Observation and measurements of the production of prompt and non-prompt $\psi$ mesons in association with $Z$ boson in pp collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV with the ATLAS detector


DOI
10.1140/epjc/s10052-015-3406-9

Publication date
2015

Document Version
Final published version

Published in
European Physical Journal C

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Citation for published version (APA):
Observation and measurements of the production of prompt and non-prompt $J/\psi$ mesons in association with a $Z$ boson in $pp$ collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV with the ATLAS detector

ATLAS Collaboration*

CERN, 1211 Geneva 23, Switzerland

Abstract The production of a $Z$ boson in association with a $J/\psi$ meson in proton–proton collisions probes the production mechanisms of quarkonium and heavy flavour in association with vector bosons, and allows studies of multiple parton scattering. Using 20.3 fb$^{-1}$ of data collected with the ATLAS experiment at the LHC in $pp$ collisions at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV, the first measurement of associated $Z + J/\psi$ production is presented for both prompt and non-prompt $J/\psi$ production, with both signatures having a significance in excess of 5$\sigma$. The inclusive production cross-sections for $Z$ boson production (analysed in $\mu^{+}\mu^{-}$ or $e^{+}e^{-}$ decay modes) in association with prompt and non-prompt $J/\psi (\to \mu^{+}\mu^{-})$ are measured relative to the inclusive production rate of $Z$ bosons in the same fiducial volume to be $(36.8 \pm 6.7 \pm 2.5) \times 10^{-7}$ and $(65.8 \pm 9.2 \pm 4.2) \times 10^{-7}$ respectively. Normalised differential production cross-section ratios are also determined as a function of the $J/\psi$ transverse momentum. The fraction of signal events arising from single and double parton scattering is estimated, and a lower limit of 5.3 (3.7) mb at 68 (95)% confidence level is placed on the effective cross-section regulating double parton interactions.

1 Introduction

In the Standard Model, a single parton–parton interaction can produce a $J/\psi$ meson in association with a $Z$ boson either through a “prompt” QCD subprocess, or through the production of a $Z$ boson with a $b$-quark and its subsequent decay into a $J/\psi$ (“non-prompt” production). The same classification into prompt/non-prompt applies to any feed-down into $J/\psi$ production from the decays of excited charmonium states (expected to be approximately 20–30% of the total inclusive rate), depending on the production mechanism for those states. In addition, this final state may also result from the production of a $Z$ boson and a $J/\psi$ (either promptly or non-promptly produced) from two distinct parton–parton interactions within the same proton–proton collision. Previous searches for the related processes $W + \Upsilon(1S)$ and $Z + \Upsilon(1S)$ by CDF saw no evidence for the associated-production of vector-bosons and quarkonia and set limits on the production rate [1,2]. The production of a prompt $J/\psi$ in association with a $W$ boson was observed previously [3] by the ATLAS experiment.

The mechanisms responsible for the production of prompt $J/\psi$, and indeed all quarkonia, are not fully understood in hadron collisions. While the rate of hadroproduction of the $J/\psi$ [4–7] and $\Upsilon(2S)$ [7–10], as a function of their transverse momentum, $p_T$, is now modelled well by predictions in the non-relativistic QCD (NRQCD) [11–13] framework up to transverse momenta of 100 GeV, predictions of related observables such as charmonium spin-alignment [14,15] remain challenging to model simultaneously with the production rate, in part due to the number of free parameters which are not calculable and must be constrained from data. The study of additional observables and new final states provides further constraints on the contributions from colour-singlet [16–22] and colour-octet production processes, and their properties. The production of a gauge boson in association with a $J/\psi$ sets a high energy scale for the scattering process and results in an improvement in the perturbative convergence of the calculations [23,24] that has troubled the accuracy of quarkonium production models in the past [25]. Recent literature [24] has suggested that colour-octet contributions should dominate the total production rate and that next-to-leading-order (NLO) contributions enhance the cross-section over leading-order (LO) predictions, while other groups [23] state that colour-singlet processes may be important.

Contributions to the total $Z + J/\psi$ production rate can come from non-prompt $J/\psi$ originating from the decay of a $b$-hadron. Measurement of this contribution provides a new opportunity for studying heavy-flavour production in association with a $Z$ boson [26,27]. Beyond the study of

* e-mail: atlas.publications@cern.ch
quarkonium production mechanisms, measurement of the $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ rate may be relevant for the study of $ZZ^*$ production in a kinematic regime complementary to that previously studied at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) \cite{28,29} where one on-shell $Z$ boson is produced along with a highly virtual boson that fragments into a $c\bar{c}$ pair. Measurement of $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ production also represents an important background to the search for the rare $Z \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^- J/\psi$ three-body decay \cite{30–32}. In the future, $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ may prove to be a compelling mode for the study of rare decays of the Higgs boson in quarkonia and associated vector-boson decay modes, proposed in Refs. \cite{33,34} and more recently in Refs. \cite{35,36}. Such decays have received renewed attention as a promising mode for the study of Higgs boson charm couplings \cite{37} and its CP properties \cite{38}, and also as a possible background to $H \rightarrow ZZ^*$ decay \cite{39}. The production of a $Z$ boson in association with a $J/\psi$ can also contribute to the search for new physics \cite{35,40–43}.

In addition to the production of $Z + J/\psi$ via single parton scattering (SPS) processes, double parton scattering (DPS) interactions \cite{44–50} are expected to constitute a significant proportion of the observed signal. While DPS processes are not distinguishable event-by-event from SPS interactions, azimuthal angular correlations between the $Z$ and the $J/\psi$ are expected to be starkly different for the two processes, allowing information on their relative contributions to be extracted. These data can be used to tune the modelling of multiple interactions in other high-energy hadron–hadron processes.

This paper presents a measurement of the cross-section for the associated-production of $Z$ and $J/\psi$ relative to inclusive $Z$ production. The results are shown as fiducial cross-section ratios defined in a restricted phase-space of the muons from $J/\psi$ decay, and also as inclusive cross-section ratios after correcting for the $J/\psi$ kinematic acceptance of these muons, for the range of $J/\psi$ transverse momentum 8.5–100 GeV and rapidity $|y_{\psi}| < 2.1$. The contributions from prompt and non-prompt $J/\psi$ production are presented separately. The cross-section ratio for single parton scattering is obtained after estimating and subtracting the contribution due to double parton scattering. A lower limit on the effective cross-section regulating double parton interactions is presented. Differential cross-section ratios as a function of the transverse momentum $p_T$ of the $J/\psi$ are shown for prompt and non-prompt production, inclusive and DPS modes.

2 The ATLAS detector

The ATLAS detector \cite{51} is a general-purpose detector with a cylindrical geometry\(^1\) and forward–backward symmetric coverage in pseudorapidity $\eta$. The detector consists of inner tracking detectors, calorimeters and a muon spectrometer, and has a three-level trigger system. The inner tracking detector (ID) is composed of a silicon pixel detector, a semiconductor microstrip detector (SCT) and a transition radiation tracker (TRT). The ID directly surrounds the beam pipe and is immersed in a 2 T axial magnetic field generated by a superconducting solenoid.

The calorimeter system surrounds the solenoid and consists of a highly granular liquid-argon electromagnetic calorimeter (EM) and a steel/scintillator tile hadronic calorimeter. The EM calorimeter has three layers: the first consists of fine-grained strips in the $\eta$ direction, the second collects most of the energy deposited in the calorimeter by photon and electron showers, and the third provides measurements of energy deposited in the tails of these showers. Two complementary presampler detectors complete the EM, correcting for energy lost in the material before the calorimeter. This fine segmentation provides electron identification in conjunction with the inner detector in the region $|\eta| < 2.5$.

The muon spectrometer (MS) surrounds the calorimeters and consists of three large air-core superconducting magnets (each with eight coils), which generate a toroidal magnetic field. The MS is instrumented in three layers with detectors (monitored drift tubes and cathode strip chambers) that provide precision muon tracking covering $|\eta| < 2.7$ and fast trigger detectors (resistive plate chambers and thin gap chambers) covering the range $|\eta| < 2.4$.

