



ALEKSANDR FEDOROVICH BELOUSOV
(10 AUGUST 1946 — 5 JANUARY 2023)

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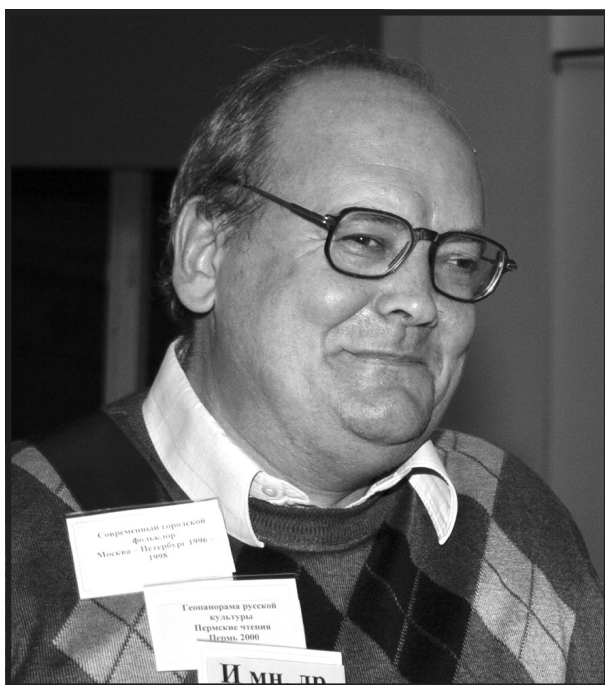


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Aleksandr Fedorovich Belousov (10 August 1946 — 5 January 2023)

Aleksandr Fedorovich Belousov died on 5 January 2023. We have lost a remarkable literary scholar, folklorist and historian of culture, an outstanding academic administrator, and a talented, sensitive, charming and witty man.

Born in Riga, Belousov originally entered the Faculty of History and Literature of the Latvian State University, but soon transferred to Tartu. His emergence as a scholar and the formation of his research interests and methodological preferences are all connected with that city and with the Department of Russian Literature of the University of Tartu.¹ He completed his undergraduate and graduate studies there, in the mid-1970s he began to teach, and in 1980 he defended his candidate's dissertation titled "The Literary Heritage of Old Russia in the Folk Tradition of the Old-Established Russian Settlers in the Baltics." His academic advisor was Yury Lotman, and his opponents at the defence were Aleksandr Panchenko and Boris Uspensky. His interest in folklore and in the culture of the Russian Old Believers² arose

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¹ In the Soviet period, the university was known as Tartu State University. [Eds.]

² Belousov A. F., 'Kolybelnaya iz Prichudya' [A Lullaby from the Peipus Area], *Uchen. zap. Tartusk. gos. un-t.*, 358, Tartu: Tartu State University Press, 1975, pp. 157–167 (*Trudy po russkoy i slavyanskoy filologii*, 24); Belousov A. F., 'Pesni i skazki russkogo naseleniya Estonii' [Songs and Fairy Tales of the Russian Population of Estonia], *Folklor russkogo naseleniya Pribaltiki*, ed. by A. F. Belousov, T. S. Makashina, N. K. Mitropolskaya; chief ed. E. V. Pomerantseva. Moscow: Nauka, 1976, pp. 184–241; Belousov A. F., 'O sudbakh svadebnoy obryadnosti u russkikh starozhilov Latgalii' [On the Fate of Wedding Rituals among the Old-Established Russian Settlers in Latgalia], *Sbornik trudov SNO filologicheskogo fakulteta*, Tartu: Tartu State University Press, 1977, pp. 133–150 (*Russkaya filologiya*, 5); Belousov A. F., 'Iz zametok o staroobryadcheskoy kulture: "Velikoe ponyatie nuzhdy"', *Vtorichnye modeliruyushchie sistemy*, Tartu: Tartu State University Press, 1979, pp. 68–73 (in English: A. F. Belousov, 'A Note on the Culture of the Old-Believers: "The Great Concept of Want"', *Kulturologiya: The Petersburg Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1993, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 87–91); Belousov A. F., 'Poslednie vremena' [The Last Times], *Aequinox: Sb. pamyati o. Aleksandra Menya*, ed. by I. G. Vishnevetsky, E. G. Rabinovich. Moscow: Carte Blanche, 1991, pp. 9–33; Belousov A. F., "'Stikh o knige Golubinoy" v zapisi I. N. Zavoloko' ["The Verse about 'The Book of the Dove'"] as recorded by I. N. Zavoloko], *Zhivaya starina*, 1994, no. 1, pp. 41–42; Belousov A. F., "'Staraya vera": istoriko-kulturnyy tekst russkikh starozhilov Pribaltiki' ["The Old Belief": A Historical-Cultural Text of the Old-Established Russian Settlers in the Baltics], *Texts and Communities*:

during folklore collecting expeditions among the Russian peasantry of the Lake Peipus area in Estonia and the province of Latgalia in Latvia. Belousov began going on these when he was still a student in Riga.¹

