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INTRODUCTION

The Oak Island mystery has fascinated me since I was a small boy, and first read of the incredible treasure at the bottom of the famed Money Pit (well, there’s supposed to be treasure at the bottom). Only recently, however, have I begun to attempt, and to thereby suggest, a possible interpretation of the Oak Island Tablet.

My source material has come, primarily, from the Internet, and has been utilised here via the Fair Use Act; I have given credit for same, insofar as possible. It should be noted, however, for the purposes of this document, that my analyses and my interpretations are entirely my own; they are not the work of others, nor were they provided to me by others. Furthermore, it should also be noted that all graphics appearing in this document are my own work; I drew them myself; they belong to me. There are numerous websites featuring photographs of the copy of the Oak Island tablet; I do not include them here, for copyright reasons.

I have not visited Oak Island in person, nor have I communicated with the owners. My interpretations have not been submitted to either a professional historian, archaeologist or surveyor, or indeed to anyone connected to Oak Island; in all honesty, I shouldn’t know where to start. There are a great many people who have studied this topic and who continue to do so; in the words of the beautiful and young Marie Antoinette, *Il y a bien du monde aujourd’hui à Versailles.*

Other interpretations have been made, by other persons; some are referenced in this document. I do not suggest, in any manner, that these interpretations are incorrect, invalid, and/or incomplete; it is my own suggestion that an *alternative* interpretation of the tablet may provide new insight. All things being equal, of course, it may be rejected in its entirety.

I have stated that the analyses and interpretations presented herein are entirely the results of my own work, and my own efforts, and so, I must also state that any mistakes, glaring or otherwise, are also my own. I’m hardly perfect, although I certainly try my best; the reader’s gracious indulgence is humbly requested.

Finally, to answer the question which my friends, colleagues and acquaintances have asked, since I first began to buttonhole them with my enthusiasm, and bore them with my ephemera, in the immortal words of Sir Edmund Hillary (who, in fact, once held me as a baby): “Because…it was there.”

Respectfully submitted,
Sanjay R Singhal, RA

2 May, 2014

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TABLET

Although initially explored in 1795 by Daniel McGinnis and his friends,\(^3\) the Oak Island tablet was not discovered until 1803 or 1804\(^4\)\(^5\) by the Onslow Company, approximately eighty to ninety feet (80-90ft, or 24.384-27.432m) below grade, in what was soon to be called the Money Pit.\(^6\)

The stone tablet, inscribed in geometric symbols in unusual sets of same, has been interpreted by various persons; one of these is: *Forty feet below two million pounds are buried.*\(^7\) However, this interpretation has not been accepted by everyone, and there is still some dispute as to the symbols’ exact meaning. I have viewed the structure and rationale of this interpretation, and, while it is interesting, I have some reservations regarding same, which are presented in this document.

Another interpretation, suggesting a connection to nearby Birch Island,\(^8\) has also been produced; it appears to be based on an intriguing correspondence between the geometric symbols of the tablet, and certain geoglyphs found on the island. Again, while this is interesting, I cannot offer any assessment of same.

\(\text{\textsuperscript{6}}\) JB McCully. “The Oak Island Diggings.” *Liverpool Transcript,* October 1862.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MONEY PIT

There have been numerous theories regarding the Money Pit, and what, if anything, is actually buried there. I have included the following, in descending (!) orders of probability:

1. Gold, and other precious items, rescued by the French from nearby Fort Louisbourg, after their disastrous loss to the British after the Seven Years’ War;\(^9\) \(^10\)
2. Pirate gold and gems from the haul of the infamous pirate Captain Kidd;\(^11\)
3. The Crown Jewels of France,\(^12\) last seen on Marie Antoinette’s head (while still attached to the rest of her body, but not, by some accounts, to her brain);\(^13\)
4. The treasure from Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem, brought to the New World by the Knights Templar, and including, quite possibly, the Ark of the Covenant and/or the Holy Grail.\(^14\)

Assuredly, there are others.

