

**almanac**

# THE ELLIPSES

NOTES FOR AN UNMONASTERY ALMANAC OF GATHERINGS

There are many Ways of marking time. New calendars come into cultures; the list goes on.

As some in the Northwestern Hemisphere plot their days, weeks and months by the solar Gregorian Calendar, different meteorological, networked rhythms oscillate their connections and their return to familiar places.

Humans have used neighboring celestial bodies to mete out time since we observed their irregular motion in the sky: sometimes slower, sometimes more pronounced. A guiding waypoint, the Moon comes to the fore as something of our North Satellite:

Derived from the old English *mōna*, of Germanic origin; moon is related to Dutch *maan* and German *Mond*, also to month, from an Indo-European root shared by Latin *mensis* and Greek *mēn* 'month', and also Latin *metiri* 'to measure' (the moon being used to measure time).

Though used to measure time, the Earth's Moon does not keep a constant speed. A lunar phase's duration depends on its location in its asymmetric, elliptical path around the planet. The first device known to accurately measure its irregular cycles is the Antikythera Mechanism. Found by divers in 1900 off the coast of a Greek island, its 82 small, remaining fragments and gears now sit in a dark blue room of the National Archaeological Museum, Athens.

From New Moon to New Moon, a full lunar cycle approaches a rough average of twenty nine and a half days.

We observe the Eclipses of the Moon and sun, too, with variability each year. Tilted by five degrees in relation to the earth's orbital path around the sun, the Moon usually lies to the north or south of a direct line through the earth and sun when its full or new phases occur.

The geometry of any given eclipse will repeat just eight hours shy of 18 years and 11 days otherwise known as the Saros cycle<sup>1</sup> (though shifted 20 degrees westward from its original position). Eclipses of similar geometry between the Moon, sun and earth are rarely visible from the same geographical location.

With its oblong orbiting, the Moon is still one of our most constant partners in the observation of mundane time. Today, the season by season creep of climate change encroaches, former terra incognita sinks beneath our feet, and the extraterrestrial commons are threatened at the first moment of their tangible, corporeal appearance. Our touchstones of seasonal and geographical constancy are shifting rapidly, and thus we must look to truly re-inhabit and collectively determine traditions which pose another relation to time.

“The revival of magical beliefs is possible today because it no longer represents a social threat... Astrology too can be allowed to return, with the certainty that even the most devoted consumer of astral charts will automatically consult the watch before going to work.”

*Caliban and the Witch*, Silvia Federici

The irregular cycles of the Moon serve as a constant focal point for coming together and an alternative temporality in relation to living and working. It is a chance to draw a line in the sand, to reinstate a (magical) resistance through the marking of time: for the celebration of doing nothing.<sup>2</sup>

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1 As I understood the ramifications of your unearthing of the phenomenon of the Saros was to give the unMonastery a pulse beat. That as we made lifestyle proposals and solemn vows of a somewhat terrifying nature, we would at the same time be assuaged by the knowledge that all such proposals were temporary, that at the next passing of the Saros all things would be reappraised and reform would be sagely taken into consideration.

2 The initial fascination with the lunar cycle among unMonasterians was as a tempo indicator for meet the community open house events. It was proposed that we coordinate our efforts to hold both new moon and full moon rituals to revitalise our often contemplative natures through a generous dose of collective baying.

## VISCERAL ADDED VALUE

The unMonastery morphed into its latest manifestation in the late fall of 2015 A.D. As the unMonasterians rushed to contain the historical narrative and attempt to catalyse social transformation through the invisible good will of ten to twenty people, they remained still for a moment. Months of, however transient, conflict and potential dissolution shook off some of their ominous veils. Sitting in a late Monday night community hangout, with muffled noises in the background, the unMonasterians present shirked their administerial duties in favour of less near-sighted pressures.

“One thing we know, as a constant, is that we will continue to meet each other.”

With the thought of seven generation sustainability roaming amidst the collective backdrop, the conversation continued: “What if we invited the first daughter of your second cousin to a meeting in 10 years?”

The 200 Year Plan of the unMonastery shrank to 100 years, then bloomed back to 400, and now rests somewhere between 89 cycles or a millennium.

As a platform for long term gatherings, the Deep Time Bank took on its visceral added value of assuaging the longing that haunts modern, dispensable friendships; the unMonasterians erected the conceptual plateau of projecting a gathering calendar into the uncertain future of our planet over the course of seven generations.

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## GATHERINGS EVERY THIRD FULL MOON

The Disappearing Host, any self-initiated unMonasteri-an, may propose a location and orchestrate appropriate accommodations for those able to attend on the approach-ing moon. A virtual hangout, in which each unMonasteri-an shares the moon from their current location, will take place on the exact night of the full moon.

NB: See the MMM (Moon Meeting Memorandum) for said full moons and their corresponding focii.

Approaching Dates 2016-2017:

- Friday, April 22
- Sunday, October 16
- Thursday, 12 January
- Tuesday, 11 April
- Sunday, 9 July
- Thursday, 5 October



## THE PRESUMMIT ERRATIC GENERAL MEETING (EGM)

A member on Loomio can state their intent and propose such a gathering to discuss pressing matters, and they are responsible for assembling a team to handle the logistics; at least half of the board must be able to attend for the convening to take place.

NB: See previous preSummit discussions on Loomio for wider context.



## THE UNSUMMIT ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY (AGM), THE SHI BUILDING

This gathering always happens once each rotation of the earth around the sun.

Approaching Dates 2016-2017:

June 17 to 28th (Full Moon Monday, June 20)



## THE SAR - AN ELLIPSE CYCLE (OR 223 SYNODIC, 242 ANOMALISTIC OR 239 DRACONIC MONTHS)

The intergenerational marker, for this gathering a council of Novices, Itinerants and Metanational will be appointed through standards in keeping with Sociocracy to begin planning a land(sea-, sky-) mark in the initiative's history one year prior to its date.

Approaching Dates (Subject to Different Series):

- Lunar Sar: 2016-8-18
- Lunar Sar: 2027-7-18
- Solar Sar: 2054-8-3
- Solar Sar: 2083-7-15
- Lunar Sar: 2092-7-19
- Solar Sar: 2112-6-24
- Lunar Sar: 2139-7-12
- Lunar Sar: 2150-6-10
- Solar Sar: 2195-7-7
- Solar Sar: 2206-6-7
- Lunar Sar: 2233-6-22



## THE CAVE A CONTINUOUS MONUMENT

An ongoing presence of conviviality at  
[cave.unmonastery.org](http://cave.unmonastery.org)

and fortnightly at  
[meet.jit.si/unmonastery](http://meet.jit.si/unmonastery).

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