



## Swedish Pomeranian Shipping in the Revolutionary Age (1776–1815)

*Magnus Ressel*

On 23 October 1815, Sweden lost its last remaining conquest of the Thirty Years War. As a result of a complicated exchange, Sweden gained Norway as a kingdom to be ruled in personal union by its king. In return, Denmark obtained the little Duchy of Lauenburg, which Prussia had acquired previously from Hanover in exchange for Eastern Frisia, only to be used as a bargaining chip. To make up for differences in the relative importance of these territories, substantial flows of money accompanied the entire clearing process.<sup>1</sup> Swedish Pomerania thus left the Swedish orbit for good. It had been a small province on the southern coast of the Baltic with an area of 4 400 km<sup>2</sup>, the main part stretching from Damgarten to Anklam with Stralsund and Greifswald as the most important cities. The island of Rügen (with another 920 km<sup>2</sup>) had also belonged to the Swedish possessions in the Holy Roman Empire, as had the city of Wismar with a little hinterland (this only until 1803).

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Sweden's provinces in Germany had been saved twice for the kingdom, in 1678 by France alone and in 1719 by France and England together when they had joined to preserve as much as possible of the weakened country's German territories.<sup>2</sup> Now this was undone forever. Sweden had considered selling the province to Prussia since 1793, for reasons which to this day remain rather unclear.<sup>3</sup> Now these thoughts became reality. Sweden withdrew from the Continent and left unrest and warfare to the continental powers for the centuries to come.

On the surface, Prussia was not the greatest winner as a result of this action, but an old dream of Brandenburg's leaders was now fulfilled – the unification of Pomerania under their state. Prussia now possessed an unbroken coastline along the Baltic of almost 870 km in length; a promising acquisition of territorial coherence at an important and still profitable seaboard. In this article, I want to point out another gain Prussia made with this exchange. With the province, the Prussians obtained an amalgam filled with know-how and capital for long-distance trade, which greatly helped the Prussian state to become a respectable maritime trading nation in the nineteenth century. During the revolutionary era, the province had amassed this hitherto non-existing potential – an aspect mostly unknown to this day.

Our view of Swedish Pomeranian history has suffered from the proceedings of the Prussian acquisition. Soon after the installation of the Prussian administration the 185-year-long history of Swedish rule was either presented in a distorted way (more often in Germany) or, to some extent, forgotten (more often in Sweden).<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, this has changed after 1990 and nowadays the historiography on Swedish Pomerania is rather flourishing.<sup>5</sup> Yet still we retain an image of the province as having been “territorially and in terms of population small, economically and politically insignificant”, an image which, in all likelihood, has its invisible origins in the elder Prussophile historiography.<sup>6</sup> To its historians, Swedish Pomerania seems to be an interesting but, on the whole, not too much outstanding territory. From recent historical research, we have learned a lot about its fiscal, jurisdictional-administrative and intellectual-discursive history.<sup>7</sup> However, none of these publications, for all their outstanding quality, challenged the fundamental assertions or images we have of the province. “History”, in the traditional meaning of remarkable events and outstanding achievements, seems to have happened elsewhere.



*A map of Swedish Pomerania. Source: Homann 1720.*

In the following, I will try to counter this image by focusing on some outstanding achievements of the province's populace, especially its shippers and merchants, within a short time-span. I hope thus to present Swedish Pomerania in a new light and prove how exciting and far-reaching research into provincial history can be if one uses comparative material. In brief, the German territories of the Kingdom of Sweden underwent an impressive and rather fast transformation during the Revolutionary Age 1776–1815. The economy and especially the shipping industry of this small, impoverished and sparsely populated province, located in a remote corner of Europe, within a time span of just 35 years, experienced, with the years from 1793 to 1805 at its core, first a

meteoric rise, and then, within a very short period of war, saw an occupation and a temporary, but as I also hope to show, rather superficial ruin. The shape and course of this mostly unknown boom shall be outlined in this article, the aim of which is to highlight the province's close and, at least for the Pomeranians, advantageous relations with the Kingdom of Sweden.<sup>8</sup> To support my argument, considerable use is made of statistical source material and one long and detailed report addressed to the Prussian Ministry of Finance in 1817. In this memorandum, we find the state of the province's shipping described before and after the Prussian acquisition.

#### The Prussian report of 1817 on the state of shipping before and after 1815

When Prussia acquired Pomerania in 1815, the new government encountered a population the majority of which did not welcome the new rulers. Initially, the Prussians were careful not to change the administrative and power structures too much; instead they left most the way they found it. Still, the population's feelings for the new rule were a far cry from a warm welcome.<sup>9</sup> This animosity had partly to do with certain benignities of the late Swedish rule. Much more important were some hard economic facts which affected the entire population of the province at its core.

The problem for the newly arrived administrators was that they were accompanied by a certain kind of weakness, which was regarded as problematic for one of the province's most vital sectors of the economy – its shipping business. To give some figures, we can present our Prussian voice of 1817 before introducing the source itself:

New Pomerania [Swedish Pomerania], this beautiful and rich country, sent, by way of its industry and freedom of the Swedish flag on a coast stretching for about 6–8 miles [= 45–60 kilometres], 350 seaworthy ships into the world and thereby fed one quarter of the population directly, all others received the advantages and conveniences which an extended trade and navigation bestow. As now in Hamburg, Bremen, Amsterdam and other places, all well-off people speculate in trade, thus nearly everybody in Pomerania was, and still is, interested in shipownership. Shipping was the fortune and pride of the country!<sup>10</sup>

With just a few lines, much of what has been written on Swedish Pomerania seems to be proven wrong. The allegedly poor and backward province is here described as rich and beautiful. It is presented as home to a huge fleet of ocean-going ships, the source of immense income for the population. Of the 100 000 inhabitants, 25 000 are said to have been fed directly by its profits. Our commentator contrasts this situation with the one after the Prussian acquisition:

These [the Pomeranian ships] are, since the Prussian eagle has replaced the Swedish flag on them, completely out of work. For the owners and captains, there remains no other choice in the present circumstances than impoverishment and emigration. Among the wealthy, the latter has already happened and the others will necessarily follow. The sailors, who are used to fighting the elements and having the whole world as their realm, cannot be accustomed to the simple and slow tasks of a peasants life.<sup>11</sup>

We have a clear distinction at hand. Under Sweden, Swedish Pomerania was rich because its shipping had increased. Now the province experiences rapid impoverishment because its shipping faces ruin. The colour of the flag, obviously a very important factor for the respective shipping of any province, is blamed for this.

Before we go into detail, the oddness of our Prussian commentator's remark must be emphasized again. Swedish Pomerania is not renowned for having been a country of great seafarers, and in no work on its history do we find any remark coming even close to our Prussian's observation in 1817.<sup>12</sup> This surprising observation gets even more odd if we contrast it with a citation from a very detailed work on the shipping history of Stralsund, the province's capital. The author, Lotte Müller, blames the city's authorities for not having grasped the opportunity which presented itself, when in 1771 Sweden reduced the province's import and export duties:

In spite of trying to meet the new tasks, which the change in the economic policy of the [Swedish] empire had brought, or of awakening new productive forces within the city, the merchant community remains trapped in medieval views, clings narrowly and jealously to the guild coercion, wastes energy and money on protracted and expensive trials with other guilds and

curbs the development through a short-sighted policy. Not a single sign of progress or adaptation to the new conditions can be observed in this century.<sup>13</sup>

Even though Müller sees some progress in the last four years of the eighteenth century, her final judgement remains harsh, and Stralsund in particular pales in comparison with Stettin, presented by her as the great model of success.<sup>14</sup> This conclusion does not correspond at all with that of our Prussian commentator of 1817. For a maritime historian of 1926, the late eighteenth century was for the entire province a period of self-inflicted decay, while for the contemporary Prussian of 1817, Swedish Pomerania had been, under Swedish rule, a blossoming, rich country with extensive shipping and trade around the globe and was now heading towards its ruin. Who is right?

