Chapter 2

The Traditional Tunings of Welsh Harp Music

On p. 15 we set out the alphabetical symbols used in the Welsh tablature. There is good evidence to suggest that these symbols correspond to the strings of the harp which are tuned to the Odonian values of the letters used; thus a =\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\begin{bmatrix}
\text{a} \\
\text{b} \\
\text{c} \\
\text{d} \\
\end{bmatrix}}
\end{align*}
\]

Although it appears that these values may have been subject to certain chromatic alterations, the evidence appears to preclude their deviation from the Odonian values by more than a semitone either way. The presentation and justification of this hypothesis is the prime concern of this chapter.

Both Burney and Thomas based their transcriptions on this assumption, but were restricting their investigations to sections of the MS with a tonality clearly centred on C (see Fig. 1).

Fig.1

a) Burney, op. cit. Vol. 2, p. 112:

‘No. XI, Kor Sinfaen’ (Cwlwm on mak y mwn hir, cainc 13)

[35] b) John Thomas, op. cit. p. 1236
A more recent point of view, expressed particularly by Thurston Dart, holds that a large proportion of the music in the MS cannot be satisfactorily transcribed according to the simple and direct method of Burney and Thomas. In many cases, such as Gosteg yr Halen, Caniad Ystafell and Caniad Tro Tant, a direct transcription is quite satisfactory, but obviously requires the addition of a key signature, although neither key signatures nor accidentals are present in the tablature. Sometimes the result appears to make no musical sense whatsoever, although, as will become apparent later in this work, one should beware of making such judgements too hastily without a full understanding of the musical processes involved.

A possible explanation of these anomalies would be that the strings of the harp, while corresponding to the alphabetical symbols in name, were required to be tuned in ways sometimes widely divergent from the Odonian pitch-values implicit in the

\[\text{[36]}\]

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symbols. It is therefore significant that Welsh treatises which deal with the theory of harp and crwth playing, found in several 16th and 17th century MSS, mention a number of tunings for the harp, of which five were considered particularly important: the Gogywair, the Lleddfgywair, the Bragod gywair, the Is gywair and the Cras gywair.

This fact was noticed by Dolmetsch and Crossley-Holland, and is the subject of a thorough investigation by Dart. Particularly interesting are the unusual tunings given by ap Huw on pp. 108/9 of B.M. Add. MS 14905. In each case two rows of alphabetical symbols are given: the first representing the usual (nominal) pitches of the strings, the second showing their new pitches according to the particular tuning, e.g.:

\[\text{kower ynghower y wrach (p. 109)}\]

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccccc}
g & a & b & c & d & e & f & \bar{g} & \bar{a} & \bar{b} & \bar{c} & \bar{d} \\
g & b & a & c & d & f & f & \bar{g} & \bar{b} & \bar{a} & \bar{c} & \bar{d} \\
\end{array}
\]

From the use of the alphabetical symbols in the second row to show the actual pitches of the strings when re-tuned in the required way, it is clear that we are dealing with what is basically a pitch rather than a finger notation. Thus, in general, the alphabetical symbols were intended to correspond to their Odonian pitches, and only in special cases, such as those set out on pp. 108/9 were scordature used, presumably in order to bring widely-spread chords within the span of the harpist's hand, as Dart points out on p. 55 of his article.

We are informed by Bermudo that this was also the practice of several Spanish harpists. He illustrates this point by describing the following tuning: all d and g strings are lowered a tone to c and f respectively, while the c and f strings are raised to d and g respectively.

\[\text{[37]}\]

The order of the strings then becomes: d c e g f a b d c e g f, etc. Although this is not identical with any tuning given by ap Huw, the principle at work is evidently the same in both cases.

Unfortunately the tunings given on pp. 108/9 of Add. MS 14905 are of virtually no practical help in the decipherment of the music in the MS. For example, Caniad Cadwgan is associated in

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\[2\] Dart, op. cit., pp. 55-59.

\[3\] “Declaracion de Instrumentos Musicales”, Chapter 92, f. 112b.
some MS lists with the *cras gywair*.\(^4\) In the event, the intabulation of \textit{Caniad Cadwgan} is reduced to nonsense if interpreted in terms of the *cras gywair* in the form in which it appears on p. 108 of the MS (see Fig. 2).

\[\text{Fig. 2 The *cras gywair*}\]

\[
\text{names: } g, a, b, c, d, e, f, g \tilde{a} b \tilde{a} d
\]

\[
\text{sounds: } g, a, a, c, d, e, e, g \tilde{a} \tilde{a} \tilde{a} d
\]

\[\text{Caniad Cadwgan, *cainc* 1 (p. 42):}\]

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{Transcription according to the diagram of the *cras gywair* on p. 108 of Add. 14905:}\\
\text{Transcription in the major mode:}
\end{array}\]

\[^4\text{The name Caniad Cadugon appears in a list of caniadau on the *cras gywair* on f. 35 of B.M. Add. MS 15046 (1593 transcription of an earlier source), followed by Caniad Maur i Gadugon (the large caniad to Cadugon). Another version of the same list is contained in the printed Grammar of John Dafydd Rhys (1592), from which it was copied into B.M. Add. MS 14905 (P. 113) by Lewis Morris. Here, the two pieces are called Can. Bach i Gydwgi and Can. Mawr i Gydwgi respectively. Since all other pieces are in the same order in both versions of the list, it seems reasonable to identify Caniad Cadwgan with Caniad Bach i Gydwgi.}\]
Thus, on examination of the original intabulation of this piece, we find that a pentatonic tuning omitting the notes F and B would be quite inappropriate to a piece whose tonal centre is clearly the note F.

There is reason to believe that the tuning used for any particular piece was to some extent left to the discretion of the performer, or intabulator, as we may judge from the following note, inserted by ap Huw at the end of *Caniad San Silin*: "It is best [performed] in [the tuning] tro tant or in is gywair."\(^5\)

A piece very similar in style and content to *Caniad Cadwgan* is *Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd* (p. 46). In fact, the entire first cainc of the former *cianiad* re-appears unchanged, but for a scordatura to be discussed below (p. 72), as the diwedd of the latter piece.

On p. 50 of the MS we find the following note: "The end of *Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd*, in the bragod gywair."\(^6\) In view of the close resemblance between the two pieces, it seems likely that ap Huw chose to intabulate *Caniad Cadwgan* in a form playable in the bragod gywair rather than the cras gywair.

There is no evidence in MS Add. 14905 or elsewhere to suggest that the tunings given on pp. 108/9 of the MS are to be applied to any of the music in the MS. We may be certain of this point on musical grounds alone, since not one of these tunings, when applied to any of the pieces in the MS will produce a more satisfactory transcription than a literal\(^{[39]}\) interpretation of the alphabet-symbols. Later in this chapter (pp. 59-61) and in Appendix 1 we shall demonstrate that it would be impossible for any tuning which re-arranges the natural order of the notes to be applied to the group of pieces towards the end of the MS whose dissonance and eccentric harmonic idiom has proved to be a major stumbling-block to previous commentators on the MS.

