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Experiences of Pilgrimage in Lithuania: Expressions of Values and Identity at New Destinations

Darius Liutikas

Abstract

This article looks at destination places and the extent of religious and secular pilgrimages in Lithuanian society. Destination image of a particular place is unique, as it is constructed from travellers own values, identity, memories, associations and imaginations of the place. The focus is on the phenomenology of destination image and expression of values and identity during valuistic journeys (pilgrimage). Values can embody religious, national, cultural or other collective ideals, or they may be unique to the individual. The article discusses destination places in Lithuania and investigates the main groups of geographical destinations that give meaning to the identity of Lithuanian pilgrims and are visited by them.

Key Words: religious pilgrimage; secular pilgrimage; valuistic journey; pilgrimage destinations in Lithuania, desirable destinations.

Introduction

The current concept of tourism, aside from cognitive and recreational trips, also involves other kinds of journeys: scientific, business, and pilgrimage journeys. All travelling individuals, whatever the purpose of their travel, are now becoming tourists, while tourism itself, is becoming a synonym for travelling. Still, it is extremely difficult to analyse tourism as a homogeneous phenomenon because journeys differ from each other with regard to their motivation, destinations, means, and forms.

The idea of a valuistic journey (Liutikas, 2012) encompasses any journey taken within a geographical space, expressing identity and values. By the term identity we mean the perception of self, both on the social and personal (self-consciousness) levels, as well as self-description and distinguishing features for self-identification in each situation. One can define values as abstract beliefs, which are culturally defined and serve as guidelines for views and behaviours. Values are desired objectives, which determine the major principles of an individual's life.

We can define valuistic journey as an expression of valuistic ideals, as well as confirmation and demonstration of identity. Such journeys help to develop or change personal or social identity. The destination of this kind of journey, which is carried out on the grounds of spiritual or valuistic motives, is sacred, estimable, or a place

related to personal values. The term – valuistic journeys – could be used as a synonym for the term pilgrimage. However, while the modern conception of pilgrimage is widely defined in academic discourse, modern secular pilgrims more often characterize their journey as valuistic and relate the term pilgrimage with religious travelling (Liutikas, 2009).

The clearly defined conceptual model of valuistic journeys allows one to identify two major groups of such journeys: a traditional (religious) pilgrimage and a modern secular (unrelated to religion) pilgrimage. The former has been explored by Morinis (1992), Coleman and Elsner (1995), Vukonic (2002), Coleman and Eade (2004), Timothy and Olsen (2006), Collins-Kreiner (2010) while the modern secular pilgrimage has been explored by Reader and Walter (eds., 1993), Margry (ed., 2008). Modern secular pilgrimage can be divided into several types: sport fan journeys are related to supporting a team and / or an athlete during a competition outside their place of residence; cultural pilgrimages seek to express cultural values related to music, fine arts or other kinds of art; national identity journeys constitute travelling to a place or event of significance from the point of view of national history or statehood, seeking to pay tribute to political leaders or, if the place of residence is elsewhere, to visit one's motherland. Each pilgrimage (secular or sacred) is comprised of three major elements.

- 1) an individual with his / her identity, values, motivation which they are ready to demonstrate and express during the journey,
- 2) the fact of travelling as such, mobility within geographical space characterised by different ways of travelling and effected by environment and fellow-travellers;
- 3) the destination place, which from the cultural, symbolical and special point of view embodies a certain value.

Scientific research on valuistic journeys and geographical destinations of these journeys has been very limited so far in Lithuania. The aim of this article is to discover the new geographical destinations that give meaning to the identity and values of Lithuanian pilgrims. Other major tasks are to discuss the construction of the destination image and to analyse the main travel destinations of the Lithuanian population.

Destinations places of tourism and pilgrimage

The main elements of the valuistic journey become a clearly defined geographical destination of the journey and, the valuistic motives impelling one to reach that destination. We can consider values a 'push' factor, and places in the space that symbolize values a 'pull' factor for the traveller. Visible expressions of personal or social identity as well as specific behaviour are also very common for the valuistic travellers.

