

ŠIAULIAI REGION





LEGENDS OF ŠIAULIAI REGION

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Project prepared and implemented by
The Šiauliai Tourism Information Centre

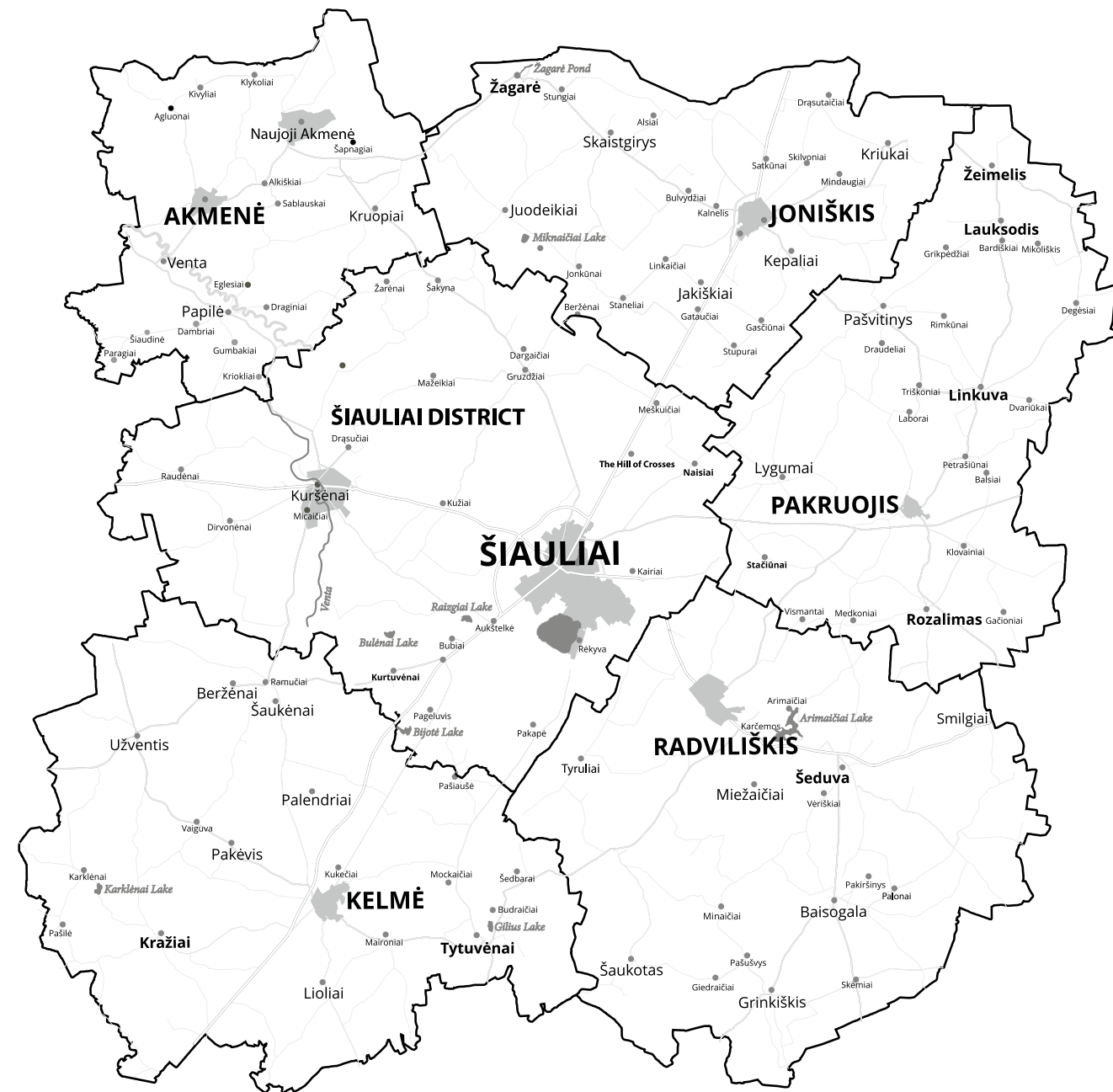
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Partners










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Link to e-book in English

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Introduction

To read and travel, to learn, and admire

Way back when no one could even have imagined that someday there would be a thriving Šiauliai region with its very own people who had specific lives, culture, art, trades, and their own everyday and festive rhythms, people talked. The stories of the region told by our forefathers were passed from mouth to mouth. The stories travelled, transformed, were forgotten or recreated in the face of new realities. The stories, also known as legends, were used by the people to explain the origins of lakes and hills, to explain who was the first to erect a cross on a now famous hill, to explain bodies of water, hillforts, rocks, towns, villages, and churches. To explain miraculous transformations of the surrounding landscape and the people that once lived there, who became the central figures of legends without even knowing it.

People observed nature and scanned the night sky for answers to the questions posed by nature, their surroundings, and their own lives.

Once passed from mouth to mouth, they were laid to rest on paper, collected by local historians and other protectors of the region's cultural heritage, and they found their way into various books.

This is one such book – full of the most beautiful and memorable legends of the Šiauliai region. This is the first publication to present a collection of legends from the entire region of Šiauliai – from the city of Šiauliai and the districts of Šiauliai, Joniškis, Akmenė, Radviliškis, Prakuojis, and Kelmė – illustrated with photographs and drawings.

Legends are an important part of a nation's memory, creativity, and understanding of the landscape. Cultural memory, as a means of transmitting values, testifies to the unending layers of human creativity. With this book, we seek to encourage readers to travel, to admire the artistic power of the word and image, to be charmed by the natural and cultural heritage of the Šiauliai region. This

is an opportunity for both Lithuanians and visitors from abroad to learn about the diversity of legends from the Šiauliai region. Fortunately, most of the places that concern the tales can still be seen, but many have disintegrated or even disappeared, remaining only in story form. The book consists of legends from the city of Šiauliai and the districts of Šiauliai, Joniškis, Akmenė, Radviliškis, Prakuojis, and Kelmė as well as an abundance of pictures taken by the region's photographers. It begins with the legends of the city of Šiauliai, as the initiator of this publication, and then runs clockwise through the districts. The publication is also illustrated with detailed pencil drawings by a local artist, Andrius Seselskas. This master of drawing created the general illustration for all seven

districts at the beginning of the publication, individual illustrations representing each district, and a further 20 illustrations for individual legends.

The value of the book is further enhanced by two academic articles: one on the history of tale collection in the Šiauliai region, the most prolific collectors of folklore, and the genre of the legend by culturologist Doc. Dr. Rita Repšienė; and another on the natural landscape of the Šiauliai region and its reflections in local folklore by Darius Ramančionis.

The publication also presents links to the websites of each district's tourism centre. QR codes will allow readers to find more information about certain objects and their locations, while general maps will help orient readers geographically.

The tourism information centres and municipal offices of each district contributed to this publication by collecting and submitting photographs, collaborating with photographers, and grouping their district's most important legends. All of the contributors read and analysed the text, shared their insights, and tried their best to create a relevant and artistic educational publication on the Šiauliai region with lasting value.

For their contributions we would like to sincerely thank the museums of the Šiauliai region and the departments of district municipal offices in charge of culture, tourism, and heritage.

The text is presented in both Lithuanian and English, while the paper version of the books is adapted for the use of the visually impaired (using the Braille writing standard ISO 17049:2013). The publication is available in paper and digital form, which is available at visitsiauliai.lt.

The publication was made possible by the work of folklore scholar Rūta Stankuvienė and her students at Šiauliai University, who had for several years collected legends from published and unpublished sources as well as archives. Later, the Povilas Višinskis Public County Library of Šiauliai implemented a two-year-long project entitled *Legends of the Šiauliai Region, the E-Book* funded by the Lithuanian Council for Culture. By commission of the library, this collection was further added to and systematised, while the collected legends were compiled by and an academic article was written by Associate Professor Rita Repšienė. The abridged version of the article is presented in this publication.

Not one tale about a hill, river, or rock emerged of its own accord – the human imagination moulded it to become part of cultural memory. And where should such stories be told, if not on a journey? Stories of green hills and lakes falling from the sky, of sunken bells and mighty giants – to some, these will simply be figments of imagination, while to others, they will awaken the urge to deepen their understanding of the region. Take this book and read the stories within, admire the region's rich cultural heritage, and come visit Šiauliai – the land of the sun!

The publishers

Thoughts

As global changes unfold in the 21st century, all-pervasive technology advances take place, and visual culture and the entertainment industry begin to dominate, those seeking to foster identity, memory, and heritage face new challenges. The stories, traditional narratives, tales, legends, and beliefs of the cultural sphere are passed on from generation to generation and become mediators of time and the current realities. To discover and develop creative abilities and foster the competencies of historical knowledge and imagination as well as a sense of pride in one's own past is now a crucial part

of the nation's existence. How do we draw wisdom from our vast treasury of folklore? A wisdom that would allow us to see the wonderful world that surrounds us – the fields and the hills, the hillforts, the rivers and lakes, the towns and their pasts – as full of incredible and meaningful experiences? Not restricted by temporal limitations, cultural memory is reflected in our *modus vivendi* – the foundation of our way of living and sense of meaning. By fostering traditions, adding to them and modifying them, valuing and upholding them, we open up a centuries-old world of miracles and magic, of real and imagined beings, and of mythical aspirations, hopes, and dreams.

Associate Professor Rita Repšienė

Lately, every opportunity I have to illustrate a text is like a fun adventure. This journey into the history of our region was a fun adventure too. As I sat down to draw for this publication, I let myself relax completely. I wanted to lay down my very first impressions on the page, so having read a tale, I would immediately put pencil to paper and draw what I had just 'seen'. These first visions, slightly improved, made it into the final version of the book. I was glad that the drawing process went especially smoothly

and quickly. It was interesting to observe myself, as if from the side, and ask: 'Why did you draw that like that? And why is this here? Is that what you read? Really? Great.' I have always said that an artist's work should speak for itself, so I do not have much to add: everything I wanted to say is hidden in those small drawings. To the initiators and publishers of this book, I would like to say thank you, while to its readers — have a fun and rich journey into the history of our region.

Andrius Seselskas, artist

For many years, I have collected legends about hills, lakes, and rocks on regional historical expeditions, interviewing locals and scanning through printed pages. And this book contains a collection of the most valuable legends of the Šiauliai region all in one place. Many readers of this book will want to visit the miraculous places of our natural environment, to feel the connection between the earth and the nation for themselves. Only by visiting

these places can you truly understand the meaning of each tale. In my article, I sought to explain possible links between the natural landscape and ancient thinking. I hope that my insights will help readers understand the earth's memory that the people of old have left behind for future generations. So read, travel, learn, and tell others of what you have discovered so they will want to do so themselves.

Darius Ramančionis, naturalist

As we travel through the wonderful region of Šiauliai, perhaps we might not give any thought to the deep and meaningful past that it hides. This publication, which covers the lore of seven districts, invites locals and visitors to look around and build a closer relationship to the region's nature, places, and people. The legends allow us to get a sense of past times as well as understand what shaped the region and where the names of its cities, towns, hills, lakes, and rivers come from. In order to reflect the uniqueness of each area, we created symbols to represent each district and its historical and geographic

identity. As you touch eight of the book's embossed images, you will be able to feel and imagine how the world is seen by the blind. Tactile illustrations and Braille text will allow the visually impaired to learn about the uniqueness of each municipality and delve into regional life. These are just small details with which we would like to bring together different readers, remind others of the socially vulnerable groups that are part of our society, and encourage readers to travel across the region of Šiauliai using this book with their children, older family members, or those with special needs.

Eglė Jokužytė, publisher

LEGENDS OF
ŠIAULIAI
REGION



Šiauliai region



LEGENDS OF ŠIAULIAI CITY



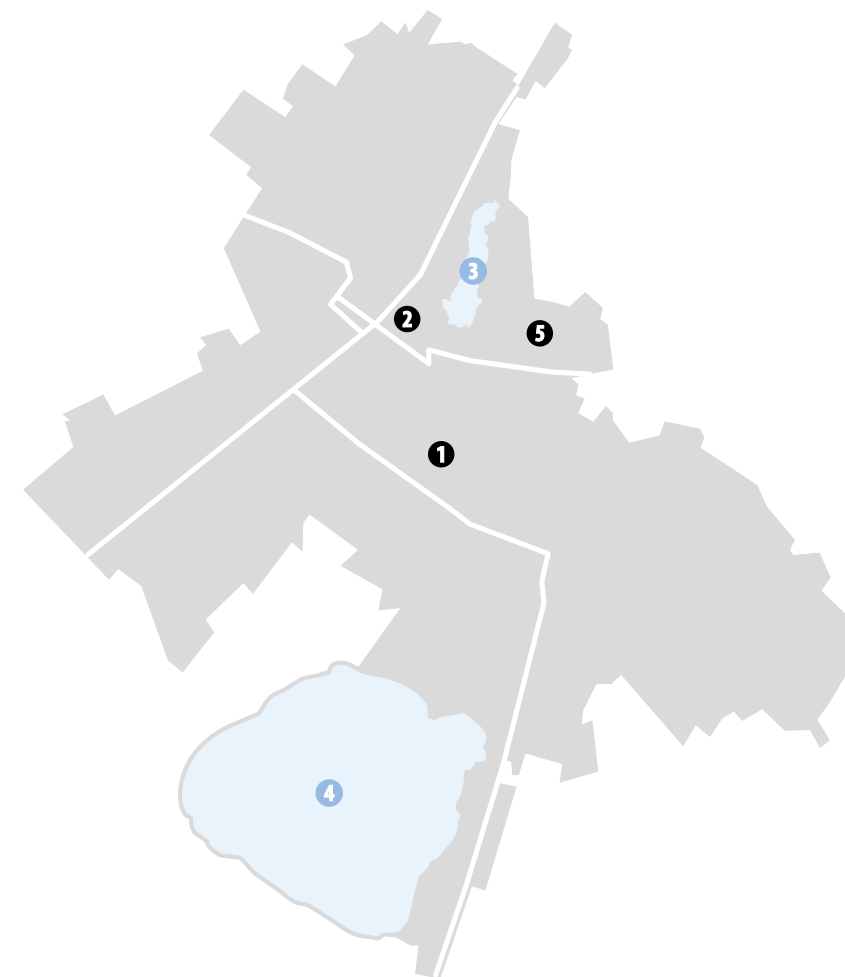
Šiauliai miesto legendos
 1. Šiauliai
 2. Šv. Petro ir Šv. Pauliaus katedra
 3. Talkšos ežeras
 4. Rėkyvos ežeras
 5. Salduvės kalnas (Žuvininkai pilis)

The Archer, a sculpture on Sundial Square

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1. Šiauliai
2. The Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul
3. Talkša Lake
4. Rėkyva Lake
5. Salduvė Hill (Žuvininkai Hillfort)



Šiauliai

Šiauliai is the city of the sun. The city was made famous by the Battle of Saulė (the Sun), which took place in 1236. The symbols of the sun that were scattered throughout the city became an inseparable part of its identity. In Šiauliai, the sun tells the time and glitters in gold in the sculpture of *Šaulys (The Archer)* — the tallest sundial in Lithuania — while one of the country's oldest sundials adorns the wall of the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Šiauliai is the city of sweets and the home of Rūta, the oldest sweet factory in Lithuania, in operation since 1913. Rūta chocolate and sweets are the best present to bring back from Šiauliai. Another delight awaits visitors of Lithuania's oldest brewery, Gubernija, where they can taste some of the country's finest *gira*.

Šiauliai is also a city of unique museums on the themes of chocolate, bicycles, photography, cats, telephone technology, water management, radio and television, and cinema. There are over 20 such museums in the city. The Aušra Museum alone, founded in 1923 and named after the first Lithuanian newspaper, has as many as nine specialised departments and is one of the largest museums in Lithuania. Incidentally, Šiauliai boasts the only Baltic Culture Education Centre in the Baltic states.

In 1975, the city was the third in Europe and the first in Lithuania to transform the central part of its main street, Vilnius Street, into a boulevard (pedestrian street). The boulevard was decorated with sculptural street architecture elements and advertising stands, and it became the home of as many as five fountains and several museums.

The interwar architecture of Šiauliai is part of the country's architectural, cultural, and historical heritage. In between the wars, the city was modernised and underwent intense construction and development. Famous architects, such as Vladas Bitė and Karolis Reisonas, designed many new

modernist buildings that the city was so in need of. As a city, Šiauliai is old and new at the same time — both world wars destroyed the city, and thus modernist and later architectural styles are predominant in the city.

Šiauliai has consistently invested in the development of pilgrim routes, such as the Way of St. Jacob and the Way of Graces. On 7 September 1993, Pope John Paul II rested and prayed in Šiauliai on his way to the Hill of Crosses (Jurgaičiai Hillfort). Following his visit, a special decree granted the St. Peter and Paul Church of Šiauliai the title of cathedral. Today, the entire city can be viewed from the cathedral tower.

Šiauliai is the fourth largest city in Lithuania and has a population of 100 thousand residents. In ancient times, Šiauliai was the home of the tribes of Samogitia, Žiemgala, and Aukštaitija — descendants of all three Baltic tribes live here to this day. Now, the local population is predominantly Lithuanian, while at the beginning of the past century, this position was held by the Jews, who left behind a deep historical, cultural, and economic legacy, alongside the Russians, Germans, and members of other ethnic groups.

The city is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty — at the heart of the city lie the Talkša and Rėkyva lakes; the latter is the tenth largest lake in Lithuania. These lakes have become the refuge of enthusiasts of active and passive recreation both in the summer and in the winter. The botanical gardens draw visitors the entire year long, with the first buds coming into bloom as early as January. The rhododendron and alpine plant collections have been the object of envy and interest for many.

The city is recreated by each new generation of residents. Wild new ideas and artistic initiatives add to the city's whimsical and lively character. Šiauliai is transforming, modernising, and confidently moving forward to the rhythm of the 21st century.

Šiauliai

The city of Šiauliai was named after an Archer (*Šiaulys*) who once lived there, and the environs began to be known as the Archer's (*Šiaulio*) county. It is for this reason that Samogitians call those who live in these environs *šiauliškis* or *šiaulytis*. Samogitians also like to say in jest, 'There goes a šiaulytis, black-coated and brown-backed.' In ancient times, the people of the county kept a breed of sheep of blackish colouring, and while the locals' wool coats were black when new, they browned with age. By now that breed has disappeared several times over, and now the sheep are grey in colour.¹

The old folks say this of how the city of Šiauliai came to be. Once upon a time, when Lithuanians still worshipped Perkūnas and all their other gods, two tribes settled on two hills, both covered in dense forests and standing opposite each other. In the deep dell lay Talša Lake, which separated the two settlements. On one side of the lake lived a family that made a living by fishing, while on the other side lived a family of archers and foresters. The fishermen's settlement became known as Žuvininkai (Fishermen), while the archers' and foresters' side became known as Šiauliai (Archers). And to this day, the village on one side of the lake is known as the village of Žuvininkai, while on the other side lies the city of Šiauliai.²

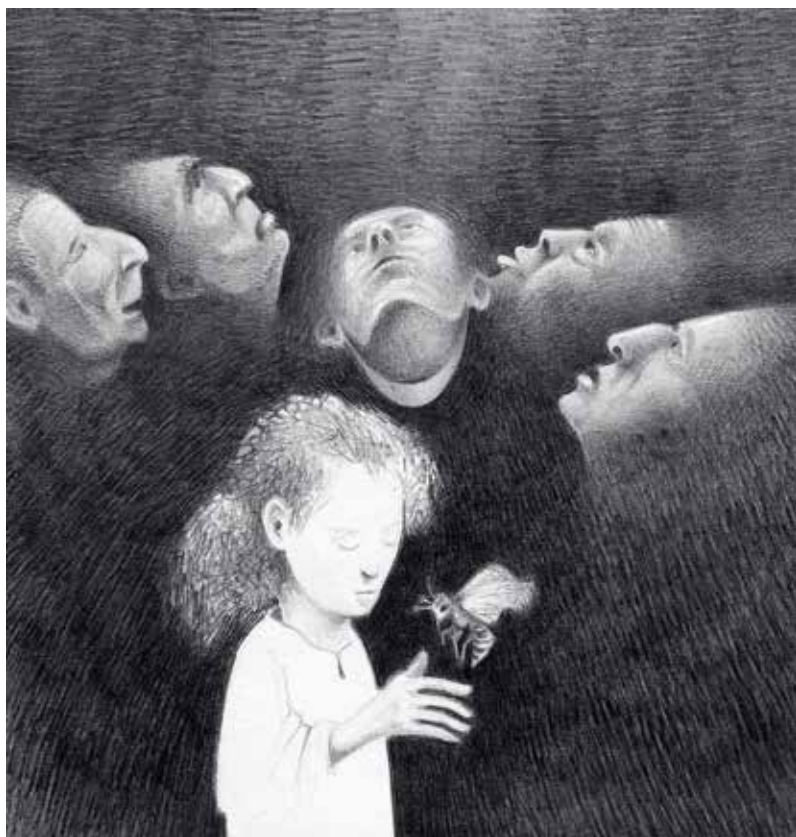


A legend about the church of Šiauliai

(The Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul)

As he was building a church, a builder cursed at it because construction was not going smoothly. The builder asked the devil to flood the church or to send a lake crashing down on it on St. Peter's when a certain number of people (we do not know what number exactly) gathered in the town. And one time this nearly happened. But people began to run from the town, their number dwindled, and the lake went howling and roaring away.³





Bitinėlis Lake

Talkša Lake

Once upon a time, a long time ago, the city of Šiauliai was in great danger. For a large cloud of water had drifted in from somewhere, and the people were afraid that it would pour over what was then still a small town. One of the town residents had a dream that this cloud of water would only stop posing a threat if someone could guess its name. And so the people tried to guess! But no one was successful. Because the cloud made a strange noise, like the buzzing of a bee, one woman said, 'What will come of us when that cloud keeps buzzing and buzzing like a little bee?' As soon as she said it, the cloud descended peacefully and settled down next to the town. To this day there lies a lake there by the name of Bitinėlis (Little Bee).⁴

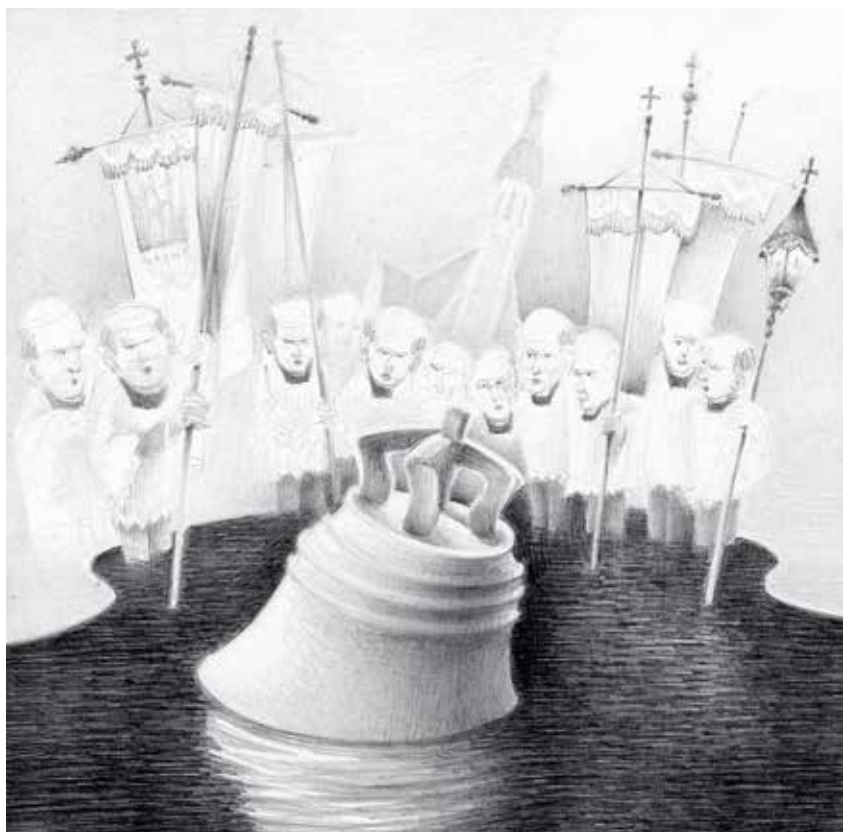
There was once no lake near the town of Šiauliai. But one time, a lake came flying in through the air. The people were frightened and said, 'Our town will surely be flooded.' The priest called the townspeople into the church. He told them to pray. They prayed day and night. But the water kept hanging over the town. Then an old man declared, 'The lake will only drift away from the town if someone guesses its name.' Everybody made their guesses. But the water would not budge. Then a girl said, 'It's like a little bee, oh let the bees come after it!' As soon as she said it, the water moved and dropped to the earth beyond the town limits. The town was saved from flooding. And from then on the lake was known by the name of Bitinėlis.⁵



The lake had wanted to rise. The people had to guess its name so that it would not hang over the church of Šiauliai and crash down upon it. One man guessed the name. He cut his ring finger and after three drops of blood came out, he said, 'Be still [telkšiok] and don't move until the day of judgement!' After that, the lake tried to rise no longer and became known by the name of Telkšys.⁶

An old man was herding his cattle in the woods. Two oxen separated from the rest and walked away. The weather took a turn: the rain came down, large clouds hung overhead, and the wind blew. The old man wanted to drive the oxen back to the herd, and he cried out their names, 'Žalis! Margis! Where are you off to?' And a cloud crashed down upon him and everything was flooded. People say that that is how the lake came to be. There is no knowing whether the old man stopped the lake there by calling for his oxen ... but it is believed that the lake came from somewhere else.⁷





Talkša

In the bell tower of the church of Šiauliai, there were once two very large bells. One was named Jonas and the other Kundrotas. Once, the Swedes decided they wished to take one of the bells back to their own country. They carted the bell over a lake in the wintertime, and the ice broke. Whenever the bells in the church rang, the one at the bottom of the lake rang in response. The great bell in the church cried, 'Jonas, Jonas, Jonas!' And the one in the lake replied, 'Kundrotas, Kundrotas, Kundrotas!'

Then the town priest was visited by a dream in which he went to the edge of the lake in the morning with all his vestments and finery, and the bell rose up to the shore. So all the priests went out with their vestments, monstrances, crosses, crowns, and candles and waited for the bell to rise. And it rose from the water, appearing for a moment before dropping back into the depths once again. The priests looked about them, for they thought they had brought everything they needed – save for the wick cutter. Later, a diver dove down to see the bell. He discovered a serpent wrapped around its heart, and that was the end of that.⁸

It was once said that the church of Šiauliai would plunge into the water if it was ever full, so it never was. It stands at the edge of a lake. And it has never been full to this day.⁹

Once upon a time, where the lake of Šiauliai now lies, was a meadow. The villagers were making hay in that meadow. Suddenly, a dark cloud began to circle around the village. The villagers knew right away that their village was in danger if the cloud were to fall, and they all ran to their homes to save their children. As she rushed home, a woman caught her foot on a rock, and her toenail broke. She wailed in pain, 'My nail, my nail!' Just as she uttered the words, the cloud turned away from the village and sank into the meadow. For the people had guessed the name of the lake.¹⁰

A long time ago, when there were no railways, people travelled by horse. A set of bells had been ordered for the church. When they were made, four horses and four men came to retrieve them. It was winter then. They drove across the lake of Šiauliai. In the middle of the lake was a whirlpool that did not quite freeze over in the winter. As they drove across the whirlpool, the ice broke. All the horses and the men sank to the bottom. So did the bells. Back then, they had no clever tricks, and no one could pull the bells out. So the bells remained at the bottom of the lake.

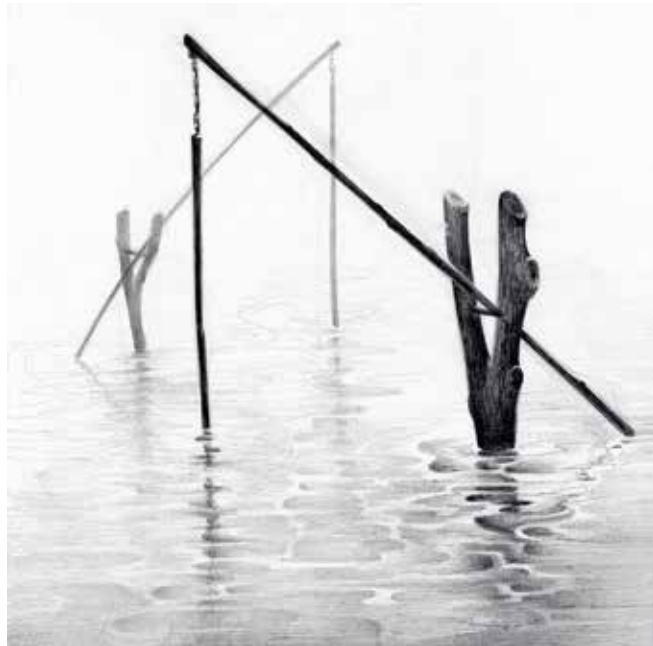
After a while, a priest from Šiauliai had a dream that the bells could be pulled up. He had the dream once – but he did not believe it. Again, he had the dream, and this time he replied, 'How can they be taken out?' Then a voice seemed to answer him. 'Take everything,' it said, 'that you need for Mass'. The priest did as he was told. He gathered everything that he needed but failed to remember the wick cutter. The priest went to the lake's edge. It was then that the bells rose up from the water and asked him, 'Do you have everything you need for Mass?' The priest replied, 'I believe so.' Then he heard the voice say, 'But where is the wick cutter?' and the voice receded into the depths.¹¹



Rėkyva Lake

People say that Rekyjava Lake came to be thus: once upon a time, there were four villages. One holy day in the summer, a dark black cloud drifted over the villages. The herds of the four villages were out to pasture together. A herdsman watched over them. A heavy rain came down and rained without pause. The soil and meadows began to flood. It was then that the village people realised they might be in danger. Without regard for anything, they drove their animals back and fled themselves, leaving everything behind. As she was driving her animals out, a woman's apron fell into the water. She cried out to another woman, 'Hand me my apron [Lith. – *fartukas*].' As soon as she uttered the words, the water began to pour down in columns because, it seems, the name of the cloud had been guessed.

