

DLX Project

Microelectronic Systems Course



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DLX Processor



- The DLX (aka. "**DELUXE**") is a processor architecture introduced by John L. Hennessy and David A.
- This architecture is a **simpler version of the MIPS**
- The MIPS core belongs to the **RISC** family (Reduced Instruction Set Computer).
- This kind of architecture uses simpler **fixed-size instructions** and addressing modes compared to its main competitor, the CISC (Complex Instruction Set Computer).
- In this way decoding the instructions is **simpler**, but the size of the **code increases**.
- The RISC approach became very popular, especially in the **embedded market**, and it is still today.



A

Architectural design of DLX processor



B

Simulation & Benchmarking
Synthesis
Physical Design



C

Documentation

Possible versions:

DLX basic (max. project evaluation 28/30)

DLX pro (max. project evaluation 30L/30)

The submission requires:

All VHDL files (with testbenches)

All the scripts required for simulation, synthesis, etc...

Full documentation

Discussion deadlines:

Suggested: July 31st

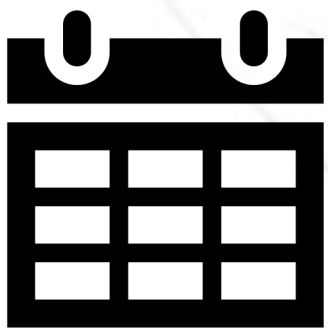
Max: October 30th

All groups are required to submit all files one week before the discussion

Remember to add
comments within
all files!!!!

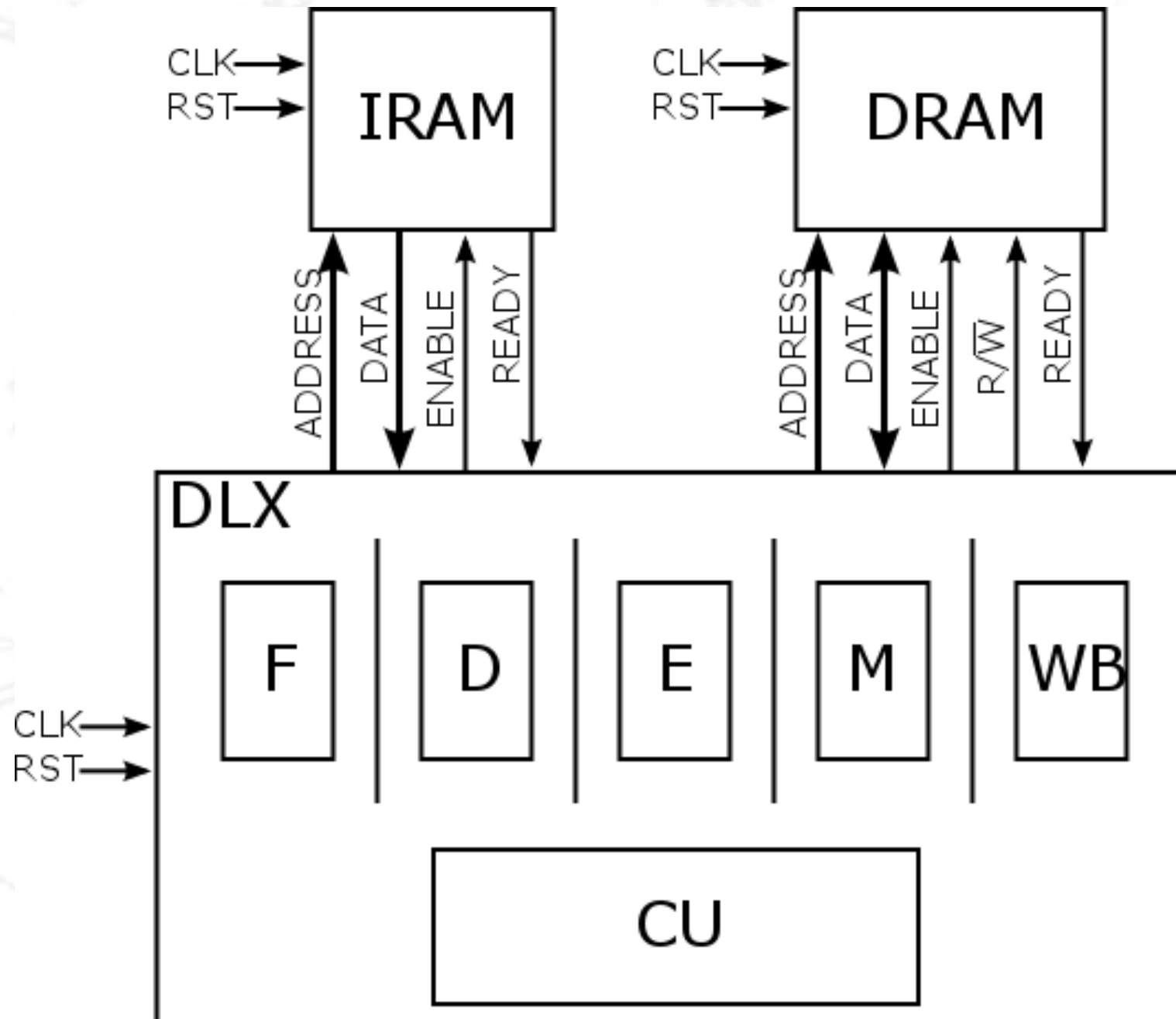
Discussion sessions

1. End of June
2. End of July
3. End of September
4. End of October



Precise scheduling will be given at the beginning of each month.

