# In Search of Truth in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies

## New Approaches to a Philosophical and Rhetorical Novel of Late Antiquity

Edited by

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# From the Dark Platonic Cave to the Vision of Beauty and the Act of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ: The *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* as a Late Antique Philosophical Narrative[1]

Benjamin M. J. De Vos

The *Pseudo-Clementine Homilistic* narrative, a Christian novel from third/fourth-century Syria, is presented as the ego-narration of Clement of Rome, preceded by three introductory writings.[2] In the ego-narration, Clement-narrator reflects on his time as Peter's student and on the knowledge he gained during his search for truth. From the beginning, Clement sums up several existential questions about life after death and the (in)finite existence of the world. During his quest for answers, he considers the information received from the senses and the intellect. What is true, what is not? He visits philosophical schools in order to hear several theories about the (im)mortality of the soul and he conceives the plan to see Egyptian magicians in order to witness their calling up of souls, also called necromancy. After some rumours about an itinerant preacher in Judea, he even decides to visit and see that man with his own eyes before giving credence to these rumours. However, the emphasis on visual sensory knowledge seems to fade away since Clement-character eventually meets Barnabas and becomes a follower of Peter's, who introduces Clement to the so-called oral teachings of the 'True Prophet' Jesus. Various explanations to his disciples follow this introduction, as well as long disputes with his arch-enemy in the story, Simon Magus.

The discourse of the spoken word (disputes, dialogue, expositions, morning lessons) strongly determines the narrative. Clement, who first wants to see and believe with his own eyes, subsequently believes the words of Peter (and the True Prophet). In this sense, the spoken word is presented as the ideal medium of transmission of truth. Nicole Kelley has already pointed out this emphasis

[1] I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. dr. Danny Praet (Ghent University), co-supervisor Prof. dr. Koen De Temmerman (Ghent University), as well as the participants of the conference for their valuable comments on my previous draft and the stimulating discussions during the conference. I also wish to thank Daniel De Coen for correcting my English, remaining mistakes are mine.

[2] A methodological note is needed here. We have to be aware of the distinction between two 'Clements': Clement who is telling his life story (I will call him Clement-narrator) and the younger Clement who is a character in the life story told by Clement-narrator (I will call him Clement-character). Clement-narrator is an overt, homodiegetic narrative voice of his own story.

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on hearing and the spoken discourse (as preferred to visual perception) and connects this with the late antique, philosophical master-disciple relationship as explained by Pierre Hadot.[3] This downgraded visual aspect within the narrative seems to be related to the less prominent visual aesthetics of the narrative itself. Meinolf Vielberg and Beate Klein noted that the *Pseudo-Clementine* literature literally offers a more 'black and white' world view in which the themes of darkness and light are emphasised, in contrast to the multi-coloured narrative world of other novels such as Petronius's *Satyricon*.[4] In addition, rhetorical techniques, which evoke or are related to visual imagery and perception such as *ekphraseis* or *physiognomic* descriptions, are not as well developed as they are in the so-called Greek novels.[5] For example, when Peter and his students go to the isle of Aradus, his students visit some statues (according to the *Pseudo-Clementine* author) of Phidias in a temple[6] – which is a known literary *topos*.[7] Only Peter lacks interest

[3] Nicole Kelley, "What is the Value of Sense Perception in the Pseudo-Clementine Romance?" In *Nouvelles intrigues pseudo-clémentines. Plots in the Pseudo-Clementine Romance: actes du deuxième colloque international sur la littérature apocryphe chrétienne, Lausanne-Genève, 30 août–2 septembre 2006*, ed. Frédéric Amsler et al. (PIRSB 6; Prahins: Éditions du Zèbre, 2008), 361–369, here 367: "The emphasis on hearing is just one way that the *Pseudo-Clementines* highlight the face-to-face, master-disciple relationship between Jesus and Peter, which is at the heart of both texts' epistemological agendas."; for this relationship in Hellenistic and Imperial philosophy, see Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life. Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault; edited by Arnold Davidson and translated by Michael Chase* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 62. See also my contribution for a discussion of Peter's characterisation as a rhetorician and philosopher and the emphasis of the oral discourse in the *Homilies*: Benjamin M. J. De Vos, "The Literary Characterisation of Peter in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies: Life Guide, Rhetorician and Philosopher." In *Peter in the Early Church. Apostle – Missionary – Church Leader*, ed. Judith M. Lieu (BETL 325; Leuven: Peeters, 2021, 483–509).

[4] Both authors focus on the *Recognitions*, but the same can be said about the *Homilies*. Meinolf Vielberg, "Farbausdrücke im heidnischen und christlichen Roman: die Metamorphosen des Apuleius und die pseudoklementinischen Rekognitionen im Vergleich." *Latomus* 61.1 (2002): 108–120; Beate Klein, *Der Farbegebrauch im antiken und christlichen Roman unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Petrons Satyrica, den Metamorphosen des Apuleius und den pseudoklementinischen Rekognitionen* (Dissertation vorgelegt dem Rat der Philosophischen Fakultät der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, 21.12.2006), e. g., 119. See also Vielberg's contribution to this volume.

[5] Meinolf Vielberg calls it a "bildloser Innerlichkeit, das auch sonst in dem Romanwerk vorherrscht." Meinolf Vielberg, "Bildung und Rhetorik in den Pseudoklementinen." In *Antike Rhetorik und ihre Rezeption. Symposium zu Ehren von Professor Dr. Carl Joachim Classen, D. Litt. Oxon. am 21. und 22. November 1998 in Göttingen*, ed. Siegmar Döpp (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999), 41–63, here 49. See also William Robbins, "Romance and Renunciation at the Turn of the Fifth Century." *JECS* 8.4 (2000): 531–557, here 539.

[6] It is not said which temple this is. For a discussion of the statues and the temple (of Aphrodite – which is also mentioned in Chariton 2.3.6): Paolo Liverani, "Pietro Turista. La visita ad Arado secondo le Pseudo-Clementine." In *Il contributo delle scienze storiche allo studio del nuovo testamento. Atti del Convegno Roma, 2–6 ottobre 2002*, ed. Enrico Dal Covolo and Roberto Fusco (Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche Atti e Documenti 19; Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), 136–145.

[7] *Hom.* 12.12; *Rec.* 7.12; 12.13: For the *topos* of periegetic *curiositas* concerning Arados, see Jean-Paul Rey Coquais, *Arados et sa pérée aux époques grecque, romaine et byzantine. Recueil*

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in them.[8] He prefers to engage into a conversation with a beggar who is sitting at the entrance of the temple. In this sense, the rhetorical component of evoking visual perception seems to be neglected on purpose, just as the epistemological value of visual perception itself as a criterion for truth seems to be secondary to dialogue and the oral teachings of Peter.

Nevertheless, as I argue in the first part of this contribution, the discourse of visual perception and contemplation plays an important role in the *Homilistic* narrative and the philosophical journey of the Clement-character in the footsteps of Peter. The ego-narration is structured by Peter's oral discourses, which are constructed in such a way that they represent an ascent to true contemplation and true visual perception. This seeing is a philosophical-prophetic performance which is to be situated on two levels: the intellectual contemplation of God and daily sensory experiences in such a way that one really sees beyond false appearances and *φαντάσματα*. This philosophical development is shown gradually along the events on Clement's path during Peter's explanations to his pupils or in his disputes with Simon: it is a consciously constructed development from ignorance to real understanding, from the visible environment to the Beauty of the invisible, divine form itself, and back to the visible environment. Moreover, the reception of Platonic terminology and concepts is key for our understanding of the rhetorical construction of the *Homilistic* narrative and the development of Peter's expositions. The adaptation of the *Cave Allegory*, the philosophical characterisation of the True Prophet and the contemplation of the form of God (*Hom.* 1–2; *Hom.* 17.6–12), all fit in with this gradual development. This way, Peter's relationship with Clement links the philosophical, oral discourses with an intellectual-philosophical discourse of an ascending development towards noetic contemplation.

An additional discourse supporting this gradual development is the combination of the themes of the recognition of false and misleading forms, the re-establishment of one's form as the image of God's form and the accompanying Platonising motif of 'likeness to God' or 'ὁμοίωσις θεῷ' (from *Hom.* 2 to *Hom.* 16). This will be discussed in the second part of this contribution, as the first development nicely ties in with this one: the re-establishment of one's true image within the aim of striving for 'likeness to God' is premise to contemplating the true form of God.

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*des témoignages littéraires anciens, suivi de recherches sur les sites, l'histoire, la civilisation* (BAH 97; Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1974), 206. See also in particular, Marie-Ange Calvet-Sébasti, "Une île romanesque: Arados." In *Lieux, décors et paysages de l'ancien roman des origines à Byzance. Actes du 2e colloque de Tours, 24–26 octobre 2002*, ed. Bernard Pouderon (CMO – Série littéraire et philosophique 34; Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux, 2005), 87–99.

[8] *Hom.* 12.13.1.

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Both Platonising developments, as I discuss in the third part, also determine further the last part of the *Homilies*. Peter does not present the contemplation of God's form as the end of his teachings, nor does he present the progress as a 'flight' from the sensible world. It is a progress which leads towards a better disposition of man within this visible world and the improvement of the epistemological value of one's visual sensory experiences. This is explained by Peter himself after his explanation of noetic contemplation and practised by Peter at the very end of the *Homilies* when he sees beyond Simon's false images and recognises the true image of Clement's father.

The aim, therefore, of this contribution is threefold. (1) It offers an interpretation of the general structure of the *Homilies* as Clement's ego-narration. The key developments of this structure are the philosophical ascending development of understanding and visual contemplation of God's true form and the theme of one's true nature in relationship with true and false forms. (2) Important to this overarching motif and ascent is the reception of Platonic philosophical terminology and concepts which comes to the fore in Peter's discourses and performances. (3) Therefore, the *Homilistic* narrative is fashioned as a philosophical, even Platonising narrative. In this sense, this analysis can be seen as a further step in the appreciation of the *Homilistic* narrative as a narrative in its own right and in the holistic interpretation of this narrative.

## 1. From the Dark Platonic Cave towards the Noetic Contemplation of True Beauty (*Hom.* 1–2; 17.6–12)

### *1.1. Clement's First (Mis)steps …*

Already in the letters preceding the ego-narration, Clement-character's search for truth is emphasised. Before his death, Peter asked him to write down his experiences from his childhood (τῶν ἐκ παίδων σου λογισμῶν) and the teachings he has heard and the deeds he has seen of Peter on their journey together.[9] From the beginning of the narrative proper, Clement-character is struggling with several existential questions about death, the soul, possible afterlife, and the world (1.1.1–5).[10] The lack of answers affects him to such an extent that he becomes physically pale (ὡς ὠχριακότα με τήκεσθαι; 1.2.1).[11] If, however, he dares to dismiss these questions as useless, the suffering becomes even worse (1.2.1–2). This quest for truth, moreover, is characterised by a desire to hear and to see possible answers

[9] *EpCl* 19.2–3. Peter also asks Clement to describe his death. However, this is left out in the *Pseudo-Clementines*.

[10] Cf. 1.1.3: ἄρα θανὼν οὐκ εἰμὶ καὶ οὐδὲ μνήμην τις ποιήσει μού ποτε τοῦ ἀπείρου χρόνου πάντων τὰ πάντα εἰς λήθην φέροντος; and 1.1.3–5: οὐκ ὄντας εἰδώς, οὐ γινώσκων, οὐ γινωσκόμενος, οὐ γεγονώς, οὐ γινόμενος […] εἰ γὰρ ἦν αἰεί, καὶ ἔσται· εἰ δὲ γέγονεν, καὶ λυθήσεται.

[11] For Clement's distress, see William Adler's contribution to this volume.

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to his questions. These two sensory experiences are emphatically present during his first steps. However, disappointment is what he experiences in his quest. A first step is to hear philosophical doctrines (at philosophical schools) in search of "something solid" (χάριν τοῦ μαθεῖν τι βέβαιον; 1.3.1). Clement-character only hears confirmations and refutations, eristic expositions, quarrels, syllogisms. Subsequently, Clement decides to go to priests and magicians in Egypt in order to be able to see a performance of necromancy with his own eyes, which will give him certainty about the immortality of the soul, "and never again shall the uncertain words of hearing be able to overturn the things which the eyes have made their own".[12] However, this plan is cancelled. After having heard a rumour about a man in Judea proclaiming the kingdom of God, Clement-character again decides that he wants to see this man with his own eyes.[13] Nevertheless, a storm at sea causes him to arrive in Egypt. He hears Barnabas speaking (against philosophers) and Clement abruptly realises that he is hearing the truth (1.9–14). The act of hearing becomes more important than the act of seeing. At the request of Barnabas, Clement goes to Caesarea Stratonis where he meets Peter. The latter introduces him to the oral teachings proclaimed by the True Prophet.

The very beginning of the ego-narration indicates that it is a philosophical quest. This episode of Clement-character's first steps which lead him to philosophical schools or to his decision to go to magicians in order to see performances of necromancy, is itself a *topos* in narratives dealing with philosophical quests, for example Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, Plutarch's *Moralia* (410a–b), Philostratus's *Vita Apollonii* (1.7; 6.11), Lucian's *Piscator* (§ 11–12) and *Menippus* (§ 1–6).[14] All describe how the ego-narrator or a particular character undertake a philosophical quest, visit (several) philosophical schools and/or decide to visit

[12] 1.5.4–5: καὶ οὐκέτι δυνήσεται τὰ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἴδια τὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς ἀνατρέψαι ἄδηλα ῥήματα. For the theme of necromancy in ancient traditions, among which the *Pseudo-Clementines*, Jan N. Bremmer, "Ancient Necromancy: Fact or Fiction?" In *Mantic Perspectives: Oracles, Prophecy and Performance*, ed. Krzysztof Bielawski (Gardzienice-Lublin: Ośrodek Praktyk Teatralnych "Gardzienice", 2015), 119–141.

[13] 1.7.7; An unnamed philosopher advises Clement not to go to Egypt (because of *asebeia*). According to Dirk Uwe Hansen, this scene offers an intertextual link with Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* 6.14 where Chariclea asks Kalasiris for help (with a performance of necromancy), while the latter advises her not to do that; Dirk Uwe Hansen, "Die Metamorphose des Heiligen. Clemens und die *Clementina*." In *GCN* 8, ed. Heinz Hofmann (Groningen: Egbert Forsen, 1997), 119–129, here 126. For the much-debated dating of Heliodorus, see Koen De Temmerman, *Crafting Characters. Heroes and Heroines in the Ancient Greek Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2 n 4.

[14] Franz Boll rejects the possible intertextual link between the *Pseudo-Clementines* and Lucian's dialogues ("Aber soviel auch gemeinsam ist, der leichtfertige Ton von Lukians übrigens recht flauer Erzählung kontte wenig geignet sein, das fromme Gemüt des Klemens zur Nachahmung zu verlocken", instead he suggests that the beginning of the *Pseudo-Clementines* (already in the *Grundschrift*) is based on "das Prooemium einer astrologisch-botanischen Schrift eines gewissen Harpokration". Franz Boll, "Das Eingangsstück der Ps.-Klementinen." *ZNW* 17 (1916):, 139–148, here resp. 140 and 143.