The cultural and empirical effect of a place on the construction of identity is analysed by different disciplines, primarily by social and cultural geography, environmental psychology and sociology. The analysis has shown that spaces, apart from having an effect on individuals, offer opportunities for the construction of identity (Benwell, Stokoe, 2006). Individuals identify themselves with specific places, therefore, such places can often become a kind of sanctuary for those who try to demonstrate alternative identity (marginal groups). Therefore, where and how we spend our vacation and our leisure time shows who we are to others as well as to ourselves. According to Hall (2006), the link between identity and place still exists and in a period of fast global changes and mobility it can become even more important. According to marketing researchers (Keller et al., 2008) the formation of a destination image can derive from attributes (external symbols with the particular meaning attached to the attribute), benefits (spiritual, emotional, psychological, etc.), and attitudes (overall evaluation of place).

Furthermore, destination image is described as the sum of cultural and personal beliefs, early impressions and prejudices, dreams and expectations, ideas or perceptions that people hold of a particular place. Destination image is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination's constructs (Tasci et al., 2007: 200). Psychological characteristics, such as general atmosphere, communal feelings, and feelings of satisfaction and the possibility to manifest identity are all important factors of the destination construct. Destination image is based on all information and data gained from different social and technological channels, personal relationships, and cultural traditions. In other words destination image is built on a set of functional and valuistic expectations.

However, when interpreting destination image, personal or social identity can be considered the primary source.

Various narratives help to create destination image. The pilgrim's conceptions about what is 'sacred' or 'valuable' are often based on pre-journey understandings. Pre-journey narratives such as books, brochures, articles in journals and newspapers, TV, internet, public presentations, stories of friends and family members are all factors which form images for potential travellers / pilgrims of what they will find at the destination place. For the journey to be a pilgrimage, one or another item from valuistic discourse will come to a person's consciousness and later on may develop the aspiration to travel to a particular place.

A pilgrim's original / initial experience is unique and different as it is filtered through past images, personal identity, knowledge base, and other factors. On-journey, personal experience, encounters and observations as well as such narratives as stories of local people and guides, descriptive handouts, postcards, markers at sites, stories of other valuistic travellers all invite the participant to further interpret and adjust their destination image and pre-journey understandings. Destination image as a pilgrim's overall perception of a specific destination usually consists of cognitive, affective, valuistic and behavioural elements. Moreover, mental image of the place influences a pilgrim's behaviour and also the satisfaction derived from the journey experience.

Post-journey narratives could determine future journeys to the same or similar place. At the destination places pilgrims purchase such objects as souvenirs, memorabilia and postcards, they also gather various tickets and other mementos (for example stones from the ground). These narratives together with photographs, personal diaries, travel stories (sometimes including slides shows) and spiritual group discussions (common for religious pilgrims) combine to form the basis for real and mental images of their trip.

Pilgrimage is very heterogeneous: pilgrimage sites vary a great deal in importance, from small shrines that attract the faithful from the immediate area to world famous

places visited by believers from many countries; they also involve different size groups, from the individual experience to the mass pilgrimage (Table 1).

Table 1 Main geographical destinations of valuistic journeys and tourism

Religious pilgrimage	Modern secular pilgrimage	Tourism
<i>Sacred places:</i>	<i>Honoured and valuable places and events:</i>	
1) Associated with the origin of religion and centres of religion;	1) Associated with national values, national monuments;	1) Historical objects, architectural objects, monuments, museums;
2) Associated with the birth, life or death of the founders of religion, prophets or holy people;	2) Associated with the birth, life and death of famous artists, musicians, politics or public figures;	2) Industrial objects;
3) Apparition places;	3) Graves of famous secular figures;	3) Life-style cognition;
4) Graves of saints or prophets;	4) Artworks, beautiful nature places;	4) Gastronomy;
5) Relics, images and other miraculous cultural or natural objects;	5) Places of personal identity, homeland, conferences, meeting places of people with the same outlook;	5) Entertainment events (festivals, concerts, art exhibitions, shows, fairs);
6) Essential religious places (very known cult objects, specific objects, example Calvaries in Christianity);	6) Mystical and miraculous places or people (bioenergetics, psychics);	6) Amusement and thematic parks;
7) Monasteries and living saints;	7) Essential entertainment, cultural (concerts, art exhibitions and shows) and sport (championships, tournaments) events.	7) Nights clubs and casinos;
8) Important events of religious life (meeting the religious leader, renewal days etc.).		8) Shops;
		9) Natural landscape, beautiful nature places: ocean, lakes, and rivers, parks, forests, mountains, islands, coasts;
		10) Flora and fauna;
		11) Resorts, SPAs, beaches, sauna centres;
		12) Rural and sport tourism (bicycles, golf, skiing);
		13) Sport events, sport clubs,
		14) Touring treks.

