

# THE MONASTERY OF THOLING IN 1933

OSCAR NALESINI<sup>1</sup>

(National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome)

On the evening of September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1933, the Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci and his travel companion, the physician and photographer Eugenio Ghersi, pitched their tents outside the sacred precinct of the Tholing monastery. The visit of the Italian party lasted a little more than three days, over which they collected information and shot photographs inside and outside the major buildings. On his return to India Tucci reported his discoveries in enthusiastic – albeit worried – terms to Frederick Williamson, Political Officer in Sikkim:

[...] the monastery of Toling is one of the oldest, richest and finest of Tibet. These documents are of unrivalled interest for the religious history of Tibet as well as for the history of Indo-Tibetan Art. [...] The rain dropping through the ceiling left unrepaired for years is washing away the marvellous frescoes [...]. Unless the Tibetan Government does some urgent repairs, it will shortly be a ruin yet in no other part of Tibet is possible to find finest paintings and better workmanship. This is why here also I took photos of the interior of all the temples and chapels so that if they are to tumble down western scholars might at least have an exact idea of what they were.<sup>2</sup>

A year later Tucci announced the intention to devote to Tholing a volume of the *Indo-Tibetica* series (Tucci & Ghersi 1934: 12, n. 1; Tucci & Ghersi 1936: XII, n. 1). Yet, he felt the need of a second inspection, which he was eventually able to realise in 1935. In the travelogue of that expedition Tucci wrote that he had returned to Tholing in order to “study the details that I missed during my first visit, take photographs, visit the caves of Upper Tholing” (Tucci 1937: 167).<sup>3</sup> The warning he had sounded two years before on the conservation of the monastery had remained unanswered;<sup>4</sup> he

---

1 My warmest thanks to Michela Clemente and Federica Venturi, who bravely took the hopeless work to improve my outrageous English. Any errors obviously are my sole responsibility.

2 *Report by Professor Tucci on his travel to Western Tibet* (INDIA OFFICE RECORDS, Political and Secret Department, External collections, 4247 = Farrington 2002: 81, 83).

3 “studiare i particolari che nella prima visita mi erano sfuggiti, riprendendo fotografie, visitando le grotte di Toling alto” (author’s translation).

4 See the letter by F. Williamson to Fraser-Tytler, Deputy Secretary of the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, dated at Gangtok, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1933: “Professor Tucci hints in his reports that the Tibetan Government ought to carry out repairs to the monastery of

could only ruefully observe that “in two years the destruction made huge strides”<sup>5</sup> (*ibidem*), and “many paintings we had photographed in 1933 have already disappeared completely”<sup>6</sup> (Tucci 1935b). In spite of the efforts, the documentation he had gathered still proved insufficient, and six years later the book was still in the making (see Tucci 1941: 108).

He probably tried for the last time to revise his documentation on Tholing in the postwar period, as he wrote references to his 1933 field notes on the back side of some photographs presumably printed in the late 1960s.

What actually happened afterwards is a matter of guess; the fact that Tucci did not mention the mural paintings of Tholing throughout his book on Tibetan art (Tucci 1973) might be significant in this respect. He probably believed that Tholing deserved further in-depth analysis (cf. Petech 1995: 9), and postponed the publication over and over again until vivid memories faded away and his documentation was of little help to revive them. Most of his papers had probably already been lost at some point. Nothing remains nowadays of his records on the 1935 expedition, and what is known of the field notes written in 1933 is contained in a small notepad, 15×9.5 cm in size, with brown cover and squared paper (henceforth *Notepad*), which I recovered in his home at San Polo dei Cavalieri after his widow, Francesca Bonardi, passed away on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014.<sup>7</sup>

The notes are extremely simple and sketchy, as they were meant to be just reminders of the works of art seen in the buildings of the monastery. Moreover, these pages are filled with corrections, additions and afterthoughts that complicate its understanding and render the notes hard to use. Fortunately, he added to them references to the photographs taken by Gherzi, often organised according to the number of the roll film and frame: e.g. II 1, that is second [Tholing] roll film, frame 1.<sup>8</sup>

This is an important fact. As it is well known, the buildings and works of art of the monastery have been since then damaged by weather, as Tucci observed, and defaced by men, rendering precious the photographs taken by Gherzi. Tucci, however, published only some of them, kept the negatives at home for decades, cut the roll

---

Toling. This is, of course, very desirable, but I fear that it would be quite impossible to approach the Tibetan Government on such a subject” (INDIA OFFICE RECORDS, Political and Secret Department, External collections, 4247 = Farrington 2002: 91).

5 “in due anni la rovina ha fatto passi da gigante” (author’s translation).

6 “molte pitture che avevamo fotografato nel 1933 sono già completamente scomparse” (author’s translation).

7 Now in the library of the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale, Fondo Bonardi Tucci, Q15 (provisional code). The *Notepad* covers Tucci’s activity since the departure from Gartok, on September 14<sup>th</sup>, through the last day spent at Tsaparang, on September 24<sup>th</sup> (cf. Tucci & Gherzi 1934: 33-114, 288-349; Tucci & Gherzi 1936: 11-53, 152-81); over half of its pages have been left blank. I will refer to the pages as f[olio] followed by digit+r[ecto]/v[erso].

8 To keep Tucci’s count of the Tholing roll films throughout the article, I numbered 0 the roll film exposed on the way from the Bogo pass to Tholing (Fig. 8).

films in short stripes (sometimes as short as one frame), jumbled them up and, on the top of it, lost some of them. This is not the place to recall what happened after he gave the photographs to the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome through IsMEO (see Nalesini 2008: 104-8). Suffice it to say that over twenty years ago we were able to propose a reconstruction of the original sequences of the 35 mm negatives exposed in the course of the 1933 and 1935 expeditions (see Klimburg-Salter, Nalesini & Talamo 1994).

The Tholing photographs thus recovered were studied by Roberto Vitali for a book on the monastery edited on the occasion of the millennium of its foundation, but the then Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (IsMEO), owner of the negatives, at the last moment withdrew the support to the project and the permission to publish the photographs (see Vitali 1999: 3). After having revised the Tholing photographs with the help of Tucci's notes, I was able to better appreciate the accuracy of Vitali's work, who successfully combined the analysis of the remains of the monastery with the available written and oral sources. I have therefore to regret that the photographs have not been properly published on that occasion. Even more so since a few years ago short-sighted political considerations left the former IsMEO/ISIAO library and archives in deplorable conditions.

On the other hand, I am happy to say that, after having combined Tucci's field records with the photographs exposed in 1933, the reconstructed sequence of the negatives holds up pretty well, the only major changes being the chronological order of two roll films and the attribution of a few frames to another roll film. Twenty years ago we had arranged them relying on the published travelogue of the expedition (Tucci & Ghersi 1934; Tucci & Ghersi 1936, henceforth *Cronaca*), and assuming that the two Italians always visited together the buildings, taking notes and photographs. A typed copy of Ghersi's personal diary (Bellatalla 2016, henceforth *Diario*) and Tucci's field records transcribed in the Appendix demonstrate that this was not always the case.

