HYPERBOREUS

STUDIA CLASSICA

ναυσὶ δ᾽ οὔτε πεζὸς ἰών κεν εὕροις
ἐς Ὑπερβορέων ἀγῶνα θαυμαστὰν ὁδόν

(Pind. *Pyth.* 10. 29–30)

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CONSPECTUS

EPIGRAPHICA

COMMENTARII BREVIORES

Статьи сопровождаются резюме на русском и английском языке
Summary in Russian and English

THE TRAIN OF THOUGHT IN HORACE, *EPIST.* 2. 2. 213–216

The framework of Horace's epistle to Florus consists of profuse apologies: in response to having been reproached for not replying to letters, and in particular, for not sending new lyrics. For the latter the poet makes the following excuses (seemingly with varying proportions of seriousness and humour, though always with a flavour of self-irony):[1]

(1) he only dared to write verses out of poverty and despair (v. 26–54);[2]

(2) old age takes away creative powers along with other pleasures of life (v. 55–57);[3]

(3) different friends prefer different genres (iambi or satires or odes), so that one cannot please everybody (v. 58–64);

(4) noise and fuss in Rome preclude him from creative work (v. 65–86);

(5) poets are obliged to trade in insincere mutual admiration, which he abhors (v. 87–105);

(6) incompetent poets enjoy comfortable illusions which he does not have (v. 106–128).[4] In fact, writing genuine poetry is backbreaking (in v. 109–125 a concise poetic programme, a quasi *ars poetica in nuce* is given). If it were possible, Horace admits, he would gladly be deluded in considering himself a great poet instead of behaving reasonably (*sapere*)

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[1] Helpful for understanding the structure of the epistle are the headlines of sections in Brink's commentary (Brink 1982, 266–412) and in Rudd's text edition (Rudd 1989, 51–58).

[2] In v. 51 and 54 poetry is humorously (ἀπροσδοκήτως, Heinze [7]1961, 251) described as a kind of audacious feat; the serious thought that lies behind it is that genuine poetry must indeed be regarded as extremely hard labour (cf. below on argument [6], v. 106–108). Klingner 1935, 466 (= 1964, 323) rightly points out that v. 42–46 (civil war regrettably made the poet leave Athens and drop philosophical studies) anticipates the declaration of turning to philosophy that comes much later in v. 141–144.

[3] The connection between v. 55–57 and v. 141–144 and, especially, 214–216 is also rightly pointed out by Klingner 1935, 465 (= 1964, 322).

[4] Incompetent poetry that Horace is obliged to praise provides, along with poets' vanity, a connection between (5) and (6).

and being angry with despair (*ringi*),[5] but, alas, this misapprehension is not available to him (v. 126–128). There follows the anecdote about a monomaniac who lamented over the loss of pleasant illusions after recovery (128–140).

The verb *sapere* in v. 128 throws a bridge to the concluding part, which amounts to about a third of the whole epistle:[6]

(7) the author declares that he has abandoned poetry and devoted himself to the study of moral philosophy (v. 141–144):

> nimirum sapere est abiectis utile nugis
> et tempestivum pueris concedere ludum[7]
> ac non verba sequi fidibus modulanda Latinis,
> sed verae numerosque modosque ediscere vitae.

These lines are very similar to the famous passage from *Epist*. 1. 1 (v. 10–11):

> nunc itaque et versus et cetera ludicra pono:
> quid verum atque decens, curo et rogo et omnis in hoc sum.

Further, a kind of self-suggestion or autogenic training is introduced (v. 145):

> quocirca mecum loquor haec tacitusque recordor...

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[5] Kilpatrick 1990, 23 with n. 54 on p. 101–102 and 69 (transl.) surprisingly understands *ringi* as a critical reaction to incompetent writings ('[to] exercise like Diogenes a fierce, uncompromising discernment'; he puts a rhetorical question instead of a full-stop after *ringi*). Yet, it seems natural to refer *ringi* not to the poet's reputation as a critic, but to his psychological condition (as the opposite to *delectent* in v. 12; cf. Kiessling 1889, 211 and Brink 1982, 350).

