

## THE HAMBURG SCHOOL

### The Early Years

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

I am very happy that I can take part in this conference. I would like to thank everyone who has made this conference possible. My special thanks go to Liane Thomas Wade, who made this dream possible. And of course my thanks also to all founders, friends and members of the IUF because our friendship is very special.

The astrological methods of Alfred Witte are a special view at the astrological phenomenon. How were the early years and which conception reveals itself in Alfred Witte's astrology? I will try to answer these questions with this lecture.

### 2. HAMBURG SCHOOL, THE EARLY YEARS

#### 2.1. The "Kepler-Circle"

The astrologer **Friedrich Siegrun** founded with his students in **spring 1915** the study group "**Kepler-Circle**." My grandfather **Ludwig Rudolph** was the youngest member and secretary of the Kepler-Circle. For Ludwig Rudolph Siegrun was not only an important astrological teacher but he was also privately connected with Friedrich Siegrun.

Until about two years after the foundation of the Kepler-Circle Friedrich Siegrun informed Ludwig Rudolph that he would like to invite an interesting astrologer into the Kepler-Circle. Siegrun didn't mention the name, however, he pointed out that the astrologer was able to do particularly exact astrological

calculations. The invitation had to be moved because of the First World War. During the war time, the meetings of the group could take place only under difficult conditions.

Later it became clear, that Siegggrun spoke about the Astrologer **Alfred Witte**. After the war was ended and Alfred Witte had overcome the effects of a serious joint rheumatism, Witte was invited to introduce his methods in the Kepler-Circle. So it came that Alfred Witte came for the first time into the Kepler-Circle and gave his first public lecture in **summer 1919**.

Alfred Witte had published his first article already in 1913 but he himself and his methods were not well known. His ideas found great attention and fast support in the Kepler-Circle since 1919, particularly through the promotion of Friedrich Siegggrun who was on the board of the group. Next in addition to his lectures Alfred Witte published approximately 40 articles at the same time, from 1919 to 1924. After 1924 Witte's students and supporters introduced in particular the new methods in magazines. To my knowledge Alfred Witte published in 1929 his last series of articles in the publishing house of my family, the so called "Witte-Verlag Ludwig Rudolph."

## **2.2. The names "Hamburger School" and "Uranian System of Astrology"**

Friedrich Siegggrun belonged to the first astrologers who actively supported the methods of Alfred Witte. The Kepler-Circle changed thus from a group of traditional astrologers to supporters of the methods of Alfred Witte, in the period 1919-1925.

Alfred Witte published in **July 1923** his first hypothetical planet **Cupido** which he had calculated with the help of astrological methods. There already existed numerous astronomical calculations of Transneptunian planets at the same time, but Alfred Witte was obviously the first one who had published an Ephemeris of a hypothetical Trans-Neptunian. Unlike the astronomers, who could not find their calculated Trans-Neptunian(s) with the telescope until 1930, Witte confirmed his hypothetical planets with the help of astrology. The astronomers were not enthusiastic about Alfred Witte's work. The astronomer Dr. Schorr, who was the head of the Hamburg observatory, was particularly mentioned here. But that is another story.

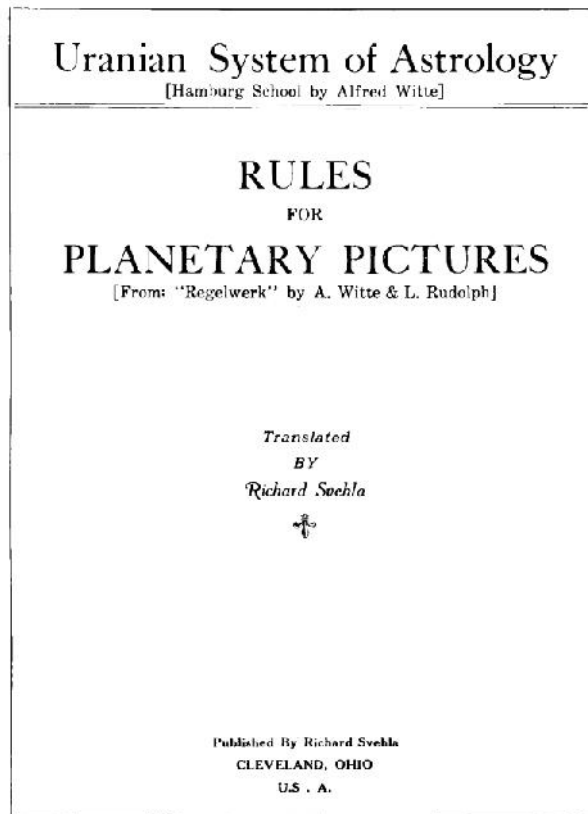
In the same year, at the second Astrology Congress in Leipzig, Germany, Friedrich Siegggrun as "representative of the Hamburg Astrologers School" mentioned for the first time the name "Hamburg School" and asked the present astrologers to take into account the knowledge of this new method.

