

The 25th International Roundtable for the Semiotics of Law (IRSL 2025)

Legal Evidence in the Age of Techno- Societies and Visual Jurisprudence



ATFD



INSTITUTO JURÍDICO
FACULDADE DE DIREITO
UNIVERSIDADE DE
COIMBRA



7th-9th May 2025

Colégio da Trindade¹

**University of Coimbra Institute for Legal Research (UCILeR)
Faculty of Law – University of Coimbra
PROGRAMME**

**Instituto Jurídico da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Coimbra
(UCILeR)**

This event is proposed by the 'Vulnerabilities', 'Democracy' and 'Technical Societies' groups

**International Journal for the Semiotics of Law –
Revue internationale de Sémiotique juridique (Springer-Verlag)
*Editor-in-Chief: Anne Wagner***

**ATFD-Associação Portuguesa de Teoria do Direito,
Filosofia do Direito e Filosofia Social (Portuguese Section of the IVR)**

**FCT-Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
*This event is organised as part of the strategic project UID 04643 – UCILeR***

¹ <https://www.uc.pt/fduc/ij/contactos/>

Between the 11th and 14th of March 1987, the University of Messina hosted a memorable meeting focused on the discourse and practice of Proof in Law. This event was the third conference of the International Association for the Semiotics of Law, which, as we well know, led to the equally memorable special issue of the International Journal for the Semiotics of Law (IJSL), published in two volumes (*Approches du discours de la preuve en Droit / Approaches to the Discourse of Proof in Law*, IJSL vol I, n° 3, 1988; vol II, n° 4, 1989). These volumes presented various meta-dogmatic approaches, ranging from speech act theory and narrative semiotics to socio-linguistics and inductivist probabilism. They also included key chapters by Wróblewski, Jackson, Landowski, and Twining, whose contributions continue to be foundational for contemporary theories of legal evidence.

Our upcoming meeting, IRSL 2025 in Coimbra, is not only a tribute to this significant event and its remarkable legacy but also a proposal, nearly 40 years later, to systematically revisit the theme of Legal Evidence. As indicated by the conference title, our aim is to address the challenges posed by the markedly different practical and cultural context of today. This context will be explored through two primary dimensions:

1. Techno-Societies and Legal Evidence

The first dimension, global in scope, focuses on the influence of techno-societies and the demands for congruence that are often imposed unilaterally by technological teleologism and social engineering projects (Hans Albert).

2. Visual Jurisprudence

The second, more specific dimension, examines the importance of visual meaning-making. It explores the new role of rhetoric and the evolving concept of textuality in light of the rapid expansion of "viserbal" (visual and verbal) communication and the "semiotic dance" of the video-sphere (Goodrich), which together have given rise to the emerging field of Visual Jurisprudence.

Techno-Societies and Legal Evidence

This dimension opens up discussions about the core topics of scientific forensic evidence and expert testimony. These discussions require internal (procedural-dogmatic and meta-dogmatic) approaches, as well as external perspectives, drawing on analytical, socio-linguistic, and semiotic tools. A combination of these views is necessary to address key issues such as:

- The communication paradigm that forensic experts' statements and reports should follow. Should they adhere to the individualization paradigm or the likelihood paradigm?
- The possibilities and limits of judicial assessment of expert evidence in various normative frameworks.
- The types of warrants, backing, and criteria that underpin the adjudicative (judicial) weighing of expert evidence.
- The principle of free assessment of evidence and its different normative and systematic configurations.
- The challenges posed by hyper-specialization and the growing range of resources available in forensic science, which impact expert evidence and judicial evaluation.
- The influence of emerging fields such as neuroscience, computer simulations, DNA phenotyping (and other predictive genetic information), and data analytics (e.g., probabilistic-inductive arguments provided by machine learning).
- The need for congruence between the dominance of scientific (empirical-explicative) proof and jurisdictional adjudication.

- The importance of rethinking the construction of reality in the courtroom, including the plausibility of an intensional understanding of truth and meaning.
- The necessity of reassessing the relationship between dogmatic and meta-dogmatic approaches, particularly where these approaches overlap or conflict.

These considerations highlight the increasingly complex relationship between legal evidence and the evolving landscape of digital democracy.