Mostly destination places strengthen the values for which pilgrims travel. Changes in personal identity emerge out of the interplay between social circumstances and events during the journey and the way the individual responds to them: the sight at a destination place; the argument passed from a fellow traveller; the unique experience, can all induce changes in a pilgrim's value orientation or identity. Their new identity needs to be grounded in social reality. Other people have to accept a pilgrim as they wish to be accepted; new or developed ideas obtained from a pilgrimage can help that.

Methodology

The results of a representative survey of Lithuanian society outlines how inhabitants spend their leisure and travelling time (Figure 1). The survey based on multistage probability sampling was done in May 2008 and 1002 respondents were interviewed. The market and opinion research centre 'Vilmorus' carried out interviews at respondents' home place. Homes were selected using the route method, and the respondents at home – using a random method. The author of this article prepared the questions for respondents.

Big national surveys are usually done using multi stage sampling methods. This survey was the first attempt to estimate the potential number of religious and modern pilgrims in Lithuania and to verify available data. The core question was where inhabitants travel to from their locality at least once per year. Surveys were undertaken in the seven largest Lithuanian cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Marijampolė, Alytus) also at 14 other towns and 63 villages.

Table 2 Statistical errors of the survey (N=1000)

Possible values in %	3	5	10	15	20	25	30	40	50
	97	95	90	85	80	75	70	60	50
Statistical error in %	1.1	1.4	1.9	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.9	3.1	3.1

Further analysis of Lithuanian valuistic travellers is based on data from a questionnaire inquiry which was carried out between July 2007 and May 2008. During the study, 700 valuistic travellers (400 Catholic pilgrims and 300 modern

secular pilgrims) from 14 to 74 years old were interviewed. For this selection of respondents, non-probability purposive sampling was applied. Valuistic travellers were interviewed in organised groups going to places or events of religious or modern pilgrimage. In total 30 groups of valuistic travellers were questioned, including those who travelled in an organised group outside Lithuania to other countries' religious pilgrimage centres or concerts and those who travelled to religious pilgrimage places or sport competitions in Lithuania by a special bus in an organised group (Table 3 and Figure 5).

The second task undertaken in this paper is the identification of new pilgrimage destinations in Lithuania. This is based on a detailed review of documentary sources (including media news). It is important to record not only the places visited by contemporary pilgrims but also the development of visit traditions, the number of valuistic travellers who visit the places, and the significance of the destinations to the identity of the travellers.

Possible destinations for pilgrimage in Lithuania

The results of the representative survey indicate that almost a quarter of Lithuanian inhabitants don't travel at all or choose other leisure time possibilities. Almost half (45 per cent) of them travel to spend leisure time near a lake or river in Lithuania at least once per year. One third of the population travel to Lithuanian resorts at least once per year, to their own or rural tourism homesteads or simply spend time at their garden-plots.

