Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

MOHAMMAD ALSUBAIE

“The Miqat of al-Juhfa: A Historical and Archaeological Study”

Department of Art History and Visual Studies

Tuesday, June 26th, 2018
8:30 a.m.
Clearihue Building
Room B017

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Marcus Milwright, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Evanthia Baboula, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, UVic (Member)
Dr. Brendan Burke, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Alison Gascoigne, Faculty of Humanities, University of Southampton

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Carolyn Crippen, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The Mīqāt of al-Juhfa is located in the west of Saudi Arabia about 187 km northwest of the Holy City of Mecca. Al-Juhfa is one of the five fixed places called Mawāqīt, or entry stations to the pilgrimage (Hajj). These Mawāqīt were designated during the early Islamic period for any pilgrim comes through them with the intention of Hajj. During the early Abbasid period, al-Juhfa was the largest occupied Mīqāt in the Islamic world.

This study focuses primarily on historical and archaeological aspects of the Mīqāt of al-Juhfa during the early Islamic period. To illustrate these aspects, the study analyzed many primary sources that mention al-Juhfa in order to reconstruct the historical and cultural development of the site and to establish the extent to which it functions as an urban center. The study benefited from important information provided by these sources in this respect, such as the chronology of the site, its strategic location, topographical features, the nature of the landscape at different times, the function of specific objects, human activities that took place at the site, and factors that led to its prosperity and decline.

The study also undertook a fieldwork at al-Juhfa site—primarily archaeological survey and excavation. This fieldwork enabled us to test the results of the textual analysis and to reveal other characteristics of the site (such as its cultural role, urban elements, planning and defences, architectural functions, building technique, building material, and other features). Moreover, the study analyzed both the formal and technical qualities of all archaeological discoveries on the site, comparing them with their analogues at other early Islamic sites in the Middle East.

The study derived many results that clearly indicate the great importance of al-Juhfa as an urban center characterized by several urban functions during the early Abbasid period in the late of 8th century until its importance began to decline gradually between the second half of 11th century and the first half of 12th century. This chronology is supported by both written sources and the archaeological evidence. Several architectural elements and a collection of archaeological finds of different pieces of pottery, ceramic, glass, worked stone, and metal were discovered at al-Juhfa. These discoveries provide us with more information about the extent of mutual influence and active interaction between various cultures during pre-Islamic period as well as the high cultural and commercial level achieved by al-Juhfa and the relationship it had with other Islamic sites in the Middle East.