



Tesi, Mauro Antonio, detto il Maurino

Montalbano, Modena 1730 – 1766 Bologna

Studies of putti with scrolling forms, lying on the ground, and a mask design with scrolling forms

[Bologna? circa 1760]

DRAWING, pen and brown ink over black chalk, 135 × 347 mm, laid down on a nineteenth-century mount, inscribed on the mount *Maura Tasia* and 5 W L^L 48.

In a gilt frame.

PROVENANCE Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, 9th Baronet, of Pollok (1818-1878) — his album of 'Drawings by Old Italian Masters. Sculpture', dispersed by Phillips Son & Neale, London, 12 December 1990, lot 281 (£1895)

THE OLD ATTRIBUTION on the mount to Mauro Tesi is confirmed by similarities to a drawing published by Richard Wunder in 1965.¹ Both sheets are executed in the same manner in Tesi's distinctive pen style, and are strongly reminiscent of Stefano della Bella's ornament prints. The Michigan drawing, in fact, carried an attribution to Della Bella before Wunder associated it with etchings by Tesi in imitation of prints by Della Bella.²

Comparable drawings with garlands, satyr's heads, and infants, are in Rome;³ Geneva;⁴ Sammlung Schloss Fachsenfeld;⁵ Venice;⁶ New York,⁷ and on the art market.⁸ Similar

¹ Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1960/2.20; Richard P. Wunder, *Architectural and ornament drawings of the 16th to the early 19th centuries in the collection of The University of Michigan Museum of Art* (Ann Arbor 1965), p.[21] no. 28; Collection catalogue ([image](#)).

² 'Frises, feuillages et grotesques' (set of 8), 'Ornamenti di fregi e fogliami' (set of 16), published c. 1645. Alexandre De Vesme, *Stefano della Bella: Catalogue raisonné*, edited by P.D. Massar (New York 1971), nos. 979-1002.

³ Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe, Taccuino 2511, FN7756-7787; compare FN7768 ([image](#)).

A sketchbook of thirty drawings by Tesi, acquired in 1932 ([record](#)).

⁴ Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Cabinet des dessins, Inv. 1959-84; Anne de Herdt, *Dessins anciens d'architecture et de décoration: donation Gustave Hentsch, ancienne Collection Edmond Fatio*, catalogue for an exhibition held at the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, 15 February-15 September 1979 (Geneva 1979), p.38 no. 43. Collection catalogue ([image](#)).

⁵ Inv.-Nr. I/1632; Christel Thiem, *Bolognesische Zeichnungen 1600-1830 aus der Sammlung Schloss Fachsenfeld, mit Leihgaben aus Windsor Castle und der Fondazione Cini Venedig*, catalogue of the exhibition presented at the Graphische Sammlung der Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, 2 March-2 May 1982 (Stuttgart 1982), pp.178-179 no. 121.

⁶ Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Raccolta Antonio Certani, Inv. 31714; Chiara Basalti, 'Nuove proposte sul fondo Antonio Certani: disegni di ornato di Mauro Tesi, Carlo Bianconi' in *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 34 (2010), pp.115-116 fig. 7.

⁷ New York, Morgan Library & Museum, 1982.75:632. An album of 41 'Drawings after antique sculpture and motifs and several set designs' ([catalogue record](#)).

⁸ 'Cartouche with grotesque masks', Sotheby's, New York, 28 January 1998, lot 229; 'Study for a grotesque', Phillips, London, 22 April 1998, lot 82.

drawings by Tesi of decorative friezes incorporating masks were etched by Clemente Nicoli,⁹ and by the artist himself.¹⁰

Mauro Tesi, who died at the age of 36, had taught himself by copying the drawings of the great Bolognese masters of the previous century, Agostino Mitelli and Angelo Michele Colonna. All kinds of ornament interested Tesi, but soon a natural predisposition towards architectural decoration asserted itself.¹¹



⁹ 'Due fregi decorativi con volute e mascheroni e una testa di leone' and 'Due fregi decorativi e un mascherone', signed respectively C.N. [monogram] scul. | Maurus Tesi deli. and M.T. del. | C.N. scul. (Reggio Emilia, Biblioteca Panizza, Raccolta Davoli, Sezione Gabinetto delle stampe 'Angelo Davoli', Inv. 10387 [image](#), and 10386 [image](#)).

¹⁰ 'Fregi, vasi, teste, in tutto tredici elementi' (Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Inv. 5222, vol. 12), reproduced by Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, *Catalogo generale della raccolta di stampe antiche della Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, Gabinetto delle Stampe: Incisori Bolognesi ed Emiliani del sec. XVIII* (Bologna 1974), no. 865; and by Wanda Bergamini, in *L'arte del Settecento emiliano: X Biennale d'arte antica. Architettura, scenografia, pittura di paesaggio*,

catalogue for an exhibition held in Bologna, 1979, edited by Anna Maria Matteucci (Bologna 1980), p.34 no. 39a and fig. 29.

¹¹ For Tesi's career, see Wanda Bergamini, 'La cultura di Mauro Tesi: "Ecco il frutto dello studiare attentamente gl'antichi professori"' in *I decoratori di formazione bolognese tra Settecento e Ottocento. Da Mauro Tesi ad Antonio Basoli*, edited by Anna Maria Matteucci (Milan 2002), pp.105-114, reprinted in Wanda Bergamini, *Scritti d'arte*, edited by Deanna Lenzi, A.M. Matteucci Armandi, and Vincenza Riccardi Scassellati Sforzolini (Bologna 2009), pp.113-121.



Above Detail from our drawing

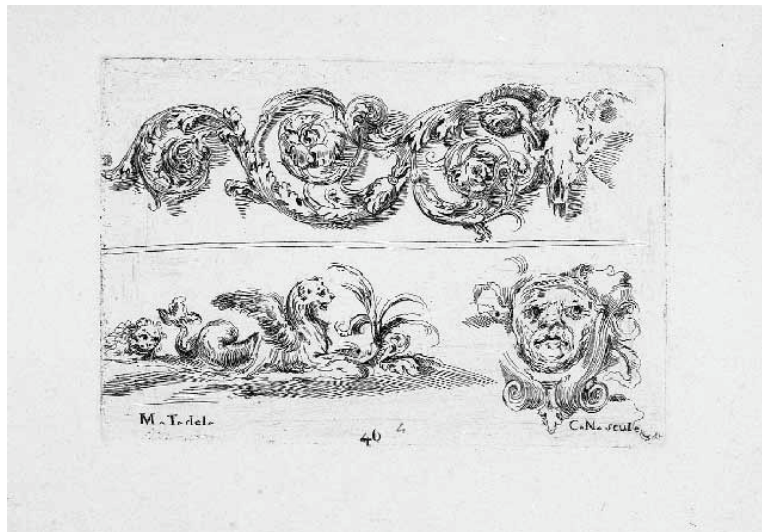


Fig. 1 *Comparative illustration* 'Due fregi decorativi e un mascheron', engraving by Clemente Nicoli after Mauro Tesi (Reggio Emilia, Biblioteca Panizzi, Sezione Gabinetto delle stampe 'Angelo Davoli', Inv.10386)



Fig. 2 *Comparative illustration* Detail of 'Two Sections of Arabesque Friezes in Imitation of Classical Sculpture', drawing attributed to Mauro Tesi (University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1960/2.20; [image](#))