



**THE EMOTIONAL LAST DAYS OF A PLAGUE-VICTIM:
An exploration of emotions in the Devotio Moderna**

Bram Knapen

Radboud University Nijmegen 

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Supervisor: Dr. Kati Ihnat

Did you ever see history portrayed as an old man, with a wide brow and pulseless heart? Weighing all things in the balance of reason.

Is not, rather, the genius of history like an eternally-blooming maiden, full of fire, with a burning heart and flaming soul, humanly warm and humanly beautiful?

Therefore; if you have the capacity to suffer, or rejoice with the generations that have been. To hate with them, to love with them; to be transported, to admire, to despise, to curse as they have done.

In a word: to live among them with your whole heart, and not alone with your cold, reflecting judgment?

Then follow me! I will lead you down into the vale, my hand is weak and my sketch humble, but your heart will guide you better than I.

Upon that, I rely, and begin.

-

Poem by Zacharias Topelius included in *The Surgeon's Stories: Times of Gustaf Adolf* (1891).

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Introduction

“My brother, my brother my brother” Francesco Petrarca lamented in a letter to his brother Gerardo. “My beloved brother. What shall I say? Where do I begin? Whither shall I turn? Sorrow is everywhere! Fear is everywhere! O brother, I wish I had never been born! Has man ever witnessed such a thing? Has man ever heard of such a thing? In which annals can one read of houses that lie abandoned, about cities that are entirely depopulated, about fields that lay bare, about floors that are littered with corpses and about an earth of immeasurable, terrible emptiness? Ask the historians and they remain silent [...]”.¹ Since the days of Petrarca historians have not remained silent. The pandemic commonly known as “The Black Death” that raged through the European continent between 1346 and 1353 and the subsequent periodical returns of this disease have proved to be a rewarding subject for historians. On the so-called Foster scale, that measures the severity of disasters, the Black Death scores 10.9. This gives it the dubious honor of being the second worst disaster to ever befall humanity.²

An enormous disaster such as a plague-epidemic would cause immense human suffering. This suffering inspired writers such as Petrarca to give witness of their experiences. Traditionally historians would interpret accounts like these as testimonies of a *zeitgeist* or as containing explanations for political tension for instance. More recently however there has been a change in the way historians interpret historical sources, this change has been dubbed “the affective turn” and it has inspired historians to look at the emotional content of historical sources under the header of “emotional history”.

This emotional history has been on the rise in recent years, different scholars are producing standard works containing methodology for doing research into the history of emotions.³ Up until now there has not been a more opportune moment to attempt to uncover more of the emotional worlds of people of the past. That is what this thesis will aim to do. It will apply the most recent insights from eminent scholars on emotional history on a single source. The primary source that shall be analyzed is the account of the last days of Lubbert ten Bosch.⁴ Ten Bosch was associated with the early days of the Modern Devotion in the Dutch city of Deventer who fell victim to the plague in 1398. This thesis will place the story of Lubbert ten Bosch into its historical context, outlining how he and his fellow *modern devotees* formed a unique emotional community in Deventer in the late 1390's. It will set out to try and address how emotions manifested themselves within the context of the early *devotio moderna* and the plague that raged through Deventer. It will ask why emotions manifest themselves in the manner that they do, thus the focus will be on contextualizing the emotional expressions that can be found in the account of the last days of Lubbert ten Bosch.

¹ Francesco Petrarca, *Le Familiari*, translation: Ria Jansen-Sieben 'Ooggetuigen en flagellanten anno 1349', in: Jozef Lemli (ed.), *De pest in de Nederlanden* (Brussels, 1999), 85-108, here: 85. Translated from Dutch into English by me; Compare: George Deaux *The Black Death 1347* (New York, 1969), 92-94 for an original English translation.

² Robert E. Lerner, 'The Black Death and Western European Eschatological Mentalities', *The American Historical Review* 86-3 (1981), 533-552, here: 533; The Black Death is only “outdone” by World War II, which scores 11.1 on the aforementioned scale..

³ Some of these will be listed in the chapter on methodology.

⁴ For the full transcription of the source see: Thom Mertens 'Rondom het Sterfbed van Lubbert ten Busch: de Moderne Devoten en de Pest in Deventer in 1398', in: Jozef Lemli (ed.), *De pest in de Nederlanden* (Brussels, 1999), 141-158.

Status Quaestionis

Historiographical approaches to the Black Death have varied greatly throughout the years. Demographic historians such as Ole Jørgen Benedictow are mainly interested in the territorial spread of the plague and its demographic impact, which they study through mortality rates. Benedictow himself uses modern bacteriology and epidemiology to explore the spread of the Black Death and explain its demographic impact.⁵ In correlation with research into the spread, demographic impact and mortality rates the question of the origin of the Black Death is often raised. Consensus on this subject has not been reached thus far. The same can be said for the historical discussion on the exact nature of the disease that caused the plague.⁶ Debates on these issues have proved interesting and fruitful areas of research. Despite this fact, this thesis shall not engage in big-data debates since it seeks to uncover the human beings behind the numbers. For the same reason political responses and economic consequences will also remain unaddressed throughout this work, for: it will largely deal with the experiences of those who witnessed the plague firsthand as it was happening. This thesis is by no means the first attempt at identifying people's responses to the plague. Jo N. Hays gives a comprehensive overview of some of these responses. Hays states that the primary response to the plague in both the Christian and Muslim worlds was religious, he goes on to mark supplications, prayer services and processions as the main responses to the disease. Another frequent response identified by Hays was flight, this cause of action was mainly informed by the medical knowledge of the time which held that 'purer' air in the countryside would be beneficial.⁷

Alongside the broad interest in "big data-matters" concerning the plague there has also been a broad historical interest in the cultural impact of the plague. Historians have, for instance, asserted that contemporary authors consciously wrote for posterity, being fully aware of the magnitude of the events they were describing.⁸ This could point toward a more self-conscious attitude compared to pre-Black Death times. Other historians, such as David Herlihy, have pointed to a change in attitudes towards death. He describes this change in terms of two social fissures, one between the sick and the healthy and the other between those in the cultural mainstream and those on the fringes of society.⁹ Herlihy points towards the lack of care the Church was able to provide for the sick and the dying as the main cause for the change in attitude towards the sick and the dying. The dead became a danger, things to be disposed of quickly. The living on the other hand seemed to celebrate life with feasts and even orgies, seemingly celebrating a temporary victory over death.¹⁰ The established church seemed to have lost control of their spiritual monopoly. Priests were widely criticized for not providing spiritual care and not performing duties such as administering last rites or taking confessions.¹¹ At the same time, the second half of the 14th-century saw a veritable explosion in the rise of lay movements.¹² Within the context of the failing established church and the rise of lay movements, it were the friars who garnered the admiration of the people by staying behind and performing religious duties for the community.¹³

Another group that seemingly came under societal scrutiny were the healers.¹⁴ The medical response to the plague has also been an area of broad historical research. Most of this research

⁵ Ole J. Benedictow, *The Black Death 1346-1353: The Complete History* (Woodbridge, 2004), xi-xii - 3-35.

