

WRITING IN THE INDUS CIVILIZATION

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The Indus Civilization also invented a form of writing, much like the people of Sumer and Egypt. At present, nearly 4,000 specimens of Indus script have been found, which are primarily engraved on seals, and there is evidence of 375 to 400 signs, generally written from right to left (fig. 5).



Figure 5. Indus script recovered from Khirsara, Indus Valley Civilization. Anil K. Pokharia et al., “Altered Cropping Pattern and Cultural Continuation with Declined Prosperity Following Abrupt and Extreme Arid Event at ~4,200 yrs BP: Evidence from an Indus Archaeological Site Khirsara, Gujarat, Western India,” PLOS One, October 6, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0185684>; CC BY 4.0 license. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Indus_script_recovered_from_Khirsara,_Indus_Valley_Civilization.jpg.

However, despite the existence of numerous examples of Indus script, scholars have been unable to translate it into a modern language. This is due to the absence of a bilingual or trilingual inscription, such as the Rosetta Stone or the Behistun Inscription, which would allow historians and linguists to compare two or three different examples of writing. In addition, scholars have yet to find an Indus inscription with a sufficient number of recurring symbols to ensure a proper translation. However, this has not stopped numerous scholars

around the world from attempting to translate the extant writing using a varied number of techniques—all of which have been questioned for their accuracy. Needless to say, the inability to decipher the Indus script has been a major hindrance in the comprehensive reconstruction of Indus society.^[1]

[1]. Antonova et al *History of Ancient India*. 26-27; Chopra et al., *Comprehensive History*, 20–21; Dani and Thapar, “The Indus Civilization,” 290–91; Habib, *The Indus Civilization*, 67–71; Mehta and Mehta, *History of Ancient India*, 106–07; Pusalker, “The Indus Valley Civilization,” 193–95; and Sharma, *India’s Ancient Past*, 83–84.