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THE ITALIAN LAUDA FROM MANUSCRIPT TO BYTE:  
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK\*

ABSTRACT

L'ERC AdG LAUDARE, progetto che afferisce all'Università di Trento e al Gran Sasso Science Institute dell'Aquila, ha lo scopo di raccogliere in un database testi e melodie della lauda italiana dal XIII al XVI secolo. In questo articolo, che fornisce un'impostazione concettuale per il progetto, gli autori rilevano dapprima la varietà delle fonti laudistiche; suggeriscono quindi una strategia per la costituzione di un database relazionale che rappresenti efficacemente e fedelmente le qualità intrinseche del repertorio. In considerazione dell'identità 'debole' del genere laudistico, sempre soggetto alle innovazioni di copisti ed esecutori, si propone di individuare come principio del database la singola occorrenza laudistica di ciascun testimone, e non una comprensiva identità testuale e musicale, troppo astratta e di difficile ricostruzione filologica. Il compito di rappresentare le relazioni storiche tra testi, musiche, fonti e agenti del repertorio è demandato agli indici e alle funzioni di ricerca del database.

PAROLE CHIAVE lauda, manoscritti e stampe, database, cantasi come, *contrafactio*

SUMMARY

The main goal of the ERC AdG LAUDARE, hosted by the University of Trento and the Gran Sasso Science Institute in L'Aquila (Italy), is the creation of a database of Italian *lauda* texts and music from 1200 to 1550. This article provides a conceptual framework for this task. The authors start from an analysis of the sources and their variety and consider strategies for creating a relational database to represent such a heterogeneous repertory in an organized way, without hiding its intrinsic complexity. A point of departure is the 'weak' philological status of the genre, continuously subject to alterations by copyists and performers. For this reason, the authors suggest that the database comprises a series of *lauda* occurrences drawn from each source, instead of attempting to reconstruct more abstract textual and musical identities. The task of representing the historical connections among texts, music, sources, and actors of the repertory is given to the analytical tools and indexes of the database.

KEYWORDS lauda, early sources, database, cantasi come, *contrafactio*



THE Italian *lauda* is a poetic and musical genre that originated before 1200 and flourished until the modern era.<sup>1</sup> Used by confraternities and religious orders to accompany moments of paraliturgical prayer, it employs vernacular language and singable tunes as a means of devotion and dissemination of religious concepts.

The project ERC AdG LAUDARE, directed by Francesco Zimei and hosted by the University of Trento and the Gran Sasso Science Institute in L'Aquila (Italy), has the goal of building a relational database of *lauda* texts and melodies from around 1200 to ca. 1550.<sup>2</sup> This task raises significant theoretical issues, due to the nuanced and complex tradition of the genre. A first challenge is representing the interaction – not always linear – between the two basic elements, text and melody. The second is registering the variety of *lauda* sources in time and place, since they have different organization and problematic features. They range from traditional music manuscripts, to text-only collections with links to an external model (the *cantasi come procedure*, i.e. ‘to be sung to the tune of’), to Renaissance prints in which a model-melody is followed by several texts to be sung to the same tune.

In this article we reflect on a conceptual framework for our database which aims to maintain the complexity of *lauda* transmission and make it accessible – as much as possible – to the modern user. Our point of departure is the analysis of the sources: we believe that their way of presenting information is meaningful and can suggest similar solutions for the database.

## 1. The weak identity of the Italian *lauda*

Because of its devotional destination, the *lauda* encouraged audience participation. For this reason, melodies are quite simple and can be easily memorized. At a compositional level, anonymous authors crafted

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1. An overview of the genre's history is in LEONARDI, *Storia della lauda*.
2. Info and updates at <https://laudare.eu/>.

them through a process of centonization, *contrafactio*, and adaptation, reassembling literary and musical patterns already at hand. This intrinsic need for transformation did not stop with composition: the repertory remained susceptible to alterations by copyists and performers, who adapted them to their changing requirements.

The consequence is a weak identity intrinsic in the genre. Its relatively precarious tradition is evident in both a weak transmission of each single *lauda*, which presents a high number of variants for text and melody; and in a weak association between text and melody, resulting in the reuse of pre-existing melodies (*cantasi come*, or *contrafactio*) with a variable degree of adaptation.

Such unstable identity manifested itself from the early stages. The two late 13<sup>th</sup>-early 14<sup>th</sup> century *laudari* Cortona, Biblioteca del Comune e dell'Accademia Etrusca, 91 (Cort) and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Banco Rari 18 (BR18), differ in the elegant illuminations present in BR18 and absent in Cort, but they otherwise contain a similar, monophonically-transmitted repertory.<sup>3</sup> Scholars analyzing this corpus pointed to a particularly complex tradition, due not only to mechanical errors but to a great number of different melodic versions.<sup>4</sup> The influence of orality is clear in a proliferation of variants, especially frequent in those sections destined for solo singing. An example is *Altissima luce col grande splendore*, preserved in both Cort and BR18, where the beginning of the *stanza* (the solo part) in BR18 presents a more ornamented version compared to Cort (see Figures 1, 2 and Example 1).<sup>5</sup>

Taken to an extreme, this variability produced the circulation of completely different melodies for the same poetry. This is the case of *Gloria 'n cielo e pace 'n terra* in Cort (ff. 43v-44r) and in BR18 (f. 9), which are in fact two separate pieces with a similar text.