[6] The connection between *sapere* in v. 128 and 141 was pinpointed by Knoche 1935, 478–479 (= 1986, 258–259; supported by McGunn 1954, 356 with n. 35 and Brink 1982, 357).

[7] *tempestivum* is almost universally taken here as an epithet to *ludum* (*utile est ludum pueris tempestivum <pueris> concedere*); *pueris* depends then on *tempestivum* and *concedere* ἀπὸ κοινοῦ. I find this brachylogy harsh (Kiessling 1889, 212 refers to *Epist*. 1. 19. 17 *decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile*, but there *decipit* can stand alone and *vitiis* can be taken only with *imitabile*, thus Wilkins 1907, 231) and prefer to follow L. Mueller 1893, 241 in taking *tempestivum* as a predicate that is coordinate with *utile est* (*tempestivum* [scil. *est*] *concedere*). The coordinate clauses *utile est* and *tempestivum (est)* would give more weight to the argument ('it is appropriate ... and it is timely ...') and provide a closer parallel to *tempus abire tibi* in v. 215 (on which see below). Still, I admit the possibility that the usual interpretation is correct.

It is important to stress that the remaining third of the epistle, up to the last line, might be printed in quotes: this is what Horace repeats to himself.[8] The second person addressed to in this part is therefore not Florus, but Horace himself.

Almost all this self-addressed part of the epistle is devoted to Horace's favourite subject, the foolishness of money-grabbing (v. 146–204; this 'diatribe' has a complex structure and abounds in digressions). After being through with it, the poet goes on to instruct himself in the following way (v. 205–212):

> non es avarus: abi.[9] quid?[10] cetera iam simul isto
> cum vitio fugere? caret tibi pectus inani
> ambitione? caret mortis formidine et ira?[11]
> somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
> nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala rides?
> natalis grate numeras? ignoscis amicis?
> lenior et melior fis accedente senecta?
> quid te exempta iuvat [*v.l.* levat][12] spinis de pluribus una?

Thus, after rebuking avarice and greed, the poet warns himself against euphoria and urges on himself the necessity of further improvement in moral philosophy: 'Well-done, but this was only the first step; much work is yet to be done'.

This paper focuses on the concluding four lines that contain two problems of interpretation, one of which has been discussed often and in detail, while the other one seems to remain in the background, being overlooked by most of the scholars (v. 213–216):

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[8] *Pace* L. Mueller 1893, 241–242 (ad v. 145 ff., 'ohne Rücksicht auf seine Person'); 250 (ad v. 213) and Nisbet 2007, 18 (cf. n. 44 below); otherwise *mecum* and *tacitus* in v. 145 would be pointless.

[9] *abi* is a rare colloquial formula attested in Plautus and Terence (see *TLL* 1. 67. 76 ff. and Brink 1982, 402–403 *ad loc.*) that more often expresses disapproval or disbelief, but sometimes, as here, approval. The latter sense is likely to originate in some formula of dismissal – in court, in army, at school, at the doctor's or elsewhere.

[10] Some editors punctuate *quid cetera, iam ... fugere?*

[11] L. Mueller 1893, 249 *ad loc.* (citing Virg. *Aen*. 2. 413 *ereptae virginis ira* and Lucr. 3. 1045 *dubitabis et indignabere obire*) takes *mortis* as dependent on *ira* as well as *formidine* ('fear and resentment of death'; likewise Kiessling 1889, 220; Wilkins 1907, 327–328, Pasoli 1964, 115; Rudd 1989, 148). However, Fedeli 1997, 1452, with reference to Traina 1993, 43 rightly states that it is unnecessary, since *ira* was normally regarded as an ailment in philosophical writings and could be mentioned in one row with vain ambitions and fear of death. The old-age peevishness mentioned in v. 210–211 is not exactly the same as *ira* in general and, therefore, not an obstacle.

[12] The choice between the two readings is not relevant for the present discussion.

vivere si recte nescis, decede peritis.
lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti:
tempus abire tibi est, ne potum largius aequo 215
rideat et pulset lasciva decentius[13] aetas.