The name "Hamburg School" was taken up fast, but it was not chosen particularly clever. So it happened that the Witte-Astrology received many additional names in the German spoken area. Friedrich Siegggrun called it "Mathematical Astrology." Alfred Witte called it the "Methods of the Hamburg people" (Methoden der Hamburger). Ludwig Rudolph called it "Witte's System." There are still many other names which were used according to need. But the name "Hamburg School" (Hamburger Schule) has been established as the most important name to this day.

The American **Richard Svehla**, Phoenix Bookshop, Cleveland, Ohio, was in the early 1930's one of the first who introduced the Witte-Astrology in the USA. After initial contacts Richard Svehla suggested to Ludwig Rudolph to form a team, in 1933. Richard Svehla received an exclusive authorization for selling books and tools of the Witte publishing house. Furthermore, he received the authorization for the translation of the "Rules for Planetary Pictures", 3<sup>rd</sup> German Edition 1935, into English. We can say that Richard Svehla was the very first official representative of the "Hamburg School" in the USA, and the only one who received a personal common consent from Alfred Witte and Ludwig Rudolph. Richard Svehla tried to solve the problem of finding a suitable name for the USA. It was a note by Ludwig Rudolph that inspired Richard Svehla for the name "**Uranian System of Astrology**". The name is a description of the "Uranian" Alfred Witte and his astrological system (Uranus)

which is revolutionary (Uranus) and which puts mathematics, science and astronomy (Uranus) into the foreground of the astrological view.

This name found by the US-American Richard Svehla during the lifetime of Alfred Witte was formed by the first letters U.S.A. It is internationally used for the method of Alfred Witte since that time, most in the abbreviated versions "Uranian System" or "Uranian Astrology." — As a synonym for "Witte System" or "Witte Astrology".



*U.S.A. = Uranian System of Astrology*

### **2.3. The Foundation of the Astrologers-Association "Hamburg School"**

Since 1923 the name "Hamburg School" was used, but there was neither an official organisation nor a "school" which had this name, because the name was a description of a new method which was taught in the "Kepler-Circle". To promote the development of Witte-Astrology Friedrich Sieggrun took over the planning of the 5th Astrologer Congress (1926) in Hamburg. This is one of several reasons why it came to the official foundation of the **Astrologers-Association "Hamburg School."**

On a full-moon evening, 85 years ago in October 1925, on the initiative of Friedrich Sieggrun, Alfred Witte, Ludwig Rudolph and Hans Feddern — altogether 21 astrologers — came together for the foundation of the Astrologers Association.

Sieggrun, Witte, Rudolph and Hans Rugamer (the co-initiator Hans Feddern was hindered) were elected to the first executive board. As before at the Kepler-Circle, Friedrich Sieggrun (1st chairman) and Ludwig Rudolph (secretary) represented in particular the *Association* organizationally outside and inside. Alfred Witte, who was not interested in organizational tasks, was elected as the 2nd chairman.

## 2.4. Goals of the Astrologers-Association "Hamburg School"

The name "School" does not reflect the true character of this organisation. In reality an astrological research project was started with the association. It was obvious, that the mathematical astrology of Alfred Witte, offers the best methods of a serious check of the astrology.

Friedrich Sieggrun expressed the purpose and the guidelines of the astrologer association which I would like to combine here:

- The purpose of the association is to create, in common and in serious work, a simple astrological system, which consists of reliable norms.
- The goal is, to affiliate astrology, under condition of the same rights, with the recognized sciences.
- The astrological methods used must make a re-check and repeat of the results possible.
- Research the degree of truth of astrology, and work out the theoretical and astronomical bases of astrology
- The works of the members must be so arranged that they meet critical requests.
- The astrological system has to be cleaned in all parts of superstition.

To accomplish these goals, horoscopes which showed equal events and therefore had to show also similar planetary pictures were collected. These were horoscopes with clear events, e.g. fires, accidents, deaths, special dates like condemnations, arrests, business transactions and so on. Furthermore the members of the association had to buy themselves exact watches and record the events of their own daily life on the exact minute, in order to collect more research material.