The first theory seems to me the most valid; Fort Louisbourg fell in 1758 to the British, and was destroyed ten years later. It seems reasonable to suggest the French evacuated their gold, and other precious items, to Oak Island for safe-keeping, during some period of time prior to 1758. On the other hand, it is reasonable to suggest that the British may have captured treasure from the fort, transported it to Oak Island, and buried it there!\(^15\)

The second theory seems slightly less valid; \emph{that does not mean it is invalid}. Pirates roamed the Eastern Seaboard during much of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, and beyond; it is possible that a pirate of Kidd’s stature \emph{might} have used Oak Island as a safe storage location for his plunder.

The third theory, while seemingly valid, has some curious features: Fort Louisbourg fell in 1758, and was destroyed in 1768…so, if one of Marie Antoinette’s ladies-in-waiting was entrusted to bring the jewels to Canada in 1792…\emph{where did she go, and where did she take them?} Fort Louisbourg…\emph{did not exist in 1792}. On the other hand, if the boat which brought her to the New World was manned by persons with knowledge of Oak Island, it seems reasonable to suggest a connection between the two.

As for the fourth theory; well, I don’t know. I honestly don’t know; it seems so fantastic that it might well be true. It seems reasonable to suggest that Oak Island may have been used as a concealment location by a variety of different parties, over time; if they \emph{all} used the Money Pit, however, the coincidence becomes almost too much to believe, or even comprehend. At best, a valid argument may suggest that the treasure at the bottom of the Money Pit…\emph{may not have been put there, by the persons who excavated it.}

\(^11\) Ibid, Howlett.
\(^12\) Arnold Gingrich. "When Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette fled Paris during the French Revolution, the jewels were entrusted to a lady-in-waiting who succeeded in escaping. History shows that she did reach Louisberg, a few miles north of Oak Island on the Nova Scotia mainland, then known as the "Paris of the ..." \textit{Coronet} 36. Chicago: DA Smart; 1954.
\(^14\) Steven Sora. \textit{The Lost Treasure of the Knights Templar}. New York: Destiny; 1999.
\(^15\) Ibid, O’Connor.
THE LANGUAGE

While reviewing the inscriptions on the Oak Island tablet, I began to reconsider the interpretation first outlined by James Lietchi of Dalhousie University:16 *Forty feet below two million pounds are buried.*17

It seemed…*strange,* somehow, and at first I could not comprehend why. After looking at some of the theories regarding the Money Pit and its secrets, I began to realise my puzzlement: why would a stone tablet, buried face-down in a pit, *be inscribed in English?*

If one accepts the theory that French troops from Fort Louisbourg excavated and/or used the Money Pit to hide their gold and precious items, why would they have inscribed a stone tablet…*in the English language?*

But, all things being equal, what about Captain Kidd? Certainly he could have used some type of code for the tablet, *and in the English language.* One may suggest that the code was his own, or perhaps a compendium of symbols, cryptographs, and other ephemera that he inscribed on the tablet…*or had someone inscribe for him.*

Considering the Crown Jewels of France,18 again, *why would the inscription be in English?* One possible answer is that the persons involved did not want any French revolutionaries to know what they had done, and by inscribing the tablet in English, were attempting to throw them off the scent, as it were. This being said, however, I’m not sure how a lady-in-waiting to the Court of Versailles managed to get two million pounds of…*something*…across the Atlantic Ocean without anyone catching on; that’s an awful lot of…*something. And, as I’ve already outlined… where did she take them, when she got there?*

I began to wonder if, in fact, the tablet inscription really was a sentence in the English language.

Could it have been written…*in French?*

Could it have been written…*in something else?*

Again, looking at the theories outlined in this document, it is possible. This would, however, invalidate Leitchi’s interpretation, and others. All things being equal, these interpretations have not been proven, either.

Perhaps, I thought, it is time to re-examine the tablet and its strange inscription, again.

