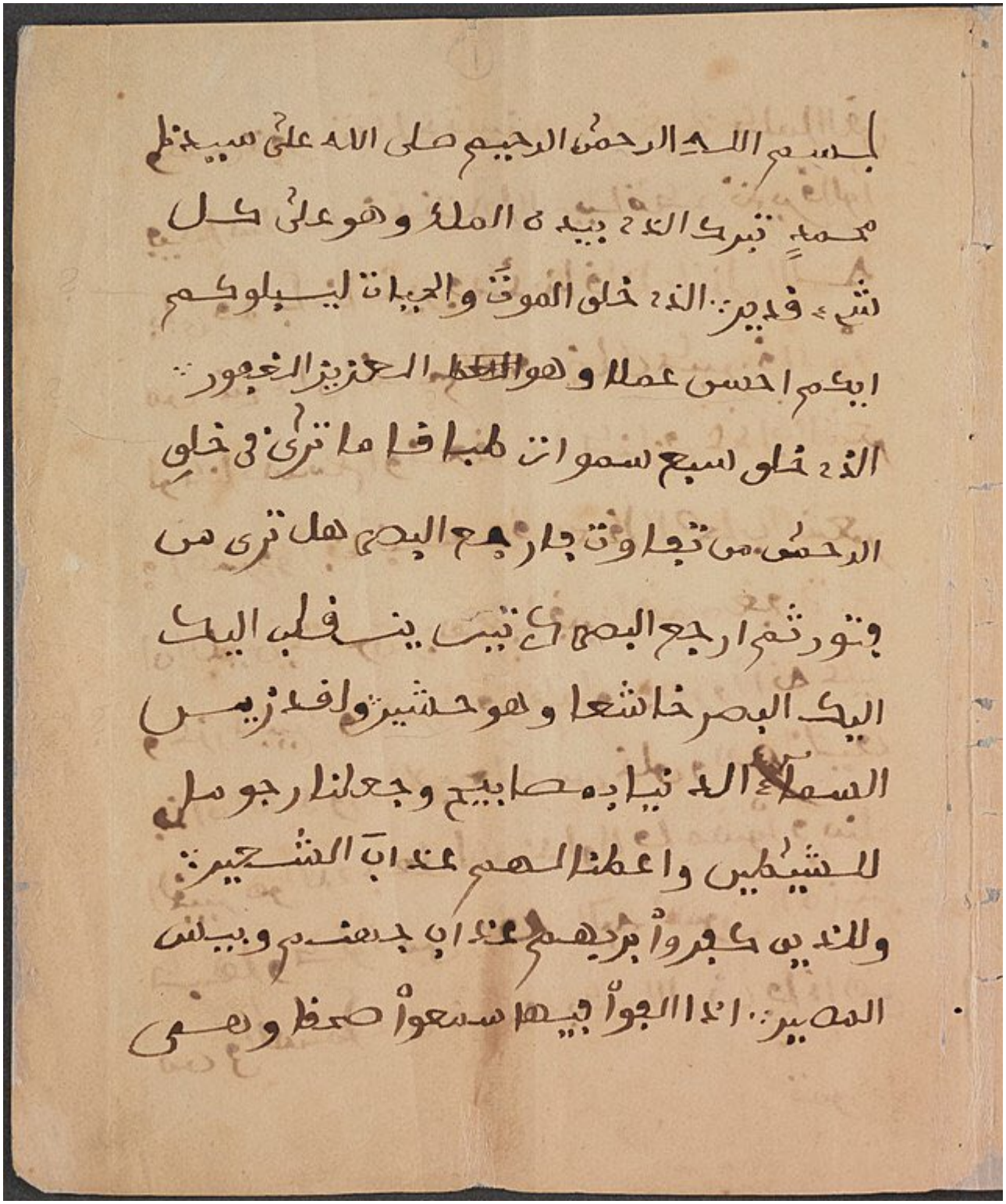
Twitter Thread by people aren’t metaphors



people aren’t metaphors
@ellen_perleberg

A brief thread on the life, religion, and language of Omar ibn Sa’id, author of the only known Arabic-language autobiography of an enslaved person in the United States.



Omar ibn Sa’id was a Fula man from what is now Senegal. He studied Islamic sciences and mathematics under prominent scholars before his enslavement in 1807 at age 37.

In his autobiography, he writes that he was taken “to a place called Charleston in the Christian language.”

He escaped from his first enslaver, but was recaptured and jailed. He wrote in Arabic on the walls of his cell, attracting the attention of the Governor of North Carolina and his brother, who took Omar to their home, where he remained until his death in 1864.

He continued to write short Arabic theological and philosophical texts through his life - his autobiography in 1831, letters, annotations in his Bible, and passages from the Qur’an.

