

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

ViNoRHM Newsletter

September 2026

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

This update is coming at you much later than in previous years and you might be wondering what is going on with ViNoRHM? If you're only looking for updates on the third year of the project, skip ahead to the 2025 Recap below. If you're wondering why you haven't heard much – or anything – since the ViNoRHM 1.0 concluding workshop back in January, keep reading and – as always – If any of this is feeling like a repeat, feel free to just scroll through and look at the pretty pictures.

The ViNoRHM: Ideology, Policy & Practice Concluding Workshop was held January 13-14, 2026 here in Flensburg at the EUF. (More on this in the Recap below). Officially, funding for the project ended January 19th. Since I had submitted an application for a project extension (*Fortsetzungsantrag*) back in July, I had hoped to know by the workshop if the project would continue to be funded, but since I hadn't heard anything and funding was ending, I had to drastically shift gears in terms of what my day-to-day tasks were because I took over to a teaching contract for a colleague who was on leave. The position was a 50% appointment, so I had *hopes & dreams* to fund and spend (the rest of) my time during the spring semester working on ViNoRHM things, but the tl;dr version is that *things & stuff* happened (e.g., travel, illness, red-tape and bureaucracy, etc.) and none of the additional contract/funding things panned out the way I was told they would and so I remained only part-time employed until, well, now. So rather than continuing with ViNoRHM, my time was spent teaching two courses I've never taught before (*Mehrsprachigkeit im 19. Jahrhundert – mit Schwerpunkt Nordfriesland* 'Multilingualism in the 19th century with emphasis on North Frisia' and *Einführung in das Friesische* – Frasch 1 'Intro to Frisian – Frasch 1'), which to be honest – after a few years only being in the classroom as a guest lecturer, jumping in to teaching an intro language course of a language where my passive skills greatly surpass my productive skills – really demanded much more time and effort from the end of January through early July than I had expected.

HOWEVER, in the midst of *gestures broadly* all that, I received the unbelievable news that **ViNoRHM 2.0: The North Frisian Element** would be funded for the full three years requested as an extension (the maximum amount of time allowed) and so



That's right. Three more years of ViNoRHM!

But before I get into ViNoRHM 2.0 we're jumping back to January 2025 for the recap of year 3 of ViNoRHM 1.0 (because who wants a linear timeline? ;-))

2025 Recap: ViNoRHM 1.0 – Ideology, Policy & Practice

I started off 2025's year of presentations and travel in February, with a talk called, "Analyzing the Duchy of Schleswig in the digital age" at the [International Workshop on Language History "from Below": Data Sources and \(Digital\) Approaches](#) at the University of Lausanne organized by Markus Schiegg & Anita Auer. This talk wasn't groundbreaking in any way, but because we've been working with so many historical texts of various sources and types, we have to first be able to work with these texts. So, this talk was mostly about how we use digital and other modern analysis methods in the ViNoRHM project. Most are familiar with Transkribus for transliterating historical handwriting and AntConc for corpus work, but new to us was working with the software ATLAS.ti for qualitative data analysis, which we began in early 2025. At this point in time, I was still on the fence as to whether I would apply for an extension of the project or not. I knew the odds were not great and I was concerned that taking the time necessary put together a decent application to apply for an extension would take away too much time from the project and the rest of the things I had promised and yet to complete. However, while in Lausanne, Anita and I talked a bit about the project and she made it clear to me that I *couldn't not* apply for an extension – and since she's an advisory board member – I had to listen to her. So many thanks to Anita for that advice – or was it a threat? ;-)

Shortly after this, both Andre (my student assistant) and I were invited to contribute posters to the second annual [Nordfriesland in Kiel](#) conference at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel (CAU), hosted by the Department of Frisian Studies. This was a great opportunity for us to share more about the project to a primarily academic audience a bit closer to home. While I simply took an updated overview of the ViNoRHM project, Andre presented about student nicknames as an indicator of group belonging at the Teaching Seminary in Tønder.