The ATLAS trigger is a three-level system \cite{52} (Level-1, Level-2 and Event Filter) used to reduce the 20 MHz proton bunch collision rate to a several-hundred Hz event transfer rate recorded to mass storage. The system consists of a Level-1 trigger implemented in hardware and a software-based two-stage High Level Trigger (HLT). The Level-1 system provides a rough measurement of lepton candidate position in “regions of interest” (RoI) with a spatial granularity of $\Delta \phi \times \Delta \eta \approx 0.1 \times 0.1$. These RoI are used to seed HLT algorithms that use higher precision MS, ID and EM measurements to reconstruct lepton trigger objects.

3 Event selection and reconstruction

Events are collected by triggers requiring at least one lepton with $p_T > 24$ GeV. These triggers are highly efficient

Footnote 1 continued

\(^1\) 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 upward. Cylindrical coordinates $(r, \phi)$ are used in the transverse plane, $\phi$ being 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 the transverse momentum $p_T$ is defined as $p_T = p \sin \theta$. The rapidity is defined as $y = 0.5 \ln((E + p_T)/(E - p_T))$, where $E$ and $p_T$ refer to energy and longitudinal momentum, respectively. The $\eta$–$\phi$ distance between two particles is defined as $\Delta R = \sqrt{(\Delta \eta)^2 + (\Delta \phi)^2}$. 
in collecting $Z \to \ell^+\ell^-$ decays and were not prescaled during the 2012 data-taking period. Triggered events are required to satisfy certain standardised data-quality requirements, which exclude events taken when temporary faults in detector systems compromise the reconstruction. The total integrated luminosity of proton–proton collisions used in this measurement, after data-quality requirements are applied, is 20.3 fb$^{-1}$.

The final state of this measurement is $Z(\to \ell^+\ell^-) + J/\psi(\to \mu^+\mu^-)$, where $\ell = \mu, e$, and therefore candidate events are required to have two pairs of leptons with opposite charge. Each pair of leptons is then fitted to a common vertex, with the invariant mass of the first pair required to be close to the $Z$ boson mass and that of the second pair to be near the $J/\psi$ mass. For events with more than four leptons, all possible combinations of $\ell^+\ell^-$ and $\mu^+\mu^-$ pairs are considered. In rare cases where ambiguous solutions are found, the pairings giving the dilepton combination with mass closest to the particle ($Z$ or $J/\psi$) world-average mass are chosen.

### 3.1 Lepton reconstruction

Muons are identified [53] by tracks (or track segments) reconstructed in the MS, matched to tracks reconstructed in the ID. Track reconstruction in the inner detector uses the measurements from the pixel, SCT and TRT detectors. The “inside-out” reconstruction strategy starts by finding a track candidate in the pixel and SCT detectors and then extends the trajectories of successfully fitted tracks to the TRT to reconstruct a full inner detector track. Outside of the TRT acceptance ($|\eta| > 2.0$) only pixel and SCT information is used.

The muon momentum is calculated by statistically combining the information from the ID and the MS, applying a parameterised correction for the energy loss in the calorimeter. Such muons are referred to as combined muons. In some cases it is possible to match an ID track to a signal in the MS, matched to tracks reconstructed in the ID. Candidate electron tracks are constructed in the MS, matched to tracks reconstructed in the ID.

Electrons are reconstructed [54] from energy deposits in the electromagnetic calorimeter that are matched to a track in the inner detector. Candidate electron tracks are fitted using a dedicated tracking algorithm to account for bremsstrahlung energy losses, and the track pattern recognition and global $\chi^2$ fit take into account the electron track hypothesis as an alternative to the default pion hypothesis. Both electrons coming from the $Z$ boson decay need to have $p_T > 15$ GeV, $|\eta| < 2.47$ and satisfy the loose identification criteria described in Ref. [54].

In order to reject non-prompt leptons from the decay of heavy quarks, electrons from conversions of bremsstrahlung photons and fake electrons from misidentified jets, the leptons that form the $Z$ boson candidate must satisfy isolation requirements based on tracking information. The scalar sum of the transverse momenta of inner detector tracks inside an $\eta$–$\phi$ cone of size $\Delta R = 0.2$ around the lepton, excluding the track associated with the lepton itself, is required to be no more than 15% of the lepton $p_T$.

At least one of the $Z$ boson candidate’s leptons must have been responsible for firing the trigger. This criterion is assessed by requiring one of the reconstructed muons (electrons) from the boson to be less than $\Delta R < 0.1(0.15)$ from a relevant muon (electron) trigger object. The offline reconstructed $p_T$ of the candidate matching the trigger must satisfy $p_T > 25$ GeV. In addition, triggered muons must satisfy $|\eta| < 2.4$ and electrons must satisfy the medium identification criteria, as described in Ref. [54].

### 3.2 $Z + J/\psi$ candidate selection

Same-flavour, opposite-sign lepton pairs are combined to reconstruct the $Z(\to \ell^+\ell^-)$ and $J/\psi(\to \mu^+\mu^-)$ candidates. Candidate $Z + J/\psi$ events are retained if the $J/\psi$ invariant mass falls in the range $2.6–3.6$ GeV and the $Z$ boson candidate has an invariant mass within $10$ GeV of the $Z$ mass world-average value ($m_Z^{\exp}$) [55]. In addition, the $J/\psi$ candidate is required to satisfy $p_T > 8.5$ GeV and $|y_{J/\psi}| < 2.1$. The measurements in the di-electron and di-muon decay channels of the $Z$ boson are performed in slightly different phase spaces and combined into a common phase-space for measurement of the fiducial production cross-sections as summarised in Table 1. The inclusive phase-space definition is identical except for the omission of requirements on the leptons from the $J/\psi$ decay.

The $Z$ boson and $J/\psi$ lepton pairs are used to build two dilepton vertices. In the case of the $J/\psi$ candidate the ID tracks alone are used in this vertex fit, whereas for the $Z \to \mu^+\mu^-$ the combined tracks (which are built from hits in both the ID and the MS) are used. For $Z \to e^+e^-$ decays, ID tracks corrected by a dedicated tracking algorithm are used, as described above. To reduce contamination from pileup, where a $Z$ boson and a $J/\psi$ are produced from two separate...
proton–proton collisions in the same proton–proton bunch crossing, the candidate vertices must not be separated in the z-direction by more than 10 mm.

Figure 1a shows a scatter plot of the masses of candidates satisfying these selections. In total, 290 candidate events are selected, of which 139 are observed with $Z \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ decays and 151 with $Z \rightarrow e^+ e^-$ decays.

### 3.3 Inclusive Z candidate selection

An inclusive Z sample is formed by selecting all events that satisfy the Z part of the $Z + J/\psi$ selection, including the trigger requirements. This sample is used in the measurement of the ratio of the $Z + J/\psi$ to Z cross-sections, and in the estimates of double parton scattering and the pileup background in the associated-production sample.

