

Is the pronoun usage in page 148, exercise (d) ambiguous?

The sentence reads:

Ea Iovem Amphitruōnem arbitrātur, quod is sē illī similem fēcit.

“She thinks that Jupiter is Amphitryon, because he (Jupiter) made himself similar to (look like) him (Amphitryon).”

As best I can tell, this is a poorly written Latin sentence, but it is the sort of sentence difficult to make unambiguous only with pronouns in either Latin or English.

is, ea, id are not used to distinguish one item from another (that’s what *hic* and *ille* do), so don’t really help here. *Hic* and *ille* are used regularly to refer to “the latter” and “the former” respectively, *hic* referring to the item mentioned more recently. Hence I would think that clearer Latin here would be:

. . . . quod ille (Iuppiter) sē huic similem fēcit.

But this too may well be awkward, as *ille* is often used to change subjects in Latin, so a Roman might well have thought that *ille* was not the same person as the last masculine subject—Jupiter, who was the subject of the (implied!) infinitive (a fuller Latin version of this sentence would be: *Ea Iovem Amphitruōnem esse arbitrātur, quod is sē illī similem fēcit.* “She thought Jupiter to be Amphitryon . . .”

Probably, then, this is a case where the Latin (and English translation) ought to repeat one of the proper names to make things clear.

Ea Iovem Amphitruōnem arbitrātur, quod Iuppiter sē illī similem fēcit.

“She thinks that Jupiter is Amphitryon, because Jupiter made himself similar to (look like) him (Amphitryon).”

In this sentence, by the way, *ei* could substitute for *illi*.