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The ATLAS Collaboration

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Keywords: ATLAS, $b^*$, single top-quark, excited quark

1. Introduction

The single top-quark signature is sensitive to many models of new physics [1]. Single top-quark production in the Standard Model (SM) has been measured at the LHC in the $t$-channel [2,3] and in association with a $W$ boson ($Wt$-channel) [4,5]. Searches for resonant production of a new particle which decays with a single top-quark have been carried out in the $s$-channel production of a top quark together with a $b$ quark [6,7]. This Letter presents the first search for a resonance decaying to a single top-quark and a $W$ boson [8]. Here we consider the production of an excited quark $b^*$ which decays to a single top-quark and a $W$ boson. This is the first search for excited-quarks coupling to the third generation of fermions.

Previous searches for excited quarks have focused on their strong interactions [9,10], as well as their electromagnetic interactions [11,12] with SM quarks. These searches exploit the coupling between the excited quark and up or down quarks in the proton. Here the production of excited-quarks coupling primarily to the third generation of SM quarks is investigated. This coupling occurs for example in Randall–Sundrum models that address the strong interaction sector [13,14] or in models with a heavy gluon partner, such as composite Higgs models [15–17]. The $b^*$ quark is produced singly through its coupling to a $b$ quark and a gluon, as shown in Fig.1.

The Lagrangian describing this interaction is given by

$$
\mathcal{L} = \frac{g_s}{2\Lambda} G_{\mu\nu} \bar{b} \gamma^{\mu\nu}(\kappa_b^L P_L + \kappa_b^R P_R) b^* + \text{h.c.}, \tag{1}
$$

where $g_s$ is the strong coupling, $G_{\mu\nu}$ the gauge field tensor of the gluon and $\Lambda = m_{t'}$ the scale of the new physics. $P_L$ and $P_R$ are the left- and right-handed projection operators and $\kappa_b^L$ and $\kappa_b^R$ are the respective coupling strengths. This analysis is thus complementary to excited-quark searches focusing on the coupling to the first generation [2,20,21]. Single $b^*$-quark production can also reveal the chiral nature of the excited bottom-quark [8].

In addition to the chromomagnetic coupling, the $b^*$ quark investigated here also has weak couplings, as in a general class of new physics models where new heavy particles stabilise the Higgs-boson mass at the electroweak scale [22–26]. In such models, the heavy
quarks can have left-handed or right-handed couplings to the $W$ boson or can be vector-like with equal strength for both couplings. The Lagrangian describing the electroweak decay of the $b^*$ quark, shown in Fig. [1] is

$$\mathcal{L} = \frac{g_2}{\sqrt{2}} W^\mu_\nu \gamma_\nu \left( g_L P_L + g_R P_R \right) b^* + \text{h.c.},$$

(2)

where $g_2$ is the SU(2)$_L$ weak coupling and $g_L$ and $g_R$ are the coupling strengths for left-handed and right-handed couplings, respectively.

While the search is general and considers any resonance decaying into the $Wt$ signature, three specific $b^*$-quark coupling scenarios are considered in order to extract $b^*$-quark coupling and mass limits: left-handed ($\kappa_L^b = g_L$ non-zero and $\kappa_R^b = g_R = 0$), right-handed ($\kappa_L^b = g_L = 0$ and $\kappa_R^b$ non-zero) and vector-like ($\kappa_L^b = \kappa_R^b = \kappa_{LR}^b$ and $g_L = g_R = g_{LR}$ non-zero) production and decay. Limits are derived as a function of the $b^*$-quark mass as well as the couplings $\kappa_{LR}^b$ and $g_{LR}$. These limits take into account both the change of the production cross-section and the $b^* \to Wt$ decay branching ratio, which depend on the couplings and the $b^*$-quark mass. The branching ratio to $Wt$ varies between 20% at $m_{b^*} = 300$ GeV and 40% at higher values, with decays to $bg$, $bZ$ and $bH$ also allowed. Contributions from non-$Wt$ decay modes that may increase the $b^*$-quark acceptance of this analysis are not considered, resulting in conservative limits. Signal event yields presented in the following tables are calculated with $\kappa_L^b = g_L = 1$ and $\kappa_R^b = g_R = 0$.

