In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the era of the Reformation, thousands of Europeans were thought to be possessed by demons. In response to their horrifying symptoms—violent convulsions, uncontrollable movements, and bizarre behaviors—the Church and its exorcists were required to intervene. These cases were often the subject of intense scrutiny by the Inquisition, which sought to verify the authenticity of the possession claims and to ensure that any supposed demonic influence was driven out of the afflicted individual.