

bility of many masterpieces, the lack of surveys, and our tendency to focus on the fantastic rather than the mundane grant undue credence to the propaganda of Flavio Biondo, Giorgio Vasari, and other publicists of the “Italian Renaissance.” As a result, most scholars and lay readers continue to view developments between 500 and 1600 as occurring in leaps and bounds rather than continuously.

I do not mean to suggest that something as arcane as a manuscript catalog will change this. Rather, this catalog should underscore the richness of information that remains unmined, let alone to be unearthed.



Whoever wishes to understand Statius’ poems owes a debt of gratitude to the small number of individuals who hunted down their manuscripts. In the age of limited travel, where individuals examined a small number of manuscripts *in situ* and spent much more time collecting collations and soliciting readings from librarians, these include Richard Bentley, Friedrich Menke, John Mitford, Nicolaus Lemaire, Philipp Kohlmann, Alfred Klotz, and Jacques Bousard. In more recent times, after travel to a large number of libraries became feasible, they include a handful of scholars whose names are scattered throughout these volumes, as well as the tireless efforts of the late Paul Kristeller. Much of the work presented here is lifted from their labors and would not have been possible without them.

This leviathan was begun in 1994 when I chanced upon a *vita* of Statius in a manuscript in the old British Library and wondered why it was wrong. In the ensuing years of travel, research, and writing, I have amassed debts of gratitude to a large number of individuals, some of whom the intervening years have robbed me of the opportunity to thank personally. My foremost thanks are to Frank T. Coulson, to whose wisdom and inspiring diligence this catalog is a monument, and to the late Virginia Brown, whose guidance, encouragement, and pruning helped transform this project from its beginnings as a *rudis indigestaque moles*.

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