Bluffs, Bays and Pools in the medieval Liffey at Dublin

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ABSTRACT

The course of the river Liffey in Dublin city is not straight. Between Mellowes (Queen Maeve) Bridge and East Link Bridge there are two deviations; one to the north and one to the south. This paper examines these deviations and seeks their origin in the bluffs, bays and pools of the river in medieval times. Locations are suggested for these features.

Key index words: medieval, river course, Liffey.

Introduction

There are several words in this title that require comment. 'Medieval' covers many centuries. It is useful however to suggest a single year as a base date and the year 1000 has been chosen. The reasons for this choice include the following—

- the Viking resettlement at Dublin was in progress;
- the first earthen banks, man's first significant intervention in the Liffey topography at Dublin, were about 100 years old;
- the stone wall across the Wood Quay site was still about 100 years in the future;
- the area along Fishamble Street was inhabited;
- the Liffey passing by had by then taken on the overall shape that it would have retained for the next 1000 years, had the people of Dublin during that period not thought otherwise and laboured to confine it;
- the tidal regime had reached some long time earlier a constancy that would not change since that time; and
- there was little if any built development on the north bank of the river in 1000.

Otherwise, there is no special significance in that particular year.

In considering the Liffey at Dublin, it must be accepted that it is tidal with an amplitude between high and low water ranging approximately from 4.2m (14 feet) to 1.6m (5.3 feet) depending on the time of the month. In the present context, the level of the thread of water that would form the dry-weather channel of the river would be of little concern except to offer the fullest exposure of the banks. The high water tideway, which even with stormy weather at sea is unlikely to exceed an OS compatible level of +5.3m (17.7 feet) OD Poolbeg, or +2.6m (8.7 feet) OD Malin, is more relevant in the present context; and this tideway will be preferred to the channel throughout, and references to water level will always, unless otherwise mentioned, be to high water at ordinary spring tide. Various intermediate levels at half-tide or during neap tides can also be significant in, for instance, considering the viability of fords. Further rises of water level induced by flash flooding from the river catchment have on occasions led to inundation conditions along sometimes broad expanses of the river banks. These further rises are recognized but are not particularly discussed in this presentation.

Turning now to the course of the river, a line as shown on Figure 1 running due west to east passes through the river just upstream of the weir at Islandbridge at one end and the north end of East Link Bridge at the other. In the city area this base line passes through Mellowes

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(Queen Maeve) Bridge and Liffey (Ha'penny) Bridge. Between these two points, however, the centre line of the modern river deviates to the south, being furthest from the east-west line at O'Donovan Rossa (Winetavern St) Bridge. Then, passing through a point of contraflexure at the Ha'penny Bridge, the centre line of the river deviates to the north, being furthest from the east-west line at Butt Bridge. The amount of the deviation to the south is about 170m or 500 feet, and that to the north also about 170m or 500 feet. This slow S-bend is very obvious today because of the constriction of the modern tideway between continuous walls.

These deviations have not changed in sense since the base date of 1000, although, of course, the amounts of deviation will differ, to reflect the differences between the earlier river unconfined by man at that time and the modern constricted tideway. Figure 2 suggests how the high tide shore line might have appeared in 1000. This suggestion will be discussed in detail later but for now, the following might be suggested. The precise position of the 1000 AD high tide shore line is not known except perhaps in one or two spots. There were no maps at that time and there would not be any for another 600 years. The deviations illustrated correspond adequately with relevant early and recent maps. These maps would include Hatfield (*c.* 1592), Speed (1610), de Gomme (1673), Phillips (1685), Brooking (1728), Rocque (1756), Ordnance Survey (1838 and onwards), and the two valuable historical studies of Walsh (1977) and Clarke (1978).

As a further general comment it is recorded that Stanihurst wrote about Dublin in 1577 "the famous river called the Liffie, named of Ptolome Lybnium, runneth fast by". The river did not in early times flow through the town or city, but rather along its northern boundary. In this context, it should be noted that the precinct of Lazars Hill, east of the walled city, although ignored in Hatfield and by Speed, was probably in existence in 1220 as a suburban nucleus, along the northern boundary of which the river also flowed; and the existence of the hill as a significant exposed land mass in 1000 may be presumed.

Bluff, bay, and pool

A dictionary definition of a 'bluff' is a feature that presents a bold and almost perpendicular front rather rounded than cliffy in outline. The concept of a bluff extends this definition to the sense in which John Wesley used it in saying "Savannah stands on a flat bluff as they [in Georgia, USA] term any high land hanging over a creek or river"; and to the sense in which Archibald Geikie the geologist spoke of "bold bluffs that mark the limits of an ancient shore". In the present context, a bluff is taken to describe a large mass of rock or compacted clay, with a high resistance to erosion and permeation such that flowing water striking it will be deflected to pass around the mass rather than straight through it, washing it away. Bluffs are of course not exempt from geological attrition, but their degradation will, by definition, be very much slower than that of surrounding deposits. Also, the outline of a bluff may become masked by later natural deposits or man-made accretions.

The word 'bay' is usually associated with sea inlets. It is also known however as relating to freshwater lakes, and it is now suggested that it can also be used to describe a large local pool beside a river and opening to the river on a wide front. Such a bay might be seen as a local enlargement of the river although it may be in parts shallower than the main stream. As such if the river is tidal, the bay will also be tidal; and it is possible that when the river is at low tide level, some part or all of the bay may be dry, just indeed as it would be in the coastal context of a tidal sea.