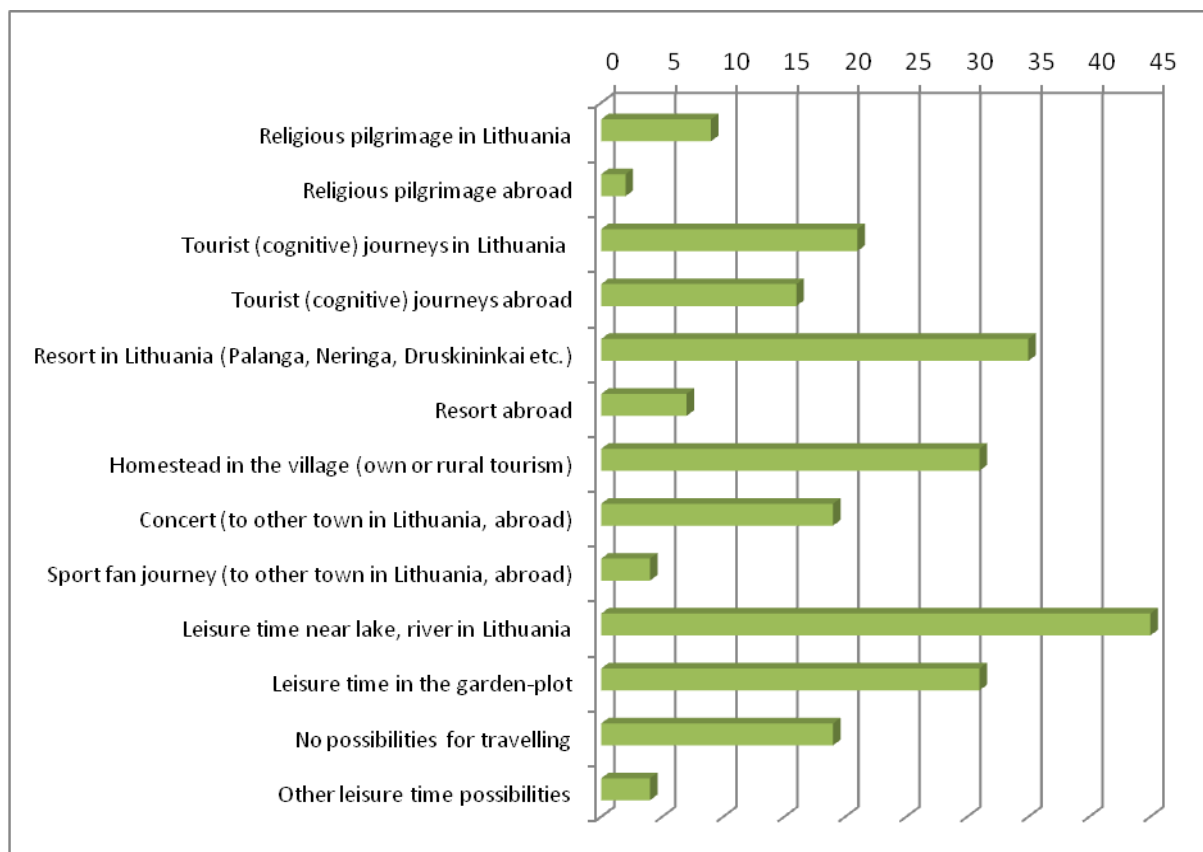
The survey results show that religious pilgrimage places both in Lithuania and abroad are chosen by 9.4 per cent of the respondents. More than a half of the respondents who travel to sacred places abroad, also travel to Lithuanian religious pilgrimage places the same year. More than a quarter of all religious pilgrims were from rural areas, where, every year, many travel to plenary indulgence feasts in their own or neighbourhood parishes.

According to this survey and other calculations, the overall figure of religious pilgrims (including journeys for plenary indulgence feasts and journeys abroad) in Lithuania totals between 250 and 350 thousand persons annually. Taking a minimum distance requirement into account (50 km – to avoid including visits to neighbouring parish Churches) we can assume that the number of religious pilgrims travelling distances to sacred places in Lithuania or to pilgrimage centres abroad at least once per year

is between 180 and 220 thousand. This accounts for approximately 6 per cent of all Lithuanian inhabitants, considering that approximately 3.366 million inhabitants were in Lithuania on January 1st 2008).

4 per cent of Lithuanian habitats at least once per year go on a journey to support their favourite team or athlete. 18.6 per cent respondents state that they travel to other Lithuanian cities or abroad for concerts. These numbers don't show how many respondents travelled for valuistic purposes and how many just to see these as events. We have to consider that people from smaller towns or rural areas have to travel to the larger cities of the country in order to listen to / watch such events. Almost 40 per cent of respondents who travelled to concerts were from rural areas or smaller than municipal towns. The same situation exists with sport fans, one third of them travelled to sport events from rural areas or towns with less than 20 thousand residents. No team from these towns participates in major Lithuanian football or basketball leagues. However, some travellers identify with the team of their larger local town.

Figure 1 Journeys of Lithuanian residents outside their local area at least once per year (2008) (all figures are %).



A valuistic journey is a journey to a destination point, which was constructed from the cultural point of view and which occupies a central position in the identity of a person. It is important to underline that the journey is used to provide meaning to specific places thus forming the meanings of these places. Therefore, the significance of the choice of a place increases. If this place is abroad, travelling abroad helps people to understand cultural differences, identify and better realise personal and social identity. Identity (both personal, social, national or trans-national) is constructed through specifying differences, it cannot be constructed in a vacuum, therefore, it is always created in a realistic or imaginary relationship with others.

