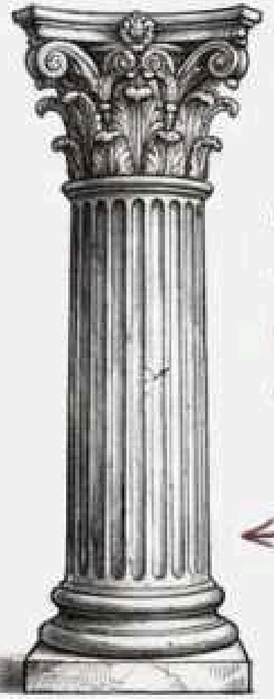
¶ 3.1

The Three Forces Shaping Tudor Literature

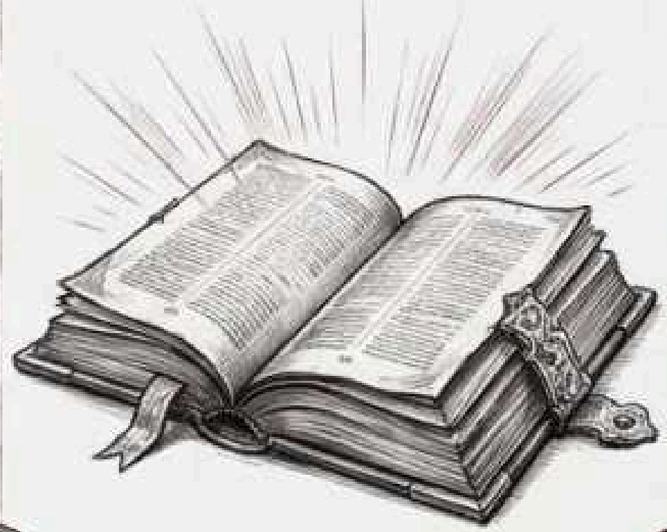
The Renaissance



How did the study of classical writers change English writing?

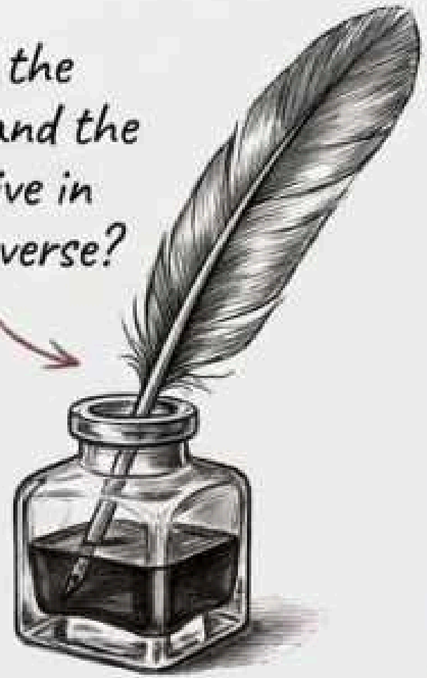
The Reformation

How did the Bible become an English book?



New Poetics

How did the sonnet and the epic arrive in English verse?



