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**J/ψ production at low transverse momentum  
in Pb-Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$  TeV**

The ALICE Collaboration\*

**Abstract**

The ALICE experiment has measured the inclusive J/ψ production in Pb-Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$  TeV down to  $p_t = 0$  in the rapidity range  $2.5 < y < 4$ . A suppression of the inclusive J/ψ yield in Pb-Pb is observed with respect to the one measured in pp collisions scaled by the number of binary nucleon-nucleon collisions. The nuclear modification factor, integrated over the 0%–80% most central collisions, is  $0.545 \pm 0.032(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.084(\text{syst.})$  and does not exhibit a significant dependence on the collision centrality. These features appear significantly different from lower energy measurements. Models including J/ψ production from charm quarks in a deconfined partonic phase can describe our data.

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\*See Appendix A for the list of collaboration members



Ultra-relativistic collisions of heavy nuclei aim at producing nuclear matter at high temperature and pressure. Under such conditions Quantum Chromodynamics predicts the existence of a deconfined state of partonic matter, the Quark-Gluon Plasma (QGP). Among the possible probes of the QGP, heavy quarks are of particular interest since they are expected to be produced in the primary partonic scatterings and to coexist with the surrounding medium. Therefore, the measurement of quarkonium states and hadrons with open heavy flavor is expected to provide essential information on the properties of the strongly-interacting system formed in the early stages of heavy-ion collisions [1]. In particular, according to the color-screening model [2], measuring the in-medium dissociation probability of the different quarkonium states is expected to provide an estimate of the initial temperature of the system. In the past two decades, J/ψ production in heavy-ion collisions was intensively studied at the Super Proton Synchrotron (SPS) and at the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider (RHIC), from  $\sqrt{s_{\text{NN}}} \approx 20$  to 200 GeV. At the SPS, a strong J/ψ suppression was found in the most central Pb-Pb collisions [3]. The observed suppression is larger than the one expected from Cold Nuclear Matter (CNM) effects, which include nuclear absorption and (anti-) shadowing. The dissociation of excited  $c\bar{c}$  states like  $\chi_c$  and  $\psi(2S)$ , which in pp collisions constitute about 40% of the inclusive J/ψ yield, is one possible interpretation of the observed suppression. A J/ψ suppression was also observed at RHIC, in central Au-Au collisions [4, 5], at a level similar to the one observed at the SPS when measured at mid-rapidity although it is larger at forward rapidity. Several models [6, 7, 8, 9] attempt to reproduce the RHIC data by adding to the direct J/ψ production a regeneration component from deconfined charm quarks in the medium, which counteracts the J/ψ dissociation in a QGP. A quantitative description of these final-state effects is however difficult at the present time because of the lack of precision in the CNM effects and in the open charm cross section determination. The measurement of charmonium production is especially promising at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) where the high energy density of the medium and the large number of  $c\bar{c}$  pairs produced in central Pb-Pb collisions should help to disentangle between the different suppression and regeneration scenarios. At the LHC, a suppression of inclusive J/ψ with high transverse momentum was observed in central Pb-Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{\text{NN}}} = 2.76$  TeV with respect to peripheral collisions or pp collisions at the same energy by ATLAS [10] and CMS [11], respectively.

In this Letter, we report ALICE results on inclusive J/ψ production in Pb-Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{\text{NN}}} = 2.76$  TeV at forward rapidity, measured via the  $\mu^+\mu^-$  decay channel. Our measurement encloses the low transverse momentum region that is not accessible to other LHC experiments and thus complements their observations. The J/ψ corrected yield in Pb-Pb collisions is combined with the one measured in pp collisions at the same center-of-mass energy [12] to form the J/ψ nuclear modification factor  $R_{\text{AA}}$ . The results are presented as a function of collision centrality and rapidity ( $y$ ), and in intervals of transverse momentum ( $p_t$ ).

The ALICE detector is described in [13]. At forward rapidity ( $2.5 < y < 4$ ) the production of quarkonium states is measured in the muon spectrometer<sup>1</sup> down to  $p_t = 0$ . The spectrometer consists of a ten interaction length thick absorber filtering the muons in front of five tracking stations comprising two planes of cathode pad chambers each, with the third station inside a dipole magnet with a 3 Tm field integral. The tracking apparatus is completed by a triggering system made of four planes of resistive plate chambers downstream of a 1.2 m thick iron wall, which absorbs secondary hadrons escaping from the front absorber and low momentum muons coming mainly from  $\pi$  and K decays. In addition, the silicon pixel detector (SPD) and scintillator arrays (VZERO) were used in this analysis. The VZERO counters, two arrays of 32 scintillator tiles each, cover  $2.8 \leq \eta \leq 5.1$  (VZERO-A) and  $-3.7 \leq \eta \leq -1.7$  (VZERO-C). The SPD consists of two cylindrical layers covering  $|\eta| \leq 2.0$  and  $|\eta| \leq 1.4$  for the inner and outer layers, respectively. All these detectors have full azimuthal coverage. The minimum bias (MB) trigger requirement used for this analysis consists of a logical AND of the three following conditions: (i) a signal in two readout chips in the outer layer of the SPD, (ii) a signal in VZERO-A, (iii) a signal in VZERO-

<sup>1</sup>In the ALICE reference frame, the muon spectrometer covers a negative  $\eta$  range and consequently a negative  $y$  range. We have chosen to present our results with a positive  $y$  notation.

C, providing a high triggering efficiency for hadronic interactions. The beam induced background was further reduced by timing cuts on the signals from the VZERO and from the zero degree calorimeters (ZDC). The contribution from electromagnetic processes was removed with a cut on the energy deposited in the neutron ZDCs. The centrality determination is based on a fit of the VZERO amplitude distribution as described in [14]. A cut corresponding to the most central 80% of the nuclear cross section was applied; for these events the MB trigger is fully efficient. A data sample of  $17.7 \times 10^6$  Pb-Pb collisions collected in 2010 satisfying all the above conditions is used in the following analysis. It corresponds to an integrated luminosity  $\mathcal{L}_{\text{int}} = 2.88 \pm 0.10 \mu\text{b}^{-1}$ . This data sample was further divided into five centrality classes from 0%–10% (central collisions) to 50%–80% (peripheral collisions).

$J/\psi$  candidates are formed by combining pairs of opposite-sign (OS) tracks reconstructed in the geometrical acceptance of the muon spectrometer. To reduce the combinatorial background, the reconstructed tracks in the muon tracking chambers are required to match a track segment in the muon trigger system. The  $J/\psi$  raw yield was extracted by using two different methods. The OS dimuon invariant mass distribution was fitted with a Crystal Ball (CB) function, i.e. a Gaussian with a polynomial tail [15], to reproduce the  $J/\psi$  line shape, and a sum of two exponentials to describe the underlying continuum. At high transverse momenta ( $p_t \geq 3 \text{ GeV}/c$ ), the sum of two exponentials does not describe correctly the underlying continuum; it was replaced by a third order polynomial. Alternatively, the combinatorial background was subtracted using an event-mixing technique. The resulting mass distribution was fitted with a CB function and an exponential or a first order polynomial to describe the remaining background. The  $\psi(2S)$  was not included in the signal line shape since its contribution is negligible. The width of the  $J/\psi$  mass peak depends on the resolution of the spectrometer which can be affected by the detector occupancy that increases with centrality. This effect, evaluated by embedding simulated  $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$  decays into real events, was found to be less than 2%. This conclusion was confirmed by a direct measurement of the tracking chamber resolution versus centrality using reconstructed tracks. Therefore, the same CB line shape can be used for all centrality classes. The parameters of the CB tails were fixed to the values obtained either in simulations or in pp collisions where the signal to background ratio is much higher. For each of these choices, the mean and width of the CB Gaussian part were fixed to the value obtained by fitting the mass distribution in the centrality range 0%–80%. In addition, a variation of the width of  $\pm 1$  standard deviation was applied to account for uncertainties (varying the mean has turned out to have a negligible effect in comparison). The raw  $J/\psi$  yield in each centrality class was determined as the average of the results obtained with the two fitting approaches and the various CB parametrizations, while the corresponding systematic uncertainties were defined as the RMS of these results. It was also checked that every individual result differs from the mean value by less than three RMS. The raw  $J/\psi$  yield in our Pb-Pb sample is  $2350 \pm 139(\text{stat.}) \pm 189(\text{syst.})$ . The invariant mass resolution is around  $75 \text{ MeV}/c^2$ , in very good agreement with the embedded  $J/\psi$  simulations. The signal to background ratio integrated over  $\pm 3 \sigma$  of the mass resolution varies from 0.1 for central collisions to 1.5 for peripheral collisions.

