

LIGHT CURVES OF TYPE Ia SUPERNOVAE FROM NEAR THE TIME OF EXPLOSION¹

ARTI GARG,² CHRISTOPHER W. STUBBS,² PETER CHALLIS,² W. MICHAEL WOOD-VASEY,² AND STÉPHANE BLONDIN²

Department of Physics and Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Harvard University,
Cambridge, MA, USA; artigarg@fas.harvard.edu

MARK E. HUBER,² KEM COOK,² AND SERGEI NIKOLAEV

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, CA, USA

ARMIN REST,³ R. CHRIS SMITH, KNUT OLSEN, NICHOLAS B. SUNTZEFF, AND CLAUDIO AGUILERA

Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory/NOAO,⁴ La Serena, Chile

JOSE LUIS PRIETO²

Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA

ANDREW BECKER² AND ANTONINO MICELI

University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA

GAJUS MIKNAITIS²

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, IL, USA

ALEJANDRO CLOCCHIATTI,² DANTE MINNITI, AND LORENZO MORELLI²

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile

AND

DOUGLAS L. WELCH²

McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, Canada

Received 2005 December 24; accepted 2006 August 27

ABSTRACT

We present a set of 11 Type Ia supernova (SN Ia) light curves with dense, premaximum sampling. These supernovae (SNe), in galaxies behind the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC), were discovered by the SuperMACHO survey. The SNe span a redshift range of $z = 0.11\text{--}0.35$. Our light curves contain some of the earliest premaximum observations of SNe Ia to date. We also give a functional model that describes the SN Ia light-curve shape (in our VR band). Our function uses the “expanding fireball” model of Goldhaber et al. to describe the rising light curve immediately after explosion but constrains it to smoothly join the remainder of the light curve. We fit this model to a composite observed VR -band light curve of three SNe between redshifts of 0.135 and 0.165. These SNe have not been K -corrected or adjusted to account for reddening. In this redshift range, the observed VR band most closely matches the rest-frame V band. Using the best fit to our functional description of the light curve, we find the time between explosion and observed VR -band maximum to be $17.6 \pm 1.3(\text{stat}) \pm 0.07(\text{sys})$ rest-frame days for a SN Ia with a VR -band Δm_{-10} of 0.52 mag. For the redshifts sampled, the observed VR -band time of maximum brightness should be the same as the rest-frame V -band maximum to within 1.1 rest-frame days.

Key words: Magellanic Clouds — supernovae: general — surveys

Online material: color figures, machine-readable tables, tar files

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rise Time as a Tool to Discriminate between SN Ia Explosion Models

The realization that Type Ia supernovae (SNe Ia) can be used as standardizable candles (Phillips 1993; Riess et al. 1995, 1996a; Hamuy et al. 1996a, 1996b) led to an explosion in SN Ia science. Surveys to test the Hubble expansion law at larger distances found

that, rather than exhibiting a constant or decelerating expansion rate, the universe has an accelerating expansion (Riess et al. 1998; Perlmutter et al. 1999). The consensus explanation for the accelerating expansion is a negative pressure, or dark energy, permeating the universe. Today, many teams are working to use SNe Ia as standard candles to better constrain the properties of dark energy (ESSENCE, Matheson et al. 2005; Supernova Cosmology Project, Kowalski et al. 2004; Supernova Legacy Survey, Astier et al. 2006). While the methods to standardize the SN Ia luminosity vary, the interpretation of all their results relies to varying degrees on the basic assumption that SNe Ia belong to a single-parameter family.

Methods of standardizing SN Ia luminosity distance using the postmaximum light-curve shape have proven successful when verified against other standard candles such as Cepheids (Suntzeff et al. 1999; Gibson et al. 2000). These results do not necessarily indicate the existence of a single-parameter family of progenitors, only that the behavior of SNe Ia postmaximum is similar. Still, the

¹ This paper includes data gathered with the 6.5 m Magellan telescopes located at Las Campanas Observatory, Chile.

² Visiting Astronomer, Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, National Optical Astronomy Observatory, which is operated by the Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy (AURA), Inc., under cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation.

³ Goldberg Fellow.

⁴ Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, National Optical Astronomy Observatory, which is operated by AURA, Inc., under cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation.

most widely considered SN Ia progenitors are carbon-oxygen (C-O) white dwarfs in binary systems. Even accepting these systems as the progenitors, questions remain concerning the mechanism and progression of the explosion. Many competing theories (see Hillebrandt & Niemeyer 2000 and references therein) predict roughly the same postmaximum behavior and vary only in the prediction of the premaximum, or rising, light curves and spectra. Understanding the explosion mechanism may help us better understand how the population of SNe Ia, and their progenitors, evolves over cosmological time. Many explosion models are sensitive to progenitor element abundances, which may vary depending on the environment. Combining existing information about the differences between low- and high- z stellar populations and galaxies with a more accurate model of the SN Ia explosion mechanism will help more tightly constrain the impact of evolution on SN Ia light-curve shape. Discriminating between competing explosion models, however, requires light-curve coverage close to the time of explosion, which has been scarcely available.

The reasons for the lack of early premaximum light-curve coverage are manifold. Some SN Ia searches rely on a search-and-follow method, in which SNe are discovered and then followed by another, larger telescope. Discovery often occurs near maximum brightness, and dense premaximum temporal coverage is not available. Other surveys, similar to SuperMACHO, revisit the same fields every few days, obtaining consistent temporal coverage over the entire light curve. These data sets have better premaximum coverage but still do not generally provide densely sampled premaximum light curves. In order to maximize the number of fields observed, most surveys use a long, multiday gap between observations, which is sufficient to standardize the postmaximum behavior but often misses the earliest portion of the rise. For higher z SNe in which the multiday gap between observations translates to a shorter gap in the SN's rest frame, the earliest portion of the rise is often too faint to be observed. As described more completely below, the SuperMACHO data avoid these two pitfalls. This survey provides dense coverage (every other night) and deep imaging with its custom broadband VR filter.

1.2. SuperMACHO and Supernova Detection

The SuperMACHO project is a 5 yr optical survey of the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC) aimed at detecting microlensing of LMC stars (Stubbs et al. 2002). The goal of this survey is to determine the location of the lens population responsible for the excess microlensing rate observed toward the LMC by the MACHO project (see Alcock et al. 2000 and references therein) and, thereby, better constrain the fraction of Massive Compact Halo Objects (MACHOs) in the Galactic halo. The survey is conducted on the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory (CTIO) Blanco 4 m telescope using a custom VR broadband filter. SuperMACHO observes 68 LMC fields during dark and gray time in the months of October–December. We completed our fifth season of observations in the second half of 2005. We process our images with a near-real-time data reduction pipeline that employs a difference-imaging technique (see Alard & Lupton 1998; Alcock et al. 1999; Alard 2000; Gössl & Riffeser 2002) that enables us to detect small changes in flux and to produce light curves uncontaminated by light from nearby, nonvarying sources.

We present here a uniform set of densely sampled premaximum SN Ia light curves from the SuperMACHO survey. From these we constrain the time to maximum brightness for SNe Ia. We present data to provide constraints on SN Ia explosion models to aid in discriminating between competing theories. In § 2 we discuss our observations. In § 3 we present our data. In § 4 we use our data

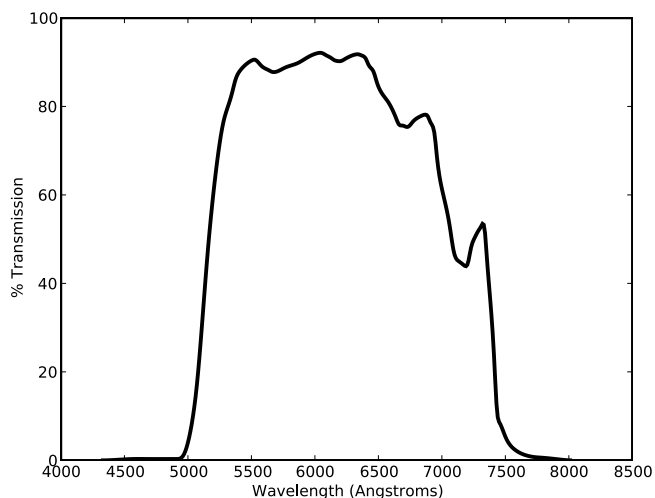


FIG. 1.—Transmission curve for the SuperMACHO VR filter. The data for the transmission curve are available in a tar file.

to place limits on the time to maximum brightness and present a functional model for the SN Ia light-curve shape.

2. OBSERVATIONS

2.1. Imaging

The light curves of the sources we report were obtained on the CTIO Blanco 4 m telescope during the 2004 season of the SuperMACHO survey. The images were taken using the MOSAIC II wide-field CCD camera. With a plate scale of $0.27'' \text{ pixel}^{-1}$, MOSAIC II's eight SITE 2K \times 4K CCDs cover a 0.32 deg^2 field. On a given night we image approximately 60 of our 68 fields so that we obtain relatively dense time coverage of the events we detect. All survey images are taken in a single custom VR passband (see Fig. 1 for transmission curve). This broad filter enables us to detect flux excursions while they are still too faint for many narrower filters to detect at a high signal-to-noise ratio (S/N). We use an atmospheric dispersion corrector to suppress the atmospheric dispersion through our broad filter. A detailed description of the data reduction pipeline and event selection criteria will be available in A. Rest et al. (2007, in preparation) and A. Garg et al. (2007, in preparation).

The images are processed using a near-real-time pipeline. SuperMACHO surveys 50 million sources. The difference-imaging technique we use enables us to limit our attention to a subset of those light curves that includes only those that show changes in brightness. We identify candidate events by first choosing, from previous years' data, the highest quality image for each field to create a set of templates. We then subtract the templates from the coregistered detection images to produce “difference images” showing only sources whose brightness has varied since the template epoch. This difference-imaging technique enables improved sensitivity to faint flux excursions, particularly in crowded fields such as those in the LMC. We consider any difference flux detections coincident within a 1×1 pixel box in all images of a field to be from a single source and so caused by a unique flux excursion event. We obtain a difference light curve for each flux excursion event by measuring the difference flux under a point-source function whose center is forced to be at the centroid of all the difference image detections clustered within that box. By performing this “forced difference flux photometry” on all images of an event location, we measure changes in difference flux that are below our triggering threshold of $S/N > 5$.

