

**AP<sup>®</sup> ART HISTORY**  
**2006 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 4**

Left slide: Giotto di Bondone, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels (Ognissanti Madonna)*, circa 1310.

Right slide: Blank

4. Identify the artist of this painting. In which art historical period would you place the painting? Justify your decision. (10 minutes).

Background:

Giotto's *Ognissanti Madonna* was painted for the high altar of the basilican-plan church of the Ognissanti (All Saints) in Florence. This church was the site of the Umiliati order, mendicants who traveled throughout the city doing charitable deeds and, to support themselves in these endeavors, engaged in wool production. At almost 11 feet high, with a gold background that flickered in the candlelit interior, Giotto's altarpiece made an imposing central focus to the church and drew worshippers down the nave with ease. The importance of this and similar house-front altarpieces (such as those by Cimabue and Duccio) is closely tied to the role of the mendicant orders and their attempts to use art to excite devotion. Indeed, altarpieces of the enthroned Madonna and Child, often referred to as a *Maestà*, are a reflection of the great popularity of the cult of the Virgin Mary during this period on the Italian peninsula. They are also a reflection of the new interest in representing holy figures in more realistic, human terms. Giotto's profound interest in nature and his observations of the natural world are evident in paintings like this, and his incorporation of these interests is considered revolutionary by art historians.

Students have three tasks:

- (1) They must identify the artist.
- (2) They must assign this painting to a particular art historical period.
- (3) They must justify their decision to place this painting in that art historical period.

Good responses will understand that the key issue is Giotto's pivotal role as an artist whose work bridges two periods—the Gothic and the Renaissance. Students must decide on one period, and they must justify that decision in their essays.

This painting appears in many of the major textbooks. The only way to identify the artist is as Giotto or Giotto di Bondone. This is a transitional work, so the period of the painting is not precise; some students will discuss this as a fourteenth-century, Proto Renaissance, or Early Renaissance (but not High Renaissance) painting, while others will call it Gothic. It is critical that students use the proper vocabulary both in the identification of periods and in the identification and analysis of the inherent characteristics of those periods.

Characteristics that should come up in a discussion of the painting as **GOTHIC** include:

- The pointed, delicate throne that seems too fragile to support the figure of the Madonna.
- The disparate scale between the Madonna and the surrounding saints and angels, and between the Madonna and her throne; Giotto used a hierarchic scale here, where the most important figure in the composition—the Madonna—is also the largest figure by far. Should she stand up, she would tower over the other figures and indeed over her own throne.
- The use of a conventional gold background (which some students may refer to as a Byzantine characteristic) is similarly Gothic, denying a sense of a coherent space and providing the viewer with an iconic message.

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**Question 4 (continued)**

Characteristics that should come up in a discussion of the painting as **FOURTEENTH CENTURY**, **PROTO RENAISSANCE**, or **EARLY RENAISSANCE** include:

- The overall stability and balance in the composition.
- The weighty, sculptural bodies represented in a surprisingly convincing three-dimensional space (despite the gold background); they are revealed by the realistic masses of draperies that clothe them.
- The saints and angels arranged around the throne as if they stand on steps, with their placement in space obvious by the way they overlap each other.
- The depiction of the relationship between the Madonna and Child has developed into a more believable and indeed more recognizable expression of human emotion.

Points to remember:

- Students are not asked to date the painting but instead to use proper art historical vocabulary to situate it in a time period and to analyze it in relation to that time period.
- This is a 10-minute question.

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**Question 4 (continued)**

**Scoring Criteria**

**Score Scale 0–4**

**4** Correctly identifies the artist as Giotto (or Giotto di Bondone). Assigns an art historical period to the painting and justifies that decision with a high degree of specificity. There are no significant errors.

**3** Correctly identifies the artist as Giotto (or Giotto di Bondone). Assigns an art historical period to the painting and justifies that decision with a fair degree of specificity. The essay may be less thorough or may contain minor errors.

**OR**

Does not identify the artist as Giotto but is otherwise a 4.

NOTE: Students who place the painting in the Byzantine period may not earn a score higher than 2.

**2** Correctly identifies the artist as Giotto (or Giotto di Bondone). Assigns an art historical period to the painting and attempts to justify that decision but lacks specificity or focus. The essay may contain errors.

**OR**

Does not identify the artist as Giotto (or Giotto di Bondone) but is otherwise a 3.

**1** Correctly identifies the artist as Giotto (or Giotto di Bondone) but includes no other discussion of merit.

**OR**

Does not identify the artist as Giotto (or Giotto di Bondone) but is otherwise a 2.

**0** Makes an attempt, but the response is without merit because it fails to identify the artist or makes only incorrect or irrelevant statements.

— This is a nonresponse, such as a blank paper, crossed-out words, or personal notes.

4. Identify the artist of this painting. In which art historical period would you place the painting? Justify your decision. (10 minutes)

This work, ~~by Giotto~~ by Giotto, ~~is~~ an Italian painter of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, ~~from a period~~ known as the Proto-Renaissance (or pre-Renaissance).

