

## [1640] An overlooked source of Wangerooge Frisian: The birthday invitation of Louwine Luths

Sune Gregersen

***Abstract.** The paper presents and discusses a hitherto overlooked text in Wangerooge Frisian, a short birthday invitation written in 1934 by the native speaker Louwine Luths. The text was first published in the members' bulletin of a local genealogical society, which is currently only available in print in a few German archives. In the paper I re-publish the birthday invitation – along with another short fragment of Wangerooge Frisian from the bulletin – and discuss a number of salient linguistic features. The two short texts are of particular interest because they were written down by native speakers of Wangerooge Frisian.*

### 1. Introduction

For a linguistic variety that went extinct in the early 20th century, Wangerooge Frisian is very well documented. Thanks in large part to Heinrich Georg Ehrentraut (1798-1866) and his primary consultant Anna Metta Claßen (1774-1846), a substantial corpus of Wangerooge Frisian texts survives, most of it published in Ehrentraut (1849, 1854) and Ehrentraut & Versloot (1996). Further texts can be found e.g. in Littmann (1922) and Siebs (1923). A brief survey of the documentation is given by Versloot (2001: 423-424); for a more detailed overview see Versloot (1996: xii-xix). These texts were all recorded by (formally educated or autodidact) linguists from the mouths of speakers; as far as I am aware, no text written by a native speaker has so far been mentioned in the scholarly literature.

In this paper, I re-publish and discuss two such texts, a birthday invitation and a short rhyme written down in the 1930s by two elderly Wangerooge Frisian speakers.<sup>1</sup> They were originally published in the bulletin of the Sippenverband der Alt-Wangerooger, a small genealogical society based in Varel. The birthday invitation is short, running to just 150 words, and as I

---

1. This work was made possible by an internationalisation fellowship from the Carlsberg Foundation (project no. CF21-0502), which is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are also due to an anonymous reviewer and the editors of *Us Wurk* for a number of helpful suggestions and corrections.

will discuss in more detail below, it contains little lexical or grammatical material which is not already known. The rhyme is even shorter, only about 25 words long, and had already been published before in different versions. However, the two texts from the bulletin are of particular interest because they were written down by native speakers of Wangerooge Frisian.

In the following, I will first give some background information on the bulletin where the texts originally appeared and the circumstances of its publication (§2). I then present the two texts and discuss some linguistic features observed in them (§3). In the concluding discussion, I point to a few directions for further research on late Wangerooge Frisian and the *Sippenverband der Alt-Wangeroooger* (§4). The appendix reprints the table of contents of the bulletin, which is of historical interest to Frisian studies but currently not available in digital format.

## 2. *Sippenverband der Alt-Wangeroooger*

Wangerooge Frisian was the native language of the few hundred inhabitants of Wangerooge until the middle of the 19th century. The earliest known documentation was collected by two natural scientists, Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767-1811), who visited the island around 1800 (see Versloot 1995), and Lorenz Oken (1779-1851), who visited it in the winter of 1806-7 (see Bräuning-Oktavio 1958). The bulk of the surviving material, however, was collected by H. G. Ehrentraut on several field trips in the period 1837-41.

Only shortly after Ehrentraut had collected his corpus, Wangerooge was struck by a flood, the so-called Neujahrsflut of 1855, which destroyed many of the houses on the island. In the following years, most of the inhabitants moved to the mainland, the majority to the small settlement Neu-Wangerooge near Varel. The community assimilated to (Low) German relatively quickly: A census in 1890 found 32 speakers of Wangerooge Frisian (Kollmann 1891: 384-385), and during a trip to Varel and Neu-Wangerooge in 1927, Th. Siebs counted seven speakers, all of them around 80 years or older (Siebs 1931: 70). According to B. E. Siebs (1954: 161-162), the last speakers were Heinrich Christian Luths and Hayo Hayen, who both died in 1950, and this is often cited as the year when Wangerooge Frisian went extinct (see e.g. Slofstra & Hoekstra 2023: 13; Winter 2022). However, it is quite possible that these two were semi-speakers or “rememberers” rather than fluent speakers of the language (for discussion see Versloot 1996: xi).

While the Wangerooge Frisian language was thus given up within a few generations after the Neujahrsflut, a sense of identification with – and romanticisation of – the “old” island culture lived on at least among some

descendants of the community. This is clear from the publication under scrutiny here, the members' bulletin of the Sippenverband der Alt-Wangerooger, i.e. the "Genealogical Society of Old Wangeroogers". This publication, which appeared in the period 1934-39 under the heading *Mitteilungen*, contains articles on genealogy, historical documents, and other material related to the history of the families who lived on Wangerooge until the mid-19th century. Two short contributions on the Wangerooge Frisian language also appeared, which will be discussed below. Because the bulletin has not been digitised and appears to be available only in a few German archives, I decided to transcribe and re-publish the Wangerooge Frisian material in order to make it available to a broader readership. Before presenting the linguistic material, however, some additional background information on the original publication venue is in order.

