Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BA (McGill University, 2014)

“Towards a Historical Ecology of Halibut Fishing on the Northwest Coast”

Department of Anthropology

Thursday, August 23rd, 2018
10:00 a.m.
Clearihue Building
Room B017

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Iain McKechnie, Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Quentin Mackie, Department of Anthropology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Loren McClenachan, Department of Environmental Studies, Colby College

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. George Tzanetakis, Department of Computer Science, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This thesis examines the enduring history of human interactions with Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) on the Northwest Coast of North America, through the framework of historical ecology, drawing on multiple lines of inference and diverse sources of archaeological, historical, and contemporary data. Morphometric analysis of traditional halibut fishing equipment, combined with analysis of halibut mouth structure, illuminates how this technology mediates the interactions between fishers and fish, and provides insight into the size of halibut targeted. Calculation of regression relationships to estimate halibut length from archaeological elements, and application of this method to nine archaeological sites, allows estimation of a pre-industrial Pacific halibut size baseline. Comparison of these data with industrially harvested size distributions from different time periods reveals significant differences between pre and post-industrially harvested populations. Historical written accounts, interviews with knowledgeable individuals, and experimental archaeology allow for further investigation into past halibut fishing practices.