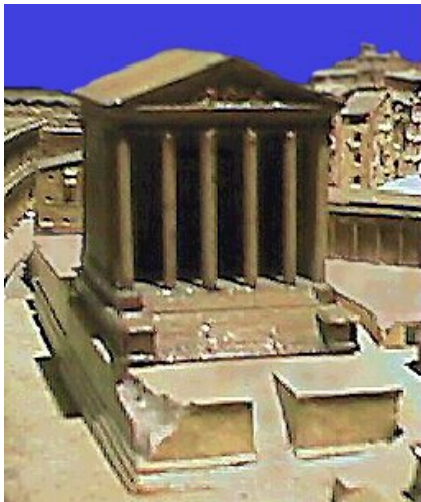


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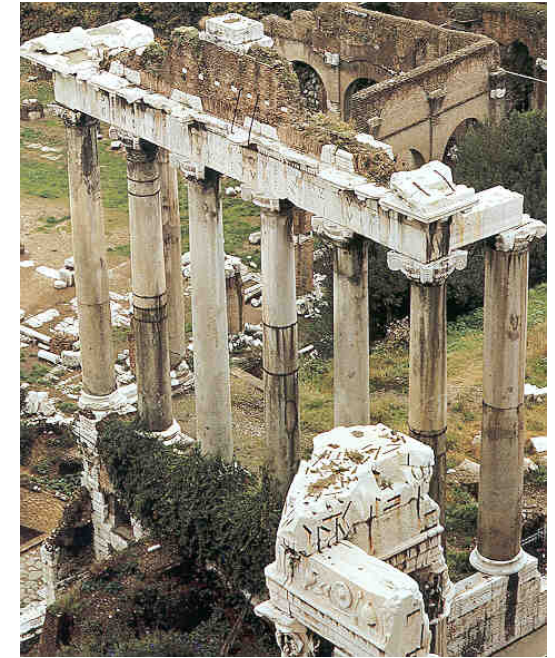
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THE TEMPLE OF SATURN

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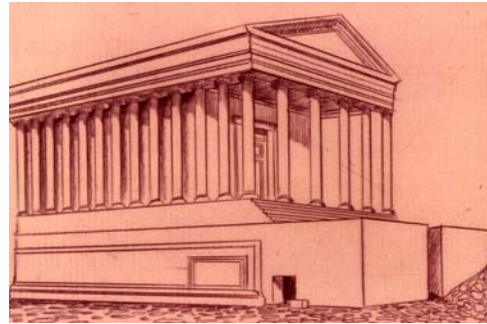
The *Templum Saturni* is a monument to the god Saturn; it stands at the western end of the Forum. It is at the foot of the Capitoline Hill, which the Romans have attributed to Saturn since the Empire's founding. The Temple was constructed around an early altar between 501 and 498 BC. It is not known who built the original temple. Some sources attribute it to the King Tarquinius Superbus, but others say that it was built by Lucius Furius. This latter dedication could belong to a reconstruction after the fire set by the Gauls which took place in the early 4th century BC.

The Temple of Saturn was used by all of Rome from the very early days. In early times, the city's inhabitants brought their wealth, grain, wool, and oil, to offer the first fruits to the god who had blessed them. He guarded their treasure at his temple. Later, therefore, when they counted their wealth in gold and silver bars, or in coins, Saturn guarded the state treasure in his temple for many years until a separate *aerarium* was constructed.



Little of the Temple remains today. Gradual collapse has left nothing but the remains of the front portico standing – eight surviving columns and a partially intact pediment. On the pediment, the inscription

*Senatus Populusque Romanus incendio consumptum restituit* is found. It means, “The Senate and People of Rome restored what had been consumed by fire,” referring to the fire set by the Gauls.



The Temple of Saturn followed a traditional Roman style of Architecture. It was of the Ionic order with six columns on the facade. The eight surviving columns of red and grey granite are from this third temple, which largely used recycled material – not all columns, bases and capitals match stylistically.

According to sources, the statue of the god in the interior, veiled and provided with a scythe, was wooden and filled with oil. The legs were covered with linen bents, which were released only on the day of the Saturnalia. While dedicated to the god Saturn, the temple's chief use was as the seat of

the treasury of the Roman Empire, storing the Empire's reserves of gold and silver. Also the state archives, the standards and the official scale for the weighing of metals were housed in the temple for a time.



A famous story about the Temple:

When Caesar needed a large amount of money for one of his armies, he went to the *Aerarium*, which was housed under the temple at that time. One of the Tribunes, Metellus, told Caesar to stop, saying he was breaking Roman law by violating a most sacred place. Caesar, however, was a man on a mission, and he had smiths pry open the doors to the treasury despite the pleas of all the Tribunes. He went on to bring great wealth to Rome from that initial “investment.”