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Historical Approach Institutes of Legal Medicine in the Atlantic during the 20th century – historiography, methodology and documentation

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes a critical historical approach to understanding the institutionalization of Legal Medicine as a global process centred on the so-called Institutes of Legal Medicine evoking the Atlantic system theory and the *jeux d'échelles* methodology to do so. The proposal aims to explore the technical and social connections between these institutions and seeks to demonstrate the historiographical validity of considering Institutes of Legal Medicine as global objects of macro and micro historical analysis. To that end, the article provides an introduction to Legal Medicine and its Institutes as understood in contemporary historiography, and offers some considerations regarding methodology and documentation to provide conceptual coherence to international and collective research on these Institutes. It is argued that an international and critical perspective is crucial for recognizing these institutions as mechanisms of power and knowledge within the context of professionalization of forensic activities in western urban societies. This approach articulates the institutions of Legal Medicine with interpersonal and structural social dynamics throughout the Atlantic Space, uncovering a common alignment among medical, penal and political systems during the 20th century in countries such as Portugal, France, Italy, Brazil, and Chile.

Keywords: History of Legal Medicine - History of Medical Institutions - Institutes of Legal Medicine - Atlantic System

I. Contemporary historiographical outlines about Legal Medicine and its Institutes

During the 20th century, the history of Institutes of Legal Medicine persisted as a black box of the institutional past throughout Western countries, virtually ignored as a monographic object of historiographical analysis^{1,2}. As institutions of forensic teaching and practice, Institutes of Legal Medicine were mostly restricted to medical doctors and a few jurists, who had the monopoly on the documents, the memory, and the writing of the history of the institutions, hindering greater critical research efforts — in a typical example of what is conceptualized as iatrocenic historiography³.

Nonetheless, from the end of the century onwards, authors from different nationalities such as Crawford⁴, Ferla⁵, Salgueiro⁶, Rafter⁷, among others, inquired into the historical role of legal medical institutions as secular parts of social history, proposing different tools and approaches to overcome the difficulty of accessing primary documentation.

Through critical methodology — typically associated with the imperatives of social history and post-structuralism — these research efforts moved away from laudatory narratives of impartiality to define these institutions as centers of technical and political action in their context, that did not represent inherently good or bad interventions, but were structured historically among social relations of meaning and power, safeguarding influences and constraints, horizons and limitations, violence and consensus⁸. This perspective allowed contemporary historians to distinguish these institutions as devices of power and knowledge amid the professionalization of scientific activity and the modern bureaucratization of National States administrations, acting as normative catalysts in the subjects of death, labour, crime and sex in deeply conflicted societies^{9,10}.

From these centers, the various components necessary for Legal Medicine to emerge as a ready-made scientific discipline were socially and technically constructed throughout the 20th century. Within the Institutes, Legal Medicine consolidated itself alongside other medical and penal specialties as a frontier field, strategically situated at the intersection of medical sciences and the Law. It represented a hybrid discipline characterized by discursive practices derived from diverse anatomical, laboratory, psycho-social, penal, and statistical foundations, all of which were instrumental in applying medical parameters and interventions within legal settings¹¹.

During the 20th century, Legal Medicine technical scope was vast, its institutional ramifications were diverse and widespread, and its actors—individuals such as Arrigo Tamassia¹² (1848-1917) Oscar Freire¹³ (1887-1924), Severin Icard¹⁴ (1860-1932), Azevedo Neves¹⁵ (1877-1955), Fritz Strassman¹⁶ (1858-1940) — were articulated in local and international networks on both sides of the Atlantic, motivated as they were by an interventionist and experimental mentality, with a clear interest in influencing crime repression and social agendas in their contexts^{17,18,19, 20}.

Specially in Continental Europe and Latin America, Legal Medicine as a scientific field found possibilities for autonomy within paradigms of governance during the 20th century, allocated both in the academic structure of Medical and Law Schools, and within penal administration — mainly in policies and penitentiary institutions^{21,22}. Despite relevant regional peculiarities, the referred Institutes of Medicine and Law correspond to a model of institution that spread across Atlantic contexts as fundamental parts of the process of internationalization of Legal Medicine, conceived precisely as the centers of institutional agency of the field — as mechanisms for the production and reproduction of medical interventions applied to the Forum. This process would be carried out by setting up a centralized model institute of practice and teaching of Legal Medicine that functions simultaneously within superior schools and law enforcement administration, and whose structure was separated from psychiatry and hygiene institutions²³.

