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Theoretical Cosmology and Observational Astronomy Circa 1930

That the invention of geometric cosmological models based on general relativity occurred at the same time that Vesto Slipher and Milton Humanson were documenting systematic large nebular red-shifts seems to have been a coincidence. Edwin Hubble in 1936 explicitly associated the expanding-universe interpretation of his red-shift law with relativistic cosmology; for Hubble, universal expansion was a theoretical notion rooted in relativity theory. The paper explores various historical questions concerning the relationship between theory and observation in cosmology around 1930.