

TOURISM AND THE MAKING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE: THE CASE OF NIDA (*CURONIAN SPIT*), LITHUANIA

Anja Peleikis

ABSTRACT

The region of Lithuania Minor to which the northern part of the Curonian Spit belongs, has been characterized by changing national affiliation in the course of the twentieth century (Germany, Soviet Union, Lithuania) and the resulting change of population. The following article analyses how different social actors have recurred to and managed the Curonian Spit's cultural heritage. It shows how Curonian cultural heritage has been mobilized for the making of nationalist identities. Taking the case of the village of Nida (Nidden) it is shown that heritage is nothing fixed or given but is, in fact, produced over the course of time depending on the political, economic and social interests of the social actors involved as well as on the societal background. The example of the Curonian Spit and the making of cultural heritage is a contested and flexible process. Heritage is nothing fixed or given but is made and remade over the course of time, depending on the political, economic and social interests and power resources of the social actors involved. My examples have shown how the production of Curonian heritage has flexibly contributed to the making of German, Soviet as well as Lithuanian identities.

KEY WORDS: socio-cultural anthropology, cultural heritage, tourism, Curonian Spit, Lithuania Minor, German identity, Soviet identity, Lithuanian identity.

ANOTACIJA

Straipsnyje analizuojamas paveldo produkcijos vaidmuo Kuršių nerijos šiaurinėje dalyje. Šis regionas pasižymi priklausymo atskiroms nacionalinėms valstybėms kaita (Vokietija, Tarybų Sąjunga, Lietuva), migracija ir gyventojų mobilumu. Kartu nuo pat XIX amžiaus pabaigos Kuršių nerija buvo ir lieka turistams patraukli vieta. Nidos (Nidden) pavyzdžiu straipsnyje atskleidžiama, kaip čia buvo pasitelktas senasis kuršių paveldas ir kaip jį įvairiais laikotarpiais kūrė įvairūs socialiniai subjektai. Po Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atkūrimo 1991 metais nacionalinės ir vietinės politinės pastangos buvo sutelktos naujai turizmo infrastruktūrai Kuršių nerijoje kurti, bandant transformuoti jos sovietinį įvaizdį ir pakeisti jį europietišku. Kuršių nerijos istorija ir kultūrinio paveldo kūrimas, atrodo, yra diskutuotinas ir lankstus procesas. Paveldas nėra sustingusi sąvoka; jis formuojamas ir performuojamas, žvelgiant istoriškai, remiantis politiniais, ekonominiais ir visuomeniniais interesais ir procese dalyvaujančių socialinių veikėjų galių ištekliais.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: sociokultūrinė antropologija, kultūros paveldas, turizmas, Kuršių nerija, Mažoji Lietuva, vokiškasis identitetas, sovietinis identitetas, lietuviškasis identitetas

*Dr. Anja Peleikis, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology,
Advokatenweg 36, 06114 Halle/Saale, Germany
E-mail: peleikis@eth.mpg.de*

If you do not like the past, change it. (William L. Burton 1982: 14)

The region of Lithuania Minor to which the northern part of the Curonian Spit belongs, has been characterized by changing national affiliation in the course of the twentieth century (Germany, Soviet Union, Lithuania) and the resulting change of population. The following article analyses how different social actors have recurred to and managed the Curonian Spit's cultural heritage. It shows how Curonian cultural heritage has been mobilized for the making of nationalist identities. Taking the case of the village of Nida (Nidden) it is shown that heritage is nothing fixed or given but is, in

fact, produced over the course of time depending on the political, economic and social interests of the social actors involved as well as on the societal background.

In 2000 the Curonian Spit, divided between Kaliningrad Oblast and Lithuania, was taken up as a cultural landscape into the UNESCO World Heritage list because of its outstanding sand dune landscape. Lithuanian tourist officials hoped that this award would raise the interest of international tourists to visit the country. As a matter of fact, since Lithuania's independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, an ever increasing number of Western tourists have come to visit the new independent Baltic state once closed off behind the Iron Curtain. The first visitors to Lithuania Minor, a region that was once a part of German East Prussia, were the so-called "homesick-tourists", mainly elderly Germans who were born in this region and who for the first time in 45 years were able to visit the region of their birth. With intensified tourist advertisement, Lithuania's appearance on the UNESCO list and the country's entrance into the EU, more and more Western visitors have become interested in the "unknown Baltic state". Lithuania's untouched nature as well as its cultural heritage is presented as its greatest tourist capital. In tourist leaflets, brochures and guidebooks, this cultural heritage, above all the old centre of Vilnius, the Curonian Spit fishermen's artefacts and architecture as well as age-old traditions and folklore are praised and marketed appropriately.

Indeed, as Reinhard Johler has stated, "cultural heritage" has become an important niche in the European tourist economy as well as a primary means world wide for the production of identity in the late 20th century (Johler 2002: 10). In the same line, Marshall argues that heritage is a key mechanism in defining community, ethnic or national identity (Marshall 2004: 95). Heritage sites and most notably monuments become the visual manifestations of official, public interpretations of the past. In this context, struggling over the meaning of heritage can result in a fierce conflict over the interpretation of the past.

In the following I will examine the role of heritage production on the northern part of the Curonian Spit, which belongs to Lithuania. This region is characterized by changing national affiliation (Germany, Soviet Union, Lithuania), migration and shifts of population. Simultaneously, it has been marked by tourism since the end of the 19th century. Taking the example of the village of Nida (Nidden), I will show how Curonian heritage was mobilized and produced by different social actors over time. Without aiming to give a complete or comprehensive description and interpretation of this development, I have chosen cases, which appear typical for the different periods. In this context I am interested in delineating partial changes and continuities in the process of Curonian heritage production.