In later centuries, the polyphonic *lauda* reveals similar phenomena, due to a proliferation of performing practices, singers, and sources. One of the most popular pieces, *O Iesu dolce* on a text by Leonardo Giustinian, is preserved in five manuscripts with five different melodies diverging in their number of voices, mensuration, style, and form.<sup>6</sup>

The philological status of the text is no different. In the *Laudario Illuminati*, verses for a deceased confraternity brother are reused for a different

3. A description of the two sources can be found in BARR, *The Monophonic Lauda*, and DÜRRER, *Altitalienische Laudenmelodien*. Cort is published in facsimile in *Il Laudario di Cortona*, ed. Gozzi-Zimei. For an edition of BR18 see *The Florence Laudario*, ed. Wilson.
4. See ZIINO, *Tre laude*. Ziino links the variants to metrical inconsistencies of the texts (*anisosillabismo*).
5. The following transcriptions do not take into account any implied accidental inflections, nor do they distinguish *plica* from the simple *virga*. Further information on *Altissima luce col grande splendore* is in GOZZI, *Un esempio di contrafactum*.
6. On *O Iesu dolce* and its different versions see *Laudario Giustiniano*, cur. Luisi, vol. 2, pp. 88-93.



Figures 1-2. *Altissima luce col grande splendore*, beginning of the stanza in Cort (left), f. 17v, and BR18 (right), f. 43v

Example 1. *Altissima luce col grande splendore* (transcription)

Cort

BR18

one by adjusting names and other attributes.<sup>7</sup> A manuscript written for a female institution – L’Aquila, Archivio Arcidiocesano, Archivio Capitolare, ms. 4 – preserves Jacopone’s *Tropo perde ’l tempo ki ben non t’ama* in a version tailored to the conditions of a women’s convent.<sup>8</sup> This strong tendency towards adaptation thus causes – as with melodies – great difficulties in recognizing both the authority and the authenticity of the poems.<sup>9</sup> According to Giorgio Varanini, the editor of a *laudario* needs to preserve the readings of each source, without mixing different ones in the attempt to reconstruct a hypothetical original.<sup>10</sup> This suggestion has been justly followed by mu-

7. SCENTONI, *L’Illuminati*, p. 155.

8. ZIMEI, *I cantici del perdono*, p. 83.

9. LEONARDI, *Storia della lauda*, pp. 14-17.

10. VARANINI, *Laude e laudari*, cited in LEONARDI, *Storia della lauda*, p. 16. Gianfranco Contini arrived at a similar conclusion: he included the genre in the category of ‘traditional’ poetry, for which each transformation has equal dignity. See CONTINI, *Breviario di ecdotica*, p. 48. This criterion is not without criticism, and the editor should not dismiss the importance of considering the tradition in its entirety as well as the hypothetical intention of the author. See CANOVA, *Per la lauda*.

sicologists, who have adopted two possible options: either editing from a single musical source or producing separate transcriptions for each piece preserved in different manuscripts.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Preservation and access to *lauda* sources

The bibliographical disciplines adopt a model, known as WEMI, which delineates the two extremes of a cultural object. The ‘Work’ represents the abstract entity of intellectual or artistic creation, while the ‘Item’ embodies its singular physical manifestation.<sup>12</sup> These two concepts can be productively applied to the *lauda* repertory: the Work would correspond to a distinct poetic and devotional composition, whereas the Item would describe each instance of its transmission in written or unwritten sources. Given the weak philological status of the *lauda*, it seems challenging to postulate the existence of a Work, i.e. a ‘*lauda* identity’, which subsumes the various instances preserved by the sources. To accommodate the centrifugal forces of the tradition better, it seems more constructive to concentrate on the Item, i.e. a single *lauda* occurrence in a single source. Thus LAUDARE’s digital repository can effectively preserve the intrinsic variability – even the instability – of the genre.

In a comparative perspective, one can observe how the *Cantus Index* database (hereafter CI, at <https://cantusindex.org/>) takes advantage of the relative stability of the Mass and Office repertories. CI can gather various occurrences of chants in medieval sources under the numerical identifiers devised by René-Jean Hesbert for his *Corpus Antiphonale Officii*, or define new ones, if necessary, despite the obvious degree of variability entailed by an early, transformed, and disseminated *corpus* such as plainchant. Occurrences with a significant variant receive a second-level number in addition to Hesbert’s string, denoted as ‘.1’, ‘.2’, and so forth. A practical tool, which involves relevant philological reasoning, is provided to help define the boundaries among chant identity, similarity, and mutual independence.<sup>13</sup>

The DIAMM database (<https://www.diamm.ac.uk/>) shares some similarities with CI, primarily due to the heightened textual authority achieved by the *de arte* polyphonic repertoire. DIAMM’s ontology actually includes a category named ‘Composition’, encompassing all instances of a musical

11. Examples of single-source editions are *The Florence Laudario*, ed. Wilson; *Italian Laude and Latin Unica in Ms. Capetown, Grey 3. B. 12*, ed. Cattin; and *Florence, BNC, Panciatichi 27*, ed. Filocamo. Separate transcriptions of different versions are given in DÜRRER, *Altitalienische Laudenmelodien* and *Laudario Giustiniano*, cur. Luisi.
12. This use of the terms ‘Item’ and ‘Work’ is drawn from the WEMI (Work, Expression, Manifestation, Item) entities developed in the frame of the FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records): see RIVA – LE BŒUF – ŽUMER, *IFLA*, especially at pp. 21-23, 27-28.
13. At <https://cantusindex.org/variants>.

Table 1.

