

TOMASZ ROKOSZ

SEEING THE SOUND, HEARING THE IMAGE,  
DANCING THE MYTH: MUSICALNESS OF THE MIDSUMMER  
NIGHT RITUAL IN SOME POLISH ICONOGRAPHY  
OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Midsummer Night ritual has long interested researchers and folklore collectors. The nineteenth century was a kind of apogee with regard to the discussed subject, as attested by the number of diverse ethnographic, literary, musical and visual sources. However, in the quite extensive Polish literature concerning Midsummer Night there are no studies of iconographic documentation related to the summer solstice ritual. This documentation seems to be quite significant, as it may provide new information about the ritual, and in particular about the musicalness of Midsummer Night. It is also worth remembering that works of art are a testimony to the epoch in which they were created. Not all of them should be regarded as ethnographic source material—classification and interpretation methodology of this type of documentation are vital.

With regard to the **musicalness of the ritual**, the collected iconography demonstrates primarily three main groups of issues: dance, the participation of musicians playing specific instruments in the ritual and, much less frequently and less prominently, depictions of singing. The discussed material can also be divided according to other criteria, for example, into realistic and symbolic representations, but such rigid divisions are not always possible.

When comparing a musical and a visual work in a semiotic sense, it is important to notice the translation of content from one code (sound) to another (visual image). The performance of a musical work here and now usually carries a visual aspect, which is also significant for its reception. Historically,

---

Dr hab. TOMASZ ROKOSZ, Associate Professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin; e-mail: [tomasz.rokosz@kul.pl](mailto:tomasz.rokosz@kul.pl); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6666-6196>.

---

Articles are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

---

participants in rituals typically had a possibility of not only aural perception of an event (specific cultural practices), but also of visual reception that complemented it. It is also worth emphasizing a substantial share of dances both in the folk and highly artistic (e.g., court) culture, which implied active cultural participation (and certainly required appropriate cultural competence).

A visual work of art in its basic forms is devoid of sound. However, in a semiotic and structural sense, iconography can contain specific motifs closely related to music, and also bears “hidden”—symbolic—content. It pertains especially to the way in which the sphere of musicalness is represented (particularly musical instruments, singing and dancing).

From a semiotic perspective, there is also correspondence between different fields of art, expressed through various means. The principles of analogy, synaesthesia (cf. STL, 551) and, to a lesser extent, inverted ekphrasis<sup>1</sup> should particularly be mentioned here. Specific motifs in visual representations can also be understood as symbols, metaphors or even allegories.

Let us make a few other remarks. My thesis is that iconography does not necessarily reproduce an authentic ritual—it is frequently only inspired by it.

In its traditional form, the Midsummer Night ritual was already rare in the nineteenth century and probably few authors (painters and writers) had an opportunity to witness it personally or—even less frequently—to participate in it. Because of that, when interpreting the collected iconography, it is worth juxtaposing it with other ethnographic sources, also in order to determine through comparative analysis of what was actually depicted by an artist. Reconstruction of the author’s intentions is difficult, although possible, at least in the form of hypotheses. Moreover, in the case of a work of art we should also establish the relationship between the artistic intention of the author and a particular version of the ritual. It should be assumed that the artist may have used indirect sources (literary, ethnographic, or visual). Furthermore, it is also possible to illustrate only ideas, fantasies, and illusions about the ritual or to implement one’s own artistic concept that more or less distorts reality (like in cubism, expressionism, surrealism, etc.; cf. Michna 2014). However, possible refutation of the so-called “authenticity” of the source (historical and ethnographic realities presented in it) does not diminish its intrinsic value.

---

<sup>1</sup> I understand the phenomenon of inverted ekphrasis as creation of iconography on the basis of a literary work. Another issue is ekphrasis *sensu stricto*—a work of lyrics and music composed to paintings or “a poetic work that is a description of a painting, sculpture or building” (cf. STL, 122).

