I. DELIMITATION OF THE PROJECT: PERIODS AND KINDS OF SOURCES

The history of Portuguese and Brazilian science, medicine and technology is still badly known. A bibliographical project is being developed in order to provide an easy way to find out primary and secondary sources for the study of this subject.

From its discovery in 1500 to 1822, Brazil was not an independent country: it was a Portuguese colony. During this period, it is impossible to draw any clear-cut distinction between Brazilian and Portuguese science. After the independence of Brazil in 1822, there was an increasing cultural divergence between the two countries, but even in this period it is useful to compare their academic productions. For these reasons, this project was devised to include both Portuguese and Brazilian works.

For practical reasons, the project was first restricted to the period from the beginning of printing to 1822 (the year of the independence of Brazil). For this period, several parts of the project are now fairly advanced. They include data-bases on: published scientific, medical and technological books, theses, pamphlets and articles; secondary literature (bibliographies and historical studies) about this period; printed and manuscript maps; manuscripts of scientific and technological import; and biographical data on authors of those works. More recently (since 1994), the project has been broadened to include the period from 1823 to 1900. For this period, however, only published works have hitherto been included.
II. Subjects included in the project

The following subjects were included as «science, medicine and technology»: astronomy, mathematics, physics (or natural philosophy), geography, geology, chemistry, metallurgy, natural history (or biology, zoology, botany, mineralogy), farming, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary sciences, engineering, architecture, mechanics, naval techniques, military techniques, education, philosophy, philology, anthropology, sociology, statistics, psychology, and (partially) history. Studies on arts (music, drawing, handicrafts, cooking, etc.) were included. The so-called «pseudo-sciences» (astrology, alchemy and magic) were also included. It was necessary to include works that were not properly scientific studies, such as travel descriptions and historical descriptions of the period, as these are essential for the study of the development of scientific, medical and technological knowledge.

The following subjects were excluded: religion, law, fiction literature (romance, poetry, drama, etc.), politics. However, some religious works were included for their linguistic relevance (for instance: religious texts written in indigenous or Asiatic languages). A few law and fiction works directly related to science and technology (for instance, Gil Vicente’s comedy «Auto dos físicos», that depicts the author’s view of Portuguese Renaissance medicine), were also included.

Works about Portugal and Brazil written and published in other countries were not included. For instance, many foreign travelers have described the geography, flora and fauna of Brazil, but their works cannot be considered as part of the Brazilian scientific production.

History was partially included in the search. It was not desirable to include all works that might interest an historian working on the history of Portugal or Brazil (in that case, nothing could be excluded). The selection was made from the assumption that this data-base was to be used by historians of science, medicine and technology. For this reason, the search included historical works that present an account of the general historical context of Portugal and Brazil during the period, but excluded specialized works of political import, diplomatic correspondence, discourses, laudatory biographies of kings and princes, etc.

All manuscripts that corresponded to scientific, medical and technical monographs were included, of course. Individual letters were included only when written by an important author, or when the content was clearly relevant. Institutional papers (those, for