Neomedievalism And Its Architectural Traces in the Mediterranean: The Case of Antalya

NEOMEDIEVALISM AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL TRACES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: THE CASE OF ANTALYA**

YENİ ORTAÇAĞCILIK VE AKDENİZ'DEKİ MİMARİ İZLERİ: ANTALYA ÖRNEĞİ

Aykut AKTAV**

Abstract

Postmodern Neomedievalism (or Postmodern Neo-medievalism) is a concept that emerged with the combination of the words "neo" and "medievalism." Neomedievalism is now commonly employed as a concept and methodological approach along with numerous applications, wherein the historical reality presented by medievalism is reinterpreted and modified by incorporating alternative contemporary frameworks. While this reinterpretation and modification can be considered an alternative processing of history, it can also be presented as the continuation or re-birth of Medieval culture in which medieval elements are combined with (post)modern concepts. As this paper argues, such "new" but "medieval" buildings are often surrounded by fantastic sculptures of creatures that existed in the minds of our medieval grandparents. It is possible to see the effects of Neo-Medievalism in hotels and amusement parks situated in Antalya, which resemble medieval buildings with fantastic creatures of the Medieval world. Thus, the theoretical frameworks that guided this study are Neomedievalism and Medievalism, which theoretically nurtures Neomedievalism. Using this framework, the existence of Neomedievalism in the present-day Mediterranean culture is studied in terms of its architectural dimensions. The scope of the study is conceptually Medievalism and Neomedievalism, and the study is limited to the effect of Neomedievalism on the architectural features of the buildings in Antalya. The study results are limited to two buildings: The Land of Legends and Aktur Park, where various medieval designs and objects are apparent. Results show that Neomedievalism is influential in Antalya, where tangible medieval structures and objects exist.

Keywords: Antalya, Medievalism, Neomedievalism, Tourism, Umberto Eco

Özet

Yeni Ortaçağcılık, yeni anlamına gelen "neo" ve ortaçağcılık anlamına gelen "medievalism" kelimelerinin birleşimi ile ortaya çıkmış bir kavramdır. Günümüz çalışmalarında Yeni Ortaçağcılık, Ortaçağcılık adı altında ortaya konulmuş gerçekliği alıp alternatif desenlerle işleme, kullanıma sunma ve değerlendirme yöntemi olarak sıklıkla kullanılmaktadır. Bu değerlendirme, tarihin alternatif bir işleyişi olabileceği gibi, Ortaçağ ögelerinin unsurlarını modern sonrası kavramlarla birleştirip sanki Ortaçağ kültürünün bir parçasıymış gibi sunulmasını da içerebilmektedir. Ortaçağ yapılarına benzetilmiş oteller, Ortaçağ'ın fantastik yaratıkları ile donatılmış eğlence parkları, video oyunları ve daha nicesi içerisinde yeniden doğan Ortaçağ'ı görmek mümkündür. Bu çalışma, Yeni Ortaçağcılık ve beslenmiş olduğu Ortaçağcılık kavramını kuramsal olarak ele alıp yeniden doğan Ortaçağ'ın günümüz Akdeniz kültüründeki var oluşunu mimarlık boyutunda ele almaktadır. Antalya mimarisinde bulunan Yeni Ortaçağcı görünümler ve yansımalar, yapılar bazında incelemiştir. Çalışmanın kapsamı kavramsal olarak Ortaçağcılık ve Yeni Ortaçağcılık olup, çalışma Yeni Ortaçağcılık'ın Akdeniz havzasının başat turizm kentlerinden biri olan Antalya'daki yapıların mimari özelliklerine ve şehir hayatına olan etkisi ile sınırlıdır. Günümüzde, çalışmanın sonuçları incelenen turistik yapılarda Yeni Ortaçağcı özelliklerin baskın olarak görüldüğü The Land of Legends ve Aktur Park'ta vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Antalya, Ortaçağcılık, Yeni Ortaçağcılık, Turizm, Umberto Eco

INTRODUCTION

Many people still believe that the Middle Ages have no connection to the time we live in today. For some, the Middle Ages was full of terrible ideas and events that cannot be compared with what we have today. Some also may argue that it is passé, and thus, it can easily be separated from the periods that followed it. Such beliefs withheld by many people today are groundless, showing how little such people know about that specific period, which was just "in the middle" and nothing more. Eco defines the Middle Ages as "The period that began with the decline of the Roman Empire, during which Christianity, acting as a unifying force, helped fuse Latin culture with the cultures of the peoples who gradually invaded the empire. This era gave rise to what we now call Europe, shaping its nations, the languages we still speak, and the intellectual traditions that remain with us, even through subsequent changes and revolutions" (Eco, 2014, p. 11). The Middle Ages, then, is not yesterday but now.

