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Measurement of the Born cross section for $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ at $\sqrt{s} = 3.5\text{--}4.9\text{ GeV}$



The BESIII collaboration

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ABSTRACT: Using e^+e^- collision data corresponding to a total integrated luminosity of 20 fb^{-1} collected with the BESIII detector at the BEPCII collider, we present a measurement of the Born cross section for the process $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ at 39 center-of-mass energies between 3.5 and 4.9 GeV with a partial reconstruction technique. By performing a fit to the dressed cross section of $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ with a power law function for continuum production and one resonance at a time for the $\psi(3770)$, $\psi(4040)$, $\psi(4160)$, $\psi(4230)$, $\psi(4360)$, $\psi(4415)$ or $\psi(4660)$, respectively, the upper limits for the product of partial electronic width and branching fraction into the final state $pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ for these resonances are determined at the 90% confidence level.

KEYWORDS: e^+e^- Experiments, Branching fraction, Particle and Resonance Production, QCD

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1 Introduction

The study of baryon decays of vector charmonium(-like) resonances provides a test of quantum chromodynamics (QCD) [1, 2]. Below the open charm threshold, the mass spectrum of the conventional charmonium resonances is consistent with the predictions from the potential quark model [3]. Above the open charm threshold, the model predicts six vector charmonium states from the threshold to 4.9 GeV, ordered as the $1D$, $3S$, $2D$, $4S$, $3D$, and $5S$ states, while far more vector states have been observed in this energy region. Several states, such as the $\psi(4040)$, $\psi(4160)$, and $\psi(4415)$, are seen as clear peaks in the center-of-mass energy-dependent inclusive hadronic cross section and predominantly decay to open charm final states [4]. Other states, such as the $\psi(4230)$, $\psi(4360)$, and $\psi(4660)$, are mainly observed in decay channels with hidden-charm intermediate states and are produced via initial state radiation (ISR) processes at BaBar and Belle [5–14] or via direct production in e^+e^- annihilation at CLEO [15] and BESIII [16, 17]. These vector states might not be resonances with simple $c\bar{c}$ quark content, and many hypotheses, such as hybrid, multiple-quark state and molecular models, have been proposed to interpret them [18–24]. No solid conclusions can be made at present and the nature of these vector charmonium(-like) states remains uncertain [25]. This reflects our limited knowledge of the strong interaction in the non-perturbative region. To solve these puzzles, more and improved experimental measurements are needed. Among these measurements, charmonium states decaying into hyperon-antihyperon pairs, dominated by

three-gluon or one-photon processes, are promising due to the simple topologies of their final states compared to three-meson production. However, studies of substantial correlations between these charmonium(-like) states and the production of baryonic final states above open charm threshold are still insufficient. Although many experimental studies of baryonic final states have been performed by the BESIII and Belle collaborations [26–52], the only established decay is $\psi(4660) \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{\Lambda}_c^-$ [9]. While there is also evidence for $\psi(3770) \rightarrow \Lambda \bar{\Lambda}$ [34], $\psi(3770) \rightarrow \Xi^- \bar{\Xi}^+$ [45], and the three-body baryonic decay $\psi(4160) \rightarrow K^- [\Lambda/\Sigma^0] \bar{\Xi}^+$ [46] with an extra pseudoscalar meson, our knowledge is still lacking. Thus, more precise measurements of exclusive cross sections of e^+e^- to baryonic final states above the open charm threshold could provide additional insight into the nature of these vector charmonium(-like) states.

In this paper, we present a measurement of the Born cross sections for $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^- \bar{\Xi}^+$ using data sets at center-of-mass (CM) energies $\sqrt{s}$ between 3.5 GeV and 4.9 GeV corresponding to a total integrated luminosity of 20 fb^{-1} [53, 54] collected by the BESIII detector [55, 56] at the BEPCII collider [57]. Compared to previous studies, this process is a four-body interaction that includes two pseudoscalar mesons. Throughout this paper, the charge conjugated channel is always included. The possible resonances are studied by fitting the lineshape of the dressed cross section of the process $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^- \bar{\Xi}^+$. The products of branching fraction and electronic partial width for possible charmonium(-like) states, i.e. $\psi(3770)$, $\psi(4040)$, $\psi(4160)$, $\psi(4230)$, $\psi(4360)$ and $\psi(4660)$ decaying to $pK^-K^- \bar{\Xi}^+$, as well as their upper limits at the 90% confidence level (C.L.) are provided.