From these horoscopes, short rules were derived, which could be rechecked by the members of the group, and which were applicable in repetition. These rules were collected mainly in the time from July 1926 until November 1927. From this collection Ludwig Rudolph arranged the First Edition of the "Rules for Planetary Pictures" which was published in the Witte publishing house, in the fall of 1928.

Of course the interpretations of the Transneptunians Cupido, Hades, Zeus and Kronos were already included, but not the additional Transneptunians calculated by Friedrich Sieggrun.

## 2.5. Sieggrun's Transneptunians and his retreat

On September 5th, 1927, Friedrich Sieggrun presented his Transneptunians Apollon, Admetos and Vulkanus for the first time in the group. This innovation led to a crisis in the community. The members were not very much interested in Friedrich Sieggrun's new calculations, they wanted to put the focus more *on the reading of the horoscope*, and, that the announcement of the planetary pictures should be continued by Witte. This decision was made at the general meeting in a voting with a unanimous result, on October 17th, 1927.

Friedrich Sieggrun possibly experienced this as a defeat because he retired from the leadership of the association. Nearly at the same time, in November 15th, 1927, Ludwig Rudolph gave his publishing house the new name "Witte publishing house". Friedrich Sieggrun became solitary in the subsequent years, but stayed connected with the "Hamburg School", Alfred Witte and Ludwig Rudolph. Ludwig Rudolph became the most important collaborator of Alfred Witte.

It lasted some years until the Ephemerides of Friedrich Sieggrun Transneptunians were taken "officially" in the programme of the Witte publishing house. The exact time isn't known, but I've found an advertisement of the year 1939.

## 2.6. Members of the Astrologers-Associations "Hamburg School", 1925-1928

The board members (1925-1928):

Friedrich Sieggrun, Alfred Witte, Ludwig Rudolph and Hans Rugamer.

#### The board members (February 1928):

Werner Jung, Alfred Witte, Ludwig Rudolph, Wilhelm Pohl and Edward Arthur Stone (an Englishman in Hamburg).

#### Founders:

Friedrich Sieggrun, Alfred Witte, Ludwig Rudolph, Hans Rugamer, Mr J. Bartsch, Mrs L. Graefe, August Krost, Paul Krampfer, Herbert Pauels, Jonni Somann, Mr R. Lutgert, Mr J. Everts, Carl Gulck, Wilhelm Gerlach, Hans Debusi, Edward Arthur Stone, Arthur Liebig, Mr Joh. Neuffer, Mr R. W. Weber, Ms M. Jenner, Paul Gernt

#### Additional members of the association (1925-1928):

Ernst Ruof, Albert Berndt, Jak. Ganert, Fritz Bossert, Mr W. Meewes, Mr Grabarse, Mr H. Bockelmann, Mr F. Oertling, Hans Johns, Mrs Helka Hailbronner, Hans Feddern, Ernst Uschkamp, Richard Grunziger, Hermann Meyer, Mrs Marie Kröger, Werner Jung, Hermann Gerlittung, Friedrich Pundsack, Mrs A. Bettermann, Mrs Gertrud Jansen, Margarete Glass, Heinrich Meyer, Johannes Langenbuch, Otto Schulz, Ms Ihl, Mrs Luttgert, Adolf Lakeit, Mr E. Gehrke, Mrs Knorr, Bruno Schubert, Fritz Mai, Ms Stobe, Baron von Breidenbach zu Breidenstein, Wilhelm Pohl, Alfred Schuler, Paul Somann, Hans Herbstreit, Mr Friedrichs, Mrs Jantzen, Mr Wagner, Mr Müller and Mr X. Chrometzka.

### **2.7. The "Witte Study-Community" 1932**

After 1928, it is unclear whether the Astrologer-Association "Hamburg School" was continued further as a democratic association. Alfred Witte and Ludwig Rudolph gave regularly lectures. Additionally, Ludwig Rudolph gave introduction courses for beginners. The title "Association" disappeared, but "Hamburg School" and "Hamburg Astrologers School" were left.