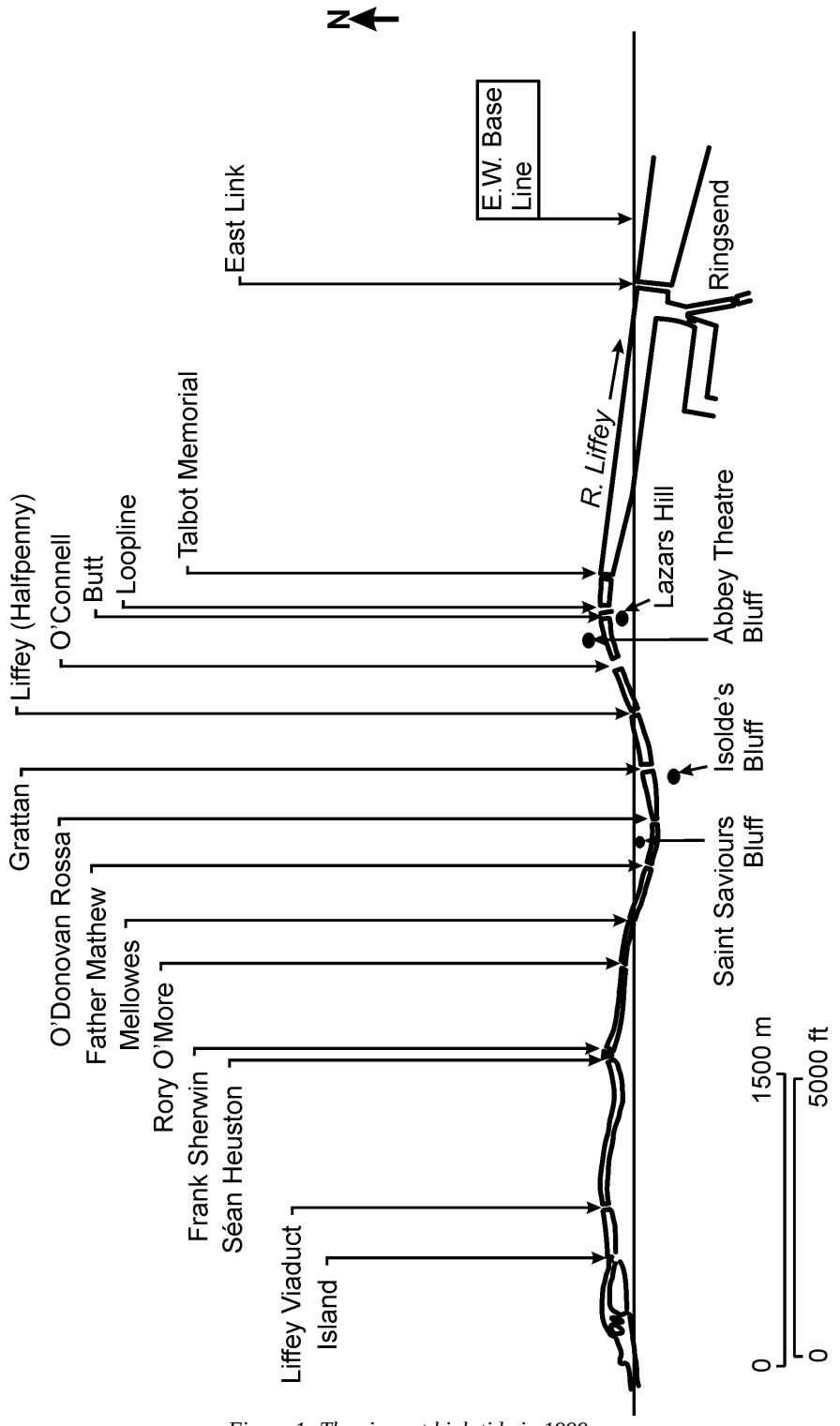

Figure 1: The river at high tide in 1999.

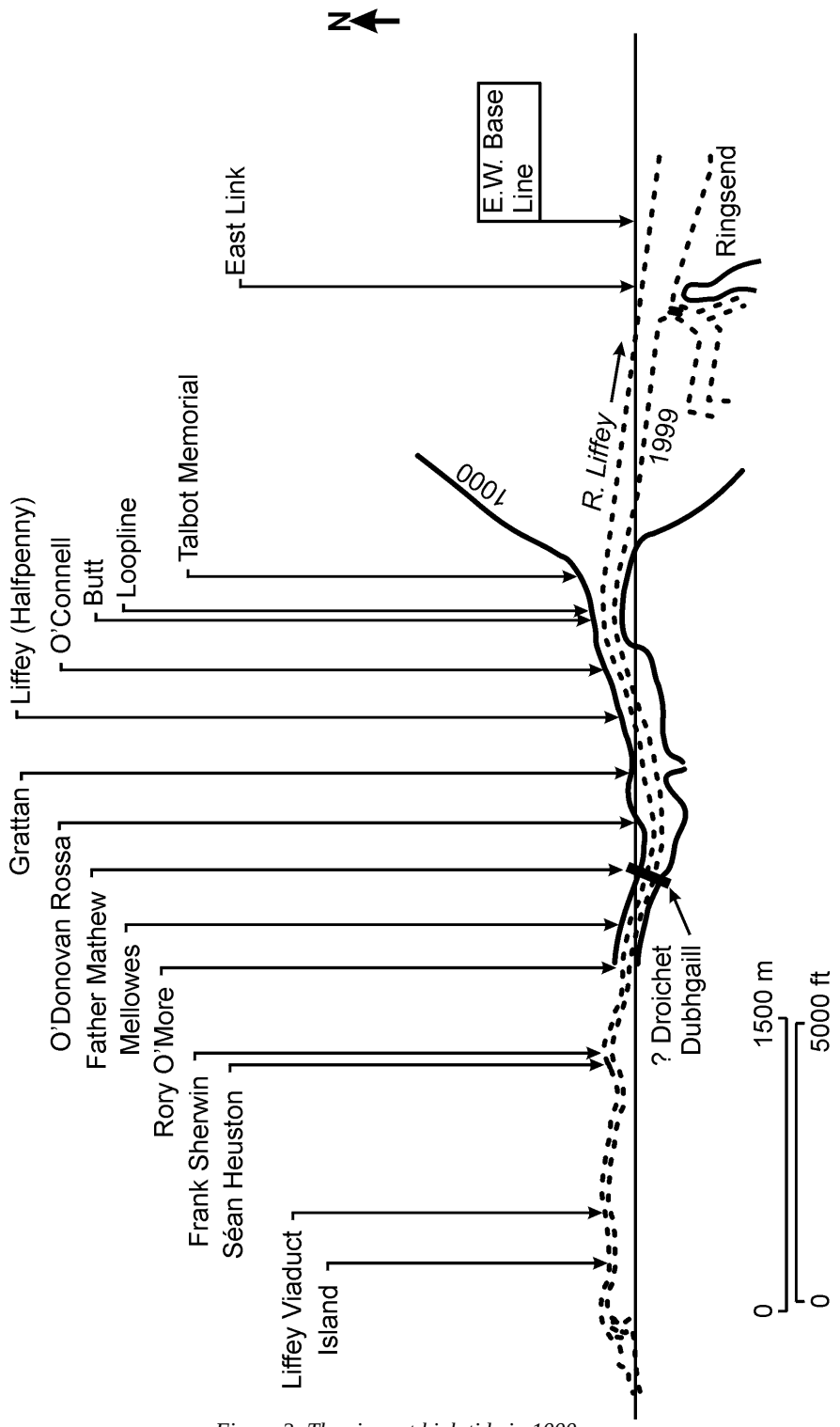

Figure 2: The river at high tide in 1000.

