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 மைய்யம் (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 86 | Glyph | Syllable onn-, mu- | DED | Description one | Tamil 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 | - න |
| 108 | | -ar | 2485 | six | ஆறு |
| 110 | | elu-,-elu | 910 | seven | ஏழு,எழு |
| | Application of | above phonemes | | | |
| 112 | 1111 111 | nalam,munnal | - | Healthy, before | நிலம்,முன்னால் |

| 116 | 11111 | nellai | - | rice | நெல்லை |
|-----|--------------|------------|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 121 | ;;;; ;;;; | nallonal | - | good person | நல்லோனால் |
| 120 | ; ;; | mumunnonum | - | Three generations back | மும்முன்னோனும், மும்முன்னமும் |
| 119 | <i>;</i> ;; | 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 | 1 | - | -il,-da,-ta,-in | -ட,-டு,-த,-து,-இல்,-இன் |
| 99 | 11 | - | -ra,-ru | -ர,-ரு,-ற,-று |
| 123 | ^y | - | -yar,-yin | -யர், -யார் |

Learn through pun

Following are an indication of the pun that abounds in Indus script, which is termed as the "rebus principle". 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. They are also termed rebus principle.

| M77 Sign 298 | Glyph | Syllable valai = vala+ai | DED - | Description) = vala+5 | Tamil ഖல+ഇ=ഖலை |
|---------------------|------------------|---|----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| | 0 1 | sis is "vala" (curved further explained by | | • | |
| 62 | (Q) | valai-kanni | - | vaalai fish | வாளை மீன் |
| | drawn at the top | i" is known as the shoot to elucidate the lead the phonetic value ' | rning. This ex | plains that the par | |
| 63 | (# Q) | kanni-pori-valai | - | Trapping of | கன்னி-பொறி- |
| | | | | birds | ഖതல |
| | _ | tablet defines the ph ning it through a poly | | | |

"valai" . The "kanni-pori" in Tamil is "trapping".

64 ___((🍇) valai-kanni - The clitic கன்னி-பொறிreverses reading வலை order

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

376 🧭 pal - teeth பல்லு

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 Sig 1 | n Glyph ☆ | Syllable an | DED 131, 132 | Description person | Tamil அன் |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| | ★★ | an(n)-an | 131, 132 | brother | அண்ணன் |
| 2 | 大 | aran | 311 | dharma | அரண் |
| 3 | \bigstar | ath-an | 142 | husband | அத்தான் |
| 4 | 犬 | natt-an | 3638 | country man | நாட்டான் |
| 5 | 霁 | natt-ar-an | 3638 | country rules | நாட்டரன் |
| 6 | * | val(i)-an | 5276 | skilled man | வலியன் |
| 7 | * | vel-an | 5368 | lance fighter | வேலன் |
| 8 |)歎) | valai-velan,valaiyan | 5288 | animal trapper | வலையன் |
| 54 | * | pu | 4345 | flower,Insect | பூ (பூச்சி) |
| 55 | * | pol | 4550 | flowering | பொலி, பொலிவு |
| 374 | O | -n | 1159b, 3621, | night, bug | நீர் (துளி), |
| | | | 3621a | | (ப)னி,நள்,நல்லு |
| 410 | 8 | naan | 3639 | me | நான் |
| 415 | 8 | nanan | 3639 | shame | நாணம், நண்ணன் |
| 299 | (| idai | 449 | hip,left | இடை |
| 301 | (| idayan | 450 | herder, | இடையன் |
| | | | | herdsman | |
| 287 |) | valai | 5313, 5314 | bent, trap, right | ഖര, ഖണെ |
| 293 |) | valaiyan | 5288 | animal trapper | வலை வேலன், |
| | | | | (short form) | வலையன் |
| 328 | U | vu | 651,761 | ooze, mortar | ഖ, <u>ഉ,</u> ഉണ |
| ? | U | vala,valla | 5304 | strong,fertile | ഖல−, ഖണ− |
| 336 | U | valan | 5276 | by | -ഖலன் |
| 32 | ∜∪ | vuvan | | person between | <u>உ</u> வன் |
| | | | | two | |

