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## Measurement of the branching fraction for the decay $K_S \to \pi e \nu$

The KLOE Collaboration\*

#### Abstract

We present a measurement of the branching ratio BR(K  $\rightarrow \pi^{\pm} e^{\mp} \bar{\nu}(\nu)$ ) performed using the KLOE detector.  $K_S$ -mesons are produced in the reaction  $e^+e^- \rightarrow \phi \rightarrow K_S K_L$  at the DA $\Phi$ NE collider. In a sample of  $\sim 5 \times 10^6 K_S$ -tagged events we find  $624 \pm 30$ semileptonic  $K_S$  decays. Normalizing to the  $K_S \rightarrow \pi^+\pi^-$  count in the same data sample, we obtain BR( $K_S \rightarrow \pi e\nu$ ) =  $(6.91 \pm 0.37) \times 10^{-4}$ , in agreement with the Standard Model expectation.

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#### **1** Introduction

In the Standard Model, there are only  $\Delta S = \Delta Q$  transitions at tree level.  $\Delta S = -\Delta Q$  transitions exist at higher order, but are suppressed by a factor of  $\sim 10^{-6}-10^{-7}$  [1,2]. Under this assumption, together with TCP-invariance [3,4], it follows that  $\Gamma(K_S \to \pi e\nu) = \Gamma(K_L \to \pi e\nu)$  to very high accuracy. Using the values of BR $(K_L \to \pi e\nu)$  and  $\tau_S/\tau_L$  from ref [5], one obtains BR $(K_S \to \pi e\nu) = (6.70 \pm 0.07) \times 10^{-4}$ . Precise measurements of the  $K_S$  semileptonic decay rate are important for checking the above assumptions. Until recently, no experimental information was available about the semileptonic decay of the  $K_S$ -meson. This is in large part due to the smallness of the branching ratio and to the difficulty of isolating  $\pi^{\pm}e^{\mp}\bar{\nu}(\nu)$  decays from  $\pi^{+}\pi^{-}$  decays. Both decays are observed as two charged tracks, but the latter are  $\sim 1000$  times more abundant. Good particle identification is necessary for isolating a pure sample of  $\pi^{\pm}e^{\mp}\bar{\nu}(\nu)$  events. The CMD-2 collaboration at VEPP-2M operating at the  $\phi$  peak has observed 75  $\pm$  13 semileptonic  $K_S$  decays [6], with limited separation of signal and background. They find BR $(K_S \to \pi e\nu) = (7.2 \pm 1.4) \times 10^{-4}$ . With KLOE [7,8], we have considerably improved on this result.

Our measurement is performed with kaons from  $\phi \to K_S K_L$  decays. KLOE operates at DA $\Phi$ NE [9], an  $e^+e^-$  collider also known as the Frascati  $\phi$ -factory.  $\phi$ -mesons are produced in small angle (25 mrad) collisions of equal energy electrons and positrons, giving the  $\phi$  a small transverse momentum component in the horizontal plane,  $p_{\phi} \sim$  $13 \,\mathrm{MeV}/c$ . The main advantage of studying kaons at a  $\phi$ -factory is that  $\phi$ -mesons decay  $\sim 34\%$  of the time into neutral kaons.  $K_L$ 's and  $K_S$ 's are produced almost back-to-back in the laboratory, with mean decay paths  $\lambda_{\rm L} \sim 340 \,\mathrm{cm}$  and  $\lambda_{\rm S} \sim 0.6 \,\mathrm{cm}$ , respectively. Detection of a long-lived kaon therefore tags the production of a  $K_S$ -meson and gives its direction and momentum. The contamination from  $K_L K_L \gamma$  and  $K_S K_S \gamma$  final states is negligible for our measurement [10,11]. Since the branching ratio for  $K_S \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^$ is known with an accuracy of  $\sim 0.4\%$  [5], the  $K_S \rightarrow \pi e \nu$  branching ratio is evaluated by normalizing the number of signal events to the number of  $K_S \to \pi^+ \pi^-$  events in the same data set. This allows cancellation of the uncertainties coming from the integrated luminosity, the  $\phi$  production cross section, and the tagging efficiency. Both charge states  $\pi^+ e^- \bar{\nu}$  and  $\pi^- e^+ \nu$  are included in the measured branching ratio. The measurement is based on an integrated luminosity of  $17 \,\mathrm{pb}^{-1}$  at the  $\phi$  peak collected during the year 2000, corresponding to  $\sim 5 \times 10^7$  produced  $\phi$ -mesons.

