

Patrizia Marzillo

*Abstract*

The description of the cave of the Nymphs, which opens the XIII book of Homer's *Odyssey*, depicts a

*locus amoenus*

although it does not fulfill completely the criteria of this literary

*topos*

. Exactly because of its ambiguity, the passage was interpreted by the Neoplatonist Porphyry who wrote an entire treatise on the cave. By analysing Porphyry's literal and allegorical exegesis and how his commentary inspired, in turn, a fresco of the Aureli Hypogeum in Rome and a modern performance, it will be attempted to explain how the ecphrasis has lost its aesthetic meaning in order to acquire a functional valence already present

*in nuce*

in Homer.

Patrizia Marzillo is currently a Martin Buber Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where she is carrying out a research project on Presocratic philosophy's reception in the Early Modern Age; in this frame, she published several contributions on philosopher poets' tradition and interpretation by Henricus Stephanus and Joseph Justus Scaliger. In addition, she intensively dealt with Neoplatonism and allegoresis. Her PhD thesis, published in 2010 as a monograph, is a critical edition (with a translation into German, a vaste philological and philosophical introduction, and final remarks) of the 283 fragments ascribable to Proclus' commentary on Hesiod's «Works and Days».