

‘Until earth appears another world’: The Sea as Compositional Method in Percy B. Shelley’s ‘Ginevra’

Ilaria Natali 
(University of Florence)

Abstract:

This essay reads Percy B. Shelley’s poetic fragment ‘Ginevra’ through the Mediterranean as a compositional and countercontextual space. Drawing on manuscript materials from Shelley’s Pisan notebooks and on the poem’s editorial afterlife, it argues that the sea offers a logic for reading the organisation of creativity and writing. By situating ‘Ginevra’ within a wider constellation of contemporaneous works, particularly *Adonais*, the essay shows how poetic composition unfolds within a fluid continuum of textual possibilities, where agency is distributed across authors, editors, environments, and acts of transmission. From this perspective, ‘Ginevra’ becomes a case study in how sea-thinking can productively converge with modern manuscript studies, foregrounding writing as a practice shaped by drift and permeability.

Keywords: genetic criticism, the blue humanities, manuscript studies, intertextuality, editorial practice, British Romanticism, Anglo-Italian relations

CounterText 12.2 (2026): 163–178

DOI: 10.3366/count.2026.0420

© Ilaria Natali. The online version of this article is published as Open Access under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial Licence (<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits non-commercial use, distribution and reproduction provided the original work is cited. For commercial re-use, please refer to our website at: www.eupublishing.com/customer-services/authors/permissions.
www.eupublishing.com/count

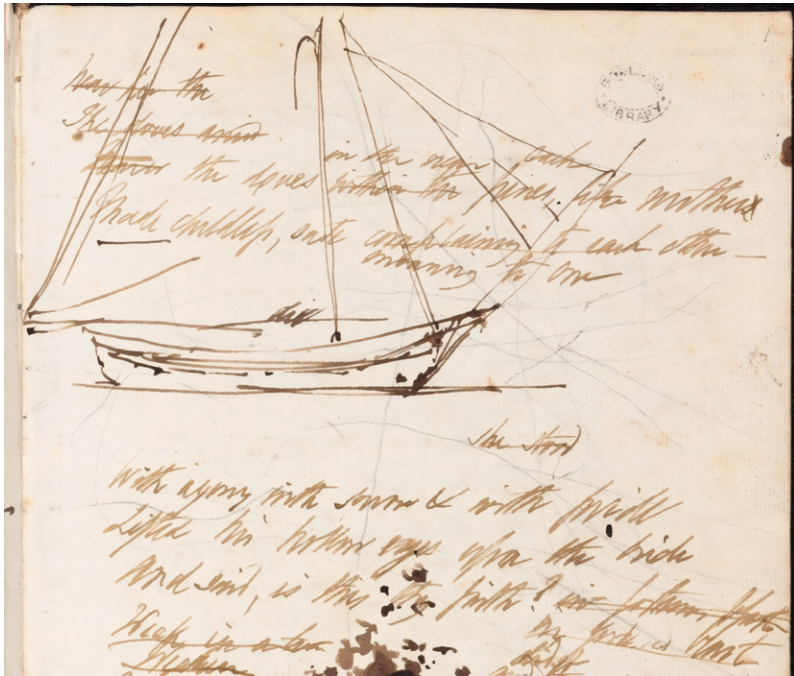


Figure 1. MS Shelley e.18, p.1 (detail). Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. Source: Digital Bodleian, <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/> Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Percy B. Shelley's notebooks Bodleian MS Shelley adds. e.8 and e.18, dating from approximately 1820 to 1822, offer a revealing glimpse into his late Pisan years, when his literary circle was at its most active and expansive, engaged in collaborative projects and shared pursuits, including frequent excursions along the Tyrrhenian coast.¹ The pastimes of these vital Tuscan years and the presence of the sea itself left tangible traces in the notebooks: the first page of e.18, for instance, contains a sketch of a boat alongside an array of small pencil strokes (Figure 1).² These pencil marks do not function as signs of revision or deletion within the manuscript; instead, they register the material conditions of writing, recording how the movement of the boat interfered with the steadiness of Shelley's hand.

