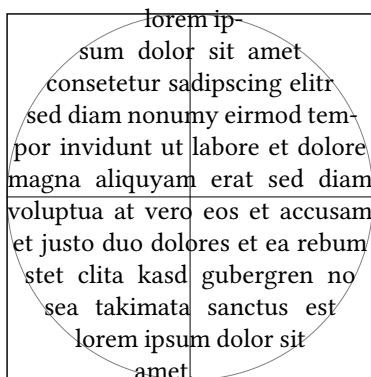


Colophons /'koləfon/ & shaped paragraphs in SILE

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.

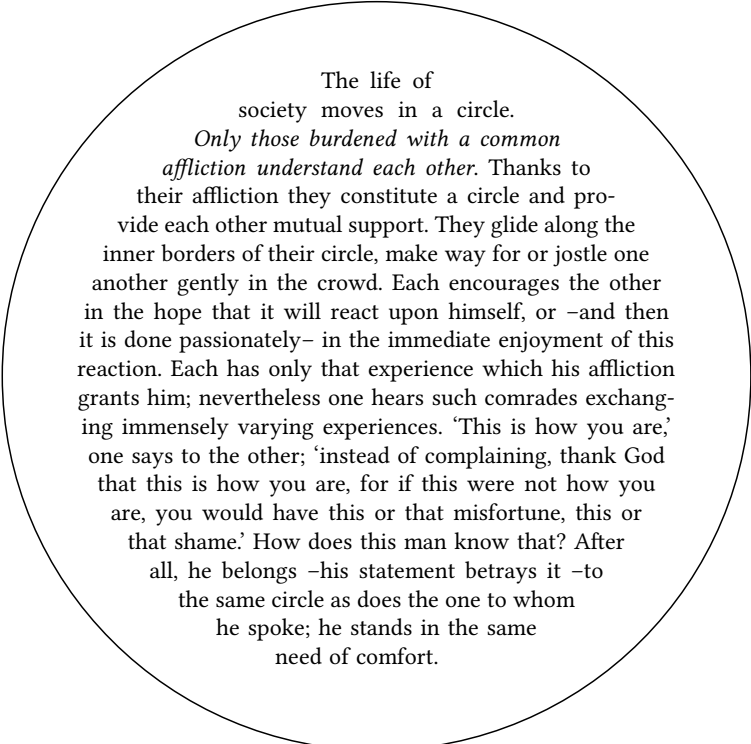
It looks cool, perhaps, but typesetting text in a circle, however, is difficult. The first and last lines do not have much place to play with. Even with hyphenation, one is not guaranteed that the text can be broken at appropriate places. And one cannot be sure the last line, anyway, by nature incomplete, 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.

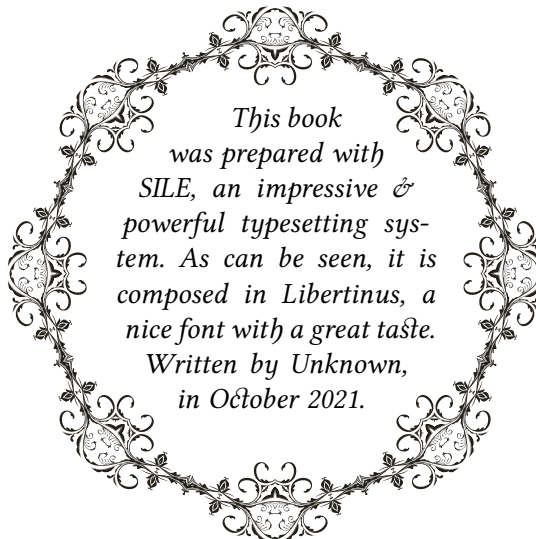
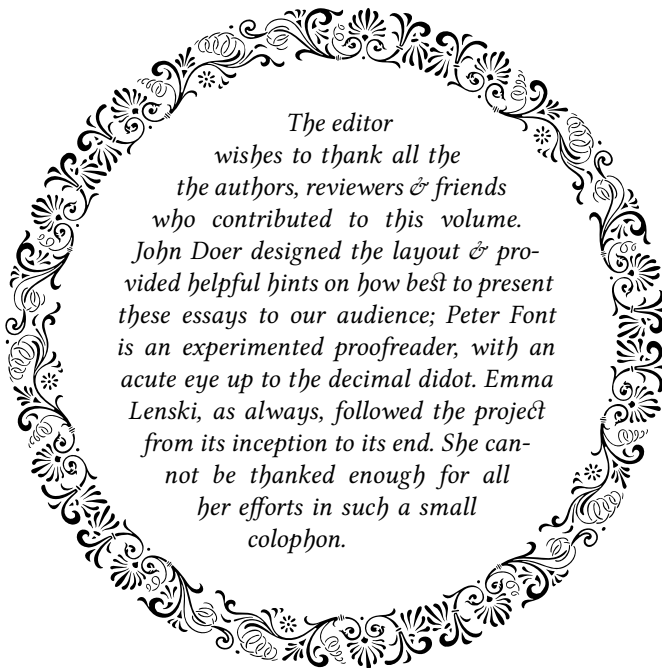
It is quite common for colophons to be surrounded by some sort of ornament. While regular paragraphs are composed of square-shaped blocks, colophons may take various shapes. Can we automated their presentation with SILE in a successful way? Honestly, the ways to do so can be fragile, with a lot of underlying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



