



# laetus in praesens

Alternative view of segmented documents via Kairos

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## Timeship: Conception, Technology, Design, Embodiment and Operation

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### Conceiving a timeship and its operation

"The future is not a probable place we are being taken to but a preferred place we are creating.  
The tracks to it are not found and followed but are made by laying and constructing a trail."  
Peter Ellyard, Preferred Futures, 1993

**Intimations:** A sense of the nature of time and time travel is perhaps first given, and best encapsulated, in the phrase at the beginning of many a story-teller's tale: "once upon a time" -- suggesting a special sense of oneness and togetherness in time. In Celtic cultures legends exist of the people of an earlier time who "withdrew into the stones" from which they can return at any time (see [Judge, 2002](#)). This notion is interwoven with that of Tir-Na Nòg, the land of eternal youth. Although in Italian, it is perhaps not surprising that this is the topic of one of the publications of Damanhur (Lisa Nutti. *Tir-Na Nòg*. 1997).

The possibilities of time travel and time machines are assiduously cultivated in fiction. There is much speculation on how such machines might be designed and operated -- stimulated by the widespread interest in UFOs. Damanhur nourishes this reflection and has designed machines in which to experiment with time travel -- and even has a [web page](#) on the topic. Their presumption in openly articulating their progress in this field has also attracted reactions [[comment](#)]. But for Damanhur: "The most important principle of all our researches is that art and science are complementary to each other, it is possible to obtain results that contemporary science declares impossible, if you combine human creativity and will with technology". Thinking about time travel may be severely handicapped by using the mental frameworks appropriate to thought about space travel.

For the *Gameplayers of Zan*, in envisaging the vessel by which to dissociate themselves from the constraints of those dominating them:

...in the beginning, we were not sure it could be done; it was a hope, a theory, a gamble. but the suspicion was so strong we could not ignore it; so we started at the mountain called Madness. Inside, it was hollowed out, a little at a time, a handful, a pocket-load, to make a place for the ark that was to be. And just as gradually, in the smoky mediation halls of Dragonfly Lodge, one pocketful of principle at a time, it began to come into view, to manifest itself. It was then we learned that the whole concept of ideas about space travel we had been labouring under was wrong, full of limits we would *never* transcend...like powering aircraft with coal-fired steam engines....Now we saw that space was a sea...we still call a container of people that moves according to control in that medium a *ship*. But the flaw in the old concept was that we tried to leapfrog to powered ships, fueled ships, before we even knew the nature of the new sea." (p. 366-7)

**Varieties of possible timeship:** A point of departure might be to consider the implication of a preliminary "brainstorming" range of timeship candidates, however tentatively indicative of possibilities:

- Café / Pub: The gathering together over the years of groups of people in a cafe or a pub suggests that a time ship might be

envisaged in terms of the coherence over time of a group. At a different extreme the kind of experience offered by a Munich Oktoberfest suggests a different way of thinking about time over a period of hours.

- Meeting / dialogue: Any kind of gathering can be understood as a timeship. A useful distinction is made between meetings that "take off" and "fly" and those that do not.
- Social organization: A club, or any peer-group society such as an alumni group, gives a related sense of continuity over time and the nature of renewal. There is a degree to which any organization may be usefully considered as a vehicle for collectively moving through time. The same may be said of less formal organization such as a dynasty, a kinship group, a tribe, or a totemic group.
- Epic performance: Major epic performance such as the Mahabarata or Wagner's operatic Ring cycle can be understood as carrying people into other dimensions of space and time. For *aficionados*, such experiences have an overwhelming alternative sense of reality. Many of the considerations with regard to an epic apply also to a song, a poem or a body of work in which the minds and emotions are carried backwards and forward in time. Some long-running sitcoms may also be considered in this light (cf 30-year run of the BBC's *Last of the Summer Wine*; *Neighbours*; *Dynasty*)
- Liturgy of the hours of prayer, notably as practiced in monasteries [[more](#)]
- Megalithic circles: These can be understood as time machines, especially given their particular relationship to annual astronomical phenomena:
- Virtual organizations: The web, and the social networks which flourish on it, can be thought of as timeships, especially given such devices as webrings and virtual reality
- Journey: Recognition of the nature of the complex relationship between a journey and time suggests that a journey as a whole might be understood as a timeship; a similar argument might be applied to understanding of a career
- Device: There is of course the possibility of a time travel device, much explored in fiction. At Damanhur such a device has been built for experimental purposes.

**Web as timeship:** The tremendous socio-economic revolution created by the web has been the subject of a multitude of commentaries. Through the configuration of hyperlinks, the web may be understood as a convergence of semantic patterns and mnemo-technics. It is emerging as a planetary form of organization of significance beyond the simple transfer of knowledge along information highways. This may be described in memetic terms but it also resonates with the metaphor of songlines articulated by Australian Aborigines. Aspects of this have been explored elsewhere (*Songlines of the Noosphere: global configuration of hypertext pathways*, 1996; *Sacralization of hyperlink geometry*, 1997). The forthcoming "semantic web" will offer even more striking possibilities. It is an extension of the current web in which information is given well-defined meaning, better enabling computers and people to work in cooperation.

