

ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE *HISTORIA AUGUSTA*

ALTHOUGH the biographies known collectively as the *Historia Augusta* purport to have been written by six different biographers, it has often been thought that their similarities are so numerous that they must be the work of a single author.¹ In this article I shall deal with a piece of linguistic evidence which supports this view.

The two scholars who have treated the language of the *H.A.* in most detail, E. Wölfflin² and E. Klebs,³ attempted to show that certain linguistic features which are not spread evenly among the *Scriptores* point to multiplicity of authorship. But evidence of this kind is scarcely conclusive, for the style of any writer is bound to vary in the course of a long composition, and may even do so to a striking extent. Moreover it has recently been shown that the work of Klebs, which was more systematic than that of Wölfflin, contains some deficiencies of method which invalidate his conclusions.⁴

If on the other hand a single biographer was responsible for the whole or the bulk of the *H.A.*, it should be possible to isolate some idiosyncrasies of language and style which are scattered throughout the work. It would of course be pointless merely to catalogue set expressions and words used by most or all of the *Scriptores*,⁵ for the language of biography was no doubt as strongly influenced by tradition as that of history: in dealing with any particular topic a biographer might fall into certain conventional phrases. Furthermore, one or more of our *Scriptores* might well have imitated one or some of the others.

But no writer, however indebted he might be to a linguistic tradition, can be without his own mannerisms. Even a fixed expression will not necessarily be used in exactly the same way by all who adopt it. It will be argued here that there are observable throughout the *H.A.* certain idiosyncrasies in the use made of *interficio* and *occido* which cannot reasonably be ascribed to the influence of the everyday educated language and which are too unobtrusive to have been either traditional in biography or imitated by one *Scriptor* from another.

Although both *interficio* and *occido* were in regular use during the Republic, by the early Empire *occido* had established itself as the everyday word, while *interficio* had become restricted to high style.⁶ *Occido* is the term strongly preferred not only in the vulgar speeches of the freedmen in Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*, but also in the unaffected educated language of Seneca the Elder and pseudo-Quintilian (*Declamationes Minores*). Obviously *interficio* was a euphemism (cf. 'do away with'), whereas *occido* in origin contained a direct

¹ On the controversy see now A. Momigliano, *Secundo Contributo alla Storia degli Studi Classici* (Rome, 1960), 112 f.; P. White, 'The Authorship of the *Historia Augusta*', *JRS* lvii (1967), 115 ff.; R. Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1968), 176 ff.

² 'Die S.H.A.', *Bayerische S.-B.* 1891, Heft 4, 465 ff.

³ 'Die S.H.A.', *Rh. Mus.* xlvii (1892),

1 ff., 515 ff.

⁴ By P. White, op. cit.

⁵ As done by K. Hönn, *Quellenuntersuchungen zu den Viten des Heliogabalus und des Severus Alexander im Corpus der Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1911), 107 ff.

⁶ See E. Löfstedt, *Philologischer Kommentar zur Peregrinatio Aetheriae* (Uppsala, 1911), 256 ff.

reference to the physical act of killing with a weapon. No doubt the latter eventually won favour in the current language because of its greater vigour.

The S.H.A., despite a generally mundane style, admit the elevated term 82 times, against 342 examples of *occido* (a proportion of 1:4.1). They thereby depart markedly from the practice of Suetonius, their model in many respects, who uses *interficio* only 6 times and prefers *occido* in the proportion 9:1.

