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MILITARY-RELIGIOUS
ORDERS

Engaging the Crusades, Volume Seven

Edited by
Rory MacLellan

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The Modern Memory of the Military-religious Orders

Engaging the Crusades, Volume Seven

**Edited by
Rory MacLellan**

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6 The Internet Crusade against Communism

Political Neomedievalism in Twenty-first Century Brazil

Luiz Felipe Anchieta Guerra

Medieval Brazil?

There is no such thing as ‘medieval Brazil’. Despite a certain historiographical lust for presenting feudal models for the Brazilian colonial economy or, more recently, seeking the medieval ‘inheritances’ of our culture, most researchers’ consensus is that Brazil did not have a medieval period per se.¹ ‘Discovered’ and colonized by the modern Portuguese from 1500 onwards, Brazilian history is often divided, by its own scholars, into Pre-Discovery (up to 1500), Colony (1500–1822), Empire (1822–89), and Republic (from 1889 to the present day).²

This is mainly reflected in our schools’ curriculum: the Middle Ages are only briefly taught and usually limited to a necessary transitional step in European history. A step between Classic and Modern times always related to understanding the importance of Religion, the permanence of Roman Structures, or how medieval labour structures compare to ancient and early modern ones.³

As a testament to the period’s lack of prominence in the mainstream Brazilian curriculum, in 2015, historian Luís Fernando Cerri wrote an opinion that served as a basis for reducing and even excluding medieval and ancient history from the national syllabus. The opinion was grounded on a statistical analysis of data gathered by the *Jovens e a História* [Youth and History] Mercosul project, which supposedly ‘proved’ a sufficient knowledge of these periods by students between ages 15 and 16. Even though the said decision was quickly revoked and Cerri’s methodology amply criticized by other researchers such as Prof. Claudia Bovo, this whole situation caused a commotion within the academic community, with most medievalists and classics historians taking a strong stance against it.⁴

That being said, the Middle Ages are, by no means, unknown to the average Brazilian. They are as much a part of the pop culture *zeitgeist*

over here as in most of the Western world. Medievalism has been a present aspect in literature, architecture, and culture. Furthermore, the same can be said about the recent revival of medieval popularity over the last decade: *Game of Thrones*' overwhelming success even spawned a medieval-themed Brazilian telenovela in 2018.

This recent surge also resulted in a particularly interesting boom of Brazilian political medievalism and neomedievalism from, at least, 2016 – most likely influenced in no small part by the uses of medieval imagery by Donald J. Trump's supporters in that year. Political medievalism in Brazil is not something new, with famous examples dating from the first decades of the twentieth century (such as Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões*). It is usually derived from the very traditional stereotype of the Dark Ages, with the medieval portrayed as something to overcome; more nostalgic appropriations, albeit rarer, are also not new (such as the uses of medieval imagery, since the 1960s, by the conservative Catholic group the Tradition, Family, Property movement, or TFP). However, what we are going to call political neomedievalism here is what is perhaps truly *nouveau*.

Political Neomedievalism?

Here we opt to distinguish between the more traditional forms of political medievalism and the phenomenon we will be calling political neomedievalism. If we follow available definitions of neomedievalism, it has been identified how this type of medievalism is not preoccupied with historical accuracy or what scholars have established as the 'real' Middle Ages. Instead, it creates a pseudo-medieval past that is neither new nor original – but appropriates known historical symbols and events to give them new contemporary meanings: just like the standard of Saint Maurice (a black saint) was used by white supremacist supporters in Charlottesville, USA, in 2017.⁵

On 'Past, Present and Neo', Richard Utz offers a very brief explanation of neomedievalism, providing us with a useful summary of Carol L. Robinson and Pamela Clements' original, and much more extensive, definition of the term, which points to the trauma which emerged when postmodernism further separated medievalism from its desired object.⁶ We are aware that the aforementioned definitions were created to discuss works of fiction, like movies and games, and would not be the best fit to talk about political discourse and memes without some caveats. However, a single rigid definition of neomedievalism is very hard to establish, but as author KellyAnn Fitzpatrick points out, this might be one of its merits: the perpetual invitation to being defined.⁷ Thus,

we choose to adopt Utz's summary as the basis for the term here, but only as a starting point, and we will be referring to medievalisms like Crusader Donald Trump or the Charlottesville riot as political neomedievalisms, since they could be described, in Utz's terms, as 'neither an original nor the faithful copy of an original, but entirely "Neo"'.⁸