As yet the structure of the Damanhur website is relatively simple, but as the planned "virtual Damanhur" emerges it is probable that many of the mnemonic links in its Temple architecture will be reflected in hyperlinks. Engaging with the configuration of these hyperlinks may well take on many aspects of experiencing a timeship -- notably in the light of its Triad project (see [below](#)).

**Symbolism:** This is a classic approach to time-binding and may be considered fundamental to insight into the nature of any timeship. It can provide an intimately significant sense of coherence. Elements include:

- interwoven tales and legends may be usefully understood as encoding the control circuitry of development -- to prove coherence to timeship (ecosystem). This may be most apparent in oral cultures and the oral natural of childhood education. Interesting examples of complex sets of tales include the
  - *Jataka Tales of the Buddha*, These 547 stories are meant to teach the values of self-sacrifice, honesty, morality and other didactic values.
  - *Panchatantra*. This Hindu collection of stories about relationships between animals (known in Europe as the *Fables of Bidpai*) serves as a manual for the conduct of a prospective ruler and is widely used by parents in guiding children towards values in human life, since each story has a moral.
  - *Aesop's Fables*. Over 655 European tales are in this collection, each with an associated moral.
  - *Mulla Nasrudin's* tales.
- labyrinths and walking the labyrinths
- mandalas
- statues of divinities
- temple halls
  - each room based on a different number symbolism
  - alchemical metals (lead, sulphur, mercury, gold,), but not the periodic table (cf Haskell)
  - traditional elements: earth/air/fire/water
  - rituals and chants
  - walking the temple
- mnemonic gardens / theatre
- meditative work process, notably in construction and artwork

**Operation:** The "art" of making a timeship operate may well make use of symbols in ways that might be understood as constituting a "magical" operation. The nature of this "magic" needs to be considered in the light of the perception of someone in 1900 observing computer-controlled facilities of 1999. The comprehensibility of the "magic" relevant to timeship operation may be like any present understanding of the technology of the year 2099. The control systems of any modern vehicle, whether automobile, aircraft or spaceship, all involve evaluation and manipulation of symbols. Ficino's "natural magic" required the appropriate disposition of symbols with the same care as would be invested by a professional event designer (involving interior decoration, etc) needing to ensure an appropriately harmonious effect. The concerns of a *feng shui* professional are of a similar nature. The challenge is how to think of different kinds of "magic" deriving primarily from:

- artefacts, colours, sounds, scents, foodstuffs
- art work
- architecture
- view, context
- temporal setting (kairos)
- people

A major challenge is how to get the various components to work together. In the case of a spaceship this is a control systems issue -- timed to match a "launch window". In the case of interior decoration, the whole art is to ensure that the different elements work together to create a transformative ambiance -- perhaps on an "auspicious" occasion selected by some means. It might be assumed that the operation of a timeship might involve an intermediary form of "magic".

At Damanhur various forms of operation are undertaken. these include: walking a labyrinth (including extensive stone circuits) and rituals

**Being the experiment:** Given recent shifts in understanding in relation to physics and consciousness, and therefore to understanding of time, it is probable that any timeship or time travel would involve a much more intimate relationship between the person carried and the vehicle. Whereas traditionally a vehicle travelling through space required getting "onto" it, or "into" it, or hanging from it in some way, in the case of a timeship these may well need to be understood metaphorically in part at least. The traveller is no longer isolated from the vehicle to the same degree -- there may be the kind of bonding with the vehicle which some car owners experience, for example-- only much more so. In medical therapy there is a similar shift between providing medicine to others and testing the medicine on oneself (as is done in homeopathy).

## Imaginative technologies

In 2003, the [DaVinci Institute](#) (Colorado) is in process of launching the world's first *Encyclopedia of Future Inventions*. However the challenge of the invention process is precisely to traverse the logical interface into a new framework from which the principles underlying the new invention will tend not to be fully comprehensible. They may be treated in terms of quackery, superstition, ignorance, fantasy, or tainted by the "hand of the devil".

**Comprehending new technologies:** There is therefore a fundamental problem of comprehension through new frameworks. Classic examples include:

- refusal of Galileo's colleagues to look through the telescope he had invented, because "they already knew what they would see"
- theoretical assertion that bumble bees could not fly -- and therefore manpowered flight was impossible
- processes of professional ostracism practiced against: physicist David Bohm for extending the scope of his research; Capra, Laszlo
- systematic denial of relevance of "non-mathematical" research of Isaac Newton, despite his reputation as one of the greatest mathematicians
- process of evaluation of "cold fusion", water forms, etc \*\*\*\*\*
- helicobacter\*\*

The UFO phenomena is therefore most interesting for the manner in which the possible technologies involved are subject to disparagement. It is unlikely that they would be powered by comprehensible technologies such as rubber bands or combustion engines. But if the principles on which they might be powered cannot be understood, it would seem that a measure of suspended judgement is appropriate in considering the possibility. This is the challenge for the "sceptical inquirer" who may not be able to acquire evidence in the form compatible with the methodology of future technology.

