

## The Relationship between River Names and Valley Names in Norway

*Botolv Helleland*

DOI: 10.2436/15.8040.01.185

### Abstract

The author discusses the relationship between river names and valley names, based on material mainly from western Norway. Rivers are a predominant feature of the landscape, and most of them were given names in the earliest period, while the valleys by and large have younger names and were often named in relation to the rivers flowing through them. Many of the valley names contain river names in the first element that are no longer in use, e.g. Lærdal, leading to the development of a secondary, younger name, using the valley name as the first element, in this case Lærdalselva. A form characteristic of the old river names is that they are non-compounds, and are constructed as strong or weak feminine  $\bar{o}$ -/ $\bar{on}$ -formations, for example Venda < \*Vend- $\bar{o}n$ , cf. vend-‘turn’.

\*\*\*\*\*

### 1. Introduction

It is reasonable to assume that Norway is especially well known for its fjords, among others, Hardangerfjorden, Sognefjorden, and Nærøyfjorden, the last one being a branch of the larger Sognefjorden. UNESCO has now included the West Norwegian fjords, exemplified by Nærøyfjorden, on the renowned World Heritage List.



Figure 1. Nærøyfjorden, a branch of Sognefjorden.

In this paper, however, I will concentrate on the valleys and the rivers, or rather on the names of those topographical features, and consider to what extent they are interrelated. If one looks in the interior of the country beyond the coastal line, a mountainous landscape with an abundance of valleys, rivers, waterfalls, and lakes will meet the eye. This landscape has been shaped by several ice ages, mostly by the last one that ended about 10,000 years ago. As the ice glided slowly in the direction of the sea, it dug out the main valleys, and in this process it was helped by water. After the ice age the water continued to deepen the valleys. According to the shape of the valleys, geologists distinguish between U-valleys, primarily shaped by the ice, and younger V-valleys which have been dug out mainly by the water. In south-eastern Norway, the direction of the valleys is predominantly north-south, whereas in the west and

north the valleys have mostly an east-west direction. The name material which will be discussed in this paper has been sampled from various parts of Southern Norway, especially from the province of Hordaland (see map).



Southern Norway. Fjord and river contours  
Base map Norwegian Mapping Authority

**Figure 2.** Map of Southern Norway. Norwegian Mapping Authority ([cc-by-sa-3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)).

## 2. Rivers and valleys and their names

Normally the term ‘river name’ is used about names of flowing water of a certain size, but also names of smaller streams and brooklets may be included, as the name typology is more or less the same. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine how many river names there are in Norway, as all the names have not yet been registered or collected. The same applies to names of valleys. As a rule, even minor types of running water tend to be named if they are close to settlements, in particular if there is only one or very few of them (cf. Gelling & Cole, 2000: 1 f.). A pragmatic solution is to consult the Central Place-Name Register (SSR) established by the Norwegian Mapping Authority. This register contains 8,190 features defined as ‘river’, and 26,280 features defined as minor watercourses like brooks, brooklets, creeks, etc. In addition, 2,111 features are defined as waterfalls and rapids. Altogether then, there are 36,581 names of different watercourse types, all based on name material taken from the various official map series. This means that only watercourses which happen to be named on the maps are included in this survey, not names of minor features which may be used locally without having been mapped. As we shall see in more detail below, river names may be divided into two types, namely derived names, mostly non-compound, for instance *Glåma* (the longest river of Norway; for its interpretation see below), and compound names, containing generics like *elv* (f.) ‘river’, for instance *Geitelva* ‘goat river’. Both non-compound and compound river names mostly have the ending *-a*, which is the definite article of feminine nouns in the singular.<sup>1</sup>

One reason for contrasting valley names in relationship to river names, or the other way around, is that the topographic characteristics of a valley are nature’s own way of leading the water. As for valleys and names of valleys, they are even more difficult to count. Where does a valley start, and where does it stop, and what should be defined as a valley? A valley may be long or short, deep or shallow; in fact even a small hollow in the ground may sometimes have been defined as a valley by the name givers. According to the Central Place-Name Register, some 54,000 named features are defined as valleys. The generic of most valley names occurs as *-dal* or *-dalen*. The difference between *dal* and *dalen* is that the former is the indefinite form and the latter the definite. The ending *-en* is the definite article of masculine nouns in the singular, corresponding to the abovementioned *-a* in feminine words. I will return to some morphological characteristics below. It is, by the way, interesting to note that the number of Norwegian generics referring to hills and heights is far higher than those used for valleys and hollows. The number of generics for rivers and streams is also relatively limited in comparison with words for convex features.

