

‘En este lugar se acaba esta rrazon’: Closing Down the Discourse in Performance and Script

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Abstract: How, in oral performance, do we know that the end of the recitation or display has been reached? And how, too, in a manuscript context, can the end of a work be signalled to the reader? Such bringings-to-an-end were often loci of creativity, and I discuss the authorial ending (here termed ‘explicit’) and the scribal signing-off (here invoked as ‘colophon’), as well as scribal colonization of the authorial *adieu*; in all, an element which has often been dismissed as stereotyped, as fixed or as fossilized is shown to be in constant, often subversive, evolution. At the same time, I consider the typological information preserved in these end-ers (title, author, date, genre), their phylogeny (transmission of particular phrasing or style), and the implications for their use in a particular place and time—here, northern Spain, thirteenth–fifteenth centuries—and, as just one last thing, the manner in which they may transmit how scribes themselves considered the nature of the works they were copying.

Keywords: explicit, verse-explicit, colophon, scribal emendation, manuscript transmission

FIN: the word that marked the end of motion pictures, like the dramatic fall of the curtain in the theatre, indicating that the spell of suspension of disbelief in flickering images or strutting actors was now to be dispelled, and one might begin the applause: the credits could roll or the players come out to take their bows. The ending of things has its own grammar, and one which triggers a response: the collapse of the performer-audience binary, the set-

ting aside of roles, a show of appreciation which has until then been quietened and which can only be fully and acceptably shown once the performance has stopped. Since the oral performance of literary works was the norm in the Middle Ages,¹ these two elements (of performance and text) are much more intertwined than would be assumed by a modern observer. The present article, then, will look at how the endings of various medieval works are negotiated in manuscript, and what we might understand from them about the grammar of literary closure: how the audience was told the end was nigh, and then how that end was consummated. This is not, however, an essay in how a listener or reader comes to appreciate the fulfilment of a work's *telos*, the possibly cathartic *dénouement* of the final lines, as explored by Frank Kermode a generation or two ago in his *The Sense of an Ending* (1967, 2000); no, we will be concerned with the *formalia* of how readers and listeners were assured that the performative space or literary work was, through those very words, drawing to a close, and not halting unfinished due to material loss in a source-text somewhere along the line. Our exploration will also show how these formal bringings-to-an-end were, as befits a manuscript culture, *loci* of creativity and, despite an appearance of stability, sites of evolution, development, colonisation.

The picture we will draw is, however, unavoidably complicated since the only evidence of medieval orality is conveyed through writing. Consequently, we will have to take seriously the role of writing and copying within a manuscript culture as well, and to this end we shall consider what I will refer to as *explicit*s and colophons. There is a wide range of often conflicting definitions for these two words and a wide range of usage, from the archivists' and codicologists' *explicit* as the final words of a document or unit of the same (Oxford English Dictionary 2022, s.v. *explicit* n.² def. 2, the parallel to the *incipit* of the same; Casas Rigall 2014: 17), to a more general sense which simply identifies material which may show up at the end of a work.² Here, though, *explicit* and colophon may be thought of as two sides of a threshold—inside and outside the work³—and as being enunciated in two different voices: the *explicit* being the statement that the work itself is finishing, often expressly in the voice of the author, at once communicating and enacting the end (Oxford English Dictionary 2022, s.v. *explicit* n.² def. 1, 'a declaration that something is finished', or, rather *is finishing*); and the colophon in the voice of the scribe, noting amongst other things that the copying

¹ Whilst canonists and scholastics would be hunched wordless over their *pecia*-copied tomes, the copying of literature—and particularly the texts we will be considering—was primarily to provide a prompt for oral performance: see, for example, Lawrance (1984).

² *Explicit* has been used in numerous ways: contemplating scribal involvement (Yudkin 1984: 1 n. 2; Dagenais 1994: 48; Mooney 1995: 48; Trygg 1999: 273; Godden 2003: 25; Busby 2007, par. 35; Olson 2008: 288; Treharne 2009: 107); indicating lines (often verse) attributed to the author (Emmerson 1999: 152; Sobecki 2019: 31); for words written by the translator (Glaza 2005: 53 n. 1) or the editor (Domínguez 1997: 110); for both scribal and authorial endings to a text (Dillon 2002: 214; Haywood 2013: 81)—referring, in these cases, to Anglo-Saxon, Castilian, French, Latin and Middle-English manuscripts.

³ See Scase (2020) for the idea of 'threshold-switching'.

is also drawing to a close.⁴ Here, then, we are using the terms to lay out part of the functional structure of a text, rather than (as in codicology) describing the chance extremities of any given manuscript. This distinction between colophon and *explicit* is essentially that which was adopted for Sanskrit literature at the beginning of the century. 'Colophons are [...] scribal notes attached to a manuscript copy of a text [...]; whereas *explicit*s provide 'information about a text that forms a more integral part of the text itself' (Baums 2022: 16; cf. also Formigatti 2022: 44–45). This distinction has been found to be usefully applicable elsewhere (von Hinüber 2017).

The authorial beginning to a work (which, in line with our previous definitions, we will call an *incipit*) provides an entry into the 'performative world' of the story to be recounted; the *explicit* closes that world which had previously been opened;⁵ *incipit* and *explicit* combine to demarcate a performative space and time. Yet, as we have mentioned, these works exist not simply as performances, but as written documents, copies of copies, involving the personal work of scribes for their transmission. As the imaginative and creative work of the author is closed, so the focus turns to the material support, the physical labour of the scribe through that scribe's addition which falls outside the work itself, yet is still connected to it. Such formal scribal endings have been appended to texts for over four thousand years (Hunger 1968: 2; Willgren 2016: 54).⁶ The process of re-copying a text from a scribal copy may also, then, include an already-existing colophon, which then becomes frozen, or fossilised, within the manuscript tradition, as part of a stratum of accretions that was absolutely normal in a manuscript culture.⁷ Despite the rather hidebound impression that talk of 'frozen colophons' might create, scribal use of the colophon, in its composition, deployment and occasional preservation, was anything but mechanical.⁸ That is not to say, though, that the colophon was deprived of a recognisable structure, and the medieval European scribe usually repeated well-worn phrases, pious rhymes or prayers, expressions of relief, but never reached the florid elaboration found amongst Armenian scribes (Schiegg 2015: 11; Sirinian 2014).