Back in 1892, you could still see little islands with the levers of the water wells sticking out. Ever since then, the lake has been known by the name of Fartukas.¹²



Rėkyva Lake

Rikiva Lake and Rikiva Manor can be found five kilometres away from Šiauliai. They say there once stood a manor where the lake now is. A priest once spent the night at the manor. In the morning, a maid rose to find a reed growing in the fireplace. The priest told her that the place would soon turn into a lake and that they would soon have to run, taking none of the master's things, only their own. The priest managed to offer Mass, and then the two took off. The priest ran and he was fine. The maid tried to run but could not – the water prevented her legs from moving and that was that. She glanced down to see that she was wearing an apron. The apron was not hers – it was her master's. She threw the apron off and began to run. This time the water let her. When the priest held Mass, he left his book on the table. So the table and the book floated over to the water's edge, and the priest retrieved his book.¹³

They were carting some bells across Rėkyva Lake. As they drove across the ice to the church of Šidluva, one bell dropped into the lake. It is still heard to cry, 'I went down, brother Jonas of mine.' Thus spoke my old man.¹⁴

Salduvė Hill (Žuvininkai Hillfort)

A poor man was ploughing his field. His son was herding their cattle nearby. As he was herding, the son climbed to the top of Salduvė Hill and found a hole full of gold. He took a hatful of gold and brought it to his father. Then he brought him a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth hatful of gold. He took off to fill a seventh hat full of gold when he was swallowed by Salduvė Hill. After waiting some time, the father went to look for his son. He came to the foot of the hill and searched. After a while, the father heard a voice wailing from the earth. The father was frightened and cried out, 'Is that my son?' He had not even had time to look around for who was calling to him when the earth around him became riddled with holes.¹⁵

At the edge of the city of Šiauliai stands a hill by the name of Salduvė. Once upon a time, some children were playing on the hilltop. They got into a fight as they played, and one was pushed into a hole at the top of the hill. Some of the children were very frightened and ran away, while others wanted to pull him out, but they could not, because there was no bottom to be seen. As they stared down into the cavity, a ladder suddenly came up, and the child climbed out with a hat full of gold. Grippled by envy, another child waited for everyone to scatter and then climbed down the ladder into the hole. Nobody knows what became of him because he never climbed back out. However, in the evenings, a wailing can be heard at the top of the hill. It is the wailing of a greedy child who cannot get out. And no one can help him because ghosts drift around the hilltop in the evenings, and they can pull other people down too.¹⁶



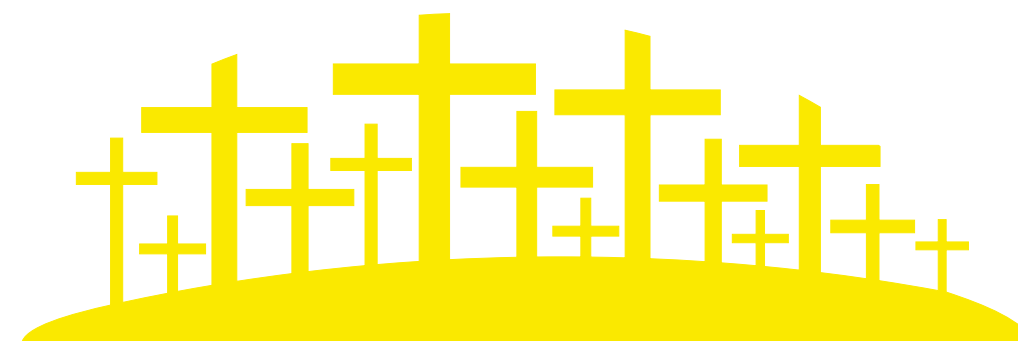


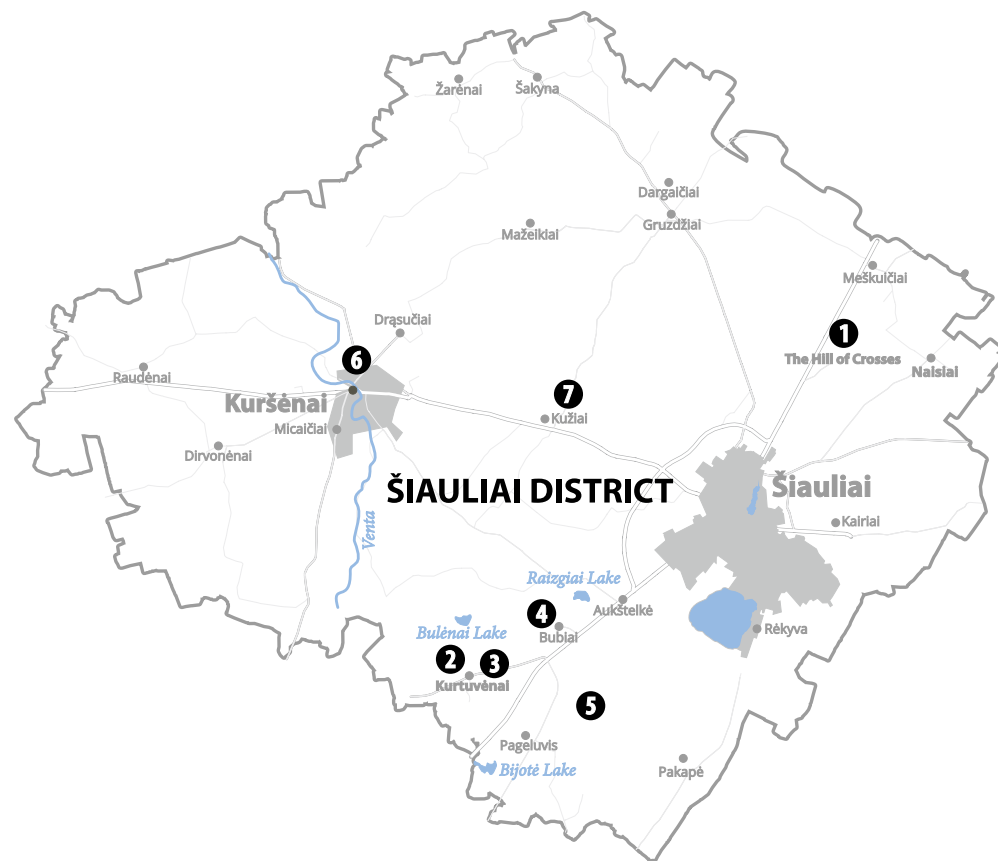
LEGENDS OF THE ŠIAULIAI DISTRICT

Šiauliai District
The Hill of Crosses

The Hill of Crosses

The Hill of Crosses is a hill in the Šiauliai District, Lithuania. It is a place of great historical and cultural significance, known for the thousands of crosses that have been placed there over the centuries. The crosses are of various shapes and sizes, and they are a symbol of the faith and resilience of the Lithuanian people.





siauliurajonas.lt

1. The Hill of Crosses
(Jurgaičiai / Domantai Hillfort)
2. Sacred Hill of Girnikai
(Šikštas)
3. Kurtuvėnai Hillfort
4. Bubiai Hillfort
5. Sacred Hill of Jusaičiai
6. Kuršėnai
7. Luponiai Hillfort

The district of Šiauliai stretches across the north-western part of Lithuania – at the edge of the East European Plain, over the Middle Lithuanian Lowland. The territory of Šiauliai District Municipality lies in a tight ring around the city of Šiauliai.

One of the most impressive places in the district of Šiauliai is the Hill of Crosses, which attracts countless pilgrims and tourists from around the world. In 1993, the site was visited by Pope John Paul II, who offered Holy Mass there. It was he who inspired the idea of building a Franciscan monastery by the Hill of Crosses that would serve as a spiritual link between the Lithuanian Hill of Crosses and Italy's Mount La Verna. Covered in messages written in the various languages of the world, the crosses are a testament to the faith and hope of the world's believers. The region boasts of a great number of churches, which reveal themselves to visitors through their sacred beauty and valuable history.

The region's hillforts – witnesses of the nation's past – hark back to a distant history. There are plenty of places in the district of Šiauliai to climb up for a bet-

ter view! Beautiful panoramas open up from the hillforts of Rekčiai, Bubiai, Luponiai, and Jurgaičiai (now the Hill of Crosses). During the holidays, the national flag can be seen flying proud on most hillforts, and on All Saints' Day, the hillfort cemetery in the town of Kurtuvėnai glows in a sea of candles.

The largest city in the district of Šiauliai, Kuršėnai, also known as the capital of pottery and the old crafts, greets visitors with a uniquely constructed pedestrian bridge over the Venta River, which leads to the recreated gem of old wooden architecture – Gruževskiai Manor of Kuršėnai. Travellers have taken a liking to Naisiai, which stand out for its Baltic culture and open-air events, and the town of Kurtuvėnai, famed for its manor and the beautiful sights offered by the regional park. The district takes pride in having one of the largest zoological gardens in the Baltic region with its adorable animals and birds as well as equestrian centre.

Those who prefer gastronomic tourism have discovered Kuršėnai, with its unique Kuršėnai roll cake (*vyniotinis*), and Kurtuvėnai, with its unique-tasting Kurtuvėnai ham, baked according to an ancient recipe.





Jurgaičiai Hillfort



The Hill of Crosses

(Jurgaičiai / Domantai Hillfort)

Thirteen kilometres from Šiauliai, somewhere along the highway, stands Jurgaičiai Hill, covered in many crosses. It is believed to have magical powers, and people make wishes to it and promise to build it a cross in return. They say this about that hill: once upon a time, a castle stood on the hilltop, and it had a church. But one Easter morning, perhaps because of the sins of its residents, the castle, the church, the other houses, and the inhabitants were swallowed up by the earth as the church bells tolled. That is why there is a depression in the earth there, which is well known to this day.

The old folks say that one Easter morning, when the churches had celebrated the resurrection of Christ, the bells of the church beneath the earth could be heard too. This is perhaps why this place is considered sacred and magical. People honour that hill and pray there. Every year, thousands of people gather there to pray. Mass and other church rituals are held. The hill is now known as Castle Hill (*Pilies kalnas*).¹⁷



Once upon a time, a man was ploughing the soil near the hill, and when breakfast time came, he let the oxen graze. Having had his breakfast himself, he fell asleep. When he woke up, a woman was driving his oxen away from the hill. He stood up, came closer, and saw that a door was open on the side of the hill. He asked the woman, 'Can I go take a look?' She replied, 'You can. Just don't look behind you as leave.' He stepped inside the hill and saw a priest offering Mass, candles glowing on an altar, bells ringing, and many people praying. When Mass was over, he headed back outside. As he walked, he could hear many footsteps behind him. Standing in the doorway, he looked back. Crash, bang, and everything collapsed, just as the man rushed out.¹⁸

Along, long time ago, there used to be no hill where the Jurgaičiai Hillfort now stands. A church once stood in its place. Once, a terrible thunderstorm struck. Lightning struck the church, and a whirlwind buried it in sand. That was how the high hill came to be.¹⁹



One night, the horseherds of Jurgaičiai saw money burning on Castle Hill. They moved quickly and soon found a pot full of gold coins. A young hand took a little bit of the money. In the morning, he recounted the entire story to his master. The master went up to the top of the hill and found the pot. He attempted to take the money, but the pot just clanged and sank back into the hill.²⁰

They say that about midnight, chickens, baby chicks, and cats can be seen on Castle Hill. They run around until the rooster crows. Then they all disappear. They say these are devils wandering for they cannot find a place for themselves.²¹

On the Meškuičiai road from Šiauliai, in the Domantai field, just by the edge of the Jurgaičiai field, looms a hill known by the name of Castle Hill, or Jurgaičiai Hill. From very olden days, that hill has been covered in several rows of crosses, not just wooden ones, but stone crosses as well. My late father said that back in 1831, the hill was covered in crosses, just like it is now. An old man he met at the hill once said as he looked at it, 'Now, there is a large depression at the top, but I remember back when you could see a raven strolling there.' The hill is not a burial place, but those crosses are erected in return for promises fulfilled, and images of the fourteen stations are attached to them. Many ill men come from the local environs and from further on to give their promises – to visit the hill, to pray, and to stroll from cross to cross.²²



A long time ago, where the Hill of Crosses now stands, people say there once stood a wooden church. Every holy day the people from the surrounding villages flocked to the church to pray. One fine Sunday, when the church was full, a great thundering sounded during the elevation of the Host. The people were horribly frightened. Before they could take stock of what had happened, the church began to sink into the ground. A few minutes later, only the tips of the church could be seen sticking out of the ground, but soon these too disappeared. The hilltop on which the church had stood now lay flat. Every year, the depression on the top of the hill grows deeper. They say that the church is rotting and the hill is caving in. Many years on, that hill will split apart.²³

Once upon a time, there was a hole at the top of the hill. One day, a mother climbed up to it, led by her two small children. While she prayed, the children rolled about, and one fell into the hole. The mother ran to get help, and they let a rope down into the hole. The child held onto the rope, and they pulled him out with a gold cross hanging from his neck. The child said that it had been very beautiful inside, like in a church, and full of people.²⁴

Once a gentleman drove past the hill on his way to court. He uttered, 'If things go my way in court, I will build a cross on that hill.' And the case did go his way. On his way back home, he hired a carpenter to fashion a cross and put it up on the hill. The carpenter fashioned the cross and put it up on the hill. (That was the first cross.) After that, others heard the story and began to erect their own crosses. At present, in 1918, there are 245 crosses.

Once, in 1813, Pilypas Jurevičius and his friends began to excavate in the area, but the Russian authorities found out and forbade it. A second time, they went to dig, but the authorities caught the diggers and told them to pour the earth back into the hole. Just as they brought the earth back, they were cured. Now, in 1911, there were holes in that hill. When people prodded the holes with long poles, they sometimes hit against some boards.

M. Lukošytė, a cowherd, was seeing to her herd. She

climbed up on the hill and found three pennies at the foot of a cross. She took them and brought them home to her mother. At night, she dreamt that she must go back and return those three pennies. When she told her mother of this in the morning, her mother laughed. The next night she had the same dream. Then she and her mother went and placed the three coins back beneath the cross. The next night, no dream came to her.

J. Jankauskienė was completely blind. She had a dream that she should go to the hill. She asked her daughters to take her up to Castle Hill. The daughters complied and took her there. As she stood on the hill, her vision was restored.

K. Rudis had been crippled ever since he was little. He heard talk of how people were bringing crosses to Castle Hill. He asked that a small cross be made for him. When the cross was made, he carried it. People passed him by in a cart and said, 'Sit with us, we'll give you a ride,' but

he refused. The moment he climbed up on Castle Hill and erected his cross, he was cured and walked home a healthy man.

The next year, the priest of Meškuičiai dreamt three times that he should head to Castle Hill with all he would need for Mass, not leaving anything behind at the church. The priest did as the dream told him to and went. Just as the procession arrived at the hill, they saw that a procession just as long as theirs rose up from the hill. The procession disappeared shortly afterwards. Everyone began to wonder whether they had left anything behind at the church. They remembered that they had left the wick cutter. They returned to the church and grabbed the wick cutter, but when they came back to the hill a second time, they no longer saw anything.

When he came home, the priest went to bed at night and had a dream once again. 'You did not fulfil my instructions. Had you done so, you would have brought the procession from the hill back with your own,' he was told.

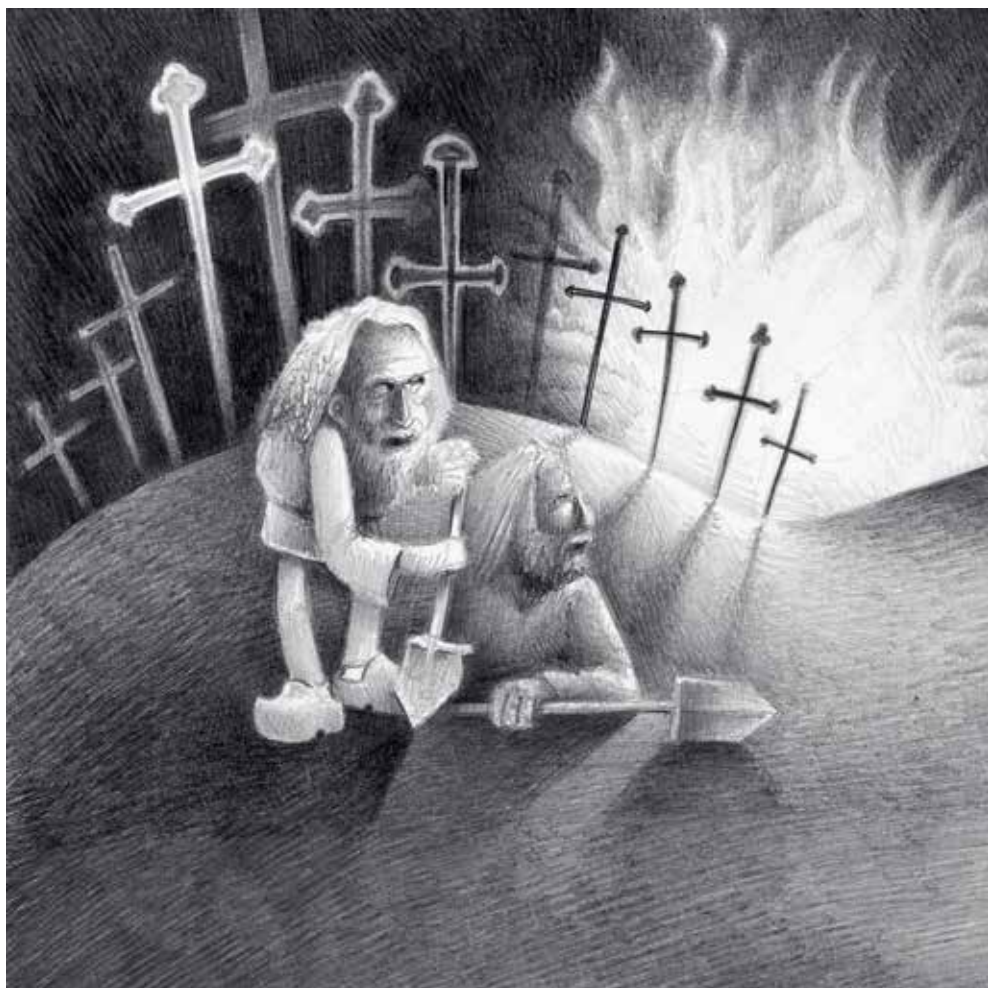
Once, Bagdonas Tadaušas had a great fright and went blind. He saw all kinds of doctors, but the doctors could not help him. Then he swore he would visit Castle Hill. As he could not go himself, he asked others to take him. Just as they led him up onto the hill, he began to see. Then and there, he swore he would visit Castle Hill every year. But one year he grew idle and failed to pay his visit, and he went blind again. Then he asked once again to be taken to the hill. When they took him there, he began to see again.

P. Čepulis lived in Kalvarija, and his body was riddled with pains. At night he dreamt that he should make himself a roadside cross and take it to Castle Hill. Just as he brought it to the hill and erected the cross, his health was restored.

Liucija Striupėikienė had a cancer growing in her mouth. All the doctors said that it had to be surgically removed. Then she swore she would go to Castle Hill. Just as she came to it, her health was restored.

Elena Kazimieraitienė lived in a homestead, and one day the house caught on fire. She had a great fright, and it crippled her legs. She went to the doctors to be treated, but the doctors could not help. Another woman told her to swear that she would visit Castle Hill because the sick that promise to go there are often cured. She asked her daughters to take her, and so they did. Just as she climbed up onto the hill, her health was restored.²⁵





Jurgaičiai Hill

The men of Domantai village heard that an ancient church lay beneath the hill and decided to dig around it at noon. They began to dig. Suddenly, one of them turned around to see their entire village up in flames and smoking. They were all terrified and rushed to get back home. When they came closer, the fire disappeared. That is when the people realised that the hill would not be dug.²⁶

In the *valsčius*¹ of Meškuičiai, stands Castle Hill. It is covered in crosses. For many years back, crosses could be seen standing on that hill. It was believed that some money had been buried there. People began to dig around on the hill. After a while they found a candlestick and several other items from a church. From that day onwards, nobody attempted to dig. Only more crosses were erected. They say a church was swallowed by the earth there. And there is a depression at the top of the hill from the digging. That occurred in 1887.²⁷

All the men of the valsčius came to pull the crosses off the hill fort. They burned the wood crosses, and they carted the stone crosses to a factory in Šiauliai for crushing. Now there are no more crosses on Castle Hill. For some time, guards were stationed to prevent people from putting up crosses. But they still came and put their crosses up. They say that beneath [the hill] is a church that was battered under by storms. Having served in the army for 25 years, a [soldier] was heading home, and in the night, he heard voices, as if of people going to church. People began to emerge from a church, and a great light appeared. The man entered the church through the vestry. He saw a young woman sitting and combing her hair, with a large dog sitting before her. Terrified, the soldier ran out of the vestry and the hill closed behind him again.²⁸

On the eastern side, there is a hole, and as the people say, when the ground is hit, a ringing can be heard. There is yet another hole there, left behind by diggers who had been looking for treasure. As they did their digging, an old man came up to them and said, 'Don't dig any further, because misfortune will fall upon you. This is a sacred place and should not be disturbed.' It was a mystery, that Castle Hill.²⁹

[...] along the Šiulaičiai field, they say there are 12 barrels of gold coins. If someone builds a chapel on Castle Hill (no one knows the saint's name), they will discover that treasure.³⁰

Castle Hill stands between the fields of Domantai and Jurgaičiai of Šiauliai County and Meškuičiai and Šiauliai Parish. They say that atop that hill, from a long time ago, there stood an iron cross alongside a hole. If a rock was dropped into the hole, you could hear it falling for a long time because the hole ran deep into the hill. At first, the hilltop was flat, but it began to cave in, and now the middle has caved in so deep that it has become a depression.

A man had tried to dig there, but he was immediately crippled and was only restored to health when they carried him off the hill. The same thing happened to a ploughman who had determined to plough the hill.

These days, crowds of people gather at the hill on holy days. They pray and put crosses up. The sick make their promises. They have already put up two hundred crosses there. People come from afar for some water from the stream (Kulpė) that runs alongside the hill. They bring it home and give to the sick to drink, people ask to be cured, and they wash babies with it to make them stronger.³¹

¹ *Valsčius* – a minor administrative territorial unit used in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Russian Empire, and other countries.



Once, a young man from a nearby village went to Castle Hill to see the crosses. As he looked around, he found a hole in the ground, three fingers wide. He wondered what it was and dropped a pebble inside. From the hole came a sound as if the pebble were bouncing down a flight of steps. The young man threw in a few more rocks, listened, and then went home. When he got back, he told his master about what he had found. His master was also curious to see for himself, but when they came back to the hill, try as they might, they could not find the hole. The young man never went back to the hill alone again.³²

Where the village of Jurgaičiai now lies once lived a wealthy farmer by the name of Jurgaitis. He had lots of land. When the Swedes swarmed Lithuania, they settled on his land, in a depression known by the name of Trišakumai. There they built their huts on the banks. You can see the remains of those huts, like caves, to this day. The Swedes attacked Jurgaitis often and liked to take what was his. So the man decided to build himself a hillfort. There was a hill on his land, which was there of its own accord, so he poured more earth on top of it and built himself a house, in which he lived. He surrounded his home with a wall of clay. The Swedes could no longer attack him. Later, after his death, as more people settled around the hill, the place became a village and was known by the name of Jurgaičiai. From that time onwards, the hillfort became known as Jurgaičiai Hillfort.³³

The Hill of Crosses stands at the edge of Meškuičiai Parish in Šiauliai. A great many crosses stand on that hill. The sick make promises to visit the hill and build crosses on it. Those who do not have the means to build a large one purchase a figure of the crucified and find a place for it on the hill. Many people have thus been cured. A great many people from these parts visit the hill. They say that a church once stood there. They say that one time some cowherds were guiding their herd when they climbed up the mountain and found a small hole. The shepherds began to dig and discovered that beneath it stretched a deep cave. The larger cowherds persuaded a smaller cowherd to wriggle in and see what was inside. They tied a rope around the shepherd's waist and let him down. He looked about and came back up. He said there were three large altars, many candlesticks and all kinds of riches in the cave. Once home, the shepherds told everyone at home what they had found. Later, some of the young men who had heard the story decided to go loot the cave. They thought that with that money they could buy themselves several gallons of drink and some cigars. A few of them climbed up to the top of the hill, tied a rope around the waist of one young man and said, 'When you've picked up enough treasure, pull on the rope, and we'll lift you out.' Down the boy went. The young men at the top waited, but the boy in the hole never pulled on the rope. They pulled the rope up, but there was nothing on the rope, and the boy was left behind for eternity. The women from around the area pray at the hill during Mass, and they say that when they put their ears to the ground, they hear a great wailing and an organ playing.³⁴

Two hundred years ago, Tutys Marcijonas saw the hillfort in the *valsčius* of Meškuičiai. There was a hole on the face of the hill. People began to dig around the hole and made it bigger. When the hole was large enough, they began to prod it with a pole. Whenever the pole touched something, bells sounded in the hole. A shepherd stepped up brave enough to descend into the hole. They tied him to a very large rope. When he was ready to come back up, he was to pull on the rope, and they would lift him up. The shepherd descended into the hole, and the people waited for when they would have to pull him up, but the rope never moved. Having waited long enough, they pulled the rope up and they saw that there was no child, and the rope had been cut. Following this incident, Father Ladašins had a dream that the hole was to be covered, that no shepherds were to go inside it and no poles were to prod it because God's power was unknowable. No one has tried to dig around the hole ever since, and the hole has since closed. Where the hole once was, there is now a depression. And no one knows why it is caving in.³⁵

At least 13 kilometres from Šiauliai in the direction of Joniškis stands a hillfort that is well known in the area. For in a time before this, it was a very important and sacred place. The hillfort is still considered to be sacred. People who suffer from some sort of misfortune, especially illness, swear to put up a cross on the hill and visit the hill itself and pray there. They say there was once a blind Jew who built a cross on the hill, and his eyesight was restored. No one knows for certain when the hillfort was built.

It was built by giants. The giants were so tall that they could hand axes to each other over a distance of several kilometres. Later, people used it to protect themselves from the iron men. The iron men used to come in from the west. They would pinch one of them with their fingers, and the iron man would be dead.

One time, a great horde of iron people came. When our men found out they were approaching, they prepared for a life-or-death defence. They brought their belongings, vast amounts of firewood, logs, and stones into the castle. Then the iron men arrived and attacked the castle. Our men began to throw logs and stones with ferocity, but there were just too many iron men. Our men realised that they would not be able to defend themselves, so they lit the firewood and piled their belongings into the fire. At last, they threw themselves into the fire. For the iron men, the castle was of little consequence then, so they desisted and returned to the west.³⁶



Sacred Hill of Girnikai (Šikštas)

Once upon a time, a giant by the name of Ansiulis destroyed an unheard multitude of enemies and stacked their corpses in a pile. In his own time, he walked to the seaside, 125 *varstas*² away. At the seaside, he took off his shoes, filled them with sand, came back, and poured the sand over his fallen enemies. Thus, the large hill, known by the people as Girnikai Hill, came to be.³⁷



In Kuršėnai, there lived a giant by the name of Kuršis, and his mother Kurtuvė lived in Kurtuvėnai. Before his mother's death, Kuršis had decided to visit her to secure her blessing. On the way over, Kuršis' clogs sank into the sand, and each time they did so, he had to shake the sand out. This was how the hills between Kuršėnai and Kurtuvėnai came to be. Kuršis' journey took longer than expected, and his mother died saying, 'He must have gotten stuck on the road from Kuršėnai'. Kuršis sat down on the last hill of Girnikai and began to weep. He wept until there were enough tears for a lake. (That is how Bulėnai Lake came to be.) Once Kuršis regained his composure, the giant Šatrija began to wink at him from a distance. Kuršis treated her to some snuff, and she sneezed so much that she had sneezed up a valley between the Šatrija and Girnikai hills. The damp valley was soon overgrown with trees, and Šatrija tossed Kuršis an axe. He chopped away but got stuck in the mire and was swallowed up by the ground.³⁸

A giant who lived by the hill departed for Luokė, to go to his mother's funeral. On his way there, his clogs filled with sand, and he emptied one clog at Girnikai and the other at Luokė (Šatrija Hill). Upon his return, he sat down and wept until he had wept up Bulėnai Lake. And the hill was called a hillfort. One tale has it that once upon a time, the son of a giant built that hill as a burial place for his mother.³⁹

Girnikai Hill was no hill at all – it was once a beautiful old church. A great storm and whirlwind came and buried it. On certain Sundays, people emerge from beneath the hill in a mist. You can just about see them circling the hill three times with their books and then going back down into the ground. They wanted to dig around that hill to see what lay there. But it stands to this day, and nothing has been dug up.⁴⁰



² *Varstas* – a historical Russian unit of measurement roughly equal to 1.067 kilometres.



Girnikai Hill

Once, a man was walking around on Girnikai Hill and found a cave. He stood by the mouth of the cave and heard a grinding; he was very frightened and ran away without turning back. Girnikai Hill is a church covered in earth.⁴¹



Kurtuvėnai Hillfort

Back when Lithuania was covered in dense forest and impassable woods, the town of Šaukėnai was but very little. Its sole inhabitants were a gentleman and his servants as well as two Jews. The gentleman spent most of his time hunting. Once, when he was out on a hunt, it grew dark. Not wishing to make the long journey back home, he spent the night in the forest, on a hill where the old cemetery of Kurtuvėnai now lies. The spot was so much to his liking that he decided to build a manor and small church there for his daughter. The gentleman began to cut down trees and work the land about the place. He built a small wood chapel where the old graves now are.

Having built the church and manor, the gentleman married his daughter to Duke Kurtis and invited his son-in-law to make the manor his residence. He named the new manor Kurtuvėnai after his son-in-law.

While he lived there, Kurtis had two sons. One son died and was buried in the cemetery. But his brother mourned him so that he built a great stone church on his grave in his honour – it stands to this day. And in place of the old church lie the old graves and Kurtuvėnai Hillfort. All this came to pass four hundred years ago.⁴²



Bubiai Hillfort

There were two caves on Bubiai Hill. Two women gathered hay there and had a child each. As they played, one child went inside the cave. After finishing her work, his mother came to look for him. The child turned up carrying many gold coins. Then the second mother made her child go inside the cave, but there was a noise and a cry, and the child never came out. They say that during the war, there was a tunnel from Bubiai all the way to Šiauliai. They say that there had been a church there in the old days and that it had somehow sunk into the ground.⁴³

Back in the times of serfdom, the steward of a manor rode back one evening after seeing to the serfs. He rode late at night to Bubiai Manor. His route took him past the hillfort. He seemed to see a church door open, many people inside, and a priest offering Mass. An old man pulled a snuffbox out and tapped the door with it twice. He then said, 'Come man, let us have some tobacco.' The steward dug his heels into his horse so hard that only a wake of dust soon trailed behind. He arrived in a sweat at the manor.

They say that this hillfort was once very beautiful. It was very high, so they could flood it with water, but the top would remain dry. Back then it was a very good defensive outpost for Lithuanians. The Dubysa River runs by this hillfort.⁴⁴

Once a man was ploughing the fields by Bubliai Hillfort. The farmer's son was playing on the hillside. As he played, he found a hole through which he entered the inside of the hillfort. The child returned after a while carrying a hatful of coins, which he immediately handed over to his father. The father then told his son to go inside a second time for some money. The girl inside the hillfort gave the child some money once again, but upon his third visit, she told him not to come back again. The greedy father, having procured two hatfuls of coins, was intent on getting a third and forced his son to descend into the hillfort one more time. The son did not want to go back, but he did as he was told and never returned.



Bubliai Hillfort

The father waited for his son but could not find him anywhere around the hillfort that day. It was only on the next day that they found the child dead on the hillfort – pinched to death. Where the body was found, the father built a cross for his son. But the cross would not stay put: in the morning, people found the figure of Christ lying on the banks of the Dubysa River and the cross on its side. Now, the cross stands not on the hillfort itself but beside it.⁴⁵



At a time when serfdom still existed in Lithuania, an Overseer (who supervised the serfs' work) was riding from the village of Jakštaičiai to Bubliai Manor. As he approached the hillfort, he seemed to hear music and saw many people standing about the fort. A large door was open on the side of the hillfort, and inside a priest was offering Mass. An old man amid the crowd was tapping his snuffbox on the door frame and invited the overseer to have a smoke with him. The overseer was very frightened and rushed quickly away to the manor.⁴⁶

Sacred Hill of Jusaičiai

When I was still little, I heard talk of a church that once stood on that hill and then sank into the ground. There used to be a large hole there. When you threw a rock inside, it took a long, long time to drop to the bottom. They also say that they used to whip people there during the time of serfdom.⁴⁷

Kuršėnai

Having made hay in the fields by the Venta, farmers left the haystacks out overnight. Upon waking in the morning, they would no longer find the hay, because the Venta would flood and carry the hay away. The farmers would ask each other, 'Where's the hay? [Lith. – *Kur šienai?*]' That is where the name of Kuršėnai comes from.⁴⁸





Luponiai Hillfort

On the road from Gruzdžiai to Šiauliai lies the Luponiai settlement. In the middle of the settlement, taller than all the huts and trees, stands Luponiai Hill. Not far off is a small stream by the name of Luponė. That Luponiai Hill stands to this day (1889). It was clearly once a hillfort because both ends are higher. At its base, it takes up an area large enough to produce three *pūras*, while the top is large enough to produce one *pūras*³ of grain. In the service of one farmer was a small shepherdess who, come the autumn, failed to thresh the grain. The master was angry and threw her out of the barn through the door. Then he saw that the girl went missing. And she was missing for three whole days. Three

days later, she reappeared. They asked her, 'Where have you been?'

She replied, 'I was at the Luponiai Hillfort.'

'And how did you get there?'

'The master threw me out of the barn. I was crying, so a young man came up to me and took me there.'

'And what did you do there?'

'They put me to milling nuts, but I could not do it. Then they put me to grinding sand, but I could not do it – so they let me go.'

'Are many people there?'

'Yes, many: some grinding, some milling.'

Yet another time, a cockerel could be heard crowing on that Luponiai Hill. That is what my father told me.⁴⁹

³ *Pūras* – a historical unit of measurement for measuring the volume of dry substances.

Once a ploughman let his oxen out to graze at breakfast. Having had his breakfast himself, he fell asleep. When he woke up, a woman was driving his oxen away from the hill. He stood up, came closer, and saw that a door was open on the side of the hill. He asked the woman, 'Can I go take a look?' She replied, 'You can, but don't look behind you as leave.' He stepped inside the hill and saw a priest offering Mass, candles glowing on the altar, bells ringing, and many people praying. When Mass ended, he began to make his way out. As he walked, he heard many footsteps following behind him. Standing at the doorway, he looked back. Crash, bang, and everything collapsed, just as the man rushed out in time to save his hide. Many say that wherever there are hills, there were once churches, covered by the earth during storms. Once upon a time, it seems, devils had a great deal of power. This was a very long time ago, when the earth had not yet tidied up, perhaps before the birth of Master Jesus. Elsewhere they say that farms and towns were covered by storms. At Luponiai Hill, they ploughed up some church crowns and heads and the string of a money bag.⁵⁰



Luponiai Hill

A master grew angry with a shepherdess and sent her out of the threshing barn. It was three days before the shepherdess returned. She claimed to have been at the Luponiai Hillfort. She said she had been driven out by the master and that she had cried. A young gentleman came up to her and took her to the hillfort. There, they put her to milling nuts. She could not do it. Then they put her to grinding sand – but she could not do that either. Then they let her go.