TABLE 1
 SUPERMACHO SUPERNOVAE 2004

SN ID	R.A. (J2000.0)	Decl. (J2000.0)	z	Galaxy z	Phase _{S/N>5}	t_{\max} (MJD)	VR_{\max}	Phase _{$f=0$}
SM-2004-LMC-64 ^a	04 55 22.266	−67 30 44.31	0.22	...	−7.9	53,292.97 ± 0.86	64.93 ± 1.04	−29.3
SM-2004-LMC-772	05 19 42.656	−67 31 35.83	0.19	...	−18.0	53,316.74 ± 0.39	79.83 ± 1.13	−566.8
SM-2004-LMC-797	05 59 13.224	−71 49 59.27	0.145	...	−17.2	53,318.94 ± 1.00	96.05 ± 1.42	−20.7
SM-2004-LMC-803	05 47 05.071	−71 46 28.36	0.16	...	−10.4	53,327.46 ± 0.53	69.86 ± 0.87	−27.8
SM-2004-LMC-811	04 56 31.608	−66 58 09.21	0.27	...	−7.6	53,324.87 ± 0.97	31.12 ± 0.62	−20.2
SM-2004-LMC-917	05 21 19.819	−70 51 12.57	0.11	...	−5.5	53,350.52 ± 0.28	198.76 ± 0.56	−24.6
SM-2004-LMC-944	05 11 48.947	−70 29 38.66	0.15	...	−12.7	53,358.87 ± 0.50	60.49 ± 0.49	−37.9
SM-2004-LMC-1002	04 53 09.337	−69 41 00.13	0.35	0.350	−8.8	53,356.12 ± 15.44	14.93 ± 3.24	−30.3
SM-2004-LMC-1052	06 01 36.188	−71 59 29.88	0.34	0.348	−9.5	53,361.10 ± 2.81	17.09 ± 0.84	−22.2
SM-2004-LMC-1060	05 35 30.148	−71 06 34.05	0.16	0.154	−13.5	53,363.94 ± 1.96	76.73 ± 3.60	−326.4
SM-2004-LMC-1102	05 37 13.676	−68 50 00.93	0.22	...	−13.1	53,364.30 ± 1.22	31.65 ± 1.17	−27.0

NOTES.—Summary of SNe Ia presented in this paper. SN ID gives the SuperMACHO survey identification of each SN; z is the redshift of the SN determined by comparing its spectrum to a nearby SN; galaxy z is the redshift of the SN's host galaxy determined, when possible, from galaxy features in the spectrum; phase_{S/N>5} indicates the rest-frame phase in days at which the first detection with S/N > 5 was made; and t_{\max} is the time of VR -band maximum, VR_{\max} . Both t_{\max} and VR_{\max} are given with their 1 σ uncertainties. The value of VR_{\max} is in flux units normalized to a zero point of 25. Finally, phase _{$f=0$} gives the rest-frame phase of the last zero-flux measurement, corresponding to difference flux with S/N < 0.5, prior to the SN's detection. Units of right ascension are hours, minutes, and seconds, and units of declination are degrees, arcminutes, and arcseconds.

^a SM-LMC-2004-64 also has IAU designation SN2004gb.

Each night's data reveal hundreds of optically varying events. The majority of these are due to intrinsically variable stars, detector artifacts, cosmic rays, and diffraction spikes from nearby bright stars. To limit the set of light curves to unique flux excursions (such as microlensing, active galactic nuclei [AGN] activity, and SNe) of real sources, a series of cuts are applied to the light curves. These include the significance of the measured difference flux and goodness of fit to a flat baseline in years prior to the event. Known variable sources in the MACHO catalog and sources with more than three difference detections of S/N > 10 in previous years are removed from the set. Finally, all remaining light curves and their associated detection and difference images are inspected by eye to remove spurious detections caused by artifacts. This selection process whittles the set of new candidate transient events discovered each night of the survey to approximately 20. Fits to models of microlensing and SN Ia light curves and visual inspection of template and difference images (for the appearance of host galaxies) are used to preliminarily categorize the events as microlensing, SNe, AGNs, or other optical transients. The events are then placed in a queue for spectroscopic confirmation (see § 2.2).

The final light curves we present in this paper were produced using the $N(N-1)/2$ method (NN2) of Barris et al. (2005). With this method, instead of using a single template, we difference all possible image pairs to produce the final light curve whose points are weighted combinations of the difference flux in all subtractions for a given observation. We use NN2 subtractions to provide cleaner difference light curves for our SNe, which are behind very crowded LMC fields and often close to other variable sources.

2.2. Spectroscopy

Both Magellan telescopes, Clay and Baade, were used to obtain spectroscopic follow-up of events identified by the CTIO 4 m. On the Clay Telescope, the Low Dispersion Survey Spectrograph 2 (LDSS2; Allington-Smith et al. 1994) was used to obtain long-slit spectroscopy on our targets. The LDSS2 CCD detector has a resolution of 0.378'' pixel^{−1}. We used the following configuration for the spectra obtained on this instrument: the medium-resolution (300 lines mm^{−1}) blue grism blazed at 5000 Å, a slit of 0.75'', and no blocking filter. The spectra have a nominal dispersion of 5.3 Å pixel^{−1} over the useful wavelength range of ~3800–7500 Å. On the Baade Telescope, we used the Inamori-Magellan

Areal Camera and Spectrograph (IMACS; Bigelow & Dressler 2003) in long-slit mode with the long camera ($f/4$ focus) and the medium-resolution (300 lines mm^{−1}) grating. In this configuration the instrument provides a 0.111'' pixel^{−1} image scale with a nominal dispersion of 0.743 Å pixel^{−1} over a useful wavelength span of 3800–7500 Å without order-blocking filters. The nights were mostly photometric, and the Shack-Hartmann wave front sensor provided image quality of ~0.6''–1.1'' FWHM. To minimize slit losses due to atmospheric dispersion, we used a slit aligned on the parallactic angle. Observations typically consisted of multiple integrations on a source. The S/N on each target varied with the integration times, source brightness, transparency, and seeing.

Reduction of the spectra consists of the typical single-slit processing using standard IRAF routines for bias subtraction and flat-fielding. Cosmic-ray removal is facilitated using the Laplacian cosmic-ray identification routine of van Dokkum (2001). We co-add the processed two-dimensional images of each target and extract one-dimensional apertures using isolated regions around the target source for the background subtraction. We determine the best one-dimensional extraction by iterating through multiple target and sky regions to ensure proper source and sky isolation within the crowded LMC fields. We find the dispersion solution for each image using HeNeAr arc lamp observations that show a typical rms of <0.5 Å. We use spectrophotometric standards (Feige 110, Hiltner 600, and LTT 3864) observed on the same night as the targets for flux calibration.

3. DATA

3.1. Light Curves

We present 11 SNe Ia from the 2004 observing season. Table 1 gives their positions and redshifts. Tables 2–12 give the light curves for each object. The NN2 difference fluxes in the light curves are given normalized to a zero point of 25 (see Rest et al. 2005 for VR -band standardization procedure). Figures 2–6 show the light curves with the time axis transformed to the SN rest frame and relative to the time of maximum brightness in the observed VR band, t_{\max} (see § 4.2 for t_{\max} determination procedure). We normalize the observed fluxes to the flux at maximum, VR_{\max} (see § 4.2 for VR_{\max} determination procedure), to obtain the f_{norm} light curves shown. The SNe are grouped by redshift, and each figure shows all SNe with similar redshifts (see § 3.2 for the

TABLE 2
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-64

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,257.27.....	-29.3	-0.410	1.168	-0.006	2.852	0.35
53,266.23.....	-21.9	-3.083	2.099	-0.047	0.681	1.47
53,283.31.....	-7.9	40.694	2.666	0.627	0.067	15.26
53,287.37.....	-4.6	54.304	5.662	0.836	0.105	9.59
53,289.30.....	-3.0	60.166	1.196	0.927	0.026	50.31
53,291.20.....	-1.4	66.107	1.746	1.018	0.031	37.86
53,293.18.....	0.2	68.740	2.673	1.059	0.042	25.71
53,297.30.....	3.5	60.655	1.158	0.934	0.025	52.37
53,299.19.....	5.1	58.575	1.269	0.902	0.027	46.15
53,301.18.....	6.7	53.818	1.580	0.829	0.033	34.06
53,321.21.....	23.1	20.107	1.633	0.310	0.083	12.31
53,325.29.....	26.5	16.623	1.055	0.256	0.065	15.76
53,327.33.....	28.2	16.610	0.894	0.256	0.056	18.58
53,331.32.....	31.4	12.894	0.930	0.199	0.074	13.87
53,344.29.....	42.1	7.851	0.834	0.121	0.107	9.41
53,348.36.....	45.4	7.481	2.565	0.115	0.343	2.92
53,350.20.....	46.9	6.244	0.692	0.096	0.112	9.02
53,352.31.....	48.6	9.055	2.524	0.139	0.279	3.59
53,354.26.....	50.2	6.311	0.891	0.097	0.142	7.08
53,356.26.....	51.9	6.288	0.849	0.097	0.136	7.41

NOTES.—Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-64. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 2 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

TABLE 3
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-772

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,257.37.....	-49.9	1.176	0.995	0.015	0.846	1.18
53,289.35.....	-23.0	1.866	1.074	0.023	0.576	1.74
53,295.28.....	-18.0	7.319	0.994	0.092	0.137	7.36
53,315.30.....	-1.2	78.786	1.445	0.987	0.023	54.52
53,323.27.....	5.5	64.686	1.135	0.810	0.023	56.99
53,327.35.....	8.9	52.777	1.238	0.661	0.027	42.61
53,329.36.....	10.6	48.186	1.250	0.604	0.030	38.56
53,344.35.....	23.2	25.464	1.204	0.319	0.049	21.16
53,346.34.....	24.9	22.006	1.346	0.276	0.063	16.35
53,348.24.....	26.5	21.588	0.850	0.270	0.042	25.40
53,350.29.....	28.2	20.707	1.089	0.259	0.054	19.02
53,352.22.....	29.8	18.823	1.145	0.236	0.062	16.44
53,354.22.....	31.5	17.099	1.136	0.214	0.068	15.05
53,356.24.....	33.2	16.935	0.655	0.212	0.041	25.86
53,358.32.....	34.9	14.938	0.910	0.187	0.063	16.41
53,360.28.....	36.6	13.548	0.710	0.170	0.054	19.08
53,379.13.....	52.4	8.437	0.733	0.106	0.088	11.51
53,381.15.....	54.1	7.082	0.762	0.089	0.109	9.29
53,383.15.....	55.8	7.653	0.600	0.096	0.080	12.75
53,387.13.....	59.2	7.282	1.002	0.091	0.138	7.27

NOTES.—Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-772. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 3 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

TABLE 4
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-797

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,287.28.....	-27.7	7.218	13.565	0.075	1.879	0.53
53,295.24.....	-20.7	-0.123	0.930	-0.001	7.533	0.13
53,297.19.....	-19.0	1.495	0.946	0.016	0.633	1.58
53,299.27.....	-17.2	10.651	0.770	0.111	0.074	13.82
53,315.20.....	-3.3	90.763	1.869	0.945	0.025	48.56
53,323.21.....	3.7	94.325	1.822	0.982	0.024	51.78
53,325.30.....	5.6	89.474	1.775	0.932	0.025	50.41
53,327.36.....	7.4	85.997	2.309	0.895	0.031	37.24
53,344.28.....	22.1	36.229	1.096	0.377	0.034	33.06
53,348.31.....	25.7	31.168	0.843	0.324	0.031	36.99
53,354.26.....	30.9	23.170	1.838	0.241	0.081	12.60
53,356.28.....	32.6	22.785	0.817	0.237	0.039	27.90
53,358.34.....	34.4	20.772	1.042	0.216	0.052	19.94
53,360.30.....	36.1	18.483	0.768	0.192	0.044	24.06
53,379.13.....	52.6	13.162	0.969	0.137	0.075	13.58
53,381.15.....	54.3	11.145	0.942	0.116	0.086	11.83
53,383.15.....	56.1	9.917	0.684	0.103	0.071	14.50
53,387.12.....	59.5	10.317	0.966	0.107	0.095	10.69

NOTES.— Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-797. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 4 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

redshift determination procedure). We group the SNe Ia by redshift to limit the impact of K -corrections (Hamuy et al. 1993; Kim et al. 1996; Schmidt et al. 1998; Nugent et al. 2002) on our findings (see § 4.3.1 for further discussion of K -corrections).