One astonishing but easily forgotten fact about the Middle Ages is that many institutions regulating our lives today are the legacies of the Medieval times. Hence, understanding today thoroughly requires a highly developed understanding of Medieval times. We can better navigate and focus on contemporary issues by accurately comparing the Middle Ages and proposing well-founded solutions based on insights into how our medieval predecessors addressed their challenges. This approach helps counter the problematic tendency to conceptualize development without considering the valuable lessons from past human experiences.

This study aims to explore the impact of Neomedievalist trends in Antalya, Turkey, and to illuminate the connection between medieval history and the contemporary world. It primarily examines hotels and entertainment centers that feature medieval architecture and decorative arts. Including these venues provides a comprehensive understanding of how medieval history has shaped modern society. By analyzing relevant buildings, the study reveals how medieval aesthetics and culture influence contemporary leisure and entertainment activities, highlighting the significance of medieval studies in today's context.

Extensive literature research was conducted to gather relevant information. Then, specific buildings in Antalya, such as The Land of Legends and Aktur Park, which are critical examples of Neomedievalism, were visited. This visit and examination aim to uncover their connections to Neomedievalism and their significance to the region. Studying Neomedievalism in Antalya enhances our understanding of how medieval history relates to modern life, offering new insights into the evolution of cultural trends and their impact on leisure activities. The study enriches our understanding of the relationship between history, culture, and society by linking the past with the present.

UNDERSTANDING THE THEORETICAL FRAMES OF THE MIDDLE AGES

In his famous Historia Universalis, Christopher Cellarius (1638-1707) categorized history into three periods: the Antique Ages, the Middle Ages, and the Modern Ages. Although periodizing these distinct periods was initially practical and meaningful, they introduced challenges, especially as they were seen as overlapping, opposing, or increasingly different (Arnold, 2021). The Medieval period is still debated at all levels and in all domains. However, only some consensus exists on how this period is understood and discussed. Conversations often reduce the Middle Ages to a time of slavery, ignorance, and suffering, ignoring its complexities and achievements in art, architecture, and philosophy. This narrow view leads to misrepresentation, overshadowing the period's contributions to modern society and turning it into a collection of clichés and misinformation. As a result, the Middle Ages are often seen as dark and horrific, shaped by stereotypical images that people hold. It is

essential to recognize that many commonly held beliefs about this time are misleading and to explore where these unrealistic perceptions originated.

Although there are several reasons for those unrealistic images, the misinterpretation of different lifestyles and the misunderstanding of the differences in the way of thinking can be shown as the main reasons for these images of the Middle Ages. The emergence of anything in the Middle Ages could serve an entirely different purpose from its apparent function. The existence of something was related to not only its shape and size but also its image and meaning to the people. This sense of reception, which Eco (1986) called symbolism, was one of the principal elements that shaped the mindsets of medieval people. Hence, talking about this age in which the mentality of the entire society is affected by the symbolic narrative without adequate knowledge and experience will cause considerable confusion. According to Gombrich (1995), people today need more information about the early periods of the Middle Ages. Also, the darkness and fears do not shape these periods as they are attributed to these people. Because the Middle Ages is generally remembered as a dark entity and:

> We call these ages dark, partly to convey that the people who lived during these centuries of migrations, wars, and upheavals were themselves plunged in darkness and had little knowledge to guide them, but also to imply that we ourselves know rather little about these confused and confusing centuries which followed upon the decline of the ancient world and preceded the emergence of the European countries in shape, roughly, in which we know them now. There are, of course, no fixed limits to the period (…) Five hundred years is a long time, in which much can happen, and much did happen. (Gombrich, 1995, pp. 109-110)

Middle Ages was an extended period embodying different time intervals at its core. It would be a huge mistake to see all of these time intervals as the age of nothingness and poverty, direct all the unrelieved hatred and anger to medieval times with false stories, and fit all the horror that comes to mind. Although medieval societies experienced a well-known great famine between the 5th and 8th centuries, which also brought a series of substantial unfortunate events and pain, they also made a series of innovations that cannot be ignored easily, especially after the 9th century (Eco, 2014). The Middle Ages were a bulk of evolving identities, the sum of which was a quest to search and discover. It was the conflict between individuality and society. This is why researchers should abandon old and useless stereotypes, and the Middle Ages deserve a completely new examination with a brand new perspective.