She saw many people at the hillfort. Some had been grinding, some had been milling.

People heard a cockerel crowing at Luponiai.⁵¹



Stone with the footprint of God

Not far from Kurtuvėnai is a rock that has God's little foot on it. That rock is longish and low. The little foot is like that of a 3–5-year-old child. You can see everything: the little heel and the five toes. They used to say that God stepped down from the heavens on it. The foot is about a finger's width deep.⁵²

The rock lay this side of Laisvučiai. In the direction of Kurtuvėnai stands Rimas Hill. Along the road is a kind of bog. The rock was in that bog. The bog had a name, but I cannot remember it. The foot is small, like a doll's. The people say that it is God's little foot, that it is a sacred rock. People did not go down to pray there because the priest did not know about it.⁵³

Sacred Hill of Girnikai and Raizgiai Lake

Along, long time ago, back when Lithuania was a land of vast forests, there lived a giant. He had a son, whom he loved very much. One day, the son decided to take a stroll. He left and got lost in the impenetrable woods. The giant waited and waited, but the son did not show up. He decided to go look for his missing son. As he walked, the woods shook. He walked and he walked, and he finally came to Samogitia. The Samogitian lands were very sandy. The giant's clogs filled with sand. The giant grew tired, sat down, and took his clogs off to shake the sand out. That is where a large hill now stands by the name of Girnikai. The giant was very tired and concerned because he could not find his son. He was upset and began to cry. He cried and he cried, and his tears ran in rivers. The rivers ran into a depression and turned it into a lake, which the people now call Raizgiai.⁵⁴

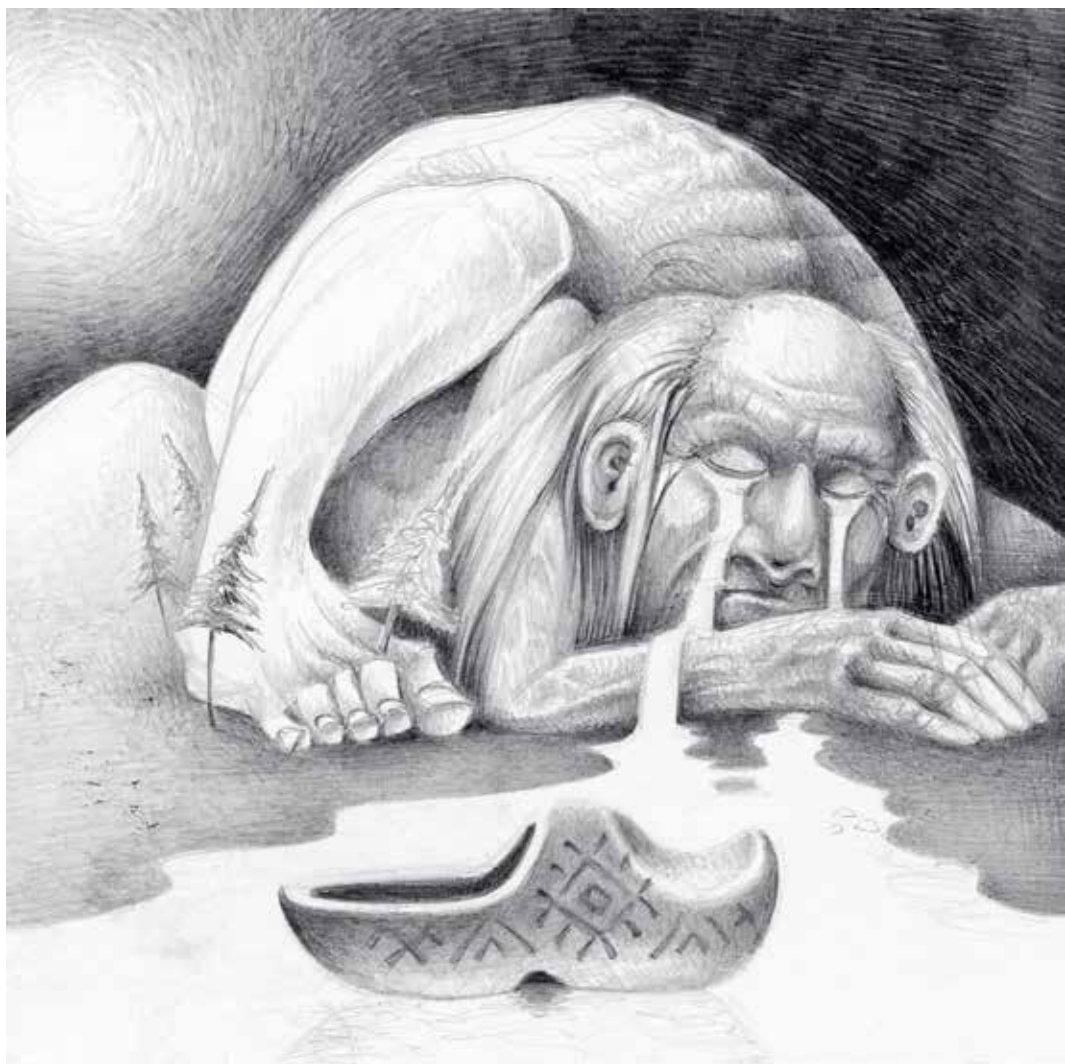
On the Venta and Dubysa Rivers

Once upon a time, the Venta and Dubysa were inseparable friends, but as often happens between friends, they fought and turned away from each other (the Venta began to run north, while the Dubysa ran south).⁵⁵

On the name of the Dubysa River

According to lore, perhaps spun later by the people, there were once two devils who used to ride the horses people let out to graze at night. When morning came, the Samogitians would find their horses not only not rested but exhausted, 'ridden by devils'. Once they figured out what was happening, they swore and shouted that this had been the work of two devils.⁵⁶





Bulėnai Lake

Bulėnai Lake

The mother of a giant had died. The giant lived far away from her. He set off to give his mother a burial. As he walked, his clogs filled with sand and soil. The giant shook the sand from his clogs – and thus Girnikai Hill came to be. He then sat down by the hill and began to weep sorrowfully. The giant's tears became Bulėnai Lake.⁵⁷

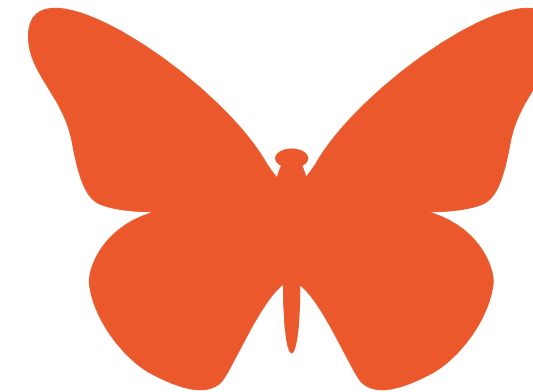


On Bijotė Lake

For an entire month, vast clouds drifted over the area. The sky darkened, and the clouds began to howl. One day, a festival was being celebrated at church. All the village people went to church, and only one stayed at home. He looked out of his window at the clouds and said, 'I'm afraid (Lith. – *bijau*) they might fall to the ground. I'll bring my horse back in.' As soon as he uttered the words, the cloud crashed down upon the church. That is where Bijotė Lake now lies. All the people at the church died. He was the only one to survive. The church once stood in place of the island. For many years to come, people would pull old buckets and furniture from the lake.

As told by Zosė Budžinskienė-Kastkaitė, born in 1902, Šaukėnai dist., Gudmoniškiai Vlg. Lived in Kurtuvėnai dist., Sodėliukai Vlg.⁵⁸





LEGENDS OF THE AKMENĖ DISTRICT

Diurnal butterfly collection of the Akmenė Regional History Museum

Diurnal butterfly collection of the Akmenė Regional History Museum

Diurnal butterfly collection of the Akmenė Regional History Museum



akmene.lt

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Luokava Hillfort | 5. Krūtis Stream |
| 2. Ramonai | 6. Kuršėnai and Papilė |
| 3. The Ringing Field | 7. Karpėnai rock |
| 4. Vieké | |

The district of Akmenė lies in the country's northwest. To the north, it is bordered by Latvia, to the east by the district of Joniškis, to the southeast by the district of Šiauliai, to the southwest by the district of Telšiai, and to the west by the district of Mažeikiai. The district's history only began in 1950; however, the territory itself has been inhabited since the 1st millennium AD, and traces of the domestic and cultural lives of the tribes of Samogitia and Žiemgala can still be found here.

Perhaps the oldest known mention of the area is a description of an expedition to the land of Alsiai written by a Livonian magistrate in 1229 (*Livländische Reimchronik*). Historians believe that it was the settlement of Alsiai, not far from Klykoliai, that is referred to in his work. In 1359, the Livonian crusaders battled near Papilė with the Samogitian army and experienced great losses.

Historical circumstances made the Akmenė region a witness to many military conflicts. Much devastation was inflicted on its people by the Swedish army in the 17th century. The area was also ravaged on multiple occasions by starvation, the plague, and other epidemics. However, the determined and industrious people healed the wounds of war and rebuilt their homes. By 1511 there are mentions of Akmenė Manor, which belonged to the Samogitian Kęsgaila family, and in 1531, King Žygimantas the Elder gave his permission to build the town of Akmenė and establish a marketplace.

The Akmenė region also played a role in the uprisings against the occupying forces of tsarist Russia. It experienced painful losses during both world wars, the Soviet occupation and later, the Nazi occupation. The fire of war destroyed the towns of Kruopiai, Papilė, and the centre of the *valsčius* by the Latvian border, Vegeriai.

Grass has long overgrown the region's trenches and scars of war. Today, the name of Akmenė sounds far and wide for its impressive development, beautiful nature, and exceptional tourist attractions. The Akmenė Regional History Museum showcases the tooth and remnants of a phytosaurus, a creature that inhabited the Earth several hundred million years ago. These remnants are the oldest in the world! The museum also boasts the largest collection of diurnal butterflies from all over the world. Visitors can stroll around the clay pits of Menčiai and Šaltiškiai, dubbed the canyons of Mars, and even find their own fossils, perhaps ones older than a phytosaurus. They can also pay their respects to the enlightened Simonas Daukantas at his grave, at his memorial, or at his namesake museum in Papilė. Or stop by Paragiai Manor and find out who signed their work by the pen name of the Lazdynai Owl. Or walk about or even wade a few steps into Kamanos Marsh, stroll around Venta Regional Park, and take in the views from atop the Papilė and Luokava hillforts or the Kamanos and Jurakalnis observation towers. Or perhaps come see the autocross races organised in the village of Dabikinėlė or try parachuting, gliding, or other forms of extreme entertainment at the Akmenė aeroclub.

Akmenė's hillforts and streams, marshes, and rocks are steeped in legend and lore. The wondrous past of the Akmenė region is a mix of historical fact and fantastical stories. Some of them are presented in this publication.



Luokava Hillfort

(previously known as Lokava Hill)

They say [the hill] has stood there since ancient times, since the flood. They say it was washed up by the water, the marsh water. The people of old say that the hill piled up. They say a woman sometimes appeared there. She would climb up that hill and beckon, 'Here, here, here, here, here, here!' They say that a castle was there covered in earth.⁵⁹

A man went to Lokava Hill and saw a serpent. The serpent said, 'Take the keys out of my jaws with your mouth!' The man did not dare take the keys. The serpent said, 'Once a fool, always a fool! You could have had a manor.' Another time, they said that it was once a manor covered in sand, or it was once a church.⁶⁰

They say a castle of some sort sank into the ground there a long time ago. Once, a cowherd was driving his herd. A girl with long hair came out. She wished to be saved. But the cowherd did not speak to her. She said, 'I have lain here three hundred years, and I will lie here for as many more.' They say she had some keys. There was a door of some sort.⁶¹

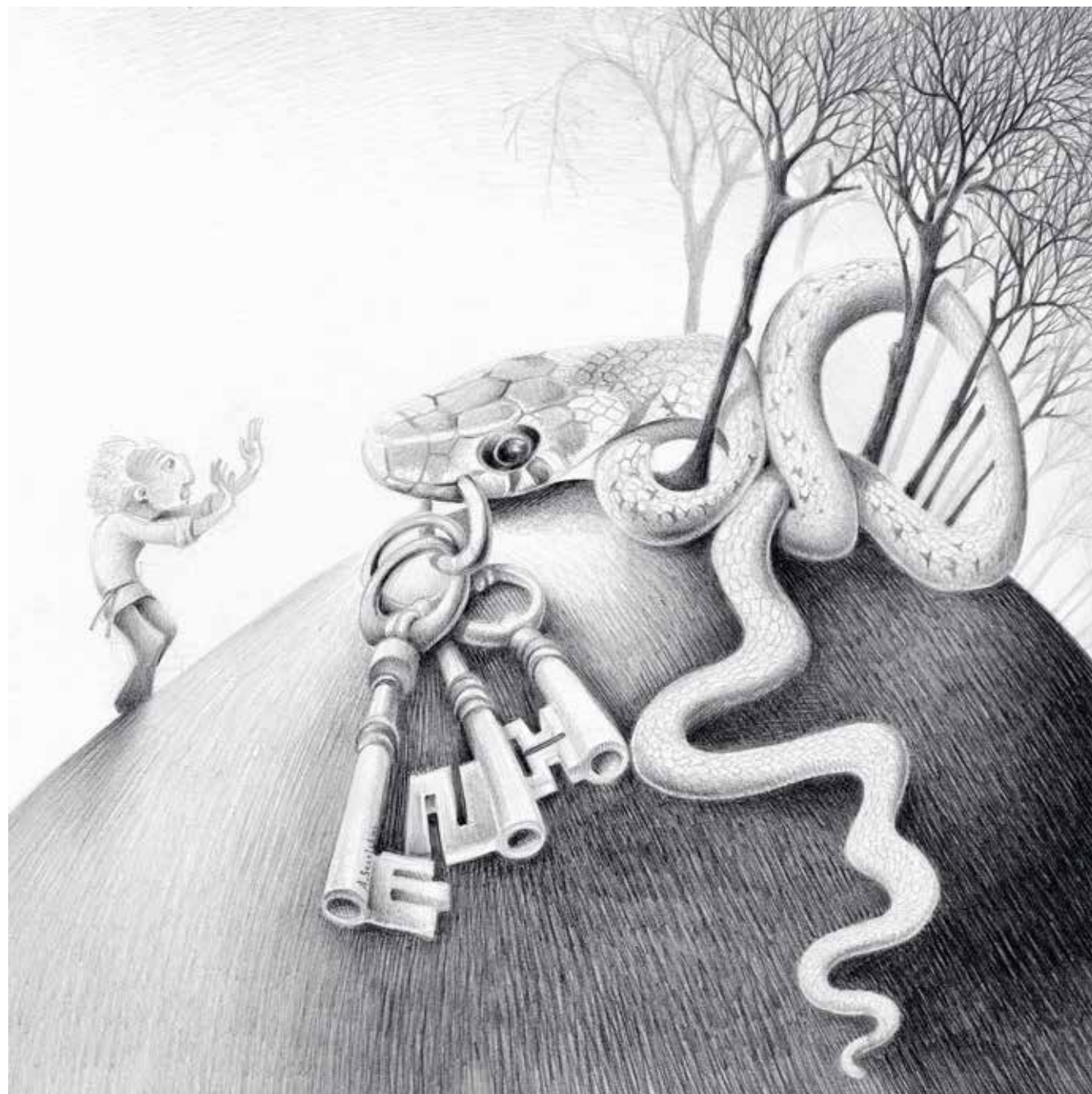
Father Lemeževičius had a dream in which he was told, 'On Easter morning, take all you need from the church and head to Lokava Hill. Lokava Manor will rise from within.' So he called together the church committee and they agreed, 'We need to go – perhaps we can save that manor.' So they went. Only a kilometre was left to walk, and a small unknown child ran up to them and said, 'Your efforts are in vain, you did not take everything you need.'

'What do you mean not everything?'

'You are missing the thing that puts the candles out (the wick cutters) – you didn't take the wick cutters. You'll gain nothing. Go back.'

And so they failed to save the manor because they did not have everything they needed.⁶²

They say that there once was a lake, and there was a small hole on the hill. When children herd flocks of geese and cast them down into the hole, the geese enter the lake from inside the hill.⁶³



Luokava Hillfort



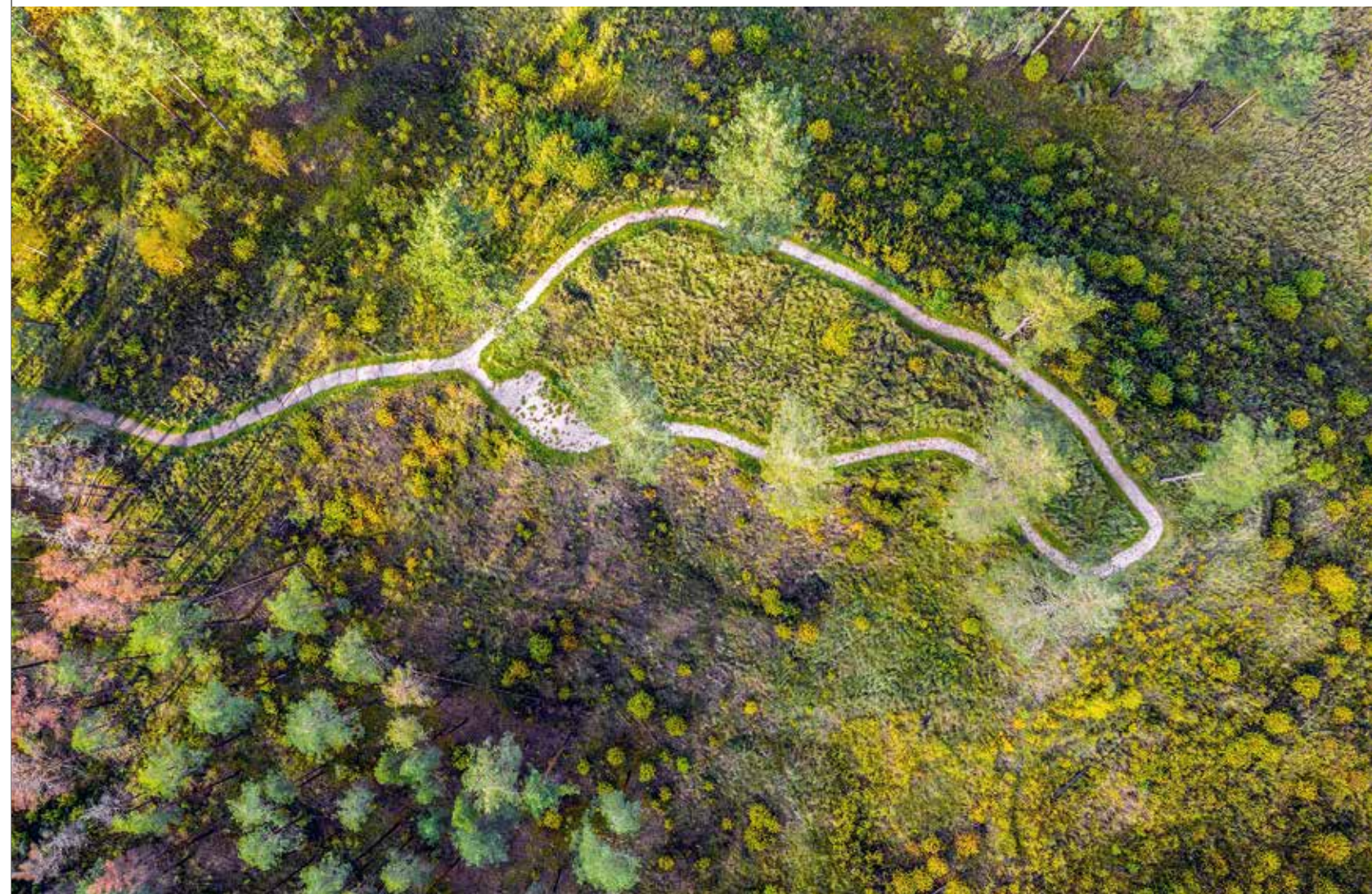
In the parish of Akmenė, in the *pavietas*⁴ of Šiauliai, not far from Vegerė – just three *varstas* away – at the end of the Kuriežiai settlement, there is one Lokava Hill. They say that in the summer, a gentleman from Vegerė went to that hill every evening for a drive. One time, as the sun set on one of his drives, the hill lit up with a red fire-like light, and the gentleman had a great fright, shortly fell ill, and died.

After that, a farmer from the settlement on whose land the hill stood worked a small stretch of land on it and cultivated crops there for several years. The crops grew well, but the farmer met the same end as the gentleman. This vision was seen by several other people. From that time on to this day, no one dares plough the land there. Some time ago, on one side of the hill, the steep side, there had once been caves near the top. From these caves, as the sun set, a girl with a milking pail would come out every evening to shout, '*Tbruka, tbruka, tbruka*', as if she were calling to a cow. When people came close, she hid away. A group of cowherds were herding their cattle there once, when they threw the hat of one into the cave and ran off. The cowherd who lost his hat cried and paced about the mouth of the cave. Not long after, the girl brought his hat out, full of gold coins. Overjoyed, he ran home.

The people heard about this, and some locals decided to dig up the cave. But however much they dug out during the day, the earth collapsed during the night. They laboured for a while but soon grew tired. They left the cave in peace. Ever since then, no more sightings of the girl have occurred.

They were carting grain past the hill at night, and a man fell asleep. When he woke up, the bags of grain were missing, but he found gold in the wheels, twice the value of the missing grain.⁶⁴

⁴ *Pavietas* – an administrative territorial unit used in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.





Ramonai

Ramonai

A hundred years ago, the town of Ramonai in the *valsčius* of Akmenė was a very beautiful and wealthy town. There lived a god-fearing priest. One morning, on his way to Holy Mass, the priest found a letter engraved in gold lettering. The letter warned that on such and such a day, a great current of water would come from a distant sea and flow over the entire town during Holy Mass. The priest announced the warning to the parishioners, and they packed up their things and left the town for another parish. Only the priest did not

leave the church. A procession remained to await the unfortunate day. The day came, and the people came to the church with sorrow on their faces. Only the priest kept his spirits up and went to offer Mass, while the other men watched out for the coming water. When the ceremonies began, they saw a current of water flow in from the west. The people and the procession began to make their way out of the church, but the priest stayed behind to finish Mass. However, the men grabbed the priest and the sacramental bread and carried them out of the church. Then everyone ran in the direction of Akmenė. And all the bells of the surrounding towns tolled, as little by little the towers of the Ramonai church were submerged in water. A church procession from Akmenė came to meet the unfortunate residents of Ramonai. As for the town of Ramonai, even though it is surrounded by forests, three great waterholes can still be found there, come winter or summer. They are constantly boiling and bubbling, and nobody can come near them. No one can explore them to this day.⁶⁵

Once upon a time, the people were heading to church for a festival. They saw a lake come howling in. The people were very frightened, but when the lake crashed down, all it made was a depression because the lake had been empty.⁶⁶

My grandfather, when he was young, was making hay with the other men. As they made hay, they began to hear a howling. One old man climbed up a tree to see what it was. And he saw that a lake was drifting towards them. He cried, 'Run, run as fast as you can because you'll all drown – a lake is coming.' Some began to run, as my grandfather did. Only the lake drifted over the meadow and descended upon it. Those who stayed drowned, even the old man in the tree. That is how my grandfather stayed alive.⁶⁷





You will hear the water howling. Blowing and blowing. The people say that the lake will leave, that it will rise and go and never return. And then they see that all there is is a dray hole, and the cloud is leaving. Blowing and howling. Thinking about where to land. Well, either it liked the place or maybe it was just a lower spot, but it would fall again, and a new lake would come.⁶⁸

[...] I was still a child when the lake went. I had just driven the herd home. And a strange cloud came over. Dear Lord. It began to rain, it thundered a little, it howled a little. Then, the fish began to come down and the fish jumped up into the air. So we carried bags over, people carried bags of fish. They dried the fish and carried it. The lake had fallen. And the lake had come from Germany. They got word of it later. For they immediately tried to find out where it had come from. From Germany. And I had been herding a flock from Germany, a girl's herd. And the Germans came, from the government. And they wrote everything in the books, the area it covered when it fell on the forest in Latvia. Once they came to see how much it covered, then they recorded everything again. And over there they said it came from ours.⁶⁹

The Ringing Field

Beyond Pailiai (Kruopiai Vls.), by the Sielenai marsh lies a beautiful little meadow. If you struck the ground with your foot or a stick of some sort, you could hear a ringing coming from below: *ding, ding*. If you only knew how it sounded! It seemed there were bits of iron or bells down there. That is why the people gave the meadow the name of the Ringing Field (Lith. – *Skambantysis*). That is what it is called to this day.⁷⁰





On the name of Vieké

On the name of Vieké

Interviewer: Where does the name 'Venta' come from?
Have you heard anything?

F. Rudzinskas: [...] I can't tell you where the name of Ventė comes from, in truth [...]. But Vieké... It was called Vieké.

Well, you see, that Vieké [...], that was its name since the flood, because the Viekas was a ship that sank there. It was a ship that had been called Viekas. So that's how Vieké got its name.

Interviewer: And who told you this?

F. Rudzinskas: It was my grandfather who told me about Vieké.⁷¹



Krūtis Stream

The Krūtis stream runs through Pleikiai (Kruopiai Vls.).

In that stream, as day breaks, horseherds used to see girls bathing with their breasts (Lith. – *krūtys*) bare. And the horseherds began to call the place *plika krūtis* (Eng. – bare breast). To this day they call that stream 'Krūtis'.⁷²



Kuršėnai and Papilė

Having made hay in the fields by the Venta, farmers left the haystacks out overnight. Upon waking in the morning, they would no longer find the hay, because the Venta would flood and carry the hay away. The farmers would ask each other, 'Where's the hay? [Lith. – *Kur šienai?*]' That is where the name of Kuršėnai comes from.

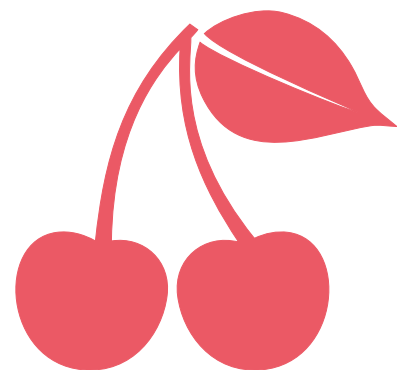
In another place, farmers would find a great lot of hay and say every year, 'Someone brought [Lith. – *papylė*] the hay in again!' That is where the name of Papilė comes from.⁷³



Karpėnai rock

In the forest of Karpėnai, the rock stood right by the road. I was still a little girl, [when] my uncle used to say as we passed, 'Dearest, that rock is slithering away from the road. Not by much – you can barely see it as it slithers – but it moves bit by bit.' Over the years, you could begin to see that it was further away than it once was. It was a large grey rock.⁷⁴





LEGENDS OF THE JONIŠKIS DISTRICT



The cherries of Žagarė



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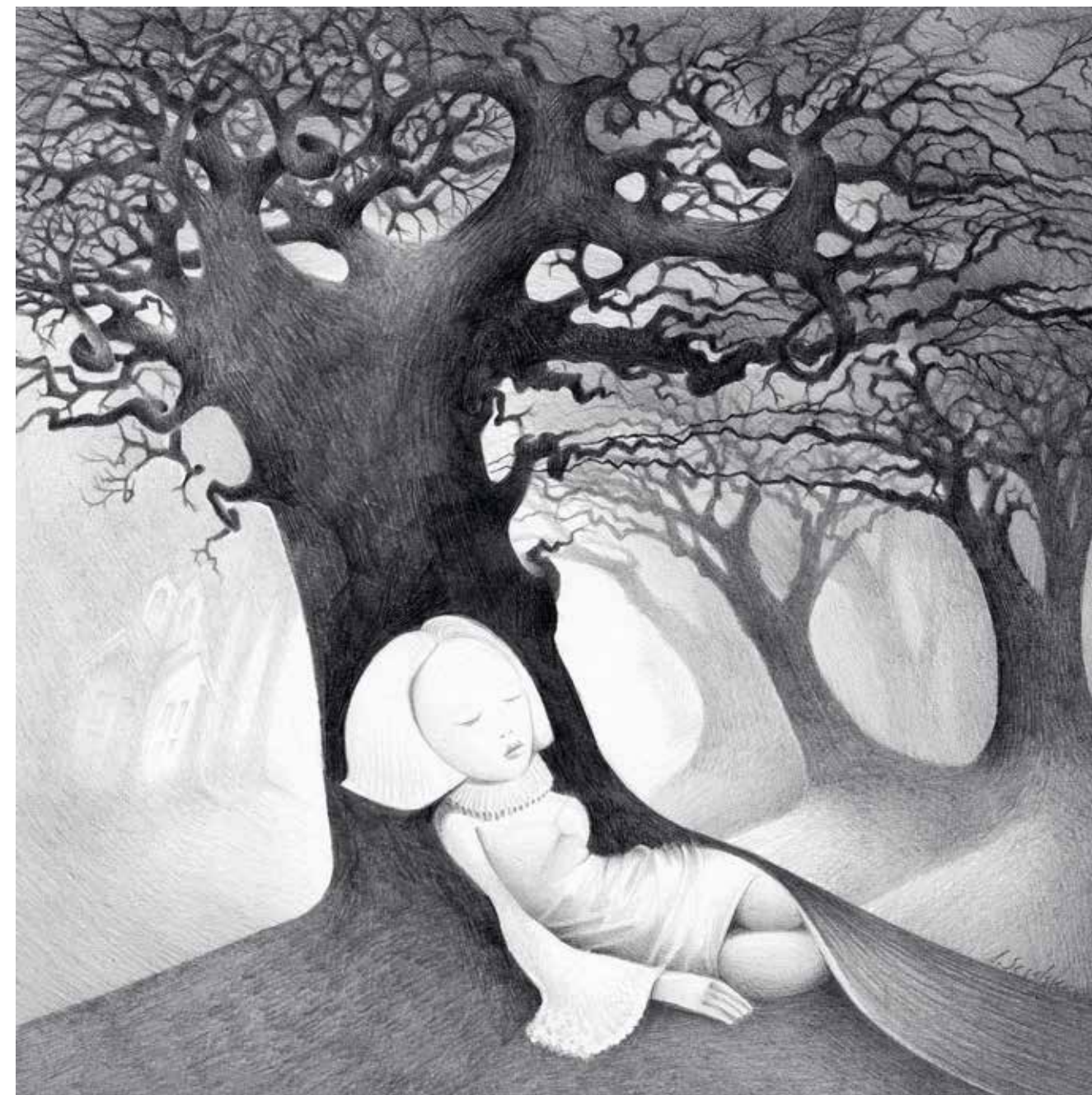
1. Joniškis city
2. Žagarė city
3. Skaistgirys
4. Miknaičiai Lake
5. Žagarė Pond
6. Žvelgaitis Hill
7. Raktuvė
8. The ghost of Daunorava
9. Kalnelis graveyard and church

The district of Joniškis lies in the northern part of Lithuania, right by the Latvian border, in an area that was once the historical Baltic territory of Žiemgala. Joniškis is the largest city in the Lithuanian part of the old tribal Žiemgala, famed for the tribe's rich historical legacy. Joniškis is known as the capital of present-day Lithuanian Žiemgala. The contours of the Joniškis District in the Lithuanian north are shaped like a heart, which is why Joniškis locals do not shy away from calling it the heart of northern Lithuania. Even though the residents of Joniškis once had to bear jibes from other Lithuanians that they were simply 'latvified' Lithuanians who had turned away from their own language and culture or simply skerslatviai (cross-Latvians), now Joniškis is one of the most rapidly developing districts in Lithuania.

Whatever you call the region of Joniškis, none of the labels mean anything – you can only experience Joniškis by visiting the place for yourself: by breathing in the fresh air of the forest in Mūša Marsh and walking along the country's longest hiking trail; by diving into the yellowish waves of Joniškis' grain fields in the summer – some of the most fertile in the country; by visiting each of its small but unique villages (that number over 290), making sure to stop by the longest linear village in northern Lithuania (Stungiai); by making the trip to the Lithuanian border and taking a walk through the unique town of Žagarė, renowned for both its wonderful nature and exceptional urban structure as well as network of streets and late neoclassicist manor; or maybe even by finding the determination to complete the two-day Camino Lituano challenge (the country's first and only modern self-guided pilgrim trail, which measures over 500 km and stretches across all of Lithuania and links to Europe's international St. Jacob's network) to get to know the environs of Joniškis on foot (a two-day hiking route from Žagarė to Gataučiai).

