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**THE KINGDOM OF HADES—AT THE JUNCTION OF RIVERS KOLA AND TULOMA
(CONTINUING TO EXPLORE THE HOMERIC HERITAGE AT THE KOLA PENINSULA)**

• original in the English language:

<https://new-etymology.livejournal.com/1475827.html>

• in the Russian language:

ГОРОД КОЛА – ГОМЕРОВСКОЕ МЕСТО ЦАРСТВА АИДА

<https://new-etymology.livejournal.com/1475475.html>

In his studies *The Nordic Origins of the Odyssey and the Iliad: the Migration of Myth*, Felice Vinci provides convincing evidence of the location of the kingdom of Hades in the Lappish Arctic: the eternal darkness that pursues Homer's Cimmerians, clearly related to the period of polar winter in the Far North; coincidences in geographical descriptions by Homer, Jordanes and Saxo Grammaticus; the extraordinary similarity of the Lappish shamanic rituals of summoning the souls of the dead and the algorithms that the sorceress Circe shares with Ulysses, when sending him to the Underworld entrance point.

Felice Vinci, however, is not entirely sure of the exact location described by Homer. In the initial publication, Felice Vinci associated the River Styx with an ancient river waterway from the White Sea to the Gulf of Bothnia. According to this old hypothesis, Ulysses had to make a long journey, starting from the island of Circe in the far north of Norway, sail around the entire Kola Peninsula and reach Kandalaksha, the supposed entrance to the River Styx. In the updated version of his study, however, Vinci moved the point to which Circe directed Ulysses – to the sacred 35-meter-high rock of *Simalango* at the intersection of the fjords *Burfjorden* and *Jøkelfjorden* in northwestern Norway, associating these fjords with “two roaring rivers confluent near a rock”:

*Go to the rotten home of Hades,
here the Pyriphlegethon¹ flows into the Acheron
with the Cocytus², which flows from the water of the Styx³
and there is a rock at the confluence of the two noisy rivers. (Odyssey 10.512-515)*

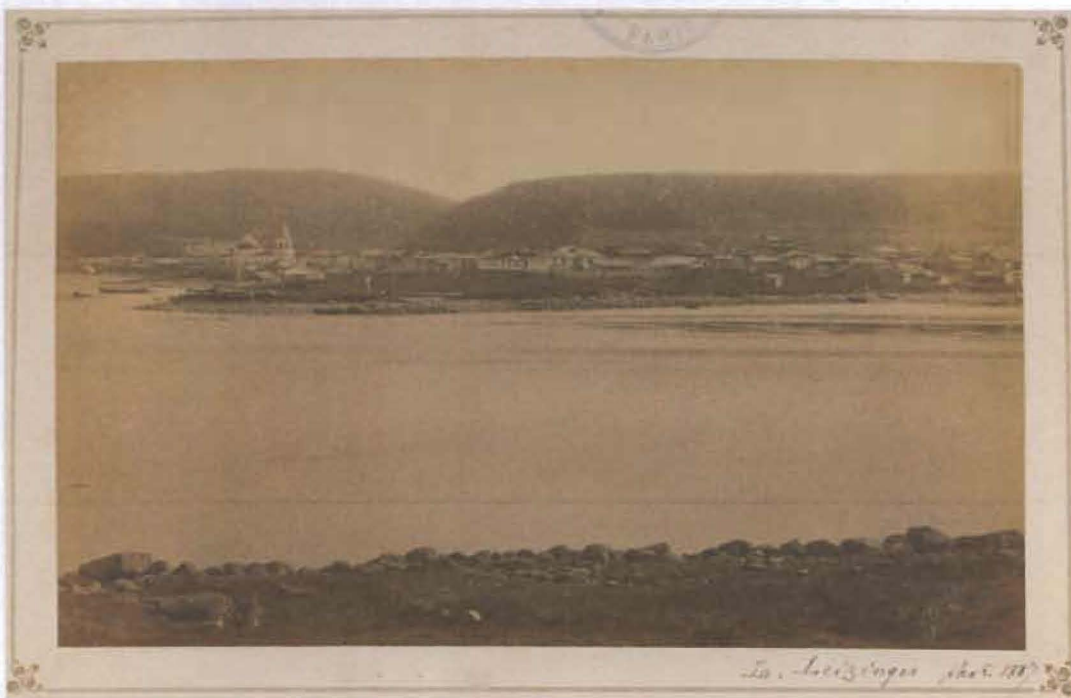
During the translation of Felice Vinci's study into Russian, we repeatedly searched the map of the entire coast of Norway and the Kola Peninsula, browsing it up and down, looking for an alternative place where two distinct large rivers would merge by a noticeable cliff, until we found it... very close to the present-day city of Murmansk. **In between the estuaries of two mighty rivers, Tuloma and Kola, when their waters join and simultaneously flow into the long Kola Bay, there rises the famous 80-meter tall cliff of Suolovarra** (and beneath it, on a lowland cape formed by these two rivers, there stands the ancient port and fortress of Kola).



