

# Visibilizing Normative Regional Historical Multilingualism (ViNoRHM): Ideology, Policy & Practice

ViNoRHM Newsletter

January 2024

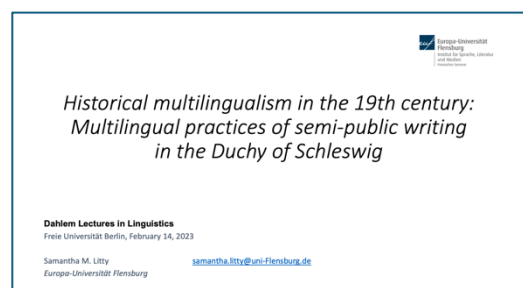
Dear ViNoRHM Advisory Board Members, Local Cooperation Partners, project ViNoRHM supporters, colleagues, and friends,

as we make our way into the new year, we are also making our way to the end of the first year of the ViNoRHM Project! Can you believe it?! (I cannot.)

Since some of you have some interest in the success/progress of this project, I'd like to keep you apprised of all the going-ons and update you of where things stand right now. Depending on how much we were in touch over the past year, some of this might be a bit of a repeat, and if that is the case you're welcome to just look at the pictures 😊.

Officially, the project started on January 20, 2023, and the Europa-Universität Flensburg (EUF) internal "kick-off" took place a month later. However, between the acceptance of the project and the official start, I was already knee-deep in getting myself organized and trying to incorporate things I'd learned in the months since having submitted the proposal.

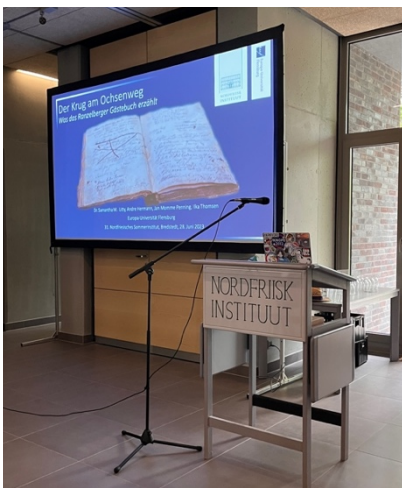
On November 30<sup>th</sup> I gave a talk about the project and the relationships between language and identity at the **Språkforum** lecture series at the Universitet i Stavanger. The following week I was able to connect with scholars closer to home—many who are familiar with the region—while presenting at the Linguistic Colloquium / **Sprachwissenschaftliches Kolloquium des Instituts für Linguistik und Phonetik (ISFAS)** at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel. And after spending an unexpected half an hour on the unsheltered train platform in the middle of nowhere in negative temperatures on the way home, I promptly fell ill for the rest of the year, all of January, and into early February—but I experienced the joy (no sarcasm) that is the German health care system and was put on sick leave for the first time in my life, so despite the rest of it not being fun, that one little aspect was actually rather exciting. Fortunately, I recovered in time to travel to Berlin to introduce the project at **Dahlem Lectures in Linguistics** at the Freie Universität Berlin on February 14<sup>th</sup>.



At that point things really started to look up for me and the project, because I met and hired my **project assistant, Andre Hermann**, who is the happiest of all happy accidents I encountered in 2023—truly. He just appeared out of the blue one day at the DCB (*Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig*). Andre is currently pursuing his MA in Education at the EUF, but also has many other strengths to recommend him to this project. He is a Danish-German L1 bilingual, which was very important to me, since my modern Danish and spoken Danish are not yet great. Andre's second area of study beyond German is geography, which I was also actually looking for in the hopes of finding someone who might be interested in working with mapping for the project, and it turns out Andre is not only interested in it, but he has since taken the multi-session [REDE SprachGIS](#) workshop and is preparing to create some maps from our data. Since joining the project Andre has been incredibly valuable with his assistance transcribing the Ranzelberg Guestbook, collecting and digitizing documents, organizing the ViNoRHM Opening workshop, and so much more.



The **ViNoRHM website** went up in the early spring and is where we regularly keep track of all of our updates and announcements (in German and English): <https://www.uni-flensburg.de/vinorhm>



We only managed a few archive trips, as much of the spring was spent working with the **Ranzelberg Guestbook**, but it has become one of the major sources we are using in this project. The guestbook includes entries from over 200 hands, in all of the regions' languages, and includes more than 1500 entries spanning from 1834-1888. Unfortunately, the guestbook is in pretty rough condition, which has made the work with it rather tedious, but we (along with two other student assistants, Ilka Thomsen and Jan Momme Penning, also pictured below) finished the first transcription in the spring and were then invited to give a guest lecture at the **31. Nordfriesisches Sommerinstitut** at the *Nordfriisk Instituut*

in June where we were able to make more local contacts who we hope to work with on the project in the future.

This presentation also led to a short article on the guestbook which appeared in the September 2023 issue of the Zeitschrift *Nordfriesland* and can be viewed here:

<https://www.nordfriiskfutuor.eu/audio-e-books-historische-buecher/zeitschrift-nordfriesland/>



In September, Andre and I traveled to the **15. Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für Germanistische Sprachgeschichte (GSGG)** at the Universität Passau to give another presentation related to the guestbook. At the same time, I gave a talk about ViNoRHM, specifically focusing on visible and invisible regional languages in the Duchy of Schleswig and the ‘visible bilingualism’ which resulted from the dual standard language ideology of the time period.



