Textual Heritage Embodied: Entanglements of Tangible and Intangible in the *Aoi no ue utaibon* of the Hōshō school of Noh

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1. "Missing Heritage": Literature, UNESCO, and Heritage Studies

The word *heritage* has been the object in recent decades of growing interest both from the general public as well as from policy makers and local and national institutions. Specifically, the concept of cultural heritage has assumed an implicitly positive meaning among the public. This positive view has been furthered by the popularity of UNESCO's World Heritage List, instituted in 1972 with the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.[1] Attracted by the possibility of reinforcing their symbolic capital and soft power, a growing number of countries have ratified the convention, investing a remarkable amount of funding and other resources into heritage safeguarding. Nonetheless, because the parameters for inscribing a site on the UNESCO World Heritage List are based overwhelmingly on European and Western values and principles, the struggle to have one's items inscribed therein has always been biased in favor of Western countries. As of this writing, more than half of all World Heritage List sites are located in Europe or North America. This imbalance and unfairness in the UNESCO rules has been criticized by non-Western countries, as well as by postcolonial scholars, especially since the mid-1980s.[2] Partly as a consequence of this criticism and largely as a result of non-Western countries' demands for a fairer and more inclusive definition of heritage, UNESCO promoted the new category of intangible cultural heritage through the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereafter the ICH Convention) in 2003.[3] With the

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[1] Available at: http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf.

[2] One of the earliest and more influential critics of the UNESCO model was David Lowenthal, in his *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, a revised version of which was published in 2015.

[3] Available at: https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/2003_Convention_Basic_Texts-_2018_version-EN.pdf.

establishment of two new lists—(1) the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and (2) the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding—followed in 2009 by a Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, the Convention aimed to safeguard the various practices, representations, skills, knowledges, and associated objects and spaces that communities (or sometimes individuals) identify as their cultural heritage.

Japan played an important role in promoting this convention. In 1994, it had hosted the Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention[4]—usually considered as a sort of prelude to the 2003 ICH Convention—which recognized the importance of intangible forms of cultural heritage alongside long-recognized tangible forms: "All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected" (Art. 7).

The new category of ICH helped to counterbalance the hegemonic position some Western countries such as France or Italy had held in the original World Heritage List. Today, nearly two decades after the ICH Convention, the countries with the greatest number of recognized ICH—China, Japan, and Korea—are all non-Western. As early as 2008, Japan succeeded in having three of its most important theatrical forms—noh, kabuki, and *bunraku* puppet theater—inscribed into the ICH Representative List. Since these early inscriptions, new entries for Japan have followed almost annually, leading to twenty-two items today.

Increasingly, the ICH List has come to include a wide array of cultural practices, from festivals to food, from traditional and modern dances to horse riding, agricultural techniques, falconry, and so on, making the category of ICH even more flexible and rather dazzling in its diversity. Curiously, however, cultural practices connected with writing and the creation of literary works or written documents have remained thus far underrepresented. The inscription of traditional calligraphy, for example, has been pursued only by China ("Chinese calligraphy," 2009) and Mongolia ("Mongolian calligraphy," 2013), and most recently by Turkey ("Hüsn-i Hat: traditional calligraphy in Islamic art in Turkey," 2021) and by a consortium of countries in the Islamic cultural sphere ("Arabic calligraphy: knowledge, skills and practices," 2021)[1]. This lack of attention toward the literary and toward written culture in general may be due to the ICH Convention itself, which clearly defines intangible heritage as being, above all, "oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage" (Art. 2.2). Since its focus is the living and performative aspects of culture, as well as the safeguarding of endangered and fragile oral cultural practices (e.g.,

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[4] The Nara Document on Authenticity (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 1994), Article 7: https://www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf (accessed 3.30.2021).

[1] 2021 is also the year in which Iran added its "National Programme to Safeguard the Traditional Art of Calligraphy in Iran" to the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, a separate list instituted in 2009.

endangered languages), it seems logical that written texts have—at least to the present—received less attention.

On the other hand, the UNESCO ICH Convention does not completely exclude objects. Its official definition of intangible cultural heritage is as follows (emphasis added):

> The "intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the *instruments, objects, artefacts* and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (Art. 2.1).

The problem therefore seems to be that literature and texts are usually not regarded as "instruments, objects, artefacts" produced and associated with "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills."

The majority of items currently inscribed on the UNESCO lists were, or are, produced by "communities" or "groups"—examples include historical cities and buildings, as well as traditional festivals and dances—rather than by a single individual, as is often the case for literary works. This long-standing practice is not, however, sufficient reason for excluding single literary works—or even literary genres or practices—from the UNESCO ICH lists. Indeed, the UNESCO ICH Convention itself recognizes heritage creation to be not just the act of producing culture but rather the long-span process by which a community or group—or even a set of individuals!—recognizes some specific cultural expression or item "as part of their cultural heritage."

It is evident that literary works like the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語), the *Divine Comedy*, or *Faust* are much more than just three cultural products composed by their authors at a given time: they are acknowledged by three well-defined national communities—the Japanese, the Italians, and the Germans—as part of their cultural and linguistic identity. In light of this, there is no doubt that we can consider them *literary* heritage, as indeed these works are often called. In 1990 Edward Said strongly stressed the association between heritage and literature, with reference to the role of literary texts in the ex-colonies: "Literature has played a crucial role in the re-establishment of a *national cultural heritage*, in the re-instatement of native idioms, in the re-imagining and re-figuring of local histories, geographies, communities" (emphasis added).[5]

Even so, literary (cultural) heritage has, thus far, been almost completely missing from the UNESCO heritage lists. Investigating the reasons for this missing heritage, therefore, is a necessary prelude to any discourse about literature *as* heritage.

One can argue that literature—and texts in general—have been omitted because they do not fit into either of the two categories of heritage defined so far: tangible and intangible. I will show in this article how this problem is connected

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[5] Said, "Figures, Configurations, Transfigurations," p. 1.

with the sheer intimate nature of literary sources, and with what exactly we mean by the word *text*. Let us consider, for example, the *Tale of Genji*. We can agree that it is undoubtedly a literary heritage of Japan and the world, but which version of the *Tale of Genji* should be indicated if it is ever someday inscribed on the list? A selected and verified set of scrolls, manuscripts, or prints of particular value related to the literary work? Since the original copy of the *Genji* supposedly written by Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (late tenth–early eleventh century) is now long-lost, which manuscripts and which version of the text are we talking about? Should we consider any copy of the *Genji* as part of the literary heritage? And to what extent? Should we include also translations, parodies, or other adaptations like manga and movies? In this case, what could possibly be the meaning of "listing" it?

The UNESCO Memory of the World (MoW) Programme, started in 1992 to support the preservation of, and access to, documentary sources that are vital for people's collective memory, seems to offer a solution for this impasse. Scanning the MoW Register's more than 430 items, submitted by (cumulatively) more than 520 countries (52 percent from Europe and North America), we find manuscripts, printed books, photos, films, paintings, musical scores, woodblocks for printing, inscribed stones, and historical records as well as entire archives and collections that are explicitly described as the "documentary heritage" of humanity. We also find therein items identifiable as literary works, but the list largely comprises documents and records of historical value: registers, letters, maps, diaries, and so on. The focus of the MoW Programme has been on access to and digitization of these resources[6] rather than on representing the world's cultural and *literary* diversity.

Moreover, even if a central criterion for the acceptance of a submission is a document's "authenticity," this requirement does not necessarily indicate an "original work" but rather the integrity of a specific material item. For example, "The Wizard of Oz" was inscribed on the MoW Register in 2007. However, this entry does not indicate Frank Baum's original 1900 novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* but rather "the original Technicolor 3-strip nitrate negatives and the black and white sequences preservation negatives and soundtrack" of the movie produced in 1939 by Metro Goldwyn Mayer and now owned by Warner Bros. Pictures.[7] In other words, what the MoW Programme recognizes as humanity's documentary heritage, and therefore as worthy of preservation, is not the literary *work* itself, nor its "expressions" or "representations"—as these terms are defined in the *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records* (hereafter *FRBR*) by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.[8] What is recognized

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[6] Prodan, "The Memory of the World," p. 142.

[7] See: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-8/the-wizard-of-oz-victor-fleming-1939-produced-by-metro-goldwyn-mayer/.

[8] The report is available at: https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/811.

rather are specific *items* that embody a work: physical copies, manuscripts, and documents in their authentic and material form.[9] This is the most noticeable difference between texts included in the MoW Register and literary works included in anthologies and textbooks of literature.