2 BESIII detector and Monte Carlo simulation

The BESIII detector records symmetric e^+e^- collisions provided by the BEPCII storage ring in the CM energy range from 1.84 GeV to 4.95 GeV, with a peak luminosity of $1.1 \times 10^{33} \text{ cm}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ achieved at $\sqrt{s} = 3.773 \text{ GeV}$. BESIII has collected large data samples in this energy region. The cylindrical core of the BESIII detector covers 93% of the full solid angle and consists of a helium-based multilayer drift chamber (MDC), a time-of-flight system (TOF), and a CsI(Tl) electromagnetic calorimeter (EMC), which are all enclosed in a superconducting solenoidal magnet providing a 1.0 T magnetic field. The solenoid is supported by an octagonal flux-return yoke with resistive plate counter muon identification modules interleaved with steel. The charged-particle momentum resolution at 1 GeV/ c is 0.5%, and the dE/dx resolution is 6% for electrons from Bhabha scattering. The EMC measures photon energies with a resolution of 2.5% (5%) at 1 GeV in the barrel (end cap) region. The time resolution in the plastic scintillator TOF barrel region was 68 ps, while that in the end cap region was 110 ps. The end cap TOF system was upgraded in 2015 using multigap resistive plate chamber technology providing a time resolution of 60 ps, which benefits 64% of the data used in this analysis [58–60].

Monte Carlo (MC) simulated data samples produced with a GEANT4-based [61, 62] package, which includes the geometric description of the BESIII detector and the detector response, are used to determine detection efficiencies and to estimate backgrounds. The simulation models the beam energy spread and ISR in the e^+e^- annihilations with the generator KKMC [63, 64]. The inclusive MC sample includes the production of open charm processes, the ISR production of vector charmonium(-like) states, and the continuum processes

incorporated in KKMC. All particle decays are modeled with EVTGEN [65, 66] using branching fractions either taken from the Particle Data Group (PDG) [67], when available, or otherwise estimated with LUNDCHARM [68]. Final state radiation (FSR) from charged particles is incorporated using the PHOTOS package [69]. To determine the detection efficiencies and evaluate the ISR factors in the $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$, $\bar{\Xi}^+ \rightarrow$ anything process, exclusive MC samples with 6×10^5 signal events are generated for each of the 39 CM energies from 3.5 GeV to 4.9 GeV using a phase space (PHSP) model and incorporating ISR effects.

3 Event selection

A partial reconstruction method is used to extract the signal process, where only the proton and two kaons are reconstructed in each event and the presence of the $\bar{\Xi}^+$ is inferred through the missing mass. The tracks from charged particles must at least fulfill the following criteria. The polar angle for each track in the MDC must satisfy $|\cos \theta| < 0.93$, where θ is the angle between the direction of the track and the positron beam direction. To suppress backgrounds, decay vertices are limited in the distance $V_r < 1$ cm in the radial and $|V_z| < 10$ cm in the axial direction from the interaction point. Particle identification (PID) probabilities, $\text{Prob}(H)$, $H = p, K, \pi$, are determined from the ionization energy loss measured in the MDC combined with the time of flight measured with TOF. Tracks are identified as protons if the proton hypothesis has the greatest probability ($\text{Prob}(p) > \text{Prob}(K)$ and $\text{Prob}(p) > \text{Prob}(\pi)$), while charged kaons are identified by requiring $\text{Prob}(K) > \text{Prob}(p)$ and $\text{Prob}(K) > \text{Prob}(\pi)$. Events with exactly one p candidate and two K^- candidates, denoted in the following as K_1 and K_2 , are kept for further analysis. If an extra candidate for the identified tracks is present, the event is discarded.

To further suppress the background, a primary vertex fit for pK^-K^- is performed, and events with $\chi^2 < 100$ are kept. The number of anti-baryons $\bar{\Xi}^+$ at each energy point is determined using an unbinned maximum likelihood fit to the recoil mass of the pK^-K^- system, defined as

$$M_{pK^-K^-}^{\text{recoil}} = \sqrt{\left[\sqrt{s} - (E_p + E_{K_1^-} + E_{K_2^-})\right]^2 - \left|\vec{p}_p + \vec{p}_{K_1^-} + \vec{p}_{K_2^-}\right|^2}, \quad (3.1)$$

where $E_{p(K_1^-, K_2^-)}$ and $\vec{p}_{p(K_1^-, K_2^-)}$ are the energy and momentum of the proton (negative kaons), respectively. The signal shape is modeled using a histogram of $M_{pK^-K^-}^{\text{recoil}}$ from MC simulation, which is additionally convolved with a Gaussian function to account for different mass resolutions between data and MC simulation when the signal significance is greater than 3σ . Note that the resolution will be worse as the energy increases because the empirical beam energy spread $(0.9454\sqrt{s} - 2.147)/\sqrt{2}$ MeV will dominate the effect. Using a detailed background analysis in both data and MC simulation, the dominant background is determined to be from misidentified particles. All backgrounds contribute either smooth shapes or shifted peaks away from the signal region in the recoil mass spectra, ensuring no contamination of the signal region. Consequently, the background shape is described by a first- or second-order Chebyshev polynomial function. The fit results are presented in table 1 and shown in figure 1.

