How does a city’s legendary past affect its present? Thebes remains a city with one of the richest traditions of myth and legend in all of Greece – it was the home of Cadmus, Oedipus, and Hercules, and the traditional birthplace of Dionysus. The city’s topography, both natural and built, very often played a significant role in its myths. By focusing on Greek literature ranging from the oral epics to the travel writing of the Roman Empire, this book explores the relationship between the city’s spaces as they were represented in the Greek literary tradition and the physical realities of a developing city that had been continuously inhabited since at least the second millennium BC. Spurred on especially by the city’s catastrophic sack by Alexander the Great in 335 BC, the urban topography of Thebes came more and more to reflect the literary, even fictional, constructions of its mythic past.

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MYTH, LITERATURE, AND
THE CREATION OF THE
TOPOGRAPHY OF THEBES

DANIEL W. BERMAN
Contents

List of illustrations page vi
Acknowledgments vii

Introduction: Constructing a city 1
1 Epic Thebes 27
2 Lyric Thebes 49
3 Thebes on stage 75
4 Thebes of the library 122
5 The creation of Theban topography 141

Appendices
I. The plain(s) of Thebes 160
II. The walls and gates of Thebes 162
III. Pindar's house 176
References 178
Index locorum 185
General index 188
Illustrations


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Some portions of this book may be familiar from earlier versions published elsewhere: the discussion here of the spring/river Dirce is developed from a 2007 article in *Greece & Rome* entitled “Dirce at Thebes,” and that of Corinna draws upon my discussion in an article published in *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* in 2010, “The Landscape and Language of Korinna.” The maps in Appendix II are mostly so old that the publishing houses are no longer in a position to be thanked, but I do so nonetheless, with special thanks to the two who did grant permission to reprint their more recently published maps, Princeton University Press and Cambridge University Press.

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