To solve this riddle, we may at first present our Prussian and his report more closely. The name of the author is Heinz Pütter. We know almost nothing about him except for what he writes at the beginning of the report. Here, he states that the Prussian minister of finance, Ludwig Friedrich Victor Hans Graf von Bülow, had given him the order to investigate the problems of Prussian shipping. We have two letters from him. In the first, dated 29 September 1817, and 32 pages long, he writes that he had lived in Turkey and the Mediterranean for several years. He insists therefore that his opinion on shipping is well founded. In the second letter, from 24 January 1819, and 27 pages long, he writes from Cadiz in Spain, which indicates that this location was also where he wrote his first report. For the purpose of this article, only his first letter is of interest since the second mainly repeats the findings of the first one with some new details and practical proposals. In the first letter, he writes that he had spent a year collecting information. Therefore, his report shall be regarded as “the” voice of the shipowners, all of whom suffer from just “one” specific problem.<sup>15</sup>

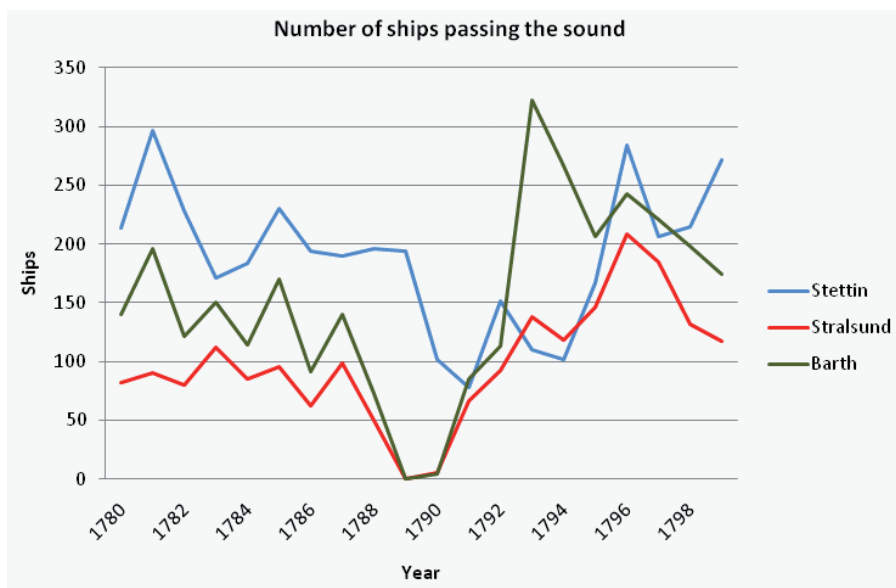
Apparently, after 1815, the Prussian minister of finance had received many complaints from shipowners, presumably mostly former Swedish Pomeranians. Pütter, a Prussian expert in Southern European shipping, had been given the task to find out the root cause of the problems. Pütter’s report is the meticulous result of this assignment. Its fundamental analysis is very clear: under Swedish rule, the province’s shipping was extensive and the people became wealthy from this large sector of the economy. Now under Prussian rule, the shipping industry

faces certain ruin unless the state intervenes. Many of Pütter’s findings go even much beyond his original task. In one part, where he provides a historical outline of shipping from the times of the old Hanse to the present day, he dates the emergence of Pomerania’s flourishing shipping to 1795:

Until the outbreak of the French Revolution, the Dutch engaged around 3 000 ships for transport shipping in the Baltic. Since the occupation by the French, and the hostilities with England, most of the Dutch ships have been destroyed and the remaining ones may only suffice for the conduct of their own affairs. After Holland’s fall, Denmark prospered. It tripled within a few years the number of its ships and even if it enjoyed uninterrupted transport shipping only for a short time – roughly ten years – it acquired during this period a wealth previously unheard of. The foundation for the great prosperity of Copenhagen, Flensburg and Altona was laid, and the country later could bear the loss of about 3 000 ships, which were taken by the English, because these ships had already earned three or four times their original value. Only the New Pomeranians under the Swedish flag competed with the Danes and all other peoples. They had everything an increased transport shipping on commission needed. Harbours, shipping material, freedom and safety under the flag, able shipbuilders, experienced seamen, a hundred years of peace and connections of all sorts allowed and facilitated these commercial activities. Only the Pomeranian ships enjoyed the credit and trust of the Swedish flag. Whilst the Swedish nationals had to contend themselves with transporting their own products, the Pomeranians were sought and found on all oceans. The only representatives of the German nation, in the entire Mediterranean, the Adriatic and even the Black Sea, from Gibraltar to Constantinople, from Odessa, from Trieste to Alexandria in Egypt, in all Italian, Spanish and French harbours, were our brave entrepreneurial Pomeranians. Without them, one would hardly have believed that Germany still had water and ships and trade.<sup>16</sup>

Once more, we learn just how extensive and profitable Pomeranian shipping was. For the first time, we even read how exceptional the Pomeranian ships were in a comparative perspective. Their activities were more daring and far-flung, according to Pütter, than those of the Swedish ships.

Pütter and Müller, for all their enormous differences, agree on one fundamental point; they both see 1795, when the Dutch Republic fell, as a turning

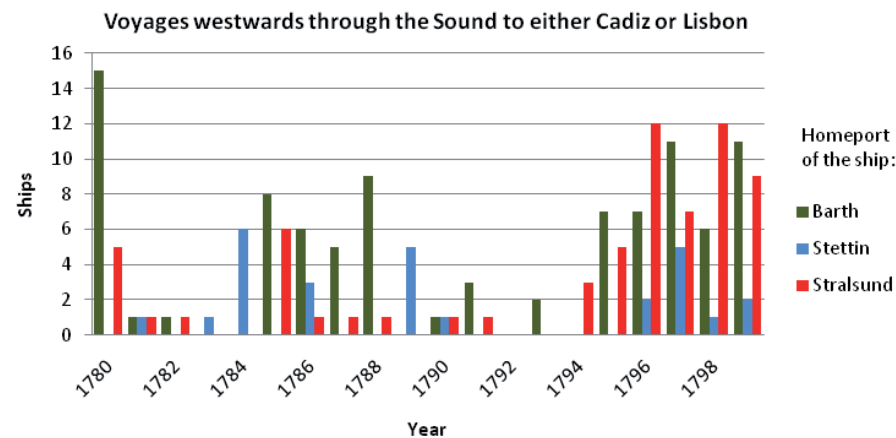


Source: <http://www.soundtoll.nl>

point for the flowering of Swedish Pomeranian shipping. Yet, Pütter also hints that before 1795 there had been a strong base for increased shipping, and this was more or less blocked by the Dutch Republic until its fall. This contrasts rather sharply with Müller's judgement. She saw nothing but backwardness in Stralsund before 1795. The contradiction of the two authors remains and we have to look at some statistics in order to find out who is right.

#### Baltic shipping in the late eighteenth century

The development of eighteenth-century international trade generally favoured Sweden, which was able to rid itself of any remaining dominance from the old mercantile powers, such as Lübeck or even the Dutch Republic, and, at the same time, expand continuously into far-off markets.<sup>17</sup> Yet, for all the outstanding research that has already been done, it seems that the relative strength of the kingdom's sea trade vis-à-vis other powers, and its internal composition, still need to be outlined in more detail in order to explain who profited most,



Source: <http://www.soundtoll.nl>

at which time, and under what circumstances. Therefore, some shipping tonnage figures, and their respective owners and destinations, shall be compared. To do this, the recently developed online database of the Soundtoll registers will be used.<sup>18</sup> First, we will compare the shipping through the Sound from the main Prussian port of Stettin with that of two Swedish Pomeranian ports, Stralsund and Barth. Stettin was highly praised by Müller and, consequently, it is necessary to look at its performance in order to validate or falsify her judgement. Two Swedish Pomeranian ports have been chosen to establish a broader view of the province's entire shipping. Just because Stralsund was the capital of Swedish Pomerania, its preponderance in the province's shipping-industry did not necessarily have to follow. Barth, a small town west of Stralsund, was also well suited to shipping. If we compare the figures, we immediately find this expectation confirmed.

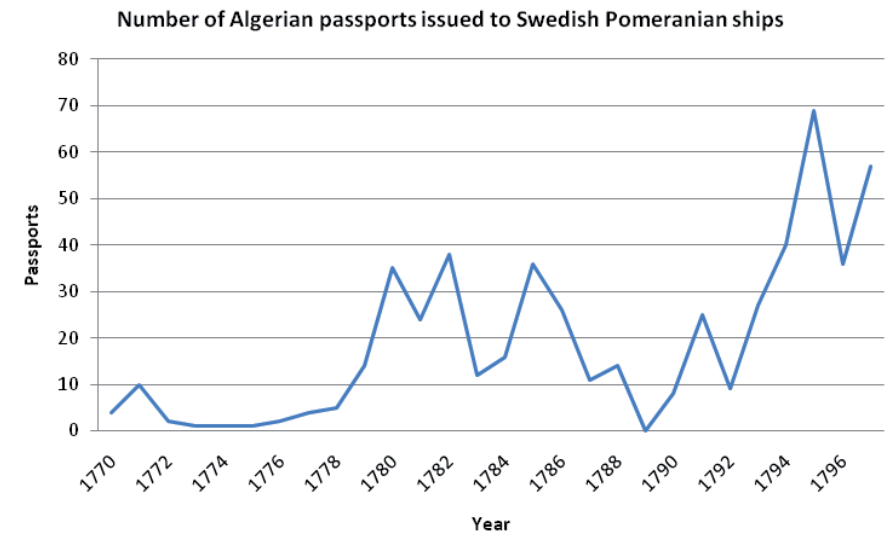
The large oscillations of the curves can be better understood if we keep in mind the state of sea warfare. The steep decline in Stralsund's and Barth's shipping from 1788–90 is explained by the Swedish–Russian war of these years. The decline in Stettin's shipping from 1791–95 is traditionally ex-

plained by the Prussian war against revolutionary France. Yet, except for a very short-lived boost of its southbound shipping in 1789, Stettin's decline started already in 1790, which is rather surprising given the contemporary weakness of the main competitors at the time.<sup>19</sup>

The greatest surprise is Barth's shipping. In this small town, many more ocean-going ships were registered than in the province's capital and, for some years, Barth even surpassed the largest Prussian port, Stettin. The Pomeranian boom was even more profound once we look at the most profitable long-distance voyages. According to the Soundtoll data from 1780–99, ships from Barth visited the large ports of Cadiz and Lisbon 93 times, while ships from Stralsund and Stettin visited these ports 66 and only 27 times, respectively, during the same period.<sup>20</sup> The small town of Barth seems to have been the buzzing hub of the entire province, which has been mostly overlooked up to now.

