

DRAVIDIAN PARALLELS
IN
PROTO-INDIAN SCRIPT

by

IRAVATHAM MAHADEVAN



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Dravidian Parallels in Proto-Indian Script

IRAVATHAM MAHADEVAN

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0. METHODOLOGY

0.1. This paper presents in brief outline a new interpretation of the Proto-Indian script within the Dravidian frame-work.

0.2. The long quest for an understanding of this script has entered an exciting and perhaps decisive phase with the recent publication of the preliminary results achieved by the Soviet and the Finnish teams of scholars working in the field. Their work has placed the investigations for the first time on a scientific basis and represents a major break-through. The methodology adopted by both the teams is broadly the same *viz.*, the determination of the functional characteristics of each sign by statistical-positional analysis and ascertaining the probable phonetic value by the technique of homophony applied after linguistic reconstruction. While there are differences in the identification of individual signs, as there are bound to be at this preliminary stage, both the teams

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are agreed on three fundamental results: (a) the language is Dravidian, (b) the signs are mostly logographic and based on the principle of homophony, and (c) the inscriptions generally read from right to left. This is the basic groundwork from which I started. I acknowledge my indebtedness to the pioneering work of the Soviet and the Finnish teams and my work should be considered as following up their break-through.

0.3. There are, however, two main differences in our methods and approach to the problem which I should mention at the outset.

0.4. In the first place I have had no access to a computer. The positional-statistical analysis attempted by me is based on the conventional tools, pencil and paper. I have relied largely on the accurate Sign-Tables prepared by Hunter and the Sign Manuals in the original publications relating to Mohenjodaro and Harappa. I have supplemented these by preparing my own Tables from the inscriptions subsequently found at the minor sites like Chanhudaro, Lothal, etc. I have also made grateful use of the preliminary statistical data released by the Soviet and the Finnish teams. I believe, without in any way detracting from the excellent work done by the Soviet and the Finnish teams on the computer, that the relative smallness of the available sample lends itself to meaningful analysis by 'manual' methods.

0.5. A much more important difference is my extensive application of the technique of parallelisms developed by Emil Forrer (*The Hittite Ideographic Writing*, E. Forrer, 1932, Chicago). I reproduce below extracts from the excellent summary of the method found in '*Voices in stone—the decipherment of the ancient scripts and writing*', E. Doblhofer, tr. by M. Savill, 1961, London, (pp. 181–185):

“The method used by Forrer marks a decisive phase in the work of decipherment and we give here the broad outlines. Prior attempts had as their goal the phonetic reading of characters. Forrer maintained that an *objective comprehension*

of the contents of the inscriptions was essential. He quoted in this respect ideograms used in more than one language. We still use ideograms which are universally understood although they represent no determinate phoneme. Objective comprehension must, therefore, take precedence over the reading. But how to acquire this objective comprehension without being able to read a single syllable? There is in practice, maintained Forrer, one method: the observation of *parallel phenomena*. Parallels can occur,

- (1) between the symbolical representation and the text;
- (2) between the written object and its designation;
- (3) between the written symbol itself and its meaning.

“ A few brief examples will help to illustrate what Forrer means. The first case applies when their attitude, costumes and attributes obviously predict them as deities . . . Case (2) appears when one sees engraved on a sacrificial axe ‘ the axe of the High Priest ’ . . . Case (3) is that of all ideograms which have remained comparatively close to their original form, as for example the old Sumerian character for ‘ star ’ .

“ The three parallelisms, continues Forrer, already lead without phonetic reading to the determination of many lexical and grammatical points. But these are not the only possibilities afforded by the observation of the parallel phenomena. There is another priceless key: the similarity throughout Ancient East of certain portions of the inscriptions. Forrer quoted three particular features :

- (1) The opening of royal inscriptions (‘ King, King of Kings, King of This and That ’).
- (2) The formulae of the curses (‘ whoever destroys . . . may the gods destroy ’).
- (3) The introduction to the letters (‘ A to B ’).

“A simple comparison of these texts will reveal the signs employed for case-endings, pronouns, personal suffixes, demonstrative pronouns, relative and interrogative pronouns; also the adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, particle and verb forms,—in short, the basic features of a grammar, *intelligible to the eye if not to the ear*. The originality, intelligence and lucidity of Forrer’s work received the praise it deserved.”


0.6. I have permitted myself this longish quotation as I have made the method of parallelisms the basic tool of my decipherment. I shall illustrate my adaptation of the method for the decipherment of the Proto-Indian script with a few examples.

0.7. Parallelisms will be valid only if the material used for comparisons is relevant. I have proceeded on the basic assumption that the material relevant to an understanding of the Proto-Indian inscriptions must be primarily Dravidian. Thus the apparently votive inscriptions found on the ‘tiny’ seals and prisms at the lower levels of Harappa may be compared with the earliest extant Dravidian votive texts in the Tamil-Brāhmī cave inscriptions. The seal texts may be compared with the earliest seal and coin legends in the Dravidian languages. The Proto-Indian graffiti stand comparison with those found on the megalithic pottery in South India. (This particular comparison has already been undertaken by B. B. Lal in his important Paper ‘From Megalithic to Harappa : tracing back the graffiti on pottery’, *Ancient India*, 1960, pp. 4-24). The seal-texts which presumably consist mostly of names and titles can be usefully compared with Dravidian name-lists compiled from the earliest available sources like the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions, the poems and the colophons in Tamil ‘Sangam’ works and from the vast material in the medieval temple inscriptions. The names of Dravidian tribes and the non-Āryan ethnic names preserved in early Sanskrit literature also constitute valuable comparative material. Since the archaeological evidence tells us that the Proto-Indian polity was highly organised and well-administered, it is particularly useful to collect and study

the technical terminology employed in Dravidian civic administration and palace and temple organisations. Lastly the myths and legends embodied in Dravidian literature and the oral tribal traditions may tell us much about the scenes portrayed on some of the Proto-Indian seals.

0.8. The example of \cup , the most frequently recurring sign in the script is instructive. The Soviet and the Finnish scholars have identified the sign as an inflectional ending of the genitive case as it occurs mostly in the final position. It is well known that Sanskrit and Prakrit legends on coins and seals and in short votive labels (as at Sānci and Mathurā) have the names in the genitive. However, a comparison with the earliest Dravidian material in similar contexts showed that the observed frequency and distribution pattern of the sign is not matched even remotely by that of the Dravidian genitive. The names in the ancient Tamil coin-legends, graffiti and votive labels almost always occur in the nominative. I concluded, therefore, that the sign does not represent the genitive. It also occurred to me that the best way to find the value of the sign would be to identify any frequently recurring element in Dravidian name-formations with functional-positional characteristics matching those of the sign and related to it through a homophone. This line of reasoning led to the identification of the sign as the masculine singular pronominal base **anr-* (O.Ta. *-an*, *antai*) almost universally affixed to male personal names in Old Tamil. A similar comparison with ancient Dravidian names led to the identification of \uparrow , a functional analogue of \cup , as the nominal suffix **-ey* corresponding to Old Tamil *-i* or *-ai*. The recognition of these two symbols enabled me to pick out personal names and titles from the inscriptions. The decipherment had begun.

0.9. Another example of the parallel method based on grammar and syntax is my identification of the 'introductory' symbols in the texts as place-names. About 25 per cent of the names in the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions and almost 40 per cent of the names in the alphabetical list of Tamil 'Sangam' poets begin with place-

names. It seemed reasonable that the Proto-Indian seal texts followed a similar practice. This deduction is confirmed by the appearance of the three symbols, one of which  is identical with the Egyptian ideogram for a 'city'. Starting from these premises I was able to identify two of the symbols as representing the Citadel and the Lower City respectively, the fundamental units of the Proto-Indian polity.

0.10. An even more important application of the method of parallelisms is in regulating the interpretation of the symbols and the selection of suitable homophones. One of the criticisms made against the methods of decipherment developed by the Soviet and the Finnish teams is that there are too many choices available at too many levels to inspire confidence in the correctness of any of them. Choices have to be made at every stage in the interpretation of the pictorial and the positional values of the symbols and the selection of homophones. Thus the identification of a symbol as representing, say, a 'mortar with pestle' is only the beginning. The symbol might have been intended to represent either the mortar or the pestle or the verb 'to pound'. Each of these ideas is indicated by several words in Dravidian languages and many of them offer homophones signifying a wide range of meanings. The positional characteristics of the symbol can help to limit the choices available. The method of parallels furnishes another powerful tool for narrowing down the choices and to increase the degree of probability as more and more parallels are thrown up which cannot all be reasonably ascribed to mere coincidence or clever contrivance. This is illustrated by the identification of the 'modified fish' signs as personal and clan names.

0.11. Names are among the most conservative elements in any language. It appeared reasonable to look for parallels between the Proto-Indian symbols and ancient Dravidian names. The 'fish' symbols which comprise about ten per cent of the texts and generally occur in the middle positions, seem to indicate personal names derived from planetary deities. The discovery of Heras

that the words for 'star' and 'fish' (*mīn*) are homophones in Dravidian languages began the whole process of decipherment. The 'fish' symbols often occur in clusters of two or three, the most common being the pair 𑌕𑌕 . The Finns have identified this pair as Saturn and Venus and believe that it represents a 'planetary conjunction'. I, however, concluded from Dravidian parallels that the 'fish' clusters correspond to the composite personal names so commonly found in old Tamil literature. It seems possible to employ the technique of parallelisms to find a solution. We have to search for two frequently occurring Dravidian names which should satisfy three criteria :

- (a) linguistic connection with the words for Venus and Saturn ;
- (b) occurrence as a pair ; and
- (c) in either order.

The Old Tamil names *mā vēḷ* and *vēḷ mā-* assumed by almost all the Vēḷir chieftains satisfy all the criteria. Then followed the recognition that the dual meaning of *vēḷ* in Old Tamil (a chieftain ; to perform a sacrifice) is a survival from the times when the priest was also the ruler in a social order which was certainly non-Āryan and probably pre-Āryan. This deduction was then linked to the persistent and strongly-held traditions about the origin of the Vēḷir from a 'pit' or 'pitcher', their descent from sacerdotal forbears, their migration from Dvārakā and affinity with the Yādavas (also a non-Āryan people). Thus a grid of parallels is built up which progressively makes the identifications more and more cling together until the validity of the decipherment is objectively demonstrated.

0.12. The model of decipherment set up by me is quite different from that suggested by the Finnish team. (The Soviet Papers have so far mainly dealt with methodological considerations except for the tentative identification of half a dozen signs). The differences arise mainly from different interpretations of the objects represented

in the pictograms and of the functional values to be attached to the signs. The choice of homophones and the methods of linguistic reconstruction also vary. It also appears to me that by a curious mischance (-Chance does play a part in this game, computer notwithstanding!-) the interpretation of all the four signs which are basic to the Finnish model, *viz.*, their genitive, dative, plural, and 'feminine' suffixes has turned out to be incorrect. What, however, matters most at the present stage is the emergence for the first time of a coherent 'school' of decipherment working within the same framework and accepting the same methodological discipline. Hence the results, even if widely different, have become comparable and can be corrected and improved upon by constructive criticism. It is this development which kindles the hope that we are at long last on the threshold of a true decipherment of the Proto-Indian script.

0.13. *Acknowledgments* : It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the guidance I have received from Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and Dr. Bh. Krishnamurti, particularly on problems of linguistics. I am most grateful to Dr. Romila Thapar for her constant encouragement and her assistance during my search for historical parallels. I should, however, make it clear that the responsibility for the conclusions is entirely mine. I am beholden to the Director-General, Archæological Survey of India and the National Museum authorities for the facilities given to me to conduct my research.

Note : 1. The system of transliteration and the standard abbreviations used in the Paper follow the *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*. Some popular spellings are however retained, e.g., Chēra, Chōla, Pāṇḍya, 'Sangam', etc.

2. (-v) stands for an indeterminate vowel at the end of a word.
3. The symbols of the script should be read from right to left.

1. THE NOMINAL AFFIXES

The Symbol U :

1.1. This is the most familiar symbol in the Proto-Indian script. Previous work in the field has already established the following positional and functional characteristics of the symbol :

- (1) It is the most frequently used symbol in the script. According to the preliminary statistical data released by the Finnish team, the symbol occurs 873 times in 1944 inscriptions comprising 9147 total occurrences of all the symbols.¹ Thus almost one-tenth of the total material is accounted for by this single symbol.
- (2) The most marked characteristic of the symbol is its terminal position at the end of the inscriptions. Kondratov has estimated that about thirty per cent of all the inscriptions end with this symbol.² The Finnish count of 627 final occurrences (32.25 per cent of the number of inscriptions) is in close agreement with the Soviet estimate.³
- (3) The symbol acts as a terminal sign even when it occurs in the middle of the texts. This was noticed by Gadd and Smith at the time of the first tabulation of the symbols and was rigorously demonstrated by Hunter and more recently by the Soviet and the Finnish teams.⁴
- (4) The symbol is found affixed to single signs or well-defined groups of signs which appear by themselves to be complete words as shown by Hunter.⁵ In Soviet terminology, the symbol belongs to the class of variable signs 'which can replace each other, join in pairs, or disappear'.⁶ Kondratov has counted 146 different recurring 'blocks' or polygrammes with this symbol in the final position.⁷

- (5) The symbol occurs occasionally (12 times according to the Finnish team) at the beginning of the inscriptions.⁸

1.2. The almost constant terminal position of the symbol led Langdon to the conclusion that it must be a post-fixed determinative or an inflectional case-ending.⁹ Hunter, however, showed that the great frequency of the symbol precluded the possibility of its being a determinative.¹⁰ He seemed to have considered the possibility of the symbol being a case-ending, but finally decided that it represented a suffix, "not in the sense of a grammatical suffix, but as a suffixed element, 'servant' or the like, used in the formation of proper names".¹¹ Knorozov pointed out that the symbol is one of the variables which occur "in the position usually occupied by form-building suffixes and other morphological formants".¹² The Finnish team has also described the symbol as an inflectional ending on the basis of its positional and functional characteristics.¹³

1.3. The behaviour of the symbol as a suffix suggested to more than one scholar the possibility that it could be the suffix of the genitive. Hunter briefly considered the possibility, as stated earlier. Heras came to the same conclusion on the basis of a comparison with later Indian seals and coins which generally show the names in the genitive.¹⁴ The Finnish team has also identified the symbol as the genitive suffix.¹⁵ The Soviet suggestion that the symbol represents the Dravidian oblique or attributive case-morpheme is substantially similar.¹⁶

1.4. There is, however, no agreement among the scholars as to the object represented by the symbol. Hunter suggested that the symbol showed a jar with lip and handles on the basis of Egyptian and Sumerian analogies.¹⁷ According to the Soviet team the symbol is a stylised picture of the *ašvattha* tree as indicated by some of the variants of the symbol.¹⁸ The Finnish team sees the picture of a ship in the symbol on the basis of contemporary representations of Sumerian and Indus ships.¹⁹

1.5. The disagreement on the pictorial representation has resulted in different phonetic values being proposed for the symbol. Heras suggested the value *-adu*, as according to him, this was the most ancient form of the Dravidian suffix of the genitive.²⁰ He, however, did not attempt to connect the proposed phonetic value with the object represented in the symbol. Knorozov compares the Tamil name *atti* for the *aśvattha* tree with the Dravidian oblique case suffix, *-attu* (Ta.) and *-ti* (Te.).²¹ The Finnish team connects *ōta(m)*, 'ship' (DED. 876) with *-ōtu*, the sociative case suffix and *-uṭai-(ya)* used as a genitive suffix in Tamil.²²

1.6. A serious difficulty in the way of treating the symbol as an inflectional case-ending is its occasional presence at the beginning of a text. No inflectional 'ending' can of course occur in the initial position. This objection can be met only by proposing different values for the symbol in the initial and final positions. Thus Hunter proposed that the symbol in the initial position was used simply as a syllable forming part of a word with probably no sense-connection with the symbol used as a suffix.²³ Heras pointed out that the word *-adu* proposed by him could also occur initially, but in the sense of a demonstrative pronoun.²⁴ More recently the Finnish team has turned to the same idea by suggesting that the symbol in the initial position could stand for an epithet or title meaning 'one who possesses'.²⁵

1.7. Such an arrangement is, of course, possible. But there is some internal evidence to show that it is unlikely in this script. The symbols occur generally in a fixed order which has been shown by Knorozov to reflect the word-order in Dravidian.²⁶ Almost all the workers in the field agree that the script is logographic in which each symbol represents a word and not merely a sound.²⁷ We may, therefore, exclude the possibility of a purely phonetic syllabary. It is, therefore, preferable to search for a single value for the symbol, which is not inconsistent with its occurrence in the initial or the final positions.

1.8. There is an even more serious objection to the identification of the symbol as the Dravidian suffix of the genitive. Comparisons with the earliest extant Dravidian texts in similar

contexts (name-lists, votive inscriptions, legends on coins etc.) show that the observed frequency and distribution characteristics of the symbol are not matched by those of the Dravidian genitive suffixes. The Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions, in marked contrast with the Prakrit votive texts, do not have even a single instance of a final genitive suffix.²⁸ The ancient Tamil coin-legends, again in sharp contrast with the Prakrit or Sanskrit coin-legends, almost always give the names of the rulers in the nominative case.²⁹ The Dravidian genitive is, more often than not, implicit even in the medial positions in a sentence,—the so-called ‘ zero-genitive ’, e.g., *kō ātan cel-l-irumporai makan perunkaṭuṅkōṅ makan (i) laṅkaṭuṅkō* (TBI., No. 56). Hence the symbol which is known to occur three times in a text of six symbols (one each in the initial, medial and final positions)³⁰ and which ends thirty per cent of all the Proto-Indian inscriptions is most unlikely to be the Dravidian genitive suffix.

1.9. In view of the foregoing conclusion, it is really not necessary to discuss the proposed phonetic values, treating the symbol as the genitive suffix. I may, however, observe in passing that the oldest and the most universal Dravidian suffix of the genitive is *-a*, as pointed out by Caldwell and attested by the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions.³¹ The other genitive suffixes occurring in the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions are the locative-possessive *-il/-in* and the oblique case *-t-* also used with locative and possessive meanings.³² The most preferred construction was, however, by the use of the ‘ zero-genitive ’.

1.10. I began the work on the identification of the symbol by making the following assumptions :

- (1) Judging from our knowledge of seals used by contemporary ancient civilizations, it is reasonable to suppose that the bulk of the seal-texts would consist of names and titles with perhaps some minimal information relating to religious or economic activity.

- (2) As the language of the texts appears to be Dravidian, the names and titles would be mostly in the nominative case, invariably so at the end of the texts.
- (3) The most likely hypothesis which fits in best with the observed frequency, distribution and functions of the symbol would be to regard it as an integral element affixed to personal names and titles, generally as a suffix, but occasionally as a prefixed element.
- (4) The best method to identify the value of the symbol would be to search for parallels among the most ancient extant lists of Dravidian personal names and titles in order to identify any frequently recurring element with positional and functional characteristics matching those of the symbol and connected with it by a suitable homophone.

1.11. The Dravidian materials chosen for the comparative study are :

- (1) *The Corpus of the Tamil-Brāhmī Inscriptions* : ³³ These inscriptions are dated from the Third or the Second Century B.C., and are the most ancient lithic records extant in any Dravidian language. Their votive context, their contents confined mostly to names and titles and their brevity make them the ideal linguistic material for the present comparison.
- (2) *The name-lists of Tamil 'Sangam' poets* : ³⁴ About 473 names of poets have been preserved in the colophons to the poems of the Sangam Age, datable to the first three or four centuries of the Christian Era. The names represent an almost complete cross-section of the ancient Tamil society and include those of princes and commoners, men and women, and persons belonging to various clans and professions. There is little doubt that the names (which are among the most

conservative elements in any language) represent a tradition going back much farther than the dates of the composition and the compilation of these poems.

1.12. The most frequently recurring element in the formation of Old Tamil names turns out to be *-an*, the masculine singular pronominal suffix of the Third Person, meaning, 'he, that man'. The evidence on this point is conclusive.

1.13. The Corpus of the Tamil-Brāhmī Inscriptions contains 98 composite personal names and titles, in which the suffix *-an* occurs 99 times. Twenty out of the 74 inscriptions (excluding two *akṣara-bandhas*) i.e., about 27 per cent, end with *-an* in the final position; (verbal forms ending in *-ān/ōn* are not included in this count). In a number of composite names, the suffix *-an*, occurs twice or even thrice e.g., *maṇi-y vaṇṇakkan tēvan cāttan* (TBI, 72).

1.14. A random sampling of the first one hundred composite names from the alphabetical list of the Sangam poets yields similar results. The suffix *-an* occurs 82 times in these names. The suffix occurs 61 times in the final position (ignoring the honorific *-ār*, conventionally added in the colophons to the poets' names). The relatively high proportion of the suffix in the final position is doubtless due to the fact that while these are purely name-lists, the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions (and, presumably, the Proto-Indian seal-texts) often contain in the final position the names of the objects owned or gifted. Again many of the composite names in the list of poets contain the suffix *-an* twice or thrice, e.g., *Iṭaiyan cēntan korran-(ār)*.

1.15. In the light of this evidence from the nearest parallels, it seemed reasonable to suppose as a provisional working hypothesis, that the symbol in question probably represents the Proto-Dravidian equivalent of the masculine singular pronominal suffix of the Third Person (*-an*, in Tamil).

1.16. Before proceeding further, it is pertinent to point out the true significance of pronominal suffixation in ancient Dravidian

names. In modern Dravidian languages, pronominal suffixation to nouns serves three purposes :

- (a) to indicate number and gender ;
- (b) to form appellative nouns ;
- (c) to serve as honorifics.

There is, however, evidence to show that the earliest purpose of pronominal suffixation to personal names or titles was honorific and that the indication of number and gender was only incidental. The Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions have three instances of *-uvan* used unmistakably as a honorific suffix (TBI., No. 1-3). In medieval Tamil inscriptions we come across a similar honorific usage for *-avan*, e.g., *cuvaran māran-avan etuppitta paṭāri kōyil*. Later developments in Tamil when *-an* lost its honorific force due to constant usage and became a mere nominal suffix, only confirm this supposition. The plural pronominal suffixes, *-ar*, *avar(-kaḷ)*, were then added to or substituted for the singular *-an* to express respect e.g., *kiṟār*, *makan-ār āciriyar-avarkaḷ* etc. In the light of this evidence it is reasonable to infer that in the early stage of Dravidian met with in the Proto-Indian inscriptions, the pronominal suffix was added to personal names or titles only as an honorific.

1.17. Pronominal suffixes of the type *-an* are derived from *a-*, (D.E.D. No. 1), the demonstrative base expressing the remoter person or thing. Comparisons of such forms like *avan* (Ta., Ma.), *avn* (Ko.), and *avēn* (Kod.), with those like *vā(n)ḍu* (Te.), *ōnḍ* (Ga.) etc., enables us to reconstruct the PDr. form **(a)nṛ-(v)*. It will be seen that while Tamil has lost the final consonant, Telugu drops optionally the nasal. The change *-nṛ>-ṅḍ* (Te.) is regular (*vide* Phonetic Correspondences in DED).

1.18. Many of the Dravidian languages have masculine singular pronominal suffixes of the Third Person belonging to another related series also formed from the Dem. *a-*, e.g., *āta* (Ka.), *ātanu* (Te.), *ath* (To.) etc., (DED No. 1). The Old Tamil equivalent is

a(n)tai (not recorded in DEID or *Tamil Lexicon*), which seems to have gone out of use even in the Sangam works in free form (though occurring fairly often in bound form) and has been recovered only recently when the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions were deciphered. In these inscriptions *a(n)tai* occurs as a honorific affix to male personal names. It is recorded 14 times, prefixed six times and suffixed eight times to male personal names. A study of the following examples will make the pattern of its usage clear :

- (1) as a prefixed honorific : .. *antai-y Pikaṇ* (TBI, 13)
- (2) as a suffixed honorific in free form : .. *Kuvīra antai* (TBI, 25)
- (3) as a suffixed honorific in bound form : .. *Koṟṟantai* (TBI, 65)
- (4) as a suffix to place-name to indicate the male person's status therein : .. *Patiṇ-ūr atai* (TBI, 23)
- (5) In kinship terms with pronominal possessive prefix : .. *tantai-y* (TBI, 2)

A careful study of these examples will show that in names like *Koṟṟantai*, the final term is the honorific suffix *-antai*. Compare with *kuvīra antai*. In two adjacent inscriptions (TBI, 58-59) the words *Piṭaṇ* and *Piṭantai* occur as synonyms, proving the honorific use of *-antai* and the functional equivalence of *-aṇ* and *-antai*. The terms *antai* and *atai* occurring in these early inscriptions are closely related to the Old Tamil honorific suffixes *-attai* (here masculine, as in *añci-y-attai*) and *-attaṇ*. By a natural extension of meaning, male personal names like *āntai*, *anti*, *antuvan*, *atti*, *ātaṇ*, etc., and kinship terms like *t-antai*, *e-ntai* etc., are formed from the honorific usage of the pronominal base. A comparison of all these forms enables us to reconstruct **-ant-* as the dem. pronominal base for *antai*. It will also be seen that **-aṇṭ-* and **-ant-*, the basic forms of the two series of affixes are allomorphs and we can, therefore, posit a single PDr base **-aṇṭ-*

for the whole series of masculine singular pronominal affixes of the Third Person meaning ' he, that man ', used honorifically.

1.19. The identification of the symbol as the masculine singular pronominal affix of the Third Person used as a honorific with male personal names and titles explains satisfactorily the high frequency of the sign and its normal terminal position in seal-texts presumably consisting mostly of male names and titles. This identification also explains the multiple occurrences of the symbol in the same text. It has also been shown that while the pronominal honorific was normally suffixed, there are quite a number of attested cases in the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions where it is found in the initial position. There is to my knowledge no other recurring element in Dravidian name-formation which can so remarkably match the observed frequency, distribution and functional characteristics of the symbol under discussion.

. 1.20. The pictogram \cup seems to suggest some kind of a vessel with handles or pronounced rim or lip at the mouth and a tapering bottom. Some of the variants copied by Hunter would seem to make this identification almost certain.³⁶ Once the symbol is recognised as representing a vessel, the following etyma denoting several types of vessels of a generally similar form suggest themselves as good homophones for comparison with *-anṛ- :

DED. 110 : *antai* (Ta.) : squirt ; *aṇḍe* (Ka., Tu.) : vessel made of hollow bamboo etc., generally with a handle ; *andy* (Ko.) : milk-pot, bamboo pot ; *ady* (To.) : clay-pot ;

DED. 107, 109 : *aṇḍige* (Ka.) : one pannier ; *aṇḍemu* (Te.) : ibid. ; *aṇḍu* (Ka.) : bottom of a vessel ;

Ta. Lex. : *antai* (Ta.) : an ancient weight (measure?).

1.21. The following etyma having the general meaning ' male, elder person ' appear to be connected with the pronominal honorific *-anṛ, meaning ' he, that man ' :

DED. 111 : *andra* (Kui.) : a male ; *aṅḍrā* (Kur.) : male (of animals) ; *aṅḍyā* (Kur.) : a haughty man ; *aṅḍīra* (Skt., lex.) : a male.

DED. 2494 : *tantai* (Ta.) : father ; *taṅḍri* (Te.) : *ibid.*, etc.

1.22. The following personal, clan and dynastic names of Dravidian rulers are perhaps ultimately derived from the honorific usage of the pronominal affix *-anṛ- :

aṅṭiraṅ : a personal name of Āy. (*Puṛam.*, 129).

aṅṭar : clan name of chieftains of cow-herds (=āyar, *iṭaiyar*) ; (*Akam.*, 59).

āṭaṅ : a common personal name among the Chēras.

āṅḍhra : dynastic name of Āṅḍhra Kings.

