

Terry Wilfong

Terry Wilfong spent his seventh year as Assistant Archivist for the Oriental Institute Research Archives working on a variety of bibliographical projects. In addition to being Assistant Editor of the ongoing *Oriental Institute Research Archives Acquisitions List*, Wilfong contributed the bibliography *Women in the Ancient Near East: A Select Bibliography of Recent Sources*, to the series Research Archives Bibliographic and Informational Documents. In collaboration with Charles Jones, Research Archivist, Wilfong has begun to prepare *Materials for a History of the Human Body in the Ancient Near East*, a collection of short essays, bibliographies, and indices on the little-studied subject of ancient Near Eastern conceptions and constructs of the body. Other in-progress bibliographical projects include an expanded version of *Women in the Ancient Near East*, a bibliography of resources for Coptic studies in the Research Archives, and a bibliography and critical discussion of ‘outsider’ scholarship on the ancient Near East, with a catalogue of the Research Archives’ holdings of this material.

Wilfong continued work on his Ph.D. dissertation, “The Social and Economic Roles of Women in Western Thebes During the Seventh and Eighth Centuries CE,” an examination of women’s lives in the Coptic documentary texts and archaeological material from the Coptic town of Jême, which was excavated by the Oriental Institute during its clearance of the pharaonic temple at Medinet Habu. He had the opportunity to examine the site of Jême when he went to Egypt in January, for his second season with the survey of the Byzantine gold-mining camp at Bir Umm Fawakhir under the direction of Carol Meyer.

Wilfong gave a paper on the Oriental Institute Museum’s Coptic texts at the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies in Washington, D.C. in September. This gave him an opportunity to discuss his own work on the texts as well as bring the collection to the attention of the scholarly community. Shortly thereafter, Wilfong’s publication of some Coptic and Greek texts from the Oriental Institute Museum appeared in *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*. Wilfong also gave a paper at the 18th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference in Urbana-Champaign about Coptic documentary evidence for the manufacture of pottery. In April, Wilfong was an invited speaker at a conference to inaugurate the University of Warwick’s Centre for East Roman Studies—“Constantine and the Birth of the Christian West”—where he gave a paper on Coptic sources for the Byzantine emperor Constantine the Great. Though mostly legendary and not historical, the Coptic texts about Constantine show how Coptic authors seemed to be displacing their own anxieties about potential invasions of Egypt onto a mythicized

Constantine figure. Wilfong has also continued his work on gender and sexuality in Late Antique Egypt. In April he gave a paper for the University of Chicago's Ancient Societies Workshop on "Neglected Evidence for the Regulation of Women's Sexuality in Late Antique Egypt"; this paper included a discussion of an extraordinary Coptic text that records two cases of the punishment of sexual activity between women—making it one of the rare attestations of lesbian activity from early Christian Egypt.
