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On the fringe of Neolithic Europe: excavation of a chambered cairn on the Holm of Papa Westray, Orkney

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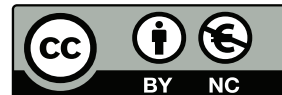
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APPENDIX

GEORGE PETRIE, SAS MSS 487(3), f.15v, HOUSED IN NMS

'Graves in Holm of Papa Westray opened 29/30 Sept 1854

In the Compartment A, fragments of Deer's horns, the inside porous portion of the horn of an ox (?) and the lower jawbone apparently of a Deer were found, together with fragments of a human skull. In B the crowns of 10 pairs of Deer's horns were found lying on and between layers of stones intermixed with Bones of the Ox, Deer, Sheep & the wing bone of a Swan or other large bird & the lower part of the bill of the Curlew with bones of various kinds of birds were also found in this Compartment. And underneath a layer of Deers horns and lying amongst others the front or brow of a human skull (no. 1) was discovered face downwards at a. A human skull (no. 2) or rather a considerable portion of one was lying on its side at b resting on a portion of a Deers horn. The face was towards the SW. In C at least the crowns of 2 pairs of Deers horns were found. At c the remains the remains of skeleton were found – the ribs in tolerable order, apparently not having been disturbed but no part of the skull was found except the lower jaw (no. 3) with excellent teeth. This jaw was large and of a peculiar formation. The remains of another skeleton, wanting the head, were found at d. Two skulls one of the (no. 4) in excellent preservation & having a small hole through the back part bas if perforated with a sharp pointed instrument, were lying or rather placed upright at e with the faces towards the East – another Skull was lying on its side at g with the face to the backs of the two last mentioned and apparently connected with a skeleton lying under the stones at h which have not yet been removed.'

GEORGE PETRIE, LARGE NOTEBOOK, SAS MS 545, 9–10, HOUSED IN NMS

'I was also present at the opening of a large tomb in the Holm of Papa Westray in 1854. The length of the tomb, as far as it was opened up, was 12 ft and the breadth about 6 feet. It was marked off into three compartments by upright flagstones projecting a short distance from the side walls into the tomb. One compartment was filled with stones and earth intermixed with animal remains amongst which were fragments of deer horns, a horn core of the ox and a jawbone of a boar. There were also portions of a human skull. In the next compartment the crown and other portions of 10 pairs of horns of the Red deer were found intermixed with bones of the ox, deer, sheep and horn cores of the goat, the wing bone of a swan or other large bird, the lower part of the bill of a curlew and bones of various other birds. And beneath a layer of deers horns and resting on others was part of a human skull with the face downwards. At a little distance part of another skull lay on its side on a piece of deers horn with the face towards the south-west. In the third compartment were fragments of at least two pairs of deers horns, the remains of two headless skeletons, two skulls placed vertically with the faces towards the east and another skull on its side with the face towards the back of the other two. The headless skeleton had apparently not been disturbed since their interment as the ribs and other bones were in the position they might be expected to occupy. This is worthy of notice, as it shows that the dismemberment of the bodies occurred before interment, and was therefore the result of design and not of a subsequent disturbance of the remains. The whole appearance indeed of the tomb and its contents was irreconcilable with the idea that it had been disturbed since the bodies and other relics were first placed in it.'