At this point we should make it clear that our discussion of the tunings rests on the assumption that during the period when they were in use (the latter part of the 16th century), the harp for which they were intended was diatonic. The lack of accidental signs in the tablature would then be explained by the fact that the chromatic notes included in the tuning for any particular piece must remain in

\(^5\) "Ar tro tant ne ar is gower mae'n ore."

\(^6\) "Terfyn kaniad kynrhig benkerdd ar y bragod gywair."
force throughout the piece. Only with the advent of the double and triple harps in the 17th century could accidentals be introduced at will during the course of a piece.

As we have already indicated, ap Huw occasionally specifies the tunings to be used in the pieces intabulated by him in the MS. The pieces concerned are:

1) Caniad Ystafell (p. 38)  
2) Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd (p. 46)  
3) Caniad Crych ar y Bragod Gywair (p. 76)  
4) Caniad Bach ar y Go Gywair (p. 44)  
5) Profiad Brido ar Uwch Gywair (p. 64)  
6) Profiad Brido ar Is Gywair (p. 63)  
7) Caniad San Silin (p. 69)  
8) Caniad Tro Tant (P. 67)

In all the available sources the names of seventeen different tunings may be distinguished (see Fig. 3). A certain amount of information regarding the nature of the tunings has come down to us, but in somewhat garbled form.
The treatise ‘Dosparth Cerdd Dannau’ (B.M. Add. MS 14905, pp. 5-7) tells us the following: "There are five keys [tunings] established beyond doubt, and from these one may construct whichever [other] tunings one wishes. One finger of the crwth player keeps [governs] three tunings, namely the is gywair, the cras gywair and the lleddf gywair: these are kept by the middle finger. The index finger keeps the go gywair and the bragod gywair, and these are the five main or principal tunings.”

At the time when this treatise was written in the form in which it comes down to us (late 16th century), it seems that the term cywair, which we here translate as ‘tuning’, was already taking on the meaning of ‘mode’, in the sense of an individual order of intervals within the octave (its original use in the sense of ‘tuning’ can be seen in the diagram on pp. 108/9). Within a short space of

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[41]

7 “pum Cowair y sydd yn safedig ag yn warantedig; ag o'r rhai hynny, gellir gwneuthur a fynner o gweiriau. Un bys i grythor a geldw tri choweir, nid amgen is gower, cras gower a Lleddf gower; a hyn y mae'r hirfys yn ei gadw. Y Manegfys sydd yn Cadw y Gogower a'r Bragod gower ag wele dyma'r pum Cowair prifedig, neu Brinsibal.”
time this secondary meaning gave way to the present-day meaning of 'key', since particular tunings became associated with particular notes, as we see in the passage on f. 121a of MS Havod 3 quoted below, p. 42. Thus in the above section of 'Dosparth Cerdd Dannau’, which evidently concerns crwth playing, the five main harp tunings are described in terms of modes playable on the crwth. Unfortunately the instructions given in the treatise are too vague, and our knowledge of the crwth is insufficient for us to establish the nature of the tunings from this passage alone.

Five other sources from the 16th and 17th centuries give us further information regarding the tunings. These are Cardiff MSS Havod 3 and Havod 24; N.L.W. Add. MSS 13161B and 4110B, and N.L.W. MS Panton 56.

The tuning about which we have the most information is the bragod gywair. This information is, however, remarkably vague and contradictory.

The word bragod is related to the English bragget, and means a "liquor made by the ancients of the wort of ale and mead fermented together." From the idea of fermentation there apparently arose a secondary meaning of ‘mixture’. Thus, under the entry ‘cywair’ in Pughe's dictionary the bragod gywair is called “a mixt key”.

The version of Llyfr Cadwedigaeth Cerdd Dant in N.L.W. MS Gwysean 28 tells us the following: "This is the reason why the bragod gywair is so called: because there is something of every tuning in it." This statement is preceded by an addition to the usual passage about fingerings on the crwth: "The index finger keeps [governs] the go gywair and [as for] the bragod gywair, every finger governs it, and it takes its name because of that." It would seem, therefore, that the bragod gywair was in some way more complex than the other tunings.

The bragod gywair occurs as the third in the list of seven tunings, or keys given in Havod 3, ff. 120b-121b, in the following passage which throws some light on attitudes to tonality in relation to the harp around 1600:

“...there are seven letters, namely the following: cyweirdant and crasdant, ¼ ragodant or breiniol cyweirdant, C cyweirdant, dylordant, eglurdant, ffrwythledddiant or the breiniol raised string, and the eighth note from the principal cyweirdant is the middle cyweirdant, and thus [similarly] for everyone which comes from the

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9 “Llyma yr achos y gelwir bragod gywair am fod peth o bob kywair ynddo.”
10 “Y manegfys sydd yn kadw y gogywair ar bragod gywair bob bys sydd yn kadw arno ac y mae yn kael enw o blygid.”
11 The treatise is attributed in the MS to Robert Peilin, “Servant of the King Iago” (James 1st of England).
seven clefs [notes]; for there are seven types of strings, and the seven letters are [used] to recognise these seven types of strings; and from these seven sorts of letters come seven principal keys [tunings], namely [from] the following seven letters: G a ♮ c d e f, and by means of the above seven [letters] it is possible to recognise the seven main keys which are none other than the following: firstly the C [G] key, and that is the chief of them, and for that reason all the strings which come from it are all called cyweirdannau [key-strings, or tuning-strings]; and the second is the key called the cras gywair and that is higher by one note and sharper than the cyweirdant, and because of that it is called the cras gywair [the sharp tuning]; and the third is the bragod gywair, and that is in the midst of all keys, for which reason it is called the bragod gywair, since there is every key fermenting in it; and the fourth key is the C gywair, and that may be as high as one wishes, and as low as the lowest [43] [string] of all, and because of that it is called the is gywair [low key], and that is a bad name for it, because it is rightly called the C key; and the fifth key is the dylod gywair [in] which key is sung the plainsong called Cainc Arglwydd Llywelyn [the song of Lord Llywelyn]; and the sixth key is the eglur gywair and that makes every key clear, and because of that its strings are called eglurdannau [clear strings]; and the seventh key is the ffrwythlleddf gywair [ffrwyth - fruit; lleddf - flat, plaintive], and that flattens [lleddf] every key of all keys; and because of that all its strings are called flat [lleddf] strings; and thus end the names of the seven sorts of clefs [notes].”

The various possible interpretations of this passage must be considered in relation to those pieces in B.M. Add. MS 14905 known to be in the bragod gywair. The reference to seven different strings (tannau) makes it clear that the whole passage concerns the harp, rather than the crwth, which was six-stringed.

