

DISCOVERY OF THE LENSED QUASAR SYSTEM DES J0408-5354

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ABSTRACT

We report the discovery and spectroscopic confirmation of the quad-like lensed quasar system DES J0408-5354 found in the Dark Energy Survey (DES) Year 1 (Y1) data. This system was discovered during a search for DES Y1 strong lensing systems using a method that identified candidates as red galaxies with multiple blue neighbors. DES J0408-5354 consists of a central red galaxy surrounded by three bright ($i < 20$) blue objects and a fourth red object. Subsequent spectroscopic observations using the Gemini South telescope confirmed that the three blue objects are indeed the lensed images of a quasar with redshift $z = 2.375$, and that the central red object is an early-type lensing galaxy with redshift $z = 0.597$. DES J0408-5354 is the first quad lensed quasar system to be found in DES and begins to demonstrate the potential of DES to discover and dramatically increase the sample size of these very rare objects.

Keywords: gravitational lensing: strong — quasars: general — surveys

1. INTRODUCTION

Strong gravitational lensing systems provide valuable tools for studying the properties and evolution of galaxies and quasars, for measuring the distribution of dark matter, and for constraining cosmological parameters. In particular, lensed quasar systems can provide information on, for example, intervening absorption line systems (e.g., [Smette et al. 1995](#)), properties of quasar host galaxies (e.g., [Peng et al. 2006](#)), dark matter substructure in the lens (e.g., [Dalal & Kochanek 2002](#)), and the stellar content of the lensing galaxy (e.g., [Schechter et al. 2014](#)). Moreover, when combined with time delay measurements and careful lens modeling, lensed quasar systems can provide powerful cosmological constraints that are complementary to those of other techniques (e.g., [Bonvin et al. 2017](#); [Suyu et al. 2016](#); [Treu & Marshall](#)

[2016](#)).

Previously, large samples of lensed quasars have been found by surveys such as the Cosmic Lens All-Sky Survey (CLASS; [Myers et al. 2003](#); [Browne et al. 2003](#)) in the radio and the Sloan Digital Sky Survey Quasar Lens Search (SQLS; [Oguri et al. 2006](#); [Inada et al. 2012](#)) and the SDSS-III BOSS quasar lens survey ([More et al. 2016](#)) in the optical. The Dark Energy Survey (DES; [Dark Energy Survey Collaboration 2005, 2016](#)) is an ongoing imaging survey covering 5000 deg² of the Southern Galactic Cap in the *grizY* filters using the Dark Energy Camera ([Flaugher et al. 2015](#)), and it holds the promise of significantly increasing the numbers of lensed quasars. In particular, based on the forecasts of [Oguri & Marshall \(2010\)](#), we expect to find in DES about 120 lensed quasar systems brighter than $i = 21$ (magnitude limit

applies to the fainter image for pairs and third brightest image for quadruple systems, or quads; see Figure 1 of [Ostrovski et al. 2017](#)). DES, specifically with the external collaboration project STRIDES¹ (PI T. Treu), aims to use the resulting large lensed quasar sample for the primary science goal of improving constraints on cosmological parameters. This lensed quasar sample is predicted to include about 20 of the very rare quad systems which will provide additional valuable information compared to pair systems for constraining lens models (specifically extra constraints from 2 more positions and 2 more time delays), in particular for cosmology purposes (e.g., [Suyu et al. 2013](#)) and substructure studies (e.g., [Dalal & Kochanek 2002](#)).

To date, we have discovered and spectroscopically confirmed three lensed quasar pair systems ([Agnello et al. 2015b](#); [Ostrovski et al. 2017](#)) in DES. Here in this letter we report the discovery and confirmation of the first lensed quasar quad (or quad-like) system, DES J0408-5354, in the Dark Energy Survey. We first describe our lensed quasar search procedure, system discovery, and photometric data in §2. We then describe our spectroscopic observations and present our data in §3. We summarize and conclude in §4. Detailed photometry analysis and lens modeling for this system are presented in a companion paper, [Agnello et al. \(2017\)](#), to which we will refer the reader where relevant below.

