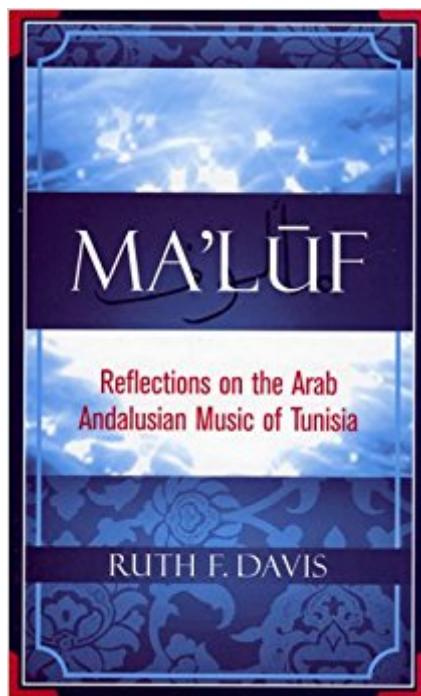


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# Ma'luf: Reflections On The Arab Andalusian Music Of Tunisia



## **Synopsis**

Ma'lāf is an Arabic word meaning 'familiar' or 'customary'. In Tunisia, it is the term used for the indigenous Arab Andalusian musical tradition. Like the related musical traditions of Morocco, Algeria, and Libya, the ma'lāf originated in the Islamic courts and cities of medieval Iberia (Al-Andalus) and is associated with the migrations of Muslim and Jewish refugees into North Africa in the wake of the Christian reconquest. This is the first English-language book on Tunisian music or any national tradition of Arab Andalusian music, and it is the only book in any language to survey the recent history of the ma'lāf since its modern revival in the early 20th century. Drawing from and expanding upon her extensive body of published writings, this book presents key aspects of Davis's original research on the ma'lāf, including its musical aesthetics, personalities, institutions and myths, through a century of modernization and change from the early twentieth century to the present day. The text is enriched by original photographs, musical examples, and song texts in Arabic and English translation, including a complete transcription of a twenty-minute performance of a nuba - the principal genre of Arab Andalusian music.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This volume serves as a good example of how one can apply reflective methods to ethnomusicology. Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above. (CHOICE) A delight to read ... the clarity of Davis's writing opens doors for many. The confluence of historical sources and the author's sensitive ethnographic study of contemporary practices enriches the texture of the

music itself. Ma'luf provides a non-European perspective on nationalism that has long been wanting in studies of modernity. The book fully deserves to become a standard text in the study of music in the Middle East/North Africa.' (Philip V. Bohlman, Mary Werkman Distinguished Service Professor of Music and the Humanities, The University of Chicago)'This is an important work that provides a critical, clear and concise analysis of the impact of Tunisian cultural nationalism on, and through, the medium of music.' (Richard C. Jankowsky Ethnomusicology Forum)The musical form, like related Arab musical traditions in Morocco, Algeria, and Libya, is alleged to have been brought to North Africa by Muslims and Jews fleeing the Christian reconquest of Spain from the 10th to the 17th centuries. Davis (ethnomusicology, U. of Cambridge) examines the music in such terms as Arab musical aesthetics; modernization, Westernization, and Egyptianization; the use of notation in oral tradition; musical nationalism and cultural policy; concepts of art and popular; and relations between traditional music and the mass media. (Reference and Research Book News)

Ruth F. Davis is Senior Lecturer in Ethnomusicology at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Corpus Christi College Cambridge.

In the 1990s and early 2000s Davis published a number of articles dealing with the social and political dimensions of the Arab-Andalusian music tradition of Tunisia. These essays, with some useful revisions, form the basis for this very significant contribution to Andalusian music studies. Not only is it the first monograph in English on this tradition, it is the first book-length work in English on any of these North African poetic-musical traditions. Well written and clear, Davis' book offers an interesting study of the role that musical traditions can play in state formation in the Arab world and in the promotion of Benedict Anderson's "nation-ness." Davis details the politico-cultural processes by which this largely oral tradition dominated by old-school master teachers was standardized and promulgated by the state as a national classical music through committing it to writing and the creation of conservatories that teach the standardized version. The authority of the master-teachers was thus undermined, and much of the tradition's diversity and vitality has been lost.

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