

‘A Satisfaction to the Heart and to the Intellect’

A Note on Osvald Sirén’s Connections with Italy through his Epistolary

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A few years ago, I was visiting the Sirén Archive in Stockholm (Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities) researching the letters Osvald Sirén (1879–1966) had written to the Italian art historian Lionello Venturi (1885–1961).¹ Sirén was a Finnish-born art historian who lived for most of his life in Sweden. However, he worked for some time as the art advisor to the Finnish entrepreneur and collector Paul Sinebrychoff (1859–1917). His expertise covered 18th-century Swedish art and Old Masters and thus he could secure some extremely fine examples that found their way into the Finnish collection. Today the works are part of the Finnish National Gallery Collection and can be visited at the Sinebrychoff Art Museum in Helsinki.² With this article I aim to shed new light on Sirén’s international career and the impact of his professional networking on the Italian art history scene.

Sirén and Venturi had shared an interest in Italian art history, and in particular the Italian Primitives. Among the letters I read, there was one that caught my attention, although it was not especially pertinent to my primary interest. It was addressed by Sirén to his Italian colleague.³ In it a rather moved Sirén wrote to Venturi, both an old friend⁴ and the spokesman of the Faculty, expressing his gratitude for the degree of *Doctor Honoris Causa* he had

1 The research was connected to my doctoral thesis which deals with the relationship between Sirén and Venturi in the 1920s and will be examined in 2019.

2 The collection was donated and belongs to the Finnish State.

3 Copy of the letter from Osvald Sirén to Lionello Venturi, 26 February 1959. Collection of Sirén’s letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

4 The circumstance of their first encounter is uncertain. However, the two scholars were part of the same network of intellectuals involved with Italian Primitive Art, including Bernard Berenson and Adolfo Venturi. Antonella Perna, ‘Osvald Sirénin matka Italian taidehistoriaan.’ In Teppo Jokinen & Hanne Selkokari (eds.), *Italiassa ja Saksanmaalla. Taiteilijoiden ja taiteentuntijoiden matkassa 1840–1930*. (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2011), 267–75.

Islinge Lidingö, Sverige
5 mars 1912

B. B.

Med anledning af ditt bref af den 2 dennes kan jag försäkra dig att Mierowald-porträttet nog är "all right." Att Menting slog ned priset mer än jag väntat hoppas beredde han sig i någon mån därpå att jag skref till honom att var djärfv åt bejra 4000 gulden och beteckna det som en förmånspris - så man gjäf kort förut värderat tyflan till endast 3000 kr, hvilket - om jag är rättligt undermålad - var det pris han betalade.*

Jag har, som sagdt, ej något tydligt personligt minne af tyflan, men jag är benägen att tro att det är en bra sak och att du har gjort en god förvärf.

Ditt sköna hälsotillstånd önskar och smäktar mig. Motte du nu finna belöfligt lugn och hvila!

Arvodesfrågan har jag besvarat och också öfriga framställda frågor, så vitt som jag kunnat.

Är din resa öfver Stockholm?

Med hjärtlig hälsning
Telegrafvännen

Oswald Sirén

* Menting telegraferade till mig 1:sta gången omhelldt efter mottagande af ditt bud och undrade huru han skude ställa sig!

A letter from Oswald Sirén to Paul Sinebrychoff, Islinge, Lidingö, Sweden, 5 March 1912.
Collection of Paul Sinebrychoff's Correspondence. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery
Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Kirsi Halkola

received from the University of Rome La Sapienza.⁵ Sirén explained to Venturi that he was glad that his 'contributions in the fields of Oriental and Italian art' had been acknowledged as important. He also added he especially appreciated such recognition because of his personal 'intellectual connection and artistic devotion to Italy'.⁶ The official motivation for

5 Copy of the letter from Oswald Sirén to Lionello Venturi, 26 February 1959. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

6 Copy of the letter from Oswald Sirén to Lionello Venturi, 26 February 1959. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

awarding the honorary degree, granted by the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy⁷, emerges in another letter sent by the dean Angelo Monteverde: it was granted for the 'high merits reached in the field of art-historical research'.⁸ These facts alone, however, do not explain the reasons and the events leading to the award. I thus became interested in understanding the circumstances surrounding such recognition in a country where Sirén had neither maintained any institutional position nor any official role.

I found that Sirén's connection to Italian art history could not fully explain the events leading to such recognition. He had not been active in the field of Italian art scholarship for a long while. I knew I had to look elsewhere for the answers. Venturi was probably involved as an old friend and as a representative of the Italian athenaeum, but the real link would prove to be another of Sirén's many Italian friends and colleagues: Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984). Tucci was a scholar of Asian cultures.⁹ Soon after graduation, he moved to India, where he worked and studied until 1931. At the time of his return to Italy, he had a deep and diverse knowledge of Asian civilisations, despite his expertise being focused mainly on Tibetan culture. In 1933 Tucci supported the foundation of ISMEO, the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East.¹⁰ He intended to promote a cultural relationship between Italy and Asian countries and to co-ordinate a common ground for research in Italy.¹¹

This article does not aim to provide a complete and exhaustive understanding of the relationship between Sirén and Tucci. My approach remains limited to the consideration of the epistolary with Tucci and his entourage. In making this choice, I am aware that this leaves out much of the larger context necessary to a full understanding of the complex matter of Sirén's connection with the Italian academic network and scholarship. However, since there are no previous studies on the relationship with Tucci, I would like to present a first analysis of unpublished letters and other archival material that can throw some light on this aspect of Sirén's professional life: his particular role in the development of Oriental scholarship in Italy. Moreover, this brief analysis, while describing some aspects of Sirén's personality, his way of working and establishing a network of fellow scholars, contributes to a better understanding of the circumstances leading to the award of the honorary doctorate. The material in the Sirén Archive relating to the partnership with Tucci proves to be a particularly remarkable source if one considers the ISMEO Archive's poor state of preservation since many of its documents were destroyed or dispersed during the Second World War.¹²

7 Both the departments of Art History and Eastern Studies are still part of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy at the University of Rome La Sapienza. While it had been possible to study art history from 1896 onwards, the curriculum of Eastern studies (Eastern religions and philosophies) was inaugurated only in 1932. More specifically teaching on Eastern art history was available starting from 1953. <https://web.uniroma1.it/diso/chi-siamo> (accessed 4 September 2017).