Finally, a 'pool' is a still place in a river, or in the present context, may be a body of water, large or small, connected tidally to a tidal river, the link being a narrow gut or channel passing through the bank of the river. The most vivid example of a pool in the Liffey estuary is that named by, for instance, John Taylor in his map *The Environs of Dublin* (1816), as the Marsh, in Sandymount. He shows this pool as about 5 hectares (13 acres) in area, in a location crossed by part of modern Park Avenue and the railway line between Sydney Parade and Sandymount stations. The Marsh was linked to the estuary at Merrion Strand by a gut roughly 0.6km long that, in part, followed Saint John's Road and discharged onto the strand at the Cock Lake just north of the Sandymount Martello tower. At high water, the area would have been a pool. At low tide it would have been wholly or partially free of standing water. This area formed part of the Merrion brickfields which were owned by the Fitzwilliam family. There is no evidence of such a clear cut pool in the parts of the Liffey being considered here.

The two significant deviations in the Liffey at Dublin might now be considered. These two deviations clearly exist; and at the year of the base date, 1000, the hard places or bluffs that caused them had already existed for some quite long period in post-glacial time. It should, however, be remembered that the base date is arbitrary; some reasons for its choice were given above. It suggests also a year when the course of the river, derived from the flow in the catchment and the twice-daily tidal cycle, had been little changed over very many hundreds of years, and a year that would be followed perhaps a century later by the first signs of Merchants Quay and then over many centuries by the gradual walling of the river tideway to reach its state today. This paper draws on developments during the whole transition period of the last thousand years.

The Western Deviation

The argument here is based on the existence of two bluffs, one, which is here named Saint Saviour's Bluff, on the north bank, and the other about 400m downstream on the south bank, and here named Isolde's Bluff. Figure 3 illustrates the location.

What justification is there for identifying Saint Saviour's Bluff? There appears to be no evidence of a rock outcrop. This whole area of the north bank from Father Mathew to O'Donovan Rossa Bridges is shown on a geological map of 1912 as being covered by alluvium in common with the whole north bank generally. Nevertheless it has been since early times a place with natural characteristics quite different to those of the north bank immediately upstream and downstream from it. Upstream at modern Arran Quay where riverside protection works dating from the fourteenth century have been revealed (Hayden and Walsh, 1990), William Ellis was given a lease in 1682 of "all the Strand from the Parke gate to the wall by the Lord Lowther's garden neere to the stone bridge". The term 'strand' in Dublin usage of the period meant the strip between the low water shoreline and the high water shoreline. At Arran Quay the high water line was close to modern Hammond Lane, and the width of the strand was given as about 240 feet or 72m. Downstream lay the Pill (the Pill beyond the Water). This was an area of muddy creeks around the mouth of the river Bradogue. It was waste land quite probably overflowed by high tides, and perhaps used as a berthing ground where vessels could lie at low tide upon the mud of the creeks. Whether possibly the Pill actually combined with Christchurch Bay (which will be mentioned below) on the south shore to form a large sheet of water at high tide in Viking times and later is unclear but cannot be dismissed. Early in the seventeenth century the Corporation moved to urge the filling in of the Pill. Later in that century, Humphrey Jervis acquired an interest in

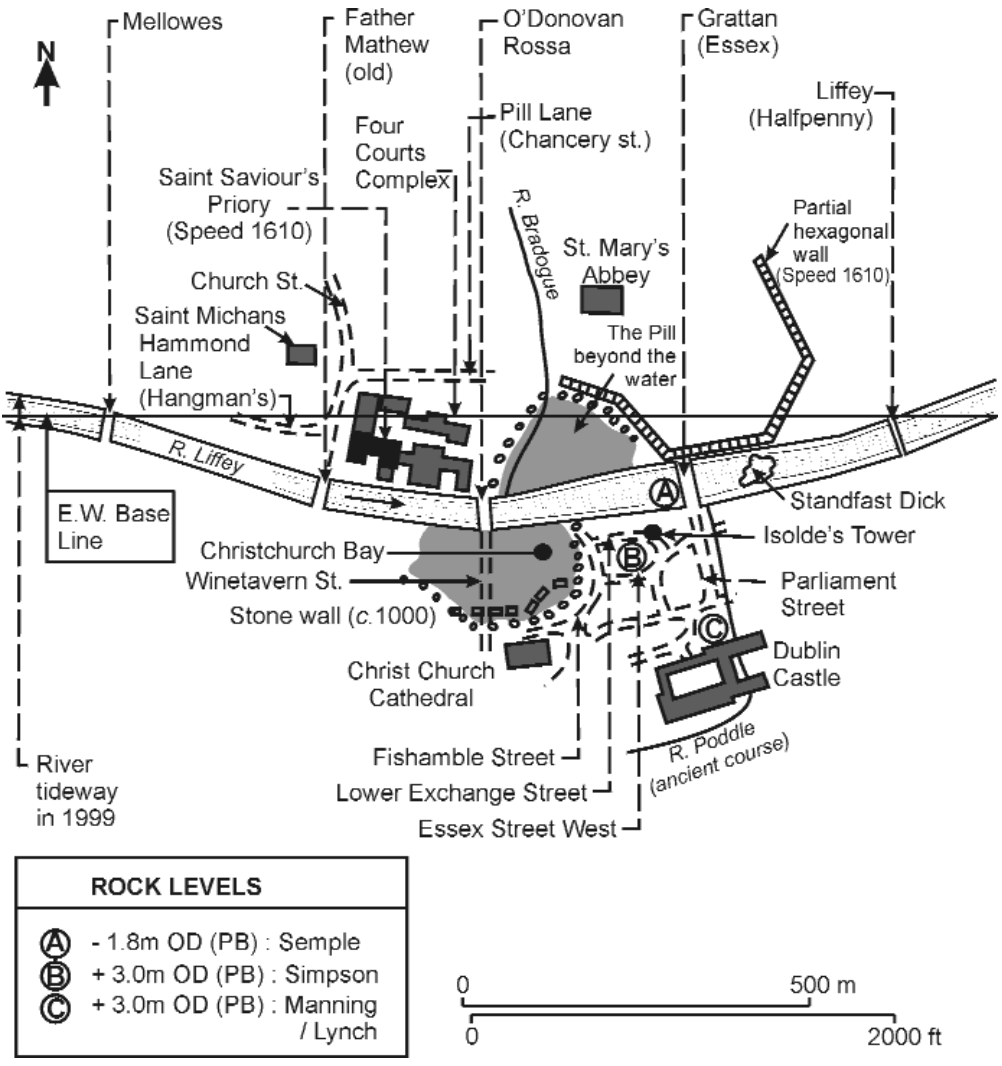

Figure 3: The western deviation.

