

## Holst's works on Uralic

This file provides a brief overview of Jan Henrik Holst's work on the Uralic language family. So far, the languages investigated most extensively by Holst are Hungarian and Estonian, but almost all other Uralic languages are treated or mentioned in some publications as well.

– There exist several papers about Uralic languages published in journals and edited volumes.  
– Moreover, there are some papers by Holst not devoted specifically to Uralic topics, but they treat Uralic languages among other languages. Given the titles these papers have, they might escape the attention of the Uralicists.

– There is no monograph by Holst on a Uralic topic (yet). However, some of his monographs address topics relevant to Uralic linguistics.

Some of these publications are in German, some in English. Some can be found on the internet, some cannot.

This file provides the references in a practical format, and it gives very brief surveys of the contents and results of the publications.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2001):

*Die Herkunft des estnischen Vokals õ*. In: Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne / Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran Aikakauskirja 89. 57–98.

This paper is based on 300 Estonian / Finnish word pairs. It demonstrates that the vowel *õ* found in Estonian arose through three sound laws: *\*e > õ* when the following syllable contained a back vowel, *\*o > õ* when the following syllable contained a front vowel, and *\*o > õ* when next to a labial. The third law can be illustrated e.g. by the cognate set Estonian *kõva* / Finnish *kova* 'hard'. These laws explain the data in an excellent manner; some apparent exceptions can be explained as loanwords or in other ways. The three nouns *kõrv* 'ear', *õlg* 'shoulder' and *sõrg* 'claw' look irregular at first, but it is observed that all three designate paired body parts, and it turns out that they received their vowel *õ* by analogy from the plural. This paper has already been cited many times.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2006):

*Die Herkunft der estnischen Diphthonge ae, äe, oe und õe*. In: El Mogharbel, Christliebe / Himstedt, Katja (eds.): *Phonetik und Nordistik. Festschrift für Magnús Pétursson zum 65. Geburtstag*. Frankfurt am Main: Hector. 69–86.

This paper is based on 89 Estonian / Finnish word pairs. It investigates why some Proto-Balto-Finnic *\*ai* remained *\*ai* in Estonian, while others were shifted to *ae*, and correspondingly how *\*äe*, *\*oe* and *\*õe* arose. The shift occurred when the syllable was open and the next syllable contained *\*a*. In a few instances, *\*r* caused the shift.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2015a):

*On the theory of a Uralic substratum in Baltic*. In: Junttila, Santeri (ed.): *Contacts between the Baltic and Finnic languages*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki Finno-Ugric Language Section / Finno-Ugric Society. 151–173.

This paper is based on a talk held on June 12th, 2012 at the conference "Baltic languages and white nights. Contacts between Baltic and Uralic languages.", University of Helsinki. The paper argues that Proto-Baltic did not acquire its typological profile due to a Uralic substratum, while more recent contacts do of course exist.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2015b):

*Zur unregelmäßigen Flexion der ungarischen Verben megy und van*. In: Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne / Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran Aikakauskirja 95. 137–144.

This paper argues that the irregular forms of the verbs *megy* 'go' and *van* 'be' are historically subjunctive forms.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2019):

*Forschungsfragen zur baskischen Sprache*. Düren: Shaker.

This monograph is on Basque, but it addresses Uralic languages many times. For example, on pp. 18–20 similarities between Basque and Mordvin are observed. Moreover, as discussed on pp. 43–46, the fact that

Finnish *yhdeksän* ‘nine’ and *kahdeksan* ‘eight’ contain ‘one’ and ‘two’ respectively has parallels in Basque and elsewhere.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2023a):

*Das Rekonstruieren von Sprachen*. Düren: Shaker.

This is the most up-to-date monograph available explaining how to reconstruct proto-languages. It uses examples from all continents, and it refers to Uralic examples more than most other books on historical linguistics. On pp. 82–87, the book takes up the crucial points of the rise of the Estonian vowel *õ*.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2023b):

*Facts about ‘face’ that we ought to face*. In: Pattillo, Kelsie / Waśniewska, Małgorzata (eds.): *Embodiment in cross-linguistic studies: the ‘face’*. Leiden / Boston: Brill. 31–63.

This paper deals with peculiar words for ‘face’ which came into being through compounding two of the three body parts ‘eye’, ‘mouth’, and ‘nose’. In Hungarian, for instance, *arc, orca* ‘face’ is originally a compound of *orr* ‘nose’ and *sza* ‘mouth’ (today *száj*). Uralic examples are dealt with on p. 39f. The paper arrives at various insights about these compounds meaning ‘face’. The investigation reveals that those Uralic languages that have such compounds are not alone with this feature, but further examples are found on several continents.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2024a):

*Observations on the reflexes k- and h- for initial \*k- in Hungarian*. In: *Mother Tongue XXV*. 53–62.

This paper makes several points about the shift of initial *\*k- > h-* before back vowels in Hungarian, as e.g. in *hal* ‘fish’, cf. Finnish *kala*. The development may have proceeded via the intermediate stages *\*q* and *\*x*. Its chief consequence is that in inherited words usually *k-* is followed by a front vowel, and *h-* by a back vowel. Most interestingly, the sound law split the interrogative pronouns with *\*k-* into two groups, those with *k-* such as *ki* ‘who’, and those with *h-* such as *hol* ‘where’; and interrogative pronouns with *\*k-* were split in a surprisingly similar way in the Eskimo-Aleut languages, Yukaghir and Mongolian.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2024b):

*New insights on the Hungarian objective conjugation*. In: *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne / Suomalais-Ugrilaisen Seuran Aikakauskirja* 100. 67–84.

In Hungarian, certain subjective and objective verb forms are distinguished solely by the fact that the latter have *-já-*: *var-tók* ‘you (pl.) wait’, *var-já-tók* ‘you (pl.) wait for him’. In the 1st person plural, the forms are *vár-unk* ‘we wait’, *vár-juk* ‘we wait for him’. The first form had the suffix *-muk* in Old Hungarian. The crucial discovery of the paper is that the suffix of the second form, *-juk*, can be claimed to go back to *\*-já-muk*. This idea makes use of the fact that intervocalic *\*m* is often shifted to *\*w (> v)*, or lost, in Hungarian. The discovery has unforeseen implications.

Holst, Jan Henrik (2025):

*Proposals for the diachronic interpretation of Tocharian*. Düren: Shaker.

Tocharian is a branch of Indo-European, but influenced by a non-Indo-European idiom. It had been suspected that the contact was with Uralic. In this book, however, pp. 184–227 show that the contact was with Turkic.

Unpublished

– *Estonian and its closest relatives: a subgrouping issue*. Lecture held on June 14th, 2014 at the conference “Baltic languages and white nights. Typology and contacts of Baltic and Finnic languages and literatures.”, University of Tartu.

– Forthcoming: a paper on Hungarian nominal morphology, among other things making a new proposal on the origin of the accusative suffix *-t*.