

Observation of $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ and evidence for $B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$ below η_c threshold

B. Aubert,¹ M. Bona,¹ D. Boutigny,¹ F. Couderc,¹ Y. Karyotakis,¹ J. P. Lees,¹ V. Poireau,¹ V. Tisserand,¹ A. Zghiche,¹ E. Grauges,² A. Palano,³ J. C. Chen,⁴ N. D. Qi,⁴ G. Rong,⁴ P. Wang,⁴ Y. S. Zhu,⁴ G. Eigen,⁵ I. Ofte,⁵ B. Stugu,⁵ G. S. Abrams,⁶ M. Battaglia,⁶ D. N. Brown,⁶ J. Button-Shafer,⁶ R. N. Cahn,⁶ E. Charles,⁶ M. S. Gill,⁶ Y. Groyzman,⁶ R. G. Jacobsen,⁶ J. A. Kadyk,⁶ L. T. Kerth,⁶ Yu. G. Kolomensky,⁶ G. Kukartsev,⁶ G. Lynch,⁶ L. M. Mir,⁶ T. J. Orimoto,⁶ M. Pripstein,⁶ N. A. Roe,⁶ M. T. Ronan,⁶ W. A. Wenzel,⁶ P. del Amo Sanchez,⁷ M. Barrett,⁷ K. E. Ford,⁷ A. J. Hart,⁷ T. J. Harrison,⁷ C. M. Hawkes,⁷ A. T. Watson,⁷ T. Held,⁸ H. Koch,⁸ B. Lewandowski,⁸ M. Pelizaeus,⁸ K. Peters,⁸ T. Schroeder,⁸ M. Steinke,⁸ J. T. Boyd,⁹ J. P. Burke,⁹ W. N. Cottingham,⁹ D. Walker,⁹ D. J. Asgeirsson,¹⁰ T. Cuhadar-Donszelmann,¹⁰ B. G. Fulsom,¹⁰ C. Hearty,¹⁰ N. S. Knecht,¹⁰ T. S. Mattison,¹⁰ J. A. McKenna,¹⁰ A. Khan,¹¹ P. Kyberd,¹¹ M. Saleem,¹¹ D. J. Sherwood,¹¹ L. Teodorescu,¹¹ V. E. Blinov,¹² A. D. Bukin,¹² V. P. Druzhinin,¹² V. B. Golubev,¹² A. P. Onuchin,¹² S. I. Serebnyakov,¹² Yu. I. Skovpen,¹² E. P. Solodov,¹² K. Yu Todyshev,¹² M. Bondioli,¹³ M. Bruinsma,¹³ M. Chao,¹³ S. Curry,¹³ I. Eschrich,¹³ D. Kirkby,¹³ A. J. Lankford,¹³ P. Lund,¹³ M. Mandelkern,¹³ R. K. Mommsen,¹³ W. Roethel,¹³ D. P. Stoker,¹³ S. Abachi,¹⁴ C. Buchanan,¹⁴ S. D. Foulkes,¹⁵ J. W. Gary,¹⁵ O. Long,¹⁵ B. C. Shen,¹⁵ K. Wang,¹⁵ L. Zhang,¹⁵ H. K. Hadavand,¹⁶ E. J. Hill,¹⁶ H. P. Paar,¹⁶ S. Rahatlou,¹⁶ V. Sharma,¹⁶ J. W. Berryhill,¹⁷ C. Campagnari,¹⁷ A. Cunha,¹⁷ B. Dahmes,¹⁷ T. M. Hong,¹⁷ D. Kovalskyi,¹⁷ J. D. Richman,¹⁷ T. W. Beck,¹⁸ A. M. Eisner,¹⁸ C. J. Flacco,¹⁸ C. A. Heusch,¹⁸ J. Kroseberg,¹⁸ W. S. Lockman,¹⁸ G. Nesom,¹⁸ T. Schalk,¹⁸ B. A. Schumm,¹⁸ A. Seiden,¹⁸ P. Spradlin,¹⁸ D. C. Williams,¹⁸ M. G. Wilson,¹⁸ J. Albert,¹⁹ E. Chen,¹⁹ A. Dvoretzkii,¹⁹ F. Fang,¹⁹ D. G. Hitlin,¹⁹ I. Narsky,¹⁹ T. Piatenko,¹⁹ F. C. Porter,¹⁹ A. Ryd,¹⁹ G. Mancinelli,²⁰ B. T. Meadows,²⁰ K. Mishra,²⁰ M. D. Sokoloff,²⁰ F. Blanc,²¹ P. C. Bloom,²¹ S. Chen,²¹ W. T. Ford,²¹ J. F. Hirschauer,²¹ A. Kreisel,²¹ M. Nagel,²¹ U. Nauenberg,²¹ A. Olivas,²¹ W. O. Ruddick,²¹ J. G. Smith,²¹ K. A. Ulmer,²¹ S. R. Wagner,²¹ J. Zhang,²¹ A. Chen,²² E. A. Eckhart,²² A. Soffer,²² W. H. Toki,²² R. J. Wilson,²² F. Winklmeier,²² Q. Zeng,²² D. D. Altenburg,²³ E. Feltresi,²³ A. Hauke,²³ H. Jasper,²³ J. Merkel,²³ A. Petzold,²³ B. Spaan,²³ T. Brandt,²⁴ V. Klose,²⁴ H. M. Lacker,²⁴ W. F. Mader,²⁴ R. Nogowski,²⁴ J. Schubert,²⁴ K. R. Schubert,²⁴ R. Schwierz,²⁴ J. E. Sundermann,²⁴ A. Volk,²⁴ D. Bernard,²⁵ G. R. Bonneaud,²⁵ E. Latour,²⁵ Ch. Thiebaux,²⁵ M. Verderi,²⁵ P. J. Clark,²⁶ W. Gradl,²⁶ F. Muheim,²⁶ S. Playfer,²⁶ A. I. Robertson,²⁶ Y. Xie,²⁶ M. Andreotti,²⁷ D. Bettoni,²⁷ C. Bozzi,²⁷ R. Calabrese,²⁷ G. Cibinetto,²⁷ E. Luppi,²⁷ M. Negrini,²⁷ A. Petrella,²⁷ L. Piemontese,²⁷ E. Prencipe,²⁷ F. Anulli,²⁸ R. Baldini-Ferrolli,²⁸ A. Calcaterra,²⁸ R. de Sangro,²⁸ G. Finocchiaro,²⁸ S. Pacetti,²⁸ P. Patteri,²⁸ I. M. Peruzzi,²⁸ * M. Piccolo,²⁸ M. Rama,²⁸ A. Zallo,²⁸ A. Buzzo,²⁹ R. Contri,²⁹ M. Lo Vetere,²⁹ M. M. Macri,²⁹ M. R. Monge,²⁹ S. Passaggio,²⁹ C. Patrignani,²⁹ E. Robutti,²⁹ A. Santroni,²⁹ S. Tosi,²⁹ G. Brandenburg,³⁰ K. S. Chaisanguanthum,³⁰ M. Morii,³⁰ J. Wu,³⁰ R. S. Dubitzky,³¹ J. Marks,³¹ S. Schenk,³¹ U. Uwer,³¹ W. Bhimji,³² D. A. Bowerman,³² P. D. Dauncey,³² U. Egede,³² R. L. Flack,³² J. A. Nash,³² M. B. Nikolich,³² W. Panduro Vazquez,³² D. J. Bard,³³ P. K. Behera,³³ X. Chai,³³ M. J. Charles,³³ U. Mallik,³³ N. T. Meyer,³³ V. Ziegler,³³ J. Cochran,³⁴ H. B. Crawley,³⁴ L. Dong,³⁴ V. Eyges,³⁴ W. T. Meyer,³⁴ S. Prell,³⁴ E. I. Rosenberg,³⁴ A. E. Rubin,³⁴ A. V. Gritsan,³⁵ A. G. Denig,³⁶ M. Fritsch,³⁶ G. Schott,³⁶ N. Arnaud,³⁷ M. Davier,³⁷ G. Grosdidier,³⁷ A. Höcker,³⁷ F. Le Diberder,³⁷ V. Lepeltier,³⁷ A. M. Lutz,³⁷ A. Oyanguren,³⁷ S. Pruvot,³⁷ S. Rodier,³⁷ P. Roudeau,³⁷ M. H. Schune,³⁷ A. Stocchi,³⁷ W. F. Wang,³⁷ G. Wormser,³⁷ C. H. Cheng,³⁸ D. J. Lange,³⁸ D. M. Wright,³⁸ C. A. Chavez,³⁹ I. J. Forster,³⁹ J. R. Fry,³⁹ E. Gabathuler,³⁹ R. Gamet,³⁹ K. A. George,³⁹ D. E. Hutchcroft,³⁹ D. J. Payne,³⁹ K. C. Schofield,³⁹ C. Touramanis,³⁹ A. J. Bevan,⁴⁰ F. Di Lodovico,⁴⁰ W. Menges,⁴⁰ R. Sacco,⁴⁰ G. Cowan,⁴¹ H. U. Flaecher,⁴¹ D. A. Hopkins,⁴¹ P. S. Jackson,⁴¹ T. R. McMahan,⁴¹ S. Ricciardi,⁴¹ F. Salvatore,⁴¹ A. C. Wren,⁴¹ D. N. Brown,⁴² C. L. Davis,⁴² J. Allison,⁴³ N. R. Barlow,⁴³ R. J. Barlow,⁴³ Y. M. Chia,⁴³ C. L. Edgar,⁴³ G. D. Lafferty,⁴³ M. T. Naisbit,⁴³ J. C. Williams,⁴³ J. I. Yi,⁴³ C. Chen,⁴⁴ W. D. Hulsbergen,⁴⁴ A. Jawahery,⁴⁴ C. K. Lae,⁴⁴ D. A. Roberts,⁴⁴ G. Simi,⁴⁴ G. Blaylock,⁴⁵ C. Dallapiccola,⁴⁵ S. S. Hertzbach,⁴⁵ X. Li,⁴⁵ T. B. Moore,⁴⁵ S. Saremi,⁴⁵ H. Staengle,⁴⁵ R. Cowan,⁴⁶ G. Sciolla,⁴⁶ S. J. Sekula,⁴⁶ M. Spitznagel,⁴⁶ F. Taylor,⁴⁶ R. K. Yamamoto,⁴⁶ H. Kim,⁴⁷ S. E. Mclachlin,⁴⁷ P. M. Patel,⁴⁷ S. H. Robertson,⁴⁷ A. Lazzaro,⁴⁸ V. Lombardo,⁴⁸ F. Palombo,⁴⁸ J. M. Bauer,⁴⁹ L. Cremaldi,⁴⁹ V. Eschenburg,⁴⁹ R. Godang,⁴⁹ R. Kroeger,⁴⁹ D. A. Sanders,⁴⁹ D. J. Summers,⁴⁹ H. W. Zhao,⁴⁹ S. Brunet,⁵⁰ D. Côté,⁵⁰ M. Simard,⁵⁰ P. Taras,⁵⁰ F. B. Viaud,⁵⁰ H. Nicholson,⁵¹ N. Cavallo,⁵² † G. De Nardo,⁵² F. Fabozzi,⁵² † C. Gatto,⁵² L. Lista,⁵² D. Monorchio,⁵² P. Paolucci,⁵² D. Piccolo,⁵² C. Sciacca,⁵² M. A. Baak,⁵³ G. Raven,⁵³ H. L. Snoek,⁵³ C. P. Jessop,⁵⁴

