

What is a colophon?

A colophon is a brief statement at the end of a book or manuscript, that provides information about its production, its publication: The name of the printer, date of printing, place of printing, typeface, type of paper, and the size of the edition. A colophon in an artist's book also may include a description of the materials and processes used to create the book.

In most countries, the colophon is now located on the page opposite the title page. However, for fine editions, and artist's books, the colophon may still be placed on the last page and include more production details as per above.

Early books often had a colophon instead of a title page imprint. Modern private presses and other examples of fine printing also often use a colophon.

A little bit of history about colophons

Another
miracle.



WHEN, too, there was Dietrich, the first Abbot of Saint Evroul, filled with holy zeal for the transcribing of manuscripts and making of books. In order that his monks might work more earnestly he used to tell them this story:

Once upon a time there was a wicked monk. At his death the devil claimed his soul. He thought he had a sure thing. Now, it happened that just before his death the monk had completed the copying of a great fario volume. This book the angels brought to judgment-seat of God, and for each letter written in the book one sin was forgiven. When the recording angel had added up the two sides of the account, behold, there was one little "i" left over, and the monk's soul was saved.



This tale comes from J. S. Kennard's short 1901 [tome](#) on the colophon — that last page at the end of a manuscript or book. The colophon has served many purposes: giving the title of the work, identifying the scribe or printer, naming the place and date of completion or imprint, thanking and praising the patron, bragging, blaming, apologizing, entreating, praying and much more. Examples can be traced back to [clay tablets](#) and forward to [websites](#).