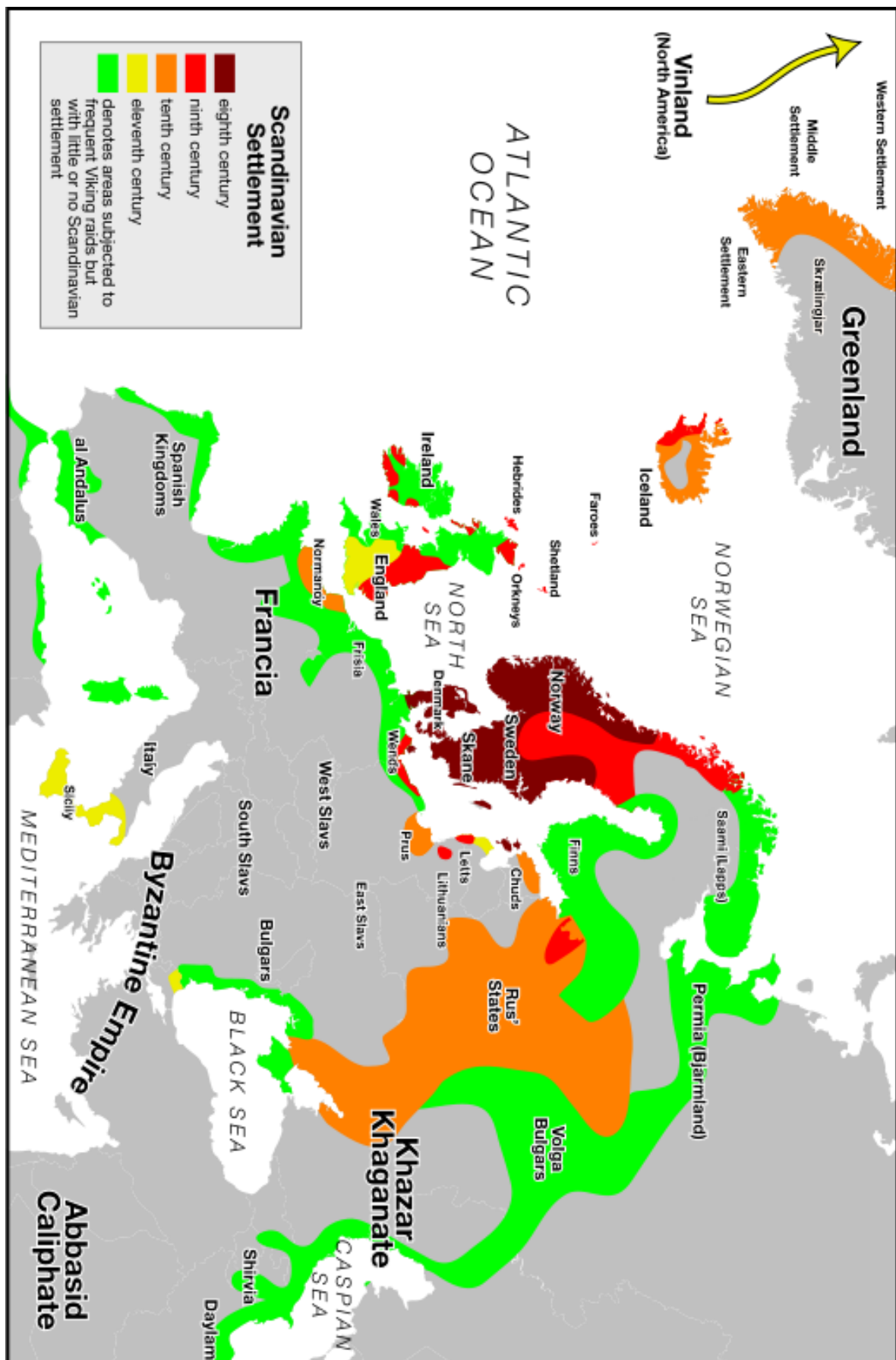


## *Thor Heyerdahl and Azerbaijan*



Conference in Baku, 26-29 October 2011



Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Viking\\_Expansion.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Viking_Expansion.svg))

## Introduction

Thor Heyerdahl is probably the most famous Norwegian of the twentieth century, having had a long career as an explorer, writer and anthropologist. He was never tied down by borders between the different academic fields his work touched on. His whole life can be described as one of transcending borders: between countries and cultures, between academic fields, between what was thought possible and impossible. He is probably best known for his expeditions taking rafts or boats based on ancient designs on intercontinental journeys to show that pre-historic peoples could have travelled great distances.

His attitude to exploration can probably be summarized in as follows:

- Ancient myths and stories are based on historical facts and could and should be used to illuminate the past.
- Ideas are best tested in real life, by trying them out instead of theorizing in an office.
- Today's academic world is too insular. When investigating an idea, one should seek out collaborators across the normal academic boundaries: By cooperating, historians, biologists, archeologists and other experts from different countries and traditions can add light and their particular knowledge to topics that are too complex to be fully understood by one academic field alone.
- A general belief that ancient peoples travelled and communicated over greater distances than most established academics think.