For a left-handed $b^*$ at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV with $\kappa_L^b = g_L = 1$ and $\kappa_R^b = g_R = 0$, the leading-order cross section times branching ratio to $Wt$ is 0.80 pb for $m_{b^*} = 900$ GeV [8]. The uncertainties due to the choice of factorisation and renormalisation scales are evaluated by varying the scales between $m_{b^*}/2$ and $2 \times m_{b^*}$, and those due to the choice of PDF by comparing results obtained using the CT10 [27], MRST [28] and NNPDF [29] sets. These uncertainties are added in quadrature to yield cross-section uncertainties ranging from 12% at $m_{b^*} = 300$ GeV to 25% at $m_{b^*} = 1200$ GeV.

This channel proceeds via two $W$ bosons from $b^*$-quark and top-quark decays. At least one $W$ boson is required to decay to a lepton (electron or muon). The analysis is performed separately in the dilepton and lepton+jets final states. The lepton+jets channel has the advantage that the invariant mass of the $b^*$ quark can be reconstructed, whereas the dilepton channel benefits from smaller backgrounds. A discriminant that separates the $b^*$-quark signal from the backgrounds is defined in each final state. Limits on $b^*$-quark production are obtained from a combined Bayesian analysis of both
discriminant distributions.

2. The ATLAS detector

The ATLAS detector [30] is a general purpose detector with a precise tracking system, calorimeters and an outer muon spectrometer. The inner tracking system consists of a silicon pixel detector, a silicon microstrip tracker, and a straw-tube transition radiation tracker. This system is immersed in a 2 T axial magnetic field produced by a solenoid and provides charged particle tracking and identification in the pseudorapidity ($|\eta| < 2.5$). The central calorimeter system consists of a liquid-argon electromagnetic sampling calorimeter with high granularity and an iron/scintillator tile calorimeter providing hadronic energy measurements in the central pseudorapidity range ($|\eta| < 1.7$). The endcap and forward regions are instrumented with liquid-argon calorimeters for both electromagnetic and hadronic energy measurements up to $|\eta| = 4.9$. The muon spectrometer is operated in a toroidal magnetic field provided by air-core superconducting magnets and includes tracking chambers for precise muon momentum measurements up to $|\eta| = 2.7$ and trigger chambers covering the range $|\eta| < 2.4$.

3. Data and simulated samples

This analysis uses data collected with the ATLAS detector in 2011, corresponding to an integrated luminosity of 4.7$\pm$0.2 fb$^{-1}$ [31,32] of 7 TeV proton–proton ($pp$) collisions delivered by the LHC. The data are selected using single-electron or single-muon triggers whose efficiencies reach their plateau at 25 GeV and 20 GeV, respectively [33,34]. The data must also pass stringent quality requirements [35]. Events are selected if they contain at least one primary vertex candidate with at least five associated tracks.

The signal is modelled using MadGraph5 [36] and the CTEQ6L1 parton distribution functions (PDFs) [37]. Events with single top-quarks in the $t$-channel are generated with the AcerMC [38] generator, using the MRST LO* PDF set [39]. MadGraph5