The Tudor Bookends: 1485–1603



Henry Tudor wins the **Battle of Bosworth**



Henry VIII breaks with **Rome**

Death of Elizabeth I



1485 — 1534 — 1603

movable type

Printing + Humanism + Reformation = A New Reading Culture



↑ classical revival

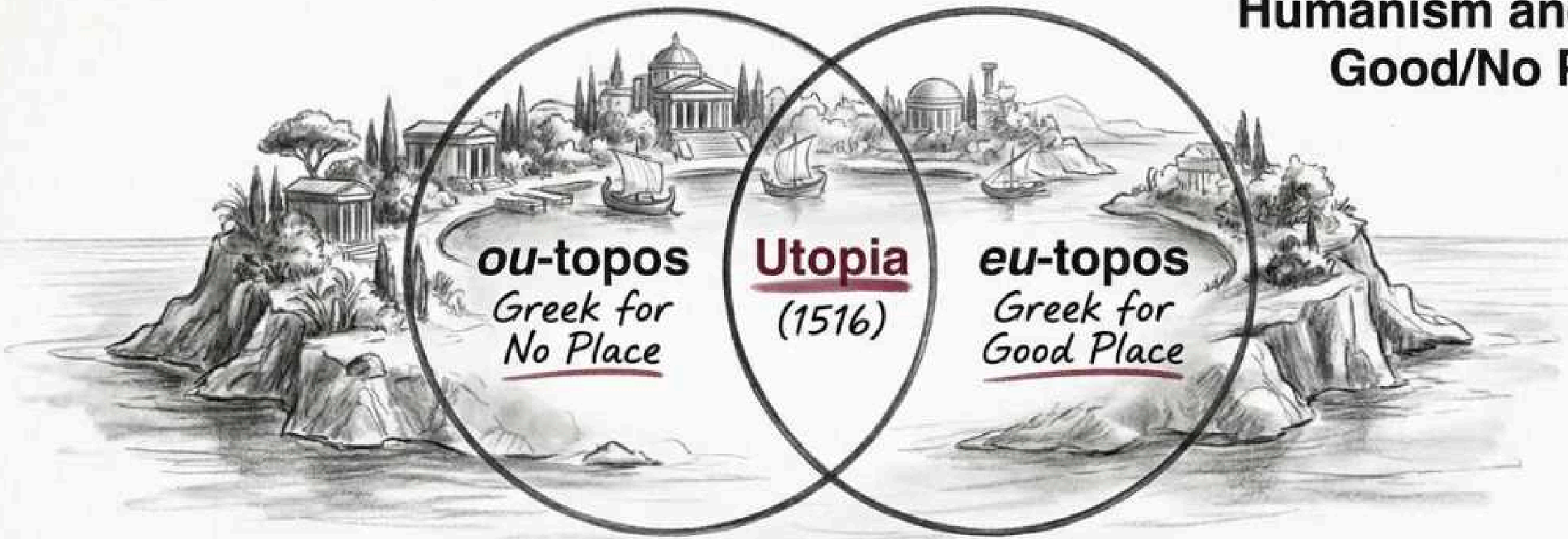


↑ vernacular bibles



¶ 3.3

Humanism and the Good/No Place



Classical study of Latin and Greek

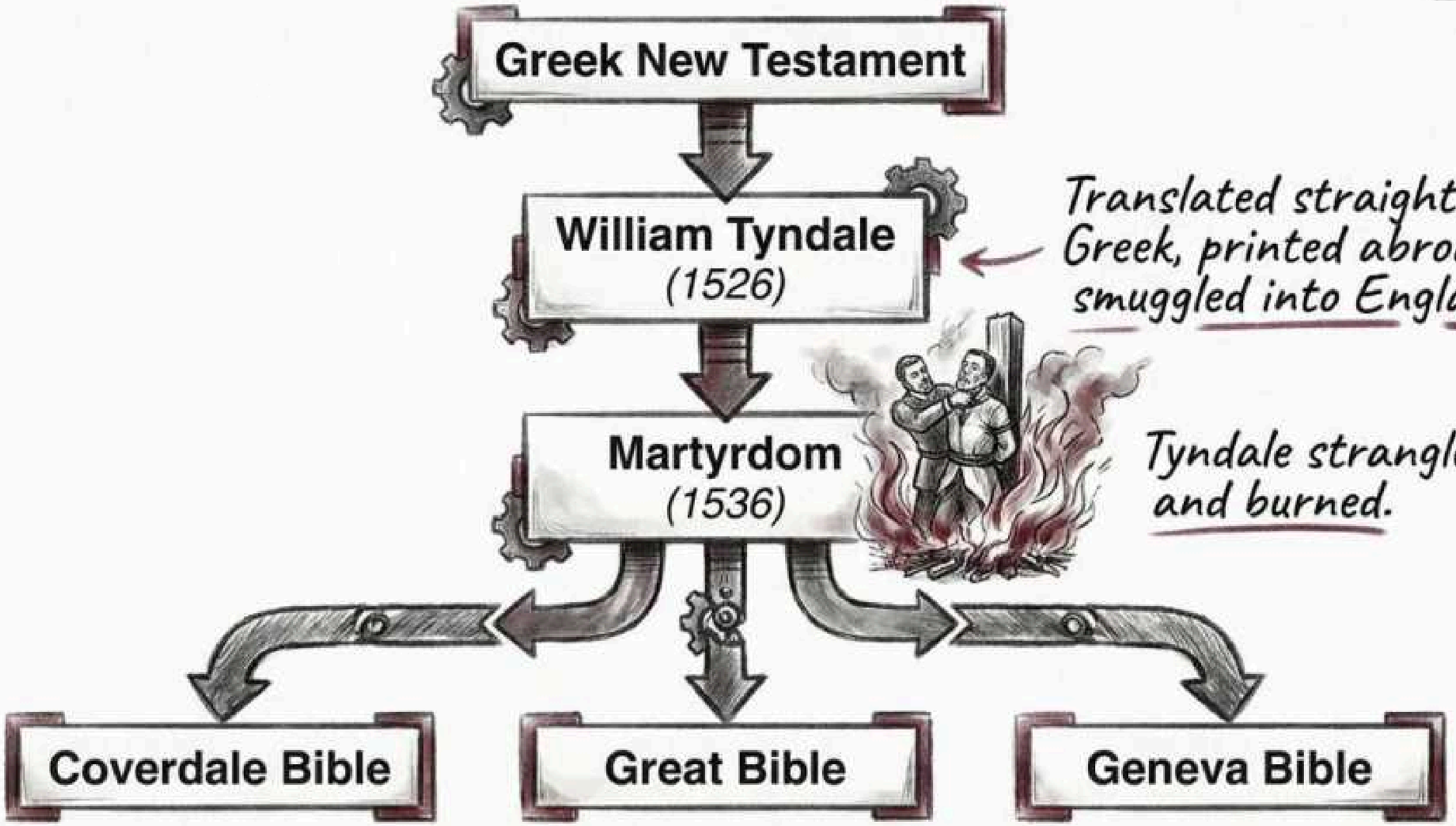
↳ *study of antiquity, original sources*

Education for public service (Erasmus & Thomas More)

↳ *civic virtue, leadership, ethical governance*

The Dangerous Translation Pipeline

¶ 3.4

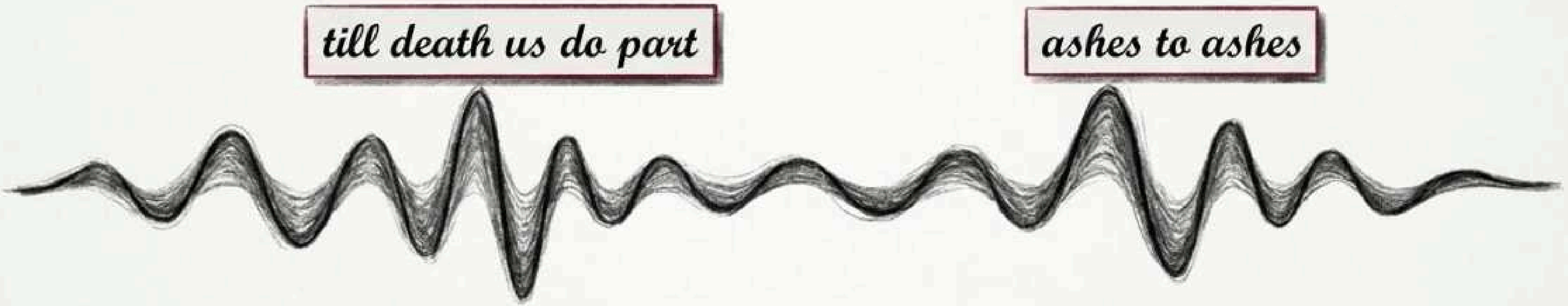


Tyndale's phrases survive and build the foundation of modern English today.