#### 2 Experimental setup

The KLOE detector (Fig. 1) consists of a large cylindrical drift chamber surrounded by a lead-scintillating fiber sampling calorimeter. A superconducting coil outside the calorimeter provides a 0.52 T field. The drift chamber [12], 4 m in diameter and 3.3 m long, has 12582 all-stereo sense wires and 37746 aluminium field wires. The chamber shell is made of carbon fiber-epoxy composite and the gas used is a 90% helium, 10% isobutane mixture. These features maximize transparency to photons and reduce  $K_L \rightarrow K_S$  regeneration. The position resolutions are  $\sigma_{xy} \sim 150 \,\mu {
m m}$  and  $\sigma_z \sim 2 \,{
m mm}$ . The momentum resolution is  $\sigma(p_{\perp})/p_{\perp} \leq 0.4\%$ . Vertices are reconstructed with a spatial resolution of  $\sim 3 \,\mathrm{mm}$ . The calorimeter [13], divided into a barrel and two endcaps, covers 98% of the solid angle. The energy resolution is  $\sigma_E/E = 5.7\%/\sqrt{E(\text{GeV})}$  and the timing resolution is  $\sigma_t = 54 \text{ ps}/\sqrt{E(\text{GeV})} \oplus 50 \text{ ps}$ . The trigger [14] uses calorimeter and chamber information. For the present analysis, the trigger relies entirely on calorimeter information. Two local energy deposits above threshold (50 MeV on the barrel, 150 MeV on the endcaps) are required. The trigger time has a large spread with respect to the bunch crossing time. It is however synchronized with the machine RF divided by 4,  $T_{\rm sync} = 10.8 \, {\rm ns}$ , with an accuracy of 50 ps. The time  $T_0$  of the bunch crossing producing an event is determined after event reconstruction.



Figure 1: Vertical cross section of the KLOE detector.

#### **3** Data reduction

About half of the  $K_L$ -mesons reach the calorimeter, where most interact. A  $K_L$  interaction is called a  $K_L$ -crash in the following. A  $K_L$ -crash is identified as a local energy deposit with energy above 100 MeV and a time of flight indicating low velocity:  $\beta \sim 0.218$ . The coordinates of the energy deposit determine the  $K_L$ 's direction to  $\sim 20$  mrad and its momentum  $\mathbf{p}_L$ , which is weakly dependent on the  $K_L$  direction because of the motion of the  $\phi$ -meson. A  $K_L$ -crash thus tags the production of a  $K_S$  of momentum  $\mathbf{p}_S = \mathbf{p}_{\phi} \mathbf{p}_L$ .  $K_S$ -mesons are tagged with an overall efficiency of  $\sim 30\%$ . Both  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  and  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  decays are selected from this tagged sample. Event selection consists of fiducial cuts, particle identification by time of flight, and kinematic closure.

Identification of  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  decays requires two tracks of opposite curvature. Tracks must extrapolate to the interaction point (IP) within KLOE resolutions. The reconstructed momenta and polar angles must lie in the intervals 120 MeV/c $and <math>30^\circ < \theta < 150^\circ$ . A cut in  $(p_\perp, p_\parallel)$  selects non-spiralling tracks. 1 636 604  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^$ events have been found. Contamination due to  $K_S$  decays other than  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  is well below the per-mil level and is ignored.

Identification of  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  events also begins with two tracks of opposite curvature. Tracks must extrapolate *and form a vertex* at the IP. The invariant mass  $M_{\pi\pi}$  of the pair calculated assuming both tracks are pions must be smaller than 490 MeV. This rejects ~95% of the  $\pi^+\pi^-$  decays.

Electrons and pions are discriminated by time of flight (TOF). Tracks are therefore required to be associated with calorimeter energy clusters. For each track, we compute the difference  $\delta_t(m) = t_{cl} - L/c\beta(m)$  using the cluster time  $t_{cl}$  and the track length L. The velocity  $\beta$  is computed from the track momentum for each mass hypothesis,  $m = m_e$ and  $m = m_{\pi}$ . In order to avoid uncertainties due to the determination of  $T_0$ , we make cuts on the two-track difference

$$d\delta_{t,ab} = \delta_t(m_a)_1 - \delta_t(m_b)_2,\tag{1}$$

where the mass hypothesis  $m_{a(b)}$  is used for the track 1(2). This difference is zero for the correct mass assignments. An additional fraction of  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  events is rejected by requiring  $|d\delta_{t,\pi\pi}| > 1.5$  ns. The differences  $d\delta_{t,\pi e}$  and  $d\delta_{t,e\pi}$  are calculated for events surviving the previous cut. The scatter plot of the two variables is shown in Fig. 2 for Monte Carlo events. The cuts applied on these time differences for the selection of  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  events are illustrated in the figure:  $|d\delta_{t,\pi e}| < 1$  ns,  $d\delta_{t,e\pi} > 3$  ns; or  $|d\delta_{t,e\pi}| < 1$  ns,  $d\delta_{t,\pi e} > 3$  ns.