Japan offers a very clear example of how the authenticity criterion can be controversial. In 2013, Japan succeeded in having inscribed on the MoW Register the *Midō kanpakuki* 御堂関白記, the diary of Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 (966–1027), the most influential political figure of eleventh-century Japan. In the very same year, the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO decided to abandon the candidacy of the *Tale of Genji*, Japanese literature's most famous and canonized work. Written around the same years as *Midō kanpakuki*, the *Tale of Genji* is, notably, one of the first works of Japanese premodern literature to be canonized in world literature anthologies. Yet even if its cultural and historical value is undisputed, the committee's submission of the work was rejected because Murasaki Shikibu's original handwritten copy has been lost. By contrast, the *Midō kanpakuki*'s fourteen scrolls are recognized as the authentic manuscripts of Fujiwara no Michinaga.

The *Tale of Genji* is therefore a perfect example of a firmly canonized work of world literature that cannot be consecrated by UNESCO as an example of "heritage of humanity" because of the absence of an "original" and authentic text, namely Murasaki's autograph manuscript—despite the fact that many valuable handwritten copies produced since the late Heian period (794–1192) are today registered as official National Treasures in museums and libraries across Japan.

Authenticity is actually one of the most debated problems among heritage scholars[10] because many submissions to the UNESCO lists do in fact mobilize this concept to reinforce the connection between antiquity and a territorially-rooted community, with the aim of distinguishing between "real" heritage practices and "inauthentic" revivals, or practices that have merely been restored.[11] In any case, even when a literary work's original copy does exist, it is unlikely that any literary masterpiece would be inscribed on the MoW Register simply because its literary qualities were acknowledged by scholars of literature. Anne Frank's diary and the Gutenberg Bible—if we accept the Bible *also* as a piece of literature—have been selected primarily for their symbolic or historical value: the first, as a dramatic account of one of the darkest pages of human history and the second, as proof of a revolution in printing technology and the spread of books in Europe.

It is therefore clear that the criteria followed by literature scholars when designating—through its inclusion in anthologies and textbooks—a particular literary

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[9] UNESCO is putting efforts in including also documents in digital format, as in the project of "Software Heritage," but this has led to a number of contradictions I will not discuss in this paper.

[10] See, for example, Akagawa, "Rethinking the Global Heritage Discourse"; Labadi, "World Heritage, Authenticity and Post-Authenticity."

[11] Bortolotto, "Authenticity," p. 76.

work as worth reading and teaching are quite different from the criteria followed by UNESCO. In other words, a text may be recognized as an important piece of literature, without necessarily being nominated as "heritage," and vice versa. In more technical terms, we can say that the canonization of a literary work does not necessarily correspond to its heritagization.

The case of noh theater is quite interesting. Japanese literature scholars often consider noh to be *also* a literary genre. However, the presentation we find on the UNESCO website[12] scarcely mentions noh's literary or textual aspects, such as the transmission of libretto texts. Nor does it emphasize the artform's connection with classical works of literature, such as the *Tale of Genji*. Even Zeami 世阿弥 (1363?–mid-fifteenth century), usually credited as the author of about ninety plays in the noh repertoire, remains unmentioned. These peculiarities may be seen as a way of accommodating the ICH Convention's own criteria, which emphasize the oral aspect of heritage. However, as I show in the second part of this article, it is also possible that the conservation of texts is not considered a priority in the logic of noh practitioners, which emphasizes the transmission of oral and intangible teachings.

In this article, I analyze the relationship between the contemporary practice of noh and the textual sources that inform it, in order to shed new light on the meaning of heritage and the possibilities offered by the new paradigm of "textual heritage" as applied to traditional performing arts.

The Need for an Interdisciplinary Approach: Literary Heritage Studies

If it is true that texts in general and literature in particular do not perfectly fit present definitions of heritage per the UNESCO conventions, it is also important to underline the fact that UNESCO's is not the only available definition of heritage, which remains a very controversial and elusive concept. Even if under different names, cultural assets from the past have been protected and evaluated since long before modern nation-states began regulating and administrating the management of the past through institutions like national museums, libraries, and archives. In recent times, the term *heritage* has been increasingly mobilized to question the relationships that social groups and communities imagine and create with "their" pasts, and to understand how those knowledges and practices are transmitted to subsequent generations as a core asset of the cultural identity of groups and individuals.

At least since the mid-1980s, and increasingly since the 1990s, the interdisciplinary field known as heritage studies has gradually developed, drawing from a wide range of disciplines, including archeology, history, law, sociology, anthropology, geography, economics, and management. Especially since the first decades of the twenty-first century, the tendency to abandon the Eurocentric and universalist idea that defines heritage as something of "outstanding universal value"—

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[12] See: https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/ngaku-theatre-00012.

as first stated in the 1972 Convention, which established the World Heritage List—has led to a redefinition of heritage as a social practice, rather than as an object, in a framework that emphasizes its intrinsic intangible nature. Some of the contributors to this new approach, which goes generally under the name "critical heritage studies," have defined heritage as follows:

> This book explores the idea of heritage not so much as a "thing," but as a cultural and social process, which engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present.[13]

> Heritage is not a passive process of simply preserving things from the past that remain, but an active process of assembling a series of objects, places and practices that we choose to hold up as a mirror to the present, associated with a particular set of values that we wish to take with us into the future.[14]

> Starting from a position of seeing "heritage" as a mental construct that attributes "significance" to certain places, artifacts, and forms of behavior from the past through processes that are essentially political, we see heritage conservation not merely as a technical or managerial matter but as cultural practice, a form of cultural politics.[15]

> Increasingly, the view has been that, alongside any intrinsic value heritage may have, ultimately meaning resides in the "intangible" relationships it provides between people and things.[16]

This emphasis on the implicitly intangible side of heritage that informs the work of many heritage scholars may be one reason that literature scholars in general have been discouraged from engaging with heritage as a topic of study. This is especially true for those committed to particularly conservative disciplines like philology—defined by Edward Said as "the least with-it, the least sexy, and most unmodern of any of the branches of learning associated with humanism."[17] As such, key terms such as *literary heritage* and *textual heritage* remain at present mostly undertheorized and undefined, owing to text and literature experts' lack of engagement with the challenge that heritage studies presents.

 Even if indeed, as Rodney Harrison reminds us, "heritage as a concept is constantly evolving and the way in which the term is understood is always ambiguous and never certain,"[18] the contributions of literary criticism, literary theory, and philology are still missing in this puzzle. How can it be possible to trace a "history of heritage,"[19] namely the history of heritage discourse in premodern times, without considering the contributions of the history of literature? How

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[13] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 2.

[14] Harrison, *Heritage*, p. 4.

[15] Logan, Kockel, and Craith, "The New Heritage Studies," p. 1.

[16] Akagawa, "Intangible Heritage and Embodiment," p. 81.

[17] Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, p. 57.

[18] Harrison, *Heritage*, p. 6.

[19] Harvey, "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents," p. 320; "The History of Heritage," p. 19.

can we understand the processes of heritage-making and textual re-creation without the eye of the philologist, one specifically trained to follow the slender thread of intertextuality?[20] There is a good chance that the contributions of literature scholars—and textual experts in general—to the heritage debate would benefit all of those working in this interdisciplinary field. They could offer new case studies and evidence to validate the theoretical bases of heritage studies, and help extend the range of its discourse analysis to longer time-spans and different cultural and linguistic contexts.

On the other hand, literature scholars, especially those interested in premodern texts or the so-called classics, should take advantage of the very timely and flexible theoretical category of heritage. The never-ending debate about why the classics should still be read today, about their claimed —or rejected —effectiveness in fostering and cultivating critical thought and civic values, could surely gain new visibility and develop in unexpected ways if connected to questions about the uses and safeguarding of heritage. During a keynote lecture at a recent symposium,[21] Wiebke Denecke expressed her disappointment at Japanese scholars' fatalistic uninterest in the progressive and relentless decline of literacy in Sinitic letters, or literary Chinese (*kanbun* 漢文), among not only contemporary Japanese people at large but also among Japanese experts of literature. One reason for this trend may be that, independent of their professional interest, many Japanese today see *kanbun* as a cultural heritage that is not really (or completely) Japanese, unlike kabuki or Japanese cuisine (*washoku* 和食). Rethinking literacy—even in an old and "dead" language—and the ability to read premodern texts, and moreover reinterpreting both skills as forms of cultural heritage at risk of extinction, might well shake the consciousness of many in the literary field.

An interdisciplinary dialogue about texts, literature, and heritage is also essential today to call into question the fallacious promises of digital technology enthusiasts, who avow that everything can be saved and archived. Even if we grant that one day, every text ever written by humankind will be digitized and made accessible on the internet, there will remain a need to distinguish which texts really matter and are worthy of knowing, and which not.

Reflecting on what a text is, and on what textual heritage might mean today, has also the potential to foster a global rethinking of fundamental assumptions in the theorization of heritage, among them the rigid divide between tangible and intangible.

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[20] Two initial attempts in this regard related to Japanese literature are Gerlini, "The Awareness of Past and Present" and "The Legitimation and Heritagization of Vernacular."