Obviously, the peace between Sweden and Russia in 1790 had been beneficial to the shipping of the former's German province. Ships from Swedish Pomerania had their heyday in the Sound from 1790–96 and, whilst their absolute numbers in the Sound declined afterwards, they continued to considerably strengthen their position in the profitable long-distance trade to Southern Europe. Thus, the traditional picture which put the beginning of the boom at 1795 has to be revised. It started already long before that time. What really happened in 1794–95 was an increase in Swedish Pomeranian shipping to Southern Europe. This obviously had been hampered by the dominance of the Dutch Republic until its fall.

This raises the question of the historical origins of Swedish Pomerania's long-distance shipping. A good source for finding some answers is provided by the register of the 'Algerian passports', kept at the National Archives of Sweden (Riksarkivet) in Stockholm. Here, all sold passports, for every ship under the Swedish flag sailing south of Cape Finisterre are registered with its tonnage, its home port, its date of issue, and more.<sup>21</sup> Since every shipowner in the entire kingdom had to provide each of his ships with such a passport if it sailed in waters frequented by the North African corsairs, and because everybody involved had a very strong interest in procuring such a document in order to benefit from the accompanying security, we can legitimately conclude that these registers give us very reliable information.



Source: Riksarkivet Stockholm, Kommerskollegium Huvudarkivet, *Utgående diarier, sjöpassdiarier, C II b*.

Thus, a close look at the number of Algerian passports issued to Swedish Pomeranian ships can give us accurate information on the exact time when the province's shippers began to engage in long-distance trade. The answer becomes clear from the graph above. It is precisely in the year 1778, two years before the Dutch Republic was weakened, that the province discovered the potential of long-distance trade. Hampered by high Prussian and Swedish duties, the province had been unable to escape a state of dependency until that year. Also very important was the dominance of the two cities of Hamburg and Lübeck, which still cooperated efficiently in order to control the markets on the Baltic coast west of Prussia. Most goods from Western Europe or overseas were traded in Hamburg, Lübeck and, to a lesser degree, in Rostock. These cities thus held Pomerania in an economic semi-dependence which did not allow for the growth of any competitive shipping in Pomerania.<sup>22</sup> In Wallersteinian terms, it could be described as the periphery of the contemporary world system.<sup>23</sup>

This fact was proven by the initial failure of an important legislative change. Until 1771, the province's exports were directed to Sweden by restrictive duties called 'Licenten'.<sup>24</sup> After the governor of the province, Henrik van Liewen, who had served in this post since 1766, strongly intervened, the Licenten were reduced in 1771.<sup>25</sup> This relaxation of the duties did not help the inexperienced Swedo-Germans and initially proved a disappointment.<sup>26</sup> The province remained dependent on the Lübeck and Hamburg markets. It was only with the decline of the dominant powers of international commerce after 1778 that Swedish Pomeranian shippers began to sail to more distant destinations. Now they could expect handsome profits without risking too much. With the need for neutral shipping during the war between France and Great Britain, the shipowners now sent their ships further west- and even southwards and, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, they found that the Swedish flag was highly respected and in great demand for trade between Southern European ports.

The boom of the late 1770s and early 1780s did not go unnoticed, however, especially since it more or less appeared out of nowhere. In 1785, a contemporary observer, Johann David von Reichenbach (1727–1807),<sup>27</sup> wrote extensively about the flourishing of Pomeranian shipping.<sup>28</sup> He identified the dominance of Barth, whose origins he saw in the middle of the century, when some of the town's merchants had expanded their range of shipping *and* trade considerably.<sup>29</sup> He contrasted this with Stralsund, whose relative disadvantage for Pomeranian merchants and shipowners he linked to the high costs of living in the capital.<sup>30</sup> Other contemporary observers had the same opinion. In 1782, the historian and jurist Professor Thomas Heinrich Gadebusch (1736–1804) counted 40 ships with a carrying capacity of 2 324 lasts altogether (Ø per ship = 58.1) in the town. He also remarked that developing this huge capacity had been a rather recent phenomenon.<sup>31</sup> For many of Barth's inhabitants, and even the entire province, such a boom was much too rapid to be accepted. Most of the populace regarded it as disrupting the social fabric, making one group instantly rich and leaving another behind. Around 1780, riots broke out all over the province but perhaps nowhere as fierce as in Barth. The rioters attacked primarily the profiteers of the boom, i.e. the merchants, the shipowners and the sailors. Eventually, the use of military force was necessary to stop the rioting.<sup>32</sup>

Barth was to remain the centre of the province's shipping. With hindsight, we can already provide some numbers for what was to come. If we look at the composition of Swedish Pomeranian shipping from 1770 to 1799, we find that of 818 ships from that province that passed the Sound, 262 (32 per cent) were registered in Stralsund, 300 (36.6 per cent) in Barth, 146 (17.8 per cent) in Wolgast, 31 (3.7 per cent) in Wismar, 44 (5.3 per cent) in Damgarten and 35 (4.2 per cent) in Greifswald. Whereas in 1780 the figure for Stralsund had been 43 per cent (15 out of 35), it fell until 1799, when it accounted for 33.7 per cent (55 out of 163).<sup>33</sup> An interesting aspect of the great period of Swedish Pomeranian shipping is the fact that the activities were not concentrated to the large and traditional cities, but rather in ports which had not existed hitherto on the map of European commerce.

With the Peace of Paris in 1783, the first blossoming lost its momentum. With the reappearance of the Dutch in the Baltic, the main competitor came back and limited the Pomeranians' possibilities. Worse was to come, namely the outbreak of the Swedo-Russian War in 1788, as this destroyed Pomeranian shipping for two years. Yet, something had changed profoundly. Now we can see that there existed a small class of experienced merchants and shippers in Pomerania who had seen the world and knew much better how to operate in distant waters. The Russian war, the Dutch competition, and a still-preponderant Hanseatic dominance of the markets along the south-western Baltic Coast momentarily hindered the use of the acquired know-how, but the potential was now undeniably at hand.

The chance to use it again came quicker than might have been expected. After 1790, the picture once again changed profoundly. Peace with Russia ensured that Swedish ships could again safely sail in the Baltic. The revolutionary events in France at the same time spread the flames of war towards the Dutch Republic, whose entry into the war with France in 1793 proved fatal to its shipping. From this moment on, practically all of Northern Europe's shipping surged. Since the fall of the republic happened at a time when the overall frequency of passages through the Sound rose, in all likelihood due to an increased demand for Baltic raw materials in war-torn Western and Southern Europe, the boost was all the greater for the heirs of the Dutch shipping lanes.

Who were mainly these heirs? The most important neutral powers remained the two Scandinavian kingdoms, Prussia (after 1795) and the three still-

vital Hanseatic cities. Yet, the Hanseatics and the Prussians received a slight boost if looked at in a comparative perspective. The number of passports issued in Prussian Emden was truly staggering after the fall of the Dutch Republic and the Peace of Basel:

1794	35
1795	107
1796	499
1797	337

Table 1: Passports issued in Emden. Source: Müller 1930, p. 115.

We can assume that many Dutch shipowners had escaped to Emden with the arrival of French troops. Yet, here they obviously did not find what they had sought since already in 1797, the number of issued passport fell again. If we look at the Soundtoll registers for the years 1795–1799, we discover that none of Emden’s ships sailed to or from a port south of France. Thus, Emden’s fleet increased vastly but found itself limited to northern waters. Pütter’s commentary regarding Prussia was scathing:

The state which could have benefited most from the destruction of Dutch shipping and which most easily could have filled the gap was Prussia. But Prussia has, in fact, won the least.<sup>34</sup>

Even an old and experienced trading republic like Hamburg failed to grasp the full potential of the Dutch Republic’s decline.<sup>35</sup> One of the most profitable branches of its shipping had been exchanging Baltic goods for Southern European goods. It was therefore in southern waters where the profits lay. But the Hanseatics and Prussians hesitated to venture there. In identifying the reasons for this, at first glance obscure phenomenon, we will be able to identify the principal mechanics at work in late-eighteenth-century world trade.

