

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

... *And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.*

Edgar Allan Poe (1843)

The sixteenth century, which heralded the end of the Middle Ages and the commencement of the Early Modern Era, was a time of tremendous religious upheaval and social ferment. The movement (or nebulous conglomeration of movements), which is often referred to as the “Reformation,” led to a wave of wars and bloodshed which engulfed most of Europe for at least a hundred years.¹ The present volume offers a translation of a particularly graphic literary portrayal of tortures and atrocities committed against Catholics during that time. This work, bearing the striking and apposite title of *Speculum Haereticæ Crudelitatis* [A Mirror of Heretical Cruelty] and first published in Cologne in 1608, is both a revealing, if gruesome, historical testament and also a remarkable literary curiosity.² Its author, Arnold Havens (1540-1610), was a Carthusian monk and a distinguished historian. This introductory essay will present the available biographical details of the author and an overview of his literary output, a number of observations on the genre, style and objectives of the *Speculum Crudelitatis*, and some comments on the present translation.

It is perhaps pertinent firstly to offer some general observations regarding the historical context of the work. The multitude of movements and events which are often identified by the umbrella term

¹ See Rudolph W. Heinze, *Reform and Conflict: From the Medieval World to the Wars of Religion* (Oxford: Monarch, 2006), 353-384.

² Arnold Havens, *Speculum Haereticæ Crudelitatis* [Mirror of Heretical Cruelty] (Cologne: Servatius Erssens, 1608).

of the “Reformation” was a phenomenon of vast and multivalent complexity.³ Its beginnings and endings, as well as its overall etiology and teleology, are elusive and difficult to identify and define. Even the word “Reformation” itself expresses a partisan interpretation of the events, which is by no means unequivocal.⁴ For this term suggests a corrupt and decadent Church being “reformed” by persons inspired by a desire to return more authentically to the teachings and practices espoused by Scripture and the church of the apostles and early fathers. This interpretation of the movement(s) is not, of course, without a certain degree of truth in many instances. But it largely overlooks the critical role of political and social factors as the matrix for the complex and labyrinthine series of events which unfolded in Europe from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. It is also based on the myth of a “monolithic Catholic Church,” which (arguably) did not come into existence itself, even as a conceptual entity, until well after the Reformation.

The most cursory reading of the ecclesiastical history of the Middle Ages serves to reveal that, throughout much (or even most) of the time, the church was in a state of turmoil and instability, and often tainted by corruption to one degree or another. As a consequence of this, “reformations” of various kinds were therefore also very frequently necessary and did, in fact, take place.⁵ Such reformations generally aimed at addressing particular and relatively localized issues, such as simony,

³ See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (London: Penguin, 2005). Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). Andrew Cunningham, Ole Peter Grell and Cunningham Andrew, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: religion, war, famine and death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Carlos M. N. Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

⁴ See Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 8–9. The present translator will use the term “Reformation” for the sake of convenience, notwithstanding the interpretative and partisan implications of the word.

⁵ The view that the Church underwent almost continual reformations throughout the Middle Ages, in response to particular issues of corruption or dysfunction, is convincingly demonstrated by numerous particular case studies in Christopher M. Bellitto, David Zachariah Flanagan, ed., *Reassessing Reform* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 61–277.

the breakdown of clerical discipline, or individual acts of criminality or injustice committed by persons within the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

But a virtually omnipresent issue of contention was the proper relationship between the Roman Pontiff and the civil authorities.⁶ In the era before the notion of the separation of the Church and the State had gained currency and the Divine Right of monarchs was assumed, the precise relationship between the powers and prerogatives of the pontiff and the emperor (or king, or other legitimate authority) was highly ambiguous.