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magicians. Moreover, I argue, if we pay careful attention to Clement-character's several steps, we can notice that these steps are based on several, general Platonic *topoi* and also on several verbal echoes of Platonic dialogues. Clement-character's intellectual crisis causes him to conduct his quest for truth: ζήτησιν καὶ εὕρεσιν ἠναγκάσθην ἐλθεῖν (1.2.4). He characterises this quest as a *love for truth* (ἐκ παιδὸς ἐγὼ Κλήμης ἀληθείας ἐρῶν καὶ ζητῶν τὰ ψυχῇ διαφέροντα; 5.2.2).[15] This love for truth already played an important role in Platonic dialogues[16] and became a widespread philosophical *topos* in later literature, among which Christian literature.[17] It is not coincidental that terms aimed at seeking truth, such as ζήτησις, ἐξέτασις, ἐξετάζω, εὕρεσις, – again strongly present in Platonic dialogues[18] as well as in other later philosophical texts –, play an important role in Clement's search and in Peter's expositions about the right way of finding truth.[19] The search for truth has to be conducted in a true and genuine way (ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀλήθεια γνησίως ζητουμένη εὑρίσκεται; 4.11.1), as Clement-character himself says to a former acquaintance of his, the grammarian Appion. During his time in philosophical schools, he does not find the true answers he is looking for. Again, linked with the *topos* of *dissensus philosophorum*,[20] a general and popular Platonic theme can be noticed, namely of eristic philosophers.[21] As Clement experiences, truth in Greek *paideia* does not depend on the intrinsic nature of things, but on the qualities of the one who best defends his opinion against others (1.3.3–4). In the meantime, unsatisfied with this, Clement-character decides to live a balanced, pious life. This way, there is less chance of suffering punishments in the *Pyriphlegethon* and the *Tartarus* as "some philosophers" (κατ' ἐνίων φιλοσόφων λόγους; 1.4.3)

[15] He even enjoys this quest, 1.3.5: "ἡσυχάζειν ἐπιτάσσοντος, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως λανθανόντως μεθ' ἡδονῆς ὁ τῶν τοιούτων μοι εἰσήρχετο λογισμός."

[16] Think of the themes of love and philosophy in the *Symposium*, or the idea that a life without research is not worth living in *Apologia* 38a (ὁ δὲ ἀνεξέταστος βίος οὐ βιωτὸς ἀνθρώπῳ); Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo. Edited and translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones, William Preddy* (LCL 36; Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2017), 180.

[17] E. g. Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis* 6.15.129.4.

[18] See *Apologia* 24b1, *Cratylus* 436a5, 436a7, *Symposium* 221d3, *Philebus* 34d6.

[19] For *ἐξέτασις*, see e. g. 3.41.2; 3.58.1–2 (2x); 20.5.2; *ζητεῖν* combined with *εὑρίσκειν* related to the topic of finding truth: e. g. 3.24.3; 3.52.3; 4.11.1.

[20] Cf. 1.3.1–2; For the Skeptic *topos* of *dissensus philosophorum*, e. g. Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes* 3.6–7.

[21] Nicole Kelley already pointed out this Platonic theme (e. g. *Phaedo* 89d–90c) in the *Recognitions*; Nicole Kelley, *Knowledge and Religious Authority in the Pseudo-Clementines: Situating the Recognitions in Fourth-Century Syria* (WUNT 2.213; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 41 and 49. For the reception of this *topos* of eristic sophistry, George B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 5. For the strong link between Plato and this theme in the *Homilies*, see my forthcoming contribution: Benjamin M. J. De Vos, "Paideia, Plato's Sophist and the Pseudo-Clementines: Simon Magus's characterisation in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies." In *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, ed. David Hamidovic, Eleonora Serra, and Philippe Therrien (Judaïsme antique et origines du christianisme; Turnhout: Brepols, 2022, *forthcoming*).

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say.[22] Clement-narrator evokes Plato's description of the *Pyriphlegethon*, which flows into the *Tartarus*, according to the *Phaedo* (112e–114a6).[23] Moreover, the reflection on death and the role of the soul in relation to philosophy accompanies Clement's search for truth, which matches the philosophical stance of Socrates in the *Phaedo*. Linked with this current of (popular) Platonic references and *topoi*, a nuancing motif appears. While the sensory experience of seeing has been downplayed when Clement-character hears Barnabas speaking, an introduction to the philosophical-noetic experience of truly seeing comes to the surface based on a first level of Platonic reception which fits the other Platonic allusions. Peter focusses in his introduction (as well as in later teachings) on the act of truly seeing and performs an adaptation of Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, in which the True Prophet acts as the True (Platonic) Philosopher.

### *1.2. … in the Darkened Platonic Cave …*

In Caesarea, Peter states that because of his truthloving attitude, Clement can easily become a citizen of "the city of truth" (1.16.3).[24] This truth is presented as the revelations of the True Prophet. In recent research, the character of the True Prophet has been strongly linked with Judeo-Christianity,[25] but interestingly, the first thing Peter says about him, and thus what Clement is told, is, I argue, an adaptation of the image of the cave by Plato (*Republic* 514a2–521c8).[26] Peter discusses the problem of man's lack of truth and the relationship between men and

[22] In the *Phaedo*, Socrates says that belief in the immortality of the soul leads to an increase of one's care of it and to live a better life (107c–d; 115b).

[23] This topos can be found in other texts, see e. g., Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* 3.17, Seneca's *Phaedra* 1126 and Lucian's *Menippus* § 10 (ὁ Πυριφλεγέθων). György Geréby mentioned this as an implicit reference to Plato in his "Reasons and Arguments in the Clementina." In Amsler, *Nouvelles intrigues*, 211–222, here 212 n 6.

[24] καὶ αὐτή σε ἡ ἀλήθεια ξένον ὄντα τῆς ἰδίας πόλεως καταστήσει πολίτην.

[25] For a recent and general overview, see Simon C. Mimouni, "La doctrine du *Verus Propheta* de la littérature pseudo-clémentine chez Henry Corbin et ses Élèves." In *Henry Corbin. Philosophies et sagesses des religions du Livre: Actes du colloque "Henry Corbin", Sorbonne, les 6–8 novembre 2003,* ed. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 165–175, and Dominique Côté, "Le vrai Prophète et ses incarnations dans les *Homélies* pseudo-clémentines." In *Christianisme des origines. Mélanges en l'honneur du Professeur Paul-Hubert Poirier,* ed. Éric Crégheur et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 309–337.

[26] György Geréby has already briefly mentioned this possible link, in Geréby, "Reasons", 216–217. The *Allegory of the Cave* became a widespread motif, among which in Christian texts: see e. g. Anthony Meredith, "Plato's 'cave' (*Republic* vii 514a–517e) in Origen, Plotinus, and Gregory of Nyssa." In *StPatr* 27 (Papers Presented at the 11th International Conference on Patristic Studies), ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 49–61. For a general discussion (one of many) of this original Platonic passage, see John E. Raven, *Plato's Thought in the Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 131–187 (Chapter 10, 'Sun, Divided Line and Cave'); Julia Annas, *Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 242–271 (chapter 10, 'Understanding and the Good: Sun, Line, and Cave'); Vassilis Karasmanis, "Plato's Republic: The Line and the Cave." *Apeiron* 21.3 (1988): 147–171. For a brief discussion of the several kinds of reading of this passage: Thomas Johansen, "Timaeus in the Cave." In

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the darkened world. Among the causes are a bad education (εἰσαγωγῇ κακῇ), wicked association with bad people, corrupting society, unseemly discourses, wrongful prejudice, error, fearlessness, fornication, covetousness, vainglory, and many other evils, which, like smoke, have darkened the world (1.18.3). Several vices obscure the educational aspect of culture or *paideia*: bad habits, a wrong disposition and wicked education have corrupted man's relationship with the truth. In a similar way, Socrates explains in the *Republic* (519a–b) that wrong habits and the like corrupt the philosophical nature, more precisely, they strike down the eye of the soul (στρέφουσι τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ὄψιν; 519b).[27] The quest for truth is a philosophical one that needs appropriate *paideia*, as Socrates states:

514a: Μετὰ ταῦτα δή, εἶπον, ἀπείκασον τοιούτῳ πάθει τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν παιδείας τε πέρι καὶ ἀπαιδευσίας./ 'After this, then,' I said, 'compare our own nature as regards both education and the lack of it to such experience as this.'

Hereafter, Socrates discusses the known *Allegory of the Cave*. It is no coincidence, I argue, that Peter uses a similar image after his list of the several causes, and after Clement's first (disappointing) steps in search of truth and true education. Let us have a look at Peter's image, in this case, of a house:

1.18.3–1.19.4: […] ὥσπερ καπνοῦ πλῆθος, ὡς ἕνα οἶκον οἰκοῦντα τὸν κόσμον <ἔπλησεν, καὶ> τῶν ἔνδοθεν οἰκούντων ἀνδρῶν ἐπιθολῶσαν τὰς ὁράσεις, οὐκ εἴασεν ἀναβλέψαντας ἐκ τῆς διαγραφῆς τὸν δημιουργήσαντα νοῆσαι θεὸν καὶ τὸ τούτῳ δοκοῦν γνωρίσαι. διὸ τοὺς φιλαλήθεις ἔσωθεν χρὴ ἐκ στέρνων βοήσαντας ἐπικουρίαν προσκαλέσασθαι φιλαλήθει λογισμῷ, ἵνα τις ἐκτὸς ὢν τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πεπλησμένου καπνοῦ προσιὼν ἀνοίξῃ θύραν, ὅπως δυνηθῇ τὸ μὲν ἐκτὸς τοῦ ἡλίου φῶς εἰσκριθῆναι τῷ οἴκῳ, ὁ δὲ ἐντὸς τοῦ πυρὸς ὢν ἐκβληθῆναι καπνός.
τὸν μὲν οὖν βοηθὸν ἄνδρα τὸν ἀληθῆ προφήτην λέγω, ὃς μόνος φωτίσαι ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων δύναται, ὥστ' ἂν αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς δυνηθῆναι [ἡμᾶς] ἐνιδεῖν τῆς αἰωνίου σωτηρίας τὴν ὁδόν. ἄλλως δὲ

[the aforementioned evils] filling the world as a quantity of smoke fills a house, have obscured the sight of the men inhabiting the world, and have not suffered them to look up and become acquainted with God the Creator from the delineation of Himself which He has given, and to know what is pleasing to Him.
Wherefore it behoves the lovers of truth, crying out inwardly from their breasts, to call for aid, with truth-loving reason, that someone *from outside the* house which is filled with smoke may approach and open the door, so that the light of the sun which is without may be admitted into the house, and the smoke of the fire which is within may be driven out. Now the Man who is the helper I call the true Prophet; and He alone is able to enlighten the souls of men, so that

*The Platonic Art of Philosophy*, ed. George Boys-Stones, Dimitri El Murr, and Christopher Gill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 90–109, here 98.

[27] For the Greek with an English translation: Plato, *Republic, Volume II: Books 6–10. Edited and translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones, William Preddy* (LCL 276; Cambridge (Ma): Harvard University Press, 2013), 122–123. See also for the first books: *Republic, Volume I: Books 1–5. Edited and translated by Christopher Emlyn-Jones, William Preddy* (LCL 237; Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2013).

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ἀδύνατον, ὡς οἶσθα καὶ σύ, μικρῷ τάχιον εἰπὼν ὡς πᾶσα ὑπόθεσις ἀνασκευάζεται καὶ κατασκευάζεται καὶ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἐκδικοῦντος δύναμιν ἡ αὐτὴ ἀληθὴς καὶ ψευδὴς νομίζεται, ὡς μηκέτι τὰς ὑποθέσεις φαίνεσθαι ὃ εἰσίν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τοὺς ἐκδικοῦντας φαντασίαν λαμβάνειν τοῦ εἶναι ἢ μὴ εἶναι ἀληθεῖς ἢ ψευδεῖς. τούτου ἕνεκεν προφήτου ἀληθοῦς ὅλον τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐδεήθη πρᾶγμα, ἵνα ἡμῖν ἐρεῖ τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν καὶ ὡς δεῖ περὶ πάντων πιστεύειν.

with our own eyes we may be able to see the way of eternal salvation. But otherwise it is impossible, as you also know, since you said a little while ago that every doctrine is set up and pulled down, and the same is thought true or false, according to the power of him who advocates it; so that doctrines do not appear as they are, but take the appearance of being or not being truth or falsehood from those who advocate them. On this account the whole business of religion needed a true prophet, that he might tell us things that are *that and how* they are, and how we must believe concerning all things.

Comparing this passage with Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, one can draw several relevant similarities and differences concerning the concept of truly seeing and understanding. First, I will give the fragment from Plato, next I will compare it with Peter's adaptation.

(514a–515a) ἰδὲ γὰρ ἀνθρώπους οἷον ἐν καταγείῳ οἰκήσει σπηλαιώδει, ἀναπεπταμένην πρὸς τὸ φῶς τὴν εἴσοδον ἐχούσῃ μακρὰν παρὰ πᾶν τὸ σπήλαιον, ἐν ταύτῃ ἐκ παίδων (b) ὄντας ἐν δεσμοῖς καὶ τὰ σκέλη καὶ τοὺς αὐχένας, ὥστε μένειν τε αὐτοῦ εἴς τε τὸ πρόσθεν μόνον ὁρᾶν, κύκλῳ δὲ τὰς κεφαλὰς ὑπὸ τοῦ δεσμοῦ ἀδυνάτους περιάγειν, φῶς δὲ αὐτοῖς πυρὸς ἄνωθεν καὶ πόρρωθεν καόμενον ὄπισθεν αὐτῶν, μεταξὺ δὲ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τῶν δεσμωτῶν ἐπάνω ὁδόν, παρ᾽ ἣν ἰδὲ τειχίον παρῳκοδομημένον, […] Ὅρα τοίνυν παρὰ τοῦτο τὸ τειχίον φέροντας ἀνθρώπους σκεύη τε παντοδαπὰ ὑπερέχοντα τοῦ τειχίου καὶ ἀνδριάντας καὶ ἄλλα ζῷα λίθινά τε καὶ ξύλινα καὶ παντοῖα εἰργασμένα, […]. [Glaucon] Ἄτοπον, ἔφη, λέγεις εἰκόνα καὶ δεσμώτας ἀτόπους. [Socrates] Ὁμοίους ἡμῖν, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ.

Imagine people as it were in an underground dwelling like a cave with a long wide entrance facing the light along the whole length of the cave. They have been there since childhood shackled by the legs and the neck, so that they remain in the same spot facing only forward, unable to turn their heads right round because of the chains. There is light from a fire burning from above a long way behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a path leading upward across which you should imagine there is a low wall built, […]. Now imagine people carrying props of all kinds along this wall above the top of it and statues and other creatures made of wood and stone and fashioned in all kinds of ways. […] This image and prisoners you speak of are strange, he said. Just like us, I said.

*Smoke in the house*: In his comparison (ὥσπερ), Peter points out how the aforementioned evil fills the world as smoke from a fire fills a house. This smoke comes from a fire, which is different from Plato's interpretation where fire causes the shades of objects (carried in front of the fire) to be seen on a wall by people who are chained to their seats. Another difference is the setting since Peter uses the image of a house and Plato that of an ἐν καταγείῳ οἰκήσει σπηλαιώδει, al-

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though in both cases the interpretation deals with a place where people live (ἕνα οἶκον οἰκοῦντα/οἰκήσει). According to Peter, people are trapped in this house, which is reminiscent of the prisoners in Plato's cave. Moreover, in both cases, the place is linked with the human state (as Socrates also confirms). In fact, it stands for a degraded state of the human condition and its disturbed relationship with truth.[28] We can even speak of a topological isomorphism: both the cave and the house are a closed, confined place with a certain entrance through which light from outside can enter. The house represents the material world and in fact also the human condition concerning bad education, which caused the degraded state of man's knowledge of truth. In both cases, the comparison is based on education and the discovery of true knowledge: one does not actually see the truth within this confined place.