Visual Jurisprudence

The second dimension focuses on the theory and practice of Visual Jurisprudence, with particular attention to the use of images in evidentiary adjudication. Several critical questions arise, including:

- What is an image? Can we make an objective statement about what an image truly depicts? Is it possible to make an analytic judgment about the truth or falsity of an image or its content?
- What specific issues arise, at both dogmatic and meta-dogmatic levels, when images are used as forensic evidence?
- Is visual "evidence" demonstrative? What does – and does not – an image prove? Can images be interpreted literally, as straightforward references to facts? Can they be textualized?
- Can images or pictures serve as hermeneutic devices? What does it mean to interpret an image in legal and forensic contexts? How do images convey meaning, whether legal or otherwise?
- Can images be tamed? In terms of admissibility, what types of images can and cannot be used as forensic evidence? Can legal discourse truly regulate images in the visual era, subjecting them to pre-established disciplinary standards?
- How should the relationship between evidentiary images and the broader body of evidence be understood? Are images independent entities to be viewed in isolation, or must they be seen within the context of other images and events?
- How does the increasing presence of visual images in the courtroom affect normative standards and legal methodology?
- Should the perception of images as an interruption in traditional legal discourse be viewed as a call for new analytical tools and structuring criteria?
- How do visual discourse, image theory, and aesthetics help us understand the relationship between visual practice(s) and legal discourse(s)?
- How does the rise of new mass media, digital, and virtual experiences influence the materiality of legal evidence?
- What changes does the understanding of visual proof entail in the digital era? How should the relationship between digital images and material reality be framed, particularly in relation to juridically relevant realities?
- Does the use of visual evidence open the door to an aesthetic and visual turn in legal narrative? What is the relationship between legal images and the narrative paradigm? Do images reinforce or challenge the role of narrative rationality?
- Does the use of visual evidence suggest the need for a "juristic methodology of looking" as part of the pursuit of "retinal justice"?

Respecting the tradition, the roundtable languages will be English and French.

Wednesday, 7th May

REGISTRATION (9.00)

OUVERTURE (9.30)

Capela

ANNE WAGNER (International Journal for the Semiotics of Law: Editor-in-Chief)

JOSÉ DE SOUSA E BRITO (ATFD- Portuguese Section of the IVR: President)

J M AROSO LINHARES (IJ/ UCILeR: President of the Coordinating Board)

PLENARY SESSION I (9.50-11.05)

Capela

Chair: José de Sousa e Brito

RICHARD K. SHERWIN (New York Law School): *Presence and Obligation: Why techno-spectacle cannot legitimate law's claim to power*

SPECIAL SESSION

Capela

Chair: J.M. Aroso Linhares

EXPOSING THREE GENERATING THEMATIC CELLS: "CONGRUENCE(S)" WITH TECHNO-SCIENCES/ "RETINAL" JUSTICE/ LEGAL FICTIONS

11.05-11.35 | RUI SOUSA SILVA (Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto): *Proof, Cybercrime, and the Law: The Challenges and Forensic Potential of Linguistic Evidence in the Age of Techno-Societies*

11.35-12.05 | SUMANTA BHATTACHARYA (Asian International University, and Policy Analyst), *The Power of Images in Law: A New Era of Visual Jurisprudence and Its Impact on Justice*

12.05-12.35 | MICHAL VOSINEK (Faculty of Law, Department of Legal Theory, Masaryk University) *To do things with (Legal) Imagination*

12.35-12.50 | Debate

LUNCH

WORKSHOP 1

Capela

Chair: Rui Sousa e Silva

14.30-15.00 | ANA ELISABETE FERREIRA (UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra) *Neuroscience, Truth and Meaning. How neurosciences affect traditional responsibility conditions*

15.00-15.30 | LINDA TVRDÍKOVÁ (Masaryk University), *Intentions of the Legislator in the Age of Social Media and Technology*

15.30-16.00 | LUIZA NOGUEIRA BARBOSA (UCILeR, University of Coimbra) *Legal Evidence as a Means of Truth Attainment in the Narrative Reconstruction of Facts in the Digital Age*

16.00-16.30 | NATALLIA F. KOVKEL (Faculty of Law, Belarus State Economic University), *Images and Visual Metaphors as Legal Evidence: Problems of Forming a Semiocognitive Model of Interpretation.*

16.30-16.45 | Debate

WORKSHOP 2

Room 1.0.5

Chair: *Luis Meneses do Vale*

14.30-15.00 | JURGITA PAUŽAITĖ-KULVINSKIENĖ & GODA STRIKAITĖ-LATUŠINSKAJA (Law Faculty, Vilnius University), *AI-Generated Legal Reasoning as Expert Evidence? Assessing Judicial Use of AI in Legal Decision-Making*

15.00-15.30 | ANA MARGARIDA GAUDÊNCIO (FDUC/ UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra): *Imagery as (a) language (arti)fact in legal evidence discourse: a duck-rabbit kaleidoscopic oxymoron?*

