

Supplemental Material for J110057

October 18, 2017

Selection in SDSS-III BOSS of J110057

SDSS J110057.71-005304.5 was discovered by the Sloan Digital Sky Survey in 2000. J110057 was imaged in Run 756 and satisfied a number of spectroscopic targeting flags¹ making it an SDSS quasar target. A spectrum was obtained on MJD 51908, on Plate 277, Fiber 212, and the spectrum of a $z = 0.378 \pm 0.00003$ quasar was catalogued in the SDSS Early Data Release (Schneider et al., 2002).

The second epoch spectrum is from the SDSS-III Baryon Oscillation Spectroscopic Survey (BOSS; Dawson et al., 2013) and shows the dramatic downturn at $\lesssim 4300\text{\AA}$. SDSS-III BOSS actively vetoed *against* low- z QSOs (Ross et al., 2012), and it was due to J110057 being selected as an ancillary target via a White Dwarf program (Kepler et al., 2015, 2016) that a second spectral epoch was serendipitously obtained. Since J110057 was not a BOSS QSO target, it is not subject to the “blue offset” present for BOSS QSO targets (Margala et al., 2016).

A third epoch spectrum was obtained from the Palomar 5m telescope using the DBSP instrument. Two exposures of 600s+300s were taken in good conditions. A feature to note includes the continuum straddling MgII being blue in the 2017 spectrum, as it was for the SDSS spectrum in 2000, as opposed to red, as it was for the BOSS spectrum in 2010.

J110057 is in the DECaLS DR3, where there are 8, 3 and 9 exposures in the g –, r – and z –band respectively. The g – and r –band observations have fairly limited time spans, ($56707 \leq g_{\text{MJD}} \leq 56727$ and $56367 \leq r_{\text{MJD}} \leq 56367$) and are separated by roughly a year. The z -band observations span almost 3 years ($56383 \leq z_{\text{MJD}} \leq 57398$). The DESI imaging brick name is 1651m010.

Selection in NEOWISE-R of J110057

W1 and W2 lightcurves for $\sim 200,000$ SDSS spectroscopic quasars were extracted from Data Release 3 (DR3) of the Dark Energy Camera Legacy Survey (DECaLS). These light curves span from the beginning of the WISE mission (2010 January)

¹SERENDIP_BLUE, ROSAT_D, ROSAT_C, ROSAT_B, QSO_SKIRT, ROSAT_A, see Stoughton et al. (2002) and Richards et al. (2002) for flag descriptions.

through the first-year of NEOWISER operations (2014 December). In detail, the W1/W2 light curves are obtained by performing forced photometry at the locations of DECam-detected optical sources. This forced photometry is performed on time-resolved unWISE coadds, each of which represents a stack with depth of coverage ~ 12 exposures. A given sky location is observed by WISE for ~ 1 day once every six months, which means that our forced photometry light curves typically have four coadd epochs available. Coadd epochs of a given object are separated by a minimum of six months and a maximum of four years. Our coaddition removes the possibility of probing variability on $\lesssim 1$ day time scales, but it allows us to push ~ 1.4 magnitudes deeper than individual exposures while removing virtually all single-exposure artifacts (e.g. cosmic rays and satellites).

$\sim 30,000$ of the SDSS quasars with such W1/W2 lightcurves available are “IR-bright”, in the sense that they are above both the W1 and W2 single exposure thresholds and therefore detected at very high significance in our coadds. For this ensemble of objects, the typical variation in each quasar’s measured (W1-W2) color is 0.06 magnitudes, which includes statistical and systematic errors expected to contribute variations at the few hundredths of a mag level. The typical measured single-band scatter is 0.07 magnitudes in each of W1 and W2. A full characterization of the typical mid-IR quasar variability will be presented separately (Ross et al., in preparation).

We undertook a search for extreme outliers relative to these trends. Specifically, we selected objects with the following characteristics.

- Monotonic variation in both W1 and W2.
- W1 versus W2 *flux* correlation coefficient > 0.9 .
- > 0.5 mag peak-to-peak variation in either W1 or W2.

This yielded a sample of 248 sources. 31 of these are assumed to be blazars due to the presence of FIRST radio counterparts. Another 22 are outside of the FIRST footprint, leaving 195 quasars in our IR-variable sample.

A link to the key properties of our sample can be found here: [qso_pages_v01](#) and the links to the catalogs are given here: [dr3_wise_lc_sample.fits.gz](#) and here: [dr3_wise_lc_sample.fits.gz](#). The first catalog has 248 rows, which are the selected highly IR-variable sample of objects. The second catalog is the full 200 622 quasar sample quasars that have “good” WISE light curves available in DECaLS DR3. In each file, there are 3 extensions: `ex = 0` – WISE light curve summary metrics; `ex = 1` – DECaLS DR3 Tractor data for each object; `ex = 2` – SDSS data for each object.

Relevant Timescales

Our model consists of three main parts: (i) an event that causes an initial change of torques at the ISCO; (ii) the propagation of a cooling front in the accretion disk

outward from the central engine and an associated increase in the number density of scatterers and (iii) a propagation in towards the central black hole of a heating front (leading to a 'recovery' in the observed spectra).