Given DLX entity



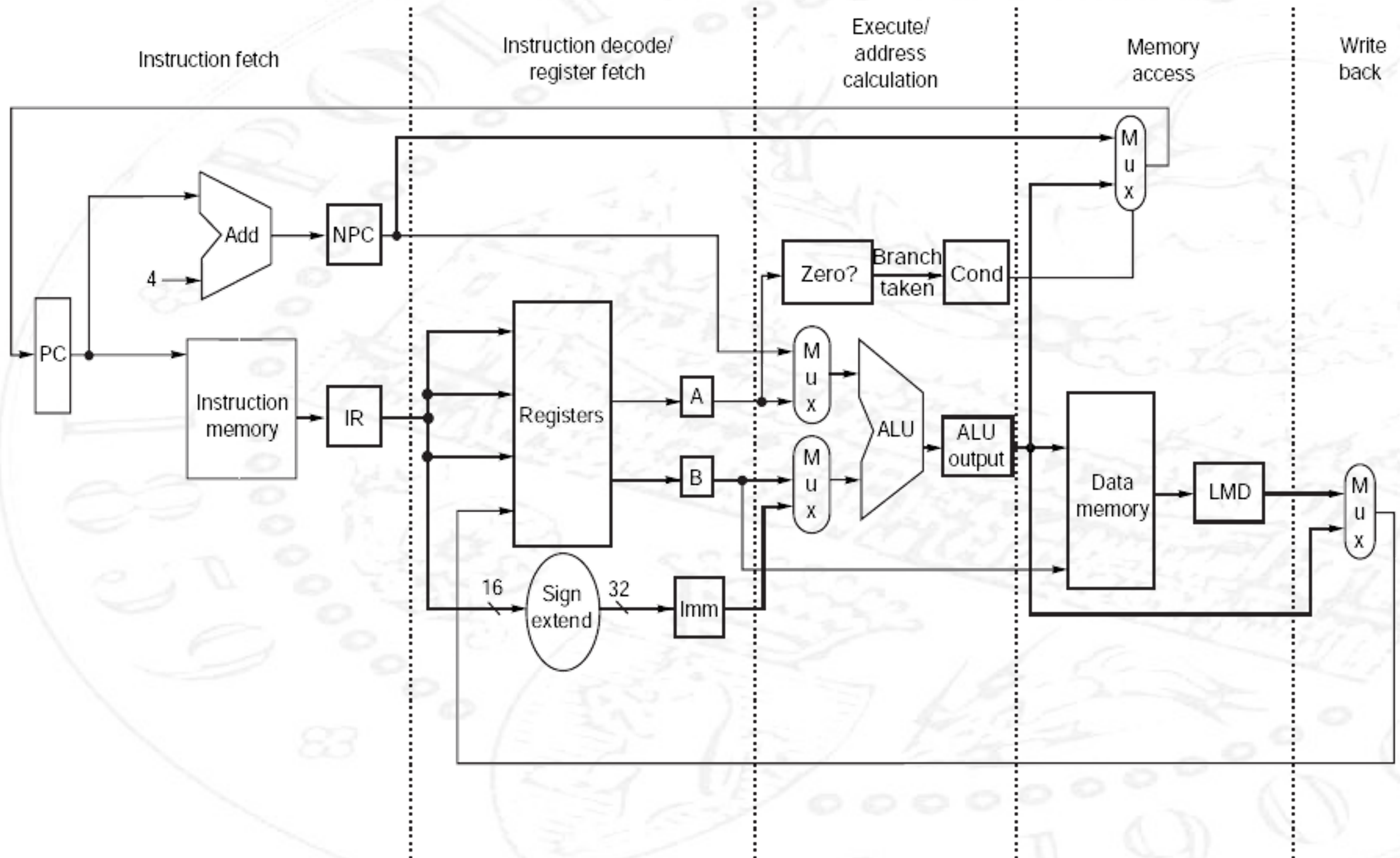


Data Path



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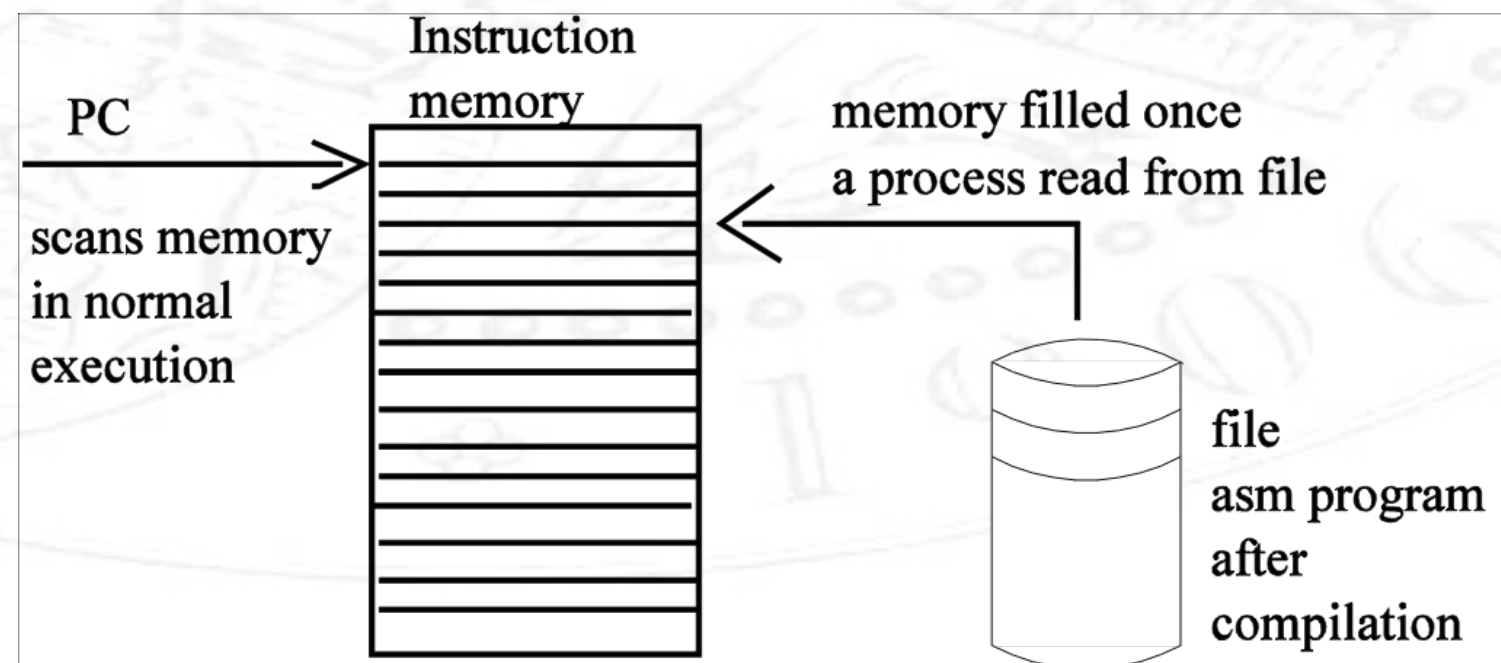
DLX Data Path organisation



Fetch



1. Send out the PC
2. Fetch the instruction from memory into the instruction register (IR)
3. Increment the PC (by 4) to address the next sequential instruction.



Decode

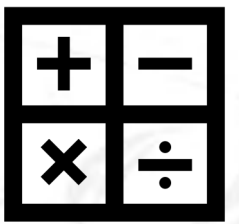


1. Decode the instruction
2. Access the register the (RF)
3. The outputs of the general-purpose registers are read into two temporary registers (A and B)

Instruction set:

- R-type: operations between registers;
- I-type: operations between a register and an immediate value;
- J-type: jump/branch instructions.

Execution



1. The ALU operates on the operands (A and B) prepared in the previous cycle
2. The result is stored in the ALU Output register.



