Foreign Men, Domestic Women: The Translation of the Supernatural Figures in *Rómverja saga*

Rómverja saga, an Old Norse account of the history of the Roman Republic, has often escaped critical attention despite its clear interest for literary study. Containing accounts of battles, fraught relationships, and supernatural occurrences, the saga is filled with exciting scenes adapted from the Latin sources. This article, attempting to fill part of the gap in criticism on *Rómverja saga*, examines the literary depictions of the human supernatural figures within the saga. It begins by analysing the depictions of the male supernatural beings, both living and dead. Following this, the analysis turns to the female supernatural beings, examining the various *trǫll*-women, witches, and sybils described within the saga. Using Venuti's theory of domestication and foreignisation, this article finds a gendered difference within the treatment of the supernatural figures; the supernatural women are domesticated noticeably more than the mostly foreignised men. Finally, the article examines the potential reasons behind this difference, drawing conclusions relating to gender, power, and the literary ability to control. Before the analysis, a detailed introduction is given, including the necessary background information on *Rómverja saga* for the unfamiliar reader.[1]

Rómverja saga is a translation of various Latin works: two texts by Sallust (*Bellum Jugurthinum* and *Conjuratio Catilinae*) and one by Lucan (*De Bello Civili*, or *Pharsalia*). These accounts are linked together by material taken from various *scholia*, *summae historiae*, and *accessus* texts (see Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, lxxvii-cxxvi). The saga is often viewed alongside other Old Norse texts that have been translated from Latin, including *Breta sǫgur*,

[1] For a full examination of the sources, redactions, and manuscripts of *Rómverja saga*, see the various works of Þorbjörg Helgadóttir (1986-89, 1996, 2010) and Stephanie Würth (1998, 2005, 2009).

Trójumanna saga, and *Alexanders saga*. Stefanie Würth has used various terms to denote this group of sagas, including 'pseudo-histories' (2005) and 'Antikenromane' (1998); both terms are in some way problematic (see Svala Lind Birnudóttir 2014, 7-8). This group of sagas has historically received little critical attention; *Rómverja saga* especially is lacking in literary analysis.

Rómverja saga exists in two main versions: an earlier and a later redaction (see Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, xv-xlix). The saga was initially translated in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, probably at Þingeyrar, for a school environment interested in Latin rhetoric (see Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, cxciv-cc). This earlier version of the saga is found only within AM 595 a-b 4to: a fourteenth-century manuscript which is poorly preserved and contains several lacunae, particularly in the Lucan section. Sometime after the original translation was written, the saga was significantly shortened, creating the later redaction.[2] Würth (1998, 142) and Þorbjörg Helgadóttir (2010, cxcv) agree that the later version has been shortened from a different, lost version of the earlier redaction. The abridged version exemplifies a decreased interest in the rhetoric of the saga, as many of the speeches are severely shortened (see Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, clxxv, cxciv-cc). Instead, the focus appears to be on the account of Roman history contained within the saga. This later version is found in a variety of both vellum and paper manuscripts, including AM 226 fol., AM 225 fol., and AM 598 III β 4to.

The version within AM 226 fol. is considered to be the most literarily significant version of this later redaction for several reasons. Firstly, it is the only manuscript to contain *Rómverja saga* in its entirety. Secondly, scholars generally agree that AM 225 fol. has been copied from AM 226 fol. (see, for example, Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, xlvii-xlix). The other manuscripts of this redaction of the saga contain only fragmented accounts. Finally, AM 226 fol. is a very important manuscript compilation; made in the fourteenth century (c. 1350-1370)

[2] 'When this took place is not possible to determine' (Þorbjörg, 2010, cxcviii).

at the Augustinian monastery in Helgafell, it contains several works translated from Latin, including *Alexanders saga*, *Gyðinga saga*, and, most famously, *Stjórn*. Altogether, the manuscript presents a history of the world from Genesis to the time of the New Testament. Þorbjörg Helgadóttir (2010, cc) writes, 'The high mark for *Rómverja saga* was its incorporation into the *Stjórn* compilation'. For these reasons, the version of *Rómverja saga* within AM 226 fol. is considered the most literarily significant version of the later, shorter redaction. Þorbjörg Helgadóttir therefore chose to base her critical edition of the short and long redaction of the saga upon AM 226 fol. and AM 595 a-b 4to respectively.

The focus of this article is upon the supernatural figures within *Rómverja saga*, of which there are many, particularly in the Lucan part. However, most of the accounts of the supernatural from AM 595 a-b 4to (the only manuscript containing the earlier redaction) have unfortunately been lost in the lacunae. This manuscript therefore does not contain sufficient textual content for this analysis. The later redaction, as found in AM 226 fol., however, contains several accounts of supernatural figures, allowing for comparison throughout the text. The present article therefore focuses entirely on the later redaction in AM 226 fol. for its study of the depictions of the supernatural within *Rómverja saga*; relevant comparisons with AM 595 a-b 4to are included in the footnotes.

The source manuscript(s) used in the creation of *Rómverja saga* have not survived; no manuscript containing Sallust or Lucan has been found in Iceland. Þorbjörg Helgadóttir's extensive research in her 2010 edition to the saga (see lxxvii-cxxvi) has revealed that the Sallust source must have belonged to the *codices integri* group (with Codex Parisinus 10195 as the closest surviving version) and that the Lucan source shared great similarity with the versions within four extant manuscripts (Codex Parisinus 7502, Codex Bruxellensis 5330-32, Codex Vossianus XIX F. 63, and Codex Vossianus XIX Q. 51). Details from various *scholia*, *summae historiae*, and *accessus* texts are also employed throughout *Rómverja saga*. This article takes

all quotations of *Rómverja saga* from Þorbjörg Helgadóttir's edition and the Latin sources from the editions she uses in her own work (Alfred Ernout 1974 for the Sallust text and D. R. Shackleton Bailey 1988 for the Lucan material).

The present article compares the Old Norse saga against its Latin sources from a literary perspective. Past scholarship has commented on the major differences, pointing out, for example, the removal of the poetic embellishments and moral theorising in the Old Norse version (see Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 1996, 204) and the shift in sympathy towards Caesar in the Lucan part of the saga (see Rudolf Meissner 1910, 256-59). Literary analysis beyond this is limited. Würth places the *Antikenromane* as a whole into Rita Copeland's (1991) secondary category of medieval translations, writing: 'Die Arbeit eines Übersetzers stand nicht im Dienst der Ausgangssprache, sondern ausschliesslich im Dienst der Zielsprache' (1998, 10) 'The work of a translator is not in the service of the source language, but exclusively in the service of the target language'. *Rómverja saga*, particularly the shortened version within AM 226 fol., certainly fits this description, as the translator-redactors produce an Old Norse text which does not follow the literary aims of its Latin sources.