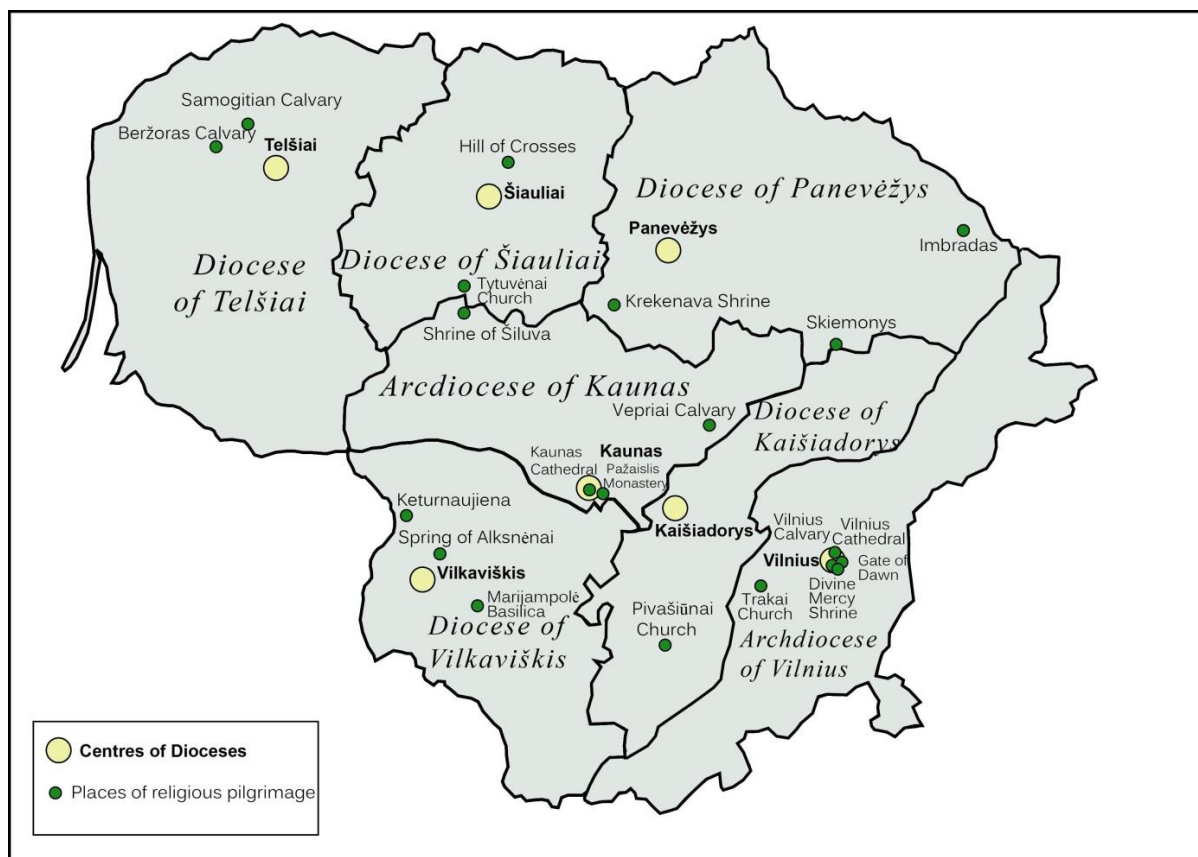
In general, however, we can conclude that Lithuanian travellers are more seduced by the idea of spending leisure time near lakes or in resorts than going on valuistic journeys. However, thousands of pilgrims and thousands of their destinations still exist. Spaces created by people for such activities constitute holy cultural environments (cult buildings, religious objects, cemeteries), oeuvres of art (paintings, sculptures). Nowadays the intertwining of sacred natural spaces and cultural spaces can be observed.

Tradition religious pilgrimage places in Lithuania

Sacredness manifests itself both in natural and cultural space. Sacred space creates 'the world's centre' (M. Eliade), it is always distinguished from the everyday profanum space, it is outside the everyday routine and arouses feelings of respect and self-sacrifice. Sacred natural space consists of various natural objects that are regarded as holy: water (rivers, lakes, springs), rocks, mountains, woods or trees of different kind. The image of such a sacred place is constructed by its religious traditions and manifestation of the divine through the likes of apparitions or miraculous relics etc. Twenty major Catholic pilgrimage places can be identified in Lithuania (see figure 2, below).

This identification is based on the places visited by contemporary pilgrims as well as taking into consideration the visiting traditions, geographical area of attraction, the number of pilgrims who visit the place, the hierarchical importance of sacred places and their significance.