The Symbol † :

1.23. The main characteristics of this symbol are its position as a terminal sign and its functional similarity with U . Both the symbols function as terminal signs not only at the end of the texts, but also in medial positions. Only either of these two symbols is found ligatured with † . In the quasi-final positions, both are followed by the same set of single variable signs. The preceding symbols or sequences in either case can be shown to be complete words by themselves, probably names and titles. There is, therefore, reason to believe that the symbol † like its functional twin U , is an integral suffix used in name-formations, as suggested by Hunter.³⁶ He was, however, mistaken in thinking that the sequences preceding the two symbols are mutually exclusive. Subsequent discoveries have shown that, there are, several symbols and sequences, notably- ††† which can end with either symbol.

1.24. The Soviet and the Finnish teams³⁷ regard the symbol as an inflectional ending on account of its terminal position and its alternation with other variable symbols, notably Uf .

1.25. Knorozov has suggested that the phonetic value of the symbol probably corresponds to Ta. *-kaṇ*, the ancient suffix of the locative, as the symbol closely resembles the Sumerian pictogram *igi*, meaning 'eye' (*kaṇ* in Tamil).³⁸ The resemblance to the Sumerian pictogram was also noticed earlier by Hunter and Heras, and in fact, the latter adopted the phonetic value *kaṇ* in the literal sense, "eye, to see" in his readings.³⁹

1.26. The Finnish team has identified the symbol as an arrow on the basis of a comparison with another Sumerian pictogram. According to them, the symbol functions as the dative case-ending, corresponding to Ta. *-ku*. Their attempt to derive the phonetic value *-k(u)* by acrophony (?) from *koṭ-* : 'end, point' (DED. 1704) and *koṭ-(u)* : 'to give' (DED. 1708) is however unconvincing.⁴⁰

1.27. There are other objections to the Finnish identification. One does not expect seals giving the owners' names to end in the dative. This objection is sought to be met by the suggestion that the seals ending in \uparrow are dedicatory.⁴¹ However, Dravidian dedicatory or votive texts do not end in the dative, as may be gathered from the Tamil-Brāhmī votive texts and the thousands of medieval temple inscriptions in Tamil. Internal evidence from the seal-texts also appears to contradict the Finnish view. According to them, 'names of gods' can be identified by the dative case-ending. And yet it is curious that two of the most important 'deities' according to the Finnish decipherment, \ast and \sim are never followed by the supposed dative sign \uparrow . In the circumstances, it is difficult to accept the proposed identification of the symbol as the dative suffix.

1.28. The functional similarity between \cup and \uparrow clearly indicates that the latter is also likely to be a nominal suffix used in Dravidian name-formation. I have suggested that the symbol \cup is the masculine singular pronominal affix of the Third Person. It is, therefore, possible *prima facie* that the symbol \uparrow could represent another grammatical category, say, the plural or the 'non-masculine' gender. However, the frequent addition of the

symbol to the single 'fish' signs makes it unlikely that it is the plural suffix. Again the 'fish' symbols, comprising about ten per cent of the total textual material and occupying the bulk of the medial positions in the texts, are unlikely to be in the non-masculine (=feminine) gender. The common sequences preceding \cup and \uparrow also make it unlikely that the two suffixes represent mutually exclusive grammatical categories. I, therefore, started with the working hypothesis that the symbol \uparrow represents another, and less frequent, element in the formation of Dravidian personal names and titles.

1.29. The comparative statistical data relating to the symbols \cup and \uparrow are instructive. According to Kondratov, the number of 'blocks' ending with the symbols is respectively 146 and 48 (approximately 3:1). He also calculates that the percentage of inscriptions ending with either symbol is respectively 30 and 7 (4.5:1).⁴² According to the Finnish team, the total occurrences of the two symbols are respectively 873 and 146 (approximately 6:1).⁴³

1.30. The next step was to apply rigorously the method of parallelisms as illustrated in the case of \cup . The Dravidian linguistic material chosen for comparative study was subjected to a positional-statistical analysis to identify any recurring nominal element with characteristics matching those of the symbol \uparrow .

1.31. The results speak for themselves. It turns out that the nominal endings occurring most frequently with old Tamil personal names and titles, next to the pronominal suffixes, are *-ai* and *-i* which may be considered together for reasons to be explained presently. The comparative statistics are as follows:

Names and titles occurring in	Pronominal suffix (-az)	Nominal endings (-i, -ai)	Approximate ratio
Tamil-Brāhmi Inscriptions (98 names).	99	31	3:1
Alphabetical List of Sangam Poets (first 100 names)	82	33	2.5:1

The parallel is close enough to suggest that if \cup represents the pronominal honorific (*-an*, *-ant-* in Ta.), then \uparrow is likely to represent the Dr. nominal endings (*-i*, *-ai* in Ta.).

1.32. The endings *-i* and *-ai* can be considered together for the following reasons :

- (a) They are inter-changeable (e.g. *uṟ-i*, *uṟ-ai* : 'place' (DED. 588); *var-i*, *var-ai* : 'line' (DED. 4304).
- (b) There was no diphthong in Proto-Dravidian. *Tolkāppiyam* (*eṟu.*, 54) clearly states that *ai* could be resolved as the vowel-cluster *a+i*.
- (c) The *-ai* ending in Tamil could be traced to **-ay*, and the final *-y* here can be considered as the variant of an older *-i*. *Tolkāppiyam* (*eṟu.*, 56, 58) also mentions that the final *-i* becomes consonantalised to *-y* and that *-i* and *-y* alternate in the final position. The Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions have many such pairs, (e.g.) *Kaṇi-i* (TBI, 3) and *Kaṇi-y* (TBI, 1).

1.33. The endings *-i* and *-ai* were probably independent formative suffixes originally ;

e.g., *vil-l-i* : an archer, a name, from *vil* : 'bow' ; *nikar-il-i* : 'one without equal', a title, from *nikar* (equal)+*il* (not).

1.34. The suffix *-i* is sometimes regarded as a non-masculine suffix which has been applied to masculine nouns at a later date. However, there is evidence from the earliest strata of literary works and inscriptions that the suffixes *-i* and *-ai* were also added to masculine nouns. Consider the ancient Tamil masculine names ending in *-i* like *añci*, *atti*, *avīni*, *eṟīni*, etc., and the *-ai* endings in *tantai* (masc.), *tanṅai* (fem.), *attai* (epicene), etc.

1.35. The archaic use of the independent suffixes *-i*, *-y* and *-iy* occurring in the earliest Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions should be specially noted ; (e.g.) *kaṇi-i* (TBI, 3); *kaṇi-y* (TBI, 1); *tantai-y* (TBI, 2); *kāviti-iy* (TBI, 3) and *vaṟutti-iy* (TBI, 1).

1.36. We may, therefore, expect to find after the names and titles occurring in the seal-texts a nominal suffix corresponding to TBI, *-i(y)* and *-a-i(y)*.

1.37. It is easy to recognise the object in the pictogram \uparrow . It is an arrow or a spear-head. Hunter has copied a variant (Table LXVIII, 1) which even shows the rivet-hole in the blade for fixing the arrow-head or the spear-head to the shaft.⁴⁴ Large numbers of copper and bronze spear-heads have been recovered from the sites of the Proto-Indian cities.

1.38. The recognition of the object in the pictogram as arrow or spear and the probable use of the symbol as a nominal suffix immediately suggest the following etyma with the meanings, "arrow, to shoot (as an arrow), to throw (as a spear) etc.": DED. 691 : *ey*, \bar{e} (Ta.) ; *ey-*, *iy-* (Ko.) ; $\bar{e}yu$ (Te.) ; etc.

1.39. The result has to be interpreted with caution. The Ta. *-ai* has been reconstructed to PDr. **-ay*. It is possible that the corresponding nominal suffix was pronounced **-ey* or even **-iy* in the Proto-Indian dialect. It is equally possible that the homophony in this case was only approximate and not an exact indication of the 'real' Proto-Indian form. However, the correctness of the identification seems to receive support from the following circumstantial evidence.

1.40. The symbol \uparrow occurs mostly in the digramme $\uparrow\text{ḷ}$ and with the other 'fish' symbols. There is reason to believe that the frequently occurring digramme is the generic name for the ruling class of the civilization, as judged from its frequency and positional and functional characteristics. The approximate phonetic value of the 'fish' sign ḷ appears to be **māḷ/n/ṭ-(v)* (See discussion, *infra*, on the 'fish' symbols). The digramme $\uparrow\text{ḷ}$ would then correspond to **māḷ-ey* which should be compared with (a) *māḷi*, *māḷai* (O.Ta.) : chief, great man, and (b) *mleccha* (Skt.) : name applied by the Āryans to the people encountered by them in India. The significance of this suggestion will be more fully discussed later.

Here it is relevant to note the regular phonetic correspondences, *ey-* (*ec-*), *eyk-*, *eg-*, *iy-* (*ic-*) etc., under *ey-* in DED 691.

1.41. While discussing the symbol \cup , it was suggested that the almost constant use of $^{*}(a)n\bar{r}$, as a honorific probably led to the derivation of personal or clan names like *aṅṭiraṅ*, *aṅṭar* and *Āndhra* from the pronominal suffix. It appears likely that a similar development took place in respect of $\hat{\cup} = ^{*}ey$ also. Thus we come across *evvi* (*Puṛam.*, 24) and *eyiṅaṅ* (*Akam.*, 181) as clan or personal names among the Vēḷir. This is significant as there are several converging lines of evidence suggesting that the ancestors of the people known in Tamil history as the Vēḷir constituted the ruling classes of the Proto-Indian civilization.

2. THE PRIEST-RULERS

2.1. The five 'fish' symbols stand out prominently in the Proto-Indian inscriptions. Their striking graphic resemblances and their almost identical positional and functional characteristics make it reasonably certain that the symbols express similar or related meanings. They occupy about ten per cent of the textual matter.⁴⁵ The proportion increases substantially if the attributes and the suffixes forming integral part of the 'fish' words are taken into account. The 'fish' signs generally occupy the central portions of the inscriptions. The evidence thus appears to indicate that in some manner the 'fish' words constitute the core of the seal-texts.

2.2. The inescapable resemblance of the symbol to a fish was first noticed by Gadd and Smith who also observed that the modifications in the other 'fish' signs "are not particularly natural as indicating different kinds of fish".⁴⁶

2.3. Hunter's meticulous analysis of the 'fish' signs has not, however, proved fruitful because of his pre-occupation with the supposed syllabic character of the signs. His conclusion that all the 'fish' signs and even the 'fish clusters' express one and the

same word with 'dialectal or phonetic' variations seems *prima facie* unacceptable. His suggestion that the 'fish' signs represented the Proto-Indian word for 'son' was a mere guess.⁴⁷

2.4. The work of Heras on the 'fish' sign marks the true beginning of the decipherment of the Proto-Indian script.⁴⁸ His vital clue was that in almost all the Dravidian languages, the word for 'fish', *mīn*, (DED. 3999) also means 'a star or planet', (DED. 3994). The identification is crucial in establishing the logo-graphic character of the script, the principle of homophony underlying it and the possibility of the language being Dravidian. Heras also proposed that all the 'fish' signs read *mīn*, but expressed different meanings like, 'star', 'shining', names of persons, etc. Starting from these premises, he built up his theories that the people of the Proto-Indian civilization called themselves '*mīna*' and practiced an astral religion. While Heras was not on the whole successful in deciphering the script, his pioneering ideas, particularly regarding the 'fish' sign, have influenced the recent work of the Soviet and the Finnish teams.

2.5. The Soviet scholars have followed Heras closely in interpreting the symbol 𑌕 as **mīn*, with the meanings 'star or planet' and 'shining'.⁴⁹ Gurov has added the identification 𑌕^m *mum-mīn* (Ta.) (*mṛgaśīrṣa*) to 𑌕^m *aru-mīn* (Ta.) (Pleiades) already proposed by Heras. He has suggested that these combinations could also be interpreted as personal names. However, Gurov's identification of 𑌕 pictographically as the carp and his interpretation of the symbol as **kay* (*key*) with the meanings 'Mars, red' may be due to a false lead since it is certain that the modifications of the 'fish' signs are artificial and cannot represent different natural varieties of fish.⁵⁰

2.6. The Finnish team's work on the 'fish' signs is of fundamental importance.⁵¹ They have extended, in a very logical manner, the idea of Heras that 𑌕 represents a star or planet, by proposing that each of the 'modified fish' signs represents a different planet worshipped by the Proto-Indians. They have

proposed the following identifications which will be of great interest to students of Hindu religion and mythology, though an examination of their full implications is quite beyond the scope of the present Paper :

Symbol	Phonetic Value in O. Ta.	Planet	Colour	Deity
𑀓𑀮	<i>ce-</i>	Mars	red	Śiva = Rudra
𑀓𑀭	<i>mā, māy, māl</i>	Saturn	black	Viṣṇu = Kṛṣṇa
𑀓𑀮𑀲	<i>ve i</i>	Venus	white	Balarāma
𑀓𑀮𑀲	<i>poṇ</i>	Jupiter	golden	Brahmā
𑀓𑀮	<i>pay</i>	Mercury	green	Gaṇeśa

2.7. The Finnish team has also made the following suggestions regarding the use of the ' fish ' symbols in the script :

- (1) The ' fish ' signs represent the divine names of planetary deities in the dedicatory inscriptions.
- (2) These also served as the personal names (of theophoric type) of people, mostly priests, in some seals.
- (3) The ' fish blocks ' consisting of two or three ' fish ' symbols represent planetary conjunctions.

2.8. A comparison of Dravidian name-lists with the seal texts indicates that the symbols occurring in the middle of the inscriptions are most likely to represent personal names. Dravidian names exhibit a fixed word-order. The place-names occur first followed by clan or professional names and then by personal names which are generally composite. In votive inscriptions the final elements generally relate to the objects gifted. Consider the following examples :

mattirai-y poṇ-kolavaṇ ātaṇ-a tāṇa (TBI, 30)

vēṇpaḷi-i aruvaivaṇikaṇ eḷa-a aṭaṇ (TBI, 43)

pākaṇ-ūr pērātaṇ piṭaṇ itta vēpōṇ(TBI, 12)

I, therefore, started with the assumption that the 'fish' signs which are mostly confined to the middle portions of the texts, particularly of the longer ones, probably represent personal names and titles. This presumption was strengthened by the fact that the suffixes \cup or \uparrow which indicate that the preceding signs and sequences are names and titles, are almost invariably added to the 'fish' signs. Yet another pointer is the occurrence of the 'fish' signs in clusters of two and three strongly suggesting composite names of the Dravidian type.

2.9. The 'fish' symbols can be divided into three categories on the basis of their frequency and positional characteristics :

- (a) $\hat{\text{Q}}$
- (b) $\hat{\text{F}}$ and F .
- (c) $\hat{\text{A}}$ and $\hat{\text{I}}$.

The Symbol $\hat{\text{Q}}$:

2.10. The Finnish scholars interpret the digramme $\hat{\text{A}}^{\text{TT}}$ as 'red star' (=Mars) and further propose that the symbol $\hat{\text{Q}}$ should itself be regarded as representing Mars, though they interpret the symbol as 'star' when suffixed to numerals. If the digramme $\hat{\text{A}}^{\text{TT}}$ means the 'red planet', it is unlikely that $\hat{\text{Q}}$ alone will have the same meaning. The morphography of the group of 'fish' symbols seems to require the presence of modifying elements for the recognition of distinct meanings. The much greater frequency of $\hat{\text{Q}}$ and its general use as an affix seem to indicate that it represents the generic name for the class of persons denoted by the 'fish' symbols.

2.11. The homophony, $m\bar{i}n$ (fish) = $m\check{i}n$ (star, shine), appears so irresistible that the phonetic value $*m\check{i}n$ has been accepted for the symbol by all the scholars working in the field within the Dravidian framework. A rigorous application of the method of parallelisms, however, shows that $m\check{i}n$ does not occur as an element in ancient

Dravidian personal or clan names or titles. Even the word *mānavan* cited by Heras and the Finnish team is only a periphrastic expression used in the literary works to describe the Pāṇḍyas or the fishermen tribes. The element *māñ* does not occur in any of the ancient Pāṇḍya names. There is also no evidence for the use of *māñ* as an epithet affixed to Dravidian personal names in the sense 'shining, glorious', etc. However, the technique of parallelisms requires that we should search for a widely used name or title associated with the meaning 'star, shine' and which can be connected with Proto-Indian names in some manner.

2.12. The clue came with the recognition that the intended homophone is probably **māñ*. Confer DED. 3994 for *miñ*-forms, (e.g.) *miṇa* (Ka.), *menu* (Tu.), *miṇuku* (Te.). It appears likely that Proto-Tamil also had the **miñ*-form, as indicated by *mīl-ir* (Ta. Lex.): to shine, glitter ($n > l$). A parallel to the alternation between *miñ* and *min* forms is provided by that of *viñ* and *vin-u* in DED. 4422. Once the original form is recognized to be **miñ*, rather than **min*, the possibility of alternations between $l/n/nt/t$ in this environment becomes clear. Compare *midugu* (Te.), *midkōs* (Go.), *biṇḍke* (Malt.), (DED. 3994), and *mīl-ir* (Ta. Lex.) These are regular phonetic alternations of the type exemplified by, say, *vēl*, *vēñ*, *vēñt-*, *vētt-* (DED. 4548, 4561). The reconstructed form is written **mīl/n/t-(v)* ($m=v$; $i=e$), conventionally to indicate the possible alternant forms for the 'shine' words.

2.13. The recognition of the original form **mīl/n/t-* for 'shine > star' immediately leads us to the old Tamil parallel *māli* (DED. 3990): lord, chieftain, hero, great man, etc. The epithet *māli* is derived from *mīl-ir*: to shine, and is thus connected with **miñ* (>*min*) form with the same meaning. The word *māli* also occurs in old Tamil as *mīlai*, though the connection does not seem to have been recognised. However, there is clear evidence for this in the alternant name *māli* (= *mīlai*)-*p-perum-patuman-ār*, (author of *Nar.*, 109). We should, therefore, interpret the word *mīlai*

occurring in personal names like *mīlai-k-kantaṅ-ār* (*Kurun.*, 196), *mīlai vēl tittaṅ-ār* (*Kurun.*, 284) as a title forming part of the personal names and not as the name of a place. In fact, the term *mīlai-nāṭu* (*Akam.*, 133 : 16) should be interpreted as the place of the *mīlai* and not connected with *miṭai* (*mīlai*) : bush (DED. 3991). It should be specially noticed that all the persons mentioned in the old Tamil works with the title *mīli/mīlai* appear to be Vēljir.

2.14. We are now ready to interpret the most common digrammes occurring with the 'fish' symbol ; †‡ : **mīl/n/t-(v)-ey* (cf. O.Ta., *mīl-i*, *mīl-ai*) : lord, chieftain. †‡‡ : **mīl/n/t-(v)-anṛ* (cf. O.Ta., *miṭal*, *miṭuk-k-aṅ*) : strong, powerful, proud man : (DED. 3970).

2.15. It has been suggested earlier that the symbol † represents the generic name or title of the class of people described by the 'modified fish' symbols. The suggested reading †‡ : **mīl-ey* immediately invites comparison with *mleccha*, the term used by the Āryans to describe the people encountered by them on their migration to India (*mleccha* < **mīl-ec* < **mīl-ey*). It now appears from the decipherment of these symbols that the Mlecchas of the R̥gveda were the chieftains of the Proto-Indian civilization, who called themselves **mīl-ey* (lit., the resplendent) and whose names occupy the bulk of the seal-texts.

2.16. In the light of the evidence furnished by the decipherment of the 'modified fish' symbols (See *infra*), the identity of **mīl-ey* and Ta. *vēl* also seems to be established. From the linguistic point of view it seems possible to propose the equation † = **mīl* = **vēl* on the basis of the alternations between *m* and *v* and between *i* and *e*. Compare *miṅ-*, *mīl-* : 'to shine' (DED. 3994, 3990) with *vil-*, *vel-* : 'to shine, bright' (DED. 4524), and *viṅ* ; 'sky' (DED. 4422).

2.17. The series of blocks formed by † with prefixed numerals can now be interpreted differently. The symbol does not literally represent a star or a planet in any of the inscriptions. As we

have seen, it is the generic name of the rulers of the Proto-Indian civilization. My investigations of the numeral signs in the script have shown that

- (a) where the numeral sign within a block is constant, it is not a 'true' number, but indicates a homophone with a different meaning :
- (b) where the numeral sign within a block is variable, it represents a true number ;
- (c) since the elaborately carved and carefully preserved seals are most unlikely to be mere inventories of enumerated articles, the numbers must relate to persons organised in numbered groups like septs or phratries of the Dravidian tribes, or other assemblages.

2.18. Old Tamil parallels tell us that the Vēḷir were divided into numbered groups (most probably, exogamous phratries) : (e.g.)

aim-peru-vēḷir : The Five (Great Vēḷir (*Akam.*, 125)

eṟu-vēḷir : The Seven Vēḷir (*Akam.*, 36)

paṭiṇoru vēḷir : The Eleven Vēḷir (*Akam.*, 246)

paṭiṇāṅku vēḷir : The Fourteen Vēḷir (*Akam.*, 135)

paṭiṇeṅ kuṭi vēḷir : The eighteen septs of Vēḷir (*Tol. Porul.*, 32, *urai*)

2.19. The Dravidian custom of numbered septs can still be seen among the Gonds of Adilabad.⁵² The names of their phratries are :

nal ven saga : The Number Four Phratry

si ven saga : The Number Five Phratry

sar ven saga : The Number Six Phratry

er ven saga : The Number Seven Phratry

Curiously enough the Gonds add up these numbers and consider that they have 22 phratries though the division is only four-fold. This is very instructive as a similar confusion may have resulted in the higher numbers mentioned in connection with the Vēḷir.

2.20. This discussion leads us to the conclusion that the 'numbered' fish-blocks relate to the phratry numbers of the rulers and not to stellar constellations. I should, however, mention that the digramme 𑌕𑌕 is in a special category as shown by the long strokes not used in the other numeral prefixes. This block possibly refers to a special group and reminds us of the Irunkō vēḷir who seem to have been a dominant group of Vēḷir (*Puram.*, 201). It is also just possible that the prefixed numeral 'three' in 𑌕 (found in the upper register unlike normal numerical signs) indicates the homophone **mūn̄r* : chief, eminent (DED. 4119) or *mūt(u)* : senior, old, (DED. 4053, 4057), cf. *toṇ mutu vēḷir* : 'The ancient great Vēḷir (*Puram.*, 24). It is, therefore, not unlikely that the phratry numbers among the Vēḷir, as among the Gonds, ranged only from four to seven (combinations of which produce the numbers 11, 14, 18 or 22). The numeral signs 4, 6 and 7 preceding the 'fish' sign may therefore be regarded as phratry numbers (The omission of 5 from the series seems accidental). The absence of a plural suffix after the 'numbered fish' blocks confirms my suggestion that each block refers to one numbered phratry.

The Symbols 𑌕 and 𑌕 :

2.21. These are the most commonly occurring 'modified fish' symbols. In particular, they frequently occur paired in either order. The Finnish discovery that the pair represents the planets Venus and Saturn is of crucial importance, as it leads us directly to the recognition of who the rulers of the Proto-Indian civilization were. However, it does not appear from their published papers that the Finnish scholars have realised the significance of their own discovery. This is perhaps due to their belief that the symbols

represent, in the literal sense, planetary 'deities' and the paired symbols stand for 'planetary conjunctions'. Neither assumption seems to be correct. Each of the 'modified fish' symbols represents a personal name or title and the clusters of 'fish' symbols represent composite personal names and titles.

2.22. When this correction is effected, the technique of parallelisms can be employed to find a solution. We have to search for two frequently occurring Dravidian names which should satisfy three criteria :

- (a) The names should be connected linguistically with the Dravidian terms for Venus (*Vēl-*) and Saturn (*mā*) ;
- (b) They should occur as a pair,
- (c) in either order.

2.23. No sooner the criteria were determined, than the answer presented itself. The paired 'fish' symbols correspond to the old Tamil *Vēḷir* names : *mā vēḷ* and *vēṇ mā-*. Study the following parallels from Tamil Sangam works :

- (i) *Mā Vēḷ Ā-ay* .. (*Puram.*, 135)
- (ii) *Mā Vēḷ Evvi* .. (*Puram.*, 24)
- (iii) *Mā Vaḷavaṇ* .. (*Paṭṭiṇa.*, 299)
- (iv) *Iruṅkō Vēṇ māṇ* .. (*Akam.*, 36)
- (v) *Naṇṇaṇ Vēṇ māṇ* (*Akam.*, 97)
- (vi) *Vēḷi māṇ* (*Puram.*, 162)

2.24. There is evidence that the names *mā vēḷ* and *vēḷ mā-* were not confined to the Tamil country. It is significant that the name *Mā vēḷa* occurs in the Chedi dynasty (*Mbh.*, I. 63). The Sanskrit names *Bali* (an ancestor of the Āndhras, according to the *Bhāgavatam*) and *Mahābali* seem to correspond to *vēḷ* and *mā vēḷ* (*bali*=*vēḷ*=sacrifice). The Rigvedic references to *Vailasthānaka* and *Mahāvailastha* as the 'ruined cities'⁵³ seem to connect **vēḷ*

with the Proto-Indian Civilization. The most important piece of linguistic evidence is however provided by the word *vēl* itself, which stands for 'chieftain' (DED. 4562) as well as 'to sacrifice' (DED. 4561). It will be remembered that Śukra (Venus; *velli* in Ta.; DED. 4524) was the *guru* (priest) of the Asuras. I interpret the linguistic evidence as indicating that the *vēlir* were the priest-rulers of the Proto-Indian Civilization.

2.25. While the Finnish scholars have identified 𐌺 as Venus and 𐌾 as Saturn, my investigations seem to show that the suggested identifications should be exchanged.

The Symbol 𐌺

2.26. The Finnish identification is based on their view that the sign is a ligature of 𐌸 with 𐌶. This does not seem to be correct. The variant forms cited by them seem to be rather cursively drawn variants of an altogether different sign, viz., 𐌶.

2.27. According to me, the modification consists of two upper strokes on either side of the 'fish' symbol. Hunter has copied a variant showing that the two strokes probably represent horns.⁵⁴ In all the 'modified fish' signs, only the modifying elements are phonetically significant. The addition of the horns may indicate *mā* (DED. 3917): animal. Probably a 'horned beast' was originally meant, (e.g.) *mān* (Ta.): deer, beast. Also see *māy* (DED. 3779): sharp, sharpen, to grow sharp. Ta. Lex. gives 'nail' as one of the meanings of *mā*. Saturn was known as '*mai-mān*', the 'dark' planet (Ta. Lex.); *mā, mai*: dark, black (DED. 3918, 3927).

2.28. What does *mā* mean in this context? It is clearly a title affixed to personal names. I do not, however, think it means 'great'. In spite of the weighty authority of the D.E.D. (3923), I would suggest that *mā*, in the sense of 'great' is really derived from Skt., *mahā*. **mā* in these names is not an attribute as it is sometimes found suffixed; *mā* appears to be present in names like

vēṇmā-ṇ, *vēṇmā-l*, *mā-l*, *mā-k-kaḷ* etc., with the pronominal/nominal suffixes *-aṇ*, *-aḷ*, *-al*, *-kaḷ* after them. While it is grammatically possible to derive *māṇ* from *makaṇ*: ‘son,’ it noteworthy that the suffix is almost always used with Vēḷir and Chēra names. I suggest that the term *mā* means, ‘chieftain, noble or official’. This meaning can be clearly gathered from words like *kāviti-mākkal* (ministers), *kōyil-mākkal* (palace or temple officials) etc. A probable explanation of the term is that the chieftains wore a headgear of horns as shown on some seals and as still practised by some Dravidian tribes. *mā* is used in old Tamil works to describe a man ‘in the shape of an animal’ (*Puraṇ.*, 28).

