

# A Dravidian decipherment Indus script

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We only sketch some brief outlines here. Details will be presented in a separate independent development by M.V.Bhaskar (MVB). This publication is for feedback and further elucidation on the basic decipherment for larger community of enthusiast out there in the world.

Important documents for understanding Indus script is the Corpus created Asko Parbola and [Iravadham Mahadevan's concordance](#) work. We also need the [Dravidian Entymology Dictionary](#) by Burrow and Emaneau. Please download the two PDFs from Internet Archive and you should be ready. If you want to write documents with Indus signs then you need Asko Parbola's NFM Indus Script font. This document was written in that font, a lovely gift from MVB to me. Now on to the beautiful discovery of the decipherment.

This decipherment became possible with the arrival of the splendid work by MVB in Sasanam: M.V. பாஸ்கர் (Bhaskar), அன்றைய தலைப்பு செய்திகள் (Yesterday's headlines), சிந்துவெளி நாகரீக சிறப்பு வெளியீடு (Indus Valley Civilization Special Issue), கிருஷ்ணகிரி மாவட்ட வரலாற்று ஆய்வு மையம் (Krishnagiri District History Research Center), சாசனம் (Sasanam), 2025.

This laid down the map that lead to all the linkage between graphics and the text, building this beautiful journey of discovery enabled by M.V. Bhaskar, with whom I have been working for the past several years. My learning in art, Brahmi and Indus Script derived from his interactions.

## Numbers

Numbers are treated separately, but they are just like other glyphs, easily welded and affixed to other glyphs, producing a plethora of possibilities.

M77 Sign	Glyph	Syllable	DED	Description	Tamil
86		onn-,mu-		one	முதல், ஒண்ணு
87		ra-,ir-,iru-	474	two	ர-,இர்-,இரு-
89		mu-,mun-	5052	three	மு-,முன்-
95		nal-,naal,nalla-		four	நல்-,நால்-,நல்ல-
96		ai-	2826	five	-ஐ
108		-ar	2485	six	ஆறு
110		elu-,elu	910	seven	ஏழு,எழு

### Application of above phonemes

112	''''	nam,munna-	-	Healthy, before	நிலம்,முன்னால்
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116		nellai	-	rice	நெல்லை
121		nallonal	-	good person	நல்லோனால்
120	≡≡	mumunnonum	-	Three generations back	மும்முன்னோனும், மும்முன்னமும்
119	≡≡	mum-munnor	-	Two generations back	மும்முன்னோர்

## Clitics

Clitics provide sentence structure (the subject and the object). The reading order is right to left only after the clitics; before that the reading is left to right.

M77 No.	Glyph	DED	Description	Tamil
97	.....	-	-il,-da,-ta,-in	-ட,-டு,-த,-து-இல்,-இன்
99	.....	-	-ra,-ru	-ர,-ரு,-ற,-று
123	.....	-	-yar,-yin	-யர், -யார்

## Learn through pun

Following are an indication of the pun that abounds in Indus script. Of course, it only makes sense if your language is close to ancient Dravidian. For deeper understanding you may have to refer to some of the sign values below this in the section on “Syllabic development”. We only sketch a few, but the Indus script syllabary abounds in such pun.

M77 Sign	Glyph	Syllable	DED	Description	Tamil
298	))))	valai = vala+ai	-	) = vala+5	வல+ஐ=வலை
Right-parenthesis is “vala” in Tamil and “vala” + “ai” = “valai”. This is further explained by a pun statement shown in the next row.					
62	(ஃ)	valai-kanni	-	vaalai fish	வாளை மீன்
The fish “vaalai” is known as the shark fish that has sharp teeth. A nice tooth is drawn at the top to elucidate the learning. This explains that the parenthesis sign (299,287) carry the phonetic value “valai”.valai-kanni					
63	(ஃ)	kanni-pori-valai	-	Trapping of birds	கன்னி-பொறி-வலை
This learning tablet defines the phonetic value of fish as “kanni” and the bird as “puri” by defining it through a polysyllabic pun as “kanni-pori” with a parenthetic “valai” . The “kanni-pori” in Tamil is “trapping”.					

The clitic sign 64 reverses the reading order to the right of it. This learning script defines that.

A teeth is indicated by the protruding teeth effect, just like in the fish teeth.

## Syllabic development

We outline from top to bottom how the syllabary is developed. We outline entries that are learning signs that give us clue on understanding the development (like “a” for “apple”, but in a funny/punny way). Happy journey!