If three *Lives* are excepted (the *Caracalla* of Aelius Spartianus and the *Avidius Cassius* of Vulcarius Gallicanus, in which *occido* outnumbers *interficio* by 35:1 and 15:1 respectively, and the *Trig. Tyr.* of Trebellius Pollio, in which there are 10 instances of *interficio* to 20 of *occido*),¹ the comparative frequency of the two words is much the same in the five remaining Scriptores: in Aelius Spartianus *occido* predominates in the proportion of about 4:1, in Julius Capitolinus by 3.4:1, in Aelius Lampridius by 4:1, in Trebellius Pollio by 3.3:1, and in Vopiscus by 4.8:1. This evenness of distribution establishes nothing definitely, but it is not without interest. Although the stylistic traditions of a genre might dictate the use of certain words, their incidence in comparison with that of their synonyms inevitably tends to vary from writer to writer within the genre. Thus, while most third- and fourth-century historical writers employ *interficio*, the comparative frequency of the word is by no means uniform: in Eutropius *occido* is preferred by 1.2:1, but in Aurelius Victor *interficio* is twice as common as *occido*; in Ammianus *interficio* predominates by about 1.3:1,² but in the *Excerpta Valesiana* *occido* is preferred by slightly more than 2:1; finally, in Orosius (*adv. Paganos*) both words have the same incidence.

But there are more interesting mannerisms to be seen in the *H.A.* Under certain linguistic conditions not one but all or most Scriptores adopt one or other of the two words, though no rational reason can be found for their preference. Thus there are observable between the two terms a number of fine distinctions of usage which are not violated by any one Scriptor. The presumption must be that we are confronted by the idiosyncratic preferences of a single author rather than by a group of idiosyncrasies shared accidentally by six writers. The evidence is cumulative: if there were only a limited number of conditions under which the Scriptores concurred in choosing one word or the other, their concurrence of choice might be put down to chance; but in fact the distinctions maintained between the words throughout the work are numerous.

The following are the most striking distinctions of usage and mannerisms that I have noted:

1. Of the 82 examples of *interficio* in the *H.A.*, only 17 are in the active. This in itself need cause no surprise, for it is easy to see why in historical writings verbs of killing should be particularly frequent in the passive: the agent of a death, especially in battle, is commonly either not known or not important. However, in the *H.A.* *occido* is scarcely less frequent in the active than in the passive (1:1.4). Clearly therefore the Scriptores placed a definite restriction on their use of the active forms of *interficio*: when an active verb was required, they chose *occido* about nine times as often as *interficio*; but when a passive was required, their preference for *occido* was only about 3:1.

The scarcity of active forms of *interficio* is equally marked in most of the

¹ Isolated fluctuations of taste are almost inevitable in any writer.

² A proportion based on a substantial amount of Ammianus' work.

Scriptores. In Aelius Spartianus *occido* predominates in the active by about 10:1, in Julius Capitolinus by about 8:1, and in Aelius Lampridius by about 12:1. In Vopiscus there are 25 examples of active *occido* to only 1 of *interficio*, a proportion which is only superficially different from those in the above three writers: had *interficio* occurred only once more in the active the ratio would have been much the same as those above.

Statistics drawn from Vulcacius Gallicanus and Trebellius Pollio are in this case worthless, for the figures involved are very small. In the *Avidius Cassius* of Vulcacius there are 5 instances of *occido* in the active to 1 of *interficio*; and in the three *Lives* attributed to Pollio which contain *interficio* or *occido* (*Gall.*, *Trig. Tyr.*, *Claud.*), *occido* is found 6 times in the active, *interficio* 3 times.

The rarity of *interficio* in the active would not be of significance if other authors of roughly the same period also made proportionately greater use of the active forms of *occido* than of those of *interficio*. It is not uncommon for a word to be restricted in use in certain forms. However, there is no evidence at all to suggest that archaizing writers of the third to fifth centuries were more hesitant about using *interficio* in the active than *occido*. Orosius, for example, has a slight preference for the active forms of *interficio* (49:35 in *adv. Pag.* 1-7). Eutropius has the active of *interficio* 17 times, that of *occido* 18 times. Ampelius prefers *interficio* by 9:6, and Aurelius Victor by 3:0. Dares Phrygius leans towards active *occido*, but only by 18:7 (an unremarkable proportion, for in all forms *occido* is preferred by 29:12). Ammianus uses both words predominantly in the passive, but the active of *interficio* seems to outnumber that of *occido* (by 4:2 in Books 14-19 and 28).