From a cultural perspective, the Midsummer Night ritual should be interpreted as a multi-level macro-sign, which is co-created by the following codes: verbal, personal, temporal, spatial, action, musical and object-related (cf. Tolstoy 1995, 63, 167). All of these codes can be transferred into the realm of visual arts. In a visual work of art, direct references to the musical code will be the object code, the action code and, to a lesser extent, the verbal code. Iconography typically presents actions, props, and possibly verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The musicalness of a ritual (its musical code) can be expressed by any of the above-mentioned three codes, intersemiotically translated into an image. The counterpart of the verbal code in iconography will be the representation of the full phonosphere: singing, but also the visual expression of shouting, screaming, uproar (less often the inscription of a specific verbal phrase into the work). Depictions of instruments will be parallel to the object code, while representations of dance will be classified as non-verbal behaviour reflecting the action code. We will also include here depictions of other musical somatic behaviours, such as clapping, stomping, jumping over fire, showing specific body positions, etc. These types of behaviour have also amusical (mainly rhythmic) dimension. Therefore, I understand the musicalness of the ritual in iconography broadly, as a visual representation of all musical aspects of the rite.

Furthermore, it is evident that iconography contains exhibits of the temporal and spatial code. A visual work of art generally depicts the space of ritual activities and ritual time. As regards the action code, iconography usually shows one selected moment of the ritual.

Dances, especially in a circle, could fulfil complex functions, including communication and social bond-building, but originally they were connected with rituals (Kowalska 1995, 33; Nowicka 2014, 2017).

It is worth reminding that in the ethnochoreological literature it is emphasized that the myths of many peoples contain the cosmogonic motifs expressed through dance: “A circle of everlasting beings who, by dancing, whirling or penetrating space between its cardinal points, brought forth the world or its constitutive elements from the abyss of the primordial ocean” (Kowalska 1995, 7). This clue can also suggest that the cosmogonic myth is reproduced and reflected in the ritual Midsummer Night dance (cf. Kalinowska-Kłosiewicz 1985).

Out of the numerous anthropological and semiotic interpretations pertaining to the discussed issues, I will cite only two that can be considered crucial from the perspective of dances in a circle. Describing in detail the “symbolism of the centre”, Eliade (1998) regards the centre as the midpoint of the world

relevant in the majority of known cosmogonies (21–38). Jolanta Kowalska (1991) considers the category of the centre in space, and especially in dance, to be the equivalent of the tonic in music (70), and mentions the diverse and detailed examples of the centre and forms of movement in traditional dances. In the Midsummer Night dance, such a centre around which the girls dance is a blazing bonfire, often additionally with a stake, pole, *palinocka*, etc. stuck in the middle. It can be interpreted as the *axis mundi*. This is how the Midsummer Night log pile used to be prepared and still is in Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus (cf. Brykczyński 1988, 94–97). In the Eastern Slavs there are also forms of a ritual tree which, if regarded as a figuration of the cosmic tree of life, also symbolically marks the centre of the world.

Songs were indispensable components of Midsummer Night: they shaped the dynamics of the ritual and were a way of expressing linguistic and extralinguistic content manifested in the somatic code. However, in the collected visual works of art from the nineteenth-century singing is hardly “visible”—dance and other cultural practices such as jumping over a bonfire are much more vivid and at the same time simpler to depict. Certainly, representation of dance does not preclude depiction of singing, and the two can harmonize. We can even assume that singing “accompanies” dance: after all, people danced to some kind of music (vocal, instrumental, vocal-instrumental).

The same applies to instrumental music, which is shown explicitly by the presence of the object code exhibitors, primarily musical instruments. They may be depicted “in the background” but the culmination of musicalness in iconography is direct representation of the musicians playing and, possibly, the reception of music—its effect on the listeners (the somatic code, emotions expressed in the listeners’ faces, putting them into a state of ecstasy, etc.)

