Sigrid Schottenius Cullhed

Astrid Lindgren and the Nightingale's Song

Abstract: This article analyzes the nightingale motif in Swedish author Astrid Lindgren's short story "Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal" ("My Nightingale is Singing"), first published in her collection Sunnanäng *(*The Red Bird*, 1959). The lineage of the motif is traced back to ancient Greek folklore, where the nightingale's lament symbolizes maternal grief over the loss of a child. It is argued that Lindgren's story can be interpreted as a modern reimagining of a specific strand in the mythological tradition surrounding the rape of Philomela and the infanticide committed by Procne to avenge her sister. Lindgren alludes to a version of the story found in fable collections, which centers on the reunion of the two sisters after their metamorphosis into birds. In the Greek myth, especially as it was interpreted by Romantic writers, a bereaved mother is transformed into the nightingale, eternally lamenting her loss and thereby transfiguring human suffering into beauty. In Lindgren's story, Malin longs to bring beauty to the bleak world of the orphanage, first miraculously causing a linden tree to grow in its yard, but ultimately giving her spirit to the tree, where it is heard in the song of a nightingale among its branches. "Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal" thus represents Lindgren's innovative culmination of a long fable tradition with pre-classical origins, where the child becomes the agent of transformation.*

Keywords: Astrid Lindgren, "My Nightingale is Singing", Greek mythology, nightingale motif, transformation in folklore, motherhood

©2024 S. Schottenius Cullhed. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 License (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), permitting all use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. Any included images may be published under different terms. Please see image captions for copyright details. Citation: *Barnboken – tidskrift för barnlitteraturforskning/Barnboken: Journal of Children's Literature Research*, Vol. 47, 2024 http://dx.doi.org/10.14811/clr.v47.933

Astrid Lindgren’s short story “Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal” (“My Nightingale is Singing”), from her fairy-tale collection *Sunnanäng* (*The Red Bird,* 1959), is often recognized as her most lyrical and darkest tale.[1] The four stories in the collection incorporate elements of fantasy in their tragic portrayal of childhood in impoverished nineteenth-century Sweden. Initially, *Sunnanäng* struggled to find a broad audience, partly due to its departure from the more light-hearted mood of books such as *Pippi Långstrump* (*Pippi Longstocking*, 1945) and *Barnen i Bullerbyn* (*The Children of Noisy Village*, 1947).[2] Critics at the time found the stories overly sentimental and bourgeois (Edström, *Astrid Lindgren* 160–163, *Kvällsdoppet* 20–25; Wistrand 163–164; Andersen 283). Today, however, the collection is recognized for its role in revitalizing the Swedish fairy-tale tradition while reflecting Lindgren’s more melancholic sensibility and moments of subtle metatextual self-commentary (Holmberg 69–70; Bak 23; Edström, *Astrid Lindgren*, *Kvällsdoppet*; Nauwerck).

“Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal” recounts the story of Malin (Maria in the English translation), who is orphaned at age eight as her parents succumb to tuberculosis. She finds herself disheartened in the Norka parish poorhouse, where “vackert och roligt” (“beauty and fun”; Lindgren, *Sunnanäng* 32; Crampton 6) are completely lacking.[3] One day, while seeking alms at the parsonage, Malin overhears a story being read to the family’s young children. She is struck by the beauty and rhythm of the words: “*Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal*” (“My linden plays, my nightingale is singing”; 37; 14). The story that Malin overhears is the Swedish wonder tale “Lilla Rosa och Långa Leda” (Little Rose and Long Leda):[4] The beauty of the princess Lilla Rosa stirs jealousy in her stepmother who plots to have her killed. After surviving an attempt on her life at sea, she finds herself on an island where the song of a nightingale in a linden tree eases her solitude. She marries a prince and they have children, but the stepmother learns of her survival and transforms her into a goose. Upon being found by fishermen she asks:

> Spelar min lind?
> Sjunger min näktergal?
> Gråter min lille son?
> Gör min herre sig någonsin glad?
> (Geijerstam 31)
>
> (Does my linden play?
> Does my nightingale sing?
> Does my little son weep?
> Does my lord ever rejoice?) [5]

Lilla Rosa is rescued and reunited with husband and child; the linden plays and the nightingale sings again.

