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Fundamentals of Geometry Construction

The Math Behind the CAD

 Springer

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*Beware of designers who walk around
without paper and pencil.*

Ancient Chinese proverb.

Preface

The purpose of the book, in a nutshell, is to provide both the beginner and the experienced CAD user with *the math behind the CAD*. It is expected that, with the geometry tools introduced here, the reader will be able to exploit CAD software to its fullest extent. In fact, the book should allow the reader to go *beyond what CAD software packages offer in their menus*.

Chapter 1 includes a summary of facts from basic Linear and Vector Algebra, most of which the reader may have covered either in high school or in undergraduate math courses. The chapter also includes some new items, such as the 2D form of the vector product. In fact, while the vector product is defined solely in 3D, it is needed in some 2D applications, as made apparent in this chapter. The 2D form is not common in mathematics textbooks, although it is a useful tool that helps to streamline many calculations, as the reader will find here. One more novelty, not covered in either high school or undergraduate math courses, is the manipulation of block matrices and vectors. This material is introduced to help the reader compute inverses and determinants of $n \times n$ matrices, for $n > 3$ using the corresponding expressions for 2×2 and 3×3 matrices. These calculations become handy in Chap. 4, devoted to affine transformations.

Chapter 2 includes the study of the relations among points, lines, and curves in the plane. Here, the difference between curves representing functions and their geometric counterparts is emphasized. Plotting the former is quite a different task from plotting the latter. Scientific software makes the difference, in that it uses different commands to plot one or the other. The former are representable by means of *explicit functions*, e.g., $y = f(x)$, the latter by *implicit functions*, e.g., $f(x, y) = 0$. Geometric concepts are studied in order of growing complexity, from points to lines, then algebraic curves and, finally, non-algebraic and free-form curves. The simplest algebraic curves, conics, are given due attention. However, these are too limited for practical engineering design applications. For example, they cannot produce a smooth fillet to join the two lines of a corner with tangent and curvature continuity, which is essential to avoid stress concentrations in mechanical design. For this reason, Lamé curves are introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 3 is devoted to geometric objects in 3D, namely, points, planes, lines, and surfaces. Of the latter, only quadrics are studied, to keep the discussion at an elementary level. It is shown that, with these simple surfaces and planes, more complex surfaces can be generated by means of *Boolean operations*. These are at the basis of CAD software. Furthermore, as illustrated in Chap. 4, highly complex surfaces, like those of screws, can be readily generated by means of affine transformations.

The concept of *affine transformations* is indeed a key component of Chap. 4, which includes applications of these transformations to the synthesis of curves and surfaces that could be extremely cumbersome to produce otherwise. Again, affine transformations lie at the core of CAD software. Understanding these transformations should help the reader best use the software tools available in the market.

In this book, catering to various disciplines—engineering, graphic design, animation, and architecture—an attempt is made to keep the material discipline-independent, while including some examples of interest to various disciplines. Furthermore, the book can be used to complement lectures on CAD, at the undergraduate level. In this light, the references included in footnotes are not mandatory reading. They are included for the benefit of both the lecturer and the curious, diligent student wanting to go deeply in certain subjects.

A crucial point that led to the production of the Lecture Notes, and hence to this book, was the input received from Axel Pavillet, Ph.D., alumnus of the French *Ecole Polytechnique*.^{1,2} In the early 2000s, Dr. Pavillet was an Instructor of the course on *engineering drawing* offered by the Department of Mechanical Engineering at McGill University. The syllabus of this course included, as was usual in those days, a substantial component of *Descriptive Geometry* (DG). Dr. Pavillet's point was that DG was completely out of place since the end of the twentieth century, given that computer-graphics software was already available in the 80s. Lengthy exchanges with Dr. Pavillet and other instructors finally led us to the idea that the course in question needed an in-depth revision, with classical DG replaced with fundamental concepts of geometry and linear algebra. Thus came this book to fruition.

This book is the result of teamwork. We thank all the students, undergraduate and graduate, who contributed with their work to bring the book to its current form. We acknowledge especially the work of two Ph.D. students who were instrumental in both the first phases of the book editing and producing graphic material—photos and drawings—that led to the final version. The highly professional work done by Vikram Chopra and Wei Li is dutifully acknowledged, with our most sincere thanks. The editing work leading to the final version was conducted by Dr. Bruno Belzile, Postdoctoral Fellow at the *Robotic Mechanical Systems Laboratory* (RMSLab). The RMSLab is affiliated with both the *Centre for Intelligent Machines* and the *Department of Mechanical Engineering*, McGill University, in Montreal. Dr. Belzile provided also technical support in the graphics work that made possible

¹Asanchev (2002).