In this way, our perceptions of a 'medieval' past can be analogically compared with Lacan's mirror stage,⁹ with the so-called 'real' Middle Ages being the original vase, hidden by physical obstruction (in this case, time itself), and therefore inaccessible and unattainable to all, even to historians themselves. After all, with all our methods and criteria, we scholars are, ultimately a product of our own time as well, ultimately plagued by our contemporary minds and thus incapable of the complete alterity needed to understand the past. In this scenario, the only form of seeing the hidden vase would be through its projection, the real, inverted image generated by the mirror, which already has some interference: this image we can call medievalism, since it can still be traced directly to the original vase, with all attempts to reach the Middle Ages being in some degree a form of medievalism itself. As French historian Nicole Loraux points out, it is impossible to access the past without interference from the present, and therefore the work of a historian is inherently anachronical.¹⁰

Neomedievalism, however, would be one step further, being the virtual image of said real image, which exists only inside the mirror, and which has already incorporated enough elements (such as the flowers in Lacan's drawings) and distortions to make sense on its own. It is a new image, an image of the image, a reflection of the reflection, a medievalism of medievalisms, which no longer needs to be linked to the original (historical period) to exist.

Utz's definition of neomedievalism also notes that it 'playfully obliterates history, authenticity, and historical accuracy', replacing its historical references with imagery already detached from the 'sources'. Moreover, this playfulness is a central aspect of political neomedievalism itself. Unlike political medievalism, which often presents itself in a more serious façade, aiming to connect with some supposed historical past, political neomedievalism centres itself around its own absurdity, evoking the language of memes to connect with its audience, and, therefore, requiring somewhat of an entertainment value, which is more important than the historical aspects themselves.

On a sidenote, about this attempted historicity, it is imperative to note that we are discussing intentions here. Therefore, we are not stating that the more traditional uses of the Middle Ages in political medievalism are necessarily more grounded on reality or even more accurate

than their neomedievalism counterparts. Rather, we are pointing out that the preoccupation/necessity of being ‘historical’ is a fundamental characteristic of them. After all, one cannot deny that conspiratorial shows like History Channel’s *Ancient Aliens* take their historical pretensions very seriously in their attempts to insert their narratives within historical contexts, no matter how twisted said attempts may be.¹¹ They might be doing ‘bad history’ as Andrew Elliott would call it,¹² but still they intend it to be historical, unlike the meme below:

In other words: within these political neomedievalistic materials, what matters most is the meme itself. Take, for example, Figure 6.1. In it, the Middle Ages themselves are not very important. What is



Figure 6.1 Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro as a Knight Templar. The red star is the logo of the left-wing Workers’ Party, the main rivals to Bolsonaro [author unknown].

essential is Bolsonaro's face, the sunglasses from the *deal with it* meme, and the four symbols around him – these are what conveys the message. He is, of course, dressed as a Templar Knight; in fact, this is even written in red on the image. However, that does not imply a pretence direct connection between him and the Templar Order or a Templar medieval past. The author of the meme is not really suggesting Bolsonaro to be related to the knights of old; in fact, we might say that the Templars here are used more an avatar of conservatism and order, than in reference to the historical military order.

Another aspect of this medieval meme culture is what we could call the retro-feeding effect. Due to the memes' swift nature, they tend to be direct responses or references to current events and also to one another. This often creates a correlation between progressive and conservative memes, both feeding into each other's medievalism. If

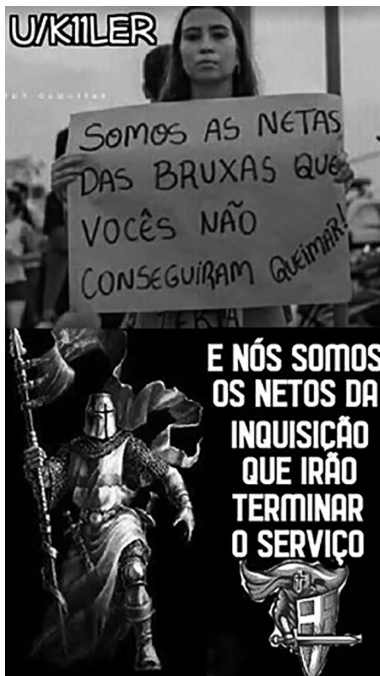


Figure 6.2 A Templar meme posted on Reddit by u/K11LER. The woman holds a sign reading 'We are the granddaughters of the witches that you could not burn'. Below, the text says 'And we are the grandsons of the Inquisition that will finish the job' [author unknown].

one side were to call Bolsonaro medieval, because he is antiquated, conservative, and a bigot (all medieval characteristics according to the Dark Ages stereotype), the other would then adopt this adjective, turning it into something positive: he is now medieval because he is strong, chivalrous, and masculine, for example.

Therefore, we are left with somewhat of a chicken-egg situation, in which it is almost impossible to determine who started it, but it is clear that they are both fundamentally interconnected. Perhaps, the most explicit example of this relationship is seen in the image below, Figure 6.2, in which we have the left-wing meme of being ‘the granddaughters of the witches they could not burn’ and its direct response from a Reddit user, in the form of a templar knight saying that they would finish the job now.

