INTRODUCTION

# Heritagizing Texts, Textualizing Heritage

*Edoardo Gerlini and Andrea Giolai*

When we started drafting this introduction, the admittedly walled-off world of the university was taken by storm by the sudden leap made by artificial intelligence following the release of ChatGPT and similar applications. Universities scrambled to prepare adequate responses; new software was released to combat "e-plagiarism"; and colleagues wavered between capitulation and putting up the fight of their lives. Artificial intelligence is already being applied to the production of texts and images in ways previously considered unimaginable; we do not know whether, by the time the volume is published, neural networks or machine learning would do a better job at crafting this introduction.

Despite the outcry, we believe that the consequences of technological advancements will not undermine the overarching role of *texts* and writing in organizing information. Above all, computer programs are based on codes of information—binaries, hexadecimal or otherwise. Since they have been generated using strings of text assembled according to programming languages, these programs are, in a sense, "made of text." In a broader sense, digital texts and textual codes are at the basis of any kind of digital product. As Jean Baudrillard once claimed, "as hologram or virtual reality or three-dimensional picture, the image is merely the emanation of the digital code which generates it" (quoted in Steintrager and Chow 2019: 2). We are strongly convinced that texts remain important and become even more important within the context of a largely digital world.

These developments are forcing scholars engaged in the study of current and future ways of transmitting information—including the specific information, values, and objects that fall into the category of "heritage"—to raise

Textual Heritage
Locating Textual Practices Across Heritage and the Humanities
Edited by Edoardo Gerlini and Andrea Giolai
https://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/GerliniTextual

a set of questions that until now have been largely neglected: what will the place of texts—however defined—be in the future of heritage? What can specialists in the humanities more broadly gain from critical approaches to heritage, and what can they contribute to the field? In other words: what would it mean to talk about *textual heritage*? The present book is an attempt to address, if not answer, these questions.

The project partially originated in March 2021, with a three-day online international symposium hosted by Ca' Foscari University of Venice, entitled "Textual Heritage for the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Potential of a New Analytic Category."[1] Throughout the symposium, we were able to identify several threads running through a rich array of thematic and methodological inquiries, spanning entirely different geographical and historical contexts. The notion of textual heritage certainly helped us to establish a common ground for a rich interdisciplinary discussion. As organizers, we relied on our personal expertise in Japanese studies and area studies, but we also decided to open the debate to colleagues with such diverse specializations as (ethno)musicology, philology, geography, and art history. Rather than following the paradigm of area studies and organizing our volume geographically, however, we decided to privilege thematic continuities and highlight internal connections among the chapters, leading the reader into unfamiliar territories.

In addition to a firm grounding in the humanities, we share an awareness that our individual fields—despite numerous calls for interdisciplinarity—lacked vocabulary and appropriate methodological orientation to deal with the special kind of heritage that texts convey. This volume therefore will show how the humanities can profit from a more sustained engagement with heritage studies. Bringing together present-oriented approaches to texts and to societies and disciplines that explore history and memory, our main aim is to emphasize the role of both modern and premodern texts in shaping cultural identities. Throughout, we insist that rethinking texts as a separate category of human expression is a meaningful approach to better understand distinctive processes of heritagization. All the authors in our edited volume deal with "texts" and the ways they are inherited. The case studies here span from manuscripts and epigraphs to musical notations and maps, both in analog and digital formats. Both early-career and well-established contributors discuss issues spanning from Korean poetry to futurity in sci-fi novels, from the spatial imagery of early modern Japanese maps to the digital challenges of contemporary European philologists.

We are aware that in dealing with such diverse "objects" we invoke a thorny question: what is a text? However, we are less interested in finding a definitive answer to that question than in exploring what texts can contribute to heritage research. Rather than engaging with the complexi-

ties of textuality as an abstraction, in the tradition of thinkers like Barthes, Derrida, and Foucault, we chose to base our approach on well-defined, empirical case studies. This method is in line with the grounded approach that characterizes much recent scholarship on heritage. In fact, as noted by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson, critical heritage studies today is "necessarily eclectic" (a phrase they use to describe their own *Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*): "a bricolage, an autoethnography, listening to other voices, discourse analysis, the visual, each of these is used to create a more meaningful notion of heritage, developing a conceptualization that would not previously have 'counted'" (Waterton and Watson 2015: 9).

## Texts as Cultural Production . . . or, the Unbearable Permanency of Texts

Accordingly, and among countless possibilities, in our reflection about texts we build upon the work of Elizabeth Hill Boone, a specialist of Mesoamerican art especially interested in writing systems and "alternative literacies" (see Boone 1994, 2000, 2020). In her introduction to *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (1994), Boone struggles to settle upon a universally valid definition of "writing"—arguably, a similar predicament to the one confronting us when it comes to "texts." Lamenting the tendency among linguists to "write off" pre-Columbian cultures as "illiterate, nonliterate, and preliterate" (Boone 1994: 4), she contrasts conventional evolutionary understandings of writing with what she calls "the narrow view of writing as visible speech" (1994: 13). In fact, these widespread approaches tend to equate writing with a system that transports (or transduces, to use a more technical term) information across different mediums and sensory modalities, rendering sonic utterances visible. If we were to follow the "alphabetic triumphalism" (see Denecke 2014: 205–6) of these scholars, neither the Maya script—"a combination of logograms representing whole words, phonetic signs, and semantic qualifiers, which together reproduce a verbal text" (Boone 1994: 18)—nor the "highly pictorial" Mixtec and Aztec systems would be recognized as writing. And yet, they certainly "encoded knowledge" and "were accepted as valid documents" (1994: 22), two essential features of written communication. It goes without saying that Boone's argument can be applied to textual communication in other cultural contexts as well; if we look to the example of literacy in ancient Japan, for instance, David Lurie argues for the "alegible functions of texts" (Lurie 2011: 64). Evidently, there is more to writing than alphabetic scripts; texts don't need to be read out loud to perform a social function.

Boone identifies three fundamental elements of writing: communication, convention, and permanency. We maintain that these are equally characteristic of texts. In particular, texts ensure permanency through "the communication of relatively specific ideas in a conventional manner by means of permanent, visible marks" (Boone 1994: 15). We also follow Boone in claiming that permanency, however relative, affords writing—and, by extension, texts—the power to "*document* and to *establish* ideas" (Boone 1994: 22). While we rely on writing to conceptualize texts and textuality, we do not restrict our notion of texts to books and manuscripts any more than Boone herself restricts her definition of writing to alphabetic or phonographic scripts. At the same time, if pressed to offer a provisional characterization, we would posit texts to be the durable products of different technologies of inscription that aim to communicate meaningfully, manipulating a medium using shared conventions so that others can obtain information. In the present volume, the texts that we deal with are structured enough to present a relatively high degree of internal coherence. In other words, they can be taken as things that tell a story or make an argument.

Given our thorough reconsideration of "text" as a category, a publication dedicated to "textual heritage" might strike a reader as having an ambiguous purview. For example, with the expanded notion of reading implied by our reasoning, is the classical antinomy between orality and literacy (see Ong [1982] 2012) even tenable anymore? Ultimately, the relative permanency of texts compared to other forms of more volatile communication, like speech or performance, suggests a special relation to processes of heritage. The Latin motto *verba volant, scripta manent* (spoken words fly away, written words remain) perfectly expresses the treatment and understanding texts have received in different cultures. If texts are among those things that heritage specialists might want to "think through" (see Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell 2007), what are their specificities in relation to heritage-making?

With their immanent *intention to stay*, texts "afford"—using William Gibson's expression—their contents with a capacity for futurity. However, contrary to Walter Ong's claim regarding orality and literacy, this is not the product of cultural evolution but rather the effect of a specific "language ideology," to use the expression of linguist Michael Silverstein (1979). The virtual promise of permanence places texts within the purview of what has been called "heritage futures" (Harrison et al. 2020). After all, isn't textual production part and parcel of those "activities that are intimately concerned with assembling, building and designing future worlds" (2020: 4)? Ultimately, the fact that textual heritage belongs to an array of cultural practices is precisely what led us to draw the line joining texts and heritage discourses. In other words, this volume tries to cast light on the importance of textual artifacts as both products and sources of heritage processes.