²Pavillet (2011)

the completion of this highly demanding project. Our most sincere acknowledgement to Dr. Belzile for his diligent and excellent work.

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Any suggestions for improving or any reports of typos or inaccuracies are most welcome.

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Contents

1	Introduction to Geometry Construction	1
1.1	Book Overview	1
1.1.1	Free-Hand Sketches	1
1.2	Back to Basics: Coordinate Space	4
1.2.1	The Cartesian Coordinate System	4
1.2.2	Right-Hand Rule	7
1.2.3	Types of Coordinate Systems	7
1.2.4	Homogeneous Coordinates	11
1.3	Vectors	13
1.3.1	Notation	13
1.3.2	Definition	13
1.3.3	Basic Properties	14
1.3.4	Scalar Product	16
1.3.5	Inequalities	17
1.4	Matrices	17
1.4.1	Definition	17
1.4.2	Special Matrices	17
1.4.3	Properties	19
1.4.4	The Vector Product	20
1.4.5	The 2D Form of the Vector (Cross) Product	21
1.4.6	Determinants	25
1.4.7	The Cross-Product Matrix	31
1.4.8	The “Triple” Vector Product	32
1.4.9	Derivation of the “Double Vector-Product Formula”	33
1.4.10	Matrix Inversion	35
1.5	Summary	38
1.6	Exercises	39
	References	43

- 2 2D Objects** 45
 - 2.1 Points 45
 - 2.2 Lines 46
 - 2.2.1 Distance from a Point to a Line 47
 - 2.3 Planar Geometry and Polygons 49
 - 2.4 Quadratic Curves: Conics 50
 - 2.4.1 The Circle 51
 - 2.4.2 The Ellipse 52
 - 2.4.3 The Parabola 56
 - 2.4.4 The Hyperbola 59
 - 2.5 Higher Order Algebraic Curves 63
 - 2.6 Non-algebraic Curves 66
 - 2.7 Free-Form Curves 67
 - 2.8 Properties of Planar, Bounded Figures 71
 - 2.9 Summary 72
 - 2.10 Exercises 73
 - References 75
- 3 3D Objects** 77
 - 3.1 Points, Lines, and Planes in Space 77
 - 3.1.1 Planes 78
 - 3.1.2 Lines in Space 79
 - 3.1.3 Distance of a Point to a Plane 80
 - 3.1.4 Distance of a Point to a Line 81
 - 3.1.5 Distance Between Two Skew Lines 82
 - 3.2 Surfaces 83
 - 3.3 Simple Solids 85
 - 3.3.1 Cylinders 85
 - 3.3.2 Cones 87
 - 3.3.3 Regular Polyhedra 90
 - 3.3.4 Prisms and Pyramids 92
 - 3.4 Properties of Bounded Solids 94
 - 3.5 Composite Solids: Boolean Operations 94
 - 3.6 Summary 96
 - 3.7 Exercises 97
 - References 101
- 4 Affine Transformations** 103
 - 4.1 2D Transformations 103
 - 4.1.1 Scaling 104
 - 4.1.2 Translation 106
 - 4.1.3 Rotation 107
 - 4.1.4 Reflection 108

- 4.2 The Most General Affine Transformation in 2D 111
 - 4.2.1 Examples 113
 - 4.2.2 Affine Transformations of 2D Objects Under
Implicit Representations 119
- 4.3 3D Transformations 123
 - 4.3.1 Scaling 123
 - 4.3.2 Translation 125
 - 4.3.3 Rotation 125
 - 4.3.4 Reflection 134
- 4.4 The Most General Affine Transformation in 3D 135
 - 4.4.1 Examples 137
 - 4.4.2 Affine Transformations of 3D Objects Under
Implicit Representations 140
- 4.5 Techniques for 3D Object Modeling 143
 - 4.5.1 Surfaces of Revolution 143
 - 4.5.2 Extrusion 146
 - 4.5.3 Free-Form Surfaces 153
- 4.6 CAD Tools for Creating 3D Objects 154
- 4.7 Summary 155
- 4.8 Exercises 156
- References 163