M77 Sign	Glyph	Syllable	DED	Description	Tamil
1	𑌕	an	131, 132	person	அன், அள்
	𑌕𑌕	an(n)-an, anni	131, 132	brother, sister	அண்ணன், அண்ணி
2	𑌕𑌔	aran	311	dharma	அரண்
3	𑌕𑌔	ath-an	142	husband	அத்தான்
4	𑌕𑌔	natt-an	3638	Country man	நாட்டான்
5	𑌕𑌔	natt-ar-an	3638	Country man	நாடாரன்
6	𑌕𑌔	val(i)-an	5276	Skilled man	வலியன்
7	𑌕𑌔	vel-an	5368	Lance fighter	வேலன்
8	𑌕𑌔)	valai- velan, valaiyan	5288	Animal trapper	வலையன்
374	𑌕	-n			-ன்
415	𑌕	mun		Front, fore	முன்
299	(	idai	-	hip, left	இடை
301	(	idayan	-	Herder, herdsman	இடையன்
287	)	valai	5313, 5314	bent, trap, right	வல, வளை
293	)	valaiyan	5288	Animal trapper (short form)	வலை வேலன், வலையன்
328	𑌕	vu	651, 761	ooze, mortar	வ, உ, ஊ
32	𑌕𑌕	vuvan		Person between two	உவன்
342	𑌕	vur	752	Town	ஊர்
347	𑌕	vellore	-	Hunter's town	வேலூர்
358	𑌕	chevur	-	Bronze worker's town	செவ்வூர்
344	𑌕	ur-ar	-	Important sign with clitics	ஊரார்
343	𑌕	ur-il		Important sign	ஊரில்

				with clitics	
373	○	pa	3805,4016	Sun,Pot	பகல்,பாணை
391	⊗	pakan		Mahout	பாகன்
216	✕	tha			த, தவளை
?	✕	than		mine	தன்
36	✕	than		mine	தன்
?	⊙	pan-		Many	பன்-
31	⊙	panan		singer	பானன், பாடுபவன்
59	♀	kan,kanni	-	Fish, boat, river	கண்,கன்னி
60	✕	nalla-kan		Good boat	நல்ல கண்
67	✕	konda,konde	2216	Bull, horn	கொண்ட,கண்ட
70	✕	kal		canal	கால்,கால்வாய்
78	✕	-pur,-puri	4374	Bird	-புர்,-புரி,புரா
319	○	-mura	4977	Snail, Curl	முறை, முறுக்கு
134	∧	-peru, -ma	4411	Big, Large	பெரு,-மா
261	◇	-ko	2207	Fort, Gentry	-கோ, கோட்டை
30	⊙	kovan		Herder,herdsman	கோவன்
197	⊙	-mel,-madi	5058	Top, Terrace	மேல்,மாடம்
402	✕	nadu	3638	Country (as a contrast to village)	நாடு
162	Ψ	vel	5536	Spear, Valor	வேல்
245	⊙	thatti	3036	Cloth, Wooden frame	தட்டி
149	✕	naalvali	3610,5297	Cross-road	நால்வழி
249	⊙	carakku,acu	47,2353	Load, Sack	சரக்கு, அச்சு
153	↑	perupavan	4422	Receiver	பெருபவன்
155*	↑	anupu,anbu	330	Send	அனுப்பு,அன்பு*
211*	↑	anupu	5536	Send	அனுப்பு,அன்பு
83	✕	irappan,iraapu	501	death	இறப்பு
49	✕	kula	1829	Generation, geneology	குலம்
50	✕	athu,adu	5153	goat	ஆத்து-ஆடு
124	∧	aer	2815	plough	கலப்பை
125*	∧	vilagu	5423	diverge	விலகு
323	⊙	Ila,illam	497	Leaf,home	இலை,இல்லம்
326	✕	nal-ilantha	497	Good home	நல்-இலந்த
327	✕	iru-vali-nal-ilanthai	497	home	இரு-வழி-நல்-இலந்த
47	∧	aran	204	squink	அரண், அரணை
43	✕	nal-aran		Good behavior	நல் அறன்
?	(    )	munal-valai		3 by 4 (yards) net	முன்னால் வலை
415	⊙	mu-pala		Many many	முப்பல
171	Ψ	nil-(v)anji			நில்வஞ்சி
?	≡	nal-inai		Joining four	நல்லிணை
403	⊙	dandan,patru,patu,parai		Announcement with a drum beat	டண்டன்,பற்று,பட்டு,பறை
404	⊙	nal-parai		Good annoucement	நல்ல பறை

51	𑌕	Maran	Trader,barter	மாறன்
130	√	kol	Buy/sell	கொள், கொள்முதல்
304	𑌔	vil	bow	வில்
305	𑌕	vilai	price	விலை
127	𑌕	alaku	beak	அலகு
306	𑌕	alaku-vilai	Good price	அலகு-விலை
397	𑌕	thiral	Pearl necklace	திரள், முத்து மாலை