Lehrerseminar in Tønder
Birnamen als Indikator der Gruppenzugehörigkeit

1. Einführung

2. Forschungsfragen

3. Datengrundlage

4. Analyse der Signaturen

Quantitative Auswertung der Signaturen 1679-1882

Zeichen	1679-1882	1882-1900	1900-1918	1918-1945	1945-1982
Barablonner (Stillebuch) (BB)	12	5	27	144	
Postkammer (PA)	5	1	46	12	
Gesamt	17	6	73	156	

Statistische Auswertung

$\chi^2(1, N=96) = 8.3, p = 0.016$

$p < 0.05$ demnach ist ein statistisch signifikanter Unterschied in der Verwendung der Signaturen nachweisbar.

5. Fazit und Ausblick

6. Quellen

ViNoRHM

Sichtbarmachung historischer Mehrsprachigkeit in regionalen Alltagssprachen: Sprachideologie, Sprachpolitik und Sprachpraktiken

Einführung

Sprachideologie

Sprachpraktiken

Sprachenpolitik

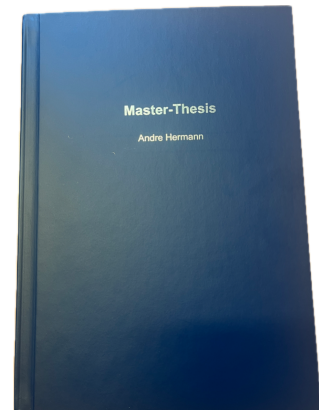
Forschungsfragen:

Daten:

DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

ELIUS

Andre Hermann, project assistant, still worked on the project for the first half of the year in a number of different ways, including archival visits and entertaining project guests. We were visited by Christa Schneider (Bern) in March, and enjoyed an afternoon excursion to Sønderburg to the [Deutsches Museum Nordschleswig](#) ‘German Museum North Schleswig’ (which wouldn’t be complete without a *skippervaffel** from the ice cream boutique *Promenaden – Is med udsigt* near the harbor). Andre spent much of the year working on project pieces gearing up to his MA Thesis, visiting archives, gathering data, and testing different digital methods. His MA Thesis „Sprach(en)verhältnisse angehender (Volksschul-)Lehrkräfte im Herzogtum Schleswig“ was successfully completed in early 2026 – congrats to Andre!



**skippervaffel* is an ice cream specialty with a licorice flavored cone, licorice *guf* (some kind of magical Danish marshmallow fluff), Danish soft-serve ice cream, licorice sprinkles, and other licorice toppings (ours has a licorice pipe sticking out the top).

Just prior to Christa’s visit in March – the unthinkable happened. I spilled an entire mug of coffee directly onto my laptop.

pause for traumatic effect

Fortunately, following the “unsealed-water-bottle-in-backpack-with-laptop-in-plane catastrophe of 2013 (ACTFL, Orlando)” I back up everything to the cloud.

Except what I didn’t know was that everything we had been working on with ATLAS.ti, was saving locally to a folder I didn’t know things save to and so I lost it (and the entire laptop, but honestly who cares about the laptop when the data is gone?!?!). While it was only a couple of months of work, it was still cause to make some changes.