The Making of Curonian Heritage during the period of German sovereignty

The rich and unspoilt nature of the Curonian Spit, an elongated, narrow peninsula dividing the Baltic Sea from the inland lagoon, and an outstanding example of a landscape of mighty sand dunes, dense pine forests and long, large beaches, have attracted travellers, artists and tourists over centuries. Indeed, nature and tourism have represented important elements of continuity, while rupture and change have deeply marked this area during the 20th century.

German travellers and artists "discovered" the beauty of the Curonian Spit in the middle of the 19th century, when this region belonged to an eastern province of Prussia and after 1871, Germany.

"The Curonian Spit is so peculiar that if you do not want your soul to miss a wonderful impression, you must see it, just like Spain or Italy," remarked the German philosopher and diplomat Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), who visited the Spit in 1809 and praised its uniqueness (von

Humboldt cit. in von Sydow 1909). Another well-known traveller and writer of that time was Louis Passarge (1825-1912), who described the Spit and its most peculiar nature in his book "*Aus baltischen Landen*" (Of Baltic Lands) (1878).

In the same manner, painters were fascinated by the remote landscape, which provided them with a wealth of picturesque subjects and offered them the possibility to flee the pressures of city life. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, more and more European painters were leaving their urban studios and sought out small, rural locations where they worked in the open air and formed artist's colonies (see for example Wietek 1976, Pese 2001, Barfood 2005) They were fascinated by the local inhabitants, peasants and fishermen, who in their eyes represented the unity of man and nature and were untouched by "progress", which they considered dubious benefits of civilization (Albert 2002: 42-43).

In this context Nidden, a small fisher village on the Curonian Spit, attracted well-known German painters like Corinth, Schmidt-Rotluff, Pechstein, Birnstengel, Gelbke, Mollenhauer and many others, who made up the "Niddener artist's colony" (see Barfood 2005, Ehlermann-Mollenhauer 1992). Some of them rented a room in a fisherman's house for a few weeks or months, others lived more comfortably in the "Hotel Blode", which developed into an important meeting point for painters, writers, scientists, journalists and filmmakers at the beginning of the 20th century up until the end of the Second World War.

Fascinated by shifting light conditions, rich colours and atmosphere, the painters depicted endlessly the impressive landscape of dunes, seaside, pine forests and lagoon. The old, reed-covered wooden fishermen's houses, with their brownish-blue colour, the vivid flower gardens, and above all the Curonian fishing boats (*Kurenkähne*) with the picturesque *Kurenwimpel* (weathervanes) on the mast of every boat were favourite motives, as were fishermen and women themselves. The painters were inspired and impressed by the simple fisher folk struggling with threatening environmental forces. Nature, perceived and experienced in all its contrariness between dead calm and heavy storms, serenity and severe danger, motivated the painters to depict the local inhabitants in a similar state of tension, between life and death, greatness and weakness, inner wealth and material poverty, between brevity and eternity (see Albert 2002). Above all, they depicted the people's deep religiosity, calm faithfulness, superstition, and closeness to nature:

I see all this fisher figures working like in the gospels themselves, in their work, on their way into the small church on the height of the dune at the Table of the Lord. In bygone days, this picture could have been different, an image of paucity and death, birth and witchcraft, an image of these figures of human weakness and greatness. This breed of people was dignified and reliable, ancient. Whose path leads by chance to the Curonian Spit is trapped by the spell of this enchantment (Mollenhauer cit in Nidden und seine Maler 1977: 23).

This account by the painter Ernst Mollenhauer depicts an exotic, foreign and religious representation of the Other. This population, with its past as a Baltic ethnic group, with their own Curonian¹ language and their distinct cultural traditions, appealed to the artists and caught their imagination. The local fisher folk at the complete mercy of nature often mirrored the artist's own struggle and are represented in their portraits of the Curonian population.²

¹ Cronin is an old Indo-Germanic Baltic language, closely related to Latvian (see Putsch 1991, Kwauka/Pietsch 1977, El Mogharbel 1993).

² See for example the comments by Andreas Albert on the portraits of Richard Birnstengel 2002: 42-43.

Not only painters and other intellectuals came to the Curonian Spit. In the years before and after the First World War, Nidden became more and more a holiday destination for a German public seeking relaxation and tranquillity. They were attracted by the beauty and peacefulness of the Curonian Spit. The fact that the northern part of the Spit was separated from East Prussia after the First World War and annexed to Lithuania, to which it belonged until 1939³, did not hinder Germans from spending their summer months in Nidden.

Painters presented images of the Curonian population in their art, writers described them in the literature⁴ and photographers produced photographs and postcards, depicting through their lenses the traditional world of the Curonian population. This was often done in a manner reinforcing Western ideas of a romantic and exotic native Other.

As a matter of fact, the simple, rural lives of the inhabitants, which for the tourists were a foreign and somehow mysterious world, as well their traditional cultural practices became tourist attractions from the very beginning of tourism in this area. In this context a process of the commodification of culture for tourism was initiated (see Greenwood 1989). This implies that what were once personal cultural displays of living traditions or a cultural text of lived authenticity become "cultural products" that meet the needs of commercial tourism and the construction of heritage (Hall and Tucker 2004: 12).

The tourists were, for example, fascinated by the colourful *Kurenwimpel* (weathervanes) on each of the Curonian fishing boats. These signs were originally introduced by the fishery inspectors so as to be able to recognize the boats in case they violated fishing laws. Later, small copies of these *Kurenwimpel* were produced and sold as souvenirs.

The local population welcomed tourism as it brought new income possibilities, new ideas and modernity. During the summer months they rented their houses to the guests, while they themselves moved to the sheds. New boarding houses and hotels opened and offered jobs for young women and men. In the 1930s and 1940s, young people were especially interested in the modern commodities and ways of life tourists brought to the Spit. German-Curonian women who grew up in Nidden before 1944 told me that they tried to copy the tourists in fashion and way of life. They themselves dreamt of leaving the Spit and of an easy life in the city. At the same time, they told me that they often dressed in their traditional Curonian costume in the summer months as it raised the interests of tourists.