## Security as the principal commodity in international waters

Pütter, who had a sharp eye for the principal forces at work at the time, can again be cited. In his reflections on the state of Prussian shipping after the Peace of Basel from 1795 until 1805, he explains what had been lacking for the breakthrough into world trade:

Prussia could have engaged over 2 000 ships in these ten years only with tramp shipping for others (Orig.: Frachtfahrt für fremde Rechnung) within the Mediterranean. It could have built and manned the necessary ships easier and better than Sweden and Denmark. It lacked neither capital nor entrepreneurial spirit. Nothing except peace with the Barbary States was missing, but without this, it had to limit itself to short-distance tramping (Orig.: aber ohne diesen mußte es sich auf die nähere, auf die Kleinere Frachtfahrt beschränken).<sup>36</sup>

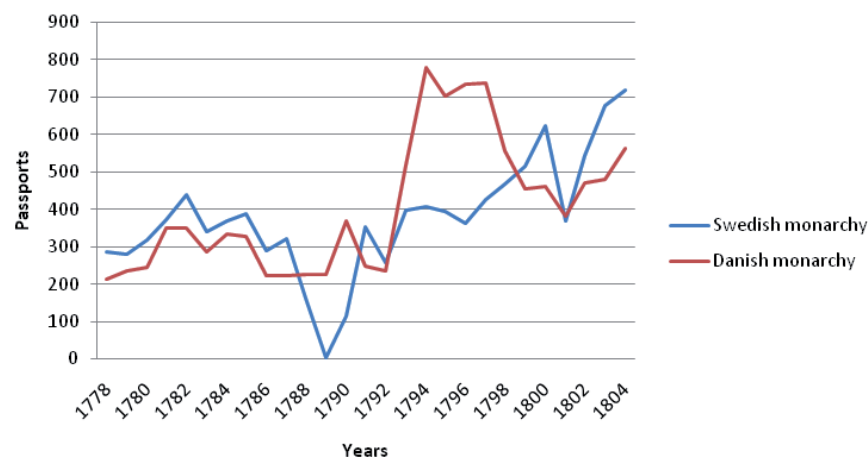
Pütter then goes on with detailed calculations which prove that Prussia indirectly lost 50 million Thaler by not concluding a peace treaty with the regencies at the right time. This great problem still existed in 1817 after the end of the revolutionary wars. For Pütter, there was only one remedy:

Only peace with the Barbary States, and thereby a free flag, can maintain the wealth and importance of this land [Swedish Pomerania] and arouse among the inhabitants true love for throne and fatherland.<sup>37</sup>

In all these years, the crucial factor was, according to Pütter, that there were no peace treaties with the Barbary States. This can indeed be verified with new research. Whereas an older view insisted on the harmlessness of the eighteenth-century North African regencies,<sup>38</sup> we now know that the corsairs’ activities intensified spectacularly after 1790 and lasted until 1806.<sup>39</sup> During these 16 years, the Mediterranean swarmed with Muslim corsairs and only a Portuguese squadron at the Strait of Gibraltar saved at least the Atlantic seaboard from their depredations.<sup>40</sup> The unsafe sea beyond the Strait of Gibraltar prevented the Hanseatics and Prussians from entering the Mediterranean – there they could only expect corsairs of ill repute. No insurer was willing to provide any insurance for ships under these flags.



Number of issued Algerian passports for ships from the Scandinavian kingdoms

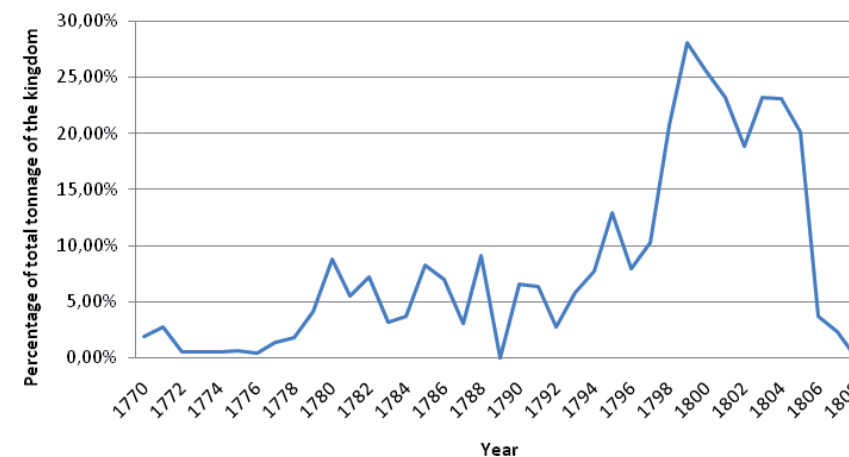


Sources: Andersen 2000, CD-ROM; Müller 2004, p. 236.

Things were different for the Scandinavian kingdoms. Both had concluded peace treaties with the regencies and the Ottoman Empire between 1729 and 1760, which remained mostly stable until the end of the regencies. They had thereby obtained the most crucial resource for Southern European waters, namely security.<sup>41</sup> Sailing with this invisible, but very tangible load, ships under Scandinavian flags were able to operate freely all around the world. During the eighteenth century, ships from both kingdoms had built up an excellent reputation for being reliable carriers in the Mediterranean, where their flag was highly respected. Yet, both kingdoms saw their room for manoeuvre still limited until 1793 because the Dutch remained a fierce competitor. With the entry of the Dutch Republic into war against revolutionary France, it was therefore no surprise that the Scandinavians should benefit most. Nevertheless, the gains were unequally distributed as can be seen in the graph above.

The rise of Denmark's shipping from 1793 until 1798 is, in all likelihood, due to the proximity of the kingdom to Hamburg. The city was the main beneficiary of the fall of the Dutch Republic and saw an immense concentration of capital and financial expertise within its walls for more than one decade after 1793. The merchants residing there traditionally gave the orders to transport goods to ship-

Percentage of Turkish passports issued in the Swedish Kingdom to vessels with their home port in Swedish Pomerania



Source: Riksarkivet Stockholm, Kommerskollegium Huvudarkivet, Utgående diarier, sjöpassdiarier, C II b.

pers from the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, especially to their close neighbour, the city of Altona.<sup>42</sup> This gave the Danish Kingdom an additional boost, which, for some years, increased its shipping above Sweden's. When a financial crisis hit Hamburg in 1798/99 and many merchants went bankrupt, this reduced Denmark's shipping, directly benefiting Sweden, which had never been so dependent upon orders from Hamburg. It was at this very moment that Swedish shipping took off, or more precisely, the shipping of its German province.

A commercial revolution in the Baltic area had been silently in the offing for years and its full effect was felt in 1798. Until this date, the two cities of Hamburg and Lübeck had been able to keep their dominance over many of the markets of the southern Baltic coast.<sup>43</sup> Most goods obtained by distant trade had hitherto been provided for the Pomeranians by Hamburg or Lübeck. Both cities employed small fleets of long-distance vessels with a range down to Atlantic Iberia and also used the ships of Schleswig and Holstein to import goods from the more distant markets. The southern Baltic coast had until 1798 thus been under a sort of Hanseatic economic suzerainty. Now this was irrevocably broken. Pomeranian merchants began to conduct a lot of business with ships from the province.

Fr			1801.		
90	Gales St. Johannes	Barth Joh. Jan. Krauff 20 Jul.	85	Spaniska fön oh. Nereb. 16	1800. 1. 1. April. jämnta Sigmund hald. ut. 16. 1800. 1. 1. 1800.
91	Prudentia	Barth Joh. Pet. Krauff 27 Jul.	85	Do	1800. 1. 15. Mars. jämnta Sigmund. hald. ut. 16. 1800. 1. 1. 1800.
92	Fortuna	Barth Joh. Cath. Bernin 27 Jul.	85	Do	1800. 1. 15. Mars. jämnta Sigmund. hald. ut. 16. 1800. 1. 1. 1800.
93	Liana	Barth Joh. Niel. Lörner 27 Jul.	79	Do	1800. 1. 11. febr. jämnta Sigmund hald. ut. 16. 1800. 1. 1. 1800.
94	Constantia	Barth Joh. M. Luttman 7 Jul.	69	Westerf.	1800. 1. 15. Mars. jämnta Sigmund. hald. ut. 16. 1800. 1. 1. 1800.
95	Die Hoffnung	Barth Joh. Chr. Schmitt 7 Jul.	54	Nordfön	1800. 1. 7. Apr. jämnta Sigmund. hald. ut. 16. 1800. 1. 1. 1800.
96	Svea Nyfölar	Halden Elias Sandström 7 Jul.	50	Müch.	1800. 1. 20. Mars. jämnta Sigmund hald. ut. 16. 1800. 1. 1. 1800.
97	Johannes	Barth Chr. Fr. Gottschalk 27 Jul. och Chr. Berndt Nyfölar. 1800.	69	Do	1800. 1. 14. Mars. jämnta Sigmund. hald. ut. 16. 1800. 1. 1. 1800.
98	Frau Gertrud	Barth Pet. Viron 10 Jul.	79	J. Olof. M. Müch.	1801. 1. 1. 1801. 1. 1. 1801.
99	Anna Martha	Calmar Lars Strömberg 10 Jul.	26	Portugal	1801. 1. 17. Mars. jämnta Sigmund. hald. ut. 16. 1801. 1. 1. 1801.
100	Melena	Calmar Zach. Richard 10 Jul.	27	Ottomien	1801. 1. 17. Mars. jämnta Sigmund. hald. ut. 16. 1801. 1. 1. 1801.