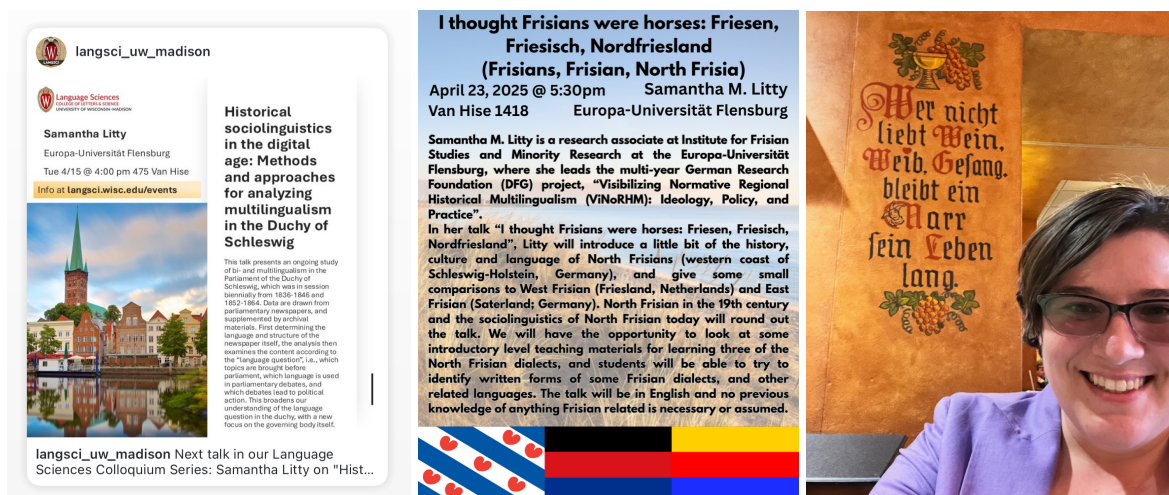


To the project, yes, but also to my beverage consumption habits. First things first – coffee is now only consumed in my office in a sippy cup for adults, aka a thermal mug with a lid. And it lives on the bookshelf next to my desk, no longer on it.



In April I visited my family in Wisconsin and gave two talks at the [University of Wisconsin – Madison](#). The first was quite similar to the talk in Lausanne and the second was for the students studying German and Dutch (mostly BA-level, but some MA and graduation students attended as well). It was a really nice experience to introduce an entire group of students to North Frisian (although I'm pretty sure many were still expecting me to talk about West Frisian...), but my maybe favorite part was a visit to the [Rathskeller at Memorial Union](#). The Rathskeller is a restaurant/pub/dining experience designed like a German beer hall. I'd been here many times while a grad student in Madison, but I never paid attention to the paintings and text on the walls until this trip, when I discovered our most cited expression from the Ranzelberg Guestbook in a very prominent place on the wall near the entrance (third pic below).

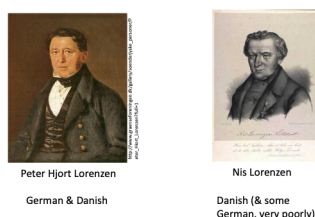
1. *Historical sociolinguistics in the digital age: Methods and approaches for analyzing multilingualism in the Duchy of Schleswig*. Language Sciences, College of Letters & Science, University of Wisconsin – Madison.
2. *I thought Frisians were horses: Friesen, Friesisch, Nordfriesland (Frisians, Frisian, North Frisia)*. Hosted by the German and Dutch Graduate Student Association (GDGSA). University of Wisconsin – Madison.



May was spent with several trips to the State Archive of Schleswig-Holstein (Landesarchiv SH) in preparation for traveling to Bristol for the [20th anniversary edition](#) of the **HiSoN** conference. Both Andre and I gave talks related to the multilingual experience in the Duchy of Schleswig in the 19th century. Andre's focus was on the students attending the teaching seminary in Tønder and I focused on some aspects relating to language policy among policy

advisors in the Estates Assembly of the Duchy of Schleswig. This is a large part of the project's "policy" component. You might also remember it more as the daytime drama, "A Tale of Two Lorenzens" which was in its first season, but has been renewed at least twice since then and will be airing the newest season in Madison, WI in October 2026.

A Tale of Two* Lorenzens



*In 1836 (and 1840-1844) there were three men with the last name Lorenzen in the Assembly and in 1838 there were four.

If anyone saw me in between panels at HiSoN, I was likely working on transcriptions or going through thousands of pages of meeting minutes from the sessions of the Estates Assembly, which were important for an article I was working on that needed to be drafted prior to submitting the extension application. As nearly all of the members of the ViNoRHM advisory board were present in Bristol, it was there that I began some of the planning for the concluding workshop and was able to touch base with everyone about the extension application.