The interest in Curonian traditions and heritage developed in the context of Nidden's artist colony and expanding tourism. In 1926 the painter Ernst Mollenhauer, who had married the daughter of the hotel owner Hermann Blode and who later took over the famous hotel of his father-in-law initiated the "*Niddener Trachtenverein*" (Niddener association of traditional costumes), whose task was to preserve popular Curonian culture in Nidden. Under the leadership of Mollenhauer the association was active in the founding and organization of the "*Nehrungsmuseum*" (Spit Museum). (Barfod 2005: 42, Ehlermann-Mollenhauer personal communication).

I would argue that Mollenhauer was not only active in presenting Curonian traditions in the museum, but tried to make the village itself look like a museum. Former inhabitants explained that he ensured that the houses and fences were all painted in the same colour and that he actively intervened against the introduction of electricity into the village. Thus, it seems that it was his interest to preserve his "Nidden" as he experienced and imagined it upon his arrival, i.e. as a small, traditional

³ Between 1939 and 1944 the Memelland was part of Nazi Germany.

⁴ See for example the writings of Thomas Mann on the Curonian Spit 1994 [1983].

and authentic fisher village, with devout Curonian natives who accepted their difficult lot living in a rough environment, untouched by the developments of modernity and civilization.

But political, economic and social developments did not make hold before the Spit and accounts of the former inhabitants show how they themselves felt about change, modernization and new income possibilities. German tourism as well as German education and administration had changed their lives. Belonging to Lithuania between 1929 and 1939 did a great deal for the mobilization of their German nationalist identities, as did National Socialist politics. With the rise of nationalist identification, ethnic identity became redefined. While it on the one hand became a synonym for backwardness and out-dated traditions, I would argue that on the other hand, ethnic identity was nationalized. In this context, the girls' traditional Curonian costume, for example, became a tourist commodity and a symbol of nationalist German folklore. At the same time, the local population became an agent in marketing their "tradition and cultural heritage" to the tourists.

The examples which I presented above give a small glimpse of how tourists, artists and local inhabitants contributed to the "making of Curonian tradition and heritage" in the first half of the 20th century. Without being able to go into detail here, I argue that all of these social actors were involved in producing images of what the Curonian population and their heritage was. These images attracted artists and tourists and contributed to the making of the "place-myth Nidden".⁵

The place-myth Nidden

The Second World War brought a brutal end to the tourist, artist and local life in Nidden. Summer 1944 was the last tourist season and shortly after, in the autumn, most of the local population fled the region, like millions of other Germans fleeing Central and Eastern Europe. For them, East Prussia, the Curonian Spit and Nidden disappeared behind the Iron Curtain. But the place-myth Nidden lived on vividly in the memories of the local population, the former tourists and artists.

Prints of the art made in the former artist colony, as well as photographs and books about their homeland helped the former inhabitants to remember their region of origin. Unlike many other places, there exists a rich visual archive of Nidden due to the artist colony, the professional photographers and tourists' visual archive.

Thus, despite having lived in Germany since 1944 and not having been allowed to visit, the memory of Nidden was relived, newly imagined and shared with others over the years. In families and in the course of the meetings of *Heimatvertriebenen* (displaced peoples) organizations, Memelland groups and Niddener gatherings, people exchanged memories as well as photos and other commodities, which made them remember and share their experiences of flight and trauma.

Photographs taken in the 1920s, 30s and 40s portray the beautiful, colourful and folkloric village, the beaches, dunes and the Curonian residents in traditional costumes. This was the view of the photographers of that time, who took their pictures for the tourists and portrayed the place in an exotic and folkloric manner. I would argue that the Nidden population, once an object of exotic place-making in the first half of the 20th century, themselves took up this touristy view and place-myth after their flight. While Nidden represented the everyday world of hard labour in the fishery before the war, it became the most beautiful and picturesque village, an unattainable place of memory and desire.

⁵ The term "place-myth" was coined by the sociologist Rob Shields to denote the cluster of stereotypes and images associated with a specific location. These stereotypes need not have any direct relation to the actual realities of that place but they form people's expectations of that site (Shields 1991: 46-47, 60-1).

With the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1990, the former inhabitants - if health and age still allowed them - were able for the first time in 45 years to visit their place of birth, carrying their memories and place-images to the present-day locality.

The Making of Curonian Heritage during the period of Soviet sovereignty

After the Second World War, Nidden became Nida, a village in the Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic. As most of the Curonian/German inhabitants had fled the region at the end of the war, people from very different regions of the Soviet Union, but predominantly from Lithuania, were settled there by order of the Soviet state, which militarized the region and imposed strict entry restrictions to the Spit. Only in the 1960s could Nida develop once again to a popular holiday resort for Soviet citizens. New Soviet-style holiday hostels were built for deserving workers who could stay for a 10 day period of time with special permits. Coming from diverse Soviet Republics, from as far away as Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan, from Georgia or Armenia, from Moscow as well as from Leningrad, people with very different backgrounds came to Nida, then called "the pearl" or "the most beautiful village" of the Soviet Union. Tourists from all over the Soviet Union were fascinated by Nida, not only because of its impressive natural environment, its beautiful beaches and unique dune landscape, but also because of its local architecture.⁶ It was thanks to the effort of Lithuanian architects that these German-Curonian fisher houses were preserved and saved from Soviet state destruction plans. For the local population who arrived in the 1950s, these empty houses functioned as a welcome accommodation. Thus, local German-Curonian architecture was not fully eradicated in the Soviet period; I would instead argue that it was actually appropriated by the new Lithuanian inhabitants, "Lithuanized" and turned into their own cultural heritage.