Pages from the Algerian Passports Register in 1801 with five entries for ships from Barth, destinations mostly in Southern European waters. Source: Riksarkivet Stockholm, Kommerskollegium Huvudarkivet, Utgående diaries, sjöpassdiaries, C II b.

If we look at a graph of the percentage of the tonnage of Swedish Pomeranian ships for which Algerian passports were issued, we find that the heyday of provincial shipping lasted from 1797 to 1805–06. This boom becomes all the more remarkable given the overall growth of the Swedish flag in the exact same years. As before, the small port of Barth functioned as some sort of centre for this surge. For ships from this port, 22 passes were issued in 1797, 67 in 1798, 72 in 1799 and 84 in 1800. Every year this accounted for between 40 and 50 per cent of the entire provincial shipping.

To flesh out this rather abstract graph, 4 033 Algerian passports were issued in the seven years from 1799 to 1805 in Sweden. Of these, 1 143 (28.3 per cent) went to ships from the German provinces. More than 80 per cent of the German ships gave their destination as Iberia or the Mediterranean. By contrast, ships from Stockholm or Göteborg were mostly bound for the British

Isles, St. Barthelemy or Northern Europe. For these ships, Southern European destinations constituted perhaps 25 per cent of the stated destinations.<sup>44</sup> The contrast is remarkable. Whereas Pomeranians had their primary routes way down south, Swedish ships rarely ventured there. Instead, they limited themselves mostly to furnishing the British Isles with iron. As Pütter wrote a few years later, it was primarily the Pomeranians who operated between Alexandria, Constantinople, Livorno, Malta and Spain. Thus, the profits made by the Pomeranians were much larger than those of their Scandinavian ‘co-nationals’.

#### Swedish Pomerania as a short-lived hub of the European maritime trade

The origins of this boom, which came so suddenly and had such remarkable effects, shall now be outlined. In the two years before 1797, much came together that was to prove hugely beneficial to the province’s shipping. Even though we cannot identify for sure all the causes, some plausible hypotheses can be put forward.

With the last partition of Poland in 1795, Prussia acquired vast stretches of new land whose products could now much more easily flow northwards to the Baltic ports. The products were mainly primary goods, such as timber and cereals. These were needed mostly in belligerent Western and Southern Europe. With the need to export more Baltic products than ever to these regions, the question as to who would transport these products proved to be more acute than ever. Also during these years, Prussian mercantilism was significantly relaxed, which removed many of the strangulating effects that the province had hitherto felt.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, an intense corsair war was waged between the European Great Powers in western waters. In this war, the flag of the Hanseatic vessels was often disregarded.<sup>46</sup> This was less the case for ships under the Danish flag but this power had no harbour along the southern Baltic coast. Thus, the only power that could meet a demand for transport tonnage from this region was the Kingdom of Sweden. Its German province now became the great profiteer from the changed international constellation when its merchants began to ship large quantities of Baltic products westwards. Once Pomeranian ships entered the Western and Southern European harbours in vast numbers, their captains or owners

obviously felt the need to fill the ships with cargo for the return voyage. In these harbours, they, therefore, began to buy exactly the sort of products that they had hitherto obtained in Hamburg and Lübeck. With these activities, they destroyed the last remnants of Lübeck's shipping to the Iberian Peninsula. It is remarkable that Lübeck's shipping did not increase during the revolutionary wars, in contrast to a small rise in the years from 1781 to 1784.<sup>47</sup>

With the increased shipping, a new advantage appeared rather quickly. In Pomerania, oak wood was available in large quantities, in contrast to Sweden, where mainly coniferous wood grew. Only oak wood was well suited to ships designed for long-distance shipping. Therefore, the Pomeranian shipyards built exactly the kind of ships that were now needed in Sweden and Pomerania.<sup>48</sup> The boost to the shipbuilding industry in Pomerania was thus even greater than the growth of shipping itself and they delivered ships en masse to Sweden and Pomerania. This was pointed out by Pütter in his 1817 report on the future of Swedish shipping:

After the unification of New Pomerania with the Prussian monarchy, the Swedish merchant fleet, including Norway, comprises just over a thousand ships, of which it needs one-half, built of fir wood, for shipping its own products, which have a large volume but little value. The other half, which consists of ships built of oak wood, is used for tramp shipping in the Mediterranean. Since Sweden bought these oak ships mostly from Prussian, Danish and New Pomeranian prizes, it is unable to replace them with its own material. Thus, Sweden will have to gradually abandon freighting for others or at least will face greater difficulties in this regard.<sup>49</sup>

Pomerania's importance as a supplier of oak wood was well known to Swedish statesmen. When Sweden offered to sell Pomerania to Prussia the first time in 1798, it demanded the right to obtain for the future 400 000 cubic feet of free timber per year. This was one of the issues on which the negotiations foundered.<sup>50</sup>

It is possible to make some tentative calculations in order to estimate the economic significance of the shipping for the province by 1800. Let us go back to Pütter's first citation, where he stated that 350 ships had sailed for Swedish Pomerania in Southern and Western Europe. In his report, he also does some calculations to convince his superiors of the importance of the shipping. Since he is a meticulous observer, and his statements have been partially confirmed

by our findings, his maths may not be too far from the truth; notwithstanding that he certainly had an agenda of his own.

Pütter estimates the cost of a medium-sized ship of 80 lasts, the type most used in long-distance trade, at 10 000 Thaler (1 500 for the required timber, 3 000 for other raw materials and 5 500 as payment for the workers). He also concludes that 10 000 sailors (he uses this large figure for the whole Prussian fleet of 1817 consisting of 1 000–1 100 ships) cost 1 million Thaler per year. Thus, one sailor earns roughly 100 Thaler per year. Simply for the maintenance of one ship (repairs, insurances and victuals for the voyages), 1 000 Thaler are needed. 10 per cent is required as pure profit for the shipowners in order for the entire business to be worthwhile in comparison with other investments like agriculture or manufacturing. On a single voyage, a ship thus has to earn at least 1 000 Thaler. He adds that the profit made on voyages to southern waters easily attains 50 per cent and sometimes even 100 per cent.

We can now use these figures for some calculations. Pütter writes that 10 per cent of the ships need to be rebuilt every year, which, in the Pomeranian case, is exactly 35 ships. Thus, the yearly turnover for shipbuilding stood at 350 000 Thaler. To this, we have to add the payment for the sailors (~10 sailors per ship), which is the same sum. Maintenance of the fleet again costs the same and, finally, the pure profits again are, if the 10 per cent minimum is attained, the same. Thus, the entire yearly monetary turnover of the fleet stood at roughly  $350\,000 \times 4 = 1\,400\,000$  Thaler. If Pütter is right regarding his assertion that ships on long-distance voyages made mostly a 50 or even a 100 per cent profit, the actual sum may yet be much higher.

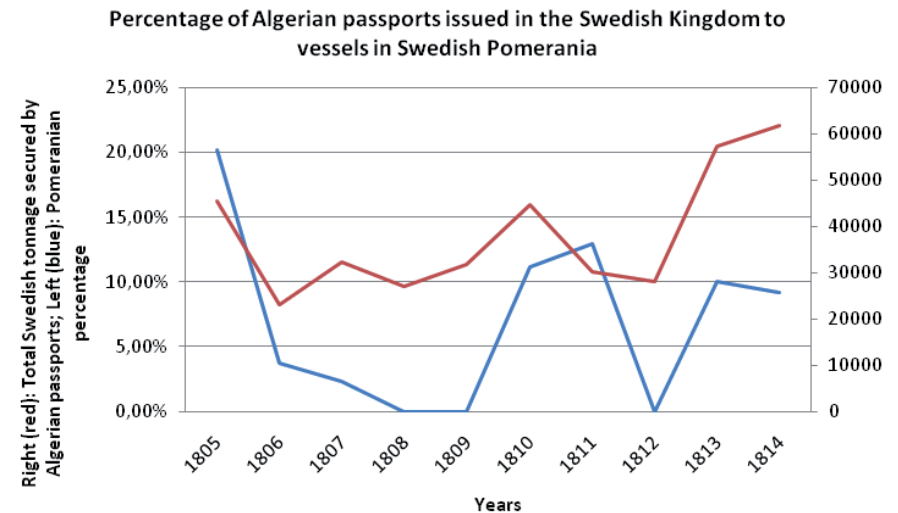
A yearly turnover (i.e. income) of at least 1.4 million, perhaps up to 3 million, Thaler in a small province like Swedish Pomerania? This staggering figure may arouse suspicion. Yet, it is not that too far-fetched a 'guesstimation'. If we look at calculations made for Danish shipping in the same period, we find roughly the same costs for individual ships and their maintenance and the profits range between 10 and 18 per cent during wartime.<sup>51</sup> It may be no coincidence that the tax revenues in Swedish Pomerania increased significantly in these boom years.<sup>52</sup>

Even though these are very rough estimates, the numbers give us some indication of the situation around 1800. Even if we remain conservative and assume a yearly turnover of 2 million Thaler, this was a huge economic sector for a small province like Swedish Pomerania with just 100 000 inhabitants. Pütter's

assertion that 25 000 of these were directly fed by the fleet and its supporting industry does not seem to be far-fetched.

