

# THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE LATE MEDIEVAL URBAN AUTHORITIES IN THE LOW COUNTRIES WITH REGARD TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FRANCISCAN OBSERVANCE <sup>(1)</sup>

## **Introduction**

In the late medieval period the urban authorities interacted in various ways with the ecclesiastical institutions and religious persons both in and outside their territory. Depending on place and period, good relationships and harmonious cooperation alternated with periods of friction and discord. <sup>(2)</sup> Further research will indicate whether geographical or chronological developments can be distinguished in this process. For the moment, it appears that — partly under the influence of Protestantism — policy around 1570 became more restrictive with regard to tax exemption for cler-

(1) This paper is a revised version of our lecture of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2002 at the Ravenstein symposium in the Netherlands, concerning *The Attitude of the Urban Authorities with regard to Religious Dissent in the Late Middle Ages*. This symposium was organized as part of the VNC-project *The Interaction of Church and Secular Authorities with regard to the Religious Reforms in the Low Countries between 1370 and 1560*. The Flemish participants to the project examine different aspects of the relationship between Church and town, the Dutch participants concentrate on the relationship between the Church and the ruler; research has each time been restricted to the Late Middle Ages and the Low Countries. The symposium was organized in cooperation with, and with the co-financing of the project *Urban Culture in the Late Medieval Low Countries*, Section 4: *Religious Institutions, Spirituality and Devotions*. The chronological and geographical restrictions for this paper were determined by the restrictions of the said VNC-project, *i.e.* the *Late Middle Ages (circa 1370 - circa 1570)* and the *Low Countries* in their broadest sense, roughly the territory of present-day Belgium and the Netherlands, including French Flanders. Our research has focused on the monasteries of the — male — Franciscan First Order, though we will occasionally refer to similar developments in the Second Order, that of the Clares.

(2) One such type of discord, *viz.* the interdict, has been discussed in our article M. DE SMET and P. TRIO, *De verhouding tussen Kerk en stad in de Nederlanden in de late Middeleeuwen, onderzocht aan de hand van het interdict*, in: *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis*, 5 (2002), p. 247-274.