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Who Wrote the *Journal of Du Roi the Elder*?

One of the most informative accounts left by soldiers serving with the German contingents on the British side during the American Revolution is the so-called *Journal of Du Roi the Elder*. The manuscript is owned by the Library of Congress, where it is ascribed to August Wilhelm Du Roi, a lieutenant and adjutant in the service of the duke of Brunswick under General Burgoyne.¹ Charlotte S. J. Epping's translation of it appeared in 1911 as a book in the series *Americana Germanica*,² after having been published in the quarterly *German-American Annals* of 1910.³ According to the half-page preface by Marion Dexter Learned, who edited the monograph series as well as the periodical, the translation was undertaken and published at the instance of Joseph G. Rosengarten, an authority on the role played by Germans in U.S. military history. Learned's own reputation as a leading scholar undoubtedly went a long way to recommend Epping's book, which was never critically reviewed. As a translation that is far more readable than reliable it actually fell short of Learned's own standards.⁴ But even more unsatisfactory is Epping's failure to state the authorship problems inherent in the German original. This essay intends to show that what is known as the *Journal of Du Roi the Elder* is really the work of four different writers.

The manuscript at the Library of Congress consists of unlined sheets, most of them measuring approximately 15.5 by 20 cm and bound in two volumes whose respective blue covers are inscribed "No. 3 bis 6" and "N[o]. 7 bis 10," respectively. These numbers refer to the following consecutive parts:

No. 3. 106 numbered pages of text, including four drawings, plus one unnumbered page [107]. An untitled diary from 6 February 1776 until April 1777, covering the voyage of the first contingent of Brunswick troops from Stade to Quebec;

observations on the history, geography, flora, fauna, and population of Canada; and an outline of the military operations against the American insurgents along the St. Lawrence and northern Lake Champlain. A marginal note added to the first page identifies this part as "Tagebuch des in herzog[lich] Br[äun]schweigischen Diensten stehenden Lieutenants und Adjutants [sic] du Roi des Älteren."⁵

No. 4. 10 unnumbered pages. "Zusätze und Veränderungen zu Herrn Leistens Beschreibung des brittischen America," listing numerous naturalist observations to supplement the book *Beschreibung des Brittischen Amerika zur Ersparung der englischen Karten*. Von Christian Leiste, Conector an der Herzoglich großen Schule zu Wolfenbüttel. Dasselbst gedruckt mit Bindseilschen Schriften, 1778.

No. 5. 40 numbered pages, plus three unnumbered pages with an order by General Burgoyne (dated Skenesborough, 10 July 1777) inserted between pages 18 and 19, plus a colored sketch of the British-German Army's battle formation. "Feldzug im Jahr 1777 gegen die Rebellen von Canada aus, unter Commando des General-Lieut. John Bourgoyne,"⁶ in diary form, from 6 May to 12 November 1777.

No. 6. 11 numbered pages. "Freye Gedanken über den Feldzug des General-Lieut. John Bourgoyne."

No. 7. 51 unnumbered pages. "Vierte Fortsetzung des Journals vom 7ten bis zum 31ten August 1777," relating the Brunswickers' activities in Burgoyne's advance south along the Hudson from Fort Edward to the Battenkill, including the battle of Bennington on 16 August 1777.

No. 8. 51 unnumbered pages. "Auszug aus den [sic] Journal der Bourgoyneschen Armee, von Boston bis nach Virginien," from 28 October 1777 to 7 March 1779. An account of the Convention Army's eight-week, 700-mile winter trek from Cambridge in Massachusetts to Charlottesville in Virginia, followed by a description of the soldiers' living conditions there.

No. 9. Miscellanea written on various sizes of octavo paper, and consisting of

(a) 7 unnumbered pages. Notes on the value of various domestic and foreign currencies then circulating in North America.

(b) 6 unnumbered pages. Notes on North American plants and animals.

(c) 8 unnumbered pages. Data on U.S. geography and population.