From 1977 to the end of the 1980s, Belousov worked at the Tallinn Pedagogical Institute, where he not only carried out his assigned teaching, but organised literary conferences, drawing speakers from various cities in the Soviet Union, and published, one after another, a whole series of collections of scholarly articles, disguised as brochures on method for students and teachers, so as to legitimate their publication by the TPI's in-house press.²

In 1990, Aleksandr Fedorovich and his family moved to St Petersburg. During the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, he worked at the Pushkin House, taught at the Faculty of Literature of St Petersburg University, and at the Faculty of Ethnology (as it then was) and the Faculty of Art History at the European University, St Petersburg. He gave lectures on contemporary folklore³ and the analysis of literary texts, and accompanied students on folkloric expeditions to Vologda Region. The two graduate projects that he supervised were case studies in the folklore and mass culture of the twentieth century: schoolgirls' manuscript albums and Young Pioneer literature.⁴

The last place where Belousov worked, throughout the 2000s, was the Department of Children's Literature at the St Petersburg University of Culture and the Arts, bringing a good deal of energy,

Soviet and Post-Soviet Life in Discourse and Practice, Aleksanteri Series (Helsinki), 2007, no. 4, pp. 135–144. (All in Russian with one exception).

- ¹ Afterwards, for many years, he himself led parties of students into the field in different parts of Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, and the Smolensk, Novgorod, Pskov and Vologda provinces of Russia.
- ² *Uchebnyy material po analizu proizvedeniy khudozhestvennoy prozy. (Propedevtichesky kurs "Istoriya russkoy literatury")* [Teaching Material for the Analysis of Works of Literary Prose (a Propaedeutic Course "The History of Russian Literature")], ed. by A. F. Belousov, Yu. L. Sidiyakov. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical Institute Press, 1979, 118 pp.; *Prepodavanie literaturnogo chteniya v estonskoy shkole: metod. razrabotki* [Teaching Literary Reading in Estonian Schools], ed. by A. F. Belousov. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical Institute Press, 1981, 156 pp.; *Uchebnyy material po analizu proizvedeniy khudozhestvennoy prozy* [Teaching Material for the Analysis of Works of Literary Prose], ed. by A. F. Belousov. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical Institute Press, 1984, 122 pp.; *Russkaya klassicheskaya literatura. Analiz khudozhestvennogo teksta: Materialy dlya uchitelya* [Classic Russian Literature. Analysis of the Literary Text. Materials for the Teacher], ed. by A. F. Belousov. Tallinn: Valgus, 1988, 120 pp. (All in Russian).
- ³ Belousov A. F., 'Sovremennyy gorodskoy folklor: Programma kursa' [Contemporary Urban Folklore: A Course Programme], *Ezhгодnik fakulteta etnologii 1999–2000*. St Petersburg: EUSP Press, 1999, pp. 63–67; Belousov A. F., 'Sovremennyy gorodskoy folklor: Programma kursa' [Contemporary Urban Folklore: A Course Programme], *Kafedra istorii russkoy literatury: Uchebnye programmy* [The Department of the History of Russian Literature: Study Programmes]. St Petersburg: St Petersburg State University Press, 2000, pp. 363–371. (All in Russian).
- ⁴ Kalashnikova M. V., *Sovremennyy albom: tipologiya, poetika, funktsii* [The Contemporary Album: Typology, Poetics, Functions]: Long Abstract, Candidate of Philological Sciences Dissertation. Tver: Tver State University, 2004, 25 pp.; Leontyeva S. G., *Literatura pionerskoy organizatsii: ideologiya i poetika* [The Literature of the Pioneer Organisation: Ideology and Poetics]: Long Abstract, Candidate of Philological Sciences Dissertation. Tver: Tver State University, 2006, 24 pp. (All in Russian).

common sense and warm humour into its everyday life and atmosphere. Not least due to his presence in the department, it became, in those years, a landmark on the map of St Petersburg scholarly life, and one that attracted scholars in the humanities, whose interests went far beyond the study of children's literature. In the 2010s, when former lecturers of the department created a Centre for the Study of Children's Literature at Pushkin House, Belousov, although already retired, continued to participate in all the Centre's joint projects.

A scholar of his era, a representative of the Tartu school and a disciple of Lotman, in most of his work (which covered a wide range of phenomena) he adhered to the research problems, approaches and concepts that were predominant in late Soviet literary studies. He studied the interactions between folklore and literature: this set of problems determined the topic of his candidate's dissertation and a series of other works.¹ A number of his articles were devoted to the analysis of individual poetic texts, including the much anthologised works of Russian classical authors, in the spirit of Lotman's school — from form to meaning,² and at a recent meeting, he mentioned that he considered his highest achievement to be his early article on Pushkin's "Winter Evening."³ He was interested in the cultural history of particular *topoi* in Russian poetry,⁴ and social types appearing in stereotypical ideas and literary