Lawrence Venuti's (1995) model of domestication and foreignisation is a useful tool in the analysis of the Old Norse against the Latin. *Rómverja saga* contains numerous domesticating features, where the classical characteristics of the source text are changed and naturalised as they are written into the Old Norse (for example, the Roman Jupiter is consistently rendered as the Norse Þórr). The saga, however, also has foreignising features, where classical words and concepts that are strange and unfamiliar to the Old Norse literary tradition are included in the saga, often without explanation (for example, the classical deities Apollo and Vesta are found in *Rómverja saga*, with no attempt to connect them to the familiar pantheon). There is therefore a mix of domestication and foreignisation within the saga. This

article will analyse the balance between these opposing approaches in relation to the supernatural figures within *Rómverja saga*, revealing a gendered difference in the translator-redactors' domesticating tendencies.

The term 'translator-redactors' is used throughout this article to denote the agent(s) behind the process that takes us from the Latin sources to the *Rómverja saga* of AM 226 fol. This term is chosen to acknowledge that the Latin text has undergone both translation and then a later shortening before arriving at the extant version within this manuscript. In this case, it is impossible to distinguish between the work of the translator(s) and the redactor(s); the only extant version of the short redaction has lost many of the episodes of the supernatural examined in this article, and, in any case, it is not the exact version from which the *Rómverja saga* of AM 226 fol. was shortened. As the analysis cannot distinguish between translator and redactor, the terminology does not attempt to do so. The translator(s) and redactor(s) were almost certainly different people, and the plural nature of the term 'translator-redactors' hopes to capture this. The term is by no means perfect, but it facilitates the analysis of the saga.

This article focuses on the literary presentation of the supernatural. The term 'supernatural' is used here to describe the magical or ghostly happenings within both *Rómverja saga* and its Latin sources. The term 'paranormal', however, is gaining increasing favour within the Old Norse scholarly community, with many believing it should replace 'supernatural'. Ármann Jakobsson (2020, 2) writes that 'paranormal' is 'intentionally jarring in its anachronistic dissonance', which 'opens up discursive space for new critical perspectives and theoretical approaches'. This term, nevertheless, is not currently used with any frequency within classical scholarship. As this article compares the depictions of the supernatural or paranormal across both classical and Old Norse texts, the term 'supernatural' is favoured, as it has a strong precedent in the scholarship of both literary periods. Whether the term

‘paranormal’ can be used within scholarship of classical literature would be the subject of an article in itself.

The focus in this article is upon supernatural figures that are in some way human. This excludes from the analysis portrayals of prophecy involving animals, bad dreams, and death as an abstract concept. This article also omits analysis of the presentation of the gods, focusing exclusively on the human or near-human figures. This allows for a clear comparison based on gender. The following analysis first explores the male supernatural figures, followed by the female. A clear difference is found between the domestication and foreignisation of the supernatural men and women, and conclusions are drawn at the end of the article as to why the translator-redactors would seek to domesticate the supernatural women far more than the men.

The Male Supernatural Figures

Rómverja saga features numerous supernatural men, both living and dead. The dead supernatural men find some way to walk again: Marius and Sulla arise to fight each other at the fall of Rome, and Julius' army is haunted by slain enemy soldiers. The living supernatural men have magical or prophetic abilities. The most significant of such figures is Arruns the haruspex, a priestly figure who interprets the future from the entrails of sacrificed animals. The majority of these supernatural male figures appear in one chapter of *Rómverja saga*, which details the unusual disturbances as Caesar's army first advances upon Rome.[3] The translator-redactors significantly shorten the corresponding Latin passage, preserving only a select few of the portents, which must have carried some significance. The following analysis examines the supernatural men of *Rómverja saga*, many of which are drawn from this one chapter, and seeks to determine whether they are mostly foreignised or domesticated to establish a comparison with the female figures analysed in the next section.

The Undead

Old Norse literature has an extensive tradition of representing the undead, or *draugar*, who linger for longer than appropriate in the world of the living. The translator-redactors therefore had an extensive literary tradition to call upon to domesticate the depictions of the undead within *Rómverja saga* if they wished. Many scholars have analysed the *draugar* in-depth, creating categories to describe and explain them. The present analysis utilises these categories as they can be compared against the depictions within *Rómverja saga* to determine to what extent the translator-redactors incorporate Old Icelandic traditions into their depictions of the undead. Such categories must, however, be treated with caution since they are modern impositions upon a literature which resists categorisation. Ármann Jakobsson, one of the major

[3] Þorbjörg Helgadóttir numbers this as chapter 54 in her edition. The equivalent section is missing from AM 595 a-b 4to, so no comparisons can be made with the longer version.

scholars of the supernatural (or paranormal) suggests two classes of the undead: the 'watchmen', who 'generally stay in the vicinity of their home, since their continued presence is related to objects that were left behind', and the 'vampires', who 'are more aggressive […] since their main objective seems to be to attack the living' (Ármann Jakobsson 2011, 289). Fernando Guerrero (2003) proposes four categories. The first two roughly correspond to those of Ármann Jakobsson, while the third describes the newly dead and the fourth the ethereal *fyrirburðr* 'spectre'. These categories are used in this analysis of the undead of *Rómverja saga* to determine to what extent they are foreignised or domesticated.

The dispute between Marius and Sulla and their eventual death is detailed at the start of *Rómverja saga*. This, however, is not the end of their story, as the figures appear again in the Lucan section, rising from the dead before the fall of Rome. The Old Norse reads:

> þar sá menn ok vm allar nætr drauga ganga. þeir Silla ok Maríus hǫfdu med mestum grimmleik deillt sín i millum. ok var þui huarígum þeíRa ueíttr grǫftr sem ǫdrum hǫfdíngium i Roma borg. Gengu þeir nu ok aptr allar nætr i syn vid menn (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 246)

> Men also saw the undead walk about there every night. Sulla and Marius had fought each other with most savageness, and for this reason neither of them was given burial like the other chieftains in the city of Rome. They now walked again every night in the sight of men.

This translates and changes the Latin source:

> compositis plenae gemuerunt ossibus urnae.

tunc fragor armorum magnaeque per avia voces
auditae nemorum et venientes comminus umbrae. (Lucan 1988, I:568-570)

… e medio visi consurgere Campo
tristia Sullani cecinere oracula manes,
tollentemque caput gelidas Anienis ad undas
agricolae fracto Marium fugere sepulchro (Lucan 1988, I:580-84))

Urns full of bones groaned. A crash of weapons and great calls were heard through the pathless forest, and ghosts came together to fight.

From the middle of the Campus, the shade of Sulla was seen to rise, chanting gloomy oracles. Marius lifted his head next to the icy waves of the Anio; farmers fled as he broke his tomb.

