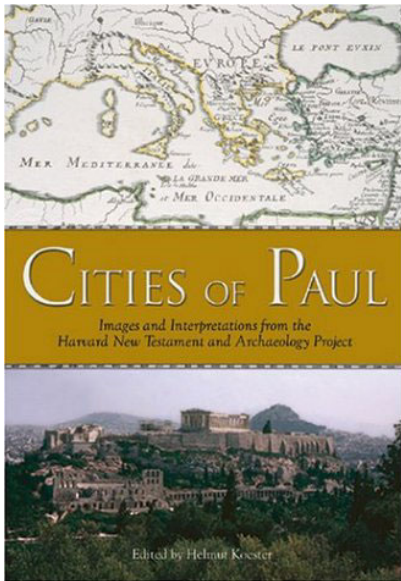


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Koester, Helmut, ed.

Cities of Paul: Images and Interpretations from the Harvard New Testament and Archaeology Project

Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004. CD-ROM. \$250.00, ISBN 0800636732.

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This wonderful CD resource of nearly nine hundred images and textual explanations is compiled by Helmut Koester with Charalambos Bakirtzis, Marianne Bonz, Steven Friesen, Holland Hendrix, John Lanzi, Daniel Schowalter, and Philip Sellw. Its title *Cities of Paul* accurately names the CD's geographical interest in Asia Minor and Greece (and not Judea and Galilee) but understates the chronological span of the material. The CD is organized to focus on nine geographical, predominantly urban, areas from Greece, Macedonia, and Western Asia Minor, namely, Athens, Corinth, Isthmia, Olympia, Delphi, Thessalonike, Philippi, Ephesos, and Pergamon. While it deals specifically with the developing Christian groups and mission (key cities such as Corinth, Thessalonike, Philippi, Ephesus, Pergamon), the scope of material is broader in time (both earlier and latter than the first century C.E.), geography (Athens, Delphi, Olympia, Isthmia), and content (Greco-Roman political, societal, religious, and cultural realities).

Each of the nine geographical "chapters" is subdivided into area-appropriate sections. Athens, for instance, has seventeen subsections, Corinth nine, Isthmia six, and Olympia eight. Each of the nine areas includes "General Materials" such as maps, panoramas, and plans/diagrams of particular sites (e.g., a forum, a building), as well as extensive material specific to various sites at the location. The images, mostly color, are excellent in quality and presentation. The well-made selections depict the ancient sites as they are today. I

have not yet found any artist's reconstruction of what a site might have looked like, although there are several images of models (ancient Athens, Ephesos, Pergamon). A photo of modern Thessalonike seems unnecessary.

The range of material is truly impressive. After the initial "General Materials" featuring eighteen images, Corinth, for example, focuses on the Leeahion Road and Peirene Fountain (10 images), Forum (28), Sanctuaries (16), Theater and Odeion District (7), Sanctuary of Demeter (6), Asklepion (11), and Acrocorinth (4). In total, there are one hundred slides dealing with Corinth and covering architecture, coins, sculptures, and inscriptions. The extensive 154-slide section on Ephesos covers General Material (9 images), Lower City (15), Sarapeion (11), Library of Celsus (17), Embolos Area (13), Temple of Hadrian (11), Fountain of Trajan (3), Magnesian Gate Area (7), State Agora (40), Temple of the Sebastoi (17), and Domitian Plaza (11). Philippi has sixty-two slides covering General Materials (6 images), the Akropolis Mountain (12), Basilica A (13), Basilica B (7), Forum (2), and the Octagonal Church (fourth century C.E.; 22 slides).

Each slide is accompanied not with a brief caption but with a slide of valuable textual explanation that includes description of the object or site and interpretation of its significance. Image and text can be displayed separately or in combination. The interpretation sections often engage contemporary debates about identification, dating, significance, and the like and provide bibliography. They also include citations from or references to ancient authors, New Testament texts and incidents, and other Christian writings. For example, the text for an image of a politarch's inscription from Thessalonike identifies where it was found and where it is currently displayed, describes its size, content, and debates over its dating (from first century B.C.E. to second century C.E.). It then provides a Greek version and English translation of the inscription, a note on politarchs, and a three-item bibliography. The text for the well-known Erastus inscription from Corinth follows a similar format. It describes the inscription's location, appearance, and presentation, then provides a Latin text and English translation. Discussion of its interpretation supplies information about aedileships in Corinth, considers a likely link to Rom 16:23, and provides a four-item bibliography.

The CD could function in various ways. It is a rich resource for insight into the Greco-Roman world that the early Christian movement negotiated. Scholars, clergy, and students of this material will find much of interest and illumination. Using the program for this function is very straightforward. Users can also assemble and project a slide show from this rich resource, either using this program or using other software such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Apple Keynote. A "Zoom Palette" offers flexibility in presentation. The text material often includes links to other slides. Text material can be included in a presentation, or one can type one's own textual commentary to appear with

the images. A series of linked indices for the whole CD covers ancient authors, architecture, coins, inscriptions, maps, names, and sculpture, as well as a general index, making access to the material very easy. The program includes an extensive glossary of important terms.

The program comes with a Help feature that can be accessed both on screen and printed from an Acrobat Adobe file. I think of myself as a willing but average technology user. I did not find this Help feature adequate or particularly helpful. It was especially inadequate in providing instructions for creating a file and for transferring material to existing PowerPoint files. Though it claims to present a “tutorial,” the “tutorial” does not provide first-time users with all the necessary and significant steps for setting up a new file or transferring material to existing files. On my first attempt I got to a certain point but could go no further without further input. Moreover, the Help text usefully attempts instructions for both Windows and Mac users, but it is not consistent in following through on each system. This Help feature could benefit from a significant revision with more specific guidelines and consistency that walk first-time users through carefully thought-out steps appropriate to each operating system. The CD offers a Technical Support contact, either by “snail mail” or by e-mail, but not by telephone. Once the initial mysteries had been revealed to me, though, I have found using the program to be quite straightforward.

The program can be used on Windows and Macintosh systems. The former requires Windows 2000, the latter System 9.x. Both need a 800 x 600 resolution monitor and 440 Mz PowerPC processor. Obviously, a more powerful system will handle the extensive range of images more quickly.

This is a wonderful resource for scholars, clergy, and students that will enrich one’s own understanding of ancient sites from Greece and Turkey as well as function as a resource of significant and well-produced material for scholarly and pedagogical presentation.