- ¹ Belousov A. F., *Literaturnoye nasledie Drevney Rusi v narodnoy slovesnosti russkikh starozhilov Pribaltiki* [The Literary Heritage of Old Russia in the Folk Tradition of the Old-Established Russian Settlers in the Baltics]: Long Abstract, Candidate of Philological Sciences Dissertation. Tartu: Tartu State University, 1980, 21 pp. (see also: Belousov A. F., 'O vliyaniy starinnoy pismennosti na mirovozzrenie russkikh starozhilov Pribaltiki' [On the Influence of Old Writings on the Outlook of the Old-Established Russian Settlers in the Baltics], *Uchen. zap. / Tartusk. gos. un-t*, Vyp. 491, Tartu: Tartu State University Press, 1979, pp. 3–12 (Tipologiya russkoy literatury i problemy russko-estonskikh literaturnykh svyazey. Tr. po rus. i slav. filologii, vol. 31); Belousov A. F., Mityurev S. N., 'Byt i folklor podrostkov v proizvedeniyakh F. M. Dostoyevskogo' [The Life and Folklore of Adolescents in the Works of Dostoyevskiy], *Problemy tipologii literaturnogo folklorizma*. Chelyabinsk: Chelyabinsk State University Press, 1990, pp. 15–29. (All in Russian).
- ² Belousov A. F., 'Problemy istolkovaniya stikhotvoreniya A. S. Pushkina "Na kholmakh Gruzii..." [Problems in the Interpretation of Pushkin's Poem "On the Hills of Georgia"]', *Uchebnyy material po metodike prepodavaniya literaturnogo chteniya v estonskoy shkole*. Tallinn: Tallinn State Pedagogical Institute Press, 1987, pp. 3–10; Belousov A. F., 'Razmyshlyaya nad otryvkom iz poemy E. Bagritskogo "Smert pionerki"' [Considering a Fragment of Bagritskiy's poem "The Death of a Pioneer Girl"], *Russkiy yazyk v estonskoy shkole*, 1982, n. 3, pp. 23–26. (All in Russian).
- ³ Belousov A. F., 'Stikhotvorenie A. S. Pushkina "Zimniy vecher"' [Pushkin's Poem "Winter Evening"], *Russkaya klassicheskaya literatura. Analiz khudozhestvennogo teksta: Materialy dlya uchitelya*. Tallinn: Valgus, 1988, pp. 14–34. See also: Belousov A. F., 'Vozvrashchayas k "Zimmemu vecheru": mifologicheskiy aspekt stikhotvoreniya' [Returning to "Winter Evening": The Mythological Aspect of the Poem], *ПОЛУТРОПОН. К 70-летию Vladimira Nikolayevicha Toporova*. Moscow: Indrik, 1998, pp. 579–582. (All in Russian).
- ⁴ Belousov A. F., 'Akklimatizatsiya sireni v russkoy poezii' [The Acclimatisation of the Lilac in Russian Poetry], *Lotman-70: Sb. statey k 70-letiyu prof. Yu. M. Lotmana*. Tartu: Tartu State University Press, 1992, pp. 311–322; Belousov A. F. 'Siren moey vesny' [The Lilac of My Spring], *Sbornik pamyati V. A. Sapogova*. Cherepovets: Cherepovets State University Press, 2000, pp. 138–144 (Severo-Zapad: Istoriko-kulturnyy regionalnyy vestnik: Statyi i materialy, is. 3); Belousov A. F., 'Iz istorii russkoy

representations.¹ Sharing then recently developed scholarly interest in the culture of the everyday life of previous ages, and in life scenarios and behavioural models dictated by the norms of the social milieu (an interest that Lotman had a significant role in promoting where the study of literature was concerned), Belousov directed his research attention to the life and traditions of private boarding schools for girls, and students of the Noble Maidens' Institutes became one of the major topics of his scholarship.²

As a historian of literature, Belousov had his favourites. Thus, he spent almost thirty years, from the 1990s to his last days, studying, commenting on, publishing and popularising the work of Leonid Dobychin. As he prepared the novel *The Town of N* and books of the writer's short stories for publication, and as he worked in the archives of various cities (St Petersburg, Moscow, Riga, Vilnius, Minsk), Belousov not only recreated many of the realities of life in Dvinsk (present-day Daugavpils) at the beginning of the twentieth century, but also discovered undoubted prototypes for Dobychin's main characters.³ Carried away by his research, he did not usually

"kladbishchensky" poezii: stikhotvorenie K. Sluचेvskogo "Na kladbishche" [From the History of Russian "Cemetery" Poetry: Sluचेvskiy's Poem "At the Cemetery"], *Smert kak fenomen kultury: Mezhevz. sb. nauch. tr.* Syktyvkar: Syktyvkar University Press, 1994, pp. 4–23. (All in Russian).