The restrictiveness found in the *H.A.* is therefore an idiosyncrasy, scarcely of an obtrusive or traditional kind, shared by a large number of *Lives* which are supposedly the work of various hands. The uniformity of the practice of Aelius Spartianus, Julius Capitolinus, and Aelius Lampridius is especially remarkable.

2. All six Scriptores prefer *occido* to *interficio* in relative clauses. There are 42 finite examples of *occido*, spread throughout the work, in clauses of this kind, but only 1 of *interficio* (*Comm.* 14. 8). Such a preference can only have been an unconscious idiosyncrasy of one man; it is highly unlikely that six different authors happened to concur in avoiding *interficio* in a type of clause of such frequent occurrence.

Note in particular the following two examples, supposedly from different Scriptores: Iul. Cap. *Marc. Ant.* 25. 4 *nam et praefectum praetorio sibi fecerat, qui et ipse occisus est*; Vulc. Gall. *Av. Cass.* 7. 4 . . . *statim praefectum praetorii fecit; qui et ipse occisus est*. In both cases the main clause is similar, and *occido* in the relative clause is preceded by *et ipse*.

Again, in the following passages, also from different authors, the expression *quos omnes* is followed immediately by the proper name which stands as the subject of *occidit*: Treb. Poll. *Gall.* 11. 2 *quos omnes Gallienus . . . occidit*; Vop. *Aurel.* 18. 6 *quos omnes Aurelianus . . . occidit*. Cf. Iul. Cap. *Gord.* 33. 1 *quae omnia Philippus . . . occidit*.

3. The use of *ipse* with *occido* seen above is also a mannerism running throughout the *H.A.* The word is never found with *interficio*. Cf. Ael. Spart. *Hadr.* 24. 13 *qui se ipse, ne daret, occidit*; Iul. Cap. *Clod. Alb.* 3. 1 *ne ipse pariter occideretur*; ib. 6. 5 *quos cum causa ipse posset occidere*; Iul. Cap. *Opell. Macr.* 14. 5 *in eo tumultu in quo ipse occisus est*; Iul. Cap. *Max.* 10. 3. *Alexandri gloriam, quem ipse occiderat, vincere*; Treb. Poll. *Trig. Tyr.* 15. 4 *ne et ipse posset occidi*.

In the only two places in which *ipse occidere* is not in a relative clause, it is introduced by *ne*. Note also the structural similarity between Iul. Cap. *Clod. Alb.* 6. 5 and Treb. Poll. *Trig. Tyr.* 15. 4: in both places *ipse* immediately precedes *posset*, which governs a postponed infinitive of *occido*.

4. In three different Scriptores there occurs an example of the ablative absolute expression *quo interfecto*, in each case following a statement (in varying words) of someone's death: Ael. Spart. *Did. Iul.* 2. 4 *statim enim mors Pertinacis secuta est. quo interfecto . . .*; Treb. Poll. *Trig. Tyr.* 3. 4 *missisque militibus adulescentem interfecerunt. quo interfecto . . .*; Vop. Aurel. 37. 1 *hic finis Aureliano fuit, principi necessario magis quam bono. quo interfecto . . . Quo occiso*, however, is nowhere found in the work.

On the other hand, the expression *eo occiso* is also used by three different Scriptores: Ael. Spart. *Geta* 6. 1 *occiso eo pars militum quae incorrupta erat parricidium aegerrime accepit*; Iul. Cap. *Gord.* 7. 3 *primum ipsum rationalem adiunctis sibi plerisque militibus occiderunt. occiso deinde eo . . .*; Treb. Poll. *Trig. Tyr.* 9. 3 *Ingenuum conflictu habito vicit eoque occiso . . .* But *eo interfecto* is absent from all Scriptores, though *interficio* is particularly common in the ablative absolute.