The Symbol † :

2.29. This ‘fish’ symbol is modified by a mark which seems to represent the eaves of a roof, as pointed out by the Finnish team. We may compare *vaḷavi* (DED. 4346): sloping roof, eaves; *vaḷavu* (DED. 4349): arch, vault; *veḷumpu* (DED. 4463): edge—all derived from **vaḷ-ay*: to bend (DED. 4349). The modifying element may also be regarded as the conventional representation of the sky (‘vault of heavens’) on the basis of Sumerian and Egyptian analogies (Hunter, p. 203). This will furnish the homophones, *viṇ* (DED. 4422): sky; *veṇ-*, *veḷ-* (DED. 4524): bright (as sky), Venus, as the ‘shining’ planet. The corresponding O.Ta. names are *vēl*, *veḷi*, *vaḷavaṇ* etc.

2.30. As mentioned earlier, the dual meanings of *vēl*, ‘chieftain’ (DED. 4562) and ‘to sacrifice’ (DED. 4561) constitute important linguistic evidence for the presence of priest-rulers in early Dravidian society. The word *vēl*: ‘to sacrifice’ (DED. 4561) is connected with the root *vēl/ṇṭ*: ‘to desire, pray, wish’ (DED. 4548).

The Symbols † and † :

2.31. These two ‘fish’ signs behave exactly alike. However, unlike the pair †† , they seldom occur together. The Finnish

interpretation of the signs as Jupiter and Mercury is not acceptable as there are no ancient Dravidian names associated with the two planets. We can, however, make a reasonable guess about the identity of these two planetary signs by a process of elimination. The sun and the moon are unlikely to be represented by the fish symbols; Venus and Saturn have already been accounted for; Jupiter and Mercury have no Dravidian parallels in name-formations; Mars is unlikely because we have a closely related pair here. Thus the ascending and the descending nodes, the shadow or serpent planets, (Skt., *rāhu* and *ketu*) are the only possibilities. The inference is strengthened by the graphic modifications and is almost conclusively confirmed by parallels in Dravidian names.

The Symbol ♣ :

2.32. This 'fish' symbol is modified by a vertical stroke, which suggests:

- (i) *ō(-ṅku)* (DED. 870) : to ascend ;
- (ii) *sō-* (DED. 2344) : to come out, emerge (as sun and moon) ;
- (iii) *cō(ṅ)ku* (DED. 2346) : devil, demon, evil spirits ;
- (iv) *sō-, ṅccu* (DED. 2351) : to drive away, cause to go by beating ;
- (v) *ōccan* (DED. 874) : priest.

2.33. While there seems to be no surviving Dravidian word for the ascending node, the collection of etyma made above provides enough evidence to suggest **cō-* as a possibility. The term also seems to have acquired the meaning of liberation from the evil influences of the serpent-planet. In the light of this evidence, the derivation of *ōccan*, priest, from IA., *ojhā* (DED. 874) requires reconsideration.

The Symbol † :

2.34. This 'fish' symbol shows a slanting (not horizontal) stroke which immediately suggests: *cāy* (DED. 2026): to incline, decline, as a heavenly body; slope, slant, declivity: *cāy* (DED. 2028): to release, cause to leave. The term *cāy-kōl*: descending node, seems to have been assimilated later to Skt. *chāyā-graha*. It should be noted that as with *cō-, the term *cāy* also seems to indicate both the shadow-planet and liberation from its influence.

2.35. The Dravidian tradition regarding the shadow-planets or the serpentine demons, *rāhu* and *ketu*, is very ancient. The eclipses are caused by the serpents swallowing the sun and the moon. Both the nodes are associated with evil spirits and diseases and regarded as ill-omens. The liberation of the sun and the moon from the serpents is greeted with ceremonial bathing in sacred waters. It appears probable that the Great Bath at Mohenjodaro was connected with ritualistic bathing during eclipses. It is also probable that the Proto-Indian priest knew how to calculate the occurrence of the eclipses, and he would have been less than human if he had not used this knowledge to create awe and respect for himself. Since the priestly rituals appeared to liberate the sun and the moon from the evil influence of the serpent-planets, the ability of the priests to exorcise the evil spirits on earth (probably identified with *rāhu* and *ketu*) would have been obvious to the Proto-Indians. This seems to account for the strange fact that the Proto-Indian priests named themselves after the serpent-planets. The names probably indicate that the priests were also the exorcists. The unbroken continuity of Indian beliefs and rituals built around the eclipses and the peculiarly South Indian (Dravidian) taboos connected with the inauspicious *rāhu-kālam* provide strong evidence that the suggestions made here are not mere speculations.

2.36. It now appears that the Vējir known to us from the old Tamil works had names probably derived from the ascending and the descending nodes. The suggested identifications are :

*cō>ō, ōy, ōvīyar (*Puṟam.*, 176, 376 ; *Cīrupāṇ.*, 122).

*cāy>ā-ay, āy, āvi, āvīyar (*Akam.*, 69 ; *Puṟam.*, 129, 147).

2.37. The Ōy clan lived in Ōymā-nāṭu, the territory included in modern South Arcot district.⁵⁵ Tradition connects this Ōy clan with the Nāga (serpent) race. The connection between *cō and Ō-y might have remained conjectural but for the lucky survival in the old Tamil poems of the name *Cō-paṭṭinam*, the port in Ōymā-nāṭu (the *sōpatma* of the *Periplus*, the modern Markāṇam).

2.38. The Āys appear to have been a more numerous clan judged from the references to them in Tamil literature.⁵⁶ (It is interesting that even in the Proto-Indian seal texts, † out-numbers ‡ by almost two to one). The Āys occupied the Southern-most end of the Tamil country included in modern South Kerala and Tirunelvali districts (the ancient Vēṇ-nāṭu and Nāñcil-nāṭu). We learn from the Āykuḍi copper-plates (T.A.S., I, 12) that the Āys claimed to belong to *vṛṣṇikula*. This connects the Vēḷir with the Yādavas. The Āys are also associated with the Nāga (serpent) race. The phrase *cāy(-a) vēḷir* occurring in the old Tamil *nikaṇṭus* confirms the identification *cāy>Āy.

2.39. The evidence does not end there. Mention was made of the connection of the Āy and the Ōy clans with the Nāga race. The most common title of the Vēḷir Chieftains was *ara(i)yar*. It has been considered that this word is derived from Skt. *rājan* (DED. 167). What makes this etymology suspect is that, in the Tamil tradition, the honorific *ara(i)yar* is not applied to the kings but only to the Vēḷir nobles, chieftains and officials. A precious clue is the survival of the form *tara(i)yaṇ* as an alternant to *ara(i)yaṇ* (e.g.) *Villa-v-ara(i)yaṇ* and *Villa-tara(i)yaṇ* ; *Viṟup-p-araiyaṇ* and *Viṟuppa-tara(i)yaṇ*, *Mut-tara(i)yar* etc. The etymology of *tara(i)yar* as those who rule the land (*tara(i)*) is unconvincing. The alternation between *ara-y-* and *tara-y-* is strong linguistic evidence for an original **cara-y* which means 'serpent'. Compare *ara* (Ta.), *saras* (Ko.), *taras* (Go.) etc., for 'serpent' (DED. 1949). I would,

therefore, suggest that the Vēḷir, whose clans bore the names of the two serpent-planets, called themselves **cara-y>tara-y/ara-y-(ar)*. The Tiraiyar who lived in the northern districts of the Tamil country in the ancient times seem to be connected with this name (**tara>*tera->tira-*).⁵⁷ I also suggest that this is the true origin of the name *aravar* (DED. 264) for the Tamils, lit., the people of the serpent (clans).

2.40. The ancient Dravidian custom of serpent-worship was in origin probably the worship of the serpent-planets. The entwined serpents carved on stones found under the pipal trees in almost every South Indian village probably represent the twin serpent-planets. The association of Siva, Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa with serpents may also have the same origin. The legends of the five-headed and the seven-headed serpents are probably connected with the well-known five or seven clans of the Vēḷir.

2.41. The astonishingly close parallels between the clusters of the 'fish' symbols occurring on the Proto-Indian seal-texts and the composite names and titles borne by the Dravidian Vēḷir is brought out in the examples given below. It is necessary to emphasise that the blocks of 'fish' symbols and the Dravidian names are taken from *actual* occurrences :

' Fish Blocks '	Prob. phonetic values	O.Ta. Parallels
↑𑀓	<i>mi(ṣ)ḥ/ṣ/t-ey</i>	<i>mīṣi, miṣai, ve(ḥ)ḥ-i</i> (Skt., <i>mleccha</i>)
U𑀓	<i>mi(ṣ)ḥ/ṣ/-anṛ</i>	<i>miṣ-ṇṣ, miṣuk-k-ṇṣ, miṣ-ṇl</i>
𑀓𑀓	<i>mā ve(ḥ)ḥ/ṣ</i>	<i>mā vḥḥ</i>
𑀓𑀓	<i>ve(ḥ)ḥ/ṣ mā</i>	<i>vḥṣ mā(-ṣ), veḥi mā(-ṣ)</i>
↑𑀓𑀓𑀓	<i>mā ve(ḥ)ḥ/ṣ cāy ey</i>	<i>mā vḥḥ āy evri</i>
𑀓𑀓	<i>cāy ve(ḥ)ḥ/ṣ</i>	<i>āy vḥḥ</i>
U𑀓	<i>cāy anṛ</i>	<i>āy-ṇṣ ; āy āṣiṣa(-ṣ)</i>
↑𑀓	<i>cō ey</i>	<i>ō-y</i>

The parallels are so close and so numerous that they constitute the best evidence of the essential correctness of the interpretation proposed here.

The Symbols 𑌛 , 𑌜 , 𑌝 :

2.42. A comparison of the pair of the 'modified fish' symbols 𑌛 and 𑌜 with the corresponding pair 𑌝 and 𑌞 is instructive. These are obviously linked by the use of similar 'modifying' elements. From this we can infer that the unmarked symbols 𑌛 and 𑌝 are similarly related. The pictograms clearly suggest the idea of a combination. We may, therefore, interpret the symbols as representing the collective entity of a clan or tribe. Then 𑌝 and 𑌞 represent the clans of the ascending and the descending nodes respectively while 𑌛 and 𑌜 represent the individual members of the two clans. The pictogram 𑌛 can be interpreted through the homophones,

(1) *kūtu* : to come together, join, meet, combine (DED. 1562)

(2) *kūttam*, *kūttar* : clan or tribe: members of a clan or tribe (ibid., Ta. Lex.)

The term *kūttam* is used even today as the specific technical term to connote the totemistic clans among the *Vēlāḷalar* of the Tamil country.

The Symbol 𑌟 :

2.43. It is convenient to deal with this symbol in this section because of its close functional similarity to 𑌛 . Compare the blocks 𑌟𑌛𑌛 and 𑌟𑌜𑌛 . Hunter's identification of the symbol with a 'horned man' representing a hero or god offers the best explanation.⁵⁸ The Soviet scholars regard some of the variants of the symbol as 'a horned personage' and others as 'a female personage with uplifted hands and large breasts'.⁵⁹ However, the analysis of the sequences proves that all the variants constitute a single symbol, as pointed out by Hunter and the Finnish team.⁶⁰

The Finnish interpretation of the symbol as a 'star' takes no account of the pictorial representation and cannot, therefore, be accepted.⁶¹ According to my interpretation, the symbol is a title or name as it alternates with the symbol 𑌕 . It represents a male name as it is followed almost invariably by 𑌕 the masculine singular suffix.

2.44. The etyma grouped in DED. 986 offer good possibilities; *kaṇṭaṇ* (Ta.): warrior; *gaṇḍ* (Ko.): male; *gaṇḍa* (Ka.): a strong, manly, male person; *gaṇḍu* (Tu.): male, valiant, etc. The root **ka(n)ṭ-* is particularly found in words describing horned male beasts. See *kaṭamā* and other entries in DED. 935 for bison, stag, antelope, etc., and also *kaṭavu* (Ta.): male of bull, buffalo, ram, etc. (DED. 943).

2.45. A parallel is found in the use of *kaṇṭaṇ* as a favourite title by the Vēḷir and the Chōḷas: The Vēḷāḷar of the Tamil country (the descendants of the Vēḷir) have retained the honorific till this day in their names; c.f., *kaṇṭar*, *kavunṭaṇ* and 'gouṇḍer' (the last two from Ka. *gaṇḍa* < *gaṇḍa*). We can, therefore, regard the digramme 𑌕𑌕 as corresponding to **ka(n)ṭ-anṛ* (O.Ta. *kaṇṭaṇ*: male person of status).

The 'enclosures' to 𑌕 :

2.46. This symbol is frequently enclosed between two sinuous or curved lines like this: 𑌕𑌕 , 𑌕𑌕 , 𑌕𑌕 . The lines appear to represent serpents as suggested by the first variant given above. I have already suggested the derivation of *ara(i)yaṇ*, the most common Vēḷir title from **cara-y*, serpent (DED. 1949). It is, therefore, possible to equate the block 𑌕𑌕𑌕 with **cara-y-kaṇṭ-anṛ* (O.Ta. *ara(i)y* [-*an*] *kaṇṭ-an*).

The Symbol 𑌕𑌕 :

2.47. This symbol functions as a prefixed attribute, mostly before 𑌕 and 𑌕 . Its position and obvious resemblance to the Sumerian pictogram *lugal* ('great') make it likely that it is an attri-

bute. This is also confirmed by the determination of the values of 𑌕 and 𑌖 as titles or honorifics. However, the symbol 𑌗 is one of the very few symbols in the script which cannot stand by itself, as noted by Hunter.⁶² It is, therefore, likely to be a true adjective, not a noun functioning as an attribute. Heras proposed the value *per* (-u) 'great' and the suggestion has recently been revived by Gurov.⁶³ The identification, however, is not supported by any argument based on homonymy. The Finnish suggestion that the pictogram 𑌗 represents the concept 'straight, just' with the phonetic value corresponding to *Ta. ce-m* (also meaning 'red') is an improvement, though their identification of the pictogram as a flower (*Ixora*) fails to carry conviction.⁶⁴

2.48. It is almost certain that the pictogram 𑌗 represents a weapon, somewhat like the later trident, with a toothed head mounted on a long shaft or staff. In accordance with the method of parallels, we have to look for a word in Old Tamil which represents a weapon and was widely used as a prefixed attribute.

The following homophones seem to be apt :

(1) *neṭṭai* : a kind of weapon. (*Ta. Lex.* citing *Patir.*, 42, 3, commentary). The description of the weapon in the pictogram as 'long or tall' seems to fit in.

(2) *neṭu-* : (a) tall, great (*DED.* 3099).

(b) a common attribute to kings and deities in Old Tamil (e.g.) *neṭu māl* : *Viṣṇu* ; *neṭiyōn* : *Viṣṇu* or *Murukan* ; *neṭu vēl* : *ibid* ;

Neṭu-ñ-cēral-ātaṅ, *Neṭu-ñ-killi*, *Netu-ñ-çeriyāṅ* : examples of kings' names with the attribute '*neṭu*' : 'great'.

2.49. The following parallels are particularly interesting :

$\text{U}^{\text{𑌖}}\text{𑌗}$: **neṭ-(v) ka(n)ṭ-(v) anṛ* : (cf. O.Ta. *Neṭuñ-kannan* : the name of a Pāṇḍya, (*Akam.*, 373). Here, as also in

Ceṅkaṇaṅ, the name is related to *kaṅṭaṅ* or *kaṅa-(v)-aṅ* and not to be derived from *kaṅ*, eye.

† 𑌕𑌗𑌛 : **neṭ-(v) miḷ/n/ṭ ey.*, cf. O.Ta. *neṭu miṭ-al* (*Akam.*, 266) : a personal name ; *neṭu-vēḷ* : ' A great Vēḷ ' ; also a deity (Viṣṇu or Murukaṅ).

- 𑌕𑌗𑌛 : **neṭ-(v) mā* : O.Ta. *neṭumā-l* : Viṣṇu ; *neṭumā-ṅ* : a king's name or title.

The Vēḷir are described as the descendants of *neṭiyōṅ* or *neṭu-muṭi-annaḷ* (Nacc., on *Tol.*, *Pāyiram* and *Poruḷ.*, 34) who is considered to be Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa. The terms used by the commentator seem to be astonishing survivals of Proto-Indian usage. In the light of the decipherment, we can consider **neṭu-mā*- etc., to be the Priest-King of the Vēḷir, whose apotheosis resulted in the later Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa cult. It is ' Proto-Viṣṇu ' and not ' Proto-Siva ', who seems to be the presiding deity of the Proto-Indian civilization.

The Symbol 𑌕 :

2.50. The pictogram has been interpreted by the Soviet scholars as a personage carrying a club on his shoulders.⁶⁵ Volcok has expressed the view that the symbol probably represents a deity which could be regarded as one of the predecessors of Vedic Yama, since Yama has the constant epithet *daṇḍin* or *daṇḍadhara* in Sanskrit,—' one who carries a club '.⁶⁶ The Finnish team has drawn attention to the realistic portrayal of the symbol on an ivory plaque (which shows a personage with a crown, carrying a club over his shoulders) and has drawn the inference that the symbol means ' great '.⁶⁷

2.51. According to the morphology of the script, anthropomorphic signs refer to human beings. Hence the symbol 𑌕 can be regarded as a person of high authority or status. The key to the recognition of the meaning and the phonetic value of the symbol lies in the special element, *viz.*, the staff carried on the shoulder, which distinguishes the sign from the other anthropo-

morphous symbols. The identification of the special element as a bamboo rod or staff connects it with the following homophones :

- (1) *vēy* (Ta.): bamboo, bamboo rod (DED. 4559; Ta. Lex.); *vetir* (Ta.), *veduru* (Te.): *ibid.*, (DED. 4514); *mētar*, *mētaravar*, *mētavar* : A class of people who do bamboo work (Ta. Lex.); (*v* > *m*).
- (2) *vēntan* (Ta.): 'king' (DED. 4549); *vēttiya-* (in cpds.): 'of kings' (Ta. Lex.).
- (3) *vēy-ar* : a class of brahman priests; *vētiyar* : brahmans, priests : (Ta. Lex.).

2.52. According to Indian tradition, both the king and the priest carry a staff representing royal or religious authority. It is, however, more likely that the Tamil word *vēntan* (DED. 4549) is really derived from *vēy*, to cover or thatch (DED. 4552), and signifies a 'crowned' personage, as pointed out by N. Subrahmanyam (PPTI, p. 791). According to the old Tamil tradition only the *vēntar* (kings) were entitled to wear the crown and not the *vēlir* (chieftains). The sign is, therefore, not a direct ideogram, but a phonogram based on the homophony between **vē-y/t* : bamboo staff and **vēy-nt* : a crowned personage.

2.53. The linguistic connection between *vēnta-* : 'king' and *vētiya-* : 'priest', has not been so far recognised, no doubt due to the Indo-Āryan tradition of the separation of the functions of the king and the priest, the latter being represented by the brahman in later Hinduism. The apparent resemblance between Skt. *veda* and Ta. *vētiya* has further masked the true etymology of the word. According to my interpretation, **vē-y/(n)t-(v)* (>*vēntan*, *vē(t)liyan*) represents the King or the High Priest, or rather, the Priest-King, even as **vēl/n* signifies both a chieftain and a priest. These two words form the most important linguistic evidence that in the Pre-Āryan Dravidian society, the functions of the priests and the rulers were performed by the same persons. This clearly takes us

to the age of the Proto-Indian polity and to the analogies of the priest-kings in the contemporary West Asian civilizations.

2.54. We have direct evidence in the so-called 'Paśupati' seal regarding the type of 'crown' worn by the Proto-Indian dignitaries. The 'crown' consisted of a headgear made from buffalo-horns. The tradition is still maintained by many tribal societies and finds its echo in Ta. *kompaṇ* (lit., the horned person) : a great or clever man. The recognition of the likely meaning of **vē-y/(n)t* as a personage crowned with buffalo horns and the possibility of alternation between *v/m* (see the Ta. 'bamboo-worker' words quoted above) suggest an interesting parallel :

mēti, *mētiyaṇ* : buffalo ; a buffalo-faced demon slain by Durgā ; Yama (riding on a buffalo). (Ta. Lex.).










Here we seem to have a link with Mahiṣāsura, the buffalo-faced demon whose destruction probably signified the victory of the Āryans over the Dravidians; *mēti* (*mahiṣā sura=yama*) represents the buffalo-horned Proto-Indian High-Priest or the Priest-King, who is depicted on the 'Paśupati'-type seals.







2.55. It is astonishing that the *vēntar-vēṭir* group of the old Tamil civilization should also occur in the Proto-Indian polity, though, of course, in a very different social milieu. The digramme 𑌕^* **mū-vēy/(n)t* offers an interesting comparison with Old Tamil *mū-vēnt-ar*, the three 'crowned' kings. However, I regard the constant prefix as an attribute, **mu-(nṛ-)* : 'chief' (DED. 4119) or **mu-(nt-)* : 'senior, great' (DED. 4053, 4057). The expression **mū-vēy/(n)t*, can thus be interpreted as 'the Great Priest-King'.

3. THE ACROPOLIS AND THE LOWER CITY

The Symbols 𑌕 , 𑌖 and 𑌗 :

3.1. These three symbols form a notable set graphically and functionally. Their most marked characteristic is their introductory position in the inscriptions. They commence the texts in

about 15 per cent of the inscriptions. They are generally accompanied by one of the three 'strokes': ' , ' or ' . They constitute independent blocks along with the strokes. The sequences following them can be shown to be separate words, most probably representing names or titles. In particular, the functions of  and  appear to be very similar. They both act as introductory symbols largely before the 'fish' blocks and the series formed by the symbols  or  with the 'numeral' signs. The proportion of  to  in the initial position is 2 : 1. The symbol  occurs with much less frequency in comparison with the other two symbols. The symbols  and  occur in linear or circular forms which are seen to be mere graphic variants from the sequences.

3.2. Hunter suggested that  and  are probably deities and that the appended strokes function as the dative suffix.⁶⁸ Heras regarded  as the sun in the literal sense.⁶⁹ He considered the linear and circular forms of the other two symbols as distinct symbols and generally interpreted them as place-names.⁷⁰ He suggested that the stroke ' stood for the locative-ending after the place-names.⁷¹ The Finnish team has identified the pictograms ,  and  as depicting the (potter's) wheel, the conch and the plan of a city respectively.⁷² They interpret all these symbols as divine epithets or royal titles. The strokes appended to the symbols are identified as pronominal suffixes.⁷³ The phonetic equations suggested by the Finnish team are, however, linguistically unsatisfactory.

3.3. In order to ascertain the probable functional character of the 'introductory' symbols, I turned to the Dravidian name-lists to identify any predominant element in the initial position. It proves to be decisively the place-name. Out of the 98 composite personal names in the Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions, 25 begin with place-names. The alphabetical list of the 'Sangam' poets has 473 names, out of which 184 (39 per cent) commence with place-names. We may, therefore, assume as a working hypothesis that the three 'introductory' symbols represent place-names.




3.4. This supposition receives strong support from the appearance of the stroke \cdot most frequently appended to the 'introductory' symbols. It appears possible to determine its value through the homophones, $*ir-$: 'two' (DED. 401) and $*ir-$: 'to be in a place, to reside' (DED. 407). In Old Tamil, the locative suffix also acts as the possessive suffix and is frequently used to indicate the residence of a person in a place or his belonging to a group of persons. This explains well the behaviour of the stroke which seems to follow place-names and personal names. The following examples will bring out the dual function of $-il$, the locative-possessive suffix :

(i) *añci-l añci-y-ār* : Añci of (lit., in) the house (of) Añci (author of *Nar.*, 90).


(ii) *Rājarāja-t-terinta valaṅkai vēlai-k-kārar-il varakuṇaṅ cīrāḷaṅ-u-kku-p-paṅku mukkālum* : Three-fourth share to Varakuṇaṅ Cīrāḷaṅ of (lit., in or among) the Rājarāja-t-terinta valaṅkai vēlai-k-kārar (a regiment of king's bodyguards). (S.I.I., II, 66).


3.5. The other two strokes, \cdot and \cdot , also have precisely the same functions and must, therefore, be locative or possessive suffixes. They appear to be conventional and their phonetic value cannot be fixed by homonymy. This problem can, however, be tackled by the method of parallels. Inscriptional and literary evidence in Old Tamil attests to the use of only three suffixes in this environment, *viz.*, the attributive-possessive ending $-a$, the locative-possessive suffix $-il/n$ and the locative-possessive oblique case ending $-t$. The stroke \cdot has been identified with $*ir$ ($=il$, in). One of the other two must therefore correspond to $-a$ and the other to $-t$. A clue is provided by the fact that while $\textcircled{\cdot}$ can be followed by \cdot , the other two members of the set cannot be. As we shall see presently, $\textcircled{\cdot}$ appears to end with a long vowel and the other two with consonants (ignoring the enunciatory vowels). On this basis, I propose the equations $\cdot = *a$ and $\cdot = *t$.

3.6. The next point for determination is the type of place-names one is likely to come across in the seal-texts. The obvious possibility that each 'introductory' symbol represents one city is ruled out as the proportion of the occurrences of these symbols is approximately the same on the seals recovered from various sites. We are, therefore, left with the possibility that these symbols stand for places or institutions which existed in every Proto-Indian city.

3.7. It turns out that the symbols  ,  and  appear to represent respectively the Temple, the Citadel (Acropolis) and the City and indicate the place of residence as well as the status of the seal-holders.


The Symbol  :

3.8. It is difficult to accept the Finnish identification of the pictogram as a wheel, as there is no evidence that the Proto-Indians knew the spoked wheel. A comparison with Babylonian sculptures seems to indicate that the symbol may be a conventional representation of the sun. An important piece of internal evidence is the symbol  which clearly shows the sky above the orb and shadows cast below. (I have provisionally identified this symbol as the moon or the night).

3.9. The identification of  as the sun suggests the following homophones :

- (1) *vē-* (DED. 4540) : To be hot (as the sun) (e.g.) *veyyōn* : sun ; *veyyil* : sunlight, heat of sun.
- (2) **vē-* (DED. 4550, 3635) : god, demon, spirit. (e.g.) *vē(n)diđ*, *vē(n)diđ* (Pa.), *vē(n)diđ* (Ga.), *vēnu* (pl. *vēnga*) (Kui.), *pēn* (Go.), *pēnu*(Kui), *pēy* (Ta.), *pē-* (Ka.), *pēyi* (Tu.) : god, demon.

We can deduce that **vē(-ñk)* was used as a place-name from later Dravidian evidence. *Vēngi* occurs as the name of the country of the Eastern Chālukyas and of the capital city of the Sālañkāyanas. *Vēñkai*, tiger, became the emblem of the Chōlas, probably because

the name of the animal is homophonous with **vē-ñk*. We can recognize two Dravidian words **vē-* (deity) and **ku(ñ)ṭ-a* (Lord) in the name of *Vēñkaṭa*, the Lord of the Seven Hills. The name of the rivers *Vaikai* and *Vēga(-vati)* (<**Vēkai*) flowing through Madurai and Kanchipuram respectively seem to be connected with **vē-(ñ)k*. One of the eighteen gaṇas who accompanied the Vēḷir to the south was known as *vēñ-il-ālar*. We may thus interpret the symbol , **vē-(-ñk-/nt)*, as meaning 'in the temple,' 'of the temple' or 'among the persons in the temple' or 'belonging to the Deity' (when followed by a suffix).

3.10. The archæological evidence on the existence of the temples in the cities is meagre. However, there is adequate evidence from the general character of the civilization to warrant the presumption of the existence of a Temple as the central focus of civic-religious life. Sumerian and later Dravidian parallels of temple-cities also support the idea.

The Symbol  :

3.11. The Finnish identification of the pictogram as a conch by the collation of variants is a piece of brilliant deduction. This forms the basis of the phonetic correspondences proposed by me :

- (1) **cur-*, **cūr-*, **cur-* (DED. 2211, 2223, 2238 respectively) : to be curved or spiralled (as the conch) ; e.g., *curi-mukam* : conch ; *cōri* : 'cowry' ;
- (2) **cūr-*, **cur-* (DED. 2223, 2238) : to surround, surrounding place or persons.

