

Translation of 3c

Warning: *This is sometimes rather loose. I provide more literal translations in the footnotes (at least for the first time a certain idiom is used).*

M. What is that slave going to do? Is he going to enter this house? Is he going to tell all about that victory of Amphtruo? I'll go up to him and very quickly drive him away from this house. I'll never [100] allow this fellow to reach this house today. Since my looks are similar to his—actually, I'm really more like him than he is like himself—I'll have a very similar character. So I'll be wicked, cunning, clever; and I'll drive him from this house most quickly using wickedness, tricks, bits of cunning, lies, and force.

Sosia, about to enter the house, catches sight of Mercury.

S. Now I'm going to go into the house and say what my master's done. . . . But who is this guy? Who's this I see in front of my master's house? Damn,¹ he's really strong! I've never seen a stronger. I don't like this at all . . . it's certain my greeting here is going to be fisty. I'm completely out of luck. [110]

M. This fist packs quite a punch, but this one packs a greater.²

S. I'm done for! He's parceling out punches!³ He wants to greet me with his fists.

M. If anyone comes here, he'll get a knuckle sandwich.⁴

S. I don't like that. I've just eaten . . .

M. If this fist touches anyone's face, we'll have us some fillet of face⁵ . . .

S. He wants to fillet me with his fists? O, woe is me! I'll be feeding the fishes.⁶

¹ *obsecro* is sometime used parenthetically, a bit like "pray tell" in older English, or "I say." There's no real praying going on. Very literally, "I pray, by Heracles, how strong he is!"

² "Great is the weight to this fist (= "of this fist" dative of possession), but greater the weight to that."

³ "He's weighing fists"; my translation attempts to capture the alliteration in the Latin (pondus . . . pugno).

⁴ "He'll eat fists."

⁵ "If this fist touches a face, it will be deboned."

⁶ "I'll be worth as much as an eel."

M. Someone's talking.

S. I'm safe! He doesn't see me! Since my name isn't "Someone", but Sosia. [120]

(Mercury catches sight of Sosia)

M. Where are you going, you complete loser? Tell me, who are you? Are you a slave, or free? Speak up, you utter scoundrel!

S. I'm a slave, about to go to my master's house.

M. Whose slave are you? Why mumble to yourself as you're going to enter this house? What are you going to tell them? Tell me, you worst of scoundrels.

S. I'm about to go into this house. For my master told me to do this. Since I'm his slave.

M. Get out of here, you fount of evils!⁷ You aren't worth a damn!⁸ If you don't get out of here and fast, I'll filet you with these fists! You'll be feeding the fishes.⁹ [130]

S. If you're going to exercise your fists on me, why don't you soften them up on this wall, first?

M. If you don't get out of here at once . .

S. But I live here, and I'm a slave in this household.

M. Who is your master?

S. Amphytruo, best of men, and his wife Alcumena, loveliest of women.

M. What's your name, you scoundrel?

S. The Thebans call me Sosia, son of Davus.

M. What are you saying? That's a bold-faced lie!¹⁰ *You're Sosia? I'm Sosia!* Don't come here counting on your second-hand tricks.

S. But what I've got on is a second-hand tunic, no tricks.

M. No, you're lying. It's your feet you've come on, not your tunic.¹¹

⁷ *caput* can mean "head or source" as of a river, or of evils.

⁸ "You are of no value."

⁹ "You'll be worth as much as an eel."

¹⁰ "You are lying, most bold one"

(Mercury beats Sosia fiercely with his fists)

S. I'm done for!

M. Crying out, are you, Mr. Worthless¹²? Whose slave are you now?

S. I'm Amphitruo's, Sosia.

M. Sosia is who I am, not you.

(Mercury beats him more fiercely)

S. I'm done for! I'm a dead man!

M. You're shouting, Mr. Worthless? Shut up.

S. I'll shut up.

M. Who's your master? Whose slave are you now?

S. I don't know. Whose do you want me to be most?

M. [155] Now you're talking.¹³ What then? What's your name?

S. I don't know. What you do want?

M. Now you've got it.¹⁴ Are you Amphitruo's Sosia?

S. Not at all.

M. Great answer.¹⁵ For Amphitruo has no slave but me.

S. *(speaks to himself)* There's no one badder than this badboy.¹⁶ Aren't I the slave of Amphitruo, Sosia? Aren't I standing in front of our house? Aren't I talking? Don't I live here? Isn't this guy beating me with his fists? Aren't I about to enter our home?

(Mercury stops Sosia from entering the house¹⁷)

¹¹ Okay, a desperate attempt to render the joke Latin does via two distinct uses of the ablative. *dolis consutis* and *tunicis consutis* are ablatives of accompaniment (which we haven't really seen in this form), *pedibus* is ablative of means. I try to exploit the range of English "on" similarly.

¹² "Man worth nothing"

¹³ "Now you are saying better things"

¹⁴ "You are saying the best things"

¹⁵ "You are responding best"

¹⁶ "No one is worst than this worst <guy>"

M. What's this you're saying? *Your* house? This is my house, not yours, loser. Don't lie.

(Mercury beats Sosias most fiercely with his fists)

S. I'm done for! Who am I, if not Sosia? I'm asking you.

M. When I don't want to be Sosia, you'll be Sosia. For now, since I'm Sosia, get out of here, scoundrel.

[S. *(speaks to himself, after thinking a lot)* He certainly looks just like me. For he's got the same hat, the same clothes, the same height, the same feet, the same chin, same check, same lips, beard, nose, neck. He's like me all over. He's more like me than I am. If he's got scars on his back, there's nobody more like me. But I'm certainly the same guy, Sosia, best slave to the best master. Since there's no slave better than me, no master better than Amphitruo.

(having said this, Sosia exits)]

¹⁷ "Mercury stops Sosia as he (Sosia) is about to enter the house": the first use of a future participle outside of the nominative case, I believe (*initurum*, from *ineo*).