[21] Denecke, "'Textual Heritage': Déjà-vu or Catalyst for History Making and Writing?"

The Limits of the Tangible/Intangible Divide and a Rethinking of Embodiment Processes

Critical heritage studies begins with the premise that "all heritage is intangible."[22] This critical posture has the declared intent of "deprivileging and denaturalizing it [the tangible] as the self-evident form and essence of heritage."[23] In other words, "What makes these things valuable and meaningful—what makes them 'heritage', or what makes the collection of rocks in a field 'Stonehenge'— are the present-day cultural processes and activities that are undertaken at and around them, and of which they become a part."[24] This position has become increasingly mainstream in the academic discourse on heritage over the last fifteen years, even if it is still not universally accepted.

Many heritage scholars and professionals still "believe" in the intrinsic and universal value of old masterpieces that are recognized and appreciated as heritage. Those who espouse such "heritage belief," according to Christoph Brumann, may be "tacitly or explicitly committed to cultural heritage in general or to specific heritage items of whose intrinsic value they are convinced and whose conservation they endorse."[25] In contrast to this position, "heritage atheism" is the "fundamental doubt about the value of specific heritage items or heritage as such. In this view, heritage is not a naturally positive force and instead serves all kinds of dubious or outright objectionable purposes that, however, are not immediately obvious."[26]

As an alternative to these oppositional positions, Brumann proposes a middle path of "heritage agnosticism":

> [This position] does not posit a priori that heritage is an empty signifier, an entirely arbitrary and socially determined ascription, but takes people's heritage experience and beliefs seriously. It also accepts the idea that some of the qualities employed for the ascription of heritage value may be based on verifiable facts, such as age, provenance, or rarity, or may rest on universal human tendencies (such as possible commonalities in the perception of beauty). And while it rejects the idea that heritage value is intrinsic to the objects and practices so labelled, it still considers the possibility that the latter's materiality constrains their social interpretations and uses.[27]

This heritage agnosticism offers a way to rethink the importance of the materiality of heritage while eliding the question about where precisely its "value" resides. The solution proposed by Brumann is useful in defining textual heritage, and not least because with the application of sociocentric approaches to the field

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[22] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 3.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Brumann, "Heritage Agnosticism," pp. 173–175.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., p. 180.

of literary production—from Pierre Bourdieu onward—some long-standing assumptions about the universal value of literary "masterpieces" have come under challenge. Moreover, it is especially useful when we try to rebalance our understanding of the role texts play as *things* and not only as intangible cultural practices.

The *a priori* exclusion of *things* from the analysis of heritage processes—or a significant reduction of their role therein—seems inappropriate also because, as the archaeologist Ian Hodder explains, "there are very few dependencies between humans that do not involve things in some way. For example, power relations in which one human dominates another are often concerned with the control of property or rights to property in some form. . . . Many of these HH [human-human] relations in which things are involved lead to entanglements."[28]

This concept of human-thing entanglement elaborated by Hodder offers new insights into how heritage, as both practice and as thing, regularly informs and interacts with humans. In particular, the idea that humans and things do not just influence each other but are indeed "dependent on each other in ways that are entrapping and asymmetrical"[29] may inform our understanding of traditional performing arts such as noh.

Hodder's rethinking of "things," in fact, goes even further and in an unexpected direction. He understands things, not as stable and permanent, but rather as fluid and mutable:

> But in reality the things are themselves just flows of matter, energy or information. Things are unstable and unruly. Material things decay and erode, institutions crumble, ideas and thoughts pass fleetingly. Some appear to stay, to have duration, but looked at from sub-atomic or long-term perspectives, all is in flux. There are physical, biological, chemical, informational, social, ideological processes that occur at different rates and rhythms, jumbled up and tumbling over each other.[30]

This theoretical rethinking of the complex relationship between human society and the environment is, of course, very timely now, when environmental issues have become a twenty-first-century global priority. For the purpose of this article, however, it helps also to introduce a very similar topic which is already being questioned by heritage studies, namely the embodiment of heritage.

Although the broader category of heritage has been described as an "embodied cultural performance of meaning-making,"[31] the term *embodiment* has specifically been used to define ICH: "heritage that is embodied in people rather than in inanimate objects."[32] Embodiment itself has been explained as an intangible

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[28] Hodder, *Studies in Human-Thing Entanglement*, p. 3.
[29] Ibid., p. 9.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Smith and Campbell, "The Elephant in the Room," p. 443.
[32] Logan, "Closing Pandora's Box," p. 33.

process,[33] but the same has been said about tangible heritage. As suggested by Henry Jatti Bredekamp, "Museum objects are not ends in themselves. Even though they may have intrinsic value, they are manifestations of intangible relationships between people and things. They are *tangible embodiments of intangible ideas and practices*"[34] (emphasis added).

In this article, I adopt a middle way that is close to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's understanding of intangible heritage as "not only embodied, but also inseparable from the material and social worlds of persons."[35] That is, I suggest that both people and objects may equally be embodiments of intangible practices and values, being reciprocally entangled in human-thing relationships. Moreover, to reconsider tangible objects as embodiments of intangible cultural practices may also suggest an answer to the key question of this article: "What kind of heritage is textual heritage?"

Attempting a Definition of Textual Heritage

As I noted in an earlier section, texts and literature do not perfectly fit current definitions of heritage, especially those made official by the UNESCO conventions. If the principal reason that heritage lacks proper theorization is literature scholars' limited engagement with the topic, a more concrete reason might be that (literary) texts are fundamentally different from other genres of heritage.

A clue to this difference is the fact that, unlike ancient buildings or endangered languages, the majority of literary works produced by humankind—"work" here meaning the contents of a given book—are today rarely considered at risk, and do not need official institutions to offer a particular endorsement for their safeguarding. Even before the advent of digital technologies, the growth of the publishing industry and the proliferation of libraries and archives around the world provided books—even in the case of less canonized works—with a high chance of being widely distributed and preserved in different copies and locations. Consequently, accidents and natural disasters—fires, floods, earthquakes—that might well destroy a single archive or library, are unlikely to lead to the definitive loss of any specific literary work.

This is all the more true in today's digital world. Not only can a new book live completely in the digital dimension—going from a text file on the author's computer to the digital copy edited by the publisher and then to an e-book downloaded by the reader—but even rare printed books and manuscripts are being continually digitized, which grants to them—or, to be more precise, to the digital copies of their pages—an even higher probability of surviving any risk of loss or destruction. Barring a disaster of massive scale that compromised the survival

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[33] Taylor, "Embodiment Unbound," p. 73.

[34] Bredekamp, "Transforming Representations," p. 79.

[35] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production," p. 59.

of humanity itself, it would be almost impossible for the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, or Murasaki to be lost in the future.

At the same time, in the case of old books and manuscripts, even the most high-quality digital copy will never completely replace the original document. These books and manuscripts often contain a great deal of extratextual information—like the quality of the paper or ink, the kind of bookbinding, hidden or excised parts, or other physical and material characteristics. Such information, which is often crucial to new discoveries by philologists and librarians, cannot be properly digitized. This is why a program like UNESCO's MoW is fundamental to preserving rare and fragile documents even if it does not take into account literary works *per se*.

Historical documents like manuscripts always combine both material (the pages, the physical medium) and information (the contents, the text); but in the case of a modern book published exclusively in digital format, all we have is the text. In the case of digital texts, the problem of authenticity I discussed earlier carries a totally different meaning. This is true also in the pre-digital world of mass printing: Which of a best seller's thousands of copies is the authentic original? Is a hardcover copy more authentic than a paperback edition? Or is the text file saved on the author's computer the most authentic version? It is obvious that these questions, as well as the problem of authenticity itself, have lost much of their meaning ever since the publishing industry and digital technologies freed a book's content from its material embodiment.

Therefore, if we want to define textual heritage, we must first redefine *text*. A text—meaning the contents inscribed on a page, a wooden tablet, or a stele—is nothing more than an aggregate of pure information, a chain of signifiers—the characters—assembled according to a language's specific and preexisting lexicon, syntax, and rules of grammar. The result is a unique, recognizable, and readable code, ready to be "executed" (i.e., read).

It is precisely here that we find another, deeper reason for why a text might seem essentially poorly-suited to current definitions of heritage. We may say that a text is intangible because it is not tied to a unique and specific object in the material world. Indeed, the same text can be copied an infinite number of times on a wide array of "surfaces"—woodblocks, paper, papyrus, SMS, e-books—potentially without any loss of information or integrity. At the same time, the text can be considered something tangible in the sense that, as a set chain of letters and words, it is unique, fixed, and recognizable. In such cases, the text's "authenticity" may endure for as long as the material embodiment itself survives. There is no need for a continuous process of reiteration and transmission of the accompanying cultural practice as is the case (for the most part) with examples of intangible heritage. If we exclude a text's more artistic and analog aspects—in the case of Japanese writings, calligraphy is the obvious example—we can say that, in most cases, a written text is just a code of letters that is infinitely replicable. As long as I can recognize the characters, I can copy

any text—even those written in a language I do not know!—without any loss of information.