## 3. A preliminary comment on the relationship between river names and valley names

A conspicuous trait with respect to the two name categories in question is that there is very often a relationship between the name of the valley and the name of the river running through that valley, shown either by the fact that the river name constitutes the first element of the valley name, for instance in *Glåmdalen*, i.e. the valley of the abovementioned river *Glåma*, or by the fact that the valley name constitutes the first part of the river name, for instance *Hallingdalselva*, i.e. the river which flows through the valley of Hallingdal. The first element *halling* (m.) may be an inhabitant name or it may be derived from an obsolete personal name

<sup>1</sup> In some districts the dialectal article ends in *-o*, for instance *Kinso*, which is accepted as standardized form by the Mapping Authority. I have, however, chosen to write *-a* (*Kinsa*) in all cases in accordance with the main regulation of the place-name law in order to avoid confusion. The generic *elv* (f.) should have the standardized ending *-a*, but on some maps one may find the dialectal endings *-i* and *-e*.



or byname (NSL: 192). In such cases the river name is relatively young and most often it must have replaced an older name which has been forgotten. This is probably the case with the name of the neighbouring valley, *Numedal*, which is supposed to reflect an obsolete river name, \**Nauma*, possibly derived from a stem related to Icelandic *naumur* (adj.) ‘narrow’ or Latin *navis* ‘boat’ (NSL: 337). The present name of the river through Numedal is *Numedalslågen*, where the generic *låg* (m.), Modern Norwegian *log* (m.), means ‘(a certain kind of) liquid’, for instance *einerlog* ‘decoction of juniper’, also ‘(big) river, lake’, cf. Old Norse *lōgr* (m.) ‘liquid, river, lake’.

When studying the names of rivers and valleys one will also notice that a river name often applies to only a part of the extensive valley in question, or the river may have been given more than one name where it flows through a landscape. *Glåmdalen* is for instance used of the middle stretch of the river *Glåma*, whereas the upper part of the valley through which *Glåma* flows is named *Østerdalen*. *Hallingdalselva* is used in the middle part of the valley, while further up the valley the river is named *Ustelva* and *Ustekveikja*. The valley of Hallingdal reaches its lower end where the *Hallingdalselva* flows into the lake of Krøderen. Further down in the direction of the sea, the river is named *Snarumselva* after the parish name *Snarum*, and then *Drammenselva* after the town name *Drammen*. The oldest recorded name of the lower part of the river is *Drøfn* (related to *Drammen*), derived from Old Norse *draf* (n.) ‘rubbish’, cf. poetic Old Norse *drøfn* ‘wave’ (Helleland, 2008: 229).

#### 4. River names

It is well known and generally accepted that the river names, especially those of the larger watercourses, are regarded as the oldest ones. The linguistic strata are indicative of age, for instance the old suffixes, as well as the fact that the rivers have always been the most pronounced landscape features that serve as lines of orientation (Olsen, 1939: 35; see Greule, 1996, for a more comprehensive outline on river names). Moreover, the waterways were, and still are, important transportation channels. The Norwegian name scholar Magnus Olsen (1929: 28) described the rivers as the living geo-morphological elements in the landscape. Quite a few river names are used more or less unchanged as farm names, for instance *Bjerka*, Old Norse *Bjarka* ‘birch (river)’, in Nordland situated close to the river *Bjerka*, and the more frequent *Bekken* ‘the brook’ (Rygh, 1898: 34). However, the non-compound river names occur mostly as specifics of names ending in *-dal(en)* ‘valley’, *-nes(et)* ‘promontory’, *-os(en)* ‘river mouth’, *-vatn(et)* ‘lake’, and so on, like *Glåmdalen* (above) and *Glåmos*. We also find generics for rivers, such as *å* (f.), Old Norse *á*, and the Old Norse variant *ó* (f.), as non-compound farm names *Å* and *O* in several places in Norway, both being the shortest possible names, since they are constituted by only one letter. In Old Norse *á* was the current word for ‘river’, contrary to Modern Norwegian where *elv* (f.) is the prevailing term, even though *å* is still used in some areas of Norway. *Elva*, *Storelva* ‘the big river’, or *Åa* is quite often used about the closest river by the locals, even if it has another official name.