The Old Norse text paraphrases the Latin and includes some extra details about the burial of Marius and Sulla; Þorbjörg Helgadóttir (1996, 209) suggests that a source like Codex Berolinensis, nr 23 was used by the translator-redactors in their rendering of the Marius and Sulla story. The translator-redactors also blur together the two depictions of the undead from the Latin source. The fighting ghosts in lines I:568-570 of Lucan are depicted in the Old Norse line ‘þar sá menn ok vm allar nætr drauga ganga’ (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 246) ‘men also saw the undead walk about there every night’. Here, the undead have a less clear-cut purpose than the Latin; while this might draw the figures closer to Ármann Jakobsson’s ‘watchman’ category, the lack of specificity in the Old Norse blurs the unnamed undead with Marius and Sulla. It is not clear that the undead referred to in this line are separate from the named figures. The translator-redactors also repeat the description of these unspecified undead when

describing Marius and Sulla: they both *ganga* ‘walk’ *allar nætr* ‘all night’. As such, the passage easily reads as discussing only the two undead: Marius and Sulla. The translator-redactors refer to these figures using the term *draugr*, which is frequently used in Old Norse literature to denote the undead. The term *ganga aptr* ‘to walk again’ is also employed here, connecting these figures with depictions of the undead within the *Íslendingasǫgur*, which are sometimes called *aptrgǫngumenn* (literally ‘walk-again-men’; see, for example, *Grettis saga*: Guðni Jónsson 1936, 121). This connection makes the depiction of the ghosts of Marius and Sulla somewhat domesticating.

While the translator-redactors use Old Norse terms to describe the undead, they do not change the nature of the ghosts to have them align more closely with Old Norse literary depictions. The figures do not fit into any of the aforementioned scholarly categories of the Old Norse undead. Marius and Sulla fight with each other and are therefore neither ‘watchmen’ nor ‘vampires’ according to Ármann Jakobsson’s aforementioned categories. These figures also do not fit comfortably into the categories of Guerrero (2003). They are not newly dead, so cannot belong to his third category. They may, however, have some affinity with the *fyrirburðr* ‘spectre’. Guerrero (2003, 104) writes, ‘The sight of a *fyrirburðr* […] implies an omen’, which is exactly the function of the undead within *Rómverja saga* and the Lucan source material. They are, however, not entirely comfortable within this category, since they do not carry the same connection to the drowned as the *fyrirburðr* (Guerrero 2003, 102-122). Additionally, the word *fyrirburðr* ‘appearance, vision’, which Guerrero (2003, 102-122) considers to be the major linguistic marker of this category of the undead, is not found within *Rómverja saga*. Although the undead in Lucan, as portents, had the potential to be aligned with the Old Norse *fyrirburðr*, the translator-redactors do not accentuate this or draw attention to the possible connection with Old Norse literary depictions of the undead. While the translator-redactors use words like *draugr*, which domesticate the portrayal, many elements of the description do not

align with typical Old Norse representations of the undead. The ghosts here remain mostly unfamiliar and foreign to Old Norse literary culture.

The second appearance of the undead in *Rómverja saga* occurs when Caesar sleeps in a captured enemy camp.[4] The men are haunted by dreams of fire, hell, and the undead. The Old Norse reads:

> Enn herbuda vistín vard þeim æigi iafn nádulig sem þeir ætladu. þuiat þa er þeir foro at sofa. í þær sængr er att hǫfdu konungar edr hertogar. ok náttadí. saa þeir ellda stora ok ogurliga. þeir sa ok mikinn fiolda daudra manna ganga um herbudír alla nattína med uapnum. ok opi ok kalli. med allzkyns skrímslum ok undrum. ok v hreínínndum. þeim sem ero i heluítí. ok var þar þo mest um sem Julíus var sealfr. (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 339-340)

> But their abode at the lodgings was not as peaceful as they thought, because when they went to sleep in the beds which had been owned by kings and dukes and night fell, they saw great and awful fires. They also saw a great crowd of dead men walk about the camp all night with weapons and screaming and calling, alongside all kinds of monsters and wonders and uncleanliness, which are in hell, and it was worst where Julius himself was.

The translator-redactors once again use the phrase *ganga um […] alla nattína* 'walk about […] all the night', which may be considered somewhat domesticating, as mentioned above. The undead here, however, appear as an ethereal dream. Within the Old Norse literary tradition, a

[4] This episode is also missing from AM 595 a-b 4to., so no comparisons can be made with the longer version.

draugr usually returns using its own body, especially if that body is uncorrupted and readily available. Caesar sleeps surrounded by the bodies of enemy soldiers; if the translator-redactors wished to align the undead with here with typical depictions within Old Norse literature, a physical resurrection in wakefulness would have carried a greater resemblance. There is, however, a tradition within Old Norse literature of representing the undead in dreams, though Kirsi Kanerva (2022) notes that this usually occurs when the full physical body is not available. Nora K. Chadwick (1946, 54-55) similarly connects the undead in dreams to the physical plane, writing:

> [The undead] are sometimes seen by the living in what appears to be a kind of dream or trance; but it generally happens even so that they leave beside the living person some gift, by which, on awakening, the living person may be assured of the tangible nature of the visit.

The undead within *Rómverja saga* leave no physical sign of their appearance. This follows the Lucan source material, in which the dream is not a corporeal resurrection of the fallen soldiers but instead a psychological manifestation of the guilt and wrongdoing of Caesar's army. It is unusual within Old Norse literature for dreams to represent psychology; Lars Lönnroth (2002, 456) writes, 'Unlike psychoanalysts, saga narrators do not primarily see dreams as a key to the inner soul'. Without any real corporeal presence, the undead in this passage keep the psychological element of the Latin source, which is foreign to Old Norse literary culture. In the source text, this passage forms part of Lucan's vehement criticism of Caesar. It is therefore even more intriguing that the translator-redactors maintained the psychological (and therefore anti-Caesar) elements of the passage, since elsewhere they show more support for Caesar's campaign. Meissner writes, 'Der Übersetzer übernimmt nicht die politische Meinung des

Lucan, nicht die Parteilichkeit für Pompeius und den fanatischen Haß gegen Caesar' (Meissner 1910, 256) 'The translator does not adopt the political opinion of Lucan, nor the bias towards Pompey and the fanatical hatred of Caesar'. Later in the passage, and frequently in the saga, the translator-redactors distance themselves from Lucan's criticism of Caesar by rendering the most condemning lines they translate into direct speech with the accompanying phrase 'Lucanus s(egir) sua' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 340, etc.). Regardless of this, the psychological elements of the undead shine through this passage; this is entirely foreign to the Old Norse literary tradition of representing the undead.

After the dream, the translator-redactors follow the Lucan material to detail how Caesar treats the slain: he burns the bodies of only the Roman knights, leaving the other soldiers unburied. Within Old Norse sagas like *Eyrbyggja saga* (Einar Ól. Sveinsson and Matthías Þórðarson 1935, 143-45), following the appearance of a *draugr*, the characters must find a way to make the spirit rest, usually by disposing of the body appropriately. This is even true of the undead who appear within dreams: in *Laxdœla saga*, for example, a dead woman appears within a dream, and her bones are moved to another place to stop the haunting (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1934, 223-24). Caesar makes no attempt to care for the bodies which have haunted him, and simply leaves the camp. As the undead in this passage seem to fall loosely into Ármann Jakobsson's 'watchmen' category, this might be an effective way to get rid of a ghost who is tied to one specific area to watch and guard. It is, however, a very unusual way of dealing with a ghost within Old Norse literature. Both the dream and the treatment of the bodies remain unfamiliar and foreign to Old Norse literary culture.