MEDIEVALISM

Medievalism is a system that examines the actors, artworks, ideas, and structures of the Middle Ages. It compromises all reflections, phenomena, and interactions related to medieval times. These interactions extend beyond academia to include past, ongoing, and future research in politics, literature, art, philosophy, and medicine, involving historians, philologists, sociologists, and philosophers. According to Workman (1997), Medievalism focuses on recreating the Middle Ages to understand medieval times better.

In-depth research on Medievalism has shown that the problems and experiences of medieval times were often similar to today's issues. These similarities suggest that by studying these historical experiences, we can gain alternative insights and potential solutions for our current problems. According to numerous researchers, the stereotypical medieval stories everyone knows reflect what lies in people's minds today; princes, princesses, witches, and knights are meeting around the castle. In truth, the period offers much more than the grand castles, knights, endless wars, witchcraft, and paganism commonly associated with it.

Entertainment is a basic need of us, and it was no different in medieval times. However, medieval entertainment was quite different from what we have today. Medieval festivals hugely covered the need for fun, some aligning with religious values while others were secular. The entertainment they enjoyed during certain times of the year was accessible from religious culture and social morality. Moreover, some research showed that medieval people were quite excessive during these festivals, which were usually held once a year, and these festivals constitute evidence of the contradictory world of the Middle Ages (Bakthin, 1984).

According to Arnold (2021), "So medievalists now need to think about nations critically rather than unproblematically celebrating them" (p. 24). Furthermore, again, the writer says, "Other hand-me-down concepts from the founders of medieval history have also been questioned in recent years: the coherence, in their contemporary settings, of different bodies of law (Roman law and canon law in particular); the sense in which the Catholic Church was a singular, unitary entity; and the notion that there is a kind of hierarchy of sources, moving initially from the official histories to governmental archives, and thence to lesser materials" (Arnold, 2021, p. 24). And from this perspective, the contemporary histories "have tended to homogenize and homeostatize the society of the middle ages" (Arnold, 2021, p. 34) which show us that modern historians have updated the obsolete medieval conceptualization.

NEOMEDIEVALISM

Neomedievalism is not only a combination of two words, but it is also a semantic synthesis. Italian writer Umberto Eco came across the term Neomedievalism in a text written in 1953, which belongs to Isaiah Berlin. After a deep analysis of the text, Eco realized that "We are at present witnessing, both in Europe and America, a period of renewed interest in the Middle Ages, with a curious oscillation between fantastic Neomedievalism and responsible philological examination" (Eco, 1986, p. 63). The renewed interest in the Middle Ages often emerges in architecture, films, or even responses to 21st-century crises. According to Cawelti (1976), combining medieval themes with the freedom of the 21st century has made the Middle Ages extremely appealing and this appeal can be seen as modern Europeans' escape from the monotony of their daily lives, where they use medieval motifs like courtly love and chivalry as a form of entertainment (p. 15).

Neomedievalism is a reaction to the culture of the modern world. For Robinson and Clements (2012), Neomedievalim "involves contemporary medieval narratives that purport to merge (or even replace) reality as much as possible, and there is no longer a sense of the futile and is thus more playful and in greater denial of reality" (p. 7). Neomedievalism takes the reality revealed by Medievalism and reshapes it in different ways. While this reshaping can turn into alternative history, it can combine the existing medieval elements with postmodern elements and present them as a part of unreal medieval culture. Especially the last one can be seen as fiction in a story or event. A fictionalized Middle Ages narration is frequently used in literal texts. The concept can change historical knowledge and traditional medieval cultural elements in fiction. Instead of historical reality, it presents the same but distorted reality or a different reality that has chosen various ways to reach its final destination. Additionally, Neomedievalism has been explored in fields such as architecture and art history, where its influence is becoming increasingly evident (D'Arcens & Lynch, 2014). In particular, the term has gained prominence in Italy, where it has been formalized under the concept of 'Neo-Medieval architecture' (Zerbi, 2022).