\footnote{ATLAS uses a right-handed coordinate system with its origin at the nominal interaction point (IP) in the centre of the detector and the $z$-axis along the beam pipe. The $x$-axis points from the IP to the centre of the LHC ring, and the $y$-axis points upwards. Cylindrical coordinates $(\rho, \phi)$ are used in the transverse plane, $\phi$ is the azimuthal angle around the beam pipe. The pseudorapidity $\eta$ is defined in terms of the polar angle $\theta$ as $\eta = - \ln(\tan \theta/2)$.}
and ACF@MC are interfaced to Pythia [41] for parton showering and modelling of the underlying event. Other processes producing single top-quarks and top-quark pairs (t̄t) are modelled with the next-to-leading-order(NLO) generator MC@NLO [41] using the CT10 PDF set [27], interfaced to Herwig [42] for parton showering and JIMMY [43] for the underlying event. AlgoGen [44] is used to model vector boson (W and Z) production in association with jets as well as diboson processes (WW, WZ and ZZ) using the CTEQ6L1 PDF set. It is interfaced to Herwig for parton shower modelling. In the lepton+jets analysis the diboson processes are modelled with Herwig only. Decays of τ leptons are handled by Tauola [45]. A top-quark mass of 172.5 GeV [46] is assumed. Approximate next-to-next-to-leading-order(NNLO) cross-section calculations are used to normalise the t̄t [47] (HÄNNÖ) and single top-quark samples [48–50], while the vector boson and diboson samples are normalised using calculations with MCFM [51] at NNLO and NLO, respectively.

A variable number of additional pp interactions (pile-up) are overlaid on simulated events, which are then weighted to reproduce the distribution of the number of collisions per bunch crossing observed in data. All samples are passed through a GEANT4-based simulation [52] of the ATLAS detector [53] and are then reconstructed using the same procedure as for collision data.

4. Physics object selection

Electron candidates are reconstructed from clusters of energy deposits in the calorimeter [54]. The transverse energy $E_T$ of electron candidates is required to be larger than 25 GeV and their pseudorapidity is required to be $|η| < 2.47$. Electrons in the barrel–endcap transition region of the calorimeter, corresponding to $1.37 < |η| < 1.52$, are not considered. Selected electrons must pass a set of "tight" quality criteria [54] and the electrons must be matched to a track reconstructed in the inner tracking system. Electrons must also be isolated from close-by tracks in a cone of $ΔR = \sqrt{(Δη)^2 + (Δφ)^2} < 0.3$ and from calorimeter energy deposits not belonging to the electron candidate in a cone of $ΔR < 0.2$. The isolation requirements on the sum of transverse momenta of tracks in the cone and on the sum of energy deposits in the calorimeter in the cone are chosen as a function of $p_T$ and η such that an efficiency of 90% for electrons in the simulation is achieved.

Muon candidates are reconstructed from matching tracks in the muon spectrometer and inner tracking systems. Muons are required to have transverse momentum $p_T > 25$ GeV and $|η| < 2.5$ and fulfil tight quality criteria [55]. Muons must be isolated from close-by tracks in a cone of $ΔR < 0.3$ and from energy deposits in the calorimeter in a cone of $ΔR < 0.2$. The sum of transverse momenta of tracks in the cone must not exceed 2.5 GeV and the sum of energy deposits in the calorimeter in the cone must be below 4 GeV.

In order to reject events in which a muon emitting a hard photon is also reconstructed as an electron, events are vetoed if a selected electron–muon pair shares the same track.

Jets are reconstructed from clusters of energy deposits in the calorimeter [56] using the anti-$k_t$ algorithm [57] with a radius parameter $R = 0.4$. These jets are calibrated to the hadronic energy scale through $p_T$- and η-dependent scale factors, which are derived from simulation. An additional uncertainty due to residual differences between simulation and data is applied in the analysis [58]. Jets are required to have $p_T > 30$ (25) GeV and $|η| < 2.5$ in the dilepton (lepton+jets) channel. The ratio of the scalar sum of the $p_T$ of tracks associated with the jet and the primary vertex to the scalar sum of the $p_T$ of all tracks associated with the jet must be at least 0.75 to reject jets from pile-up interactions. Muons overlapping with jets within $ΔR < 0.4$ are removed and the jet is kept. The closest jet overlapping with electrons within $ΔR < 0.2$ is removed and the electron is kept. If electrons subsequently still overlap with any remaining jet within $ΔR < 0.4$, they are removed. Information about jets containing $b$ quarks [59] is also used in the lepton+jets channel. A neural network combines lifetime-related information reconstructed from the tracks associated with each jet. At the chosen working point, the $b$-tagging algorithm has an efficiency of 70% (20%/0.7%) for jets containing $b$ quarks ($c$ quarks/ light quarks or gluons) in a simulated $t̄t$ sample.

