**1. The moralistic purpose:** ‘[…] Perhaps, then, it is no bad thing to include in our examples of Lives one or two pairs of those who have behaved recklessly or have become conspicuous for evil in positions of power or in great affairs. Of course, this is not to vary my writing for reasons of pleasure, or to divert my readers; it is more in the manner of Ismenias the Theban, who would show his pupils both good and bad flute players, and say “*That* is how you should play”, and “*That* is how you should not”… So it seems to me that we will be more enthusiastic in our admiration and imitation of good lives if we examine bad and blameworthy lives as well. This book will tell of Demetrius Poliorcetes and the commander A., men who showed with particular clarity the truth of Plato’s remark that great natures produce great vices as well as virtues.’ (*Dtr*. 1.4-7) (Plutarch cited by Pelling (a) 11)

2. **Moral exemplars**: “By associating Demetrios and Antony with this paradigm, Plutarch not only implies their inherent greatness but also suggest a less negative way of viewing their vice. Be that as it may, they are, still, as Plutarch himself implies in the prologue to the *Demetrios-Antony*, to be viewed as bad, as examples of ‘vice’ (*κακια*). […] Demetrios and Antony are, then, in Plutarch’s view, evil men, examples of vice. But they are good men gone wrong, not innately evil. They are men of great natural potential, but whose potential is perverted by their environment and by their own weaknesses.” (Duff 61)

3. **Mirrors and morality**: For a discussion on the image of the mirror in Plutarch’s narratives as a means for the improvement of the reader’s moral behavior see Phillip Stadter’s *The Rhetoric of Virtue in Plutarch’s Lives* in L. V. Stockt. 2000.*Rhetorical Theory and Praxis in Plutarch: Acta of the IVth International Congress of the International Plutarch Society, Leuven, July 3-6, 1996*. Leuven: Namur: Peeters; Société des Etudes Classiques, pp. 493-455.

4. **Moralistic mimesis**: In analyzing Plutarch’s prologue of the Pericles, Tim Duff has argued: “It seems, then, that in the Perikles prologue Plutarch is presenting the good, working through or consisting in the Lives, as having an effect on readers similarto that of the gods in moments of divine intervention. The reader’s powers to make choices are not taken away; rahter the Lives provide an impulse, a beginning, a conception, to reasoned moral choice leading to action.” (40) He further adds: “ [...] the goal of Plutarch’s work is not simply, or not only, ‘vivid representation’ (mimesis); it is primarily the improvement of the character of the reader, which is attained, as we have seen, trhough ‘imitation’ (another sort of mimesis).” (Duff 41)

5. **More on Plutarch’s moralism**: Pelling (a) 12. For the moralistic character of Plutarch’s biographical project see the standards studies of Christopher Pelling in the *Introduction* to his 1988 edition of the*Life of Antony*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-47; and *The Moralism of Plutarch’s Lives* in Pelling 2002. *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies*. Classical Press of Wales, pp. 237 – 251. See also Tim Duff, 1999.*Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice*. Oxford.

6. **Antony’s military prowess**: “Nevertheless, on his return from Spain Caesar ignored the charges against Antony and was perfectly right to do so, since in war he found him energetic, courageous, and a natural leader.” (*Ant*. 7) […] Many battles took place, one after another, and Antony distinguished himself in all of them. […] Caesar made no secret of his opinion o Antony: when the final battle at Pharsalus was imminent […] he put Antony in charge of the left wing, on the ground that he was the best tactician apart from himself. After the victory Caesar was made dictator and went off after Pompey, but he chose Antony as his cavalry commander and sent him to Rome.” (*Ant*. 8)

7. **Good kid with bad companies**: “[…] In fact, they intensely disliked him, and were disgusted by his ill-timed bouts of drunkenness, his oppressive extravagance, his cavorting with women, and the way he spent the days asleep or wandering around in a daze with a hangover, and the nights at parties and shows, and amusing himself at the wedding of actors and clowns. At any rate, it is said that he was a guest at the wedding of the actor Hippias, where he drank all night long, and the next morning, when the people of Rome summoned him to the forum, he presented himself while he was still suffering from over-indulgence and vomited into the cloak one of his friends held out for him. Then there were the actor Sergius, who had a very great deal of influence over him, and Cytheris, a woman from the same school, of whom he was fond; he even used to take her around with him on a litter when he visited various cities […].” (*Ant*. 9)

8. **Fulvia, mentor of Cleopatra**: “He married Fulvia, the former wife of the popular leader Clodius. Now, Fulvia was a woman who cared nothing for spinning or housework, and was not interested in having power over a husband who was just a private citizen, but wanted to rule a ruler and command a commander —and subsequently Cleopatra owed