However, nature and architecture do not a stomach fill, so trying out the authentic local cuisine is a must. Refresh yourself on a hot day with the cool Žiemgala soup, and if you need something really satisfying, try the traditional Žiemgala dumplings with their countless filling options. And if you still have room after such a Joniškis-style lunch, make sure to make the trip to Stupurai, where you can learn the art of baking šakotis cakes or simply drop by the Upytė bakery in the town centre and taste their freshly baked goodies. Don't forget the beauty of the Joniškis town centre itself, with its renovated synagogue complex and eclectic church, which greets those arriving in town with its bell tower. It should also be noted that Joniškis was always an athletic town and always had a love for shooting orange balls through hoops. It should come as no surprise why one such hoop ended up on the wall of the Joniškis Basketball Museum, the only one of its kind in Lithuania, and where fans of the sport, athletes, and anyone interested in basketball can see the achievements of the country's greatest players, various basketball paraphernalia, and historical images. When you've had enough of dribbling, opt for something more restful like learning about the far-reaching history of the Joniškis region's manors – there are as many as 28. Not all of them have withstood the test of time intact; however, their aristocratic spirit is still palpable. And it seems only yesterday that their halls were filled with the sound of music.

Thus beats the heart of northern Lithuania, waiting for its mysterious and rebellious soul to be discovered. Joyful, entrepreneurial, and green is the region of Joniškis.



How Skaisgirė came to be





How the city of Joniškis came to be

Once upon a time there lived a poor man by the name of Jonas Jonyla. He roamed and roamed around in the woods. He was tired and hungry. Night came, and he fell asleep. He had a dream that the Virgin Mary pointed her finger at a place where some gold was buried. The next morning, he got up and began to dig. He discovered three large chests of gold. On the spot where he had the dream of the Virgin Mary, he built a large church with the gold he found. Not far from it, he built himself a home. More people settled around the church, and that is how Joniškis came to be.⁷⁵



How the town of Žagarė got its name

On the left bank of the Švėtė, a town began to grow at rapid speed. However, it did not have a name. The town fairs attracted many farmers, but there was no bridge over the Švėtė. The farmers carted in sticks and dumped them into the river. This made a bridge of sticks (Lith. – *žagarai*). In the long run, the farmers began to say, 'We're driving over the sticks [Lith. – *žagarai*].' When going to the market, the Latvians also brought sticks with them and dumped them in the place of the 'bridge'. And they began to call the town Žagarai too. That is how the town of Žagarė got its name.⁷⁶



How the town of Žagarė got its name





How Skaistgirīs came to be

They say that there once was a large and impenetrable forest that the locals called the virgin wood (Lith. – *skaisti giria*). Once, a princess was travelling through the wood and got lost. As she wandered about, she grew tired and stopped to rest. She fell asleep. In her sleep she dreamt that she would only be able to leave the wood if she built a chapel there. The chapel was soon built. People began to settle around it. Later, they built a church, and a town soon began to grow and became known by the name of Skaistgirīs.⁷⁷



Miknaičiai Lake

Where the marshy Miknaičiai Lake now lies was once a settlement and farmed land. Once, the sky grew dark (though it did not rain), and something began to bleat (Lith. – *mikenti*) loudly, like a little goat kid. It seemed to be bleating one place, but go there and lo and behold, it began bleating somewhere else. It kept bleating for three days and three nights, and up above, the clouds kept roaring and roaring. On the morning of the fourth day, they looked up and saw a great lake lying before them. From that day forward, who dares come close to the lake never comes back – the lake draws them in. Even as you approach from afar you sink deeper and deeper. The locals say that chopped wood and beams can be found in the lake.⁷⁸

Žagarė Pond

A little way off from Žagarė, there runs the river Švitė. One man built a watermill on it. By the watermill was a large pond. Not long after, a different man came along and built a mill on the other side of the pond. And after a while, all the pond water ran down through the town to the other side of Žagarė; all the fish was left behind. I was still very little, they told me this tale. For someone poured some quicksilver in and all the water flowed out.⁷⁹

Žagarė Lake (Pond) was once a level field. One day, a poor cowherd was guiding her herd where the present lake now lies. As she watched her herd, something began to groan in the bushes. It kept groaning for a day, then two and then three. The girl thought, 'What could be groaning there so?' She went to have a look and found a horrible four-eyed dragon crouching behind the bushes. The girl was very frightened and quickly drove her herd away. The next morning when she took her herd out to graze again, she found a large pond there.⁸⁰



Žagarė Pond

Žvelgaitis

Where Žvelgaitis Hill now stands once was a large manor known by the name of Aukštadvaris. The masters of the manor were wealthy but very cruel. They traded their servants for animals or beat them to death. The servants prayed to the Lord, cried tears of blood, and cursed their masters.

One day, a great storm came and covered the manor and all of its inhabitants with sand. The old folks say that a long time ago, at noon on Sunday, you could clearly hear dogs barking and cockerels crowing from underground.⁸¹

There once stood a manor. The master had a daughter named Barbora, and she was buried in the cellar. The hill stands right by the road, with two trees on either side of it. They say the place is haunted. They believe that [the hill] was there since the flood. The manor was buried under the hill.⁸²



Raktuvė

In the old days, great giants walked the earth. Once, a giant died. The other giants covered his grave with earth and made a hill – that is how the Raktuvė graves came to be. They once found a very large skull there.⁸³

They say that where the Raktuvė graves now lie there once was a grand army, and every soldier poured a handful (others say hatful) of sand and built Raktuvė Hill for their canons. Others say that the Swedes built the hill. Raktuvė Hill stands on the edge of a river (several *sieksnis*⁵ away) by the name of Švietė, which flows from the forests of Šakyna.⁸⁴



The ghost of Daunorava

Yes, yes, yes, yes, she was poisoned, poisoned, dead. A farmer was passing by, it was light already. Mother – it was evening, and he saw: Milė! She went from the manor, so the maid went after her. We'll catch her up. We'll catch her up, she said, we'll go together. When we were close, she wanted to grab her, she strained. She strained – and my sister began to scream and yell – the girl was very little – for her to not go any further. It was a ghost! Well now, I don't know anymore...⁸⁵

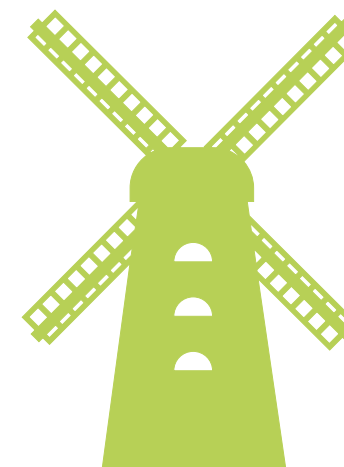


⁵ *Sieksnis* – a historical unit of measurement equal to 9 feet.

On the Kalnelis graveyard and church

Once the people were sick with louse-borne typhus and many of them died. They were all buried where the hill now stands with its church and graveyard. To prevent the typhus from spreading, the women carried aprons full of earth and poured it onto the graves. That is how this great hill grew out of the earth. There once lived Princess Brigita, who was an old maid. When she died, she was buried on the hill. The hill became known as St. Brigita's. Later, other people came to be buried there, and they built a church that stands there to this day.⁸⁶





LEGENDS OF THE PAKRUOJIS DISTRICT

Windmill
The windmill in Pakruojis is a very old one. It was built in the 16th century. It is a very beautiful building. It is a very important part of the district's history.

Windmill

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pakruojovic.lt

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Rozalimas Church | 5. The rock of Zigmantiškiai |
| 2. Birjagala village | 6. The rock of Medginai |
| 3. Padubysis Manor | 7. The rock of Dulkiškiai |
| 4. The rock of Rozalimas | 8. Velniabala |

The district of Pakruojis is a part of Northern Aukštaitija, known for its old wind mills, wonderful roundstone manors, and old merchant and craft houses as well as synagogues. It is part of the old Žiemgala, a region with a unique landscape, fertile fields, hard-working people, and a rich cultural history. Here, a rich history weaves through the treasures of the region's natural and cultural heritage.

The Pakruojis region is a region of communities, and each has left its very own imprint on the course of life in Pakruojis. Lithuanians, Jews, Latvians, Germans, and Russian Old Believers have been living here since days of old. We invite visitors to follow in the footsteps they have left behind as they travel across the Lithuanian north. As you explore the region of Pakruojis, make sure to visit the magnificent Pakruojis Manor. The Pakruojis Manor is a working, living piece of architectural heritage that allows visitors to experience real late 19th-century manor life and is dedicated to serving the community, guests, and tourists from Lithuania and the rest of the world. In spring and summer, Pakruojis Manor turns into an oasis of blooming flowers, while in the winter, the manor draws in crowds with its arresting lantern festival.

In the Pakruojis District, you will discover old towns known for their valuable urban heritage, including Linkuva, Žeimelis, and Rozalimas. In Žeimelis, visitors will learn about the work of renowned scientist Teodoras Grottus (1785–1822), known for his work on electrolysis and photochemistry, and discover the Žiemgala Regional Museum of Pakruojis. In the town of Linkuva, visitors will discover anew the monastery of the Linkuva Carmelites, while in Rozalimas, they will be able to visit

the wooden Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, built in 1794.

Upon arriving at the town of Pakruojis itself, visitors will get to see the oldest wooden synagogue in Lithuania, Pakruojis Synagogue, and the Pakruojis Firefighting Society station. Fans of gastronomic tourism will be pleased to participate in beer and root beer tastings that hark back to the old traditions of Aukštaitija and try out the *virtieniai* (dumplings), potato dishes, and melt-in-the-mouth curd donuts made by the hospitable local communities.

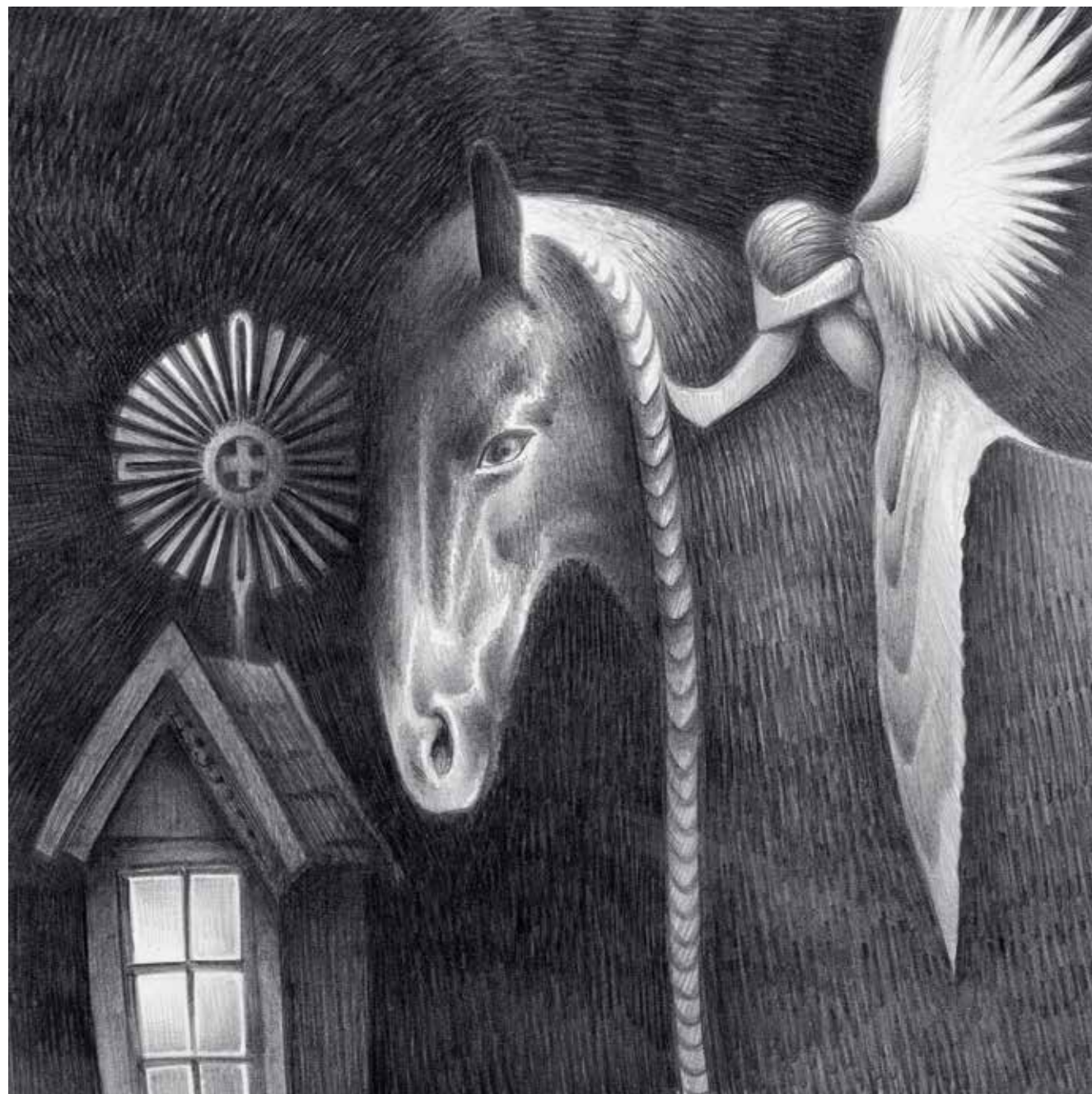
Lovers of nature will also find the serenity they seek in the Pakruojis District. Here, the eye is drawn towards the dolomite pits and exposures of dolomite rock near Petrašiūnai and Klovainiai. This region is the only one to have the unique – one might even say only – gift of a mineral resource, dolomite. Hikers should make sure not to miss the Rozalimas Forest hiking trail and recreational park, which offers recreational hiking trails that introduce visitors to the diverse species of the Rozalimas pine forests and woods, the mythological history of the area, and other attractions.

A great variety of cultural and natural sights as well as an abundance of events invite visitors to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city and go on an exciting journey to the Pakruojis region. Raise your pint full of delicious foaming Pakruojis beer, stash a piece of Pakruojis gold – dolomite – in your pocket, and come and visit the region once again!

How the Rozalimas Church of the Virgin Mary was built and how the town was founded

In 1787, one Master Drabyšius lived in Padubysis Manor with his wife Rozalija. They decided to build a church but did not know where to put it. One and a half

kilometres away from the manor stood a chapel known by the name of Plūdė. It was surrounded by a large pine wood. Once, Mistress Drabyšienė had a dream that an angel was riding a beautiful horse. It rode in circles around Plūdė until the horse stumbled and the angel fell. She woke and told her husband of the dream. Without replying, Drabyšius gave instructions to cut the pine wood. The servants went to see the place and found a horse lying on the ground. They led the horse back to the manor, and when the master found out that this was the horse his wife had dreamed, he mounted it and rode to Plūdė. He rode so fiercely that the horse stumbled. He dismounted and told his servants to cart the chapel out to another village. The servants carted it out, and in 1788, they built a church in its stead. Later, Master Drabyšius began to sell plots of land around the church, and people began to build themselves homes. That was how the town came to be. Master Drabyšius named the town Rozalimas after his wife.⁸⁷



Rozalimo bažnyčia

A legend about the town of Birjagala

Once upon a time, when Lithuania was a land of vast forests, in the place where the village of Birjagala now lies, the Baron Ruopas was hunting with his courtiers. Evening was approaching, but no one had yet shot their prize. Suddenly, the baron saw a large boar and began to chase it. He chased and he chased, but the boar suddenly disappeared from view, and before him the baron saw a large marsh surrounded by great trees. He could no longer ride on, and he thought to himself that he had truly reached the end (Lith. – *priėjo galą*). When night fell, he could no longer return, so he had to spend the night by the marsh. In the morning, when he returned to the manor, he recounted how he had chased the boar and reached a large marsh surrounded by great trees. The baron told his servants to go and fell them. They also built a few huts for them to live in. This was the beginning of a village that would become known as Prijagala. As time went by, the name of the village changed and became Brijogala. The next time it changed, it had probably already become Birjagala.⁸⁸



Padubysis Manor

Padubysis (locally known as Padobesia) Manor is to be found in the *valsčius* of Rozalimas in the county of Panevėžys. One kilometre north of Padubysis is the town of Rozalimas.

Padubysis lies along the steep banks of a stream known by the name of Dubysėlė (locally known as Dubisėla). The town itself was named after the stream. At Padubysis, the Dubysėlė flows into the Daugyvenė, a tributary of the Mūša.

Two roads pass through Padubysis and form a cross-roads. One stretches from Šeduva to Rozalimas, while the other goes from Radviliškis to Smilgiai.

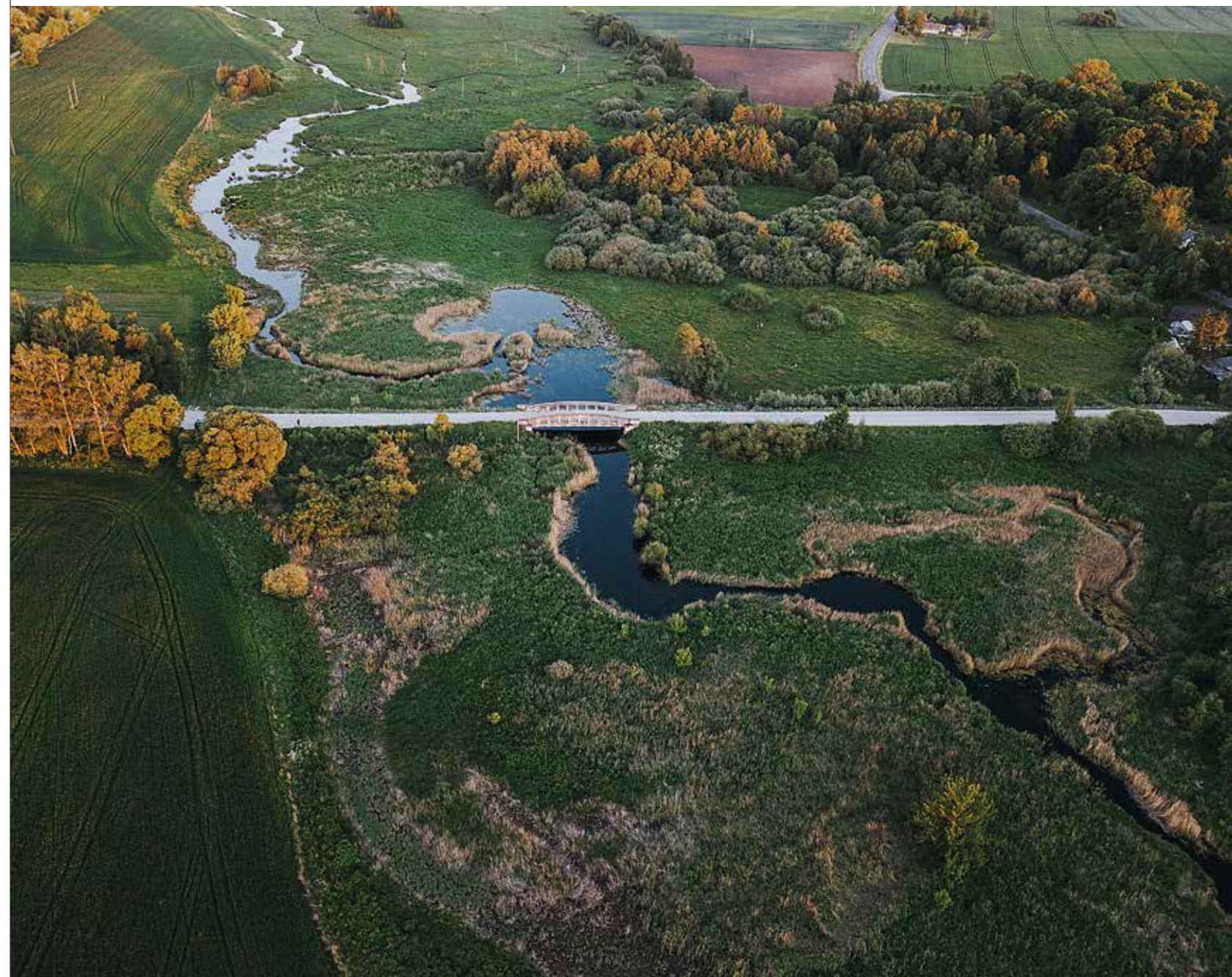
Once upon a time, Padubysis was ruled by the noble family of Drabišas, then the Bielazaras family, and now it is ruled by Ms. Bystramienė.

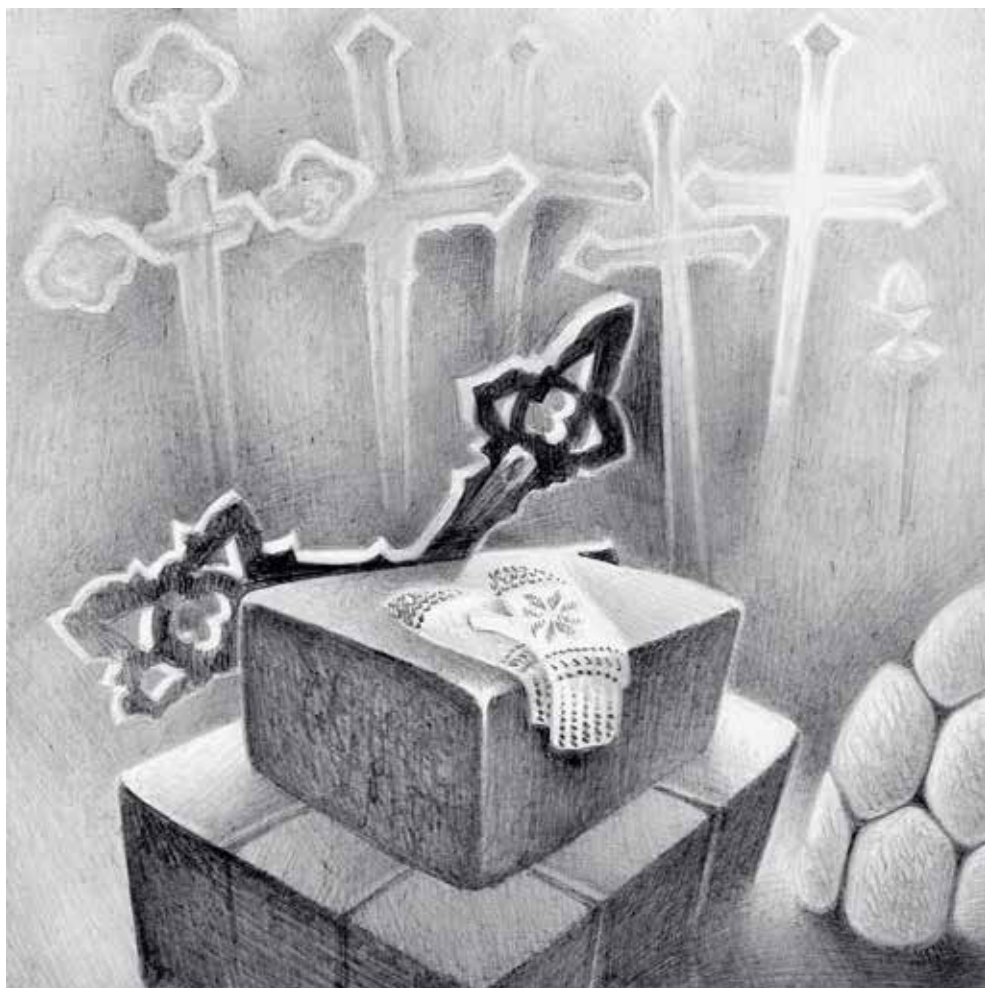
Knowing anything about the old days at the manor is very difficult because the people were always changing. Perhaps that is why so little is known about the buildings of Padubysis and the placenames of the fields. There is more talk to be heard of the ruins in the manor gardens, which they call 'the cellars'. The ruins were in a more elevated part of the garden. In some of the higher places, you can still see the foundations. The ruins take up an area of about 150 m². They say that there once stood a manor that was later destroyed by fire. To this day, you can see the charcoal remains. Beneath the manor were two large underground halls. A tunnel runs along the northern side of both halls. It begins on the eastern side and stretches out to the west. Behind both halls are holes in the tunnel that lead upward, beneath each of which stands something like a stove. The tunnel also has entryways into each hall. It does

not end with the halls but goes further on. However, you cannot enter the tunnel any longer because it has caved in. They say that the tunnel used to go west, then turned north and stretched all the way to the town of Pakruojis (in Šiauliai County). In the walls of the halls and the tunnel are depressions in certain places that look like entryways that were once bricked off. Before the war, when the entryway into tunnel had not yet collapsed, two young men tried to get in, but after walking a kilometre or so, they had to turn back because they arrived at a spot where the tunnel had caved in.

Not far off from the cellars was a smaller underground space, but it is even more caved in. There had been an anchor set in one wall.

In another part of the garden was a very old barn. Odds and ends from the church had been stored there until the church of Rozalimas was built. The barn stood near the Daugyvenė River, but God did not like the place, and he carried it over to its present location. Beneath that barn lay a chest of Napoleon Bonaparte's, but when the barn was moved, the chest remained in the meadow by the river (in the corner, at the confluence of the Daugyvenė and Dubysėlė). Beyond the Dubysėlė, opposite the aforementioned chest, is a rock overgrown with willows. During the Great War, several clergymen passed by it, and a ball of fire jumped out from under the rock and rolled into the Dubysėlė. They believed that this had been the chest on fire, and they went off to search for the money but never found it.⁸⁹





The rock of Rozalimas

The rock of Rozalimas

In Rozalimas, by the graves, is a miraculous rock: the Lord Jesus of Nazareth appeared upon it. But the rock has been walled in and can no longer be seen. People bring their offerings there: if their hand hurts, they bring a glove; if their head hurts, they bring a hat or a scarf; if their entire body hurts, they bring a shirt.⁹⁰



There are all kinds of legends about the sacred rock of Rozalimas. They say that an old man had a dream that there was a sacred rock in the Zigmantiškiai field by the pine wood and that if he were to find it, he would receive a gift from God. Because he was blind, that morning he began to ask around who could take him to the field in Zigmantiškiai, where he would look for the sacred rock. As he passed by the pine wood, a bunch of beautiful wild strawberries sprang up – there was never anything like it before. He told his companion, ‘You can head home now because I can see that I’ll be able to find the rock on my own.’ Then he went along the path the berries made, all the way to the rock itself. This was the miraculous work of God.

They also say that one old woman, also blind, sat by the rock and fell asleep. She had a dream in which she was told, ‘If you pull the weeds away from the rock, your vision will be restored. You’ll see again as before.’ Upon waking up, she cleaned all the moss off the rock and saw again as before. When the rock was discovered, they wanted to cart it back to Rozalimas, but because it was so very large, they could not find a way to split it into parts. The bits of rock they managed to chip away they used for the foundations of the chapel that now stands in the Rozalimas cemetery. They wanted to bring Jesus of Nazareth and put him up in the great chapel, but along the way the horses fell to the ground and could no longer pull their load. So they say that they decided not to take him further, built a small [chapel] on the same spot where the horses fell, and put him there.⁹¹





The rock of Zigmantiškiai

The second rock is in the Zigmantiškiai field (in Rozalimas Parish). People visit the rock, pray upon it, and walk in circles around it. They try to break a piece off and then rub their sore parts with it. The Holy Mother appeared on the rock. You can even see the trace she left behind – the foot of the Blessed Virgin.⁹²

The rock of Medginai

In the field at Medginai, among the bogs, is a very large rock. The devil had tried to carry it to block the doors of the Pašvitinys church, but when he reached the bogs, he sank into the ground, the cockerel began to crow and he was out of time.⁹³



The rock of Dulkiškiai

In the fields of Dulkiškiai village in the valsčius of Rozalimas is a large rock that bears the imprint of a human foot. In the days of serfdom, Dulkiškiai and its environs were ruled by one lord. The lord was very prideful, cruel, and godless. He did not believe in God or the devil. He treated his servants like animals. If he purchased something, he usually paid with slaves.

Once, the lord's daughter became ill. He loved her most deeply. Concerned for her health, he invited the best doctors of the time. But they could not find anything, and the daughter's health only got worse. One of the lord's servants said, 'No one can help any more but God.' The lord heard him and was very angry.

The lord's daughter got worse and worse. The servant loved his master and began to pray to God to restore the daughter's health. The servant sat down after he had finished his prayer. He fell asleep as he sat. He had a dream in which God revealed himself and said, 'Go and tell your master that he should come and give Me praise, that he should believe in Me.'

The servant woke and went to the manor. He found his master and told him of his dream. Pressed upon by his woes, the lord promised to do as he was told. In the morning, the lord went to see the rock. As they approached, they saw the rock lit by the light of fire. The lord then understood God, dropped to his knees and praised him. After a short while, the light disappeared from their eyes. Only footprints were left on the rock. Upon his return, the lord found his daughter's health restored. Now people go to the rock to pray and ask God for good health.⁹⁴





Velniabala

In Šiauliai County, by the forest of Gailioniai called Viduralis, was a waterhole known as the Devil's Waterhole (Lith. – *Velnio bala*).

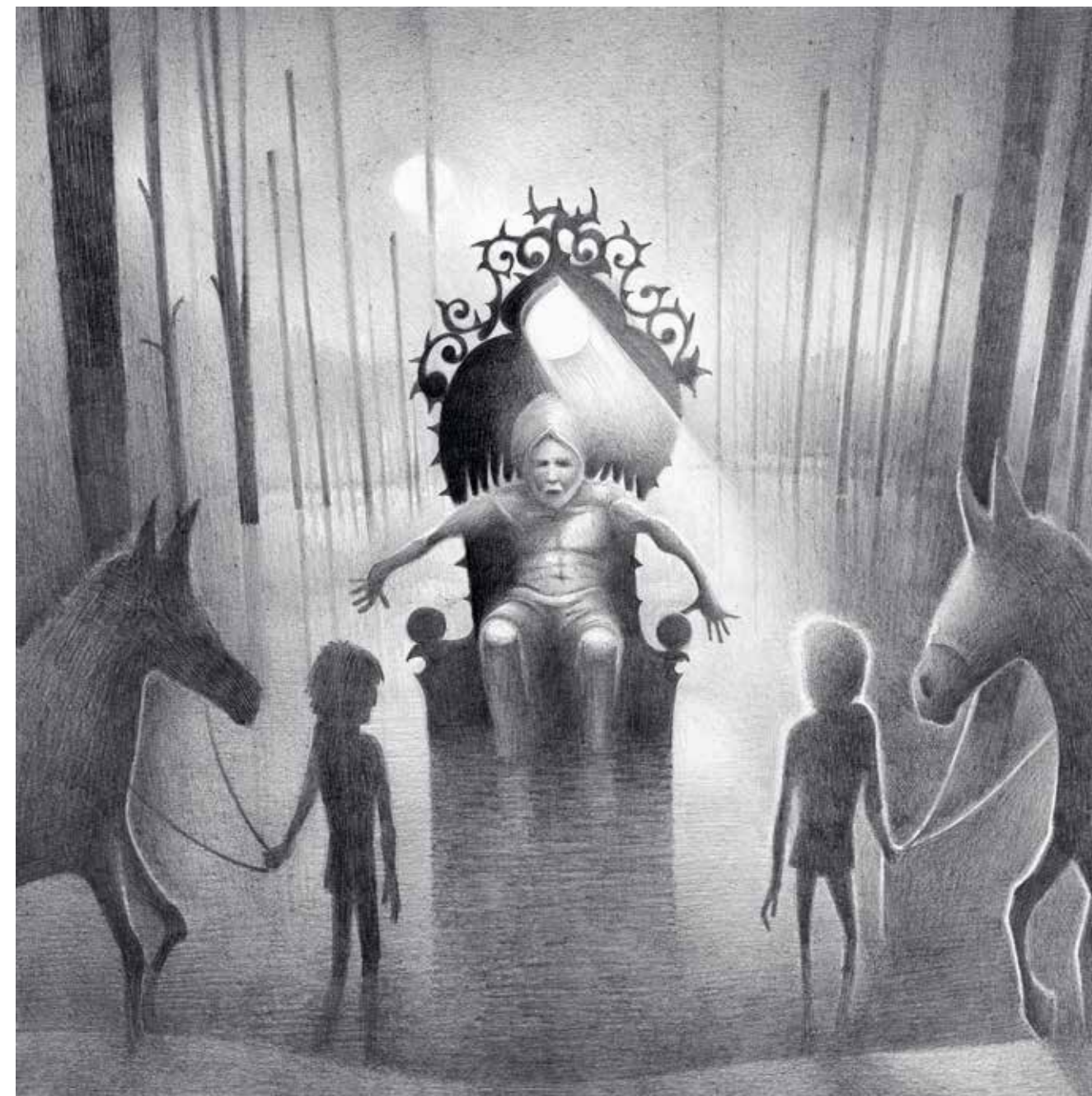
The young men of Galiniai would ride out for a midnight graze into the forest. There they would hobble the horses with iron hobbles and let them graze. Every morning upon waking, they would find their horses unhobbled. Then one time they decided to stand watch and find out who was unhobbling the horses. They saw a young gentleman sitting on a rock in the waterhole.