There were many occasions on which there were rival claimants to the papacy (typically supported by different civil leaders), and at least one instance (in the eleventh century) when there were no less than three claimants to the Petrine See, each resident in Rome.⁷ Amongst the lurid stories of the rivalries between civil and ecclesiastical power, one reads of a deposed pontiff (Antipope John XVI) having his hands, feet and tongue amputated by the emperor, and then being compelled to ride through Rome seated backwards on a donkey.⁸ One reads also of a pope (Benedict IX) who sold the papacy to a confederate for a sum of gold,⁹ and another (Gregory VII) who plotted to have heavy boulders dropped through the ceiling of a church to crush a praying emperor to death(!).¹⁰ And at times, such as during the Albigensian Crusade of the early thirteenth century, entire provinces even virtually seceded from the authority of Rome.¹¹ Although popes such as Gregory VII¹² and

⁶ The ongoing conflicts concerning the relationship of civil authorities and the papal see is extensively documented in the three volumes of *Monumenta Germanica Historica: Libelli de Lite Imperatorum et Pontificum, I-III* [Writings on the disputes between Emperors and Popes] (Hanover: Societas Aperiendis Fontibus Rerum Germanicarum Medii Aevi, 1891, 1892, and 1897).

⁷ See Victor III, "Dialogi", in *Patrologia Latina CXLIX* (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1853), 1005.

⁸ Georg Josef Egg, *Pontificium Doctum* (Cologne: David Ritter, 1718), 288.

⁹ Beno, "Gesta Romana Ecclesiae Contra Hildebrandum," in *Monumenta Germanica Historica: Libelli de Lite Imperatorum et Pontificum II* (Hanover: Societas Aperiendis Fontibus Rerum Germanicarum Medii Aevi, 1892), 378.

¹⁰ Beno, "Gesta Romana Ecclesiae," 371.

¹¹ See Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2014), 33-36.

¹² See Gregory VII, "Dictatus Papae," in *Patrologia Latina CXLVIII* (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1853), 407-408.

Boniface VIII¹³ boldly asserted papal supremacy, the very fact that such assertions seemed necessary is evidence of the extreme uncertainty of the matter.

It could be argued that the Reformation was primarily an attempt to resolve definitively this long-persisting ambiguity between pontifical and imperial or royal authority (and, by extension, civil institutions in general), which had fermented throughout most of the Middle Ages; and that it was therefore more concerned with politics and power than theology or ecclesiology. Furthermore, it is important, in this context, to note that this ambiguity was no less real or potentially problematic when the imperial and pontifical parties were in substantial agreement (such as during the time of the “*Rex catholicissimus*,” Philip II) than when they were in open conflict.¹⁴

In a sense, then, the issues raised during the Reformation were nothing genuinely new.¹⁵ However, the conditions of the nascent Early Modern Era did present a rapidly altering set of circumstances; and, pursuant to these new circumstances, an increasingly urgent need for a resolution appeared. In particular, the emergence of printing and a literate and educated middle class meant that laypersons were now able to take an interest in, and form opinions on, questions which would once have been confined to the arcane and exclusive realms of the cloister or

¹³ See Boniface VIII, “Unam Sanctum,” in Harald Hjärne, *Medeltidens statskick omkr. 800-1350* (Upsala: Historiska föreningen, 1895), 51-53.

¹⁴ See Henry Kamen, *Philip of Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 234-235. Geoffrey Parker, *The World is Not Enough: The Imperial Vision of Philip II of Spain* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2000), 38-53.

¹⁵ Indeed, even many of the theological issues which came to prominence during the Reformation (such as the questions of the nature of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the predestination of souls, and the relationship of good works to salvation) had already been widely discussed through the Middle Ages. For an overview of the various Medieval controversies about the nature of the sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharist, see Timothy Thibodeau, “Western Christendom,” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 231-235. For a detailed discussion of the Medieval controversies over predestination and the relationship between good works and salvation, see Alister E. McGrath, *Justitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 128-154.

academy. If corruption and crime had been a virtual constant throughout the Middle Ages (both in the civil and ecclesiastical spheres), the emergence of published records and widely accessible reporting of such things meant that the public could now adopt a more informed and critical attitude towards their leaders, both civil and ecclesiastical. And the publication of partisan literature (including history-as-propaganda) became an important polemic vehicle in the ongoing conflicts and controversies. It is in this context that Havens's *Speculum Crudelitatis* had its genesis.