12 “Sef yw saith lethyren nid amgen nar rhai hynn gowirdant achrasdant ſragodant ne breiniol gywirdant C gywirdant dylordant egłurdant ffrwythlleddf ant ne breiniol1 ddyrchafaelant ac yr wythfed not or kyweirdant pinsbal yw y kyweirdant kanol ac fyllu am bob un y sydd yn dyfod or saith gliff kans saith ryw o danau y sydd ar saith lythryen sydd i adnabod y saith ryw danay hynu ac ar saith ryw lethyren hynu y mae saith [p. 237] gowair prinsbal yn dyfod nid amgen y saith lethyren yma g a ♮ c d e f ac wrth y saith uchyd y gellir adnabod y saith gowair pinsbal [sic] nid amgen y rai hynn yn gynta yw c kywair a hwnw y sydd ymhlith ac ar achos hynu y gelwir yr holl danay ac sydd yn dyfod o hono ef yn gorier danau i gyd yr ail yw kywair a elwir y kras gowair a hwnnw sydd uchw o un not a chrassach nar gywirdant ac am hynu y gelwir ef yn gras gowair ar tredydd yw ſragod gywair a hwnw y sydd ymhlith pob kywair ac am hynu y gelwir ef y bragod gywair o herwydd bod pob kowair ynddo yn bragodi ar pedowyrdwyd kywair yw C gower a hwnw a dichyn fod kynn uchyd a y mynir a chyn issed ar isaf oll ac am hynu y gelwir ef yn is gywair a cham hwen arno ef yw hwnnw cans C gywair y gelwir ef mewn iawn enw ar pumed kywair yw dylod gywair yr hwnnw gywair y kenir [p. 238] gaingk blaen a elwir kaingk arglwydd lywelyn a chwecled gywair yw eglur gywair a hwnnw sydd yn eglurhau pob kywair ac am hynu y gelwir i danau ef yn egłurhauar ne seithved kywair yw ffrwythlleddf gywair a hwnw sydd yn lleddfynu pob ryw gywair o holl gyweirion i gyd ac am hynu y gelwir i holl danau yn lleddf danau i gyd ac fyllu y terfyna am henwau y saith ryw gliff.”
The first possible interpretation is that the seven *keys* are the seven natural modes beginning on each note in succession. The method of determining the accidentals appropriate to each tuning, according to this interpretation would be by building the relevant modal pattern on the main *cyweirdant*, or ‘tuning string’, which is g. Thus the *bragod gywair* would be the locrian mode starting on g: g, a flat, b flat, c, d flat, e flat, f, g.

We need only apply this tuning to the first piece in MS Add. 14905 which we know to be in the *bragod gywair*, *Caniad Ystafell*, to find that the diminished 5th g-d flat at the end of the *diwedd* section would destroy the clear g tonality on which the piece is built (see Fig. 4).

![Fig. 4 Caniad Ystafell, Diwedd (p. 38)](image)

The second interpretation takes as its starting-point the statement: “Firstly the C key, and that is the chief of them, and for that reason all the strings which belong to it are called *cyweirdannau*.”

The list of strings at the beginning of the passage clearly identifies the seven strings with the notes g a b½ c d e f. These notes are later used as the starting notes for the seven *keys* or tunings. It seems, therefore, that this natural tuning is the basic one, and can be identified with the C *gywair*, or the major scale on C, since all its notes are called *cyweirdannau*, or tuning strings.
The g string, however, is called simply cyweirdant in the list of strings, which implies that this string had the function of the fundamental tuning string, as in the tuning of the Irish harp.

Our second hypothesis is that the passage is describing a method of obtaining seven different tunings by tuning the major mode on each of the strings in succession, thus constructing seven different modal patterns beginning on the g string. This is not immediately clear, because of a conceptual anomaly in the list of keys given in the passage.

In fact, the c key is listed twice: firstly beginning on g, since it is in this case being considered as the conceptual end-product: the mixolydian mode on g, rather than the means to that end: the major mode on c; and secondly beginning on c, in which case it is called the is gywair.

That the is gywair and the C gywair are identical we know from the statement “and the fourth key is the C gywair and that may be as high as one wishes and as low as the lowest [string] of all, and because of that it is called the is gywair [low key], and that is a bad name for it, just as the C key is a good name for it.”

As a result of the twofold listing of the c key in our passage from Havod 3, the g key is not listed by name at all, but from other information in the passage we may identify it as the breiniol gywair.

At the start of the passage, the string associated with the note b is called the #ragodant. The form of the initial letter makes it clear that b natural is meant. This string is also called the breiniol cyweirdant or the tuning string of the breiniol gywair. The f string is called the breiniol dyrchafaeldant, or the raised string of the breiniol tuning.

It would seem, then, that the breiniol tuning has an f sharp which is tuned from the bragodant, or b natural. The dictionary of W.O. Pughe and several 18th and 19th century Welsh publications on music theory, describe the breiniol gywair as a key beginning on g. Since in the passage the breiniol gywair is the only tuning not associated with any string, and the g string is the only string which does not have its own tuning attributed to it, it seems possible that W.O. Pughe was correct.

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13 The lowest note appearing in the tablature of B.M. Add. MS 14905 is cc, which tallies with the descriptions given by Bermudo and Bunting.
14 E.g. 'The Cambrian Vocal and Musical Preceptor', Owen Williams, 1811-18.
15 The use of the term breiniol gyweirdant to describe the b string does not imply that the breiniol gywair takes b as its starting note, but rather, as we explained on p. 49, that the b string is used to tune the f sharp of the breiniol gywair. This is yet another sense in which the term cyweirdant was employed.
In that case, the *is gywair* and the *breiniol gywair* are the major mode constructed on the c and g strings respectively. Since C major is considered to be the main tuning, an extension of this pattern would be, as we have suggested, the construction of the major mode on each string in succession, the criterion of each tuning being the characteristic modal pattern thus formed, starting on the g string in each case.

Thus the *bragod gywair* would be the major mode on b natural, which would create the aeolian mode starting on the g string, which in this case would be tuned to g sharp. Although such a large [47] number of accidentals seems unlikely at first, this could be explained by the idea that the passage quoted above is an exposition of the simplest method of tuning seven different modal patterns, whereby the harpist need only know how to tune the major mode. The modal patterns alone are important, irrespective of the exact pitches to which the strings are tuned.

The modal pattern for the *bragod gywair* which we arrive at according to the above hypothesis is identical to the pattern implicit in a diagram of harp tunings headed ‘Trefn Cywair Telyn’ (The order of harp tuning), which is extant in two slightly different versions in N.L.W. Add. MSS 4710B and 13,167B, which date from 1674. Both MSS are copies of a poetic miscellany compiled by Gwylim Pue of Llandegai. we give the more complete and accurate version from N.L.W. Add. MS 4710B in Fig. 5a below.