An estimate of the background in the inclusive Z sample is obtained using a mixture of Monte Carlo (MC) models and data-driven techniques. The NLO generator POWHEG (R1556) [56–58], interfaced to PYTHIA (8.160) [59], is used to model the signal, as well as Drell–Yan contributions away from the $Z$ peak and $Z \rightarrow \tau \tau$ or $W \rightarrow e\nu$ backgrounds. These samples use the CT10 PDF set [60] and the ATLAS AU2 tune [61]. The LO multi-leg generator SHERPA v1.4.1 [62] is used as an alternative signal model. Top quark processes involving tt or single top production are modelled with the NLO generator MC@NLO (4.03) [63,64], interfaced to HERWIG (6.52) [65] for parton showering and JIMMY (4.31) [66] for the underlying-event modelling with the ATLAS AUET2 tune [67] and the CT10 PDFs. The single-top $Wt$ process is modelled with the ACDerMC (3.8) [68] generator, using the CTEQ6L1 PDF set [69] and interfaced to PYTHIA (6.42) [70]. Diboson ($WZ$, $WW$ and $ZZ$) production is modelled using the HERWIG (6.52) and Jimmy generators with the ATLAS AUET2 tune and the CTEQ6L1 PDF set. The detector response is modelled using the ATLAS simulation infrastructure [71] based on the GEANT4 toolkit [72]. Background contributions arising from multi-jet events and from misidentified leptons are obtained directly from the data. This is achieved by inverting the isolation requirements on the leptons, providing a multi-jet background template, which can be used for comparison with the $Z + J/\psi$ sample. The total background in the $m_{Z^{\text{PDG}}} \pm 10$ GeV window is estimated to be 0.4±0.4 % (including systematic uncertainties), giving a sample of 16.15 million $Z$ boson candidates after background subtraction, of which 8.20 million are observed with $Z \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ and 7.95 million with $Z \rightarrow e^+ e^-$. The di-muon to di-electron ratios of the associated-production $Z + J/\psi$ sample and the inclusive Z sample are compared and found to be consistent within statistical uncertainties (0.92 ± 0.11 and 1.03 ± 0.01, respectively).

### 4 Signal and background extraction

The selected $Z + J/\psi$ candidates arise from a variety of signal and background sources. In addition to associated $Z$ boson and $J/\psi$ production from SPS and DPS, $Z$ boson and $J/\psi$ candidates can be produced from pileup. Genuine $J/\psi$ may also be paired with fake Z boson candidates in the same proton–proton collision, or vice-versa. Associated-production candidates may also occur from the production of a $Z$ boson in association with $b$-quarks, where one of the $b$-quarks hadronises into a $b$-hadron that subsequently decays into a $J/\psi$. This section discusses the means by which the contributions from the prompt and non-prompt signal components are distinguished and separated from the prompt and non-prompt background sources.

### 4.1 Separation of prompt and non-prompt $J/\psi$

The $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ candidates originate from prompt and non-prompt production sources, backgrounds with real and fake muon combinations, and real muon pairs producing an invariant mass in the continuum under the $J/\psi$ peak. These various components can be separated into categories using the pseudo-proper time distribution of the $J/\psi$ candidates in combination with the $J/\psi$ invariant mass distribution, where the pseudo-proper time, $\tau$, is defined by:
The analysis of the signal region considered in Sect. 4.1. indicates horizontal dotted lines with empty circles and to electrons with full circles. The \( J/\psi \) pseudo-proper time versus invariant mass, discussed in \( J/\psi \) production exhibits a longer pseudo-proper time distribution reflecting the lifetime of \( b \)-hadrons, although the distributions of non-prompt signal and background are not necessarily equal. In total, four terms are used for signal and background regions either side of the \( J/\psi \) mass peak are used to constrain the background components.

The pseudo-proper time of the signal prompt component is modelled by a double Gaussian distribution. For the background prompt component, a double-sided exponential convolved with the prompt signal function is used. The dimuon invariant mass is modelled with a double Gaussian distribution both for the prompt and non-prompt signal components and exponential functions for the backgrounds (again, prompt and non-prompt). The fit is performed in two separate rapidity regions, the barrel (\( |y_{J/\psi}| < 1.0 \)) and the endcap (\( 1.0 < |y_{J/\psi}| < 2.1 \)). The mass resolution is different between the two regions, due to increased multiple scattering and the decrease of the magnetic field integral at high rapidity.

In order to improve the stability of the fit process, the pseudo-proper time and invariant mass of the associated-production \( J/\psi \) candidates are fitted simultaneously with a sample of 100 k inclusive \( J/\psi \) candidates, selected with the same requirements on the \( J/\psi \) and its daughter muons as applied to the \( Z + J/\psi \) signal sample (see Table 1). The parameters that determine the shape of the pseudo-proper time and invariant mass distributions are linked between the two samples in this fit, leaving only the normalisations free between the two samples. Figure 2 shows the mass and pseudo-proper time distributions of the \( J/\psi \) candidates, produced in association with a \( Z \) boson, with the signal and background fits. Applying the fit model to the sample of \( Z \) bosons produced in association with a \( J/\psi \) candidate results in \( 56 \pm 10 \) promptly produced \( J/\psi \) mesons and \( 95 \pm 12 \) non-prompt.

After the fit is performed in the \( J/\psi \) mass and pseudo-proper time, the sPlot tool [73] is used to assign a weight to each event for each of the components included in the fit model (prompt signal, non-prompt signal, prompt background and non-prompt background). This technique allows the determination of distributions of observables associated with a specific contribution, e.g. prompt \( J/\psi \), while removing the contamination from the other components. As the sPlot technique relies on the assumption that the control variable is uncorrelated with the discriminating variables, the correlations between the \( J/\psi \) mass and pseudo-proper time,\( L_{xy} m_{J/\psi} \)

\[ \tau := \frac{L_{xy} m_{J/\psi}}{p_{TJ/\psi}} \]

with \( L_{xy} \) defined as 

\[ L_{xy} = \mathbf{L} \cdot \mathbf{p}_{TJ/\psi} / p_{TJ/\psi}, \]

\( \mathbf{L} \) the vector from the primary vertex to the \( J/\psi \) decay vertex, \( m_{J/\psi} \) the world-average mass of the \( J/\psi \) meson [55], \( p_{TJ/\psi} \) the transverse momentum of the \( J/\psi \) and \( p_{TJ/\psi} = |\mathbf{p}_{TJ/\psi}| \) its magnitude. The invariant mass and pseudo-proper time of the selected \( J/\psi \) candidates produced in association with a \( Z \) boson are shown in Fig. 1b. Promptly produced \( J/\psi \) mesons, which are created directly in the hard interaction or feed-down from prompt excited charmonium states produced by the colliding protons, have small pseudo-proper times (distributed around zero due to detector resolution). Background from opposite-sign muon pairs with invariant mass close to the \( J/\psi \) mass and short reconstructed pseudo-proper times can mimic prompt \( J/\psi \) mesons and forms the prompt background. The second component of the background arises from non-prompt muon pairs, with a vertex displacement that is related to \( b \)-hadron decays. Similarly, the signal from non-prompt \( J/\psi \) production exhibits a longer pseudo-proper time distribution reflecting the lifetime of \( b \)-hadrons, although the distributions of non-prompt signal and background are not necessarily equal. In total, four terms are used for signal and background to fit the pseudo-proper time distribution simultaneously with the invariant mass distribution of the muon pair. The mass regions either side of the \( J/\psi \) mass peak are used to constrain the background components.
on one side, and the variables that the weights will be applied to, on the other, were checked, and found to be negligible. The invariant mass distribution of Z boson candidates, after application of the sPlot weights, is shown in Fig. 3a, b for prompt J/ψ and non-prompt J/ψ events, respectively.

4.2 Properties of the Z boson candidates

Signal and multi-jet background templates for the dilepton mass were extracted separately for $Z \rightarrow e^+e^-$ and $Z \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ from the POWHEG MC generator described in Sect. 3.3 and the data. The signal templates are parameterised with a Gaussian distribution convolved with a Breit–Wigner function, with an additional Gaussian, with smaller mean value compared to the core Gaussian, to model the radiative tails. The multi-jet templates are modelled with an exponential function. The normalisations of the two templates are extracted from a fit to the sPlot-weighted $Z$ invariant mass distributions (Fig. 3). The numbers of background events estimated in the $Z$ signal region, defined as $m_{\text{PDG}}^Z \pm 10$ GeV, are $0 \pm 4$ (1 ± 4) and $1 \pm 5$ (0 ± 5) for the $Z \rightarrow e^+e^-(\mu^+\mu^-)$ candidates associated with prompt and non-prompt J/ψ, respectively, supporting the hypothesis that the sample is dominated by genuine $Z + J/\psi$ events. The background estimation procedure was verified with toy MC simulation.

