Dynamic Scribal Culture in Late Seventeenth-Century Japan: Ihara Saikaku's Engagement with Handscrolls

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This article investigates the characteristics of scribal culture in early modern Japan and its relationship to print culture. I focus on the intersections between the activity of Ihara Saikaku and the representative scribal format of the handscroll. In his artistic production, Saikaku engaged with all aspects of handscrolls: their materiality, production, use, and social significance. I analyze Saikaku's works from two complementary perspectives that structure this study: as meta-textual and visual references to the uses and meanings of scribal formats, and as artifacts with distinct material profiles. The article shows that the meaning and use of early modern texts were intertwined with the materiality, affordance, and social context of text-bearing artifacts. This was a dynamic and palimpsestic process: scribal formats preserved echoes of authority and cultural capital while accommodating contemporary usage. While making full use of the material connotations and established uses of the format, Saikaku negotiated and innovated its meanings. Saikaku can thus be reassessed as an astute practitioner of a range of scribal practices and a versatile producer of scribal artifacts who developed a side practice of commercial publishing. Saikaku's aesthetic identity emerged from within the scribal culture and aesthetic networks of his time. For a better understanding of the dynamics of this process, the history of early modern literature needs to be recentered on the relationship between various media.

Keywords: early modern, scribal, manuscript, *makimono*, affordance, handscroll, materiality

The endurance of scribal culture centuries after the development of commercial print is increasingly acknowledged in the history of literature and of the book.[1] For early

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1 See Scarborough King 2020 for eighteenth-century Europe and Son 2018 for late seventeenth-century Qing China. For an overview of recent developments in the history of the book in East Asia, see Sherif 2017.

modern Japan, Peter Kornicki and Nakano Mitsutoshi have argued that the production of handwritten documents thrived at all social levels, while Linda Chance and Julie Davis have underlined the fact that, both in terms of their production and aesthetics, print and manuscript artifacts were far more contiguous in early modern Japan than in Europe.[2] But the details of scribal endurance and of its interaction with print culture are still insufficiently understood.[3]

An alternative approach to the above issues has been developed within the "Material Text Cultures" research project at Heidelberg University. It consists of an analysis of the materiality, the shape and the design of textual artifacts, as well as their practices and conventions of use; in other words, their praxeology. This approach is a form of materialist philology, which privileges the characteristics of the text as an artefact.[4] A central concept in this analysis is that of affordance, meaning the possibilities of action that emerge out of the relationship between user and artifact.[5] This allows a reconceptualization of scribal culture as co-constituted by human and artifactual agents. This process is not static—in other words, scribal culture does not include only normative practices but also idiosyncratic and experimental practices that continuously redefine it. In this study, I propose to use the above approach to tackle the following questions: What were the characteristics of scribal culture in early modern Japan, and what was its relationship to print culture? Did manuscript formats undergo a reevaluation amid a rapidly expanding print culture at the time? Rather than a monolithic concept of scribal culture as the background against which print culture emerged, the challenge is to uncover the dynamic nature of the interactions between various textual media, with print being only one of them.

That challenge is addressed through a focus on the activity of Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693). In the history of early modern Japanese literature, Saikaku holds a prominent place as a print author of prose writings.[6] While active in Osaka, his texts were published in all three major urban centers of early modern Japan, and the plots of his stories featured locations throughout the archipelago. Saikaku's work is therefore considered representative of the urban culture of early modern Japan.[7] However, an emphasis on print production has led to a "flattening" of the archive.[8] Saikaku's output was notably diverse: he started by writing *haikai* 俳諧 (humorous linked verse), and also wrote essays, plays, and actor critiques, all produced in a variety of formats (poem slips, poem cards, bound books, handscrolls). Although a reassessment of this diverse output is ongoing, it has so far sidelined the issues of materiality and scribal culture that this article asserts are central to understanding Saikaku's activity.[9]

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2 Kornicki 2006; Nakano 2011, pp. 86–87; Chance and Davis 2016.
3 In this study the terms "scribal" and "manuscript" are used interchangeably.
4 I borrow the term materialist philology from Friedrich and Schwarke 2016, p. 5.
5 Gibson 1979, pp. 127–143, Talaga 2020, pp. 5–7.
6 For a recent study of the textual genealogy of Saikaku's prose, see Struve 2021.
7 Moretti (2020) argues for a de-centering of Saikaku from the understanding of early-modern literature by expanding the range of (printed) sources and of the literary production of this period. While I agree with the need to redefine and expand the literary canon, this does not diminish the importance of the study of Saikaku's output for understanding the urban culture of early modern Japan.
8 I adapt the term from Williams 2019, p. 149.
9 For an example of this burgeoning reassessment, see Nakajima and Shinohara 2016.
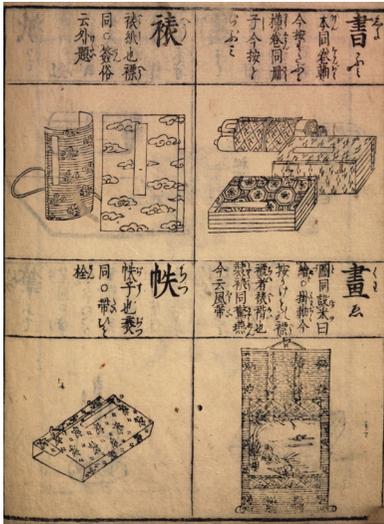
Figure 1. The normative materiality of seventeenth-century scribal culture: *fumi* 書 (texts), *e* 畫 (pictures), *hyō* 裱 (covers), *chitsu* 帙 (storage cases). Illustration from Nakamura Tekisai, ed., *Kinmō zui* 訓蒙図彙, 1666, vol. 8, 15v. Courtesy of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München.

As a window into the significance of Saikaku's diverse scribal output, this study focuses on the intersections between Saikaku's activity and the *makimono* 巻物 (handscroll) format. The reason for choosing this particular format is that since its first use in Japan in the seventh century it had become one of the main carriers of textual and visual content.[10] Moreover, the physical characteristics of the handscroll format are markedly different than those of the *fukurotoji* 袋綴 (pouch binding) codex, the other main format of early modern scribal culture. After 1600, the *fukurotoji*-bound codex also became a format for printed text, unlike the handscroll which remained an almost exclusively manuscript format.[11] For that reason, the terms "handscroll" and "scribal format" are used interchangeably throughout this study.