⁶ Jo N. Hays, *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History* (Santa Barbara, 2005), 59-66.

⁷ Hays, *Epidemics and Pandemics*, 55.

⁸ John Aberth, *The Black Death: The Great Mortality of 1348-1350 a Brief History with Documents* (Boston, 2005), 5-7.

⁹ David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West* (Cambridge MA, 1997), 59-81.

¹⁰ Herlihy, *The Black Death*, 59-64.

¹¹ Aberth, *The Black Death*, 94.

¹² Cebus C. de Bruin, 'De Spiritualiteit van de Moderne Devotie', in: C.C de Bruin (ed.), *Geert Grote en de Moderne Devotie* (Zutphen, 1984), 102-144, here: 102-104.

¹³ Aberth, *The Black Death*, 94-95; The possible correlation between the Black Death and the rise of lay movements will be elaborated on in the chapter on the Devotio Moderna.

¹⁴ Aberth, *The Black Death*, 37-40.

focusses on the inadequacies of medieval medicine for combatting the plague. John Kelly describes the “cutting edge” new “scientific” approach that was new Galenism with its four humors. He concludes by saying that the best advice practitioners of medicine in the middle ages could give was “run far and run fast”.¹⁵ Ria Jansen-Sieben describes a 14th-century Middle Dutch plague-regime. This advises therapies such as bloodletting, diets and fresh air but also to tie a live rooster’s plucked and salt-rubbed “arse” to the patient’s swollen lymph nodes until either the rooster or the patient would succumb.¹⁶ Both Kelly and Jansen-Sieben describe practices of practitioners of medicine, they describe actions or at least an advised course of action. The patient remains illusively invisible, how did the people that underwent these treatments feel? Were they scared? Hopeful? Desperate? We do not know.

One of the main aforementioned societal fringe-groups that came under pressure were the Jews.¹⁷ Things took a turn for the worse for the Jews in western Europe when the plague hit the area in the fifth decade of the 14th century. What followed had been called ‘the biggest wave of persecution of the Jews before the Shoah’.¹⁸ In an attempt to show that there is less of a correlation between the flagellant movement and the persecution of Jews than previously thought, Christoph Cluse uses a variety of primary sources to argue that it was in fact the local authorities in the cities that encouraged pogroms.¹⁹ As interesting as Cluse’s findings may be, he uses his sources in a fairly traditional fashion. Like many traditional historians he aims to explain developments through interpretations of actions and behaviors. The feelings of those involved seem supplementary. Samuel Cohn Jr does mention emotions in his work on the persecution of Jews during the Black Death but actually negates the potential emotional undercurrent of participants of pogroms.²⁰ Cohn instead opts to explain that the pogroms were initiated by the social elites of the day.²¹

The research undertaken on this issue so far shows that professional historians have elected to try to answer the big questions surrounding the plague such as the territorial spread of the disease, its mortality rate, its demographic impact and which bacteria actually caused it. Those historians who have taken a more in-depth look at cultural responses to the plague have elected to write reflective accounts of what happened to better interpret the causes and effects of specific phenomena surrounding the plague. It is striking that the human beings behind the numbers remain largely unseen. Part of this can be attributed to the fact that the so-called affective turn is a fairly recent development. It can also be attributed to the fact that the source material that is available simply is not adequate to write an emotional history about. Samuel Cohn Jr. for instance used, amongst others, the writings of Jacob von Königshofen, a chronicler from Strasbourg who wrote about the plague in his city a full generation after the Black Death struck.²² This can hardly be seen as an eyewitness account which renders the document less suitable for writing an emotional history about. What is needed to produce such a history is an account such as the one written about the death of Lubbert ten Bosch. Given the fact that the history of emotions is a developing field it is key to map out a clear methodological framework to make its object of study accessible, this will be done in the next chapter.

¹⁵ John Kelly, *The Great Mortality: An Intimate History of the Black Death* (London, 2006), 164-175.

¹⁶ Ria Jansen-Sieben ‘Het Pestregimen van Arent Schryver’, in: Jozef Lemli (ed.), *De pest in de Nederlanden* (Brussels, 1999), 109-139, here: 113-139.

¹⁷ Aberth, *The Black Death* 139-141.

¹⁸ Christoph M. Cluse, *Jodenvervolgingen ten tijde van de pest (1349-1350) In de Zuidelijke Nederlanden*, in: J. Lemli (ed.), *De pest in de Nederlanden* (Brussel, 1999), 45-83, here: 45.

¹⁹ Cluse, ‘Jodenvervolgingen’, 45-83.

²⁰ Samuel Cohn Jr., ‘The Black Death and the Burning of the Jews’, *Past and Present* 196-1 (2007), 3-36 here: 17-18.

²¹ Cohn, ‘Burning of the Jews’, 3-36.

²² *Ibidem* 17-18.