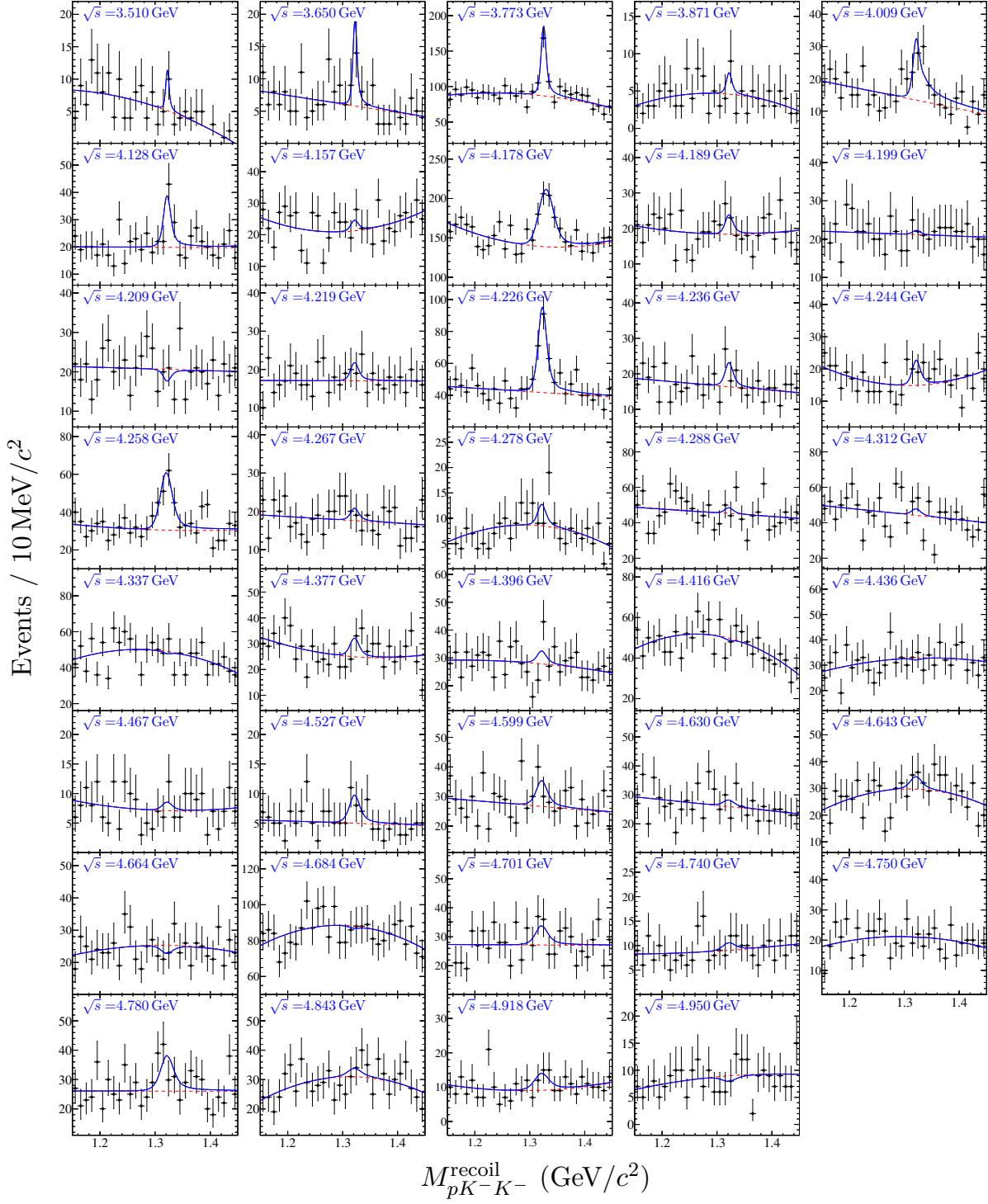


Figure 1. Fits to the $M_{pK^-K^-}^{\text{recoil}}$ spectra, where the black dots with error bars denote the data, the red dashed lines denote the background contribution, and the blue lines denote total fit curves.