3.2. Spectra

Table 13 lists the telescope, instrument, observation date, and total integration time for each spectrum presented. We determine

the SN type and redshift by comparing the spectrum to a library of nearby SN spectra (T. Matheson et al. 2007, in preparation). Following the method of Matheson et al. (2005) we classify an event as a SN Ia if it shows the characteristic Ca II H and K, Si II, Fe II, and S II features (Filippenko 1997). We choose a comparison spectrum from the nearby library that was obtained at approximately the same SN phase as our spectrum. We determine the object’s redshift by redshifting the nearby spectrum until the

TABLE 5
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-803

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,295.23.....	-27.8	0.361	1.092	0.005	3.029	0.33
53,297.18.....	-26.1	-0.886	1.037	-0.013	1.170	0.85
53,315.34.....	-10.4	35.393	1.081	0.507	0.033	32.74
53,323.21.....	-3.7	64.359	1.536	0.921	0.027	41.91
53,325.30.....	-1.9	69.728	1.529	0.998	0.025	45.60
53,327.23.....	-0.2	69.143	1.636	0.990	0.027	42.26
53,331.30.....	3.3	65.585	1.389	0.939	0.025	47.21
53,346.37.....	16.3	31.534	7.572	0.451	0.240	4.16
53,348.27.....	17.9	29.872	0.814	0.428	0.030	36.72
53,354.27.....	23.1	26.101	2.085	0.374	0.081	12.52
53,356.28.....	24.8	21.420	0.823	0.307	0.040	26.02
53,358.33.....	26.6	19.618	1.053	0.281	0.055	18.62
53,360.25.....	28.3	18.968	0.820	0.272	0.045	23.12
53,377.14.....	42.8	9.255	0.696	0.132	0.076	13.29
53,381.12.....	46.3	7.939	0.971	0.114	0.123	8.18
53,383.12.....	48.0	8.478	0.661	0.121	0.079	12.82
53,387.15.....	51.5	8.239	0.985	0.118	0.120	8.37

NOTES.— Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-803. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 5 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

TABLE 6
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-811

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,287.37.....	-29.5	17.718	14.242	0.569	0.804	1.24
53,289.31.....	-28.0	-1.034	0.705	-0.033	0.682	1.47
53,295.19.....	-23.4	0.212	0.779	0.007	3.681	0.27
53,297.30.....	-21.7	-0.317	0.795	-0.010	2.507	0.40
53,299.19.....	-20.2	0.174	0.830	0.006	4.763	0.21
53,301.18.....	-18.7	-1.227	1.016	-0.039	0.828	1.21
53,315.25.....	-7.6	23.727	1.111	0.762	0.051	21.36
53,321.21.....	-2.9	31.035	3.161	0.997	0.104	9.82
53,325.29.....	0.3	31.162	1.091	1.001	0.040	28.55
53,327.33.....	1.9	30.392	1.117	0.977	0.042	27.21
53,331.32.....	5.1	30.126	1.164	0.968	0.044	25.88
53,344.29.....	15.3	18.166	1.125	0.584	0.065	16.15
53,348.36.....	18.5	7.853	2.961	0.252	0.378	2.65
53,350.20.....	19.9	12.294	0.695	0.395	0.060	17.68
53,352.31.....	21.6	10.440	1.105	0.335	0.108	9.45
53,354.17.....	23.1	9.706	0.986	0.312	0.103	9.85
53,360.35.....	27.9	6.264	0.976	0.201	0.157	6.42
53,385.14.....	47.5	3.283	0.671	0.105	0.205	4.89
53,387.14.....	49.0	3.416	0.886	0.110	0.260	3.85

NOTES.—Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-811. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 6 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

peaks and valleys match. This gives z to an accuracy of ~ 0.01 . Because we do not apply Galactic, LMC, or host galaxy reddening corrections, the continuum shapes of our spectra sometimes appear flatter and redder than those of the nearby, reddening-corrected spectrum. Figures 7–17 show the spectrum of each SN with the redshifted nearby comparison spectrum above. The SN’s redshift determined by this method is given in Table 1.

Three of the spectra also exhibit strong host galaxy emission and absorption features. We use these features to obtain more ac-

curate redshifts for these sources and to verify the nearby SN comparison method of redshift determination used for the remaining SNe. To determine the galactic redshifts we first find the line centers of the emission and absorption features by fitting a Gaussian profile to each. We then calculate the galaxy’s redshift by averaging the redshifts of the identified lines. Table 14 lists the SNe whose spectra exhibit strong galaxy features, the lines seen, and the galaxy redshift. For reference, the table also lists the redshift determined by the nearby comparison method. In all cases,

TABLE 7
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-917

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,295.27.....	-49.8	0.075	0.588	0.000	7.801	0.13
53,297.22.....	-48.0	1.027	0.673	0.005	0.655	1.53
53,301.24.....	-44.4	0.584	1.077	0.003	1.844	0.54
53,315.22.....	-31.8	-0.731	0.660	-0.004	0.903	1.11
53,323.20.....	-24.6	0.248	0.503	0.001	2.027	0.49
53,325.36.....	-22.7	0.880	1.209	0.004	1.374	0.73
53,329.29.....	-19.1	-0.947	0.626	-0.005	0.661	1.51
53,331.33.....	-17.3	3.916	0.790	0.020	0.202	4.96
53,344.36.....	-5.6	163.411	2.276	0.822	0.014	71.79
53,346.35.....	-3.8	181.941	2.037	0.915	0.012	89.34
53,348.19.....	-2.1	192.288	1.344	0.967	0.008	143.09
53,350.27.....	-0.2	199.294	0.684	1.003	0.004	291.32
53,352.33.....	1.6	195.035	1.130	0.981	0.006	172.60
53,360.35.....	8.9	153.213	2.068	0.771	0.014	74.08
53,385.17.....	31.2	53.737	1.428	0.270	0.027	37.64

NOTES.—Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-917. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 7 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

TABLE 8
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-944

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,315.26.....	-37.9	0.070	0.778	0.001	11.177	0.09
53,323.34.....	-30.9	0.609	0.898	0.010	1.475	0.68
53,327.22.....	-27.5	-0.557	0.851	-0.009	1.528	0.65
53,329.27.....	-25.7	-0.563	0.689	-0.009	1.222	0.82
53,331.23.....	-24.0	2.834	1.696	0.047	0.598	1.67
53,342.24.....	-14.5	10.673	2.345	0.176	0.220	4.55
53,344.24.....	-12.7	20.172	0.552	0.333	0.029	36.53
53,346.32.....	-10.9	29.423	0.661	0.486	0.024	44.53
53,348.35.....	-9.1	38.566	0.635	0.638	0.018	60.72
53,350.24.....	-7.5	46.252	0.739	0.765	0.018	62.60
53,356.33.....	-2.2	59.033	0.557	0.976	0.012	105.97
53,358.18.....	-0.6	60.552	0.768	1.001	0.015	78.88
53,360.32.....	1.3	59.972	1.167	0.991	0.021	51.38
53,381.12.....	19.3	25.134	0.623	0.416	0.026	40.36
53,383.12.....	21.1	23.555	0.521	0.389	0.024	45.17
53,387.15.....	24.6	18.505	0.621	0.306	0.035	29.81

NOTES.—Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-944. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 8 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

the redshifts found by the two methods agree within better than 0.01.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Functional Model of the SN Ia Light Curve

To model our observed VR band light curves, we choose the following function, $\phi(t)$, to describe the difference flux normalized to the difference flux at the time of maximum brightness in the VR band:

$$\begin{aligned} \phi &= 0.0 \text{ for } t < t_r, \\ \phi &= \frac{(t - t_r)^2}{t_r(t_r - n)} \text{ for } t_r < t < n, \\ \phi &= 1 - \frac{t^2}{nt_r} \text{ for } n < t < 0, \\ \phi &= 1 - \gamma t^2 \text{ for } 0 < t < m, \\ \phi &= 1 - m^2\gamma + 2m\gamma\tau \left(e^{(m-t)/\tau} - 1 \right) \text{ for } t > m, \end{aligned}$$

TABLE 9
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-1002

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,295.18.....	-45.1	-0.021	0.828	-0.001	40.005	0.02
53,297.30.....	-43.6	-0.590	0.738	-0.040	1.269	0.80
53,299.19.....	-42.2	-1.349	1.676	-0.090	1.261	0.80
53,301.17.....	-40.7	-1.034	1.109	-0.069	1.095	0.93
53,315.24.....	-30.3	0.282	0.822	0.019	2.922	0.34
53,325.28.....	-22.8	0.576	0.746	0.039	1.312	0.77
53,327.32.....	-21.3	-1.888	0.747	-0.126	0.451	2.53
53,329.34.....	-19.8	-0.643	0.541	-0.043	0.868	1.19
53,331.35.....	-18.3	-0.582	1.241	-0.039	2.144	0.47
53,344.31.....	-8.7	9.045	1.217	0.606	0.256	7.43
53,346.28.....	-7.3	13.110	1.145	0.878	0.234	11.45
53,348.22.....	-5.9	12.412	0.646	0.831	0.223	19.22
53,350.19.....	-4.4	13.807	0.676	0.925	0.223	20.44
53,352.26.....	-2.9	13.994	0.736	0.937	0.224	19.01
53,354.18.....	-1.4	15.154	0.914	1.015	0.225	16.59
53,360.37.....	3.1	11.610	3.738	0.778	0.388	3.11
53,385.14.....	21.5	2.049	0.674	0.137	0.394	3.04

NOTES.—Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-1002. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 9 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

TABLE 10
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-1052

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,295.24.....	-49.2	-0.666	0.843	-0.039	1.265	0.79
53,297.19.....	-47.7	0.583	0.952	0.034	1.634	0.61
53,299.27.....	-46.1	0.859	0.752	0.050	0.876	1.14
53,315.20.....	-34.3	1.078	1.180	0.063	1.096	0.91
53,323.21.....	-28.3	2.211	0.847	0.129	0.386	2.61
53,325.30.....	-26.7	0.144	0.838	0.008	5.810	0.17
53,327.36.....	-25.2	0.578	1.357	0.034	2.348	0.43
53,331.30.....	-22.2	-0.349	1.339	-0.020	3.836	0.26
53,344.28.....	-12.6	3.058	0.867	0.179	0.288	3.53
53,348.31.....	-9.5	8.714	0.673	0.510	0.092	12.95
53,352.34.....	-6.5	10.739	1.842	0.628	0.179	5.83
53,354.26.....	-5.1	16.207	1.952	0.948	0.130	8.30
53,356.28.....	-3.6	16.779	0.984	0.982	0.077	17.05
53,358.34.....	-2.1	16.838	0.954	0.985	0.075	17.65
53,360.30.....	-0.6	16.303	0.907	0.954	0.074	17.98
53,379.13.....	13.5	7.213	0.908	0.422	0.135	7.95
53,381.15.....	15.0	5.784	1.104	0.338	0.197	5.24
53,383.15.....	16.5	4.348	0.750	0.254	0.179	5.80
53,387.12.....	19.4	2.766	1.148	0.162	0.418	2.41