Methodology

Some scholars argue that there is room for works that emphasize how emotional standards are shaped through interaction between different groups in society.²³ This thesis would however argue that it is necessary to inventory individual groups' emotional standards before such an inter-societal synthesis can be made. After all, before one starts building a synthesis, the individual building blocks need to be in place. In recent years various authors have made strides in outlining a methodological framework for emotions history. The desire to have a historiographical overview of the recent rise in emotions history publications prompted German historian Jan Plamper to write a summarizing introduction on the development of this new field.²⁴ Plamper distinguishes two main schools of thought concerning the history of emotions: the universalist perspective borrowed from the neurosciences and the social-constructivist perspective which employs theories borrowed from the social sciences.²⁵ The universalist perspective holds that emotions are timeless, pan-cultural and unchangeable. For universalists emotions are a bodily or neuroanatomical affair.²⁶ The social-constructivist school exists alongside this universalist perspective; it does not argue that the neuroanatomical view is incorrect, however it does argue that responses to emotions are social constructs that are unique throughout time and bound to specific geographical contexts.²⁷ The two perspectives that have been sketched out here are thus not entirely incompatible. No historian can argue with the neuroanatomical evidence that the universalists present. The manner in which people deal with the neurological signals that we call emotions does however vary greatly over time and place and these can be historicized.²⁸

To illustrate this, Plamper presents a case of Maori-warriors who overcome their fear by performing a ritual which involves them crawling underneath a woman and glancing at her genitals.²⁹ During the middle ages, as we shall see later on, people would rid themselves of their fears through prayer and silent contemplation. In the modern Western world people often seek out psychologists to help them cope with their fears by talking about them. These three cases neatly present the same neuroanatomical phenomenon, the emotion of fear, handled in three distinctly different ways. One deals with fear through a physical ritual, the other through silent and individual prayer and yet another deals with fear through conversation with others. In other words, the emotion of fear remains a neuroanatomical constant but the way people deal with this neuroanatomical constant varies over time and place.

For the purposes of the historian, as Plamper argues, the social-constructivist perspective is the most workable of the two. Historians simply lack proper knowledge of the neurosciences and this would lead to undesirable and casual borrowings from those sciences.³⁰ A leading historian in the field of social-constructivist emotional history is Barbara H. Rosenwein. Rosenwein focusses on medieval history and argues that "the" medieval emotion does not exist. She argues that we should not view medieval society as a whole if we want to understand their emotional worlds. Rather, we should see the medieval world as kaleidoscope of separate emotional communities, each with its own unique specifications. She also argues that these specifications can change rapidly over relatively short periods of time.³¹ The development of these emotional communities can be historicized, therefore a history of the emotions becomes possible. Rosenwein postulates that emotional communities are largely the same as social communities without fully equating the two. Moreover she argues that textual

²³ Susan J. Matt & Peter N. Stearns, 'Introduction', in: Susan J. Matt & Peter N. Stearns (ed.), *Doing Emotions History* (Champaign, 2014), 1-16, here: 5-6.

²⁴ Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2015), preface, compare 7-8.

²⁵ Plamper, *History of Emotions*, 1-9.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 2-4.

²⁷ *Ibidem* 4-5.

²⁸ Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', *Passions in Context* 1-1 (2010), 2-32, here: 10.

²⁹ Plamper, *History of Emotions*, 4.

³⁰ *Ibidem* 298.

³¹ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca NY, 2006), 191-203.

communities often form the core of emotional communities.³² Through the study of emotion-words within texts historians can begin to problematize what feelings might be locked away in these texts by looking at the frequency of certain words and reading them in a historical context. Through this method a picture of the emotional worlds of these emotional communities can emerge.³³ While laying bare peoples' individual emotional experiences will remain a historians' utopia there are ways for the historian to understand people's emotional worlds. Historians can analyze the ways in which people articulated, understood and/or represented their emotions to others. Rosenwein argues that this is in fact all we can know of any type of feelings outside of our own experience.³⁴ We have to rely on communication to express our emotions to others and we can only take notice of the emotions of others when they communicate them to us.

Adherents of the linguistic turn have justifiably raised some questions into the translatability of certain emotion-words. If a medieval monk says he is afraid, does he understand this emotion in the same manner as we do in the 21st century? Vida Vukoja would argue that, on a semantic level, he will not. Vukoja distinguishes between three paradigms: emotion, affect (from the Latin *affectus*) and passion (Lat. *passio*) and concludes that the medieval paradigms of *affectus* and *passio* do not correspond very well with the modern paradigm of emotion, the latter first appearing in the works of René Descartes in the 17th-century. She goes on to argue that the word feeling actually better corresponds with the medieval terms of *affectus* and *passio*.³⁵ On this basis, equating the modern word 'emotion' with the medieval *affectus* and *passio* would seem to verge on anachronism. Some scholars have attempted to get around this problem by saying that all these words bear 'a family resemblance' and that the terms used are not standardized.³⁶ This thesis would however add another layer of historical theory. If the 21st-century mind is to understand 14th-century discourse it needs to employ a discourse it is familiar with to create an understanding of the past. To achieve this the historian can employ the idea of *Horizontverschmelzung* (English: fusion of horizons) as coined by German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer poses that understanding is formed by interaction between the historian and (images of) the world. Within this interaction the historian should actively use his own conceptions of the world to create an understanding of history.³⁷ This would enable the historian to empathize and engage with history without having to let go of 21st-century discourse. This would mean that we have to 'feel along' with historical actors if we wish to understand them.

But how can historians begin such a daunting enterprise? In her essay entitled Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions Barbara Rosenwein distinguishes between three interpretive paradigms of medieval emotion that can prove helpful to answer this question. The first was coined almost a century ago by Johan Huizinga who viewed the middle ages as a period where emotions were childish and uninhibited, released seemingly without self-control in any circumstance. Norbert Elias further popularized this theory by choosing it as a starting point for his civilizing process. Rosenwein asserts that viewing the middle ages through this paradigm cannot be the foundation of any inquiry into the medieval emotion since it does not view emotion as a cognition but as outbursts, not rooted in a cognitive structure.³⁸ The second paradigm was coined by Gerd Althoff, this paradigm holds that emotions were performances, they were staged as part of elaborate rituals involving members of society in varying positions in a social hierarchy.³⁹ Klaus Oschema adds another layer to this paradigm by stating that through repetition of these rituals medieval emotions became institutionalized, part of

³² Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods', 11-12.

³³ Ibidem, 10-22.

³⁴ Ibidem, 11.

³⁵ Vida Vukoja, 'Passion, a forgotten feeling', in: Fabienne Baider & Georgeta Cislaru (ed.), *Linguistic Approaches to Emotions in Context* (Amsterdam, 2014), 39-65, here: 39-65.

³⁶ Martin Pickavé & Lisa Shapiro, 'Introduction', in: Martin Pickavé & Lisa Shapiro (ed.), *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford, 2012), 1-8, here: 7-8.

³⁷ Harry Jansen, *Triptiek van de Tijd: Geschiedenis in drievoud* (Nijmegen, 2010) 112-115.

³⁸ Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions', *History Compass* 8-8 (2010), 828-842, here: 828-830.