Consider the following examples :

- (i) *cūr-al* : place, locality (Ta. Lex.).
- (ii) *cūr-aka-(irukkai)* : fortified capital (Ibid.).
- (iii) *cūr-v-ōr* : counsellors, ministers (Ibid.).
- (iv) *urī*, *urai* : place, site, esp. about a king (DED. 588).

- (v) *uṟai-y-ar*, *uṟai-y-arar*
uṟai-y-iruntār } king's counsellors, attendants;
 those who live in *uṟai*.
 (Ta. Lex.).
- (vi) *ūṟi-y-ar* : servants or attendants at temples or palaces
 (DED. 646 : but this appears related to 2223).
- (vii) *curram* : attendants esp. of a king (DED. 2238).
- (viii) *kuṟu* : assembly (DED. 1513) ; acc. to O.Ta. usage the
 term is used for assemblies or committees constituted
 by or under royal authority ; cf. *aim-peruṅ-kuṟu*.

The collected etyma show the initial consonant $c > k, t$ or \emptyset and the final consonant alternating between $r, ṟ$ and $ṛ$. The phonetic equation for the Symbol can be written in the conventional form $*cur/ṟ/ṛ-(v)$; ($c = k, t$ or \emptyset)

3.12. Here we have, almost certainly, the term for the Citadel or Acropolis that is such a characteristic feature of the Proto-Indian cities. "Harappan uniformity begins with the basic conception of the city plan. At Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Kalibangan, this consists of two distinct elements : on the west a 'Citadel' mound built on a high podium of mud-brick, with the long axis running north-south, and to the east, apparently broadly centred upon the Citadel, a 'lower city' consisting of what must have been the main residential areas" (Allchin, 1968, p. 238). The Citadel was without doubt the Acropolis, the centre of religious and secular authority. This is amply borne out by the public character of the buildings on the Citadel at Mohenjodaro, the Great Bath, the Collegiate Building, the Pillared Hall and the Granary. "The general indication of a combined kingly and priestly rule fits the habit of the Third Millennium" (Wheeler, 1966, p. 18). The parallel with the Dravidian civilization portrayed in old Tamil poems and inscriptions is no less striking. Terms like *aka-nakar* (*Maṇi.*, 1-72) and *aka-nilai* (*Cilap.*, V : 161) for the 'inner city' and *Puṟa-k-kuṟi* (*Maṇi.*, XXVIII : 4), *Puṟa-nilai* (*Cilap.*, V : 180) for 'outer town' preserved in old Tamil works indicate the

existence of a city-plan very similar to the Proto-Indian type. Thousands of temple inscriptions, particularly of the imperial Chōlas, enumerate numerous temple and palace attendants. We shall see later that many of the symbols of the seal texts can be interpreted on the basis of these parallels. The block '◇' can, therefore, be interpreted to mean 'in the Citadel' or 'of the Attendants'.

The Symbol ◇ :

3.13. The pictogram has been universally interpreted as the plan of a city. The walls of the city and the streets intersecting at right angles are unmistakable. There are several Dravidian words for a city. However, in accordance with the method of parallels, we should find a word which was in ancient use and which specifically connotes the idea of a *planned* city.

The selected homophones are :

(1) *pāṛi* (Ka.) : row, line, regularity (DED. 3384).

(2) *pāṛi* (Ta.) : town, city, temple (DED. 3383).

(3) *pāṭi* (Ta.) : (a) military encampment (prob. because of the planned row of tents).

(b) town, city (DED. 3347).

3.14. The word *pāṛi* in old Tamil literature is specifically associated with the Vēḷir cities. Āy and Miñili fought a battle at Pāṛi (*Akam.*, 208). The name of the city of Naṅṅaṅ Utiyaṅ was Pāṛi (*Akam.*, 15). *Toṅ-mutu-vēḷir* (a term generally used to denote the remote ancestors of the Vēḷir, probably before their southern migration) stored gold at Pāṛi (*Akam.*, 375). The city of Pāṛi had a 'red' fort and its walls shone like copper (*Akam.*, 375). This description closely resembles that of the legendary 'three forts' (*Tiripuram*) destroyed by Siva. These parallels provide strong evidence that the Dravidian name for the Proto-Indian cities was approximately **pāṛ/n/t(-v)*.

3.15. The symbol \diamond represents the 'lower' city where the commoners like artisans, agriculturists and traders must have lived. This provides a satisfactory explanation for the paucity of this symbol on the seals which mostly belonged to the ruling classes living on the Acropolis. This also explains the nearly identical use of \diamond and \otimes , as the persons 'in the Citadel', and 'of the Temple' must have been from the same group. There are also instances of priests in the lower city or commoners in the Acropolis, no doubt to perform specific civic or religious functions.

3.16. The decipherment of the 'introductory' symbols confirms what the archaeologists have suspected ever since the cities were excavated, viz., the fundamental division of the Proto-Indian society into the priest-rulers of the citadel and the common people of the lower city. The decipherment has also brought out two astonishing historical parallels set out below :

First Parallel :

$*cur/\underline{r}/\underline{r}-(v)$	<i>Cōṛa, Cōḍa, Cōḷa, Cūṭu, Tuṭu ;</i>
$*pā\underline{r}/(n)\underline{t}-(v)$	<i>Pāṇṭiya, Paṛaiya ;</i>

Second Parallel :

$*cur/\underline{r}/\underline{r}-(v)$	<i>Kuru > Kaurava (c=k) ;</i>
$*pā\underline{r}/(n)\underline{t}-(v)$	<i>Pāṇḍu > Pāṇḍava.</i>

3.17. I interpret the linguistic evidence thus :

The First Parallel : The people of the Citadel, the Priests and the Attendants, correspond to the Vēḷir of Tamil history. It will be shown presently (section 5) that the people of the lower city correspond to the Kōcar (lit., mountain people) of the Tamil country. After the collapse of the Proto-Indian civilization, the Vēḷir and the Kōcar migrated to the South maintaining their separate identity. There is evidence to show that the route of their southern migration

lay through the Indo-gangetic plains, Gujarat, the coast of Konkan and the Tulu territory into the Tamil country. Early Tamil history can be re-interpreted as virtually a battle for supremacy between the Vēḷir and the Kōcar. The Vēḷir occupied most of the fertile plains on the eastern and western coasts and built up the powerful Chōḷa and Chēra empires which were really grand confederacies of the Vēḷir Chieftains. The Kōcar, true to their origin as the hill people, occupied the central highlands included in the Kongu and the Pāṇḍya territories and built up the Pāṇḍya Kingdom. The traditional division of the old Tamil rulers into the three *Vēntar* (kings) and the many *Vēḷir* (chieftains) has obscured the fact that the original and fundamental division was between the Vēḷir (including the Chōḷas and the Chēras) and the Kōcar (including the Pāṇḍyas). The bitter Chōḷa-Pāṇḍya wars lasting for centuries in the Tamil country were the final echoes of the conflict between the ruling citadel-dwellers and the oppressed city-dwellers of the Proto-Indian civilization. The only memories of the earlier epoch were, however, the vaguely remembered legends about the earlier 'Sangam' Ages, the sacerdotal origins of the Vēḷir and the 'fish' flag of the Pāṇḍyas, the symbol of their erstwhile servitude under the 'fish' people. (*Vide* Excursus A on the history of the Vēḷir and Excursus B on the history of the Kōcar).

The Second Parallel: The Kurus seem to be connected with the ruling classes of the Citadel and the Pāṇḍus with the common people of the Lower City. The serpent-flag of Duryōdhana, the leader of the Kurus, should probably be traced to the serpent-planets worshipped by the Citadel people. The equation of the Pāṇḍavas with the people of the Lower City receives some support from the fact that both the groups appear to have been mountain-people in origin (*See* Section, 5). The Great Bhārata War can be seen in this light as the struggle between the ruling classes and the rebellious commoners of the Proto-Indian polity. The victory of the Pāṇḍavas signified the end of the old order and the collapse of the civilization based on it. The Kurus and the Pāṇḍus remaining in the Pāñcāla and the Doab must have become 'Aryanised'

in course of time and the Epic, even in its earliest version, was probably no more than a record of the dim recollections of a distant past,—in fact the Northern equivalent of the Tamil legends of the earlier 'Sangam' Ages, based on similar racial memories of vaguely remembered events. Both the great traditions converge on the cities of the Proto-Indian civilization. It is here that we reach the bedrock of unity of the Indian peoples.

4. THE INSTITUTIONS ON THE ACROPOLIS

4.1. In an earlier section we considered the symbols relating to the High-Priest and the priests. We shall now deal with the other two categories found associated with the Citadel :

- (a) High officials or nobles (also from the priestly classes) in charge of institutions ;
- (b) Temple or Palace attendants and guards.

The Symbol \times :

4.2. Heras identified the symbol as a crab and interpreted it as the name of a city and its people.⁷⁴ The identification is incorrect as the crab is represented by an altogether different symbol. The Finnish identification of the symbol as a two-sided drum with one side open to indicate a single-sided drum fails to carry conviction. They interpret the symbol as a priest; but their choice of the word *tampala* (?) is linguistically unsatisfactory.⁷⁵

4.3. The key to an understanding of the symbol is to realise that it is lying 'on its side', and should be turned through 90° to get the correct orientation. This is a normal feature of many signs of the script, as demonstrated by the 'bird' signs with their legs in the air. The correctly oriented pictogram \times immediately tells us what is: the trunk of a body. Notice the waist and the open neck. This leads us to the homophones :

- (1) *iṭai* (Ta.), *eḍa* (Ka.) : waist, (DED. 380).

(2) *ed* (Ko.), *ede*, *erde* (Ka.), *ede* (Tu.) *eda* (Te.) *edram* (Pa.) : trunk, chest, breast (DED. 683).

(3) *irai* (Ta.), *ere* (Ka.), *era* (Te.) : lord, master, chief (DED. 448).

The etyma in (1) look ultimately to *itū-ñk(u)* : to be constricted, narrow (DED. 378). Similarly the etyma in (2) can be derived from *irū-k(u)* : to contract, constrict, (DED. 447). We can thus posit the root **ir-*, for deriving both the groups through *t* <*r*> *t*. The pictogram may, therefore, suggest the homophone **ir(-ay)* : lord.

4.4. Proper names are of course 'untranslatable' though we may etymologise to get at their origin. It is usually more fruitful to establish historical parallels for the names. These are found by comparing the *it*-forms with *iṭai* : a clan name and the *ed*-forms with *yadu* > *yādava* (Skt.) : A famous Non-Āryan people having their seat of power at Mathurā and later at Dvārakā. Confer the Tamil-Brāhmī form *Yaḍu* (Arikamedu).^{7b} The addition of the symbol to all the varieties of the 'fish' signs proves that **ir(-it-, ed-)* served as a general epithet for the priests whom we have already identified with the Vēḷir.

4.5. The decipherment of the symbol confirms the persistent southern tradition connecting the Vēḷir (particularly the Āys) and the Iṭaiyar with the Yādavas. In fact, most of the Dravidian royal dynasties including the Āndhras, the Chalukyas, the Hoysalas and the Yādavas in the Karnāṭaka and the Vēḷir Chieftains (counting the Chēras and the Chōḷas in the group) in the Tamil country claimed to be Yādavas. The Sanskrit tradition that the Yādavas were a non-Āryan people though held in high esteem is also confirmed. The special relationship of the Yādavas with the Kurus can now be interpreted as due to racial affinity. (*Vide* Excursus A)

The Symbol ≡ :

4.6. This is a frequently occurring terminal sign with the functional characteristics of a title or epithet. Its virtual identity with the corresponding Sumerian pictogram *pin*, *apin* (plough) has

been noticed by all the workers in the field. The symbol is of great cultural significance for proving the existence of the plough in the Proto-Indian civilization and the connection between the Sumerian and the Proto-Indian scripts. Both Heras and the Finnish team have regarded the symbol as a honorific epithet, the former proposing the phonetic value *uṛavar* (from *uṛu*, to plough) and the latter, the value *mēṭi* (from *mēṛi*, plough).⁷⁷ Neither suggestion is acceptable as there are no Dravidian parallels for such usage.

4.7. A clue to the recognition of the correct phonetic value is furnished by the Sumerian pictogram which actually shows a yoke with the plough.⁷⁸ This suggests the homophones :

- (1) *cēr* : plough ; plough with yoke (DED. 2313)
(from *cēr* : to be united, DED. 2312).
- (2) *cēr* : granary (Ta. Lex.).
(from *cēr* : to be collected, DED. 2312).

Here then we have the word for the great Granaries excavated at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Since the context indicates a person rather than an institution, the symbol can be interpreted as the Keeper of the Granary, undoubtedly a very important official since the Granaries were the Public Treasury or, in the words of Wheeler, ' the State Bank '.

4.8. There are several parallels for names formed from *cēr* or its inflected forms ending with *-(n)l*, *-p*, or *-v*. The most important parallel is furnished by the name *Cēra* (the Chēras), one of the three great Tamil dynasties. There are several corroborative details to substantiate the identification. The Chēras were essentially superior Vēḷir Chieftains and took Vēḷir women in marriage. A part of the Chēra territory was known as *Vēṇāṭu*, the country of the Vēḷir. The area was also known as *nāñcil-nāṭu*, the country of the plough, suggesting that the homophonous emblem of the plough had not been forgotten. The royal emblems of the

Travancore kings, the conch and the wheel (as it was later identified) also seem to have a similar origin. The legend regarding the feeding of the armies of the Bhārata War by an ancestor of the Chēras (*Puṛam*, 2) acquires a new significance from the finding that the **Cēr-a* was in charge of the granaries. Other names and titles in Old Tamil which appear to be connected with **cēr-* are *cē(r)ntaṅ*, *cērppaṅ* and *cērvai*.

4.9. An interesting parallel is provided by the name *Cedi*, which appears to be an inflected form of **cēr*. (cf. *cērd-*, *cēd-*, *cēnt-* forms in DED. 2309 and 2312). According to the Mahābhārata (I, 63), the Cedi kings descended from the Kurus and had non-Āryan names like *Māvēla* and *Yadu*. It is significant that Balarāma, the Yādava prince, had a plough as his weapon (*halāyudha*).

The Symbol ∪ :

4.10. This is a common symbol and forms $\uparrow \parallel \cup$, one of the most frequent combinations in the script. The Finnish team has identified the pictogram as a mortar with pestle.⁷⁰ Their later interpretation that the digramme represents a deity is based on their incorrect identification of \uparrow as the dative sign.⁸⁰

4.11. Excavations have brought to light wooden mortars sunk into the ground and surrounded by brick platforms (S. Piggott, 1950, Pl. 3). The related homophones are :

(1) (a) *kuṭṭ-u* : to pound (DED. 1391).

(b) *kur-u*, *kurr-u*, *kutt-u* : to pound as in a mortar (DED. 1536).

(c) *kuḍy* : pit-mortar (DED. 1383).

(2) (a) *kuṭṭ-am*, *kuṭṭ-ai* : small pond, pool, pit (DED. 1389).

(b) *kuṇṭ-am*, *kuṇṭ-u* : pond, pit (ibid.).

(c) *kuṇḍa* (Skt.) : round hole for water or sacred fire (ibid.).

4.12. The symbol \cup can thus be interpreted as standing for a sacred pool of the type represented by the famous Great Bath at Mohenjodaro. The Great Bath has often been compared with the sacred 'tanks' adjoining the Dravidian temples. The comparison is apt. However, it now appears that the importance attached to the Great Bath or the Sacred Pool by the Proto-Indians was far greater. The legends of the origin of the *Vēḷir* (including the Chalukyas and the Hoysalas) from a *kunṭa*, variously identified with a fire-pit, water-pit or water-pitcher, should now be re-interpreted as referring to the ancient origin of these people from the Place of the Sacred Pool.

4.13. There are three blocks which refer to the Priests specially connected with the Pool. Two of them are digrammes :

$\cup\cup$: **kuṭ anr* ; cf. O.Ta. *kuṭṭan*, *kuṭṭuvan*.

$\uparrow\cup$: **kuṭ ey* ; cf. O.Ta. *kōtai*.

In later Tamil tradition, both these frequently occur as Chēra names. Also compare *Kuṭṭanātu* : the country of lakes, or the country of the Chēras (Ta. Lex.).

4.14. The trigramme $\uparrow\parallel\cup$ connected with the Sacred Pool occurs very often on the seals. The earlier Finnish reading of the first two symbols as *kur mun* is essentially correct, though they have not realised its significance.⁸¹ The trigramme in fact stands for 'the Chief (Priest) of the Sacred Pool'. The symbol consisting of the three long strokes suggests the homophones :

(1) **mū-nr*-(u) : three (DED. 4147).

(2) **mū-nr*-(u) : superiority, priority, eminence (DED. 4119)
(Ta. *muṇi*, *muṇai*).

(3) *mut-al* : principal, chief, headman (DED. 4053).

(4) *mut-u* : old, senior (DED. 4057).

4.15. The most frequently recurring block in the texts,
 †𑀓𑀣 produces an astonishing Dravidian parallel :

**kuṛ munṛ ey* : cf. O.Ta. (1) *kuṭa muṇi*

(2) *kuṛu muṇi* : Agastya (Skt.)

Incredible as it may seem, the Chief (Priest) of the Sacred Pool turns out to be none other than Agastya himself ! There is adequate evidence to substantiate the identification. According to legend, Agastya was born in a water-pitcher, a story which immediately connects him with the Vēḷir. The word for 'pitcher', *kuṭa-* (DED. 1376) is practically identical with *kuṭṭa-* 'pool', (DED. 1389). The near-identity between *kuṛ-* and *kuṭ-* makes it certain that the story of Agastya's 'dwarfishness' is spurious and caused by the linguistic confusion between *kuṭṭ-* ('pond', DED. 1389) and *kuṛ-* ('short', DED. 1537). The legends about Agastya's origin in the water-pot, his southern migration on a colonising mission, his authorship of the first Tamil grammar and his residence in Potiyil or Potikai, the characteristic Vēḷir institution of an Assembly Hall and his being the *kula-guru* of the Pāṇḍyas—all provide irrefutable evidence that Agastya was a Vēḷir priest-ruler (or rather, a clan). The term '*agastya*' itself seems to be of Dravidian origin. A frequent introductory formula in the seal-texts is '𑀓 **aka-t-*, (O.Ta. *akattu*) meaning 'inside', that is, 'within the Citadel or Temple-Palace'. Thus the Chief Priest of the Sacred Pool was an '*akattiyar*', one who lived inside the Citadel or the Temple.

4.16. The term *muṇi* or *muṇai* has also Dravidian and specifically Vēḷir parallels. *Muṇaiyar* are enumerated among the eighteen Vēḷir clans which migrated south. One of their colonies was called *Muṇai-p-pāṭi* and they distinguished themselves as commanders under the Tamil kings.

The Symbol 𑀣 :

4.17. This is one of the commonest symbols. It is generally found preceding 𑀓 or 𑀣. The Finnish suggestion that the sign

represents a 'great person' fits the context; but the Sumerian analogy through which the pictogram is equated to a 'garden' is not close.⁸² I interpret the pictogram as a pillar set on a base. This gives the following set of apt homophones :

- (1) *pōtikai* (Ta.): capital of a pillar, stake; *pōtika* (Ma.): *bōdige*, *bōduge* (Ka.); *bōdigē* (Tu.): capital of a pillar; *bōdiya*, *bōde* (Te.): trunk of a tree (DED. 3746).
- (2) *potikai*, *potiyil* (O.Ta.): residence of Agastya, a Vēḷir city, a Hall of Justice, Assembly Hall, platform under a tree in village common (from *potu*: common. DED. 3684).

Old Tamil literature contains many references to the word. Agastya lived on a hill called Potikai or Potiyil (*Akam.*, 25). Many Vēḷir cities were called Potiyil (*Akam.*, 322; *Puṛam.*, 128). The Vēḷir themselves were called Potuvar (= *Iṭaiyar*) (*Paṭṭiṇa.*, 274-282). Numerous references in the Sangam works (*Akam.*, 127 etc.) tell us that *potikai* was an important social institution of the Vēḷir and the Kōcar. This was a meeting place, generally under a tree, of the Village Elders. The archæological evidence leads us to connect **poti-k(v)* with the Pillared Hall in the Citadel at Mohenjodaro which is now seen to be the Assembly Hall or Palace, analogous to O.Ta. *potikai*.

The Symbol 𑀓 :

4.18. This is a frequent terminal sign occurring alone or ligatured with the suffixes U or 𑀓. The pictogram clearly shows a person with a pole across his shoulders carrying loads suspended on either side. Gurov has suggested an apt pair of homophones :⁸³

kā : pole with ropes hung on each end to carry loads on the shoulder (DED. 1193).

kā : to protect, guard (DED. 1192).

He suggests that the symbol could stand for a protecting deity, or for the word 'protection' (associated with amulets) or for a

weight (when preceded by numerals). The Finnish team also gives two widely differing meanings to the symbol, starting from *kaṛai* : pole (DED. 1155) : ⁸⁴

(1) *-kaḷ* : plural suffix.

(2) *kaṛ(-u)* : wash, bathe (>bath) (DED. 1154).

The difficulty with these interpretations is that they are not consistent and do not suit the context. The phonetic values proposed by the Finnish are not acceptable on linguistic grounds.

4.19. The terminal position of the symbol and its ligature with U or ↑ indicate that it is a honorific of a male person. The preceding numerals indicate a group rather than a single person. I suggest that the phonetic and functional values can be deduced through these homophones :

poṛ(-u) : (a) to bear a burden ; load, weight (DED. 3729).

(b) to take responsibility, to undertake, carry out,
to undertake an office (DED. 3729).

(c) seal (of office) (DED. 3728) (O.Ta. *Porai*).

Old Tamil usages are instructive. The noun *poṛi* : seal (lit., responsibility) may actually be earlier than the verb : *poṛi* : inscribe, as the verbal form in this sense is not found outside Tamil. *Poraiyāṭṭi* (Ta. Lex.) occurs in the sense of a priestess attached to a temple. In the light of this evidence, we may interpret the symbol as a priestly official attached to the Temple-Palace and entrusted with specific responsibilities. It is not likely that the symbol stands for a 'seal' as the morphographic pattern of the script indicates that anthropomorphous signs always stand for human beings. The ligatured symbols may be compared with O.Ta. *Porai* and *Poraiyan* (Chēra names).

4.20. The decipherment of the symbols has revealed that the group, later known as the Chēras in the Tamil history, occupied the highest status in the Proto-Indian Priestly hierarchy and held

all the most important offices. The **Cēr-(a)* were the Keepers of the Granary. The **Kutt-(a)* were the Priests of the Sacred Pool. The **Por-ey* were the Keepers of the Seals and Functionaries in the Temple. From this evidence it can be inferred that the High-Priest or Priest-King **Vē-y/(n)t* was himself probably a "Chēra".

The Symbol  : The Scribe.

4.21. The scribe was an important person in all the great ancient civilizations. He was generally a priest and entrusted with the accounts of the Temple. His knowledge of writing, probably a jealously guarded science handed down from father to son, gave him unique prestige and a voice in temple and civic administration.

4.22. The symbol represents a row or series of lines within an enclosed space. This suggests the following homophones :


- (1) *vari-cai* : order, regularity, line, row, series (DED. 4310).
- (2) *var-(ai)* : boundary, limit, ridge of a field, enclosure (DED. 4301).
- (3) *var-i* : line, streak, stripe, course (as of bricks) furrow, rule (DED. 4304).
- (4) *vari, varai* : to write, to scratch, inscribe, cut ; writing, letter of alphabet, manuscript writer, scribe, clerk (DED 4304).

A glance at the entries in the DED. shows that the only widely prevalent word in Dravidian languages for 'writing' is **var-(v)* (DED. 4304). It is significant that the word is connected with the roots, 'to cut, inscribe, scratch', etc., indicating its origin.

4.23. Old Tamil inscriptions preserve the word in two forms the true meaning of which does not seem to have been so far recognized :

- (1) *vāriyan, vāriyam* : The inscriptions dealing with temple and village administration use these terms frequently,

in the sense of executive committees or officers elected by the villagers from time to time to look after various aspects of civic administration.⁸⁵ This appears to be a later development when the self-governing village communities in the Tamil country reached their zenith during the Pallava and the Chōla periods. In its origin, the term *vāri-y-aṇ* probably connoted the scribe or the accountant who maintained the temple accounts. The term is clearly connected with the root *vari*, *varai* : to write.

- (2) *mārāyaṇ*, *mārāyam* : The temple inscriptions list *mārāyam* as a temple service (S.I.I., II, 66). The term is also used in the sense of ‘ messenger, good news ’ etc. (Ta. Lex.). The derivation proposed by Ta. Lex. from *mahārāja* is clearly incorrect as it does not suit the context. If the attribute *mā* is separated, the true meaning of the word is recognised, particularly when it is compared with the Telugu forms, *vrāyu*, *rāyu*, *rāsu* : to write, a scribe (DED. 4304). The antiquity of the phrase *mā-rāya* (The chief scribe) can be inferred from the frequent digramme
 **mā-var*-(v) on the seal texts.

The Symbols ృ and ౄ :

4.24. These two symbols occur frequently and occupy about three per cent of the textual matter according to the Soviet and the Finnish tabulations.⁸⁶ The most marked characteristic of the symbols is the prefixed numeral signs. In fact a large number of the texts merely consist of these symbols with prefixed numbers with or without one of the ‘ introductory ’ blocks preceding them, e.g. ృ¹ ౄ² ృ³ ౄ⁴

4.25. Langdon suggested that the symbols represented an inflection or postfix placed after numeral signs.⁸⁷ Hunter amplified the idea by proposing that the symbols represented the ordinal

suffix.⁸⁸ The Soviet suggestions that the symbols may represent a measure (a 'handful') or some other 'especially classified suffixes' occurring after numerals also follow the same trend of thought.⁸⁹ However, I have already pointed out how unlikely it is that these carefully cut seals should be mere inventories. It has also been established that in the cases of the 'fish' symbol that the preceding numerals represent the phratry number of the person mentioned in the seal-text. It thus became clear to me that the symbols 𑌒 and 𑌓 represent categories of persons organised in some numerable groups. The recent Finnish proposal that the symbols represent 'tax-collectors' is not supported by Dravidian parallels.⁹⁰ However, their earlier suggestion that these symbols denoted 'workers' turns out to be nearer the mark.⁹¹

4.26. The Finnish team considers the two pictograms 𑌒 and 𑌓 to be merely graphic variants of the same symbol on the basis of identity of sequences. This is, however, not an infallible test. For example, the signs 𑌔 and 𑌕 occur in identical contexts but are different from each other. Similar is the case with the pair 𑌖 and 𑌗. There are many more examples of such signs showing that modifications of symbols were utilised in this script to represent similar but not identical meanings. Hunter pointed out that the difference in morphography of the two symbols was 'marked', though he too considered that they represented the 'same word'.⁹² It turns out, however, that 𑌒 and 𑌓 represent functionally similar but distinct categories of persons. A precious clue, apparently overlooked by the previous investigators, is that 𑌘 is followed only by 𑌓 and never by 𑌒

4.27. The symbols represent the fore-arm. A careful study of the variants of each of the two symbols shows that 𑌒 represents an 'open' hand with all the five fingers spread out and 𑌓 represents a 'closed' hand with the fingers kept together. According to the morphographic scheme of the script, it is the modifying elements which are crucial in such cases. The two postures suggest :

- (1) *vil* (*vel*) : to open, expand, spread out (DED. 4459, 3446).
 (2) *kōl* : to seize, hold ; grasp (DED. 1788).