16 Ibid, Lamb.
17 Ibid, Howlett.
18 Ibid, O’Connor.

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THE SYMBOLS

The tablet itself has disappeared; it was last seen in the earlier part of the twentieth century, in a Halifax bookbinder’s shop.\(^{19}\) Numerous copies of it remain, however, and it is from these that I have taken my source material, and utilised same here, via the Fair Use Act. With this in mind, I have made the following provisos:

1. The tablet may have been a fake, created to generate attention and/or investment in the excavation.
2. There are no known photographs and/or wax-rubbings of the tablet in existence.\(^{20}\)
3. The present-day whereabouts of the tablet are unknown.
4. The copy of the tablet may be inaccurate, or incomplete.
5. The copy may have, over time, been altered, either through transport, natural ageing, or through deliberate modification, rendering it, again, inaccurate and/or incomplete.
6. The photograph of the copy of the tablet may mask certain details and/or features which might aid in a more accurate interpretation; it’s a bit like the Parthenon, isn’t it? \(^{21}\)

Nonetheless, the finding of the tablet in 1804 or thereabouts, and its puzzling inscription, are fairly well documented, so I think we can proceed accordingly.

The inscription consists of two widely-spaced rows of symbols, grouped in sets of differing quantity. There are eight sets of symbols; four per row. Some symbols are repeated throughout; some only appear once or twice.

The most commonly used symbols are:

1. A division symbol 5 times
2. Two round dots, arranged vertically 5 times
3. A closed box 4 times

Some other symbols, repeated less times, are:

4. A circle with a diagonal slash 3 times
5. A triangle, pointing down 3 times (one of these is slashed)
6. A triangle, pointing up 3 times
7. An open-ended box 3 times
8. Three round dots, arranged in a triangle 3 times

Additionally, there are some symbols which only appear once:

9. An arrow
10. A circle with a horizontal slash
11. A circle with a centred, round dot
12. A single, round dot

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\(^{20}\) At least, none that I could find; believe me, I’ve looked. *Everywhere*.


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This is all rather pretty, of course, but does not answer the question: *what does this all mean?* To the casual observer, it is an arrangement of geometric figures, squares, circles, dots and triangles, a child’s scrapbook of Euclidean delights, as it were. The meaning of the symbols, and their various arrangements, is baffling; what on earth is going on here?

I began trying to imagine myself…in the position of the writer:

*What* was he trying to say?

To *whom* was he saying it?

And what…*language*…was he saying it in?

The symbols seemed to dance before my eyes; I could not possibly make heads or tails of them; it seemed a great load of gibberish, I was wasting my time. And then, quite suddenly, I had my first “light-bulb” moment; a friend and I were at dinner, discussing the Greek alphabet, and the derivations of the shapes of its letters:

“It is very clever, it is a picture,” I said to my friend, “The Greek letter *alpha* is derived from the Phoenicians, who called it *aleph*, and it was their word for *ox.*”

“For…*ox*?” my friend asked.

“Yes,” I said, “If you turn it sideways, it *looks like an ox’s head, with the horns.* See, look, “I said, drawing upon the napkin, “You know, it reminds me of the Chinese word for happiness, with a little pig under a roof…. I had suddenly stopped talking. “Oh, my god!” I exclaimed. “Oh, my god!”

“What is it?” asked my friend.

“The Oak Island tablet…oh, my god!”

“What? What? What?”

I did not know how to answer my friend; he was not familiar with the topic, although I had certainly bored him to sobs with it for several weeks, by this time.

I was bursting with excitement; I had my first breakthrough:

What if the symbols on the tablet…*were symbols of actual words, objects, or actions*?

What if the writer used symbols…*to create a record of his activities on Oak Island*?

Now, I daresay these are questions had been raised by others, and quite possibly, had already been answered; to me, it was all new, and exciting. I felt I was getting somewhere, that I had made a first, firm step towards a new interpretation!

---


I reviewed the symbols again; not as individual letters, but as unique, individual expressions, representing an object, an idea, an action. And then, as they say, I had my next “light-bulb” moment:

These symbols were not new; some had been in use for a long time, and no doubt, would have been perfectly understood by others…in the eighteenth century.