The missing transverse momentum $E_T^{miss}$ is calculated using topological clusters of energy deposits in the calorimeter and corrected for the presence of muons [60].

5. Event selection in the dilepton channel

The event selection and background modelling in the dilepton channel is the same as in the ATLAS measurement of the single top-quark production in the $W+$ channel [4]. Candidate events must contain exactly two leptons (ee, $μμ$ or $eμ$) with opposite electric charge and exactly one jet. At least one of the leptons in each event must match the corresponding trigger-level object. No
b-tagging requirement is made since the dominant background from tt production also contains b quarks. The $E_T^{miss}$ is required to be greater than 50 GeV. In the ee and $\mu\mu$ channels, the invariant mass of the lepton pair, $m_{\ell\ell}$, is required to be outside the Z boson mass window: $m_{\ell\ell} < 81$ GeV or $m_{\ell\ell} > 101$ GeV. In all three channels, the $Z \rightarrow \tau\tau$ background is reduced by a dedicated veto, which requires the sum of the azimuthal angle differences between each lepton and the $E_T^{miss}$ vector to be greater than 2.5 rad. After all cuts, the acceptance for signal events with $m_T = 800$ GeV in which both W bosons decay leptonically (to either e or $\mu$) is 26%.

The main background, accounting for 63% of the total, comes from tt events in which one of the two jets originating from b quarks is not detected. The second largest background is from SM Wt production, which has the same final state as the $b^*$-quark signal, and accounts for 13% of the total background. Diboson events produced in association with jets account for 12% of the total background. With the exception of single- and diboson samples, these backgrounds are taken from NLO simulation and are normalised to their NNLO theoretical predictions. Drell–Yan (DY) events contribute a small background of 7.3% to the sum of the signal at a few mass points are compared to data in Table I. The predicted event yields for the backgrounds and signal are shown in Fig. 2.

The contribution from $\tau\tau$ final states, where both $\tau$ leptons decay leptonically, is estimated from simulated samples, with the normalisation checked in an orthogonal data sample obtained by reversing the $Z \rightarrow \tau^+\tau^-$ veto cut described above. $Z \rightarrow \tau^+\tau^-$ events account for 0.7% of the total background. The small background from jets that are misidentified as primary leptons and from non-prompt leptons (fake dileptons) is modelled and normalised using data [61]. It accounts for 4% of the background.

The predicted event yields for the backgrounds and signal at a few mass points are compared to data in Table I. The $p_T$ distributions of the two leptons and the jet are shown in Fig. 2.

A discriminating variable that separates the signal from the backgrounds is $H_T$, the scalar sum of the transverse momenta of the leptons, jet and $E_T^{miss}$. The $H_T$ distribution is shown in Fig. 3.

### 6. Event selection in the lepton+jets channel

The analysis in the lepton+jets channel follows the same background modelling strategy as the cross-section measurement for single top-quark production in
The signal yields are calculated with $\kappa_L = 1$ and $\kappa_H = 0$.

Table 1: Observed and predicted event yields in the dilepton channel with normalisation uncertainties. The signal yields are calculated with $\kappa_L = 1$ and $\kappa_H = 0$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Event yield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$b^+$ (400 GeV)</td>
<td>1250 ± 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^+$ (600 GeV)</td>
<td>211 ± 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^+$ (800 GeV)</td>
<td>41 ± 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^+$ (1000 GeV)</td>
<td>8.9 ± 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^+$ (1200 GeV)</td>
<td>2.1 ± 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Wt$</td>
<td>293 ± 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t\bar{t}$</td>
<td>1380 ± 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diboson</td>
<td>255 ± 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Z \rightarrow e^+e^-$</td>
<td>41 ± 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Z \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$</td>
<td>118 ± 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Z \rightarrow \tau^+\tau^-$</td>
<td>14 ± 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake dileptons</td>
<td>90 ± 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expected bkg.</td>
<td>2190 ± 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total observed</td>
<td>2259</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: $H_T$ distribution for data and background expectation for the dilepton channel. The hatched band shows the uncertainty due to the background normalisation. The signal for a $b^+$-quark mass of 800 GeV is also shown.
Figure 4: Kinematic distributions comparing data to predictions in the lepton+jets channel. "Other top" includes $t\bar{t}$, $s$- and $t$-channel single top-quark production. The hatched band shows the uncertainty due to the background normalisation. The last bin includes overflows.

