PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Department of History)

Wesley Thiessen

1989 Institute of Holy Land Studies MA
1986 Bethel University BA

“The Formation of the Mudawwana”

Tuesday, April 22, 2014
11:00am
University Centre, A207a

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Andrew Rippin, Department of History, UVic (Supervisor)
Dr. Martin Bunton, Department of History, UVic (Member)
Dr. Marcus Milwright, Department of History in Art, UVic
(Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Joseph E. Lowry, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Angela Downey, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic
Abstract

The Mudawwana is a work which is traditionally credited to Sahnūn, a legal jurist from Kairouan, North Africa in the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th century. It is one of the major legal texts at the foundation of the Mālikī madhhab named after Mālik b. Anas. The text is a large compendium of hypothetical scenarios requiring resolution. The style of the text is masāʾil, i.e. question-and-answer, between a disciple and his teacher. This research examines ancient manuscripts, commentaries and modern editions of the Mudawwana for a comparative analysis in attempting to understand the way in which the text was formed. The text will be examined in the areas of structure, content and presentation. The roles and influences of those responsible for the development of the text will be examined using definitions set out by Sebastian Günther. Discrepancies and variances amongst the manuscripts and modern editions, along with insights gleaned from the commentaries will yield a formative process in the development of the text over a period of centuries. It will be shown that although much of the content of the text was likely set by the creator of the text, various influences through the centuries by personalities and individuals fulfilling certain roles have impacted the structure and presentation of the text. The various roles in the creation of the text will be examined including author, writer, scribe, student, transmitter and editor. The influences of these various roles have developed the text further, therefore distancing it from the intentions of the creator of the original text. Structural changes were most prominent in the medieval period with kitābs within the text being bound in kurrāsas, one or more to a group. In the modern period, these nearly one hundred kitābs were then bound in multi-volume hardcover sets providing a very new presentation form for the text. Additionally, a new name was given with the publication of the first modern edition in 1323/1905, al-Mudawwana al-kubrā. The textual changes will be examined
in light of these roles in order to better understand how the text has been modified and formed over the centuries. Results will demonstrate that the text of the Mudawwana has undergone three primary periods of development: formative, classical and renaissance. The roles and personalities have impacted its development in content, structure and presentation, with the latter two having been more significantly affected during its classical and renaissance stages.

**Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships**

2010 - 2014 – Graduate Award, University of Victoria

**Presentations**


2. **Thiessen, Wesley A.** “‘I said... He said’: Ninth Century Legal Conversations from North Africa - Authority Recognition and Practice in Saḥnūn’s al-Mudawwana al-kubra” The Middle East and Islamic Consortium of British Columbia, 5th Annual Student Conference, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. March 2012. (oral)

3. **Thiessen, Wesley A.** “The Beauty of the Word: Calligraphy and ornamentation analysis towards an understanding of provenance--the Kitāb al-Diryāq: A twelfth century Arabic manuscript”History and Classics Graduate Student Association Graduate Conference - The Middle Ground: Transdisciplinary Approaches to the Past & Present, Edmonton, AB, Canada., Mar. 2011.(oral)