As I already pointed out (Nalesini 2008), the reconstruction of the textual and visual sources of the expedition, as well as the establishment of a strong connection between the sequences of the photographs and the chronicle of the activities of the two Italians are the best way to attain a credible identification of the images. The discovery of Tucci's *Notepad* is – no doubt – a significant addition to the sources on the 1933 expedition, as it gives the opportunity to identify more precisely the photographs taken in that year, and to revise our old work. For the first time it is thus possible to publish these photographs as a whole, though by necessity in small size, proposing a new sequence which I deem very close to the original one (Figs 8-14).<sup>9</sup>

The collation of the different travelogues on the 1933 expedition, and especially of *Cronaca* with *Notepad*, proved far from simple because of omissions and

---

9 In these figures the frame number and, in brackets, the negative or print (P-) access number are placed under each image. A question mark indicates a doubtful placement.

contradictions. According to *Cronaca*, to begin with, on September 19<sup>th</sup> Tucci and Gherzi successfully bargained with the abbot (*mkhan po*) and the treasurer (*phyag mdzod*) of Tholing the permission to visit the monastery without restrictions, but on that day they were allowed only a first survey on the exterior as the monks were performing ceremonies in the temples. Gherzi had thus the opportunity to pan over the site with his cine-camera and produce unique panoramic views of the monastery and its surroundings (Istituto Luce 1934; Fig. 1). The morning of September 20<sup>th</sup> was apparently spent again in discussions with the local authorities. Only in the afternoon Tucci and Gherzi were finally able to start fieldwork exploring the ruins of Upper Tholing (Tholing alto).<sup>10</sup> The visit to the monastery took place on September 21<sup>st</sup>, and according to *Diario*, Gherzi had to photograph works of art and books for six hours (Bellatalla 2016: 169).

This version is partially contradicted by *Notepad*. According to it, Tucci visited the so called Ye shes 'od temple, i.e. the dPal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang,<sup>11</sup> soon after the first meeting with the authorities (f. 2r and Fig. 2).

On the next folios of *Notepad*, 3r and 4r, Tucci sketched two plans of this building. The first one basically is a schematic representation of the entire temple (Fig. 3), while the second is a plan of the entrance to the complex and the *lha khang* of its core, the rNam par snang mdzad (Fig. 4).<sup>12</sup> Above the latter, Tucci wrote “foto rotolo Tolin Anticamera” (photo roll film Tholing Antechamber), where ‘Anticamera’ obviously is the 'du khang Thub dbang bDul 'dul ma, positioned between the entrance to the temple and the rNam par snang mdzad (see Vitali 1999: 84-85). This plan bears references to the photographs taken by Gherzi in this part of the temple, consecutively numbered 1 through 8.

Even a quick look at the Tholing roll films shows that no one of them can possibly contain a sequence of frames numbered 1 through 8 showing images that might be compatible with the decorations of the rNam par snang mdzad. The figures on the plan in fact do not refer to the frames numbers, which were still unknown to Tucci since he was writing while Gherzi was photographing, but to the subjects of the photographs and the order in which Gherzi took them.

The analysis of the sequence of the frames in this roll film demonstrate it. As can be seen on Fig. 9, the exterior views of the door of the lHa khang dkar po (frame 9)

10 Shing gra hill (Vitali 1999: 103, 105), where Gherzi discovered the well known manuscripts (see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 437-46; De Rossi Filibeck 2007; Heller & Eng [in press]). According to Tucci (1937: 167), the Tibetan name of Upper Tholing was Phyi murti.

11 As a rule, I refer to Vitali 1999 for the names and position of the buildings.

12 Recent plans of this area, as published by Luczanits 1996, Vitali 1999 and Wang 2001, differ significantly from Tucci's drawings. He apparently did not realise that the western wall of 'anticamera' was also dividing this hall from the Mi skyod pa lha khang in the rNam par snang mdzad. Therefore, he sketched a second non-existent hall between the entrance to the rNam par snang mdzad and the wall of the 'du khang with a Buddha statue (Figs 3 and 4; cf. Tucci & Gherzi 1934: 311, fig. 227; Tucci & Gherzi 1936: 163).

and of a corner of the dPal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang (frame 10) mark the beginning of the photographs taken inside the temple. Then follow four images of mural paintings representing the Life of the Buddha (frames 11-14). They certainly correspond to the “མཛད་པ་ 12” written in the lower left corner of the plan sketched on f. 3r,<sup>13</sup> and, arguably, to the “Id[em]” written in the lower right corner of the same plan (Fig. 3 letters N and O). This may mean that the Life of Buddha was painted on the two different walls, on the left and right sides of the hall. This fits with the second plan of the hall, drafted on f. 4r, where one can find references to “Fotog. 1” and “Fotog. 2” on the walls to the left and right of the entrance to the first *lha khang* of the brGya tsa, the 'du khang Thub dbang bDul 'dul ma.

There is a second possible reading of these notes: “Fotog. 1” may refer to the paintings as a whole (frames 11-14), while “Fotog. 2” indicates the place where stood the statue of Maitreya pictured in the next frame 15, and erroneously published by Tucci as Avalokiteśvara (Tucci 1934d: 282). Vitali (1999: 126) and Luczanits (2004: 209) supposed it stood in the Byams khang of the brGya tsa. The plan on f. 3r in fact shows a “Campa grande in piedi” (large standing Byams pa) in the westernmost *lha khang* of the brGya tsa. However, in this case, Gherzi would have to pass through the entire brGya tsa to shot a unique picture and then walk back to the entrance of the temple. In my opinion, the statue pictured in this frame more likely is the statue of Byams [pa] mentioned in the *Me glang rten deb* of Tholing, f. 53r (Vitali 1999: 73 and 169), standing to the left of the main statue of Thub dbang in the 'du khang Thub dbang bDul 'dul ma. Tucci drawn its rectangular base in both plans, and marked it with a “Sakya tuba” on f. 3r and “Statua/e di Buddha” on f. 4r.

“Foto 3” on f. 4r corresponds to frame 16, and portrays the statue of Rin 'byung (Ratnasambhava), which, according to *Cronaca* (Tucci & Gherzi 1934: 314, fig. 229; Tucci & Gherzi 1936: facing p. 167) was in the southern *glo 'bur* of the rNam par snang mdzad.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, the following frames are lost.

The last survived frame of this sequence, and possibly of the roll film, is an exterior view taken at sunset (Fig. 9/26; cf. Tucci & Gherzi 1934: 299, fig. 217)

13 It obviously is the representation of the Life of the Buddha called *mdzad pa bcu gnyis* (cf. Tucci 1935a: 77). These paintings have been discussed by Klimburg-Salter 1988: 193-94, and correctly located by Vitali 1999: 125.

14 Vitali (1999: 124, n. 119) located in the Rin chen 'byung ldan lha khang also the first two frames of roll film 3 (Fig. 12/0-1), mainly on the basis of the memories of the monks and elders who lived in Tholing at the time of its destruction. These two photographs, which can be better appreciated once they are stitched together (Fig. 7), show, however, mural decorations that – in my view – are stylistically not compatible with those surrounding the statue of Rin 'byung. Moreover, the main sculpture visible in this *lha khang* is an eight-armed eleven-headed sPyan ras gzigs, and there is no visible trace of the statue of Ratnasambhava with its surrounding elaborated stucco decoration. Last but not least, there is a strict correspondence of what can be seen in these photographs and the description of the *lha khang* written by Tucci (see below f. 4v). I am grateful to Roberto Vitali for having expounded his opinion on the identification of these two photographs.

marking the end of that day. Contrary to the statements of *Cronaca* and *Diario*, therefore, Tucci and Gheresi visited the rNam par snang mdzad on the first day passed at Tholing.

