

### **Fred M. Donner**

**Fred M. Donner** was engaged in his usual teaching duties in 2006/2007, including a larger-than-ever survey of early Islamic history in the fall, "Introduction to the Middle East" in the spring,

and at various times a seminar on the “High Caliphate,” a course reading passages from the medieval Arabic historian al-Baladhuri’s massive *Ansab al-ashraf*, a research seminar in early Islamic history, and several tutorials on Islamic law. He also served on sixteen dissertation committees and on three MA thesis committees.

Donner was asked to evaluate colleagues for appointment, promotion, and/or tenure at the University of Pennsylvania, Ohio State University, and University of California at Irvine and was invited to serve as external examiner for dissertation defenses at Princeton and the Sorbonne. He was also asked by the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, to evaluate the application of a French colleague to become “Director of Research.” He served as grant reviewer for the National Humanities Center (Research Triangle Park, North Carolina) and the American Center for Oriental Research (Amman, Jordan).

Donner delivered lectures on Islam’s origins for audiences of the general public at the University’s Humanities Open House (October), the German Cultural Club (Chicago, February), the Missouri Valley History Conference (Omaha, Nebraska, March), and Washington University in St. Louis (March). In February, he gave more specialized presentations on his research on Islam’s origins to seminars at the Sorbonne and at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris.

As usual, he continued to review manuscripts for various professional journals, including *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, and for *Law and History Review*. He also continued to serve as editor of *Al-‘Usur al-Wusta: The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists*, which appears semi-annually.

During the year, Donner submitted to the editors the draft translation of his section of the *History of al-Ya‘qubi*, a collective project to translate the works of this important ninth-century historian and geographer. He also submitted his introduction, bibliography, and other materials required for a volume of reprinted articles by various authors which he selected on the topic *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State* — to appear as volume five in the series entitled *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, published by Ashgate. He also submitted two articles, one entitled “‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, ‘Amr ibn al-‘As, and the Muslim Invasion of Egypt,” for the festschrift of a distinguished colleague, and “Umayyad Efforts at Legitimation: the Umayyads’ Silent Heritage,” to appear in *Umayyad Legacies/Heritages Omeyyades*, edited by A. Borrut and P. M. Cobb (forthcoming with E. J. Brill, Leiden).

At long last, he has completed the draft of his monograph, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam*, and is now contacting publishers to place the work, intended for the general reader and introductory college classroom.

Two articles appeared in print during the year: “Historical Context,” in *Cambridge Companion to the Qur’an*, edited by J. D. McAuliffe, pp. 23–39; and “Fight for God — But Do So With Kindness,” in *War and Peace in the Ancient World*, edited by K. A. Raaflaub, pp. 297–311 (Blackwell).

Donner is continuing with his research on early Islamic history, particularly the way the early community of Believers gradually changed its self-definition and grew into what we now recognize as the Muslim community, during the first century or so following the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632 C.E. He has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2007/2008 to pursue research on this theme on the basis of early Arabic papyri and looks forward to spending much of his time next year at the great papyrus repositories in Europe (particularly those of Paris, Vienna, and Heidelberg).