In the spring and early summer of 1822, Shelley and his companions routinely travelled by boat from Villa Magni, in Lerici; letters from the period attest to his attentiveness to coastal settings while reading, composing poetry, and enjoying music.³ As also suggested by Bodleian MS Shelley adds. e.20, often referred to as the 'drowned notebook', he was

in the habit of carrying his writing materials with him on these excursions to note impressions prompted by the surrounding Italian landscapes and seascapes.⁴ Far from being a mere pastime, sailing for Shelley was a 'state of being' (Isham 2004: 65). The wavering pencil strokes in e.18 register this condition even at the level of the creative process, as the environment enters the graphic trace itself, shaping the interaction between the author and the 'vehicle' of written invention (Van Hulle 2014: 244). The Mediterranean thus begins to emerge as a constitutive condition of literary production, rather than a picturesque frame for self-contained imaginative work; the boat that prevents a straight line on paper becomes the material analogue of a mind that resists vectorial composition.

In this light, the recurring sketches in notebook e.18 (e.g. 1, 26) can be read figuratively as visual counterparts of a writing practice that develops in an unstable way. Even when the body is still, the sea continues to act, turning and adjusting the vessel regardless of intention; the drawings thus point to a state in which constant change and motion become unavoidable. In short, the boat sketches offer suggestive emblems of Shelley's creative impulses: his drafts rarely follow a linear course, cutting transversally across impressions and ideas. More broadly, the unfinishability and undecidability inscribed in the doing and undoing of texts throughout the notebooks find a structural analogue in the journey without a destination, a recurring motif in Shelley's corpus. This compositional tendency left many of his works suspended in a state of unresolved openness—an openness that, after the fatal excursion along the coasts of Liguria and Tuscany in 1822, became irrevocable.

Incompletion—often seen as a refusal of the work's 'death' (Ferrer and Rabaté 2004: 136)—lies at the heart of the genetic study of modern manuscripts, or what Daniel Ferrer has termed '*la science de l'invention écrite*' (2011: 184). The blue humanities prove productive in this context insofar as they likewise conceive form as arising from constant mobility. Not only do they invite an epistemological shift away from terrestrial, arborescent, and rhizomatic conceptions of textual growth, but they also offer a supplementary vocabulary for describing the behaviour of the compositional process: a space of drift and permeability in which provisional outlines take form through the coexistence of textual possibilities (Peters 2015: 262). In particular, Dirk Van Hulle's notion of 'creative ecology' conceives writing as a process generated within a relational field, where the manuscript's physical

environment, the author's reading practices, dialogic exchanges with peers and collaborators, and other agents of textual change interact dynamically (2022: 75). Read through the lens of sea-based thinking, and more specifically within the blue humanities, this ecology can acquire a further inflection: it may be understood in terms of a transitional zone in which internal and external forces are continuously interwoven, and in which heterogeneous currents converge and recombine, giving rise to hybrid (or even counter-) textualities (Steinberg and Peters 2015: 248–9). I use 'sea-thinking' to designate this methodological transposition of marine mobility into the analysis of textual genesis: it does not simply refer to maritime imagery, but to a way of understanding composition as drift, contact, suspension, and recombination. In this sense, Van Hulle's 'creative ecology' provides the broader genetic model of writing as a relational process, while the blue humanities reorient that model towards a specifically 'wet' ecology – one in which textual agency is distributed through currents of transmission, editorial mediation, and environmental pressure.

Through this integrated methodological framework, I intend to focus on the untitled poetic fragment drafted beneath Shelley's boat drawings and spanning notebooks e.8 and e.18, now known as 'Ginevra', which exemplifies the author's approach to texts as fluid entities, constantly interacting with one another and shaped by complex external influences. This essay traces two distinct yet interconnected movements in the textual history of 'Ginevra'. The first concerns the re-composition of dispersed manuscript materials for the printed page, a process that also entails a convergence of agencies, since Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley assumed a constitutive role in shaping the poem's published form. The second movement addresses the openness of the creative process itself, in which elements of writing remain in circulation, intersect with adjacent projects, and allow lines and motifs to be reconfigured across texts. In both cases, what is at stake is a form of confluence: in the first, of authorial roles; in the second, of textual materials within a circulatory field – though in the latter this confluence remains provisional, sustained by ongoing dispersion rather than resolved into fixity.