No. 10. Two items:

(a) 34 unnumbered pages. An untitled orderly book in English, dated Ticonderoga, 12 July to 11 August 1777.

(b) 2 unnumbered pages. An order in French, issued by General Sir Guy Carleton at Quebec on 4 August 1776.

From the preceding list of its components it is clear that the so-called *Journal of Du Roi the Elder* does not constitute a continuous record but rather a collection of loosely related heterogeneous materials, with no. 5 and no. 7 overlapping chronologically. As will be seen, there are also some basic differences in intent and perspective.

According to contemporary usage, all the German texts are written in Gothic script (*deutsche Kurrentschrift*), while Latin characters are used for names and non-German words. Three different handwritings are manifest: one for nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10; another for no. 7; and a third one for no. 8. There are also several minor additions by a fourth hand, including the numbering of the volumes and sections as well as the above-mentioned attribution to Du Roi, which is followed by the note "[S]iehe Schlözers' [sic] vertrauliche Briefe aus Kanada und Neuengland vom Jahre 1777 und 1778 aus den [sic] Briefwechsel Heft 23 und 24" (3: 1). Since Epping's translation includes this without comment, at least two bibliographers have mistakenly construed this as a significant clue for Du Roi's identity.⁷ By converse but erroneous logic, Emil Meynen went so far as to designate Du Roi as the author of the anonymous *Vertrauliche Briefe aus Kanada und NeuEngland*, whose repeated publication by August Ludwig Schlözer in 1779 was such a sensational success. The simple explanation for the Schlözer reference entered by the fourth hand is that the same hand added three brief excerpts from the *Vertrauliche Briefe* by way of amplification on related topics in the *Journal* (two separate passages on 3: 87, one on 3: [107]).⁸ Also by the fourth hand are text fragments on two slim strips of paper left in the manuscript as markers, one of which cites "Harris Gesandtschaftsreise [sic] von 1841 im 12. Bande der Weltkunde Seite 281." This turns out to be a reference to the sixteen-volume series *Die Weltkunde in einer planmäßig geordneten Rundschau der wichtigsten Land- und Seereisen* (Leipzig, 1847-55), of which volume twelve, *Reisen in den Nil-Ländern Afrika's und Arabien*, was published in 1854. It

is therefore reasonable to conclude that the fourth hand is probably that of a learned collector or compiler who in 1854 or later⁹ may have planned to publish no. 3 along with the other documents numbered sequentially by this person. This writer's difficulty with the dative case, which is symptomatic in all the eighteenth-century Brunswick military journals I have read, suggests that he or she was a North German. Nothing else about this person can be ascertained from the manuscript.

For no. 3 and thus also for nos. 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10 the authorship of August Wilhelm Du Roi can be safely established. The Stadtarchiv in Braunschweig owns a manuscript written in a different hand and acknowledged to be a later copy of his diary.¹⁰ Except for minor variations in orthography, it is identical with no. 3. Since the Braunschweig text has smoothly integrated a number of additions and corrections by the writer of the version in the Library of Congress, no. 3 must be the older manuscript, very likely in Du Roi's own handwriting.

August Wilhelm Balthasar Du Roi was born on 25 May 1744 in Braunschweig as the son of the military judge-advocate Ascan Christoph Du Roi and his wife Sophie Cordula, née Saur. In a fit of depression he drowned himself on 23 March 1814 in his native city. This is the outline of his military career:¹¹

1762	Ensign in the infantry regiment Prinz Friedrich.
1767	Lieutenant in the same regiment.
1776	Adjutant in the same regiment.
1776-83	Served with this regiment in North America.
1783	Captain in the same regiment.
1788-94	Served with this regiment in Maastricht.
1801	Major in the regiment Prinz Friedrich, renamed von Warnstedt as of 1803.
1807-08	Held by the French as a prisoner of war in Metz.
1808	Lieutenant Colonel in the army of the Kingdom of Westphalia, which included Brunswick.
1813	Return to Brunswick service as Generalkriegs-kommissar with the rank of major.
1814	Lieutenant colonel.

