

THE CELEBRATION OF SELF-RESTORATION
or walking as a festive practice in the case of Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht

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REPORT I

Literature Research

"Lo! The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land."¹

Celebrating the advent of Spring in the Songs of Solomon

1. Introduction

Every creation of human culture has an origin; a starting point and an initial idea which sparked the birth of that creation and usually expressed the very sense of it. Sometimes, those cultural "products" keep on being close to their origins for their whole history; they remain authentic by continuously declaring their starting point. Other times, they develop and transform themselves or their context, always based on that very spark that lighted the fire of their existence. Inevitably, in some cases, their history has an end and consequently, they become part of the past. Festivals, as one of the most distinguished expressions of collective human culture, have a long past that reaches our modern lives. As a result, their origins can be researched based on the above-mentioned syllogism. In the following lines, the notion of festivity will be examined through the lens of a specific starting point; that of seasonality. The season of the year in which a festival is celebrated reveals a lot about its historical roots, the social purposes it addresses and of course, about the ways it is celebrated and the traditions for the creation of which it is responsible.

In every research related to festivity; the question of "how people celebrate", consist the key point that links the notion of festivity with that of architecture. As it is obvious, there is no specific answer to that question as every festival is defined by different parameters (season, country, location, reason of celebration, cultural context etc.). But what we can safely state is that architecture acts as the mediator between

¹ Duncan H. *Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons: Illustrating the Perfections of God in the Phenomena of the Year; Volume 2*. 1985. Re-edition: Nabu Press. 2010. page 3

people and the “practice” of the festive itself; architecture materializes the above-mentioned “how”. As it was already implied above, the purpose of the current paper is twofold; from the one hand to highlight the general connection of seasonal change with that festival expression and on the other, to examine in what ways architecture concretizes the above-mentioned connection in the case of Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht.

2. A few words on the origins of festivals

Festivities are as old as civilization. According to Klein and Blake, festivals are *closely connected to the development of human culture, which dates back to the historical roots of the humankind.*² By studying the advent of festivals, is like examining at the same time the factors that influenced the evolution of our civilization. Festivals can be characterized as the mirror in which the collective fundamental principles of our existence are reflected. For W. Cundy, *in antiquity, festivals were an emanation of the culture and religion of primitive tribes,*³ highlighting the advent of spirituality (in the form of ancient religion) and of cultural production. So, if we take for granted that festivals and rituals contributed in the evolution of the primal peoples to what we are today, what is hidden behind the need for humans to worship and celebrate? What were the first stimuli that caused the birth of the festivity sense and which are the fundamental principles that are reflected in almost all the festival activities?

We can keep on asking thousands of those questions which are embodied with high existential, almost philosophical inquiries. But this can lead to pointless and confusing answers. We can argue that sciences like Theology or Psychology can research the above-mentioned in a more solid base. For example, through C. Jung's "The collective unconsciousness and its archetypes" we can link the primal festive

² Klein RG, Blake E. *The dawn of human culture*. Wiley, New York. 2002. page 43

³ Cudny W. *Festivalisation of urban spaces*. Springer Geography, Switzerland. 2016. page 11

sense as a form of collective unconsciousness that *seem to be always present and everywhere*.⁴

What we can support is that the first festivals celebrated the continuously evolving relationship between *humanity* and the *there*, following what the ancient philosophers of Miletus asked in their famous question "*what is there?*".⁵ The core of their ritualistic celebration is the fruitful interaction between humanity and nature that contributed to the survival and progress of the first through the respect of the rules of the second. The long desired and forgotten balance between humans and nature. By the term nature, we mean *the "natural environment" or wilderness-wild animals, rocks, forest, beaches and in general areas that have not been substantially altered by humans, or which persist despite human intervention*.⁶ The part of the "visible" universe (which includes the stars, the moon and the sun) falls into the previous categorization as well the climate conditions/weather and the change of seasons. This is the reason why the first festivals were *those events connected with seasonal occasions like sowing and harvesting, or even further with phenomena like the summer or winter solstice and the advent of spring*.⁷ For W. Davies, those *festive events were also seen as the first festivals* and he called them *temporal or seasonal festivals*.⁸ In that sense, seasonality indeed lies on the core of the origins of the festive sense.

⁴ Jung C. *The archetypes and the collective unconsciousness*. Princeton University Press; 2nd ed. edition. 1981. page 10

⁵ <https://www.ancient.eu/Anaximander/>, accessed 08/12/2017

⁶ <http://environment-ecology.com/what-is-nature/108-what-is-nature.html>, accessed 08/12/2017

⁷ Cudny W. *Festivalisation of urban spaces*. Springer Geography, Switzerland. 2016. page 22

⁸ Davies WKD. *Festive Cities: multi dimensional perspectives*. in *Theme cities: solutions for urban problem*. Springer, Cham 2015. pages 533-561

3. What is seasonality?

But how we define, in a more precise way, the concept of seasonality?

*Seasonality, in the archaeological sense of the word, refers to when, what season, a particular event occurs.*⁹ Moreover, it is widely accepted that for our better understanding of the change of the weather in nature, we divide the time period of a year into four equal sub-periods, the so-called seasons.¹⁰ In summary, according to R. Huschke's "Glossary of Meteorology":

-Summer is the warmest season everywhere except in some tropical regions...

-Winter is the coldest season of the year...

*and Spring and Autumn are defined as the transition periods between these two seasons.*¹¹

In the current research, there will be no mentions to the scientific or philosophical connections that seasonality has with what we generally call Cosmos (planet Earth, solar system etc.) But, what it is crucial to be argued is that seasonality is nothing else rather than nature's self-destruction and self-restoration process, divided into four equal parts. It is the oldest and most important of all the rituals in which every successful completion of the circle immediately highlights the beginning of the new one. Nature only dies so as to reborn all over again from its own ashes. In this very sense, if summer and winter are the periods in which life and death are experienced, spring and autumn concern more the moments of birth and death itself. The moment is which a tree blossoms and withers is way stronger than the periods in which it remains blossomed or withered. It is a festive miracle!

⁹ <https://www.thoughtco.com/seasonality-archaeology-anthropology-changing-seasons-172752>, accessed 08/12/2017

¹⁰ Trenberth K. *What are the seasons?* in *American Meteorological Society*. Volume 64. Issue 11. November 1983. page 1276

¹¹ Ibid

According to K.Kris Hirst's article "Seasonality-The archeology and anthropology of changing seasons", the perception of seasonality used to be stronger in the past than today.¹²The agricultural societies that followed the primary pastoral communities, were fundamentally depended on the process of seasonal change. Without a harvest, no food was available and subsequently, starvation would come. In ancient Egypt or Greece to many other places and ages (some of them until the 20th century), rituals used to be organized to ensure a good harvest and festivities were taking place after it. Seasonal rituals or festivals were also related to other events. There isn't a more known example than that of King Agamemnon who, according to the ancient Greek mythology, sacrificed his daughter to the gods to ensure the good weather before his war sailing to Troy.

But nowadays, things are totally different. The more humans distinguish themselves from nature, the more the changing of seasons does not affect their daily life. It is a fact that Modernity softened the impact, the different seasons used to have upon humanity. In contrast with the past, today we barely experience the changing from spring to summer, or from summer to winter. The seasonal circle does not affect us the same as it used to do, especially in the metropolitan centers of the globe. If we do not need to pray for smooth winters and a good harvest, we do not need to celebrate the advent of spring and the fertility that comes with it. Scientific progress alienated people from nature and changed entirely the rules of the game.

But, as it is implied above, until the 19th century, seasonality had a crucial role in all the different parts of human activity; including festivities. Again according to K.Hirst: *Religious ceremonies associated with the movements of the sun, moon and stars were scheduled for different seasons: solstices and equinoxes were celebrated with specific rites at specific seasons of the year.*¹³ Finally, there isn't a more solid example of the importance of seasonality than that of the book of Henry Duncan. In 1835,

¹² <https://www.thoughtco.com/seasonality-archaeology-anthropology-changing-seasons-172752>, accessed 08/12/2017

¹³ Ibid

Duncan published his four-volume book named "Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons: Illustrating the Perfections of God in the Phenomena of the Year" in which he addresses in a detailed description all the ways in which seasonality affects humanity. Each one of the books is dedicated to one of the four seasons, presenting the impact of the seasonal phenomena to every different activity of civilization, from agriculture and commerce to festivals and architecture. Duncan's work is not important only for its detailed documentation but mainly because it could be considered an authentic expression of a significant cultural shift in the Western thought. The interest towards the study of nature was the new fact. Until the dawn of industrialization and capitalism, *the city was a sacred place while the open country was profane*.¹⁴ As I. Cireraad well-aimed quoted, *in the Enlightenment opposition between the rational and the irrational, the city counts as the locus of reason and science whereas the countryside is seen as a benighted are of ignorance and superstition*.¹⁵ In Architecture, S. Serlio also embraced this particular point of view. In his famous Three Scenes, he depicts the countryside as a something Satyric; a place for *all those who live with licentiousness and rudeness, ...a place for the unreserved characters that we call country folk*, according to his own words.¹⁶ But the radical urbanization and the rise of the first proletarians together with the need of the bourgeoisie to distinguish itself from the working class led to a dramatic change of attitudes. According to the new romantic view, God stopped be present in the city and the divine splendor could be found in the beauty of the countryside, away from the dirt of the industrial centers.