Lone Wolves or Organizations? From *Lux Brazil* to September 7, 2021

Even if this type of political meme is usually associated with scattered, independent, and mostly anonymous online content creators, to say that they are limited to that is a great understatement. In fact, this may only be the tip of the iceberg, since over the last few years more and more organized groups started to appear, not only taking credit for some of these creations but also trying to capitalize on them in order to organize rallies, protests, and even attacks.

This is truly ‘uncharted territory’, and a potentially profitable one at that. Since notions like authorship and ownership are very loose at best, when dealing with internet meme-culture,¹³ it is often hard to identify how much said claims are warranted. The idea that these are not all lone wolves,¹⁴ and that there may be some order to this chaos is a very important one, especially to confront the myth of disorganized white terrorism. However, there is always the risk of giving too much credit to certain groups and end up buying their own projected narratives of organization and influence.¹⁵ After all, of course there is logic to chaos, but just how much of it?

To clarify this a bit more, let us now delve deeper into one of such groups, so-called *Institute Lux Brasil*: ‘Patriots! I come from afar on a sacred quest. March 15, come with me, against the communists and traitors of the homeland. We will rescue our country, our flag. ORDINEN ET PROGRESSUS, VENIT AD LUX!’

In a short YouTube video, with these words, on March 3, 2020, a man supposedly dressed as a Knight Templar rallied Brazilians for a protest against Congress and the Supreme Court and in support of

President Jair Bolsonaro.¹⁶ This small piece of promotion drew the attention of the entire Brazilian media and some international outlets as well, as some sort of bad joke, an unintentional caricature of the most delirious sectors of our far-right. This was Brazil's introduction to *Lux*.

Instituto Lux Brasil, the authors of the infamous video mentioned above, is a non-profit organization who presents itself as heir and defender of a conservative European Christian tradition, and, in an almost contradictory way, as apologists for modern liberal values. On their website their own description is: 'God, Country and Family are our core beliefs and values, in addition to the encouragement and recognition of: Minimum State; Pro-life; Conservation and maintenance of customs and traditions; Free market; Individual freedom'.¹⁷

Counting among its founders a notorious neo-Nazi historian, the *Lux* institute promotes a fierce revisionism of Brazilian history, having as one of its main guidelines the defence of the military dictatorship, and the 1964 coup.¹⁸ For this, they make frequent use of neomedievalisms, going far beyond the aforementioned video. On their website one can see posters and other material produced by *Lux*, in which the figure of the Knight Templar is again evoked as an avatar of conservatism and the far-right.¹⁹

It is also very interesting to note that alongside said posters there are a couple of template versions available on the website as well.²⁰ These consist of banners with the *Lux* colour scheme, a bloody and battered templar knight with the *Lux* logo on the lower right corner, and the explanation that they are 'to have control of standardization in any type of media (banner, videos, texts, demonstrations, etc.) containing the *Lux Brasil* logo'. Here we can see a clear attempt to establish a brand, uniformizing and capitalizing, *a posteriori*, on the boom of political neomedievalisms we saw over the last years.

Lux might have produced one of the most iconic examples of Brazilian political neomedievalism, in the form of the 2020 video; however, the plans for continued content generated by associated members, with the use of said templates, apparently failed. This is evident on the institute's own website, which has barely been updated since late 2020. Despite achieving viral success early on, the *Lux* brand never really took off, and it seems to have been mostly abandoned since then.²¹ In contrast to that, political neomedievalism never went away, it did not fade with the *Lux* brand. Quite the opposite, since it has continuously provided us with a seemingly endless stream of content for analysis, whose most notorious recent example is the 'Templar of Pernambuco', seen during the September 7, 2021 protests (Figure 6.3).



Figure 6.3 A Bolsonaro supporter dressed as a Templar at a demonstration in Recife, 2021 [Photo © @itsmepoan].

September 7, Brazil's Independence Day, is a date often associated with military parades and official celebrations. However, inspired by the riot at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, President Bolsonaro and his supporters started a long campaign for most of 2021 to turn the Independence Day's celebrations into a show of force, intended to coerce and intimidate the opposition and perhaps even pave the way for an attempted coup d'état.²² Whilst the more radical aspirations for the event seem to have failed, significant protests and demonstrations did happen in many Brazilian cities, and within them a picturesque figure stood out in the city of Recife: apparently unphased by the heat, one man stood strong in full 'Templar regalia', complete with leather boots and a dollar-store 'helmet'.

This figure's similarities to *Lux's* Templar are unlikely to be coincidental; however, no direct connection can be established between the two, other than that of a reference. This can be further witnessed in other neomedievalisms on display around September 7, such as Facebook banners advertised by the group *Templários da Pátria* [Templars of the Homeland] which summoned the 'good citizens' to the streets on Independence Day, to 'fight a crusade against the communist threat'.²³ These all share similarities in both tone and model to the *Lux* templates mentioned before. So, even if *Lux* ultimately failed to bottle up and brand these political neomedievalisms, it successfully left its influence all over them.

