

Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns

Guides to Special Collections in the Music Division of the Library of Congress



**Music Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2005**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/perform.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/2004718267>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu004008>

Processed by the Music Division of the Library of Congress

Finding Aid encoded by Library of Congress Music Division, 2005
Revised 2010 April

Collection Summary

Title: Ragheb Mofteh Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns

Span Dates: 1926-1997

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1926-1936)

Call No.: ML31.M58

Creator: Mofteh, Ragheb

Extent: circa 3,000 items

Extent: 18 boxes

Extent: 6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in Coptic, English, and Arabic.

Location: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2004718267>

Summary: The collection consists of transcriptions of Coptic chant music by Ernest Newlandsmith and Margit Toth. Both contain transcriptions of the Liturgy of St. Basil. Basil. Marian Robertson Wilson created a guide to Mofteh's audio tapes in 1996, which consists of transcriptions, transliterations and translations into English of the texts sung on the tapes. Wilson also devised a new order for the pieces on the tapes, putting them in a more logical order, as used in the context of the liturgy. Included is also correspondence, most importantly of letters from Ernest Newlandsmith to Ragheb Mofteh concerning their collaboration. Writings in the collection consist of articles by Mofteh and an autobiography, both manuscript and printed. There are notes about chant written by Mofteh. The collection also contains articles written by Marian Robertson Wilson concerning Coptic chant from the transcriptions Mofteh contracted. Other materials include clippings, tickets, receipts, photographs and a few legal papers.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Mofteh, Ragheb--Correspondence.

Mofteh, Ragheb--Interviews.

Mofteh, Ragheb.

Newlandsmith, Ernest--Correspondence.

Newlandsmith, Ernest.

Roy, Martha--Interviews.

Tóth, Margit.

Wilson, Marian Robertson, 1926-2013.

Organizations

Coptic Church--Liturgy--Texts.

Subjects

Coptic chants--History and criticism.

Coptic chants.

Form/Genre

Articles.

Autobiographies.

Autographs (Manuscripts)

Business correspondence.

Chants.

Clippings (Information artifacts)

Interviews.

Personal correspondence.

Photographs.

Receipts (Financial records)
Records (Documents)
Sacred music.
Scores.
Tickets.
Writings (Documents)

Provenance

Gift; Ragheb Moftah, 1991-2001.

Custodial History

The materials in the Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns were donated to the Library of Congress by the late Dr. Ragheb Moftah, between 1991 and 2001. The initial gift of twelve audio tape reels and twenty-five audio cassettes was made in 1991 by Dr. Moftah. Thirty-one reel-to-reel tapes and thirty-two cassettes were added to the collection in 1992. In 1994, Moftah added letters from Ernest Newlandsmith to Ragheb Moftah to the collection. In 1996, Moftah donated fourteen volumes of Coptic music transcribed by Newlandsmith. The remainder of the Collection was acquired from his niece, Laurence Moftah, in fulfillment of his instructions.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Processing History

The Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns was processed in 2002 by Deborah Crall. The original finding aid was prepared with Corel WordPerfect 8. In 2004 the Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns finding aid was coded for EAD format by Michael A. Ferrando. Janet McKinney revised and re-coded the finding aid in 2009 to incorporate additional materials. Chris Hartten made additional revisions to the finding aid later in 2009.

Transfers

Video tapes and sound recordings were transferred to Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division where they are identified as part of the Ragheb Moftah Collection (MAVIS collection nos. 8476 and 13541). This material includes audio tapes of Coptic chant music recorded by Moftah between 1940 and 1985, with the bulk recorded in 1965 and 1975-1985; four videotapes which include a biographical interview of Dr. Moftah conducted by Raymond Stock for a Library of Congress oral history project as part of its World Heritage series (1996-1997); a recording of Ragheb Moftah's one hundredth birthday party (December 21, 1998); Moftah's funeral (June 19, 2002); and an interview with Margit Toth and Dr. Martha Roy (March 13, 2002) conducted by Laurence Moftah.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright on the materials of the Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The Ragheb Mofteh Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Performing Arts Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Certain restrictions to use or copying of materials may apply.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: container number, Ragheb Mofteh Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Ragheb Mofteh was born on December 21, 1898, in Egypt, the son of Habashi Mofteh. He was a musicologist, scholar, and a pioneer of the preservation of the Coptic liturgical music heritage. This heritage of the Coptic Orthodox Church springs from perhaps the oldest musical tradition in the world. Ragheb Mofteh's recordings of the orally transmitted Coptic Liturgical chants were collected from authoritative cantors throughout most of the twentieth century.