4.28. A search for Dravidian parallels for numbered groups with similar names and connected with the idea of ' hands ' yielded immediate results. Medieval temple inscriptions tell us about the two great formations in the armed forces of the Tamil royal dynasties, viz., the *vēla(i)paṭai* and the (*kai-*) *kōl(ar) paṭai*; (*paṭai* : army formation). Both the formations constituted the elite corps of the army and generally served as the personal body-guards of the king.⁹³ According to tradition, they were sworn to defend the person of the king with their lives and to kill themselves on the death of the king. The prefix *terinta* or *teriñca* found before the names of these Formations in the inscriptions has been interpreted as ' select ' or ' elite '. However, it is almost certain that the word is derived from *tērru* : to swear, take an oath (DED. 2856) as this was the special characteristic of the group. Scores of these formations are known to us from epigraphs, generally named after some bombastic Sanskrit title of the king under whom they served. The inscriptions sometimes refer to numbered formations (A.R.E. 120/1905). They had a corporate entity and made and received endowments as such. Some examples are given below :

Vēlai-kārar :

- (1) *Rājarāja-t-terinta valānkai vēlaiikkārar*.
 (2) *Vikramābharaṇa-t-terinta valānkai vēlaiikkārar*.
 (3) *Kṣatriya śikhāmaṇi-t-terinta valānkai vēlaiikkārar* (S.I.I., II, 66).

Kai-k-kōl(ar) :

- (1) *Pārthiva śekhara-t-teriñca kai-k-kōlar* (ARE, 491 of 1918).
 (2) *Samarakesari-t-teriñca kai-k-kōlar* (Ibid., 24 of 1895).
 (3) *Vikramasimha-t-teriñca kai-k-kōlar* (Ibid., 278 of 1911).

4.29. It is relevant for our purposes to note the following differences regarding the two formations :

- (1) While both the groups served under the Chōlas, the Vēlaikkārar were never known to have served under the Pāṇḍyas. It appears that the reason is that the Vēlaikkārar (related to the Vēḷir as indicated by their name) considered themselves socially superior to the Pāṇḍyas who seem to be the ruling clan of the Kōcar confederacy. Similarly the Vēlaikkārar groups figure as temple attendants only in the Chōla inscriptions. (*Vide* Section 5 and Excursus B on the Kōcar).
- (2) The Vēlaikkārar prefixed the epithet '*valaṅkai*' 'right hand' which is conspicuously absent from the name of the other group. However, the variant '*kōlar*' occurring in the inscriptions for *kai-k-kōlar* proves that they also had the prefix *kai*: 'hand'. By implication the (*kai*-)-*k-kōlar* represented the 'left hand' forces. This is strengthened by the fact that the *kōḷ(ar) paṭai* was made up of the Kōcar, the group which ranked lower than the Vēḷir in the social scale. R. Raghava Iyengar noticed the connection and even derived *kōlar* from *kōcar* (*Kocar*, p. 57). The great division of the Tamil castes into 'right hand' and 'left hand' groups seem to be connected with this schism.

4.30. In the light of the Old Tamil parallels we may now interpret the symbols thus :

𑌕 : open (right hand) : **vil/vel* ; O.Ta. : (*valaṅkai*) *vēlai* ;

𑌖 : closed (left hand) : **kōḷ* ; O.Ta. : (*kai*-) *kōḷ(ar)* ;

It may be seen that the 'open hand' with spread-out fingers shows the thumb at the right end showing that it is the right hand (facing the reader). It is known from the morphography of the script that human figures and asymmetric symbols face to the right.

4.31. Combining the Old Tamil evidence with what we have already learnt about the Proto-Indian social structure, we may draw the following picture : The Citadel housed, in addition to the priests, the Palace and Temple attendants and guards. These were drawn from both the major social groups, viz., the people of the Citadel (Vēlir) and the people of the City (Kōcar). They were called the 'Right-hand' and the 'Left-hand' attendants respectively probably from the position they occupied in the presence of the Priest-King or the Deity, no doubt an indication of their relative social status. They were divided into a number of formations indicated by the prefixed number to the symbols. The seals are the corporate official seals of the formations. They lived in separate "cantonments" (as we also learn from Tamil epigraphs) designated by the symbols O and O . From the analogy of the Old Tamil inscriptional *vēlam*, *vēlakam*, *viḷākam*, (the quarters of the *vēlai* regiments), we can equate the symbols with **vēl-aka* and **kōl-aka* respectively; *aka-m* : inside, house (DED. 8).

4.32. The recognition of the symbols for the attendants leads to an understanding of the meaning of λ , a common epithet occurring before the 'attendants' symbols and also before the 'fish' sign. Langdon drew attention to the resemblance of the symbol to the Sumerian pictogram 'bad', 'open' (M.I.C., II, p. 454, No. 15). Assuming that the symbol has the same pictorial value in Proto-Indian, it seems possible to interpret it through the Dravidian word *tir-a* : to open (DED. 2667).

We can identify the meaning of the symbol through the following etyma homophonous with **tir* > **tēr* :

ter-r-u : to become tied together (as a man who is closely bound to, a servant, connection, friend) (DED. 2836).

tēr-r-u : to swear, take an oath ; *tēr-unar* : trust-worthy persons ; *tēr-inar* : tested or tried friends (DED. 2856).

4.33. In the medieval inscriptions, we find the attribute *terinta* or *terin̄ca* applied to the army formations consisting of persons who had sworn fidelity and taken an oath to protect their sovereign with their lives. Hence it is likely that these inscriptional terms are derived from **tēṛ-* : 'faithful, trust-worthy'. In the old Tamil poems we come across *tēr* as an attribute to personal names, e.g., *tēr vēḷ*, *tēr ceṟṟiyaṇ* etc. It does not appear that in this context *tēr* could mean a 'chariot'. It is likely that, as in the inscriptions, the attributive *tēr* found in the poems is also derived from **tēṛ-* and should have originally meant, 'faithful'. The symbol λ therefore corresponds to **tīṛ* or **tēṛ* and means 'faithful', 'sworn to fidelity' or 'dedicated (to the service of the king or the deity)'.

4.34. The digrammes $\gamma\lambda$ and $\delta\lambda$, **tīṛ-viḷ*/**tīṛ-miḷ* which occur commonly in the seal-texts are of great significance for another reason. The phrase seems to be the origin of the word 'Dravidian' itself. The probable derivation is suggested below :

tīṛ(-v)-viḷ(-v)*/tīṛ(-v)-miḷ(-v)*>

tīṛamiḷa, *tīṛamiḍa* > *dramiḷa*, *dramiḍa* > *drāviḍa*.

The original meaning of the term *drāviḍa* was therefore 'a faithful or dedicated Vēḷ' (cf. *tēr-vēḷ* : *Puram.*, 133). The title may be compared with *tamiṛ-ara(i)yaṇ* or *tamiṛa-taraiyaṇ* occurring in the medieval inscriptions.

The Symbols U and U :

4.35. These symbols must represent masculine singular personal nouns as they are invariably followed by U. A comparison of the two symbols with each other makes it clear that they represent a pair of uplifted arms. The essential difference is that in U the fingers are open, while in U, the fingers are tightly shut. According to the morphography of the script, it is the modifying elements which are phonetically significant. Hence U can be connected with *viḷ(-veḷ-)* : to open, spread out; U will then express *kēḷ* : (to) grasp. My interpretation is that these two symbols

stand for the chieftains or commanders of the formations of attendants and guards with similar names and represented respectively by the symbols 𑀓 and 𑀔 . A comparative study of the pictograms makes it clear that 𑀕 is not connected with 𑀔 , but with 𑀓 . The compound symbol 𑀕 is interesting. The word **vēl-anṛ* corresponds to O.Ta *vēlān*, a *vēlāla* chieftain.

Ligatures with 𑀕 and 𑀕𑀓 :

4.36. Perhaps the best proof for the validity of the parallels drawn above comes from the interpretation of the following compound ideo-phonograms :

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|---|---|----|
| (1) | 𑀕𑀓 | = | 𑀕 | + | 𑀕 |
| (2) | 𑀕𑀔 | = | 𑀕 | + | 𑀕 |
| (3) | 𑀕𑀓𑀔 | = | 𑀕 | + | 𑀕𑀓 |
| (4) | 𑀕𑀔𑀓 | = | 𑀕 | + | 𑀕𑀓 |

4.37. We have already identified all these symbols individually. The symbol 𑀕𑀓 is not the plural of 𑀓 , but an ingenious graphic device to distinguish its meaning from the latter. 𑀓 is an attribute meaning ‘ great ’ which is derived from the homonymy between *neṭ-(-ṭ-ai)* : a weapon and *neṭ-u* : tall, great. The graph 𑀕𑀓 suggests another set of homophones also connected with the concept of weapons : *paṭai* : (1) weapons, arms ; (2) armed formations (DED. 3195).

4.38. By substituting the known values we can explain the compound ideo-phonograms thus :

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|--|
| (1) | 𑀕𑀓 | : | The Chief of the <i>vēlai</i> (Right-Hand) Attendants of the Temple. |
| (2) | 𑀕𑀔 | : | The Chief of the <i>kōl</i> (Left-Hand) Attendants of the Temple. |
| (3) | 𑀕𑀓𑀔 | : | The Chief of the <i>vēlai</i> (Right-Hand) Guards. |
| (4) | 𑀕𑀔𑀓 | : | The Chief of the <i>kōl</i> (Left-Hand) Guards. |

We may consider (1) and (2) as the equivalents of civil servants (of course in a hierarchy exercising religious and temporal authority), while (3) and (4) are their military counterparts. Whole phrases denoted by these compound ideo-phonograms have survived in later Dravidian languages, attesting to the validity of the decipherment :

(*mū-*) *vēnta-vēlān* : a *vēlālā* chieftain (Ta., insc.,) (corr. to 1 above) (S.I.I., II, 86).

paḍe-valla : a general (Ka., DED. 3195) (Corr. to 3 above).

The digramme : $\uparrow\cup$

4.39. This digramme occurs finally in contexts where \cup alone can occur. The sign, however, does not follow \uparrow which otherwise behaves exactly like \cup . From these facts I inferred that \uparrow is not an independent suffix like ‡ but forms a single word $\uparrow\cup$ which is functionally equivalent to \cup or \uparrow : in other words the digramme forms a nominal suffix or an independent epithet. There must, however, be a difference between \cup and $\uparrow\cup$. The symbol \uparrow does not seem to be a masculine determinative as the masculine singular meaning is contained in \cup itself. The pictogram \uparrow could well represent a 'servant' from its simplicity. However, positional analysis led me to the conclusion that in a text like $\uparrow\cup\text{‡}\text{‡}$ the symbol \uparrow does not represent the 'servant' of $\cup\text{‡}\text{‡}$ (a trigramme which occurs frequently) since the digramme $\uparrow\cup$ itself is a suffix. We are then faced with the following arrangement :

(1) $\cup\text{‡}\text{‡}$: A person in category \cup with the name $\text{‡}\text{‡}$

(2) $\uparrow\cup\text{‡}\text{‡}$: A person in category $\uparrow\cup$ with the name $\text{‡}\text{‡}$.

4.40. We already know that the text in (1) is the name of a priest-ruler. Therefore, the name in text (2) is that of a priest-attendant. We can infer that (a) the priest-attendant had some social status as he could own seals and (b) the priests and the priest-attendants came from the same group since they could have identical names (with differing suffixed honorifics).

4.41. As I had already discovered that the priests of the Proto-Indian civilization correspond to the Vēḷir of the Old Tamil civilization, it occurred to me that the priest-attendants could correspond to Vēḷ-āḷ-ar (lit., the 'men' of Vēḷ), who were, in the Tamil society, peasants, men at arms and artisans in the service of the Vēḷir chieftains. Though their social status was lower, the Vēḷāḷar belonged to the same stock as the Vēḷir. They had common names, could marry into each other's families and were generally regarded with almost equal respect. (See Excursus A).

4.42. The next step was to search for a phonetic parallel for $\uparrow\cup$ in old Tamil with a corresponding meaning. The pictogram \uparrow is a man and the only suitable Dravidian word is $\bar{a}n > \bar{a}l$: man, male, servant (DED. 342). The digramme then reads $*anr-\bar{a}n$. The nearest old Tamil equivalent is $ant-an$, $ant-ana-n$ or $ant-an-\bar{a}l-an$ (DED. 126 ; Ta. Lex.) : a brahman (=priest).

4.43. It might appear *prima facie* that the meanings do not correspond. However, when I investigated the matter further by looking into the various contexts in which the word occurs, I became convinced that $ant-an-$ was an ancient compound word having originally a different meaning and the connotation of a 'brahman priest' was acquired only after the advent of Brahminical Hinduism. We have already seen a similar transfer of meaning for $*v\bar{e}-y/(n)t$ (O.Ta. $v\bar{e}ntu$, $v\bar{e}tiyan$) which originally meant a high priest and came to be applied to the Brahman when he became the high priest of the society in the new dispensation. (The term continued to signify the Dravidian king even when he ceased to be the high priest).



4.44. We gather from old Tamil poems that *antaṇar* were a kind of 'inferior' brahmans who did not perform brahminical rites but were engaged in cutting bracelets and bangles out of conch shells (*Akam.*, 24). The poet Kīraṇ-ār, an *antaṇar* is described as engaged in this 'unbrahman-like' profession. We learn from the *Tivākaram* that shell-work or bead-making (*kuyiluvam*) was one of the six prescribed occupations of the Vēlālar. In fact, the phrases *vēlālar aṟu toṟil* and *antaṇar aṟu toṟil* (*Ta. Lex.*) resemble each other, and the six 'brahminical' occupations assigned to the *antaṇar* in the *Tivākaram* have an appearance of artificiality.

4.45. Another important clue comes from *Tol. Poruḷ.*, 627 which prescribes, rather surprisingly, that *antaṇālar* cannot be precluded from kingship (*aracu*). It is clear that the term cannot mean a brahman here as he never claimed the right to kingship. It is significant that the sūtra occurs in a series dealing with the Vēlālar. The preceding Sutras 617 and 618 clearly specify the 'common characteristics' of '*aracar*' and '*antaṇar*'. The real import of these sūtras will become clear if *antaṇar* are equated with *vēlālar* and *aracar* with *vēḷir*. We learn from inscriptional evidence that *araiyaṇ* (*araičan*) was the most favoured epithet of the Vēḷir Chieftains.

4.46. The words *ant-āla-m*: coat of mail, *attavālam*: upper garment and *ant-aḷ-aka-tt-ālar*: warriors in the Chōḷa army (See *Ta. Lex.* for these entries) all seem to be derived from *ant-aḷ-*, the royal attendant or warrior.

4.47. Since \cup is **anṟ-* and \uparrow is a man or servant, the digramme $\uparrow\cup$ can be 'visually' equated to *Āndhra-bhṛtya* a name of the Āndhra kings. This name had long been a puzzle as there seemed to be little distinction between the Āndhras and the Āndhra-bhṛtyas. It now appears possible to equate *Āndhra-bhṛtya* (the 'servant' of Āndhra) with *Vēḷ-āla* (the 'servant' of the Vēḷ) since we have other evidence linking the Āndhras with the Vēḷir (See Excursus A).

5. THE PEOPLE OF THE LOWER CITY

5.1. It is understandable that we do not hear much about the common people from the seal-texts which relate (with some exceptions) to the ruling priestly classes. Fortunately there is another category of inscriptions which helps us in this regard. The inscribed votive objects consisting of thin plates, prisms and similar material, particularly from the lowest levels at Harappa, as well as the graffiti on pottery may reasonably be regarded from the circumstances as mostly relating to the common people. The symbols U,  and  belonging to this category seem to denote the common people.

The Symbol U :

5.2. The 'cup' symbol occurs mostly on the votive plates and prisms and is generally preceded by one to four long vertical lines. Gurov has interpreted the 'cup' symbol as an offering and the preceding numeral signs as indicating the number of offerings.⁹⁴ However, the numeral never exceeds four. If quantities were intended, one should expect a greater range of numbers. Volcok's suggestion that the numerals represent four types of offerings is even more difficult to accept as it is strange that different kinds of offerings should be indicated by numbers.⁹⁵

5.3. My investigations of the numeral signs on the seal-texts have shown that,

- (i) A fixed 'numeral' sign in a block, generally indicates a homophone and not a number.
- (ii) Variable numeral signs in a block function truly as numbers and generally indicate the number of phratries in a clan or other numbered groups like army formations.

5.4. I, therefore, started with the assumption that the 'cup' symbol represents a clan which was divided into four numbered phratries. This led to the following homophones :

- (1) *kōy* (O. Ta.) : a vessel for taking out toddy (DED. 1842) (cf. *Puṟam.*, 300).
- (2) *kōya-*, *kōca-*, *kōva-* : An ancient clan of the Tamil country divided into four phratries (*nār-kōcar*). They had a strong tradition of migration from the North and were in perpetual conflict with the Vēlir. (*vide*, *Kōcar*, R. Raghavaiyengar, 1951). (Excursus B)
- (3) *kō-*, *kuyava-*, *kucava-* : potter clan in Tamil-Malayalam and Kannada-Tulu areas (DED. 1468).
- (4) **kō-* : names of several Dravidian hill tribes ; (from *kō* : mountain, DED. 1811).

5.5. It is remarkable that so many of the Dravidian tribe-names commence with *kū* or *kō*. Confer Kota, Koḍagu, Kolami, Gondi, Koṇḍa, Khond, Koya, Kui, Kuwi, Kūbi, Kurukh, etc. (DED.). Most of these names seem to be derived from *kō* : mountain, and denote hill tribes.

The Symbol ΔΔ :

5.6. This is one of the easiest pictograms to interpret and clearly represents hills or mountains. Its occurrence on pottery graffiti links it with the common people and its probable phonetic value **kō* : mountain (DED. 1811) connects it with the 'cup' symbol. The two symbols are most probably synonyms. The 'hill' symbol is more often used than the 'cup' symbol on the seal-texts and may indicate a further development of the script. The 'hill' symbol is a valuable confirmation that the common people or the working classes of the Proto-Indian civilization hailed originally from the mountains. It is significant that *veli* (plains, open country, DED. 4526) was a common Vēlir name, (*e.g.*) *Veḷimāṇ*, *Veḷiyaṇ Tittaṇ* etc. We can, therefore, infer that in the Proto-Indian polity, the ruling classes belonged to the plains and the working classes came from the mountains. Apparently the system of importing servants from the hills to the plains of Hindustan is at least four millennia old !

5.7. This identification is supported by two remarkable parallels. According to my decipherment the People of the Lower City correspond both to *pāṇṭiya* ('City-dweller') and *kō-y* ('Mountain-people'). We learn from old Tamil history that the Pāṇḍyas were particularly associated with the Kōcar (See Excursus B). We also have reason to believe that the Pāṇḍavas were hill-tribes, to wit, their polyandry.

5.8. The identification of $\Delta\Delta$ as **kō*, corresponding to the O.Ta. Kōcar leads to the recognition of the two symbols either of which is most commonly prefixed to the 'hill' symbol as totem or clan symbols :

⚔ : axe or knife fixed through a wooden handle (*vide*, Diringer, 1968, II, p. 71 for a very close Hittite parallel).

The homophones are :



- (1) *maṟu* : axe, hatchet, axe with blade fastened through wooden handle (DED. 3889).
- (2) *maṟa-v-ar*, *maṟavar* : martial tribes of Tamil country associated with the Kōcar.





⌘ : weed, clump (*vide*, Hunter, p. 208 for an Egyptian parallel).

The homophones are :

- (1) *kaḷ-* : weed (DED. 1157).
- (2) *kaḷlar*, *kaḷavar* : a martial tribe of Tamil country associated with the Kōcar.


5.9. According to the old Tamil tradition, Kaḷlar and Maṟavar were together known as *akam-uṭai-y-ār* which has generally been interpreted as indicating the origin of these clans as palace attendants. They were considered as socially inferior to the Vēḷ-āḷ-ar. The Kōcar clans (including Maṟavar, Maṟavar and Kaḷlar) formed the fighting arm of the Pāṇḍya kingdom, the counterpart

of the Vēlāla or Vēlaikāra forces under the Vēlir (including the Chēra and the Chōla kingdoms). Continuing the parallel we may interpret the modified symbols  and  as representing respectively workers inside the Citadel where their services would certainly be required for menial duties and those outside living in the City (*e.g.*) artisans, etc.

5.10. We have already seen that Old Tamil literature has numerous references to *aka(m)*- : the inner city and *puṛa(m)*- : the outer suburbs corresponding to the Proto-Indian 'lower' city. The symbol  (four roads outside the walls) may be compared with O.Ta. *puṛa-c-cēri* (outer suburbs). By contrast the symbols  and  can be interpreted respectively as *aka*: 'in' (DED. 8) and *puṛa*: 'out' (DED. 3554). The priest-rulers were the 'insiders' (cf. : *akattiyaṅ*). The working classes were the 'outsiders' (cf. : *puṛattiyaṅ*). It is remarkable that the Pāṇḍavas whom I have equated with the outer or lower city people, are called the Pauravas in Sanskrit (lit., the townsmen). It appears likely that the Sanskrit word *pura*: 'city' is the Dravidian *puṛa*: 'outer (city)'.


The Symbol :

5 11. This symbol occurs very frequently on the votive texts. It is also known on pottery graffiti. An exceedingly interesting fact about this specialised symbol is its occurrence among the graffiti on the South Indian megalithic pottery, as convincingly demonstrated by Lal (*Ancient India*, 1960, Pl. XXXI-B, 47). The Finnish team has suggested that the picture depicts a human being in a sitting posture (indicative of dignity) on the basis of Egyptian analogies. They identify the symbol with the 'Mother Goddess' merely on the basis of its frequency and assign an arbitrary phonetic value (*ammā*) to it.⁹⁶

5.12. I am convinced that the pictogram  is the representation of an infant child. Note the relatively large head, the curving back, the folded limbs and the posture, all suggestive of an infant

in embryonic position. This recognition suggests suitable homophones :

- (1) *eḷa- : young, tender (DED. 436).
- (2) eḷi- : low of rank (DED. 728).
- (3) iḷa : an epithet of the Kōcar tribe.

5.13. We learn from old Tamil works that the Kōcar were generally called Iḷaṅkōcar, or simply as the Iḷa(i)yar. Personal names like Iḷankō (not, 'prince' in this context) and Iḷavaṅ are found in old Tamil poems and inscriptions (TBI., 9, 27 & 43).

5.14. There are two other symbols which seem to give *eḷ-(v), as an epithet of *kō-(y), the mountain-people :

∅ : This frequently occurs before the 'cup' symbol and is an attribute. It can be interpreted thus :

- (1) iḷa-ku : to become relaxed as a bow-string, to loosen as a rope (DED. 433).
- (2) iḷa- : O.Ta. epithet for the Kōcar

U^A : This symbol shows a squatting person ligatured to the 'cup' symbol. The posture suggests :

- (1) iḷa-ku : to lift one's body slightly from the ground (DED. 432).
- (2) iḷa- : O.Ta. epithet for the Kōcar.

5.15. It is clear that the epithet iḷa-m cannot mean 'young' when applied to a tribe. It must be a proper name. Raghava Iyengar has shown that the stories of Iḷa and Kuśa found in Sanskrit sources seem to refer to the same people as the Tamil Iḷaṅkōcar. He has also established that Vatsa, the name of the rulers of Kauśāmbī was a literal translation of Ta. iḷa. (Raghava Iyengar, *Kōcar*, pp. 8-9 ; 47-48). (Please also see Excursus B for more details on the Kōcar).

5.16. The name *īla* or *eīa* gives us a hint about the probable place of origin of the Kōcar, the mountain-people who inhabited the Lower City. The nearest hilly tract from where they could have come down to the plains of the Indus Valley is in Baluchistan. The proximity of Elam to Baluchistan and the reported affinity of the Proto-Elamite language to Dravidian and the Proto-Elamite script to the Proto-Indian script make it likely that the Iḷānkōcar came originally from Elam. (I acknowledge with pleasure that this most important suggestion was made to me by Prof. Balakrishnan Nayar when I discussed my identifications with him).

5.17. The Tamil deity Murukaṇ (lit., the young one ; cf. Skt. Kumāra) is also the Lord of the Hills. His name and his habitat strongly link him with the Kōcar. In the Tamil country most of the temples dedicated to Murukaṇ are found on the hill-tops in the central highlands occupied by the Kōcar in ancient times. It is likely that Murukaṇ is the apotheosis of the chief of the Iḷa tribe ("the young" as the term came to be understood) or the Kōcar ("the mountain-people"). It is probable that at least in some contexts the digramme $\mathcal{U}^{\mathcal{L}}$ may represent the proto-type of this deity.

The Symbol \mathcal{E} :

5.18. This is a terminal symbol with functions analogous to those of $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{U}$. It is thus a nominal suffix or an independent epithet. That it is not a grammatical suffix is shown by the plural $\mathcal{E}\mathcal{E}$. It is so often final after $\mathcal{U}^{\mathcal{L}}$, that it seems to have a special relationship with the common people of the Lower City. The pictogram very closely resembles the Sumerian sign for 'hand' (Falkenstein, No. 9). In comparison with the other 'hand' signs we have considered earlier, it is seen that this symbol does not show the forearm and appears to indicate the horizontal or lower position. From these facts I infer that the symbol represents a worker or a servant lower in status than the attendants or guards on the Acropolis (from either major social groups). The symbol possi-

bly represents a serf or even a slave. It cannot represent the feminine suffix as it is sometimes followed by U .⁹⁷ The examples of the other 'hand' signs also indicate that the essential meaning of the symbol and its phonetic value would be indicated by the posture of the hand, rather than by the 'hand' itself. This line of reasoning leads to the homophones :

- (1) *iṛ-i*: to fall, drop down, low, inferior (DED. 426).
- (2) *ēṛai*: A poor person (DED. 728 : (but this goes better with 426).
- (3) *eṛava-r*: persons belonging to a low caste (serfs) in Kerala.
- (4) *eṛai-y-ūr*: the 'hamlet of the shepherds' (TBI. 28).

5.19. It is interesting that the Kōcar are found associated with the words derived from *iṭ*-, *iḷ*-, *iṛ*-, all connoting inferiority of status. Here we have evidence that these people were the lowly working classes of the Proto-Indian civilization.

5.20. It appears possible to construe the symbol ¶ following a name in two ways. The preceding name could be that of the serf himself ; or it may be the name of his master. The usage has probably to be judged from the context.

5.21. It is necessary to distinguish between the epithets **iṛ*- applied to the ruling classes and **iṭ*-/*iṛ* of the working classes. In later Tamil, both became homophones (*iṭai*) causing some confusion in identification.

5.22. We can also notice the 'ligatured hand' signs here. The ligatures may show either a pair of arms or a single hand. The latter may be upraised or drooping down. The general indications are quite clear. The 'pair of arms' represents a chieftain of a formation of attendants or guards. The single upraised 'ligatured hand' indicates an attendant belonging to the upper classes. The 'drooping hand' stands for a servant from the 'lower classes'.

5.23. The symbolism of the 'hands' in the script is quite fascinating, as it speaks a universal language. The suggested interpretation of the 'hand' signs furnishes a good example of the technique of 'visual comprehension' advocated by Forrer. The actual existence of the Right Hand and Left Hand castes and army formations in the old Tamil polity provides parallels attesting to the validity of the decipherment.

6. THE MYTHS OF THE PROTO-INDIANS

6.1. The vast majority of the Proto-Indian seals depict an animal in the field, seemingly unrelated to the inscriptions. There are, however, a few seals which depict scenes which give us a rare glimpse into the myths and legends of the race. Here I shall deal with four such scenes which may be called,

- (1) The priest in the water-pitcher.
- (2) The hunter on the tree.
- (3) The hunter with the tiger.
- (4) The serpents on the tree.

(1) *The priest in the water-pitcher :*

6.2. The seal (illustrated in F.E.M., II, Pl. XCIX, ill. A) is typical of the rest. The scene shows a horned personage wearing his hair long and having bracelets on his arms standing inside a vessel decorated with pipal leaves. A similarly adorned person kneels in front of the vessel with what appears to be an offering of a fowl in front. A ram stands behind him. There are seven robed figures (in contrast to the other two persons who appear to be naked) standing in a row in the lower field.