15.30-16.00 | ANTONIO LOPO MARTINEZ (UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra): *Deciphering Deepfakes: Safeguarding Legal Evidence in the AI Era through Semiotic and Technological Approaches*

16.00-16.30 | TULISHREE PRADHAN (KIIT School of Law, Odisha, India) / CHINMAYEE NANDA (Department of Liberal Arts, XIM University, Bhubaneswar, India), DIYA SARKAR (Independent Researcher, München): *The Pixel Paradox: Deepfakes and Due Process in the AI Era*

16.30-16.45 | Debate

16.45-17.15 Coffee break

WORKSHOP 3

Capela

Chair: *Ana Margarida Gaudêncio*

17.15-17.45 | JOHN GEALFOW (Faculty of Law, Masaryk University) : *Too Much Law? Hyper-Rationality and the Czech Supreme Court's Struggle with Legal Fictions*

17.45-18.15 | ANA SOFIA MENESES DA SILVA / RUI SOUSA-SILVA / ISABEL MARGARIDA DUARTE [Centre for Linguistics of the University of Porto (CLUP)]: *The*

(mis)representation of oral conversations in court: The role of forensic linguistics experts in the Portuguese legal process

18.15-18.45 | SILVIA DE CARVALHO HOMEM (FDUC, University of Coimbra, PhD Student), *Coding Markers and the Semiotics of Law: The Challenge of Genetic Evidence in Criminal Procedure*

18.45-19.00 | Debate

WORKSHOP 4

Room 1.0.5

Chair: Ana Elisabete Ferreira

17.15-17.45 | HELOISA VIRNES AKABANE (Université de Paris, PhD Student) : *Digital Justice and Narrative Control*

17.45-18.15 | PIERANGELO BLANDINO (School of Law, University of Lapland), *Images as hermeneutic tools within the textual-based framework of legal interpretation and legal reasoning*

18.15-18.45 | GONÇALO MOTA [Polytechnic University of Viseu, Research Centre on Justice and Governance (JusGov)], *The best interests of the child: what if the courts' decision-making advisory was AI-based?*

18.45-19.00 | Debate

Thursday, 8th. May

WORKSHOP 5

Capela

Chair: Ana Margarida Gandêncio

9.30-10.00 | RICCARDO BERTOLOTTI (Independent researcher, former fellow of Coris Dept., Sapienza Università, Roma) : *A Form of Universal Lawfulness*

10.00-10.30 | KAMIL ZEIDLER / PAULA CHMIELOWSKA (Department of Theory and Philosophy of the State and Law, Faculty of Law and Administration, University of Gdansk), *How to put the whole world of visual jurisprudence into a coherent order?: The general theory of aesthetics of law*

10.30-11.00 | J.M. AROSO LINHARES (FDUC/ UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra): *The Evidentiary Adjudication in the "Stochastic Dance" of Videosphere: Is an Authentic Subject/Subject Practical Rationality Still Possible*

11.00-11.30 | HANNA KUCZYŃSKA (Institute of Law Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences): *The ICC Interactive Digital Platform – should visual jurisprudence change the paradigm of evidentiary law?*

11.30-12.00 | BRISA PAIM DUARTE (FDUC/ UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra): *Image as proof, proof as image: the probative value of non-evidential images*

12.00-12.20 | Debate

WORKSHOP 6

Room 1.0.5

Chair: Luíza Nogueira Barbosa

9.30-10.00 | MIKLÓS KÖNCZÖL (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest): *Seeing Blasphemy*

10.00-10.30 | TIAGO RIBEIRO (Centre for Social Studies – University of Coimbra, School of Education and Social Sciences – Polytechnic Institute of Leiria), *The legal status of religion and evidentiary (unsolvable?) problems*

10.30-11.00 | ANA SOFIA CARNEIRO FERREIRA & RUI SOUSA-SILVA (University of Porto), *Construction of domestic violence narrative in a report - An analysis of meaning production*

11.00-11.30 | ANA OLIVEIRA (Centre for Social Studies – University of Coimbra), *Law and the Pornographic Imagination: on the criminalisation of sexual image Dissemination*

11.30-12.00 | MATEUSZ STEPIEŃ (Jagiellonian University, Krakow), *Shaped by Visuals: The Unintended Consequences of EU Air Pollution Regulation*

12.00-12.20 | Debate

LUNCH

WORKSHOP 7

Capela

Chair: Maria João Antunes

14.30-15.00 | SHULAMIT ALMOG (Faculty of Law, University of Haifa): *Legal Proceedings and Human Dignity in the Era of the Digital Condition*

