

Summary

FELIX THURLEMANN (University of Konstanz) / *Gathering the Manna* by Poussin. Astonishment as passion of seeing

The following study is a chapter from Felix Thürlemann's book *Vom Bild zum Raum. Beiträge zu einer semiotischen Kunstwissenschaft*. Other chapters alike, while discussing *Gathering the Manna* by Poussin, the author focuses on specific means of presentation – in this case we deal with *mis en abyme* method, “a summarising mirroring”. In *Gathering the Manna* this function is ascribed to the group of four figures at the left edge of the painting. Next to some hints referring to reception, included in a character of the bewildered man, there is also depicted a woman who refuses her breast to the child in order to feed her mother threatened with starvation. This motif, frequently referred to in ancient literature and art, known as *Caritas Romana*, was a classic example (*topos, locus*) of love among family members. Thürlemann demonstrates that both this scene and the added figure of reception constitute a metaplane of an image. As a summarising mirroring this scene delivers to onlookers appropriate hints referring to reception and helps them reaching the sense of *Gathering the Manna*. Following Horatius' *dictum Ut pictura poesis* and the perception of pictures understood as analogies of a language that were effective from the beginning of modernity, Poussin applied a method of representation based on rhetoric, which may be proved by the comparison between gathering the manna and *Caritas Romana*. Many other features of *Gathering the Manna* can be read following rhetoric categories, as *exordium* for instance, which concept designates an introduction to a discourse, which is about to endear the listeners to a further content.