I began to realise a curious aspect of the inscription: the intended meaning of the symbols, at the time of their inscription…might not necessarily be the meaning attached to them today. Furthermore, many presented multiple meanings; which was the most appropriate?

A good example is the “Greek cross” symbol, which appears twice in the second row, in the second and fourth sets. Does it represent a Greek cross…or something else? It is definitely not a crucifix; there are two of those on the tablet as well; the writer, clearly, knew and understood the difference. On the other hand, does it mean that someone, on the island, was of the Eastern Orthodox faith…and died in that faith, on the island?

What else might it be?

- It might be a symbol indicating the intersection of two paths, or a meeting-point.
- It might be a mathematical symbol, ie the plus sign.
- It might be a Maltese cross, of the Order of St John; in other words…the Knights Templar.
- It might also be an alchemical symbol, suggesting the four elements…or the number four.

One may comprehend my frustration at realising just how many interpretations might be made from this symbol alone; in combination with the other symbols, the possibilities are truly…endless.

Remind me to tell you the story of Louis XV’s fireworks, and the courtier’s appreciation; it seems rather appropriate right about now, and needless to say, it involves Marie Antoinette (again!).

The alchemical symbol, suggesting the four elements, or the number four, also suggested something else to me: that other alchemical symbols might have been used in the inscription. I looked up several indices of same, and found a great many different symbols which, once again, had multiple meanings.

And in so doing, I found…something else.

I found…gold.

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25 Look at the graphic diagrams following this section, and you will see the Greek crosses there.
Gold, and silver...*inscribed together on the same tablet.*

And...*salt.*

Salt, oh...my god! How many wars (not to mention both the American and French Revolutions) have been fought, and won, because of duties imposed on salt production!^{29}

This graphic diagram, which I drew myself, is based directly on the tablet inscriptions; it presents the second set of symbols in the second row. The first is the alchemical symbol for salt; the last is the alchemical symbol for gold. For more information, please refer to the section immediately following.

Well, after giving myself a good pat on the back (albeit a small one), I started up again, this time focussing on the triangles; there are six of them, as outlined previously: three pointing down, and three pointing up.

This graphic diagram, which I drew myself, is based directly on the tablet inscriptions; it presents the first set of symbols in the first row. Notice the three triangles: two are pointed down, and one is pointed up. Additionally, the second triangle has two diagonal lines, or slashes, across it.

What on earth did these mean? I looked at the triangles again; *three of them pointed down, and three of them pointed up.* I thought this was curious; it gave the impression of *something coming and, something going away.* Almost like a boat, I thought...and then, I realised:

The prow of a boat...*is shaped like a triangle.*

Could this be the answer? Did the triangular symbol...represent a ship, or a boat?

I looked at all the triangle symbols again; yes, perhaps it *did* represent a ship, or a boat. The present-day causeway to the island, permitting vehicular access, was not constructed until 1965.^{30} *No one* would have been able to reach the island any other way, unless they swam out from the mainland. Ships, or boats, would have been the only means of transportation, either to, or from, the island.

It was a startling concept. I was on my way.

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My interpretation of the Oak Island tablet is presented on the following pages. Each set, and its symbols, are analysed individually and together, with possible alternatives where appropriate, and in consideration of context within the inscription itself. There are a total of eight sets of symbols, as previously noted: four sets per row. The sets are presented in order, starting with the first row/first set, and ending with the second row/fourth set.

Each set of symbols is accompanied by a graphic diagram based directly on the tablet inscriptions; these diagrams are my own work; I drew them myself. Those persons wishing to view the tablet in toto may find it, quite easily, via any number of Internet websites; it is not reproduced here.

It should be noted, for the purposes of this document, that I did not undertake this task with any concept of what those interpretations might mean; I did not know what I might find, only that it was there…and so I went looking for it. What I found, at the end of my journey…was not at all what I expected.
FIRST ROW, FIRST SET

We observe a sequence of six symbols, from left to right: a downwards triangle, another downwards triangle, with two slash marks, a division symbol, a circle with a diagonal slash, an upwards triangle, and finally, an arrow, pointed down and to the left.