Neomedievalism aims to provide a comprehensive explanation for the systematic use of medievalism. Neomedievalists focus on specialized areas while rejecting harsher practices, allowing marginalized ideas to gain prominence as rigid structures of knowledge

collapse. This potential for new perspectives has attracted historians to Neomedievalism, highlighting the need to explore ignored topics academically. Cantor (1991) notes that the Middle Ages concealed our deepest fears, reflecting the traumas and utopias of modernity. Eco (1972) emphasizes that today's insecurities have historical, sociological, and psychological roots that influence our relationship with nature and society.

Today, companies that wrap around the world like a spider's web and are seen as the sanctions of modernization and capitalism draw a medieval rather than modern image. Apple's Apple Park, which resembles a medieval city protected by high walls, is an excellent example of this situation (Fig. 1). To make a comparison, the population of a typical town in the Middle Ages was probably less than the total number of workers in a medium-sized company today. Moreover, these companies are drawing an image of a closed town, just like in many regions in the Middle Ages. Employees in these companies often spend most of their time at work, mirroring the lives of serfs in the Middle Ages. They can leave only for basic needs and must produce for their company, surrendering most of their earnings with little in return. Although the nature of work has changed, the underlying system remains similar, raising questions about 'modernity' and 'modern systems.'

Figure 1. Apple Park.

Depression, insecurity, and livelihood, often labeled as modern problems, have existed since the Middle Ages. The insecurities of today's society echo the concerns of medieval people, as seen in economic troubles and crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, which carries similarities to the plague epidemics of the Middle Ages. The struggles for survival, fear of the unknown, and greed are legacies of the past that still affect us and part of us. The Middle Ages is the key to understanding our limited expectations for the future; therefore, the problems faced in the past are fundamentally the same as those we face now (Eco, 2018, p. 29).

As Eco states in Travels in Hyperreality (1986), the Middle Ages are enchanting and magical and offer a compelling backdrop even in the 21st century. It provides a suitable place for reworking modern problems. Neomedievalism offers a structuralist approach to deconstructing long-standing ideas, transforming outdated, stereotypical concepts into more dynamic and convertible ones. Researchers and authors enrich their work by pushing beyond traditional boundaries, uncovering lost or ignored information from the Middle Ages, and allowing for different interpretations.

It is quite possible to see the resurrected Middle Ages in hotels likened to medieval buildings, amusement parks equipped with fantastic medieval creatures, pop music that uses

medieval music rhythms, video games that represent medieval personalities, and more. As
stated by Arıkan (2020), "The concept of the Medieval is a fictive entity encompassing
various personally shaped psychological states which are in close contact with identity
politics and agency whose borders are drawn by historical research the result of which is an
original conceptualization" (p. 42).

STYLISTIC FEATURES OF THE MEDIEVAL

Understanding Medieval Europe's stylistic and architectural features is essential for
interpreting how medieval life is represented in today's images, artifacts, and objects.
Through their artistic styles, it is crucial to understand the mindset of medieval European
societies and their institutional frameworks. The perception of aesthetics during the Middle
Ages differed significantly from other eras, which has caused many misconceptions about it.

Medieval artists did not view beauty as a random abstraction; they believed that
concrete and abstract elements were essential to an object's significance. For them, beauty
included a metaphysical dimension. For instance, depicting a sheep could serve various
symbolic functions beyond altogether representing a sheep. According to Curtius (1953),
medieval scholastic thought associated beauty with tangible forms and divine beauty,
considered one of God's attributes. For churchmen and medieval society, moral judgment and
psychological perception shaped the basis of their experience of beauty, which the senses
could not quickly receive. Thus, the medieval concept of beauty carries a much broader
meaning than our contemporary understanding (Eco, 2018).

In today's context, for an object to be deemed beautiful, it must exist on an abstract
plane. The influence of various elements on style during the Middle Ages is evident in
surviving artifacts like stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, sculptures, metalwork,
precious stones, and paintings, which have become primary resources for researchers. The
architectural features of Medieval Europe evolved along with their stylistic characteristics.
Following the persecution of Christians in the Early Middle Ages, the demand for places of
worship increased, transitioning Christianity from private practices to a more prominent
societal role competing with pagan sites (Eco, 2014). Initially, prominent worship places
called basilicas served religious rituals. These were eventually replaced by sturdier
Romanesque structures characterized by strong columns, round arches, thick walls, and
narrow windows. By the 11th and 12th, medieval builders search for innovation, leading to
a radical transformation in architecture from the Romanesque to the distinctive Gothic style
(Gombrich, 1997, p. 185).

Figure 2. Notre Dame Cathedral.