June and July were spent with more archival visits and the application for the extension of the project (made much more coherent after a long planning conversation with advisory board member, Mark Richard Lauersdorf—thanks, Mark!). For those not familiar – for this particular application, the extension process is *exactly* the same as for the original application. That means writing another 25-page proposal (with – in my case – an additional 121 pages of appendixes, letters of intent from cooperation partners, drafts of publications submitted *and* accepted for publication...sorry reviewers!) and going through the entire review process again. This means field-specific experts (*Begutachtende*), DFG internal reviews from field-related experts (*Fachkollegium*), final review and approval from the main committee (*Hauptausschuss*). After my extension application was submitted in mid-July, I took a break. Enjoyed some summer sun in Flensburg. (Yes, sun happens here sometimes!).

In 2024's newsletter I talked a bit about naming practices and my thoughts on that relating to North Frisian and the resulting article from the conference organized by the Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache (IDS Mannheim) ([Sprach\(en\)politik in Deutschland: Perspektiven auf Sprachminderheiten- und Mehrsprachigkeitskonstellationen](#)) (Sept. 2024), was published early in 2026 and can be accessed here:

Litty, Samantha M., Ruth Kircher, & Lena Terhart. 2026. Minderheitensprache, *heritage language* oder Familiensprache? Überlegungen zur Sprachbegrifflichkeit am Beispiel des Nordfriesischen. *Sprachpolitik und Sprachenpolitik*. 1. IDS-Verlag Mannheim.
DOI: <https://ids-pub.bsz-bw.de/frontdoor/index/index/docId/13633>

The discussion at the workshop **Haugen Revisited: Theoretical and Empirical Realities of Heritage Communities** (held in Uppsala, May 2024) also led to a paper with Ruth and Lena called “Minority *and* heritage language? North Frisian and Haugen’s ecology of language” which will be part of a volume called *Haugen Revisited: Theoretical and Empirical Realities of Heritage Communities* edited by Angela Hoffman and Joshua R. Brown, and is slated to be published with the Wisconsin University Press in late 2026.

In the 2024 newsletter I also claimed that 2025 was gearing up to focus on the language “policy” component of the project and I think that ended up being true. Despite the technical setbacks in March and the stepping back from ViNoRHM 1.0 in June/July to consider what ViNoRHM 2.0 could look like and what I would need for that application, I’m still pretty happy with where things ended up. A good chunk of the fall was spent figuring out how to pivot from the lost project parts from earlier in the year (do it all again? or focus on something else for now?) and eventually gearing up to plan and organize the concluding workshop.

2026: The ViNoRHM Concluding Workshop was held in Flensburg on January 13 and 14, 2026. I, personally, had a blast. I think nearly everyone who has played a major role in advising and supporting this project from the beginning was present and there were several new(er) faces as well. The talks were fantastic and everyone was delightful. Even with my intent to keep it relatively small I think we had 30-35 attendees. The discussions during and after were supportive and helpful. I really couldn't be happier with how the event turned out, so thank you to everyone who helped and attended! We followed up the workshop with an excursion to Sønderborg to the *Deutsches Museum Nordschleswig* (but no Danish ice cream at the harbor promenade in January unfortunately!).

Concluding-Workshop

VISIBILIZING NORMATIVE REGIONAL HISTORICAL MULTILINGUALISM (VINORHM): IDEOLOGY, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

DATE: 13th-14th January, 2026 | TIME: 10.00am-17.00pm

The workshop focuses on current research on language ideology, language policy, and language practices with a special focus on the visibilization of historical multilingualism in regional everyday languages.

Key research findings, panel discussion, networking and guest lectures by:

- Andreas Krogull (Zurich)
- Markus Schiegg (Fribourg)
- Doris Stolberg (IDS Mannheim)
- Gijsbert Rutten (Leiden) & Rik Vosters (Brussels)

The workshop is organized by Dr. Samantha M. Litty (Institute for Frisian Studies and Minority Research). For more info, visit www.ices.de

Logos: DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Europa-Universität Viadrina, Interdisciplinary Centre for European Studies



Surprisingly, I don't have many pics from the workshop – I guess I was busy doing other things? – so not all the speakers are shown here... but instead of being sad about that, let's take a moment to notice how the picture from our outing to Sønderborg looks an awful lot like a late 90s – early 2000s boyband album cover.