We have now established a rough idea of the provincial shipping around 1800. The province was at this time a buzzing mercantile hub filled with merchants who managed from here commercial transactions between Anatolia and Italy, industrious sailors who made year-long voyages, a strong secondary industry, namely shipbuilding and the outfitting of ships, and altogether an impressive rate of growth. At the forefront, its ships ensured the highly profitable exchange between the Baltic and the Mediterranean. Its merchant class had managed to break Lübeck's dominance and weaken Hamburg's hold on the entire northern markets. This picture contrasts with much that hitherto has been written about the province. Voices like Müller's from 1926 can now be relegated to the realm of pure nationalist fiction.<sup>53</sup> From being the backwater of Europe, its periphery, this small stretch of land had become within a few years rather rich thanks to being part of the Swedish Kingdom.

The effects are probably also discernible politically and intellectually. It corresponds well with the years 1780–1806, during which Andreas Önnersfors has identified a strong idealization of Sweden among Pomerania's intellectual elite.<sup>54</sup> The bonds of the populace towards their sovereign in Stockholm are also stressed in current research.<sup>55</sup> When the Swedish king overthrew the traditional power of the Pomeranian estates in 1806, he encountered a rather weak opposition, maybe because the traditional elites knew very well how much affection the lower classes had for the king.<sup>56</sup> This strong bond of affection to Sweden manifested itself in the political events of the time. When Swedish Pomerania faced the invasion of Napoleonic troops in the first months of 1807, the defence was much more pertinacious than it had been in Prussia. In Swedish Pomerania, the populace obviously had something to fight for and did not easily give up, even when faced with a superior enemy. A comparison of the respective defences of the capital of Prussian Pomerania, Stettin, and that of its Swedish counterpart, Stralsund, is very telling. Whereas Stettin, defended by more than 5 000 men, surrendered without fighting when facing 800 French cavalymen, Stralsund put up strong resistance against the vastly superior French army and held out for months.<sup>57</sup> Yet, this did not suffice to save the province. After several months of fighting, the province was completely occupied by French soldiers at the end of August 1807.



Source: Riksarkivet Stockholm, *Kommerskollegium Huvudarkivet, Utgående diarier, sjöpassdiarier, C II b*.

#### Two French occupations and the final acquisition of Prussia

With the French occupation, the Continental Blockade came to Pomerania. The shipowners mostly sailed to Stockholm, which we can conclude from the passport registers, where often the same ships appeared after 1806 as belonging to Swedish port cities. Yet, here they did not find the longed-for security. Denmark's entry into the war against Great Britain ensured that the Sound was blocked and Sweden faced many privateers in distant waters. Still, the potential profits remained immense under the conditions of the Continental Blockade and thus the kingdom maintained an important long-distance shipping trade.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, the shipping trade from Pomeranian ports was all but annihilated. The costs of the French occupation ensured that all wealth obtained here was very quickly wiped out. The only capital saved from the boom period was, in all likelihood, the Pomeranian ships which were now in Swedish harbours, where their captains hoped for better times. We can also be

certain that many Pomeranian shippers continued their shipping trade from Swedish ports – even under the dire circumstances.

With the coming of peace between France and Sweden in 1810, Swedish Pomeranian shipping was temporarily spared.<sup>59</sup> Again it reached an impressive 13 per cent of the kingdom's, albeit reduced, shipping in 1811. Most of this happened in clear violation of the Continental Blockade.

At the beginning of 1812, French troops occupied the province again, officially to protect it from a British invasion. In reality, one of the foremost reasons for this was the continued violation of the Continental Blockade by the Pomeranians. The French troops had secret orders to cut down all the masts of the Pomerian ships once the 'friendly' occupation was complete.<sup>60</sup> Yet, the French failed to achieve this hidden aim – we know from the passport registers that most Pomeranian ships again escaped to Sweden.

Even though this year again resulted in a harsh depression, its shipping found much relief in 1813 with the final liberation of the province. For one last time, Pomeranian shipping under the Swedish flag resurged and acquired a still-impressive 10 per cent of the now quickly growing Swedish shipping. In 1814, Sweden secured, with Algerian passports, a larger tonnage than ever before, and the Pomeranians still supplied a substantial part of it. In 1814, 84 passports were obtained for Pomeranian ships, the last year that they could fully exploit this possibility. If we believe Pütter, the entire fleet of long-distance ships still numbered 250 vessels and enjoyed the opportunities after the difficult years.<sup>61</sup>

Yet this was not to last. After the war, it was decided in Stockholm to exchange its German province for Norway.<sup>62</sup> Either Denmark or Prussia was the power to inherit it. We do not know at present why the kingdom finally decided to abandon this piece of land which was still so valuable. Gustav IV first entertained the idea of selling the province to Prussia in 1798,<sup>63</sup> when Pomeranian ships surpassed the 20 per cent level of all the kingdom's tonnage protected by Algerian passports – at the time without any mention of Norway as an object of exchange.<sup>64</sup> At the time, the province's extensive shipping made the sale impossible. Sweden demanded a huge sum for the province, citing the immense provincial shipping; the Prussian leaders did not believe the figures, which were so much at odds with everything hitherto known.<sup>65</sup>

The Prussian acquisition in 1815 was met with mixed feelings by the populace. Scepticism was rife among all classes.<sup>66</sup> Yet, no groups felt as horrified

by this change of nationality as the merchants, shipowners and sailors. They would certainly have preferred a Danish acquisition. Ernst Moritz Arndt wrote with disdain about their feelings:

Alas! It [the Pomeranian populace] is – shameful to say and hear – more Danish than Prussian. What do they know about German victories and German and Prussian glory. They want a flag that protects their ship; they want to sell their grain at a high price; they want to sail through the Sound without paying duties; may the German ships sail or strand wherever they want . . .<sup>67</sup>

Arndt's outrage may be understandable from a patriotic point of view, but all patriotism could not help if the substance of one of the most profitable sectors of the Pomeranian economy was threatened by the change of sovereignty. The shipowners, the merchants and many others in the entire province were negatively affected by the loss of the Swedish flag. The Danish flag, which had the same prestige globally, would have been a sound replacement but not the practically unknown Prussian flag. This was to no avail since Prussia took over the province in October 1815.

The consequences were probably at first even worse than expected. Even though Lord Exmouth bombarded Algiers in 1816 and some hope existed within Germany that the regencies might be destroyed, the Barbary States spectacularly hit back. In 1817, corsair ships even operated in the North Sea, much to Europe's consternation.<sup>68</sup> This had a devastating effect on the shipping of the nations warring with the corsairs. We can again quote Pütter's report:

The insurance premiums for our flag are, since the appearance of the Barbaresks in the northern waters, 2 to 4 to 6 per cent higher than for other ships, and with the slightest bad news, the Prussian shipowner has to fear either being completely without insurance or having to give one-half of his capital to the insurer in order to save the other. It is obvious that, under these circumstances, neither trade nor shipping can flourish.<sup>69</sup>

It may nowadays seem a little odd that a few single corsairs operating in northern waters could tilt the balance so much as to cause the downfall of the shipping of one entire European province. Yet, the fear of the corsairs determined the insurance market and this in turn was decisive for the weal and woe of any

shipping industry. The few activities of the corsairs thus did not cause any lasting disruption to the shipping in Northern Europe but sufficed to deter Pomeranian shipowners from the region where they had hitherto earned their greatest profits, i.e. the waters of Southern Europe.

The reactions in Pomerania were manifold. Many shippers continued to use the Swedish flag and passports.<sup>70</sup> When the Prussian government demanded that they be classified as Prussian shippers, even the governor of Stralsund strongly objected and pointed out that this could cause the ruin of the entire province's shipping.<sup>71</sup> Still, this could not go on forever since the passports soon lost their validity and the Swedish authorities soon stopped issuing Pomeranians with passports. The desolation felt in Stralsund, reported by its governor, may have been the reason for the report by Pütter, the most important content of which has been presented. His conclusion was very grim concerning the outlook for the future:

The capital of the wealthy, mostly invested in shipowning, and which is the fruit of years of saving, disappears with the value of the ships, which have already lost up to two-thirds of their original price. The shippers, the ship-carpenters, the sailors and all craftsmen involved go idle without work and soon will be without bread. They have no other choice but to emigrate, which many wealthy have already done. If, however, the rich leave, the poor become even poorer. Prussia will lose the core of Pomerania and keep only half of it, which is not worth the sacrifices given for it.<sup>72</sup>

Was Pütter right in this regard? We lack the detailed data but a very short and temporary migration from the province may have happened in the years around 1817. If this was indeed the case, this did not matter too much since the province soon experienced a rather sustained population growth.<sup>73</sup> Obviously, Pütter erred in his gloomy prediction for the future. Something did change to remove the threat of ruin for the province.

