, N.S. Nolte ⁶⁵, C. Normand ⁸, J. Novoa Fernandez ⁴⁷, G.N Nowak ⁶⁶, C. Nunez ⁸⁸, A. Oblakowska-Mucha ³⁴, V. Obraztsov ⁴⁴, T. Oeser ¹⁴, S. Okamura ^{21,i}, R. Oldeman ^{27,h}, F. Oliva ⁵⁹, C.J.G. Onderwater ⁸⁰, R.H. O’Neil ⁵⁹, J.M. Otalora Goicochea ², T. Ovsianikova ⁴¹, P. Owen ⁵¹, A. Oyanguren ⁴⁸, O. Ozcelik ⁵⁹, K.O. Padeken ⁷⁷, B. Pagare ⁵⁷, P.R. Pais ⁴⁹, T. Pajero ⁶⁴, A. Palano ¹⁹, M. Palutan ²³, G. Panshin ⁸⁶, L. Paolucci ⁵⁷, A. Papanestis ⁵⁸, M. Pappagallo ^{19,f}, L.L. Pappalardo ^{21,i}, C. Pappenheimer ⁶⁶, W. Parker ⁶⁷, C. Parkes ⁶³, B. Passalacqua ²¹, G. Passaleva ²², A. Pastore ¹⁹, M. Patel ⁶², C. Patrignani ^{20,g}, C.J. Pawley ⁸¹, A. Pellegrino ³², M. Pepe Altarelli ⁴⁹, S. Perazzini ²⁰, D. Pereima ⁴¹, A. Pereiro Castro ⁴⁷, P. Perret ⁹, K. Petridis ⁵⁵, A. Petrolini ^{24,k}, S. Petrucci ⁵⁹, M. Petruzzo ²⁵, H. Pham ⁶⁹, A. Philippov⁴², R. Piandani ⁶, L. Pica ^{29,q}, M. Piccini ⁷⁹, B. Pietrzyk ⁸, G. Pietrzyk ¹¹, M. Pili ⁶⁴, D. Pinci ³⁰, F. Pisani ⁴⁹, M. Pizzichemi ^{26,m,49}, V. Placinta ³⁷, J. Plews ⁵⁴, M. Plo Casasus ⁴⁷, F. Polci ^{13,49}, M. Poli Lener ²³, A. Poluektov ¹⁰, N. Polukhina⁸⁵, I. Polyakov ⁴⁹, E. Polycarpo ², S. Ponce ⁴⁹, D. Popov ^{6,49}, S. Poslavskii⁴⁴, K. Prasanth ³⁵, L. Promberger ¹⁷, C. Prouve ⁴⁷, V. Pugatch ⁵³, V. Puill ¹¹, G. Punzi ^{29,r}, H.R. Qi ³, W. Qian ⁶, N. Qin ³, S. Qu ³, R. Quagliani ⁵⁰, N.V. Raab ¹⁸, B. Rachwal ³⁴, J.H. Rademacker ⁵⁵, R. Rajagopalan⁶⁹, M. Rama ²⁹, M. Ramos Pernas ⁵⁷, M.S. Rangel ², F. Ratnikov ^{42,84}, G. Raven ³³, M. Rebollo De Miguel ⁴⁸, F. Redi ⁴⁹, J. Reich ⁵⁵, F. Reiss ⁶³, C. Remon Alepuz⁴⁸, Z. Ren ³, P.K. Resmi ⁶⁴, R. Ribatti ^{29,q}, A.M. Ricci ²⁷, S. Ricciardi ⁵⁸, K. Richardson ⁶⁵, M. Richardson-Slipper ⁵⁹, K. Rinnert ⁶¹, P. Robbe ¹¹, G. Robertson ⁵⁹, E. Rodrigues ^{61,49}, E. Rodriguez Fernandez ⁴⁷, J.A. Rodriguez Lopez ⁷⁶, E.R.R. Rodriguez Rodriguez ⁴⁷, D.L. Rolf ⁴⁹, A. Rollings ⁶⁴, P. Roloff ⁴⁹, V. Romanovskiy ⁴⁴, M. Romero Lamas ⁴⁷, A. Romero Vidal ⁴⁷, M. Rotondo ²³, M.S. Rudolph ⁶⁹, T. Ruf ⁴⁹, R.A. Ruiz Fernandez ⁴⁷, J. Ruiz Vidal⁴⁸, A. Ryzhikov⁸⁴, J. Ryzka ³⁴, J.J. Saborido Silva ⁴⁷, N. Sagidova ³⁸, N. Sahoo ⁵⁴, B. Saitta ^{27,h}, M. Salomoni⁴⁹, C. Sanchez Gras ³², I. Sanderswood ⁴⁸, R. Santacesaria ³⁰, C. Santamarina Rios ⁴⁷, M. Santimaria ²³, L. Santoro De Oliveira ¹, E. Santovetti ^{31,t}, D. Saranin ⁸⁵, G. Sarpis ⁵⁹, M. Sarpis ⁷⁷, A. Sarti ³⁰, C. Satriano ^{30,s}, A. Satta ³¹, M. Saur ⁵, D. Savrina ^{40,41}, H. Sazak ⁹, L.G. Scantlebury Smead ⁶⁴, A. Scarabotto ¹³, S. Schael ¹⁴, S. Scherl ⁶¹, A. M. Schertz ⁷⁸, M. Schiller ⁶⁰, H. Schindler ⁴⁹, M. Schmelling ¹⁶, B. Schmidt ⁴⁹, S. Schmitt ¹⁴, O. Schneider ⁵⁰, A. Schopper ⁴⁹, M. Schubiger ³², N. Schulte ¹⁵, S. Schulte ⁵⁰, M.H. Schune ¹¹, R. Schwemmer⁴⁹, B. Sciascia ²³, A. Sciuccati ⁴⁹, S. Sellam ⁴⁷, A. Semennikov ⁴¹, M. Senghi Soares ³³, A. Sergi ^{24,k}, N. Serra ⁵¹, L. Sestini ²⁸, A. Seuthe ¹⁵, Y. Shang ⁵, D.M. Shangase ⁸⁸, M. Shapkin ⁴⁴, I. Shchemerov ⁸⁵, L. Shchutka ⁵⁰, T. Shears ⁶¹, L. Shekhtman ^{43,w}, Z. Shen ⁵, S. Sheng ^{4,6}, V. Shevchenko⁸³, B. Shi ⁶, E.B. Shields ^{26,m}, Y. Shimizu ¹¹, E. Shmanin ⁸⁵, R. Shorkin ⁸⁵, J.D. Shupperd ⁶⁹, B.G. Siddi ^{21,i}, R. Silva Coutinho ⁶⁹, G. Simi ²⁸, S. Simone ^{19,f}, M. Singla ⁷⁰, N. Skidmore ⁶³, R. Skuza ¹⁷, T. Skwarnicki ⁶⁹, M.W. Slater ⁵⁴, J.C. Smallwood ⁶⁴, J.G. Smeaton ⁵⁶, E. Smith ⁵¹, K. Smith ⁶⁸, M. Smith ⁶², A. Snoch ³², L. Soares Lavra⁹, M.D. Sokoloff ⁶⁶, F.J.P. Soler ⁶⁰, A. Solomin ^{40,55}, A. Solovev ³⁸, I. Solovyev ³⁸, R. Song ⁷⁰, F.L. Souza De Almeida ²,

