

sind, wenn sie auch unterschiedlich visualisiert werden. Die Schwedenzeit spielt jedoch in den estnischen Museen im Vergleich zu denen in Pommern fast gar keine Rolle. Die in der Historiografie zu Estland so viel diskutierte „gute alte schwedische Zeit“ wird somit in den Museen vernachlässigt.

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SUMMARY

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*“The good old Swedish times” from  
their Beginnings to the End of the  
Great Northern War as Represented in  
Estonian and Pomeranian Museums*

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries Sweden controlled major parts of the Baltic Sea region. It ruled over, among others, the provinces of Estonia (1561/83–1710/21), Livonia (1629–1710/21) and Pomerania (1628/48–1815). Thus, for several decades, these territories were administered more or less directly by Sweden. Not surprisingly, one can find similarities in the historiographies of Estonia, Livonia and Pomerania such as the frequently used phrase ‘the good old Swedish times’. But how is the public perception of Swedish rule in contemporary Western Pomerania (Germany) and the Republic of Estonia? What do people know about this period and what are they taught?

In order to answer these questions museum exhibitions are analyzed because they serve as crucial institutional spaces to educate people of various social and cultural backgrounds. Two Estonian and two German museums have been selected as representative examples for this study: the Estonian History Museum (*Eesti Ajaloomuuseum*) in Tallinn, the University Museum of Tartu (*Tartu Ülikooli Ajaloo Muuseum*), the State Museum of Pomerania in Greifswald (*Pommersches Landesmuseum*) and the Cultural and Historical Museum of Stralsund (*Kulturhistorisches Museum Stralsund*). The analysis is based on different methods including comprehensive visits of the exhibitions, guided interviews with the responsible curators and a quantitative evaluation of questionnaires completed by the visitors.

The article demonstrates that most relevant topics of the historiography on the Swedish rule appear in the museum exhibitions such as the administrative structure and the ruling methods of Sweden, its rulers, several wars and the protestant religion. In comparing the two regions it is evident, however, that the Swedish period definitively plays a smaller role in the museums of Estonia than in Western Pomerania. This finding can be illustrated by the different emphases given to ‘the good old Swedish times’.

Although this latter image is discussed intensively in the historiographies on Pomerania and Estonia, it remains almost invisible in the Tallinn and Tartu exhibitions, but constitutes one of the main topics in Greifswald and Stralsund. According to the Estonian curators the relevance of the more contemporary periods by far outshines the Swedish rule in Estonia.

The evaluation of the questionnaires indicates that the visitors of the Estonian museums gain far more knowledge on the Swedish period than the visitors of the Western Pomeranian museums. This result, however, has to be put into the context of the previous knowledge of the interviewees: While the visitors of the Estonian museums knew very little about the Swedish period before visiting the exhibitions, the interviewees in Western Pomerania already had an understanding of the basic developments. Consequently, one can assume a less distinct awareness of the Swedish rule in contemporary Estonia than in Western Pomerania.