

Dr. Clara Holst (1868–1935) – an important but long forgotten Norwegian linguist and woman pioneer¹

ERNST HÅKON JAHR

ORCID: 0000-0002-3717-6099

University of Agder

Abstract: Clara Holst (1868–1935), a pioneering Norwegian linguist and academic feminist, was the first woman to defend a PhD in Norway (1903). Her research focused on German, in particular Low German, and the long-lasting contact between Low German and the Scandinavian languages during the Hansa period of the Late Middle Ages. Some of her work clearly points forward in the direction of structuralism. However, due to her gender, she was never granted a university position in Norway. When she finally protested against the discrimination she faced, she was quickly relegated to obscurity and nearly forgotten. Until quite recently, her scholarly and feminist contributions were rarely acknowledged after she left academia in 1910. This represented a significant loss for Norwegian linguistics, as few linguists in the country were as experienced or up-to-date with international linguistics as she was. This paper outlines her biography as a pioneering female academic and linguist.

Abstrakt: Clara Holst (1868–1935), norweska językoznawczyni i pionierka feminizmu akademickiego, była pierwszą kobietą w Norwegii, która obroniła doktorat (1903). Jej badania koncentrowały się na językach germańskich, w szczególności na języku dolnoniemieckim oraz na długotrwałych kontaktach językowych między dolnoniemieckim a językami skandynawskimi w okresie Hanzy w późnym średniowieczu. W niektórych swoich pracach Holst zapowiada kierunek rozwoju strukturalizmu. Pomimo wybitnych osiągnięć naukowych, ze względu na płeć nigdy nie otrzymała stanowiska uniwersyteckiego w Norwegii. Gdy zaprotestowała przeciw dyskryminacji, została odsunięta od życia akademickiego i prawie zapomniana. Jej dorobek naukowy i feministyczny przez wiele lat pozostawał niedoceniony, co stanowiło znaczną stratę dla norweskiego językoznawstwa, gdyż niewielu badaczy w tym czasie dorównywało jej wiedzę i znajomością międzynarodowych nurtów językoznawczych. Artykuł przedstawia biografię Clary Holst jako pionierki wśród kobiet naukowców i językoznawców.

¹ The author's "Distinguished Professor's Lecture", given at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, 2 April 2025, forms the basis for this paper, together with Jahr (1999, 2006). The lecture in Poznań also represented my "Jubilee Teacher's Lecture", since it was held exactly 50 years after my very first university lecture, at the University of Oslo in April 1975. I thank Penelope Gardner-Chloros for helpful suggestions and language comments.

Key words: Clara Holst, Norwegian linguistics, Low German, Hanseatic League, structuralism, women in science, academic feminism

Słowa kluczowe: Clara Holst, językoznawstwo norweskie, dolnoniemiecki, Hanza, strukturalizm, kobiety w nauce, feminizm akademicki

1. Introduction

There are many pioneers in linguistics. Someone is always the first, be it to make an important discovery – e.g. Grimm’s Law – or to propose new theoretical ideas or new methodology – as William Labov did with *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* – or to be the first in a group to introduce a particular field of study. In this paper, I will outline the biography and contributions of the first woman to defend a doctoral dissertation in Norway. She did so in 1903, and she was a linguist.

In Norway in the 1980s and 1990s there was huge interest in women’s history, and in the contributions of early women pioneers back in the time when women’s place was defined more or less exclusively as home, kitchen and children. Several volumes were published about academic women pioneers – however, nobody showed any interest for Clara Holst. In the academic year 1992/93, this author



Instructor of German, Dr. Clara Holst, Wellesley College, 1906/07.
Copyright: Wellesley College Archives.

was a visiting professor at Hamburg University, working on a project on the Low German–Scandinavian language contact of the Hansa period, the area for Clara Holst's doctoral dissertation. It was then that I started looking into her biography – and soon understood why nobody had written anything about her. The only information available was to be found in two short papers, one from 1907 (Tiberg 1907), and the second, which for the most part built on the first one, is Nessel & Valgard (1983). It took me 15 years to publish a biography about her (Jahr 2006, 240 pp.), after searching for her and her activities in archives in six different countries: Norway, Denmark, England, France, Germany, and the U.S.

