

A Precursor of Germanistik in the Soviet Union

—F. A. Brown—

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1. F. A. Brown —Glimpses Gleaned—

It was in April in 1978 in Moscow when I first met Professor Jartseva, Director of the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Science of the Soviet Union. I had known her by name for more than twenty years because I had by chance obtained a copy of her book, *Historical Morphology of English* (Moscow, 1960, 194 pp.)

I had been in Moscow and Leningrad for the year 1977 & 78 and had managed to collect materials for my prospective book, a tentative title of which is *History of Romano-Germanistik in Russia and in the Soviet Union*.

I made the best of this precious occasion of a *viva voce* talk with the venerable scholar of Anglistik in the Soviet Union. I asked and she talked about her younger days of scholarship at Leningrad and of her teacher, Zirmunskij (1891-1971), a universalist in the field of Romano-Germanic philology in this country. I still remember that in her desk lay a book entitled *Problems of Comparative Philology: In Honor of V. M. Zirmunskij in His 70th Years*. (M.-L., 1964, 496 pp.)

I understand that nowadays Zirmunskij is widely known to the literary as well as linguistic scholars in Western Europe because his *Introduction to Metrics* was lately translated in English and published by Mouton Co. in 1966. (*Introduction to Metrics: The Theory of Verse*. Translated from the Russ. by C.F. Brown. Ed. with an introd. by E. Stankiewicz & W. N. Vickery. The Hague Mouton & Co., 1966, 245 pp. 'Slavistic printings and reprintings' 58)

It was however little known to the Western scholars that Zirmunskij's doctoral dissertation was *Byron and Pushkin* (Moscow; Academia, 1924, 334 pp.) and that his first printed article was 'English Folk Ballad' (*The Northern Proceedings*. Petersburg, 1916, p. 91-94.)

Zirmunskij was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by Oxford University in 1966.

Thus one may rightly think that he is the precursor of Anglistik in the Soviet Union. On scrutiny of his writings, however, I have found that this supposition is not tenable, because Zirmunskij himself wrote that 'my teacher in the field of Germanistik was F. A. Brown, pupil of academician A. N. Veselovskij, and the founder of Germanic philology in our country. (Italics mine) 'On the field of Germanistik,' Zirmunskij goes on, 'he was a student of H. Paul. (V. M. Zirmunskij,

General & Germanic linguistics: Selected Works, 1976, p.7.) D. S. Likhatsëv, introducing Zirmunskij in his co-edited book of Zirmunskij's *Collected Works* (V. M. Zirmunskij, *Theory of Literature: Poetics & Stylistics*. Leningrad, 1977, 407 pp.) wrote that 'in Historico-philological faculty of Petersburg University, where V. M. Zirmunskij learned from 1918 to 1912 he studied *under leading Romano-Germanists* and he was interested chiefly in European literature of new era.' (Italics mine) (Likhatsëv D. C., 'V. M. Zirmunskij, An Witness and Participant of Literary Process of First Half of 20 th Century', *Ibid.*, p. 5-6.)

Professor Jartseva, whom I mentioned above, along with others said that 'In Petersburg University at that time there was still living the tradition of A. N. Veselovskij. One of his dearest students was F. A. Brown, ...' (Viktor Maksimovič Zirmunskij (1891-1971), *Philologica: Studies in Language & Literature: In Memory of Academician, Viktor Maksimovič Zirmunskij*, Leningrad, 1973, p. 3.)

A famous specialist in Germanic Philology in present-day Soviet Union, Professor Tchemodanov, whom I got acquainted with during my stay at Moscow in 1978, wrote in the article he had contributed to *Soviet Linguistics for 50 Years* (Moscow, 1967, 427 pp.): 'In pre-revolution period the studies in Germanic languages took a modest place in our linguistic studies. At the beginning of this century a serious study in this field was done only in Petersburg University where F. A. Brown, a student of an Academician Veselovskij, founded the first faculty of Germanic philology in the Soviet Union, and he raised many Germanists.' (N. S. Tchemodanov, 'Germanic Languages', *Ibid.*, p. 112.) 'Out of the works of this period', Professor Tchemodanov writes, 'special mention must be made of F. A. Brown's Monograph on Goths and their relationship with the Slavs.' (*loc. cit.*)