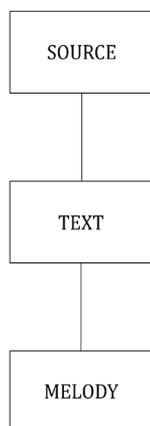
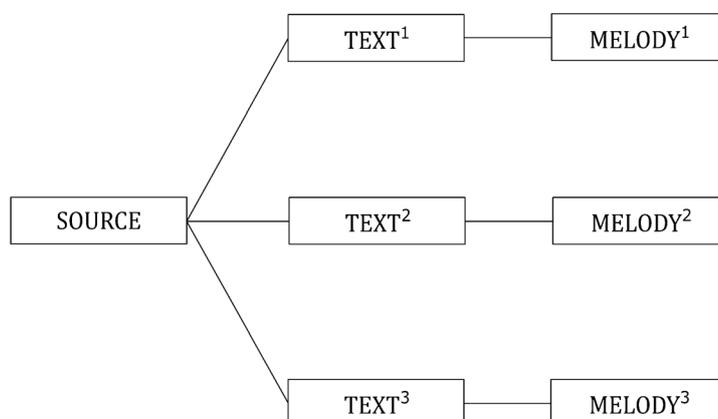


Table 2.



piece – that is, a Work – found in different sources. In contrast, RISM’s database (<https://rism.info/>) aligns with LAUDARE’s in that each occurrence in manuscript or print is assigned a unique identifier, known as the ‘RISM ID number’. Retrieving all instances of a specific piece is facilitated through querying textual and musical incipit similarities.

Unlike chant or mensural polyphony, the field of *lauda* studies has neither a preconceived conventional classification nor clear unifying criteria – at the level of textuality, authorship, or liturgical/devotional function – to collect *a priori* and easily all occurrences of a musical-poetic composition under a single label. Hence our suggestion is to sort through sources assigning a single identification to each instance of a *lauda* and establishing a one-to-one relationship with its accompanying melody.<sup>14</sup>

In LAUDARE’s workflow, poetic texts and melodies are codified by editors in XML using the TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) and the MEI (Music Encoding Initiative) schemes. Before doing so, manuscripts and prints undergo examination by both musicologists and philologists to gather basic information about their provenance, historical owners, and the original context in which they were copied and used. In our relational database, this information is codified in a table called ‘tblSource’, where each item is identified by the RISM siglum (in the case of manuscripts) or by a conventional printer-year key (in the case of printed editions). An identifier as an element of ‘tblText’ is assigned to each *lauda* attested in a source: ‘tblText’ is linked to an entity in ‘tblMelody’, a subset which stores the melodic information (Tables 1 and 2).

For instance, every occurrence of the above-mentioned polyphonic piece *O Iesu dolce* is accompanied by a unique identifier, even if all the occurrences are so strictly linked by textual similarity that they might – and should –

14. Notwithstanding some individual cases, such as Serafino Razzi’s anthology discussed below, which require a ‘one-to-many’ relationship between melody and text.

be considered the same *lauda* in different melodic guises. Although partly counterintuitive, such a thorough itemization of lauda sources – almost a pulverization of their information – guarantees the preservation of even the minutest characteristics of each occurrence. Also, this approach helps avoid any preconceived assessments regarding the philological or chronological priority of a given textual occurrence.

This choice aligns with a broader trend of utilizing the digital environment for collecting literary and musical texts in archives or ‘hypermedia’, rather than for creating critical editions.<sup>15</sup> Given its weak identity, studying *lauda* tradition through a digital archive might prove more advantageous than using the conventional tools of critical editing on paper. As suggested above, dissemination through orality made *lauda* transmission more susceptible to copyists’ innovations and adaptations, making it less suitable for reconstructing a rigid network of philological relationships among sources.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, *lauda* poetry and music are intricately intertwined, to the point that changes in musical form and taste over time influenced the textual form, often obscuring the possible dependence of one source on another.<sup>17</sup> In such a highly variable textual and musical corpus, the hypermedia structure may prove essential for recovering the shadowy *lauda* tradition, encouraging the analysis of ‘non-canonical’ aspects – those outside the spectrum of textual criticism – such as transmission through orality or composition via melodic matrix.<sup>18</sup> For example, a digital archive allows the users to access transcriptions of text and music together or separately; examine digital images of the sources first-hand; or make comparisons between textual occurrences evidently close or apparently distant from each other in terms of textual and musical style and form.

Another immediate consequence of this methodological choice is that one cannot easily transition from a purely horizontal disposition of information to a vertical, hierarchical one based on the more or less evident similarities between texts and melodies, i.e., those involving textual and melodic identities. Additionally, the database conceals more than one critical dimension of the historical object, including its known, suspected, or attributed

15. «In generale, dall’adozione dei linguaggi di codifica testuale risulta una maggiore attenzione alle funzioni di *rappresentazione* che di *interpretazione* [...], e un’enfasi sul fedele rispecchiamento della materialità dei documenti. [...] già a inizio Duemila, lo aveva rilevato con chiarezza Jerome McGann quando parlava delle edizioni digitali in termini di *hypermedia*, cioè archivi testuali che operano in una rete di piattaforme comunicanti [...]; le possibilità del mezzo digitale spingono verso la pubblicazione simultanea di molte, talora tutte le versioni del testo disponibili nella tradizione», from ZACCARELLO, *Filologia materiale*, p. 118 (see also MCGANN, *Radiant Textuality*, pp. 53-74). This tendency has been openly defended by digital editions advocates: PIERAZZO, *Il testo è morto*.
16. This in no way discredits the potential for reconstructing *lauda* philological traditions. Limitations to this application have already been discussed in § 1.
17. As in the instances highlighted by ZIMEI, *Forma vs performance*.
18. Some examples of ‘twin’ compositions made according to a shared melodic structural model are illustrated in ZIMEI, “*Contrafactio*” as a Tool.

authorship, its placement within a tradition, and its relationships with other textual and musical occurrences.<sup>19</sup> This might result in a homogenization of the resources and their alienation from historical context and interpretive community – a risk that other scientific endeavors, such as the ‘traditional’ critical edition, do not face, thanks to a long-time perfected method and a highly structured and commonly shared set of conventions.<sup>20</sup>

In the next paragraphs we will suggest practical solutions devised to help mitigate the homogenization of sources and occurrences in the database, allowing the retrieval of the historical dimension of each *lauda* Item, and highlighting its compositional and performative techniques, such as *contrafactio*.

