

Well, faith and begorrah and thanks be to Patrick, he, who banished the snakes off our green and lovely island and who, when I prayed to him for wind, being the time of year that was in it, said to me, “I’ll be way too busy on Friday. Appointments all over the place, from Chicago to Mooloolaba, and I have a bit of explaining to do as well about Sheelah, who some researcher at Cork University has found out about; so I’ll look after you on Thursday.”

“But,” he said, “Hy Breasal is not a myth. Giovanni Caboto, or John Cabot as his English employers who were never great at languages were want to call him, was a great lad, but just because he didn’t find it, it doesn’t mean it isn’t there. All you need is fait’.”

“You see,” he went on, “Gio went looking for Hy Breasal in the wrong place, and sure what he found, thousands of miles off the Connemara coast, wasn’t it at all. Any eejit would have told him that was Vinland, which those mad bad feckers the Vikings had already discovered hundreds of year earlier. Calling it America was just a bit of bourgeois revisionism by the Brits.” Obviously Pat had stayed up to speed on the politics things over the centuries.

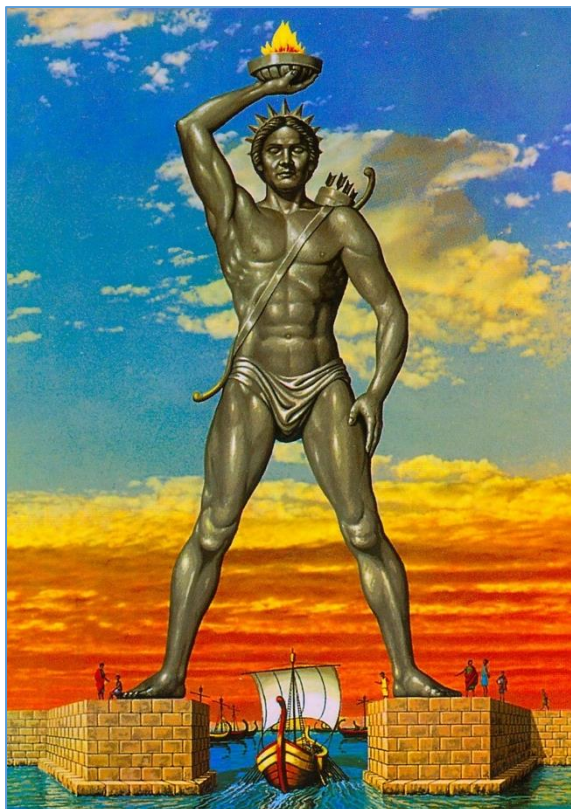
“No” – yes, we had a right old chat – “on a clear day,” he continued, “from the top of Croagh Patrick, you can see all the isles off the Mayo (Clew Bay, a right mess) and Galway coast.”



“So, I’ll tell you what, I’ll climb up there again on Thursday, cast a spell that’ll make isle of the Brasil clan more visible – it’ll be at 53N00.0000 010W00.0000 exactly, trust me – and I’ll talk to Noaa, the God of wind. I know, I know, there is only one God, but you know as well as I know, the ones that were there before, just like Hy Breasal didn’t disappear either, were never happy to simply ‘exit stage left’.”

He was getting a bit verbose at this stage, was Paddy, and it got worse.

“I’ll tell you what, because you are from Cork, I’ll talk to Sol, as well. Sol is the God of the Sun and Quantum Jumps. Heals goes by the name of Helios, here’s a statue to him.”



“Quantum Jumps!?” I fairly shouted, “What the feck are them!” I was getting more Oirish by the minute.

“Well”, he replied, “Einstein said ‘God does not play dice’. Being a Hebrew, he would have been talking about Jawa. A lot of his peers at the time – it was the start of the last century – did not agree with him. Guys like Schrodinger, Heisenberg, Pauli and Bohr.”

Paddy was showing off now, going off at a tangent.

“Being a monotheist,” he continued back on track “Einstein would not have believed in Sol, who, however, whatever about God or Jawa, does appear to roll'm. It starts the moment Sol registers you as being part of the boat (not human) race. A few people always show a hop – Sol calls ‘m server hops not quantum hops, never mind – ahead, and immediately rank in the lead. Why, you may well ask?”

“Well, it has to do with measurement and the speed of light. To measure anything you have to shine a light on it. Light is very fast, but not infinitely fast, and carries a quantum (uhuh) of energy. It gets complicated and Sol is only a minor God, you’ll understand. But as far as Sol is concerned, if you are part of his boat race, because of it all, you can only be seen at the start or at the end of a server jump.”

“Uhuh,” I echoed, thinking he’s a bit of a physicist too, that patron saint. Wonder was my old prof Ernest Walton at Trinity College any relation of his? Now that we know about Sheelah, like.

“Look it gets more complicated still, but to make a long story short, Sol, when you get to the end of your life in his boat race, has to make an estimate as to when you crossed the line. All he has is your last time and position prior to crossing that line. And, because of all the myriad of prayers you and your fellow participants during the race have made – called DCs, divine communications – your hops will be that bit out of sync with the next guy and the next guy.”

“So, what I have done for you is asked Sol to make sure you get a good jump out of the start and to watch over you a bit that you don’t feck it up with a non-synchronous DC. The rest is up to you. Start at 11:33:30 and I have it from Sol himself that you will get round in less than 4 hours and 7 minutes”.

All right then,” I said.

“One more thing,” said the saint, “look, because he’s from Australia, circuitously, mind you, and because my true love Sheelah left me for Australia, all those many hundreds of years ago, if your mate, Kipper he calls himself I think, starts a little after you, I’ll talk to Sol on his behalf as well. If Sol is willing, he’ll then finish within a server jump of you. All right?”

All right!