When Malin hears these lines in the parish kitchen, she is filled with an intense desire for a playing linden tree and a singing nightingale. She discovers a pea under a resident's bed and plants it in the poorhouse's potato field. Miraculously, the seed grows into a linden tree and yet it makes no sound: "Den stod i potatislandet vacker och tyst och var död" ("There it stood in the potato field, beautiful, silent and dead"; Lindgren, *Sunnanäng* 44; Crampton 24). Disheartened and confronted with the looming threat of the silent linden being cut down to make way for the potatoes, Malin contemplates sacrificing her life for the cause. The next morning, the inhabitants of the poorhouse awaken to melodies streaming from the linden's branches, harmonizing with the song of a nightingale. Malin is nowhere to be found, but one of the residents, Jocke Kis – a man tormented by voices in his head – hears Malin's voice whispering among the notes: "Det är jag … Malin!" ("This is Maria!"; 46; 29).

The scene where Malin overhears a story in the parsonage parallels an autobiographical memory of Astrid Lindgren. Lindgren once recalled being deeply captivated when she overheard a fairy tale recounted by the daughter of a local cowherd (Lindgren, "Det började"; Edström, *Astrid Lindgren* 38–50). Accordingly, Vivi Edström reads "Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal" as metafiction about the power of imagination and the conditions of artistry. Krzysztof Bak situates this and other instances of intricate textual interweaving in *Sunnanäng* within this specific phase of Lindgren's development, marking her progression from emulating folk tales to incorporating more complex formal elements characteristic of literary fairy tales.[6] Malin Nauwerck highlights the magical interplay between listening and creative imagination in *Sunnanäng*, as well as the depiction of childhood as a paradisiacal state (205–206).

As for the specific use of "Lilla Rosa och Långa Leda," Monika Osberghaus has argued that Lindgren's omission of the two last questions in the original text – "Does my little son weep? / Does my lord ever rejoice?" – carries autobiographical significance, alluding to the author's personal experience of giving up her newborn child as an unwed mother in rural Sweden in 1926. Even though Lindgren herself never mentioned this in interviews about "Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal," Osberghaus suggests that the truncated quotation epitomizes the tragic intensity that permeates numerous works of the author.

Be that as it may, there is a clear contrast between the happy ending of the fairy tale and Lindgren's short story, between Malin's

self-sacrificing metamorphosis and Lilla Rosa's restoration. Edström draws parallels between Malin's transformation and metamorphoses as images of escape and liberation in Classical mythology and folk tales, referencing Ovid's tale of Daphne and Swedish folklore adaptations of the dryad motif (*Astrid Lindgren* 49, 130–135; *Kvällsdoppet* 26). Sten Wistrand connects Malin's self-sacrifice to Christian martyrdom, reading the story as a romantic tale of the artist's sacrifice for the sake of art and beauty (185–186). Yet an unexplored and central intertext to Malin's metamorphosis is the tale of Procne and Philomela, which evolved from the archaic Greek tale of the nightingale. What is the meaning of the nightingale in Lindgren's short story, and can a comparison with the earliest written reference to this myth offer new insights in respect to the story? To explore this, I will examine a selection of fable texts rooted in the archaic myth that share key elements with Lindgren's use of the motif.

Theoretically, this article draws on anthropological concepts of myth as a dynamic and evolving process, a view shaped by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. For long, early renditions of myths were seen as their most authentic forms, while later versions were regarded as reinterpretations or adaptations. Lévi-Strauss challenged this notion by emphasizing the functions played by myths in human cultures, viewing them not as static narratives but as living entities – dynamic processes that actively organize and communicate human experience. From this perspective, every iteration of a myth contributes to its unfolding narrative fabric.