The Templars are not, however, the only reference to be found on said banners. From Solaire of Astora, a character from the *Dark Souls* videogame franchise, to Horatio Nelson and Uncle Sam *I want you* posters, they are filled to the brim with contemporary references which are, once again, much more relevant to the derivative product of neomedievalism than any historical medieval context. Even the 'crusade against communism' is likely more influenced (albeit indirectly) by the fundamentalist and integralist (*integrismo*, a political principle of Catholic faith) ideas of Plínio Corrêa, founder of the TFP movement, who in the 1960s proposed a crusade against modernity,²⁴ than by any medieval ideologies.²⁵ Going back to our Lacanian comparison and Utz's definition, neomedievalism does not require much (if any) knowledge of the Middle Ages to make sense on its own, it is a reflection of the reflection where the medieval is but a 'simulacrum'.²⁶

Going back to our original question of just how much logic you can have in chaos, perhaps this can serve as an anecdotal answer. For it seems to illustrate well how all these productions of political neomedievalism are somewhat interconnected, and not the work of isolated individuals, but also how they are ultimately not on-demand products within a structured chain of production. Keeping true to their memetic aspects, these neomedievalisms seem to reproduce themselves organically, copied by imitation, influence, reference, and other methods, in a way that can never be fully controlled or predicted.²⁷ Hence, to decide between fully organized radical groups and lone wolves,²⁸ it might be best to consider a bit of both and take a more stochastic approach. The concept of Stochastic Terrorism is centred around acts that are not directly ordered through a clear chain of command but are also not the result of isolated individual actions. Instead, they are the statistical consequences of sufficiently reproduced ideas and discourses (i.e., the dehumanization of certain groups and individuals) that are analysable statistically but cannot be precisely predicted or controlled.²⁹ After

all, as Molly Amman and J. Reid Meloy point out, Henry II neither participated in, nor ordered, the assassination Thomas Beckett, yet he is widely accepted as being responsible for it when he supposedly said ‘Will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?’.³⁰

But Why Templars in Brazil?

After all we have seen, one thing still needs to be clarified, especially for those readers from outside of Brazil. Most of these political neomedievalisms tend to centre around the figure of the knight/crusader, often being referred to as ‘Templar knights’, and attempting to emulate that order’s iconography. This begs the question: why the Templars? Well, there is a lot that can be said about the popularity of the Templar Order in present-day Brazil.

In fact, there are many ‘Templar Orders’ in modern Brazil, from loosely organized internet communities such as the *Templários da Pátria* to fully structured traditional orders tied to claims of nobility. A large portion of this can be attributed to one of the more traditional forms of Brazilian political medievalism: the Templar founding myth. This idea stems from the foundation of the Order of Christ in Portugal in 1319. This new military order was somewhat of a successor to the Templars in the Iberian Peninsula, inheriting their Portuguese lands and some of their personnel. The new order had deep ties with the Portuguese crown and nobility and, therefore, with their seafaring enterprises from the fifteenth century onwards.³¹ This inspired many conspiracy theories about how the Templar Order secretly survived in Portugal, within the Order of Christ, and using their secrets and treasures managed to jumpstart the Age of Discovery.³²

According to those theories, Brazil was then founded by Templar Knights, and their sacred mission continued here: a new crusade against pagans and heathens. This implicates a true denial of the colonization process, instead choosing to believe that Brazil was part of the Kingdom of Portugal as a territory of the Order of Christ, or in the worlds of self-styled historian Tito Lívio Ferreira:

That’s why he [the king of Portugal] soon baptized it with the name of Province of Santa Cruz, to be administered by the Portuguese Monarchy, independent of the Lusitanian Kingdom. Those fixated by European colonialism do not understand this, much less those limited by the Marxist idiom of historical materialism [...] an empty sophistry like a floating soap bubble. And they are happy to teach that Brazil was a colony, because Marx

is the atheist philosopher of the red economy, that is, of the class struggle, with the weapons of hatred and violence, with iron and fire, without documents.³³

This idea is particularly strong around the city of São Paulo, whose flag still bears the red cross of the Order of Christ (Figure 6.4 below). And it grew in popularity around the early twentieth century as São Paulo consolidated its influence as the economic centre of Brazil.