It seems that the time has come to consider the definitive installation, among us, of an Institute of Legal Medicine that can serve, at the same time, the interests of justice and those of the practical teaching of legal medicine. Countries that are proud of the title of civilized have, for a long time, institutes of this nature, provided with material resources capable of making society take advantage, in its defence, of all the modern conquests of this branch of medicine, if not also and, mainly, to provide future medical doctors with the essential material for perfect knowledge of the medical-legal technique²⁴.

According to this institutional model, the teaching and the judicial practice of Legal Medicine had to take place within the same institution, equipped to host both activities. This junction was based on the idea that the coroner needed to be trained in forensic practice through real cases, as would happen during the instruction of other medical specialties in the teaching hospitals — but in this case, within the Institutes, through agreements between superior schools and the State Police Departments, in circumstances of civil and criminal cases. Professional training would only take place in the presence of the medical teacher, recognized as an official forensic doctor, who would conduct teaching and practice simultaneously, demonstrating techniques and investigation procedures to the students while resolving the State's pending legal issues²⁵.

And then, several solutions to bear in mind to meet the requirements of training good forensic experts that only technical education provides. One of them, the wisest, the best, the one found in European countries and, in Latin America, in Chile, Peru, and here in Brazil, is the teaching directly carried out by the forensic expert, by the fusion of the teaching and forensic practice into a single institute, under the exclusive guidance of the professor of Legal Medicine of the Medical School. Obeying a single orientation will result in the practice and the teaching reaching maximum efficiency²⁶.

As the contemporary testimonies indicates, these medical-legal institutions were understood as a “solution” to the structuring of the practice and the teaching of Legal

Medicine, being integrated into a larger international arena of cultural and scientific exchanges during the period¹². Whether in São Paulo, Lisbon, or Paris, these model institutions were directed by the professor of Legal Medicine of the local Medical School and intertwined simultaneously with the top of academic and penal structures, allowing forensic doctors to transit between universities, police stations, and judicial courts with little restraint, always through the circuits of truth production of the State. In addition to the practical teaching of the students, this format brought biomedical methods and concepts closer to the State's courts and legal forums, especially in the context of prosecution procedures, synchronizing with the punitive tendencies that Latin judicial systems experienced from the end of the 19th century onwards²⁷.

Specifically in Latin American countries, being part of an Atlantic network of civilizing agreements based on scientific references helped to empower these Institutes within local governments and public administrations, causing indelible racial and social repercussions on the function of regional penal and penitentiary systems. In contexts recently emerging from slavery and colonialism, lacking societal hierarchizing principles recognized as legitimate in global arenas of cultural and scientific debate, the appropriation and dissemination of Eurocentric doctrines that naturalized penal, societal and economical inequalities based on biological criteria were welcomed by the local elites²⁸. In this scenario, physicians and jurists from Latin America were unable to break their dependence on the dominant paradigms of conceptualization and intervention elaborated in Europe and organized their doctrines under the aegis of positivist anthropology and sociology. This dependency was expressed not only in conceptual and hermeneutical formulations of an evolutionist, morphological, and racist nature but also in the institutional, political, and symbolic spheres of the field, where European doctors and institutes were referred to as epitomes of civilization, models to be followed, and authorities to be acknowledged²⁹.

This historiographical debate makes it clear that the architecture of legal medical institutions did not arise suddenly or from an isolated impulse of agents or scientific knowledge, but emerged from a complex network of disputes and collaboration among scientists, social groups, and international organizations at least since the 19th century. The international exchange of ideas and practices not only structured Legal Medicine as a scientific discipline rooted in the assumptions of anatomy, pathology, biochemistry and statistic, but also promoted the consolidation of an interventionist Eurocentric identity that transcended local particularities and established hierarchies and powers within the field and its institutions.

Drawing on their technical expertise from medical sciences, these institutions evolved into mechanisms of State's penal administration that helped to ensure social and economic order through the many extreme social processes of the 20th century, tasked with defending capitalist, urban, and civilizational development through what were believed to be science-based interventions in the field of crime and order³⁰. In this re-

gard, these institutions acted as nexus between political and scientific dynamics amid the historical process of normative disciplining within the realm of justice, crime and punishment according to modern parameters of States's administration^{31,32,33}.