Finally, for events passing all of the above criteria, we compute the missing energy



Figure 2: Scatter plot of the time differences  $d\delta_{t,\pi e}$  vs  $d\delta_{t,e\pi}$  for  $e\pi$  and  $\pi e$  mass assignments for  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  (left) and  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  (right) Monte Carlo events.

and momentum  $E_{\text{miss}}$ ,  $p_{\text{miss}}$ . For  $\pi^{\pm}e^{\mp}\bar{\nu}(\nu)$  decays, these variables are the neutrino energy and momentum, and satisfy  $E_{\text{miss}} = cp_{\text{miss}}$ . The distribution of  $E_{\text{miss}} - cp_{\text{miss}}$  is shown in Fig. 3 before (left) and after (right) the time-of-flight cuts are imposed. A clear peak at  $E_{\text{miss}} - cp_{\text{miss}} = 0$  is evident in the distribution in the right panel and corresponds to a clean signal for  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$ . Events with  $E_{\text{miss}} - cp_{\text{miss}} > 10$  MeV are mostly due to  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  decays in which a pion decays to a muon before reaching the tracking volume. The solid line in the right graph is a fit of the data to the sum of the signal and background spectra simulated using the Monte Carlo (MC). The free fit parameters are the signal and background normalizations. We find:

$$N(\pi^{\pm}e^{\mp}\bar{\nu}(\nu)) = 624 \pm 30 \tag{2}$$

The quoted error includes the contributions from fluctuations in the signal statistics ( $\pm 25$ ), from the background subtraction ( $\pm 10$ ), and from the finite statistics of the MC spectra ( $\pm 13$ ).

#### 4 Efficiency determination

For both  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  (normalization) and  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  (signal) events, contributions to the tagging and selection inefficiencies due to purely geometrical effects have been estimated using MC simulation, while data have been used to estimate the corrections for tracking and trigger inefficiencies. For  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  events, the corrections for vertex reconstruction and time-of-flight  $\pi$ -e identification inefficiencies have also been evaluated using data.

For  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  events, the MC is used to compute the efficiency after application of the fiducial cuts, since these are fundamentally geometrical. The single-track recon-



Figure 3:  $E_{\text{miss}} - cp_{\text{miss}}$  spectrum for  $K_S \rightarrow \pi e\nu$  candidates before (left) and after (right) TOF cuts.

struction efficiency is obtained in bins of  $(p_{\perp}, \theta)$  from subsamples of  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  events. The ratio of data and MC reconstruction efficiencies is found to be constant throughout the acceptance, and the overall MC efficiency is scaled accordingly. The  $K_S$ - $K_L$  final state allows the trigger efficiency to be evaluated directly from data. Because of its high energy, the  $K_L$ -crash always fires at least one calorimeter sector. Approximately 40% of the time it fires *two* sectors, giving rise to a valid trigger by itself. Events recognized to have triggered in this way are used to measure the probability that at least one  $K_S$  secondary satisfies the trigger together with the  $K_L$ -crash cluster, which defines the trigger efficiency in the remaining 60% of events. The  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  selection efficiencies are listed in table 1; for more details see ref. [15].

	and <i>nev</i> decays.
$K_S \to \pi^+ \pi^-$	Efficiency
Fiducial cuts	$0.5755 \pm 0.0015$
$T_0$ and trigger	$0.976 \pm 0.003$
$K_S \to \pi e \nu$	Efficiency
Fiducial cuts	$0.297 \pm 0.005$
$T_0$ and trigger	$0.922\pm0.004$
Track-cluster association	$0.925 \pm 0.006$
Time of flight	$0.820\pm0.007$
Tag efficiency ratio ( $R_{tag}$ )	$1.024 \pm 0.007$

Table 1: Efficiencies for  $\pi^+\pi^-$  and  $\pi e\nu$  decays.

For  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  events, the MC is used to evaluate the contributions to the selection inefficiency from the vertex reconstruction, the fiducial cuts, and the  $M_{\pi\pi}$  cut. The vertex reconstruction efficiency is also estimated from data, using events in which the  $K_L$  decays into  $\pi^{\pm}e^{\mp}\bar{\nu}(\nu)$  near the IP and the  $K_S$  decays into  $2\pi^0$ 's ( $\pi^0$ 's do not affect tracking in the drift chamber). The ratio of data and MC efficiencies is used as a scale correction to the MC efficiency. The tracking efficiencies for MC and data have been measured using  $K_S \rightarrow \pi^+\pi^-$  events, as stated above. The need to extrapolate over a larger interval in the track momenta for  $K_S \rightarrow \pi e\nu$  events (especially for the electrons) introduces a larger error on the tracking efficiency correction in this case.

