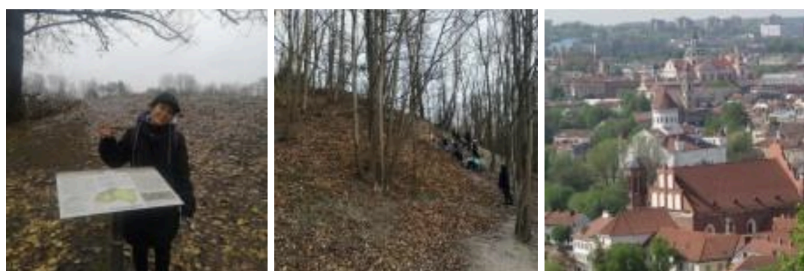
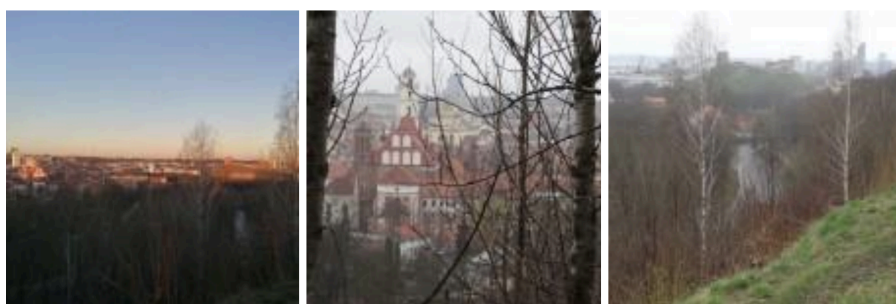


Visit Hill Park. Part III

When the **second uprising against Tsarist rule** began in Lithuania and Poland in 1863, the fortress remained on combat alert until 1865. After the uprising was suppressed, the Vilnius Fortress lost its military significance, and in 1878 it was ordered to be demolished. As Kaunas was the westernmost strategically important city of the Russian Empire, in 1879 Emperor Alexander II approved the military leadership's proposal to build a military fortress in Kaunas and turn the city into a defensive stronghold against the growing threat of an attack by Germany. From 1890, Kaunas was surrounded by eight forts and nine artillery batteries. More about the Kaunas Fortress.



In 2009, **the site of the former Bekešas Hill** was marked with a carved wooden obelisk dedicated to the memory of Kaspar Bekešas. It was created by folk artist Rimantas Zinkevičius on the initiative of the Lithuanian-Hungarian Friendship Cultural Association. The shape of the obelisk was chosen because this is a traditional monument marking soldiers' graves in Transylvania, the region from which Kaspar Bekešas originated. The famous 16th-century military commander Kaspar Bekešas was buried on the slope of this hill in 1579, and a 20-metre-high octagonal monument was erected over his grave. This monument, together with the southwestern slope of Bekešas Hill, slid into the Vilnia River in the 19th century. The former name of Bekešas Hill was later transferred to the nearby elevation, which should actually be called Altana Hill.



Altana Hill: Altana Hill, also known as Bekešas Hill, is best reached from the Krivių Street side, starting from the courtyard of Užupis Gymnasium. From Altana Hill, look for the point from which as many as six churches line up one behind another along a single axis: the Bernardine Church, St Anne's Church, St Michael's Church, the Church of St Johns, the Church of the Holy Spirit and St Catherine's Church. If viewed from the south, from the direction of the railway, these churches would appear against the outline of a parabolic hill, with the bell tower of St Johns' Church at its highest point – the tallest tower in the Old Town. Altana Hill received its name from a small octagonal structure, an altana, which Vilnius

resident Melanija Dluska built illegally around 1933. In Italian, altano refers to a rooftop terrace or a gazebo. This altana was intended for growing fruit and exotic plants. Abandoned and covered in graffiti, the altana still stands today. During archaeological excavations in 1989, human burials were discovered at the southern edge of the hill. It is believed that until the middle of the 17th century there was a cemetery here where victims of the war of 1655 were buried in large numbers.

Hill Park Management Project: In 2019, a management project was prepared for the territory of Hill Park within the Vilnius Castles State Cultural Reserve. The aim of the project is to adapt Hill Park for better and safer visitation and use. A suspended pedestrian bridge with a viewing platform was designed to connect the slopes of the Great Ravine. The bridge will provide easier access to the Song Festival Grounds from Olandų and Kriviu Streets and will be accessible to people with disabilities. The project is funded by state and European Union funds. In July and October 2019, public discussions about the project were held, and a considerable number of comments from local residents were received. Among the suggestions were to cut down as few trees as possible and to reduce the number of unpaved paths.

Former Military Town: As you enter Hill Park from Olandų Street, the area of the former military town can be seen on the right, behind the concrete fence. Most recently, a branch of the Vytautas the Great War Museum operated here. A new study campus of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre is planned for this site. It will consist of teaching buildings, a block of halls, a library, a film studio and a dormitory. The project is headed by National Prize laureate R. Palekas. Nearby, on T. Kosciuškos Street, are the M. K. Čiurlionis School of Arts and the B. Dvarionas Music School.