

# Practical applications for the Butterfly orbital family

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**Abstract**—The lunar mission market is experiencing significant development and growth with increasing interest from government agencies, private companies, and international collaborations. Future lunar missions are driven by scientific exploration, resource utilization, and the establishment of a sustainable human presence. The first step in order to accomplish those goals is to being able to observe and communicate with both, the Earth and the Moon in a continuous and optimized way. The work aims covering the lack of literature in practical applications for the Butterfly family by proposing three different synodic resonant butterfly orbits which could outperform the current reference orbit for the cislunar architecture, known as a Near Rectilinear Halo Orbit (NRHO), in terms of energy/time consumption.

**Key words**—CR3BP, Earth-Moon, Butterfly Orbits, NRHO

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the near future, the lunar mission market is expected to keep growing at an accelerated pace. The Artemis program, led by NASA, is one of the primary driving forces behind this expansion. Artemis aims to return humans to the Moon by 2024 and establish a sustainable lunar presence. This ambitious program has garnered significant attention and investment, aiming to not only land astronauts on the lunar surface but also enable long-duration stays and foster scientific research and exploration. Moreover, international collaborations are also on the rise in the lunar mission market. Partnerships such as the Artemis Accords aim to establish a common vision via a practical set of principles and use of outer space to advance the Artemis Program. These activities may take place on the Moon, Mars, comets, and asteroids, as well as in orbit of the Moon or Mars, in the Lagrangian points for the Earth-Moon system [1]. These collaborations foster global participation in lunar missions and provide opportunities for scientific research, technology demonstrations, and knowledge sharing.

This endeavor's current orbit of interest is an L2 near rectilinear halo orbit (NRHO). Near rectilinear halo orbits are members of the broader set of L1 and L2 families of halo orbits. These foundational structures exist in a dynamical environment modeled in terms of multiple gravitational bodies, and the motion also persists in a higher-fidelity model. This type of trajectory was first identified in a simplified representation of the gravitational effects in the Earth-Moon system, i.e., the circular restricted three-body problem (CR3BP). In the

CR3BP model, NRHOs are characterized by favorable stability properties that facilitate low-cost maintenance of NRHO like motion over long duration periods. Some NRHOs also possess favorable resonance properties that can be exploited for mission design and are particularly useful for eclipse avoidance [2].

In this investigation, the dynamical structure that bifurcates from the first period-doubling bifurcation of the NRHO region of the L2 halo family (butterfly orbits) [3] is explored to scrutinize the possible characteristics that would make a possible candidate for future lunar missions out of this orbital family.

## II. DYNAMICAL MODEL

The Circular Restricted Three-Body Problem (CR3BP) is a simplified mathematical model used in celestial mechanics to study the motion of a small object (such as a spacecraft) in the gravitational fields of two larger bodies, referred to as primaries, offering simplifications that facilitate easier conceptual understanding. In this problem, the two larger bodies are assumed to move in circular orbits around their center of mass. The CR3BP hypothesis assumes that the mass of the small object is negligible compared to the masses of the larger bodies, meaning that the motion of the larger bodies is unaffected by the presence of the small object. [4]

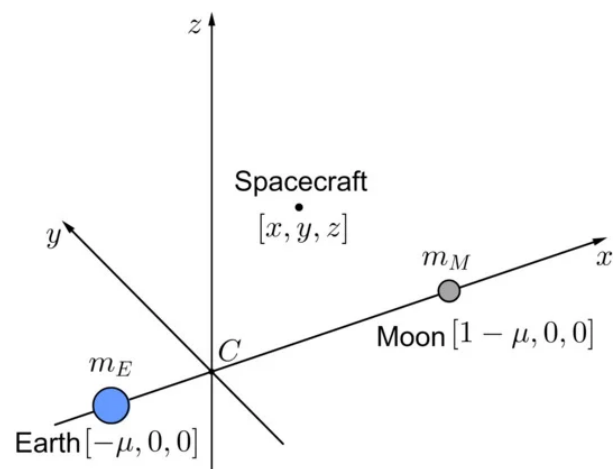


Fig. 1: Earth-Moon rotating reference frame [5]

In a coordinate system centered around the barycenter and rotating with the system (rotating or synodic frame, figure 1), the position of the negligible-mass body is denoted by  $(x, y, z)$ . The  $x$ -axis points from the more extensive primary ( $m_1$ ) to the smaller primary ( $m_2$ ), while the  $z$ -axis is perpendicular to the orbital plane. The  $y$ -axis completes the set of orthogonal coordinates. In the CR3BP, a convention is followed to make quantities dimensionless. Normalized or nondimensional units will be used for nearly all the discussions in this paper. When appropriate, conversion to dimensional units (e.g., km, km/s, seconds) can be done to scale a problem. The following choice of units normalizes the system: the unit of mass is taken to be  $m_1 + m_2$ ; the unit of length is chosen to be the constant separation between  $m_1$  and  $m_2$  (in our case the distance between the centers of the earth and the moon;  $3.850 \times 10^5$  km); the unit of time is chosen such that the orbital period of  $m_1$  and  $m_2$  around their center of mass is  $2\pi$ . The universal constant of gravitation then becomes  $G = 1$ . It then follows that the primaries' common mean motion,  $n$ , is also unity. [6]

As a result of this dimensionless representation, the distances from the Earth and Moon to the barycenter are expressed as  $\mu$  and  $1 - \mu$ , respectively. Here, the parameter  $\mu$  represents the ratio of the Moon's mass to the system's total mass ( $\mu = m_2/(m_1 + m_2)$ ). In the specific case of the Earth-Moon system,  $\mu$  is equal to 0.01215. The larger and smaller primaries are then located at  $(-\mu, 0, 0)$  and  $(1-\mu, 0, 0)$ , respectively, and the equations of motion are given by:

$$\begin{aligned} x'' &= 2y' + x - (1 - \mu)(x + \mu)r_1^{-3} - \mu(x - 1 + \mu)r_1^{-3} \\ y'' &= -2x' + y - (1 - \mu)yr_1^{-3} - \mu * yr_2^{-3} \\ z'' &= -(1 - \mu)zr_1^{-3} - \mu * zr_2^{-3} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Where denotes derivative concerning time, and with  $r_1$  and  $r_2$  as:

$$\begin{aligned} r_1 &= \sqrt{(x - \mu)^2 + y^2 + z^2} \\ r_2 &= \sqrt{(x - 1 + \mu)^2 + y^2 + z^2} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

The pseudo-potential function  $U$  is:

$$U = \frac{1}{2}(x^2 + y^2) + \frac{1 - \mu}{r_1} + \frac{\mu}{r_2} \quad (3)$$

The CR3BP has a notable quantity called the Jacobi constant, denoted as  $JC$ . It is defined as  $JC = 2U - v^2$ , where  $v$  represents the magnitude of the spacecraft velocity in the rotating frame. The Jacobi constant is a parameter similar to energy and remains constant along a ballistic arc. It provides insights into the possible behavior of the system. For instance, a higher Jacobi constant implies a lower orbital energy, resulting in more restricted motion. In the six-dimensional phase space described by (1), a subset of invariant planar orbits exists, meaning their  $z$ -coordinate remains at zero. Additionally, there are several symmetries within the system. If  $(x(t), y(t), z(t))$  is a solution to 1, then its reflection about the  $x$ - $y$  plane,  $(x(t), y(t), -z(t))$ , is also a valid solution. Similarly, by reversing the direction of time, the reflection about the  $x$ - $z$  plane is another valid solution, given by  $(x(-t), -y(-t), z(-t))$ . Furthermore, there

is a symmetry concerning  $\mu$  if  $(x(t), y(t), z(t))$  is a solution for  $\mu = \mu_0$  then  $(-x(-t), y(-t), z(-t))$  is a solution for  $\mu = 1 - \mu_0$ . There is then a symmetric axis in  $\mu = 1/2$ .

### A. Libration points

It is a widely acknowledged fact that for any given value of  $\mu$  (where  $0 < \mu < 1$ ), system 1 exhibits five equilibrium points in the orbital plane of the primaries ( $z = 0$ ), as shown in figure 2. These points are commonly referred to as Lagrange<sup>1</sup> points or libration points. Among the libration points, three of them, named  $L_1$ ,  $L_2$ , and  $L_3$ , are positioned in a straight line with the primary bodies.  $L_1$  is situated between the two primaries,  $L_2$  is located beyond the smaller primary, and  $L_3$  is positioned beyond the larger primary. The remaining two libration points,  $L_4$  and  $L_5$ , form an equilateral triangle with the primaries. Specifically,  $L_4$  can be found at coordinates  $(x, y) = (1/2 - \mu, -\sqrt{3}/2)$ , while  $L_5$  is located at  $(1/2 - \mu, \sqrt{3}/2)$ . It is important to note that as  $\mu$  approaches 0,  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  merge together, and as  $\mu$  approaches 1,  $L_1$  and  $L_3$  merge. Additionally, there is a symmetry relationship with respect to  $\mu = 1/2$ . [2]

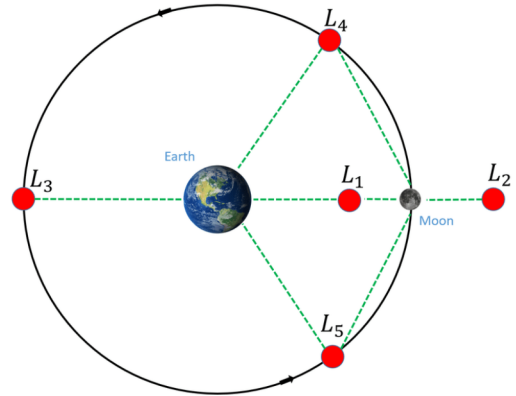


Fig. 2: Lagrange points on the CR3BP [7]

### B. Periodic Orbits

When system 1 is expressed as a first-order system in  $R_6$ , the Jacobian matrix evaluated at the libration points  $L_1$ ,  $L_2$ , and  $L_3$  exhibits two pairs of purely imaginary eigenvalues. These eigenvalues are responsible for well-known families of periodic orbits, namely the planar Lyapunov orbits denoted as  $L_1$ ,  $L_2$ , and  $L_3$ , as well as the Vertical orbits denoted as  $V_1$ ,  $V_2$ , and  $V_3$ . Similarly, the Jacobian matrix at the libration points  $L_4$  and  $L_5$  always possesses at least one pair of purely imaginary eigenvalues for all values of  $\mu$ . This gives rise to the families  $V_4$  and  $V_5$  of Vertical orbits originating from  $L_4$  and  $L_5$ , respectively. For values of  $\mu$  below a critical threshold  $\mu_2$ , approximately equal to 0.0385, the Jacobian matrix at the libration points  $L_4$  and  $L_5$  exhibits an additional two pairs of purely imaginary eigenvalues. These additional eigenvalues generally lead to the emergence of two families of planar orbits for both  $L_4$  and  $L_5$ . [8]

<sup>1</sup>Despite being all named Lagrange points, the collinear equilibrium points were found by Euler (1767) while the triangular equilibrium points were worked out by Lagrange (1772)

### III. ORBITAL STABILITY AND BIFURCATIONS

Stability indices provide valuable information about the stability of an orbit. This metric is defined as

$$\nu = \frac{1}{2}(\lambda^{W_s} + \lambda^{W_u}) \quad (4)$$

where  $\lambda$  represents the eigenvalues of the monodromy matrix,  $\phi(t + P, t)$ , and  $P$  is the orbital period of the baseline orbit in the CR3BP. [9] It is worth noting that the eigenvalues of the monodromy matrix are observed as two sets of reciprocal pairs and two trivial eigenvalues with a value of unity, which arise from the periodic nature of the solution.

The nontrivial four eigenvalues consist of a pair associated with the stable/unstable subspace and another pair representing the center subspace. Since there is one stable and one unstable mode, the stability indices are calculated by taking the average of the (reciprocal) pair of multipliers related to the stable subspace ( $|\lambda_s| < 1$ ) and the unstable subspace ( $|\lambda_u| > 1$ ). These eigenvalues are also used to isolate intersections with other families of orbits in the solution space. In this study, all of the solutions examined possess six characteristic multipliers in reciprocal pairs.

When the characteristic multipliers  $\lambda_s$  and  $\lambda_u$  associated with the stable and unstable subspaces are equal to  $\pm 1$ , the reference trajectory represents the precise intersection between two distinct families of orbits. As a result, the orbit becomes a subset of both families, indicating a bifurcation point where the trajectory exhibits characteristics of both families simultaneously. Additionally, if the characteristic multipliers  $\lambda_c$  and  $\lambda_c^*$  corresponding to the center subspace are such that  $\lambda_c = \lambda_c^* = \pm 1$ , the solution or orbit also defines the intersection point between two different families. In this case, when  $\lambda_s = \lambda_u = \pm 1$  and  $\lambda_c = \lambda_c^* = \pm 1$  occur simultaneously, the trajectory solution belongs to three distinct families of orbits. As a consequence, three families intersect at this point, leading to a phenomenon known as trifurcation.