Myths are often intuitively grasped within their respective cultures, a phenomenon that Lévi-Strauss attributed to their construction around core relational clusters, which he termed "mythemes." These mythemes convey specific meanings in relation to a particular myth while preserving its essence (Lévi-Strauss 233–236). For example, the Nightingale myth involves such mythemes as a mother's infanticide, her transformation into a nightingale, and her ensuing melancholic song. These elements make the myth recognizable across various genres, media, historical periods, and cultural contexts, allowing it to continually renew itself through each individual manifestation of these core elements. Structural analysis, as a methodology, recognizes and examines these diverse versions (Lévi-Strauss 240). From this perspective, Lindgren's short story is as important for understanding the Nightingale myth as an ancient Greek folktale. The article explores these topics through a historical and comparative approach, focusing on intertextual connections and the evolution of motifs.

The Nightingale Mother

In Archaic Greek traditions, the nightingale's song symbolizes a mother's grief and regret for her lost child, forming the foundational mythemes of the Nightingale myth (Fontenrose; Mihailov). The earliest version of this myth appears in the nineteenth song of Homer's *Odyssey* (c. 7th century). After two decades of war and wandering the seas, Odysseus finally returns to Ithaca, where his wife Penelope has endured relentless hardship. Hundreds of suitors have invaded the royal palace, plotting to kill her son Telemachus. Disguised as a beggar, Odysseus listens as Penelope shares of her longing for her husband's return, and growing fears for her son's future. Lying awake throughout the night, her restless thoughts seem to follow the mournful strains of the nightingale's lament:

> ὡς δ' ὅτε Πανδαρέου κούρη, χλωρηῒς ἀηδών,
> καλὸν ἀείδησιν ἔαρος νέον ἱσταμένοιο
> δενδρέων ἐν πετάλοισι καθεζομένη πυκινοῖσιν,
> ἥ τε θαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυδευκέα φωνήν
> παῖδ' ὀλοφυρομένη Ἴτυλον φίλον, ὅν ποτε χαλκῷ
> κτεῖνε δι' ἀφραδίας, κοῦρον Ζήθοιο ἄνακτος,
> ὣς καὶ ἐμοὶ δίχα θυμὸς ὀρώρεται ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.
> (*Odyssey* 19.520–527, transl. in Wilson)
>
> (As when the daughter of Pandareus,
> the pale gray nightingale, sings beautifully
> when spring has come, and sits among the leaves
> that crowd the trees, and warbles up and down
> a symphony of sound, in mourning for
> her son by Zethus, darling Itylus,
> whom she herself had killed in ignorance,
> with bronze. Just so, my mind pulls in two directions—)

Penelope's emotional dilemma – whether to continue to endure her current plight or remarry to secure the welfare of her son and household – mirrors the fluctuating melodies of the nightingale. An ancient commentary, citing a fragment from the historian Pherecydes, traces the myth's origins to Aëdon, the daughter of King Pandareos of Lydia. Consumed by jealousy over her sister-in-law Niobe's many children, Aëdon attempts to kill one of Niobe's sons but, in the dim light, mistakenly kills her own son, Itylos. Overcome by grief, Aëdon begs the gods to transform her into a bird, giving rise to the nightingale's sorrowful song.[7]

The earliest written renditions of the Nightingale myth explore themes of motherhood, fertility, envy, jealousy, errant violence, and the tragic loss of a child. In this form, the motif appears in Aeschylus's tragedy *Agamemnon* (*c*. 460 BCE), where the chorus interprets the nightingale's song as an elegy for Itys (1140–1145). The myth was most fully developed during the height of the Athenian Empire in Sophocles' tragedy *Tereus* (*c*. 420 BCE), which transformed the Nightingale myth – or perhaps a specific otherwise unknown Athenian reiteration of it – into the story of Procne and Philomela's revenge on King Tereus (*Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* 581–95b).[8] Here, the nightingale's song, once an expression of maternal sorrow for a lost child, becomes intertwined with themes of Athenian geopolitical conflicts with Thrace, with hubris, justice, power, and the dynamics of male dominance and female suffering. While Sophocles' play is known primarily through scattered quotations and allusions, and recently also from papyrus fragments (Sommerstein et al. 160–173; Finglass), the story is more widely known through Ovid's extensive retelling of the myth in the *Metamorphoses* (6.424–674), published in 8 CE. Ovid's narrative, although similar to what can be reconstructed from Sophocles' play, also contains alterations, which appear to be his own. Instead of emphasizing Procne's sacrifice, the Roman poet focuses on the prelude of the story and on elements that would have occurred off-stage in the Greek tragedy: Procne's rape and mutilation, and her indictment of Tereus against all odds through her weaving. In ancient Greece, the nightingale was associated with the mournful songs of Aëdon, whose lamentation for the loss of her son is heard in its languid melodies, while the swallow's chirping was linked to sexual violence and the silencing of Philomela after her rape and mutilation (Sommerstein; Mancuso, *Der Prokne-Mythos*; Schottenius Cullhed). However, in the Roman tradition, the bird identities became interchangeable and were eventually reversed.[9] This shift marks a significant evolution in the myth, where the nightingale no longer mourns a child but embodies Philomela's suffering after Tereus' rape, which has influenced the myth's legacy and cultural impact.