The Life and Writings of Arnold Havens

Arnold Havens, the author of the *Speculum Haereticæ Crudelitatis*, was a Carthusian monk, who had commenced his ecclesiastical life as a Jesuit. He was well-respected as a scholar and historian, and is frequently cited as an authoritative source by other writers of the seventeenth century. The most comprehensive biography of Havens is to be found amongst the introductory material of the 1753 Brussels edition of his *Historica relatio duodecim martyrum Cartusianorum* [*Historical Relation of Twelve Carthusian Martyrs*]. In this biographical sketch, the editor, Josef Hartzheim, SJ, offers a detailed compendium of the life of Havens as well as a comprehensive bibliography of his published works, drawing upon documents accessed from the archives of Carthusian monasteries in Belgium and Cologne. A translation of this biography (with some very minor abridgements) is provided below.¹⁶

Arnold Havensius was born in Bois-le-Duc¹⁷ to a noble and illustrious family, known in the vernacular language as *Havens*, in the year 1540. He commenced his first studies of reading and writing in his native territory, being imbued with the rudiments of literacy by the Hieronymite brothers, (known as the “Collationaries”, because of their communal life). The *ludus*

¹⁶ Josef Hartzheim, “Compendium Vitae Venerandi P. Arnoldi Havensii Carthusiani” [“Compendium of the Life of the Venerable Fr. Arnold Havens, Carthusian”], in Arnold Havens, *Historica relatio duodecim martyrum Cartusianorum* [*Historical Relation of Twelve Carthusian Martyrs*] (Brussels: J. Hartzheim, 1753), v-viii.

¹⁷ A city in the southern Netherlands.

*litterarum*¹⁸ of this community was flourishing wondrously in Bois-le-Duc at that time. Entering into young adulthood, he enrolled in the Society of Jesus in 1559 in Cologne. Supported by his father, he spent two years in the study of dialectics at the Jesuit *Collegium Trium Coronarum* in that city. In the year 1560, he taught grammar, and in the following year was admitted to the degree of Master of Arts. In 1564, he was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Theology by decree of the faculty of theology in Cologne. Following this, he studied Aristotelian philosophy in the *Collegium Trium Coronarum*. Amongst his colleagues at this time was Justus Lipsius,¹⁹ who became one of the great ornaments of his age.

Following this, in 1572 Havens gained the degree of Master of Sacred Theology from the Electoral Academy at Trier.²⁰ (There are some who claim that he gained this degree from the University of Cologne, but that is not correct.) From Trier, he returned to Cologne, and began to lecture in theology. He was appointed prefect of youth in the Jesuit college at Cologne, under the rectorship of Johannes Rhetius. Rhetius passed away in 1574, and Fr. Havens²¹ then became a Regent Professor of the college, continuing in this role until 1581. In that year, he travelled to Rome to attend the elections of a new Superior-General (Claudio Acquaviva) for the Jesuits. Following his

¹⁸ “Games of letters,” referring to various kinds of literary and philological amusements of a didactic nature.

¹⁹ Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), or Joest Lips, was a Flemish philosopher and scholar, best known for his work arguing the consistency of ancient Stoicism with Christian thought.

²⁰ A German city on the banks of the Moselle River.

²¹ At this point, Hartzheim uses the title ‘Fr.’ (Latin, *P.*) for Havens. Evidently, he had been ordained as a priest at some point, although no mention of it is made in this biographical sketch. It seems most likely that his sacerdotal ordination would have occurred around the time when he gained the degree of Bachelor of Theology, in 1564. This would have consistent with the canonical requirement with respect to age and education for priestly ordination at the time.

return to Cologne, he was appointed Rector of the *Collegium Trium Coronarum*.

Havens lived and served faithfully as a member of the Society of Jesus for more than twenty-six years. But in the year 1585, he became captivated by the sweetness of the solitary life and love for contemplative spiritual exercises. Of his own free will, and with proper letters of dispensation from his superiors, he departed from the Jesuits and entered the House of St. Mary Magdalene, the Carthusian monastery at Leuven. In the year 1586 at this same monastery, he made his profession as a monk of the Carthusian Order. He sought for himself solitude and a place of hidden refuge in the bosom of the House of St. Mary Magdalene, after his many years of the active, apostolic life amongst the sons of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Whilst at the monastery at Leuven, a close friendship sprang up between himself and the English Carthusians. These English Carthusians had been exiled from their native land under the reign of Elizabeth I, and had taken up residence in the monastery of their order in Leuven. In particular, Havens befriended the Venerable Fr. Maurice Chauncy, the Prior of the English community. Chauncy was the author of a small book on the eighteen Carthusians martyred at the command of Henry VIII, King of England, some years previously. This booklet was edited and adapted into a more polished style by Havens, and re-published by him.²²

