

Fred M. Donner

Fred M. Donner spent much of the 2010–2011 academic year immersed in his duties as director of the University’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES). After a tumultuous year in 2009–2010, this year was blissfully calm and CMES’s many activities — including hosting numerous visiting lecturers, sponsoring workshops and conferences, mounting public education activities, and supervising CMES’s burgeoning MA program — came off smoothly, thanks especially to the efforts of CMES’s dedicated staff (Dr. Paul Walker, Dr. Thomas Ma-

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guire, Traci Lombre, and Alexander Barna). A number of CMES's events were co-sponsored by the Oriental Institute.

Of special interest to Donner was a two-day conference held in mid-June on Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians in the Umayyad State that he and Professor Antoine Borrut (University of Maryland, College Park) organized. Ten invited participants and ten commentators, along with many visitors, convened for stimulating discussions focused on the role members of these non-Muslim communities played in the operation of the Umayyad state (660–750 CE). This event received major funding from the Franke Institute for Humanities and CMES, as well as greatly appreciated co-sponsorship and funding from the Oriental Institute, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Chicago Center for Jewish Studies, the Divinity School, and the University of Maryland Department of History. It is hoped that the papers will be published as a collected volume sometime in 2012.

Donner gave many lectures during the year. In July 2010 he participated in the third World Conference of Middle Eastern Studies, held in Barcelona, Spain, as part of a series of panels on ancient empires, presenting a paper on "An Empire in Crystallization: The Umayyads." At the Middle East Studies Association conference in November, he presented a paper entitled "Was Marwan ibn al-Hakam the First Real Muslim?" He also gave numerous presentations related to the theme of his recent book, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam*, published in spring 2010 by Harvard University Press; this included talks at the Chicago Humanities Festival and at Chicago Alumni Day, and at York University in Toronto, the Noor Foundation in Toronto, Georgetown University, George Mason University, the University of Maryland, Ohio State University, and the University of Southern California. Less directly related to his own research, he was asked to deliver a plenary address at the annual conference of the American Oriental Society, on its theme of "Heritage." His talk was entitled "Heritage, Legacies, and Collectibles" and discussed how these concepts relate to the development of Islamic tradition.

Publications submitted during the year include the full version of his paper "Was Marwan ibn al-Hakam the First Real Muslim?," for a volume to be edited by Sarah Savant (Aga Khan University) on Genealogies and History, and "A Typology of Eschatological Concepts," submitted for a volume entitled *Roads to Paradise: Eschatology in the Islamic Tradition*, to be edited by Sebastian Günther (University of Göttingen) and Todd Lawson (University of Toronto). He is now at work on a very early Islamic papyrus found in the Oriental Institute collection.