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J. M. LoSecco,⁵⁴ T. Allmendinger,⁵⁵ G. Benelli,⁵⁵ L. A. Corwin,⁵⁵ K. K. Gan,⁵⁵ K. Honscheid,⁵⁵ D. Hufnagel,⁵⁵ P. D. Jackson,⁵⁵ H. Kagan,⁵⁵ R. Kass,⁵⁵ A. M. Rahimi,⁵⁵ J. J. Regensburger,⁵⁵ R. Ter-Antonyan,⁵⁵ Q. K. Wong,⁵⁵ N. L. Blount,⁵⁶ J. Brau,⁵⁶ R. Frey,⁵⁶ O. Igonkina,⁵⁶ J. A. Kolb,⁵⁶ M. Lu,⁵⁶ R. Rahmat,⁵⁶ N. B. Sinev,⁵⁶ D. Strom,⁵⁶ J. Strube,⁵⁶ E. Torrence,⁵⁶ A. Gaz,⁵⁷ M. Margoni,⁵⁷ M. Morandin,⁵⁷ A. Pompili,⁵⁷ M. Posocco,⁵⁷ M. Rotondo,⁵⁷ F. Simonetto,⁵⁷ R. Stroili,⁵⁷ C. Voci,⁵⁷ M. Benayoun,⁵⁸ H. Briand,⁵⁸ J. Chauveau,⁵⁸ P. David,⁵⁸ L. Del Buono,⁵⁸ Ch. de la Vaissière,⁵⁸ O. Hamon,⁵⁸ B. L. Hartfiel,⁵⁸ Ph. Leruste,⁵⁸ J. Malclès,⁵⁸ J. Ocariz,⁵⁸ L. Roos,⁵⁸ G. Therin,⁵⁸ L. Gladney,⁵⁹ M. Biasini,⁶⁰ R. Covarelli,⁶⁰ C. Angelini,⁶¹ G. Batignani,⁶¹ S. Bettarini,⁶¹ F. Bucci,⁶¹ G. Calderini,⁶¹ M. Carpinelli,⁶¹ R. Cenci,⁶¹ F. Forti,⁶¹ M. A. Giorgi,⁶¹ A. Lusiani,⁶¹ G. Marchiori,⁶¹ M. A. Mazur,⁶¹ M. Morganti,⁶¹ N. Neri,⁶¹ E. Paoloni,⁶¹ G. Rizzo,⁶¹ J. J. Walsh,⁶¹ M. Haire,⁶² D. Judd,⁶² D. E. Wagoner,⁶² J. Biesiada,⁶³ N. Danielson,⁶³ P. Elmer,⁶³ Y. P. Lau,⁶³ C. Lu,⁶³ J. Olsen,⁶³ A. J. S. Smith,⁶³ A. V. Telnov,⁶³ F. Bellini,⁶⁴ G. Cavoto,⁶⁴ A. D’Orazio,⁶⁴ D. del Re,⁶⁴ E. Di Marco,⁶⁴ R. Faccini,⁶⁴ F. Ferrarotto,⁶⁴ F. Ferroni,⁶⁴ M. Gaspero,⁶⁴ L. Li Gioi,⁶⁴ M. A. Mazzoni,⁶⁴ S. Morganti,⁶⁴ G. Piredda,⁶⁴ F. Polci,⁶⁴ F. Safai Tehrani,⁶⁴ C. Voena,⁶⁴ M. Ebert,⁶⁵ H. Schröder,⁶⁵ R. Waldi,⁶⁵ T. Adye,⁶⁶ N. De Groot,⁶⁶ B. Franek,⁶⁶ E. O. Olaiya,⁶⁶ F. F. Wilson,⁶⁶ R. Aleksan,⁶⁷ S. Emery,⁶⁷ A. Gaidot,⁶⁷ S. F. Ganzhur,⁶⁷ G. Hamel de Monchenault,⁶⁷ W. Kozanecki,⁶⁷ M. Legendre,⁶⁷ G. Vasseur,⁶⁷ Ch. Yèche,⁶⁷ M. Zito,⁶⁷ X. R. Chen,⁶⁸ H. Liu,⁶⁸ W. Park,⁶⁸ M. V. Purohit,⁶⁸ J. R. Wilson,⁶⁸ M. T. Allen,⁶⁹ D. Aston,⁶⁹ R. Bartoldus,⁶⁹ P. Bechtle,⁶⁹ N. Berger,⁶⁹ R. Claus,⁶⁹ J. P. Coleman,⁶⁹ M. R. Convery,⁶⁹ M. Cristinziani,⁶⁹ J. C. Dingfelder,⁶⁹ J. Dorfan,⁶⁹ G. P. Dubois-Felsmann,⁶⁹ D. Dujmic,⁶⁹ W. Dunwoodie,⁶⁹ R. C. Field,⁶⁹ T. Glanzman,⁶⁹ S. J. Gowdy,⁶⁹ M. T. Graham,⁶⁹ P. Grenier,⁶⁹ V. Halyo,⁶⁹ C. Hast,⁶⁹ T. Hryn’ova,⁶⁹ W. R. Innes,⁶⁹ M. H. Kelsey,⁶⁹ P. Kim,⁶⁹ D. W. G. S. Leith,⁶⁹ S. Li,⁶⁹ S. Luitz,⁶⁹ V. Luth,⁶⁹ H. L. Lynch,⁶⁹ D. B. MacFarlane,⁶⁹ H. Marsiske,⁶⁹ R. Messner,⁶⁹ D. R. Muller,⁶⁹ C. P. O’Grady,⁶⁹ V. E. Ozcan,⁶⁹ A. Perazzo,⁶⁹ M. Perl,⁶⁹ T. Pulliam,⁶⁹ B. N. Ratcliff,⁶⁹ A. Roodman,⁶⁹ A. A. Salnikov,⁶⁹ R. H. Schindler,⁶⁹ J. Schwiening,⁶⁹ A. Snyder,⁶⁹ J. Stelzer,⁶⁹ D. Su,⁶⁹ M. K. Sullivan,⁶⁹ K. Suzuki,⁶⁹ S. K. Swain,⁶⁹ J. M. Thompson,⁶⁹ J. Va’vra,⁶⁹ N. van Bakel,⁶⁹ M. Weaver,⁶⁹ A. J. R. Weinstein,⁶⁹ W. J. Wisniewski,⁶⁹ M. Wittgen,⁶⁹ D. H. Wright,⁶⁹ A. K. Yarritu,⁶⁹ K. Yi,⁶⁹ C. C. Young,⁶⁹ P. R. Burchat,⁷⁰ A. J. Edwards,⁷⁰ S. A. Majewski,⁷⁰ B. A. Petersen,⁷⁰ C. Roat,⁷⁰ L. Wilden,⁷⁰ S. Ahmed,⁷¹ M. S. Alam,⁷¹ R. Bula,⁷¹ J. A. Ernst,⁷¹ V. Jain,⁷¹ B. Pan,⁷¹ M. A. Saeed,⁷¹ F. R. Wappler,⁷¹ S. B. Zain,⁷¹ W. Bugg,⁷² M. Krishnamurthy,⁷² S. M. Spanier,⁷² R. Eckmann,⁷³ J. L. Ritchie,⁷³ A. Satpathy,⁷³ C. J. Schilling,⁷³ R. F. Schwitters,⁷³ J. M. Izen,⁷⁴ X. C. Lou,⁷⁴ S. Ye,⁷⁴ F. Bianchi,⁷⁵ F. Gallo,⁷⁵ D. Gamba,⁷⁵ M. Bomben,⁷⁶ L. Bosisio,⁷⁶ C. Cartaro,⁷⁶ F. Cossutti,⁷⁶ G. Della Ricca,⁷⁶ S. Dittongo,⁷⁶ L. Lancieri,⁷⁶ L. Vitale,⁷⁶ V. Azzolini,⁷⁷ N. Lopez-March,⁷⁷ F. Martinez-Vidal,⁷⁷ Sw. Banerjee,⁷⁸ B. Bhuyan,⁷⁸ C. M. Brown,⁷⁸ D. Fortin,⁷⁸ K. Hamano,⁷⁸ R. Kowalewski,⁷⁸ I. M. Nugent,⁷⁸ J. M. Roney,⁷⁸ R. J. Sobie,⁷⁸ J. J. Back,⁷⁹ P. F. Harrison,⁷⁹ T. E. Latham,⁷⁹ G. B. Mohanty,⁷⁹ M. Pappagallo,⁷⁹ H. R. Band,⁸⁰ X. Chen,⁸⁰ B. Cheng,⁸⁰ S. Dasu,⁸⁰ M. Datta,⁸⁰ K. T. Flood,⁸⁰ J. J. Hollar,⁸⁰ P. E. Kutter,⁸⁰ B. Mellado,⁸⁰ A. Mihalyi,⁸⁰ Y. Pan,⁸⁰ M. Pierini,⁸⁰ R. Prepost,⁸⁰ S. L. Wu,⁸⁰ Z. Yu,⁸⁰ and H. Neal⁸¹

