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## *Thomas Reading and the Issues of his Press*

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Ee,<sup>2</sup> pp. 95-114. The gatherings standing isolated in the volume, indicated here by the symbols, B-C,<sup>2</sup> D,<sup>1</sup> pp. 1-10, and bearing at the foot of page 10 the word "Finis," its only occurrence in the volume save when it was used at the conclusion, contain the laws for the April session of 1706. It will be recalled that in a note on the last page of the compiled laws of 1707, Reading desired his readers to take notice that the laws of 1706 were "folio'd 1 2 3 &c. by reason the Laws made that Sessions were ordered to be first printed so that they [*i. e.* the page numbers] could not be truly ascertained." The explanation of this erratic paging is to be found in the printer's desire to save time and the labor of composition. It has been shown here that in April 1706 he had contracted with the Assembly for an edition of collected laws and for editions of session laws for all future assemblies. Directed, it seems, to proceed with the printing and publication of the laws of that session before setting the collected laws, he had determined to run off from the forms which he proceeded to make up for this current issue, a number of extra sheets to be laid aside and held for inclusion in the larger work in contemplation. As his alternative to this course, he had the prospect of resetting later the matter of the entire session, for with the small fonts which the colonial printer owned, he could not have kept this matter in type until it was needed. Accordingly he ran off his extra sheets of the laws of 1706, stored them, and a year later, bound them in the "collection" exactly as they had been printed originally for the separate edition of the session laws, retaining their paging, 1-10, their signatures, B-D, and the word "Finis" on their last page, leaving out only their original signature "A," which was doubtless the title-page and preliminary matter of the separate edition. If this reasoning is correct, it seems that the testimony of the documents as to the existence of a series of printed Maryland session laws earlier than heretofore has been known is well supported by the bibliographical evidence which the discovery of the volume of collected laws of 1707 has made it possible to adduce.<sup>1</sup>

There exists further evidence that Reading fulfilled the contract which he made with the Assembly when in 1704 he was appointed by that body "to print all laws and other publiq matters." Almost as this narrative goes to press there have appeared in the auction room two broadside sheets,<sup>2</sup> printed by Thomas Reading of Annapolis in the year 1708, containing the Governor's "Speech" and the "Answer" of the November Assembly of that

<sup>1</sup> For a further discussion of this item, see bibliographical appendix under 1706 and 1707.

<sup>2</sup> See bibliographical appendix for a description of these two broadsides, unrecorded until they appeared as item No. 452 in catalogue No. 1546 of the Anderson Galleries, New York. They were sold January 11, 1921, to Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach for \$1260.