4.3 Pileup background

During the 2012 data-taking period the average number of $pp$ interactions per bunch crossing at ATLAS was 20.7. While the most likely scenario is that all but one of these inelastic collisions are low-$p_T$ background events, there is a certain probability that two or more of these produce a hard scatter. Of these cases, some produce a $Z$ from one scatter, and a $J/\psi$ from another. To exclude as many as possible of these backgrounds, the two dilepton vertices are required to be separated along the $z$-axis by less than 10 mm. The remaining contamination can be estimated using four ingredients: the spread of the beam spot in $z$ for the data-taking period of relevance; the $J/\psi$ production cross-sections (prompt or non-prompt) from $pp$ collisions at 8 TeV; the number of $Z$ candidates; and the mean number of inelastic interactions per proton–proton bunch crossing, $\langle \mu \rangle$. This latter quantity is calculated from the instantaneous luminosity, $\mathcal{L}$, as $\langle \mu \rangle = \mathcal{L}\sigma_{\text{inel}}/nb_{fr}$, where $\sigma_{\text{inel}}$ is the $pp$ inelastic cross-section (equal to 73 mb [74]), $nb$ is the number of colliding bunches and $fr$ is the LHC revolution frequency.

To estimate the mean number of pileup collisions occurring within 10 mm of a given $Z$ vertex, an MC procedure is used. A number of pileup vertices are sampled from the luminosity-weighted distribution of $Z$ vertices. These vertices are distributed according to a Gaussian function with width $48 \pm 3$ mm, equal to the measured width of the proton beam spread in the $z$-coordinate. The number of additional vertices which lie within 10 mm of a randomly selected vertex, is determined to be $N_{\text{extra}} = 2.3 \pm 0.2$.

As it has been verified that the $J/\psi$ reconstruction efficiency is independent of the number of interactions per bunch crossing, the probability for a $J/\psi$ to be produced at a given pileup vertex is

$$P_{\psi}^{ij} = \sigma_{\psi}^{ij}/\sigma_{\psi}^{\text{inel}}$$

where $\sigma_{\psi}^{ij}$ is the cross-section for $J/\psi$ production in the appropriate $p_T$ ($i$) and rapidity ($j$) bin. Although $\sigma_{\psi}^{ij}$ has not been measured in the fiducial region used in this measurement at centre-of-mass energies of $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV, it can be estimated using an existing non-prompt $J/\psi$ fraction measurement at $\sqrt{s} = 7$ TeV [4] and the fixed-order next-to-leading-logarithm [75, 76] (FONLL) prediction for the non-prompt $J/\psi$ cross-section at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV. This extrapolation to 8 TeV is based on the observation [4] that the variation in the ratio of non-prompt to prompt $J/\psi$ production with $p_T$ appears to be independent of the collision energy, and also on
Fig. 3 $Z \rightarrow e^+ e^-$ (left) and $Z \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ (right) candidate invariant mass distributions after the application of the sPlot weights coming from the a prompt and b non-prompt $J/\psi$ component of the fit. Projections of the unbinned maximum likelihood template fit, for the signal and background components derived from MC simulation and data respectively, are overlaid on the sPlot-weighted distributions. The vertical dot-dashed lines indicate the signal region considered in the analysis.

The excellent agreement between the ATLAS measurement and the FONLL predictions of the non-prompt cross-section.

The number of pileup candidates can be evaluated using the number of $Z$ candidates in the fiducial region, $N_Z$, according to $N_{\text{pileup}}^{ij} = N_{\text{extra}}^{ij} Z P_{ij}^{J/\psi}$, giving a total of $\sum_i N_{\text{pileup}}^{ij} = 5.2^{+1.8}_{-1.3}$ and $2.7^{+0.9}_{-0.6}$ events in the prompt and non-prompt samples, respectively. The uncertainty on the final result includes contributions from the estimated $J/\psi$ cross-section at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV, the number of inclusive $Z$ events and the number of extra vertices. The dependence of $\langle \mu \rangle$ and $P_{J/\psi}$ on $\sigma_{\text{inel}}$ cancels in the determination of $N_{\text{pileup}}$.

4.4 Double parton scattering

The DPS contribution to the $Z + J/\psi$ sample is counted as part of the signal. The effective cross-section for double parton interactions $\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ measured by ATLAS in $W + 2$-jet events [77], and the $pp \rightarrow J/\psi$ prompt and non-prompt cross-sections, are used to estimate the number of signal candidates from this source. Based on the assumptions that $\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ is process-independent, and that the two hard scatters are uncorrelated, for a collision where a $Z$ boson is produced, the probability that a $J/\psi$ is produced in addition due to a second hard process is $P_{j/\psi|Z}^{ij} \sigma_{J/\psi}/\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ (3) where $\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ is taken to be $15 \pm 3$ (stat.)$^{+5}_{-3}$ (sys.) mb according to the ATLAS measurement. The estimated numbers of DPS events in the associated-production $Z + J/\psi$ sample are $11.1^{+5.7}_{-5.0}$ for the prompt component and $5.8^{+2.6}_{-2.0}$ for the non-prompt component. Uncertainties from the $J/\psi$ cross-section at $\sqrt{s} = 8$ TeV, the number of inclusive $Z$ events and the DPS effective cross-section contribute to the total uncertainty.

Figure 4 shows the azimuthal angle between the $Z$ boson and the $J/\psi$ momentum vectors, $\Delta \phi$, after the application of...
sPlot weights to separate the prompt and non-prompt $J/\psi$ signal components from each other and from background sources. The estimated contributions of double parton scattering and pileup to the observed signal yields for prompt and non-prompt production are also overlaid. DPS events are expected to be distributed uniformly in $\Delta \phi$ because the $Z$ and the $J/\psi$ are produced by two independent processes. On the contrary, SPS events are expected to display a back-to-back correlation of the $Z$ and the $J/\psi$ ($\Delta \phi = \pi$) since the two particles come from a single interaction of two partons. This back-to-back behaviour is smeared by the presence of additional gluons in the final state, radiation from the leptons, detector effects and by the intrinsic properties of the protons; the measured data are consistent with a combination of a smeared $\Delta \phi = \pi$ peak from SPS and a flat DPS contribution with $\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ taken from the ATLAS $W+2$-jet measurement.

4.5 Detector effects and acceptance corrections

The efficiency for reconstructing muons in the ATLAS detector is very high [53] and depends on the kinematics of the muon. In order to correct the measurements for detector effects, a per-event weight is applied, based on the pseudorapidity and transverse momentum of both muons coming from the $J/\psi$ decay. These weights are extracted using large inclusive $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ and $Z \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-$ data samples and have been validated with MC simulation [53]. Small inefficiencies resulting from the requirement on separation of $Z$ and $J/\psi$ vertices are corrected using MC simulations.

It was verified using MC simulation that detector resolution effects causing reconstructed $Z$ boson candidates to migrate in and out of the phase space defined in Table 1 do not produce visible effects on the measured relative production rates.

In addition to corrections applied for reconstruction efficiency (approximately 90% depending on the $p_T$ of the $J/\psi$), the detector acceptance needs to be taken into account. The spin-alignment profile of the $J/\psi$ meson produced in association with a $Z$ boson might be different from the known profile of inclusive $J/\psi$ mesons [78]. The modified angular distributions of muons from the decay of alternatively-polarised $J/\psi$ mesons can cause changes in acceptance in the fiducial region defined by the selection requirements (see Table 1). For various extreme polarisation states of the $J/\psi$ [79], the $J/\psi$ rate is corrected for muons that fall outside the detector acceptance in transverse momentum and pseudorapidity.

