

Petzval astrograph of Tartu Observatory

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In 1908 Tartu Observatory acquired an 8-inch Zeiss refractor as a substitute for the famous Fraunhofer refractor from 1824. A year later the observatory purchased for the needs of astrophotography a Petzval type objective photcamera.

The telescope arrived to Tartu and it was installed in the late autumn of 1911. Beginning from 1927 the Petzval camera was in use as a standalone astrograph. To this end the camera was mounted upon the heliometer support and placed in the former pavilion of the zenith telescope. The Troughton telescope (1806) tube served as a guide. Much later a wide field camera previously used for observations of the Earth artificial satellites was added as a finder. Petzval astrograph diameter is 160-mm, focal length 78-cm.

In the twenties and thirties of XXth century the Petzval astrograph was widely in use for observations of planets, meteors, stars and even for obtaining images of M 31 by Ernst Öpik.