Despite her obvious status as an important woman pioneer – being, among other things, the first woman to defend her PhD in Norway – Clara Holst fell into almost complete oblivion in her own lifetime. How could that happen? We shall return to this enigma later in this paper, first we have to look at the main aspects of Clara Holst's biography.

2. Early life

Clara Holst was born 4 June 1868 in Kristiania (now Oslo). Her grandfather, Fredrik Holst (1791–1871), was a professor of medicine and was the very first candidate in modern Norway – after the end of the Dano-Norwegian union in 1814 – to defend his doctoral dissertation. His defence in 1817, when the Norwegian University, The Royal Frederik's University, had been in operation for only four years, lasted one entire day, a break for dinner included, and all in all a total of 13 opponents took part in the discussion, which was all in Latin.

Clara Holst's mother, Anna Mathilde Charlotte Flemming (1832–1897), was German, the daughter of a physician in Mecklenburg. She married Clara's father, Axel Holst, (1826–1880) a Norwegian physician, in 1856. They had altogether eight children, seven of whom lived through infancy. Clara was number six. One brother (Axel Holst, 1860–1931) became, like his grandfather, a professor of medicine, and between 1919 and 1921, he was the elected Rector (V.C.) of the Kristiania [Oslo] university. Another brother (Victor Holst, 1862–1945) studied classical philology and became the headmaster of a well-known private school in the capital. Of the three daughters in the Holst Family, only Clara, the youngest of the three, received a full university education, although one of her elder sisters (Thea Holst, 1866–1944) stayed one academic year (1889/90) at Newnham College in Cambridge. She, however, never graduated with a degree. Due to the background of Clara Holst's mother, the family's home language was German, which meant that the Holst children grew up as bilinguals with Norwegian and German.

3. Studies in Norway and abroad

In the spring of 1889, Clara Holst graduated from a girls-only high school (gymnasium, or A-level) in Kristiania [Oslo] with the best possible grades. In the fall semester of the same year, she was enrolled as a student at the Kristiania [Oslo] university, then the only university in Norway. This was just seven years after the first female student had been accepted at the university. Clara Holst chose to study philology, and she was the first woman in the country to do that. This was, then, the first of her pioneer achievement: the first female philology student. She chose the professor of modern languages, Johan Storm (1836–1920), as her university advisor and mentor.

Professor Storm was at the time among the best known linguists in Europe, his role in the development of phonetics being especially important. He had a long-standing scholarly relationship with Professor Henry Sweet in Oxford and Professor Eduard Sievers in Leipzig. These three – Storm, Sweet and Sievers – are often referred to as the three big S's in phonetics of the time. When Sweet visited Norway to do fieldwork on Norwegian dialects, Johan Storm acted as his host.

It was probably quite decisive for the young student Clara Holst that she came into contact with one of the leading linguists in Europe so early on in her studies. Not many of the Norwegian professors at the time had such an international standing as Johan Storm. It is highly likely that her contact with him contributed considerably to the fact that she acquired international academic experience during her studies, far beyond that of most of her fellow students.

In 1892, only two years into her studies, Clara Holst spent a year in Cambridge studying English and staying at a women's college. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to find anything more about her studies and stay in England. After a year, she moved to Paris and studied at the Sorbonne. While she was there, she joined l'Association Phonétique Internationale (API) (now: The International Association of Phonetics, IPA). She was recruited as a member by Professor Paul Passy (1859–1940), the founder of the association. In 1894, she published an example of spoken Norwegian, transcribed in the IPA phonetic alphabet according to her own pronunciation, in *Le Maître Phonétique* (Holst 1894), the journal of the phonetic association. Holst remained a member of the IPA till 1897.

