

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Faculty Publications: School of Music

Music, School of

1998

Harley 978

Peter M. Lefferts

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, plefferts1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/musicfacpub>



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

Lefferts, Peter M., "Harley 978" (1998). *Faculty Publications: School of Music*. 40.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/musicfacpub/40>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Music, School of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications: School of Music by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Harley 978

A well-known manuscript from Reading Abbey (BL Harley 978), compiled sometime in the period 1245–65, probably at the behest of a single individual. Its contents are eclectic and reflective of wide intellectual interests and sources, suggesting a university connection. Famous principally because it contains the canon "Sumer is icumen in," Harley 978 also possesses the unique text of the "Song of Lewes" (*Calamo velociter*), the best English collection of goliardic verse, the largest surviving collection of the fables and lais of Marie de France, an index to the extensive contents of an otherwise lost book of polyphony, and other items. In addition to the Sumer canon the musical contents of the manuscripts first large section include ten lengthy monophonic Latin songs of the sequence or lai type, one three-voice motet, three two-voice textless (instrumental?) pieces, and two pages of elementary music-instruction material.

Peter M. Lefferts

Bibliography

- Hohler, Christopher. "Reflections on Some Manuscripts Containing 13th-Century Polyphony." *Journal of the Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society* 1 (1978): 2–38
- Kingsford, Charles Lethbridge, ed. *The Song of Lewes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1890
- Sanders, Ernest H., ed. *English Music of the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Century*. Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century 14. Paris: L'Oiseau-Lyre, 1979
- Stevens, John. *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050–1350*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986

◦ ◦ ◦ ◦ ◦

Published in *Medieval England: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Paul Szarmach, M. Teresa Tavormina, Joel T. Rosenthal, Catherine E. Karkov, Peter M. Lefferts, & Elizabeth Parker McLachlan (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), p. 338–339. Copyright © 1998 Paul Szarmach, M. Teresa Tavormina, & Joel T. Rosenthal.