Figure 2 Religious pilgrimage places in Lithuania



Most sites are related to the cult of the Virgin Mary (Šiluva, The Gate of Dawn, Pivašiūnai, Trakai, Pažaislis, Imbradas, Keturaujiena, Krekenava, Skiemonys, the Cathedral of Kaunas). The second group is comprised of Calvaries (Vilnius Calvary – See Figure 3 (below), Vepriai Calvary, Beržoras Calvary, Tytuvėnai Calvary, Samogitian Calvary) and the remaining are important for a variety of reasons including: places of saints and the cult of a holy person (the cult of St Casimir at the Cathedral of Vilnius and the cult of Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis in Marijampolė); a worship place of the Cross (the Hill of Crosses); a holy spring (Alksnėnai) and; the Vilnius Divine Mercy Shrine which contains the first image of Merciful Jesus which was painted according to St Faustina's visions.

The importance of pilgrimage, just like tourist journeys, is substantial for the economy of specific towns, regions and countries. Travellers generate income, new jobs are created thus reducing unemployment, infrastructure of the region and the

Figure 3 Pilgrims at Vilnius Calvary



Source: Author's photo

service sector are expanded. Having noticed these effects, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, by its Resolution of 8 August 2007, approved a programme for the creation of the Pilgrim Route of John Paul II in Lithuania and its adaptation for the needs of pilgrims and tourism. One of the objectives of the programme is to increase the number of pilgrims and tourists in the religious pilgrimage places of Lithuania. 16 religious objects, mostly Churches, are included in the list of this Pilgrim Route. Therefore, an understanding of: the valuistic journey; pilgrim differences which vary from tourist to pilgrim and; behaviour and manifestation of identity during the journey are of particular relevance.

National monuments, historical national places

Destination places of modern pilgrimage are very different. We have to consider the types of events, which attract modern pilgrims such as cultural (concerts, exhibitions), sport events, events of national significance or events of political importance. The importance and value of nation is very great for many people. Every nation can

illustrate traditions of pilgrimage to battlefields or monuments of national pride. To this category we can also add mounds, castles and other such sites. Lithuanian pilgrims of this nature visit the Castle of Gediminas in Vilnius, Trakai castle and other monuments which symbolise liberation from the Soviet regime.

Figure 4 Trakai castle



Source: Author's photo

Birth, life or death places of famous individuals

Birth, life or death places of famous artists, musicians, politics or public figures are also important. In this category, graves play the most important role. Graves of admired and well-known people often become exceptional places of secular pilgrimage. Sometimes in such places the distinction between pilgrims and tourists almost disappears. The death, burial and grave sites of famous people create new pilgrimages (princess Diana burial place in Althorp Park). At burial ceremonies pilgrims tend to express their honour to authorities: politics, artists, musicians,

sportsmen or famous public figures. Commemoration of former national Lithuanian political leaders (J. Basanavicius) or the country's most famous artists (J. Ciurlionis) especially on the eve of All Saints Day (1 of November) is very common.

Museums, art works

Modern secular pilgrims can visit public secular sites like museums and religious shrines containing particular artwork. Such sites become places of pilgrimage with their 'sacred' objects. The image of Mona Lisa in the Louvre is the most famous object of this form of pilgrimage.

Thousands of Lithuanians and guests to the city of Vilnius in 1999 visited the Museum of Applied Art to see the painting 'The Battle of Žalgiris' by Jan Matejka which was brought from Poland. Flags of the most important battle of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Middle Ages and weaponry of the XIV century were exhibited together with the painting. 200,000 visitors came in total in this exhibition, which took place for almost half a year.

Places of personal identity, homeland

Emigration by one's parents and grandparents causes new flows of pilgrims. Pilgrims go back to their ancestral country Lithuania; they feel the need to go back to where they are from, and to visit other places, where they feel at home. Many of them go on a pilgrimage to look for their self, their identity, their roots, thus showing the loss of links and sense of fragmentation. These trips are especially relevant in today's global and virtualised society. The pilgrims in this group travel in the tracks and footsteps of their parents or grandparents, they visit countries where they were born or grew up, spent their youth or were forced to be because of war, exile or other reasons. Such places and journeys are very well known from the stories of family members or from personal memory. The most popular valuistic journeys among the youth of Lithuania are journeys to Siberia to clean the cemeteries of Lithuanian exiles and to get to know the everyday conditions of exiles who lived in these areas.

