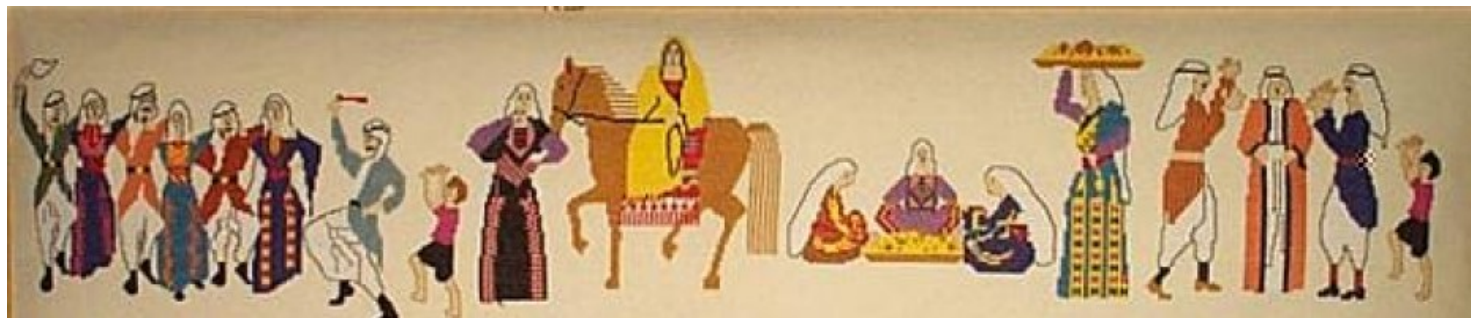


American-Palestinian Women's Association

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The Invisible Influence of the Palestinian Christians

22 Dec

On Christmas Day, worshipers across this country will hold [bibles](#) that bear the faithful diligence of the forefathers of present day Palestinian Christians; and Protestant and Catholic clerics will display the ecclesiastical vestments that invoke Palestinian traditional [dalmatic embroidery](#).

mai abdul rahman

Christmas 2016

This Christmas, pastors will quote the scripture that was elucidated by the Palestinian scholar [Procopius of Gaza](#), and bishops will bear their ecclesiastical vestments that display Palestinian traditional [dalmatic embroidery](#) that was first worn by Palestinian clerics.

The Christians of Palestine trace their faith to the very first disciples. Nonetheless, Americans continue to ask Palestinian Christians “When did you convert?” Unaware, that the Palestinian Christians whether they reside in Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, or Israel represent the [uninterrupted](#) presence of the very [first](#) church.



The history and narrative of the Palestinian Christians dates back to the very first cross and church. Since the birth of Jesus, the Christians of Palestine have provided fellow Christians an authentic account of the early Christian experience, and their scholars have helped clerics and worshipers contextualize the bible verses they cite and read. Because of their close proximity and relationship to the first disciples, Palestinian scholars played a critical role in spreading the Christian faith, yet few are aware of their role in documenting the personal experience of the first Christians.

Palestinian Christians’ direct link to the disciples provided scholars and historians an intimate knowledge of the [personal religious](#) experience of the first Christians. Their accounts helped shape the Christian narrative.



The Palestinian Christians are the living extension of the first church. For two thousand years, they have faithfully [maintained](#) the [oldest churches](#) in Christendom. They have preserved the ancient gardens where [Jesus prayed](#), tended and harvested the [olive trees](#) that shaded Jesus and his disciples, and when their communities are besieged and bombed, they have used their sanctuaries to shelter and accommodate the earnest prayer of fellow Palestinians- Christian or [Muslim](#).



So why do most Americans choose to ignore the Christians of Palestine and dismiss their early scholars? Palestinians have largely assumed that their Arabic [bible](#), [liturgies](#), and [sermons](#), and Arab Semitic ancestral heritage are the core reasons that their community is forsaken and their scholarship is omitted and forgotten.



Regardless, Christians owe much to the faithful work and witness of the early Palestinian Christians, and many a pilgrim owes them gratitude for their persistent stewardship of Christendom's first churches. Like their ancestors before them, the Christians of Palestine continue to practice their faith traditions and preserve their churches while living under an Israeli military occupation that limits their access to their holy places- they are a testament to their ancestors, the Palestinian people, and faith.