Meanwhile it happened that, although Havens had attempted to free himself from all secular and practical concerns for the sake

²² The booklet referred to here is *Historia aiquot martyrum nostri temporis* ("History of Several Martyrs of our Time"), first published in 1550 by Maurice Chauncy. Maurice Chauncy, *Historia aiquot martyrum nostri temporis* (Mainz: Ordo Cartusiensis, 1550). Havens's revision of this work was published in 1608, with the title *Innocentia et constantia victrix*. Maurice Chauncy and Arnold Havens, *Innocentia et constantia victrix: sive commentariolus de vitae ratione et martyrio 18 Cartusianorum* [Victorious Innocence and Faithfulness, or a Commentary on the Life and Martyrdom of Eighteen Carthusians] (Cologne: Ordo Cartusiensis, 1608).

of the salvation of his soul, he soon found himself compelled by his superiors within the Carthusian Order to bear burdens and responsibilities of leadership greater than any he had previously carried. Indeed, the light of his talents was not able to be hidden, nor was it fitting that such a lamp should be placed under a bushel.²³ In the year 1590 he was made Prior²⁴ of the Carthusian monastery at Bois-le-Duc, known as the Monastery of St. Sophia. In 1594, he was appointed as Prior at Liège, at Leuven in 1597, and at Brussels in 1599. In the same year he was appointed as Visitor for the entire Province,²⁵ and in 1600 participated in the General Chapter of the Order at the *Grande Chartreuse*.²⁶

But the preference of Havens was for a life of quiet, and so he humbly requested that he be relieved of the duties of leadership. He was then granted a sabbatical, which he spent at the monastery at Roermond²⁷ (known as the 'House of Bethlehem'), dedicating himself during this time to the work of scholarship and writing. But following this sabbatical, he was appointed Prior at the monastery at Ghent, and Visitor of the Province once more.²⁸

At the age of more than seventy, he died peacefully and prayerfully there in the year 1600, on the fourteenth day of August, the vigil of the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady.

Among his Jesuit confreres, Havens had lived for twenty-six years, and for twenty of these had served as a tireless and astute teacher, prefect, lecturer and instructor. He possessed a miraculous acuity and mental dexterity, and a confident mastery of all the arts and sciences. His work produced immense

²³ See Matthew 5:15.

²⁴ In the Carthusian Order, the Superior of monasteries is given the title of Prior, rather than Abbot.

²⁵ As Visitor, Havens would have had the responsibility of overseeing all the Carthusian monasteries within the province.

²⁶ The *Grande Chartreuse* monastery is the head monastery of the whole Carthusian Order.

²⁷ A city in southeast Holland.

²⁸ Havens assumed the role of Prior at the Ghent Charterhouse in 1604.

benefits for the faithful, for the University of Cologne, and for the Jesuit College *Trium Coronarum*.

After he had become a Carthusian, his achievements included establishing good order in the archives of a number of monasteries, notable those at Bois-le-Duc, Roermond and Ghent. Each of these three monasteries had suffered from raids and arson attacks from heretics, and were in dire need of restoration and reinvigoration, which Havens was able to provide. Whilst at Roermond, he diligently collected and edited many previously unpublished writings of the Venerable Denis the Carthusian, known as the “Ecstatic Doctor”, who had died in the same monastery in the year 1471.²⁹ With similar diligence, he collected documents as well as verbal testimony from living witnesses relating to the martyrdom of twelve monks of the same monastery in 1572.³⁰

The published works of Arnold Havens are numerous, and are listed below:

1. *Oratio Quodlibetica de Fidei Dogmatibus* [A Sermon on Various Dogmas of the Faith], published after the death of Havens, in Cologne in 1620.
2. *Commentarius de Ereptione novorum in Belgio Episcopatum* [Commentary on the establishment of new Episcopal See in Belgium], Cologne, 1608.
3. *Historica Relatio XIII Martyrum Carthusianorum qui Rueraemundae in 1572 agonem compleverunt* [Historical Account of the Twelve Carthusian Martyrs who completed their battle at Roermond in 1572]. A “golden book”, re-published in Brussels in the year 1753, with additional material.³¹
4. *Exhortatio ad Carthusianos de observantia Regularis Disciplinae* [Exhortation to Carthusians on the Observance of Regular Discipline], Ghent, 1608.