Cultural, sport and other events, conferences

Pilgrimage also means a journey to meet other people who come from all over the country or even the world but who share the same outlook and symbols (conferences of speakers of the Esperanto language or scout Jamborees). Pilgrims

need special places to meet together, and sacred places as meeting points. In this case a conference must not to be a business or work conference. It should be associated with vacation, which is a kind of sacred time (Graburn, 1989: 21-36). Travelling to the Olympic Games originated in Ancient Greece. Today not only the Olympic Games, but also World Championships attract a noticeable number of modern pilgrims. The Lithuanian sport fans with national flags and other attributes of their team such as special clothes, travel to the farthest places of the world. These pilgrims have a number of rituals which are similar to religious pilgrims. Favourite sportsmen become objects of veneration. In Lithuania the most popular sport – basketball – is referred to as the second religion of Lithuanians.

Music is one of the most important cultural sources in forming personal and collective identity. Concerts are like secular rituals, feasts that symbolically separate the individual from everyday social life either in time or in space. Especially in music festivals the atmosphere of community is proclaimed. Folk music festivals ('Skamba skamba kankliai') could be seen as sites for manifestation of national identity and the symbol of preserved traditions. Every four-years Lithuania organises a national Lithuanian song festival, which attracts many secular pilgrims. Other popular music festivals are held annually: 'Mėnuo Juodaragis (Black-Horned Moon)' is a festival of contemporary Baltic culture and alternative music representing the heritage of pagan tradition, post-folk currents and the vanguard of postmodern music; 'Bliuzo naktys (Blues nights)' is a traditional blues music festival near Plateliai lake in Lithuania; 'Kaunas Jazz' is a traditional jazz music festival in Kaunas.

Secular pilgrims can also visit beautiful places in nature (springs, stones and mountains), ancient shrines (for example, the ancient Baltic cult site in Puokainiai, Latvia), mystical and miraculous places or people (persons associated with bioenergetics, wonder-workers, psychics). In contrast to the Middle Ages when Christian pilgrimage was a form of penance, now people travel on pilgrimage to receive benefits for themselves, physical healing or spiritual renewal.

The identification of places or events which are the most desirable for visiting, allows the identification of links between identity, value and destination of the journey (See Table 3). In the process of analysing the research material it was discovered that

most religious pilgrims (two thirds) consider the places of Christian pilgrimage both in Lithuania and abroad as well as religious events to correspond most strongly to the values of a person. In contrast, modern pilgrims prefer visiting specific foreign countries and cities (or have already visited them). Sport fans seek various sport events, specific competition halls and stadiums or have already visited them while the final group, cultural pilgrims, seek concerts of specific bands.

Table 3 Most desirable place or event for religious pilgrims

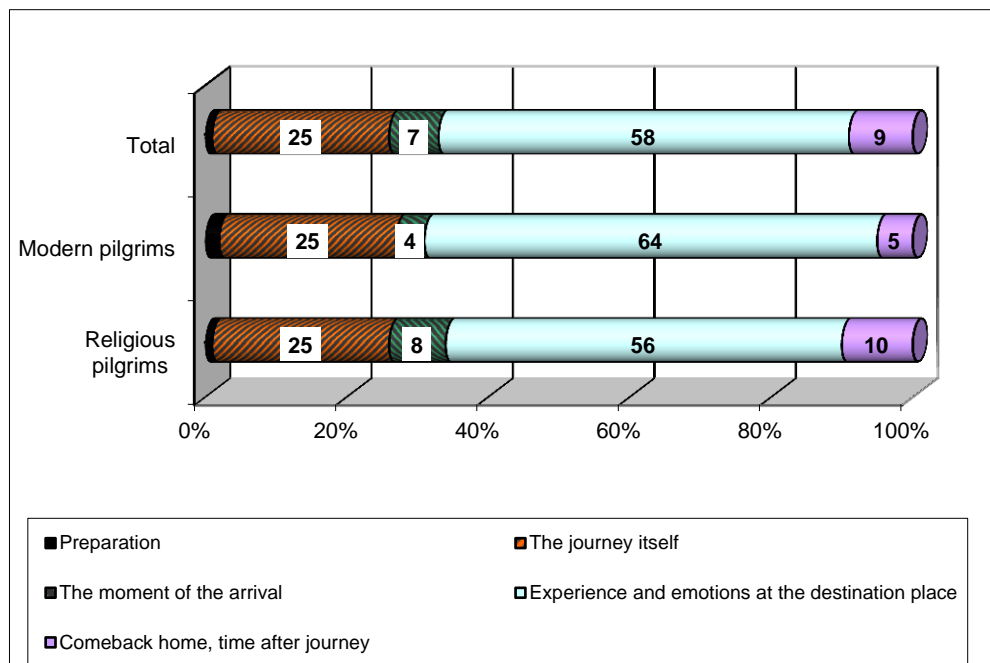
Most desirable to visit or already visited destination	Religious pilgrims, per cent
Pilgrimage or religious place in Lithuania (Šiluva, The Hill of Crosses, The Gate of Dawn in Vilnius, Trakai church, Samogitian Calvary, Pivašiūnai, Vilnius Calvary, Keturnaujiena, etc.)	19
Pilgrimage place abroad (Rome, Jerusalem, Lourdes, Fatima, Medjugorje, Chenstochova, Aglona, Taize, Guadalupe, Assisi, Padua, Lisieux)	64
Religious event in Lithuania or abroad (World Youth Days, Lithuanian Youth Days)	2
Countries or cities abroad (Italy, USA, Island, Brazil, Portugal, Japan, Egypt, Tibet, Greece, India, Australia, Paris, Milan, Vienna, etc.)	12
Other destination (mountains, concerts of favourite bands, Holy Father, etc.)	3