Such institutions included the Institute of Legal Medicine of Rome, the Institute of Vienna, the Institute of Lisbon, the Nina Rodrigues Institute and the Oscar Freire Institute in Brazil, among many similar institutions. According to Ambage and Clark³⁴:

During the half-century following 1870, state or municipally-sponsored institutes of forensic medicine were established in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, and many other principal cities of Europe. Usually associated with university medical faculties, they served the dual purpose of teaching and research in forensic medicine and conducting medico-legal investigations, usually on behalf of the authorities. (...) By 1930, almost every European capital and many other principal cities had its own medico-legal institute (France, for example, had three by 1933, in Paris, Lyon, and Lille).

Delving into this historical scenario, the present article synthesizes a conceptual approach to address the institutionalization of Legal Medicine as a global process centered in these Institutes of Medicine and Law, according to a methodological proposal of analyzing historical documents with the tools of the *jeux d'échelles* and *indiciary* history, in an attempt to articulate references, structures, and events while avoiding ethnocentrism and determinism of various orders. In the next section, this perspective is conceptually detailed, trying to provide methodological cohesion to international research about the institutions of Legal Medicine.

II. Institutes of Legal Medicine through the Lens of Atlantic History: Observational Scales and Documentation

The perspective of an international historiography concerning Institutes of Legal Medicine benefits from the insights of the *jeux d'échelles* methodology, which seeks to employ variations in historical observation scales within and around these institutions, based on the cognitive effects and heuristic advantages that macro and micro analyses can provide in relation to the research procedure³⁵.

The rules of the *jeux d'échelles* dictate that the analysis must recognise each scale as a documentable and observable reality of conflicts and resolutions, representing a segment of historical time characterised by its rhythms, temporalities, and definable durations that the historian must examine horizontally before establishing the vertical relationships between different scales^{36,37}. Thus, understanding the Institutes of Legal Medicine through the rules of *jeux d'échelles* means that the option for one observation scale or another does not imply representing a constant reality in different sizes, but rather transforming the content of the representation through the choice of what is representable and what is relatable with the object³⁸.

Accordingly, the approach distinguishes three overlapping gradients of historical observation: in the foreground, it turns to the individual actors, focusing on their subjec-

tive trajectories taken as privileged zones to study the experiences and expectations of human beings who led, subscribed to, or opposed the institutional projects. One level above the subjective trajectories, it appreciates how these individuals formed groups within and through the Institutes, weaving relationships and plots that articulated agents in networks, as the weight of these relationships was imposed on the associated elements and transformed them. Moving further away, the approach must contemplate how these institutions played a social and collective role in the context in which they existed and beyond, articulated with other medical, penal, and political groupings and institutions around the Atlantic during the 20th century.

From this perspective, it is possible to recognize scales of historical determination that encompass different lengths of time and integrate various agents and medical-legal institutions across the Atlantic. Hereupon, the Atlantic System is understood not only as the ocean and adjacent territories, but as an open totality composed of the mosaic of historical temporalities in mutual determination, connected through different human ties and in constant asymmetrical oscillation. It acts as an integrated arena of historically structured social relations, opened by the expansion of networks of capital and European colonization, which became increasingly permeable to the flow of goods, people, and ideas from the 19th century onwards^{39,40,41}.

The approach considers different nexuses between regions around the Atlantic according to their specific perspective and documentation, and even though it can't encompass the entire globe, nor the totality of practices, nor the totality of times, it reveals a systemic totality in itself, in the sense of an integrated whole — without presuming the hermetism of the system or the determination of the parts by the whole, but trying to understand hierarchies, alignments, differences, and conflicts in relative perspective⁴². Methodologic speaking, to analyse these bonds and temporalities, the dialogue with historical documents is essential and irreplaceable, since it is the only path for the *jeux d'échelles* approach to reach scientific standards, as the documents are the only source of empirical density of the historian's demonstration discourse, and philosophical or historiographical debate cannot remedy this role⁴³. The document is then regarded as the reminiscence of legitimate discourses of past temporalities, as fragments of historical time that reveal the hidden process of manipulation that authorized it to be preserved, between successive meanings and exclusions that both limit and establish the possibilities for the historian's work⁴⁴.

That means the history of these institutes must also encompass the forgotten past of figures overlooked by official documents and narratives, represented by those occupying the lowest positions within the institutional hierarchy, as well as by the men, women, and children subjected to the scrutinizing gaze of the coroners and their students. In this regard, it is important to state that while the protagonists of the documented narratives are predominantly doctors and legal practitioners, the proposed framework does not regard the constellation of forensic institutions solely as an object

of the elites. Instead, it emphasizes the necessity of uncovering the material conflicts within them and the presences, voices, and images of those from below, taking into account their representations, resistances, and lines of escape within the interstices of the documentation.

