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# John Lyly

## Complete Works



Series Fifteen

*The Complete Works of*  
**JOHN LYLY**

(c. 1553-1606)



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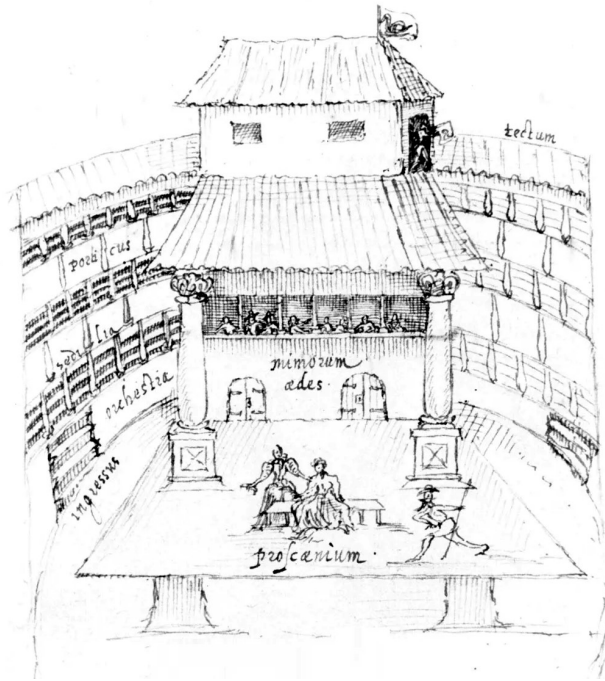
*The Delphi Classics Catalogue*

*Jason Lyly*

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Version 1

*The Complete Works of*

**JOHN LYLY**



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*Complete Works of John Lyly*



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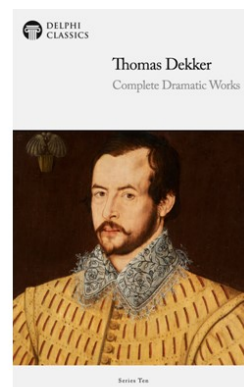
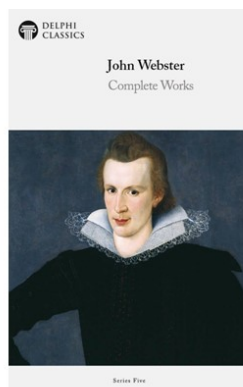
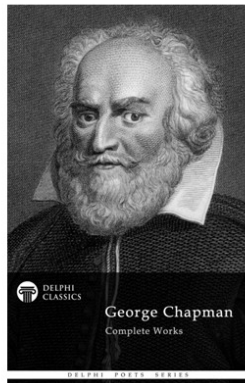
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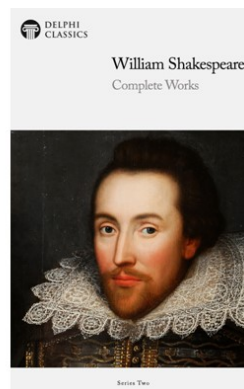
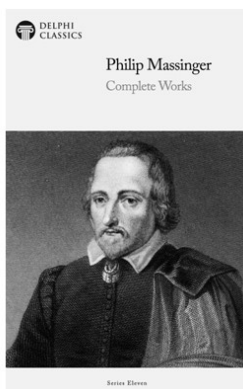
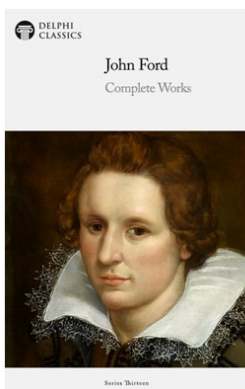
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# PLAYWRIGHTS