Colophons in the Latin West began attracting at least some academic attention at the beginning of the twentieth century (Plummer 1926, *inter alia*) and, although this work mainly

⁴ On the question of voice see Sears (2006: 90).

⁵ This is not necessary a *fictional* world, since the tyranny of positivism had not yet laid its technocratic hand upon the teller of tales in order to maintain the primacy of facts.

⁶ There is not the wide difference of signification attached to the definition of the colophon as there is to the *explicit*; it is nearly always understood as scribal. But see Brioso Sánchez (2004), 336 and Daniel Hobbins who promises a forthcoming monograph on the 'authorial colophon'. For an example of a 'non-scribal colophon' (marking the relevant manuscript's location in a given year) see Maxwell (1983: 48).

⁷ Willgren (2016). Gimeno Blay (1995: 170–71) points out that, for Catalan manuscripts, it is a rare occurrence, witnessed in not quite 2% of the corpus he examined.

⁸ Whilst Newton (1973: 11) saw little space for innovation, Gimeno Blay (1995: 183) underlined the creative liberty shown in the composition of the colophons he studied.

tended towards the anecdotal,⁹ it led to the six-volume collection by the Swiss Benedictines of Le Bouveret which took two decades to complete (*Bénédictins du Bouveret* 1965, 1967, 1973, 1976, 1979, 1982). Excellent systematic studies of what we have here referred to as the *explicit* and colophon have been carried out, for Catalan manuscripts, by Gimeno Blay (1995) and, for Castilian ones, by Casas Rigall (2014);¹⁰ for the colophon alone, regarding Beneventan manuscripts, by Newton (1973), for Latin manuscripts by Derolez (1995), and for Anglo-Saxon ones, by Gameson (2006). Studies of the final matter in manuscript texts beyond Latin Christendom have also been produced, in the main, during the last three decades.¹¹

In what follows I will consider in the main vernacular manuscripts from the north of Spain from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Given that the taxonomy of their final matter has been ably explored by Gimeno Blay and Casas Rigall, my focus can turn to exploring the range of possibilities such formal components to literary works and their copying afforded, and so I will trace stages of development visible either through single copies of a work or via manuscript traditions of another. My aim will be to highlight how these formal features are put to work performatively, what they reveal of authorial and scribal attitudes to the material, to the work itself or to previous copies of the same. Northern Spain, despite its unfamiliarity to many and its peripheral nature in relation to the core of medieval European culture, nevertheless provides a continuous, relatively homogenous scribal milieu which was in turn connected to the larger streams of scribal praxis in both Latin and vernacular further north. The aim will be to deepen appreciation of how *explicit*s and colophons might serve their authors, and how they may be interrogated. Whilst being aware of horizontal, comparative connexions (both from the depths of history and literally next-door), I shall strive to show how *explicit*s and colophons display individual depth and how they may communicate information of crucial significance for our understanding of the works in question. I will move from an understanding of typological form (such as an *explicit* which contains both title and subscription), or phylogenetic relationships (such as the spread of the particular style of phrasing in *explicit* or colophon) to the observation of what may be implied by their use in specific surroundings. In the words of the charity advocate, I seek to 'raise awareness' in a comparative forum that these *formalia*, although often formalised and repetitive, should not be thought of as wholly dead, and that the formal appearance of the colophon or the *explicit* may hide a dynamism which deserves

⁹ For example, Thorndike (1937, 1956); Dondaine (1978). Others have been less forgiving about previous scholarship: 'haphazard and unscientific' (Gameson 2002: 3); focused on 'antiquarian curiosities' (Moreno Olalla 2013: 114).

¹⁰ Subscriptions from early medieval Spain have been explored by Brown (2011).

¹¹ The notable exception is Hunger's (1968) collection of Assyrian and Babylonian colophons; see further Brock (1995) and Carter McCollum (2015) (Syriac), Piemontese (1995) (Persian), van Soldt (1988) (Ugaritic), Chambert-Loir (2007) (Malayan), Quiring-Zoeche (2013) (Arabic), Sirinian (2014) (Armenian), Waal (2015) and Corti (2022) (Hittite), von Hinüber (2017) (Sanskrit), Lundhaug and Rubenson (2018) (Coptic), Beit-Arié (1995) and White Crawford (2020) (Hebrew), and the essays in Balbir and Ciotti (2022).

appreciation. Such an analysis might be possible using examples drawn from various times and places; but the marginalised nature of both colophon and *explicit* in the hands of editors means that it is practically possible to carry out an analysis only with manuscripts and manuscript traditions that one knows well.

In what follows, I shall take up some examples of both ‘popular’ and ‘learned’ works: such a division is mainly based upon a distinction found in some of the more learned works that looked down upon the fabulations of the jongleur (or *joglar* in medieval Castilian), the performer of the *chanson de geste* (a primarily oral form, at least as regards its earliest manifestations), when compared to the literate nature of the clerical poet (although he, also, recited his work and used many characteristically oral forms).¹² The *chanson de geste* also illustrates how a single manuscript may suffer colophonical accretions, whilst the clerical poetry shows how dynamic the *explicit* and colophon may be when the chance survivals within a manuscript tradition grant us a view of their development.

Popular verse: *Cantar de mio Çid*

This acephalous *chanson de geste* from the beginning of the thirteenth century has only survived in what is most likely a late-thirteenth- or early-fourteenth-century copy on parchment. Its iconic status has led to grievous mistreatment by editors down the years, with cavalier use of reagents resulting in significant parts of the poem now being scarcely readable, or utterly illegible. This very much affected the end of the work, and some of the final recto cannot be deciphered even with the high-resolution images provided by the Biblioteca Nacional ([Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes 2002](#)); so, in large part, the text given below directly relies upon those who also vandalised the manuscript.