- ¹ Belousov A. F., 'Institutki v russkoy literature' [Students of the Noble Maidens' Institutes in Russian Literature], *Tynyanovskiy sbornik: Chetvertye Tynyanovskie chteniya*. Riga: Zinatne, 1990, pp. 77–99; Belousov A. F., 'Vnuk dyachka' [The Parish Clerk's Grandson], *Philologia. Rizhsky filologichesky sbornik*. Riga: Latvian University Press, 1994, is. 1: *Russkaya literatura v istoriko-kulturnom kontekste*, pp. 30–41; Belousov A. F., 'Obraz seminarista v russkoy kulture i ego literaturnaya istoriya (ot komicheskikh intermediy XVIII v. do romana Nadezhdy Khvoshchinskoy *Bariton'*)' [The Image of the Seminarian in Russian Culture and its Literary History (from the Comic Interludes of the 18th Century to Nadezhda Khvoshchinskaya's Novel *The Baritone*)], *Traditsiya v folklore i literature: Statyi, publikatsii, metod. razrabotki prepodavateley i uchenikov Akademicheskoy gimnazii Sankt-Petersburgskogo gos. un-ta*, ed. by M. L. Lurie. St Petersburg: Akademicheskoy gimnazium of St Petersburg State University, 2000, pp. 159–176; Belousov A. F., "'Farmazony" (Narodnye predstavleniya o masonstve) ["Farmazony": Popular Ideas of Freemasonry], *A. M. Panchenko i russkaya kultura: Issledovaniya i materialy*. St Petersburg: Pushkinskiy dom, 2008, pp. 106–115. (All in Russian).
- ² Belousov A., "The Folklore Culture of the Students of the Noble Maidens' Institutes", *Kulturologiya: The Petersburg Journal of Cultural Studies*, 1993, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 57–61; Belousov A. F. "Institutka / The Institutka (Boarding-School Girl)" [parallel text in English], *Uskolzayushcheye vremya, ili Plody vospitaniya: Katalog Vtoroy ezhegodnoy vystavki Tsentra sovremennogo iskusstva Dzh. Sorosa*. St Petersburg: S. n., 1996, pp. 28–37; Belousov A. F., 'Institutki', *Institutki: vospominaniya vospitannits institutov blagorodnykh devits*, ed. with commentaries by V. M. Bokova, L. G. Sakharova, intro. by A. F. Belousov. Moscow: NLO, 2001, pp. 5–32; Belousov A. F., 'Druzha i obozhanie sredi vospitannits zhenskikh institutov v Rossii nachala XX veka' [Friendship and Adoration among the Students of Russian Institutes of Noble Maidens in the Early 20th Century], *Syuzhetoslozhenie i syuzhetografiya* (Novosibirsk), 2019, no. 2, pp. 120–126. (All in Russian with two exceptions).
- ³ Belousov A. F., 'Zhiznennaya osnova i literaturnyy kontekst romana L. Dobychina *Gorod En'* [The Basis in Life and Literary Context of L. Dobychin's novel *The Town of N*], *Labirinti: Collana del Dipartimento di Scienze Filologiche e Storiche*, 1995, vol. 18: "Vtoraya proza": *russkaya proza 20–30-kh godov XX veka*, pp. 45–50; Dobychin L. *Polnoye sobranie sochineniy i pisem* [Complete Works and Letters], ed. and notes by V. S. Bakhtin; general ed., co-author of notes A. F. Belousov; intro. by A. Yu. Aryev. 2nd expanded edn. St Petersburg: Soyuz pisateley Sankt-Peterburga; "Zvezda" Magazine, 2013 (1st edn.: St Petersburg: "Zvezda" Magazine, 1999), 540 pp.; Belousov A. F., 'Vskore my uvidelis i s Aleksandroyu Lvovnoy...' [Soon After I Saw Aleksandra Lvovna As Well], *Dobychinskiy sbornik* — 4. Daugavpils: Daugavpils Pedagogical University Press "Saule," 2004, pp. 249–257; Dobychin L., *Gorod En* [The Town

stop there, but traced the later fates of the people he had researched. Thanks to his many years' study of Dobychin, Belousov's favourite work became a real commentary, and he admitted in conversation that the most exciting part of the work of literary studies for him was the work of a historian.

Another important hero of his studies was Evgeniy Shesholin, the samizdat poet from Pskov of the 1960s–80s. Like Dobychin, Shesholin was connected biographically with Latvia and Daugavpils. He died young and was known only to a very small circle of people until Belousov became interested in his work. An oral tradition (but quite a reliable one) relates that he first heard of the existence of such a poet when he was teaching a course on the analysis of poetical texts to graduate students at the European University at St Petersburg: for one assignment, one of his students did an analysis of a poem by the friend of his youth, already dead by that time.¹ The consequence of this chance encounter with Shesholin's poetry was a long and profound literary enthusiasm on the part of Belousov, which produced a series of articles, publications and commentaries.²