![Fig. 5a The Diagram of Gwilym Pue (N.L.W. Add. MS 4710B)](image-url)
This diagram is so ambiguous as to pose an almost insoluble puzzle. Not only are no absolute pitches given, but also the arrangement of strings from low to high is nowhere explicitly stated. Thus it is open to two quite different interpretations according to whether the lowest pitched strings are on the left or the right hand side of the diagram.
We are afforded a clue to this mystery by the instruction given for string no. 7 in the *bragod gywair*: “8th to the stringe next above the sette string” (my italics). This obviously refers to the string to the immediate left of string no. 1. The strings should therefore be arranged from right to left in ascending order.

A further circumstantial confirmation of this is the fact that if the tuning-pegs were on the right hand side of the instrument, then the player would hold the diagram in his left hand, parallel to the instrument. In this case, the right hand side of the diagram would be opposite the lower strings and the left hand side opposite the higher strings from the player’s point of view.

Fig. 5b shows the tunings arrived at on the basis of this interpretation of the diagram. The order of tones and semitones which it gives for the *bragod gywair* is identical with the modal pattern which we suggested on the basis of the passage from Havod 3.

Fig. 5b The tunings given in the diagram of Gwilym Pue (taking g as the tuning string):

1) *Bragod Gywair*:

![Bragod Gywair diagram]

2) *Go Gywair*:

![Go Gywair diagram]

3) *Braidd Gywair*:

![Braidd Gywair diagram]

Our hypothesis implies three different uses of the term *cyweirdant* in Havod 3. The most restricted sense of the word refers to the g string, which probably corresponds to the 'sisters' of the Irish harp,¹⁶ and the 'set string’ in Gwilym Pue’s diagram.

¹⁶ Bunting: Introduction to 'Ancient Music of Ireland' (Dublin, 1840); 'Music and Letters', Vol. XXIV, p. 100: 'Some Notes on the Irish Harp'.
The second meaning refers to the seven strings, including the g string, which are the starting notes for the keys or major scales which produce seven different tunings from the main cyweirdant, or the g string.

The third use of the word occurs only in the term breiniol cyweirdant, and means the string by which the only accidental of the breiniol gywair, f sharp, or the breiniol dyrchafaeldant is tuned.

Our second interpretation of the Havod 3 passage yields the table of tunings shown in Fig. 6. This diagram shows two methods of tuning. The first, simpler method, presumably for beginners, uses the instructions given in Havod 3. The second, more rational method involves a prior knowledge of the modal pattern appropriate to the tuning, through practice with the first method, and always begins with the note g.

![Fig. 6](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Starting-note</th>
<th>Tuning as constructed according to instructions in Havod 3</th>
<th>Tuning as constructed on the main tuning-note, g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breiniol gywair</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>G A B C D E F# G</td>
<td>G A B C D E F# G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cras gywair</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>G# A B C# D E F# G#</td>
<td>G A b C D b E b F G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bragod Gywair</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>G# A# B C# D# E F# G#</td>
<td>G A b C D E b F G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is gywair</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>G A B C D E F G</td>
<td>G A B C D E F G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylod gywair</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>G A B C# D E F# G</td>
<td>G A B C# D E F# G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eglur gywair</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>G# A B C# D# E F# G#</td>
<td>G A b C D E b F G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ffrwyth-) lleddf gywair</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>G A B b C D E F G</td>
<td>G A B b C D E F G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tunings arrived at by the second method, which would be used by practised harpists, are consistent with statements made in the following passages from Peniarth 62 and Panton 56; respectively:

“This is of the music of Cerdd Dant (harp and crwth music], about the strong cyweirdant and how many of them are strong. There are seven in all, and of the seven, four change in mode [mewn modd], and the others do not do so. This is the way in which
they do not do so. Because the three are principal or special, and the four are not. They have a reason for this, since there is not one number between them and they are not of one condition, and the four weak cyweirdannau are called containing strings (cynnwysdannau). In many places they become tyniadau."

“There are three things pertaining to the strong cyweirdant: Bécarré, Bémol and Properchant...”[17] There is a cyweirdant of Bécarré, and a cyweirdant of Bémol and a cyweirdant of Properchant”[18]

[51] “And how many strong cyweirdannau are in the gamut? Seven, namely [gamut?], ut in c faut, ut in f faut, ut in g solreut in a space, ut in c solfaut, ut in f faut ut in g solreut on the line: these are the seven mutations in the gamut.”[19]

In the two last quotations the strong cyweirdannau are identified with the starting-notes of the three Guidonian hexachords: g, c and f. Thus there are seven such cyweirdannau within the whole gamut. For some reason the gamut (Γ) itself is omitted from the list.

Whereas the Panton 56 quotations refer to the whole gamut, the passage from Peniarth 62 is limited to the notes contained within the octave. Thus the phrase "There are seven in all" means that within the octave there are seven cyweirdannau including both hard and soft cyweirdannau. Three of these are called principal, and are evidently the strong cyweirdannau g, c and f, as in Panton 56, while the remaining four, a, b, d, and e, are explicitly called weak cyweirdannau.

The latter are said to “change in mode”, while the three strong cyweirdannau do not. This could be construed as meaning that for some of the five main tunings to which this treatise ('Dosparth Cerdd Dannau') limits itself, the four weak cyweirdannau are submitted to chromatic change, while the others remain the same. We find in our diagram of the second, more rational and sophisticated method of tuning, that this is indeed the case. If the tunings begin always on the note g, then within the scope of the five main tunings, the is gywair, cras gywair, bragod gywair, lleddf gywair and go gywair, the only notes which are affected are a, b, d and e. This is also quite consistent with our translation on p.31 of tannau lleddf as flattened strings, or strings which may be flattened to produce any of the five tunings except for the is gywair.

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[17] The terms begwri, beiniol and propgrawnt are corrupt transliterations of the Anglo-French names for the three Guidonian hexachord - types: becarré, bémol and properchant (hard, soft and natural hexachords respectively).
[18] “Tri pheth a berthyn i gyweirdant cryf begwri, beiniol, propgrawnt... Mae cyweirdant o Begwri, a chyweirdant o Beiniol, a chyweirdant o Broprgrawnt...” Panton 56, pp. 36-7.
[19] “A pha sawl cyweirdant cryf sydd yn y gamwth? 7 nid amgen wth yn c ffawth, wth yn effawth, wth yn g solreuth yn ysbas, wth yn c solfawth, wth yn ff ffawth, wth yn g solreuth y ruwl, dyna y saith gyfnwedid sydd yn y gamwth.” (Panton 56, p. 48)
Our hypothesis leads us, then, to the form g# a# b c# d# e f# g#, or g a b♭ c d e♭ f g for the *bragod gywair*. The three pieces in B.M. Add. MS 14905 which are explicitly stated to be in the *bragod gywair* are *Caniad Ystafell*, *Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd*, and *Caniad Crych ar y Bragod Gywair*.