B. Souza De Paula ², E. Spadaro Norella ^{25,l}, E. Spedicato ²⁰, J.G. Speer ¹⁵,
E. Spiridenkov³⁸, P. Spradlin ⁶⁰, V. Sriskaran ⁴⁹, F. Stagni ⁴⁹, M. Stahl ⁴⁹, S. Stahl ⁴⁹,
S. Stanislaus ⁶⁴, E.N. Stein ⁴⁹, O. Steinkamp ⁵¹, O. Stenyakin⁴⁴, H. Stevens ¹⁵,
D. Strelalina ⁸⁵, Y.S Su ⁶, F. Suljik ⁶⁴, J. Sun ²⁷, L. Sun ⁷⁵, Y. Sun ⁶⁷, P.N. Swallow ⁵⁴,
K. Swientek ³⁴, A. Szabelski ³⁶, T. Szumlak ³⁴, M. Szymanski ⁴⁹, Y. Tan ³, S. Taneja ⁶³,
M.D. Tat ⁶⁴, A. Terentev ⁵¹, F. Teubert ⁴⁹, E. Thomas ⁴⁹, D.J.D. Thompson ⁵⁴,
H. Tilquin ⁶², V. Tisserand ⁹, S. T'Jampens ⁸, M. Tobin ⁴, L. Tomassetti ^{21,i},
G. Tonani ^{25,l}, X. Tong ⁵, D. Torres Machado ¹, D.Y. Tou ³, C. Trippel ⁵⁰, G. Tuci ⁶,
N. Tuning ³², A. Ukleja ³⁶, D.J. Unverzagt ¹⁷, A. Usachov ³³, A. Ustyuzhanin ^{42,84},
U. Uwer ¹⁷, V. Vagnoni ²⁰, A. Valassi ⁴⁹, G. Valenti²⁰, N. Valls Canudas ⁴⁵,
M. Van Dijk ⁵⁰, H. Van Hecke ⁶⁸, E. van Herwijnen ⁶², C.B. Van Hulse ^{47,x},
M. van Veghel ³², R. Vazquez Gomez ⁴⁶, P. Vazquez Regueiro ⁴⁷, C. Vázquez Sierra ⁴⁷,
S. Vecchi ²¹, J.J. Velthuis ⁵⁵, M. Veltri ^{22,u}, A. Venkateswaran ⁵⁰, M. Veronesi ³²,
M. Vesterinen ⁵⁷, D. Vieira ⁶⁶, M. Vieites Diaz ⁵⁰, X. Vilasis-Cardona ⁴⁵,
E. Vilella Figueras ⁶¹, A. Villa ²⁰, P. Vincent ¹³, F.C. Volle ¹¹, D. vom Bruch ¹⁰,
V. Vorobyev⁴³, N. Voropaev ³⁸, K. Vos ⁸¹, C. Vrahas ⁵⁹, J. Walsh ²⁹, E.J. Walton ⁷⁰,
G. Wan ⁵, C. Wang ¹⁷, G. Wang ⁷, J. Wang ⁵, J. Wang ⁴, J. Wang ³, J. Wang ⁷⁵,
M. Wang ²⁵, R. Wang ⁵⁵, X. Wang⁷³, Y. Wang ⁷, Z. Wang ⁵¹, Z. Wang ³, Z. Wang ⁶,
J.A. Ward ^{57,70}, N.K. Watson ⁵⁴, D. Websdale ⁶², Y. Wei ⁵, B.D.C. Westhenry ⁵⁵,
D.J. White ⁶³, M. Whitehead ⁶⁰, A.R. Wiederhold ⁵⁷, D. Wiedner ¹⁵, G. Wilkinson ⁶⁴, M.
K. Wilkinson ⁶⁶, I. Williams⁵⁶, M. Williams ⁶⁵, M.R.J. Williams ⁵⁹, R. Williams ⁵⁶,
F.F. Wilson ⁵⁸, W. Wislicki ³⁶, M. Witek ³⁵, L. Witola ¹⁷, C.P. Wong ⁶⁸, G. Wormser ¹¹,
S.A. Wotton ⁵⁶, H. Wu ⁶⁹, J. Wu ⁷, K. Wyllie ⁴⁹, Z. Xiang ⁶, Y. Xie ⁷, A. Xu ⁵,
J. Xu ⁶, L. Xu ³, L. Xu ³, M. Xu ⁵⁷, Q. Xu⁶, Z. Xu ⁹, Z. Xu ⁶, D. Yang ³, S. Yang ⁶,
X. Yang ⁵, Y. Yang ⁶, Z. Yang ⁵, Z. Yang ⁶⁷, L.E. Yeomans ⁶¹, V. Yeroshenko ¹¹,
H. Yeung ⁶³, H. Yin ⁷, J. Yu ⁷², X. Yuan ⁶⁹, O. Yushchenko⁴⁴, E. Zaffaroni ⁵⁰,
M. Zavertyaev ¹⁶, M. Zdybal ³⁵, M. Zeng ³, C. Zhang ⁵, D. Zhang ⁷, J.Z Zhang ⁶,
L. Zhang ³, S. Zhang ⁷², S. Zhang ⁵, Y. Zhang ⁵, Y. Zhang⁶⁴, Y. Zhao ¹⁷, A. Zharkova ⁸⁵,
A. Zhelezov ¹⁷, Y. Zheng ⁶, T. Zhou ⁵, X. Zhou ⁷, Y. Zhou ⁶, V. Zhovkovska ¹¹,
X. Zhu ³, X. Zhu ⁷, Z. Zhu ⁶, V. Zhukov ^{14,40}, J. Zhuo ⁴⁸, Q. Zou ^{4,6}, S. Zucchelli ^{20,g},
D. Zuliani ²⁸, G. Zunica ⁶³