### 3. The early *laudari* and *contrafactio*

The weak identity of the Italian *lauda* manifests itself also as an unstable association between text and melody, as centonization and *contrafactio* are the main compositional tools of the repertory. In the first two centuries, *contrafactio* was mainly created by fitting a new devotional text for a pre-existing *lauda* melody, although with some degree of flexibility. This is the case, for example, of *Altissima luce* and *Regina sovrana*, both preserved in Cort and BR18. The two *lauda* share the same tune, but – even in the same Cort source – they differ in the presence of small variants, testifying to the copyist’s interest in representing each of the pieces in its peculiar unicity (Example 2).

The two early *laudari*, Cort and BR18, are organized liturgically, i.e. they group pieces with the same destination – Marian, Christological, etc. As instruments for the celebration of a lay liturgy parallel to the official one, they need to supply texts and music for each devotional occasion in a way that mirrors liturgical manuscripts. Therefore, showing melodic similarities between *lauda* is not their concern, as it will be in later sources: rather, they

19. Due to the obvious principle of *recentiores non deteriores*, this feature cannot be inferred with certainty from the sources’ chronological assessment provided in tblSource. Another issue is philological authority, which is strictly connected to that of the occurrences’ chronology and provenance. Concerning authorship, it is telling that the ontology implied by the LAUDARE project does not involve attributes like ‘author’ or ‘title’, which normally represent the cornerstones of any descriptive model for cultural objects.
20. The paratexts, indexes, and apparati of a critical edition mirror – even if in a highly abstract, economic, and systematic way – the hypothetical reconstruction of the text’s tradition (sometimes even the phases of its genesis), reception, and reuse. If correctly deciphered, critical editions’ abbreviations and standardized ways of representing information (should) provide all the elements to penetrate texts’ history: «The business of textual criticism is in a sense to reverse this process, to follow back the threads of transmission», in REYNOLDS – WILSON, *Scribes and Scholars*, p. 207. See also SEGRE, *Testo*, pp. 316-318.

Example 2. Beginning of *Altissima luce* and *Regina sovrana* in Cort, ff. 17r and 24v.

a) Al-tis-si-ma lu-ce col gran-de splen-do-re, in voi dol-çe amo-re a-giam con-so-lan-ça.

b) Re-gi-na so-vra-na de gram pi-e - ta-de, in te, dol-çe madre, a-giam re-po-san-ça.

present pieces one after the other in an itemized way.<sup>21</sup> *Altissima luce* and *Regina sovrana* are both Marian, so they were placed in the same initial section dedicated to the Virgin.<sup>22</sup> Copying them next to each other could have suggested their relationship, but this is not the case, as both Cort and BR18 locate them quite far away from each other.<sup>23</sup>

This is also the case of *Co la madre del beato* and *Pastor principe beato*, which have nearly identical melodies, but were kept separate by the scribe of BR18.<sup>24</sup> In only one instance does BR18 place two *lauda* with melodic similarity one after the other: *Di tutto nostro core* (f. 58r) and *Apostolo beato* (f. 69v). The pairing – however – is only apparent: the pieces have only the *ripresa* in common, and a different melody for the *mutazioni*.

The analysis of the early *laudari* reveals how their internal organization obscures the presence of *contrafactio* in favor of other organizing criteria: its detection is left to an expert contemporary ear, or to the analysis of a modern musicologist.

#### 4. Strategies to describe *contrafactio*

In the database, emphasizing each occurrence of a *lauda* (the ‘Item’) individually, rather than subsuming them under a single identification (a ‘Work’), proves effective in representing the presence of *contrafactio* in the early sources, since it mirrors their itemized approach towards the phenomenon.

At the same time, a scholarly archive cannot overlook the need for a tool able to trace melodic and textual relationships among its entries. To address this issue, two conceptual links have been devised at the level of *lauda* occurrences – they will be displayed in the final visualization and allow the user to move from one item to the other. The first is a link between two *tblText* records indicating the textual ‘affinity’ with other cases of *lauda* in the database. The second is a link at the *tblMelody* level signaling the me-

21. On the similarities between *laudari* and liturgical books see ZIMEI, “*Tucti vanno ad una danza*”, pp. 316-317.

22. BARR, *The Monophonic Lauda*, p. 96.

23. In Cort, *Altissima luce* is on f. 17r and *Regina sovrana* at f. 24v. In BR18 they are on ff. 43r and 55v respectively.

24. At f. 30r and 63v respectively. See ZIINO, *Adattamenti musicali*, p. 564.

Table 3.

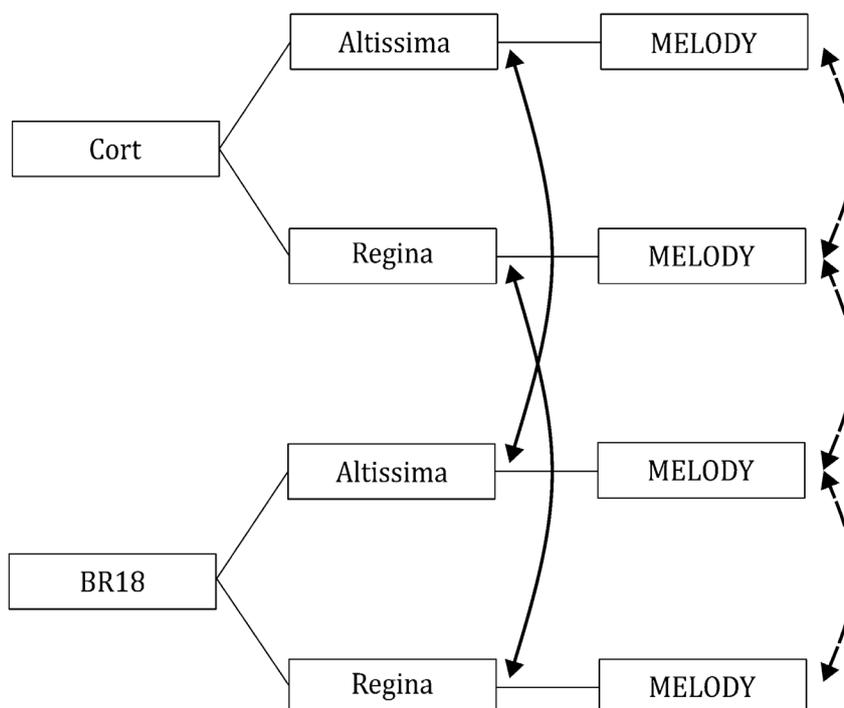
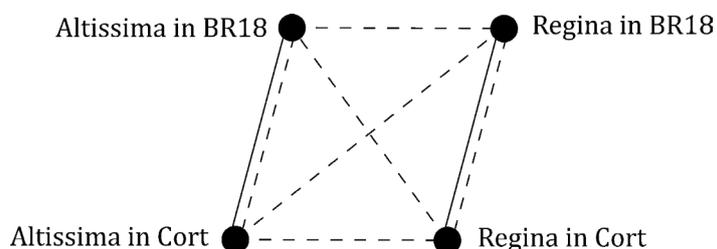


