# **Ragheb Moftah collection of Coptic Orthodox liturgical chants and Hymns**

Processed by the Music Division of the Library of Congress



# **Music Division, Library of Congress**

Washington, D.C.

## 2005

## Finding Aid encoded by Library of Congress Music Division, 2005

Finding aid URL: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/eadmus.mu004008

## **Collection Summary**

Title: Ragheb Moftah collection of Coptic Orthodox liturgical chants and hymns Span Dates: 1926-1997 Bulk Dates: (bulk 1926-1936) Call No.: ML31.M58 Creator: Moftah, Ragheb. Size: 6 linear ft.; 17 boxes; ca. 3,000 items Language: Collection material in Coptic, English, and Arabic Repository: Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Abstract: 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. Also part of the collection are audio tapes of Coptic chant music recorded by Moftah between 1940 and 1985, with the bulk recorded in 1965 and 1975-1985. Marian Robertson Wilson created a guide to Moftah'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 Moftah concerning their collaboration. Writings in the collection consist of articles by Moftah and an autobiography, both ms. and printed. There are notes about chant written by Moftah. The collection also contains articles written by Marian Robertson Wilson concerning Coptic chant from the transcriptions Moftah contracted. Other materials include clippings, tickets, receipts, photographs, a few legal papers, and 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.

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by personal names, organizations, subjects, related names, and listed alphabetically therein.

### Personal Names

Moftah, Ragheb--Correspondence. Moftah, Ragheb--Interviews. Moftah, Ragheb. Newlandsmith, Ernest--Correspondence. Roy, Martha--Interviews.

**Organizations** Coptic Church--Liturgy--Texts.

**Subjects** Coptic chants--History and criticism. Coptic chants.

Related Names Newlandsmith, Ernest. Tóth, Margit. Wilson, Marian Robertson, 1926-

## **Administrative Information**

### Provenance

Gift; Ragheb Moftah, 1991-2001.

### 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.

### **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.).

### Restrictions

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, the Ragheb Moftah collection of Coptic Orthodox liturgical chants and hymns, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Introduction

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 Moftah 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. The collection is comprised of music manuscripts, transcriptions, correspondence, an index to the tapes, and other non-music materials, as well as the audio tapes, now housed in the Recorded Sound Section of the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, where the tapes have been preserved.

Certain restrictions as to the use or copying of the materials in this collection may apply. Consult a Reference Librarian in the Music Division for further permission information.

This Finding Aid was prepared with **Corel WordPerfect 8**. An automated version is available from the staff of the Performing Arts Reading Room.

## **Biographical Note**

Ragheb Moftah was born on December 21, 1898, in Egypt, the son of Habashi Moftah. 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 Moftah's recordings of the orally transmitted Coptic Liturgical chants were collected from authoritative cantors throughout most of the twentieth century.

Moftah traveled to England where he met Ernest Newlandsmith, who was a professor at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Newlandsmith became intrigued with Moftah's idea of transcribing the music of the Coptic Orthodox Liturgical chants. Moftah 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, Moftah 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 Moftah 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 Moftah 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 Moftah 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 Moftah'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, Moftah established a center to teach Coptic chant melodies. By 1954, Moftah was among the founders of the Higher Institute of Coptic Studies, and established the Music Division. From 1954 until his death in 2001, Dr. Moftah 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 Moftah 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 1998Ragheb Moftah 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. Also part of the collection, but housed in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded and Sound Division, are audio tapes of Coptic chant music recorded by Moftah between 1940 and 1985, with the bulk recorded in 1965 and 1975-1985. Marian Robertson Wilson created a guide to the audiotapes 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, a few legal papers and four videotapes housed in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division belong to the collection. The videotapes 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); the funeral of Dr. Ragheb Moftah (June 19, 2002); and an interview with Margit Toth and Dr. Martha Roy (March 13, 2002) conducted by Laurence Moftah.

Deborah Crall, December 2002

# **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 Contia about transprintions
	<b>MUSIC - Coptic chant transcriptions</b> 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.
вох 2-3	The Sunday morning hymns: as used in preparation for the Mass and the music of the liturgy of St. Basil; [165] p.; draft version of vol. 1
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 Pairts" 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.
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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.
BOX-FOLDER 7/14	The hymns of the "three children" in the fire; 26 p.
BOX-FOLDER 7/15	The big "alleluia" (a midnight hymn sung in Advent); [43] p.
	Transcriptions by Margit Toth
<b>box-folder</b> 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 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