Today, seasonality and the experience of nature are still important in specific aspects of human activity. But, for the purposes of the current research, only a few of them will be mentioned. The change of human mood can be characterized as the first example. It is generally accepted, that the so-called Spring fever is real and that

¹⁴ Cieraad, Irene. *Traditional Folk, Industrial Masses*. in *Alterity, Identity, Image. Selves and Others in Society and Scholaship*. Rodopi 1991. Page 19

¹⁵Ibid, page 21

¹⁶ Marcia Feuerstein, Gray Read. *Architecture as a Performing Art*. Routledge 2016. Page 154

*warmer days have a direct influence on the mood and behavior of people.*¹⁷ We tend to be happier when the days are longer and we are always motivated further by the anticipation of the holidays and the summer.¹⁸ In many cases, the advent of Spring comes together with the scheduling of a series of trips and excursions to the countryside; a chance to escape the daily routine and come closer to the beauty of nature through walking and other similar activities.

Moreover, seasonality continues to influence more those whose lives are closely related to nature. Residents in rural areas still experience the difference between the seasons and there are still many professions that consider the variability of the landscape, especially those which are active on seasonal tourism. But there are also examples in Architecture that exceed the notion of sustainability and that of *designing with environment* and become deeper and more meaningful. Particularly, in Landscape Architecture, *seasonal change is a taken-for-granted aspect of the landscape*¹⁹ which contributes a lot to the way design decisions are being made. The case of Pilgrim walks, which will be addressed further in the following pages, consist also a great example. Combining processions, spirituality and the experience of cultural/natural landscape, pilgrimages (also in their modern versions) are the most characteristic examples through which people can experience actively the self-restoration process of nature and the festive moments that accompany it.

Another example is the existence of a series of festivals around the globe that have their origins in the ancient celebrations of seasonal changes; particularly that of the spring equinox. For example, *in Japan, the spring equinox, or Shunbun no Hi, is celebrated by visiting ancestral graves and having family reunions*²⁰ while *another way to celebrate the spring equinox that has been carried over from ancient times is the*

¹⁷ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/warm-weather-mood_us_56fd42b3e4b083f5c606f9cd, accessed 08/12/2017

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Pūrs I. *Concept of Seasonality for Landscape Architecture in Proceedings of the Latvia University of Agriculture Landscape Architecture and Art*, Volume 3, Issue no3. page 99-107

²⁰ <https://www.bustle.com/articles/70678-8-first-day-of-spring-celebrations-around-the-world-in-honor-of-the-spring-equinox>, accessed 08/12/2017

*observance of Nowruz or Persian New Year.*²¹ In Europe, there are the so-called "Spring Festivals" such as the Stuttgarter Frühlingsfest (Stuttgart Spring Festival) that had to do more with a general celebration of that particular season rather than that of the exact date of the equinox. In the current research, the main interest focuses on a specific example. The Heiligdomsvaart Festival of Maastricht is one of the festivals of which the historical traces could be found in the celebration for the advent of Spring and its celebration is related to a series of traditions and legends dominant in the Dutch province of Limburg.

4. The Return to Nature as a practice of self-restoration

It has been already stated several times that one of the major characteristics of nature lies in its ability to destroy and restore itself, following the seasonal circle. Moreover, in the previous chapter, it is briefly described in what extent people used to be depended on the above-mentioned process, and how this dependence changed, mainly the centuries after the advent of the Modern Era. As it is widely known, the radical urbanization that took place during the second half of the 19th century in the Western World reinterpreted the established relation between the two Cs: the city and the countryside. God left the city to dwell in the countryside and this shift brought an inclination *towards a more "involved" and celebratory attitude to nature.*²² The less we are dependent on nature, the more the return to it is "dressed" in a deeper meaning; that of an idyllic "village" scene.²³ As T. Lemaire stated in the book *Philosophy of the Landscape*, this reverse of the notion of the domestic God to a natural one²⁴ recreated this image of harmonious country life that, of course, has its own history. Many

²¹ Ibid

²² Cieraad, Irene. *Traditional Folk, Industrial Masses*. in *Alterity, Identity, Image. Selves and Others in Society and Scholarship*. Rodopi 1991. page 21

²³ Ibid, page 23

²⁴ Lemaire T. *Filosofie van het landschap*. Baarn:Ambo, pages 9-31

philosophers, artists and architects have long discussed this subject; a subject which continues to be relevant nowadays.

In the age of the Anthropocene, due to the stressful and harmful way of living in the metropolitan centers, more and more people are in search of new ways to escape from their everyday life. Contrary to the past, this new reality does not refer exclusively to the bourgeoisie but to almost all the social classes that experience the alienation of the cities. It seems that the return to the idyllic “village” scene returned stronger and updated. The current trends on healthy eating, training and meditation methods argue also on favor of that. We are trying to find new ways of "returning to nature" in order to get self-restored following what nature continuously does. It could be supported that to an extent, we became nature-imitators. Of course, in this point the critical question of how we achieve that arises. A first example of the above-mentioned is the festivalisation of healthy-living through the concept of Wellness Festivals. Thousands of people are gathering in festivals in which they celebrate by practicing a variety of “healthy” activities; from public mediation to collective sauna. For N. Koncul *the rise of ‘wellness’ concept can be attributed to two factors. First, the WHO has now long been pushing forward an integrated concept of «wellbeing» and «fitness» into its global health policy. Second, the overall education of people has increased the human awareness of personal health.*²⁵ But, opinions sometimes differ widely on that subject and there are many who support that these festivals are nothing more than lifestyle meaningless expressions. Despite that they are based on true needs, they reflect more a “hipster” attitude towards the subject of self-restoration, in the sense that they commercialize and disconnect the practicing activities from their true cultural and medical meaning.

Except for the Wellness festivals, there is also another activity that highlights the return to nature and the need of contemporary man to seek for his self-restoration; that of trekking or modern pilgrim walking. Pilgrim walks have a long

²⁵ Koncul N. *Wellness: a new mode of tourism.* in *Economic Research - Ekonomska istraživanja*, Volume 25, Issue no2, 2012. pages 525-534

history and they had been the subject of numerous researchers. Even if they started as an action totally connected to religious purposes, today they seem to have gained a new, contemporary meaning. During the years, they were many walks that gained a significant amount of reputation and fame. Among them, the most historical and important is that of Camino de Santiago. *The Way of Saint-James*, as it is also known, is a vast network of pilgrim routes that start from the church of Santiago de Compostela in Spain and they spread across Europe. We can summarize that pilgrimage used to be a form of spiritual walking that also provided the chance of an intimate interaction with the surrounding nature. It was an extensive festive ritual; a great procession towards the religious purification. But, today, pilgrim walking seems to be in a continuous process of re-discovery. As M. Kunaeva states: *the number of travelers taking pilgrimage routes is constantly growing along with motivation changes for carrying it out. In addition to people undertaking a religious pilgrimage, there are many travelers and hikers who walk the route for non-religious reasons, such as travel, sport, or simply the challenge as weeks of walking in a foreign land. For many modern "pilgrims" it serves as a retreat, as it is considered to be a spiritual adventure and a getting away from habitual life.*²⁶ In addition to Kunaeva's words, Suzanne van der Beek argues that *Pilgrimages are very suitable as a ritual to step in. You can give it the content you want. It brings people outside, it is a means of meeting and meeting. I also see a critique of our daily lives in which everyone is increasingly focused on themselves.*²⁷

In conclusion, it seems that the current re-interpretation of Pilgrim walks as a new form of meaningful touristic escape, highlights a completely different approach than that of Wellness Festivals. In a way, this modern form of trekking is an official expression of this long-desired "return to nature". People come closer to their natural environment and they are given the chance to experience the beauty of its mutability

²⁶ Kunaeva M. *Sustainable Tourism Management along the Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage Routes*. HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences, March 2012. page 3

²⁷ https://www.volkskrant.nl/buitenland/-de-meeste-moderne-pelgrims-zijn-niet-religieus-geinspireerd~a4513619/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=shared%20content&utm_content=paid&hash=4c25082c51eadc10a372fa07674806cc68ad3cb1, accessed, 08/12/2017

and its numerous festive moments. It is not so much about religious expression, rather than about the balance between us and nature. While Wellness festivals are based on the western consumerist standards, pilgrim walks introduce a new anti-profit form of self-restoring which is more related to the Japanese tradition. Japanese culture had always been supportive of an *harmonious relationship between man and nature...and the Japanese often attempt to bring nature close to daily life.*²⁸ In that sense, pilgrim walks try to re-establish this long forgotten bond, in the general context of the western globalized civilization. Modern walking intends to raise the need of a new aesthetic natural pleasure that leads to a personal purification and it distances itself from contemporary hypes and trends.