## Texts and Heritage Studies: A Survey

Throughout history, texts have been among the most effective embodiments of power. They have been used as tools for crafting public memory, shared values, and a common heritage. As the field of postcolonial studies was first coming into maturity, Edward Said stated that "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" (Said 1990: 1, emphasis added). We argue that this is true not only of modern and early modern literary works, but of texts more generally. It is no exaggeration to say that the way texts are tied to memory and identity-making is a typical feature of societies that developed (or adopted) a writing system early in their history. Some of the oldest extant books of different cultures around the world—the *Iliad*, *Gilgamesh*, *Torah*, *Poetic Edda*, *Vedas*, *Shi Jing*, *Kojiki* just to mention a few—are devoted to preserving and transmitting memories of old events, responding to the needs of political and cultural elites of the time. In order to do so, many of these texts look back at the world's mythological birth or creation, thus justifying and legitimizing the particular hierarchy and social structure of their historical moment. Moreover, as religious canons, national histories, or law codexes, these texts have often become the documentary foundations upon which authorized discourses of national, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity have developed. In other words, authorizing identitarian discourses is one of the main ways that such texts have been put to use, not only at the time they were first created, but also during the following centuries, often up to the present.

Despite the important role texts have played in processes of heritage making, specific academic discourse regarding texts "as heritage" or *textual heritage* as a category, as this book suggests, remains largely unexplored. It is not that phrases like "textual heritage," "textual cultural heritage," "literary heritage," or "written heritage" are totally new in academic publications. But most of these interventions use the term heritage to refer either to literary works or to historical documents deemed worthy of attention. In many instances, the term is also used to signpost the entire literary tradition of a specific country, one of its celebrated authors, or its dominant language. Furthermore, those in the humanities that talk about "textual heritage" are often unaware of or unengaged with heritage specialists' most recent contributions. In other words, several experts have gestured toward something that approximates the field of "textual heritage," but these attempts have not been unitary.

Today, the interdisciplinarity of heritage studies is undeniable. From the late twentieth century, a growing number of specialists from archaeology,

sociology, economics, law, art, and anthropology have participated in what is sometimes described as the "heritage boom" (Harrison 2013: 68). In their introduction to the edited volume *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, archaeologists Marie Luise Stig Sørensen and John Carman even claim that "the investigation of heritage has become a distinct research area within the Arts and Humanities" (Sørensen and Carman 2009: 3). Such bold statements must be reconsidered in the light of more "fenced off" disciplines, such as those revolving around Western texts and textuality. Disciplines chiefly concerned with close reading texts, such as literary history, philology, literary criticism, literary theory, comparative literature, and so forth often keep themselves at a distance from heritage studies.

To understand the degree to which disciplinary boundaries are being reconsidered, in this section we look at articles published in the authoritative *International Journal of Heritage Studies* in the past ten or so years. Only a few articles refer explicitly to "literature" or "literary heritage": often the focus is on how communities engage with the memory of a specific literary work or with an author tied to a specific place, such as articles about Mark Twain and his hometown on the Mississippi River (Shackel 2011), or regarding touristic experiences in places related to Jane Austen's novels (Orr 2018). Other contributions revolve around the idea that heritage discourses may be detected within works by contemporary authors, such as the nostalgic description of twentieth-century Taipei in Zhu Tianxin's *The Old Capital* (2007) (Møller-Olsen 2021), or the production of Indigenous Mapuche poetry by Chilean poet Jaime Luis Huenún (Ramay 2019). Studies of older textual sources, including literary ones referred to as "literary masterpieces," are almost completely absent.

This disengagement from literary texts is surprising if we consider that David Lowenthal's seminal work *The Past is a Foreign Country* ([1985] 2015) contains numerous references to literary masterpieces: from Homer to Confucius, Bram Stoker to Thomas Hardy, Mark Twain, Virgil, and Petrarch. To be sure, these names are summoned to a variety of ends, both intellectual and more pragmatic. Despite Lowenthal's status as one of the forefathers of the "critical approach" (Harrison 2013: 98) however, his reliance upon the humanistic canon is understood as the product of a specific intellectual upbringing that values the authority of literary sources *as heritage* and as a peculiarity of his style. It is as if Lowenthal prefigures a path for exploring literary sources within the new framework of heritage studies; however, subsequent academic trends did not conform to his style.

This does not mean that heritage scholars ignore textual sources altogether. Sørensen and Carman's volume indicates "textual/discourse analysis" as one approach to investigate heritage, together with "methods for investigating people's attitudes and behaviour; and methods aimed at ex-

ploring the material qualities of heritage" (Sørensen and Carman 2009: 5). In their interpretation, textual analysis is thus as significant as ethnographic or cultural approaches, or approaches linked to material studies and archaeology. This assertion might be part of the broader "discursive turn" (Harrison 2013: 9) which introduced critical discourse analysis into heritage studies (Smith 2006). In this sense, textual analysis may be seen as synonymous with the analysis of Foucauldian discourses (see Fairclough 2003), but this interpretation is still a far cry from what a philologist classically trained in Romance languages would understand as his or her methodology.

Because the focus of this approach is often on the contents of official documents and provisions issued by national and international institutions like UNESCO and ICOMOS (Smith 2006: 87–114; Waterton and Watson 2015; Akagawa 2015), the texts analyzed were largely produced in the twentieth and twenty-first century. Because of this, these documentary sources shed light upon the ways in which heritage may be understood as "a *contemporary* product shaped from history" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 20, emphasis added). As is well known, the concept of heritage itself owes an important debt to the Euro-American ideology of modernity (Harrison 2013: 23). At the same time, a different class of texts can be mobilized to explore heritage processes of the past. In contrast to the "presentist gaze on the past" (see Chapter 2, this volume) typical of the majority of heritage studies, textual records and written documents can also be explored starting from the assumption that "heritage is as old as humanity" (Lowenthal 1998: 1).

Though rare, some attempts have been conducted to analyze textual sources dating from before the contemporary period. Recent issues of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* include contributions analyzing the emergence of heritage discourses from a variety of historical textual sources. For example, Song Hou analyzes local gazetteers (*fangzhe*) from the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) to retrace how Hangzhou's historical and natural elements became part of the city's "cultural landscape heritage" (Hou 2019: 11). Shortly after, Laura J. Galke investigates nineteenth-century biographies of George Washington to reassess how biographers portray his mother's role in the president's upbringing, reconsidering the biographers' implicit bias against women (Galke 2019). These are interesting attempts to reassess textual sources in relation to heritage-making, but they remain isolated examples even within specialized publications.

In *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, most chapters are based on ethnographic, archaeological, and historiographical approaches, but the entire second part of the volume is dedicated to "investigating texts." Still, none of the contributions deals with literature or literary texts. Useful insight comes from the examination of pieces of legislation. For instance, in her chapter "The History of Heritage: A Method in Analysing Legislative His-

toriography," Hilary A. Soderland convincingly argues that "written records and textual documents attest to how knowledge was created and chronicled, embodying and assimilating the particular values of the time when the history was recorded" (Soderland 2009: 55). Focusing on federal laws, records, and documents issued by the United States federal government, Soderland aims to demonstrate that the analysis of legislative archival material "enables the creation of an historiographical heritage"; in other words, this methodology makes it possible to write a "history of heritage," as she puts it, that "illuminates the interplay among knowledge, text and value" (2009: 55).

Soderland is not the first to adopt the phrase "history of heritage" or to propose an "historically informed approach" to textual sources in order to understand and analyze how the idea of heritage has evolved in the past. In two seminal articles, David C. Harvey (2001, 2008) defined the "history of heritage" as a "history of power relations that have been formed and operate via the deployment of the heritage process" (Harvey 2008: 20). According to Harvey, "heritage has always been with us and has always been produced by people according to their contemporary concerns and experiences" (Harvey 2001: 320). While Soderland focuses on a corpus of jurisdictional texts and archives produced during a relatively short period of time, Harvey relies on a more diverse selection, from hagiographical accounts of medieval England (Harvey and Jones 1999) to eighteenth-century treatises and essays regarding the conservation of old monuments and churches. In mobilizing such different sources, Harvey sharply criticized the orthodoxy of contemporary heritage studies: "many contemporary studies of heritage issues have failed fully to explore the historical scope that the concept really implies, and have rather been too preoccupied with certain manifestations of heritage's recent trajectory" (Harvey 2001: 320).