He came and unhobbled the horses and then went back to sitting on the rock. Not one of them dared to approach him. At last, midnight struck. There was a howling noise, the trees started to bow, and the gentleman disappeared. That is when the young men realised that this had been the devil. During the day, they went to inspect the rock upon which the devil had been seated. The rock was very much like an armchair, and there were even marks on it of the devil's hands and feet. Every evening, the gentleman would come see the men; they traded pipes and he took them to dances. The devil's pipes looked better, which is why the men traded them, but when 12 o'clock struck, the devil's pipes turned into roots.

At the dances, all the girls liked to dance with the gentleman. Once a girl stepped on his foot by accident and realised that it was empty. Frightened, she looked at his face and saw that his nose was without nostrils, which meant that this was the devil in the guise of a young gentleman.

Ever since then, the waterhole has been known as the Velnabala, and the rock on which the devil sat was known as the Devil's Chair (Lith. – *Velnio krėslas*).

Now that rock has been split into pieces by lightning, so the devil no longer has a place to sit and appears no longer. Besides, the waterhole was drained. But the place is still called Velnabala to this day.⁹⁵



Velniabala



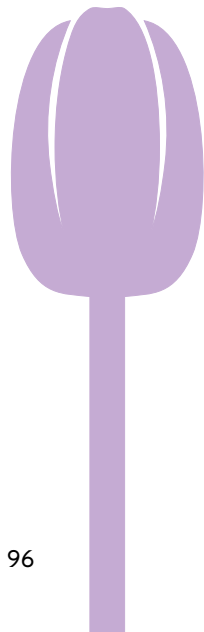


LEGENDS OF THE RADVILIŠKIS DISTRICT

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The tulips of Burbiškis Manor

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inforadviliskis.lt

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|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Šeduva | 5. Velniaminė Rock | 9. Tyruliai |
| 2. Baisogala | 6. The Devil Stone | 10. Švėdūkalis (Swedish Hill) |
| 3. Vėžaičiai (village) | 7. Biesbala rock (Pakalniškiai village) | 11. Raginėnai Hillfort |
| 4. The rock of Baisogala | 8. Arimaičiai Lake | 12. Kudiniai, Kalniai Hill (Šiaulė Hill) |

The greater part of the Radviliškis District lies on the Eastern Samogitian Uplands, while to the east, it descends into the Nevėžis and Mūša-Nemunėlis lowlands. The highest point of the district (184 m above sea level) is to the southeast of Šiaulėnai, at the village of Pasodnis, while the lowest point (63 m above sea level) is at Kundrėnai. The city of Radviliškis itself lies in the north of Middle Lithuania, on a marshy flatland, 20 km to the south-east of Šiauliai. It is known as the country's railway capital because the Radviliškis railway hub is one of the largest and oldest in Lithuania. The district consists of 11 townships, all of which are charming and interesting in their own way.

The Radviliškis region has a wealth of manors of exceptional architectural value, along with their impressive parks, the sculptures of historical figures that loom within them, their refreshing and mysterious avenues, and fields with over 460 different tulip species. Burbiškis Manor is like a little Holland, where history intertwines with the present and the region's natural and cultural beauty. In the Daugyvenė River valley, where an old village once stood, now stands the Kleboniškės Ethnographic Museum, also known as the Rumšiškės of Northern Lithuania. The museum hosts various exhibitions, celebrations, barn plays, craft fairs, folk music concerts, and Užgavėnės festivals.

Baisogala Manor is one of the most famous architectural monuments in Lithuania. From 1830, the manor belonged to the Komarai family. The central manor building, stables, carriage house, kitchen, storehouse, and mill have survived to this day. The manor park is also impressive and boasts of several exotic species of tree. In 1952, the manor became the home of the Lithuanian

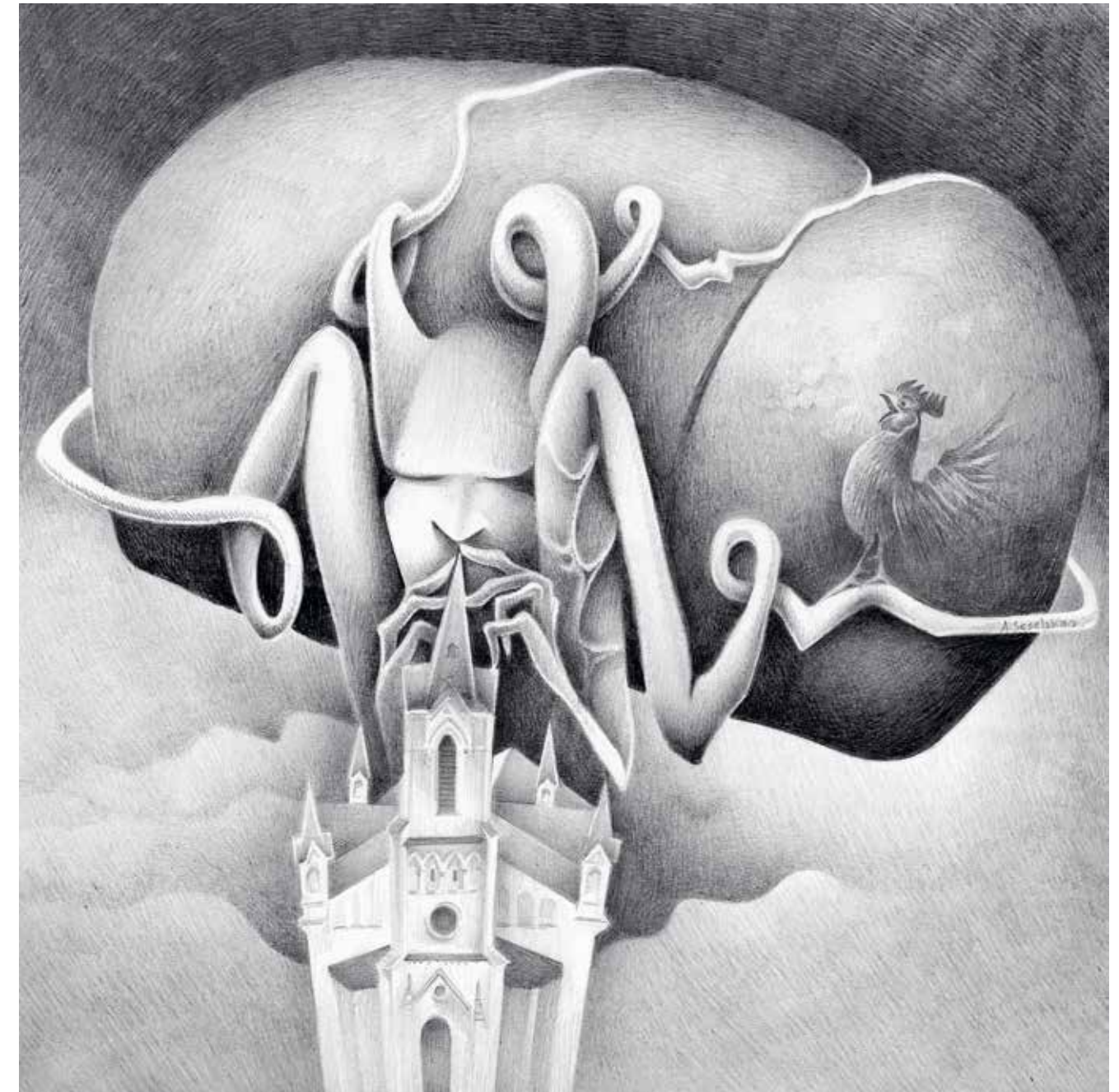
Institute of Animal Science, which operates there to the present day.

On your visit to the district of Radviliškis, make sure to visit Minaičiai village, which is known as Lithuania's historical capital. It was here, at the Mikniai homestead, on 16 February 1949, that the leadership of Lithuania's freedom fighters drafted and signed the Declaration of the Lithuanian Freedom Fight Movement.

At the district's western border, in what is known as the Šiaulė region, among the hills between Šiaulėnai and Šaukotas, stands a 21-meter-high observation tower. The breath-taking views of the surrounding landscape open up as you climb to the top. A hiking path leads away from the observation tower and around the storied Kudinai Forthill, also known as Šiaulė Hill.

The centrepieces of countless legends and folk tales, the district's hillforts, of which there are as many as six, invite visitors to discover the treasures hidden within them.

New cycling routes, hiking trails and educational programmes presenting ethnocultural traditions – all this awaits visitors in the unique and hospitable district of Radviliškis.



The rock of Baisogala



Baisogala

This took place during a time when the Swedes had occupied almost all of Lithuania. The town of Baisogala had also been occupied. But the Lithuanians pieced together an army and attacked the Swedes at Baisogala. Back then, the town did not have a name yet. The battle was a long one, but the Lithuanians defeated the Swedes with such ferocity that it was a great blow to their power. Many of them had to die then and there. Then the Swedes began to call the place 'Baisus Galas' (Eng. – 'Terrible End'), and over the ages the name became Baisogala. At the time, a great river ran through Baisogala, and the Swedes called it the Keršija (Eng. – Vengeance) because the Lithuanians got their revenge against the Swedes for all the sorrow they had caused. Now the name has turned into the name of Kiršinas.⁹⁶





Šeduva

Šeduva

Once upon a time, where Šeduva now lies, the land was a vast forest. Once, a girl was gathering mushrooms in the woods. As she went about gathering mushrooms, a beggar approached her and begged for alms. The girl only had two Boletus mushrooms. She took them out of her basket and said to the beggar, 'Here, there's two [Lith. – *Še du va*].' Ever since, the place has been known as Šeduva.⁹⁷



Vėžaičiai

Not far from Radviliškis lies the village of Vėžaičiai. They say that when they were dividing the land up among the people, the surveyor thought about what name to give the village. And there the residents were short, had little land, and often wore bast shoes (Lith. – *vyžos*). That is how he came up with the name Vėžaičiai.⁹⁸



The rock of Baisogala

In the *valsčius* of Baisogala, in the forest by the station, is a rock. They say that the rock was carried by the devil so he could crush the church of Baisogala, but the cockerel crowed and the rock slipped out of his clutches. There is a ditch there now in which [traces of] the devil's nail and chain can be seen. That rock is very large and shaped like a roof. Now, it has been a split apart a little by lightning.⁹⁹

Velniaminė Rock

In the *valsčius* of Grinkiškis is a rock that bares the imprint of a foot, neither a ram's nor a wolf's. A tale about that rock goes thus.

A long time ago, rocks were still liquid, but by and by they turned solid. Once, the devil was in search of a soul, for he was very hungry and had nothing to eat. He transformed into a wolf, but the wolf's paws were still like the devil's. Sensing danger, a goat began to flee and lightly jumped over a rock in its way. But the devil's foot, heavy and clumsy as it was, sank into the stone. By the time the devil removed his leg, the goat had already escaped.

To this day, that footprint can be found at the edge of Velniaminė Marsh. This is how the place came to be called Velniaminė (Lith. *velnias mina* – Eng. the devil steps). Now the rock is dented and worn, and only the heel of the footprint remains.¹⁰⁰

The Devil Stone

In the forest of Baisogala, not far from the limits of Valatkoniai village, lies a great big rock known by the name of the Devil Stone. There are many tales about that devil's stone because it really does seem fantastical: measuring 10 m³ in volume, it lies at one end of a shapeless ditch, three metres wide, while the other end stretches out to the east for a distance of over ten metres away from the rock. The rock is cracked in half, and mysterious dents can be seen in several places on its surface. The locals say that this rock was carried by the devil, which is why the ditch is there – the trail left behind by the weight of the rock as it was dragged. Nothing grows there to this day, and the crack as well as the dents were left by the devil's chain and his devilish hooves. Where was the devil taking that rock? This question is answered by the locals and their tales. This is what Viktoras Žeromskis has to say, who lived in the village of Valatkoniai and heard this tale from his father Pranas, who lived in the 19th century. In the days when there were many inns in the villages and towns that our forefathers flocked to for redemption, the 'devil's stone' lay untouched. One Easter night, as the people prayed, a great wind could be heard howling in the forest for a short while – until the priest came out to offer Mass. As soon as the priest placed the chalice with our Lord on the altar, the wind immediately stopped blowing. After Easter, the people went to the forest to see what damage the wind of Easter night had done. And to their great surprise, the people found many trees broken and uprooted, and amid all the destruction was a great ditch – the trail left behind by the devil as he dragged the rock on a chain. For he wished to drag the rock and set it against the door to the church of Baisogala so that people could no longer come inside and be saved

from the hellish inns. The devil did not like that, because when the people went to church, they retreated from the inns. Which is why the devil wished to block the doors of the church with that great rock. And if the people could not go to church, perhaps they would go to the inns, sin more against God, and bring more souls for the devil to have in hell. However, at night, as the devil dragged the rock away, a service was being held at church. Just as he had moved the rock ten metres, the bells tolled and took all the devil's power away, so he left his task unfinished to this day.¹⁰¹

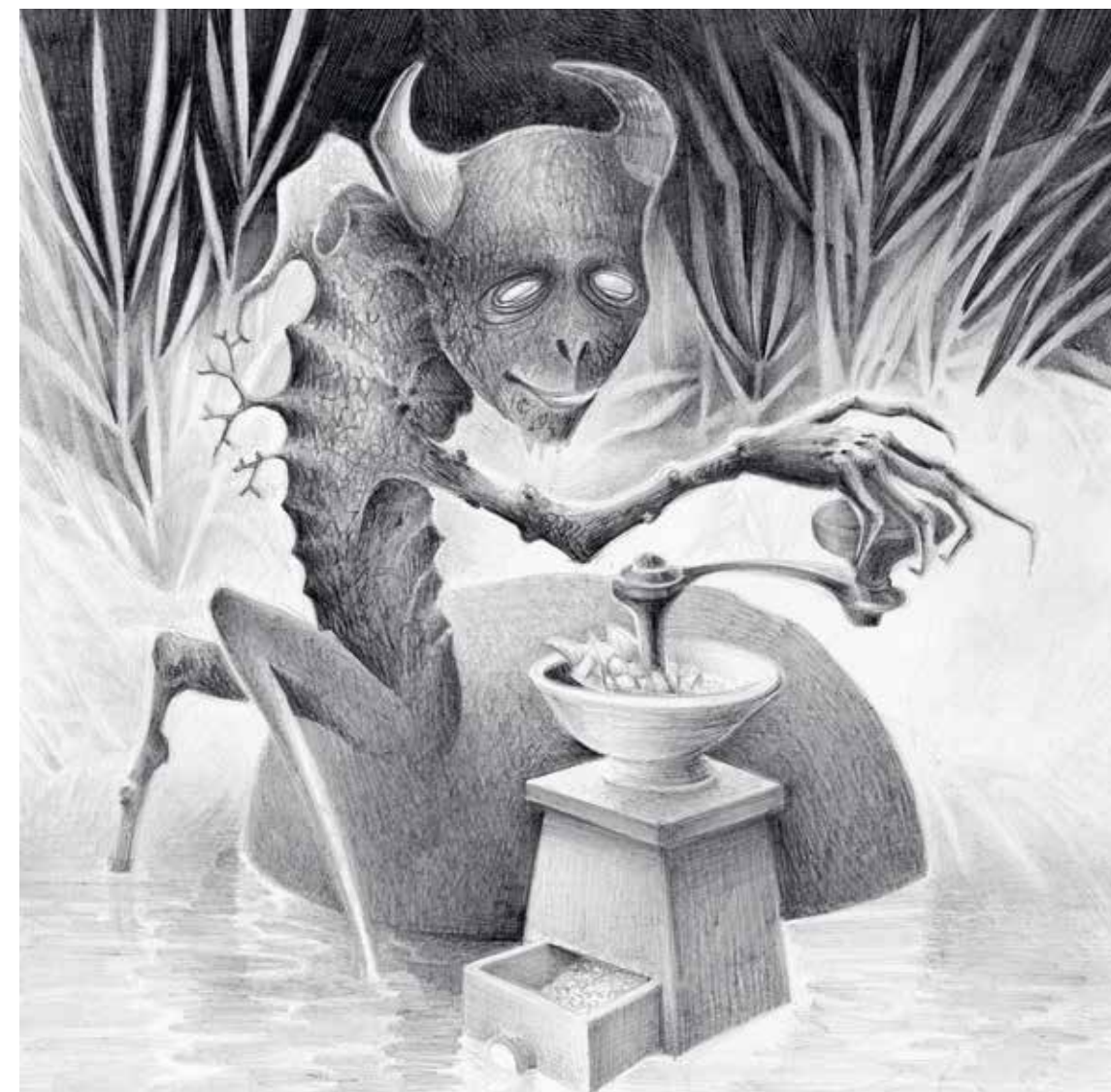


Back in the days of serfdom, the lords of the manors had great power over the serfs (according to various stories, when a master liked a man, he gave him a small plot of land, and from those he did not like, he took land away, and so on). The said devil's stone lay at the boundary between the forest of Komaras, lord of Baisogala Manor, and the land of Kadaras. One day, Komaras decided that the boundary at the rock was not the true boundary: the true boundary was over ten metres further on Kadaras' side of the great rock. Komaras and Kadaras began to argue. Of course, there was no reason for Kadaras to argue, because in those days Komaras was so powerful that with a single expression of his will the boundary shifted toward Kadaras' side of the rock. Now, Kadaras lost a good plot of land and, vexed as he was, he began to curse at Komaras, mentioning the names of what were then powerful devils and masters. This was all the devil had been waiting for – someone to cry for his help. The devil listened to Kadaras' curses. One stormy night, he dragged the rock noisily towards Komaras' forest, as far as Komaras had overreached into Kadaras' land. Now, the devil had restored the boundary to its former place to the advantage of Kadaras because Komaras had used the great rock as a reference point for measuring out a certain number of steps. Now the devil had left things so that when measuring this same number of steps from the rock towards Kadaras' land, the boundary lay in exactly the same place as before, the true boundary before Komaras had taken the plot of land from Kadaras. In this miraculous way, the devil too restored justice with his work.¹⁰²

Back in the days of serfdom, when the nobles had great power, the Devil Stone lay on a ditch that marked the boundary between the forest of the lord of Baisogala Manor, Komaras, and the land of Kadaras the serf. One day, Komaras decided that this was not the true boundary of his land. He claimed that the boundary of his land lay 15 metres away from the rock on Kadaras' side. Komaras began to argue with Kadaras. Kadaras lost a piece of land and began to curse Komaras. One stormy night after hearing his curses, the devil decided to drag the rock further into Komaras' forest by as much as Komaras had taken away from Kadaras.¹⁰³

Once, a man was driving along the road when his cart caught on a rock that lay by the roadside. It broke the man's wheels. He was angry and cursed, 'May the devil take you!' The next day, people found the stone had been dragged to the side. You could see that it had been dragged because there was a large trail and a mound of earth and branches. And the mark of a chain appeared on the rock. For the devil tried to drag the rock off the road by wrapping it in a chain.¹⁰⁴

The devil came to propose to Komaras' daughter. She asked that the devil bring her the rock that now lay in the Valatkoniai forest. The devil dragged it and dragged it but could not bring it to her and gave up. The rock left a large ditch behind it. Even grass does not grow there.¹⁰⁵



Biesbala rock

The marsh of Biesbala can be found in the village of Pakalniškiai, in the *valsčius* of Šeduva of Panevėžys County. There lies a large rock. They say that on that rock the devil ground his tobacco.¹⁰⁶

Arimaičiai Lake

Once upon a time, where the lake of Velžiai or Arimaičiai now lies, they say there was a beautiful meadow. Once, a great cloud appeared in the sky above that meadow. It whirled and it bubbled – a terrible sight to see. Then all the old women of the village gathered and explained that the name of the cloud would have to be guessed because then the cloud would drop down onto the meadow. They guessed at the name for a long time, but they could not guess. One old woman grew angry and cried, ‘Curse this confusion [Lith. – *painelis*]. I’m going home.’ It was then that the confusion dropped from the sky and became a lake. The people who had been in the meadow drowned.¹⁰⁷

Once upon a time, in the place where the lake of Velžiai now lies, was a great beautiful meadow. Bees buzzed, butterflies fluttered, and the fragrance of the flowers was so great that it could be smelled a mile away.

One fine summer’s day, a large black cloud drifted in from the west. It howled, roared, and bubbled like water boiling in a great furnace. The cloud drifted over the meadow and stopped. The people were afraid. Then an old man stepped forward from the crowd and said, ‘Guess the cloud’s name. When you guess its name, it’ll fall down and turn into a lake.’

The people began to make their guesses. They guessed for two days and two nights, but they could not get the name right. On the morning of the third day, one old woman grew angry and said, ‘Curse this confusion [Lith. – *painelis*]. I’m going home.’ With those words the cloud fell to the ground and turned into a lake, now known as Painelis.¹⁰⁸



Tyruliai

Along time ago, Tyruliai had no name. It was a very big, long lake. A blind man was walking along the lake and asked, 'What kind of lake is this? This is no lake, it's a marsh [Lith. – *tyrulys*].' Then a voice could be heard coming from the lake, 'You have guessed my name, and from this day forward I will close up, and your eyes will open.' So it came to be: the old man's vision was restored, while the lake slowly began to close in on itself from the edges.¹¹²



In the *valsčius* of Šeduva, not far from the village of Velžiai, lies a lake. There is a tale about that lake that goes thus.

Where the lake of Velžiai now lies, there once was a very beautiful meadow. The meadow was full of the lushest grass. Nowhere else was there a meadow as great.

One day, a dark black cloud drifted over the meadow. It hung over it for more than a week and did not move in the slightest. Then one old man explained that they had to guess its name, and then the cloud would fall. So the people guessed. They stood around the lake for days on end, but no one could guess its name. One woman grew irritated by the wait and uttered, 'Oh let the demon [Lith. – *peibelis*] have it.'

As soon as she said the words, the cloud fell upon the meadow and became a lake. It seems the name of the cloud had been Peibelis. Ever since then, a lake lies in place of the meadow.¹⁰⁹

Once upon a time, where the villages of Kurkliai, Velžiai, and Arimaičiai now are, there was no rain for three years in a row. Not even any morning dew. The people prayed to God to make it rain. God heard their cries. A great black cloud howled in with thunder and lightning and stopped just as it reached the place where the lake now lies. For two weeks, it howled and bubbled and hung over the ground. One night, a man had a dream. As soon as someone guessed its name, the lake would come down from the sky, the dream revealed. Everyone guessed, but no one got the name right. Then one time, a mother and daughter were walking from Radviliškis and passed by the cloud. The mother was carrying a bag of peas (Lith. – *žirniai*). The daughter asked for some. As soon as she uttered the word, the lake began to descend. Seeing that she guessed the name, she repeated the word a second time – 'Pea [Lith. – *žirnis*].' The lake fell to the ground because its name had been Žirnis. And now they call the lake by the name of Žirnis.¹¹⁰

In the *valsčius* of Šeduva is a village known as Paežeriai. By that village is a lake. Now, the people call the lake simply 'the Lake', but once upon a time, the name of the lake was Žirnis. There is a tale about how the lake got its name. They say that when the lake came, it howled a great deal. Someone said that it would howl until someone guessed its name. The people made all kinds of guesses, but they could not guess right. A girl was gathering peas by the lake and her leg got tangled. She cried out, 'Oh, you pea [Lith. – *žirnis*]!' and the lake grew quiet. From that day onward, the lake was known as Žirnis, even though the name has now been forgotten again.¹¹¹

Švėdūkalis (Swedish Hill)

In the county of Šiauliai, in the *valsčius* of Radviliškis, by the village of Šiukoniai stands a hill known as Švėdūkalis (Swedish Hill). It is about 15 metres high and about 50 metres wide. They say that once upon a time, there lived a great many Swedes and they had their cemetery there. Ever since then, the hill has been known as Švėdūkalis. People go there for gravel, and as they dig they find human bones, rings, watches, and many other items.

They also say that the place is haunted, especially because there is a cemetery by that hill. They speak of one girl and what she saw as she passed by that hill. They say she was passing by the cemetery when she turned and saw that she was being chased by some sort of flame. She was very frightened and began to run. As she ran past the hill, she turned and saw that the flame had turned into a hay bale and was rolling after her. She was even more frightened, especially because she was alone and it was night time. She ran as fast as she could, and she ran with such a ferocity that when she arrived at her door, she crashed into so hard that it came off its hinges. Another time, my brother was walking past that hill alone at night. As he walked, he saw some kind of scarecrow at his feet. He was very frightened, and perhaps he would not have been frightened had he not heard what people say about that hill. He just saw that scarecrow and ran back as fast as his legs would take him. Because

he still had to go in that direction, he went a very long way around it. As he walked, he looked away from the hill and even kept his head turned away. Because his head was turned, he could not see where he was going. He fell into a ditch that was full of water, which terrified him even more. He jumped out of the ditch and ran all wet and frightened back home. Our mother gave him some medicine. After a while, someone knocked at our door. Father went to see who it was. When he opened the door, he saw a drunkard. The man stepped inside, all cold and dirty. He looked like a real devil.

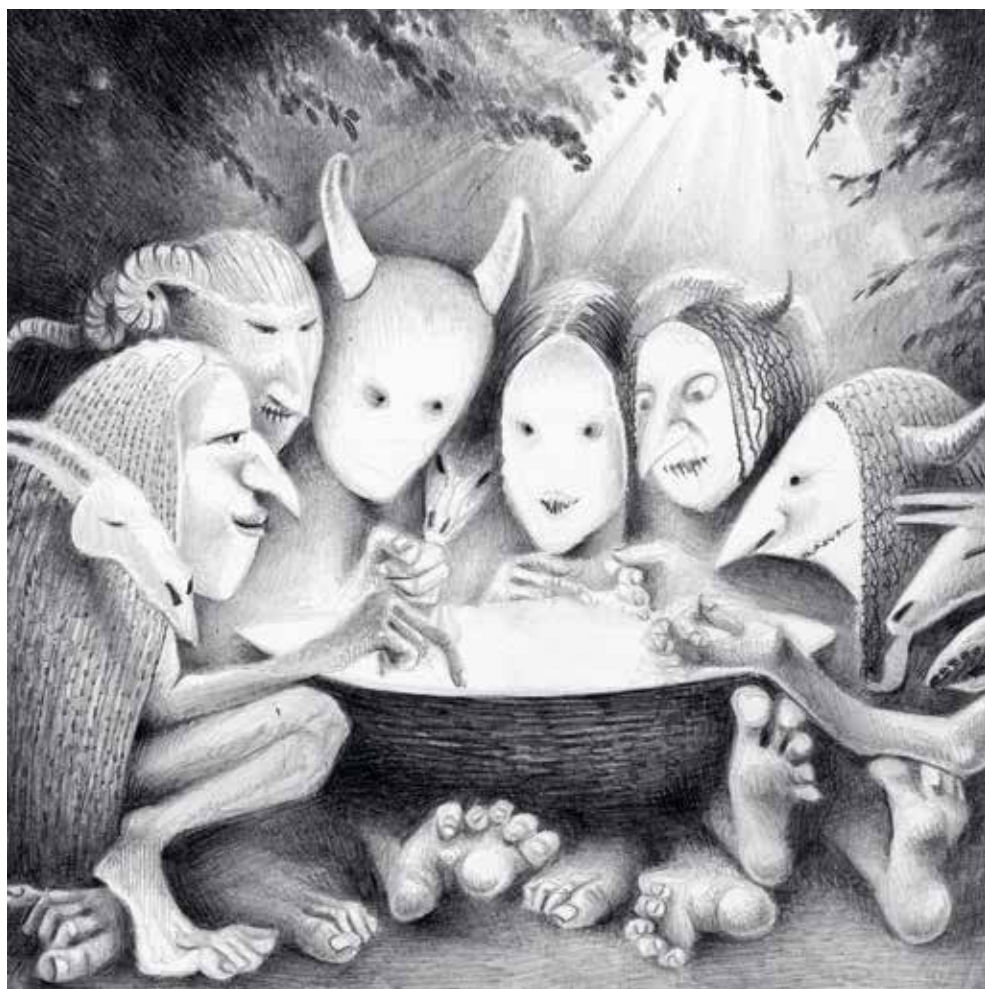
‘Brrr, how cold I am,’ he said.

Father asked, ‘Where are you going and where did you come from?’

‘Well,’ said the man, ‘I had settled down to rest by the hill, but I grew cold as I lay there, so I got up, and here I am, asking for a night’s stay.’

It was then that my brother realised that this was the scarecrow he had met by the hill. He realised that he had not seen a ghostly apparition and was no longer afraid to go past Švėdūkalis. And so, many, many people have their stories about that Švėdūkalis.¹¹³





Raginėnai Hillfort

Raginėnai Hillfort

Raganų Hill (Eng. – the Hill of Witches) was so called because in the old days, it was a gathering place for witches. The Hill of Witches is also called that because in the old days, witches were killed and burned alive there. The hill is supposedly a giant's grave and was built by soldiers. Great battles took place by the hill in ancient times because weapons and human bones are often found here.¹¹⁴

The villagers know many stories about the hillfort. On the hill lived several deities, who gathered in the evenings to sing. However, when the people began to dig at the hill, they began to cry, abandoned the hillfort, and moved to what was once a wood on the opposite bank of the Daugyvenė. An angered deity cursed the diggers and they went blind.

Other legends speak of good witches (Lith. – *laumė*), who took care of the babies left behind there by the working women of the village. There are several legends about the witches of Raginėnai, who used to gather and go wild. Other versions have it that this was a place where witches were burned.¹¹⁵

Once upon a time, a woman was gathering flax and forgot her child. When she came back home she found a *laumė* rocking her child and singing to it. She grew frightened and ran away alone, without the child. In the morning she came back and found the child dressed neatly. Another woman took her child there on purpose. The *laumės* began rocking the child and singing a lullaby. But when the mother came back, she found her child dead. That is what the 'laumės' did. They would go to the hillfort because it was a sacred place.

On the hillfort of Raginėnai village (between Šeduva and Rozalimas), they say, 'laumės' lived and sang. Later, people went to dig around on the hill. The 'laumės' cried in sorrow. As they cried, they walked to the woods on the opposite bank of the Daugyvenė. One *laumė* was a great witch. She cursed the diggers and they went blind.

Another tale has it that in the pine wood, the deities buried a golden altar, but no one could find the never-before-seen treasure. There was no church. There were 'laumės'. A passing priest blessed the hill and the 'laumės' moved to a wood. Before, they had sung on the hillfort.¹¹⁶



Kudinai, Kalnai Hill (Šiaulė Hill)

They say that where the hillfort now stands was once a church. A long time ago, the church was blown over with sand. People could hear bells tolling.

Once, a wealthy gentleman came and gathered a group of men to dig around the hillfort. They dug and they dug, but whatever they managed to dig during the day caved in at night. They laboured thus for a long time, but their efforts were in vain.