In 1894, Clara Holst returned to Kristiania [Oslo] and the university, where she graduated in 1896, with exams in English and French, Norwegian and German. Her marks were excellent. The usual step for a person with such a degree would be to apply for a teaching position at high school somewhere in the country. Women had achieved the right to be employed as a high school teachers in 1896.

However, Clara Holst had other plans. Not only had she been the first woman to study philology and subsequently been the first woman to graduate in philology in Norway, she now wanted to be the first woman – in any field – to defend a PhD.

4. Towards her doctorate – Female student pioneer also in Germany

In 1897, she studied for one year in Leipzig under Professor Eduard Sievers (1850–1932). From 1898, she spent three semesters, one and a half years, at the University of Copenhagen. Here, she studied Old Danish and took an active part in discussion groups and philological associations.

In August 1898, she participated in "The 5th Scandinavian Philological Meeting" in Kristiania [Oslo]. This conference brought together many participants, most of them professors, from the Scandinavian countries. Among all the present distinguished male professors, Clara Holst was chosen as the Norwegian Chairperson of the "Section for Germanic languages". The fact that she was elected to such a prestigious position at the conference, without being a professor herself, shows that she had already achieved recognition as a promising linguist and scholar.

After three semesters in Copenhagen she returned to Norway. From the autumn of 1899 and for two and a half years, she carried out research and worked on her dissertation, before moving on to Berlin and the Humboldt University in 1902. While still in Norway, she finished a paper on Low German loan words in Danish, which was published in the journal *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* (Holst 1902). This paper, together with a second one published the following year (Holst 1903a), formed a basis for her dissertation, which she finished and submitted during her stay at Humboldt University.

As a female in academia, Clara Holst encountered certain problems at German universities. As a rule, women were not given access to lecture halls and seminars in Germany at that time. The well-known Norwegian philologist, Professor Sophus Bugge (1833–1907), who had a widespread network of international scholars, intervened by letter and asked his colleague and friend in Leipzig if he could make an exception and let Clara Holst attend his lectures and seminars? Professor Sievers then gave her access to lectures and seminars. However, she was not given permission to take an active part in discussions, but had to be silent and listen while the professor and his male students exchanged views and opinions on the various topics of interest. When in Berlin in 1902, she was denied access to lectures and seminars. Once more, Professor Bugge tried to help. This time, however, he was not very successful. Clara Holst was only allowed access to the departmental library, not to lectures and seminars. For a person like Clara Holst, this must have been very frustrating, but we do not know anything about her reaction to this discrimination.

Probably Clara Holst has to be acknowledged as a woman pioneer also in the history of German universities, since, after all, she was allowed access to lectures and seminars in Leipzig, and to the department library at Humboldt university at a time when this was not the case for German female students in general.

After having submitted her dissertation to the university in the autumn of 1902, while still in Berlin, she was informed that the Historic-Philological Faculty at

the university had appointed a PhD committee consisting of the professors Johan Storm, Hjalmar Falk (professor of German) and Alf Torp (professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Linguistics). At the same time, she received a modest scholarship ("Det grevelige Hjelmstjerne-Rosencronske legat") – the first and only support she ever received from her home university – to carry out research on the modern Low German dialects of northern Germany. Subsequently, she spent most of 1903 in Magdeburg and Westfalen doing fieldwork on Low German dialects.

5. The doctoral defence

She arrived home just in time for her three trial lectures and her PhD defence at the end of 1903. Of the three lectures, she could herself choose the topic of one, the other two were given to her by the doctoral committee. At all three lectures, she had a large audience, and the auditorium was crowded. The newspapers noted that the women seemed to be in majority. For the first lecture, and due to the large influx of people, the university had to change rooms to a much bigger auditorium.