Studies of the handscroll format tend to focus on pre-1600 examples, and particularly on the characteristics of narrative illustrated handscrolls.[12] This leaves the changing significance of this major scribal format from the seventeenth century onwards comparatively under-researched. This study addresses that gap through its investigation of Saikaku's involvement with handscrolls (figure 1).[13]

As detailed below, Saikaku engaged with all aspects of this format: its materiality, production, use, and social significance. I analyze Saikaku's output from two complementary perspectives that structure this study: as meta-textual and visual references to the uses and

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10 Kersey 2020, p. 125.

11 There are a few exceptions: the 1391 *Yūzū nenbutsu engi emaki* 融通念仏縁起絵巻 (Takagishi 2015); the 1767 *Jōkyōshū* 乗興舟 (Impromptu pleasures afloat) by Itō Jakuchū 伊藤若冲 (1716–1800) (Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2000, cat. 142; Nakano 2011, pp. 113–114; Yamashita 2019, cat. 18); and the 1785 *Edo meisho zue* 江戸名所図会 (Views of the famous places of Edo) by Kitao Masayoshi 北尾政美 (1764–1824) (Smith 1988, p. 9).

12 Watanabe 2011, pp. 28–42.

13 The handscroll was one of two major formats for scribal artifacts given in the 1666 encyclopaedia *Kinmō zui* 訓蒙図彙, which notes under "Texts, writings, books [that] handscrolls, 'rolled texts' are the same as side-scrolls; codices are the same as 'bound texts'" (Original text: 書ふみ本同巻軸今按まきぶみ横巻同冊子今按とぢぶみ), vol. 8, 15v. Available from https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb11175015?page=319 (Accessed 15 August 2022). See Marquet 2009, p. 84.

meanings of scribal formats; and as artifacts acting as "evolving entities" with distinct material profiles.[14] This two-pronged approach takes into account the recent emphasis on the paratextual as well as material and visual characteristics of text-bearing artifacts as carriers of meaning.[15] Such an approach allows us to analyze Saikaku's output in order to develop an understanding of early modern scribal culture as a dynamic set of practices that continuously reconfigured its meaning and relevance in interrelationship with technologies of reproduction.

The Normative Profile of Handscrolls

Before discussing the characteristics of Saikaku's involvement with handscrolls, it is necessary to start with establishing the normative meanings and uses of the handscroll format in early modern Japan. As mentioned above, considerations of the handscroll's affordances and characteristics as a medium of inscription have been limited to discussions of the genre of *emaki* 絵巻 (illustrated handscrolls) from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Most notably, art historians such as Akiyama Terukazu have proposed a classification of such handscrolls into those with continuous visual compositions and those with alternating sections of text and image, arguing that they developed from two different lineages.[16] A recent study has reassessed this classification and considered the relationship of this format to the flow of time and memorialization.[17] Because of the emphasis on the rise and fall of illustrated handscrolls in the medieval period, it has been argued that the importance of the handscroll diminished in comparison to bound books, whether these were in manuscript or printed form.[18] This understanding, however, is undermined by the comparatively recent recognition of the proliferation of lavish sets of handscrolls produced both by the Kano 狩野 and the Tosa 土佐 schools for elite patrons during the early modern period.[19] And beyond elite circles, too, the manuscript scroll remained a viable alternative, as shown by Saikaku's production discussed below.

To better comprehend the received meaning of the scroll format in the seventeenth-century, it is necessary to first acknowledge the interrelated terms used to designate it. While illustrated handscrolls were produced from the twelfth century, there was no established term for them: they were called *makie, emaki*, or *emakimono*.[20] Meanwhile, the term *makimono* was more generic in its designation of any scribal content bound up as a scroll. In one of the first examples of its use in the eleventh-century novel *The Tale of Genji*, it is paired with *sōshi* (codices), the other major scribal format of premodern and early modern

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14 For "evolving entities," see Friedrich and Schwarke 2016.
15 See Williams 2019, p. 148.
16 Akiyama 1989. For a comparison between Chinese and Japanese illustrated handscroll traditions, see Kohara 1991.
17 Kersey 2020.
18 See Kohn 2005, pp. 137–139.
19 For an example from the Kano school, see McCausland and McKelway 2009; for the Tosa school see McCormick 2013, pp. 56–64.
20 *Makie* (scroll pictures) appears for example in the entry for Ōan 応安 2 (1369).2.9 of the fourteenth-century diary *Gogumaiki* 後愚昧記 by the aristocrat Sanjō Kintada 三条公忠 (1324–1383); the later terms *emaki* (picture scroll) and *emakimono* (picture scroll item) are widely used only from the seventeenth-century onward; see Okudaira 1987, pp. 8–23.

Japan.[21] In another example from the "Suzumushi" 鈴虫 (Bell cricket) chapter of *The Tale of Genji*, the components of a lavishly decorated scroll of a Buddhist sutra are mentioned without using any specific term denoting the scroll itself.[22] This implies that the association between Buddhist texts and the scroll format was so intrinsic as to not require a specific mention.

Makimono did not always refer to manuscripts or even to scrolls: in a 1593 edition of *Aesop's Fables* printed with movable type at Amakusa, *makimono* is used to refer to the text of *Aesop's Fables*, despite it being bound as a codex.[23] From this example we can gather that *makimono* could also refer to a textual unit, irrespective of its material properties. However, such examples are few, and while an extensive study of its use before the early modern period is beyond the scope of this article, *makimono* had been established as the most generic and widely used term for the handscroll format prior to the seventeenth-century.

At the same time, from the sixteenth century onward, *makimono* also started to be used as a generic term for a rolled object of any material. The *Sasayaki dake* ささやき竹 (The whispering bamboo), a sixteenth-century tale, uses *makimono* when mentioning a gift of ten bolts of rolled cloth.[24] By the end of the seventeenth century, increased levels of trade meant that bolts of cloth had gained prominence in the popular imagination, as seen for example in the 1695 encyclopedia *Kashiragaki zōho Kinmō zui* 頭書増補訓蒙図彙, which illustrates nine types of raw textiles as bolts of cloth.[25] In 1688, Saikaku used the compound term *ito makimono* 糸巻物 to refer to such bolts of cloth in the context of trade conducted through Nagasaki harbor, which peaked at the end of the seventeenth century:

> Nagasaki, first city of Japan for fabulous treasure, is a busy sight when the autumn shipping calls and bidding starts for the bales of raw silk, rolls of cloth, medicinal herbs, shark skins, aloes wood, and curios of all kinds.[26]

From Nagasaki, these "rolls" would be shipped to Osaka, Saikaku's home and the main commercial hub of the period, from which they would be redistributed for sale through specialized shops called *karamonoya* 唐物屋 (lit. "seller of Chinese goods").[27] Foreign textiles

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21 For example, in the "Umegae" 梅枝 (The plum tree branch) chapter, the protagonist Genji gathers choice manuscripts with fine examples of calligraphy for his daughter: "He placed nothing of base origin in his daughter's book box, and he carefully distinguished the rank of each writer when he asked for a book or a scroll" (SNKZ 22, p. 422; Tyler 2003, p. 555). *Sōshi* are equivalent to the *fukurotoji*-bound codex discussed in the previous section.