2. SEARCH AND DISCOVERY

The system DES J0408-5354 was discovered during a systematic visual search for candidate strong lensing systems in the Dark Energy Survey Year 1 (Y1) data ([Diehl et al. 2014](#)). A number of different search methods have been applied to the DES Y1 data, but the specific method involved in this case was a “blue-near-red” technique, where we first automatically identified candidate systems of red galaxies with multiple neighboring blue objects within some radius, and then used visual inspections of these systems to rate them and to select the best candidates for subsequent spectroscopic follow-up. This method has been used previously in the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS) data to search for bright strong lensing systems and then to confirm them spectroscopically with good success (e.g., [Diehl et al. 2009](#); [Belokurov et al. 2009](#)).

Here we started with a DES Y1 red galaxy sample selected using the redMaGiC technique ([Rozo et al. 2016](#)). To minimize stellar contamination of this sample, we rejected objects with `SExtractor` ([Bertin & Arnouts 1996](#)) `spread_model` ([Desai et al. 2012](#); [Bouy et al. 2013](#)) values ≤ 0.01 . We then identified as our initial set of

candidates those redMaGiC galaxies with three or more blue objects within a radius $< 10''$, where we defined a blue object as one with colors $-1 \leq g - r < 1$ and $-1 \leq r - i < 1$. We did not apply any star/galaxy separation cut to the blue objects, but did reject objects that are saturated in any of the g, r, i filters using a `SExtractor flags` ≤ 3 cut. We also applied a magnitude cut $r < 22$ on the blue objects to keep the number of candidates manageable for the visual inspection step and to have relatively brighter candidates to ease follow-up spectroscopic redshift measurements.

Applying the above criteria resulted in a list of 6526 systems that one of us (HL) then inspected visually by examining their DES gri color composite images. The discovery image of DES J0408-5354 is shown in Figure 1, where we see a central red galaxy (G1) surrounded by three blue objects (A, B, and D) and a fourth red object (G2) (objects labeled as in [Agnello et al. 2017](#)). This system stood out as a potential quadruply lensed quasar system, except that the fourth putative lensed quasar image has a conspicuously redder color than those of the other three images, suggesting that the fourth image may instead be that of a foreground red galaxy, which is possibly also associated with the central red lensing galaxy. Here the system would be a triple, where two of the quad’s images are blended into one due to a fold configuration. Another possibility is that the fourth image is a blend of a foreground red galaxy with the fourth blue lensed quasar image, as the fourth image in Figure 1 appears not as red as the central galaxy. Regardless, the quad-like configuration of DES J0408-5354 made it a very good candidate for subsequent spectroscopy, described in the next section. We present a detailed lensing model for this system in the companion paper [Agnello et al. \(2017\)](#).

In the DES Y1 catalog, DES J0408-5354 is composed of three objects due to the fact that components D and G1 are blended and that B and G2 are also blended. As such, the catalog contains entries from A, D+G1, and B+G2. The `SExtractor` segmentation map for the system is shown in Figure 1, overplotted on the DES i -band image of the system. We need to point out here that all three catalog objects actually meet our blue object color criteria given before (see Figure 2, leftmost panel), so that the redMaGiC galaxy for this system is not G1 but rather the red galaxy G0 marked in Figure 1. G0 is about $6''$ away from G1 and has a redMaGiC photometric redshift of 0.66 ± 0.03 , close to G1’s spectroscopic redshift of 0.597 (see §3). Therefore in this case our blue-near-red method found the system via another red galaxy likely associated with the lensing galaxy, rather than directly via the red lensing galaxy itself. The discovery was thus likely not coincidental, but was also not by the direct route as intended by the method. In simi-