5. Conclusions

The current paper is meant to act as the starting point of the research that follows in the next two reports. It is crucial to be mentioned that the way in which the presented issues were discussed, structures at the same time the content of the next report. The relevant follow-up will be the examination of a specific example; starting from the research on the Heilidomsvaart Festival, the paper will continue by discussing the cultural and natural context of Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht. In which ways people imitate and celebrate the restoration process of Nature in their own self-healing experience of Maastricht's pilgrim walking tradition? Do they agree with the concluded remark of the above-mentioned report that through walking, man explores the beauty of the landscape, celebrating through the experience of seasonality, the re-birth of his own existence?

²⁸ Saito Y. *The Japanese appreciation of nature.* in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Volume 25, issue no3, Summer 1985. pages 239-251.

REPORT II

Exploring the countryside of Maastricht

“When spring came, even the false spring, there were no problems except where to be happiest.”

Ernest Hemingway

1. Introduction

The current paper aims to be the link between the contents of the first and the third report. Considering that the previous report introduces the "theme" and the following the "people", the second report is responsible for the presentation of the "place", or in other words, of the general context of Maastricht's countryside in which the Pilgrim Route of the city is (Pelgrimwandeling Maastricht). The narrative of the place, upon which the design project is developing, will be unfolded in the following pages. From the starting points and the first impressions to the selection of the design site and the description of the social and cultural environment of it. At this point, it is important to mention that the following research presents a variety of differentiations concerning the analysis of the demography of the design site or the needs/desires of the neighborhood; after all, the selected site is not a plot in the center of the city and there is not an immediate context in terms of neighboring buildings. The site develops a dialogue in two levels: on the one hand with the elements of the surrounding landscape and on the other, with all the elements of the built or intangible environment which constitute the place as a cultural meaningful. This is the reason why the paper addresses mainly the social/cultural dimensions of the above-mentioned spaces and not so much the demographical issues. The next chapter, the first of the current paper, includes my personal effort to create a solid narrative of the place, always based on the theoretical background presented in the first report. The notions of “back to nature”, “festivity and seasonality”, “processions and pilgrim walking” are more than present in the narrative of the current report.



The valley of river Jeker on the borders of Maastricht

2. Starting point of the narrative: the well of St Servaas

Since my very first visit to Maastricht -for the purposes of the "After the Party" graduation studio-, I admit that I was impressed by the relationship the city has with the surrounding landscape. The hills, the rivers and the small forests, all of them adjacent to the historical urban center, contribute to the creation of a unique image of that place; an image different from that of the central parts of the Netherlands. The greater area of the valley of river Jeker, which is located only a few kilometers outside Maastricht, is one of the best examples of what is described in the above-mentioned sentence. In my eyes, the site has something attractive and powerful. Its privileged position, its great history and its unique spatial characteristics create indeed an atmosphere, an *aura* according to W. Benjamin's words. The valley is the home of a variety of significant places, many of which are also important architectural monuments.

The St Servaasbron, or otherwise, the well of Saint Servatius, stands alone in the middle of the small valley, adjacent to the central provincial street (Cannerweg), in a site which is filled with chestnut trees, probably due to the presence of water the well of the Saint. It is also important to mention that the site is one of the official monuments of the Netherlands²⁹ and one of the oldest festive spaces of Maastricht. The place consists of only two built structures in a very clear geometry; the gate from which you enter and the well of Saint Servaas (visible from the gate) with a small statue of the Saint on the top of it. On the top of the entrance of the monument, the following sentence is written:

"Eer Pelgrim deze heilige bron, en hetzij dorst of koorts u kwelle, drink tot lafenis en genezing, zoo helpe u de H. Servatius."

"Honorable pilgrim this holy source, either it is thirst or fever that your suffer, drink till be refreshed and healed, so that Saint Servatius helps you"

²⁹ <https://monumentenregister.cultureelerfgoed.nl/monuments/27941>, accessed 12/12/2017

The meaning of that sentence will be extensively evaluated later in the paper, as it has a critical importance for the understanding of the myth of St. Servatius.

The well of St Servatius is a magnificent example in which nature and built structures co-exist in a dialectical way that creates an archaic yet almost sacred space. After all, no one can deny how strong is the bond between festivity and the symbolic elements of the sacred, especially in the way they were described in the first report. During the season of spring, where the trees bloom and the grass is growing, the visitor can experience the space as an almost total festive phenomenon; a festive moment in which the area of well is being transformed into a seasonal open interior. The crossing of the gate highlights, even more, the transportation from the open outside to a different, enclosed outside; an atmospheric transition that is achieved only by the presence of this very old threshold. The well seems to have always been there, below the same old trees, intending to remind that the most powerful architecture is always simple, clear and imposing.

As it was already implied above, this small complex has a long history with legendary extensions. It is also the central point from which the celebrations of the Heiligdomsvaart festival of Maastricht, start every seven years until today. The septennial celebration of St. Servaas in Maastricht has a very old history that goes back to the 14th century. According to the organizers, the origins of the festival are even older than that. It derives from the ancient tradition of celebrating the end of winter and together with that, the advent of spring.³⁰ It can be clearly stated, that this is the optimal period for experiencing the mutable landscape; the festivity of seasonality. Without no doubt, Heiligdomsvaart falls into the category of spring festivals mainly because its 10-day celebration is always organized in the period between spring and summer (this year is on May). The celebration officially starts on a Thursday, with an evening mass on the St. Servaasbron . The mass is the result of an

³⁰ Interview with the Heiligdomsvaart organizers in Maastricht, 28/09/2017

open procession from the center of the city, which signifies the begging of the whole opening ceremony.³¹