Memory

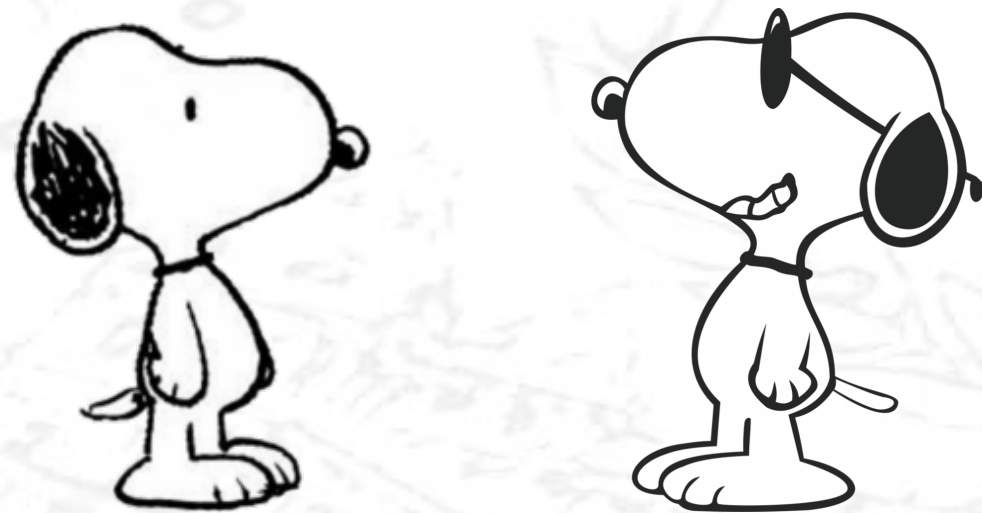


- Access memory if needed.
- If the instruction is a load, data return from memory and is placed in the LMD (Load Memory Data) register.
- If it is a store, the data from the B register is written into memory.
- In both cases the used address is the one computed in the prior cycle and stored in the ALU Output register.

Write Back



- Write the result into the register file, whether it comes from the memory system or from ALU



BASIC vs. PRO Features

Basic
DLX

5-stage Pipeline

Limited Instruction Set

Data path

Synthesis

Physical design

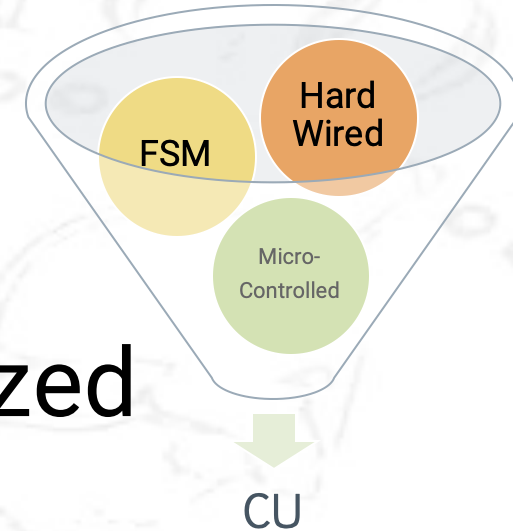
Documentation



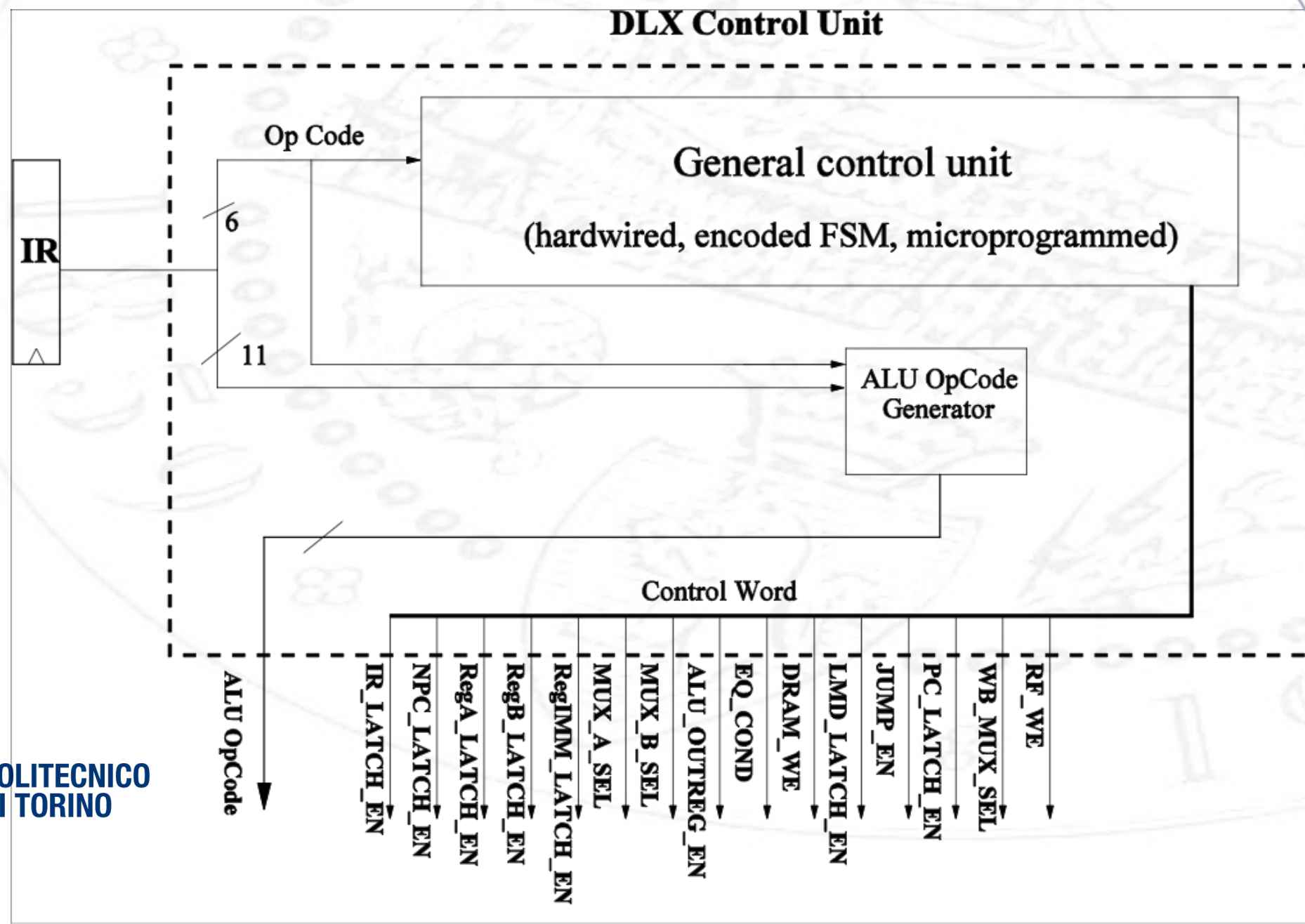
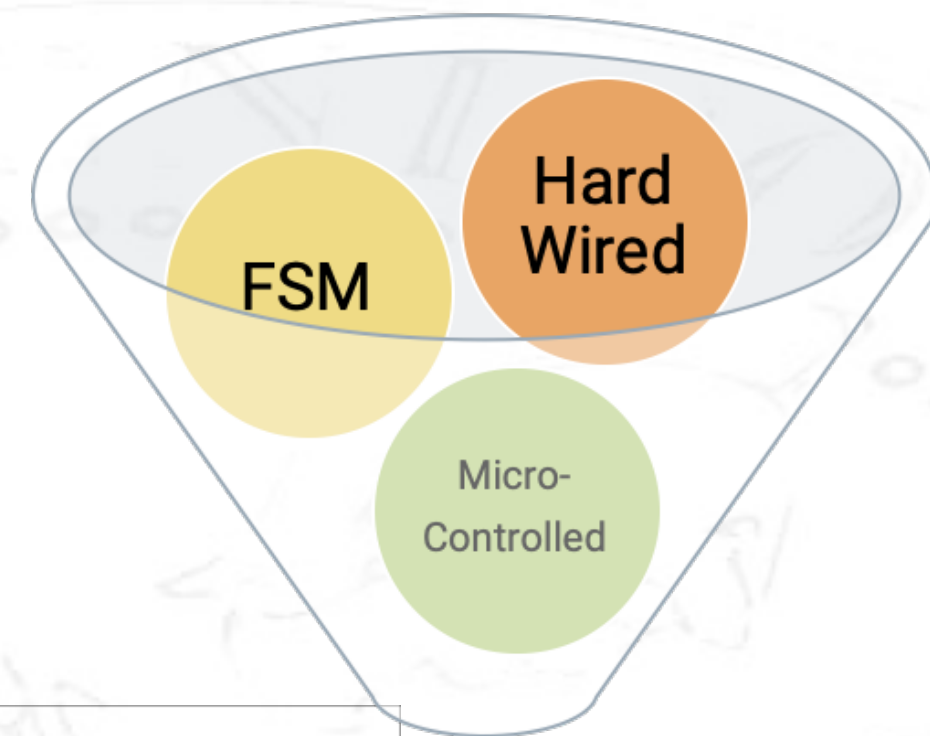
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Controlling a 5-stage Pipeline