(The BABAR Collaboration)

¹Laboratoire de Physique des Particules, IN2P3/CNRS et Université de Savoie, F-74941 Annecy-Le-Vieux, France

²Universitat de Barcelona, Facultat de Física, Departament ECM, E-08028 Barcelona, Spain

³Università di Bari, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-70126 Bari, Italy

⁴Institute of High Energy Physics, Beijing 100039, China

⁵University of Bergen, Institute of Physics, N-5007 Bergen, Norway

⁶Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, USA

⁷University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom

⁸Ruhr Universität Bochum, Institut für Experimentalphysik 1, D-44780 Bochum, Germany

⁹University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1TL, United Kingdom

¹⁰University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6T 1Z1

¹¹Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH, United Kingdom

¹²Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk 630090, Russia

¹³University of California at Irvine, Irvine, California 92697, USA

¹⁴University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California 90024, USA

¹⁵University of California at Riverside, Riverside, California 92521, USA

¹⁶University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, California 92093, USA

¹⁷University of California at Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California 93106, USA

¹⁸University of California at Santa Cruz, Institute for Particle Physics, Santa Cruz, California 95064, USA

¹⁹California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California 91125, USA

²⁰University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221, USA

²¹University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, USA

- ²² Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado 80523, USA
- ²³ Universität Dortmund, Institut für Physik, D-44221 Dortmund, Germany
- ²⁴ Technische Universität Dresden, Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, D-01062 Dresden, Germany
- ²⁵ Laboratoire Leprince-Ringuet, CNRS/IN2P3, Ecole Polytechnique, F-91128 Palaiseau, France
- ²⁶ University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH9 3JZ, United Kingdom
- ²⁷ Università di Ferrara, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-44100 Ferrara, Italy
- ²⁸ Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati dell'INFN, I-00044 Frascati, Italy
- ²⁹ Università di Genova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-16146 Genova, Italy
- ³⁰ Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, USA
- ³¹ Universität Heidelberg, Physikalisches Institut, Philosophenweg 12, D-69120 Heidelberg, Germany
- ³² Imperial College London, London, SW7 2AZ, United Kingdom
- ³³ University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, USA
- ³⁴ Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-3160, USA
- ³⁵ Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland 21218, USA
- ³⁶ Universität Karlsruhe, Institut für Experimentelle Kernphysik, D-76021 Karlsruhe, Germany
- ³⁷ Laboratoire de l'Accélérateur Linéaire, IN2P3/CNRS et Université Paris-Sud 11, Centre Scientifique d'Orsay, B.P. 34, F-91898 ORSAY Cedex, France
- ³⁸ Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California 94550, USA
- ³⁹ University of Liverpool, Liverpool L69 7ZE, United Kingdom
- ⁴⁰ Queen Mary, University of London, E1 4NS, United Kingdom
- ⁴¹ University of London, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, United Kingdom
- ⁴² University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky 40292, USA
- ⁴³ University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, United Kingdom
- ⁴⁴ University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742, USA
- ⁴⁵ University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003, USA
- ⁴⁶ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Laboratory for Nuclear Science, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139, USA
- ⁴⁷ McGill University, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3A 2T8
- ⁴⁸ Università di Milano, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-20133 Milano, Italy
- ⁴⁹ University of Mississippi, University, Mississippi 38677, USA
- ⁵⁰ Université de Montréal, Physique des Particules, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3C 3J7
- ⁵¹ Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075, USA
- ⁵² Università di Napoli Federico II, Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche and INFN, I-80126, Napoli, Italy
- ⁵³ NIKHEF, National Institute for Nuclear Physics and High Energy Physics, NL-1009 DB Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- ⁵⁴ University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556, USA
- ⁵⁵ Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210, USA
- ⁵⁶ University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403, USA
- ⁵⁷ Università di Padova, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-35131 Padova, Italy
- ⁵⁸ Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, IN2P3/CNRS, Université Pierre et Marie Curie-Paris6, Université Denis Diderot-Paris7, F-75252 Paris, France
- ⁵⁹ University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104, USA
- ⁶⁰ Università di Perugia, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-06100 Perugia, Italy
- ⁶¹ Università di Pisa, Dipartimento di Fisica, Scuola Normale Superiore and INFN, I-56127 Pisa, Italy
- ⁶² Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas 77446, USA
- ⁶³ Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08544, USA
- ⁶⁴ Università di Roma La Sapienza, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-00185 Roma, Italy
- ⁶⁵ Universität Rostock, D-18051 Rostock, Germany
- ⁶⁶ Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 0QX, United Kingdom
- ⁶⁷ DSM/Dapnia, CEA/Saclay, F-91191 Gif-sur-Yvette, France
- ⁶⁸ University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina 29208, USA
- ⁶⁹ Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, Stanford, California 94309, USA
- ⁷⁰ Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305-4060, USA
- ⁷¹ State University of New York, Albany, New York 12222, USA
- ⁷² University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996, USA
- ⁷³ University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, USA
- ⁷⁴ University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas 75083, USA
- ⁷⁵ Università di Torino, Dipartimento di Fisica Sperimentale and INFN, I-10125 Torino, Italy
- ⁷⁶ Università di Trieste, Dipartimento di Fisica and INFN, I-34127 Trieste, Italy
- ⁷⁷ IFIC, Universitat de Valencia-CSIC, E-46071 Valencia, Spain
- ⁷⁸ University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 3P6
- ⁷⁹ Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, United Kingdom
- ⁸⁰ University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA
- ⁸¹ Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut 06511, USA

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We report measurements of the decays $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ and $B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$ using a sample of 231 million $B\bar{B}$ pairs collected with the BABAR detector at the PEP-II asymmetric-energy B Factory at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. The branching fractions are measured to be $\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+) = (7.5 \pm 1.0 \text{ (stat)} \pm 0.7 \text{ (syst)}) \times 10^{-6}$ and $\mathcal{B}(B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0) = (4.1_{-1.4}^{+1.7} \text{ (stat)} \pm 0.4 \text{ (syst)}) \times 10^{-6}$ for a $\phi\phi$ invariant mass below 2.85 GeV/ c^2 .

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We report an observation of the decay $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ and evidence for $B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$ along with their corresponding branching fractions. The decay modes studied involve a flavor-changing neutral current $b \rightarrow s\bar{s}s$ transition. These charmless transitions can interfere with the $b \rightarrow c\bar{c}s$ process $B \rightarrow \eta_c K$, $\eta_c \rightarrow \phi\phi$ and lead to direct CP violation [1]; the CP asymmetry expected in the Standard Model (SM) is zero, so a non-zero CP asymmetry would be a sign of new physics. In the SM the partial decay widths for these decays are expected to be equal due to the suppression of $\Delta I = 1$ transitions in the electroweak Hamiltonian [2]. Additional interest in these final states arises from the possibility of glueball production with subsequent decays to $\phi\phi$ [3].