As Germany was regarded as the fascist and capitalist enemy, the local German past was officially silenced and became taboo. Nevertheless, a few active people became engaged in rediscovering the specific German-Curonian heritage, despite encountering strong official resistance. Most outspoken was the Lithuanian artist Eduardas Jonušas, who created various memorials that implicitly recalled the German-Curonian legacy of the Spit.⁷ He installed, for example, poles with typical Curonian weathervanes (*Kurenwimpel*) at the entrance of the Curonian Spit. Further, he reconstructed Nida's old cemetery next to the Lutheran church in the 1970s. With the help of a few Germans who did not flee and could provide information about the pre-war period, he was able to draw a reconstructed plan of the cemetery and became engaged in carving and putting up new wooden grave markers that resembled the old Curonian ones.⁸ He also carved the names of the dead into these reconstructed grave markers. By doing so, pre-war German-Curonian inhabitants carrying the names like Wilhelm Purwin, Anna Pietsch, Lotte Weinhold, Dorothea Froese or Johann Engelin received a new implicit recognition and a visual presence on Nida's cemetery, despite the fact that the German past was publicly denied.

Officially, a different, first and foremost a-political ethnographic history of Nida was told, which has to be understood in the context of Soviet ideology and the theoretical framework of classical evolutionism and historical materialism.⁹ In this context the local culture of the Curonian fish-

⁶ People from the former Soviet Union who visited Nida during the Soviet period and after Lithuanian independence told me about their experiences.

⁷ On the life of Eduardas Jonušas see Jonušas 2000.

⁸ These specific grave markers are called *Kurenbretter*, in Lithuanian *krikštai*.

⁹ For an analysis of Lithuanian ethnography during Soviet times see Čiubrinskas 2001: 99-117.

ermen and women, fishing utensils and models of the specific Curonian fishing boats were presented in the local Nida history museum in the Nida Protestant Church. These material artefacts were presented without any reference to the political context in which they developed. Generally speaking, during the 1970s, Lithuanian ethnographers became involved in the intensive collection and registration of folk material culture, given the fear that more and more such artefacts were to disappear (Čiubrinskas 2001:116; 2000: 28).

Further, there was a growing interest in pre-Soviet ethnic traditions. It became popular to trace magic, ritual, myth and symbols of the ancient Lithuanians (Čiubrinskas 2000, 2001).¹⁰ In the 1970s local history clubs and folklore ensembles sprang up and contributed to the creation of national Lithuanian identities opposed to Soviet identities (Čiubrinskas 2001: 117). Learning to understand and keeping up one's national and ethnic heritage contributed to the re-making of Lithuanian national identities and to strive for independence at the end of the 1980s.

In this context, people also became interested in the history, pagan rituals and symbols of the Curonians, who like the Prussians, Lithuanians and Yotvingins were Baltic ethnic groups living in the area of present-day Lithuania, Kaliningrad Oblast and Latvia in the middle ages.¹¹ The Curonians lived on the Baltic coast and were described as an influential and prosperous ethnic group engaged in pirating and trading across the Baltic Sea in the 11th century. It is said that during the 15th century, Curonians migrated from the Latvian Curland to the Curonian Spit, where they were later Christianized and Germanized to become the ancestors of the German-Curonian population.

Summarizing, it can be said that with the renewed interest in the pagan Lithuanian past, the Curonian past became a focus of interest as well. I would argue that the Curonian cultural heritage was mobilized for Lithuanian nationalist interests, ignoring the fact that they historically represented a separate ethnic group distinct in language and culture.

Further, I would argue that the focus on the ancient Curonians also contributed to the avoidance of tackling the difficult and ambiguous recent German-Curonian past and the region's association with German East Prussia and Nazi Germany. Thus, the examples of heritage practices of the Soviet period reveal once more the importance of situating the analysis in the specific social and political contexts as well as reflecting the interests and strategies of the social actors involved.

Struggling over the Curonian Heritage in independent Lithuania

Following Lithuania's independence in 1991, national and local political efforts concentrated on the implementation of a new touristy infrastructure on the Curonian Spit so as to meet western European standards. As a matter of fact, in the course of the last 15 years Nida has become a very high class holiday resort, attracting Lithuania's nouveaux riche as well as international tourists from the West. New roads, bicycle paths, as well as restaurants and hotels were built or reconstructed. Much attention was given to a redefined cultural infrastructure, new museums opened and cultural festivals take place during the summer months.

¹⁰ The work on the prehistoric Balts by the Lithuanian archeologist Marija Gimbutas became an important point of reference for the new "folklore movement" in the 1970s and 1980s. See for example Gimbutas 1963, 1974.

¹¹ See for example "Die Kuren, die Wikinger unter den Balten" http://www.muenster.org/litauen/html/body_kurland.html.

Narratives of the age old Curonian fishing population and its specific and outstanding cultural heritage, as well as narratives of famous personalities like Thomas Mann¹² are mobilized as important cultural capital in the process of marketing the Curonian Spit. Although only a few reconstructed Curonian fishing boats (*Kurenkahn*, Lith.: *kurėnai*) sail the lagoon at present since the fishery has long been motorized, the typical Curonian boats stands out as the most important symbol of Curonian heritage.

Interestingly, commodities that were popular tourist souvenirs during German sovereignty, like the above mentioned *Kurenwimpel* (weathervanes), are once again being sold as profitable tourist items. Similarly, reprints of old black and white postcards originally produced during the 1920s – 1940s are sold to tourists. It is striking that these present-day *Kurenwimpel* carved by Lithuanian carpenters who have found a new economic niche, have acquired new Lithuanized interpretations. Saleswomen working in small tourist boutiques in Nida, for example, explain the meaning of these "Curonian-Lithuanian" objects to curious tourists: "You know, our ancestors, the Curonians, were pagans and they believed in the sun and moon; that's why these symbols are presented on the weathervanes".¹³ I would argue that in the newly defined Lithuanian tourist market, artefacts, which once represented the German-Curonian heritage, are being used flexibly, reinterpreted and sold as typical present-day Lithuanian tourist souvenirs.