Beyond the hillfort of Šiaulė stands Varpinė Hill. In the old days, this was where the church bell tower stood. Once, some people found a kind of band on the hill. They began to pull on it. The band ripped, and the bell rang as it fell to the bottom.¹¹⁷

A giant once lived in Šiaulėnai and, five miles away, another lived in Šiauliai. They had one axe between them, so they tossed it back and forth over the distance of five miles.¹¹⁸





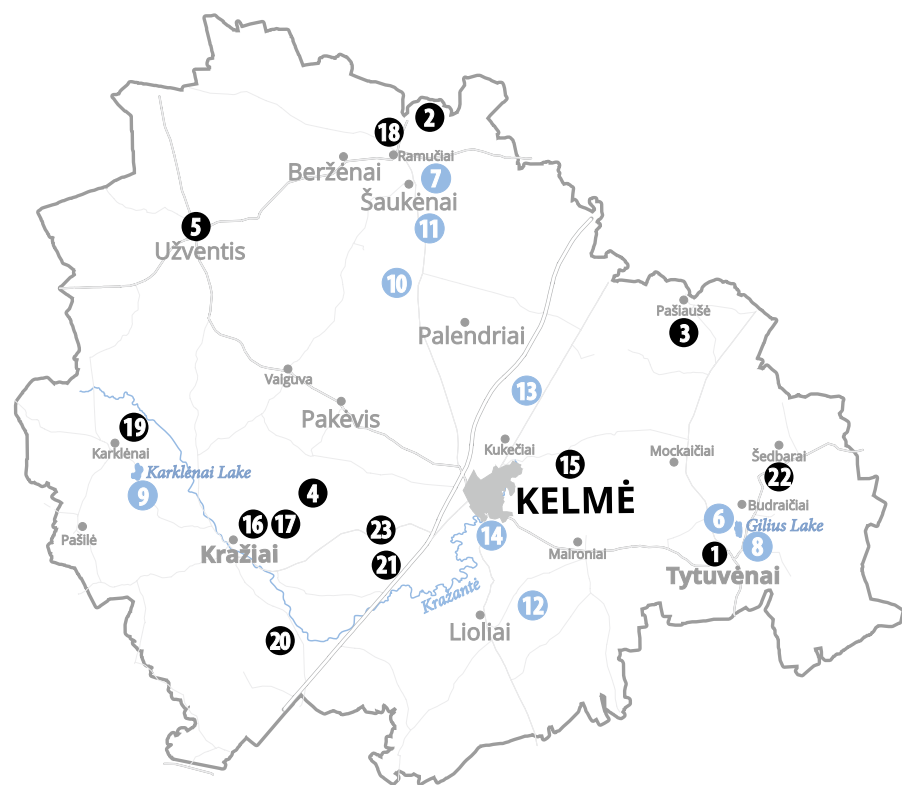
LEGENDS OF THE KELMĖ DISTRICT

Legend of Tytuvėnai Church and Monastery



Tytuvėnai Church and Monastery

Legend of Tytuvėnai Church and Monastery



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|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Tytuvėnai | 9. Karklėnai Lake | 17. Kražiai Mound |
| 2. Vaitkiškė village | 10. Dubinas Lake | 18. Kalniškiai (Biržė) Hill |
| 3. The town of Pašiaušė | 11. Mergežeris Lake | 19. Karklėnai Mound |
| 4. The village of Orelišķė | 12. Gaučiškė Lake | 20. Suotkalnis |
| 5. Užventis Church | 13. Noruišiai Lake | 21. The Swedish embankments |
| 6. Gilius Lake | 14. Skarbinė | 22. Skerdimai |
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| 8. Tytuva Lake | 16. Medžioklnis | |

The region of Kelmė is a small area in the western part of Lithuania, on the boundary between Žemaitija (Samogitia) and Aukštaitija. As it was once part of the historical Hansa route, the Kelmė region appeals to visitors because of the variety it offers: unique and engaging museums, the wonderful bends of the Dubysa and Venta rivers, pristine lakes, storied mounds, and hills and forests.

The district of Kelmė is an open and entrepreneurial district, a great place to learn about and discover mysterious and unique places. Enthusiasts of water activities will be able to enjoy the legendary lakes of Juodlė and Gilius, where not only will they have a great time, but they will have a unique opportunity to walk the local hiking trails. A unique characteristic of the district is its abundance of protected territories, untouched nature, and unique natural features such as hillforts and hills. One of the most memorable locations is the cone-shaped Burbaičiai Mound, also known as 'Piliukas' [diminutive of 'castle'], which was supposedly built by a giant who had stopped to rest on a long journey.

Kražiai is one of the Kelmė District's oldest towns. Here, visitors will discover various storied geographical features: mound, hills, and lakes. Medžioklnis Hill is undoubtedly one of the most interesting places in Kražiai. Covered in oak trees held sacred by the Baltic peoples and beneath which sprang sacred springs, the hill was once a place where sacred fires were burned. Vytautas the Great himself is known to have ridden over the hill, but today it is a great place for rest and a unique vantage point for viewing the Kražiai environs.

Other hillforts in the Kelmė region and their origin stories have their own unique appeal, including the Bridvaišis,

Karklėnai, Kubiliai, and Papiliai Mound. Also worthy of note are various rocks bearing the imprints of God's feet (at the Maironiai Chapel) and other sacred places such as the Svilė Crossroad of Crosses.

However, it would be difficult to experience the district of Kelmė solely through its natural attractions. Much of the district's uniqueness comes from its sacred heritage: the Kražiai Church, which once withstood a Cossack massacre, the architecturally eclectic ensemble of the Tytuvėnai Church and Monastery, and the unique wooden churches of Lioliai and Užventis, which keep the secrets of their builders to this day.

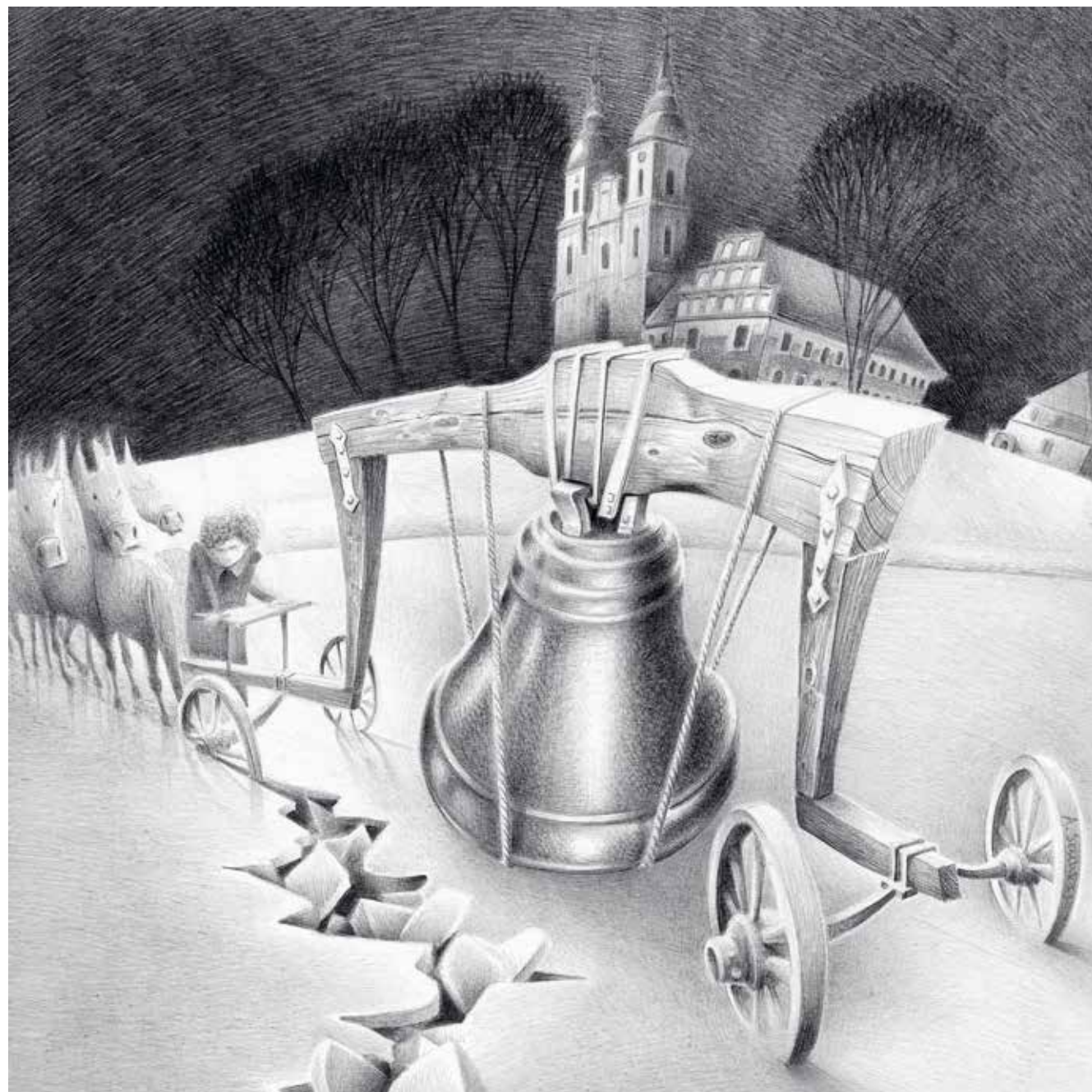
The local culture is integrally linked to the manors of the Kelmė District, each of which speaks of the lives of its residents and historical events. One of the most significant estates is the Kelmė Manor, which was where the 1831 uprising began. Those who wish to learn more about the manors of the Kelmė region will also be delighted by the manors of Pakėvis, Beržėnai and Pagryžuvis.

As they travel around the Kelmė District, visitors will be able to sense the unique aura of its villages, nestled among the region's hills and dells and by its lakes and forests, with some, like Orelišķė, long gone with only a great rock marking where it once stood. However, the most exceptional town is Kelmė, a blend of the past and present. Kelmė is a town decorated by stonemasons, an open art gallery that can be explored at any time of the year.

The district of Kelmė is a place where everyone can discover something new, get to know and love the local culture, and enjoy the wonderful natural landscape.

Tytuvėnai

When the church of Tytuvėnai was finally built, a very large bell was cast. It was winter. The bell was carted over a lake by twelve horses. As soon as they reached the centre of the lake, the bell and the horses sank. To this day, once every ten years, the bell can be heard tolling at the bottom of the lake. Not everyone can hear it ring because not all are meant to hear it. Now the lake is overgrown with moss and lichen, but nothing grows around the bell, and the water does not freeze over it in winter.¹¹⁹



Tytuvėnai



How the names of Vaitkiškės village and Kražiai came to be

Now for our village. At the beginning, a man by the name of Vaitkus lived here, so they called it Vaitkiškė. This was a long time ago – none of us knew Vaitkus ourselves. Kražiai. Kražys was the first to settle down by the river, so the place became known as Kražiai.¹²⁰

The town of Pašiaušė

Once, a German by the name of Gilius was walking through Pašiaušė on his way to the county of Šiauliai. On his way, he met a man who asked him whether he would put iron hoops on some barrels (for the German was a blacksmith). Not knowing who the man was, the German took the task on. The man brought him to the ruins of the former Jesuit church (no trace of it remains), blindfolded him, and led him into the cellar beneath the ruins. He brought him all the necessary tools and told him to secure the hoops on the barrels (which contained money for the church). When he completed the job, he was paid and led out (blindfolded) and released. In the morning he poked around everywhere but could not find the door. And they say that in that cellar was a candle and clock that would both stop in fifty years. So the ground takes a live man to set the clock and light the candle again.¹²¹

The village of Orelišķė

Why the village is called Uorelišķės. The name of the village came about because in that corner, on the crossroads between Pupėnai and Kelmė, on the Kražiai road, there was an inn, and in that inn lived a Jew by the name of Uorelis. That is where the name Uorelišķės comes from... Or Orelišķė.¹²²



Užventis Church

The Užventis church was built by the Swedes. They carried the beams on their backs from the forest of Žiėmdagynė across the river. The place where the Swedes carried the beams across the river is called Švedbrastis (Eng. – the ford of the Swedes). The Swedes built the church with just a saw and an axe; even the nails are made of wood.¹²³

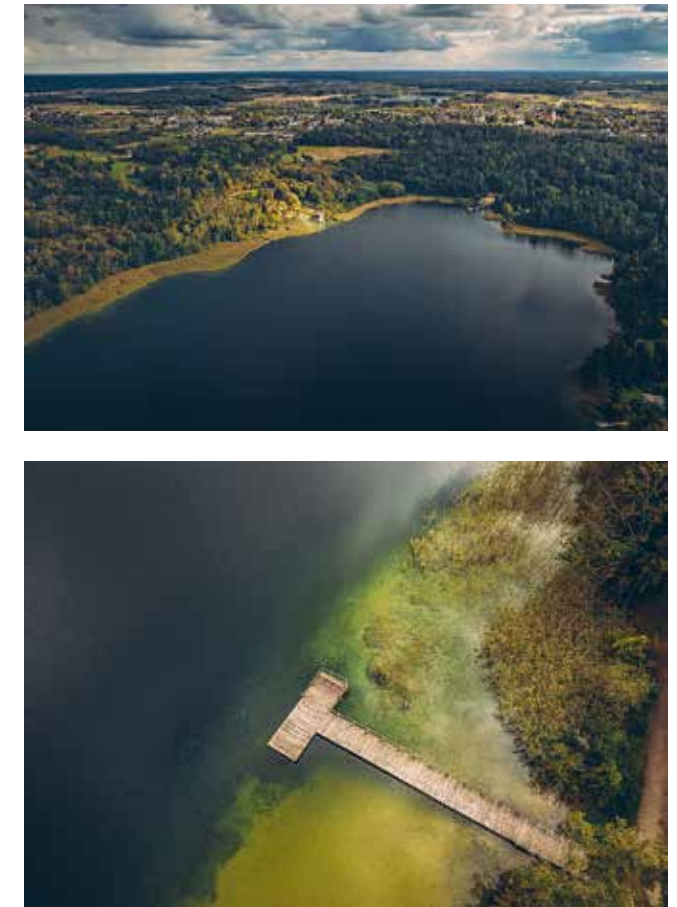
They say that there were once these men, and that the beams of Užventis church (these giant beams) were carried by two men. They say they were Swedes.¹²⁴

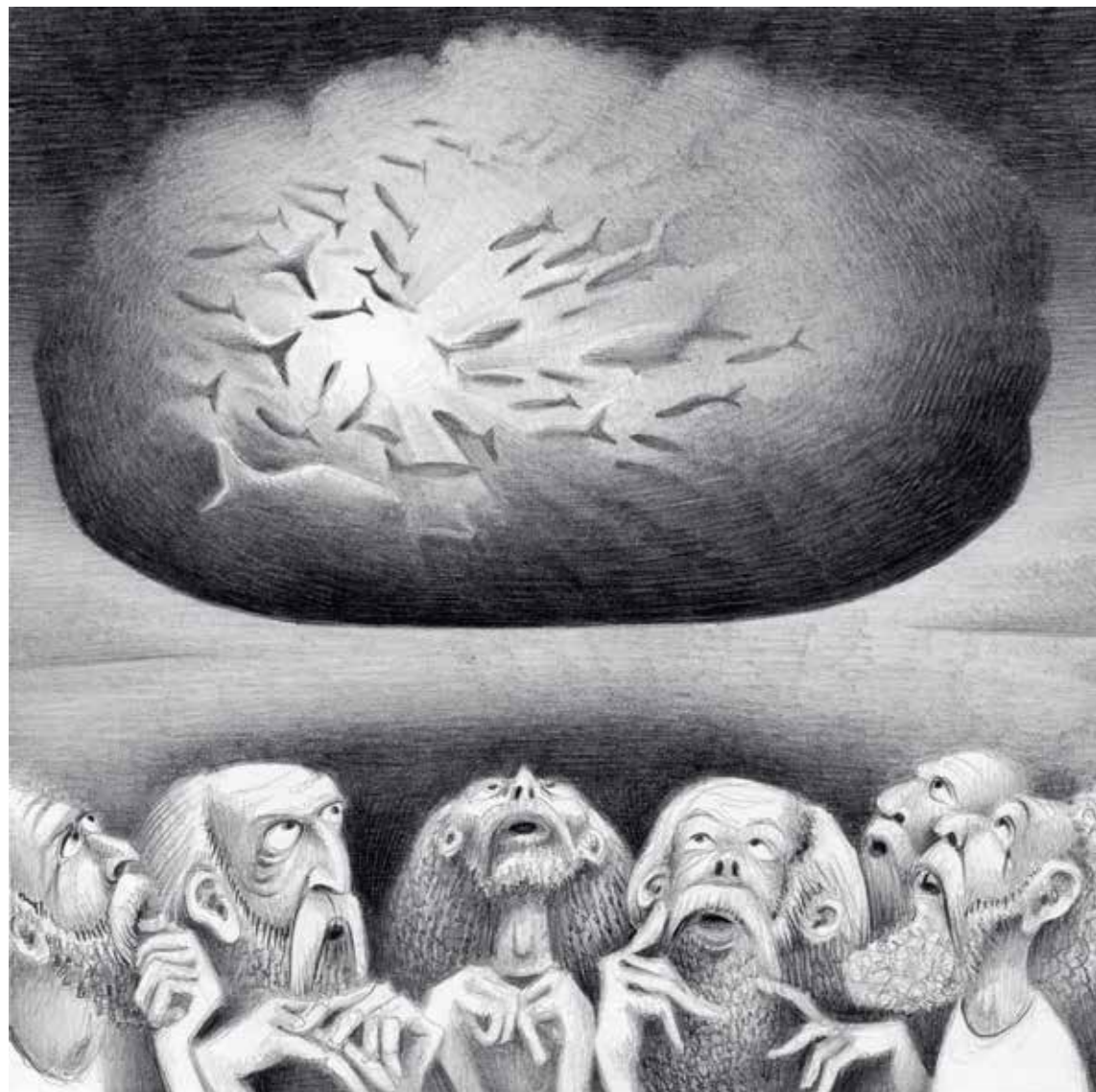


Lake Gilius

Once upon a time, there was a very beautiful manor. In that manor lived a master who owned very many slaves. The master treated his slaves like dogs. Once, a large cloud drifted over at noon. The slaves observed, ‘What a deep, deep [Lith. – *gilus*] cloud it is.’

The cloud then fell over the manor and all its inhabitants. Now it is known as Lake Gilius. Sometimes, if you stand on a nearby hill on a sunny day, you can sometimes see the manor walls through the water.¹²⁵





Juodlė Lake

Juodlė Lake

Once, a body of water flowed in through the air and suddenly descended upon the ground. It stayed there awhile, but then rose again. Then the people began to guess at its name. If they could guess its true name, then it would settle down. But no one could guess the name. Then a hundred-year-old man came and said, 'Let it be named Judlė'. The water suddenly settled down upon the ground. The lake is called Judlė to this day.¹²⁶





Tytuva Lake

In Tytuvėnai, by the lake, the old legends say that Komaras' daughter drowned, and today her cries can be heard. Every evening, between sunset and sunrise, you can hear her crying as she washes and rinses her shirts.¹²⁷



Gaučiškė Lake

Not far from Lioliai is a small lake known by the name of Bamblys. That lake once flew in through the air and descended into its present place. One morning, the residents of the village of Gaučiškė (Lioliai Vls., Raseiniai County) could hear a great howling. They stepped outside and saw that high up in the air a lake was circling around the village. The people were very frightened and tried to guess its name so that it would descend next to the village and not cause any harm. As it lay in its crib, a baby mumbled to itself and uttered (guessed) the lake's name. The lake had not yet reached the village and descended alongside it.¹²⁸



The curse of Karklėnai Lake

They say there once was a curse on Karklėnai Lake. They say a Jew rode in on a pig wearing a hat, [...] and the pig began to sniff around. The people began to wonder what this strange occurrence meant. The Jew replied, 'A lake is coming to Karklėnai.' Well, the people were curious, and they began to wait for the lake. After some time had passed, several days, a lake drifted in towards Karklėnai. It dropped to the ground, and there is a lake there to this day.

After that, a drunk man was walking from Kražiai past the lake with his leather shoes on. He grew tired, sat down beneath an oak tree, and began to sleep. When he woke after his nap, he saw the laces of his shoes had come undone. As he took his shoe off to fix it, a devil approached him and asked,

'What are you working on there?'

The man replied, 'My laces.'

'So what are you going to do?'

The man replied, 'I'll lace up the lake.'

The devil was frightened and said, 'Don't, I'm the king of the lake. How many souls I've lured into the lake...'

'Well, I don't care, I'm going to lace it up.'

The devil asked, 'How much money do you want?'

'Well,' he said, 'give me a hatful.'

So, the devil went to get him a hatful. The man dug a hole and placed a hat on the hole. He pierced the hat so that the gold coins would drop down into the hole. He kept it there. The devil brought the money and poured the coins into the hat. But the hat would not fill. 'More, or I'll lace the lake up,' said the man.

The devil set off to bring more, and this time he brought enough to fill the hat. The man stood up, thanked the devil for the money, and said, 'Well, now I won't lace the lake up. Live here as you please. Take your people and bathe them about in that lake.'

Well, and the people bathe, and the devil keeps luring them in. Many of them drown.¹²⁹



How Dubinas Lake came to be

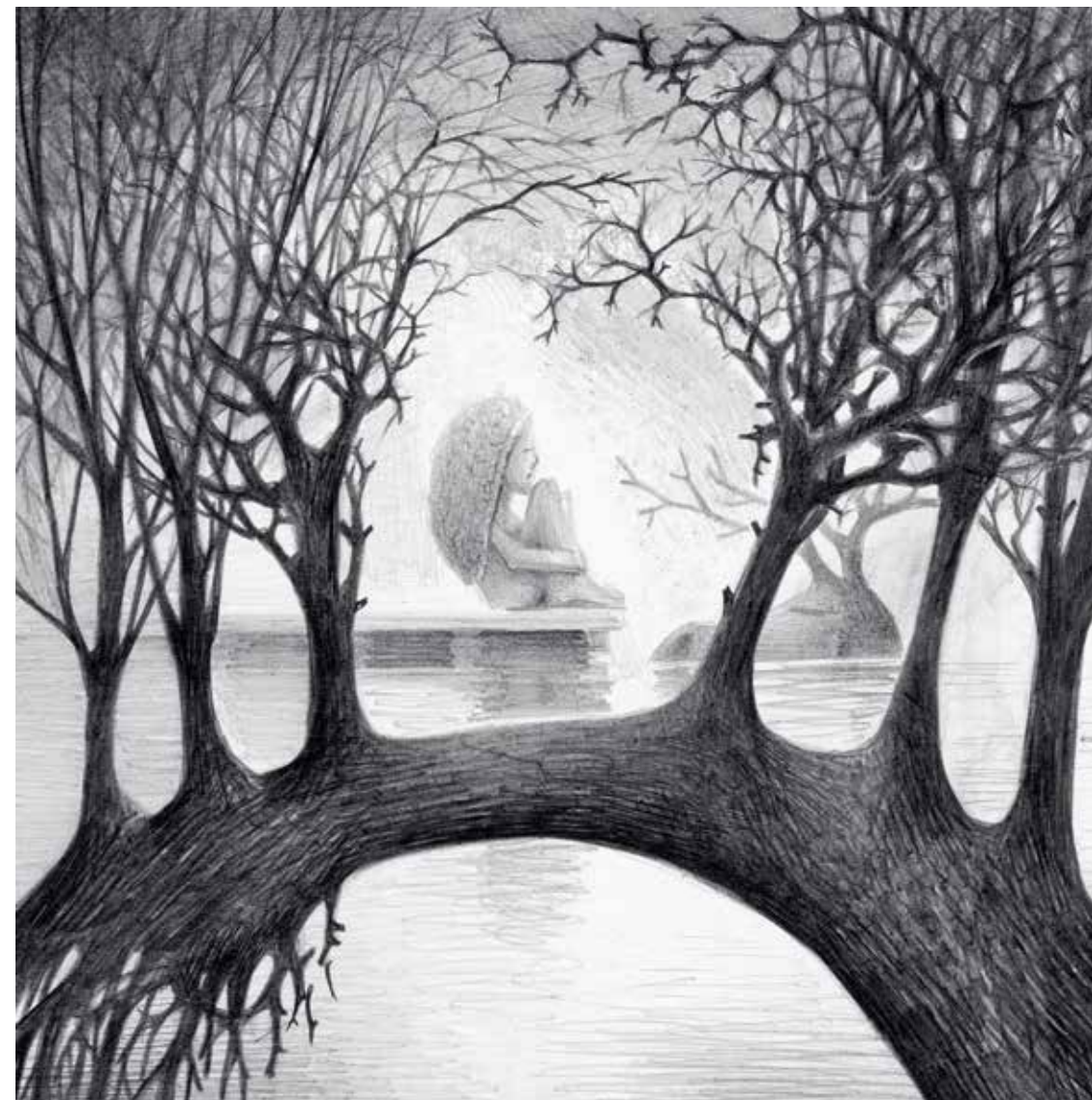
In the environs of Vaiguva, in the village of Duobiniai, was a great depression, a cavity, they say, left behind by a lake, because that is how legends went: lakes came and went, rose up, and left. Well, one sunny day, a great cloud came over the sun and the entire sky grew dark. The people said, 'That'll be a lake coming. If someone guesses its name, it will fall to the ground.'

And so the people were afraid to say anything because they did not want it to fall down upon the village. Well, some children were playing in the yard, digging little holes, and one said, 'Oh, I made a little hole (Lith. – *duobikė*), why did you pour over my hole (Lith. – *dubena*)?' Another child cried out, and the lake began to pour into the hole until it was all there. To this day, it is known as Dubinas Lake.¹³⁰

Mergežeris Lake

It so happened that where the Mergažeris fields are used to be vast impenetrable forests. Right by the lake, a man lived alone with his daughter. In the old days, they did not know how to farm the earth, so they ate what they hunted and fished and the berries they gathered. But a time came when they caught nothing and they were going to starve to death. The father told his daughter to kill her old man so that at least she could be saved from death. The daughter refused and began to beg her father to take her life instead of her having to take his. Well, of course, the father agreed to kill the daughter, but before her hour of death, the daughter went to the lake to wash herself. Well, the daughter was overjoyed to see an elk drowned in the lake. And the daughter joyfully ran back to her father and told him of the drowned elk. They both went to drag the elk back and were both saved from death. So it is from those two people [...] that the locals descend from. That is how the place came to be known as Mergažeris. It means 'a girl's lake' (Lith. – *mergos ežeras*) because the lake saved the girl from death.

Many learned men say that people settled there because in the old days, it was a most convenient place, with rivers and lakes nearby, for the people to live in.¹³¹



Mergežeris Lake





Noruišiai Lake

We have a little lake. Now the lake is called Noruišiai, but it used to be called Sustojo. Older folks say that there used to be no lake here at all, but a village stood in its stead. Once, a villager left his house and saw a black cloud coming towards the village with a great howling sound. When the cloud reached the village, it stopped. The villager was surprised and cried out, ‘Did it stop? [Lith. – ‘Ar sustojo?’]’ As soon as he uttered the words, the cloud fell onto the village and flooded it. According to lore, the cloud had been a travelling lake. Its name had been Sustojo. As soon as the villager guessed its name, it descended upon the village. One old woman, who died two years ago, said that when she was still young, the crosses on the village church could still be seen sticking out of the lake.¹³²

Skarbinė

In a small wood, by the steep banks of the Kražantė, was a deep sinkhole. The sinkhole is still deep, about three metres, though people have done much to fill it. There are many legends about the place. Once upon a time, there lived a wealthy man. He had a lot of gold, silver, and other valuables. When the war began, the man had to flee the country, but because he could not take his valuables with him, he locked them in an iron chest and threw the chest into the Kražantė. As time passed, the water covered the chest with silt, and it lay forgotten. Once, a fisherman was fishing near the hole and saw the water in it cloud over as the iron chest rose up from the deep. After a while, the chest sank back down. This happened to several other people. Later, someone had a dream that if a priest were to come to the place with his entire procession and all the things from the church, they could lift the treasure out. The man went to the priest and told him everything. Then the priest went to the river, as he was told. When the procession arrived and began to chant, the chest rose to the surface but soon sank back again. The priest realised that they had left something behind. They looked about them and saw that they had failed to bring the wick cutter. After that, no one ever saw the chest again. And they call the place Skarbinė (Eng. – a can) because of the large iron chest.¹³³



Burbaičiai Mound

They say that there once stood a church. It sank straight into the earth. Now they say that you can sometimes hear cockerels crowing underground.

They wanted to start digging from the Kražantė side, but after every night everything collapsed again. This frightened the people, and they stopped digging. They also tried to plough the hill. When one man sowed his crops around the hillfort and came back to see whether anything had grown after a while, he found nothing. All he found were the footsteps of a child.¹³⁴



Medžiokalnīs

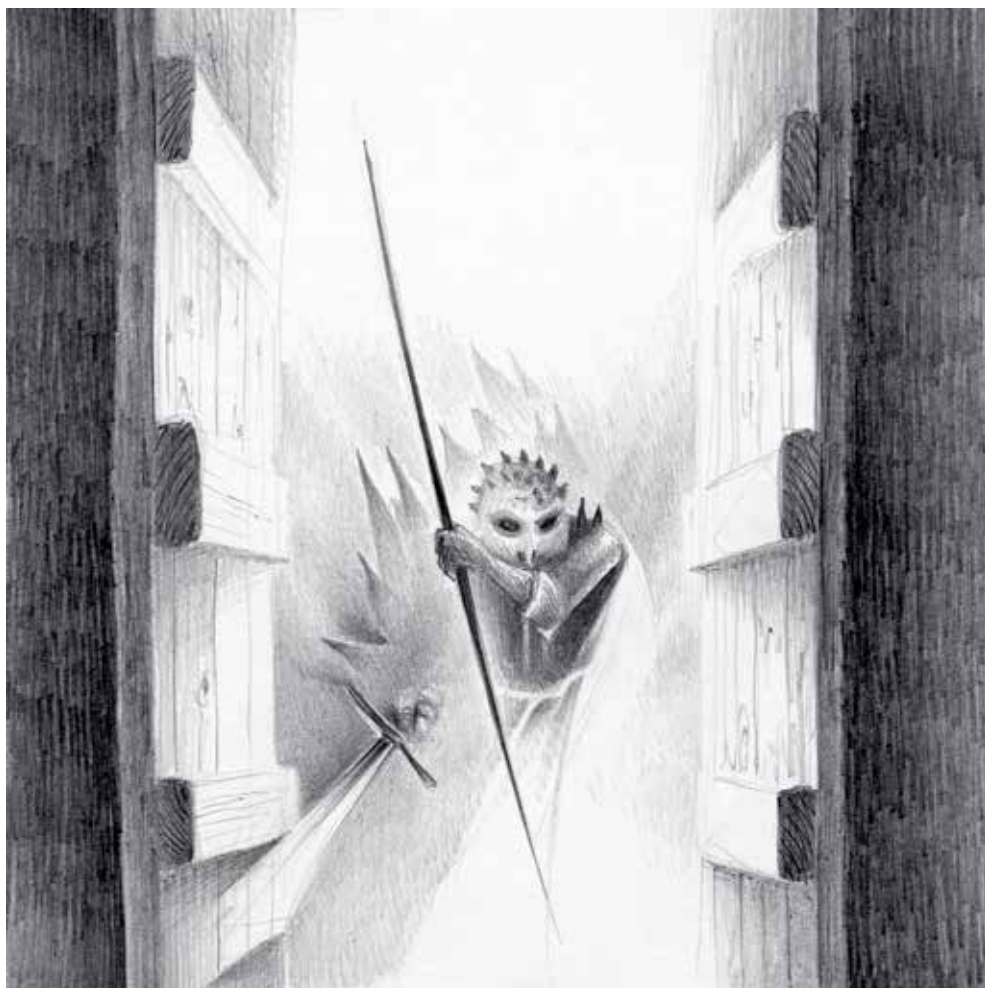
A little about Medžiokalnīs [...], even in my memory, the entire village belonged to the Šukšta family. Šukšta was very [wealthy]. Baltdvaris was his manor. He later had a manor or two in Kretinga somewhere. First here, then a second. So the entire little town belonged to him. He provided electricity, a mill, a sawmill. In short, everything belonged to Šukšta.

His grandfather, his father's father, [...] was a former count, he had a title [...] back in the tsar's days. [...] the serfs [...] built Medžiokalnīs Hill. Those [...] serfs piled the earth [...] to make a hill. And from wherever you look, you can see that it truly was man-made. [...]

Well, he [...] had a large cellar. [...] The late mother of Lileikienė, she was perhaps 103 years old, she used to say that [...] they had a cellar, and now crosses stand where it used to be. There are three crosses there. There's a bench for the traveller to rest on, if you ever had to go by foot [...], and that cellar was underground, while a large chapel stood above it. They say that a priest would offer Mass for them there, when the masters were in power. Later [...], it was destroyed [...], during the war between the Russians and Germans in the fourteenth year. Well, so they destroyed [...] the chapel, they wrecked it. Then perhaps the son tidied everything up. In a word, only the crosses stand there now. So that's the legend – that [...] this was the count's property [...], grandfather Šukštas'. (And why did he build the hill, why did he need to build it?) For the honour of it. For honour. He built himself a chapel, built himself a hill, and so the entire hill is like a grave for it. To show who he was! [...] first pile that earth on, serf, or you'll get a whipping, if you don't pile high enough.

Interviewee's note: Lileikienė came to Kražiai. She's going on eighty.¹³⁵





Kražiai Hillfort

Kražiai Mound

On the road to Kražiai, to the right stands a mound, while to the left are marshes, meadows, and berry patches. Few people went there. The hillfort was very high and wide. A member of the Third Order had come to visit the priest of Kražiai to read some books. As the priest saw

him out in the evening, he said, 'Poor thing, you have a long way to walk.' The man said, 'I'll get there.' The priest accompanied him part of the way. When he reached the hillfort, the man heard a great crash and voices: 'Rise, to battle! Rise, to battle!' Horses whinnied, arms jangled. The man heard orders being issued:

'Quick, canons in position!' He stopped to watch what would happen. As he watched, the side of the mound fell and an iron gate opened. First, the cavalry stepped out, then the commander stepped out all aflame and cried, 'Hold on, you, who are my life force!'

Thus, they rushed to the marshes and began to fight. They battled so until midnight struck. When the cockerels began to crow at midnight, the commander spoke up once again, 'I leave to rest'.

