

NON CERTE IN CICERO DE DIVINATIONE 2.94

In Cic. *Div.* 2.94 the manuscripts read:

Haec igitur cum sit tum serenitas, tum perturbatio caeli, estne sanorum hominum hoc ad nascentium ortus pertinere non dicere, quod *non certe* pertinet, illud nescio quid tenue, quod sentiri nullo modo, intellegi autem vix potest, quae a luna ceterisque sideribus caeli temperatio fiat, dicere ad puerorum ortus pertinere? (Cic. *Div.* 2.94)

The italicised words *non certe* have received the attention of Latinists from early times onwards, and rightly so. It is the only instance in the existing Classical Latin literature with the two words juxtaposed in this order.¹⁾ The last one to defend the transmitted text is Pease in his commentary *ad loc.* He assumes that *non* modifies *certe* and not the whole clause *quod . . . pertinet*. “Cicero does not mean to assert that the weather has no effect upon children at their birth . . ., but rather, with Academic suspense of judgment, to declare that it is not clear that it has any effect.” Schäublin (1987, 186) rightly observes that there are no parallels for this. As in modern languages like English and Dutch it is not possible to deny a statement that is modified by an attitudinal adverb indicating a degree of certainty: we do not, for example, find *non fortasse* or *non profecto* in this sense either (Pinkster 2004). There is on the other hand no shortage of instances in which the degree of certainty of a negated statement is indicated. The order is then normally *fortasse* / *profecto* / *certe* + *non*, with or without intervening constituents. An example is (1).

- (1) Nisi forte postea coeperunt legare quam ego Taurum transgressus sum; quod *certe non* ita est. (Cic. *Fam.* 3.8.5)

In this example *certe* modifies *quod non ita est*. Similarly we find *Certe non* as an answer to a question in Cic. *Dom.* 77.

As in example (1), it is quite common for Cicero to rectify a previous statement or suggestion with a *quod*-clause, in order to avoid being associated himself with that previous thought (Vahlen 1908, 329-30). Schuetz obviously wanted to interpret our initial *Div.* passage in this way and simply removed the only obstacle he saw by reading *certe non*, and Madvig followed him (1826, 36-8). Falconer, in his Loeb edition, follows this interpretation in translating ‘—and of course it has not—’, but keeps the order of the manuscripts. Giomini keeps the order as well in his Teubner edition, with not very helpful references in the apparatus criticus. Schäublin (1987, 185-7) re-examines the case and suggests that a word has been omitted in the manuscripts and inserts <*nihil*> in between *non* and *certe*. In his Tusculum edition of 1991 he translates ‘Was in gewissem Maße doch wohl einwirkt.’, for which he receives praise from Powell (1996, 550).

I think that there is some evidence that allows us to follow Schuetz’

and Madvig's interpretation and keep the order of the manuscripts. In the first place there are a few instances of *non fortasse* and *non profecto*, juxtaposed and in that order, in which *fortasse* and *profecto* modify a negated clause. One example is (2).²⁾

- (2) Tribunus plebis fuit *non fortasse* tam vehemens quam isti quos tu iure laudas, sed certe talis, quales . . . (Cic. *Planc.* 28)

Secondly, whereas *certe* normally precedes negative words like *nemo*, *nihil*, *numquam*, and *nusquam*, there are exceptions, such as (3).³⁾

- (3) Moveor enim tali amico orbatus qualis ut arbitror nemo umquam erit, ut confirmare possum, *nemo certe* fuit. (Cic. *Am.* 10)

Finally, there are a few instances of *non certe* in Christian authors that have to be interpreted in the way I suggest for the *Div.* instance,⁴⁾ one of which is (4):

- (4) *Non certe* ergo, qui in uno offendit, factus est omnium reus. (Aug. *Serm.* 179A)

In conclusion, in the passage discussed Cicero definitely rejects a relationship between weather circumstances during someone's birth and one's future life.

1015 BS AMSTERDAM, Herengracht 102 G
h.pinkster@uva.nl

HARM PINKSTER

1) According to the Bibliotheca Teubneriana Latina CD-ROM (2002).

2) For *non profecto* see *Rhet. Her.* 4.23 and Quint. *Decl.* 323.16. For *nec profecto* Cic. *Leg.* 1.14. One interesting instance can be found in Aug. *c. Acad.* 3.16 *Certe enim non fortasse* omnis, qui errat, peccat, omnis tamen, qui peccat, aut errare conceditur aut aliquid peius.

3) *Nemo certe* Plin. *Nat.* 36.57; 36.116; Sen. *Dial.* 5.19.3; Quint. *Inst.* 12.1.11. *Nihil certe* Liv. 30.19.12; 42.42.9. *Numquam certe* Cic. *Planc.* 53; Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.56. *Nusquam certe* Plin. *Nat.* 33.12.

4) In total five instances on the first CLCLT-4 CD-ROM (2000).

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