When examining the Lyapunov families, the first two bifurcations occur when exploring the solution space for all three Lyapunov families. These bifurcations are specifically associated with the condition where the center multipliers,  $\lambda_c$  and  $\lambda_c^*$ , are equal to  $\pm 1$ . Initially, the multipliers in the center subspace for all three families (**L1**, **L2**, **L3**) are distributed along the unit circle, which aligns with our expectations. However, as the solution space is expanded, these families exhibit bifurcations with the halo orbit families. During these bifurcations, the center multipliers transition to real values instead of remaining on the unit circle.

Apart from the previously mentioned bifurcation types, there are additional types of bifurcations that should be considered. Specifically, in the context of studying and applying Halo orbits, period-multiplying bifurcations play a significant role.

#### A. Period-multiplying bifurcations

Can occur without any changes in the orbital stability. For instance, when two nontrivial eigenvalues of the monodromy

matrix,  $\lambda_c = -1$ , are present, a period-doubling bifurcation takes place. However, period-multiplying bifurcations (with a multiplying factor  $m$ ) occur when two nontrivial eigenvalues of the monodromy matrix are expressed as  $\lambda_c = \lambda_c^* = \cos(2\pi/m) \pm i^* \sin(2\pi/m)$ . These period-multiplying bifurcations give rise to a set of new families of orbits originating from the NRHO family. These bifurcations provide an avenue for exploring and discovering new orbital configurations and behaviors within the HALO orbit family.

For period-multiplying bifurcations (and the resulting higher-period families) the naming format is defined: ‘Pm[originating family]n’, where ‘Pm’ refers to the order of the period-multiplication (e.g., period-doubling is reflected in  $m = 2$ ), ‘[originating family]’ refers to the family from which the bifurcating family has evolved (e.g., ‘HO’ refers to halo orbits and ‘DRO’ refers to distant retrograde orbits), and ‘n’ denotes a sub-family identifier (i.e., for multiple bifurcations of the same type, the first family, in order of increasing perilune radius, is labelled  $n = 1$ , the second family is labelled  $n = 2$ , etc.).

Regarding the period-doubling bifurcations, two families emerge from the NRHO family:  $P2HO_1$  and  $P2HO_2$ . With respect to the period-quadrupling bifurcations, another two families emerge:  $P4HO_1$  and  $P4HO_2$ . The following sections of this paper will focus on the  $P2HO_1$  family, commonly known as the Butterfly family [3]. Butterfly orbits have been of interest in space exploration and satellite missions for several reasons. They offer stable orbits that require relatively little propulsion or station-keeping maneuvers to maintain the spacecraft’s position. They also provide continuous visibility of both the larger bodies (such as the Earth and the Moon) and allow for extended observation or communication coverage. In figure 3 the Halo and Butterfly families are plotted together.

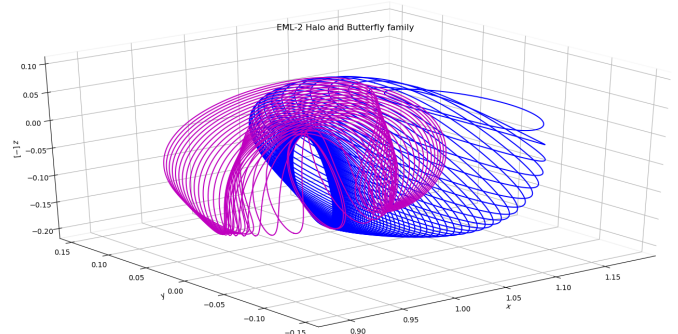


Fig. 3: Halo-Butterfly families transition

All the results presented in this work were carried out in SEMpy [10], a simulation environment for the circular restricted three-body problem, based on Python and developed by SaCLaB at ISAE-SUPAERO.

### IV. BUTTERFLY ORBITAL FAMILY

Employing a multiple-shooting pseudo-arclength continuation scheme, the new families of periodic orbits originating at each of these bifurcations are computed. The Butterfly family

originating from the NRHO bifurcation is plotted (and colored by Jacobi constant) in figure 4. Note that in figures 4 and 5 the southern orbits (or the segment of the family that possesses a majority of motion in the negative z-direction) are plotted (a northern analog also exists).

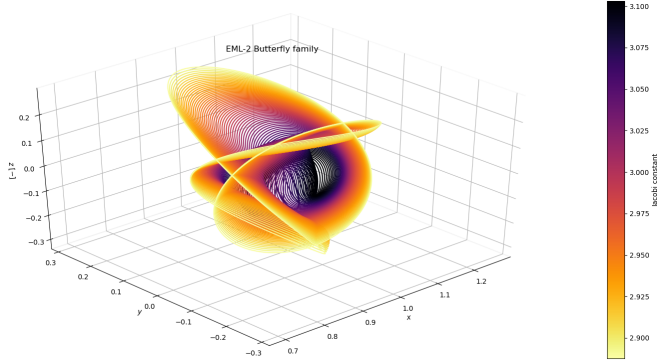


Fig. 4: 3D Butterfly Family

As can be appreciated in figure 5, this family is characterized by two lobes in a “figure-8” shape, one on the L1 side of the Moon and one on the L2 side each having 5 to 7 day period ranges. [11] A distinct advantage for periodic orbits in this family is the ability to access both sides of the Moon using natural ballistic motion.

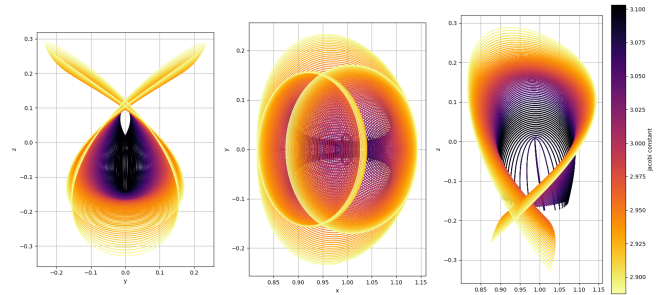


Fig. 5: Butterfly Family 2D projections

#### A. Stability and Jacobi constant properties

The behavior of the butterfly family undergoes intricate changes in terms of its geometry, period, energy, and stability properties. The analysis of its stability evolution employs a different approach to the stability index compared to the one presented in Section III.

This study utilizes an alternative formulation of the stability index to capture the full implications of complex eigenvalues deviating from the unit circle. Referred to as  $\zeta$ , it is defined as:

$$\zeta = \frac{1}{2}(\|\lambda_i\| + \|\lambda_i\|^{-1}) \quad (5)$$

for  $i = 1, 2$ . This alternative stability index is a real value with a magnitude greater than or equal to 1<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>This alternative formulation sacrifices certain details, such as the sign of the eigenvalues.

Figure 6 displays the alternative stability indices,  $\zeta$ , for a significant portion of the butterfly family. As a result, the range of orbits depicted in the stability index plot is significantly broader than the range of orbits presented in the visualization of the halo-butterfly bifurcation in figure 3. The extended coverage of the butterfly family reveals numerous stability transitions throughout its evolution.

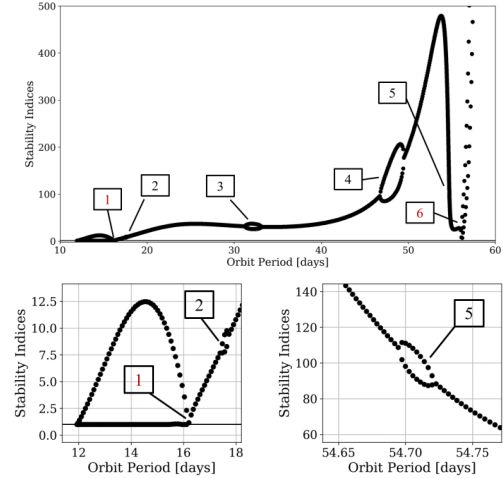


Fig. 6: Alternative orbital stability evolution [12]

Figure 6 illustrates the diverse eigenstructures present in the butterfly family. These eigenstructures have significant implications for mission design. The range of butterfly orbits analyzed so far exhibits a variety of eigenstructures and stability properties, which directly impact the available manifold structures. This is particularly relevant when considering low-cost transfers. Additionally, the magnitude of the stability indices is correlated with station-keeping and transfer costs, with smaller stability indices typically resulting in lower station-keeping costs [12].

The evolution of the Jacobi constant value, denoted as  $C$ , for the butterfly family exhibits a less complex behavior compared to its stability evolution. Figure 7 displays the evolution of the Jacobi constant value for the butterfly family and the 9:2 NRHO orbit. It is evident that within this range of the butterfly family, only one orbit shares the same Jacobi constant value as the 9:2 NRHO orbit, suggesting a potential no-cost transfer possibility at that specific point.

For the family’s remaining orbits, the Jacobi constant value change is relatively small during the initial portion of the curve. However, there is a noticeable drop in the Jacobi constant value at an orbit period of approximately 50 days. In general, the smaller the difference in Jacobi constant value between two orbits, the lower the transfer cost. As a result, butterfly orbits with lower Jacobi constant values (corresponding to higher energy levels) tend to have relatively higher transfer costs.



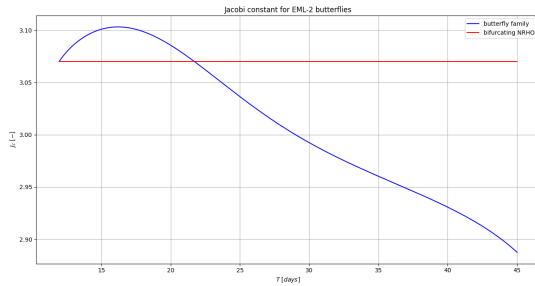
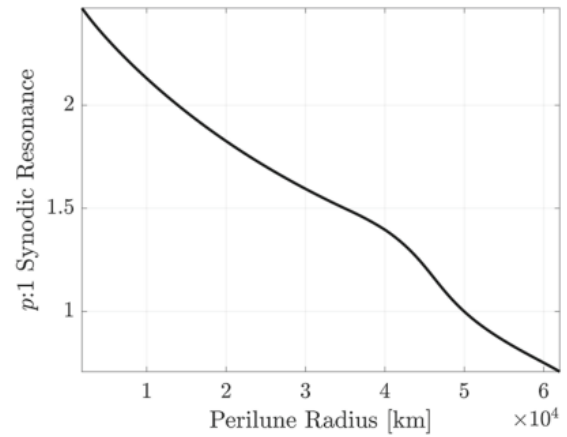


Fig. 7: Jacobi constant evolution

Fig. 8:  $p=1$  synodic resonances in Butterfly orbits [2]

### B. Resonance properties

Resonance in terms of the synodic period is defined as the time between successive conjunctions of a celestial body with the Sun, i.e., the time required for the Earth–Moon–Sun orientation to repeat. In this case, a viewer fixed at the center of the Earth would see the Moon return to the same location with respect to the Sun after one synodic period of the Moon, however, the Moon would not appear in the same location to an observer in an inertial frame fixed at the center of the Earth. The Moon’s synodic period is approximately 29.5 days, slightly longer than its sidereal period (approximately 27.3 days). The synodic period is also denoted as a lunar month since the full lunar cycle (i.e., time between successive full Moon phases) requires one synodic period to complete.

Orbital resonance is defined in terms of a  $p:q$  ratio, where  $p$  indicates the number of completed revolutions of a given periodic orbit over  $q$  synodic periods of the Moon. The value of  $p$  divided by  $q$  must be positive and rational, i.e., both  $p$  and  $q$  can be written as positive integers. As an example of orbital resonance, a 4:1 synodic resonant NRHO possesses a period of approximately 7.375 days such that four revolutions of the spacecraft in this orbit can be completed over the duration of one synodic period of the Moon (7.375 days \* 4 = 29.5 days). [2]

1) *Eclipse avoidance in the Butterfly orbits:* Eclipse avoidance in space missions is a crucial consideration for space missions, especially those involving spacecraft that rely on solar power. It helps maintain power supply, thermal stability, data continuity, operational stability, and battery conservation, thereby enabling the success and longevity of spacecraft operations.

Specific resonant solutions from the  $P2HO_1$  family will be investigated further due to their favorable long-duration eclipse avoidance properties. In figure 8, it is apparent that 2:1, 1:1, and 3:2 (equivalently, 3/2:1) synodic resonant orbits exist across the region of the  $P2HO_1$  family.

The 2:1 synodic resonant  $P2HO_1$  orbit is illustrated in figure 9 in Earth–Moon synodic reference frame. In the CR3BP, this butterfly orbit is defined with a perilune radius of 13967 km and an orbital period of 14.76 days. It is the most stable of the three orbits but still unstable. The maximum stability index is  $\nu = 12.31$  (corresponding to a time constant of  $\tau = 0.0919$  revolutions); unstable orbits potentially possess useful manifold structures for transfer design.