Heyerdahl visited Azerbaijan several times and spent his last years working on projects focusing on old connections between Caucasus and Scandinavia. This conference brings together scholars from different fields to discuss Heyerdahl's ideas and to throw light on the ties between these regions.

**Wednesday October 26**

**Venue: Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL)**

<b>Opening session</b>	
	Moderator: Samad Seyidov
10:00	Opening by Samad Seyidov, Rector of AUL, and Bente Christensen, Head of Department, University of Oslo
	Welcoming speeches: Misir Mardanov, Minister of Education; Husein Bagirov, Minister of Ecology; Vagif Aliyev, Deputy Minister of Culture; Erling Skjønberg, Ambassador of Norway to Azerbaijan
	Greeting by Thor Heyerdahl jr and Maja Bauge, Director of the Kon-Tiki Museum, Oslo
	Greeting by Lars Troen Sørensen, Country Manager Statoil Azerbaijan
	Betty Blair, book presentation. Thor Heyerdahl: <i>Beyond Borders, Beyond Seas. Links with Azerbaijan</i> (2011).
<b>Subject 1: Thor Heyerdahl: A presentation</b>	
	Moderator: Jon Ramberg
11:00	Christer D. Daatland: Thor Heyerdahl – A short introduction
11:10	Thor Heyerdahl jr: My father Thor Heyerdahl
11:40	Saleh Garabagli Bey: Thor Heyerdahl – Top man of the world culture
12:10	Qorxmaz Mustafayev: Thor Heyerdahl's search for the origins of the Varyags
12:40	Maja Bauge: The Kon-Tiki Museum – A presentation in words and pictures
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Heyerdahl in Azerbaijan: A conversation moderated by Betty Blair. With Jacqueline Beer Heyerdahl, Tore Seierstad and Zaza Aleksidze
<b>Subject 2: Heyerdahl's "Odin theory": Background</b>	
14:40	Jon Gunnar Jørgensen: Snorri and the origin of the Odin theory
15:10	Farah Jalil: Scandinavian and Azerbaijani epic poetry: Comparative notes
15:40	Hallvard Bjørgum: Deep tunes: The quest for linkages between Azerbaijani and Norwegian folk music
19:30	Dinner buffet (upon invitation) in Ambassador Skjønberg's residence, with a small concert: Norwegian fiddle player Hallvard Bjørgum and Azerbaijani kamancha player Elshan Mansurov

**Thursday October 27**

**Venue: Gobustan – Western University**

**Subject 3: The “Odin theory” – Archeological evidence**

08:00	Departure from Diplomat Hotel (185, Suleiman Rahimov Street) to Gobustan by bus (participation limited, upon invitation)
09:30	Visit to the rock carvings – presentation by archeologists Malahat Farajova, Knut Helskog and Anne-Sophie Hygen Visit to Roman inscription (1 <sup>st</sup> century AD)
11:30	Return to Baku (Western University) by bus
13:00	Lunch
	Moderator: Urkhan Alekperov
14:00	Husein Baghirov: Thor Heyerdahl: Explorer, author, cosmopolite, activist for the environment
14:20	Malahat Farajova: Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape
14:40	Anne-Sophie Hygen: The boat and the chariot as physical objects and symbolic motifs in the Bronze Age
15:10	Knut Helskog: Petroglyphs as evidence of boats, communication and subsistence in the coastal regions of Scandinavia and the Caspian Sea
15:30	Questions, discussion
16:00	Coffee and tea break
16:30	Qoshqar Qoshgarli: Heyerdahl and archeology in Azerbaijan
17:00	Nazim Bababayli and Isa Habibeyli: On similar motifs in petroglyphs in Alta (Norway) and Gamigaya (Azerbaijan)
17:30	Discussion: Petroglyphs in Azerbaijan and Norway – How similar are they?
18:00	Ceremony: Honorary Doctor’s diploma presented by Western University to Thor Heyerdahl jr
18:30	Thor Heyerdahl jr: My father Thor Heyerdahl – Baku History Club
20:00	Dinner (upon invitation), hosted by Western University and Ministry of Ecology

**Friday October 28**

**Venue: Azerbaijan University of Languages**

**Subject 4: Heyerdahl's work studied from various angles**

	Moderator: Vibeke Roggen
10:00	Nazim Ibrahimov: Getting inspired by the Kon-Tiki Man and his books
10:20	Afat Sadiqoglu Mammadov: Why is Thor Heyerdahl so well known and so popular in Azerbaijan?
10:40	Bente Christensen: Thor Heyerdahl – The literary writer
11:10	Betty Blair, book presentation: Translation into Azerbaijani of Thor Heyerdahl: <i>In the footsteps of Adam, A Memoir</i> .
11:20	Coffee and tea break
11:50	Vagif Aslan: Azerbaijani and Norwegian mythical thinking: Comparisons and parallels
12:10	Robert Mobili: Thor Heyerdahl and the Udin people

