

CARL FRIEDRICH BEISBARTH

(Stuttgart, 1809 - Stuttgart, 1878)

The basilica of Constantine and Maxentius

signed and dated, lower right: *ger v. C Beisbarth. 1835*; artist's blind stamp, upper right

pen and ink, grey wash, framing lines

345 x 390 mm (image); 430 x 490 mm (sheet)

Provenance:

Private collection, Berlin

This meticulously executed drawing of the remains of the Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine in Rome was made by the Stuttgart architect Carl Friedrich Beisbarth in 1835, during his residence in the Eternal City. Until 1819, the Basilica had been erroneously identified as the Temple of Peace (Tempio della Pace); nonetheless, its imposing ruins had long captivated artists, from the sixteenth-century Flemish engraver Hieronymus Cock (c. 1518–1570) to the eighteenth-century Italian vedutist Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), and the English Romantic J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851). The vast fourth century building stands at the eastern end of the Roman Forum and was initially used for judicial and financial proceedings. The largest edifice in the Forum, the basilica features three surviving barrel vaults with coffered ceilings and a section of arcade, all of which are captured in this study.

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