Because of this, there are many ‘official’ Templar Orders in Brazil today who base their traditions in said inheritance, claiming to be the true descendants of the original order. Within these there are at least four structured ‘Templar Orders’ currently active in Brazil (and potentially many more smaller ones), with some of them even having some international recognition. These are the *Ordo Templum Domini*; the *Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani* O.S.M.T.H. BRASIL: *Grão Priorado de São Jorge*; O.S.M.T.H. *Gran Priorado Brasil: Cavalaria Espiritual São João Batista* (CESJB); *Gran Priorado Templário do Brasil: Cavalaria Espiritual São Francisco de Assis* (GPTB).³⁴ These groups often adopt masonic-like structures and symbols and award their members with titles such as Knight, Dame, Master, and

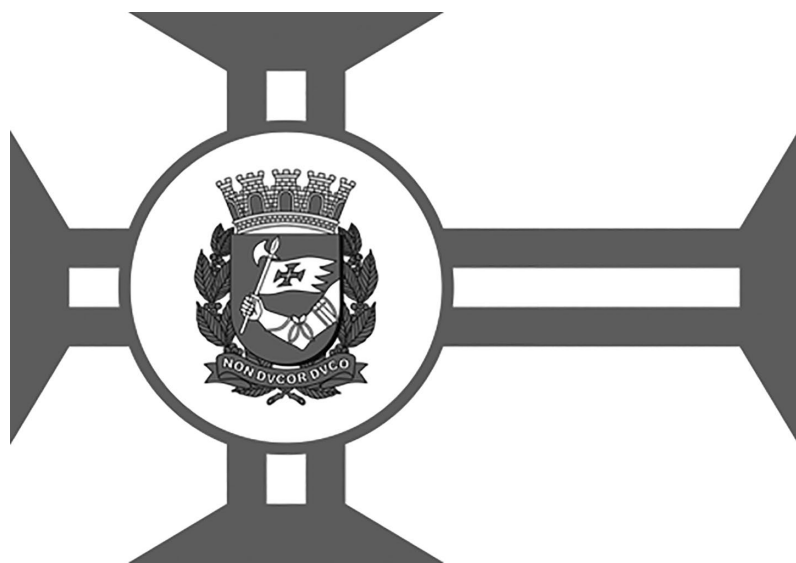


Figure 6.4 The flag of São Paulo city [Wikimedia Commons].

Grandmaster. All of them claim to be the one true representation of the Knights Templar in Brazil, and to be autonomous and independent Orders. They usually do not acknowledge each other.

The myth of a ‘Templar connection’ weighs heavily on the political uses of the Templar imagery here in Brazil, especially in those which we would classify as traditional political medievalisms. These, like the founding myth of São Paulo, or the New Crusade of the TFP, are deeply rooted in the idea that Brazil is, somehow, the inheritor of Western Christian Civilization.³⁵ However, even at their height these are somewhat fringe theories, which might be ingrained in the minds of certain groups but are far from being something most Brazilians would know or even recognize with at first. Therefore, whilst acknowledging its influence within Brazilian political medievalism, one cannot give these Templar conspiracy theories all the credit for the order’s recurrent presence in Brazilian neomedievalisms.

In fact, the Templars are not only popular in Brazil. When dealing with neomedievalisms it is always important to remember that it is essentially a derivative product. Much like meme-culture, neomedievalisms do rely on a wide net of popular references that are required for it to make sense. Also, it is a product of capitalism and therefore bound by its laws of market, demand, and imperialism. Therefore, before looking at the Templars’ popularity in Brazil, one must step back and see the Templars’ popularity in the centres from where most cultural products are exported, especially the USA.

From the Trump electoral campaign in 2016 to the Capitol riot of 2021, the Templars are a popular form of US political medievalism as well. And part of that success can be attributed to the Templars’ status on pop culture, as a successful brand of medievalisms; from books, to movies, to games, be they heroes or villains, the Templars are definitely among the most recognizable (even if completely inaccurate) medieval figures: the *über* knights.

This fascination with the Templar Order, as well as some of the shapes it took over the centuries is discussed in depth in Peter Partner’s *The Murdered Magicians*,³⁶ but for here, suffice to say, that since the Templars are a very popular theme of medievalisms, it is to be expected that said popularity would reflect on how well they can work as an easily recognizable sign for the ‘simulacra’ of neomedievalism. Also, as the quintessential Christian knights, they are often associated with devotion, strictness, and, of course, the Crusades, elements which contribute to the order’s attraction within far-right conservative groups.³⁷

However, it still begs the question: why the Templars? All we have seen so far, in terms of popularity, could be attributed to the Templars’

role as crusaders, but they are far from being the only group associated with the crusades, so why them specifically?

Well, in the case of Brazil, this can be in large part credited to the myths that we have called the ‘Templar connection’, which might make the Templar Order more prominent. After all, their red crosses and the Order of Christ are a frequent presence on school textbooks and most depictions of colonial Brazil, not to mention within the city and the state of São Paulo. As for the wider prevalence of the Templars in pop culture, we can refer again to Peter Partner’s much more in depth, albeit now a little dated, exploration of the subject.