The Magical Men

Several magical men appear in the aforementioned chapter 54 of *Rómverja saga*, who prophesy terrible things at this turning point in Roman history. As ominous portents haunt the city, several magical men are called upon to make sacrifices and prophesy:

> þa komu til fjǫlkyngis men. ok blotuðu. ok gengu til fretta vid guðín. ok Rannsakadu bæði manna ínnsterri ok sua bufiar. ok kuaduz þar ecki sea nema daprliga luti eína. (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 246)
>
> Then magicians came and sacrificed and went to ask the gods. They searched the innards of both men and also livestock and said that they saw nothing there but sad things.

This significantly shortens the Lucan, which devotes many lines of verse to a description of both the male and female workers of magic here. Following this, Arruns the haruspex is introduced, and the Old Norse describes his method of prophecy in detail: 'knytti hann íj. knuta á uilíunum' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 246) 'he bound two knots in the innards' and assigns one to each of the warring leaders. Caesar's knot swells the most, predicting his ultimate victory. This method is not the same as that used within Lucan, where Arruns inspects the animal's guts for impurities. Svala Lind Birnudóttir (2014, 5) has identified a parallel within the Old Irish translation of the civil war: *In Cath Catharda* (Whitley Stokes 1909, 4.2; see also Cillian O'Hogan 2014, 32). It is likely that the translator-redactors of *Rómverja saga* had access to the same *scholium*, now lost, as the translator of *In Cath Catharda*, because of the numerous parallels within this passage and elsewhere in the saga. Within *In Cath Catharda* only the male magicians with Arruns are mentioned, which may explain the Old Norse translator-redactors' removal of the references to magical women in this passage. As the Latin source text is not extant, comparison cannot be made against the Old Norse version; some conclusions can, however, be drawn from the depictions of prophecy within *Rómverja saga*.

The method of prophecy described here is foreign to Old Norse saga literature. Boberg's (1966) *Motif-Index* has no listing for haruspices or any method of magic or prophecy involving the slaughter of animals. According to this index (pp. 43-44), animals are more useful prophetic vehicles when alive, foreshadowing future events with their strange behaviour (see, for example, the dog Floki in *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka*: Hubert Seelow 1981, 172-73). The slaughter of animals and the interpretation of their bodies is unfamiliar to Old Norse literary culture. When describing the initial sacrifices made by Arruns' companions, the translator-redactors also include the line 'bæði manna […] ok sua bufiar' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 246) 'both men and also livestock'. There is no mention of human sacrifice within either Lucan or *In Cath Catharda*, though it may well have been in the lost source manuscript. Although human sacrifices do occur in the sagas, they are rare, and the practitioners of the sacrifice are usually vilified, like those in *Ynglinga saga* (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1941, 32, 48-9). The inclusion of human sacrifices may be the translator-redactors' attempt to make the passage seem even more unfamiliar to the target literary culture. Old Norse literature contains ample traditions of magic and prophecy; had the translator-redactors wished to make this passage more familiar, they could have easily modified the text, incorporating elements from Old Norse traditions rather than from the Latin *scholium*.

The language used by the translator-redactors in their rendering of Arruns and the augurs also requires examination. The translator-redactors use numerous specific Old Norse terms for magic in this passage: *fjǫlkyngi* and *galdr*, for example. This might lend the passage some familiarity, since similar terms are used extensively within the Old Norse literary tradition. Nicolas Meylan (2019, 108), commenting on Old Norse texts translated from Latin, writes, 'When the Norwegian and Icelandic translators came across such terms as *magia* or *maleficus* in their Latin originals, they resorted to the lexis moderns generally associate with vernacular (pagan) magic'. The use of such terms in *Rómverja saga* to depict classical magic

is not unusual. Commenting specifically on words like *galdr* and *fjǫlkyngi*, Meylan (2014, 29) argues:

> The vernacular terms, which had most likely referred to specific and discrete practices, came to be mobilized in sweeping denunciations by clerics who were neither very knowledgeable nor interested in their precise original denotations.

The Old Norse terms for magic used within *Rómverja saga* may therefore be divorced from their original meanings. While somewhat domesticating, the use of these words does not curb the unfamiliarity of the overall passage.

The translator-redactors also use a variety of rare words in their depiction of Arruns' prophecy. The word *uilíunum* or *vil* 'innards' is scarcely used within Old Norse literature; the Dictionary of Old Norse Prose (ONP) lists only one other occurrence of it, highlighting the unfamiliarity of this type of prophecy (https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?o87143). Similarly, the word *innsteri*, 'guts' or 'innards', is only listed by the ONP as occurring within translated texts: *Rómverja saga*, *Nikolaus saga*, and one homily (https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?o40566). The term *fitons anda* (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 246) 'prophetic spirit' is used to describe Arruns; this word also occurs primarily, though not exclusively, in translated texts (https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?o20907). Zoëga (1910, 138) comments that it derives 'from med[ieval] L[atin] *Phiton* for *Python*'. These words have links to Latinity, accentuating the foreign nature of the concepts depicted here. Although some of the terms used in this passage are partially domesticating, there are also numerous examples of Latinate and rare Old Norse words which give the depiction of Arruns and his fellow magicians a foreign feel. The overall impression of this passage, with its classical methods of prophecy, Old Norse terms for magic, and rare, Latinate words is primarily one of foreignisation.

Two final depictions of magical men are worth mentioning, though the translator-redactors do not give them much narrative space. Following the prophecy of Arruns, Figulus, who is not named in *Rómverja saga*, interprets the stars to make similarly gloomy predictions. This section is considerably shortened, as the translator-redactors decided to place more emphasis on the prophecy of Arruns than of Figulus. The method of prophecy presented is unchanged, and there is clearly no attempt to bring the depiction closer to Old Norse concepts of magic. Similarly, the figure named as Aponus in *Rómverja saga* retains his classical depiction, determining the future by reading the *himinn* (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 327) 'sky', 'heaven'.[5] The major change made here is naming him as Aponus, which in Lucan does not name the augur but rather the spring which he appears next to.[6] These figures are depicted in a way that renders their unfamiliarity faithfully, emulating the foreignising tendencies seen in the portrayals of the supernatural men explored in more detail above.

Overall, the male supernatural figures, both dead and alive, are mostly foreignised by the translator-redactors of *Rómverja saga*. The translator-redactors make no significant attempt to align the undead or the magicians of *Rómverja saga* with the depictions typical within Old Norse literary culture. Though certain Old Norse words may hint at a domestication, the translator-redactors also employ rare, Latinate words and classical methods of prophecy. The overall impression created by the portrayals of supernatural men is one of foreignisation.