|   | A            | B            | C        | D          | E        | F        | G        |
|---|--------------|--------------|----------|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| A | -            |              |          |            |          |          |          |
| B |              | -            |          |            |          |          |          |
| C |              |              | -        |            |          |          |          |
| D |              |              |          | -          |          |          |          |
| E |              |              |          |            | -        |          |          |
| F |              |              |          |            |          | -        |          |
| G |              |              |          |            |          |          | -        |
|   | 10           | 20           | 30       | 40         | 50       | 60       | 70       |
|   | "indigenous" | "developing" | "modern" | "advanced" | "future" | "future" | "future" |

A table like that above might be used to show the challenges to communicating between different stages of understanding -- from "primitive" to "advanced". This table would suggest that successful communication between Stage A and Stage C might require an education process lasting one or two decades. It could help to distinguish the understanding Stage A has of Stage C from that that Stage C has of Stage A. Doris Lessing drew special attention to these challenges in her *Canopus in Argos* series (1979-83) of science fiction, partly based on sufi concepts. See also the work of Andreas Fuglesang (1982-5).

More interesting however is the insight from a disposition of these stages around the circumference of a circle. This would highlight the investment required to traverse the stages on the circumference to ensure communication between distant stages. However a line across the circle between distant stages might well occur in the case of communication between some understandings of indigenous societies relating to space-time and those of advanced physics.

**Array technology:** In 1900 a radio antenna would have been as meaningful as the Native American devices called "[dreamcatchers](#)" --

and would be viewed with the same suspicion by sceptics. A century later many modern buildings carry complex antennas -- whose mode of operation few would be able to explain or comprehend, even though dependent on their daily use. The same might be said of extensive antenna arrays spread over kilometres, or of cosmic ray detectors kilometres underground. Dreamcatchers are still in use.

A conventional organization chart might be seen to be an array vital to that body's knowledge management process. Typically this is hierarchical with daring excursions into matrix management and network organization models. These may all be considered to be different styles of array. They reflect equivalent arrays in conceptualization: hierarchy, matrix, and network. Interestingly the French term for a matrix-based conceptual array is *grille de lecture*, emphasizing that it is through the conceptual array that external phenomena are read -- as through a pattern of window panes.

It is also worth considering how many conceptual schemes, whether theories or in the form of operational plans, can be considered as arrays -- ranging from lists of concepts (as in web menus), through tables, to more complex structures. The organization of these may be of special significance in practice (see *Representation, Comprehension and Communication of Sets: the role of number*, 1978).

Although much studied, it is questionable whether array technology as applied to social organization is now as sophisticated as that applied to antenna design and operation. There has been little follow-up to Patrick Heelan's concern with "*The Logic of Changing Classificatory Frameworks*" (1974) in terms of the conceptual freedom of the lattices of non-Boolean quantum logic -- which is in complete contrast to the essentially mechanistic structure of conventional thesauri [more]. He noticed that meta-contextual languages able to unify two or more contextual languages are isomorphic.

One intentional community that made very intensive use of conceptual matrices (which they termed "screens") was the Institute of Cultural Affairs. Their screens [Jon and Maureen Jenkins; [collective research](#)] seem to be much more extensive than that presented for Damanhur by Jay Merrifield (1998, appendix II). The question is how such conceptual arrays function to orient the flows of insights and control messages throughout a community. How does this contrast with processes based solely on logical chains of argument? Can an "argument" then be understood as an array of reasons to be best understood through insights into their complementarity and symmetry? This then raises issues about the kinds of visual literacy required to comprehend an argument, or conceptual complex, so presented. Again the work of Ron Atkin is helpful in understanding the difficulties that may be experienced in holding an array of perspectives of any particular degree of complexity [more]. Forms of intelligence may be cultivated that are more adept at this than those whose strengths lie in conventional forms of literacy and numeracy.

Taking the five alternatives:

- hierarchy: typical of the linear thinking necessary in many administrative and control functions. Significance in the cartesian sense is classically derived from sequential processes typically associated with hierarchical structure. Here a logical chain of argument is most evident.
- matrix: typical of complex inter-sectoral, multi-organizational management processes in which coordination is a priority. Matters become more complex when tabular arrays are required to carry meaning -- as in any matrix approach. In effect such arrays encode a pattern of conditions that may be dynamically interrelated as in input/output analysis. Multiple chains of argument are now interwoven.
- network: typical of communication pathways between disparate bodies where information, rather than coordination or control, is a priority. Presumably this will come into its own with the emergence of the semantic web.
- tensegrity: typical of partially ordered networks of which the most clearly articulated example is that which emerges from the syntegrity process invented by cybernetician [Stafford Beer](#) (*Beyond Dispute: The Invention of Team Syntegrity*, 1994) [more]
- quantum logic and lattice theory

At Damanhur, to a far greater degree than in the Institute of Cultural Affairs, use is made of arrays of people in ritual processes in order to carry and embody significance. A ritual, appropriately performed, may even be understood as performing an antenna-like role in binding time and insight. Unrecognized new principles of higher dimensionality may then become comprehensible. On the other hand, it is possible that common games like soccer, with its 11-player sides, may have acquired their fascination from the way in which they are intuitively understood to offer insights into the 11-fold dimensionality of superstring unified theory (see *Into the Eleventh Dimension*).

