

## ABSTRACT

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Title: *Egil's Saga* and *The Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue* in the Formation of Icelandic Identity

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*Egil's Saga* and *The Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue*, written in Iceland during the thirteenth century, were composed amidst a transitional period in Icelandic history. The island was struggling with internal conflict driven in part by the decentralized nature of its society and outside pressure from Norway. The fear of annexation by the Norwegians and the increase in strife between Icelanders meant that the importance of a shared identity in Iceland was amplified. The authors of *Egil's Saga* and *The Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue* recognized this, and in writing them chose to emphasize Icelanders' ties to the land, law and legal practices, social customs, and past interactions with the Norwegian crown in order to cement those as key pieces of Icelandic identity. This thesis showcases that, through a detailed reading of the Sagas along with a study of Icelandic medieval history up to the end of the thirteenth century. Understanding the historical context of the authors allows the reader to see the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, moves made by the Sagas' authors to achieve their goal of influencing the formation of Icelandic identity.