As mentioned above, river names in Norway may be divided roughly into two main groups:

##### 1) *Derived names*

These names are mostly non-compound, for instance the abovementioned *Glåma*, perhaps derived from a root meaning ‘pale’ with reference to its colour, cf. Anglo Saxon *glóm* ‘dawn’, or derived from Old Norse *glaumr* (m.) ‘loud sound, noise’ (NSL: 178); *Skjerva*, derived from the Old Norse stem *skarv-*, cf. Modern Norwegian *skarv* (n.) ‘naked rock’; *Bessa*, derived from Old Norse \**bersi* (m.) ‘male bear’. These names reflect Proto-Scandinavian feminine *-ō/-iō* or *-ōn/-iōn* formations. Today most of the river names derived

through a suffix are weak feminine formations, but the medieval sources quite often show that they were originally strong feminine forms, for instance Old Norse *Pofn*, cf. the valley name *Pofnardal*, as well as the place-name *Kinsarvik*, where *-ar-* reflects the Old Norse strong genitive singular of the specific (Helleland, 2008: 226). The presumably younger name *Kinsedalen* reflects the weak form *Kinsa* with double musical accent. The transition from strong to weak formations, which has obviously taken place in many cases, may to a certain degree be explained through analogical influence from the latter.

As already mentioned, almost all of the non-compound river names occur in the modern language as definite forms. This is in one way strange, as we are speaking about names which to a great extent were coined before the suffixation of the definite article in Norwegian, which is supposed to have taken place in the late medieval period (14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century). Other old toponyms, for example farm names formed directly from topographical words, like *Berg* < Old Norse *berg* (n.) ‘rock’, *Vik* < Old Norse *vík* (f.) ‘bay, inlet’, are very often in the indefinite form. In fact, the definite article is regarded as a relatively younger characteristic of place names. Consequently, there is reason to believe that the definite form of the whole group of non-compound river names was triggered by analogy. It has not been fully explained how this process took place. However, there are some exceptions, for instance the river names *Hund* and *Veig* where the indefinite form has been kept. According to Sophus Bugge (NE: 111) *Hund* could be derived from Gothic *hinþan* ‘catch’, whereas *Veig* simply is the Old Norse *veig* (f.) ‘strong drink, liquid’ (NE: 292 f.).

## 2) Names, mostly compound, containing a generic for flowing water

Most of these names contain the elements *elv* (f.) ‘river’; *låg* (m.) ‘river’, also ‘lake’; *å* (f.) ‘river’; *løk* (m.) ‘slowly flowing brook’; *grov* (f.) ‘small river, brook’; *bekk* (m.) ‘brook, brooklet, torrent’. Normally these names are in the definite form, that is ending in *-a* or *-en*, depending on gender, for instance *Moldelva* ‘the mould river’, *Fuglåa* ‘the bird river’, *Numedalslågen* ‘the river of Numedal’ (see above), *Bjørkebekken* ‘the birch brook’, *Langløken* ‘the long brook’, *Stølsgrovi* ‘the brook at the summer farm’.

As mentioned above, many of the names of the biggest Norwegian rivers were non-compound in older times, and also names of smaller watercourses (Rygh, 1898: 34), but most of them became compound at a later stage, for example the abovementioned *Lærdalselva* and *Tovdalsåna*. In a few cases the river names are formations of compound words or names, like *Dalseta* ‘the river which passes Dalsete’; this one may alternatively be mentioned in the compound form *Dalsetelva*. Another example is *Austdøla*, derived from the valley name *Austdalen* ‘the Eastern valley’ (further examples in Helleland, 2004). The last one has also given rise to the alternative river name *Austdalselva*.