5 Systematic uncertainties

Systematic uncertainties coming from the fit are calculated by varying the probability density functions for the $J/\psi$ mass and pseudo-proper time distributions. In addition to the model described in Sect. 4, an alternative model was used, changing the parameterisation for the mass and lifetime resolution and the shapes of the background components. This model parameterised the mass with a Gaussian function for the $J/\psi$ signal and exponential (or polynomial) functions for the combinatorial background, and parameterised the pseudo-proper time with the sum of a Gaussian and a double-sided exponential function convolved with a Gaussian resolution function for the prompt $J/\psi$ and prompt combinatorial background component, and an exponential function convolved with a Gaussian resolution function for the non-prompt $J/\psi$ and non-prompt combinatorial background. The shape-related parameters are linked between the $Z + J/\psi$ sample and the inclusive $J/\psi$ sample in the model used for the signal extraction. This assumption neglects the possible
difference in kinematics between $J/\psi$ mesons that are produced inclusively and $J/\psi$ mesons produced in association with a $Z$ boson and needs to be taken into account. This effect is evaluated by removing the link between the parameters and repeating the fit, using the main fit model and the alternative considered for the systematic study. The systematic uncertainty associated with the fit procedure was determined with a toy MC simulation technique. A large number of simulated data samples were generated for the two rapidity bins and then fitted with all the available fit procedures. The uncertainties were evaluated from the maximal variation in mean yield extracted from each of the three fit models, relative to the nominal model. This uncertainty was found to be 3% for prompt production and 4–8% (depending on the rapidity of the $J/\psi$ candidate) for non-prompt production.

In the measurement of the cross-section ratios, it is assumed that the efficiency and acceptance for the $Z$ boson are the same when the $Z$ is produced in association with a $J/\psi$ as when it is produced inclusively. In the absence of reliable signal Monte Carlo samples for the SPS or DPS processes, systematic uncertainties that arise from this assumption are calculated using a data-driven approach. The reconstruction and trigger efficiencies calculated for the associated-production data sample and an inclusive $Z$ sample, re-weighted to match the observed $Z + J/\psi$ $p_T$ spectrum, are compared. The non-cancellation of efficiencies and acceptance between inclusively-produced $Z$ bosons and those produced in association with a $J/\psi$ is found to be $(1 \pm 1)$%.

The reconstruction efficiencies of the $J/\psi$ muons used for the correction and calculation of the inclusive cross-section are extracted from $Z \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ and $J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-$ decays using a tag-and-probe method [33]. These efficiencies and their uncertainties depend on the muon pseudorapidity and $p_T$ and are applied to the data in the form of two-dimensional maps. In order to calculate the systematic uncertainty, each bin of the efficiency map is allowed to vary within its uncertainty and the effect on the extracted yield is examined. The systematic uncertainty from the muon reconstruction efficiency is of the order of 1%.

In the selection requirements applied to the dataset, the $Z$ and $J/\psi$ vertices are required to be within 10 mm along the $z$-axis. This choice could cause a potential bias in the measurement of the prompt and the non-prompt yield since it affects the pseudo-proper time distribution of the $J/\psi$. This cut is loosened to 20 mm and the difference in the extracted yield, again assessed using data-driven pseudoexperiments, determined after the pileup subtraction and correction for the expected change in signal efficiency from MC simulations, is taken as a systematic uncertainty. This variation is found to be between 2 and 16%, depending on the rapidity of the $J/\psi$.

A possible contribution from the decay of $Z \rightarrow \ell^+\ell^-J/\psi$ [30–32] might lead to an enhancement of the measured yields over contributions from $Z + J/\psi$. This possible enhancement is studied by considering the change in the prompt yield after subtracting events for which the mass of the $\ell^+\ell^-J/\psi$ lies within 10 GeV of the world-average value of the $Z$ boson mass; the effect was found to be negligible.

The kinematic acceptance of $Z$ bosons is dependent on the average $Z$ boson polarisation. Due to the high detector acceptance for $Z$ boson decays, the possible effect of modification of the average polarisation of the $Z$ boson in associated production relative to inclusive production is considered negligible in this study.

Uncertainties linked with the luminosity measurement and the $Z$ trigger efficiencies cancel in the ratio of $Z + J/\psi$ to inclusive $Z$ cross-sections. The contributions of all non-negligible systematic uncertainties are summarised in Table 2.

### Table 2 Summary of experimental systematic uncertainties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Prompt (%)</th>
<th>Non-prompt (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>y_{J/\psi}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit procedure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Z$ boson kinematics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\mu_{J/\psi}$ efficiency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertex separation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
method, the background-only hypothesis for both the prompt and non-prompt final states was excluded at 5 σ significance. To allow for an assessment of the significance beyond that possible using pseudoexperiments, the significance was extracted as \( \sqrt{-2 \times \ln \mathcal{L}} \), where \( \mathcal{L} \) is the likelihood ratio of the background-only and signal plus background hypotheses. Both methods yielded consistent results, the outcome being that the background-only hypothesis is excluded at 5 σ significance for the \( Z + \text{prompt} \) \( J/\psi \) final state, and 9 σ significance for the non-prompt \( J/\psi \) signature.

After background subtraction, significant signals for the associated-production of \( Z + \text{prompt} \) \( J/\psi \) and \( Z + \text{non-prompt} \) \( J/\psi \) are observed. The background-subtracted \( Z + \text{prompt} \) \( J/\psi \) and \( Z + \text{non-prompt} \) \( J/\psi \) candidate yields are corrected for detector efficiency effects, and production cross-sections are determined in a restricted fiducial volume given by the criteria in Table 1. The measured \( Z + J/\psi \) cross-sections are normalised by the inclusive \( Z \) production cross-section determined in the same \( Z \) boson fiducial volume as the \( Z + J/\psi \) measurement, benefiting from the cancellation of some systematic uncertainties to allow a more precise determination of production cross-sections.

### 6.1 Fiducial cross-section ratio measurements

The fiducial cross-section ratio, as described in Table 1 (normalised to the inclusive \( Z \) boson cross-section), \( R^\text{fid}_{Z + J/\psi} \), is measured without applying corrections for the incomplete geometric acceptance for the \( J/\psi \) decay muons, nor for the \( Z \) boson acceptance and is defined as\(^2\):

\[
R^\text{fid}_{Z + J/\psi} = \frac{\mathcal{B}(J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-) \frac{\sigma_{\text{fid}}(pp \rightarrow Z + J/\psi)}{\sigma_{\text{fid}}(pp \rightarrow Z)}}{N(Z)} \sum_{pT \text{ bins}} \left[ N^\text{ec}(Z + J/\psi) - N^\text{ec}_{\text{pileup}} \right],
\]

where \( \mathcal{B}(J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^-) \) is the branching ratio for the decay \( J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^- [55] \), \( N^\text{ec}(Z + J/\psi) \) is the yield of \( Z + \text{hyperons} \) (prompt/non-prompt) \( J/\psi \) events after corrections for \( J/\psi \) construction efficiency, \( N(Z) \) is the background-subtracted yield of inclusive \( Z \) events and \( N^\text{ec}_{\text{pileup}} \) is the efficiency-corrected expected pileup background contribution in the fiducial \( J/\psi \) acceptance. For prompt and non-prompt production, the cross-section ratios were measured to be:

\[
prompt: R^\text{fid}_{Z + J/\psi} = (36.8 \pm 6.7 \pm 2.5) \times 10^{-7}
\]

\[
\text{non-prompt: } R^\text{fid}_{Z + J/\psi} = (65.8 \pm 9.2 \pm 4.2) \times 10^{-7}
\]

d for 8.5 GeV < \( p_T^{J/\psi} < 100 \) GeV and |\( y_{J/\psi} \)| < 2.1, where the first uncertainty is statistical and the second is systematic in origin. The results are summarised in Fig. 5. Production of a \( J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+\mu^- \) meson in association with a \( Z \) boson occurs approximately ten times per million \( Z \) bosons produced in the fiducial volume defined in Table 1.

The differential fiducial cross-section ratios \( dR^\text{fid}_{Z + J/\psi}/dy \) for prompt and non-prompt \( Z + J/\psi \) production are also determined in two bins, for central \( J/\psi \) rapidities (|\( y_{J/\psi} \)| < 1) and forward \( J/\psi \) rapidities (1 < |\( y_{J/\psi} \)| < 2.1), and are reported in Table 4.

