



Volume 59 | Issue 2

Article 24

2016

Blumell and Wayment's "Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, documents, and sources" (Book Review)

Joseph Baumstarck Jr.
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit [//www.acl.org/](http://www.acl.org/)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl>



Part of the [Ancient History, Greek and Roman through Late Antiquity Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Baumstarck, Joseph Jr. (2016) "Blumell and Wayment's "Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, documents, and sources" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 59: Iss. 2, Article 24.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.1109>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

highly recommended for school and public libraries serving a young adult audience. Academic libraries may find it a helpful resource especially for degrees in education and possibly as a resource for public speakers.

Reviewer

Leslie R. Starasta, Lincoln Christian University

Blumell, L.H., & Wayment, T.A. (Eds.). (2015). *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, documents, and sources*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press. 756 pp. \$89.95. ISBN 9781602585393

Christian Oxyrhynchus is an edited collection of archaeological fragments discovered while working the ancient site of Oxyrhynchus (Pemje) in upper Egypt. Oxyrhynchus is a well-established archaeological site which has had several seasons of intense effort by several teams of archaeologists from several academic centers. The archaeological work and translation efforts of the works discovered are published in many different journals with *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri (P.Oxy.)* and *Papiri della Societa Italiana (PSI)* being the major ones. An online site devoted to this work is: <http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/>. The major contribution of Blumell and Wayment is assembling the 162 fragments discovered at Oxyrhynchus which deal with Christianity in one volume and compiling entries for each fragment listing the relevant publications which address that item regardless of the source in which it is found. In this they have done scholars of early Christianity a tremendous favor. Each entry also includes a brief commentary which gives approximate dates for the fragment, an original language reconstruction of the fragment, and relevant physical details about it. They also note important controversies regarding the fragment and attempt to locate that particular fragment within the much larger body of scholarship on its content.

Few of the fragments discussed have any large impact on the understanding of Christianity today, but the collection as a whole provides a snapshot of early Christianity. Much as the Qumran discovery provides a picture of religious activity in one location over a brief period of time, these discoveries provide a glimpse at what Coptic Christianity looked like in a moderately important part of upper Egypt in the second to the fourth century.

As the editors note: “6000 documentary texts and just over 3000 literary fragments” had been published from Oxyrhynchus at the time they completed this book (6). Obviously the 162 fragments published in this book are just a small portion of these almost 10,000 items which give a much more complete understanding of life at Oxyrhynchus during this period. These 162 fragments are important for giving some idea of the relevance of Christianity to this region at this time, allowing us to partially

reconstruct the church structure during this time, identifying important characters of Christianity in Oxyrhynchus, understanding some of the sociopolitical issues faced by early Coptic Christians of this region, and giving us an idea of the things which interested the Christian community during the second to the fourth century in Oxyrhynchus.

Although both editors are faculty from Brigham Young University there is no denominational bias in this work which is academically sound and serves as a very valuable function for all scholars of early Christianity. As with any work like this it will suffer from a shorter useful life because research on Oxyrhynchus is ongoing and additional fragments are almost certainly going to be found which will make *The Christian Oxyrhynchus* incomplete. Hopefully further editions can remedy this problem. The reasonable price makes this a good investment regardless. The failure of the editors to include LXX material from Oxyrhynchus will make this less useful to some scholars. Lack of English translations for the 52 New Testament fragments is another negative which limits the usefulness of this work to more academic scholars or those with some background in Greek who can easily translate these for themselves. A lack of reproductions of the actual fragment in some form is another negative, although these can readily be found in resources such as those listed above.

Overall this is a highly valuable work for scholars of early Christianity. Libraries serving graduate level students and faculty working with early Christianity, Coptic Christianity, or upper Egypt should definitely have a copy of *Christian Oxyrhynchus*.

Reviewer

Joseph Baumstarck, Jr., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Bradley, J. A., & Muller, R. A. (2016). *Church history: An introduction to research methods and resources, second edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing. 214 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 9780802874054

Church History: An Introduction to Research Methods and Resources is a reference book which offers guidelines to the graduate student researching church history. This new edition is a much updated version of the 1995 first edition, which takes into account the latest information on digitized primary source materials and internet research. Chapters 1 and 2 deal with the theory behind the study of history, church history in particular, providing some context for the student's research. Chapters 3 through 6 lead the student through the entire research project, including choosing and narrowing a topic, researching and evaluating different types of sources, writing research papers, monographs and articles, and preparing lectures. The last third of the book is a bibliography broken down by time period and an appendix of internet