The poem tells (not without some degree of invention) of the latter part of the martial career of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar (d. 1099), a multifaceted warrior who was able to wrest the stunning prize of the port of Valencia from its independent Muslim overlords and hold on to it until his death, the mention of which draws the poem to a close (fol. 74r; ll. 3728–35 in modern editions).¹³

¹² On this imitation of epic phrasing in learned hagiographic verse see Lappin (2002: 247) and Lappin (2008b).

¹³ There are two errors in the text which affected ll. 8 and 10; both are examples of dittography. The first is the repetition of the definite article ‘el’ (l. 8: *el el romance*) which seemed, according to Menéndez Pidal, to have been corrected by the scribe; and the repetition of a syllable at l. 10 (*dararan*), which, again according to Menéndez Pidal, may have been corrected to the third-person plural future, *daran*. In the text as reproduced, I have silently expanded abbreviations and ignored medieval letter-forms (such as the long-s in words such as *Passado*); I have also provided accentuation and the indication of apocope through an apostrophe. Otherwise, I have preserved the original majuscules and punctuation.

- Passado es d'este siglo el dia de cinquaesma
 De Christus aya perdón
 Assi ffgamos nos todos iustos e peccadores [3]
 Estas son las nueuas de myo çid el canpeador
 En este lugar se acaba esta rrazón
 Quien escriuió este libro dél' dios paráyso amen [6]
 Per abbat le escriuió enel mes de mayo
 En era de mill e .C.C. xLv. annos. el rromanz
 es leydo dat Nos del uino : si non tenedes dineros echad [9]
 ala unos pennos que bien uos darán sobr'elos

 He left this world on the day of Pentecost
 May he have forgiveness from Christ.
 May we all, just and sinners, do likewise. [3]
 These are the deeds of the Cid the Warrior,
 In this place this tale ends.
 To him who copied this book, may God give him paradise, Amen! [6]
 Peter Abbot wrote it in the month of May,
 in the era of 1245 years [AD 1207]. The poem
 has been read, give us some wine, if you have no coins, throw [9]
 some pledges there, for you will be rewarded for them.¹⁴

The poem ends maintaining its recognisable verse-structure of roughly equal hemistichs with a repeated assonance at the end of the line (thus at ll. 2-5, the assonance is in *ó*). These lines evoke the death of the Cid, ask for prayers for his soul and counsel to all to forgive others (so that they may, too, be saved), followed by the concluding two lines which sum up the poem (l. 4) and announce the end of the recitation, the *rrazon* (l. 5; from Latin *ratio*, it means in this context 'discourse', 'oral statement or argument', 'tale', 'account').¹⁵

A similar pattern may be observed at the end of the Aragonese life of Mary of Egypt (again witnessed in a single manuscript and dominated by the demands of oral delivery), the *Vida de Santa María Egipcíaca*. This poem concludes with the grief-stricken reaction of the Egyptian monks to the retelling of the death of the saint, which spurs them to greater asceticism, and which in turn is presented to the poem's own listeners as the proper response to what they have heard, so that (as with the *Cantar*) the closure of the work may be marked by a communal act of prayer for salvation:

¹⁴ This and all following translations are my own.

¹⁵ Cf. the initial line of the thirteenth-century hagiographic poem, *Santa María Egipcíaca* (Alvar 1972: 47), 'Oit, varones, huna razón' (Oyez, gentleman, a tale).

El santo abat ploró muy fuerte
 quando'l oyó contar su muerte
 e los monges que eran hí
 todos plorauan otrosí
 mucho emendaron de su vida
 por enxemplo desta María.
 E nos mismos nos emendemos
 que mucho mester lo auemos,
 e roguemos a esta María
 cada noche e cada día
 que ella rruegua al criador
 con quien ella ouo grant amor
 que'l podamos fer tal seruiçio
 que al día del juýcio
 non nos falle en mal uiçio.
 Él nos dé grant partida
 en la perdurable uida.
 Todo omne que oujere sen
 rresponda e diga Amen.
 AMEN.¹⁶

The holy abbot wept a lot,
 when he heard him recount her death,
 and the monks who were there
 they all wept too;
 they corrected much in their lives
 through this Mary's example.
 And let us correct ourselves,
 for we very much need to,
 and let us pray this Mary,
 every day and every night,
 that she should pray to the Creator,
 by Whom she was so beloved,
 that we might do him such service
 that, on the Day of Judgement,
 He might not find us in evil sin.
 May he give us a great share
 in the life that never ends.

¹⁶ The text is adapted from Alvar (1972).

Everyone who has some sense
 reply, and say 'Amen'.
 AMEN.

Here again the traditional ending of Christian prayers, *Amen*, is used to signal the *explicit* of the work of literature, as both prayer and poem are aligned. The imaginative story-world of the saint's life, and its recitation by an individual, is brought to an end by a communal vocalisation that pronounces the end of the work, the end of performance-time (Schechner 1988) and returns both audience and performer to the quotidian through a ritual expressing a desire (here, for salvation) held in common. The AMEN in the manuscript text, too, indicates the end of the work; there is no scribal colophon, as the poem nestles between other poetic works within the sole manuscript to preserve it (El Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo, ms. K-III-4). The following work in the manuscript, the *Libro de los tres reyes de Oriente* is rounded off simply, with a recognisable and very common scribal colophon: '*Finito libro sit laus et gloria Christo*' (With the book finished, may praise and glory be to Christ).¹⁷

Yet the sole manuscript to transmit the *Cantar de mio Çid*, and which contains nothing but the *Cantar*, does not fall into silence so easily. There are further lines which follow the *explicit*, and which mark a change in verse structure, with, similarly, a change in focus: the emphasis is not now on the ending of the epic poem but on the mechanics of its preservation: a colophon, with the name of the scribe, the date of copy, a prayer not this time for the hero but for the scribe himself. The verse structure has a simple assonance in the two parts of l. 6 (*i-o: libro—paráyso*), and then another assonance for ll. 7-8 (*á-o: mayo—annos*) in lines which more recognisably ape the epic verse which the scribe had previously copied.¹⁸ We might thus reformat the verses (ll. 6-8) with the assonantal vowels marked with italics, as:

Quien escriuíó este libro
 dél' dios paráyso
 amen
 Per Abbat le escriuíó | enel mes de mayo
 En era de mill e .C.C. | xLv. annos.