The Rhythm of Common Prayer

¶ 3.5

Thomas Cranmer's 1549
Book of Common Prayer



The English church services provided a prose of great rhythm. The Bible and the Prayer Book combined to teach an entire nation how to hear English read aloud.

The Italian Import

¶ 3.6



Sir Thomas Wyatt (d. 1542):
Brought the sonnet from Italy;
translated Petrarch.

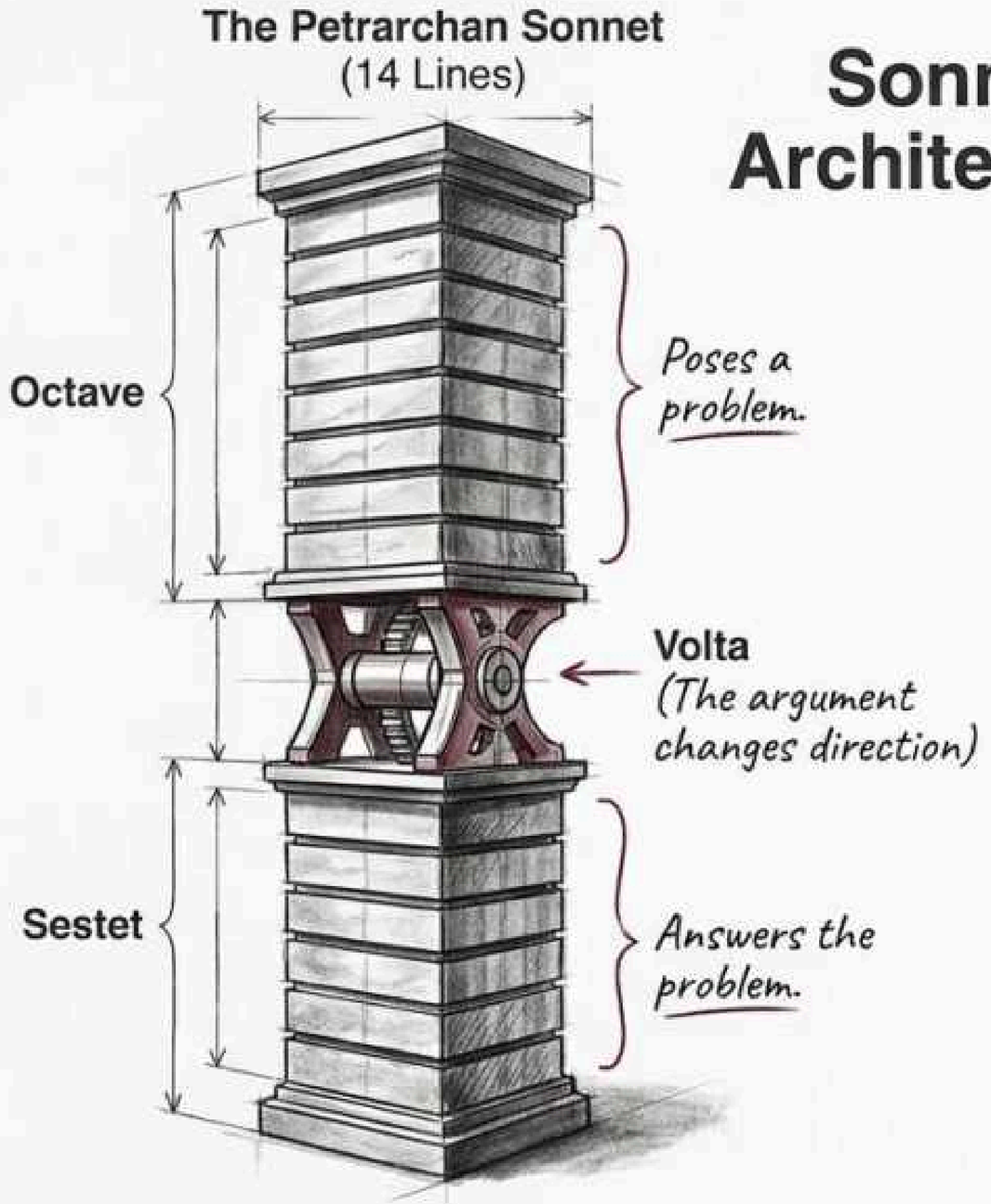
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (d. 1547):
Created a new English rhyme pattern.