The track-to-cluster association efficiency  $\varepsilon_{tca}$  includes both the probability that the particle reaching the calorimeter  $(\pi^+, \pi^-, e^{\mp}, \text{ or } \mu^{\mp})$  deposits enough energy to be detected, and the probability that the track and cluster are correctly associated during reconstruction. The trigger efficiency  $\varepsilon_{\rm trg}$  is given by the probability that one of the  $K_S$  clusters together with the  $K_L$ -crash cluster triggers the event. The overall corrections for  $\varepsilon_{tca}$ ,  $\varepsilon_{trg}$ , and the time-of-flight identification efficiency are obtained using a high-purity (> 99.7%)sample of  $K_L \to \pi e \nu, K_S \to \pi^+ \pi^-$  events in which the  $K_L$  decays near the IP and the  $K_S$ decay generates the trigger. Such  $K_L \ell 3$ -gold events can be selected using track kinematics only, with essentially no recourse to calorimeter information. Independent estimates for  $\varepsilon_{tca}$  and  $\varepsilon_{trg}$  parameterized in the variables of each track can be obtained from samples of  $\phi \to \pi^+ \pi^- \pi^0$ ,  $K_S \to \pi^+ \pi^-$ , and  $K_L \ell$ 3-gold events. For all of these event types, reconstruction is possible whether or not one of the tracks leaves a cluster in the calorimeter. The efficiencies are then parameterized separately for each particle type, and used to weight the MC-generated semileptonic events to obtain an average correction. The results obtained with the two methods agree within errors. The overall efficiency  $\epsilon_{tot}^{\pi e_{\nu}}$  for the detection of signal events is  $0.208 \pm 0.004$ . The various contributions are separately listed in table 1; for more details see ref. [16].

In principle, the  $K_L$ -crash identification efficiency cancels out in the ratio of the number of selected  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  and  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  events. In practice, since the event  $T_0$  is obtained from the  $K_S$  and the  $K_L$  is recognized by its time of flight, there is a small dependence of the  $K_L$ -crash identification efficiency on the  $K_S$  decay mode. A correction for this effect is obtained by studying the accuracy of the  $T_0$  determination in each case. For the case of  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$ , this study is performed using  $K_L \ell 3$ -gold events in which the topology of the  $K_L \to \pi e\nu$  decay is manipulated to reflect the  $K_S$  decay length distribution, and in which the true  $T_0$  is unambiguous (both the  $\pi^+$  and  $\pi^-$  from the  $K_S$  give the same  $T_0$ ). For the case of  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$ , this study is performed using  $K_L \to \pi^+\pi^-\pi^0$ ,  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  events, in which the  $K_L$  decay gives an unambiguous estimate of the event  $T_0$ . Such events can be recognized without knowledge of the event  $T_0$  *a priori*. The ratio  $R_{\text{tag}}$  of the tagging efficiencies for  $K_S \to \pi e\nu$  and  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  is found to differ from unity by  $\sim 2\%$  (see table 1).

#### 5 Result

The value for BR( $K_S \to \pi e\nu$ ) is obtained by normalizing the number of signal events to the number of  $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$  events in the same data set, correcting for the total selection efficiencies and the ratio  $R_{\text{tag}}$  of tagging efficiencies, and using the present experimental value for BR( $K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-$ ) [5]:

$$BR(K_S \to \pi e\nu) = \frac{N^{\pi e\nu}}{N^{\pi \pi}} \times \frac{\varepsilon_{\text{tot}}^{\pi \pi}}{\varepsilon_{\text{tot}}^{\pi e\nu}} \times \frac{1}{R_{\text{tag}}} \times BR(K_S \to \pi^+ \pi^-).$$
(3)

We obtain

$$BR(K_S \to \pi^{\pm} e^{\mp} \bar{\nu}(\nu)) = (6.91 \pm 0.34_{\text{stat}} \pm 0.15_{\text{syst}}) \times 10^{-4},$$
(4)

in agreement with the expectation from the Standard Model. The contributions to the error in our measurement are given in table 2.

Table 2: Fractional errors on $BR(K_S \rightarrow \pi e\nu)$ .		
Source	Error, %	
Statistics, signal and background	4.9	
$K_S \to \pi e \nu$ selection		
Tracking and vertex efficiency	1.4	
MC preselection efficiency	0.5	
Track-cluster, $T_0$ and trigger	0.7	
Time-of-flight cuts	0.9	
$K_S \to \pi^+ \pi^-$ selection		
Acceptance	0.2	
Tracking	0.2	
T0 and Trigger	0.3	
Tag efficiency ratio $(R_{tag})$	0.7	
$BR(K_S \to \pi^+\pi^-)$	0.4	
Total error	5.3	

This analysis demonstrates that KLOE can isolate a very pure sample of  $K_S \rightarrow \pi e\nu$  decays. The overall selection efficiency for  $K_S \rightarrow \pi e\nu$  decays among  $K_S$ -tagged events is  $0.208 \pm 0.004$ , due in large part to the tight fiducial cuts imposed on the decays of interest.

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