Table 4.



lodic ‘affinity’ between *lauda* tunes. In the diagrams (Tables 3 and 4), the continuous lines indicate textual affinity – in this case, the near-identity – between *Altissima luce* and *Regina sovrana* in Cort and BR18, while the dashed ones represent melodic affinity among all four musical instances due to *contrafactio*.

In LAUDARE’s conceptual framework, ‘affinity’ – a truly umbrella term – is used to define a number of melodic and textual similarities encompassing various degrees of resemblance. From the point of view of the poetic text, ele-

ments of affinity include the sharing of the incipit, metric structure, rhyming scheme or lexical proximity in different combinations; the similarities might encompass all these features, reaching almost complete identity. As for the music, ‘affinity’ considers the sharing of the musical incipit, significant intervallic sequences, melodic phrases (even in transposition), and the overall musical form. As with poems, melodies that appear absolutely identical fall, in our database, under the class of ‘affinity’, and they are still treated as two or more separate entries in order to preserve the itemization of the repertory.

Conceived this way, the concept of ‘affinity’ allows us to illustrate, for instance, the musical relationship between *Alta trinità beata* and *Sia laudato san Francesco* in Cort, which have their incipit in common, or the already-mentioned *Di tutto nostro core* and *Apostolo beato* in BR18, which share the same music only for the *ripresa*. A higher level of affinity can be found in *Amor dolçe sença pare* and *Laude novella sia cantata*, where the second piece is notated a fourth lower and shows minor melodic variants (Cort, ff. 117v-120 and 3v-5v, respectively). Additionally, this concept helps reveal less apparent resemblances arising from compositions in different forms, or from monodic and polyphonic works that utilize the same melodic materials.<sup>25</sup>

The relationships of textual and melodic affinity create a horizontal network that scholars can search for their specific purposes. Since the two links – for textual and melodic affinity – are usable independently, their differentiation is instrumental in indicating similarities among instances of *lauda*, particularly in cases of multiple settings of the same text. They also highlight the pattern of textual and melodic correspondence that may have influenced the process of composition and dissemination, while simultaneously avoiding the potential error of conflating these instances as a single entity.

## 5. The *cantasi come* repertory

In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the *contrafactio* technique evolved by including not only *lauda*, but also well-known secular songs. Once created, the new match was not usually fixed into a written unit of text and melody, as was the case of the early *laudari*, but identified by a rubric added into literary collections (*cantasi come*, i.e. ‘to be sung to the tune of’).<sup>26</sup> If early manuscripts obscured the melodic reuse by copying each *lauda* as a single item, the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century sources put *contrafactio* on full view. (See Figure 3).

25. The criterion of ‘affinity’ – still under development by the musicologists and philologists of the LAUDARE team – will be used later as a benchmark to evaluate a set of tools based on statistical analysis that are being set up by the computer scientists of the same project. If proven effective, these tools, using fine-tuned parameters, will be automatically applied to the *corpus* at a later stage.

26. The most comprehensive study on this repertory is WILSON, *Singing Poetry*, but one should also consider the pioneering contributions of CATTIN, *Musiche per le laude* and CATTIN, *I «cantasi come»*.