22 "There is no need to describe [the scroll's] roller, mounting paper, or box. It rested on an aloeswood stand that stood on the dais with the sacred images." SNKZ 23, p. 375; Tyler 2003, p. 710.

23 Hamada 2010, p. 60.

24 Kavanagh 1996, p. 231; Saitō 2019, pp. 5, 17. A seventeenth-century illustration of this passage is available from: http://codh.rois.ac.jp/iiif/iiif-curation-viewer/index.html?pages=200003084&pos=27 (Accessed 1 June 2022).

25 These are *aya* 綾 (twill), *Kaga kinu* 加賀絹 (silk from Kaga province), *birōdo* 絨 (velvet), *donsu* 緞 (damask), *Hachijōjima* 八丈縞 (striped cotton fabric from Hachijō Island), *shuchin* 繻珍 (figured satin), *kōrai ori* 高麗織 (Korean-style weave), *kinu* 絹 (silk), and *shusu* 繻子 (satin). Vol. 7, 22r, 22v, 23r. Available from https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11446233 (Accessed 15 August 2022).

26 Ihara Saikaku, *Nippon Eitaigura* 日本永代蔵, book V, no. 2, in Ihara 2003, p. 195. The English translation is from Ihara 1959, p. 106. An alternative translation of the same passage, along with a discussion of the commercial system it reflects, is found in Chaiklin 2003, pp. 74–76.

27 On *karamonoya*, see Chaiklin 2003, pp. 78–82.

were highly coveted, so *ito makimono* (rolls of cloth) were associated with exoticism and high financial value.

The early modern versatility of the term *makimono* thus meant that it could be applied both to textiles and to text-bearing paper.[28] This is evident in a *haikai* sequence of playful verses by Saikaku:

> Twill on a roll, the drum's quarrel
> Return, return, please, please, the oaths![29]

The first verse starts with a reference to unrequited love from the noh play *Aya no Tsuzumi* 綾鼓 (The twill drum): there, a gardener beats on a twill-wrapped drum in the vain hope of winning the favor of the Imperial Consort.[30] In the next verse, Saikaku grafts that tragic story onto the prostitution quarters of his day, referring with the word *taiko* 太鼓 (drum) to the *taikomochi* 太鼓持 (lit. "drum-holder," a jester in the prostitution quarters), and invoking love oaths, often written by prostitutes for their clients.[31] The transition from revered medieval source to vulgar contemporary conversation relies on the polysemy of the word *makimono*, which here also refers to a handscroll resulting from joining together the papers on which the oaths were written. This polysemy of *makimono* is dependent upon the shared material characteristics of the twill-wrapped drum and of the rolled papers. In other words, while text-bearing scrolls differed from rolled-up textiles, they were designated with the same term and shared a similar external appearance, thus allowing for the slippage of meaning that is exploited by Saikaku.

Despite its polysemy, the term *makimono* retained a strong association with scribal culture and with textual sources of authority. Buddhist clerics, for example, were often shown together with scrolls of sutras, as is visible by perusing the first volume of the 1690 encyclopedia, the *Jinrin Kinmō zui* 人倫訓蒙図彙.[32] While this reflected actual affordances, practices of ownership, scribal reproduction, and the performative chanting of sutra scrolls, it also visually represented the knowledge and scribal authority of clerical figures.[33] Handscrolls were also a common format for the preservation of documents in a juridical context. This is shown by the inaugural story in Saikaku's 1689 *Honchō ōin hiji* 本朝桜陰比事 (Trials under the shade of cherry trees in our land).[34] This features a quarrel between representatives of two neighboring villages over the boundary between them, and particularly over the ownership of a derelict chapel with a statue of the Buddha that lies on that boundary. Each village preserves a record in the form of a *makimono* with the

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28 There is a possible connection here to the fact that paper was initially a substitute for silk in East Asia; see Tsuen-Hsuin 2004, p. 169.
29 Original text: 綾の巻物太鼓がくぜつ / 返せ返せ是非是非返せ起請文, see Ihara 2007, pp. 600–601. The discussion of these verses is based on Maeda 1987, p. 448.
30 See Tyler 1992, pp. 49–57.
31 For more on these oaths, see Leca 2022.
32 Representatives of the Jōjitsu 成実 (18o), Kegon 華厳 (19o), Tendai 天台 (19v) and Hokke 法華 (22o) schools are all shown handling or displaying handscrolls; see https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/2592439/20 (Accessed 15 August 2022). See also the monk about to buy a handscroll in Asai Ryōi's 1665 *Kyō suzume* 京雀 (The sparrow of the capital), vol. 2, 33o.
33 For details of sutra-copying practices, see Kornicki 1998, pp. 87–92; Lowe 2012; O'Neal 2019.
34 Original text: 六代の先祖是を作りたる家業のまき物さしあげしに, see Ihara 2003, pp. 601–604. For the French translation, see Ihara 1990, pp. 35–41.

exact same text proving their right. The case is brought before the court in Kyoto, where a Buddhist sculptor is called in and produces another handscroll where his ancestor had recorded the details of the carving of the statue in question. The scroll record is found to correspond to a folded paper placed by the original sculptor inside the base of the statue, thus settling the dispute. Here, text-bearing scrolls serve both as judicial proof and as materialization of the historical identity of a family or a community.