Damanhur invests in the construction of large labyrinthine arrangements, notably as healing devices. their role should be assessed in the light of the long tradition of using such devices in various religions (Sic Lonegren. *Labyrinths: Ancient Myths and Modern Uses*, 1996).

There is a case for exploring *radiolaria* as arrays. They are holoplanktonic protozoa widely distributed in the oceans (and in the fossil record) and range from 30 microns to 2 mm in diameter [more; more; more]. They have long been an inspiration as art forms in their own right [more]. Many are spherical in structure. Extremely interesting efforts by Nicholas Shea have been made to generate such spherical radiolaria structures [more] with graphic software within the context of other generated spherical arrays [more], including buckyballs. The question is whether such structures could be used to configure semantic content spherically -- a spherical semantic network map. This would then provide a context for exploring whether initiatives like that at Damanhur effectively involve the construction of such "closed" arrays as "*grilles de lecture*". Do such structures:

- map complex closed conceptual systems
- reflect a degree of "programming" in both the positive and negative sense
- provide the degree of mutually reinforcement between the semantic components to perform an antenna-like function
- offer clues to the emergence of coherence in the forthcoming "[semantic web](#)"

**Selfic technology:** One of the most unusual fields of research and development at Damanhur is that of "Selfica". Traces of this technology can reportedly be found in Egyptian, Etruscan and Celtic cultures; it was used up until the 7th century BC by Arabs. It might prove to be the case that the classical Celtic knot designs [more; more], as applied by monks in goldleaf to illustrate the pages of sacred texts, are a legacy of their early knowledge of selfic technology.

For Damanhur:

Selfic structures involve the use of spirals (the word Selfica actually means 'spiral'). Particular metals, colours and alchemical inks are used in geometric forms, to act as host bodies for highly evolved intelligent beings. The particular energies that inhabit these structures are in fact minute living forms, border intelligences that can pass from one reality to another, acting as a go-between from one plane of existence to another. Selfic energies belong to a sector of our universe characterized by ultra-light speed and when they enter inside a prepared host body it is as if they undergo a kind of deceleration. The interaction of the Self with a person is founded upon mutual advantage. The Self diverts or attracts useful conditions in the physical life of the individual, connecting itself to the aura through the 'microlines' -- the energy lines of the body. Entering into a pre-prepared structure enables the Self to perform specialist functions and there is a wide range of Selfica to aid and assist with an array of human conditions and problems, from dietary imbalances to failing eyesight, from protection against radioactivity to balancing sensitivity within the individual. The greatest selfic structure is contained within the Temples of Humankind. Seen in the context of a laboratory, the Temple is able to maintain the ideal conditions for reaching, conversing and interacting with superior forces. Each individual Self is personally linked to the Temples of Humankind. [\[more\]](#) [\[more\]](#)

Selfica is therefore the practical use of spirals and metals to concentrate and direct vital energies. The Damanhur temple is reported to contain over 300 tons of circuitry and connections based upon this technology (see Jay Merrifield, 1998, pp. 236-7). The technology is used to "charge" the spaces and shapes preparatory to ritual or healing. The subterranean position of the temple makes it ideally situated to store the energy which the Damanhurians say is flowing through the "synchronic" lines of earth energy.

Damanhur also sells personalized bracelets and amulets for specific purposes, notably related to healing. The bracelets resemble those in copper worn by many against arthritis. Many religions promote the wearing of amulets. In this context it is worth noting the beliefs held and promoted in relation to rosaries and mala beads (see *Designing Cultural Rosaries and Meaning Malas to Sustain Associations within the Pattern that Connects*, 2000).

Developed using their selfic technology, the Damanhur "spherosefcs" function somewhat like psycho-social analogues to the computers foreseen as endowed with "artificial intelligence" and "personality". In contrast to digital "computers", they might be better understood -- not as "analogue computers" -- but as "analogue configurators" holding and reconfiguring patterns. In the account of the Damanhur experiments, they are "instruments able to perform many different functions. They make use both of Selfica and of alchemy at very high levels, applying more advanced principles of esoteric physics than the traditional Selfic circuits. As with computers, these spherosefcs are used as "memory cells" but also as vital "energy accumulators" -- in effect a psycho-technical manifestation of the adage "knowledge is power". As well as energy, they are able to hold wholly abstract "soul information", such as artistic talent, the potentiality of which can then be transferred from one person to another, through the medium of the spheres. In time travel the more ordinary "spheres", the size of footballs, are used like screens to monitor the process *à la* Houston Ground Control.