One iconographic example, which will be the subject of a description and comparative analysis, is *Sobótka* [Midsummer Night], a drawing by Apoloniusz Kędzierski (1861–1939), published in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* in 1884. It was an illustration for “Pieśń świętojańska o Sobótce” [Midsummer Night Song], a poem by Jan Kochanowski (*Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, no. 86, p. 121). Apoloniusz Kędzierski’s illustration bears a specific title, *Sobótka*, referring directly to the summer solstice rite. According to this illustration, a wood engraving on paper (woodcut and drawing) was made by Julian Schübeler (*Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, no. 86, p. 121).



Figure 1. Apoloniusz Kędzierski, *Sobótka*

*Sobótka* one of Kędzierski's early works (before his experience with impressionism). He was 23 years old when he created it, and at that time he studied painting at the Warsaw Drawing School of Wojciech Gerson and Aleksander Kamiński (SAP 398). The drawing shows in detail the Midsummer Night ritual taking place on a river bank or a lake shore, at the edge of a forest—in a mediated place, frequently attested in ethnographic sources.

Kędzierski's work is artistically equal to other illustrations of the ritual from the period (by Gerson, Pillati, Siemiradzki) and it can be interpreted on many levels.

The theme of the drawing is depicted in the convention of certain theatricalisation of Midsummer Night. The participants of the ritual are shown in several groups and the illustrated subject is divided into three planes. The foreground is static. The characters presented here are quite clearly spectators of the ritual. Its "centre" is depicted on the second, dynamic plane. This spatial arrangement enabled the author to increase the depth of the image and avoid depicting details accurately: of the musicians, musical instruments and dancers. Thus, the musical ritual activities, made somewhat unreal in this way, could be "poetised" with an appropriate illustrative technique (*chiaroscuro*

layout, blurring of the dancers' contours). Despite this approach, Midsummer Night is the predominant motif here—in terms of theme, light and movement.

On the two planes described, we can distinguish several groups: girls dancing in a circle, musicians, girls wearing garlands (probably younger) watching the dances, older residents standing in a circle a little off to the side, two younger boys peeking at the ritual from a distance, a woman with a child in her arms (a clear indication of her married status). Thus, we can divide the participants of the ritual into several categories according to the structure of the local community. The third, farthest plane is the background, which represents the wilderness—provides the space for ritual activities.

The most dynamic representation is that of the group of dancing girls. They form a choreographed circle around the Midsummer Night bonfire. They dance holding one another's hands, which is a characteristic motif in many other representations of the ritual.

The Midsummer Night dance in such an arrangement—around a bonfire—is confirmed by numerous historical and ethnographic sources, including contemporary field interviews (Kalinowska-Kłosiewicz, Rokosz). The sources demonstrate a rather simple but meaningful choreographic arrangement (see Kowalska 1991, 1995; Nowicka 2014, 2017). The same is true about Kędzierski's *Sobótka*—we can even determine the direction of the movement, based on the way the dancing girls are depicted—to the right, which is very important for describing its symbolism. This is particularly evidenced by the girls' flowing, loose hair and dresses. Nine dancing girls can be seen, the others not; however, we can say there are twelve of them, which matches the number of maidens described by Kochanowski. Movement to the right is identical to the movement of the sun, which is the central symbol of the ritual and in the past was most likely an object of worship itself. Furthermore, movement to the right symbolizes the so-called "opening of time"—the future, which corresponds to the predictive function of many Midsummer Night customs. However, in the collected iconography there are examples where the reverse movement of Midsummer Night dancers is presented, which has also been interpreted in detail in the literature. For example, Wojciech Gerson (*Sobótka z Bilczy*) depicted the reverse movement of Midsummer Night dancers—"against the sun" (cf. Kolberg 1962). An article by Danuta Kalinowska-Kłosiewicz contains an important interpretation of this direction of movement as a "retreat to the mythical time", necessary in the initiation scheme (73). In the case of detailed anthropological analyses, numerous factors and aspects should be taken into account, which we cannot address in this brief sketch.