### 6.2 Inclusive cross-section ratio measurements

Theoretical predictions for the production rates of \( J/\psi \) are often presented within a limited \( J/\psi \) phase-space, but without any kinematic requirements on the decay products. To allow comparison of theoretical and experimentally measured production rates, corrections derived from simulation are applied to the measured fiducial cross-sections to account for the geometrical acceptance loss due to the muon \( p_T \) and \( \eta \) requirements detailed in Table 1. These corrections are dependent on the \( p_T \) and rapidity of the \( J/\psi \) meson and on the angular distribution of the dilepton system in the decay of prompt \( J/\psi \). The angular distribution is dependent on the spin-alignment state of the produced \( J/\psi \) mesons. While the spin-alignment has been measured for inclusive prompt \( J/\psi \) production [78] and found to be consistent with an isotropic angular distribution hypothesis, \( J/\psi \) produced
in association with a $Z$ boson may have a different polarisation, leading to different decay kinematics. The central value is determined assuming unpolarised decays, with the effect of the most extreme polarisation scenarios assigned as a systematic uncertainty. The largest change in acceptance obtained considering the extreme polarisation scenarios is used as an additional systematic uncertainty in the determination of inclusive production cross-section for prompt $J/\psi$ production, and is equal to $\pm 24\%$ for $|y_{J/\psi}| < 1.0$ and $\pm 23\%$ for $1.0 < |y_{J/\psi}| < 2.1$. The range of variation for non-prompt production was reduced to about $10\%$ of the full range as suggested by the measurement of the $J/\psi$ polarisation in $b$-decays [80] and the uncertainty was found to be $\pm 3\%$ for $|y_{J/\psi}| < 1.0$ and $\pm 2\%$ for $1.0 < |y_{J/\psi}| < 2.1$.

The acceptance-corrected inclusive production cross-section ratio, $R_{Z + J/\psi}^{\text{incl}}$, is defined as:

$$R_{Z + J/\psi}^{\text{incl}} = \frac{B(J/\psi \rightarrow \mu^+ \mu^-) \sigma_{\text{incl}}(pp \rightarrow Z + J/\psi)}{\sigma_{\text{incl}}(pp \rightarrow Z)} = \frac{1}{N(Z)} \sum_{pr \text{ bins}} [N^{\text{rec+ac}}(Z + J/\psi) - N^{\text{rec+ac}}_{\text{pileup}}],$$

where $N^{\text{rec+ac}}(Z + J/\psi)$ is the yield of $Z +$ (prompt/non-prompt) $J/\psi$ events after $J/\psi$ acceptance corrections and efficiency corrections for both muons from the $J/\psi$ decay, $N^{\text{pileup}}_{\text{rec+ac}}$ is the expected pileup contribution in the full $J/\psi$ decay phase-space, and other variables are the same as for $R_{Z + J/\psi}^{\text{fid}}$.

The production cross-section ratio is measured to be:

- prompt: $pR_{Z + J/\psi}^{\text{incl}} = (63 \pm 13 \pm 5 \pm 10) \times 10^{-7}$
- non-prompt: $nR_{Z + J/\psi}^{\text{incl}} = (102 \pm 15 \pm 5 \pm 3) \times 10^{-7}$

for $8.5 \text{ GeV} < p_T^{J/\psi} < 100 \text{ GeV}$ and $|y_{J/\psi}| < 2.1$, where the first uncertainty is statistical, the second uncertainty is systematic, and the third uncertainty is due to the unknown $J/\psi$ spin-alignment in $Z + J/\psi$ production.

The differential fiducial cross-section ratios $dR_{Z + J/\psi}^{\text{incl}}/dy$ for prompt and non-prompt $Z + J/\psi$ production are also determined in two bins, for central $J/\psi$ rapidities ($|y_{J/\psi}| < 1$) and forward $J/\psi$ rapidities ($1 < |y_{J/\psi}| < 2.1$), and are reported in Table 4.
6.3 Comparison with theoretical calculations and double parton scattering contributions

Double parton scattering interactions are expected to contribute significantly to the measured inclusive production cross-sections. Using the relation in Eq. 3 and a $\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ value of $15 \pm 3 \text{ (stat.)}^{+5}_{-3} \text{ (syst.) mb}$, an estimate of the double parton scattering component of the observed signal for both prompt and non-prompt production can be derived in any kinematic interval of the measurement. Subtracting this DPS contribution from $R_{Z,\text{incl.}}^{J/\psi}$ gives an estimate $R_{Z,\text{incl.}}^{\text{DPS sub}}$ of the single parton scattering cross-section ratio for prompt $J/\psi$ production:

$$p R_{Z,\text{incl.}}^{\text{DPS sub}} = (45 \pm 13 \pm 6 \pm 10) \times 10^{-7}$$

and non-prompt $J/\psi$ production:

$$np R_{Z,\text{incl.}}^{\text{DPS sub}} = (94 \pm 15 \pm 5 \pm 3) \times 10^{-7}$$

for $8.5 \text{ GeV} < p_T^{J/\psi} < 100 \text{ GeV}$ and $|y_J/\psi| < 2.1$, where the first uncertainty is statistical, the second uncertainty is systematic, taking into account uncertainties from the DPS estimate, and the third uncertainty is due to the unknown $J/\psi$ spin-alignment in $Z + J/\psi$ production. Figure 5 summarises the fiducial, inclusive and DPS-subtracted cross-section ratios for prompt and non-prompt production and Table 4 presents the differential cross-section ratios in the central and forward $J/\psi$ rapidity intervals. The DPS fraction is $(29 \pm 9)\%$ for the $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ signal and $(8 \pm 2)\%$ for the non-prompt signal, in the kinematic region studied in this measurement.

The production cross-section ratios for $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ production are compared to LO colour-singlet [23] predictions, as well as the contributions from colour-singlet (CS) and colour-octet (CO) processes in the non-relativistic QCD (NRQCD) formalism [24].

All theoretical calculations consider only single parton scattering processes in which the $J/\psi$ mesons are produced directly from the parton interaction, without any feed-down from excited charmonium states. To allow direct comparison to the measured DPS-subtracted cross-section ratios, these predictions are normalised to NNLO calculations of the $Z$ boson fiducial production cross-section (533.4 pb), determined using FEWZ [81,82].

LO colour-singlet mechanism (CSM) predictions for the production cross-section (normalised to the inclusive $Z$ production rate) vary between $(11.6 \pm 3.2) \times 10^{-8}$ (from Ref. [23]) and $(46.2^{+6.0}_{-6.5}) \times 10^{-8}$ (from Ref. [24]). The NLO NRQCD prediction [24] for the colour-singlet rate is $(45.7^{+10.5}_{-9.6}) \times 10^{-8}$. NRQCD colour-octet contributions to the normalised production rate (that should be added to the corresponding colour-singlet rates to provide the total NRQCD prediction) shown in Fig. 5 are predicted to be $(25.1^{+3.3}_{-3.5}) \times 10^{-8}$ at LO and $(86^{+20}_{-18}) \times 10^{-8}$ at NLO accuracy, approximately a factor of two larger than the contribution from colour-singlet production at the same order in the perturbative expansion. Uncertainties in the predictions arise from a variation of the renormalisation and factorisation scales up and down by a factor of two from their nominal values, and uncertainties on the charm quark mass. The variation in the predictions for the colour-singlet rate at LO from different groups arises from a different choice of scale for the central prediction, either taking the $Z$ mass, $m_Z$, or the $J/\psi$ transverse mass, $m_T^{J/\psi} = \sqrt{(m_J/\psi)^2 + (p_T^{J/\psi})^2}$, the appropriateness of which is the subject of some discussion [23,24]. The CO predictions presented here use the values for the NRQCD long-distance matrix elements as discussed in Ref. [24], but do not include uncertainties related to the determination of these matrix elements [83].

