A CERTAIN INSTRUMENT FOR SEEING FAR

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Four Centuries of Styling the Telescope

Illustrated by a Selection of Treasures from the

LOUWMAN COLLECTION OF HISTORIC TELESCOPES

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17 | Two-draw telescope made of curved African ivory fluted lengthwise.
With the remains of marble paper on the drawtubes.
Length 13.2-21 cm, Ø 1.8-2.2 cm. Convex objective lens Ø 1.5 cm
with focal length of 27.4 cm. Concave eye lens. Magnification 4 times
(in diameter).
Unsigned. Presumably first quarter of the seventeenth century.

According to Stuart Talbot (2008) the shape, length and optics of this telescope indicates a very early date. The construction resembles the narrow slightly conical telescope in the 1614-portrait of Simon Marius. Such ivory telescopes were made for the seventeenth century cabinets of curiosities. It is remarkable that the turning tables which were used for the turning of ivory resemble the mechanical machines that were developed in the seventeenth century for the grinding of telescope lenses. It probably was no coincidence that the English 'ivory turner' Richard Reeve(s) developed himself into one of the first optical instrument makers in England. In the Netherlands, in the 1630s, Descartes and Constantijn Huygens Senior also ordered telescope lenses at an unnamed *Tourneur d'Amsterdam*.