8 Letter from Angelo Monteverdi to Sirén, 20 March 1959. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

9 Massimiliano A. Polichetti, 'Giuseppe Tucci.' <http://www.museorientale.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/166/approfondimenti-tematici/12/0/0> (accessed 31 August 2017).

10 Giuseppe Tucci and Giovanni Gentile founded ISMEO, the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East, in 1933. Massimiliano A. Polichetti, 'Giuseppe Tucci.' Museo d'Arte Orientale Giuseppe Tucci, last modified 6 October, 2015, <http://www.museorientale.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/166/approfondimenti-tematici/12/0/0> (accessed 31 August 2017).

11 'Chi siamo.' Dipartimento Istituto Italiano di Studi Orientali <https://web.uniroma1.it/diso/chi-siamo> (accessed September 9, 2017).

12 Sirén used to keep a copy of the letters he sent. Most of the documents kept at ISMEO's Archive were dispersed in 1944. Francesco D'Arelli, 'In cerca di una nuova memoria.' In Maurizio Scarpari & Tiziana Lippiello (eds.), *Caro Maestro... Scritti in onore di Lionello Lanciotti per l'ottantesimo compleanno*. (Venezia: Cafoscarina, 2005), 15–34. Since 2017, ISMEO's documents have been available at the National Library in Rome. 'Riapre la Biblioteca ISIAO nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma.' Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma, <http://www.bncrm.beniculturali.it/it/790/eventi/1805/> (accessed 31 August 2017).

Osvald Sirén's shifting interests through different areas of art history

Sirén studied art history, then a newly established discipline at the University of Helsinki in Finland, under the supervision of J. J. Tikkanen (1857–1930), who became the first Professor of Art History in 1897.¹³ Soon after his graduation in 1898, Sirén settled in Stockholm, Sweden to work first at the Nordic Museum and then at the National Museum. The city at the time had more to offer to art historians in terms of opportunities and networks than did Finland because of its university, museums, and private collections. While living in Stockholm, Sirén also completed his doctoral dissertation on 18th-century Swedish genre painting, a field that became his area of research for some time after his graduation. However, at the beginning of the 20th century, he began exploring a new field, the Old Italian Masters.¹⁴ In 1902, the same year that his research on the Swedish painter Carl Gustav Pilo was released, he published a survey of Italian Renaissance artworks in Swedish collections.¹⁵ At the time, collecting and the art market offered a good alternative prospective of employment to art historians besides museums and universities, mainly due to the demands of a larger number of collectors. Sirén was interested in exploring the possibilities connected with the roles of advisor to collectors and as an expert for dealers. In this regard he gained his first experience back in Finland through working for his fellow countryman Paul Sinebrychoff.

Paul Sinebrychoff was a beer tycoon and one of the richest industrialists in Finland at the time. He began collecting art from an early age and although art might have worked as a means of social advancement, as was usual at the time, he also collected with a genuine passion and competence. He dedicated much of his free time, during the nights to learning more, he followed auctions and sales, and participated within an international network of collectors.¹⁶ Nevertheless he had to rely on intermediaries because he lived in Finland and the management of his business limited his possibilities to be at the forefront of the international art market.¹⁷ Until 1900, Sinebrychoff had relied mainly on the advice of Henryk Bukowski (1839–1900) and purchased most of his artworks through his auction house based in Stockholm. After Bukowski's death Sinebrychoff soon realised he needed a replacement.¹⁸

Sirén offered all the promising characteristics that Sinebrychoff would have wanted. He was young and ambitious, he was based in Stockholm and was an expert in Swedish genre painting, which at the time the collector favoured. Sirén became Sinebrychoff's representative in Sweden and exhorted the scholar to keep an eye out on his behalf for art works of his interest, in auctions, through collectors, and on transactions and to report to him unconditionally and confidentially.¹⁹ The co-operation between Sirén and Sinebrychoff, which was at its most active from 1901 to 1909, was satisfying and productive for both parties as can be seen through the extensive correspondence kept at the Archive Collections of the Finnish National Gallery.²⁰

13 Johanna Vakkari, *Focus on form. J.J. Tikkanen, Giotto and Art Research in the 19th Century* (Helsinki: Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistyksen aikakausikirja, 2007), 38–45.

14 Minna Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans. Osvald Sirén's journey into Chinese Art*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 9–13

15 *Carl Gustaf Pilo och hans förhållande till den samtida porträttkonsten i Sverige och Danmark: ett bidrag till den skandinaviska konsthistorien* (1902); *Dessins et tableaux de la Renaissance italienne dans les collections de Suède* (1902).

16 Susanna Pettersson, 'Suspense and Jubilation. The Sinebrychoffs as Art Collectors.' In Minerva Keltanen (ed.), *Sinebrychoff. From Art Collectors' Home to Art Museum*. Sinebrychoff Art Museum Publications. Helsinki: Finnish National Gallery / Sinebrychoff Art Museum, 2003, 71–83.

17 Kai Kartio, 'Introduction. Paul and Fanny Sinebrychoff and their Art Collection.' In *Sinebrychoff Art Collection. A celebratory exhibition*. Helsinki: Finnish National Gallery / Sinebrychoff Art Museum, 1993, 26–35.

