

The Trial of Pablo Montañés, a Canariote Augustinian Friar

Among the few remaining *processos* of the Court of the Inquisition in the Canary Islands stands as a singular case the trial of the Augustinian friar Pablo Montañés¹. Pablo Montañés, a native of Los Silos in Tenerife, was the son of Capitán Sebastián Pérez Montañés². We lack information on his past in the Island until his becoming an Augustinian friar. He may be considered a devoted member to his order and loyal to his vows, since he was accepted as a priest in the *tercia* of Don Fernando del Castillo, and recruited in the Island for the war in Flandres³.

He served in Flandres as a priest and held Mass, heard soldiers' confessions and gave the Sacraments and final Unctions. In this capacity he served in Brussels and Amsterdam as well, as we can learn from the testimony of Juan Antonio Moermans, a young Flemish merchant settled in San Cristóbal in Tenerife⁴. Already in Brussels

1 The file's number is Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inq. Canarias, leg. 1825 n. 23. It holds 15v folios. The file (see Appendix 2) ends with the summons to return to Tenerife within a year and stand trial. On another group of Canariote Conversos see: H. Beinart, 'The Jews in the Canary Islands: a Re-evaluation', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* XXV (1977) 48-86. See also: L. Wolf, *The Jews in the Canary Islands* (London 1927).

2 He had another brother who joined the army in Seville for Ceuta. There was probably another brother named Nicolás. See Pablo's letter sent to his father from Amsterdam (fol. 11v). He promised his father to search for his brother who joined the army on returning to Spain. For the letter see below, Appendix n. 1.

3 After the *tercia* disbanded in Flandres Don Pedro Benítez de Lugo, the Sergeant-Major, became its head. See Francisco Coronado's testimony, fol. 4r.

4 Moermans was 22 years old when he testified on 11 February, 1697. Moermans engaged him to say Mass in Amsterdam. After the Mass held in the Franciscan Church there, Moermans learned that Pablo became a proselyte to Judaism. Moermans suspected that the Mass was held by