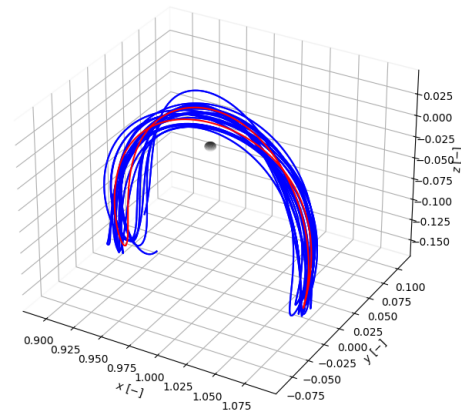


Fig. 9: Butterfly 2:1 ephemeris model

In figure 9, the red orbit corresponds to the solution in the CR3BP, while the blue trajectory corresponds to 15 revolutions (221.3 days) of the orbit computed in the higher-fidelity ephemeris <sup>3</sup> model.

<sup>3</sup>The ephemeris model takes into account the gravitational interactions among celestial bodies, such as the Sun, planets, and moons, and factors in other influences like perturbations from other bodies, relativistic effects, and more. By considering these various forces, the model can calculate celestial objects’ precise positions and velocities at a given time.

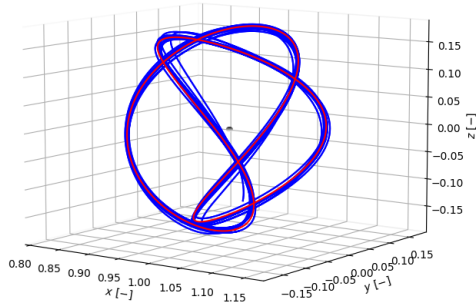


Fig. 10: Butterfly 1:1 ephemeris model

Figure 10 illustrates the representation of the 1:1 synodic resonant  $P2HO_1$  orbit in Earth-Moon rotating frame. The orbit's perilune radius is measured at 49986 km, and in the context of the Circular Restricted Three-Body Problem (CR3BP), its period corresponds to the synodic period of the Moon, which is approximately 29.5 days.

Regarding the stability index, it is the most unstable with  $\nu = 33.55$  or time constant of  $\tau = 0.03499$  revolutions. The orbit exhibits both unstable and stable spiral manifold structures, which have the potential to be useful in transfer design within the specific region.

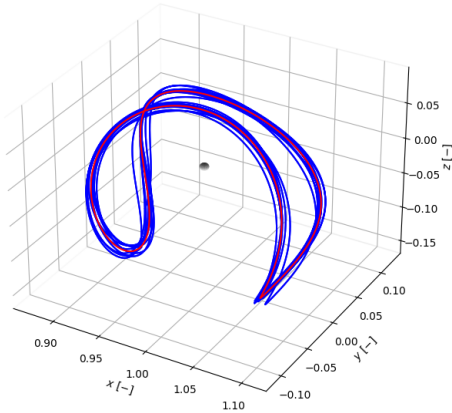


Fig. 11: Butterfly 3:2 ephemeris model

Figure 11 depicts the 3:2 synodic resonant  $P2HO_1$  orbit. In the context of the CR3BP, this periodic solution has a perilune radius of 34970 km and a period of 19.67 days. A calculated ephemeris solution covering a duration of 295 days successfully avoids both lunar and Earth eclipses.

The maximum stability index is  $\nu = 19.94$ , indicating its overall stability. Alternatively, the associated time constant for this orbit is  $\tau = 0.05988$  revolutions. Notably, this specific  $P2HO_1$  orbit exhibits both stable and unstable spiral manifold structures, which hold the potential for facilitating transfer design either into or out of the vicinity of the orbit.

To determine whether the three orbits avoid solar and lunar eclipses, they need to be observed in the Sun-Earth and Sun-Moon synodic reference systems. By examining the paths of

the shadow of the Earth and the Moon, it can be determined whether or not these orbits intersect with the shadow regions.

If an orbit does not intersect with the shadow of the Earth or the Moon, it can be considered to avoid solar and lunar eclipses. Conversely, if the orbit passes through or intersects with these shadow regions, it may be subject to solar and lunar eclipses during its trajectory.

• **Sun-Earth reference frame:** To transform an orbit from the Earth-Moon synodic reference frame to the Sun-Earth synodic reference frame, the following steps can be taken:

1) Transformation to the Earth-Centered Inertial (ECI) system:

- Use the appropriate rotation matrix that corresponds to the dimensionless time of each position and velocity vector. Apply this rotation matrix to convert each vector from the Earth-Moon synodic reference frame to the ECI system.
- Subtract the displacement of the center  $\mu$  from the  $x_{inertial}$  coordinate. This accounts for the fact that the center is displaced from the center of the Earth in the ECI system.

2) Transformation from the ECI system to the Sun-Earth synodic reference frame:

- In this transformation, the dimensional units need to be adjusted to match the Sun-Earth system.
- Multiply each time value by the ratio of the synodic periods or the ratio of the orbital periods in the two systems.
- Scale the position vector by the ratio of the characteristic lengths in the two systems.
- Scale the velocity vector by the ratio of the length to the ratio of the time units.
- Use the inverse of the rotation matrix that was used in the first transformation. Apply this inverse rotation matrix to convert the position and velocity vectors from the ECI system to the Sun-Earth synodic reference frame.

By following these steps, the orbit can be successfully transformed from the Earth-Moon synodic reference frame to the Sun-Earth synodic reference frame, accounting for the rotation matrices, dimensional unit conversions, and displacement of the center.

Figures 12, 13, and 14 depict the transformed orbits in the Sun-Earth synodic reference frame. It is evident from these figures, particularly from the z-y projections, that the three orbits successfully avoid sun eclipses. The visualization clearly shows that the orbit paths never intersect with the Earth's shadow (it would be projected along the x axis), indicating that there is no interference between the orbits and the Earth during their respective trajectories.

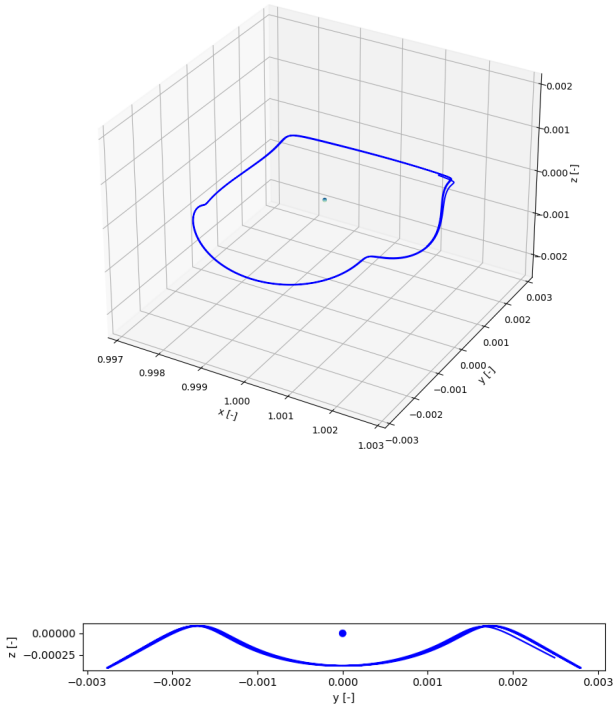


Fig. 12: Butterfly 2:1 Sun-Earth Synodic reference frame

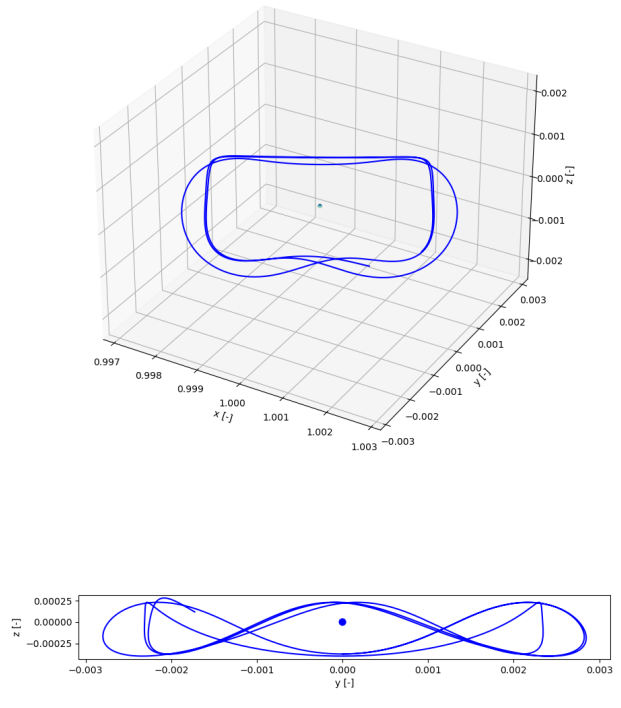


Fig. 14: Butterfly 3:2 Sun-Earth Synodic reference frame

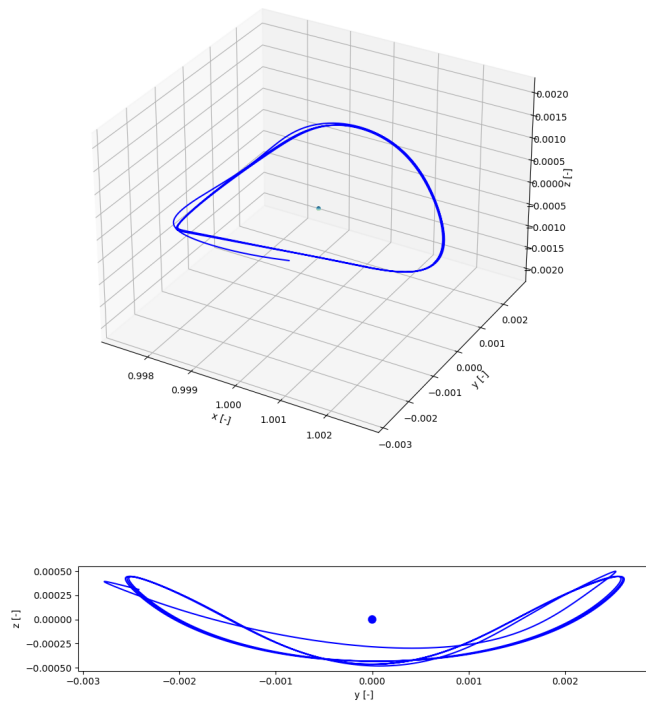


Fig. 13: Butterfly 1:1 Sun-Earth Synodic reference frame

- **Sun-Moon reference frame:** To transform an orbit from the Earth-Moon synodic reference frame to the Sun-Moon synodic reference frame, the following steps can be taken:
  - 1) Transformation to the Moon-Centered Inertial (MCI) system:
 

Following the same procedure that the one to convert to the ECI, the corresponding rotation matrix will be apply to convert each vector to the MCI system. Then, unlike with the ECI system, the value  $1 - \mu$  will be add to the  $x_{inertial}$  coordinate. Being displaced the center to the center of the MCI system.
  - 2) Transformation from the MCI system to the Sun-Moon synodic reference frame:
    - In this transformation, the dimensional units need to be adjusted to match the Sun-Moon system.
    - Multiply each time value by the ratio of the synodic periods or the ratio of the orbital periods in the two systems.
    - Scale the position vector by the ratio of the major axis of the second body in the two systems. In this case, this value is equal to 1, due to the second body is the same (Moon) for both reference frames.
    - Scale the velocity vector by the ratio of the length to the ratio of the time units.
    - Use the inverse of the rotation matrix that was used in the first transformation. Apply this inverse rotation matrix to convert the position and velocity vectors from the MCI system to the Sun-Moon synodic reference frame.

By following the aforementioned steps, the orbit can be effectively converted from the Earth-Moon synodic reference frame to the Sun-Moon synodic reference frame, taking into account the rotation matrices, dimensional unit conversions, and displacement of the center. Figures 15, 18, and 20 illustrate the transformed orbits in the Sun-Moon synodic reference frame. The 2D visualizations clearly demonstrate that all three orbits successfully avoid solar eclipses, as the paths of the orbits do not intersect with the Moon's shadow. This observation holds significant importance, as the avoidance of solar eclipses is essential for the safe and efficient operation of space missions.