4 Determination of Born cross section

The Born cross section (σ^B) for $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ at each energy point is calculated as

$$\sigma^B = \frac{N_{\text{obs}}}{2\mathcal{L} \cdot \varepsilon \cdot (1 + \delta_{\text{ISR}}) \cdot \frac{1}{|1-\Pi|^2}}, \quad (4.1)$$

where N_{obs} is the signal yield, the factor of $1/2$ averages the charge-conjugate channels, $\mathcal{L}$ is the integrated luminosity, ε is the detection efficiency, $1 + \delta_{\text{ISR}}$ is the ISR factor evaluated using a quantum electrodynamics calculation [70]. The procedure to determine both ε and $1 + \delta_{\text{ISR}}$ is iterated [71] until the difference of their product between the last two rounds is less than 0.5% [45]; the iteration line shape is selected as the power-law function (described in section 6) only; and $\frac{1}{|1-\Pi|^2}$ is the vacuum polarization factor estimated according to ref. [72]. The upper limit on the Born cross section is estimated at the 90% C.L. table 1 summarizes the numerical results.

5 Systematic uncertainty

The systematic uncertainty in the Born cross section measurements is evaluated for the following sources: the tracking and PID for charged particles, the vertex fit of pK^-K^- , the signal and background shapes, the input line shape and the quoted luminosity. Assuming all sources are independent, the total systematic uncertainty is calculated by the quadratic sum of the uncertainties due to all individual sources, as shown in table 2. All will be discussed in the following.

5.1 Tracking

The systematic uncertainty associated with charged track reconstruction is evaluated as 1.0% per track using the control samples of $J/\psi \rightarrow \pi^0 p\bar{p}$ [73] and $J/\psi \rightarrow K^*K$ [74]. Given that three charged tracks are reconstructed, the systematic uncertainty is set to be 3.0%.

5.2 PID

The systematic uncertainty due to the PID is evaluated as 1.0% per track by the control sample of $J/\psi \rightarrow p\bar{p}\eta'$ and $\psi(3686) \rightarrow K^-\Lambda\bar{\Xi}^+ + \text{c.c.}$ [75, 76]. There are three particles identified, so this systematic uncertainty is assigned as 3.0%.

5.3 Vertex fit

The systematic uncertainty for the vertex fit is evaluated by the control sample of $\psi(3686) \rightarrow \pi^+\pi^-J/\psi$ with $J/\psi \rightarrow p\bar{p}$, where a proton or anti-proton is missed in the reconstruction. A cut for vertex $\chi^2 < 30$ is required to estimate the efficiency loss, and the difference for relative efficiency between data and MC sample is taken as the systematic uncertainty, which is assigned as 1.3%.