It is hardly known (also in Germany) that a second group named the "Witte Study-Community" was founded by **Theodor Keyzers** in Dusseldorf, 1932. Also in Dusseldorf, the "Astrological Central Office" was located (Astrologische Zentralstelle). The "Astrological Central Office" was the first organisation, which was allowed to issue diplomas for astrologers who were working scientifically. Alfred Witte and Ludwig Rudolph went to Dusseldorf in 1933 and took the diploma examinations as representatives of the Hamburg Astrologer School. In Ludwig Rudolph's diploma identity card of 1933 (No 19 and with photo) it is mentioned that the owner is allowed to describe himself as a "scientific and practical astrologer with diploma."

## **3. ALFRED WITTE'S POINT OF VIEW**

### **3.1. The astronomical-astrological view - a physical viewpoint**

The Hamburg astrologer **Albert Kniepf** (1853-1924) presumably can be considered a founder of scientific astrology in Germany. Witte was strongly influenced by Kniepf. Both looked at astrology from an astronomical or physical viewpoint, and they had the conviction that astrological methods and theories should have their origin in the conditions of nature. Empirical studies served for control of the methods.

Alfred Witte had continued these basic ideas consistently. In his explanations Witte referred to the knowledge of astronomers, physicists and mathematicians whom he tried to integrate into his astronomical astrological position.

Already in his first two articles, which were published seven years apart, in 1913 and 1920, Witte refers to publications of the physicist Hermann von **Helmholtz** (1821-1894) who published works about sound vibrations (Tones) and spectral colours. Witte tries to derive explanations from this knowledge particularly with the help of mathematics, and adapt it to astrological effects within the planetary system.

Witte mentions the Biot-Savart-law after the physicist and mathematician Jean-Baptiste **Biot** (1774-1862) and the physicist Félix **Savart** (1791-1862). This is a law which deals with the connections of magnetism and electricity. Witte needed this law for the description, how the electromagnetic connections between the bodies of the solar system influence the astrological theory.

Witte also needed for his explanation of his theoretical ideas the Coulomb's law of the physicist Charles-Augustin de **Coulomb** (1736-1806), the founder of the electrostatics and the magnetostatics.

For Witte's declarations about positive and negative charge distributions in his astronomical astrological view, he mentions the physicists J. C. **Maxwell** (1831-1879) and Sir J. J. **Thomson** (1856-1940) – Thomson, who built on Maxwell, was the discoverer of the electron and Nobel Prize winner for physics.

Furthermore, Witte was influenced by astronomers. In the year 1920, Witte pointed out a Trans-Neptune "Pluto" which was suspected by the Neptune calculator and astronomer Urbain **LeVerrier** (1811-1877) many years before. Witte wrote in 1923 that position of the planet calculated by LeVerrier in Cancer became a starting point of the astrological calculation of Witte's Cupido.

One recognizes clearly that in the opinion of Alfred Witte, scientific explanations and approaches are transferable to astrology. Particularly he saw in the magnetic fields and the electromagnetism an important connection for the explanation of the astrological phenomena. The astronomer and astrophysicist, Dr. Percy **Seymour**, whom I met by chance in 1992 at a conference in London, mentioned also relationships between the magnetic fields of the solar system and the astrology.

### 3.2. The order of the astrological factors

☉ + ♈

#### Sonne + Widder

Der Körper, das Körperliche, Viele am Tage, Personen in der Öffentlichkeit.

- ♃
- ☉
- ♀ Körper weiblicher Personen.
- ☽ junger Körper, bzw. Jugend. In Bewegung befindlich. Gedanken vieler am Tage.
- ♀ Liebestätigkeit und Liebesfähigkeit von Körpern.
- ♂ Ausführende Körper. Menschen in Tätigkeit.
- ♁ Das körperliche Glücksgefühl vieler Personen.
- ♃ Krankheit des Körpers oder körperliche Trennung, sich trennende Körper. Verluste oder Kummer für mehrere.
- ☽ Der plötzlich tätige Körper, energisch handelnder Körper. Aufruhr, Unruhe.
- ♃ Schwächliche Körper, in der Tätigkeit gehemmt, viele täuschen sich.
- ♁ Körperliche Verbindungen mehrerer Personen.
- ♁ Körperliche Verbindungen mit anderen Personen, oder am Orte.
- M Körperliche Verbindung mit der Allgemeinheit, bzw. im Augenblick.
- ♃ Der ehelich verbundene Körper, künstlerisch veranlagter Körper. Liegenschaften einer Gesellschaft, internationale Vereinigungen.
- ♁ Gebrechliche Körper, Armseligkeit, Armut, Arbeitslosigkeit.
- ♂ Der körperliche Führer (Anführer).
- ♁ Der geistige Führer (Helfer).

