

55. Beata viscera

Conductus-motet Anonymous (English, late 13th century)

Beat

(Triplum) Be, - - - - -

(Duplum) Be, - - - - -

(Tenor) Be, - - - - -

5

10

15

20

25

Be - a - ta vi - sce - ra Ma - ri - ae vir - gi - nis, quae

Be - a - ta vi - sce - ra Ma - ri - ae vir - gi - nis, quae

Be - a - ta vi - sce - ra Ma - ri - ae vir - gi - nis, quae

fru - ctu gra - vi - da ae - ter - ni ger - mi - nis in vi - tae po - tu -

fru - ctu gra - vi - da ae - ter - ni ger - mi - nis in vi - tae po - tu -

fru - ctu gra - vi - da ae - ter - ni ger - mi - nis in vi - tae po - tu -

lo pro - pi - nat pro - no - bis et no - stro vi - ti - o - po - tum dul -

lo pro - pi - nat pro - no - bis et no - stro vi - ti - o - po - tum dul -

lo pro - pi - nat pro - no - bis et no - stro vi - ti - o - po - tum dul -

ce di - nis.

ce di - nis.

ce di - nis.

Worc (91).

The text of this composition from the voluminous though badly damaged source known as the 'Worcester fragments' is a trope of the communion *Beata viscera*, whose plainsong is ornamented in the lowest part. The piece is something of a hybrid, motet-like in its plainsong basis and yet conductus-like in its score notation and note-against-note part writing. The presence of caudae at the beginning and end is another link with the true conductus repertory. The piece includes many chains of 6/3 chords which produce a typically English sonority and richness of texture. This

kind of parallel writing became a feature of the 14th-century English genre known as the *cantilena*, and it may have influenced the creation of the French technique of *fauxbourdon* (see No. 95) in the early 15th century.

TRANSLATION

Blessed be the womb of the Virgin Mary, which, pregnant with the fruit of the eternal seed, offers a drink of sweetness in the cup of life for us and for our sin.

'pro nobis et nostro vitio potum' is an editorial substitute for the illegible original text.