

CONTENTS

List of Figures	xi
List of Plates	xiv
List of Tables	xvi
Abstract	xviii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Aims	1
1.3 Summary	2
2 Archaeological Background	3
2.1 Introduction	3
2.2 Location	3
2.3 Environment	3
2.3.1 Modern Climate and Environment	3
2.3.2 Past Climate and Environment	4
2.4 Archaeological Background	5
2.4.1 Mesolithic Scotland	5
2.4.2 Mesolithic Orkney	5
2.4.3 A General Chronology of Neolithic Orkney	5
2.4.4 Settlement and Domestic Sites of Neolithic Orkney	6
2.4.4.1 Settlement in the Earlier Neolithic	6
2.4.4.2 Settlement in the Later Neolithic	6
2.4.5 Megalithic Tombs of Orkney	8
2.4.5.1 Background	8
2.4.5.2 Orkney-Cromarty-Type Tombs	9
2.4.5.3 Maeshowe-Type Tombs	10
2.4.5.4 Artefacts and Other Structures from the Orcadian Tombs	12
2.4.5.4a Artefacts	12
2.4.5.4b Faunal Remains	12
2.4.5.4c Fire	13
2.4.5.5 Tomb Distribution and Siting	13
2.4.5.6 The End of the Tombs?	13
2.4.6 Ritual Monuments	14
2.4.7 Art	15
2.4.8 Interpretations	15
2.5 Summary	16
3 Understanding Death in Neolithic Orkney: Current Themes	17
3.1 Introduction	17
3.2 The Significance of Death in the Archaeological Record	17
3.3 The Treatment of the Dead in Neolithic Orkney	17
3.3.1 Inhumation, Primary Burial and Direct Interment	17
3.3.2 Excarnation	18
3.3.3 Secondary Burial	19
3.3.4 Manipulation, Curation and Movement	20
3.3.5 The Use of Fire	21
3.3.6 A Complex Combination	21
3.3.7 Non-megalithic Locations	22
3.4 Ancestors and Individuals – the Symbolism of the Megaliths	22
3.4.1 Introduction	22
3.4.2 Critiques of the Ancestor Hypothesis	23
3.4.3 Ancestors and the Orcadian Megaliths	23
3.5 Orkney's Neolithic Funerary Rites in the Wider British and Irish Context	24
3.6 Conclusion	26

4 Taphonomy	27
4.1 Introduction	27
4.1.1 Chapter Outline	27
4.1.2 Introduction to Taphonomy	27
4.2 Decay and Disarticulation of the Body	28
4.2.1 The Onset of Decay	28
4.2.2 Putrefaction	29
4.2.3 Factors Influencing the Rate of Soft Tissue Decay	30
4.2.4 Rate of Decay for Children	30
4.2.5 Skeletal Disarticulation and Decay	30
4.3 Recognising ‘Normal’ Patterns of Preservation	31
4.4 Traumatic Taphonomic Variables	32
4.4.1 Fracturing in Bone	32
4.4.1.1 Compression	33
4.4.1.2 Tension	33
4.4.1.3 Twisting or Torsion	33
4.4.1.4 Bending	33
4.4.1.5 Shearing	33
4.4.2 Peri-mortem or Post-mortem? The Relative Timing of Fractures	34
4.4.3 The Intentional Modification of Human Remains	35
4.4.3.1 Cut Marks	35
4.4.3.2 Scrape Marks	35
4.4.3.3 Chop Marks	35
4.4.3.4 Percussion Pits	35
4.4.3.5 Trepanation	35
4.4.3.6 Interpersonal Violence	36
4.4.5 The Effects of Burning	36
4.4.5.1 Colour Change Due to Thermal Application	37
4.4.5.2 Thermal Fragmentation	37
4.4.5.3 Surficial Patterning	37
4.4.6 Animal Modification	38
4.4.7 Water as a Taphonomic Agent	39
4.4.8 Weathering	39
4.4.9 Insects	40
4.4.10 Bone Colour	40
4.4.11 Plant Roots	40
4.4.12 Taphonomic Signatures/Profiles	40
4.4.12.1 Taphonomic Profile for Cannibalism	40
4.4.12.2 Taphonomic Profile for Trampling	41
4.4.12.3 Taphonomic Profile for Excarnation and Secondary Burial	42
4.4.12.4 Taphonomic Profile of Successive Inhumation	43
4.4.13 Conclusion	43
5 Methods	44
5.1 Introduction	44
5.2 Selection of Material	44
5.3 Making Quanterness Accessible	45
5.4 The Zonation Method	46
5.5 Practical Analysis	46
5.6 Taphonomic Features Recorded	46
5.6.1 Skeletal Element Identification	47
5.6.2 Identification of Side	47
5.6.3 Zones	47
5.6.4 Weathering Stage	47
5.6.5 Fracture Type	47
5.6.6 Colour	49
5.6.7 Surface Features	49
5.6.8 Trauma	50
5.6.9 Burning	50
5.6.10 Fragment Size	50

