Report on Kennedy Mausoleum, Ballantrae

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Through the efforts of Commander G. H. Hughes-Onslow, our President, the Society received at the end of 1956 a grant of £403 from the Pilgrim Trust for the repair of the Kennedy Mausoleum, Ballantrae Churchyard, which is now becoming ruinous. The building, vaulted and surmounted by a slated roof, was built against the south wall of the former Kirk, which was demolished at the beginning of the nineteenth century. On the west wall of the aisle is the monument consisting of the recumbent figures of Gilbert Kennedy of Bargany and his widow, Jonet Stewart, surmounted by a canopy supported by pillars at each end and one in the centre. Through decay and vandalism the inscription and carving have largely disappeared. Nevertheless the monument is an excellent example of the "glorious tombs" which it was the fashion to erect in the seventeenth century. It is described and illustrated by Macgibbon and Ross¹ and is scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

Gilbert Kennedy took a prominent part in the feud between the Bargany and Cassillis branches of the Kennedy family, and was mortally wounded in a fight between the opposing factions at Brockloch, near Maybole, in 1601. Aged twenty-five, he died at Ayr and his body was laid in the Kirk of Ayr until his tomb was made ready.²

Lady Bargany died at Stilton, in England, in 1605, and her body was brought to Ayr to be laid beside that of her husband.³ The funeral, on a magnificent scale, is best described in the words of the anonymous contemporary chronicler:

"At this tyme, me Lord of Abercorn, and the haill freidis, conduditt that the buryiall of the Laird of Bargany and his wyff suld be on the xv day off September, . . . yeiris, in the New Kirk of Ballantry; qhilk the Lady had causquit build for hir husband, qhaur she had gart set wp ane glorious towme; and, indeed, Josias maid gritt preparatioune for the same, bayth in Bargany and in Arstensar; the

¹ Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland, III., p. 304.
² Historical Account of the Families of Kennedy (Bannatyne Club, 1830), pp. 46-51.
³ For an account of the feud see the foregoing and also Paterson's History of Ayr and Wigtoun, Vol. II.
⁴ History of Kennedys, p. 67.
honouris and all the rest being preparit werrie honourable. The day being eumin, thair wes thairoff Nobill menne, the Eirllis of Eglintoun and Abercorne, and Vintoun, with the Lordis of Sempill, Carkartt, Loudone, and Wehiltry. The Lairdis of Bombie, Blairquhanne, and Gairland; with ane grit number, quhilk I will nocht mint to expres. His Honouris being borne be the Gudmanne of Ardmillane, the the Gudmanne of Kirkhill, with sindry ma of the freindis. His sister-sone, Young Auchindrayne, beirand the Banner of Rewendge, quhairin was payntitt his portratour, with all his wondis, with his sone sittand at his kneyis, and this deattone writtine betuix his handis "JUDGE ANDREWEGE MY CAUS, O LORD!" And sa, conwayit to Air; but all werry honourabilly, to the number off ane Thoussand horse, of Gentilmenne; and layd in the foirsaid Tome."

Work on the repair of the Mausoleum is going forward and it is proposed to publish a further note in the next volume of The Collections.

The Pilgrim Trust is due the thanks of all interested in the preservation of our historic past, for the generous grant which alone enables the urgent repairs to be effected.

4 Ibid, p. 68. The persons named were:--
Lord Abercorn, created Earl of Abercorn 10th July, 1606;
Josias Stewart of Bonnytoun, brother of Lady Bargany;
Hugh, 5th Earl of Eglinton;
Robert, 2nd Earl of Winton;
Robert, 3rd Lord Sempill;
Alan, 4th Lord Cathcart;
Hugh, Lord Campbell of Loudoun;
Andrew, 3rd Lord Ochiltree;
Sir Robert Maclellan of Bombie;
John Kennedy of Blairquhan;
John McDowall of Garthland;
Thomas Kennedy of Ardminlan;
Thomas Kennedy of Kirkhill;
James Mure, yr of Auchendrane.
Assuming that the funeral was in 1606, Gilbert Kennedy's son, Thomas, would then be about nine years old.