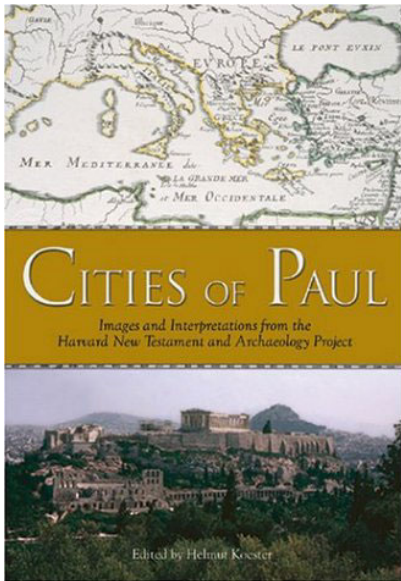


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Koester, Helmut, ed.

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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Koester, the John H. Morison Research Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School, has led a team project to provide archeological background for the cities of Paul and other sites in Greece and modern Turkey that were crucial to the development of early Christianity. Listed on the title page in addition to Koester are Charlabos Bakirtzis, Marianne P. Bonz, Steven Friesen, Holland L. Hendrix, John Lanzi, Daniel Schowalter, and Philip L. Sellew. This CD-ROM has nine hundred images of ancient architecture, coins, sculptures, inscriptions, maps, and floor plans. While the first Christian centuries are the center of attention, images and cultural information are included from the Hellenistic period as well.

The CD-ROM has built-in software that allows the user to set up a slide show by selecting images and moving them to a strip of holders that can be projected from the computer on which the CD is loaded. Alternatively, a user can export the images and use them in standard presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Apple Keynote. The editor and publisher have pastors and professors in mind, providing them with excellent data and the freedom to arrange the slides in accordance with the audience being addressed. In the process of viewing and choosing slides, the user can see the image alone, the accompanying text alone, or both together on the screen at the same time.

In addition to these high-quality images, however, what really marks the greatness of this CD are the copious explanatory notes that accompany each picture. Typically these notes identify the location, describe the image itself, give an interpretation of the importance of the image for Pauline studies or the history of early Christianity, and provide up-to-date bibliography.

The images are arranged by cities: Athens, Corinth, Isthmia, Olympia, Delphi (Temenos of Apollo), Thessaloniki, Philippi, Ephesus, and Pergamon. In each case, there are numerous subcategories. For Athens alone there are seventeen subcategories. In addition, there are a parade of indexes—General Index, Index of Ancient Authors, Index of Architecture, Index of Coins, Index of Inscriptions, Index of Maps, Index of Names, Index of Sculpture—plus abbreviations, bibliography, glossary, acknowledgements, and a list of contributors, far outnumbering those listed in the first paragraph above. Strangely, there is no index of biblical passages or other ancient literature cited in the discussions, and the indexes of architecture, coins, inscriptions, maps, and sculpture are not arranged alphabetically.

Koester's career has been marked by close attention to the development of ideas and the cultural and intellectual context within which Christianity emerged. This CD brings that effort to its apex as it uses state of the art software instead of outmoded cardboard and film slides. Professors of the New Testament or early Christianity will find this CD essential for teaching, and many a pastor will use it to bring new depth and insight to the message and effects of Pauline Christianity.