Results / Publications from ViNoRHM 1:

Back in early 2025, after Anita convinced me to apply for continued funding, I was in touch with the DFG to find out more about the process and see if I could get any tips. This actually made me have a 30-second freak out, because I was told – rightfully so – that one of the ways they consider continued funding is to consider outputs – aka publications – from the first funding phase. I was convinced that I had nothing to show for the first years until I actually sat down and made a list, which thankfully, the DFG tells you exactly how they want you to make such lists. (The following is from my application list.)

Publications with specific ViNoRHM content:

1. Litty, Samantha M. & Jan Momme Penning. 2025. Semi-public writings in the Duchy of Schleswig in the 19th century. In Samantha M. Litty & Nils Langer (eds.), *Language Ideology, Policy, and Practice: Focus on minoritized languages past and present*, 89–115. Historical Sociolinguistics. Studies on Language and Society in the Past. Berlin: Peter Lang. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3726/b21997>
2. Hermann, Andre & Samantha M. Litty. 2024. Tønder Teaching Seminary: *Biernamen* as an indicator of group belonging. In Kristoffer Friis Bøegh & Mette-Marie Møller Svendsen (eds.), *Ord & Sag* 44. Aarhus, DK: Peter Skautrup Centret for Jysk Dialektforskning. ISSN: 2794-6754. Open Access: <https://tidsskrift.dk/ordogsag/issue/view/11802>
3. Litty, Samantha M. 2024. Multilingual Memory Albums in Wisconsin and the Duchy of Schleswig. In Rachyl Hietpas, Mirva Johnson, Laura Moquin, Charlotte Vanhecke & Joe Salmons (eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 13th Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA 13)*, 28–36. Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies 14(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15845/bells.v14i1.4337>

One additional paper was created in the ViNoRHM context, specifically relating to the ‘Policy’ aspect and has been submitted for publication in a secret *Festschrift*, so *iykyk*, otherwise check back in about 6 months and maybe I can tell you more then. ;-)

Public outreach pieces, created in the ViNoRHM context:

4. Litty, Samantha M. 2024. Das Frauenbild im Ranzelberger Gästebuch. *Nordfriesland* 226. Bredstedt: Nordfriisk Instituut. ISSN: 0029-1196.
5. Litty, Samantha M., Jan Momme Penning, Andre Hermann & Ilka Thomsen. 2023. Mit spitzer Feder – Was das „Ranzelberger Gästebuch“ erzählt. *Nordfriesland* 223. Bredstedt: Nordfriisk Instituut. ISSN: 0029-1196.

Additionally, *Schriftschätze der Seminaristen am Tønderaner Lehrerseminar: Unterschiede, Parallelen, Zeitgeist, Bedeutung* ‘Written treasures of trainee-teachers at the Tønder Teaching Seminary: Differences, parallels, zeitgeist, importance’ will appear as part of an edited volume to be published late 2026 or early 2027 by the Verlag Nordfriisk Instituut. It will include a transcription, translation and historical commentary of the meeting minutes of the Frisian Club at the Tønder Teaching Seminary (1874-1894). Initially I just helped with the transcription but later wrote a chapter on the meetings minutes and the Ranzelberg Guestbook, both of which are of historical, cultural, and linguistic value to the North Frisian community (and beyond).

