

The Corpus Rhythmorum Musicum (CRM)

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Abstract

The *Corpus Rhythmorum Musicum (CRM)*, conceived by Francesco Stella, presents the critical edition of rhythmical Latin poems set to music from the 4th to 9th centuries. The project – promoted by the University of Siena in collaboration with the International Society for the Study of the Latin Middle Ages (SISMEL), with the support of the European Commission (TMR1998-2000 project) and the PRIN 2002-2004 and 2006-2008 projects – led to the publication of numerous preparatory studies presented at the Arezzo 1998 and Ravello 1999 conferences, and at the Munich Euroconference 2001. The first volume and CD-ROM on the *Songs in non-Liturgical Sources* were published in 2007, followed in 2011 by the online edition, expanded with new texts and functions in 2020 by Luigi Tassarolo. The *CRM* provides the critical edition with diplomatic and semi-diplomatic transcriptions of all the witnesses and musical notations, as well as recordings of the singing performances. Manuscript images, philological apparatus, linguistic statistics, metrical tables, and neumatic tables offer an open and verifiable edition, with a wealth of material for various types of research, thanks to a search interface that allows the intersection of textual, metrical, linguistic, and musical data.

Keywords: Songs; Rhythmic poetry; Digital critical edition; Middle Latin language; Manuscripts

Il Corpus Rhythmorum Musicum (CRM), ideato da Francesco Stella, è dedicato all'edizione critica delle poesie latine ritmiche e musicate dei secoli IV-IX. Il progetto – promosso dall'Università di Siena in collaborazione con la Società Internazionale per lo Studio del Medioevo Latino, col supporto della Commissione europea (progetto TMR1998-2000) e dei PRIN 2002-2004 e 2006-2008 – ha portato alla pubblicazione dei numerosi studi preparatori presentati ai convegni di Arezzo 1998 e Ravello 1999 e all'euroconferenza di Monaco di Baviera 2001. Il primo volume e il CD-ROM sui Canti di tradizione non liturgica sono stati pubblicati nel 2007 e sono stati seguiti nel 2011 dall'edizione online, ampliata con nuovi testi e funzioni nel 2020 da Luigi Tassarolo. Il CRM fornisce il testo critico con trascrizione diplomatica e semidiplomatica di tutti i testimoni e delle notazioni musicali, nonché le registrazioni delle esecuzioni canore. Le immagini dei manoscritti, l'apparato filologico, le statistiche linguistiche, le tabelle metriche e le tavole neumatiche offrono una edizione aperta e verificabile, con una grande mole di materiale su cui condurre diversi tipi di ricerca, grazie all'interfaccia che permette di intersecare dati testuali, metrici, linguistici e musicali.

Parole chiave: Canzoni; Poesia ritmica; Edizione critica digitale; Lingua mediolatina; Manoscritti

1. History

The *Corpus Rhythmorum Musicum* (CRM),¹ conceived by Francesco Stella, is dedicated to the critical edition of Latin rhythmic poems (i.e. poems based on the principle of stress accent sequence in verses of a defined number of syllables) set to music from the 4th to 9th centuries. This textual tradition, which gave rise to modern Western poetry, began as early as the 4th century, also thanks to its close association with poetic creations in the liturgical sphere. It grew throughout the Middle Ages, with an initial mature development in the Carolingian Era, and then reached the grandiose dimensions of Latin and vernacular lyric poetry of the following centuries.

It is a vast and extremely heterogeneous production. Sometimes it is necessary to study a song in detail to determine whether it's rhythmic poetry with metrical reminiscences or metrical poetry deeply influenced by a no longer quantitative accentuation (this is the case with many hymns from the Visigothic Spanish tradition), or whether we are dealing with assonant prose rather than rhythms (frequent cases are found in the tradition of computational mnemonics). Even among true rhythms, stylistic, linguistic, and metrical differences can be significant: this definition include the 'confessional' poems of Paulinus of Aquileia, the *planctus A solis ortu usque ad occidua* for the death of Charlemagne, the lyric poetry of Gotescalco, but also riddles, the more 'popular' narrative or didactic-moral songs, and those with apocalyptic themes, as well as hymns from the Merovingian Era that by now leave many concessions to vernacular speech.

The analysis of metrical and linguistic aspects therefore is exceptionally fruitful even from a comparative perspective, both within this production and with so-called "classical" Latin, as well as with the origins of poetry in the Romance languages.