There is no reason to suppose that such a distinction in usage was general in the artificial literary language.¹

5. A mannerism which is scattered widely is the use of *occisus* (without *esse*) as predicate after verbs of seeming and passive verbs of thinking, etc.: Iul. Cap. *Verus* 9. 2 *visum est nonnullis, non tamen Marco, quod eius fraude putaretur occisus*; Vulc. Gall. *Av. Cass.* 12. 10 *ut in causa tyrannidis qui in tumultu cecidit probetur occisus*; Ael. Spart. *Carac.* 11. 4 *ut a patre videretur occisus*; Ael. Spart. *Geta* 7. 1 *qui fratri videretur occisus*; Iul. Cap. *Opell. Macr.* 4. 7 *ut ab eo non videretur occisus*; Ael. Lampr. *Elag.* 14. 5 *quando eidem nuntiaretur consobrinus occisus*; Iul. Cap. *Gord.* 34. 4 *simul etiam quod a Philippis videbatur occisus*.

Interficio is never used in this way in the *H.A.*, despite its frequency in passive forms. For a roughly contemporary example of the word in the same construction, see Eutrop. 8. 15 *interfectus putaretur*.

It will be observed that *occisus* regularly follows the main verb. In other prose of all periods, however, participles in this construction for the most part occupy the position before the verb.² Even in the *H.A.* itself it is more usual for participles other than *occisus* to precede.³

The requirements of the clausula allowed the Scriptores various alternative arrangements, from which the same one has invariably been selected. The use of *occisus* after the verb gives a cretic-trochee (— ∪ — ∪), which along with the double trochee (— ∪ — ∪) is the most popular rhythm in the *H.A.*⁴ In all

¹ For *eo interfecto* see Oros. 5. 21. 9.

² See H. Merguet, *Lexikon zu den Reden des Cicero*, iv. 915b for past participles with *videor* in Cicero's speeches (for *occisus videor* see *Verr.* 1. 72). The large majority precede the verb. Cf., e.g., Suet. *Iul.* 55. 2, 84. 1, *Vesp.* 10. See also Sulp. Sev. *Chron.* 1. 2. 4 *occisus traditur*.

³ See K. Lessing, *Scriptorum Historiae Augustae Lexicon*, 730a–b for participles with *videor*.

⁴ For a table showing the most common clausulae in Spartianus, Lampridius, and Vopiscus see A. W. de Groot, *Der antike*

Prosarhythmus, i (Groningen, 1921), 111. These three Scriptores do not differ significantly in their preferences. Moreover, according to H. L. Zernial, *Über den Satzschluss in der Historia Augusta* (Deutsche Akad. d. Wiss. z. Berlin, Schrift. d. Sect. f. Altertumswiss. 2, 1956), 5f. and 6 n. 1, summarizing an unpublished Louvain dissertation (A. Fiasse, 'Les Clausules métriques dans l'histoire Auguste'), the preferred clausulae in all six Scriptores are the same. The table of de Groot can therefore be taken as a general guide to the favoured clausulae of the whole *H.A.*

cases but one, however, the placing of *occisus* before the verb would have given the same result.¹ The exception is *Av. Cass.* 12. 10, where the reversed order would have produced an equally desirable double trochee. Again, if *interfectus* had been substituted it would in each case have created the same rhythm as *occisus* if placed before the verb; and if postponed it would have given a double spondee, a rhythm which is acceptable in the *H.A.* (it is found in 10 per cent of clausulae), if not as common as the cretic-trochee or double trochee.

