

ATHENIS FINLANDIAE 2013 – SPECIAL OFFERS OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE ATHENS OF FINLAND

As the main theme of *Athenis Finlandiae* 2013 is Hanseatic Cities and Germany, the cultural relations between Scandinavia and Germany in the course of centuries will be the central issue to be discussed. Their significance is in danger of being forgotten, due to the dominance of the English language. Culture in its abstract sense and material culture should not be separated from each other, since quite evidently there is a multifarious interdependency between them.

The Mediterranean Sea is the cradle of our civilisation. The seafaring Phoenicians, while transporting commodities from east to west and from west to east, also conveyed, as if from a horn of plenty, various cultural stimuli. Among other things, they brought from the east the North-Semitic set of consonants, to which the Greeks added the vowels – to meet the needs of their sonorous language – thus laying the basis for the two European alphabets.

The Greeks built their own culture on the inspiring ideas offered by the oriental world. It was then adopted by the Romans and conveyed in its Latin form to the Europe of later days. This is how our cultural tradition was born.

The Romans regarded the Mediterranean as “Our Sea” (*Mare Nostrum*). The “Our Sea” of the Northern peoples has been *Mare Balticum*, the Baltic Sea, on which the Hanseatic League performed the same duties as the Phoenicians in their days did on the Mediterranean. When Duke John fetched his young wife – the princess related to the Sforza family – from Poland to Turku, the Baltic Sea – in the hexametric media - was referred to as *Mare Finnicum*.

These subjects will be dealt with during the six days (from the 9th to the 14th of September, 2013) of the next *Athenis Finlandiae*. The fact that Germany and the German language have been the main conveyer of the Mediterranean cultural tradition will not be forgotten. Neither should economy be excluded, since man – not even at his noblest – will not live on spirit alone but will also need bread to survive.

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