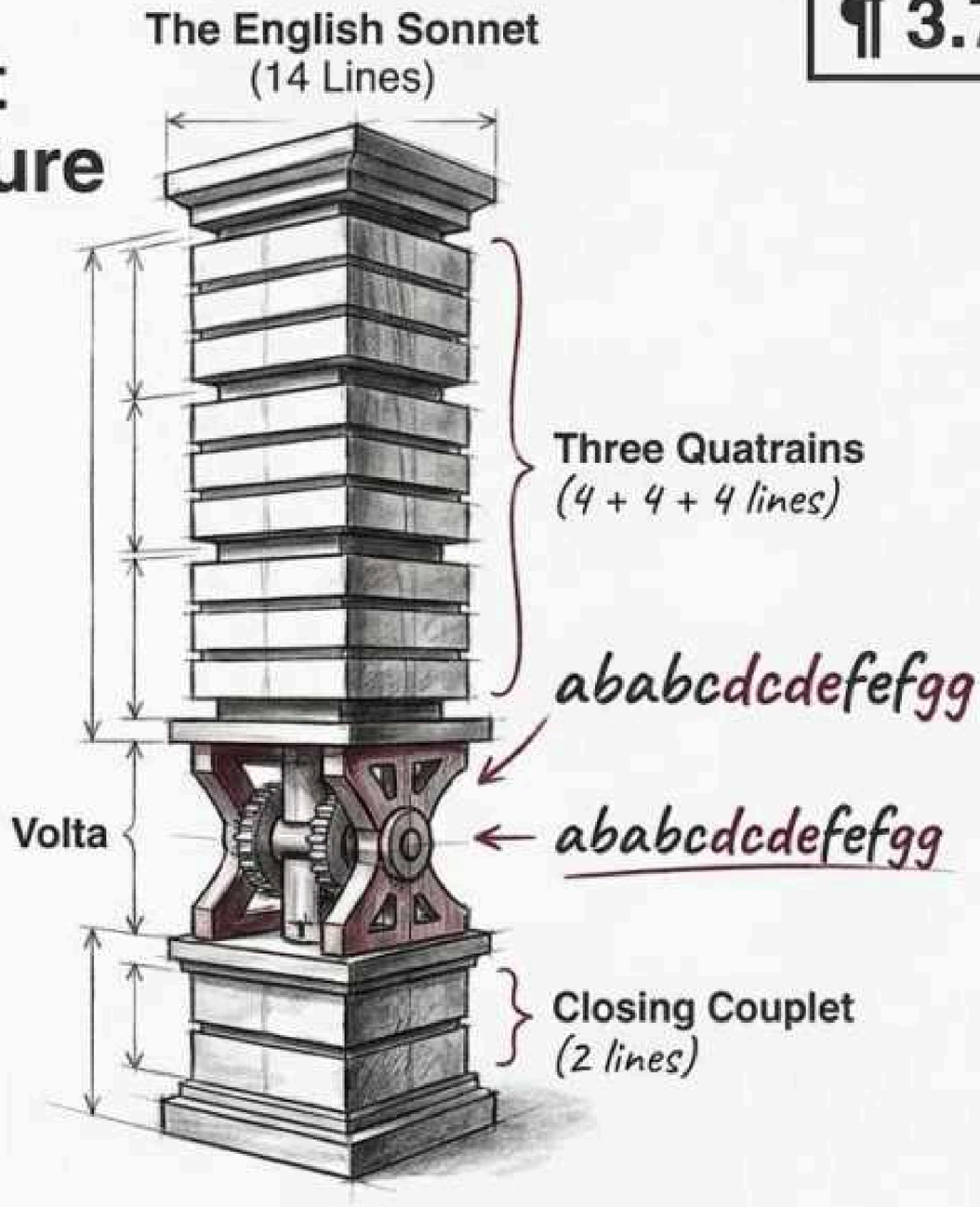
Unrhymed + Iambic Pentameter = Blank Verse

Both poets were printed together in Tottel's Miscellany in 1557.

Sonnet Architecture

¶ 3.7





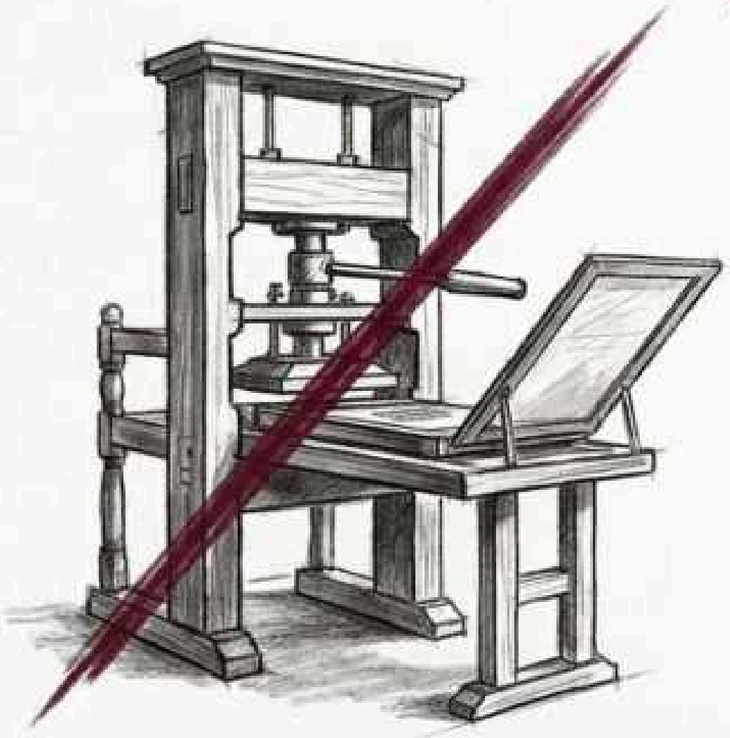
Poetry as a Social Act

¶ 3.8

Sir Philip Sidney

Sir Walter Raleigh

Manuscript Circulation among Friends



Court of Elizabeth I
(1558-1603)

Verse was a mark of cultivation.

Poems were primarily a social act, circulated privately in manuscript form, and only printed later.

Sidney's Ideal Over the Actual

¶ 3.9



The Unreachable

Astrophil and Stella (1591)

A sequence of 108 sonnets and 11 songs detailing a *poet-lover* and an *unreachable lady*.

Sir Philip Sidney died of a wound at Zutphen in 1586.



Defence of Poesy

Argues that poetry teaches and delights by showing the ideal, not just the actual.