The folios written during the following days are a bit more puzzling. After the rNam par snang mdzad, Tucci described the “cappelle” (i.e. *lha khang*) of the surrounding brGya tsa. Surprisingly, the photographic references on these folios are not to roll film 2, as one would have expected, but to roll film 3. Roll film 2, in fact, appears several folios below in connection with the temple of 16 Arhats (i.e. gNas bcu lha khang; see Vitali 1999: 88-89, 97), the 'Du khang and the ruins of Upper Tholing (ff. 11r-13v). These photographic references have been added later, as their thicker and softer strokes drawn with a dull point clearly show (Fig. 5).

The key to understanding this inconsistency is on f. 13r, where Tucci wrote “Escursione di Gheresi alto Toling” (Gheresi’s hike Upper Tholing). Contrary to the claims of the published travelogue (Tucci & Gheresi 1934: 303; Tucci & Gheresi 1936: 160), Tucci’s field notes let us know that on the afternoon of September 20<sup>th</sup> Gheresi explored Upper Tholing alone, while he remained at the monastery; a circumstance confirmed by Gheresi’s *Diario* (Bellatalla 2016: 168).

The most plausible interpretation is that on the morning of September 20<sup>th</sup> Gheresi photographed the temple of 16 Arhats and the 'Du khang while Tucci was discussing with the authorities. In the afternoon, Gheresi climbed to Upper Tholing and Tucci visited the brGya tsa, sTon rgyud lha khang, lHa khang dkar po and gSer khang. Tucci therefore wrote on his notepad first the notes on the temples he had explored alone (ff. 8r-11r), and then the observations on the temples visited by Gheresi on the basis of the photographs that the photographer had developed in the meanwhile to check the quality of his work, and perhaps printed on a contact proof sheet as an easy reference tool (ff. 13r-v). On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Tucci guided Gheresi through the *lha khang* he had previously visited alone, indicating him what had to be photographed. This was done with the third roll film, as the second has been exposed the day before.

Not all doubts on the photographic documentation of Tholing have been solved. The location of the painting in frames 5-7 of roll film 1 remains unclear. Vitali (1999: 96) believes that they were in the entrance room (sGo khang) of the brGya tsa, but this hypothesis contrasts with the position of the frames in the roll film, which clearly shows that Gheresi took them before entering the brGya tsa (Fig. 9). There remain doubts also on the mural paintings of roll film 4,<sup>15</sup> frames 1-3 (Fig. 14). Vitali (1999: 128) located them with sound arguments in the gSung chos ra ba. Tucci otherwise somewhat linked them to the paintings of the Tshe dpag med lha khang in the brGya tsa, by drawing an arrow in his notes (f. 7r; Fig. 5), but it remains unclear whether he meant the location of the paintings, or just inserted a reminder of iconographic or stylistic similarities.

15 Named ‘Stantze I’ (my most plausible reading, see Fig. 5) by Tucci. It contains the last photographs taken at Tholing and the first shot at Tsaparang (as on f. 17r, not transcribed here).

The position of these frames is not very helpful to solve the question. They have been exposed immediately after the paintings and the door of the gSer khang (Fig. 13/27-38), and immediately before the frames showing again the door of that temple (Fig. 14/4-9; cf. f. 10r), which suggests that all these photographs have been taken there. On the other hand, the two frames under discussion are at the very beginning of a roll film containing also the first photographs taken at Tsaparang. Consequently, they might have been exposed the day after. If the latter was the case, what might have happened is that Gheresi has discovered, on developing the negatives at night, that his photograph of the door was not as good as expected, and decided to take it again next morning, before leaving Tholing. As he would have developed the negatives in Tsaparang, he decided to shot a series of photographs to the door of the gSer khang with the same framing but with different exposure settings (Fig. 14/4-9; cf. f10r).

Though several points of the documentation on Tholing gathered or produced by Tucci are still cryptic, the discovery of his *Notepad* allowed a more reliable identification of Gheresi's photographs. Hopefully, a small progress toward a better knowledge of the 'mother' monastery of Gu ge.

## Appendix 1

The *lha khang* of the brGya tsa

The correspondence of “I cappella” and “luogo diverso” with the actual *lha khang* is uncertain.<sup>16</sup> The position of the Byams pa ngal gso lha khang according to Vitali (1999: 92, pl. VII no. 18) differs from Tucci’s drawing (Fig. 3, letter I “Ciampa seduto”).

FIG.	TUCCI	VITALI 1999	WANG 2001
1/11-16	Anticamera	’du khang Thub dbang bDul ’dul ma	释迦殿 Shijia dian
3/0-1	I cappella	’Jigs byed lha khang lTung bshags (or A tsa ra) lha khang	护法神殿 Hufashen dian 阿扎惹殿 Azare dian
3/2	II cappella	lHa khang bKra shis ’od bar	扎西威巴殿 Zaxiweiba dian
3/3	III cappella	sMan lha khang	药师殿 Yaoshi dian
3/4	IV cappella	Thugs rje lha khang	观音殿 Guanyin dian
3/5	V cappella	sGrol ma lha khang	度母殿 Dumu dian
	VI cappella	rGyal ba rigs lnga lha khang bSrung ma khang Byams khang	五佛殿 Wufu dian 护法殿 Hufa dian 强巴殿 Jiangba dian
3/6-8	VII cappella	Phyag rdor lha khang	金刚持殿 Jingang chi dian
3/9-10	VIII cappella	Byams pa ngal gso lha khang Bla ma lha khang	佛母殿 Fumu dian 修习状强巴殿 Xiuxi zhuang jiangba dian
	Altra cappella	Yum chen mo lha khang	宗喀巴殿 Zongkaba dian
3/11-13	Altra cappella	Tshe dpag med lha khang	无量寿佛殿 Wuliangshoufu dian
3/14	Altra cappella	’Jigs brgyad lha khang	甘珠尔殿 Ganzhuer dian
3/15-16	Luogo diverso	gSung chos lha khang ’Jam dbyang lha khang	丹珠尔殿 Danzhuer dian 文殊殿 Wenshu dian

<sup>16</sup> The sGrol ma and Tshe dpag med lha khang have been discussed also by Luczanits 1996 and Luczanits 2004: 282-83 respectively.



## Appendix 2

### Tucci's Field Records

What follows is a semi-diplomatic transcription of folios 1r-16v of the *Notepad*. Wylie transcription of Tibetan words is in footnote when Tucci's transcription may generate confusion. A “|” marks the end of line when there exist doubts on the correct syntactical or semantic link. My additions are in square brackets; [?] indicate doubtful reading, and a number in bold square brackets (e.g. [1r]) marks the beginning of a folio, recto or verso. Tucci traced dividing lines (—) to separate the descriptions of different *lha khang* or other features. Please note that he normally omitted diacritics, aspirations and 'a chung.

[1r] Settembre 14 partenza da Gartok

གོང་སྤུ་ ཚོ་རིང་

Gargunsa Garyarsa[?]

15 [settembre] sera al passo

16 [settembre] passato il Bogo La | accampato tenda[?]