There is no mention of F. A. Brown, founder of Germanic philology in the Soviet Union in *Theoretical Problems of Soviet Linguistics* (Moscow, 1968, 367 pp.), which, in the words of Fedot Petrovič Filin, Director of the Institute of Russian Language of the Academy of Science, is one of the most important books on history of linguistics in present-day Soviet Union. ('Soviet Linguistics: Theory & Practice', in *Problems of Linguistics*, 1977, vol. 5, p. 3.)

However When I met Professor Ivanova at Leningrad University in 1978 in June, a season of white nights, she informed me of an article written by Kovalëv and added that she herself had just written a survey article in *The Transactions of the Leningrad University*.

'In the pre-revolution period at Petersburg University,' Kovalëv wrote in his article, ('Anglistik in the Faculty of History of Foreign Literature at Leningrad University,' *The Transactions of Leningrad University*, 1969, vol. 1, pp. 103-109.) 'there was no department of Anglistik. It was opened in 1919, and the head of the department was Zirmunskij. The responsibilities of teaching all aspects of Anglistik rested on the shoulders of three men, S. K. Vojanus, Ja. N. Blokh, and V. M.

Zirmunskij. But even in this state the English Department was short-lived because in next year (i. e. in 1920) F. A. Brown, head of the department of Germanic philology, left. ...' Where did Fëdor Aleksandrovič leave who 'in the 80's in the 19th century read a lecture in Germanic philology, i. e. in old Germanic literature and languages?' (I. P. Ivanova & A. V. Fedorov, 'Germanic linguistics in Leningrad University in the Past 60 Years,' *The Transactions of Leningrad University*, 1978, vol. 8, p. 97.)

I hunted for Fëdor Aleksandrovič, the founder of Germanic philology in the Soviet union, and I found him in the entry for L. V. Schelva, student and successor of Baudouin de Courtenay, in *the Dictionary of East-Slavic Linguists*, vol. 3, 1978, pp. 293 & 297).

I was informed from this entry that there was a special volume of *The Proceedings of Western New Philological Society*, which had been founded by Aleksandr Nikolaevič Veselovskij (1838–1906). And I managed to locate the volume 8 of this journal (for 1915) in the catalog of Lenin National Library. Although I could not find the volume, I could locate two items of bio-bibliography pertaining to Fëdor Alesandrovič Brown.

One is in *The First Edition of Great Russian Encyclopedia* (Moscow, 1927, s. v. 'Brown, Fëdor Aleksandrovič'): the other is 'Brown, Fëdor Aleksandrovič, 1862–: Notes of Scholarly Works of Prof. F. A. Brown' (Leningrad, 1929). The latter article was part of a voluminous *Transactions of The Academy of Science : Division of Humanities*, which I was able to see at the library of the Institute of the Russian Language in Moscow. (Chief librarian, Lyudmira Selgeevna kindly searched for the book and showed it to me.)

2. Fëdor Aleksandrovič Brown —the man and his work—

Thanks to the efforts of Veselovskij, in 1885 was founded the department of Romano-Germanic philology at Petersburg University, and three students he invited to join the faculty was F. D. Batyushka for Romanistik, R. O. Lang for Anglistik and F. A. Brown for Germanistik. (*History of Leningrad University: Survey*, 1969, p. 128 & 148.) The date and year is always a tricky point for issue: I. Moskal'skaja thought that the Romano-Germanic faculty was opened in 1884. ('Soviet Germanistik for the Past 50 Years (German Language)', *Foreign Languages in School*, 1967, vol. 5, p. 29.), while Zirmunskij thought it was in 1883. ('Academician V. F. Shishmarëv (1874–1957)', *B. F. Shishmarëv, Collected Works: French Literature*, 1965, p. 4.)

Fëdor Aleksandrovič was born in Petersburg in July in 1862. Having finished the First Saint-Petersburg High School he went into the historico-philological faculty of Saint Petersburg University. He graduated from it with honors, and the theme for his graduation thesis, for which he won the first-place gold medal, was 'Beowulf'.