Gothic architecture introduced a series of innovative techniques and became a significant style in world architecture. Diagonal ribs allowed columns to support rib vaults, reducing the need for thick walls and enabling taller structures with thinner columns and more expansive spaces (Gombrich, 1997, p. 185). These expansive interiors were often adorned with stunning stained glass, which enhanced their beauty and light. A significant example is the Notre Dame Cathedral, which exemplifies the grandeur and spaciousness of Gothic architecture (Fig. 2).

Besides cathedrals and basilicas, fortified castles and châteaux were important structures in Medieval Europe. A castle's construction was closely related to its strategic location, production, and subsistence needs. The wars between the 9th and 11th centuries significantly increased castle building (Eco, 2014). In the Middle Ages, castles and châteaux were two different structures. While the purpose of the castles was military power and defense, the châteaux were used as a living place for feudal lords and their families. Castles and the walls that surround them were constantly strengthened and rebuilt. The strength of a medieval castle was closely related to its size and strength (Oman, 1885). The thickness and quality of the stones used in constructing a castle determined the castle's strength and impressive appearance (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Eltz Castle.

REFLECTIONS OF NEOMEDIEVALISM IN TODAY'S WORLD

The theory of Neomedievalism can present alternative and different interpretations of history within cultural elements and create fiction through concepts. It does not avoid taking medieval elements, fictionalizing them, and reintroducing them into popular culture. A contemporary Neomedievalist novel can carry readers to an unseen medieval world while focusing on modern issues. This allows for a Postmodern-feminist analysis in literature, film, and theater where medieval themes are prominent. Such works may even explore fictional characters' lives somewhere in the Eastern Roman Empire, as seen in recent movies and TV series. For example, Cursed, consisting of legendary medieval elements like Merlin and Excalibur, is a significant case for analyzing Neo-Medievalism through the scope of feminist debates.

Controlling the fictional character Frederick I in a video game with the A, B, X, and Y keys would seem absurd without a Neomedievalist interpretation. Similarly, interpreting King Arthur as a black character from a medievalist perspective may be confusing. However, the Neomedievalist view allows a modern phenomenological analysis of this character and illustrates his representation in popular culture. Reality often prioritizes fiction in TV series

and films that draw on medieval concepts and symbols. Within this framework, fictional elements become tenacious with history. Historical series are featured in the entertainment industry (Çencen & Şimşek, 2015), and modern adaptations of medieval places can reinterpret these places in ways that diverge from their original forms.

As Utz states in a book, "Neomedieval texts no longer need to strive for the authenticity of original manuscripts, castles, or cathedrals but create pseudo-medieval worlds that playfully obliterate history and historical accuracy and replace history-based narratives with simulacra of the medieval employing images that are neither an original nor the copy of an original, but altogether neo" (Robinson & Clements, 2012, p. 7).

Recreational tourism activities significantly contribute to the economies of the countries in the Mediterranean Basin, where a large portion of their income comes from tourism. As a result, many countries in the region prioritize tourism and allocate substantial investment to it. One of the top cities attracting tourists is Antalya, where the classic and fantastical medieval influences seen in some hotels and complexes and their structures draw the attention of both local and international visitors. What follows is the study of two building complexes: The Land of Legends and Aktur Park.

THE LAND OF LEGENDS

The Land of Legends is a significant example of Neomedievalism. Designed as an entertainment complex combining a shopping mall, a hotel, and a theme park, the complex evokes the spirit of the Middle Ages through its grand and extravagant outlook. The complex showcases impressive features, such as winged horse sculptures perched atop the structures and decorative friezes that enhance its grandeur. The entrance is reminiscent of the Middle Ages, with fortified iron walls encircling the entire complex, providing a secure and controlled entrance through wide gates. Upon passing through the main gate, featuring massive columns and gigantic statues that harken back to the medieval era, visitors can access the hotel (Fig. 4). This colossal size reminds us of the medieval people's ambition to reach God and Heaven. Behind the sculptures at the hotel's entrance, replicas and reinterpretations of Romanesque architectural arches are prominently displayed, reflecting the influence of medieval design. The grandeur of the columns also evokes the Hellenistic period (323 BC - 146 BC), particularly reminiscent of Corinthian columns, which further enhances the historical and architectural richness of the space.

Figure 4. The hotel entrance of The Land of Legends.