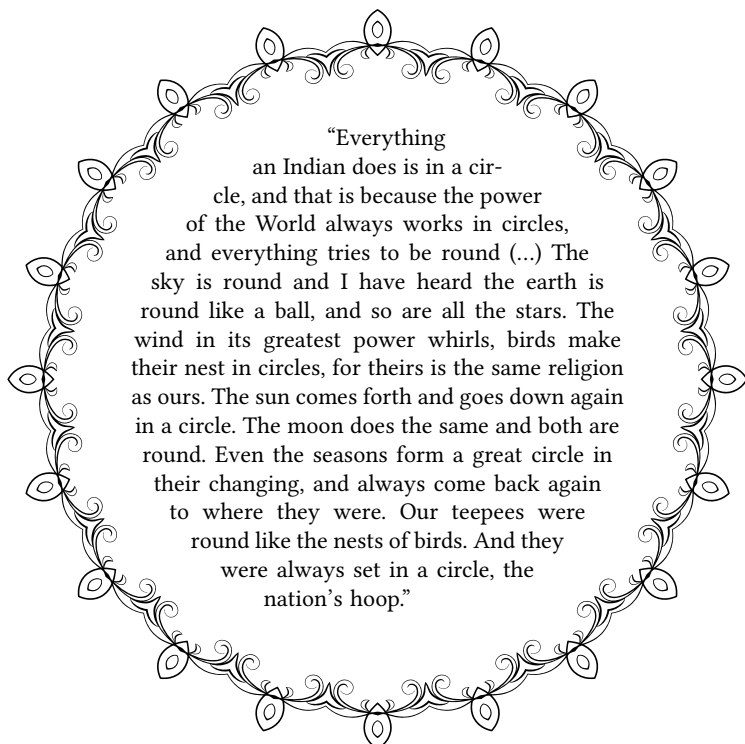
The life of
society moves in a circle.
*Only those burdened with a common
affliction understand each other.* Thanks to
their affliction they constitute a circle and pro-
vide each other mutual support. They glide along the
inner borders of their circle, make way for or jostle one
another gently in the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

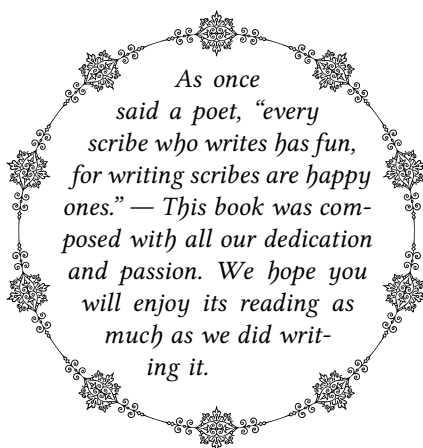
A few traditional colophons.



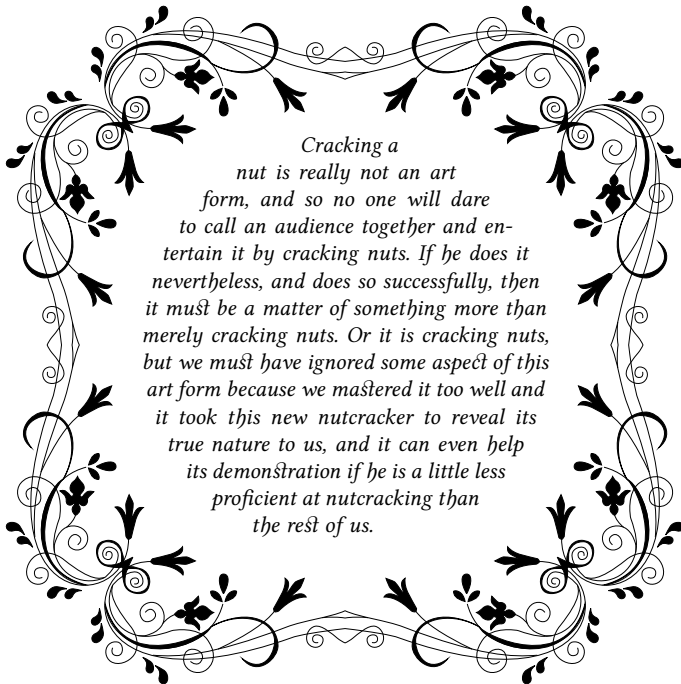
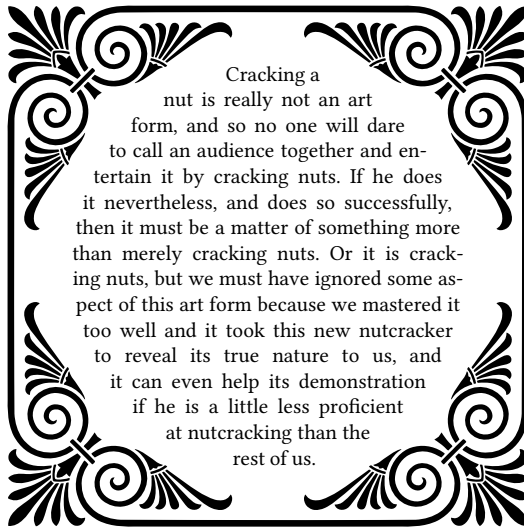
Chief Black Elk was wise. He had something to say regarding circles.



An expressive colophon, now.



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



And thus, we have finished.