The musicians are another significant group in the drawing. The instruments they hold in their hands are depicted very vaguely—“from afar”. The second plane of the drawing is at the same time in the centre of the picture. It is crucial in terms of the theme and composition (it depicts the main participants of the ritual: the girls and the musicians). It is highlighted, e.g. by the use of light which draws the viewer’s attention. The author has combined here the dynamics of movement with the dynamics of light. The three instruments are played by old men with grey beards, standing and facing the viewer. The fourth man next to this group is younger, seated and shown from behind (hence the hypothesis that the fourth person sitting near the musicians is a painter sketching the rite in which he is taking part). The three old musicians are illuminated by the light of the bonfire (which can also be interpreted symbolically as enlightenment, knowledge, and wisdom). The old age of the musicians is noteworthy—the representation of an old man-musician can be interpreted as a symbol of tradition, wisdom, and experience—reaching back to the archetype of archaic music. The three instruments in their hands resemble Greek lyres and it is worth mentioning that these instruments were not played in the Polish territories. The artist’s aim was not to reconstruct a particular type of lyre from a given region, but rather to present an instrument (and the music it creates) of a specific, well-known symbolism. Thus, the artist reaches for the widespread symbolic basis, formed around the topos of the Greek Apollonian lyre<sup>2</sup> and its numerous connotations. This symbol can be regarded as an archetype of the Mediterranean culture. It is introduced into the Polish Midsummer Night artificially—“from outside”.

The introduction of three (symbolic number) lyres into the illustration could not have been accidental. In the drawing we can see the oldest horse-shoe-shaped version of *kithara*, which appears in the ancient Greek iconographic sources as early as in the 14th century BC (cf. Landels 2003, 64). This version of the instrument is the closest to the commonly known mythical accounts of its creation (SS 198–99). Its representation in the drawing might indicate an artistic intention to archaize the ritual.

The Greek (classical) lyre has an enormous number of meanings and connotations (SS 199). Many of them relate to the musicalness of the Midsummer Night ritual. We should primarily emphasize the logical parallelism between the Apollonian lyre—the “solar” instrument and the basic attribute of the “solar god”, and the summer solstice celebration in which the sun also plays

---

<sup>2</sup> An instrument developed in antiquity, with a different structure and origin than the string chordophones played in the Polish land (such as *suka biłgorajska* or *geśle*).

the central role. The Greek lyre (*phorminx*) is often referred to as golden (*chrysea phorminx*). Gold can be understood here as the symbolic equivalent of the sun, light and fire.

Furthermore, Urania, the Muse of astronomy (associated with the lyre), fits well with the context of the summer solstice, during which, among other things, the setting sun was ritually observed. The similar relationships with the ritual can be discovered in the case of Terpsichore, the Muse of joy and dance (SS 198), and Erato, the Muse of love poetry and music. Thus, as we can see, the connotations between the Greek lyre and the mythological characters associated with it align perfectly with the described ritual. In addition, the drawing depicts ethereal dancing girls who match the “mythical canon” of the Muses.

It is also worth touching upon (barely—for reasons of space) some detailed issues important for the musicological-semiotic analysis. These include performance practice: how do the musicians depicted in the drawing hold the lyres and how do they play them? It is noteworthy that two of the musicians play the lyre standing up, clearly making sounds with the bows.

The Orphic tradition of the instrument, associated at the level of a Greek myth with the ritual initiation of women, may also be important for symbolic interpretation of the analysed depiction of the lyre. Such (initiatory) functions were also fulfilled by the Midsummer Night ritual (cf. Kalinowska-Kłosiewicz 1985). At a certain interpretive level, the maenads rampaging in the wilderness can be seen as similar to virgins dancing in ecstasy, who in Kędzierski’s work are depicted not quite realistically. They somewhat resemble ethereal nymphs.<sup>3</sup>

In the drawing, as in the Polish folk tradition, the initiated women wear long, white, perhaps linen gowns. We know that flax had a symbolic significance in many rituals (mainly as an apotropaic plant). On the practical side, loose gowns do not restrict movement during a dance. However, it is worth noting that “originally, the ritual Midsummer Night dance was performed by naked girls” (Kalinowska-Kłosiewicz 1985, 72).