However, there is another key component here, one that ought to be mentioned: the fact that the ‘real’ Templars are all dead and gone, and they have been that way for more than 700 years. This not only contributes to the mysticism of it all, but also makes them the perfect blank-slate archetype to be moulded for one’s ideals and interests. After all, even if grossly misrepresented, there is no rightful or legal owner of the Templar brand to take action against it, which is definitely not the case for all other military orders, such as the Knights Hospitaller, the major successor orders of which operate a joint committee to take legal action against imitation orders.

This point is illustrated by a recent event in Brazil: during a Congress hearing in August 2021 about COVID vaccine overpricing, it was found that one of the investigated companies used the seal of the Knights Hospitaler on their website and in their documentation as if endorsed by them. This resulted in the Order of Malta sending an official note to the Brazilian Congress affirming that they had no connection to said company and had not authorized their brand to be used by it.³⁸

Political Neomedievalism: A Dangerous Game

So, going back to our central point, political medievalism is clearly not a new phenomenon in neither Brazil nor the wider world. However, these more recent manifestations of ‘alt-right Templars’, as in the case of the *Lux Institute*, and the anonymous protester on Independence Day 2021, are, in a way, a new phenomenon within Brazil. Or at least new in terms of its popularization and prominence outside very specific niches such as the TFP, and also on how its characteristics are much more fitted to the subcategory of neomedievalism than to that of traditional political medievalism.

Although both episodes – with their respective costumes being much more adequate to a street carnival than to any historical Middle

Ages – may certainly seem to us like childish games and inexpressive daydreams, they are nonetheless a strong symptom of a much deeper phenomenon. The figure of the crusader, especially the Templar, appears to be increasingly consolidated within the national political imaginary,³⁹ and along with it we have a new resurgence³⁹ of the Middle Ages as a stage for political disputes between different parts of the political spectrum. All of this in a country that, as we have established above, has no historical Middle Ages to speak of.

This political neomedievalism also directly translates another global phenomenon: the recent rise of a new conservative right-wing (often called the alt-right or alternative right) to power and the growing prominence of the media and forms of virtual language in the world of traditional politics. This phenomenon has as its major landmark the election of Donald J. Trump to the presidency of the USA in 2016,⁴⁰ and which produced its own neomedieval imagery boom during the campaign and even after.

Finally, it would be utterly naive to simply compare a meme of Jair Bolsonaro depicted as a Knight Templar to similar representations of any Western European leaders, and just assume that they are somewhat equivalent. Whilst the latter is appealing to a local nationalism and past, and an almost ancestral sense of belonging, the former is clearly not. Therefore, a post-colonial perspective becomes pivotal in the studies of Brazilian political medievalisms, to identify the Middle Ages as a foreign construct.

Thus, from September 7, 2021, to the *Lux's* Templar, passing through the various Brazilian web pages full of medieval 'political memes' – including the 'progressive' ones like André Dahmer's Medieval Brazil⁴¹ – we see a Middle Ages full of completely anti-historical elements and connections. Templars burning witches, knights in sunglasses battling communism, none of these have any real bearing on the historical period known as the medieval. As historians and scholars, we know this very well; however, many of these memes' creators and overall 'Internet neo-Templars' are likely aware of it as well. This disconnection from the 'real' historical past should not be simply attributed to ignorance; on the contrary, it is fundamentally linked to the nature of such neomedieval contents, through which both progressives and conservatives dispute the meaning of a so-called medieval past that both wish to mobilize as a contemporary political instrument, and for which historical accuracy becomes a secondary, or even non-existent, concern.

There is methodological value in the distinction between political medievalism and neomedievalism, especially in the Americas, as there is a need to rethink scholarly approaches to certain uses of the past

that tend to be more light-hearted/loose by their very nature (such as memes), treating them more seriously and not dismissing them as simple ignorance. And to understand that, as neomedievalisms often do, they care very little about the authenticity of the ‘medieval’ in them, and perhaps so should we. Instead choosing to focus on their more contemporary memetic elements and the many layers that detach them from the so-called Middle Ages, such as that of colonialism in the case of Brazil. After all, understanding these nuances might provide us with a broader grasp of how this ‘playful’ content might stochastically lead to very grim consequences.⁴²

There is no such thing as ‘Medieval Brazil’. The American Continent had no medieval past, and incorporating this element from our colonizers’ history is, in a way, a perpetuation of the colonial discourse. Essentially, we would then be a little bit of Portugal in the Americas. Thus, thinking about the Middle Ages in Brazil, within the perspective of *longue durée*, can lead to dangerous situations in which fragments of ‘primitive’ Europe still live in the Badlands of our country. A place where, in the seventeenth century, ‘Knights Templar’ could crusade against indigenous infidels and communists. A land trapped in a different/foreign temporality, living in a time already lived by other parts of the world.