## 5. Valley names

To a far greater extent than river names, the names of valleys are used as settlement and farm names. In fact, the number of farms, summer farms and smallholdings named after a valley amounts to thousands. One reason is of course that a valley or a hollow offers arable soil and shelter from rough weather. The most common word for valley is *dal* m. Other frequent terms are *kvam* (m.) ‘short valley’, *deld* (f.) ‘small valley’. Names containing *botn* (m.) ‘bottom, hollow’, *dokk* (f.) ‘hollow’, *gjel* (n.) ‘ravine’, *juv* (n.) ‘gully’ may sometimes be considered as valleys, as well as a number of other elements designating depressions. In this paper, however, I will refer only to names containing the first one, as they are by far most frequently associated with river names.

A great number of names ending in *-dal(en)* may have been coined in the Middle Ages or earlier. Many of them are also chronicled in medieval documents, for instance *Opedal*, written “i Opudale” in 1329 (DN 3: 143, see also Olsen, 1910: 453 f.). As Opedal is the main farm in the parish of Ullensvang in Hordaland, there is reason to believe that the name dates back to the first millennium. The first element is the river name *Opo*, which has been interpreted in two ways, either from an Indo-European river name word *\*apa* ‘flow’ (Krogmann, 1951–52: 323 ff., 326), or from Old Norse *opa* vb. ‘draw back, go backwards’ (Olsen, *op.cit.*: 454). Another valley name related to a river is *Årdal* ‘river valley’ where the specific *År-* reflects the genitive case of Old Norse *á*, Modern Norwegian *å* (f). In this case it is not the river name itself that has given rise to the valley name, but an appellative for river.

## 6. Further examples

As mentioned above, the name of the valley sometimes contains an obsolete river name. This is also the case in *Lærdal* (the name of a municipality in Sogn og Fjordane), where the first element *Lær-* may reflect a non-compound river name corresponding to Norwegian *leire* (f.) ‘clay’, or it may reflect the Proto-Scandinavian form *\*law-ara-R* with the basic sense of ‘something cut or hollowed out’, thus meaning ‘the river flowing through a ravine’ (Elmevik, 1998). Today only the secondary name *Lærdalselva* is known, and this name has then replaced the old non-compound *\*Lær* as the river name.



Figure 3. Lærdal(en) and Lærdalselva, Norwegian Mapping Authority ([cc-by-sa-3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)).



North of Kristiansand we find *Tovdalsåna*, where *-åna*, (*n* is a reflex of the Old Norse accusative definite form), is compound with *Tovdal*, which is the name of the valley. *Tovdal* reflects Old Norse *Pofnardal*, which in its turn contains the genitive case of an obsolete river name *Pofn*, derived from the root *\*pub* ‘swell’ (Hovda, 1971: 136). As a preliminary conclusion, we may say that the names of valleys as a principle are younger than the names of the rivers. First the river name was coined, then the valley name. However, as pointed out in the case of *Lærdalselva* and *Tovdalsåna* above, the old river name may have been replaced by a younger one derived from the valley name. In these cases we can speak about a naming process like this: river name → valley name/farm name → river name, where the valley name reflects the older, in many cases obsolete, river name.

Another example is *Hildalselva* with *Hildalsfossen* in the municipality of Odda. The farm Hildal is situated at the lower end of the valley of Hildalsdalen. *Hildalsdalen* is a secondary name of the valley as the primary valley name probably centuries ago was lent to a farm situated in the lower part of the valley. According to Magnus Olsen (1910: 445) *Hildal* has not been satisfactorily explained, but there is reason to believe that the first element reflects an obsolete river name *\*Hill-*, related to Old Norse *hjaltr* (m.) ‘ledge’, cf. Old Norse and Icelandic *hilla* (f.) ‘ledge’.

