RUINOPHILIA
via Belgica

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ABSTRACT - Ruins and residues of the past have held a moral, emotional, and aesthetic fascination throughout history. In the region of IBA parkstad Limburg there is a lack of cultural identity. The former meaning and significance is disappeared. The aim of this paper is to research the qualities and identity of significant layers in time, which are the Roman period, medieval period, mining industry period and modern period, to translate this in a new layer. In the research the via Belgica, a former fundamental development axis, is used as an unifying concept. The principal question for this research is: 'How to reinterpret the cultural history of the via Belgica, with a focus on the development of the area along the road, with the aim to make the area recognisable and valuable back again using the via as a primary connecting axis.' The study starts with some theories around ruins. After the theories a palimpsest approach is used to analyse the region, ending up with the superimposition of the different layers of this palimpsest. Finally, a new identity will be formed. This research combines the agricultural character of the Roman period with the industrial character of the mining period to propose an intervention in the research area.

KEYWORDS - ruins, identity, palimpsest, via Belgica, agriculture, mining industry, architecture

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INTRODUCTION

In the last century architecture was strongly based on functionality, an analysis of the expected future use was the main subject to invent design strategies. Nowadays, there is a fascination for ruins, for what was already there. Ruins and residues of the past have held a moral, emotional, and aesthetic fascination throughout history. Reflecting on what there was, new functions with actual quality can be concealed. Fundamental is here exploring the existing qualities and describing the essential characteristics of the site, and then creating a design on the basis of these qualities. (Meurs, 2014)

IBA, Internationale BauAusstellung or International Building Exibition, Parkstad Limburg is an approach to contribute to the developing of the area Limburg. Within these developments there is a search for the identity of the region. Parkstad contains a lot of evidence of Roman habitation. Heerlen, known as 'Coriovallum' in the past, was situated at the crossing point of two major roads, the Via Belgica and the Via Trevorum. Apart from the remains of the Via Belgica, the whole Parkstad is cluttered with ruins of Roman villae. The region is very fragmented and there is to much of everything. This demands a clear vision and direction.

The region is like a sedimentary layer accumulated for a long time. Considering the region as a layered palimpsest, we can find several anchor points to recover the lost identity of the region The key idea of palimpsest is the superimposition of layers, and palimpsest can describe situations where historical layers are visible simultaneously, layers of information are superimposed, or existing layers inform the organisation of new

structures. (Kjerrgren, 2011) The via Belgica is used within this research as a backbone to find the characteristics of the area throughout time, to recover the lost identity of Limburg. The uses and programme of the oldest historical layers, the layer of the Romans will be combined of the industrial character of the mining period, to define an intervention approach.The main question for my research is:

'How to reinterpret the cultural history of the Via Belgica, with a focus on the development of the area along the road, with the aim to make the area recognisable and valuable back again using the via as a primary connecting axis.'

The thematic research question is guided subquestions to define the framework of the research. These are:

'How can reuse of ruins and relics contribute to the forming of a new identity in the area.'

'What is the relation of the Via Belgica with the Roman villae, and how is it developed over time?'

'What is the relation of former technical and innovative attributes with the attributes now?

BACKGROUND

The Via Belgica is a 400 km long Roman road, starting in Boulogne Sur-Mer and ending in Koln. The road is of universal significance for government and military organizations, trade and industry, communication and spread of the Roman culture. In Roman times the Via Belgica functioned as a fundamental development axis for this area. (van Kesteren, 2005) Nowadays, there is a lack in cultural identity in this area. The former meaning and significance is disappeared. Along this road there are studies and analysis to the human activity in the past through excavation of the material culture and environmental data. Several anchors, including ruins of Roman villae, are valuable for possible development.

fig. 1 Via Belgica (own ill.)

OBJECTIVE

The main intention is to research the qualities and identity of the Roman culture and other relevant layers with an impact to translate this to the present in a new layer. The roman villae founded in the area of the via Belgica were on of the most prominent exponents of the roman culture. The old road, the Via Belgica, functions within these villae as one physical linear infrastructure. In the research the via Belgica is used as an unifying concept at urban and landscape level, the cultural history as an opportunity for spatial development, and the use of historical elements with an added value.

fig. 2 Via Belgica in the Netherlands (own ill.)

RELEVANCE

In these times there is a fascination for appreciation of ruins. Half destroyed buildings and architectural fragments have existed since the beginning of the human culture. Friedrich Schlegel commented on the tempo of transformation of modern ruins: *'Many of the works of the Ancients have become fragments. Many of the Moderns are fragments the moment they come into being.' (Tanehise, 2009, p. 59)* Ruins are places which are open for imagination. Decaying structures and

abandoned places have been the inspiration for many architects since long ago. Development and transposition of the ancient cultural history can be applied in a larger social and scientific framework.

