



Work of the Madrid school

Third quarter of the 18th century

Saint Michael the Archangel

Circa 1750–1770

Sculpture in the round; carved, gilded, incanted, and polychrome wood
79 cm (height) × 54 cm (base width)

This dynamic and powerful representation of the **Archangel Saint Michael** is carved from wood, which has been sumptuously painted and gilded. The archangel, dressed as a celestial warrior, stands out for his golden armour, the red cape that is billowing around his shoulders, and the spectacular multi-coloured wings that are unfurled in a show of strength. In his right hand he is grasping a sword, and beneath his feet he is trampling a scrawny, sinewy demon whose expression is redolent of defeat, thereby reinforcing the message of **the triumph of good over evil**.

The composition transmits a great sense of movement: Saint Michael is advancing, with his body leaning forward and his leg flexed, while his cape and wings heighten the feeling of action and drama that is characteristic of the **late Spanish Baroque period**. The anatomical features of both the archangel and the demon are extremely precise, while the different colours serve to bring out the details of Saint Michael's armour and feathers, as well as the faces of both figures. This imbues the scene with an even greater sense of realism and expressiveness.

Drawing inspiration from a celebrated work by the Italian artist **Guido Reni**, this sculpture may have been intended to crown a reredos or lectern, in line with the tradition of the Madrid school. As well as its artistic value, this piece also has symbolic value, as it has a connection to the name of one of its donors. In short, it is a magnificent example of **Baroque religious sculpture**, in which technical skill and a spiritual message are brought together in order to captivate the observer.