Weapons jangled, the soldiers rode back, and the commander with his blue and red flames went after them. Upon his return, the man recounted everything to the priest. The priest said to him, 'Perhaps you slept as you walked back? Perhaps you were in a dream?' The man was embarrassed.

Another time, some merchants were passing through the place. At midnight they also heard a commotion coming from the mound. The gates opened, and the entire army marched out again. The merchants were frightened. When the cockerels crowed, the entire army returned. Upon their return to Kražiai, the merchants recalled what they had seen. No one wanted to believe them. They decided to report what they had witnessed to an officer. The officer listened, cursed, and said, 'Lies.' Another time, a vicar was driving back in the evening

after making his rounds. It was late. Once again, as he drove past the mound, he heard a noise coming from it. The gates opened again, and the army stepped out, followed by the flaming commander on a handsome steed. The vicar watched in surprise and could not make head nor tail of anything. When the cockerels crowed, everyone returned to the mound. Upon his return, the vicar told the priest what he had seen. He still would not believe what he was told. The vicar then said to him, 'A member of the Third Order said so, but you did not believe him. The merchants said so, but you did not believe them. And if I'm saying it was so, I am not lying either.'

The priest went to his superiors and related everything. The superiors led many soldiers, a priest in vestments, and a procession to the mound, and they began to dig. They found an iron gate, the bones of dead people and animals, rusted weapons, old crops, and many military documents (the old woman mentioned a name, but Simanavičiūtė did not remember it and did not tell me. – J.D.). The documents described the army. The priest realised that the bones had to be collected. There they held Mass by the graves, gathered the weapons, and covered the hillfort back up. The ghostly army no longer appeared.¹³⁶



Kalniškiai (Biržė) Hill

This tale is about Birža Hill, which is in the *valsčius* of Šaukėnai, by Milvydžiai Manor. The hill once belonged to the Swedes. The Russians were set on taking it, and they battled long and hard, but they could not defeat the Swedes. Then one Russian soldier came up with an idea: he took a stallion, dressed it in bear fur, painted it red, and let it graze among a herd of many horses. That stallion began to fight with all the others, and the horses began to whinny terrifically. The Swedes heard the whinnying and rushed out to see what was happening, while the Russians occupied the castle. At the top of that castle, there once was a hole that no one could reach. Once, they let a dog down on a rope. The rope proved to be too short, and the dog fell to his death. On holy days, the priest would go out and hold Mass. The bells tolled on the hill, and sometimes everything cried, and sometimes a whirlwind emerged. The master of Milvydžiai Manor decided to dig around on the hill. He had a dream that he needed to stop digging because if he did not, the entire place would flood – so he stopped.¹³⁷



Karklėnai Mound

Beyond Karklėnai stands a little hill. I don't know now [...], the fir trees came first. Maybe they sprang up of their own accord, maybe they were planted. It's a beautiful little hill. They call it a mound. The filled kind. And once upon a time, some army marched by – oh, I can't remember how the story went. And they built a hill by pouring hatfuls of earth. And they called it a filled hill.

Interviewee's note: An old man by the name of Tuolušas told this tale. He lived in Karklėnai.

Interviewer's note: When asked whether she heard any talk of the Swedes, she remembered that they said it was the Swedes who built the hill.¹³⁸

A legend about Suotkalnis

Interviewer: Please tell me about your village. Where does its name come from? You just mentioned it to me.

V. Damkus: Suotkalnis. That [...] name comes from our fathers, our forefathers. There are Swedish graves there [...] And there are still rocks marking their graves, arranged in rings. Some nine, maybe eleven rings. Before, they used to burn them, it seems. My uncle, when he dug cellars for keeping potatoes, he would see the ground was like [...] running oil. And he would find all kinds of hair, jewellery, chains, pins [...]. It seems they were mostly soldiers: all kinds of weapons, spearheads.

Well [...] the name of the hill came from our fathers. Our forefathers called it Suotai Hill. Now it is known as Suotkalnis. The cemetery is still there. No one gave permission to dismantle it. The fir trees are hundreds of years old. Others cannot even be embraced by a single man – such fir trees need two men. They are from a long time ago.

There is also the Swedish spring, where the Swedes went to wash. My uncle used to say that the Swedes went to wash themselves there. [...] That spring is still alive to this day – the water is very good.¹³⁹

The Swedish embankments by the forest of Kuprė

This here I found when I came back. There were these embankments. So I asked why the embankments were there. So, they said that there had been a Swedish war, and when the Swedes fought here, they dug these trenches. So that is how the embankments came to be built. So, they say that the Swedes fought here, and then they moved on to the rest of Lithuania.

Interviewer's note: The Swedish embankments once were in the small pine wood by Kuprė Forest, but now there is hardly anything left. Others call the place the Swedish graves.¹⁴⁰



Skerdimai

Not far from Kaniūkai is a meadow known by the name of Skerdimai. There, the Russians killed a large company of Swedes. A great massacre (Lith. – *skerdynės*) took place, which is why the meadow is called Skerdimai. When the Swedes saw that the Russians were going to defeat them, they began to retreat. They had with them a large treasury. It was a large money box. They fired at the Russians to cover themselves in their retreat to a swamp that had three wells. This swamp was in the Skerdimai meadow. They could retreat no further. The soldiers were drowning. Realising their impending defeat, the Swedes threw the chest and all their valuables into a well. Then they surrendered. That is why even today, if you stick a long pole into the well, you can hear it knocking against something. That treasure is probably there to this day.¹⁴¹

Labučiai had a very beautiful meadow. Both masters slaughtered there pigs there. [...] So the place is still known as Skerdimai. And Skerdimai is no longer that, just a beautiful village. And they don't call it anything but Skerdimai.¹⁴²

So, you know, young man, for a long time they've been saying: a man was driving along here and got lost, he drove into this marsh and straight on to some trees and, as they used to say, slaughtered himself (Lith. – *pasiskerdė*). Well, so the place is called Skerdimai.¹⁴³

There was a massacre there once, as they say, armies at war, the old kind of war it was – between Germans and Russians. They say they were caught on bayonets, which is why they called the place Skerdimai (Eng. – massacres). It means they were massacred with bayonets. That's what the old folks used to say, of the older generation. They're no longer with us, our great grandfathers. And the marsh itself it stretches all the way to Eitulioniai, to the cemetery.¹⁴⁴



The forest of Kuprė

Beyond Oreliškės lies the forest of Kuprė, maybe seven, eight, or more kilometres on. And in the middle of that forest is a kind of depression. In that depression, the Swedes, when they fought with the Lithuanians, had their hideaway. They hid their army and all their military materiel there – uniforms, arms, and everything.¹⁴⁵



About the Legends

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Memory heritage as a cultural treasure trove of landscape: The Šiauliai region

Reality is only what we believe in.
Algirdas Julius Greimas

As global changes unfold in the 21st century, all-pervasive technology advances take place, and visual culture and the entertainment industry begin to dominate, those seeking to foster identity, memory, and heritage face new challenges. The stories, traditional narratives, tales, legends, and beliefs of the cultural sphere are passed on from generation to generation and become hostages of time and the current realities. To discover and develop creative abilities and foster the competencies of historical knowledge and imagination as well as a sense of pride in one’s own past is now a crucial part of the nation’s existence. How do we draw wisdom from our vast treasury of folklore? How do we bring back the possibility of timelessness to the transcendence of the moment, a timelessness that would allow us to see the wonderful world that surrounds us – the fields and the hills, the hillforts, rivers and lakes, the towns and their pasts – as full of incredible and meaningful experiences? Not restricted by temporal limitations, cultural memory is reflected in our *modus vivendi* – the foundation of our way of living and sense of meaning. By fostering traditions, adding to them, and modifying them, valuing and upholding them, we open up a centuries-old world of miracles

and magic, of real and imagined beings, and of mythical aspirations, hopes, and dreams. Primordial imagery has preserved the imprints of eternity in the world that surrounds us. Creators that bore witness to mythical times were gifted with great power, supernatural abilities, and the purpose of beautifying and improving, creating, and shaping, acting in, and giving meaning to the world as will – the invisible creative side and images – as a visible testimony. Building on the words of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, it is important to learn about the world that surrounds us so that we can educate and improve ourselves: ‘Just as the labourer who helps erect a building either does not know the plan of the whole or does not always have it at hand, so does man relate himself to the whole course of his life and its character as he spends the individual days and hours of his life. The more dignified, important, planned and individual his life is, the more necessary and beneficial it is for the reduced outline, the overall scheme of things, to come before his eyes from time to time [...] it is important for him to understand his calling, his role and his relationship to the world. If it is meaningful and grand, then a glance at the life plan, its

contours, should more than anything strengthen, excite, arouse, move him to action and prevent him from losing his path' (Schopenhauer, 1994, p. 172).

When declaring a heritage treasury, broadening horizons, and committing the history of memory to paper, it is crucial to draw on a comprehensive spectrum of knowledge, folklore, and interpretations. The collective memory, its function, and its area of diffusion seem to be localised within the framework of a defined national, ethnic, dialectic, or geographical area. The givens of universal memory encompass a multitude of spheres and reflect the entirety of parallel initiations, holograms as spatial analogues, identical actions, and analogous results. The emergence of the sacred and profane, familiar and unfamiliar, historical, exceptional and uncommon places, phenomena, and meanings – it is the common experience, heritage, and values of humanity, preserved as a representation of uniqueness. In contemporary narratives of cultural memory, as in the relics of time and past experiences, the present is interpreted by searching for meanings that signify uniqueness: how the natural phenomena that surround us came to be, how hills were formed and hillforts built, how lakes travelled, or how towns got their names.

As we explore the stories of the past, we discover new possibilities for communication. Cultural memory, as a force for transmitting values, bears witness to the inexhaustible strata of creativity and urges us to create and foster continuity through modern technological means – virtual reconstruction software can be inventively hidden in 'archaic' narratives.

Based on the best-known studies of the phenomenon of collective memory, cultural memory can be reflected on in three ways: as practice-reflection using traditional heritage, i.e., tales, proverbs, and maxims; self-reflexively, when the aim is to explain, distinguish, criticize, or find hypothetical grounding; and by reflecting the images generated by heritage as a given value in the search for possibilities

for social grounding (Assmann, Czaplicka 1995, p. 132). The history of memory, verbal tradition, and cultural reflection are close-knit elements of heritage that inspire new visual explorations. How can we recreate and foster collective memory? What combinations of image, creativity, and legend can we link with the virtual technology that permeates our current culture? Every time that we open up the treasury of our heritage, we enrich ourselves and deepen the experiences that reveal our identity.

History, nation, and memory, as uniting parts of contemporary existence, that take shape over hundreds of years and are passed on from generation to generation, bring the focus in on the challenges of cultural reception, as understanding and acceptance. Cultural memory is identified as an opportunity to *homogenise society*, i.e., provide it with certain common experiences. The idea of collective identity, commonality, or unity is gaining relevance again in a changing world. Today, when writing the history of memory, scholars of nationality find the subjects of national memory and national stories are closely linked, and they investigate the search for commonality among the small local national histories, regenerative processes, and entireties that testify to the variety of a nation's past (Berger, Niven 2014, p. 140). From the perspective of stories (tales, legends, and personal stories) that reflect the history of a landscape, a metaphor relating to heritage defined by the French historian Pierre Nora – sites of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) – becomes the unifying parameter of cultural memory, or local memory, and provides the region's history with the distinguishing marks of identity.

The history of the region's folk tales

The smaller local narratives – beliefs, tales, and legends – that scholars began to collect in the mid-19th century, remained the regional narrative that was passed on from generation to generation.

Renowned collectors of heritage from the region of Šiauliai, such as Matas Jonas Slančiauskas, have preserved a multitude of valuable testimonies of cultural memory. Slančiauskas' first texts include the tales about the lake of Talkša (No. 6 and 7) and are printed in this collection of the *Legends of the Šiauliai Region*. They were told by Juozas Gendvilas and Aloyzas Striupėikis and recorded in the county of Šiauliai, as is believed, in 1874. Slančiauskas is considered one of the best-known folklore specialists of the late 19th and early 20th century. He was a book smuggler, a public figure, a member of the Aušrininkai group, and a publicist. He was born on 21 February 1850, in the village of Trumpaičiai of the Gruzdžiai *valsčius*, to the family of a landless craftsman, a maker of wooden dishware. At first, he learned to read in Polish, helped along by his father and a primer in Polish grammar. In 1857, he was taken to a shelter in Rudiškės, where he was to study with an organist. There, he learned to read notation, play the organ, and read in Lithuanian. As he was from a poor family, he had no opportunity to study further and chose the profession of tailor. An avid reader and an educated man, he was then considered a country intellectual.

As a tailor, he travelled the country and studied it. As he journeyed through the villages, he recorded everything he heard. He made an effort to write down tales, proverbs, riddles, and anecdotes as he heard them, in the local dialect and noting the story-teller's last name and place of residence. Thus, he preserved pieces of the region's unique heritage. In collecting pieces of national memory, 'he sought to save the people's creations from fading into oblivion, to collect the remaining grains of mythology,' as stated by the Matas Slančiauskas Progymnasium in Joniškis on the occasion of the 163rd anniversary of Slančiauskas' birth in 2013 (<http://slanciauskas.lt/matas-slanciauskas-1850-1924/>). The first issues of the Lithuanian *Aušra* newspaper provoked extraordinary feelings. '[...] I cried with joy for a long time upon receiving such a beloved guest', he wrote.

Inspired by a feeling of national pride, he sought to have his writings published in *Aušra*. Having been introduced to several book smugglers, he entered their circle, began to distribute banned Lithuanian publications, and worked with the famous book smuggler Jurgis Bielinis. As he travelled from village to village as a tailor, he became a *daraktorius* – a secret teacher who taught children to read and write. Along with the like-minded Jonas Trumpulis, the organist Antanas Baranauskas, and Aleksandras Ratkus, on 7 May 1889, he founded the secret Atgaja society. The principal aim of the society was a revival of Lithuanian culture – it collected folklore, distributed banned literature, and concerned itself with cultural education. On 26 April 1895, when the book smuggler Stanislovas Rupšius was caught, the home of the parents of fellow Atgaja member Liudas Vaineikis was searched. The authorities discovered Slančiauskas' letters and manuscripts. Later, during a search of Slančiauskas' home on 18 July 1895, they found 71 notebooks of folklore, original writings, letters from famous cultural figures, Atgaja's articles of association, and forbidden literature – a calendar and several songbooks. On 5 September 1895, he was arrested and locked up in Šiauliai. After a year of imprisonment, he was sentenced to three years of exile in Riga by decree of the tsar. Upon his return home, he continued to distribute banned literature and collect folklore and was an active contributor to various periodicals. In 1907, he was accepted as a member-contributor of the newly established Lithuanian Scientific Society. The legends Slančiauskas collected were published in Jonas Basanavičius' collection *Lietuvių tautoje* (1923, Book 3, Part 2). In 1974, the Vaga press published a book of Slančiauskas' folklore under the title *Šiaurės Lietuvos pasakos (Tales of Northern Lithuania)*, in 1975, under the title *Šiaurės Lietuvos sakmės ir anekdotai (Legends and Anecdotes of Northern Lithuania)* [compiled by N. Vėlius and A. Seselskytė, ed. K. Aleksynas]), and in 1985, as part of Norbertas Vėlius' *Legends and Stories of Northern Lithuania*, compi-

led by Slančiauskas' colleagues Jonas Trumpulis, Pranas Narvydas, Juozapas Stanevičius, Jonas Lydeikis, Pilypas Grigutis, and Steponas Strazdas. Every year, the Matas Slančiauskas prize is awarded for the collection, fostering, and propagation of the ethnic cultural heritage of the Joniškis region. The prize is awarded by the Municipal Government of Joniškis District, while candidates are proposed by academic, educational, and cultural institutions, associations, townships, and individuals. The first to receive the prize in 1990 was Jurgis Dovydaitis, who dedicated his life to collecting folk creations. The legend of the Kražiai hillfort, recorded by Dovydaitis in the village of Girkalnis in 1932, is also presented in this collection (No. 113).

The early 20th-century memoir collection of the Šiauliai Aušra Museum includes Matas Slančiauskas' hand-written notebook of songs and grammar (p. 101), the digitised version of which is available at the P. Višinskis Public Library in Šiauliai (from 2012).



Matas Slančiauskas.
From the Joniškis
History and Culture
Museum

He left behind a vast archive of Northern Lithuanian heritage with over 3,000 items: 800 songs, 800 transcriptions of oral tales, 200 riddles, 1,000 proverbs and sayings, and 1,500 ethnographic descriptions, including descriptions of folk medicine, weather predictions, beliefs, spells, superstitions, games, and drawings of folk costumes. He died on 11 March 1924, in the village of Reibiniai, the Skaistgiris valsčius, Šiauliai County. Today, the Matas Slančiauskas

Memorial House-Museum showcases manuscripts, books, and documents linked to Slančiauskas' life and work as well as testimonies of the activity of the Atgaja society. The idea of preserving the memory of Matas Slančiauskas by opening a museum at his house emerged after Lithuania gained its independence. By the efforts of Šiauliai-local Boleslovas Vengrys, an enthusiast of the region's history, the abandoned house was renovated and became part of the region's historical identity (http://www.spaudos.lt/Knygnesiai/M_Slanciauskas.htm). Presently, the museum is preparing to showcase the ethnographic heritage of the highlanders of the Joniškis region.

The first collection of Lithuanian oral lore was compiled by another renowned collector, the Samogitian noble Mečislovas Davainis-Silvestraitis (Silvestravičius), was published in Warsaw in 1894, as a two-part work under the title *Podania żmujdskie, zebrat i dosłownie spolszczył M. Dowojna-Sylwestrowicz (Samogitian Legends)*, and printed in volume XII of the *Wisła* magazine. It presented over 300 pieces of Lithuanian oral lore, and to this day, it is one of the largest collections of Lithuanian oral lore in Polish.

Legends of the Šiauliai Region contains a unique narrative about the hillfort of Šiaulė (No. 14), which was recorded in the village of Toleikiškiai (Šiauliai District) by Mečislovas Davainis-Silvestraitis and printed in the first volume of the Polish *Samogitian Tales* (p. 227).

Born on 20 April 1849, in the village of Žieveliškės (Raseiniai District), Davainis-Silvestraitis studied at the Kaunas and Kėdainiai gymnasiums and trained as a metal-worker in Warsaw. From 1874 to 1876, he published poetry and various articles in Polish magazines. From 1883, he became a correspondent for the *Aušra* newspaper and became the first chronicling journalist of the Lithuanian press. He began to collect folklore back in 1867, and he amassed over 700 Samogitian stories and tales (they were translated into Polish). In 1889, in Tilsit, Otto von Maude-

rode's press published Davainis-Silvestraitis' collection of *Proverbs and Songs*. In 1907, he was elected as member-correspondent the Lithuanian Scientific Society.

To Davainis-Silvestraitis, folklore was the expression of a nation's life force and could successfully contribute 'to the explanation of many scholarly questions about the Lithuanian language and ancient Lithuanian beliefs.' When he first began collecting folklore, Davainis-Silvestraitis encountered some substantial difficulties. As a man of noble birth, he could not gain the trust of his story-tellers, so he set out to find assistants among the peasant-folk. It is believed that he had as many as 247 helpers. The assistant he most valued was a man by the name of Vincas Bakutis, a poor labourer of Palendriai Manor. He was barely literate, but he knew of many tales himself and recorded many legends told by others. A share of the legends collected by Bakutis and other helpers were included in Book I and II of the *Samogitian Legends*. A great portion of Davainis' collected tales is missing. The surviving part of Davainis' collection of oral lore was published by the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature in 1973 under the title *Pasakos, sakmės, oracijų* (Stories, Legends, and Orations), which was compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė and edited by Kostas Aleksynas. 'Most of the stories and legends recorded by Davainis and his assistants are traditional stories that have been recorded many times throughout Lithuania; however, some of the texts are unique and have not been discovered by other collectors of folklore' (*Pasakos, sakmės, oracijų*. Collected by Mečislovas Davainis-Silvestraitis. Vilnius: Vaga, 1973, p. 39).

Some of the legends of the Šiauliai region included in the present publication were also published in works compiled by the most prominent Lithuanian public figure, Jonas Basanavičius, the nation's patriarch, the editor of the first Lithuanian newspaper *Aušra*, one of the chief architects of Lithuanian independence, scholar, and collector of folk-

lore. The works included *Lietuviškos pasakos (Lithuanian Tales)*, published in the USA (Shenandoa, Penn.), in 1898 (No. 95), and *Iš gyvenimo vėlių bei velnių (Of Life's Spirits and Devils)*, published in Chicago in 1903 (No. 77). Legend No. 77, 'Lokava Hill', which was narrated to Father Aleksandras Burba by Vincas Čeputis in the parish of Akmenė (Šiauliai County), was also published in the Lithuanian Literary Society's publication *Mitteilungen der litauischen literarischen Gesellschaft*, which was printed in Heidelberg, Germany (1901, Bd. Vol. (2), p. 198–199).

The Polish scholar, anthropologist, economist, and sociologist Ludwik Krzywicki (1859–1941) was also known as an archaeologist, explorer of Lithuanian hillforts, and collector of folklore. His most important work on the hillforts of Samogitia was entitled *Żmudź starożytna: dawni Żmudzini i ich warownie* ('The Samogitian Past: The Ancient Samogitians and Their Hillforts') was published in Polish in 1906, in Warsaw. The Lithuanian translation was published in 1928. In this work, Krzywicki presents the tale of the Raginėnai Hillfort, located in the district of Radviliškis, as the home of female deities, who later fled from the hillfort to a wood on the other side of the Daugyvenė, and as the home of witches (*laumės*).

Legends of the Šiauliai region were also published in the Lithuanian folklore collections compiled by Dr. Jonas Balys, entitled *Lietuvių liaudies sakmės I (Lithuanian Folk Legends I)*, Kaunas, 1940) and *Istoriniai padavimai (Historical Legends)*, published by the Chicago-based Draugas press in 1949) as well as in *Lietuvių tautosakos (Lithuanian Folklore)* Vol. 4 (senior editor: Kostas Korsakas, volume editor: Leonardas Sauka, material prepared by Leonardas Sauka, Adelė Seselskytė, Norbertas Vėlius, Klimas Viščinis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1967).

The country's greatest repository of oral lore is at the Vilnius-based Institute of Lithuanian Language and Folklore. It is composed of three core collections: the Lithuanian Scientific Society's Folklore Collection (LLTI LMD), the

Lithuanian Folklore Manuscript Archive (LLTI LTR), and the Lithuanian Folklore Audio Archive (LLTI LTRF). Collectively, these archives contain a substantial share of folklore associated with the cultural memory of the Šiauliai region. Among other noteworthy treasures of folklore are the collections of the Manuscript Department of the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (CABR F) and the Placename Archive of the Institute of the Lithuanian Language (LŽV).

Oral tradition as the art of storytelling

The art of today, which reminds us of the importance of the subjects of tradition, memory, and stories and how they are the essence of identity, does not reject faith in the power of the word. Heritage decisions, reality, reminders of prohibitions in stories, emphasised values, and proposed privileges remain secrets for discovery. The magic power of the word is reflected in tales, beliefs, stories, and spells. In the region of Šiauliai, to guess the name of a travelling lake is no difficult thing. It is no coincidence that many tales have been told about lakes that ‘peacefully descend’ near a town, for example Bitinėlis Lake near Šiauliai (No. 1), the lakes of Velžiai or Arimaičiai, or the lake in the district of Radviliškis (No. 143–145). This type of legend is the most frequently occurring and content-rich kind and reveals the kinetic or dynamic and static powers of water and the power of the imagination to force a ‘settled’ lake to travel along the sky as well as to settle and calm it.

Airborne lakes are images of a primordial mythical world and survive as a real anomaly of the imagination in legend. The image of the airborne lake can be found in the historical legends of many countries. Once upon a time, airborne lakes inspired fear with their threat of flooding and death. Today, legends attest to the power of the word – guess the name and overcome the elements of nature.

The tradition of the story is based on belief in the testi-

mony of personal experience. These experiences often take the shape of an ‘extraordinary and shattering supernatural event’, which creates a certain distance and removes us from the source. Legends, on the other hand, do not reference the personal. The experience, testimony, and transmission of collective experiences is the distinguishing feature of tales. ‘The collective experience portrayed in a legend is shown by the objects about which they speak. Toponymic legends are stories about local features of renown, i.e., lakes, hills, rocks’, exceptional objects, valuable relics of the landscape and unique heritage objects, and ‘the fantastical circumstances of their emergence’ (Donatas Sauka, *Lietuvių tautosaka*. Vilnius: Mokslas, 1982, p. 156).

As it reveals the origins of natural and historical objects, the changes they undergo, and the flow of ‘lost time’, the archaic world of legend draws on a common reflection on ‘belief in reality’. Legends of an explanatory nature are ‘creations that allude to reality and which recount extraordinary events of the past that determined the specific characteristics of landforms or the origins of historical monuments: how giants and devils shaped landforms, how lakes moved, how hillforts were built, how settlements came to be, and how manors sank into the ground.’ (Bronislava Kerbelytė, *Lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1970, p. 14). Narratives with mythical aspirations – legends of origin, creation and destruction, of sinking and resurrection – have clear value-driven motives to preserve a worldview shaped by centuries and to create a familiar form of the ideal ‘reality’.

Popular legends on the origins of the names of cities, towns, and villages in which everyday phrases and their phonetic combinations or analogues become the root of a name are based on more recent traditions. A girl gathering mushrooms in the forest gives two Boletus mushrooms to a vagrant with the words ‘*Še du va* [Here there’s two]’, and from then on the place is known as Šeduva (No. 153). Or the names of Kuršėnai and Papilė, which come from far-

mers’ wonder at where the hay went or where it came from with the flooding of the Venta River (No. 83). The primitive mythological thinking in which names were part of a holy and sacred testimony, the essence and soul that gave the entity its power, is transferred into the creative space of the secular everyday world.

As historical memory is lost, new etymological narratives are introduced that seek to explain the names of various objects, including unique rocks. The Devil Stone of Luponiai village came to be when one devil threw a rock at another, who had not been doing any wrong, not tempting anyone to sin. Just forty years ago, the rock had still existed, but it later ‘sank into the ground’ (No. 21). In general, in the tradition of the creation of the world, are two known creative forces: the divine, the creator of good and light, and the demonic, dark force that tries to oppose it, mimic it, and spread evil. Their fight left a deep trace in the mythical consciousness, heritage, and creative oral history.

Of course, even in the Šiauliai region, even the strangest things can happen, and a devil can fall in love with a good witch. Once upon a time, there lived a devil who liked a witch living in Laumakiai. ‘But the walk to Laumakiai was made difficult by the many puddles. He decided to build himself a road. He rushed to hell, picked up a bag, and went to Palanga to fill it with gravel and sand’. It was dark by the time he returned. The bag tore, the sand poured out, and the cockerel crowed. And the devil stayed to haunt Kipškalnis Hill (No. 30).

As virtual communication technology becomes predominant in our lives, the art of storytelling has become an uncommon ability, a priority area of creative art. A good storyteller, who knows how to interest, engage, and intrigue in the 21st century is a great rarity. It is for good reason that there is more and more talk of a ‘narrative turn’ in the culture, a notion based on increasing numbers of creators who use various forms of storytelling in their art: monologues, readings, discussions, lectures, or alternati-

ve forms of education.

In heritage interpretations, the story, as a history, tradition, and present, spurs on the continuity of the ‘new’ visual culture. The realities portrayed in tales visually link us to the object of the story: to a lake that settles down by a town, treasure left behind by the Swedes, a bell ringing at the bottom of a lake, travelling hills, and other mythological locations in the region.

Visions and reality

Legends immortalise the story of the creation of the world, which describes how hills could have been created by extraordinary forces, tall mythical anthropomorphic beings (of human form), i.e., giants. Back in the late 19th century, they used to say that giants had once lived in the Šiauliai region, and the giants shared an axe that they would toss each other at a distance of five miles, or about eight kilometres (No. 14).

The primordial creative force is demonstrated in the earthly actions of extraordinary beings, thus joining two worlds – the divine and the everyday human world. When one giant shook the sand and dirt out of his clogs, he created Girnikai Hill. When he cried over his mother’s death, his tears created Bulėnai Lake (No. 23). In the region of Šiauliai are still a significant number of place names that are linked to mythical beings, such as Kapmilžiai, Milžinkapiai, and Velniobala.

Some extraordinary legends have been spun about hillforts. Visions of the afterlife that were associated with special places gave hillforts sacred status: ‘They say that where the hillfort now stands there once was a church. A long time ago, the church was blown over with sand. People used to hear bells tolling’ (Šiaulė Hillfort, No. 13). At Luponiai Hill, people would hear a cockerel crowing inside the castle that once sank into the fort, where many people could be seen, ‘Some [...] grinding, some [...] milling’ (No. 56).

In the traditional worldview, a sunken world was basically seen as the kingdom of the dead, where life went on as before, just underground. On Sundays and on holidays, the church bells toll, festive meals are prepared, chimneys smoke, and cockerels crow in the morning.

The sanctity attributed to the hillforts is evidenced by the prohibition of digging on them: 'Once, a wealthy gentleman came and gathered a group of men to dig around the hillfort. They dug and they dug, but whatever they managed to dig during the day caved in at night. They laboured thus for a long time, but their efforts were in vain' (No. 13). Of course, as noted by Professor Bronislava Kerbelytė, when hillforts are destroyed or worn down by the elements, the legends about them also fade into oblivion. Legends that hark back to ancient times seem to create the illusion of a retrospective. It is important that we believe in legends and pass them on from generation to generation, thus keeping in touch with our home soil and its stories.

One of the best-known and visited places in the region is Jurgaičiai Hillfort, more frequently referred to as the Hill of Crosses. From days of old, people believed in the miraculous nature of what is also known as Castle Hill. They made their vows to it and built their crosses on it. As folklore has it, the hill once boasted a castle, church, and other buildings, all of which sank along with its inhabitants into the depths of the earth for their sins. 'The old people say that one Easter morning, when the churches had celebrated the resurrection of Christ, the bells of the church in the earth could be heard too' (No. 32). There are also several tales that claim that inside the hill a priest offers Mass to a church full of the faithful (No. 33–34, 46), that the god Perkūnas struck the hill with lightning and it was blown over with sand (No. 35), that a church sank into it (Nr. 39), and that money was buried (No. 44, 47–48) or was seen to be burning on the hill (No. 36). Now, there are over 100 thousand crosses, wayside shrines, and roofed pillar-type crosses erected on the hill, and they are adorned with a multitude of small

crosses, rosary beads, and images and sculptures of saints. Today, the Hill of Crosses is also viewed as a symbol of the nation's hope, suffering, and resistance in the 20th century. From a historical perspective, it is important to note that the Hill of Crosses is first of all a hillfort, a state-protected monument, and a unique, sacred, and respected place and the object of many beliefs, tales, and legends



The Hill of Crosses. Photographed by Stasys Ivanauskas, 1943



Bubiai Hillfort. Photographed by Irenos Berštienės

Many moralising tales and stories of warning are associated with Salduvė Hill, which once stood at the edge of the city of Šiauliai. It was once believed that hillforts were the hiding places of fantastical treasures. Hills often share these riches with those who show temperance, know the limits of their desire, do not seek to recklessly enrich them-

selves, and are not driven by envy or greed. 'However, in the evenings you can hear a wailing at the top of the hill. This is the wailing of a greedy child who cannot get out. And no one can help him because ghosts drift around the hilltop in the evenings and can pull other people down with him' (No. 18).

The theme of enchanted treasures resurfaces in the legends about Swedish riches. Knowing that there was Swedish treasure to be found inside the hill, locals began to dig around and unearthed a rock bearing the message, 'Not yours, so not for you to find!' (No. 22). A clear warning that without the ability to overcome the enchantment, there would be no rags-to-riches story.

When someone encounters the transcendent world, it is important to know how to act, how to not cross lines in order to preserve their health and life or prosper at the expense of this other world. If you abide by prohibitions, are careful with dangerous uncertainties, and obey your ancestors' warnings, then you will live a long and happy life. The goings-on of the world inside the hillforts, the sounds emanating from them, and various occurrences that took place around them were associated with another world, another life. If you enter this world, you might find yourself trapped in it forever. The surviving legends about the prohibition of digging on hillforts or descending into their depths were a collective safeguard against undesirable adventurers, a kind of historical prevention effort. Hillforts were protected and respected for many reasons. One is that hillforts, much like tumuli, were viewed as burial grounds, and the same rules of respect for the dead were applied to them. Those who went digging for riches were treated as grave robbers and punished. On the other hand, to honour our history and protect the extraordinary places that preserve our memory is our duty and calling.