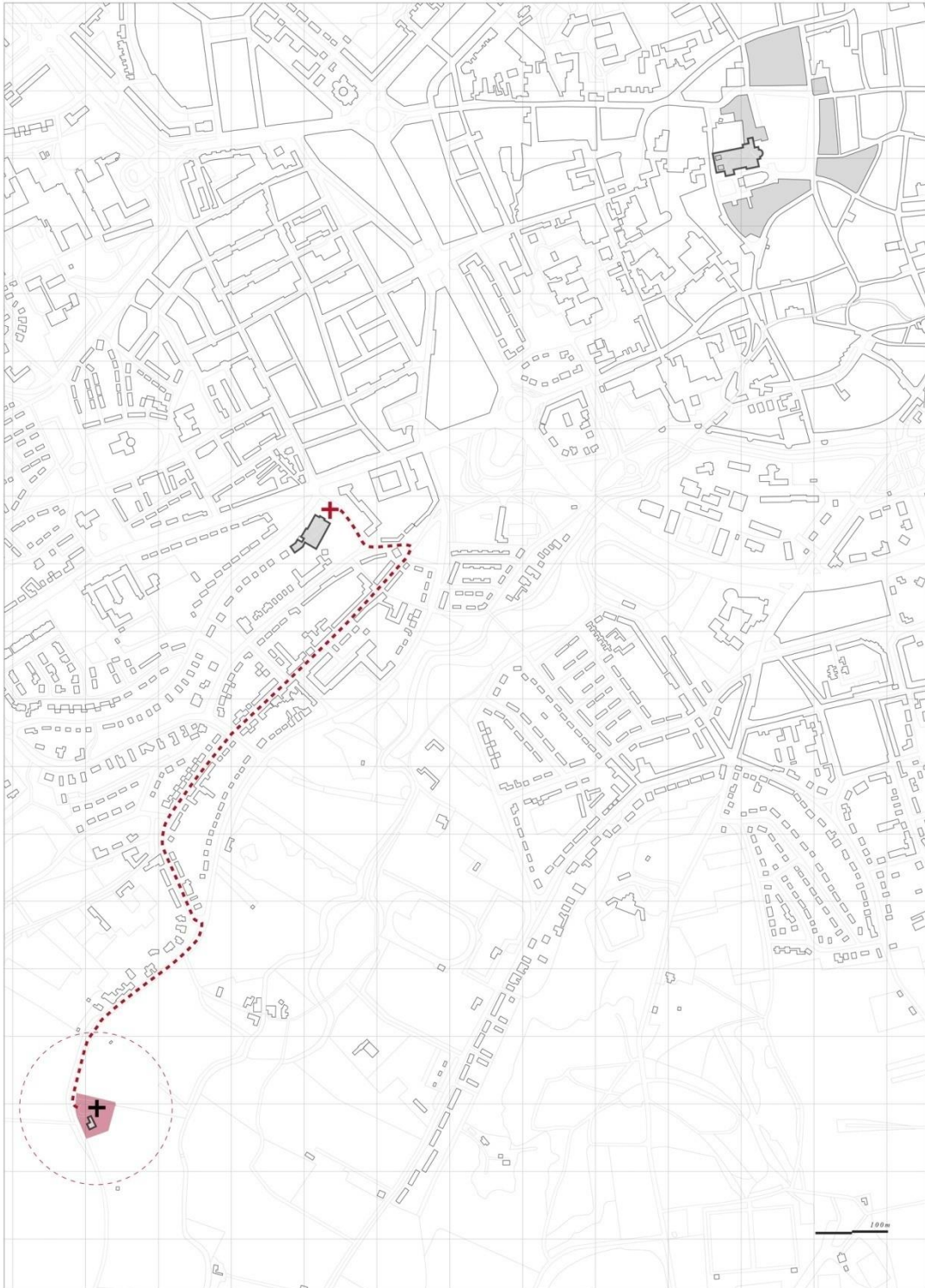
Going back to the well, we should conclude by mentioning more about the legend of Saint Servaas. According to the inscription on the monument, the Saint gave birth to the spring by drawing a cross with his staff on the ground, on the way back from his pilgrimage to Rome. The water that popped-up satisfied the thirst of St. Servaas but at the same time, it had healing powers as well.³² Being aware of the potential that this myth had, in 1496, the city council of Maastricht placed a fountain in Vrijthof (central square of the city) aiming to stimulate pilgrimage tourism³³. After worshipping in the St. Servaas cathedral, the pilgrims were hoping in their own cure/restoration by drinking the water of the Vrijthof fountain. The similarity, that this monument presents, with the contents of the first report is more than obvious.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight once more the significance of the Well in the general cultural background of Maastricht during the ages; especially if we consider its correlation to the “profound” character of the nature that surrounds it. Moreover, it seems that the legend of St. Servaas contributed to the formation of two new traditions in the area. On the one hand, that of Kuroord (bathhouse/spa with healing waters) and on the other, that of “pilgrim” walking in the countryside, with or without religious purposes. But apart from its cultural significance, this small provincial monument is also a strong statement; a design reference of what festive architecture could be. The well of St Servaas is still nowadays an important focal point in the network of farm routes that constitute the pilgrim walk of Maastricht. The last one consists the main subject of the following chapters as they consist the starting point of my personal design thesis. But before that, there is a small part of the research dedicated exclusively to the tradition of pilgrim walking of Limburg through which, the pilgrim walk of Maastricht will be introduced.

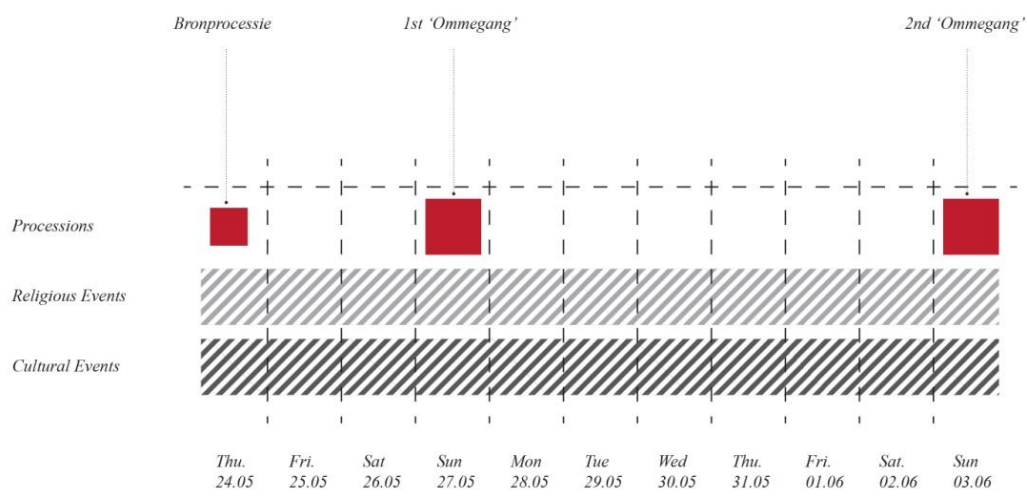
³¹ <http://www.heiligdomsvaartmaastricht.nl/nl/programma-c/donderdag-24-mei-2018>, accessed 12/12/2017

³² Ubachs, PJH, and IMH Evers. Historical Encyclopedia Maastricht. Walburg Press, Zutphen 2005.

³³ Ibid



The Heiligdomsvaart opening procession towards the Well of St. Servaas



The program of the Heiligdomsvaart festival 2018



The Heiligdomsvaart opening procession towards the Well of St. Servaas



The procession enters the gate



The opening mass of Heiligdomsvaart



The fountain of St. Servaas at the Vrijthof square of Maastricht

3. Pilgrim walking in Limburg: an alive tradition

In the history of Christianity, the year 813 must have been significant. It was that date where *the tomb of St James was claimed to be (re-)discovered in the city of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain and it had attracted many thousands of Christian pilgrims from all parts of Europe.*³⁴ Ever since, *almost every West European country has an association, society or confraternity dedicated to pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, often carrying the name of the apostle involved: St James.*³⁵

In general, following the more traditional way of thinking, a "pilgrimage" is a *religious (or at least semi-religious) act by a person or by a group of persons for the purpose of venerating an object or a person and is to be encountered in almost every culture around the world.*³⁶ Based on that, it can be understood that pilgrim walks differ drastically from simple promenades; they do have an inner purpose in their core and they relate more to festival processions, even if they are not so structured as the last ones.

Pilgrim walks continue to be present until today. But as it was already mentioned, despite what was happening in the past, today's "pilgrimages" seem not to be so much dependent on the religious feeling. Either they serve as a way of coming to nature or they act as the heritage of a long tradition, they keep being inspiring forces; forces that activate the festive or even sometimes an artistic feeling. Especially in the province of Limburg in which the current research focuses, the contemporary pilgrim walking attitude is expressed mainly by two aspects: the neo-impressionism paintings of the Dutch artist *Nop Briex* and the active online initiative of *Pilgrim in Limburg*.

Starting from *Nop Briex*³⁷, it should be mentioned that he is an artist educated in Maastricht and based in Tilburg, mainly known for his neo-van Gogh

³⁴ https://www.traildino.nl/trace/continents-Europe/countries-Pilgrims_Ways, accessed 18/12/2017

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Paul Post, Jos Pieper, Marinus van Uden. *The Modern Pilgrim: Multidisciplinary Explorations of Christian Pilgrimage*. Peeters Publishers. Leuven 1998. page 85

³⁷ <https://briex.eu/portfolio/paintings/landscapes%20archive.html>, accessed 15/01/2018

painting style. In his portfolio, he has dealt with a variety of different themes, but what is particularly interesting is his collection of landscape paintings. The greatest part of his collection is dedicated to paintings that represents fragments of the countryside of Limburg; a detailed artistic effort in which everything is present. From the hills and the small valleys to the farm houses and the typical villages. Every aspect of the fragile Limburgian natural beauty and cultural wealth is revealed to the public, always treated with care and respect. But what makes Nop Briex's work unique is that all his paintings are conceived and experienced through the eyes of a walker. The spectator seems to be a walker in the landscape and this is the reason why the old provincial farm roads are so dominant to almost all his paintings. A new reinterpreted statement on a very old tradition.