By recognizing their empirical indispensability and by accepting documents as monuments, the proposed approach tries to read historical sources related to the Institutes as producers and products of power relations, whose conditions of preservation allow us to distinguish the conflicts and meanings that they encompass in the past and in the present, always considering that documents demarcate the line that differentiates what must be remembered and preserved, on the one hand, and what must be forgotten and discarded, on the other.

From this angle, it is imperative to recognize that these Institutes of Legal Medicine enabled the production and preservation of hundreds of thousands of documentary testimonies around the Atlantic during the 20th century, and that a substantial part of these documents is still preserved today, mostly in public archives, which in itself demarcates powers emanating from the field⁴⁵. These documents include public speeches, memory transcripts, medical courses and records, laws, decrees, and official diaries, autopsy and medical reports, manuals, specialized journals on Legal Medicine, hemerographic documents, photographic images, museum catalogues, archive records, and direct correspondence – most of which can now be consistently reached due to the policies of access to data and public documents that prevail in most Western countries.

Through a close study of documents produced and conserved within and around the Institutes of Legal Medicine in different zones of the Atlantic space, it is possible to understand the ways in which the internationalization of Legal Medicine became possible — not from the self-fulfilling capacity imputed to it, but through the identification of agents, institutions and structures that took part in its historical realization². Even a superficial look over the history of Institutes of Legal Medicine through that frame makes it clear that these institutions were linked by concrete historical processes at the intersubjective and structural level, especially during the first half of the 20th century. These dynamics are well documented in different instances: minutes of meetings and congresses, articles and bibliographic references, epistolary correspondence, newspaper documents, museum exhibits and catalogues.

To illustrate this exemplarily, the two testimonies below are presented as samples of these documented bonds of Legal Medicine throughout the 20th century Atlantic:

My very dear master and friend. You should have been the first to whom I should have sent the works that I am addressing to you today by this same letter: they are three memoirs devoted to the description of three new processes of pulmonary docymasia. Before communicating them to you, I wanted to wait until they had appeared in the annals of public hygiene and legal medicine; unfortunately, the serious events which are currently absorbing

*all the attention of France and all its activity do not allow us to hope for the resumption of scientific publications soon*⁴⁶.

*In European institutes, one of the departments that receives the most attention from its directors is the museum. Professor Strassmann enthusiastically refers to the excellence of the Berlin Institute's Museum and, at every step, highlights the benefits it has provided to education, providing essential demonstration pieces for the students' full benefit. In Rio de Janeiro, the 'crime museum' was created in 1907, and it immediately began to receive a lot of attention from our forensic experts. In a short time—it is almost unbelievable—it has been transformed into a warehouse of precious objects, such as gambling house paraphernalia, counterfeit coins, and other items of this nature*⁴⁷.

Both the content and the form of the testimonies highlight specific aspects of the technical and social dynamics of Legal Medicine across the Atlantic during the 20th century. The first one is a letter written by Professor Severin Icard to Professor Oscar Freire in the last year of the First World War, in which the French coroner discusses the effectiveness of pulmonary docymasia tests developed by him to identify causes of death in newborn babies. The experimental knowledge to determine and categorize death was valued by the forensic doctors in the technical instance, as it allowed the appropriation of the organic phenomenon of morbidity as a peculiar scientific object of Legal Medicine, and in different ways quantifiable and disentangled in its cellular, anatomical and penal characteristics⁹.

The correspondence between forensic doctors associated with different institutions demonstrates dialogues, hierarchies, and asymmetries between different areas of the globe and different sectors of medical sciences during the 20th century and may serve as a tool to recognize neglected technical flows and exchanges in the internationalization of Legal Medicine.

On the other hand, the second document is an excerpt from a previously mentioned journal chronicle written by Professor Leonídio Ribeiro, which discusses Professor Fritz Strassman's visit to Brazil in the year of 1913. Strassman's role in the process of consolidating the Berlin Institute of Legal Medicine was recently highlighted by historiography⁴⁸. Similar to the letter from Severin Icard to Oscar Freire, Strassmann's trip to Rio de Janeiro at the peak of his institutional activities underscores the significance of the networks established among different areas of the Atlantic for the contemporary agents of Legal Medicine.