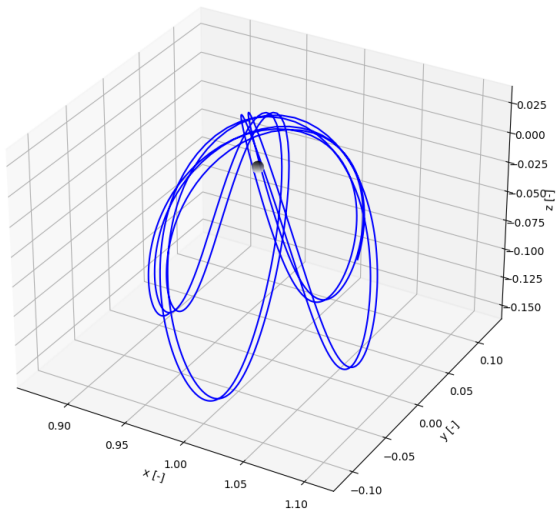


Fig. 15: Butterfly 2:1 Sun-Moon Synodic reference frame

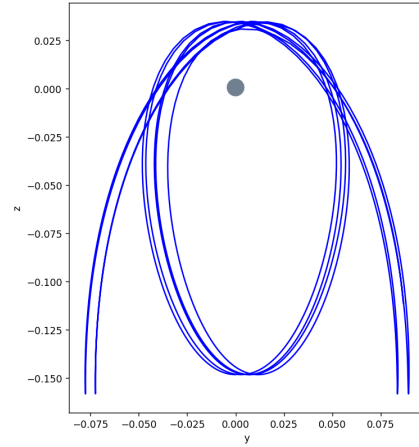


Fig. 17: Butterfly 2:1 Sun-Moon Synodic reference frame yz projection

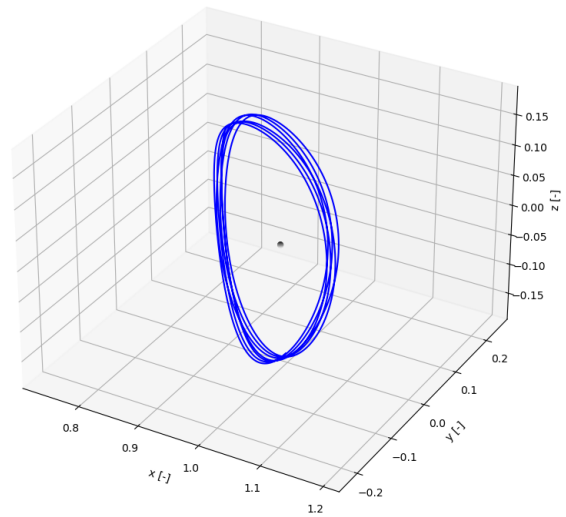


Fig. 18: Butterfly 1:1 Sun-Moon Synodic reference frame

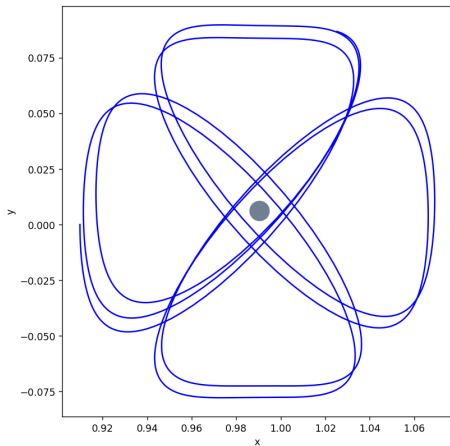


Fig. 16: Butterfly 2:1 Sun-Moon Synodic reference frame xy projection

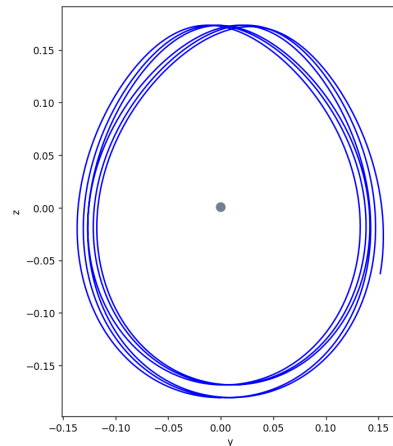


Fig. 19: Butterfly 1:1 Sun-Moon Synodic reference frame yz projection



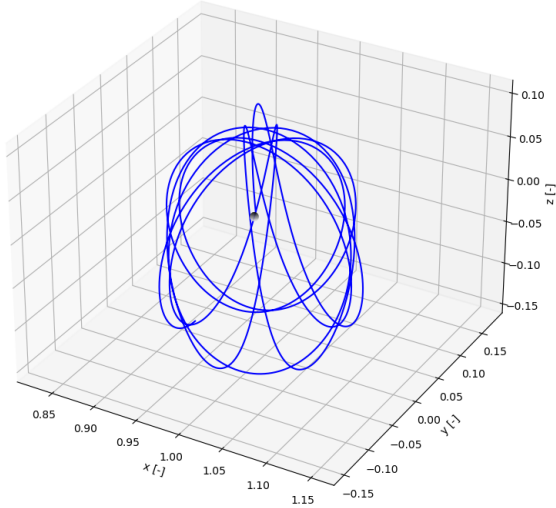


Fig. 20: Butterfly 3:2 Sun-Moon Synodic reference frame

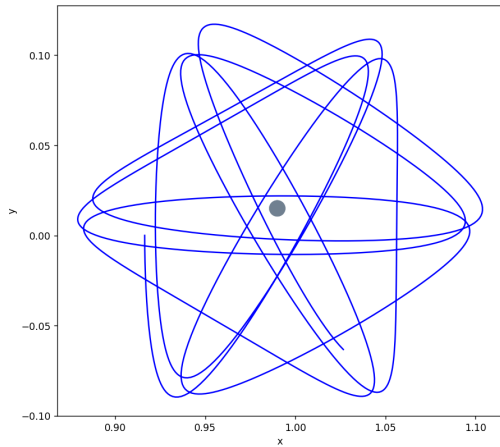


Fig. 21: Butterfly 3:2 Sun-Moon Synodic reference frame xy projection

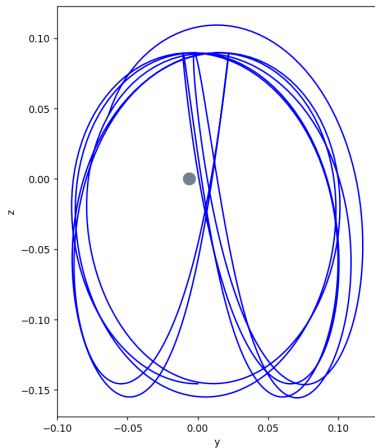


Fig. 22: Butterfly 3:2 Sun-Moon Synodic reference frame yz projection

### C. Lunar coverage and station-keeping cost

There has been significant interest in exploring and investigating the lunar south pole in recent years, primarily due to its potential for harboring frozen volatiles<sup>4</sup>. [13] This region has distinct scientific and strategic advantages, making it an attractive target for space exploration missions. A key aspect of lunar south pole coverage involves using two satellites, and within the context of the three-body problem, there may be viable architectures for achieving this. [14]

The selection of orbits plays a crucial role in determining lunar south pole coverage. Two criteria are considered: the time required to complete one full period and the feasibility of achieving coverage. Once a specific architecture is chosen, the orbit is discretized into a series of patch points. Using a corrections scheme proposed by Wilson and Howell [15], these patch points are then adjusted to meet the desired time-of-flight and orbit periodicity requirements.

Considering the long-term station-keeping costs is also crucial in assessing the feasibility of these systems. Minimizing costs is advantageous in this regard. The study by D.J. Gregow et al. [14] analyses the lunar coverage and station-keeping cost of two satellites in the same or different orbits. The butterfly family of orbits, characterized by a specific time to complete one full period and feasibility for lunar south pole coverage, is selected for further analysis. The HALO family is also selected for analysis. A combination between the 14-day  $L_2$  butterfly orbit and the 7-day  $L_2$  HALO orbit is realized, obtaining a region of dual coverage of 50°. While taking into account only the 14-day butterfly orbit, the region of dual coverage is 45°.<sup>5</sup>

From that same study, the data shown in the table I are presented:

Orbit type	Period days	Stability index	Total $\Delta V$ [m/s]
NRHO $L_2$	7.0	1	4.82
NRHO $L_1$	8.0	1.25	5.54
HALO $L_1$	12.0	60	66.33
Vertical $L_1$	14.0	690	171.82
Butterfly $L_2$	14.0	11.3	31.86

TABLE I: Station keeping result for one year [14]

A clear relationship between the stability index and the station-keeping cost can be observed upon qualitative analysis of the results. Orbits with higher stability indices, indicating less stability, tend to require more fuel for station-keeping compared to orbits with lower stability indices. This can be exemplified by the vertical orbit, which exhibits a higher stability index and thus would necessitate a greater amount of fuel for maintaining its desired trajectory.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that despite the butterfly orbit having a total period of 14 days, it exhibits a distinctive pattern with two lobes, each situated on one side of the moon. This configuration effectively creates a periodicity of

<sup>4</sup>Substances that have frozen or solidified due to extremely low temperatures in certain regions of the lunar surface. These volatiles include compounds such as water ice, carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ ), methane ( $CH_4$ ), and other volatile compounds.

<sup>5</sup>At least one spacecraft is always 45° above the horizon

approximately 7 days, which can be considered when planning and scheduling mission operations.

These qualitative observations highlight the importance of stability and periodicity in orbital dynamics, as they directly impact the operational costs and feasibility of maintaining desired orbits for space missions.

Finally, the study identifies the butterfly family as a solution to the challenges associated with lunar south pole coverage, having good coverage and an affordable station-keeping cost (thanks to their stability properties).

## V. TRANSFER TO BUTTERFLY ORBITS

In this section, an analysis of transfer costs<sup>6</sup> associated with Earth to Moon transfers for the lunar mission will be made. Understanding these costs is crucial in selecting the optimal target orbit for the mission. Various factors influence the transfer costs, and by considering them, informed decisions can be made to minimise energy requirements and maximise mission efficiency.

In order to carry out this analysis, two main factors have been taken into account:

- **$\Delta V$  Requirements:**  $\Delta V$ , or change in velocity, is a key parameter that determines the energy needed for a spacecraft to transition from Earth's orbit to the Moon's orbit. It encompasses both the departure from Earth's orbit and the arrival at the Moon's orbit. Analyzing the delta-V requirements for different transfer trajectories allows us to assess the fuel consumption and propulsion system capabilities needed for the mission.
- **Trajectory Optimization:** Trajectory Optimization: The path taken by the spacecraft during the transfer can be optimized to minimize energy consumption. This involves careful analysis of various trajectory options, such as direct transfers or complex multi-impulse trajectories. Considering factors such as duration, fuel consumption, and arrival-departure points, advanced optimization algorithms will be employed to search for the most efficient trajectory within the given constraints, for different kind of missions.

By studying and quantifying these transfer costs, the overall feasibility and efficiency of different target orbits for the lunar mission can be assessed. At the end of this analysis, it will be possible to compare the mission requirements for various Butterfly and NRHO orbits, as was done for station-keeping costs in Section IV.

To compute the transfer from a geocentric orbit to a lunar orbit, the following steps can be taken:

### 1) Computation of an Earth parking orbit

First of all, our desired orbit's characteristics must be chosen. In this research, the parking orbit will be initialised through the desired Keplerian elements. In the case concerning this paper, the parking orbit used to

calculate the transfer costs, is a circular<sup>7</sup> LEO orbit with a height of 500km over the Earth's surface (it's remaining Keplerian elements are  $i = 0^\circ$ ,  $\Omega = 125.08^\circ$ ,  $\omega = 318.15^\circ$ , and  $\nu = 139.87^\circ$ ). Once the orbit's elements have been chosen, translation to the Cartesian coordinates system by using the function "keplerian-to-cartesian-elementwise" from the tudatpy module must be done before propagating them on the J2000 reference frame<sup>8</sup>, by the use of a numerical simulator. In order to have useful results from the propagation, the time and state vectors from the simulation will be extracted.

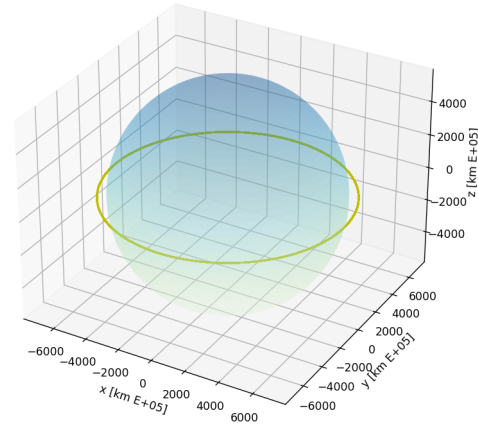


Fig. 23: Earth's parking orbit in the J2000 Frame

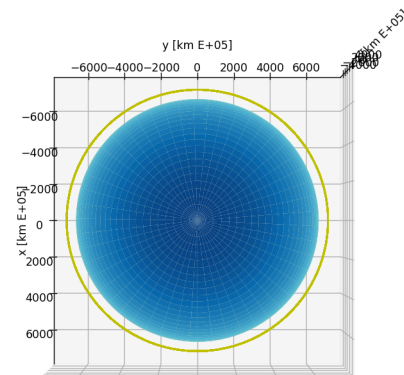


Fig. 24: Earth's parking orbit in the J2000 Frame seen from the zenith

### 2) Transformation from the Earth's J2000 frame to the Earth-Moon Synodic frame

Since SEMpy has been used for this study, the time and state vectors of the J2000 reference frame will have to be translated into the Earth-Moon synodic frame. In contemplation of this goal, use of the "j2000-to-synodic"

<sup>7</sup>Circular orbit implies  $e=0$ .