**Subject 5: The “Odin theory” – Methodology and various approaches**

	Moderator: Bente Christensen
12:30	Ruth Vatvedt Fjeld: Heyerdahl's linguistic evidence: Why was it criticized?
13:00	Vibeke Roggen: Between Snorri and Heyerdahl: The Odin theory around 1700
13:30	Jon Ramberg, book presentation: Øystein Kock Johansen: <i>Thor Heyerdahl: The Scientist, the Adventurer, the Man</i> (2003)
13:40	Lunch
14:30	Ronnie Gallagher: The Ice Age rise and fall of the Ponto Caspian: Ancient mariners and the Asiatic Mediterranean
15:00	Farda Asadov: Did Scandinavians come to sail in the Caspian in VIII – early IX century?
15:30	Siv Kristoffersen: The long run: Migration of motives in animal figurines in metal works
16:00	J. Bjørnar Storfjell: Scandinavians in Scythia: Thor Heyerdahl's interpretation of Snorri tested by the archaeologist's trowel
16:30	Sergey Lukyashko: Thor Heyerdahl's work in Azov
17:00	Coffee and tea break
17:30	Concluding discussion, moderated by Christer D. Daatland: Thor Heyerdahl's theory about ancient relationships between Azerbaijan and Norway.
18:30	Concert
21:00	Dinner (upon invitation) hosted by Azerbaijan University of Languages

## Saturday October 29

**For students, teachers and the general public:**

**Lectures given by conference participants**

**Venue: Azerbaijan University of Languages**

	Moderator: Erik Juriks
10:00	Vibeke Roggen: Heyerdahl's theory on relationship between Azerbaijan and Norway – Brief summary of the conference
10:20	Thor Heyerdahl jr: In and out of my father's footsteps
11:20	Jon Ramberg: Vikings of the East
12:00	Malahat Farajova, Anne-Sophie Hygen and Knut Helskog: Gobustan's petroglyphs - Azerbaijan's pride
12:40	Questions by the press and the general public Discussion
13:30	Lunch

## **For international guests (optional)**

09:00	Trip to Ateshgah (Fire Temple) and Yanar Dag (Fire Mountain) by bus and guided tour of Old City with the Maiden Tower
13:30	Lunch. Venue: Azerbaijan University of Languages

## **PRESENTATION OF SPEAKERS AND THEMES (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)**

ZAZA ALEKSIDZE, CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR, INSTITUTE OF MANUSCRIPTS, TBILISI  
*PARTICIPANT IN CONVERSATION*

Professor dr. Zaza Aleksidze is the decipherer of Caucasian Albania script of 5th century, which he discovered on a manuscript in St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai, Egypt. Heyerdahl visited him in Tbilisi out of interest in this script.

FARDA ASADOV, HEAD OF ARAB STUDIES, AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL ACADEMY

*DID SCANDINAVIANS COME TO SAIL IN THE CASPIAN IN VIII – EARLY IX CENTURY?*

Arabic sources have left essential reports about Rus incursions into Caspian in the end of IX-th and the first half of X-th century. These sources leave little doubt of those Rus being Scandinavian traders and warriors. In the meantime Arab evidences of Rus preserved in geographic literature (Ibn Khordadbeh, Ibn al-Faqih, al-Masudi) and historical chronicles (at-Tabari) contain some data which enable an assumption of Rus sailing in the Caspian as early as in VIII and the first half of IX century. The paper presents those evidences and discusses their value to justify early coming of Scandinavians to the Caspian several decades prior to the establishment of Rurik dynasty in Kiev in 882.

VAGIF ASLAN, SENIOR TEACHER, SHEKI BOARD OF AZERBAIJAN TEACHERS  
INSTITUTE

*AZERBAIJANI AND NORWEGIAN MYTHICAL THINKING: COMPARISONS AND PARALLELS*

In his last visits to Azerbaijan, Thor Heyerdahl said that many Norwegians consider their ancestors to have come from Azerbaijan, as it was written in Snorri's Edda. This talk makes comparisons, parallels and analyses referring to the texts in Edda, information in Thor Heyerdahl's speeches, facts and arguments in research papers and at the same time the mythic notion in Azerbaijani style of thinking and existing sayings and expressions in Azerbaijani language. Comparisons between the names of gods, goddesses, ordinary people, trees, springs and toponyms in Edda and in Azerbaijani language support this idea. The author of the paper sees the similarities in Azerbaijani-Norwegian mythic thoughts as the result of closeness in their genetic roots.



NAZIM BABABAYLI, PhD IN GEOGRAPHY, AND ISA HABIBEYLI , PROFESSOR, DR. IN PHILOLOGY, RECTOR OF NAXCHIVAN STATE UNIVERSITY

*ON SIMILAR MOTIFS IN PETROGLYPHS IN ALTA (NORWAY) AND GAMIGAYA (AZERBAIJAN)*

Petroglyphs with similar motifs can be found from Anatolia to Taklamakan and from Scandinavia to Korea. The motifs of petroglyphs in Scandinavia (Alta, Komsa, Tennese and Saam) and in the Lesser Caucasus (Zangezur, Paragol, Zalkhagol, Perichingil and Gamigaya) can be divided into four groups: social, lifestyle, economy and hunting. For example, deer motifs are found in the whole area, even in places with no deer, indicating similar cultures.