Notes

- 1 Frederic Mauro, *Le XVIe. Siècle Européen. Aspects Économiques* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), p. 352; Ruggiero Romano, ‘American Feudalism’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 64:1 (1984), p. 132; Luis Weckmann, *La Herencia Medieval del Brasil* (Mexico City, 1993).
- 2 An example of this periodization can be found at Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *História geral da civilização brasileira* (São Paulo, 1985).
- 3 See Base Nacional Curricular Comum. MEC, 2015, pp. 415–21, basenacionalcomum.mec.gov.br/images/relatorios-analiticos/BNCC-APRESENTACAO.pdf [accessed 20 January 2022]; Base Nacional Curricular Comum. MEC, 2018, basenacionalcomum.mec.gov.br/images/BNCC_EI_EF_110518_versaofinal_site.pdf [accessed 20 January 2022].
- 4 Conducted since 2012, the Youth and History project in Mercosur is a multi-institutional initiative by Latin American researchers dedicated to making a quantitative survey on historical awareness, political culture, and learning perceptions of young people in the Mercosur countries; *Parecer para o texto preliminar do componente curricular História para a Base Nacional Comum Curricular* by Luíz Fernando Cerri was one of the nine opinions that based the 2015 BNCC’s decision. Unfortunately, on the BNCC website, the opinion files are no longer available. Some of the replies to the aforementioned decision include a letter from the Brazilian Association of Medieval Studies (ABREM), web.archive.org/web/20160116063806/http://www.abrem.org.br/images/Carta_da_ABREM_sobre_a_BNCC.pdf.

- 5 Daniel Wollenberg, 'Defending the West: Cultural Racism and Pan-Europeanism on the Far-Right', *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 5:3 (2014), pp. 308–19.
- 6 Carol Robinson and Pamela Clements, 'Living with Neomedievalism', *Studies in Medievalism XVIII: Defining Medievalism(s) II*, ed. Karl Fugelso (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 55–75; Carol L. Robinson and Pamela Clements, *Neomedievalism in the Media: Essays on Film, Television, and Electronic Games* (Lampeter, 2012).
- 7 KellyAnn Fitzpatrick, '(Re)producing (Neo)medievalisms', in *Studies in Medievalism XIX: Defining Neomedievalism(s) II*, ed. Karl Fugelso (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 11–20.
- 8 Richard Utz, 'Past, Present and Neo', *Humanistic Perspectives in a Technological World*, ed. Richard Utz (Atlanta, 2014).
- 9 Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Abingdon, 2001), pp. 146–78.
- 10 Nicole Loraux, 'Éloge de l'anachronisme en histoire', *Espace Temps*, 87–88 (2005), pp. 127–39.
- 11 Olav Hammer and Karen Swartz, 'Ancient Aliens', in *Handbook of UFO Religions*, ed. Ben Zeller (Leiden, 2021), pp. 151–77.
- 12 Andrew B. R. Elliott, 'Bad History and Contemporary Medievalism', *YouTube*, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fWx4V1i0ps> [accessed 20 January 2022].
- 13 Michael Soha and Zachary J. McDowell, 'Monetizing a Meme: YouTube, Content ID, and the Harlem Shake', *Social Media+ Society*, 2:1 (2016), pp. 1–12; Jakub Nowak, 'Internet Meme as Meaningful Discourse: Towards a Theory of Multiparticipant Popular Online Content', *Central European Journal of Communication*, 9:16 (2016), pp. 73–89.
- 14 Amy Kaufman and Paul Sturtevant, 'The Devil's Historians [Interview and round table] Linhas-UFRRJ', *Youtube*, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSPnKlfqm6c&t=23s> [accessed 20 January 2022].
- 15 Daniel Wollenberg, 'The New Knighthood: Terrorism and the Medieval', *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies*, 5:1 (2014), pp. 21–33.
- 16 Lux Brasil, 'O cavaleiro da Lux convida você!...', *Youtube*, 4 March 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTQMu4TzoG4> [accessed 22 January 2022].
- 17 'Lux Brasil', <https://luxbrasil.org.br/> [accessed 21 January 2022].
- 18 Cleber Lourenço, 'Uma brincadeira macabra: Instituto que gravou o "templário" brasileiro tem nazista em suas fileiras', *Forum*, 6 March 2020, <https://revistaforum.com.br/blogs/ocolonista/uma-brincadeira-macabra-instituto-que-gravou-o-templario-brasileiro-tem-nazista-em-suas-fileiras/> [accessed 22 January 2022].
- 19 'Quem somos', <https://luxbrasil.org.br/quem-somos/> [accessed 22 January 2022].
- 20 '1.png', <https://luxbrasil.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/1.png> [accessed 22 January 2022].
- 21 Thais Monique Costa Moura, 'Um cavaleiro medieval em solo brasileiro: usos da idade média pela organização política Lux Brasil'. *Ist International Conference Global Medievalisms*, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jA_-79RdO_w&list=PLY_CJSkFcUSrSE2ZFVO-xBvR-9z7Qk2DW&index=12 [accessed 20 January 2022].