According to Arıkan (2020), "the fact that the castle is equipped with bright lights and technologically fortified with laser lights has glorified it and made it part of a fairytale

atmosphere" (p. 44). Again, according to the author, "the glittering visuality of this structure, which was completed by utilizing the prosperity of the technology, aims to resurrect the medieval space design in a legendary way to the present day" (Arıkan, 2020, p. 44). This quotation supports our finding as the legendary Medieval outlook can be seen in the hotel's entrance from the shopping mall side (Fig. 5).

Figure 5. The scene greeting guests beyond the hotel's entrance.

The bridge is adorned to evoke a festive atmosphere for guests, enhancing the overall entertainment experience. Surrounding the square, the shops feature semicircular arches reminiscent of Romanesque architectural design (Fig. 6). The artificial canal serves as a network that encircles the whole complex, and on festival evenings, guests can tour the complex on gondolas with various light decorations. The artificial canal divides the complex into two distinct sections, with bridges designed in a medieval style connecting them at regular intervals.
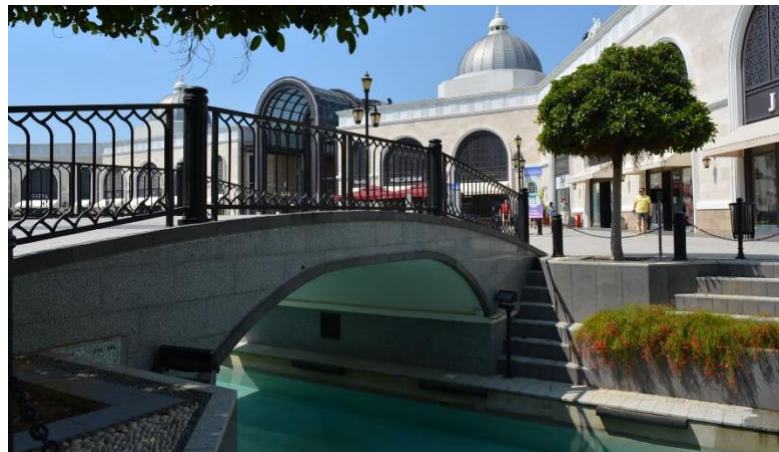

Figure 6. The bridge used to cross the artificial canal.

Every detail, from the Romanesque arches to the columns used in the complex, reflects the depths of the Middle Ages. Even the drain covers in the complex have been decorated with mythological figures and wrapped in a regular pattern with extremely delicate craftsmanship (Fig. 7). These figures, reminiscent of military figures, were frequently used

in artistic activities during the Classical and Medieval periods to show the bravery of soldiers and knights.

Figure 7. The drain covers used in the complex.

Throughout the complex, additional structures resemble medieval castles. As Utz (2011) noted, castles no longer need to strive to reflect their reality in the resurrected Neomedieval era. In today's world, castles are used to entertain or educate people. A 111-meter-high building, which reflects medieval castles, is a prime example of the use of neomedievalism in architecture and serves as a shopping center (Fig. 8).

Figure 8. A Neomedieval Reflection of a Medieval Castle.

Additionally, the castle is outfitted with various advanced technological devices, cleverly incorporated to align with the medieval theme. While these technologies did not exist in the Middle Ages, their seamless integration into the structure creates a sense that they are naturally part of the medieval experience. This blend of old-world aesthetics with modern functionality enhances the immersive atmosphere, making the castle appear both historically rooted and contemporarily equipped. The juxtaposition of modern technology within a

medieval setting elevates the visitor's experience and reflects the complex interplay between history and modernity in neomedieval designs. The back of the castle is divided by a giant screen. This screen is a countdown timer to reflect various entertainment elements during multiple celebrations. The windows around the castle are decorated with medieval images, and the windows used in the castle resemble the shape of Romanesque windows.

A convoy of horse riders, located right in front of the castle, quickly draws visitors' attention. The convoy is accompanied by a horse-drawn carriage, which appears to have just left the castle. The convoy's presence holds considerable significance due to its crucial role in the medieval period. In the Middle Ages, the horse riders's convoy protected the castle and its inhabitants from intruders (Fig. 9). It is worth noting that during the Middle Ages, possessing a single horse was deemed significant enough to change the fate of a battle. Moreover, horses were also used to pull the large harrows utilized in the fields. Hence, the continuous strength and well-being of the horses were of utmost importance. During the winter months, when medieval people's food stocks were depleted, they often prioritized feeding their horses, even if it meant cutting back on their food consumption. Hence, the sculpted horses represent a powerful and majestic horse breed that existed during the Middle Ages. These horses were highly venerated thanks to their power and agility and were considered valuable assets during war and peace.