The use of the handscroll format for the preservation of important documents is also alluded to in a parodic passage from *Saikaku okimiyage* 西鶴置土産 (Saikaku's parting gift). The mistress of a bordello advises one of her girls:

> People from the northern provinces, you know, like to boast about letters from you girls when they get home. The notes you dash off mean more to them than something from the brush of Hitomaro or Tsurayuki.[35] They hate to see the paper damaged, so they paste something on the back and make them into scrolls.[36]

The importance given to written artifacts received from afar is expressed through active care for the material preservation and memorialization of the artifacts.[37] This consists both of adding an extra layer of backing paper for reinforcement, and of assembling the letters into a handscroll format. The preservation of paper-bound texts was thus one of the affordances of the scroll format, and the material practice of this affordance underscored the value of the particular texts bound in this way.

The examples above testify to the pervasive and multifaceted presence of the text-bearing handscroll, or *makimono*, in late seventeenth-century popular culture. While the two preceding examples feature rural locations, an investigation into the importance of *makimono* in early modern rural Japan is beyond the scope of this study. Saikaku's examples rather suggest that generally, including within urban culture, the handscroll was perceived to be authoritative and commonplace throughout Japan. This is particularly relevant for our argument here, which argues that the handscroll format, as a common format for manuscripts, continued to be associated with a variety of meanings and uses in urban popular culture even as commercial printing took off.

The Manipulation of the Meanings of Handscrolls in Saikaku's Works
We have seen how handscrolls feature in diverse narrative contexts throughout Saikaku's printed texts. This is representative of a larger phenomenon: emerging textual media, such as commercially printed books, incorporated the cultural prestige of celebrated manuscript texts by reproducing them. This is evident in printed versions of calligraphy miscellanies, such as the 1651 *Kohitsu tekagami* 古筆手鑑 (Album of venerable calligraphy),

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35 Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂 was a revered poet collected in the imperial anthology *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*); Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 was the compiler of the imperial anthology *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Japanese poems of ancient and modern times) and the author of *Tosa nikki* 土佐日記 (*Tosa Diary*).

36 Book 3, no. 1, translation from Leutner 1975, p. 378. Original text: 事に北國衆は文を国のひけらかし物に、人丸、貫之の筆より、をのをのさまの書捨てを、大事にかけ、紙のそんずるをうたてく、裏うちして巻物にし給ふとや, see Ihara 2004, p. 245.

37 Kersey 2020.

which included the following disclaimer in the preface: "I applied myself diligently to the rendering of fine brushwork, the intensity, the angle of the brush and so on. While there may be mistakes in the block printing, the shape of characters should not be doubted at all."[38] This acknowledgement of the limits of the technology of reproduction subordinates the printed book to the manuscripts it renders. In this way, in a predominantly manuscript culture, the shared knowledge of readers will be formed by manuscript texts, and therefore printed media will often incorporate allusions and references to scribal media.

However, Saikaku did more than simply reference the established meanings and pedigree of scribal formats: he also experimented and invented new meanings, mostly for the sake of entertainment. A prominent example of his subversion of the authoritative character of the handscroll is in *Gaijin yashima* 凱陣八島, a libretto written in 1685 for the puppet theater run by Uji Kaga no Jō 宇治加賀掾 (1635–1711).[39] As in the case of the *haikai* sequence discussed above, Saikaku starts with a reference to a medieval noh play which would have been familiar to audiences of the time: in the play *Ataka* 安宅, the military commander Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経 and his party are disguised as mountain ascetics and need to cross the barrier at Ataka. The barrier commander asks Yoshitsune's chief retainer, Benkei 弁慶, to prove their credentials by reading out the document authorizing them to collect donations for the rebuilding of Tōdaiji 東大寺 Temple in Nara. Benkei produces a blank scroll and reads it aloud as if the authorization had been written on it (figure 2).[40] It is a vivid example of the performative relationship between bodies and texts in premodern Japan.

The inclusion of an abbreviated version of this scene in *Gaijin yashima* likely alludes to a similar 'crowdfunding' effort for the rebuilding of the same temple, initiated in 1684 by the monk Kōkei 公慶 (1648–1705).[41] In Saikaku's rewriting, however, Benkei "pulls out an educational scroll, calls it a subscription scroll and reads it out in a loud voice."[42] The scroll format could therefore accommodate a wide range of textual content. "Educational" (*ōrai* 往来) works were more casual text artifacts for the instruction of young readers, popularized by the burgeoning commercial print industry that catered to the newly affluent merchant class of late seventeenth-century Japan.[43] Saikaku is therefore referring to established tropes of handscroll use, as indicating authority, while at the same time updating those tropes and connecting them to other scribal practices.[44] This is emblematic of what has been called

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38 Original text: 筆勢気曲以下心を尽しうつすといへとももし板刊の誤りもや有へき然とも字形においては毛頭たかふ へからす, in Kanai 1989, p. 146. See also Komatsu 1972, pp. 95–102. For a comprehensive list of seventeenth-century printed versions of calligraphy albums, see Komatsu 1972, p. 102.

39 Some scholars have argued that the author was Chikamatsu Monzaemon 近松門左衛門 (1653–1725). I follow the attribution given in Noma 1965, cat. 271.

40 Yasuda 1972, pp. 363–366, 386–388; Smith 2021, pp. 79–80. For later Kanjinchō kabuki versions, see Smith 2021, pp. 87–90.

41 Shinoda 1999, p. 41; Torii 1993, pp. 134–135. Notice that the second character of Benkei's and Kōkei's names is identical: 慶. For the rebuilding effort, see Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 2005.

42 Original text: わうらいのまき物取出し、くはんじん帳と名付、たからかにこそよみあげけれ, see Ihara 2007, p. 1234. The mention of an "educational scroll" (往来の巻物) might be a semi-parodic reference to Yoshitsune's young age.

43 The category *ōraimono narabi tehon* 往来物並手本 (primers and copybooks) appears in booksellers' catalogues in the 1660s; see Moretti 2010, p. 315. For a comprehensive study of the development of *ōraimono*, see Ishikawa 1988.

44 This is in line with a general characteristic of Kaga no Jō's librettos, which frequently update references to noh theatre; see Takusagawa 2012.

Figure 2. "Benkei Reads the Donation Document." Illustration from Ihara Saikaku, *Gaijin yashima* 凱陣八島, 1685. Courtesy of Osaka University Library.

"an accretionary tendency for redeploying earlier forms and ideas in Tokugawa print and culture."[45] But it was not only print that exhibited this accretionary feature: scribal culture also adapted to an expanded audience and to a thriving economy, as shown by Saikaku's handscroll production discussed in the next section. The relationship to past practices and meanings can be described in terms of Gérard Genette's concept of hypertextuality, and a recent study has argued in this vein that the character of Benkei can be conceptualized as a palimpsest: perpetually open to reinterpretation while retaining traces of its former configurations.[46] When considering the text's materiality and social context in conjunction with Genette's ideas, it becomes possible to consider the handscroll itself as a palimpsestic format in the urban culture of the period: preserving echoes of authority and cultural capital while adapting to contemporary usage.