The Allegorical Epic

¶ 3.10



= Holiness (The virtue of the Redcrosse knight)

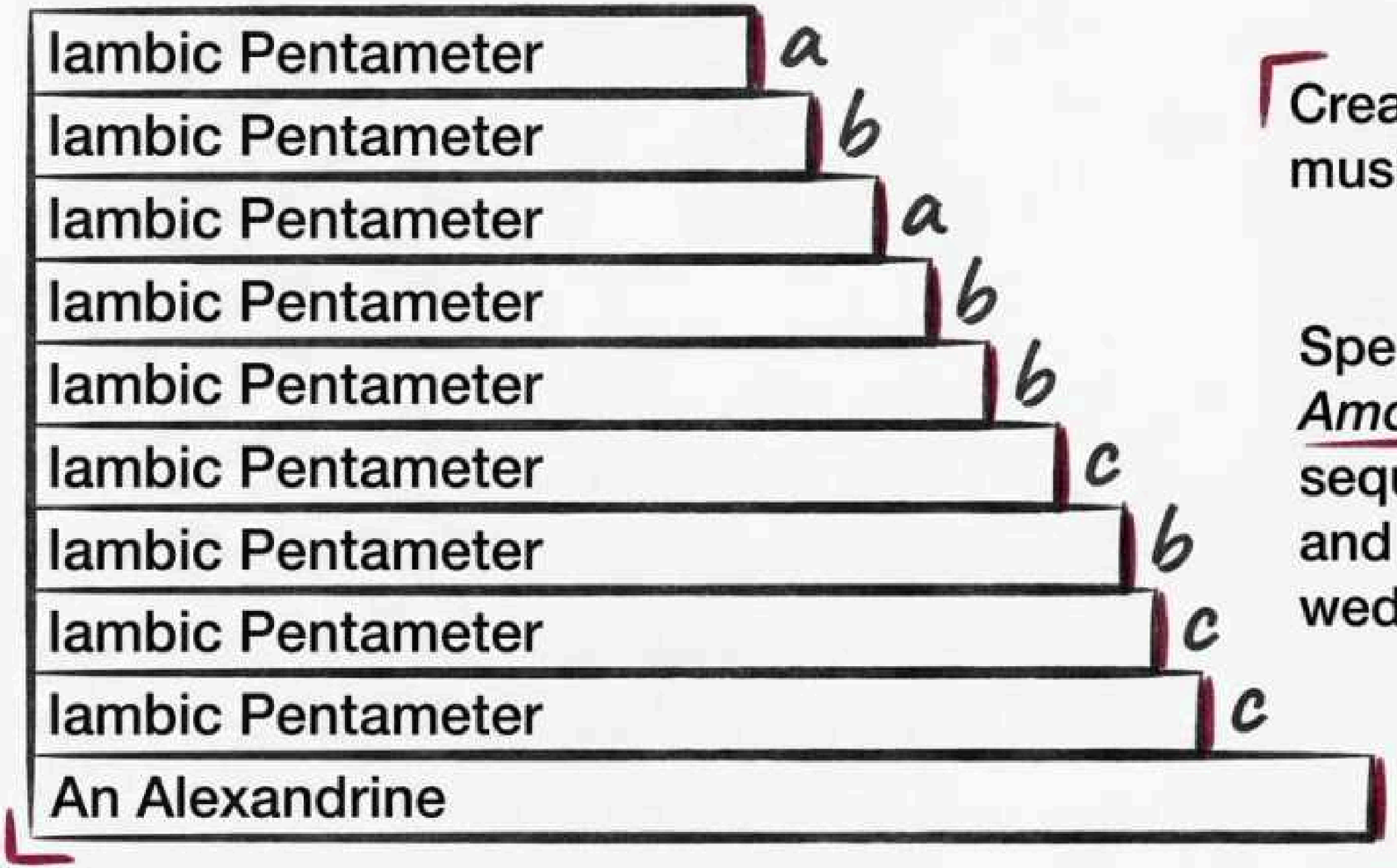


= Gloriana / Elizabeth I (The Faerie Queene)

Edmund Spenser published *The Shepheardes Calender* in 1579. *The Faerie Queene* followed in 1590/1596. Intended for 12 **books, it** reached 6. Each book follows a knight standing for a specific virtue.

The Spenserian Stanza

¶ 3.11



Creates a slow and musical structure.

Spenser also published *Amoretti* (a sonnet sequence of courtship) and *Epithalamion* (a wedding hymn) in 1595.

Poetic Conversations

¶ 3.12



Christopher Marlowe

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Invites a lover to live in a pastoral paradise.



Sir Walter Raleigh

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

The nymph points out that flowers fade and promises are broken.

An early, prime example of the poetic conversations that filled the Tudor period.

The Branches of Prose Fiction

¶ 3.13

Prose Fiction

Ornate & Balanced



John Lyly's *Euphues* (1578).
Set a fashion for highly structured sentences.

Pastoral Romance



Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*.
A long, idealized narrative.

Picaresque / Rogue



Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594).
A comic tale of a rogue wandering through Europe, an early English picaresque.

Recording the Wider World

¶ 3.14

Voyages

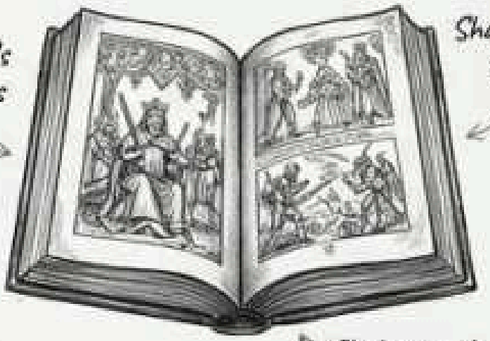
Richard Hakluyt collected accounts of English voyages in *Principal Navigations* (1589).

