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Gamma-ray Astrophysics with AGILE: Surprises and Challenges

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The AGILE space mission, currently in its eight year of operations in orbit, obtained a large number of crucial and unexpected results. We will review the main results for both Galactic and extragalactic sources, and outline some of the most surprising discoveries (gamma-ray flares from the Crab Nebula, detection of Cygnus X-3 and Cygnus X-1 in coincidence with special spectral transitions, identification of an unambiguous signature for hadronic cosmic rays in Supernova Remnants, very intense flaring from a class of Active Galactic Nuclei). AGILE is very actively continuing to observe the gamma-ray sky with very fast processing and alert capability for transients. Particular emphasis is now given to the study of Galactic binaries that can erratically produce gamma-ray emission such as the “hidden” black hole system MWC 656 that was recently discovered because of an AGILE detection.

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