Because of this replicability, access to textual products and other similar cultural goods differs in nature from access to heritage sites or even intangible performances. The ways in which a text can come to fruition are physically unlimited, thanks to the unlimited number of copies that can be created, especially in the digital age. Therefore, texts are not affected by problems of overexploitation of the sort that plague the historical centers of tourist cities. Regardless of how many copies of a text have been produced or how many people are reading it at the very same moment, no one will ever be deprived of the possibility of enjoying that same text simultaneously.

Of course, texts, especially the most important and widely canonized ones, undergo a continual process of reconstruction and modification. This results in different versions of the "same" text—or to be more precise, of the same *work*—aimed at satisfying the needs of new readers, much as pagan temples of ancient Rome were converted into Christian churches during the Middle Ages. But unlike with buildings, texts and literary works may be reconstructed, updated, and translated without destroying or modifying their originals. We can make "backup copies" of each variation or edition a given literary work has undergone over the course of its "life," and read any of these again whenever we want. By contrast, we cannot have different "editions" of the same building at the same place and time, once it has been modified or destroyed. To give just one example, we cannot visit the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris in its medieval shape prior to Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's restoration of 1864, nor visit it again with the same roof that was lost forever to fire in 2019. We can, however, have a copy of every version of the Bible authorized by the Roman Catholic Church across the centuries, all on the same bookshelf.

I want to underline the semiotic nature of text, which I consider a "natively digital" cultural product, and to stress its contrast with the "analog" qualities of tangible artifacts, such as a painting made with canvas and paint. The natively digital quality I have in mind is not necessarily linked to digital technologies and computers—but is rather a quality of any text, even the oldest manuscripts or inscriptions. A recent article in Japanese by Inaga Shigemi 稲賀繁美 explains this quality. He reminds us that the original meaning of *text* was tied to *textile*, a fabric. He states, "The loom is the very first digital device invented by humans."[36] No matter who operates the loom, as long as the individual follows the pattern provided, the result will be the same, exactly like executing a computer program. This same relationship exists between the text—the immaterial code—and its various embodiments—written, inscribed, printed, engraved.

One might argue that storytelling, music, dance, and even some figurative arts could, to some extent, also be considered "texts," as definitions of text and textuality

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[36] Inaga, "Ko no sōshitsu."

may vary considerably.[37] In this article, I limit my analysis to *written* texts, by which I mean sequences of characters and words inscribed on any kind of surface, material or immaterial. I do so because the intimate nature of texts vis-à-vis other kinds of cultural products is one of the reasons why texts are not easily included in modern definitions of heritage and in preservation programs like those of UNESCO.

The definition of textual heritage that I propose here is based on the fact that texts are digital cultural products, in the sense that they are both intangible—or to be more precise, immaterial—as well as tangible, in the sense that they are constituted by fixed and measurable chains of signifiers (characters and words). Applying to texts the idea that heritage sites and artifacts are the "tangible embodiments of intangible ideas and practices,"[38] we can therefore state that texts are *embodiments* of the cultural practice of *writing* and its derivations like copying, editing, translating, correcting, abridging, and so on. A literary work's various different manuscript versions are just the many embodiments of the "original text." And indeed, such ur-texts have often, especially in the case of premodern works and the so-called "classics"—from the *Odyssey* to the *Analects*, from the *Tale of Genji* to the *Divine Comedy*— not managed to survive in those "original" and physical forms that their "authors" themselves touched and produced.[39] This is perfectly consistent with the hierarchy of work-expression-manifestation-item given in the *FRBR* I mentioned before, which indeed defines *manifestation* as "the physical embodiment of an expression of a work," and *expression* as "the intellectual or artistic realization of a work."

The point I want to stress here is that textual heritage does not dwell in things but in the re-creative, reproductive process itself. To re-create and transmit a text implicitly means adding (new) value to that text. Texts are never produced or reproduced by chance but are always the result of a voluntary effort; this was especially true in premodern times. And in many cases, especially when a text is reproduced, that process itself may be seen as a form of heritage. When a medieval copyist of the Bible or a Chinese translator of a Buddhist sutra produced their own copy of the text, they implicitly contributed to its heritagization, that is, to the conservation of textual contents charged with a new social and symbolic value.

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[37] I explored the possible extension of *text* and *textual heritage* in the curated session "Defining 'Textual Heritage': Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Heritagization of Texts, with a Focus on Japan," presented at the 5th Association of Critical Heritage Studies Biennial Conference (University College London, August 26–30, 2020) with the contributions of scholars of musicology, ethnography, architecture, urban planning, history, comparative literature, and digital humanities.

[38] Bredekamp, "Transforming Representations," p. 79.

[39] The problem of authorship in classical or premodern texts is another complex issue, especially when related to cultural heritage. I tried to foster a discussion about authorship, as well as ownership and authenticity, in the workshop "Textual Heritage: Uses and Re-creations: Ownership, Authorship and Authenticity in Premodern Japanese Literature" (Waseda University, July 18, 2020). The results of this workshop have since been published: see Gerlini and Kōno, *Koten wa isan ka.*

On the other hand, these "productive" practices of writing the text could not exist without a preexisting set of "receptive" or "performative" practices accompanying them, such as reading, understanding, or performing—in a word, not without various ways of *using* the text. When a jester performed a troubadour's *canso* in medieval southern France, he contributed to the heritagization—namely the survival—of that text, fostering and stimulating further practices of writing: for example, the vernacular *canzone* in Italy. When a Confucian scholar in medieval Japan lectured upper-class samurai with a self-annotated copy of a Sinitic primer containing Chinese historical anecdotes, he contributed to the conservation of those texts and the Chinese stories narrated within them, making them part of the shared memory of the Japanese upper classes. Using a text, commenting on it, teaching it, but also criticizing it, are all part of textual heritagization. This process may seem very close to what literary scholars call canonization. However, I argue that heritagization has a wider—and sometimes even contradictory—meaning because it may occur also independently of the will of political and cultural elites, and at different levels of society.

In this sense, the embodiment of textual heritage, or more precisely, textual heritage intended primarily as a process of embodiment, may happen in both directions. It can be embodied into text, namely through the inscription of living practices and knowledges—but also feelings and memories—in physical or digital media. It can also be embodied from text into people, as in the case of the reenactment of an old theatrical piece, as sometimes happens with less famous noh plays, or in modern performances based on the reconstruction of ancient musical scores, as in the case of Japanese *gagaku* 雅楽 music.[40]

The *production* of a text is a cultural practice, but a text *per se* is not a *practice*. This is why inscribing a traditional performing art, such as noh, on the ICH list can omit any reference to the librettos or the textual tradition. Librettos are fixed textual records of the play as performed on the stage; and one could even compare them to video recordings of a play. In this kind of theater, the intangible heritage is not the written text itself but the practice of performing—and continuing to perform—that text.

What I propose in this article is a new, non-oppositional configuration of tangible and intangible that reflects the relationship between object and practice, thing and human. A tentative definition of literary or textual heritage should focus not only on the performative side of writing but also on the tangible presence of the text. Indeed, there cannot be any cultural practice related to text without the text itself. A simple example: the religious practice of copying out a sutra (*shakyō* 写経), frequently performed in many Buddhist temples, cannot be carried out without the tangible existence of the sutra itself; and at the same time, such a practice also generates a new physical embodiment (copy) of that text.

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[40] See, for example, Giolai, "Hearing the Past, Sounding the Text" and Terauchi, "Beyond the Court."

Defining textual heritage, or even merely trying to do so, has therefore the merit of fostering reflection about material culture and the preservation of documentary sources. It also invites us to question the deeper meaning of why and how we conduct efforts to create digital copies and representations of culture and texts, and how these digital embodiments will affect—whether enriching or impoverishing—the cultural and social life of people in the twenty-first century.

A tentative definition of textual heritage—one that does not claim to be definitive—may be the following:

> Textual heritage indicates both the texts of the past and also the various cultural practices involving the use and re-creation of those texts. "Texts" here is meant to include the immaterial contents as well as the material medium. "Practices" likewise is meant to include the receptive, the performative, and the creative: for example reading, copying, collecting, rewriting, quoting, translating, annotating, commenting, teaching, correcting, performing, collating, restoring, and so on. The ultimate significance of textual heritage lies in the transmission both of the text and of the knowledge associated with that text, in order to make it meaningful in the present through the accumulation of new values, meanings, and interpretations.