The Fable of the Swallow and the Nightingale

Alongside the canonical versions by Sophocles and Ovid, the ancient nightingale tale was also preserved in the Aesopian fable tradition. The earliest written fable about the swallow and the nightingale was composed by the Syrian poet Babrius and included in his work

Mythiamboi Aisopeioi (*c.* AD 100). In the preface, Babrius claims to have adorned Aesop's fables with the blossoms of his Muses, offering them to his readers as "sugared, poetic honeycomb" (qtd. in Adrados 103). A concise prose version of Babrius' fable has also survived, written in the 2nd century by a young student in Palmyra (112–114). Originally inscribed on a wax tablet, this student's abridged version was later published as an Aesopian fable. Babrius' *Mythiamboi* quickly secured a place in the Hellenistic educational system with the poems widely used in school curricula throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Adrados 112–114; Easterling 142–143; Laes; Lerer 35–56).

In Babrius' fable, a dialogue unfolds between a swallow and a nightingale. The swallow, having departed from her agricultural community, finds the nightingale deep in the forest, lamenting her son Itys and the cruel fate that ended his life prematurely. When the swallow urges her to return to the city, the nightingale refuses, expressing her preference for solitude:

> ἔα με πέτραις ἐμμένειν ἀοικήτοις,
> καὶ μή μ᾽ ὀρεινῆς ὀργάδος σὺ χωρίσσῃς.
> μετὰ τὰς Ἀθήνας ἄνδρα καὶ πόλιν φεύγω·
> οἶκος δέ μοι πᾶς κἀπίμιξις ἀνθρώπων
> λύπην παλαιῶν συμφορῶν ἀναξαίνει.
> (Babrius 12.20–24, transl. in Perry)
>
> (Let me stay on amid these desert rocks, nor take me from this mountain grove away. Since Athens, I shun my husband and the city. Every house I see of men and every human contact harrows and renews the painful wounds of fortune long ago)

The moral in Babrius' fable reminds the reader of how individuals scarred by severe injustices, be they victims or perpetrators, often seek solace in isolation. An appended epimythium, a four-line moral conclusion, emphasizes that wisdom, song, and solitude offer some relief for those who have suffered humiliation, while facing those who remind them of their former prosperity can be unbearable (Vaio 36). While the swallow is eager to restore the bond with her sister, the nightingale finds it impossible. Babrius' poem accentuates the musical aspect of the myth; the nightingale yearns for nothing but solitude and song.

Babrius' fable was revitalized in the modern era, when Jean de La Fontaine reinterpreted it in his poem "Philomèle et Procné," part of his twelve-book anthology published between 1668 and 1694.[10]

This fable follows the structural framework of Babrius' narrative but incorporates character names from the classical versions of the myth by Sophocles and Ovid and adapts the post-classical role reversal where Philomela becomes the nightingale and Procne the swallow. The poem begins with the swallow finding her sister, Philomela, encouraging her to leave her solitary refuge, arguing that her beautiful song should not be wasted on the wilderness. Procne warns that the woods might revive memories of Tereus, given the similarity of the setting to where he assaulted Philomela:

