

**CORNELL STUDIES IN  
CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY, NO.  
XVII: ERICHTHONIUS AND THE  
THREE DAUGHTERS OF CECROPS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649456000

Cornell Studies in Classical Philology, No. XVII: Erichthonius and the Three Daughters of Cecrops by Benjamin Powell

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Cover @ 2017

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**BENJAMIN POWELL**

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**Cornell University**

**Ithaca, New York**

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**CORNELL STUDIES**

IN

**CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY**

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AND

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No. XVII

**ERICHTHONIUS AND THE THREE DAUGHTERS  
OF CEOPUS**

BY

**BENJAMIN POWELL, A.B., A.M.**

PUBLISHED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

BY

**THE MACMILLAN COMPANY**

1906

ERICHTHONIUS

AND

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PUBLISHED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

1906

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PRESS OF  
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ITHACA, N. Y.

#### EDITORS' PREFACE.

The premature death of Benjamin Powell in June, 1905, several days before the Commencement at which he would have received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Cornell University, made it impossible for him to superintend the publication of his Doctor's Thesis. The task, therefore, of reading and correcting the proof has devolved entirely on the Editors of the Cornell Studies.

They have been greatly aided in this task by Dr. L. L. Forman, of Cornell University. It is hoped that the result is such as would meet with the approval of Dr. Powell.





## PREFACE.

In this treatment of Erichthonius and the Three Daughters of Cecrops but little is required by way of introduction. I think the body of the work may speak for itself. Even a short sketch of the work done by me in the study of religion, myth, and ritual would be of little practical value to my readers. My plan has been to study the sources for this particular myth as fully as possible, and to adapt to my use the information thus gained from the classical writers. It seemed to me wise to treat the subject broadly, rather than to hew to one hard and fast line and try to make everything conform to a preconceived view. So many changes and influences come into the history of a myth that a great deal of allowance has to be made for peculiar features which do not belong to it originally.

I have tried to arrive at the truth and to present it, although at one time I may adopt a suggestion from one author and at another time discover the truth in an author whose ideas are opposed to those of the first. However for a complete survey, one must take many points into consideration, the etymology of names, whether the divine personage in question was a personification of some natural phenomenon, or a beast, bird, reptile or insect, a totem, a spirit of the crops, or an historical personage. This I have endeavored to do and my results are hereinafter set down. The writers whose works are used in my text are carefully credited with each reference. The work of Miss J. E. Harrison, who has discussed this myth more than any other writer, has been especially helpful. The literary sources are put in a body at the end.

The myth, which must be one of the most ancient at Athens, was not written down until somewhat late in her history, so that the classical evidence, although appearing somewhat bulky, is not always satisfactory and is often but a repetition of some previous account. I have begun the discussion with the different classical accounts of the myth and have then passed on to an attempted explanation of its meaning and that of the ritual connected with it. As will be seen, anthropology has entered largely into the discussion throughout.