The study of textual heritage necessarily has a different aim from that of philology, at least in the latter's more conservative approach, which considers a classical text *a priori* a subject worth studying. Philology's ultimate goal is the reconstruction of a version of the text that is as close as possible to the lost archetype. By contrast, the goal of textual heritage studies should be instead to understand the various processes that historically took place around a text, how its reception and understanding, its interpretations (and misinterpretations!), and the conscious or unconscious process of adding, subtracting, or changing values associated with that text—how all of these had particular meanings for a certain group or community in a certain period. Such studies can be oriented toward understanding the past—by, e.g., writing the history of a specific textual heritage, but also toward the present or future, by inquiring into contemporary practices of managing, understanding, and reproducing the texts of the past, as well as into questions of how to transmit those texts to future generations. The study of textual heritage may adopt approaches typical of heritage studies, like discourse analysis within or around a specific text, and should address many of the questions with which heritage scholars are usually engaged: Who is the owner of that heritage, and how do they demonstrate that ownership? What political meaning does the heritagization of this text carry? How might the safeguarding of this textual heritage contribute to social well-being and the promotion of human rights or, on the contrary, be aimed at reinforcing nationalism and populism?

The texts suited to analysis in textual heritage studies are therefore not necessarily those usually studied by philologists, nor are they necessarily the most widely canonized. Moreover, the focus of this analysis remains on the cultural processes taking place around a text, rather than the meaning of the text itself.

The analysis of an annotated noh libretto (*utaibon* 謡本) that I present in the second part of this article is intended to be explanatory in this sense.

This tentative definition of textual heritage is undoubtedly close to the idea of intangible heritage as something constantly "re-created"—a form of continual replacement of the heritage itself, as stated by the ICH Convention:

> This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity (Art. 2).

Although I do not aim in this article to develop successful strategies for inscribing a textual cultural asset onto the UNESCO lists, I suggest that the paradigm of textual heritage could become an effective tool for promoting a particular textual practice as an intangible heritage. The recent efforts, promoted by a consortium of Japanese associations, to inscribe haiku poetry on the ICH list is a good example.[41] Haiku is both a tangible corpus of texts—the poems composed by poets like Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694) since the sixteenth century up to modern times—and also a lively creative practice that survives today. Regarding the latter, schools, clubs, and associations of amateur and professional poets in Japan and around the world are engaged in producing new embodiments (i.e., new poems) of the aesthetic ideals that characterize this poetic genre and have produced numerous publications in Japanese and other languages. As a corpus of texts, haiku is the object of scholarly practices (reading, understanding, analyzing, translating). It is also the indispensable basis for contemporary poets' practices of active production—the composition of new poems—which in many cases appear to inherit this centuries-old and unbroken literary tradition, even if unconsciously. From this point of view, the initiative to inscribe haiku on the UNESCO list has a reasonable chance of success. Another interesting initiative aimed at the UNESCO ICH list is the "Appeal on Behalf of the Latin and Greek Intangible Heritage of Humanity," promoted by a group of classical studies institutes in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.[42] The most interesting aspect of this initiative is that it proposes reconceiving of classical and literary languages of the past as endangered languages and knowledges, worthy of institutional and political safeguarding.

If one of these attempts to receive official UNESCO recognition succeeds, literature will have gained its place within the realm of authorized heritage. Yet even if this does not happen, the paradigm of textual heritage may challenge present assumptions and understandings of heritage among the heritage studies community.

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[41] A description of these efforts is available at: https://www.haiku-hia.com/special/unesco_en/.

[42] The appeal is available at: https://vivariumnovum.net/it/unesco/appello.pdf.

2. Embodiment of Heritage and Personification of Texts in Traditional Performing Arts

<u>The Hōshō School of Noh and the Textual Heritage of *Aoi no ue*</u>

As I discussed in the previous section, it is somewhat curious that noh theater—which is often understood as a literary genre, just as Shakespeare's plays are considered literary works—has been accepted into the UNESCO ICH list, whereas other literary products have not. Even if the production and development of noh scripts (*nōhon* 能本) is strictly tied to the development of the performing art itself,[43] the official documentation about noh's inscription as ICH usually does not stress its ties with Japanese literature or the existence of written and canonized texts—the lyrics—that are sung during the play. For example, as noted earlier, the UNESCO ICH official website's page on noh[44] does not contain the name of Zeami, recognized as the author of an important part of the repertoire. This separation between written texts and their enacted performance reflects a slightly rigid distinction between literary production and the performing arts. On the contrary, Japanese literature scholars are well aware of the fact that many Japanese literary products are the result of collaborative endeavors in a public or semi-public space, like poetic competitions (*utaawase* 歌合) or linked verse (*renga* 連歌) poetry gatherings, often regulated by a hierarchical relationship between master and disciples. This master-disciple hierarchy is, of course, at work also in traditional performing arts such as noh, where the leading role is usually passed down through a family's succession of firstborn sons.

In the following pages, I describe the textual embodiments of a specific noh play, *Aoi no ue* 葵上 (Lady Aoi), in the repertoire of a specific noh school—the Hōshō 宝生 school—with the aim of analyzing the relationship between this kind of traditional performing art and its own textual heritage. The body that emerges from this analysis is both that of the actor, which embodies the characters described in the text, and that of the text itself—particularly the annotations relating to *kata* 型 (movement patterns) and dance—which embodies in written and tangible form the experience accumulated through generations of performance practice.

Among the many plays in the Hōshō noh repertoire, *Aoi no ue* is a well-known one in the genre of "vengeful spirits stories" (*shūnenmono* 執念物), which is included in the canonical "fourth category" of "miscellaneous plays" (*zatsunō* 雑能). The story draws upon the plot of one of the *Tale of Genji*'s most dramatic and thrilling chapters, titled "Aoi" 葵. In this chapter, Lady Aoi, wife of the protagonist Hikaru Genji 光源氏, is possessed and tormented by the living spirit (*mononoke* 物怪) of Lady Rokujō (Rokujō no Miyasudokoro 六条御息所). One of Genji's lovers, the latter woman is also the widow of a crown prince and is humiliated by Genji's growing lack of interest in her. The noh play enriches the

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[43] Yokomichi, Nishino, and Hata, *Nō no sakusha to sakuhin.*
[44] See note 12 above.

story with a bitter fight between Lady Rokujō's vengeful spirit and a Shugendō 修験道 priest, summoned to appease her wrath. The climax is represented by the prayer (*inori* 祈) dance that the priest performs to bring rest to the defeated Lady Rokujō's tormented soul.

In the following pages, I analyze two copies of the *utaibon* for *Aoi no ue*, or more precisely two particular items (to follow the *FRBR* terminology): (1) an undated manuscript titled *Hōshō-ryū nō-zuke* 宝生流能附,[45] housed in the archives of the National Institute of Japanese Literature and digitized in the Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works; and (2) a modern edition of the *utaibon*, titled *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: "Aoi no ue,"* 宝生流謡本 葵上, in particular a copy personally owned and annotated by the twentieth Hōshō school head (*iemoto* 家元), Hōshō Kazufusa 宝生和英. The analysis focuses almost exclusively on the annotations in these two documents and their re-creations, namely the copying of some of these annotations by disciples and heirs.

Annotations in the *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* Manuscript

The *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* is a four-volume manuscript contained in the National Institute of Japanese Literature's general collection. The same institution's database does not present detailed records of the manuscript's provenance or dating. In each of its volumes, the only information given in what may be considered a colophon (*okugaki* 奥書) is the name Kenmochi Kurō Sadanushi 釼持九郎治主, allegedly the author of the manuscript's extensive interlinear and header annotations in vermillion (*shu* 朱) ink. The identity of this individual is not clear, as this name does not appear in reference books on noh and *kyōgen* 狂言. Without such information, it is hard to date these manuscripts, which are in good condition (apart from some insect damage) and do not appear to be particularly old.

What is interesting to underline here is the massive presence of annotations in vermillion ink on almost every page, indicating the choreography (*katazuke* 型付) and movements of the dance. Especially meaningful for our discourse is how many of these annotations have been deleted and modified at many points (**fig. 1**). Even at a superficial glance, it is clear that the owner of this *utaibon* used it as a private memo-book for training and performance. Furthermore, it was probably not intended to be read primarily by others—except perhaps the author's heir or disciples.