Mofteh traveled to England where he met Ernest Newlandsmith, who was a professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Newlandsmith became intrigued with Mofteh's idea of transcribing the music of the Coptic Orthodox Liturgical chants. Mofteh and Newlandsmith collaborated together from 1927 - 1936.

In 1931 they again traveled to England to lecture on Coptic liturgical music at Oxford, Cambridge, and London Universities. Thereafter, Mofteh and Newlandsmith made their way back to Cairo, and were more determined than ever to finish their goal of transcribing this unique tradition.

In those pre-tape-recording days, Newlandsmith took down the notation from live performances of the liturgies that were chanted by the great master cantor Mikhail Girgis al-Batanouni, who was chosen by Ragheb Mofteh and Newlandsmith for his rich baritone voice, and accurate rendition of the Coptic Orthodox liturgical chants. The legendary great master cantor Mikhail Girgis al-Batanouni worked assiduously with Ragheb Mofteh from 1928 – 1957.

Newlandsmith compiled some 16 folios of music notation, including the Liturgy of St. Basil (used in the Coptic Church throughout the year except during the feasts), the Liturgy of St. Gregory (used during the four major feasts of Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection and Pentecost), and a number of special services like the ordaining of new priests, festivals, weddings, funerals and many other Coptic Orthodox occasions.

In 1932 Mofteh was chosen by the Egyptian government to present the Coptic Music in the Arab Music Conference that was held in Cairo, and was sponsored by King Fuad. Bela Bartok, the composer and ethnomusicologist who visited Egypt to attend the Conference, was intrigued by Mofteh's endeavors, and promised to work with him, but he was unable to do so as he was called away to a more urgent project in Turkey.

In 1945, Mofteh established a center to teach Coptic chant melodies. By 1954, Mofteh was among the founders of the Higher Institute of Coptic Studies, and established the Music Division. From 1954 until his death in 2001, Dr. Mofteh recorded the entire corpus of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical chants and hymns in the Higher Institute of Coptic Studies (HICS). The Collection includes the St. Basil's Liturgy, the St. Gregory's Liturgy, parts of the St. Cyril's Liturgy, and many other hymns and chants for various occasions. He was also responsible for training cantors at the Higher Institute of Coptic Studies (HICS), as well as students at the Coptic Clerical College. Each summer he ran a camp in Alexandria for additional instruction, which was all by rote memorization.

In 1970, Ragheb Mofteh commissioned Margit Toth to transcribe the music notation of the **Coptic Orthodox Liturgy of St. Basil**, which was published by the American University in Cairo Press in 1998. Ragheb Mofteh collected and recorded the orally transmitted chants of the Liturgy of St. Basil that were transcribed by Toth from authoritative cantors, including cantors Sadek Attallah and Farag Abdel Messih. The work contains a full text of the Liturgy in Coptic and Arabic, together with an English translation.

Moftah's work is of interest not only for spiritually engaged people both within and without the monotheistic tradition, but also to Egyptologists, Coptologists, historians of religion, and ethnomusicologists. Moftah died on June 16, 2001.

By Laurence Moftah (niece of Dr. Moftah)

Scope and Content Note

The Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns consists of transcriptions of Coptic chant music by Ernest Newlandsmith (compiled 1926-1936) and Margit Toth (begun 1970). Both contain transcriptions of the Liturgy of St. Basil. Marian Robertson Wilson created a guide to Moftah's audiotapes of Coptic chant music in 1996, which consists of transcriptions, transliterations and translations into English of the texts sung on the tapes. Wilson also devised a new order for the pieces on the tapes, putting them in a more logical order, as used in the context of the liturgy. The most important part of the correspondence consists of letters from Ernest Newlandsmith to Ragheb Moftah concerning their collaboration.

Writings in the collection consist of a paper written by Moftah, typescript, and an autobiography, in both manuscript and printed forms. There are notes about chant music written by Moftah. The collection contains articles written by Marian Robertson Wilson concerning Coptic chant music from the transcriptions Moftah contracted. Other materials include clippings, tickets, receipts, photographs, and a few legal papers.