The project – promoted by the University of Siena in collaboration with SISMELE, with the support of the European Commission and the PRIN (Research Projects of National Interest) 2002-2004 and 2006-2008 – led to the publication of numerous preparatory studies presented at the conferences in Arezzo 1998 and Ravello 1999 (*Poesia dell'Alto Medioevo Europeo* [9]) and at the Euro conference in Munich 2001 (*Poetry of the early medieval Europe* [5]), and in December 2007 to the publication of the first volume and CD-ROM on the *Songs in non-Liturgical Sources* [10], which was followed in 2011 by the online version edited by Stella and Tassarolo, then modernized, again by Tassarolo, in 2020, sponsored by University of Siena together with University of Bergamo and Cambridge University. The CRM provides the critical edition of these texts with philological apparatus (with the possibility of synoptic viewing in the case of multiple redactions), images of all the manuscripts used and their diplomatic and semi-diplomatic transcription.

The edition thus neither obscures discarded readings nor censors manuscripts that may contain different versions; these reveal themselves as valuable witnesses to specific cultural circles that

¹ <https://www.corimu.unisi.it/public/frontend>.

read and listened to the work as it was handed down to us by that codex, rather than in the reconstructed version. Likewise, the subsequent history of the work and its modes of consumption are explored, since both the culture, environment, and grammatical and stylistic choices of the author, as well as the innovations and linguistic changes introduced by copyists, are worthy of being discovered and analysed.

While traditional editions, including those of the so-called *New Philology*, are based on a single codex and offer the reader only one stage of the tradition, more or less dating back to the text intended by the author, and thus accentuate the gap between the reconstructed text and that attested by the individual manuscript, this kind of digital edition seeks to bridge this gap, offering a reconstruction that is as transparent and verifiable as possible, so that even any errors can be quickly discussed and corrected, thanks to dialogue with the entire scholarly community.

Sam Barrett has also edited the melodies, including transcriptions of the musical notations and the music on the staff, along with Giacomo Baroffis's recordings of the corresponding vocal performances. The editions are also accompanied by statistical indices relating to rhythmic and linguistic issues. The data entries, carried out by scholars from various European universities, is constantly updated and expanded on the *CRM* website, which aims to present the most advanced stage of the edition and provide a forum for open discussion on scholarly issues related to the edition. New manuscripts have been discovered and added to the site only for the *Anni Domini notantur* edition, and therefore any comments or suggestions are welcome, even regarding material already published.

The *CRM* has a complex and multifaceted structure, making it difficult to communicate and integrate with other similar sites, which currently do not exist. Erwin Rauner's *Analecta Hymnica digitalia* website² is achieving a certain level of precision regarding rhythmical and metrical aspects,³ but linguistic tagging is missing, and in any case, the site is paid, so a comparison or integration is not currently possible, even though such platforms are complementing each other. In fact, the *CRM* is designed to accommodate and compare different rhythmic songs within itself. At a later stage, it will be possible to integrate the *CRM* with poems without melodies but still interesting for their linguistic and versification aspects, as well as other poetic genres currently excluded, such as sequences or *prosulae*.

2. Sections

The *CRM* currently hosts the editions of 28 chants from the non-liturgical (or not only) tradition, along with transcriptions of all the witnesses (over 170), their photographic reproductions – available both by uploaded images and via links to the digital archives of the preservation institutions – and the metrical and linguistic tables. This first part has benefited from the collaboration of scholars from across Europe, experts in the various fields required by the *CRM*'s editing and data entry criteria.

² <http://www.erwin-rauner.de/philol1.htm>.

³ In addition to searching by song, by author, or for one or more words, it is possible to navigate the corpus by type of verse and stanzas. Concordances, rhymes and assonances are also searchable. Each type of research is preceded by an explanation of the methodologies used and the criteria.

This is followed by the section on computistic rhythms, i.e., pieces written to memorize procedures for calculating calendar elements, primarily the date of Easter. Currently, the *CRM* contains editions of the mnemonic rhythms *Anni Domini notantur* [8] and *Annus solis continetur*. These are sometimes very short compositions constructed in the style of nursery rhymes, sometimes very long, and with considerable variation in tradition due to their predominantly oral transmission. The construction of a detailed *stemma codicum* proves very complex if not impossible and often one has to settle for identifying a few main families and noting frequent and stratified contamination over time. The insertion or deletion of stanzas or groups of stanzas at different points in the text in the various witnesses forces the editor to choose between the set up of a very large apparatus (as in the case of *Anni Domini*) or of different versions (as in *Annus solis*, a composition of some length, later revised and summarized in two later versions).