Aoi no ue is the fourth play in the first volume of *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* and occupies three full folios, in addition to two "pasted slips" (*harigami* 貼紙). A detailed transcription of this manuscript and its annotations is not within the scope of this article. However, from even a general perusal of these pages, we can imagine the creative process as it relates to the vermillion inscriptions. These indications relating to dance and movements reflect an iterative process of corrections vis-à-vis the

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[45] Full-color images available at NIJL's Database of Pre-Modern Japanese Works. See **fig. 1** below.
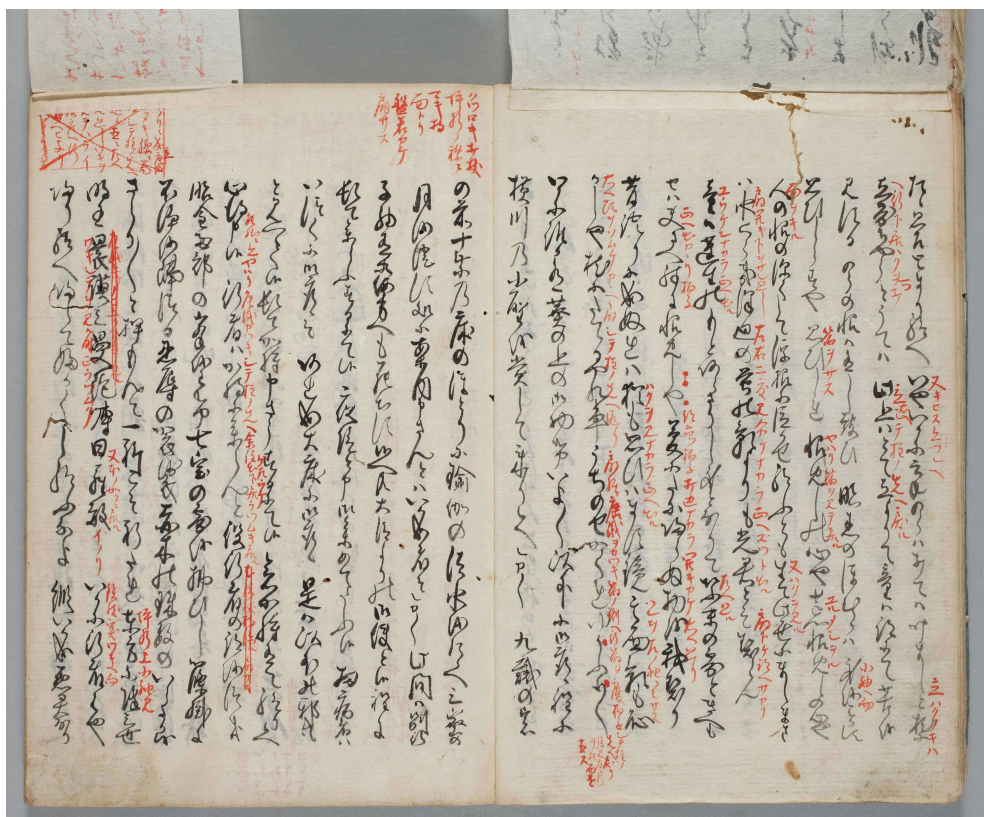
Figure 1. *Hōshōryū nōzuke* 宝生流能附. National Institute of Japanese Literature. https://doi.org/10.20730/200012481 (image 14).

performance. This text is thus evidently not simply an accurate copy—a new *item*—of a previous text. It is also the embodiment of the work into a new *representation*, with original solutions adopted later, probably through direct experience of onstage performance. We can thus see this manuscript as a specific embodiment of continually changing representations and performing choices.

The first of the two pasted slips is dedicated entirely to the *inori* dance (**fig. 2**). It is also notable that instructions for the *inori*, one of the most important parts of the entire play, were added on such a separate slip, probably because of their length. There was not enough space to inscribe the instructions in the margins of the original page, alongside the lyrics.

The other added slip is a copy of the original page to which it is attached, reproducing the original text underneath it, running from the middle of the fourth column, *urameshi no kokoro ya* 恨めしの心や, up to the tenth column, *uchinose kakureyukō ni* うちのせかくれゆかふに (**figs. 1 and 2**). Here, the reason for the slip's addition is clear, as we can see that its own interlinear annotations differ slightly from the original ones.
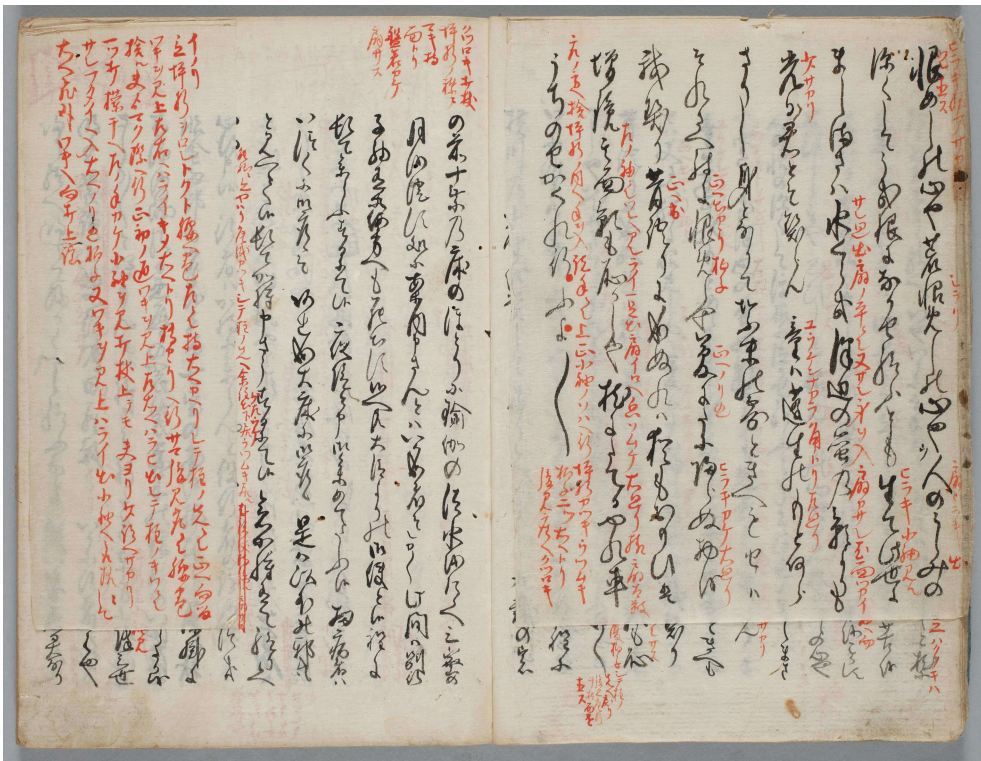
Figure 2. Here one can see the "pasted slips" (*harigami* 貼紙) bearing later annotations. *Hoshōryū nozuke*. National Institute of Japanese Literature. https://doi.org/10.20730/200012481 (image 13).

It is therefore clear, as is typical of *utaibon*, that the inscriptions in black ink indicating the lyrics—which are a fixed, highly canonized, and almost unchangeable part of the play—were copied entirely into this manuscript before the owner started to add his annotations in vermillion. During the copying of the lyrics, no consideration was given to leaving space for future annotations, as the need for the addition of the *inori* slip demonstrates. We can also observe that the annotations were modified two or more times, making it necessary to recopy a part of the lyrics altogether and then attach this to the original folio. Moreover, since the style of the handwriting is exactly the same in both the pasted slips and in the original manuscript, we can also conclude that the amendments and additions, as well as the copied lyrics and the annotations, are all the work of the same hand. This reinforces the hypothesis that this manuscript was a self-produced copy for an exclusively personal use.

A detailed analysis of these annotations could reveal how this specific noh practitioner performed movements and dances in *Aoi no ue*, thus allowing comparison with the styles of noh performers of different periods; but again, this is not the aim of this article. What is important to underline here is the conspicuous

presence of a layer of text (the vermillion annotations) that is easily added, modified, or deleted. Though the practice of annotating and glossing a text is also common to other—if not all—Japanese traditional performing arts, this manuscript is material proof of the active practice of interpreting and performing the noh libretto's "original" text: a play originally *written* by Zeami was performed and re-elaborated in a very flexible and creative way, while maintaining the integrity of the creator's lyrics. We may consider this annotated manuscript a sort of *recording* of that specific representation of *Aoi no ue*, a textual embodiment of the work that at the same time is also an embodiment of this specific actor's stage performance.

<u>Hōshō Kazufusa's Handwritten Annotations in *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: Aoi no ue*</u>

The same process of reciprocal embodiment between text and actor, thing and human, may be found with contemporary noh practitioners and their *utaibon*, with the difference that since the twentieth century, we can also watch video recordings of the performance. Moreover, we have the chance to directly question and interview noh practitioners and the "legitimate" heirs of this tradition. I did so for this research with Hōshō Kazufusa, the Hōshō school *iemoto*, whom I interviewed at the Hōshō Noh Theater (Hōshō Nōgakudō 宝生能楽堂) on November 25, 2019.

As in many Japanese traditional arts, the transmission of knowledge in noh from master to disciple was a strictly controlled process that mixed oral teachings with written materials.[46] The transmission of written sources was often accomplished by manually copying out one's master's books and annotations—in some cases even imitating the calligraphic style —and this practice continued to be predominant long after printing technologies had been introduced to and developed in Japan. The *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* manuscript (supposedly an early-modern copy) seems to follow this trend, and a more accurate study of this manuscript's dating may shed light on how long these copying practices have continued to be mandatory in the Hōshō school.

