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 Mauro Tasia and 5 W. L. 48.

In a gilt frame.


**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

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drawings by Tesi of decorative friezes incorporating masks were etched by Clemente Nicoli,\textsuperscript{9} and by the artist himself.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{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. | Mauro 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).


**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])