Du Roi's service in one and the same regiment, from the end of the Seven Years' War until Napoleon abolished the Brunswick army in 1806, is very unusual among Brunswick officers of his time and indicates that he was steadfast and competent. His regiment was one of six, totaling 4,300 men, sent to Canada under the 1776 treaty between the duke of Brunswick and the British crown. The Brunswick corps accounted for almost half of Burgoyne's 1777 invasion army, if one discounts a fluctuating number of largely ineffectual Loyalist and Indian irregulars.

After returning to Brunswick in 1783, most soldiers and officers were dismissed as the duke reduced his army for fiscal reasons to about one half of its former strength.¹² Since Du Roi was not only retained but repeatedly promoted, he must have been appreciated as an exceptionally capable officer. His American journals (nos. 3 and 5) and attendant collectanea (nos. 4 and 9) characterize him as a keen, diligent, and honest observer with a genuine love of learning. In early 1776, his journal shows, he does not even know the names of the thirteen American colonies that have declared their independence from Britain. A year later he has gathered enough information to improve on the recent encyclopedic book on North America by Lessing's learned correspondent Leiste. The scientifically trained company surgeon Julius Friedrich Wasmus, who was stationed not far from Du Roi, claims that a lunar eclipse visible in Germany on 31 July 1776 could not be observed in La Prairie "since the sun rises here 5 hours later than in Braunschweig," and goes to bed.¹³ Du Roi stays up, observes the phenomenon, and calculates from it the exact time difference between the City of Quebec and Braunschweig (3: 66). In no. 3 he carefully defines the limited extent of his own experiences as a subaltern officer in the regiment Prinz Friedrich to explain the restricted scope of his journal (3). A passion for truth and moral integrity but also astute discretion are manifest in his critical reflections about the failure of Burgoyne's 1777 campaign (no. 6). He has never been afflicted with *Autorsucht*, he writes, and these thoughts are to be shared only with his brother (1). His first North American journal, on the other hand, was written for his *Landesleute* and other readers (3: 6), probably with publication in mind.

As a lieutenant and adjutant of the regiment Prinz Friedrich, Du Roi took part in Burgoyne's ill-fated 1777 campaign. In July, while the bulk of the army was slowly moving from Lake Champlain south towards Albany, Du Roi's regiment and one from the British contingent remained behind to garrison Fort Ticonderoga and the adjacent Mount Independence,¹⁴ a fact corroborated by Du Roi's own journal (5: 25, 28-31, 39-40) and his orderly book (no. 10). After Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga on 17 October, under the terms of a convention signed by both sides, and the march of his army into *de facto* captivity at Cambridge, Massachusetts, the British forts on southern Lake Champlain had to be evacuated. Du Roi's regiment returned from Fort Ticonderoga to Canada where he spent the remaining six years of his North American sojourn without enemy contact. In light of this, he could not have authored no. 7 and no. 8. The former was written by a participant in the British-German army's advance along the Hudson to the south of Ticonderoga. His immediate access to important and detailed military information and his intimate knowledge of the interior of a house temporarily occupied by

Burgoyne make it likely that this writer was a high-ranking officer with direct access to or excellent informants in the army's headquarters.

Unlike no. 7, no. 8 offers sufficient clues to positively identify its author. At the outset of the Convention Army's March to Virginia, after a one-year stay at Cambridge, General von Riedesel appoints him Commissary in charge of transportation, provisions, and quarters for the second German division under Brigadier Specht ([1]). He receives forage money commensurate to his rank of lieutenant ([12]), and at the end of the march in Charlottesville he is ready to resume his regular duties as adjutant in the regiment Specht. All these details point to Anton Adolf Heinrich Du Roi, August Wilhelm's younger brother, with whom no. 6 was to be shared. This is corroborated by the fact that the handwriting in no. 8 is identical with that in two ascertained autographs by him.¹⁵ Born 30 April 1746 in Braunschweig, he lived until 19 August 1823. His professional career is circumscribed by the following dates:¹⁶

1767	Ensign in the infantry regiment von Rhetz.
1768-71	On half-pay.
1771	Lieutenant in the regiment von Rhetz.
1776	Adjutant in the newly established infantry regiment Specht.
1776-83	With this regiment in North America.
1783	Joined the infantry regiment von Riedesel.
1790	Captain.
1788-94	Stationed in Maastricht.
1804	Major and tutor of Prince August zu Braunschweig-Lüneburg.
1814	Lieutenant colonel.

