Macro structures in Indus script

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The logo-syllabic Indus script has been deciphered using Dravidian Etymology Dictionary. Complete list of signs of the Mahadevan corpus deciphered are described in the other document. A threshold point has been reached now that one is able to not only read all the lines of text but also understand them with clear-cut semantics.

Apart from the decipherment we are also able to provide a picture of the production activities in Indus Valley as reflected in the text.

Glyphs grouped under categories

A word of caution must be mentioned here: since these are primarily syllables, their actual use in a text may not correlate to below category.

Description	M77 Signs	Glyphs	Tamil
Activity-based counties [1]	261, 391, 162, 245, 12, 326, 400, 311	◇, ⊛, ⟩, ⊞, 𐦀, 𐦄, ⋉, 𝄐	கோவன், பல்லவன், வலையன், தட்டான், உழவன், இலையன், நுழம்பன், பானன்
Farming: farmer, farm town	12, 15, 178, 124	𐦀, 𐦄, 𐦅, 𐦆	உழவன், உழவூர், கலப்பை, ஏர்
Horticulture: leaf, flower	326, 54	𐦄, 𐦇	செடி, பூ
Hunting: trapping, spear	35, 293, 162	𐦈, ⟩, Ψ	வலையன், வலையன், வேலன்
Cattle farming: herding and selling	30, 301	𐦉, ⟨,	கோவன், இடையன்
Carpentry and metallurgy: metal and wood work	245	⊞	தட்டி (தட்டான்)
Tayloring: stitching	400, 219, 182	⋉, 𐦊, 𐦋	நுழல், தை
Honey gathering	180	⦀	கொட்டு தேன்
Singing: harp, musician	311, 31	𝄐, 𐦌	யாழ், பானன்
Trade: barter, buy/sell	51, 130	𐦍, √	மாறன், மாற்று, கொள்
Transportation: ship, boat, raft, manual cart, bullock cart	59, 65, 70, 72, 67	⚘, 𐦎, 𐦏, 𐦐, 𐦑	கன்னி, பெருங்கன்னி, கல், கொல், கொண்ட
Movement: send, receive, speed	153, 155, 211	↑, ⼂, ⼃	அனுப்பு

The Indus barter exchange system

We only illustrate the key points here. The local barter happens in the undocumented unorganized sector at the cross-roads (※), in what is termed as "cantai" (சந்தை) in modern Tamil. The exchange is abstracted by the symbol $\overline{X}$ and the barter mediated by 𝕏 (maran?), who is usually qualified by great reliable ancestary (flowery self-praise by the system). The exchange is done by symbol √ (kol, the dagger of exchange) and $\overline{X}$ (an abstraction of the cross-road, ※). Most of the script pertains to official barter transactions of Indus, which are really instructions of transporation mode and the origin/destination. The clitics like $\overline{"}$ (M77-99) orchestrate the sentence structure of the lines of the seals. An highly compressed form of information exchange mechanism is enabled by the drsastic use of poly-semantic logo-syllabic script with each of these logo-syllables having many semantic possibilities with high degree of pun. This is so deeply wedded to Indus culture and mode of exchange that the deciphering of it has taken so long. The skills of bronze-age artisans is in ful display here with those hundreds of poly-semantic logo-syllables crafted and designed with care to work in those small spaces available in the seals.

Relative volume of trade

Let us now consider the M77 concordance table [2] sign no. 99: $\overline{"}$. If we look at the signs that come before this sign (to the right), then we see this broad picture:

Logo identities of transactions	No. of occurances
◇	369
⅄	239
⊞	205
⊗	195
⋈	53
⋀⋀⋀	53
◈	41
⫽	44
(𝄐)	24

Summary

Among 634 occurances in IVC text with sign no. 99, assuming that what comes to it's right is the region that is sending commodities to the other regions, we can summarize that cattle and agriculture were the dominant activities, closely followed by carpentry and elephant-based products. Hunting, honey-gathering, fishing, carpentry, weaving and stitching were the other important activities that created products participating in the organized barter system of IVC.

References

[1] M.V. பாஸ்கர், *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.

[2] MASI 77 Indus Script Texts Concordances & Tables Iravatham Mahadevan, https://indusscript.in/