[1v blank]

[2r] སྤྱི་རི་སྐྱུར་ནས་ལྷོང་པོ་ཐོག་ལྷོ་ལ་འགོ་བའི་ལའི་མིང་པོ་གོ་ལ་ (Pogola)

17 [settembre] Discesa a Donbo | molti ciorten<sup>17</sup> e rovine di un tempio | poche antichità presso[?] templi [Fig. 8/10-21]

ལྷོང་པོ། རིན་ས།

18 [settembre] a Toling passando per rovine di རིན་ས། molti tsatsa [*sic*]

[2v] 19 [settembre] Toling visita del Chanzod<sup>18</sup> | anche al Khampo<sup>19</sup> | visita al tempio

di Ye ses od ← རོན་ཡོད་གྲུབ་པ། | མི་བསྐྱོད་པ་

[on the left margin:] Rinchen[illegible]

[plan of a building; Fig. 2]

[3r] དཔལ་དཔེ་མེད་ལྷན་གྱིས་གྲུབ་པའི་ལྷ་ཁང་ [Fig. 3]

17 *mchod rten*.

18 *phyag mdzod*.

19 *mkhan po*.

[A] *campa*<sup>20</sup> grande in piedi [B] *Od pa med*<sup>21</sup> [C] *Rinchen chulden*<sup>22</sup> [D] *Rnam par Snam mizat*<sup>23</sup> [E] རྫོན་ཡོད་གླུ་པའི། [F] *Lokanata* [*sic*] *Lhak[hang]* [G] porta [H] མི་བསྐྱོད་པ། [I] *Campa seduto* [L] 16 arhat [M] *Sākyatuba*<sup>24</sup> [N] མཛེད་པ་ 12 [O] id.

[3v] Tempio centrale | Viste le pitture | vicino[?] di *Dechog*<sup>25</sup> | le statue di *Kunrig*

[4r] Foto Rotolo Tolin Anticamera [Fig. 4]

[A] Statua [or: Statue] di Buddha [B] Statua foto

[4v] Rotolo III di Tolin

1<sup>a</sup> cappella            pitture

Fot III 44 ལྷན་ལྟ་ e 1 ཨ་ར་པ་ཅན་ | ལྷན་རས་གཟིགས་ | 2 ལོ་རྒྱུ་བ་ 2 [Fig. 12/0-1]

Foto 2 [Fig. 12/2] II<sup>a</sup> [cappella] | parete laterale ambiente[?] | *Canrezig*<sup>26</sup> | sinistra *Zepamed*<sup>27</sup>

[on the right margin:] Centrale[?] | Buddha | rientro[?]

[5r] *Od zer*[?] *jam mo*

Foto 3 [Fig. 12/3] 3<sup>a</sup> cappella

centrale

| *Vairocana* | ← intorno *tanc'a*<sup>28</sup> sulle pareti

8 *Sman lha*

circumambulazione con *bskalbzhan po*

4<sup>a</sup> [cappella] vuota

Foto 4 [Fig. 12/4] 5<sup>a</sup> [cappella] Statua di *Samvara* in bronzo e *Tara* in bronzo [5v] e sulle pareti *tanc'a* arrotolate

(yum libri)

20 *Byams pa*.

21 *'Od dpag med*.

22 *Rin chen 'byung ldan*.

23 *rNam par snang mdzad*.

24 *Shākya thub pa*.

25 *bDe mchog*.

26 *sPyan ras gzigs*.

27 *Tshe dpag med*.

28 *thang ka*.

Foto 5 [Fig. 12/5] 6<sup>a</sup> [cappella] Rigs lna<sup>29</sup> con Vairoca[na] in mezzo  
tanc'a[?] [6r] e drup tob<sup>30</sup> (bkargyud[?]) vicino a Vairocana sulla parete centrale

---

Foto 6, 7, 8 [Fig. 12/6-8] 7<sup>a</sup> [cappella] pyag dor<sup>31</sup>  
kyil k'or<sup>32</sup>

3 “ [small scheme] uno al centro e uno per lato

---

Foto 9, 10 [Fig. 12/9-10] 8<sup>a</sup> [cappella] | yum c'en mo in stucco e una in bronzo in pose  
diverse e sulle pareti tanc'a [6v] con un guru | dieci od pa med

---

altra [cappella] tsonk'apa<sup>33</sup> in bronzo | nascita di Budda | ལྷོ་མ་གཙོ་འཛེང་ [?]  
[on right margin a small sketchy drawing/plan and] k'rims[?] rab

---

[7r] Fot 11, 12, 13 [Fig. 12/11-13] altra [cappella]

Tsepamed | tso k'or<sup>34</sup> | circumambulazione di bskalbzhan po e kyil k'or di Vairocana  
[simple drawing, perhaps showing the position of] pittura di Lotsava del Tsok'or →  
Fot. Stantze[?] I 1,2,3 [Figs 5 and 14/1-3]

---

[7v] altra [cappella] Fot. 14 [Fig. 12/14] drol ma e immagine del sabdag del luogo  
debellato da Rincen bzhan po | dorje c'en mo e Sman lha (Yum lha mo) sulla parete

---

Arapacana al centro (Jampel rdorje)<sup>35</sup>

luogo diverso | Kun rig a sinistra foto 15 | d[estra] Vairocana foto 16 [Fig. 12/15-16]

---

[8r] Poi[?] tongyud lha k[hang]<sup>36</sup> | grande mani [dung skor] | parete bskalbzhan [po al]  
centro[?] e Sakyatuba

Cianrezig            Drolma

intorno bskalbzhan po

---

29 *rigs lnga*.

30 *grub thob*.

31 *Phyag rdor*.

32 *dkyil 'khor*.

33 *Tsong kha pa*.

34 *tshogs 'khor?*

35 *'Jam dpal rdo rje*.

36 *sTon rgyud lha khang*, or *Ma ñi lha khang* (see Vitali 1999: 90).

[8v] Altro tempio con ingresso barbarico fotografato rotolo I° [Fig. 9/9] ལྷ་ཁང་དཀར་པོ་

Sakyatuba[?] | Sman lha [two illegible characters] in stucco

parete a destra pitture: [Figs 12/17-19, 13/20-26] Zonk'apa 17 Pan c'en 18 Rnal jor ma<sup>37</sup> 19 Yum c'en mo 20 [9r] 21 གདུགས་ཀྱི་མེ་མོ་སྐྱེད་མ་ 22 | drol ma 23, 24 | dei dei cimiteri 25 | sulla parete alla destra della porta rnam tos [sic] sras (Vaisravana) [9v] sulla parete di sinistra nascita di Buddha 26

[small drawing/plan/scheme]

[10r] porta Serk'an<sup>38</sup> (foto Stantze[?] I 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 [Fig. 14/4-9])

ingresso con molti di[pi]nti di demc'og[?]

I sala [Fig. 13/27-34] centro Sambuta[?] kyil k'or 27

sinistra Sambu[?] jamdpal dorje 28 | destra demcog<sup>39</sup> 29

a sinistra della porta in alto dus kyi korlo<sup>40</sup> 32

a destra Kye rdorje 30, 31 | [10v] in basso a destra 34 ཡ་མན་དཀར་ | a sinistra 33 དམ་ཅན་ཚོས་  
ཀྱི་རྒྱུས་པོ་

ingresso circumambulazione Buddha

35 (porta a scene[?]) [Fig. 13/35]

[11r] II° piano | [crossed out: ingresso] 3 kyilkor [Fig. 13/36-38]

foto 36 Rnam par snang zad<sup>41</sup> e Kun rig (Kunrig)

37 id

38 id

III° piano vuoto

37 rNal 'byor ma.