It may well be that their choice was determined by the desire to have correspondence of ictus and word accent in the clausula, for while, for example, both *videretur occisus* and *occisus videretur* are metrically perfect, only the first gives correspondence in the last two feet;² *videretur interfectus* may have been ruled out because it is inferior metrically. If this is the case, in the expressions in question the same accentual principle has worked in combination with quantitative factors in the same way in a number of Scriptores, who elsewhere are by no means so careful to provide for ictus-stress correspondence, and do not always have such a sure eye for the best arrangement both metrically and accentually. Thus, for example, at both *Sev.* 17. 7 (*interfici eum iussit*) and *Trig. Tyr.* 19. 2 (*interfici praecepit*) the placing of *occidi* (for *interfici*) after the verb would have given a cretic-trochee as well as correspondence; at *Marc. Ant.* 26. 10 (*occidi passus est*) the reverse order would have given correspondence and a double spondee, a rhythm which is more favoured in the *H.A.* than a spondee-cretic; at *Marc. Ant.* 25. 4 (*exercitus occidit*) transposition would have produced correspondence and a double cretic, and at *Av. Cass.* 7. 9 (*occidi non iussit*) correspondence and a cretic-trochee; at *Comm.* 19. 4 (*omnes occidit*) the postponing of *omnes* would have given a double trochee with correspondence, instead of a double spondee without; at *Did. Iul.* 6. 2 (*iussit eum occidi*) it would have been better to place *eum* before *iussit*; and at both *Aurel.* 23. 2 (*omnes occidite*) and 36. 5 (*omnes occidere*) a double trochee with correspondence would have replaced the present spondee-cretic without correspondence if *omnes* had been placed after the verb.

Under the circumstances, then, it seems more likely that a single author habitually fell into the same word choice and word order when expressing similar ideas, than that a number of authors who are otherwise not strict adherents to an accentual *cursus* happened always to coincide in achieving the best possible metrical and accentual arrangement in this one type of expression. Nor does it seem possible that such an indistinctive construction was traditional in biography, or picked up by some Scriptores from others without any change to the rhythm, word order, or verb of killing.

In four of the above passages the main verb is *videor*. When *dicor* is the governing verb, however, *interemptus* is preferred to *occisus*: *Iul. Cap. Opell. Macr.* 4. 8 *id egit ut quasi militaribus insidiis . . . interemptus diceretur*; *Treb. Poll. Trig. Tyr.* 4. 1 *cum patre dicitur interemptus*; *ib.* 18. 12 *a quodam gregario milite . . . dicitur interemptus*. It is of note that *interemptus* after *videor* would have produced both a double trochee and ictus-stress correspondence,³ and *occisus* with *diceretur* at *Opell. Macr.* 4. 8 either a double trochee with correspondence (if

¹ At *Elag.* 14. 5 both the participle and *consobrinus* would have had to be transferred to leave the rhythm intact.

² For a discussion of accentual clausulae in the *H.A.* see Zernial, *op. cit.*, especially

chap. iii.

³ On the secondary accent which long words (e.g. *interemptus*) must have possessed, see W. M. Lindsay, *The Latin Language* (Oxford, 1894), 159 f., 161.

placed before), or a cretic-trochee with correspondence (if placed after). It looks like the idiosyncrasy of a single writer that *occisus* has been preferred with *videor* and *interemptus* with *dicor*.

6. In 10 places in five different Scriptores *occido* is placed in juxtaposition or antithesis with *vinco*: Vulc. Gall. *Av. Cass.* 3. 2 *addemus . . . quemadmodum sit occisus et ubi victus*; ib. 8. 3 *nec quemquam facile bonum vel victum a tyranno vel occisum*; Ael. Lampr. *Comm.* 12. 11 *vel victis retiariis vel occisis*; Ael. Spart. *Sev.* 17. 5 *victo et occiso Iuliano*; Ael. Spart. *Pesc. Nig.* 9. 3 *ab eodem victi atque occisi sunt*; Iul. Cap. *Opell. Macr.* 15. 1 *belloque victus est et occisus in suburbano Bithyniae*; Iul. Cap. *Max. et Balb.* 11. 2 *ita victus est ut a suis occideretur*; ib. 15. 4 *victum apud Aquileiam Maximinum esse dixerunt, et ipsum cum Balbino esse occisum*; Treb. Poll. *Trig. Tyr.* 9. 3 *Ingenuum conflictu habito vicit eoque occiso . . .*; ib. 26. 4 *ad campum deductus victus est et occisus*.

