



# Filologia del testo inglese medievale

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CdL in Lingue e Letterature Europee e Americane

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## *Mirie it is while sumer ilast*

It is the earliest surviving secular song in English.

Found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson G.22, an eleventh-century psalter, the song is written on a flyleaf together with other two French compositions.



# Diplomatic transcription

Irie it is while sumer  
ilast pið fugheles song.  
oc nu neched pindes blast  
and weder strong. Ei ei  
phat this nicht is long. And  
ich pið wel michel wrong.  
Soregh and murne and



# Interpretative transcription

[M]irie it is while sumer ilast

pið fugheles song.

Oc nu necheð pindes blast

and weder strong.

Ei ei phat this nicht is long.

And ich pið wel michel wrong.

Soregh and murne and [fast].

# Let's translate it

[M]irie it is while sumer ilast

pið fugheles song.

Oc nu necheð pindes blast

and weder strong.

Ei ei phat this nicht is long

and ich pið wel michel wrong.

Soregh and murne and [fast].

birds'

approaches

lo        night

it does to me much

sorrow



## *Sumer is icumen in*

Extant in London, British Library, MS Harley 978, a miscellany of fables and lays by Marie de France, English poems, goliardic satires and songs.

Its owner, William of Winchester, a learned Benedictine monk, was famous for his 'incontinence' with nuns and other women. The contents of the manuscript reflect his entertaining character.

The song is written in black ink, while in red ink is recorded another song in Latin on the glory of Jesus.

The image shows a page from a medieval manuscript, MS Harley 978, featuring musical notation and Latin text. The page is divided into several staves of music. The text is written in black ink, with some words in red ink (rubrics). The music is written in square neumes on a four-line red staff. The text includes the title 'Sumer is icumen in' and the lyrics 'Sumer is icumen in. Iude sing cucu. Sumer is sed and blowes'. The text is written in a Gothic script. The page is numbered '978' in the top right corner. A small red cross is visible at the top of the page. The text is written in black ink, with some words in red ink (rubrics). The music is written in square neumes on a four-line red staff. The text includes the title 'Sumer is icumen in' and the lyrics 'Sumer is icumen in. Iude sing cucu. Sumer is sed and blowes'. The text is written in a Gothic script. The page is numbered '978' in the top right corner. A small red cross is visible at the top of the page.

Sumer is icumen in. Iude sing cucu. Sumer is sed and blowes  
Perspice xpicola que dignacio celicus agrico  
med and springe se uide nu. Sing cucu tawe bletch after  
la pro uicit vicio filio non parcentis exposu  
lomb. Ihouy after calue cu Bulluc stertey. bucke uertey  
it mortis exicio. Qui captiuus semiuuio  
quere sing cucu. Cucu cucu Wel singes pu cucu ne sibi  
a supplicio. Vite donat et secum coronat. in ce  
pu nauer nu. u so u o.  
Singer cucu nu. Singer cucu.  
Singer cucu. Singer cucu nu. fine. S. immedata repetes pncipiu.

Hanc rotam cantare possunt quatuor socij. A paucio  
ribus autem qui a tribus ut saltem duobus non debet  
dici. preter eos qui dicunt pedem. Cantant autem sic. Sacen  
tibus ceteris inchoat cum his qui tenent pedem. Et cum uenerit  
ad primam notam post cruce. inchoat alius. et sic de ceteris.  
Singer si repauserit ad pauca non septa  
si alibi: spacio unius longe note.

hoc repetit uti quocient op est.  
faciens pauca nonem in fine.

hoc dicit alii pauca non in medio et in  
fine. S. immedata repetes pncipiu.





# Diplomatic transcription

Sumer is icumen in. Lhude sing cucu. Groweþ sed and bloweþ  
med and springþ þe wde nu. Sing cucu awe bleteþ after  
lomb. lhouþ after calve cu. Bulluc sterteþ. bucke uerteþ  
murie sing cuccu. Cuccu cuccu wel singes þu cuccu ne swik  
þu nauer nu.

Sing cuccu nu. sing cuccu.

Sing cuccu. Sing cuccu nu.



# Interpretative transcription

Sumer is icumen in

lhude sing cucu.

Groweþ sed and bloweþ med

and springþ þe wde nu.

Sing cucu

awe bleteþ after lomb,

lhoup after calve cu.

Bulluc sterteþ, bucke uerteþ

murie sing cucu.

Cuccu cuccu

wel singes þu cuccu

ne swik þu nauer nu.

Sing cuccu nu. sing cuccu.

Sing cuccu. Sing cuccu nu.

# Interpretative transcription

Sumer is icumen in  
lhude sing cucu.

Groweþ sed and bloweþ med  
and springþ þe wde nu.

Sing cucu

awe bleteþ after lomb,  
lhoup after calve cu.

Bulluc sterteþ, bucke uerteþ  
murie sing cucu.

blooms meadow  
wood

ewe

cow

jumps farts

merrily

Cuccu cuccu

wel singes þu cuccu

ne swik þu nauer nu.

do not ever stop now

Sing cuccu nu. sing cuccu.

Sing cuccu. Sing cuccu nu.