¹ Greek *Phlegethon*, or *Pyriphlegethon* – literally, the ‘fiery’ river.

² Greek *Cocytus* – the river of ‘weeping’.

³ Greek *Styx* – the river of the ‘dead’.



In between the estuaries of two mighty rivers, *Tuloma* and *Kola*, when their waters join and simultaneously flow into the long *Kola Bay*, there rises the famous 80-meter tall cliff of *Suolovarra* (and beneath it, on a lowland cape formed by these two rivers, there stands the ancient port and fortress of *Kola*).

The Five Rivers of the Kingdom of Hades on the Kola Peninsula

☑ ***Tuloma*** river (Lappish *Tuållâmjokk*, *Tuellam* yogk) is perhaps a ‘tracing’ name for the river ***Phlegethon***, or *Pyriphlegethon*, literally “the fiery river” in Greek. Compare to the Lappish *dolla*, Karelian, Finnish *tuli*, Estonian *tuli*, gen. *tule*, Livonian *tu’l*, Vepssian *tuli*, *tu’l*, Erzia, Moksha *tol*, Udmurt *tjl*, *tyl*, Mari *tul* – “fire”. Compare also to Sumerian [*dal*] – “fire”.⁴

☑ ***Kola*** river (Lappish *Kuollāk*, Finnish: *Kuola*, *Kuolla*) – possibly the river of the “dead”, the legendary ***Styx***. Compare to Mansi *χōli-*, Khanty *χāl-*, Udmurt *kulij*, Erzia *kuloms*, Mari *kolaš*, Finnish *kuolla*, Estonian *koolma*, Livonian *kūolō* – “to die”; Komi-Permian *kolny* – “to leave, to abandon”; Lappish: *goalus*, Karelian *kolo*, *kolie*, Finnish *kolea*, Estonian *kole*, Livonian *kō’l* – “terrible, gloomy, horrible, monstrous”.

This same lexical stem is observed in the ancient languages of the south: in Hungarian *halál* – means “death”; in Sumerian [*hal-*] – “to leave, go away”; in Hebrew כלה [*kala-*] – “to end, finish, perish, die, collapse, fade away, disappear”; in Sanskrit [*kala*] – “death from old age”; in Persian [*gālid*] – “to run away, escape”; in Ingush language in Caucasus *к’айладала* [*k’ayladala*] – “to disappear, dive”; in Greek [*khaláo*] – “to dive, get drown in waters”.

The name of the river of *Kola* is usually etymologized as a “fishy” river, with comparisons made to the Lappish *guolli*, Khanty-Mansi *χul*, Nganasan *kolj*, Finnish, Estonian, Karelian *kala*, Mari *kol* – “a fish”. It should be understood, nevertheless, that fish are the creatures of the Neither World in ancient mythologies, and, accordingly, their name in Finno-Ugric languages bears the same lexical stem as words with the meanings of “death” and “fear”, of “diving into the waters / getting to the Underworld”.⁵

