

OBSERVATION OF CABIBBO SUPPRESSED DECAYS  $D^0 \rightarrow \pi^- \pi^+$  AND  $D^0 \rightarrow K^- K^+$  \*

G. S. Abrams, M. S. Alam, C. A. Blocker, A. M. Boyarski,  
M. Breidenbach, C. H. Broll, <sup>(a)</sup> D. L. Burke, W. C. Carithers,  
W. Chinowsky, M. W. Coles, S. Cooper, W. E. Dieterle,  
J. B. Dillon, J. Dorenbosch, J. M. Dorfan, M. W. Eaton,  
G. J. Feldman, M. E. B. Franklin, G. Gidal, G. Goldhaber,  
G. Hanson, K. G. Hayes, T. Himel, D. G. Hitlin, R. J. Hollebeek,  
W. R. Innes, J. A. Jaros, P. Jenni, A. D. Johnson, J. A. Kadyk,  
A. J. Lankford, R. R. Larsen, D. Lüke, <sup>(b)</sup> V. Lüth, R. E. Millikan,  
M. E. Nelson, C. Y. Pang, J. F. Patrick, M. L. Perl, B. Richter,  
J. J. Russell, <sup>(c)</sup> D. L. Scharre, R. H. Schindler, R. F. Schwitters, <sup>(d)</sup>  
J. L. Siegrist, J. Strait, H. Taureg, M. Tonutti, <sup>(e)</sup> G. H. Trilling,  
E. N. Vella, R. A. Vidal, I. Videau, J. M. Weiss, and H. Zaccone

Stanford Linear Accelerator Center  
Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305

and

Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory and Department of Physics  
University of California, Berkeley, California 94720

ABSTRACT

We have observed the  $D^0$  Cabibbo-suppressed decay modes  $\pi^- \pi^+$  and  $K^- K^+$  and have measured the following ratios of  $D^0$  partial decay widths:  
 $\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow \pi^- \pi^+) / \Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+) = 0.033 \pm 0.015$  and  $\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- K^+) / \Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+) = 0.113 \pm 0.030$ .

Submitted to Physical Review Letters

\* Work supported by the Department of Energy under contract numbers DE-AC03-76SF00515 and W-7405-ENG-48.

Present addresses:

- (a) Laboratoire d'Annecy de Physique, F-74019 Annecy-le-Vieux, Cedex, France.
- (b) DESY, Hamburg 52, F.R.G.
- (c) Southeastern Massachusetts University, N. Dartmouth, MA 02747.
- (d) Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138.
- (e) Phys. Inst. der Univ. Bonn, D-53 Bonn, F.R.G.

We report here the first observation of Cabibbo-suppressed decays of charmed particles.<sup>1</sup> The mechanisms for the Cabibbo-allowed and Cabibbo-suppressed decays in the standard model<sup>2</sup> are illustrated in Fig. 1. The angle  $\theta_A$  is the familiar Cabibbo angle  $\theta_C$  measured in strange particle decays while the angle  $\theta_B$  can be thought of as a new Cabibbo angle which can be measured in charmed particle decays. The ratios  $\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- K^+)/\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+)$  and  $\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow \pi^- \pi^+)/\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+)$  are proportional to  $\tan^2 \theta_A$  and  $\tan^2 \theta_B$ , respectively. Assuming<sup>3</sup>  $\theta_A = \theta_B$  and SU(3) invariance, one predicts<sup>4</sup>

$$\frac{\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- K^+)}{\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+)} = \frac{\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow \pi^- \pi^+)}{\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+)} = \tan^2 \theta_C \approx .05 . \quad (1)$$

Phase space corrections will raise the  $\pi^- \pi^+$  rate by 7% and lower the  $K^- K^+$  rate by 8%.