If you know not how to live aright [i. e., obviously, according to (moral) philosophy], make way for the experts (*decede peritis*).[14] You have played enough, have eaten and drunk enough. 'Tis time for you to quit the feast, lest, when you have drunk too freely, you get mocked and jostled by the age that plays the wanton with better grace [i. e. by the youth] (transl. Fairclough; modified to make it slightly more literal).

The first problem concerns the interpretation of the last three lines (v. 214–216). Scholars are divided into two camps here.[15] Some (from Porphyrion to N. Rudd,[16] P. Fedely[17] and N. Holzberg[18]) insist that leaving the feast metaphorically implies dying. They are guided by multiple examples of this metaphorical usage in antiquity and first of all by Lucr. 3. 938 ff.[19] and 959 ff.[20] that were imitated by Horace himself in *Sat*. 1. 1. 117–119[21] and also bear resemblance to the passage in question.[22]

Other scholars, starting with Wieland,[23] emphasize the close resemblance between v. 213–216 and v. 141–144 quoted above and interpret leaving the feast as renunciation of all kinds of youthful diversions,

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[13] *decentius* is to be taken with *lasciva*, not with *rideat et pulset*.

[14] See *ThLL* 5. 1. 120. 60 ff. s. v. *decedo* (sometimes *via* or *de via* is added). Note the absolute usage of *decedere* in passive voice (Cic. *Cato M.* 63 *salutari, appeti, d e c e d i, assurgi*). This is the only possible meaning for *decedere* here and *peritis* must be dative (there are no parallels for *decede* with the ablative in the sense of 'to go out of the rank of').

[15] Catalogued in Brink 1982, 408–409.

[16] Rudd 1989, 149–150.

[17] Fedeli 1997, 1454–1456.

[18] Holzberg 2009, 213.

[19] *cur non ut plenus vitae conviva recedis* / *aequo animoque capis securam, stulte, quietem?* / *sin ea quae fructus cumque es periere profusa* / *vitaque in offensost, cur amplius addere quaeris,* / *rursum quod pereat male et ingratum occidat omne,* / *non potius vitae finem facis atque laboris?*

[20] (personified Nature speaking): *"... et nec opinanti mors ad caput adstitit ante* / *quam s a t u r a c p l e n u s p o s s i s d i s c e d e r e r e r u m.* / *n u n c a l i e n a t u a t a m e n a e t a t e o m n i a m i t t e* / *aequo animoque, age dum, †m a g n i s† c o n c e d e necesse est*".

[21] *inde fit, ut raro, qui se vixisse beatum* / *dicat et exacto contentus tempore vita* / *c e d a t u t i c o n v i v a s a t u r, reperire queamus.*

[22] See, however, n. 30 below.

[23] Wieland 1816 (= [4]1837), 183.

including poetry, in favour of philosophical studies (thus R. Heinze, Fr. Klingner, Ch. Brink a. o.).[24]

The advantage of the first interpretation is that all the other examples of this feast-metaphor in Greek and Roman literature,[25] including the lines of Lucretius and their imitation by Horace, indeed refer to dying. If we take the second interpretation, then only in this passage of Horace is this hackneyed metaphor applied to something different.

On the other hand, the striking similarity between v. 141–144 and 213–216, as well as the composition of the epistle on the whole, are compelling arguments in favour of the Wieland line of interpretation that was at length defended by Brink.[26]

Nothing suggests that Horace is saying farewell to life here. Not only would it spoil the flippant mood of the quasi-rigorous self-instruction, but, which is more important, the appeal to surrender to well-timed death would be out of place in this context. It could only be explained as one more – disjointed – philosophical self-admonition: '*Besides*, remember that you should die decently as an old man and not cling to life at any price'.[27]

Still, the renunciation of youthful play in v. 141–144 is expressed in very similar words (*sapere*, v. 141, and *verae vitae*, v. 144 – *vivere recte*, v. 213; *tempestivum ... concedere*, v. 142 – *tempus abire*,[28] v. 215, *ludum*, v. 142 – *lusisti*, v. 214) and clearly implies there not dying, but quitting poetry. Moreover, this is the main subject of the epistle: why does Horace not send new lyrics? – because he exchanged lyrics for philosophy. He is not preparing to die, but devotes himself to philosophy from now on. In the concluding lines 214–216 Horace therefore returns to v. 141–144 and sums up the last and most important excuse for not writing lyrics any more: he has had enough of juvenile amusements, it is time for him to drop them (in favour of philosophy, of course, and not in the face of death[29]).

