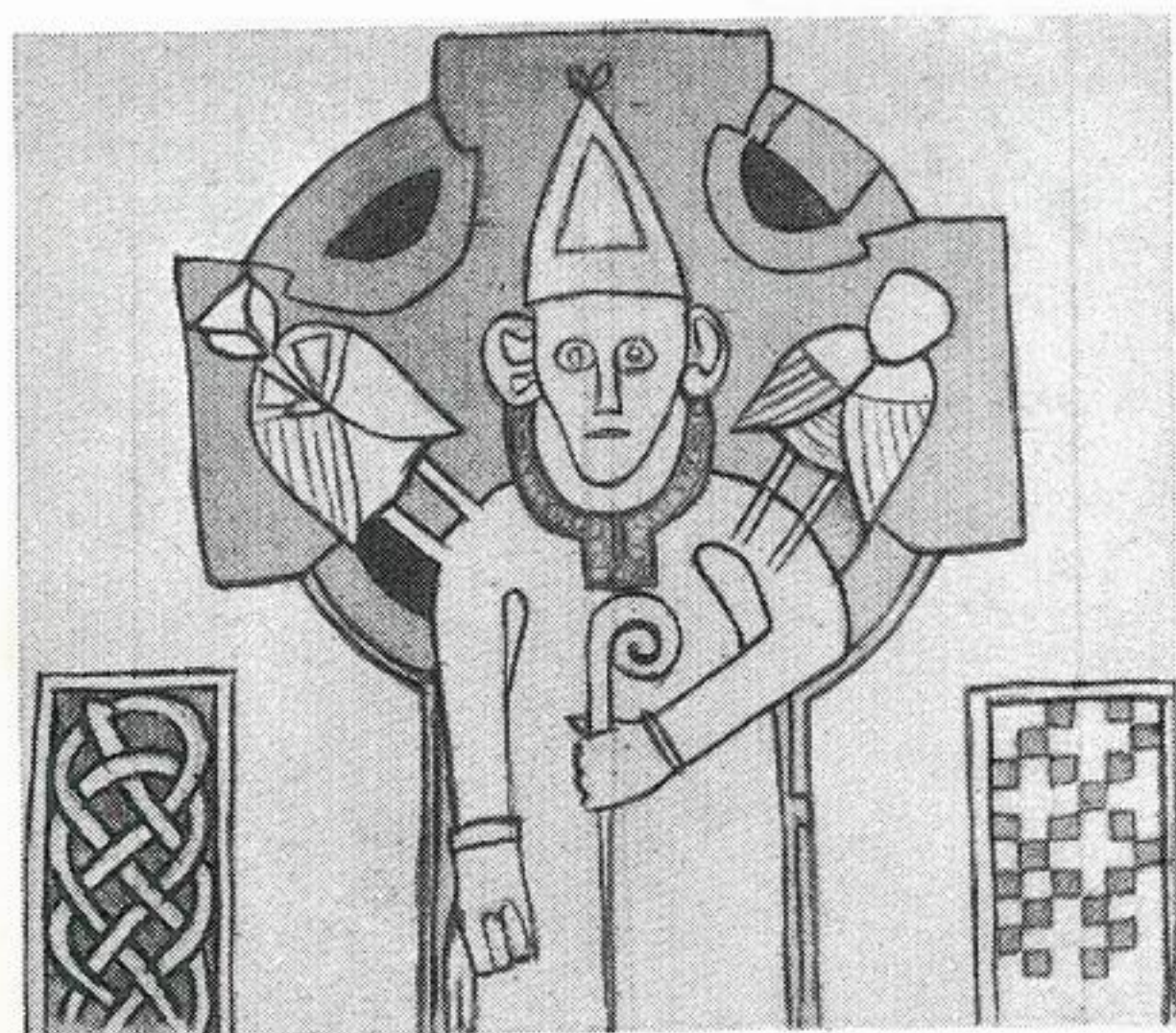
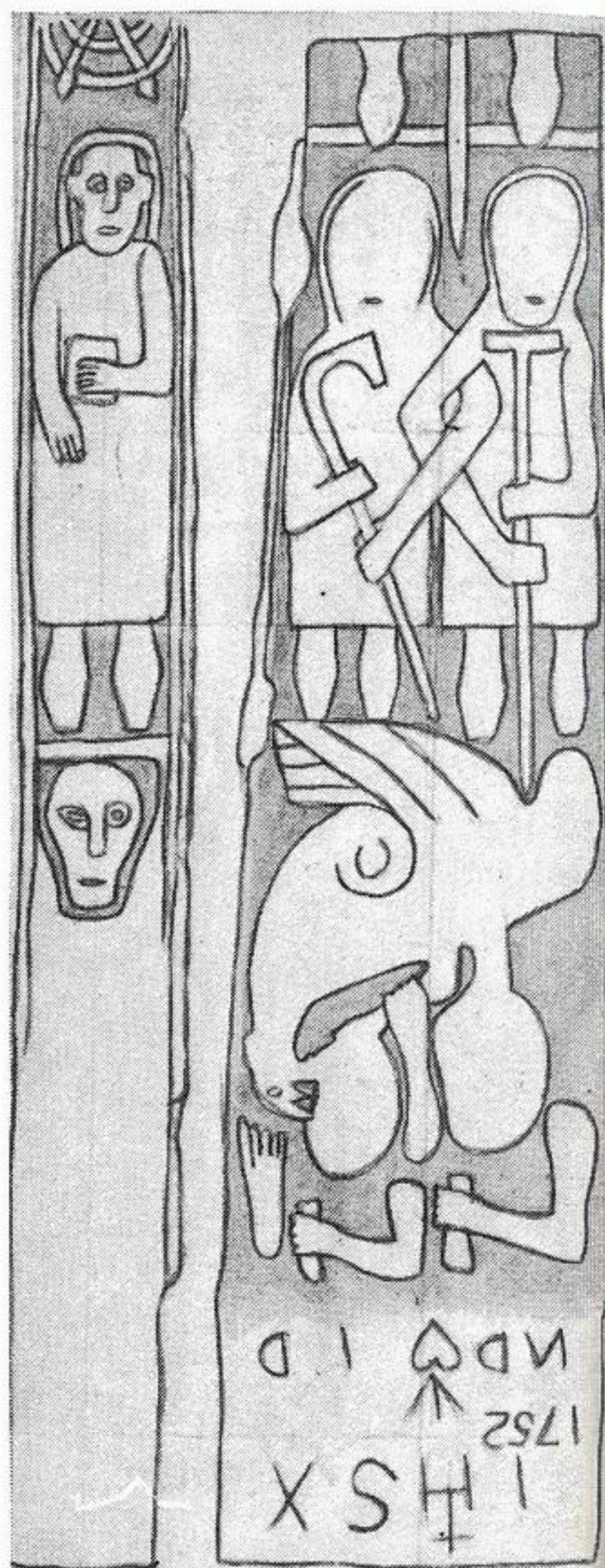