(515c–d) Παντάπασι δή, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, οἱ τοιοῦτοι οὐκ ἂν ἄλλο τι νομίζοιεν τὸ ἀληθὲς ἢ τὰς τῶν σκευαστῶν σκιάς. […] Σκόπει δή, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, αὐτῶν λύσιν τε καὶ ἴασιν τῶν τε δεσμῶν καὶ τῆς ἀφροσύνης, οἵα τις ἂν εἴη, εἰ φύσει τοιάδε συμβαίνοι αὐτοῖς· ὁπότε τις λυθείη καὶ ἀναγκάζοιτο ἐξαίφνης ἀνίστασθαί τε καὶ περιάγειν τὸν αὐχένα καὶ βαδίζειν καὶ πρὸς τὸ φῶς ἀναβλέπειν, (d) πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ποιῶν ἀλγοῖ τε καὶ διὰ τὰς μαρμαρυγὰς ἀδυνατοῖ καθορᾶν ἐκεῖνα ὧν τότε τὰς σκιὰς ἑώρα, […]

Then in every respect, I [Socrates] said, what people in this situation would consider the real world would be nothing other than the shadows of the objects making them. […] Now think about setting them free, I said, loosing their chains and curing their foolishness. What would it be like if something like this should happen to them? Whenever anyone was freed and suddenly made to stand up, look around, walk, and look up toward the light, it would be painful doing all this and because of the glare he would be unable to see the object whose shadow he saw before. […]

(517b–c) Ταύτην τοίνυν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, τὴν εἰκόνα, ὦ φίλε Γλαύκων, προσαπτέον ἅπασαν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν λεγομένοις, τὴν μὲν δι' ὄψεως φαινομένην ἕδραν τῇ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου οἰκήσει ἀφομοιοῦντα, τὸ δὲ τοῦ πυρὸς ἐν αὐτῇ φῶς τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου δυνάμει· τὴν δὲ ἄνω ἀνάβασιν καὶ θέαν τῶν ἄνω τὴν εἰς τὸν νοητὸν τόπον τῆς ψυχῆς ἄνοδον τιθεὶς οὐχ ἁμαρτήσῃ τῆς γ' ἐμῆς ἐλπίδος, ἐπειδὴ ταύτης ἐπιθυμεῖς ἀκούειν. θεὸς δέ που οἶδεν εἰ ἀληθὴς οὖσα τυγχάνει. τὰ δ' οὖν ἐμοὶ φαινόμενα οὕτω φαίνεται, ἐν τῷ γνωστῷ τελευταία ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα καὶ μόγις ὁρᾶσθαι, ὀφθεῖσα δὲ συλλογιστέα εἶναι ὡς ἄρα πᾶσι πάντων αὕτη ὀρθῶν τε καὶ καλῶν (c) αἰτία, ἔν τε ὁρατῷ φῶς καὶ τὸν τούτου κύριον

So then, my dear Glaucon, I said, we must fit this image in its entirety to what we were discussing before, comparing the place that appeared through our sight to the dwelling in the prison chamber and the light of the fire there to the power of the sun. If you take the upward journey and the seeing of what is above as the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible realm, you will not mistake my intention, since you are keen to hear this. Only God knows, I suppose, if this is entirely true; but this is how these things appear to me: in the knowable region the form of the Good is last among the things perceived and is seen with difficulty, but once seen, then this is to be reckoned as the origin of all that is right

[28] For the allegory of the cave, Annas, "Introduction to Plato's Republic", 252.

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τεκοῦσα, ἔν τε νοητῷ αὐτὴ κυρία ἀλήθειαν καὶ νοῦν παρασχομένη, καὶ ὅτι δεῖ ταύτην ἰδεῖν τὸν μέλλοντα ἐμφρόνως πράξειν ἢ ἰδίᾳ ἢ δημοσίᾳ.

and good for everyone. It gives birth to light and the source of light in the visible world, in the world of the intelligible it is the very thing which gives truth and understanding, and he who is going to act with good sense in private or public life must see this.

*Visual limitation and contemplation:* Just as is the case of the prisoners in the cave, the sensory experience of seeing is questioned. In the house, smoke causes darkness, in contrast to the true sunlight from outside. People do not see the real objects within the house. This contrast between what one sees inside and the true light outside is also prominent in Plato's cave: prisoners do not see the real objects, nor true sunlight, but shadows cast by the fire. The resemblance between both images lies in the fact that one does not see true sunlight nor the true objects. However, Peter evaluates visual sensory knowledge more negatively than Socrates does since the inhabitants of the house are robbed from their visual perception (ἐπιθολῶσαν τὰς ὁράσεις). This could be seen in context of the general downgraded role of visual perception in the *Pseudo-Clementines*. Man's sight is darkened and is unable to perceive what is true. In this line, Socrates tells Glaucon that the prison corresponds to "the place that appeared through our sight [...]." In addition, just as the prisoners in the cave cannot look upwards, neither can the inhabitants of the house. However, in the cave, someone suddenly frees one of the prisoners from his shackles. This released prisoner stands up and is forced to lift his eyes to the light (πρὸς τὸ φῶς ἀναβλέπειν).[29] The other prisoners are still tied to their seat, unable to see anything else than the shadows on the wall in front of them. In the *Homilies*, the inhabitants are not able to "look upwards" (οὐκ εἴασεν ἀναβλέψαντας) in order to become acquainted with God (νοῆσαι θεὸν) by their own effort, just like the prisoners in the cave. However, nobody is suddenly set free, which will turn out to be a difference in one's intention as I will discuss further. In any case, both passages deal with the act of looking upwards to perceive the truth in relation to their own effort. Interestingly, in both cases the Greek verb ἀναβλέπειν is used. The choice of this verb is maybe not very logical in the case of the *Pseudo-Clementines* since the inhabitants cannot see anything at all.[30] So, this makes the influence of the Platonic use of this verb more striking. The link becomes even clearer because in both cases truth is connected with the realm of sunlight.

*Sun, Sunlight, and True forms:* Just as is the case with Plato, seeing the light of the Sun implies an ascent to the true, intelligible world.[31] Peter also explains how the light of the Sun from the outside liberates people from the darkness (ὅπως

[29] *Republic* 515c; see also 621c.

[30] I thank Danny Praet for this remark.

[31] 516b: τελευταῖον δὴ οἶμαι τὸν ἥλιον, οὐκ ἐν ὕδασιν οὐδ᾽ ἐν ἀλλοτρίᾳ ἕδρᾳ φαντάσματα αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸν καθ᾽ αὑτὸν ἐν τῇ αὑτοῦ χώρᾳ δύναιτ᾽ ἂν κατιδεῖν καὶ θεάσασθαι οἷός ἐστιν.

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δυνηθῇ τὸ μὲν ἐκτὸς τοῦ ἡλίου φῶς εἰσκριθῆναι τῷ οἴκῳ) and how it lets the truth shine. In Plato's interpretation, sunlight is connected with a higher degree of truth and the world of Forms. So, in both cases there is a division between the world of the house/cave and the world of a higher truth outside this confined space. As mentioned above, a difference can be noticed concerning the way to proceed. While one of the prisoners in the cave is suddenly (ἐξαίφνης)[32] set free (in a rather mysterious way), and forced to go towards the realm of the sunlight, none of the inhabitants suddenly move towards the realm outside the house. How should the difference (the free man is suddenly set free, while none of the inhabitants is) be explained?

*Right philosophical attitude in comparison with the Platonic 'sudden' liberation:* In the Platonic cave, one of the prisoners is suddenly liberated and forced to go upstairs.[33] When he returns to the other (still chained) prisoners, they laugh at him (since he cannot see well in the dark) and do not believe him (516a–517a). In the *Clementines*, however, Peter states that one must be truth-loving (φιλαλήθης)[34] and aware of this need for help. In this way, an active attitude seems to be required rather than the sudden release of the prisoners in the cave. The inhabitants of the house need to call for help which has to come from the outside (διὸ τοὺς φιλαλήθεις ἔσωθεν χρὴ ἐκ στέρνων βοήσαντας). What happens to those who do not call for help is not clear, but throughout the *Homilies* there is a strong emphasis on one's own free will to seek the truth. People who willingly remain ignorant are as severely punished as people who willingly sin.[35]

*The True Prophet and the visual perception of invisible things:* The figure of the True Prophet plays an important role here. Without him, the whole process

[32] 515c; See concerning ἐξαίφνης also Plato's *Letter VII* 341c and *Symposium* 210e. In the *Symposium*, Diotima explains to Socrates how one, passing on from view to view of beautiful things, can suddenly perceive beauty in its nature. In his *Seventh Letter*, (pseudo-)Plato explains how there is an element of 'suddenness' of philosophical understanding, brought to birth in the soul on a sudden (341c).

[33] Later in the *Republic*, Socrates discusses the ideal student in Callipolis and his education in mathematics and dialectic. There is no forced nor violent pulling, but a gentle one, 533d.

[34] Other important related concepts in the *Homilies* are open-mindedness and love for God, *εὐγνωμοσύνη* and *στοργή* (e.g., 2.39; 2.42.1–2; 3.4.3; 3.10.4; 6.23.4; 15.2.3; 19.25.2). For a discussion of these concepts, see Bernard Pouderon, "Les discours de Pierre contre Simon dans les Clémentines: stratégies rhétoriques pour atteindre l'inaccessible et énoncer l'indicible." In *Christian Discourse in Late Antiquity. Hermeneutical, Institutional and Textual Perspectives*, ed. Anna Usacheva and Anders-Christian Jacobsen (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 3–29. I want to thank Bernard Pouderon for sending me his proof prints.

[35] 3.5.2; One has to listen with "love for truth", as Peter states in 11.17.4. Based on several signs in nature, man is given evidence that he should look further. See for a discussion, Donald H. Carlson, *Jewish-Christian Interpretation of the Pentateuch in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2013), 137–213. See also for a discussion of ignorance causing physical deformity (19.22.1–9): Nicole Kelley, "The Theological Significance of Physical Deformity in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies." *PRSt* 34 (2007): 77–90.

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of attaining truth is not possible.[36] Moreover, the characterisation of the True Prophet is in line with the abovementioned Platonic motifs, in particular with regard to intellectual visual experience. The figure of the True Prophet is the only one who can illuminate the souls (ὃς μόνος φωτίσαι ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων δύναται; 1.19.1) of the blinded inhabitants by letting sunlight shine into the house – this way, the True Prophet even excels the philosopher by being able to let the light shine in the house and to show people the way to salvation with their own eyes (αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς; 1.19.1). Without him, it would be impossible to attain truth because people are deceived by hypotheses and opinions, which the philosophers proclaim to be true, "as you well know (ὡς οἶσθα καὶ σύ; 1.19.2)", as Peter tells Clement. In contrast to the eristic philosophers, the True Prophet is needed. In a narrative sense, Clement is the one who went in search of true insight and here, eventually, he gets the answers from Peter, without which he could not go further in his quest for truth, as Peter (sceptically) states the next day in Caesarea (2.6.3; cf. 2.4.3):

For how can he find the truth who seeks it from his own ignorance? And even if he does find it, he does not know it, and passes it by as if it were not.

The True Prophet is actually also a True Philosopher.[37] He is the main character in Peter's comparison of the house and, moreover, Platonic themes can be found further in his characterisation concerning true vision. As Peter explains to Clement, one who follows the teachings of this Prophet receives many goods (eternal life, health, perfect understanding), but first, one has to learn "things as they are" (2.5.3):

οὐκ ἄλλως ἔστιν αὐτὸ κτήσασθαι, μὴ πρότερον **γνόντα τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν**· τῆς δὲ γνώσεως οὐκ ἄλλως τυχεῖν ἔστιν, ἐὰν μὴ πρότερόν τις τὸν τῆς ἀληθείας προφήτην ἐπιγνῷ.

[These diverse blessings] cannot be possessed without first knowing things [BDV: *that and how*] they are; and this knowledge cannot be otherwise obtained than by first becoming acquainted with the Prophet of the truth.

This expression is quite similar to an expression which is used several times in Platonic dialogues in order to point out knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of the immutable character of things which always are what they are, as we can find in *Republic* 477b: "γνῶναι ὡς ἔστι τὸ ὄν".[38] Only the True Prophet can show people things

[36] In *Hom.* 8.5, Peter explains that if people had been able to use reason in order to become truth, the coming of Moses and Jesus would not have been necessary.

[37] Recently, Dominique Côté interpreted some characteristics of the True Prophet within a Neoplatonic context concerning revelated truth, see "Le vrai Prophète", 332–334. See also his contribution to this volume.

[38] For the reception of this idea in later Platonism, such as Plotinus and Iamblichus, see resp. *Enneads* 1.6.8 and *De Communi Mathematica Scientia* 49.20.

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"that and how they are", as Peter also said immediately after his comparison of the house (1.19.4):

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|---|---|
| τούτου ἕνεκεν προφήτου ἀληθοῦς ὅλον τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας ἐδεήθη πρᾶγμα, ἵνα ἡμῖν ἐρεῖ **τὰ ὄντα ὡς ἔστιν** καὶ ὡς δεῖ περὶ πάντων πιστεύειν. | On this account the whole business of religion needed a true prophet, that he might tell us things that are, as they are, and how we must believe concerning all things. |

What are these things? Peter notes, in the remainder of the house comparison, that Greek philosophers are not able to attain truth by themselves: they are stuck in circular reasoning (οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι αὐτῶν ψευδεῖς ἀρχὰς ἑαυτοῖς ὁρισαμένων, τῇ ἀρχῇ αὐτῶν τὸ τέλος συμφωνίαν εἴληφεν; 2.8.1–3). This truth, moreover, is not concerned with visible things, but with 'unclear' things (2.7.2–3):

| | |
|---|---|
| ἐκ στοχασμῶν[39] γὰρ ἐπιβάλλοντες τοῖς ὁρατοῖς περὶ τῶν ἀδήλων ἀπεφήναντο, τὸ ὁπώσποτε παραστὰν αὐτοῖς, τοῦτο ἀληθὲς εἶναι νομίσαντες. | For, applying themselves to things visible, they [Greek philosophers] have given decisions by conjecture on things not apparent, thinking that that was truth which at any time presented itself to them as such. |

Jonathan Barnes has already noticed the similarity with an expression of Anaxagoras about understanding/seeing: "ὄψις ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα."[40] However, any sort of bridging the distance between the phenomena and the higher things is condemned by Peter, since it is impossible to see the 'unclear things' without the help of the True Prophet. What are these 'unclear' things? Compared to the *Allegory* this could be interpreted within the framework of 'visible' and 'invisible', especially if we look further. Peter uses the word ὁρατοῖς here, which is also used in Plato's *Allegory* in order to make a distinction between an intelligible (νοητόν) world and a visible one (ὁρατόν; 509d). Moreover, Plato uses this comparison to explain the clarity and obscurity in relation to truth, reality and (false) appearances. In a similar way, Peter explains how philosophers try to comprehend the 'unclear things', while only the True Prophet really knows what these 'unclear things' are. As discussed before, the True Prophet is the only figure who can show the relationship between the visible and invisible world and the right act of ἀναβλέπειν,[41] since he is indispensable to show the inhabitants the true light from the outer realm. Moreover, as Peter also explained in 1.19.4, this truth has to deal with the "business of religion" (ὅλον τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας), or

[39] Socrates uses this word in *Philebus* 56a in order to point out that musicians use guesswork based on practice, but not on certainty, so that there is still much uncertainty.

[40] Jonathan Barnes, "[Clément] et la philosophie." In Amsler, *Nouvelles intrigues*, 296.

[41] In the *Recognitions* (8.9), Nicetas is more positive (in Platonic sense). Arithmetics can help in order to ascend to the higher, intellectual and invisible things. See for a discussion, Vielberg, "Bildung und Rhetorik", 51. For Plato's discussion of arithmetics, *Republic* 511de; 537b and *Laws* 817e. The Platonic idea of a distinction between the intelligible and sensible realm was accepted among Christian authors such as Athenagoras (*Plea for the Christians* 19.2), Origen (*Contra Celsum* 7.31), and Eusebius (*Praeparatio* 11.8.1).