'Ginevra': Dispersed Composition and Countertextuality

Rather than containing a mere fragment, manuscripts e.8.138–133rev, e.8.130–122rev, and e.18.1–27 preserve an unfinished portion of an

unfinished work, distributed across notebooks in a non-linear configuration integral to its making. In her 1824 edition of *Posthumous Poems*, Mary Shelley imposed an apparent order on these scattered materials, supplying a paratextual framework that included the title 'Ginevra' and a footnote explaining that the fragment was 'part of a poem which Mr. Shelley intended to write' (P. B. Shelley 1824: 229). She further noted that the poem drew on a legend narrated in *L'osservatore fiorentino* (*The Florentine Observer*), a periodical first published between 1776 and 1778 and later reissued in 1797 and 1821, the latter coinciding with the Shelleys' residence in Tuscany.

In this source, the legend is associated with a narrow street near the Duomo of Santa Maria del Fiore—now Via del Campanile (Bell-tower Alley) but formerly known as Via della Morta (Dead Woman's Alley) or Via della Morte (Death Alley). Set around 1400, the tale recounts how Ginevra degli Amieri (also recorded as Almieri or Armieri) was believed to have died and was buried four years after her arranged marriage to Francesco Agolanti, who had separated her from her true love, Antonio Rondinelli. Upon her unexpected return to life, the Church sanctioned her marriage to Antonio, declaring her earlier union null (Lastri 1821: 1.119–23).

What Mary Shelley omits in the 1824 edition is her likely role in bringing her husband into contact with *L'osservatore*, which appears to have functioned as a conduit within the couple's shared economy of reading and rewriting. Percy Shelley may never have consulted the Italian periodical directly; rather, it was Mary who read it during her immersion in medieval and Renaissance Italian history while researching *Valperga* (1823). According to her journals, she began reading *L'osservatore* on 10 April 1821 and completed its first volume by 14 April (M. W. Shelley 1987: 1.360–62). While she incorporated elements of the periodical into her own novel, she also relayed its contents through conversation and excerpt, allowing the legend to move from print into the collaborative space of the notebooks, where it could be taken up and re-formed within Percy's verse (see Natali 2024).

'Ginevra' may thus be understood as emerging from a pattern comparable to the Shelleys' discovery of the Cenci family story in 1818, when Percy 'urged the subject' to Mary 'as one fitted for a tragedy', but she 'felt [her] incompetence' and 'entreated him to write it instead' (M. W. Shelley 1971: 335). In both cases, Mary appears to have attentively calibrated her authorial exposure when literary projects risked provoking undue disapproval;⁵ Ginevra's legend, in fact, contains

transgressive elements that might have appeared especially controversial if voiced by a woman. Marco Lastri, editor of *L'osservatore*, had already signalled unease at the tale's desecralisation of marriage,⁶ whereas some nineteenth-century commentators drew parallels with the fourth tale of the tenth day of the *Decameron*, observing that the boldness of Ginevra's story surpasses even Boccaccio's characteristic irreverence (D'Ancona 1863: 10).

When borrowing this legend, Mary Shelley could not have anticipated the role she would later play in its textual afterlife: after Percy's death, she became not only a source of inspiration but also an editor and, in many respects, a co-author of 'Ginevra'. Confronted with a manuscript dense with recursive modifications, cancellations, and clusters of words and phrases lacking any stable hierarchy,⁷ she undertook the meticulous work of cutting, combining, and stitching together material from forty manuscript folios and approximately 900 lines of annotations, distilling them into 220 lines of coherent poetry. Her reconstruction, which relies on a profound knowledge of Percy Shelley's compositional methods honed over years of shared notebooks and co-writing, does not seem to assume any linear or chronological sequence in the writing process. The multidirectionality of the manuscript of 'Ginevra', indeed, lies in a series of intertwined deviations and returns that keep the text in a perpetual state of becoming, governed by non-vectorial dynamics and competing directions. Mary Shelley thus moved across pages to assemble compatible segments, allowing her editorial practice to align with the fluid conditions of the Mediterranean environment in which the poetic fragment was conceived.