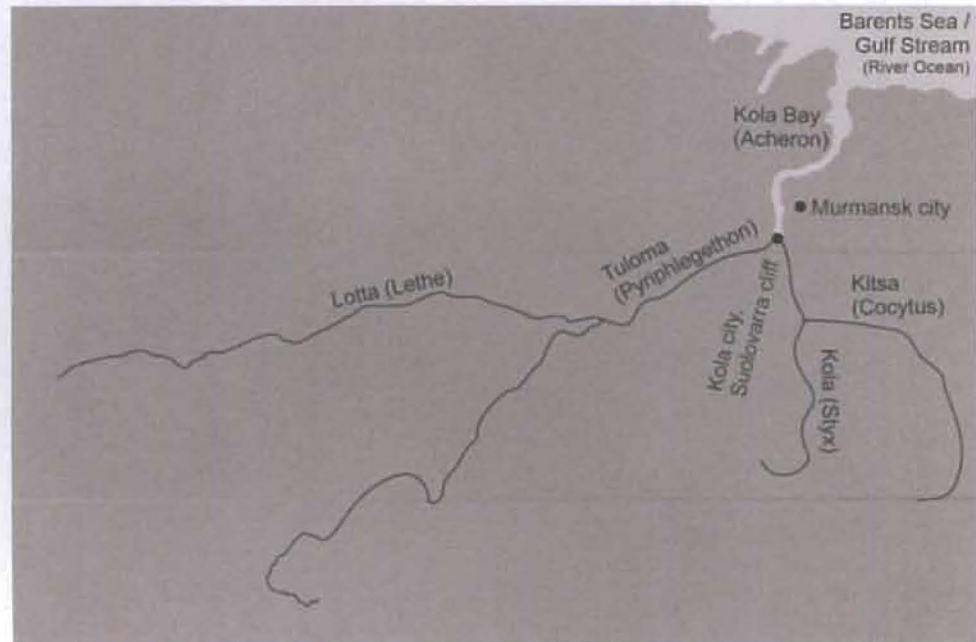
⁴ See <https://eesti-keel.livejournal.com/254828.html>

⁵ See <https://anti-fasmer.livejournal.com/299974.html>

☑ *Kitsa*, the largest tributary of *Kola* river, probably corresponds to *Cocytus*, the “river of tears”. According to confusing translations of Homer’s text, *Cocytus* is “the great branch of the Styx”. A branch is not a tributary, but a river flow that branches off and then rejoins; however, river branches rarely have a separate name. The Greek word used is ἀπορρώξ, “tearing off” (from the verb meaning “to tear, rip, break off”), which is more correct to translate as “the tributary” rather than “the branch”. Also, according to Hesiod, *Cocytus* flowed into the *Styx* (similar to how the *Kitsa* river flows into the *Kola* river).

☑ In this northern geographic reality it is also easy to identify *Acheron*, the river formed by the confluence of the *Phlegethon* (*Tuloma*) and the *Styx* (*Kola*) – this is the long narrow *Kola Bay* leading directly to the Barents Sea, the ending part of Gulf Stream (River Ocean).

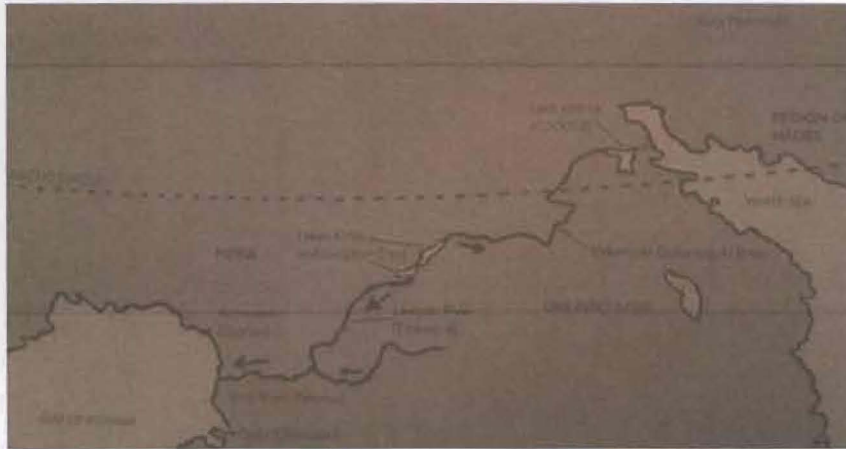
☑ The fifth of the five rivers of the kingdom of Hades, *Lethe*, the “river of oblivion,” is also identifiable in the Tuloma and Kola river basin. *Lethe* is probably the river of *Lotta* (Finnish: *Lutto joki*), the 235-kilometer-long largest tributary of Tuloma.