Further, the narrative of the age-old pagan Curonians developed by Lithuanian nationalist ethnographers in the Soviet period continues to be the main source of reference in dealing with Nida's past. In tourist leaflets, brochures and guidebooks, this knowledge of the pre-Christian Curonians is disseminated. At the same time, these publications generally do not refer to the German past, despite the fact that the "Thomas Mann House", and the German Niddener artists' colony are mentioned. Generally, this information is provided without putting it into any form of historical and political context.

Interested Western tourists are often puzzled concerning the place's past and ask questions such as if the Curonian Spit ever belonged to East Prussia or to Germany; if the Curonians were Lithuanians; or why there are so many German names on the grave markers although the place belonged to Lithuania. Many Western tourists who visit the place because of an interest in history, still wonder about the detailed German Lithuanian past and seek more tourist information.

The former German inhabitants, who were in fact the first Western tourists after 1990, of course know about Nidden's history and they themselves have their own and specific narratives of the past. Many told me that they were shocked about the official Lithuanian representation of Nidden's history. Taking the diverse narratives of the local cemetery, the following ethnographic example depicts one example of the opposing narratives of Nidden/Nida's Curonian heritage.

During my stay in summer 2004 in Nida I accompanied a Lithuanian travel guide leading a group of German tourists over the "Nida ethnographic graveyard" as it is called today. They were passing through the new graveyard door, rebuilt on the initiative and with the money of the old Niddener population. It carries a sign saying in German and Lithuanian: "I am the resurrection and the life." (*Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben.*)

¹² The Nobel Prize winner Thomas Mann visited Nidden for the first time in 1929. In 1930 his summer house was built in Nida, in which he spent three summers with his family. Today the house is the most visited museum in Lithuania with up to 500 visitors per day during the summer months.

¹³ I recorded many of these explanations to tourists during my stay in Nida.

The guide, a woman in her twenties, was walking through the graveyard, giving explanations concerning the old "Curonian population" of the village. She said:

The Curonians were an archaic Baltic tribe with very exotic habits and a very special tradition, very unique for Lithuania...Many of the crosses are Lithuanian "*krikštai*" which are so particular for the area. "*Krikštai*" can be shaped like a horse's head, birds or plants and are placed at the foot of the grave. It is said that the Curonians believed if the dead want to get up they can put their hands around the "*krikštai*" to pull them up. The size, material and design of these grave markers depend on the sex and age of the deceased.

While the Lithuanian guide was passing on her detailed and colourful information of the lives of the pagan Curonians and their habits to the curious tourists, just next to the group an elderly woman was on her knees, cleaning a grave and planting some flowers on it.

When I later came to talk to this German woman, she was very upset about the explanations of the Lithuanian guide:

Look at this...here is the grave of my mother and of my grandmother. I was born in Nidden and my parents and grandparents were born in Nidden. This was our graveyard. We were good Protestants, we buried our dead in a Christian way and we were Germans. Why do the Lithuanians only stress an archaic Curonian past and do not mention *us*?

When this 75 year-old woman talks of "us" she means the local Nidden population who lived in the village until the end of the Second World War. In her memory this population was above all German and Protestant. She can remember her grandparents and parents talking the "Curonian" language, but stresses that in her childhood the German language had dominated communication between children and parents, between locals and tourists and in the general public life. This old lady named Anna Pietsch, was born in 1930, a time when the northern part of the Curonian Spit belonged to Lithuania. She barely mentions this fact but states:

The Curonian Spit had belonged to Germany for over 600 years, the population was German and the tourists who came here were German as well. There were no Lithuanians living on the Curonian Spit. They only moved in after we left.

At the end of the Second World War, Anna, then 15 years old, had to flee west with her family. She came to Germany where she lived ever since. In 1990 Anna came to Nida for the first time in 45 years. Since then she has come to Nida every year for a two weeks period. "I am at home in Germany, but Nidden is my "*Heimat*", she stated. She has renewed her mother's and grandmother's grave markers and every year she plants flowers on them. Actually, she experiences "*Heimat*" best at church, on the cemetery and in Nidden's natural environs. These places help her to go back and remember Nidden as the home of her childhood and youth in the 1930s and 1940s.

In analyzing Anna Pietsch's narrative on the past, we have to contextualize her present day memories. She grew up during the period of National Socialism and was a member of Hitler's youth organization for girls, "*Bund deutscher Mädchen*" (*BDM*), (Association of German Girls). "Germanness" was important and celebrated during the 1930s and 1940s, a time of nationalism and war. During that period, being "German" for the inhabitants of the Curonian Spit meant being "modern", whereas their ethnic Curonian identity was – as described above - considered traditional and backward.

Curonian, the local language was the language of the simple fishermen, of the old people and of the past, whereas German was the language of the tourists, the traders, the church, local administration and the young people to which Anna belonged at that time. She cannot remember that people of the Curonian Spit called themselves "Curonians". "We were Germans living on the Curonian Spit and we were *Nehrunger*." (People of the Spit) she stated.¹⁴ She remembers the old superstitious practices of the local population and their ethnic specificities, like the Curonian grave markers (Ger: *Kurenbretter*, Lith.: *krikštas*), which in her memory stood next to simple wooden crosses that in the 1930s and 1940s were as common as the *Kurenbretter*. Thus, in Anna Pietsch's narratives, the ethnic past and identity is ignored, while national identities and belonging is often mentioned. I would argue that this has to be understood on the one hand in the context of the historic struggle between Germany and Lithuania over the Spit, as well as in the context of National Socialist ideology and present day Lithuanian historical representation.