NOTES.— Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-1052. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 10 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

where t is the SN phase in rest-frame days scaled such that $t = 0$ is the time of maximum, ϕ is the ratio of observed VR -band flux at t to maximum flux, t_r is the time of explosion, n and m are arbitrary SN phases such that $n < 0$ and $m > 0$, γ is an arbitrary constant, and τ measures the decay time of the late-time light curve. The early-time portion of our model is motivated by Riess et al. (1999). Riess et al. fit their SN Ia light curves prior to -10 days with the expanding fireball model of Goldhaber et al. (1998), which has the functional form of a parabola with a minimum at the time of explosion. We model the expanding fireball as

$\phi = \alpha(t - t_r)^2$. We choose an exponential for the late-time light-curve shape because we expect the luminosity to be dominated by radioactive decay. For the exponential we pick the generic form $\phi = \phi_0 e^{-(t-t_m)/\tau} + c$. The form of ϕ between $-n < t < 0$ and $0 < t < m$ is taken to be two arbitrary second-degree polynomials constrained to be 1 at $t = 0$. We use the forms $\phi = 1 - \beta t^2$ and $\phi = 1 - \gamma t^2$, respectively. We leave n and m as free parameters in our fit. By requiring that ϕ be a smoothly connected function (i.e., that the value of ϕ and its first derivative are everywhere continuous), we eliminate α , β , c , ϕ_0 , and t_m . This results in the

TABLE 11
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-1060

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,315.33.....	-41.9	0.562	0.843	0.007	1.501	0.67
53,323.23.....	-35.1	0.544	0.709	0.007	1.303	0.77
53,325.33.....	-33.3	1.628	0.759	0.021	0.469	2.14
53,329.32.....	-29.8	1.489	0.940	0.019	0.633	1.58
53,344.32.....	-16.9	3.832	1.381	0.050	0.364	2.77
53,348.32.....	-13.5	12.766	0.782	0.166	0.077	16.33
53,350.33.....	-11.7	24.416	1.230	0.318	0.069	19.85
53,356.29.....	-6.6	57.413	0.979	0.748	0.050	58.64
53,358.25.....	-4.9	65.401	1.287	0.852	0.051	50.81
53,360.25.....	-3.2	73.437	1.385	0.957	0.051	53.01
53,377.15.....	11.4	44.074	0.901	0.574	0.051	48.90
53,381.13.....	14.8	36.533	1.243	0.476	0.058	29.39
53,383.13.....	16.5	32.523	0.863	0.424	0.054	37.68
53,387.16.....	20.0	24.534	0.980	0.320	0.062	25.03

NOTES.— Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-1060. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 11 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

TABLE 12
LIGHT CURVE FOR SM-2004-LMC-1102

MJD	Rest Phase	Diff. Flux	Flux Err	f_{norm}	f_{norm} Err	S/N
53,315.29.....	-40.2	-0.087	0.837	-0.003	9.605	0.10
53,323.23.....	-33.7	-0.235	0.610	-0.007	2.591	0.39
53,325.33.....	-31.9	-1.052	0.728	-0.033	0.693	1.45
53,329.32.....	-28.7	0.401	0.741	0.013	1.849	0.54
53,331.36.....	-27.0	-0.609	2.042	-0.019	3.355	0.30
53,344.32.....	-16.4	0.643	0.836	0.020	1.301	0.77
53,348.32.....	-13.1	6.190	0.602	0.196	0.104	10.28
53,350.34.....	-11.4	9.280	3.479	0.293	0.377	2.67
53,354.28.....	-8.2	27.495	3.617	0.869	0.137	7.60
53,356.28.....	-6.6	25.415	1.013	0.803	0.054	25.08
53,360.30.....	-3.3	29.460	0.950	0.931	0.049	31.01
53,377.17.....	10.5	16.716	0.786	0.528	0.060	21.27
53,381.15.....	13.8	12.371	0.758	0.391	0.072	16.33
53,383.14.....	15.4	9.838	0.613	0.311	0.072	16.06
53,387.17.....	18.7	8.589	0.611	0.271	0.080	14.05

NOTES.— Difference flux light curve for SM-2004-LMC-1102. Rest phase is given in rest-frame days relative to observed VR -band maximum. “Diff. flux” is the observed VR -band difference flux at the position of the SN given in Table 1. These fluxes are determined using the NN2 method of Barris et al. (2005) and are normalized to a zero point of 25. “Flux err” is the error in difference flux; f_{norm} is the difference flux normalized by the maximum VR -band flux, VR_{max} , given in Table 1; and f_{norm} err is the error in f_{norm} and includes the uncertainty in VR_{max} . The S/N column gives the significance of the difference flux measurement. Table 12 is also available in machine-readable form in the electronic edition of the *Astronomical Journal*.

form of ϕ given above, with t_r , τ , n , m , and γ as the five remaining free parameters.

In the following sections we use this model to estimate the time, t_{max} , of observed-frame maximum brightness, VR_{max} , for each SN and to place constraints on the interval between the time of explosion and maximum brightness.

4.2. Estimation of t_{max} and VR_{max}

For each SN presented, we determine t_{max} and VR_{max} using the functional SN Ia model presented in § 4.1. We do so by adding t_{max} and VR_{max} as free parameters to the model such that

$$f_{\text{obs}}(t_{\text{obs}}) = VR_{\text{max}} \phi \left(\frac{t_{\text{obs}} - t_{\text{max}}}{z} \right),$$

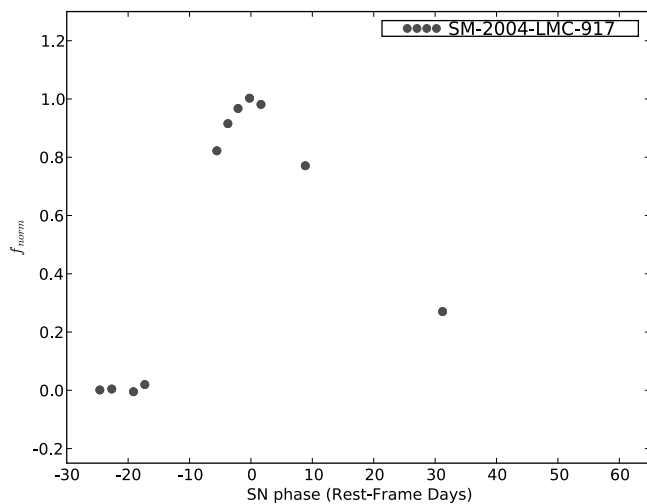


FIG. 2.— Rest-frame VR -band light curve of SM-2004-LMC-917, which has a redshift of 0.11. Data are shown in flux units normalized to the flux at maximum brightness. Error bars represent 1σ errors. Where error bars are not seen, 1σ errors are smaller than the symbol. [See the electronic edition of the *Journal* for a color version of this figure.]

where f_{obs} is the observed flux, t_{obs} is the time of the observation, and z is the SN redshift.

Using the C-MINUIT implementation of the MINUIT⁵ minimization package, we individually determine the best fit for each light curve to f_{obs} by minimizing χ^2 . Table 1 gives the t_{max} and VR_{max} values for each SN along with the parabolic errors returned by the MIGRAD processor in MINUIT. We emphasize that these fits are performed on the light curves as observed with no K -corrections, reddening corrections, or adjustments to account for SN Ia light-curve shape. We use these fits to obtain estimates

⁵ See <http://wwwasdoc.web.cern.ch/wwwasdoc/minuit/minmain.html> for documentation on the MINUIT package.

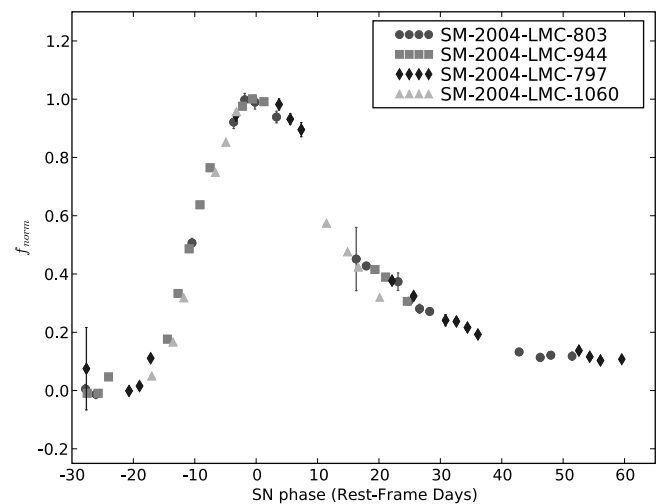


FIG. 3.— Rest-frame VR light curves of four SNe Ia at $z = 0.135$ – 0.165 . Data are shown in flux units normalized to the flux at maximum brightness. Error bars represent 1σ errors. Where error bars are not seen, 1σ errors are smaller than the symbol. SM-2004-LMC-803 (circles) has a redshift of 0.16, SM-2004-LMC-944 (squares) has a redshift of 0.15, SM-2004-LMC-797 (diamonds) has a redshift of 0.145, and SM-2004-LMC-1060 (triangles) has a redshift of 0.154. [See the electronic edition of the *Journal* for a color version of this figure.]

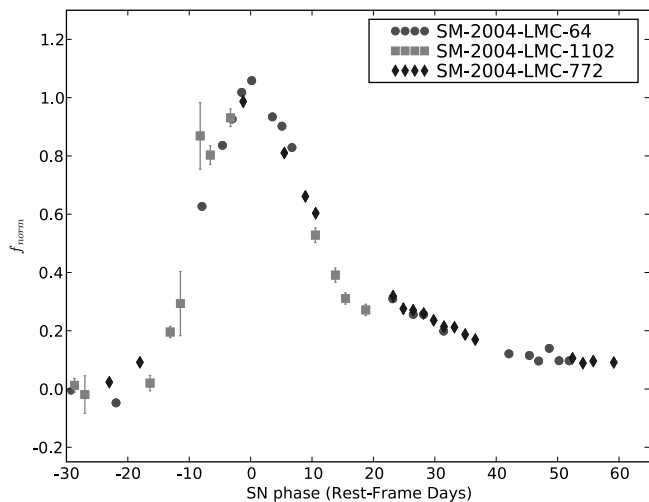


FIG. 4.—Rest-frame VR light curves of three SNe Ia at $z = 0.19$ – 0.22 . Data are shown in flux units normalized to the flux at maximum brightness. Error bars represent 1σ errors. Where error bars are not seen, 1σ errors are smaller than the symbol. SM-2004-LMC-64 (circles) has a redshift of 0.22, SM-2004-LMC-1102 (squares) has a redshift of 0.22, and SM-2004-LMC-772 (diamonds) has a redshift of 0.19. [See the electronic edition of the *Journal* for a color version of this figure.]

of t_{\max} and VR_{\max} for each SN and not to assess whether our model, $\phi(t)$, provides a good description of the SN Ia light curve. We discuss the validity of our model in § 4.3. For now we choose this model to estimate t_{\max} and VR_{\max} because we assume that the SN Ia light curve is a smooth, continuous function with a single maximum and an asymmetric shape. The $f_{\text{obs}}(t_{\text{obs}})$ provides a generic model for such a curve and should give a reasonable description of the maximum. To provide an initial assessment of this assumption we note that for each SN the best-fit curve generally has a χ^2 value close to 1.