<sup>8</sup>The J2000 (aka EME2000) frame definition is based on the earth's equator and equinox, determined from observations of planetary motions, plus other data. The name "J2000" is also used to refer to the zero epoch of the ephemeris time system (ET, also known as TDB). [16]

<sup>6</sup>The transfer costs studied in this section are direct transfer costs based on the Lambert Transfer, for better results, the use of manifold structures should be taken into account.

function will be taken, obtaining the parking orbit's time and state vectors in the desired frame.

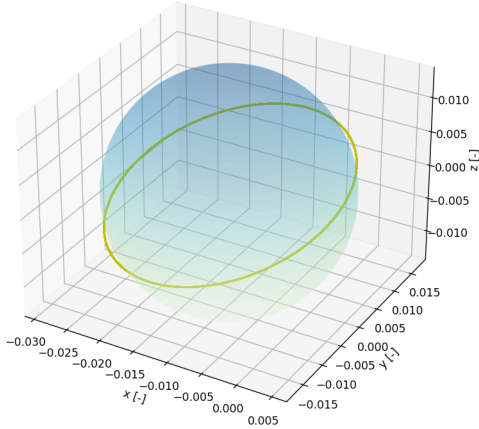


Fig. 25: Earth's parking orbit in the Earth-Moon Synodic Frame

### 3) Computation of the target lunar orbit

The computation of the target lunar orbit will be carried out in the CR3BP model, as will the Lambert's transfer in the next step. This solution will be obtained with the same method as have been previously done in this paper, via the interpolation of the orbit given the desired orbital period. As studied throughout the article, the three resonant butterfly orbits studied above will be computed, in addition to a 4:1 synodic resonant NRHO, with the purpose of comparing the direct transfer costs from Earth to both families.

### 4) Computation of the Lambert Transfer

Once computed the departure and arrival orbits, with their respective dimensionless state and time vectors, to perform the direct transfer, the Lambert problem for one revolution must be solved, taking use of the class "Cr3bpLambertPbm" from SEMpy. To obtain the solution to this problem, the departure point of the transfer (state of the parking orbit), the arrival point (state of the corresponding lunar orbit) and the time of flight (TOF) will have to be chosen, among other parameters.

By definition, the Lambert transfer seeks an orbit arc in the two-body problem that connects two points in space guaranteeing continuity of velocity and position. By using this method in this study, only an approximated value of the desired transfer cost between the Earth's parking orbit and the lunar orbit in question can be given, since at small changes in the time of flight, or in the departure and arrival positions and velocities, large difference in the  $\Delta V$  values will be obtained as a solution to the problem.

### 5) Optimization of the computed transfer trajectory

Although the study carried out in this section is qualitative, for the reasons previously discussed, the obtained results can be optimized in a rather rudimentary way by choosing the departure and arrival points so that at the departure the velocity vector is as tangent as possible to

the trajectory to be followed, and at the arrival, points with velocities in the same direction or the same plane. In this way, a better result can be obtained when choosing as arrival points the periapsis of the butterfly orbits whose velocity is tangent to the Lambert's transfer trajectory. To further refine the optimisation results, use will be made of the "Trajectory" class [17], which employs the Primer Vector theory to assess optimality and provide a criterion to decrease the transfer cost by inserting intermediate impulsive manoeuvres along the trajectory.

## A. Comparison of Earth-to-lunar orbit transfer costs

In the following, the results obtained by using the procedure previously described in the section will be shown. Differentiation will be made between four different transfers, with the previously described parking orbit being the departure orbit used at all times, varying the arrival orbit. In addition, the best results obtained for times of flight (TOF) of 4, 7, 10 and 12 days will be shown, differentiating the transfer to three types of arrival points (lunar periapsis with velocity in favour, with velocity against and one of the four states contained in the ecliptic plane), for a better analysis of the data. Despite only showing the best result obtained, more than two hundred trajectories have been simulated, these data can be consulted in Appendix A.

Time of Flight [days]	Arrival point	Number of impulses	Total $\Delta V$ [m/s]
4	Periapsis	3	4812
7	Periapsis	3	4700
10	Periapsis	3	4578
12	Periapsis	3	4630

TABLE II: Transfer costs from parking orbit to Butterfly 1:1

Time of Flight [days]	Arrival point	Number of impulses	Total $\Delta V$ [m/s]
4	Periapsis	3	5031
7	Ecliptic plane	4	5013
10	Periapsis	3	4708
12	Periapsis	3	4705

TABLE III: Transfer costs from parking orbit to Butterfly 3:2

Time of Flight [days]	Arrival point	Number of impulses	Total $\Delta V$ [m/s]
4	Periapsis	3	5041
7	Ecliptic plane	4	5090
10	Ecliptic plane	4	4964
12	Ecliptic plane	4	4824

TABLE IV: Transfer costs from parking orbit to Butterfly 2:1

Time of Flight [days]	Arrival point	Number of impulses	Total $\Delta V$ [m/s]
4	Periapsis	3	5084
7	Apoapsis	3	5265
10	Periapsis	3	4908
12	Apoapsis	3	4545

TABLE V: Transfer costs from parking orbit to NRHO 4:1

**B. Comparison of Earth-to-lunar orbit transfer trajectories**

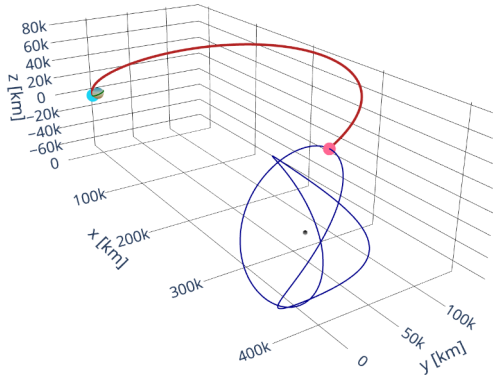


Fig. 26: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 1:1 for TOF = 4 days and 2 impulses

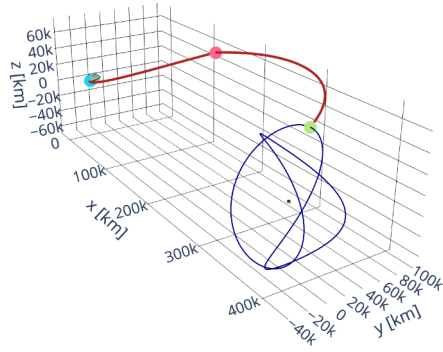


Fig. 27: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 1:1 for TOF = 4 days and 3 impulses

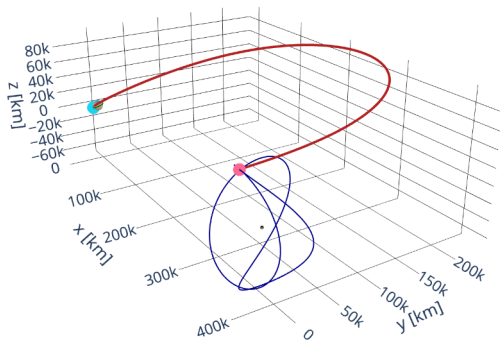


Fig. 28: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 1:1 for TOF = 7 days and 2 impulses

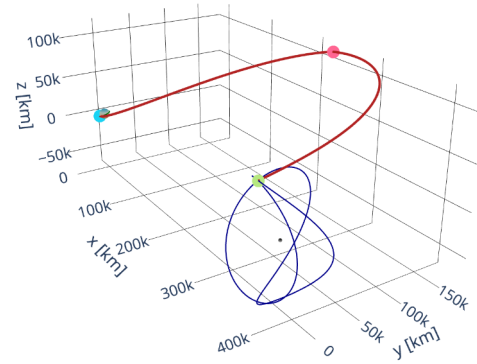


Fig. 29: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 1:1 for TOF = 7 days and 3 impulses

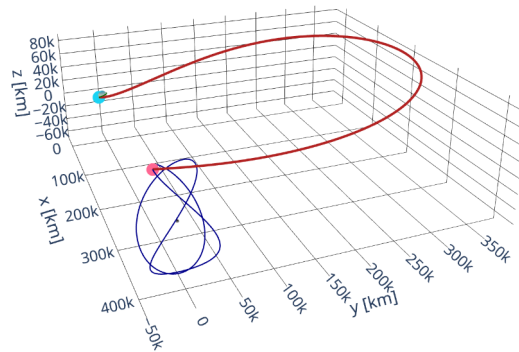


Fig. 30: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 1:1 for TOF = 10 days and 2 impulses

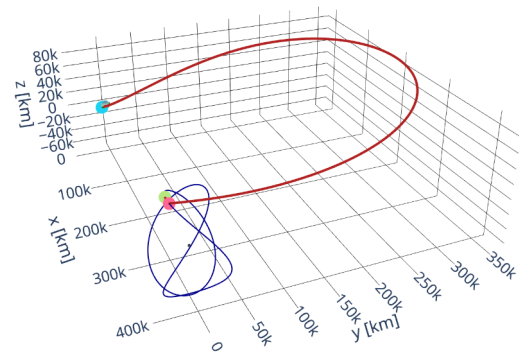


Fig. 31: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 1:1 for TOF = 10 days and 3 impulses



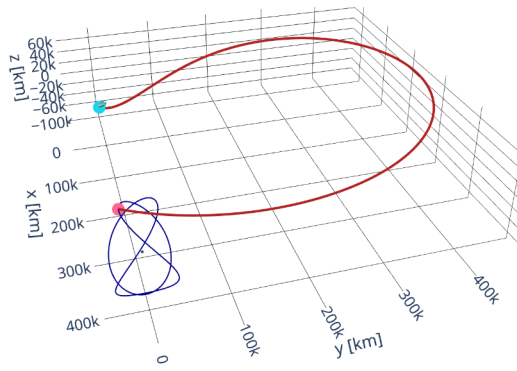


Fig. 32: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 1:1 for TOF = 12 days and 2 impulses

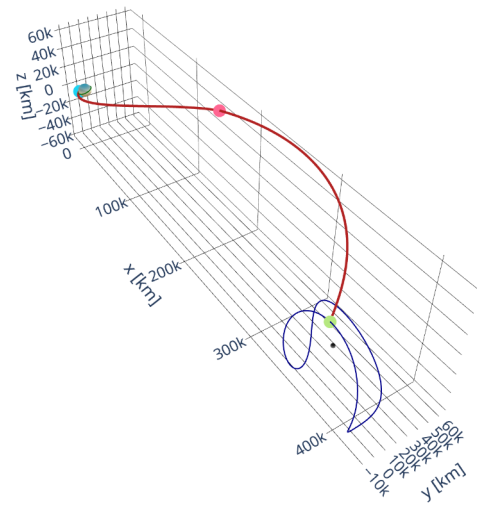


Fig. 35: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 4 days and 3 impulses

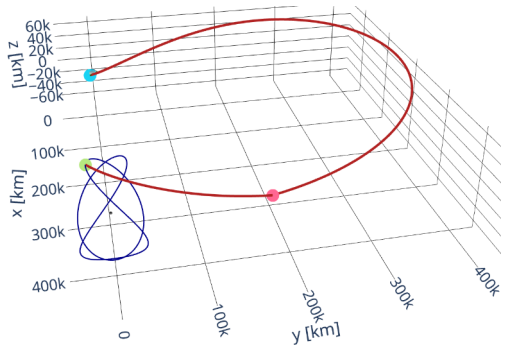


Fig. 33: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 1:1 for TOF = 12 days and 3 impulses

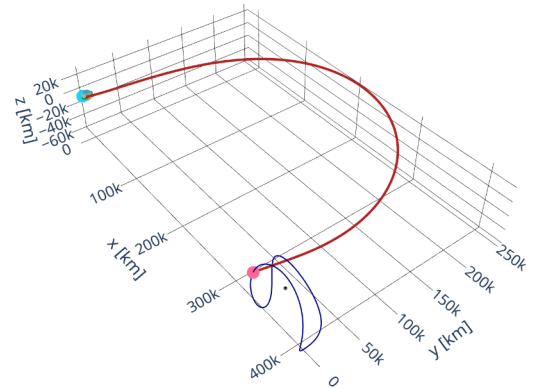


Fig. 36: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 7 days and 2 impulses

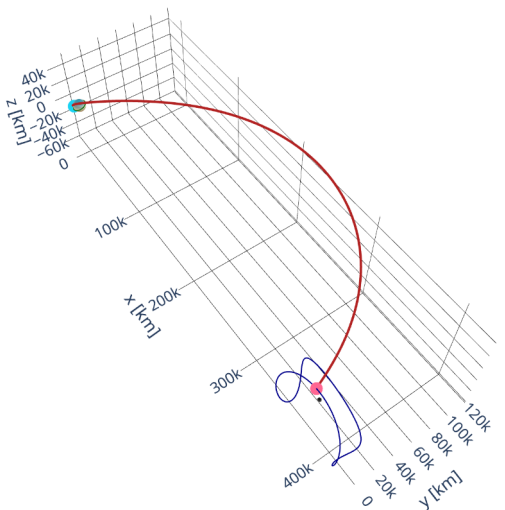


Fig. 34: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 4 days and 2 impulses