³⁹ Rosenwein 'Thinking Historically', 830.

a set political and juristic framework as it were.⁴⁰ This approach has been met with various critiques, firstly viewing an emotion as a ritual freezes that emotion. It will work according to the same principle every single time and in every situation regardless of context. Secondly, this approach deprives emotions of any inner meaning to the person that experiences them since, according to this approach, emotions are performed rather than intrinsically felt.⁴¹ Stephen White coins the idea of 'scripts'. These scripts embed emotions in a framework of acts and feelings that serve a social function as a *gesamtkunstwerk*, emotions never come alone but are part of a self-contained context. According to White they serve to uphold the social fabric of society.⁴² The last paradigm that Rosenwein presents is her own idea of emotional communities. These can be constructed through, what Rosenwein calls, an 'associative method'. This method entails that emotion words will be placed within their respective scripts.⁴³

This thesis will look at emotion-words and phrases in the text about Lubbert ten Bosch. It will attempt to place these in the broader ideological context of the early *devotio moderna* movement mapping out which emotions were valued by adherents of this movement and how they manifested themselves in said source. In other words, the *devotio moderna* will form the script, the emotion-words within the text about Lubbert ten Bosch will be contextualized by the *devotio moderna* in an attempt to penetrate the emotional meanings placed upon them by the author.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, 830.

⁴¹ Ibidem, 830.

⁴² Ibidem, 830-831.

⁴³ Ibidem, 831-833.

Broader Context Part 1: The Devotio Moderna

To contextualize emotions it is imperative to outline the contexts in which these emotions took shape. The next two chapters will address, in broad terms, which emotional frameworks were dominant in the late 14th century, with special emphasis on the *devotio moderna*. It will address the core values of the early *devotio moderna* movement and will also give an anthology of medieval theories of emotion.

The Modern Devotion first arose in the last quarter of the 14th-century along the banks of the river IJssel in what is now the eastern part of the Netherlands.⁴⁴ In its early days the movement hinged on the ideas of one man, Geert Grote. Grote was born into a wealthy patrician Deventer-family in the year 1340, his parents died of the plague only ten years later, leaving young Geert orphaned. After the death of his parents, from his mid-teens onward, Grote relentlessly pursued an academic career in Paris where he read the Arts and Law and possibly strayed into the realm of theology.⁴⁵ Between 1363 and 1368, Grote applied for the position of canon for various churches in the Netherlands and modern-day Germany. He finally acquired this appointment in Aachen in 1368, moving to Utrecht four years later to occupy the same position.⁴⁶ Whilst visiting his home city of Deventer in 1372 Grote fell seriously ill. The gravity of this illness was such that a local Norbertine prior was summoned to perform the last rites for him. As the story goes, the prior refused to perform the last rites, because when upon seeing some of Geert's books, he deemed them to be sacrilegious on the grounds of them containing 'black magic'.⁴⁷ The effect of this refusal had profound consequences for Grote, he had his books burned on the central market in Deventer, opting to pursue a more righteous life in the face of his oncoming demise.⁴⁸ After making a miraculous recovery from his illness Geert consulted with various friends, made a full confession and wrote down a list of what he called '*Besluiten en voornemens*' (Eng. decisions and intentions). These can be seen as the blueprint of the later *devotio moderna* and they outline the core-values of the movement. He renounced to elaborate clothing, he would abandon his worldly property, he vowed to be humble, poor, abstinent and sedentary. He would also renounce to his income as a canon and would start a new simple and pious life without taking monastic vows.⁴⁹ His life would henceforth be devoted to private devotion and self-examination.⁵⁰

It is important to note that the modern devotion was not the only movement promoting new forms of piety in the wake of the black death. In fact the plague led to a veritable plethora of devotional reform movements with a strong lay-component, like for instance the Flagellants and other penitential movements⁵¹ but also John Wycliffe and his Lollards⁵² and a variety of other confraternities.⁵³ The connection between the rise of these movements and the plague has been well-established, this does not apply to the *devotio moderna* however. Even though this possible connection merits more research it is clear that Geert Grote agitated against the moral decay of the Church.⁵⁴ As pointed out earlier in this work, David Herlihy has convincingly argued that this perceived moral decay is a direct

⁴⁴ Anton G. Weiler, *Volgens de Norm van de Vroege Kerk* (Nijmegen, 1997), XIV.

⁴⁵ John van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2008), 11.

⁴⁶ Anton G. Weiler, 'Leven en Werken van Geert Grote 1340-1384', in: C.C de Bruin (ed.), *Geert Grote en de Moderne Devotie* (Zutphen, 1984), 9-101, here: 12-17.

⁴⁷ Weiler, 'Leven en Werken van Geert Grote', 18.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, 18-19.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 20.

⁵⁰ Bas Diemel, 'United or Bound by Death: A Case-study on Group Identity and Textual Communities Within the Devotio Moderna', *Revue d' Histoire Ecclesiastique* 105-2 (2010), 346-380, here: 346.

⁵¹ André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, 1993), 119-127.

⁵² Leonard W. Cowrie, *The Black Death and the Peasants's Revolt* (London, 1972), 76-83.

⁵³ Vauchez, *The Laity*, 107-117.

⁵⁴ Leendert Breure, *Doodsbeleving en levenshouding: Een Historisch-psychologische Studie Betreffende de Moderne Devotie in het IJsselgebied in de 14^{de} en 15^{de} eeuw* (Hilversum, 1987), 21-27.

consequence of the Black Death.⁵⁵ It is therefore highly plausible that the experiences of the Black Death have a direct connection to the development of the devotio moderna.