In lieu of a conclusion

Sensus fidelium: a sense of belief

The pride of place, nature, history, and its monuments cultivated over the centuries is closely linked to a belief in the uniqueness of heritage. Traditions, cultural memories, and inspiring and legend-related visual experiences serve an important educational role in developing the imagination and teaching the art of language and mythical thinking. By recognising the memory history of our country, we preserve our heritage.

According to a renowned scholar of folklore Alan Dundes, identifying folklore as the creative output of simple folk, the culture of peasant or village communities, or with people 'from the past' distorts our understanding of it. City dwellers also create their own legends and are influenced by folklore. Dundes suggests that instead of allowing folklore to disappear, it should constantly be created and recreated so that it will have a place in new contexts (Dundes, 1980, p. 2).

The contemporary world unifies cultural memory. The invasion of new media has changed traditional creative potential. Books, television, radio, and the internet have become a source of knowledge passed down as folklore. Sharing culture shapes a uniquely superficial, temporal heritage for fast consumption. How do we restore the cultural life force of our heritage? The visual nature of legends, as the earth's memory, preserves certain possibilities for a connection with the past.

A belief in the life force of the cultural past and the ability to build new approaches to and meaning for our memory history is an essential part of fostering the region's identity.

Literature in p. 170.

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Reflections of the natural landscape of the Šiauliai region in legends

What makes the natural landscape of the Šiauliai region special? What characteristic features of the landscape are reflected in legends? Who could have created these legends and why? What links are there between legend and reality?

Let us take a look at the region of Šiauliai from a bird's-eye view and find its unique natural features, which carry the Earth's memory encoded in local folklore. Today, in Northern Lithuania, in the county of Šiauliai, arable land is the predominant feature. However, the green robes of the earth, the impenetrable woods so often mentioned in legends, can still be found in the large forests of Kurtuvėnai–Šaukėnai, Tyruliai–Tytuvėnai, Žagarė, Gubernija, and Gedžiūnai. To the north and to the east of Šiauliai lie the flatlands, the Venta and Mūša river valleys, and the Linkuva ridge. To the south and to the east lie the Eastern Samogitian uplands with the region's highest hills, the deepest river valleys of the Dubysa and Kražantė, and its ranges of lakes. Here loom the region's lore-rich hillforts and sacred hills.

The Šiauliai region lies nestled between three rivers: the Venta, the Nemunas, and the Lielupė. The region's largest rivers flow into them – the Dubysa, Venta, and Mūša as well as their tributaries flow into three different river basins and feed the major rivers of Lithuania and Latvia.

The Šiauliai region is home to vast marshlands: based on area, the Great Marsh is the third largest marsh in Lithuania,

while Praviršulis Marsh is the fifth, and Rėkyva Swamp is the eighth. Mūša Marsh and Kamanai Swamp are also impressive. In legends, marshes are characterised as the gathering places of devils and witches (*laumės*). In Europe, these are wonderful protected corners of natural and biological diversity, most of which have been granted the status of reserve or protected territory.

In legends, landscape and historical memory are typically reflected through natural phenomena such as storms, thunder, floods, rains, and outstanding features of the landscape such as valleys, depressions, rivers, lakes, marshes, hills, rocks, and springs. Let us take a brief look at the landscape that is reflected in the legends of the region. From days of old, people chose to live by bodies of water – rivers, lakes, and marshes – which provided them with food and protection. Knowledge of the changes undergone by bodies of water and other natural phenomena was passed on from generation to generation and has been preserved in folklore. The relationship between the Dubysa and Venta rivers is reflected in the legend of two good friends that flowed together until they came to blows over the beautiful Nemunas. The separation of the rivers described in the legend has been confirmed by the science of geography. At some point, after a glacial lake outburst, the two rivers did flow together until geological phenomena separated them. This phenomenon can be linked to

the 'times of the flood' (Lith. – *plūdo laikas*) mentioned in folklore. Today, between the separated rivers lies a wide and overgrown old valley. There was once an attempt to turn it in to a waterway or channel for ships passing from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea.

The legend about the name of the Dubysa River mentions two devils. In one legend, they are described as evil-doers that wore out horses grazing in the valley. Another legend mentions two devils that walked on either side of the river and beat each other with whips. Today, the deep gullies left behind on the banks either side of the valley by fast-flowing waters remind us of the slashes left behind by a great whip. Another legend tells us of the Venta's flood season and the rains during which the river flooded the hay fields of Kuršėnai and carried its hay all the way to Papilė.

Among the marshes of Rėkyva lies the tenth largest lake in Lithuania – Rėkyva Lake. Once, the lake was twice as large as it is now and covered the surrounding marshlands. Over the millennia, the larger part of the shallow lake turned into marshland. However, in the eastern part of the lake are still sandy beaches with shallow approaches. The origins of this lake are addressed by several legends. Rėkyva Lake, much like many of the region's other lakes, supposedly drifted in with the clouds and fell to the ground. This motif reflects the rare cases when 'fish rained' from the sky as forceful winds or whirlwinds lifted tonnes of water skyward and blew them to different locations. These legends can also be linked to the occasional intense rains that could have flooded the depressions in the landscape (e.g., in the legends on the lakes of Rėkyva, Talkša, Bijotė and others). To this day, people call them 'fallen' lakes (Lith. – '*kristiniai*'), as they once fell from the sky.

Legends about lakes flowing in from under the ground can be linked to thermokarst phenomena. These lakes formed when underground glaciers melted and the resulting water poured out as the earth's surface caved in. The lowest

points of these depressions often turned into marshland or waterholes that locals called 'devil's holes'. Legends often mention geographical events during which water spouts out of the ground in columns and floods churches and entire towns (as in the legend about the Lake of Talkša). There are plenty of thermokarst lakes in the Šiauliai region: in the regional parks of Kurtuvėnai (the Pageluvis lakes) and Tytuvėnai (the lakes of Bridvaišis and Gilius).

In the flatlands of the Šiauliai region, some singular hills stand out, transformed by humans into defensive hillforts, sacred hills, and burial grounds. Legends hark back to the incredible histories of these hills.

The Jurgaičiai (Domantai) Hillfort, also known as the Hill of Crosses, is one of the best-known in the Šiauliai region. In the olden days, it was a castle that defended locals from the onslaught of enemies, but later, people began to erect crosses there as thanks for prayers fulfilled. Few know that this hill is a remnant of a long and narrow hill that once stretched along the Kulpė River. Based on origin, such hills are called eskers. Eskers form as sediment (gravel and sand) accumulates in glacial cracks. When the glacier melts away, the long ridges of sediment are left to settle onto the ground. On the surface, we can see the smaller part of an esker-like formation. The larger part lies beneath the ground. Part of the Jurgaičiai esker was levelled as locals mined gravel, sand, and roundstones for building structures and roads.

Near Žagarė, the Žvelgaitis and Rakštė hillforts featured in the legends were both built on an esker. In the olden days, eskers were also called the roads of giants, Swedes, or devils, '*ožnugariai*' ('goatbacks') and '*rūžos*' ('strips of road') because they reminded people of the raised roads that were built over wetlands.

The most impressive and distant views open up from the sacred Girnikai Hill, the highest hill in the Šiauliai region. It is for good reason that the hill is the object of many legends

that involve the giants that built them, churches blown over with sand, buried armies, and giant's tears (Būlėnai Lake). Some scholars link the power of giants and devils reflected in folklore with the very old memories of the people about the shifting glaciers that created the surrounding hills and depressions. Glaciers from Scandinavia had slid into Lithuanian territory at least six times. The last glacier receded about 10 thousand years ago. After the ice ages came the warm periods – interglacial periods during which broad-leaved forests thrived. During the interglacial periods, the Northern Lithuanian territories could have been inhabited by people, and their stories could have carried from generation to generation until they reached our times. Legends often refer to churches buried under hills (e.g., the legend of Girnikai Hill) – this phenomenon can be linked to the dust storms that once ravaged the region. Primitive places of worship could have been blown over by sand and buried beneath the continental dunes of the Arctic deserts that emerged after the ice age (e.g., in tales on the Kipškalnis or the Šiaulė Hillfort). Ranges of such continental dunes can be found on the shores of what were formerly great lakes. Legends often mention holes and fissures on hills, often associated with sunken castles, manors, churches, bells, underground caves, or buried gold. The origins of such holes are varied. The surface of the earth can cave in if ground water washes sediment away and forms an underground cavity. These could have been subterranean structures that people built in the olden days – wells, cellars, pits for storing vegetables, remnants of defensive fortifications from times of war – or the burrows of animals. Holes could have also appeared as a result of the efforts of treasure hunters – the ‘pirate archaeologists’ – who left pits behind them as they burrowed for valuables. People sought to protect their sacred places from evil-doers, and they did this by building crosses and wayside shrines as well as inventing legends about ghosts, witches, devils, and prophetic dreams that threatened desecraters of sacred hills with misfortune.

Larger and smaller roundstones were dragged into the region by glaciers that moved in from the north thousands of years ago. Legends of the devils that carried the great Velnias, Martynas, Laumė, and Medginai rocks as well as stone-throwing giants can be linked to glacial activity. In the Lithuanian landscape, a large marked or strange-looking rock was an outstanding feature that marked a boundary, an exceptional place, or a memory. The rocks that the god Perkūnas struck by lightning as he hunted devils gained special significance – such rocks were used as altars for burning the Sacred Flame and placing offerings. Some exceptional legends include the stories that involve footprints on rocks or chair-shaped stones (as in the legends of the rocks of Zigmantiškiai, Rozalimas, Martynas, and Dulkiškiai). As rocks wear away, all sorts of indentations emerge that look like the footprint of a person, animal, or bird or the sagging seat of a chair. Such rocks inspired awe. People saw them as traces of God, the Virgin Mary, angels, devils, witches, horses, rams, wolves, and other beings. Such rocks were considered miraculous and sacred not just in Lithuania but in other parts of the world as well. Protected territories were established to preserve the region's lore-rich natural and cultural heritage as well as its natural landscape and biodiversity. In the most beautiful areas of the Šiauliai region are six regional parks – Kurtuvėnai, Venta, Žagarė, Tytuvėnai, Dubysa, and Varniai – and 34 state nature reserves. The Kamanos state reserve, the Gubernija and Gedžiūnai forest biosphere polygons, and dozens of Natura 2000 territories were established to preserve biodiversity and protect birds and habitats of European significance. These are the unique territories in which the majority of the places mentioned in legends are concentrated. While it is perhaps impossible to see all the interesting places of the Šiauliai region in one day, by reading legends we can at least make that trip in the imagination.

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- ⁴⁰ As told by Jocienė Geležinytė Michalina, born 1909, Šalpirčiai Vlg., Padubysis Vls., Šiauliai county.
- ⁴¹ LLTI LTR 293 (407^{ab}).
- ⁴² Recorded in Jonelaičiai Vlg., Padubysis Vls., Šiauliai County, as told by Urbonas, 90 y/o. Recorded by V. Trinkas (1930). LLTI LTR 293 (412). Source: *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 160, No. 233.
- ⁴³ As told by Juana Stonienė-Linkutė, born in 1933, Bubiai, Šiauliai County. Lived in Pašvinė village from 1942.
- ⁴⁴ LLTI LTR 3116 (1364).
- ⁴⁵ LLTI LTR 3098 (301).
- ⁴⁶ LLTI LTR 3098 (301).
- ⁴⁷ Antanas Dauginis, born in 1909. Jusiaičiai vil., Šiauliai County. Recorded by Darius Ramančionis, 1992.
- ⁴⁸ Recorded in Šiauliai, as told by P. Hiksas, 52 y/o. Recorded by I. Hiksaitė (1949). LLTI LTR 3116 (381). Source: *Lietuvių tautosaka. T. 4, Pasakos; Sakmės; Pasakojimai; Oracijos*. Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR. Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore; senior editor: K. Korsakas; editor: L. Sauka; material prepared by A. Seselskytė,

N. Vėlius, K. Viščinis. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1967, p. 614–615; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 163-164, No. 245.

- ⁴⁹ Recorded in Trumpaičiai Vlg., Gruzdžiai Vls., Šiauliai County, as told by T. Urbonienė. Recorded by M. Slančiauskas (1889). LLTI LTR 1208B (1510). Source: *Istoriniai padavimai* = Lithuanian historical legends: most images borrowed from K. R. Jurgėla's *History of the Lithuanian Nation*. Prepared for printing by Jonas Balys, PhD. Chicago: Lithuanian Catholic Press Society, 1949, p. 80–81, No. 78; *Šiaurės Lietuvos sakmės ir anekdotai*. Collected by Matas Slančiauskas; [prepared by Norbertas Vėlius and Ada Seselskytė; edited by Kostas Aleksynas]. Vilnius: Vaga, 1975, p. 155; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 118, No. 178.

- ⁵⁰ Recorded in Šiauliai County, as told by T. Urbonienė. Recorded by M. Slančiauskas. LLTI LTR 1208B (1513). Source: *Istoriniai padavimai* = Lithuanian historical legends: most images borrowed from K. R. Jurgėla's *History of the Lithuanian Nation*. Prepared for publication by Jonas Balys, PhD. Chicago: Lithuanian Catholic Press Society, 1949, p. 52, No. 44.

- ⁵¹ Recorded in Trumpaičiai Vlg., Gruzdžiai Vls., Šiauliai County, as told by T. Urbonienė. Recorded by M. Slančiauskas (1889). Source: *Kai milžinai gyveno: padavimai apie miestus, ežerus, kalnus, akmenis*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vytautas Kalinauskas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1969, p. 41; *Šiaurės Lietuvos sakmės ir anekdotai*. Compiled by M. Slančiauskas. Prepared by N. Vėlius and A. Seselskytė. Vilnius: Vaga, 1975, No. 252; *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyktintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 112, No. 245.

- ⁵² As told by Antanas Druktenis, born in 1924, Gailiškiai Vlg.,

Kurtuvėnai dist., Šiauliai County.

- ⁵³ As told by Juozas Urbonas, born in 1932, Pabalčiai, Šiauliai dist.
- ⁵⁴ Recorded in Šiauliai, as told by Stonys. Recorded by M. Stonys (1932). LLTI LTR 369 (27). Source: *Istoriniai padavimai* = Lithuanian historical legends: most images borrowed from K. R. Jurgėla's *History of the Lithuanian Nation*. Prepared for printing by Jonas Balys, PhD. Chicago: Lithuanian Catholic Press Society, 1949, p. 87, No. 88; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 34, No. 5.
- ⁵⁵ Source: Bronius Kviklys. *Mūsų Lietuva*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1989–1992, vol. 4, p. 479.
- ⁵⁶ Source: Bronius Kviklys. *Mūsų Lietuva*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1989–1992, vol. 4, p. 479.
- ⁵⁷ Recorded in Jonelaičiai Vlg., Kurtuvėnai Vls., Šiauliai County, as told by Žukauskienė, 50 y/o. Recorded by K. Trinkas (1930). LLTI LTR 293 (407c). Source: *Lietuvių tautosaka. T. 4, Pasakos; Sakmės; Pasakojimai; Oracijos*. Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR. Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore; senior editor: K. Korsakas; editor: L. Sauka; material prepared by A. Seselskytė, N. Vėlius, K. Viščinis. Vilnius: State Press for Political and Academic Literature (*Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla*), 1967, p. 594; *Kai milžinai gyveno: padavimai apie miestus, ežerus, kalnus, akmenis*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vytautas Kalinauskas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1969, p. 42; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 34, No. 4.
- ⁵⁸ Source: Vaitkevičius, Vyktintas. *Senosios Lietuvos šventvietės: Joniškio rajonas*. Šiauliai: [published by K. J. Vasiliasukas' Lucilijus press], 2016, p. 515.
- ⁵⁹ Recorded in Vėlaičiai Vlg., Akmenė dist., as told by O. Stepanavičienė, 60 y/o. Recorded by B. Kerbelytė (1964). LLTI LTR 3665 (912). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies*

padavimai. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyktintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 95, No. 209.

- ⁶⁰ Recorded in Giepaičiai Vlg., Akmenė dist., as told by Justė Šidlauskaitė, 60 y/o. Recorded by B. Kerbelytė (1964). LLTI 3665 (623). Source: *Lietuvių tautosaka. T. 4, Pasakos; Sakmės; Pasakojimai; Oracijos*. Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR. Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore; senior editor: K. Korsakas; editor: L. Sauka; material prepared by A. Seselskytė, N. Vėlius, K. Viščinis. Vilnius: State Press for Political and Academic Literature (*Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla*), 1967, p. 640; *Kai milžinai gyveno: padavimai apie miestus, ežerus, kalnus, akmenis*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vytautas Kalinauskas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1969, p. 42; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 124, No. 189; *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyktintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 95, 97, No. 213.

- ⁶¹ Recorded in Giepaičiai Vlg., Akmenė dist., as told by K. Lingytė, 95 y/o. Recorded by J. Saukienė, L. Sauka (1964). LLTI LTR 3665 (903). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyktintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 95, No. 211.

- ⁶² Recorded in Giepaičiai Vlg., Akmenė dist., by Antanas Karvelis, 72 y/o. Recorded by B. Kerbelytė (1964). LLTI 3665 (876). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyktintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 97, No. 214.

- ⁶³ Recorded in Vėlaičiai Vlg., Akmenė dist., as told by V. Kiudulienė, 60 y/o. Recorded by B. Kerbelytė, J. Saukienė, L. Sauka (1964). LLTI LTR 3665 (907). *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė;

- illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 97, No. 215.
- ⁶⁴ Recorded in Akmenė parish, Šiauliai County, as told by Vin. Čeputis. Recorded by A. Burba in the late 19th c. Source: *Mitteilungen der litauischen literarischen Gesellschaft*, Bd. V (2), Heidelberg, 1901, S. 198–199; *Iš gyvenimo vėlių bei velnių*. Compiled by Dr. J. Basanavičius. Chicago: turtu ir spauda „Lietuvos“, 1903, p. 174–175, No. 27; *Lietuvių tautosaka. T. 4, Pasakos; Sakmės; Pasakojimai; Oracijos*. Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR. Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore; senior editor: K. Korsakas; editor: L. Sauka; material prepared by A. Seselskytė, N. Vėlius, K. Viščinis. Vilnius: State Press for Political and Academic Literature (*Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla*), 1967, p. 639–640; *Kai milžinai gyveno: padavimai apie miestus, ežerus, kalnus, akmenis*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vytautas Kalinauskas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1969, p. 42; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 121, No. 183; *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 95, No. 210.
- ⁶⁵ Recorded in Pakempoiniai Vlg., Akmenė Vls., Mažeikiai County. as told by A. Jesaitis, 80 y/o. Recorded by Z. Lungytė (1936). LLTI LTR 935 (5). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 93, No. 207.
- ⁶⁶ LLTI LTR 1596 (147).
- ⁶⁷ LLTI LTR 2412 (24). Note: Text edited.
- ⁶⁸ LLTI LTR 4792 (12).
- ⁶⁹ LLTI LTR 4845 (53). Note: Text edited.
- ⁷⁰ LLTI LTR 2377 (19). PNote: Text edited.
- ⁷¹ LLTI LTR 4945 (271). Note: Text edited.
- ⁷² LLTI LTR 2377 (15). Note: Text edited.
- ⁷³ Recorded in Šiauliai, as told by P. Hiksas, 52 y/o. Recorded by I. Hiksaitė (1949). LLTI LTR 3116 (381). Source: *Lietuvių tautosaka. T. 4, Pasakos; Sakmės; Pasakojimai; Oracijos*. Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR. Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore; senior editor: K. Korsakas; editor: L. Sauka; material prepared by A. Seselskytė, N. Vėlius, K. Viščinis. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1967, p. 614–615; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 163–164, No. 245.
- ⁷⁴ Recorded in Vilnius, as told by Ona Sakauskienė, 83 y/o (from Žagarė). Recorded by A. Jonaitytė (1974). LLTI LTR 4927 (7). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 113, No. 248. Note: About a rock on the road from Karpėnai to Ramučiai.
- ⁷⁵ LTR 2368/679 (U. M. Skablauskaitė, 1936–1938 m.) Source: Vaitkevičius, Vykintas. *Senosios Lietuvos šventvietės: Joniškio rajonas*. Šiauliai: [published by K. J. Vasiliauskas’ Lucilijus press], 2016, p. 69.
- ⁷⁶ LLT LTR 3021 (4).
- ⁷⁷ LLTI LTR 3024 (3).
- ⁷⁸ LLTI LTR 1610 (80).
- ⁷⁹ Recorded in Gruzdziai, Šiauliai County as told by J. Jašiškis. Recorded by A. Škiudas (1936). LLTI LTR 3426 (578a). Source: *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 75–76, No. 96.
- ⁸⁰ LLTI LTR 1610 (79).
- ⁸¹ Recorded in Dilbinai Vlg., Žagarė Vls., Šiauliai County, as told by E. Melenytė, 68 y/o. Recorded by J. Marcinkus (1938). LLTI LTR 1427 (195). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 114, No. 252.
- ⁸² Recorded in Giepaičiai Vlg., Akmenė dist., as told by A.

- Žlabys, 82 y/o. Recorded by J. Saukienė, L. Sauka (1964). LLTI LTR 3665 (888). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 114, No. 253.
- ⁸³ Recorded in Puikiai vil., Žagarė dist., Joniškis dist., as told by J. Deimantienė, 67 y/o. Recorded by A. Antanaitis (1967). LLTI LTR 5083 (124). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 114, No. 254. Note: On Žagarė Hillfort, Raktuvė Hill.
- ⁸⁴ Recorded in Grodno. Recorded by A. Burba (from memory) (1888). Source: *Latwju Tauta*, 1898, p. 573; *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 115, No. 256.
- ⁸⁵ As told by Valerija Kundrotaitytė-Zeleckienė, born in 1918, Daunoriškė Vlg. Recorded by Edita Budrytė and Indrė Galiauskaitė during an expedition in the environs of Daunorava in 2000. Transcribed by Janina Švambarytė-Valužienė (2017).) Note: Text edited.
- ⁸⁶ Tale told by locals to Julė Vičienė, born in 1912, residing in Kalnelis Vlg., Joniškis dist. Recorded by 9th year student at the Žeimelis Secondary School, Romas Platbarzdis (1970). Source: Šliavas, Juozas. *Žiemgalių pėdsakais*. Ed.: A. Bėčius (secretary-in-chief) ... [et al.]. Vilnius: Žiemgala, 1996, p. 99–100.
- ⁸⁷ LLTI LTR 619 (46).
- ⁸⁸ LLTI LTR 3087 (19).
- ⁸⁹ LLTI LTR 3087 (43).
- ⁹⁰ Recorded in Naujamiestis Parish, Panevėžys County. Recorded by J. Paulukaitis (1916). LLTI LMD I 502 (15). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 101, No. 224. Note: People say that in

the Rozalimas cemetery, a masonry chapel was built over a piece of the sacred Zigmantiškiai rock; however, this fact is unverified.

- ⁹¹ Recorded in Rozalimas, Panevėžys dist., as told by Vyskupaitienė. Recorded by E. Vyskupaitytė (1925). LLTI 614 (48a). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 103, No. 226.
- ⁹² U Recorded in Naujamiestis Parish, Panevėžys County. Recorded by J. Paulukaitis (1916). LLTI LMD I 502 (15a). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 101, 103, No. 225.
- ⁹³ Recorded in Trumpaičiai Vlg., Gruzdziai Vls., Šiauliai County, as told by P. Ratkus. Recorded by M. Slančiauskas in 1893. LLTI LMD I 561 (229). Source: *Lietuvių liaudies sakmės* = Lithuanian folk legends. T. 1. Compiled by J. Balys. Kaunas: Lithuanian Folklore Archive of the A. S. Institute of Lithuanian Studies, 1940, p. 222, No. 495; *Lietuvių tautosaka. T. 4, Pasakos; Sakmės; Pasakojimai; Oracijos*. Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR. Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore; senior editor: K. Korsakas; editor: L. Sauka; material prepared by A. Seselskytė, N. Vėlius, K. Viščinis. Vilnius: State Press for Political and Academic Literature, 1967, p. 600, No. 638; *Šiaurės Lietuvos sakmės ir anekdotai*. Collected by Matas Slančiauskas; [prepared by Norbertas Vėlius and Ada Seselskytė; edited by Kostas Aleksynas]. Vilnius: Vaga, 1975, p. 202, No. 346; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidas Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 50, No. 42; *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vykintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 115, No. 257. Note: The tale seems to be about the mythological rock of Butėliškis or Liesai.

- ⁹⁴ LLTI LTR 3085 (118).
- ⁹⁵ LLTI LTR 2079 (165).
- ⁹⁶ LLTI LTR 3087 (21).
- ⁹⁷ As told by A. Punkrytė, 18 y/o. Recorded by N. Sapožnikovaitė (1936). LTR 888c (800). Source: *Lietuvių tautosaka. Pasakos; Sakmės; Pasakojimai; Oracijos*. Vol 4. Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR. Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore; senior editor: K. Korsakas; editor: L. Sauka; material prepared by A. Seselskytė, N. Vėlius, K. Viščinis. Vilnius: State Press for Political and Academic Literature, 1967, p. 615; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidan Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 164, No. 247.
- ⁹⁸ LLTI LTR 1828 (147).
- ⁹⁹ Recorded in Baisogala Vls., Kėdainiai County. Recorded by J. Jurevičius (1930). LLTI LTR 270 (2). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyckintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 101, No. 223. Note: The tale is about the Devil Stone of Valatkoniai Forest (Radviliškis dist.).
- ¹⁰⁰ LLTI LTR 3085 (128).
- ¹⁰¹ Recorded in Valatkoniai Vlg., Baisogala Vls., Kėdainiai County, as told by V. Žeromskis. Recorded by Vl. Žeromskis 1929. LLTI LTR 520 (1). Source: *Lietuvių liaudies sakmės* = Lithuanian folk legends. Vol. 1. Compiled by J. Balys. Kaunas: Lithuanian Folklore Archive of the A. S. Institute of Lithuanian Studies, 1940, p. 222, No. 496.
- ¹⁰² Recorded in Valatkoniai Vlg., Baisogala Vls., Kėdainiai County, as told by K. Zubas. Recorded by Vl. Žeromskis (1929). LLTI LTR 520 (1). Source: *Lietuvių liaudies sakmės* = Lithuanian folk legends. Vol. 1. Compiled by J. Balys. Kaunas: Lithuanian Folklore Archive of the A. S. Institute of Lithuanian Studies, 1940, p. 22, No. 497.
- ¹⁰³ Source: *Kai milžinai gyveno: padavimai apie miestus, ežerus, kalnus, akmenis*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vytautas Kalinauskas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1969, p. 44.
- ¹⁰⁴ Source: *Kai milžinai gyveno: padavimai apie miestus, ežerus, kalnus, akmenis*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vytautas Kalinauskas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1969, p. 44–45.
- ¹⁰⁵ Source: *Kai milžinai gyveno: padavimai apie miestus, ežerus, kalnus, akmenis*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vytautas Kalinauskas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1969, p. 45.
- ¹⁰⁶ Recorded in Pakalniškiai Vlg., Šėduva Vls., Panevėžys County. Recorded by S. Alksnis. LLTI LTR 3098 (264). Source: *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidan Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 52, No. 48.
- ¹⁰⁷ LLTI LTR 3101 (100).
- ¹⁰⁸ LLTI LTR 1828 (155).
- ¹⁰⁹ LLTI LTR 3085 (116).
- ¹¹⁰ LLTI LTR 3087 (30).
- ¹¹¹ LLTI LTR 3098 (297).
- ¹¹² Recorded in Tyrolkai Vlg., Padubysis Vls. and county Recorded by E. Božytė (1935). Institute of the Lithuanian Language, Name Archive LZV 1386. Source: *Istoriniai padavimai* = Lithuanian historical legends: most images borrowed from K. R. Jurgėla's *History of the Lithuanian Nation*. Prepared for printing by Jonas Balys, PhD. Chicago: Lithuanian Catholic Press Society, 1949, p. 86, No. 87; *Ežeras ant milžino delno: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Norbertas Vėlius; illustrated by Aidan Paberžis. Vilnius: Mintis, 1995, p. 68, No. 78.
- ¹¹³ LLTI LTR 768 (167).
- ¹¹⁴ Recorded by Balys Buračas (1935). Placename Archive of the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, transcription from the Lithuanian Placename Survey, VAK, f. 1, b. 74, p. 516.
- ¹¹⁵ Source: Kviklys, Bronius. *Mūsų Lietuva*. Vol. 3. Vilnius: Mintis, 1991, p. 608.
- ¹¹⁶ Source: Kšivickis, Liudvikas. *Žemaičių senovė*. Kaunas–Marijampolė, 1928, p. 14–15.
- ¹¹⁷ Recorded in Šiaulėnai, Šiauliai County, as told by Grebliauskas. Recorded by V. Mikalčius. LLTI LTR 851 (6). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyckintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 104, No. 228.
- ¹¹⁸ Recorded in Toleikiškiai Vlg., Šiauliai County, as told by S. Teišerskis. Recorded by Mečislovas Davainis-Silvestraitis. Source: *Podania źmujdskie*, zebrał i dosłownie spolszył M. Dowojna-Sylwestrowicz. Warszawa, 1894, cz. 1, p. 227. Text translated into Polish; original text unknown. Published fragment; the remaining text is about giants' graves; *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyckintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 104, No. 229.
- ¹¹⁹ LLTI LTR 1934 (32).
- ¹²⁰ LLTI LTR 4791 (389). Note: Text edited.
- ¹²¹ LLTI LMD I 385(3). Note: Text edited.
- ¹²² LLTI LTR 4793 (227).
- ¹²³ Recorded in Volungiai Vlg., Kelmė dist., as told by P. Bumbliauskienė, 57 y/o. Recorded by J. Kavaliauskas (1976). LLTI 4788 (221). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyckintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 91, No. 203.
- ¹²⁴ Recorded in Dangvietai Vlg., Užventis dist., Kelmė dist., as told by Žebrauskienė, 80 y/o. Recorded by S. Šimkevičiūtė, D. Grošytė, transcribed by K. Viščinis (1976). LLTI LTR 4787 (38). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyckintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 91, No. 204.
- ¹²⁵ LLTI LTR 1934 (34).
- ¹²⁶ LLTI LTR 3116 (1068).
- ¹²⁷ LLTI LTR 3665 (1304).
- ¹²⁸ LLTI LTR 1172 (8).
- ¹²⁹ LLTI LTR 4794 (144). Note: Text edited.
- ¹³⁰ LLTI LTR 4942 (255). Note: Text edited.
- ¹³¹ LLTI LMD III 92(1). Note: Text edited.
- ¹³² LLTI LTR 1782 (269).
- ¹³³ LLTI LTR 1782 (82).
- ¹³⁴ Recorded by L. Kšivickis in the late 19th c. Source: Л. О. Крживицкий. „Жмудские пилкаписы“. In: *Известия Императорской археологической комиссии*, выпуск 29 (1909), p. 86; Kai milžinai gyveno: padavimai apie miestus, ežerus, kalnus, akmenis. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vytautas Kalinauskas. Vilnius: Vaga, 1969, p. 38; *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyckintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 91, No. 205. Note: Text recorded in Russian.
- ¹³⁵ LLTI LTR 4791 (275). Note: Text edited and abridged.
- ¹³⁶ Recorded in Girkalnis, as told by D. Simanavičiūtė. Recorded by J. Dovydaitis (1932). LLTI LTR 462 (199). Source: *Istoriniai padavimai* = Lithuanian historical legends: most images borrowed from K. R. Jurgėla's *History of the Lithuanian Nation*. Prepared for printing by Jonas Balys, PhD. Chicago: Lithuanian Catholic Press Society, 1949, p. 67–68, No. 61.
- ¹³⁷ LLTI LTR 1322 (17).
- ¹³⁸ LLTI LTR 4791 (262). Note: Text edited.
- ¹³⁹ LLTI LTR 4945 (203). Note: Text edited.
- ¹⁴⁰ LLTI LTR 4793 (299). Note: Text edited.
- ¹⁴¹ LLTI LTR 4092 (170).
- ¹⁴² LLTI LTR 4162 (154).
- ¹⁴³ LLTI LTR 6167 (166).
- ¹⁴⁴ LLTI LTR 6167 (167). Note: Text edited.
- ¹⁴⁵ Recorded in Orelškės Vlg., Kražiai dist., Kelmė dist. as told by J. Daškevičius, 69 y/o. E. Kilikevičiūtė, V. Žvikaitė (1976). LLTI LTR 4791 (371); LTRF 1881 (13). Source: *Žemės atmintis: lietuvių liaudies padavimai*. Compiled by Bronislava Kerbelytė; illustrated by Vyckintas Vaitkevičius. Vilnius: Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, 1999, p. 90, No. 201. Note: The story is likely about medieval fortifications in a place referred to as Daugviere by locals.

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