Organization of the Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns

The Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns is organized in 6 series:

- Music - Coptic Chant Transcriptions
- Music - Index
- Correspondence
- Documents
- Photographs
- Publication

Description of Series

Container

Series

Music - Coptic Chant Transcriptions

Transcriptions by Ernest Newlandsmith, compiled between 1926 and 1936, which include the Liturgy of St. Basil and other liturgies, chants and hymns for various occasions. Bound volumes, manuscript. Volumes 5 and 7 are missing. The unnumbered volume is a draft version of volume 1, the Liturgy of St. Basil. An index to the titles of individual chants is found in the Index.

Transcriptions by Margit Toth, begun in 1970, of the Liturgy of St. Basil, consisting of typescript and photocopies. The transcriptions by Margit Toth are preserved in the order of use in the Liturgy of Saint Basil.

Arrangement is by provenance.

Music - Index

Guide to the Ragheb Moftah Coptic chant collection of audio tapes. Marian Robertson Wilson prepared the Guide for the audio tapes, housed in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division. The Guide includes a transcription of the words, as well as transliteration and translation; annotations place the chant in its liturgical context. The Guide is divided into four categories: Liturgy of St. Basil, Liturgy of St. Gregory, excerpts from the liturgy, and special hymns, which are used during festival periods and various occasions. The hymns are organized into function, such as funeral or wedding, and according to use in the Christian year, such as Lent, Easter, and Christmas. An index to the Guide is found in the Appendix. The LC numbers refer to the numbers of the tapes in the collection housed by the Library of Congress.

Draft versions of the *Guide*. Typescript and photocopy.

Arrangement is by genre.

Correspondence, 1926-1997

General correspondence, letters to and from Ragheb Moftah.

Arrangement is alphabetical by correspondent.

Documents

Contracts, copies and originals, between Moftah and Ernest Newlandsmith, Margit Toth and the Coptic Church. Included are papers and notes written by Moftah in manuscript, as well as articles about Ernest Newlandsmith and articles written by Marian Robertson Wilson about Moftah's work on Coptic chant music.

Arrangement is by format.

Photographs

Photographs of Moftah, others, and his funeral.

Arrangement is by subject.

Publication

A printed and bound textbook. *al- Jam'iyyat al-Khayriyyah al-Kibtiyyah al-Kubra* (Fiftieth Anniversary Golden Jubilee: History of the Coptic Tawfiq Society in fifty years 1881-1930.), [Cairo: The Coptic Tawfiq Society Publication, 1930]. The Coptic Tawfiq Society, founded at Yusuf Moftah's home on the 8th of January 1881, was one of the most influential of the philanthropic societies that proliferated in the late 19th and early 20th century in Egypt. Several of Moftah's family were members.

Arrangement is by title.

Container List

Container

Contents

Music - Coptic Chant Transcriptions

Transcriptions by Ernest Newlandsmith, compiled between 1926 and 1936, which include the Liturgy of St. Basil and other liturgies, chants and hymns for various occasions. Bound volumes, manuscript. Volumes 5 and 7 are missing. The unnumbered volume is a draft version of volume 1, the Liturgy of St. Basil. An index to the titles of individual chants is found in the Index.

Transcriptions by Margit Toth, begun in 1970, of the Liturgy of St. Basil, consisting of typescript and photocopies. The transcriptions by Margit Toth are preserved in the order of use in the Liturgy of Saint Basil.

Arrangement is by provenance.

Transcriptions by Ernest Newlandsmith

BOX-FOLDER 1/1	The music of the Mass as sung in the Coptic Church; [96] p.
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BOX-FOLDER 4/2	Some special hymns used in the Coptic liturgy (with music) being the first supplement of the mass-book; 48 p.
BOX-FOLDER 4/3	Three hymns for the Fast of the Apostles; also "Kayse Pairs" and "Emes ay apohoice"; [19] p.
BOX-FOLDER 4/4	Some Advent and Christmas hymns of the Coptic Church; 22 p.
BOX-FOLDER 5/6	Hymns for Holy Week in the Coptic Church. First volume; 33 p.
BOX-FOLDER 5/8	Array-ten-sontee; [39] p.
BOX-FOLDER 5/9	Three big hymns; 36 p.
BOX-FOLDER 6/10	Adam; Heeten nee evhee; Allilouia pee o-o-fa; The "Tay oy en-hee can-noose"; [27] p.
BOX-FOLDER 6/11	Some Easter hymns; 36 p.
BOX-FOLDER 6/12	No title; [44] p.
BOX-FOLDER 7/13	Seven Saturday evening hymns and seven midnight hymns; [43] p.
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Transcriptions by Margit Toth