The effective cross-section regulating multiple parton interactions is expected to be a dynamical quantity dependent on the probed scale of the interactions, and thus should be $x$-dependent (where $x \equiv p_{\text{parton}}/p_{\text{beam}}$) [84]. Recent theoretical studies [85] have suggested that vector-boson production in association with jets may have $\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ values as high as $15$–$25$ mb. In this paper, the ATLAS $W + 2$-jet measurement of $\sigma_{\text{eff}} = 15 \pm 3 \text{ (stat.)}^{+5}_{-3} \text{ (syst.) mb}$ is used to estimate the DPS contribution, and is found to be consistent, within the still sizeable uncertainties, with the observed rates and the plateau observed at small azimuthal separations between the produced $Z$ bosons and $J/\psi$, illustrated in Fig. 4.

The small $\Delta \phi(Z, J/\psi)$ region is sensitive to DPS contributions and can be used to limit the maximum allowed double parton scattering contribution to the observed signal, which corresponds to a lower limit on $\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ by conservatively assuming that all observed signal in the first bin ($\Delta \phi(Z, J/\psi) < \pi/5$ region) is due to DPS. As the estimated relative signal contribution from DPS processes is largest in prompt production, the data from $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ provides the most stringent limit on the rate of DPS interactions. The data uncertainties and uncertainties inherent in the DPS estimate allow a lower limit $\sigma_{\text{eff}} > 5.3 \text{ mb (3.7 mb)}$ at 68% (95%) confidence level to be extracted from the $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ data.

A model-independent upper limit on $\sigma_{\text{eff}}$ cannot be extracted from these data, as such a limit corresponds to a minimum rate of DPS contribution at small $\Delta \phi(Z, J/\psi)$. While SPS contributions are largest at wide angles, a significant SPS contribution is possible at low angles due to high-order processes [86].

6.4 Differential production cross-section measurements

Extending upon the measurement of the total inclusive production ratios $R_{Z,\text{incl.}}^{J/\psi}$ and determination of the DPS con-
for-like comparison between theory and data. Theory predicts that colour-octet contributions exceed the production rate from singlet processes by approximately a factor of two, with colour-octet processes becoming increasingly dominant for higher $p_T$ of the $J/\psi$. The combination of DPS and NLO NRQCD contributions tends to underestimate the production rate observed in data, with the discrepancy increasing with transverse momentum and reaching a factor of 4–5 at $p_T^{J/\psi} > 18$ GeV. A significant SPS contribution to $Z$ + non-prompt $J/\psi$ production rate from $Z+b$-jet production, where the jet contains a $J/\psi$ meson, is expected but has not been evaluated for this article. The data presented here offer the opportunity to test $Z+b$-jet production at low transverse momentum.

7 Conclusions

This paper documents the first observation and measurement of both associated $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ and $Z +$ non-prompt $J/\psi$ production, with the background-only hypothesis being excluded at $5 \sigma$ significance for prompt $Z + J/\psi$ production and at $9 \sigma$ significance for non-prompt $J/\psi$ production, using 20.3 fb$^{-1}$ of proton–proton collisions recorded in the ATLAS detector at the LHC, at a centre-of-mass energy of 8 TeV.

Fiducial cross-sections of the production rate of the two final states were measured as ratios to the inclusive $Z$ boson production rate in the same fiducial volume, and found to be $(36.8 \pm 6.7 \pm 2.5) \times 10^{-7}$ and $(65.8 \pm 9.2 \pm 4.2) \times 10^{-7}$ for $Z$ bosons produced in association with a prompt and non-prompt $J/\psi$, respectively, where the first uncertainty is statistical and the second is systematic. Ratios, corrected for the limited geometrical acceptance for the muons from the $J/\psi$ decay in the $J/\psi$ fiducial volume, are also presented. For prompt production this correction factor depends on the spin-alignment state of $J/\psi$ produced in association with a $Z$ boson, which may differ from the spin-alignment observed in inclusive $J/\psi$ production. The measured $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ production rates are compared to theoretical predictions at LO and NLO for colour-singlet and colour-octet prompt production processes. A higher production rate is predicted through colour-octet transitions than through colour-singlet processes, but the expected production rate from the sum of singlet and octet contributions is lower than the data by a factor of 2 to 5 in the $p_T^{J/\psi}$ range studied.

Measurements of the azimuthal angle between the $Z$ boson and $J/\psi$ meson suggest that both single and double parton scattering contributions may be present in the data. Using the effective cross-section regulating double parton scattering rates as measured by ATLAS in the $W+2$-jet final state, the fraction of the inclusive production rate arising from double parton scattering interactions is estimated to
be (29±9) % for prompt production and (8±2) % for non-prompt production. An independent limit on the maximum rate of double parton scattering contributing to the signal is set, corresponding to a lower limit on the effective cross-section of 5.3 mb (3.7 mb) at 68 % (95 %) confidence level. The measured production cross-section ratios of inclusive $Z +$ prompt $J/\psi$ and $Z +$ non-prompt $J/\psi$ production, and the estimated contribution from double parton scattering, are shown differentially in five intervals of the $J/\psi$ $p_T$, with the differential production rates compared to NLO predictions from colour-singlet and colour-octet processes.

Acknowledgments We thank CERN for the very successful operation of the LHC, as well as the support staff from our institutions without whom ATLAS could not be operated efficiently. We acknowledge the support of ANPCyT, Argentina; YerPhI, Armenia; ARC, Australia; BMWFW and FWF, Austria; ANAS, Azerbaijan; SSTC, Belarus; CNPq and FAPERJ, Brazil; NSERC, NRC and CFI, Canada; CERN; CONICYT, Chile; CAS, MOST and NSFC, China; COLCIENCIAS, Colombia; MES, CR, MPO CR and VSC CR, Czech Republic; DLR and Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, Germany; INFN, Italy; BMBF, DFG, HGF, MPG and AvH Foundation, Germany; The Royal Society and Wallenberg Foundation, Sweden; SER, SNSF and Cantons of Bern and Geneva, Switzerland; N挂, Taiwan; TAEK, Turkey; STFC, the Royal Society and Leverhulme Trust, United Kingdom; DOE and NSF, United States of America. The crucial computing support from all WLCG partners is acknowledged gratefully, in particular from CERN and the ATLAS Tier-1 facilities at TRIUMF (Canada), NDGF (Denmark, Norway, Sweden), CC-IN2P3 (France), KIT/GridKA (Germany), INFN-CNAF (Italy), NL-T1 (Netherlands), PIC (Spain), ASGC (Taiwan), RAL (UK) and BNL (USA) and in the Tier-2 facilities worldwide.