METHODS

This study will follow a global approach as described in figure 3. Firstly, using several methods, an inventarisation and analysis of available information take place. With the help of the results of these inventarisation and analysis, it would be possible to establish the identity of the area. Establishing the identity is followed by design purposes.

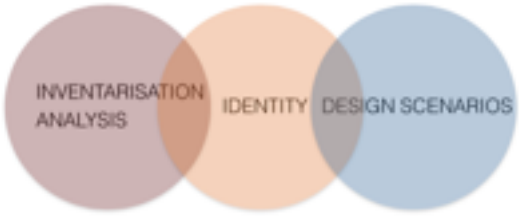


fig. 3 Research approach (own ill.)

The methods applied in the first part of the research will consist of three components. The first one is literature study. With this study will the use of the existing stock, in this case ruins, in architecture be discovered. Also literature study will provide background information about the philosophy of production of space in an existing environment with a cultural value, and about preserving ruins. The historical, cultural and geomorphological study will be followed by a literature study to the technical part of the project.

The second method is to use case studies. There are several examples of use of ruins in architecture or landscape design. This study will broaden the objective in using ruins and extend experience to what is already known. Explicitly case studies of residues and ruins of Roman settlements and their use nowadays will be researched.

The third one is the study on site and mapping. New insights will be developed in site while analysing and observing the left over ruins and segments of the Via Belgica. Important are not only the ruins, but also the relation of the ruins within the landscape. Why did the Romans chose for this location to construct their road, and what are the relationships of the location and the Roman villas? But also nowadays, the old road can be used as a backbone to identify the diversity and characteristics of the region through mapping. After mapping the via Belgica over time, some anchors will appear to make interventions. Significant for these interventions is the relation of the via with the development of the city in different time layers.

FRAMEWORKS AND LIMITS

This chapter introduces the frameworks of this study. The first paragraph will discuss the different perceptions on theoretical bases on ruins and design approaches as result of these theoretical bases. Secondly the formation of the landscape will be broadly characterised. Subsequently, a conceptual approach will be explored. The main limits of this research consist of the availability of information about the historic layers of the city.

RESULTS

RUINES

The ruin was to lead to a change towards an aesthetic universe much more centred on the individual. Casper David Friedrich wrote that the painter should not just paint what he sees, but what he sees inside himself. Ruins on Friedrich's pantings:

'evoke far-off history through landscapes which stand out for the isolation to which they are submitted by nature, images which bring forth the feeling of the sublime with the stamp of loneliness'. (Mozas, 2012, p. 8)

These thoughts are continued in the ideas of John Ruskin. He believed that the ruins should be kept intact, objects from the past were imbued with their own history. Restoration work is a misleading ploy for him and he

argues that carrying this out would cause greater damage than the actual decay of the building. Death was the final fate of all beings. In the same lifetime, Viollet-le-Duc thought very differently. He has a more rational approach which was opposed to Ruskin's romantic historicism. He had no hesitation about pulling down any additions or any other intervention to a relict. (Mozas, 2012)

There are a lot more perceptions on the value of ruins. Theoretical implications of the ruins emerged also contemporaneously in the work of Walter Benjamin and Albert Speer. In Speer's 'Theory of Ruin Value', there is a fascination to moral, emotional and aesthetic aspect of ruins and images of ruins throughout history. His objection is that the ruins are to much of the moment, and new materials or innovative interventions situates them in a specific, modern period and precludes the effects of timelessness or excessive age that the classical ruin demands. Benjamin's concept of the ruins, especially explained in his book 'The origin of German Tragic Drama', goes beyond the aesthetic of the ruin as an object, and reads it as a process, a means of demythifying and stripping away symbolism, an approach for historical truth through reduction. (Stead, 2003)

Currently the approach to ruins still reflects the traditional 18th- and 19th-century images, in which the interest for ruins were based on different concepts. The interest in ruins is closely connected with the understanding of the impact of history on the living, and are not only elements of a landscape. Buildings and their remains offer stories of human fate, both real and imaginary. Ruins and relicts encourages us to think and imagine about lives , in which incompleteness and fragmentation plays a evocative role. (Treib, 2009) Nowadays there is a desire to find the right balance between the historical, spatial and social context in architecture. A sense of the qualities and meaning that are already there, the identity and soul of a space, reflected in an architectural intervention can translate potentials into actual quality.