- The architecture and control must be organized following the five stages pipeline.
- You have three ways:
 - go further with microcontrolled CU,
 - or change to a clever FSM
 - or hardwired CU.
- Choose meaningful assembler programs so that pipeline and pipeline stall are underlined.

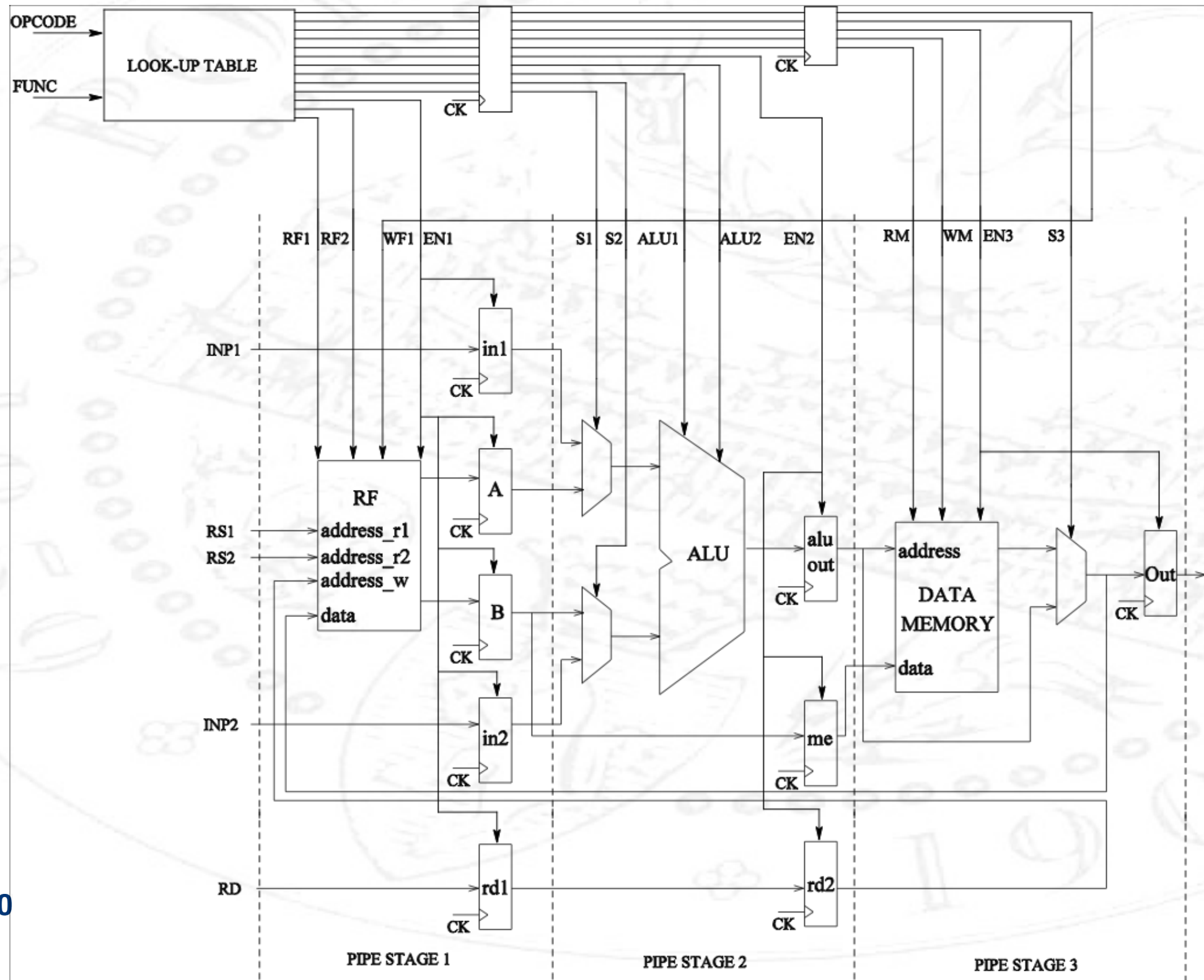


Control Unit

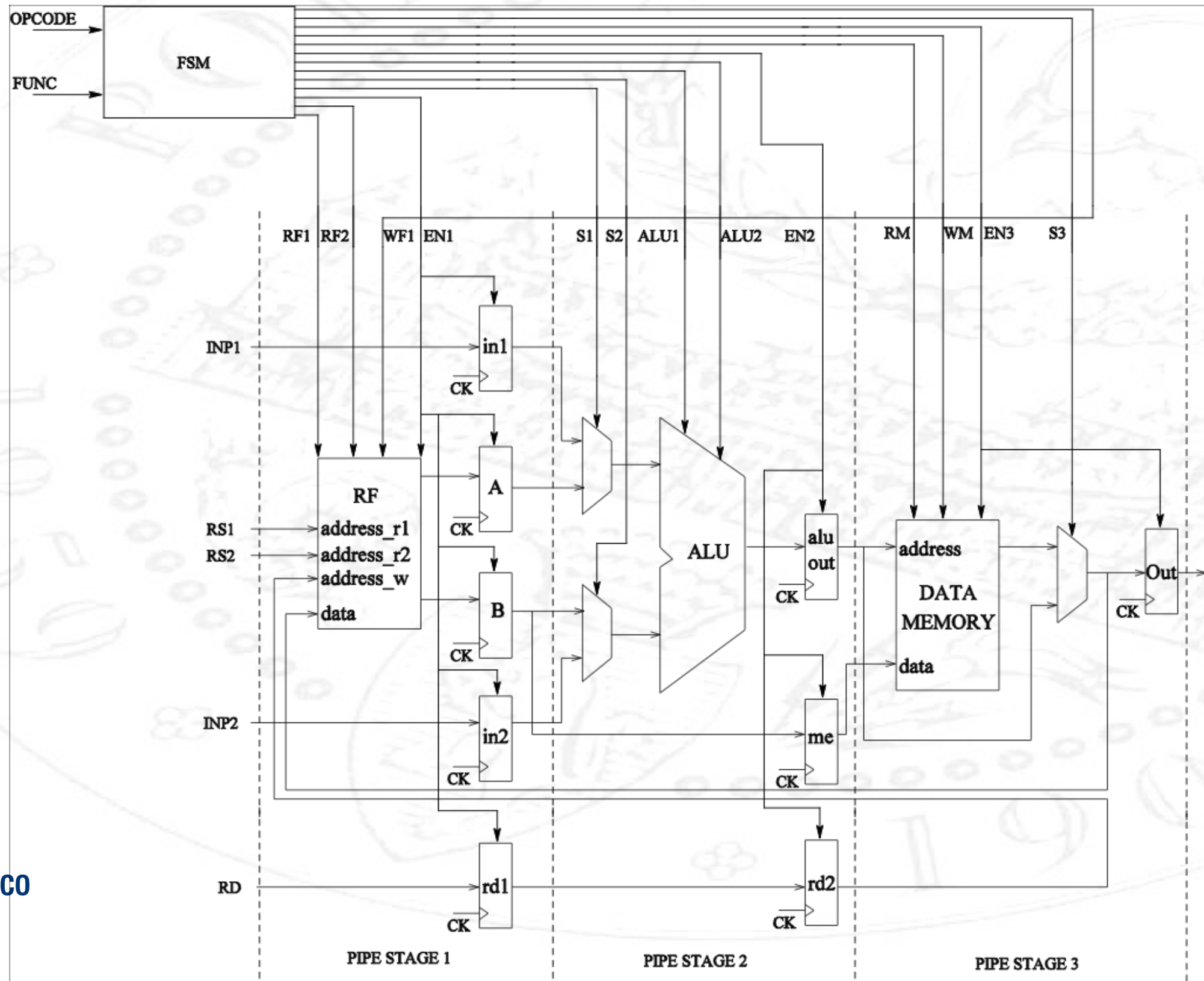


CU

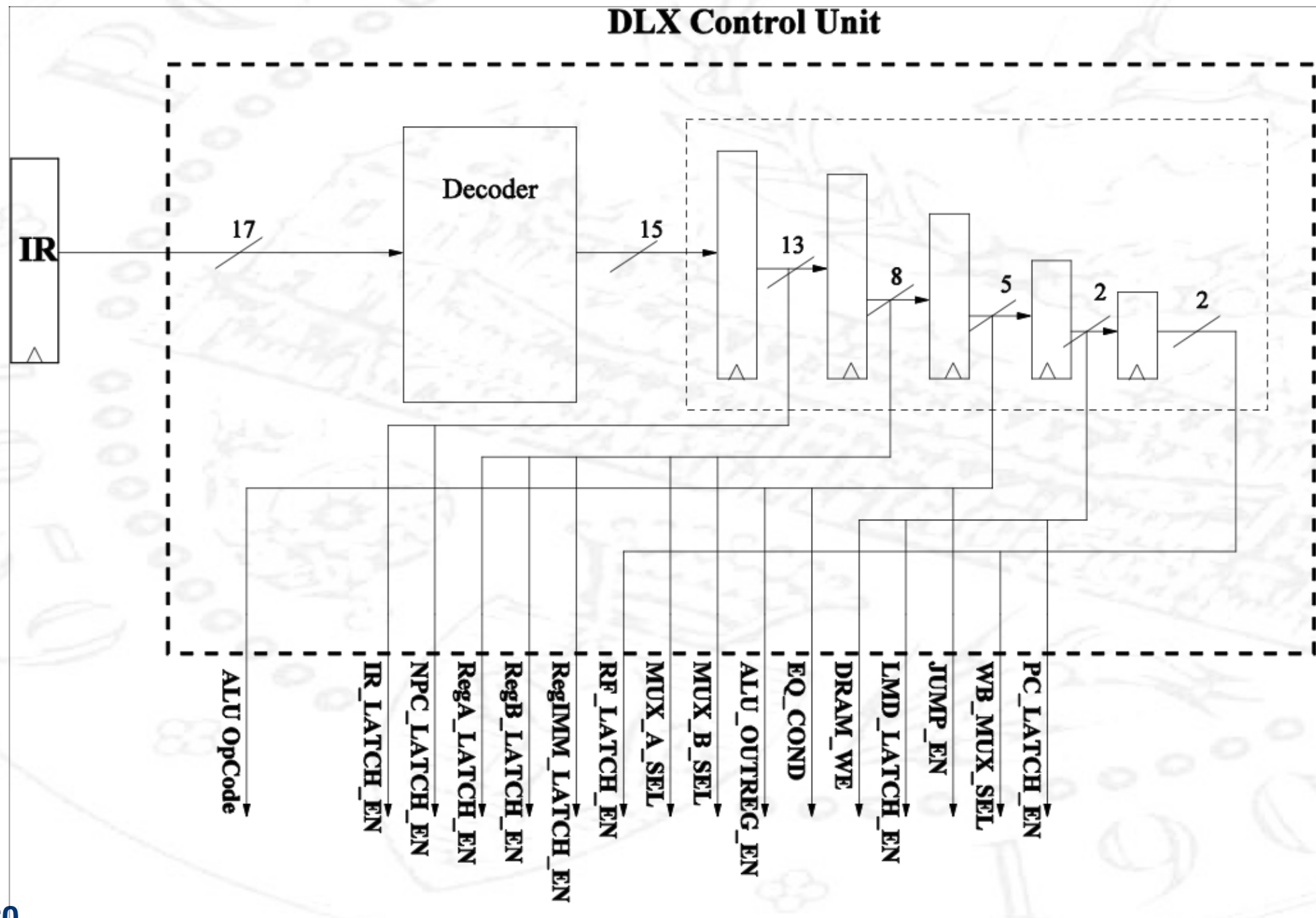
Hardwired Control unit



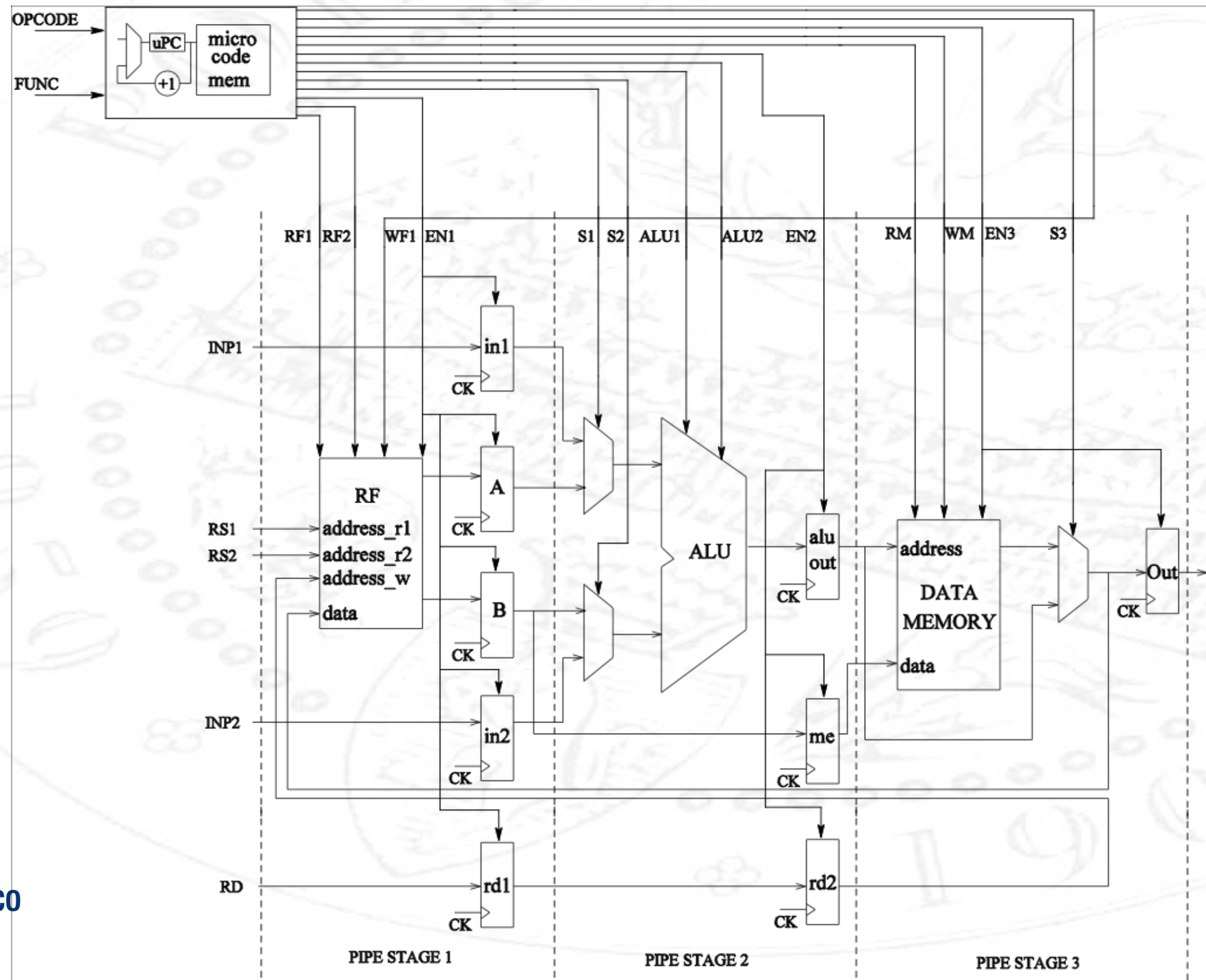
FSM Control unit



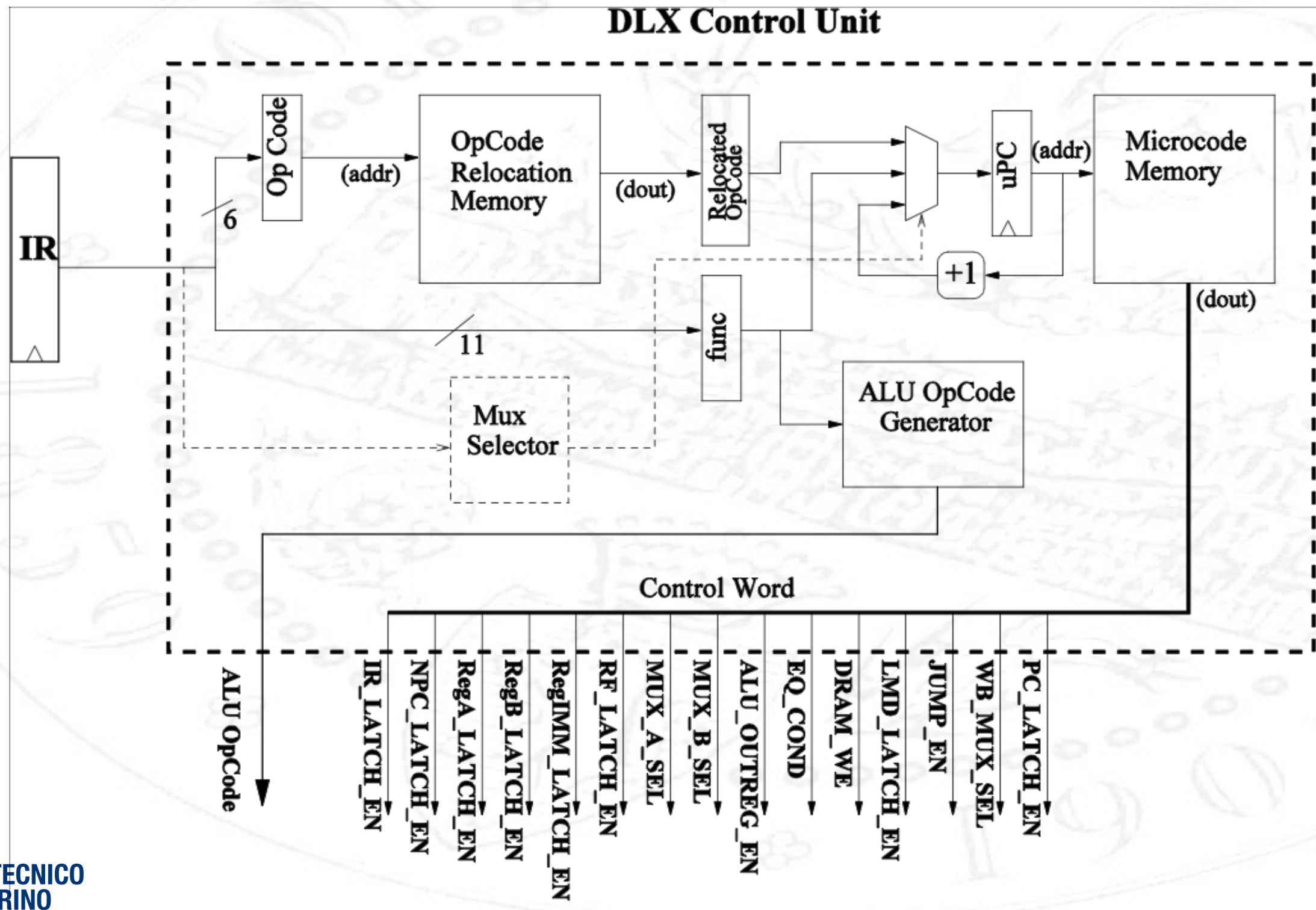
FSM Control unit



Micro-Programmed Control unit



Micro-Programmed Control unit



Limited Instruction Set

- add addi and andi
- beqz bnez j jal
- lw nop or ori
- sge sgei sle slei sll slli sne snei srl srli
- sub subi sw xor xori
- Design modify and comment one (or more) intelligent **assembler** programs so that these instructions can be meaningfully checked. Change the ALU OP CODE so that an enumeration type can be used (see appendices A and B).