According to Hōshō Kazufusa, the continual production of handwritten *utaibon* copies is a practice that today has been almost completely abandoned, at least in the Hōshō school. The *utaibon* personally owned by Kazufusa and used during his training for *Aoi no ue* is not a manuscript, but a printed edition published in 2005 by Wan'ya Shoten わんや書店—the *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: Aoi no ue*. In the colophon, Hōshō Kurō 宝生九郎 is indicated as the author (*chosakusha* 著作者). Kurō, the traditional name passed down by members of the Hōshō family, refers in this instance to the seventeenth Hōshō school grandmaster (*sōke* 宗家), Hōshō Shigefusa 宝生重英 (1900–1974)—as Kazufusa himself confirmed during our

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[46] See, for example, the transmission of secret commentaries on the *Kokinshū* as explained in Unno, *Waka o yomitoku*, pp. 131–227.

interview.

As noh practitioners know well, even if the *utaibon* used today are, in most cases, printed versions, the main text reproduces a calligraphic text, one using historical *kana* orthography (*rekishiteki kanazukai* 歴史的仮名遣い) and written moreover in cursive (*kuzushiji* 崩し字), with its many alternative forms of *kana* and *kanji*. According to Hōshō Kazufusa, the use of this complex style of writing—hardly readable without a certain amount of practice, even for Japanese readers—is an integral part of noh performance, and it is perceived by beginners as a fascinating aspect of the art.[47] Reading an *utaibon* transcribed in modern typographic characters (*katsuji* 活字) would, rather, confuse anyone accustomed to the traditional calligraphic style. This is certainly another interesting aspect of the text's use and reproduction that, as I explained in the first part of this article, may be labeled "textual heritage."

According to Hōshō Kazufusa, the calligraphic original reproduced in the mass-printed version is neither particularly old nor in Shigefusa's handwriting. Rather, it is a photographic reproduction of a Shōwa-period (1926–1989) handwritten copy made by a disciple of the school. The custom of copying *utaibon* with ink and brush had continued throughout the Edo period (1603–1867) but ceased in the modern era for many complex reasons, not least of which was the fact that noh became an art that anyone, independent of birthplace and status, could learn and practice at will. Thereafter, once noh teaching had been extended and opened to everybody, it probably became impossible to produce a handwritten copy of every text for each new disciple. Printing a photographic reproduction of the handwritten text was supposedly the only reasonable solution from an economic and practical point of view.

Even if modern *utaibon* editions are no longer handwritten copies, the choice to exactly reproduce a handwritten text, instead of creating a typographic transcription, is proof that the connection with the textual tradition is still considered important by practitioners. The same may be said about the historical *kana* orthography and grammar used in the headnotes of each page (**fig. 3**). These notes are basically the modern version of the interlinear annotations in vermillion ink that we saw in the *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* manuscript itself. The identity of the author of these printed headnotes is uncertain, as these *utaibon* lack the bibliographical and philological details of a critical edition. A possible candidate may be Hōshō Shigefusa, who is indicated as the text's "author" in the colophon, even though the original text is—obviously—attributable to Zeami. Identifying the author of these annotations is an almost unsolvable puzzle.

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[47] In concluding a keynote lecture discussing the necessity of *kuzushiji* education ("Naze 'kuzushiji kyōiku' ga hitsuyō na no ka" なぜ「くずし字教育」が必要なのか) at the conference *Koten kyōzai kaihatsu no kadai to kanōsei* 古典教材開発の課題と可能性 (Ritsumeikan University, March 28, 2021), Iikura Yōichi 飯倉洋一 suggested that *kuzushiji* literacy itself is a kind of textual heritage and may be tied to the future of historical texts in Japan and their use.
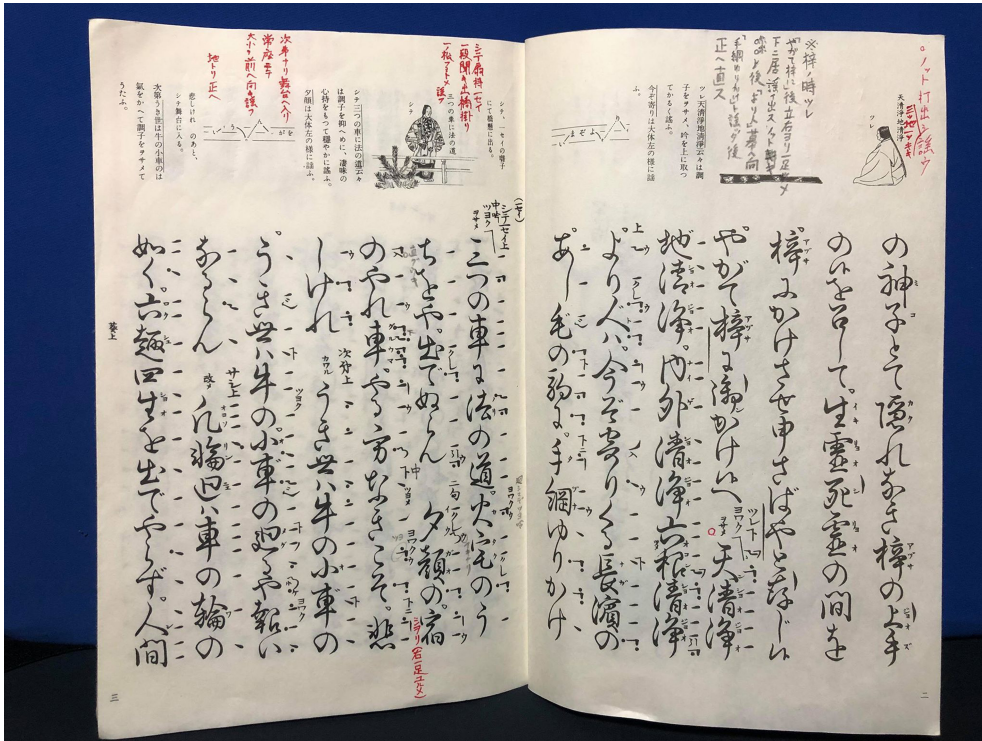
Figure 3. *Hōshō-ryū utaibon* 謡本 of the play *Aoi no ue* 葵上, with handwritten annotations. Hōshō Kazufusa 宝生和英, private collection.

Moreover, what is important for the practitioners is not exactly which master first wrote those notes, but rather that they are clear and coherent with the rest of the *utaibon*. If the use of specific terms to indicate the various movements (*kata* 型) is indeed obvious and necessary, the use of a simplified and codified form of classical Japanese may be understood more as a stylistic choice, designed to make the annotations consistent with the language—one might even say with the *mood*—of the noh, making the annotations also implicitly more authoritative.

For example, the language of the last headnote on page 3 (**fig. 3**, upper left) has a clear "classical" flavor:

> 次第うき世は牛の小車のは氣をかへて調子をヲサメてうたふ
> *shidai ukiyo ha ushi no woguruma no ha ki wo kahete chōshi wo wosamete utahu*[48]
>
> [*shidai*] "*ukiyo wa ushi no oguruma no*": when singing this phrase, change the intensity and reduce the tone.

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[48] In order to exphasize the use of historical *kana* orthography, I have exceptionally adopted here a more mechanical one-to-one transcription (e.g., *kahete* for かへて, rather than *kaete*).
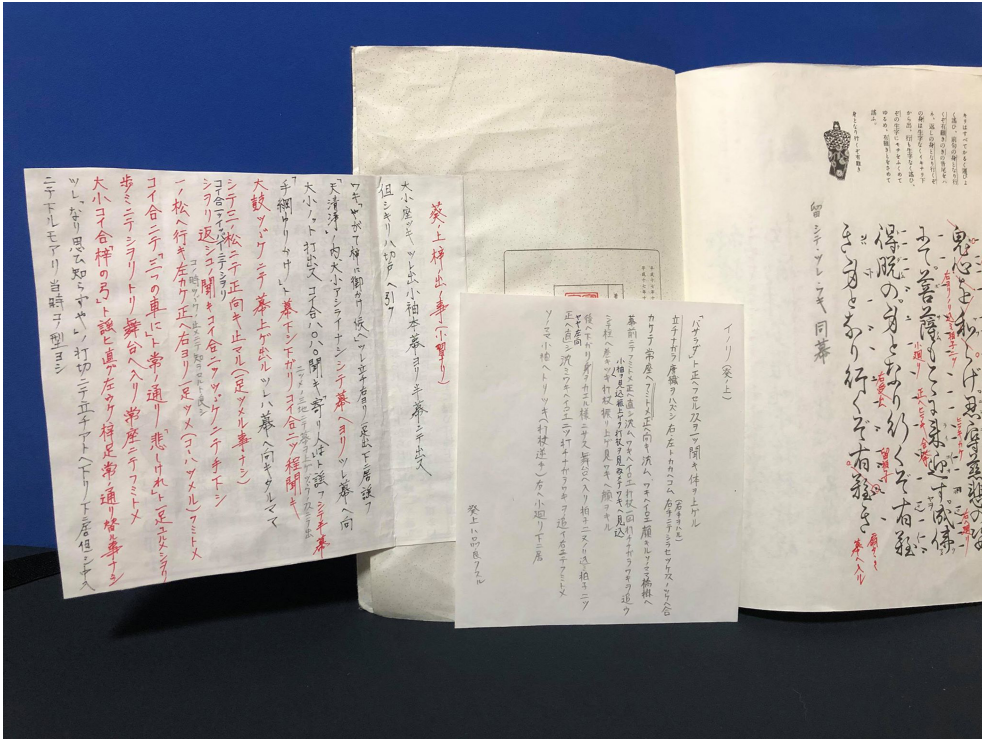
Figure 4. *Hōshōryū utaibon* of the play *Aoi no ue*, with handwritten annotations. Hōshō Kazufusa, private collection.