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## The Plays



*Rochester, Kent — Lyly's likely birthplace*





*Canterbury, Kent — another possible birthplace*



## Campaspe (1583)



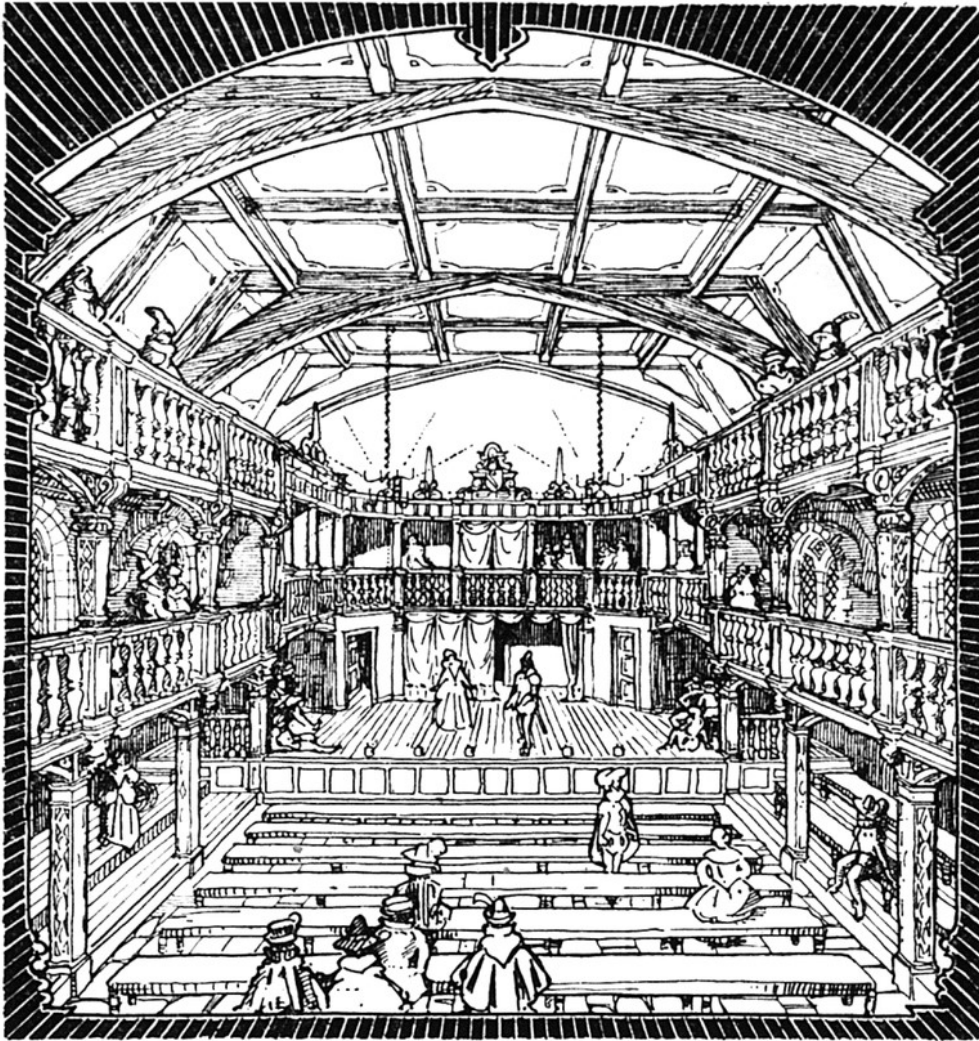
John Lyly was born in Kent in c. 1553 and was the eldest son of Peter Lyly and his wife, Jane Burgh in the North Riding of Yorkshire. His grandfather was William Lily, the grammarian and the first headmaster of Saint Paul's School, London. His uncle, George Lily, was a scholar and cartographer, serving as domestic chaplain to Reginald Pole, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lyly was probably educated at King's School, Canterbury, where his younger brothers are recorded as contemporaries of the playwright Christopher Marlowe. He was about fifteen when his father died. The following year, he became a student at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he received his bachelor's degree on 27 April 1573 and his master's two years later. After finishing university, Lyly moved to London and secured lodgings at the fashionable residence of the Savoy Hospital on the Strand, where he is described as "a dapper & a deft companion... a pert-conceited youth." Here he began his literary career, writing his novel *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*, which was an instant success and was quickly followed by a sequel, *Euphues and his England*. These two landmark works, which went through over thirty editions by 1630, firmly established his reputation as one of the most successful and fashionable of London writers. His prose style was much imitated by his contemporaries, including Barnabe Rich, Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge.

