

*Coronation of the Madonna and Child, with Five Angels*, by Sandro Botticelli

Art selection and commentary by [Heidi J. Hornik](#) and [Mikeal C. Parsons](#)

This article appears in the [December 6, 2017](#) issue.



*Coronation of the Madonna and Child, with Five Angels*, by Sandro Botticelli. © Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

Sandro Botticelli (1444–1510), most famous for *Prima Vera* and *The Birth of Venus*, presents the Magnificat in a tondo, or circular painting. A tondo was often given to a couple at their marriage or upon the birth of a child. The book in the painting is inscribed with Mary's words *Magnificat anima me Dominum* ("Behold, my soul doth magnify the Lord"). With this tondo, Botticelli and the donor wish the couple a blessed and prosperous union and the safe birth of many children. The strong, vibrant colors and gold leaf are the colors of the High Renaissance and of regal beauty. Mary, crowned queen of heaven, is positioned in the center, surrounded by

an adoring Christ and several angels.