The Sippenverband der Alt-Wangerooger was founded in 1933, apparently at the initiative of the school teacher and amateur historian Otto Luths (1895-1973), who was also the editor of and main contributor to the members' bulletin (Luths 1934-39). Luths had previously published at least one short article on Wangerooge Frisian, discussing the word *strick* 'footpath in the Wadden Sea' (Luths 1929), but as I will discuss below, his contributions to the bulletin of the Sippenverband suggest that he was not himself a speaker of the language. The bulletin served as the official newsletter of the Sippenverband and published material both on the history of the Wangerooge families and on the island more generally. The issues were 8 or 12 pages long and also contained obituaries and other "family news" (*Familiennachrichten*) on birthdays, weddings, etc. Occasionally interspersed between the articles and news items are various romantic poems, always with a maritime theme (cf. titles such as "The old captain", "By the sea", "The dune"). In the fifth issue of the bulletin, a full list of contents of all five issues appeared, which I have transcribed and included in the Appendix.

In the first issue of the bulletin, a list of members was published, which was updated with new members in issues 2-4. From these lists it appears that the Sippenverband eventually had about 70 members in the late 1930s, almost all of them based in northwestern Germany (e.g. Varel, Wilhelmshaven, Wangerooge, Bremen, Hamburg). A few of these also contributed articles to the bulletin, but the great majority of the content comes from the hand of Otto Luths, who according to the introduction to the first issue was working on the genealogy of all the old Wangerooge families. Little can be said about any other activities of the Sippenverband, but at least the early issues of the members' bulletin show clear *Völkisch* influence. Examples

from the first issue, dated “15. Julmond [December] 1934”, include the following:<sup>2</sup> In the introduction, it is explained that the Sippenverband should not just study mere dates, but also “the life of the ancestors, their peculiarities, talents, illnesses [...] with a view to the laws of racial hygiene and genetics” [das Leben der Vorfahren, ihre Besonderheiten, Begabungen, Krankheiten [...] im Hinblick auf die Gesetze der Rassenhygiene und Vererbungslehre] (p. 2). On the same page, under the heading “Lese Frucht”, a quote appears from one “Professor Dr. H. Lundberg” in Uppsala on the importance of strong family ties for a well-organised state. This is clearly a reference to the eugenicist Herman Lundborg (1868-1943), who served as the first director of the Swedish Government Institute for Race Biology (Statens institut för rasbiologi).<sup>3</sup> Finally, on the last page the format of the bulletin is said to have been adjusted shortly before going to press in order to conform to the guidelines of the Reichsverein für Sippenforschung und Wappenkunde (RSW). This association was established in 1934 by the genealogist and longtime NSDAP member Achim Gercke (1902-1997) in order to coordinate and surveil the work of local genealogical societies (on Gercke see e.g. Klee 2003: 179-180). Luths also notes that he has decided to join the RSW “in the interest of the genealogical society” [im Interesse des Sippenverbandes] (p. 8), but does not mention whether or how he contributed to the work of the RSW.

It is unclear what became of the Sippenverband der Alt-Wangerooger and when and why it ceased its activities. The members’ bulletin seems to have folded after only five issues, the last appearing on 1 March 1939 after a delay of almost a year. In a short notice (“Zu dieser Folge”, p. 11), Otto Luths announces that a planned article on Wangerooge in the Napoleonic period (*die Franzosenzeit*) has been postponed to issue 6, so there were clearly plans to continue publication. However, Luths also complains about a lack of funds and urgently asks the members of the society to pay any outstanding membership fees. Similar calls for overdue payments (and voluntary donations) had already appeared in issues 1 and 2. Presumably, the problems with covering the publication costs were at least part of the reason for the discontinuation of the bulletin; whatever role the German

- 
2. The “old” Germanic names of the months are also used in issue 2 (“1. Heuert 1935”, i.e. 1 July) and, alongside the received German name, in issue 3 (“1. März/Lenzing 1936”, i.e. 1 March). In issues 4 and 5 only the received name is used.
  3. On this institute and on Herman Lundborg and his circle, see e.g. Björkman & Widmalm (2010) and references there. I have not been able to identify the exact source of the passage quoted in the bulletin of the Sippenverband.

invasion of Poland in September 1939 and the outbreak of World War II may have played is unknown.