PLATE I.



High Cross at Kilfenora—Top and recently discovered shaft.



Discovery of High Cross at Kilfenora

By LUBA KAFTANNIKOFF.

It is traditionally stated that the "Church of the White Ridge" once possessed seven crosses. Six are still in existence (counting as one of these the shattered portions which rest against the south wall of the church, and another which was removed to Clarisford, Killaloe). Yet another cross was discovered last year, when, at the writer's suggestion, two young architects, Patrick Hamilton and Robin Walker, made investigations in the churchyard at Kilfenora.

Westropp, in his "Notes around Kilfenora" (*West Clare*, published by the Munster Archaeological Society), mentions a "monumental stone," broken across the top, which lies, recumbent, to the north path leading to the door of the present church, and gives a rough drawing of it. It now seems evident that this stone is, in fact, the shaft of a High Cross, and that the broken cross which stands in a socket of rock against the wall of the sacristy (N.) once formed its "head." The carving on the head and base is identical in character.

As will be seen from illustration, the subject of carving on the face of this shaft is very unusual. Two figures are portrayed with arms linked; one holding the tau-headed staff still used by Greek and Orthodox clerics, and the other the pastoral, drop-ended, crozier which is characteristic of early Irish metal work. At the lower end of the shaft is a bird, apparently whispering into the ear of one of the two heads carved at extreme base. Two almost obliterated arms and hands stretch up to grasp the legs of this bird. One side of the shaft is carved as shewn, and the interlacing on corresponding side of the head is carried down a short distance. The other side seems almost plain—there may be a little of the "dice" design (as on right side of head) and some indeterminate scroll work.

The face of the shaft which is concealed definitely seems to be carved, as is the face of the head now turned to the wall of the sacristy. Neither carving can be seen, but it is traceable by the hand. As that on the shaft has been protected from the weather, since 1752 (presuming the cross to have fallen at that date), it might be in a good state of preservation. Altogether it seems desirable that this monument should be raised and re-erected.

It should be remembered that the socket on top of the "head" (for mortice of capstone) now forms a receptacle for a drip from the eave, and, unless this cross is speedily removed, the residual water will split the head. Already it is cracked.