Since Kędzierski’s *Sobótka* is an illustration of Kochanowski’s *Pieśń świętojańska*, a fragment of which was printed in the same issue of *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* (no. 86, 127), we would rather expect a depiction of three bagpipers, a fiddler, and a drummer. After all, *Pieśń świętojańska* describes the bagpipes, fiddle and drum playing.

---

<sup>3</sup> In the Polish iconography of the 19th century, the Midsummer Night’s dances are depicted rather aesthetically (as shown by Pillati and Kędzierski) and not ecstatically as represented mostly in historical sources (cf. Długosz 1867; Zawistowicz-Adamska 1930, 219–20).



These instruments had already been presented before Kędzierski, in 1861, by Henryk Pillati who illustrated the text. Pillati's *Sobótka Dawna* [Old Midsummer Night] depicts the ritual "in a hereditary village of Jan Kochanowski". It is the best example of an accurate but somewhat mechanical illustration of the text of *Pieśń świętojańska*. It shows, among others, three elderly bagpipers who play standing up and a fiddler who plays seated.



Figure 2. Henryk Pillati, *Sobótka dawna*

It is worth recalling that the quotation from Kochanowski, "Bąki za raz troje grały," was most often interpreted as three bagpipers (bagpipes) playing at the same time (as indicated by the old Polish meaning of the term *bąk*—the pipe in bagpipes), or, less frequently, the playing of single bagpipes with three bourdon pipes or two bourdon pipes and one melodic pipe (cf. Przerembski 2006, 252). From a musical perspective, other fragments of the poem in which

Kochanowski writes expressly about “beating the drum” and the “fiddler” are also significant.

If Kędzierski saw the 1861 illustration by Pillati (which is very likely), he might have wanted to distinguish himself from his predecessor by introducing other musical symbolic elements and abandoning literalism. This also applies to the depiction of the dance—in Pillati’s picture, the girls perform (dance) in pairs (as described by Kochanowski), while in Kędzierski’s drawing they form a circle around the bonfire.

In Pillati’s work, we recognize the instruments’ details quite accurately—the number of pipes in the bagpipes and the fact that the air for the bagpipes is pumped by hand with bellows rather than with a tube (pipe) by mouth (for the structure and types of bagpipes, see Przerembski 2006, 25–36).

Nevertheless, the most significant fact in the symbolic interpretation of the drawing in question is that the bagpipes should be considered in terms of the Dionysian tradition—opposite to (and definitely separate from) the Apollonian tradition used by Kędzierski. The Orphic tradition, already mentioned above, is also linked to the cult of Dionysus. Therefore, the depiction of different instruments may have been caused by two diverse artistic and ideological concepts adopted by Kędzierski and Pillati (and not just the mechanical reproduction of the literary text). Indeed, in the two analysed examples we deal with a dualistic way of representing musicalness within the same theme. It is likely that in both representations of Midsummer Night we have a peculiar case of *interpretatio graeca*—an attempt at archaize and at the same time to raise the status of the Polish folk rituals by referring to the Greek Apollonian and (to a lesser extent) Dionysian traditions.

In both Kędzierski’s and Pillati’s works, the interaction of the two most important groups is also evident: the girls dance to the music performed by a band. Do the illustrations depict instrumental or instrumental-vocal music? From the ethnographic source accounts, we know that Midsummer Night songs were the core of the ritual. However, their depiction must recede to the background, as it is less visually appealing than illustration of dance or instrumental music. We should also add that the ethnographic sources generally lack any reliable descriptions of instrumental music performed during Midsummer Night, which left visual artists with ample room to mythologize the musicalness of the ritual.