of N], notes and commentaries by A. F. Belousov. Daugavpils: Daugavpils University Press "Saule," 2007, pp. 93–226; Belousov A. F., *Elza Budrikh: realnaya biografiya literaturnoy geroini* [Elsa Budrich: The Real Biography of a Literary Heroine], *Dobychinskiy sbornik* — 6. Daugavpils, 2008, pp. 217–224; Belousov A. F., 'Vsmatrivayas v "Portret": "Tovarishch Shatskina" u Dobychina' [Looking Deep Into "The Portrait": Dobychin's "Comrade Shatskina"], *Stanford Slavic Studies*, 2012, vol. 43: *Avoti. Trudy po balto-rossiyskim otnosheniyam i russkoy literature. V chest 70-letiya Borisa Ravdina*: in 2 parts, pt. 2, pp. 113–118. See also the biographical articles on Dobychin: Belousov A. F., 'Poslednie dni Leonida Dobychina' [The Last Days of Leonid Dobychin], *Pisatel Leonid Dobychin. Vospominaniya, statyi, pisma*, ed. by V. S. Bakhtin. St Petersburg: "Zvezda" Magazine, 1996, pp. 25–32; Belousov A. F., 'Studentcheskoye delo L. Dobychina' [Dobychin's Student Dossier], *Dobychinskiy sbornik* — 4. Daugavpils: Daugavpils University Press "Saule," 2004, pp. 15–20. (All in Russian).

¹ This was Vsevolod Rozhnyatovskiy, who had been friendly with Shesholin in Pskov, and who became an historian of Old Russian architecture: see his obituary, Rozhnyatovskiy S., 'Evgeniy Shesholin', *Sumerki: literaturno-khudozhestvennyy zhurnal*, 1990, no. 10, pp. 61–69. (In Russian).

² Belousov A. F., 'Poet Evgeniy Shesholin' [The Poet Evgeniy Shesholin], *Zvezda*, 2005, no. 10, pp. 194–201. Belousov A. F., 'Stikhotvorenie Evgeniya Shesholina "Roditsya gde-nibud v provintsii..."' [Evgeniy Shesholin's poem 'To be Born Somewhere in the Provinces...'], *Evgeniy Shesholin: sudba i tvorchestvo*, ed. by A. F. Belousov, F. P. Fedorov. Daugavpils: Daugavpils University Press "Saule," 2005, pp. 123–131. (Almanakh Instituta komparativistiki: russko-latyshskie literaturnye kontakty, is. 1); Belousov A. F., "Pskovskie virshi" Evgeniya Shesholina' [Evgeniy Shesholin's "Pskov Verses"], *Iskusstvo poetiki — iskusstvo poezii. K 70-letiyu I. V. Fomenko*: A coll. of articles. Tver: Tver State University Press, 2007, pp. 140–149; Belousov A. F., "'Pervyy severnyy divan" Evgeniya Shesholina' [Evgeniy Shesholin's *The First Northern Divan*], *Uchenye zapiski Novgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. Yaroslava Mudrogo*, 2018, no. 5 (17), pp. 1–4; Shesholin E., *Solntse nevechnoe* [The Sun Not Eternal], ed. by A. Belousov, G. Shesholina; intro. by A. F. Belousov. Rezekne: Latgalia Cultural Centre Press, 2005, 264 pp.; Shesholin E., *Pervyy Severnyy Divan* [The First Northern Divan], ed. by M. Andreev; intro. by A. Belousov; commentaries by M. Andreev, A. Belousov, D. Prokofyev. Moscow: Palmir, 2015, 107 pp.; Shesholin E., *Izbrannoe (dekabr 1979 — dekabr 1987)* [Selected works, December 1979 – December 1987], ed. by M. Andreev; commentaries by M. Andreev, A. Belousov, D. Prokofyev. Moscow: Palmir, 2015, 100 pp.; Shesholin E., *Iz raznykh tetradey (stikhotvoreniya 1973–1988)* [From Various Notebooks: Poems 1973–1988], ed. by M. Andreev; commentaries by M. Andreev, A. Belousov, D. Prokofyev. Moscow: Palmir, 2015, 231 pp.; Shesholin E., *Izmaragd so dna Velikoy (stikhotvoreniya 1979–1989)* [An Emerald from the Bottom of the Velikaya], ed. by M. Andreev, commentaries by M. Andreev, A. Belousov, D. Prokofyev. Moscow: Palmir, 2015, 190 pp. (All in Russian).

Aleksandr Fedorovich had a remarkable talent for broadening horizons. He could discern and formulate a major new topic, enthuse colleagues from different cities, institutions and disciplines, and create a space for communication. Every time it turned out that this topic chimed with many people's interests; it was as if it had been "hanging in the air," just waiting for the moment to receive a name, a scale and legitimacy within the scholarly community. And that moment arrived thanks to Belousov's faultless intuition, research enthusiasm and huge energy.

