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## *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland*

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had been printed at Lord Baltimore's expense, there seems no reason for believing this to be true. The collection bears the royal arms, was printed by the King's printer, and has neither dedication nor preface. There is nothing about the book to suggest that Baltimore had been ordered to publish it, and as it contains none of the laws made since the Province had been restored to his government, it is more probably the case that the collection had been issued by the Lords of Trade from the engrossed copy sent to them in 1715 as one of that series of colonial laws which they published customarily for the benefit of those in England who were associated in colonial business enterprises. Similar publications were printed by Baskett, some of them "by order of the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations," for Bermuda and New York in 1719, the Barbadoes in 1721, Massachusetts in 1724 and Virginia in 1727, to name only the most important collections of the series.

This London edition of the laws is a handsome book, well printed on a thick, crisp, white paper. It was printed by John Baskett, who six years before its publication had acquired unpleasant notoriety as the printer of an edition of Holy Writ which has been known ever since as the Vinegar Bible, by reason of the occurrence in its pages of a misprint in one of the gospels which caused the laborers in the vineyard to be alluded to as the laborers in the "vinegar." Because of this and other blunders which it contained, it was known to a mocking generation as a "Basket-full of printer's errors," but in spite of its textual imperfections, Dibdin described it as "the most magnificent of the Oxford Bibles." Until Jonas Green had printed Bacon's edition of the laws, Baskett's edition was certainly the most magnificent of the Maryland books of statutory law. That it had little use in the colonies is easily explained by the nature of its contents and by its date of publication, for a work published in 1723 containing no laws passed since 1715 could not be expected to prove useful when even the easily available Jones-Bradford compilation, containing the code of 1715 and subsequent legislation for the three years 1716-1718, so rapidly became out-of-date that the Assembly in 1722 attempted to have printed a second volume containing the compiled laws of the intervening years.<sup>1</sup>

### "TROTT'S LAWS OF THE PLANTATIONS," LONDON, 1721

Several times in the course of this narrative grateful reference has been made to a special compilation of colonial laws known familiarly as "Trott's Laws of the Plantations." *The Laws of the British Plantations—relating to*

<sup>1</sup> See next chapter under the section devoted to Michael Piper and his attempt to establish a press in Maryland.