A short review of the few examples of research available for the study of "texts as heritage" and "texts in heritage" reveals two distinct approaches. On the one hand, specific kinds of texts, such as official documents or pieces of legislation, have been mined for what they can reveal about the present construction of heritage. This approach is in line with a broader trend in the field that emphasizes the significance of Foucauldian discourses. On the other hand, fewer authors have noticed that historical materials like literary texts can shed light on what constituted heritage for people in the past. What these approaches share is the notion that in various heritage making processes, texts are effective means for the attribution of value. In fact, texts are instrumental in defining heritage categories, such as the *tangible* and *intangible* pair. As we discuss below, they can also help in establishing entirely new labels such as documentary heritage, digital heritage, or software heritage. Harvey reminds us that "every society has had a relationship with its past, even those which have chosen to ignore it, and it is through un-

derstanding the meaning and nature of what people tell each other about their past; about what they forget, remember, memorialise and/or fake, that heritage studies can engage with academic debates beyond the confines of present-centred cultural, leisure or tourism studies" (Harvey 2001: 321). Ultimately, texts themselves, in all their complex physicality, perform the kinds of heritage they come to represent; after all, the corpus of documentary heritage is "populated" by the items selected as such. Texts are, and always have been, an important component in the continual process of defining what heritage is and what it is not. As flexible tools in the hands of policymakers wishing to pursue specific agendas, in addition to historical documents that testify to the development of heritage processes, texts and textual practices are a complex and dynamic subject of study, worthy of scholarly consideration and wider understanding. Given the wide scope of such an approach, the selection process itself is a challenge, and types of text also matter. Our volume is only indirectly concerned with scientific and political texts and is mainly concerned with literary texts.

## Heritage Institutions and the Heritagization of Texts

On the one hand, texts are productive artifacts to think about in relation to heritage; on the other, they sit uncomfortably within institutional treatments of heritage. This contradiction arises due to the inability of texts to fit within either of the macro-categories of tangible or intangible heritage when considered in conjunction with issues of authenticity, unicity, and materiality. We might start to consider the place of texts within heritage studies by asking two simple questions: what categories—if any—are already available for the institutionalization of textual products and processes? Which kinds of texts are included, and which are left out of the authoritative discourses surrounding heritage "preservation?" Ultimately, investigating the ways texts are selected, included in, or absorbed by various stakeholders causes us to call into question the very boundaries of "textual heritage." In fact, looking at texts within the framework of the institutional architecture of heritage institutions can reveal something about their specificities and inherent potential. In this section we want to offer preliminary insights regarding how the exploration of the intersection between textual products and practices within institutional frameworks—both at the international and local levels—can offer productive paths of research for further developments of this subfield.

The difficulties in finding a collocation for texts in the institutional heritage framework is well represented by the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme (MoW). Since its inception in 1992, the mission of the MoW

Programme has been "to increase awareness and protection of the world's *documentary heritage*, and achieve its universal and permanent accessibility" (UNESCO 2021: 1–2, emphasis added). These aims are pursued while "encouraging institutions and individuals holding documentary heritage to make it accessible as widely and equitably as possible, in analogue and/or digital form, as appropriate" (UNESCO 2021: 1–2). In concrete terms, the Programme establishes a Register—essentially, a selected list—based on well-known criteria like "outstanding universal value"—and encourages third party institutions such as libraries and archives around the world to provide access to and information concerning the inscribed items widely available worldwide. The logic upon which the items are selected follows principles that, again, are not new in the UNESCO's ideological paradigm: authenticity, integrity, uniqueness or rarity, and historical significance.

The notion of documentary heritage expressed by the MoW Programme is not confined to textual production; the Register includes items such as audio cassettes, films, and other artifacts. Still, most of the entries amount to books and inscribed documents. This might seem like the most suitable institutional framework to consecrate texts worthy of the label of "textual heritage." But a closer look at the MoW Register reveals important differences between "documentary heritage" and what we mean by "textual" heritage.

For example, the entry labeled "42-line Gutenberg Bible, printed on vellum, and its contemporary documentary background" comprises not only one of the four surviving copies of the Bible printed by Gutenberg but also a rare document that serves as evidence of Gutenberg's invention (together with the so-called Goettingen Model Book, the source of the Bible's illumination at the time) (UNESCO n.d.). These three documents acquire their "outstanding historical significance" only in connection with one another. What is interesting is that the MoW Register does not feature the Bible itself, nor even other extant copies of Gutenberg's Bible, but rather this specific copy, known as the "Goettingen copy," which is clearly only one of many discrete and specific embodiments of the Bible. Another interesting example from the MoW Register is the entry that comprises both the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx, inscribed together in 2013. The entry consists of two specific documents handwritten by Marx: the only remaining manuscript page for the draft version of the *Manifesto* and Marx's personal, annotated copy of the first edition of *Das Kapital* (UNESCO n.d.).

Both examples demonstrate an important difference between documentary and textual heritage: the former implicitly attributes significance to physical *items*, whereas the latter privileges the *work*. This can be seen even in nontextual or nonwritten entries of the Register, such as paintings, photos, and audio and video recordings. For instance, the MoW selected to

include the reel of the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*—not the movie in general, nor the novel published in 1900 by Frank Baum, but that specific object. Clearly, specific objects have been added to the Register in accordance with the historical significance of what is inscribed on them. The Bible and the *Manifesto* have both played major cultural and symbolic roles in European and world history. Similarly, *The Wizard of Oz* has influenced popular culture throughout the twentieth century. Still, the Programme seems to fetishize the artifacts themselves. In this version of "documentary heritage," the culturally specific meaning of *texts as objects*—the equivalence of texts with a format that resembles the modern book—is extended to textuality *lato sensu*: in an ironic game of mirrors, inscribed artifacts become documents (in that something is literally written on them) and these documents are in turn inscribed as items of the Register.

The bias toward physical artifacts made "more authentic" by virtue of unique and irreproducible features leads to the following conundrum: on one hand, the MoW register legitimates and fosters the accessibility of documents often unknown to the general public, increasing an awareness of historical sources meaningful to contemporary societies. Thanks to projects like the MoW, scholars around the world as well as the larger public have unparalleled access to documents related to the life of William Shakespeare or to the handwritten diary of an aristocrat of premodern Japan. On the other hand, well-known and already canonized works of (world) literature such as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* or Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* are, in principle, barred from the MoW Register. This is because in these cases no manuscripts produced by the hand of their author have survived. In this way, the Register equates an "authentic" physical item with what philologists call an "archetype" and prioritizes works that "have" an archetype. (For more on authenticity in the context of heritage studies, see Jones 2010.)

Paradoxically, while the Programme endeavors to create a "shared memory" around the "universality" of the documents it enshrines, it also excludes canonical works that are already known to most. Textual heritage, by contrast, would privilege *works*, both in their material and immaterial aspects. This conundrum has become more evident in recent years because of the proliferation of entirely digital artifacts for which a physical "original" has never existed. In this respect, UNESCO has been particularly receptive. Since 2003, the *Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage* regulates the management of different kinds of documents, with an emphasis on their selection (Art. 7), protection (Art. 8), and preservation (Art. 9). Article 1 (Scope) defines "digital heritage" as embracing "cultural, educational, scientific and administrative resources, as well as technical, legal, medical and other kinds of information created digitally, or converted into digital form from existing analogue resource" (UNESCO 2003). The *Charter* also un-

derlines what is specific to the digital "nature" of this kind of heritage: it is "inherently unlimited by time, geography, culture or format. It is culture-specific, but potentially accessible to every person in the world" (UNESCO 2003: Art. 9). As these passages make clear, in their approach to new kinds of texts, global institutions operate under similar theoretical assumptions, stressing the potential for "rapid and inevitable loss" unless necessary measures are taken.

Interestingly, quotes from the Charter reveal its strict correlation with the MoW Programme. Researchers attempting to theorize how digital artifacts and data can take on the value of heritage often stress the ability of such artifacts to transmit memory (see, e.g., Prodan 2020; van der Werf and van der Werf 2020; Grincheva and Stainforth 2024). Hence, the disappearance of the physical/tangible and subsequent rise in digitally produced works compels us to raise questions about the status and nature of texts, and, to some extent, their "essence." In this sense, it is particularly telling that initiatives like Free and Open Source Software (UNESCO n.d.) and Software Heritage—which "collect[s] and preserve[s] software in source code form" because "software is fragile" (see Software Heritage 2018)—were either created in collaboration with or later embraced by the Memory of the World Programme. At the same time, as Prandan notes, the principles at the core of the MoW do not necessarily align with challenges presented by the current digital revolution: "As a global standard setter, MoW could and should embrace the manifold aspects of software as documentary heritage. However, for this to happen, MoW probably has to break out from its positivist shell and embrace critical perspectives" (Prodan 2020: 170). More than twenty years have passed since the publication of UNESCO's *Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage*, but the question of how the spread of digital products will affect our understanding of heritage and memory remains hard to answer.