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[24] See n. 15 above. *Pace* Brink, Kiessling 1889, 221 refers v. 214–216 (though not v. 213) to dying.

[25] See appendix 20 in Brink 1982, 444–446 ("Life a Feast") with a dozen passages.

[26] Brink 1982, 399–402, 408–412.

[27] In this case I would rather take the asyndeton in v. 214–216 not as causal, but as temporal or conditional ('once you are well-fed, leave the feast'), in order to avoid the implication of Horace's dying in the near future.

[28] I omit *decede* in v. 213, since my interpretation of *decede peritis*, which is to follow, suggests that it means other than *concedere* in v. 142.

[29] Pleading old age is present in v. 214–216, but it must not necessarily be taken as saying farewell to life; it only suggests that Horace does not have energy to write lyrics any more, as in v. 55–57 (see p. 274 with n. 3 above; cf. also *Epist*. 1. 1. 8–11). H.-Chr. Günther 2013, 481–482 tries to combine these two interpretations ("Horace

We can only conclude that this change of life*style* is expressed by the metaphor that normally refers to leaving life altogether.[30]

The second problem in question lies in the words *decede peritis* (v. 213: 'If you know not how to live aright, make way for the experts'). If this is a self-addressed appeal to make room for those who are experienced in moral philosophy, it would imply giving up philosophy, while the context clearly requires just the opposite.[31] In v. 205–212 quoted above the poet exhorts himself not to relax after overpowering avarice and ardently enumerates other vices that are yet to be extirpated. 'A single one of many thorns has been removed' (v. 212). Therefore, the required sense of *decede peritis* must be 'work further, do not stop at what has been accomplished' and not 'make room for the experts'.

Secondly, it is not clear how Horace's efforts in mastering moral philosophy can possibly prevent anyone (professional or amateur) from doing the same. Why exactly should he step aside, as if he were occupying somebody else's position or space? It might make sense if philosophical sermons, i. e. writing philosophical poetry, were meant ('let the better-skilled propagate philosophy instead of you'); but Horace presents himself as a self-instructing student of philosophy, not as a teacher.[32]

Scholars tend to ignore these problems, while those who do offer solutions leave me unconvinced. Praedicow's emendation *decede peritus* may be called amusing ('if you cannot live aright, at least die having learned to do so').[33] Lehrs obelized v. 213.[34]

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speaks of both the banquet of life and banquet of youth: the banquet of life *is* the banquet of youth", p. 481), but if dying is taken metaphorically ("He retires from life into his own self ... and he abandons everything that goes with life", *ibid*.), leaving the feast will in fact refer to juvenile amusements alone. Cf. n. 42 below.

[30] The influence of the Lucretian passage is undeniable, but pushing the parallel between *decede peritis* and *†magnis† concede* too far (Fedeli 1997, 1454–1455; Holzberg 2009, 213) is illegitimate. *†magnis†* in Lucr. 962 has been emended to *gnatis* (Bernays), *dignis* (Lachmann), *iam annis* (Traina) etc., but I favour the brilliant emendation of Martin [5]1969, 121 *magnis concede necessis* (the dative form of a rare substantive *necessum*). Holzberg (*ibid*.) wrongly transfers *periti* into his translation of Lucr. 3. 962 (either by mistake or adopting some emendation of *magnis*): " '...und mit Gleichmut – auf denn! – weiche den Klugen: Es muß sein!' Horaz ist bereit, zu weichen".

[31] Rightly noted by Lehrs 1869, CCV–CCVI, who obelized the vers, though preserved it in the printed text.

[32] V. 144 *ediscere*; cf. *Epist*. 1. 1. 10 ff.

[33] Praedicow 1806, 620.

[34] See n. 31 above.

Heinze states that Horace here literally speaks of dying in favour of more conscientious philosophers.[35] His reservation that it is not a direct appeal to committing suicide, but only an exhortation to discipline in living aright ('only thus you deserve to live at all') does not make it clearer. Again, in what way Horace's death would make room for true philosophers – and, for that matter, why only for them?

