



**THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

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January 15, 2008

Dear Colleague:

I wish to bring to your attention an important collection in the Library of Congress—the Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Chants and Hymns. Donated to the Library by the late Dr. Ragheb Moftah (1898-2001), musicologist, scholar and pioneer in the preservation of Coptic language and music, this collection contains rare and unique materials that have not yet received scholarly attention. I am writing to convey information about this collection and present it as a research opportunity for scholars and students.

The collection consists of audiotapes, manuscripts, musical transcriptions, correspondence, articles, and an oral history by Dr. Moftah, but of paramount importance are the recordings of the complete St. Basil's liturgy chanted by the master cantor Mikhail al-Batanouni and also by two succeeding generations of cantors. In addition to St. Basil's liturgy, cantor Mikhail also chants hymns reserved for special rites, including weddings, baptisms, Advent, and Holy Week. Topics for research would include formal analysis of the music and comparative studies involving related musical traditions. Other areas rich in research opportunities would include the Coptic liturgies and performance practice.

I enclose the finding aid to the Ragheb Moftah collection which can also be found on the Library's website at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu004008>. The collection itself is available to researchers in the Performing Arts Reading Room in the Madison Building of the Library of Congress on Capitol Hill. Researchers are encouraged to contact the Reading Room in advance to make arrangements to study the collection. Phone the Reading Room at (202) 707-5507 or email Ask a Librarian at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/>.

Also enclosed is a brochure describing opportunities for research support at the Library's John W. Kluge Center. Additional information about Kluge fellowships can be found at <http://www.loc.gov/loc/kluge/>.

If you have questions about this collection and possibilities for research, feel free to contact me directly at (202) 707-5251 or [jlau@loc.gov](mailto:jlau@loc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan Lauridsen".

Jan Lauridsen  
Assistant Chief