[5] This figure is present in the earlier version within AM 595 a-b 4to. The description of the figure and his prophecy is slightly longer, but the depiction remains classical, as in AM 226 fol.

[6] AM 595 a-b 4to. also has this mistake in naming.

The Female Supernatural Figures

Against this mostly foreignising background, this article now turns to the female supernatural figures of *Rómverja saga*. First to be examined are the women who predict the future, including the witch Erictho who resurrects a dead man, Apollo's priestess, and the other sybils. Following this, analysis turns to the women who are themselves portentous, including the mysterious female figure in chapter 54 and the personification of Rome who appears to Caesar. This section examines whether the female supernatural is treated in the same way as the male supernatural within *Rómverja saga*, or if the balance between domestication and foreignisation shifts as the translator-redactors pen the female figures.

Old Norse literature has an extensive tradition of representing the female supernatural, from the *vǫlva* 'seeress' of *Vǫluspá* to the *trǫllkona* '*trǫll*-woman' of saga literature. These figures have been analysed extensively by scholars; notably by Jenny Jochens (1996) and Ármann Jakobsson (2017). While it is likely that figures such as the *nornir*, *dísir*, and *vǫlur* were once understood as separate classes of beings with unique identities, by the late period in which *Rómverja saga* was written, the categories overlap and blur. The idea of a *trǫll* is also multivarious; Ármann Jakobsson (2017, 18) writes that the *trǫll* does not represent a 'clearly demarcated group' but is used to describe numerous categories of other. It can denote *jǫtnar* 'giants', human women with supernatural features, the undead, and the racial other. As a result of this considerable ambiguity, a domesticating translation would not need to place its female mythological figures into one specific class of being, but instead use language and features associated with literary depictions of the Old Norse mythological women. This would bring the depiction closer to the portrayals of supernatural women within the Old Norse literary tradition, which themselves do not clearly distinguish between or categorise the figures. As such, the following analysis of any potential domesticating tendencies within the depiction of the supernatural women of *Rómverja saga* will not look for figures that fit neatly into the

category of *trǫll*, *valkyrja*, or any other category, but rather depictions that bring the figures closer to the target literary culture.

Erictho

The most memorable female figure of both *Rómverja saga* and *De Bello Civili* is probably Erictho, a powerful witch who resurrects a dead body and forces it to predict the future. In Lucan, she is described in detail as being the most horrible of all the witches. Asked by Sextus Pompey to prophesy, Erictho performs an elaborate magical ritual upon a dead body, which includes striking it with a snake. The body reluctantly reanimates and tells the future before dying once again. In line with the translator-redactors' method in the rest of the saga, this episode is shortened considerably in the process of translation. Unusually, however, the translator-redactors treat this episode with some creative freedom. As Meissner writes, 'Der Übersetzer hat die Szene trotz starker Kürzungen offenbar mit Interesse nachgebildet und mit besonderen Zügen ausgestattet' (1910, 216) 'The translator has obviously reproduced the scene with interest, despite the strong abbreviations, and furnished it with special details.' The special interest paid to this section of *Rómverja saga* is also evident in the longer redaction contained within AM 595 a-b 4to. Although the manuscript only preserves the first half of the story, it interestingly contains a rough drawing of Erictho on folio 36v. She is visually depicted wielding a snake next to a dead body, while Sextus Pompey looks on.[7] This manuscript contains many such rough drawings, but very few relate to the text itself. Jakob Benediktsson (1980, 15) notes that this drawing, alongside some others in the manuscript, is contemporary with the saga, perhaps even drawn by the scribe himself (see also Lena Liepe 2006, 72-89). The drawing is further evidence of the interest which the medieval scribes, translators, and redactors had in the Erictho episode. The character is rendered creatively in both redactions of the saga; the

[7] Interestingly, the snake does not look like a snake, but instead it resembles medieval Nordic illustrations of dragons (see Paul Acker, 2013). This perhaps adds to the domestication of the passage.

following analysis examines the changes made in the translation of Erictho, focussing specifically on the version within AM 226 fol., but noting any moments where the text of AM 595 a-b 4to. deviates in the footnotes.

The translator-redactors introduce Erictho with the following physical description:

> Sv kona het Ericta er agietuz var af sinní fiǫlkyngi. Enn hon bygði ecki í manna husum. helldr bygdi hon i hellum. ok grǫfum dauðra manna. Hon var mǫgr. ok var holld hennar svartara. enn molld. ok geck af henne illr dauN. (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 319)

> There was a woman called Erictho who was most excellent in her magic. She did not live in the houses of men but rather she lived in caves and the graves of dead men. She was thin and her flesh was blacker than earth and a bad smell emanated from her.

The initial few lines, describing Erictho's habitation, follow but significantly shorten the Latin. The use of the word *fjǫlkyngi* 'magic' parallels the terms used to describe Arruns' classical magic. Meissner (1910, 162), commenting on this passage, however, picks out Erictho's dark skin as one of the distinctive features added by the Old Norse translator-redactors. This stands in sharp contrast to the *pallor* (Lucan 1988, VI: 517) 'paleness' of her Latin counterpart. Dark or black skin is a feature commonly associated with *trǫll* or giantesses within Old Norse literature.[8] Erictho is herself called a *trǫllkona* 'troll-woman' by the translator-redactors as the younger Pompey addresses her: 'Heil þu vegr ok prydi allra trǫllkuenna' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir

[8] For example, a *trǫllkona* in *Ketils saga hængs* is described as *svartr* 'black' (Valdimar Ásmundarson 1886, 152). Various scholars such as Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir (2013, 63) have commented on this.

2010, 319-320) ‘Hail, you honour and glory of all *trǫll*-women’. The translator-redactors actively change the depiction of Erictho’s physical form, giving her features typical to Old Norse *trǫll* rather than classical witches. From the first few lines of the passage, the translator-redactors clearly treat Erictho differently to the male supernatural figures analysed above.

