Patrick Cheney’s new book places the sublime at the heart of poems and plays in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England. Specifically, Cheney argues for the importance of an ‘early modern sublime’ to the advent of modern authorship in Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson. Chapters feature a model of creative excellence and social liberty that helps explain the greatness of the English Renaissance. Cheney’s argument revises the received wisdom, which locates the sublime in the eighteenth-century philosophical ‘subject’. The book demonstrates that canonical works such as *The Faerie Queene* and *King Lear* reinvent sublimity as a new standard of authorship. This standard emerges not only in rational, patriotic paradigms of classical and Christian goodness but also in the eternizing greatness of the author’s work: free, heightened, ecstatic. Playing a centralizing role in the advent of modern authorship, the early modern sublime becomes a catalyst in the formation of an English canon.

**Patrick Cheney** is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Pennsylvania State University. He is the author of seven monographs and the editor of eleven collections, as well as the editor of poems by Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare. A recipient of the Faculty Scholar Medal from Pennsylvania State University and the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Montana, Cheney has been a Visiting Research Fellow at Merton College, Oxford, and a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. Currently, he is the general editor of the fourteen-volume *Oxford History of Poetry in English*. 
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ENGLISH AUTHORSHIP AND THE EARLY MODERN SUBLIME

Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson

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For Jan
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Frontispiece. Detail from ‘An Allegory of Peace and the Arts’.
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Smith and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 174–87. I am grateful to the editors and publishers for the opportunity to include this material here. I would add that elsewhere I discuss sublime authorship in two additional English Renaissance figures (both mentioned in the Works Cited): Donne (‘Artes Poeticae’) and Marston.

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Note on Texts and References


Unless otherwise noted, quotations and translations from other classical authors come from the Loeb Classical Library. As the Works Cited list at the end reveals, major exceptions include Plato’s dialogues, which come from the edition of Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns; Aristotle’s
Note on Texts and References

works, from the edition of Richard McKeon; and the Bible, from the facsimile of the Geneva edition of 1560 published by the University of Wisconsin Press. (Works merely cited in passing but not quoted in the text do not appear in the Works Cited list.)

Throughout, I modernize the archaic i–j and u–v of Renaissance texts, as well as other obsolete typographical conventions such as the italicizing of names and places.

For formatting, I rely primarily on the ‘works cited’ format from the *MLA Style Manual*; this format depends on a system of abbreviation in the text and the notes, and thus it includes full citations only in the list of Works Cited. In particular, I use the following citation format to refer to a given primary work’s book number, section or chapter number, and page number, such as Longinus’ *On Sublimity*: 1.4: 144 (or sometimes minus the section or chapter number: 10: 105). For secondary works of more than one volume, I use the following format to refer to volume and page number: 2: 205. Secondarily, I accommodate Cambridge University Press’s in-house style guide by using single quotation marks, as well as other formatting conventions, such as for printing dates and page numbers and for spelling.
Abbreviations

CEWBJ Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson
c circa
DNB Dictionary of National Biography
esp. especially
FQ The Faerie Queene
MS manuscript
OED Oxford English Dictionary
rpt. reprint
qtd. quoted
pub. published
s.d. stage direction
St. Saint
Figure 1. William Marshall, title page to Gerard Langbaine’s edition of Longinus: *Dionysiou Longinou rhetoros Peri hypsous* (Oxford, 1636).

With permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC.
Figure 2. Antonie Wierix II, ‘Grammatica’, Antwerp, 1592.