Twitter Thread by Christian Sahner

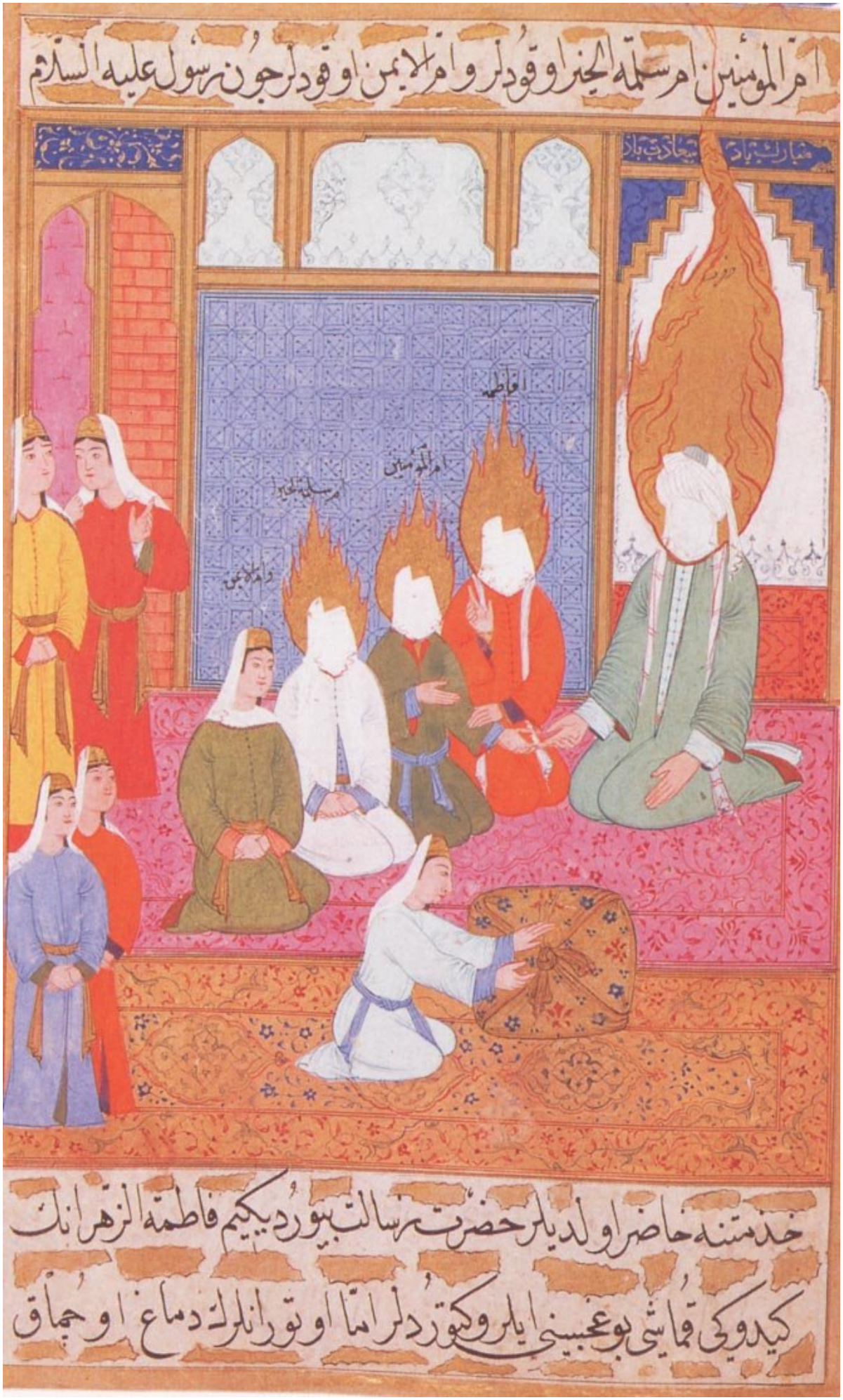


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1/ Who were the earliest women converts to Islam and what was their experience of conversion?

In our new sourcebook, Sean Anthony (@shahanSean) and Keren Abbou Hershkovitz profile several women who were alive at the Prophet's time #ConversionToIslam

https://t.co/00XpFCjXtP



2/ In the first entry, @shahanSean translates and comments on the conversion of the Prophet's first wife Khad■ja as portrayed in one of the earliest and most famous biographies, the Kit■b al-Magh■z■ of Ibn Is■■q (d. 767)

3/ According to tradition, Khad■ja was a widow and wealthy merchant of Mecca, who married Mu■ammad after initially hiring him as her agent. She was reportedly the first person to believe in his prophethood, underlining the centrality of women in the Prophet's life

4/ Ibn Is■■q tells us that when Mu■ammad first received the revelation from Gabriel, he came to Khad■ja frightened and confused. She reassured him, "God would never allow anything but good to befall you, for I know you are a man who only speaks the truth...

5/ "Rejoice and remain steadfast! By Him whose hand Khad■ja's soul resides, I hope that you will be the prophet of his people (umma)!"

Khad■ja then consulted with her cousin Waraqa, a Christian, who verified that Mu■ammad's experience was true.

6/ He said to her, "Holy! Holy! By Him in whose hand my soul resides, if you have told me the truth, Khad■ja, then he is a prophet! Let him be steadfast!"

7/ Abbou Hershovitz then profiles women converts in the great biographical dictionary of Ibn Sa■d (d. 845), the ■abaq■t. One is the Prophet's paternal aunt Arw■. Interestingly, only one of his paternal uncles became Muslim (■amza), whereas several of his aunts did

8/ Arw■'s brother was the Prophet's uncle and fierce opponent Ab■ Lahab. She tried to convince him to convert as well, saying, "Take the side [of Mu■ammad]... If he is victorious, you will have the choice of either joining him or keeping your religion...

9/ "If he fails, you will have an excuse as he [is a relative]."

In other words, for Arw■, conversion was about building strategic social ties; family loyalty was everything.

10/ Stay tuned for more highlights from our sourcebook in the coming days and weeks!

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