As already mentioned, I have found no references to the Sippenverband or its members' bulletin in any of the literature on Wangerooge Frisian. I was only made aware of the existence of the bulletin after a search in the Digital Collections of the Landesbibliothek Oldenburg turned up a short notice in a 1935 newspaper mentioning the Sippenverband.<sup>4</sup> The bulletin is not available in digital format, and according to the digitisation service of the German National Library (Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, e-mail dated 10 May 2023) the publication is still under copyright protection and thus cannot be digitised legally. Hence, for the time being the bulletin has to be reviewed on location. I have managed to identify five copies of it in German archives and libraries and include a list of these in the bibliography. The material presented in the following was transcribed from the copy in the Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv [Oldenburg], Dep 80.

### *3. The Wangerooge Frisian material*

#### *3.1. Description of the texts*

The Wangerooge Frisian texts are contained in the first two issues of the bulletin. In issue 1, a short letter appears under the heading “Einladung zum Geburtstag” (p. 6). This is a birthday invitation written to Otto Luths by his aunt Louwine Luths (1868-1939) in 1934.<sup>5</sup> Below the text a short glossary is included, almost certainly by Otto Luths. In issue 2, a short discussion of Wangerooge Frisian appears under the heading “Von der Wangerooger Sprache” (p. 8). Here Otto Luths corrects two mistakes in the earlier glossary and adds a few comments sent to him by an anonymous reader. He then prints a version of a traditional Candlemass rhyme which had previously been published in a different version by Ehrentraut (1854: 4), Th. Siebs (1923: 246), and B. E. Siebs (1928: 65), and discusses an ostensible mistranslation in B. E. Siebs' version (see below).

At first glance, these two sources of Wangerooge Frisian may seem rather disappointing. They are both very short, running to about 150 and 25 words, respectively, and there is little linguistic material in them which is not

---

4. “Vom Sippenverband der Alt-Wangerooger”, *Jeversches Wochenblatt* (Beilage), 25 Jan 1935. <https://digital.lb-oldenburg.de/lbolrz/periodical/pageview/1024556> (last accessed 20 Nov 2023).

5. According to a short notice in the *Oldenburger Nachrichten* on 15 June 1939, Louwine Luths died in 1939 at the age of 71. Unless this information is inaccurate, it can be inferred from the birthday invitation that her date of birth was 4 December 1868.

already known. Furthermore, different versions of the Candlemass rhyme had already appeared in print before. However, I believe that the two short texts are still very valuable for our knowledge of Wangerooge Frisian. As far as I am aware, they are the only fragments of the language which were actually written down by native speakers, and they thus give us an impression of how these speakers adapted German orthographical conventions to represent the language. In addition, the two fragments are also some of the very latest sources, having been written down only a few years before the last speaker passed away. I thus thought it pertinent to transcribe and publish them here with some linguistic commentary.

### 3.2. *Birthday invitation of Louwine Luths*

The birthday invitation is printed in issue one (p. 6) with a short introduction by Otto Luths where he writes the following:

Louwine Luths, die ja wohl fast allen Sippenmitgliedern bekannt ist, (manchem auch wohl als „Herz“ bekannt, womit sie den Vogel – und das mit Recht – unter allen Wangerooger Kosenamen abgeschossen hat), hat sich das Vergnügen gemacht, eine Einladung zu ihrem Geburtstag auf Wangeroogisch zu schreiben. Dieses seltene Dokument, das zu den letzten Aufzeichnungen in der Sprache unserer Vorfahren gehört, sei hiermit bekanntgegeben:

After this follows the birthday invitation, which I have transcribed observing the line divisions in the original text:

Wilhelmshaven, den 29. 11. 1934.

Ljoef Otto!

Tiesdi token wüku, 4. Dez., is min gebursdi. Ik wull nu man glied in varut twidder, dat ik denn sa'n litk fier in us famili makí wull, un dat ik Di hierto früntelk onlidder. Ik hoppi, dat Du mi ju fraud makest. Emil, Gretel un Erich hoppi ik denn uk hier to schoen, 5  
all da Luthsens sind denn bioren un wull wi denn'n netten namedi verlibb.

Nu tonk ik Di noch far Din koert (huskoop). Puppi wer middewüku in Voel un hä deit hus verlauket, ju kun Di aber nich mo upseik, ju heid nein tid mo, ju is noch varmiddis fäder na Ollnburg farrin.

Wutt ik Di mit ditt sgriewen in us memmsprok weil'n littken gefallen do? Du 10  
häst ju var langerer tid moel dan wunsk utsprickin.