The aforementioned emphasis on “the self” within the devotio moderna has prompted some historians to see the movement as a precursor to humanism and the renaissance. This view was met with fierce critique by others, most notably by the catholic priest-professor Reinier Post. Post saw the ‘Devotionalists’ as thoroughly medieval, painting them as ascetic, quasi-monastic, sober-minded and pious, lacking any link with true reformation-ideals.⁵⁶ Whether one interprets the modern devout as a direct precursor to humanism or the reformation does not diminish the great emphasis that the adherents of the movement placed on the self however. One of Post’s students, Anton Weiler, for instance asserts that the modern devout placed great emphasis on the “constitution of the self”. In modern parlance we might call this self-fashioning.⁵⁷ One explanation for this is that the modern devout had to defend their way of life from both the established Catholic Church, as well as from lay critique. This in turn required a clear sense of self of both individuals as well as the movement as a whole.⁵⁸

But the self was also at the heart of the ideals of the movement and emotions are of course at the heart of the self. The self was something to be built, to be worked at continuously, to be crafted and constantly examined.⁵⁹ For the devotees this self-examination was informed by a the constant threat of imminent death. Their ponderings formed a preparation to the Four Last Things: death, the Last Judgement, Heaven and Hell. Their main objective was to rid themselves of sin before leaving their earthly lives behind.⁶⁰ To achieve this, the devotee was expected to experience vehement emotions whilst going through the process of becoming free of sin. This process is outlined by one of the other leading figures in the early days of the movement: Gerard Zerbolt. Zerbolt wrote a treatise entitled *De spiritualibus ascensionibus* in which he made death and the desire to enter Heaven the central theme. Within this treatise Zerbolt distinguishes three stages of ascent, the first of which is the aforementioned self-examination, the devotee can only confront his or her sins through knowledge of the self. This knowledge is achieved through the trinity of *lectio, meditatio et oratio* (reading, meditation and prayer). After this often emotional confrontation with the self the devotee would enter the second stage of ascent wherein he tries to combat his own sinful inclination. This stage is subdivided into three sub-stages: fear, hope and love, these we can of course recognize as emotions. Fear (of God) will lead to the next emotion: *compunctio* (remorse). The result of this remorse is a desire for the joys of Heaven, which would give the devotee a sense of hope. The third sub-stage of the second ascent is the love for God which should fill the devotee and fuel his desire to do good. The third and final stage of the ascent as a whole would happen after death during the Last Judgement. Until that time Zerbolt advises the devotees to take charge of their own fate.⁶¹ It is precisely this dynamic interplay between emotions, the individual experience of living between hope and fear, that makes the devotio moderna such an interesting case-study for a history of the emotions.

This thesis is not the first historical work to see this potential for an emotional history about the devotio moderna. In 2014 Mathilde van Dijk used theories from the history of emotions to oppose the commonly held belief that adherents of the modern devotion were archetypical Dutch, opposing a *lieu de mémoire* that took root in the 19th-century and that persists until the present day.⁶² In the chapter that follows this thesis will follow van Dijk’s work to some extent. Van Dijk ascribes the emergence of the modern devotion and other movements that place more emphasis on the

⁵⁵ See: note 7.

⁵⁶ Van Engen, ‘Sisters and Brothers’, 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 84-118.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 294-304, Compare: Diemel, *United or Bound* 353-356.

⁶⁰ Diemel, *United or Bound*, 353-354.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 356-359.

⁶² Mathilde van Dijk, ‘The Devotio Moderna, the Emotions and the Search for Dutchness’, *BMGN- Low Countries Historical Review* 129-2 (2014), 20-41, here: 20-23.

interiorization of the faith to the rise of the cities in the Late Middle Ages. She argues, correctly, that cities were more dangerous and that they inspire a sense of fear in their populations.⁶³ However, she neglects to mention that only a few decades before the rise of the modern devotion these cities suffered a substantial depopulation at the hands of the Black Death. Moreover, Grote and other early adherents of the movement witnessed this depopulation firsthand. Therefore this thesis would instead like place special emphasis on the role of the Black Death in the rise of these movements. It will follow David Herlihy's assertion that the Church simply could not provide the spiritual care that its followers required due to the demographical impact of the Black Death, it argues that this lack of available spiritual care lies at the core of the discontent with the Church and therefore with the rise of movements seeking spiritual reform such as the *devotio moderna*.

⁶³ Van Dijk, *Devotio Moderna and Emotions*, 30-31.

Broader Context Part 2: Frames of Thought

Before finally delving into the story of Lubert ten Bosch one last piece of the puzzle needs to be placed. This chapter shall address the various lenses through which the members of the modern devotion viewed the world around them. This will be done by analyzing some medieval theories on emotions as coined by eminent philosophers and theologians of the day. They will be explored in both physical and metaphysical terms. This chapter will place special emphasis on the figures that most influenced the ideas of the modern devotion, these being: the four church fathers, the Desert Fathers, John Cassian, Hugh of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, Aelred of Rievaulx, St. Bonaventure and David of Augsburg.⁶⁴

Before doing so it might be prudent to give some attention to the ways adherents of the modern devotion might have viewed their own emotions. As sketched out in the preceding chapter, emotions were both a tool for achieving a sense of enlightenment, which would allow the devotees to ascend into Heaven, as well as things to be mastered. The emotions were understood through the dominant medical theory of the time, that of Galenic humoralism.⁶⁵ Principally this theory holds that the body has to contain the right proportions of the four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. Each of these humors corresponds with one of the four elements and is ascribed different qualities that in turn inform one's temperament. Schematically it looks as follows⁶⁶:

Humor	Season	Age	Element	Produced by	Qualities	Temperament
Blood	Spring	Infancy	Air	Liver	Wet/Hot	Sanguine
Yellow Bile	Summer	Youth	Fire	Spleen	Hot/Dry	Choleric
Black Bile	Autumn	Adulthood	Earth	Gallbladder	Cold/Dry	Melancholic
Phlegm	Winter	Old Age	Water	Brain/Lungs	Cold/Wet	Phlegmatic

Each element had different connotations, water and air being associated with carnality whereas fire and earth were associated with God. This in turn held gender-repercussions. Women were perceived as more humid and therefore further away from God than men, who were perceived as containing more fire, this presence of fire in men would also make them more intelligent than women. Contrarily, fluidity was associated with Christ and wisdom, making women closer to the Son and generally wiser than their male counterparts. If one wanted to become closer to God, one had to increase the measures of earth and fire within oneself, this could be achieved through asceticism. A closer relationship with Christ could be attained through acts such as weeping. Proximity to God remained the highest goal however, making 'healthy' quantities of yellow and black bile of prime importance to the devotees.⁶⁷ Despite the dubious medical evidence behind humoral theory this analysis does provide important clues into the moral values of the *devotio moderna*. The quest for intelligence led many devotees to a life of voracious reading, their desire to be close to God led them to lead an ascetic lifestyle, which they hoped would increase the elements of fire and earth in their bodies, making them more similar to God. In other words, humoral theory profoundly influenced the behavior of the devotees and it led them to adapt their individual lifestyles, consciously trying to influence their interior selves in the process.

