



Compositiones Variarum

A Late 8th Century Artists' Technical Treatise

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- An academic insight into one of the oldest recipe books in the world
- Discover the relevance of this manuscript's physical form to its medieval audience

Compositiones Variarum is the earliest surviving example of medieval artisanal recipes. Translated into Latin from a Hellenistic source and copied at Lucca, it is thought to preserve technical knowledge extant in Tuscany from around 800 CE, and to have offered practical assistance to the Lucca scriptorium. Studies of the text have examined its historical and liturgical contents; however, its intriguing physical and material features have largely been ignored. As medieval manuscript culture conveyed meaning through textual content and physical object, both should be considered equally. This new publication is among the first to take such a holistic approach. The significance of the *Compositiones Variarum* becomes apparent when its context is reconstructed, using evidence supplied by numerous other texts. An investigation of functional relationships – production, uses, practices and preservation: in short, what the object's materiality represents – reveals the *Compositiones Variarum* as a social product that can only be approached from a historicist's critical perspective. *Compositiones Variarum* situates this seminal text within the socio-cultural history of medieval knowledge and power.