For each SN we use our estimation of t_{\max} and its measured redshift to determine the rest-frame phase, relative to t_{\max} , of each observation. In the cases in which a galaxy redshift is available (see Table 14), we use its value for the SN's redshift. Tables 2–12

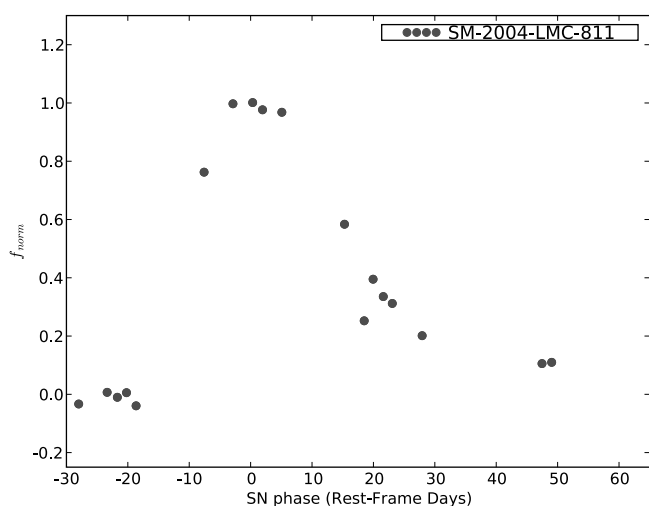


FIG. 5.—Rest-frame VR light curve of SM-2004-LMC-811, which has a redshift of 0.27. Data are shown in flux units normalized to the flux at maximum brightness. Error bars represent 1σ errors. Where error bars are not seen, 1σ errors are smaller than the symbol. [See the electronic edition of the *Journal* for a color version of this figure.]

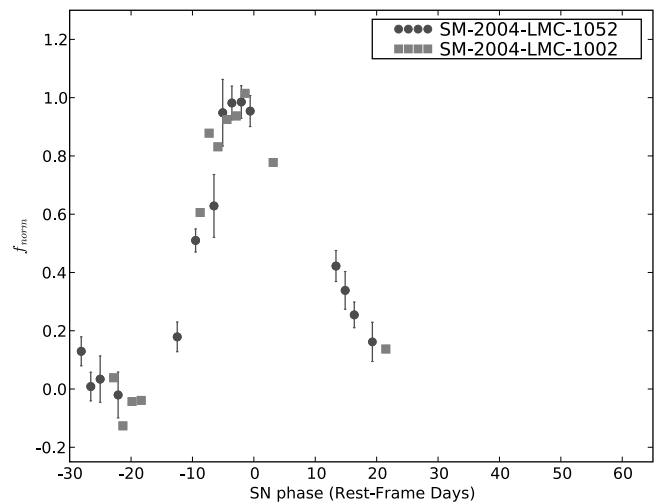


FIG. 6.—Rest-frame VR light curves of two SNe Ia at $z = 0.33$ – 0.36 . Data are shown in flux units normalized to the flux at maximum brightness. Error bars represent 1σ errors. Where error bars are not seen, 1σ errors are smaller than the symbol. SM-2004-LMC-1052 (circles) has a redshift of 0.348, and SM-2004-LMC-1002 (squares) has a redshift of 0.35. [See the electronic edition of the *Journal* for a color version of this figure.]

give the phase and the significance (S/N) of each measurement. Table 1 lists the phase of the first $S/N > 5$ observation for each SN.

We scale the difference fluxes to VR_{\max} to obtain the normalized VR flux, f_{norm} . We also correct for time dilation using the redshift determined in § 3.2 and obtain the light curves shown in Figures 2–6. The SNe are presented grouped by redshift to minimize the differences in the K -corrections for the SNe in each group. We expect the observed-frame VR -band light curve to vary with redshift as the VR filter samples different portions of the rest-frame spectrum. Because the spectra of SNe Ia near the time of explosion are not well studied and because we lack multiepoch multiband data for our light curves, we bin our data by redshift rather than apply K -corrections. We choose a bin size of 0.03 in redshift to maximize the number of SNe per bin while keeping the difference in K -corrections between redshifts within a bin small.

4.3. Construction of a Composite of the SN Ia Light Curve

Using the normalized f_{norm} light curves presented in § 4.2, we construct a composite SN Ia light curve that is well sampled from the time of explosion to +60 days. We include SNe from the redshift bin $z = 0.135$ – 0.165 to create the composite. For this redshift bin the center of our broadband filter corresponds to approximately 5200 \AA in the rest frame, close to the V band. We would expect the light passing through this filter to be continuum-dominated, although some Fe II, Fe III, Si II, and S II features are present (Filippenko 1997). We use our composite light curve to examine the SN Ia light curve. In particular, we discuss how well the functional form presented in § 4.1 describes the light-curve shape by performing a multiparameter fit to the composite light curve. We also discuss the rise time to maximum brightness as parameterized by t_r in our functional model.

Using C-MINUIT to minimize χ^2 , we perform a multiparameter fit of $\phi(t)$ to the composite light curve, including only data between -30 and $+60$ rest-frame days so as not to allow the flat baseline to dominate the χ^2 of our best fit. Although we fit all four SNe simultaneously, we also refit for the t_{\max} and VR_{\max} of each individual SN in the composite. For each SN, the best-fit t_{\max} obtained through the simultaneous fit agrees with the t_{\max} found in

TABLE 13
SPECTROSCOPIC OBSERVATIONS

SN ID	Telescope	Instrument	Date	Integration Time (s)
SM-2004-LMC-64	Magellan II	LDSS2	2004 Nov 3	900
SM-2004-LMC-772	Magellan I	IMACS-4	2004 Dec 2	2400
SM-2004-LMC-797	Magellan I	IMACS-4	2004 Dec 2	2400
SM-2004-LMC-803	Magellan I	IMACS-4	2004 Dec 2	2700
SM-2004-LMC-811	Magellan I	IMACS-4	2004 Dec 2	2700
SM-2004-LMC-917	Magellan I	IMACS-4	2004 Dec 10	1800
SM-2004-LMC-944	Magellan II	LDSS2	2004 Dec 18	2400
SM-2004-LMC-1002	Magellan II	LDSS2	2004 Dec 17	2100
SM-2004-LMC-1052	Magellan II	LDSS2	2004 Dec 18	2400
SM-2004-LMC-1060	Magellan II	LDSS2	2005 Jan 11	1200
SM-2004-LMC-1102	Magellan II	LDSS2	2005 Jan 9	3600

the individual fits in § 4.2 to within 1 observed-frame day. An initial fit to all four SNe in the $z = 0.135\text{--}0.165$ bin indicates that SM-2004-LMC-1060 is a much faster decliner than the other SNe in the bin, a result that can be verified from a qualitative inspection of Figure 3. Removing this SN from the composite light curve, we refit $\phi(t)$ and find a best-fit χ^2/dof (degrees of freedom) of 1.16 for 38 dof. A summary of the parameters and their 1σ parabolic error uncertainties is given in Table 15.

From this fit we conclude that our functional model provides a reasonable description of the overall shape of the observed V/R -band light curve for a SN Ia with z between 0.135 and 0.165. To draw further conclusions about the SN Ia light curve from the best-fit parameters, we must discuss them in the context of the systematic effects that might alter the overall composite light-curve shape and also of any effects introduced by using multiple SNe with different systematics to create the composite. We discuss the three largest systematic effects affecting our composite light curve: (1) the lack of K -corrections to account for SNe at different redshifts, (2) intrinsic diversity in the SN Ia family, and (3) reddening from the host galaxies, the LMC, and the Milky Way.

To examine the effects of the systematics, we create a tool to construct empirical models of observed V/R -band light curves using a library of nearby SN Ia spectra and light curves. The light-curve library spans a wide range of Δm_{15} values⁶ (see Phillips 1993), and the spectral library provides a typical SN Ia spectrum for each phase of the SN light curve from -10 to $+70$ rest-frame days (Nugent et al. 2002). We use these libraries to construct observed V/R -band light curves with a specified redshift and Δm_{15} ranging from 0.8 to 1.9 mag as follows. By applying the Δm_{15} weighting method of Prieto et al. (2006), we first construct $BVRI$ light curves for the specified Δm_{15} value. We then “warp” the spectrum to match the expected rest-frame $B - V$ color at each phase. Finally, we convolve the transmission curve of the V/R filter (see Fig. 1) with the redshifted spectrum and obtain the observed V/R -band flux for a given phase. We use a similar procedure to construct reddened light curves. After warping the library spectrum to match the expected color for the specified Δm_{15} value, we approximate the host galaxy reddening by applying the Cardelli et al. (1989) Galactic reddening law using $R_v = 3.1$ to the spectrum

⁶ The value of Δm_{15} refers to the difference between the B -band SN brightness in magnitudes at maximum brightness and at $+15$ rest-frame days.

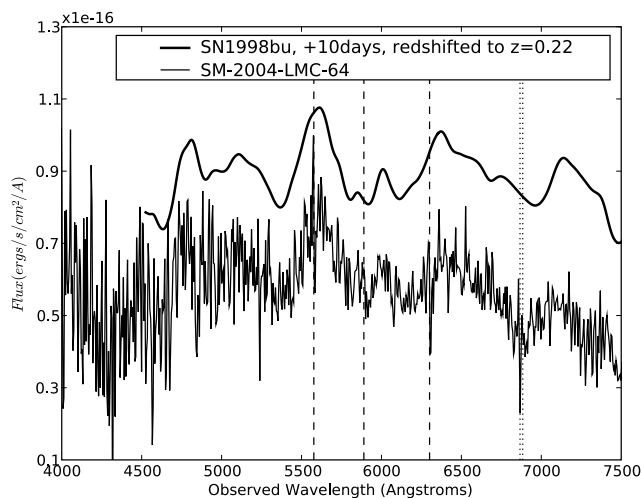


FIG. 7.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-64 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN1998bu above. The spectrum of SN1998bu was taken at $+10$ days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.22$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. Dashed lines indicate sky emission lines at 5577, 5890, and 6301 Å. Dotted lines demarcate the atmospheric O_2 band between 6867 and 6884 Å. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

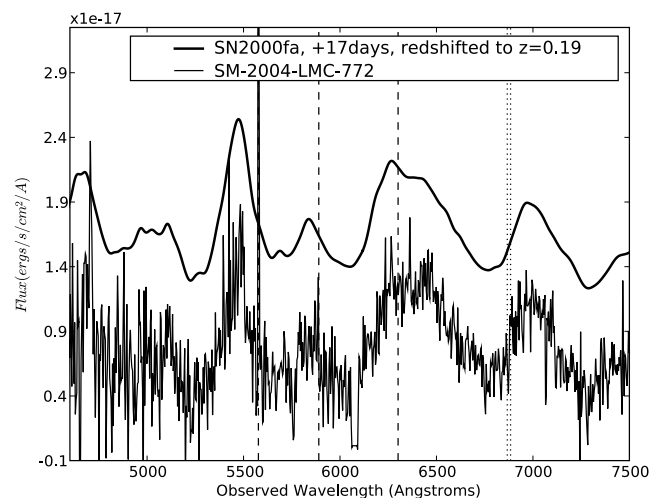


FIG. 8.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-772 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN2000fa above. The spectrum of SN2000fa was taken at $+17$ days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.19$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