Unlike the five rivers on the Kola Peninsula, the two rivers in Greece (Ἀχέρων, *Acheron* and its tributary Κόκυτος, *Cocytus*) do not correspond to the descriptions in Greek mythology. In the Mediterranean geographic reality, *Phlegethon* is missing, and, accordingly, there is no confluence of two powerful rivers at the mouth of *Acheron*, contrary to what *Odyssey* tells us. In Greece it is also not possible to identify the high cliff, to which *Circe* leads *Ulysses*. And in Greece the rivers *Styx* and *Lethe* are not ‘materialized’ either.

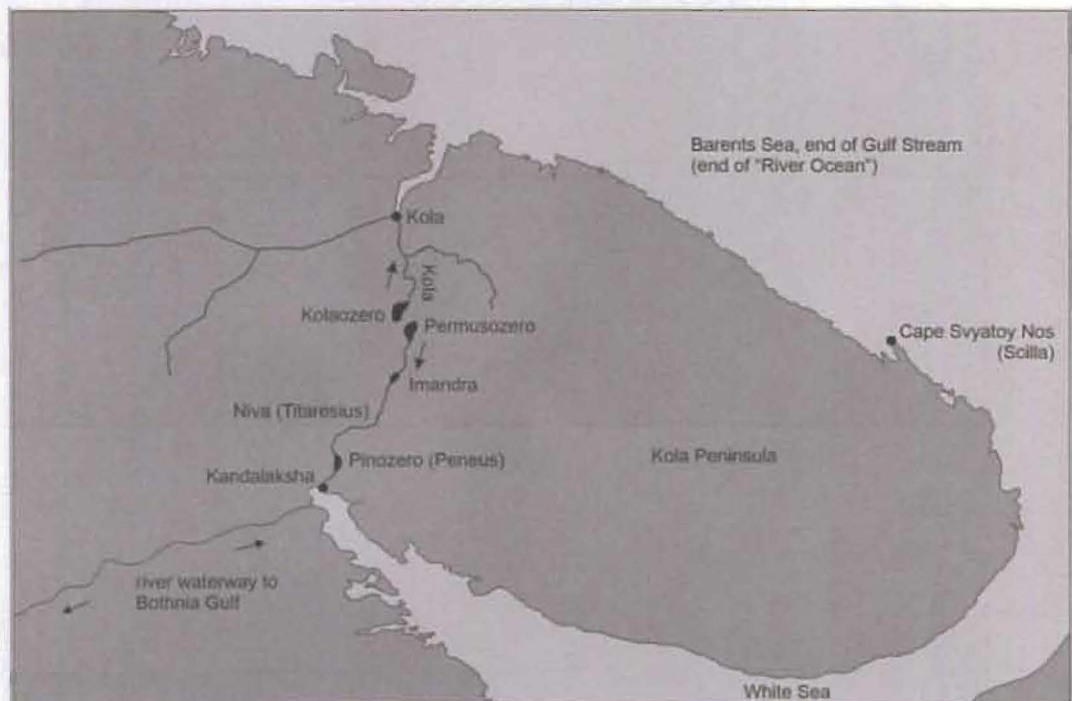
The second descent from the 'overflowing Styx'

In the early version of his study, Felice Vinci emphasized that the *Iliad* (2.749-755) gives an indication of the existence of a "second descent" from the "overflowing Styx" – and Felice Vinci connected the "river Styx" with the river waterway connecting Kandalaksha on the White Sea – and the Gulf of Bothnia:



It is noteworthy that the "Styx waters" of Kola river also have a "second descent". From the upper reaches of Kola, one can get to both the *Kola Bay of the Barents Sea* and the *Kandalaksha Bay of the White Sea*: the source lake of the Kola river (*Kolaozero*) is separated by less than a kilometer-wide isthmus (perhaps, a place of an ancient ship portage) from lake *Permusozero*. The latter descends into lake *Imandra*, from which, in turn, the *Niva* river flows south into the *Kandalaksha Bay*.