On the other side, the online initiative of Pelgrim in Limburg is not a representative form of pilgrim walking but a vivid experience. The website *pelgriminlimburg.nl* is responsible for the mapping and the highlight of a variety of pilgrim promenades in the countryside of the province and it consists of an active and conscious community of followers. Moreover, the initiative does not address exclusively to believers. For them, *Pilgrim in Limburg is not connected to a religious movement and is open to everyone who likes to walk.*³⁸ In that sense, the walking culture in the area tends to be more connected to the alternative wellness attitude, an escape from the city routine, a time of self-reflection and self-restoration in the way it was described in the first report.

Continuing the description of Pelgrim in Limburg, we should mention that the organizers have divided the walking experience into four parallel axes of experience. According to the brochure of the initiative, the modern walkers in Limburg has the chance to experience (a) the practice of walking to (b) a vast system of historical roads. But the "totalitarian" of the experience is not achieved until the walkers find a place in which they can admire the (c) great natural beauty of the place or understand

³⁸ <https://www.pelgriminlimburg.nl/#aanbod>, accessed 18/12/2017

its (d) cultural wealth. The brochure descriptions of all the four axes are included below aiming to provide a better picture to the reader:³⁹

a. Walking in Limburg

The South Limburg hill country is ideal for multi-day walking tours. An extensive network of mostly unpaved paths makes it possible to avoid the busy traffic routes and enjoy undisturbed lime grasslands, hillside forests and charming villages with whitewashed half-timbered houses.

b. Old roads

Limburg has traditionally been an area where much is promoted to local pilgrimage sites. Many hiking trails are in fact historic pilgrims' roads between chapels, churches, monasteries and shrines. The large number of road crosses also indicates a long and rich religious tradition.

c. Natural beauty

Partly thanks to the calcareous soil, plants and animals can be found in Limburg that cannot survive in any other place in the Netherlands. In this way, more than fifteen species of orchids bloom on the poor limestone grasslands. Hillside forests provide shelter to the garlic and the wood anemone. And the protected vine snail feels at home in the shadow of hollow roads.

d. Cultural wealth

In Limburg the traces of a rich history are clearly visible. Various peoples, including Romans, Spaniards, Prussians, and French, have contributed to the cultural landscape of this region. Religion and culture are closely intertwined. You will find expressions of Christian symbolism along almost every country road.

³⁹ Ibid

Reaching the conclusion of the chapter, it is worthy to mention that Pelgrim limburg.nl is responsible for the organization of five -in total- different pilgrim walks, all of them in Limburg and all of them scheduled during springtime. These five walks act more as an indication of the variety of the different paths that someone can take in Limburg. An experienced walker can easily mark his/her own path in this marvelous countryside without the need of a map. Everyone who can walk approximately 20km in one day is welcomed to participate, no matter the age and the background. Apart from walking, the participants will have the chance to spend one/two night in a farm or in a monastery depending their pilgrim walk. The reason behind the selection of spring as the optimal season is both practical and symbolical; on the one hand spring has the best temperature for trekking (not too much cold or heat) and on the other, this is the time in which nature celebrates the moment of its birth and as a result, its beauty is incomparable. The five walks and their brief descriptions are the following:⁴⁰

a. Hiking weekend Val-Dieu

Discover the beautiful Belgian Voer region during the hiking weekend Val-Dieu. The imposing abbey of Val-Dieu is the resting point of the two-day circular walk. The overnight stay takes place in the converted stables of a neighboring farm.

b. Walking weekend Heiligenroute

During the walking route Heiligenroute we follow in the footsteps of local saints. The beautiful pilgrim route runs through brook valleys and worn plateaus. For the overnight stay in Valkenburg, we join the sisters of the monastery Regina Pacis.

c. Walking weekend via Regia

⁴⁰ ibid

Now the classic of Pilgrim in Limburg. During the trip from Maastricht to Aachen, the hill country shows its best side. The route runs partly over the pilgrimage road to Santiago. We stay overnight in monastery Wittem, a beautiful place to unwind.

d. Abbey tour Limburg

Abbey tour Limburg is a three-day walk through Benedictine abbeys. Spicy hills and picturesque river valleys alternate. The overnight stays take place in the abbeys of Kornelimünster and Rolduc.

e. Maastricht Pilgrim walk

Discover the hilly borderland south of Maastricht on your own. The 14-km day walk leads past holy houses and devilish caves.

The fifth and final walk is the main subject of the next chapter as well as the background of the whole design project. The above-discussed Well of St. Servaas is also an integral part of the same walk together with a variety of other features: from dense forests and scary caves to beautiful hills and peaceful valleys. All together will be discussed extensively in the next pages of the current report based on the 4-part division: *walking in Limburg, old roads, natural beauty and cultural wealth.*



The countryside of Limburg by Nop Briex



A farm road of Limburg by Nop Briex

Pelgrim in Limburg

↑ AANBOD WANDELWEEKENDEN OVER CONTACT

Pelgrim in Limburg

Wandelen over oude pelgrimswegen, genieten van de natuur en overnachten in een klooster. Dat is Pelgrim in Limburg in een notendop.

Maak de pelgrim in je wakker en ervaar de schoonheid van het heuvelland tijdens een van de wandelweekenden.

[BEKIJK AANBOD](#)



Pelgrim in Limburg > Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht

↑ OVER DE WANDELING ROUTE DOWNLOADEN

Pelgrim in Limburg

Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht

Ontdek op eigen gelegenheid het heuvelachtige grensland ten zuiden van Maastricht. De dagwandeling van 14 km voert langs heilige huisjes en duivelse grotten. Een routebeschrijving en GPX-bestand zijn gratis te downloaden.

Aangeboden door Pelgrim in Limburg.

[LEES MEER](#)



The Pelgrim in Limburg online initiative

Highlights

Walking and pilgrimage in Limburg is a special experience. Below you can read what the hill country has to offer.



Walking in Limburg

The South Limburg hill country is ideal for multi-day walking tours. An extensive network of mostly unpaved paths makes it possible to avoid the busy traffic routes and enjoy undisturbed lime grasslands, hillside forests and charming villages with whitewashed half-timbered houses.



Old roads

Limburg has traditionally been an area where much is promoted to local pilgrimage sites. Many hiking trails are in fact historic pilgrims' roads between chapels, churches, monasteries and shrines. The large number of road crosses also indicates a long and rich religious tradition.



Natural beauty

Thanks in part to the calcareous soil, plants and animals can be found in Limburg that can not survive in any other place in the Netherlands. In this way more than fifteen species of orchids bloom on the poor limestone grasslands. Hillside forests provide shelter to the garlic and the wood anemone. And the protected vine snail



Cultural wealth

In Limburg, the traces of a rich history are clearly visible. Various peoples, including Romans, Spaniards, Prussians and French, have contributed to the cultural landscape of this region. Religion and culture are closely intertwined. You will find expressions of Christian symbolism along almost every country road.