1. The triangles, as I have indicated previously, suggest direction, an idea of something arriving, and then departing…in other words, a ship or a boat.
2. The second triangle, pointing down, bears two long, diagonal slashes across it; to me, this suggests something wrong with the symbol. Something has happened to it; something has…damaged it. One may infer that the ship suffered storm or wind damage, perhaps while en route to the island.
3. The third symbol, that of division, is not, in this case, used as such. In trade or commerce, this symbol is also known as a whip, and signifies less than, or a reduction. Something has been removed; something has been taken away; there has been…a reduction.
4. The fourth symbol, to the modern eye, resembles nothing so much as the letter Ø from the Danish and Norwegian alphabets; it is found in the word Øresund, and, standing alone, also represents the word island in Danish. Curiously, as part of the name Øresund, it also means gravelled beach. I suggest two (2) interpretations: island, or pit, and, in context, that the meaning is the pit.
5. The fifth symbol is another triangle, pointing upwards. Again, I suggest that this represents a ship or a boat, departing the island.
6. The sixth symbol, the arrow, to me suggests a strong headwind, and that the ship, departing the island, may have been close-hauled in order to do so.

I suggest the following interpretation:

Two ships came to the island; one of them was badly damaged.
This reduced our company/workforce, who are here to work on the pit.
One of the ships left, in heavy winds, close-hauled.

FIRST ROW, SECOND SET

We observe a sequence of four symbols, from left to right: a downward triangle, two round dots vertically arranged, another two round dots vertically arranged, and an upward triangle.

1. The first symbol, the downward triangle, suggests something arriving, or *coming to the island*. Again, I suggest the *arrival of a ship, or a boat, from the mainland*.
2. The second symbol, the two *vertical* dots, is, in fact, an ancient symbol for *rain*. However, one may also view the two dots *horizontally*, which would symbolise *water*. An alternative suggestion is the alchemical symbol for *silver*, or its use in cartography to symbolise…*ancient ruins*. In context, any one of these meanings is feasible; the *ancient ruins* may suggest that the Money Pit was an older excavation, being re-worked and re-purposed for new treasure burial. Again, in context, I suggest that the appropriate meaning, however, may be *silver*, and the tablet records its delivery to the island.
3. The third symbol is a duplicate of the second; I suggest its meaning is the same, and its duplication part of the message being conveyed. This symbol is important; in a tablet of so few symbols, to have been written twice suggests twice the amount of silver usually carried.
4. The fourth symbol, the upward triangle, suggests *departure from the island, via a ship or boat*.

I suggest the following interpretation:

*A ship came to the island, bearing a great (ie, double) cargo of silver; then the ship left the island.*

Alternatively:

*A ship came to the island, bearing silver; it then left the island, carrying some silver away.*

I also suggest a third interpretation:

*A ship came to the island, in the rain; it was also raining when the ship left.*

This, to me, seems a bit unusual; why a weather-report on a stone tablet? And, quite frankly, who would care? But…if the ship approaching the island could not take anchor, *because of the weather*…could someone have watched its arrival…and its departure?

1. The men digging the Money Pit *might have been* working for someone else.
2. The men were, more or less, *might have been* left there alone; ie without supervision.
3. The men *might not have been picked up* by the ship that arrived in the heavy rain.
4. The men *might have been* left…to their fate.
5. The men *might have been* conscripted labourers, or captives…or slaves.

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35 Ibid, Liungman, p08.82
36 Ibid, p25.17
37 Ibid, p25.18
FIRST ROW, THIRD SET
We observe a sequence of five symbols, from left to right: a dagger, or crucifix, two round dots, arranged vertically, an open box, a division symbol, and a closed box.