The measured number of  $J/\psi$  ( $N_{J/\psi}^i$ ) was normalized to the number of events in the corresponding centrality class ( $N_{\text{events}}^i$ ) and further corrected for the branching ratio (BR) of the dimuon decay channel, the acceptance  $A$  and the efficiency  $\epsilon^i$  of the detector. The inclusive  $J/\psi$  yield in each centrality class  $i$  for our measured  $p_t$  and  $y$  ranges ( $\Delta p_t, \Delta y$ ) is then given by:

$$Y_{J/\psi}^i(\Delta p_t, \Delta y) = \frac{N_{J/\psi}^i}{\text{BR}_{J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-} N_{\text{events}}^i A \epsilon^i}. \quad (1)$$

The product  $A\epsilon$  was determined from Monte Carlo simulations. The generated  $J/\psi$   $p_t$  and  $y$  distributions were extrapolated from existing measurements [16], including shadowing effects from EKS98 calculations [17]. As  $J/\psi$  mesons produced from charm quarks in the medium are expected to be unpolarized, and the measured  $J/\psi$  polarization in pp collisions at  $\sqrt{s} = 7 \text{ TeV}$  is compatible with zero [18], we presume  $J/\psi$  production is unpolarized. For the tracking chambers, the time-dependent status of each

**Table 1:** The average number of binary nucleon-nucleon collisions  $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$ , of participating nucleons  $\langle N_{\text{part}} \rangle$  without and with  $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$  weighting, the mid-rapidity charged-particle density  $dN_{\text{ch}}^w/d\eta|_{\eta=0}$  with  $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$  weighting and the average value of the nuclear overlap function  $\langle T_{AA} \rangle$  for the centrality classes expressed in percentages of the nuclear cross section [14].

Centrality	$\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$	$\langle N_{\text{part}} \rangle$	$\langle N_{\text{part}}^w \rangle$	$\frac{dN_{\text{ch}}^w}{d\eta _{\eta=0}}$	$\langle T_{AA} \rangle$ (mb $^{-1}$ )
0%–10%	1503±170	356±4	361±4	1463±60	23.5±1.0
10%–20%	923±100	260±4	264±4	979±37	14.4±0.6
20%–30%	559±56	186±4	189±4	658±23	8.74±0.37
30%–50%	248±24	107±3	117±3	369±13	3.87±0.18
50%–80%	46±4	32±2	47±2	110±5	0.72±0.05
0%–80%	450±48	139±3	264±4	n.a.	7.03±0.27

electronic channel during the data taking period was taken into account as well as the residual misalign-  
 95 ment of the detection elements. The efficiencies of the muon trigger chambers were determined from data and were then applied in the simulations [19]. Finally, the dependence of the efficiency on the detector occupancy was included using the embedding technique. For J/ψ mesons emitted at  $2.5 < y < 4$  and  $p_t \geq 0$ , a run-averaged value of  $A\varepsilon = 0.176$  with a 8% relative systematic uncertainty was obtained. A  $8\% \pm 2\%$  (syst.) relative decrease of the efficiency was observed when going from peripheral to central  
 100 collisions.

The J/ψ yield measured in Pb-Pb collisions in centrality class  $i$  is combined with the inclusive J/ψ cross section measured in pp collisions at the same energy to form the nuclear modification factor  $R_{AA}$  defined as:

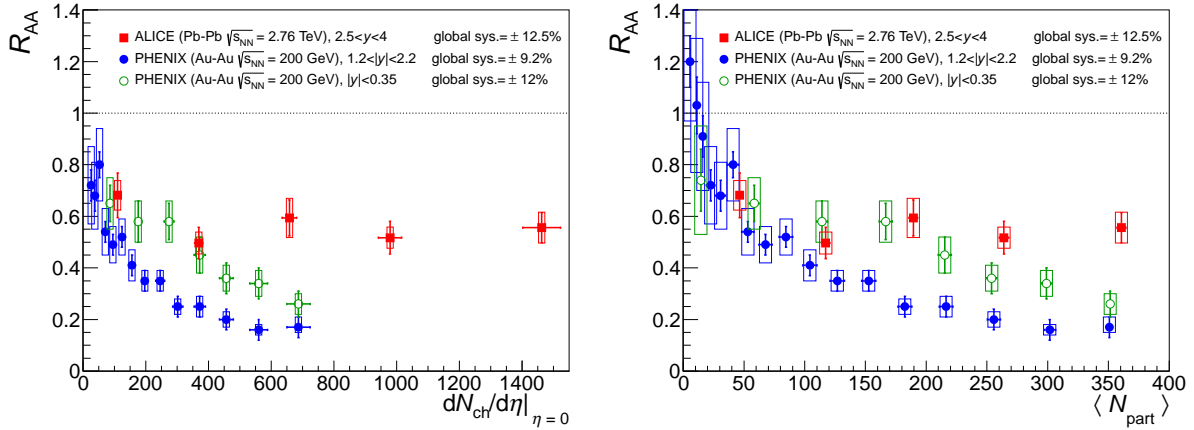
$$R_{AA}^i = \frac{Y_{J/\psi}^i(\Delta p_t, \Delta y)}{\langle T_{AA}^i \rangle \times \sigma_{J/\psi}^{\text{pp}}(\Delta p_t, \Delta y)}. \quad (2)$$

The inclusive J/ψ cross section in pp collisions  $\sigma_{J/\psi}^{\text{pp}}(\Delta p_t, \Delta y)$  was measured using the same apparatus and  
 105 analysis technique within the corresponding  $p_t$  and  $y$  range [12]. The reference value  $\sigma_{J/\psi}^{\text{pp}}$  used for the calculation of  $R_{AA}$  integrated over  $p_t$  and  $y$  is  $3.34 \pm 0.13$  (stat.)  $\pm 0.24$  (syst.)  $\pm 0.14$  (lumi.)  $^{+0.53}_{-1.07}$  (pol.)  $\mu\text{b}$ . The centrality intervals used in this analysis and the corresponding average number of binary collisions  $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$ , average number of participating nucleons  $\langle N_{\text{part}} \rangle$  and average value of the nuclear overlap function  $\langle T_{AA} \rangle$  derived from a Glauber model calculation [14] are summarized in Table 1. Since our most  
 110 peripheral bin is rather large, the variables  $\langle N_{\text{part}}^w \rangle$  and the charged-particle density measured at mid-rapidity  $dN_{\text{ch}}^w/d\eta|_{\eta=0}$  were weighted by the number of binary collisions  $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$ . Indeed in absence of nuclear matter effects, the J/ψ production cross section in A-A is expected to scale with  $\langle N_{\text{coll}} \rangle$ . The weighted values are given in Table 1 and are used for the ALICE data points in the following figures. All systematic uncertainties entering the  $R_{AA}$  calculation are listed in Table 2. In the figures below, the point  
 115 to point uncorrelated systematic uncertainties are represented as boxes at the position of the data points while the statistical ones are indicated by vertical bars. Correlated systematic uncertainties are quoted directly on the figures.

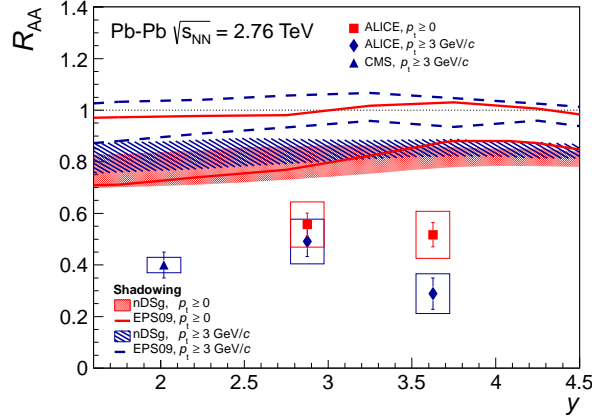
The inclusive J/ψ  $R_{AA}$  measured by ALICE at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$  TeV in the range  $2.5 < y < 4$  and  $p_t \geq 0$  is shown in Fig. 1 as a function of  $dN_{\text{ch}}/d\eta|_{\eta=0}$  (left) and  $N_{\text{part}}$  (right). The charged-particle density  
 120 closely relates to the energy density of the created medium whereas the number of participant reflects the collision geometry. The centrality integrated J/ψ  $R_{AA}$  is  $R_{AA}^{0\%–80\%} = 0.545 \pm 0.032$  (stat.)  $\pm 0.084$  (syst.), indicating a clear J/ψ suppression. The contribution from beauty hadron feed-down to the inclusive J/ψ yield in our  $y$  and  $p_t$  domain was measured by the LHCb collaboration to be about 10% in pp collisions at  $\sqrt{s} = 7$  TeV [21]. Therefore, the difference between the prompt J/ψ  $R_{AA}$  and our inclusive

**Table 2:** Summary of the systematic uncertainties entering the  $R_{AA}$  calculation. The type I (II) stands for correlated (uncorrelated) uncertainties. The centrality dependence for the type II is given as a range.

source	value	type
signal extraction	5%–12%	II
input MC parametrization	5%	I
tracking efficiency	5% and 0%–1%	I and II
trigger efficiency	4% and 0%–2%	I and II
matching efficiency	2%	I
$T_{AA}$	4%–8%	II
$\sigma_{J/\psi}^{pp}$ at $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$ TeV	9%	I



**Fig. 1:** (Color online) Inclusive  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  as a function of the mid-rapidity charged-particle density (left) and the number of participating nucleons (right) measured in Pb-Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$  TeV compared to PHENIX results in Au-Au collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$  GeV at mid-rapidity and forward rapidity [4, 5, 20].