Following this initial description, the translator-redactors reduce the horror ascribed to Erictho by greatly shortening the long list of her vile exploits given in the Latin. The only remnant of this account in the Old Norse is ‘Hon var vǫn med gǫlldrum sinum at vekia upp dauda menn. ok lata þa segia ser þat er hon villdí’ (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 319) ‘She would often wake up dead men with her magic, and command them to say what she wanted’. The removal of the classical accounts of her magic place all focus on this one trait, which has numerous parallels with supernatural women within Old Norse literature. Such figures often communicate with the dead in some way; the *vǫlva*, for example, is frequently depicted ‘sitting out’ to connect with the dead (see John McKinnell 2005, 197-217). The phrase ‘vekia upp dauda menn’ (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 319) ‘to wake up dead men’ in *Rómverja saga* has no Latin source within the Lucan but instead parallels language found within Norwegian law codes prohibiting magic: ‘væcia trǫll upp oc fremia heiðni með því’ (R. Keyser and P. A. Munch 1846, vol. 1, 265, *Hákonarbók* 19; see also 362 and 372 *Ældre Borgarthings-Christenret* II.25, III.22) ‘to wake up a *trǫll* and practice heathen worship with it’. A clear Northern parallel with the lack of a Latin one suggests that the translator-redactors are depicting their Erictho using the phrasing and concepts of the target literary culture. Additionally, later in the passage the translator-redactors describe the magical skills possessed by Erictho: ‘Enn sua mikit er sagt af hennar fiolkyngi. at hon matti naliga hræra alla iǫrdína. ok sua hafit. ok hon matti fara i gegnum fiǫll ok hamra’ (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 320-21) ‘And so much was said of her magic that she could almost stir the whole earth and also the sea, and she could go

through mountains and ridges'.[9] Meissner (1910, 162) notes that the first part of this line is a 'freie Nachbildung von Luc. 6,469 ff.' 'free rendering of Lucan', but that the latter half describing Erictho's ability to travel through mountains is an 'echt nordischer Zusatz' 'genuinely Nordic addition'.[10] This skill is commonly ascribed to Old Norse *trǫll* and has no parallel in the Latin.[11] The types of magic selected by the translator-redactors for inclusion or omission suggest a domestication of Erictho.

To temporarily resurrect the body, Erictho chants spells and strikes the corpse with a snake. The body then speaks, telling Sextus Pompey of the fate of his army and the outcome of the war. Introducing the speech, the Old Norse translator-redactors call the body a *draugr*, the Old Norse term for the undead. This is perhaps an attempt at domestication, but the term was also found in the mostly foreignising depictions of the undead discussed above. Here, however, the translator-redactors go further, using this figure to develop the associations they have made between Erictho and Old Norse ideas of female magic, particularly the *vǫlur*. When the body awakens, its first words are: 'Meín eitt er mer at þui er þu hefir mik vpp vaktan. enn æigi mvn ek segia fleira enn ek ueít' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 322) 'It caused me harm when you had me woken up, but I shall not speak more than I know'. This has no direct source in the

[9] In AM 595 a-b 4to., the word 'kænleik' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 320) 'sagacity' is used instead of 'fjolkyngi' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 320) 'magic'. Additionally, 'hollt' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 321) 'wood' is found instead of 'fjǫll' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 321) 'mountain'.

[10] The aforementioned difference in the wording of the version within AM 595 a-b 4to. may therefore reduce the domestication of the episode in the earlier redaction of the saga, as Erictho is able to move through the woods, not mountains. This earlier version, however, contains all the other domesticating features in the depiction of Erictho explored in this article.

[11] See, for example, the dream figure emerging from the mountain peaks within *Brennu-Njáls saga* (Einar Ól. Sveinsson, 1954, 346) and the 'undarligr madur' 'extraordinary man' of *Viktors saga ok blávus* (Jónas Kristjánsson, 1964, 43) who bursts from a mountain and causes an avalanche.

Latin, which is especially unusual as it comes at the start of the speech; the translator-redactors tend to render the start of speeches the most accurately (see Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, clxxv). These lines, however, bear resemblance to the eddic poetry that features *vǫlur*, particularly *Vǫluspá* and *Baldrs draumar*. The famous refrain within *Vǫluspá* reads, 'Vituð ér enn – eða hvat?' (Guðni Jónsson 1954, st. 27, 28, 33 etc.) 'Do you know yet – or what?', and the *vǫlva* here speaks many times about what she knows. The *draugr* of *Rómverja saga*, referencing the limits to his knowledge, perhaps recalls the emphasis on knowledge associated with the *vǫlva* and her magic within *Vǫluspá*. Additionally, while some critics like Jenny Jochens (1996, 42) believe the aforementioned refrain to be an expression of the *vǫlva*'s power over Óðinn, others take the opposite view; Lars Lönnroth (2002, 13) writes that the *vǫlva* is 'expressing her reluctance to speak'. If this is the case, the refrain finds a parallel with the one in *Baldrs draumar*, when Óðinn confronts a *vǫlva* to ask the significance of Baldr's bad dreams. It is clear from the start that the *vǫlva* does not want to give this information to Óðinn; she is *nauðigr* (Guðni Jónsson, 1954, st. 4) 'unwillingly' awoken from the dead. The refrain of the *vǫlva* within *Baldrs draumar* reads:

'nauðug sagðak,	I spoke unwillingly,
nú mun ek þegja.'	now I shall be silent.
(Guðni Jónsson 1954, st. 9, 11, etc.)	

The initial line of the *draugr*'s speech in *Rómverja saga*, where he talks of his *meín* (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 322) 'harm' seems to recall this idea of a *vǫlva* speaking reluctantly, after her inquirer places her under duress. Although in *Rómverja saga* it is not the *vǫlva* but a body she resurrects that speaks unwillingly, this follows the traditional pattern of a magical person 'sitting out' (see McKinnell 2005, 200) to temporarily raise the dead, who speak unwillingly.

In adding this initial line to the speech, the translator-redactors draw the account yet closer to literary depictions of supernatural women in the target culture.

Other Female Prophets

Erictho is not the only woman within *Rómverja saga* who predicts the future. The present analysis focuses on the following figures: the priestess at Apollo's temple, the *spákona* who warns Caesar of his assassination, and the woman who floats in the air to deliver her prophecy. There is also mention of a sybil's prophecy in the *Catilinae* translation, but the reference is so brief that it does not deserve extensive treatment here.

The story of Apollo's priestess Phemonoe ends very differently in the Old Norse translation compared to the Latin source.[12] The basic elements of the story remain the same: she is forced to enter Apollo's temple to gain knowledge of the future, fakes a prophecy, is forced further into the temple, and finally speaks the words of the god. The first major change made by the translator-redactors is the removal of the line explaining the reasons behind the priestess' fear and falsity: Delphic priestesses will die after Apollo speaks through them. This removes much of the exploration of female plight present in the Lucan passage. The most significant change, however, relates to the ending of the story. In Lucan's *Pharsalia,* the priestess gives her prophecy (that Appius will escape the troubles of war in Euboea) and then dies. Appius sails away, but immediately dies of other causes upon arriving in Euboea. The translator-redactors end this section of *Rómverja saga* as follows:

> Appíus geck or hofínu. ok for med sueít sína í eyna Roboram. ok hugdi at hann mvndi þar taka Riki. Enn litlu sidaR enn hann kom þar. tok hann sott ok do. Enn

[12] This passage is also preserved in the earlier redaction within AM 595 a-b 4to. The passage is slightly longer than that of AM 226 fol., and deviates from it in a few places, but the differences between the versions are not significant for the present analysis.