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☉ + ♈

#### SUN + ARIES

The body and everything pertaining to the body. Many on the day. Persons in public life.

- ♀ The bodies of female persons.
- ☽ Young body. Relating to youth. To be in motion. Thoughts of many on the day.
- ♀ The body's activity in, and capacity for, love.
- ♂ Acting bodies. Active people.
- ♁ Many people feeling bodily happiness.
- ♃ Physical sicknesses, or physical separations. Separating bodies. Losses, or grief, for several.
- ☽ A body becoming suddenly active. The energetically acting body. Uproar. Restlessness.
- ♃ Frail, delicate bodies. Hindered in activity. Many are deceiving themselves.
- ♁ Bodily contact or union among several people.
- ♁ Bodily contact with other people, or in the place.
- M Bodily contact with the general public, or in the moment.
- ♃ Bodily union in matrimony. Body with artistic disposition. The possessions of a company.
- ♃ Frail, debilitated body. Deficiency, poverty, unemployment.
- ♂ The bodily (physical) leader.
- ♁ The mental (intellectual) leader.

42.

In the order of the astrological factors Alfred Witte's shows an astronomical point of view.

The beginning is made by the *mundane factors* which influences life on Earth already *without* an astrological proof: Aries point (Cardinal Cross), the Sun (Earth) and Moon. These factors have to be understood as a unit with multiple interactions: The seasons, the tides and the weather in general. Furthermore the mundane life is determined by the annual cycle and monthly cycle. Also outside astrology this is an unquestionable fact.

That is followed by the *known planets* in the natural order of Mercury to Neptune and then the intersection points: Moon Nodes, Ascendant and Meridian.

At last, and as the special part of the research programme, the *hypothetical planets* Cupido, Hades, Zeus and Kronos are taken into account.

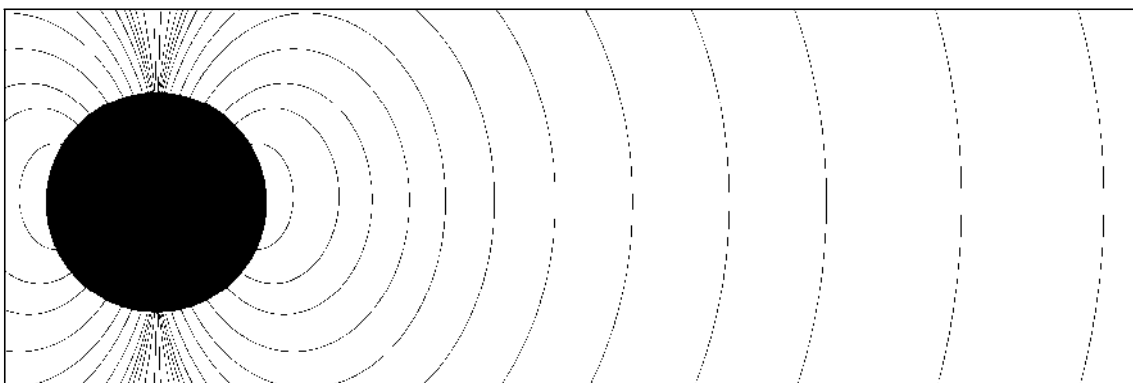
This order was also known in the USA, it was published in the first English translation of the "Rules for planetary Pictures" in 1939.

In 1946, for the 4th German Edition of the Rulesbook, Hermann Lefeldt reordered the order of the factors. For the first time Pluto and the 4 Transneptunians by Friedrich Siegggrun were taken into account in the Rulesbook. This new order follows more practical considerations. By translations, starting with the Rulesbook, 5th German Edition 1959, this new order was established in Witte-Astrology also internationally, in the languages: English, Thai, Japanese, Estonian, Latvian, Russian and more.

### 3.3. The Sun as a Magnet

In consideration of physical laws Alfred Witte explains the electromagnetic effect of the sun on the planetary system and draws conclusions on the astrological meaning from it.

Witte comes to the following consideration: In case of growing distance of the sun the forces of the magnetic field lines spread out on bigger and bigger areas. Witte describes these areas as different "ball shells" with falling energetic potential. Inside these different energy zones are the orbits of the planets. For Witte, the astrological character of the planets therefore is not bound to the body of the planets, but it results by the different distances of the planets from the sun in a falling energetic potential.