Furthermore, Kędzierski’s illustration of Kochanowski’s work has interesting references in the painter’s biography. After the fall of the January Uprising, the Kędzierski family settled in Radom where young Apoloniusz

began his studies at the local gymnasium, near Czarnolas (cf. SAP 398), which must have had a strong effect on the painter's imagination and perhaps influenced his later work and the subjects he took up.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that the Midsummer Night ritual in the vicinity of Czarnolas has survived to this day, admittedly in a folkloric form, but more detailed field research shows that these folkloric forms are grounded in tradition.<sup>4</sup> This would justify the claim that the ritual was also present there in the second half of the nineteenth century in a certain, probably already transformed, form. Thus, Kędzierski might have witnessed the Midsummer Night ritual in his youth, but definitely not in the form depicted by him in the drawing (Pillati 1861, 232).

\*

On the basis of the presented comparative analysis of the selected iconographic source, several final conclusions can be drawn. In the two different iconographic representations of the same variant of the ritual from one historical period and region, the instrumentation changes: from the bagpipes, fiddle and drum to the Greek lyre. These representations are conditioned by the original function of the drawings (illustration of a literary work) and the artists' own concepts.

An element of the ritual's musicalness is its dynamics, conveyed in a visual work by the representation of dance, jumping, playing instruments, elements of the somatic code, and occasionally singing (less attractive visually).

Dance reflects musicalness (the ways in which certain music is arranged and performed, its rhythmization and relationship to a particular performance space). In dance, music is manifested through movement of the human body—rhythmic or arrhythmic—which cannot be fully reproduced in visual art. The presence of Midsummer Night dances is confirmed by historical and ethnographic sources. On the action level of the ritual, dances in a circle may have been a reproduction of the cosmogonic myth—e.g. reflection of the movement of the sun, which itself used to be an object of worship.

Iconography creates the ritual in a dynamic way. A fragment of a specific ritual space and time is depicted, involving a personal code (participants) and an object code (musical instruments). It does not have to be just a piece of reality from a continuous space or linear time—in iconography (e.g., in symbolic

---

<sup>4</sup> I refer here to my own field research conducted in the area in question mainly between 2012 and 2016.

representations) different time planes can overlap. However, in the examples discussed in the article we deal with a kind of “situational realism”.

In the collected iconography, it is always the community (in the relationship: human–nature) that is depicted, rather than an individual. In the process of communication understood in this way, the musicalness of the ritual plays a significant role.

The meaning of the described ritual is grounded in mythology. Among the important symbolic concepts, such as the Sun—life—fertility—health—youth, a primary interpretative category of Midsummer Night is also movement, which is the basic material of dance as well (Lange 1988, 50), and is directly connected with music through rhythm. Thus, the dynamic representations of the rite discussed in this article—in which music and, especially, dance, leaps and movement play a significant role—express the essence of the ritual.

Translated by Ewa Zabrotowicz

#### REFERENCES

- Brykczyński, Antoni. 1988. “Zapiski etnograficzne z Polesia Wołyńskiego.” In *Zbiór Wiadomości do Antropologii Krajowej wydawany staraniem Komisji Antropologicznej Akademii Umiejętności*, 12:81–102. Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności.
- Długosz, Jan. 1867. *Dziejów polskich ksiąg dwanaście*. Translated by Karol Mecherzyński. Vol. 1. Kraków.
- Eliade, Mircea. 1998. *Mit wiecznego powrotu*. Translated by Krzysztof Kocjan. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo KR.
- Kalinowska-Kłosiewicz, Danuta. 1985. “Obrzęd sobótkowy. Taniec w aspekcie symboliki ruchu obrotowego.” *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, no. 1–2, 67–75.
- Kolberg, Oskar. 1962. *Dzieła wszystkie*. Vol. 2, *Sandomierskie*, 108–23. Wrocław: PTL. Offset re-edition of the 1865 original.
- Kowalska, Jolanta. 1991. *Taniec drzewa życia. Uniwersalia kulturowe w tańcu*. Warsaw: Instytut Historii Kultury Materialnej PAN.
- Kowalska, Jolanta. 1995. *Koło bogów. Ruch i taniec w mitach i obrzędach*. Warsaw: Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN.
- Landels, John G. 2003. *Muzyka starożytnej Grecji i Rzymu*. Kraków: Homini.
- Lange, Roderyk. 1988. *O istocie tańca i jego przejawach w kulturze. Perspektywa antropologiczna*. Poznań: Rhythmos.
- Nowicka, Ewa. 2014. “Taniec w kregu. Nowe i dawne *communitas*.” *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego MCCCXXXVI. Prace Etnograficzne* 42 (2): 147–71.
- Nowicka, Ewa. 2017. “Taniec w kręgu – rola w budowaniu więzi społecznej.” In *Taniec w kulturze*, edited by Jerzy Przerembski, 74–86. Zakopane: Zakopiańskie Centrum Kultury.