- Index 165**

List of Figures

Fig. 1.1 The free-hand sketch of a solution alternative to the problem of designing a mechanism housing (Sketches produced by Juan Fernández González, B.Sc. Arch.) 2

Fig. 1.2 The geometric modeling of a complex mechanism, mounted on a jig, in need of a housing. 3

Fig. 1.3 A typical manufacturing drawing of a part of the housing sketched in Fig. 1.1, with a (non-isometric) 3D view added for visualization (produced by Dr. Shaoping Bai, currently Professor at Aalborg University, DK). 3

Fig. 1.4 A geometric model of the mechanism housing in Fig. 1.3 4

Fig. 1.5 A 2D coordinate system 5

Fig. 1.6 Creating a rectangle 5

Fig. 1.7 3D coordinate system 6

Fig. 1.8 Creating a rectangular parallelepiped 6

Fig. 1.9 Polar coordinates. 8

Fig. 1.10 Cylindrical coordinates 8

Fig. 1.11 Spherical coordinates 9

Fig. 1.12 Absolute coordinates. 10

Fig. 1.13 World coordinates (x, y, x) versus relative coordinates (x', y', z') 10

Fig. 1.14 World and local coordinates 11

Fig. 1.15 Geometric interpretation of the vector product 22

Fig. 1.16 Vector \mathbf{r} and its image under \mathbf{E} 22

Fig. 1.17 The angle between two directed segments, measured from $\vec{\mathcal{L}}_1$ to $\vec{\mathcal{L}}_2$ 24

Fig. 1.18 The geometric interpretation of the box product 27

Fig. 1.19 Geometric interpretation of the double (a.k.a. “triple”) vector product. 33

Fig. 1.20 Top view of a wheeled mobile robot 40

Fig. 1.21 A planar, three-axis robot 42

Fig. 2.1 Distance from a point Q to a line \mathcal{L} , both lying in the X - Y -plane. 47

Fig. 2.2 Conics generated as the intersection of a right circular cone with a plane 51

Fig. 2.3 The ellipse as a section of a right circular cone 53

Fig. 2.4 The ellipse obtained by means of a taut string of length $\overline{PF_1} + \overline{PF_2}$, as per Eq. (2.23) 53

Fig. 2.5 Circles viewed as ellipses: **a** a Wall clock; **b** a close-up image of an aisle light; **c** and **d** aisle lights (Photos courtesy of V. Chopra, Ph.D.) 54

Fig. 2.6 Tilting a glass of water (Photo courtesy of V. Chopra, Ph.D.) 55

Fig. 2.7 The parametric representation of the ellipse 55

Fig. 2.8 A parabola determined by the intersection of a right circular cone with a plane parallel to an element of the cone: **a** general view; **b** normal view of the intersection curve 56

Fig. 2.9 The parabola defined as the locus of points equidistant from a focus F and a directrix \mathcal{L} 57

Fig. 2.10 Trajectory of water ejected from a waterspout (Photo courtesy of V. Chopra, Ph.D.) 58

Fig. 2.11 The Golden Gate Bridge (Photo courtesy of V. Chopra, Ph.D.) 58

Fig. 2.12 The hyperbola generated by a plane cutting a right circular cone at an angle $\beta < \alpha$, α being the angle made by the elements with the cone axis. 59

Fig. 2.13 The hyperbola as the locus of points whose distance from a focus F is proportional to the horizontal distance from a line, the directrix. 60

Fig. 2.14 The hyperbola as the locus of points P obeying the property $\overline{PF_2} - \overline{PF_1} = \text{constant}$ 60

Fig. 2.15 A reflective property of the hyperbola: lines $\overline{F_1P}$ and $\overline{F_2P}$ make equal angles with the tangent at P 61

Fig. 2.16 The two branches of the hyperbola determined by the corresponding rims of a cylindrical shade, as projected on a wall (photo courtesy of Ms. A.-M. Esnos) 61

Fig. 2.17 Plots of the Lamé curves for $m = 2, \dots, 7$ 65

Fig. 2.18 A close-up of the mechanism cover of Fig. 1.4 66

Fig. 2.19 Examples of non-algebraic curves: **a** the circle-involute; **b** the epicycloid; and **c** the logarithmic spiral. 67