Many river names and names of waterfalls are famous, not only for their impressive beauty, but also because they have been used in the production of electrical power. One of these is Tyssa which flows through the valley of Tyssedal, also situated in Odda. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a large hydroelectric power plant was built at the mouth of the river to supply the growing electrometallurgical industry with power. Before the river was dammed up it was a great tourist attraction because of its famous waterfalls Tysestrengene and Ringedalsfossen.

The name *Tyssa* is derived from *twis*, cf. Gothic *twis-* ‘divided in two parts’ (NSL: 469, see picture). *Tysestrengene* is composed of the river name *Tyssa* in the genitive form and *streng* (m.) ‘string’ in the plural (each part of the waterfall is perceived as a filament or string of water).



**Figure 4.** Tysestrengene, the famous waterfall of Tyssa as it looked before it was utilized for hydroelectric power, viewed from Ringedalsvatnet. Photo 1880-1890 by Axel Lindahl (1841-1906). Collection of Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo.

As we can see from figure 4, the water from Tyssestrengene flows into the lake of Ringedalsvatnet ‘the lake of Ringedal’. There is one more river/waterfall that flows into Ringedalsvatnet, namely Ringedalsfossen, which also used to be a famous tourist attraction (figure 5). The name *Ringedal* is possibly composed of an obsolete river name *\*Ring*, derived from *ring* (m.) ‘ring’, alluding to a characteristic of the body of water (NE: 193). Here we see that the valley name *Ringedal* is composed of a presumed forgotten river name and *dal*, and then the name of the valley is used as the first element of a secondary, more recent, name for the river/waterfall.



**Figure 5.** Ringedalsfossen, the second famous waterfall close to Tyssedal, viewed from Ringedalsvatnet. Photo 1880-1890 by Axel Lindahl (1841-1906). Collection of Norsk Folkemuseum, Oslo. The abovementioned waterfall Tyssestrengene is situated on the left of Ringedalsfossen, not in the picture.

In Eidfjord in Hordaland we find *Bjoreida*, which is the name of the river running through the valley of *Bjoreiddalen*. The river name may contain an unknown place name *\*Bjoreid* which could be explained as ‘beaver isthmus or peninsula’. There is, however, another possible explanation, as the second part of *Bjoreida* contains the name of the lower part of the same watercourse, namely *Eida*. This river name is derived from Old Norse *eið* (n.) ‘isthmus’. It is easy to explain, as the river flows past an isthmus between the lake Eidfjordvatnet and the fjord Eidfjorden. On the southern side of the isthmus there is a farm named *Lægreid* ‘the lower (part of the) isthmus’, and on the northern side a farm named *Hæreid* ‘the higher (part of the) isthmus’ is situated. So it is also possible and even more likely to explain *Bjoreida* as ‘the part of the river Eida where beaver has been observed’, even more due to the fact that there are no testimonials to *\*Bjoreid*, either orally or in writing.





**Figure 6.** The river *Bjoreida* and the valley of *Bjoreiddalen*. Photo: B. Helleland.

The abovementioned river *Veig* is a neighbouring watercourse to *Bjoreida*, and as we have seen, this is one of the few river names reflecting a strong form and used in the indefinite form. It should be mentioned that NE, 292 f., lists the weak form “Veigo”, but this must be a mistake as it has not been verified by the locals. One reason for the strong form may simply be that the now obsolete appellative *veig* (f.) has become a name in the same way as the more recent river names *Elva* from *elv* (f.) ‘river’, *Åa* from *å* (f.) ‘river, stream’ and *Lågen* from *låg* (m.) ‘(kind of) liquid’. Still, the indefinite form is a rare exception. The river of *Veig* flows through the valley of *Veigdalen*, and in this case we have a stem composition as in the above mentioned *Glåmdalen*. Stem composition is not unusual, but it is difficult to explain the distribution of the two types.

## 7. Semantic categories of river names and names of valleys

There is one semantic category which is intimately attached to the formation of river names, namely gender. As almost all non-compound river names (there are some exceptions) are feminine forms, this trait is in itself a semantic feature which separates the group from valley names (Helleland, 2008). It should be mentioned that river names share this trait with the majority of the names of islands.

