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978-0-521-28042-6 - Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell

J. M. Wallace

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ANDREW MARVELL

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To J. A. V. W. & M. W.



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The drawing under the dedication represents Marvell’s stag seal, enlarged. It is based, by permission of Bodley’s Librarian, on the seal on MS. Rawl. Letters 50, fol. 130v.

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Foreword

History and literary criticism do not always make good marriages, and I shall not know until later how happy they are together in this book. No doubt I have committed faults characteristic of both professions but will not make the mistake that Marvell detested of offering any excuses. The method itself of reading political poems in the context of their contemporary background does not require a theoretical defence; but, if what is usually called background in literary criticism sometimes predominates, it is because the texts seem to me to call for a full explanation, and because Marvell himself, when alive, played a more significant part in the history of his period than he did in its literature. I have been hoping to do justice to the man as well as to his political poems, and believe that Marvell's thought and changes of allegiance should have an archetypal value to the historian, just as his best poems retain a perennial freshness for the critic.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking my particular teachers in the past for their instruction: the late Aubrey de Selincourt, whom I remember with special affection as the first; Graham Storey, Theodore Redpath, and F. R. Leavis at Cambridge, whose supervisions were always better than I deserved; and my friends and masters at Johns Hopkins. Don Cameron Allen, Earl R. Wasserman, and Jackson I. Cope remain still the teachers whose learning and acumen I try—backwardly—to emulate. Mr Quentin Skinner of Christ's College has most helpfully criticized the first chapter, and I am also indebted to a correspondence with Professor Arthur Barker for some shrewd questions which I fear I have inadequately answered. The Folger and Newberry libraries assisted me with summer fellowships in 1961 and 1964, and I am grateful to their staffs and their resources. The English Department of Cornell University, through its grant-in-aid

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FOREWORD

fund, mercifully relieved me of some course-work in 1961–62. I should also like to thank the Clarendon Press, Oxford, for permission to quote from H. M. Margoliouth's edition of Marvell's poems and letters, the Bodleian Library for allowing me to reproduce as a curiosity a drawing of Marvell's stag seal, and The Johns Hopkins University for paying the expenses of typing the manuscript.

Chapters two and three appeared in earlier versions in *PMLA* and *ELH*. Other opinions and occasional sentences have appeared in articles and reviews in *The Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, *Modern Language Notes*, *Modern Language Quarterly*, and *The Yale Review*. I gladly record their editors' permissions to reprint. Finally, this book is dedicated to my parents, because my filial obligations are of such long standing that I know of no other way to acknowledge them; I would also thank my wife, Justine, who has helped so much during the later stages of writing.

J. M. W.

Baltimore
August 1966