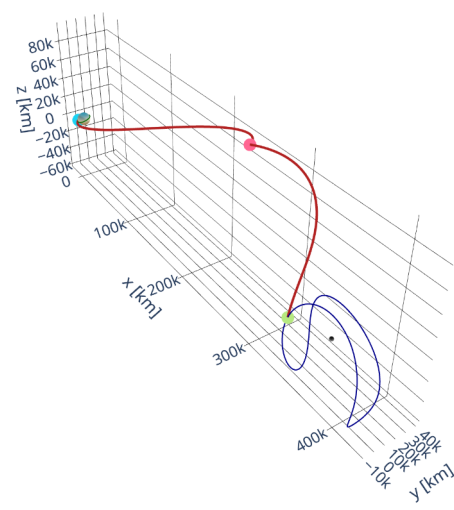


Fig. 37: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 7 days and 3 impulses

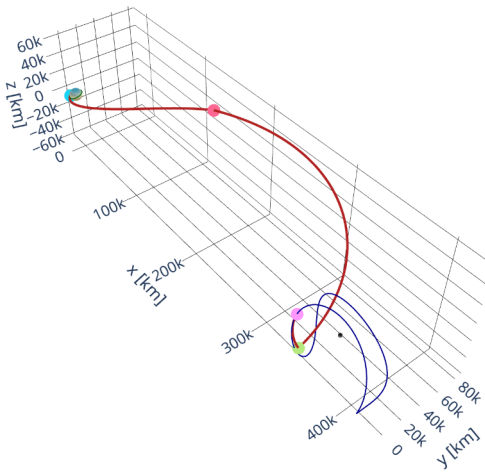


Fig. 38: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 7 days and 4 impulses

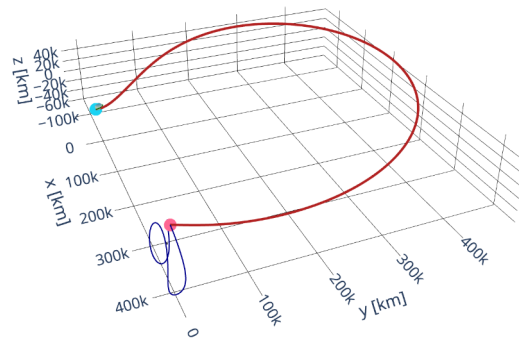


Fig. 41: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 12 days and 2 impulses

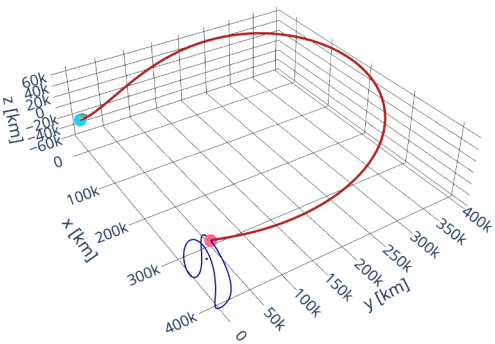


Fig. 39: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 10 days and 2 impulses

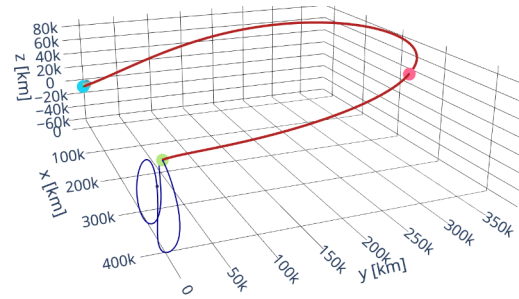


Fig. 42: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 12 days and 3 impulses

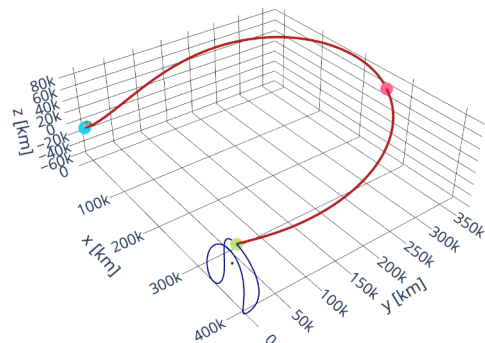


Fig. 40: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 3:2 for TOF = 10 days and 3 impulses

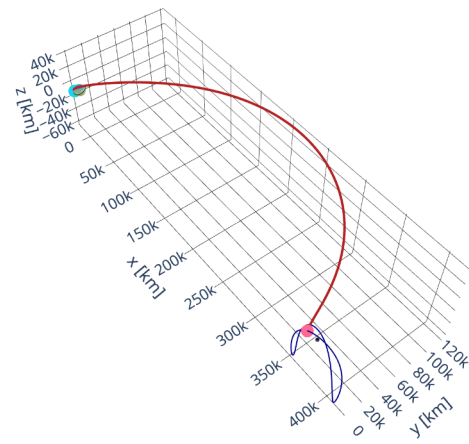


Fig. 43: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 4 days and 2 impulses

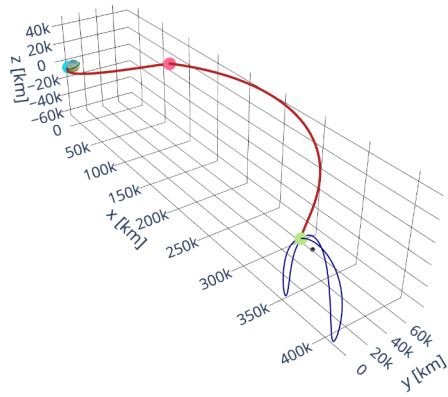


Fig. 44: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 4 days and 3 impulses

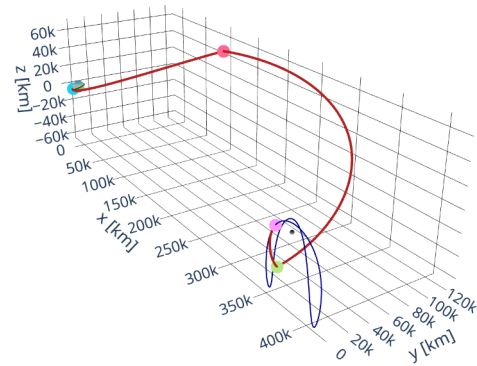


Fig. 47: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 7 days and 4 impulses

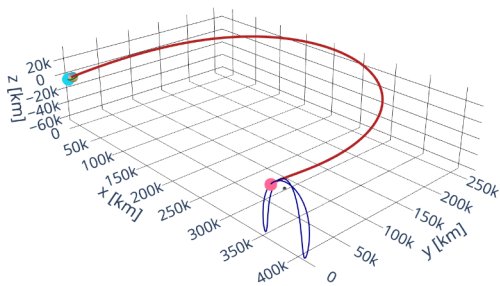


Fig. 45: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 7 days and 2 impulses

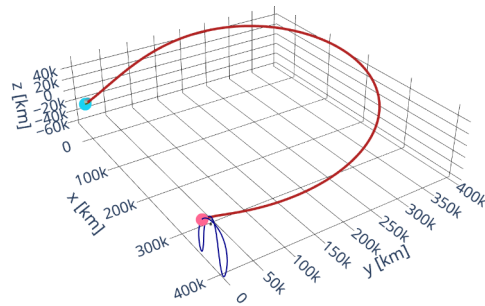


Fig. 48: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 10 days and 2 impulses

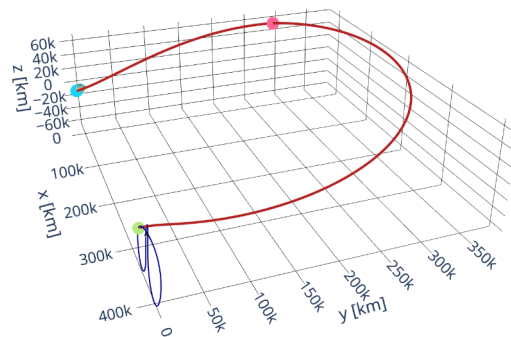


Fig. 49: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 10 days and 3 impulses

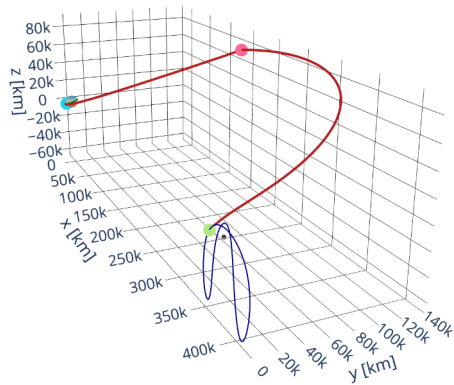


Fig. 46: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 7 days and 3 impulses

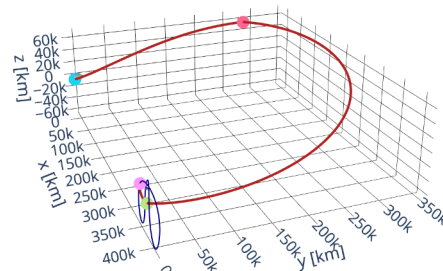


Fig. 50: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 10 days and 4 impulses

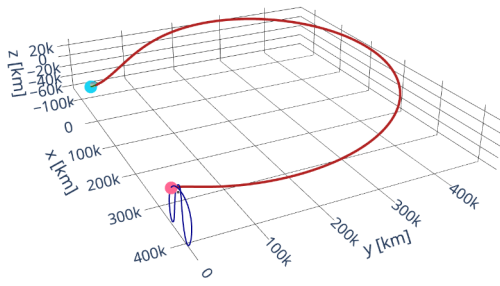


Fig. 51: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 12 days and 2 impulses

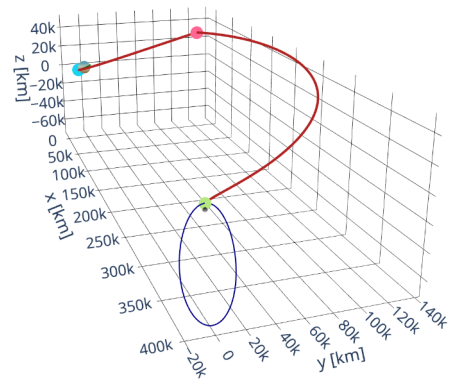


Fig. 55: Transfer trajectory to NRHO 4:1 for TOF = 4 days and 3 impulses

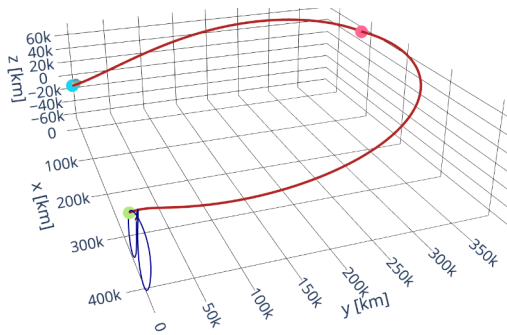


Fig. 52: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 12 days and 3 impulses