The last section currently concerns rhythmic hymns, represented on the web site by the edition of the Eucharistic hymn: *Ad caenam Agni providi*. With the introduction of pieces specifically designed for the dissemination of the religious contents, especially in the early centuries, and for the liturgies of the Mass and the Hours, starting from the model created by Ambrose, new aspects must be taken into consideration. We often face with ancient hymns present in the liturgy, later censored and re-entering with a new function and/or significant textual changes.⁴ Moreover, their use in monastic pedagogy and in the creation of models of Hymnaries as a tool of control and centralization made these creations a double-edged sword. See, in this regard, the Trinitarian controversy between Hincmar of Reims and Godeschalk (849-50), whose documents frequently mention the hymns of the Office, and the position of Walafrid Strabo in his *Libellus de exordiis* [3].

Furthermore, the frequent reuse of melodies and verses used in similar liturgical contexts, or the rhythmical phenomena that reveal the interference of the vernacular language already in the author and not only during the copying process (see the hymn published on the website), enrich the *CRM* with new elements and lines of research.

3. Manuscripts and transcripts

The *recensio* for the editions has yielded a set of information that can form a basis for alternative research. For each witness, a page “Manuscript” was drawn up with some general information including editions and bibliography, and a list of the texts contained therein, which often involved the examination of the entire codex. The list of *codices* (137 now) can be consulted in the web page with the same name.

All texts used for the edition have been entered with diplomatic transcription and linked to the relevant reproductions (often a codex contains multiple rhythmic compositions).

In the “Manuscript transmission and Music” section, all the witnesses used for each song are present. Every song is referred to by the *Incipit* as quoted in the manuscript, the folios that contain the text and the siglum used for each of them. The red musical note that appears under the “Music” column indicates which manuscripts contain the piece accompanied by the melody.

⁴ See the case-study of *Tellus ac aethra iubilant* [14].

By clicking on each of them, we have a synthetic link to the manuscript and some links to the images; by selecting from the “Transcript” menu, it is possible to view the texts with both scribal and semi-diplomatic transcription, as well as compare them in synopsis with the corresponding page of the manuscript (Fig. 1).

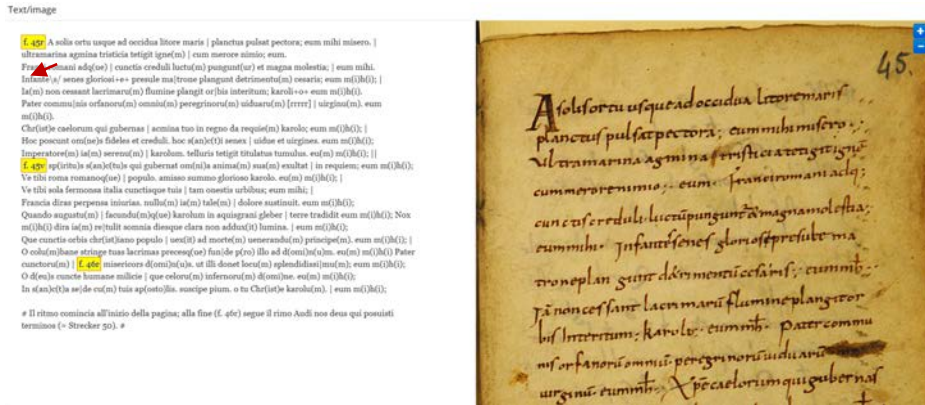


Fig. 1 - Synoptic view of manuscript and his transcription.