38 gSer khang.

39 bDe mchog.

40 Dus kyi 'khor lo.

41 rNam par snang mdzad.

[crossed out: III° piano | (illegible) | 16 kil k'or | bskalbzhan po]  
 tempio dei 16 Arhat statue in stucco recenti pareti bskalbzhan po [11v] in basso a sinistra  
 proseguimento[?] della astasahasrika<sup>42</sup> scritta e raffigurante འུར་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔལ་ཉག་<sup>43</sup> ཏུ་རུ་  
 (sadāprarudita)

vicino[?] alla porta re del Tibet Srontsen bsangpo[?] | Lotsava | (Foto II 44, 1, 2, 3  
 [Fig. 10/0-3])

[12r] dopo la porta ཏུ་རུ་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔལ་ཉག་ ལྷ་མོ་གུར་ཇོ་མ་ sa bdag del luogo

di fronte nicchia con Śākyatuba

Dus k'an

[12v] Sakyat[uba]

Tzepamed Ciampa

Foto rot[olo] II°, 4 [Fig. 10/4]

dietro figura di Budda e affreschi di tara[?] che davanti[?] va scomparendo

Sala delle adunanze

[13r] Escursione di Gheri alto Toling | Toling alto visita di Gheri

Tempio in basso rosso

Foto II 13, e 9 interno | 14 vista d'insieme | 7 particolare di ciorten vicino al 14 [Fig.  
 10/7-14]

18 laterale sinistra | 19 statua centrale | 20 sinistra parete porta | 21 parete sinistra | 22  
 parete destra | 23 estrema parete sinistra | 24 25 26 zoccolo[?] parete destra | 27 parete  
 destra estrema | 28 laterale destra | 29 destra[?] e alto[?] [Fig. 10/18-29] | statue ed  
 affreschi [13v] del tempio [illegible] pure rovine in un[?] [illegible]

21 [settembre?] C[illegible] in tenda 48 gradi[?]

[14r] [incomplete outline drawing of the outer walls of the Ye shes 'od temple]

[14v blank]

[15r] 3 piano[?] del serk'an སྐ་མེད་རྒྱུད་ཡིན་མེད་ ལྷོ་རྒྱུད་ཡིན་མེད་ ལྷོ་རྒྱུད་ཡིན་མེད་

[15v] [pianta] [A] Ser k'an [B] dus k'an [C] gompa dkar po [D] ton gyud [E] ye se[s  
 'od] [Fig. 6]

<sup>42</sup> *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā sūtra*.

<sup>43</sup> ཏུ་རུ་

[16r] ai quattro angoli del cag rim<sup>44</sup> ci sono a distanza diseguale 4 lhababs ciorten. In quello posto a NE<sup>45</sup> si dice siano i resti del Lotsava | nel convento non c'è biografia di Rin c'en [bzang po]<sup>46</sup> [16v] e di [?] molte [?] [illegible] Tibet [?]  
 22 [settembre] a Tsaparang  
 [omissis]

### Appendix 3

#### Index to the Tholing roll films exposed in 1933

Frame	Fig.	ACC. NO.	PLACE, SUBJECT	PUBL.
Roll film 0				
0-8	8	omitted	From the Bogo pass to Dongbo	
9	8	6041/09	Petroglyphs	
10-11	8	6041/10-11	Dongbo, ruins	
12-17	8	omitted	Dongbo, portraits	
18	8	missing		
19-20	8	6046/19-20	Drinsa?, ruins	
21	8	6061/21	Drinsa?, view	<i>Cronaca</i> : 211
22-24	8	missing		
25-26	8	6067/25-26	The Tholing valley	
27-29	8	6067/27-29	Tholing, the chain bridge	
30?	8	missing	Tholing, the chain bridge	<i>Cronaca</i> : 213
31?	8	P-2749	Tholing, the chain bridge	<i>Cronaca</i> : 214
32?-36	8	missing		
37	8	6059/37	Tholing, lha 'bab mchod rten	<i>Cronaca</i> : 218
38	8	6059/38	Tholing, view	
Roll film 1				
1-3	9	missing	Tholing	
4	9	6062/5	Tholing, general view	<i>Cronaca</i> : 216
5-7	9	6025/5-7	Tholing, mural paintings	

44 *lcags ri*.

45 According to Tucci & Ghersi (1934: 301; Tucci & Ghersi 1936: 158) this *mchod rten* stood Northwest. On the alleged presence of relics of Rin chen bzang po, see Vitali 1999: 101, n. 108.

46 Cf. Tucci & Ghersi 1934: 302; Tucci & Ghersi 1936: 159.

Frame	Fig.	ACC. NO.	PLACE, SUBJECT	PUBL.
8	9	missing	Tholing	
9	9	6077/9	Tholing, lHa khang dkar po, door	<i>Cronaca</i> : 232
10	9	6077/10	Tholing, Ye shes 'od temple, view	<i>Cronaca</i> : 228
11-14	9	6035/11-14	Tholing, rNam par snang mdzad, Life of the Buddha	
15	9	6035/15	Tholing, rNam par snang mdzad, Mañjuśrī	Tucci 1934d
16	9	6018/16	Tholing, rNam par snang mdzad, Ratnasambhava	<i>Cronaca</i> : 229
17-25	9	missing		
26	9	6572/26	Tholing, view at sunset	<i>Cronaca</i> : 217
27-38	9	missing (perhaps unexposed)		

## Roll film 2

0-2	10	missing	Tholing, temple of 16 Arhat	<i>Cronaca</i> : 236-39
3	10	6571/3	Tholing, temple of 16 Arhat	
4	10	6082/16	Tholing, 'Du khang, Buddha	
5?	10	missing		
6?	10		Upper Tholing, view	Tucci 1934a
7	10		Upper Tholing, Lower temple	<i>Cronaca</i> : 220
8	10	missing	Upper Tholing	
9	10		Upper Tholing, Lower temple	<i>Cronaca</i> : 221
10-12	10	missing	Upper Tholing, Lower temple	
13	10	6061/13	Upper Tholing, Lower temple	
14	10	6057/14	Upper Tholing, Lower temple	<i>Cronaca</i> : 222
15-17	10	missing	Upper Tholing	
18-23	10	6002/18-23	Upper Tholing, Upper temple	19= <i>Cronaca</i> : 224
24-25	11	6002/24-25	Upper Tholing, Upper temple	
26?	11		Upper Tholing, Upper temple	<i>Cronaca</i> 223
27?-29	11	missing	Upper Tholing	
30-32	11	6017/30-32	Panoramas from Upper Tholing	30=Tucci 1934d
33	11	6055/33	Panorama from Upper Tholing	<i>Cronaca</i> : 215
34	11	missing	Panorama from Upper Tholing	Bellatalla 2016: 157

## Roll film 3

0-1	12	6074/44-1	Tholing, brGya tsa, 'Jigs byed or lTung bshags lha khang	
2	12	6074/2	Tholing, brGya tsa, bKra shis 'od bar l.k.	