He and the regiment Specht were part of the Convention Army captured at Saratoga,¹⁷ and his signature is on the Cambridge Parole List of 13 December 1777.¹⁸ An entry in the unpublished journal of Riedesel's adjutant, Lieutenant Friedrich Christian Cleve, confirms that the younger Du Roi was appointed *Commissair* for the Brunswickers' second division commanded by Brigadier Specht.¹⁹ He must have returned to Canada in the spring of 1781, when almost all the captured Brunswick officers in Virginia were exchanged. A roster written before December 1781 lists him as second lieutenant in the regiment Prinz Friedrich, where his elder brother was a first lieutenant and adjutant.²⁰ In the context of the Brunswick officer corps, where few lieutenants were younger than twenty-five and forty-year-old ones were not unusual,²¹ the younger Du Roi's career was as distinguished as his brother's.

As the author of the anonymously and speedily published *Tagebuch der Seereise von Stade nach Quebec in Canada* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1776),

Anton Adolf Du Roi shows the same characteristics as in his journal of the march to Virginia. Whereas the elder Du Roi is always looking for more information and rational explanations, his younger brother is usually content with the obvious. When August Wilhelm sails for Quebec (23 March to 1 June 1776), he lists all the ships in the convoy, their tonnage, nationality, captains, and the names and ranks of all the Brunswick officers assigned to each (3: 9). When Anton Adolf makes the same voyage a few months later (31 May to 17 September 1776), his journal offers such specifics for only the *Friesland* that takes him to Portsmouth, and for the *Lively* to which he transfers there.²² It is the elder Du Roi who again systematically records the complete information on all the vessels carrying the second contingent of Brunswick troops after their arrival in Quebec (3: 77). Unlike the studious and somewhat pedantic August Wilhelm, the younger Du Roi is a casual observer who prefers the pleasures of appetite to those of the intellect. Gregarious and personable, he has an eye for pretty women and easily makes friends wherever he goes. It seems that he charmed all the people he met in North America except the Pennsylvania Dutch townspeople of Lancaster and York.²³ In Virginia he is a sought-after guest among the gentlemanly plantation owners of Albemarle County who cultivate the art of pleasant living. His knowledge of English was undoubtedly an important asset in his contacts with Americans. He begins to learn English aboard the *Lively*, where his tutor is the captain's wife. By the fall of 1778 he must have been fairly proficient, and it is because of his ability to speak English that he is appointed march commissary (8: [2]). In the half-hour meeting between George Washington and Brigadier Specht in Fishkill, New York, on 29 November 1778, Anton Adolf Du Roi functions as interpreter ([12]). Had August Wilhelm Du Roi been there, he would have left more than the mere seven lines his brother devotes to this occasion. In spite of his cheerful insouciance and incidental brevity, Anton Adolf's diary is important for its firsthand documentation of the Brunswick troops' arduous winter march to Charlottesville and their reception there. Via Epping's translation this account figures as a unique source in William Dabney's 1954 history of the Convention Army.²⁴

To sum up: The manuscript of the so-called *Journal of Du Roi the Elder* translated by Epping is actually the work of four different writers. One of them is responsible only for minor additions made in 1854 or later. Of the *Journal's* eight parts, six (nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10) are by August Wilhelm Du Roi, one (no. 8) is by his younger brother Anton Adolf, and one (no. 7) by an unidentified Brunswick officer in the Burgoyne campaign.

Notes

¹ John R. Sellers et al., comps., *Manuscript Sources in the Library of Congress for Research on the American Revolution* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1975), 85.