Data Path

- You should describe in **VHDL** at RT level all the data path components necessary to fulfill the instruction subset defined at previous points.
- Of course you can reuse the blocks you already described in previous **labs**.
- Describe one or more intelligent **assembler** programs (COMMENTED) so that these instructions can be meaningfully checked.

Synthesis

- Both the **data path** and the **control unit** must be synthesized.
- **Different** synthesis results can be reported, commented and compared
- A final optimization for **frequency** must be performed.
- The **scripts** you use for the synthesis step must be reported and commented (memory should not be synthesized).

Physical Design

- The synthesized design must be **placed and routed**.
- Post physical design performance must be reported:
 - delay,
 - thermal informations,
 - power...



- Instructions subset: addu, addui, jalr, jr, lb, lbu, lhi, lhu, sb, seq, seqi, sgeu, sgeui, sgt, sgti, sgtu, sgtui, slt, slti, sltu, sltui, sra, srai, subu, subui, mult...
- **Data path:** The data path can be extended for each of the instruction you choose to add.

Windowed register file

- **Control hazard:** Implement one or more of the techniques to prevent stall as mentioned during classes as instruction queue for jump (IQ), branch prediction using a small branch history table.
- **Power consumption optimization** from an architectural point of view
- **Caching:** Add a small data cache (RTL) between the main memory and the CPU;
- **Advanced synthesis:** Force further optimization to the design: try to reduce power consumption, perform a post synthesis VHDL simulation, so that realistic timing and power simulation with a real test bench can be performed
- **Physical design:** Post physical design simulations, clock tree synthesis and even crosstalk analysis would be appreciated in the final report.

Scripts for the automatization of simulaztions, synthesis and results elaboration