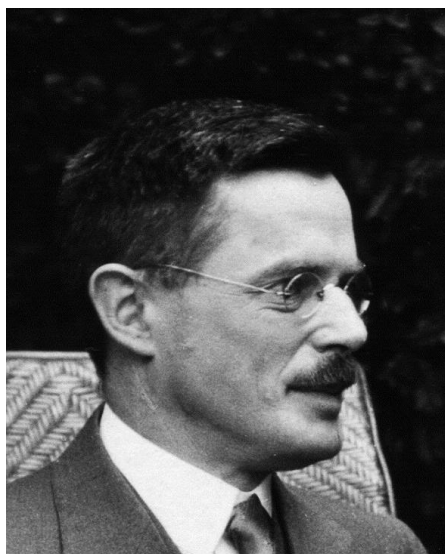
18 Kartio, 'Introduction', 26–35.

19 Pettersson, 'Suspense and Jubilation', 71–83.

20 'Osvald Sirén.' Paul Sinebrychoffin kirjarkisto, <http://kirjarkisto.siff.fi/Dealers/OsvaldSirén/tabid/60/Default.aspx> (accessed 31 August 2017).

Osvald Sirén.
Photographer and date
unknown.

Photo: Världskulturmuseerna, Östasiatiska (Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities), Stockholm. Published in *I Kinas trädgårdar: med Osvald Sirén / With Osvald Sirén in the Chinese gardens*. Stockholm: Östasiatiska museet, 2007.



Giuseppe Vincenzo Tucci in Tibet in the 1930s,
photograph probably taken by
a British Indian official.



At the beginning of their partnership, they continued to focus on Swedish painters, but already in 1902 things began to change. From 1901 onwards Sirén visited Italy on a regular basis and, in the following years, he wrote several articles and monographs regarding his trips to Italy. This new interest took Sirén across Europe and to North America to study collections including Italian Old Masters. It is not clear why he became interested in Italian art, but his professional choices were mostly determined by personal interest.²¹ However Sirén, at least since 1900, had been an active Theosophist and had been publishing articles in the Swedish theosophist journal, *Theosophia*. In this regard he stressed the expressive spiritualism of Italian Primitive artists.²² During those early travels to Italy, he established important connections, which he retained throughout his life and which contributed to his rapid international recognition as an authority on Italian Old Masters. For instance, he had met many distinguished scholars, such as Giovanni Morelli and Bernard Berenson, who had helped him to become in a short time a great connoisseur of Italian early Renaissance art.²³ While at the service of Sinebrychoff, and also thanks to his generous financial support, Sirén, within few years, became a recognised expert on Italian Old Masters.

The way Sirén shifted his interest from Swedish genre painting to Italian Old Masters anticipates the further transition in his career towards Chinese art in the 1910s. It is not clear the exact reasons, circumstances, or moment – probably some time between 1913 and 1915 – when Sirén's attention drifted towards Chinese art.²⁴ Certainly Chinese art would have appealed to his inclination towards artistic expressions of a spiritual and sensorial kind, but he might also have seen some practical interest. Chinese art scholarship was virgin territory that, besides his personal and professional fascination with the field, would open new possibilities from an academic and financial point of view. Nevertheless, Sirén managed in few years to become an authority in this new field too. Consequently, in the 1920s, having lost his position as professor of art history at the University of Stockholm, he could afford to live for a time as an independent scholar relying on his publications, lectures, and on the sale of his private collection to support him. This shows the extent of his connections to the international network of scholars, dealers and collectors.²⁵

21 Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans*, 15–35.

22 Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans*, 15–35.

23 Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans*, 15–35.

24 Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans*, 15–35.

25 Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans*, 15–35.

Sirén's expertise on Chinese art came to influence his fellow art historian Venturi, the satisfied conveyer of the news about the honorary doctorate. It was indeed Sirén who introduced the Italian scholar to Asian art and helped him come to appreciate it.²⁶ This is also the field that made Sirén so widely renowned in Italy, even today. The extent of Sirén's influence on Venturi can be especially appreciated by looking at the Gualino Collection, which the Italian art historian had personally advised on. The collection, which since 1918 had been characterised by the purchase of Italian Primitive art, after 1923 began suddenly to include great examples of Chinese sculpture that were linked to Sirén.²⁷ Although Sirén's influence on Venturi was incisive, his knowledge of Asian Art had a far larger impact on Giuseppe Tucci, who had shared much more in regard to his interests in Asian art scholarship.

Sirén, Tucci, and ISMEO

When Giuseppe Tucci founded ISMEO, Asian studies did not have a great tradition in Italy, although there were a few acclaimed local scholars.²⁸ Therefore Tucci sought guidance abroad among scholars of the first order so as to ensure an international background to the young institution. With regard to Chinese studies, he looked with interest towards Stockholm. Tucci had known the Swedish school of Chinese studies through the linguist and sinologist Bernhard Karlgren (1889–1978) whom he held in great esteem.²⁹ Tucci personally invited Sirén – at the time keeper of paintings and sculptures at the National Museum of Stockholm (1926–44) – to be the first lecturer on Chinese Art when ISMEO was founded in 1934.³⁰ He was one of the first internationally distinguished guests Tucci attracted to Rome to launch ISMEO. At that time Sirén was one of the most renowned scholars of Oriental studies and had achieved fame thanks to the uniqueness of his experience in China.³¹ In 1917 he published his first essay dealing with Chinese art and he was already lecturing in America on the eve of his first voyage to Japan and China.³² It is during those years, and also the consequent voyages in 1921, 1929, and 1935, that his renown as an authority on Chinese art was established internationally. In the 1920s and 1930s he published catalogues on Chinese art, which included the extensive photographic material he had collected during his voyages.³³ The encyclopaedic volumes gathered information about a great number of artworks he saw first-hand. However, there were also other relevant aspects in Sirén's curriculum. He was familiar with Italy and had on many occasions travelled there to study Italian Primitive artists. He had established connections with many Italian scholars in the art history field and moreover, he spoke Italian. All these reasons made him seem a natural choice to give the inaugural lecture of the new institution.