The tonalities of the first two of these pieces may be inferred quite clearly from their intabulations. Their tonal centres are g and f respectively (see Fig. 7) so that it is difficult to imagine how the same tuning could be appropriate to both pieces. In fact, any attempt to find an ‘absolute’ tuning corresponding to the *bragod gywair* and expressed by a key signature, such as two flats according to our hypothesis, or one flat according to Thurston Dart, must inevitably be faced with this objection.

![Fig. 7](image)

a) *Caniad Ystafell*, cainc 4.

b) *Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd*, cainc 1

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20 Dart, op. cit., p. 56.
If our tuning for the bragod gywair were applied to Caniad Ystafell, the piece would be in the aeolian mode. For the greater part of the piece this interpretation sounds satisfactory in practice, if not quite convincing. In ceinciau 11 and 12, (Fig. 8a) however, the harmonic juxtaposition of f, c and d, which in conjunction evidently have a 'dominant' function in relation to the ‘tonic’ b d g harmony, demands a sharpened leading-note, which, being present for the last two ceinciau must have been included in the tuning at the start or the piece, assuming that the diatonic harp of c. 1613 contained no provision for the re-tuning of strings during the course or a piece.

Equally the leap or an augmented fourth e♭ - a, so prominent in the upper part of cainc 11 seems unsatisfactory, just as the harmonies at the beginning of cainc 9 (Fig. 8b) demonstrate the unlikelihood that a tuning incorporating b flat, e flat and f natural is applicable to this piece.

If we apply this tuning to Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd the piece falls into the mixolydian mode. The flattened leading-note does not present as severe a problem as in the case of Caniad Ystafell.

[54]

Fig. 8 a) Caniad Ystafell, cainc 11

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21 This symbol is given as dd in the MS (see p.72 below).
As we mentioned on p. 24, *Caniad Cadwgan* is similar enough in tonality and musical material to *Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd* for us to conclude that the same tuning was used for both pieces. In *ceinciau* 5, 8 and 10 of *Caniad Cadwgan*, the passage marked with a square bracket in Fig. 9 demands the use of e natural, which leads us to conclude that a tuning which includes b flat, and has e natural as the sharpened leading note would be preferable in both of these related pieces.
We now turn to the third piece explicitly stated to be in the *bragod gywair*: *Caniad Crych ar y Bragod Gywair*. This is one of the following group of pieces which are closely inter-related both stylistically and harmonically and are found mostly in the latter part of the MS:

* 1) *Caniad Llywelyn ap Ifan ap y Gof* (P. 50)

* 2) *Caniad Suwsanna* (p.54, defective)

3) *Caniad y Wefl*

* 4) *Caniad Marwnad Ifan ap y Gof* (P. 71)

5) *Caniad Crych ar y Bragod Gywair* (p. 76)

* 6) *Caniad Hun Wenllian* (P. 84)

* 7) *Caniad Pibau Morfydd* (p.90)
* 8) Caniad Llywelyn Delynior (p. 97)

The intricate pattern of cross-references of motifs and even complete musical statements which binds this group together (see Fig. 10) leads us to the conclusion that the same tuning was used in all the pieces in the above list. This impression is supported by the fact that all the pieces marked with an asterisk are listed under the *bragod gywair* in several MS sources, such as B.M. Add. MS 15046, f. 35b.

[57] Fig. 10 a) Caniad Llywelyn ap Ifan ap y Gof, Diweddd 2 (cainc 11)

The bracketed motif recurs in:

1) Caniad Y Wefl, cainc 1, etc.
2) Caniad Marwnad Ifan ap y Gof, cainc 4.
3) Caniad Suwsanna, cainc 5.
4) Caniad Crych ar y Bragod Gywair, cainc 1, etc.
5) Caniad Hun Wenllian, cainc 3.
6) Caniad Pibau Morfydd, cainc 2.
This phrase occurs in both
1) *Caniad y Wefl, Diweddd* to *cainc 1*, and
3) *Caniad Llywelyn Delynior, cainc 2*.

The harmonic and melodic language of this group of pieces is extremely complex, and appears to require a quite unprecedented tolerance of dissonance from both performers and listeners. For the most part the amount of dissonance is partly alleviated by performance in the dorian mode (with a key signature of two flats), although even then, the tonality is far from clear.

The frequent appearance of harmonies such as those shown in Fig. 11 bring us back to the idea introduced by Dart (see p. 21), that scordature may have been used to bring wide-spread chords within the range of the hand.

Fig. 11  *Caniad Crych ar y Bragod Gywair, cainc 3*. 
At this point, therefore, we must demonstrate that in the pieces in this group it would not be possible for any string to deviate from its Odonian pitch further than a semitone in either direction; thus the alphabetical symbols a-g must correspond to consecutive pitches in ascending order.

Three methods may be used to determine this fact. The first of these is a careful examination of the ornaments used in the upper part of the tablature. As we shall demonstrate in the section devoted to ornamentation, these take certain standard forms, which, in the simpler pieces with clear tonalities are used consistently with only occasional slight variants. Thus, the ornament *plethiad dwbl*, which corresponds to the inverted mordent:

When found in the simpler pieces, makes use only of adjacent notes, so that the form:
which we might deduce from an irregular tuning in the final group of pieces, seems highly improbable.

[61] Similarly, in cases where the same ornament occurs at different but adjacent pitch levels in the same piece, e.g.

we can establish that certain symbols must correspond to their Odonian values, since unacceptable forms of the ornament would result from any deviation.

The second method involves the examination of passages employing strict stepwise sequential repetition, which again would be seriously disrupted by any discrepancy in the order of the pitches corresponding to the symbols.

The third method makes use of the numerous exact doublings of melodic material at the octave, and one case (Caniad Marwnad Ifan ap y Gof, ceinciau 6 and 9), where a melodic phrase is repeated exactly in a subsequent cainc at the lower octave. In such cases, where the pitch - equivalents of the symbols in the upper octave have already been established, we may be sure that the corresponding pitches at the lower octave apply to the symbols which double the melodic line.

For the application of these methods to the relevant group of pieces, see Appendix 1. On the one hand, then, we have shown that no tuning using scordature could have been intended for the pieces of the Caniad Crych group, and on the other hand it seems unlikely that the same tuning could be arbitrarily applied to pieces showing such a wide variety [62] of stylistic and tonal traits as do Caniad Ystafell, Caniad Cynrhig Benerdd and Caniad Crych ar y Bragod Gywair.
In view of our analysis of the harmonic structures imposed on these pieces by the twenty-four measures\textsuperscript{22} musical considerations strongly suggest that irrespective of the tunings indicated by ap Huw in the tablature, he has intabulated practically the whole of the MS on the assumption that the harp is tuned in the major mode beginning on the note which is the tonal centre of the piece.