> *Aussi bien, en voyant les bois,*
> *Sans cesse il vous souvient que Térée autrefois*
> *Parmi des demeures pareilles*
> *Exerça sa fureur sur vos divins appas*;
> (Collinet, La Fontaine, fable 3.15)
>
> (Indeed, upon seeing the woods, you are constantly reminded that Tereus, once, in such a dwelling as these, unleashed his fury on your divine charms)[11]

However, Philomela insists that it is precisely the memory of his heinous act – "*un si cruel outrage*" (such a cruel outrage) – that prevents her from rejoining society, as the sight of people only intensifies her bitter memories. While Procne's life continues, time has come to a halt for Philomela. La Fontaine adapts the conventional reading of the nightingale's seclusion and self-imposed solitude as signs of inconsolable grief to being instead symptomatic of trauma (Gutwirth 111–114; Chatelain 119–134; Avian).[12]

In the fable tradition following La Fontaine, the Romantic philosopher and author Johann Gottfried Herder reinterprets the fable in *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* (*Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*, 1792/1793–1797). Herder adds a dimension by reflecting not only on the nightingale's song but also on its audience. He suggests that the words behind the nightingale's tune can be heard only by a select few with sensitive souls, and that its melody has the power to soften the hearts of those willing to listen (Herder in Schrimpf 129.[13]

In the fable tradition represented by Babrius, La Fontaine, and Herder, the nightingale rejects reconciliation with its past, and its song becomes an expression of sublimated suffering.

Lindgren's Tale and the Nightingale Tradition

In "Spelar min lind, sjunger min näktergal," Astrid Lindgren reinterprets the ancient Nightingale myth, weaving together elements of Greek folklore and Romantic symbolism. While the original myth centers on a grieving mother transformed into a nightingale after losing her child, Romantic interpretations later recast this metamorphosis as a symbol of human suffering redeemed through art and beauty. Lindgren draws on this tradition but shifts the focus to the child, Malin, whose sacrifice brings beauty to the poorhouse's inhabitants and embodies unconditional devotion to the transcendental ideal of beauty. In the glory of the poetic words she overhears, "försvann fattigstugans hela armod och elände" ("all the want and misery of the poorhouse vanished"; Lindgren 37; Crampton 15). As Herder's nightingale sings only for tender hearts, only Malin hears the calling of aesthetic values in the bleak world of poverty and understands that the sacrifice is necessary:

> Och då kom det för henne, att om hon kunde ge sin ande åt det döda trädet, så skulle liv strömma in i de gröna små bladen och de fina små grenarna, och då skulle linden i ett jubel börja spela, så att alla näktergalar hörde det i alla lunder och skogar på jorden. (Lindgren 44; Crampton 26)
>
> (It came to her that if she could give her breath to the dead tree, life would stream into the little green leaves and the delicate green branches and the linden tree would begin to play for sheer joy so that all the nightingales would hear it in all the woods and groves on earth.)

After her transformation, only Jocke Kis senses her presence in the linden tree's song: "Det är jag ... Malin!" ("This is Maria!"; 29; 46). The nightingale's song becomes both a lament for a lost child and the child's ode to her own sacrifice for beauty.

Biographical information: Sigrid Schottenius Cullhed is an Associate Professor and Senior Lecturer in Literature at Uppsala University, Sweden. Her research focuses on gender history, ancient Greek and Roman literature, and the reception of antiquity in later literature. Her most recent publication is Filomelas förvandlingar: Myten om det outsägliga *(2024).*

Noter

1 This article was written with funding from the Swedish Research Council, project 2019-02584. It has also received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952366.

2 Vivi Edström discusses how Astrid Lindgren wrote against the grain and against the expectations of what children's books should look like: "När *Sunnanäng* kom ut hördes liknande kommentarer [som efter *Mio, min Mio*] 'Vilka mörka sagor! Står barn ut?'" (When *Southern Meadow* was released, it received similar comments [as after *Mio, My Son*] like "What dark tales! Can children handle them?"; Edström, *Kvällsdoppet* 21, my translation). In an interview with Eva von Zweigbergk, Astrid Lindgren was asked why she wrote such dark stories and her reply was: "Döden och kärleken är det stora människan upplever, det intresserar alla åldrar. Man ska inte skrämma barn till ångest, men de behöver likaväl som en vuxen uppröras av konst" (Death and love are the great experiences of life, interesting to all ages. One should not scare children to anxiety, but they, as much as adults, need to be stirred by art; *Dagens Nyheter*, 8 september, 1959, qtd. in Edström, *Astrid Lindgren* 162, my translation).