²⁹ Denis the Carthusian was a significant mystical and scholastic writer, and an extraordinarily prolific author.

³⁰ An account of this martyrdom is to be found in Chapter XVII of this work.

³¹ Hartzheim is here referring to his own edition of the work, which had originally been published in Cologne in 1608.

5. *Speculum Hereticae Crudelitatis* [Mirror of Heretical Cruelty], on the cruelty of the behavior of heretics ancient and modern. Cologne, 1608.
6. *Innocentia et constantia victrix: sine commentariolus de vitae ratione et martyrio octodecim Cartusianorum* [Victorious Innocence and Constancy; or a commentary on the lives and martyrdom of eighteen Carthusians]. This is a work by Maurice Chaucy, but revised and presented in an improved and more polished style by Havens.

The *Speculum Crudelitatis*: History-as-Propaganda and Graphic "Torture Literature"

As previously suggested, the emergence of printing and a literate middle class was a key factor which gave impetus and a degree of coherence to the Reformation movement(s). It was natural that publishing should be utilized as a vehicle of propaganda by all those who were capable of doing so. In this context, a considerable corpus of works emerged which adopt the genre and form of history, but whose principal purpose is propaganda.³² Haven's *Speculum* is one such example.

The work sets out with the stated objective of surveying the cruelty of heretics and schismatics of various kinds throughout the ages.³³ Yet it soon becomes clear that the objective is to place the "heretics" of Havens's own times in historical and spiritual continuity with the heretics of the past. Commencing from incidents of cruelty and torture in the nascent church and progressing chronologically to his own times, Havens presents ever more detailed and horrifying descriptions of atrocities perpetuated against Catholics. This leads, as may be expected,

³² Other notable examples of Catholic history-as-propaganda include Tommaso Bozio, *De Signis Ecclesiae Dei* (Rome: Jacobus Tornerius, 1591); and Laurentius Surius, *Commentarius brevis rerum in orbe gestarum ab anno 1500 usque ad annum 1566* [A Brief Commentary on the Events in the World from 1500-1566] (Cologne: Gervinus Calenius, 1567). Havens cites both these texts in his own work, and even copies certain passages from them directly.

³³ Havens, *Speculum*, 2.

to the conclusion that the heretics of his own time are more cruel and depraved than those of the past. At one point, he writes:³⁴

The atrocities committed by all tyrants against the faithful are always to be deplored, such as those of the pagans of imperial Rome who threw Christians to lions and other beasts. Yet the cruelty of these former martyrdoms seems mild in comparison to the revolting obscenities of the schismatics of our own times, who seem to have entirely transgressed all the bounds of humanity. If we study the annals of the ancient Church and the martyrdoms of past ages, do we ever encounter such ghoulish abuses of the bodies of the dead? Do we ever find such demonic savagery and such insane hatred of Christ and his servants?

If Havens ostensibly adopts the medium of history as his chosen form, in certain ways he transgresses the customary stylistic bounds of that genre. This is most conspicuous in his graphic descriptions of tortures (which sometimes approach obscenity), which one would expect to be either 'glossed over' or 'left to the imagination' in conventional historical writing. Yet Havens makes a point of presenting them in "*propriis suis coloribus depictae*"³⁵ ('painted in their own colors').

This literary reference to graphic art calls to mind another work which influenced Havens deeply, and to which he makes reference in his own text, namely, the *Theatrum Crudelitatum Haereticorum Nostrae Temporis* [Theatre of the Cruelties of the Heretics of our Times]. This book, published in Antwerp in 1578 by an exiled Englishman, variously known as Richard Rowlands and Richard Verstegan, presents a series of engraved images depicted with a multitude of acts of torture committed against Catholics.³⁶ It is a kind of nightmarish picture-book, the large number of its surviving copies suggesting that it enjoyed extensive circulation. Havens adopts the general formal scheme used in that work, and was also perhaps influenced by it in composing his title.