Also denn bet tiesdi, denn wull wi us noch mo vertähl.

Mit hartelk grötnis von us triu.

Din  
bopp Louwine. 15

Below the letter, a short glossary is printed in smaller type, explaining some words and expressions which were presumably thought difficult for German readers. The indication “ß-ch...” after *schoen* (l. 5 in the letter) is most likely an instruction to pronounce the word with an initial cluster [sj] rather than [ʃ], the usual pronunciation of <sch> in German.

Anmerkungen:	twidder	= erzählen	upseik	= aufsuchen
	onliddy	= einladen	nein tid mo	= keine Zeit mehr
	schoen (ß-ch...)	= sehen, schauen	fäder farrin	= weiter gefahren
	bioren	= eingeladen	memmsprok	= Muttersprache
	Voel	= Varel	utsprickin	= ausgesprochen
	verlauket	= besichtigt	bopp	= Tante väterlicherseits

That some of the Wangerooge Frisian words were indeed less transparent for German readers is suggested by two mistakes in the glossary, which were corrected by Otto Luths in issue 2 (p. 8).<sup>6</sup> The word *bioren* (l. 6) means ‘together’ [beisammen], not ‘invited’ [eingeladen]. And at least according to all other known sources, *bopp* (l. 15) refers to a maternal aunt [Tante mütterlicherseits] rather than a paternal aunt [Tante väterlicherseits].<sup>7</sup> The fact that Louwine Luths refers to herself as *bopp* despite apparently being Otto Luths’ paternal aunt suggests that the word may have had a wider use than the one reported in the 19th-century sources, at least for some speakers.

In the remainder of this subsection, some linguistic comments on the birthday invitation itself will be made. The line numbers are given between brackets; “Eh.” refers to the Ehrentraut corpus (Ehrentraut 1849, 1854; Ehrentraut & Versloot 1996).

<i>Tiesdi</i> (3)	Corresponding to Eh. <i>tízdî</i> ‘Tuesday’. The spelling <s> for (expected) voiced [z] is also seen in <i>us</i> ‘our’ (10).
<i>token</i> (3)	Corresponding to Eh. <i>tókum</i> ‘coming, next’.
<i>gebursdi</i> (3)	Not recorded in earlier material. Compound of the High German loan element <i>geburs-</i> ‘birth-’ and <i>dî</i> ‘day’.

6. The passage correcting the mistakes reads “Eine Zuschrift veranlaßt mich – solche Zuschriften sind immer ein erfreuliches Zeichen für ein starkes Interesse! –, zu einer Richtigstellung: „bioren“ muß mit „beisammen“ und „bopp“ mit „Tante mütterlicherseits“ übersetzt werden. (Tante väterlicherseits = pei.)”

7. Cf. Ehrentraut (1849: 19): “djû bop, der Mutter Schwester” and Seetzen c. 1800: “*Bobb*’ Mutter Schwester, die Tante” (Versloot 1995: 79).

## US WURK LXXIII (2024), p. 56

- twidder* (3) Corresponding to *quidder*, which is frequently found in Eh. The variant form *twidder* is also recorded in the earlier material, however (cf. Ehrentraut 1849: 16; Versloot 1996: xii).
- fier* (4) Not recorded as a simplex noun in earlier material, but cf. Eh. *fir* ‘celebrate’ and *firdi* ‘holiday’. Note Louwine Luths’ spelling of initial [f] as either <f> or <v> according to the spelling of the High German cognate, e.g. *fier* and *famili* vs. *var* and *vertähl*.
- onliddar* (4) Not recorded in this form in earlier material. Apparently a conflation of two historical etyma under the influence of German *laden* ‘invite’ or ‘load’. Eh. gives the verb *lATHi* for ‘invite’, whereas *ónliTHE* is said to mean ‘load’ a ship or gun [ins Schiff, auch eine Flinte laden]. The 1SG form *onliddar* used by Louwine Luths in the sense ‘invite’ appears to be a variant of *ónliTHE* ‘load’ with word-final r-insertion (cf. Hoekstra 1998: 40) and fortition of [ð] to [d].
- netten* (6) Expected MASC.SG.INDF form of the adjective; cf. also *littken* ‘small’ (10).
- tonk* (7) For earlier *thonk*. The realisation of historical [θ] as [t] is already recorded by Ehrentraut (1849: 16) and was possibly already noticed by Oken in 1806 (“Nebstdem haben sie den englischen Zungenstoß *th*, der aber verschieden ausgesprochen wird; – viele können es gar nicht”; Bräuning-Oktavio 1958: 22).
- huskoep* (7) The word between brackets is apparently a reminder of the topic of a postcard sent by Otto Luths. It clearly consists of the words *hûs* ‘house’ and *kô,p* ‘purchase’, but is not attested as a compound in Eh.
- varmiddis* (9) Not recorded in this form in earlier material; the noun *farmidi* ‘(late) morning’ is recorded by Eh. The derived adverbs (*des*) *midis* ‘at noon’ (from *midí* ‘noon’) and *des nâmidis* ‘in the afternoon’ (from *nâmidí* ‘afternoon’) are also attested.
- Wutt ... do?* (10) Insubordinate complement clause expressing a question or deliberation (‘Am I doing you a small favour with this letter, I wonder?’). The construction is also recorded by Eh., cf. e.g. *wut de breid al úpmacket is?* ‘Is the bride already dressed up?’ (Ehrentraut 1854: 26).
- memmsprok* (10) The form in the Eh. material is *mâmsprôk*. According to a comment sent to Otto Luths by an anonymous reader (issue 2, p. 8), the word *memmtôel* was used earlier.
- gefallen* (10) High German loanword not recorded in earlier material.
- ju* (11) Unexpected form of the particle corresponding to German *ja* (Eh. *jâ*). Possibly a misreading or misprint.