3 All English translations from Lindgren's story are from Patricia Crampton's version, *My Nightingale is Singing* (Methuen, 1985).

4 "Lilla Rosa och Långa Leda," chronicled in the mid-eighteenth century by Sven Sederström (Edström, *Astrid Lindgren* 123–135; Westin 80–88; Asplund Ingemark).

5 My translation.

6 Bak, p. 23: "I sina tidigaste sagoberättelser imiterar hon först och främst folksagan. Så småningon börjar hon berika folksagans enkla strukturer med konstsagans mer sofistikerade element [...] Alla hennes senare sagostiliseringar med novellsamlingen *Sunnanäng* (1959) som paradexempel bygger på konstsagans avancerade formregister." (In her earliest fairy tales, she primarily imitates the folk tale. Gradually, she begins to enrich the simple structures of the folk tale with the more sophisticated elements of the literary fairy tale […] All her later fairy-tale stylizations, with the short story collection *Sunnanäng* (1959) as a prime example, are based on the advanced forms of the literary fairy tale; my trans.)

7 This reading partly draws on an ancient V-scholium to 19.518 referring to Pherekydes, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 3 F 124. A slightly different version is found in Helladius' commentary on Photios' library 531; a third in Antoninus Liberalis' *Metamorphoses*, earlier told in Boeus' *Ornithogonía*; Celoria 62–63, 135–142.

8 Pandion, the legendary king of Athens, marries his daughter Procne to the Thracian warlord Tereus. Longing for her sister Philomela, Procne is promised a reunion by Tereus. He brings Philomela from Athens to Thrace but, along the way, he rapes her and cuts off her tongue to prevent her from exposing the crime. Despite his attempt at concealment, Philomela,

the crafty Athenian princess, outwits the Thracian king. She weaves a tapestry narrating the brutal event and ensures its delivery to Procne. The sisters secretly reunite, plotting and executing their revenge: they kill Itys, the child of Tereus and Procne, and serve his flesh to the father. Upon realizing the sisters' deception, Tereus pursues them in blind fury but, just before the fatal blow, the gods take pity on this rash mortal trio and transform Tereus into a hoopoe, Procne into a nightingale, and Philomela into a swallow. The transformation of the mytheme in Sophocles' *Tereus* shifts the focus from the individual mother's grief over an accidental infanticide to a collective familial tragedy involving rape, mutilation, and calculated revenge. On the Nightingale myths development from folk tale to tragedy see Gernet; Fontenrose; Cazzaniga; Parsons; Forbes Irving; Nagy; March; Monella; Biraud and Delbey; Mancuso, *Der Prokne*; Schottenius Cullhed.

9 Vergil describes the murderous mother Procne as a swallow (Verg. *Georg*. 4.15), but in the same work Philomela's complaint over her dead children is compared with Orfeus' unhappy song, his miserabile carmen (Verg. *Georg*. 4.511–515). The nightingale complains over both Tereus' evil deed and the death of Itys in *Amores* (Ovid. *Am*., 2.6.7–10). In *Heroides*, "the Daulian bird" laments Itys death (Ovid, *Heroides* 15.151-156); in the third song of Tristia the swallow builds tiny nests to undo the deeds of the evil mother (Ovid. *Tri*. 3.12.5–10) and in the fifth song of *Tristia*, Procne deplores the loss of children (Ovid. Tri. 5.1.59–60). In *Ex Ponto*, Ovid alludes to the "impious" Procne (Ovid. 3.1.119), and in *Remedia Amores*, Tereus' rape on Philomela is mentioned (60–61). For a discussion of the bird transformation in Greek and Roman sources, see Zaganiaris; Monella 194–214; Mancuso, "Thraces" 283, n. 8.