At Damanhur the Temple complex might be understood as an emerging analogue equivalent to mainstream digital initiatives towards an emerging "global brain" based on "artificial intelligence" [[Simulating a Global Brain: using networks of international organizations, world problems, strategies, and values](#), 2000]. The interesting aspect at Damanhur is the functional symbolic isomorphism perceived between the structure of the Temple and the structure of the human body (cf R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz. *The Temple in Man: Sacred Architecture and the Perfect Man*, 1949), with the added dimension explored by Mark Johnson (*The Body in the Mind: the bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*, 1987), and the enactivist concern with embodied mind [\[more\]](#).

**Synchronic lines:** Research at Damanhur is extensively focused on "synchronic lines" which they variously distinguish from, or associate with, the more widely explored "ley lines". Cautioning readers against premature judgement, Jay Merrifield (1998, p. 222) reports:

The synchronic lines put our universe in contact with the entirety of the universe, both from a physical point of view and from a subtle point of view. They are roads where thought and information flow....Influencing the synchronic lines means you can influence the type of thought that flows out and thus influence events.

For Damanhur, synchronic lines are like rivers in which an infinite amount of knowledge is stored, as if they were a library containing all that humankind has ever thought. The network of synchronic lines is composed of nine major vertical lines and nine major horizontal lines, plus a few minor lines built by human beings. The intersection of two vertical lines with two horizontal ones creates a 'shining knot' of synchronic lines. This is an entry point to the entire network of lines. On Earth there are only two shining knots: one is in Tibet, the other goes through the valley where Damanhur is built [\[more; map\]](#).

Curiously another such knot is located in the lands of the Pitjantjatjara of Central Australia -- a focus of Aboriginal insights in to what have been termed "song lines". It is appropriate to contrast the metaphor of information highways with what might be termed "songlines of the noosphere" (see *Songlines of the Noosphere: global configuration of hypertext pathways*, 1996). Synchronic lines may relate very closely to the songlines of the Aborigines and to their radically different understandings of time -- through what they term the Dreaming.

**Alchemical research:** At a time when the long-repudiated alchemical experiments of Isaac Newton are being reassessed, research at Damanhur is focused on an "advanced form of ritual alchemical operation" of which the most intriguing is a project known as Triad. This is a series of "theurgic magical rituals". In the light of historical research, the aim is to recall, one at a time, all the thousands of divinities of every culture in the history of humankind -- to determine whether they are willing to cooperate with each other for the future salvation of humankind. The divinities are understood as carrying what might now be termed memes that are features of the evolutionary force associated with a particular people. Part of the ritual involves removing negative aspects of such deities -- working with the

essence of that divinity before it has been contaminated by dogma and religiosity. (Jay Merrifield, 1998, p. 240-4).

In psychotherapeutic terms, this process may be understood as an active effort to integrate the disparate understandings of divinity active in some way in the collective unconsciousness -- and as understood by humankind. At Damanhur, it is considered a spiritual duty of human beings to synthesise all aspects of the human experience, including the intellect. These various understandings may then be configured as facets vital to an appropriate collective spiritual integration -- facets that may be represented mnemonically in the glass mandalas of the Damanhur temple. As with personal individuation, much depends on the emerging understanding of the meaning of integration and unification in such a context -- whence the conventional function of a mandala in meditation. Such rituals can usefully be compared with the rituals of mainstream religions or of the Freemasons.

The unusual process of establishing a relationship with forgotten facets of humanity's cultural heritage, and then integrating them through special rites, can be compared with the Mormon approach to detection of their non-Mormon ancestors for proxy baptism in secret rites. Mormons are widely recognized for the immense resources they devote to genealogical research in order to be able to convert their ancestors from as far back as possible -- an exercise in "time travel" ! There is an irony to the fact that, despite such beliefs, Mormon-controlled computer companies have been closely associated with some of the most significant software developments worldwide.

**Community "technology":** Western mainstream thinking is ill-adapted to understanding some of the dimensions of community that are vital to other cultures:

*Islam:* Ummah is sometimes defined as the community, sometimes the nation, sometimes the body of Muslim believers around the world, and it has a physical reality, without parallel in any other religion, that is nowhere better expressed than in the five daily times of prayer....The body of the individual believer, identical in its posture to the bodies of all other believers, becomes one with the Umma, the body of the Islamic community on earth. (Jonathan Raban. *Guardian*, 19 April 2003)

*Buddhism:* The Buddha did not write anything down, but left a remarkable legacy in the form of a teaching (the Dhamma) that was at first orally transmitted by the religious Order (the Sangha) that he founded and personally guided for forty-five years. This Order has survived the centuries, preserving the wisdom of the Buddha in lifestyle as well as in words. To this day, these three elements, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, are known and respected by all Buddhists as 'The Three Refuges' or "The Triple Gem".

Damanhur rightfully prides itself on its capacity to enhance the quality of community life -- in the light of continuing experimentation on itself. Whilst there is much concern around the world with the basics of community development, there is little insight into how to achieve a "climax" community. Indeed there is no appropriate term for this concept or condition -- although communities may be described as "magical", as having "good vibes", as "being together", or perhaps as "mature". Such terms point towards a form of psycho-cultural ecosystem in which the multiplicity of roles together carry and engender a larger life form -- a form of emergent organization of a higher order. This ecosystem has its social dimensions but it its semantic dimensions that merit highlighting -- the "semantic ecosystem".