Thus, while Belousov was still living in Tallinn, he became interested in urban folklore, and modern children's folklore as part of it. This field of research, which was soon to develop explosively in post-Soviet folklore studies, is firmly associated with the name of Belousov, not only as the author of a whole series of significant works about cycles of narrative jokes,¹ urban songs² and sadistic rhymes,³ but, above all, as one of its pioneers and enthusiasts. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, once again in the format of "teaching materials," two brochures were published in Tallinn with his lectures on con-

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- ¹ Belousov A. F., 'Anekdoty o Shtirlitse' [Jokes about Stierlitz], *Zhivaya starina*, 1995, no. 1, pp. 16–18; Belousov A. F., 'Vovochka', *Antimir russkoy kultury. Yazyk, folklor, literatura: A coll. of articles*, ed. by N. A. Bogomolov. Moscow: Lodomir, 1996, pp. 165–186; Belousov A. F., 'Anekdoticheskiy tsikl o Krokodile Gene i Cheburashke' [The Cycle of Jokes about Gena the Crocodile and Cheburashka], [*Pamyati Ya. I. Gina*]. *Problemy poetiki yazyka i literatury: Materials of scientific conference*, May 22–24, 1996. Petrozavodsk: Karelian State Pedagogical Institute Press, 1996, pp. 86–89; Belousov A. F., 'Sovremennyy anekdot' [The Contemporary Narrative Joke], *Sovremennyy gorodskoy folklore* [Contemporary Urban Folklore]. Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities Press, 2003, pp. 581–598 (Italian translation: Belousov A., 'La barzelletta contemporanea', *eSamizdat. Rivista di culture dei paesi slavi*, 2022, vol. 15, pp. 349–362); Belousov A., Lurie M., 'Youth Humour in Postsoviet Russia', *Post-Socialist Jokelore: International Symposion* [sic], *January 15–16, 2007*. Tartu: Estonian Literary Museum, 2007, pp. 9–11. (All in Russian with two exceptions).
- ² Belousov A. F., 'Kommentariy k pesne "Chubarovtsy" ("Dvadtsat let zhila ya v provintsii...")' [Commentary on the song "Chubarovtsy" ("I Lived Twenty Years in the Provinces")], *Literatura i chelovek. (Pisateli, chitateli, filologi): Sb., posvyashchennyy 55-letiyu professora M. V. Stroganova*. Tver: Marina, 2007, pp. 77–84; Belousov A. F., 'Pesnya o peterburgskom zavodchike Putilove' [The Song of Putilov, the Petersburg Industrialist], *Zhivaya starina*, 2011, no. 1, pp. 6–8; Belousov A. F., 'Ot proisshestviya — k folkloru: leningradskie pesni-khroniki 1920-kh godov' [From Event to Folklore: Leningrad News Ballads of the 1920s], *Problemy istorii, filologii, kultury*, 2012, no. 2 (36), pp. 284–299; Belousov A. F., "'Kak na kladbishche Mitrofanyevskom...": pravda i vymysel gorodskogo romansa' ["At the Mitrofanyevskoe Cemetery": Truth and Invention in the Urban Romance], *Genius Loci: Sb. statey v chest 75-letiya S. Yu. Neklyudova*, ed. by M. V. Akhmetova, N. V. Petrov, O. B. Khristoforova. Moscow: Forum, 2016, pp. 253–264; Belousov A. F., 'Pesnya o "Burevestnike"' [The Song of the Stormy Petrel], *Vostok — Zapad: prostranstvo lokalnogo teksta v literature i folklore: Sb. nauch. statey k 70-letiyu professora A. Kh. Goldenberga*. Volgograd: Peremena, 2019, pp. 374–380. (All in Russian).
- ³ Belousov A. F., 'Sadistskie stishki' [Sadistic Rhymes] [ed., with foreword and commentary], *Russkiy shkolnyy folklor. Ot "vyzyvaniy" Pikovoy damy do semeynykh rasskazov*, ed. by A. F. Belousov. Moscow: Lodomir; AST, 1998, pp. 545–577; Belousov A. F., 'Folklor'naya sudba elektriika Petrova' [The Folklore Fate of Petrov the Electrician], *Studia Metrica et Poetica: Sb. statey pamyati Petra Aleksandrovicha Rudneva*. St Petersburg: Akademicheskyy proekt, 1999, pp. 303–308; Belousov A. F., 'Nedolgo muchilas starushka...' [The Old Woman Didn't Suffer Long], *Arkhiv peterburgskoy rusistiki. K 60-letiyu P. A. Klubkova*, 2009. <<https://ruthenia.ru/apr/textes/klubkov60/belousov.html>>; Belousov A., 'The Energy of Confrontation: A History of Russian Sadistic Poems', *Contemporary Folklore: Changing World View and Tradition*. Tartu: Estonian Literary Museum, 1996, pp. 311–320. (All in Russian with one exception).

temporary urban folklore and children's folklore (the latter also included an examination of its contemporary forms¹), followed by two collections of articles and materials, one entirely devoted to the genre of narrative joke, and the other, which came out in two volumes, to "school life and folklore."² Those folklorists who were dreaming at that time of modernising the discipline and reviewing the conventional boundaries of its subject matter saw the appearance of the "Tallinn collections" (as they called them amongst themselves) as the sign of a breakthrough. Owning one of these unassuming little books, printed on a duplicator and bound with staples, was a cause for envy, and publishing in them seemed deliberately to place the author in the vanguard of the new Russian folklore studies that had overcome the dictates of the conservatism and purism of Soviet scholarship. Even the title of the two-volume work was conceptually innovative: instead of the usual "children's" or "adolescents'," it was defined as "school" folklore, and this was repeated in the later and more fundamental publication on the same phenomenon, the collection *Russkiy shkolnyy folklor*.³ In this way the specificity and consistency of this folklore tradition was connected not with the age of those it belonged to, but with their institutionally conditioned social milieu and its everyday culture — their "life." Such a change of focus indicated deeper theoretical shifts in the Russian folklore studies of that time than just a widening of the empirical base.