Although there is an intimate relationship between river names and valley names, there is a noticeable difference with regard to semantic categories. First of all, river names, particularly the old derived names, very often describe characteristics of the water flow or the river bed. Secondly, river names are more often than valley names primary forms, i.e. they are not directly related to another name, for instance the river name *Tyssa* in opposition to the valley name *Tyssedal*. A third, non-linguistic, difference is that names of valleys quite often are used as the names of settlements, parishes and larger districts, whereas river names very rarely have a function beyond referring to rivers. In spite of these differences, most semantic aspects may still be found in both groups. Some examples of the most important categories are systemized in the table below.

<i>River names</i>	<i>Valley names</i>
<p>Watercourse characteristics:  <i>Kvemma</i>, cf. <i>kvam</i> (m.) ‘short valley’  <i>Leira</i>, cf. <i>leire</i> (f.) ‘clay’</p>	<p>Valley characteristics:  <i>Brattdal</i>, cf. <i>bratt</i> adj. ‘steep’, and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’  <i>Leirdalen</i>, cf. <i>leire</i> (f.) ‘(valley of) clay’</p>
<p>Flowing characteristics:  <i>Driva</i>, cf. vb. <i>driva</i> ‘drift, run’, <i>driv</i> (n.) ‘something which is running swiftly’  <i>Fossbekk</i>, cf. <i>foss</i> (m.) ‘waterfall, swift stream’</p>	<p>Flowing characteristics:  <i>Drivdalen</i>, reflects the river name <i>Driva</i></p>
<p>Direction:  <i>Venda</i>, cf. <i>venda</i> vb. ‘turn’, <i>vende</i> (f.) ‘turn’  <i>Middagsgrova</i>, cf. <i>middag</i> ‘noon’ and <i>grov</i> (f.) ‘stream’ (at noon the sun stands over <i>Middagsgrova</i>)</p>	<p>Direction:  <i>Vendedalen</i>, reflects the river name <i>Venda</i>  <i>Norddalen</i>, cf. <i>nord</i> adj. ‘north’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’</p>
<p>Colour:  <i>Grøno</i>, cf. <i>grøn</i> adj. ‘green’  <i>Raudbekken</i>, cf. <i>raud</i> adj. ‘red’ and <i>bekk</i> (m.) ‘stream’</p>	<p>Colour:  <i>Grøndalen</i>, either ‘the valley with the river <i>Grøna</i>’, or ‘the green valley’  <i>Svartdal</i>, cf. <i>svart</i> adj. and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’</p>
<p>Sound:  <i>Rumla</i>, cf. <i>rumla</i> vb. ‘rumble’  <i>Skrikja</i>, cf. <i>skrik</i> (n.) ‘shriek’, <i>skrika</i> vb. ‘to shriek’</p>	<p>Sound:  <i>Dunderdalen</i>, cf. <i>dunder</i> (n.) ‘roar’ (perhaps from a waterfall) and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’  <i>Rolege dalen</i>, cf. <i>roleg</i> adj. ‘quiet’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’</p>
<p>Temperature:  <i>Kjelda</i>, cf. <i>kald</i> ‘cold’  <i>Kjøla</i>, cf. <i>kjøla</i> vb. ‘to cool, chill’</p>	<p>Temperature:  <i>Kalddalen</i>, cf. <i>kald</i> adj. ‘cold’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’</p>
<p>Fauna:  <i>Bessa</i>, cf. O.N. <i>bersi</i> (m.) ‘male bear’  <i>Ulvåa</i>, cf. <i>ulv</i> (m.) ‘wolf’ and <i>å</i> (f.) ‘river’</p>	<p>Fauna:  <i>Bjørndal</i>, cf. <i>bjørn</i> (m.) ‘bear’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’  <i>Geitdalen</i>, cf. <i>geit</i> (f.) ‘goat’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’</p>
<p>Flora:  <i>Kvenna</i>, cf. <i>kvann</i> ‘angelica archangelica’  <i>Lauva</i>, cf. <i>lauv</i> (n.) ‘leaf/leaves’  <i>Bjørkebekken</i>, cf. <i>bjørk</i> (f.) ‘birch’ and <i>bekk</i> (m.) ‘stream’</p>	<p>Flora:  <i>Kvanndal</i> cf. <i>kvann</i> (f.) ‘angelica archangelica’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’  <i>Almdalen</i>, cf. <i>alm</i> (m.) ‘elm’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’</p>
<p>Human activity:  <i>Koppavaska</i>, cf. <i>koppavask</i> (m.) ‘washing cups’ (place in the stream where cups are being washed)  <i>Laugarelva</i>, cf. <i>laug</i> (n.) ‘bath’, and <i>elv</i> (f.) ‘stream’</p>	<p>Human activity:  <i>Hogstdalen</i>, cf. <i>hogst</i> (m.) ‘felling’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’  <i>Slaktardalen</i>, cf. <i>slaktar</i> (m.) ‘butcher’ and <i>dal</i> (m.) ‘valley’</p>