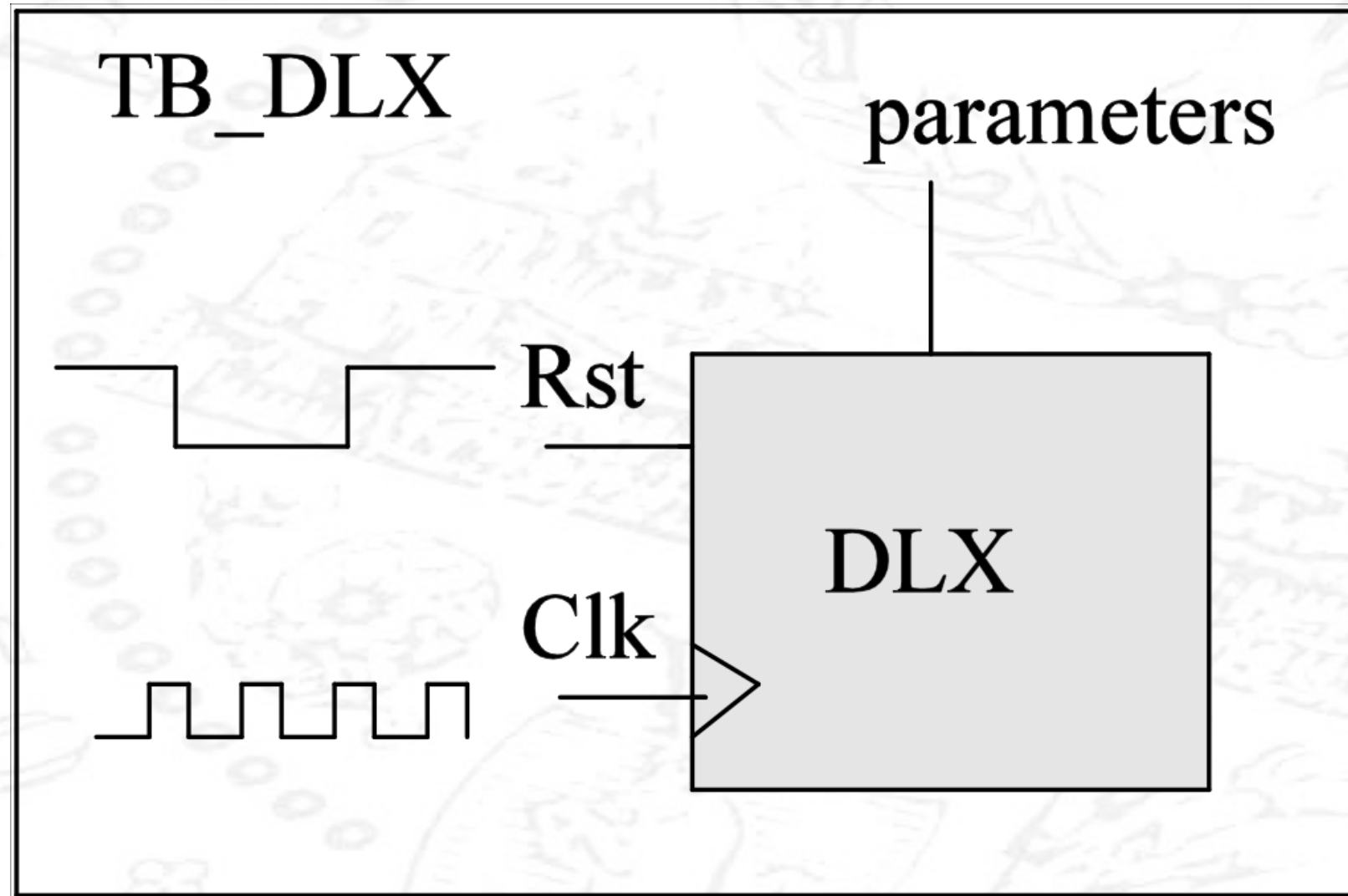


Testing the DLX

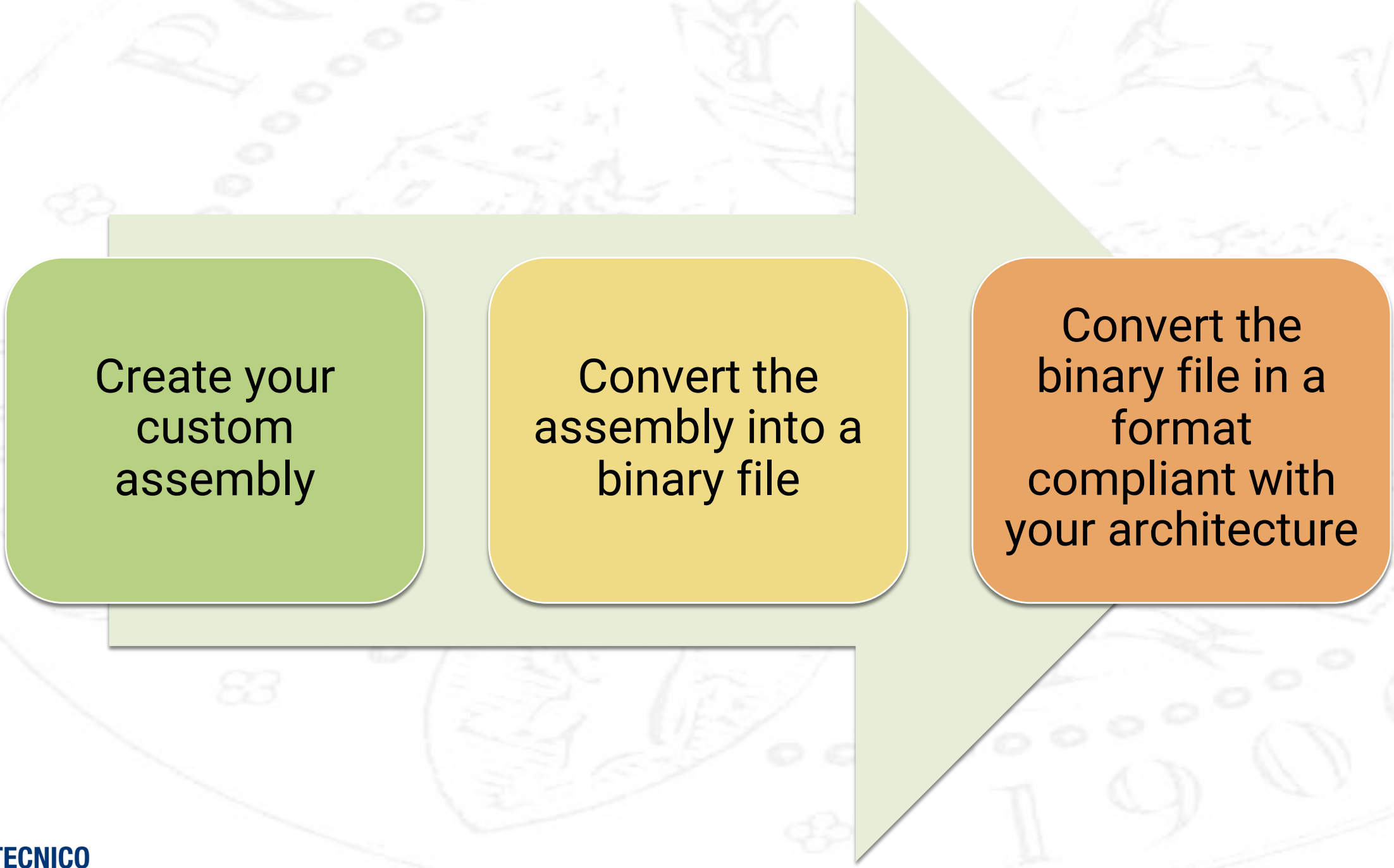


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Given Testbench



Test your DLX



Create your
custom
assembly

Convert the
assembly into a
binary file

Convert the
binary file in a
format
compliant with
your architecture

Test your DLX

- Chose the assembler program to be executed:

*MANY examples are given DLX Project /asm example/
(we recommend you to use the simplest one: test.asm)

- Compile it and convert to a readable format:

```
prompt> ./assembler.bin/dlxasm.pl test.asm
```

- Convert the file format so that it can be easily read by the VHDL control unit:

```
prompt> ./assembler.bin/conv2memory test.asm.exe test.asm.mem
```

First steps...

- 1) **Understand** how to **generate** assembler files
- 2) **Run** a basic **simulation** of the given structure
- 3) Try to **add the management of a new ASM instruction** (follow file) of the CU
- 4) **Build** a very simple **DATA PATH** by connecting all the elementary blocks already used in labs 1-2-3-4
- 5) **Connect** simple **DATA PATH**



Report Guidelines



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Report Structure