A remarkable interpretation was offered by Fr. Klingner,[36] who takes *vivere recte* in v. 213 in two senses at once. According to him, it refers on the one hand to philosophical principles and corresponds to *verae ... vitae* in v. 144,[37] but on the other hand (at the same time) to philistine values ('to live aright, i. e. to drink and have a good time', like *laute vivere*).[38] The words *decede peritis* are consequently explained by him in the same vein as leaving the feast in v. 215 (*tempus abire tibi*): the experts in 'living properly', *periti* (*recte vivendi*), are therefore not philosophers, but young revellers, to whom Horace has to give way.

In other words, Klingner suggests that Horace is playing the fool in v. 213, suddenly putting on the mask of a philistine and saying 'if you are unable to *live properly* [here comes the code-switching: not *improve* properly, but *have a good time* properly], make way for those younger who can, and leave their feast; you have enjoyed yourself enough'. In this case Horace would playfully explain his zeal in exchanging poetry for philosophy not by rigorous moralizing, but by pleading old age and lack of worldly skill.[39]

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[35] Heinze [7]1961, 280: 'Kannst du nicht gut, also glücklich Leben, so hast du kein Recht mehr aufs Leben; du nimmst nur anderen den Platz weg, die darauf verstehen' (Kiessling 1889, 221 more cautiously: 'mache Platz vor denen, die das *vivere recte* verstehen'). Likewise Krüger [7]1972, 323; Schütz 1883, 236, 356; Fischer 1892, 22; Rudd 1989, 149–150 ('there is no moral point in continuing to live'); Wilkins 1907, 329: 'make way for those who have learnt the lesson'. The latter might be understood if it could refer not to death, but to oral testing at school ('sit down and may the better pupils say their lessons instead of you'), but this sense can hardly be squeezed out of *decede*. Schneidewin 1901, 655–656 ("Horaz als Darwinist") suggests metaphorical death ("...daß andere mit ihm kurzes Prozeß machen, ihn überrennen werden").

[36] Klingner 1935, 467–468 (= 1964, 324), supported by McGunn 1954, 358 with n. 38 and Kilpatrick 1990 103, n. 73; rejected by Brink 1982, 410.

[37] Cf. also *Epist*. 1. 2. 41 *sapere aude, incipe. vivendi qui recte prorogat horam*...; *Epist.* 1. 6. 29 *vis recte vivere*; *Carm.* 2. 10. 1 *rectius vives...*

[38] Cf., e. g., *CIL* 8. 17938 (Timgad): *venari lavari ludere ridere occ est vivere.*

[39] Klingner 1935, 467 (= 1964, 324): "...alle (*scil*. Fehler) müssen abgetan werden. Dann erst ist es ein *recte vivere* (vgl. Vers 144). 'Sonst, wenn du nicht *recte vivere* kannst – andere verstehen sich darauf, sie dürfen ausgelassen sein, die Jungen. Troll dich davon, ehe sie dich hinauswerfen'. In den Worten *recte vivere* vollzieht

The flippant air of self-caricaturing as an unskillful bon vivant appears tempting.[40] The more important advantage of Klingner's interpretation against the others is that *decedere* in v. 213 and *abire* in v. 215 refer to the same (otherwise these similar words that stand in close proximity must be treated as referring to different images).

However, the identification of *decede peritis* with leaving the feast in v. 215 also has a reverse side: in this case v. 213 conforms well with the following v. 214–216, but is incompatible with the preceding v. 205–212. The line of reasoning in v. 205–212 (not to mention the parallels between 213–216 and 141–144), requires that *vivere recte* in v. 213 must be taken in a philosophical sense (as *sapere* in v. 141 and *verae vitae* in v. 144, as Klingner himself admits).[41]

Pace Klingner, it is impossible to interpret *vivere recte* in both senses at once: in a philosophical sense 'when it was being pronounced' and in a hedonistic sense 'suddenly' and 'at the same moment'. At that very moment when we have taken *vivere recte* as 'to have a good time', the preceding enumeration of vices, the aphorism about unextirpated thorns and the protasis in v. 213 will hang in the air.