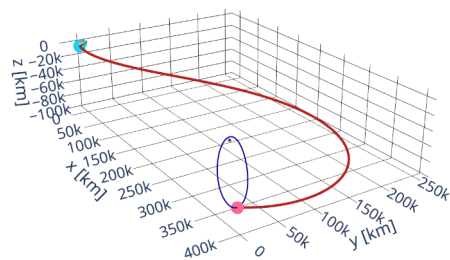


Fig. 56: Transfer trajectory to NRHO 4:1 for TOF = 7 days and 2 impulses

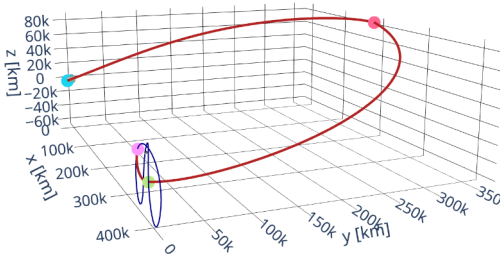


Fig. 53: Transfer trajectory to Butterfly 2:1 for TOF = 12 days and 4 impulses

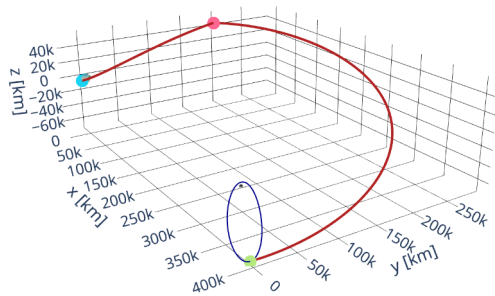


Fig. 57: Transfer trajectory to NRHO 4:1 for TOF = 7 days and 3 impulses

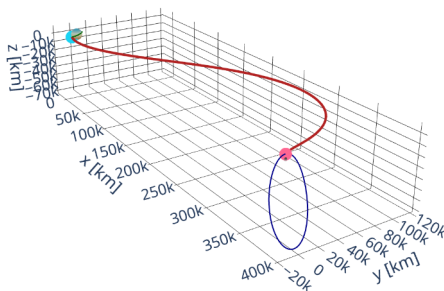


Fig. 54: Transfer trajectory to NRHO 4:1 for TOF = 4 days and 2 impulses

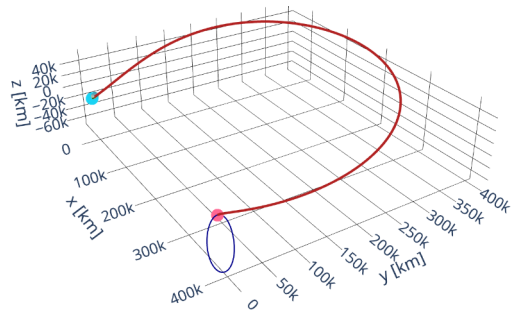


Fig. 58: Transfer trajectory to NRHO 4:1 for TOF = 10 days and 2 impulses



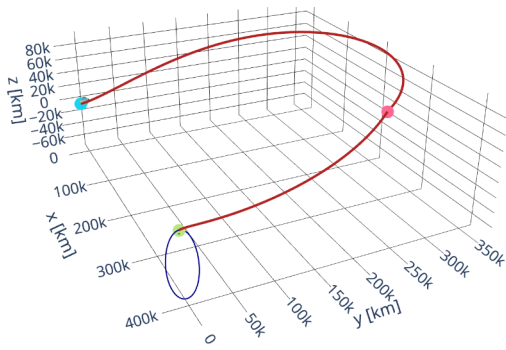


Fig. 59: Transfer trajectory to NRHO 4:1 for TOF = 10 days and 3 impulses

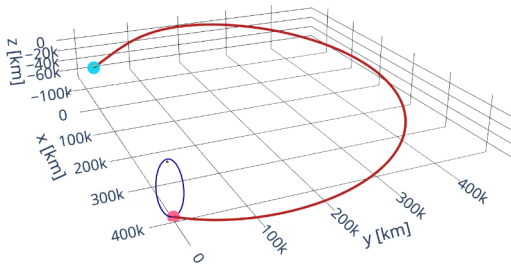


Fig. 60: Transfer trajectory to NRHO 4:1 for TOF = 12 days and 2 impulses

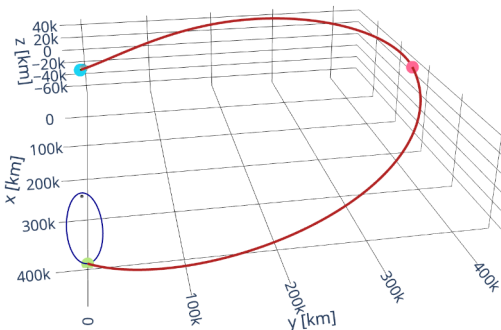


Fig. 61: Transfer trajectory to NRHO 4:1 for TOF = 12 days and 3 impulses

As can be gathered from table II and figures 26 to 33, for the transfer up to the 1:1 Butterfly, the total cost of the manoeuvre is reduced when increasing the TOF up to 10 days. In addition, the y-component of the trajectory increases from 100,000 km in the case of 4 days of flight to 400,000 km in the case of 12 days of flight. On the other hand, it can be noticed that the best transfers to this orbit are those towards the periapsis.

Furthermore, from table III and figures 34 to 42, for the transfer up to the 3:2 Butterfly, the total cost of the manoeuvre is reduced when increasing the TOF up to 12 days. In addition, the y-component of the trajectory increases from 100,000 km in the case of 4 days of flight to 400,000 km in the case of 12 days of flight. However, this component is reduced when inserting the third impulse, being drastically reduced for low TOF and slightly reduced for longer periods.

On the other hand, from table IV and figures 43 to 53, it can be noted that the Butterfly 2:1 has a very similar behaviour to the Butterfly 3:2, both in terms of cost and trajectory shape (y and z components).

When moving to the 4:1 NRHO transfer, from table V and figures 54 to 61, the total cost of the manoeuvre is also generally reduced when increasing the TOF. It is remarkable that the optimal transfers for the times of flight studied in this article occur indistinctly towards the apsides of the orbit in consideration. In this case, there is hardly any variation in the y-component of the transfer trajectory when adding a third impulse, which contrasts with the results obtained for the most of the Butterfly family.

From the data obtained in this section, it could be concluded that for short transfer missions, ideal for manned missions, the cost of direct transfer would be reduced by increasing the flight time from 1 up to 2 weeks. However, the results show that the difference would not be excessive, and that it would therefore be feasible to study a direct mission with a flight time of around one week. Furthermore, the transfer costs to a Butterfly or an NRHO are almost identical, which makes sense since the arrival states are very similar. Therefore, to benefit from the Butterfly family's instability in terms of transfer costs, a mission with a much longer time of flight (and therefore only unmanned missions) should be considered, by making use of the arrival manifold structures, which will be detailed in the next section.

## VI. POSSIBLE PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR BUTTERFLY ORBITS

In the following section, the implementation of Butterfly orbits in practical applications will be explored, considering their unique characteristics and the advantages they offer over other orbit types. Various renowned missions will be selected, and a comparison will be made between the initial orbit employed in each mission and the corresponding Butterfly orbit. This analysis will shed light on the benefits and potential applications of Butterfly orbits in real-world scenarios.

Taking into account the common characteristics of NRHO and Butterfly orbits, our attention will be directed towards missions that specifically employ NRHOs. As attributes such as resonance properties, eclipse avoidance and lunar coverage of the South Pole are inherent to both types of orbits, they will not be discussed in detail. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that these characteristics still offer advantages compared to the majority of other orbit types such as lunar orbits.

### A. NRHO practical applications

1) *Artemis mission*: The Artemis mission, a joint endeavor between European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA, aims to facilitate the return of humans to the Moon [18]. A key to this mission is the lunar gateway, a small space station intended to orbit the Moon. The lunar gateway serves as a staging point for lunar surface missions and offers a platform for scientific research. To achieve this, the lunar gateway will be placed in a NRHO around the Moon [19]. Additionally, a transfer

from a parking Earth orbit to the NRHO configuration will be executed<sup>9</sup>.

The Gateway orbit is planned to be a highly-elliptical seven-day NRHO around the Moon, which would bring the small space station within 3,000 km of the lunar north pole at closest approach and as far away as 70,000 km over the lunar south pole [20] [21] [22]. Among the advantages of the NRHO orbit, which have made it the orbit of choice to host the lunar gateway, the following can be highlighted:

- **Long-Term Stability:** NRHO orbits exhibit better long-term stability, requiring minimal station-keeping maneuvers to maintain the desired position of the gateway.
- **Mission Experience:** NRHO orbits have been extensively studied and utilized in previous lunar missions, particularly within the Apollo program. The experience gained from these missions can inform decision-making and operations.
- **Targeted Coverage of Points of Interest:** NRHO orbits can be optimized to provide better coverage of specific points of interest on the lunar surface, aligning with mission objectives and scientific priorities.

2) *Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter mission:* Launched in 2009 by NASA, the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) is a robotic spacecraft specifically designed to collect data about the lunar environment and create high-resolution maps of the Moon's surface [23].

To fulfill its mission objectives, the LRO spacecraft was placed into a Near Rectilinear Halo Orbit (NRHO) around the EM-L1 with a perilune radius of about 50 kilometers above the lunar surface. It was launched the 18<sup>th</sup> of June of 2009 and inserted into the orbit 5 days later. This orbit was carefully selected to ensure that the spacecraft maintained a nearly constant view of the lunar surface, which proved advantageous for conducting detailed observations and precise mapping activities. [24]

The utilization of the NRHO for the LRO mission offered several notable benefits. Firstly, it provided a stable and predictable orbit, reducing the frequency of orbital corrections required. As a result, the spacecraft could primarily focus on its scientific goals without significant interruptions or excessive fuel consumption. Additionally, the NRHO allowed for improved coverage of the lunar surface, enabling the LRO to capture high-resolution images and acquire valuable scientific data.

### B. Possible Butterfly practical applications

Throughout this article, the most important characteristics of the Butterfly orbital family have been discussed. In the following, a recapitulation of the attributes that make the butterfly orbits great candidates for hosting future lunar missions will be given:

<sup>9</sup>It's important to note that the Artemis mission is a multi-phase endeavor with multiple missions planned, each with its own specific orbital requirements. The orbits used can vary depending on mission objectives, spacecraft capabilities, and operational considerations.

- **Enhanced Flexibility:** Due to their lower stability, butterfly orbits offer greater flexibility in terms of station keeping and maneuverability. This allows for easier re-configuration of the satellite's position and orientation as required.
- **Improved Lunar Surface Coverage:** Butterfly orbits allow for better coverage of the lunar surface, facilitating comprehensive observation and exploration of various regions.
- **Transfer Costs:** As have been seen in the previous section, the direct transfer cost (based on the Lambert transfer) to butterfly orbits and NRHOs is practically identical, so there would be no clear advantage to propose the use of one over the other simply on this basis.

However, in terms of cost reduction, the employment of stable and unstable manifolds is an additional advantage offered by Butterfly orbits, which has not been explored in this study. In the CR3BP, some periodic orbits are unstable and, therefore, possess both stable and unstable invariant manifolds. [6] In this application, invariant manifolds are six-dimensional structures that govern the flow toward and away from an unstable periodic orbit; leveraging this natural dynamical structure allows transfers to and from the orbit for relatively minor maneuver cost. Manifold structures are, therefore, often a basis for transfer design techniques. Orbit stability, as determined from the eigenvalues of the monodromy matrix determines the types of manifold structures that an orbit possesses. Unstable eigenvalues ( $|\lambda_i| > 1$ ) correspond to unstable manifold structures that depart a periodic orbit, likewise, stable eigenvalues ( $|\lambda_i| < 1$ ) correspond to stable manifold structures that flow into a periodic orbit [25] [26].

Manifolds offer pathways for arrival at and departure from unstable periodic orbits. One of the challenges associated with transferring to/from NRHOs (as well as other stable or nearly-stable periodic orbits like DROs) is their lack of useful arrival/s/departures structures, which evolve too slowly for practical application. Butterfly orbits characterized by higher stability indices can effectively utilize stable and unstable manifolds, thereby facilitating fuel-saving strategies and enabling low-energy transfer possibilities.

## VII. FINAL REMARKS

Butterfly orbits are identified as viable candidate orbits for a habitat spacecraft in cis-lunar space. In this investigation, properties of the Butterflies that lead to their desirable characteristics are explored. They possess favorable eclipse avoidance and lunar coverage properties. In terms of transfer costs, preliminary transfer studies indicate that the butterflies are accessible from LEO for a relatively low-cost and short time of flight, they present the same direct transfer cost as a NRHO, and would therefore be equally well suited to host a crewed mission. Additionally, for longer duration unmanned missions, the use of manifold structures could be studied, which would differentiate the transfer cost to an NRHO and a Butterfly, since the latter, being more unstable, would present manifolds that could be used for practical application, which is not the case with NRHOs.

Therefore, for future work on butterfly orbits, the natural continuation of this study would be to compute stable and unstable manifold structures, or, more specifically, trajectories that lie along these manifold surfaces, in butterfly orbits. In this way, an overall comparison of the total mission cost could be made, weighing station keeping costs against the transfer cost in order to optimise the total mission cost.

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## APPENDIX

A. *Earth-Butterfly transfer cost*

In this list, all the attempts that have been made in order to find the best result for the transfer, are shown. They are ordered by arrival orbit and time of flight (TOF). The numbers inside () represent the departure or arrival state in our code. On the right, the results show the number of impulses and the total transfer cost in m/s.