Figure 9. The horse riders in front of the complex resemble a medieval Castle.

In today's world, Valkyrie figures are frequently visible in literature, architecture, and cinema. According to Arıkan (2020), "Among the models presented to individuals by the culture industries, and particularly through the corporatized tools of cultural production, there is a considerable number of tangible and intangible objects that are thought to belong to the Middle Ages and remind individuals of medieval elements" (p. 43). Valkyrie figures are a significant example of this phenomenon and are presented to visitors as representations of medieval symbols (Fig. 10).

Figure 10. Modern representation of Valkyries hardened by steel and heat.

Modern representations of Valkyries are more than just decorative. They are deeply rooted in the cultural imagination, which mixes historical and mythological elements. Their presence in literature, architecture, and cinema reflects a continued admiration of medieval imagery, especially Norse mythology. These figures bridge the past and present and connect audiences to ancient narratives while being reinterpreted for contemporary tastes. The frequent use of Valkyries highlights the enduring influence of the Middle Ages in today's entertainment world; medieval themes remain relevant and compelling in modern cultural production.

One of the reflections drawn from the depths of the Middle Ages and reintroduced within the complex is the door shaped like a harp (Fig. 11). This concept, which is at the extreme representation of Neomedievalism, involves distorting the reality of objects, transforming the harp into a different form. It merges the narratives of the Middle Ages with the realities of the modern world, reshaping both (Robinson & Clements, 2012). Although this structure functions as a door, it no longer represents a traditional door and takes on the qualities of a sculpture. Crafted with highly sophisticated metalwork, the door is painted gold to attract visitors' attention. At the top of the door is the inscription The Land of Legends, complete with a design reminiscent of a Romanesque arch that serves as a brand mark.
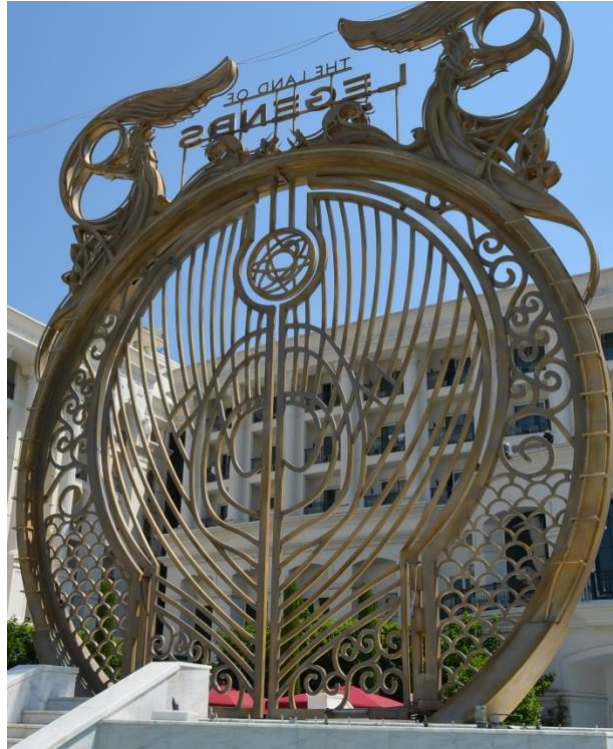
Figure 11. The door shaped like a harp located inside the complex.

AKTUR PARK

Aktur Park is a remarkable example of the ongoing debates around Neomedievalism. Built with unusual structures, the park combines elements reminiscent of medieval entertainment and postmodern decorative applications. Aktur Park not only promises to move visitors to a fantasy world but also offers children, teenagers, and adults who are bored of the monotony of modern life the opportunity to escape to a reimagined version of the Middle Ages.

In both The Land of Legends and Aktur Park, the motives and themes of the Middle Ages have been skillfully transformed into a legend that modern people would desire. Moreover, both The Land of Legends and Aktur Park utilize their boundaries as discrete walls that separate visitors from the contemporary world, transporting them into a realm of medieval times. Upon entering through their grand entrances (Fig. 12), visitors are immediately transported into a fantastical world of entertainment and never-ending craziness on a fictional plane. When visitors enter Aktur Park, they can leave behind the familiarity and monotony of their daily lives, even for a little while. They can escape modern-day problems and immerse themselves in the world of the Middle Ages, as Cawelti (1976) noted.