The highlights of Pilgrim in Limburg



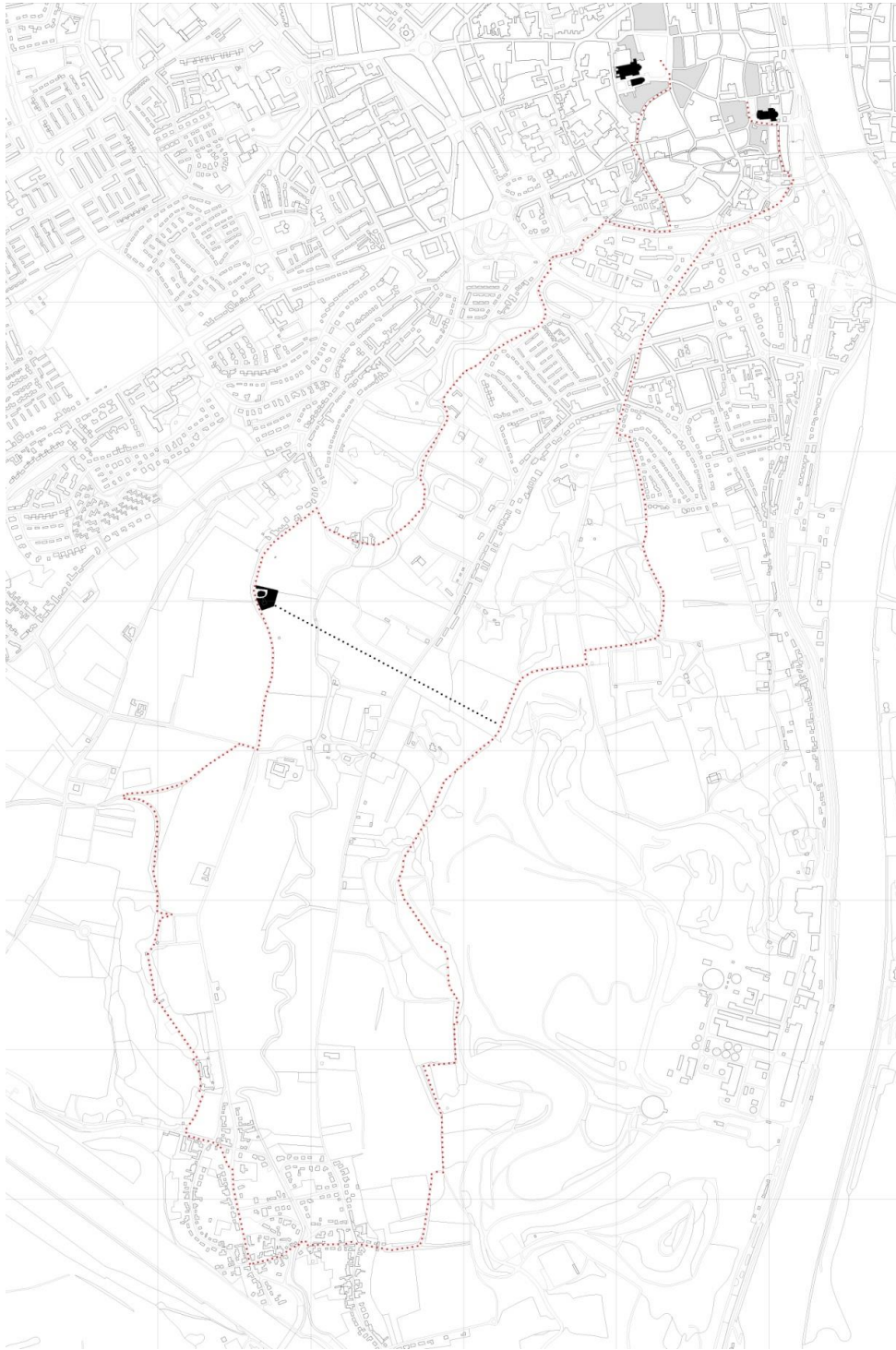
Walkers of Limburg in action

4. Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht

Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht or Maastricht's pilgrim walk is the last and the smallest of the five structured pilgrim walks proposed by Pelgrim in Limburg. It is approximately a 14km walk that crosses through all the different kinds of the landscape (manmade and natural) that a visitor can find in the area. Similar to the other walks, Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht is accompanied by numerous smallest farm roads or paths that lead to all the different corners of the area. But, contrary to the other walks, it does not offer any accommodation, mainly due to the absence of any kind of accommodation place that fits in the general context of the pilgrim walk (monasteries, farms etc). Maastricht's pilgrim walk takes place during spring. Only then the walker/visitor would have the chance to experience the festivity of seasonality and the influence of Spring's restoring power.

Reflecting on my own walking experience from *Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht*, I would like to mention that this, particular, walk presents a meaningful differentiation that constitutes it unique in comparison with the other four. There is no other Pilgrim walk that presents this great variety in all its four different aspects (walking, old roads, natural beauty, cultural wealth) and it is at the same time in such a proximity from an urban center. More precisely, Maastricht's pilgrim walk can be summarized as a vivid narrative of the region's cultural and natural history. During the length of the walk, the visitor has the opportunity to visit and experience a long list of different places; from plain fields and forests, from abandoned industries to small farms, from hills to rivers, from scary caves to beautiful chapels and from outstanding vineyards to the familiar Well of St. Servaas. There is nothing particular that could be described as the main feature of the walk. In terms of meaning, all those elements are destined to work together, no matter if they weren't designed to do that. They seem like pages of the same book that other times live contrastingly and others supplementary. They are the chapters of a ritualistic procession without a defined beginning or end. Everything is there: from the contemporary duality of the city vs the

countryside, to the religious contrast of God vs Devil and the ontological difference between destruction and rebirth. *Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht* can, indeed, be the journey which leads to the personal catharsis of the participant; a totalitarian festive experience of returning to nature. The following pictures from the site complete the contents of the current chapter.



Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht



Artistic work depicting people celebrate alongside with nature



The hilly landscape of Limburg



The peaceful fields of Maastricht



The rough landscape in the former industry of Sint-Petersberg



Small kapels in the intersections of pilgrim paths



Walking in the forests



The underground cosmos of Maastricht Zonneberg caves



De Apostelhoeve as a crown in the landscape



The chapel of Holy-Selpucher



The open chapel de Lourdes grotto



Duivelsgrot



The Well of St Servaas

5. *Conclusions-Remarks*

In conclusion, the current report tried to present briefly all the Pilgrim walks of the Province of Limburg, emphasizing on the one located close to Maastricht. In its core, Pelgrims wandeling Maastricht can be characterized as a pure festival activity; It is a ritualistic walk that welcomes the visitors to experience the *other*, in the means of the non-daily urban condition, and invites them to return to nature and get restored through that. Cultural symbolism and naturalistic pleasure are equally blended creating a deep sense of relief to the participant walker. It can be supported that this deep, almost archaic sense overpasses the limitations of western religion and reaches a different level of universal spirituality. Maastricht's Pilgrim walk consist the optimal background for the developing of a design project that focuses on pilgrim walkers and their intention to celebrate a contemporary return to nature. Nop Briex's paintings also taught a valuable lesson. The aim is to "work" in aligning with all the above-mentioned facts by forming new design themes. The program of the design thesis will be concretized in the form of a new guesthouse that tries to incorporate the ritual of the contemporary walker's retreat. The guesthouse will be accompanied by a supplementary designed promenade that shapes a new tangible form for the experience of the beauty of the mutable landscape. But before that, there is a need of knowing more about the people that will be the target group of the intervention. How do they feel about Pelgrims wandeling Maastricht and why do they choose to participate? The subject of the third report is to provide with answers to questions like the previous ones.

REPORT III

The participants of Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht

1. Introduction

The third and final report is a user-centered research document which presents the opinions of both the organizers and the participants of Pelgrimwandeling Maastricht. Apart from presenting, the purpose of this paper is to evaluate the findings of the current investigation and shape a formula through which the results can be implemented to the design studio. As it had been already understood from the two previous reports, the undertaking of the current research presents a few particularities and difficulties. But despite that, the intention of the author was to extract the maximum from this investigation, by finding alternatives methods of investigation.

Pelgrim in Limburg is a small website that runs the organization of the pilgrim walks. It is not a famous society or a big travel agency but a small, although remarkable, online initiative that is occupied exclusively with that. As it was stated in the previous reports, the pilgrim walks take place during spring and this is also when the groups of walkers are formed. It is only at that time that a researcher can have the full picture of the "event" and at the same time, be able to personally talk with the participants. Unfortunately, the period of this research wasn't in align with the dates of the pilgrim walks but there is an alternative way of research that provides important background information for the design proposal.

The essence of the presented research is to examine a series of principal queries on the subject of Pilgrim walks in Limburg, focusing on the Maastricht one. Why do people choose to participate in a pilgrim walk? We can speculate that the answer has to do with the pilgrim tradition of the area or with the fact that pilgrim walking is perceived as a kind of "sport", inherited from generation to generation. Thus, a conversation with the organizers, in the form of a qualitative research, will try to provide answers, revealing at the same time, hidden details on the subject.

But, probably the most important question is related to the participants themselves. What do they believe they gain from the experience of a pilgrim walk? How do they feel about their choice? Of course, the optimal way to answer these questions will be a direct conversation with the pilgrims. Knowing that this is impossible at the current moment, the research strategy followed a different path. Based on the fact that Pelgrim in Limburg is a website platform which communicates exclusively through email and Facebook, the author investigated the comments, the suggestions and the ratings of the participants in the form of public comments posted on the official Facebook page. By evaluating the comments, we can conclude to what extent the questions posed by the author can be answered or not.

Finally, in the last part of the paper, an overall evaluation will take place. Which conclusions or remarks are useful and which not and why. Moreover, if some of them are indeed useful, in what ways they will be taken into account in the design decisions. In conclusion, the final chapter will try to link the findings of the report to the bigger picture, that of the design project.