1. The first symbol, a dagger or a crucifix, suggests death.\textsuperscript{38} Someone has died on the island.
2. The second symbol, the two dots arranged vertically, suggest, to me, the manner of his death: he died in the rain.\textsuperscript{39} It is possible that he drowned, that the Money Pit flooded, while he was working in it, and could not get out? Alternatively, if we consider this symbol to mean silver, can we suggest that he died while burying it? Did the pit collapse on him? Was he killed in a fight…over the silver?
3. The third symbol, the open box, suggests, to me, exactly that: an open box. Associated with death, I suggest that this may represent…a coffin, and/or a grave.
4. The fourth symbol, the whip,\textsuperscript{40} again suggests a reduction in the workforce; there is one man less, and the work has now become more difficult. They have not finished digging; there is more to be done.
5. The fifth symbol, the box, or chest, suggests the treasure buried within it. This makes more sense within the context of the fourth set of symbols in the first row, and also the second and fourth sets of symbols in the second row.\textsuperscript{41}

I suggest the following interpretation:

\textit{A man has died; he was burying the silver. We dug a grave for him, and buried him. Now, there is one less of us; our number has been reduced. There is still treasure to be buried; we are not finished.}

I suggest a second interpretation:

\textit{A man has died; he drowned (either in the pit, due to flooding, or perhaps off-shore). We dug a grave for him, and buried him. Now, there is one less of us; our number has been reduced. There is still treasure to be buried; we are not finished.}

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, Liungman, p08.02
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, p18.26
\textsuperscript{41} As in “treasure chest.” Heave to, lads!
FIRST ROW, FOURTH SET

We observe a sequence of three symbols, from left to right: an upward triangle, a box, and a reduction symbol.

1. The first symbol, the upward triangle, suggests departure from the island, via a ship or boat.
2. The second symbol, the box, suggests, quite frankly, a box, or a chest…of treasure. However, I do not think that all the treasure was removed; the box symbol is repeated twice, in the second row.\(^{42}\) It is curious that the treasure is not signified (ie silver or gold); perhaps the contents were not known, at least not to the tablet-maker, or to anyone else.
3. The third symbol, the whip,\(^{43}\) again suggests a further reduction…but of what? A reduction of men? A reduction of treasure? I suggest that some of the treasure was removed, and that, quite possibly, some of the men left the island as well; this is also highlighted in the second row.

I suggest the following interpretation:

_A ship left the island, carrying some of the treasure with it; our numbers have been reduced._

I suggest the following explanations for the (partial) removal of the treasure:

1. It was needed elsewhere, for supplies, equipment, weapons, etc.
2. It was being shipped elsewhere, for safe-keeping.
3. The portion being shipped elsewhere may have been a special cache, or trove, contents unknown.

Which, of course, raises the next question:

_Who remained behind...to watch the ship take sail and depart the island?_

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\(^{42}\) As in “treasure chest”. Avast, ye landlubbers!

\(^{43}\) Ibid, Liungman.
SECOND ROW, FIRST SET
This is the longest sequence on the tablet; there are seven symbols from left to right: a double dagger, or double crucifix, three round dots arranged in a pyramid, an open box, another open box, another three round dots arranged in a pyramid, a whip symbol, and the letter X.

1. The double dagger, or crucifix, again, to me suggests death;\textsuperscript{44} two men have died.
2. The three round dots, arranged in a pyramid, may represent the alchemical symbol for sand, or gravel.\textsuperscript{45} Alternatively, this may also represent the alchemical symbol for oil.\textsuperscript{46} A third meaning of this symbol is found in mathematics; it means therefore. Nonetheless, its use here is puzzling; why here, and why twice? I suggest that this is a reference to sand, or gravel, based on the context of the symbols.
3. The open box, as indicated previously, suggests an open grave, or burial.
4. The second open box suggests the same thing; this correlates to the double dagger. Two men have died, and so two graves have been dug.
5. The second symbol of three round dots, arranged in a pyramid, again suggests sand, or gravel; if so, then this may mean that the graves were dug on the beach, or in a gravel quarry on the island.
6. The whip symbol again suggests a reduction; something has been removed.\textsuperscript{47} Two men have died; the workforce is shrinking.
7. The letter X suggests, to me, the Roman symbol for ten.\textsuperscript{48} I suggest that the workforce has dwindled to ten men, still on the island, still working inside the Money Pit.