¹ <http://strides.astro.ucla.edu/>

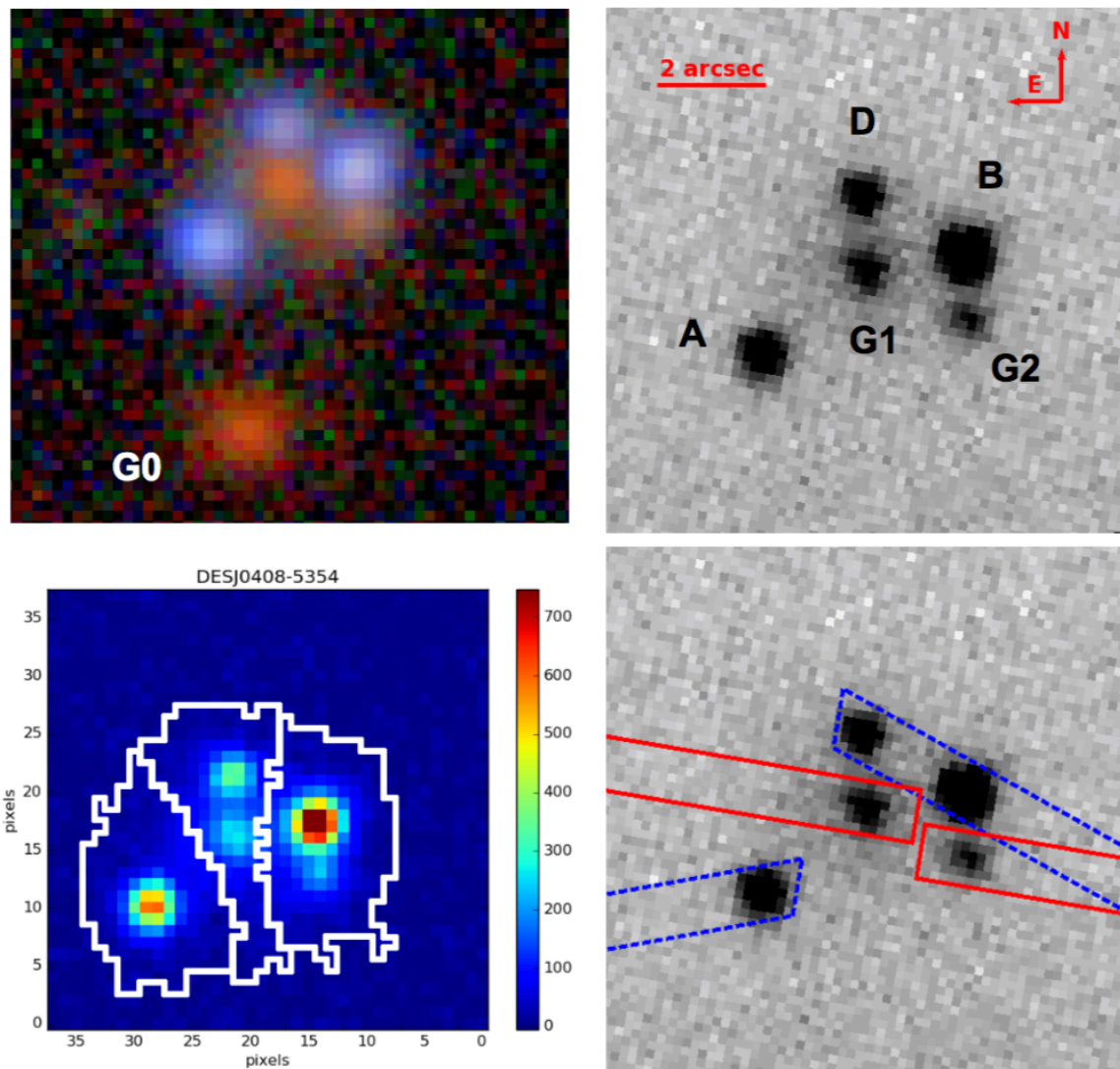


Figure 1. DES *gri* color composite discovery image (top left), **SE**xtractor segmentation map plotted over the DES *i*-band coadded image (bottom left), Gemini *i*-band acquisition image (top right), and the spectroscopic slit layout (bottom right). The central red lensing galaxy is G1, the three blue lensed quasar images are A, B, and D, a fourth red image is G2, and the redMaGiC galaxy is G0. The 5 components (A,B,D,G1,G2) of the system are not fully separated in the DES catalog, with D+G1 and B+G2 remaining blended.

lar DES Y1 blue-near-red and related searches, we also see other cases in galaxy group and cluster environments where the lensing system is being indirectly found this way (Diehl et al. 2017, in preparation).