> mærín fannz uítlaus aðr uígdu vatní var stǫckt yfir hana. (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 295)
>
> Appius went out from the temple and travelled with his company to the island of Robora. He thought he would take power there. But a little after he arrived there, he became ill and died. And the maiden was found to be mad, until holy water was sprinkled upon her.

Here, instead of a genuine, if somewhat misleading, prophecy from a classical god, we have the ravings of a mad woman who is only cured by Christian holy water.[13] Although this passage does not show the same domestication as the Erictho section, the Christianisation of the passage and its subversion of the authority of the classical ideas of female magic can be considered a different type of domestication. This is especially true for a clerical audience, who might have distrusted female prophets. Although the classical prophecy of the male figures discussed above correctly predicts the future, classical female prophecy is rendered as being inaccurate and associated with madness.

Two prophetic women within *Rómverja saga* do retain their classical, foreign depictions: the *spákona* (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 384) 'prophetess' who warns Caesar about the Ides of March and the *húsfrú* (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 247) 'housewife' that is lifted into the air and has a vision of the fields of Philippi.[14] The story of a woman attempting to warn

[13] In the version within AM 595 a-b 4to., the word 'uígdu' (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 295) 'consecrated, holy' is omitted. While this might reduce the Christianisation of this passage in this version, the holy nature of the water is perhaps implied by the context.

[14] The Ides of March are mistakenly rendered as the *kalandis daga* (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 384) in *Rómverja saga*.

Caesar of his assassination is not included within *Rómverja saga*'s primary sources; the translator-redactors have looked for the story in other places. The assassination of Caesar and the role of the ignored seeress is a famous story, so it is likely that the translator-redactors wished to render it accurately, rather than adapting it as they do with the other, less famous female figures. The prophecy of the *húsfrú* is included among the portents listed before the Roman civil war. In the Latin, she dreams she is lifted into the air and travels to the fields of Philippi. In the Norse, the only major change is that the figure is actually lifted into the air and hangs there to speak her prophecy, perhaps resulting from a misunderstanding of the Latin. I can offer no explanation of why this figure does not follow the trends witnessed elsewhere in *Rómverja saga*, where the classical concepts are removed from the female supernatural characters. There is, however, one figure within this same passage who does follow the pattern of domestication outlined above.

Female Portents

As chaos ensues in Rome, a mysterious female figure stalks the streets, adding to the people's terror; this female figure, one of the portents of the suffering ahead, is very different in the Latin and the Old Norse.[15] Lucan writes,

> quique colunt iunctos extremis moenibus agros
> diffugiunt: ingens urbem cingebat Erinys
> excutiens pronam flagranti vertice pinum
> stridentisque comas (Lucan 1988, 1:571-574)

Neither of these passages are found in the earlier redaction within AM 595 a-b 4to.

[15] This figure is not found within AM 595 a-b 4to.

> Everyone that tends to the fields adjoining the outer city walls scattered: an enormous *erinys* (Fury) encircled the city, shaking hissing hair and a prone pine tree with a burning top.

Lucan then goes on to detail Megaera's previous exploits, including her connection to the Maenads and the fear she struck into Hercules. These details are all removed from the Old Norse account, and the figure's description is changed significantly:

> Ok þeir menn sem næstir biǫGu borgar ueGíunum. sa fara at borginni trǫll konu mikla. ok ogurliga. ok hafdi i hendi fork mikinn af gloand iarní. ok sua syndiz þeim sem hon hefdi borgína i fadmí ser (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 245-46)

> And those men who lived nearest to the city walls saw a great and terrible *trǫll*-woman going to the city, and she had in her hand a large staff of red-hot iron, and so it seemed to them as if she held the city in her embrace.

Instead of an *erinys* 'fury', we have a *trǫllkona* '*trǫll*-woman', and numerous elements of her description are changed into traits more familiar to Old Norse literature. *Erinyes* are frequently depicted with snake hair (see John Roberts 2007, 269), like the *erinys* within *Pharsalia*. The half-line 'stridentisque comas' (Lucan 1988, 1:574) 'hissing hair' is not translated into the Old Norse. This conscious removal of classical material brings the *trǫllkona* closer to Old Norse representations of supernatural women, who never have snake hair.

The item held by this female figure also changes: a burning tree in the Latin and a red-hot iron *forkr* 'staff' in the Old Norse. *Trǫll* are frequently depicted carrying an iron staff, often called a *járnstafr*, though other names are also used. A *járnstafr* is carried by a *trǫll*, *jǫtunn*

‘giant’, or *trǫll*-like creature in several sagas, including *Qrvar-Odds saga* (Boer 1888, 43), *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1941, 271) and *Brennu-Njáls saga* (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1954, 346-48). *Trǫll* are also found carrying other metal items such as the *trog* ‘trough’ and *skálm* ‘sword’ held by the *trǫllkona* of *Grettis saga* (Guðni Jónsson 1936, 212). No scholarship exists exploring this trope or the reasons behind it. It seems clear, however, that the translator-redactors of *Rómverja saga* wished to render this female figure as an Old Norse *trǫll*, and so placed in her hand an iron staff, which is commonly used to depict these figures within Old Norse literature. The description of the iron as *gloand* ‘glowing, red-hot’ likely translates the heat of the fiery tree in the original Latin, since the phrase *gloand iarní* ‘glowing iron’ is only used within Old Norse literature to reference the iron ordeal (see https://onp.ku.dk/onp/onp.php?o41450), which does not seem appropriate here. The use of the word *forkr* rather than *stafr* suggests a twisted, branching staff. Leszek Gardeła, following extensive research into staffs in the Viking Age, writes of ‘The concept of “divine crookedness”, whereby the unusual shape and “basket handle” of the staffs from archaeological contexts symbolises the otherness of their bearers as well as their magical skills’ (Gardeła 2008, 71). Several ostensibly magical staffs in archaeological finds have been crooked or in some way branching, and this may have been considered a magical quality (see also Gardeła 2016). If this is the case, the branching nature of the *forkr* perhaps accentuates the pagan, and specifically Norse, aspects of the *trǫllkona*.

It is clear from the numerous changes that are made to this *erinys* that the translator-redactors wished to re-write her to align with the target literary culture, removing her classical features and history to do so. This is especially interesting as the figure is found within a mostly foreignising passage, just before the appearance of the undead Marius and Sulla and the prophecies of Arruns discussed in the first section of this article. Amongst the men written with

classical concepts, a *trǫllkona* appears, who aligns more with the Old Norse than the classical literary tradition.

One final example of a supernatural female figure is still to be explored: the personification of the city of Rome who appears to Caesar before he begins the civil war.[16] In Lucan, as Caesar advances his army, he sees a vision of a classical mourning woman, described thus:

> ingens visa duci patriae trepidantis imago
> clara per obscuram vultu maestissima noctem
> turrigero canos effundens vertice crines
> caesarie lacera nudisque astare lacertis
> et gemitu permixta loqui (Lucan 1988, I:187-190)

> …a great, trembling image of the fatherland was seen by the leader clear through the night with a most miserable face, white locks flowing from her crowned head. With torn hair and bare arms, she stood and spoke, with groans mixed in.

