**Unreliable Ability: *Barrus* in Horace’s Epode 12**

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1. Horace. *Epodes* 1.12.1-2

*Quid tibi vis, mulier nigris dignissima* ***barris***?[[1]](#footnote-1)

What do you want, a woman most fit for black elephants?

1. Livy. *History of Rome* 27.14.9

*sed ut non omnes volnerati sunt, ita in quorum tergis infixa stetere pila, ut est genus* ***anceps****, in fugam versi etiam integros avertere.*

Though not all (elephants) were injured, those with spears stuck in their backs turned in flight – such is their unreliable nature – and drove off even the uninjured animals

1. Horace. *Satires* 1.6.30-37

*ut si qui aegrotet quo morbo* ***Barrus****, haberi*

*et cupiat formosus, eat quacumque, puellis*

*iniciat curam quaerendi singula, quali*

*sit facie, sura, quali pede, dente, capillo:*

*sic qui promittit ciues, urbem sibi curae,*

*imperium fore et Italiam, delubra deorum,*

*quo patre sit natus, num ignota matre inhonestus,*

*omnes mortales curare et quaerere cogit.*

Just as he who, suffering the sickness of Barrus, desires to be thought of as handsome that wherever he went he would incite girls’ interest in his personal details: how his face, his ankles, his feet, his teeth, his hair was. In this way, he who promises to take care of the citizens, city, the empire, and Italy, the sanctuaries of the gods, forces all mortals to inquire and to care about what father he was born from, or whether because of an unrenowned mother he is unrespectable.

1. Horace. *Epodes* 1.12.14-17

*Inachia* ***langues*** *minus ac me*

*Inachiam ter nocte* ***potes****, mihi semper ad unum*

*Mollis opus. Pereat male, quae te*

*Lesbia quaerenti taurum monstravit inertem’*

With Inachia, you are not so limp – you are able to (have sex with her) three times a night. But with me, you are always soft for one exertion. Curse Lesbia, who suggested incompetent you, when I was seeking a bull.

1. Horace. *Epodes* 1.12.19-20

*cuius in* ***indomito*** *constantior inguine nervus*

*quam nova collibus arbor inhaeret*

On whose groin an undefeated shoot stands more constantly erect than a young tree that clings to the hills

1. Horace. *Satires* 1.7.8

*confidens, tumidusque, adeo sermonis amari, Sisennas,* ***Barros*** *ut equis praecurreret albis.*

Overconfident, blustering, so sharp-tongued, he would outrun Sisennas, like Elephants by white horses

1. Marcellinus. *History* 19.2.3

*elephantorum agmina rugosis horrenda corporibus leniter incedebant*

The horrible line of elephants, with wrinkled bodies, were advancing slowly

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* 2003. *A Commentary on Horace’s Epodes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
1. All translations are my own [↑](#footnote-ref-1)