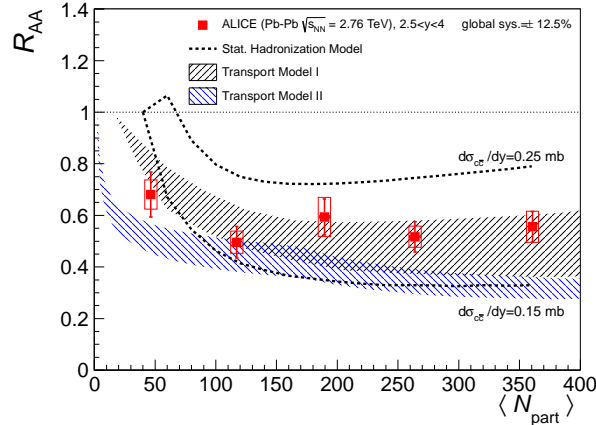
**Fig. 2:** (Color online) Centrality integrated (0%–80%) inclusive  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  measured in Pb-Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$  TeV as a function of rapidity for two  $p_t$  ranges. The open boxes contain the total systematic uncertainties except the one from the integrated luminosity in the pp reference of 4.3% (6%) for the ALICE (CMS [11]) data. The two models [22, 23] predict the  $R_{AA}$  due only to shadowing effects for nDSg (shaded areas) and EPS09 (lines) nPDF respectively.

125 measurement is expected not to exceed 11% if  $N_{coll}$  scaling of beauty production is assumed and shadowing effects are neglected. The comparison with the PHENIX measurements <sup>2</sup> at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 200$  GeV at forward rapidity  $1.2 < |y| < 2.2$  [5, 20] shows that our inclusive  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  is almost a factor of three larger for  $dN_{ch}/d\eta|_{\eta=0} \gtrsim 600$  ( $N_{part} \gtrsim 180$ ). In addition, our results do not exhibit a significant centrality dependence.

130 The rapidity dependence of the  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  is presented in Fig. 2 for two  $p_t$  domains,  $p_t \geq 0$  and  $p_t \geq 3$  GeV/ $c$ . The  $J/\psi$  reference cross sections in pp collisions and the  $R_{AA}$  total systematic uncertainties, indicated as open boxes in the figure, were evaluated in the same kinematic range. Our results are shown together with a measurement from CMS [11] of the inclusive  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  in the rapidity range  $1.6 < |y| < 2.4$  with  $p_t \geq 3$  GeV/ $c$ . No significant rapidity dependence can be seen in the  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  for  $p_t \geq 0$ . For  $p_t \geq 3$  GeV/ $c$ , a decrease of  $R_{AA}$  is observed with increasing rapidity reaching a value of  $0.289 \pm 0.061(\text{stat.}) \pm 0.078(\text{syst.})$  for  $3.25 < y < 4$ . At LHC energies,  $J/\psi$  nuclear absorption is likely to be negligible and the modification of the gluon distribution function is dominated by shadowing effects [24]. An estimate of shadowing effects is shown in Fig. 2 within the Color Singlet Model at Leading Order [22] and the Color Evaporation Model at Next to Leading Order [23]. The shadowing is respectively calculated with the nDSg and the EPS09 parametrizations of the nuclear Parton Distribution Function (nPDF). For nDSg (EPS09) the upper and lower limits correspond to the uncertainty in the factorization scale (uncertainty of the nPDF). The effect of shadowing shows no dependence with rapidity and its overall amount is reduced by the addition of a transverse momentum cut. At most, shadowing effects are expected to lower the  $R_{AA}$  from 1 to 0.7. Recent Color Glass Condensate (CGC) calculations for LHC energies may indicate a larger initial state suppression ( $R_{AA} \approx 0.5$ ) [25]. However, any  $J/\psi$  suppression due to initial state effects, CGC or shadowing, will be stronger at lower  $p_t$  contrary to the data behavior.

140 In Fig. 3, our measurement is compared with theoretical models that include a  $J/\psi$  regeneration component from deconfined charm quarks in the medium. The Statistical Hadronization Model [6, 26] assumes deconfinement and a thermal equilibration of the bulk of the  $c\bar{c}$  pairs. Then charmonium production occurs at phase boundary by statistical hadronization of charm quarks. The prediction is given for

<sup>2</sup> The PHENIX mid-rapidity  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  was measured in centrality classes wider than the ones in which the mid-rapidity charged-particle density is given [20]. Therefore a linear interpolation was done to extract the mid-rapidity charged-particle density in the three most peripheral classes.



**Fig. 3:** (Color online) Inclusive  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  measured in Pb-Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$  TeV compared to the predictions by Statistical Hadronization Model [26], Transport Model I [27] and II [28], see text for details.

two values of  $d\sigma_{cc}/dy$  in absence of a measurement for Pb-Pb collisions. The two transport model results [27, 28] presented in the same figure differ mostly in the rate equation controlling the  $J/\psi$  dissociation and regeneration. Both are shown as a band which connects the results obtained with (lower limit) and without (higher limit) shadowing. The width of the band can be interpreted as the uncertainty of the prediction. In both transport models, the amount of regenerated  $J/\psi$  in the most central collisions contributes to about 50% of the measured yield, the rest being from initial production.

In summary, we have presented the first measurement of inclusive  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  down to  $p_t = 0$  at forward rapidity in Pb-Pb collisions at  $\sqrt{s_{NN}} = 2.76$  TeV. The  $J/\psi$   $R_{AA}$  is larger than the one measured at the SPS and at RHIC for most central collisions and does not exhibit a significant centrality dependence. Statistical hadronization and transport models which feature a full or partial  $J/\psi$  production from charm quarks in the QGP phase can describe the data. Towards a definitive conclusion about the role of  $J/\psi$  production from deconfined charm quarks in a partonic phase, the amount of shadowing needs to be measured precisely in pPb collisions. In this context, the measurement of open charm and  $J/\psi$  elliptic flow will also help to determine the degree of thermalization for charm quarks.

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## A The ALICE Collaboration