Some of the chapters in this volume address this issue from a specific disciplinary perspective, such as bibliography (Chapter 10), while others take intermediality as a springboard, rather than discussing it as the endpoint of a process (Chapters 3 and 9). But the path of "digital heritage" is not the only one available to scholars interested in exploring textual heritage. On the contrary, while the analysis of digital practices certainly amounts to an important subfield within textual heritage research, it is only one of many potential areas for expansion. As the case studies discussed in Chapter 1 illustrate, the agency of institutions like UNESCO is such that the inclusion of textual heritage in its lists and registers can help reshape collective memories in areas of the world where conflicts over shared history are so often mobilized to foster political tensions. As a branch of heritage studies, textual heritage can increasingly engage with technological developments of textual production

and reception while maintaining its ties to disciplines that have concurred in shaping traditional approaches to the study of texts and textuality. Such inherent potential leads to the question of how this new subfield of heritage studies may evolve in the future.

## Future Developments of Textual Heritage Studies

Firmly lodged in the tradition of critical heritage studies, the study of textual heritage does not seek to generate completely new issues. On the contrary, investigating textual heritage implies a confrontation with many of the same problems that already characterize heritage discourses more broadly. In fact, texts exhibit some if not all the traits that are idiomatic of heritage discourses. At least since the publication of Laurajane Smith's *Uses of Heritage* (2006), critical approaches have emphasized that heritage is best conceived as a process rather than an object, "a verb" (Harvey 2001) rather than a thing. This approach clearly applies to the fate of not only archeological finds or items displayed in museums but also to textuality: from genesis to fruition, texts are not only manuscripts preserved in some library, but they are also the products of social contexts and cultural practices. Textual practices, in this sense, are fully compatible with heritage-making processes described in recent decades.

Surprisingly, however, texts have remained at the fringes of heritage scholarship. In part this is due to the fact that defining textual heritage is made particularly difficult by the inherent characteristics of texts. Whether engraved on the stone walls of pyramids (see Chapter 5) or printed on the commercially produced libretto copies of a fourteenth-century Japanese Nō play (Gerlini 2022) texts exist in a wide variety of media. Some texts are included in initiatives like the MoW Programme, while others are safeguarded because of their "intangible" value, like the oral poetry of endangered minoritarian languages. Therefore, the dissemination of texts among different categories of heritage discourages a more focused and circumscribed approach. Paradoxically, as discussed in the previous section, it seems that texts can be at once excluded by heritage institutions and ubiquitous among the categories set up by those same institutions for classificatory purposes.

Yet this situation should not discourage researchers from embarking on new projects that delve into facets of textuality which can be connected with heritage in different ways. On the contrary, the field offers numerous potential paths that can, in turn, enrich academic discourse on heritage by providing a fresh perspective. In particular, we identify three conceptual pairs that resonate with the latest developments in critical heritage studies, and that

are touched upon in the chapters of this volume: embodiment and materiality, authenticity and copying, and canonization and authorship.

As objects, texts have some interesting specificities. Despite their apparent fixity, like so many objects of heritage, texts are dynamic entities: shifting shapes and mediums, they problematize the strict boundary patrolling tangible and intangible heritage. Texts demonstrate that often the tangible "thing" is just a physical medium for a much larger, diffuse process. Texts can be replaced, reproduced, and modified not only in each passage from one generation to the next but also from reader to reader. In most cases, the heritagization of a text—be it a work of literature, an historical chronicle, or a religious canon—has been pursued through the circulation of multiple copies and versions, rather than through public appraisal of one physical original. All these features make texts very peculiar and almost "ontologically plastic" objects.

This "flexibility" of texts is what guarantees their potential for heritagization; their reading and spreading (intangible heritage processes) are conducive to the conferral of the heritage "label" to specific artifacts, such as rare books (tangible heritage). As cultural products, texts are characterized by this peculiar relation between embodiment and materiality. On the one hand, their embodiment is dependent upon material support (be it paper, stone, or papyrus); on the other, the contents of the inscribed medium are not necessarily unique to any given physical item. In more technical terms, each "witness" represents an individual with its own peculiar features, but it can also generate a "tradition" encompassing more than one item. Revisiting the notion of embodiment through the lens of texts and textual practices is also fruitful because the reproduction of a text can take place seemingly without information loss. In many ways, this peculiar quality of texts calls to mind the notion of "lossless" reproduction. In fact, leaving aside its decorative elements—e.g., calligraphic renditions—copying a text is a surprisingly straightforward process when compared to reproducing other artifacts, such as paintings and objects of craft.

The relation between "original" and "copy" is one of the most fascinating features of texts. As early as the eighteenth century, following the contribution of Karl Lachmann (1793–1851), one of the defining characteristics of textually concerned disciplines such as philology and more particularly stemmatology was their search for the "archetype . . . an 'official text' checked by the author and intended to be published afterwards in further copies" (Trovato 2020: 127–28). Recent developments in the field, however, have introduced the idea that, especially for premodern texts, the formation of the work involves the complex and multifaceted processes of writing and rewriting; in most cases, a unique and "perfect" original never existed at all. By some accounts, the very concept of the archetype has come to signal an impossibility; to some scholars, the archetype indicates "a lost manuscript

on which the extant transmission depends" (Trovato 2020: 127). As such, the archetype should not be confused with the "original" of a given text, and its search remains essentially an intellectual ideal, not a practical mission (Caraci Vela 2019: 223).

One cannot help but relate this insistence upon a textual origin to the "pursuit of originality" that characterized so much of traditional heritage research until well into the twentieth century. Indeed, it is only a short step from debates on origins and archetypes to more contemporary discussions of the notion of authenticity in critical heritage studies. "The heritage crusade, as Lowenthal called it, is inextricably linked to an authenticity craze" (Silverman 2015: 69). For one, the proliferation of a text into items/copies/witnesses does not automatically affect its perceived authenticity. Even considering inevitable, subtle variations, we hardly question whether the paperback edition of the latest novel by Emmanuel Carrère is less authentic than the hardback published a few years before (luckily for publishers the world over, not every reader is a Borges). In other words, the authenticity of a text is often dislodged from its embodiment in any given physical item. Put another way: there is a greater distance between Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* and one of its replicas than between any two copies of a Graham Greene novel.

This does not mean that a specific copy of a text cannot be imbued with particular meaning and value connected to its very physicality, as in the case of manuscripts authored by famous figures. We already saw that UNESCO's Memory of the World grants the label of "documentary heritage" to the handwritten draft of the *Communist Manifesto* and to Marx's annotated copy of *Das Kapital* on the basis of their authenticity, bestowed by the "hand" of Marx himself. This process resembles what Pierre Bourdieu, riffing on Walter Benjamin, has described as "replacing the work-of-art-as-fetish with the 'fetish of the name of the master'" (Bourdieu 1987: 203).

As these examples demonstrate, the pliable relationship between authenticity and materiality that characterizes texts invites serious considerations from heritage studies scholars, because it helps to problematize the distinction between tangible and intangible heritage. Indeed, texts exemplify the intrinsically intangible features of heritage that are not as immediately apparent when it comes to more established "objects" of heritage, such as the metopes of the Parthenon in Athens or the stones of Stonehenge (on the contested "movements" of objects of heritage, see Hicks 2020). Unlike public monuments or physical places that can be viewed, accessed, and experienced simultaneously by hundreds of people, a text has to be copied or at least reproduced in some way in order to increase the number of its readers and receivers. On the other hand, there is virtually no limit to the number of people that can read the same text at the same time, if everyone has a copy. Texts do not suffer from "overtourism."

These considerations take us beyond the boundaries of heritage studies proper and into the realm of canonization, or the ways certain texts acquire cultural capital. After all, even the most canonical "archaic oral world" of Homeric poetry (Denecke 2014: 206) depended upon the spread of what to our modern eyes look like "copies" or "versions" of the work. To name another example, despite the abundance of modern materials available to scholars of Chinese Tang poetry, "the poetic culture of the Tang period itself was based not on printed editions carefully compiled and collated by scholars, published and spread through governmental and commercial concerns, but on handwritten manuscripts and oral performance and circulation" (Nugent 2010: 1). As suggested by these examples, and from the perspective of this volume, reflection regarding the reproduction and circulation of texts cannot be pursued without also taking into consideration problems of canonization, as explored through Bourdieusian analyses of cultural and symbolic power.

In her groundbreaking study *Uses of Heritage*, Laurajane Smith acknowledges Pierre Bourdieu's influence on the field of heritage studies, adding that heritage itself "may also require a particular attainment of cultural *literacy* to ensure that the meanings and 'messages' believed to be contained within or represented by various heritage forms may be *read and understood*" (Smith 2006: 49, emphasis added). This leads us to the problem of circulation. In fact, according to previous research in comparative (world) literature, the circulation of a text is an important factor in the acquisition of symbolic capital. For example, David Damrosch "take[s] world literature to encompass all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language" (Damrosch 2003: 4). The relationship between the spread of a text and the production of dominant discourses is made manifest in book fairs and literary prizes. Canonization, in this sense, is a prime example of the functioning of discourse. In such events, an entire set of experts and specialists—journalists, editors and publishers, literary critics, professors of literature and so on—themselves create and promote the symbolic value of literary works, facilitating their transmission (see Sapiro 2010, 2016).