'Ginevra' exhibits a markedly contingent textual status, defined less by actualisation than by potentiality. Its opening lines are drafted in reverse in notebook e.8, wedged into Greek annotations from Pindar (e.8.132–131rev; 123rev) and surrounded by material and thematic influences from other verse fragments, including classical materials with a Mediterranean resonance (Horace's *Ode* 1.28) and some Italian letters (e.8.121rev, a–f). At times, the absence of a privileged version led Mary Shelley to retain or even supplement what Percy had cancelled;⁸ the dense intertextual and intratextual web, in turn, invited a mode of editorial attention attuned to circulation rather than stabilisation.

After all, within Percy Shelley's creative process, cancellation does not necessarily coincide with elimination. As Van Hulle has observed, cancellation can produce an 'unfavoured' trace (2014: 17), one that persists

within the manuscript constellation as a latent possibility, capable of reactivation. This mode of textual survival can be read, at a certain level, in relation to the material and conceptual dynamics that the blue humanities identify in the sea, where drift and redistribution give rise to intermittent recomposition (Jue 2020: 118–19).

From this perspective, the manuscript may be understood as a stratified space in which variants move laterally rather than sequentially and coexist without fully displacing one another. Mary Shelley's editorial practice engages directly with this condition by negotiating among coexisting states and allowing suppressed or marginal elements to re-emerge. It is in this sense that one might speak of a countertext: a partially submerged textual layer that accompanies and intermittently surfaces within the edited form. Rather than standing apart from the text, this layer exerts a shaping pressure from within. What is preserved, then, is a condition of textual plurality: an editorial logic that resists closure and remains open to constant recomposition. This is the sense in which countertextuality becomes central to this reading of 'Ginevra': the published poem is accompanied by submerged, cancelled, displaced, or only partially actualised textual states that continue to exert pressure on its edited form.

Shifting Currents: 'Ginevra' and Adonais

Long before the Shelleys engaged with it, the ancient Florentine legend of Ginevra degli Amieri had already undergone multiple retellings, first through oral transmission and later in written form. Against this extended history, the legend was approached as part of a common cultural legacy – albeit one that could be appropriated, controlled, and reshaped from an Anglocentric perspective. In their hands, 'Ginevra' transforms and expands beyond the original narrative, becoming a transcultural nexus of individual and collective memory, where most lines draw upon intertextual literary allusions while simultaneously establishing complex intratextual relations with Percy Shelley's ongoing poetic endeavours.

Within this process, the boundaries between works become increasingly permeable, eroded by a sort of hydrological hybridity in which phrases and motifs follow a tidal logic. For instance, the lines drafted beneath the boat sketch in e.18.1, which Mary omits from the published version, are closely connected to *Antar*, the Arabian romance translated into English in 1820

that also inspired an 'Imitation' drafted in the same notebook (e.18.163).⁹ Woven throughout the annotations for 'Ginevra' are, besides the mentioned echoes of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (e.18.11), references to Godwin's *Mandeville* (e.18.7), and quotations and allusions from Shelley's roughly concurrent translations of Goethe's *Faust* (e.18.24) and Calderón's works (e.8.124rev).¹⁰

Percy Shelley's most significant alteration of the Florentine legend establishes further intertextual connections: he concentrates the action around the wedding celebration and culminates the scene in the discovery of the unresponsive bride. As Crook observes, this choice draws on themes from Keats's *Lamia*, portraying a scene of festivity abruptly overtaken by fear and sorrow (P. B. Shelley 1997: 315–16). Direct lexical connections to Keats's works include references not only to *Lamia* (e.8.137rev, 124rev; e.18.12.17), but also to *The Eve of St Agnes* (e.8.137rev), *Endymion* (e.18.3), 'To Autumn' (e.18.4), and *Calidore* (e.18.14), along with strong parallels with *Isabella*.

