The anomalous suppression of $\pi_2(1670) \to b_1\pi$

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We show that current experimental data indicate that the decay mode $\pi_2(1670) \to b_1\pi$ is anomalously small. This acts as a powerful discriminator for and against various decay models. Non-relativistic quark models with spin-1 pair creation, e.g. $^3P_0$ (flux-tube breaking) and $^3S_1$ (gluon exchange) models, can accommodate the experimental data because of a selection rule. Conversely, the decay model which follows naturally from the one-boson (in this case π) exchange model strongly disagrees with the data.