

MORE FANTASY ARCHAEOLOGY

– [the never-ending search for the Holy Grail ...](#)

The BBC is reporting what looks like another publicity scam

Fascination with the Holy Grail has lasted for centuries, and now the Bletchley Park code-breakers have joined the hunt. But what is it that's made the grail the definition of something humans are always searching for but never actually finding?

Could an obscure inscription on a 250-year-old monument in a Staffordshire garden point the way to the Holy Grail – the jewelled chalice reportedly used by Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper?

That is one theory entertained by Richard Kemp, the general manager of Lord Lichfield's Shugborough estate in Staffs.

Kemp has called in world-renowned code-breakers to try to decipher a cryptic message carved into the Shepherd's Monument on the Lichfield estate.

The monument, built around 1748, features an image of

one of Nicholas Poussin's paintings, and beneath it the letters D.O.U.O.S.V.A.V.V.M.

[Link]

As Brendan O'Neill puts it

The Grail – because it is mysterious and has always belonged in the realms of the imagination – is a marvellous focus for the new genre of 'imagined history', the idea that all history as taught and recorded is a vast cover-up. Once this kind of idea becomes current, particularly with the internet, it acquires a life of its own – regardless of whether it has any basis in reality.

Again we have here a classic and modernist narrative of overlooked clues, microfragments to be decoded by an inspired forensic imagination in pursuit of the truth that is out there but has been covered up by the state, the church, or ignorance, or by superstition. And at the heart – the artifact, mysterious and possessed of aura, veritable witness of history itself.

It is Dan Brown's Da Vinci code.

I like the association with the internet's new media – microfragments in a sea of noise and triviality – and all with lives of their own as we track them down in pursuit of ourselves.

All in all – profoundly archaeological.