the lands of the Pill from Lord Santry, who held the lease of the Pill proper, and from Jonathan Amory who had a lease of the strand downstream. The area was still wasteland, and Jervis built a river wall along the north shore of the river to form, *inter alia*, Ormonde Quay Upper.

The nature of the area forming the Pill and the strand continuing downstream at that period may be judged, first from its description given in Amory's lease of 1675 for the north shore strand in that vicinity as "All which Strand and premisses are covered every tide at full sea with water and is part of the river Annaliffy"; and, second, by Jervis' claim that in raising the ground level in the Pill he had ten carts constantly employed for four years carrying in earth for this work.

So there are lands above and below the 'hard place' named here as Saint Saviour's Bluff.

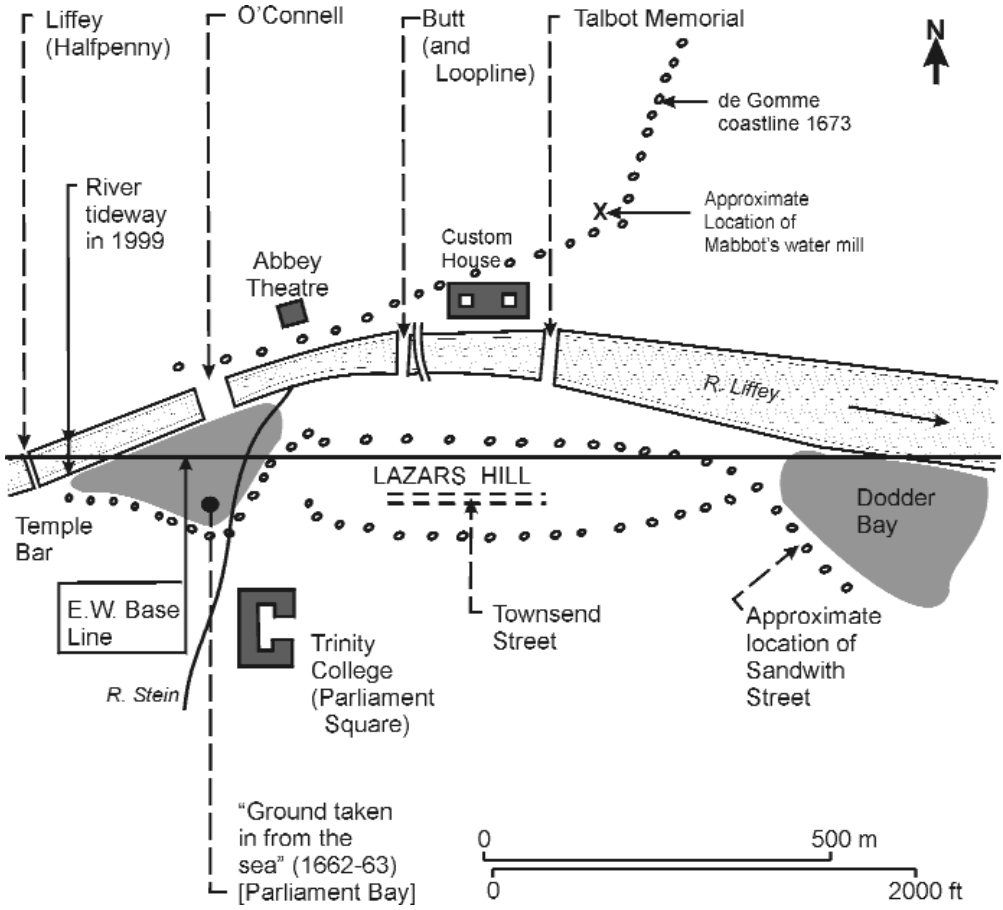

Figure 4: The eastern deviation.

The land in this 'hard place' which had come into the possession of the King's Inns after the dissolution of the monasteries did not form part of either Ellis's, Santry's or Amory's lease; and it is quite clear that in the sixteenth century, it did not require reclamation. It had already been an established site for major building for over three hundred years.

In the early years of the thirteenth century, a grant of Anglo-Norman land, roughly 0.3 acres (0.1ha) in extent was made to the Cistercians of Saint Mary's Abbey. They built a small church, but quite soon, in 1224, gave the site to the Dominican Order. The Friars built a large church in 1238, and developed the whole medieval monastery of Saint Saviour. Let it be accepted that this site lay above high tide level: to build a church and priory on land overflowed by the tide twice daily would have been absurd. Such land would scarcely have been offered to the Church for building. Very little is known about what the buildings of the priory were other than the church, but when it was surrendered to Henry VIII in 1539, the other buildings were said to have extended over about 3 acres (1.2 hectares).

An archaeological excavation of 1984 (MacMahon) contains most of the little known about the nature of the site. The main trenches were dug down to natural gravel at roughly 4m "below modern ground level"; and some pier foundations were discovered to be founded on grey sandy gravel, or, in the deepest parts exposed, on grey black clay. It may be that the core of the bluff, which one may hold to extend from Father Mathew to O'Donovan Rossa, and from the north bank of the Liffey northwards towards Chancery Street (shown as Pill Lane by Speed, de Gomme, and Rocque), was boulder clay overlain by gravel. But this is apparently not known; and all that can be said is the ground has safely supported the buildings of the Priory, the later extensions of the King's Inns and, to the present day, the great structures of the Four Courts.

It is argued here that this local land mass in its setting of weaker lands overflowed by the tides caused the river to deflect southwards to flow around it rather than through it to the Pill.