2. Pelgrimswandelig Maastricht through the eyes of the organizers

The first part of the current social research is the result of the communication of the author with the organizer of Pelgrim in Limburg, L. Dumont. According to the last one, the idea of Pelgrim in Limburg was born in the summer of 2006, when L. Dumont went on a pilgrimage for the very first time. As he personally states:

*The experience of walking on ancient paths, alone or in the company of fellow pilgrims, sleeping and eating in a variety of places, was very impressive and profound. To me being on the 'camino' was a life-changing event and in the years that followed, I walked the old roads whenever I had the chance.*⁴¹

⁴¹ Interview with L. Dumond, organizer of Pelgrim in Limburg, Maastricht 19/01/2018

In 2014, L. Dumont created his first website with the aim of finding more passionate walkers that are willing to share the experience of walking in nature. The first 8 people were enrolled and the first walk in the countryside of from Aachen to Maastricht followed. *Pelgrim in Limburg* was finally a fact.

Analyzing the reasons behind the participation in a pilgrim walk, L. Dumont supports that there are still today people that practice pilgrimages for religious purposes. But, together with them, there is a growing number of participants that simply enjoy walking in the countryside. For them, *Pelgrim in Limburg is a way to unwind and get back in touch with nature*⁴² but there are also others for whom *the motivation is very personal, such as the loss of a beloved*.⁴³ A deep and spiritual need; the expectation of remembrance and the feeling of a personal catharsis thought the practice of walking.

Concluding this short chapter, dedicated to the organizer, there are also a few things to be mentioned; things that can also act as an introduction to the following main body of the social research. For L. Dumont, pilgrim walking is a participatory activity that does not exclude anyone. In a way, we could support that it keeps its religious roots. There are no limitations or differentiations on how someone is treated during a pilgrim walk; everyone is equal in front of this practice and competitive feelings have no place. The only requirement from the side of the participant is to be healthy and able to walk approximately 20km per day. A contemporary form of an old collective “sport”.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

3. Pelgrimswandelig Maastricht through the eyes of the participants

According to the Facebook page, Pelgrim in Limburg was founded in September of 2014, confirming what L. Dumont stated in the interview. We can support that its official start coincides with the increasing popularity of pilgrimage, especially in the Netherlands. Suzanne van der Beck, PhD candidate in Tilburg University, supports two really interesting facts. Not only pilgrimage becomes more and more secularized, but it also gains more and more reputation, mainly due to the rise of social media.⁴⁵ In a way, this opinion strengthens the decision of the current research to examine the Facebook page of the initiative as a form of social expression and evaluation. We can state that this particular form of social media consists the generator of the social dimension of Pelgrim in Limburg.

Pelgrim in Limburg is followed by approximately 570 persons, which is a relatively small number for the usual Facebook standards. We can make the hypothesis that the pilgrim society consists of a small, but at the same time, active core of persons. The last argument seems to be strengthened further by the fact that the people who follow the page are keen on involving in it. L. Dupont, the administrator and organizer of the page confirms it too. Many posts, shared pictures and videos, comments, upvotes and ratings follow each one of the different pilgrim walks, proving that the participants willingly share their experiences with the other people of the community. In the effort to answer the research question, all the posted comments were taken into account. The aim is to categorize the comments and the reviews in a clear and structured way.

The investigation showed that there are 4 big categories of answers to the hypothetical question "what did you believe you gain from the Pelgrim in Limburg experience and how do you feel about your choice?". The 4 categories are the following:

⁴⁵ https://www.volkskrant.nl/buitenland/-de-meeste-moderne-pelgrims-zijn-niet-religieus-geinspireerd~a4513619/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=shared%20content&utm_content=paid&hash=4c25082c51eadc10a372fa07674806cc68ad3cb1, accessed 19/12/2017

1. The pilgrim walk as a team experience

Review no1⁴⁶

*Walking on this route through the beautiful landscape of southern Limburg was a rare and unbelievable experience. We did it on May 2016 and it was for us, a wonderful and relaxing weekend with bright sun and with a breeze perfume. **Experts and good people were guiding us through the whole walk.** Thank you, Pelgrim in Limburg organizers, for preparing this unique walk for us. We will definitely come back in 2017 for another walk.*

Review no2⁴⁷

*We loved the stunning landscape, the beautiful route with its surprising moments and **the nice team atmosphere accompanied by the good guidance of Len;** it was a unique and refreshing experience. The ultimate way to relax and do an unexpected gift to yourself! 5/5 stars.*

Review no3⁴⁸

*It was the first time for me and together with my sister, we participated on March 23 and 24 April. We liked it very much. I found it a unique experience that relieves your soul. The route above the old Pelgrimspaden, was very special and spiritual for me. The trip was well organized, and the guide explained us a lot on the road. **It is a team experience and it was fun.** I had a very good time and I would recommend it for everyone. I'll see you next time!*

In the first of the four categories, the pilgrim walking is perceived as a type of collective/group activity. A small group of people (around 8-10 participants)⁴⁹ that spend together their weekend, relaxing away from the burdens of their daily life. The

⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/pelgriminlimburg/>, accessed 19/12/2017

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ <https://www.pelgriminlimburg.nl/>, accessed 19/12/2017

comments reveal that for the participants, pilgrim walks are a chance for meaningful socializing. People are free to interact, away from the usual context, and walking in nature provides the fruitful ground for the establishing of new social relationships. They are a group because they share the same experience.

2. The pilgrim walk as a surprising activity

Review no1⁵⁰

I was familiar with the area of the walk from pictures but the reality was still a revelation ... Nature, its atmosphere, and the numerous views were just fantastic. It was the perfect thing to clear up my mind before another busy week by just looking to the magnificent scenery. 5/5 stars.

Review no2⁵¹

Nature was a wonder, a revelation of beautiful routes to challenge yourself. And all that accompanied and guided by a nice person. I enjoyed it and my creativity is bubbling again. I needed some time off in nature. Thank you, Len. It was great! And special! 5/5stars

Review no3⁵²

We loved the stunning landscape, the beautiful route with its surprising moments and the nice team atmosphere accompanied by the good guidance of Len; it was a unique and refreshing experience. The ultimate way to relax and do an unexpected gift to yourself! 5/5 stars.

In the second category, we can argue that the pilgrim walk can cause a positive feeling to the participants. It clearly offers an unparalleled experience of the landscape. Even

⁵⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/pelgriminlimburg/>, accessed 19/12/2017

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid

the people that are familiar with the places and the landscapes of the walk, confess their surprise about the beauty of the experience. Through the practice of walking, participants stop being just simple visitors and they are transformed into dwellers of a meaningful locus. In that sense, pilgrim walks can be considered as a revelation; as a unique chance of reevaluation and a time for personal reflection on the way we interpret the daily beauty of our lives. A question about the alienated and “fortified” - behind our tiny anxieties- souls.

3. The pilgrim walk as a repeatable experience

Review no1⁵³

*Walking on this route through the beautiful landscape of southern Limburg was a rare and unbelievable experience. We did it on May 2016 and it was for us, a wonderful and relaxing weekend with bright sun and with a breeze perfume. Experts and good people were guiding us through the whole walk. Thank you, Pelgrim in Limburg organizers, for preparing this unique walk for us. **We will definitely come back in 2017 for another walk.***

Review no2⁵⁴

*It was the first time for me and together with my sister, **we participated on March 23 and 24 April.** We liked it very much. I found it a unique experience that relieves your soul. The route above the old Pelgrimspaden, was very special and spiritual for me. The trip was well organized, and the guide explained us a lot on the road. It is a team experience and it was fun. I had a very good time and I would recommend it for everyone. **I'll see you next time!***

Review no3⁵⁵

⁵³ <https://www.facebook.com/pelgriminlimburg/>, accessed 19/12/2017

⁵⁴ Ibid

I have walked two times with the Pelgrim in Limburg organization and I would really want to walk again with a new trip. 5/5

As it is clearly stated in the reviews, the majority of the participants express their wish to come back again for another walk, sometime in the future. Moreover, some of them have already participated more than once. In this sense, Pelgrim in Limburg creates a new tradition; it facilitates the beginning of a new pilgrim society that consists of members who consider pilgrimage as a repeatable experience. This remark is embedded with a special importance concerning that all these people consist the target group of a potential architectural intervention. Their commitment to their activity is fundamental for the successful implementation of the new design project in the area.