We study the charmless decays $B \rightarrow \phi\phi K$ by working below the charm production threshold ($m_{\phi\phi} < 2.85$ GeV/ c^2) to avoid the region dominated by the η_c resonance. Theoretical estimates of these branching fractions are in the range $(1.3 - 4.2) \times 10^{-6}$ [4, 5] within the above kinematic region. The Belle Collaboration has previously reported evidence for the decay $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ with a branching fraction of $2.6_{-0.9}^{+1.1} \text{ (stat)} \pm 0.3 \text{ (syst)} \times 10^{-6}$ for $m_{\phi\phi} < 2.85$ GeV/ c^2 [6]; no measurement of the branching fraction for $B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$ has previously been reported. Throughout this paper, for any given mode, the corresponding charge-conjugate mode is also implied.

The data used in this analysis were collected with the BABAR detector [7] at the PEP-II asymmetric e^+e^- storage ring. These data represent an integrated luminosity of 209.1 fb $^{-1}$ collected at a center-of-mass (CM) energy $\sqrt{s} = 10.58$ GeV, near the peak of the $\Upsilon(4S)$ resonance, plus 21.6 fb $^{-1}$ collected at a CM energy approximately 40 MeV below the $\Upsilon(4S)$. These are referred to as the on-resonance and off-resonance data samples, respectively.

Charged particles from the e^+e^- interactions are detected and their momenta measured by a five-layer, double-sided silicon vertex tracker (SVT) and a 40-layer drift chamber (DCH) with a helium-based gas mixture, placed in a 1.5-T uniform magnetic field produced by a superconducting magnet. The charged particles are identified using likelihood ratios calculated from the ionization energy loss (dE/dx) measurements in the SVT and DCH, and from the observed pattern of Cherenkov light in an internally reflecting ring-imaging detector. A K/π separation of better than four standard deviations (σ) is achieved for momenta below 3 GeV/ c , smoothly decreasing to 2.5 σ at the highest momenta present in the B -decay final states. Photons and electrons are identified

as isolated electromagnetic showers in a CsI(Tl) electromagnetic calorimeter. The detector response is simulated with the GEANT4 [8] program.

The B -meson daughter candidates are reconstructed through their decays $\phi \rightarrow K^+K^-$ and $K_s^0 \rightarrow \pi^+\pi^-$. For $\phi \rightarrow K^+K^-$, we require one charged track to be consistent with the kaon hypothesis, the other to be inconsistent with the pion hypothesis, and the invariant mass to satisfy $1000 < m_{K^+K^-} < 1050$ MeV/ c^2 . The variable $m_{K^+K^-}$ will be later used in the fit. The K_s^0 candidates are formed from pairs of oppositely charged tracks consistent with the pion hypothesis, with a vertex χ^2 probability greater than 0.001 and a reconstructed decay length greater than 2 mm. We require the invariant mass of the two pions to satisfy $486 < m_{\pi^+\pi^-} < 510$ MeV/ c^2 .

We reconstruct a B -meson candidate by combining a K^+ or K_s^0 with two ϕ candidates. From the kinematics of the $\Upsilon(4S)$ decays, we determine the energy-substituted mass $m_{\text{ES}} = ((\sqrt{s}/2)^2 - p_B^{*2})^{1/2}$ and the energy difference $\Delta E = E_B^* - \sqrt{s}/2$, where p_B^* and E_B^* are the reconstructed 3-momentum and energy of the B meson calculated in the CM frame, respectively, and \sqrt{s} is the e^+e^- collision energy in the CM. For signal decays, the m_{ES} distribution peaks near the nominal mass of the B meson and ΔE peaks at zero. The ΔE (m_{ES}) resolution is about 20 MeV (3.0 MeV/ c^2). We require $|\Delta E| \leq 0.2$ GeV, $m_{\text{ES}} > 5.2$ GeV/ c^2 , and the invariant mass of the pair of ϕ meson candidates to be less than 2.85 GeV/ c^2 . The average number of reconstructed B candidates per event is 1.06 (1.05) for $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ ($B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$). In events with multiple candidates we arbitrarily select one candidate to avoid a potential bias in the shape of the variables used in the selection

Backgrounds arise primarily from random combinations of tracks in the continuum $e^+e^- \rightarrow q\bar{q}$ ($q = u, d, s, c$) events. Because of the jet-like topology, in contrast to the nearly isotropic distribution of final particles from the process $\Upsilon(4S) \rightarrow b\bar{b}$,

the continuum background can be significantly reduced by an appropriate choice of variables describing the event shape. Discrimination between signal and continuum events is obtained using a Fisher discriminant \mathcal{F} . The variable \mathcal{F} combines eleven event-shape variables defined in the CM frame [9]: the polar angles of the B momentum vector and the B candidate thrust axis with respect to the beam axis, and the scalar sum of the momenta of charged particles and photons (excluding particles from

TABLE I: Fitted signal yield, detection efficiency $\epsilon(\%)$ including tracking, PID efficiency and fit bias correction, daughter branching fraction product $\prod B_i$ [11], significance $S(\sigma)$, measured branching fraction \mathcal{B} with statistical and systematic uncertainties for each decay mode. These branching fractions are for $m_{\phi\phi} < 2.85 \text{ GeV}/c^2$. The first uncertainty is statistical, the second systematic.

Mode	Signal Yield	$\epsilon(\%)$	$\prod B_i (\%)$	$S(\sigma)$	$\mathcal{B}(10^{-6})$
$B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$	64 ± 9	15.3	24.2	12.9	$7.5 \pm 1.0 \pm 0.7$
$B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$	$10^{+4.1}_{-3.4}$	12.6	8.3	4.2	$4.1^{+1.7}_{-1.4} \pm 0.4$

the B candidate) in nine 10° polar-angle intervals coaxial with the B -candidate thrust axis.