Such intromissions of the scribe through imitation of the voice of the poet—here, the epic poet—are not, as we shall see, entirely uncommon.

¹⁷ Sánchez (1864: 321); for the florid development of the tag, Reynhout (1988); further, Bénédictins du Bouveret (1982: 274).

¹⁸ Probably to be read: *Per abbat l'escriuíó | enel mes de mayo / En era de mill e dosçientos | e quarenta e çinco annos*, with the solidus (|) indicating the central caesura characteristic of the epic verse.

Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the manuscript we have before us is *not* the actual text copied out by Per Abbat, but is in fact a copy of that work; the scribal colophon that names Per Abbat has thus been frozen in transmission. In its original oral form, the *Cantar* ended with a sequence comprised of (1) the invocation of the deity, (2) recapitulation of the subject matter, and (3) formal closure. As a primarily oral text, designed (as epics were) for performance, it concluded with the words of the performer, the *joglar*. A colophon was added after this ending, where the scribe could (1) invoke the deity, (2) identify himself and (3) record when he had copied the text. In our copy, though, this colophon has been fossilised, preserving these details, perhaps for a number of motivations, but due in part to what follows on from the scribal colophon itself, *another* drawing to a close, but this time with a much more down-to-earth intention: a request for payment. Unlike the poem and the scribal colophon, this (pseudo-) *joglar*'s invitation to his audience does not observe any allegiance to line divisions. We might reconstruct it in the following fashion, with the assonantal vowels (the first two lines in *í-o*, followed by three with *é-o*) again marked with italics:¹⁹

El rromanz es leído
 Datnos del vino
 Si non tenedes dineros
 echad ala unos pennos
 que bien uos darán sobr'elos

Gonçalvo de Verçeo, writing in the first half of the thirteenth century, did echo this type of jongleuresque demand: at the beginning of his account of his life of Saint Dominic of Silos which occupied more than three thousand lines of carefully constructed Alexandrines, he noted that his work in the vernacular 'Bien ualdrá como creo | un uaso de bon uino' (will be worth, as I believe, a glass of good wine) (Ruffinatto 1992: 259). Nevertheless, like both the anonymous poet and the named scribe of the *Cantar de mio Çid*, Gonçalvo ends that poem, quite properly and piously, with a long request for prayers, not inebriation.²⁰ Others were less spiritual: the goliardic and possibly contemporary *Razón de amor y Denuestos del agua y del vino* (Tale of Love and the Argument between Water and Wine) marks the end of its debate between the key liquids with a squiggly line (whose deformity closely matches the copyist's handwriting), a closing formula and, finally, an imperative: 'Mi rraçón aquí la fino e mandad nos dar uino' (I end my words here; and you should order that wine be

¹⁹ The lines in *í-o* are irregular (equalling seven and five syllables respectively), whilst for those in *é-o* each line offer eight syllables.

²⁰ Very possibly a cross-over from scribal practice (see, for example, Sears 2006: 60 n. 54, 80) which had an enormously long pedigree: Willgren (2016: 54); Hunger (1968: 2). In line with ancient practice, the name of the author (often accompanied by a title, if one existed) was given usually at the end of the book or scroll (Gamble 1995: 48). Gower was particularly interesting in his use of the authorial *explicit*, combining scribal motifs with his self-consciousness as an author: see Sobecki (2019: 31); Echard (2004); Echard (1998: 3–4, 28–29); Echard and Fanger (1991: 95).

given us). This is not quite all, however, as the scribe continues in Latin after leaving a blank line: '*Qui me scripsit scribat semper cum domino bibat lupus me fecit de moros*' (May he who wrote me [continue to] write, may he live for ever with the Lord; Lope de Moros made me).²¹ Yet in these lines it is not the poet-scribe who speaks in his own voice; it is rather the book he has made which itself expresses a (perhaps jocular) hope for his salvation: the colophon, thanks to Iberian betacism, is paranomastic, with a play between the pious '*semper cum domino uiuat*' (may he live with the Lord [Jesus Christ] for ever) and the goliardic '*semper cum domino bibat*' (may he always drink with the master). Here the performative nature of the work is reconfigured: even though the text is no longer primarily conceived as human-delivered oral performance, still the book speaks and addresses the reader. At the same time as the focus falls not upon the text as aid-to-performance but as written object, the text itself speaks, and divulges the name of the author (or copyist). Any desire to distinguish *the written* from *the oral* is here wholly vain and is clearly part of the complexity of Lupus' literary *ludus*.

The concluding lines of the *Cantar de mio Çid* do not have quite this sophistication, but they do follow somewhat the same model: (a) *explicit* to the poem, in verse; (b) a 'scribal ditty' in Lynn Thorndike's term (Thorndike 1937); and (c) identification of the hand that held the pen. Per Abbat went on to provide (d) the date of copy; it is regrettable that Lupus de Moros refrained. Lupus retained the colophon in Latin, even though the work it rounded off was in the vernacular, thus making a clear break between text and colophon; Per Abbat provided the colophon in the vernacular. Nevertheless, this 'jingle' (l. 6: 'Quien escriuió este libro | dél' dios paraýso') is in fact a close translation of a common Latin tag which is often used as, or as part of, a colophon and exists in a number of variant forms. The most basic one of these is '*Qui scripsit hunc librum | collocetur in paradisum*' (May he who copied this book be seated in paradise).²² Indeed, it was common enough in the twelfth century to receive an earthly parody by one David Armenicus, appended to the end of his copy of the *De oculis* of 'Ammār ibn'Alī al-Mauṣilī of Baghdad (Caen, Bibliothèque de la Communauté d'agglomération de Caen la mer, ms. 93, fol. 62v): *Qui scripsit hunc librum lucretur denarios et florenos* (May he who copied this book gain dinars and florins).