Klingner's ingenious interpretation is therefore to be rejected as overcomplicated. The explanation of *decede peritis* is only possible on the premise that *vivere recte* means 'to live in accordance with moral philosophy' and nothing else.[42] *Periti (recte vivendi)* must consequently refer to experts in philosophy as opposed to beginners.

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sich wieder eine der spielenden Wendungen des Horaz. Ihr Sinn schlägt plötzlich aus dem Philosophischen in das Unphilosophische um. Es hieß 'nach der sittlichen Norm leben', als es ausgesprochen wurde, aber im gleichen Augenblick heißt der Satz auch schon: 'Wenn du mit dem Leben nichts rechtes anzufangen weißt...' Von diesem Standpunkt aus heißt es dann: 'Du hast nun in dem, was du so Leben nennst, nichts mehr zu suchen. Also fort mit dir!' "

[40] One might object, though, that the feast-simile in this context rather suggests that juvenile pleasures are improper to Horace's old age and beyond his powers (as in v. 55–57, cf. n. 3 and 29 above); the idea that he fails to succeed in pursuing pleasures would be slightly different.

[41] Cf. n. 39.

[42] Günther 2013, 401 takes leaving the feast as a transition from 'real life' with its pleasures and writing lyric poetry, to the state of quasi non-existence and writing 'philosophical semi-poetry' (see n. 29 above): "He leaves life to the 'experts (of life)', to those who know how to live, or think they do. He knows that he, the old man, is at a loss as to how to live properly, and he accepts it. He accepts that there is nothing left for him but to try to cope with his imperfect existence", – but he does not explain how *recte vivere* and *peritis* can be withdrawn from the philosophical context of v. 205–212.

Another solution, offered by Wieland, was accepted by Schmid and defended by Brink.[43] Wieland takes *decede peritis* only as a show of respect to the experts (like eng. *to take off one's hat to smbd.*) and not as an appeal for them to act instead of Horace. This metaphorical usage would remove the second of the two difficulties mentioned above on p. 279. Yet, how does this deference to expertise fit in a context that requires the sense 'improve further, go on studying'? Wieland simply assumes that this reverent gesture implicitly refers to studying: 'respect the masters', i. e. 'learn from them'.[44]

Though this interpretation offers excellent sense which fits the context perfectly, it is insufficient semantically, as was rightly pointed out by Rudd.[45] Indeed, a wording like, e. g., 'if you cannot write in good Latin, respect those who can' does not suffice to imply '...learn from them' – that would be expressed in some different way.

Nevertheless, Wieland and Brink seem to be right in understanding *decede* only as a reverent gesture (any idea that Horace has to drop philosophy, or even die, to let some experts act in his place obviously results in nonsense). Now, if one could explain how this gesture can provide the sense 'study further' in a semantically satisfactory way, the problem would be solved.

It is important for the discussion that *decedere* with the dative case, like *assurgere* (which refers to a similar reverent gesture[46]), can be applied to inanimate objects as a personifying poetical metaphor in the sense of 'to be inferior to, to be of lower rank or quality', and this usage is attested in Horace (*Carm*. 2. 6. 14–16):

> ...ubi non *Hymetto*
> *mella decedunt* viridique certat
> baca Venafro.

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[43] Wieland 1816 (= [4]1837), 182–184; Schmid 1830, 255; Brink 1982, 410.

[44] Wieland 1816 (= [4]1837), 183: "*Implicite* sagt dies auch noch: *und lerne von ihnen*!"; cf. Brink 1982, 410: " 'make room for, give place or precedence to, those who know how to (live aright)' <...> in a metaphorical case, like the present, 'defer to' is at least not excluded". Nisbet 2007, 18: "here Horace is not talking to himself (as is sometimes assumed) [cf. n. 8 above. – *DK*] but is advising Florus to defer to his own greater experience of life ... *concede* might be clearer". Yet, even thus *decede* in the sense of 'defer to' is problematic.

[45] Rudd 1989, 149 (supported by Günther 2013, 481 with n. 54): "If it could mean 'attend to those who *can* live properly', i. e. the philosophers, the difficulty would be greatly eased. But it is very doubtful if the phrase can bear that sense". He concludes that v. 214–216 must refer to death; but it will not make the explanation of *decede peritis* as 'you do not deserve to live' any better (see p. 280 with n. 35 above).