6.3. I interpret the scene as depicting the mythical origin of 'Agastya' the High-Priest of the Proto-Indian civilization as well as the origin of the Seven Vēḷir phratries in the Sacred Pool.²⁸ The story of the origin of Agastya is a water-pitcher (hence Ta.

kuṭa-muṇi., Skt. *kumbha muṇi*) is too familiar to need recapitulation here. The water-pitcher shown on the seal is a pun on the words *kuṭa-*: water-pot (DED. 1376) and *kuṭṭa-*: pool (DED. 1389). This is a characteristic feature of the scenes on the seals as well as of the pictographic script. The two naked figures appear to be priests, judging from the representation in the so-called 'pasupati-' type seals. The tradition of ascetic and ceremonial nudity in later Indian religions indicates that the Proto-Indian priests were naked on ceremonial occasions like their Babylonian counterparts. The rising of the priest from the pitcher symbolises the origin of the priestly rulers from the sacred pool. The scene thus represents not only the Agastya legend but also the popular myth about the origin of the Vēḷir (including Chalukyas) from a 'kuṇḍa', later interpreted as a 'sacrificial pit'. The seven robed figures represent the Seven Vēḷir phratries, to whom the seal texts refer.

The stories of the Seven Sages (*Sapta-ṛṣi*) and the Seven Mothers (*Sapta-mātṛka*) appear to be connected with the Vēḷir clans. In particular, the latter legend seems to signify the matrilineal social structure of the Vēḷir. The matronyms of the Āndhra kings, the Chōḷa and the Chēra custom of marrying the Vēḷir women, the Nambūdri custom of marrying the Nāyar women and the matriarchal system in Kerala can all be traced probably to the Proto-Indian civilization through the Vēḷir. Ramanathan (BSOAS, XXII-2, 1969, pp. 323-343) notices the survival of matriarchal customs among the exogamous septs (*kiḷai*) of the Kōṭṭai Vēḷāḷar, an extremely conservative community which traces its origin from the Iruṅkōvēḷir. Incidentally, the text on this seal refers to a priest of the *(C)ō-y clan and is unrelated to the scene depicted in the field.

(2) *The hunter on the tree*

(3) *The hunter with the tiger*

6.4. These two types of seals seem to represent the same legend. In type (2), we see the hunter seated on a kino tree

looking at the tiger on the ground growling at him (*e.g.* M.I.C., III, Pl. CXI, 353). In another variant, the hunter is on the ground attacking the tiger (*e.g.* Ibid., 357). In type (3), the hunter grapples with two roaring tigers standing on either side of him (*e.g.* F.E.M., II, Pl. LXXXIV, 75).

6.5. These scenes suggest two unmistakable parallels. One is the Babylonian story of the hero Gilgamesh with the lions. The Indian seals have replaced the lions with tigers as the Indians were not apparently familiar with the lion. The other parallel is the old Tamil story of *puli-kaṭi-māl* (lit., the hero who slew the tiger), a legend which was quite popular with the Vēḷir and the related Hoysalas. The famous verse in *Puram.*, 201, addressed to an Iruṅkōvēḷ, refers to both the legends, *viz.*, the Vēḷir origin in the 'kuṇḍa' (Ta. *taṭavu*) of a 'northern' sage and the name *puli-kaṭi-māl*. The verse also refers to the descent of Iruṅkōvēḷ through 'fortynine generations' from the Vēḷir who ruled Tuvurai of the 'bronze walls', almost certainly a reference to the Proto-Indian cities. According to popular tradition, the name Hoysala is also derived from the feat of an ancestor who killed a tiger which threatened a sage. The homonymy between kino tree and tiger, (both called *vēṅkai* in Dravidian) with god or priest (**vē-ṅk*, *-nt*) should be noted. The depiction of the tiger on the Chōḷa flag, and the place name Vēṅgi seem to be survivals of an ancient homonymy.⁹⁹

(4) *The serpents on the tree.*

6.6. This unique seal (M.I.C., III, Pl. CXII, 387) shows a two-headed creature with sinuous bodies entwined at the base of a pipal tree. I have already shown that the priest-rulers of the Proto-Indian civilization were divided into two main groups each named after a serpent-planet. I suggest that this seal represents the twin serpent-planets or demons (*rāhu* and *ketu*). I have already suggested that the Proto-Indian worship of the serpent-planets led to Dravidian serpent-worship. Stones with entwined serpents carved on them are still to be seen under the pipal tree in

every Dravidian village. Considering the Proto-Indian penchant for homonymy I wonder whether the original name of the pipal tree was not **cara* with the loss of initial palatal in all later Dravidian languages. This may explain the association of the pipal tree with the serpents through the homophones:

**cara-?* (*ara-*)>*ara-*: pipal tree (DED. 168).

**cara->ara-*: serpent (DED. 1949).

The seven pipal leaves shown on the tree probably indicate the seven serpent-clan phratries referred to in the seal-texts.

6.7. A surprisingly close parallel for the two-headed serpent-deity seems to be found in '*palika dēyam*', the 'home deity' of the Koṇḍa Doras, a Dravidian tribe. (See *Koṇḍa or Kūbi, a Dravidian Language*, Bh. Krishnamurti, p. 29, ill. No. 3).

6.8. The combination of the two serpent-planets into a single deity also helps to explain the occasional pairing of 𑀧𑀭 in the texts. It is possible that 𑀧𑀭 also refers to the clan of the Two Serpent-Planets, **ir-miḷ* (O.Ta. Iruṅkō Vēl).

6.9. The legend on the unique seal can be read thus: "The SEAL? of the Priest in the Temple-City (City-Temple)". The compound ideogram reading Temple-City or City-Temple is especially interesting. It may possibly refer to *the* City (Mohenjodaro?) or to *the* Temple therein.

6.10. An interesting parallel to the serpent-on-the-tree is the biblical story of the serpent and the tree in the garden of Adam and Eve.

6.11. In fact, the intermingling of West Asian and Dravidian myths and legends can be seen in all the four scenes described above. The religious rituals based on water, the ceremonial nudity of the priests, the stories of '*Pulikaṭimāl*' and Gilgamesh, the evil Serpent-demons and the Serpent of Sin, all these cannot be mere coincidences. They furnish visual proof of the fact that the Proto-Indian and the Sumerian civilizations had an ultimate common origin in what may truly be described as the cradle of human civilization.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS :

1. The Proto-Indian civilization was Dravidian. The decipherment of the inscriptions reveals a language which resembles South Dravidian (including Telugu) in general and Old Tamil in particular. This resemblance is accounted for by the migration of the Proto-Indian elements to the South where they created the historical Dravidian civilizations of the Iron Age in the Deccan and the Tamil country. The special resemblance to Old Tamil is accounted for by two facts : (a) the antiquity of Old Tamil and its preservation of the Proto-Dravidian forms, (b) the use of Tamil in civic and temple administration in the Tamil country (—in contrast to the Deccan where Prakrit and Sanskrit completely displaced the vernaculars until the medieval period—) resulting in a lucky preservation of ancient Dravidian terminology.

2. The Proto-Indian civilization was ruled by a priestly oligarchy. The most marked characteristic of the Proto-Indian polity was the fundamental division between the priest-rulers living on the Acropolis within the Citadel and the common people living in the Lower City. At least a section of the common people hailed from a mountainous region, probably Elam. If they spoke a different language or a dialect it does not appear to have been recorded in the inscriptions, the language of which, judging from universal practice, was almost certainly that of the ruling classes.

3. The priest-rulers of the Acropolis correspond to the Vēḷir of the Tamil civilization. They seem to have been an extraordinarily gifted people with a special genius for social and political organisation. They created not only the largest and the best organised civilization in the world during the Bronze Age : but also, after the collapse of this civilization and their migration to the South, some of the greatest kingdoms known to Indian History including the Āndhra and all its successor kingdoms in the Deccan and the Chēra-Chōḷa-Vēḷir kingdoms in the Tamil country. They established once again great cities and thriving sea-ports and created social and political organisations which closely resembled the Proto-

Indian originals and endured for more than two millennia (from the beginning of the Iron Age to the advent of the Muslims in South India). There is no parallel in recorded history for this remarkable achievement.

4. The common people of the Lower City, who called themselves 'mountain-people' and probably came from Elam, correspond to the *Iḷaṅ-kōcar* of the old Tamil civilization. After the fall of the Proto-Indian civilization, they also seem to have migrated south. It is remarkable that the advanced and literate Dravidian societies comprised in the present Tamil-Malayalam, Kannada-Tulu and Telugu linguistic areas were the creation of the *Vēḷir*, the Proto-Indian ruling classes, while the backward and non-literary Dravidian tribes mostly living in hilly areas seem to be connected with the *Kōcar*, the working classes of the Proto-Indian Civilization. The only exception was the great *Pāṇḍya* kingdom based on *Kōcar* hegemony.

5. The amazingly close parallelisms between the hierarchical structure of the Proto-Indian and the old Tamil polities are among the most interesting findings of the present study. These are summarised in the following Table :

<i>Proto-Indian Polity</i>	<i>Old-Tamil Polity</i>	Old Tamil terms phonetically corresponding to Proto-Indian Symbols
I. Within the Citadel :		
Priest-King	King	<i>vēṇu</i>
Priest	Noble	<i>vēḷ</i>
Attendant (Right Hand Faction)	Peasant (Right Hand Castes)	<i>vēḷ-āḷ, ant-an</i>
Guard (-do-)	Warrior (Right Hand Faction)	<i>vēḷai (valaṅkai)</i>
} Chēra- Chōḷa- Vēḷir		
II. From the Lower City :		
Attendant (Left Hand Faction)	Attendant (Left Hand Faction)	<i>akam (aḷaiyār)</i> <i>(Kāḷḷar, Maṇavar)</i>
Guard (-do-)	Warrior (-do-)	<i>Kaikōḷar</i>
Common People	Common people (Left Hand Castes)	<i>Kōcar</i>
} Pāṇḍya- Kōcar		

We may also notice a major difference between the two societies. In the old Tamil polity, the term ' *mū vēnt-ar* ' connoted the ' three crowned kings ' viz., the Chēras, the Chōlas and the Pāṇḍyas, generally mentioned in that order. In the Proto-Indian polity, in term **mū vē-y/(n)t* stood for the High-Priest or the Priest-King, who appears to correspond only to the " Chēras " of the old Tamil society. The " Chōlas " (*cūṛ*: to surround) were the Priests, Nobles and Attendants on the Acropolis. The " Pāṇḍyas " (*pāṛi*, *pāṭi*: city) were the ' townsmen ' of the ' Lower City ', comprising most probably, the traders, artisans, and the workers of the society.

6. It is only to be expected that not all the Dravidian elements migrated South. It is a mistake to consider Brahui and the few tribes of the North-Eastern and Central India as the only survivors of the Dravidian population in the North. It is most unlikely that the Āryans who came into India were numerically superior to the indigenous people. While the Āryans imposed their language and culture, they themselves must have been assimilated ethnically with the local population. While there are Āryan and Dravidian languages in India today, there have been no ' Āryans ' or ' Dravidians ', but only Indians for millennia. If this is realised, the occurrence of the so-called Āryan names in the Proto-Indian inscriptions should cause no surprise as they can be interpreted as Dravidian ethnic and linguistic elements surviving in the Indo-Āryan languages.

7. The priest-rulers of the Acropolis turn out to correspond to the Kuru clan ; the mountain-people of the Lower City are the Pāṇḍus. If these correspondences are established, the Great Bhārata War can be viewed as the Proto-Indian civil war between the ruling and the working Classes. The victory of the latter spelt the end of the Proto-Indian polity and the dispersal of the population. It is quite likely that when the Āryans came in, they found Mohenjodaro and Harappa already in ruins and deserted, or, at best, occupied by the victorious but ill-organized ' mountain-people '. Indra may yet get the benefit of doubt and be acquitted !

8. The strongly-held traditions of the Chēra-Chōlas of their connection with the Kauravas and the claim of the Pāṇḍyas to be related to the Pāṇḍavas receive dramatic confirmation in the seal-texts. In the light of this new evidence, we have to hold that the Kurus and the Pāṇḍus were originally Dravidian clans and became 'Āryanised' as they stayed on in the Pāñcāla and the Doab regions. The *Mahābhārata* even in its earliest version must have been no more than a legendary chronicle of the happenings of a very distant past. In this respect the *Mahābhārata* resembles the old Tamil traditions of the First and the Second Sangam Ages (Harappan and Saurashtrian phases?) of an equally remote past. Both the traditions meet in the cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa.

9. The Chedis seem to be connected with the priest-rulers while the Vatsas (a literal translation of Dr. **ela* : yong) are related to the City People. The story of Iḷa, the legendary ancestor of the Kuru-Pāṇḍu races and the legend of Kuśa found in Sanskrit sources appear to be referring to Iḷaṅkōcar, the mountain-people dwelling in the Lower City.

10. The Yādavas are in a special category. They are considered to be non-Āryan even in Sanskrit literature. They are connected with the priest-rulers. This confirms the strongly-held tradition of the Tamil Vēḷir that they were Yādavas and migrated from Dvārakā to the Tamil country.

11. The decipherment of the inscriptions has cleared up some of the mystery surrounding the Proto-Indian religion. I have so far found no evidence for a 'Proto-Śiva' or a 'mother-goddess'. The Finnish interpretation of some symbols as 'Śiva' (Mars) and 'Mother Goddess' has been shown to be incorrect. The religion of the Proto-Indians may be considered under two separate categories :

- (a) *astral religion* : The names of the two priest clans indicate the existence of an astral religion primarily based on the worship of the serpent-planets (Skt., *rāhu* and

ketu). The pipal tree was sacred as its name was most probably homophonous with the word for 'serpent'. The later Dravidian serpent-worship seems to be derived from the worship of the serpent-planets. The names of the priests indicate the worship of Saturn and Venus also. Though the names of the other planets are not found, we may reasonably presume that the Proto-Indian worshipped all the planets known to the ancients. The *Navagraha* worship is still a part of Hinduism.

- (b) *ancestor-worship* : The apotheosis of the 'Great Priest of the Vēlir' as Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa and the 'Chief of the Kōcar' as Murukaṅ-Kumāra seems to have originated in ancestor-worship. The Harappan votive texts have most often two trigrammes. The trigramme $\uparrow \text{𑀓} \text{𑀕}$ may stand for the Great Priest-Chieftain or 'Viṣṇu' (Ta. *Neṭu Vēl*). The trigramme $\text{𑀓} \text{𑀕} \text{𑀓}$

represents an 'Iḷa' Chieftain of the common people. It may also stand for the 'young god' or 'god of the young' (Murukaṅ=Kumāra). Considering their contemporaneity in the Proto-Indian civilization it is not surprising that both the deities have common attributes; both claim the title *neṭu* and both compete for a place on the same hills! Murukaṅ is sometimes referred to as a Vēl (Priest). A careful study however reveals that each represents one of the two fundamental divisions of the Proto-Indian polity. Evidence is, however, not quite clear whether their apotheosis took place within the Proto-Indian civilization or in later Hinduism. The location of the temple of Viṣṇu to the west of the village seems to be a Proto-Indian survival.

12. And finally we come to the question whether there was a Dravidiān civilization in South India before the migration of the

Proto-Indian people. No evidence has so far turned up proving the presence of the 'Dravidian' in the Deccan and the Peninsula earlier than the First Millennium B.C. The appearance of the iron-using people is sudden and intrusive. It may well be that the Proto-Indians retreating before the Āryan advance brought the Dravidian civilization for the first time to South India, and the indigenous neolithic people became completely merged with the Dravidians linguistically. By combining the new evidence with Sanskrit-Tamil traditions, we can reconstruct the story of the migration. After the destruction of the Proto-Indian Cities in the Great Civil War the Proto-Indian rulers continued to hold on to power in the Doab around the Mathurā until they were evicted by the relentless pressure of the Āryan princes. They then retreated to the Saurashtra coast where the Proto-Indian civilization was already declining. This last post also fell after a civil war. The Yadu-Vēḷ people then migrated to the South where they established the historical Dravidian civilization.

EXCURSUS A : THE HISTORY OF THE VĒḶIR :

The history of the Vēḷir can be briefly considered in two parts :

- (a) The Vēḷir in the Tamil Country.
- (b) The identity of the Yadu and the Vēḷ tribes.

(a) The Vēḷir Society in the ancient Tamil country was organized in three tiers :

- (1) The Vēntar : The crowned kings.
- (2) The Vēḷir : The nobles, chieftains and generals.
- (3) The Vēḷāḷar : The peasantry.

(1) *The Vēntar* : The Tamil polity of the Sangam Age was presided over by the *Mū-Vēntar*, the three crowned kings belonging to the Chēra, the Chōḷa and the Pāṇḍya dynasties. The frequent phrase '*vēntar-um vēḷir-um*' represents the Kings and their Nobles.

It is, however, important to notice the special relationship of the Vēḷir with the Chēras and the Chōlas to the exclusion of the Pāṇḍyas. At the beginning of the period portrayed in the Sangam Age, the Vēḷir Chieftains are found only in the service of the Chēra-Chōla kings and not under the Pāṇḍyas. The Vēḷir women were given in marriage only to the Chēra-Chōla princes and not to the Pāṇḍyas. In fact, there is some evidence that a Vēḷāḷa clan of the Pāṇḍya country was persecuted by a Pāṇḍya king for refusing to give one of its maidens in marriage to the Pāṇḍya prince (Ramanathan, BSOAS, XXII-2, 1969, pp. 323-43). The Vēḷai-kāra-p-patai, the fighting arm of the Vēḷir never served under the Pāṇḍyas. The Vēḷir and the Chēra-Chōla kings shared common names like Ātaṇ, Kaṇṇaṇ, -māṇ etc., not found in the Pāṇḍya line. There is little doubt that the Chēras and the Chōlas belonged to the Vēḷir stock and presided over a large confederacy of Vēḷir Chieftains. The Chēras and the Chōlas fought with each other and the Vēḷir for supremacy. There was, however, a much deeper hostility between the Vēḷir and the Kōcar, the latter having the same special relationship with the Pāṇḍyas as the Vēḷir had with the Chēra-Chōlas. The Kōcar had no scruples in serving under the Chēra-Chōlas as palace-attendants and bearing arms for them. This state of affairs can be explained only by assuming that the Vēḷir considered themselves superior to the Kōcar in the social scale (*vide* Excursus B on the Kōcar).

(2) *The Vēḷir*: The Vēḷir clans occupied almost the entire length of the west and the east coasts except for a length on the South-East coast where the Pāṇḍyas had an outlet to the sea. They established large and flourishing ports like Musiri and Tōṇḍi on the west coast and Cōpaṭṭiṇam, Virai (Arikamedu) and Kavirip-paṭṭiṇam on the east coast. The Chēra-Chōla prosperity was largely based on sea-borne trade. The Vēḷir were divided into 'numbered' groups, almost certainly exogamous phratries. While the numbers mentioned in the poems range from 5 to 21, it is possible that the number of phratries was only seven, and the higher numbers were derived in later times by merely adding up

the numbers of these phratries. The Vēḷir were also divided into two clans, the Āy (Āviyar) and the Ōy (Ōviyar). Raghava Iyengar does not mention the Ōy in his *Vēḷir Varalāru*. However, the similarity in names, their reported descent from the Nāgas and other circumstances make it almost certain that the Ōy was a Vēḷ clan like the Āy.

(3) *The Vēḷalar* : The Vēḷālar (lit., the 'men' of the Vēḷ) were what their name indicates. They were the peasants, men-at-arms and artisans working under the Vēḷir Chieftains. Naccinārk-k-ṇiyar specifically mentions that the Vēḷir had a right to the services of the Vēḷālar. He also describes the Vēḷir Chieftains as "those who lived by causing (the lands) to be ploughed" and the Vēḷālar as "those who lived by ploughing the lands". (Nacc. on *Tol. Poruḷ.*, 34). There is, however, no doubt that the Vēḷ and the Vēḷālar belonged to the same stock and the distinction was one of social status only. The six occupations of the Vēḷālar listed in the *Tivākaram* are : agriculture, animal husbandary, trade, bead-making, smithy and service to the 'twice-born'. The last-mentioned occupation has been interpreted by the medieval commentators as 'service to the brahmans'. This does not appear to be correct. As the right to the services of the Vēḷālar was exercised by the Vēḷir, it seems that the 'priests' to whom the Vēḷālar rendered service were none other than the Vēḷir. The *tiṇacariyai*, a treatise on the Vēḷālar castes mentions about their sacerdotal origin.

(b) The classic work on the migration of the Vēḷir and their external affinities still remains the *Vēḷir Varalāru* published more than half a century ago by M. Raghava Iyengar (Third Edition, 1964, Madras). I can do no better than to summarise the evidence collected by him :

- (1) Iruṅkōvēḷ, a Vēḷir Chieftain is described as having been descended through 'forty-nine generations' from the Vēḷir who arose from the pitcher of a northern sage and ruled over Tuvarai of the 'soaring bronze walls' (*Puṇam.*, 201).

- (2) It is said that Agastya led a migration of eighteen kings descended from Neṭu-muṭi-annaḷ (=Kṛṣṇa=Viṣṇu) and eighteen families of Vēḷir from Tuvarāpati (=Dvārakā) to Potiyil (somewhere in the Tamil country) (Nacc. on *Tol.*, *Pāyiram* : *Poruḷ.*, 34).
- (3) The story of the origin in the pitcher of a sage is also shared by the Chalukyas who are enumerated in the Tamil nikaṇṭus as among the Vēḷir Chieftains.
- (4) Iruṅkōvēḷi is addressed as the *Puli-kaṭi-māl* (lit., the hero who slew the tiger) (*Puṟam.*, 201-2). This story is shared by the Hoysalas who also styled themselves as Baḷḷāḷa (Ta. Vēḷāḷa).
- (5) According to the Tamil tradition the Vēḷir migrated to the Tamil country from Koṅkaṇam and the Tuḷu territories. The evidence of place-names and related dynasties indicates that at one time the Vēḷir were spread throughout the Pañca-Drāviḍa territories comprising Gurjara, Maharashtra, Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil lands.
- (6) There is clear evidence that the Vēḷir considered themselves as Yādavas. The Āykuḍi Plates specifically describe the Vēḷi Āy family as *Vṛṣṇikula* (T.A.S., 1, 12).
- (7) The well-established connections of the Vēḷir with the Chalukyas and the Hoysalas and their claim of descent from the Yādavas link them up with practically all the famous dynasties of the South including Āndhras, Kadambas, Kākatiyas, Yādavas (Devagiri) etc.
- (8) There is clear evidence in the Sanskrit sources that the Yādavas were regarded as 'inferior' to the Kṣatriyas. (I am adding the following to support this). Śiśupāla condemned Kṛṣṇa as '*varṇāśramakulāpeta*, i.e., one devoid of *varṇa*, *āśrama* and *kula* (the hallmarks of

Āryan birth) (*Bhāgavatam*, *Dasamaskandam*, 74 : 35). A revealing detail is the cross-cousin marriage in Kṛṣṇa's family (between Aniruddha and Rocanā), a totally non-Āryan and specifically Dravidian custom (*Ibid.*, 61 : 25).

- (9) The Yādavas migrated from Mathurā to Dvārakā on the west coast, (I may add, to escape the persecution of the Āryan princes like Jarāsandha and Siśupāla), They did not, however, stay there long. A few years after the Bhārata War, a civil war broke out among the Yādavas in Dvārakā resulting in wholesale slaughter and probably migration. It appears from the evidence that the Yādava clan migrated South where they established the various leading kingdoms in course of time (R. C. Dutt, *Civilization in Ancient India*, Pt. I, p. 219).

Here ends the evidence collected by M. Raghava Iyengar. We have already seen that the historicity of the identity of the Vēl and the Yadu clans is confirmed by the decipherment of the Proto-Indian Texts.

EXCURSUS B : THE HISTORY OF THE KŌCAR :

The history of the Kōcar clans can be reconstructed from two separate sources :

- (a) Old Tamil literature and inscriptions.
- (b) Sanskrit literature.

2. The Tamil Sangam literature and temple inscriptions contain many references to the Kōcar. These have been collected and studied by R. Raghava Iyengar in his admirable monograph, *Kōcar : A Study* (Annamalai University, 1951). Dr. Dorai Ranga-swamy has also dealt with the Kōcar and the allied tribes in his

work, *The Surnames of the Caṅkam Age, Literary and Tribal* (Madras University, 1968). I have freely drawn from these valuable studies though my interpretation of the facts proceeds on somewhat different lines.

3. According to Tamil tradition, the Kōcar entered the Tamil country from Koṅkaṇa and Tuḷu lands, a fact which immediately connects them with the migration of the Vēḷir from the same regions. The territories under the control of the Kōcar came to be known as Koṅku or Kō-nāṭu though the Kōcar clans were to be found throughout the Tamil country.

4. The Kōcar were divided into four groups and were generally described as *Nār-Kōcar*, 'the Four Kocar'. These groups were almost certainly exogamous phratries.

5. The Kōcar are most often referred to as *Iḷankōcar* or simply as *Iḷa(i)yar*. Raghava Iyengar has shown that the epithet *iḷam* cannot mean 'young' when applied to a tribe which is also described as '*mutu kōcar* (the old or ancient tribe of Kōcar). We shall understand the significance of the term *iḷam* when we deal with the history of the Kōcar outside the Tamil country.

6. Another common epithet for the Kōcar is *moṟi*. This term has not so far been satisfactorily explained. However, the phrases *oṟṟu-moṟi-k-kōcar* and *nāṇ-moṟi-k-kōcar* occurring in the poems show that the term cannot mean 'the single (plighted) word' or the 'four dialects' supposedly spoken by the Kōcar. I suggest that the term *moṟi* is a corruption of *maṟu*, axe or sword, probably the totem symbol of the clan. This is confirmed by the frequently used epithet *vāy-vāḷ* ('sharp sword') before the names of the Kōcar. This identification connects the Kōcar with the Maṟavar or Maṟavar, and through them, with the Kaḷḷar or Kaḷavar. It appears that the Kōcar were divided into two totemistic clans, the *Maṟ-avar* ('axe' clan) and the *Kaḷ-avar* ('weed' clan). This division cut across the organisation of the tribe in four exogamous phratries.

7. The special relationship of the Kōcar with the Pāṇḍyas is alluded to very often in the Tamil literary works and inscriptions. The Kōcar formed the bulk of the Pāṇḍya fighting forces and produced the commanders, chieftains and nobles of the Pāṇḍya kingdom. It appears that the Pāṇḍyas themselves were of the Kōcar stock and presided over a large confederacy of Kōcar Chieftaincies, an exact parallel to the Chēra-Chōḷa leadership of the Vēḷir Confederacy. The existence of a Pāṇḍya line in the Tuḷu country, the earlier home of the Kōcar, is significant in this context.

8. The curious love-hate relationship of the Kōcar and the Vēḷir fills the pages of the old Tamil chronicles. They appear to have migrated together into the Tamil country, though retaining their separate identities. On the one hand, the Kōcar served the Chēra and the Chōḷa kings as palace attendants and fighting men side by side with the Vēḷir. The Kaḷḷar and the maṟavar clans in the Chōḷa country were known as Akam-uṭaiyār, a reference to the original occupation of these people as palace attendants in the Chōḷa kingdom. They are also mentioned as the palace-attendants of the Chēras in the *Kēraḷōlpatti*. The Kōcar also formed the famous army formations called the *teriṅca kai-k-kōḷar paṭai*. (See Raghava Iyengar, *Kōcar*, pp. 55-57 for the identity of Kōcar and *Kōḷar*). The Chēra Commanders like Piṭṭaṅ and Korraṅ were also Kōcar Chieftains (PPTI, p. 563).

9. On the other hand, the Kōcar and the Vēḷir were implacably hostile to each other and missed no opportunity for a fight. Raghava Iyengar has collected a number of stories from the Sangam Works recording the wars of the Vēḷir and the Kōcar. One of the decisive battles took place at Pāri in which Miṇili, the Kōcar chieftain killed Vēḷiyaṅ Vēṅmāṅ and drove off Naṅṅaṅ, both Vēḷir chieftains (*Akam.*, 208).