The coordinates and photometry of the three DES catalog objects are given in Table 1, while we present in Agnello et al. (2017) a more detailed analysis that provides the deblended positions and magnitudes of all five components in this system. The DES **SE**xtractor auto magnitudes of the three catalog objects are listed in Table 1, as are the near-infrared Kron magnitudes (Kron 1980) from the VISTA Hemisphere Survey (VHS; McMahon et al. 2013) and the mid-infrared magnitudes from the Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE; Wright et al. 2010). For the near-infrared catalog, mag-

nitudes were obtained by cross-matching the DES and VHS catalogs using a $1.5''$ search radius. Component D+G1 does not have a *J*-band magnitude value due to blending with B+G2 in this band. For the mid-infrared magnitudes, the DES and WISE catalogs were cross-matched using a $4.0''$ search radius. All components of the system are blended into a single WISE source, which is why the same values of the *W1* and *W2* magnitudes are displayed in the table.

After DES J0408-5354 was first announced to the STRIDES Collaboration as a lensed quasar candidate from the blue-near-red search, a number of other search methods within STRIDES were examined and also seen to identify the system as a candidate. These other search methods are described in more detail in Agnello et al.

Table 1. DES J0408-5354 positions (J2000 coordinates) and photometry (AB magnitudes)

	A	D+G1	B+G2
RA	62.091333	62.090469	62.089596
Dec	-53.900266	-53.899641	-53.899776
<i>g</i>	19.99 ± 0.01	20.45 ± 0.01	19.74 ± 0.01
<i>r</i>	19.94 ± 0.01	20.08 ± 0.01	19.51 ± 0.01
<i>i</i>	19.75 ± 0.01	19.57 ± 0.01	19.18 ± 0.01
<i>z</i>	19.51 ± 0.02	19.13 ± 0.02	18.82 ± 0.01
<i>Y</i>	19.48 ± 0.07	19.09 ± 0.05	18.69 ± 0.03
<i>J</i>	19.58 ± 0.06	–	18.77 ± 0.03
<i>H</i>	19.62 ± 0.08	18.90 ± 0.04	18.65 ± 0.03
<i>K</i>	19.06 ± 0.07	18.51 ± 0.04	18.15 ± 0.03
<i>W1</i>	–	16.78 ± 0.02	–
<i>W2</i>	–	16.51 ± 0.02	–

(2017). We provide here a brief summary: (1) the Gaussian Mixture Model (GMM) method of Ostrovski et al. (2017), which uses supervised machine learning in a five-dimensional optical plus infrared color space and identified DES J0408-5354 as a candidate pair (D+G1 not found separately in *J* band due to blending noted above); (2) CHITAH (Chan et al. 2015), which uses pixel-based automatic recognition on *grizY* cutout images and identified the system as a candidate pair (not flagged as quad because fourth image G2 is too red); and (3) the Artificial Neural Network (ANN) method of Agnello et al. (2015a,b), which uses *griz* and *W1W2* magnitudes and identified DES J0408-5354 as a candidate extended quasar. Figure 2 shows the positions of DES catalog objects A, B+G2, and D+G1 in the color space used by the GMM method, illustrating how the system was flagged as a candidate due to the quasar-like colors of its components.

3. SPECTROSCOPIC OBSERVATIONS

Spectroscopic observations of DES J0408-5354 were carried out using the Gemini Multi-Object Spectrograph (GMOS-S) on the Gemini South telescope, as part of a larger Gemini Large and Long Program (LLP) (PI E. Buckley-Geer; program IDs GS-2015B-LP-5, GS-2016A-LP-5) of spectroscopic follow-up for DES strong lensing systems and for DES photometric redshift (photo-*z*) calibrations. GMOS-S was used in multi-object spectroscopy (MOS) mode on 9 Dec 2015 UT to take spectra of the three blue objects A, B, and D. The *i*-band GMOS-S acquisition image is shown in Figure 1 (top right). A single slit mask was used, with one slit for A and a second slit for B and D together; see blue slits in

Figure 1 (bottom right). (Another 38 slits were assigned to unrelated DES photo-*z* calibration targets.) Two sets of spectra were taken: blue data using the B600 grating (dispersion $\approx 1.0 \text{ \AA pixel}^{-1}$) and red data using the R400 grating (dispersion $\approx 1.5 \text{ \AA pixel}^{-1}$). We used 4×900 second exposures for cosmic ray rejection and processed the data using the IRAF Gemini reduction package. The seeing was $0.8''$, measured from spectra of mask-alignment stars in the science data.

