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the dominant cereal types (Monk 1985/6, 34). The cultivation of wheat requires an increased output of labour and a better quality of soil than other cereals. It could not therefore, yield a crop which, compared to oat, would have been as economically viable.

The low level of weed seeds recovered with the cereal grains suggests that the harvested crops may have been at a late stage of processing as waste, in the form of weed seeds and cereal chaff, seems to have been eradicated. This may, however, be an indication of poor preservation within the sample. Cereal chaff (Boardman and Jones 1990) and weed seeds are generally regarded as being less robust than cereal grains and may not have survived the charring process.

#### Conclusion

The Labbamolaga material produced large numbers of cereal grains representing four different types, thus providing important evidence for the cereal economies of early medieval and medieval Ireland.

Table 1: Taxa Present

Botanical name	English name	F4 Area 1	F8 Area 1	F11 Area 1	F4 Area 3
<i>GRAMINEAE</i>					
<i>Triticum sp. (whole)</i>	wheat	5	69	32	•
<i>Triticum sp. (frags)</i>		•	8	5	•
<i>Hordeum sp.</i>	barley	1	8	2	•
<i>cf. Secale cereale L. (frags)</i>	rye	•	•	2	•
<i>Avena sp. (whole)</i>	oat	56	303	103	•
<i>Avena sp. (frags)</i>		12	121	38	•
<i>Cerealia sp. (frags)</i>	cereal	1	32	7	1
<i>POLYGONACEAE</i>					
<i>cf. Polygonum sp.</i>	knotgrass	1	•	•	•
<i>ROSACEAE</i>					
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	bramble	•	1	•	•
<i>LEGUMINOSAE</i>					
<i>cf. Vicia sp.</i>	vetch	•	1	•	•
TOTAL (whole seeds)		63	382	137	0
frags = fragments			cf. = possible		

#### APPENDIX 4

##### St Molaga and Leaba Molaga

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St Molaga or Laicin/Laichen belongs traditionally to the seventh century. His father's name was Dubhligh or Dubhligidh, his mother's Mioncolla or Mincollaid, and he came from a family local to Fermoy. His parents were good people of humble origin and he was the child of their old age. St Cuimíne Fota foretold his birth and future sanctity, and his birth and baptism were surrounded by miracle. He and his parents were apparently received into the household of a local chief, but the circumstances of his early education seem vague. Eventually he founded the monastery of Tulach Min (not certainly identified – see Hogan 1910 (1993), *tulach min mo-laga*: perhaps Leaba Molaga?), and gathered followers around him. He subsequently travelled, visiting Ulster, Scotland and St David in Wales. At St Davids he is said to have received the name Lachinus or Molaga. (The chronology is, of course, quite confused: St David is said to have died c. 600.) Molaga then returned to Ireland. He founded a church near Dublin; visited Clonmacnoise, and was recalled thence to his own monastery of Tulach Min. Various privileges and possessions were bestowed upon his church. He is traditionally credited also with the foundation of Timoleague; had churches near Marshalstown and at Aghacross between Mitchelstown and Kildorerry, county Cork. He died on 20 January in an unspecified year, and was traditionally believed to have been buried at Leaba Molaga (O'Hanlon 1875, 336-56).

The problems of his historical life and chronology apart, his cult may be early enough. The late eighth-century Martyrology of Tallaght has, under 20 January, 'Locheni fili Duib Dligid' (Best and Lawlor 1931, 10). And under the same date, the Martyrology of Oengus has 'Splendid are the four whom I knit together on one festival that is holier, mo-Laca, mo-Ecu, Sabaist and Oenu' (Stokes 1905 (1984), 37). According to Hughes, 'it seems

almost certain that the Martyrology (of Oengus) was written between 797 and 805' (Hughes 1972, 205). The Annals of Inisfallen record the death of a coarb of Molaga in 1164 – AI 1164.6: 'The coarb of Mo-Laca (*Mu-Laca*) was slain' (Mac Airt 1951) – but his church is not named.

