Greenland IPY Project
GL-IPY 007

HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF THE FIRST POLAR YEAR

For the IPY-4 (2007-08) the Department of Cultural and Social History at the University of Greenland strongly supports the idea put forward by Igor Krupnik, Arctic Studies Center, Smithsonian Institution, of including the legacy stemming from earlier IPY-efforts, particularly from the First International Polar Year of 1882-83. As Igor Krupnik points out those years produced a large body of extensive reports and surveys, including seminal studies by i.a. Franz Boas, John Murdoch, Edward Nelson, and Lucien Turner. To Krupnik’s list might be added the Dane Gustav Holm, who 1883-85 visited the isolated East-Greenlandic habitation of Angmassalik (Tasiilaq), about which he two years later published his famous *Ethnologisk Skizze af Angmassalikerne* (Meddelelser om Gronland, 8). The possible connection between the IPY1 and the huge Danish efforts in the same years should be investigated more closely. To what extent were they competitors - to what extent was the *konebådsekspedition* the expression of a silent, in public not admitted cooperation? We feel a strong need of providing some fresh light on Gustav Holm’s effort – about which the Danish National Archives in Copenhagen have abundant material – but not only on Gustav Holm’s effort. The vast body of collections from the First Polar Year deserve a close historical scrutinizing, and we feel that the IPY-4 would be an excellent occasion for initiating that

Prime investigator: Thorkild Kjærgaard, assoc.professor, Department of Cultural and Social History; Ilisimatusarfik.