Frame	Fig.	ACC. NO.	PLACE, SUBJECT	PUBL.
3	12	6074/3	Tholing, brGya tsa, sMan l.k.	
4	12	6077/4	Tholing, brGya tsa, Thugs rje l.k.	<i>Cronaca</i> 231
5	12	6077/5	Tholing, brGya tsa, sGrol ma l.k.	<i>Cronaca</i> 230
6-8	12	6097/6-8	Tholing, brGya tsa, Phyang rdor l.k.	
9-10	12	6097/9-10	Tholing, brGya tsa, Byams pa ngal gso l.k.	Tucci 1973: 127
11-13	12	6097/11-13	Tholing, brGya tsa, Tshe dpag med l.k.	Tucci 1934d
14	12	6097/14	Tholing, brGya tsa, 'Jigs brgyad l.k.	
15-16	12	6097/15-16	Tholing, brGya tsa, gSung chos or 'Jam dbyang l.k.	
17-19	12	6097/17-19	Tholing, lHa khang dkar po	
20-24	13	6061/20-24	Tholing, lHa khang dkar po	20= <i>Cronaca</i> : 233
25-26	13	6004/25-26	Tholing, lHa khang dkar po	
27-30	13	6004/27-30	Tholing, gSer-khang, Mandala	28=Tucci 1949: II
31-32	13	6005/31-32	Tholing, gSer-khang, Mandala	
33-38	13	6007/33-38	Tholing, gSer-khang, Mandala	
Roll film 4 (Stantze 1)				
1-3	14	6071/1-3	Tholing gSung chos ra ba?	
4	14	6071/04	Tholing, gSer khang, door	
5-6?	14	missing	Tholing, gSer khang, door	
7?	14	P-0787	Tholing, gSer khang, door	
8-9	14	6025/8-9	Tholing, gSer khang, door	
10	14	6025/10	Tholing, row of stupa	
11-14?	14	missing		
15?-34	14	omitted	Tsaparang	
Not assignable to any roll film				
	15	P-1616	Tholing, row of stupa	<i>Cronaca</i> : 219
	15	missing	Tholing	<i>Cronaca</i> : 240
	15	missing	Tholing	Tucci 1934d
	15	missing	Tholing	Tucci 1934e
	15	P-1047	Tholing	
	15	P-1062	Tholing, gSer khang, exterior view	<i>Cronaca</i> : 239
	15	P-3268	Tholing, general view	



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Secondary Sources

- Bellatalla, D. (2016), *Eugenio Ghersi: Sull'Altipiano dell'Io Sottile. Diario inedito della spedizione scientifica italiana nel Tibet occidentale del 1933*, Rovereto: Montura.
- De Rossi Filibeck, E. (2003), *Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of IsIAO 2*, Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente.
- De Rossi Filibeck, E. (2007), "The Fragmentary Tholing Kanjur in the IsIAO Library." In *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ: Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, edited by B. Kellner, H. Krasser, H. Lasix, M. Much and H. Tauscher, Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, pp. 53-62.
- Farrington, A. J. (2002), "Prof Giuseppe Tucci", in A.J. Farrington (ed.) *British Intelligence on China in Tibet, 1903-1950. Formerly classified and confidential British intelligence and policy files, CIT-5 Travellers and entry control, 1905-1950*, Leiden, IDC Publisher.
- Heller, A. - Eng C. (in press), "Three Ancient Manuscripts from Tholing in the Tucci Collection, IsIAO, Roma, Part II: Manuscript 1329 0". In *Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia: Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity. Proceedings of the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, 25-27 Nov. 2013*, edited by E. Allinger, F. Grenet, C. Jahoda, M.-K. Lang, A. Vergati, Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press.
- Istituto Luce (1934), *Nel Tibet occidentale* [black and white documentary film, shot by Eugenio Ghersi], Roma: Istituto Nazionale Luce; available at <http://www.archivioluce.com>.
- Klimburg-Salter, D. (1988), "The Tucci Archives Preliminary Study, 2: The Life of the Buddha in Western Himalayan Monastic Art and Its Indian Origins: Act One". *East and West* 38: 189-214.
- Klimburg-Salter, D. - Nalesini, O. - Talamo, G. (1994), *Inventory of the Tucci Photographic Archives, 1926-1935 (Western Himalayas, Nepal, Tibet)*, Roma: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente.
- Luczanits, C. (1996), "A Note on Tholing Monastery". *Orientalia* 27/6: 76-77.
- Luczanits, C. (2004), *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay: Early Western Himalayan Art, Late 10<sup>th</sup> to Early 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Chicago: Serindia.
- Nalesini, O. (2008), "Assembling Loose Pages, Collecting Fragments of the Past: Giuseppe Tucci and His Wanderings throughout Tibet and the Himalayas, 1926-1954". In *Manuscripta buddhica 1: Sanskrit Texts from Giuseppe Tucci's*

- Collection, Part I*, edited by F. Sferra, Roma: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, pp. 79-112.
- Petech, L. (1995), “Il contributo di Giuseppe Tucci alla storia dei paesi himalayani”. In *Giuseppe Tucci. Nel centenario della nascita, Roma, 7-8 giugno 1994*, edited by B. Melasecchi, Roma: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, pp. 7-19.
- Tucci, G. (1934a), “Unknown Monasteries in Mysterious Tibet Visited during a Recent Journey of Exploration”. *The Illustrated London News*, February 17: 246-47.
- Tucci, G. (1934b), “La spedizione Tucci nel Tibet occidentale”. *L’Illustrazione italiana* 61/3: 81-84.
- Tucci, G. (1934c), “La spedizione Tucci nel Tibet occidentale - II”. *L’Illustrazione italiana* 61/4: 118-21.
- Tucci, G. (1934d), “Nel Paese dei Lama: costumi e riti nel Tibet occidentale”. *Le Vie d’Italia e del Mondo* 3/3: 261-87.
- Tucci, G. (1934e), “Nel Tibet occidentale: splendori di un mondo che scompare”. *Le Vie d’Italia e del Mondo* 3/8: 911-37.
- Tucci, G. (1935a), *I templi del Tibet occidentale e il loro simbolismo artistico. Parte I. Spiti e Kunavar*, Roma: Reale Accademia d’Italia.
- Tucci, G. (1935b), “La mia ultima spedizione tibetana”. *L’Illustrazione italiana* 62/50: 11-24.
- Tucci, G. (1937), *Santi e briganti nel Tibet ignoto: diario della spedizione nel Tibet occidentale 1935*, Milano: Hoepli.
- Tucci, G. (1941), *Gyantse ed i suoi monasteri I. Descrizione generale dei tempi*, Roma: Reale Accademia d’Italia.
- Tucci, G. (1949), *Teoria e pratica del mandala*, Roma: Astrolabio.
- Tucci, G. (1973), *Tibet*, Geneve: Nagel.
- Tucci, G. - Ghersi, E. (1934), *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet occidentale (1933)*, Roma: Reale Accademia d’Italia.
- Tucci, G. - Ghersi, E. (1936), *Secrets of Tibet, Being the Chronicle of Tucci Scientific Expedition to Western Tibet (1933)*, London: Blackie & Sons.
- Vitali, R. (1999), *Records of Tho.ling: A Literary and Visual Reconstruction of the ‘Mother’ Monastery in Gu.ge*, Dharamsala: High Asia.
- Wang, H. 王辉 (2001), “Xizang Tuolinsi jia sadian de jianzhu yishu 西藏托林寺迦萨殿的建筑艺术”, *Wenwu chungiu* 文物春秋 60/4: 54-62.

dPal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa 'i gtsug lag khang (Ye shes 'od temple)      sTon rgyud lha khang (Ma ri lha khang)      'Du khang (lHa khang dmar po)