5.6.11 Refitting	51
5.7 The Living Population - Demographic Information	51
5.7.1 Sex	51
5.7.2 Age Assessment	51
5.7.3 Pathology	51
5.8 Quantification of the Data	51
5.8.1 NISP and MNI	52
5.8.2 MNE and SER	52
5.9 Comparative Analysis	53
5.10 Making Use of the Zones	53
5.11 Level of Fragmentation	54
5.12 Dating of Quanterness Human Remains	54
5.13 The Faunal Remains from Quanterness	54
5.14 Additional Investigative Techniques	56
5.14.1 Scanning Electron Microscope Analysis	56
5.14.2 X-Ray	56
5.14.3 Experimental Work	56
5.15 Statistical Analysis	56
5.16 Conclusion	56
6 Sites	57
6.1 Introduction	57
6.2 Quanterness, Mainland	57
6.2.1 Introduction	57
6.2.2 The Cairn	58
6.2.3 The Chamber Deposits	59
6.2.4 Artefacts	59
6.2.5 The Human Remains	59
6.2.6 The Faunal Remains	60
6.2.7 Chronology	60
6.2.8 Summary	61
6.3 Quoyness, Sanday	61
6.3.1 Introduction	61
6.3.2 The Cairn	61
6.3.3 The Platform	61
6.3.4 The Finds	61
6.3.5 The Human Remains	62
6.3.6 Dating	63
6.3.7 Summary	63
6.4 Point of Cott, Westray	63
6.4.1 Introduction	63
6.4.2 The Cairn	63
6.4.3 The Finds	65
6.4.4 Human Remains	65
6.4.5 Chronology	66
6.4.6 The Mortuary Rite	66
6.4.7 Summary	66
6.5 Pierowall Quarry	66
6.5.1 Introduction	66
6.5.2 The Cairn	66
6.5.3 The Finds	67
6.5.4 Human Remains	67
6.5.5 Animal Bone	67
6.5.6 Dating	68
6.5.7 Summary	68
6.6 Isbister, South Ronaldsay	68
6.6.1 Introduction	68
6.6.2 The Cairn Exterior	68
6.6.3 The Cairn Interior	68
6.6.4 The Human Remains	69

6.6.5 Faunal Remains	70
6.6.6 Artefacts	70
6.6.7 Chronology	70
6.6.8 Summary	70
6.7 Cuween Hill	71
6.7.1 Introduction	71
6.7.2 The Cairn	71
6.7.3 Artefacts	71
6.7.4 Human Remains	71
6.7.5 Dating	72
6.7.6 Summary	72
6.8 Conclusion	72
7 Results: Quantification and Representation of Skeletal Remains	73
7.1 Introduction	73
7.2 Quantifying the Material	73
7.2.1 Quanterness NISP and Minimum Number of Individuals	73
7.2.2 Quoyness NISP and Minimum Number of Individuals	76
7.2.3 Point of Cott NISP and Minimum Number of Individuals	76
7.2.4 Pierowall Quarry NISP and Minimum Number of Individuals	77
7.2.5 Isbister NISP and Minimum Number of Individuals	77
7.2.6 Cuween Hill NISP and Minimum Number of Individuals	78
7.2.7 Summary	78
7.3 Skeletal Element Representation (SER)	79
7.3.1 Quanterness Skeletal Element Representation	79
7.3.2 Quoyness Skeletal Element Representation	80
7.3.3 Point of Cott Skeletal Element Representation	81
7.3.4 Pierowall Quarry Skeletal Element Representation	82
7.3.5 Cuween Hill Skeletal Element Representation	83
7.4 Comparative Skeletal Representation	83
7.4.1 Comparison of General Skeletal Element Representation between Orcadian Sites	84
7.4.2 Comparison of General Skeletal Element Representation between Orcadian Sites and Medieval Sites	88
7.4.3 Comparison of General Skeletal Element Representation between Orcadian Sites and Irish Sites	88
7.4.4 Statistical Analysis	88
7.4.5 Summary	93
7.5 Representation of Each Element by Zone for All Sites	93
7.5.1 Crania (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	93
7.5.2 Mandible (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	95
7.5.3 Scapula (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	95
7.5.4 Humerus (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	96
7.5.5 Radius (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	96
7.5.6 Ulna (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	97
7.5.7 Pelvis (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	97
7.5.8 Femur (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	97
7.5.9 Tibia (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	99
7.5.10 Fibula (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	99
7.5.11 Sternum (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	100
7.5.12 Patella (Zones Shown in Appendix 2)	100
7.5.13 Other Skeletal Elements	100
7.6. Summary	101
7.7 Conclusions	101
8 Results: Taphonomic Variables	102
8.1 Introduction	102
8.2 Weathering	102
8.2.1 Quanterness	102
8.2.2 Quoyness	106
8.2.3 Point of Cott	106