Yet, in our *Çid* manuscript, the sequence immediately turns back to orality, to performance, as there is a direct apostrophe of the audience, initially asking for wine, then for payment.

²¹ For the goliardic source-material, see Cárdenas (1968: 240); for the identification of the Aragonese Lope de Moros, Cásida Teresa (2021). On the scribal formula, '*Qui me scripsit* etc.' see Reynhout (2006, I 171–85). For the use of the first person and the 'speaking book', see also the colophon '*Qui me scribebat ... nomen habebat*' (He who wrote me was called ...): Reynhout (2006, I 149–50). On Lupus's use of *fazer* (to make, to compose) see Casas Rigall (2014: 60).

²² Bénédictins du Bouveret (1976: 21). Subsequent variation: Bénédictins du Bouveret (1979: 566; 1982: 467); Lang (1892: 87); Greene (2011); Bénédictins du Bouveret (1982: 467; 1973: 363; 1976: 87; 1982: 466). The second hemistich of the Latin version might be reformulated as '*fiat collocatus in paradisum*', '*fiat collectum in paradisum*', '*ducatur in paradisum*', '*vadat ad paradisum*', '*se videat in paradisum*', '*ab angelis portetur in paradisum*' (be placed in, be gathered into, led into, go to, see himself in, be carried by the angels into, paradise, respectively).

It is not absolutely clear whether these lines are an addition to this manuscript: Menéndez Pidal (1908: 15–16), after he had deciphered the letters through judicious application of acid, thought they were added shortly after the scribe completed his work, which, for the great don Ramón, was early in the fourteenth century; for Montaner (2018: 51), they were added in the second half of the fourteenth century; and Riaño Rodríguez and Gutiérrez Aja (2003: 317) argue that these lines were due to the same scribe as the rest of the manuscript (who was writing, in their view, around the 1230s). In all scholarly opinions, though, the lines are an addition to the text, perhaps explicitly to be used in oral performance, as if the reciter were a proper *joglar*. But of course, any reciter in need of such a prompt would not be an actual *joglar*: such verses were a performer's stock-in-trade. Given that, at this point, the genre of the epic was itself an orally-composed and -delivered form of entertainment (and the *joglar* was one capable of doing this), the written form of the *Cantar* presents itself as a somewhat ersatz epic.²³ In the light of this curious presentation of the text and particularly the closing lines which we have discussed, it is germane to note that an ecclesiastical establishment would be the most likely possessor and interpreter of the text (Russell 1958; Montaner 2018: 54–55). Such monastic or canonical foundations could indeed host semi-permanent epic performers (Anton 1988: 18), yet the final lines asking for payment suggest that the poem was not simply a memento of a significant performance, but provided an alternative form of delivering the epic narrative by someone who was not at all a professional *joglar*; in other words, the manuscript provided a consistent recreation of the tale which avoided the variable inventions of the *joglares* (and *joglareasas*), whilst still imitating their form of poetry.

The name of the author

The works considered above are, in the main, anonymous, which is perhaps a function of the written text being subordinate to the performance of the work; the persons of creator and deliverer merge through the act of delivery. Where, however, texts are conceived as having their own, primarily written, existence, the preservation of the author's name through the poem may become both a desideratum but also a way of closing the text. A simple example is provided by a clerical poet of the first half of the thirteenth century whom we have mentioned earlier, Gonçalvo de Verçeo, drawing the nearly two thousand lines of the poem dedicated to Saint Aemilianus—or San Millán in the vernacular—to a halt:

Gonzaluo fue so nomne | qui fizo est tractado
en Sant Millán de Suso | fue de niñez criado

²³ Duggan (2008) argued that the text of the *Cantar* as it presents itself to us is a transcription of a *joglar*'s performance; others maintain the possibility of written composition (Bayo Julve 2005); for the *Cantar*'s eccentric quality within the genre of Iberian epic see Vaquero (2018).

natural de Berceo, | ond Sant Millán fue nado
 dios guarde la su alma | del poder del pecado

Gonzalvo was his name, he who composed this piece of writing;
 he was raised from his childhood in San Millán de Suso,
 a native of Berceo, where Saint Aemilian was born;
 God guard his soul from the power of the Devil.

The verse *explicit*, then, not only identifies the author, but can also be used to express the author's connexion to the material that he is versifying, his intimate involvement in the subject-matter. Here Gonçalvo indicates his biographical links to the predominant sites of the saint's cult, the monastery that the saint founded close to the place of his birth (and where Gonçalvo held a benifice). In the poet's *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* we find self-identification followed by a request for spiritual payment from the audience, then from the saint, before the work is closed by a long intercessory prayer which ends again with the hope for the salvation of those present.

Despite the artistry involved, the verse *explicit* is neither necessarily inviolable nor definitively the end. We shall look, in what follows, at a series of examples of the same. Gonçalvo de Verçeo, to continue with our poet, in his final hagiography, the *Vida de Santa Oria*, drew his work to a close with a recognisable sign-off, with self-identification, connexion to the subject, prayer for salvation:

Gonçalo li dixieran | al versificador,
 que en su portalejo | fizo esta lavor;
 ponga en él su gracia | dios el nuestro señor,
 que vea la su gloria | en el Regno Mayor.

They called him Gonçalo, · the versifier
 who, in her doorway [either to her cell, or her shrine], · composed this work;
 may He put his grace in him · God our Lord
 so that he might see His glory · in the greater Kingdom.

