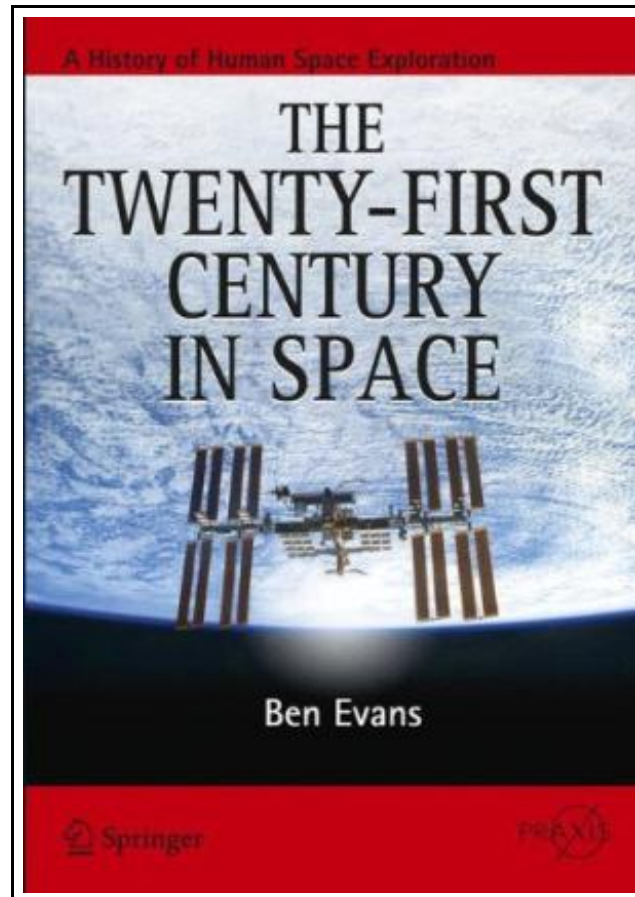


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Summary: April 12, 2011 was the 50th Anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's pioneering journey into space. To commemorate this momentous achievement, Springer-Praxis has produced a mini-series of books that reveals how humanity's knowledge of flying, working and living in space has grown in the last half century. The fifth and final volume in the miniseries focuses on The Twenty-First Century, in which the construction of the International Space Station, from the launch of its first element (the Russian Zarya control module) in 1998 to the end of the Shuttle-focused construction effort (with the Tranquility Node-3, the cupola and the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer) in 2011. All the expeditions up to the 2011 anniversary of Gagarin are explored in detail, the make-up of crews, the shift from three-crew to two-crew, the effect of the STS-107 tragedy on the project and the eventual push to a six-person permanent occupancy. The final Hubble repair mission, STS-125, provides an opportunity not just to discuss the flight itself, but also to explore the mechanics and principles behind having rescue missions on standby and will spur a discussion of the changing focus of Shuttle operations in the wake of Columbia. The remarkable arrival of the Chinese Shenzhou on the scene and its whirlwind of achievements in such a short space of time is explored, as its potential for contributions in the future. Similarly, the arrival of the first space tourists with Dennis Tito in 2001 is considered and the future of such projects are discussed, including Virgin Galactic. The future in space is considered: ongoing Russian projects, Orion, the return to the Moon and on to Mars and this book closes with a snapshot of where humanity may be on the hundredth anniversary of...

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