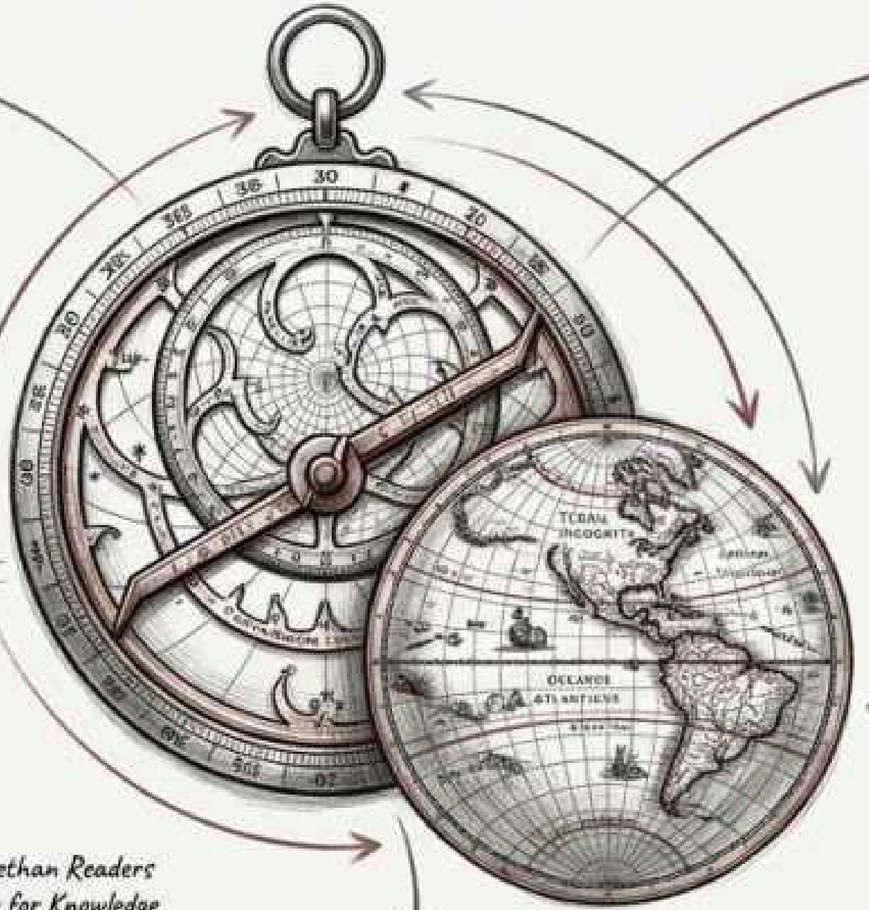


History

Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* told the history of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

(Crucially provided Shakespeare with many plots).







The Audience

Elizabethan readers possessed a deep hunger for travel, history, and news of the outside world.

Women Shaping the Literary Landscape

¶ 3.15



Mary Sidney (Countess of Pembroke)

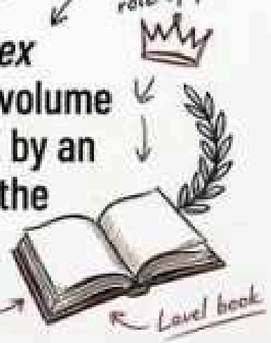
Completed her brother's verse translation of the Psalms and led a prominent literary circle.





Aemilia Lanyer

Published *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* in 1611. The first volume of original poetry published by an Englishwoman claiming the role of poet.





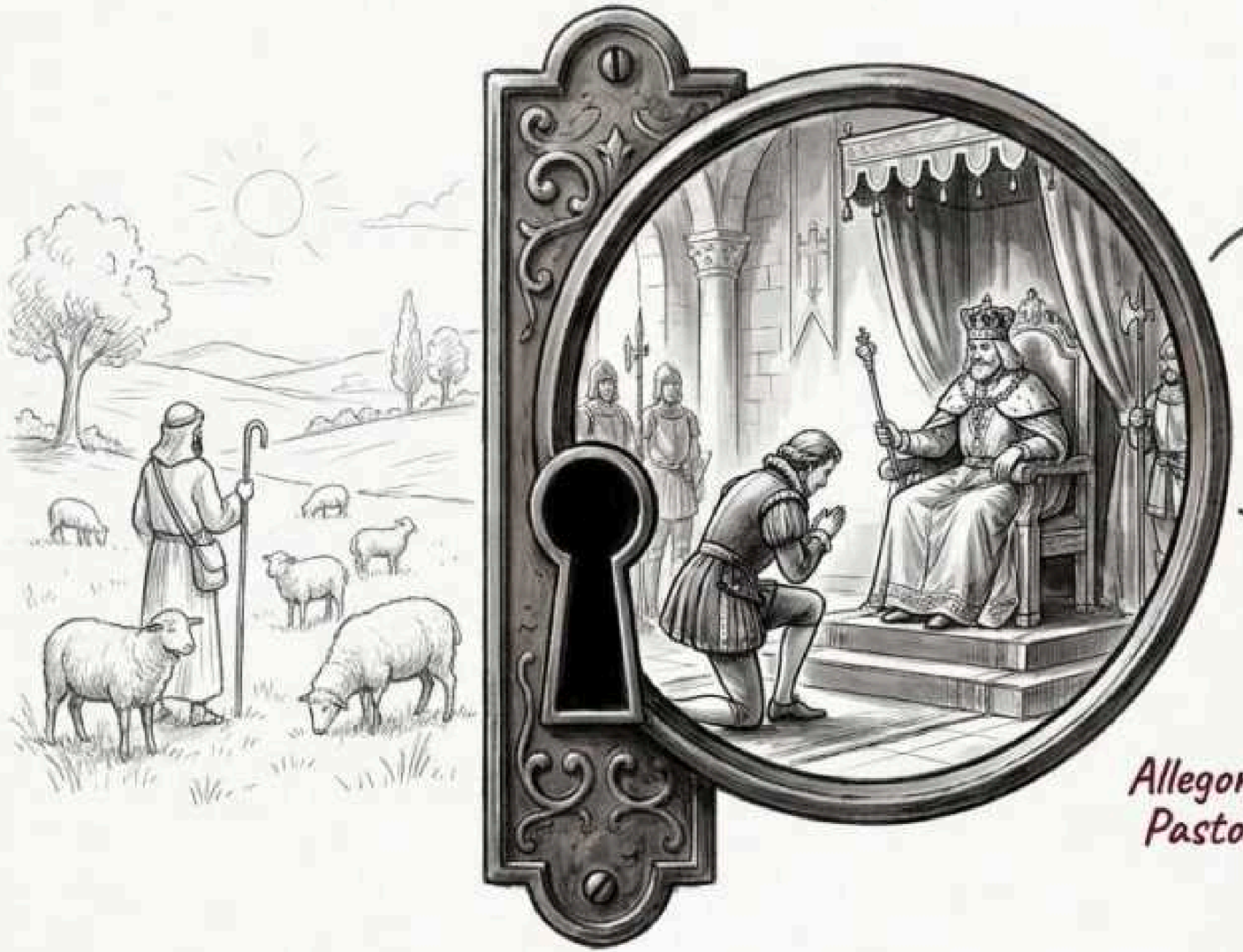
Queen Elizabeth I

A writer herself, producing poems and delivering memorable, historically significant speeches.



