# BOOK REVIEWS

*The Papers of James Madison.* Volume XI—7 March 1788—1 March 1789. Edited by ROBERT A. RUTLAND and CHARLES F. HOBSON. WILLIAM M. E. RACHAL, Consulting Editor. JEANNE K. SISSON, Editorial Assistant. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977. xxvi, 471 pp. $17.50.

*The Papers of James Madison.* Volume XII—2 March 1789–20 January 1790, With a Supplement, 24 October 1775–24 January 1789. Edited by CHARLES F. HOBSON and ROBERT A. RUTLAND. WILLIAM M. E. RACHAL, Consulting Editor. JEANNE K. SISSON, Editorial Assistant. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979. xxiv, 498 pp. $17.50.

THESE two volumes continue the chronicle, begun in Volume X, of James Madison's extraordinarily active role in creating, promoting, and organizing the new federal government. As in previous volumes of the Madison Papers, and in marked contrast to Julian P. Boyd's edition of the Jefferson Papers, the editors have generally avoided the use of lengthy analytical introductions seeking to interpret the meaning of the documents printed here. The merits of that strategy have been debated with the issuance of each successive volume of the Papers; in the case of the present volumes, where so much of the material bears on well-known public events and where interpretive disagreements among historians have been substantial, the editorial policy of restraint seems to me the most desirable.

The documents in Volume XI neatly encapsulate a twelve-month period in which Madison, seeking to expand his activities on the continental level, was forced into a more active role both in private maneuvering among the political elite in Virginia and in rallying the electorate of his home district in and around Orange County behind him. In a letter to Eliza House Trist (March 25, 1788, XI, 5) he noted, with no great enthusiasm, that on the day of the election for delegates to the Virginia Ratifying Convention he was "obliged . . . to mount for the first time in my life, the rostrum before a large body of the people, and to launch into a harangue of some length in the open air and on a very windy day." Madison of course gained election, and some nine weeks later would play a pivotal role in the adoption of the Constitution by the Virginia Convention. The editors have prefaced the section on that Convention with what seems to this reviewer a somewhat unfairly partisan headnote (XI, 72-76), but then, relying on David Robertson's heroically extensive transcripts of the debates, they have allowed Madison to speak for himself.

In the period following the Gonvention Madison found himself in continual combat with the one Virginian whose popular following at the state and local level was distinctly stronger than his own—Patrick Henry. Defeated in the Virginia legislature for a post in the United States Senate, Madison next faced a tough election for the House of Representatives in a gerrymandered (actually, a "Henrymandered") district which included a preponderance of antifederalist counties. He initially resisted the implorations of his friends to campaign for office, avowing his

"extreme distaste to steps having an electioneering appearance" (to George Washington, December 2, 1788, XI, 377), but ultimately decided not only to come to Virginia to advance his cause, but also to moderate his opposition to a Bill of Rights. By the end of Volume XI, as Madison goes off to New York to serve in the new House of Representatives, we can see a man who has not only extended his existing gifts as a political theorist and tactician, but also one who has taken the first steps toward recognizing the expanded role of the popular voice in the national political process.

The documents in Volume XII constitute a solid case for the editors' contention that Madison was "by common consent the 'first man' in the House" (XII, 53). The introduction to the documents encompassing the first session of the First Congress is excellent, hardly surprising given the fact that one of the editors, Robert A. Rutland, has written an excellent book which focuses in part on Madison's role as legislative pilot for the Bill of Rights. In spite of his success in preserving the core of the new Constitution from attacks by confirmed antifederalists, Madison, by the end of that first session of Congress, would have cause to doubt his prediction, made in *Federalist 10,* that the very extent of the new republic would moderate the effects of faction. The apparent success of a Northern majority in the House in thwarting the desire of the South and West to have the seat of government located on the Potomac gave the young nationalist pause. He noted (to Henry Lee, October 4, 1789, XII, 425) that "Every circumstance which has marked the late altercations betrays the antipathy of the Eastern people to a South-western position."

So much has been written about the editorial policies of the individuals responsible for the publication of the papers of major figures like Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Hamilton, and Madison that the opinion of one more commentator on yet another set of editors seems hardly appropriate. Yet it may be useful to note at least those obvious changes between these two volumes, which are under the principal editorial direction of Robert A. Rutland and Charles Hobson and published by the University Press of Virginia, and its predecessors, published by the University of Chicago Press under the direction of William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal, with Rutland joining the enterprise with Volume VIII. Volumes XI and XII continue the policies inaugurated with Volume VIII; the number and size of explanatory notes at the end of each document have been kept relatively small, and major sections of the Papers (e.g., those on the First Congress) are now prefaced by substantive headnotes. As has always been the case, the new editors are continuing the commitment to print virtually everything—including speeches, rough notes, drafts of laws—that can be attributed to Madison.

It is, I am sure, impossible for anyone to satisfy all of the critics on matters of editorial policy, but it does seem to me that the current decision to simplify the editorial apparatus while at the same time retain the commitment to completeness is the best possible course. And, if the slightly accelerated production of these two volumes is any indication, our prospects of reading the completed set of Madison Papers sometime within the next half-century have improved considerably.

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