

EARTH KNOWLEDGE IN COLONIAL BRAZIL THROUGH A STUDY OF JOSÉ VIEIRA COUTO'S MINERALOGICAL AND GEOLOGICAL RESEARCHES, 1798-1805

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In the 80's there was a movement of renovation in the Latin American science historiography. Since then the science has been seen not as an abstract and universal entity, but as a practical activity which takes place in a concrete space and time. Through this new vision, Latin American historians started making an inventory of the scientific activities in Latin American continent since its colonial ages. Under the light of this new concept, the present work is a contribution to both the general history of Brazil and the history of science since it is a contextual study about a scientist and his scientific practice. The scientist in question is the Brazilian José Vieira Couto (1752-1827), whose researches in the field of mineralogy and geology is strong evidence which shows us how the earth was studied in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. José Vieira Couto's researches around Minas Gerais (1798-1805) resulted in 4 Memoirs, as the scientific texts were usually referred to that time. My master dissertation presents a contextual analysis of those Memoirs taking into consideration the historical and scientific situation of that period. Its preeminent objective is to show how the geoscientific studies were carried out in colonial Brazil.