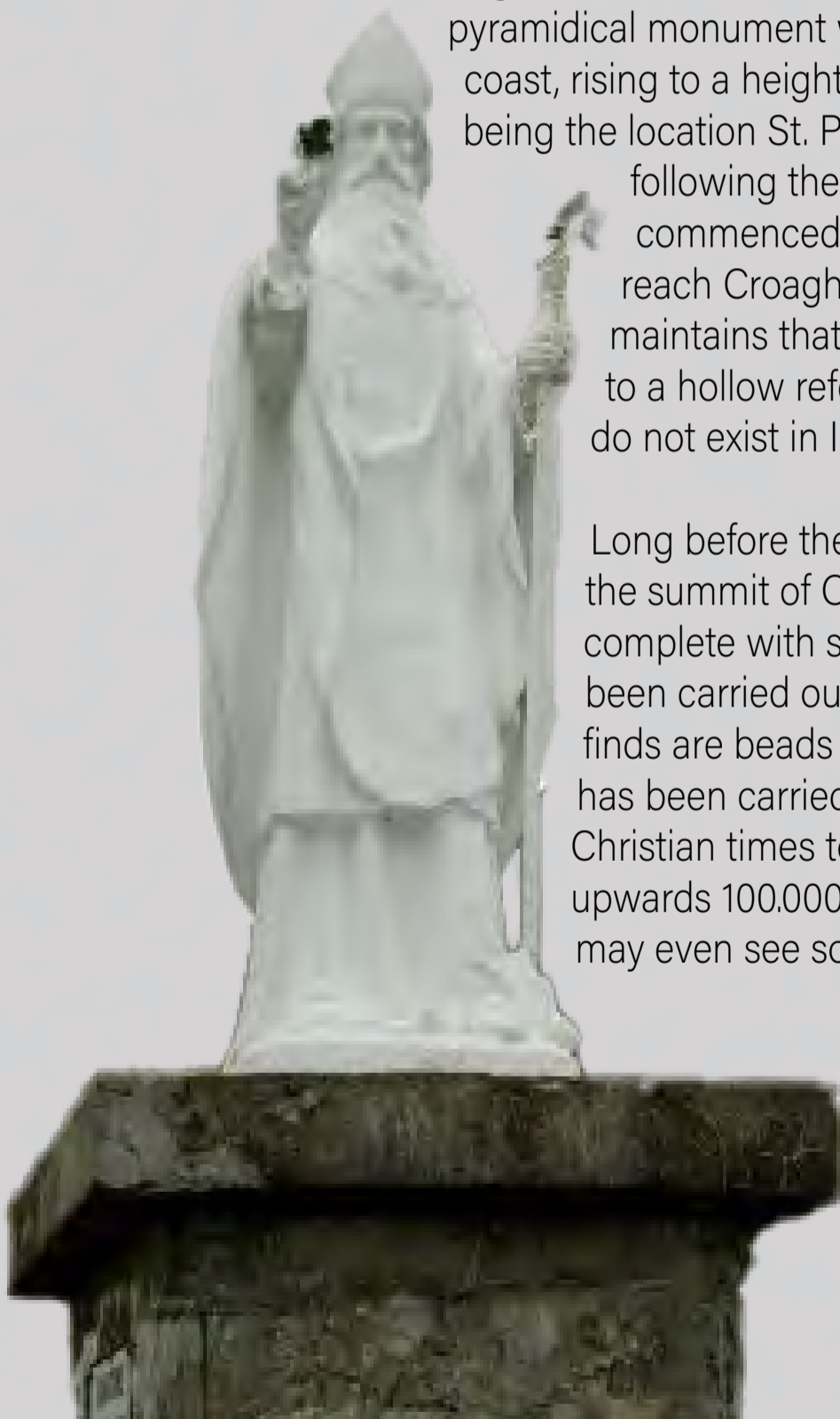




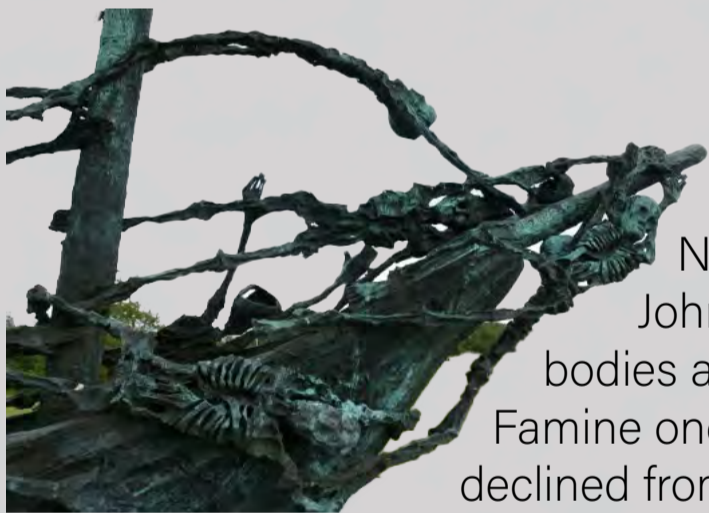
Croagh Patrick

Croagh Patrick, Ireland's Holy Mountain, is a magnificent natural pyramidal monument which dominates the skyline on Mayo's west coast, rising to a height of 765 m. It holds a unique place in Irish history being the location St. Patrick chose for his forty days fast on the summit, following the example of Christ and Moses. While St. Patrick commenced missionary work in Ireland in 432 he did not reach Croagh Patrick until nine years later in 441. Tradition maintains that while on the mountain he banished the snakes to a hollow referred to as "Lug na Demon". To this day, snakes do not exist in Ireland.

Long before the arrival of Christianity to Ireland we know that the summit of Croagh Patrick was occupied by a hillfort, complete with stone ramparts and dwellings. Excavations have been carried out on the summit and among the earliest dateable finds are beads which date to the 3rd century B.C. Pilgrimage has been carried out here for over 1500 years from the early Christian times to the present day without interruption and upwards 100,000 visitors come to Croagh Patrick every year. You may even see some penitents climbing in their bare feet.



THE NATIONAL FAMINE MONUMENT IN MURRISK



Mary Robinson, the president of Ireland, unveiled the National Famine Monument in Murrisk, 20 July 1997. The John Behan sculpture depicts a c" Coffin Ship" with skeleton bodies and commemorates the anniversary of the National Famine one hundred and fifty years ago, when the population declined from eight million to four million.