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the way in which one has to act towards and think about the divine. In this way, these so-called unclear things are to be understood within this framework of the higher, invisible truth, which has to be revealed by the True Prophet. Moreover, the True Prophet is connected with a particular form of seeing, namely the eye of the soul, which is another widespread Platonic concept among Jewish, Christian and Platonic authors.[42] Peter explains (3.13.1):

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|---|---|
| προφήτης γὰρ ὢν ἄπταιστος, ἀπείρῳ ψυχῆς ὀφθαλμῷ πάντα κατοπτεύων ἐπίσταται λανθάνων. | For, being a faultless Prophet, and looking upon all things with the boundless eye of His soul, He knows hidden things. |

The eye of the soul has a particular role in Plato's texts and in later reception in the oppositional relationship to the eyes of the body.[43] In the *Phaedo* (66b–d), Socrates explains how the body has a negative influence on the soul and on the practice of philosophy. Freed from the body, true philosophers (τοῖς γνησίως φιλοσόφοις; 66b; cf. 4.11.1) can perceive the actual reality by seeing it with the soul (ἀπαλλακτέον αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ θεατέον; 66e). In Peter's explanation, it is the True Prophet who truly sees and knows the hidden things, which stands in contrast to the failed act of seeing within the house. Moreover, in order to let people see, he is also the one who enlightens the νοῦς of men (3.27.3–28.1):

| | |
|---|---|
| νύμφη γάρ ἐστιν ὁ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, ὁπόταν τοῦ ἀληθοῦς προφήτου λευκῷ λόγῳ ἀληθείας σπειρόμενος φωτίζηται τὸν νοῦν. | For every person is a bride, whenever, being sown with the true Prophet's *white* word of truth, he is enlightened in his understanding. |

Again, the Platonising elements continue to be built up. The role of the νοῦς is strongly reflected on in the *Phaedrus* (247c) and is examined in the *Republic* within a distinction between sense/αἴσθησις and intellect/νοῦς.[44] This view was also important in later texts of Platonic, Christian, and Jewish authors.[45] In this way, the *Homilistic* narrative not only stands in line with other intellectual, Platonising Christian and Jewish works, but it also deliberately builds up these (modified) Platonic references related to 'truly seeing' and noetic vision, which will be further discussed in this ego-narration. Peter's introduction (as the comparison of the house) and the figure of the True Prophet are only a first step of Clement's path in the footsteps of Peter. This is also the reason, I argue, why the inhabitants, according to the comparison, are still in the house, since the actual

[42] See for example Theophilus's *Autolycus* (1.7.2), Philo's *De Confusione Linguarum* (92.1) or *De Specialibus Legibus* (3.6.3).

[43] For a discussion of the 'Mind's eye' in Platonic dialogues (and the de-trancendent view of the Forms): Dorothea Frede, "Plato on What the Body's Eye Tells the Mind's Eye." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 99 (1999): 191–209.

[44] This distinction can already be found in Democritus B11 DK.

[45] Again Philo, e.g. *On Abraham* 57–58; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 1.169.12; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 7.7.2; Basilius, *Epistulae* 226.3.33.

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ascent towards the realm of the sunlight and truth will be discussed at a later stage of Clement's life: how he can see or contemplate the invisible reality with his νοῦς. This reality will be the true, invisible Form and Beauty.

*1.3. … towards the Noetic Contemplation of God's Beauty and Form.*

The themes discussed in Peter's comparison of the house and the vision of true light/truth/invisible realm are developed further during Peter's exposition on the second day in Laodicea. Peter explains to Clement how one can see and contemplate God's form. This act of contemplation is, again, strongly set in Platonic reminiscences, which take up Peter's comparison of the house. This passage (17.6–12), unique to the *Homilies*, has often been studied separately due to the many supposed links with older, hypothetical (pre-Christian) Jewish mysticism, transferred via Jewish-Christian groups into what resulted to be medieval Jewish mysticism (Merkabah and Shiur Qomah).[46] I want to propose another reading here. My interpretation of this passage focuses more on the philosophical thread of this passage within the narrative-philosophical construction of the *Homilies* and the discourse of true philosophical seeing throughout Peter's expositions. Zacchaeus, a disciple of Peter, announces that Simon is already discoursing with his own students. Before meeting Simon, Peter wants to hear from Zacchaeus what Simon's charges against him are. One of these charges states that, even though Peter wants to liberate people from 'terrible images' (referring to the

[46] For a nuanced analysis of past research concerning this passage: Annette Y. Reed, *Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism* (TSAJ 171; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 331–360 (Chapter Ten 'Rethinking "Jewish-Christian" Evidence for Jewish Mysticism'), 346–347: "[…], Scholem and others have shown how the extraction and filiation of motifs can be used to construct compelling narratives about the evolution of Jewish mysticism, with gaps in the Jewish literary record filled through the culling of Christian sources [BDV: in Scholem's case, Jewish Christian groups via Gnostic traditions] for the relics of purportedly pre-Christian Jewish ideas. The assumptions underlying this method, however, remain questionable and may well undermine the results." For Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York [NY]: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1960), 36–42 (chapter 6). See also for the idea that this discussion about God's form would go back to Ebionite or Elchasaite views: Jarl Fossum, "Jewish-Christian Christology and Jewish Mysticism." *VC* 37 (1983): 260–287. For the view that 17.6–12 (together with 16.10 and 16.19; and *Rec.* 2.50.3) is part of the *Grundschrift*: Jürgen Wehnert, "Das Geheimnis der Siebenzahl. Spekulation über die unendliche Gestalt Gottes in den pseudoklementinischen Homilien, Buch 16 und 17." In Amsler, *Nouvelles intrigues*, 461–476, here 461 and 464. However, *Hom.* 17.6–12, in contrast to 16.10 and 16.19, deals with God's form itself. See also for a discussion of past research and the idea that this particular passage is unique to the *Homilies*: Bernhard Rehm, according to whom the *Homilist* is responsible for this passage; "Zur Entstehung der pseudoclementinischen Schriften." *ZNW* 37 (1938): 77–184, here 159; Dominique Côté, "La forme de Dieu dans les *Homélies* pseudo-clémentines et la notion de Shiur Qomah." In *"Soyez des changeurs avisés". Controverses exégétiques dans la littérature apocryphe chrétienne*, ed. Gabriella Aragione and Rémi Gounelle (CBP 12; Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 69–94.

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statues of gods), he introduces an even more terrible form that hinders the contemplative soul (17.3.3–4):

ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι Πέτρος φοβερῶν ἰδεῶν δοκῶν ἀπαλλάσσειν ὑμῶν τὰς ψυχάς, φοβερωτέρᾳ ἰδέᾳ τὸν ἑκάστου ὑμῶν ἐνθουσιᾶν ποιεῖ νοῦν, θεὸν ἐν μορφῇ εἰσηγούμενος καὶ ταῦτα ἄκρως δίκαιον, ᾧ ἕπεται τὸ φοβερὸν καὶ τῇ συννοούσῃ ψυχῇ τὸ φρικῶδες, δυνάμενον καὶ τῶν ὀρθῶν λογισμῶν ἐκλῦσαι τοὺς τόνους. ἐν γὰρ τοιούτῳ καθεστὼς χειμῶνι ὁ νοῦς ὡς βυθὸς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σφοδροῦ θολοῦται τὸ λαμπρόν.

but because Peter, seeming to free your souls from terrible images, drives mad the mind of each one of you by a more terrible image, introducing God in a shape, and that, too, a God extremely just, – an image which is accompanied by what is terrible and awful to the contemplative soul, by that which can entirely destroy the energy of a sound mind. For the mind, when in the midst of such a storm, is like the depth stirred by a violent wind, perturbed and darkened.

Simon's criticism focuses on the contemplative act of the soul. Concerning lifeless statues, Simon claimed that the soul does not fear these statues since it knows that they are nothing to be afraid of. However, the object of contemplation, God's form, as it is sketched by Peter is terrible for the contemplative soul or "τῇ συννοούσῃ ψυχῇ." Moreover, this hypothetical form of God (μορφή) also indicates, according to Simon, that God possesses a figure (σχῆμα) – which is limited in space – and that he, therefore, is less than the space surrounding him. Peter's exposition implies the existence of a god who is not omnipotent (17.3.5–7). Simon is, moreover, portrayed here as someone who denies that God has a form. Later, Peter states to the audience at the end of his speech that there are "strangers to the truth" (such as Simon; τινὲς δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀλλότριοι; 17.11.1), who say that God is formless, shapeless, visible to no one and desired by no one (ἵνα ἄμορφος καὶ ἀνίδεος ὢν μηδενὶ ὁρατὸς ᾖ, ὅπως μὴ περιπόθητος γένηται; 17.11.1). In the note to this passage in the French *Pléiade*-translation, it is suggested that: "[l]es adversaires visés pourraient être des chrétiens de tendance platonisante."[47] This passage, as I will discuss further, indeed shares symbolic language with Platonising Christians, but also with pagan philosophers: Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists. Let us first look at Plotinus, and then to the earlier Middle Platonic philosophers. In his discussion of what the soul and spirit can contemplate, Plotinus stated that the One does not have a shape, nor a form, nor would this form be intelligible. Within the context of seeing, Plotinus defines the One as ἄμορφον, not μορφῆς νοητῆς, and ἀνείδεον.[48] Peter, in turn, refutes those "strangers to the truth," who claim that God is ἀσχημάτιστον, ἄμορφος

[47] Pierre Geoltrain and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens tome II* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 1193–1589 (Homélies), here 1522.

[48] *Enneads* 6.9.3.38–45; Plotinus, *Enneads, Volume VI: 6–9, translated by A.H. Armstrong* (LCL 468; Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1988), 312–314. For a discussion of the *Homilies* and the shared Neoplatonic context, see the contribution of Dominique Côté to this volume.

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καὶ ἀνείδεος. This idea of the One or the divine as without the abovementioned qualifications can be understood in line of Middle Platonic perceptions of Plato's theological points of view. In the *Phaedrus* (247c), Plato already states how the ὑπερουράνιον τόπον is the place where the Ideas are present or – in Plato's words – the essence, which is only visible by mind: ἡ γὰρ ἀχρώματός τε καὶ ἀσχημάτιστος καὶ ἀναφὴς οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα, ψυχῆς κυβερνήτῃ μόνῳ θεατὴ νῷ, περὶ ἣν τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἐπιστήμης γένος, τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν τόπον. In Middle Platonic thinking, such as Alcinous and Apuleius, these (negative) qualifications from *Phaedrus* 247c were used in order to define God, and not – as originally intended – the Ideas.[49]

This way, by using a shared terminology and theological-philosophical ideas, the *Homilist* claims a role in this symbolic, Platonising network. In this social dialogue of a shared linguistic and a philosophical Platonic framework, we find Plotinus and others, but Christian authors as well. Similar interests and Platonic terminological framework can be noticed in a particular pre-Nicene debate amongst Jewish and Christian intelligentsia about anti-anthropomorphism and the noetic Form of God.[50] Platonic heritage is prominently recognised within this debate as for example Justin Martyr, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, points out that the Deity "cannot be seen by the same eyes as other living beings are. He is to be perceived by the mind alone, as Plato affirms."[51] Platonising Christians such as Origen rejected the idea of anthropomorphism but nevertheless did not reject the idea of a form of God, interpreting it in a noetic way,[52] as the *Homilies*

[49] Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus. Translated by Harold North Fowler* (LCL 36; Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 1914), 474–476. For a discussion of this passage in Middle Platonic and Christian authors (not the *Pseudo-Clementines*): Claudio Moreschini, "The *Phaedrus* as Testimony of a Theology of the Gentiles." In *The Reception of Plato's "Phaedrus" from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Sylvain Delcomminette, Pieter d'Hoine and Marc-Antoine Gavray (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 384; Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 87–102, here 88–94.

[50] For a discussion of this Christological pre-Nicene debate: Dragoş Andrei Giulea, "'Simpliciores, Eruditi,' and the Noetic Form of God: Pre-Nicene Christology Revisited." *HTR* 108.2 (2015): 263–288, here 265: "While rejecting anthropomorphism, they [pre-Nicene authors such as Justin, Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, Origen himself, and Methodius] did not interpret the biblical concept of the Form of God as a sensible entity among the things of the universe, but they transferred its reference to the intelligible dimension of creation." It should be mentioned that this debate dealt with the Form of God, which is the (non-incarnated) form of the Son or *Logos*. The idea of the form of God as the Son does not seem to be present in the *Homilies*. But, as I will discuss further, the arrangement of *Hom.* 17.6–12 and 17.13–20 does seem to be set within the context of such a discussion. Here, I do not deal with the discussion of noetic corporeality and pure immateriality, rather with the accompanying Platonising idea of noetic contemplation.

[51] *Dial.* 1.3.7; quoted from Giulea, "Simpliciores, Eruditi", 269. Justin does however define the very Being as having no colour, no form, no greatness, which is (directly or indirectly) refuted by the *Homilies* (cf. *Dial.* 4.1).

[52] See for example Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.68.

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are doing here in this discussion between Peter and Simon. The latter is the ideal symbol of those philosophers and theologians who are refuted by Peter.[53]

Keeping this broader social dialogue in mind, we could read one of Peter's remarks in a meta-literary way, related to this symbolic network. Before giving his exposition about the form of God and the contemplation of it, Peter explains that due to the short time the True Prophet was teaching on earth, he did not use a demonstrative style, since he did not want to spend his limited time for demonstrations. Therefore, the latter instructed his students to use evidence in order to support his words.[54] Shlomo Pines and Dominique Côté already pointed out that Peter uses several Stoic elements in order to describe God's relationship with space.[55] In addition, Jürgen Wehnert mentioned that some elements in this passage are linked to Greek philosophical thinking, again related to the description of God, which I will quote if relevant for this contribution.[56] Moreover, Peter, I argue, uses Platonising demonstrations in order to explain the contemplation of the form of God, fitting the same symbolic field as the Neoplatonic philosophers do as well as Christian intelligentsia. In narrative terms this also fits in with Peter's Platonising introduction by discussing the contemplation of true Form. In contrast to "those strangers to the truth", Peter gives the following striking exposition about God's form which, quoting Matt 18:10, can be seen by angels (ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἑστήκασιν θεωροῦντες τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς διαπαντός) and by people who are pure of heart (τὴν δὲ καλλίστην μορφὴν ἔχει δι᾽ ἄνθρωπον, ἵνα οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτὸν ἰδεῖν δυνηθῶσιν, ἵνα χαρῶσιν δι᾽ ἅτινα ταῦτα ὑπέμειναν; 17.7.4). To begin with, God has a corporeal form with limbs as humans have. He, however, does not use these limbs, since these are only for the sake of His beauty (μορφὴν γὰρ ἔχει – διὰ πρῶτον καὶ μόνον κάλλος – καὶ πάντα μέλη, οὐ διὰ χρῆσιν; 17.7.2). This has, actually, a function: he has a form so that people, pure of heart, can see this beauty.[57] God is, however, invisible (αὐ-

[53] I thank Patricia Duncan for the remark that Peter points out this theory not in private, but in public. I also thank Dominique Côté for the suggestion that this can be compared to Jesus' parables, which are sometimes delivered in public but intended for the disciples.

[54] 17.6.4–17.7.1: τῷ τῆς ἀποδείξεως οὐκ ἐχρῆτο λόγῳ, ἵνα μὴ εἰς λόγους τὸν πάντα τῆς προθεσμίας δαπανᾷ χρόνον, […] εἰδὼς οὖν ἡμᾶς εἰδότας πάντα τὰ ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ῥηθέντα καὶ τὰς ἀποδείξεις παρασχεῖν δυναμένους, εἰς τὰ ἀμαθῆ ἔθνη ἀποστέλλων ἡμᾶς.

[55] Shlomo Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yezira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies. The Implications of the Resemblance." *PIASH* 7 (1989): 63–142, here 74–76. See also Côté, "La forme de Dieu", 89–90.

[56] "Ein von der Thora inspiriertes Gottesbild soll vor Einwänden logisch-philosophischen Denkens geschützt und damit sogar kompatibel gemacht werden – das ist Hellenismus pur." Wehnert, "Das Geheimnis der Siebenzahl", 461–476, 464: "Der Urheber des Traktats [which Wehnert considered to be from the second century] lebt ersichtlich in zwei Welten."

