

CASSIODORUS, Quaestor to the Ostrogothic King Theoderic, to the Illustrious Consularis, c. 510

The Professors of this Science [i.e., surveying] are honoured with



a more earnest attention than falls to the lot of any other philosophers. Arithmetic, Theoretical Geometry,

Astronomy, and Music are discoursed upon to listless audiences, sometimes to empty benches. But the land



surveyor is like a judge; the deserted fields become his forum, crowded with eager spectators. You would fancy him a madman

when you see him walking along the most devious paths. But in truth he is seeking



for the traces of lost facts in rough woods and thickets. He walks not as other men walk.

His path is the book from which he reads. He shows what he is saying; he proves what he hath learned; by his steps he divides the rights of hostile claimants; and, like a mighty river

he takes away the fields of one side



to bestow them on the other. Wherefore, acting on our instructions, choose such a land surveyor, whose authority may be sufficient to settle this dispute, that the litigants may henceforth cultivate their lands in peace.