The data reported here were collected by the Mark II detector at SPEAR. The data sample contains 49000 detected multi-hadronic events, corresponding to an integrated luminosity of  $2.84 \text{ pb}^{-1}$ , accumulated at the center-of-mass energy  $3.771 \pm .002 \text{ GeV}$ , near the peak of the  $\psi(3770)$  resonance.<sup>5</sup>

A schematic drawing of the Mark II detector is shown in Fig. 2. Starting from the interaction region the detector consists of two layers of cylindrical scintillation counters, 16 layers of cylindrical drift chambers,<sup>6</sup> 48 time-of-flight (TOF) scintillation counters, an aluminum solenoidal coil which produces a 4.1 kG axial field, 8 lead-liquid argon shower counters, iron hadron absorbers, which in part serve as the magnetic flux return, and 2 planes of proportional tubes for muon

detection. There are also shower detectors in the endcap regions of the detector.

Signals derived from the cylindrical scintillation counters, the drift chambers, and a timing reference from the beam are processed to give event triggers. The trigger requires at least one charged track to be within the central 75% of  $4\pi$  sr covered by the detector and a second charged track within approximately 85% of  $4\pi$  sr. Vertex position, tracking quality, shower counter pulse height and time-of-flight cuts were imposed to select the sample of 3-or-more prong events used in the present analysis from beam-gas, cosmic ray, and electromagnetic backgrounds. Subsequent data analysis relied only on drift chamber and time-of-flight information.

The drift chambers measure the azimuthal coordinates of charged tracks to a rms accuracy of  $200\mu$  at each layer. Polar coordinates are determined from the 10 stereo layers oriented at  $\pm 3^\circ$  to the beam axis. When tracks are constrained to pass through the known beam position, the rms momentum resolution is

$$\frac{\delta p}{p} = [(0.005 p)^2 + (0.0145)^2]^{1/2} ,$$

where  $p$  is measured in GeV/c. The tracking efficiency is greater than 95% for tracks with  $p > 100$  MeV/c over 75% of  $4\pi$  sr.

The TOF counters provide timing information over 75% of  $4\pi$  solid angle. The flight path is between 1.5 and 2.3 m depending on polar angle and the average rms resolution for these data is 315 ps. Thus the TOF system provides about 2.5 standard deviation  $\pi/K$  separation

for momenta around 850 MeV/c, which is the typical particle momentum for the decays reported here.

Two-body  $D^0$  decay involving  $K^\pm, \pi^\pm$  were identified in two steps. First, we make use of the property that  $D$ 's can only be produced in pairs at 3.771 GeV and thus all  $D^0$ 's have a unique momentum  $p_D \approx 288$  MeV/c. Accordingly, candidates for two-body  $D^0$  decay were required to be oppositely charged pairs having net momenta in the range  $p_D \pm 30$  MeV/c. Second, TOF information and the measured individual track momenta allowed identification of specific  $K\pi, \pi\pi,$  or  $KK$  final states. TOF probabilities<sup>7</sup> for  $\pi, K,$  and proton were assigned to each track. To reduce backgrounds, the product of the individual probabilities for a given final state hypothesis was required to be greater than 0.3; the results are insensitive to this requirement.

Final identification was made by computing the two-body invariant mass for each decay mode; these spectra are shown in Fig. 3. Correctly identified  $D^0$ 's appear near the  $D^0$  mass,  $1863 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ , while  $D^0$ 's in which one particle has been misidentified will appear shifted by approximately  $120 \text{ MeV}/c^2$  from the  $D^0$  mass. In Fig. 3(b) the dominant  $K^\mp\pi^\pm$  mode is clear; peaks due to misidentified  $K\pi$  decays are present at 1743 and 1983  $\text{MeV}/c^2$  in Figs. 3(a) and 3(c), respectively. A clear  $K^-K^+$  signal is present in Fig. 3(c) and there is an excess of  $\pi^-\pi^+$  events over background in the  $D^0$  region of Fig. 3(a).