For our data and observations of J11057, we have to remain agnostic to the events that initially causes the initial change of torques at the ISCO. A change in magnetic field being the cause of non-zero torques is well studied, Krolik (see e.g., 1999); Gammie (see e.g., 1999); ?; ?. Notably, ? argue that a thick disk at the ISCO should produce a substantial torque, while a thin one will not. Regardless of the initial trigger, we suggest some event causes a change in the torque conditions at the ISCO. As such, we build on the non-zero torque model from ?.

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For the second part and stage of our model, we need to explain the observed light-curves and optical spectra.

J110057 changes from ≈ 17.9 mag to ≈ 18.5 mag in the observed g -band over $\lesssim 100$ days (in the observed frame). This translates to a Johnson V-band flux density change from 0.262 mJy to 0.151 mJy. However, given the redshift of $z = 0.378$, the observed V-band 380-750 nm corresponds to 276-544 nm in the rest frame ($-6.56 < \log(\lambda) < -6.26$) or near-UV to red in the quasar frame. The source flux density drops to 58% of the original flux in ~ 3 months.

Simply changing the boundary condition at R_{in} from non-zero torque to zero torque (e.g. collapsing a puffed-up disk inner edge, or, as mentioned above, the magnetic fields) leads to the difference in the SEDs (**NPR NOTE:: Figures 6 and 7 in our notes**. At $\log \lambda = 6.56$, the flux for $R_{\text{in}} = 9r_g$ (dark blue in both) drops by ~ 0.2 dex from ~ 38.0 to ~ 37.8 or from 10.0 to 6×10^{37} ergs), or to 60% of the initial flux density, consistent with the values above.

However, in the restframe spectrum, the 300 nm flux seems to drop by a factor of ~ 5 (given the uncertainty in the normalization). The flux at $\lambda < 350$ nm is dropping relative to the optical flux. In order to make the multi-color blackbody spectrum do this, we would need dim large regions of the inner disk simultaneously. For example, if the entire inner disk at $R \leq 50r_g$ changed state and became dimmer on thermal timescales at each annulus, we can reproduce both the change at short wavelengths and the observed V-band change.

There are several relevant timescales associated with J110057 and our model explaining the observations. These are:

“Relevant disk timescales around a $M_{\text{BH}} = 10^8 M_{\odot}$ at $R \sim 25r_g$ are:” where α is the viscosity of the disk; ρ_{cloud} is ; ρ_{medium} is ; R is the radius of the accretion disk; r_g is the Gravitational radius; V_{rel} is

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1 Comparison with Guo et al. 2016

Figure 1 of Guo et al. (2016) shows a UV collapse (green curve) in their source (J23+) at a very similar wavelength to that in the 2010 spectrum of our source

Description		quantity
Orbital	t_{orb}	$6 \text{ days} \left(\frac{R}{50r_g} \right)^{3/2} \frac{r_g}{c}$
Thermal	t_{thermal}	$6 \text{ months} \left(\frac{\alpha}{0.03} \right)^{-1} \left(\frac{R}{50r_g} \right)^{3/2} \frac{r_g}{c}$
Front propagation	t_{front}	$11 \text{ yr} \left(\frac{h/R}{0.05} \right)^{-1} \left(\frac{\alpha}{0.03} \right)^{-1} \left(\frac{R}{50r_g} \right)^{3/2} \frac{r_g}{c}$
Cloud-crushing	t_{cc}	$100 \text{ yr} \left(\frac{\rho_{\text{cloud}}/\rho_{\text{medium}}}{10^6} \right)^{1/2} \left(\frac{R}{4 \times 10^{10} \text{ km}} \right) \left(\frac{V_{\text{rel}}}{10^4 \text{ km/s}} \right)^{-1}$
viscous	t_v	$230 \text{ yr} \left(\frac{h/R}{0.05} \right)^{-2} \left(\frac{\alpha}{0.03} \right)^{-1} \left(\frac{R}{50r_g} \right)^{3/2} \frac{r_g}{c}$

(J110057), and with turnover in both around ~ 350 nm. The collapse in J23 happens in 23 days (Figure 2 of et al., 2016) and this object was observed with SDSS back on MJD 52177 (normal) and then 23 days later on MJD 52200. There is a drop of 1.2mag in the u -band and 0.5mag in g -band, with r, i, z are all consistent with the earlier observation. J23 is observed with SDSS again about a year later and (u, g, r, i, z) are all back consistent with ‘normal’. More importantly, XMM-Newton spectra straddle this time period. The XMM-Newton spectra are from June 3 and Nov. 28 2001. Both spectra are consistent with *no neutral absorption in the rest-frame*. So the sightline is clear on both of those dates (i.e. the Nov. spectrum is 45 days after the UV catastrophe). et al. (2016) also find that the IR does not significantly change and that the broad lines are consistent with being constant over time.

et al. (2016) discuss two scenarios to explain this behaviour: 1) inner accretion disk change and 2) eclipse by an optically thick cloud. They make the point that in principle both models could explain the observation. In scenario 1) they suggest that turning off the disk at $< 60r_g = 30r_{\text{Sch}}$ would explain this (in the same manner as we discuss for J11057) but they find this implausible since “quasars are not observed to flicker like this typically”. et al. (2016) then spend more time on scenario 2). So, based on the initial optical spectrum (23 days before the u -band dip) and the Nov. X-ray spectrum (45 days after the u -band dip) they say that the dip lasts < 65 days.

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