Fulvia the fee for teaching Antony to submit to a woman, since she took him over after he had been tamed and trained from the outset to obey women.” (*Ant*. 10)

9. **Antony, the conspirator**: “The most plausible pretext for Brutus and Cassius to act was in fact given them accidentally by Antony.” (*Ant*. 12)

10. **Chiaroscuro**: Pelling also remarks Plutarch’s exaggeration in his depiction of Antony’s character: “Good qualities and bad are both painted in the firmest lines: both are indeed exaggerated to sharpen the contrast, a crude *chiaroscuro* technique.” Pelling (a) 13. For a thorough discussion on how Plutarch composed his biographies, including the *Life of Antony*, see also Pelling, *Plutarch’s Method of Work in the Roman Lives*, in *Plutarch and History*, pp. 1-44.

11. **Fabrication**: Pelling considers the whole episode an imaginary fabrication that does not fit well within the narrative due to Plutarch’s merging of two different sources (Cicero and Pollio). (Pelling (a) 147-8)

12. ***“imaginative inference”***: “Trebonius sounding of A. at Narbo (13n.) is an especially clear case. A. now shares a tent with Trebonius, who broaches the subject ‘delicately and cautiously’; A. neither joins the plot nor reveals it to C. None of this is Cic., and it is surely P.’s *imaginative inference* (my emphasis). Indeed the whole context is suspect. It is just the Ides, and the conspirators are wondering whether to approach A.: Trebonius tells them the story to dissuade them. That is *fiction, and highly implausible* (my emphasis): it is a poor piece of narrative, too, but the best peg P. could find to include the Narbo story (13n.) He makes up the detail to ‘fabricate a context’ to include A.’s foreknowledge of the plot.” (Pelling (a) 34)

13. **Cicero’s invective**: Plutarch is not the only one that engages in such invention. Cicero, for instance, in his *Philippic II*, accuses Antony not only of being responsible for the Civil War because Caesar invaded Italy using as a pretext the Senate’s reaction to Antony’s veto (*Philippic* II, 53), but also for plotting Caesar’s death and again alludes to the Narbo episode: “For everyone knows that you and Gaius Trebonius plotted to kill him [Caesar] at Narbo; and your involvement in that plot is the reason why Trebonius, as we saw, drew you to one side while Caesar was being killed.” (*Phillippic* II, 34) It is evident that Cicero’s accusations are part of a programme to politically annihilate Antony; consequently, his *Philippic II* is not really credible. Both Plutarch and Cicero exaggerate the reality to have it serve their respective purposes or agendas. In both accounts Antony is the villain who betrayed his friend Caesar by suggesting that Caesar wanted to become a king and by failing to warn him about the conspiracy against him.

14. **Manipulation of source-materials**: Pelling (b) 154, 156. For a full account on the different devices used by Plutarch to arrange his narrative (“conflation of similar items”, “chronological compression”, “chronological displacement”, “transfer of one item from a character to another”, and “fabrication of a context”, Pelling (b) 91-95, and how it departs from the historical sources see Pelling’s *Plutarch’s Adaptation of his Source-Material* and *Truth and Fiction in Plutarch’s Lives*. Pelling himself offers an assessment of how the Plutarchan narrator compose the life of Antony: “Circumstantial detail can also be added. A. vomiting on the tribunal (9.6), his unexpected night-time return to Fulvia (10.8-9), the squabbles with Dolabella (11.3) —all are elaborated with narrative detail (nn.) which Plutarch has surely made up. Trebonius’ sounding of A. at Narbo (13n.) is an especially clear case. A. now shares a tent with Trebonius, who broaches the subject ‘delicately and cautiously’; A. neither joins the plot nor reveals it to C. None of this is in Cic., and it is surely P.’s imaginative inference. Indeed, its whole context is suspect. It is just before the Ides, and the conspirators are wondering whether to approach A.: Trebonius tells them the story to dissuade them. That is fiction, and highly implausible: it is a poor piece of narrative, too, but the best peg P. could find to include the Narbo story (13n.). He makes up the detail to ‘fabricate a context’ to include A.’s foreknowledge of the plot. P.’s readiness to manipulate his source-material can be seen elsewhere. Stories can be moved to a different context, and even transferred from one person to another (5.6-7n.); complex detail is readily simplified —for instance, several events may be conflated into one (3.2, 10.7-10, 12.7, 72 nn.); A.’s role may be exaggerated (3, 5.10, 8.2, 14.1-4nn.), as may Octavia’s (31.2n). Embarrassing facts may be ignored: for instance, P. suppresses his knowledge that A. had fought in the last stages of the Gallic War, for he wants to pretend that Curio led over his susceptible friend to C.’s side (5-8n.). Exaggeration can sharpen contrasts to a crude *chiaroscuro*. Details can be fabricated: the precise nature of A.’s excesses, for instance (9.5-9, 21.3nn.) or the methods of the flatterers (24.9-12n.), or the course of a battle (65-6n.) or a campaign —he even seems to make up a major river (48.6, 49.2 nn.) and a range of hills (76.1-3n.) which do not exist. He often borrows characteristics from familiar stereotypes. […] Not much of this will have appeared in P.’s sources. What did P. think he was doing when he rewrote his source-material in this way? Would he have freely admitted that he was sacrificing the truth? Or would he have felt that he was *reconstructing* reality, arriving intuitively at a picture which simply *must* have been true? It is probably a little of both.” (Pelling (a) 34-35)