When they are confronted with Lithuania's narratives of the local past, the former German inhabitants often feel attacked. Most of the former inhabitants whom I interviewed accepted the course of time and Germany's responsibility in this context. They do not have bitter feelings towards the Lithuanian population, which came in the 1950s and later. Quite the opposite, most of them are content that the new inhabitants have taken care of their old houses and are thankful that the church, the cemetery and other places to which they are strongly attached to are still there despite 50 years of Soviet rule. Above all, they are grateful that with Lithuanian independence, they have the chance to visit the place of childhood, which was not possible before. Nevertheless, they often feel ill-presented when their history is not mentioned. The following remark of a former German inhabitant is representative for many Niddener: "It is true that Germany is responsible for the course of history and it is Germany's fault that we had to flee this area, but this does not mean that we have to ignore the German history of this place."

In contrast Anna, whom I presented here and who stands for many former inhabitants, the Lithuanian tourist guide speaks of a very different past in the cemetery. She describes the graveyard as a place of the pagan, pre-Christian Curonians, who had exotic grave markers, which refer to an ancient Baltic culture. In her description the "Curonians" were a "Lithuanian tribe" next to many other ethnic groups in Lithuania. Further, the cemetery appears as an ethnographic relict from a long distant past and not as a place with a "living memory", where people mourn their relatives and ancestors. This historical narrative has to be understood in the context of Nida's and Lithuania's Soviet and post-soviet history and in the context of Lithuanian nationalism to which I pointed before.

Generally speaking, the interest of Western tourists and their requests for historical information about the German and Lithuanian past of the Curonian Spit have put pressure on the tourist officials to rework their representations about the past and present more detailed descriptions, including the German past of the area.¹⁵ As Marshall has stated, cultural tourists tend to favour a holistic,

¹⁴ People say that in Curonian and Lithuanian languages, people from the Spit were also called 'people of the dunes', while people from the other side of the lagoon were called 'people of the land' (see also Strakauskaitė 2004: 107-119).

¹⁵ I have noticed that the official website of the city of Neringa (to which Nida belongs) has developed constantly over the last years. The actual official website for tourist information (www.visitneringa.com) has come to include far more information on the German past than earlier webpages. Here, information by the Lithuanian historian Nijolė Strakauskaitė has been included. Strakauskaitė, a historian, has recently published guide tours in Lithuanian, German and English, which – in contrast to many other guides – give much room for the German past. See Strakauskaitė 2005; see also her historical account on the Spit 2004.

politically balanced, contextualized representation that allows them to understand the complex realities that have shaped a country's history and its people (Marshall 2004: 100). This is also true for the majority of Nida's Western tourists, who desire to learn about the Spit's complex history, including the German and Soviet periods.

Finally, I would argue that Lithuanian tourist managers are manoeuvring in a difficult field of cultural heritage politics. On the one hand, Nida is represented as Lithuania's most beautiful and prestigious holiday resort, a national symbol of a new, European-oriented lifestyle that promises to provide the guests with an impressive natural landscape and authentic Lithuanian cultural heritage. On the other hand, they have to consider the demands of the well-off Western tourists who question the age-old Lithuanianness of the place and demand a balanced historical account.

Concluding Note

I suggest that the example of the Curonian Spit and the making of cultural heritage is a contested and flexible process. Heritage is nothing fixed or given but is made and remade over the course of time, depending on the political, economic and social interests and power resources of the social actors involved.

Since the introduction of tourism in this area, the cultural heritage has been effectively mobilized as a powerful resource in the making of tourist locations and in the making of nationalist identities. During German sovereignty, the Curonian past served first and foremost to nurture the tourists' and artists' longing for an unspoilt utopia, where people live in harmonic co-existence with nature. Under National Socialism, the Curonian past was turned into authentic national German heritage. During Soviet sovereignty the Curonian past was first and foremost seen in the context of Soviet ideology as the culture and folklore of the "working masses". The Curonian heritage came to be interpreted as a part of Lithuania's pre-Christian past and thus contributed to the building of national identities in a Soviet state. When after Lithuanian independence the Curonian Spit was transformed into a new Lithuanian tourist attraction, drawing national and international tourists, the narrative of Curonian Lithuanian heritage was turned into a well-selling product in the new tourist economy. My examples have shown how the production of Curonian heritage has flexibly contributed to the making of German, Soviet as well as Lithuanian identities.

Acknowledgements

This article is based on a paper given at the conference: "Defining Region: Baltic Area Studies from Sociocultural Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Perspectives", May 19-22, 2005, The Institute of Baltic Sea Region History and Archaeology, University of Klaipėda, Lithuania. Research was carried out during ten months of fieldwork in Nida and with former inhabitants of Nidden living in Germany between 2002 and 2005. I am grateful to the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale Germany, which funded the research project within the framework of its "Legal Pluralism" research group.

Bibliography

- Albert, Andreas. Kulturzentrum Ostpreußen, Neue Chemnitzer Kunsthütte 2002. *Ostseebilder*. Georg Gelbke, Richard Birnstengel. *Motive der kurischen Nehrung*. Husum: Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Barfod, Jörn 2005. *Nidden. Künstlerkolonie auf der Kurischen Nehrung*. Fischerhude: Atelier im Bauernhaus.
- Burton, William L. 1982. *American Historical Association Newsletter*. 20: 2, p. 14.
- Čiubrinskas, Vytis 2000. Identity and the Revival of Tradition in Lithuania: an Insider's View, *Folk* 42: 19-40.

