

Vladimir (Woldemar Justus Konstantin) Malmberg (1860–1921), Professor of Dorpat and Moscow Universities

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Abstract: *The creative development of the well-known art historian, Professor Vladimir (Woldemar Justus Konstantin) Malmberg (1860–1921), was connected with several universities: the Kazan University, where he was a student (1879–1984) and began lecturing as Assistant Professor (1888–1889); the University of St Petersburg, where he prepared for professor's activity (1884–1887); the universities of Dorpat (now Tartu, 1890–1896) and Moscow (1907–1921), where he worked as professor during a significant period. Besides lecturing, he put a great deal of his strength and energy to archaeological investigations and museum work. The main part of Malmberg's works was devoted to the history of Ancient Greek culture, but he also wrote some articles on Ancient Egyptian art, the antiquities of southern Russia, and the painting of Albrecht Dürer. His creative contribution to art criticism was appreciated in Russia and abroad. He was a member of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society in St Petersburg, the Society of History and Antiquities in Odessa, the Associate Member of the Imperial Archaeological Commission and the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin, Rome and Athens.*

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At the end of the 18th and in the first half of the 19th century, the history of Ancient Greece gained importance in European historiography. The most intensive work in this area took place in Germany. The basics of the scientific history of ancient art were laid down by Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who created an outstanding work *History of Ancient Art* (1764) and “invented an aesthetic scheme which has deeply affected European attitudes to Greece ever since” (Davies, 1997, p. 96).

The work generalizing the study of many German historians was a three-volume monograph by Ernst Curtius, *Greek History* (1857–1867), in which he devoted much attention to archaeology and art history. Curtius compared the newest method for studying the ancient world with the experimental method, which was then already widely used in natural sciences: quite like natural scientists find answers to their questions with the aid of experience, archaeologists conduct methodical archaeology diggings in those places where, according to science, there are potential sources of solution to their issues. The last third of the 19th century was marked by a number of major archaeological discoveries in the history of Ancient Greece. The most outstanding results were obtained from excavations made by German researchers Heinrich Schliemann and Wilhelm Dörpfeld in Troy, Mycenae and Tiryns (1871–1894), as well as by Englishman Arthur Evans in Crete (1900).

During the same period there was a major breakthrough in the study of the history of Ancient Egypt. Much credit for this belongs to Adolf Erman, a prominent Egyptologist and lexicographer, founder of the Berlin School of Egyptology. The classical works of Erman and his school laid the foundation for modern Egyptology, affecting the development of this area of science in many countries. Among his disciples are known researchers such as Alan Gardiner in England, James Breasted in America, Gulio Farina in Italy, and Boris Turaev in Russia. In the late 19th century, major discoveries in the excavations in Egypt were made by French researchers Gaston Maspero (1881; 1889) and Victor Loret (1898), German Egyptologist Emil Brugsch (1881), and English archaeologist Flinders Petrie (1884).

Pioneering works in the field of Antique and Ancient Egyptian art disclosed, according to Ludwig Borchardt, “the most striking lines of the incredible dialogue of epochs”. However, the recreation of the fullest possible picture of the history of art of the Ancient World required the hard work of dozens of researchers from different countries, and one of them was the Russian scientist Vladimir Malmberg.

Vladimir K. Malmberg was born in Moscow on the 1st of December 1860 in a merchant’s family. In 1884, he completed a course of History and Philology at the Department of Classics of the Kazan University. In the autumn of that year, Malmberg was awarded the Candidate of Sciences degree and since March 1, 1885 worked at the University to prepare for a professorship at the Department of History and Theory of Fine Arts. In this capacity he was seconded to the University of St Petersburg to study under the guidance of Professor Adrian V. Prakhov (art historian, archaeologist), Ivan V. Pomialovskii (researcher of Roman literature, archaeologist) and Petr V. Nikitin (literary historian).

During the Christmas holidays in 1885, Malmberg visited Dorpat (now Tartu), where Professor Georg Löschcke acquainted him with the university museum. Over the period of three months in the summer of 1886 in Germany, he attended the lectures of professors of the University of Berlin, historians of Antiquity, and archaeologists Ernst Curtius, Johann Adolf Michael Furtwängler and Carl Robert, and participated in practical exercises conducted by them. In 1887, his St Petersburg coach Prakhov was sent abroad on a scientific mission, and to continue his internship, Malmberg was relocated to Dorpat to work with professor Löschcke. In the spring of 1887 he passed the exam for a master's degree in Art History and Theory at the University of St Petersburg, and after reading two trial lectures was awarded the title of assistant professor.