In the Old Norse, her speech is introduced with this description:

> Þa dreymdi hann um nátt at kona kom til hans | mikil ok ogurlig. hon hafði laust hárít. ok bera alla armleGína ok mællti (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 235)

[16] This figure is not found within AM 595 a-b 4to.

> Then he dreamed at night that a woman came to him, great and terrible. She had loose hair and bare arms and spoke.

The night vision of the Latin becomes explicitly a dream in the Old Norse, which has an extensive literary tradition of depicting dreams (see, for example, Georgia Dunham Kelchner 1935; Lars Lönnroth 2002; etc.). The woman is also described with the phrase *mikil ok ogurlig* (Þorbjörg Helgadóttir 2010, 235) 'great and terrible', which likely translates the word *ingens* (Lucan 1988, I:187) 'great', 'unnatural'. The phrase *mikill ok ógurligr*, however, is frequently used within Old Norse literature to describe *trǫll*; this same word-pairing is used to describe the *trǫllkonur* analysed above. Although the figure maintains many of her classical concepts, including the description of her loose hair and bare arms, this choice of word-pair and the rendering of the vision as a dream appears to subtly align the figure with concepts of the supernatural within the target literary culture: *trǫll* frequently appear in dreams within Old Norse literature.

Overall, although some of the supernatural female figures retain all or most of their classical features, a striking tendency to domesticate these women can be observed. The figure of Erictho is turned from a classical witch into an Old Norse *trǫllkona*, with numerous similarities to the *vǫlva* figure. The *erinys* stalking the streets of Rome similarly becomes on Old Norse *trǫll*, carrying a staff of iron instead of a flaming tree. The classical prophecies of Phemonoe are undermined, as the translator-redactors equate her with a mad woman rather than a prophetess. There is a clear tendency within *Rómverja saga* to domesticate the supernatural female figures, drawing them closer to the depictions within the target literary culture, which stands in sharp contrast to the translator-redactors' treatment of the male supernatural figures.

Conclusions

Having established that there is a clear divide between the treatment of the male and female supernatural figures within *Rómverja saga*, this article now explores the potential reasons why the translator-redactors may have depicted the female characters differently. While it is tempting to suggest that the translator-redactors domesticated the female figures far more than the male because such strong ideas of the female supernatural exist within Old Norse literary culture, where *nornir*, *vǫlur*, and *trǫllkonur* are frequently depicted, there are also numerous examples of male supernatural figures which the translator-redactors might have called upon. François-Xavier Dillmann (1986, 235-406) argues that magic is evenly distributed between men and women across the *Íslendingasǫgur*; the translator-redactors had as many examples of male magicians on which to base the depiction of Arruns as they did female witches for the portrayal of Erictho. For example, within *Eyrbyggja saga* there are various portrayals of both male and female magicians, as well as *draugar*. *Eyrbyggja saga* is chosen here as an example not only for its numerous depictions of pagan practices, but also because various scholars (Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards 1972, 12-13; Lee M. Hollander 1977, xvi; etc.) believe the saga was originally composed in the thirteenth-century at or closely connected to the monastery in Helgafell: the same monastery where AM 226 fol. was written. The domestication of the female but not the male supernatural figures in *Rómverja saga* cannot therefore be explained satisfactorily by the argument that there is not as strong a literary precedent for representing the supernatural male; a text containing examples of supernatural figures of both genders was likely written in connection with the same monastery just a century earlier. If the translator-redactors had numerous examples from the target culture to call upon when representing the figures of both genders, there may have been some other reason that the female figures are domesticated more extensively than the male.

The domestication of the supernatural female within *Rómverja saga* is not only enacted through the insertion of familiar Old Norse depictions of women, but also through the negation of the classical female power possessed by Apollo's priestess. Instead of a woman able to speak the voice of the god, the figure becomes a mad woman who must be cured by Christianity. A strong tradition of representing the supernatural female within Old Norse literature would not explain this change. While the Christianisation of this passage is not surprising for a text produced within a monastic setting and written in a manuscript that also contains a biblical translation, it is significant that the translator-redactors only Christianise this female supernatural figure. The men are allowed to exist in their classical unfamiliarity, but the female supernatural figures are changed in the process of translation to represent something familiar: Old Norse depictions of *trǫllkonur* and *vǫlur* or a mad heathen woman in need of Christian intervention.

In searching for a reason why the translator-redactors might include depictions of women from the target literary culture, negate the classical power of women from the source text, and make domesticating changes of this magnitude exclusively with the female figures, it seems this comes down to gender and power. The supernatural women in the text appear to be confined to the pre-established traditions of representing magical, monstrous, and Othered women. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (2000, 13), in their seminal book exploring women and literature, write, 'As a creation "penned" by man, moreover, woman has been "penned up" or "penned in."' The women of *Rómverja saga* appear to be 'penned in' to Old Norse literary ideas of what a supernatural woman is, and how she should be depicted. While the male figures within *Rómverja saga* are allowed to be multivarious, displaying classical features from the source text which are unusual in the target literary culture, the supernatural women are not given the same variety. The female figures, with explicitly Nordic features, including iron

staffs, mountain-dwelling, and *vǫlva*-like dialogue, are 'penned in', potentially minimising and controlling their otherwise transgressive power.

The Old Norse concepts of the *vǫlva*, *trǫllkona,* and *valkyrja* are known and frequently represented within the literary sphere. Although they may be seen as powerful, transgressive, and even monstrous women, their familiarity in the literature reduces their transgression. As Ármann Jakobsson (2011, 286) writes in his study of the supernatural, 'The harder it becomes to classify or name a monster, the more powerful it is'. The known monster is weaker than the unfamiliar. Classical witches, *erinyes,* and seeresses are familiar, and thus controlled, in their own literary culture, but they are foreign and Other in the Norse literary sphere. The classical female supernatural, who does not conform to Old Norse categories of the acceptable female monster, might therefore require change, re-writing, and, ultimately, domestication to control her power. The frequent domestication of the classical supernatural women within *Rómverja saga* may therefore represent a desire to minimise unusual and potentially transgressive female power. This would explain both the inclusion of specifically Old Norse literary markers in the depictions of the supernatural women as well as the minimisation of classical female power.

Writing on Monster Theory, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (1996, viii) suggests that the fascination with monsters stems from 'the twin desire to name that which is difficult to comprehend and to domesticate (and therefore disempower) that which threatens'. In relating the supernatural women of *Rómverja saga* to Old Norse portrayals of female magic, the translator-redactors give the women a recognisable identity, as *trǫllkonur* or *vǫlur*, and simultaneously remove their threatening, transgressive power. The translation process visible within *Rómverja saga* reveals an acceptance of multivarious depictions of the male supernatural but a desire to control and minimise female power, as represented through literary depictions of supernatural women.

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