

## **Our minds are in the gutter, but some of us are watching Starz... Sex, Violence and Dirty Medievalism in *Camelot* and *The Pillars of the Earth***

---

In a 2011 *Yahoo!* review for the medieval trio *Game of Thrones*, *The Borgias*, and *Camelot*, online reviewer Elizabeth Periale proposed that all three series offered a “sexy blueprint”: “Start with a dash of intrigue, add some blood and gore, and then throw in as much sex as you can fit into an episode.”<sup>1</sup> Be it the blood and nudity of Starz’ *Camelot*, the bedroom power plays of Showtime’s *The Borgias*, or the violence and sexual intrigue of HBO’s *Game of Thrones*, in the era of cable television it seems that the term ‘medieval’ has come to mean ‘time to put the children to bed’. But why do cable channels in particular favour a dirty medievalism over the merrie Olde England exemplified by network offerings such as BBC’s *Merlin* and *Robin Hood*? Examining the use of sex and violence in *Camelot* and *The Pillars of the Earth*, this paper will look at the commercial and marketing impact of this “sexy blueprint” to question which came first: was the dirty medievalism seized upon by Starz as a vehicle, or has the sexy blueprint of Starz been the impetus for a resurgence in Eco’s “shaggy medievalism”?

---

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://tv.yahoo.com/news/lots-sex-little-violence-game-thrones-borgias-camelot-221600305.html>