## References

- DN = *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*. 1–. 1847 ff. Oslo.
- ELMEVIK, Lennart. 1998. “Lærdal”. *Namn och bygd* 86. 31–39.
- GELLING, Margaret; Cole, Ann. 2000. *The Landscape of Place-Names*. Stamford: Shaun Tyas.
- GREULE, Albrecht. 1996. “Gewässernamen: Morphologie, Benennungsmotive, Schichten”. In: Eichler, Ernst & al. (eds.), *Namenforschung. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Onomastik* (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft. 11.2.). Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1534–1539.
- HELLELAND, Botolv. 2004. “Ableitungstypen in Flussnamen Westnorwegens”. In: *Suffixbildungen in alten Ortsnamen. Akten eines internationalen Symposiums in Uppsala 14.–16. Mai 2004*. Ed. by Thorsten Andersson und Eva Nyman. (Acta Academiae Regiae Adolphi 88.) Uppsala 2004: Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, 177–197.
- HELLELAND, Botolv. 2008. “Genus som formell og semantisk kategori i usamansette vassførenamn” [Gender as formal and semantic category in non-compound watercourse names]. In: Kvaran, Guðrún & al. (eds.), *Norræn nöfn – Nöfn á Norðurlöndum. Hefðir og endurnýjun. Nordiska namn – Namn i Norden. Tradition och förnyelse*. Handlingar från Den fjortonde nordiska namnforskarkongressen i Borgarnes 11–14 augusti 2007 (NORNA-rapporter 84). Uppsala: NORNA-förlaget, 217–234.
- HOVDA, Per. 1971. “Til norske elvenamn” [On Norwegian river names]. *Namn och bygd* 59, 124–148.
- KROGMANN, Willy. 1951–52. “Zur apa-Frage”. *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 3, 323–327.
- NE = Rygh, K[arl] (ed.). *Norske Elvenavne samlede af O[luf] Rygh* [Norwegian river names collected by O[luf] Rygh]. Kristiania 1904: Cammermeyers.
- NSL = Sandnes, Jørn & Ola Stemshaug (eds.). *Norsk stadnamnleksikon* [Norwegian place-names dictionary]. 4. ed. Oslo 1997: Det norske Samlaget.
- OLSEN, Magnus (ed.). 1910. *Norske Gaardnavne i Søndre Bergenhus Amt ... samlede ... af O[luf] Rygh* [Norwegian farm names in Søndre Bergenhus Amt ... collected ... by O[luf] Rygh]. Kristiania: Fabritius.
- OLSEN, Magnus. 1929. *Stedsnavn og gudeminner i Land* [Place names and fanes in Land]. (Avhandlingar utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo. II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse. No. 3.) Oslo: Dybwad.
- OLSEN, Magnus. 1939. “Norge” [Norway]. In: Olsen, Magnus (ed.), *Stedsnavn* (Nordisk kultur 5.) Stockholm: Bonniers – Oslo: Aschehoug – København: Schultz, 5–52.
- RYGH, O[luf]. 1898. *Norske Gaardnavne. Forord og Indledning* [Norwegian farm names. Preface and introduction]. Kristiania: Fabritius.

Botolv Helleland

Norway

[botolv.helleland@iln.uio.no](mailto:botolv.helleland@iln.uio.no)