

PREFACE

As Lawrence Wroth points out in his introduction, reprinted below, in 1929 the only known copy of *A Declaration of The Lord Baltemore's Plantation in Maryland* was in the archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Westminster at Westminster Cathedral, London. In an effort to date the Houghton Manuscript of the Maryland charter through watermarks (distinctive, often unique, impressions in paper created by the manufacturer in the papermaking process), I sought permission to examine the *Declaration* only to find that it was no longer there. How it was lost is not known, but today all that remains in public hands is Wroth's facsimile edition, which itself exists in an edition of only one hundred and twenty-five copies. Given its importance as the earliest printed promotional tract relating to Maryland, and its rarity today, it seemed only fitting to reprint the rare Wroth facsimile as the second in the Maryland Hall of Records 350th Anniversary Document Series with an historical introduction on the genesis of the charter.

Lawrence Wroth's contributions to the history of printing and to the history of Maryland are truly impressive, both in quantity and quality. If he had known of the Houghton Manuscript of the charter and had had the opportunity to examine it with all the known printed versions of the charter, I have no doubt that he would have revised his assessment of the Brown/Griswold/Jones copies of the charter (see n. 1 of his introduction below), assigning to them a later printing date instead of suggesting that they could be first editions. As was suggested in the introduction to the first pamphlet in this series, there can be little question that the first printed