[46] Cf. Cic. *Cato M*. 63 in n. 14 above.

Nisbet and Hubbard[47] rightly note that in this case *decedere* is a livelier metaphor than simple *cedere*: the latter would simply mean that the honey does not yield to its eminent rival; the former draws a picture of a human being, who does not move out of the way before a person of high status.[48] I find it very probable that Nisbet and Hubbard are correct in suggesting here the influence of Virgil (*Georg*. 2. 95– 98):

> ...et, quo te carmine dicam,
> Rhaetica? nec cellis ideo contende Falernis.
> sunt et Aminneae vites, firmissima vina,
> Tmolius adsurgit quibus et rex ipse Phanaeus...

It is noteworthy that in both contexts *decedere* and *assurgere* are contrasted with *certare* and *contendere* respectively; in other words, *decedere* is here virtually the same as '*certare (contendere) non posse*'. If it can be applied to inanimate objects through personification, no doubt that it can be applied to human beings as well.

Thus, *decede peritis* can be explained as '*noli certare cum peritis*', 'acknowledge the precedence of the experts', that is to say, 'do not imagine yourself to be a master'. This meaning accords perfectly with the general sense of the preceding passage (v. 205–212): 'Avarice defeated? Fine! What about other numerous vices? Is it enough to uproot a single one? If you cannot live aright, bow your head to the masters, i. e. do not imagine that you are equal to them'.

The idea that the author is in danger of valueing himself as an expert has already been expressed (*non es avarus? abi...*, v. 205) and the warning against it has been given (v. 205–212); v. 213 summarizes this warning. The reverent gesture of making room for the masters is meant to confirm the poet's own amateur status and thus easily provides the sense required by the context: 'do not think that you are already an expert' is essentially the same as 'study further'.

The interpretation suggested here follows in the footsteps of Wieland's and may be called a modification of it. I can foresee two objections:

(1) The imperative 'concede to smbd.' is, strictly speaking, not the same as 'acknowledge that you concede'. – However, *decedere*, unlike eng. *to concede*, refers not to inferiority itself, but (at least formally) to a ceremonial gesture that habitually expresses one's inferiority. Therefore

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47 Nisbet–Hubbard 1978, 102.

48 This gesture was significant for the higher circles of Rome: cf. Tac. *Ann*. 3. 31 and Suet. *Nero* 4.

the imperative *decede* in this sense means not just ‘be inferior to’, but ‘act as inferior to’, which is almost the same as ‘acknowledge your inferiority’.

A parallel in support of this can be found in *Paneg. Lat*. 2 (12). 4. 4 (Pacati Theodosio):

> sint, ut scribitur, Gargara proventu laeta triticeo, Mevania memoretur armento, Campania censeatur monte Gaurano, Lydia praedicetur amne Pactolo, – dum Hispaniae uni quidquid laudatur *assurgat*.

(2) In this case *decede peritis* has nothing in common with *tempus abire tibi* in v. 215 and the simile of leaving the feast; but it would seem natural to understand two similar expressions that stand almost next to one another as referring to the same, especially in the view of similarities between v. 141–144 and 214–216 (*concedere*, v. 142 – *decede*, v. 213, *abire*, v. 215). – This difficulty is more serious, but perhaps it can be put up with. As has been shown above in the discussion of Klingner’s interpretation, it is hardly possible to link *decede peritis* with the simile of leaving the feast and *periti* with young revellers. It would deprive *recte vivere* in v. 213 of its normal philosophical sense and break the logical sequence between v. 213 and the preceding v. 205–212.

On the contrary, once we assume that *decede* in v. 213 has nothing in common with *abire* in v. 215 (as if it were, e. g., *assurge peritis*) and that v. 213 can be separated from v. 214–216 and linked to the preceding v. 205–212, both logic and structure will be satisfactory. V. 213 sums up the warning against the beginner’s premature pride and exhorts him to learn further (this corresponds to v. 141a and 144). V. 214–216 pick up the theme of bygone youth and dropping poetry (which corresponds to v. 141b–143 and 55–57).