Sirén accepted the invitation and so began a collaboration that would continue beyond the seminar. Tucci asked Sirén to deliver his lectures in Italian, the language they had been using in their letters. Sirén on the other hand felt more comfortable with English. He was also hesitant about the translation that Tucci suggested as an alternative. He thought that the translator would have to be such a special expert, proficient both in art history and Eastern studies besides having excellent language skills in Italian and English. He was doubtful that

26 Letter from Lionello Venturi to his father Adolfo, 25 May 1926 about the photographs he sees from Sirén as a base for his growing interest about Asian Art. Adolfo Venturi Archive (VT V1 b45 19). Centro Archivistico della Scuola Normale di Pisa.

27 Perna, 'Osvald Sirénin matka Italian taidehistoriaan', 267–75.

28 Raniero Gnoli, 'Benvenuti.' Dipartimento Istituto Italiano di Studi Orientali, <https://web.uniroma1.it/diso/benvenuti> (accessed 9 September 2017).

29 D'Arelli, *Caro Maestro...*, 17.

30 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 13 February 1934. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm. In this letter Tucci writes about Sirén as an 'internationally esteemed expert' (the translation from Italian is mine).

31 Osvald Sirén, 'A Chinese Emperor Plays Photographer's Assistant.' *New York Times* 22 April 1923.

32 Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans*, 15–35.

33 Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans*, 15–35.

Tav. 84.

ARTE CINESE
DELLA DINASTIA WEI

420 - 589 d. Cr.

LEONE.

Calcare grigio durissimo. Alt. m. 1,12, largh. m. 0,50, prof. m. 0,80.

Questo leone è un portento di energia; e l'origine della sua forza non si trova tanto nella linea e nella forma, quanto nel contrasto delle masse pittoriche. La struttura ossea è coperta, e in qualche modo nascosta, sotto la massa delle cartilagini: la tensione dei muscoli accentua all'estremo la ferocia della belva. Perciò il rigore della composizione giunge a imprimere alle masse pittoriche la medesima forza espressiva che gli occidentali hanno ottenuto con la forma ben definita. L'arte cinese anteriore al periodo Wei aveva assunto una notevole altezza nella realizzazione pittorica delle forme animali. Nel periodo Wei i principii costruttivi d'occidente, tendenti alla sintesi formale, penetrano nell'arte cinese. Lo stile di questo leone è ancora quello tradizionale cinese; l'eccezionale risultato dipende dal fatto che quello stile, eminentemente pittorico, è stato spinto verso un ideale nuovo, di natura formale e di provenienza occidentale.

Un leone di simile carattere era nella coll. Charles Vignier di Parigi (Sirén, *La Sculpture chinoise du Ve. au XIVe. siècle*, tav. 114). Questi mostri, posti lungo le strade che conducevano ai templi, avevano la funzione di tener lontani gli spiriti maligni.



**Sculpture of a lion,
Wei Dynasty, 5th–6th century,
in *Prima Mostra della Collezione Gualino*, 1928,
Tav. 84**

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Ainur Nasretdin

one existed.³⁴ However, Tucci was able to convince him and promised that he would find the right man. In the end Sirén was satisfied with the translation and the event turned into such a success that even he was surprised by how Chinese art was met with such great interest in Italy.³⁵ The lectures were so well received that three of them were immediately published by ISMEO.³⁶ Moreover, the Institute wished to extend the collaboration with the Finnish-Swedish scholar by naming him as a correspondent member abroad. This gesture sealed a lifelong relationship between Sirén and the Italian Institute.³⁷

34 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 14 March 1934, Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 27 March 1934; Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 7 April 1934. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

35 Törmä, *Enchanted by Lohans*, 126.

36 Osvald Sirén, *La scultura e la pittura cinesi* (Rome: ISMEO, 1935). Sirén lectures were 'Chinese Sculpture'; 'On the Great Painters of the Southern Sung Period'; 'Ch'an Buddhism as Inspiration of Painting'; 'Chinese Attitude towards Painting'.

37 Letter from Giovanni Gentile to Sirén, 16 May 1934. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

Sirén and Tucci's co-operation continued thereafter, despite the fact that ISMEO was not able to lure him again to Rome for a conference until the 1950s.³⁸ In fact ISMEO invited Sirén on numerous occasions, but their poor finances could not support the invitation with adequate recompense. While Sirén declined the invitations, nonetheless he kept following ISMEO's initiatives. He stayed in touch in particular with Tucci and his wife Giulia. Their intellectual friendship continued with discussions of their latest works and exchanging their publications. They also kept supporting each other's work. For instance, Tucci used to write a review of Sirén's books in ISMEO's journal³⁹ and, at least on one occasion, Sirén wrote a recommendation to introduce the Italian researcher to his French editor, Van Oest.⁴⁰

**Buddhist votive stele, Wei Dynasty, first half of the 6th century,
in Prima Mostra della Collezione Gualino, 1928, Tav. 85**

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Ainur Nasret'din

Tav. 85.

ARTE CINESE DELLA DINASTIA WEI

Prima metà del sec. VI.

STELE VOTIVA.

Calcere grigio, alt. m. 1,30, largh. m. 0,99 (più m. 0,17 di zoccolo).

Nella faccia anteriore è rappresentato il Buddha Sakja-muni, ad alto rilievo, in piedi, tenendo la mano destra in *abhaya mudrā*, cioè in atto di rassicurare i fedeli, la mano sinistra in *vara mudrā*, cioè in atto di carità. Lo fiancheggiano due Boddisatva, Kuan Yui e Maitreya, ritti su uno zoccolo di loto sostenuti da un atlante grottesco e ratrappito. Il fondo è graffito con motivi ispirati al fior di loto e con piccoli Buddha seduti. La stele è ora spezzata superiormente, ma doveva terminare a foglia di loto, come vedesi ancora dietro la testa dei due Boddisatva. Il rovescio è decorato da Buddha seduti, da fiori appena rilevati e da motivi graffiti.