B. Abelev<sup>68</sup>, J. Adam<sup>33</sup>, D. Adamová<sup>73</sup>, A.M. Adare<sup>120</sup>, M.M. Aggarwal<sup>77</sup>, G. Aglieri Rinella<sup>29</sup>,  
 A.G. Agocs<sup>60</sup>, A. Agostinelli<sup>21</sup>, S. Aguilar Salazar<sup>56</sup>, Z. Ahammed<sup>116</sup>, A. Ahmad Masoodi<sup>13</sup>, N. Ahmad<sup>13</sup>,  
 S.U. Ahn<sup>63,36</sup>, A. Akindinov<sup>46</sup>, D. Aleksandrov<sup>88</sup>, B. Alessandro<sup>94</sup>, R. Alfaro Molina<sup>56</sup>, A. Alici<sup>97,9</sup>,  
 275 A. Alkin<sup>2</sup>, E. Almaráz Aviña<sup>56</sup>, J. Alme<sup>31</sup>, T. Alt<sup>35</sup>, V. Altini<sup>27</sup>, S. Altinpinar<sup>14</sup>, I. Altsybeev<sup>117</sup>, C. Andrei<sup>70</sup>,  
 A. Andronic<sup>85</sup>, V. Anguelov<sup>82</sup>, J. Anielski<sup>54</sup>, C. Anson<sup>15</sup>, T. Antičić<sup>86</sup>, F. Antinori<sup>93</sup>, P. Antonioli<sup>97</sup>,  
 L. Aphecetche<sup>102</sup>, H. Appelshäuser<sup>52</sup>, N. Arbor<sup>64</sup>, S. Arceci<sup>21</sup>, A. Arend<sup>52</sup>, N. Armesto<sup>12</sup>, R. Arnaldi<sup>94</sup>,  
 T. Aronsson<sup>120</sup>, I.C. Arsene<sup>85</sup>, M. Arslanodk<sup>52</sup>, A. Asryan<sup>117</sup>, A. Augustinus<sup>29</sup>, R. Averbeck<sup>85</sup>, T.C. Awes<sup>74</sup>,  
 J. Äystö<sup>37</sup>, M.D. Azmi<sup>13</sup>, M. Bach<sup>35</sup>, A. Badalá<sup>99</sup>, Y.W. Baek<sup>63,36</sup>, R. Bailhache<sup>52</sup>, R. Bala<sup>94</sup>,  
 280 R. Baldini Ferroli<sup>9</sup>, A. Baldisseri<sup>11</sup>, A. Baldit<sup>63</sup>, F. Baltasar Dos Santos Pedrosa<sup>29</sup>, J. Bán<sup>47</sup>, R.C. Baral<sup>48</sup>,  
 R. Barbera<sup>23</sup>, F. Barile<sup>27</sup>, G.G. Barnaföldi<sup>60</sup>, L.S. Barnby<sup>90</sup>, V. Barret<sup>63</sup>, J. Bartke<sup>104</sup>, M. Basile<sup>21</sup>,  
 N. Bastid<sup>63</sup>, B. Bathen<sup>54</sup>, G. Batigne<sup>102</sup>, B. Batyunya<sup>59</sup>, C. Baumann<sup>52</sup>, I.G. Bearden<sup>71</sup>, H. Beck<sup>52</sup>,  
 I. Belikov<sup>58</sup>, F. Bellini<sup>21</sup>, R. Bellwied<sup>110</sup>, E. Belmont-Moreno<sup>56</sup>, G. Bencedi<sup>60</sup>, S. Beole<sup>25</sup>, I. Berceanu<sup>70</sup>,  
 A. Bercuci<sup>70</sup>, Y. Berdnikov<sup>75</sup>, D. Berenyi<sup>60</sup>, C. Bergmann<sup>54</sup>, D. Berzano<sup>94</sup>, L. Betev<sup>29</sup>, A. Bhasin<sup>80</sup>,  
 285 A.K. Bhati<sup>77</sup>, N. Bianchi<sup>65</sup>, L. Bianchi<sup>25</sup>, C. Bianchin<sup>19</sup>, J. Bielčik<sup>33</sup>, J. Bielčiková<sup>73</sup>, A. Bilandžić<sup>72</sup>,  
 S. Bjelogrić<sup>45</sup>, F. Blanco<sup>110</sup>, F. Blanco<sup>7</sup>, D. Blau<sup>88</sup>, C. Blume<sup>52</sup>, M. Boccioni<sup>29</sup>, N. Bock<sup>15</sup>, A. Bogdanov<sup>69</sup>,  
 H. Bøggild<sup>71</sup>, M. Bogolyubsky<sup>43</sup>, L. Boldizsár<sup>60</sup>, M. Bombara<sup>34</sup>, J. Book<sup>52</sup>, H. Borel<sup>11</sup>, A. Borissov<sup>119</sup>,  
 S. Bose<sup>89</sup>, F. Bossú<sup>25</sup>, M. Botje<sup>72</sup>, S. Böttger<sup>51</sup>, B. Boyer<sup>42</sup>, P. Braun-Munzinger<sup>85</sup>, M. Bregant<sup>102</sup>,  
 T. Breitner<sup>51</sup>, T.A. Browning<sup>83</sup>, M. Broz<sup>32</sup>, R. Brun<sup>29</sup>, E. Bruna<sup>25,94</sup>, G.E. Bruno<sup>27</sup>, D. Budnikov<sup>87</sup>,  
 290 H. Buesching<sup>52</sup>, S. Bufalino<sup>25,94</sup>, K. Bugaiev<sup>2</sup>, O. Busch<sup>82</sup>, Z. Buthelezi<sup>79</sup>, D. Caballero Orduna<sup>120</sup>,  
 D. Caffarri<sup>19</sup>, X. Cai<sup>39</sup>, H. Caines<sup>120</sup>, E. Calvo Villar<sup>91</sup>, P. Camerini<sup>20</sup>, V. Canoa Roman<sup>8,1</sup>, G. Cara Romeo<sup>97</sup>,  
 F. Carena<sup>29</sup>, W. Carena<sup>29</sup>, N. Carlin Filho<sup>107</sup>, F. Carminati<sup>29</sup>, C.A. Carrillo Montoya<sup>29</sup>, A. Casanova Díaz<sup>65</sup>,  
 J. Castillo Castellanos<sup>11</sup>, J.F. Castillo Hernandez<sup>85</sup>, E.A.R. Casula<sup>18</sup>, V. Catanescu<sup>70</sup>, C. Cavicchioli<sup>29</sup>,  
 J. Cepila<sup>33</sup>, P. Cerello<sup>94</sup>, B. Chang<sup>37,123</sup>, S. Chapeland<sup>29</sup>, J.L. Charvet<sup>11</sup>, S. Chattopadhyay<sup>89</sup>,  
 295 S. Chattopadhyay<sup>116</sup>, M. Cherney<sup>76</sup>, C. Cheshkov<sup>29,109</sup>, B. Cheynis<sup>109</sup>, E. Chiavassa<sup>94</sup>, V. Chibante Barroso<sup>29</sup>,  
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 F. Coccetti<sup>9</sup>, F. Colamaria<sup>27</sup>, D. Colella<sup>27</sup>, G. Conesa Balbastre<sup>64</sup>, Z. Conesa del Valle<sup>29</sup>, P. Constantin<sup>82</sup>,  
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 300 M.R. Cosentino<sup>67,108</sup>, F. Costa<sup>29</sup>, M.E. Cotallo<sup>7</sup>, E. Crescio<sup>8</sup>, P. Crochet<sup>63</sup>, E. Cruz Alaniz<sup>56</sup>, E. Cuautle<sup>55</sup>,  
 L. Cunqueiro<sup>65</sup>, A. Dainese<sup>19,93</sup>, H.H. Dalsgaard<sup>71</sup>, A. Danu<sup>50</sup>, I. Das<sup>89,42</sup>, K. Das<sup>89</sup>, D. Das<sup>89</sup>, S. Dash<sup>40,94</sup>,  
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 V. Demanov<sup>87</sup>, N. De Marco<sup>94</sup>, E. Dénes<sup>60</sup>, S. De Pasquale<sup>24</sup>, A. Deppman<sup>107</sup>, G. D'Erasmus<sup>27</sup>, R. de Rooij<sup>45</sup>,  
 305 D. Di Bari<sup>27</sup>, T. Dietel<sup>54</sup>, C. Di Giglio<sup>27</sup>, S. Di Liberto<sup>95</sup>, A. Di Mauro<sup>29</sup>, P. Di Nezza<sup>65</sup>, R. Divià<sup>29</sup>,  
 Ø. Djuvsland<sup>14</sup>, A. Dobrin<sup>119,28</sup>, T. Dobrowolski<sup>100</sup>, I. Domínguez<sup>55</sup>, B. Dönigus<sup>85</sup>, O. Dordic<sup>17</sup>, O. Driga<sup>102</sup>,  
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 310 A. Fedunov<sup>59</sup>, D. Fehlker<sup>14</sup>, L. Feldkamp<sup>54</sup>, D. Felea<sup>50</sup>, G. Feofilov<sup>117</sup>, A. Fernández Téllez<sup>1</sup>, R. Ferretti<sup>26</sup>,  
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 D.R. Gangadharan<sup>15</sup>, P. Ganoti<sup>74</sup>, C. Garabatos<sup>85</sup>, E. Garcia-Solis<sup>10</sup>, I. Garishvili<sup>68</sup>, J. Gerhard<sup>35</sup>,  
 315 M. Germain<sup>102</sup>, C. Geuna<sup>11</sup>, A. Gheata<sup>29</sup>, M. Gheata<sup>29</sup>, B. Ghidini<sup>27</sup>, P. Ghosh<sup>116</sup>, P. Gianotti<sup>65</sup>,  
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 C. Hadjidakis<sup>42</sup>, M. Haiduc<sup>50</sup>, H. Hamagaki<sup>113</sup>, G. Hamar<sup>60</sup>, B.H. Han<sup>16</sup>, L.D. Hanratty<sup>90</sup>, A. Hansen<sup>71</sup>,  
 Z. Harmanova<sup>34</sup>, J.W. Harris<sup>120</sup>, M. Hartig<sup>52</sup>, D. Hasegan<sup>50</sup>, D. Hatzifotiadou<sup>97</sup>, A. Hayrapetyan<sup>29,121</sup>,  
 S.T. Heckel<sup>52</sup>, M. Heide<sup>54</sup>, H. Helstrup<sup>31</sup>, A. Herghelegiu<sup>70</sup>, G. Herrera Corral<sup>8</sup>, N. Herrmann<sup>82</sup>,  
 325 K.F. Hetland<sup>31</sup>, B. Hicks<sup>120</sup>, P.T. Hille<sup>120</sup>, B. Hippolyte<sup>58</sup>, T. Horaguchi<sup>114</sup>, Y. Hori<sup>113</sup>, P. Hristov<sup>29</sup>,  
 I. Hřivnáčová<sup>42</sup>, M. Huang<sup>14</sup>, S. Huber<sup>85</sup>, T.J. Humanic<sup>15</sup>, D.S. Hwang<sup>16</sup>, R. Ichou<sup>63</sup>, R. Ilkaev<sup>87</sup>, I. Ilkiv<sup>100</sup>,