- 22 Andrew Fishman, 'Jair Bolsonaro's Pro-Coup Rally: September 7 Is Shaping Up to Be Brazil's January 6', *The Intercept*, 5 September 2021, <https://theintercept.com/2021/09/05/bolsonaro-september-7-brazil-trump-january-6/> [accessed 20 January 2022].
- 23 Cf. the many neomedieval and Templar images on the group's Facebook page: 'Templários da Patria', *Facebook*, <https://www.facebook.com/TemplariosDaPatria> [accessed 25 January 2022].
- 24 Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, *Revolução e contra-revolução* (1959); Roberto de Mattei, *O Cruzado do século XX Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira* (Porto, 1997).
- 25 Carlile Lanzieri Junior, *Cavaleiros de cola, papel e plástico: sobre os usos do passado medieval na contemporaneidade* (Campinas, 2021).
- 26 Alain Badiou, *Ethics – An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London, 2001), p. 74.
- 27 J. T. Burman, (2012), 'The Misunderstanding of Memes: Biography of an Unscientific Object, 1976–1999', *Perspectives on Science*, 20:1 (2012), pp. 75–104; Susan Blackmore, 'Consciousness in Meme Machines', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 10:4–5 (2003), pp. 19–30; Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford, 1976).
- 28 Ramón Spaaij, 'The Enigma of Lone Wolf Terrorism: An Assessment', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33:9 (2010), p. 866; Jacob Ware, *Testament to Murder: The Violent Far-Right's Increasing Use of Terrorist Manifestos* (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2020).
- 29 Jakub Drmola and Tomáš Hubík, 'Stochastic Modeling of Non-linear Terrorism Dynamics', *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, 18:3 (2021), pp. 251–81. Scott, Keith. 'Ha Ha Only Serious: Irony in Information Warfare and the Comedy-Cloaked Extremism'. *ICCWS 2021 16th International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security* (2021).
- 30 Molly Amman and J. Reid Meloy, 'Stochastic Terrorism', *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 15:5 (2021), pp. 2–13. Contemporary chronicles disagree on what exactly Henry said, but that 'he uttered some such words is, however, beyond doubt': W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (London, 1973), p. 508.
- 31 For some historiographical views of the order's role in the Age of Discovery, see Bruno Tadeu Salles, 'A administração do Infante D. Henrique na Ordem de Cristo e os inícios da expansão marítima portuguesa no século XV (1420–1460)', *Revista Tempo de Conquista*, 4 (2008), pp. 1–25; *ibid.*, 'A monarquia portuguesa nas discussões sobre o fim dos Templários e a fundação da Ordem de Cristo: aspectos das relações de poder entre D. Dinis, as Ordens Militares e o Papado (1314–1326)', *Revista Tempo de Conquista*, 1 (2007), pp. 1–15.
- 32 As seen in Tito Lívio Ferreira, *A Ordem De Cristo E O Brasil* (1980); Thales Veiga, *Histórias da Pátria Paulista* (2019).
- 33 Tito Lívio Ferreira, *A Ordem De Cristo E O Brasil* (1980), p. 53.
- 34 See Ordem Templaria Do Brasil, 'Ser Templário', https://templariosbrasil.org.br/avada_portfolio/ser-templario/ [accessed 20 January 2022]; O.S.M.T.H. Grão Priorado Brasil, 'O.S.M.T.H. Brasil', <https://www.osmthbrasil.com/>; Ordem dos Cavaleiros Templários Gran Priorato Templário do Brasil, 'Ordem dos Cavaleiros Templários – Home', <https://www.granprioratotemplario.com.br/> [accessed 20 January 2022]; Ordem do Templo, Gran Priorato Templário do Brasil São Francisco de Assis – GPTB, 'Cavaleiros Templários do Brasil – Ordem do Templo Brasil', <https://www.ordemdotemplabrasil.com/?lightbox=cf4t> [accessed 20 January 2022].

- 35 Plínio de Oliveira, *Aspectos fundamentais da nobreza numa civilização cristã Catolicismo*, N° 549, Setembro de 1996.
- 36 Peter Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth* (Oxford, 1982).
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- 38 See the transcription of the official hearing, between timestamps 14:40 and 14:44, <https://www25.senado.leg.br/web/atividade/notas-taquigraficas/-notas/r/10111>.
- 39 Raoul Girardet, *Mitos e mitologias políticas* (São Paulo, 1987).
- 40 Lise Esther Herman, *Trumping the Mainstream* (Abingdon, 2019).
- 41 André Dahmer, 'O Brasil Medieval. Um fio com algumas tiras da série.', *Twitter*, <https://twitter.com/malvados/status/1422572618587283456> [accessed 19 January 2022].
- 42 Keith Scott, 'Ha Ha Only Serious: Irony in Information Warfare and the Comedy-Cloaked Extremism'. *ICCWS 2021 16th International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security* (2021).

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