Yet the same Gonçalvo, at another moment, returned to his work to include further details, no doubt due to local pressure (to which he alludes in the last lines of the stanza):

Aún non me querría | señores espedir
 aún fincan cosiellas | que vos é de dezir
 la obra començada | bien la quiero complir
 que non aya ninguno | por qué me escarnir.

I still would not wish, gentlemen, to take my leave;
 there still remain some little things I have to say;
 the work begun, I wish to finish well,
 so that there is no-one who will criticise me.

We might say that the verse *explicit* here works as part of the strata of composition. It was left in its original place even when an extension to the work would, in tidier aesthetic conditions, have been displaced to a more harmonious end point. The same happens with the poet's *Milagros de nuestra Señora* (The Miracles of Our Lady) which sees another miracle added to the count at a significantly later point, yet still the *explicit* was left in its original place when the text was copied.²⁴

We might move from the example of a verse *explicit* which did not in fact mark the eventual end of the text to one which, even though it remained in place, was by no means inviolable. The *Libro de Alexandre*, which recounted the Alexander legend by a remarkably gifted and sardonic poet, exists in two different recensions. The circumstances which gave rise to these related versions need not detain us (see Lappin 2018), but in both recensions the poem is closed by a verse *explicit*. In one the poem is attributed to the poet we have seen mentioned earlier, Gonçalves de Verçeo (stanza 2675):

Sy queredes saber | quien fizo esti ditado
 Gonçalo de Berçeo | es por nonbre clamado
 Natural de Madrid | en Sant Myljan criado
 Del abat Johán Sánchez | notario por nombrado

If you would wish to know · who composed this work,
 Gonçalo de Berceo · is he called by name,
 native of Madrid, · raised in San Millán,
 to the abbot Juan Sánchez · notary by appointment.

The attribution of the poem has caused much debate. Further comment may be delayed until we consider the verse *explicit* of the other recension (in which I maintain the punctuation of the original, since it indicates that something of the original text has been preserved):

Se quisierdes saber quien escreuió este ditado
 Johán Lorenço bon clérigo & ondrado
 Natural de Astorga : de mañas bien temprado
 El día del iuyzio : dios sea mio pagado amen

²⁴ Lappin (2008b: 75). The fifteenth century does, however, see a rearrangement of the order of the miracles and the placing of the *explicit* at the end.

If you would wish to know who wrote this work:
 Juan Lorenço, a good cleric and honourable,
 a native of Astorga, · well-measured in his comportment;
 on the day of judgement, · may God be pleased with me. Amen!

The above quite explicitly names the copyist. Nevertheless, we can see by a comparison between the two versions that the scribe, Johán Lorenço, was simply inserting his name and details into a model he had before him. Something similar would seem to have happened with whoever attributed the poem to Gonçalvo de Verçeó (who certainly did not compose it: [Lappin 2008a](#)). We may therefore reconstruct some parts of the original verse *explicit*, but what is lacking is the actual name of the author, which has been lost due to, on the one hand, a satirical dig aimed at Gonçalvo de Verçeó (who was associated with the monastery of San Millán, as we have seen, but was *not* the long-lived and politically active abbot's notary), and, on the other, the scribe choosing to exalt himself rather than the original author. Thus, on the one hand, we have a falsified authorial *explicit*, while, on the other, the *explicit* has been colonised by the scribe and turned into a rhyming colophon.²⁵ A reconstruction, then, would appear as follows:

Se quisierdes saber | quien fizo est' ditado
 xxxxxxxx | xxxxxxxx-ado
 natural de xxxxxx | de mañas bien temprado
 El día del iuyzio | dios sea mio pagado.
 Amen

If you want to know · who wrote this work
 ...-ed
 A native of ... , · in his comportment well-measured
 On the Day of Judgement, · God be pleased with me.
 Amen!

The remains of the authorial *explicit* displays the familiar form of self-identification concluded by a prayer for salvation. Thus we see the copyists of both recensions choosing to occlude the name of the actual author, perhaps as part of a *damnatio memoriae*, motivated by a reason which we can no longer grasp: it would, indeed, be a lot easier to discern their motive if we knew the name of the person that they were determined to forget. Literature is, in these works, primarily a written form—a written form destined for performance, but a written form none-the-less. In a manuscript culture and with the interventions that

²⁵ Some scribes did have their own rhymes by which they identified themselves, such as Bernardo de Jaca, who signed off with 'Bernardus est dictus | qui scripsit sit benedictus | De Iaqua uocatur qui | scripsit benedicatur AMEN' (Bernardo is the name of him who wrote; may he be blessed. De Jaca is called who wrote, may he receive blessings. Amen): Casas Rigall (2014: 73). The date of copy, 1393, is provided immediately before this.

copying brought, the verse *explicit* designed to preserve the author's name for readers in posterity may still be subverted, hijacked, thwarted. The malleability of the verse *explicit* is something we shall see in our final section. Nevertheless, even in these deturpate versions, the form of the *explicit* was kept and not substituted, say, with a traditional colophon. Its existence still provided a reassurance to readers that they had received a text which reached its full extension (Casas Rigall 2014: 16, 53).

The shaping of the text

The treatment of the verse *explicit* in the case of the *Libro de Alexandre* may inform us about attitudes to the author of the text: here, perhaps, either not worth preserving or unwise to mention. In a later work which goes by a number of titles—the *Libro del arçipreste*, the *Libro de buen amor*, the *Libro de Buen Amor* (the archpriest's book, the book of good love, Good Love's book: careers and life-long enmities have been staked upon the use, or not, of majuscules)—the verse *explicit* and eventual scribal colophons indicate how different scribes (who might even be considered editors in their own right) might conceive of the totality of the text.