Figure 5: Reconstructed mass distribution for data and background expectation for the lepton+jets channel. "Other top" includes $t\bar{t}$, $s$- and $t$-channel single top-quark production. The hatched band shows the uncertainty due to the background normalisation. The signal for a mass of 800 GeV is also shown. The last bin includes overflows.

### Table 2: Observed and expected event yields in the lepton+jets channel with normalisation uncertainties. The signal yields are calculated with $k_s = g_L = 1$ and $k_R = 0$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Event yield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$b^+ (400 \text{ GeV})$</td>
<td>12100 ± 1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^+ (600 \text{ GeV})$</td>
<td>1950 ± 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^+ (800 \text{ GeV})$</td>
<td>370 ± 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^+ (1000 \text{ GeV})$</td>
<td>79 ± 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b^+ (1200 \text{ GeV})$</td>
<td>20 ± 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Wt$</td>
<td>1660 ± 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single top $s, t$-channel</td>
<td>1960 ± 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t\bar{t}$</td>
<td>15700 ± 1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$W+\text{light jets}$</td>
<td>3200 ± 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$W+\text{jets HF}$</td>
<td>10900 ± 1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diboson</td>
<td>327 ± 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Z+\text{jets}$</td>
<td>1300 ± 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multijet</td>
<td>3500 ± 1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expected bkg.</td>
<td>38500 ± 2900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total observed</td>
<td>38175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Systematic uncertainties

Systematic uncertainties affecting the signal acceptance and the background normalisation are considered, together with uncertainties affecting the shape of the discriminant distributions. The main experimental source of systematic uncertainty comes from the limited knowledge of the jet energy scale [58], which carries an uncertainty of 2–7% parameterised as a function of jet $p_T$ and $\eta$. The presence of a $b$ quark in the jet adds an additional uncertainty of 2–5% to the jet energy scale uncertainty, depending on the jet $p_T$. Other jet-related uncertainty sources are the jet energy resolution, jet reconstruction efficiency and $b$-tagging efficiency [59]. Lepton-related uncertainties come from trigger and identification efficiencies as well as the lepton energy scale and resolution. Event-related uncertainties are due to the modelling of multiple proton-proton interactions and the underlying event as well as $E_{\text{miss}}$ [60]. The uncertainty on the integrated luminosity is 3.9% [31, 32].

Simulation uncertainties include modelling of the hard process, parton shower and hadronisation, and initial- and final-state radiation. These have been assessed for the $t\bar{t}$ background events by comparing different generators (Powheg and MC@NLO), different shower models (Pythia and Herwig), and for $t\bar{t}$ and signal events different settings for the amount of additional radiation [64]. Other sources of theoretical uncertainty include the normalisation for $t\bar{t}$ ($^{+7\%}_{-10\%}$) [47, 63, 67], sin-
ingle top-quark (±7%) \cite{48,50} and diboson (±5% with an additional 24% per extra jet) production \cite{61}, as well as the choice of PDF. The latter was assessed using the CT10 \cite{27}, MRST \cite{28} and NNPDF \cite{29} sets.

Additional uncertainties affect the data-driven background estimation. The uncertainty on the DY background normalisation in the dilepton channel is 10% for ee and \( \mu\mu \) final states and 60% for \( \tau\tau \) final states. The uncertainty on the fake-dileptons normalisation in the dilepton channel is 100%. The uncertainty on the \( W+\text{jets} \) normalisation in the lepton+jets channel is 13%. The \( W+\text{jets} \) flavour composition has two additional uncertainties: the HF contribution has a relative uncertainty of 6%, and the \( W_{bb}/W_{HF} \) ratio has an uncertainty of 17%. The multijet background normalisation in the lepton+jets channel has an uncertainty of 50%.