In early 1889, Malmberg was appointed to the position of assistant-professor in the Department of History and Theory of Fine Arts at the Kazan University. However, in late 1889 the Ministry of Education invited him to take the position of the acting extraordinary professor of Classical Philology and Archaeology at the University of Dorpat. He agreed on condition that he would be lecturing only on the history of ancient art, antiquities of life and cult, and the ancient authors related to these disciplines. On May 10, 1890 Malmberg entered the service at the University of Dorpat (*Biograficheskii slovar'* ..., 1903).

History of Ancient Art was a compulsory subject for the students of the department of Classics, so Malmberg annually repeated the course of the History of Greek and Roman Art. Besides the main subject he lectured Mythology, Greek and Roman Antiquity, Introduction into Homeric Epics and the Homeric Antiquity, as well as the works of Greek and Roman authors: Pausanias, Pliny, Vitruvius and Lucian. As elective subjects he lectured the Overview of Art History for junior classes and Explanation of Plaster Casts open to all faculties. He carried out practical exercises in various fields of archaeology, including antiquities found in Russia, as a result of the Imperial Archaeological Commission activities (Malmberg, 1891). The university lacked funds to buy materials for demonstrations and workshops, but Malmberg managed to get for free 28 plastic groups, individual statues and busts from the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts.

In the summer of 1892, Malmberg was assigned to an expedition to southern Russia, where he participated in archaeological excavations. In 1894, he was given an assignment for six months, most of which he spent in Athens. While in Greece, he took part in the journey to the Greek islands, organized by the German Archaeological Institute under the guidance of Professor Wilhelm Dörpfeld, the famous German archaeologist, and visited various places in the Peloponnese and Delphi. From Greece via Venice, Nuremberg, Cologne and Antwerp, he went to

London and via Berlin returned to Russia. In 1897, he traveled to Stockholm and Copenhagen and in 1900 to Paris, Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Florence and Vienna.

Based on his own and other scientists' archaeological discoveries, Malmberg wrote several articles on the history of Ancient Greek culture. In 1889, he published his work 'Essays on Ancient Greek art. Some methods of pottery-painters' in *Memoirs of the Imperial Russian Architectural Society in St Petersburg*. In 1899, his article on the history of the study of military arms of the ancient Greeks was published in *Scientific Proceedings of the Imperial Kazan University*. He wrote that in 1838 the Englishman Charles Fellows found bas-relief images of the fourth-century warriors carrying round shields with pieces of cloth-like dense mats attached. Later these boards with mats made of cloth or leather were found in figures depicted on vases (5th century) and on sarcophagi (6th century). According to Malmberg (1890), these mats served to protect the soldiers' feet from the arrows of the attackers.

In 1892, Malmberg's work *Metopes of the Ancient Greek Temples. Research in the Field of Decorative Sculpture*, was published in Dorpat, and was defended by him as his master's thesis. In 1894, after conducting his own research during a stay in Greece, he amended this work, carried out by studying the publications of other scientists. After analyzing the relief decoration on all four sides of the Parthenon, he concluded that the sculptural groups on the pediment and friezes were created by talented artists based on the models of the famous artist Polignotus, and the sculpture metope on the north side represents a pattern borrowed from another, less-known master (Malmberg, 1894).

In 1904 Malmberg defended, in St Petersburg, his doctoral thesis on *Ancient Greek Pediment Compositions*, in which he noted that the marble figures of the pediments were painted in ancient times with a predominance of red color and stood out against a dark blue or light blue background. In 1907, he became professor at the Moscow University, and spent the rest of his life in Moscow. Vladimir Pavlov (1962, p. 45) recalled: "I had the good fortune to listen to his lectures on Egyptian Art. He not as much analyzed the monument, but mostly described it, and the statue came to life in these descriptions, became soulful". As in the University of Dorpat, professor Malmberg, during his lectures, showed photos and drawings, and during the sessions at the museum – original works of art, or plaster casts and copies. For larger audiences he insisted on using the magic lantern (image projector) during demonstration, as it was done by Hermann Grimm in Berlin and Adolf Furtwängler in Munich (Malmberg, 1896). In addition to teaching, he put a lot of effort and energy to the museum work.