- var langerer tid* (11) Probably a calque of High German *vor längerer Zeit*. The comparative recorded by Eh. is *länger*.
- hartelk* (13) Not recorded in earlier material; cf. West Frisian *hertlik*, Mooring *hartlik*, Low German *hartelk*, High German *herzlich*, etc.
- triu* (13) Recorded as *thriû* in Eh.; cf. *tonk* (7). The FEM/NEUT form of the numeral, which is expected for a mixed-gender group (the MASC form *thrê* is reserved for all-male groups).

### 3.3. The Candlemass rhyme

The short article “Von der Wangerooger Sprache” in issue 2 (p. 8) begins with an announcement that this was supposed to be a recurring series in the bulletin, a plan which was evidently not realised. Then follow the corrections to the glossary in issue 1 which Otto Luths had received from an anonymous reader (see above) along with a few observations on language change:

Aus dem Briefe geht übrigens deutlich das Gesetz der Sprachentwicklung, in diesem Falle die Einwanderung hochdeutscher bzw. niederdeutscher Wörter und Redensarten hervor. Vor 100 Jahren sprachen die Insulaner noch anders als die noch heute das Wangeroogische Beherrschenden. Manche Wörter sind ausgestorben bzw. verändert.

Für „memmsprok“ sagte man früher „memmtôel“, für „triu“ „thriu“, für „hus“ „hûzû“ (z = scharfes s).<sup>8</sup>

The remainder of the article is devoted to a short rhyme which Otto Luths had received from Heinrich Luths, Wilhelmshaven. He introduces it in the following way:

Marine-Obermeister a. D. Heinrich Luths, Wilhelmshaven, der sich schon wiederholt um die Erhaltung der Wangerooger Sprache verdient gemacht hat, hat einen alten Kinderreim aufgeschrieben, der auch schon in Ehrentrauts „Friesisches Archiv“ (1854), jedoch in anderer Form enthalten und von Benno Eide Siebs in seinem Buche „Die Wangeroger“ wiederholt und übersetzt worden ist. Ein Vergleich dieser beiden Formen ist nicht uninteressant und bekräftigt das oben bezgl. der Sprachentwicklung Gesagte.

The version of the rhyme published in the bulletin thus appears to have been written down by Heinrich Luths himself, making it the second Wangerooge

---

8. The spelling <hûzû> strongly suggests that this form was taken from *Friesisches Archiv*. Otto Luths appears to have overlooked that this was actually the plural form; the singular is simply *hûs* (cf. Ehrentraut 1849: 19).

Frisian source written by a speaker of the language. The older version which Otto Luths refers to is found in Ehrentraut (1854: 4) and with slightly adapted spelling and a translation in B. E. Siebs (1928: 65). Th. Siebs (1923: 246) also prints the same version in phonetic spelling. The bulletin of the Sippenverband reprints B. E. Siebs' version ("ältere Form") and translation alongside the one by Heinrich Luths ("neue Form"):

ältere Form	neue Form	
liáchtmsdii,	ljachtmsdi,	1
den óóent de ii,	denn oent d'ie,	
den kálwert de kii,	denn kalwert d' ki,	
den búlert de sjen,	denn kokelt d' henn,	
den kóókelt de han,	denn bullert d' schenn,	5
den flidert da schul,	denn sind all d' henen	
den sint al daa heen ful.	full dull bull.	
Übersetzung (B. E. Siebs):	Übersetzung (H. Luths):	
Lichtmeßtag.	Lichtmeßtag.	
Dann lammen die Mutterschafe, (falsch!)	Dann balzt die Ente,	
Dann kalben die Kühe,	Dann kalbt die Kuh,	
Dann klötern die Butterkarnen,	Dann gackert die Henne,	
Dann gackern die Hennen,	Dann arbeitet die Butterkarne,	
Dann bewegen sich die Schollem,	Dann sind alle Ecken	
Dann sind alle Ecken voll.	Voll wütender Kreaturen.	

