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 | III | 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 | nalam,munnal | - | Healthy, before | நிலம்,முன்னுல் |
|-----|---------|--------------|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 116 | 11111 | nellai | - | rice | நெல்ஜல |
| 121 | | nallonal | - | good person | நல்லோ <u>ஞ</u> ல் |
| 120 | | mumunnonum | - | Three generations back | மும்முன்னே னும், மும்முன்னமும் |
| 119 | <i></i> | 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 | I | - | -il,-da,-ta,-in | -ட,-டு,-த,-து,-இல்,- இன் |
| 99 | 11 | - | -ra,-ru | - ঢ়,- ঢ় ,- ற ,- ற |
| 123 | ^y | - | -yar,-yin | -шп, -шпп |

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+ஐ=ഖ2്ല |
|---------------------|-----------------|---|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| | 0 1 | sis is "vala" in Tamil pun statement shown | | | his is further |
| 62 | (♦) | valai-kanni | - | vaalai fish | வாீள மீன் |
| | drawn at the to | ii" is known as the sh p to elucidate the lead the phonetic value " | rning. This ex | xplains that the pa | |
| 63 | (4 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 | <u>۾</u> | Ila,illam | 497 | Leaf,home | இஜே,இல்லம் |
| 326 | A | nal-ilantha | 497 | Good home | நல்-இலந்த |
| 327 | * | iru-vali-nal- | 497 | home | இரு-வழி-நல்- |
| | | ilanthai | | | இலந்த |
| 47 | 2 | aran | 204 | squink | அரண்,அரண |
| 43 | № | nal-aran | | Good behavior | நல் அறன் |
| ? | (;;;;) | munal-valai | | 3 by 4 (yards) | முன்னுல் வ2ல |
| | | | | net | |

| 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 |