Erich Schoenberg (1882–1965) – Early Scientific Career in Tartu (Dorpat) (1907 to 1918)

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Erich Karl Wilhelm Schoenberg (1882–1965), a graduate of Tartu (Dorpat) University was born on 27th December 1882 in Warsaw. His father also a former graduate of the same University, a doctor of philosophy worked as a teacher of Latin and Greek in one of Warsaw gymnasium. Raised in a family of seven children as the last but one descendant Erich graduated from gymnasium in 1900 and at first prepared for entering a navy college, worked for some time in a shipbuilding company in Riga (Latvia) and even once navigated. But in 1902 Erich suddenly changed his mind, entered the Warsaw University, for some time attended lectures also in Strasbourg University (due to students unrest in 1905 Warsaw University was closed) and finally graduated from Tartu University in 1907. He defended there his PhD thesis dedicated to determination of orbits of binary stars. He was appointed the same year as the assistant at Tartu Observatory. In 1912 E. Schoenberg defended his doctoral thesis in Kiel. Between 1915 and 1918 he assumed a post of the acting director of Tartu Observatory. During the civil war raging in Russian empire Tartu Observatory was actually deserted by its former staff. Luckily for E. Schoenberg he assumed a position of an astronomer – surveyor to perform triangulation measurements at the topographic department of Estonian Army headquarters. Eventually he left Estonia in 1920 for Helsinki, Finland and supervised during four years the geodetic triangulation works. In 1925 E. Schoenberg with his young wife settled in Germany assuming the post of the director of Breslau Observatory (later on till the end of his life he headed München astronomical observatory).
In our contribution we concentrate on scientific activities of E. Schoenberg during his early career in Tartu (Dorpat). In addition to his work on binary orbits we analyse in some detail
a) his studies dedicated to changes in geographic latitude of the astronomical sites with the aid of zenith Repsold telescope,
b) an expedition to observe total solar eclipse close to Riga in August 1914,
c) work on micro-photometry to measure brightness distribution over planetary discs with the aid of Zeiss refractor, later on supplemented by observations in Pulkovo with 15-inch-Repsold-refractor. Finally we review briefly the sources of scientific legacy of E. Schoenberg preserved in Estonia.