We use Monte Carlo (MC) simulation for an initial estimate of the residual $B\bar{B}$ background and to identify the decays that may survive the candidate selection and have characteristics similar to the signal. We find that the contributions from the multi-kaon decays, $B^{+0} \rightarrow \phi K^+ K^- K^{+0}$ and $B^{+0} \rightarrow K^+ K^- K^+ K^- K^{+0}$, are negligible after selecting events with two ϕ meson candidates.

We obtain the signal yields from an unbinned extended maximum-likelihood fit. The variables used in the fit are ΔE , m_{ES} , the invariant masses of two ϕ meson candidates, and \mathcal{F} . The likelihood function has two categories of probability-density functions (PDF), one for signal and the other for the continuum background. For each event i and category j , the likelihood function is

$$\mathcal{L} = e^{-(\sum n_j)} \prod_{i=1}^N \left[\sum_{j=1}^2 n_j \mathcal{P}_j(\mathbf{x}_i) \right], \quad (1)$$

where N is the number of candidates, n_j is the number of events in category j , and $\mathcal{P}_j(\mathbf{x}_i)$ is the corresponding PDF, evaluated with the observables \mathbf{x}_i of the i th event. Since correlations among the observables are small, we take each \mathcal{P} as the product of the PDFs for the separate variables. Possible systematic effects arising from correlations are discussed later.

We determine the signal PDF parameters from MC simulated data. We generate signal MC assuming that the B meson decays isotropically to $\phi\phi K$, using three-body phase space. The signal PDF distributions are parametrized using a single Gaussian function for m_{ES} , a sum of two Gaussian functions with the same mean for ΔE , a sum of an asymmetric Gaussian function with a different width below and above its maximum, and a single Gaussian for \mathcal{F} , and a relativistic Breit-Wigner distribution, convolved with a Gaussian resolution function, for the ϕ candidate masses. Control samples (e.g., $B \rightarrow D(K\pi\pi)\pi$) are used to verify the resolutions obtained from signal MC. The signal PDFs are obtained using correctly reconstructed $B \rightarrow \phi\phi K$ decays from MC simulated data.

The continuum background PDFs are determined using m_{ES} and ΔE sideband data ($5.20 < m_{\text{ES}} < 5.26$

GeV/c^2 , $0.1 < |\Delta E| < 0.2 \text{ GeV}$). We use a first-order polynomial for ΔE , an empirical phase-space function [10] for m_{ES} , and an asymmetric Gaussian function for \mathcal{F} . Since the background includes both resonant and non-resonant K^+K^- combinations, the ϕ -candidate mass distributions are parametrized as the sum of the ϕ line-shape (as described above) and a first-order polynomial. The parameters allowed to vary in the fit are the signal and background yields and all the continuum-background PDF parameters except the ϕ mass and width. The signal yield from a fit performed on off-resonance data was consistent with zero, as expected.

Before applying the fitting procedure to the data we evaluate the possible signal-yield bias from neglecting small residual correlations between discriminating variables in the signal PDFs. The bias is determined from ensembles of mock experiments obtained from samples of signal MC events combined with $q\bar{q}$ background events generated from the PDFs. We find a bias of 7% (10%) for $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ ($B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$). We correct the signal-detection efficiency for this fit bias.

We compute the branching fractions from the fitted signal-event yields, detection efficiencies, daughter branching fractions, and the number of produced B -meson pairs. In Table I, we show the fitted signal yield, the detection efficiencies, the products of daughter branching fractions for each decay mode, the significances $S(\sigma)$, and the measured branching fractions. We assume equal decay rates of the $\Upsilon(4S)$ to B^+B^- and $B^0\bar{B}^0$. The statistical uncertainties in the signal yields are taken as the change in the central value when the quantity $-2 \ln \mathcal{L}$ increases by one unit from its minimum value. The significance is taken as the square root of the difference between the value of $-2 \ln \mathcal{L}$ (with systematic uncertainties included) for zero signal and its the value at its minimum.

In Fig. 1 (a, b), we show the m_{ES} projection distributions of $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ and $B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$ events with a requirement $|\Delta E| < 0.05 \text{ GeV}$. The corresponding ΔE projections for $m_{\text{ES}} > 5.27 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ are shown in Fig. 1 (c, d). The PDF model represents the data well, and a significant signal is seen in $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$. At the present level of statistics, we do not observe any evidence for resonant structure in the $\phi\phi K$ Dalitz plot. This is consistent with our use of three-body phase space in the signal

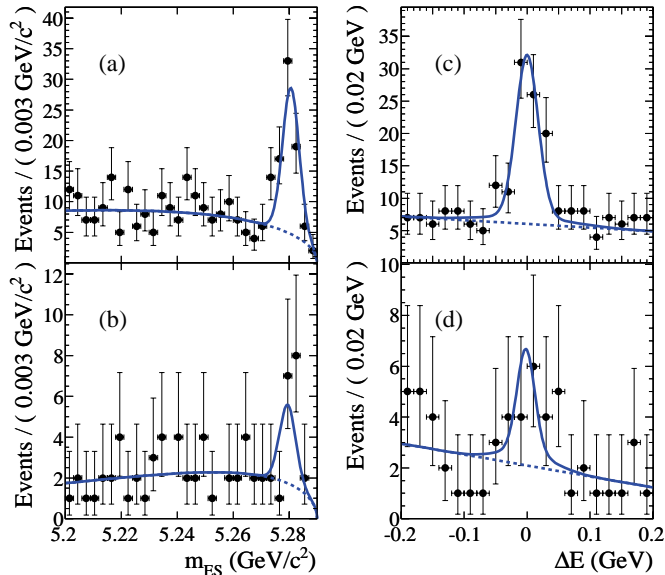


FIG. 1: The projected m_{ES} distributions of events with $|\Delta E| < 0.05$ GeV for (a) $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ and (b) $B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$, and the projected ΔE distributions of events with $m_{ES} > 5.27$ GeV/c² for (c) $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ and (d) $B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$. Points with error bars represent the data, solid lines the total PDF, and dashed lines the background PDF.