In the early 20th century, the Moscow Museum of Art, now named the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, was opened. It was based on the Munzkabinett, the later Cabinet of Fine Arts and Antiquities of the Moscow University, as educational support and public repository of casts and copies of classic works of world art, and it was first called the Museum of Plaster Copies Named after Emperor Alexander III at the Moscow University (Kharko, 1960). The initiative for its creation in 1893 came from Ivan V. Tsvetaev, professor of Moscow University, doctor of Literature and the Roman historian, who became the first director of the museum. The museum building was erected under the supervision of architect Roman I. Klein from 1899 to 1894. The construction was funded by sponsors. At the same time there were on-going activities on collection and ordering of the future exhibits, in which Malmberg took part. The opening of the museum was held on May 31, 1912, and in 1913 Malmberg was appointed to the position of the director of the museum.

The pride of the museum was a collection of Egyptian antiquities collected by the famous Russian Egyptologist Vladimir S. Golenishchev (1856–1947), a distant relative of Commander Mikhail Kutuzov. Golenishchev had been fascinated by Ancient Egypt from a young age, and when he was 14 years old he acquired his first item which laid the foundation for the future collection. Having made later more than sixty trips to Egypt, he collected over 6,000 valuable monuments of Egyptian art, purchased by the Russian state on the occasion of the opening of the Museum of Fine Arts (Golovina, 2006). Inspired by the study of Golenishchev's artifact collection, Malmberg seriously engaged himself in the study of ancient Egyptian art.

Interest in the Egyptian art, derived from the general state of the study of Arts, has experienced a new surge in the first quarter of the 20th century. Throughout this period, Art stood out as the object of independent study in various fields of cultural history. The first special researches into art history, including Egypt, appeared in Western Europe. The work by Gaston Maspero from 1887 highlighted important issues of the artistic culture of Egypt and was titled *L'archéologie égyptienne*; in 1912 he outlined the same problem in a more profound form in a book titled *Essais sur l'art égyptien*. The emancipation of the history of Egyptian art from the general Egyptian studies eventually prevailed; its focus was not only the general patterns of development, but also separate directions, schools and artists. A variety of tasks of the young discipline of Egyptian Art History could be accomplished with the help of original materials assembled in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities of the Museum of Fine Arts.

The result of Malmberg's creative exploration was a series of works devoted to the attribution of the exhibits of the museum, the largest of which was written

jointly with Boris A. Turaev (Malmberg & Turaev, 1917). An article, published in 1915, and polemical in its nature, devoted to discussing the methods of composition of human body in the works of Ancient Egyptian art, holds a special place in his work. The human figure, shown with expanded shoulders and upper part of the body from the front, and legs in profile, first appeared in the painted figures and in reliefs during Dynasty I, and remained such throughout the period of Ancient Egyptian art (Pavlov, 1936). In the study of art this method was given various explanations and interpretations. In the late 19th and early 20th century the dominating opinion, the most important representative of which was Bissingen, insisted that Egyptian artists sought to portray the human body in all three dimensions. Erman was in agreement with such an interpretation:

The dominant style in the Egyptian painting affects us primarily with a strange interpretation of the human figure. In an effort to show every part of the body from the point of view which for us is the most characteristic, Egyptian artists painted such a body with the strange twists that are completely contrary to reality. In general, the figure is conceived in profile, as evidenced by the head, arms, legs and feet. But in this profile an eye is placed en face, and the main confusion is in the torso, namely, the shoulders are visible from the front, while the tibia put in the profile, and chest and stomach should serve as intermediate link between them. With regard to the chest, then this is reflected by the fact that the posterior contour shows the outline of it [the torso] en face, and the front – in profile, the lower abdomen should be thought about three-quarters, as it shows the position of the navel. (Erman, 1923)

Malmberg was the first to dispute this view, which was present in all textbooks on the history of art, insisting that it is about using only two dimensions:

