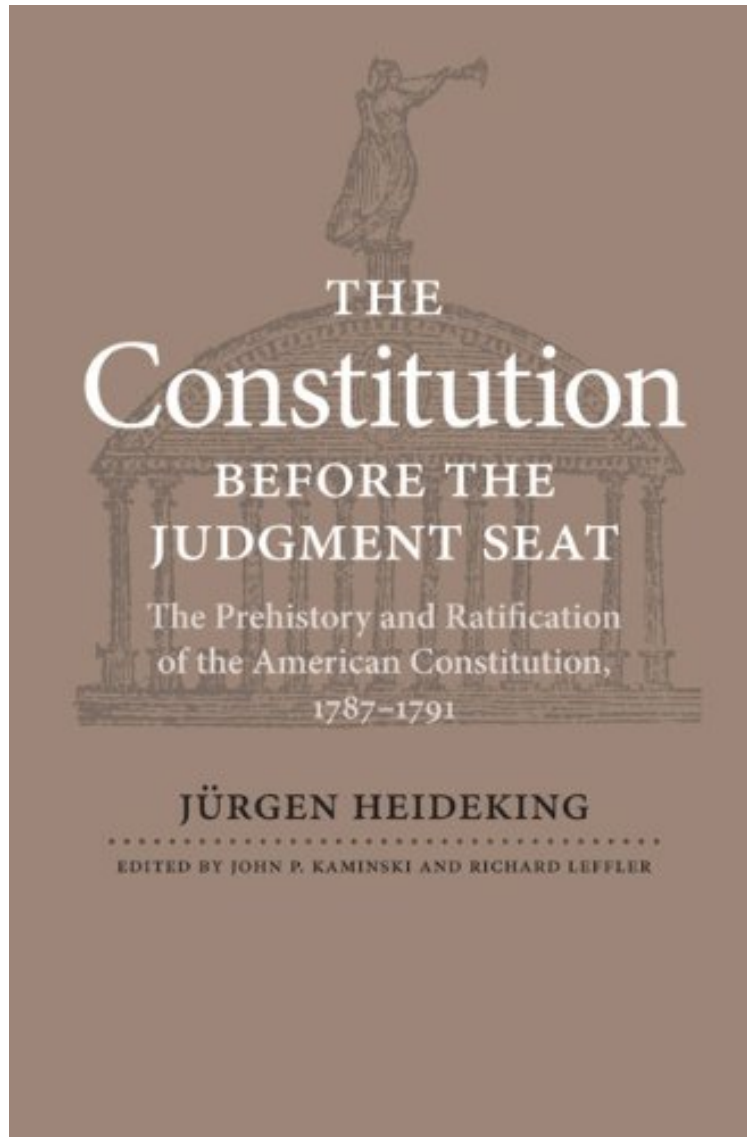


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## **The Constitution before the Judgment Seat: The Prehistory and Ratification of the American Constitution, 17871791**

*Jrgen Heideking*

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Originally published in German in 1988, the late Jürgen Heideking's exhaustive study of the debates over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution compares the methods used to call state ratifying conventions and explores everything that made up the ratification debate, from town meetings and festive culture to private correspondence and print media. In Heideking's view, the construction of a new political process was an unintended but key result of ratification debates over the federal Constitution. Heideking's work anticipated diverse strands of subsequent scholarship; this translation can claim to provide not only an invaluable account of the ratification debates but also a master narrative for integrating future studies.

In the best traditions of German scholarship, Heideking builds toward his simple but powerful conclusion, which is that the great national discussion in which the United States took on its political form was exactly that, an enormous exchange of ideas and perspectives. Elegant and highly readable. (Edward Countryman, Southern Methodist University author of *A People in Revolution: The American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760-1790*) *The Constitution before the Judgment Seat* is an instant classic destined for a long and useful life. Formidably researched, carefully argued, and exceptionally clear and engaging, it is the late Jürgen Heideking's masterwork, and it will be essential reading for anyone concerned with the Constitution and its origins. It is a model of what history should be. (R. B. Bernstein, New York Law School, author of *The Founding Fathers Reconsidered*) Posthumously translated from German, this encyclopedic treatment painstakingly traces the political, ideological, and cultural battle involving the U.S. Constitution, its ratification, and the addition of a federal Bill of Rights.... This important monograph is strongly recommended.... Essential. (CHOICE) Jürgen Heideking's impressive study of the ratification of the Constitution has remained virtually unknown among English-speaking scholars until now. Scholars and graduate students will definitely want this book in their libraries alongside other major works on the founding of the United States. (Jane E. Calvert *The Journal of Southern History*) About the Author Jürgen Heideking was a prominent U.S. historian and authored or edited over twenty books, including *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early Twentieth Century*. John P. Kaminski and Richard Leffler head the Center for the Study of the American Constitution in the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and are the editors of the multivolume *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*.