A "climax" ecosystem in this sense is one which has over time reached a degree of equilibrium -- fulfilling its potential -- with respect to the range of species in the system. However, if the diversity of species is greater, more complex ecosystems can then be sustained. The question is what kind of human communities would be possible -- at "climax" -- with a wide range of personality types? If strongly disrupted, would it recover through the "succession" process as with natural environment ecosystems? "Community development" might then be understood as the catalytic aid to such succession processes. In non-subsistence communities such a catalyst might take the form of a symbol whose degree of order and complexity would provide a template through which vital links within the community could then be rendered credible -- whether or not they were meaningful to others.

Where might examples of such climax communities be found? How might they be recognized - or ignored -- by outsiders? The supposition is that they would tend to be rare and isolated -- and possibly vulnerable.

So confident has been Damanhur in its community "technology" that it achieved some notoriety in 1986 in proposing to act as adviser to NASA concerning the community dynamics of future orbital space colonies -- given NASA's lack of research in this area (see Jay Merrifield, 1998, pp. 169-70). The notion of orbital "time colonies" might also merit reflection.

**Future studies:** A particular area of exploration at Damanhur involves what is termed "time prospecting" in collaboration with a "group of divine forces". This is "an investigation in time able to move and modify events" -- processes reinvented from those of the Oracle of Delphi. Questions submitted to the Oracle are answered monthly at a full moon ritual open to the public (see Jay Merrifield, 1998, pp. 95-8). The Findhorn Community integrated a similar process into its early processes.

## Timeship design and operation

**Timeship design:** The arguments above suggest that the challenge of timeship design may be more one of imagination and language than of mechanics. Unknowingly, we may well be confronted in daily life with a variety of modules of a timeship. The difficulty is that we do not know how to recognize them or how to configure them together. Perhaps our situation is like that of a group of indigenous people who encounter an abandoned automobile that has broken down on a jungle road -- is it out of fuel, is the tyre punctured, etc?.

Temples, mosques, pyramids, or cathedrals may be timeships -- all but ready to go. As explored elsewhere, the configuration of chambers and stages is suggestive of an insight into some other form of travel (*Entering Alternative Realities -- Astronautics vs Noonautics: isomorphism between launching aerospace vehicles and launching vehicles of awareness*, 2002). Is it possible that the differences between the architectures developed by different faiths signal the design elements that need to be reconciled to ensure a

functioning timeship? For example, the emphasis on the amount of mass characteristic of pyramids suggests an awareness of a factor that has been largely omitted from mosques and cathedrals. Whereas the configuration of chambers in the latter imply a sense of articulated structure and symmetry omitted from pyramids.

Most challenging perhaps is the insight necessary for the coherence of a timeship -- a missing design metaphor. The suggestion in the title of the paper is that timeships may need to be "embodied" rather than "constructed". It may then be the "construction" metaphor that prevents understanding of the relationship between the vessel and what it might carry.

Some of the following remarks are based on an account published in *Kindred Spirit* (33, Winter 1995/1996, with images) of some early experiments in time travel as understood at Damanhur. Variations were published in *Pendulum* (March 2003). The account has also been posted by artist Ashley Rye, appropriately focused on [trompe l'oeil murals](#).

**Timeship embodiment:** The Damanhur community has been very coherent in recognizing a degree of isomorphism between the structure of their temple and the interconnected organs of the human body. "Walking the temple" is understood as engendering a healthy sympathetic relationship with a sequence of particular organs -- although such "health" may merely be the easiest way of explaining the "integrity" or "wholeness" of the resonant system. Excavating the temple and decorating it with symbols are understood as magical operations that preserve a resonance between the individual and the temple. The intricate detail of the symbolism suggests that this is far from being a general resonance but one that is closer to the relationship between a pilot and a control system. This symbolism is enhanced and intertwined with selfic technology that interconnects the chambers of the temple. The process might be understood as embodying thought patterns -- articulating "the pattern that connects" (Gregory Bateson. *Mind and Nature: a necessary unity*, 1979). It may be of a similar nature to Aboriginal "singing of the land".

*The Gameplayers of Zan* provides an interesting account of the paradoxes involved in the "construction" of their space-time ship hidden within a mountain:

Let me build a dynamic identification-series for you: consider vehicles. You make a cart, a wagon, hitch it to a pony, and off you go. Its purpose is to go, but it can be stopped, and it doesn't change, or stop being a cart. ..Now consider a bicycle, which must be in balance to go...Now an aircraft; it can only be stopped when it is finished being a functional airplane...You can't stop it just anywhere, and never in the air...Just so the leap to the Ship. It is a quantum leap into a new concept in machines, if indeed that is the proper word. Before, we had machines that could be turned off. The more complex they became, the harder to turn off. With the Ship we enter the concept-world of machines that can't be turned off -- at all. They must be *on* to exist. Once you reach a certain stage in the assembly of it, it's *on* and that's all there is to it. (pp 369-70)

