

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE SONGS OF THE SPHERES

Lewis, Tolkien and the Overlapping Realms of their Imaginations

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It is rather common knowledge amongst the scholars of both Lewis and Tolkien that, although the former played quite a significant role in encouraging the latter to first publish *The Hobbit* and then to complete *The Lord of the Rings*, the creator of Middle-earth was never able (or, it seems, even willing) to appreciate the stories set in the land of Narnia. The actual reason(s) may now appear to be somewhat obscure (Tolkien is not known to have been particularly vocal about the matter), but, as he once remarked in a letter to Eileen Edgar (1972), his dislike of Lewis's septology resulted simply from "a difference of taste", doubtlessly caused by Tolkien's well-known aversion to allegory (and religious-didactic allegory in particular).

This, however, does not mean that Narnia and Middle-earth, the fantasy worlds they created and, subsequently, began to be chiefly associated with, have absolutely nothing in common. After all, leaving aside (for the moment) the two writers' worldbuilding techniques and the more (Lewis) or less (Tolkien) easily discernible religious themes that underlie their works of fiction, the major sources of their literary inspiration were quite often the same and included an impressively wide range of works, from those of Homer, Plato and Virgil, through the mythological and legendary tales of Germanic and Celtic provenance, the Bible and other Christian texts, to the Victorian and Edwardian novels of Edith Nesbit, Kenneth Grahame or William Morris.

To celebrate the approaching seventieth anniversary of the publication of Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (16 October 1950), the editors of the forthcoming volume welcome the contributions that will aim at critically reflecting upon the similarities and, no less importantly, the differences in the

two writers' approaches to the works that came to impregnate their vivid imaginations. The thematic axis of the proposed papers should, therefore, be Lewis's best known work of fiction, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, either as a whole or as a selection of individual volumes and/or episodes set in the World Beyond the Wardrobe, always, however, in connection with Tolkien's own (sub)creative projects. The papers may therefore deal with such diverse fields of academic research as literature, theology, philosophy etc. (or, of course, a combination of some of them).

Please send a short (c. 250 words) abstract of your proposed paper (together with a short biographical note) by 31 October 2019 to lukasz_neubauer@poczta.onet.pl. Notices of acceptance will be sent out in mid-November. We expect the final versions of the papers to be submitted by 31 May 2020.