HUSEIN BAGHIROV, PROFESSOR, MINISTER OF ECOLOGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
*THOR HEYERDAHL: EXPLORER, AUTHOR, COSMOPOLITE, ACTIVIST FOR THE ENVIRONMENT*

Professor Baghirov holds a degree in history and is former Rector of Western University. He is president of Air and Extreme Sports Federation of Azerbaijan.

MAJA BAUGE, DIRECTOR OF THE KON-TIKI MUSEUM, OSLO  
*A PRESENTATION IN WORDS AND PICTURES*

This is a short presentation of Thor Heyerdahl's life and work by the Kon-Tiki Museum. It starts with his childhood, his education and interests until he started to work on his migration theory. He was convinced that ancient civilizations had the knowledge about building vessels and navigating across the big oceans long before Columbus. There were many indications of such contacts, but no real evidence. The Kon-Tiki expedition across the Pacific and the reed boat expeditions across the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans proved that such a contact was possible. His archaeological excavations on Easter Island supported his theory. This presentation focuses on these three expeditions and the Kon-Tiki Museum.

SALEH GARABAGLI BEY, PROFESSOR  
*THOR HEYERDAHL – TOP MAN OF THE WORLD CULTURE*

In his book "The Destiny of the World" (written in Russian), Prof. Bey tries to identify the most important issues for humanity, and those persons who have made the greatest contributions to human development. Three Norwegians are among the 44 persons identified as creators of world science and culture: Fridtjof Nansen, Roald Amundsen and Thor Heyerdahl.

Especially interesting is Heyerdahl's work on the connections between Azerbaijan and Norway.

HALLVARD BJØRGUM, NORWEGIAN FOLK MUSICIAN

*DEEP TUNES: THE QUEST FOR LINKAGES BETWEEN AZERBAIJANI AND NORWEGIAN FOLK MUSIC*

Historical and archaeological evidence tells us that the Nordic people had contact with peoples of Caucasus as far back as two thousand years ago. This contact is reflected in Norse mythology as well, which tell of adventures to the south and east. Could music also have travelled along these routes? Can we find living examples of this music still in existence? Hallvard T. Bjørgum, master harding fiddle player from Norway, has found striking similarities between the music from Caucasus and a small collection of folk tunes from his home area of Setesdal. In his seminar, Bjørgum examines how these tunes (in Norwegian: ("Gorrlause Rammeslåttar")), which are still played in living tradition in Setesdal, could be connected to living folk music in Caucasus.

BETTY BLAIR, EDITOR OF AZERBAIJAN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

BOOK PRESENTATIONS:

*THOR HEYERDAHL: BEYOND BORDERS, BEYOND SEAS. LINKS WITH AZERBAIJAN/TUR HEYERDAL: SƏRHƏDLƏRİ AŞARAQ, DƏNİZLƏRİ AŞARAQ. AZƏRBAYCANLA ƏLAQƏLƏR (2011)*

This bilingual book is a compilation of various articles that were originally published in Azerbaijan International magazine which relate to Thor Heyerdahl—his voyages, his theories and interests. Heyerdahl specifically selected Azerbaijan International as his medium to publish for the first time (1995) his belief that Scandinavian ancestors could trace their roots to the region that is now Azerbaijan. Main translator: Sheyda Suleymanova.

*THOR HEYERDAHL: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ADAM, A MEMOIR (TUR HEYERDAL: ADƏMİN İZLƏRİ İLƏ, XATIRƏLƏR), 2011*

Considered by many to be the best of his 20 books, Heyerdahl, writing in his mid-80s, looks back on his life and shares insights gained from his four sea voyages, beginning with Kon-Tiki in 1947. The book is a captivating read about the struggles of an idealistic archaeologist and historian who risked his life to prove that Eurocentric theories of ancient migration patterns were flawed. This is the first of Heyerdahl's books in Azerbaijani translation. Translation: Sevinj Seyidova.

Both books were published in joint cooperation between Azerbaijan International magazine and Western University.

BENTE CHRISTENSEN, DR. PHILOS., HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTIC AND NORDIC STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

*THOR HEYERDAHL – THE LITERARY WRITER*

Thor Heyerdahl and his work have been followed and discussed all over the world, and countless books and articles have been written about him. One aspect, however, is less scrutinized, and that is Thor Heyerdahl as an author. I have chosen to go deeper into four texts from different periods of his literary production, in order to find out more about his technique as a writer. The four texts are *Fatuhiva, back to Nature* (1974/2002), *The Kon-Tiki Expedition: By balsa raft across the Pacific*, 1947, *The Ra Expeditions*, 1970 and *In the footsteps of Adam*, 1998. I want to find out how he approaches his material, how he manages to describe the uneventful, but at the same time highly dramatical life of the explorers. I also want to look at the texts from a genre perspective. Are the four texts I have chosen travel literature, are they autobiographies, or both? And are there other genre traits involved? I will try to find out what makes the specificity of Heyerdahl's literary texts.