A fisherman drifting down the river past Saint Saviour's Bluff just after a high tide in 1000 would have seen ahead of him the great bay under the Christ Church escarpment; and indeed the earliest Norse visitors in the ninth century as they sailed up river on a full tide past the mouth of the Poddle for the first time would have been struck by the extent of this bay and by its potential as a harbour. Christchurch Bay, if that name may be offered for it, had largely disappeared under new land by about 1300 (Wallace, 1984), but in 1000 it was at high tide a sheet of water some 150m wide (north to south) from a line joining Pricketts Tower and Fian's Castle towards the Christ Church escarpment, and perhaps 250m broad (east to west) from Fishamble Street to some indefinite line west of Winetavern Street. The bulk of this area would of course have been dry at low spring tides. The east boundary of this bay was the continuation of the east end of the Christ Church ridge as it turned northward towards the river along the line of Fishamble Street.

This street and Winetavern Street to its west are seen as very ancient thoroughfares with their southern sections tumbling down rapidly to link the ridge to the river bank. To the east lay the estuary of the river Poddle. The landmass between Christchurch Bay and the Poddle estuary has been named here as Isolde's Bluff. It is about 150m (500 feet) wide west to east. This bluff contains a core of calp limestone which has been exposed at various levels, ranging from a highest at Dublin Castle through West Essex Street (Simpson, 1995) and the south abutment of Essex, now Grattan, Bridge (Semple, 1776) to a lowest under the river bed at the reef of Standfast Dick (Ballast Office). The rock is shown in some places to be overlain by gravel with some clay (Simpson, 1995). The name Isolde's Bluff has been suggested because of the medieval dominance of Isolde's Tower near the north-eastern edge or nose of the land mass. The discovery of a river channel immediately south of West Essex Street (Simpson, 1995) presents a conundrum that awaits resolution. However it is abundantly clear that Isolde's Bluff offered a positive obstacle to the main river and caused it to alter its course at an early date, certainly very many hundreds of years before 1000, to flow north of east. This deflection completed the western deviation.

The Eastern Deviation

At some stage of the post-glacial period it seems possible that the River Liffey may have flowed to Dublin Bay by turning towards the south near the reef of Standfast Dick and flowing a little south of east, passing to the south of Trinity College. The southern shore line would then, at high water, have followed Nassau Street, Lincoln Place and Fenian Street or Denzille Lane and reached the line of Hogan Place and Grand Canal Street at the north end

of Holles Street. If so, the river course changed in times long before 1000 to that which is known today, to a course that lies north of All Hallows Priory, now Trinity College.

This new eastern part of the Liffey at Dublin is determined by the constriction imposed on it by two bluffs, the Abbey Theatre Bluff to the north and Lazars Hill to the south. As the river approaches O'Connell Bridge it is deflected from the course north of east that it has been following from Christchurch Bay, and as it flows past Butt Bridge the direction of flow is now due east. Consider the neck the river is now being asked to pass through (Figure 4). To the north the shore seems little changed from that encountered by the river along Ormonde Quay Lower and Bachelors Walk. The whole area along the shore in this region would appear to be quite featureless river meadow that would offer little resistance to the direction of flow in the main stream of the river. To the south lies Lazars Hill.

Lazars Hill runs west to east along the south side of the Liffey. In its description as 'hill' it is a ridge rather than an isolated cone. Townsend Street, an ancient thoroughfare, forms the line of the ridge, which is above the high water level of spring tides. Along its southern slope in the year 1000 lay marshy land that possibly was covered at least partially at spring tides. This land would later be filled in to form Pearse Street and also developed to form part of the park of Trinity College. North of Townsend Street, the surface was built up, ultimately to form the walled boundary that is now at Burgh Quay, George's Quay and City Quay. The profile of a ridge has been largely or totally obliterated by the new land. Some details of the Lazars Hill precinct have been recorded in recent archaeological excavations (Walsh, 1998).

In 1213, Henry of London, the then recently appointed Archbishop of Dublin undertook to build a hospital (or hospice or hostel) to facilitate pilgrims who were awaiting embarkation for a visit to Santiago de Compostela. He established this near, probably, the north-west corner of Lazars Hill. It may be assumed that he built on land that would not be overflowed by high tide, and it seems safe to say that there was already, or would soon be, a small fishing and seafaring community somewhere along the ridge. In 1488 the route taken in the riding of the city franchises left "All Hallows on ther right hand" on their way "by Ampnlyffy is side" from Dames Gate to Ringsend. They would probably have ridden along the route of Townsend Street.

The first cartographer to show the Lazars Hill precinct was Bernard de Gomme in 1673; both Hatfield and Speed ignore it. de Gomme however is very valuable. He shows the built-up area along both sides of Townsend Street, which he names as Lazy Hill. The length of the 'hill' is about 600m (2000 feet) from the vicinity of Hawkins Street at the west to Sandwith Street at the east. Lying immediately to the west of Lazars Hill, de Gomme shows the "ground taken in from the sea" by Hawkins in 1662, an area that before then was subject to tidal overflow and might possibly be named today as Parliament Bay. To the east of Lazars Hill he shows what remains today a critical topographical feature, namely the high water shore line of 1673 and earlier. This is the line of modern Sandwith Street. Reference to modern maps will show that the northern half of Sandwith Street runs from north-west to south-east, and is the only street in the district not to lie on the roughly north-south and east-west street grid.

This land mass of the Lazars Hill bluff has clearly been the southern determinant of the course of the Liffey from the reef of Standfast Dick towards Ringsend.

Opposite the west end of ancient Lazars Hill and only 150m (500 feet) to the north across the river, there is today the Abbey Theatre. It is suggested here that a 'hard place' existed in