After consulting semi-regularly on various aspects of the project since February, **Dr. Temmo Bosse**, expert for structural and sociolinguistics of North Frisian varieties officially joined the Flensburg project team as a **consulting partner** this fall. Dr. Bosse’s expertise spans Frisian and Minority Studies, covering both historical and modern times. Dr. Bosse has been instrumental in assisting the team in identifying North Frisian dialect variation as well in the Ranzelberg Guestbook and continues to consult regularly with the Flensburg team regarding document collection and analysis.

The main event of the year for us was, unsurprisingly, the official **Opening Workshop and Reception** on October 4. It was pretty amazing to be able to invite so many accomplished and respected scholars to Flensburg just to talk about this work and to have discussions about the project moving forward. I’m so thankful for everyone who made this day into such a huge success. (And so much fun!)

## Visibilizing Normative Regional Historical Multilingualism: Ideology, Policy, Practice



### Workshop

Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig

- 09:00 Welcome and Opening
- 09:15 Visibilizing Normative Regional Historical Multilingualism (ViNoRHM)  
Project Presentation  
Samantha M. Litty
- 10:00 Coffee Break
- 10:30 Panel 1: Ideology, Policy, Practice (English)  
10:30-11:15 Ruth Kircher (ECMI)  
11:15-12:00 Markus Schiegg (Leipzig / Erlangen)
- 12:00 Lunch Break: There are several cafes and restaurants in the area, go right toward Nordermarkt.
- 13:00 Panel 2: Regional Languages in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Deutsch)  
13:00-13:45 Temmo Bosse (EUF)  
13:45-14:30 Robert Langhanke (EUF)
- 14:30 Coffee Break
- 15:00 Expert Panel: Synthesis Discussion  
Joshua Bousquette (UGA); Karoline Kühl (EUF); Joseph C. Salmons (UW-Madison)
- 16:00 Closing Remarks

### Reception

European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)  
Kompagnietor, Schiffbrücke 12, 24939 Flensburg

- 19:00 Welcome & Introductions  
Dr. Samantha M. Litty – ViNoRHM Project Leader
- 19:10 Welcome Addresses / Grußworte  
  
Prof. Dr. Nils Langer, *Institut für Friesisch und Minderheitenforschung, Europa-Universität Flensburg*  
  
Dr. Christoph G. Schmidt, *Direktor des Nordfriisk Instituts*
- 19:20 Plenary Addresses / Impulsvorträge (English)  
  
Prof. Dr. Gijsbert Rutten, *Centre for Linguistics, Universiteit Leiden*  
  
Prof. Dr. Mark Richard Lauersdorf, *Linguistics, University of Kentucky*
- 19:45 Networking & Nibbles  
Toast to the project opening, followed by finger foods and networking

One of the major takeaways for me resulted in a shift in how I'm now looking at the project overall. Where I had initially been thinking rather rigidly about the region's language history in terms of ideology, policy, and practice as separate entities, discussions at the workshop not only blurred those clear-cut lines for me, but it also became evident that I am going to need to incorporate how these three things overlap with one another, and the biggest change is that the **social dimension** (which I had been including in regard to individual speaker profiles) is actually going to need to be thought of as an all-encompassing aspect of the entire project. I'm still working on how exactly that will come to play in the book later, but for now it has led to a **change in one of the current research strands**. We are beginning analysis of three books published 1847, 1848, and 1849 regarding the languages of the duchy, but written by a German, a Dane, and a Frisian, so we can see the impact of national or ethnic origin on their ideological standpoints regarding the languages. We are planning to have completed a first analysis this spring.

Because this project is the first **DFG Eigene Stelle** to be funded at the EUF, I was approached for an interview for the university's website, which led to our first foray into **Citizen Science**. After the initial interview the university's press department set up a second press event where we were interviewed again and able to put out a public call for documents. This call went out in early July to a couple of Flensburg and the surrounding region's news outlets and was picked up by the *Flensborg Avis* (the Danish-language daily in Flensburg), *Der Nordschleswiger* (the newspaper of the German Minority in Denmark), and *Die Wirklich* (a new Flensburg weekly, that saves space to regularly showcase higher education in Flensburg), and a radio entry from *NDR (Norddeutscher Rundfunk)*. The call led to a small number of contact requests and community members were willing to share several documents with us, including two diaries and several memory albums (among others). We are considering future public calls, as we think the public interaction is important and adds to the strength of the overall project.

**Upcoming in 2024:** Our plans for 2024 aren't yet set in stone, but we've got a lot of work to do, so we're ok if there aren't so many major events. Andre and I are hoping to visit the archives at the **Peter Skautrup Centret** in Aarhus early in 2024 (perhaps in February?). In March, I'll be headed to the islands (ok, just to Föhr) to give a presentation at the **Ferring Stiftung** on Frisian connections in the Ranzelberg Guestbook. We've also applied to some conferences to present various preliminary results, so if we're accepted, we'll be headed to Cambridge to the Forum for Germanic Language Studies (FGLS) in April and the Historical Sociolinguistics Network (HiSoN) Conference in Zürich in June. Fingers crossed!

That's all from us for now! We'll be in touch again in 2024 with more updates. Or you can always check the website or drop us a line at [vinorhm@uni-flensburg.de](mailto:vinorhm@uni-flensburg.de) if you'd like to discuss anything with us!

Wishing you all the best for a healthy and productive 2024,  
Sam