There are three different extant versions of the *Archpriest's Book*, usually referred to as *T* (for Toledo, a manuscript of perhaps 1340), *G* (for Gayangos, the early-modern owner of a manuscript of 1381) and *S* (for Salamanca, of the beginning of the fifteenth century).²⁶ There were undoubtedly other versions in the Middle Ages, of which small fragments have survived, although they cannot assist us with our present investigation. With regards to our extant manuscripts, *T* and *G* are closely linked, as they share a sub-archetype. *S* is somewhat distant from these two, as it represents a later evolution of the text. Furthermore, our knowledge of the transmission of the text is made much more difficult by the large number of lacunae caused by material loss, primarily from *T*, to a lesser extent from *G*, and to the lowest extent from *S*. Indeed, a laudable desire for simplification has led some critics to ascribe priority to the longest version, *S*, and consider *G* and *T* to be but poor abbreviations. This is, in my opinion, certainly not true; but in a sense, it does not matter here, since we shall be considering the use of verse *explicit*s and colophons to consider not the validity of extrapolations made by twentieth-century ecdotics, but rather to interrogate what the copyists thought about the texts they were setting down on paper.

²⁶ *T*: Madrid, Biblioteca nacional de España, ms. VS-6-1 (previously held in the Cathedral archive in Toledo); *G*: Madrid, Real Academia Española, ms. 19 (previously owned by Benito Martínez y Gómez Gayoso [1700-87]); *S*: Salamanca, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 2663.

In the earliest of our manuscripts, *T*, the ending is reassuringly tidy. *The Archpriest's Book* is drawn to a close on the present fol. 38 (which, as an indication of the losses the codex has suffered, represents folio cxxvj in the original foliation) by two stanzas of verse *explicit*:

Señores, he vos seruydo | con poca sabiduría,
por vos dar solás a todos | fabléuos en juglería,
yo un galardón vos pido | que por dios en rromería
que por mí a dios digades | páter nóster et aue maría.

Era de mill et tresyentos | et seseynta et ocho años
Fue acabado este lybro | por muchos males et daños
depués que fasen muchos et muchas | a otras con sus engaños
E por mostrar a los synpres | fabras et versos estraños

Gentlefolk, I have served you · with little wisdom
to make all content · I spoke to you in jongleury
I ask you for a reward · that by God on a pilgrimage
that you say for me to God · Our Father and Hail Mary.

Era of one thousand three hundred · and sixty-eight years [i.e. AD 1330]
this book was finished · through many evils and harms
following what many men and women do · to other women with their deceits
and to show to the simple · stories and unusual verses.

As again is familiar, the ending is announced, here cast as the end of the poet's service to his audience; and this conclusion is rounded off by a request for prayers set within popular religious practices—the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary during a pilgrimage which would probably be to a local shrine. The orality—we might say the direct connection between performer and audience—of this stanza is, however, significantly lessened by the following stanza, which offers a date and a justification for the composition of the work, giving voice to the ostensible *intentio* that, at least according to the verse *explicit*, lay behind it. And here, too, the hand of the scribe may be intuited: the tag 'Fue acabado este libro' is a direct calque on the various forms of *Finito libro* ... which we mentioned above; the date provided, then, is probably scribal,²⁷ intended to indicate when a copy had been made; it is, however, unlikely to be the present manuscript's date of copying; it is more probably to be understood as a frozen relic taken over unaltered from the model, as we have seen before (see Casas Rigall 2014: 58, for further examples).

²⁷ Further examples of scribal alteration of an authorial *explicit* may be found in Tahkokallio (2019: 36), Warburg (2017: 48) and Pohl (2015: 154).

The rest of the page is left blank, without a scribal colophon since the copyist continues his scribbles on the verso with a prose romancing of an enormously popular Latin work, Walter Mapp's *Visio Filiberti*, which ends with a simple, although fragmentary, prayer, '...ad o[m]ni [?]. . . gloria [sic] nos perdu[c]atur [?] amen' (Torres Miranda 2004: 128; May we be led to all glory, amen).²⁸

The reassuringly clean ending to *The Archpriest's Book* in *T* was, however, brought about by a decision made to abbreviate the copying, to provide nothing further than the frozen scribal colophon. As we can see from comparison with *G* and *S*, the *Libro* had already been extended after the *explicit* with a series of poems, which the scribe of *T* considered superfluous or spurious and did not copy. *G*, as we have said, copied out the model, and concluded with a scribal colophon:²⁹

Fenito libro graças a dño ñro Iesu xpo este libro fue acabado jueues xx dias de jullio del año del Nasimyento del ñro saluador Jesu xpo de mil e tresientos e ochenta e Nueue años.

The book is fineshed [sic] thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ this book was completed on Thursday 20th of July of the year of the Birth of our saviour, Jesus Christ, one thousand three hundred and eighty-nine years.

Underneath the colophon there is an undecipherable squiggle which is probably an idiosyncratic rendition of the scribe's own name or the vernacular version of *Explicit*, namely 'Fenesçe' (It ends) (see Casas Rigall 2014: 55–57). We can see again a vernacularisation of the traditional tag, *Finito libro gracias detur Ihesu Christo*, which we have already met several times. Nevertheless, we can see that the scribe's copying project closes only with the completion of the material contained in the model beyond that which has been preserved in *T*; yet both texts would claim that the *libro* or book extends to the final verses (to just before the colophon in *G*, to the verse *explicit* in *T*).

The scribes' conception of the extension (and, indeed, the very nature) of the *Book* that they were reproducing differed. *T*'s interpretation was a minority one: the extra material was present in the sub-archetype to both *T* and *G*, and some of this additional poetic material appears in the later (and rather more distant manuscript) *S*, which in turn represents a significant expansion of the work both at the beginning and in the poetic material that was included after the *explicit*. The lines of the verse *explicit* are represented as follows in that latter, enlarged version found in *S*:

²⁸ The original survives in over two hundred manuscripts; this vernacular version is an *unicum*.

²⁹ In this citation, I have not expanded any abbreviations, since I am unsure in what language some of them should be read. Further examples of dated colophons from the same century: Casas Rigall (2014: 69–73).

Señores he uos servido | con poca sabiduría,
 por uos dar solás a todos | fabléuos en juglería,
 yo un gualardón vos pido | que por dios en romería
 digades un páter nóster | por mí et ave maría.