In the late 1990s, Sergei Neklyudov and Aleksandr Belousov co-organised a long-running seminar on the study of urban folklore, which became both an academic platform and a research working group. Belousov brought a whole team of young specialists in literary studies from St Petersburg to join this project. The visible scholarly outcome of the seminar's work was the collection *Sovremennyy gorodskoy folklor*,⁴ published in 2003, but an even more important consequence was the formation of a solid community of young folklorists of the "new wave" from Moscow, St Petersburg and

¹ Belousov A. F., *Gorodskoy folklor: lektsiya dlya studentov-zaochnikov* [Urban Folklore: Lecture for Distance-Learning Students]. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical Institute Press, 1987, 26 pp. (Italian translation: Belousov A., *Il folklore urbano: lezione a studenti per corrispondenza*, eSamizdat. Rivista di culture dei paesi slavi, 2022, vol. 15, pp. 229–240); Belousov A. F., *Detskiy folklor: lektsiya dlya studentov-zaochnikov* [Children's Folklore: Lecture for Distance-Learning Students]. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical Institute Press, 1989, 38 pp. (All in Russian with one exception).

² *Uchebnyy material po teorii literatury. Zhany slovesnogo teksta. Anekdot* [Teaching Material on the Theory of Literature. Genres of the Verbal Text. The Narrative Joke], ed. by A. F. Belousov. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical Institute Press, 1989, 204 pp.; *Shkolnyy byt i folklor* [School Life and Folklore]: in 2 parts: Teaching material on Russian folklore, ed. by A. F. Belousov. Tallinn: Tallinn Pedagogical Institute Press, 1992, pt. 1, 223 pp.; pt. 2: *Devichya kultura* [Girls' Culture], 160 pp. (All in Russian).

³ *Russkiy shkolnyy folklor. Ot "vyzyvaniy" Pikovoy damy do semeynykh rasskazov* [Russian School Folklore. From "Summoning" the Queen of Spades to Family Stories], ed. by A. F. Belousov. Moscow: Ladomir; AST, 1998, 743 pp. (In Russian).

⁴ *Sovremennyy gorodskoy folklor* [Contemporary Urban Folklore], ed. by A. F. Belousov, I. V. Veselova, S. Yu. Neklyudov. Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities Press, 2003, 731 pp. (In Russian).

elsewhere. Although subsequently the research interests and methodological preferences of the seminar's participants might have diverged, they remain as one in the principles of their scholarly position and assessments in which they were formed, and to a large extent this determines the overall landscape of present-day Russian folklore studies and cultural anthropology. Belousov's role in the seminar's strong impact cannot be overestimated.

Another large-scale project of Belousov's, on which dozens of scholars in the humanities worked for several years, was devoted to research on the phenomenon of the Russian provinces. In alliance with colleagues from various universities, he organised a series of annual conferences that took place in "provincial" towns (more than once in some of them), which were followed by the publication of collections of articles.¹ At an institutional level, the project was supported by the Russian Academy of Sciences² and implemented in collaboration with several Russian higher education institutions. On the conceptual level, it presupposed a dual interpretation of the phenomenon, and, accordingly, a possible choice of research perspective: the Russian provinces were understood both as a "reality" — the living world of provincial cities with their social and cultural individuality — and at the same time as a "myth" and the "text" that represented it — a cultural construct of the nineteenth century, a sort of "imagined provinces" endowed with persistent typical characteristics and evaluations. Belousov's own works in this area concerned cultural stereotypes, literary and folkloristic representations, and the symbolic nomenclature of the Russian provinces, including particular towns and localities within them.³

