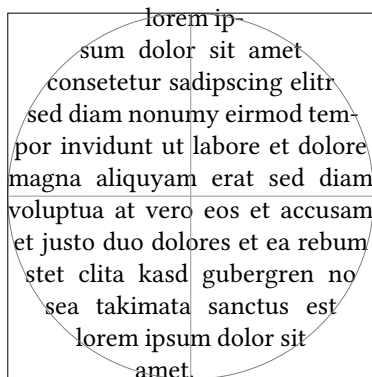


## Colophons /'koləfon/ & shaped paragraphs in SILE

Where to start this document about colophons and paragraph shaping? Galileo, in 1638, wrote:

The area of  
a circle is a mean pro-  
portional between any two reg-  
ular and similar polygons of which  
one circumscribes it and the other is iso-  
perimetric with it. In addition, the area of  
the circle is less than that of any circum-  
scribed polygon and greater than that of any  
isoperimetric polygon. And further, of these  
circumscribed polygons, the one that has  
the greater number of sides has a smaller  
area than the one that has a lesser num-  
ber; but, on the other hand, the iso-  
perimetric polygon that has the  
greater number of sides  
is the larger.

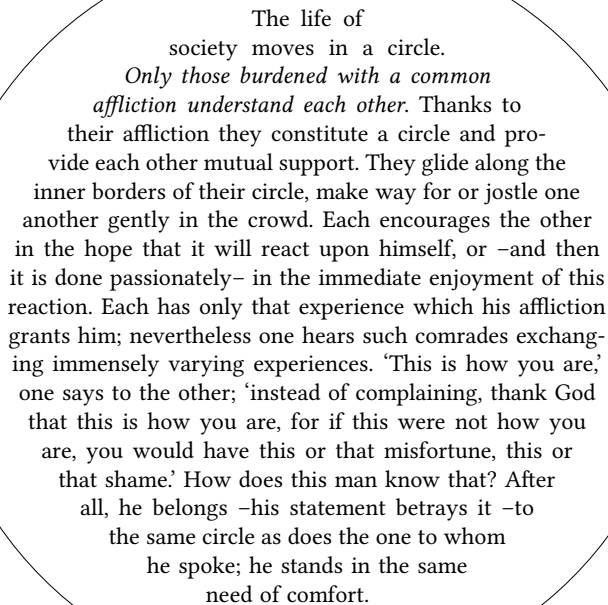
It looks cool, perhaps, but typesetting text in a circle, however, is difficult. The first and last lines do not have much place to play with. Even with hyphenation, one is not guaranteed that the text can be broken at appropriate places. And one cannot be sure the last line, anyway, by nature incomplete, can fit well in a circle. What if, moreover, one wants to display some sort of ornament around a circular-shaped paragraph, not knowing beforehand how it will look? Spaces in a line can be stretched or shrunk. Let us try and debug:



This is not too bad, is it?

Quoting Wikipedia, a colophon (/ˈkɒləfən/) is a brief statement containing information about the publication of a book such as the place of publication, the publisher, and the date of publication. Colophons are usually printed at the ends of books. The term colophon derives from the Late Latin *colophōn*, from the Greek *κολοφών* (meaning “summit” or “finishing touch”). The existence of colophons can be dated back to antiquity.

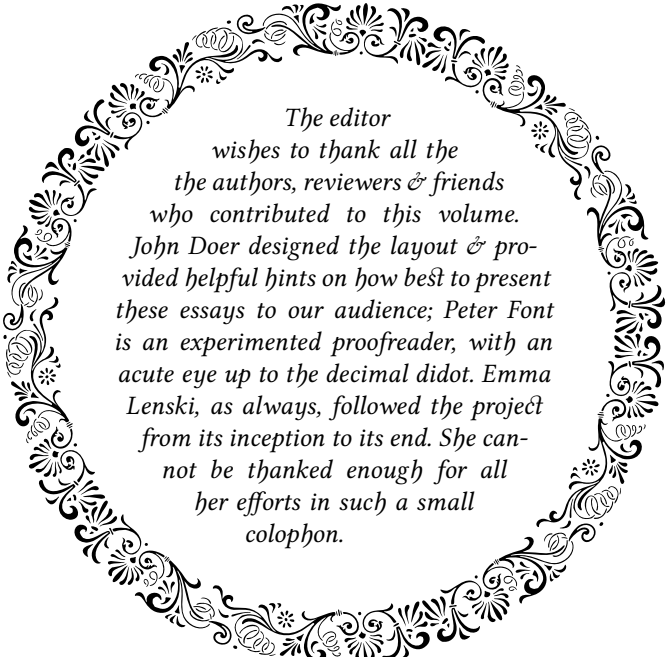
It is quite common for colophons to be surrounded by some sort of ornament. While regular paragraphs are composed of square-shaped blocks, colophons may take various shapes. Can we automated their presentation with SILE in a successful way? Honestly, the ways to do so can be fragile, with a lot of underlying assumptions, and sometimes some manual “tweaks” may be needed. Let us quote Franz Kafka, from his *Diaries*, 1910–1923:

A large circle is centered on the page, containing a block of text. The text is a quote from Franz Kafka's diaries, describing how people in a circle of affliction support each other. The circle is a simple black outline with no fill.

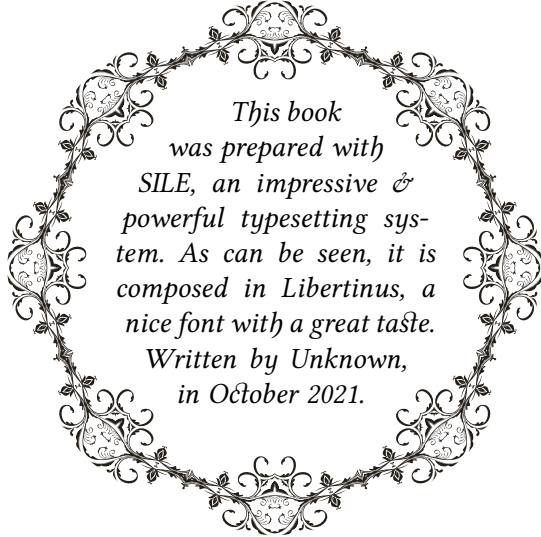
The life of  
society moves in a circle.  
*Only those burdened with a common  
affliction understand each other.* Thanks to  
their affliction they constitute a circle and pro-  
vide each other mutual support. They glide along the  
inner borders of their circle, make way for or jostle one  
another gently in the crowd. Each encourages the other  
in the hope that it will react upon himself, or –and then  
it is done passionately– in the immediate enjoyment of this  
reaction. Each has only that experience which his affliction  
grants him; nevertheless one hears such comrades exchang-  
ing immensely varying experiences. ‘This is how you are,’  
one says to the other; ‘instead of complaining, thank God  
that this is how you are, for if this were not how you  
are, you would have this or that misfortune, this or  
that shame.’ How does this man know that? After  
all, he belongs –his statement betrays it –to  
the same circle as does the one to whom  
he spoke; he stands in the same  
need of comfort.

It still looks decent? Obviously, any long text has more chances to look fine when shaped into a circle. This type of colophon might not be appropriate for short statements.

A few traditional colophons.