CHRISTER D. DAATLAND, PROJECT ADVISOR, AZERBAIJAN UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES

*THOR HEYERDAHL – A SHORT INTRODUCTION*

Thor Heyerdahl had a long and varied career as an explorer, writer and anthropologist, among other things. His last projects were a book on the Norse god Odin, and an archeological dig in Azov at the mouth of the Don river, both of which concentrated on the possible links between Azerbaijan and Scandinavia. This conference will follow up on these themes.

MALAHAT FARAJOVA, DIRECTOR OF GOBUSTAN MUSEUM

*GOBUSTAN ROCK ART CULTURAL LANDSCAPE*

Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape was inscribed into the World Heritage List in 2007. Over 6000 rock engravings were found and registered, since Upper Palaeolithic up to the Middle Ages. One of the most important and difficult questions a rock art researcher has to deal with and on which he does not always find an exact answer, is the problem of dating that has cardinal value for correct definition of place of the given monument in the long circuit of historical development. Gobustan rocky boulders, situated closely to one another, form the caves, which over thousand years were used

by ancient dwellers as a living place and religious sanctuaries, where ritual and magic ceremonies, ancestor and mountain worships were made.

RUTH VATVEDT FJELD, DR. PHILOS., PROFESSOR OF LEXICOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

*HEYERDAHL'S LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE: WHY WAS IT CRITICIZED?*

In the early time of lexical semantics, it was suggested that the latin word mors (death) was related to the god Mars, the god of war (Geeraerts 2010). Later, Christian Medieval authors found that the same word morse was related to the word morsus (to bite - referring to Adam and Eve's bite in the forbidden apple). Today linguists find such explanations of word meaning unscientific and non reliable evidence for any proof of reality. The paper will present some general requirements for methodology generally accepted by modern linguists, and try to give a closer explanation of the heavy critics from Norwegian researchers about Heyerdahl's linguistic evidence to support his theories.

RONNIE GALLAGHER, AMATEUR ARCHEOLOGIST

*THE ICE AGE RISE AND FALL OF THE PONTO CASPIAN: ANCIENT MARINERS AND THE ASIATIC MEDITERRANEAN*

Evidence of massive flooding is written into the Azerbaijani landscape and dates to the last Ice Age. This paper discusses geomorphological, biological and rock art evidence, and aims to show that flooding was due to diverted Russian rivers, glacial meltwater and an inundation by the Arctic Ocean. The consequences of a gigantic Eurasian lake – the Asiatic Mediterranean, would have greatly affected regional climates, regional biogeography and human demographics and suggests that intercontinental navigation was possible for millennia in prehistory. The floods and the eventual disappearance of the waterways, must surely have influenced ancient human life and helped shape prehistory.

KNUT HELSKOG, PROFESSOR, TROMSØ UNIVERSITY MUSEUM, NORWAY

*PETROGLYPHS AS EVIDENCE OF BOATS, COMMUNICATION AND SUBSISTENCE IN THE COASTAL REGIONS OF SCANDINAVIA AND THE CASPIAN SEA*

Populations whose subsistence is dependent on the exploitation of marine resources rely on boats for transportation, fishing and hunting, at the present as they did in the past. Also as important, boats and images of boats appear to have been associated with symbolism, beliefs and ritual communication with “other than humans” as well as humans. The first uses

of boats are believed to have occurred 10000 - 11000 years ago, and most likely there were multiple points of origin rather than one. In Scandinavia the oldest indications of crossing coastal waters are from approximately 10000 – 9000 years ago. Boats are depicted in 7000 - 6000 years old petroglyphs, which might be younger or older than the oldest boats depicted in Gobustan. – The discussion will examine the figures and contexts they are a part of, to illuminate the similarities and differences of the early cultural and maritime environments in two regions far apart.

JACQUELINE BEER HEYERDAHL

*PARTICIPANT IN CONVERSATION*

Jacqueline Beer Heyerdahl is Thor Heyerdahl's wife. Thor and Jaqueline Heyerdahl visited Azerbaijan together in three times: in 1994, 1999, and 2000. At the time, Heyerdahl was working on his book "The Search for Odin" (Jakten på Odin).

THOR HEYERDAHL JR

*MY FATHER THOR HEYERDAHL*

Thor Heyerdahl jr is the oldest son of Thor Heyerdahl. He is by profession a biologist and oceanographer, with a lifelong career in marine sciences. He has cooperated with his father in planning his ocean voyages, and for more than 20 years been chairman of the board of the Kon-Tiki Museum in Oslo. – He will give an evaluation of his father as a scientist, and characterize him as an artist who expressed himself as an author, photographer, cartoonist, and even through wood carving! He believes his father's spectacular achievements were the fruitful result of scientific curiosity, combined with an artist's imagination and communicative skills.

THOR HEYERDAHL JR

*IN AND OUT OF MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS*

A slide show in the wakes of Thor Heyerdahl's life, in an informal and entertaining way, prepared for a general audience.