## Conclusion

Due to a lack of data, it is difficult to explain what exactly happened to the province's long-distance shipping. Yet, undoubtedly, it was saved in some modified form. From 1815 to 1824, 1 438 Prussian and 1 622 Swedish ships passed through the Sound. From 1825 to 1834, we count 2 071 Prussian and only 1 192 Swedish passages.<sup>74</sup> Even though the destinations or range of these ships are not presently known, obviously the sheer volume of shipping stopped any Prussian decline and Sweden, instead, had to cope with some loss of overall shipping volume.<sup>75</sup> We should not conclude that Pütter was wrong with his grim report in 1817 but that he overstated the depressing contemporary situation. In 1817, Algerian corsairs spread fear in northern waters and some shipowners left Pomerania. This contrasted with the spectacular flourishing in the years 1797–1806. Pütter simply had extrapolated from the present and could thus only see a bleak future for the province if Prussia did not conclude a peace with the Barbary States.

Yet after 1817, much changed for the better. A renewed war between Spain and other Southern European powers against Algiers ensured that the navies of these powers' held the Algerians at bay. The regency itself was overcome by internal turmoil and ghastly crises, which shook the state to its core.<sup>76</sup> From 1820 onwards, the Barbary regents faced a bleak future and lost their ability to attack in distant waters. This helped the Prussians to save at least their shipping to France and Atlantic Spain. Under new circumstances, the Barbary corsairs were no longer the limiting factor for shipping and thus the Swedish flag and passport no longer ensured shipping success. The merchant marines of all European states were revived at a time of global peace after 1815, and with the sheer number of competitors, it was impossible for Prussian shipping to operate globally. Prussia's ports, as well as Sweden's, were too peripherally located to be veritable centres of global fleets. This role could after 1815 only be filled by ports like London, Rotterdam or Hamburg. Thus, the need for peace with the Barbary States simply disappeared with global peace after 1815, a fact that Pütter overlooked. Only Swedish neutrality during the great conflicts had ensured the flowering of Pomerania. In a world at peace, the province's shipping could not but revert to its role on the periphery. This role the Prussians quickly accepted. The Hanseatic cities, in contrast, still had an interest in trade in the Mediterranean and thus

tried throughout the 1820s to conclude peace with the Barbary regencies. When the Hanseatics asked the Prussian government in 1828 whether they should try to achieve this peace together, the Prussian minister's answer was very clear – the Prussian shipping in the Atlantic was too insignificant to legitimize thorough measures to increase its security.<sup>77</sup>

After 1817, Pomerania and its merchants, indeed, lost their Southern European markets; however, this was not due to corsair activities but to renewed competition with traditional trading powers like Britain. Yet, they were obviously happy with the limitation of their range. Within the given limits, shipping under the Prussian flag expanded impressively and continuously.<sup>78</sup> We can assume that after 1817, the Pomeranian inheritance had been put to good use. A large group of professional merchants, well-connected shipowners, experienced sailors and craftsmen serving a fleet of some hundred ships had been a perhaps unexpected but very profitable endowment that came with the province being Swedish. Even though this group had to face a significant limitation of its range after 1815, it still had been able to maintain itself and make an impressive use of the given circumstances. We can also be sure that the Pomeranian dockyards did not cease to produce ships of high-quality oak wood for all of Europe. Thus, Pütter's grim prediction for the future did not come true. His report is understandable given the dire circumstances in which it was written but he had not expected the shipping industry's degree of flexibility.

His report is much more valuable in its presentation of Pomerian shipping in the revolutionary age, which was brought to the fore here. Pütter has shown us how impressive the development of the Pomeranian shipping industry had been in the late eighteenth century. Due to an extraordinary combination of beneficial factors, the small province had become a European shipping hub for nearly a decade. In 1800, almost one-third of the Swedish Kingdom's entire merchant fleet was owned in Pomerania. This fleet had been operating in the Mediterranean, from east to west, and thus made immense profits. Admittedly, the accumulated wealth had been destroyed by war and occupation. But the global vision and know-how had escaped destruction since the fleet and its owners could always easily leave the province for safe Swedish ports in times of French occupation. Thus, the ships and, more importantly, the 'human capital' of the province survived the Napoleonic occupation and were preserved well into Prussian times.

In this article, an outline of an extraordinary part of German and Swedish maritime history was presented. The fact that this has often been overlooked has to do with Prussian historiography, which tried to obscure the positive aspects of Swedish rule, but also the lack of published statistical material. Here only an overview could be presented which still needs to be filled in with more detail. We still know very little about the principal actors of the time. Who were the merchants in Stockholm, Stralsund or Barth, and who ensured this extraordinary flowering of Pomeranian shipping? What were their mutual connections?<sup>79</sup> What were the effects on the economic, cultural and intellectual life in the provincial cities? What were the effects in Southern Europe and how did the Pomeranians actually conduct business in this region very much alien to them? What was the perception of, and reaction to, this at the province's political level or in Stockholm? How did these connections continue after the severing of political ties between Sweden and Pomerania? These and other questions lie at the core of a German–Swedish shared history which is nothing less than spectacular. The Pomeranians did not know it, but they ventured so far in so impressive numbers, which had seldom been done before by German sailors or ships. This they owed to Swedish protection, which had been introduced in 1729 for other purposes but served Pomeranians well in the late eighteenth century. Swedish rule and the Pomeranian ability to innovate appear here as a combination that has been far more beneficial to Pomerania than has traditionally been known. Once we are able to look at these connections in more depth, we will uncover aspects of a shared German–Swedish past whose rich diversity has been unduly misrepresented and even forgotten up to this very day.

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## Sammanfattning

Det svenska Vorpommern genomgick en stor förändring under de tumultarade decennierna från 1776 till 1815, av vissa beskriven som revolutionens tidsålder. Sedan det svenska övertagandet 1629 hade provinsen gått bakåt i ekonomiskt hänseende och provinsens sjöfart var fram till 1776 huvudsakligen begränsad till att bidra med enklare varor till Sverige. Försvagningen av det holländska inflytandet från slutet av 1770-talet och den samtidiga uppmykningen av svensk och preussisk merkantilism, öppnade nya möjligheter för sjöfarten i provinsen. Skyddade av den svenska flaggan, kunde provinsens sjöfarare och handelsmän under de följande åren konstruera och underhålla en stor handelsflotta, en process som nådde sin höjdpunkt år 1800. Vid denna tid sköttes nästan 30 procent av hela den svenska internationella sjöfarten av sjöfolk från svenska Vorpommern och deras fartyg var regelbundna besökare i bl.a. Konstantinopel och Alexandria. Genom användning av empiriska data och en detaljerad analys hämtad från en samtida expert, beskrivs i artikeln ursprunget, formen, utvecklingen, och de långsiktiga effekterna av detta ekonomiska uppsving, vilket har gått ganska obemärkt förbi dagens historiker.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The details of the exchange: Rassow 1915, pp. 113-150; and Büsch 1992, pp. 104.

<sup>2</sup>See Roberts 1986, pp. 10-12.

<sup>3</sup>The authors who have written the most detailed accounts of this exchange emphasized Sweden's financial problems as the primary motivation: Grimberg 1903; and Rassow 1915.

<sup>4</sup>For an overview of the historiography of Swedish Pomerania after 1815, see Buchholz 1999, pp. 18-20; Önnersfors 2003, pp. 28-33; and Buchholz 2003, pp. 81-82, 116-117.

<sup>5</sup>This manifests itself especially in international conferences on the Baltic, where the history of the province always plays an important role. See Backhaus et al. 2003; and North and Riemer 2008.

<sup>6</sup>This is a remark of one of the most renowned historians on Swedish Pomerania. See Jörn 2003.

<sup>7</sup>Standards were set with the following works: Buchholz 1992; Jörn 2003; and Önnersfors 2003.

<sup>8</sup>The only historian who has ever indicated that Swedish Pomerania enjoyed a boom period in the late eighteenth century is, to my knowledge, Leos Müller. His observation that "the increase of provincial shipping was the most remarkable fact" of late-eighteenth-century shipping under the Swedish flag will be elaborated here: Müller 2004, p. 151.

<sup>9</sup>In 1932, Karl Scharping wrote a rather detailed book about the changing attitude of the Pomeranians towards their new rulers. He identified a phase of intense scepticism mixed with some elements of outright hostility towards the Prussians at the beginning and a rather quick change after the first years of Prussian rule. Crucial to this change was, for him, the Pomeranians feeling they had been "abandoned" (Orig.: im Stich gelassen) by the Swedes. Yet, his findings have to be regarded with caution since he wrote at the time of a nationalist historiography. See Scharping 1932. Other voices point to a growing distance between rulers and subjects for many years after 1815. See Önnersfors 2003, pp. 475-476.

<sup>10</sup>Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Abt. III Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, II. Nr. 5322, fol. 12v. (Afterwards cited as: GSPK, III, II, 5322.) The original text is in German. We present here only translations without the original in order to save space. The translation is a close rendering of the original.

<sup>11</sup>GSPK, III, II, 5322, fol. 11v.