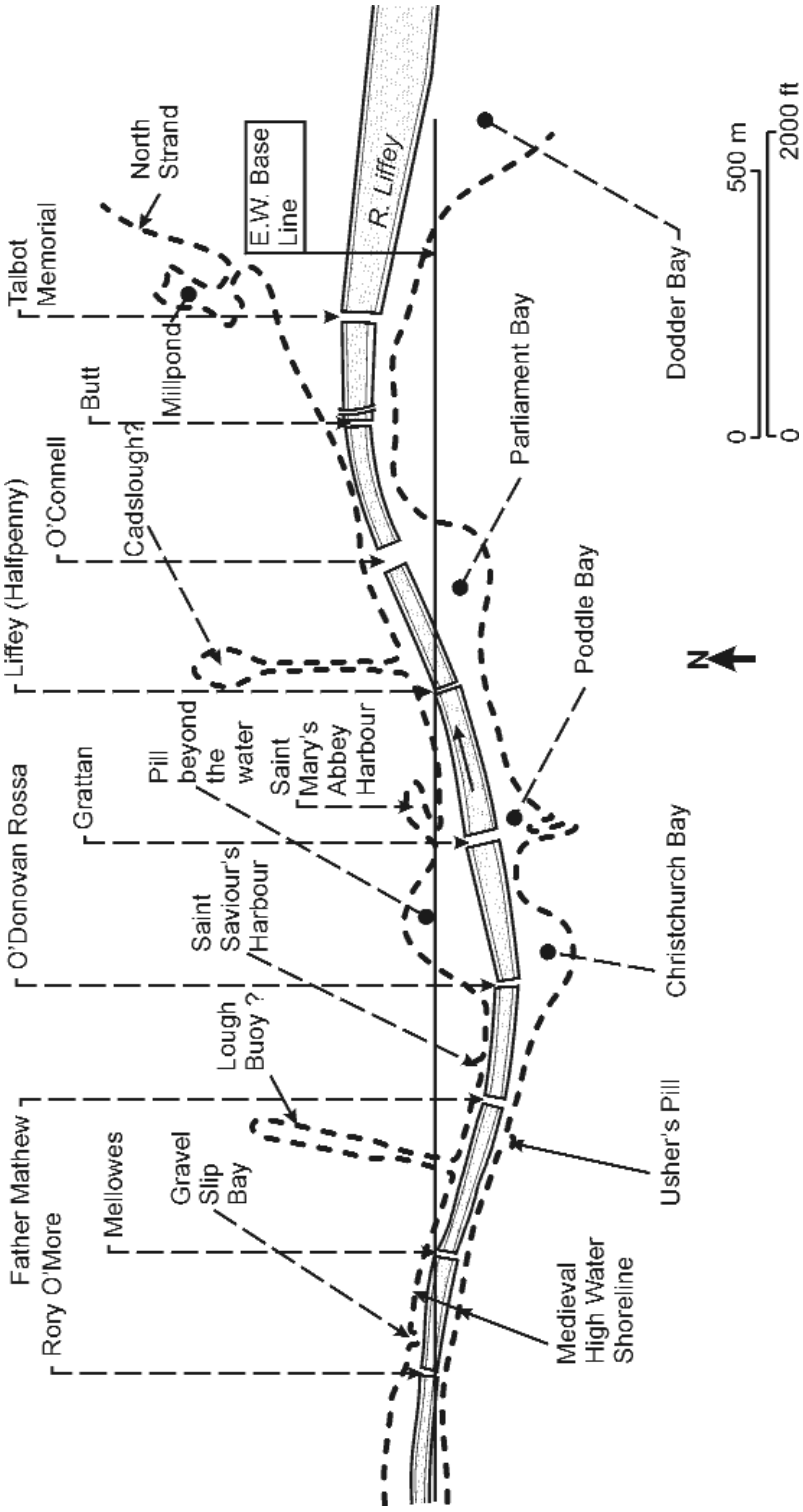

Figure 5: Bays and pools.

the vicinity of the theatre. This is given the name here of Abbey Theatre Bluff; and it is argued that this feature is the northern determinant of the course of the river, and that it forms with Lazars Hill the quite narrow passage through which the Liffey has been constrained to flow.

What justification is there for proposing a bluff at this place? First there is the line taken by the river. Then there are four factors of varying influence that point to the location of the bluff around the place where the present line of Marlborough Street meets the river bank. These factors are as follow—

(a) The early history of the ferries in Dublin is incomplete. In 1665 Charles II thanked Dublin for its services to him and to his father over many years, and as part of a reward he committed "the ferry over the river of Annaliffy" to the ownership of "the mayor sheriffs commons and citizens". It is not clear whether this referred to just a single ferry or to a ferry service at several crossing places, such indeed as existed in later development. However, Rocque in 1756 showed a ferry crossing from Union Lane or Ferryboat Lane on the north bank to Hawkins Street on the south bank. Ferryboat Lane was close to the line of the extension of Marlborough Street past the Abbey Theatre. This ferry that Rocque names as 'The Old Ferry' existed also in 1675 shortly after the date of Charles' grant. It was clearly an important river crossing as it would have linked both Lazars Hill and Hoggen Green to the north side of the river. Its north shore landing place would quite probably have been set at a solid site not subject to tidal overflow, if such were readily available, rather than on a site with difficult tidal implications.

(b) de Gomme's map of 1673 shows only six houses on the entire north bank of the Liffey east of the ruined Saint Mary's Abbey. Four of these, side by side, are quite close to the landing place of the Old Ferry. Again it may be suggested that their location is not random, but reflects the stability of this particular site and its security against tidal submersion.

(c) In 1675 Jonathan Amory was granted his lease for "that part of the Strand on the north side of the Liffey situate betwixte the wall of the Pill - and the water mill lately built by Mr Gilbert Mabbott". It was a significant feature of the lease that "all which strand and premisses are covered every tide at full sea with water and is part of the river Analiffy". The dimensions in the lease suggest strongly that a length of about 100m (330 feet) of the river bank close to the place where the four houses earlier mentioned were built was excluded from Amory's lease. Amory however was bound by his lease to build a roadway 60 feet (18m) wide in the new land to be made by him, and he was granted a narrow strip of land along the line which is today known as Abbey Street Old to enable the continuity of this road to be maintained. Thus a short length of the river bank about 100m (330 feet) long and 50m (165 feet) wide was excluded from Amory's lease at this significant location. The city recorded its ownership of this small area of land in 1733, noting that it was bounded "on the south by the river Anna Liffey and on the north [by] the land granted to Jonathan Amory". At that time, they then used this small area to build a protected quay which was named as The Iron Quay; and they clearly showed themselves continuing their ownership of the Old Ferry landing place close by.

The exclusion of this 100m strip may well be based on the simple fact, quoting the lease, that this length of the river bank was not indeed "covered every tide at full sea with water" and therefore did not have a strand and was not "part of the river Annaliffy". Conditions similar to those at Saint Saviour's Bluff would then apply, albeit over a shorter length of river bank.

If perhaps it is felt that these items of evidence are not clear cut, one must still consider whether the reason for the original siting of the ferry landing and for building the four houses nearby, when other choices might have been possible, arose from the recognition of a 'hard place' in the ground, a definite area not of marshy meadow and not subject to twice-daily tidal flooding. The Abbey Theatre Bluff would be such a place.