15.00-15.30 | SUSANA AIRES DE SOUSA (FDUC/ UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra): *From Uncertainty to Prophecy? Rethinking the Presumption of Innocence in times of AI*

15.30-16.00 | KAROLINA WIERCZYŃSKA (Center for Research on International Criminal Law, ILS PAS, Instytut Nauk Prawnych

Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warsaw): *Judges and Technology: Navigating the Challenges of Evidence Processing at the International Criminal Court*

16.00-16.30 | SÓNIA FIDALGO (FDUC/ UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra): *Criminal proceedings, digital evidence and the right to privacy*

16.30-16.45 | Debate

WORKSHOP 8

Room 1.0.5

Chair: Brisa Paim Duarte

14.30-15.00 | VITTORIA BECCI (Civica Postdoctoral Fellow at European University Institute), *Aesthetics and Dynamics in Law and Space. Law in architecture: the rise and fall of social legal thought in the twentieth century and the status of contemporary legal thought*

15.00-15.30 | LUNG LUNG HU (Chinese Department, School of Language, Literatures, and Learning, Dalarna University), *Legal Fiction and The Truth: Visual Evidence in Queen's Bench III (1990)*

15.30-16.00 | DANIEL BARTÁK (Masaryk University, PhD Student) *Legal personhood of a river from a fictionalistic point of view*

16.00-16.30 | VIVIANE COSTA & RUI SOUSA-SILVA (University of Porto), *"My sacrifice will remain in your souls forever...": Examining discursive strategies as linguistic evidence*

16.30-16.45 | Debate

Coffee Break (16.45-17.15)

WORKSHOP 9

Capela

Chair: Anne Wagner

17.15-17.45 | PAULINA NOWAK-KORCZ (Université de Lodz - Faculté de Philologie, Département des langues spécialisées et de la communication interculturelle): *Les moyens de preuve visuels et sonores dans le cadre du procès pénal français comme outils de reconstitution et de justice*

17.45-18.15 | MARIA JOSÉ CAPELO (FDUC/ UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra): *Preuve numérique et justice: la recevabilité des images en ligne*

18.15-18.45 | MBENTI ESSIANE HYACINTHE (Université de Yaoundé II, Cameroun) : *La preuve visuelle deepfake : entre manipulation et réalité*

18.45-19.15 | PIERRE MOOR (Université de Lausanne): *Faits et preuves*

19.15-19.30 | Debate

Friday, 9th May

WORKSHOP 10

Capela

Chair: Susana Aires de Sousa

10.00-10.30 | ROMAN ULIASZ (Law Faculty, Rzeszów University), *Text as Evidence: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Decoding Meaning and Enhancing Judicial Reasoning*

10.30-11.00 | LUÍS MENESES DO VALE (FDUC; UCILeR, Universidade de Coimbra) *Envisioning constitutionality: on constitutional imagery, imaginary and imagination.*

11.00-11.30 | RICHARD POWELL (Professor at Nihon University, Vice President at Japan Association of Language and Law): *Visual hybridity in Malaysian bijural law as a reflection of cultural and professional overlaps between formally separated traditions*

11.30-12.00 | MIROSŁAW M. SADOWSKI (Lecturer in Legal Theory at the School of Law, University of Strathclyde in Glasgow), *Petrażycki's Theory of Law Applied: Between Collective Memory, Legal Consciousness and Images of Cultural Heritage. Investigating the Lusophone Communities*

12.00-12.30 | LARRY CATÁ BACKER (白 轲) (W. Richard and Mary Eshelman Faculty Scholar, Pennsylvania State University): *The visualization of Text and the Textualization of Image: Factual Narratives in and as Legal Discourse*

12.30- 12.50 | Debate

LUNCH

15.00 | SPECIAL SESSION

Capela

ANNE WAGNER PRESENTS THE

**INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF LEGAL LANGUAGE AND
COMMUNICATION. FROM TEXT TO SEMIOTICS (SPRINGER)**

PLENARY SESSION II (15.30 -16.30)

Capela

Chair: Maria José Capelo

PAULA COSTA E SILVA (CIDP, Faculdade de Direito, Universidade de Lisboa): *Where does the story end if the storyteller loses his mind?*

PLENARY SESSION III (16.30 -17.45)

Capela

Chair: J M Aroso Linhares

PETER GOODRICH (Director of the Program in Law and Humanities, Cardozo School of Law, New York): *Jest and Gesture. The Evidence of Dance in Contemporary Visual Jurisprudence*

CONCLUSIONS (17.45-18.00)