MC. The invariant mass of two ϕ mesons from the decay $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ is shown in Fig. 2. Both the signal and background display smooth behavior with no evidence of any structure. We therefore see no evidence to support the hypothesis of glueball production.

The systematic uncertainties are dominated by our knowledge of the signal and background PDFs, fit-bias correction, signal MC modeling, and possible non-resonant background contributions. The PDF-modeling error is largely included in the statistical uncertainty since most background parameters are free in the fit. The uncertainties in the signal PDFs are estimated by varying the signal PDF parameters within their errors. We estimate the uncertainty to be 3.8% and 4.8% for charged and neutral B meson decays, respectively. The systematic uncertainty due to any discrepancy in the signal PDFs between the signal MC and the control data samples is 1.7% (1.8%) for $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ ($B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$). The uncertainty in the fit-bias correction is taken to be a half of the correction. To estimate the uncertainty due to the non-resonant background, we refit the data by including a non-resonant component in the fit. The change in the signal yield is taken as a systematic uncertainty; it is found to be 5% for the charged B meson decay and 3% for the neutral one. The uncertainty due to the use of three-body phase space when calculating the signal efficiency is 3%, as determined by the signal efficiency vari-

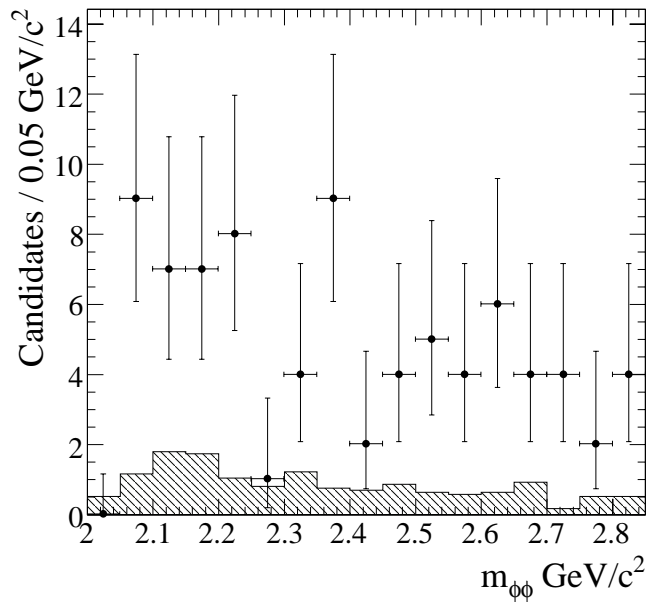


FIG. 2: The projected $m_{\phi\phi}$ distributions of events with $|\Delta E| < 0.05$ GeV and $m_{ES} > 5.27$ GeV/c² for the $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ decay mode. The points with error bars represent the data in the signal region, and the shaded histogram represents the mass distribution of expected background from the ΔE sideband.

ation across the Dalitz plot. A correction is applied to account for known data-MC differences in track-finding efficiency. The uncertainty on this correction is 0.8% per track. Systematic uncertainty due to the PID requirements are 3.5% and 2.5% for the charged and neutral B meson decays, respectively. There is a systematic uncertainty of 2.1% on the efficiency of K_S^0 reconstruction. The uncertainty on the total number of $B\bar{B}$ pairs in the data sample is 1.1%. Published data [11] provide the uncertainties in the B -daughter product branching fractions (0.2 – 1.4%).

In conclusion, in the charged decay mode, we observe a signal of 64 ± 9 (stat) events with a significance of 12.9σ , corresponding to a branching fraction of $\mathcal{B}(B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+) = (7.5 \pm 1.0$ (stat) ± 0.7 (syst)) $\times 10^{-6}$, where $m_{\phi\phi} < 2.85$ GeV/c². This result is larger than the previous measurement reported by the Belle Collaboration and is also larger than theoretical predictions. The decay $B^+ \rightarrow \phi\phi K^+$ is not dominated by a narrow glueball state with mass below 2.85 GeV/c². In the neutral mode, we observe a signal of $10.0^{+4.1}_{-3.4}$ (stat) events with a significance of 4.2σ , corresponding to a branching fraction of $\mathcal{B}(B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0) = (4.1^{+1.7}_{-1.4}$ (stat) ± 0.4 (syst)) $\times 10^{-6}$, where $m_{\phi\phi} < 2.85$ GeV/c². This is the first evidence for the process $B^0 \rightarrow \phi\phi K^0$. The decay widths of the charged and neutral modes differ by less than 2σ . The fact that the observed charmless $m_{\phi\phi}$ spectrum extends

into the region of the η_c resonance opens the possibility of looking for direct CP violation in interference between the two processes.

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* Also with Università di Perugia, Dipartimento di Fisica, Perugia, Italy

- † Also with Università della Basilicata, Potenza, Italy
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