The defence took place on December 10th, 1903. The first opponent was Professor Johan Storm, who understandably was very proud of his former student. He agreed with the candidate on all major issues, and had only a few objections concerning minor topics. One of these objections had to do with the fact that Clara Holst had labelled the language of the old Icelandic sagas as – Old Icelandic. The term commonly used in Norway at the time, was "Oldnorsk" (Old Norwegian). The candidate showed her international experience and orientation, proving to be a scholar with independent opinions when, in her reply, she stated that she found the term "Old Icelandic" better for two reasons. First, because the literature written in the language in question was undoubtedly authored in Iceland, and second, the term Old Icelandic was the term most commonly used in German and English. Even if she did not state that directly, by her reply, she clearly objected to the current nationalistic use in Norway of the term "Oldnorsk" about the language of the Icelandic sagas.

The second opponent (Professor Hjalmar Falk) and a third "ex auditorio" opponent from the floor (Professor Sophus Bugge) both praised the dissertation and agreed with its main findings, although Professor Falk also had some objections to minor points. All three opponents made comments pertaining to the fact that Clara Holst was the first female candidate to defend a doctoral dissertation at the Norwegian university.

Two days after her defence, the university granted her the title of *Doctor Philosophiæ*. She was then 35 years old. Nobody could anticipate that in seven years' time this extremely active female scholar suddenly would retire and disappear completely from academia, which was a tremendous loss for Norwegian linguistics. As we shall see, the reason for her sudden disappearance seven years later, was that she refused to accept the gender discrimination she experienced.

6. The study of Low German–Scandinavian language contact

In her dissertation, Clara Holst investigated the vowel quality of Middle Low German by analysing the many loan words borrowed from Low German into the Scandinavian languages. The title of her dissertation was (in English): "Studies on Middle Low German loan words in Danish in the 14th and 15th centuries" (Holst 1903b). Scholars prior to Dr. Holst had tried to ascertain the Middle Low German vowels by studying the vowel variation exhibited in the modern Low German dialects. By taking into consideration the vowels found in Low German loan words in Danish, Clara Holst was able to increase the amount of relevant linguistic data, and to reach more reliable conclusions.

When, today, we read about the intensive and massive language contact between Low German and the Scandinavian languages in the Hanseatic period, a striking paradox immediately becomes apparent. All historical linguistic accounts stress that no other language has ever influenced the Scandinavian languages to such a degree as Low German did. If this is the case – and there are no historical linguists who would dispute that it is – we should expect that a comprehensive account of the nature of this influence and its ensuing sociolinguistic results would follow. But the paradox is that, once the uniqueness, in terms of Scandinavian language history, of this intense language contact had been established, authors up until the 1990s usually spent little time discussing the consequences for the Scandinavian languages, frequently devoting only a couple of pages to the entire topic.

This paradox is, however, relatively easy to explain. It is primarily due to the long-standing domination in Scandinavian linguistics of the theoretical paradigm of the Neogrammarians. According to this paradigm, language contact can in general only result in various types of borrowings. If an element X from language A is transferred to language B, this can easily be integrated into a Neogrammarian description. There is, therefore, a long tradition in Scandinavian historical linguistics of studying and classifying Low German loan words in the Scandinavian languages. In Norway, Clara Holst initiated and started this tradition with her dissertation in 1903. Since then, a substantial amount of sound philological work has been carried out in this field over the past one hundred years plus, and a good deal of empirical evidence has been presented. Thousands of loan words have been identified and classified.

For Clara Holst, the Neogrammarian framework provided a fruitful method in her pre-structural investigation of the vowel quality of Middle Low German. The results she presented in her dissertation did indeed bring our knowledge of Middle Low German a step forward. But from then on, she more or less let go of the Neogrammarian paradigm, and became a precursor to the up-and-coming structuralist theory.

7. Teaching in Oslo 1904–1906

From 1904 till the summer of 1906, Clara Holst resided in Oslo. She had two short teaching assignments at the university in the two spring terms of 1904 and 1906, when she taught German phonetics and pronunciation. In the autumn term 1904 she worked as a teacher of German at one of Oslo's high schools. But a university position was not yet open to female scholars.