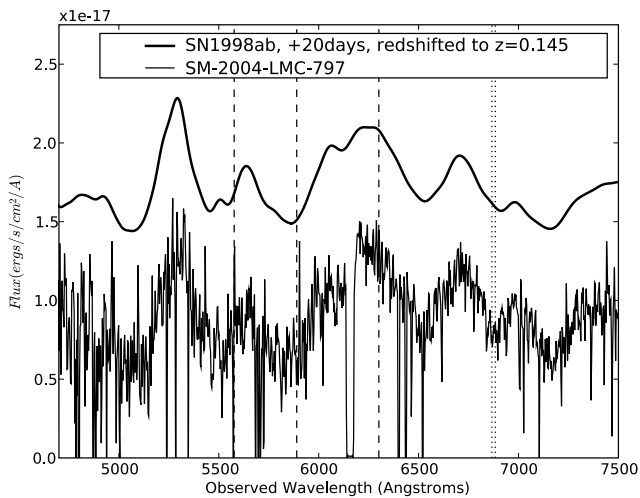


Fig. 9.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-797 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN1998ab above. The spectrum of SN1998ab was taken at +20 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.145$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

(see Riess et al. 1996b for discussion of host galaxy reddening laws). We then redshift the spectrum and apply the LMC reddening law of Fitzpatrick (1986) with $R_v = 3.3$. We also add the Galactic reddening using the Cardelli et al. law with $R_v = 3.1$. Finally, as in the unreddened case, we convolve the reddened, redshifted spectrum with the VR -band transmission filter to obtain the observed VR -band flux. As with our own data, we normalize these light curves to the flux at the time of maximum to create model f_{norm} light curves. We use this light-curve simulation tool in the following sections to help us understand the impact of systematic effects on our findings.

4.3.1. K -Corrections

The general K -correction formula (Schmidt et al. 1998; Nugent et al. 2002) is used to “correct” for the fact that, in a given filter,

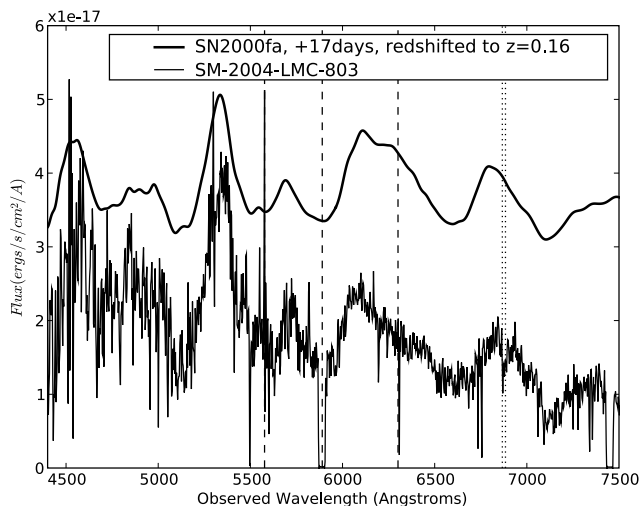


Fig. 10.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-803 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN2000fa above. The spectrum of SN2000fa was taken at +17 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.16$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

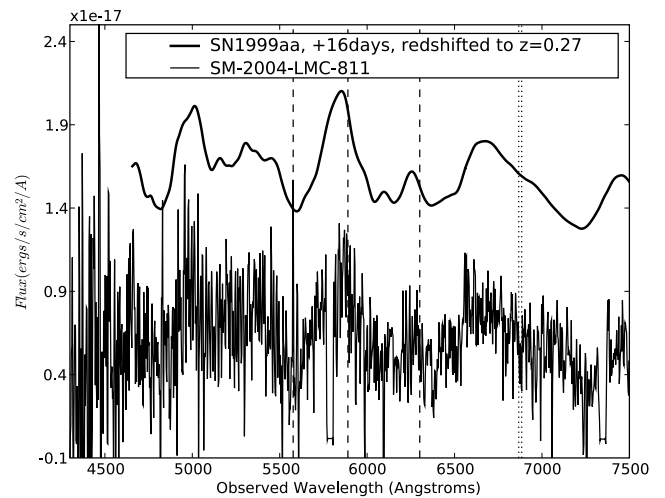


Fig. 11.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-811 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN1999aa above. The spectrum of SN1999aa was taken at +16 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.27$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

observations of SNe with different redshifts sample different portions of the SN Ia rest-frame spectrum. The observations are typically normalized to the filter most closely matching the portion of the rest-frame spectrum sampled by the filter in the observed frame. To apply such a correction to a given observation ideally requires a spectrum taken at the same phase as the observation. Because there are few high-quality SN Ia spectra prior to -10 rest-frame days, we choose not to K -correct our light curves. Instead, we choose SNe from a narrow range of redshifts to avoid introducing scatter into our composite by sampling very different portions of the SN Ia spectrum.

To estimate the variation between the SNe in our bin, we construct unreddened observed VR -band light curves at the redshifts of the SNe in our composite using the light-curve simulation tool described above. We choose a fiducial Δm_{15} of 1.2 mag for these

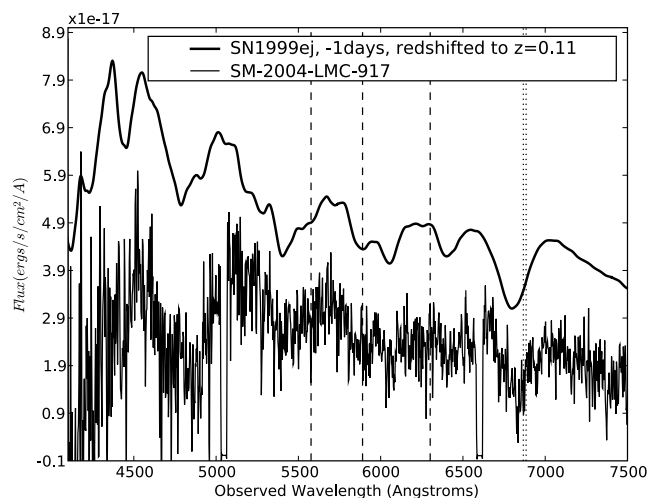


Fig. 12.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-917 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN1999ej above. The spectrum of SN1999ej was taken at -1 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.11$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

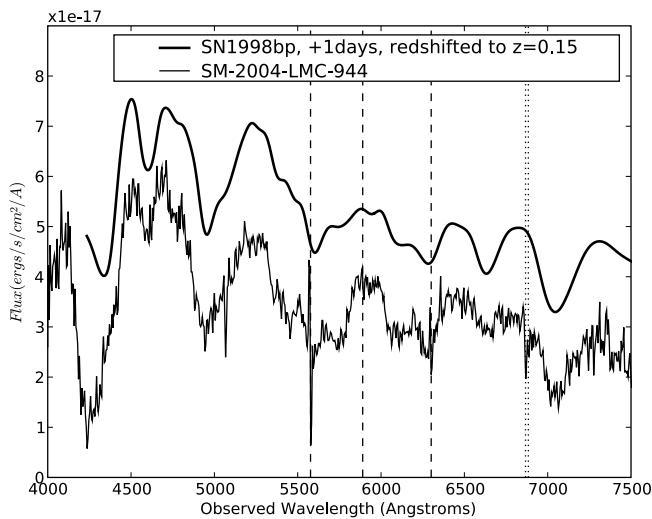


FIG. 13.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-944 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN1998bp above. The spectrum of SN1998bp was taken at +1 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.15$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

model light curves. Between -10 and $+70$ rest-frame days, the flux/maximum flux ratio of the three light curves differs by less than 3%, with the maximum spread between the three at approximately +15 days. All three light curves reach maximum brightness at approximately the same phase relative to rest-frame B -band maximum. Their times of maximum differ by less than the resolution of our model light curves, which is ~ 0.5 rest-frame days. On the rising portion, their f_{norm} light curves differ by less than 0.2%. These tests indicate that the systematic error contributed to an estimate of the time to maximum brightness using a composite light curve of SNe at redshifts between 0.135 and 0.165 without K -corrections is negligible.

In addition to minimizing scatter between SNe at different redshifts, K -corrections would provide a means for matching

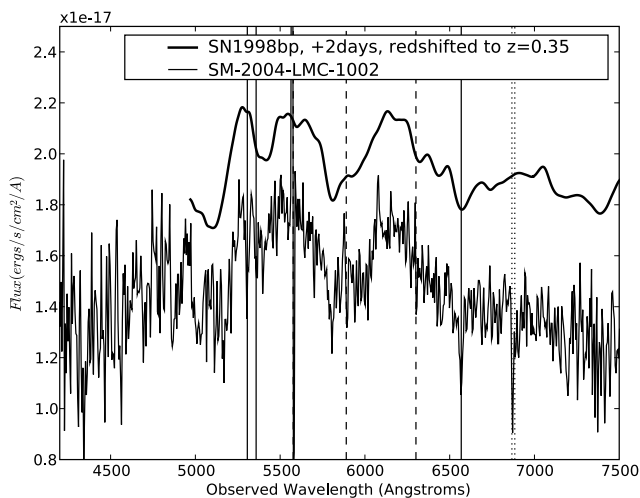


FIG. 14.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-1002 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN1998bp above. The spectrum of SN1998bp was taken at +2 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.35$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. Solid vertical lines mark galaxy features used to independently find the source redshift of $z = 0.350$. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

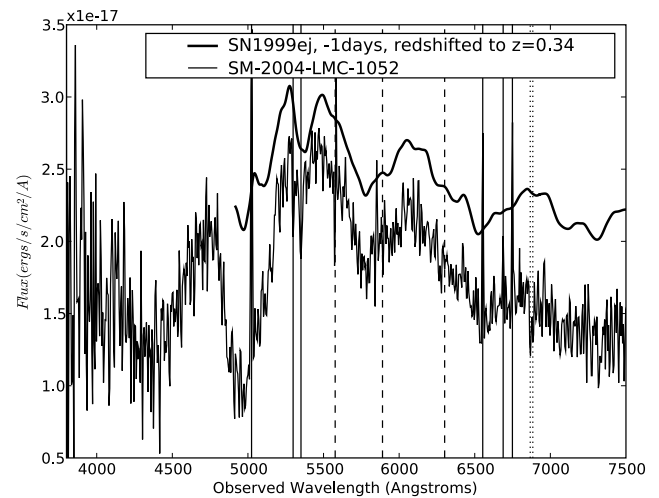


FIG. 15.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-1052 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN1999ej above. The spectrum of SN1999ej was taken at -1 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.34$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. Solid vertical lines mark galaxy features used to independently find the source redshift of $z = 0.348$. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

our observed VR -band light curves to standard bands in the rest frame. At $z = 0.15$, the central redshift of the SNe in our composite light curve, the observed VR band most closely matches the rest-frame V band. To compare the light curves of the observed VR band at $z = 0.15$ and V band at $z = 0$, we construct f_{norm} light curves between -10 and $+70$ rest-frame days with Δm_{15} of 1.2 mag. Prior to maximum, the two light curves differ by $\sim 2\%$. Using a cubic spline fit to the light curves near maximum, we find the difference in the times of maximum to be 1.1 rest-frame days. Postmaximum, the light curves diverge, with the observed VR -band light curve declining more rapidly. From this comparison we conclude that for the rising portion of the light curve, the observed VR -band light curve—with the time axis shifted to the