Fig. 2.20 Free-form curves: **a** spline; **b** Bézier; **c** B-spline. 68

Fig. 2.21 Curvature distribution of the fourth-degree Lamé curve 70

Fig. 2.22 Blending points with: **a** G^0 - and G^1 -continuity, but G^2 -discontinuity; **b** G^0 -, G^1 -, and G^2 -continuity; and **c** G^0 - and G^1 -continuity, but G^2 -discontinuity 71

Fig. 2.23 Robotic arm manufactured with water-jet cutting
(Photo courtesy of B. Belzile, Ph.D.) 72

Fig. 2.24 An irregular polygon. 74

Fig. 2.25 An angle bracket. 75

Fig. 3.1 Distance of a point to a plane. 80

Fig. 3.2 Distance of a point to a line: **a** general layout; **b** geometric
interpretation of $[e \times (q - p_0)] \times e$ 81

Fig. 3.3 Distance between two lines: **a** general layout; **b** view
with \mathcal{L}_1 projected as a point, and n lying in the projection
plane. 82

Fig. 3.4 A single-sheet hyperboloid created using three skew lines 84

Fig. 3.5 A bounded circular cylinder 86

Fig. 3.6 A spur gear with its tooth flanks as instance of a cylindrical
surface 87

Fig. 3.7 A bevel gear with its tooth flanks as instances of conical
surfaces: **a** cut with the exact spherical involute;
b with the Tredgold approximation (Shigley and Uicker 1995)
(produced by Mathew Shaker, M.Eng.) 88

Fig. 3.8 Various instances of solid cones: **a** right; **b** oblique;
c truncated; **d** frustum. 88

Fig. 3.9 A solid, bounded cone 90

Fig. 3.10 The Platonic solids (regular polyhedra). 91

Fig. 3.11 An *accelerometer strapdown* produced as an array
of *biaxial accelerometers*, mounted on a regular tetrahedron
(produced by Ms. Ting Zou, Ph.D.) 91

Fig. 3.12 One of the biaxial accelerometers of Fig. 3.11
(produced by Ms. Ting Zou, Ph.D.) 92

Fig. 3.13 Classification of prisms: **a** oblique pentagonal;
b right quadrilateral; **c** right pentagonal; **d** cube;
e oblique parallelepiped; **f** truncated;
g right rectangular; **h** right hexagonal; **i** truncated oblique
triangular. 93

Fig. 3.14 The three Boolean operations: **a** two sets of points, \mathcal{A} ,
a rectangular parallelepiped, and \mathcal{B} , a right circular cylinder;
b union; **c** difference $\mathcal{A} - \mathcal{B}$; and **d** intersection 95

Fig. 3.15 Boolean operations on adjoining primitives: **a** two sets,
 \mathcal{A} and \mathcal{B} ; **b** $\mathcal{A} \cup \mathcal{B}$; **c** $\mathcal{A} \cap \mathcal{B} = \emptyset$ 96

Fig. 3.16 Effects of ordering of operands in a difference operation 96

Fig. 3.17 A 3D model 98

Fig. 3.18 Another 3D model 98

Fig. 3.19 A 3D model 99

Fig. 3.20 A 3D object 100

Fig. 4.1 A uniform scaling. 105

Fig. 4.2 A non-uniform scaling 105

Fig. 4.3 The McGill University crest undergoing a translation. 107

Fig. 4.4 A rotation by $\theta = 45^\circ$ 108

Fig. 4.5 A reflection about the X -axis 110

Fig. 4.6 A reflection about the Y -axis 110

Fig. 4.7 The composition of one reflection about the X -axis
with one about the Y -axis, equivalent to a rotation about the
origin through 180° 110

Fig. 4.8 A reflection about the line $y = x$ 111

Fig. 4.9 An affine transformation of the unit circle centered at the origin
into an ellipse of semiaxes 2 and 0.5, centered likewise. 113

Fig. 4.10 An affine transformation of the unit circle centered at the origin
into an ellipse of semiaxes 2 and 1, with its center offset
from that of the circle. 115

Fig. 4.11 The affine transformation of a cubic Lamé curve
into a displaced, squeezed configuration 116