Adherence to Galenic theory is just one part of the mental framework of the modern devotees. Their other influences can be divided into two categories: those that influenced the structuration of their quasi-monastic lifeform, which was under constant pressure from outside, and those that influenced them on a spiritual-theological level. To defend their way of life the devotees voraciously

⁶⁴ Diemel, *United or Bound*, 355; compare: van Dijk, *Devotio Moderna and Emotions*, 25.

⁶⁵ Van Dijk, *Devotio Moderna and Emotions*, 31.

⁶⁶ Justin Lewis-Anthony, *Circles of Thorns: Hieronymus Bosch and Being Human* (London, 2008), 70.

⁶⁷ Van Dijk, *Emotions and the Devotio Moderna*, 31-34.

read the models presented by the Desert Fathers and elaborated on by John Cassian.⁶⁸ Their spiritual sensibilities however were heavily influenced by the ideas of Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugh of St. Victor⁶⁹, the next section of this thesis will therefore elaborate on their ideas.⁷⁰

The emphasis on the self has a long tradition within Christianity, it can be seen clearly in the tales about the Desert Fathers and other recluses for instance. It was Bernard of Clairvaux however who taught the modern devout that emotions could be an instrument in the forming of the self. He elaborated on the ideas of St. Augustine who viewed emotions, provided that they were properly mastered, as a pathway to God. Bernard placed a special emphasis on the emotion of love, which he viewed as the defining characteristic of Christ, for Christ's self-sacrifice was an act of love.⁷¹ Emulating Christ was the highest goal for it would bring one closer to God.⁷² The emphasis on love can also be seen in another of the modern devotion's main influences: Hugh of St. Victor. To understand Hugh's conception of love, and to understand the *devotio moderna's* conception of love through his writing, one needs to understand his conception of faith. Faith for Hugh is a twofold matter, it has a cognitive aspect (things that are believed through faith) and a affective dimension (faith through which there is belief). This means that faith is not an entirely rational enterprise, faith is not the same as knowledge for knowledge can only be truly attained in the afterlife. Faith becomes a trust-issue here, one has to trust in God and his intentions, God has to be at the center of faith. The same thing goes for love. According to Hugh, we can only love through God, God is the only good, just and true thing there is. All good, just and true things are good, just and true through God. To Hugh this means that when he loves his fellow man he loves those elements of God that manifest themselves through that person.⁷³ Through the layers of dense medieval mysticism that are presented here one thing stands out, positive emotions are manifestations of God, for analyzing the *devotio moderna* this means that when they profess a love for a person they mean to say that they love God. From this the conclusion can be drawn that emotions were seen as manifestations of God, which would account the fervent emphasis placed on them by the devotees in their biographies, God could be understood through emotions and one could get closer to God and his heavenly kingdom through emotions. How this happened will be shown in the next chapter where the emotions of Lubbert ten Bosch will be analyzed in their plague-context.

⁶⁸ Koen Goudriaan, 'Empowerment Through Reading, Writing and Example: the Devotio Moderna' in: Miri Rubin & Walter Simons (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity Vol. 4* (Cambridge, 2009), 405-419, here: 411.

⁶⁹ Goudriaan, 'Empowerment Through Reading', 411.

⁷⁰ As interesting as the ideas of the modern devotion concerning their lifeform might be, it is my view that they are less relevant for a history of the emotions and therefore they will be disregarded in the remainder of this work.

⁷¹ Van Dijk, *Emotions and the Devotio Moderna*, 30.

⁷² Ibidem, 34.

⁷³ Rick van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to Medieval Theology* (Cambridge, 2012), 131-136.

Source analysis

"In the name of the Lord, Amen. In the year of our Lord thirteen-hundred and ninety-eight, on the fourteenth day of August, the venerable Lubbert ten Bosch, humble priest and a very fiery man, was taken by the plague". So begins the account of the last days of Lubbert ten Bosch as written down by Amilius of Buren of the Deventer Brothers of the Common Life.⁷⁴ The events that Amilius describes took place in the so-called *Heer-Florenshuis* (Eng. Lord Florens' House). The house is noted for being the first communal house of the *devotio moderna*. It was founded in 1381 under the auspices of Florens Radewijns, a friend and early follower of Geert Grote who offered his own home to house Grote's followers. Radewijns took over the reigns as leader of the movement upon the death of Geert Grote in 1384 and remained in charge until his own death in 1400.⁷⁵

When the plague hit Deventer in 1398 it was Radewijns, along with Gerard Zerbolt, who opted to move some of the brothers, to the city of Amersfoort to secure the survival of the movement after having already lost one of their members, the house-cook Johannes Kessel. Lubbert ten Bosch and a few others stayed behind to provide spiritual care to the citizens of Deventer.⁷⁶ Ten Bosch took up the position of deputy rector in the absence of Radewijns but fell ill in the night of the 19th of July 1398.⁷⁷ Up until this point Lubbert served as procurator for the Florens-house, he was born in the city of Zwolle to a local magistrate and had studied in Prague where he attained a baccalaureate degree. Upon returning to his home-city he came under the influence of Geert Grote and, much to the dismay of his father, decided to join the growing clique surrounding "master Geert".⁷⁸

As a man, Lubbert was characterized as a fearful and worried person, extremely humble and willing to submit to even the lowest ranking of his brothers, apparently constantly searching for the unworthiness within himself. Florens Radewijns said of him: *"no man thought of himself as petty and as injudicious as much as this man did"*. Ten Bosch actively sought out humiliating experiences and such as being yelled at by Radewijns as part of his spiritual education, seemingly enjoying these experiences. He was also unapologetically humble, showing his wealthy, and well-dressed friends from Zwolle around his new surroundings whilst still wearing a mustard-stained apron. He was also known to be prone to theatrical outbursts of self-deprecating remarks, calling himself Limping Lubbert on some occasions.⁷⁹ Within all this Lubbert clearly portrayed the humbleness that so characterized the core values of the modern devotion, and for this he was much admired by his brothers.⁸⁰

Having given a short description of Lubbert's history, character and surroundings it is now time to take a closer look at the letter sent by Amilius to his brothers in Amersfoort in which he informs them of Lubbert's death.⁸¹ Let us start by examining the description that Amilius gives in the opening lines of his account. He speaks of "a humble and very fiery man".⁸² As we can see from the aforementioned examples of behavior, Lubbert did everything in his power to feel humble; which he would have undoubtedly seen as a path to ascension.⁸³ Within the context of the modern devotion this is not that remarkable, the interesting part is contained within the word "fiery". This could of course be seen as a character trait, it could be synonymous with "passionate". However, if we take

⁷⁴ Mertens, 'Rondom het Sterfbed van Lubbert ten Busch', 141.