It must be *manually* flown to hold it in place...Its position at a specific place upon the Earth is not held by gravity and momentum...that it stays in that place, it must be flown *there*. As we sit here, we move in many ways, but are held fast in a matrix of local forces. The Earth rotates...And if we do not compensate, then the Ship would drift off on its own. (p. 373)

At Damanhur, the underground temple -- as a "Time Mine" -- is more than simply a focus of community life. In the *Kindred Spirit* account it is described as a gigantic battery that is charged through "300 tons of circuits and connections utilising a veritable periodic table of metals and minerals" based on the aforementioned Selfica technology. It is a form of energy station of advanced complexity appropriate for dimensional exchanges of various kinds (including healing). Such Time Mines are places which have the potential to store sufficient energy, both from the synchronic lines and from human activity, to enable time travel to occur. Within that framework, the ritualistic environment of the Temple ensures that large amounts of energy can be generated through the human activities of dancing, chanting, meditating and singing -- energy which can then be stored by the Temple's selfic circuitry (connected to the spherosefselfs). One reason for the extent of the symbolic artwork, is that Damanhurians work on the basis that there is a precise relationship between the extension of the decorated surfaces and the amount of energy generated. In effect the Temple, might more accurately be described as a huge capacitor, building and then releasing energy.

With the Temple has been constructed a "Time Cabin". According to the report, this is "a very complex Selfic structure used to travel in time and space. It is the application of a very advanced magical and physical technology. It makes use of selfs, spheres, spherosefselfs, crystals, electro- magnetic fields, oscillators, laser technology, and a sophisticated Selfic and alchemical plant for its activation, planning and charging."

Damanhur has a specific identification with the Egyptian pantheon, and notably with Horus. The name derives from "City of Light". In this context, the symbolically decorated Temple complex recalls the structure and decoration of the pharaonic tombs. Their construction and symbolic decoration by the pharaoh during his lifetime might also be understood as a means of ensuring the capacity to travel through time.

**Timeship operation:** Again the earlier arguments suggest that the challenge of timeship operation may be more one of imagination and language than of mechanics. Given R Buckminster Fuller's proposal for an *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* (1969), what should be sought with respect to an *Operating Manual for Timeship Earth*?

The most suggestive pointers towards this may be those associated with "magical" or "alchemical" "operations" -- since they combine the sense of operation on reality with the sense of modifying the relationship of the operator to reality. This would be consistent with new understandings of the relationship between physics and consciousness. The problem is to dissociate the many layers of superstition and misuse from whatever clues are available -- and to ask the question why "theurgic rituals" do not appear to "work" as well as claimed.

If the Damanhur temple as a whole -- with its many halls and chambers -- is to be understood as a timeship, it is clear that how the community "meshes" with it to enable it to operate becomes a vital issue. Whilst the selfic technology may indeed provide one level of connectivity to ensure the integrity of the vessel, the nature of the harmony of the interaction between the people grouped in the different

halls becomes an important question. Clearly the complementary symbolism associated with the different halls may well have been designed to ensure a good mix of harmony through polyphony -- as a symbolic analogue to harmony. It is intriguing to note that terracotta figurines, made as self-portraits by each community member, are spread throughout the halls -- to symbolize the presence of the community "crew" member, even when they are not in the complex.

Again *The Gameplayers of Zan* provides an interesting account of the operation of their space-time vessel. They had to travel and navigate through "hyperspace" of great complexity. Control was maintained by techniques intimately related to game playing -- for which some community members had been specially trained under a cloak of misdirection:

"Indeed do what? Play a distracting Game for three hundred years?"...."You all have been carefully led to assume that the root *klarh-* was Earth aspect, 'to play'. Hence, in turn, the *Players*....It is not Earth aspect: it is Fire aspect, and that means...to fly! Not Players but Flyers...We are not idle, privileged entertainers...we are the pilot-astrologers...There was no other way to keep the skill and the knowledge alive, save in a public Game that everyone could see and think he knew" (p. 369)

An imaginative stimulus for such investigation is provided by a science fiction scenario explored by a number of writers. It focuses on the challenge of comprehending high degrees of complexity calling for decision-making under operational conditions (as is the case in global management). The problem is that of piloting or navigating a vessel through "hyperspace" or "sub-space", as imagined in the light of recent advances in theoretical physics and mathematics. Because of the inherent complexity of such environments, writers have explored the possibility that pilots and navigators might choose appropriate metaphors through which to perceive and order their task in relation to qualitative features of that complexity -- for example, flying like a bird, windsurfing, swimming like a fish, tunneling like a mole, etc. The mass of data input derived from various arrays of sensors, and otherwise completely unmanageable, is then channelled to the pilot in the form of appropriate sensory inputs to the nerve synapses corresponding to s/his "wings" or s/his "fins". Perception through the chosen metaphor is assisted by artificial intelligence software and appropriate graphic displays. The pilot switches between metaphors according to the nature of the hyperspace terrain. Such speculations do at least stimulate imagination concerning a possible marriage between metaphor and artificial intelligence in relation to governance.