8. Statistical analysis

Both the \( H_T \) distribution in the dilepton channel and the reconstructed mass distribution in the lepton+jets channel show good agreement between the data and the background model. These two discriminants are used to set limits on the \( b^* \)-quark signal using a Bayesian analysis technique \cite{68}. The likelihood function is defined as

\[
L(\text{data}|\theta) = \prod_k P_k^{\text{obs}} e^{-\mu_k} \frac{\mu_k}{n_k!} \prod_i G_i,
\]

where \( k \) is the index of the discriminant template bin, running over both analysis channels; \( \mu_k = s_k + b_k \) is the sum of predicted signal and background yields; \( n_k \) is the observed yield and \( G_i \) is a Gaussian prior for the \( i \)th systematic uncertainty. A flat prior is assumed for the signal cross-section. Upper limits on the \( b^* \)-quark production cross-section times branching ratio to \( Wt \) are set at the 95% credibility level (CL) for a series of \( b^* \) masses at 100 GeV intervals.

The observed and expected cross-section limits as a function of the \( b^* \)-quark mass for the left-handed coupling scenario \( k^b_L = g_L = 1 \) and \( k^b_R = g_R = 0 \) are shown in Fig. 5 where the expected limit and its uncertainty are derived from ensembles of background-only pseudo-datasets. The intersection of the theoretical cross-section and the observed (expected) cross-section limit defines the observed (expected) \( b^* \)-quark mass limit. The observed lower limit on the \( b^* \)-quark mass for this left-handed coupling scenario is 870 GeV with an expectation of 910 GeV. When considering only the dilepton channel, the observed (expected) limit on the \( b^* \)-quark mass is 800 GeV (820 GeV); for the lepton+jets channel, the limits are 800 GeV (830 GeV).

Limits are also computed for models with right-handed and vector-like couplings of the \( b^* \)-quark. Setting \( k^b_L = g_L = 0 \) and \( k^b_R = g_R = 1 \), the observed lower mass limit is 920 GeV with an expected limit of 950 GeV. Setting \( k^b_L = k^b_R = g_L = g_R = 1 \), the observed lower mass limit is 1030 GeV with an expected limit of 1030 GeV.

At each mass point, the corresponding cross section is parameterised as a function of the couplings \( k^b_{LR} \) and \( g_{LR} \) in order to extract coupling limits in each of the three \( b^* \)-quark coupling scenarios. The resulting limit contours are shown in Fig. 7. The coupling limits increase as the theoretical cross-section decreases with \( b^* \) mass, except for the region between 400 GeV and 500 GeV where the backgrounds decrease rapidly with increasing mass (see Figs. 4 and 5).

9. Summary

A search for a singly produced excited \( b^* \)-quark in 4.7 \( fb^{-1} \) of data collected with the ATLAS detector in \( pp \) collisions at \( \sqrt{s} = 7 \) TeV has been presented. This is the first search for excited-quarks coupling to the third generation. It considers the dilepton and lepton+jets final states. Limits are computed as a function of the \( b^*gb \) and \( b^*Wt \) couplings in three different scenarios. For purely left-handed couplings and unit strength chromomagnetic coupling, \( b^* \) quarks with mass below 870 GeV are excluded at the 95% credibility level.
Figure 7: Limit contours at the 95% CL as a function of the coupling parameters for several different $b^*$-quark masses, for (a) left-handed $b^*$-quarks, (b) right-handed $b^*$-quarks and (c) vector-like $b^*$-quarks.