10 On Fontaine and the genre development of the fable, see Zillén.

11 My translation.

12 See also discussion in Schottenius Cullhed (121–122, 192).

13 See discussion in Schottenius Cullhed (122–124).

Works Cited

Adrados, Fransisco Rodríguez. *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable: Volume 1: Introduction and from the Origins to the Hellenistic Age*. Brill, 1999, 3 vols.

Andersen, Jens. *Denna dagen, ett liv: En biografi över Astrid Lindgren.* Translated by Urban Andersson, Norstedt, 2014.

Asplund Ingemark, Camilla. "The Chronotope of the Legend in Astrid Lindgren's *Sunnanäng*: Toward an Intergeneric Level of Bakhtinian Chronotopes." *Genre – Text – Interpretation: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Folklore and Beyond*, edited by Kaarina Koski et al., Finnish Literature Society, 2016, pp. 232–250.

Avian, Éva. "'Il m'en souvient bien davantage': Pour une autre mémoire poétique de la fable 'Philomèle et Progné.'" *Itinéraires: Littérature, Textes, Cultures: Fables du trauma*, no. 3, 2022–2023, doi.org/10.4000/itineraires.13536.

Bak, Krzysztof. "Genreekvilibristen Astrid Lindgren." *Studia Litteraria Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis*, vol. 6, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2011, pp. 7–28.

Biraud Michèle, and Evrard Delbey. "Philomèle: Du mythe aitiologique au début du mythe littéraire." *Rursus: Poiétique, réception et réécriture des textes antiques*, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1–23.

Cazzaniga, Ignazio. *La saga di Itis nella tradizione letteraria e mitografica greco-romana*. Istituto editoriale cisalpino, 1950.

Celoria, Francis, translator and editor. *The Metamorphoses of Antoninus Liberalis: A Translation with a Commentary*. Routledge, 1992.

Chatelain, Marie-Claire. "La figure galante de Philomèle." *Philomèle: Figures du rossignol dans la tradition littéraire et artistique*, edited by Véronique Gély et al., Presses Universitaire Blaise Pascal, 2006, pp. 119–134.

Collinet, Jean-Pierre, editor. *Œuvres complètes*: *1, Fables, contes et Nouvelles: Edition établie, presentée et annotée par Jean-Pierre Collinet*. Gallimard, 1991.

Crampton, Patricia, translator. *My Nightingale is Singing*. By Astrid Lindgren, Methuen, 1985.

Easterling, Patricia E. "The Fable." *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature: The Hellenistic Period and the Empire*, vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 139–143.

Edström, Vivi. *Astrid Lindgren och sagans makt*. Rabén & Sjögren, 1997.

---. *Kvällsdoppet i Katthult: Essäer om Astrid Lindgren diktaren*. Natur och kultur, 2004.

Finglass, Patrick J. "A New Fragment of Sophocles' 'Tereus.'" *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, vol. 200, Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, 2016, pp. 61–85.

Fontenrose, Joseph. "The Sorrows of Ino and of Procne." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 79, 1948, pp. 125–167.

Forbes Irving, Paul M.C. *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths*. Clarendon, 1990.

Geijerstam, Gustaf. *De gamla goda sagorna ånyo utgivna*. Fröléen, 1909, 2 vols.

Gernet, Louis. "La légende de Procne et la date du Tereus de Sophocle." *Mélanges offerts à O. Navarre par ses élèves et ses amis*, *L'Antiquité Classique*, 6:2, edited by L. Gailly, Edouard Privat Toulouse, Neuchatel et Paris, 1935, pp. 207–217.

Gutwirth, Marcel. "Beast Fable for the Sun King: A Wry Poetical Offering." *Sun King: Ascendancy of French Culture during the Reign of Louis XIV*, edited by David Lee Rubin, Folger, 1992, pp. 103–114.

Herder, Johann Gottfried von. *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*. Vol. 4, Hartknoch, 1794.

Holmberg, Hans. *Från prins Hatt till prins Mio: Om sagogenrens utveckling*. Rabén & Sjögren, 1988.

Laes, Christian. "Children and Fables, Children in Fables in Hellenistic and Roman Antiquity." *Latomus*, T. 65, Fasc. 4, Oct.–Dec., Société d'Études Latines de Bruxelles, 2006, pp. 898–914.