M. Inaba<sup>114</sup>, E. Incani<sup>18</sup>, G.M. Innocenti<sup>25</sup>, P.G. Innocenti<sup>29</sup>, M. Ippolitov<sup>88</sup>, M. Irfan<sup>13</sup>, C. Ivan<sup>85</sup>,  
 M. Ivanov<sup>85</sup>, A. Ivanov<sup>117</sup>, V. Ivanov<sup>75</sup>, O. Ivanytskyi<sup>2</sup>, A. Jachořkowski<sup>29</sup>, P. M. Jacobs<sup>67</sup>, L. Jancurová<sup>59</sup>,  
 H.J. Jang<sup>62</sup>, S. Jangal<sup>58</sup>, M.A. Janik<sup>118</sup>, R. Janik<sup>32</sup>, P.H.S.Y. Jayarathna<sup>110</sup>, S. Jena<sup>40</sup>,  
 330 R.T. Jimenez Bustamante<sup>55</sup>, L. Jirde<sup>29</sup>, P.G. Jones<sup>90</sup>, H. Jung<sup>36</sup>, W. Jung<sup>36</sup>, A. Jusko<sup>90</sup>, A.B. Kaidalov<sup>46</sup>,  
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 A. Kazantsev<sup>88</sup>, U. Keschull<sup>51</sup>, R. Keidel<sup>124</sup>, S.A. Khan<sup>116</sup>, M.M. Khan<sup>13</sup>, P. Khan<sup>89</sup>, A. Khanzadeev<sup>75</sup>,  
 Y. Kharlov<sup>43</sup>, B. Kileng<sup>31</sup>, M. Kim<sup>123</sup>, T. Kim<sup>123</sup>, S. Kim<sup>16</sup>, D.J. Kim<sup>37</sup>, J.H. Kim<sup>16</sup>, J.S. Kim<sup>36</sup>, S.H. Kim<sup>36</sup>,  
 335 D.W. Kim<sup>36</sup>, B. Kim<sup>123</sup>, S. Kirsch<sup>35,29</sup>, I. Kisel<sup>35</sup>, S. Kiselev<sup>46</sup>, A. Kisiel<sup>29,118</sup>, J.L. Klay<sup>4</sup>, J. Klein<sup>82</sup>,  
 C. Klein-Bösing<sup>54</sup>, M. Kliemant<sup>52</sup>, A. Kluge<sup>29</sup>, M.L. Knichel<sup>85</sup>, A.G. Knospe<sup>105</sup>, K. Koch<sup>82</sup>, M.K. Köhler<sup>85</sup>,  
 A. Kolojvari<sup>117</sup>, V. Kondratiev<sup>117</sup>, N. Kondratyeva<sup>69</sup>, A. Konevskikh<sup>44</sup>, A. Korneev<sup>87</sup>,  
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 J. Kral<sup>37</sup>, I. Králik<sup>47</sup>, F. Kramer<sup>52</sup>, I. Kraus<sup>85</sup>, T. Krawutschke<sup>82,30</sup>, M. Krelina<sup>33</sup>, M. Kretz<sup>35</sup>,  
 340 M. Krivda<sup>90,47</sup>, F. Krizek<sup>37</sup>, M. Krus<sup>33</sup>, E. Kryshen<sup>75</sup>, M. Krzewicki<sup>72,85</sup>, Y. Kucheriaev<sup>88</sup>, C. Kuhn<sup>58</sup>,  
 P.G. Kuijter<sup>72</sup>, P. Kurashvili<sup>100</sup>, A.B. Kurepin<sup>44</sup>, A. Kurepin<sup>44</sup>, A. Kuryakin<sup>87</sup>, V. Kuschpil<sup>73</sup>, S. Kuschpil<sup>73</sup>,  
 H. Kvaerno<sup>17</sup>, M.J. Kweon<sup>82</sup>, Y. Kwon<sup>123</sup>, P. Ladrón de Guevara<sup>55</sup>, I. Lakomov<sup>42,117</sup>, R. Langoy<sup>14</sup>, C. Lara<sup>51</sup>,  
 A. Lardeux<sup>102</sup>, P. La Rocca<sup>23</sup>, C. Lazzeroni<sup>90</sup>, R. Lea<sup>20</sup>, Y. Le Bornec<sup>42</sup>, K.S. Lee<sup>36</sup>, S.C. Lee<sup>36</sup>,  
 F. Lefèvre<sup>102</sup>, J. Lehnert<sup>52</sup>, L. Leistam<sup>29</sup>, M. Lenhardt<sup>102</sup>, V. Lenti<sup>98</sup>, H. León<sup>56</sup>, I. León Monzón<sup>106</sup>,  
 345 H. León Vargas<sup>52</sup>, P. Lévai<sup>60</sup>, J. Lien<sup>14</sup>, R. Lietava<sup>90</sup>, S. Lindal<sup>17</sup>, V. Lindenstruth<sup>35</sup>, C. Lippmann<sup>85,29</sup>,  
 M.A. Lisa<sup>15</sup>, L. Liu<sup>14</sup>, P.I. Loenne<sup>14</sup>, V.R. Loggins<sup>119</sup>, V. Loginov<sup>69</sup>, S. Lohn<sup>29</sup>, D. Lohner<sup>82</sup>, C. Loizides<sup>67</sup>,  
 K.K. Loo<sup>37</sup>, X. Lopez<sup>63</sup>, E. López Torres<sup>6</sup>, G. Løvholden<sup>17</sup>, X.-G. Lu<sup>82</sup>, P. Luettig<sup>52</sup>, M. Lunardon<sup>19</sup>,  
 J. Luo<sup>39</sup>, G. Luparello<sup>45</sup>, L. Luquin<sup>102</sup>, C. Luzzi<sup>29</sup>, K. Ma<sup>39</sup>, R. Ma<sup>120</sup>, D.M. Madagodahettige-Don<sup>110</sup>,  
 A. Maevskaya<sup>44</sup>, M. Mager<sup>53,29</sup>, D.P. Mahapatra<sup>48</sup>, A. Maire<sup>58</sup>, M. Malaev<sup>75</sup>, I. Maldonado Cervantes<sup>55</sup>,  
 350 L. Malinina<sup>59,1</sup>, D. Mal'Kevich<sup>46</sup>, P. Malzacher<sup>85</sup>, A. Mamonov<sup>87</sup>, L. Manceau<sup>94</sup>, L. Mangotra<sup>80</sup>,  
 V. Manko<sup>88</sup>, F. Manso<sup>63</sup>, V. Manzari<sup>98</sup>, Y. Mao<sup>64,39</sup>, M. Marchisone<sup>63,25</sup>, J. Mareš<sup>49</sup>, G.V. Margagliotti<sup>20,92</sup>,  
 A. Margotti<sup>97</sup>, A. Marín<sup>85</sup>, C.A. Marin Tobon<sup>29</sup>, C. Markert<sup>105</sup>, I. Martashvili<sup>112</sup>, P. Martinengo<sup>29</sup>,  
 M.I. Martínez<sup>1</sup>, A. Martínez Davalos<sup>56</sup>, G. Martínez García<sup>102</sup>, Y. Martynov<sup>2</sup>, A. Mas<sup>102</sup>, S. Masciocchi<sup>85</sup>,  
 M. Maserà<sup>25</sup>, A. Masoni<sup>96</sup>, L. Massacrier<sup>109,102</sup>, M. Mastroianni<sup>98</sup>, A. Mastroserio<sup>27,29</sup>, Z.L. Matthews<sup>90</sup>,  
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 A. Menchaca-Rocha<sup>56</sup>, J. Mercado Pérez<sup>82</sup>, M. Meres<sup>32</sup>, Y. Miake<sup>114</sup>, L. Milano<sup>25</sup>, J. Milosevic<sup>17,11</sup>,  