The pilgrimage journey itself can be grouped into five parts: preparation; the journey itself; the moment of arrival; the experience and emotions at the destination; comeback home and time after journey. The content of each particular part depends on the aims of the journey and the various cultural features. Clearly, from this research, different pilgrimages have characteristic rules and norms of behaviour. For example, preparation for religious pilgrimage consists of two elements: technical-organisational and spiritual. Contemplation about the journey essence and spiritual purification (confession, penance) are the main parts of the spiritual preparation. Modern pilgrims however, collect information about the aims of the journey, discuss about its significance.

Furthermore, based on analysis of the empirical research it is possible to propose that more than a half of the travellers with a clearly defined geographical destination point consider the most important things in the journey to be the experiences and

emotions at their geographical destination and only a quarter – the journey itself (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Significance of the journey parts



Valuistic journey is exceptional and unique experience. Pilgrims undergo non-ordinary and special feelings. Unknown landscapes, experiences and emotions at the desirable place added to new social relations, assist pilgrims to understand and interpret cultural knowledge more deeply. After getting back home pilgrims often somehow try to integrate this experience into their everyday life.

Conclusions

From this analysis, several important conclusions may be drawn. Valuistic journey means a journey carried out within geographical space expressing personal identity and values. The destination of this kind of a journey, which is carried out on the grounds of spiritual or valuistic motives, is sacred, estimable, or related to personal values. Values fostered by valuistic travellers can relate to religion, search for personal spiritual direction, or embody national, cultural or other collective ideals or they may be unique values for an individual.

Valuistic place identity is related to material and immaterial cultural heritage.

Valuistic travellers’ views of a particular destination place are unique, as they are

constructed from their own values, identity, memories, associations and imaginations of the place. Destination image is a mental portrait that a person has about a particular place. Such images for pilgrims have cognitive, emotional and valuistic components. These can affect the experiences and behaviour of pilgrims. In addition, certain perceptions of the place image may lead pilgrims to develop an attachment to the valuistic place or event. Destination image is considered to be one of the key aspects of a pilgrims' travel decisions.

A valuistic journey is a journey to a destination point, which was constructed from the cultural point of view and which occupies a central position in the identity of a person. The places we visit reflect our life, as well as our values and identity. The journey destination for Lithuanian religious pilgrims is a sacred space, which is an important geographical dimension of religious manifestation. Modern secular Lithuanian pilgrims visit cultural events, sport events or events of national significance in addition to other places of personal or social identity. The other principal destinations of modern pilgrimage in Lithuania are associated with national values, the birth, life and death of famous people, museums and substantial art works, also places of personal identity, Homeland.

Pilgrimage is important for social and personal identity. The extent of valuistic journeys shows the significance of pilgrimage itself. About 200,000 Lithuanian pilgrims travel annually to religious pilgrimage places (including journeys to plenary indulgence feasts and journeys to shrines abroad), which is about 6 percent of the total population of Lithuania.

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