10. It can, therefore, be concluded that although the Kōcar served the Vēḷir faithfully, they maintained their separate identity and even asserted their independence. The bitter Chōḷa-Pāṇḍya wars

which dragged on for centuries and finally destroyed both the kingdoms were essentially the projection of the Vēḷir-Kōcar antagonism.

11. Raghava Iyengar has demonstrated the connection between the Vatsas of Kauśāmbī and the Iḷāṅkōcar of the Tamil chronicles. The term *vatsa* appears to be a literal translation of Ta. *īla* : young. According to the story in Rāmāyaṇa (I, 32), there was a king called Kuśa who had four sons, each of whom founded a kingdom. This can be interpreted as an allusion to the Four Phratries of the Kōcar. One of the sons of Kuśa founded Kauśāmbī (Pkt., Kosam). Kauśāmbī was called the Vatsa country and its famous king Udayaṇa was described as Vatsaraja. Even more significant is the story of *Iḷa*, the ancestor of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍus who were consequently known as the *aiḷa* or *aiḷava*. It appears that Iḷa (= Vatsa) and Kuśa of the Sanskrit legends and the Tamil Iḷāṅkōcar refer to the same people.

12. My investigations of the Proto-Indian texts place the story of the Kōcar in a new perspective which also confirms the essential truth underlying the Northern and the Southern legends. The possibility of Elam being the original home of the Iḷam-Kōcar has already been suggested.

SIGN-LIST (PART I) AND SELECTED READINGS FROM SEAL-TEXTS :

The following Table contains a list of 50 symbols which include almost all the basic signs of the script, with the exception of the numeral signs. I have, however, included four of the so-called 'numeral' signs which have 'non-numeral' functions (S. Nos. 7, 8, 31 and 32). I have not separately enumerated compound signs which consist of ligatures of two or more basic signs, *e.g.*, S. Nos. 1 and 3, 21 and 18 or 19, etc. The meanings of these compounds are easily derived from those of the component signs. Where modifications (as in the 'fish' series) or ligatures (as in S. No. 25)

substantially alter the meanings, these are enumerated separately. The signs given in the Table, along with their compounds and the 'numeral' signs account for nearly two-thirds of the total of symbol-occurrences. This shows how few are the basic signs in this script.

2. The reference numbers in Col. 2 of the Table are to the Sign Manual prepared by Gadd and Smith (M.I.C., III, Pl. CXIX-CXXIX) and followed by Vats (E.H., II, Pl. CV-CXVI). The reference numbers to the texts are from the original sources (*vide*, Bibliography). The symbols used in the texts are 'normalised' and may not always correspond to variants found in any individual text.

3. The system of transliteration and the standard abbreviations used in the Paper follow the *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* (D.E.D.).

4. A word of explanation is necessary as to the method of phonetic transcription of the signs adopted in the Paper. It is, of course, not possible to determine the 'real' form of any Proto-Indian word, as the script is logo-graphic. The phonetic transcription of each symbol is to be regarded as a 'formula' indicating the phonetic boundaries within which the word occurs in the Dravidian languages. Thus the 'fish' symbol is 'read' as $*m\ddot{u}l/n/t-(v)$; ($m=r$; $i=e$). This means that the symbol can be interpreted with reference to the later forms like $m\ddot{u}l-$, $m\ddot{u}li$, $v\ddot{e}l-i$ etc. This example also illustrates the fact that we cannot always get at the Proto-Indian form by reconstructing to the Proto-Dravidian form. The Dravidian 'fossil' words *mleccha* ($<*m\ddot{u}l-ey$) and *dramiḷa* ($<*t\ddot{u}ra-m\ddot{u}l-a$) preserved in early Sanskrit literature make it likely that the Proto-Indian word for the priest-ruler was pronounced $*m\ddot{u}l-$. Now the method of historical parallels has established that the corresponding word in old Tamil was $v\ddot{e}l$, a result which cannot be reached by PDr. reconstruction. A combination of linguistic and historical parallels is thus essential for an interpretation of the script.

5. Translation of the Proto-Indian inscriptions presents similar problems. A literal translation of the proper names and titles will in fact be misleading. In the Indian context, there is a world of difference between the translation of, say, the pair of 'modified' fish symbols as 'Saturn-Venus' or 'Black-White' (as proposed by the Finnish scholars) and 'Mā Vēl' (as proposed by me). If the 'Conch' and the 'City' symbols are literally translated, we shall miss the great significance of the terms *viz.*, their Northern association with the Kuru-Pāṇḍu Clans and their Southern association with the Vēḷir (Chēra-Chōḷa) and the Kōcar (Pāṇḍyas). Here again only a combination of linguistic and historical parallels will lead us to a true understanding of the Proto-Indian Inscriptions. It is for this reason that I have drawn attention to the corresponding old Tamil names and titles to aid comprehension. Such use is, however, to be understood as conventional and not indicating precise phonetic correspondences.

Note: For typographical reasons, the following changes are made in the system of transliteration used in the Sign List and the selected readings of Texts:

- (1) *r* for *ṛ* (DED)
- (2) *a(ā)* etc., for *ā* etc., (DED)

Approximate phonetic value	Object represented	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
* (4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
vɛ(-nk, -nt)	A conventional representation of the Sun; to be hot as the Sun (DED. 4540).	(a) Deity (DED. 3635, 4550); (b) Temple (lit., place of the Deity), when followed by suffixes; (c) High-Priest, Priest-King, God-King.	1. Deity : Ta. <i>pēy</i> (DED. 3635); Kui. <i>vēnu</i> etc., (DED. 4550); 2. Place : Tc. <i>Vēngi</i> : the country of the Eastern Chalukyas; the Capital of the Śālanākyaṇas; Ta. <i>Vaiṅkaṭ</i> (<* <i>Vēṅkaṭ</i>) : a river; 3. King, Priest: Ta. <i>vēṅkaṭ</i> (DED. 4549), <i>vēṅiyaṭ</i> (Ta. Lex.) (also see S. No. 20). (Paras 3.8—3.10).
ɱ(ɔ̄)vɛɾɪɾ(v) =k, φ	A conch; to be curved (as a conch); DED. 2211; 2223, 2236. (a) A 'surrounding' place, fortified capital, place about the palace, etc. (DED. 588); hence the Acropolis or Citadel in the Proto-Indian Context. On the Citadel, see Wheeler, 1966, pp. 14, 28. (b) 'Surrounding' persons; viz., counsellors, ministers; officials, priests, nobles, attendants, guards (DED. 646, 2236).		1. Place around a palace : Ta. <i>uṛi, uṛai</i> ; (DED. 588). 2. Attendants at temples and palaces : Ta. <i>uṛiyaṛ</i> (DED. 646). 3. Attendants of the King : Ta. <i>cuṛam</i> (DED. 2236). 4. Official Bodies : Ta. <i>kuṛu</i> (DED. 1513). 5. Derived names : <i>Cōṛa</i> : lit., the 'surrounding' attendants; the <i>Chōḷas</i> ; Kuru > Kaurava; the dynasty which lost the Mahābhārata War. (Paras 3.11, 3.12, 3.16, 3.17).

Sign	Approximate phonetic value	(Object represented)	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
(3) a	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
⊗	*pāṭṭiṅṭ-(r)	Plan of a city ; plan, order : DED. 3384. City : DED. 3383, 3347.	(a) The City. (b) The 'Lower' or 'Outer' City of the common people. (c) Citizens, townsmen, ordinary people.	1. Ka., <i>pāṭṭi</i> : order, row (DED. 3384). 2. Ta., <i>pāṭṭi, pāṭṭi</i> : city (esp. of the Vēṭṭir) ; (DED. 3383, 3347). 3. Ta., <i>Pāṭṭiya, Pūṭṭiya</i> : the Pāṅḍya (lit., the city people). 4. Skt. Pāṅḍu > Pāṅḍavaś : the heroes of the <i>Mahābhārata</i> , also called the <i>Pāṅḍava</i> (lit., the townsmen). 5. Skt. <i>Pāṅḍi</i> : a Non-Aryan tribe ; (Para 3.13—3.17).
⊗	*nka (-t, -mp)	Cross-roads enclosed at ends ; streets or living areas inside a fortified place ; inside : DED. 8.	(a) inside, within the Citadel. (b) residential areas within the Citadel. (c) persons living inside the Citadel.	Ta. 1. <i>akam, akampū</i> : inside place (DED. 8). 2. <i>akappā</i> : an ancient fort. 3. <i>akampū</i> : a name (lit., insider). 4. <i>akāṭṭiyag</i> : a name (id.) (PPTI). (Para 4.15, 5.10)
⊗	*pura(-t, -mp)	Cross-roads with open ends ; streets or living areas outside a fortified place ; outside : DED. 3554.	(a) outside the Citadel ; (b) residential areas in the Outer (Lower) City ; (c) persons living in the Outer (Lower) City, ordinary people.	Ta. 1. <i>puram, purampū</i> : outside (DED. 3554) ; 2. <i>parattavaṅ</i> } outsider ; 3. <i>purā-c-ēṭṭi</i> : suburbs ; Skt. <i>pura</i> : town (< Dr. <i>purā</i>). <i>Pauram</i> : townsmen ; Pāṅḍavas. (Para 5.10)
*	*-a	A short stroke generally in the upper register ; a conventional sign ; phonetic value determined by positional analysis and from Dravidian parallels.	(a) possessive suffix ; (b) attributive or formative suffix.	1. TBI, 1966, 1968 ; for use of <i>-a</i> as possessive, attributive or formative suffixes. 2. Caldwell, pp. 298—300. (Para 3.5).

Object represented	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
(5)	(6)	(7)
<p>vo short strokes mostly in the upper register; the sign indicates a homophone of <i>ir</i>, 'two' (DED. 401).</p> <p>vo conventional strokes placed in the upper register; phonetic value determined by positional analysis and from Dravidian parallels.</p> <p>fish (DED. 3999).</p>	<p>(a) Locative-possessive suffix meaning, 'in, of, among'; (b) suffix for a place-name.</p> <p>Locative-possessive oblique case ending.</p> <p>(a) star or planet (DED. 3994); (b) epithet of priest-rulers meaning 'shining, glorious' (DED. 3990, 3994, 4524). (c) A clan name for the priest-rulers by usage (DED. 4562).</p> <p>(a) Venus, as the 'shining' planet (DED. 4524); (b) A personal name or title derived from (a); (c) A homophone for a man from the plains (?); (DED. 4526); (d) A general name for a Priest-Ruler (DED. 4562).</p>	<p>Tab. 1. <i>ir</i> : to live, to reside (DED. 407). 2. <i>il</i> : Locative suffix. A suffix for a place-name. 3. <i>iz</i> : Possessive suffix. (Para 3.4).</p> <p>Tab. (a) <i>il</i>-(<i>u</i>). (Para 3.5).</p>
<p>'fish' with eaves, vault or sky above; eaves: DED. 4346, 4463; vault: DED. 4349; sky: DED. 4422.</p>	<p>(a) star or planet (DED. 3994); (b) epithet of priest-rulers meaning 'shining, glorious' (DED. 3990, 3994, 4524). (c) A clan name for the priest-rulers by usage (DED. 4562).</p> <p>(a) Venus, as the 'shining' planet (DED. 4524); (b) A personal name or title derived from (a); (c) A homophone for a man from the plains (?); (DED. 4526); (d) A general name for a Priest-Ruler (DED. 4562).</p>	<p>1. O.Ta. names and titles: <i>niñi</i>, <i>niñai</i>, <i>niñatkar</i>, <i>niñal</i>; (DED. 3970, 3990) (Ta. Lex., PPT1). 2. <i>veñ</i>, <i>veñ</i>: Chieftains with Northern and sacerdotal origins (DED. 4562). 3. <i>veñ</i>, <i>veñju</i>: 'sacrifice', to pray (DED. 4549, 4561). 4. <i>niñaccha</i>: Skt., a Non-Āryan people; (Paras 2.10—2.16).</p> <p>O.Ta. names and titles: <i>niñ</i>-(<i>va</i>), <i>vañ</i>-(<i>ai</i>), <i>vañ</i>-(<i>ai</i>), <i>vañ</i>-(<i>ai</i>), <i>vañ</i>-(<i>ai</i>), <i>vañ</i>-(<i>ai</i>), <i>vañ</i>-(<i>ai</i>); (Ta. Lex., PPT1). (Paras 2.29—2.30).</p>

Approximate phonetic value	Object represented	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
m̄-y	A 'fish' with horns; horned beast: DED. 3917; sharp, grow sharp: DED. 3779.	(a) Saturn as the 'dark' planet (Ta. Lex.); dark: DED. 3918, 3927; (b) A personal name or title derived from (a); (c) An epithet meaning 'chief, noble, official', as in <i>kōyil m̄-k-ka!</i> (PPTI); (DED. 3923).	1. Pre-fixed epithet as in <i>m̄ v̄l!</i> (Puyam. 24). 2. Suffixed epithet as in <i>v̄l m̄-y</i> (Akam. 36). 3. names as in <i>m̄l!</i> : great man, Yappu; <i>m̄yav̄g</i> , <i>m̄ȳv̄g</i> : Vispu, Kappa (DED. 3918). (Para. 2.26-2.28).
:ō	A 'fish' with a vertical stroke; to ascend: DED. 870; to emerge, as sun and moon: DED. 2344.	(a) Ascending node (Skt. Rāhu). (b) to drive off (exorcise): DED. 2351. (c) demon, spirits: DED. 2346. (d) a priest: DED. 874. (e) a member of one of the two clans of the Proto-Indian priest-rulers (named after the ascending node).	Names associated with <i>ō-y</i> (<*cō) clan; place-names: <i>Ōȳm̄-nāttu</i> , <i>Ōm̄mpūȳȳt̄</i> , <i>Cō-pattiv̄am</i> ; clan-names: <i>Ōy m̄g</i> , <i>Ōvi</i> , <i>Ōviyar</i> , <i>(Cīrup̄ān</i> ; PPTI). (Para. 2.32, 2.33).
:āy	A 'fish' with a slanting stroke; slant, declivity: DED. 2028.	(a) Descending node (Skt., Ketu); (Ta., <i>Cōy kōj</i>), Ta. Lex. (b) to cause to leave (exorcise): DED. 2028. (c) a member of one of the two clans of the Proto-Indian priest-rulers (named after the descending node).	Names associated with the <i>Ōy</i> (<*cōy) clan: <i>A-y</i> , <i>Āy</i> , <i>Āvi</i> , <i>Āviyar</i> (PPTI). (Para. 2.34).

Approximate phonetic value	Object represented	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<p><i>kāi-(v)</i></p> <p><i>cā-kāi-(v)</i></p> <p><i>cāy-kāi-(v)</i></p>	<p>Two overlapping circles representing association, a clan or tribe (DED. 1562).</p>	<p>S. No. 15 : a general symbol for a clan of the priest-rulers.</p> <p>S. No. 16 : The Clan of the Ascending Node.</p> <p>S. No. 17 : The Clan of the Descending Node.</p>	<p>Ta. <i>kāiṣam</i>, <i>kāṣar</i> : clan, tribe (DED. 1562).</p> <p>cf. S. No. 13.</p> <p>cf. S. No. 14. (Para, 2.42)</p>
-(a)nr-(v)	A vessel (DED. 107, 109, 110).	<p>(a) Masc. sing. pronom. affix of Third Person; (DED. 1).</p> <p>(b) a pronom. honorific affix for male personal names and titles;</p> <p>(c) personal or clan names derived from honorific usage.</p>	<p>1. DED. 1 for words meaning 'he, that man'; Ta., <i>ar</i>;</p> <p>2. DED. 111 for words meaning 'male'.</p> <p>3. O.Ta. honorific affix <i>-anda-</i>. (TBI., 13, 26, 65, etc.).</p> <p>4. personal or clan names: <i>aṅṅiraṅ</i> (<i>puṣam</i>, 129); <i>anṅar</i> (<i>Akām</i>, 169); <i>vāṅṅi</i> (Skv.); <i>ṅāṅṅa</i>. (Paras, 1.17—1.22).</p>
-ey	An arrow or a spear-head; cf. E.H., II, Pl. CXXIII; To discharge as an arrow, to throw as a spear, (DED. 691).	<p>(a) epicene (?) nominal suffix;</p> <p>(b) Personal or clan names derived from the nominal suffix.</p>	<p>1. Ta. nominal endings, <i>-i</i>, <i>-ai</i>;</p> <p>2. O.Ta. paragogic suffixes <i>-i</i>, <i>-iṅ</i>, <i>-y</i> after nouns ending in <i>-i</i>, <i>-ai</i>; (TBI., 1, 2, 3, etc.).</p> <p>3. O.Ta. personal or clan names: <i>Ḃvvi</i> (<i>puṣam</i>, 24); <i>Ḃyṅṅar</i> (<i>Akām</i>, 181).</p> <p>(Paras, 1.37—1.39).</p>
vāy/(m)v-(v)	A personage with a club (bamboo staff or reed) on his shoulders; a person in authority; bamboo: DED. 4514, 4558.	<p>(a) A priest-ruler occupying high position;</p> <p>(b) The High-Priest or Priest-King (particularly when preceded by three short strokes in the upper register); (<i>vide</i> S. No. 1).</p>	<p>Ta. 1. <i>vāḂar</i>; 'crowned' king (DED. 4549 PP11).</p> <p>2. <i>vāḂiya-</i>, of the King (Ta, Lex.)</p> <p>3. <i>vāḂiyaṅ</i>: High-Priest, brahman (Ta, Lex.)</p> <p>4. <i>māḂi</i>: buffalo-faced demon, yama (Ta, Lex.) (cf. S. No. 1).</p> <p>(Paras, 2.50—2.55).</p>

personage with a pole across his shoulders carrying suspended loads at either side; burden : DED. 3729.

- (a) A person carrying the 'burden of office', or responsibility; an official; holder of seal (of office).
 (b) A priest-ruler attached to the Temple or Palace for performance of specific duties (DED. 3728, 3729).

- Ta. 1. *poruypnu* : responsibility.
 2. *pori* : responsibility, seal (of office), (DED. 3728, 3729).
 3. *poraiyaz* : 'sustainer'.
 4. *poraiyāṭṭi* : Priestess attached to a temple (Ta. Lex.)
 Kod., *porṭi* : to undertake an office (DED. 3729).

O.Ta. *Porai*, *Poraiyan*, *Poraiyar* : members of the junior branch of the Chōra royal dynasty : (FBI., 1966, 1968, Nos. 56-57).
 (Paras., 4.18-4.20).

personage with 'horns' ; cf. 'horned' male animals : DEL. 935, 943.

- (a) A honorific for a warrior, hero, noble, or chieftain DED. 986.

- Ta. 1. *kaṭṭaṭ*, *kaṭṭaṭ*, *kaṭṭaṭ*, *kaṭṭaṭ* (?) : names and titles in old Tamil poems and inscriptions.
 2. *kaṭṭar*, *kaṭṭaṭṭar* : caste-name among the Vēṭṭar.
 (Paras., 2.43-2.45).

ie or a pair of sinuous lines representing serpents ; serpent : DED. 1948.

- (a) Serpent-planets.
 (b) The clans of the priest-rulers named after the serpent-planets.
 (c) A member of the serpent-planet clans.
 (d) A honorific for the priest-ruler (DED. 167).

- Ta. 1. *ara* : snake (DED. 1949).
 2. *aravar* : The Tamils (DED. 264).
 3. *araṭṭiyar* : (DED. 167) ; *araṭṭiyar* : titles of the vēṭṭar chieftains.
 4. *Tiraṭṭiyar* : a Vēṭṭar-Nāga people in the north Tamil country (PPTI).
 (Paras., 2.39, 2.40, 2.46).

Approximate phonetic value	Object represented	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>nef-(v)</i>	A toothed weapon generally with five prongs, prob. mounted on a shaft; cf. <i>neffai</i> : a ('tall') weapon (Ta. Lex.).	An attribute meaning 'great' (lit. 'tall') prefixed to the names of deities and great personages; tal, grvat: DED. 3099.	Ta. <i>neffiyōṣ</i> : name of a king (PPTI) Viṅṅu (DED. 3098). <i>neṣu-māl</i> : Viṅṅu. <i>neṣu-veḷ</i> : Viṅṅu, Muraḱaṭ. <i>neṣu-nāṅ</i> : a king's name or title. <i>neṣu-miṣal</i> : ibid. (vide, PPTI). <i>neṣu-muṭi-araṇal</i> : Deity or King considered as the legendary ancestor of the Vēḷir at Tuvaṛapāṭi; equated with Viṅṅu-Kṛṣṇa (Nacc., on <i>Tol., Pāyiram</i>). (Paras. 2.47—2.49).
<i>paṭ-(v)</i>	Two weapons, indicating 'arms', armies: (Ta. Lex., DED. 3195).	Formations of <i>Arṇvat</i> (inark).	Ta. <i>paṭai</i> : army formations; (e.g.) <i>oṭṭai-p-paṭai kaṭ-k-koṭṭar paṭai</i> . (Paras. 4.36—4.38).
<i>if-(v)</i>	Trunk (of body), to indicate 'waist' (symbol turned through 90° to the horizontal position); waist: DED. 380, 683; narrow, constricted: DED. 378, 447.	(a) Lord, Noble, Chieftain, (DED. 448). (b) a clan name of the Vēḷir by usage (DED. 382 f). (c) The clan name 'Yadu' (▷ Yā-dava) by usage.	Ta. 1. <i>ifai, iriṭṭu</i> : Lord, Chief (DED. 448). 2. <i>ifai</i> : a name of the ruling Vēḷir classes (to be distinguished from <i>ifaiyar</i> : a low caste (cf. DED. 382). 3. <i>Yadu</i> : an epithet before the name <i>Yala-hhāṭṭiy</i> (a typical Yādava name) on an Arikamedu graffito. Skt., <i>Yadu</i> (< * <i>ed</i>), <i>yādāvi</i> : a non-Āryan tribe. (Paras. 4.2—4.5).

(-m, -p/-v)	A plough, a yoke; of. Falkenstein, 214; yoke, plough: DED. 2313.	(a) A granary (Ta. Lex.); from <i>cér</i> , to collect (DED. 2312). (b) A Keeper of the Granary (the Treasury in the Proto-Indian civilization); For the Great Granaries in the Cities, <i>vide</i> , Wheeler, 1966, pp. 18-21.	Ta. 1. <i>cér</i> , <i>cér(ri)</i> : granary (Ta. Lex.). 2. <i>Céru</i> : the Chéras who ruled over <i>nāñcil-nāñu</i> , the country of the Plough. 3. <i>Cér(ri)nar</i> : old Tamil name. 4. <i>Céppar</i> : Chief of the maritime tract (Ta. Lex.). 5. <i>Cérvai</i> : Captain, Commander (Ta. Lex.).
-(v) >4)	Mortar and pestle; to pound (as corn): DED. 1391, 1536, 1383; For mortar in the cities, <i>vide</i> , Figgott, 1950, pl. 3.	Pond, Pool: (DED. 1389); The Sacred Pool (The 'Great Bath'); Wheeler, 1966, pp. 16-17.	Ta. 1. <i>kuppu</i> : to pound (DED. 1536). 2. <i>kuffam</i> , <i>kuffai</i> : Pond (DED. 1389). 3. <i>kufa-mugi</i> , <i>kufa-mugi</i> : Agastya, who arose from a water-pitcher. 4. <i>kuffara</i> , <i>kuffurap</i> : The Chéras (PPTI, Ta. Lex.).
-(b)-(v)	A pillar set on a base; capital of a pillar: DED. 3746.	Pillared Hall, Assembly Hall, Palace; For the Pillared Halls in Mohenjodaro, See Wheeler, 1966, pp. 17-18.	Skt. <i>kunda</i> : pit (of water or fire). (Parsa, 4.10-4.16). Ta. 1. <i>pōtikai</i> : capital of a pillar. 2. <i>Pōtikai</i> , <i>Pōtivil</i> : residence of Agastya, a hill, a Vējir City, Hall of Justice, a common meeting place (even under a tree) for the Vējir and the Kōcar. (PPTI, Ta. Lex.) (Parsa, 4.17).