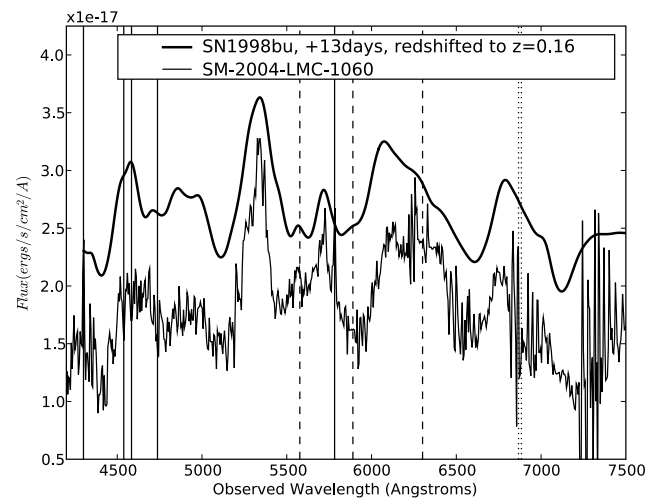


FIG. 16.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-1060 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN1998bu above. The spectrum of SN1998bu was taken at +13 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.16$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. Solid vertical lines mark galaxy features used to independently find the source redshift of $z = 0.154$. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

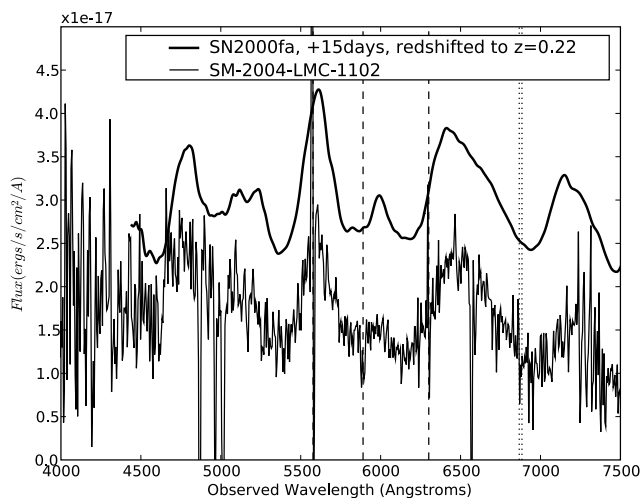


FIG. 17.—Flux-calibrated spectrum of SM-2004-LMC-1102 with comparison nearby spectrum of SN2000fa above. The spectrum of SN2000fa was taken at +15 days relative to B -band maximum and is shown redshifted to $z = 0.22$. The flux of the comparison spectrum has been smoothed, scaled, and offset. See Fig. 7 for explanation of dashed and dotted lines. The data can be found in a tar file. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

rest frame—is a close approximation of the rest-frame V -band light curve. The systematic error in an estimate of the time to V -band maximum using the observed VR -band light curve will be less than ± 1.1 rest-frame days.

4.3.2. SN Ia Diversity

Intrinsic diversity in the SN Ia family will also impact our estimate of the time to maximum from our composite light curve. To reduce the most gross impact of this effect, we remove the obvious fast riser and decliner SM-2004-LMC-1060 from our composite light curve.

To account for the effect of variation between the remaining SNe, we add a free “stretch” parameter, s , for each of the SNe in the fit following Goldhaber et al. (2001). Using C-MINUIT we perform a multiparameter fit to the composite light curve and fix the stretch parameter for one of the SNe in the composite to 1, no stretch. Effectively, the other SNe in the composite are normalized to the shape of the unstretched SN. We choose SM-2004-LMC-944 as our fiducial SN, because it has the median width of the three SNe in the composite. We present the results of this fit in Table 15. We characterize the “shape” of our best fit by the value of Δm_{-10} , the difference in magnitudes between the VR -band flux at -10 rest-frame days and at maximum. For the best fit normalized to the shape of SM-2004-LMC-944, Δm_{-10} is 0.52 mag and the time to maximum is 19.2 ± 1.3 rest-frame days. Figure 18 shows the best fit with the composite light curve. The phases of the data points have been stretched according to the

values of s returned by the best fit. By scaling the time to maximum by the best-fit stretch parameters for each of the other SNe in the composite, we can determine the time to maximum for different values of Δm_{-10} . For SM-2004-LMC-803, which has a Δm_{-10} of 0.53 mag, the time to maximum is 18.96 rest-frame days. For SM-2004-LMC-797, with a Δm_{-10} of 0.39 mag, the time to maximum is 20.93 rest-frame days.

Our fits indicate that, like the declining portion of the light curve, the shape of the rising light curve of a SN Ia differs between individual SNe in a way that can be parameterized by a stretch factor. With our current data, however, we cannot compare these rising light-curve shape parameters with those describing the decline rate. This is because our light curves are not reddening-corrected, and, as discussed below, the declining portion of our light curves is the most sensitive to the impact of reddening. Without reddening corrections we cannot meaningfully compare the rate of rise with the rate of decline in our light curves. Furthermore, because our VR -band light curve differs most significantly from the standard V -band filter on the decline, comparing our findings to previous work in standard passbands is also difficult.

4.3.3. Reddening

Reddening from dust along the line of sight to the SNe also alters the shape of our composite light curve and impacts our estimates of the parameters in our functional SN Ia model, including the time to maximum. Because the SN spectrum evolves, the effect of reddening changes with SN phase. The bluer the intrinsic SN light, the larger the change in the observed color caused by dust along the line of sight. The light from the SNe in our sample is reddened by dust in three different locations: the host galaxy, the LMC, and the Galaxy. The line-of-sight dust introduces two different effects into our composite light curve: (1) the overall change in the shape of the composite light curve due to reddening and (2) increased scatter in the composite light curve due to differences in the line-of-sight reddening to the three separate SNe in the composite.

To examine the overall impact of reddening, we use the light-curve simulation tool described above to create an unreddened f_{norm} light curve with $\Delta m_{15} = 1.2$ mag at a redshift of 0.15. We then create reddened light curves. For the host galaxy reddening we refer to the distribution of color excesses found by the ESSENCE survey (W. M. Wood-Vasey 2006, private communication). Assuming $R_v = 3.1$, ESSENCE finds a mean value for $E(B - V)$ of 0.06. To obtain a reasonable estimate of $E(B - V)$ through the LMC, we double the mean value of the Galaxy-corrected $E(B - V)$ for LMC stars found by Harris et al. (1997) and use $E(B - V) = 0.26 \pm 0.055$. We also use $E(B - V) = 0.07 \pm 0.01$ through the Galaxy toward the LMC as suggested by Harris et al., who used the Oestreich et al. (1995) SN 1987A foreground reddening value. We find the ratio of the reddened model light-curve flux to the unreddened model light-curve flux

TABLE 14
REDSHIFTS FROM GALAXY FEATURES

SN ID	Galaxy Features	Galaxy z	SN z
SM-2004-LMC-1002	Ca I H and K, H β	0.35	0.35
SM-2004-LMC-1052	Ca II H and K, O III, H β , O II, H γ	0.348	0.34
SM-2004-LMC-1060	Ca II H and K, O III, H β , O II, H γ	0.154	0.16

NOTES.—Sources exhibiting strong galactic features. SN ID indicates the SN whose spectrum shows strong galaxy features. Galaxy features lists the observed features. Galaxy z gives the redshift determined from the galaxy lines. SN z gives the redshift determined through the nearby SN comparison method described in § 3.2.

TABLE 15
BEST-FIT PARAMETERS

Fit Description	χ^2/dof	dof	t_r (days)	n (days)	m (days)	τ (days)	γ	s_{797}	s_{803}
Functional fit (no stretch) ^a	1.16	38	-22.2 ± 0.6	9.8 ± 0.8	8.3 ± 1.4	15.2 ± 0.6	0.0029 ± 0.0005
Functional fit (with stretch) ^b	0.97	36	-19.2 ± 1.3	13.8 ± 1.3	8.4 ± 1.5	14.0 ± 0.8	0.0030 ± 0.0006	0.92 ± 0.02	1.01 ± 0.02

NOTES.—Summary of best-fit parameters from fits described in § 4.1. The fits are performed on the observed VR -band f_{norm} composite light curve shifted in time to the SN rest frame. The composite light curve includes four SNe Ia with $z = 0.135\text{--}0.165$. See § 4.3 for a description of composite light-curve construction.

^a Functional model of SN Ia described in § 4.1 without stretch parameters to standardize light-curve width.

^b Functional model of SN Ia with stretch parameters to normalize widths of SNe in the composite light curve. The fit is normalized to SM-2004-LMC-944.

at each phase and multiply this ratio by the data point in our composite light curve at the corresponding phase. For data points prior to -10 days, we use the ratio at -10 days. In this way we effectively “redden” our composite light curve. We find that in our VR band at $z = 0.15$, the impact of reddening is significantly more severe on the declining arm of the light curve. The maximum change in f_{norm} due to reddening on the rising arm is $\sim 0.2\%$, while the maximum change on the declining arm is $\sim 5\%$. To get a more extreme estimate of the impact of reddening, we also create a reddened light curve with a host galaxy $E(B - V)$ of 0.25. This value represents approximately the 90th percentile host galaxy color excess found by the ESSENCE survey. Increasing the host galaxy reddening to this amount can change the f_{norm} light curve by up to $\sim 0.5\%$ on the rising arm and $\sim 10\%$ on the declining arm. Because the rising arm of the light curve is so much less susceptible to changes caused by reddening, we focus our analysis on the rising portion of our composite light curve and the constraints we can place on the time to maximum.

To understand how reddening impacts the value in the best fit of the parameter t_r , we refit the composite light curve reddened by the mean values of the host galaxy, LMC, and Galactic color excesses to our functional model. We choose SM-2004-LMC-944 as the fiducial SN for normalizing the stretch. We find that the estimate of the time to maximum, $-t_r$, is increased by 1.6 rest-frame days. From this we conclude that the systematic shift in the time to maximum caused by reddening is approximately $+1.6$ rest-frame days. To examine whether the overall effect of reddening is

to always increase the time to maximum, we choose extreme values for the color excess in the LMC, $E(B - V) = 1.26$, and the Galaxy, $E(B - V) = 1.07$, and refit the “reddened” composite light curve. As expected, the estimate of the time to maximum is more significantly altered; the absolute value of t_r increases by almost 2 rest-frame days. Notably, however, the reddening only increases, and never decreases, the estimate of the time to maximum. From this we conclude that the overall potential impact of reddening is to increase our estimate of the time to maximum by 1.6 rest-frame days, assuming reasonable values of the color excess due to reddening. We modify the value of our time to maximum to reflect the impact of the reddening to obtain a best estimate of 17.6 ± 1.3 rest-frame days.

