19th-century inscription discovered in Tenkasi

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News

At **Ilanji** in Tenkasi district, farmer **Thangadurai** told the **Thenpothigai Archives** about a half-buried sculpted stone in his field. A team led by archaeologist **Narayanamoorthi** found it to be a **gift (donation) inscription** dated **4 September 1801** (Tamil month Avani, a Friday, Punarpoosam star) (reported 6 Oct 2026).

Key facts

Place	Ilanji, Tenkasi district (the spot is now called 'Kuruvi Medu')
Size	70 × 45 cm stone; **12 lines**, partly damaged
Script	Early 19th-century **Tamil characters**
Sculpture	Below the text, a **vel** (spear) and a **peacock holding a serpent** in relief
Link	Closely tied to the **Ilanji Murugan (Kumarar) temple**; study continues

Background

- **1801, a turning point in Tamil history:** the **Marudhu brothers**, leaders of the South Indian Rebellion (1800-01), were hanged at **Tiruppattur** on 24 October 1801; **Oomaithurai** was hanged at Panchalankurichi. The **Carnatic Treaty of 31 July 1801** handed the Nawab of Arcot's lands to the British. Earlier, **Veerapandiya Kattabomman** was hanged at **Kayathar** on 16 October 1799.

- **Inscriptions are primary sources of history.** Tamil writing evolved from **Tamili (Tamil-Brahmi)** → **Vattezhuthu** → **modern Tamil script**. More than half of all inscriptions found in India are in Tamil Nadu.
- **Tenkasi's heritage: Parakrama Pandya** built the **Kasi Viswanathar temple** in the 15th century, giving the town its name ('Kasi of the South'). **Courtallam**, the 'Spa of South India', is where the **Chittar** river rises. Tenkasi became Tamil Nadu's **33rd district** on **22 November 2019**, carved out of Tirunelveli.
- **Another 2026 find in the same district:** a **5th-century hero stone** (script between Tamili and Vattezhuthu) and a Sangam-era step well at **Malayadipatti** near Karivalamvanthanallur (August 2026).

Tamil Nadu link: The vel and peacock are emblems of **Murugan**. The Tolkappiyam names **Seyon** (Murugan) as the god of Kurinji (hills), **Mayon** (Thirumal) for Mullai, **Vendhan** (Indra) for Marutham, **Varunan** for Neythal and **Kotravai** for Palai. Temple gift inscriptions tell us about land ownership, taxes and social life of their time.

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