Secondo il Sirén questa stele proviene dai dintorni di Hua Yin, nel Schàn - si orientale, insieme ad altre due, ad essa molto affini, che trovansi ora nella Rhode Island School of Providence e nella Freer Gallery di Washington. Essa rappresenta una delle più alte espressioni a cui sia giunta l'arte cinese, o meglio l'arte di tutti i tempi. Dall'India la Cina aveva ricevuto la nuova religione buddistica e insieme l'elaborazione delle forme ellenistiche avvenute nell'arte del Gandhàrà. Per la prima volta nel periodo Wei l'arte dell'estremo oriente giungeva ad una rappresentazione sintetica e compiuta della figura umana, e, sotto il possente impulso spirituale del Buddismo, s'innalzava ad una dignità umana, ad una serenità di contemplazione, ignote ai secoli precedenti. In quest'arte si trovano già elementi che richiamano stranamente l'arte romanica e l'arte gotica d'occidente; si osservino, oltre il cadere sinuoso e festonato della veste, le piccole cariatidi che sostengono lo zoccolo sotto i due Boddisatva laterali: il pensiero corre alle figure mostruose dei capitelli romanici.

Questa stele già nella collezione Vignier di Parigi fu riprodotta e illustrata da Osvald Sirén (*La sculpture chinoise du Ve. au XIVe. siècle*, I, p. 47, tav. 138) e da Curt Glaser (*Ostasiatische Plastik*, tav. 26-7).



38 In the Sirén Archive there are many letters of invitation from Rome. In two cases the invitation came with the suggestion of a title, in 1958 'Influenze centro asiatiche nell'antica pittura cinese' and 'Due paesaggisti cinesi: Kao K'o Kung e Huang Kung Wang' and in 1959 'Inizi della scultura Buddista in Cina'.

39 Letters from Tucci to Sirén, 21 October 1934 and s.d. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

40 Letter from Giulia Tucci to Sirén, 8 July 1934; Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 7 August 1934. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

TAV. 87.

ARTE CINESE
DELLA DINASTIA CHOU DEL NORD

Seconda metà del sec. VI.

TESTA DI BODDISATVA.

Calcere grigio. Alt. m. 0,35, largh. m. 0,23.

La testa del Boddhisatva è ornata da un'alta corona a motivi floreali. Il viso è trattato con una semplicità assoluta di piani che ricorda la nostra maggiore scultura del trecento. Un sorriso, appena accennato, intenso di spirituale finezza, si diffonde su tutto il volto senza tuttavia incresparne un muscolo, anzi imprimendo all'insieme un effetto d'immobilità perfetta e serena.

Questa testa è riprodotta e illustrata dal Sirén (op. cit. II. tav. 304 b., pag. 52) il quale ritiene che appartenga all'arte della dinastia Chou del Nord, che durò dal 557 al 589 con capitale a Ch'ang-an e successe immediatamente a quella Wei, dalla quale si distingue per un influsso più forte e diretto dell'arte indiana.



Head of a Bodhisattva, Chou Dynasty, second half of the 6th century, in Prima Mostra della Collezione Gualino, 1928, Tav. 87

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Ainur Nasretdin

In 1937, however, an incident occurred, which risked undermining their cordial relationship. The Finnish-Swedish scholar discovered with disappointment that some articles published in *Asiatica*, ISMEO's first journal, had employed material from his books without an appropriate indication of the source. Sirén, who was known to be very jealous and possessive about his writings and their illustrations, usually taken from his personal photographic collection, threatened to prevent ISMEO from receiving his future publications.⁴¹ Tucci was able to reassure his colleague, promising that public apologies would be published in the following issue of *Asiatica*. However, after this episode the exchange of letters came to a halt and there is a gap in the correspondence until May 1946. Although the reason for this interruption was most probably the outbreak of war, Tucci wrote this new letter in the spirit of reconnecting with his old friend. He informed Sirén that the Institute 'is not dead' and that his team was doing its best to give a new impetus to its activities.⁴² In those years the

41 It refers to the articles written by Giuliana Stramiccioli and published in *Asiatica*. Giuliana Stramiccioli, 'Il paesaggio e la natura nell'arte dell'Estremo Oriente.' *Asiatica*, II, 3, 1936, 111–17 and Giuliana Stramiccioli, 'Spirito e forme del giardino orientale.' *Asiatica*, II, 4, 1936, 181–88. Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 17 January 1937; Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 27 March 1937. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

42 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 15 May 1946. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

Institute indeed became much more active with its initiatives, seminars, publications, and the acquisition of books and photos.

From 1949 onwards the correspondence between Tucci and Sirén resumed its pre-war levels of co-operation regarding their respective publications and experiences in the field.⁴³ Tucci, again, tried on several occasions, at least in 1949 and 1950, to attract Sirén to Rome as a lecturer, but there were still financial obstacles.⁴⁴ Moreover, in many letters Tucci remarked that Sirén's participation in various events in Italy, such as an opening of the academic year or an exhibition's vernissage, would be highly inspiring to local scholars. For instance, when Tucci invited Sirén to the opening of the exhibition of Chinese paintings from the Dubosc Collection, he remarked that 'the presence of the highest expert on Chinese Art' would have made the event particularly significant.⁴⁵

**Bodhisattva, Sui Dynasty, 6th–7th century,
in *Prima Mostra della Collezione Gualino, 1928, Tav. 88***

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Ainur Nasretdin

TAV. 88.

ARTE CINESE
DELLA DINASTIA SUI

589 - 618 d. Cr.

BODDISATVA.

Pietra. Alt. m. 0,60, largh. m. 0,18, pr. m. 0,25.

L'immagine accentua le possibilità cilindriche, senza snodature nè sinuosità, ha proporzioni pesanti, e trova nella sua interezza, nella difficoltà stessa con cui si è liberata dal blocco della pietra, il proprio carattere stilistico. Le delicatezze lineari del periodo Wei sono scomparse; nè ancora è raggiunto il valore plastico del periodo T'ang. Pure la compattezza formale dà a questa immagine un effetto di grandiosità. Il Boddisatva porta una grave corona sul capo contornata da un'aureola, e dal collo gli scende la rituale pesante collana, annodata alla vita da un fermaglio circolare.