 A. Mischke<sup>45</sup>, A.N. Mishra<sup>81</sup>, D. Miśkowiec<sup>85,29</sup>, C. Mitu<sup>50</sup>, J. Mlynarz<sup>119</sup>, B. Mohanty<sup>116</sup>, A.K. Mohanty<sup>29</sup>,  
 L. Molnar<sup>29</sup>, L. Montaño Zetina<sup>8</sup>, M. Monteno<sup>94</sup>, E. Montes<sup>7</sup>, T. Moon<sup>123</sup>, M. Morando<sup>19</sup>,  
 D.A. Moreira De Godoy<sup>107</sup>, S. Moretto<sup>19</sup>, A. Morsch<sup>29</sup>, V. Muccifora<sup>65</sup>, E. Mudnic<sup>103</sup>, S. Muhuri<sup>116</sup>,  
 360 H. Müller<sup>29</sup>, M.G. Munhoz<sup>107</sup>, L. Musa<sup>29</sup>, A. Musso<sup>94</sup>, B.K. Nandi<sup>40</sup>, R. Nania<sup>97</sup>, E. Nappi<sup>98</sup>, C. Nattrass<sup>112</sup>,  
 N.P. Naumov<sup>87</sup>, S. Navin<sup>90</sup>, T.K. Nayak<sup>116</sup>, S. Nazarenko<sup>87</sup>, G. Nazarov<sup>87</sup>, A. Nedosekin<sup>46</sup>, M. Nicassio<sup>27</sup>,  
 B.S. Nielsen<sup>71</sup>, T. Niida<sup>114</sup>, S. Nikolaev<sup>88</sup>, V. Nikolic<sup>86</sup>, S. Nikulin<sup>88</sup>, V. Nikulin<sup>75</sup>, B.S. Nilsen<sup>76</sup>,  
 M.S. Nilsson<sup>17</sup>, F. Noferini<sup>97,9</sup>, P. Nomokonov<sup>59</sup>, G. Nooren<sup>45</sup>, N. Novitzky<sup>37</sup>, A. Nyanin<sup>88</sup>, A. Nyatha<sup>40</sup>,  
 C. Nygaard<sup>71</sup>, J. Nystrand<sup>14</sup>, A. Ochirov<sup>117</sup>, H. Oeschler<sup>53,29</sup>, S.K. Oh<sup>36</sup>, S. Oh<sup>120</sup>, J. Oleniacz<sup>118</sup>,  
 365 C. Oppedisano<sup>94</sup>, A. Ortiz Velasquez<sup>28,55</sup>, G. Ortona<sup>25</sup>, A. Oskarsson<sup>28</sup>, P. Ostrowski<sup>118</sup>, J. Otwinowski<sup>85</sup>,  
 K. Oyama<sup>82</sup>, K. Ozawa<sup>113</sup>, Y. Pachmayer<sup>82</sup>, M. Pachr<sup>33</sup>, F. Padilla<sup>25</sup>, P. Pagano<sup>24</sup>, G. Paic<sup>55</sup>, F. Painke<sup>35</sup>,  
 C. Pajares<sup>12</sup>, S.K. Pal<sup>116</sup>, S. Pal<sup>11</sup>, A. Palaha<sup>90</sup>, A. Palmeri<sup>99</sup>, V. Papikyan<sup>121</sup>, G.S. Pappalardo<sup>99</sup>, W.J. Park<sup>85</sup>,  
 A. Passfeld<sup>54</sup>, B. Pastirčák<sup>47</sup>, D.I. Patalakha<sup>43</sup>, V. Paticchio<sup>98</sup>, A. Pavlinov<sup>119</sup>, T. Pawlak<sup>118</sup>, T. Peitzmann<sup>45</sup>,  
 E. Pereira De Oliveira Filho<sup>107</sup>, D. Peresunko<sup>88</sup>, C.E. Pérez Lara<sup>72</sup>, E. Perez Lezama<sup>55</sup>, D. Perini<sup>29</sup>,  
 370 D. Perrino<sup>27</sup>, W. Peryt<sup>118</sup>, A. Pesci<sup>97</sup>, V. Peskov<sup>29,55</sup>, Y. Pestov<sup>3</sup>, V. Petráček<sup>33</sup>, M. Petran<sup>33</sup>, M. Petris<sup>70</sup>,  
 P. Petrov<sup>90</sup>, M. Petrovici<sup>70</sup>, C. Petta<sup>23</sup>, S. Piano<sup>92</sup>, A. Piccotti<sup>94</sup>, M. Pikna<sup>32</sup>, P. Pillot<sup>102</sup>, O. Pinazza<sup>29</sup>,  
 L. Pinsky<sup>110</sup>, N. Pitz<sup>52</sup>, F. Piuz<sup>29</sup>, D.B. Piyarathna<sup>110</sup>, M. Płoskoń<sup>67</sup>, J. Pluta<sup>118</sup>, T. Pocheptsov<sup>59,17</sup>,  
 S. Pochybova<sup>60</sup>, P.L.M. Podesta-Lerma<sup>106</sup>, M.G. Poghosyan<sup>29,25</sup>, K. Polák<sup>49</sup>, B. Polichtchouk<sup>43</sup>, A. Pop<sup>70</sup>,  
 S. Porteboeuf-Houssais<sup>63</sup>, V. Pospíšil<sup>33</sup>, B. Potukuchi<sup>80</sup>, S.K. Prasad<sup>119</sup>, R. Preghenella<sup>97,9</sup>, F. Prino<sup>94</sup>,  
 375 C.A. Pruneau<sup>119</sup>, I. Pshenichnov<sup>44</sup>, S. Puchagin<sup>87</sup>, G. Puudu<sup>18</sup>, J. Pujol Teixido<sup>51</sup>, A. Pulvirenti<sup>23,29</sup>,  
 V. Punin<sup>87</sup>, M. Putiš<sup>34</sup>, J. Putschke<sup>119,120</sup>, E. Quercigh<sup>29</sup>, H. Qvigstad<sup>17</sup>, A. Rachevski<sup>92</sup>, A. Rademakers<sup>29</sup>,  
 S. Radomski<sup>82</sup>, T.S. Rähä<sup>37</sup>, J. Rak<sup>37</sup>, A. Rakotozafindrabe<sup>11</sup>, L. Ramello<sup>26</sup>, A. Ramírez Reyes<sup>8</sup>,  
 S. Raniwala<sup>81</sup>, R. Raniwala<sup>81</sup>, S.S. Räsänen<sup>37</sup>, B.T. Rascanu<sup>52</sup>, D. Rathee<sup>77</sup>, K.F. Read<sup>112</sup>, J.S. Real<sup>64</sup>,  
 K. Redlich<sup>100,57</sup>, P. Reichelt<sup>52</sup>, M. Reicher<sup>45</sup>, R. Renfordt<sup>52</sup>, A.R. Reolon<sup>65</sup>, A. Reshetin<sup>44</sup>, F. Rettig<sup>35</sup>,  
 380 J.-P. Revol<sup>29</sup>, K. Reygers<sup>82</sup>, L. Riccati<sup>94</sup>, R.A. Ricci<sup>66</sup>, T. Richert<sup>28</sup>, M. Richter<sup>17</sup>, P. Riedler<sup>29</sup>, W. Riegler<sup>29</sup>,  
 F. Riggi<sup>23,99</sup>, M. Rodríguez Cahuantzi<sup>1</sup>, K. Røed<sup>14</sup>, D. Rohr<sup>35</sup>, D. Röhrich<sup>14</sup>, R. Romita<sup>85</sup>, F. Ronchetti<sup>65</sup>,  
 P. Rosnet<sup>63</sup>, S. Rossegger<sup>29</sup>, A. Rossi<sup>19</sup>, F. Roukoutakis<sup>78</sup>, C. Roy<sup>58</sup>, P. Roy<sup>89</sup>, A.J. Rubio Montero<sup>7</sup>, R. Rui<sup>20</sup>,