[57] In the past, this theory has been linked with rabbinic explanations: Alon Goshen Gottstein places the anthropomorphic image of God (in the *Homilies*) within an ethical context of the Mishnah and various Rabbinic midrashim: "The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature." *HTR* 87.2 (1994): 171–195. One could notice the similarity with Epicurean ideas of gods in human form, only perceptible by the mind (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 1.46–49; Lucretius,

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τὸς ἀόρατος), and man, made in his form, visible (17.7.5). Schlomo Pines argued that this last thought is a later gloss, "for it contradicts the possibility of seeing the divine form".[58] Actually, in Peter's comparison to the house, it was said that the True Prophet would show the invisible. Here, the invisible form of God is the subject of discussion on the reason why God has a form: for the art of noetic contemplation.

This form is not limited, as Peter explains in Stoic terminology. He states that God "is-that-which-is" (θεὸς δὲ τὸ ὄν; 17.8.3), while the surrounding space is "nothing" (τόπος ἐστὶν τὸ μὴ ὄν; 17.8.3).[59] Here, Peter uses the image of the Sun surrounded by air, yet the Sun lights up the air and heats it to a certain distance. To a greater extent, God infinitely extends from his figure, shape and beauty (σχήματι καὶ μορφῇ καὶ κάλλει; 17.8.9).[60] This way, even though God has a form, he is infinite. He is the heart of everything, with six infinite dimensions flowing out of him and coming back to him. He is the beginning, middle and end.[61] Wehnert notes here the "Frucht popularphilosophischer Bildung",[62] in particular referring to Plato's *Laws* 715e, where God is also described as beginning, middle and end, which fits the *Homilistic* description. He briefly links the six extensions and the theme of beauty with *Timaeus* 40ab.[63] Moreover, as I argue, Platonic terminology plays a role concerning the act of seeing and contemplating of beauty itself (17.10.3–11.3):

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*De Rerum Natura* 5.146–155). In contrast to the form, anthropomorphic character traits of God (e. g. human emotions) are refuted in the beginning of the *Homilies* (e. g. 2.40).

[58] Pines, "Points of Similarity", 103.

[59] See e. g. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* X.3 (the empty space that can be filled by what is). The idea of infinity, the comparison between the empty and an empty vase (Aëtius, *Placita* I.18.5 and Stobaeus, *Eclogae* I), see Côté, "La forme de Dieu", 89.

[60] For a possible rabbinic background of 'beauty', see Gottstein, "Body as Image", 181, and for a hypothetical link with the later Shiur Qomah, see Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah* (English translation by Joachim Neugroschel, New York: Schocken Books Inc, 1991), 30. Be that as it may, I argue further, the Platonic terminology is very strong here.

[61] 17.9.1–4: ἀπ' αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀρχόμεναι αἱ ἐκτάσεις ἓξ ἀπεράντων ἔχουσιν τὴν φύσιν. […] εἰς αὐτὸν γὰρ τὰ ἓξ ἄπειρα τελευτᾷ καὶ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὴν εἰς ἄπειρον ἔκτασιν λαμβάνει […] ὥσπερ ἀπὸ κέντρου […] ὡς ἐν ἀπείρῳ μέσος ἐστίν […] ἀρχὴ ὢν καὶ τελευτή. Wehnert here refers to *Deutero-Isaiah* (41:4, 44:6, 48:12), *Apocalypse of John* (1:8), but states that the linguistic proximity is low ("Das Geheimnis", 465). Wehnert connects it with Plato.

[62] Wehnert, "Das Geheimnis", 465.

[63] Wehnert, "Das Geheimnis", 465. Charles Bigg and John Quarry had already linked these six extensions to Plato's *Timaeus*: "The Clementine Homilies." *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism* 2 (1890): 157–193, here 164; John Quarry, "Notes Chiefly Critical, on the Clementine Homilies and the Epistles Prefixed to Them." *Hermathena* 8.19 (1893): 287–300, here 290 ("These six directions, mentioned by Plato, have reference of course to the human body, which was supposed to have been in likeness to God, said above to be *ἐν σχήματι*"). Schlomo Pines, however, approaches it as an early trace of the ten sefirot: "Points of Similarity", 79–87.

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οὕτως γὰρ καταληπτός ἐστιν καὶ ἀκατάληπτος, ἐγγὺς καὶ μακράν, ὧδε ὢν κἀκεῖ, ὡς μόνος ὑπάρχων καὶ τοῦ πανταχόθεν ἀπείρου νοὸς τὴν μετουσίαν διδούς, ἣν πάντων ἀναπνέουσαι αἱ ψυχαὶ τὸ ζῆν ἔχουσιν· κἂν χωρισθῶσιν τοῦ σώματος καὶ τὸν εἰς αὐτὸν εὑρεθῶσιν πόθον ἔχουσαι εἰς τὸν αὐτοῦ κόλπον φέρονται ἀθάνατοι, ὡς ἐν χειμῶνος ὥρᾳ οἱ ἀτμοὶ τῶν ὀρῶν ὑπὸ τῶν τοῦ ἡλίου ἀκτίνων ἑλκόμενοι φέρονται πρὸς αὐτόν. οἵαν οὖν στοργὴν συλλαβεῖν δυνάμεθα, ἐὰν τὴν εὐμορφίαν αὐτοῦ τῷ νῷ κατοπτεύσωμεν. ἄλλως δὲ ἀμήχανον· ἀδύνατον γὰρ κάλλος ἄνευ μορφῆς εἶναι καὶ πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ ἔρωτα ἐπισπᾶσθαί τινα ἢ καὶ δοκεῖν θεὸν ὁρᾶν εἶδος οὐκ ἔχοντα. τινὲς δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας ἀλλότριοι ὄντες καὶ τῇ κακίᾳ συμμαχοῦντες προφάσει δοξολογίας ἀσχημάτιστον αὐτὸν λέγουσιν, ἵνα ἄμορφος καὶ ἀνείδεος ὢν μηδενὶ ὁρατὸς ᾖ, ὅπως μὴ περιπόθητος γένηται. νοῦς γὰρ εἶδος οὐχ ὁρῶν θεοῦ κενός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ.

For thus He is comprehensible and incomprehensible, near and far, being here and there, as being the only existent one, and as giving a share of that mind which is infinite on every hand, in consequence of which souls breathe and possess life; and if they be separated from the body and be found with a longing for Him, they are borne along into His bosom, as in the winter time the mists of the mountains, attracted by the rays of the sun, are borne along immortal to it. What affection ought therefore to arise within us if we gaze with our mind on His beautiful shape! But otherwise, it is absurd to speak of beauty. For beauty cannot exist apart from shape; nor can one be attracted to the love of God, nor even deem that he can see Him, if God has no form. But some who are strangers to the truth, and who give their energies to the service of evil, on pretext of glorifying God, say that He has no figure, in order that, being shapeless and formless, He may be visible to no one, so as not to be longed for. For the mind, not seeing the form of God, is empty of Him.

Peter explains how God can be seen. God is μορφή and ἰδέα in order to be visible (ὁρατὸς), more precisely, visible for the faculty of the νοῦς. The concept of κάλλος is noteworthy here: man needs the νοῦς in order to see God's form/beauty, which reminds us of the notion in the *Symposium* of seeing the ultimate Form of Beauty.[64] In this way, noetic vision, as is discussed in Peter's introduction of the comparison of the house and the character of the True Prophet, is included here again in order to discern, as a *Wesensschau*, God's form/beauty. In addition, the theme of desire is again emphasised, as is the case in the beginning of the narrative (οἵαν οὖν στοργὴν συλλαβεῖν δυνάμεθα, ἐὰν τὴν εὐμορφίαν αὐτοῦ τῷ νῷ κατοπτεύσωμεν).[65] This desire causes the soul, immortal, to be drawn to God himself (τὸν εἰς αὐτὸν εὑρεθῶσιν πόθον ἔχουσαι εἰς τὸν αὐτοῦ κόλπον φέρονται ἀθάνατοι) after the separation of body and soul. Peter uses the simile of souls attracted as if by rays of the Sun, which, again, reminds us of the comparison of the house. As argued before, in this comparison, there was no room for an ascent to the light, but now there finally is as is explained by Peter. Beauty, as

[64] E. g., Plato, *Symposium* 212a.

[65] Here, the *Homilist* explicitly uses the term τὴν εὐμορφίαν, which is used twice in Plato's dialogues (*Symposium* 218e and *Laws* 716a) where it is linked with corporeal, bodily beauty. This is an inferior kind of beauty compared to the intelligible beauty. Here εὐμορφία is used for the beauty of the corporeal form of God, which is an anti-Platonic idea.

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an object of desire, has become an object of vision. Whoever does not desire to contemplate this Beauty, will not see it since this Beauty or Form will stay invisible. Again, in a Platonic way, the objects of thought, ἰδέαι or μορφή are invisible according to *Republic* 507b. Is it a coincidence that later in the *Republic*, concerning the *Allegory of the Cave*, it is stated that the way upwards, measured out by the soul in its knowing, is accessible to the νοῦς, as is discussed by Socrates? This is the ideal faculty to contemplate the Forms (517a–b).[66]

Ταύτην τοίνυν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, τὴν εἰκόνα, ὦ φίλε Γλαύκων, προσαπτέον ἅπασαν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν λεγομένοις, τὴν μὲν δι' ὄψεως φαινομένην ἕδραν τῇ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου οἰκήσει ἀφομοιοῦντα, τὸ δὲ τοῦ πυρὸς ἐν αὐτῇ φῶς τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου δυνάμει· τὴν δὲ ἄνω ἀνάβασιν καὶ θέαν τῶν ἄνω τὴν εἰς τὸν νοητὸν τόπον τῆς ψυχῆς ἄνοδον τιθεὶς οὐχ ἁμαρτήσῃ τῆς γ' ἐμῆς ἐλπίδος, ἐπειδὴ ταύτης ἐπιθυμεῖς ἀκούειν.

So then, my dear Glaucon, I said, we must fit this image in its entirety to what we were discussing before, comparing the place that appeared through our sight to the dwelling in the prison chamber and the light of the fire there to the power of the sun. If you take the upward journey and the seeing of what is above as the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible realm, you will not mistake my intention, since you are keen to hear this.

As Shlomo Pines briefly suggested, this Platonic language of noetic vision of beauty could be compared to Plotinus's discussion of the intelligible beauty, as it is in particular explained in his *Ennead* 5.8.[67] According to Plotinus (as based on Plato's *Symposium*), the recognition of traces or remote images of the non-bodily Forms in, for example, bodies, results in an experience of beauty. This indicates one's undescended intellect's character, which will also be the case in the *Homilies*. One could see a similar line of ascent towards God's beauty, using Platonic language, as I will explain in the second part of this contribution. In our interest here, the *Homilist* uses a similar Platonic language, but he stresses his own theories about contemplating God as Form and Beauty.[68] Maybe this could explain the alternation in the citation of Matt. 18:10 in *Hom.* 17.7.2 when Peter explains that God has a form in order to be seen by angels and men. Instead of "βλέπουσι", which is unanimously attested in the many manuscripts of *Mat-*

[66] Think also of Plato, *Phaedrus* 254e.

[67] Pines, "Points of Similarity", 105; see for a general discussion of seeing beauty in Plotinus: Makoto Sekimura, "Purification and Forms of Beauty in Plotinus." In *Looking at Beauty to Kalon in Western Greece. Selected Essays from the 2018 Symposium on the Heritage of Western Greec*e, ed. Heather L. Reid and Tony Leyh (Sioux City [IA]: Parnassos Press – Fonte Aretusa, 2019), 245–254.

[68] Pines also noticed a similarity between the *Homilies* and the fourth-century Christian Neoplatonist Marius Victorinus's *Adversus Arium* 4.24 according to whom God is in the middle, he sees in all directions (and all the Ideas of beings), he is rest, and he is Light. Pines, "Points of Similarity", 100–101; Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (Série antiquité 32–33; Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1968), 431.

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*thew,*[69] Peter uses the word "θεωροῦντες". This reminds us of the philosophical θεωρία, the desire to view the divine with the process of intellectual enquiry, as can be seen in Plato's *Republic* 486d.[70] In this respect, we can understand Peter's further explanation that seeing God with 'eyes of a mortal', so, bodily 'eyes', is impossible.[71] According to Peter, moreover, God's form is fleshless (τὴν γὰρ ἄσαρκον ἰδέαν; 17.16.2). Therefore, in Platonising terms, God's fleshless form, idea, and Beauty can only be 'seen' by one's νοῦς, in particular, by someone who is longing for the truth.[72]

## 2. The Existential Factor of 'Forms' and the Platonic ὁμοίωσις θεῷ as Framework for Man's Development (*Hom.* 2–16) Towards Peter's Discourse of the Contemplation of God

This way, Peter's comparison of the house has been further explained concerning noetic contemplation. Moreover, Peter's expositions about noetic contemplation develop alongside another important and additional theme: the re-establishment of man's form in relation to truth, God's form, and the recognition of false 'forms'. This theme gradually develops towards Peter's teaching of true vision in *Hom.* 17. During several stages of Peter's expositions and discussions, he demonstrates how to surpass the realm of false, corrupted images and forms in order to be prepared for the true form and to bridge the gap between the visible and the invisible realm. In the *Homilies*, this process is strongly connected with Platonising themes such as the ontological status of 'subjects' and 'images', and the creation of man in relation to the model form of God, and, in particular, the modified Platonic act of becoming alike, ὁμοίωσις, to God as much as possible (κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν).

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[69] See *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28. neu bearbeite Aufl., ed. Eberhard and Erwin Nestle, and Barbara and Kurt Aland (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2016), 57.

[70] See for this concept, Andrea W. Nightingale, "On Wandering and Wondering: *Theoria* in Greek Philosophy and Culture." *Arion* 9 (2001): 23–58. Also: Herman Koller, "Theoros and Theoria." *Glotta* 36 (1958): 273–287.

[71] 17.16: except when God changes one's body of flesh into light, which is the substance of the soul, see 9.9. Cf. Moses still 'lighting up' when he returns from his encounter with God on the mountain, *Hom.* 20.6.8. This passage (17.16.2b–6) does not need to be considered as inserted (as Geoltrain and Kaestli, "Écrits apocryphes chrétiens tome II", 1526 do), since noetic contemplation is not ruled out in this passage. A further comparison with Origen and other Platonising authors could be useful here.

[72] It is striking that the inhabitants of the Blessed Island in Lucian's *Verae Historiae* 2.12.3 are also defined as *asarkos*, *morphè* and *Idea*, which, as Andrew Laird wrote, "are suggestive of Platonic forms". Andrew Laird, "Fiction as a Discourse of Philosophy." In *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis, Maaike Zimmerman, Wytse Hette Keulen (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 115–127, here 121–122.

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Plato himself discusses this theme of ὁμοίωσις in several of his works, with as many different perspectives as there are dialogues about this theme[73] For example, in the *Theaetetus*, Socrates describes how one should strive for ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, which is becoming a righteous, wise, holy man, with his reason directed towards virtue, while trying to avoid vice.[74] In the *Symposium*, one tries to achieve this goal as much as possible within the framework of reaching immortality through man's most divine part, the soul. Here, the epistemological part is emphasised and the moral component to a lesser extent. In the *Republic*, the likeness to God is achieved as much as possible when one tries to follow the pattern of God's virtue. So, again, the moral-ethical part is highlighted. This theme is dealt with differently in later philosophical traditions.[75] Middle Platonic and Christian authors modified this theme within their approach of the relationship between man (as image) and the divine (as model).[76] It is not the aim of this contribution to discuss this wide reception, but to focus on the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*.