- Čiubrinskas, Vytis 2001. Sovietmečio iššūkiai Lietuvos etnologijai: disciplina, ideologija ir patriotizmas, *Lietuvos Etnologija: socialinės antropologijos ir etnologijos studijos*. 1 (10): 99-117.
- Ehlermann-Mollenhauer, Maja 1992. *Ernst Mollenhauer. Ein Expressionist aus Ostpreußen*. Heidelberg: Edition Braus.
- El Mogharbel, Christliebe 1993. *Nehrungskurisch. Dokumentation einer moribunden Sprache*. Frankfurt am Main: Wissenschaftliche Buchhandlung Theo Hector GmbH, Forum Phonetikum.
- Gimbutas, Marija 1963. *The Balts*. London: Thames and Hudson, Ancient People and Places 33.
- Gimbutas, Marija 1974. *Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, Myths and Cult Images*. California: University of California Press.
- Greenwood, David 1989. Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commodification, Smith V. (ed.) *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*: 171-185. Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Hall, Michael & Tucker, Hazel 2004. Tourism and Postcolonialism: an introduction, Hall, M. and Tucker, H. (eds.) *Tourism and Postcolonialism. Contested discourses, identities and representations*: 1-24. London and New York: Routledge.
- Johler, Reinhard 2002. Europe, Identity Politics and the Production of Cultural Heritage, *Lietuvos Etnologija, Lithuanian Ethnology. Studies in Social Anthropology and Ethnology* 2 (11): 9-18.
- Jonušas, Eduardas 2000. *Hund ist auch Mensch. Ich, der Sklave meiner Gedanken*. Ratingen: Melina-Verlag.
- Kwauka, Paul & Pietsch, Richard 1977. *Kurisches Wörterbuch*. Berlin: Verlag Ulrich Camen.
- Landsmannschaft Ostpreußen – Abteilung Kultur 1977. *Nidden und seine Maler*. Leer: Gerhard Rautenberg.
- Marschall, Sabine 2004. Commodifying heritage: post-apartheid monuments and cultural tourism in South Africa, Hall M. and Tucker H. (eds.) *Tourism and Postcolonialism*: 95-112. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mann, Thomas 1994 [1983]. Mein Sommerhaus, *Über mich selbst. Autobiographische Schriften*: 389-394. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag.
- Passarge, Louis 1878. *Aus baltischen Landen*. Glogau: Verlag Carl Flemming.
- Pese, Claus 2001. *Künstlerkolonien in Europa - "Im Zeichen der Ebene und des Himmels"*. Nürnberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum.
- Pietsch, Richard 1991. *Deutsch-kurisches Wörterbuch*. Lüneburg: Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk.
- Strakauskaitė, Nijolė 2004. *The Curonian Spit. The Old European Postal Road*. Vilnius: Versus Aureus.
- Strakauskaitė, Nijolė 2005. *Reiseführer: Klaipėda, Kurische Nehrung, Königsberg*. Vilnius: R. Paknio leidykla.
- Shields, Rob 1991. *Places on the Margin*. London: Routledge.
- Wietek, Gerhard 1976. *Deutsche Künstlerkolonien und Künstlerorte*. München: Verlag Thiemig.
- Von Sydow, Anna (ed). 1909. *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt in ihren Briefen*. Vol 3, Briefe aus Rom und Berlin-Königsberg 1808-1810. Berlin: Mittler.

TURIZMAS IR KULTŪROS PAVELDO KŪRIMAS: NIDOS KURŠIŲ NERIJOJE ATVEJIS

Anja Peleikis

Max Planck socialinės antropologijos institutas, Halė, Vokietija

S a n t r a u k a

Natūrali, žmogaus veiklos nepaliesta Lietuvos gamta, kaip ir kultūros paveldas, vertinama kaip vienas iš svarbiausių šalies kapitalų turizmo versle. Turistams skirtoje reklaminėje medžiagoje ir turistų vadovuose visų pirma reklamuojamas Vilniaus senamiestis, siūloma susipažinti su Kuršių nerijos architektūra bei žvejų gyvenimu, kaip šimtamečių giliai įsišaknijusių tradicijų apraiškomis.

Iš tiesų, kaip teigia Reinhard Johler, „kultūros paveldas“ tapo svarbia niša Europos turizmo versle, taip pat ir pagrindiniu identiteto formavimosi atributu visame XX amžiaus pabaigos pasaulyje (Johler 2002: 10). Sabine Marshall taip pat teigia, kad paveldas yra pagrindinis įrankis, nusakant bendruomenės, etninio ar nacionalinio identiteto apibrėžimus, o tokio paveldo apraiškos tampa formalių praeities interpretacijų vizualia išraiška (Marshall 2004: 95). Taigi paveldo reikšmės aptariamai gali virsti aštrių praeities interpretacijų konfliktu.

Šiame straipsnyje analizuojamas paveldo produkcijos vaidmuo Kuršių nerijos šiaurinėje dalyje. Šis regionas pasižymi priklausymo atskiroms nacionalinėms valstybėms kaita (Vokietija, Tarybų Sąjunga, Lietuva), migracija ir gyventojų mobilumu. Kartu nuo pat XIX amžiaus pabaigos Kuršių nerija buvo ir lieka turistams patraukli vieta. Nidos (Nidden) pavyzdžiu straipsnyje atskleidžiama, kaip čia buvo pasitelktas senasis kuršių paveldas ir kaip jį įvairiais laikotarpiais kūrė įvairūs socialiniai subjektai.