From the perspective of critical heritage studies, these experts are both the "agents" and the stakeholders of what Laurajane Smith has termed the "authorized heritage discourse" (AHD) (Smith 2006). This happens when selected works aligning with specific standards and exhibiting specific traits conform to "a professional discourse that privileges expert values and knowledge about the past and its material manifestations, and dominates and regulates professional heritage practices" (2006: 4). Smith's discussion is mainly concerned with traditional objects of heritage, especially monuments and historical sites, but her arguments match precisely our own. In

other words, *canonization,* as applied to literary texts, may be understood as an equivalent to *heritagization*; canonization and heritagization are contiguous if not overlapping categories. Furthermore, a literary canon resembles the functioning of authorized heritage discourses in the West also in "the way it both reflects and constitutes a range of social practices—not least the way it organises social relations and identities around nation, class, culture and ethnicity" (Smith 2006: 16). Ultimately, the AHD is an expression of power dynamics within society: "it's the dominant discourse that makes the authorized heritage discourse" (see Harrison 2013: 112). The social function of literature thus works hand in hand with heritage-making.

The same may also be said about historical or religious texts, with obvious differences in the scope and social functions of those texts. Authoritative texts are not only the tangible product of cultural practices tied to reading and writing, they can also give shape, influence, and set boundaries for future intangible practices. Canonized texts are imbued with the power to "standardize"; they become, in a sense, the "measure" for what can be done with a language: after all, the Greek word *kannon* was derived from *kanna*, a unit of measurement. They are the sources often invoked when it comes to the regulation of spoken language, rhetorical repertoires, and shared historical imagination. Power-charged texts, like the Bible, the Quran, and Buddhist sutras, need to be handled carefully, as testified by a multitude of practices across world religions (see Myrvold 2010). In fact, sacred books are perhaps the most obvious example of textual heritage; they embody the similarly paradoxical coexistence of fixed forms and multifarious practices in heritage.

As mentioned previously, this volume offers examples of practices surrounding the links between embodiment and materiality, authenticity and copying, and canonization and authorship. We intend these pairs not as the fixed extremities of rigid dichotomies but as flexible leitmotifs resurfacing at various moments throughout the volume. From the popularization of French poetry in Japan through modern translations to bibliographic practices of selection and preservation in European institutions, from different editions of a Korean poetry collection to the inscription of ritual formulas onto the walls of Egyptian pyramids and sarcophagi, we aim to show the multiplicity of textual practices around the world and, ultimately, to shed light on a category of "cultural products" that deepens our understanding of heritage.

## Plan of the Work

Wiebke Denecke opens the volume with a sweeping review of the intellectual fields relevant to the entire project. For Denecke, textual heritage has the potential of becoming a "heuristic catalyst and productive mecha-

nism in this moment to bring into dialogue different constituents of past-making" (56). She offers her personal vision of a transdisciplinary field, rejecting the simplistic addition of yet another label to the ever-growing list of "heritages." In particular, she claims that textual heritage "goes beyond documentary heritage," constituting a form of *retrospective object-oriented history making* in which "the fate of the inscribed text is always inseparable from the object's travel through time to our present moment" (52). Denecke's analytical examples help us rethink the relationship between differing methods of inscription and the materiality of each individual medium. Throughout, she discusses the fate of the Cyrus Cylinder as a symbol of human rights and as a diplomatic icon, as well as controversies regarding ownership and "stewardship" that ensued after the oldest copy of Confucius's *Analects* was acquired by a Japanese university in 2020. Later, Denecke applies her extended vision of textual heritage to the case of the *Documents on Joseon Tongsinsa* (*Chosen Tsushinshi*), a corpus of texts and visual materials produced between 1607 and 1811 by the missions that the Chosŏn Kingdom of South Korea (1392–1910 CE) sent to Japan. The proposal for its inscription was submitted jointly by South Korea and Japan in what Denecke considers a major undertaking in cultural diplomacy, a "different model of a 'positive' memory culture" (54). We may also consider the entire process leading to its inscription in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register as an instance of textual heritage, intended as a set of transhistorical, transdisciplinary practices revolving around the cultural life of texts. Through these various examples, Denecke's chapter shows us how "innocuous objects of 'textual heritage' . . . can become catalysts of complementary, disruptive forms of object-driven historiography that redraw our maps of where we expect objects and narratives to be" (57).

Isabelle Lavelle treats the canonization of literary works between France and Japan through the notion of "dislocation," suggesting that textual heritage exists in a space that is not restricted by geographical boundaries. While Lavelle's chapter does not engage directly with theoretical debates regarding world literature, it exemplifies how heritage studies and literary studies can establish a dialogue on the basis of shared topics and interests, which range from the circulation of literary works to public debates surrounding cultural values attached to literary heritage, and even to the processes that lead to institutional acknowledgment of selected authors (or lack thereof). Lavelle's approach is clearly interested in "textual practices" over abstract conceptions of what a text should be. For example, Verlaine's poem "Chanson d'automne" ("Autumn Song," 1866) was first translated into Japanese in 1905 by the acclaimed scholar and poet Ueda Bin. The Japanese rendition of the opening verses "Les sanglots longs des violons de l'automne" (Eng: "The

long sobs / of the violins / of autumn"; Jp.: aki no hi no / vioron no / tameiki no) became so popular they were quoted in a variety of formats from novels to popular media, manga (comic books), and animated movies. Reviewing several of these formats, Lavelle offers an example of how textual heritage may spread thanks to processes and practices of translation, citation, and parodization. Even though "the codified modes of reading within which the poetic metaphor instantly made sense are only marginally shared by the new audience[s], . . . these new manifestations of the original poem—its (mis)translation, fragmentation, commodification—are testimonies to the reconstruction process that a multilayered textual heritage undergoes to signify on a global scale" (81).

Drawing on the work of Donald McKenzie, Wayne de Fremery mobilizes the field of bibliography to articulate his reflections on text and heritage. He starts from a review of bibliography's intense relation to "contexts," highlighting the mutual co-constitution of books and their institutional locations: "Objects we call books articulate locations on shelves in places we call libraries as much as library shelves formulate the books that sit upon them" (89). He describes this peculiar interdependence using the phrase "(con)textual heritage." De Fremery suggests a refreshing bridge between text and heritage: bibliography becomes a means "of assessing and understanding how heritage has been formulated institutionally by organizations such as UNESCO, for example, but also the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)" (92). His focus is on the graphic rendition of the word "sound" (Kor. *sorae/sori*) in multiple editions of the poem "Pun ŏlgol" (Powdered Face) by the Korean poet Kim So-wŏl (1902–1934). The fact that "sound" is spelled with alternative glyphs in different editions has an effect on the way the poem is enacted, and this produces different kinds of "contextual inheritance." Various editions of the poet's work have been in circulation since its publication in 1925, and the debate over which version should count as a Korean "cultural asset" is far from straightforward. The chapter goes on to explore complex cases of digitalization expanding and problematizing processes similar to the ones that Franz Fisher, later in the volume, describes as "heritagization through decanonization." While Fisher invites us to reflect upon possibilities for preservation offered by new digital technologies, de Fremery alerts us to the fact that context and copies—and digital ones, in particular—have an impact on our perception of heritage: "digital copies, like all copies, can obscure as much as reveal their relationships to the objects they are understood to reproduce" (104). This new understanding of bibliography as a dynamic approach to copies and contexts is useful for grasping the diversity of ways in which texts are transmitted and heritagized.

Blending ethnography and music philology, Andrea Giolai provides an overview of the main functions of written notations in Japanese court music (Gagaku). Among the most ancient repertoires of Japanese traditional music, Gagaku hails back to Japan's contact with the Asian mainland in the seventh and eighth centuries CE. Whereas most Japanese traditional repertoires favor what ethnomusicologists call aural-oral transmission, and hence write down music very sparingly, Gagaku is peculiar for its heavy reliance upon various kinds of notation; each instrument employs a distinctive, unique method. Giolai notices that given the significance of textuality for court music, important historical figures have produced musical manuscripts, which over many centuries have become part of Gagaku's—and Japan's—tangible cultural heritage. But, as he goes on to argue, this textual heritage of Gagaku is only fully activated through embodied musical practice, creating a dialogue between tangible and intangible elements that listeners rarely get a chance to appreciate. After tracing the progress of philological approaches to Gagaku notations, and discussing some of the genre's most important manuscripts, Giolai's chapter discusses the ways in which notation intersects with the actual practice of music making. The chapter points out that scholars have predominantly focused on either the history of the performing art or its musicological features; seeing Gagaku through the lens of textual heritage, Giolai demonstrates that these repertoires can be approached from alternative disciplinary perspectives. Given that they sit at the intersection of "historical ethnomusicology" and recent trends in the philology of (Euro-American) music, Giolai's case studies demonstrate that textual heritage can be a powerful tool for unlocking the value of textual artifacts and cultural "assets" that are otherwise rarely—if ever—taken into account by heritage specialists.