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67 Graduate School of Science, Kobe University, Kobe, Japan
68 Faculty of Science, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan
69 Kyoto University of Education, Kyoto, Japan
70 Department of Physics, Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan
71 Instituto de Física La Plata, Universidad Nacional de La Plata and CONICET, La Plata, Argentina
72 Physics Department, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK
73 (a) INFN Sezione di Lecce, Lecce, Italy; (b) Dipartimento di Matematica e Fisica, Università del Salento, Lecce, Italy
74 Oliver Lodge Laboratory, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK
75 Department of Physics, Jožef Stefan Institute and University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia
76 School of Physics and Astronomy, Queen Mary University of London, London, UK
77 Department of Physics, Royal Holloway University of London, Surrey, UK
78 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University College London, London, UK
79 Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA, USA
80 Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, UPMC and Université Paris-Diderot and CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France
81 Fysiska institutionen, Lunds universitet, Lund, Sweden
82 Departamento de Física Teorica C-15, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain
83 Institut für Physik, Universität Mainz, Mainz, Germany
84 School of Physics and Astronomy, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK
85 CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France
86 Department of Physics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA, USA
87 Department of Physics, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada
88 School of Physics, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
89 Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA
90 Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA
91 (a) INFN Sezione di Milano, Milan, Italy; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Milano, Milan, Italy
92 B.I. Stepanov Institute of Physics, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
93 National Scientific and Educational Centre for Particle and High Energy Physics, Minsk, Republic of Belarus
94 Department of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA
95 Group of Particle Physics, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK
96 P.N. Lebedev Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia
97 Institute for Theoretical and Experimental Physics (ITEP), Moscow, Russia
98 National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Moscow, Russia
99 D.V. Skobeltsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia
100 Fakultät für Physik, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Munich, Germany
101 Max-Planck-Institut für Physik (Werner-Heisenberg-Institut), Munich, Germany
102 Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science, Nagasaki, Japan
103 Graduate School of Science and Kobayashi-Maskawa Institute, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan
104 (a) INFN Sezione di Napoli, Naples, Italy; (b) Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Napoli, Naples, Italy
105 Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, USA
106 Institute for Mathematics, Astrophysics and Particle Physics, Radboud University Nijmegen/Nikhef, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
107 Nikhef National Institute for Subatomic Physics and University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
108 Department of Physics, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, IL, USA
109 Budker Institute of Nuclear Physics, SB RAS, Novosibirsk, Russia
110 Department of Physics, New York University, New York, NY, USA
111 Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA
112 Faculty of Science, Okayama University, Okayama, Japan
113 Homer L. Dodge Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, USA
114 Department of Physics, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, USA
115 Palacký University, RCPTM, Olomouc, Czech Republic
116 Center for High Energy Physics, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, USA
117 LAL, Université Paris-Sud and CNRS/IN2P3, Orsay, France
Graduate School of Science, Osaka University, Osaka, Japan
Department of Physics, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
Department of Physics, Oxford University, Oxford, UK
INFN Sezione di Pavia, Pavia, Italy; Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Pavia, Pavia, Italy
Department of Physics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA
Petersburg Nuclear Physics Institute, Gatchina, Russia
INFN Sezione di Pisa, Pisa, Italy; Dipartimento di Fisica E. Fermi, Università di Pisa, Pisa, Italy
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
Laboratorio de Instrumentación y Física Experimental de Partículas-LIP, Lisbon, Portugal; Faculdade de Ciências, Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal; Departamento de Física, Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal; Centro de Física Nuclear da Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal; Departamento de Física, Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal; Departamento de Física Teórica y del Cosmos y CAPE, Universidad de Granada, Granada, Spain; Dep Física and CEFITEC of Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Caparica, Portugal
Institute of Physics, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague, Czech Republic
Czech Technical University in Prague, Prague, Czech Republic
Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University in Prague, Prague, Czech Republic
State Research Center Institute for High Energy Physics, Protvino, Russia
Particle Physics Department, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, UK
Ritsumeikan University, Kusatsu, Shiga, Japan
INFN Sezione di Roma, Rome, Italy; Dipartimento di Fisica, Sapienza Università di Roma, Rome, Italy
INFN Sezione di Roma Tor Vergata, Rome, Italy; Dipartimento di Fisica, Università di Roma Tor Vergata, Rome, Italy
INFN Sezione di Roma Tre, Rome, Italy; Dipartimento di Matematica e Fisica, Università Roma Tre, Rome, Italy
Faculté des Sciences Ain Chock, Réseau Universitaire de Physique des Hautes Energies-Université Hassan II, Casablanca, Morocco; Centre National de l’Energie des Sciences Techniques Nucleaires, Rabat, Morocco; Faculté des Sciences Semlalia, Université Cadi Ayyad, LPHEA-Marrakech, Marrakech, Morocco; Faculté des Sciences, Université Mohamed Premier and LPTPM, Oujda, Morocco; Faculté des Sciences, Université Mohammed V-Agdal, Rabat, Morocco
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
Santa Cruz Institute for Particle Physics, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA, USA
Department of Physics, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK
Department of Physics, Shinshu University, Nagano, Japan
Fachbereich Physik, Universität Siegen, Siegen, Germany
Department of Physics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada
SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Stanford, CA, USA
Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovak Republic; Department of Subnuclear Physics, Institute of Experimental Physics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Kosice, Slovak Republic
Department of Physics, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa; Department of Physics, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa; School of Physics, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
Department of Physics, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden; The Oskar Klein Centre, Stockholm, Sweden
Physics Department, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden
Departments of Physics and Astronomy and Chemistry, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY, USA
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK
School of Physics, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia
Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
Department of Physics, Technion: Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel
Raymond and Beverly Sackler School of Physics and Astronomy, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
Department of Physics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece
International Center for Elementary Particle Physics and Department of Physics, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan
Graduate School of Science and Technology, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, Japan
Department of Physics, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan
Department of Physics, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada

(a) TRIUMF, Vancouver, BC, Canada; (b) Department of Physics and Astronomy, York University, Toronto, ON, Canada
Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan

Department of Physics and Astronomy, Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA
Centro de Investigaciones, Universidad Antonio Narino, Bogota, Colombia

Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of California Irvine, Irvine, CA, USA

(a) INFN Gruppo Collegato di Udine, Sezione di Trieste, Udine, Italy; (b) ICTP, Trieste, Italy; (c) Dipartimento di
Chimica, Fisica e Ambiente, Università di Udine, Udine, Italy

Department of Physics, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL, USA
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Uppsala, Uppsala, Sweden

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

Department of Physics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, Canada
Department of Physics, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK
Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

Department of Particle Physics, The Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel
Department of Physics, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI, USA

Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie, Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, Germany

Fachbereich C Physik, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Wuppertal, Germany

Department of Physics, Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA

Yerevan Physics Institute, Yerevan, Armenia

Centre de Calcul de l’Institut National de Physique Nucléaire et de Physique des Particules (IN2P3), Villeurbanne,
France

a Also at Department of Physics, King’s College London, London, UK
b Also at Institute of Physics, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Baku, Azerbaijan
c Also at Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, Russia
d Also at TRIUMF, Vancouver, BC, Canada
e Also at Department of Physics, California State University, Fresno, CA, USA
f Also at Department of Physics, University of Fribourg, Fribourg, Switzerland
g Also at Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russia
h Also at CPPM, Aix-Marseille Université and CNRS/IN2P3, Marseille, France
i Also at Università di Napoli Parthenope, Naples, Italy
j Also at Institute of Particle Physics (IPP), Victoria, Canada
k Also at also at Department of Physics Department, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot, UK
l Also at Department of Physics, St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, St. Petersburg, Russia
m Also at Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA, USA
n Also at Institutio Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avancats, ICREA, Barcelona, Spain
o Also at Department of Physics, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan
p Also at Department of Physics, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin TX, USA
q Also at Institute of Theoretical Physics, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
r Also at CERN, Geneva, Switzerland
s Also at Georgian Technical University (GTU), Tbilisi, Georgia
t Also at Ochadai Academic Production, Ochanomizu University, Tokyo, Japan
u Also at Manhattan College, New York, NY, USA
v Also at Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
w Also at LAL, Université Paris-Sud and CNRS/IN2P3, Orsay, France
x Also at Academia Sinica Grid Computing, Institute of Physics, Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan

Springer
Also at Laboratoire de Physique Nucléaire et de Hautes Energies, UPMC and Université Paris-Diderot and CNRS/IN2P3, Paris, France

Also at Dipartimento di Fisica, Sapienza Università di Roma, Rome, Italy

Also at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology State University, Dolgoprudny, Russia

Also at Section de Physique, Université de Genève, Geneva, Switzerland

Also at International School for Advanced Studies (SISSA), Trieste, Italy

Also at Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, USA

Also at School of Physics and Engineering, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China

Also at Faculty of Physics, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia

Also at National Research Nuclear University MEPhI, Moscow, Russia

Also at Department of Physics, Stanford University, Stanford CA, USA

Also at Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Wigner Research Centre for Physics, Budapest, Hungary

Also at Department of Physics, Oxford University, Oxford, UK

Also at Department of Physics, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

Also at Discipline of Physics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa

Also at University of Malaya, Department of Physics, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

* Deceased