¹ Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Físicas (CBPF), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

² Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

³ Center for High Energy Physics, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

⁴ Institute Of High Energy Physics (IHEP), Beijing, China

⁵ School of Physics State Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Technology, Peking University, Beijing, China

⁶ University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China

⁷ Institute of Particle Physics, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, Hubei, China

⁸ Université Savoie Mont Blanc, CNRS, IN2P3-LAPP, Annecy, France

⁹ Université Clermont Auvergne, CNRS/IN2P3, LPC, Clermont-Ferrand, France

¹⁰ Aix Marseille Univ, CNRS/IN2P3, CPPM, Marseille, France

¹¹ Université Paris-Saclay, CNRS/IN2P3, IJCLab, Orsay, France

¹² Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, CNRS/IN2P3, Ecole Polytechnique, Institut Polytechnique de Paris, Palaiseau, France

- ¹³ LPNHE, Sorbonne Université, Paris Diderot Sorbonne Paris Cité, CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France
- ¹⁴ I. Physikalisches Institut, RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany
- ¹⁵ Fakultät Physik, Technische Universität Dortmund, Dortmund, Germany
- ¹⁶ Max-Planck-Institut für Kernphysik (MPIK), Heidelberg, Germany
- ¹⁷ Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
- ¹⁸ School of Physics, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland
- ¹⁹ INFN Sezione di Bari, Bari, Italy
- ²⁰ INFN Sezione di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
- ²¹ INFN Sezione di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy
- ²² INFN Sezione di Firenze, Firenze, Italy
- ²³ INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy
- ²⁴ INFN Sezione di Genova, Genova, Italy
- ²⁵ INFN Sezione di Milano, Milano, Italy
- ²⁶ INFN Sezione di Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy
- ²⁷ INFN Sezione di Cagliari, Monserrato, Italy
- ²⁸ Università degli Studi di Padova, Università e INFN, Padova, Padova, Italy
- ²⁹ INFN Sezione di Pisa, Pisa, Italy
- ³⁰ INFN Sezione di Roma La Sapienza, Roma, Italy
- ³¹ INFN Sezione di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy
- ³² Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- ³³ Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics and VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- ³⁴ AGH - University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Physics and Applied Computer Science, Kraków, Poland
- ³⁵ Henryk Niewodniczanski Institute of Nuclear Physics Polish Academy of Sciences, Kraków, Poland
- ³⁶ National Center for Nuclear Research (NCBJ), Warsaw, Poland
- ³⁷ Horia Hulubei National Institute of Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest-Magurele, Romania
- ³⁸ Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute NRC Kurchatov Institute (PNPI NRC KI), Gatchina, Russia
- ³⁹ Institute for Nuclear Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences (INR RAS), Moscow, Russia
- ⁴⁰ Institute of Nuclear Physics, Moscow State University (SINP MSU), Moscow, Russia
- ⁴¹ Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics NRC Kurchatov Institute (ITEP NRC KI), Moscow, Russia
- ⁴² Yandex School of Data Analysis, Moscow, Russia
- ⁴³ Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics (SB RAS), Novosibirsk, Russia
- ⁴⁴ Institute for High Energy Physics NRC Kurchatov Institute (IHEP NRC KI), Protvino, Russia, Protvino, Russia
- ⁴⁵ DS4DS, La Salle, Universitat Ramon Llull, Barcelona, Spain
- ⁴⁶ ICCUB, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
- ⁴⁷ Instituto Galego de Física de Altas Enerxías (IGFAE), Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- ⁴⁸ Instituto de Física Corpuscular, Centro Mixto Universidad de Valencia - CSIC, Valencia, Spain
- ⁴⁹ European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Geneva, Switzerland
- ⁵⁰ Institute of Physics, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Lausanne, Switzerland
- ⁵¹ Physik-Institut, Universität Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
- ⁵² NSC Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology (NSC KIPT), Kharkiv, Ukraine
- ⁵³ Institute for Nuclear Research of the National Academy of Sciences (KINR), Kyiv, Ukraine
- ⁵⁴ University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
- ⁵⁵ H.H. Wills Physics Laboratory, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom
- ⁵⁶ Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom
- ⁵⁷ Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom
- ⁵⁸ STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, United Kingdom
- ⁵⁹ School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