4. The pilgrim walk as a practice of self-restoration

Review no1⁵⁶

*It was the first time for me and together with my sister, we participated on March 23 and 24 April. We liked it very much. I found it a **unique experience that relieves your soul**. The route above the old Pelgrimspaden, was very special and spiritual for me. The trip was well organized, and the guide explained us a lot on the road. It is a team experience and it was fun. I had a very good time and I would recommend it for everyone. I'll see you next time!*

Review no2⁵⁷

*Nature was a wonder, a revelation of beautiful routes to challenge yourself. And all that accompanied and guided by a nice person. **I enjoyed it and my creativity is bubbling***

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/pelgriminlimburg/>, accessed 19/12/2017

⁵⁷ Ibid

again. I needed some time off in nature. Thank you, Len. It was great! And special!

5/5stars

Review no3⁵⁸

*I was familiar with the area of the walk from pictures but the reality was still a revelation ... Nature, its atmosphere, and the numerous views were just fantastic. **It was the perfect thing to clear up my mind before another busy week by just looking to the magnificent scenery.** 5/5 stars.*

Last, but not least, is the conclusion that the pilgrim walk can be considered as a practice of self-restoration. There is nothing to add more that hasn't been already mentioned in the first and second report. The main reason behind the continuous increase of pilgrimage tradition are the contemporary attitudes towards wellness. Pilgrim walks offer a unique chance of escaping to nature with the help of which, the soul is relieved, the mind is refreshed and the lost creativity is recovered. Again, modern pilgrimage is a totalitarian festive experience of rediscover our forgotten connection with the nature we are coming from.

⁵⁸ Ibid

Facebook interface showing a post for "Pelgrim in Limburg".

Page Header: Pelgrim in Limburg | Home | [Profile] | [Messages] | [Search]

Post Header: Like | Follow | Recommend | ... | Learn more | Message

Profile: Pelgrim in Limburg (@pelgriminlimburg)

Review Summary: 5.0 stars (13 reviews)

Review: The N... wrote review "Pelgrim in Limburg" May 14

Review Text: Natuur, verwondering, noining, prachtige routes bewandelen, uitdaging met jezelf aangaan. All the so-called begeleid doors have been used. Ik heb genoten en mie creativiteit borrelt weer volop. Had ik best ff nodig. Dankjewel Len. Het was super! En bijzonder!

Interactions: Like | Comment | Share

Comments: 5

- Comment 1:** Pelgrim in Limburg Wow, wat een fijne review Nathalie. If you want to know where you are going Heel hartelijk dank en graag tot een volgende keer. See the translation. I like! Reply 4 · May 15 at 9:08 am
- Comment 2:** See the translation. I like! Reply · May 15 at 9:49 am
- Comment 3:** Helmaal eens, super genot. See the translation. I like! Reply · May 15 at 3:36 pm
- Comment 4:** Moet nog een even stilstaan bij de soepe begeleiding heerlijk !! Len (nard) is krijgt van mij een dikke voldoende. See the translation. I like! Reply 1 · May 17 at 12:25 pm

Post on Facebook accompanied by the reactions of the followers

Facebook page header for "Pelgrim in Limburg" with search bar and navigation links (Home, Learn more, Message).

Profile picture: 

Page name: Pelgrim in Limburg
@pelgriminlimburg

Home
Information

Interaction buttons: Like, Follow, Recommend, ...

Review summary: 5.0 ★, 5.0 out of 5 stars, 13 reviews

Review by [User] on 5 August 2015:

Pelgrimeren met Len is een bijzondere, leuke en unieke ervaring! Niet alleen vanwege de supermooie locaties (abdijen van Kornelimunster en Rolduc) en de interessante weetjes die hij daarbij weet te vertellen. Ook de (in dit geval) mannenwandeltocht zelf brengt een extra dimensie in het samen op pad zijn. Kortom: de Abdijtocht is erg goed georganiseerd, voor elk wat wils en een echte aanrader!

See translation

Like Comment Comment Share

3 likes

Facebook page header for "Pelgrim in Limburg" with search bar and navigation links (Home, Learn more, Message).

Profile picture: 

Page name: Pelgrim in Limburg
@pelgriminlimburg

Home
Information

Interaction buttons: Like, Follow, Recommend, ...

Review summary: 5.0 ★, 5.0 out of 5 stars, 13 reviews

Review by [User] on October 25, 2015:

Ik heb twee tochten met Pelgrim in Limburg gewandeld. Mijn beleving wil ik graag tot uitdrukking in deze oude tekst:
"Ga staan op de wegen, en zie,
Vraag naar de aloude paden,
Waar toch de goede weg is, bewandel en die. Dan zult u rust vinden in uw ziel".
Ik wandel graag weer met een nieuwe tocht.

See translation

Like Comment Comment Share

3 likes

Examples of comments

Facebook page for Pelgrim in Limburg. The page features a cover photo with the text "Pelgrim in Limburg" and a profile picture with the same text. The main content is a post from October 21, 2018, announcing a weekend of pilgrimages in Limburg. The post includes a link to the website and a photo of a group of people walking on a dirt path through a green field. The right sidebar contains information about the page, including the number of likes (561) and followers (569), and a list of pages the user likes, such as "Abdij Rolduc" and "Nederlands Genootsc...".

Pelgrim in Limburg
@pelgriminlimburg

Home Information Events Critics Video Photos Publications Community Create a Page

The user **Pelgrim in Limburg** added 4 new photos .
October 21 · 🌐

Pelgrim gezocht! This is the first time that the Heiligenroute dates back to the 26th and 27th of May 2018. The weekend of the weekend was held in Limburg as a heyday by Jacobspad van Sittard naar Maastricht. Onthaasten, without any reason, has been dismissed as a result of the wandelweekend. Zin om mee te lopen? Meld is given by volgende site.
<https://www.pelgriminlimburg.nl/wandelweekend-heiligenroute>
See translation

Information View all
It usually answers within a few hours
[Send a message](#)
www.pelgriminlimburg.nl
Travel agency

Pages you like on this page

- Abdij Rolduc** I like!
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4. Epilogue-Towards a design project

The fourth and final part of the third report, also consists the epilogue of the current research. It is fact that there are already mentioned throughout the text, enough remarks that can be implemented in the design project. Some of them are part of the first and second report while the great number of them was presented in the current paper. Any conclusion that concerns the architectural program of the design has already been mentioned in the conclusion of the previous paper and it will be repeated briefly, again here.

Pelgrimswandeling Maastricht is an original representative of the Pelgrim in Limburg concept. Based on that, it means that all the general remarks apply to this one as well. The analysis of the Facebook page showed that the people, or in other words, the target group and the users that participate in the pilgrim walks, present a variety of specific characteristics. In general terms, we are talking about a specific amount of people who usually visit the sites more than once and seem to be able to know and connect with each other deeply, despite the minimum of time. All of them together, seem to enjoy and admire the beauty of the countryside and in every chance, they find themselves being surprised by something new. At the same time, the majority of them seem to live in the big cities and to be familiar with technology. Actually, pilgrim walks, for them, are a form of short holidays; a productive way to escape from the daily routine. This is the reason why they enjoy spending the night in places like monasteries and farms. They reminds them of something long forgotten and deeply hidden inside their inner selves. Thus, it seems that the design project should be a proposal that meets the needs of this groups in terms that it will strengthen further their experience and perhaps, it will positively surprise them. In any case, the project should not disrupt anything that those people know and appreciate.

In conclusion, it is worthy to mention that the current research contributed a lot in the formation of the upcoming design proposal. As an author and prospective

architect, I learned quite a lot about the place and I understood more the people and their habits. It is in my intentions to productively use the knowledge I gained in all the future design steps. In a final attempt to reflect on the present research, I will summarize my outcomes in five major design directions. The five key points are:

- The main design gestures should derive from all the qualities found in the landscape of Limburg and highlight all the visible and hidden aspects of the place.

- The guesthouse should create a feeling of seclusion and it should have a modest character. It has to be a place in which people escape from the city; a contemporary form of monastic shelter and a sacral center of the contemporary pilgrim culture.

-Seasonality should be incorporate actively in the project; the participants should have the possibility of experience the change of seasons. Together with that, the project should highlight all the hidden qualities of the Liburgian countryside; both in terms of natural beauty and cultural wealth.

-The newly designed pilgrim promenade should be similar to the existing ones, rejecting any intense intervention. It is a small contribution to a vast network of farm roads that only serves as a connection path to the new design

-The element of water should be also being part of the design based on its highly symbolic and re-aspirating power and on its meaning for the St. Servaas legend.

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