ANNE-SOPHIE HYGEN, DR. PHILOS., HEAD OF CULTURAL HERITAGE, ØSTFOLD COUNTY COUNCIL

*THE BOAT AND THE CHARIOT AS PHYSICAL OBJECTS AND SYMBOLIC MOTIFS IN THE BRONZE AGE*

Prehistoric rock art motifs and compositions were chosen for their ability to carry symbolic meaning according to accepted social, cultural and ritual

conventions. The selected motifs often borrow the shape of concrete, physical objects or beings, like anthropomorphs, animals, chariots, and boats. – As physical objects the boat and the chariot are means of transport and overcoming distances. As symbols they may represent transition, transgression of obstacles and carriers of explanations of change from one condition or situation to another. These motifs play a central symbolic role in rock art, in different geographical, chronological and cultural contexts and belief systems. – The paper will explore the role of the boat and chariot as physical objects and symbolic motifs in the Bronze Age, a period characterized by communication and change over vast areas from Scandinavia to Central Asia.

NAZIM IBRAHIMOV, FORMER MAYOR OF SHEKI

*GETTING INSPIRED BY THE KON-TIKI MAN AND HIS BOOKS*

As mayor of Sheki, Mr Ibrahimov initiated and sponsored the bust of Thor Heyerdahl in Kish, unveiled in 2009 (see the front page of this program).

FARAH JALIL, PHD, BAKU SLAVIC UNIVERSITY

*SCANDINAVIAN AND AZERBAIJANI EPIC POETRY: COMPARATIVE NOTES*

This talk investigates some elements of “Little Edda”, a book written by the XIII century historian and politician Snorri Sturluson. Aside from mythological points, the main goal of this talk is to research historical aspects and geographical areas indicated in this book. – Further, the speaker compares Odin and Oguz khan - the main hero of Uygurian (Turks) epics, a cultural hero and conqueror like Odin. The names of real geographical places were shown in “Oghuzname” as well. Sometimes the specific features of mythological characters could be transformed to historical figures. Finally, the connection between Scandinavians and Azerbaijan hinted at in Edda is investigated.

JON GUNNAR JØRGENSEN, DR. PHILOS., PROFESSOR OF OLD NORSE PHILOLOGY,  
UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

*SNORRI AND THE ORIGIN OF THE ODIN THEORY*

The so called Odin theory of Thor Heyerdahl is primarily based on a literal reading of the Ynglinga Saga, which is the first part of “The Chronicle of the Kings of Norway” (Heimskringla), written in the 13th century, probably by the Icelandic author Snorri Sturluson. In another work, “The younger Edda”, Snorri presented a similar story about Odin, which Heyerdahl also refers to. In my paper I will show how Odin is presented in these sources and how he

is connected to the genealogy of Scandinavian kings. I will then comment the historicity of the legend and Heyerdahl's use of it, and on the linguistic evidence Heyerdahl presented.

SIV KRISTOFFERSEN, DR. ART., PROFESSOR OF ARCHEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF STAVANGER

*THE LONG RUN: MIGRATION OF MOTIVES IN ANIMAL FIGURINES IN METAL WORKS*

This paper will investigate the possibility that motifs of animals migrated over large distances. Ideas concerning the meaning of an Iron Age deer figure from Rogaland in Norway will be challenged through a perspective based on similar figurines from the prehistory of Azerbaijan. In archaeological research we are often surprised by similarities in material culture across vast distances and through large spans of time. But, even if we identify the possibility of such connections through time and space, it is extremely difficult to explain them in a scientific way, due to the complexity involved in processes of cultural connection and information exchange.

SERGEY IVANOVICH LUKYASHKO, LABORATORY OF ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH, AZOV

*THOR HEYERDAHL'S WORK IN AZOV CITY*

*Maksim Aleksandrovich Belov* is co-author of this paper.

Thor Heyerdahl's interest in Don River was formed during decades. In 2000 Heyerdahl came to Rostov on Don with the wish to find an answer to the question: Can the Icelandic Ynglingasaga about "Ynglinga" be trusted? Did Odin live in Asgard on the eastern coasts of Tanaisa-Don? What he saw inspired him to organize a joint archeological expedition in 2001. – On the eastern side of Don we know of two cities/settlements that existed around the first century BC, the timeframe that would fit in with Snorri's description. Both of them were situated in the territory of present-day city of Azov. There had been no previous archeological digs, and the dig resulted in a number of artifacts from the period in question.

AFAT SADIQOGLU MAMMADOV, AUTHOR OF THE BOOK (WRITTEN IN AZERBAIJANI) "THOR HEYERDAHL IN AZERBAIJAN"

*WHY IS THOR HEYERDAHL SO WELL KNOWN AND SO POPULAR IN AZERBAIJAN?*

The paper will analyze Thor Heyerdahl's research and his conclusions, such as the relation between the Azerbaijani and Norwegian peoples. As a result of his research Thor Heyerdahl said that the origin of the royal family of Norway came from Azerbaijan. The author supports his ideas and gives his

own ideas about the similarities of rock paintings in Norway and in Gemiqaya.

ROBERT MOBILI. BAKU STATE UNIVERSITY, HEAD OF ALBAN-UDI COMMUNITY  
*THOR HEYERDAHL AND THE UDIN PEOPLE*

Thor Heyerdahl was twice (1999, 2000) in Nich village of Kabala and met with members of the Udin community. He appreciated Udins as the phenomenon of rich Albanina cultural and religious-confessional heritage which preserved till nowadays. As the result of his visits the Albanian churches began to be restored. So with the financial support of Norwegian donor organizations in 2003 the Kish temple and in 2006 the Cotari church in Nich were reconstructed.