<p>row or series of lines symmetrically placed within a rectangular enclosure ; ie, row, series : DED. 4310. ie, stripe, course : DED. 4304. boundary, enclosure : DED. 4301.</p>	<p>A scribe (DED. 4304) ; from, ' to incise ' (DED. 4302, 4357).</p>	<p>Ta. <i>vari</i>, <i>varai</i> : to write (DED. 4304). Te. <i>rāya</i>, <i>rāsu</i> : <i>ibid.</i> Ta. <i>vāriyaṅ</i> (inscr.) : A temple accountant (prob. a scribe) <i>mā-rāyaṅ</i> (inscr.) : A temple servant (prob. a scribe) (Ta. Lex.) (Paras 4.21—4.23).</p>
<p>three short strokes in the upper register prefixed to S. No. 10 and S. No. 20 ; the sign indicates a homophone of ' three ' (DED. 4147).</p>	<p>An attribute meaning ' first, chief, head, principal, senior, etc., ' (DED. 4053, 4057).</p>	<p>Ta. 1. <i>mūlai</i> : first, principal (DED. 4053). 2. <i>mūlu</i>, <i>mūl</i>, <i>mūlā</i> : elder, senior, great (DED. 4057).</p>
<p>three long strokes suffixed to S. No. 28 ; the sign indicates a homophone of ' three ' (DED. 4147).</p>	<p>A noun meaning, ' chief, head, leader, master, commander, etc., ' (DED. 4119).</p>	<p>Ta. 1. <i>mūṇṇar</i> : leader, master ; 2. <i>mūṇṇaiṇṇar</i> : commander (DED. 4119). 3. <i>mūṇṇar</i> : one of the eighteen groups of Southern migration. (Compare S. No. 31 and 32). (Paras 2.20, 2.55, 4.14).</p>

Object represented	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
(5)	(6)	(7)
<p>right forearm with all the fingers spread out; (right palm faces the reader with the thumb at the right end); open, expand: DED. 4459, 3446.</p>	<p>A numbered Formation of Attendants or Guards known as 'the Open Right Hand Formation'; stationed within the Citadel; attached to the Temple, the Palace and the Army; members belonged to the ruling Priest class.</p>	<p>Ta. cf. <i>valāṅkai</i> (Right Hand) <i>vēṃ(ē)-p-pai</i> (Vēlai Regiments); the famous elite corps of bodyguards and armed formations of the Chōḷas; a large number of the regiments known from inscriptions; they lived in separate cantonments (<i>vēṅam</i>); they were sworn (<i>serinda</i>) to defend the person of the King with their lives; prob., connected with the Vājir and the Right Hand Castes. <i>Vide, The Cōḷas</i>, II(i) pp. 217-30.</p>
<p>(Left?) forearm with the fingers kept close together; to hold, grasp: DED. 1788.</p>	<p>A numbered Formation of Attendants or Guards known as 'the closed (Left?) Hand Formation'; stationed within the Citadel; attached to the Temple, the Palace and the Army; members belonged to the 'mountain-people' of the Lower City.</p>	<p>Ta. <i>kai</i>. (Hand) <i>-k-koḷ(-ar) pai</i>; <i>brī</i>. (Hand) <i>mā cēṅai</i> (great army); the famous elite corps of attendants and armed formations associated mostly with the Pāṇḍyas, but also serving under the Chōḷas; they were sworn (<i>serinda</i>) to defend the person of the King with their lives; Prob., connected with the Kōcar and the Left Hand Castes; <i>Vide, Kōcar</i>, pp. 55-58. (Paras 4.24-4.34).</p>
<p>Open Right Hand' within an enclosure; inside: DED. 6.</p>	<p>Cantonment or barracks for the 'Open Right Hand' Formations of Attendants and Guards.</p>	<p>Ta. <i>vēṅam, vēṅkam</i> (inscr.) <i>viḷkam</i> (DED. 4462); Quarters of the Vēlai Regiments (The <i>roḷas</i>; op. Cit.). (Para 4.31).</p>

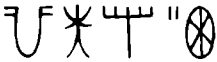
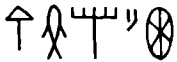
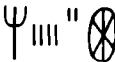
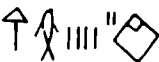


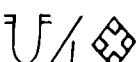


<p>Closed (left?) Hand' within an enclosure; inside : DED. 8.</p>	<p>Cantonment or barracks for the 'Closed (Left?) Hand' Formations of Attendants or Guards.</p> <p>For cells (barracks?) in the Citadel, see Wheeler, 1966, pp. 16-17.</p>	<p>Interpreted by analogy with S. No. 35. (Para. 4.31).</p>
<p>rob. an open door; cf. Sumnerian 'bad'; 'open'; M.I.C., II, p. 454, No. 15; 'to open' : DED. 2687.</p>	<p>Faithful, trustworthy; attribute prefixed to the priest ('fish' sign) and the 'Open Right Hand' and the 'Closed (Left?) Hand' Formations, sworn or dedicated to the service of the Temple.</p>	<p>Ta. 1. <i>tēru</i> : to swear, take an oath; <i>tēruar</i> : trustworthy persons; <i>tēruar</i> : tested friends (DED. 2856, 2836). 2. <i>tēruṅa</i>, <i>tēruṅa</i> (inscr.) : attribute to the Vāḷai and Kōḷar regiments 'sworn to fidelity'. 3. <i>tē</i> : attribute to names as in <i>tē-vēḷ</i> (<i>Puram.</i>, 133). 4. *<i>vir-mi</i> > <i>tami</i>, <i>drāviḷa</i>. (Paras, 4.32-4.34).</p>
<p>'two upraised hands with fingers open; + pron. suffix.</p>	<p>A Chieftain or Commander of the 'Open Right Hand' Formations of Attendants or Guards.</p>	<p>Ta. 1. <i>vēḷ-āṅ</i> : A <i>vēḷ-āṅ</i>-ar Chieftain. 2. <i>mi-vēṅa-vēḷān</i> : ibid., Ka. <i>paḷe vaḷḷān</i> general (DED. 3195). (Paras, 4.35-4.38).</p>
<p>'two upraised hands with closed palms; + pron. suffix.</p>	<p>A Chieftain or Commander of the 'Closed (Left?) Hand Formations of Attendants or Guards.</p>	<p>cf. <i>ka-i-ka</i> / <i>cēṅāpati</i> (S.I.I., V. 416). (Paras, 4.35-4.38)</p>

Approximate phonetic value	Object represented	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
ant-a(ā)//n	The symbol of an 'ordinary man', (servant) suffixed to the pron. honorific; the digramme is a single word.	The Class of Attendants to Priests; belonged to the Priest-Ruler group; prob. furnished men for the various 'Open Right Hand' Formations.	<p>Ta. 1. <i>vēl-ān</i>, <i>vēl-āj</i>, <i>vēl-āj-ar</i>: men in the service of the Vējir (Excursus A).</p> <p>2. <i>ant-an</i>, <i>ant-an-ay</i>, <i>ant-an-āj-ar</i>: 'inferior' brahman (?), priests; prob. Priest-attendants (<i>vēl-āj-ar</i>).</p> <p>3. <i>ant-aj</i>; <i>ant-aj-aka-iti-āj-ar</i>: attendants and warriors under the Chōjas.</p> <p>4. <i>āndhra-bhṛtyn</i>: the 'servants-of-Āndhra, dynasty. (Paraś, 4.39—4.47).</p>
kō-y	A 'cup' mostly found on the votive objects at Harappa; preceded by one to four long strokes;	'Mountain-people' who lived in the Lower (Outer) City; ordinary, common people; were divided into four piratries and two totémistic clans;	<p>Ta. 1. <i>kōy</i>: toddy tankard (Paraś, 300); (DED, 1842).</p> <p>2. <i>Nāc-Kōcar</i>: The Kōcar of the Four Clans.</p> <p>3. <i>kō</i>, <i>kuyava</i>: potter clan (DED, 1468). (Paraś, 5.1—5.5; Excursus B).</p>
ɛl-(v) -kō-y	A figure of a squatting person ligatured to the 'cup' symbol; to raise oneself slightly; DED, 432.	The fuller name of the 'mountain-people'. The epithet * <i>ela</i> - indicates the prob. origin of these people from Elam.	<p>Ta. <i>Ijankō</i>, <i>Ijankōcar</i>, <i>Ijavac</i>, <i>Ijatiyar</i>: Kōcar names. (Paraś, 5.14; Excursus B).</p>
ɛl-(v)	A loose bow-string or rope; relax, loosen; DED, 433.	An attribute of the 'mountain-people';	<p>ibid. (ibid.).</p>

<p>n. infant; young, tender (DED. 436).</p>	<p>(a) A personal-cum-clan name occurring frequently among the mountain-people. (b) A Chieftain of the mountain-people. (c) Murukaṅ (Skt. Kumāra), the young god (god of the young ones?). (d) Attribute to personal name, meaning 'young'.</p>	<p>ibid. (Para. 5.11—5.13).</p>
<p>three hills in a row; mountain (DED. 1811).</p>	<p>The 'mountain people' who were the commoners in the Lower City.</p>	<p>Tab. 1. <i>kō</i>: mountain; DED. 1811. 2. <i>ku(u)ō(ō)</i>: names of Dravidian hill-tribes (See Para 5.5 for list). 3. <i>kōcar</i>: the martial clans of the Pāṇḍya Kingdom; served also under the Chēra-Chōlas (Excursus B). 4. cf. Malaya-dhvaṅga: Pāṇḍya name, Prob. referring to the 'hill emblem' of the dynasty at one time. 5. cf. the legend of the 'three breasts' of Minākṣi, the First Pāṇḍya Queen. (Para. 5.6—5.7).</p>
<p>the 'hill symbol' within a frame. z.: inside (DED. 8).</p>	<p>The mountain-people working within the Citadel.</p>	<p>Tab. cf. <i>akam-utaiyār</i>: Kallar and Maravar (Kōcar groups) working in royal households. (Para. 5.9) (Excursus B).</p>
<p>the 'hill symbol' modified with a short stroke on each peak; para.: outside (DED. 3554).</p>	<p>The mountain-people working outside the Citadel i.e., in the Lower City.</p>	<p>(Para 5.10).</p>

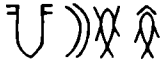
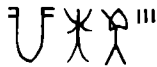
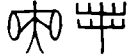



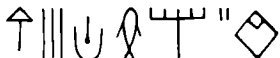
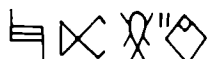

Approximate phonetic value	Object represented	Meanings	Dravidian and other Parallels (linguistic and historical) (Para Numbers refer to the Paper)
(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
<i>maɻ-(v)</i>	Axe or knife fixed through a wooden handle; <i>vide</i> Diringer, 1906, II, p. 71 for a Hittite parallel; axe: DED. 3889.	Totem symbol of one of the two clans of the mountain-people.	Ta. <i>maɻ-u</i> : axe (DED. 3889); <i>maɻuɻar</i> , <i>maɻuɻar</i> , <i>maɻuɻar</i> , <i>maɻuɻar</i> : clan names. (Para, 5.8) (Excursus B).
<i>kaɻ-(v)</i>	Weed, clump; <i>vide</i> Hunter, p. 208 for an Egyptian parallel; weed: DED. 1157.	Totem symbol of one of the two clans of the mountain people.	Ta. <i>kaɻ-a</i> : weed (DED. 1157) <i>kaɻ[ar]</i> , <i>kaɻavar</i> : clan names. (Para, 5.8) (Excursus B).
<i>ɪr/ɪr-(v)</i>	Hand (without the arm) in a horizontal position; <i>vide</i> Falkenstein No. 9 for a close Sumerian analogy; to drop, fall, low: DED. 426.	Serrf or slave, prob. drawn from the mountain people.	Ta. <i>iri</i> : low (DED. 426). Ma. <i>ɛɻaɻa</i> : a low caste (serfs) in Kerala. Ta. <i>ɛɻaɻa</i> : a poor person (originally a slave?); (DED. 726) <i>ɛɻaɻa</i> : shepherd (TBL., 26). <i>ɪr</i> : ibid (DED. 382). (Para, 5.18—5.21).

SELECTED SEAL TEXTS

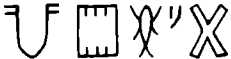

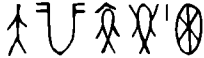
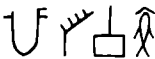


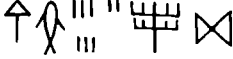


S. No.	Ref. No.	Texts (to be read from the right)
(1)	(2)	(3)
1. F.E.M., 168	..	
2. M.I.C., 543	..	
3. M.I.C., 76	..	
4. M.I.C., 19	..	
5. M.I.C., 246	..	
6. M.I.C., 157	..	
7. M.I.C., 285	..	
8. M.I.C., 380	..	
9. M.I.C., 261	..	

◦

SELECTED SEAL TEXTS

S. No.	Ref. No.	Texts (to be read from the right)
(1)	(2)	(3)
10.	Lothal (IAR, 1957-58, XX, 7)	
11.	E.H., 33	
12.	M.I.C., 268	
13.	C.E., LII, 28	
14.	M.I.C., H-95	
15.	M.I.C., 345	
16.	M.I.C., 94	
17.	M.I.C., 96	
18.	M.I.C., 456	

SELECTED SEAL TEXTS

S. No.	Ref. No.	Texts (to be read from the right)
(1)	(2)	(3)
19.	M.I.C., H-222	.. 
20.	M.I.C., H-153	.. 
21.	M.I.C., 109	
22.	M.I.C., 40	.. 
23.	F.E.M., 65	.. 
24.	M.I.C., H-72	.. 
25.	M.I.C., 314	.. 
26.	M.I.C., 201	
27.	E.H., (freq)	.. 

TRANSLATIONS OF SELECTED SEAL-TEXTS

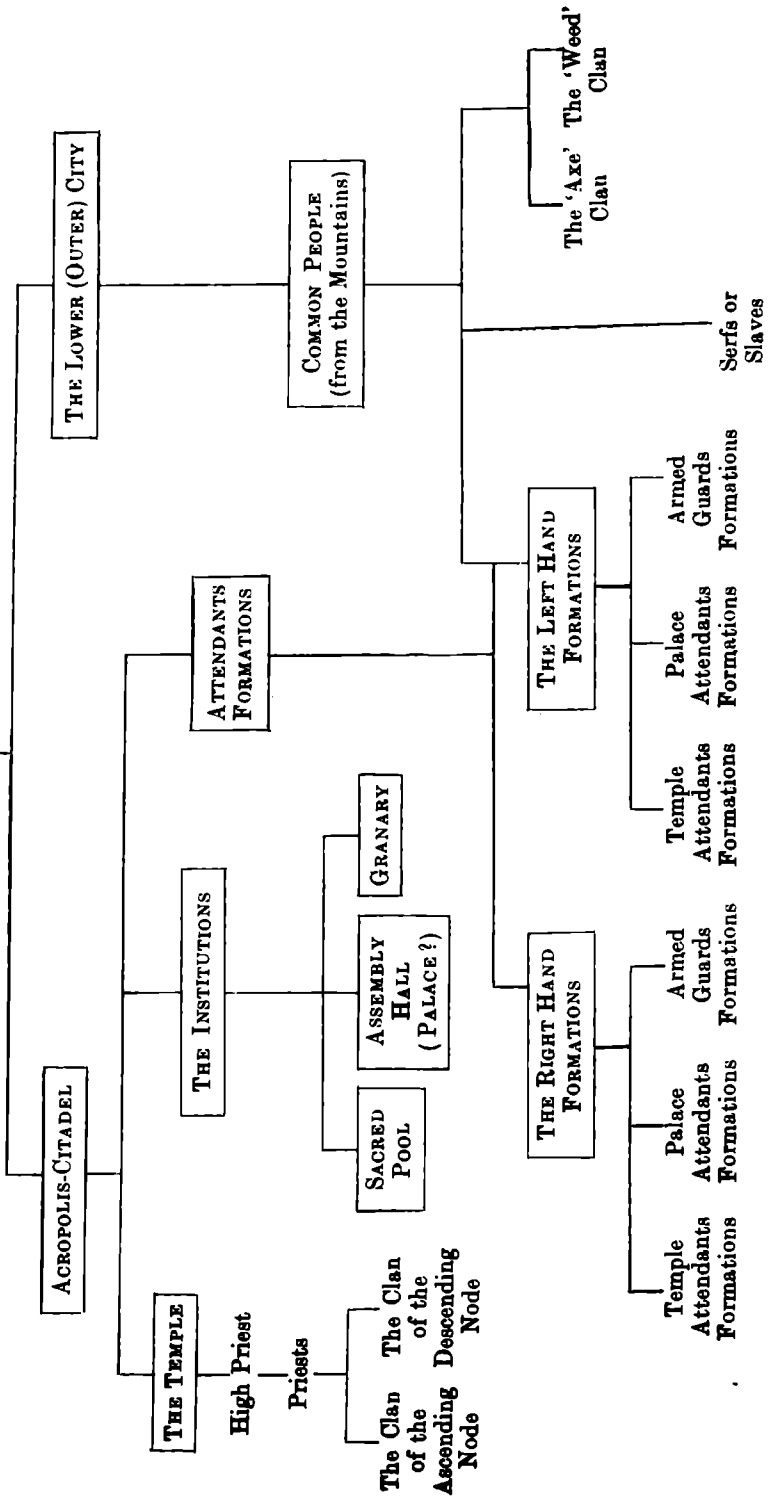
S. No.	TRANSLATION (the number within brackets placed immediately after a word refers to the order of the signs in the Texts counting from the right)
(1)	(2)
1	(The) Great (3) Lord (4)—he (5) of (2) (the) Temple (1). [cf. Ta., <i>Neṭ-(um) Kaṇṭ-aṇ</i> ; (3-4-5)]
2	(The) Great (3) Priest (lit., the shining one) (4)—he (5) of (2) (the) Temple (1). [cf. Ta. <i>Neṭ-u Vēḷ</i> ; (3-4)]
3	(The) Four(-th) (3) ' Closed (Left?) Hand ' (4) (Formation of Attendants) of (2) (the) Temple (1). [cf. Ta. <i>Kai-k-kōḷ</i> ; (4)]
4	He (5) (of the) Four(-th) (3) (Phratry) (of the) Priest(-s) (4) in (2) (the) Citadel (1).
5	(The) Four(-th) (3) ' Open Right Hand ' (4) (Formation of Attendants) of (2) (the) Citadel (1). [cf. Ta., <i>Valaṅkai vēḷai</i> ; (4)]
6	(The) Six(-th) (3) ' Closed (Left?) Hand ' (4) (Formation of Attendants) of (2) (the) Citadel (1).
7	(The) ' Sworn (2)—he (3) ' (of the) City (1).
<i>Note</i> : the epithet ' sworn ' seems to be used for persons dedicated to the Temple. The corr. Ta. (inscr.) word seems to be ' <i>terinta</i> ' (Paras, 4.28—4.34).	
8	* <i>Ve(ē)//ṇ-(v)</i> (a name) (1), he (3) (of the) (clan of the) Ascending Node (2). [cf. Ta., <i>Ve(ē)ḷ-i</i> (1) <i>Ō-y</i> (2-3)]
9	He (2) (of the) (clan of the) Descending Node (1). [cf. Ta. <i>Āy</i> (1) <i>Ēvvi</i> (2)]
10	* <i>Ve(ē)//ṇ-(v)</i> <i>Mā</i> (a comp. name) (1-2), he (4) (of the) serpents-clan (3). [cf. Ta. <i>Vēṇ mā(ṇ)</i> or <i>Veḷi mā(ṇ)</i> <i>Aray-aṇ</i> ; (1-4)]
11	(The) High (1) Priest (2), Lord (3)—he (4). [cf. Ta. <i>Mū-vēṇta-(k-)kaṇṭ-aṇ</i> ; (1-4)]
12	Officer (2) (of the) Army (1). [cf. Ta. <i>paṭai</i> (1) ; <i>porai</i> (2)]
13	Chief (1) Lord (2)—he (3), (an) officer (4). [cf. Ta. <i>Mā kaṇṭ-aṇ porai</i> , (1-4)]
14	(He) (of the) Six(-th) (3) (Phratry) (of the) Priest(-s) (4), (an) officer (5) in (2) (the) Temple (1).
15	* <i>Ve(ē)//ṇ-(v)</i> (a name) (3) (of the) (clan of the) Descending Node (4), chief (6) -he (7) (of the) (Sacred) Pool (5) of (2) (the) Temple. [cf. <i>Vēḷ-Āy</i> (3-4) ; <i>Kuru-muṇ(a)</i> (5-7)]
16	Great (3) Priest (4), Chief (6) —he (7) (of the) (Sacred) Pool (5) in (2) (the) Citadel (1).

TRANSLATIONS OF SELECTED SEAL-TEXTS

S. No.	TRANSLATION (the number within brackets placed immediately after a word refers to the order of the signs in the Texts counting from the right)
(1)	(2)
17	Chief (3) Lord (4) Granary (-Keeper) (i.e. Treasurer) (5) in (2) (the) Citadel (1). [cf. Ta., <i>Mā</i> (3) <i>Irai</i> (4) <i>Cēr(aṅ)</i> (5)]
18	Lord (7) Granary (-Keeper) (6), Chief (5) (of the) (Sacred) Pool (4), (of the) (Clan of the) Descending Node (3) in (2) (the) Citadel (1). [Note : This text indicates that the occupational names had become even then personal names by usage, and not always to be understood literally.]
19	Chief (3) Scribe (4) —he (5) of (2) (the) Inner Place (i.e. Citadel) (1). [cf. Ta., <i>akattu</i> (1-2) <i>mā rāya-ṅ</i> (3-5)]
20	Chief (1) Scribe (2) —he (4) (of the) Outer Place (i.e. the Lower City) (3). [cf. Ta., <i>Purattiyāṅ</i> (3-4)]
21	* <i>Mā</i> <i>Ve(ē)l/n-(v)</i> (a name) (3-4), (the) Priest-Attendant (5-6) of (2) (the) Temple (1). [cf. Ta., <i>Ve(ṅ)ṅ-a</i> (1-2) <i>Mā</i> <i>Vēl</i> (3-4) <i>ant-a/ṅ</i> (5-6)]
22	He (4) (of the) 'Open Right Hand' (Formation of Attendants) (3) (in the) Palace/Hall (2) (of the) Priest(-s) (1). [cf. Ta., <i>Vēl Potikai</i> (1-2)]
23	(The) Commander—he (of the) Army (of the) 'Open Right Hand' (Formation of Attendants) (3-4) of (2) (the) Temple (1). [cf. Ta., <i>Paṭai Vēl-ōṅ</i> (3-4)]
24	(The) Commander—he (of the) Army (of the) 'Closed (Left?) Hand' (Formation of Attendants) (3-4) in (2) (the) Citadel (1).
25	He (6) (of the) Six(-th) (4) (Phratry) (of the) Priests (5) (a name), in (3) (the) Army (2) (of the) Lord (1). [cf. Ta., <i>Irai Paṭai -i aru māṭi</i> (<i>ve(ē)l-i</i>) (1-6)]
26	He (3) (of the) Axe (clan) (1) (of the) Mountain (-tribe) (2). [cf. Ta., <i>mar (-ama) kōca-ṅ</i> (1-2-3).]
27	Offerings (6) (of) * <i>Eḷ-a anṛ</i> (a name) (3-4), (a) serf (5), (of the) Third (1) (Phratry) (of the) * <i>Kō-y</i> (a clan) (2). [cf. Ta., <i>mu (-k-) Kōcar</i> (1-2) <i>Iḷavaṅ</i> (3-4) <i>ērai</i> (5) <i>kāṅikkai</i> (6)]
<p>Note : The inscription is on a three-sided votive object. Sign Nos. 1-2 are on the first side, 3-5 on the second side and 6 ("three eyes") on the third side ; The signs on the third side represent 'eyes' and stand for 'offerings'. The related homophones are :</p>	
<p><i>kaṅ-k</i> : eyes (DED. 973). <i>kāṅ</i> : to see, to show (DED. 1209). <i>*kāṅ-k (-v)</i> : offerings to deity (ibid.).</p>	

PROTO-INDIAN POLITY

(A conjectural restoration based on the Seal-Texts)



NOTES AND REFERENCES

(vide Bibliography for abbreviations used in citations)

- ¹ First Announcement, pp. 7; 19.
- ² Soviet Studies, p. 7.
- ³ First Announcement, p. 19.
- ⁴ M.I.C., II, p. 415; Hunter, pp. 59-60; Soviet Studies, p. 10; First Announcement, p. 19.
- ⁵ Hunter, pp. 59-60.
- ⁶ Soviet Studies, p. 19.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 10.
- ⁸ First Announcement, p. 19.
- ⁹ M.I.C., II, p. 438.
- ¹⁰ Hunter, pp. 56-57.
- ¹¹ Ibid., pp. 27; 61.
- ¹² *Proto-Indica* : 1968, pp. 11-12.
- ¹³ First Announcement, pp. 18-22.
- ¹⁴ Heras, pp. 66-67.
- ¹⁵ First Announcement, pp. 21-22.
- ¹⁶ Soviet Studies, p. 21.
- ¹⁷ Hunter, p. 55; p. 210, No. 1.
- ¹⁸ Soviet Studies, p. 21.
- ¹⁹ First Announcement, pp. 21-22.
- ²⁰ Heras, p. 67.
- ²¹ Soviet Studies, p. 21.
- ²² First Announcement, pp. 21-22; Further Progress, p. 6.
- ²³ Hunter, p. 60.
- ²⁴ Heras, p. 67.
- ²⁵ Further Progress, p. 6.
- ²⁶ Soviet Studies, pp. 20-21.
- ²⁷ M.I.C., II, pp. 415-22 ('Independent self-contained units'; 'a succession of separate words'); Hunter, p. 128: 'no sign of common occurrence, except (one), is not found as a single word'.
- ²⁸ TBI., No. 41 is not an exception as the epigraph is broken off after the genitive.
- ²⁹ *Dravidian Coins (The Pāṇḍyas and Chōḷas and their Coinage)*, Rangachariar T. M., and Desikachariar, T. It is interesting that even Sanskrit coin-legends in the Tamil country end in the Nominative, the only known exception being the silver coin of Śrīvirākerala (*Coins of India*, Brown C. J., Pl. VII, 9). I am indebted to Miss R. Vanaja, National Museum, for the information.
- ³⁰ M.I.C., III, Pl. CVI, 93.
- ³¹ Caldwell, R., pp. 296-300.
- ³² TBI., 3, 6 (-i-); 26 (-i); 28 (-iṅ) etc.
- ³³ Cited, 'T.B.I.' (vide Bibliography).
- ³⁴ *Caṅka Ilakkīyam*, II, pp. 1496-1502.
- ³⁵ Hunter, p. 210, No. 1.
- ³⁶ Ibid., pp. 56-57; 116-17.
- ³⁷ Soviet Studies, p. 21; First Announcement, pp. 18-19.
- ³⁸ Soviet Studies, p. 21.
- ³⁹ Hunter, pp. 116-17; Heras, pp. 258-259.
- ⁴⁰ First Announcement, pp. 22-23.
- ⁴¹ Further Progress, p. 35.

⁴³ Soviet Studies, p. 10.

⁴⁴ First Announcement, p. 19.

⁴⁵ Hunter thought that the 'interior dot' represented the 'pupil of the eye'! However, many of the spear-heads recovered from the sites show one or two rivet-holes in the blade supporting my identification. See, E. H., II, Pl. CXXIII.

⁴⁶ Soviet Studies, p. 11.

⁴⁷ M.I.C., II, p. 408.

⁴⁸ Hunter, pp. 71-77.

⁴⁹ Heras, p. 261.

⁵⁰ Soviet Studies, p. 21; Proto-Indica: 1968, pp. 34; 42-44.

⁵¹ Proto-Indica: 1968, pp. 40-42.

⁵² First Announcement, pp. 40-44; Progress, pp. 18-20; 28-29, Further Progress pp. 9-10; 15-20.

⁵³ *Among the Gonds of Adilabad*, Sethu Madhava Rao Pagdi, 2nd. ed., Bombay (1949), p. 3.

⁵⁴ 'On the significance of the term *arma-*, *armaka-*, in Early Sanskrit literature', T. Burrow *Journal of Indian History*, XLI: 1, (1963), pp. 159-166.

⁵⁵ Hunter, Table XIII, Nos. 247-48.

⁵⁶ For a brief notice of the Ōy Clan, see 'The Surnames of the *Caṅkam* Age, Literary and Tribal', Dorai Rangaswamy, Madras, (1968), pp. 139-142.

⁵⁷ For details of the Āy Clan, *ibid.*, pp. 135-139. Also see, 'Vēfir Varalāru', M. Raghava Iyengar, 3rd ed., Madras (1964), pp. 38-49.

⁵⁸ For a brief notice of the Tiraiyar clan, see, Dorai Rangaswamy, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-173.

⁵⁹ Hunter, p. 109; Table L.

⁶⁰ Proto-Indica: 1968, p. 15.

⁶¹ Further Progress, pp. 11-12; 32.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Hunter, p. 128.

⁶⁴ Heras, p. 76; Proto-Indica: 1968, pp. 44-45.

⁶⁵ Progress, pp. 15-16.

⁶⁶ Proto-Indica: 1968, p. 15.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶⁸ Further Progress, p. 26.

⁶⁹ Hunter, pp. 83-86; 94-95.

⁷⁰ Heras, p. 74.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 86-87, 113.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98; texts 8 and 12.

⁷³ Progress, pp. 20-22; Further Progress, pp. 28-29.

⁷⁴ Further Progress, pp. 4-6.

⁷⁵ Heras, pp. 69, 81, 100.

⁷⁶ First Announcement, pp. 29-31; Further Progress, pp. 21-23.

⁷⁷ Ancient India, No. 2, (1946), p. 113, Fig. 47, No. 20.

⁷⁸ Heras, p. 260; First Announcement, p. 31.

⁷⁹ Falkenstein, No. 214.

⁸⁰ First Announcement, p. 37.

⁸¹ Further Progress, pp. 8-9.

⁸² First Announcement, p. 37.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸⁴ Proto-Indica: 1968, pp. 38-40.

⁸⁵ First Announcement, p. 23; Progress, p. 6-8.

- ⁸⁵ For a discussion on the term *vāriyam*, see Mahalingam, T. V., *Village Communities in South India, Transactions of the Arch. Society of South India*, Vol. I (1955), pp. 33-46.
- ⁸⁶ *Soviet Studies*, p. 11 ; First Announcement, p. 64, No. 1.
- ⁸⁷ *M.I.C.*, II, p. 439, No. 96.
- ⁸⁸ Hunter, p. 70.
- ⁸⁹ *Soviet Studies*, pp. 11, 21 ; *Proto-Indica* : 1968, p. 13.
- ⁹⁰ *Further Progress*, pp. 30-33.
- ⁹¹ First Announcement, p. 35.
- ⁹² Hunter, pp. 68-69.
- ⁹³ *The Cōlas*, Nilakanta Sastri, K. A., Vol. II, Part I, (1937), pp. 217-30.
- ⁹⁴ *Proto-Indica* : 1968, pp. 36-37 ; 45-47.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- ⁹⁶ *Further Progress*, pp. 25-26.
- ⁹⁷ First Announcement, pp. 28-29 ; The word *pen(u)* in the sense of a 'comb' does not occur in Old Tamil.
- ⁹⁸ For a different interpretation of the scene, see *Further Progress*, pp. 17-20.
- ⁹⁹ For the Finnish interpretation of the scene, see *Further Progress*, pp. 33-35.

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