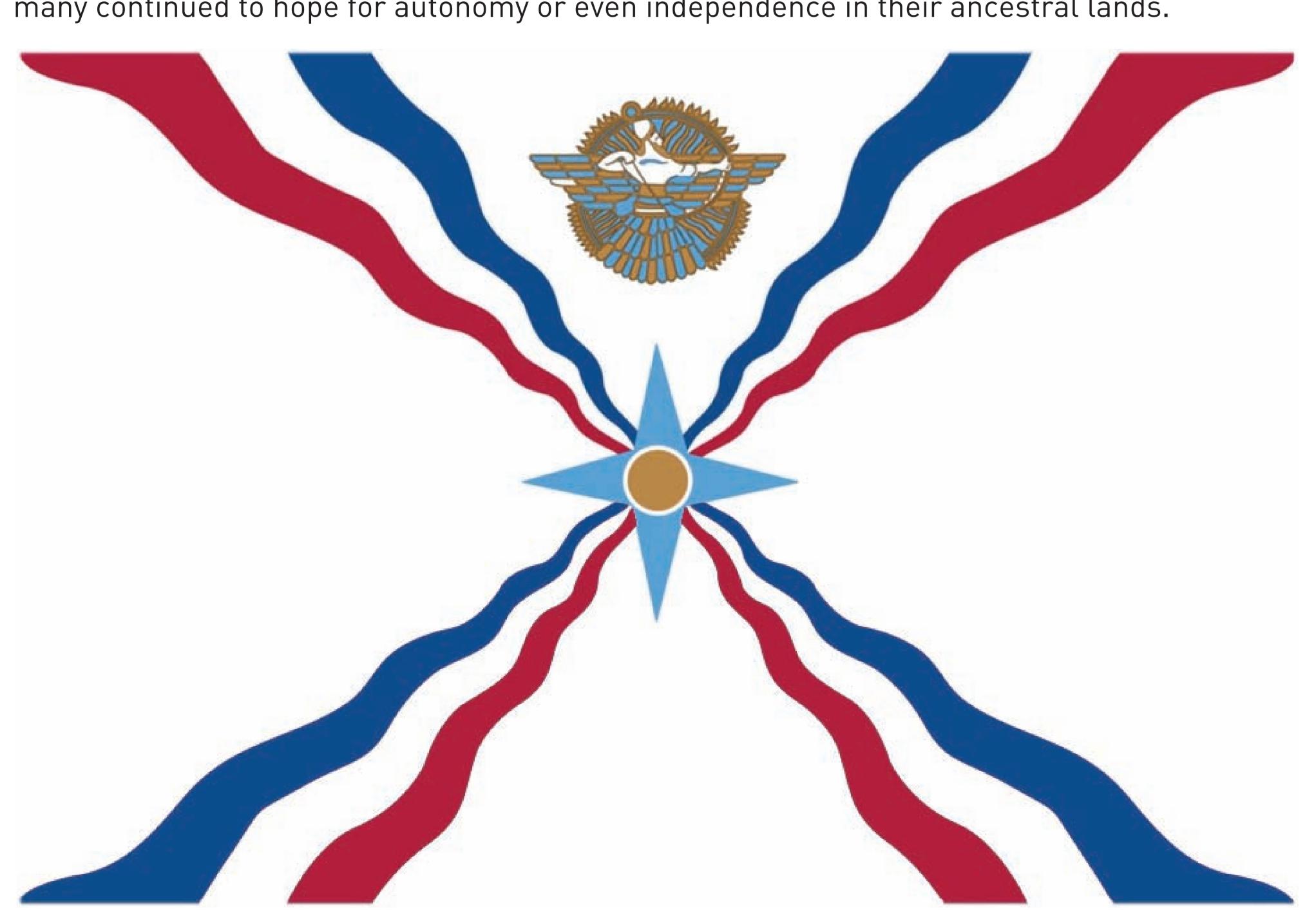
ASSYRIANS: INTO MODERN TIMES

Along with Armenians and Ethiopians, the Assyrians were among the first people to accept Christianity. According to tradition, as early as 33 C.E. the Assyrian Church of the East was established in Mesopotamia by Saint Thomas the Apostle, Saint Mari, and Saint Addai. The Chaldean, Syriac-Orthodox, and Syriac-Catholic Churches were established in the following centuries. Following the split in the Christian Church in 1054, all followed the Eastern Orthodox tradition. With the Arab conquests following the death of the prophet Muhammad in the seventh century C.E., the Assyrians fell under Muslim domination.

The Assyrians nevertheless succeeded in preserving their language and many of their customs. They played a significant role in the agriculture, crafts, and trade of the region. A national identity in the modern sense began to develop with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a result of World War I and with the ensuing emergence of nation-states in the region, and also in part as a result of the Turkish genocide of the Armenians and their massacre of Assyrians, known to the latter as the Seyfo, in 1915 and the following years. The Assyrians were led by catholicoses from the Mar Shimun family who became their de facto political leaders. Hoping to earn support for eventual autonomy, Assyrian levies played a prominent role serving the British after Britain obtained the League of Nations' mandate over Iraq in 1920. While most Assyrians also known as Nestorians, Chaldeans, Jacobites, and Suryani lived in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey and surrounding countries, out-migration during the rest of the twentieth century created a considerable Assyrian diaspora. By the end of the century there were Assyrian communities in the United States, Canada, Russia, Sweden, Germany, Brazil, Australia, and elsewhere. Despite their dispersion, the Assyrians maintained their identity, and many continued to hope for autonomy or even independence in their ancestral lands.





Caravaggio, "The Incredulity of St. Thomas" Traditionally St Thomas is considered to be a founder of the Assyrian Church





After their conversion to affiliated with Eastern Orthodox Christianity. More recently, gained Assyrian adherents. Chaldean 45% Syriac Catholic

Church of the East

19%

Assyrians by religious affiliation

The Assyrian Alphabet

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> "The Assyrian alphabet originated in the Phoenician script, as did the Hebrew alphabet. The Assyrians spoke Assyrian Akkadian and Aramaic, Semitic languages related to Hebrew and Arabic. Today they speak Assyrian, the modern version of Assyrian Akkadian and Aramaic."





The British used Assyrian levies to carry out police duties while Iraq remained under their dominion. During World War II these preventing Iraq from falling to Nazi Germany.

Syriac Orthodox