

Historical Highlight

Very Early Attempts at Drawing

Our earliest records of drawings come from caves and from ancient Egyptian tomb drawings. Characteristics of drawings at this time include the human face simply displayed in a profile view. Legs also are shown in profile because bending of the legs will appear in true form. The torso, though, is better drawn from the front because it makes it easier to represent the arms naturally. Most drawings of this period are contrived so that the middle part of the figure is twisted so you see the side view of the head, the front view of the torso, and the side view of the legs. This method to depict humans also was used by the Babylonians from about 2500 B.C.

It is worth noting that most early drawings were of humans or of humans using something. The focus of most drawings seems to be to describe events or stories and not things. Even though the Greeks were quite advanced in geometry, the drawing of things was not important, which may have prevented the development of drawing techniques useful for drawing technical devices. The development of drawing techniques suitable for technical drawings would have to wait for the Renaissance.

Excerpted from *The History of Engineering Drawing*, by Jeffrey Booker, Chatto & Windus, London, England, 1963.