



AN INFINITY OF LIGHTS GILDED CARVINGS OF AN ALTAR MACHINE

The artwork, made of beech and stone pine wood, has surfaces carved and gilded with pure gold leaf using the gouache technique. It consists of 13 elements. In the background is a sunburst, added in a second time, composed of 15 elements.

The artefact underwent restoration in 1975-77. In this occasion its false base was replaced with a new base that restored the exact proportion of the whole. At the same time, the small missing parts (fingers, feet, plumage, etc.) were reconstructed and gilded with pure 24-carat gold. On the one hand, the recent intervention involved a structural restoration that included gluing, reconstruction of lost carvings and consolidation of the wooden fibre weakened by xylophagous insect attacks.

On the other, the surfaces were treated with a cleaning of the wax layers that had accumulated during the use of the machine in liturgical services. Gaps and holes caused by woodworm were filled in. The gilding was also restored. Finally, the work was chromatically balanced, matching the gold added in the previous restoration with the original by glazing and applying a protective coating.

Some scientific investigations were carried out on the artwork in order to understand the materials and the different types of gilding. A sampling campaign was carried out to obtain stratigraphic sections. These were studied under an optical and electron microscope with Sem EDS analysis. This made it possible not only to have a virtual model of the artefact, but also a detailed graphic form where all the information obtained during the study and restoration process could be entered.