In the graveyard at Leaba Molaga are two ruined churches side by side. The earlier of the two is a building of early form with *antae*, much ruined and much restored. It is just over 13 ft long and about 9.5 ft wide inside a proportion of 1.4:1. The doorway in the W gable is unique in Ireland in being constructed of only three stones. Though the opening is surrounded by a projecting architrave, this unique feature, together with the very short proportions of the church (which should indicate an early date), led Leask (1977) to suggest the possibility of a ninth-century origin. The dimensions of the doorway were given by Power (1932) as 4 ft 10 in. high, 2 ft 3 in. wide at the top and 2 ft 9 in. below.

Within this church, on the right-hand side, is a gravestone which was raised a little above the ground. On it, Champneys (1910 (1970)) could see some carving that looked like the foot of a cross, but he could not trace it further up the stone. This is traditionally the 'bed' or tomb of St Molaga. O'Hanlon (*op. cit.* p. 342), apparently following a Windele MS, gives more detail: 'Within it (the oratory), there is a kind of kist, consisting of a large flagstone, resting on low side stones, and leaving an open space beneath, said to have been St Molaga's bed. Pilgrims, who resort here, afflicted with various diseases, are said to have been completely resorted, after having lain in it.' The bed lies at the south side of the chamber. 'There was formerly a wall here and a 'brown stone cross, which rested on the covering stone of the Leabba' in 1852, but was then apparently damaged.

Sixty years before Champneys wrote, the oratory was comparatively perfect. There was a window in the S as well as in the E wall and a stone altar.

Power gives the measurements of the second, late and larger church, a few feet to N of the early oratory, as 35 ft by 18 ft, internally.

No door or window survives and its date is indeterminate. The foundations of its N, S and E walls stand to the height of 4 or 5 ft (Leask 1977, 61-2 + Fig. 35; Champneys 1910 (1970), 39; Power 1932, 95).

#### Commentary on the air photograph (Ill. 3)

The approach road on the S to the farm on the opposite side of the road from the churches and graveyard (namely, to W) and the field wall curving NE from the farm buildings back to the road on the N together form a pronounced curve on the 6" scale OS map. The churches and graveyard lie immediately E of the chord of this arc formed by the road, the W corner of the graveyard abutting the road.

The site was photographed from the air in March 1979. The curve formed by the farm approach road and the field wall is clearly visible. The line of the field wall is continued on the opposite (E) side of the road by a distinct curving shadow-mark as far as the corner of the field to ENE of the graveyard. In the big field that lies to E and S of the graveyard, it is not really discernible, but about two-thirds of a large curvilinear enclosure is thus defined, the churches and graveyard enclosure being fairly centrally placed within it. There are faint but clear indications of a much reduced ringfort-like structure immediately adjacent to the graveyard enclosure on the SE. It is possible that the curve of the SE wall of the graveyard reflects the original existence of an inner curvilinear enclosure around the ritual core of an early ecclesiastical settlement – the churches and cemetery. The photograph is taken from the NE.

The site was visited in June 1985. It is possible that a ditch could be seen on the outside of the field wall behind and to N/NE of the farm buildings. In the field on the opposite side of the road, the shadow-mark feature, apparently an earthwork, could be traced to the corner of the field, as on the air photograph, by the ditch rather than the much vaguer bank. In the big field to E and S of the graveyard, the ringfort-like structure could be traced on the ground, and the line of the bank of the outer enclosure may have been discernible from the higher ground





Ill. 3. Aerial photograph of Labbamologa. Arrows indicate valleys.

southwards. Despite the great width of the graveyard wall nearest the road (the SW wall), it does not seem to be part of the old enclosure system. The site generally lies on ground sloping down to the stream visible on the right of the photograph.

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## NOTES

- 1 Site location : Td Labbamologa Middle, Par. Templemologa, By Condons and Clangibbon; O.S. Sheet No. 10, Co. Cork. 20cm. from the north margin, 29cm from the west margin; NGR R767185.
- 2 A catalogue of these stones was compiled during the excavation and was lodged with the OPW and National Museum of Ireland in 1995.
- 3 Surveyed in 1841.
- 4 GrN-22065 from Centrum voor Isotopen Onderzoek, Groningen.
- 5 A 2 sigma calibration gives a broader date range of 1399-1484.