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References

The ATLAS Collaboration

38 AGH University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Physics and Applied Computer Science, Krakow, Poland
39 The Henryk Niewodniczanski Institute of Nuclear Physics, Polish Academy of Sciences, Krakow, Poland
40 Physics Department, Southern Methodist University, Dallas TX, United States of America
41 Physics Department, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson TX, United States of America
42 DESY, Hamburg and Zeuthen, Germany
43 Institut für Experimentelle Physik IV, Technische Universität Dortmund, Dortmund, Germany
44 Institut für Kern- und Teilchenphysik, Technische Universität Dresden, Dresden, Germany
45 SUPA - School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom
46 INFN Laboratori Nazionali di Frascati, Frascati, Italy
47 Physics Department, University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson TX, United States of America
48 Fakultät für Mathematik und Physik, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany
49 Section de Physique, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland
50 (a) INFN Sezione di Genova; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Genova, Genova, Italy
51 (a) E. Andronikashvili Institute of Physics, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi; (b) High Energy Physics Institute, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
52 II Physikalisches Institut, Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, Giessen, Germany
53 SUPA - School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom
54 II Physikalisches Institut, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, Germany
55 Laboratoire de Physique Subatomique et de Cosmologie, Université Joseph Fourier and CNRS/IN2P3 and Institut National Polytechnique de Grenoble, Grenoble, France
56 Department of Physics, Hampton University, Hampton VA, United States of America
57 Laboratory for Particle Physics and Cosmology, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, United States of America
58 (a) Kirchhoff-Institut für Physik, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg; (b) Physikalisches Institut, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Heidelberg; (c) ZITI Institut für technische Informatik, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Mannheim, Germany
59 Department of Physics, Indiana University, Bloomington IN, United States of America
60 Department of Physics, Indiana University, Bloomington IN, United States of America
61 Institut für Astro- und Teilchenphysik, Leopold-Franzens-Universität, Innsbruck, Austria
62 University of Iowa, Iowa City IA, United States of America
63 Department of Physics and Astronomy, Iowa State University, Ames IA, United States of America
64 Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, JINR Dubna, Dubna, Russia
65 KEK, High Energy Accelerator Research Organization, Tsukuba, Japan
66 Graduate School of Science, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
67 Department of Science, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
68 Department of Physics, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan
69 Department of Physics, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan
70 Instituto de Física La Plata, Universidad Nacional de La Plata and CONICET, La Plata, Argentina
71 Physics Department, Lancaster University, Lancaster, United Kingdom
72 (a) INFN Sezione di Lecce; (b) Dipartimento di Matematica e Fisica, Università del Salento, Lecce, Italy
73 Oliver Lodge Laboratory, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom
74 Department of Physics, Jožef Stefan Institute and University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia
75 School of Physics and Astronomy, Queen Mary University of London, London, United Kingdom
76 Department of Physics, Royal Holloway University of London, Surrey, United Kingdom
77 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University College London, London, United Kingdom
78 Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, UPMC and Université Paris-Diderot and CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France
79 Fysiska institutionen, Lunds universitet, Lund, Sweden
80 Departamento de Física Teórica C-15, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
81 Institut für Physik, Universität Mainz, Mainz, Germany
82 School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
83 CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France
84 Department of Physics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst MA, United States of America
Department of Physics, McGill University, Montreal QC, Canada
School of Physics, University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, United States of America
Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI, United States of America
(a) INFN Sezione di Milano; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Milano, Milano, Italy
B.I. Stepanov Institute of Physics, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
National Scientific and Educational Centre for Particle and High Energy Physics, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge MA, United States of America
Group of Particle Physics, University of Montreal, Montreal QC, Canada
P.N. Lebedev Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia
Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics (ITEP), Moscow, Russia
Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute (MEPhI), Moscow, Russia
INFN Sezione di Napoli; (b) Dipartimento di Scienze Fisiche, Università di Napoli, Napoli, Italy
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque NM, United States of America
Department of Physics, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater OK, United States of America
(a) INFN Sezione di Pavia; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy
Department of Physics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia PA, United States of America