Designing in a historical context requires to criticize the existing qualities and to describe the essential characteristics of the site. This will result in an architectural narrative that everyone can recognise and understand. The approach to create a design on the basis of these qualities is set out by Paul Meurs in three principles: 1) traditional restoration, in which the former honour of the space is preserved or restored; 2) intervention design, in which old and new are combined (contrast, retro, reconstruction, simulation, continuity, use of local materials to create complementary forms, etc.); 3) the intervention non-design, in which there is a focus on programme and integration. (Meurs, 2014)

In the region of Limburg highly concentrated Roman relicts and ruins are found. These ruins are the starting point of the development of living in the region, and therefor of critical value. There are not only ruins of the Roman period, also relics of other periods has influenced the expansion and progress of the region. Considering the city and the landscape with their ruins and relicts as a timely layered palimpsest, we can find several alternatives to recover the lost identity of a city and approach a design intervention.

Palimpsest refers originally to old parchment handwritings, where new text has been applied on top of effaced, but still perceptible, earlier writing. (Kjerrgren, 2011, p. 6)

In an original palimpsest, the older scraped-off layers are never completely destroyed before a new layer of information is applied. The superimposition of layers is the key idea of the palimpsest. The landscape, and the city, can be defined not only as a present form and shape but also as a grammatical text that should be read through memories of the past and the future. The complexity of the landscape makes it useful to study separately the different

structural elements, without neglecting their cohesion.(Young Min, 2009)

An example of a case study in which a city is considered as a palimpsest, within an important roman way, is the project via Tiburtina. The via Tiburtina, from Borum Boarium by the Tiber to Tibur (Tivoli), offers many nodal spots of high historical intensity and value. Especially in suburbs and outskirts with vague identities, it is important to preserve and develop an environment in improving the local character in the way it was shaped by history. Urban space in relation to activities, social life and culture is in this project the main theme. (Bjur & Santillo Frizell, 2005)

fig. 4 Via Tiburtina (Bjur and Santillo Frizell 2005)

The landscape, as before the presence of mankind, is the starting point of this research. After this, several layers which are considerable for continuity and change of the landscape will be distinguished and discussed.

FORMATION LANDSCAPE

The evolution of the landscape is determined and understandable from the primary spatial structure of the region. Fundamental is hereby the combination of the soil composition, reliëf and water, shortly the physical system. A clear insight in this physical system is essential for an understanding of the current landscape.

Physical framework

The geographical area of Parkstad Limburg is situated between two major rivers, the Rhine and the Meuse, and covers numerous smaller rivers and brooks.

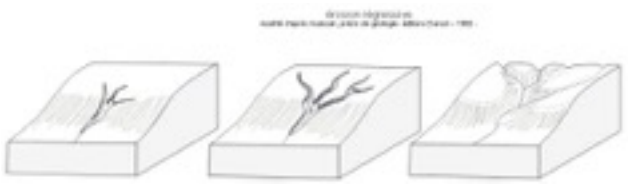


fig. 5 Erosion principle (Gallien 2008)

A river cuts into the landscape through a combination of several processes. These are hydraulic action, abrasion/corrasion, attrition and corrosion (erosion). Visible effects on the landscape as results of these processes are dependent on site conditions. The harder the surface, the straighter the incision, and thus more vertical shaped valleys. Especially when the soil slowly rises, deep valleys can derive. In Limburg, in particular the southern part, the soil is arising, through which the Meuse, and also smaller rivers as the Geul, cuts into the soil by solving and carrying limestone. This process lead into the genesis of the brooks, which are typical for the landscape of Limburg. (Geographic, n.d.)

The region of Parkstad Limburg is characterised by fertile loess grounds. The high proportion of organic substances makes the ground very fertile and is an ideal farmland. It contains sufficient moisture for plant growth. The South Limburg loess soil by these reasons the first areas that were occupied by prehistoric farmers. Nowadays agriculture is still practiced on these loess soils. More and more farmers plant vines oriented to the south for viticulture. (Willems & Kooistra, 1989)

Areas with loess show a lot of relief. The relief affects the behaviour of the waterflow through the loess. Together with water the dissolved particles move slowly from the top of the slope to the valley. Particles which are the most resistant to weathering, especially clay, will reach the valley and gather into to so-called colluvium. In the valley there is a higher proportion of clay than at the top. A strong relief makes loess soils sensitive to erosion. By

ploughing along the contour lines farmers try to minimise the transport of fertile components from the top to the valley. (van Trikt & Ahrens, 1997)

There is an environmentally-deterministic approach: natural world is seen to be the principal determining factor of human behaviour. The presence of a certain soil type, a river, a certain type of vegetation and climate determines where people live, and how. (Jeneson, 2013)

LAYERING LANDSCAPE

Different significant historical periods are used to describe the biography of the landscape to contribute in the understanding of the historical development and cohesion in the region. These are:

I. traces far past
II. roman times
III. middle ages
IV. coal mining
V. modern times

I. TRACES FAR PAST

The oldest traces of the presence of mankind in the landscape of Limburg dates back till 300.000 years ago. Around 9600 BC the climate changes and the period of Holocene starts, in which we are still living. After the climate changes, the first farmers (cattle breeding) enter the area. These groups of people are constantly shifting in the landscape (shifting cultivation). With the start of the Iron age, there is a start of a new farming system, *the Celtic Fields*. The Celtic field systems consist of a large number of adjoining, small, more or less rectangular plots. Farmers reclaimed a number of small rectangular plots of which only a part was used at the same time. When the soil was exhausted, the used plots were abandoned to recover and a different part of the plots within the Celtic field system was cleared and tilled. The farmers lived in farmsteads built on one of the plots. Cattle were held, also on the plots. (Kooistra & Maas, 2007)

During the prehistory, many forest is chopped and the agricultural land area grew strongly. Large parts of the valleys were cultivated and inhabited, the plateaus still were mostly wooded.