- ⁶⁰ School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom
- ⁶¹ Oliver Lodge Laboratory, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom
- ⁶² Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom
- ⁶³ Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
- ⁶⁴ Department of Physics, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
- ⁶⁵ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, United States
- ⁶⁶ University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, United States
- ⁶⁷ University of Maryland, College Park, MD, United States
- ⁶⁸ Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Los Alamos, NM, United States
- ⁶⁹ Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, United States
- ⁷⁰ School of Physics and Astronomy, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, associated to ⁵⁷
- ⁷¹ Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, associated to ²
- ⁷² Physics and Micro Electronic College, Hunan University, Changsha City, China, associated to ⁷
- ⁷³ Guangdong Provincial Key Laboratory of Nuclear Science, Guangdong-Hong Kong Joint Laboratory of Quantum Matter, Institute of Quantum Matter, South China Normal University, Guangzhou, China, associated to ³
- ⁷⁴ Lanzhou University, Lanzhou, China, associated to ⁴
- ⁷⁵ School of Physics and Technology, Wuhan University, Wuhan, China, associated to ³
- ⁷⁶ Departamento de Física, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogota, Colombia, associated to ¹³
- ⁷⁷ Universität Bonn - Helmholtz-Institut für Strahlen und Kernphysik, Bonn, Germany, associated to ¹⁷
- ⁷⁸ Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary, associated to ⁴⁹
- ⁷⁹ INFN Sezione di Perugia, Perugia, Italy, associated to ²¹
- ⁸⁰ Van Swinderen Institute, University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands, associated to ³²
- ⁸¹ Universiteit Maastricht, Maastricht, Netherlands, associated to ³²
- ⁸² Faculty of Material Engineering and Physics, Cracow, Poland, associated to ³⁵
- ⁸³ National Research Centre Kurchatov Institute, Moscow, Russia, associated to ⁴¹
- ⁸⁴ National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia, associated to ⁴²
- ⁸⁵ National University of Science and Technology “MISIS”, Moscow, Russia, associated to ⁴¹
- ⁸⁶ National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, Tomsk, Russia, associated to ⁴¹
- ⁸⁷ Department of Physics and Astronomy, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden, associated to ⁶⁰
- ⁸⁸ University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, United States, associated to ⁶⁹

^a Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, Brazil

^b Central South U., Changsha, China

^c Hangzhou Institute for Advanced Study, UCAS, Hangzhou, China

^d Excellence Cluster ORIGINS, Munich, Germany

^e Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

^f Università di Bari, Bari, Italy

^g Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy

^h Università di Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy

ⁱ Università di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italy

^j Università di Firenze, Firenze, Italy

^k Università di Genova, Genova, Italy

^l Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy

^m Università di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy

ⁿ Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, Modena, Italy

^o Università di Padova, Padova, Italy

^p Dipartimento di Fisica e Geologia, Perugia, Italy

^q Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, Italy

^r Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy

^s Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy

^t Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy

^u Università di Urbino, Urbino, Italy

^v *MSU - Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT), Iligan, Philippines*

^w *Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia*

^x *Universidad de Alcalá, Alcalá de Henares, Spain*

[†] *Deceased*