⁷⁵ Weiler, *Volgens de Norm van de Vroege Kerk*, 5-7.

⁷⁶ Mertens, 'Rondom het Sterfbed van Lubbert ten Busch', 143-147.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, 147-148.

⁷⁸ Breure, *Doodsbeleving en Levenshouding*, 68.

⁷⁹ Ibidem, 68-69.

⁸⁰ Mertens, 'Rondom het Sterfbed van Lubbert ten Busch', 155.

⁸¹ It is unclear how much of the text was actually dictated by Lubbert himself and how much of his own interpretations Amilius has added to it. This text is an eyewitness account however and therefore still provides valuable insight into the emotional world of the *devotio moderna*.

⁸² See: note 74.

⁸³ As described by Zerbolt in *De spiritualibus ascensionibus*.

into account what Mathilde van Dijk has written about the role of fire within the *devotio moderna*⁸⁴; Amilius actually says that Lubbert was close to achieving his ultimate goal: closeness to God.

As shown in the previous chapter, the two premier emotions within the modern devotion are fear and love.⁸⁵ Fear was seen as an essential step on the path to ascension, it could take a variety of different forms, ranging from anxiety over being on the right path, to full-blown fear of Hell, to an anxious feeling of inadequacy towards holding leading functions within the community.⁸⁶ This last point manifested itself in the self-deprecation demonstrated by “Limping Lubbert” on various occasions.⁸⁷ Fear of the afterlife and anxiety over being on the right path to Heaven play a profound role in the account of Lubbert’s death, fear of death or disease remain largely absent throughout the account however.⁸⁸ In fact, Lubbert is well aware that his end is approaching; his fears at this point seem to focus on primarily on the upcoming judgement at the hands of God than on the act of dying itself. This is illustrated by the following passage taken from a letter that he send to Florens Radewijns a few days after falling ill: [...] *since the Lord saw it fit to somewhat restore my modest consciousness, I could not pass from this vale of tears without embracing your feet like a son and enounce my grief and the countless problems that trouble me one final time. For soon I will have to appear before God and his terrible judgement, in the presence of his angels, our preeminent defenders, with the greatest shame over those sins that you have told me to combat so many times*”. He later continues: “[...] *I have asked our beloved Amilius to send you this letter so that you can behold how I suffer in the place of fears and insufferable pains, so you can come to my aid with your prayers that I so desperately need*. Later on in the letter, Lubbert also addresses the other brothers in Amersfoort and he asks them for forgiveness for all his transgressions and asks for their prayers to shorten his time in purgatory.⁸⁹

It is striking that throughout the letter Lubbert never seems to contemplate the option that he might be going to Hell, he has the utmost confidence in the salvific nature of the prayers of his brothers and the grace of God.⁹⁰ In his moments of fear he calls on his brothers to assist him with prayer, even when shrieking in agony he seems to be calmed by the support of the other devotees.⁹¹ During his ordeal Lubbert loses consciousness a few times, during one of these episodes Lubbert has to confront an evil spirit in the form of Johannes Kessel, the house-cook who died of plague several weeks earlier. The spirit calls upon Lubbert to cease his prayers, he argues that Lubbert would ascend to Heaven without having to go through purgatory because Lubbert would become a martyr because he volunteered to stay behind in the plague-ridden city. Lubbert rejects the advances of the spirit, keeping faith in the prayers of his brothers and maintaining a humble attitude.⁹² This confrontation with an evil spirit forms a constant style-figure employed by biographers within the modern devout community. It shows devotees passing through a moment of intense fear and temptation and ending up placing their confidence in God. These passages were often used as exemplary texts and should be read as such.⁹³

Mathilde van Dijk interpreted biographies similar to the one of Lubbert ten Bosch as containing performances.⁹⁴ There is indeed evidence to suggest that these accounts are highly stylized.⁹⁵ However, it is important to note that members of the modern devotion engaged in years of training their own emotions to conform to a certain template. This means that although these emotions might contain elements of performance, these performances themselves are a result of years of indoctrination and self-correcting. Dismissing emotions as mere performances would detract from the

⁸⁴ See: note 67.

⁸⁵ See: notes 61 & 71.

⁸⁶ Van Dijk, *Emotions and the Devotio Moderna*, 34-35.

⁸⁷ See: note 79.

⁸⁸ Mertens, ‘Rondom het Sterfbed van Lubbert ten Busch’, 148-154.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, 150.

⁹⁰ Ibidem, 153.

⁹¹ Ibidem, 152.

⁹² Ibidem, 152.

⁹³ Van Dijk, *Emotions and the Devotio Moderna*, 35.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, 40-41.

⁹⁵ Diemel, *United or Bound*, 351.

intrinsic value placed upon them by the people who experienced them. How intrinsic emotions could become after years of self-fashioning is exemplified by the experiences of a sister living with Geert Grote. Van Dijk describes how when ordered to perform menial tasks around the house this sister would grumble to herself, the rector of the house instructed her to reply with the word “gladly” each time she was given an order. After a while the sister was seen to enjoy her menial tasks proving that she now gladly performed these tasks as a result of her training, performance of an emotion thus had a lasting and innate effect.⁹⁶

