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TARTALOMJEGYZÉK / CONTENTS

Editorial Foreword ..... - 1 -

TANULMÁNYOK /ARTICLES

**GALLEGO Pérez de Sevilla, Francisco de Borja**  
The abolition of law and the triumph of legislation ..... - 2 -

**HIMPLI, Lénárd**  
At the Pinnacle of the Sanction System: Life Imprisonment in Light of the Objectives of Punishment . - 11 -

**KÁNTOR, Ákos**  
Heading towards machine legislation?..... - 31 -

**MYLONAS Kostis N.**  
Constitutionalizing the right to water ..... - 45 -

**LIKTOR, Zoltán Attila**  
The Messianic Imperialism of the Spanish Habsburg Monarchs ..... - 61 -

**MOLNÁR, András**  
What Has Cosmic Horror to Offer Law (or Deprive It from)? The Collapse of Natural Order in H. P. Lovecraft's Fiction ..... - 72 -

**RÁTKAI, Tímea**  
The Conditions and Practice of the Enforcement of Life Imprisonment Without Parole ..... - 84 -

**SZÖLLŐSI-BARÁTH, Szabolcs**  
A brief comparison of legal and political constitutionality – ..... - 96 -

**TUSSAY, Ákos**  
Political Justice and Natural Law- Some Preliminary Thoughts on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Book V  
..... - 104 -

## Editorial Foreword

This double issue of *De iurisprudencia et iure publico* (Vol. XVI, Nos. 3-4, 2025) presents the revised and written versions of lectures delivered at the *International Jurisprudence Conference*, held between 16 and 18 October 2025. The volume is not conceived as a mere conference proceeding. It reflects a shared normative stance. Law is treated here not as a neutral technique of governance, but as a fragile normative structure whose legitimacy, purpose, and limits must again be made explicit.

The studies collected in this issue are united by a common concern. They examine what happens when law is displaced by legislation, when sanction becomes self-justifying, when technology challenges human norm-creation, or when constitutional language absorbs political conflict without resolving it. The authors approach these problems from different doctrinal fields, yet all assume that law cannot survive on procedural validity alone.

A Spanish contribution opens the volume with a radical critique of modern statutory legality. It argues that legislation has gradually replaced law by reducing normativity to formal imputation and self-referential will. Law, in this view, risks losing its ontological grounding and becoming a closed system that no longer points beyond itself. The paper sets the theoretical horizon of the issue by questioning whether legality can still serve as a source of legitimacy.

Two contributions focus on the apex of the sanction system. One examines life imprisonment from the perspective of the objectives of punishment, while the other analyses the enforcement of life imprisonment without parole. Together, these studies expose a structural tension between declared penal aims such as prevention, proportionality, and reintegration, and the actual legal and institutional design of the sanction. Punishment appears here as a normative test case. It reveals whether criminal law still operates within its own justificatory framework or merely enforces exclusion.

The issue also includes a philosophical contribution revisiting Aristotle's account of justice in Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Rather than offering a doctrinal reconstruction, the study proposes a method for interpreting political justice that connects Aristotelian ethics, constitutional thought, and the tradition of natural law.

A further group of papers addresses emerging transformations of law. One contribution explores the prospect of machine legislation and raises the question whether automated norm production can preserve responsibility and meaning. Another, authored by a Greek scholar, analyses the constitutionalization of the right to water and shows how basic material needs are transformed into constitutional obligations. Historical and interdisciplinary perspectives further deepen the volume. One contribution examines early modern political theology through the messianic imperial vision of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy, showing how law, symbols, and sovereignty were integrated into a religiously grounded conception of political mission. A study drawing on literary analysis examines cosmic horror and the collapse of natural order, asking what law can offer when the assumption of a stable world disintegrates. Finally, a comparative paper contrasts legal and political constitutionalism and highlights the growing politicization of constitutional structures and reasoning.

The volume as a whole does not aim at synthesis. Its unity lies in its normative sensitivity. Law is presented as something that can fail, harden, or dissolve, and therefore as something that requires constant theoretical vigilance. In this sense, the issue seeks not to close debates but to reopen them.

The *International Jurisprudence Conference* explicitly aimed to strengthen the participation of Hungarian jurisprudence in international theoretical discourse. This thematic issue reflects that ambition. The dialogue it presents is not derivative but reciprocal. Hungarian and foreign perspectives meet on the assumption of shared responsibility for the future of legal thought.

The editors express their sincere gratitude to all institutions that supported both the conference and this publication. Special thanks are due to the *National Research, Development and Innovation Office* for its financial support provided under the Science Patronage – Subprogramme 2 (Identifier: 149144), as well as to the *Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary* and the *Hungarian Association of Law and Political Sciences* for their continued commitment to international jurisprudential exchange.

This issue rests on a simple conviction. If law is to remain more than a technical language of power, it must again be treated as a normative problem. The contributions collected here take that task seriously.

Balássy, Ádám Miklós  
editor

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