



#### About the book:

"History of Finland" is totally up to date and was published in England by Oxford University Press last year. The author Henrik Meinander paints a brisk and bold picture of the history of Finland from the 700 years as integrated part of the Swedish kingdom to the autonomous period of Grand Duchy within the Russian empire and further on he depicts a gradually transformed and maturing into a conscious nation, independent state and skilful adapter of modern technology. The main geographical context for his study is the Baltic region, and the author links his analysis to structural developments and turning points in European history. The book blends politics, economy and culture to show how human and natural resources in Finland have been utilized and the impact its cultural heritage and technological innovation have had on its development. In a departure from most conventional approaches, Meinander gives greater emphasis to recent and contemporary events. In other words, he puts Finland into a range of historical contexts in its Baltic and European settings to highlight how both together have formed Finland into what it is at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

#### About the author:

Henrik Meinander born 1960 became a PhD in 1994 and is since 2001 Professor of History at the University of Helsinki and the author of many acclaimed books on Finnish and Nordic history. He was formerly curator of the Mannerheim Museum in Helsinki and head of the Finnish Institute in Stockholm. He is a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

#### Relevance for Georgia and Georgian academics:

There are three main reasons why Meinander's "History of Finland" is relevant for the serious and professional academics as well as for the undergraduate students of Georgia who relates to the topics of History and Political Science.

1) The History of Finland is relevant and useful as a comparison for Georgian history since both countries were occupied by the Russian Empire at more or less the same time and later managed to establish their freedom at the same time after the Bolshevik Coup d'État and the First World War as well. Both countries are even today trying to handle the difficulties of being a neighbour to Putin's Russia. Because Georgia was occupied by the Bolshevik Russia and included in the Soviet Union it is considered by the Kremlin still after the collapse of the Soviet Union not to be a sovereign free nation but "a near abroad". This reminds quite much of Finland's situation after the Soviet attack, the following winter war and the cold war that came after the Second World War with the Finlandization. The main causes for this problem was and are of course that both The Soviet Union and Putin's Russia as strong military powers in their relations to their much smaller neighbour nations did and do not care much for international law or ethical principles in their dealings and deeds.

2) The book is written in an honest highly professional and objective spirit that is quite different from the older history books in Finland. For the most part of the 20th century the history of Finland has been described even among academics in three ways. a) The influence from Sweden was fantastic and the real foundation of Finland while the Russians were evil and Finns negligible. b) The influence from Russia was fantastic and created Finland while the Swedes were evil and Finns negligible. c) All foreign influence was evil and the foundation and spirit of Finland was created entirely by the Finns themselves.

This book is however truly objective and describes the strong and weak sides of the Swedish influence, the Russian influence and of the Finns themselves. Something of high importance for the academics of Georgia today and the future academics when they will develop their understanding and writings about the history of Georgia. The book also includes a list of literature for those readers who want to deepen their knowledge about Finland, Sweden, Russia and Europe in a scientific way.

3) The book is written in a very clear and readable way. It leaves the dry and many times boring, self-absorbed and low level of academic writing without falling into the abyss of shallow entertainment and easy simplified many times erroneous writings among non academically writers of history. For this reason the book will hopefully also inspire future writers in Georgian academics mostly among the historians and academics belonging to the humanistic or political science because of its style.

#### Some reviews:

"...this volume goes well beyond the chiefly political analysis...and includes substantial information on literary, philosophical, musical, linguistic, pedagogical and general cultural topics, providing a deeper and more nuanced overview of the Finns from prehistoric times to the present....the author gives outstanding summaries of the events and issues during the Swedish and Russian dominions and...the post-independence decades. Meinander supplies an even-handed, thoughtful analysis of the civil war and its aftermath,...the Winter War, the Continuation War, and the Lapland War, which brought WWII to an end in Finland. He also advances convincing arguments for Finland's Cold War foreign policy and for its post-war economic successes,...its integration into the European Union and its cooperation with NATO. Written in a clear, concise style. If a library can have only one book on modern Finnish history, this is the one." CHOICE (The official publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries, [www.choice360.org](http://www.choice360.org)).

"Neither publisher nor author was lacking self-confidence when they decided to produce this survey of Finnish history...Meinander is a master of elegant compression and writes with precision and subtlety....The result is a genuinely entertaining read." Helsingin Sanomat, Helsinki

"History of Finland is an extraordinarily readable and well-balanced book. Meinander's clarity of vision has placed Finland in a Nordic and European perspective as well as skilfully weaving political, economic and cultural developments into an integral whole." Svenska Dagbladet, Stockholm

"Meinander has managed to blend everything into his presentation, from the Ice Age to the NATO question. The style is elegant but at the same time so full of substance that the reader is both drawn along by the text and continually surprised by the impact the choice of a few particular words can have on the overall picture." Aamulehti, Tampere