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- ¹ *Russkaya provintsiya: mif — tekst — realnost* [The Russian Provinces: Myth, Text, Reality], comp. by A. F. Belousov, T. V. Tsiyvan. Moscow; St Petersburg: Tema, 2000, 491 pp.; *Provintsiya kak realnost i obyekt osmysleniya* [The Provinces as a Reality and as an Object of Interpretation]: Materials of a scientific conference. 29.08–1.09.2001, Tver, comp. by A. F. Belousov, M. V. Stroganov. Tver: Tver State University Press, 2001, 225 pp.; *Geopanorama russkoy kultury: provintsiya i ee lokalnye teksty* [A Geopanorama of Russian Culture: The Provinces and Their Local Texts], comp. by V. V. Abashev, A. F. Belousov, T. V. Tsiyvan; ed. by L. O. Zayonts. Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskoj kultury, 2004, 669 pp.; *"Vo glubine Rossii...": Statyi i materialy o russkoy provintsii* ["In the Depths of Russia...": Articles and Materials on the Russian Provinces]: XIX Fetovskie chteniya (Kursk, 7–9 okt. 2004 g.), comp. by A. F. Belousov, N. Z. Kokovina, M. V. Stroganov; foreword by A. F. Belousov. Kursk: Kursk State University Press, 2005, 269 pp. (All in Russian).
- ² The project "The Provincial Text of Russian Culture" (1997–2001), initiated and co-ordinated by A. F. Belousov, received the support of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Council on World Culture through the active participation of T. V. Tsiyvan.
- ³ Belousov A. F., 'Literaturnaya sudba Dinaburga — Dvinska — Daugavpilsa' [The Literary Fate of Dünaburg — Dvinsk — Daugavpils], *Slavyanskije chteniya*. I. Daugavpils; Rezekne: Daugavpils Pedagogical University Press; Latgalia Cultural Centre, 2000, pp. 209–216. (See also: Belousov A. F., 'Dinaburg — Dvinsk — Daugavpils v russkoy literatüre' [Dünaburg – Dvinsk – Daugavpils in Russian literature], *Slavica Tergestina*, 2000, vol. 8: Khudozhestvennyy tekst i ego geokulturnye stratifikatsii. Atti dei convegni Università degli Studi di Bergamo "Khudozhestvennyy tekst i sosiednie kulturnye ryady" 9–10 dicembre 1996. "Literatura i kulturnye stratifikatsii" 7–8 settembre 1998, pp. 263–271); Belousov A. F., 'Simvolika zakholyustya (oboznachenie rossiyskogo provintsialnogo goroda)' [The Symbolism of the Back of Beyond (the Meaning of the Russian Provincial Town)], *Geopanorama russkoy*

Aleksandr Fedorovich was one of those rare people to whom doors are everywhere opened with a smile. Not only in Riga, Tallinn and Tartu, where he had worked or studied, but also in Moscow, Kyiv, Daugavpils, Petrozavodsk, Tver, Ulyanovsk, Volgograd, Chelyabinsk — practically everywhere he happened to go, he had colleagues and friends who readily involved themselves in whatever he proposed, and always warmly received him and anyone he happened to bring with him.

He was himself very attentive to people and took an interest in them, surrounding himself with younger colleagues (“Belousov’s young people,” as those close to him jokingly called them), involving them in his projects, and exchanging thoughts, opinions and plans with them. Not many of them were his immediate pupils, but many can say with confidence that Belousov exerted a very direct influence on their research interests and academic trajectory.

He enjoyed having friends, and knew how to have them. He took evident pleasure in introducing people to each other, and created circles and networks of academic and human relationships. Thus, in the early 2000s, Belousov, who was then working at the St Petersburg University of Culture and the Arts, and F. P. Fedorov, a professor at Daugavpils University, organised a “colloquium of young scholars from St Petersburg and Daugavpils,”¹ without any particular pretext, simply having convinced the leadership of both universities to support a good initiative. The seminar turned into a series of annual meetings, which took place alternately in the two cities, and the “friendship between the houses” grew into personal friendship between the participants.

Both as a scholar and as a person, Aleksandr Fedorovich Belousov leaves behind him rich memories and a warm feeling of gratitude in many people’s souls. Although in recent years colleagues’ meetings with him were not very frequent, everyone who knew him well now acutely misses these meetings and conversations, with his special manner of telling stories and asking questions, his critical judgments and unforgettable humour. May his memory be bright.

kultury: provintsiya i eye lokalnye teksty, comp. by V. V. Abashev, A. F. Belousov, T. V. Tsvyan; ed. by L. O. Zayonts. Moscow: Yazyki slavyanskoy kultury, 2004, pp. 457–481; Belousov A. F., ‘Arzamas v russkoy literature XIX–XX vekov’ [Arzamas in Russian Literature of the 19th and 20th Centuries], *Literaturnoye obshchestvo “Arzamas”: kulturnyy dialog epoch* [“Arzamas” Literary Society: Cultural Dialogue of Epochs]: Materials of international scientific conference. Arzamas: Arzamas State Pedagogical Institute Press, 2005, pp. 189–202; Belousov A. F., ‘Uyezdnyaya glush zakhlostyua’ [The Provincial Depths of the Back of Beyond], *Natales grate numeras?: A coll. of articles to commemorate Georgiy Akhillovich Levinton’s 60th birthday*. St Petersburg: European University at St Petersburg Press, 2008, pp. 107–118; Belousov A. F., ‘O stikhotvorenii Aleksey Shadrinova “Provintsialu”’ [On Aleksey Shadrinov’s Poem “To the Provincial”], *Prekrasneyshyey*: A coll. of articles in memory of Elena Dushechkina. St Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriya, 2022, pp. 292–298; etc. (All in Russian).

¹ *Literaturnye yavleniya i kulturnye konteksty* [Literary Phenomena and Cultural Contexts]: Materials of the Colloquium of young scholars in the humanities of St Petersburg and Daugavpils, ed. by M. L. Lurie. St Petersburg: St Petersburg University of Culture and the Arts Press, 2005, 109 pp. (In Russian).