

A Self-Guided Tour of Latin and Greek Inscriptions at Phillips Exeter Academy

The **Academy Building** is home to several Latin inscriptions, including two above the central doorway. The one in the entablature over the door dates to the time when Exeter was an all-boys school: *HVC VENITE PVERI VT VIRI SITIS* ("Come hither, boys, that you may be men.") In the

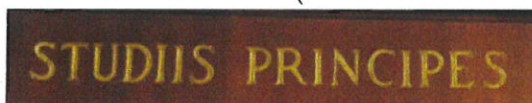
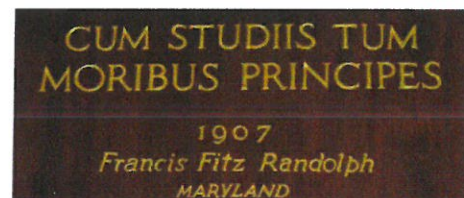


lower left and right corners are two dates, 1781, the year of PEA's foundation, and 1970, the last year before co-education. On the entablature at a higher level runs an inscription that reads, *HIC QVAERITE PVERI PVELLAEQUE VIRTVTEM ET SCIENTIAM* ("Seek here, boys and girls, goodness and knowledge.") The final accusatives refer to a portion of the founder John Phillip's

Deed of Gift: "Goodness without knowledge...is weak and feeble, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous." This inscription was added in 1995 as part of the school's celebration of 25 years of coeducation.

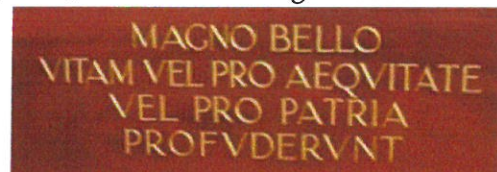


In the **Academy Building's** lobby and hallways are several wooden plaques engraved with the names of the valedictorians of each class. Older plaques are titled *CUM STUDIIS TUM MORIBUS PRINCIPES* ("Not only in studies but in morals the foremost.") but later ones *STUDIIS PRINCIPES* ("In studies the foremost.") The



change dates from a year when the faculty did not deem that the senior with the highest GPA merited the name of 'first in morals'.

Finally, on the wall to the left of the stage in the **Assembly Hall**, the base of a large wooden plaque contains an inscription as part of the monument's commemoration of alumni who died in the First World War. The sentence reads, *MAGNO BELLO VITAM VEL PRO AEQVITATE VEL PRO PATRIA PROFVDERVNT* ("In the great war either for Justice or for the fatherland they poured forth [their] life."). In addition to the triple mixed anaphora of "PRO-", an interesting element is the choice of "VEL" for the correlative, which may have been intended to suggest that one of two different motives or both may have been in the heart of each of those listed above – all nonetheless worthy of commemoration.



The **Academy Seal** contains the name and location of the school in abbreviated Latin. At the top of the central portion is *XAPITI ΘΕΟΥ* ("By the grace of God"); at the bottom, *FINIS ORIGINE PENDET* ("The end depends upon the beginning,") is a close paraphrase of a verse from Manilius' *Astronomica*, IV.16 (as noted and interpreted by Allan Wooley in a paper first delivered at CANE in 1997). Within the central image, one also finds the phrase *NON SIBI* ("Not for oneself").



On the southern end of campus, the **Thompson Gym**'s original facade also sports an inscription above its doorway, this one in Greek: *KATA ΣΚΟΠΟΝ ΔΙΩΚΩ* ("I pursue down toward the



goal."). This phrase is a quotation from *Philippians* 3:15, "I press on toward the goal, forgetting what lies behind, reaching forward to what lies ahead."

The exterior of the **Academy Library** is perhaps deliberately reminiscent of the form of *insulae*, such as those at Ostia, and there is a small, difficult to discern arch in the brickwork above each window. The interior has a large 'atrium' also reminiscent of some *insulae*.



(Right: Trajan's Markets)



The adjacent **Korean and Vietnam War Memorial** takes the form of a bench and is frequently used as such. The intention seems to be that of similar Roman tomb monuments, to attract the attention of passersby and to entice them to rest on the seating of the monument — the ultimate goal being that they will read the name and other information inscribed on the monument.



(Right: Mamia Tomb, Pompeii)

