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, அன்றைய தஃப்பு 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, ஒன்னு
87		ra-,ir-,iru-	474	two	ர-,இர்-,இரு-
89		mu-,mun-	5052	three	மு-,முன்-
95		nal-,-naal,nalla-		four	நல்-,நால்-,நல் ல-
96		ai-	2826	five	-ஐ
108		-ar	2485	six	ஆறு
110		elu-,-elu	910	seven	ஏழு,எழு

Application of above phonemes

112	1111 111	nalam,munnal	-	Healthy, before	நிலம்,முன்னுல்
116	1111	nellai	-	rice	நெல்ஜல
121	 	nallonal	-	good person	நல்லோ <u>ஞ</u> ல்
120		mumunnonum	-	Three generations back	மும்முன்னே னும், மும்முன்னமும்
119)))	mum-munnor	-	Two generations back	மும்முன்னேர்

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	["]	-	-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 298	Glyph	Syllable valai = vala+ai	DED -	Description) = vala+5	Tamil ഖல+ഇ=ഖ2്
	0 1	sis is "vala" in Tamil pun statement shown			his is further
62	(♦)	valai-kanni	-	vaalai fish	வாஊ மீன்
	drawn at the to	ni" is known as the sh p to elucidate the lean the phonetic value "	rning. This ex	xplains that the pa	
63	(# Q)	kanni-pori-valai	-	Trapping of	கன்னி-
				birds	பொறி-வ2ல

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.

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 1	Glyph ☆	Syllable an	DED 131, 132	Description person	Tamil அன்,அள்
	大大	an(n)-an, anni	131, 132	brother, sister	ച ഞ്ഞ്ഞ്ഞ്, ചഞ്ഞ് ഞ്ഞി
2	 ★	aran	311	dharma	அரண்
3	*	ath-an	142	husband	அத்தான்
4	*	natt-an	3638	Country man	நாட்டான்
5	霁	natt-ar-an	3638	Country man	நாடாரன்
6	类	val(i)-an	5276	Skilled man	ഖരിധത്
7	*	vel-an	5368	Lance fighter	வേலன்
8)类)	valai-	5288	Animal trapper	ഖമ്പയ്
		velan,valaiyan			
374	8	-n			-ன்
415	8	mun		Front,fore	முன்
299	(idai	-	hip,left	இடை
301	(idayan	-	Herder,herdsma n	இடையன்
287)	valai	5313,5314	bent, trap, right	ഖல,ഖ2്ണ
293)	valaiyan	5288	Animal trapper (short form)	ഖമാ ഖോങ്, ഖമാധങ്
328	U	vu	651,761	ooze, mortar	ഖ,உ,ஊ
32		vuvan		Person between two	<u>உ</u> வன்
342	U	vur	752	Town	உளர்
347	٣	vellore	-	Hunter's town	வேலூர்
358	P	chevur	-	Bronze worker's town	_
344	IJ	ur-ar	-	Important sign with clitics	ஊரார்
343	Ţ	ur-il		Important sign	உரில்

				with clitics	
373	\bigcirc	pa	3805,4016		பகல்,பாஜ
391	\otimes	pakan		Mahout	பாகன்
216	\bowtie	tha			த, தவீள
?	\&	than		mine	தன்
36	* **	than		mine	தன்
?	(pan-		Many	பன்-
31	‡ ©	panan		singer	பானன்,
					பாடுபவன்
59	\Diamond	kan,kanni	-	Fish, boat, river	கண்,கன்னி
60	∤ &¦	nalla-kan		Good boat	நல்ல கண்
67	*	konda,konde	2216	Bull, horn	கொண்ட,கண்
					L
70	V	kal		canal	கால்,கால்வாய்
78	À	-pur,-puri	4374	Bird	-புர்,-புரி,புரா
319	6	-mura	4977	Snail, Curl	முறை, முறுக்கு
134	\wedge	-peru, -ma	4411	Big, Large	பெரு-,-மா
261	\Diamond	-ko	2207	Fort, Gentry	-கோ,
					கோட்டை
30	ऴ	kovan		Herder,herdsma	கோவன்
	-			n	
197	ĥ	-mel,-madi	5058	Top, Terrace	மேல்,மாடம்
402	Á	nadu	3638	Country (as a	நாடு
				contrast to	
162	Ψ	vel	5536	village) Spear, Valor	வேல்
245	<u> </u>	thatti	3036	Cloth, Wooden	தட் டி
243	ш	tilatti	5050	frame	SICE!
149	**	naalvali	3610,5297		நால்வழி
249	占	carakku,acu	47,2353	Load, Sack	சரக்கு, அச்சு
153	\uparrow	perupavan	4422	Receiver	பெருபவன்
155*	+	anupu,anbu	330	Send	அனுப்பு,அன்பு*
211*	Ŷ	anupu	5536	Send	அனுப்பு,அன்பு
83	~ \	irappan,iraapu	501	death	இறப்பு
49	臭	kula	1829	Generation, gene	
				ology	
50	Ħ	athu,adu	5153	goat	ஆத்து,ஆடு
124	λ,	aer	2815	plough	கலப்பை
125*	K	vilagu	5423	diverge	ഖിയക്ര
323	A	Ila,illam	497	Leaf,home	இஜல்,இல்லம்
326	<u></u>	nal-ilantha	497	Good home	நல்-இலந்த
327	*	iru-vali-nal-	497	home	இரு-வழி-நல்-
		ilanthai			இலந்த
47	A.	aran	204	squink	அரண்,அரண
43	№	nal-aran		Good behavior	நல் அறன்
?	(;;;;)	munal-arai		3 by 4 (yards)	முன்னுல் அறை
				room	

415	8	mu-pala	Many many	முப்பல
171	Ψ	nil-(v)anji		நில்வஞ்சி
?		nal-inai	Joining four	நல்லி 2 ண
403	00	dandan,patru,pat tu,parai	Announcement with a drum bea	டன்டன்,பற்று,ப ^{It} ட்டு,பறை
404	¦ : (0);	nal-parai	Good annoucement	நல்ல பறை
51	Ĵ	Maran	Trader,barter	மாரன்
130	\checkmark	kol	Buy/sell	கொள்,கொள்
				முதல்
304	D	vil	bow	ഖിல்
305	(F	vilai	price	ඛා්විත
127	П	alaku	beak	அலகு
306	F	alaku-vilai	Good price	அலகு-விஜல
397	þ	thiral	Pearl necklace	திரள், முத்து மாலே