Questa statuetta presenta grandi affinità col Buddisatva Sui della coll. Miss Buckingham a Chicago illustrata e riprodotta dal Sirén (Op. cit. II. tav. 329, p. 56). Il Sirén crede però ch'essa appartenga non già al periodo Sui, ma al periodo Pei-ci, ad esso immediatamente precedente (550 - 589) (Cfr. Sirén, op. cit. II, tav. 230).



- 43 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 22 February 1949. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 44 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 30 January 1950; Letter from Tucci a Sirén, 10 April 1950. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 45 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 10 April 1950. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

Tav. 94.

ARTE CINESE
DELLA FINE DELLA DINASTIA T'ANG

Sec. IX.

BODDISATVA SEDUTO.

Legno con tracce di policromia; alt. m. 1,08, largh. m. 0,61,
prof. m. 0,54.

Il Boddhisatva è seduto con le gambe incrociate secondo l'uso orientale ed atteggia le mani nel gesto così detto dell'argomentazione: la mano destra in posizione orizzontale accenna al gesto della predicazione; la mano sinistra, abbassata e col palmo rivolto in dentro, invoca la testimonianza della terra alle conclusioni infallibili del Buddha.

E' una delle più antiche statue cinesi in legno: confrontata col Boddhisatva seduto del British Museum e con la statua di Kuan-yin del Museo di Boston, essa appare di epoca anteriore per la maggior sommarietà di piani, per il rigore d'impostazione che la chiude in una forma sintetica. Le pieghe delle vesti sono aderenti alla massa e il viso e le mani sono determinati senza alcuna concessione al pittresco.

Fu esposto al Museo Cernuschi di Parigi nel 1924.



**Sitting Bodhisattva,
T'ang Dynasty, 9th century,
in Prima Mostra della Collezione Gualino, 1928,
Tav. 94**

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Ainur Nasretidin

During the 1950s, while it was not possible to have Sirén in Rome, ISMEO's connection to the Swedish School of Chinese Studies still grew, thanks to one visiting student coming from ISMEO, Lionello Lanciotti (1925–2015).⁴⁶ The Italian scholar visited Stockholm on at least two occasions, in 1949 and 1958.⁴⁷ Lanciotti was above all a linguist and had followed Karlgren's mentoring. However, fascinated by Sirén's personality, he became interested in art-historical studies, which he then pursued under the direct supervision of the Finnish-Swedish scholar.⁴⁸ During his stays, the two scholars fostered a relationship of mutual esteem and trust. Later

46 D'Arelli, *Caro Maestro...*, 18.

47 D'Arelli, *Caro Maestro...*, 17.

48 Letters from Lanciotti to Sirén, 20 April 1950, 28 July and 28 September 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm; D'Arelli, *Caro Maestro...*, 24–27.

on, in 1958, when Tucci asked Sirén for another article for the Institute's journal, the author directly asked that the English manuscript be entrusted to Lanciotti for translation.⁴⁹

In 1950, Tucci began working on a project to create a library and photo library for ISMEO. He thought that these were essential tools for promoting research. Photographs especially would have a great impact, giving scholars access to artworks that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to reach. Tucci knew well that Sirén was the best person to help in this venture and that the Swedish photo collection was one of the richest in Europe at that time, especially considering the political situation in China and its distancing from the West.⁵⁰ Sirén replied with enthusiasm for the project and offered personally to curate a selection for ISMEO.⁵¹

Between 1951 and 1957 there is another break in their correspondence. This seems to be a gap in the Archive's papers rather than a real lack of correspondence, since there are other traces of communication between Sirén and ISMEO. In 1953, for instance, Sirén held two conferences in Rome.⁵² In the same year he also wrote an article published in ISMEO's new journal *East & West*, this time in English.⁵³ The change in the language of publication reflects a more substantial evolution. The journal aspired to become more international and to pursue a more scientific focus, whereas the previous incarnation, *Asiatica*, was to some extent more amateurish.⁵⁴ This event also marked a definitive shift from Italian to English in the communication between Sirén and the Institute and Tucci.

The opportunity to invite and to pay for Sirén's four lectures in 1958 is one sign of ISMEO's growth during the 1950s.⁵⁵ The lectures were a great success. In the same year Tucci asked Sirén for a new article to be published in *East & West*.⁵⁶ In this context, the two scholars' intellectual affinity and their shared goals seemed to be straightforward. The theoretical standpoint of ISMEO's scientific activity was the *oneness* of Eastern and Western civilisations. In Tucci's view continuous contacts, exchanges and mutual attraction had characterised the relationship between East and West through the centuries. This was certainly a point Sirén agreed upon and he had made himself available to support the journal's mission in becoming a cultural bridge between East and West.⁵⁷

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- 49 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 15 February 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm: 'English manuscript can be mailed to Rome for translating on request. Could this be entrusted to Dr. Lanciotti?'
- 50 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 27 October 1950. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 51 Copy of the letters from Sirén to Tucci, 27 October 1950 and 3 November 1950. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 52 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 1 July 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 53 Osvald Sirén, 'The Expressionism of Chinese Painting. The Function of Brush-work and the Conception of Space.' *East and West*, IV, 3, 1953, 184–90.
- 54 D'Arelli, *Caro Maestro...*, 18.
- 55 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 15 February 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm. Sirén proposed the following topic for four lectures to be held in Rome: 1. 'Central Asian influence in Chinese painting in T'ang period'; 2. 'Romantic landscape painting in the 14th century'; 3. 'Two leading impressionist painters of 17th century: K'un-ts'an and Pa-ta shan-jen'.
- 56 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 20 February 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 57 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 1 March 1958, Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm: 'I was interested to hear about your ideas to develop the *East & West* review into a cultural bridge between the two parts of the world. This thought is in harmony with the guiding spirit and scope of my humble efforts and I would thus be glad to contribute to your new review in the measure of my capacity.'