$\sqrt{s}$ (GeV)	$\mathcal{L}$ (pb $^{-1}$)	ε (%)	$1 + \delta_{\text{ISR}}$	$\frac{1}{ 1-\Pi ^2}$	N_{obs}	σ^{B} (fb)	S (σ)
3.510	405.7	15.27	0.915	1.045	6.6 ± 4.3 (< 13.2)	$55.7 \pm 36.3 \pm 3.1$ (< 111.4)	1.8
3.650	410.0	25.61	0.929	1.021	17.5 ± 6.5	$87.8 \pm 32.6 \pm 4.8$	3.4
3.773	2931.8	31.42	0.968	1.056	157.1 ± 23.4	$83.5 \pm 12.4 \pm 4.6$	7.2
3.871	219.2	34.39	0.959	1.051	5.0 ± 4.7 (< 12.5)	$32.9 \pm 30.9 \pm 1.8$ (< 82.3)	1.2
4.009	481.96	29.92	1.030	1.044	63.8 ± 16.1	$205.7 \pm 51.9 \pm 11.3$	4.6
4.128	401.5	25.21	1.077	1.052	43.8 ± 13.0	$191.0 \pm 56.7 \pm 10.5$	3.9
4.157	408.7	25.87	1.082	1.053	8.0 ± 10.2 (< 26.7)	$33.2 \pm 48.1 \pm 1.8$ (< 107.9)	< 1
4.178	3194.5	25.92	1.095	1.054	291.2 ± 81.3	$152.4 \pm 42.5 \pm 8.4$	6.4
4.189	526.7	26.28	1.090	1.056	13.1 ± 11.7 (< 30.3)	$41.1 \pm 36.7 \pm 2.3$ (< 95.1)	1.2
4.199	526.0	26.55	1.089	1.056	2.6 ± 10.8 (< 21.0)	$8.1 \pm 33.6 \pm 0.4$ (< 65.3)	< 1
4.209	517.1	26.40	1.098	1.057	-7.2 ± 9.6 (< 14.2)	$-22.7 \pm 30.3 \pm 1.2$ (< 44.8)	< 1
4.219	514.6	26.69	1.099	1.056	11.6 ± 10.2 (< 26.7)	$36.4 \pm 32.0 \pm 2.0$ (< 83.7)	1.2
4.226	1100.9	27.41	1.101	1.056	136.1 ± 20.7	$193.9 \pm 29.5 \pm 10.7$	7.8
4.236	530.3	27.62	1.105	1.056	16.7 ± 10.6 (< 31.8)	$49.0 \pm 31.1 \pm 2.7$ (< 93.4)	1.7
4.244	538.1	27.72	1.098	1.056	19.3 ± 11.4 (< 35.3)	$55.8 \pm 33.0 \pm 3.1$ (102.1)	1.8
4.258	825.67	27.98	1.101	1.054	102.1 ± 23.7	$190.5 \pm 44.2 \pm 10.5$	4.5
4.267	531.1	28.08	1.105	1.053	8.2 ± 10.4 (< 24.3)	$23.6 \pm 30.0 \pm 1.3$ (< 70.0)	< 1
4.278	175.70	27.86	1.109	1.053	11.0 ± 8.9 (< 24.1)	$96.2 \pm 77.8 \pm 5.3$ (< 210.7)	1.3
4.288	502.4	28.05	1.111	1.053	8.9 ± 16.4 (< 34.4)	$27.0 \pm 49.8 \pm 1.5$ (< 104.4)	< 1
4.312	501.2	28.59	1.112	1.052	10.0 ± 16.0 (< 34.8)	$29.8 \pm 47.7 \pm 1.6$ (< 103.7)	< 1
4.337	505.0	29.09	1.127	1.051	-3.3 ± 18.1 (< 29.7)	$-9.5 \pm 52.0 \pm 0.5$ (< 85.4)	< 1
4.377	522.7	29.67	1.126	1.051	20.5 ± 14.9 (< 41.5)	$55.8 \pm 40.6 \pm 3.1$ (< 113.0)	1.4
4.396	507.8	29.90	0.969	1.051	13.1 ± 14.6 (< 34.7)	$42.4 \pm 47.2 \pm 2.3$ (< 112.3)	< 1
4.416	1074.56	30.19	0.983	1.052	-3.0 ± 18.8 (< 31.1)	$-4.5 \pm 28.0 \pm 0.2$ (< 46.3)	< 1
4.436	569.9	30.34	0.887	1.054	-2.2 ± 15.5 (< 26.0)	$-6.8 \pm 48.0 \pm 0.4$ (< 80.5)	< 1
4.467	111.1	30.27	1.023	1.055	4.3 ± 7.7 (< 17.0)	$59.3 \pm 106.1 \pm 3.3$ (< 234.3)	< 1
4.527	112.12	30.60	1.029	1.054	17.6 ± 7.6 (< 28.2)	$236.5 \pm 102.1 \pm 13.0$ (< 378.9)	2.7
4.599	586.9	31.05	1.034	1.055	28.7 ± 15.3 (< 49.7)	$72.2 \pm 38.5 \pm 4.0$ (< 125.0)	2.0
4.630	521.53	31.03	1.045	1.054	7.7 ± 14.7 (< 31.1)	$21.6 \pm 41.2 \pm 1.2$ (< 87.2)	< 1
4.643	551.65	31.14	1.054	1.054	16.1 ± 17.7 (< 42.1)	$42.2 \pm 46.4 \pm 2.3$ (< 110.3)	< 1
4.664	529.43	31.21	1.060	1.054	-8.8 ± 15.4 (< 22.6)	$-23.8 \pm 41.7 \pm 1.3$ (< 61.2)	< 1
4.684	1667.39	31.32	1.070	1.054	-4.5 ± 28.7 (< 46.2)	$-3.8 \pm 24.4 \pm 0.2$ (< 39.2)	< 1
4.701	535.54	31.17	1.071	1.055	23.9 ± 16.0 (< 46.2)	$63.4 \pm 42.4 \pm 3.5$ (< 122.0)	1.6
4.740	163.87	31.71	1.015	1.055	5.8 ± 10.1 (< 21.8)	$52.1 \pm 90.8 \pm 2.9$ (< 195.9)	< 1
4.750	366.55	31.73	1.025	1.055	-5.7 ± 15.0 (< 25.8)	$-22.7 \pm 59.6 \pm 1.2$ (< 102.6)	< 1
4.780	511.47	31.66	1.036	1.055	45.7 ± 17.2 (< 68.8)	$129.0 \pm 48.6 \pm 7.1$ (< 194.2)	2.8
4.843	525.16	31.73	1.066	1.056	11.3 ± 19.3 (< 40.9)	$30.1 \pm 51.5 \pm 1.7$ (< 109.1)	< 1
4.918	207.82	31.53	1.092	1.056	20.5 ± 12.3 (< 37.7)	$135.7 \pm 81.4 \pm 7.5$ (< 249.5)	1.8
4.950	159.28	31.26	1.100	1.056	-4.3 ± 10.4 (< 16.6)	$-37.2 \pm 89.9 \pm 2.0$ (< 143.5)	< 1

