

## Summary

**MICHAL HAAKE (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan) / *Shylock and Jessica* – Maurycy Gottlieb as a painter**

The oeuvre of a Jewish-Polish painter, Maurycy Gottlieb has been considered so far as strictly related with his biography and the questions of a national and religious identity. This perspective, much as it applies to extraordinarily significant issues, results in overlooking a picture **as a picture**, meaning the relation between a representation and a pictorial medium, i.e. surface. The relation of the both elements makes up a possibility to reveal a specific speech of painting, absent in other kinds of art. The question whether it comes to this revelation is an indispensable one. Especially in terms of the pictures whose contents derive from texts, as in the case of Gottlieb's painting, *Shylock and Jessica*, which depicts characters of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. In this case the question must be also posed if the painting's features, perceived as the painter's original achievement – namely iconography, the scene of handing in the keys, and its composition, as well as depicting Shylock as a tender, painful father – should be perceived as a typical solution in view of various manifestations of reception of this work by Shakespeare. Originality and artistic significance of Gottlieb's painting is revealed instead in the fact that the artist – with the aim of provoking an optical play between the representation and the pictorial surface – managed to come up with a visual equivalent of important and general, namely reaching beyond a narrative dimension of the scene, traits of relations between the drama characters. Referring to the question of identity, in consequence we can state that Gottlieb by means of his painting does not speak to us neither as a Jew, nor as a Pole, but as a painter.