This juxtaposition is also found elsewhere;¹ but in other writers who admit *interficio*, *interficio*/*vinco* is no less common.² Our Scriptores invariably choose *occido* rather than *interficio* under such circumstances.

At *Av. Cass.* 8. 3 and *Comm.* 12. 11³ the choice of *occido* might appear to have been inspired by rhythmical considerations, for it creates a cretic-trochee rather than the somewhat less favoured double spondee (*interfectus*). But a glance at the other passages will show that the motivating factor was the aptness felt by the author (or authors) of opposing *occido* to *vinco*, for often *occido* is either outside the clausula or it produces the same rhythm as that which *interficio* would have given.

It is of interest that in two different Scriptores (Vulc. Gall. *Av. Cass.* 8. 3, Ael. Lampr. *Comm.* 12. 11) the past participles *victus* and *occisus* are linked by *vel . . . vel*.

Observe too that at Vulc. Gall. *Av. Cass.* 3. 2 the two words stand in an indirect question introduced by *quemadmodum*, with inversion of the auxiliary verb *sit* and the past participle *occisus*. *Occido* is twice found in precisely the same construction in another Scriptor (Vopiscus) who does not happen to juxtapose *vinco* with a verb of killing: *Aurel.* 36. 1 *quemadmodum sit occisus . . . brevi edisseram*; *Car.* 13. 2 *quaereretur quemadmodum Numerianus esset occisus*.

Again, in two places in different Scriptores (one of them Vopiscus) there occurs the same extension (*victor occidit*) of the usual juxtaposition: Treb. Poll. *Claud.* 9. 1 *legionibus quas Gallienus male victor occidit* (*male* goes closely with *victor*); Vop. *Aurel.* 23. 2 *proditorem patriae suae sapiens victor occidit*.

7. When *posse* is needed with a verb of killing, the Scriptores almost always use *occido* rather than *interficio*: Ael. Spart. *Pesc. Nig.* 2. 4 *proinde quasi qualis libet imperator a primipilario posset occidi*; ib. 2. 6 *quasi imperator tantus a centurione posset occidi*; Iul. Cap. *Clod. Alb.* 6. 5 *quos cum causa ipse posset occidere*; Ael. Spart. *Geta* 4. 5 *potes et fratrem occidere*; Iul. Cap. *Max.* 9. 2 *quasi non posset occidi*; ib. 9. 4 *qui ab uno non potest occidi*; ib. 17. 2 *quasi senatum posset occidere*; Iul. Cap. *Gord.* 13. 4 *quasi omnes posset occidere*; Treb. Poll. *Trig. Tyr.* 9. 7 *si et senes atque impuberes sine reprehensione nostra occidi possent*; ib. 15. 4 *ne et ipse posset occidi*; Vop. *Aurel.* 4. 4 *neque umquam occidi potuisse*; ib. 39. 8 *quo facilius eos posset occidere*.

Another characteristic shared by five of the above passages is that the expression in question stands in a *quasi* clause.

¹ e.g. Oros. 3. 1. 17, 3. 11. 1, 3. 15. 4, Iul. Obs. 65, 66.

6. 19. 2, Eutrop. 4. 20, 6. 15, 7. 3, 8. 17, 8. 18, Ampelius 42. 12.

² e.g. Oros. 6. 13. 5, 6. 16. 9, 6. 18. 13,

³ On *Trig. Tyr.* 26. 4 see below, Section 9.

Note that at *Trig. Tyr.* 9. 7 (*occidi possent*) the clausula (double spondee) would have been improved by the substitution of *interfici* for *occidi* (cretic-trochee). Concord of stress and accent would have been retained.

In four places the expression in question is *posset occidi*, which forms a cretic-trochee.¹ But again the needs of the clausula have not ruled out the use of *interficio*, for *interfici posset* would have given an identical rhythm, with ictus-stress correspondence.

