

In this study Natasha Constantinidou considers the views articulated by the scholars Pierre Charron (1541-1603), Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), Paolo Sarpi (1552-1623) and King James VI and I (1566-1625), in response to the religious ruptures of their time. Though rarely juxtaposed, all four authors were deeply affected by the religious divisions. In their works, they denounced religious zeal, focusing on non-dogmatic piety. Drawing on classical tradition and church history, they set out to offer consolation to the people of a war-torn continent and to discuss means of reconciliation. Their responses sought to define the role of religion in public and private. They emphasised the need for lay control of religious affairs as the only way of ensuring peace, whilst circumscribing belief and its practice to the private realm.

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