A demonstration of this is the recurrence of a certain harmonic pattern in the final \textit{cainc} of several different pieces. The pattern is transposed according to the tonality of the particular piece. A harmonic analysis of the first piece in which it occurs, Caniad y Gwyn Bibydd, which we give in Appendix 2, shows that this piece is almost certainly in the major mode. Since the harmonic pattern consists of a ‘tonic-dominant’ progression, and is transposed exactly in the other pieces with which we are concerned, we can conclude that these pieces, also, should be in the major mode (see Fig. 12).

Three different tunings are associated in the MS with the pieces quoted in Fig. 12: the \textit{bragod gywair}, (\textit{Caniad Ystafell}, \textit{Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd}), the \textit{go gywair} (\textit{Caniad Bach ar y Go Gywair}) and \textit{tro tant} (\textit{Caniad Tro Tant}). Since these pieces are based on a variety of tonal centres, the quotations in Fig. 12 present a strong confirmation of our suggestion that the tunings mentioned in the titles of these pieces and in ap Huw's MS notes are irrelevant to the pieces as intabulated in the MS.

Among the pieces quoted in Fig. 12 is \textit{Caniad Marwnad Ifan ap y Gof}, which, as we have seen, is one of the closely related group of pieces, to which we shall henceforth refer as the \textit{Caniad Crych} group. One of the chief factors which is common to all these pieces is a standard chordal pattern in the lower part, which includes all the notes of the scale. It is therefore fair to assume that the tonality, and thus tuning of C major which we have established for \textit{Caniad Marwnad Ifan ap y Gof} in Fig. 12 f) holds also for the other pieces in the group.

\[63\]

Fig. 12 a) \textit{Caniad y Gwyn Bibydd, cainc 1}

\textsuperscript{22} See Chapter 4, pp. 145-173 and appendix 2.
b) Caniad Ystafell, cainc 12

c) Caniad Bach ar y Go Gywair, cainc 12
d) Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd, cainc 12

e) Caniad Tro Tant, cainc 13
One exception to the otherwise complete domination of the major mode may be *Caniad Bach ar y Go Gywair*. If the intabulation is actually in the *go gywair*, then we may make use of the information given in an important MS source.

This is a note included in a general miscellany of information about Cerdd Dant compiled by John Jones of Gelli Lyvdi in MS Havod 24 (1605). On p. 810 of that MS we read:
“This is the way to tune the *go gywair* on the harp. Whichever note be the *cyweirdant* on the harp, take the third note above [the *cyweirdant*], counting the *cyweirdant* as the first of the three, and lower the highest of the three by a half note [semitone].”

This description is confirmed by the dictionary of William Owen Pughe (1803), which, under the heading of *cainc*, describes the *go gywair* as a “minor key, a secondary C key, i.e. the third above the key note is made a flat.” This is the interpretation of the *go gywair* given by Arnold Dolmetsch in the supplement to the 'Consort' no.3 (1934):

*Go gywair*

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\[ \text{\textbf{Go gywair}} \]
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The key with the minor third.

If we accept that the normal tuning was the major mode, then the quotation from Havod 24 leads us to the same conclusion as Dolmetsch. Thus *Caniad Bach ar y Go Gywair* would have a tuning containing an e flat.

[67] The modal pattern thus created is identical with the one given for the *go gywair* in the diagram of Gwylim Pue. I have suggested this tuning as a bracketed key signature in the transcription.

Of the other tunings mentioned in B.M. Add. MS and elsewhere, besides the seven mentioned in the passage from Havod 3, insufficient evidence is available for even tentative conclusions to be drawn.

We shall now examine the interpretations of the tunings presented by previous researchers in this field.

Arnold Dolmetsch published two collections of excerpts from the MS in transcription: the supplement to his article 'On my recent discoveries' in 'The Consort', no.3 (1934), and 'Translations from the Penllyn Manuscript of Ancient Welsh Harp Music', Llangefni 1937. The same interpretations of the tunings are used in both collections. In general, Dolmetsch is simply following the principle of his predecessors, Burney and John Thomas, in using the major mode wherever possible.

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23 “Llyma y modd i gyweirio y gogowair ar y delyn / pa son bynnac y bo y koweirdant yn y delyn kymryd y trydydd dant or tu uchaf a chyfri y kyweirdant yn un or trî, a gostwng hanner not ar yr ucha or trî /"
He attempts to rationalise this, however, by introducing the ‘Consort’ supplement with a list of his interpretations of the ‘five Keys of ancient Welsh music’, as shown in Fig. 13. The implication is that pieces he transcribes are in one or other of these ‘keys’. Thus, for the lleddf gywair, Dolmetsch gives the scale of f major. His transcription of Gosteg yr Halen being in f major, the reader then naturally assumes that this piece is in the lleddf gywair. There is, however, no evidence in B.M. Add. MS 14905, or elsewhere to associate Gosteg yr Halen with that tuning. Dolmetsch’s transcription of the piece must, therefore, be judged on its musical merits alone, without reference to his interpretation of the lleddf gywair.

The five tunings given in Dolmetsch’s table are taken directly from the article by John Thomas in the ‘Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales’, p. 1214. They seem to be mostly derived from those given in Pughe’s dictionary, but modified to fit the translations of the Welsh names more exactly. Thus, the cras gywair, translated as ‘sharp key’, is taken [69] to have an f sharp, and therefore to be the key of g major, by analogy to the lleddf gywair (‘flat key’) which Pughe gives as the key of f. The term ‘mixed’, which was applied to the bragod gywair by Pughe, has inspired the augmented 2nd from f natural to g sharp in the Thomas/Dolmetsch version.

The application of the bragod gywair in the transcriptions by Dolmetsch is arbitrary, and supported by neither documentary nor musical evidence; Caniad Marwnad Ifan ap y Gof is transcribed using the tuning with an augmented second, but not Caniad Llywelyn Ifan ap y Gof, although both pieces are included in the Caniad Crych group, and both are associated with the bragod gywair in the MS lists (e.g. B.M. Add. MS 15046, f. 35b). The same discrepancy is repeated in new transcriptions of the two pieces in Dolmetsch’s ‘Translations’. Furthermore, this tuning for the bragod gywair totally contradicts the c tonality which is eventually established in the intabulation, since augmented and diminished intervals occur persistently between the crucial notes g, c and d. There seems, therefore, to be no reason to accept such an eccentric tuning.

On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that Dolmetsch’s use of e flat in the tuning of Caniad Bach ar y Go Gywair is correct, as we have suggested above (pp.66-67). On purely musical grounds, then, we may accept the tunings given by Dolmetsch for all pieces, except for Caniad Marwnad Ifan ap y Gof.

