

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

Donald Whitcomb

While this last year did not appear to be an optimal time for fieldwork, **Donald Whitcomb** seemed to travel more than usual to various meetings. He attended the Seminar for Arabian Studies in London in July. Then in the fall, he gave a lecture at the first symposium of Shah Nematollah Vali sufi order in San José. In November, he went to Ann Arbor for a conference on *Communities and Commodities: Western India and the Indian Ocean (11th–15th Centuries)*; his talk was on the Sheikh's house at Quseir al-Qadim. Directly after that, he flew to Berlin, where he presented a paper on "Methodological difference in archaeology and history: the example of Qusayr/Egypt."

Back in Chicago, Don chaired a panel on Architecture and Society at *Middle East History and Theory Conference* and presented a paper at the workshop on "Archaeology and History" at the *Oriental Institute Workshop on Landscape Archaeology*. Finally, the major activity of the spring was organizing the first Advanced Seminar at the Oriental Institute, entitled *Changing Social Identity with the Spread of Islam: Texts and Archaeology*. This seminar provided a fascinating comparative perspective on this growing discipline, one which will have more fieldwork in the near future (see separate report, *Islamic Archaeology*).

Don gave two lectures for the 2002 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) seminar on *Early Islamic States*, one on the Dome of the Rock and the other on the trade of Aqaba. The latter subject was also presented at the MacDonald Institute of Archaeology in Cambridge University. Another lecture was given to the Cardiff Archaeology Research Seminar, advertised as "Quseidr al-Qadm," apparently a Welsh spelling of the archaeological site. These two venues were facilitated by visits to serve as examiner for the viva (dissertation defense) of two Islamic archaeologists, Alison Gascoigne and Andrew Petersen. Closer to home, Tracy Hoffman successfully defended her thesis and became the Oriental Institute's first Ph.D. in Islamic Archaeology. Following in her footsteps, Katherine Strange Burke and Choukri Heddouchi (both of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) and Ian Straughn (Anthropology) presented successful proposals for dissertation research in the same field of studies.

The opening of the new Persian Gallery in the Oriental Institute Museum provided a fine attraction for an international group of journalists. This group was visiting the United States, and Chicago, as part of the Silk Road Project, and it was a privilege to assist the museum office in guiding them through this hall. This same gallery provided the backdrop for an Oriental Institute conference on ancient Iran, in which Don gave a paper called "Mythology and Heritage: The Meanings of Persepolis."