In their chapter on the so-called Pyramid Texts, an important corpus of Egyptian inscriptions hailing back to the end of the third millennium BCE, Emanuele M. Ciampini and Francesca Iannarilli reflect upon the various ways in which changes to the physical medium of hieroglyphic inscriptions can be understood as a sequence of heritage-making practices. From their ancient oral use as deeply ritualistic spells to their inscription on the stone walls of royal burial chambers (and later onto private coffins), the Pyramid Texts' significance and purpose changed many times over. Despite the fact that they were rewritten and reproduced by different actors with novel motivations, their ability to echo the authority of the past endured. The authors refer to this highly performative and context-dependent process variously as "textualization," following Engler (2015), and as "entextualization," following Morales (2013, 2015). In both cases, the choice of terminology is aligned with the volume's focus on the creative reuse of texts. In a sense, the Pyramid Texts went through processes that are incredibly common; the systematiza-

tion, monumentalization, and canonization of texts all stem from the care and attention that texts can generate, in the service of the changing needs and values of their users.

Edoardo Gerlini's chapter attempts to apply the approach of critical discourse analysis to ancient texts of the Japanese literary tradition, focusing especially on the prefaces of poetic anthologies compiled in the eighth and ninth centuries CE. The objects of the discourse analysis employed by Gerlini are the prefaces to four anthologies of Chinese poetry produced by Japanese authors: the *Kaifūsō* (750), the *Ryōunshū* (814), the *Bunka shūreishū* (818), and the *Keikokushū* (827). According to Gerlini, these prefaces are eloquent witnesses to the authorized heritage discourse that took place in those centuries among Japanese cultural and political elites. Gerlini suggests that these texts can be seen both as "agents" and as "objects" of heritagization: they are agents in the sense that, through these prefaces, the compilers of the collections explain and make sense of the choices they made in selecting which poems or texts to include in the collection, with the manifest intention to leave them for future generations. On the other hand, because they are an integral part of the collections, the prefaces also become "objects" of heritagization through their inclusion in the literary canon and the official history of Japan. Gerlini argues that the close reading of these texts allows us to understand the process of compilation within its proper social and political context. According to the text of the prefaces, three of the anthologies were compiled under an official order issued by the emperor. Since it was dictated by imperial authority, the process of selecting the best poetic compositions created at court must be understood as one of several concerted attempts to consolidate and legitimize the historical and cultural identity of the ruling dynasty. In the last part of the chapter, Gerlini also reflects on how earlier Chinese textual sources were adapted into these Japanese works, extending the scope of his case study to the broader processes that texts may undergo in different geographical and cultural contexts.

A scholar of premodern Japanese literature, Heidi Buck-Albulet examines current practices revolving around a traditional poetic style called *renga* (linked verse), in which different authors take turns composing stanzas of a single long poem. Today, as in medieval Japan, *renga* are composed during gatherings characterized by a set of traditional practices that regulate both the composition of the text *as content* and the manipulation of the same text *as artifact*. Buck-Albulet describes in great detail how these gatherings take place. Participants are bound to a highly codified vocabulary and a specific metric system determining how the verses should be written down and read aloud. Similarly, sets of rules dictate which kinds of paper should be used, its format and quality, and how the resulting manuscripts

should circulate in the physical space of the gathering. Based on the results of her fieldwork among *renga* schools and circles active in contemporary Japan—an uncommon approach among scholars of classical literature—the chapter illustrates how these inflexible protocols are performed today following the practitioners' investment in "reviving" an ancient art perceived to be in danger of extinction. Buck-Albulet's contribution helps us to problematize the rigid boundary separating the "production" and "reception" of heritage. It also encourages us to rethink how processes of heritagization and canonization may be enacted through the material production, reuse, and arrangement of texts. According to Buck-Albulet, these *renga* gatherings are a form of art "where production and reception, which are conceived as spatially and temporally separate in the modern Western notion of 'literature' or 'poetry,' are united in one space and time" (191). Noticeably, the apparently secondary practices of choosing the proper paper or copying the poems on finely decorated scrolls are interpreted by Buck-Albulet "as acts of appreciation or as a judgment that the text contained is worthy of preservation" (201). In other words, these are practices that shape and inform textual heritage. Claiming that *renga* is "a synthesis composed of text (poetry), performance and written artifact," the chapter hinges upon the debate over the interdependence between tangible and intangible aspects of heritage. Buck-Albulet invites us to think critically about the boundaries of textual heritage: "despite the ubiquity of text, one should not forget that *renga* is performed in an extra-textual environment and that it not only connects verses but also people" (207).

Art historian Radu Leca focuses on ancient Japanese maps as textual artifacts: "a particularly complex category of textual heritage, they encapsulate the otherwise elusive spatial imaginary of a given community within a given time and place, and thus function as sites of convergence between intangible practices and all the elements of the heritage sector: artifacts, natural and built environment" (215). In his account, maps follow a remarkably different logic from the one to which we are accustomed: "most premodern and early modern maps were not topographical but rather topological, structured by connections and relationships between toponyms" (215). The topological structure, he argues, corresponds to "the structure of the spatial imaginary of the creators and audience of those maps" (215). He illustrates his argument with three examples from early modern Japan. The first is a map of the world by Koyano Yoshiharu. The second is a map of Japan by Ishikawa Ryusen in which roads and sea routes are the main focus, while marginal territories serve to frame Japan's geobody. This map of Japan also has a transcultural aspect, since its spatial structure was transferred to the European imaginary. The third example is a map of Edo (early mod-

ern Tokyo) that reveals the city's geomantic layout and sacred topology. In line with other contributions, Leca's chapter extends the concept of text beyond its typical confines. As he puts it: "once we enlarge our definition of maps as forms of communicating, embodying, and shaping the spatial imaginary, their multifaceted value as a form of textual heritage becomes obvious" (229). One notes that through his arguments regarding the influence of maps on the "spatial vernacular" of premodern Japan, Leca extends the scope of textual heritage, connecting art history, human geography, and intellectual history.

Characterizing himself as "a digital textual scholar" at the outset, Franz Fisher explores what he provocatively calls "strategies for the decanonization of textual heritage" (236). To be sure, his reasoning remains anchored to a classic vision of the discipline of philology, essentially understanding "texts" and "heritage" as objects to be safeguarded. As he writes, "Taking care of textual heritage, creating representations of historical texts that are true, faithful and authentic is my business as a matter of fact" (236). On the basis of a methodological orientation spelled out by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), Fischer adopts a specific taxonomy to analyze texts hierarchically and systematically. He goes on to claim that "this is textuality in the library world: a bibliographic record of an intellectual or artistic endeavor that can be described as a work, an expression, a manifestation, or an item" (238). Each of these terms is an interdependent taxonomic category within nested levels of analysis. Such views might appear outdated to readers accustomed to the vocabulary of (critical) heritage studies, yet cross-pollination is never too far afield in Fisher's chapter. For instance, starting from the philological distinction between "works" and "items," he uses the destruction of Cologne's city archive in 2009 as an example emphasizing "the materiality of textual heritage." In the hand of a heritage specialist, the same case study would probably be used to discuss topics like heritage destruction and embodiment. Conversely, philology has a lot to gain from a "heritage-minded" approach to texts: "misunderstandings and scholarly discord on editorial and preservational practices could often be avoided or alleviated if there was more clarity about the plurality of textual approaches" (240). As such, textual heritage can be a useful category for a variety of highly specialized professionals, including archivists and bibliographers. These practitioners already carry out selective practices of textual heritage when they "polish" digitized text corpora by "stripping off the scholarly framework of apparatus and annotations" (241). Ultimately, Fisher urges us to contemplate the presence of "textual perspectives" within the documents that bibliographers handle. He also highlights their responsibilities, emphasizing the task of determining what information should be

retained and what should be discarded from the extensive array of data associated with each and every document.

