

“THE TRAGIC COUPLE”: ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN JEWS & JESUITS

**An Exhibit at the John J. Burns Library
Boston College, June 15-July 31, 2012**



Rabbi Abraham Heschel and Cardinal Augustin Bea, S.J.

This Burns Library exhibit is mounted in conjunction with the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning's international conference "The Tragic Couple: Encounters between Jews and Jesuits" (July 9-13, 2012). The exhibition is divided into three parts that highlight some important aspects of the conference:

- I. Diego Laínez and the converso question in the early Society of Jesus
- II. Books by Jesuits of Jewish background
- III. Jesuit Hebraists

The first part is intended to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Diego Laínez, the most illustrious Jesuit of Jewish background. He was one of the original companions of Ignatius, his successor as the superior general, and supporter of his confreres of the same ancestry. His Jewish background became very controversial during his life and continued to be discussed after his death.

The second part shows the impact of Jesuits of Jewish ancestry as important thinkers and prolific authors. As the sixteenth-century Jesuit García Girón de Alarcón put it, "Men of Jewish lineage rendered the Society famous by their doctrine, sanctity, and erudition." Some books we expose here are an undeniable proof of that.

The third part explores the interest of some important Jesuits in the studies related to Jewish history, customs, and scriptures. They represent an important yet not frequently studied group of Christian Hebraists. Arguably, they initiated the Jewish-Jesuit dialogue.