8. Two years in the U.S., Wellesley College (1906/07) and University of Kansas (1907/08)

With bleak prospects of getting a position at her home university, Clara Holst turned to the United States of America. In the academic year 1906/07 she held a teaching assignment at Wellesley College for women outside Boston. Wellesley College had around 1200 female students and a clear majority of female teachers. There, Dr. Holst offered courses in German and Old Icelandic.

The following academic year, 1907/08, after having spent the summer of 1907 back in Norway, she was appointed to an assistant professorship in Germanic languages at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, a university with 2–3.000 mainly male students. The list of courses she gave both at Wellesley College and at the University of Kansas is impressive. In the Annual Catalogue for the University of Kansas, she is listed with courses in German grammar, German composition, History of the German language, Gothic, Old Norse, and, finally, Modern Norwegian.

During her year in Lawrence, she published a paper on the Low German dialect of the author Fritz Reuter (1810–1874). He was very popular in that time, and his dialect could be established on the basis of his earlier production (Holst, 1907a). In this work we can observe a departure from the Neogrammarian legacy in the fact that Clara Holst was interested in one single dialect per se, and in the linguistic units and features of that particular modern Low German dialect. A dogmatic Neogrammarian linguist would instead have been more interested in establishing the historical development of specific sounds and how they culminated, later in the history, in the modern dialect sounds.

At the same time that Clara Holst gained the appointment at the University of Kansas, her biography was briefly summarized in a publication in Norway to mark the occasion 25 years earlier, in 1882, when the first female student had been accepted and enrolled at the University of Oslo. The description of Clara Holst ended with the following wish on the part of the author: "Hopefully, she will not stay long in Kansas. We do not have a surplus of competent, young philologists here at home, so there should soon be a use for Miss Holst in her fatherland" (Tiberg 1907: 30, my translation).

Indeed, she did not stay long in Kansas. After only one year, she returned to Oslo in the spring of 1908, at the age of 39, turning 40 in June the same year.

When she left the University of Kansas, the acting head of department, Professor Elmer F. Engel, wrote, i.a., these words about her: "Miss Holst came to us highly recommended for her scholarly attainments, and, as we can now testify, justly so, for our expectations in that respect have been fully realized. She has been thoroughly successful as a teacher and has adapted herself with remarkable facility to our condition which was wholly new to her. Her amiable disposition and gentle manner have gained for her many friends, and her colleagues feel that the best place is none too good for her" (from Jahr, 2006: 183).

9. No job offer in Norway, Parliament takes action

After her return to Norway, she rather immediately started applying for teaching positions at various high schools all over southern Norway, as far north as Trondheim. She did not get any offer, and the reasons given by the high school rectors for not offering her a position soon became ludicrous. In Bergen, where she obviously should have been selected and given the job, the rector argued that since most of the students were boys, he assumed that a female teacher would not be able to cope with them.

It did not look good, and after almost two years, Members of Parliament got annoyed by the situation and angry with the high school rectors who did not offer Dr. Holst a position. She had clearly been the best-qualified applicant several times. The MPs then acted in a very unusual and indeed radical way. They decided that the next position to be vacant at a high school would be advertised exclusively for a female philologist. This decision passed Parliament in February 1910. The MPs had had enough of excuses from the male high school rectors.

10. Vacant position in Hamar for a female philologist

The next vacant position turned out to be at the local high school in the small town of Hamar, north of the capital. It was advertised, as decided, for a woman philologist. There were all in all only seven female philologists in Norway at the time, and the only one with a PhD was Clara Holst. Five out of the seven possible candidates applied for the job.