In another four places there occurs the expression *posset occidere*, producing a double cretic,² a rhythm which is somewhat less common in the *H.A.* than the double trochee and cretic-trochee. Had *interficere* been used for *occidere* and the order reversed, the clausula would have been a cretic-trochee with one resolution.

Thus the Scriptores could usually have chosen *interficio* without detriment to the clausula. That they adopt *occido* is therefore all the more suggestive.

There are only 2 instances of *interficio* with *possum* in the *H.A.* (Vulc. Gall. *Av. Cass.* 2. 2, Iul. *Cap. Max. et Balb.* 14. 2).

8. Most of the Scriptores always use *occido* rather than *interficio* in the expression 'to kill someone along with (*cum*) someone else'. *Interficio* is found in an equivalent phrase only twice, in passages which are very close together (Treb. *Poll. Gall.* 2. 4, 3. 4). For *occido* see Ael. *Spart. Sev.* 10. 1 *quare postea occisi sunt filii Nigri cum matre*; Iul. *Cap. Opell. Macr.* 10. 3 *occisus est cum Diadumeno*; Ael. *Lampr. Diad.* 2. 5 *cum patre occisum*; *ib.* 14. 1 *illum occiderunt cum puero suo Diadumeno*; Ael. *Lampr. Elag.* 18. 2 *occisa est cum eo et mater Symiamira*; Ael. *Lampr. Sev. Alex.* 60. 2 *cum qua occisus est*; Iul. *Cap. Max.* 4. 6 *occiso Macrino cum filio suo*; *ib.* 23. 7 *occisus est cum amicis clarioribus*; Iul. *Cap. Max. et Balb.* 15. 4 *ipsum cum Balbino esse occisum*; Treb. *Poll. Gall.* 3. 6 *Macrianus cum suis liberis esset occisus*; Vop. *Aurel.* 31. 2 *Sandarionem enim . . . cum sescentis sagittariis occiderunt*.

It will be seen that certain patterns recur. The prepositional phrase almost always follows the verb when it is finite and passive; but it precedes the perfect passive infinitive.

9. In any writer words may often be embedded in certain patterns. Structural idiosyncrasies of this kind are particularly unlikely either to be noticed and imitated by one author from another, or to be traditional in a genre. One of the passive forms of *occido*—*occisus (-i) est (sunt)*—occurs in most Scriptores in the following pattern: Ael. *Lampr. Comm.* 6. 8 *aut retenti sunt aut occisi* (a double perfect passive construction, with one auxiliary verb serving for both participles). Cf. Ael. *Spart. Sev.* 5. 10 *nam et Iulianus occisus est in Palatio, et Severus Roman invitatus*; Ael. *Spart. Pesc. Nig.* 9. 3 *ab eodem victi atque occisi sunt*; Ael. *Spart. Carac.* 3. 7 *deprehensus est et occisus*; *ib.* 4. 1 *percussus a militibus et occisus est*; Iul. *Cap. Opell. Macr.* 15. 1 *belloque victus est et occisus*; Ael. *Lampr. Elag.* 17. 1 *in eum impetus factus est atque in latrina . . . occisus*; Iul. *Cap. Gord.* 13. 9 *percussus occisus et in publico derelictus est*; Treb. *Poll. Trig. Tyr.* 26. 4 *ad campum deductus victus est et occisus*.

In the whole of the *H.A.* there is no example of *interficio* in the same construction, though other writers often use the word in this way.³ The constant

¹ *Occidi posset* would have given a double spondee.

² *Occidere posset* would have given a heroic clausula, a rhythm which is extremely rare

in the *H.A.*

³ e.g. Oros. 1. 10. 6, 3. 23. 32, 5. 16. 2, 6. 16. 9, Eutrop. 4. 20, 6. 15, 8. 18.

preference for *occisus* is the more surprising since the form *interfectus* is common in the work.