² *Journal of Du Roi the Elder*, tr. Charlotte S. Epping, *Americana Germanica* 15 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1911).

³ New Series 8 (1910): 40-64; 77-128; 131-244.

⁴ "He scorned the popular demand for readable books as something unworthy, tending to lower scientific standards. He tended to 'let truth unadorned radiate from the documents.'" Albert Bernhardt Faust, "Marion Dexter Learned," *DAB* 11: 78.

⁵ This is preceded by the barely legible ambiguous phrase "Zu behalten," which may mean to keep or to remember.

⁶ Since the eighteenth-century German spelling in the manuscript, including that of names, is often so erratic as to be termed "heterography" rather than orthography, I have not called attention to any deviations.

⁷ Philipp Losch, *Soldatenhandel. Mit einem Verzeichnis der Hessen-Kasselischen Subsidienvverträge und einer Bibliographie* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1933), 103; Emil Meynen, *Bibliographie des Deutschtums der kolonialzeitlichen Einwanderung in Nordamerika* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1937), 272.

⁸ Corresponding to *Vertrauliche Briefe aus Kanada und NeuEngland vom J. 1777 und 1778. Aus Hrn. Prof. Schlözers Briefwechsel*, ed. Lothar Zimmermann, *Deutschkanadische Schriften* ser. B 2 (Toronto: German-Canadian Historical Association, 1981), 55 (two passages) and 39-41, respectively. Epping (59) translates one of these additions but omits the other two without comment.

⁹ Unfortunately, the Library of Congress's nineteenth-century records are incomplete and do not indicate when and from whom the manuscript of the so-called *Journal of Du Roi the Elder* was acquired. Letter of 8 March 1994 from James H. Hutson, Chief of the Manuscript Division.

¹⁰ Bestandssignatur H VI 6: 80.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Otto Elster, *Geschichte der stehenden Truppen im Herzogthum Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1899-1901), 2:429.

¹³ *An Eyewitness Account of the American Revolution and New England Life, The Journal of J. F. Wasmus, German Company Surgeon, 1776-1783*, tr. Helga Doblin, *Contributions in Military Studies* 106 (New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1990), 26.

¹⁴ Elster, 2:397, 401.

¹⁵ "Gesammelte Nachrichten für das Regiment des Herrn Obristen Specht vom Jahre 1776" and "Tage-Buch Des Marches und der Reise der zweyten Division Herzogl. Braunschweiger Troupen vom Ausmarsche aus der Festung Braunschweig bis zur Ankunft in Amerika," both under Bestandssignatur VI Hs 11, Nr. 76, in the Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv in Wolfenbüttel.

¹⁶ Information received in letters of 24 April and 13 June 1987 from the Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv in Wolfenbüttel.

¹⁷ Elster, 2:407.

¹⁸ Karl J. R. Arndt, "The 1777 Saratoga Surrender of German Mercenaries and Its Importance for American-German Genealogical Research," *Genealogical Journal* 6 (1977): 194. The parole defined the area around Cambridge that the British and German officers were not allowed to leave.

¹⁹ 1 Nov. 1778. Copy in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. The original in the Preußisches Staatsarchiv was destroyed in the spring of 1945, according to a letter of 5 July 1993 from the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin.

²⁰ Elster, 2:420.

²¹ Elster, 2:458-59.

²² [Anton Adolf Du Roi], *Tagebuch der Seereise von Stade nach Quebec in Amerika durch die zweyte Division Herzoglich Braunschweigischer Hülfsvölker*, Von einem Offizier unter des Herrn Obersten Specht Regiment, ed. Gerhart Teuscher, Deutschkanadische Schriften ser. B 3 (Toronto: German-Canadian Historical Association, 1983), 41 and 60.

²³ They believed a rumor that the British crown had given Lancaster to General Riedesel in recognition of his services and that the Brunswickers were coming to claim this new possession. William Dabney, *After Saratoga: The Story of the Convention Army* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954), 55.

²⁴ Dabney, 53-64.