While most contributors focus either on textual heritage in the past or on its creative re-creations in the present, David Harvey's concluding chapter takes the lead from recent developments in critical heritage studies by looking at how physical and monumental heritage appears in literary texts. In that sense, Harvey's contribution is clearly in dialogue with the aforementioned volume on "heritage futures" (Harrison et al. 2020). Harvey examines two examples of seemingly unconnected heritage narratives. In the first part of the chapter, he looks at historical accounts of a powerful storm that damaged the parish church of Widecombe in Southwestern England and caused several deaths in October 1638. Retracing and reconstructing the "long-term heritage biography" of narratives recounting these events, he points out that the narratives not only transmit "a recognizably modern sense of heritage landscape," but also establish "a future conduct of remembrance" (265) through the texts themselves; that is, through pamphlets and poetry that started to circulate shortly after the historical events took place. In a remarkable twist, the second half of the chapter turns to sci-fi literature. Harvey examines the novel *News from Nowhere* (1890) by William Morris, a forerunner of the European perspective on heritage. While Morris is usually associated with notions of preservation and conservation, Harvey highlights his novel's "radical nostalgia." Rather than merely preserving London's monuments and statues, the citizens portrayed in *News from Nowhere* consider heritage a living entity: the Houses of Parliament, for example, are described as "good for storing manure" (271). In contrast to contemporary examples of sci-fi narratives which reflect rather conservative attitudes toward heritage, Harvey claims that Morris's book speaks to a notion of sci-fi literature "as a type of heritage discourse about possible futures" and as "a potentially transformative experimental space, in which alternative (and more progressive) futures can be envisaged and enacted" (273). Ultimately, the chapter suggests that textual heritage refers to processes that can be observed not only within texts of the past but also within narratives that display alternative conceptions of heritage projected onto a future that is yet to come—in other words, his case studies highlight the "futurity" of past heritage narratives.

## Conclusions: Paths Untrodden and New Horizons

Since UNESCO's adoption of the Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in 2003, heritage has been studied from a broader range of perspectives, disciplines, and approaches: as a diplomatic tool

(Akagawa 2015) and public discourse (Silberman 2013); as a performance (Haldrup and Bœrenholdt 2015); as entailing affective practices (Smith, Wetherell, and Campbell 2018; Crouch 2015); and as entangled with discourses on human rights (Logan 2013; Silverman and Fairchild Ruggles 2007; Langfield, Logan and Nic Craith 2010). The same perspectives can be applied to the study of texts, and analyzing texts can enliven them in turn. As the field continues to widen, there is little doubt that textuality could become a profitable outlet for critical heritage studies. In the same spirit, this volume provocatively addresses heritage across the Humanities, pushing the interdisciplinary character of critical heritage studies even further. None of the authors considers her or himself a "specialist of heritage," but they all accepted the challenge of revisiting their own work through a new lens. Our collective endeavor is a first step, but we will need further effort, engagement, and cooperation to carry on with this exploration.

Working on this volume, we became aware of the countless avenues through which texts and heritage can be approached in combination. For example, writing and scripts offer rich data to heritage scholars; in this sense, Boone's approach to Mesoamerican literacy is especially foretelling, even if the word "heritage" is not central to her discussion. Connected to this area are the techniques and technologies of inscription that shape our textual heritage, as well as issues of translation and transcription.

Studying texts as tangible embodiments of intangible practices can also broaden the field of textual heritage to include explorations of the human sensorium. As Mark Smith noticed, "texts not only represent bodily experience; they imply it in the ways they ask to be touched, seen, heard, even smelled and tasted" (B. Smith 2004: 41). When compared to printed books or newspapers, e-readers, audiobooks, podcasts and video essays offer different channels for our bodies to come into touch with texts. On the other hand, few readers today can partake in the thrill of a manuscript's smell and tactile "feel," as the most precious and rare manuscripts have become immediately available to anyone with an internet connection. When we start to think about our sensory engagement with texts, new questions come to the fore: what role do molds play in the conservation of our textual heritage? How can heritage specialists such as museum curators and restorers engage the wider public in a way that involves more than vision? Answering such questions would contribute not only to our understanding of textuality, but also to the broader field of heritage studies.

From the perspective of academic textual production, scholars themselves can profit from a greater engagement with the body. Dwelling on sensations can generate "expressive modes of writing in traditions reminiscent of [prominent anthropologist] Kathleen Stewart, point[ing] to the pos-

sibilities for unpacking a more plentiful range of sensory experiences with heritage" (Waterton and Watson 2015: 33). As Emma Waterton and Steve Watson suggest, this type of writing "emerges from immersive engagements with places and space" (Waterton and Watson 2015: 33), but we suggest that a similar mode of engagement can be applied to how we handle texts. Indeed, the multisensoriality of texts remains largely unexplored.

What are texts good for in the humanities today? Is the link between text and heritage a necessity, part of a larger trend to impart everything with a "heritage-flavor," or simply an aspiration? Will textual heritage continue to make sense as a category in the face of technological innovation threatening to turn life itself into a string of text, even as it does away with the physical format of the text? The chapters in this volume provide tools we can use while engaging in these conversations. They also explicitly identify areas where more support from heritage specialists is needed. The volume inaugurates a dialogue between two areas that are coterminous, yet seldom intersecting. As a scholarly field, heritage studies owes a huge debt to the humanistic tradition of reading and studying the "Classics" as a way of exploring the past. As we already noted, the father of modern heritage studies, David Lowenthal, shepherded his readers through the fields of archaeology and literature, disregarding distinctions between "areas" and "disciplines" and freely discussing texts, artifacts, and buildings in the same breath, all under the category of "antiquities." Just as the contemplation of a painting or an ancient sculpture can impress a lasting change upon the viewer, he was keenly aware that texts have the power to remake us into different selves. After all, the men and women inventing our own European heritage were constantly transformed by their contact with texts: "Digging up crumbled remains to recover lost or buried antiquities led to a further act of healing: reconstructing a building, *a text*, or an ethos . . . Like Hippolytus, the healing humanist reassembled himself as well, reconstituting from fragments of his own past an identity that combined consciousness at once old and new" (Lowenthal [1985] 2015: 161, emphasis added). As we scroll through our edited volume on our office computer's screen, on our e-readers on the train home, or on our physical desks, while sipping a nice cup of tea, we too are tying our lives and identities to the fate of texts. Like Lowenthal's healing humanist, we continue to reassemble ourselves with texts, reassembling heritage in the process.

**Andrea Giolai** is Assistant Professor of Ethnography and Performing Arts of Japan at the Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University. His research focuses on Japanese courtly and ceremonial music (Gagaku), the reconstruction of ancient musical materials, and the relation between sound, loss, and environmental change. His work on Gagaku investigates how textual, sonic,

and bodily practices coalesce in contemporary heritage discourses. His research has been published in *Asian Anthropology* (2019) and the *Journal of Religion in Japan* (2020), and he has contributed to the *Bloomsbury Handbook of Japanese Religions* (2021), the edited volume *Gagaku: The Cultural Impact of Japanese Ceremonial Music* (De Gruyter 2025), and *The Oxford Handbook of Ecomusicology* (forthcoming).

**Edoardo Gerlini** is Associate Professor of Classical Japanese Language and Literature in the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy. His research interests include Heian period (794–1185) literature, in particular Japanese and Chinese poetry in a comparative perspective. He is also engaged in interdisciplinary inquiries focused on processes of heritage-making related to literary texts and sources. He authored the volume *The Heian Court Poetry as World Literature: From the Point of View of Early Italian Poetry* (Firenze University Press 2014), edited the first volume of the *Antologia di poesia giapponese* (Anthology of Japanese Poetry) (Marsilio 2021), and edited with Kimiko Kono the volume *Koten wa isan ka? Nihon bungaku ni okeru tekusuto isan no riyō to saisōzō* (Are Classics a Heritage? Uses and Re-creations of Textual Heritage in Japanese Literature) (Bensei 2021).

## NOTE

1. This symposium was part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Project No. 792809 "World Heritage and East Asian Literature—Sinitic Writings in Japan as Literary Heritage (WHEREAL)" under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program.

## REFERENCES

Akagawa, Natsuko. 2015. *Heritage Conservation and Japan's Cultural Diplomacy: Heritage, National Identity and National Interest*. New York: Routledge.

Boone, Elizabeth Hill. 1994. "Introduction: Writing and Recording Knowledge." In *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter Mignolo, 1–26. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

———. 2000. *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

———. 2020. *Descendants of Aztec Pictography: The Cultural Encyclopaedias of Sixteenth-Century Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1987. "The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46: 201–10.