Sirén's contribution to Oriental scholarship in Italy

In 1958, having delivered his lectures for ISMEO in Rome and aware of his age, Sirén told Tucci of his intention to make a disposition for his collection of books and some of his photographs.⁵⁸ Sirén, probably with respect to his mentoring role within ISMEO, showed a preference for the Italian Institute as the recipient. He wrote to Tucci that he would be delighted to see his collections transferred to their care. The letter is a mix of adulation and good sense. Remembering Tucci's intention to create a library for the Institute, Sirén suggested that this would be a good occasion to enrich ISMEO's library with a valuable collection of scientific material. He stated that the Institute had the right credentials to take a leading role in the scholarship if it would just meet 'practical material conditions'. Moreover, the Finnish-Swedish scholar tried to convince Tucci to give up the project of acquiring an art collection and founding a Museum of Oriental Art⁵⁹, which he considered a much less profitable investment for the advancement of the scholarship.⁶⁰ He suggested instead that his Italian colleague should divert those funds to make the Institute's library more complete and therefore a better support for researchers. However, his books and photographs would never reach ISMEO despite the fact that Lanciotti even visited Stockholm to evaluate the contents of Sirén's available assets. It is likely that Sirén had been made an unsatisfactory financial offer.⁶¹

On the other hand, the project for a National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome had not only gone forward, but the museum had already been opened in 1957. Despite the chronic scarce economic resources of the Institute, the Museum could rely on important Chinese artworks borrowed from the Bank of Italy as a foundation for its collection. These outstanding sculptures became its core. Oddly enough they were nothing less than the old acquaintances of Sirén. The sculptures came from the Gualino Collection on the advice of his fellow art historian Lionello Venturi. The collection was an unusual mixture, including artworks of various origins in terms of date and provenance.⁶² The acquisition of artworks had followed the principle that art is a universal phenomenon. The collection, like ISMEO's initiatives, was intended to represent a bridge between East and West. Sirén had advised the purchase of

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- 58 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 1 July 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm: '[...] this Italian journey [...] was a reassurance of my old attachment to the cultural centres of Italy [...]. I learned something about your plans to establish by degrees a museum collection of Eastern art, which indeed is a most difficult task demanding a lifetime of practical experience and financial organisation, but I wonder whether it would not be safer and more useful to build up first a systematic library of illustrated books and photographic reproduction which could serve as supports or starting points for systematic studies of various kinds of works of Eastern art? As I am now advancing in age [...] I am thinking of making some disposition for my collections of books on Chinese and Italian art-history and a large number of photographs which have served in the same field of research work [...]. I would rather see my collection transferred to Rome than to any other cultural centre. The whole matter is still in a somewhat embryonic state and must be kept secret; the reason why I bring it to your attention is my conviction that your institution will become of leading importance in the near future, but these personal considerations will have to be combined with practical material conditions [...]. Let me add once more that my old attachment to Italy, my pleasant experiences during the three seasons – 1934, 1953, 1958 – when I have lectured to a great audience at your institute, and my conviction that ISMEO should first and foremost be made a centre of research where students can find opportunities for preparation before venturing into wider fields, are the principal viewpoints or reasons for bringing all this to your attention.' Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 12 July 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 59 He probably refers to the foundation of the National Museum of Oriental Art in 1957. 'Il Museo.' Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale, <http://www.museorientale.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/331/il-museo> (accessed 11 September 2017).
- 60 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 1 July 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 61 Letter from Lanciotti to Sirén, 28 September 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.
- 62 Lionello Venturi, *La collezione Gualino*. (Torino–Roma: Tumminelli, 1926).

the collection's Oriental masterworks during the 1920s. Although it is not clear yet what was the exact extent of his involvement, it is ascertained that he had an important role in their acquisition.⁶³ He had known most of the artworks already before they were absorbed into the Italian collection, he possessed their photo rights, and had written extensively about them in his publications.⁶⁴

In 1933 the collection was dispersed after Gualino's business went bankrupt. The Bank of Italy confiscated the artworks in order to repay creditors. Most of the valuable and prestigious works were generally easy to sell forward. However, the Oriental artworks were an exception. Despite their recognised monetary value, it was not possible to find a buyer ready to pay an adequate price. There was simply a lack of market for them in Italy at the time.⁶⁵ Therefore the Bank of Italy decided to keep the Oriental artworks and transferred them to their main office in Rome in 1946.⁶⁶ The episode of the confiscation of the Gualino Collection and its masterworks raised interest in the art world, but there was a secondary incident that turned it into striking news for the press. One of the trucks moving the artworks from Turin to Rome was involved in a car accident.⁶⁷ Many works on board were damaged, but one in particular, *North Wei stele*, dated 527⁶⁸, literally exploded into myriad fragments. The artworks were restored immediately after the accident and later transferred to the care of the newly opened museum. Later on, in 1960, Sirén revealed once again a connection with these artworks when he wrote an article for *East & West* about the Gualino Collection of Oriental Art.⁶⁹ He not only praised the great value of the collection, but he had insisted the editor also publish photos, in his possession, picturing the artworks before they were damaged in the accident.⁷⁰

It is in 1958 that Tucci, anticipating the official information, wrote to Sirén mentioning for the first time the news that the Italian academic authorities were intending to grant him the honorary doctorate, 'this deserved and timely recognition of your invaluable contribution to the knowledge and understanding of Oriental art'.⁷¹ Sirén replied enthusiastically, especially because he highly regarded his own contribution, from which he thought that ISMEO had greatly profited.⁷² His reply indeed reflects a genuine pride in his personal participation in the 'impressive' development of the 'intellectual activity of the enthusiastic' scientific community behind the Italian Institution.⁷³