Saikaku's boldest manipulation of the handscroll format is found at the beginning of his second printed prose work, the 1684 *Shoen ōkagami: Kōshoku nidai otoko* 諸艶 大鏡 好色二代男 (Great mirror of beauties: Son of an amorous man). A messenger from Nyōgokoku 女護国 (The Land of Women) appears in a dream to Yoden (the son of Yonosuke, the protagonist of Saikaku's first prose work, *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* 好色一代男, who is currently in the Land of Women). The messenger says, "because of the deep filial

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45 Goree 2020, p. 114. This parallels McCausland's observation: "Multiple pasts (such as the supposed historical setting of the drama narrative, the antiquities, traditions of taste, and so on) intermingle with, are etched on or embedded into contemporary objects and spaces of desire." McCausland 2009, p. 171.

46 Smith 2021, pp. 66–68.
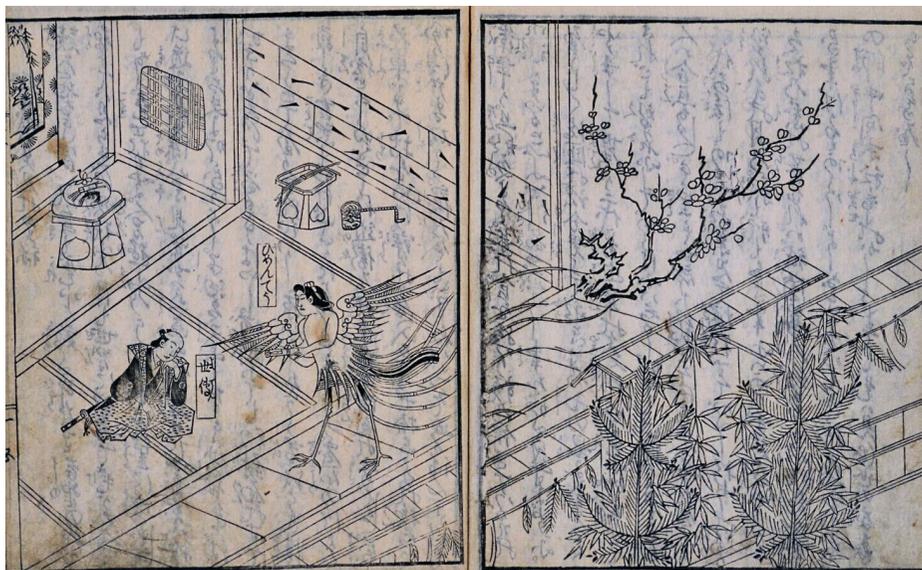
Figure 3. "A Messenger from the Island of Women." Illustration from vol. 1 of Ihara Saikaku, *Shoen ōkagami: Kōshoku nidai otoko* 諸艶大鏡 好色二代男, 1684. Courtesy of Kyoto University Library.

bond he feels, Yonosuke is bestowing upon you the secret teachings of lovemaking," and proceeds to slip a scroll into Yoden's sleeve.[47] Such a scroll of secret teachings would have reminded contemporary readers of stories about the powers Minamoto no Yoshitsune acquired through reading a *Tora no maki* 虎の巻 (secret scroll) treatise.[48] The text, as well as Saikaku's own illustration, capitalize on the multiple affordances of handscrolls within scribal culture: portability, authentication of family inheritance and perpetuation, and transmission of esoteric knowledge and iconography (figure 3).[49] Just like in *Gaijin yashima*, this example encompasses two concomitant processes: while it appears in a printed book, it shows the enduring relevance of scribal culture in late seventeenth-century urban Japan; at the same time, it reveals the manipulations of the received meanings of scribal formats by seventeenth-century authors such as Saikaku.

Saikaku's Handscroll Artifacts
Besides referencing and playing with the meanings of the handscroll format in his writings, Saikaku also played an active role in the production of handscroll artifacts. His engagement with the format was linked to his *haikai* activity, and incorporated private and public work

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47 Original text: 親子の契りふかく、色道の秘伝譲り給ふと、一つの巻物、左の袂になげ入る, in Ihara 2000, p. 181.

48 The "tiger" character originates in a reference to the Hǔ Tāo 虎韜 (Tiger teaching) chapter of the Chinese military treatise *Liù Tāo* 六韜 (Six secret teachings), translated in Sawyer 1993, pp. 76–88. Thompson 2014 and Kimbrough and Shirane 2018, p. 148, n. 46 both translate this title as "Tiger scroll." However, *Tora no maki* became a generic term for any secret treatise.

49 The illustration itself is influenced by the oblong visual layout of the handscroll. The visual representation of the messenger draws on the iconography of the *karyōbinga* 迦陵頻伽 (Skr. *kalavinka*) bird of Buddhist paradise. For an expanded discussion of this example, see Leca forthcoming.

conducted both individually and collectively. Below I will discuss three examples that illustrate these aspects in various configurations.

Since the medieval period, the poetic outputs of *renga* 連歌 and then *haikai* sessions had been inscribed on elaborately decorated paper and then often compiled in the format of a handscroll.[50] From the point of view of material formats, Saikaku's poetry master, Nishiyama Sōin 西山宗因 (1605–1682), is a transitional figure—a revered *renga* master who started to compose *haikai* with unorthodox amateur poets, and helped found the Danrin school 談林派 of *haikai*. In 1674, Sōin produced his hundred-verse solo sequence *Kabashira hyakku* 蚊柱百句 (Swarming mosquitoes: A hundred verses) both as a printed bound book and as a handscroll in his own writing, probably as a present for an elite patron.[51] That solo sequence was an exception, however: as one of the most popular forms of an array of performative practices which have been called *za bungei* 座文芸 (*za* arts), the practice of composing *renga* and *haikai* poetry was inherently collective and collaborative.[52]

As a prominent member of the Danrin school, Saikaku often composed verses together with fellow poets. One of these occasions resulted in the production of a handscroll as a memento for the poet Nakamura Saikoku 中村西国 (1647–1695) when he moved back to Hita 日田 in 1678 (figure 4). Three poets—Saikaku, Saikoku, and Maekawa Yoshihira 前川由平—took turns in composing what amounted to a three-hundred-verse collection entitled *Haikai dōbone* 俳諧胴骨 (The backbone of *haikai*). The collective composition of *haikai* by trios of poets and its recording on decorative scrolls was a consecrated formula in *renga* poetry, a celebrated example being the 1488 *Minase sangin hyakuin* 水無瀬三吟百韻 (One hundred verses by three poets at Minase).[53] This process parallels literati practices in Ming period China, where the handscroll format—or what Richard Vinograd terms the "scroll-complex"—served as a material testimony of a social occasion that enabled a "spirit-communion" among its participants.[54] The unrolling handscrolls thus reflected the memory and temporal sequence of specific social gatherings.

