

## David Starkey attacks 'pretty girl historians who show off their looks on their book covers'

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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**Attack: Historian David Starkey has branded work by female historians as being like Mills & Boon**

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Historian David Starkey has launched a scathing attack on his female rivals, branding their works 'historical Mills and Boon'.

The acid-tongued broadcaster and writer also complained that female historians are 'usually quite pretty' and keen to show off their good looks on their book covers.

In a television interview he went on to dismiss women historians as having names that 'usually begin and end with A'.

An obvious target is Amanda Foreman, who once posed naked holding copies of her book *Georgiana, Duchess Of Devonshire*, based on the life of the 18th century aristocrat.

But his comments have been taken as a wider attack on other glamorous historians such as Bettany Hughes, who has won nearly as much acclaim for her appearance as for her engaging documentaries about the ancient world.

Yesterday female writers hit back at Dr Starkey, who himself made his name with a gossipy Channel 4 documentary series, *The Six Wives Of Henry VIII*, screened in 2001.

Dr Foreman said: 'There's something clearly wrong with a male historian whose name begins with a D and ends with a D.'

She described Dr Starkey, 65, as a first-rate historian, but added: 'He seems to be incredibly upset by women historians and probably feels under-appreciated.'



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**Names that 'usually begin and end with A': Lady Antonia Fraser and Professor Amanda Vickery hit back**

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Amanda Vickery, professor of history at Royal Holloway, University of London, was also surprised by Dr Starkey's remarks. 'Who knew that David finds me attractive?' she told The Sunday Times.

'Maybe he has a secret weakness for feminists. It can only be envy as he can be charming face to face.

'He was very flattering about my research when I was on a panel with him and anxious to ally himself with those of us who slave away in the archives.'



**Daring: Amanda Foreman once posed naked with her books**

Lady Antonia Fraser, who has written numerous biographies of historical figures, was bemused by Dr Starkey's comments.

She said he had been very complimentary about one particular young female historian and wrote a line for the cover of her book.

'Starkey called it "an impressive and powerful debut",' she said.

'The writer's name is Anna Whitelock and I think Anna happens to begin and end with an A.'

Lucy Worsley, chief curator at Historic Royal Palaces and author of *Cavalier: A Tale Of Passion, Chivalry And Great Houses*, described Dr Starkey's comments as 'bizarre'.

She added: 'If it wasn't insulting and degrading to judge historians by their looks, I would point out that Dr Starkey looks like a cross owl in the pictures on his own book covers.'

Last year Dr Starkey, former lecturer at the London School of Economics and honorary fellow at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, accused women of turning Tudor history into a 'bizarre soap opera' by focusing on Henry VIII's personal life.

In the interview, to be screened on Sky Arts later this month, Dr Starkey, who is openly gay, also discusses civil partnerships and describes how, as a child, he was 'born quite badly crippled' with a double club foot.

## THE RUDEST MAN IN BRITAIN

**DR DAVID** Starkey appears to revel in his unofficial title, 'the rudest man in Britain'.

The historian has attacked the Royal Family, describing the Queen as a housewife who lacks a 'serious education', and comparing her to Joseph Goebbels in her attitude to culture.

He said Princess Diana was hysterical and 'extraordinarily destructive'.

Last year he provoked fury by describing Scotland, Wales and Ireland as

'feeble little countries'. He also said Scottish poet Robert Burns was 'deeply boring' and dismissed bagpipes as 'awful'.

Dr Starkey previously called Mary Queen of Scots 'a whore and a trollop and a murderess', and accused the nation of 'adoring failure'.

And he branded ex Scottish Education Minister Peter Peacock an 'intellectual pygmy' over his plans to axe school history lessons.