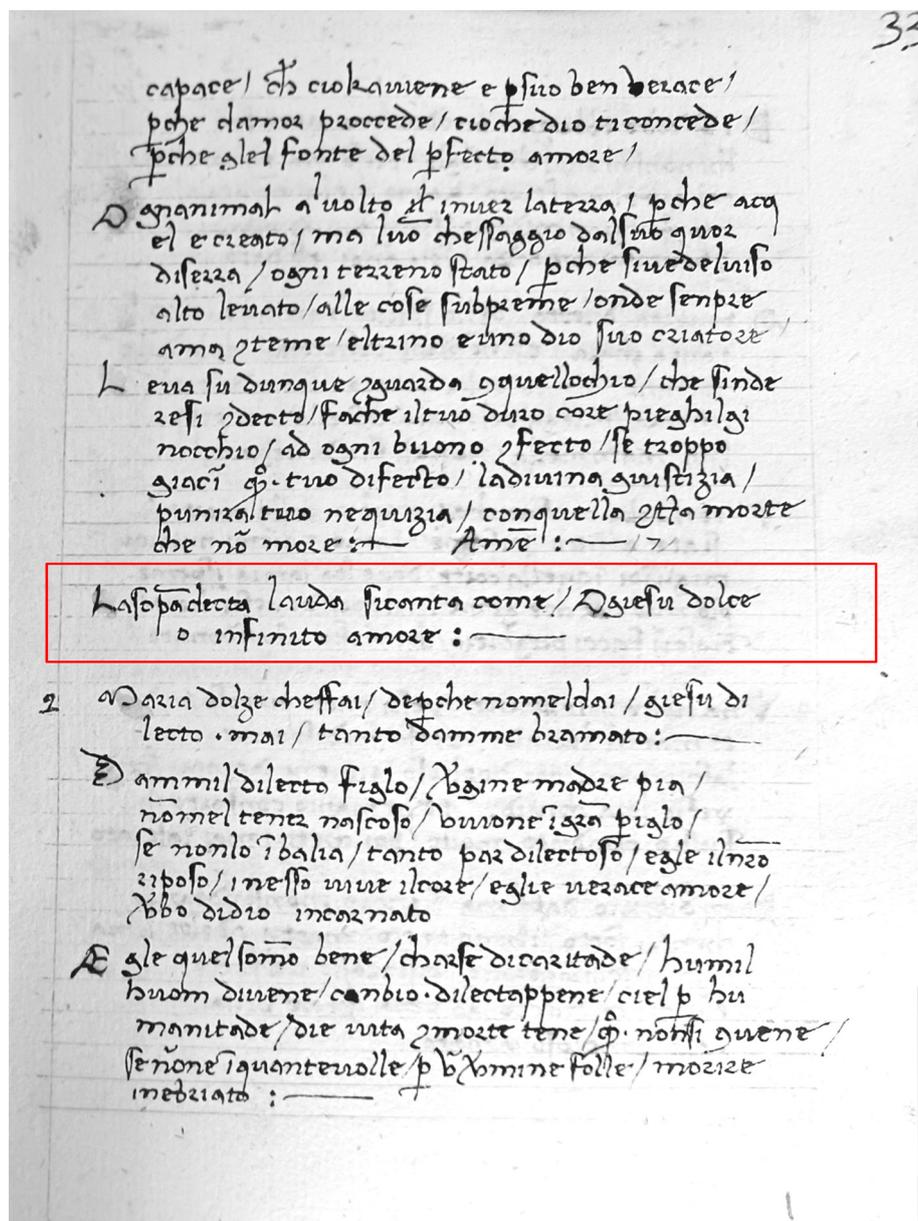


Figure 3. *Alma che cerchi pace fra la guerra* by Feo Belcari in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Magliabechiano VII 1083, f. 33r with the rubric «La sopradecta lauda si canta come O Giesù dolce o infinito amore» («The lauda written above is to be sung to the tune of O Giesù dolce o infinito amore»)

The *cantasi come* manuscripts are extremely economical, as they eliminate the need for musical notation, resembling more literary sources than musical ones. Eloquent examples are the 15<sup>th</sup>-century collections Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Mgl. VII 690 (with texts by Feo Belcari, hereafter

M690) and Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana, Ms. Chigi L. VII. 266 (hereafter Ch266), which contains 708 texts and more than 300 *cantasi come* rubrics.<sup>27</sup>

A comparison between *contrafacta* and their models reveals various degrees of similarity and derivation. In certain instances, they mirror the vocabulary and metrical structure of the original: the secular madrigal *Nel mezzo già del mar la navicella* becomes the Passion text *Nel mezzo a duo ladron post'una stella*, which can be easily adapted to the same tune of its model.<sup>28</sup> In other cases, the distance between original and *contrafactum* is more significant: Leonardo Giustinian's *Donna questi lamenti* is the *cantasi come* for texts such as *Anima benedetta* and *Dolce madre Maria*.<sup>29</sup>

The association between *lauda* and their melodic models is not always consistent, since different sources indicate different *cantasi come*, nor is it stable in time, as they can be easily added and/or changed at different moments of the life of a source.<sup>30</sup> The result is an extremely fluid situation, with multiple melodies for a single poetic text and multiple texts associated with a single melody.

A unique case of a *cantasi come* source is the *Libro Primo delle Laudi Spirituali da diversi eccellentissimi e divoti autori, antichi e moderni composte*, collected by the Dominican Serafino Razzi and printed in Venice in 1563.<sup>31</sup> Razzi's print privileges the music over the text as an organizing criterion, making the *contrafactum* technique particularly evident. The book is organized around a series of melodies for one, two, three, and four voices: each tune is followed by several texts, which can be sung on the same tune as suggested by the rubric: «tutte le seguenti si cantano sulla medesima aria» («all the following [*lauda*] are to be performed on the same tune»). Compared to the *cantasi come*, this source has the advantage of providing both texts and melodies in the same place, maintaining their flexible association.<sup>32</sup> (See Figure 4) It also represents the later Renaissance emphasis on collecting and normalizing a repertory which did not originally aspire to any kind of standard.

In conclusion, analyzing the treatment of *contrafactio* through *lauda* sources reveals important differences. The early *laudari* eschew it in the interest of an itemized layout, but *cantasi come* manuscripts and Razzi's print make it their main transmission mechanism. With this last kind of source, the flexibility of the individually-written *lauda* is lost, and the actual

27. WILSON, *Singing Poetry*, p. 44. On Ch266's dating see *ibid.* Others are Florence, Riccardiana 1764, 2224, and 2871 (see PERSICO, *Giustinian*).

28. PERSICO, *Forme di 'imitazione' sacchettiana*. *Nel mezzo già del mar la navicella* has text by Franco Sacchetti and music by Niccolò del Preposto.

29. WILSON, *Transferring Tunes and Adjusting Lines*, p. 558.

30. For example, in the manuscript Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale, Fondo Nazionale II VII 4 all the *cantasi come* rubrics are added by a different hand.

31. On Razzi's print see LUISI, *Presenze frottolistiche*; WILSON, *Singing Poetry*, pp. 168-187; MACEY, *Some New Contrafacta*; PRIZER, *Laude di popolo*.