E. Ryabinkin<sup>88</sup>, A. Rybicki<sup>104</sup>, S. Sadovsky<sup>43</sup>, K. Šafařík<sup>29</sup>, R. Sahoo<sup>41</sup>, P.K. Sahu<sup>48</sup>, J. Saini<sup>116</sup>,  
H. Sakaguchi<sup>38</sup>, S. Sakai<sup>67</sup>, D. Sakata<sup>114</sup>, C.A. Salgado<sup>12</sup>, J. Salzwedel<sup>15</sup>, S. Sambyal<sup>80</sup>, V. Samsonov<sup>75</sup>,  
385 X. Sanchez Castro<sup>55,58</sup>, L. Šándor<sup>47</sup>, A. Sandoval<sup>56</sup>, S. Sano<sup>113</sup>, M. Sano<sup>114</sup>, R. Santo<sup>54</sup>, R. Santoro<sup>98,29</sup>,  
J. Sarkamo<sup>37</sup>, E. Scapparone<sup>97</sup>, F. Scarlassara<sup>19</sup>, R.P. Scharenberg<sup>83</sup>, C. Schiaua<sup>70</sup>, R. Schicker<sup>82</sup>,  
C. Schmidt<sup>85</sup>, H.R. Schmidt<sup>85,115</sup>, S. Schreiner<sup>29</sup>, S. Schuchmann<sup>52</sup>, J. Schukraft<sup>29</sup>, Y. Schutz<sup>29,102</sup>,  
K. Schwarz<sup>85</sup>, K. Schweda<sup>85,82</sup>, G. Scioli<sup>21</sup>, E. Scmarparin<sup>94</sup>, P.A. Scott<sup>90</sup>, R. Scott<sup>112</sup>, G. Segato<sup>19</sup>,  
I. Selyuzhenkov<sup>85</sup>, S. Senyukov<sup>26,58</sup>, J. Seo<sup>84</sup>, S. Serchi<sup>18</sup>, E. Serradilla<sup>7,56</sup>, A. Sevcenco<sup>50</sup>, I. Sgura<sup>98</sup>,  
390 A. Shabetai<sup>102</sup>, G. Shabratova<sup>59</sup>, R. Shahoyan<sup>29</sup>, N. Sharma<sup>77</sup>, S. Sharma<sup>80</sup>, K. Shigaki<sup>38</sup>, M. Shimomura<sup>114</sup>,  
K. Shtejer<sup>6</sup>, Y. Sibirak<sup>88</sup>, M. Siciliano<sup>25</sup>, E. Sickling<sup>29</sup>, S. Siddhanta<sup>96</sup>, T. Siemiarczuk<sup>100</sup>, D. Silvermyr<sup>74</sup>,  
G. Simonetti<sup>27,29</sup>, R. Singaraju<sup>116</sup>, R. Singh<sup>80</sup>, S. Singha<sup>116</sup>, B.C. Sinha<sup>116</sup>, T. Sinha<sup>89</sup>, B. Sitar<sup>32</sup>, M. Sitta<sup>26</sup>,  
T.B. Skaali<sup>17</sup>, K. Skjerdal<sup>14</sup>, R. Smakal<sup>33</sup>, N. Smirnov<sup>120</sup>, R.J.M. Snellings<sup>45</sup>, C. Søgaard<sup>71</sup>, R. Soltz<sup>68</sup>,  
H. Son<sup>16</sup>, J. Song<sup>84</sup>, M. Song<sup>123</sup>, C. Soos<sup>29</sup>, F. Soramel<sup>19</sup>, I. Sputowska<sup>104</sup>, M. Spyropoulou-Stassinaki<sup>78</sup>,  
395 B.K. Srivastava<sup>83</sup>, J. Stachel<sup>82</sup>, I. Stan<sup>50</sup>, I. Stan<sup>50</sup>, G. Stefanek<sup>100</sup>, G. Stefanini<sup>29</sup>, T. Steinbeck<sup>35</sup>,  
M. Steinpreis<sup>15</sup>, E. Stenlund<sup>28</sup>, G. Steyn<sup>79</sup>, D. Stocco<sup>102</sup>, M. Stolpovskiy<sup>43</sup>, K. Strabykin<sup>87</sup>, P. Strmen<sup>32</sup>,  
A.A.P. Suaide<sup>107</sup>, M.A. Subieta Vásquez<sup>25</sup>, T. Sugitate<sup>38</sup>, C. Suire<sup>42</sup>, M. Sukhorukov<sup>87</sup>, R. Sultanov<sup>46</sup>,  
M. Šumbera<sup>73</sup>, T. Susa<sup>86</sup>, A. Szanto de Toledo<sup>107</sup>, I. Szarka<sup>32</sup>, A. Szostak<sup>14</sup>, C. Tagridis<sup>78</sup>, J. Takahashi<sup>108</sup>,  
J.D. Tapia Takaki<sup>42</sup>, A. Tauro<sup>29</sup>, G. Tejeda Muñoz<sup>1</sup>, A. Telesca<sup>29</sup>, C. Terrevoli<sup>27</sup>, J. Thäder<sup>85</sup>, D. Thomas<sup>45</sup>,  
400 R. Tieulent<sup>109</sup>, A.R. Timmins<sup>110</sup>, D. Tlusty<sup>33</sup>, A. Toia<sup>35,29</sup>, H. Torii<sup>38,113</sup>, L. Toscano<sup>94</sup>, F. Tosello<sup>94</sup>,  
D. Truesdale<sup>15</sup>, W.H. Trzaska<sup>37</sup>, T. Tsuji<sup>113</sup>, A. Tumkin<sup>87</sup>, R. Turrisi<sup>93</sup>, T.S. Tveter<sup>17</sup>, J. Ulery<sup>52</sup>,  
K. Ullaland<sup>14</sup>, J. Ulrich<sup>61,51</sup>, A. Uras<sup>109</sup>, J. Urbán<sup>34</sup>, G.M. Urciuoli<sup>95</sup>, G.L. Usai<sup>18</sup>, M. Vajzer<sup>33,73</sup>,  
M. Vala<sup>59,47</sup>, L. Valencia Palomo<sup>42</sup>, S. Vallero<sup>82</sup>, N. van der Kolk<sup>72</sup>, P. Vande Vyvre<sup>29</sup>, M. van Leeuwen<sup>45</sup>,  
L. Vannucci<sup>66</sup>, A. Vargas<sup>1</sup>, R. Varma<sup>40</sup>, M. Vasileiou<sup>78</sup>, A. Vasiliev<sup>88</sup>, V. Vechernin<sup>117</sup>, M. Veldhoen<sup>45</sup>,  
405 M. Venaruzzo<sup>20</sup>, E. Vercellin<sup>25</sup>, S. Vergara<sup>1</sup>, D.C. Vernekohl<sup>54</sup>, R. Vernet<sup>5</sup>, M. Verweij<sup>45</sup>, L. Vickovic<sup>103</sup>,  
G. Viesti<sup>19</sup>, O. Vikhlyantsev<sup>87</sup>, Z. Vilakazi<sup>79</sup>, O. Villalobos Baillie<sup>90</sup>, A. Vinogradov<sup>88</sup>, L. Vinogradov<sup>117</sup>,  
Y. Vinogradov<sup>87</sup>, T. Virgili<sup>24</sup>, Y.P. Viyogi<sup>116</sup>, A. Vodopyanov<sup>59</sup>, K. Voloshin<sup>46</sup>, S. Voloshin<sup>119</sup>, G. Volpe<sup>27,29</sup>,  
B. von Haller<sup>29</sup>, D. Vranic<sup>85</sup>, G. Øvrebek<sup>14</sup>, J. Vrláková<sup>34</sup>, B. Vulpescu<sup>63</sup>, A. Vyushin<sup>87</sup>, B. Wagner<sup>14</sup>,  
V. Wagner<sup>33</sup>, R. Wan<sup>58,39</sup>, D. Wang<sup>39</sup>, M. Wang<sup>39</sup>, Y. Wang<sup>82</sup>, Y. Wang<sup>39</sup>, K. Watanabe<sup>114</sup>, J.P. Wessels<sup>29,54</sup>,  
410 U. Westerhoff<sup>54</sup>, J. Wiechula<sup>115</sup>, J. Wikne<sup>17</sup>, M. Wilde<sup>54</sup>, G. Wilk<sup>100</sup>, A. Wilk<sup>54</sup>, M.C.S. Williams<sup>97</sup>,  
B. Windelband<sup>82</sup>, L. Xaplanteris Karampatsos<sup>105</sup>, H. Yang<sup>11</sup>, S. Yang<sup>14</sup>, S. Yasnopolskiy<sup>88</sup>, J. Yi<sup>84</sup>, Z. Yin<sup>39</sup>,  
H. Yokoyama<sup>114</sup>, I.-K. Yoo<sup>84</sup>, J. Yoon<sup>123</sup>, W. Yu<sup>52</sup>, X. Yuan<sup>39</sup>, I. Yushmanov<sup>88</sup>, C. Zach<sup>33</sup>, C. Zampolli<sup>97,29</sup>,  
S. Zaporozhets<sup>59</sup>, A. Zarochentsev<sup>117</sup>, P. Závada<sup>49</sup>, N. Zaviyalov<sup>87</sup>, H. Zbroszczyk<sup>118</sup>, P. Zelnicsek<sup>51</sup>,  
I.S. Zgura<sup>50</sup>, M. Zhalov<sup>75</sup>, X. Zhang<sup>63,39</sup>, Y. Zhou<sup>45</sup>, D. Zhou<sup>39</sup>, F. Zhou<sup>39</sup>, X. Zhu<sup>39</sup>, A. Zichichi<sup>21,9</sup>,  
415 A. Zimmermann<sup>82</sup>, G. Zinovjev<sup>2</sup>, Y. Zoccarato<sup>109</sup>, M. Zynovyev<sup>2</sup>