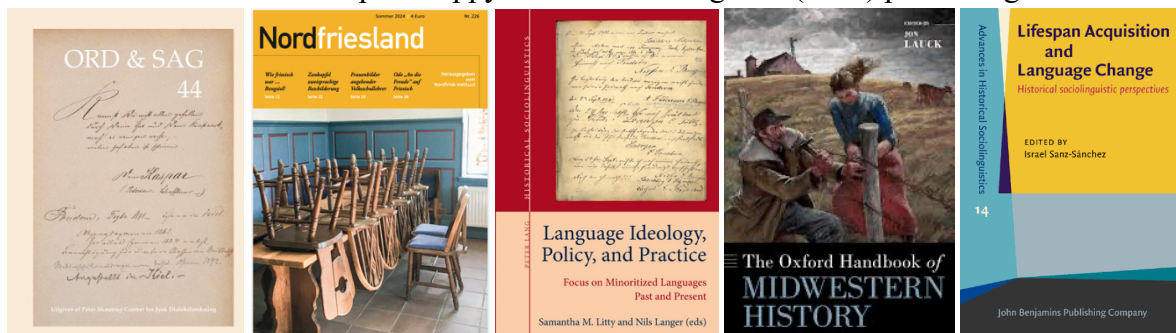
Edited volumes, for which I served as first editor:

6. Litty, Samantha M. & Karoline Kühn (eds.). 2025. *Selected Proceedings of the 14th Annual Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA 14)*. Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies (BeLLS). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15845/bells.v15i1>
7. Litty, Samantha M. & Nils Langer (eds.). 2025. Language Ideology, Policy, and Practice: Focus on minoritized languages past and present. *Historical Sociolinguistics. Studies on Language and Society in the Past*, Peter Lang. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3726/b21997>

Additional publications from the past two years:

8. Kühl, Karoline & Samantha M. Litty. 2025. Methods in heritage language linguistics. In Samantha M. Litty & Karoline Kühl (eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 14th Annual Workshop on Immigrant Languages in the Americas (WILA 14)*, 1–6. Bergen Language and Linguistics Studies (BeLLS). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15845/bells.v15i1.4546>
9. Langer, Nils & Samantha M. Litty. 2025. Effects of ideology and policy on practices: Minoritized languages and varieties in historical sociolinguistics. In Samantha M. Litty & Nils Langer (eds.), *Language Ideology, Policy, and Practice: Focus on minoritized languages past and present*, 1–14. Historical Sociolinguistics. Studies on Language and Society in the Past. Berlin: Peter Lang. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3726/b21997>
10. Litty, Samantha M. 2025. The German Midwest. In Jon Lauck (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Midwestern History* 283–301. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: [97801909333012](https://doi.org/10.1017/97801909333012).
11. Litty, Samantha M. 2024. Language dominance in Wisconsin German and English Varieties: Voice Onset Time and Final Obstruent Neutralization, 1863–2013. In Israel Sanz-Sanchez (ed.), *Language acquisition across the lifespan and language change: Applications in historical sociolinguistics*, 234–263. Advances in Historical Sociolinguistics. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/ahs.14>
12. Litty, Samantha M. & Joseph Salmons. Segmental Phenomena in Germanic: Consonants. In Sebastian Kürschner & Antje Dammel (eds.), *Oxford Encyclopedia of Germanic Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.013.964>

Now, of course, several of these don't have much – or anything? – to do with ViNoRHM, and specifically the last three on this list (publications 10-12) were written and already somewhere in the publishing process before ViNoRHM 1.0 even started. But even if we were to ignore that fact completely – which I'm not going to do, because *everything* in the past informs everything else in the future – I'm still quite happy with where things are (were) publishing-wise.



Back to the future / Sept 2026:

Officially ViNoRHM 2.0 / Phase 2 / The North Frisian Element has been a go since September 1 and will run until **31 August 2029**. That means you can expect to hear from me again more regularly, with “end of year” updates likely in the fall rather than early in the new year.

