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The Laureolus-mime

1. Suetonius, *Caligula* 57

prodigiorum loco habita sunt etiam, quae forte illo ipso die paulo prius acciderant. sacrificans respersus est phoenicopteri sanguine; et pantomimus Mnester tragoediam saltavit, quam olim Neoptolemus tragoedus ludis, quibus rex Macedonum Philippus occisus est, egerat; et cum in Laureolo mimo, in quo actor proripiens se ruina sanguinem vomit, plures secundarum certatim experimentum artis darent, cruore scaena abundavit.

These things were also considered omens which by chance had happened on that very day a little earlier. As [Gaius] was sacrificing, he was splashed with the blood of a flamingo; and the pantomime Mnester danced a tragedy which the tragic actor Neoptolemus long ago acted at the games at which Philip, king of the Macedonians, was assassinated; and when during the Laureolus-mime, in which the actor rushing forward falls and vomits blood, many of the supporting actors eagerly gave proof of their artistic experience, the stage overflowed with blood.

2. Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 19.1.13

ἔνθα δὲ καὶ σημεῖα συμβαίνει δύο γενέσθαι· καὶ γὰρ μῖμος εἰσάγεται, καθ' ὃν σταυροῦται ληφθεὶς ἠγεμών, ὃ τε ὀρχηστῆς δρᾶμα εἰσάγει Κινύραν, ἐν ᾧ αὐτὸς τε ἐκτείνετο καὶ ἡ θυγάτηρ Μύρρα, αἷμά τε ἦν τεχνητὸν πολλὸν καὶ τὸ περὶ τὸν σταυρωθέντα ἐκκεχυμένον καὶ τὸ περὶ τὸν Κινύραν. ὁμολογεῖται δὲ καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην γενέσθαι, ἐν ἣ Φίλιππον τὸν Ἀμύντου Μακεδόνων βασιλέα κτείνει Πausanίας εἰς τῶν ἐταίρων εἰς τὸ θέατρον εἰσιόντα.

Then two omens happened to occur: a mime was performed, during which a leader is caught and crucified, and a dancer performed the play *Cinyras*, in which Cinyras and his daughter Myrrha are killed; and a great deal of artificial blood was poured out, both that for the crucified man and that for Cinyras. It is also agreed that it was the same day as that on which Pausanias, one of the Companions, killed Philip, son of Amyntas and king of the Macedonians, as he entered the theater.

3. Martial, *Liber Spectaculorum* 7

Qualiter in Scythica religatus rupe Prometheus
adsidua nimio pectore pavit avem,
nuda Caledonio sic viscera praebuit urso
non falsa pendens in cruce Laureolus.
vivebant laceri membris stillantibus artus

inque omni nusquam corpore corpus erat.
denique supplicium <meruit quo crimine tantum?>
vel domini iugulum foderat ense nocens,
templa vel arcano demens spoliaverat auro,
subdiderat saevas vel tibi, Roma, faces.
vicerat antiquae sceleratus crimina famae,
in quo, quae fuerat fabula, poena fuit.

Just as Prometheus, bound on a Scythian cliff,
fed the relentless bird with his excessive heart,
so Laureolus, hanging on a *real* cross,
defenseless, offered his guts to a Caledonian bear.
His torn limbs still lived, though the parts dripped blood,
and in his whole body there was no whole body.
And finally, <what crime earned such a> capital punishment?
Either the wicked man had dug into his master's throat with a sword,
or the madman had robbed a temple of its hidden gold,
or he had set fierce torches under you, O Rome.
The impious man had surpassed the crimes of ancient lore:
what had been a play was a punishment for him.

4. Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos* 14

ita depulsa quominus pergeret nec habens supervolare Crucem, id est Horon, quia nullum
Catulli Laureolum fuerit exercitata...

Thus she* was pushed back so that she could not proceed, nor was she able to fly over
the Cross, that is Horos, because she had not been trained in any *Laureolus* of Catullus...

[*she = Enthymesis, a Gnostic term]

5. Juvenal 8.186-87

Laureolum velox etiam bene Lentulus egit,
iudice me dignus vera cruce.

The swift Lentulus even acted Laureolus well,
worthy, in my opinion, of the cross for real.

6. Juvenal 13.110-11

mimum agit ille
urbani qualem fugitivus scurra Catulli

He's acting out a mime,
Like the runaway jester of witty Catullus

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