BOX-FOLDER 9-10	The Coptic Orthodox liturgy of Saint Basil; [1162] p. Computer generated notation, photocopy 1
BOX-FOLDER 11-12	The Coptic Orthodox liturgy of Saint Basil; [1160] p. Computer generated notation, photocopy 2

Music - Index

Guide to the Ragheb Mofteh Coptic chant collection of audio tapes. Marian Robertson Wilson prepared the Guide for the audio tapes, housed in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division. The Guide includes a transcription of the words, as well as transliteration and translation; annotations place the chant in its liturgical context. The Guide is divided into four categories: Liturgy of St. Basil, Liturgy of St. Gregory, excerpts from the liturgy, and special hymns, which are used during festival periods and various

occasions. The hymns are organized into function, such as funeral or wedding, and according to use in the Christian year, such as Lent, Easter, and Christmas. An index to the Guide is found in the Appendix. The LC numbers refer to the numbers of the tapes in the collection housed by the Library of Congress.

Draft versions of the *Guide*. Typescript and photocopy.

Arrangement is by genre.

Guide to the Ragheb Moftah Coptic Chant Collection of audio tapes

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Guide to the Ragheb Moftah Coptic Chant Collection of audio tapes- draft versions

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Correspondence, 1926-1997

General correspondence, letters to and from Ragheb Moftah.
Arrangement is alphabetical by correspondent.

Correspondence, 1926-1997

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Documents	
Contracts, copies and originals, between Moftah and Ernest Newlandsmith, Margit Toth and the Coptic Church. Included are papers and notes written by Moftah in manuscript, as well as articles about Ernest Newlandsmith and articles written by Marian Robertson Wilson about Moftah's work on Coptic chant music. Arrangement is by format.	
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BOX-FOLDER 16/8	[anonymous] "A brief biography of Ernest Newlandsmith"
BOX-FOLDER 16/9	Robertson-Wilson, Marian. "Ernest Newlandsmith et sa notation de la musique copte" Laid in: English version with notes by the author
BOX-FOLDER 16/10	Miscellaneous articles about Moftah family members
BOX-FOLDER 16/11	American University in Cairo Press. "Complete catalogue: 1997-1998" Description of Moftah publication on p. 16
BOX-FOLDER 16/12	Stock, Raymond. "Preserving pharaonic psalms for Christ"

Documents

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- BOX-FOLDER 16/13** Newspaper clippings
BOX-FOLDER 16/14 Tickets, receipts
BOX-FOLDER 16/15 Printed materials of Newlandsmith, tickets, invitations, programs

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Photographs of Moftah, others, and his funeral.
Arrangement is by subject.

- BOX-FOLDER 17/1** Ragheb Moftah, alone (3)
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BOX-FOLDER 17/4 Ragheb Moftah final resting place, April 25, 2002 (13)
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BOX-FOLDER 17/6 Laurence Moftah and other women at Library of Congress (4)
BOX-FOLDER 18/1 Miscellaneous photos of Moftah and/or family members and friends (158)
Includes 46 copy prints made from CD-Rom donated by Laurence Moftah, 2008 Dec. 8
BOX-FOLDER 18/2 Passport photos of Moftah (2) and photos of St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, Cairo (4)
BOX-FOLDER 18/3 Images not used in Coptic music website

Publication

A printed and bound textbook. *al- Jam'iyat al-Khayriyyah al-Kibtiyyah al-Kubra* (Fiftieth Anniversary Golden Jubilee: History of the Coptic Tawfiq Society in fifty years 1881-1930.), [Cairo: The Coptic Tawfiq Society Publication, 1930]. The Coptic Tawfiq Society, founded at Yusuf Moftah's home on the 8th of January 1881, was one of the most influential of the philanthropic societies that proliferated in the late 19th and early 20th century in Egypt. Several of Moftah's family were members.

Arrangement is by title.

- BOX 8** Fiftieth anniversary Golden Jubilee: History of the society in fifty years from 1881-1930; printed, 243 p.; with photocopy inserts and notes, [] p.

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