While the *Haikai dōbone* handscroll was a manuscript production, its postface offers a glimpse into the burgeoning presence of print culture as it mentions that publishing houses in Osaka were interested in printing this text.[55] Indeed, a printed version is mentioned in booksellers' catalogues, although no copy survives. Furthermore, the material support of

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50 Tamamushi 2012, ch. 9. For other examples see the twelve handscrolls reproduced in Tenri Toshokan 2020a, or the 1559 *Fu nanimichi renga* 賦何路連歌 by the leading *renga* poet of the period Tani Sōyō 谷宗養 (1526–1563), written on *torinoko* 鳥子 paper with bird and flower motifs in *kindei* 金泥 (gold paste), bound as a handscroll and preserved in Waseda University Library. For handscrolls in the *haikai* tradition, see for example the work of Nonoguchi Ryūho 野々口立圃 (1595–1669) such as *Eiōkukan* 詠桜句巻 (Scroll of verses in praise of blossoms) in Waseda University Library (Kakimori Bunko 1995, cat. 29) and the nine examples reproduced in Tenri Toshokan 1996 (see also Addiss 2006, p. 217).

51 Iida 1972, pp. 35–36; Tenri Toshokan 1998, cat. 6; Qiu 2005, p. 25; Ushimi 2013. Nishiyama was not the first to print *haikai*; Nonoguchi Ryūho for example also printed a number of works starting with the 1633 *Haikai hokku chō* 誹諧発句帳 and the 1636 *Hanahigusa* はなひ草 (Kakimori bunko 1995, p. 70). See also the handscroll with Sōin's verses in Waseda University Library with the title *Nishiyama Sōin ten "Hana ni yuku" hyakuin* 西山宗因点「花に行」百韻.

52 Hibbett 1961, p. 80; for *za* arts, see Ikegami 2005, pp. 76–101.

53 They were Sōgi 宗祇 (1421–1502), Shōhaku 肖柏 (1443–1527), and Sōchō 宗長 (1448–1532). The handscroll copy in the hand of Sōchō preserved at Ōsaka Aoyama Junior College has underdrawings of flora and Mount Fuji; see Mack Horton 2002, pp. xiii–xvi.

54 "Spirit-communion" is a translation of the Chinese concept of *shen-hui* 神會; see Vinograd 1991, pp. 182–184.

55 Original text: 及大坂判屋望申ニ付、あつさにちりはむる者成, see Noma 1965, cat. 59.
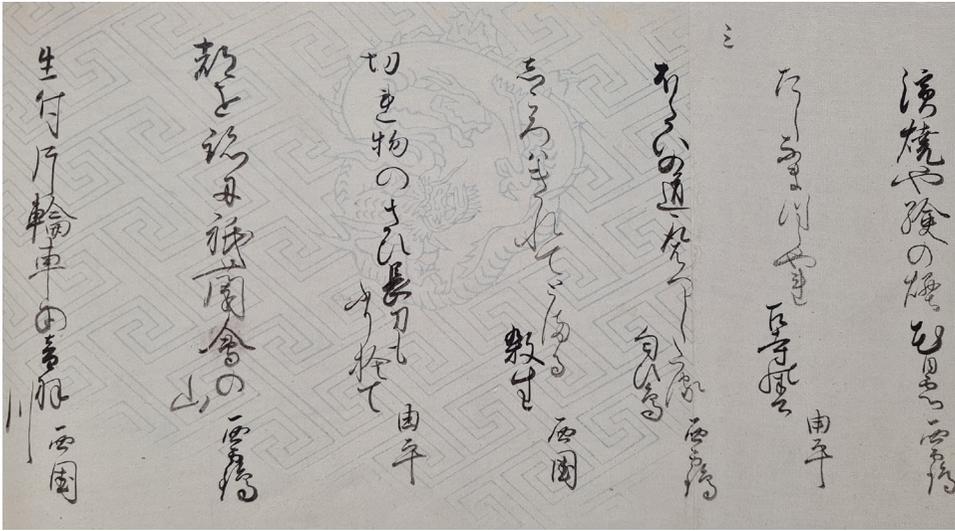
Figure 4. Hand-brushed verses on top of stencilled pattern. From *Haikai dōbone* 俳諧胴骨, 1678. Tenri University Library. Image from Tenri Toshokan 2020b, p. 67.

Haikai dōbone was itself produced through a form of printing: the handscroll was assembled from nineteen sheets of approximately 72.5 cm each, imprinted with an indigo stencil (*kappazuri* 合羽摺) featuring the design of a flying dragon over an interlocking rectangular pattern.[56] The motif carried material allusions to scrolls of collected poetry written on multicolor printed paper that illustrate an aesthetics of combining local and continental elements (*wa* 和 and *kan* 漢), initially developed in the cultural environment of Zen temples in Kyoto.[57] While grounded in a preexisting scribal culture, the handscroll's use of stencil printing already makes it a hybrid text-bearing artifact. Moreover, the same flying dragon motif enjoyed a booming popularity as a book cover design among commercial print publishers both in Kyoto and Osaka, and several of Saikaku's *ukiyo-zōshi* 浮世草子 were marketed with such dragon motif covers in the 1680s.[58]

The impetus and context of this handscroll's production were grounded in the aesthetic social network of *haikai* poetry-making. The handscroll has been preserved with, and most likely was originally designed as part of, a material assembly that contained another handscroll with impressions of a trip made by Saikoku, as well as a document in the *orihon* 折本 (accordion) format handwritten by Saikaku, transmitting secret teachings related to *haikai* composition.[59] This material assembly was meant to sustain social relationships *in absentia*, as was common in East Asia.[60] It was also part of a larger trend of increased access

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56 Bishamon kōshi makiryū moyō 毘沙門格子巻龍模様 (Curling dragon on Bishamon lattice pattern).