From the extracted (but not flux calibrated) 1D spectra shown in Figure 3 (top panels), we clearly see that all three blue images A, B, and D show strong quasar emission lines at the same redshift, specifically Ly α 1216 \AA and CIV 1549 \AA in the blue spectra, and CIII] 1909 \AA and MgII 2800 \AA in the red spectra. From the CIII] line, which shows the cleanest, most symmetric line profile among these four broad emission features, we use the `emsao` task in the IRAF external package `rvsao` (Kurtz & Mink 1998) to report a redshift $z = 2.375$ for the quasar.

To compare the spectra of the three blue images in more detail, we also show in Figure 3 (bottom panels) the fractional differences between the blue and red spectra of images A and D relative to those of image B, which has the spectra with the most counts. We first rescale the spectra of A and D so that they each have the same median counts as those of B over the respective blue and red wavelength ranges plotted. The results in Figure 3 show generally good agreement among the spectra, especially for the red spectra. For the blue spectra, we do see an overall slope for the spectrum of A relative to that of B; we attribute this slope to extinction differences between the lines of sight to these two images,

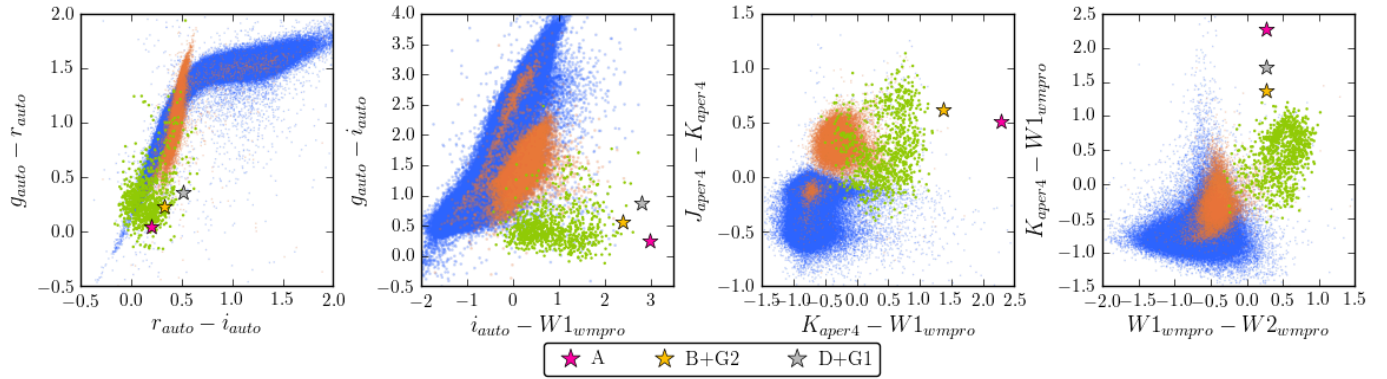


Figure 2. Color-color plots showing the location of DES J0408-5354 components A (pink stars), D+G1 (gray stars) and B+G2 (yellow stars) in different color spaces. We did not assign W1 or W2 fluxes to each individual component, so values show the sum of all flux in those bands. For comparison, the color loci of quasars (green), point sources (blue), and extended sources (orange) are populated by the objects present in the GMM training set. All magnitudes are in the AB system.

