



**A Greeting  
from  
the President of Iceland  
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson**

Thor Heyerdahl was a great hero to young boys in the small Icelandic fishing village where I grew up. We read the book about his famous voyage and the victory of man over the ocean; were inspired to make our own rafts and set them afloat on the fjord.

Later, in my first year as President of Iceland, I met the hero of my boyhood days in The Hague at an exhibition about the world's great explorers. I invited Thor and his wife to visit Iceland, which they did at Christmas two years later.

Admittedly it was not the best time of the year for public meetings or lectures, but that did not really matter because Thor expressed an interest in spending the festive season on a farm, celebrating with the local people in a small rural community and attending a service at a tiny church with volcanoes and glaciers within view.

His conversations with the farmer were mainly about the ancient Sagas, the Viking voyages, Snorri Sturluson's writings and the poems of the Edda. Then, when I met him at my residence at Bessastaðir before the New Year, he was fired with enthusiasm and his mind was full of ideas for new expeditions. Perhaps the plans for a search for Óðinn were hatched in the Icelandic countryside!

Thor Heyerdahl is one of few Norwegians who have gained global fame and his story stands as testimony to the wisdom of the ancient poem Hávamál: A good reputation, once earned, will never die.