To determine the number of signal events, the data of Fig. 3 were fit by a maximum likelihood technique using Poisson statistics. The shapes of the background functions used in these fits were derived from control regions with di-particle momenta between 50 and 110 MeV/c higher

or lower than  $p_D$ . The magnitude of the background was determined both by fits to the data in Fig. 3 and by the number of events in the control regions. These backgrounds are displayed as smooth curves in Fig. 3. The fits give  $234.5 \pm 15.8 K^{\mp} \pi^{\pm}$  decays,  $22.1 \pm 5.2 K^- K^+$  decays, and  $9.3 \pm 3.9 \pi^- \pi^+$  decays. The statistical probability that the  $\pi^- \pi^+$  signal is purely a fluctuation in the background is about  $7 \times 10^{-3}$ .

The relative efficiencies for detecting the  $\pi\pi$ ,  $K\pi$ , and  $KK$  modes are calculated from a Monte Carlo simulation to be 1.19, 1.00, and 0.84 respectively. The major effect is the probability that the  $K$  will decay in flight causing either its momentum or time-of-flight to be mismeasured. Correcting the number of events for these efficiencies, we have  $\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow \pi^- \pi^+) / \Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+) = 0.033 \pm 0.015$  and  $\Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- K^+) / \Gamma(D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+) = 0.113 \pm 0.030$ , where the quoted errors include estimates of systematic error added in quadrature.<sup>8</sup>

These results show that charmed particle Cabibbo-suppressed decays exist and that they have roughly the expected magnitude. The  $\pi^- \pi^+$  rate is lower than the prediction of Eq. (1) by about one standard deviation and the  $K^- K^+$  rate is higher by about two standard deviations. Within the context of the standard model a discrepancy in the  $K^- K^+$  rate, which is sensitive to the "old" Cabibbo angle  $\theta_A$ , would imply a corresponding violation of SU(3) invariance in either the weak or strong interactions. Accordingly, it is difficult to interpret our measurement of the  $\pi^- \pi^+$  rate as a measurement of the new Cabibbo angle  $\theta_B$  in any simple way.

We thank our theoretical colleagues for many useful discussions on the possible interpretations of these results. This work was supported primarily by the Department of Energy under contract numbers EY-76-C-03-0515 and W-7405-ENG-48. Support for individuals came from the listed institutions plus University of Bonn, CEN Saclay, and L.P.N.H.E. Ecole Polytechnique.

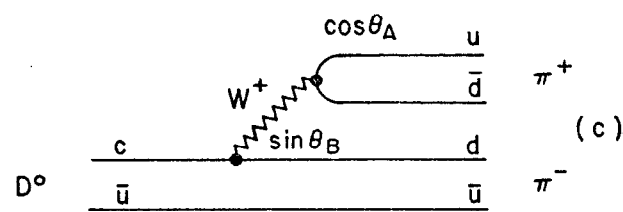
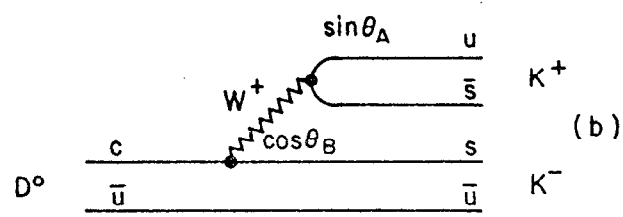
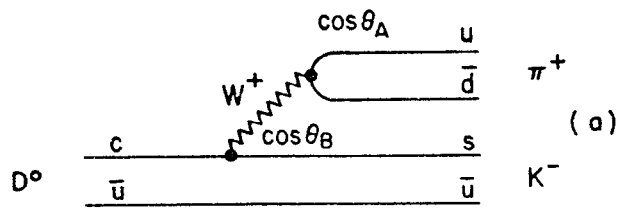
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FIGURE CAPTIONS

1. Quark diagrams for  $D^0$  decays to two charged particles.
2. Schematic drawing of the Mark II detector looking along the incident beams. Hadron absorbers and proportional tubes for muon detection on the sides are not shown.
3. Invariant mass of two particle combinations which have a momentum within 30 MeV/c of the expected  $D^0$  momentum and TOF information consistent with the indicated mode. Note that the vertical scale in (b) is five times the scale in (a) and (c). The TOF criteria ensure that no event is plotted in both (a) and (c), and that, for the most part, each event is plotted in only one plot. However, a few events from the peak in (b) are also present in the mis-identification peaks in (a) and (c).