- Michna, Natalia. 2014. *Wielka Awangarda wobec kultury masowej w myśli José Ortegi y Gasseta*. Kraków: Libron.
- Przerembski, Zbigniew J. 2006. *Dudy: dzieje instrumentu w kulturze staropolskiej*. Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk.
- Rokosz, Tomasz. 2016. *Obrzęd sobótkowy. Tradycja i jej transformacje (studium etnokułturowe)*. Archiwum Etnograficzne 59. Wrocław, Siedlce: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze/Pracownia Wydawnicza Wydziału Humanistycznego UPH.
- Tolstoy, Nikita I. 1995. *Yazyk i narodnaya kul'tura: Oчерki po slavyanskoj mifologii i etnolingvistike*. Moskva: Indrik.
- Zawistowicz-Adamska, Kazimiera. 1930. "Jana Kochanowskiego 'Pieśń świętojańska o sobótcie' a obrzędy świętojańskie." *Ziemia* 15 (11–12): 214–25.

#### Dictionaries

- SAP Maurin-Białostocka, Jolanta, and Janusz Derwojed, eds. 1979. *Słownik artystów polskich i obcych w Polsce działających: malarze, rzeźbiarze, graficy*. Vol. 3, *H-Ki*, edited by Hanna Bartnicka-Górska et al., with Maria Bardini et al. Wrocław: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk.
- SS Kopaliński, Władysław, ed. 2006. *Słownik symboli*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm.
- SSiSL Bartmiński, Jerzy, and Stanisława Niebrzegowska, eds. 1996. *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych*. Vol. 1, *Kosmos*, part. 1, *Niebo, światła niebieskie, ogień, kamienie*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.
- STL Sławinski, Janusz, ed. 1998. *Słownik terminów literackich*. 3rd ed. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

#### Iconography discussed

- Gerson, Wojciech. N.d. *Sobótka z Bilczy* [Midsummer Night in Bilcza], woodcut. Reproduced in: Oskar Kolberg. *Dzieła wszystkie*. Vol. 2, *Sandomierskie*, 123. Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze. 1965. Also available at <https://lamus-dworski.tumblr.com/post/122096495537/wojciech-gerson-polish-1831-1901-sob%C3%B3tka-z>.
- Pillati, Henryk. 1861. *Sobótka dawna* [Old Midsummer Night]. Reproduced in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 3 (67): 232.
- Pillati, Henryk. 1861. *Sobótka współczesna* [Contemporary Midsummer Night]. Reproduced in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 3 (67): 232.
- Kędzierski, Apoloniusz. 1884. *Sobótka* [Midsummer Night], woodcut. Reproduced in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, August 23, 1884, 121.

SEEING THE SOUND, HEARING THE IMAGE,  
DANCING THE MYTH: MUSICALNESS OF THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT RITUAL  
IN SOME POLISH ICONOGRAPHY OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Summary

The aim of this article is to present and analyse the selected iconographic documentation concerning the summer solstice ritual from the second half of the 19th century. The documentation contributes new information about the ritual, especially about the musicalness of the Midsummer Night, which is shaped primarily by dance and instrumental music. Furthermore, visual works of art are regarded as a testimony to the epoch in which they were created, and not necessarily as ethnographic source material. The author proposes a semiotic methodology for interpreting this type of documentation.

**Keywords:** Midsummer Night; iconography; musicalness; dance; instrumental music