Pirmoje straipsnio dalyje pasakojama, kaip vokiečių menininkai ir turistai, taip pat ir vietiniai gyventojai, prisidėjo prie kuršių paveldo atkūrimo XX amžiaus pirmojoje pusėje. Teigiama, kad kiekviena iš minėtų socialinių veikėjų grupių dalyvavo kuršių ir jų paveldo įvaizdžio kūrimo procese. Menininkus, XIX a. pabaigoje – XX a. pradžioje atvykusius į Kuršių neriją, tuo metu buvusią vokiškosios Rytų Prūsijos dalį, ir įkūrusius Nidos menininkų koloniją, sužavėjo išpūdinga gamta ir paprasti, nuoširdaus būdo vietiniai žvejai. Iš tiesų, nesudėtinga kaimiška vietinių gyventojų buitį, turistams atsiverianti nepažįstamu mistišku pasauliu, tradicinės kultūros apraiškos, papročiai buvo itin patrauklūs turistams nuo pat turizmo pradžios šiame regione. Tokiame kontekste dėl turizmo verslo prasidėjo kultūros vartimo preke procesas. Kitaip tariant, tai, kas kažkada buvo suasmeninta, tebegyvuojančių tradicijų kultūrinė raiška arba gyvas autentiškas kultūrinis tekstas virto „kultūros produktu“, tenkinančiu komercinio turizmo reikmes, o kartu ir paveldo kūrimu (Hall & Tucker, 2004: 12). Patys vietiniai gyventojai palankiai žiūrėjo į turizmą, atnešusi naujus pajamų šaltinius ir šiuolaikiškumo dvasią. Kartu jie tapo asmenimis, parduodančiais savo paveldą turistams. Be to, nacionalsocialistinės ideologijos kontekste jie patys performulavo savo etninį identitetą ir kultūros paveldą. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad viena vertus, kuršis tapo atsilikimo ir pasenusių tradicijų sinonimu, o kita vertus, jam buvo priskiriami nacionalisto bruožai. Tokiame kontekste kuršių baltiška praeitis virto nacionalsocialistiniu folkloru.

Antrasis pasaulinis karas šiurkščiai nutraukė ramų turistų, menininkų ir vietinių žmonių gyvenimą Nidoje. Dauguma vietinių gyventojų bėgo iš šio regiono, lygiai taip pat kaip milijonai vokiečių bėgo iš Vidurio ir Rytų Europos. Jiems Kuršių nerija dingo už „geležinės uždangos“. Tačiau Nidos mitas liko gyvas jų atmintyje.

Subyrėjus Tarybų Sąjungai ir atkūrus Lietuvos nepriklausomybę 1990 metais, buvę gyventojai – jei tik dar leido amžius ir sveikata – pirmą kartą po 45 metų galėjo vėl aplankyti gimtąsias vietas, atsiveždami savo prisiminimus ir vaizdinius į šiandieninį peizažą.

Po Antrojo pasaulinio karo Nidden virto Nida, Lietuvos TSR kaimeliu. Daugumai vietinių gyventojų pabėgus iš regiono, tarybinės valstybės sprendimu, čia buvo apgyvendinti atvykėliai iš įvairių Tarybų Sąjungos respublikų, daugiausia – iš kitų Lietuvos etnografinių regionų. Vietovė buvo militarizuota, buvo nustatytos griežtos taisyklės, draudžiančios laisvą įvažiavimą į neriją. Tik nuo 1960 metų Nida vėl virto garsiu poilsiniu kurortu plačiosios Tarybų Sąjungos piliečiams.

Pagal nacionalinę sovietų ideologiją, kuršių paveldas buvo apibrėžtas kaip „darbo masių“ kultūra. Nuo 1970 metų vėl atgimė susidomėjimas ikisovietinėmis etninėmis Lietuvos tradicijomis. Kaip nurodė Vytis Čiubrinskas, tapo madinga domėtis senovės lietuvių magija, ritualais, mitais ir simboliais (Čiubrinskas 2000, 2001). 8-ajame dešimtmetyje atsirado vietinės istorijos studijų klubai ir folkloro ansambliai, prisidėję prie nacionalinio lietuviškojo identiteto, kaip priešpriešos sovietiniam identitetui, atkūrimo (Čiubrinskas 2001: 117). Mokymasis suvokti ir puoselėti nacionalinį ir etninį paveldą skatino nacionalinio identiteto kūrimą ir nepriklausomybės siekį 9-ojo dešimtmečio pabaigoje. Šiame kontekste etnografai vėl ėmė domėtis kuršių istorija, pagoniškais ritualais ir simboliais. Kuršių kultūrinis paveldas buvo mobilizuotas nacionalinių interesų labui, ignoruojant faktą, kad

istoriškai jie buvo atskiros etninės grupės atstovai su sava kultūra ir kalba. Straipsnyje taip pat teigiama, kad dėmesys seniesiems kuršiams leido išvengti sudėtingos, nevienaprasmiškos ir sovietiniais laikais nutylimos vokiškosios regiono praeities problemos nagrinėjimo.

Po Lietuvos nepriklausomybės atkūrimo 1991 metais, nacionalinės ir vietinės politinės pastangos buvo sutelktos naujai turizmo infrastruktūrai Kuršių nerijoje kurti, bandant transformuoti jos sovietinį įvaizdį ir pakeisti jį europietišku. Pasakojimai apie senuosius kuršių žvejus ir jų unikalų ir reikšmingą kultūrinį paveldą, prisiminimai apie žymias asmenybes (Tomas Manas ir kt.), šiandien naudojami kaip svarbus kultūrinis kapitalas reklamuojant Kuršių neriją. Artefaktai, kažkada reprezentavę vokiškąjį ar kuršiškąjį paveldą, dabar pritaikomi lanksčiai, naujai interpretuojami ir parduodami kaip tipiškai lietuviški turistiniai suvenyrai. Manychiau, kad Lietuvos turizmo vadybininkai bando manevruoti sudėtingoje kultūrinio paveldo politikos srityje. Viena vertus, Nida pristatoma kaip gražiausias ir prestižiškiausias atostogų kurortas Lietuvoje, antra vertus, jie privalo atsižvelgti į pasiturinčių Vakarų turistų, kvestionuojančių šios vietovės šimtametį lietuviškumą ir reikalaujančių subalansuotos istorinės ataskaitos, poziciją.

Apibendrinama drįsčiau teigti, kad Kuršių nerijos istorija ir kultūrinio paveldo kūrimas, atrodo, yra diskutuotinas ir lankstus procesas. Paveldas nėra sustingusi sąvoka; jis formuojamas ir performuojamas, žvelgiant istoriškai, remiantis politiniais, ekonominiais ir visuomeniniais interesais ir procese dalyvaujančių socialinių veikėjų galių ištekliais.

Received in February 2006