³⁴ Havens, *Speculum*, 226.

³⁵ Havens, *Speculum*, 1.

³⁶ Richard Verstegan, *Theatrum Crudelitatum Haereticorum Nostrae Temporis* [Theatre of the Cruelties of the Heretics of our Times] (Antwerp: Hadrian Hubert, 1578).

A number of images from the notorious *Theatrum Crudelitatum* are included in this volume. They have been placed following the particular chapter of the text which seems best to correspond to them.

Some Comments on the Present Translation

The present translation does not offer the entire text of the *Speculum Crudelitatis* (which would be a monumental endeavor), but it does offer the key and most valuable portion, dealing with atrocities committed in the author's own time and the century preceding it. As noted previously, the earlier portions of the books serve to provide context for these, and to present them as part of a meta-narrative of "heretical cruelty." Yet it is the more recent events which are of primary interest to Havens and his potential audience. He diligently compiles for his readers a comprehensive catalogue of the innumerable murders, persecutions and tortures inflicted upon Catholics, taking an apparent macabre relish in gruesome and disturbing details.

The *Speculum* makes only passing reference to one significant group of martyrs, the twelve Carthusian monks who died for their faith in the Dutch city of Roermond. A compendium of their stories was compiled by Havens and included in his *Historica Relatio Doudecim Martyrum Cartusianorum qui Ruraemundae in Ducatu Geldria Anno 1572 agonem suum feliciter compleverunt* of 1608, which seems to explain this *lacuna*. This compendium has been inserted at the appropriate juncture in this volume to address this.

The translator has endeavored to be as faithful as possible in offering Haven's work in acceptably idiomatic and readable English. An effort has been made to reproduce in English the effect of the various Latin euphemisms liberally used throughout the work. Instances of irony and humor, wherever they occur, have also been emulated as far as possible in our language—although, admittedly, the effect is not always quite as striking in translation as in the original. Latin proper names, both of people and places, have been given in their vernacular equivalents wherever it has been possible to determine these. In one instance only, a passage which recounts an event which seems too shocking to be decently translated for a contemporary audience has been omitted. In this case, the original Latin text is given without translation, for the benefit of scholars and those undertaking historical research.

It must be acknowledged that the work of translation was not without its peculiar difficulties and challenges. The surviving copies of the physical book itself are over four hundred years old. Most of these copies exhibit varying degrees of physical damage or deterioration, including torn, missing or stained pages. This makes the text sometimes difficult to read or even illegible at various points. To address this issue, it was necessary to consult several surviving copies of the publication in order to assemble a complete and legible text. Moreover, the typesetting of the original publication is entirely without paragraph divisions, and contains more than a few typographical and authorial errors.

But the language and sense itself is generally sufficiently clear and unambiguous. Havens wrote in order to be understood by persons of ordinary education (which, in the early seventeenth century, included the ability to read fluently in 'commonplace' Latin), and not for erudite specialists and academics only. Footnotes providing pertinent background, as well as historical or literary information have been added where they seemed helpful.

Of course, translating such a text is itself a harrowing and sometimes distressing experience, since it involves immersing oneself thoroughly in its ghoulish details and charnel particulars. To read of tortures and persecutions in a general sense is one thing, but to be confronted with their hideous practicalities and Mephistophelian intricacies is quite another. Indeed, the methods of torture described in fictitious works like Edgar Allan Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* or Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* seem frankly mild and tame in comparison to the real-life atrocities described in the ensuing pages.

It is hoped that the publication of this translation of the gruesome but fascinating *Speculum Cruditatis* may be of interest to scholars of religious persecution in the Early Modern Era. The vast majority of the narrations and descriptions recounted herein have not been hitherto available in any Anglophone source, and those events which are contained in published books in our language are generally given only in their very broad, basic—and often bowdlerized—outlines. Moreover, the curious and somewhat grotesque genre of literature which it represents has remained, until now, almost completely neglected by translators.

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