Lerer, Seth. *Children's Literature: A Reader's History, from Aesop to Harry Potter*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Anthropologie structurale*. Plon, 1958.

Lindgren, Astrid. *Sunnanäng*. 1959. Rabén & Sjögren, 2003.

---. "Det började i Kristins kök." *Samuel August från Sevedstorp och Hanna i Hult*, Bokvännerna, 1973, pp. 57–64.

Mancuso, Sabrina. "'Anfione-Niobe e Zeto-Aedon: La Fondazione di Tebe nel dramma attico.'" *Gaia*, no. 21, 2018, pp. 1–14.

----. *Der Prokne-Mythos als exemplum in der attischen Tragödie*. Georg Olms Verlag, 2022.

----. "Thraces of Sophocles' Tereus in Ovid's Metamorphoses 6.424–674." *Fragmented Memory: Omission, Selection, and Loss in Ancient and Medieval Literature and History*, edited by Nicoletta Bruno, Martina Filosa, and Giulia Marinelli, De Gruyter, 2022, pp. 281–302.

March, Jenny. "Vases and Tragic Drama: Euripides' Medea and Sophocles' Lost Tereus." *Word and Image in Ancient Greece*, edited by N. Keith Rutter and Brian A. Sparkes, Edinburgh University Press, 2000, pp. 119–139.

Mihailov, Georgi. "La légende de Térée." *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia*, vol. 50, no. 2, 1955, pp. 77–208.

Monella, Paolo. *Procne e Filomela: Dal mito al simbolo letterario*. Pàtron Editore, 2005.

Nagy, Gregory. *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond*. Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 7–39.

Nauwerck, Malin. "Sagoberättaren, sekreteraren och den spelande linden: Muntlig poetik i Astrid Lindgrens ljudvärldar." *Från Strindberg till Storytel: Korskopplingar mellan ljud och litteratur*, edited by Julia Pennlert and Lars Ilshammar, Daidalos, 2021, pp. 197–219.

Osberghaus, Monika. "Astrid Lindgren: 'Klingt meine Linde.'" *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 1 February 2006, www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/monika-osberghaus-astrid-lindgren-klingt-meine-linde-1293668.html.

Parsons, Peter J. "3013: Argument of a Tereus?" *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 42, nos. 2999–3087, Egypt exploration soc. for the British academy, 1974, pp. 46–50.

Perry, Ben Edwin, editor and translator. *Babrius and Phaedrus*. By Babrius and Phaedrus, Harvard University Press, 1965.

Schottenius Cullhed, Sigrid. *Filomelas förvandlingar: Myten om det outsägliga*. Ellerströms förlag, 2024.

Schrimpf, Hans Joachim (editor), and Karl Philipp Moritz. *Schriften zur Ästhetik und Poetik*. De Gruyter, 1962.

Sommerstein, Alain H., and David Fitzpatrick. *Sophocles: Selected Fragmentary Plays*. Vol. 1, Oxbow Books, 2006.

Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta. Vol. 4, Sophocles, edited by Stefan Radt (F 730a-g edited by R. Kannicht), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977.

Vaio, John. *The Mythiambi of Babrius: Notes on the Constitution of the Text*. Olms, 2001.

West, Martin L. *Odyssea / Homerus*. De Gruyter, 2017.

Westin, Boel. *Strindberg, sagan och skriften*. Brutus Östlings bokförlag Symposion, 1998.

Wilson, Emily, translator. *The Odyssey*. By Homer, W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.

Wistrand, Sten. "Astrid Lindgrens 'mest problematiska bok': Ontologi, genre och funktion i *Sunnanäng*." *Samlaren*, vol. 135, 2014, pp. 163–203.

Zaganiaris, Nicolas J. “Le mythe de Térée dans la littérature grecque et latine.” *Platon*, no. 25, pp. 208–232.

Zillén, Erik. “Fabelns väg till barnlitteraturen: Från Camerarius till Hey.” *Barnboken: Journal of Children’s Literature Research*, vol. 45, 2022, doi.org/10.14811/clr.v45.675.