



# The Tomb of St. Thomas: A History of the Armenians of Madras

Gregory Alexander, Sri G. Ananda

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### The Tomb of St. Thomas: A History of the Armenians of **Madras**

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The Tomb of St. Thomas: A History of the Armenians of Madras Gregory Alexander, Sri G. Ananda The Armenians of Madras While many South Indians and Evangelists are familiar with the story of St. Thomas evangelizing India, and even of the Syrian merchants, with Thomas of Cana, who came later, the history of the Armenians in Madras is less known and nearly forgotten. In Chennai, near the Madras High Court, there is a street called Armenian Street, which features an old Armenian Church, which was first built in 1712. While Kerala, as the Western Coast of South India, is famous for its association with the Syrian Orthodox and Catholic churches, Madras is associated with its lost Armenian community, which dates back, perhaps, to St. Thomas himself, when the headquarters for the early East Indian church was in Edessa, a kingdom jointly overseen by Armenian kings, as Tigranes the Great, not long before this, built a great empire that indeed stretched all throughout this region. Moreover, relics of the body of St. Thomas were taken back to Edessa, and then in more recent times, Armenians discovered the body of St. Thomas in Madras, where it is located to this day. What is the significance of Armenia in the history of India? The Bible says that Noah's Ark landed in Armenia, and the first avatar of Vishnu is the Matsya "Fish" avatar, who reveals the story of Noah, thus offering a key connection for sharing Jesus in India.



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