The first five lines of the two versions correspond closely, with the exception that lines 4 and 5 are interchanged. The final lines are different, however: in the "new" version the line about *daa schul* 'the place' is left out, and the rhyme ends with the three monosyllables *full dull bull* 'full of crazy creatures'. The lexical material in the new version is already known, but the text is of interest for another reason. Because Heinrich Luths' translation was printed as well, we can see how he interpreted the words, and it is clear that some of these must have become intransparent to this late speaker of Wangerooge Frisian.

According to Otto Luths, Siebs' translation "Dann lammen die Mutterschafe" is "vollkommen falsch übersetzt". The translation supplied by Heinrich Luths is indeed very different, "Dann balzt die Ente", i.e. 'Then the duck is courting'. However, the two words in question – *oent* and *ie* – are

clearly the cognates of West Frisian *ean(dz)je/ei*, Dutch *onen/ooi*, and (older) English *ean/ewe*, i.e. ‘have lambs’ and ‘female sheep’, respectively (see De Vries 1919: 268; Th. Siebs 1923: 252; Stiles 2018: 251). The translation “Dann lammen die Mutterschafe” must thus be the original one, but the fact that the speaker Heinrich Luths was not able to supply this suggests that the words *oent* and *ie* had become obsolete. Note that already in the middle of the 19th century, Ehrentraut was unsure about the translation of this line, suggesting that his consultant(s) did not know either. A grammatical form is also misidentified in line 3, which Heinrich Luths translates “Dann kalbt die Kuh”. However, *ki* is originally a plural form (cf. West Frisian *kij*), though this had apparently already been replaced by *kîer* by the time of Ehrentraut’s fieldwork. The suffixless form must thus have been intransparent as a plural form to Heinrich Luths.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

In this paper I have presented and discussed a hitherto overlooked text in Wangerooge Frisian along with a new version of a rhyme which has already been printed before. As I have argued above, while these are two very short fragments of Wangerooge Frisian, they are still of interest and relevance for the study of the language.

In the birthday invitation by Louwine Luths, I identified a number of words and word forms which I have not found in the earlier documentation. Some of these are German loanwords which may or may not have been present in the language when Ehrentraut documented it in the 19th century. Other words consist of material which is already known to us, but not attested in these particular forms. For instance, I have not found the compound *huskoep* ‘house purchase’ elsewhere, and the verb *onlidder* is probably a hitherto unattested variant of *ónlITHe* ‘load’, but with the meaning ‘invite’ because of influence from German *laden*. The adverb *varmiddis* ‘in the morning’ is of course fully expected on the basis of other Wangerooge Frisian time adverbs (*midís*, etc.), but this particular form had apparently not been recorded before. This shows the value of even a short text like Louwine Luths’ birthday invitation for our knowledge of an extinct linguistic variety like Wangerooge Frisian.

In the variant of the Candlemass rhyme written down by Heinrich Luths, there appears to be no lexical material not recorded before. What is especially interesting about this text is that Heinrich Luths’ German translation was also printed; from this it can be gleaned that some of the forms in the rhyme were intransparent at least to this particular speaker of “late”

Wangerooge Frisian. Given Ehrentraut's problems with translating the second line, two of them had at least been obscure since the first half of the 19th century.

The texts from the bulletin are interesting from the point of view of language change in receding varieties (sometimes referred to as language "death"). Other material from the final years of Wangerooge Frisian survives, namely the sound recordings made by Otto Bremer in 1924-25 (Schallarchiv der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg) and by Th. Siebs in 1927 (Lautarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin). As far as I am aware, transcriptions of this material have not been published, though attempts have been made to transcribe some of the latter recordings (Arjen Versloot, pers. comm.). A closer examination of this late Wangerooge Frisian material – and a comparison with the Ehrentraut corpus – would be interesting from a contact linguistic perspective.

However, the bulletin of the Sippenverband is not only of interest because of the linguistic material discussed in this paper. A closer investigation of the society and its activities in the 1930s would be very relevant for the history of the Wangerooge Frisian community and its eventual obsolescence. I have not been able to locate any references to the Sippenverband der Alt-Wangerooger anywhere in the literature, so there is certainly room for more research on this topic.