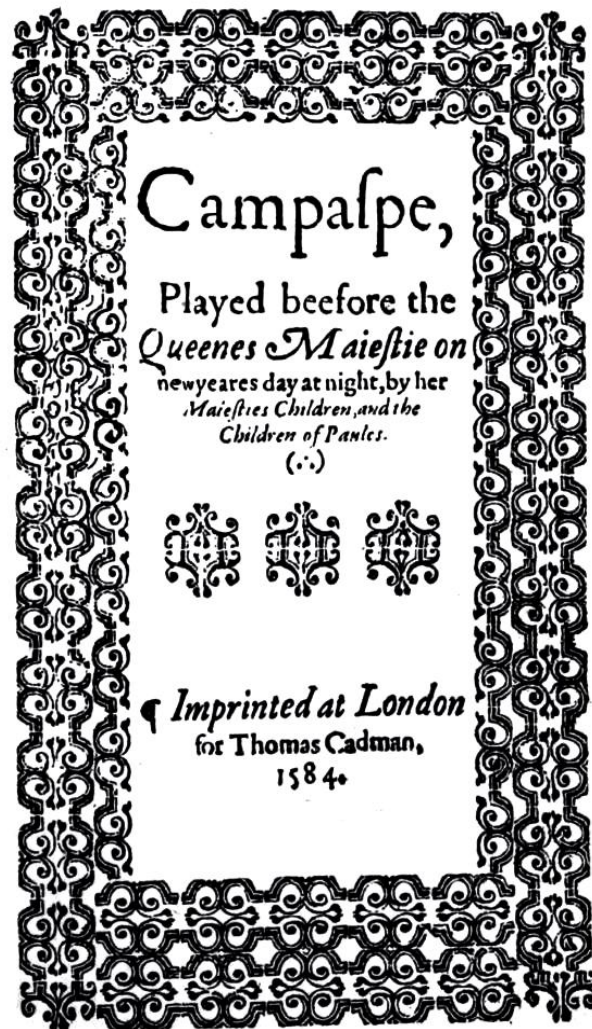
The dedicatee of his second Euphues novel was Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, who acted as a patron to many of Lyly's literary friends when they left Oxford for London. It is about this time that Lyly became the Earl's private secretary. In 1583, de Vere secured him the lease of the first Blackfriars Playhouse, where Lyly's first two plays, *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao* would be performed by the joint company of the Children of the Chapel and the Children of Paul's known as Oxford's Boys.

*Campaspe* was first performed in the autumn of 1583. After debuting at Blackfriars Theatre, it was performed before Queen Elizabeth I on New Year's Day at Whitehall Palace. The play was first printed by Thomas Dawson for the bookseller Thomas Cadman in 1584; Cadman published three separate editions of the work over a year, which was unprecedented for an English play at the time. Lyly, under the patronage of de Vere, became a highly successful playwright in the 1580's with at least six of his plays being performed at Court for the Queen.

A five-act history play sourced from the Roman author Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*, *Campaspe* concerns Alexander the Great, his mistress the Theban captive Campaspe and the renowned painter, Apelles. When Alexander commissions Apelles to paint Campaspe's portrait, the artist becomes besotted with her and a love triangle develops. In Lyly's retelling of the tale, as Alexander falls in love with Campaspe, it creates tension between his personal desires and his role and responsibilities as a ruler. Alongside the central plot involving Alexander, Campaspe and Apelles, a sub-plot features an array of prominent Greek philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes the Cynic, Cleanthes and Chrysippus. While many of the philosophers are awed by Alexander's presence, Diogenes is disdainful and dismissive of the great leader, refusing to show him deference.



