



<i>Publication Year</i>	2015
<i>Acceptance in OA</i>	2020-04-04T08:20:22Z
<i>Title</i>	Gaia: Status and Promises
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<i>Handle</i>	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12386/23835

Gaia: Status and Promises

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Abstract

The power of micro-arcsecond (μ as) astrometry is about to be unleashed. ESA's Gaia mission, now entering its second year of routine science operations, will soon fulfil its promise for revolutionary science in countless aspects of Galactic astronomy and astrophysics. I will briefly review the Gaia mission status of operations, and the scenario for intermediate data releases. I will then illustrate the potential of μ as astrometry for detection and improved characterization of planetary systems in the neighborhood of the Sun.