| 342 | Ţ | vur | 752 | town | ஊர் |
|----------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------|---|-----------------------------|
| 347 | Ű | vellore | _ | hunter's town | வேலூர் |
| 358 | ₽.₽ | chevur | - | bronze worker's | - |
| 344 | " " | ur-ar | - | important sign with clitics | ஊரார் |
| 343 | ij | ur-il | - | important sign with clitics | ஊரில் |
| 373 | \bigcirc | pa | 3805,4016 | sun,Pot | பகல், பானை |
| 375 | 0 | pal, pala | 3986a | teeth,many | പ ര്, പര |
| 391 | ₩ | palla | 3986a | elephant | பல்லா (யானை) |
| 216 | × | tha | 2946 | earthen pot | த (தண்டி) |
| 222 | \bowtie | thalu | 3105 | beat,crush | தள்ளு |
| 223 | | mumutha | 5105 | grand-parent | மும்மூத |
| ? | <i>*</i> | than | 3045 | cold | தண் (தண்ணீர்) |
| : 36 | ☆ ☆ ※ | than | 3045 | cold,water | தண் (தண்ணீர்) |
| ? | ∧ / • | | 4068 | song,melody | பாண் |
| : 31 | ☆ ⊚ | paan | 4068 | tamil bard | பாணன், பாடுபவன் |
| 51 59 | ^ ♥ � | paanan kan kanni | | 1boat, bamboo | கண்,கன்னி |
| | | kan,kanni | 67,1417 | raft | |
| 60 | ¦ 众¦ | nalla-kan | - | good boat | நல்ல கன்னி |
| 67 | X | konda,konde | 2216 | bull, horn | கொண்ட,கண்ட |
| 70 | | kaal,kala,kal | 1479,1480 | leg,canal | கல், கல, கால் (கால்வாய்) |
| 78 | Ą | -pur,-puri | 4374 | bird | -புர், -புரி, புரா |
| 81 | (<u>Å</u>) | valai-puri | - | trapped bird | ഖതെപ്പുറ്റി, പ്പുറ്റിഖതെ |
| 319 | 6 | -mura | 4977 | snail, Curl | முறை, முறுக்கு |
| 134 | \wedge | -peru, -ma | 4411 | big, Large | பெரு-,-மா |
| 261 | \Diamond | -ko | 2207,2203 | fort, gentry (west wind, | -கோ, கோட்டை |
| 30 | ☆ | kovan | | western practice of having kings in Sumeria) herder, herdsman,gentry (cattle class becoming the | கோவன் |
| 197 | П | -mel,-madi | 5058 | ruling gentry) | மேல், மாடம் |
| 402 | A | naadu | 3638 | top, terrace country (as a | நாடு |
| 402 | 70 | naduu | 3030 | contrast to village) | ישיוש |
| 162 | Ψ | vel | 5536 | spear, valor | ි ඛණ |
| 245 | | thatti | 3036 | cloth, wooden frame | தட்டி |
| 149 | * | naalvali | 3610,5297 | cross-road | நால்வழி |
| 249 | | carakku,acu | 47,2353 | load, sack | சரக்கு, அச்சு |
| 153 | \uparrow | perupavan | 4422 | receiver | பெருபவன் |
| 155* | , + | anupu,anbu | 330 | send | அனுப்பு, அன்பு |
| 211* | † | anupu | 5536 | send | அனுப்பு, அன்பு |
| 83 | * | irappan,iraapu | 501 | death | இறப்பு |
| 00 | 415 | appaii,ii.aapa | 501 | acum | SOIT I |

| 49 | Į | kula | 1829 | Generation, gene ology | குலம் |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------|---|---|
| 50 | Ħ | athu,adu | 5153 | goat | ஆத்து, ஆடு |
| 124 | \wedge | aer | 2815 | plough | கலப்பை |
| 125* | Κ | vilagu | 5423 | diverge | விலகு |
| 323 | <u>۾</u> | Ila,illam | 497 | Leaf,home | இலை, இல்லம் |
| 326 | \Leftrightarrow | nal-ilantha | 497 | Good home | நல்-இலந்த |
| 327 | * | iru-vali-nal-ilanthai | 497 | home | இரு-வழி-நல்-இலந்த |
| 47 | S | aran | 204 | squink | அரண், அரணை |
| 43 | N ≣ | nal-aran | _ | Good behavior | நல் அறன் |
| ? | (!!!!) | munal-valai | _ | 3 by 4 (yards) | ் முன்னால் வலை |
| · | ,,,,, | | | net | |
| 415 | 8 | mu-pala | _ | Many many | முப்பல |
| 171 | Ψ | nil-(v)anji,nilai | _ | 3 3 | நில்வஞ்சி, நிலை |
| ? | | nal-inai | _ | Joining four | நல்லிணை, நாலிணை |
| 403 | 00 | patru,pattu,parai | | Announcement | பற்று,பட்டு, பறை |
| | | 1 1 1 | | with a drum beat | İ |
| 404 | ;00; | nal-parai | | Good | நல்ல பறை |
| | | _ | | annoucement | |
| 51 | 篡 | kudike,pute,vavu,vey | 1851,3606 | Trader,barter,spy | சூடிக்கே, நரி, வேய் |
| | | | 4259,5291,55 | | |
| | | | 33,5534 | | |
| 130 | \checkmark | kol | 2151 | Exchange, | கொள், கொள்முதல் |
| | | | | buy/sell | • |
| 304 | D | vil | 5422,5421 | Bow,sell | ର୍ଗା ର୍ଡ |
| 305 | (ÿ | vilai | 5421 | price | ചി തെ |
| 127 | ٦ | alaku/alagu | 239,246,255 | Beak, beauty, | அலகு, அழகு |
| | | U | | | |
| 306 | | J | | grains of paddy | 2 |
| | <i>&</i> | alaku- v ilam | - | grains of paddy Good | அலகு-விலை |
| 397 | þ | alaku- v ilam thiral | - ? | grains of paddy Good Pearl necklace | திரள், முத்து மாலை |
| 397 377 | | alaku- v ilam | | grains of paddy Good Pearl necklace Many good pear | திரள், முத்து மாலை |
| 377 | ∳ ¦⊙∳¦ | alaku- v ilam thiral nal-thiral-pala | | grains of paddy Good Pearl necklace Many good pear necklaces | திரள், முத்து மாலை]நல்திரள் பல |
| | þ | alaku- v ilam thiral | | grains of paddy Good Pearl necklace Many good pear necklaces Three mountain | திரள், முத்து மாலை]நல்திரள் பல |
| 377233 | ∳ ¦⊙∳¦ ⊳} | alaku- v ilam thiral nal-thiral-pala mumalai | | grains of paddy Good Pearl necklace Many good pear necklaces Three mountain range | திரள், முத்து மாலை]நல்திரள் பல மும்மலை |
| 377 | ∳ ¦⊙∳¦ | alaku- v ilam thiral nal-thiral-pala | | grains of paddy Good Pearl necklace Many good pear necklaces Three mountain range Three mountain | திரள், முத்து மாலை]நல்திரள் பல மும்மலை |
| 377233 | ∳ ¦⊙∳¦ ⊳} | alaku- v ilam thiral nal-thiral-pala mumalai | | grains of paddy Good Pearl necklace Many good pear necklaces Three mountain range | திரள், முத்து மாலை]நல்திரள் பல மும்மலை |