

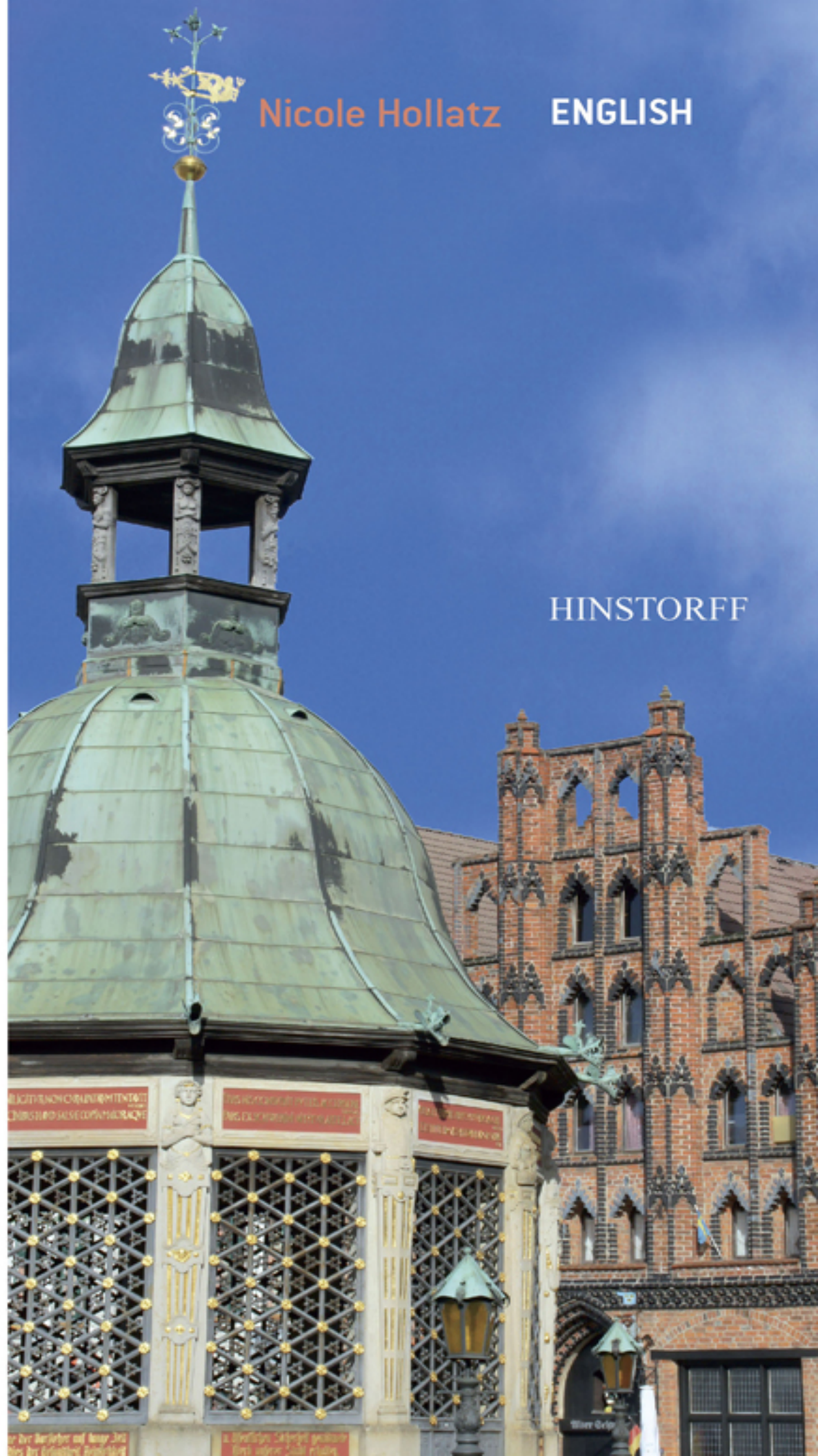
Wisimar



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ENGLISH

HINSTORFF



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Übersetzung ins Englische:

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Of **St Mary** only the tower has survived. As a highly visible landmark it is valued by sailors for long ages. In the background on the left, the most recent of the three major Wismar churches, **St George**.

WELCOME!

“We live where others go on vacation” – so many Wismar say enthusing. This is no exaggeration: Over 200,000 people visit the Hanseatic city every year to enjoy the unique charm of a comparatively small, manageable community with the cosmopolitanism of a Baltic Sea port.

Wismar is situated on the southern tip of a bay, protected by the island of Poel and the sandbank of Lieps – picturesquely nestled in the green of fields and meadows, the blue of the Baltic Sea, some yellow of the beach and the bright yellow of the canola fields in spring. Along with the red brick Gothic of its old town it gives a harmonious impression. Three high towering churches brought forth wealth by trade. St Nicolas near the harbor was the church of the seamen. St George is considered the “miracle of Wismar”. Enormous war and weather damage have been largely repaired in over 20 years of work. Fortunately the church tower of St Mary survived. The nave was blasted because of severe war damage in 1960; the replica wall outlines the size of the former church council. Many testimonies of bygone periods are displayed on the façades of Wismar. As proud lions jump out of the wall or stretch out shining like gold over the portal, while some “Swedish head” would tell of about 15 Swedish decades, if it could.

When exactly Wismar was founded is not documented. A record from 1147 mentions a “Wizmar Havn”. Eventually, at some point the harbor was followed by a town: First time related rights are detectable in 1229. Wismar was an important member of the Hanseatic League for a long time. In 1259 it joined forces with Rostock and Lübeck to fight pirates and predators at sea and ashore. During prime time at around 1300, the town

counted about 5,000 people. But it was at latest in the 1550s when it fell into decline, coupled with poverty and hunger. Wismar was repeatedly besieged and occupied in military conflicts. In the Thirty Years' War, residents had to accommodate and feed thousands of soldiers. Their city along with the whale island, a small offshore island, was expanded to the largest fortress in Europe. With the Peace Treaty of Osnabrück in 1648, Wismar fell as an everlasting imperial fiefdom to Sweden. Representatives of Stockholm dictated the fate until 1803, apart from a five-year hiatus starting 1676, when the city fell under Danish rule. Eventually, in 1803 Sweden pledged Wismar to the Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, followed by the final waiver of redemption one hundred years later. At the turn of the 19th century the economy revived, probably due to the closer connection to the surrounding countryside. Highways were built and a link to the railway system established, the port experienced prosperity. In 1881 Rudolph Karstadt opened his first store in Wismar and hereby laid the foundation for an empire of department stores across Germany. In 1893 a railroad car manufacturing site was constructed. The Engineering Academy was founded in 1908, the origin of today's University of Applied Sciences. At present, there are about 4,300 on-site and 2,700 distance students.

As in many places the two world wars resulted in deep cuts in local history. After 1918 unemployment and housing shortages were persistent hardships. It was only the introduction to the rearmament that seemed to remedy the situation at the end of 1933, until the German war plans were realized by 1939, with all their consequences. When the war began over 3,600 people worked at the Dornier Wismar plant, which provided bombers for the German Luftwaffe since 1934.

Wismar was liberated by British and Canadian troops in May 1945, but later became part of the Soviet occupational zone. In the following decades the seaport became the second largest in the GDR. The new established shipbuilding site in this dimension had up to 7,000 employees at times.

End of the 1980s resistance to the rule of the SED (Socialist Unity Party) and the repression of the opposition stirred in Wismar. On 7 November 1989, over 50,000 people demonstrated on the market square. In recent years, many important companies have settled. In parallel the city since 2002 a UNESCO World Heritage Site, developed into a tourist magnet.