Curiously the new "theory of everything" of physicist Stephen Wolfram is recognized by Steven Cullinane as having its "poetic precursor" in *The Gameplayers of Zan* [more]. He quotes part of the following description of their challenge in travelling through hyperspace with their spaceship that could not be turned off:

The kind of space that the ship perceives, operates in, is to creatures such as you and I, chaotic, meaningless, and dangerous, when perceived directly, if we can at all. To confront it directly is destructive to the primate mind, indeed the whole vertebrate nervous system.... Basic to the universe: that its inmost reality *cannot* be perceived. A limit. So we interpose a symbolizer, and that translates the view into something we can perceive, and control...And we must control it, for like the sailing ship our Ship emulates, it cannot exist uncontrolled, and there can be no automaton to do it for us. It is flown *manually*, all the time; even to hold it in place relative to our perceptual field. for at the level of reality we are operating at here, to perceive *is* to manipulate...

...the symbolizer portrays a Game.... That is the Inner Game. and the Outer Game we have played in public is a much simplified form of the kind of thing we see in the Sensorium, which is a display screen and control system in one. Not combined, it *is* both....certain configurations cannot be attained in the Outer Game, since they would lead to flight, too...

And in two-dimensional display, we have the tessellations: triangular, quarangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, octagonal....These symbolize the different kinds of space we can use...space-three, space-four, space-five, space-six, and space-eight. Each one has a different range and kind of thing it can perceive and control..

When one flies the Ship, one is actually playing a more difficult Game, in which space itself plays the role of antagonist. (p. 370-1)

What we deal with in the Game no machine can handle, because what we do is *decide*, and no machine can do that for us. and we use hunches to make those guesses and decisions. We are using resources we do not entirely understand. (p. 380)

Cheating...That is what the real universe seems to do...We can manipulate the microcosm and the macrocosm through the Game, but we cannot impose our conception of order upon it; we have to play its way. So there are degrees of subtlety, and then further subtleties, and just when we think we've got it fixed and secure for all time, it makes a change on us, some little change, some exception...We all know that this means we must learn more, but it feels like cheating....So we had allowed the adversary Player team to cheat a little in the Outer Game, to prepare us for those little shifts in the Inner, which is not a Game at all, but basic life and death. (p. 387-8)

For those at Damanhur "contemporary physics cannot, as yet, conceive of the kind of energies on which Selfica is based". Aspects of it derive in part from the work of Wilhelm Reich's on orgone energies [more; more] and that of De La Warr on mysterious radiations that seem to act outside of time and space according to Carl Jung's law of synchronicity. So problematic was Reich's work to mainstream science that he was arrested for contempt of court and died in jail [more; more; more].

Those engaged in these experiments at Damanhur have developed confidence in a time-travel technology through their knowledge of contemporary quantum physics, the laws of relativity and space-time theory, and the results of an arduous programme of research into the alchemical properties of metals and minerals, not to mention the potentiality of the human spirit and will. The complementarity of "objective" and "subjective" insight is vital to the process of time travel. according to the *Kindred Spirit* account:

In Damanhur, on the one hand we have the School of Meditation, which is the ritual, spiritual aspect, that gives us the fuel, the power of energy that we need. And on the other hand we have the esoteric physics that explains the same thing with different logic -- a logic more aligned to the rational. But, of course, this more rational logic cannot progress without inner growth, the intimate knowledge of the self, because all the answers are inside us. So the study of the universe and the principles that regulate it cannot happen without deep research inside ourselves. Otherwise it would remain just notions that could not be translated into deep understanding. We believe that through knowledge you can become conscious. Esoteric physics is just one way of getting to the same end.

Subconscious preparation is required for the time traveller -- far beyond the psyche sessions of sports or astronauts. The amount of information that must be memorised, and all the techniques to be used to be able to get out and go, are so great that they cannot be retrieved consciously. Long sessions of hypnosis are however also necessary to instil into them the complicated information needed to carry out the journeys successfully, as well as the receptivity they would require for detailed recall of the environments in which they would find themselves.

The Damanhurians have developed two separate ways of travelling in time. One involves the transmission of what they call the "subtle body" of the traveller, which could be more accurately translated as the "essence" or "spirit" of that person. The other involves full dematerialisation and rematerialisation, of both subtle and physical body.

**Journey:** Again there is the challenge of understanding what might be meant by journeying through time -- just as journeying through space may have a variety of meanings, depending on whether the focus is on the vehicle, any companions, the terrain, the direction, the speed or the duration. Recalling the classic tale of the seven blind men touching different parts on elephant, understandings of the animal may appear totally inconsistent and incompatible -- especially when they understand unrelated languages.

There is also the paradoxical aspect that the journey may be more a question of arriving "back" at one's point of departure experienced as being more "now" (or less) than the when from which one departed. The much-quoted verse of T S Eliot gives a sense of this.

"We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know it for the first time."  
T S Eliot, *Little Gidding*



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