It is of interest to observe that an area of hard durable ground may not be immediately identifiable by inspection of its surface. For example, in the bog areas of the west of Ireland, the designers of buildings have been known to locate, in large heather-covered tracts of peatland, small sub-surface areas of clays or gravels, so-called bog islands, submerged hillocks on which structures might safely be built; while less than 50m away in any direction deep beds of peat may make economic foundations impossible to construct.

(d) There is substance in the three foregoing arguments for the existence of the Abbey Theatre Bluff as an influence in directing the course of the Liffey. There is however a fourth factor which is assuredly more significant. If de Gomme's map is examined, it will be seen clearly where the river met the river estuary in 1673 (and from then back to remote times). On the south bank, the tideway expanded abruptly around the nose of Lazars Hill to fill the great bay of the Dodder estuary. On the north bank the high tide shoreline turns sharply from an west-east direction to run north north-east along the North Strand, the line of which is very clear today (see Figure 5). The defining point of this sharp change of direction can be identified quite precisely today, lying as it does at the junction of Store Street and Amiens Street. This point is the corner of the Wall mentioned in Amory's lease of 1675 as the corner of the wall at Gilbert Mabbot's water mill.

The north and south shore lines begin to diverge some 350m (1170 feet) to the west of the corner of Mabbot's wall and slightly to the east of the Abbey Theatre bluff. This divergence which is followed quickly by the sudden quite dramatic expansion into the estuary at Mabbot's corner demands the acceptance of bluffs on both shores at the place of the divergence. This appears to offer the clearest proof of the existence of a 'hard place' on the north bank near the Abbey Theatre. For, if this place resists strongly and directs the inflow of estuarine tidal waters, often storm-driven, will it not equally strongly resist and direct the downstream flow of the river?

The Bays and Pools

Definitions have been given earlier for the terms bay and pool. One distinction between them lies in the relationship between the width of the interface with the river and the plan area of the bay or pool. Obviously, this distinction can be blurred. Also, some of the sites along the Liffey were known as Pills or Pools whereas they would fall more easily into the category of bay. None of the bays or pools of medieval Dublin is visible today, and so Figure 5 as shown is based generally on the Liffey shoreline as drawn on Figure 2 (although it does include one feature that did not exist in medieval times). The whole series of bays and pools may be taken in sequence, commencing at the North Strand.

Mill Pond

This pool is shown only by Phillips 1685 where it is named by him as 'millpond'. It is close to the defining corner of Mabbot's wall. In the absence of any significant river or stream

flowing to the Liffey in this vicinity, and indeed from considering the nature of the hinterland, it may be suggested that Gilbert Mabbot's water mill, installed shortly before 1675, was a tidal mill, with the mill pond as a tidal pool providing the source of power. The pool was filled in, possibly with domestic refuse, early in the eighteenth century and the area is shown by Brooking 1728 and Rocque 1756 as containing gardens, rough ground and one dwelling house.

Cadslough

This pool, although in what form is not known, lay in the low meadow area around Moore Street. No map shows it by name, but Rocque in 1756 significantly describes its location as 'Old Brick Fields'. Phillips shows 'brick kils' in Clontarf in 1685, and Rocque's use of the word 'old' in 1756 suggests that the Cadslough fields were also of the late-seventeenth century. They are unlikely to be much earlier. Brickfields are found in clay deposits, and the pits dug for extraction of the brick clay, the so-called 'brick holes' are often partially filled with water. These would benefit from a natural or man-made drainage outlet to a watercourse but the arrangement shown on Figure 5 is merely notional. It may never have existed, although some outlet probably did. The origin of the name Cadslough appears unknown, and it is still not clear whether the ending lough refers to water. The location however is known, as the name was still in use in 1850 for a very short lane containing just one house divided into tenements off Sackville Lane which in its turn was off Moore Street; and, as recently as 1983, Cad's Lough was listed as a street by Dublin Corporation.

Saint Mary's Abbey Harbour

Already in the thirteenth century the community of Saint Mary's Abbey had its own harbour on the Liffey, as well as a less constricted harbour at Bullock; and they traded from those locations to England and France with their own vessels. It is suggested here that their Liffey harbour lay in a pool at the east side of the Pill beyond the Water, possibly protected within the river wall shown by Speed 1610. If so this would be classified as a pool.

The Pill beyond the Water

This area of water should, it is believed, be classified as a bay rather than as a pool. In view of Jervis' laborious work in filling in the area to form Ormonde Quay Upper and its hinterland, it seems possible to envisage this Pill as overflowed substantially in high tides in early times rather than as the tangle of interlocking creeks shown by Speed in 1610. The very title, which is of early origin, suggests a single body of water at least at high tide rather than a delta of creeks around the mouth of the Bradogue. This bay has been mentioned also in connection with the western deviation of the Liffey.

Saint Saviour's Harbour

It is recorded that Saint Saviour's Priory had its own harbour for the 300 years of its existence. Malton's edition of Speed 1610 shows a small bay in front of the King's Inns. It is recorded that there was a slip with steps probably at this place.

Lough Buoy

The name of Lough Boy is given by de Gomme 1673, and of Lough Buoy by Rocque in 1756. In both maps it appears as a street running north-south to the west of Church Street. Speed 1610 shows open country at this place, but with a narrow pool extending north from

the river for about 40m (130 feet) approximately on the line of the streets mentioned. Ten years before de Gomme's map, the area, known as "one parcel of ground in Oxmantown Green", was leased from the Corporation in 1662 by Sir Daniel Bellingham, who would later be the first Lord Mayor of Dublin; and two years later in 1664 another lease shows that it had passed to the family of Viscount Massarene, still as "a parcel of ground". The land extended from Young's Castle at the north to the west entrance to Saint Michan's churchyard, and is now largely Bow Street. Dillon Cosgrave (1909) names Lough Buoy as the Yellow Pool. Clarke (1978) shows it as Bow Lane with its south end at Hammond Lane and marks Slighe Midhluachra on it. The names given to the location of this possible pool by the early cartographers seem to need explanation, although the seventeenth century leases suggest that it was farm land at that time. The case for there ever being a pool at this place remains an open question.

