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Geodaesia improved; or, a new and correct method of surveying made exceeding easy in two parts

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London, 1775

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Preface.

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P R E F A C E.

COURTEOUS READER,

IF you'll consult *antient Writings*, they will inform you, that this *Art*, for its *Antiquity*, claims the *Priority* to almost any other *Branch* in the *Mathematics*: The *Egyptians*, by reason of the *NILE's* overflowing, (whereby their *Landmarks* were either washed away, or covered with *Mud*,) were, through meer *Necessity*, constrain'd to invent or discover some *Means* or other, whereby each one, every *Year*, might repossess their respective *Property*; hence the *Egyptians* are looked upon as the *Inventors* of *Surveying*. Moreover, it is affirm'd by most *Authors*, relating to measuring of *Land*, that all who professed this *Art* in those early *Ages*, were greatly esteemed and honoured; which is a further *Testimony* of its usefulness.

In short, the great *Use*, the pleasant and delightful *Study*, and the wholesome *Exercise* that attended it, were such prevailing *Motives*, that Numbers of *People* were thereby induced to apply themselves thereto; and therefore at length, in *Egypt*, almost every *Youth* could measure *Land*; which undoubtedly will now be the *Case* in these *Western Isles*. The many *Advantages* which the *Egyptians* derived from this useful *Art*, influenced *THALES* to convey the *Knowledge* thereof into *Greece*, where it was stiled *Geometry* for a considerable *Time*; but that being too comprehensive a *Term* for the *Mensuration* of *Superficies* only, it was afterwards call'd *Geodæsia*, (i. e. a *Compound*, *Word* of *Ge*, the *Greek Noun* for *Terra*, the *Earth*, and *daino*, the *Greek Verb* for *divido*, to *divide*,) or the *Art* of measuring *Land*.

The *antient* and learned *Romans* held this *Art* in such *Esteem*, that they adjudged any *Man* incapable of commanding a *Legion*, that had not at least so much *Geometry* as would enable or qualify him to measure a *Field*; nor did they respect
either

either the Priest or Physician that had not some Insight in the Mathematics, to whom (for the Honour of the Western Countries) we may add a Number of both antient and modern WORTHIES, who were not less wanting to encourage and promote this Science, a Science of such public Utility, that almost all Mankind are become sensible of its Worth, seeing there is no living peaceably without it.

And tho' there are Numbers of Treatises now extant, upon this Subject (that contain many useful Definitions, Rules, Examples, Problems, &c.) yet, notwithstanding, it is confessedly granted by most of our modern Practitioners, that scarcely one of them were penn'd by an actual Surveyor. How probable this Assertion may seem to some People, is not my Business to determine; but I am conscious that those who have relied on the Authenticity of modern Authors, with regard to curvilineal Spaces, will find themselves decoyed into an unwarrantable Mistake. Therefore, I humbly presume to hope, that an Essay methodically compiled from the Gleanings of real Practice, and adapted to the slenderest Capacity, will not be unacceptable to the Public, as the most irregular and difficult Occurrences that can possibly be met with in practical Surveys are rendered in this Treatise concise, plain, and easy; wherein if a literal or insignificant Erratum, be met with, I hope the candid Reader will pass over it as a casual Oversight.

But to conclude: The great Necessity there is for a compleat, easy Method of Surveying (whereby the true Area of an Inclosure may be found) together with those Reasons exhibited in the Title Page, Introduction, and many other Places throughout this Book, will, I hope, be deem'd Motives sufficient for this Publication; so that if it happily meets with the Approbation of my kind Subscribers in particular, and of the Public in general, it will amply fulfil the sincere Desires of,

Courteous Reader,

Your most obedient,

And very humble Servant,

ARTHUR BURNS.