Figure 12. Castle entrance.

Figures standing all over the park represent tribes that lived in the Middle Ages and welcome visitors, such as the Vikings. The figures and themes from different medieval tribes have become subsidiary elements of the theme park, detached from their basic meanings. The park has transformed the wild and dangerous societies of the Middle Ages into a more understandable, colorful, and fun for children to attract their attention directly when they visit the park. As visitors walk through the park, the presence of medieval imagery intensifies. For instance, the carousel inside the park is rooted in medieval traditions and has become a technological reflection of medieval knights here.

In addition, the park features a distinctive dark ride with a unique architectural design typical of the medieval world (Fig. 13). This design is created by shaping various medieval horror figures around a castle-like structure. The purpose of the dark ride is to provide visitors with both entertaining and scary moments with its Gothic elements that initially belong to the Middle Ages. The Romanesque arches and doors used in the interior and exterior design of the tunnel, dimly lit dark rooms, structures and protrusions resembling a medieval castle, artificial Gothic stained glass, devils, witches, and Ifrits used for decoration have become complementary elements in the design of the ride. Hence, these elements serve as a legendary and frightening Middle Ages narrative and welcome the visitors to experience fun-filled yet terrifying moments.

Figure 13. Dark ride.

The influence of Neomedievalism on Antalya is seen with various shows held in hotels during the summer months. These shows use elements and stories that contribute to constructing medieval identities. Arıkan (2020) argues that in today's world, individuals assimilate models available in their environments while constructing their selfhoods, and entertainment shows provide them with elements to enrich their identities (p. 43). Fire shows resemble the performances in medieval carnivals, with performers dressed like court jesters who entertained the nobles (Fig. 14). These shows inspired by medieval times let people connect with history and make it part of their modern lives.

Figure 14. A juggler.

Medieval style has a profound place in Antalya's touristic and daily life, as seen in the annual Antalya Sand Festival, during which humongous castles and citadels are made of sand by various local, national, and international artists. (Fig. 15). While such artistic practices that reproduce medieval structures connect the past to the present, they also exemplify how Neo-Medievalism is longed for in today's Antalya.

Figure 15. Sand Sculpture Viking.

Medieval ornamentations are some of the few tangible artistic expressions reflecting a Neomedievalist spirit within these building complexes. Although this study primarily focuses on two complexes, the Side Crown Palace stands out as a significantly noteworthy example that embodies a clear Neomedievalist feature (Fig. 16). As its name suggests, the hotel is decorated with many elements that remind people of medieval crowns, along with fun touches like the hats and bells of jesters. This mix of elegance and playfulness brings the history of the Middle Ages to life and encourages visitors to enjoy a magical version of the past.

Figure16. Side Crown Palace.

Medieval designs show that these complexes are essential examples of Neomedieval architecture. In this style, historical influences are reimagined for modern times. By combining medieval decorations, places like the Side Crown Palace create an experience that is more than just visually pleasing. They invite guests to enter a world that mixes history with modern ideas. This architectural approach demonstrates how the past influences and inspires today's design. It also highlights the lasting appeal of medieval themes in our current cultural environment.

CONCLUSION

As stated at the beginning of this study, the Middle Ages includes various artistic, architectural, and stylistic applications that await present-day researchers' attention and exploration. Neomedievalism, as a philosophical and creative movement, is a mixture of the medieval and the (post)modern and has fully affected today's architecture and arts. In this study, the visual realizations of Neomedievalism are studied in contemporary Antalya, Turkey, by looking at the architectural features of two building complexes, The Land of Legends and Aktur Park, and noted how properties of medieval history and arts have been used in the contemporary world. However, we could only consider two dominant Neomedieval buildings due to practicality. Thus, future studies should look into how Neomedievalism has found aspirations in Antalya and the rest of the world.

In conclusion, Neomedievalism significantly influences Antalya, where authentic medieval designs and objects can be found. Analyzing the visual materials from visits to these sites revealed that they prominently showcase Medieval architecture, particularly from the Romanesque and Gothic periods. Images and objects affected by the Middle Ages' architectural and artistic features and the appearances of medieval ornamentations further showed that Antalya is thus affected by Neomedievalism as an artistic movement. These results also show that such a Neomedievalist spirit highlights and emphasizes the use of magic and the uncanny and refashioning and glorification of Medieval times.

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