8.2.4 Pierowall Quarry	108
8.2.5 Cuween	108
8.2.6 Isbister	108
8.2.7 Comparison of the main sites	109
8.2.8 Summary	110
8.3 Burning	110
8.3.1 Summary	112
8.4 Fragmentation	113
8.4.1 Comparison of MNE to NISP	113
8.4.2 Fragment Size for All Sites	113
8.4.3 Summary	113
8.5 Fractures	116
8.5.1 Quanterness	116
8.5.2 Quoyness	118
8.5.3 Point of Cott	118
8.5.4 Pierowall Quarry	118
8.5.5 Isbister	118
8.5.6 Summary	118
8.6 Trauma	119
8.6.1 Quanterness	119
8.6.1.1 Percussion Pits	121
8.6.1.2 Cut Marks	124
8.6.1.3 Linear Marks	128
8.6.1.4 Chop Marks	129
8.6.1.5 Scrape Marks	133
8.6.1.6 Damage by Animals	134
8.6.1.6a Gnaw Marks	134
8.6.1.6b Punctures and Crushing	138
8.6.1.7 Other Modification	139
8.6.1.7a Drill Holes	139
8.6.1.7b Possible Carved Bone - 'Trefoil'	142
8.6.1.8 Summary	143
8.6.2 Quoyness	144
8.6.2.1 Incised Marks	144
8.6.2.2 Chop Marks	149
8.6.2.3 Impact Scars	151
8.6.2.4 Punctures and Crushing	152
8.6.2.5 Summary	152
8.6.3 Point of Cott	153
8.6.3.1 Summary	154
8.6.4 Pierowall Quarry	155
8.6.4.1 Summary	155
8.6.5 Isbister	157
8.6.5.1 Percussion Pit	157
8.6.5.2 Incised Mark	157
8.6.5.3 Animal Damage	157
8.6.5.4 Other Features	158
8.6.5.5 Summary	158
8.6.6 Cuween Hill	160
8.6.6.1 Summary	160
8.7 Chapter Summary	163
9 Results: Faunal Remains at Quanterness	164
9.1 Introduction	164
9.2 Dating of the Faunal Remains	164
9.3 Taphonomic Analysis of Faunal Remains	167
9.4 Fragment Size	168
9.5 Weathering	168
9.6 Fracture Types	169
9.7 Trauma	169

9.7.1 Incised Marks	171
9.7.2 Scrape Marks	171
9.7.3 Helical Fracturing	171
9.8 Summary	174
10 Discussion	175
10.1 Introduction	175
10.2 Quantification	175
10.2.1 How Many in the Tomb? Minimum Number of Individuals	175
10.3 Whole Bodies or Partial Remains? Skeletal Element Representation	177
10.3.1 General Representation	178
10.3.2 Comparison of the Orcadian Skeletal Representation Profiles to Each Other	178
10.3.3 Comparison of Orcadian Sites and Medieval Sites	178
10.3.4 Comparison of Orcadian Sites to Irish Sites	179
10.3.5 Specific Elements of Note	179
10.3.5.1 The Significance of Crania at Quanterness	179
10.3.5.2 The Significance of Mandibles and Femora	179
10.3.6 Summary: Whole Bodies or Partial Remains? Skeletal Element Representation	181
10.4 The Significance of Representation According to Zonation/Preservation	181
10.5 Taphonomic Variables	182
10.5.1 Weathering	182
10.5.2 Evidence for the Presence of Burning	183
10.5.3 Fragmentation and Fracturing	184
10.5.4 Trauma	185
10.5.4.1 Quanterness	185
10.5.4.2 Quoyness	186
10.5.4.3 Point of Cott	187
10.5.4.4 Pierowall Quarry	187
10.5.4.5 Isbister	187
10.5.4.6 Cuween Hill	187
10.5.4.7 Trauma Summary	188
10.5.5 Deliberate Modification	188
10.6 Mortuary Rites – The Taphonomic Profile	189
10.6.1 Quanterness	189
10.6.2 Quoyness	190
10.6.3 Point of Cott	190
10.6.4 Pierowall Quarry	191
10.6.5 Cuween Hill	191
10.6.6 Mortuary Rites - Summary	191
10.7 Death is Only the Beginning – the Power of the Corpse	191
10.8 The Significance of the Faunal Remains from Quanterness	193
10.9 Breathing Life into Old Stone – the Significance of the Tombs	195
10.10 The Orcadian Megaliths in their Wider British and Irish Setting	196
10.11 Conclusions – a Sense of Order	197
10.12 Future Directions	198
Appendix	199
Bibliography	295