

Ovid Unseen 4: Cadmus and the Dragon's Teeth

Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book 3 (continued from Unseen 2)

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Cadmus watches as the armed men immediately burst into a fight with one another, until only five remain.

*The men arose like figures embroidered on a curtain:
as it is pulled up, the men gradually appear.*

territus hoste novo Cadmus capere arma parabat:
'ne cape!' de populo, quem terra creaverat, unus
exclamat 'nec te civilibus insere bellis!
atque ita terrigenis rigido de fratribus unum
comminus ense ferit, iaculo cadit eminus ipse; 5
hunc quoque qui leto dederat, non longius illo
vivit et expirat, modo quas acceperat auras,
exemploque pari furit omnis turba, suoque
Marte cadunt subiti per mutua vulnera fratres.
iamque brevis vitae spatium sortita iuventus 10
sanguineam tepedo plangebant pectore matrem,
quinque superstitibus, quorum fuit unus Echion.
is sua iecit humo monitu Tritonidis arma
fraternaeque fidem pacis petiitque deditque.



National Galleries of Scotland exhibition,
'Ray Harryhausen: Titan of Cinema'



Vocabulary:

insero, -serere, -serui, insertum	<i>insert, involve</i>
terrigenus, -a, -um	<i>earth-born</i>
rigidus, -a, -um	<i>stiff, hard</i>
comminus (adv)	<i>at close quarters, hand-to-hand</i>
ensis, -is (m)	<i>sword</i>
ferio, ferire	<i>strike</i>
iaculum, -i (n)	<i>javelin, missile</i>
eminus (adv)	<i>from afar, at a distance</i>
subitus, -a, -um	<i>instant, sudden, short-lived</i>
mutuus, -a, -um	<i>reciprocal, mutual</i>
sortior, -iri, sortitus sum	<i>obtain by lot, allot, draw lots</i>
sanguineus, -a, -um	<i>bloody</i>
plango, plangere	<i>beat, pound on</i>
iuventus, iuventutis (f)	<i>youth, the young</i>
superstes, superstitis	<i>surviving</i>
Echion, Echionis (m)	<i>Echion (one of five to survive and help Cadmus found Thebes)</i>
Tritonis, -idis (f)	<i>Athena, goddess of lake Triton</i>