QORXMAZ MUSTAFAYEV, PHD, LECTURER OF HISTORY AT AZERBAIJAN UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES

*THOR HEYERDAHL'S SEARCH FOR THE ORIGIN OF VARYAGS*

Thor Heyerdahl devoted the last 20 years of his life to a search for the origin of Norwegian people. He investigated "Saga about Ynglings", a book written by Snorri Sturlason at the beginning of XIII century, and came to the conclusion that the origin of the Varyags was to be found in the Caucasus. The Vikings were known as Normans in the west and as Varyag in the East, but the origin of Varyags was always disputable. He based parts of his theory on linguistic similarities, which have been refuted by other scholars.

QOSHQAR QOSHQARLI, DR. OF HISTORY, INSTITUTE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY, ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

*THE ROLE OF THOR HEYERDAHL IN A MOTIVATING INFLUENCE: HEYERDAHL AND ARCHEOLOGY IN AZERBAIJANI*

Thor Heyerdahl's influence in Azerbaijan has three major directions. He was fascinated by ancient petroglyphs boats in Gobustan, and believed these boats had been made from reed, similar to the boat he himself had built and sailed. This sort of reed grows along the Khazar coastal regions, such as Salyan and Neftchala. This motivated the study of the history of Khazar navigation leading to important scientific results. Secondly, Heyerdahl supported Isa Salimkhanov's ideas that the stannum had been brought to South-West Asia-southern Caucasus from Indochina, not from Europe. Finally, Heyerdahl developed a theory on ethnic connections between Caucasian and Scandinavian peoples.



JON RAMBERG, FORMER NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR TO AZERBAIJAN

*BOOK PRESENTATION: ØYSTEIN KOCK JOHANSEN: THOR HEYERDAHL: THE SCIENTIST, THE ADVENTURER, THE MAN (2003)*

Kock Johansen, archeologist and dr. philos., was Heyerdahl's cooperation partner for many years, and wrote a biography about him in 2003 (in Norwegian). While he finds Heyerdahl's methods to be scientifically unsound at times, he maintains that Heyerdahl's greatest asset was his willingness to question, start discussions and challenge established truths. This led to harsh criticism from academic circles, and while some of the criticism was well founded, much was vindictive and out of proportion. This was true from his early projects, such as Kon-Tiki, to his last book, "The Search for Odin".

JON RAMBERG, FORMER NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR TO AZERBAIJAN

*VIKINGS OF THE EAST*

It has been written that the Nordic Vikings "exploded out of their fjords about 12 centuries ago". Population pressure in their homelands was among the factors which propelled them South, West and East in search of land and wealth – by trade or plunder. They navigated the Russians rivers all the way to the Caspian Sea. Although they also undertook occasional raids, most of the contact was peaceful and for mutually beneficial trading purposes – thanks to the Khazars, who acted as middlemen and gatekeepers to the Caspian. The Vikings created the Rus kingdom in Kiev and eventually were assimilated into the Slavic community.

VIBEKE ROGGEN, DR. ART., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LATIN, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

*BETWEEN SNORRI AND HEYERDAHL: THE ODIN THEORY AROUND 1700*

In his history of Norway (1711), the Iclander Tormod Torfaeus devoted much attention to the discussion of the origin of the Scandinavian peoples. Torfaeus took a critical approach to the old Norse sagas and their myths: Was Odin a chieftain, or was he a god? Did the Scythians take their origin from Scandinavia, as Olof Rudbeck claims in his *Atlantica* (1677)? Or was it rather the other way around, as Snorri had argued (ca. 1200)? According to Torfaeus, the truth can be hidden under the veil of fables. The paper will discuss and compare contemporary and earlier theories about the origin of Odin and the Scandinavians.

VIBEKE ROGGEN, DR. ART., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LATIN, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO  
*HEYERDAHL'S THEORY ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND NORWAY –  
BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE*

As an introduction to this day, dedicated to the general public of Azerbaijan, Roggen will present in brief the background for the conference, the main results, and the future plans. – Background: The ongoing cooperation between Azerbaijan University of Languages and the University of Oslo, developing a Scandinavian Studies program with focus on Norway. Arguably, Heyerdahl is the most popular Norwegian in Azerbaijan, and the idea was that such a conference would give valuable academic experience for the teachers and students on the program.