57 McCormick 2003, p. 55; McCormick 2018, p. 8. For a local response to such examples, see the work of Hon'ami Kōetsu 本阿弥光悦 (1558–1637) such as the pre-1615 *Selections from the New Collection of Japanese Poems from Ancient and Modern Times (Shinkokin wakashū) with Printed Designs of Plants and Animals*, in the Princeton University Art Museum.

58 See Morita 2013. I would like to thank Morita Masaya 森田雅也 for providing a scan of this article.

59 These are the *Saikoku jihitsu saikai no ki* 西国自筆西海の記 and *Haikai no kuden* 俳諧之口傳, respectively.

60 This parallels the role of the handscroll in the social relationship between the literati Wen Zhengming and Huang Yu in Ming China, discussed in Clunas 2004, pp. 64–65.

to both manuscript and printed texts among the wider population of early modern Japan.[61] In this case, the little collection of manuscript text-bearing artifacts materialized the agency and authority of Saikaku and Yoshihira for the younger Saikoku. More than simply recording the circumstances of production, the handscroll's colophons had a performative role, embodying Saikoku's pedigree as a *haikai* poet.[62] The mention of a planned printed version serves here, paradoxically, to enhance the value of the manuscript version. This testifies once more to the dynamic nature of scribal culture in this period, which included close and multilayered interactions with print culture.

Another aspect of Saikaku's involvement with the handscroll format in the context of scribal culture is the use of visual imagery: from the end of the 1670s, Saikaku started to brush sets of verse-image combinations (*gasan* 画賛) that expanded his practice as a *haikai* poet. These were eventually structured according to the twelve months of the year, borrowing conventions from poetic anthologies as well as painting practices, and produced in a variety of formats. The earliest of these *gasan* sets was probably no more than a collection of sketches for reference purposes.[63] Saikaku assembled these sketches into a handscroll for portability, as was common practice among amateur artists of the time. Then, towards the end of his life, around 1692, Saikaku added verses to the images he had made more than ten years earlier. By the 1690s, Saikaku was a revered *haikai* master and popular prose author, and the value of his calligraphy is testified to through the existence of numerous *shikishi* 色紙 (poem cards), *tanzaku* 短冊 (poem slips), as well as by another handscroll carrying only the brushed text of a selection of poems associated with each month of the year. Thus, inscribing even his early crude sketches with verses in his own hand would have considerably increased their value, and one can imagine Saikaku repurposing these sketches for a gift to a friend or patron.

A few months before his death, Saikaku integrated visual imagery in the production of his most complex handscroll, *Saikaku dokugin hyakuin jichū emaki* 西鶴独吟百韻自註絵巻 (Handscroll with one hundred poems by Saikaku annotated by himself).[64] The poems had been written during a trip to Kumano 熊野 in 1692, and the annotations were added shortly after, referencing revered poetic themes alongside contemporary events and realities. By this time Saikaku had become a consummate practitioner of the scribal culture of late seventeenth-century Japan. To produce the handscroll, he made use of his knowledge of the material and stylistic affordances of both image and text. The precedent for such a handscroll would have been the *e-nikki* 絵日記 (illustrated travelogues) produced in the handscroll format by Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644–1694), among others.[65] However, in contradiction to the conventions of the *e-nikki* genre, neither the context nor the illustrations refer to Saikaku's Kumano trip. Instead, only a few of the poems are illustrated at irregular intervals, alternating text and image in a design akin to the "paragraph

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61 See the discussion on the importance of *zōsho* 蔵書 (books in one's own collection) for preserving one's authority in Inoue 2014, pp. 4–7.

62 For the performative role of the colophon, see Williams 2019, pp. 152–154.

63 Printed versions of such sketches had begun to be produced by commercial publishers as *ehon* 絵本. The set is reproduced with the title 書賛草稿十二ヶ月 in Noma 1965, cat. 157.

64 This handscroll is 1895.4 cm long and 34.8 cm high. For more on the scroll, see Hibbett 1961, pp. 89–92; Tenri Toshokan 2020b, pp. 9–12.

65 For *e-nikki*, see Plutschow 1982, pp. 101–102; for the relationship between manuscript and print in early modern travelogues, see Itasaka 2014; for Bashō, see O'Mara 2006, p. 202.

Figure 5. Collaborative production of a handscroll: Saikaku's verses are brushed around the completed illustrations. Section of Ihara Saikaku, *Saikaku dokugin hyakuin jichū emaki* 西鶴独吟百韻 自註絵巻, 1692. Tenri University Library. Image from Tenri Toshokan 2020b, p. 111.

format" of premodern illustrated handscrolls, but without narrative continuity.[66] Saikaku's handscroll thus diverges from *e-nikki* conventions to forge its own media configuration: a fusion of the layouts of *haiga* 俳画 (*haikai* drawings), often inscribed on *shikishi*, with the broader compositions, adapted from premodern handscroll examples, of the emerging *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 (floating world picture) genre.[67] The combination of *haikai* poetry and images of contemporary scenes had been attempted in the 1671 *Takaragura* 宝蔵 (The treasure house) by Yamaoka Genrin 山岡元隣 (1631–1672) and the 1676 solo hundred-verse sequence by Katoku 可徳 called *Yakko haikai* やつこ俳諧 (Tough haikai), both printed in Edo as illustrated books.[68] Those precedents seem to support the view that print was a medium that afforded innovation. Saikaku's example, however, shows that exclusively manuscript formats continued to accommodate stylistic experimentation.