If given the choice to place the painting in a different time period, I would not. The painting belongs in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century because it is the perfect bridge between Gothic art of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and Early Renaissance art of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Giotto was somewhat of a revolutionary, considering what he had with light, ~~and~~ <sup>color</sup> and perspective. This panel is flooded with light, only helped by its bright gold background. Giotto painted with tempera, which does not give off a very shiny appearance, but he mixes color well. Mary's dark blue robe draws the eye, and is ~~completely~~ contrasted nicely with Jesus' pink ~~and~~ shirt. The surrounding angels wear dark green and red, and look up at Mary. The use of color is a good precursor to the Renaissance, where the use of oils led to a color explosion.

Most significant about this painting is Giotto's creation of an architectural space for the Madonna and Child. For the first time since the Antiquity, figures are seen placed in a space within the painting, a space with depth and a sense of authenticity. The ~~the~~ <sup>surrounding</sup> ~~surrounds~~ Mary and Jesus in a fashion not seen for ages. Giotto is considerably more advanced than the medieval artists in this fashion, yet he does not reject the perspective of the Renaissance masters. Yet, since the masters were influenced by Giotto, it makes

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perfect sense that Giotto be classified as a proto-Renaissance  
artist.

4A 2

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4. Identify the artist of this painting. In which art historical period would you place the painting? Justify your decision. (10 minutes)

This painting was done by an artist working for a church during the middle ages. Due to its medium, content, and quality of mark, I would place this painting in the early Renaissance / late middle ages time period.

This is <sup>primarily</sup> due to the painting's structure and use of gold foil—a medium often used in Byzantine and medieval religious art. Furthermore, the painting appears to be some sort of altarpiece, which suggests that the work was done for a church.

Massaccio did similarly-shaped works as this one which leads me to believe that this piece hails from a similar period as Massaccio, who was an early Renaissance painter. However, I doubt that he is after Massaccio because he uses overlapping as opposed to perspective which Massaccio employed.

The quality of mark and subject matter are also suggestive of early Renaissance art. This piece is by far less crude than Medieval religious art: it uses light to create shape and space as opposed

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to lines, while exemplifying how such light should be used in form creation. Also, the subject matter of this painting marks a transition from ~~By~~ medieval to Renaissance Art. The Renaissance artists heavily explored the subject of the Madonna just as in this piece, but this piece also makes use of Byzantine icon imagery; the halo.

These conflicting elements lead me to believe that this work is from the late Middle Age Early Renaissance transition period

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4. Identify the artist of this painting. In which art historical period would you place the painting? Justify your decision. (10 minutes)

This piece is Giotto's work and it is the "Madonna Enthroned". The piece is described as Early Renaissance, but it has so much Byzantine influence that it would better suit the Byzantine era. The figures are virtually weightless, though the innovative ~~gold~~ <sup>gold</sup> leaf on the Madonna's robes give her some form. The figures' faces are all very similar, and there is little distinction among the angels' and Madonna's faces. Every face is pale, angular, and expressionless. Their eyes are wide, dark, and deep set - completely unrealistic. There is a heavy use of gold in this painting as well. All these attributes are characteristic of the Byzantine style - not the International Style. Though space is created with the overlapping of forms and the 3-dimensional representation of the throne, the painting is not advanced enough to surpass the Byzantine Era.

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# AP<sup>®</sup> ART HISTORY 2006 SCORING COMMENTARY

## Question 4

### Overview

This question asked students to identify the artist and to place the painting shown in an art historical period. The painting was Giotto's *Madonna Enthroned*, circa 1310, a very well-known work of art. It is variously described in the major textbooks as either Gothic or Early Renaissance. Students were to place the painting in the art historical period that made most sense to them, based on the knowledge they brought to the question and on their reasoning skills. Students could use information about Giotto, the Gothic period, and the Early Renaissance when addressing the question, but they had to use their reasoning skills to address it adequately. Either Gothic OR Early Renaissance could be part of a full-scoring essay. This question tested skills AND knowledge.

### Sample: 4A Score: 4

This essay identifies the artist as Giotto and places the painting in the fourteenth century or Proto Renaissance, recognizing it as a bridge between the Gothic and the Renaissance. It is clear that the student understands Giotto's place in the continuum of Renaissance art. The essay notes that the figures inhabit a believable space and sit in a convincing throne.

### Sample: 4B Score: 3

This essay does not identify the artist but places the painting in the Early Renaissance. The student understands the chronology of the history of art and the place of this painting in it. The simpler construction of space is compared to the later work of Masaccio. The essay notes that there is a convincing creation of shapes and space.

### Sample: 4C Score: 2

While this essay identifies the artist as Giotto and places the painting in the Early Renaissance, it confuses the placement by referring to the Byzantine and International Gothic periods. The student attempts to justify that decision by noting that space is created with "the overlapping of forms" and a three-dimensional rendering of the throne, but the remaining discussion is descriptive, incomplete, or irrelevant; therefore the essay earned 2 points.