This is a useful little book that takes the reader to primary sources for background information related to Paul’s letters to the saints at Corinth.

It is divided into four parts...

Part 1 The Ancient Texts
Part 2 Paul in Corinth
Part 3 Archaeology
Part 4 Corinthian Bronze

The first section, “Part 1 The Ancient Texts,” makes up most of the book (145 pages) and offers excerpts from the writings of 33 ancient writers including Pausanias, Polystratus, Cicero, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Livy, Pliny the Elder, Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, Seutonius, Lucian, Dio Cassius, Philostratus, and others that describe some aspect of Corinthian life, history, or geography. For example, Murphy-O’Connor quotes Pausanias’ discussion of the Isthmian games that were hosted by the city of Corinth and were attended by many thousands. He quotes Seutonius to illustrate the use of tents when crowds from out of town visited a city in that era. Not only does this provide background for Paul’s mention of the games in 1 Corinthians 9:24, but it also sheds light on the choice made by Aquila and Priscila to relocate to Corinth when driven out of Rome. This city would have provided significant business opportunities given their profession. And of course, Paul would have found opportunity to work in the same trade there.

Murphy-O’Connor brings to our attention Plutarch’s remarks concerning the victor’s crown in the games, that at one time it was made of pine, and then later (in Paul’s time) of celery, before reverting to pine near Plutarch’s own time. Murphy-O’Connor calls attention to the withered celery crown that characterized the Isthmian games and highlights the contrast made by Paul: “Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable” (1 Corinthians 9:25).

Other excerpts from ancient writers paint a picture of Corinth as a city characterized by prostitution and quarreling, and it is easy to see in Paul’s first letter to the saints there that they were not immune to the cultural influences around them.

The second section, “Part 2 Paul in Corinth,” is devoted to examining the evidence for establishing the dates of Claudius’ edict and Gallio’s proconsulship, both of which, most especially the latter, are relevant to establishing the dates of Paul’s interactions with the church at Corinth. I can especially commend this section of the book inasmuch as Murphy-O’Connor’s conclusion concerning the chronology of Paul’s
travels in Acts 18-28, the dates of his visits to Corinth and return to Jerusalem, are in agreement with my own.

Parts 3, “Archaeology” takes up the topic of houses, temples, and shops, and how their dimensions and placement might be related to such things as saints assembling in a home and meals in pagan temples, both of which are of course, referenced in Paul’s first letter to the saints at Corinth.

Part 4, “Corinthian Bronze” is just what you would expect.

For anyone who is not content to take a commentator’s second or third hand remarks about the historical and cultural situation at Corinth, some of which may be accurate and others, not so much, “St. Paul’s Corinth” will be a useful little volume.
Some scholars believe that Paul visited Corinth for an intermediate "painful visit" (see 2 Corinthians 2:1) between the first and second epistles. After writing the second epistle, he stayed in Corinth for about three months[Acts 20:3] in the late winter, and there wrote his Epistle to the Romans.[56]. In St. Paul?s Corinth the evidence of thirty-three Greek and Latin authors is arranged and presented chronologically from the first century B.C.E. to the second century C.E. This third revised and expanded edition includes new textual and archaeological material based on continuing research on Corinth. The text of previous editions has been thoroughly revised in the interest of greater clarity and accuracy. The edition also includes updated maps and plans of the region. St. Paul?s Corinth is divided into four parts. Corinth at the time of Paul was not a Greek city but a Roman colony and only scant traces of the earlier Greek city have ever been found. Strabo, an early 1st century AD historian and geographer, records the desolation of ancient Corinth at the hand of the Roman general Leucius Mummius. The year was 146 BC. The Corinthians had unwisely rallied resistance to their Roman overlords and the city had suffered the ultimate penalty. I. what st. paul preached. "Christ crucified" â€“ i.e., not so much the sufferings of Christ on the Cross as the doctrines connected with the Cross and all the benefits which are secured to us by it. He preached â€“ 1. The dignity of Him who suffered. 2. His humiliation. 3. His willingness. 4. The shameful death of His death.