## Affiliation notes

<sup>i</sup> Also at: M.V.Lomonosov Moscow State University, D.V.Skobel'tsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics, Moscow, Russia

<sup>ii</sup> Also at: "Vinča" Institute of Nuclear Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia

## Collaboration Institutes

- 1 Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Puebla, Mexico
- 2 Bogolyubov Institute for Theoretical Physics, Kiev, Ukraine
- 3 Budker Institute for Nuclear Physics, Novosibirsk, Russia
- 4 California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California, United States
- 425 5 Centre de Calcul de l'IN2P3, Villeurbanne, France
- 6 Centro de Aplicaciones Tecnológicas y Desarrollo Nuclear (CEADEN), Havana, Cuba
- 7 Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas Medioambientales y Tecnológicas (CIEMAT), Madrid, Spain
- 8 Centro de Investigación y de Estudios Avanzados (CINVESTAV), Mexico City and Mérida, Mexico
- 9 Centro Fermi – Centro Studi e Ricerche e Museo Storico della Fisica "Enrico Fermi", Rome, Italy
- 430 10 Chicago State University, Chicago, United States
- 11 Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique, IRFU, Saclay, France
- 12 Departamento de Física de Partículas and IGFAE, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- 13 Department of Physics Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India
- 435 14 Department of Physics and Technology, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

- 15 Department of Physics, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, United States
- 16 Department of Physics, Sejong University, Seoul, South Korea
- 17 Department of Physics, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
- 18 Dipartimento di Fisica dell'Università and Sezione INFN, Cagliari, Italy
- 440 19 Dipartimento di Fisica dell'Università and Sezione INFN, Padova, Italy
- 20 Dipartimento di Fisica dell'Università and Sezione INFN, Trieste, Italy
- 21 Dipartimento di Fisica dell'Università and Sezione INFN, Bologna, Italy
- 22 Dipartimento di Fisica dell'Università 'La Sapienza' and Sezione INFN, Rome, Italy
- 23 Dipartimento di Fisica e Astronomia dell'Università and Sezione INFN, Catania, Italy
- 445 24 Dipartimento di Fisica 'E.R. Caianiello' dell'Università and Gruppo Collegato INFN, Salerno, Italy
- 25 Dipartimento di Fisica Sperimentale dell'Università and Sezione INFN, Turin, Italy
- 26 Dipartimento di Scienze e Tecnologie Avanzate dell'Università del Piemonte Orientale and Gruppo Collegato INFN, Alessandria, Italy
- 27 Dipartimento Interateneo di Fisica 'M. Merlin' and Sezione INFN, Bari, Italy
- 450 28 Division of Experimental High Energy Physics, University of Lund, Lund, Sweden
- 29 European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), Geneva, Switzerland
- 30 Fachhochschule Köln, Köln, Germany
- 31 Faculty of Engineering, Bergen University College, Bergen, Norway
- 32 Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia
- 455 33 Faculty of Nuclear Sciences and Physical Engineering, Czech Technical University in Prague, Prague, Czech Republic
- 34 Faculty of Science, P.J. Šafárik University, Košice, Slovakia
- 35 Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany
- 460 36 Gangneung-Wonju National University, Gangneung, South Korea
- 37 Helsinki Institute of Physics (HIP) and University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland
- 38 Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan
- 39 Hua-Zhong Normal University, Wuhan, China
- 40 Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, India
- 465 41 Indian Institute of Technology Indore (IIT), Indore, India
- 42 Institut de Physique Nucléaire d'Orsay (IPNO), Université Paris-Sud, CNRS-IN2P3, Orsay, France
- 43 Institute for High Energy Physics, Protvino, Russia
- 44 Institute for Nuclear Research, Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia
- 45 Nikhef, National Institute for Subatomic Physics and Institute for Subatomic Physics of Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 470 46 Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics, Moscow, Russia
- 47 Institute of Experimental Physics, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Košice, Slovakia
- 48 Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar, India
- 49 Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague, Czech Republic
- 475 50 Institute of Space Sciences (ISS), Bucharest, Romania
- 51 Institut für Informatik, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany
- 52 Institut für Kernphysik, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany
- 53 Institut für Kernphysik, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Darmstadt, Germany
- 54 Institut für Kernphysik, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Münster, Germany
- 480 55 Instituto de Ciencias Nucleares, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico
- 56 Instituto de Física, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Mexico
- 57 Institut of Theoretical Physics, University of Wrocław
- 58 Institut Pluridisciplinaire Hubert Curien (IPHC), Université de Strasbourg, CNRS-IN2P3, Strasbourg, France
- 485 59 Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR), Dubna, Russia
- 60 KFKI Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary
- 61 Kirchhoff-Institut für Physik, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
- 62 Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information
- 490 63 Laboratoire de Physique Corpusculaire (LPC), Clermont Université, Université Blaise Pascal, CNRS-IN2P3, Clermont-Ferrand, France

- 64 Laboratoire de Physique Subatomique et de Cosmologie (LPSC), Université Joseph Fourier, CNRS-IN2P3,  
Institut Polytechnique de Grenoble, Grenoble, France
- 65 Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, INFN, Frascati, Italy
- 495 66 Laboratori Nazionali di Legnaro, INFN, Legnaro, Italy
- 67 Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, California, United States
- 68 Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, California, United States
- 69 Moscow Engineering Physics Institute, Moscow, Russia
- 70 National Institute for Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Bucharest, Romania
- 500 71 Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 72 Nikhef, National Institute for Subatomic Physics, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 73 Nuclear Physics Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Řež u Prahy, Czech Republic
- 74 Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, United States
- 75 Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Gatchina, Russia
- 505 76 Physics Department, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, United States
- 77 Physics Department, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
- 78 Physics Department, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
- 79 Physics Department, University of Cape Town, iThemba LABS, Cape Town, South Africa
- 80 Physics Department, University of Jammu, Jammu, India
- 510 81 Physics Department, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India
- 82 Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany
- 83 Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, United States
- 84 Pusan National University, Pusan, South Korea
- 85 Research Division and ExtreMe Matter Institute EMMI, GSI Helmholtzzentrum für  
515 Schwerionenforschung, Darmstadt, Germany
- 86 Rudjer Bošković Institute, Zagreb, Croatia
- 87 Russian Federal Nuclear Center (VNIIEF), Sarov, Russia
- 88 Russian Research Centre Kurchatov Institute, Moscow, Russia
- 89 Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata, India
- 520 90 School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom
- 91 Sección Física, Departamento de Ciencias, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, Peru
- 92 Sezione INFN, Trieste, Italy
- 93 Sezione INFN, Padova, Italy
- 94 Sezione INFN, Turin, Italy
- 525 95 Sezione INFN, Rome, Italy
- 96 Sezione INFN, Cagliari, Italy
- 97 Sezione INFN, Bologna, Italy
- 98 Sezione INFN, Bari, Italy
- 99 Sezione INFN, Catania, Italy
- 530 100 Soltan Institute for Nuclear Studies, Warsaw, Poland
- 101 Nuclear Physics Group, STFC Daresbury Laboratory, Daresbury, United Kingdom
- 102 SUBATECH, Ecole des Mines de Nantes, Université de Nantes, CNRS-IN2P3, Nantes, France
- 103 Technical University of Split FESB, Split, Croatia
- 104 The Henryk Niewodniczanski Institute of Nuclear Physics, Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow, Poland
- 535 105 The University of Texas at Austin, Physics Department, Austin, TX, United States
- 106 Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa, Culiacán, Mexico
- 107 Universidade de São Paulo (USP), São Paulo, Brazil
- 108 Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP), Campinas, Brazil
- 109 Université de Lyon, Université Lyon 1, CNRS/IN2P3, IPN-Lyon, Villeurbanne, France
- 540 110 University of Houston, Houston, Texas, United States
- 111 University of Technology and Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria
- 112 University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, United States
- 113 University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
- 114 University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan
- 545 115 Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany
- 116 Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre, Kolkata, India
- 117 V. Fock Institute for Physics, St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia

<sup>118</sup> Warsaw University of Technology, Warsaw, Poland

<sup>119</sup> Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, United States

550 <sup>120</sup> Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, United States

<sup>121</sup> Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

<sup>122</sup> Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

<sup>123</sup> Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea

555 <sup>124</sup> Zentrum für Technologietransfer und Telekommunikation (ZTT), Fachhochschule Worms, Worms,  
Germany