

Valerius Maximus' exempla collection, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, has for a long time stayed out of focus of modern literary science. Viewed rather as a practical handbook for orators, it had earned criticism for its allegedly low literary value, especially in the first half of the 20th century. Although this view was later revised at least to some extent, and Valerius was admitted to have literary ambitions in so far that his work was characterized as an original literary achievement of an author who in his collection presented a summary of moral values and standards of his time, the interest in his work has stayed rather fragmented, with researchers preferring to analyze only its specific aspects (such as ethics, religion, historical reflection, etc.). This thesis aims for a comprehensive view of Valerius' collection as a whole against the analysis of theoretical interpretation of exemplum as preserved within the Roman theoretical rhetorical writings. The interpretation is performed by the analysis of the whole, examining the way the entire collection is arranged, through the description of the structure and division of individual chapters, down to the level of the core structural unit, the exemplum. It emphasizes information related to the work's focus or to the inclusion of specific topics that Valerius himself presents in the introductory sections and other incorporated comments. Intertextual method, chosen to scrutinize Valerius' exemplum, allows revealing its special and specific features through comparison with variant versions of identical themes or stories. The main objective of this thesis is to contribute to the debate on the nature of Valerius' collection on the basis of the above mentioned complex analysis, and to find convincing arguments to answer the question of whether and to what extent we should consider it just a utilitarian handbook for orators on one side, or a textbook of morality for the educated Romans on the other.