Table 1. Numerical results for the Born cross sections of $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ at different energy points. Upper limits on N_{obs} and σ^{B} at the 90% C.L. are listed in parentheses if the significances are less than 3σ . The first uncertainties are statistical and the second are systematic. The S is the statistical significance of the signal.

Source	Uncertainty (%)
Tracking*	3.0
PID*	3.0
Vertex fit*	1.3
Signal and background shapes	3.1
Input line shape	Negligible
Luminosity*	1.0
Total	5.5

Table 2. Relative systematic uncertainties in the cross section measurements, where * marks represent the correlated systematic uncertainty.

5.4 Signal and background shapes

Due to the limited statistics, this systematic uncertainty is estimated by combining all data samples. The signal shape is changed from the MC shape convolved with a Gaussian function to the signal MC shape, and the background shape is adjusted from a second to third-order Chebyshev polynomial function. The differences in the fitted signal yields, 0.7% for the variation of the signal and 3.0% for the variation of the background shape, are taken as the systematic uncertainty.

5.5 Input lineshape

The input lineshape is evaluated by varying the parameters that we used in the fit to the dressed cross section with the line shape of power-law function only (described in section 6) in the iterative procedure. The fitted lineshape is needed to determine the ISR correction, but is only known up to the precision of the data. Thus, we use 200 lineshape samples drawn randomly from a multivariate Gaussian using the covariance matrix of the fit performed in section 5 to re-evaluate the ISR correction. The standard deviation of the product $\varepsilon \cdot (1 + \delta_{\text{ISR}})$ obtained in this way is used as a systematic uncertainty. This systematic uncertainty is negligible ($\sim 10^{-3}$).

5.6 Luminosity

The integrated luminosity is estimated using Bhabha scattering events, and the systematic uncertainty for each energy point is assigned as 1% [53, 54].

6 Fit to the dressed cross section

Potential resonances in the lineshape of the cross sections for the process $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}$ are studied by fitting the dressed cross section $\sigma^{\text{dressed}} = \frac{\sigma^{\text{B}}}{|1-\Pi|^2}$ using the least χ^2 method, where $\chi^2 = \Delta X^T V^{-1} \Delta X$, and ΔX is the vector of residuals between the measured and fitted cross section. The covariance matrix V incorporates the correlated and uncorrelated uncertainties among different energy points, where the systematic uncertainties for tracking, PID, vertex fit and luminosity mentioned in the previous section are assumed to be fully

correlated if referring to the same energy point, and uncorrelated otherwise. The line shape is described by a power-law (PL) function plus a Breit-Wigner (BW) function as

$$\sigma(\sqrt{s}) \propto \left| c_0 P(\sqrt{s}) \frac{1}{\sqrt{s}^N} + e^{i\phi} \text{BW}(\sqrt{s}; m, \Gamma, \Gamma_{ee} \mathcal{B}) \right|^2. \quad (6.1)$$

Here, c_0 and N are free parameters. When no intermediate resonances are included in the fit, we find $c_0 = (5.9 \pm 2.6) \times 10^{-5}$ and $N = 1.2 \pm 0.3$. The $P(\sqrt{s})$ is the PHSP factor, ϕ is the relative phase, and the BW function is defined as

$$\text{BW}(\sqrt{s}; m, \Gamma, \Gamma_{ee} \mathcal{B}) = \frac{\sqrt{12\pi} \Gamma_{ee} \mathcal{B} \Gamma}{s - m^2 + im\Gamma}, \quad (6.2)$$