An other characteristics of Limburg was the mining of minerals. In the earlier times the product was flintstone. Flintstone mines can be found in the surroundings of Rijckholt and St. Gertrud (South Limburg). (Habermehl, 2011)

II. ROMAN PERIOD

In circa 50 BC the Roman army under Julius Ceasar, conquered the tribes that were living there and occupied the area into the Roman Empire. One of the prominent elements of the Roman periods within the research region is the east west oriented road that runs from Cologne to Boulogne-sur-Mer (fig. 6). This road, the Via Belgica, is an essential connection between urban centres and smaller rural centres. Between the different towns on the via, that all have Roman roots as either 'civitas' or ‘vicus’, there is distance of approximately 20 kilometres measured. Such centres generally served economic, religious and administrative purposes. Firstly, this road is used for military purposes, and from the first century AD onwards, the road developed towards an economic artery, connecting the fertile agricultural areas with the urban centres. It functioned as a road for international trade via secondary roads connected to the outside

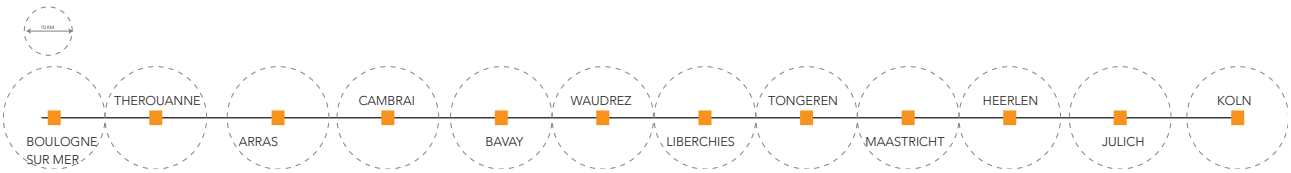


fig. 6 Via Tiburtina (Bjur and Santillo Frizell 2005)

world and held a major role in the military system that served to quarentee the unity and stability of the Roman empire. The road network formed an essential element in the development of the region. (Jeneson, 2013)

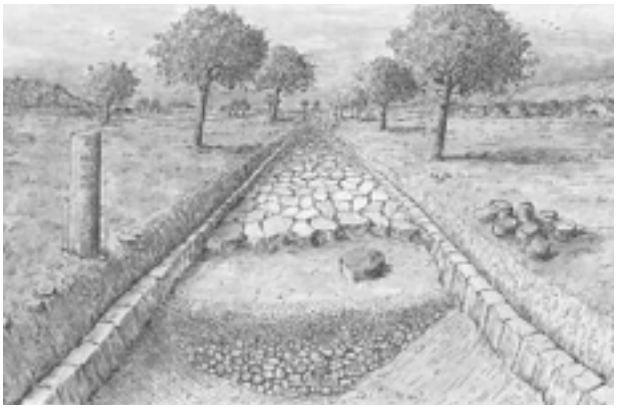


fig. 7 Image via Belgica

The road network ran along the rivers, at the foot of the slope where the smallest hight difference is discovered. Roman ways are known with their straight roads and grid plans for military settlements, but in this region the geomorphology was of influence. Typical aspect of the grid plan included two wide axis streets; a north-south street, known as the ‘cardo' (Via Trevorum) and a east-west street, the ‘decamanus’ (Via Belgica). The town centre is located at their intersection.

With the arrival of the romans, parts of the plateaus were cultivated and large roman villas were located there. These villas were located outside the town centres, and near to the via Belgica. *The villas were rural settlements with distinct architectural elements; it can also imply specific social and economic traits, such as dwelling of members of the elite and surplus production for the interregional market, referred to as villae rusticae. (Habermehl, 2011)*In this period agricultural practices changed considerably, due to improved implements and intensified manuring. A lot of ruins of the villas were found along the main road. Most Roman towns had a forum, temples and theatres and public baths. Ruins of a public bath were found in the centre of Heerlen, at a intersection with the via Belgica. (Wolters & Bonten, 1998) An other distinctive element of the Romans in the region are the watchtowers. The watchtowers served as observation posts guarding the region. The towers were built at intervals of 500 to 1500 meters, close enough that guards would have been able to signal each other in case of any trouble. (Sterling, 2003)