While he stayed and studied in the University, he was sent abroad to Germany, Switzerland, France and England further to pursue his studies. In 1888 when he came home he was nominated Director of German Language, and Assistant Professor at the Department of Romano-Germanic Philology. In 1900 he was promoted to Professorship at the same department when he had taken his doctorate degree. From that year to 1920 he was Deputy, Dean of the Department, and then Vice-president of the University.

In March 1920 Brown was again sent abroad by the University to get acquainted with the development of the discipline. The fruit of this study abroad was his co-authored survey of scholarly literature in Germany for 1914-21 (*Systematische Bibliographie der Wissenschaftlichen Literatur Deutschlands der Jahre 1914-21*, Berlin, 1923. (Bd 1;1. Teoretische Wissenschaften, Bd. 1; 2. Angewandte Wissenschaften (Bd. II;Medizin, Bd. III;Technik und Landwirtschaft, Bd. IV;Gesamtregister, Bd. V;Bibliographie des Wissenschaftlichen Socialismus, bearbeitet von Drahn)

He had permission from the Commisariat of National Education and accepted the invitation of Leipzig University to conduct a course in Germanic Antiquity. And in 1921 Professor Brown was awarded from Leipzig University honorary doctorate degree, and then in the next year he was elected to the chair of Professor Emeritus at the same university. From 1921 he was teaching at Leipzig University Germanic Antiquity and Russian language. He also conducted a seminar in History of Russian Culture and Society. Later when the faculty of History of Eastern Europe was founded in Leipzig University Fëdor Aleksandrovič was elected Extraordinary Professor for the faculty.

Professor Brown's scholarly interests were formed and given a precise contour when he was a student of Veselovskij. With his thesis of 'Beowulf', Brown had already substantially contributed to Romano-Germanic scholarship initiated by his teacher, Aleksandr Nikolaevič Veselovskij. At about the same time his another interest was in general linguistics as well as in historical linguistics, especially of Germanic languages. Encouraged by Veselovskij, Brown took to historical study of Germanic languages, and at the same time he made a study of Sanskrit and comparative linguistics under Professor Minaev, and Slavic philology at Professor I. V. Jagič, and when abroad in Germany Fëdor Aleksandrovič worked at Karl Brugmann and Hermann Paul (in Freiburg), and at Ferdinand de Saussure (in Paris).

At about this time (1885-1887) in the field of linguistics appeared a cycle of problems to which Professor Brown was to dedicate many of his later monographs. The problems were not of linguistics proper but of paleontological nature. They are the problems of antiquity in the wider sense of the word. But in so far as linguistic materials and methods were used to the problems these problems of antiquity was a set of linguistic problems.

As a Russian specialist in Germanistik, Brown could not but take interest in

problems of great stature bordering the fields of Slavistik and Germanistik which had not been satisfactorily solved. Such problems took his concern and engaged him in his later studies.

The first fruit of the study of these problems was in the field of historical ethnology and it treats the fate of the Goths at Krim (*Die Letzten Sciksale der Krimgoten*, 1890).

In 1890 Brown visited a settlement of the last descendants on the border of Azovskij Sea, and excavated the ruins of the Krim Goths' principality.

The report of this excavation was published in the *Living Antiquities* for 1890 entitled 'Mariupl'skie Greki', and also in *The Reports of Archeological Commission* for the same year.

To the Goth problems was dedicated his doctoral dissertation entitled *Researches in Goth-Slav Relationship, 1, Goths and their Neighbors up to the 5th Century. First Period: Goths on Wiesel* in *The Transactions of the Division of Russian Language and Literature at the Academy of Science* (vol. 64, Nr. 12, 1899.)

To this first part was to follow two more monographs in which Brown was to elucidate Goth period in the life of Slavs in general and Eastern Slavs in particular. However Fate had it that the first part remained unfinished because of the work entrusted to Brown in 1900 by the Division of Russian Language and Literature of the Academy of Science. It was the work to edit and publish all documents of Scandinavian literature which belong to Russia and treat of the East. To this problem of great scope and extent Fëdor Aleksandrovič dedicated his later part of life. In the fullness of time the result of his study was published in *The Transaction of the Division of Russian Language and Literature* mentioned above, and in the *Minutes* of the Session of the same Division for 1901 and for 1902.