I am – convinced that just the opposite – in the Egyptian picture, with the unfolded shoulders we never have the torso in front, but always from the side, as proven through its contour: one is always contour of the chest and abdomen, the other – back and the bottom. Excessive expansion of the body is due to the image of both shoulders and the need to drive the external contours of the body to the armpits. (Malmberg, 1915)

And then concludes, “So, you could not talk about the inability of Egyptian artists to draw person on the plane surface, but only the desire to express three dimensions using the two most characteristic ones: the profile image is

combined with expanded shoulders and put en face eye” (Malmberg, 1915, p. 16). Although the position of Malmberg was also controversial, his ability to be critical of the conclusions of a recognized authority deserves respect. In terms of the particular issue it is interesting to understand the view of Borchardt, who believed that the artist, drawing a figure, did not intend to create a common track, but constructed it from separate body parts that is close to the principles of children’s drawings. Such drawing should be read like a letter, not to be perceived as a whole. Its strange proportions were caused by the desire to most accurately portray the individual items in their reality (Gess, 1921).

Malmberg, professor of the Moscow University, also lectured at the Imperial Archaeological Institute Named after Nicholas II, the institution established by private funds for the “scientific development of archaeology, archaeography and Russian history, with the supporting disciplines”. The institute, which was opened in Moscow in 1907, admitted students with higher education, others could audit the courses. The education was scheduled for three years; the third year was devoted to archaeological excavations and studies in the archives. Lectures were given by the best specialists: philologist Sergei I. Sobolewskii, archaeologist Vassili A. Gorodtsov, art historian Vladimir K. Malmberg, and others. Occasionally, prominent scientists read the special courses. For example, the Russian artist Nicholas Roerich had chosen the following topic for his lectures – Applying Artistic Techniques in Archaeology.

In the first years of its existence, the Nicholas II Archaeological Institute occupied leased premises but then, at the expense of sponsors, mostly S. P. Ryabushinskii, a special building was constructed to host the institute. The construction works started on May 24th, 1913, on the day of celebrating the 300 years of the Romanov’s dynasty, and in 1914 lectures were already conducted in the new building. The institute has opened branches in other cities of Russia: Smolensk, Nizhny Novgorod, Vitebsk, Kaluga, Yaroslavl and Rostov. The journal *Notes of the Moscow Nicholas II Archaeological Institute*, as well as individual works of researchers were published periodically; scientific expeditions around Russia and abroad were conducted; opening of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Rome was planned. But in the Soviet times the activities of the institute, which existed on donations and fees, ended.

Malmberg’s works were known both in Russia and abroad. Together with a group of Russian scientists he participated in many international congresses, making reports on various topics, in particular: ‘Gold artifacts found in Hersonissos’ (1st International Archaeological Congress in Athens, 7–13

April 1905), 'On Belvedere Torso' (International Archaeological Congress in Rome, 9–16 October 1912). In 1917, the Russian colleagues expressed their respect to Vladimir K. Malmberg, dedicating to him the Digest of the Moscow Society for the Exploration of Ancient Monuments named after A. I. Uspenski at the Moscow Archaeological Institute. The digest included articles by such prominent specialists as Boris A. Turaev, Mikhail I. Rostovtsev, Voldemar K. Shileiko, Alexey V. Nazarevsky, and others. Nikolay A. Shcherbakov presented a list of the works of professor Malmberg, consisting of more than 50 positions (*Sbornik Moskovskogo obshchestva...*, 1917). Several years later, Malmberg was gone. He died in Moscow on December 9, 1921.

The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts continues to be a place of interest – a treasury of world art, a research center in the field of culture and art, an educational institution. Since the time of the first publications of Vladimir K. Malmberg, many new discoveries have been made, and many original ideas and concepts have been generated. But it all highlights the contribution that he and his colleagues, the first Russian Egyptologists, have made in the course of creating the museum and studying its remarkable collections.

Besides his research and lecturing activities, professor Malmberg was known in the field of the organizational-scientific work. He was a member of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society in St Petersburg, the Society of History and Antiquities in Odessa, the Moscow Society of the Exploration of Ancient Monuments named after A. I. Uspenski, and the Associate Member of the Imperial Archaeological Commission and the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin, Rome and Athens.

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