4. Edition of texts and melodies

For each song included in the *CRM*, a critical edition has been prepared, accompanied by a negative apparatus that includes not only the substantial variants, but also the graphic ones, so as to detect any traces of mixing with other native languages of the copyists or graphic customs typical of a specific area or historical period. The same page contains the intertextual analysis divided into three bands (*loci*):

«*vetustiores* (previous texts), *coevi* (possible contemporaneous texts), *seriores* (later texts, possibly limited to cases where the expression being examined appears for the first time in the edited text). The intertextual apparatus has been able to provide information on the history of individual expressions, both before and after the text in question, and also on the correlations with the texts of the proto-Carolingian era, and in particular between the rhythmic texts. This will finally help to regroup all those lyrics that find themselves in a nameless and placeless limbo into historical constellations. This has already happened in many cases, but in particular with *Alma vera*, *Anima nimis*, *Arbor natus*, *Christus rex*, *Gratuletur*, *Qui signati*, and *Tertio in flore*. In some cases (as in *Christus rex* and *Alma vera*), these findings have furnished information of great importance on the dating or the attribution of the rhythms, and in all cases have helped to reconstruct the cultural environment of the production and fruition of these texts».⁵

In the front-end, you can view this data by swiping the mouse over the stanzas or clicking on “Complete”. If the multiple versions are found, it is possible to create different editions and display them in synopsis (this is the case, for example, with the two versions of *A solis ortu* or of the three of *Annus solis continetur*). All poems are accompanied by a historical-philological

⁵ See the *General Introduction* in the *CRM* web site: <https://www.corimu.unisi.it/public/pagine/introduzioni/idintroduzioni/82>.

introduction, which frames the composition in its context and provides, often with new hypotheses, proposals for dates and places, as well as for its author and performative context. The actual ecdotic discussion is followed by the *stemma codicum*, which, thanks to the entry of the image coordinates into the HTML code, allows access via a link to the page of each manuscript, by clicking on the witness's siglum (Fig. 2).

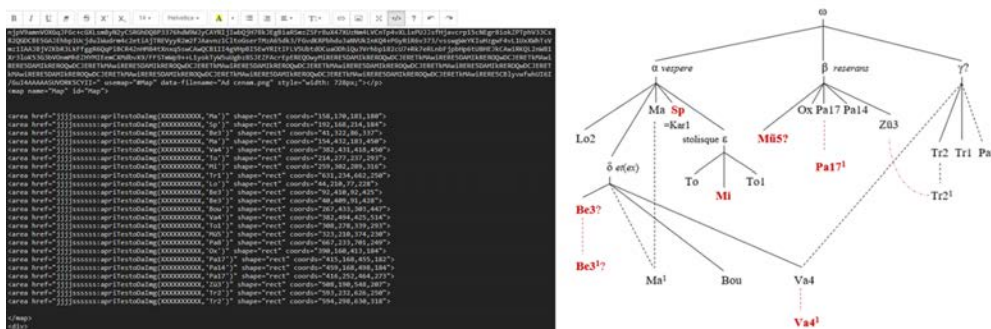


Fig. 2 - Back-end and front-end of the stemma codicum of the computistic poem Anni Domini notantur.

The melodies were edited by Sam Barrett, who also wrote the introductions to the edition and the musical transcriptions, which we invite the user to refer to both for a detailed explanation of the criteria and methods for drafting the neume notation, and for an initial approach to the complex world of adiastematic notation. For each melody there is:

1. “Notational commentary” with an approximate date of the notation, its type and characteristic scribal features.
2. “Transcription”, with related pictures of the transcription, the alphanumeric ones, and the melody commentaries. The alphanumeric transcription, following a system created specifically by Barrett, makes each neume correspond to a unique code that combines numbers and letters:

«For the purpose of creating a database, each neume has been classified according to three criteria: melodic movement conveyed by the basic sign, melodic contraction indicated by signs with qualification, and information about vocal delivery conveyed by modification of the sign. [...]; the numbers on the vertical axis refer to the number of distinct pitches signalled by the neume: thus 1 for a neume indicating one note, 2 for a neume indicating two notes and so on. The letters on the horizontal axis refer to melodic direction. These letters are grouped in pairs: ‘a’ represents a rising melodic gesture and ‘b’ represents its corresponding falling gesture; ‘c’ represents a gesture that initially rises but falls at the end and ‘d’ represents the mirror image of this process (a melodic gesture that initially falls, but rises at the end). This pattern continues with odd-numbered letters of the alphabet representing melodic gestures that initially rise and adjacent even-numbered letters representing mirror images of these melodic gestures. [...] Any melodic movement can be systematically assigned a letter and number following this method of classification».⁶

⁶ For the complete description of the phenomena and the relative alphanumeric yield, see <https://www.corimu.unisi.it/public/pagine/introduzioni/idintroduzioni/2>.

