

## THE NAMES OF THE RIVER

River Hiitolanjoki or River Kokkolanjoki? It is not entirely unknown for a river to have two names: for example, the river that flows through Riga in Latvia is called both *Väinä* and *Daugava*. The names of rivers are generally very old, and it is therefore possible that linguistic influence, layers of settlement and the various reasons for naming rivers do indeed result in different names as the years go by.

Originally, *Asilanjoki* was the name used for the last section of this river which discharges itself into Lake Ladoga. It is also worth noting that at least two of the rapids of the river have been known under two different names:

*Toikankoski/Röksänköske* and *Sahakoski/Ivankoski*.

The name *Hiitolanjoki* refers to the former parish of **Hiitola**, whose name is still used for the present-day station village of Hiitola situated in the Republic of Karelia on the Russian side of the border. *Hiitola* (< *hiisi* – the Devil) also appears as a mythical place name in Finnish folklore. The name *Hiitolanjoki* is found in maps and other written material and was used at least up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent times, this name has become more widespread.

The name *Kokkolanjoki* on the other hand is older than *Hiitolanjoki* and is more favoured in local popular use. This name derives from the depopulated village of **Kokkola** (Upper and Lower Kokkola) which is situated on the lower reaches of the river. Located in the agriculturally fertile area consisting of clay soil and on an advantageous water route, the region surrounding Kokkola was a site of early settlement. Thus, the indisputable fact that the name *Kokkolanjoki* is also established on the upper reaches of the river serves as a proof that settlements spread upstream of the river.