¶ 3.16

Writing in Code Under Control



The Constraint

Censorship & Regulation

The Stationers' Company (chartered 1557) regulated printing.

Authorities actively punished books deemed seditious or heretical.

Severe Punishments

The Result

Indirect Criticism

Writers learned to criticize indirectly.

Allegory & Pastoral

The intense political pressure birthed rich figurative language, relying heavily on allegory and the pastoral to mask true meanings.

Hidden Meanings

¶ 3.17

The Linguistic Melting Pot



Inkhorn terms (showy, complex words from the writer's desk)

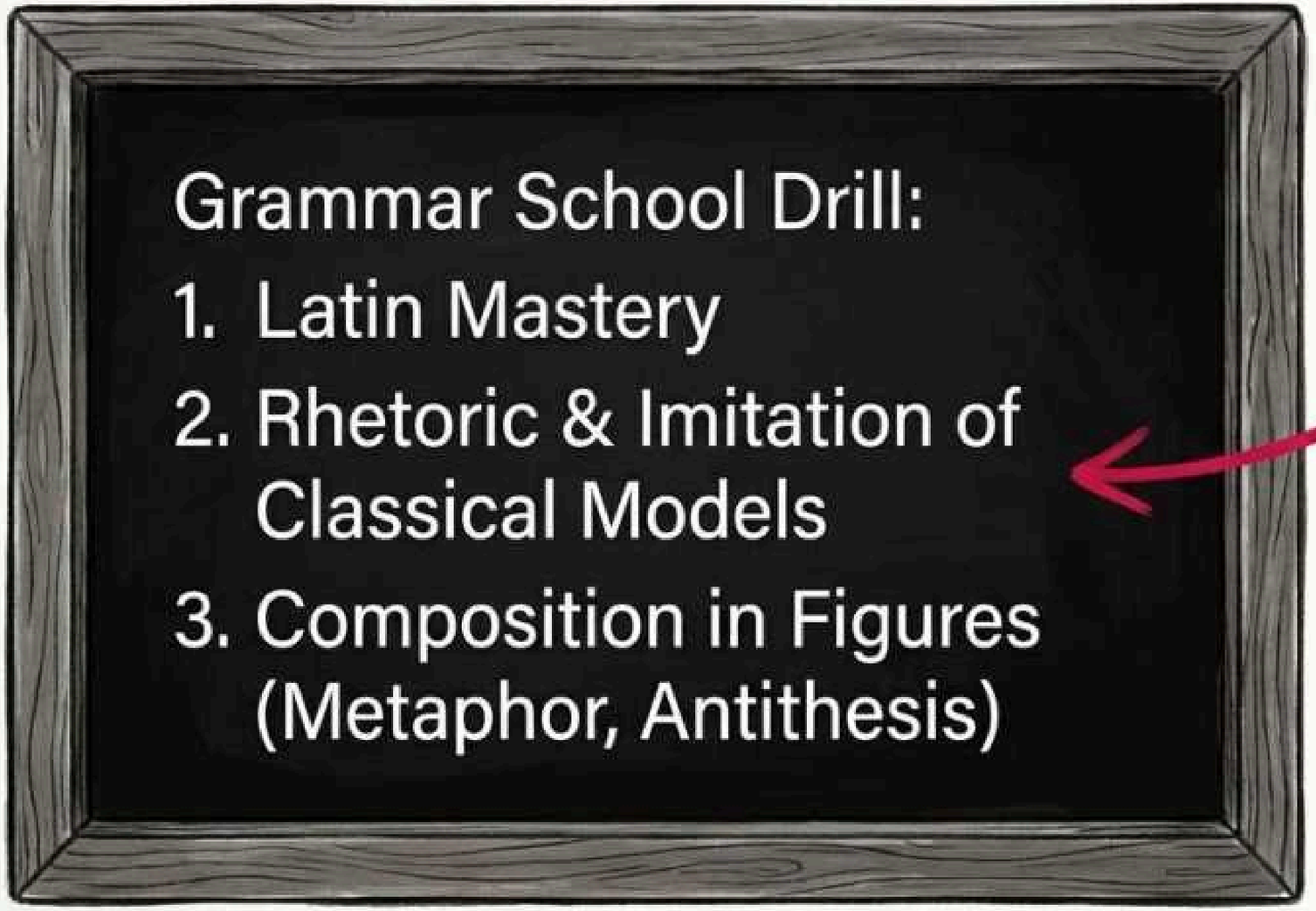


The expansive vocabulary required for the **Elizabethan stage**



The Rhetorical Foundation

¶ 3.18



* *Girls were rarely given this access!*

This systemic exclusion makes the achievements of the women who did write all the more remarkable.

Why the Tudor Age Matters

¶ 3.19



The Renaissance

Humanism merged classical forms with the native tongue.



The Reformation

English is permanently the language of the Bible and national epic.