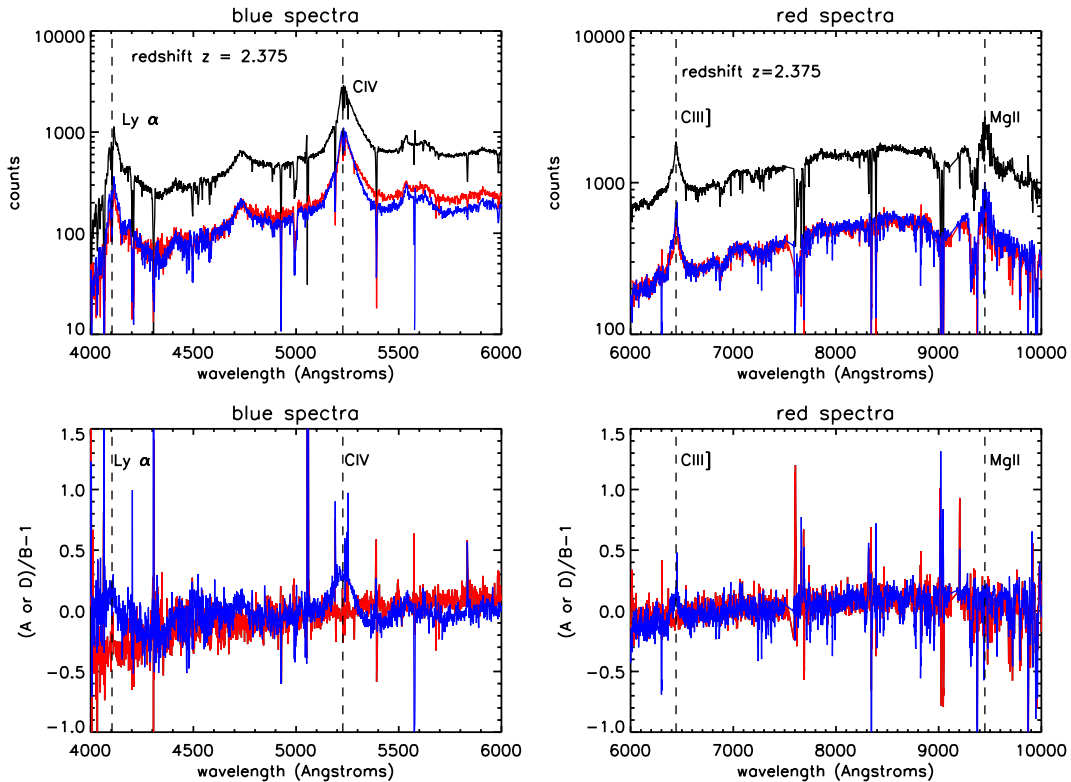


Figure 3. (Top panels:) Blue (top left) and red (top right) Gemini GMOS-S spectra for the three blue images A (red), B (black), and D (blue). (Bottom panels:) Fractional differences between the blue (bottom left) and red (bottom right) spectra of A (red) or D (blue) relative to B. The median counts in the spectra of A and D have been rescaled to match those of B, over the respective blue and red wavelength ranges shown.

and/or to differences in atmospheric differential refraction between the two differently oriented slits (Figure 1) used to observe images A and B. In addition, we also see conspicuous differences between the spectra of D and B at the locations of the strong Ly α and CIV emission lines, and to a lesser extent at the CIII] line. We attribute these differences to the effects of microlensing by stars in the lensing galaxy, manifested as flux ratio differences, in pairs of lensed quasar images, for the continuum vs. the emission line regions in the spectra (e.g., Motta et al. 2012).

Subsequent to these observations that confirmed the three blue images as having the same quasar redshift, we designed a second MOS slit mask targeting the central lensing galaxy G1 and the fourth image G2, each allocated to a single slit. The slits for G1 and G2 are shown in red in Figure 1 (bottom right). Red R400 observations were obtained in the Gemini South semester 2016A observing queue, on 9 Apr 2016, under 1.1'' seeing conditions and using the same observing setup as above. Blue B600 observations were also put into the queue, but no data were obtained before the system set in 2016A. We show the R400 spectra in Figure 4, where we see that G2 shows broad CIII] and MgII emission at the same redshift as found for the three blue images, while G1 shows Ca H+K absorption lines, indicating that G1 is an early-type lensing galaxy with redshift $z = 0.597$.

However, we also see that the G1 spectrum unexpectedly shows the same CIII] emission line as in the lensed quasar spectra, leading us to suspect there is contaminating light from the neighboring lensed quasar image D, which is only about 1.3'' away (cf. the 1.1'' seeing). Likewise, object B, the brightest quasar image, is only about 1.1'' away from the substantially fainter object G2, suggesting that the CIII] line seen in the G2 spectrum is similarly contamination from object B. Using the image modeling code GALFIT (Peng et al. 2010), we simulate image B as a Moffat profile with a FWHM of 1.1'' and find that about 12% of its light falls within the 1''-wide slit and 2''-long spectral extraction aperture used for G2. Though seemingly small, this 12% fraction actually amounts to about 80% of the r -band light from G2 itself, given that $r(B) = 19.95$ and $r(G2) = 21.98$ from Table 1 of Agnello et al. (2017). (We use r band as the CIII] line falls within that filter.) This estimated contamination is thus substantial and unfortunately we are unable to correct for it as image B lies off the slit for G2 (Figure 1, bottom right) and we do not have a concurrent spectrum of B. We thus cannot rule out contamination from B as the source of the CIII] line seen in the G2 spectrum (likewise for D and G1) and will need future observations to verify whether G2 indeed shows quasar emission features or not.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