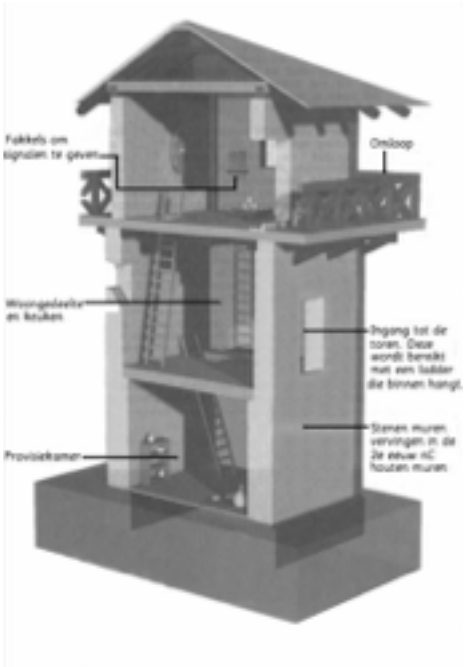


fig. 8 Section Roman watchtower.

roman agriculture

In ancient Rome, agriculture was not only a necessity, but was a ideal way of life among the social elite. The more land a Roman owned, the more important he would be in the city. Marcus Porcius Cato, a Roman statesman and historian, wrote that the best farm was a vineyard. (Wikipedia, n.d.-a) The Roman agriculture is characterised by the use of innovative attributes to make effectively management of the fertile grounds. These attributes are:

a) reverse overshot water-wheel. The Hellenists invented the water wheel and along with the Romans, they were the first to use water for both irrigation and as a power source. The Romans used water wheels frequently in mines and agricultural drainage, designed for removing water from the lowest levels of

underground workings. b) Mills. Ancient Roman mills were used mainly to maul grain and grind flour, but also to crush ore and stones. The first mill was a basic rotary mill driven by blindfolded animals (horses, mules) or by human power. The watermill is a development, which uses different kinds of water wheels. The water mills would use the water power, often from a nearby aqueduct. (vitam, 2013-2015)
c) Specularium. The Roman emperor Tiberius designed a building which he called a specularium. His aim to develop a specularium was to be sure that he would have cucumbers every year of the day, even though they ripen naturally only in the summer. By taken the beds in which the cucumbers were planted and mounting them on wheels, the gardeners could keep moving them around to follow the sun. During the cold months, they covered the cucumber beds with sheets of mica, a transparent stone. The crystalline structure of mica forms layers that can be split or delaminated into thin sheets. These sheets are chemically inert, elastic, insulating, lightweight, resilient, and range from transparant to opaque. The root of the word specularium means ‘like a mirror’. (Plinske, 2012) Today we would call this a ‘greenhouse’. A greenhouse is a structure made of glass or clear plastic which allows the heat of sunlight to enter a contained space and be captured, providing an environment for the growing of plants even when the temperature outside the structure becomes adverse to their survival.

III. MEDIEVAL PERIOD
During the fifth century AD the roman influence, and also the population declines. In the earlier middle ages the population increased gradually. The plateaus remained uninhabited, settlements were mainly along the Meuse and in the valleys. The area of South-Limburg was from the earlier middle ages divided between dukes and bishops. During the middle ages the manorial system was important for the structuring of the grounds and the development of the villages. *T*he manorial system was an economic and social system in which all legal and economic power belonged to the lord of the manor, who was supported economically from his land and from contributions from the population under his authority. (Wikipedia, n.d.-c) As a result of the increasing of the population in the medieval period residual wooded plateaus were also cultivated. Settlements on the plateaus were established. Sites which are not proper to use for agriculture were exepted from the cultivation, such as the Brunsummerheide. Another effect of the increasing population was the development of the ranches into closed farmsteads, consisting of a courtyard surrounded with residential and work buildings. The closed enclosure had mostly one access point. (Coenen, 2015)

The settlements, castles and forts evolve along the rivers, surrounded with agricultural areas with orchards.

fig. 9 Map Roman times (own ill.)

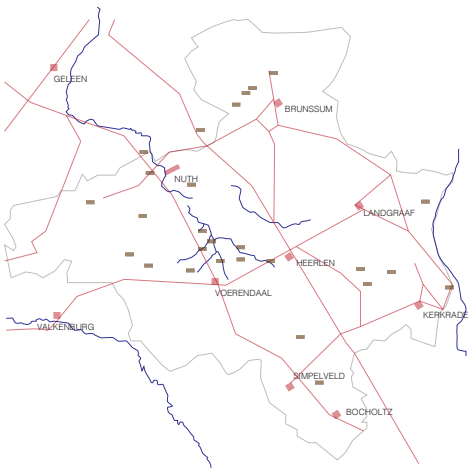


fig. 10 Map Medieval period (own ill.)