To achieve the sophisticated blend of poetry, commentary, and visual illustration of this handscroll, Saikaku provided sketches to a professional artist conversant in *ukiyo-e* as well as in Kano school techniques.[69] The collaboration was close, as is visible from a section where Saikaku fit his calligraphy around the edge of the illustration (figure 5). This tells us

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66 I borrow the translation of *danrakushiki* 段落式 as "paragraph format" from Sano 2009, p. 41.
67 For a more conventional pairing of *haikai* and their illustrations in a handscroll format, see *Fuji no yuki* 不二 之雪 (The snows of Fuji) from the late 1670s, brushed by Osaka *haikai* poet Shigeyori 重頼 (1602–1680) and illustrated by Kajiyama Yasutomo 梶山保友 (1644–ca. 1704); see Morikawa 1979, cat. 29.
68 The former is in Nakamura and Morikawa 1970, pp. 579–587 (also Qiu 2005, pp. 19–21); the latter in Morikawa and Inui 1971, pp. 23–83.
69 Asano 2020.

that, at least in this case, the illustration was ready first. A quickly unfolding sequence can be reconstructed: Saikaku composes the verses, draws sketches for the illustrations, shows them to the professional artist who produces the images, then Saikaku writes in the text but miscalculates the length of the commentary in figure 5, forcing him to overlap text and image. Nevertheless, this was an accepted practice within the manuscript handscroll tradition, which often played with the relationship between text and image.[70] Indeed, such overlaps can also be found in the handscroll production of Saikaku's contemporary Matsuo Bashō, who was also using the expressive possibilities of both manuscript and print formats.[71] By the 1690s, such blends of text and image stood in contrast to the emerging visual layouts of commercial print formats that leaned towards an extensive use of borders and dividers.[72] Producing a handscroll in this way was therefore a statement by Saikaku of the enduring relevance and appeal of scribal practice.

Conclusions

The meaning and uses of early modern texts were intertwined with the materiality, affordance, and social context of the text-bearing artifact. Both in terms of their production and of their representations in other media, scribal formats such as the handscroll carried a range of meanings that "conditioned its own social reception."[73] This was a dynamic process, which can be described as palimpsestic: scribal formats preserved echoes of authority and cultural capital while accommodating additional layers of contemporary usage. Thus, scribal formats were not passive receptacles of textual content: the meaning of a text co-emerged in conjunction with the physical characteristics and social uses of the scribal artifact, which were themselves in flux.

Saikaku played an active role in the above process in various ways: by including references to the handscroll format in his works, as editor, and as a producer of handscrolls, often in a collaborative context. While making full use of the material connotations and established uses of the format, Saikaku negotiated and innovated its meanings. Moreover, his scribal practice also included visual production. The examples discussed in the second half of this study show him conversant with painting techniques and with the skillful blending of text and image. Saikaku's illustrations for printed works were closely linked to his painting practice and need to be reassessed from this viewpoint in further studies.

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70 For references to this phenomenon in the medieval period, see McCormick 2009, pp. 56–57, 211. Seventeenth-century handscroll versions of medieval tales, the *Nara emaki* 奈良絵巻, often overlapped image and text. For an example, see the scan of the handscroll of *Mushi monogatari* 虫物語, available in the Nara Ehon and Emaki Collection section of the Digital Collections of Keio University Libraries: https://dcollections.lib.keio.ac.jp/en/naraehon/132x-76-1 (Accessed 15 August 2022).

71 Image-text overlaps can be found in *Nozarashi kikō* 野ざらし紀行 (Skeleton in the fields), the poetic travelogue of his journey from Edo to Ōgaki 大垣 in Mino 美濃, Gifu Prefecture. The travelogue also generated its own manuscript lineage through copying during Bashō's lifetime, see Hama 1980; 1982. In the mid-1690s, the *Kasshi ginkō emaki* 甲子吟行絵巻, a handscroll version of the travelogue with illustrations by Bashō's disciple Nakagawa Jokushi 中川濁子, was produced as a present for his Ōgaki disciple Tani Bokuin 谷木因 (1646–1725), see on this Shirane 1998, pp. 176–177; Imoto 1979, p. 103. This tradition was maintained almost a century later in the work of Yosa Buson, see Papavlou 1981, pp. 63–98.

72 For an analysis of this tendency in the work of Saikaku's contemporary, the painter and illustrator Hishikawa Moronobu 菱川師宣, see Watanabe 2007.

73 McCausland 2019, p. 159.

What does the above mean for the way we study early modern art and literature in Japan? We can start applying insights from studies of eighteenth-century literature in Europe that are recognizing the "complementarity, codependence and integration of manuscript and print" after the expansion of commercial print publishing.[74] We can go further in the case of East Asia, where a print-augmented scribal culture preexisted the seventeenth century, starting with Buddhist texts and enduring into the twentieth century.[75] Rather than a print-centered author, Saikaku can thus be reassessed as an astute practitioner of a range of scribal practices and a versatile producer of scribal artifacts who was also involved in commercial publishing. Saikaku's intimate knowledge of the handscroll and of other scribal formats enabled him to reference scribal artifacts in innovative ways in his *ukiyo-zōshi*. But rather than privileging authorial intention as the guiding principle of a history of literature, we need to reassess textual production as emerging from within the scribal culture and aesthetic networks of his time.[76] While this study has shown the diverse engagement of one producer, Ihara Saikaku, with one scribal format, the *makimono* or handscroll, further studies are needed to expand the investigation—in terms of period, location, producers, and media—to achieve a fuller picture of the relationship between scribal artifacts and printed media in early modern Japan.

We can nevertheless answer affirmatively the question posed at the beginning of this article. Manuscript formats such as the handscroll not only survived the emergence of commercial print, they adapted and thrived alongside print formats, sometimes in symbiotic fashion, as shown by *Haikai dōbone*. Manuscripts would enhance their circulation by being printed, while printed texts would invoke the prestige of manuscript formats. This means that we need to modify existing understandings of print-centered authors in early modern Japan. Virtually all Edo-period authors were also producers of scribal artifacts. Even for a later, and purportedly modern, writer like Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867–1916), his scribal practice, combining calligraphy and picture-making, is crucial to understanding printed novels such as *Kusa makura* 草枕 (The three-cornered world), where the production and appreciation of scribal artifacts takes center stage.[77]

This study has shown that considering the materiality, affordance, and social context of scribal production opens up new areas of interpretation for the history of the art and literature of early modern Japan. This was a period during which printing was enmeshed with, and often incorporated within, an evolving scribal culture. The resulting cross-media practices were materialized in a variety of scribal combinations whose complexity and significance is yet to be fully explored. For that purpose, the history of early modern literature needs to be recentered on the "integrated and non-hierarchical" relationship between media.[78]

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74 Scarborough King 2020, p. 14.
75 Parallels can be made to China, where woodblock printing started to be used from the late eighth century, but only in the mid-sixteenth century did prints gain ascendance over manuscript, and even then manuscript production did not decline; see McDermott 2006, pp. 43–47.
76 For "aesthetic networks," see Ikegami 2000; 2005.
77 As shown in Itō 2012, Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Daigaku Bijutsukan 2013, and Furuta 2014.
78 Scarborough King 2020, p. 10.

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