Brown made a thorough study of all materials of Icelandic saga and concluded that it was not necessary to publish all the sagas which had been found in Russia and pertained to her. It was enough, in his opinion, to publish only those sagas whose motifs were of exclusively Russian. As for other sagas, He asserted, selection must be made of Russian episodes of similar intention. His contention was that Russian episodes must be selected with similar selective eyes.

Along with sagas Brown took interest in Runic (Swedish) writings which gave direct and reliable information on Scandinavians' excursion in Russia and in the East. With the help of fund from the Adademy of Science Brown was able to travel three times to Sweden and to do field researches in all 82 stones which had attracted his attention. The vast materials which he had collected, of sages and of Runic inscriptions, was in due time entrusted to the Academy of Science. While working for the publication of all collected materials Brown incidentally made a study of an episode pertaining to the name of a Swiss, Ingvar', who had been in Russia at the principality of Jaroslav.

The result of this research was published in 1890 in *The Transactions of New Philological Society*, the representative of which had been A. N. Veselovskij, his teacher and founder of Romano-Germanic department at Historico-philological Faculty of Petersburg University. In 1910 it was written in Swedish and was published in the journal for Swedish Academy of History (*Kungl. Vitterhets, Historie och Antikvitets Akademien*). In addition to this Professor Brown published in the pages of *The Proceedings of Archeological Commission* Swedish Runic inscriptions which had been found by Professor E. R. von Stern in 1905 on the island of Verezan. Professor Brown was duly elected Foreign Member for the Swedish Academy of History in 1920.

The whole materials of sagas and Runes Professor Brown had collected and collated have not been published to this day, because of the outbreak of the war, although the publication had begun in 1911 and the type had been set for the first volume.

In Germany at Leipzig University Brown's scholarly and educational work took another turn. Along with the course in Germanic Antiquity he opened a course in Russian language, Literature and History in order that the students might be acquainted with various phases of Russian culture. These courses gave rise to his monographs on historical connection of old Russians with Germanic tribes ('Das historische Russland in nordischen Schriften des X-XIV Jahrhunderts'; 'Russland und Deutschen in alter Zeit'; 'Borrowed Words'; 'Varangian on Old Russians',)

Professor Brown took part in translating into German a famous course of V. O. Klutsevskij's and several other Russian scholarly books. A Russian journal 'Talk' (*Vesega*) was published under his editorship in 1923-1925. Fëdor Aleksandrvič was also conversant with the so-called Japhetic theory, and in 1922 in Stuttgart Professor Brown published the book entitled *Die Urbevölkerung Europas und die Herkunft der Germanen*. In the book Professor Brown tried to apply Marr's theory to solve the problem of the origin of the Germans. He treated the same problem in his booklet written in Russian and published in Berlin in 1923, *The Primitive Inhabitants of Europe*.

Wide was Professor Brown's knowledge in all the fields of humanities; rigorous was his method, but so fecund was his production of scholarly works in the forms of books, monographs and articles that he was duly awarded Honorary Correspondentship of the Academy of Science in the Soviet Union.

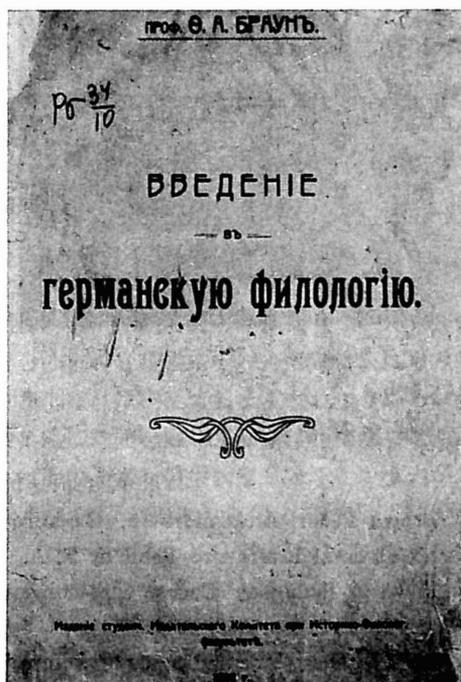
3. Reprospect —the founder lost & found—