DES J0408-5354 was identified as a candidate lensed quasar quad system from the DES first-year data. Subsequent follow-up spectroscopy confirmed the three bright blue objects in this system to be the images of a quasar at redshift $z = 2.375$, lensed by an early-type red galaxy with redshift $z = 0.597$. Another reddened object in the system, possibly a blend of a perturbing galaxy and the fourth lensed quasar image, was also observed spectroscopically, though without conclusive results.

Our companion paper Agnello et al. (2017) presents a detailed model of the system, from which we expect the longest time delay in the system to be about 80 days, making DES J0408-5354 well suited (Treu & Marshall 2016) for time delay measurements, which we are undertaking via a monitoring campaign within the STRIDES Collaboration. The lensing model also constrains the mass of the possible perturbing galaxy and thus provides information about substructure in the lensing mass distribution. Further spectroscopic follow-up and high resolution imaging data should provide more needed details about the main lensing galaxy and its environment. We thus expect this quad system to be particularly useful for the application of time delay cosmography (e.g. Treu & Marshall 2016) and substructure studies (e.g., Dalal & Kochanek 2002). DES J0408-5354 heralds a much larger sample of some 20 of these very rare and valuable quad lensed quasar systems anticipated to be discovered by the Dark Energy Survey.

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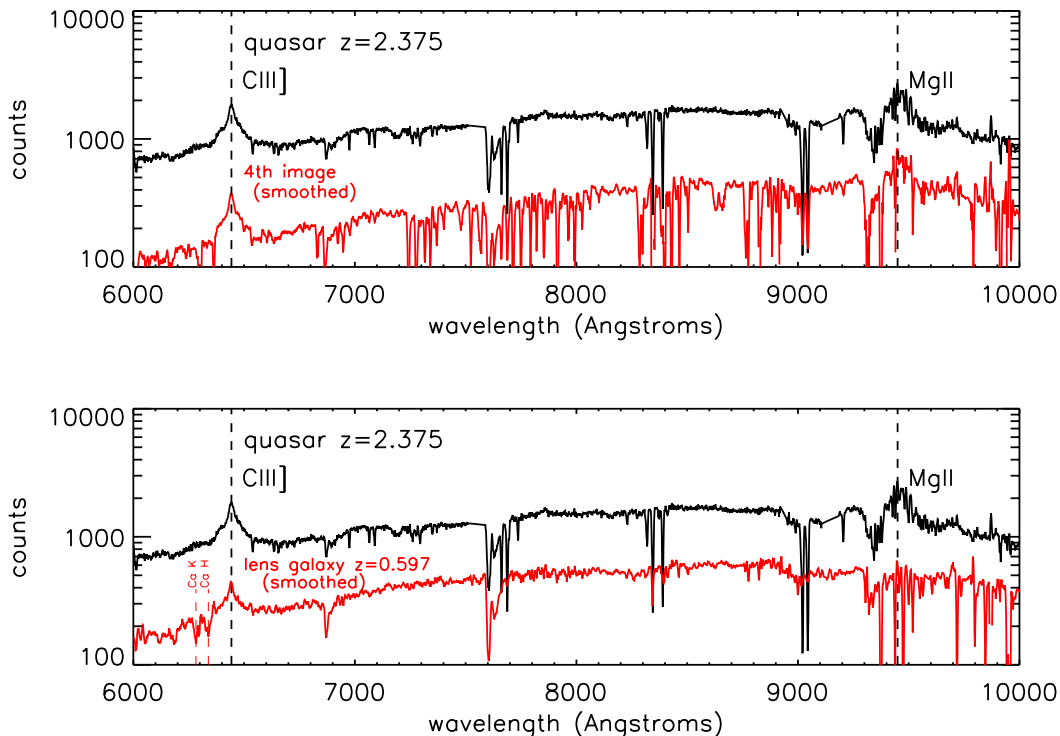


Figure 4. Red Gemini GMOS-S spectra of the fourth image G2 (top panel, red) and of the central lensing galaxy G1 (bottom panel, red). In both panels the black spectrum is that of image B.

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