The use in a book published in 2005 of "old form" *kanji* (*kyūjitai* 旧字体), such as 氣 instead of 気, which are now officially deprecated in modern writing, is another example of how a conservative approach to the tradition also involves the transmission of its paratextual apparatus. The character 氣 probably felt more traditional and "authentic" here than 気.

Such attention to the formal rules of noh language can also be witnessed (and is indeed inherited) in the annotations of the most recent Hōshō family heir, Hōshō Kazufusa. Looking at his personal copy of *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: Aoi no ue*, we can see three kinds of handwritten annotations (**figs. 3 and 4**), all in Kazufusa's own hand. The vermillion notations were already present in the *utaibon* of Kazufusa's teacher, Sano Hajime 佐野萌 (1928–2009), and Kazufusa transcribed these exactly. The annotations in black represent further indications *transmitted orally* to Kazufusa during his training, which he wrote into the *utaibon*. The annotations in pencil are mostly Kazufusa's own original additions and reminders.

Therefore, in this specific item—Hōshō Kazufusa's individual copy of the *Hōshō-ryū utaibon: Aoi no ue*—we can find at least five layers of overlapping texts, in large part copied or reproduced from previous manifestations of the work

Aoi no ue: (1) the "original" text with the lyrics by Zeami (the main part in *kuzushiji*); (2) annotations instructing about how to modulate the singing and about which *kata* to perform for the dances, supposedly by Hōshō Kurō Shigefusa (both as handwritten annotations and typewritten text in the headnotes); (3) annotations hand-written in vermillion ink by Kazufusa, exactly reproducing those found in Sano Hajime's *utaibon*; (4) annotations in black ink that inscribe (i.e., embody), for the first time, instructions and indications of the sort passed on orally to Kazufusa; and (5) Kazufusa's original annotations and considerations, written in pencil.

We can see a sort of hierarchy between these strata of text. The original text of the lyrics is, of course, the most canonized and unchangeable part. The annotations, however, on how to intone those lyrics—that is, the very thing that characterizes the Hōshō school's style of singing—are also not subject to major changes. Indeed, these latter are visually incorporated—using traditional cursive script—into the lyrics themselves. To change this part of the text—the vocal execution—might eventually undermine the performance's sense of authenticity, and possibly even the school's and its current master's authority and legitimacy. For a very clear and exhaustive reflection about the strain between renovation and conservation in Japanese traditional arts, see Sano, "Bunka wa dare no mono ni sareyō to shite iru no ka." In contrast, annotations indicating certain details of the dance or movement are more easily subjected to change and amendment. Even a quick and superficial comparison between the vermillion annotations in the *Hōshō-ryū nōzuke* manuscript and the annotations in Kazufusa's personal copy of the text shows clear discrepancies in the contents of their annotations and in their choices of which parts of the song (*utai* 謡) to annotate. It is noticeable that, even within the same school, two *utaibon* annotated about (supposedly) 100–150 years apart can attest to totally different executions of the same play.

Here it becomes clear how *utaibon* are not aimed at preserving a historically accurate record of the various versions of the same play, as it is almost impossible to discern if the vermillion annotations Kazufusa accurately copied from Sano Hajime's text were Hajime's original notes or were themselves copies of previous texts. By the same token, Kazufusa's "original" annotations in pencil, written in the same style (i.e., using historical grammar and *kana* orthography), will eventually become indistinguishable from the previous ones, once they are copied again, in the future, by Kazufusa's disciples or by the next *iemoto*.

We can therefore conclude that the approach to textual sources in modern noh practice follows rules quite different from those of modern philological practices. While the philologist tries to reconstruct the oldest archetype supposedly closer to the original work, *utaibon* preserve only a play's most recent version, usually the one taught and practiced by the current master. There is no need—and no space—for a more detailed and philologically-informed edition of the *utaibon*. This does not mean that older textual sources are entirely ignored or dismissed. According to Hōshō Kazufusa, since not all plays in the repertoire were

performed by the preceding generation, if one decides to stage an older play, it is necessary to read older *utaibon* to find indications about the *kata* and other aspects of the noh performance.

Whether to include more or less information on an *utaibon* page is, in the end, decided by the owner of that specific copy of the *utaibon*, based on that individual's judgment and needs. In the case of Kazufusa's *Aoi no ue*, a detailed description of the *inori* was added on a detached page. As he explained, he did so the first time he interpreted the piece because he felt the need to accurately record in the *utaibon* all the movements he had learned.

In theory, all knowledge about noh techniques should be transmitted only orally—but, of course, this may result in unintended loss of information. For example, song lyrics transmitted in a solely oral manner would eventually lead to small modifications that would be cumulatively significant after decades or centuries. Therefore, knowledge transmission through textual copies, annotations, and reproductions—or in other words, through the practices of textual heritage—is performed as a useful support to the transmission of the art as a whole. At the same time, given the way ancient manuscripts are handled and preserved within noh schools and institutions, it is possible to conclude that texts as physical items are charged with a relatively less symbolic importance and value in noh when compared to the preservation and transmission of other elements, whether tangible—the masks, etc.—or intangible—the various oral teachings.

Given this, it is unsurprising that the *utaibon* used every day for trainings and performances, even by the Hōshō school *iemoto* himself, are not manuscripts of particular value but are rather printed editions, with annotations written using a common pen or pencil. It is clear that a more conservative approach to the use and production of those texts—for example, requiring that annotations be made using a brush and ink, or that an *utaibon* text be copied entirely by hand—is considered superfluous, and not fundamental for guaranteeing the school's aura of legitimacy and authenticity in the eyes of both members and outsiders.

Conclusions

In the first section of this article, I proposed the idea that processes of heritage embodiment can be understood in a double and reciprocal way: from intangible practices and ideas into tangible objects, and from tangible objects into living performances and people.

The example of *utaibon* and their relationship with the living practice of noh in the Hōshō school confirms this theory. A play's performance is informed and regulated by the (tangible) presence of a specific canon of texts, whose contents—the story, the characters, the dialogue, the songs, the dances, and so on—are embodied by the actors onstage. At the same time, the living and intangible experience that comes from the everyday practice of performing the plays may be eventually embodied in new annotations that, in turn, will inform again the

next generation of actors and their performances, in a sort of spiral between text and actors, an entanglement of things and humans.

This does not mean that this relationship between performances and texts is free from breaks, which arise of course in any kind of entanglement. According to Ian Hodder, it is always possible to "disentangle" something through the act of creativity.[49] It is thus also possible to imagine a future for noh that does not involve a relationship with and the use of written texts but rather involves only oral transmission, even if this option is quite unrealistic.

The custom of copying *utaibon* by hand has faded, and one day, the use of *kuzushiji* for the printed versions of *utaibon* may also be abandoned. Even if it seems now only a remote possibility, it is always possible that textual heritage (defined in this paper as the sum of cultural practices that operate on texts and the material media of texts) will be abandoned. It is true, after all, that any kind of cultural practice or cultural product may eventually perish. Already during the twentieth century, the Japanese have experienced a general loss of literacy in Sinitic (*kanbun*), which for more than a millennium had been a powerful tool for shaping, transmitting, and transforming thoughts, knowledge, and culture from both Asia and the world at large. Yet it is also possible to revert this tendency through the rediscovery of new and old values associated with texts, for example through the use and knowledge of *kuzushiji*. In the end, heritage is something people create and perform in the present to answer present needs. The study of textual heritage has as its goal the facilitation of a deeper understanding of these social, cultural, and historical processes.

The paradigm of textual heritage proposed in this article has the potential to enable a wider view on a complex set of cultural practices, like the transmission and preservation of a traditional performing art such as noh. In so doing, it stresses the role and the interdependencies—the entanglements—that texts, here understood as things and as practices, have with people.[50]

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[49] Hodder, *Studies in Human-Thing Entanglement*, p. 92.

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