In the *Homilies*, it will be clear that the likeness to God fits in with a gradual progress of education and understanding, but also of fulfilment and re-establishment of one's form/nature in relation to God's form. The ascent to ὁμοίωσις θεῷ is twofold. We have the ethical, moral and epistemological progress of recognising false forms and the re-establishment of one's own form as an image of God. This will become clear step by step after Peter's comparison of the house, beginning with the recognition of the false and vain forms, which can corrupt man's own form. Moreover, as Clement-character learns throughout these steps, true education, piety and morality are needed in order to prevent corruption of his own form. As Peter eventually explains, man's form and the theme of 'likeness

[73] Plato, *Laws* 716c–d; *Phaedo* 64a–67e; *Philebus* 28c–30e; *Republic* 500b–501b, 611d–e, 613a–613b; *Theaetetus* 176a–b; *Timaeus* 41d–47c, 90a–d.

[74] Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b.

[75] For a brief discussion of the different interpretations of this theme, in particular within the Platonic and Stoic philosophical frameworks, Christoph Jedan, "Metaphors of Closeness: Reflections on "Homoiosis Theoi" in Ancient Philosophy and Beyond." (Special Issue: The Gods as Role Models in Western Traditions) *Numen* 60.1 (2013): 54–70. See also, John M. Armstrong, "After the Ascent: Plato on Becoming like God." In *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy XXVI: Summer 2004*, ed. David Sedley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 171–183, here in particular 174. See for a brief overview of this reception, also in early Christian texts, Ryan C. Fowler, "Variations of Receptions of Plato during the Second Sophistic." In *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Plato in Antiquity*, ed. Harold Tarrant et al. (BCCS 13; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018), 223–249, here 224, n6.

[76] For a thorough discussion of this Platonic theme, see David Sedley, "Becoming like god." In *Plato. Vol. 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, ed. Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 309–328. For a thorough discussion of the appropriation of this theme in Middle Platonic texts and texts from Nag Hammadi, Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, "A Way of Salvation: Becoming Like God in Nag Hammadi." (Special Issue: The Gods as Role Models in Western Traditions) *Numen* 60.1 (2013): 71–102. For a general discussion of the 'image' and 'likeness' in early Christian authors: Gerhart B. Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy." *DOP* 7 (1953): 1–34.

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to God' are to be understood within the framework of a Platonising reading of the beginning of the *Genesis* story: man has to aim to re-establish form in respect of the true model. This recognition and re-establishment of the true form is a premise of the second component of the 'likeness to God': the epistemological-theoretical phase in Peter's discussions of contemplating God's Form and Beauty (which I have discussed above). This way, the 'likeness to God' has a moral-ethical, existential, and intellectual conception, resulting in true contemplation. It explains how the soul and the faculty of the νοῦς have the capacity to reflect the divine image and the teleogical structure provided by God in order to contemplate his beauty.

### *2.1. False and Vain Forms*

Understanding and seeing God's form, is also being and existing in a true way which is linked with Clement's personal history as well as with the general history of humanity. After Peter's introduction (comparison of the house), it becomes clear that Clement's path, like human history in general, is filled with false, corrupted images that trouble man's relationship with the truth. A first step for Clement is to understand this, and to re-establish the true form, which is linked with the true nature of man. Cora Presezzi recently noted that the theme of 'images' plays an interesting role in the *Pseudo-Clementines*. She focuses on the framework of an intra-Christian battle regarding *imago Dei* and "false immagini – i *simulacra* prodotti dall' *artificium* umano."[77] More precisely, Simon Magus claims to be able to create a new sort of man (καὶ οὕτως ἑαυτὸν πείσας καινὸν ἄνθρωπον δύνασθαι ποιῆσαι; 2.26.5), which could be understood as an anti-Pauline trait in the *Pseudo-Clementine* narrative. In one of his epistles, Paul referred in similar words to the concept of the new man or "καινὸν ἄνθρωπον."[78] In fact, this theme also plays an overarching role in the narrative itself: it shows the character of Simon who murdered a boy in a horrible way in order to 'create' a new kind of man, as is explained by Aquila and Nicetas, former friends of Simon and now followers of Peter (2.26.1–2):

[77] Cora Presezzi, "'Essere immagine' e 'farsi immagini'. L'anti-paolinismo nella polemica contro Simon Mago delle Recognitiones pseudo-clementine." In *Genealogia dell' immagine cristiana. Studi sul cristianesimo antico e le sue raffigurazioni*, ed. Daniele Guastini (Lucca: VoLo publisher, 2014), 209–228, here 210. See also *Rec.* 2.15.1–6.

[78] *Eph* 2:15; 4:24. This was already suggested by some Dutch scholars, such as Jan H.A. Michelsen, "II. Paulinisme en Petrinisme in 't na-apostolisch tijdvak." *ThT* 9 (1876): 73–79.

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καὶ γὰρ μιαιφονεῖν ἤρξατο, ὡς αὐτὸς ἔτι ὡς φίλος φίλοις ἐξέφανεν ὅτι παιδίου ψυχὴν τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος χωρίσας ἀπορρήτοις ὅρκοις, συνεργὸν πρὸς τὴν τῶν αὐτῷ δοκούντων φαντασίαν, τὸν παῖδα διαγράψας ἐπὶ εἰκόνος, ἐνδοτέρῳ οἴκῳ ὅπου αὐτὸς ὑπνοῖ ἀνατεθειμένην ἔχει, φάσκων ποτὲ τοῦτον ἐξ ἀέρος πλάσας θείαις τροπαῖς καὶ τὸ εἶδος ἀναγράψας ἀποδεδωκέναι πάλιν τῷ ἀέρι.

For he even began to commit murder as he himself disclosed to us, as a friend to friends, that, having separated the soul of a child from its own body by horrid incantations, as his assistant for the exhibition of anything that he pleased, and having drawn the likeness of the boy, he has it set up in the inner room where he sleeps, saying that he once formed the boy of air, by divine arts, and having painted his likeness, he gave him back again to the air.[79]

False and vain images are an important element of Simon's characterisation in the *Pseudo-Clementines*.[80] For example, Berenice, with whom Clement is staying in Tyre for a few days, informs the latter that Simon astonishes the city by "making spectres and ghosts (φαντάσματά τε γὰρ καὶ ἰνδάλματα) appear in the midst of the market-place; and when he walks abroad, statues (ἀνδριάντες) move, and many shadows (σκιαὶ) go before him, which, he says, are souls of the dead." In other words, the arch opponent in the story is strongly tied to vain images and even, as one could see further, with the first part of Plato's *Division of the Line*,[81] the part of εἰκασία which consists of shadows (σκιαὶ) and reflections (φαντάσματά) and other objects of this sort, which Socrates's pupil categorises as images. This Platonic idea, however, fits in with the overarching narrative of Clement, which builds up to the level of νόησις or contemplation of God's beauty in *Hom.* 17.6–12. This way, Simon is immediately connected with the realm of εἰκασία.

The theme of false and vain images is also an important theme in the much-discussed chapters of the *Homilies*: 4–6.[82] In Tyre, Clement discusses with an old

[79] For a discussion of this passage in both *Clementine* traditions, see Tobias Nicklas and Thomas J. Kraus, "Simon Magos: Erschaffung eines Luftmenschen (pseudo-Clemens *Hom* II, 26; *Rec* II, 15)." In Amsler, *Nouvelles intrigues*, 409–424.

[80] About Simon it is said that, for example, he is capable of letting statues walk, of metamorphosing into a serpent, goat, even gold, or of becoming two-faced. He even produces images of all kinds of forms at banquets, where he also has dishes carried while no bearers are seen (2.32). Moreover, attacked by Dositheus, the stick goes through Simon as through smoke (2.24.5). For a profound analysis of the philosophical debate and the *Homilistic* character of (the vain image of) Helen (2.25.2), see the contribution by Danny Praet to this volume.

[81] *Republic* 509d–511e. See for this original Platonic motif: Richard Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), 220.

[82] See for a discussion of these chapters, William Adler, "Apion's 'Encomium of Adultery': A Jewish Satire of Greek paideia in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*." *HUCA* 64 (1993): 15–49; Dominique Côté, "La figure d'Éros dans les *Homélies pseudo-clémentines*." In *Coptica, Gnostica, Manichaica. Mélanges offerts à Wolf-Peter Funk*, ed. Louis Painchaud and Paul-Hubert Poirier (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2005), 135–165; idem, "Une critique de la mythologie grecque d'après l'Homélie pseudo-clémentine IV." *Apocrypha* 11 (2000): 37–57; Benjamin M. J. De Vos, "The Role of the *Homilistic* Disputes with Appion (Hom. 4–6)." *VC* 73.1 (2019): 54–88; idem, "The Disputes between Appion and Clement in the Pseudo-Clementine

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acquaintance, the grammarian Appion. They touch on subjects like the value of Greek *paideia*. According to Clement, this Greek *paideia* is an evil, corrupt construct of a demon (τὴν πᾶσαν Ἑλλήνων παιδείαν κακοῦ δαίμονος χαλεπωτάτην ὑπόθεσιν; 4.12.1). Its myths glorify adultery, incest and cannibalism. These myths have a corrupting influence on, especially, adolescents, whose nature is receptible for these negative images.[83] True education and right *paideia* can form the right nature. It does not seem to be a coincidence again that references to Plato and his discussions about 'forms' are present here, in particular his refutation of immoral myths (*Republic* 377aff.) concerning the aspect of *mimesis*. Socrates states that poets and their myths form the souls (πλάττειν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν τοῖς μύθοις; 377c) and put a stamp (τύπος; 377a–b) on them. This image of wax became a commonplace,[84] as it is also present in the *Homilies* in a modified form (16.10.2–5). One of the important criticisms of Socrates is the so-called ability of the gods to change shapes or to adopt one's image, implying that there would be many forms in God even though he is already in the best state (381b). This multitude of forms and metamorphoses is also criticised by Clement when he recites long lists of *exempla* of so-called gods who change forms in order to seduce women and young boys (5.12–17). These myths, performed in theatres or read in literature, corrupt people (4.19), just as Socrates says in *Republic* 395e. Moreover, Clement and Socrates share a similar statement, but both interpret it in different ways. Socrates claims that gods are not shape-shifting wizards (ὡς μήτε αὐτοὺς γόητας ὄντας τῷ μεταβάλλειν ἑαυτοὺς; 383a) for the reason just mentioned (God is already in the best form), while Clement does state, in a Euhemeristic fashion, that the gods were actually just human wizards who used their magic in order to change shapes (οἵτινες ἄνθρωποι ὄντες μοχθηροί, μαγείᾳ μεταμορφούμενοι; 6.20.2). Moreover, both point to the possible *mimetic* dangers for one's own soul, when seeing and listening to performances of these myths of metamorphosing gods.

### *2.2. Corruption of Man's Form*

The corruption of the nature of man and vanity of false forms are central here and even become an existential subject, which is also the case in the *Homilies* (7–11). From here on, the Platonic idea of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν is emphatically built up, which has to be reached before Peter gives his exposition about noetic contemplation of God. In these chapters, Peter deals with the actual corruption of one's form due to one's behaviour and the influence of demons.

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Homilies: a Narrative and Rhetorical Approach of the Structure of Hom. 6." *AN* 16 (2020): 81–109.

[83] 4.18.4: ἐν οἷς γὰρ ἕκαστος ἐκ παίδων ἐθίζεται, τούτοις ἐμμένειν ἥδεται, καὶ οὕτως τῆς συνηθείας οὐ πολὺ ἔλαττον πρὸς τὴν φύσιν δυναμένης; this idea was a general *topos* in ancient literature, e. g., already in Plato's *Republic* 377a–b.

[84] See also Plato, *Theaetetus* 191d; this became a *topos* in Stoic debates.

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People are feeling ill because of the corruption of their true form and ask Peter for help. Peter discusses, still in Tyre, how people who took part in Simon's act of sacrificing and dining,[85] came under the control of demons. The participants became "dead in their souls to God" (θεῷ τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπεθάνετε καὶ τὰ σώματα ἐπατάχθητε; 7.4.1), which means they have lost their true, uncorrupted form. This causes sickness of both body and soul, as explained later by Peter during his stay in Tripolis. To the sick people there, within the context of false appearances and one's own form, Peter gives an exposition about human history and the fall of the true human form (8.8.4). Man, who was made after His image, received all things as was provided by God. Later generations had to maintain this correct relationship towards God as a kind of perpetual law, which resulted in wealth of food, age, and health (8.10). However, they became ungrateful, neglected the divine providence, and became slaves of their lust. Here, the change of one's image (in body and soul) is key. Angels wanted to show people the right path again and, therefore came down to earth and changed into all kinds of forms – from precious stones, pearls and gold to reptiles, fish and birds –, in order to find out, for example, who would steal them. These metamorphoses have been sung about by "the poets among yourselves" (8.12.3–4). In this way, pagans mistakenly saw these metamorphosing angels as Greek gods. Greek mythology is in fact a distorted image of the Enochic episode. So, not only are these metamorphosing gods, as Clement argued earlier in *Hom.* 4–6, wrong models for imitation, they are a fabrication by poets based upon misunderstanding of this event in human history. Moreover, these angels changed themselves into human form in order to show the ideal way of life. This, however, also made them slaves to human lust, which caused them to become too heavy to go upwards again – flesh became their chains (σαρκὸς γὰρ αὐτοὶ δεσμοῖς πεπεδημένοι κατέσχηνται καὶ ἰσχυρῶς δέδενται; 8.13.3). They mingled with mortal women and were asked to show their true nature. However, not capable anymore of revealing their true form, these fallen angels taught people magic, metallurgy, and the art of dyeing garments (8.14),[86] which are linked with the idea of vanity and false appearances. From the sexual union of these fallen angels and human women, giants were born who, as the first ones, thirsted for blood. Followed by humans, this led towards cannibalism (8.15–16). This blood, which defiled the air, caused people to become sick, to die early, and to corrupt the earth. The deluge eventually caused the death of these giants, but not of their souls, which became demons with the approval of God (8.17–19). These are allowed to afflict people

[85] The theme of eating together only with other baptised people is crucial in the *Homilies*, see Peter's explanation in 7.3.4.

[86] Intratextually, this passage reminds us of the descendants of Cain, who introduce music (and instruments), war (and instruments of war), and adultery (3.25.3; this passage refers to Gen 4:21–22).

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and to corrupt their form/nature, when these people eat of sacrificial meat and participate in these rites.

The next day in Tripolis, Peter discusses another false or corrupted form: lifeless images of senseless matter worshipped by men as divine (ἄψυχα ἀγάλματα σέβοντες καὶ τὸ θεῖον αὐτοῦ ὄνομα πάσῃ ἀναισθήτῳ ὕλῃ; 9.2.2).[87] While Noah reigned after the flood as "a king according to the image of the one God" (τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ κατ' εἰκόνα ὑπάρξας βασιλεύς; 9.3.1), his once united people disintegrated into different tribes and families, among which the tribe of Ham. The 'image of God' became corrupted again. Magicians and other deceivers, fallen victim to their lust for power and pride (such as Zoroaster), became honoured "in their own forms". After several generations, people became unaware of this history and worshipped these magicians as if they were gods (of a fire-cult, such as in Persia, Babylonia, Egypt; 9.4–6). People kept honouring images (τὰ ξόανα σέβειν; 9.7.1) for which magicians established ceremonies, feasts, sacrifices, libations, shouting, "by means of which senseless men being deceived, […]. To such an extent did they prefer error, on account of its pleasantness, before truth (ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον τῆς ἀληθείας διὰ τὴν ἡδυπάθειαν προετίμησαν τὴν πλάνην; 9.7.2–3)." This way, the souls of people who participate in these events, become blended with demons, which causes the destruction of people's images (9.9.1; 9.11.4). Demons, moreover, change their own forms (through dreams) into forms of statues (μεταμορφοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς κατ' ὄναρ κατὰ τὰς τῶν ξοάνων ἰδέας) in order to mislead people. They, in fact, abuse this form (ὁ δὲ ὀφθεὶς δαίμων τῇ μορφῇ ἀπεχρήσατο), for the image is neither a living creature, nor has it a divine spirit. However, one who possesses the right image of God chases the demons away (εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ βαστάζοντα καρδίᾳ; 9.21.3). As Peter continues on the third day in Tripolis, man was made after the image and likeness of God (ὁ ἄνθρωπος κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν γεγονὼς; 10.3.3) and therefore free from all sufferings. However, when, as Peter explained earlier, man becomes sinful and ungrateful, he also becomes subject to all sufferings. Man, moreover, loses this image of God, both in body (ἐν μὲν τῷ σώματι τὴν εἰκόνα) and in mind (ἐν τῷ νῷ τῆς γνώμης τὴν ὁμοιότητα; 10.4; 10.6.1–2). This way, according to Peter, vain idols (τῶν κενῶν εἰδώλων), lifeless and senseless images (ἀψύχων ἀγαλμάτων […] οὔτε γὰρ ἀκούει οὔτε βλέπει οὔτε αἰσθάνεται, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὴν κινηθῆναι δύναται) stand in contrast with man bearing the true image of God (εἰκόνα περιφέροντα θεοῦ; 10.7.1–10.8.4). These other forms are vain and deceptive, masterminded by the serpent for its own profit. He spreads false knowledge, false certainty and false opinion, which resulted in polytheistic beliefs and idolising all kinds of images (10.10–15). Peter refers to the Egyptians who

[87] See for a general discussion of the evolution of the terminology for images: Jan N. Bremmer, "Iconoclast, Iconoclastic, and Iconoclasm: Notes Towards a Genealogy." *Church History and Religious Culture* 88 (2008): 1–17, here 1–7.