where $\Gamma_{ee} \mathcal{B}$ is the product of e^+e^- partial decay width and branching fraction of the assumed resonance decaying into the $pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ final state. In the current fit, both ϕ and $\Gamma_{ee} \mathcal{B}$ are the undetermined parameters. The considered resonances are the $\psi(3770)$, $\psi(4040)$, $\psi(4160)$, $\psi(4230)$, $\psi(4360)$, $\psi(4415)$, and $\psi(4660)$, and their masses and widths are fixed to the values taken from the PDG [67]. The significance of a resonance is determined from the change of χ^2 and the number of degrees of freedom n_{dof} for the hypothesis with and without the resonance itself. None of the considered resonances have a significance above 3σ . Here, the resonance parameters of $\psi(4160)$ and $\psi(4230)$ under the current statistics are hard to be exactly separated from each other because these two states are quite close and overlap and the interference picture can be sensitive to the resonance parameters. Figure 2 shows the fit to the dressed cross sections without and with the different resonance assumptions. The upper limits of $\Gamma_{ee} \mathcal{B}$ have been evaluated at the 90% C.L. according to the χ^2 distribution so that $\int_0^{\Delta\chi_{\text{UL}}^2} \chi^2(x; \Delta n_{\text{df}}) dx = 90\%$, where $\Delta\chi_{\text{UL}}^2$ is the difference of likelihood value between the evaluated nominal result and the upper limit one, Δn_{df} is the change in the degrees of freedom. The fit with only PL function presents a quality of $\chi^2/n_{\text{df}} = 87/37$, corresponding to a χ^2 -probability around 10^{-6} . The total numerical results are summarized in table 3.

7 Summary

Using a data sample of e^+e^- collisions corresponding to a total integrated luminosity of 20 fb^{-1} collected with the BESIII detector at the BEPCII collider, we present a measurement of the Born cross section for the process $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ at 39 center-of-mass energies between 3.5 and 4.9 GeV with a partial reconstruction technique. A fit to the dressed cross sections for $e^+e^- \rightarrow pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ under the assumption of one resonance, i.e. $\psi(3770)$, $\psi(4040)$, $\psi(4160)$, $\psi(4230)$, $\psi(4360)$, $\psi(4415)$ or $\psi(4660)$ plus a continuum contribution is performed. The values of the fitted parameters for $\Gamma_{ee} \mathcal{B}$ for each assumed resonance are summarized in table 3. No statistically significant evidence for any of the considered resonances decaying into the $pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ final state is found. Upper limits on the product of $\Gamma_{ee} \mathcal{B}$ for all assumed resonances decaying into $pK^-K^-\bar{\Xi}^+$ are determined at the 90% C.L. Compared with other processes [34, 45, 46], there is still a lack of experimental information regarding the baryonic decays of charmonium(-like) states. The results of this work provide new experimental support on baryon production above the open charm region.