In this scenario, Ribeiro mentions the *museums* of Legal Medicine and refers to them as something that captivated the “enthusiasm” and the “attention” of forensic doctors in different countries, as they fulfilled the function of exhibiting material culture that defined criminals and their local scientists. Without going into details—as this will be the subject of another article—it is enough to say here that these museums denounce aesthetic distinctions within Institutes of Legal Medicine and reveal a set of political purposes beneath the scientific paradigms of Legal Medicine circulating between Europe and Latin America medical elites during the first half of the 20th century⁴⁹.

To discern the historical processes behind the numerous silences within the documentation and the many peculiarities of regional forensic practices, an critical approach to the Atlantic history of Legal Medicine cannot overlook the investigation of local documents as indicative trails of international relations of force and meaning, from which historiography can retrace plots, circularities and processes significant to the object of analysis, but impervious to a totalizing approach of abstract conceptualization.

This also means that the first step to integrate such international historiography must be identifying and defining the eligibility of archives and *acquis* connected with the history of Institutes of Medicine and Law, many of them in precarious states of visibility and conservation. For this effort to be achievable, it must be collectively established, incorporating researchers from different backgrounds and nationalities and aiming at partnerships in global history of Forensic and Legal Medicine such as those carried out by Becker and Wetzell¹⁰ — which, unfortunately, rarely included the Global South in its scope.

III. Final Considerations

Contemporary historiography informs us that the Institutes of Legal Medicine were conceived by secular agents to be at the center of judicial and forensic truth production and reproduction in their context, as reference nucleus of technical and doctrinal teaching of Legal Medicine, obeying equivalent standards of operation: as central axis for medical education and dispatches of forensic reports, orchestrating actions, tasks, and repetitive interactions that helped to professionalize forensic sciences and established regional and global hierarchies in the field. Agents, contents and tools were connected within these institutions and enabled the serial production of scientific discourses certified in their legitimacy, contributing to defining the frontiers of Legal Medicine among other fields and specialties and guaranteeing its social indispensability as a ready-made science of the 20th century.

Many of these discourses and objects lie silently in forgotten archives as testimonies of official State's narratives, as memory symbols selected to serve as an appeasing function of the past — insofar as formalizations that underlie the iatrocetric narratives of the field. Time has come for critical historiography to deconstruct these formalizations globally, revealing how the peaceful version of the impartiality of these Institutes served to conform affinities, share disagreements, and fix memories as artificial stabilization mechanisms of an essentially conflictual scientific field, whose past reveals much more than selfless dedication to the service of Justice⁵⁰.

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12. Italian physician, university professor in Bologna and Pavia, a student of the iconic Cesare Lombroso, Tamassia played a crucial role in the formulation of techniques and interventions in the field during the first decades of the 20th century, as well as in the establishment of forensic associations and institutions in Italy. He was a well-respected figure in Europe medical circles, undertook dialogues with coroners from Latin America and little-known travels to Brazil and Chile.
13. Brazilian physician, professor at the Medical Schools of Bahia and São Paulo, one of the founders of the so-called Nina Rodrigues School, and a member of various international associations, including the Belgian and French associations, Freire was an important technical and institutional agent in the establishment of the Institutes of Forensic Medicine in São Paulo and Salvador, Brazil.
14. French physician, an esteemed member of the recognized Lyon School of Legal Medicine, director of the Institute in that city, he developed tests and techniques that have