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worship all kinds of images and even as oxen, goats, cats, serpents, fish, onions, "rumblings in the stomach" (γαστρῶν πνεύματα) and even sewers (ὀχετοὺς). In other words, 'Petrus comicus' describes what happens before, during and after the digestive process … Purification is needed, as Peter says on the fourth day in Tripolis, in order to re-establish man as the image of God. When people think they are pious in relation to "every form" (πᾶσαν μορφὴν σεβόμενοι) of senseless matter (11.5.1), they are in fact impious in relation to the "real image" (εἰς μὲν τὴν ὄντως εἰκόνα (ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος) ἀσεβεῖτε, εἰς δὲ τὰ ἀναίσθητα εὐσεβεῖν δοκεῖτε; 11.5.3). Man should attain his original state of ἀφθαρσία, as heir of "the parents (by whom God and his Wisdom are meant) who have begotten you to incorruption (11.24.2)."

### *2.3. Re-establishment of One's Form in Relation to the Theme of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ*

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|---|---|
| ὅθεν οἱ εὐσεβεῖν βουλόμενοι μὴ τὰ εἴδωλα λεγέτωσαν θεοῦ εἰκόνα εἶναι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο δεῖν αὐτὰ σέβειν. εἰκὼν γὰρ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος. ὁ εἰς θεὸν εὐσεβεῖν θέλων ἄνθρωπον εὐεργετεῖ, ὅτι εἰκόνα θεοῦ τὸ ἀνθρώπου βαστάζει σῶμα, τὴν δὲ ὁμοιότητα οὐκέτι πάντες, ἀλλὰ ἀγαθῆς ψυχῆς ὁ καθαρὸς νοῦς. | Ye are the image of the invisible God. Whence let not those who would be pious say that idols are images of God, and therefore that it is right to worship them. For the image of God is man. He who wishes to be pious towards God does good to man, because the body of man bears the image of God. But all do not as yet bear His likeness, but the pure mind of the good soul does (11.4.1). |

The relationship between man's and God's form is twofold: the image of God in the human body[88] and the pursuing of the likeness of God in the soul. Image and likeness refer, of course, to Gen 1:26–27. What is of interest here is that the notion of 'likeness' soon became linked with the aforementioned modified philosophical-Platonic notion of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ. Within the Platonic framework of models/forms and their images and the ideal of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ, Gen 1:26–27 was interpreted in a Platonising way by Philo and Clement of Alexandria. The account of the *Homilies* differs from Philo and Clement of Alexandria since the

[88] For the Jewish concepts about the body (as the human personality) as "God's image", see Alain Le Boulluec, "Les citations de la Septante dans l'Homélie XVI pseudo-clémentine. Une critique implicite de la typologie?" In *ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΥΣ Ο'/Selon les Septante. Trente études sur la Bible grecque des Septante (FS M. Harl)*, ed. Gilles Dorival and Olivier Munnich (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 441–461, here 456–458. The combination here seems to be original since the image refers to the body, and the likeness to the soul, combining rabbinic and early Christian thoughts: for the body as image of God and the loss of it having sinned, see e. g., Gottstein, "Body as Image", 171–195. According to Philo, man is image of God through the mind, while likeness is something spiritual and intellectual (as Clement of Alexandria states in *Stromateis* 2.19.102.6). For a general overview: Mark J. Edwards and Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, "Introduction." In *Visions of God and Ideas on Deification in Patristic Thought*, ed. Mark J. Edwards and Elena Ene D-Vasilescu (London/New York: Routledge, 2017), 1–18, here 2–3.

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latter describe Logos as the image of God creating man according to this image, which is the mind in each man.[89] However, the *Homilies* and Clement of Alexandria seem to share a particular point of view concerning the Platonising reading. Just as in the *Homilies*, Clement of Alexandria interprets the likeness to God within the Platonic goal of human life: becoming like God as much as possible. In line of Plato's *Theaetetus*, both the *Homilies* and Clement of Alexandria connect this likeness with the desire for a certain kind of perfection,[90] moreover a perfection related to the perfect model, which is God's Form (according to the *Homilies*) or the *Logos* (the image of God, according to Clement of Alexandria). This way, the Platonising framework of model and the image of man and the theme of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ are worked out along the ego-narration of Clement and the discourses of Peter: one has to restore his or her image surpassing the vain images, for example in the case of Simon Magus, the negative mimetic influence of wrong models, and understanding and re-establishing the true image which has been corrupted throughout human history. As Peter explains it, the pure mind of the good soul bears the likeness of God. However, once restored, this likeness to God is sealed again by one's baptism (11.27). It is, moreover, at this moment in the narrative that Clement is actually baptised. Narrative plot and the philosophical ascension coincide.

The next step towards the vision of the true form of God, is reunion with one's parents and the re-establishment of their form. Within the framework of becoming like God, the re-establishment of one's own image, in this case Clement's, is now connected with the restoration of the images of his family. Just before the recognition scenes[91] between Clement and his parents, Peter explains that one who loves the source of one's being (one's parents), also should love the source of all being (God; 11.21). In this way, these recognition scenes with his parents are gradually building up towards Peter's exposition of the contemplation of God's form himself. During these scenes, the re-establishment of the 'forms' of each parent and family member is key again. We can distinguish three lines of developments. First, on their way to Laodicea, Peter and his students go to Aradus. His students visit the statues of Phidias, but Peter does not, because he does not

[89] For example, Clem., *Spec.* 1.81; *Strom.* 5.14.94.5.

[90] Clem., *Protr.* 12.120.4.

[91] For a profound discussion of the novelistic motif of recognition and its adaptation in the *Pseudo-Clementines*, see Pascal Boulhol, "La conversion de l'anagnorismos dans le roman clémentin." In Amsler, *Nouvelles intrigues*, 151–175. For a discussion of the key aspect of the re-establishment of family (and also the motif of the Christian community as a family) in the *Pseudo-Clementines*, Cornelia B. Horn, "The Pseudo-Clementine Homilies on the Challenges of the Conversion of Families." In *The Pseudo-Clementines*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer (SECA 10; Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 170–190; and Silvia Montiglio, *Love and Providence: Recognition in the Ancient Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), here 215–219, 219: "Because God is the object of the highest love, the motif of recognition and reunion between family members is reconfigured as both an end, as in the Greek novel, and a beginning: recognition takes to conversion, and is only completed with conversion."

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consider it worthwhile to see these statues (Πέτρος δὲ μόνος οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον ἡγήσατο ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἐκεῖ ἱστορίαν γενέσθαι; 12.13).[92] However, he pays attention to a woman who is begging at the gate of the temple (who eventually turns out to be Clement's mother, Mattidia). The creative act of sculpting statues, just as in the aforementioned chapters, is downgraded compared to the image of man – in this case a kind of damaged image (of the body). Asked for the reason of her begging, she states that she cannot work with her hands: they still have the form, but they have become useless by excessively biting on them (νῦν δέ μοι σχῆμα μόνον χειρῶν φυλάσσουσιν, νεκραὶ τυγχάνουσαι, ὑπὸ δηγμάτων ἐμῶν βεβασανισμέναι; 12.13.3). She turns out to be a pious woman, which is the reason why Peter heals her in 12.23. Secondly, this is connected to the reunion of the family and the mental images they have of each other. Clement said he only had an 'obscure image' of his mother and brothers.[93] The same is said when Faustus, Clement's father, is recognised in 14.9.[94] The third line deals with the actions and the pious disposition of Mattidia since she has preserved her chastity for her husband and she has taken care of the sick woman she lives with. Peter explains this history of Mattidia, within the framework of philanthropy and the true relationship between the form of man and the form of God. Whoever practices philanthropy is an imitator of God (12.26), is immortal and has an accurate image of God in the soul, which is in line of the aforementioned Platonising theme of the 'likeness to God', since such a nature cannot be corrupted: "ὡς εἰκόνα θεοῦ ὁμοίαν, ὑπὸ φθορᾶς ὑβρισθῆναι μὴ δυναμένην τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν." (12.33.5).[95] Thus, the theme of likeness to God is important not only to oneself, but also to the whole family. One's true disposition is, just as the one of each family member, necessary for the re-establishment of one's form within the framework of ὁμοίωσις θεῷ and the framework of gradual understanding and, eventually, contemplation of the true Form.

## 3. *Hom.* 17(.13)–20: True Perception in the Visible World

Thus, the two developing Platonising themes support each other: Peter's expositions about the noetic contemplation and truly seeing, and his expositions about the vanity and corruption of certain forms and the re-establishment of one's own form (and the forms of one's family members) within the framework

[92] See also notes 6 and 7.

[93] 12.8.2: ἀλλ᾽ ὥσπερ δι᾽ ὀνείρων ἀμαυρὸν αὐτῶν τὸ εἶδος ἀναφέρω; 12.23.2: καὶ γὰρ ἅμα τῷ ῥηθῆναί μοι τοῦτο ἀμαυρῶς πως τὸ εἶδος ἀνεκαλούμην.

[94] 14.9.7: καὶ καταφιλοῦντες ἀμαυρῶς πως τὴν μορφὴν αὐτοῦ ἀνεφέρομεν.

[95] In the same context, Peter holds a eulogy about the chaste woman as the good reminiscence of God, doing the will of God. She longs for God, loves God, pleases God, glorifies God, she looks into God as she looks into a beautiful mirror (13.15–16).

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of becoming alike to God. Both developments, truly seeing and true form, are eventually explained and, moreover, practiced by Peter himself in the visible world – again, in Platonising terms. In this way, the preceding Platonising developments should not be understood within a framework of a 'flight', as has been done by Middle Platonic and Christian-Gnostic authors for example,[96] but as an evolution towards the right intellectual and moral disposition within this visible world in order to see and understand truly here.

In the remainder of *Hom*. 17(.13–19), an additional discussion between Simon and Peter develops about other forms of seeing than noetic contemplation, such as apparitions (ὀπτασία), dreams (ἐνύπνια), visions (ὁράματα), and the question of credibility of one's witness: why would one believe Peter's account of his visual experiences?[97] Whereas Simon refutes Peter's direct witness of the True Prophet as a criterion of truth, his vision of Jesus is divine and true (ἡ δὲ ὀπτασία θεότητος εἶναι ὁμολογεῖται; 17.5.6). Peter, in turn, defends the idea of a superior prophetic-sense knowledge, gushing up truth in/by his soul. This passage again discusses the overarching theme of truly seeing, settled in philosophical language. Robert J. Hauck has examined this passage within a Stoic-Sceptic framework of debate on sense perception. Dominique Côté approaches it in relation to Neoplatonic discussions.[98] The value of the witnesses of the deeds and experiences of apostles was also an important subject of debate in other Christian texts. Hauck noticed a similar discussion in Origen's *Contra Celsum*. Divine, true knowledge which supports sensory perception, gushes up as he makes clear related to (and explaining from Peter's own point of view) the episode of Matt. 16:16–17 in *Hom.* 17.18.2–3:

[96] For later Platonic reception, see John M. Armstrong, "After the Ascent", 171–183, here in particular 172. For Gnostic reception, see Roig Lanzillotta, "A Way of Salvation".

[97] Cf. 17.13.1. Simon states that he has seen Jesus in a vision (17.14), which has been interpreted as a reference to the Damascus episode of Paul. See Ferdinand C. Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom." *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 3.4 (1831): 61–206, here 126; Antoine Salles, "La diatribe antipaulinienne dans le 'roman pseudo-clémentin' et l'origine des 'Kérygmes de Pierre.'" *RB* 64 (1957): 516–551; Gerd Lüdemann, *Paulus der Heidenapostel vol. 2: Antipaulinismus im frühen Christentum* (FRLANT 130, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983); Simon Légasse, *L'antipaulinisme sectaire au temps des Pères de l'Église* (CRB 47, Paris: J. Gabalda, 2000), and Luigi Cirillo, "L'antipaolinismo nelle Pseudo-clementine." In *Verus Israel*, ed. Giovanni Filoramo and Claudio Gianotto (Brescia: Paideia, 2001), 280–303; Jürgen Wehnert, "Petrus *versus* Paulus in den pseudoklementinischen Homilien 17." In *Christians as a Religious Minority in a Multicultural City. Modes of Interaction and Identity Formation in Early Imperial Rome*, ed. Jürgen Zangenberg and Michael Labahn (London-New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 175–185.

[98] Robert J. Hauck, "'They Saw What They Said They Saw': Sense Knowledge in Early Christian Polemic." *HTR* 81.3 (1988): 239–249; See Côté's contribution to this volume.

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[…] ἐπὶ τῆς καρδίας ἀνέβη· οὐκ οἶδα οὖν πῶς εἶπον· "Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ζῶντος θεοῦ". τὸν δὲ μακαρίσαντά με μηνῦσαί μοι τὸν ἀποκαλύψαντα πατέρα εἶναι, ἐμὲ δὲ ἔκτοτε μαθεῖν ὅτι τὸ ἀδιδάκτως, ἄνευ ὀπτασίας καὶ ὀνείρων, μαθεῖν ἀποκάλυψίς ἐστιν. καὶ ἀληθῶς οὕτως ἔχει. ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἐν ἡμῖν ἐκ θεοῦ τεθείσῃ σπερματικῶς […] πᾶσα ἔνεστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια, θεοῦ δὲ χειρὶ σκέπεται καὶ ἀποκαλύπτεται, τοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος τὸ κατ' ἀξίαν ἑκάστου εἰδότος.

It came into my heart to say [I don't know how, and I said]: Thou art the Son of the Living God. But He, pronouncing me blessed, pointed out to me that it was the Father who had revealed it to me; and from this time, I learned that revelation is knowledge gained without instruction, and without apparition and dreams. [That is really so]. For[99] which has been placed in us by God *as a seed*,[100] there is all the truth; but it is covered and revealed by the hand of God, who works so far as each one through his knowledge deserves.