The *Iliad* also provides the names of two rivers of the "second descent" – in particular the river *Titaresius* (possibly now known as *Niva*), "a tributary of the river *Peneus*". It is noteworthy that in its lower reaches the *Niva* passes through the lake *Pinozero* (with an area of 14 km²), which may correspond to the Homeric *Peneus*:



The route from Circe's realm to the kingdom of Hades

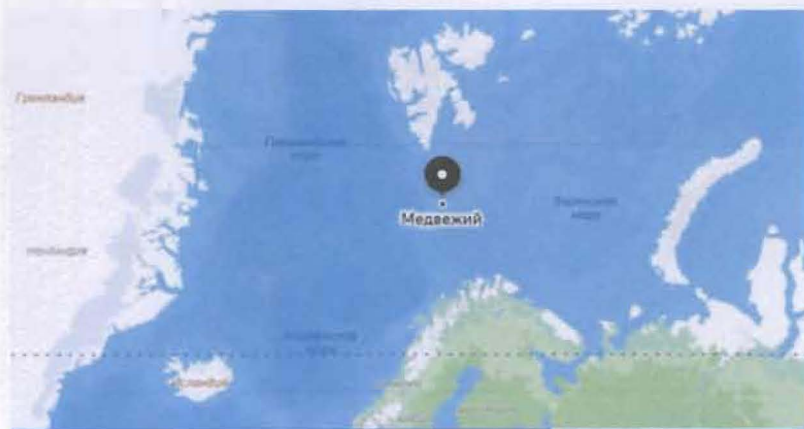
Where did the island of Circe then locate?

The sorceress Circe directs Ulysses from her distant island of *Aeaea* (according to Felice Vinci, in initial version, the island of *Håja* in the far north of Norway; in the latest update in Italian language, '*I Segreti di Omero nel Baltico*', – the island of *Sørøya* in the far north of Norway), to the kingdom of Hades as follows:

*...raise the mast, spread out your white sail, and just take your seat,
And then the breath of North Wind Boreas will take you on your way.
But once your ship has crossed River Ocean, drag it ashore
on the level beach (Odyssey 10.506–509)*

Thus, Circe directs Ulysses with the North Wind to the south, *across the River Ocean* (the *Gulf Stream*) to the *Kola Bay (Acheron)*, which is elongated like a river. At the end of the latter, at the confluence of the rivers of *Kola (Styx)* and *Tuloma (Phlegethon)*, there are low level beaches (formed by the two rivers' sediments), under the 80-meter tall cliff of *Suolovarra*.

In the Norwegian language, *øya* is any island (and the second part in many island names). If Homer's *Aeaea* lay north of the *River Ocean* (the *Gulf Stream*), it could as well be, for example, the remote *Bjørnøya* ("the Bear Island") halfway between the far north of Norway and the Svalbard (Spitzbergen) archipelago:



An ancient settlement near the cliff mentioned by Homer

A convenient place with low banks at the confluence of the rivers of *Kola* (*Styx*) and *Tuloma* (*Phlegethon*) has been a historic settlement since ancient times, first of fishermen and whalers, then it served as a trading port and a site for a military fort (the major stronghold in the Kola peninsula). The first written mentions of the Kola fortress at the mouth of the Kola river date back to the 13th century – but most likely the settlement itself existed long before then.

On some old maps, the name *Kola* was confusingly assigned to river of Tuloma.

Also, the *Kola* fort and its port were so important that the name later spread to the entire *Kola Peninsula*.



map of 1598

And could it be that Homer tells us precisely of the town of Kola in the following verses?