*"ball shells": Magnetic field of the Sun with falling potential*

For a proper understanding of his considerations Witte suggests to mark the individual "ball shells" by colours of the colour spectrum. Furthermore he assigns the signs of the zodiac and the planets to these different ranges. By these considerations it became possible for Alfred Witte to determine schematically the presumed qualities of the undiscovered Transneptunians (before the calculation). Witte's scheme was also

used as a basis by Friedrich Siegggrun's calculations of his own Transneptunians, too. I already pointed that out in my lecture "Calculate a Transneptunian", on the 4<sup>th</sup> IUF Conference in Hamburg 2009.

Witte has a plausible explanation also for the effect of the sun in the different signs of the zodiac. He ascribes this to the changing position of the earth's axis towards the sun which results during the annual revolution of the Earth around the Sun. During the revolution the geomagnetic field of the Earth gets changing energetic potential. This potential has diametrical effects on both hemispheres (north and south) of the Earth.

### **3.4. The Earth as an Electromotor**

Witte describes the Earth as an "electromotor" within the magnetic field of the sun. As is well known, an electromotor can be used as dynamo which produces electric energy (and magnetic fields). Today's science declares Witte's ideas right because in the meantime the Earth is described as a "Geodynamo". I cannot say whether the "Geodynamo Earth" was already discussed at Witte's times. The physicist Albert **Einstein** (1879-1955) should have said in 1905, that the origin of the magnetic field is one of the most important still unsolved problems of physics.

### **3.5. Revolution and Rotation**

The system Earth-Sun has a central importance. The rotation of the Earth on its axis (daily cycle) is set in relation to the revolution of the Earth around the sun (annual cycle).

Many important principles in the Witte-Astrology result from this, e.g. the annual or Earth horoscopes, the development of the different houses, the true solar arc and the progressive daily meridian (M<sub>Cr</sub> - S<sub>UNr</sub> + S<sub>UNt</sub> + Solar Arc). Furthermore these cycles are analogously transferred to the system Earth-Moon (monthly cycle, true Profecion, Moon houses) and furthermore to the planet cycles (geocentric planet periods, planet houses). Alfred Witte presents us with a self-contained well-grounded astrological system which is deduced from astronomical conditions.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

For the land surveyor Alfred Witte mathematics is the universal language of science and a link between recognized sciences and astrology. His methods in essence go back to ancient and classical astrology, which he consistently orientated upon mathematical, physical or astronomical laws. Science and astrology were no contradiction for Alfred Witte but a necessity which influenced his astrological thinking.

It must be remembered that most German astrologers in the 1920's tried to practice astrology along scientific empirical guidelines. The studies of ancient and classic astrologers were also usual for Germans astrologers in those times. But Alfred Witte was presumably the only one who consistently developed an astrological astronomical cosmology. Furthermore he gave his supporters of the mathematics (and his computer: the astrological disc) an amazing tool to do a scientifically structured astrology.

The history of my family is very closely connected with the work of Alfred Witte and Friedrich Siegggrun. My grandfather Ludwig Rudolph met his teacher and friend Friedrich Siegggrun for the first time in 1914. Then in 1919 followed the first meeting with Alfred Witte. The publishing house of my family started in 1926 when Alfred Witte asked Ludwig Rudolph to sell his materials. From these beginnings the Witte publishing house arose in 1927, which I represent here. This is a great and very important task and I hope that I have met your expectations. Thank you for your attention. —



## ----- References -----

This lecture is based on a summary of hints in articles and books, which were made accessible for the public, thru the Witte publishing house of my family.

Additional information is taken from the private archive of the Rudolph family, with special thanks to my mother Heimtraut Rudolph Feist, who met Alfred Witte and his family as a child.

Some information's about the Astrologers-Association, e.g. the members list and the goals of the association, the general meeting report and so on, is taken from the original documents of Ludwig Rudolph, who was the secretary of the Kepler-Circle and the Astrologers-Association "Hamburg School". In June 2009, during the 4<sup>th</sup> IUF Conference, I was able to show these rare old original documents to a small group of friends who are in the audience today, at the 5<sup>th</sup> IUF Conference 2010 in New York City. -----

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### **About the Author:**

Michaels family has practiced astrology since 1914. He is Udo Rudolphs nephew and one of seven family members who were educated in Wittes Astrology. Michaels main emphasis is his study of the astrological and historical development of the Uranian Astrology. In the 1990s he became editor and publisher of the most important German Uranian Journal Hamburger Hefte, continuously published in his own Witte-Verlag Publishing House since 1960. Co-founder of IUF. <http://michael.feist.witte-verlag.com>