<sup>12</sup>Werner Buchholz followed in 2003 the analysis made by David Reichenbach in 1784 when he remarked that shipbuilding was the most important part of Swedish Pomerania's industry. He did not mention the following use of many of these ships in Pomeranian rather than foreign service. See Buchholz 2003, p. 92. Reichenbach had highlighted this when he pointed out the increase in Swedish Pomerania's fleet from 198 ships in 1775 to 328 ships in 1783. See Reichenbach 1785, Attachment F.

<sup>13</sup>Müller 1926, pp. 95-96.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 91-94.

<sup>15</sup>GSPK, III, II, 5322, fol. 6v.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., fol. 8v.-9r.

<sup>17</sup>von Brandt 1947; Lindblad 1982; Lindblad 1988; and Müller 2004, pp. 225-229.

<sup>18</sup>This can be found at: <http://www.soundtoll.nl>. Information about this database is provided by Gøbel 2010.

<sup>19</sup>Johansen saw advantages for Prussian shipping with the outbreak of the Russo-Swedish war. See Johansen 1976-77, pp. 35-54, 47-50. Yet the boom for Prussia was rather weak. The advantage, instead, went to Mecklenburg's shipping as Johansen rightly emphasized later. See Johansen 1983, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup>The numbers are taken from <http://www.soundtoll.net> (see FN 18). Included is the destination given by the ship's captain at a passage westwards through the Sound.

<sup>21</sup>About these passports, see Müller 2004, pp. 144-154. The entire system of Algerian passports is illuminated by Gøbel 1982/1982. I wish to thank Leos Müller for generously sharing with me his compiled data from the passport register.

<sup>22</sup>Reichenbach 1785, pp. 17, 133, 151-157, 171-172.

<sup>23</sup>The periphery, according to Wallerstein, delivers raw materials and is dominated by forced labour. Wallerstein 2011, p. 66-129. Both aspects were generally true for Swedish Pomerania before 1775.

<sup>24</sup>About these, see Gadebusch 1788, pp. 307-309; and Müller 1926, pp. 30-41.

<sup>25</sup>Reichenbach 1785, pp. 135-136, 153-160. On Liewen, see SBL, Vol. 22, 757.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 193-207.

<sup>27</sup>Reichenbach was the senior treasurer of the province and a central proponent of the Enlightenment in the area. On him and his rich writings, see Müller 1920.

<sup>28</sup>Reichenbach 1785, pp. 76, 136-138.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 132-134.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 52-61.

<sup>31</sup>Gadebusch 1788, pp. 189-191. On Gadebusch, see SBL, Vol. 16, 700.

<sup>32</sup>Oom 1851, pp. 142-143.

<sup>33</sup>All figures based on <http://www.soundtoll.nl> (See FN 18).

<sup>34</sup>GSPK, III, II, 5322, fol. 9r.

<sup>35</sup>The number of Hamburg's long-distance ships increased with the decline of the Dutch Republic but this increase was not as large as could have been expected. In 1792, the fleet stood at 240 vessels, in 1795 at 213, in 1798 at 276 and reached its all-time high during the revolutionary era in 1801 with 295 vessels. Compared with the nearly 3 000 ships which had sailed under the Republic's flag before 1795, this increase seems rather modest. Numbers from Kresse 1966, p. 67.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., fol. 9v.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., fol. 12v.-13r.

<sup>38</sup>Fisher 1957, pp. 288-306.

<sup>39</sup>Panzac 1999, pp. 63-65, 129-140.

<sup>40</sup>This squadron and its appointment under the regime of the Marquis de Pombal certainly deserve closer historical research. At the moment, we find most information about it in the older works on German maritime history. Here, it is stated that since the 1770s, the squadron blocked the Strait of Gibraltar for all corsairs, thus ensuring the Portuguese coast was completely safe. This obviously worked until Portugal was drawn into the Napoleonic Wars in 1806. See Baasch 1897, pp. 69-79.

<sup>41</sup>On security as an important resource for expanding the Swedish shipping industry in the eighteenth century, see Müller 2004, pp. 30-32, 227.

<sup>42</sup>Büsch 1797, pp. 86-87.

<sup>43</sup>See FN 22.

<sup>44</sup>Although the passports were only obligatory for a voyage south of Cape Finisterre, we can be sure that in times of war, most shipowners who sailed west of the Sound procured these documents in order to be able to prove their identity when meeting a European privateer. This explains the rather limited destinations for many who bought passports.

<sup>45</sup>About the relaxation of Prussian mercantilism after 1786, see Rachel 1981, pp. 990-993; and Mieck 1981, pp. 994-1005.

<sup>46</sup>Büsch 1793, pp. 226-238; Büsch 1797, pp. 188-194; and Pohl 1963, pp. 89-97.

<sup>47</sup>Vogel 1928, pp. 138-139, 145-146.

<sup>48</sup>Johansen has emphasized the enormous importance of exports of all sorts of timber in the late eighteenth century from the Baltic westwards. His numbers show accurately how important this export business was on the southern coast of the Baltic and how much less the northern ports (the dividing point being St. Petersburg) exported this commodity. See Johansen 1989, p. 25.

<sup>49</sup>GSPK, III, II, 5322, fol. 9r.

<sup>50</sup>The Prussians regarded this demand as unacceptable. See Rassow 1915, pp. 104-107.

<sup>51</sup>Ventegodt 1989, pp. 36-38, 190-238. The term 'guesstimate' is taken from Leos Müller, who added some more international figures which underscore Ventegodt's findings. See Müller 2004, pp. 161-164.

<sup>52</sup>According to Buchholz, the net earnings increased from 252 442 Thaler in 1786 to 357 324 Thaler in 1805. See Buchholz 1992, pp. 539-540. Yet, here I wish not to be misunderstood. Mostly landholdings or earnings from agriculture were taxed. See *Ibid.* 555-556. Thus the effects of increased shipping on the tax revenues were at best indirect. Still, the increase is remarkable and, in all likelihood, linked to the blossoming of the province's shipping.

<sup>53</sup>See FN 12.

<sup>54</sup>Önnerfors 2003, pp. 269-484. It also seems no coincidence that the reign of Gustav IV was later very much idealized in Swedish Pomerania, in stark contrast to Sweden, where he had been regarded as reactionary. See Weise 2005, p. 51.

<sup>55</sup>Hartmann 2005.

<sup>56</sup>Dalgren has identified some opposition among the nobility and the cities, yet this did not play out in any way since the diet of Pomerania, convened by the king, was duly visited. See Dalgren 1916, pp. 115-119, 157.

<sup>57</sup>Wehrmann 1906, pp. 252-255; and Frohnert 2000, pp. 255-286.

<sup>58</sup>On Sweden and the Continental Blockade, see Heckscher and Westergaard 1922, pp. 178-180, 234-237, 319-320.

<sup>59</sup>The war with Britain from 1810-12 was a 'phony' war. See Voelcker 2007.

<sup>60</sup>Biesner 1834, p. 313.

<sup>61</sup>GSPK, III, II, 5322, fol. 11v.

<sup>62</sup>On this decision, see Höjer 1954, pp. 171-240.

<sup>63</sup>The Swedish commissioner D'Albedyhl, who reported about the state of the province in 1793, was the first to recommend selling the province – a proposal that outraged Stockholm. It is interesting to note that one of the most important counter-arguments for keeping the province was an allusion to its contribution to the Swedish fleet. See Dalgren 1916, pp. 24-31.

<sup>64</sup>Rassow 1915, p. 100.

<sup>65</sup>Rassow 1915, pp. 105-106.

<sup>66</sup>Inachin 2005, pp. 48-49, 78-88.

<sup>67</sup>Arndt 1845, p. 170.

<sup>68</sup>Burke 1818, pp. 45-49.

<sup>69</sup>GSPK, III, II, 5322, fol. 13r.

<sup>70</sup>Bindemann 1878, p. 13.

<sup>71</sup>Scharping 1932, p. 33.

<sup>72</sup>GSPK, III, II, 5322, fol. 12v.

<sup>73</sup>It is indeed true that Swedish Pomerania saw a marked increase in its population from 1779 to 1805, which was certainly connected with the economic growth described here. Remarkable in this regard is especially Barth's fast growth. Yet, after the Prussian acquisition, this did not peter out since the population growth continued constantly. See Wieden 1999, pp. 22, 89-91.

<sup>74</sup>Bergsøe 1853, p. 379.

<sup>75</sup>About Sweden's shipping in the first half of the nineteenth century, see Kilborn 2009. Kilborn gives a nuanced view which generally confirms the stagnation of Swedish shipping in these years: "Sett mot bakgrunden av en ökande världshandel, en växande befolkning och en ökad ekonomisk tillväxt i Skandinavien så förefaller det märkligt att inte fartygsflottan växte mer". See Kilborn 2009, p. 64.

<sup>76</sup>Panzac 1999, pp. 245-266.

<sup>77</sup>Baasch 1897, p. 167.

<sup>78</sup>In the year 1850 alone, 2 891 ships under the Prussian flag passed the Sound. See Bergsøe 1854, p. 379.

<sup>79</sup>A model approach for such questions regarding Finland, the other important province of the Swedish conglomerate state, has already been made. A comparison would be, therefore, interesting. See Ojala 1997.