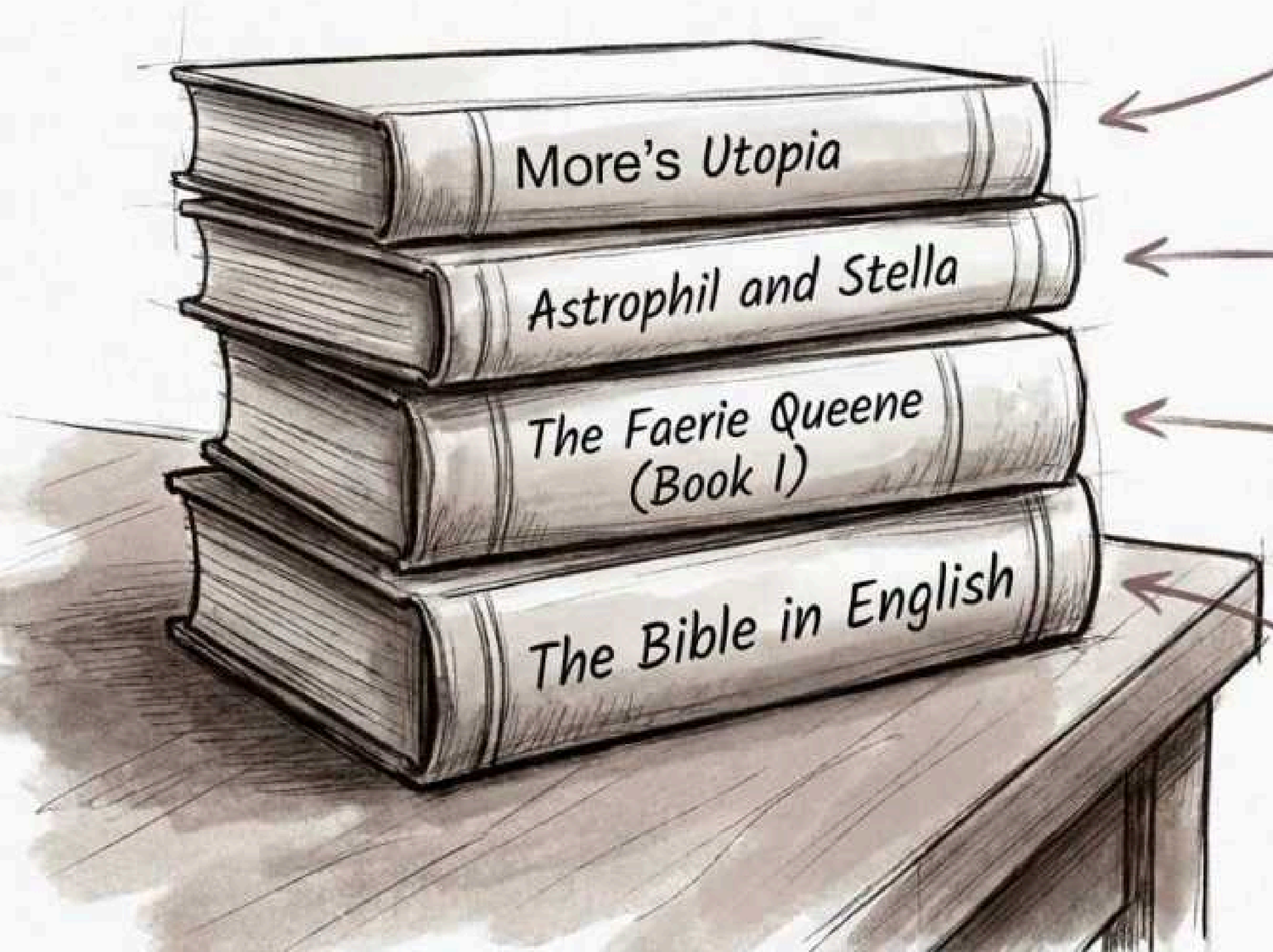


New Poetics

The sonnet is firmly established—a form poets still write today.

The Enduring Tension: *Who should read what, and how freely?*

Where to Go Next



Available in short modern editions.

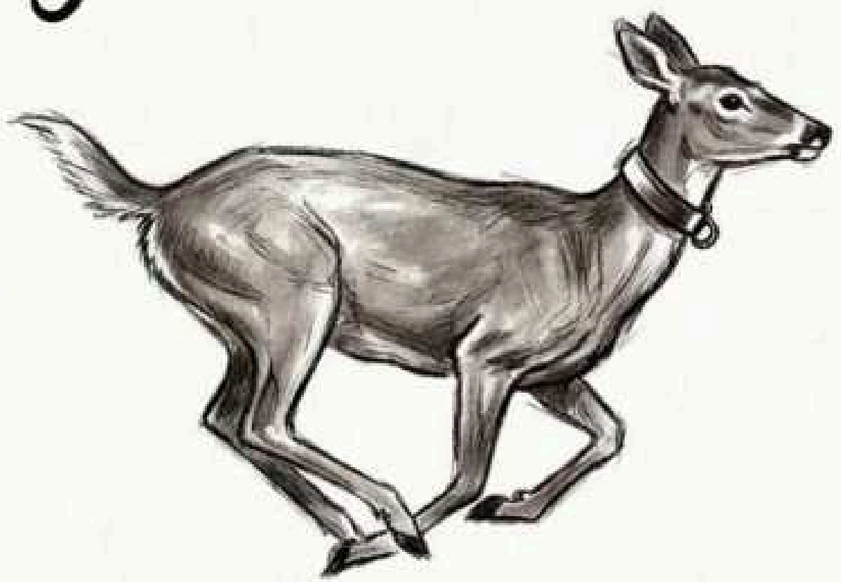
Sidney's sequence can be read in a single evening.

The most approachable entry to Spenser.

David Daniell tells the definitive story of Tyndale and his successors.

Closing Exercise: The Hunt

¶ 3.21



Read Sir Thomas Wyatt's poem ***Whoso List to Hunt*** (an adaptation of a Petrarchan sonnet).

☑ Mark the Octave ☑ Mark the Sestet ☑ Find the Turn (Volta)

Prompt: Write a short paragraph analyzing how the poet uses the image of a hunt to explore themes of desire and power.