In between the medieval period and the coal mining period a lot of events occurred. This period is featured by wars, such as the Dutch Revolt. The region was divided, combined again, fell in hands of the Spanish, the French and later on again the Dutch. The region was not stable and there are not distinctive developments in relation with this research. Because of these reasons the period interim is not included as a significant layer in time.

IV.MINING INDUSTRY

Limburg has long been known for its coal industry. The Roman occupants already used coal for their villas heating system. The industrial revolution gave the coal mining industry an enormous impulse and several private mines were started. The mine industry had an enormous impact on the arcadian landscape. Changes in the infrastructure were necessary to structure the mining management. The landscape with an agrarian character changed into an industrial character. Because of the massive flow of labourers, miner colonies emerges.

The massive flow of labourers didn't result in a social disruption. People from abroad integrated in the catholic miners culture. The mining was a place to stay with a strong social cohesion. The mines were closed relatively early, because of competition from the Dutch gas industry in Groningen, and cheaper production facilities in other countries. The closing of the mines after 1965 would become a major turning point in the social, economic and cultural history of South-Limburg. (Coenen, 2015) The region is still recovering from the impact of the closure of the mines, but a new energy market is starting to develop on the ruins of the old mines. The old mine shafts can be reused for the heating of the new or renovated buildings.

innovation

Engineer F. van Iterson of the Dutch State Mines developed the first cooling tower with the characteristic shape of the hyperboloid. The cooling tower is designed to abduct heat. This self-supporting form is mainly used for better stability of the tower, a same tower with a cylindrical shape would be less stable. The first cooling tower of this type was used at the Emma mine in region of Limburg. (Wikipedia, n.d.-b)

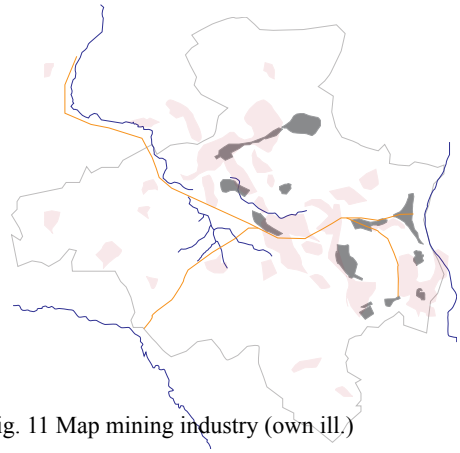


fig. 11 Map mining industry (own ill.)

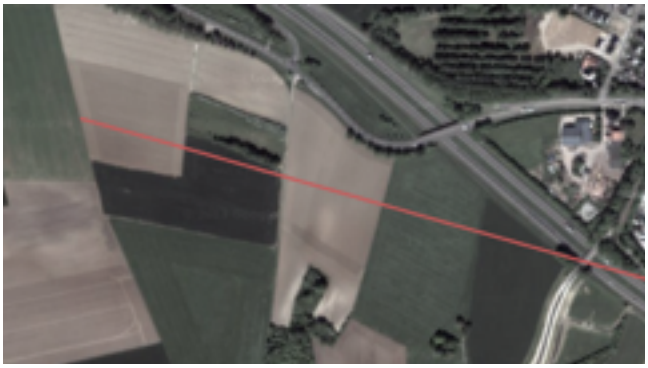
V. MODERN TIMES

After the closing of the mines the region was searching for something news which will provide vitality, dynamics and energy, and this search results into bringing foreign industries to South Limburg. As a result of this, the infrastructure radically improved. New districts and industrial areas were implanted in the region. These shifts didn't afford the expected results and the region characterised itself with shrinkage and hazing. (Coenen, 2015)

agriculture

Since the first settlement, agriculture plays a dominant role in the region. Especially in north and central Limburg determines the agricultural sector largely the identity and face of the rural areas. There is a lot of intensive livestock farming, horticulture and gardening. South Limburg is more known with extensive farming, such as dairy farming and with orchards. Nowadays agriculture has to deal with burgeoning food scarcity, water shortage and climate challenges. New models are changing the way food is grown and distributed and there is growing interest in sustainably produced food.

The via Belgica runs in the region through different kind of lands which are characterised by land-based agriculture or urban fabric.



In the context of the surrounding landscape of the contemporary via Belgica, it is to complex to link the remaining parts of the Roman road and make it accessible for local people or tourists.

SUPERIMPOSITION

By layering the landscape, and superimpose them, we can substitute several anchor points which are valuable in relation with the via Belgica. Although the complexity of linking the remaining parts of the road, it is possible to revive parts of the roads in places with an added value for the city, residents and/or visitors.