Gravel Slip Bay

This small bay on the north bank, roughly square in plan, is unusual in its development. Speed 1610 does not show it (although Malton's version of Speed published in 1799 does!). When Ellis was granted his lease in 1682, the high water shoreline ran roughly along what Rocque later recorded (1756) as Gravel Walk Slip. Ellis' work, and that of Richard Tighe and others who succeeded him, filled in the strand and advanced the shoreline, now determined by walls, to form Arran Quay, and Back Quay that would later be part of Ellis Quay. The line of the quays was however broken by Gravel Slip Bay, and the quay thoroughfare turned away from the river to join Gravel Walk and continue its course westward along Barrack (Benburb) Street. It seems clear that the Corporation retained the bay as a harbour for its Pipe Yard close by. In the eighteenth century, large quantities of timber pipes were being imported for the city water supply, and these were usually rafted upstream for delivery to the pipe storage area. The Gravel Slip would also have been an important place in the programme of the Royal Barracks nearby, and for deliveries to the Smithfield area.

The use of timber watermains had to recognise among other problems the tendency of bored timber pipes to crack if allowed to dry out completely. It is quite likely that the principle of wet storage for pipes was followed, and that Gravel Slip Bay was used partly as a storage pool for this purpose. It is an interesting coincidence that, following the enactment of the Metal Mains Act in 1809, an Act that strongly encouraged the use of cast iron pipes, Gravel Slip Bay was filled in two years later, in 1811.

Usher's Pill

This small bay on the south bank lay near to the line of Saint Augustine Street (Clarke, 1978) between the Bridge Gate at Father Mathew Bridge, where there was a residence of the Usher family, to the east and Usher's Island, the home farm and gardens of the Ushers to the west. Usher's Pill was the place at which the not fully understood complex of watercourses that lay between the great ridge of medieval Dublin on Thomas Street and the Liffey entered the river. It is hard to see how this inlet was not included in the south landing place of Áth Cliath. In 1685 Christopher Usher, then head of one branch of the Usher family, filled in Usher's Pill. This was part of his farsighted project to extend the south quays westward past the Old Bridge (Father Mathew) and to form Usher's Quay and Usher's Island Quay. Consequently Usher's Pill did not appear on any map after the seventeenth century, with the exceptions of Walsh and Clarke. The relationship between Usher's Pill and the early

riverbank harbour site excavated by Swan *et al*. (2000) at the east corner of Saint Augustine Street remains unresolved.

Christchurch Bay

This great medieval bay has been discussed under the heading of the 'Western Deviation'.

Poddle Bay

Before the year 1000, the River Poddle flowed down from the high ground south of Dublin Castle to form a tidal bay and harbour north of Dames Gate at its confluence with the Liffey. This bay, with its one or two tongues, covered the ground where Crane Lane and Essex Street East are located today. This bay continued to exist without significant change until the beginning of the seventeenth century. In 1606 Jacob Newman began a major riverside project in which during about ten years he filled Poddle Bay and the shoreline to its east as far approximately as the then Bagnio Slip (The Ha'penny Bridge). In the process he buried the Poddle in a new largely culverted course. The change in the street plan caused by Newman's work is shown clearly by Speed 1610 (before) and de Gomme 1673 (after), although it may say something about the date of Speed's field work that his map did not record the dramatic change that Newman was making just then.

Parliament Bay

During the seventeenth and early-eighteenth century, the south bank of the Liffey from the Poddle eastwards was being vigorously developed. Schemes were proposed for the making of new land above high tide level. In 1656, Sir John Temple was granted a lease for the "wast peece of ground" that would be part of modern Temple Bar; and proposals were made to extend Newman's new land eastward along the river bank. The writer is uncertain about the precise territorial boundaries of these proposals.

In 1662-63 William Hawkins built a very important river wall along the south bank from near Temple Bar to the vicinity of the Corn Exchange. Behind this wall as de Gomme recorded in 1673, Hawkins made new "ground taken in from the sea". It was a most significant project for the city. The new ground would come to contain Westmoreland, D'Olier, and Hawkins Streets, parts of the Fleet Street area, and Aston and Burgh Quays. It would also provide a secure tide-free route into the Lazars Hill precinct. The whole of this area was a tidal bay in 1000. The name Parliament Bay has been used in consequence of an early lease reference to a spot near the eastern portico of the Parliament House, now the Bank of Ireland, as the 'Old Strand' where the pre-Hawkins high tide had lapped.

Dodder Bay

This is the great expanse of the Dodder delta, bounded by Sandwith Street, Hogan Place, Grand Canal Street Upper and Lower Bath Avenue and the Irishtown-Ringsend peninsula. Before the huge land project, driven primarily by Sir John Rogerson in the eighteenth century, this was wasteland; land substantially overflowed by full tides and possibly quite similar to the Pill beyond the Water in its combination of marsh and creek.

Other bays and pools

Certain other bays and pools not mentioned directly because, while medieval, they do not lie in the stretch of river being considered here, would include a large pool shown by Phillips

(1685) behind the North Strand, the bays at the mouths of the Rivers Camac and Tolka, the Marsh at Sandymount, and the great shipping pools in the lower estuary.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the reader's indulgence is asked for the introduction of several unrecognized names into the very ancient history of the river. These are principally for the author's own use to assist in identification and recall of origins rather than for any general adoption. There is so much peripheral history in any account of any part of the river, the assisted recall of which helps to enhance the bare details of the place or feature mentioned. If these names are found of assistance to others, then they serve their purpose even better.

The complete absence of contemporary maps is a stimulating factor in any study of speculative topography. If one embarks on this study it is wise to recognize the pitfalls of an over-active imagination. There may, probably always will, be other interpretations than those offered, other interpretations that range from shades of meaning to healthy rejections of views expressed. One way in which error can arise is through relying on, say, a seventeenth century map to show with any accuracy a location as it had been in the eleventh or twelfth century. The seventeenth century is much closer to the present-day than it was to the eleventh. On the other hand, it is clear that the rate of change of the river has been much more rapid in the last 400 years than it was in the preceding unmapped six hundred, and this may make any process of 'retrofit' slightly safer.

There is however no substitute for archaeological excavation. That must remain the surest way of clarifying the form of the early river. In this context, the assistance of trial borings made on so many building sites nowadays will always be significant, although there is one essential link that must always be inserted if such borings and indeed some archaeological excavations are not to be a subject for frustration rather than enlightenment. This is that it is vital that, in both types of excavation, the findings and levels determined should be clearly related to Ordnance Datum. A universal observation of this requirement would vastly increase the value of such findings.

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