**Butterfly 2:1****TOF= 4 days**

Park(300)-But(467): 3 imp - 5148  
 Park(350)-But(467): 3 imp - 5041  
 Park(350)-But(1533): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(350)-But(430): 3 imp - 5083  
 Park(370)-But(467): 3 imp - 5075  
 Park(370)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5329  
 Park(370)-But(430): 3 imp - 5119  
 Park(400)-But(467): 3 imp - 5313  
 Park(400)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5497  
 Park(400)-But(430): 3 imp - 5362  
 Park(430)-But(467): 3 imp - 5784  
 Park(430)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5918  
 Park(430)-But(430): 3 imp - 5829  
 Park(470)-But(467): 3 imp - 7139  
 Park(470)-But(1533): 3 imp - 7436  
 Park(470)-But(430): 3 imp - 6849  
 Park(500)-But(467): 3 imp - 7746  
 Park(500)-But(1533): 3 imp - 8079  
 Park(500)-But(430): 3 imp - 7453  
 Park(530)-But(467): 3 imp - 8264  
 Park(530)-But(1533): 3 imp - 8697  
 Park(530)-But(430): 3 imp - 7979  
 Park(560)-But(467): 3 imp - 8590  
 Park(560)-But(1533): 3 imp - 9202  
 Park(560)-But(430): 3 imp - 8329

**TOF= 7 days**

Park(300)-But(467): NO RESULT (derivative at interior impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(350)-But(467): NO RESULT (derivative at interior impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(350)-But(1533): 4 imp - 5096  
 Park(350)-But(430): 4 imp - 5094  
 Park(370)-But(467): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(370)-But(1533): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(370)-But(430): 4 imp - 5090  
 Park(400)-But(467): 3 imp - 5928  
 Park(400)-But(1533): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(400)-But(430): 4 imp - 5122  
 Park(430)-But(467): 3 imp - 5959  
 Park(430)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5521  
 Park(430)-But(430): 4 imp - 5250  
 Park(470)-But(467): 3 imp - 6279  
 Park(470)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5827  
 Park(470)-But(430): 4 imp - 5631  
 Park(500)-But(467): 3 imp - 6677

Park(500)-But(1533): 3 imp - 6254  
 Park(500)-But(430): 4 imp - 6043  
 Park(530)-But(467): 3 imp - 7093  
 Park(530)-But(1533): 3 imp - 6742  
 Park(530)-But(430): NO RESULT (derivative at interior impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(560)-But(467): 3 imp - 7462  
 Park(560)-But(1533): 3 imp - 7229  
 Park(560)-But(430): NO RESULT (derivative at interior impulse in non zero nor continuous)

**TOF= 10 days**

Park(470)-But(467): 3 imp - 5967  
 Park(470)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5166  
 Park(470)-But(430): 4 imp - 4964  
 Park(500)-But(467): 3 imp - 6021  
 Park(500)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5215  
 Park(500)-But(430): 4 imp - 5145  
 Park(530)-But(467): 3 imp - 6353  
 Park(530)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5569  
 Park(530)-But(430): 4 imp - 5488  
 Park(560)-But(467): 3 imp - 6720  
 Park(560)-But(1533): 3 imp - 6004  
 Park(560)-But(430): 4 imp - 5886

**TOF= 12 days**

Park(470)-But(467): 3 imp - 6954  
 Park(470)-But(1533): 4 imp - 4954  
 Park(470)-But(430): 4 imp - 4824  
 Park(500)-But(467): 3 imp - 6055  
 Park(500)-But(1533): 4 imp - 4903  
 Park(500)-But(430): 4 imp - 4828  
 Park(530)-But(467): 3 imp - 6068  
 Park(530)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5103  
 Park(530)-But(430): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(560)-But(467): 3 imp - 6329  
 Park(560)-But(1533): 3 imp - 5404  
 Park(560)-But(430): 4 imp - 5326

**Butterfly 3:2****TOF= 4 days**

Park(300)-But(480): NO RESULT (derivative at interior impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(350)-But(480): 3 imp - 5031  
 Park(350)-But(1520): NO RESULT (derivative at interior impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(350)-But(339): 3 imp - 5157  
 Park(370)-But(480): 3 imp - 5065  
 Park(370)-But(1520): 3 imp - 5360  
 Park(370)-But(339): 3 imp - 5211  
 Park(400)-But(480): 3 imp - 5302  
 Park(400)-But(1520): 3 imp - 5523  
 Park(400)-But(339): 3 imp - 5462  
 Park(420)-But(480): 3 imp - 5593  
 Park(420)-But(1520): 3 imp - 5776  
 Park(420)-But(339): 3 imp - 5741  
 Park(450)-But(480): 3 imp - 6178  
 Park(450)-But(1520): 3 imp - 6322  
 Park(450)-But(339): 3 imp - 6284



Park(470)-But(480): 3 imp - 6621  
 Park(470)-But(1520): 3 imp - 6753  
 Park(470)-But(339): 3 imp - 6690  
 Park(500)-But(480): 3 imp - 7293  
 Park(500)-But(1520): 3 imp - 7431  
 Park(500)-But(339): 3 imp - 7303  
 Park(530)-But(480): 3 imp - 7893  
 Park(530)-But(1520): 3 imp - 8078  
 Park(530)-But(339): 3 imp - 7844  
 Park(560)-But(480): 3 imp - 8322  
 Park(560)-But(1520): 3 imp - 8601  
 Park(560)-But(339): 3 imp - 8223  
**TOF= 7 days**  
 Park(350)-But(480): 3 imp - 5140  
 Park(350)-But(1520): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(350)-But(339): 4 imp - 5013  
 Park(370)-But(480): 3 imp - 5140  
 Park(370)-But(1520): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(370)-But(339): 4 imp - 5019  
 Park(400)-But(480): 3 imp - 5153  
 Park(400)-But(1520): 3 imp - 4942  
 Park(400)-But(339): 4 imp - 5071  
 Park(430)-But(480): 3 imp - 5194  
 Park(430)-But(1520): 3 imp - 4933  
 Park(430)-But(339): 3 imp - 5200  
 Park(470)-But(480): 3 imp - 5566  
 Park(470)-But(1520): 3 imp - 5277  
 Park(470)-But(339): 3 imp - 5537  
 Park(500)-But(480): 3 imp - 6015  
 Park(500)-But(1520): 3 imp - 5739  
 Park(500)-But(339): 3 imp - 5942  
 Park(530)-But(480): 3 imp - 6483  
 Park(530)-But(1520): 3 imp - 6250  
 Park(530)-But(339): 3 imp - 6373  
 Park(560)-But(480): 3 imp - 6910  
 Park(560)-But(1520): 3 imp - 6746  
 Park(560)-But(339): 3 imp - 6771  
**TOF= 10 days**  
 Park(470)-But(480): 3 imp - 5303  
 Park(470)-But(1520): 3 imp - 4708  
 Park(470)-But(339): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(500)-But(480): 3 imp - 5256  
 Park(500)-But(1520): 3 imp - 4772  
 Park(500)-But(339): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(530)-But(480): 3 imp - 5644  
 Park(530)-But(1520): 3 imp - 5175  
 Park(530)-But(339): 3 imp - 5486  
 Park(560)-But(480): 3 imp - 6046  
 Park(560)-But(1520): 3 imp - 5622  
 Park(560)-But(339): 3 imp - 5858  
**TOF= 12 days**  
 Park(470)-But(480): 3 imp - 5270  
 Park(470)-But(1520): 3 imp - 4705  
 Park(470)-But(339): 4 imp - 4738  
 Park(500)-But(480): 3 imp - 5257

Park(500)-But(1520): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(500)-But(339): 4 imp - 4760  
 Park(530)-But(480): 3 imp - 5337  
 Park(530)-But(1520): 3 imp - 4785  
 Park(530)-But(339): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(560)-But(480): 3 imp - 5619  
 Park(560)-But(1520): 3 imp - 5087  
 Park(560)-But(339): 4 imp - 5304

### Butterfly 1:1

#### TOF= 4 days

Park(350)-But(504): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(350)-But(1499): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(350)-But(255): 3 imp - 5214  
 Park(370)-But(504): 3 imp - 4812  
 Park(370)-But(1499): 3 imp - 4985  
 Park(370)-But(255): 3 imp - 5294  
 Park(400)-But(504): 3 imp - 4977  
 Park(400)-But(1499): 3 imp - 5230  
 Park(400)-But(255): 3 imp - 5589  
 Park(430)-But(504): 3 imp - 5430  
 Park(430)-But(1499): 3 imp - 5753  
 Park(430)-But(255): 3 imp - 6071  
 Park(470)-But(504): 3 imp - 6312  
 Park(470)-But(1499): 3 imp - 6665  
 Park(470)-But(255): 3 imp - 6874

#### TOF= 7 days

Park(350)-But(504): 3 imp - 4912  
 Park(350)-But(1499): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(350)-But(255): 4 imp - 5011  
 Park(370)-But(504): 3 imp - 4886  
 Park(370)-But(1499): NO RESULT (time limit)  
 Park(370)-But(255): 4 imp - 4991  
 Park(400)-But(504): 3 imp - 4845  
 Park(400)-But(1499): 3 imp - 4700  
 Park(400)-But(255): 3 imp - 5146  
 Park(430)-But(504): 3 imp - 4845  
 Park(430)-But(1499): 3 imp - 4745  
 Park(430)-But(255): 3 imp - 5221  
 Park(470)-But(504): 3 imp - 5210  
 Park(470)-But(1499): 3 imp - 5218  
 Park(470)-But(255): 3 imp - 5605

#### TOF= 10 days

Park(400)-But(504): 3 imp - 4969  
 Park(400)-But(1499): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(400)-But(255): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(430)-But(504): 3 imp - 4933  
 Park(430)-But(1499): 3 imp - 4648  
 Park(430)-But(255): 4 imp - 4742  
 Park(470)-But(504): 3 imp - 4905  
 Park(470)-But(1499): 3 imp - 4578  
 Park(470)-But(255): NO RESULT (time limit)

Park(500)-But(504): 3 imp - 5010  
 Park(500)-But(1499): 3 imp - 4813  
 Park(500)-But(255): 4 imp - 5024

**TOF= 12 days**

Park(400)-But(504): 3 imp - 5011  
 Park(400)-But(1499): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(400)-But(255): 4 imp - 4813  
 Park(430)-But(504): 3 imp - 4972  
 Park(430)-But(1499): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(430)-But(255): 4 imp - 4753  
 Park(470)-But(504): 3 imp - 4962  
 Park(470)-But(1499): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(470)-But(255): 4 imp - 4679  
 Park(500)-But(504): 3 imp - 5001  
 Park(500)-But(1499): 3 imp - 4630  
 Park(500)-But(255): 4 imp - 4674

**NRHO****TOF= 4 days**

Park(400)-But(989): 3 imp - 5130  
 Park(430)-But(500): NO RESULT  
 Park(430)-But(0): 3 imp - 5084  
 Park(430)-But(11): 3 imp - 5086  
 Park(430)-But(989): 3 imp - 5187  
 Park(470)-But(500): 3 imp - 7513  
 Park(470)-But(0): 3 imp - 6591  
 Park(470)-But(11): 3 imp - 6595  
 Park(470)-But(989): 3 imp - 6903  
 Park(500)-But(500): 3 imp - 7513  
 Park(500)-But(0): 3 imp - 7167  
 Park(500)-But(11): 3 imp - 7170  
 Park(500)-But(989): 3 imp - 7515  
 Park(530)-But(500): 3 imp - 8104  
 Park(530)-But(0): 3 imp - 7698  
 Park(530)-But(11): 3 imp - 7701  
 Park(530)-But(989): 3 imp - 8096  
 Park(560)-But(500): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(560)-But(0): 3 imp - 8132  
 Park(560)-But(11): 3 imp - 8133  
 Park(560)-But(989): 3 imp - 8495

**TOF= 7 days**

Park(470)-But(500): 3 imp - 5265  
 Park(470)-But(0): 3 imp - 5387  
 Park(470)-But(11): 3 imp - 5388  
 Park(470)-But(989): 3 imp - 5476  
 Park(500)-But(500): NO RESULT (derivative at interior  
 impulse in non zero nor continuous)  
 Park(500)-But(0): 3 imp - 5749  
 Park(500)-But(11): 3 imp - 5751  
 Park(500)-But(989): 3 imp - 5849  
 Park(530)-But(500): 3 imp - 6768  
 Park(530)-But(0): 3 imp - 6166  
 Park(530)-But(11): 3 imp - 6167

Park(530)-But(989): 3 imp - 6290  
 Park(560)-But(500): 3 imp - 7210  
 Park(560)-But(0): 3 imp - 6576  
 Park(560)-But(11): 3 imp - 6576  
 Park(560)-But(989): 3 imp - 6733

**TOF= 10 days**

Park(470)-But(500): 3 imp - 5481  
 Park(470)-But(0): 3 imp - 4908  
 Park(470)-But(11): 3 imp - 4909  
 Park(470)-But(989): 3 imp - 4950  
 Park(500)-But(500): 3 imp - 5562  
 Park(500)-But(0): 3 imp - 4999  
 Park(500)-But(11): 3 imp - 4999  
 Park(500)-But(989): 3 imp - 5029  
 Park(530)-But(500): 3 imp - 5898  
 Park(530)-But(0): 3 imp - 5256  
 Park(530)-But(11): 3 imp - 5256  
 Park(530)-But(989): 3 imp - 5288  
 Park(560)-But(500): 3 imp - 6310  
 Park(560)-But(0): 3 imp - 5617  
 Park(560)-But(11): 3 imp - 5617  
 Park(560)-But(989): 3 imp - 5670

**TOF= 12 days**

Park(400)-But(500): 3 imp - 5194  
 Park(400)-But(0): 4 imp - 4600  
 Park(400)-But(11): 4 imp - 4597  
 Park(400)-But(989): 4 imp - 4980  
 Park(470)-But(500): NO RESULT (too close to the moon)  
 Park(470)-But(0): 3 imp - 4845  
 Park(470)-But(11): 3 imp - 4846  
 Park(470)-But(989): 3 imp - 4860  
 Park(500)-But(500): 3 imp - 5545  
 Park(500)-But(0): 3 imp - 4831  
 Park(500)-But(11): 3 imp - 4831  
 Park(500)-But(989): 3 imp - 4846  
 Park(530)-But(500): 3 imp - 5571  
 Park(530)-But(0): 3 imp - 4864  
 Park(530)-But(11): 3 imp - 4863  
 Park(530)-But(989): 3 imp - 4872