Colophons /'kpləfon/ & 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 proportional between any two regular and similar polygons of which one circumscribes it and the other is isoperimetric with it. In addition, the area of the circle is less than that of any circumscribed 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 number; but, on the other hand, the isoperimetric 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 no 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, morevover, 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 streched or shrinked. Let us try and debug:

lorem ipsum dolor sit amet
consetetur sadipscing eliti
sed diam nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore
magna aliquyam erat sed diam
voluptua at vero eos et accusam
et justo duo dolores et ea rebum
stet clita kasd
sea takimata sanctus est
lorem ipsum dolor sit
amet

This is not too bad, is it?

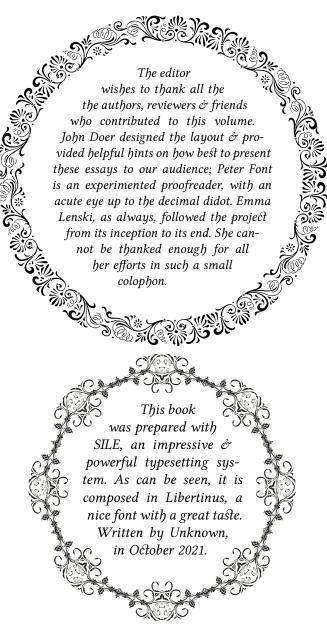
Quoting Wikipedia, a colophon (/ˈkɒləfon/) is a brief statement containing information about the publication of a book such as the place of publication, the publisher, and the date of publication. Colophons are usually printed at the ends of books. The term colophon derives from the Late Latin $coloph\bar{o}n$, from the Greek $\kappa o\lambda o\varphi \omega v$ (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:

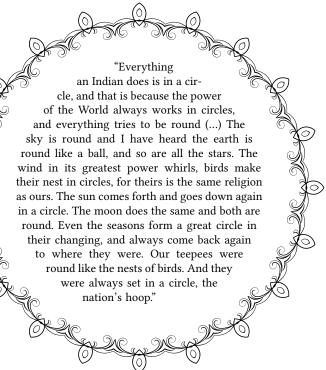
The life of society moves in a circle. Only those burdened with a common affliction understand each other. Thanks to their affliction they constitute a circle and provide each other mutual support. They glide along the inner borders of their circle, make way for or jostle one another gently in the crowd. 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 exchanging 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.

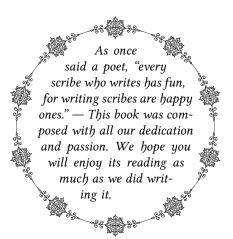
A few traditional colophons.



Chief Black Elk was wise. He had someting 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.