3. “Historical transcriptions”, that is, the images of the adaptations on a staff made by scholars over time and the related musical performances curated by G. Baroffio. These are interpretative hypotheses sometimes based on very different principles regarding the rhythm and duration to be attributed to the notes (not reported in these first centuries except with some letters indicating the movement, *c=celeriter*, etc.) and therefore with very different outcomes in the singing realization.
4. “Musical editions”, with bibliography, facsimiles, editions related with presentation and discussion around the results of the same.
5. “Transmission”, where we investigate the relationship between text and melody in the various witnesses and with other pieces even those outside the *CRM*.

The reproduction of all manuscripts, along with musical performances and transcriptions, allows for the investigation of the relationship between each text and melody, between versification anomalies and neumatic transcription: sometimes a manuscript may contain a text with anisosyllabic verses due to copyist errors, and whoever accompanies this piece with neumes adapts them with various strategies to these anomalies. The opposite can also be true: when the scribe faced with a corrupted text, he may amend the anisosyllabic lines based on the known melody; sometimes, finally, if the music known to the scribe is slightly different from that intended for the text to be transcribed, the scribe may still decide to intervene on the poem rather than the neumes. Barrett’s alphanumeric transcription also allows these data to be displayed in the search interface.

The editions are also accompanied by statistical indices relating to rhythm and language issues. They are essential to understanding the very nature of these compositions, too often underestimated because they are not metrical, nor in verse of Western poetry, and not in classical Latin, nor an expression of the first lyrics in the Romance language.

1. The versification sheet takes into consideration a complex series of factors, from phenomena affecting the verse alone (hiatus, systole, hypo/hypermertia, etc.) to the entire stanza (presence of the refrain, rhyme, abecedarian structure, etc.), as well as the articulation of rhythmic accents within the verse according to grammar (SAG) and according to the rhythm given by versification (SAM), where the tonic syllables=T and the unstressed=A. The structure of the verse and stanza is represented according to the well-known method devised by D. Norberg (number of syllables associated with a **p** for paroxytones and **pp** for proparoxytones, e.g. *A solis ortu usque ad occidua* = 5p+7pp), furthermore with the one created by E. D’Angelo, which is computer readable, and uses the terminology explained in late medieval treatises on medieval Latin rhythmic poetry.⁷ Here the name of the verse is referred to the number of syllables, and is followed by an adjective that indicates the final cadence, **i** for *iambicus* and **s** for *spondaicus* (used by medieval theorists in the meaning of “trochaic”). If the verse is composed of two or more elements, the entire verse will be represented by the first

⁷ For an exhaustive explanation of this system of representation, see [5].

number, and the ensuing elements by the relevant number of syllables separated by a dot: *A solis ortu usque ad occidua* here is 12i.7 (Fig. 3).

1.1 — A solis ortu usque ad occidua

GENERALE | **VERSI** | TESTIMONI | EDIZIONE | MANOSCRITTI | STUDI/NOTE | INTRODUZIONE

SCHEMA

2 x (5p+7pp) + R (7pp) Numero di versi 60

SAG1	T TA TA T ATAA TAA TA TA TA TAA T TA TAA TA ATA TAA ATAA TAA TA T ATA TAA T TA TAA TA ATA TA TA TAA TAA TA TAA ATAA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dieresi	1, 3 etc. (refrain) Heu mihi misero
SAM1	T TA TA TA T ATAA TAA TA TA TA TAA TA TA TAA TA ATA TAA ATAA TAA TA T ATA TAA TA TA TAA TA ATA TA TA TAA TAA TA TAA ATAA	<input type="checkbox"/> Anacrusi	
Tipo strofe	2x(5p+7pp)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sinizesi	
STM1 strofe	5i 2# 7i 3i	<input type="checkbox"/> Prostesi	
STM2 rima		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Iato	1 A solis ortu usque ad occidua / 2,1 Vitramarina
Tipo verso	5p+7pp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Refrain	heu mihi doleo Br, heu me dolens Pa, heu mihi
STM verso	12i.7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rima	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assonanze	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allitterazioni	9,2 Telluris tegit titulatus tumulus
		<input type="checkbox"/> Elisione	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Sistole	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Diastole	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ipometri	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ipermetri	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Abecedario	

Fig. 3 - Back-end of the rhythmic tab of *A solis ortu*

2. The *linguistic analysis* is divided into two levels: the first records the text's most obvious divergences from conventional Latin grammar; the second attempts an experimental analysis of diachronic linguistics, based on Michel Banniard's theory, which is useful for providing insights into the degree of sophistication of the language and the distance or proximity of Latin in these poems to Romance developments (Fig. 4). For medieval Latin grammar the reference is Stotz's *Handbuch* (HLSMA) [11].