When superimposing the layers, we can see in the recent layer that activities of the old layers are noticeable. Today there is a lot of agriculture in the area, and industrial character changed from mining industrial (business) areas. All of the layers have towers in common, it starts with the watchtowers of the Roman, the towers of the castles in the medieval period, chimneys of the mining industry and relicts of these in modern time.

layers in tekening toevoegen.

Started in the prehistory, the region is inhabited because of the fertile grounds and the presence of water. The relief of the area determined the first structuring, the constructing of roads, of the area by the romans. The road was featured by watchtowers for military reasons. The roman villae are close to this road, and an important example of one of these villa's is the villa Ten Hove. The villa Ten Hove is the largest known Roman villa on Dutch territory, located in Voerendaal (1).

Again here, we can notice the importance of the morphology. The villa Ten Hove is close to the via Belgica and the secondary road to the villa runs along a ramification of a river. The fertile fields are used for grain activities.

In 1989, a design and feasibility study was conducted by Heritage Projects of York (UK). The project was based on a partial reconstruction of the complex, within a visitor information centre. Also there were plans for a continuous excavation put in scene. This projects is not realised. Nowadays there are again plans to take it up. There are ideas to realise an outdoor museum where the building complex and connected fields are reconstructed and operated experimentally with the theme: 'Roman southern Limburg as a granary'. Life in a Roman farmhouse and its activities will be presented and experienced. In or near the villa several functions will accommodated such as a museum, exhibition space, Roman restaurant and product shop, conference centre et cetera. (van Kesteren, 2005)

A second anchor point related with the via and the Romans is the 'Thermenmuseum' located in Heerlen ('Coriovallum' in Roman terms)(2). Prominent is the theme 'water' in the exposition, aspect such as drinking water, sewerage and water for agricultural or industrial (pottery industry) are exhibited.

The via intersects also with a mine area (3). The old road cuts through the stone mountain of the coal mine 'Laura and Vereeniging'. Characterising for this area were the shafts and the chimneys, but after closing the mine areas everything was destroyed. Nowadays the stone mountain is still there and there are plans to remediate this area with the aim to connect this now separated area into the environment.

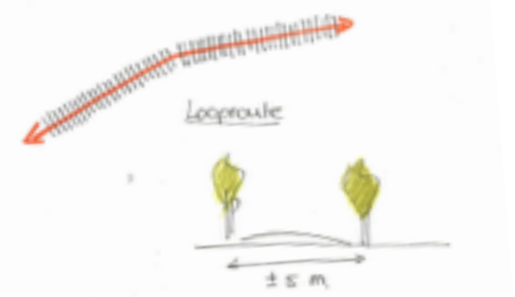
All of these anchor points are valuable for interventions. For some points there are already projects, other points are neglected. The most recent historical layer of Parkstad is the layer of the mining industry. The identity of the area became prevalent with the mine industry, mine colonies, summarised with everything connected to mining. The closing of the mines strongly affected the identity. An even or more strong impact on the identity of the area was previously the Roman layer. The awareness of both of these layers is strongly

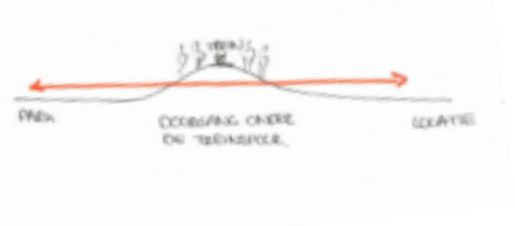
important for contemporary and further developments.

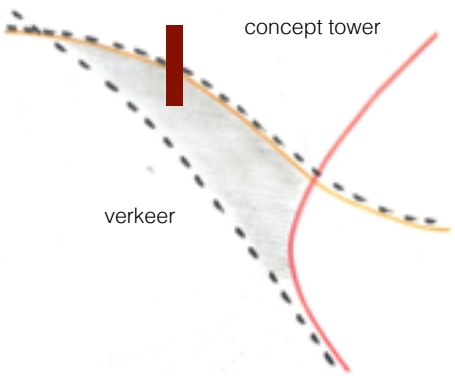
TOWARDS DESIGN

The chosen location for an intervention is the location where the via intersects with the mine area. The two layers of identity are sensible and form the base of the design.

With the help of the research and a deeper analysis to the context of the location some assumption are made.