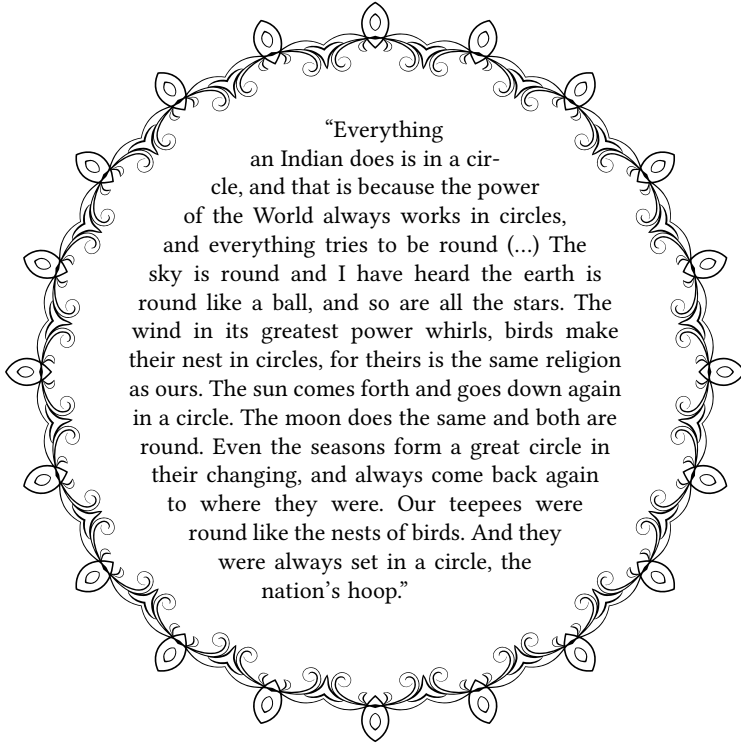


*The editor  
wishes to thank all the  
the authors, reviewers & friends  
who contributed to this volume.  
John Doer designed the layout & pro-  
vided helpful hints on how best to present  
these essays to our audience; Peter Font  
is an experimented proofreader, with an  
acute eye up to the decimal didot. Emma  
Lenski, as always, followed the project  
from its inception to its end. She can-  
not be thanked enough for all  
her efforts in such a small  
colophon.*

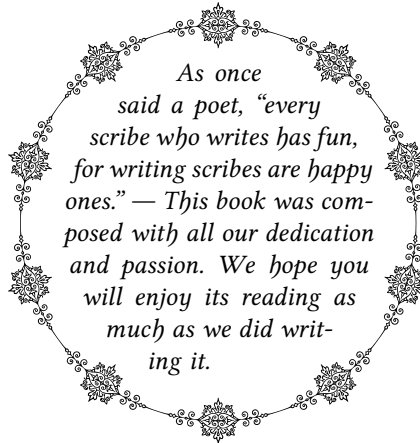


*This book  
was prepared with  
SILE, an impressive &  
powerful typesetting sys-  
tem. As can be seen, it is  
composed in Libertinus, a  
nice font with a great taste.  
Written by Unknown,  
in October 2021.*

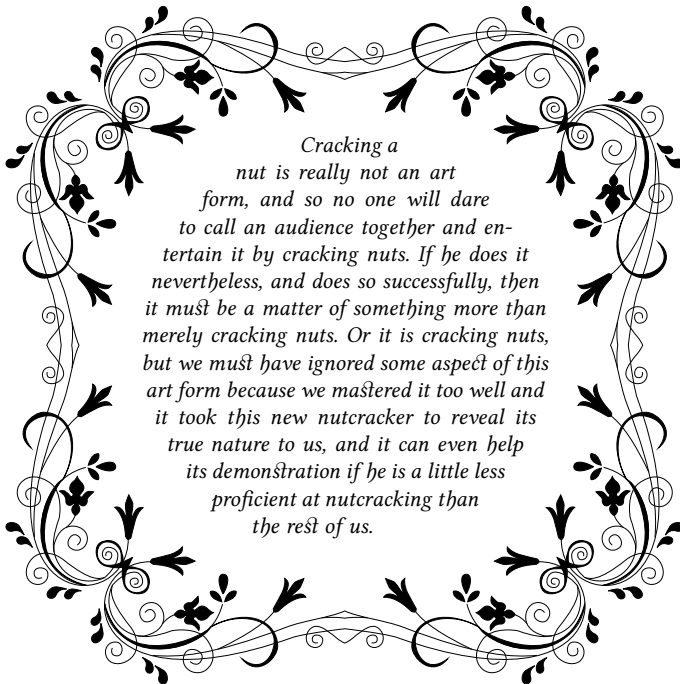
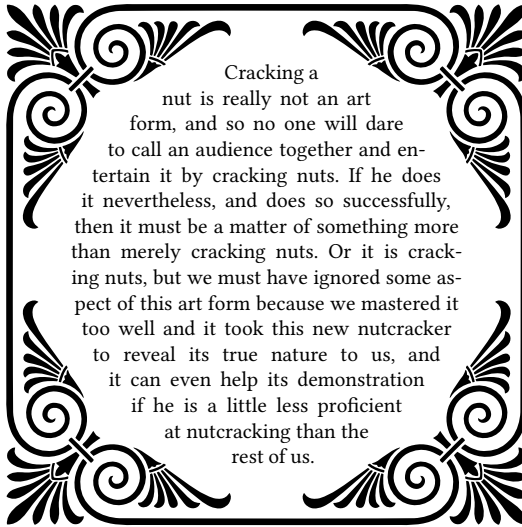
Chief Black Elk was wise. He had something to say regarding circles.



An expressive colophon, now.



As Franz Kafka wrote in *Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk*...



And thus, we have finished.