15. **Aristotle on tragedy**: “Tragedy is a representation of a serious, complete action which has magnitude, in embellished speech, with each of its elements [used] separately in the [various] parts [of the play]; [represented] by people acting and not by narration; accomplishing by means of pity and terror the catharsis of such emotions.” (*Poetics* 4.1449b24-31)

16. **Poetry (tragedy) is more philosophical and serious than history:** “It is also obvious from what we have said that it is the function of a poet to relate not things that have happened, but things that may happen, i. e., that are possible in accordance with probability and necessity. For the historian and the poet do not differ according to whether they write in verse or without verse —the writings of Herodotus could be put into verse, but they would be no less a sort of history in verse than they are without verses. But the difference is that the former relates things that have happened, the latter things that may happen. For this reason poetry is a more philosophical and more serious thing than history; poetry tends to speak of universals, history of particulars. A universal is the sort of thing that a certain kind of person may well say or do in accordance with probability or necessity—this is what poetry aims at, although it assigns names [to the people]. A particular is what Alcibiades did or what he suffered.” (*Poetics*, 9.1451b1-10)

17. **Plato banishes fiction**: “The tragic poet in the Republic, however, also fails this test of truth. He not only represents inferior objects, but he represents them badly, imitating their aparent rather than their true natures (596E). Only copying, as he does, the work of another crafstman and not the object itself, the mimetic artist creates a product far removed from reality, an imitation of an imitation. In this lies his error qua artist. His inability to know and represent the object as it truly exists disqualifies his product, on epistemological grounds, as an instrument of knowledge.” (Eden 31-32)

18. **Aristotelian fiction**: “fiction for Aristotle is not mimesis in the usual Platonic sense —a slavish copy of reality according to its readily perceptible details. On the contrary, it is a preeminently rational construct designed specifically to bring the particularity of human experience under general consideration by constructing a logical framework, with the syllogism as model, in which the action imitated undergoes both analysis and qualification through an investigation of its causes. By doing so, fiction like equity renders the individuality of experience more demonstrable and therefore more knowable. Under the best circumstances, then, the spectator at a play leaves the theater with a better understanding of the nature of human events.” (Eden 54)

19. **Lives, not histories**: “for it is not histories we are writing, but Lives. Nor is it always the most famous actions which reveal a man’s good or bad qualities: a clearer insight into a man’s character is often given by a small matter, a word or a jest, than by engagements where thousands die, or by the greatest of pitched battles, or by the sieges of cities.” (*Alex*. 1.1-2), cited by Pelling a 10-11.

20. **Moral truth**: Pelling (a) 11-12. On the concept of “moral truth”, Pelling (b) 239 has argued: “This distinction between ‘expository’ and ‘exploratory’ moralism is one to which we will return, though it may by then appear a little rough. The same is true of a further distinction, that between ‘protreptic’ and ‘descriptive’ moralism, with ‘protreptic’ and ‘descriptive’ seeking to guide conduct, ‘descriptive’ being more concerned to point truths about human behavior and shared human experience. Such ‘descriptive’ moralism is suggested by such formulations as *Cimon* 2.5, where Plutarch includes bad qualities ‘as if in shame at human nature, if it produces no character who is purely good or of unqualified virtue’. That may not give Plutarch’s audience any firm guidance on how to behave, but it still points a moral truth of the human condition, just as it may be a human truth that men as great as Alexander or Pompey or Antony may be fragile in different ways.”

**Works Cited**

Duff, Tim. 1999.*Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press.

Eden, Kathy. 1986.*Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Janko. Richard. 1987.  *Poetics with the Tractatus Coislinianus. A Hypothetical reconstruction of Poetics II*. *The Fragments of the On poets*; translated with notes by Richard Janko. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co.

Pelling. 1988(a). *Life of Antony*. Edited by C.B.R. Pelling. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

———2002(b). *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies*. Swansea: Oakville, CT: Classical Press of Wales; Distributor in the U.S.A., D. Brown Book Co.

Stadter, Philip A. and Robin Waterfield. 1999. *Roman Lives. A Selection of Eight Roman Lives*. Oxford University Press.