Era de mjll et treçientos | et ochenta et un años,
 fue conpuesto el romanze | por muchos males e daños,
 que fasen muchos e muchas | a otros con sus engaños
 et por mostrar a los simples | fablas e versos estraños.

Gentlemen, I have served you · with little wisdom
 to give you all satisfaction · I spoke to you in jongleury
 I ask for a reward from you · that by God on pilgrimage
 you might say an Our Father · for me and Hail Mary.

*Era of one thousand three hundred · and eighty one years [1343 AD]
 this vernacular work was composed · regarding many ills and harms
 which many men and many women · do to others with their deceits
 and in order to show stories · and peculiar verses to the simple.*

The lines show a quite normal variation, something that might be expected in the transmission of a text between manuscripts that are relatively distant from one another; but there are also clear alterations which we find through (1) the date and (2) the manner in which the work is described and (3) the attitude of the scribe. These changes are limited to a line-and-a-half: *Era de mill et treçientos et ochenta et un años / fue conpuesto el romanze* [*Era of one thousand three hundred and eighty-one years, the vernacular poem was composed*]. This looks very much like an authorial declaration of the date of composition, although that cannot be, since we already possess an earlier date—and that probably a scribal date, and therefore a date of something that was already a copy—some thirteen years earlier. Furthermore, although the post-*explicit* material is, in its first elements, evidently the same as that contained in G, those poems have also been significantly reworked. The beginning of the *Book*, too, is changed, through significant additions: a satirical and parodic sermon, a new introduction; and, running through the *Book*, sub-headings that divide the material up into, one might think, *materia praedicabilis*. These rubrics (and they are written in red, standing out from the black script used for the verses proper) open the work with ‘esta es oraçón qu’el açipreste fiso a dios quando començo este libro suyo’ (this is [the] prayer which the archpriest made to God when he began this book of his)³⁰ and also close it with

³⁰ Fol. 1r. The scribe (since rubricator and copyist of the text proper were not the same person) headed his work, ‘*Ihesus nasareus rex iudeorum*’ (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews [John 19:19]), and it is in the blank space between this header and the first lines that the rubric has been placed. Unusually for this type of verse, a blank line has been left between each stanza (as between the invocation of Christ and the first lines), and it is in these spaces that the

a colophon comprising another fictional summation of the work, a scribal rhyme and the name of the rubricator (fol. 104r):³¹

Este es el libro del arçipreste de hita el qual conpuso seyendo preso por
mandado del cardenal don gil arçobispo de toledo /
laus tibi Christe quoniam liber explicit iste
Alfonsus paratinensis.

This is the Archpriest of Hita's book, which he composed whilst he was imprisoned on the orders of Cardinal don Gil, archbishop of Toledo.
Praise be to thee, o Christ, since this book is finished.
Alfonso de Paradinas.³²

We have here, then, a rather confident re-packaging of a series of discreet literary productions into a single and single-authored book. That the single author was characterised as having written his work in prison fits well with the repurposing of the *Book* as a source of moral exempla carried out by Alfonso de Paradinas (Lawrance 1997). We may also note the same verb being used in both colophon and verse *explicit*: 'conpuesto el rromañçe' and 'conpuso'. We might translate this verb, *componer* as 'to compose', 'to write', which is certainly its intended meaning in the colophon. Yet, in the verse *explicit*, it may rather signify 'to put together', 'assemble', 'arrange', and so be again a fossilised record of scribal/editorial intervention into the poem. The date provided at this point is not really useful other than as an intermediate date of copy, as evidence for the ongoing generation of branching variants and versions.

The colophon here, then, can give an indication of how the work was considered by copyists, editors and readers, and how that conception shaped the presentation of each copy. None of these offer a definitive presentation of the text, just one witness to the textual history of the work in question; in this case, a textual history which has been characterised by progressive development, insertion and novelisation, as well as truncation.

It is worth noting, too, that with Alfonso de Paradinas's rounding-off of the work, with his moralising, and with his assumption of a unitary, historically-identifiable author, we have drawn closer to a much more modern (or early modern) conception of the literary text,

rubrics which run throughout the copy have been placed. For the beginning of the manuscript as a privileged space for scribal insertion see Tahkokallio (2019: 40); Sears (2006: 88–90); Brown (2011: 264–65). And for a similar example of the *remaniement* of a literary text at the hands of scribes see Dillon (2002: 201–2).

³¹ For the jingle see Thorndike (1956: 321), who provides two variants.

³² For the importance of the scribe's name in, and as sometimes the only element of, the colophon see Schiegg (2015: 8). The alternation of Latin and vernacular in the colophon is perfectly normal: a much more developed example involving a Catalan manuscript is found with Madrid, Bn, ms. 1803, fol. 166v (and see Gimeno Blay 1995: 183).

with a stable and responsible author-function, a text which fills a book and which is, like the author, unitary and single, no longer the serendipitous hodgepodge of a gathering of works over the gatherings of a codex, but a planned and edited single-work book. That this version has proved much more amenable to twentieth- and twenty-first-century editors shows how five centuries of printing have made this fifteenth-century edition of the text easier to understand, accept, study and write about.

This brings us to the modern world, the world of the printed or pixellated book. The verse *explicit*, regrettably, seems to have died out in this, our uncodexed present: the name of the poet-author has been moved to the frontispiece. The colophon, though, through its adoption in early printing as a means of identifying the printer and the place and date of publication, has continued to have a long life. Such stability has perhaps had the unfortunate effect of creating the expectation that the *explicit* and colophon in a manuscript culture will abide by the same rules, mirror the same formality, echo the same continuities. As I hope to have shown, *explicit* and colophon were both dynamic, sometimes preserved, sometimes respected, but never inviolable, always apt to be altered, even whilst the necessity was still felt of marking the end of the work or a section of writing. That requirement continued into the world of print, and subsequently led to the deployment of printers' tailpieces and, latterly, typographic end marks or tombstones (Halmos 1985: 403). ■

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