32. In his preface to Razzi's edition, the printer Filippo Giunta defines the *cantasi come* sources «a silly way» («una sciocca maniera») to present the pieces, which the book is meant to overcome. See LUISI, *Presenze frottolistiche*, p. 488.

Figure 4. In Razzi 1563, f. 51, the melody of *Vengh'ogni core ardente* with the rubric: «tutte le seguenti si cantano nella medesima aria» («all the following [lauda] are to be performed to the same tune»). The melody is followed by several texts.

match between the melody and the new text happens only in performance. In Razzi's book, the simultaneous presence of text and music can be somewhat misleading, as the text underlay is flawless only in the notated example; both historical and contemporary users might find it necessary to make minimal adjustments to align the melody with multiple poetic texts.

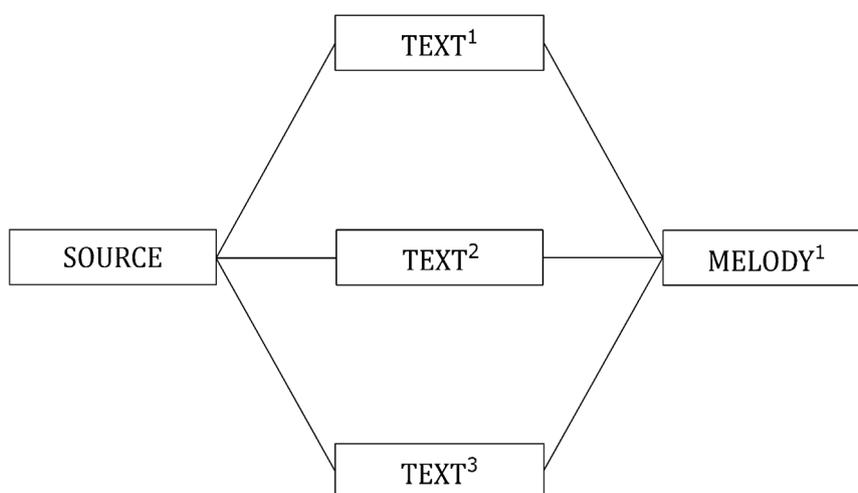
## 6. Processing *cantasi come*

Essential differences among *cantasi come* sources are mirrored in the database.<sup>33</sup> The most straightforward scenario is represented by Razzi's late printed anthology. In this case, the solution is to establish a one-to-many relationship between melody and texts, in accordance with the structure outlined by the book himself. Within LAUDARE's workflow, sources such as Razzi 1563 undergo analysis and description, leveraging its capability to associate a single melody with multiple occurrences of text (see Table 5).

The case of *cantasi come* found in textual sources such as M690 and Ch266 is more intricate. Here, the rubric conveys information pointing to a resource beyond the physical and conceptual confines of the source under examination – this external resource residing in the written or unwritten memory of the auditory and/or performing community, often unknown and undetectable.

33. Blake Wilson has already provided a database related to *cantasi come* sources, which enhances the indexes of WILSON, *Singing Poetry*. Despite some differences, this tool served as an important starting point for the development of the LAUDARE database.

Table 5.



As suggested before, there are two kinds of *cantasi come*: one that refers to another lauda (1), and one that points to a secular song (2).

1. The *cantasi come* is associated with another *lauda*. In this case, the melodic resource or Work may or may not be stored in the database as one or more Items. In either case, the *lauda* text is linked to all the Items in the database that potentially match the reference in the rubric.
2. The *cantasi come* is associated with a secular song. In this instance, the Work is necessarily an external resource, which needs to be provided in another table that we call ‘tblExternalMelody’. This transcription is derived either from a critical edition or, in the absence of such an edition, from an authoritative manuscript. However, it is left to the responsibility of the user to ascertain how the melody aligns with the formal and metrical requirements of the poetic text.

The conceptual model below (Table 6) illustrates the comprehensive layout of the database. In the first scenario, the lauda with *cantasi come* rubric is linked to other elements of the tblText through the ‘collector’ (more details below). In the second scenario, it connects instead to the melodic resource stored in tblExternalMelody (here abbreviated ‘Ext\_Mel’).

The intended function of the collector requires additional explanation. To represent the distinctive system of the *cantasi come* tradition, the sources’ rubrics necessitate processing by extracting and synthesizing their information. The processed information can then be utilized to connect the case of a given *lauda* to all the melodic resources potentially implied by the rubric. Unlike Razzi’s paratexts, *cantasi come* suggestions do not in fact refer to a specific Item of a musical work, but to the Work itself.<sup>34</sup> For

34. While defining a Work in *lauda* studies is challenging from our etic perspective, the historical actors’ emic view suggests that this operation might have been less problematic for them.

Table 6.

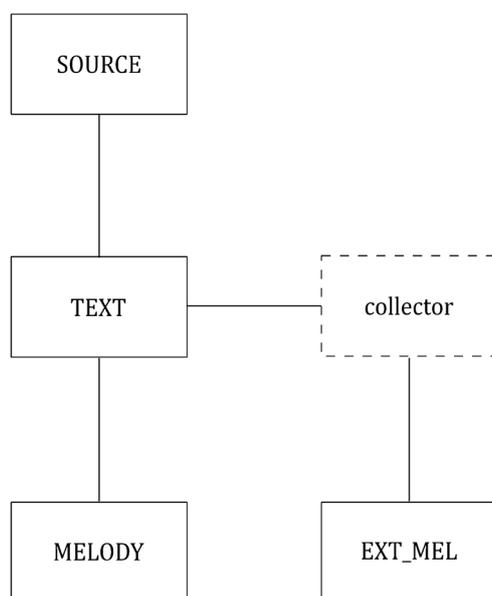
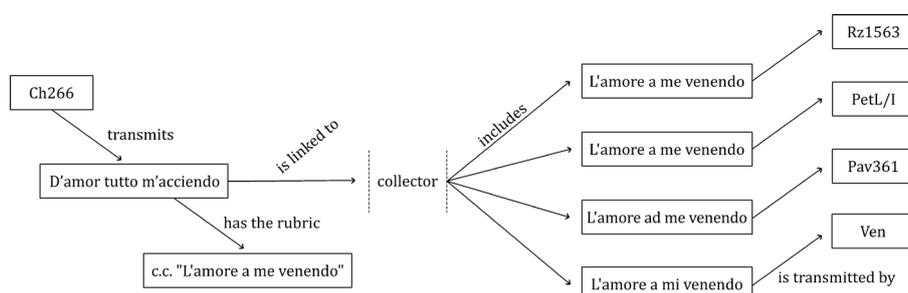


