

Who discovered the expanding universe?

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Who discovered the expanding universe? Was it Hubble, or Lemaître, or was it just the end result of a long series of investigations? In this article we summarise the main steps and contributions that led to one of the most exciting discoveries ever made, of which Lemaître was the principal architect. In 1927 he combined his dynamical solutions of the Einstein equations with astronomical observations to conclude that the universe is expanding. He derived the linear velocity-distance relationship and calculated the first numerical value of what later was called the "Hubble constant". His discovery paper of 1927 was written in French and in 1931 it was translated into English and published in Monthly Notices. However, the translation omits the section where Lemaître computed the "Hubble constant". Why was that done, and who was responsible? We do not speculate on this question, but present in a very condensed way the facts along the path of discovery. The documented details from primary sources can be found in our book "Discovering the Expanding Universe".

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