(a) INFN Sezione di Roma I; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università La Sapienza, Roma, Italy
(a) INFN Sezione di Roma Tor Vergata; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Roma, Italy
134 (a) INFN Sezione di Roma Tre; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università Roma Tre, Roma, Italy
135 (a) Faculté des Sciences Ain Chock, Réseau Universitaire de Physique des Hautes Energies - Université Hassan II, Casablanca; (b) Centre National de l’Energie des Sciences Techniques Nucléaires, Rabat; (c) Faculté des Sciences Semlalia, Université Cadi Ayyad, LPHEA-Marrakech; (d) Faculté des Sciences, Université Mohamed Premier and LPTPM, Oujda; (e) Faculté des sciences, Université Mohammed V-Agdal, Rabat, Morocco
136 DSM/IRFU (Institut de Recherches sur les Lois Fondamentales de l’Univers), CEA Saclay (Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique et aux Energies Alternatives), Gif-sur-Yvette, France
137 Santa Cruz Institute for Particle Physics, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz CA, United States of America
138 Department of Physics, University of Washington, Seattle WA, United States of America
139 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom
140 Department of Physics, Shinshu University, Nagano, Japan
141 Fachbereich Physik, Universität Siegen, Siegen, Germany
142 Department of Physics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby BC, Canada
143 SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford CA, United States of America
144 (a) Faculty of Mathematics, Physics & Informatics, Comenius University, Bratislava; (b) Department of Subnuclear Physics, Institute of Experimental Physics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Kosice, Slovak Republic
145 (a) Department of Physics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg; (b) School of Physics, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
146 (a) Department of Physics, Stockholm University; (b) The Oskar Klein Centre, Stockholm, Sweden
147 Physics Department, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
148 Departments of Physics & Astronomy and Chemistry, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook NY, United States of America
149 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom
150 School of Physics, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
151 Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
152 Department of Physics, Technion: Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel
153 Raymond and Beverly Sackler School of Physics and Astronomy, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
154 Department of Physics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece
155 International Center for Elementary Particle Physics and Department of Physics, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
156 Graduate School of Science and Technology, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, Japan
157 Department of Physics, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan
158 Department of Physics, University of Toronto, Toronto ON, Canada
159 (a) TRIUMF, Vancouver BC; (b) Department of Physics and Astronomy, York University, Toronto ON, Canada
160 Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan
161 Department of Physics and Astronomy, Tufts University, Medford MA, United States of America
162 Centro de Investigaciones, Universidad Antonio Narino, Bogota, Colombia
163 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of California Irvine, Irvine CA, United States of America
164 (a) INFN Gruppo Collegato di Udine; (b) ICTP, Trieste; (c) Dipartimento di Chimica, Fisica e Ambiente, Università di Udine, Udine, Italy
165 Department of Physics, University of Illinois, Urbana IL, United States of America
166 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden
167 Instituto de Física Corpuscular (IFIC) and Departamento de Física Atómica, Molecular y Nuclear and Departamento de Ingeniería Electrónica and Instituto de Microelectrónica de Barcelona (IMB-CNM), University of Valencia and CSIC, Valencia, Spain
168 Department of Physics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver BC, Canada
169 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Victoria, Victoria BC, Canada
170 Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom
171 Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan
172 Department of Particle Physics, The Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel
173 Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin, Madison WI, United States of America
Also at Department of Physics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa
f Also at TRIUMF, Vancouver BC, Canada
g Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Fresno CA, United States of America
Also at Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia
h Also at Institute of Particle Physics (IPP), Canada
i Also at Department of Physics, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey
j Also at Louisiana Tech University, Ruston LA, United States of America
Also at Dep Fisica and CEFITEC of Faculdade de Ciencias e Tecnologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Caparica, Portugal
Also at Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary
Also at California Institute of Technology, Pasadena CA, United States of America
Also at Institute of Physics, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland
Also at LAL, Université Paris-Sud and CNRS/IN2P3, Orsay, France
Also at Faculty of Physics, M.V.Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
Also at Nevis Laboratory, Columbia University, Irvington NY, United States of America
Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom
Also at Department of Physics, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom
Also at Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, United States of America
Also at Discipline of Physics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa
* Deceased