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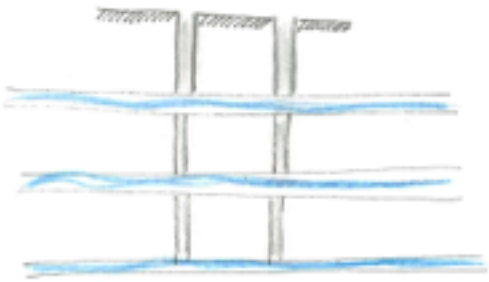
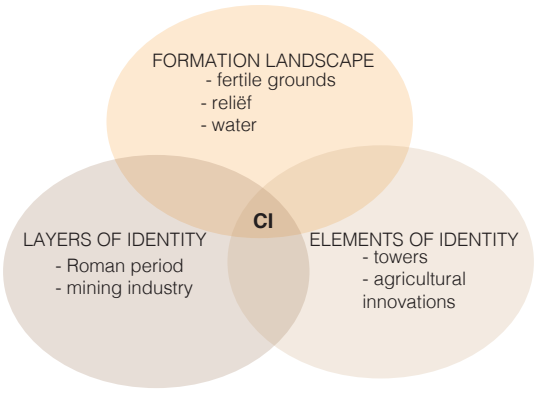


opzet ontwerp, uitgangspunten goed definiëren.
narrative.

DISCUSSION

Ruins are closely connected with the understanding of the impact of history on the living. They inspire us to think and to imagine. A ruin can be kept intact or an intervention can take place on the ruin, but in this research there is a search for identity. Ruins or fragments from different periods will describe the essential characteristics of the area. They give an interpretation of the development of the cultural history in time. The via Belgica is used as backbone in this research because of the function as former fundamental development axis. Along this road towns are grown and it connects the nowadays fragmented parts of the area. Critical in this research is not the intervention on the ruins itself, but to find anchor points with the help of ruins where interventions can take place. The ruins are here used as a method to identify the local character in the way it was shaped by history.



CI

contemporary identity

industrial character of the mining period combined with the agrarian character of the Roman period

The cultural history starts to form an identity in the Roman period. Roads are constructed for military and trade purposes, with watchtowers along the road as significant elements. Along the road the villas form an arcadic landscape with agricultural purposes. After the Roman period, the identity of the area keep stable. An other significant layer with a new identity for the area was the coal mining industry. This industrial period changed the identity and formed a new one. Miner colonies emerged and shafts and chimneys determined the image of the city. To form a contemporary identity the industrial character of the mining period and the agrarian character of the Romans will be recalled. The agriculture is still playing a determining role in the region and innovative solutions can be combined or found with the help of former Roman innovations.

Anchor points were found and for some of them are plans to intervene. The villa Ten Hove will be reconstructed to restore the former glory of the villa rustic and to add a new attraction to the region, which will function as an outdoor museum within the Roman theme, which also is applied for the 'Thermenmuseum'. Along the via there are anchor points in which different layers are combined, which has played a role in the defining of the identity of the area.

CONCLUSION

Ruins, relics and the morphology of an area can define the identity, the soul, of a region. In Limburg, the fertile grounds, water and relief were significant for the development of the area. Later on, the mining industry brought a more industrial character. The anchor points which are defined in these research can be connected to form a new layer in the palimpsest. The way how to connect these anchor points needs a further research.

The anchor point on the intersection of the via Belgica and the stone mountain 'Laura' is a favourable point to intervene because of the palimpsest of the two significant layers. In all of the layers, the tower came back. The tower is an element to view over the landscape and to make visual connections within the other anchor points. Also the tower can be used for sustainable purposes to complement the agricultural programme. This programme will challenge the climate changes, by using the fertile ground effectively. Roman innovations, such as the specularium or the greenhouse, are also elements which can contribute to a new agricultural identity in the region. Not only the

climate changes, but also erosion is a known problem in the area. Soil erosion is threatened by several actions, such as the increasing agriculture, land consolidation, incorrect treatment of the soil and change of the crops because of specialisation. By forming a new agricultural identity, these aspects has to be taken in account.

To propose design scenario's the anchor points have to be mapped further. By mapping these points on a smaller scale and relate the points with the infrastructure and other elements, a connection between the points can genesis.

EPILOGUE

This research is started by a fascination of the presence of roman ruins in the area of Parkstad, i end up with a more layered and integral search to an identity for the area. The first intention was to use the via Belgica as a connecting structure for the remains of the roman villas. After deepening in theory, i realised that not the villas, or in this case the invisible ruins of the villas, are important but the contribution of the villas to the development in the region. Nowadays still buildings and relics of different periods are visible in the area, from the medieval period to the mining industry period. All these layers are connected to each other and supplement each other in the forming of a new identity. The local character, with also local innovations, throughout different significant periods are the result now of this research.

The first part of the paper is about theories over ruins in architecture. It is vital to realise that not only ruins of buildings, or element are left over of the history. The morphology of the area is the basis of everything. After the theory about ruins, the second part starts with describing the morphology of the area. Then the palimpsest, the layering in time, starts. This palimpsest ends with a superimposition of all the layers in which the cultural history is reinterpret. However, this paper is to provide answers for the thematic focus, the design question is still open.

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