

# **An Early Thirteenth-Century Recension of the Islamic Psalms of David: The Islamicized Style and Content of Istanbul Manuscript Fatih 28**

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Many Arabic manuscripts of “the Psalms of David” contain not the Biblical Psalms but a Muslim rewriting of David’s Zabūr consisting of wise sayings and exhortations addressed to David by God. Several very different recensions exist, from which an original common core of one hundred psalms can be tentatively reconstructed. The oldest known copy, dated 626/1229, is also the closest to that original core. It preserves some material lost or modified in other recensions, but also seeks to improve it stylistically and clean up apparent problems in the text, sometimes corrupting it in the process. The copyist was particularly keen to Islamicize the text, replacing terms like God’s *nāmūs* with more Qur’anic ones like *kitāb*, and ending chapters with Qur’anic-sounding phrases like “I am the Forgiving, the Merciful.” This suggests that the core material significantly predated the thirteenth century, and raises the question of how “Islamic” it originally was.