Container	Contents
	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 Comparison
	Library of Congress. Draft versions of the <i>Guide</i> . Typescript and photocopy.
	Arrangement is by genre.
	i mangement is of genie.
	Guide to the Ragheb Moftah Coptic Chant Collection of audio tapes
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/1	Photocopy of text
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BOX-FOLDER 13/18	LC 20B cut 2; [4] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/19	LC 15B cut 1; [5] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/20	LC 17B cut 2; [13] p.
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BOX-FOLDER 13/22	LC 15B cut 2; [4] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/23	LC 6B cut 1; [1] p.
	Liturgy of St. Gregory: in order of use in liturgical service
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bon i oldeln 15/20	Excerpts from the liturgy
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BOX-FOLDER 13/29	LC 2; [1] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/30	LC 13B cut 2; [1] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/31	LC 15A; [11] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/32	LC 3A; [11] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/33	LC 21A; [2] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/34	LC 16A; [19] p.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/39	LC 20A and B; [2] p.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/41	LC 11A; [2] p.
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/42	LC 21A cut2-21B; [5] p.
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/43	LC 18A; [4] p.
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/44	LC 10B cut 2; [2] p.
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/45	LC 19A-19B; [9] p.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/47	LC 7B cut 2; [2] p.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/52	LC 4A cut 2; [10] p.
BOX-FOLDER 13/53	LC 4A cut 2; [2] p.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/55	LC 12A-12B; [6] p.
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/56	LC 11B, conclusion; [2] p.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/59	LC 20A; [8] p.
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BOX-FOLDER 13/61	LC 23B cuts 3 and 4; [2] p.
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 13/62	LC 8A; [3] p.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 14/7	Hymns; [102] p.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 15/5	Moftah, Ragheb 1920's, 1930's, 1970's
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 15/6	Moftah, Ragheb-Ernest Newlandsmith 1927-1930's
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 15/7	Moftah, Ragheb-Margit Toth 1972-1974
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 15/8	Mo-N
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 15/9-17	Newlandsmith, Ernest 1927-34, 1939
BOX-FOLDER 15/18	Newlandsmith, Ernest no date
BOX-FOLDER 15/19	0
BOX-FOLDER 15/20	Robertson-Wilson, Marian 1996-1997
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BOX-FOLDER 15/22	Toth, Margit 1970, 1975
BOX-FOLDER 15/23	W
BOX-FOLDER 15/24	Unknown 1931, 1932, 1950
	DOCUMENTS
	<ul> <li>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.</li> <li>Arrangement is by format.</li> </ul>
	Contracts
BOX-FOLDER 16/1	Contract between Ragheb Moftah and Ernest Newlandsmith
BOX-FOLDER 16/2	Contract between Ragheb Moftah, Margit Toth and Coptic Orthodox Church
	Ragheb Moftah papers
BOX-FOLDER 16/3-4	Moftah, Ragheb- manuscript notes
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 16/5	Moftah, Ragheb- draft of paper on coptic music ca. 1931-1936, typed with handwritten and overlay corrections
BOX-FOLDER 16/6	Moftah, Ragheb- autobiography
	Articles
BOX-FOLDER 16/7	Newlandsmith, Ernest, "The Ancient music of the Coptic Church," printed, 11 p.
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 16/8	Unsigned, "A brief biographyof Ernest Newlandsmith,"photocopy [6] p.
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 16/9	Robertson-Wilson, Marian, "Ernest Newlandsmith et sa notation de la musique copte," 2 copies: original publication and 1 photocopy; 463-469 pp.
BOX-FOLDER 16/9	"Ernest Newlandsmith's transcriptions of Coptic music," photocopy, 190-198 pp.

## DOCUMENTS

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BOX-FOLDER 16/11	Catalogue: American University in Cairo Press 1997-98, printed, 52 p.
	Clippings, receipts, tickets
BOX-FOLDER 16/12	Newspaper clippings
BOX-FOLDER 16/13	Tickets, receipts
BOX-FOLDER 16/14	Printed materials of Newlandsmith, tickets, invitations, programs
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	Photographs of Moftah, others, and his funeral.
	Arrangement is by subject.
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<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 17/2	Ragheb Moftah with others (14)
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 17/3	Ragheb Moftah funeral, June 18, 2001 (27)
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 17/4	Ragheb Moftah final resting place, April 25, 2002 (13)
<b>BOX-FOLDER</b> 17/5	Rufa'il Moftah manuscript (8)
	PUBLICATION
	<ul> <li>A printed and bound textbook. <i>al- Jam'iyyat al-Khayriyyah al-Kibtiyyah al-Kubra</i> (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.</li> <li>Arrangement is by title.</li> </ul>
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.

# **Related Material**

Video tapes, Sound recordings transferred to Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress Washington DC 20540.

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Acts, introduction and conclusion	<u>13/15</u> 12/22
Acts, lection and conclusion	<u>13/32</u> 12/25
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Advent hos, the big	<u>13/38</u> 12/20
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al-lahn al-ma'rūf (hymn of the thief on the cross)	<u>13/45</u>
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Allēlouia, the big	<u>13/27</u>
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Anaphora	<u>13/19</u>
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