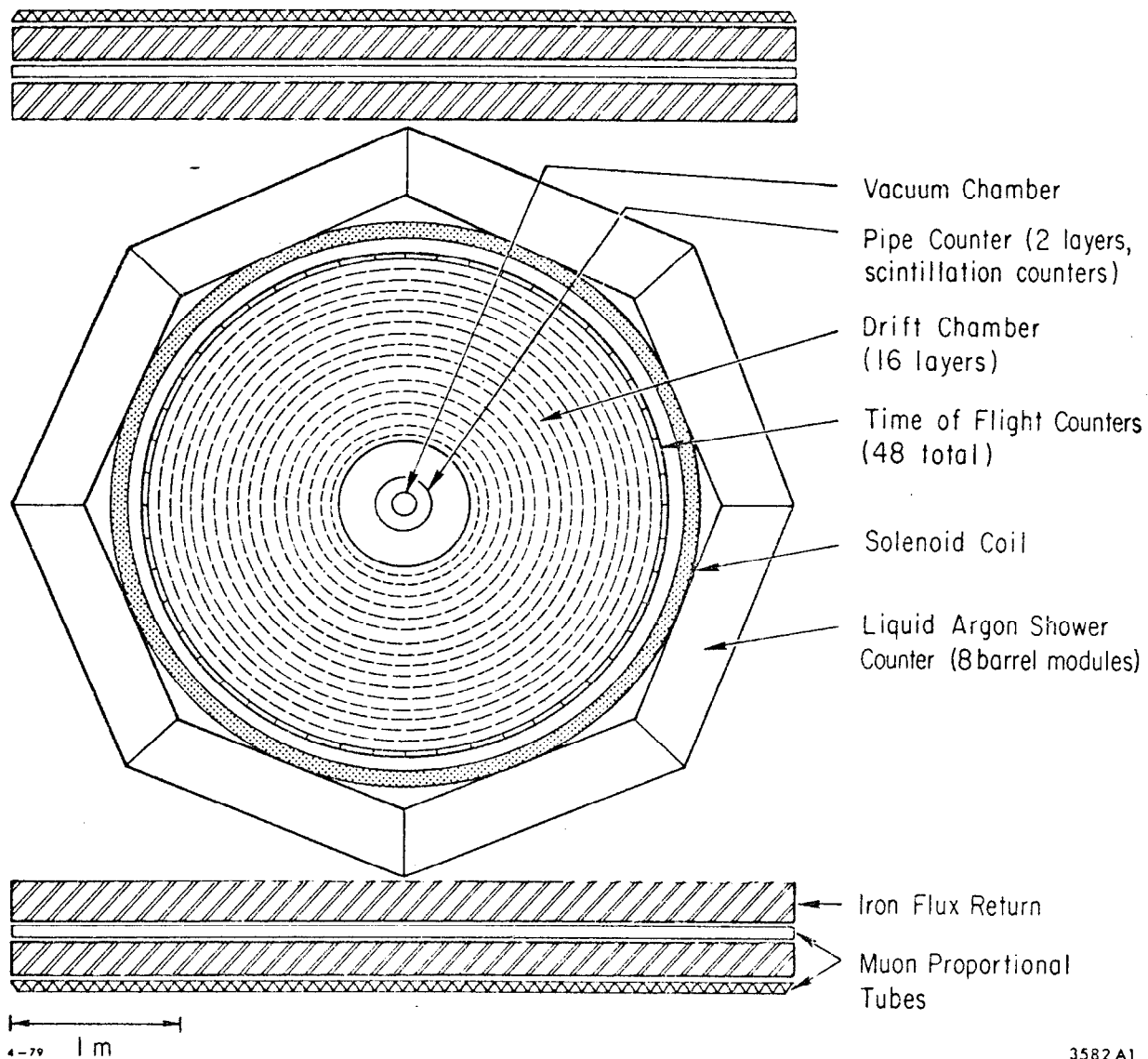




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Fig. 1