[68]
'The Five Keys of Ancient Welsh Music'
(From Dolmetsch, supplement to the 'Consort', no. 3):

Is-gywair

The low key of C.

Cras-gywair

The sharp key of G.

Lleddf-gywair

The flat key of f.

Bragod-gywair

The mixed or minor key

Go-gywair
The key with a minor 3rd.

[69] Crossley-Holland, 24 also, takes the view that the major mode was prevalent in the music of this MS, and, like Dolmetsch, reaches this conclusion from musical considerations without reference to the 16th and 17th century theoretical works contained in Welsh MSS: "The most obviously outstanding feature of these pieces [Cainc Ruffydd ab Adda ab Dafydd, Profiad y Botwm, Caniad San Silin, and Caniad Tro Tant] is that they all appear to be in modern major keys. The first three are in C major, called Isgywair in Welsh, meaning 'low key'... Other keys also found amongst the pieces, such as the 'Key of the Change of String', or B♭, in the song which is so named, 'C. tro tant'... Tro tant and the five [70] keys already referred to probably all correspond as regards the disposition of their notes with our modern major and minor scales."

This idea he justifies by referring to the common occurrence of the major mode in mediaeval secular music in opposition to the modes used in "mediaeval church music, in which these scales (in the form of the Ionian and Aeolian modes) were forbidden". 25

Nowhere in the MS sources is the is gywair specifically associated with Crossley-Holland's first three pieces, but his use of a C major tuning for them is consistent with his general principle of applying the major mode. His signature of two flats for Caniad Tro Tant is likewise in accordance with the tonal demands of the piece.

The most recent and most exhaustive enquiry into this subject appears in Dart, op. cit. (see Fig. 15). Dart's basic tuning, the bragod gywair, is a modification of the standard tuning for the Irish harp given by Bunting: G A B C D E F# G. Dart notes that the symbol for the lowest e string never occurs in the Welsh tablature, and that this string is also missing in the Irish tuning. He, also, does not appear to have consulted Welsh MS sources, such as Panton 56, Havod 3, and the diagram of Gwilym Pue. From a comparison of the information available in the tablature, in Robert ap Huw's diagram, and Irish and continental sources, notably Bunting, Henestrosa, Bermudo, Praetorius, Valente, Maione and Trabaci, he arrives at the tuning G A B♭ C D E F G for the bragod gywair.

Presumably the impetus towards his adoption of B♭ came from the diagrams of tunings on pp. 108/9 of B.M. Add. MS 14905. The diagram showing lleddf gywair y gwyddyl has a sharp sign written below the symbol b both times it occurs:

25 Crossley-Holland, op. cit., p. 140.
Since this sign is used in none of the other tunings given on these two pages, one may conclude that they all contain b flat. It must be emphasised, however, that all these tunings are unusual, with the exception of the cras gywair, which, according to the diagram, does not contain the note b; and have no relevance to the tunings used in the tablature. It is therefore not justifiable for Dart to have drawn conclusions regarding the bragod gywair from this alone.

While Dart's version of the bragod gywair is completely appropriate to the tonality of Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd, and solves the problem of the constantly recurring diminished fifth:

![Musical notes]

in the Caniad Crych group, it does not seem so suitable for the g tonality of Caniad Ystafell, as we see in the passages from ceinciau 11 and 12 (Fig. 15), which, as we have said, seem to require a sharpened leading note. We are again faced with the problem of applying one tuning to pieces with quite obviously different tonal orientations.

Dart identifies the is gywair with tro tant on the basis of ap Huw's note: "It is best in tro tant or is gywair." As we have seen, this statement indicates that one of a choice of two different tunings may be used, so Dart's identification is invalid. The tuning he gives for tro tant and is gywair includes b flat and e flat, confirming Crossley-Holland's judgement regarding Caniad Tro Tant. The association of Tro Tant with Caniad San Silin may, incidentally, indicate the possibility of a tuning with two flats for this piece. That this tuning sounds feasible in practice is demonstrated by the performance of the piece by Dr. Osian Ellis on his gramophone record '17th and 18th Century Harp Music' (L' Oiseau Lyre, SOL 309).

For the Uwch Gywair Dart gives the tuning G A B♭ C D E F G, thus implying that the word uwch (high) refers to the raising of the b string from b flat to b natural. There is no other evidence
available to confirm or refute this, and although the tonality of the one piece [71] using this tuning, Profiad Brido ar Uwch gywair, is far from clear, on balance, it appears to require a b flat, so Dart’s interpretation of the tuning seems unlikely.

For the go gywair he suggests the following: “There are a number of pieces in tuning B [the go gywair], on the one hand, but the chords on which they are composed do not admit of an unambiguous solution to the problem of how the harp was tuned. One possibility - though it is no more than that - may be that strings 5, 12 and 19 [a, ã and a] were tuned down to E or E♭ from their normal tuning of A.”

In fact, the only piece in the MS which is explicitly in the go gywair is Caniad Bach ar y Go Gywair. There is no reason to associate this tuning with any of the other pieces. Dart’s reason for the suggestion that the A strings were tuned down to E or E♭ was presumably to make harmonic sense out of the chord

which is common in the lower part of this piece. This chord appears also in some pieces in the Caniad Crych, group, and we have shown in Appendix 1 that such a scordatura as the one suggested by Dart cannot possibly have been applied to the pieces in this group.

All the other tunings given by Dart are taken from the diagrams on pp. 108/9 of the MS, and all include b flat except for one of the two versions of lleddf gywair gwyddyl, for the reasons given above.

One very clear example of a scordatura is present in the MS. This is to be found in Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd. For the first three pages of the piece the lowest note of a clear c major chord in the lower part is given as dd. From the top of the third page, this symbol is abruptly replaced by the symbol cc. The explanation of this is as follows.

[73] The chord in the lower part consists of four notes, and has the range of a tenth:
It would be almost impossible to play using a normal tuning. Ap Huw is therefore recommending that the lowest d string be tuned down to c to bring the chord within easy range of the hand.

It is highly significant that ap Huw reverts to notating the chord as it sounds, mid-way through the piece. The occurrence of similar chords, notated without scordature in *Profiad Brido ar Uwch Gywair*, and *Profiad Brido ar Is Gywair* suggests that the scordatura indication in *Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd* is exceptional, and that in general ap Huw prefers to notate pieces as they sound, leaving the harpist to use whatever scordature he may require.

That these scordature are not directly related to the tunings which are associated with the pieces is evident from the fact that *Profiad Brido ar Is Gywair* and *Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd* both have widespread chords which would require the d string to be tuned down to c, although the former is in the *is gywair*, and the latter in the *bragod gywair*.

Moreover, the use of the symbol dd in *Caniad Cynrhig Bencerdd* is a very obvious disruption of the tonality of the piece. The only other pieces in which unusual harmonic forms might have been accounted for by the use of such scordature are in the *Caniad Crych* group, and we have demonstrated in Appendix 1 that any disruption of the order of notes produced by a scordatura would be impossible.