It was obvious that the rector was not at all happy with the situation. He immediately saw that he had to place Clara Holst on top of the list. He clearly disliked this state of affairs. None of his male teachers had a PhD. How would they feel if a new and quite young colleague with a prestigious PhD was appointed to the post? The older male teachers would all be inferior to her as scholars. They would certainly know it and feel it, and how could the school cope with such a situation among the faculty?

However, the rector had to take the decision by Parliament into account, and Clara Holst was therefore on top of his priority list when it was sent to the ministry. The ministry prepared the appointment case for the Government, and Clara Holst was appointed to the position in Hamar on July 19th, 1910.

11. Finally appointed – but did not take up the position

Clara Holst was 42 years old and on summer vacation in the southern part of Norway when she was informed that she had been appointed to the teaching position at Hamar High School. We must believe that she was happy about her appointment. But she probably did not think much about the fact that she, with this appointment, once again was a female pioneer in Norway. She had, as we have seen, already been so in 1889, when she was the first female philology student. And in 1896, when she was the first female philological candidate, and again in 1903, when she was the first woman in any subject to defend her doctoral thesis in Norway. She probably, in 1910, thought more about finally finding use in Norway for her thorough and extensive professional knowledge and competence.

But then, in September the same year, she was exempted by the ministry from taking up the position, without even having been to Hamar. It turned out that it was Clara Holst herself who had applied to be released from taking up the position. What had happened?

12. Clara Holst's feminist protest causes her to be almost forgotten

When Clara Holst was informed of the appointment, she immediately contacted the rector in Hamar by letter to make an agreement about her timetable or teaching curriculum. The school year would start in August, and it was already late in July.

She was not happy with the answer she received. The rector conveyed to her that he had already decided on her teaching curriculum, and she was to teach only beginner German. The older male teachers were to teach at the high school level, as they had previously always done. Holst wrote back at once, referring to her extensive knowledge and competence in German, and suggested that at least some of her classes be held at the high school level. When the headmaster was unwilling to change anything, he did not want to make "any special consideration for Miss Holst", as he wrote to the ministry, she immediately applied to be exempted from taking up the position.

We are allowed, I believe, to see a clear and direct feminist protest in her resolute rejection of the rector's timetable. Her solid economic background enabled her to make such a principled, but, from a more personal or individual perspective, obviously quite difficult choice.

However, that very choice also meant that she herself and everything she had achieved academically were soon almost completely forgotten. In 1912, only two years later, women in Norway were allowed to hold positions at the university. If Clara Holst had not protested against what she found to be a total disregard of her competence and qualifications in favour of older male teachers and, at least for a while, accepted going from university teaching in the US to teaching beginner German in Norway, she would most probably have been able to apply for and get a university position later.

Unfortunately, she never applied for any other position after her dramatic experience with the Hamar High School rector in 1910. The woman who had been placed as No. 2 for the position in Hamar, Antonie Tiberg (1878–1952), was then appointed, and she taught there for many years. After the Hamar incident, Clara Holst lived quietly for the rest of her life with her two sisters in Oslo. She died in November 1935.

13. Unfortunate for the development of linguistics in Norway in the early 20th century

For the development of linguistics in Norway in the first decades of the 20th century it was very unfortunate that Clara Holst withdrew from scholarly activity at such a young age. With her international experience and perspective, taking into account that she had studied in Cambridge, Paris, Leipzig, Copenhagen, Berlin and Kristiania [Oslo], and had even worked for two years in the U.S., Clara Holst was without doubt among the most up-to-date linguistic scholars in Norway during the first decades of the 20th century. It is a pity that she was not offered a position at the university so that Norwegian students and colleagues alike could benefit from her international experience and overview.

Linguistic science in Norway was for a long time dominated by scholars whose international experience was quite limited. Apart from towering figures like Johan Storm, Sophus Bugge, Alf Torp and, later, Alf Sommerfelt, only a few had the ability to establish comprehensive international networks and links. Had Clara Holst been given a position at the university, Alf Sommerfelt, who studied and got his PhD in Paris, would probably not have felt so alone in the early 1920s in his efforts to bring new theoretical linguistic ideas, especially from France, to Norway.

