

# MEDIEVAL FANTASY SYMPOSIUM

International Conference  
Mielno-Unieście, 22-25 September 2019

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Dear Colleague,

You are cordially invited to the seventh Medieval Fantasy Symposium, organised by the Faculty of Humanities at the Koszalin University of Technology, which will be held in Mielno-Unieście between 22 and 25 September 2019. Medieval Fantasy Symposia aim at bringing together specialists in the areas of medieval and fantasy literature, in particular those who seek to find cultural connections between the numerous supernatural elements in the literary output of the Middle Ages (e.g. *Beowulf*, Norse and Celtic mythologies, the Arthurian cycle) and modern tales in the fantasy genre which are set in different quasi-medieval worlds (e.g. *The Lord of the Rings* or *A Song of Ice and Fire*). The scope of the symposia is not, however, strictly limited to the world of literature, as it also embraces the many fields of artistic expression including the fine and cinematic arts. In conjunction with the conference, organised will be the First Inklings Seminar, an annual event of the newly-founded Polish Inklings Society *INKLIGATAL*.

## “LOOKING OUT UPON THE SEA”: MARITIME IMAGINATION, THEMES, SUBTHEMES AND MOTIFS IN MEDIEVAL AND MEDIEVAL-INSPIRED LITERATURE

In his 1936 lecture on *Beowulf*, subsequently published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* as “Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics”, J.R.R. Tolkien famously likens the sea to the seemingly boundless horizons of human imagination (“from the top of that tower the man had been able to look out upon the sea”). Seventy-five years later, Michael C. Drout argues that “a glimpse of that sea, whatever exactly it is – the sea [which] surrounds fairyland that a character might circumnavigate, the actual sea, memory, the past and future, the afterlife – is what we readers, writers and scholars are seeking”. Given the proximity of the Baltic and the fact that various maritime-themed discussions have indeed occurred during the past symposia, we have decided that the 2019 conference will focus on various concepts (cultural, religious, philosophical and other) often figuratively associated with the sea. It could, therefore, cover all sorts of texts of undisputedly medieval, or even pre-medieval, origin (myths, poems, sagas, legend, chronicles etc.) and post-medieval fantasy (including historical fantasy) in which the sea plays a fundamental, main or at least significant role. The main thematic areas will include the following:

1. The Baltic Sea in medieval literature (poems, sagas, chronicles and other texts of literary and historical importance etc.)
2. The sea voyage narratives and their associated aesthetics in ancient, medieval as well as modern (fantasy) literature
3. The sea and its symbolism in religion and mythology (sublimity, infinity, primeval powers, the origin of life etc.)
4. The power, beauty, cruelty and mystery of the sea in folk imagination, legends and other popular tales from all over the world
5. The theological significance of the sea or other navigable waters in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis
6. The nautical and maritime themes in Tolkien’s *Legendarium*, Lewis’ *Narnia* books and Le Guin’s *Earthsea* cycle

Individual papers on any topic within the above-mentioned (or closely-related) areas should take 20 minutes, followed by 10-minute discussion. Participants are invited to submit their proposals ([medieval.fantasy.symposium@gmail.com](mailto:medieval.fantasy.symposium@gmail.com)) in the form of 200-word abstracts by 31 May 2019. Notices of acceptance will be sent in mid-June. Selected essays relating to the works of Tolkien, Lewis and the other Inklings will be published in the forthcoming academic journal *Eucaastrophe*. The other papers could be collected into a separate volume (medieval literature) or come out in the academic journal *Symbolae Europaeae* (fantasy).

The conference will be held in the beautiful seaside resort of Mielno-Unieście, situated right between the Baltic Sea and Lake Jamno. The conference rooms are equipped with audio-visual facilities, including data projectors and laptop computers. The conference fee – covering the cost of participation, accommodation, food and drink, conference materials, coffee breaks, evening reception, and future publication – will be 120 EUR/490 PLN (95 EUR/390 PLN for PhD students).

Koszalin University of Technology  
Faculty of Humanities  
ul. Eugeniusza Kwiatkowskiego 6E  
75-343 Koszalin, Poland

Conference Coordinators:  
dr Izabela Dixon  
dr Paul McNamara  
dr Łukasz Neubauer