

Donald Whitcomb

In large measure this has been the year of Iran. With the assistance of Abbas Alizadeh, **Donald Whitcomb** wrote a proposal to the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization for archaeological investigation of the site of Jundi Shapur. This site was originally part of Robert Adams' Khuzestan survey and in the course of studying sherds in the Oriental Institute collections a rather nice figurine was found (*News & Notes* 179 [2003]: 6–7). A more important discovery was found during the study of aerial photographs and CORONA images, that these urban ruins mask an older circular city (see *Oriental Institute 2002–2003 Annual Report* [Chicago, 2003], p. 84). Although the original hopes for a joint project in the spring were disappointed because of visa problems, two months later Whitcomb received an invitation to visit Iran to see Jundi Shapur and several other sites, again with the good offices of Alizadeh.

An additional aspect of Iran was the study of the citadel of Kerman, Qal'eh Dukhtar; preparation for this visit was enhanced through the generosity of Lisa Golombek of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, who has intensively studied the history and monuments of Kerman. This trip led to visits to Bam and the exciting discoveries of Yusuf Majidzadeh (an old colleague from the Oriental Institute) at Konar Sandal, and not the least a visit to the excavations of Shahr-i Daqianus, old Jiroft in the Middle Islamic period. Finally, Whitcomb visited Persepolis and Shiraz, his home of some thirty years ago, well before his growing interest in Islamic archaeology would lead to using Istakhr, the early Islamic city next to Persepolis, in his dissertation.

Whitcomb participated in a conference in Aleppo on Islamic military architecture in September. This form of architecture is not his favorite subject but offered an opportunity to explore the design of early Islamic cities and their ambivalent relationship to walls and fortifications. This conference provided an occasion to visit Hadir Qinnasrin and pursue plans for another season of excavations at that site. The contexts for Qinnasrin were explored in another conference nine months later, held in the beautiful Danish Institute in Damascus, where Whitcomb spoke on al-Muqaddasi's account of northern Syria and archaeological discoveries.

The walls of Ayla led to another conference, the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Atlanta, where Whitcomb presented a paper on the results from Aqaba in relation to those of Eilat and other archaeological discoveries in the Wadi Arabah. This was followed in December with a trip to Leiden for the seventh symposium on Late Antiquity and Early Islam, which focused on identity and material culture. Whitcomb presented his discovery of Sinnabra, the early Islamic identity of Khirbet al-Karak, which he announced in the bulletin, *al-Ussur al-Wusta*. And most recently, these various strands of Islamic sites and their contexts found an expression in a conference in the University of Cambridge on "The Islamic City and its Parts."

Teaching was somewhat interrupted with the Iranian adventure, though several students took a seminar on Iran and Iraq offered in the fall. One point of pride is the second Ph.D. dissertation in Islamic Archaeology; in June, Tasha Vorderstrasse successfully defended her study of al-Mina, the port of Antioch. Though she can never be replaced, we are happy to see several new students in Islamic archaeology beginning the program this fall.