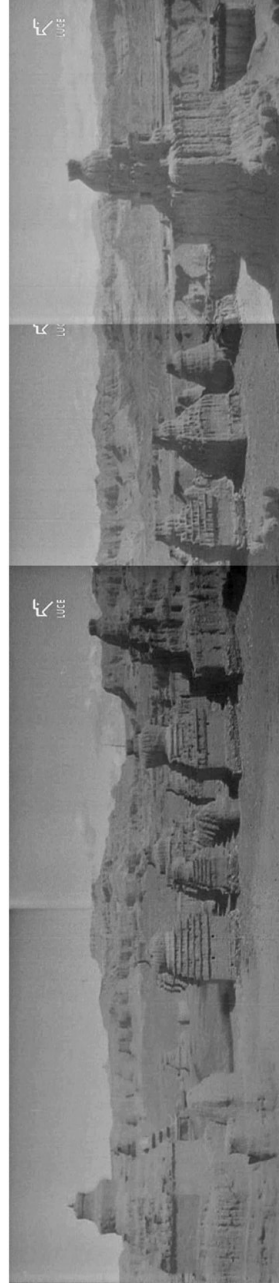
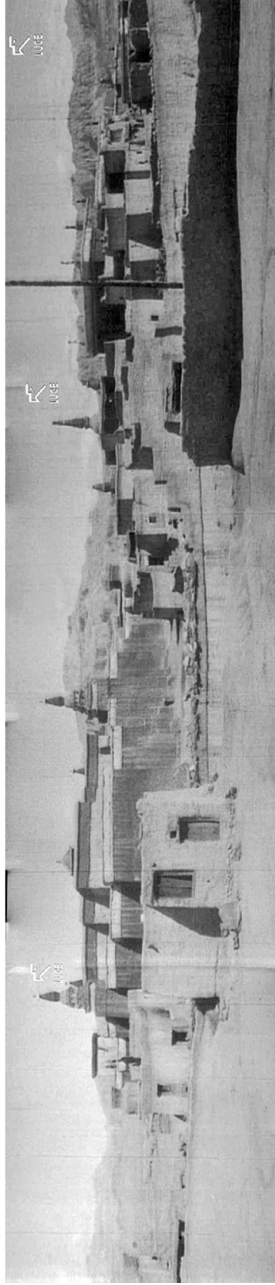


Fig. 1. Panoramic views of Tholing from Gherzi's documentary film (Istituto Luce 1934). Above: The monastery from south; below: rows of *mchod rten* in the neighbourhood of the monastery (Courtesy: Archivio Istituto Luce - Cinecittà).

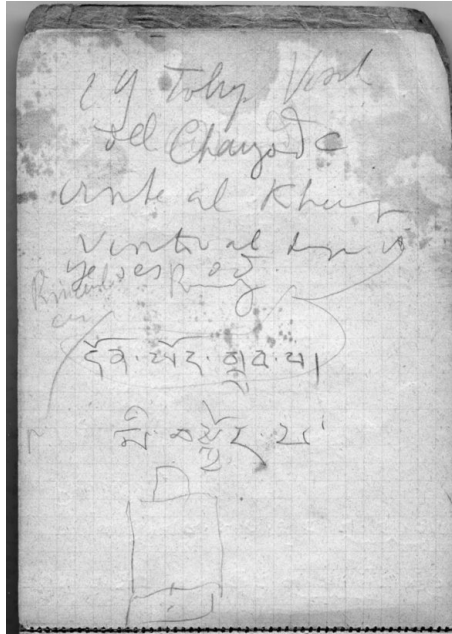


Fig. 2. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 2v.

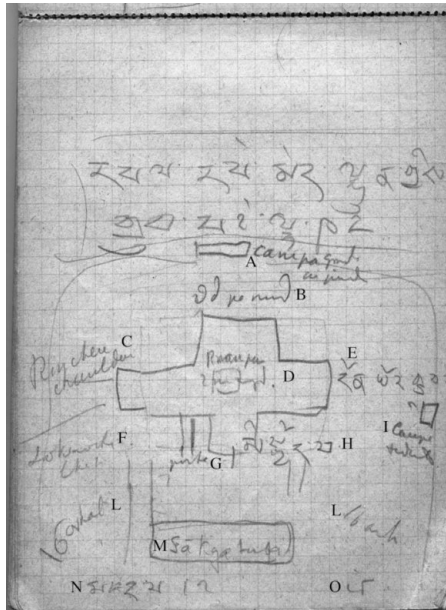


Fig. 3. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 3r.

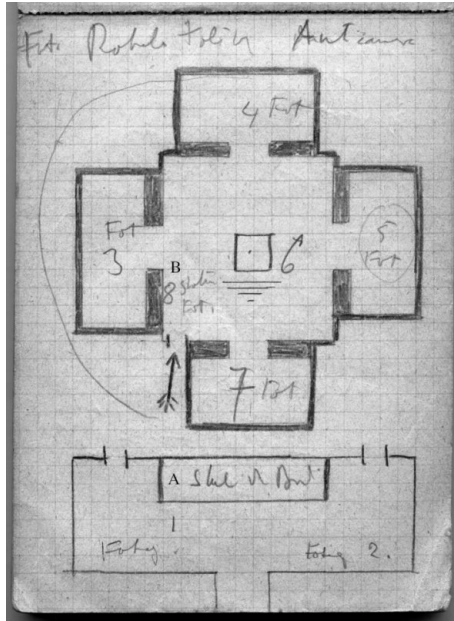


Fig. 4. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 4r.

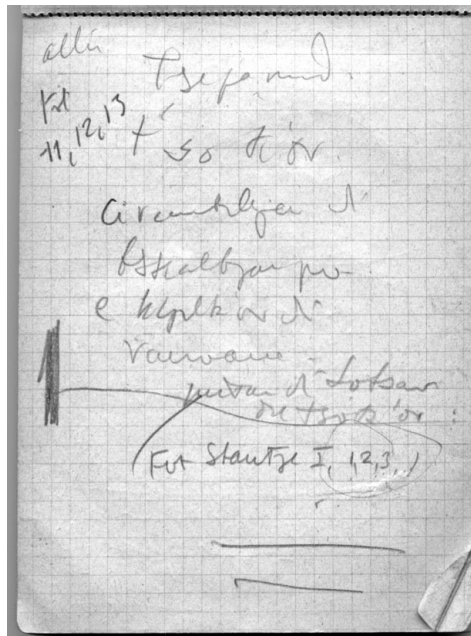


Fig. 5. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 7r.

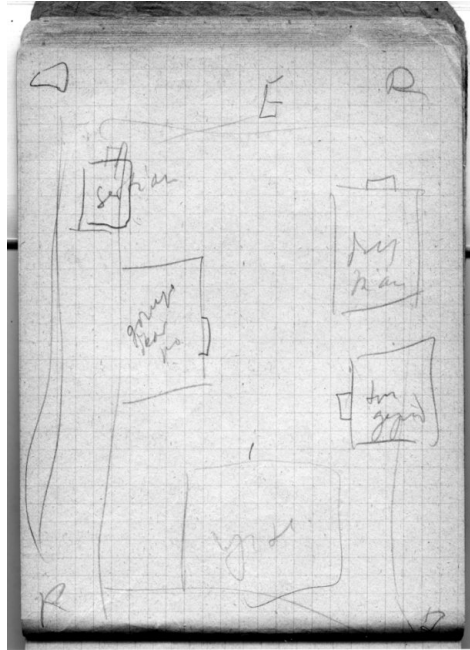


Fig. 6. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 15v.