Finally, I would like to stress the point that the bulletin was only located because of modern technology: A search in the digital collection of the Landesbibliothek Oldenburg turned up a 1935 newspaper article which pointed me to the existence of the bulletin. With the increasing availability of scanned and OCR-optimised sources, it is not unlikely that additional fragments of Wangerooge Frisian – or other extinct dialects and languages – will turn up in the future.

*Kiel University*  
*s.gregersen@isfas.uni-kiel.de*

REFERENCES

- Björkman, Maria & Sven Widmalm. 2010. Selling eugenics: The case of Sweden. *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 64: 379-400.  
<http://doi.org/10.1098/rsnr.2010.0009>
- Bräuning-Oktavio, Hermann. 1958. Oken und Göttingen. *Berichte der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft zu Freiburg im Breisgau* 48: 5-64.  
[http://dlub.uni-freiburg.de/diglit/NL45\\_A421](http://dlub.uni-freiburg.de/diglit/NL45_A421)
- De Vries, Wobbe. 1919. Etymologische aantekeningen. *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* 38: 257-301.  
[https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/\\_tij003191901\\_01/\\_tij003191901\\_01\\_0021.php](https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_tij003191901_01/_tij003191901_01_0021.php)
- Ehrentraut, H. G. 1849. Mittheilungen aus der Sprache der Wangeroger. *Friesisches Archiv* 1: 3-109, 338-416.
- Ehrentraut, H. G. 1854. Mittheilungen aus der Sprache der Wangeroger. *Friesisches Archiv* 2: 1-84.
- Ehrentraut, H. G. & Arjen Versloot. 1996. "Mittheilungen aus der Sprache der Wangeroger": *De neilittenskip fan H. G. Ehrentraut oangeande it Eastfryske dialekt fan it eilân Wangereach út it argyf fan it Mariengymnasium yn Jever*. Ljouwert & Aurich: Fryske Akademy & Ostfriesische Landschaft.
- Hoekstra, Jarich. 1998. R-ynfoeging yn it Wangereagersk. *Us Wurk* 47: 25-48. <https://ugp.rug.nl/uswurk/article/view/27884>
- Klee, Ernst. 2003. *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich: Wer war was vor und nach 1945?* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
- Kollmann, Paul. 1891. Der Umfang des friesischen Sprachgebietes im Großherzogtum Oldenburg. *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 1: 377-401.  
<https://digital.lb-oldenburg.de/ihd/content/pageview/431010>
- Littmann, Enno. 1922. *Friesische Erzählungen aus Alt-Wangerooog: Letzte Klänge einer verschollenen Sprache*. Oldenburg: Littmann.
- Luths, Otto. 1929. Wi wult tomeen uur strick! *Die Tide: Niederdeutsche Heimatblätter* 6(5): 193-196.
- Luths, Otto (ed.). 1934-39. *Sippenverband der Alt-Wangerooger: Mitteilungen*. 5 issues. Varel: Allmers. (Periodical.)
- Siebs, Benno Eide. 1928. *Die Wangerooger: Eine Volkskunde*. Oldenburg: Littmann.
- Siebs, Benno Eide. 1954. Zur Volkskunde der Insel Wangeroog. *Oldenburger Jahrbuch* 54: 157-163.

- Siebs, Theodor. 1923. Vom aussterbenden Friesisch der Insel Wangeroog. *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mundarten* 18: 237-253.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40498287>
- Siebs, Theodor. 1931. Die Friesen und ihre Sprache. In C. Borchling & R. Muus (eds.), *Die Friesen*. Breslau: Hirt, 56-76.
- Slofstra, Bouke & Eric Hoekstra 2023. *Sprachlehre des Saterfriesischen 2022-2023*. Ljouwert: Fryske Akademy.
- Stiles, Patrick V. 2018. Of lambkins and piglets in Old English and beyond. *Transactions of the Philological Society* 116(2): 246-256.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-968X.12121>
- Versloot, Arjen. 1995. De Wangereager wurdlist fan U.J. Seetzen fan 1799. *Tydskrift foar Fryske Taalkunde* 10: 69-105.
- Versloot, Arjen. 1996. Ynlieding. In H. G. Ehrentraut & Arjen Versloot, *"Mittheilungen aus der Sprache der Wangeroger": De neilittenskip fan H. G. Ehrentraut oangeande it Eastfryske dialekt fan it eilân Wanger-each út it argyf fan it Mariengymnasium yn Jever*. Ljouwert & Aurich: Fryske Akademy & Ostfriesische Landschaft, ix-l.
- Versloot, Arjen. 2001. Das Wangeroogische. In Horst Haider Munske (ed.), *Handbuch des Friesischen*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 423-429.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110946925.423>
- Winter, Christoph. 2022. Frisian. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.013.938>

*Archival copies of the Mitteilungen*

Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig. ZB 35828. [Only issues 1-4]

Landschaftsbibliothek Aurich. GA 277.

Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Oldenburg. Dep 120, OGF 5053.

Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Oldenburg. Dep 80, Best. 271-63 Nr. 94.

Schlossmuseum Jever. XVIII - 32. [Only issues 1-4]

## US WURK LXXIII (2024), p. 63

### Appendix: Contents of the *Mitteilungen*

Transcribed from issue 5 (1939), p. 12.

Folge 1:

Vorwort.

Opa Christians. Nachruf für Christian Hinrich Christians (1 Bild).

Lese Frucht (Prof. Dr. H. Lundberg [sic], Uppsala).

Mitgliederliste.

Wiltert Oelrich Wilts 89 Jahre alt (Zeitungsbericht).

Der alte Kapitän. Gedicht von Oskar Loerke.

Tod im Watt. Auszug aus einer Ahnentafel. (Fam. Luths.)

Die Toten des Jahres 1934.

Unsere Ehrenmitglieder.

Einladung zum Geburtstag (Alt-Wangeroogisch).

Wangerooge in Daten.

Meeresstrand. Gedicht von Theodor Storm.

Vorsicht bei der Entrümpelung.

Archiv.

Form, Größe und Erscheinungsweise der „Mitteilungen“.

Folge 2:

Vorwort.

Wiltert Oelrich Wilts † (4 Abbildungen).

Hinrich Renken Luths † (1 Familienbild).

Der schöne Vareler Friedhof, die Ruhestätte so mancher Alt-Wangerooger (Aufnahme).

Das Meer. Gedicht von Hermann Kasack.

Schiffsuntergang 1844.

Wangerooger Schiff (Gemälde).

Von der Wangerooger Sprache.

Einwohner-Verzeichnis von 1773.

Unsere Hausmarken (mit Beispielen).

Mitgliederliste (Fortsetzung).

Familiennachrichten.

Sammelmappe.

Am Wattenmer. Gedicht von Hans Bethke.

Westturm (Aufnahme).

Beiträge.

Folge 3:

Vorwort.

Wiltert Oelrich Wilts, ein 85jähriger (Wilh. Kurier, mit Bild).

Christian Hinrich Christians † (Nachr. für Stadt und Land).

Haus auf Wangerooge (Aufnahme).

Einwohner-Verzeichnis von 1817.

Alt-Wangerooge um 1820 (Gemälde).

Mitgliederliste (Fortsetzung).

## US WURK LXXIII (2024), p. 64

Die Wiltert Oelrich Wilters von Wangerooge. Auszug aus der Stammtafel Wilters.  
Wangerooger Wandsprüche von 1805.  
Familiennachrichten.  
Hermann Hayen † 1935. (Aufnahme.)

### Folge 4:

Wangeroog als wandernde Strandinsel. Beitrag v. H. Schütte (6 Abbildungen).  
Heinrich Popken †.  
Die Düne. Gedicht von Hans Böhm (mit Aufnahme).  
Wangerooger Schifffahrt, von Emil Lübben.  
Verklarungsprotokolle aus den Jahren 1818 und 1825.  
Meeresmittag. Gedicht von Rudolf G. Binding.  
Die Sylvesterflut 1854-55, von Emil Lübben.  
Der Wiedergänger, Erzählung v. Georg Lübben.  
Mitgliederliste (Fortsetzung).  
Familiennachrichten.  
Zu dieser Folge.

### Folge 5:

Wangerooge Anno 1844.  
Liste der Schifffahrt von Wangeroog im Jahre 1844.  
Seeschiffe 1861.  
Küstenfahrzeuge 1861.  
Verklarungsprotokoll aus dem Jahre 1821.  
Desgl. aus dem Jahre 1840. (Mißglückte Reise von Fedderwardersil-Brüssel.)  
Kaufkontrakt vom Jahre 1827.  
Alte Wangerooger Neujahrsbräuche.  
Wangerooge, Gedicht von Franz Poppe.  
Inhaltsverzeichnis der Folgen 1 bis 5.  
Abend am Meer, Gedicht von Marion.  
Zu dieser Folge.  
Abbildungen: Alter Westturm (Federzeichnung),  
Geheimrätin Westing (alter Stich),  
Rienelt Luths (Aufnahme),  
Gunther Böhmer (Aufnahme).