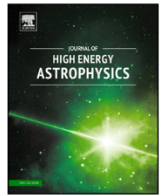




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Foreword



The Swift launch in 2004 was a nail-biter as one storm after another pummeled Cape Canaveral. The satellite had arrived in July, and our launch team fretted over whether its baby, locked away in a hangar, could survive the hurricane-force winds. The October launch was delayed a week, then another week, and then a few more days. Finally, on November 20, Swift launched under clear Florida skies. Pre-launch jitters gave way to an adrenaline rush as the first data came down showing a perfectly operating observatory.

Ten years later, in December 2014, we gathered at University of Rome "Sapienza" to celebrate a glorious decade of operation. Swift continues to work flawlessly. Over the years it has made a long series of ground-breaking discoveries, including: short GRB origin, relativistic tidal disruption event, supernova shock break-out, long GRBs from the edge of the visible universe, young supernova remnants, GRB afterglow flares and components, anti-glitch magnetars, kilonova evidence, ultra-long class of GRBs, and absorbed AGN hosted in merging galaxies. The excitement continues today with press coverage this year for a Type Ia supernova UV flash, massive stellar flare and X-ray dust scatter rings from microquasar V404 Cyg.

The observing plan for Swift has evolved with time. In the early years, most time was spent studying GRB afterglows. Now, although Swift continues to hunt for GRBs, the majority of the time is taken by target of opportunity requests coming from the community. We are accepting 3 new requests every day, by far the highest target of opportunity rate of any telescope in space or on the ground.

While the observing strategies evolved with time, the Swift data policy remained constant with all the data immediately available to the entire community. This is certainly a key ingredient of the Swift success and, together with the spacecraft's flexibility, has turned a GRB mission into a facility used to study every astronom-

ical object from comets to the most distant explosions in a very young universe.

The conference in Rome (<http://www.brera.inaf.it/Swift10/Welcome.html>) was a spectacular celebration of the Swift 10th anniversary. It included sessions on all types of transient and steady sources. Top scientists from around the world gave invited and contributed talks. There was a large poster session, sumptuous lunches, news interviews and a glorious banquet with officials attending from INAF and ASI.

While the proceedings of the conference can be found at <http://pos.sissa.it/cgi-bin/reader/conf.cgi?confid=233>, this volume provides a selection of *legacy* papers which represent an overview of the key science made possible by the Swift mission in 10 years of successful operations.

A cosmic-explosion painting, produced specially for the event by a young Italian painter, has inspired the cover of this volume.

We thank La Sapienza University as well as the ARAP association for their support, which made the event possible. We acknowledge valuable inputs from the conference SOC and from the Swift User Committee Chair Dieter Hartmann. We also thank the LOC for their unrelenting effort to solve all practical details.

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