*... where there are the Cimmerians and their city,
shrouded in fog and clouds. (Odyssey 11.13–14)*

Summoning the souls of the dead

It is likely that it was at this very place, on the cape at the confluence of the rivers of *Phlegethon* (*Tuloma*) and *Styx* (*Kola*), at the foot of the prominent cliff of *Suolovarra*, that the sorceress Circe instructed Ulysses to make a sacrifice in order to summon the souls of the dead for communication:

*When you, hero, land there, as I tell you; under the cliff
dig a pit one cubit long and wide,
and around it pour out the libation for all the dead... (Odyssey 10.516-518)*

The name of the cliff *Suolovarra* (*Suolovara*, *Solovaraka*) is usually translated as “mountain island”, due to the fact that it stands separately and differs from other hills and mountains in this area. The Lappish *suolu*, Finnish, Karelian *salo* means “wilderness, dense forest; large forested island”⁶; the Lappish *varr*, *varre*, Finnish *vuori*, *vaara* means “mountain, hill, elevation”.⁷

It is also worth considering such explanations for the first part of the name as:

- Lappish *suoli*, Karelian, Estonian, Finnish *sala*, Livonian *salā* – adjective with a meaning “secret, covert”,⁸ or
- Finnish *sielu*, Old Norse *sala* – English *soul*;⁹ or
- Finnish *säiliö* – “a reservoir, receptacle”; Karelian *säilyö*, Finnish *säilyä*, Estonian *säilima* – “to persist, be held, get preserved, survive, remain”.¹⁰

The same first lexical stem is also observed in the name of the sanctuary *Solovetsky Archipelago* (*Solovki*) in the White Sea.

Could *Suolovarra* mean a mountain of “mysteries ~ cult rites”? or a mountain of “souls” of the deceased? or “a receptacle, shelter, refuge”? If we consider that Ulysses comes here to perform a sacrament, and summon the souls of his deceased relatives and military comrades, the puzzle comes closer and closer together.

⁶ Cm. <https://eesti-keel.livejournal.com/170997.html>

⁷ Cm. <https://eesti-keel.livejournal.com/189699.html>

⁸ Cm. <https://eesti-keel.livejournal.com/170997.html>

⁹ Cm. <https://new-etymology.livejournal.com/21645.html>

¹⁰ Cm. <https://anti-fasmer.livejournal.com/93439.html>



As Felice Vinci points out, “the archaic rites connected to the journey to Hades’ home, told by a “shamanistic” character such as Circe, could be the meeting point between very ancient forms, perhaps dating back even to Neolithic rites. The “descent into Hell” is a typically shamanistic theme: Mircea Eliade writes that, according to Altaic shamans, it occurs by passing through “a hole which is the entrance of the other world, called *yer mesi* [earth’s jaws],” while the Indian Tuanas “make a hole in the ground (...) and mime forcefully the fight with the ghosts”.¹¹ This is echoed by the attitude of Ulysses, who repeatedly menaces with his sword the ghosts gathered around the pit (*Odyssey* 10.536; 11.49, 95, 231)”.

In this vein, it is interesting to think of the name *Hades* (Greek Ἅδης) used for “Hell, Underworld, Underground kingdom of the Dead”; “Lord of the Underworld”. Like many other ancient terms, word Hades is considered to be a “word of unknown origin”¹². If Hades is localized, however, in the far north, it is worth referring to the lexicon which was used in the north. E.g., compare *Hades* to Estonian *haud*, Karelian *haudu*, Finnish *hauta*, Livonian *õda* – which meant “a hole; a pit; a grave; also a deep place on a river or on a sea”. Also in the Yaroslavl, Kostroma and Vologda north-western Russian dialects the word *ad* (*að*, *aðʲ*), in addition to “the Underworld”, also had a meaning of “a mouth; jaws; a throat”.¹³

There are more and more parallels and facts testifying to the northern ancestral home of the Mediterranean civilization and Greek mythology and culture. Also, the place of the entrance to the Kingdom of Hades and its five rivers, becomes clearly identifiable at the Kola Peninsula, unlike in the Mediterranean geography.

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¹¹ Eliade, Mircea, *Lo sciamanismo e le tecniche dell'estasi*, Rome 1983 (*Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, London 1989), p. 335.

¹² 'of unknown origin': <https://www.etymonline.com/word/hades>

¹³ Cm. <https://anti-fasmer.livejournal.com/368544.html>