



Lorenzo di Niccolo (active in Florence 1391-1412)

The Angel of the Annunciation and the Virgin

Oil on poplar panel, a pair
Each: 21 5/8 by 11 7/16 in.; 55 by 29 cm.

Lorenzo di Niccolo is first known to have worked in the studio of Niccolo di Pietro Gerini (1340-1414) from 1393-1395 in Prato. He was long thought to have been the son of Gerini until his full name, Lorenzo di Niccolo di Martino, was discovered. Lorenzo di Niccolo collaborated with Gerini and Spinello Aretino on The Coronation of the Virgin altarpiece completed in 1399-1401 for the church of Santa Felicità in Florence, now hanging in the Galleria dell'Accademia, before finding success as an independent artist.

With the advent of the 15th century Lorenzo di Niccolo came into his own as an artist, evident in the impressive polyptych Saint Bartholomew enthroned, with the lives of Saints signed and dated 1401 (Museo Civico, San Gimignano), and Madonna and Child between Saint Martin and Saint Lawrence executed in 1402 in San Martino a Terenzano, near Florence.

While Lorenzo di Niccolo's early work clearly demonstrates the influence of his mentor, Niccolo di Pietro Gerini, as he matures as a painter he seems to borrow a softer, slightly more fluid approach from his other collaborator, Spinello Aretino. In the latest paintings executed by Lorenzo di Niccolo, a distinct resemblance to the work of Lorenzo Monaco emerges, as is evident in perhaps di Niccolo's most heralded work, the Coronation of the Virgin triptych (Museo di Santa Croce, Florence) from the Medici Chapel in Santa Croce executed about 1410.

The present pair of panels were probably painted by Lorenzo di Niccolo about 1410, at the height of his career, and during the phase in which the artist was inspired and influenced by Lorenzo Monaco. The fluid, elegant handling of the garments of the figures is reminiscent of the depiction of Gabriel's garments in Lorenzo Monaco's 1409 Annunciation altarpiece (Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence), and the position of the Virgin, seated on the corner of the throne, recalls the Annunciation panel in Pasadena (Norton Simon Museum, inv. M.1973.5.P.).

Provenance:

Private Collection, France