TORE SEIERSTAD, RECTOR, DANVIK SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION  
*PARTICIPANT IN CONVERSATION*

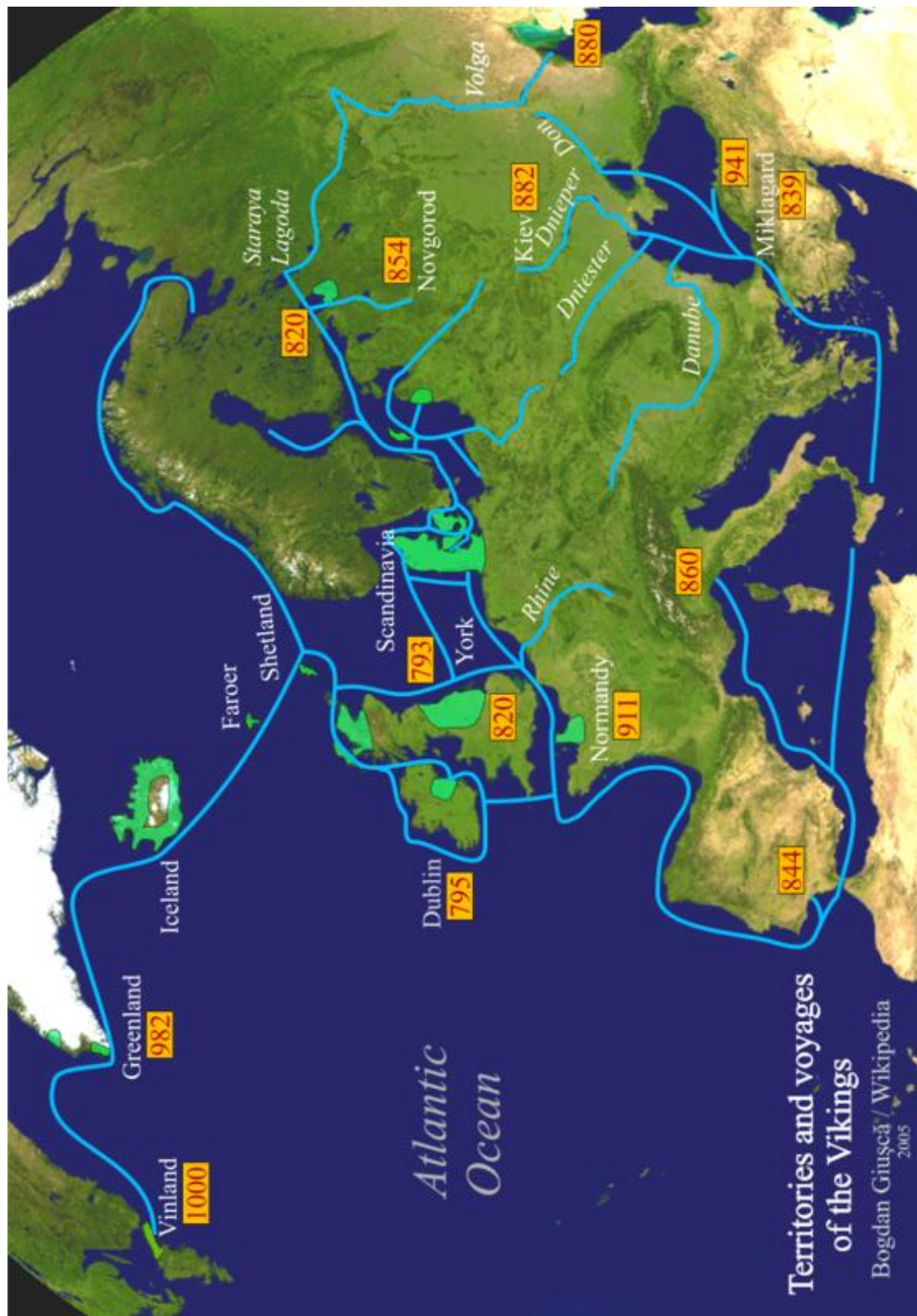
Seierstad was Director of Norwegian Humanitarian Enterprise's (NHE) at the time of Thor and Jacqueline Heyerdahl's visit to Azerbaijan in 2000.

Heyerdahl wanted to meet the Udi and learn more about their history, and the couple was invited by NHE to visit Gabala. Mr. Seierstad prepared the program for this trip and followed Thor Heyerdahl and his wife during the explorer's last visit to Azerbaijan.

J. BJØRNAR STORFJELL, PHD

*SCANDINAVIANS IN SCYTHIA: THOR HEYERDAHL'S INTERPRETATION OF SNORRI  
TESTED BY THE ARCHAEOLOGIST'S TROWEL*

Based on his interpretation of Snorri Sturluson, Thor Heyerdahl organised and fielded an archaeological excavation in Azov, Russia in 2001. He planned for a subsequent field season in 2002 which was carried out after his death. Scandinavian and Russian archaeological teams worked independently with the purpose of testing the theory proposed by Heyerdahl. This paper will present a brief discussion of Snorri's mythological history from the perspective of ancient Near Eastern history and linguistics. It will then discuss the two seasons of field work at Azov with particular attention to the results of the excavation of the Scandinavian team. Finally the excavation findings will be evaluated in light of Heyerdahl's interpretation of Snorri.



Wikipedia ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps\\_of\\_the\\_Viking\\_Age](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps_of_the_Viking_Age))



**Tur Heyerdal və Azərbaycan**

**Beynəlxalq Konfrans**

**26-29 Oktyabr 2011**

**Azərbaycan Diller Universiteti**

**Oslo Universiteti**

**ETN**

**International Conference**

**26-29 October 2011**

**Azerbaijan University of Languages**

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