Within the account of the last days of Lubbert ten Bosch this most clearly shows in the way love is presented. Amilius shows to attendees crying with sympathy during a moment where Lubbert rises to pray: “[...]Then he humbly knelt down, as weak as he was, and with great humility and in tears he asked all in attendance for forgiveness. O, who could be so hard-hearted as not to cry when such a great man, father and most-kind fellow-brother sat down on the floor in tears”. This passage is obviously highly emotional, it shows empathy and the early stages of grief but first and foremost it shows a deep-felt love for a housemate and mentor, for love lies at the basis of grief. Lubbert also seems to value love about all other emotions. After rising from the floor Lubbert addresses his fellow-brothers, he instructs them to remain “loyal and keep an affectionate unity and to preserve love amongst each other”.⁹⁷ It is also striking that, when writing to Florens Radewijns Lubert refers to Amilius as “beloved”. This again indicates that the early brothers of the modern devotion did have truly warm feelings for one another, these feelings were probably compounded by being social outcasts in both the lay-world and the Church. Love also shows through the prayers that the brothers of Lord Florens’ house recited so diligently.⁹⁸ In fact, they keep doing so until the very last moment. This very last moment came on Friday the 26th of July 1398, around eight o’clock in the evening.⁹⁹ Amilius describes Lubbert’s last moments as follows: “[...] With the last strength that he possessed he regained his hoarse and broken voice and cried out: ‘In your glory, in your glory, in your benignity, in your mercy pick me up, pick me up, pick me up! Then he sank back into the bed, bewildered and full of wonder. I spoke to him and asked ‘Lubbert, brother, what is it? How are you? He answered me with great wonderment as it were: ‘wonder, wonder, wondrous wondrous highly wondrous things I have seen’ to which he added ‘Call the brothers! Call the Brothers!’.”¹⁰⁰ Presumably Lubbert wanted to tell his brothers about the wonders of Heaven, this last element is obviously heavily stylized but it shows the modern devotion at its most mystic and most devout and it clearly shows their preoccupation with the moment of death and the ascend to Heaven as described by Zerbolt.

Lubbert was probably buried the day after, in the same grave as Johannes Kessel. It is probable that Amilius send his account of what transpired before the burial since it makes no mention of it.¹⁰¹ Some days later, the other brothers residing in Amersfoort send their reply. Some paraphrases capture a mood of intense sadness and defeat: “[...] If we could send you our hearts and you were to look inside them, you might see so much sadness, so much sorrow that when added to your own sadness would be too much to bare. If you want to know the precise measure the sadness and misery in our hearts then look into your own hearts for you loved Lubbert as much as we did”.¹⁰² Again we see an emphasis on love, a true love build over years of living together under one roof. The letter does not adhere to the structure and mysticism we find in the other writings of the *devotio moderna*, it is a very human account of a small, aggrieved group of people who felt a great sense of community and love amongst each other. Here we see, in action, Rosenwein’s theory of the emotional community. We see the emotional reactions of a particular group to their specific circumstances.¹⁰³ The letter ends on a note

⁹⁶ Van Dijk, *Emotions and the Devotio Moderna*, 30.

⁹⁷ Mertens, ‘Rondom het Sterfbed van Lubbert ten Busch’, 148-149.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, 151.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, 153.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, 154.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, 154.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, 154-155.

¹⁰³ See: note 31.

of fear: *“But it is not just grief that crucifies us, it is also an oppressing sense of worry for those of you who stay behind. Even if we knew that the heavens would fall down on us and that we would all die together it would worry and torment us less than the fear of being separated from you”*.¹⁰⁴ Here our story comes full circle. These last few frightened words show the terror that the plague inspired in people. They show the insecurity, and doubt about things to come that an epidemic inspires in people. They give us an insight into their emotions so that we may empathize with them.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, 155.

Conclusions

The focal point of this thesis has been to analyze if there is a correlation between the Black Death and the emotions that manifested themselves in the account of the last days of Lubbert ten Bosch and its *devotio moderna* context. Previous research on the Black Death has focused much on big data questions but has given little or no attention to the emotional experiences of the victims of the disease. The research that has been carried out on cultural responses to the plague has also not been affected by the affective turn yet. Likewise, research on the modern devotion, whilst being sensitive to the role that emotions played within the movement, has given little or no attention to the plague-context in which the *devotio moderna* developed. This work has been an attempt to combine these three elements using insights from recently developed theories on the history of emotions.

In terms of the correlation between the development of the modern devotion and the Black Death further research is needed to clarify how much one has influenced the other. But evidence, such as Geert Grote's own experiences with death and illness, suggests that a possible correlation may have existed. Furthermore, within the account of the death of Lubbert ten Bosch the plague plays a smaller role on an emotional front than was hypothesized beforehand. The plague is mentioned explicitly only twice. Moreover, the text adheres to the conventions that were developed within the *devotio moderna* based on the models of the Desert Fathers. However, the fact that the plague is mentioned at all implies that the authors did see the exceptionality of their circumstances. The fact that the demon in the form of the ghost of Johannes Kessel makes an explicit reference to the plague while trying to tempt Lubbert by saying that his self-sacrifice (i.e. staying in a plague-ridden city at great personal risk) will be rewarded with a place in Heaven is not just a style-figure. It shows the fear associated with such an act and the great mortality associated with the disease.

The emotion of fear plays an important role on two levels in this entire account. Firstly it plays an important role in the spirituality developed by the modern devotion community wherein it is viewed as an important step in attaining self-knowledge. This in turn was viewed as a necessary precondition for a successful ascent into Heaven, a process the devout tried to aid by increasing the amounts of the Galenic elements of fire and earth in their bodies. Secondly, we see a less spiritual and more practical fear. In the letter sent back from Amersfoort to Deventer we see the author making an explicit reference to the fear of a collective death through the plague of all the members of the *devotio moderna*. Or, to use the terms offered by Barbara Rosenwein, the extinction of their emotional community.

The way the brothers of the house of Lord Florens form an emotional community is best exemplified by their conception of the emotion of love. On a spiritual and theological level it plays an important role. The devout copied the conception of love coined by Bernard of Clairvaux who described it as the defining characteristic of Christ, who was to be emulated. The devout also took inspiration from the conception of love as coined by Hugh of St. Victor who said that loving your fellow man is loving God through that fellow man. We see this idea work through on a practical level in the account of the death of Lubbert who emphasizes a loving communal spirit and indeed in the response to his death by his brothers who speak of him with much love and appreciation.

Writing an emotional history means analyzing often dense layers of meaning locked within historical documents. In the case of Lubbert ten Bosch we have seen a man who desperately tried to form his own emotions to adhere to the expectations of his environment rise from the pages of history. We also see his environment having a strong emotional response to his death. These emotions were as much part of a scripted performance informed by religious beliefs as they were intrinsically felt by a close-knit community that possibly formed in the wake of the terrible disease that took Lubbert. Through their voracious writing the *devotio moderna* remains a community that can still provide a lot of new and interesting insights into the medieval world. It is the hope of the author of this thesis that many of these new insights will be provided by the theories developed as a result of the affective turn, which has proven to be able to provide a human quality to historical research and will hopefully become an integral part of new historical research in the future.

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