We use Monte Carlo simulations to examine how the uncertainties in the LMC, Galaxy, and host galaxy reddenings, as well as the differences between host galaxy reddening for each of the SNe, impact our estimate of the overall effect of reddening. For each simulation we create multiple realizations of a reddened composite light curve in the manner described above. We perform a multiparameter fit on each realization and calculate the robust mean value of the time to maximum and its standard deviation. To isolate the effect of the uncertainty in each source of reddening, we hold the color excess values of the other reddening sources fixed and vary the source of interest. For example, to understand how the uncertainty in the LMC’s color excess affects our estimate of the impact of reddening, we set the Galaxy $E(B - V)$ to 0.07 and the host galaxy $E(B - V)$ for all three SNe to 0.06. For each realization we draw the LMC’s color excess from a Gaussian distribution with a mean of 0.26 and a σ of 0.55, reflecting the values determined by Harris et al. (1997). We perform a similar Monte Carlo, holding the LMC and host galaxy reddenings fixed while choosing the Galactic color excess from a Gaussian distribution centered at 0.07 with a σ of 0.01. Finally, we estimate the combined impact of our uncertainty in the host galaxy reddening values and the differences between them for each SN. Holding the LMC and Galactic reddening fixed in each realization, we choose a different host galaxy color excess for each SN from a distribution of host galaxy $E(B - V)$ similar to that found by the ESSENCE survey.

For each of the simulations described above, the 3σ clipped mean value of the time to maximum matched that obtained by using the “best-guess” values of the reddenings. The standard deviation about this mean provides an estimate of the systematic uncertainty in our reddening-corrected time to maximum caused by uncertainties in the reddening caused by each source. For the LMC the standard deviation of the time to maximum is 0.014. For the Galaxy the standard deviation is 0.012. For the host galaxy reddenings the standard deviation is 0.067. Summing these numbers in quadrature, we arrive at an estimate of the total systematic uncertainty in the time to maximum due to reddening of ± 0.07 rest-frame days.

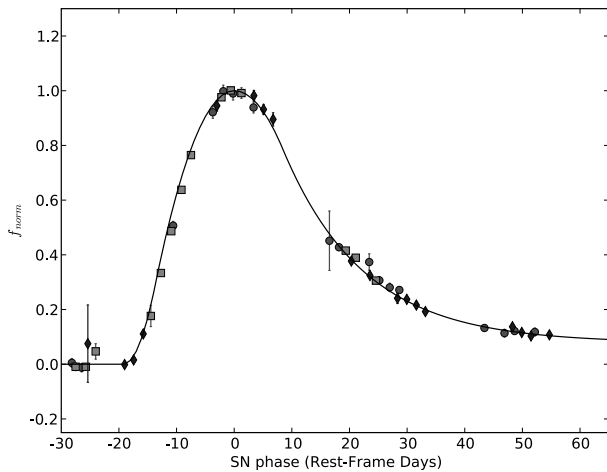


FIG. 18.—Best fit of the functional SN Ia model described in § 4.1 to the composite light curve. Stretch parameters were added to normalize the width of the light curve to that of SM-2004-LMC-944 (squares). The light curve shown has a Δm_{-10} in the VR band of 0.52 mag. For SM-2004-LMC-803 (circles), the stretch parameter is 1.01. For SM-2004-LMC-797 (diamonds), the stretch parameter is 0.92. Table 15 gives the parameters and their uncertainties for this fit. [See the electronic edition of the Journal for a color version of this figure.]

4.4. Comparison with Previous Findings

Our investigation of systematic effects impacting our composite light curve yields the following conclusions. The lack of K -corrections on our SNe chosen from the narrow redshift range of 0.135–0.165 will have a negligible effect on the overall shape of our composite light curve. Without K -corrections, however, we must be careful in how we compare our observed VR -band light curve with the most closely matched rest-frame filter, the V band. We find that the rising portion of our observed VR -band light curve is similar to the rest-frame V band, and that an estimate of the time of maximum from our composite light curve will differ from the V -band time of maximum by less than 1.1 rest-frame days. To account for intrinsic variability we introduce a stretch parameter for each of the SNe in the composite light curve and normalize the shape to SM-2004-LMC-944. We estimate that the overall effect of reddening on the time to maximum is to increase it by 1.6 rest-frame days. The systematic error in our estimate of the effect of reddening is ± 0.07 rest-frame days.

Based on the fits described above, the best-fit parameters to our functional model give a time of explosion of $17.6 \pm 1.3(\text{stat}) \pm 0.07(\text{sys})$ rest-frame days before maximum VR -band brightness for a SN Ia with a Δm_{-10} of 0.52 mag. At a z of 0.15, we expect the observed VR band to most closely match the rest-frame V -band light curve, and we add an additional systematic uncertainty of ± 1.1 rest-frame days to our estimate of the time to maximum in the V band. Our findings estimate a smaller value for the time to maximum in the fiducial V band than that of Riess et al. (1999), who find a time to maximum of 21.1 ± 0.2 days. The significance of this discrepancy is unclear. Our value for the time to maximum is normalized to a SN with VR -band $\Delta m_{-10} = 0.52$ mag. As described above, comparing our values of Δm_{-10} with previous work is difficult. For this paper we note the discrepancy, but without a study that analyzes both our light curves and previous data in the same way, we cannot comment on its significance.

5. CONCLUSION

We present VR -band light curves and optical spectra of 11 SNe Ia behind the LMC discovered by the SuperMACHO survey.⁷ Our data include some of the earliest premaximum detections of SNe Ia. We provide a functional model for the observed VR -band light curve from the time of explosion to +60 days by fitting a composite light curve to three SNe in the redshift bin of $z = 0.135$ – 0.165 . The data are fitted without K -corrections or reddening corrections; however, the set of SNe have been chosen to minimize the impact of these effects. Our function uses the expanding fireball model of Goldhaber et al. (1998) to describe the light curve immediately following the explosion. The best fit of our functional model to our composite observed VR -band light curve gives a time to maximum of $17.6 \pm 1.3(\text{stat}) \pm 0.07(\text{sys})$

rest-frame days for a SN Ia with a Δm_{-10} of 0.52 mag. Our simulations indicate that the VR -band time of maximum at $z = 0.15$ should match the rest-frame V -band time of maximum to within 1.1 rest-frame days.

We present these data to be used to test competing models of the SN Ia explosion mechanism by placing observational limits on the time to maximum and the shape of the rising light curve. Analyses of our data are limited by their being in a single band. While our broadband filter enables us to detect flux earlier, we cannot calibrate our light curves against the nearby sets of SNe Ia observed in $BVRi$.⁸ An ideal study should include both a broadband filter and the standard filter set.

The SuperMACHO survey is being undertaken under the auspices of the NOAO Survey Program. We are very grateful for the support provided to the Survey Program from the NOAO and the National Science Foundation. We are particularly indebted to the scientists and staff at the Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory for their assistance in helping us carry out the SuperMACHO survey. We also appreciate the invaluable help of Chance Reschke in building and maintaining the computing cluster we use for image analysis. SuperMACHO is supported by STScI grant GO-10583. This project works closely with members of the ESSENCE supernova survey, and we are grateful for their input and assistance. The spectroscopic observations presented in this paper were obtained on the Magellan telescopes operated by the Las Campanas Observatory. We are grateful to the scientists and staff of LCO. Discussions with P. Pinto were invaluable in helping us understand the physics underlying our observations. We are also grateful to T. Matheson and M. Modjaz for their help with spectral identifications. The support of the McDonnell Foundation, through a Centennial Fellowship awarded to C. W. S., has been essential to the SuperMACHO survey. We are most grateful for the foundation's support for this project. C. W. S. and A. G. are also grateful for support from Harvard University. A. G. thanks the University of Washington Department of Astronomy for facilities support. The work of K. H. C., M. E. H., and S. N. was performed under the auspices of the US Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration, by the University of California, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, under contract W-7405-Eng-48. J. L. P.'s work is supported by STScI grant GO-9860.07. A. C. acknowledges the support of CONICYT (Chile) through FONDECYT grant 1051061. D. M. and L. M. acknowledge support from Fondap Center for Astrophysics grant 15010003. D. L. W. acknowledges financial support in the form of a Discovery Grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

⁸ Because the transmission curve of our VR filter differs from the sum of the V -band and R -band transmissions, we cannot simply add the nearby V and R templates to obtain a VR template.

⁷ Electronic data tables can be found in a tar file.

REFERENCES

- Alard, C. 2000, *A&AS*, 144, 363
 Alard, C., & Lupton, R. H. 1998, *ApJ*, 503, 325
 Alcock, C., et al. 1999, *ApJ*, 521, 602
 ———. 2000, *ApJ*, 542, 281
 Allington-Smith, J., et al. 1994, *PASP*, 106, 983
 Astier, P., et al. 2006, *A&A*, 447, 31
 Barris, B. J., Tonry, J. L., Novicki, M. C., & Wood-Vasey, W. M. 2005, *AJ*, 130, 2272
 Bigelow, B. C., & Dressler, A. M. 2003, *Proc. SPIE*, 4841, 1727
 Cardelli, J. A., Clayton, G. C., & Mathis, J. S. 1989, *ApJ*, 345, 245
 Filippenko, A. V. 1997, *ARA&A*, 35, 309
 Fitzpatrick, E. L. 1986, *AJ*, 92, 1068
 Gibson, B. K., et al. 2000, *ApJ*, 529, 723
 Goldhaber, G., et al. 1998, *BAAS*, 30, 1325
 ———. 2001, *ApJ*, 558, 359
 Gössl, C. A., & Riffeser, A. 2002, *A&A*, 381, 1095
 Hamuy, M., Phillips, M. M., Suntzeff, N. B., Schommer, R. A., Maza, J., & Aviles, R. 1996a, *AJ*, 112, 2391
 Hamuy, M., Phillips, M. M., Suntzeff, N. B., Schommer, R. A., Maza, J., Smith, R. C., Lira, P., & Aviles, R. 1996b, *AJ*, 112, 2438

- Hamuy, M., Phillips, M. M., Wells, L. A., & Maza, J. 1993, *PASP*, 105, 787
Harris, J., Zaritsky, D., & Thompson, I. 1997, *AJ*, 114, 1933
Hillebrandt, W., & Niemeyer, J. C. 2000, *ARA&A*, 38, 191
Kim, A., Goobar, A., & Perlmutter, S. 1996, *PASP*, 108, 190
Kowalski, M., et al. 2004, *BAAS*, 36, 1466
Matheson, T., et al. 2005, *AJ*, 129, 2352
Nugent, P., Kim, A., & Perlmutter, S. 2002, *PASP*, 114, 803
Oestreicher, M. O., Goehermann, J., & Schmidt-Kaler, T. 1995, *A&AS*, 112, 495
Perlmutter, S., et al. 1999, *ApJ*, 517, 565
Phillips, M. M. 1993, *ApJ*, 413, L105
Prieto, J. L., Rest, A., & Suntzeff, N. B. 2006, *ApJ*, 647, 501
Rest, A., et al. 2005, *ApJ*, 634, 1103
Riess, A. G., Press, W. H., & Kirshner, R. P. 1995, *ApJ*, 438, L17
———. 1996a, *ApJ*, 473, 88
———. 1996b, *ApJ*, 473, 588
Riess, A. G., et al. 1998, *AJ*, 116, 1009
———. 1999, *AJ*, 118, 2675
Schmidt, B. P., et al. 1998, *ApJ*, 507, 46
Stubbs, C. W., et al. 2002, *BAAS*, 34, 1232
Suntzeff, N. B., et al. 1999, *AJ*, 117, 1175
van Dokkum, P. G. 2001, *PASP*, 113, 1420