Origen, in his *Contra Celsum*, discusses how a superior and incorporeal sense causes the apostles to see things superior to the material world.[101] This is a faculty of good souls of inspired saints here on earth as well of other souls (when free from the body) that are seeking to know God, and are turning themselves towards the eternal realities. Only they who are truly wise and genuinely pious are nearer to communion with God.[102] In this case, Origen uses the concept of the Platonic 'eye of the soul' connected to the divine senses. John Dillon pointed out that this idea of a divine, noetic sense was also shared by Plotinus, and most probably some Gnostics, within a broader social dialogue.[103] Within the philosophical construction of the narrative and in line of what I have discussed before, this idea connects with what Peter has said earlier about true vision and noetic vision of the invisible Form. Here, concerning the visible realm, Peter discusses how this revelation, nor true perception is not attainable for everyone. In line with the desire for truth, piety and the way of ascent, revelation of knowledge and the true way of vision/perception is only attainable for those who deserve it through their pure mind and intelligence: "τῷ γὰρ εὐσεβεῖ ἐμφύτῳ καὶ καθαρῷ

[99] Smith translates it as 'soul'.

[100] Smith does not translate this. Intratextually, this refers to the 'white (λευκός) word' disseminated by the Prophet, who enlightens the minds of his recipients (3.27.2–3).

[101] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.48; See for this discussion, Hauck, "They Saw", 245.

[102] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.17. It does not seem to be a coincidence that Origen refers to the same quote of Matt 18:10 (*De Principiis* 1.1.9, preserved in Latin) and interprets it as referring to the noetic contemplation by the faculty of the mind (in contrast to the sensory experiences): "By this divine sense, therefore, not of the eyes but of a pure heart, that is, the mind, God can be seen by those who are worthy. That 'heart' [BDV: corde Deum videre] is used for mind, that is for intellectual faculty […]." This passage is quoted by John M. Dillon, "Aisthesis Noete: A Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses in Origen and in Plotinus." In *The Golden Chain. Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity*, ed. John M. Dillon (Collected Studies Series; CS 333; Hampshire: Variorum, 1990), 446.

[103] Dillon, "Aisthesis noete", 443–455; for Plotin, in particular 449–453. In *Enn*. 6.7, Plotinus deals with Plato's statement that the young Gods (in *Tim*. 45b) fabricate eyes for the soul (for in the body). In order to refute the idea that the mind and the sensory faculties would be inclined to and anticipate bodily perception, he seems to defend a theory of noetic sensibilia.

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ἀναβλύζει τῷ νῷ τὸ ἀληθές, οὐκ ὀνείρῳ σπουδαζόμενον, ἀλλὰ συνέσει ἀγαθοῖς διδόμενον." In this way, Peter offers an answer to one of the problems within intellectual Christian circles, who prefer to explain apostolic witnesses concerning God by way of the intellect, not the senses. True vision is noetic vision, which fits Peter's earlier expositions, and which corrects the sensory perception of visible things. This noetic vision lets Peter perceive the true form in the visible world.

In this way, the end of the *Homilies* is a fitting conclusion. In the end, Peter practices what he explained during the whole of the *Homilies*: truly seeing and true forms. Faustus, not yet baptised, literally becomes an 'image' of Simon. After someone reported that Appion and Annubion, two older friends of Faustus's, came from Antioch to Laodicea, Faustus decides to meet them. Simon, however, is also present and takes the occasion to change faces with Faustus in order to escape unnoticed (20.11). At the end of the *Clementines*, the emperor is said to have issued a decree that all the magicians are to be expelled. However, in the *Homilies* it is not clear that there is an actual decree. The emperor has apparently issued a decree that all the magicians are to be driven away,[104] but the centurion Cornelius is actually helping Peter and his spies in spreading the rumour that the emperor issued this decree, so that Simon must flee (20.13.6). The next day, Faustus comes back from his meeting. Clement-narrator writes (20.12.4–5):

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| ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐμβλέποντες αὐτῷ ἐξειστήκειμεν, τὸ εἶδος Σίμωνος ὁρῶντες, φωνῆς δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἀκούοντες Φαύστου. καὶ δὴ φευγόντων ἡμῶν αὐτὸν καὶ στυγνούντων ἐξεπέπληκτο ὁ πατὴρ ἐπὶ τῷ οὕτως ἀπηνῶς καὶ ἐχθρῶς αὐτῷ χρῆσθαι. | But we were amazed when we looked at him: for we saw the form of Simon, but heard the voice of our father Faustus. And when we were fleeing from him, and abhorring him, our father was astonished at receiving such harsh and hostile treatment from us. |

Faustus's image has been corrupted, which, again, fits the narrative of false and true images and forms. Several scholars have explicitly[105] and implicitly considered this passage to be broken off or at least thought it not to be original,[106] compared to the more elaborated sequel that can be found in the *Recognitions*. In these *Recognitions*, Faustus's form is restored and Clement and his family

[104] Cf. *Rec.* 10.55.3.

[105] Quarry wrote in his discussion of the end of the *Homilies*: "For though even now the termination is rather abrupt, and leaves the narrative incomplete, yet the scribe having put 'amen' at the end of his copy, as it now exists, it is to be presumed that he found no more to transcribe." John Quarry, "Notes Chiefly Critical, on the Two Last Books of the Clementine Homilies." *Hermathena* 7.15 (1889): 67–104, here 67.

[106] In his outline of what the *Grundschrift* would have looked like, Stanley Jones presumes the elaborate ending of the *Recognitions* to have been the original one. F. Stanley Jones, "Eros and Astrology in the ΠΕΡΙΟΔΟΙ ΠΕΤΡΟΥ: The Sense of the Pseudo-Clementine Novel." In *Pseudoclementina Elchasaiticaque inter Judaeochristiana. Collected Studies*, ed. F. Stanley Jones (OLA 203; Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 114–137, here 121.

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actually go to Antioch. In the *Homilies*, we do not read about the restoration of Faustus's image, nor about their arrival in Antioch. It ends with how Peter uses Faustus's form in order to convince people that Simon repents his mistakes and that he declares Peter to be the servant of truth. Meinolf Vielberg has already argued that this narrative conclusion fits in with Peter's theory of useless magic and useless miracles as an essential difference between Christian miracles and the magic of Simon Magus (2.34).[107] While those miracles are useful because they help people, that is not the case for Simon's magical exploits, of which the face swap scene is one. In addition, Annette Yoshiko Reed briefly noticed a link between the end of the *Homilies* and the debates in *Hom.* 17, so far as Peter is able to see truth beyond false appearances.[108] Moreover, I argue, it fits the whole overarching structure of truly seeing and true forms since Peter is the one who sees the true form of Faustus: "μόνος δὲ Πέτρος τὴν κατὰ φύσιν αὐτοῦ ὁρῶν μορφὴν" (20.12.6). Peter's eyes are unaffected by magic, the revelatory-prophetic sense perception lets him truly see in the visible world (ἐμοῦ δὲ τοῖς ἀμαγεύτοις ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ὡς ἔστιν ὁρατὸν ὅτι μή ἐστι Σίμων, ἀλλὰ Φαῦστος; 20.12.7). The episode of seeing true forms in the visible world fits Peter's expositions: from corrupted and vain images, via the true form of man, to the invisible form of God and the discussion of why he perceives the truth. It also takes up again the expositions of Peter in Tripolis about how one's (unbaptised) form can be corrupted. Faustus's form is corrupted since he is the only unbaptised member of the reunited family. Moreover, it emphasises Simon's link with vain images and forms as well, just as the metamorphoses of the human magicians, who were seen as gods and were honoured as artificial statues (in contrast to this image). Interestingly, Peter sees the form which is natural (κατὰ φύσιν), in contrast to Simon's magical transformation and abuse of it. In other words, as a philosophical closure, Peter truly sees with the νοῦς in the darkened cave (world), which is filled with false and misleading appearances of forms.

## 4. The *Homilies* as a (Platonising) Philosophical Narrative (and Way of Life)

As I have argued, the Platonising motifs throughout Peter's exposition are built up within the framework of Clement's initiation and further development. In this way, the *Homilistic* philosophical narrative journey fits in with other philo-

[107] Meinolf Vielberg, "Glaubwürdig oder unglaubwürdig? Erzählung und Rezeption wunderbarer Ereignisse in den Pseudoklementinen." In *Credible, Incredible. The Miraculous in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Tobias Nicklas and Janet E. Spittler (Tübingen: Mohr Sieck, 2013), 209–226, here 225: "Deswegen triumphiere Petrus nicht nur in der Kunst des Debattierens, sondern auch auf dem Feld der Lüge und Magie über Simon Magus."

[108] Reed, "Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism", 357.

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sophical narratives in and points of view on philosophy in Late Antiquity.[109] It is a choice of life and an existential option in which philosophical discourse originates. For example, Alcinous wrote in his *Handbook of Platonism*, referring to Plato's *Phaedo* (67d): "Philosophy is a striving for wisdom, or the freeing and turning around of the soul from the body, when we turn towards the intelligible and what truly is; and wisdom is the science of things divine and human".[110] Due to the choice of the novelistic framework and the topic of travel,[111] the *Homilistic* narrative is literally represented as a philosophical way of life, besides the philosophical ascent explained step by step in Peter's discourses. As Pierre Hadot wrote about philosophy in Late Antiquity:[112]

> Several testimonies show that from the beginning of the second century A. D., philosophy was conceived of as an ascending spiritual itinerary which corresponded to a hierarchy of the parts of philosophy. Ethics ensured the soul's initial purification; physics revealed that the world has a transcendent cause and thus encouraged philosophers to search for incorporeal realities; metaphysics, or theology (also called "epoptics;" because, as in the Mysteries, it is the endpoint of initiation), ultimately entails the contemplation of God.[113]

However, Peter does not present this contemplation as the end of Clement's journey, nor does he present the progress as a 'flight' of the soul. It is a progress which leads towards a better disposition of (wo)man within this visible world. In this way, the *Homilies* are a unique philosophical narrative[114] in which the Platonising patterns are key. Already from the beginning, this was made clear due to several allusions and references to Plato. This approach, moreover, sheds new light on the role of philosophy in the *Homilies* and the relationship with other late antique narratives. In a recent article, Peter Gemeinhardt noted the similar-

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[109] See for example, Michael Trapp, "What is this Philosophia Anyway?" In *Philosophical Presences in the Ancient Novel*, ed. John R. Morgan and Meriel Jones (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2007), 1–22.

[110] Alcinous, Handbook § 1.1; Alcinous, *The Handbook of Platonism. Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by John Dillon* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002²), 3.

[111] For this topic, see Judith Hack's contribution to this volume.

[112] Pierre Hadot, *Qu'est-ce Que la Philosophie Antique?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995); idem, *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique. Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée* (Paris: A. Michel, 2002). His works are translated into English: Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy? Translated by Michael Chase* (Cambridge [MA]: Harvard University Press, 2004); idem, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*.

[113] Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy*, 154. Think also e. g., of Celsus's remark of how Christians do not look with the eye of the soul, *Contra Celsum* 7.36.

[114] The concept of the 'philosophical novel' is modern, but it is useful for indicating the strong philosophical character and arrangement of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*. Stefan Tilg has argued for the usefulness of this category for Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, "A Philosophical Novel: Platonic Fiction." In *Apuleius' Metamorphoses. A Study in Roman Fiction*, ed. Stefan Tilg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 57–83, esp. 61 and 61 n 12. Both novels deal with the desire to learn (the truth in the *Homilies* and the paradoxical truth of metamorphoses in Apuleius's novel). For the *Metamorphoses* as an inverted Platonising novel, Tilg, "A Philosophical Novel", 57–83; and Hunter, "Playing with Plato", 235–236.

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ity between the two narratives of Justin[115] and the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*. He writes, "By means of their literary setting, the Pseudo-Clementines underline, as Justin did, that conversion to Christianity is an educational process." Due to the sharp criticism of philosophers and of Greek *paideia* in general in the *Homilies*, Gemeinhardt continues: "However, in contrast to Justin, there is a critical stance taken against pagan learning even if it is subordinate to the spiritual and practical teaching of Peter."[116] While Justin clearly gained intellectually by going to several philosophical teachers, Clement-character, on the contrary, is deeply disappointed in these schools, and, moreover, in the whole Greek *paideia* as I have discussed earlier. It seems that, in this way, the *Homilies* stand in line of the harsh criticism as we can find in the works of Tatian or Tertullian. However, when we look at our discussion of the *Homilistic* narrative and the unravelled Platonic structures, Clement and Justin seem to have more in common than first meets the eye. Justin stated that Platonic philosophy was the better among the pagan philosophical traditions, since it aimed at seeing God.[117] As discussed in this contribution, this is also the case in the *Homilies*, according to the developing structure of Peter's discourses. The *Homilistic* narrative is perhaps even more positive: Platonic language and concepts are used in order to discuss this ascent. This reception is not unique of course since many Christian authors referred in a (mostly) positive way to Plato.[118] However, the way adapted Platonic philosophy supports the narrative structure of the *Homilies* is striking and unique compared to the apologetic authors.

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[115] For the point of view that the *Pseudo-Clementine Grundschrift* drew on Justin (inverting the latter's anti-Judaism, e. g., by not dismissing *kashrut* regulations as part of the Torah), see F. Stanley Jones, "An Ancient Jewish Christian Rejoinder to Luke's Acts of the Apostles: Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions 1.27–71." In *Semeia 80: The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles in Intertextual Perspectives*, ed. Robert F. Stoops (Atlanta [GA]: SBL, 1990), 223–245; see also F. Stanley Jones, "The Distinctive Sayings of Jesus Shared by Justin and the Pseudo-Clementines." In *Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier: The Christian Apocrypha in North American Perspectives*, ed. Tony Burke (Eugene [OR]: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 200–217; idem, "Novels." *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul M. Blowers, Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 295–302, here 298. This has also already been suggested by John Quarry, "Notes Chiefly Critical, on the Clementine Homilies and the Epistles prefixed to them." *Hermathena* 7.16 (1890): 239–267, here 247–248. For the idea that Justin used a 'Jewish-Christian' source related to the *Pseudo-Clementines*, see Oskar Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-text Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 316–320.

[116] Peter Gemeinhardt, "In Search of Christian Paideia: Education and Conversion in Early Christian Biography." *ZAC* 16.1 (2012): 88–98, here 95.

[117] Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* § 2.

[118] There are also a few explicit Platonic quotes (e. g., Peter refers to *Timaeus* 29a–e in *Hom.* 19.11). For the Platonic reception in Christian authors (not in the *Pseudo-Clementines*), see George E. Karamanolis, *The Philosophy of Early Christianity* (Durham: Acumen, 2013); for the explicit appreciation of Plato by early Christian authors (not in the *Pseudo-Clementines*), Sébastien Morlet, "The Agreement of Christianity and Platonic Philosophy from Justin Martyr to Eusebius." In *Platonism and Christian Thought in Late Antiquity*, ed. Panagiotis G. Pavlos et al. (Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity, London: Routledge, 2019), 17–32.

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## 5. Conclusion

As I have discussed in this contribution, two Platonising patterns support the narrative structure of the *Homilies*: the Platonic pattern of the vision and noetic contemplation of God combined with the philosophical theme of images and their model (referring to the Platonising lecture of Gen 1:26–27) and the theme of becoming as closely like God as possible. This Platonising framework is structured by Peter's deeds and teachings. In this way, Clement-narrator fashions his journey as a Platonising one and, moreover, he fashions Peter and the True Prophet as modified Platonic philosophers.

Moreover, this use of philosophical capital, in order to promote the unique (Judaising) Christian doctrines, also interacts with (Neo-)Platonic and Christian Platonic authors operating in the same symbolic field, as we have come across on several occasions. The Platonic motifs and terminology, however, are not subject of theoretical commentaries as is the case for instance with the Middle Platonist Alcinous, but they are used in order to structure and support the philosophical narrative. We could say that the *Homilistic* author uses the Platonic dialogues and motifs and the texts of the Old and New Testaments as hermeneutical lenses in order to represent the Christian, philosophical and spiritual life.

This contribution, moreover, nuances an important point with which I have started this contribution: the perception of the *Homilies* as an imageless novel. The image is indeed to be understood, not in a rhetorical way, but in an existential-philosophical way. The understanding, seeing, and contemplating of the true form is the Platonising nucleus of the narrative and the philosophical spine of the *Homilies*.

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