*Conjectural reconstruction of Blackfriars Theatre from contemporary documents. In 1583, de Vere secured him the lease of the first Blackfriars Playhouse, where Lyly's first two plays, Campaspe and Sapho and Phao were performed.*



*The 1584 title page of this drama*

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*'Campaspe Taking off Her Clothes in Front of Apelles by Order of Alexander' by Auguste Ottin, c. 1883 — Campaspe was a supposed mistress of Alexander the Great and a prominent citizen of Larissa in Thessaly. No Campaspe appears in the five major sources for the life of Alexander and the story may be apocryphal.*



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE.



*Alexander*, King of Macedon.  
*Page* to Alexander.  
*Melippus*, Chamberlain to Alexander.  
*Hephestion*, his General.

Alexander's Warriors:

*Clytus*, an officer.  
*Parmenio*, an officer.  
*Milectus*, a soldier.  
*Phrygius*, a soldier.

Philosophers:

*Plato*.  
*Granichus*, Servant to Plato.  
*Aristotle*.  
*Diogenes*.  
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*Chrysippus*.  
*Crates*.  
*Cleanthes*.  
*Anaxarchus*.

*Apelles*, a Painter.  
*Psyllus*, Servant to Apelles.

*Crysus*, a beggar  
*Solinus*, a citizen of Athens.  
*Sylvius*, a citizen of Athens.  
*Perim*, Son to Sylvius.  
*Milo*, Son to Sylvius.  
*Trico*, Son to Sylvius.  
*Lais*, a Courtesan.

*Campaspe*, a Theban Captive.  
*Timoclea*, a Theban Captive.

Citizens of Athens, other captive women, etc.

Scene: Athens.

## THE PROLOGUE AT THE BLACKE FRYERS.



THEY THAT FEAR the stinging of wasps make fans of peacocks' tails, whose spots are like eyes. And Lepidus, which could not sleep for the chattering of birds, set up a beast, whose head was like a dragon: and we which stand in awe of report, are compelled to set before our owl Pallas shield, thinking by her virtue to cover the other's deformity.

It was a sign of famine to Egypt, when Nilus flowed less than twelve cubits, or more than eighteen: and it may threaten despair unto us, if we be less courteous than you look for, or more cumbersome.

But as Theseus being promised to be brought to an eagle's nest, and travailing all the day, found but a wren in a hedge, yet said, "this is a bird": so we hope, if the shower of our swelling mountain seem to bring forth some elephant, perform but a mouse, you will gently say, "this is a beast".

Basil softly touched, yieldeth a sweet scent, but chafed in the hand, a rank savour: we fear even so that our labours slyly glanced on, will breed some content, but examined to the proof, small commendation.

The haste in performing shall be our excuse. There went two nights to the begetting of Hercules. Feathers appear not on the phoenix under seven months, and the mulberry is twelve in budding: but our travails are like the hare's, who at one time bringeth forth, nourisheth, and engendreth again; or like the brood of trochilus, whose eggs in the same moment that they are laid, become birds. But howsoever we finish our work, we crave pardon, if we offend in matter, and patience if we transgress in manners.

We have mixed mirth with counsel, and discipline with delight, thinking it not amiss in the same garden to sow pot-herbs, that we set flowers.

But we hope, as harts that cast their horns, snakes their skins, eagles their bills, become more fresh for any other labour: so our charge being shaken off, we shall be fit for greater matters.

But lest like the Myndans, we make our gates greater than our town, and that our play runs out at the preface, we here conclude: wishing that although there be in your precise judgments an universal mislike, yet we may enjoy by your wonted courtesies a general silence.

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*End of Sample*