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Fig. 2

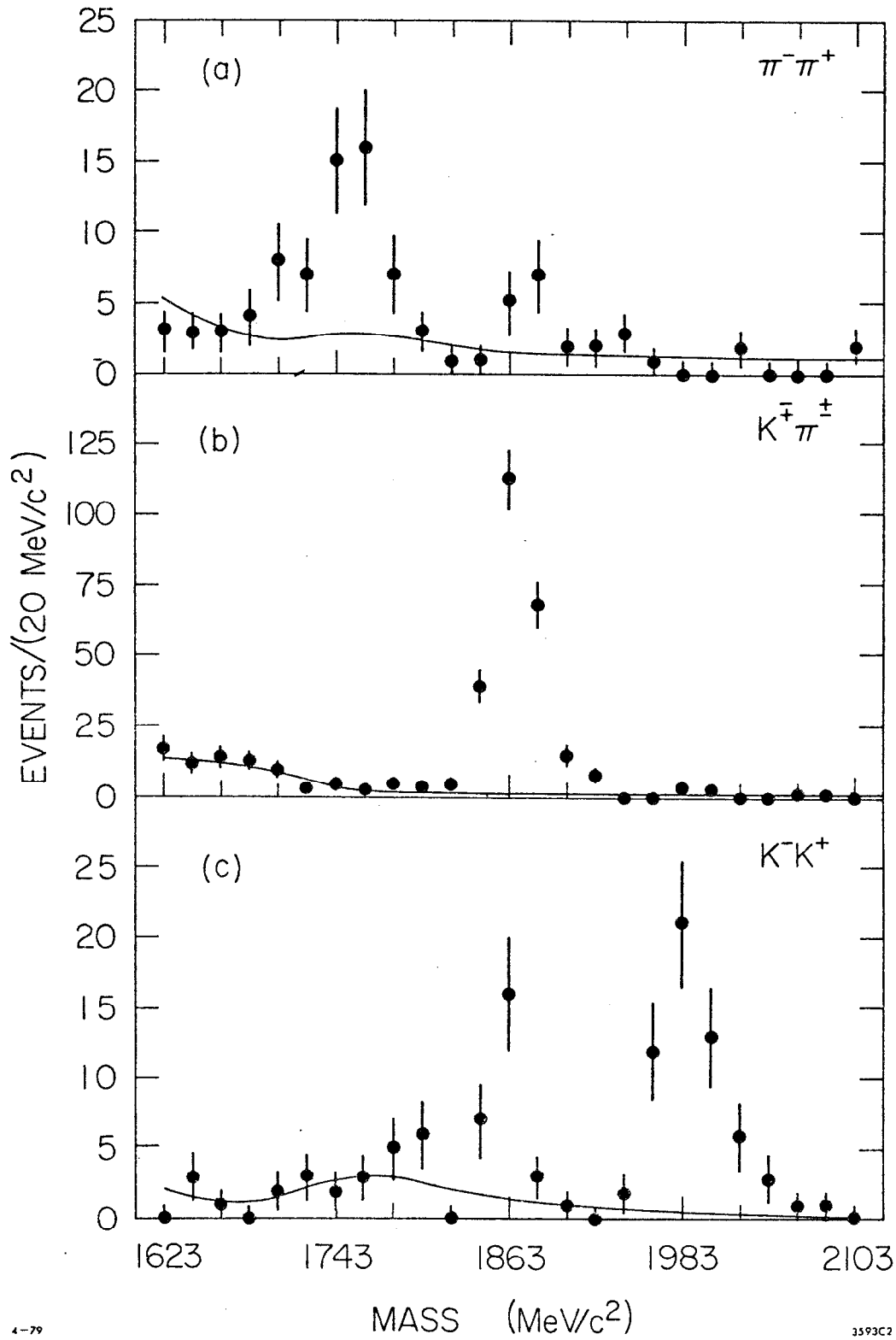


Fig. 3