I suggest the following interpretation:

\textit{Two men have died, on the sand/gravel. We dug their graves in the sand/gravel, and buried them there. Our numbers have been reduced; there are now only ten of us left.}

How did the men die?
Was it a duel?
Where they dueling…over the treasure in the pit?

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, Hoefler.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, Liungman, p08.83
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, Liungman, p18.26.
\textsuperscript{48} One may, perhaps in jest, propose that “X” marks the proverbial spot, but since the tablet was found at the tenth level of the Money Pit, one may infer its position to have already been discovered.

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SECOND ROW, SECOND SET

This sequence of six symbols includes, from left to right: a circle with a horizontal line through it, a whip symbol, a plus sign, the letter X, a box, and a circle with a round dot in its centre.

1. The circle with a horizontal line through it is the alchemical symbol for salt. However, it is also the Spanish symbol for water; both interpretations are possible. In context, however, I suggest that the symbol should be interpreted as…salt.

2. The whip symbol, in this context still meaning reduction, also suggests an important event: they made salt, by evaporation. One may infer that, in time, they had run out of salt, and needed it to preserve their food, hence its notation here.

3. The plus sign, or Greek cross, may also be viewed, in nautical terms, as a symbol for a shoal, or spit of land. I suggest this inference, although there are many, in relation to the salt-making just outlined. Additionally, this may be a stylized reference to the Maltese cross, or possibly, the Order of St John, which does suggest the Knights Templar. In context, however, I suggest that this may mean, quite simply, the number four.

4. The letter X again suggests the Roman symbol for ten.

5. The symbol for box, or chest.

6. The symbol for the sun is also the alchemical symbol…for gold.

I suggest the following interpretation:

We made salt, by evaporation. There are forty (or possibly fourteen?) boxes/chests of gold.

Well, this sounds just a little bit strange. Salt, plus gold, in the same sentence?

Perhaps not so strange, after all; salt, in the 18th century, was as precious a commodity as gold. Its making, on the island, was sufficiently important to be recorded on the tablet. Perhaps these activities occurred on the same day, hence their inclusion in one set of symbols.

But, I have to ask: where did the gold come from…and who brought it there?

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50 Ibid, Liungman, p30.01.
51 There’s almost too many meanings of this symbol to count, or to wholly list here.
52 Ibid, Foster.
53 Ibid.
55 Ibid, Liungman, p09.01.
56 As in “treasure chest.” Yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of rum!
57 Ibid, Kurlansky.
SECOND ROW, THIRD SET
This sequence of three symbols includes, from left to right: a single, round dot, a circle with a diagonal slash, and two dots, vertically arranged.

1. The single, round dot has many different meanings in Western civilisations; one of the simplest of these may reference the moon, or a period of one month. This symbol only appears once on the tablet; this is significant. I suggest that a period of one month has passed.
2. The second symbol has been seen before, in the first row, first set. I suggest that two (2) interpretations are possible: island, or pit, once again; in context, the Money Pit.\(^{58}\)
3. The third symbol, two dots vertically arranged, has also been seen before, in the second and third sets of the first row.\(^ {59}\)\(^ {60}\) Again, the interpretation of silver, seems the most feasible, but the meaning of water, in context, may suggest that the pit has flooded.

I suggest the following interpretation:

*We have been here a month, working in the pit, burying the silver.*

I also suggest an alternative interpretation:

*We have been here a month; the pit has flooded.*

\(^{58}\) Ibid, Faqs Author(s). *What are Nordic Graphemes?*

\(^{59}\) Ibid, Liungman, p08.02.

\(^{60}\) Ibid, Liungman, p25.17.
SECOND ROW, FOURTH SET

The final sequence contains six symbols: a dagger or crucifix, a plus sign, a circle with a diagonal slash, three round dots arranged in a pyramid, two dots vertically arranged, and a box.