It is clear that much remains to be discovered regarding the nature and use of the many different harp tunings mentioned in the MS sources. For practical purposes, the ideas of Crossley-Holland, although in one sense evading the issue, are of most use to us in preparing a workable transcription of the music. We shall find, moreover, that these ideas will be to some extent supported by what we shall discover about the harmonic language of the repertoire in our analyses of the pieces themselves.

One practical problem which remains to be discussed within the scope of the present chapter is that of pitch-level. Through comparisons between the Welsh tablature and the German notation discussed by Ottmar Nachtigall (see Chapter 1, p. 17), together with information provided by Bermudo concerning the range of the

26 Despite the implications of their titles, these are two completely different pieces, rather than intabulations of the same piece in two different tunings.
harp (see Chapter 1, p. 21) it appears that the symbols of ap Huw’s notation should cover the range

\[ \text{Notes} \]

Performance of the music contained in B.M. Add. MS 14905 at this pitch-level, on a modern harp, results in a muddy, indistinct sound. In contrast, however, a bright, singing tone results from performance at the higher octave-level on a modern small celtic harp, or clairsach, which has the range

Thus we have followed Crossley-Holland in transcribing the tablature at the following pitch-level:

\[ \text{Notes} \]


“Declaracion de Instrumentos Musicales”, Chapter 92, f. 112b.

The name Caniad Cadugon appears in a list of caniadau on the cras gywair on f. 35 of B.M. Add. MS 15046 (1593 transcription of an earlier source), followed by Caniad Maur i Gadugon (the large caniad to Cadwgan). Another version of the same list is contained in the printed Grammar of John Dafydd Rhys (1592), from which it was copied into B.M. Add. MS 14905 (P. 113) by Lewis Morris. Here, the two pieces are called Can. Bach i Gydwgi and Can. Mawr i Gydwgi respectively. Since all other pieces are in the same order in both versions of the list, it seems reasonable to identify Caniad Cadwgan with Caniad Bach i Gydwgi.

“Ar tro tant ne ar is gower mae'n ore.”

“Terfyn kaniad kynrhig benkerdd ar y bragod gywair”

“pum Cowair y sydd yn safedig ag yn warantedig; ag o'r rhai hynny, gellir gweunethur a fynner o gweiriau. Un bys i grynfh or geidw tri choweir, nid amgen is gower, cras gower a Lleddf gower; a hyn y mae'r hirfys yn ei gadw. Y Manegfys sydd yn Cadw y Gogower a'r Mawr gower ag wele dyma'r pum Cowair prifedig, neu Brinsibal.”


The treatise is attributed in the MS to Robert Peilin, “Servant of the King Iago” (James 1st of England).

“Sef yw saith lethyren nid amgen nar rhai hynn gowirdant achrasdant ÷ragodant ne breinio1 gywirdant C gywirdant dylordant eglurdant ffrwythledddfant ne breinio1 ddyrchafaelddant ac yr wythfed not or kyweirdant prinsbal yw y kyweirdant kanol ac fyllu am bob un y sydd yn dyfod or saith gliff kans saith syrwy y o danau y sydd ar saith lethyren sydd i adnabod y saith ryw danay hynnu ac or saith ryw lethyren hynnu y mae saith [p. 237] gowair prinsbal ym dyfod nid amgen y saith lethyren yma g a ÷ c d e f ac wrth y saith uchod y gellir adnabod y saith gowair pinsbal [sic] nid amgen y rhai hynn yn gynta yw y cywair a hwnnw yw y penaf o honynt ac or achos hynnu y gelwir yr holl danay ac sydd yn dyfod o hono ef yn gowir danau i gyd yr ail yw cywair a elwir yr kras gowair a hwnnw sydd uwch o un not a chrassach nar gywirdant ac am hynnu y gelwir ef yn
gras gowair ar tredydd yw ³ragod gywair a hwnw y sydd ymhlith pob kywair ac am hynu y gelwir ef y bragod gywair o herwydd bod pob kowair ynddo yn bragodi ar pedwyrdd kywair yw C gower a hwnw a dichyn fod kynn uched a y mynir a chyn issed ar isaf oll ac am hynu y gelwir ef yn is gywair a cham henw arno ef yw hwnw cans C gywair y gelwir ef mewn iawn enw ar pumed kywair yw dylod gywair yr hwnn gywair y kenir [p. 238] gaink blaen a elw kaingk arglwydd lywelyn a chweched gywair yw eglur gywair a hwnw sydd yn egurhau pob kywair ac am hynu y gelwir i danau ef yn eglurdanau ar seithved kywair yw ffrwythleddf gywair a hwnw sydd yn lleddf yw pob ryw gywair or holl gyweirion i gyd ac am hynu y gelwir i holl danau yn lleddf danau i gyd ac fyllu y terfyna am henwau y saith ryw gliff.”

13 The lowest note appearing in the tablature of B.M. Add. MS 14905 is cc, which tallies with the descriptions given by Bermudo and Bunting.

14 E.g. ‘The Cambrian Vocal and Musical Preceptor’, Owen Williams, 1811-18.

15 The use of the term breiniol gyweirdant to describe the b string does not imply that the breiniol gywair takes b as its starting note, but rather, as we explained on p. 49, that the b string is used to tune the f sharp of the breiniol gywair. This is yet another sense in which the term cyweirdant was employed.


17 The terms begwri, beiniol and propgrawnt are corrupt transliterations of the Anglo-French names for the three Guidonian hexachord - types: becarré, bémol and properchant (hard, soft and natural hexachords respectively).

18 “Tri pheth a berthyn i gyweirdant cryf begwri, beiniol, propgrawnt… Mae cyweirdant o Begwri, a chyweirdant o Beiniol, a chyweirdant o Broprgrawnt…” Panton 56, pp. 36-7.

19 “A pha sawl cyweirdant cryf sydd yn y gamwth? 7 nid amgen wth yn c ffawth, wth yn effawth, wth yn g solrewth yn ysbas, wth yn c solfawth, wth yn ff ffawth, wth yn g solrewth y ruwl, dyna y saith gyfnnewid sydd yn y gamwth.” (Panton 56, p. 48)

20 Dart, op. cit., p. 56.

21 This symbol is given as dd in the MS (see p.72 below).

22 See Chapter 4, pp. 145-173 and appendix 2.
23 “Llyma y modd i gyweirio y gogowair ar y delyn / pa son bynnac y bo y koweirdant yn y delyn kymryd y trydydd dant or tu uchaf a chyfri y kyweirdant yn un or tri, a gostwng hanner not ar yr ucha or tri /”


25 Crossley-Holland, op. cit., p. 140.

26 Despite the implications of their titles, these are two completely different pieces, rather than intabulations of the same piece in two different tunings.