Table 7.



example: *D'amor tutto m'acciando* is linked in Ch266 to the *lauda L'amore a me venendo*. Since *L'amore a me venendo* is a popular Work attested with several melodies, it is impossible to link it to a single notated Item.<sup>35</sup> The introduction of the collector has the function of filtering all the *lauda* texts that could meet the informational requirements of the rubric and channeling them into a single view. This task is performed by creating a standard incipit/title that groups more Items in *tblText* and *tblExternalMelody*. Such standard incipits/titles, like the collector itself, remain unseen by users and do not create *lauda* entities in a philological sense (Table 7).<sup>36</sup>

35. On the occurrences and sources of *L'amore a me venendo* see *Laudario Giustiniano*, cur. Luisi, vol. 2, pp. 54-57.

36. In the table, the following abbreviations are used: Rz1563 = Serafino Razzi, *Libro Primo*

Our envisioned solution aids in managing cases where the rubric mentions the vernacular title of the tune, as is particularly evident in instances of *canti carnascialeschi* (*Canzona del Gufo*, *Canzona dei Profumi*, *Canzona delle Cicale*, etc.),<sup>37</sup> or when dealing with devotional or secular models with varying incipits across different sources. The examples are almost infinite in number. Returning to *L'amore a me venendo* in Tab. 7, Ven's reading «L'amore a mi venendo» contrasts with Pav361 that reads «L'amore ad me venendo», and with all the other sources, which unanimously agree on «L'amore a me venendo». Ms. Cape Town, The South African Library, Grey 3. b. 12 transmits the lauda *Quando, Signor Jesu* («Quando, Signor Jesù, | serò may grato e cognoscente | del eccellente don che dato m'hay?»), also found, despite several meaningful textual and musical alterations, in Razzi's print as *Signor Giesù, quando* («Signor Giesù, quando | sarò io mai grat' e riconoscente | dell'eccellente don che dato m'hai»).<sup>38</sup>

While some of these examples may seem trivial, we should be aware that in processing data systematically, even the slightest variation could result in an irreparable loss of information. The collector in the LAUDARE database is specifically designed to enable the retrieval of Items and their variant readings without conflating them into *lauda* identities and standard texts, respectively.

## 8. Conclusions

Basing the construction of a database on a detailed analysis of the sources proves effective in many ways. The organization of Razzi's print around tunes associated with several texts serves as a model for the one-to-many relationship of multiple *lauda* to a single melody. The different types of *cantasi come* are mirrored in the distinct procedures controlling the flow of information, while the need for an external resource implicit in these sources is reflected in the creation of the `tblExternalMelody`, which contains the melodies of the secular models. Finally, the ambiguity of some *cantasi come* rubrics moved us to design a tool – the collector – which allows capturing all the possible matches for a given association.

On a broader scale, the study of the *lauda* tradition has made the main attribute of the genre evident: the lack of a strong philological identity. The solution to this impasse was also found in the sources, since the itemization present in the early *laudari* suggested a similar approach.

*delle Laudi Spirituali*, in Venetia, ad instantia de Giunti di Firenze, 1563; PetL/I = *Laudes libro primo*, Venetiis, per Octavianum Petrutium Forosemproniensem, 1508; Pav361 = Pavia, Biblioteca Universitaria, Aldini 361; Ven = Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, it. IX 145.

37. The latter, for instance, is the well-known *canto* by Lorenzo de' Medici *Donne, siam, come vedete*.

38. All the examples are drawn from *Laudario Giustiniano*, cur. Luisi, vol. 2, pp. 54-119.

Yet this is just one of the functions performed by the LAUDARE database. With its conceptual frameworks and practical tools, it offers a unique opportunity to explore the two extremes of the spectrum of the source analysis. The database can faithfully represent each source in its appearance as well as interpret its intended use. On one hand, it meticulously records all explicitly transmitted information, as exemplified by the two *lauda* in Cort or BR18 (*Altissima luce* and *Regina sovrana*) with their individual texts and melodies. On the other, it partially bridges the gap between implicit information (the *cantasi come*) and its integration by the original user; moreover, it highlights the traces of compositional and mnemonic devices (particularly *contrafactio*).

If a database seems an adequate response to some of the issues of the genre, it still leaves unaddressed some important questions concerning the functional interrelationship between *lauda* sources and their individual occurrences. Moreover, the risk of inducing homogenization and detachment from historical context through detailed data remains ever-present. The implementation of a network, however, does not mean to substitute for a critical evaluation of *lauda* transmission. Rather, this fundamental task is shifted to a subsequent stage of data analysis. To this end, the database will be equipped with appropriate tools: search functions allowing the retrieval of textual and melodic patterns; geo-localization of sources and religious institutions; alphabetical indices of *lauda*, *cantasi come* rubrics, authors, copyists, and liturgical destinations. This will allow studies of the repertory – by the LAUDARE team as well as by all the database users – which will focus on reconstructing the complex historical connections among texts, sources, actors, and their milieux. The database will be just a first step towards further, productive research on the Italian *lauda*.

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