Fig. 4.12 A squeezed cubic Lamé curve 117

Fig. 4.13 The distortion of a square into a parallelogram by means
of an affine transformation known as *shear* 118

Fig. 4.14 A shear of the unit circle centered at the origin that carries
it into an ellipse with its major axis making an angle
of about 58.28° with the X -axis ccw 120

Fig. 4.15 A cubic Lamé curve and its image after a translation
and a rotation 122

Fig. 4.16 Uniform scaling 124

Fig. 4.17 Non-uniform scaling in 3D. 124

Fig. 4.18 Translations in 3D 125

Fig. 4.19 A solar panel: **a** in its original configuration; **b** followed
by a rotation through 90° about the X -axis; **c** then by a second
rotation through 90° about the Y -axis; and **d** finally, a third
rotation through 90° about the Z -axis. 127

Fig. 4.20 Two points, A and B , of an object \mathcal{B} rotating about an axis
that passes through the origin, in the original and the final
attitudes of \mathcal{B} , with the final point positions carrying
the subscript F 130

Fig. 4.21 An object \mathcal{B} in its original and the final attitudes; illustration
of axis \mathcal{L} and angle of rotation ϕ 131

Fig. 4.22 An affine transformation of the unit sphere centered
at the origin into an ellipsoid of semiaxes 0.5, 2,
and 3, centered likewise 138

Fig. 4.23 An affine transformation of the unit sphere centered
at the origin into an ellipsoid of semiaxes 0.5, 2, and 3,
centered offset with respect to the sphere 140

Fig. 4.24 The unit sphere centered at the origin and its distorted, displaced image after the affine transformation of Eq. (4.56). 142

Fig. 4.25 Generation of a surface of revolution by means of the rotation of a generatrix Γ in the XZ -plane about the Z -axis. 143

Fig. 4.26 Construction of an O-ring by revolving the circle Γ about the Z -axis 144

Fig. 4.27 Computer rendering of an O-ring with $r = 10$ mm, $a = 50$ mm 145

Fig. 4.28 Construction of a tapered shaft 147

Fig. 4.29 Three-dimensional rendering (not a perspective) of the tapered shaft, with $l = 300$ mm and $r = 60$ mm 148

Fig. 4.30 The geometry of a common type of screw: **a** terminology; **b** flattening of the crests and roots for metric M and MJ threads, with $p =$ pitch (mm/rad) (In engineering practice, p is measured in mm (in)/turn. We use here units of length/rad to make the presentation, and the code, `terser`.) 148

Fig. 4.31 The generatrix Γ for the construction of the threaded surface of a screw: **a** general layout; **b** detail of the vee-shaped parts 149

Fig. 4.32 Computer rendering of a coarse-pitch screw, with $D = 10$ mm and $p = 1.5$ mm 151

Fig. 4.33 Computer rendering of a left-hand coarse-pitch screw, with $D = 10$ mm and $p = 1.5$ mm 152

Fig. 4.34 Conic extrusion. 153

Fig. 4.35 A pair of conjugate spherical cams, obtained by means of conic extrusion: **a** computer rendering; **b** prototype (Photo courtesy of B. Belzile, Ph.D.) 153

Fig. 4.36 A custom-made earplug (produced by S. Sing (2015), copyright Logitech Europe S.A., 2014. Reprinted with permission.) 154

Fig. 4.37 An example of extrusion along a line, with material removal, in art: **a** “The Gate of the Notables,” a sculpture dedicated to Ramón Rubial, former Lehendakari (Head of the Provincial Government) of the Basque Country, Spain; **b** close-up of the extruded part—Art work by the Spanish Sculptor Casto Solano, 2001 (Photos courtesy of Prof. O. Altuzarra, ETSI, Bilbao, Spain). 155

Fig. 4.38 An ellipse lying on an oblique plane 157

Fig. 4.39 A rod guide: **a** 3D view; **b** front view. All length in mm. 158

Fig. 4.40 An ellipsoid of revolution projected as an ellipse resting in a corner 159

Fig. 4.41 The table of a hand press 160

Fig. 4.42 An equilateral triangle with its corners smoothed—shown
in **a**—by means of a fourth-degree Lamé curve—shown
in **b**—suitably distorted, scaled, and displaced 162

Fig. 4.43 A duct made of a distorted right circular cylinder:
a isometric view; **b** top view; and **c** side view 163