After all, *tempestivum ... concedere* in v. 142 already has its parallel in *tempus abire* in v. 214 and does not stand in need of a second parallel in *decede* in v. 213. In a text that abounds in metaphors, some of them being re-purposed for different things, we must allow that metaphors will find expression through similar verbs. That these verbs happen to stand close to one another, as in this case, may be regarded as a mere coincidence.[49]

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[49] Thus, *abi* in v. 206 has nothing in common with *abire* in 215.

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Hor. *Epist*. 2. 2. 214–216 (‘you have eaten, drunk and amused yourself enough; it is time for you to leave the feast of youth’) have been taken to imply: (1) leaving life (by analogy with other instances of this feast-simile in antiquity); or (2) quitting poetry and other youthful diversions in favour of studying philosophy. The latter is preferable in view of the main subject of the epistle (Horace’s excuses for dropping poetry) and structural parallels between v. 213–216 and 141–144.

V. 213 (‘If you know not how to live aright, make room for the experts’) poses two problems: (1) it seems to imply giving up philosophy, whereas the preceding v. 205–212 (‘many vices are yet to be extirpated’) require the opposite sense (‘improve further’); (2) it is not clear in what way Horace’s withdrawal would make room for experts. Fr. Klingner took *vivere recte* in v. 213 in a hedonistic sense and interpreted *decede* by analogy with leaving the feast in v. 214–216. Yet, the train of thought in v. 205–212 and parallels between v. 141–144 and 213–216 suggest that *vivere recte* must be understood in a philosophical sense. C. M. Wieland and Ch. Brink interpret *decede peritis* not as a withdrawal, but only as a reverent gesture (‘respect the masters’) and deduce that it implies the necessity to learn from the experts. However, N. Rudd rightly objects that this extension from ‘respect’ to ‘respect and learn’ is illegitimate.

Everything falls into place, if *decedere* with the dative is understood as a reverent gesture that indicates inferiority (cf. Hor. *Carm*. 2. 6. 15; Verg. *Georg*. 2. 98 *assurgit*): ‘If you cannot live aright, bow your head to the masters’, that is, ‘Do not imagine that you are already equal to them (and study further)’.

В пассаже Hor. *Epist*. II, 2, 214–216 (‘Ты достаточно ел, пил и развлекался; тебе пора оставить пир молодых’) ученые видели указание (1) на уход из жизни (по аналогии с другими примерами этой метафоры в античности); и (2) на отказ от поэзии и других юношеских забав в пользу занятий философией. Как основная тема послания (Гораций извиняется за то, что прекратил сочинять лирику), так и структурные параллели между стт. 213–216 и 141–144 заставляют предпочесть второе толкование.

Ст. 213 (‘Если ты не умеешь правильно жить, уступай дорогу мастерам’) содержит две проблемы: (1) на первый взгляд, здесь говорится о прекращении занятий философией, хотя предыдущие стт. 205–212 (‘осталось искоренить в себе еще много пороков’) требуют противоположного смысла (‘продолжай совершенствоваться’); (2) неясно, каким образом уход Горация из философии облегчит задачу мастерам. Фр. Клингнер, понимая *vivere recte* в ст. 213 в гедонистическом смысле, объяснял *decede* по аналогии с оставлением пира в стт. 214–216; однако ход мысли в стт. 205–212 и параллели между стт. 141–144 и 213–216 предполагают, что *vivere recte* должно пониматься в философском смысле. Кр. М. Виланд и Ч. Бринк видели в *decede peritis* не уход от философии, а только почтительный жест (‘почитай мастеров’) и выводили из него необходимость учиться у мастеров; однако Н. Рудд справедливо возразил, что выражение “почитай” не может означать “почитай и учись”.

Все встанет на свои места, если понимать *decedere* с дативом как почтительный жест, указывающий на более низкий ранг (ср. Hor. *Carm*. 2. 6. 15; Verg. *Georg*. 2. 98 *assurgit*): ‘Если ты не умеешь жить правильно, снимай шляпу перед мастерами’, т. е. ‘Не считай, что ты уже стал мастером (и продолжай совершенствоваться)’.