If one wants to write history of Romano-Germanic philology in the Soviet Union, one must know all about A. N. Veselovskij, V. M. Zirmunskij, A. B. Shishmarëv and F. A. Brown. But it is an irony of fate in history of Soviet Germanistik that F. A. Brown was talked of by so many and was known by so few. On the 15th of

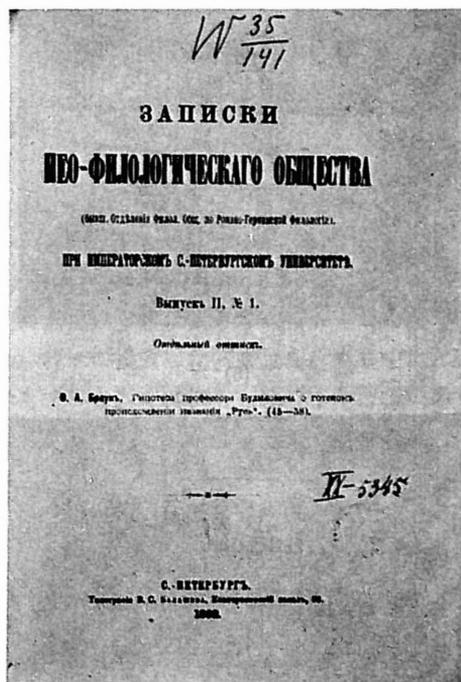
August in 1979 I flew to Moscow on the Russo-Japan Exchange Program of Scholars for 1979-1980. On the next day I flipped catalogs and all in Lenin National Library to know all about Fëdor Aleksandrovich Brown.

All that I found about him in the library was that there was five books of his stored in the library and that one article of him is also stored in this library. as I said earlier, I freely made use of this article in preparing this paper. Photo-prints of the title pages of these five books in the library follow with a code number in the parentheses.

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1. Brown Fëdor Aleksandrovič, *Introduction to Germanic Philology* 1912 (R6 34/10)
2. Brown Fëdor Aleksandrovič, 'Hypothesis of Professor Brown on Gothic Origin of the Name "Rus" Ptg. 1892 (W 35/141)

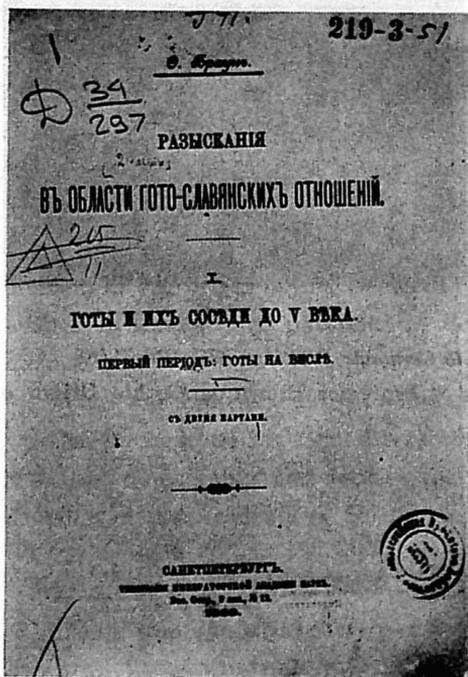
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3. Brown Fëdor Aleksandrovič, 'Lecture on Universal Literature Read by F. A. Brown at Pedagogy Course for Women 1891-1892' Ptg., 1892. (V 98/39)
4. Brown Fëdor Aleksandrovič, 'Primitive Inhabitants of Europe', 1924 (R 135/1205, 135/1206, A 191/824)
5. Brown Fëdor Aleksandrovič, 'Researches in the Fields of (D34/297) Goth-Slavic Relationship', Ptg. 1899.