- been long utilized in thanatology and toxicology. He maintained frequent international dialogues, one of which is referenced in the final pages of this article.
15. Portuguese physician, director of the Institute of Legal Medicine in Lisbon, and professor at the Medical School of the same city, he published dozens of works and assisted in the training of other key figures in Portuguese legal medicine. He played a particularly significant role in the organization and conduct of the International Congress of Legal Medicine in Lisbon in 1935.
 16. German physician, director of the Institute of Legal Medicine in Berlin, professor at the Medical School of the Prussian capital, and regarded as a mentor to other prominent figures in German forensic medicine, he traveled between Europe and Latin America in the early 20th century to disseminate ideas, models, and social proposals for the field of legal medicine.
 17. To a large extent, the work of organizing the Institutes was due to the initiative of these regional leaderships, represented by the director professors and their immediate subordinates, who were responsible for the curriculum and the parameters for medical education, the structuring of practical laboratories, and the training of auxiliary personnel. The political and scientific influence of these individuals was a decisive factor in securing greater responsibilities in teaching and forensic practice and budgetary conditions for the construction of new facilities.
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26. Fávero F, *Medicina Legal*. São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora; 1938. p. 845. Translated from Portuguese by the author. The document presented refers to an excerpt from the manual “*Medicina Legal*” written by Dr. Flaminio Fávero (1895-1982) that discuss the evolution of legal medicine education in Brazil and Europe. Flaminio Fávero served as a professor of Legal Medicine at the São Paulo Medical School and was regarded as a prominent figure in his scientific context, having held high public positions and acting as member of prestigious scientific societies in Brazil and Europe. The compilations of practical Legal Medicine manuals written by professors and directors of Institutes became a common occurrence during the institutionalization process and its seen not only in Brazil, indicating various regional moments of technical consolidation of Legal Medicine, characterized by the discernment of experimental, lexical, and classificatory standards applicable to diverse state legal purposes. This contributed to the establishment of protocols and agendas within forensic medicine and to the construction of meanings specific to their intervention objects. For further information on this process specifically in São Paulo, Brazil, please consult: Machado J, The scientific production of the Oscar Freire Institute amid the technical formalization of Legal Medicine in São Paulo: theses, texts, agents (1923-1938). *Revista Saúde, Ética e Justiça* 2023;28(2).
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38. This implies that focusing on the scale of individuals within institutions makes it possible to include singular trajectories in social processes through the complex web of relationships that are created around these trajectories and give them their social meaning. Conversely, the *jeux d'échelles* allows for the recognition of collective structures of violence and meaning that have established the conditions of action for agents in relation to their historical context and society. The investigation must be capable of navigating between an explanatory framework of post-structuralist sociology and a micro-historical framework focused on the subjective and intersubjective, which explores the intricacies of the

- individual as a neglected differential capable of internally defining institutions and structures. For an original example of this approach, see Tarelou G, Antonio Carlos Pacheco e Silva: *Psiquiatria e Política numa trajetória singular*. (Tese de Doutorado em Ciências). São Paulo: Faculdade de Medicina da USP; 2019.
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 42. Marquese R, *A História Global da Escravidão Atlântica: Balanço e Perspectivas*. Rev. Esboços. Florianópolis 2019; 26(41).
 43. Thompson EP, *A miséria da Teoria*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar; 1981.
 44. Le Goff J, *História e memória*. Campinas: Editora Unicamp; 1996.
 45. Among these archives, we should highlight those with which we have already worked in Portugal and Brazil, such as the Library of the Medical School of the University of Lisbon, the Library of the Medical School of the University of São Paulo, the Museum of the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, the Museum of the Oscar Freire Institute, the Gonçalo Moniz Library of Bahia Medical School, the National Archive of Torre do Tombo, and the State Archive of São Paulo. Each of these archives has its collection and funds related to forensic medicine, full of unexplored potential for socio-historical analysis. As mentioned above in the text, the assessment of the eligibility of such archives and their documentation, their conservation conditions, and the definition of the provenance and origin of the objects under their care are tasks to be undertaken by the international historiography we aim to construct, in which we consider ourselves nothing more than a small part.
 46. Severin Icard, 1918, apud Machado, J, Ref. 26. p 65.
 47. Leonídio Ribeiro Filho. *O Instituto Medico-Legal*. Rio de Janeiro: *Jornal do Comércio*. Edição de 10.5.1918, p. 4.
 48. Wolfram H, *Teaching Grossian criminalistics in Imperial Germany*. In: *Forensic cultures in modern Europe*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press; 2023.
 49. The many forensic and criminological museums around the world have brought new and old generations of coroners closer together in their mutual recognition, based on the identity forged as apostles of civilization and guarantors of order. The testimony also highlights the parameters surrounding the provenance of objects held in these museums, following a pattern observed both in Brazil and abroad: the objects and body parts were donated by authorities after legal cases and were handed over to doctors for conservation and exhibition in the Institutes. In this pattern, both sides of the distribution of the sensible in these museums were exposed, where some groups could partake in the experience of musealization as a spectacle of power, while other groups were offered as trophies of dissent and reduced to silence.
 50. By criticizing memorialist narratives and denaturalizing the elements of scientific power that structured the global constellation of Institutes, it is possible to illuminate different factors of social determination within Legal Medicine over time, structured at the margins of technical domains to attend political and symbolical demands in different Atlantic contexts. This approach contributes to diluting normative pretensions of universality and neutrality in forensic sciences so that, through a constant process of self-correction and self-criticism, the relationship between Legal Medicine and its objects of knowledge and intervention may become more dialogical and horizontal.