1. The first symbol, a dagger or a crucifix, suggests death.\(^{61}\) Someone has died on the island.
2. The second symbol, in context, may be interpreted as the number four;\(^^{62}\) this is the fourth person who has died on the island.
3. The third symbol has been seen before, in the first row, first set, and in the second row, third set. I suggest that two (2) interpretations are possible: island, or pit, once again, and that the appropriate meaning is the Money Pit.\(^{63}\)
4. The three round dots, arranged in a pyramid, may represent the alchemical symbol for sand, or gravel.\(^{64}\) Alternatively, this may also represent the alchemical symbol for oil,\(^{65}\) but I do not think so. The symbol for oil comprises circles, not dots; without the actual tablet to hand, I cannot confirm this interpretation. I suggest that this is a reference to sand, or gravel, based on its context.
5. The fifth symbol, two dots vertically arranged, has also been seen before, in the second and third sets of the first row,\(^{66}\)\(^{67}\) and again in the third set of the second row. Again, the interpretation of either rain, or silver, seems feasible, but I suggest that, in context, the meaning of silver is appropriate.
6. The symbol for box, or chest.\(^{68}\)

I suggest the following interpretation:

*One of the men has died; he was the fourth person to die on the island/in the pit. He was buried in the sand/gravel, with a chest of silver.*
The following is my complete interpretation of the tablet inscription; it does not include alternatives, however, which may be substituted by the reader at leisure. It is not what I expected, but then again, I did not know what to expect, if anything:

The first row:

Two ships came to the island; one of them was badly damaged.
This reduced our company/workforce, who are here to work on the pit.
One of the ships left, in heavy winds, close-hauled.

A ship came to the island, bearing a great (ie, double) cargo of silver; then the ship left the island.

A man has died; he was burying the silver. We dug a grave for him, and buried him. Now, there is one less of us; our number has been reduced. There is still treasure to be buried; we are not finished.

A ship left the island, carrying some of the treasure with it; our numbers have been reduced.

The second row:

Two men have died, on the sand/gravel. We dug their graves in the sand/gravel, and buried them there. Our numbers have been reduced; there are now only ten of us left.

We made salt, by evaporation. There are forty (or fourteen) boxes/chests of gold.

We have been here a month, working in the pit, burying the silver.

One of the men has died; he was the fourth person to die on the island/in the pit. He was buried in the sand/gravel, with a chest of silver.
CONCLUSION

We have come to the end of our journey; it has led us in strange pathways to a destination we did not know we should find, nor expect to exist. I must confess to a certain melancholia, subjectively speaking; the circumstances of the tablet’s creation may not have been optimum.

It cannot have been easy work, nor simple. The pit, and the tunnels connecting it are, if nothing else, remarkable examples of excavation and engineering; we do not know if the writer assisted in the planning, or was just one of the labourers brought there to hoist a shovel.

We know nothing about the writer, or his situation; perhaps he was an overseer, a man of some education, brought there to supervise the excavation work, and to bury the treasure. Certainly he was sufficiently learned to understand the meaning of certain symbols, and to use them.

I’ve looked at the copies of the tablet, and wondered at the wide space between the two rows. Did the writer leave this space intentionally, for recording future activities on the island? Was something else intended for this space, perhaps a chart, or a diagram of the pit, and how to excavate it properly? Did he inscribe the tablet as a means of recording his life on the island, the ships which arrived and departed, the treasure which arrived (and also departed), the men who died there, and were buried, and the last, few, hurried days when the treasure was finally buried, and the pit filled-in once more?

Did he also guess his fate, at the finish of his work? Perhaps he knew, as the other men did not, that their lives might be forfeit, after the concealment of so great a treasure; perhaps he knew, and they knew, that they might not leave the island. Was he found, somehow, surreptitiously inscribing the tablet? Was the tablet taken away from him, and flung into the pit, face-down, so that no one else could read it?

Did he leave the island…or is he still there?

We do not know; we have no record of him. We do not know his name, where he was born, where he lived, or how he died. He carved an inscription on a stone tablet, and placed it face-down in the pit, on the tenth level, so that it might not be seen, or suspected.

Perhaps one day, he might have hoped, someone would uncover the pit, and find the tablet, and remember the man who had put it there.

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2 May, 2014