14. A feminist protest ahead of her time

It is a tragic paradox that Clara Holst's feminist protest – well ahead of her time – soon led to her being overlooked and almost forgotten – until the end of the last century. Nesset and Valgard (1983) published, as mentioned, a short paper

on her, followed by Jahr (1999, 2001), and her book-sized biography appeared in 2006 (Jahr, 2006).

The linguist Clara Holst has finally been given a solid place in Norwegian women's history. In 2003, at the University of Agder in Kristiansand, a centenary celebration was held on the same date as her defence in 1903 (December 10th), and an auditorium was named after her (in Norwegian: "Clara Holsts auditorium"). The main administrative building of Oslo Metropolitan University bears her name ("Clara Holsts hus"), and so does a street in the city of Trondheim ("Clara Holsts veg").

15. "Her quiet activity and planned progress and solid belief in the future"

During her year at Wellesley College, Clara Holst published a short paper (Holst, 1907b) on the first woman in Norway to be appointed to a high school teaching position, the natural scientist Mathilde Schjøtt (1876–1959), who was appointed in 1906. In the paper, Clara Holst, who herself was such an important pioneer for women in academia in Norway, gave her opinion on what she considered important for women's advancement toward equality in Norwegian society. She wrote that Mathilde Schjøtt "is not among those who work for feminism in speech and writing. However, in her quiet activity and planned progress and in her solid belief in the future, she has contributed more to equality of women than many others have with their speeches and lectures" (Holst 1907b: 33, my translation).

These words could indeed also be used to describe Clara Holst and her contributions.

References

- Holst, C. (1894). Specimen norvegien: De tre Bukkene Bruse. *Le Maître Phonétique*, 5, 81–82.
- Holst, C. (1902). Middelnedertyske omlýdsforhold belyst ved danske laaneord. *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 18, 210–225.
- Holst, C. (1903a). Lydovergangen a > o (å) i middelnedertyske laaneord i dansk. *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 19, 141–161.
- Holst, C. (1903b). Studier over middelnedertyske laaneord i dansk i det 14. og 15. aarhundrede. Kristiania [Oslo]: Grøndahl & Søn's Bogtrykkeri.
- Holst, C. (1907a). Zur Aussprache in Fritz Reuters Heimat. *Niederdeutsches Jahrbuch*, 33, 143–158. Norden und Leipzig: Diedr. Soltau's Verlag.
- Holst, C. (1907b). Vor første kvindelige embedsmand. In C. Thue Ebbel (Ed.), *Kvindelige studenters jubilæumsskrift 1882–1907* (pp. 32–33). Kristiania [Oslo]: S. M. Brydes Bogtrykkeri.
- Jahr, E. H. (1999). Clara Holst (1868–1935): Norwegian historical linguist and woman pioneer. *Henry Sweet Society Bulletin*, (32), 5–12.
- Jahr, E. H. (2001). Clara Holst. In J. G. Arntzen (Ed.), *Norsk biografisk leksikon* (Vol. 4, pp. 356–357). Oslo: Kunnskapsforlaget.

- Jahr, E. H. (2006). Clara Holst – kvinnelig pionér i akademien i Norge. Oslo: Novus.
- Neset, O. M., & Valgard, J. (1983). Clara Holst (1868–1935). In J. Valgard & E. Wessel (Eds.), *Frauen und Frauenbilder: Dokumentiert durch 2000 Jahre* (Osloer Beiträge zur Germanistik, 8, pp. 8–17). Oslo: University of Oslo, Department of German.
- Tiberg, A. (1907). Kvindelige filologer. In C. Thue Ebbel (Ed.), *Kvindelige studenters jubilæumsskrift 1882–1907* (pp. 28–31). Kristiania [Oslo]: S. M. Brydes Bogtrykkeri.