Caraci Vela, Maria. 2019. *La filologia musicale. Istituzioni, storia, strumenti critici (I) Fondamenti storici e metodologici della filologia musicale*. Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana.

Crouch, David. 2015. "Affect, Heritage, Feeling." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. Steve Watson and Emma Waterton, 177–90. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Damrosch, David. 2003. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Denecke, Wiebke. 2014. "Worlds Without Translation: Premodern East Asia and the Power of Character Scripts." In *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter, 204–16. Oxford, UK: Wiley.

Engler, Baz. [1991] 2015. "Textualization." In *Literary Pragmatics*, ed. Roger D. Sell, 179–89. New York: Routledge.

Fairclough, Norman. 2003. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. New York: Routledge.

Galke, Laura J. 2019. "Who's the Bomb? George's Mom! Haunting Biographies of George Washington." *International Journal of Heritage studies* 25 (7): 689–707.

Gerlini, Edoardo. 2022. "Textual Heritage Embodied- Entanglements of Tangible and Intangible in the Aoi No Ue Utaibon of the Hōshō School of Noh." *Studies in Japanese Literature and Culture* 5: 55–85.

Grincheva, Natalia, and Elizabeth Stainforth. 2024. *Geopolitics of Digital Heritage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haldrup, Michael, and Jørgen Bœrenholdt. 2015. "Heritage as Performance." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. Steve Watson and Emma Waterton, 52–68. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Harrison, Rodney. 2013. *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. New York: Routledge.

Harrison, Rodney, Caitlin DeSilvey, Cornelius Holtorf, and Sharon Macdonald. 2020. "For Ever, for Everyone. . . ." In *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices*, ed. Rodney Harrison, Caitlin DeSilvey, Cornelius Holtorf, Sharon Macdonald, Nadia Bartolini, Esther Breithoff, and Harald Fredheim, 3–19. London: UCL Press.

Harvey, David C. 2001. "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7(4): 319–38.

———. 2008. "The History of Heritage." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian J. Graham and Peter Howard, 19–36. Heritage and Identity. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Harvey, David C., and Rhys Jones. 1999. "Custom and Habit(Us): The Meaning of Traditions and Legends in Early Medieval Western Britain." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 81(4): 223–33.

Henare, Amiria J. M., Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell, eds. 2007. *Thinking through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically*. New York: Routledge.

Hicks, Dan. 2020. *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*. London: Pluto Press.

Hou, Song. 2019. "Remembering Trees as Heritage: *Guji* Discourse and the Meaning-Making of Trees in Hangzhou, Qing China." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25(5): 455–68.

Jones, Siân. 2010. "Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves: Beyond the Deconstruction of Authenticity." *Journal of Material Culture* 15(2): 181–203.

Langfield, Michele, William Stewart Logan, and Máiréad Nic Craith, eds. 2010. *Cultural Diversity, Heritage and Human Rights: Intersections in Theory and Practice*. Key Issues in Cultural Heritage. New York: Routledge.

Logan, William. 2013. "Learning to Engage with Human Rights in Heritage." In *Understanding Heritage: Perspectives in Heritage Studies*, ed. Marie-Theres Albert, Roland Bernecker, and Britta Rudolff, 35–48. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Lowenthal, David. 1998. *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. 1st paperback ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. [1985] 2015. *The Past Is a Foreign Country—Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lurie, David Barnett. 2011. *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing*. Harvard East Asian Monographs 335. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.

Møller-Olsen, Astrid. 2021. "The City Is a Journey: Heritage and Memory in Zhu Tianxin's Novella *The Old Capital*." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 27(8): 819–29.

Morales, Antonio J. 2013. "The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts into the Middle Kingdom: Philological Aspects of a Continuous Tradition in Egyptian Mortuary Literature." PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania.

———. 2015. "Text-Building and Transmission of Pyramid Texts in the Third Millennium BCE: Iteration, Objectification, and Change." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 15 (2015): 169–201.

Myrvold, Kristina, ed. 2010. *The Death of Sacred Texts: Ritual Disposal and Renovation of Texts in World Religions*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Nugent, Christopher M. B. 2010. *Manifest in Words, Written on Paper: Producing and Circulating Poetry in Tang Dynasty China*. Harvard-Yenching Monograph Series. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.

Ong, Walter J. [1982] 2012. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Routledge.

Orr, Ashley. 2018. "Plotting Jane Austen: Heritage Sites as Fictional Worlds in the Literary Tourist's Imagination." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 24(3): 243–55.

Prodan, Anca Claudia. 2020. "Memory of the World, Documentary Heritage and Digital Technology: Critical Perspectives." In *The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme: Key Aspects and Recent Developments*, ed. Ray Edmondson, Lothar Jordan, and Anca Claudia Prodan, 159–74. Cham: Springer.

Ramay, Allison. 2019. "Mapuche Poetry in the Age of Heritage." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25(5): 443–54.

Said, Edward W. 1990. "Figures, Configurations, Transfigurations." *Race & Class* 32(1): 1–16.

Sapiro, Gisèle. 2010. "Globalization and Cultural Diversity in the Book Market: The Case of Literary Translations in the US and in France." *Poetics* 38(4): 419–39.

———. 2016. "How Do Literary Works Cross Borders (or Not)?" *Journal of World Literature* 1(1): 81–96.

Shackel, Paul A. 2011. "America's Home Town: Fiction, Mark Twain, and the Re-creation of Hannibal, Missouri." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 17(3): 197–213.

Silberman, Neil A. 2013. "Heritage Interpretation as Public Discourse: Towards a New Paradigm." In *Understanding Heritage*, edited by Marie-Theres Albert, Roland Bernecker, and Britta Rudolff, 21–34. Berlin ; Boston: De Gruyter.

Silverman, Helaine. 2015. "Curating Sound for Future Communities." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. Steve Watson and Emma Waterton, 69–90. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Silverman, Helaine, and D. Fairchild Ruggles, eds. 2007. *Cultural Heritage and Human Rights*. New York: Springer.

Silverstein, Michael. 1979. "Language Structure and Linguistic Ideology." In *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*, ed. Paul R. Clyne, William F. Hanks, and Carol L. Hofbauer, 193–247. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, Bruce R. 2004. "Listening to the Wild Blue Yonder: The Challenges of Acoustic Ecology." In *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity*, ed. Veit Erlmann, 21–41. Oxford, UK: Berg.

Smith, Laurajane. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. New York: Routledge.

Smith, Laurajane, Margaret Wetherell, and Gary Campbell, eds. 2018. *Emotion, Affective Practices, and the Past in the Present*. London: Routledge.

Soderland, Hilary A. 2009. "The History of Heritage. A Method in Analysing Legislative Historiography." In *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and John Carman, 55–84. New York: Routledge.

Software Heritage. 2018. "Software Heritage." Retrieved 15 January 2024 from https://www.softwareheritage.org/.

Sørensen, Marie Louise Stig, and John Carman. 2009. *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*. New York: Routledge.

Steintrager, James A., and Rey Chow, eds. 2019. *Sound Objects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Trovato, Paolo. 2020. "2.4 Neo-Lachmannism: A New Synthesis?" In *Handbook of Stemmatology: History, Methodology, Digital Approaches*, ed. Philipp Roelli, 109–38. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Tunbridge, J. E., and G. J. Ashworth. 1996. *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*. Oxford, UK: Wiley.

UNESCO. n.d. "42-line Gutenberg Bible, printed on vellum, and its contemporary documentary background." Retrieved 15 January 2024 from https://en.unesco.org/memoryoftheworld/registry/432.

———. n.d. "Free and Open Source Software (FOSS)" Retrieved 15 January 2024 from https://en.unesco.org/freeandopensourcesoftware.

———. n.d. "Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei, draft manuscript page and Das Kapital." Erster Band, Karl Marx's personal annotated copy. Retrieved 15 January 2024 from https://en.unesco.org/memoryoftheworld/registry/481.

———. 2003. "Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage, adopted by general conference on 15 Oct 2003." Paris: UNESCO.

———. 2021. "General Guidelines of the Memory of the World (MoW) Programme." Retrieved 15 January 2024 from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000378405.

Waterton, Emma, and Steve Watson. 2015. "Heritage as a Focus of Research: Past, Present and New Directions." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. Steve Watson and Emma Waterton, 1–17. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Werf, Titia van der, and Bram van der Werf. 2020. "Documentary Heritage in the Digital Age: Born Digital, Being Digital, Dying Digital." In *The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme: Key Aspects and Recent Developments*, ed. Ray Edmondson, Lothar Jordan, and Anca Claudia Prodan, 175–89. Cham: Springer.