- Header
- Summay
- Index of contents, figures and tables
- Body
 - **INTRODUCTION** (SPECIFICATION and FUNCTIONALITY)
 - **FUNCTIONAL SCHEMA** (Block diagrams)
 - **IMPLEMENTATION** (Technology, synthesis, optimization)
 - **DISCUSSION** and **CONCLUSIONS** (Result from the BenchMark, timing, area)
- References
- Appendix

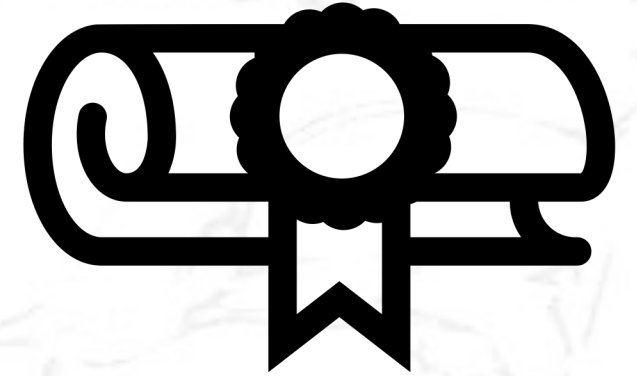
LaTeX...

Practical Info.

- Lab groups and Project groups can differ
- The basic vs. Pro choice is individual (please communicate the variation)
- You have to submit your files and final report at least one week before the discussion
- The .zip submission is made through the student web page
- Name format:
 - GRXX_DLX_basic.zip
 - GRXX_DLX_pro.zip
- The internal organization of folders and files must strictly respect the rules written in the PDF Project Guide.



The final discussion



- The final discussion is individual
- You will be asked to:
 - Give an overview of the architecture
 - Demonstrate the correct behavior by using your custom ASM files
 - Be ready to execute (at run time) some random ASM program
 - Show the synthesis and physical design results
 - Final discussion with prof. M. Graziano