Fig. 7. The mural paintings of the Jigs byed or ITung bshags lha khang in the brGya tsa.



Fig. 8. Tholing roll film no. 0.

missing frames



1-3

4 (neg. 6062/5)

5 (neg. 6025/5)

6 (neg. 6025/6)



missing frame



7 (neg. 6025/7)

8

9 (neg. 6077/9)

10 (neg. 6077/10)

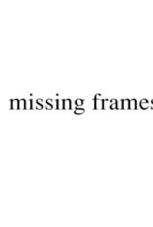


11 (neg. 6035/11)

12 (neg. 6035/12)

13 (neg. 6035/13)

14 (neg. 6035/14)



15 (neg. 6035/15)

16 (neg. 6018/16)

missing frames

17-25

26 (neg. 6572/26)

Fig. 9. Tholing roll film no. 1.





0 (Cronaca 236)



1 (Cronaca 237)



2 (Cronaca 238)



3 (neg. 6571/3)



4 (neg. 6082/16)

missing frame



6? (IllLondon)



7 (Cronaca 220)

missing frame

8



9 (Cronaca 221)

missing frames

10-12



13 (neg. 6061/13)



14 (neg. 6057/14)

missing frames

15-17



18 (neg. 6002/18)



19 (neg. 6002/19)



20 (neg. 6002/20)



21 (neg. 6002/21)



22 (neg. 6002/22)



23 (neg. 6002/23)

Fig. 10. Tholing roll film no. 2 (frames 1-23).



24 (neg. 6002/24)



25 (neg. 6002/25)



26 (neg. 6002/26)

27 (*Cronaca* 223)

missing frames

28-29



30 (neg. 6017/30)



31 (neg. 6017/31)



32 (neg. 6017/32)



33 (neg. 6055/33)

34? (*Bellatalla* 2016)

Fig. 11. Tholing roll film no. 2 (frames 24-34).



0 (neg. 6074/44)



1 (neg. 6074/1)



2 (neg. 6074/2)



3 (neg. 6074/3)



4 (neg. 6077/4)



5 (neg. 6077/5)



6 (neg. 6097/6)



7 (neg. 6097/7)



8 (neg. 6097/8)



9 (neg. 6097/9)



10 (neg. 6097/10)



11 (neg. 6097/11)



12 (neg. 6097/12)



13 (neg. 6097/13)



14 (neg. 6097/14)



15 (neg. 6097/15)



Fig. 12. Tholing roll film no. 3 (frames 0-19).



20 (neg. 6061/20)



21 (neg. 6023/21)



22 (neg. 6023/22)



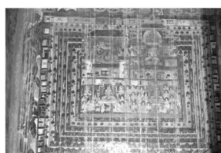
23 (neg. 6023/23)



24 (neg. 6023/24)



25 (neg. 6004/25)



26 (neg. 6004/26)



27 (neg. 6004/27)



28 (neg. 6004/28)



29 (neg. 6004/29)



30 (neg. 6004/30)



31 (neg. 6005/31)



32 (neg. 6005/32)



33 (neg. 6007/33)



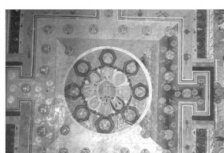
34 (neg. 6007/34)



35 (neg. 6007/35)



36 (neg. 6007/36)



37 (neg. 6007/37)



38 (neg. 6007/38)

Fig. 13. Tholing roll film no. 3 (frames 20-38).

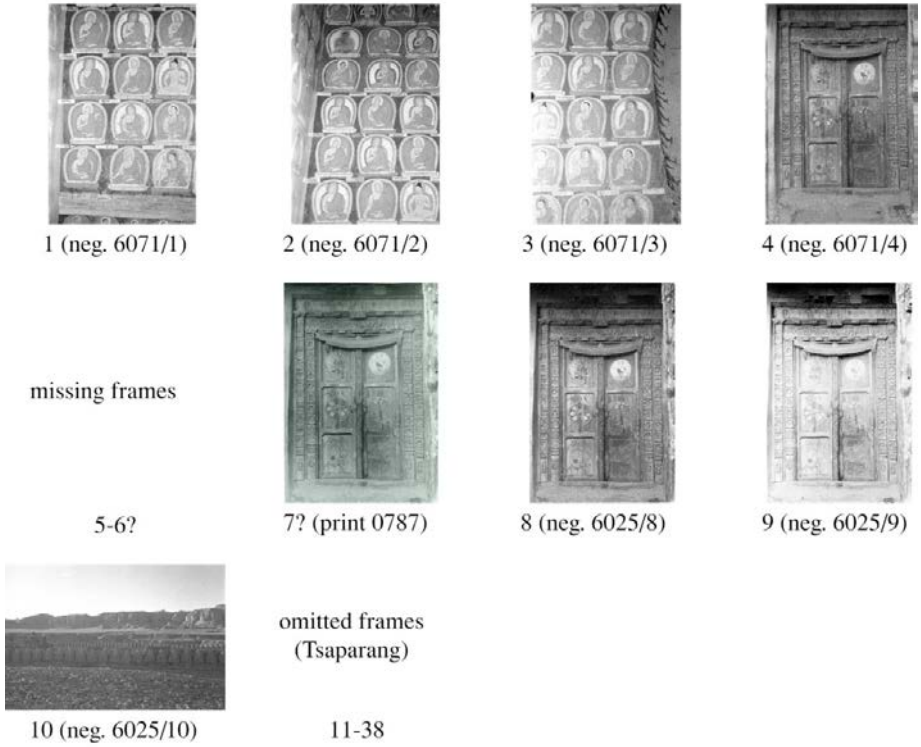


Fig. 14. Tholing roll film no. 4.

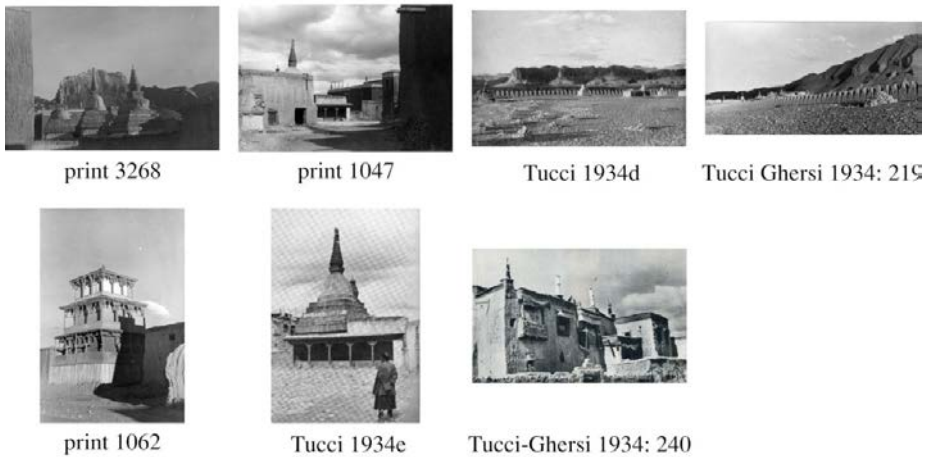


Fig. 15. Photographs not assignable to any specific film.