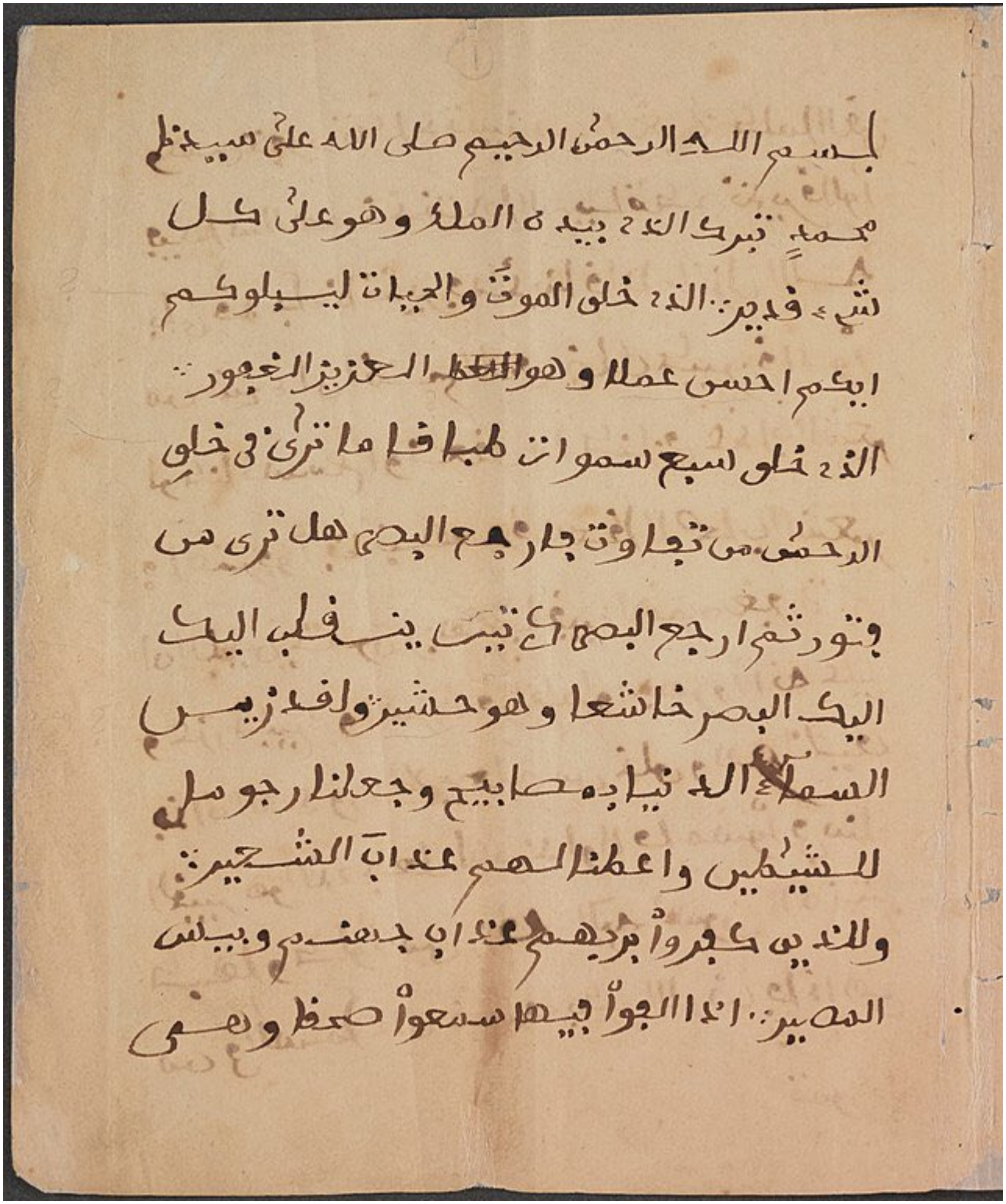
He converted to Christianity in 1820, but his relationship to Christianity was always ambiguous

He writes more about Jesus after his conversion, but the language he uses is consistent with Islamic views of Jesus - ■■■■■■ (Messiah) and ■■■■■ (our master), but not ■■■■, our Lord

He also begins his autobiography by writing out Surat al-Mulk, a Qur'anic chapter often used as an anti-slavery polemic.

Al-Mulk begins "Blessed is the One in whose hands is all dominion, and he is powerful above all things". Only God has sovereignty, it asserts.

The Arabic text at the beginning of this thread is his copy of al-Mulk.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم صلى الله على سيدنا
محمد تبارك الذي بيده الملك وهو على كل
شيء قدير. الذي خلق الموت والحياة ليبلوكم
ايكم احسن عملا وهو العزيز الغفور.
الذي خلق سبع سموات طباقا ما ترى في خلق
الرحمن من تفاوت فارجع البصر هل ترى من
فطور ثم ارجع البصر كرتين ينقلب اليك
اليك البصر خاشعا وهو حسير ولقد زينا
السماء الدنيا بمصابيح وجعلنا رجوما
للشياطين واعتدنا لهم عذاب السعير.
والذين كفروا بربهم عذاب جهنم وبئس
المصير. اذا القوا فيها سمعوا لها شهيقا وهي

On a small card, he also copied Surat an-Nasr, which describes a mass conversion to Islam in Mecca. In an ironic twist, on the back of the card another person writes that it is an Arabic translation of the Lord's Prayer.



You can view the Omar ibn Sa’id collection at the Library of Congress online

https://t.co/pwFOPD3K50

In case this thread does numbers, I encourage you to donate to and support Muslims working toward prison abolition @BelieverBailOut.

https://t.co/iP8rUM5FWi