In three places (in different Scriptores) the collocation *est et occisus* coming at the end of a colon gives a cretic-trochee. But the preference for *occidere* over *interficere* cannot be ascribed to metrical necessity, for often *occido* is either not in the clausula or is rhythmically no better than *interficio* would have been.

10. One of the most noteworthy mannerisms in the use made of *occido* is to be seen in the way in which inversion of the past participle *occisus* and its auxiliary verb takes place.

Throughout the *H.A.* past participles and auxiliaries are rarely reversed, even though inversion would often have been useful for the clausula. Inversion was, moreover, becoming increasingly common in the language in general, in anticipation of Romance practice.¹ The Scriptores thus concur in standing against a current tendency and in rejecting a useful device.² *Interemptus*, for example, is used 52 times with auxiliary verbs, but is postponed only 7 times.³ Yet inversion would always have produced concord of ictus and stress and a double trochee, instead of the clash and unpopular rhythms which the traditional order constantly gives.

Similarly *occisus* is employed with auxiliary verbs 45 times, but is inverted only 9 times.⁴ Remarkably, in all the cases of inversion the auxiliary verb is *esset* (6 times) or *sit* (3 times): Vulc. Gall. *Av. Cass.* 3. 2 *quemadmodum sit occisus*; ib. 11. 7 *nec Avidius esset occisus*; Ael. Lampr. *Comm.* 7. 1 *cum . . . esset occisus*; Ael. Lampr. *Sev. Alex.* 65. 2 *quod pessimus esset occisus*; Treb. Poll. *Gall.* 3. 6 *quod Macrianus cum suis liberis esset occisus*; Vop. *Aurel.* 36. 1 *quemadmodum sit occisus*; Vop. *Firm.* 11. 1 *Probo paene nolente sit occisus*; Vop. *Car.* 13. 2 *quemadmodum Numerianus esset occisus*; ib. 13. 3 *cum Diocletiani manu esset Aper occisus*.

It is true that *esset occisus* gives a cretic-trochee with correspondence of ictus and stress; but *occisus esset* produces a double trochee, also with correspondence. *Sit occisus*, on the other hand, usually gives an unsatisfactory clausula.

Nor is there any other reason why *esset* and *sit* in particular should have been transposed. The auxiliaries placed before *interemptus*, for instance, are more varied. Inversion of this kind can only have been the idiosyncrasy of a single man.

It is difficult to believe that a series of authors, imitating the first or a subsequent Scriptor or Scriptores, could have become so intimately familiar with the style of the model as to be aware, e.g., that *interficio* should be admitted only rarely in the active and never in relative clauses, that in various unremarkable expressions only *occido* should be used and then sometimes in a fixed position, and that certain restrictions should be placed on the auxiliaries which might precede *occisus* (as distinct from other participles). Moreover, some of the mannerisms noted above (e.g. the use of subjunctive auxiliaries before *occisus*) can only be seen as such by someone surveying the whole *H.A.* A hypothetical early Scriptor, with a limited number of *Lives* before him to imitate, would in some cases not have had sufficient examples at his disposal

¹ See J. B. Hofmann-A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik* (Munich, 1965), 405.

² See Hofmann-Szantyr, loc. cit., on Cicero's use of inversion to create a good clausula.

³ *Comm.* 6. 12, *Sev.* 11. 5, *Did. Iul.* 3. 7, *Geta* 6. 6, *Gall.* 14. 9, *Trig. Tyr.* 6. 3, *Aurel.* 34. 1.

⁴ *Interfectus* is not placed after its auxiliary verb by any of the Scriptores.

to allow the identification of a mannerism. Hence mannerisms found infrequently in the work, and to which there are no exceptions, are particularly strong evidence for unity of authorship.

Nor is it conceivable that six different authors, striving for unity of style, went so far as to devise arbitrary and insignificant rules of usage together. And it cannot be supposed that such extensive concurrences were due to chance, since in no case did the educated language impose a rule.

Against this evidence of stylistic unity I have found no signs at all to suggest the idiolect of more writers than one in the *H.A.*

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