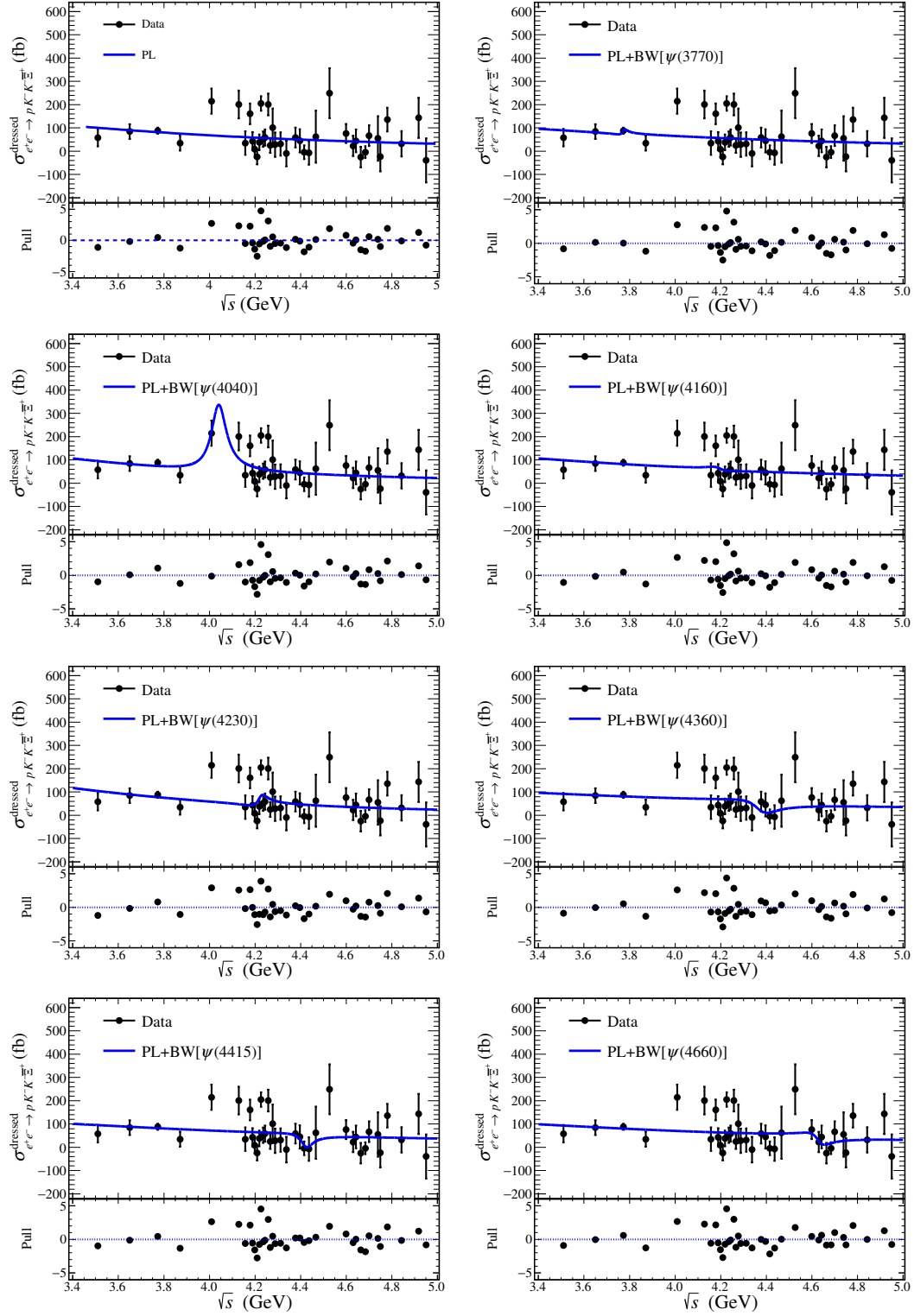


Figure 2. Fits to the dressed cross sections under the assumption of the PL function only (top left), and the PL plus a resonance, i.e. $\psi(3770)$, $\psi(4040)$, $\psi(4160)$, $\psi(4230)$, $\psi(4360)$, $\psi(4415)$, or $\psi(4660)$. The black dots with error bars are the dressed cross sections, where the uncertainty is combined from both statistical and systematic uncertainties, and the blue lines denote the fit curves. For each hypothesis, the panel below the main plot shows the pull distribution.

Fit model	ϕ (rad)	$\Gamma_{ee}\mathcal{B}$ ($\times 10^{-3}$ eV)	S (σ)	χ^2/n_{df}
PL	—	—	—	87/(39 − 2)
$+\psi(3770)^{\text{I}}$	0.57 ± 4.70	(0.0 ± 0.1)	0.2	87/(39 − 4)
$+\psi(3770)^{\text{II}}$	-1.52 ± 0.39	< 9.6 (8.6 ± 0.7)		
$+\psi(4040)$	1.38 ± 0.16	< 17.8 (10.8 ± 3.3)	2.8	76/(39 − 4)
$+\psi(4160)^{\text{I}}$	2.74 ± 0.94	(0.0 ± 0.1)	0.1	87/(39 − 4)
$+\psi(4160)^{\text{II}}$	-1.64 ± 0.08	< 25.4 (20.7 ± 2.2)		
$+\psi(4230)^{\text{I}}$	0.51 ± 0.39	(0.5 ± 0.3)	1.5	83/(39 − 4)
$+\psi(4230)^{\text{II}}$	1.42 ± 0.08	< 17.8 (14.9 ± 1.3)		
$+\psi(4360)^{\text{I}}$	-2.19 ± 0.34	(3.4 ± 3.4)	1.7	83/(39 − 4)
$+\psi(4360)^{\text{II}}$	-1.84 ± 0.14	< 33.3 (19.4 ± 7.7)		
$+\psi(4415)$	-1.80 ± 0.23	< 14.7 (4.7 ± 4.8)	1.7	82/(39 − 4)
$+\psi(4660)^{\text{I}}$	-2.46 ± 0.48	(2.1 ± 2.3)	1.1	84/(39 − 4)
$+\psi(4660)^{\text{II}}$	-1.90 ± 0.20	< 23.1 (13.1 ± 5.3)		

Table 3. Results of the fits to the dressed cross sections. Here, the superscripts I and II denote the different solutions, the numbers in parentheses represent the nominal results, S (σ) is the significance for each resonance, and the upper limits of partial widths are evaluated at 90% C.L.

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