

BENITIER

Whilst this website does not give either opinions - or valuations - we are sometimes asked interesting questions which might lead to a short article for our website to share with our readers.

Any opinions shown were kindly given by other collectors who were asked.

Additional detail is welcomed and might be added.





A first response from another collector was –

This is a much-decorated cast pewter handled pot, purpose unknown, possibly of Jewish origin, with an oval architectural touch mark for an unidentified pewterer initials "M.B." Neither has the inscription on the body been decoded.

This style of touch is much found on German pewter from Saxony and North Germany during the eighteenth century but is not listed in the seven volumes of German marks compiled by Erwin Hintze, possibly because he died before completing the whole area and missed quite a number.

The date "1626" is not a guide to when it was made as many such touch marks incorporated the founding date of the Guild to which the pewterer was affiliated and not the date of the pewterer himself. Probably made in the eighteenth century but without being able to handle it no accurate dating is feasible.

A reply from a very experienced (who also happens to be Jewish) collector followed.

- The piece is I believe Catholic. It is almost certainly a Benitier, A holy water stoup used in the Catholic Mass. (buckets of this sort were not used in the Jewish religion) The figures have halos above their heads. I assume they are saints? They are the sort of object I imagine might have been sold at the Vatican souvenir shop 100 years ago! The mark certainly looks German, but I think it is spurious as indeed is the date in the touchmark. This sort of script is very crude and could not be 18th century. It is either French or Italian. Late 19th or early 20th century.