1.1 — A solis ortu usque ad occidua

Edizione del testo Tradizione manoscritta e Musica

Testo Criteri generali Introduzione Completa Versi **Lingua**

Sintassi nome/verbo	Separazione SV: 1.0588 Grado separazione N/A/P: 0.5 Rapporto topologico SN2/SV: 3 antepos.; 9 postpos.; 8 disgiunz. Rapporto topologico SN3/SV: 5 antepos.; 4 postpos.; 5 disgiunz. Rapporto topologico SN4/SN: 3 antepos.; 3 disgiunz.
Frequenza locuzioni preposizionali	Frequenza assoluta: 4 acc.; 6 abl. Frequenza relativa agli enunciati: 0.435 Frequenza relativa alle parole: 0.039
Vocalismo	Scambi, 2,2 merore Scambi, 9,2 timulus Tr
Consonantismo	Geminazione, 1,2 littora Scambi, 8,2 senex Ve (=senes); fermonsa Ve Scambio, 3,1 adque Ve Finali (affievolimento o ipercorrettismo), 3,2 luctum (=luctu) Ve; 13,2 dolore Ve (=dolorem) Scambio, 7,1 acmina Ve
Lessico	Aggettivi, 13,2 12,1 formosa; 19,1 humanae militiae (HLSMA V § 10.4) Verbi, 9,2 titulatus tumulus Derivazione, 2,1 ultramarina?
Flessione nominale	Eteroclesia, 4,2 matrones Br
Sintassi nome	Uso dei casi, 6,1 interitum Karoli ... pater communis orfanorum omnium (=patris: HLSMA IX § 4,3)

Fig. 4 - Back-end of the linguistic tab of *A solis ortu*.

5. Tools and Tables

The construction of the data sheets for versification, musical and linguistic analyses involved a considerable amount of work; the above-mentioned conferences were some of the opportunities for expert discussions to develop innovative transcription and coding methods. In the “Tables”, in addition to the bibliography, the user can find the *criteria* for transcriptions and linguistic statistics, the metric tables edited by E. D’Angelo and the neumatic table prepared by S. Barrett.

Among the *Tools* we find:

1. General results of linguistic statistics concerning songs in non-liturgical sources.
2. “Concordances”, which allow a search both between the editions and transcriptions according to the ending, root, or any position within the word.
3. “Research interface” on:
 - “Melodies”, according to the transcription created by Barrett.
 - “Texts” in the edition, in the scribal and semi-diplomatic transcriptions, and in the apparatus, with the possibility of searching for one or more linguistic phenomena in combination or exclusion (Boolean operators AND, OR).

- “Manuscripts”, either with usual filters such as shelf mark, provenance, content, and scripts, or with more nuanced ones such as type and function of the book.
- “General Criteria”. They allow the user to navigate the *CRM* according to “Incipits”, “Authors”, “Localisations” (divided into nations, zones and cities), “Dates” and the “Versification”. In the latter case, it is possible to select the type of versification according to the different rhythmic transcriptions for both the verse and the entire stanza. In this case, too, it is possible to select one or more metrical phenomena to search for within the texts (Fig. 5).

The possibility of finding as much information as possible and retrieving it in complex searches was considered essential and necessitated designing a complex search interface: in the *CRM*, all philological, metric, linguistic and musical aspects of these songs are searchable.

It allows these data to be cross-referenced with general information about the text, such as the author, dating, and manuscripts, to conduct large-scale and equally specific research, such as identifying the areas where melodies or themes are most widespread, the predilection for certain words in certain genres, or the period of development of certain metrical patterns or linguistic phenomena, and so on.

▼ GENERAL CRITERIA

► Incipit

► Authors

► ICL number

► Localisation

► Date

▼ Versification

Schema

Schema

<Strophe type> ▼

<STM1 strophe> ▼

<STM1 strophe>

2# 8i | 2# 8s | 4s R | 7i

3# 12i.7 | 5s

3#15i.7

4#15i.7

4#8i

5#12i.7

5i 2# 7i | 3i

6#5s

phenomenons> ▼ AND ▼

► TEXTS

► MUSIC

Execute

Fig. 5 - Search interface

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