63 Perna, 'Osvald Sirénin matka Italian taidehistoriaan', 267–75.

64 Perna, 'Osvald Sirénin matka Italian taidehistoriaan', 267–75.

65 Perna, 'Osvald Sirénin matka Italian taidehistoriaan', 273.

66 Perna, 'Osvald Sirénin matka Italian taidehistoriaan', 267–75.

67 Perna, 'Osvald Sirénin matka Italian taidehistoriaan', 276.

68 Import declaration 37, 10 December 1928. Collection of letters and documents. Gualino Archive, Rome.

69 Osvald Sirén, 'A Reconstruction of a Great Collection of Chinese Sculpture.' *East and West*, 11, 2–3, 1960, 75–93.

70 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Lanciotti, 15 March 1960. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm: 'Many of the Gualino sculptures exist also in splendid large photographs made before the war, I believe, and I am including some from which you may judge the great difference in quality [...] some of the repaired sculptures [...] should be reproduced not only in their present state, but also in the state in which they were photographed before the war [...] I also include early photographs of the large stele which is now in the ISMEO [sic] Museum.'

71 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 12 June 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

72 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 5 April 1960. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm: '[...] I am sure that the King would be pleased to receive a letter from you and if you want to add in your letter that I have done my best to cooperate in your efforts to make Chinese art better known and appreciated in Italy, it will no doubt serve a good purpose.'

73 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 1 July 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive., Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.



**Bodhisattva, Qi Dynasty, 6th century,
 donated by Osvald Sirén to the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome
 Museo di Arte Orientale di Roma**

Photo: Museo di Arte Orientale di Roma

It gave satisfaction to my heart as well as to my intellect to work for a while at your growing institution, which evidently now has reached a much more important stage of development than at the time of my previous visits. I was much impressed by the spirit of growth and the enthusiastic intellectual activity at your institute; it seemed to me like a centre of well-trained, highly skilled researchers.⁷⁴

Despite Sirén's delight in hearing the news, he still took the opportunity to ask for a more tangible sign of recognition. Soon after Tucci's communication about the Honorary Degree, and just a few days after his first expression of gratitude for the nomination, a new missive revealed his desire for an antique Roman decorative marble.⁷⁵ The request was neither humble nor easy to process. However, the shipping of this 'precious sign of friendship' was eventually announced in 1960 with the approval of Rome's mayor.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Sirén had

74 Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 1 July 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

75 Letter from Lanciotti to Sirén, 28 July 1958. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

76 Letter from Lanciotti to Sirén, 24 March 1960; Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 5 April 1960. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm. 'I was very happy to learn that the official permission to send me two decorative marbles from the Roman Antiquarium has been definitely secured and that I may thus expect the arrival of these within the near future. They will constitute for me a precious sign of our friendship.'

travelled to Italy in December 1959 to take part in a ceremony for the award of the honorary doctorate, taking along with him a Bodhisattva as a gift for the National Museum of Oriental Art.⁷⁷ The peculiar travel companion that had followed the Finnish-Swedish scholar still stands in the Italian museum as a memento of Sirén's professional and personal commitment to Italian scholarship in Oriental studies. Moreover, at the same time he also held a lecture at ISMEO to testify the primary importance of the connection to Tucci's Institution. Indeed, it seems obvious that the donation and the lecture stand as a further reminder of the strength of the bond with ISMEO.

In the light of these events and through the analysis of the correspondence, Sirén's connection to ISMEO emerges in all its importance. It appears that he played a great role in the development of the Institute as a scientific and international centre for Oriental studies in Italy. He had provided a solid background and mentorship with constant commitment. Sirén's role comes up not only as a provider of knowledge, methods and tools (bibliographic references, books, and photographs), but also as a privileged provider of patronage and moral support. Being ambitious, punctilious, and extremely jealous of his work, Sirén showed altogether a sense of superiority, even paternalism, with Tucci and his entourage. Moreover, the letters give a perspective that goes beyond mere facts. While allowing a reconstruction of chronological events, they also give an insight into personalities and personal connections. In particular the relationship with Tucci is outlined as not merely intellectual, but in many ways as personal and intimate. In the end Tucci's sponsorship, probably the main source of support, for the honorary degree appears to be motivated by a sense of respect and acknowledgement. In his own words, he considered the encounter with Sirén 'as one of the best benefits since the foundation of ISMEO'.⁷⁸ Nevertheless the circumstances surrounding the award reflect the recognition of Sirén's authority and network on a larger scale, beyond the limits of a specific field. The nature of the Italian recognition indeed well describes Sirén's crossover of interests that, over time, stretched over different disciplines.

Sirén's long professional life touched many areas of art-historical scholarship and left a long-lasting legacy. There was a pattern in Sirén's career: he specialised in a field of art history, researched and published extensively, managing to become a recognised authority in the field, in some cases collected a few pieces of his own, and eventually, once he could have quietly sat back, he moved further on to a new field. Due to this ambitious and meticulous professional figure the Finnish National Gallery owns some very important artworks that, also thanks to the foresight and generosity of the Sinebrychoff family, contribute to defining the international significance of the Finnish national collection.

77 Copy of the letter from Giuganino to Sirén, 19 November 1959; Copy of the letter from Sirén to Tucci, 5 April 1960; Letter from Tucci to Sirén, 24 December 1959. Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm. 'Le sono oltremodo grato per il dono generoso che ha voluto fare al nostro Istituto [...]. La pregiatissima statuetta del Bodhisattva che ha voluto donarci arricchisce le nostre collezioni con un pezzo di grande valore; ma per me personalmente questa bella opera d'arte ha anche un altro e più profondo significato, poiché è l'eloquente testimonianza della Sua benevolenza verso di noi, ed una nuova prova della costante e fedelissima amicizia con cui Lei ci onora da oramai molti anni.'

78 Letter from Tucci to Sirén, Collection of Sirén's letters. Sirén Archive. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

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⁷⁹ The family has donated the private archive to the Italian State and it will be kept at the State Archive in Rome. At the moment the process of transferring and registering the documents is underway.