And just because the project wasn't being funded and I wasn't moving things along very quickly between January and now, doesn't mean nothing was happening. I was able to present results from Phase 1 at [*Nordfriesland in Kiel III*](#) in February, and to introduce Phase 2 at the [*Humboldt-Kolleg, Making Minorities Visible: Language as a Medium of Inclusion and Exclusion*](#) in Vienna in July. I also was invited to be part of the North Frisian contingent at an inter-Frisian annual workshop for which the topic this year was *Kulinarik* (culinary arts/cuisine). And most recently I was part of the group presenting on various aspects of the meeting minutes of the Frisian Club (1874-1894) at the Tønder Teaching Seminary, where my contribution was to talk about the meeting minutes' relation to the Ranzelberger Guestbook.

- *Speisen und Getränke in einem Landgasthof am Ochsenweg im 19. Jh.: Hinweise aus dem sog. „Ranzelberger Gästebuch“*. Steinhausgespräch: Friesische Kulinarik. Workshop. Steinhaus Bunderhee. (Organizers: Heiko Suhr, Michael Hermann, Han Nijdam, Christoph Schmidt).
- Riecken, Claas, Franziska Böhmer, Antje Arfsten, Lena Terhart & Samantha Litty. *Zwischen Bier und alten Sagen: Der Friesenclub am Lehrerseminar in Tondern (1874–1894)*. 34. Nordfriesisches Sommerinstitut. Nordfriisk Instituut. Bredstedt.

Besides all those fun updates, there are a couple changes to the **Advisory Board and the Local Cooperation Partners**. [*Karoline Kühl*](#) (Institute for Danish Studies at the EUF) has agreed to join the project's Advisory Board. From her own research in and as the Director of the Center for Small and Regional Languages ([*KURS*](#)), she's very familiar with the region and other aspects of this project. Additionally, [*Christoph Winter*](#) head of the Frisian Studies Department and *Nordfriesisches Wörterbuchstelle* 'North Frisian Dictionary Department' at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel and [*Robert Kleih*](#), Director of the [*Ferring Stiftung*](#) (Alkersum, Föhr) and [*Mareike Böhmer*](#), archivist (Ferring Stiftung) have joined the project as Local Cooperation Partners. I'm very glad to have these four on board and look forward to working with them over the next few years of the project!

I think that's probably about enough for now...

What do you mean I've written almost 3500 words of project updates so far and still haven't actually told you what ViNoRHM 2.0 is?!? Trust me, I'm as surprised as you are. ;-) **tl;dr:** In short, ViNoRHM 2.0 is a continuation of Phase 1, but the focus moving forward will be on multilingualism in the North Frisian language area. There are four main areas of research: multilingual contextualization, norms & influenc(r)s, processes of standardization, and the role of women. These will be researched in three primary work packages:

1. Position and interaction of North Frisian in the regional multilingual context
2. norms and influence(r)s on standardization processes in North Frisian
3. Women in North Frisian writing

Still not enough? Ok, here's an abridged version of the summary that went out with the application:

The project builds from work initiated in ViNoRHM 1.0. To deepen the understanding of the region's bi-/multilingual language history, and to highlight the intricacies of navigating daily language use in a minority language context, ViNoRHM 2.0 examines North Frisian in writing 'from below', created by everyday writers in informal contexts, and supplements this with data from experienced, well-known, or influential NF writers who wrote NF texts in more formal contexts, e.g., for local periodicals with a 'local or regional' focus. ViNoRHM 2.0 first reinterprets data collected in ViNoRHM 1.0 to contextualize NF writings in comparison to writings in neighboring languages in the 19th century, then traces the development and standardization processes that influence NF in contact with a majority language (and several additional smaller or regional varieties). By centering North Frisian writings by everyday writers from the 19th century – prior to codified norms or standardization attempts – and linking them with North Frisian writings and local/regional periodicals from the 20th century to the present, individual and community language practices are explored in a new way. Particular attention is paid to the role of women in this historical and minority language constellation, in an attempt to visibilize their impact on the region's cultural and linguistic history.

If that's not enough, you'll have to stay tuned! (You can check out the **ViNoRHM website**, which is still up and running and is the best place to check for updates and announcements (also in German), and I'll update it regularly: <https://www.uni-flensburg.de/vinorhm>)

grööttnis,
Sam