Shelley's consistent engagement with Keats's later works may seem unexpected, given his description of them as 'imperfect enough' in a letter to Marianne Hunt dated 11 November 1820 (1964: 2.239). He presumably acquired *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and *Other Poems* (1820) through the Gisbornes, after Keats declined his invitation to Pisa. In the letter accompanying the book on 16 August 1820, Keats urged Shelley to adopt 'discipline' in his literary pursuits, imagining that such restraint 'must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furl'd for six Months together' (1958: 2.323). Perhaps irritated by these remarks, Shelley recorded a harsh critique of Keats's 'new volume' in e.8.72, dismissing it as a 'knot of abortions engendered by vanity upon ~~erudition~~ idleness' (see Milne 1976).

The impact of these tensions on Shelley's mind after 11 April, when he learned of Keats's death, remains difficult to ascertain.¹¹ Apparently convinced, as he told Lord Byron, that his fellow poet had perished 'in paroxysms of despair' provoked by the 'contemptuous' attacks of his reviewers (1964: 2.284, letter 621), Shelley's change of attitude may have been driven by feelings of guilt or by a growing sense of idealistic sympathy. What seems certain, however, is that Keats's fate weighed heavily on him during the drafting of 'Ginevra', which he presumably began in mid-April.

His notebooks reveal this preoccupation, along with the shifting priorities that shaped his creative process.

Scholarly tradition has often sought to map Shelley's compositional movements as chronologically segmented stages. Neville Rogers, for instance, speculates that after Shelley began working on 'Ginevra' in notebook e.8, he set the poem aside to compose his elegy for Keats, *Adonais*, before resuming the narrative poem in e.18 in early 1822 (1954: 112). Such chronological fixity, however, has been questioned by Carlene Adamson, who finds no 'neat termini' in Shelley's use of notebooks (P. B. Shelley 1992: 18). Building on this debate, I suggest that the creative process can be understood as a confluence, that is, as a continuous flowing together, marked by oscillatory patterns of compositional attention: Shelley's notes for 'Ginevra' in e.18 were already in progress when he was inspired to write *Adonais*, within a Mediterranean field of circulation that favours contact, openness, and overlap.

Traces of this simultaneity emerge in the subtle intrusions of Keats's death into Shelley's lines. Initially, the name of Ginevra's husband was changed from the original Francesco Agolanti to a form legible as either 'Malespina' or 'Malaspina' (e.18.4), a possible Dantean reference meaning 'evil thorn' (*Purgatorio* VIII.118–32), but also a name linked to *Valperga*: Gherardino Malaspina was a Guelph bishop who assisted Castruccio in seizing control of Lunigiana. Shelley then crossed out 'Malespina' / 'Malaspina' and substituted it through supralinear addition with 'Gherardi,' a possible nod to Boccaccio's *Decameron* and, significantly, the same surname as the cast maker who created Keats's death mask in February 1821.

More explicit intersections between the texts show that Shelley used similar phrases and lines in the draft of 'Ginevra' and in *Adonais*. This is the case with the emphatic refrain that Shelley repeatedly erased and reinstated in e.18.26–27, 'She is ~~dead~~', '~~she dead~~ [sic]', 'She is ~~dead~~ she is ~~dead~~', which echoes the recurring exclamation in *Adonais*: 'he is dead!' (1984: 27–28; lines 1.1 and 3.19). Similarly, the 'worms' gruesomely imagined as 'alive' in Ginevra's 'golden hair' (e.18.27) relate to the '~~pit of worms~~' in an early draft of the elegy for Keats, preserved in the 'drowned' notebook (e.20.35). Perhaps the most compelling connection is found in e.18.21, a folio marked by a wavy line in the left margin, containing the lines: 'Let the spring die before the summer / Let infant buds be nipt before they blow' (Figure 2). Since this text is not crossed out, the wavy

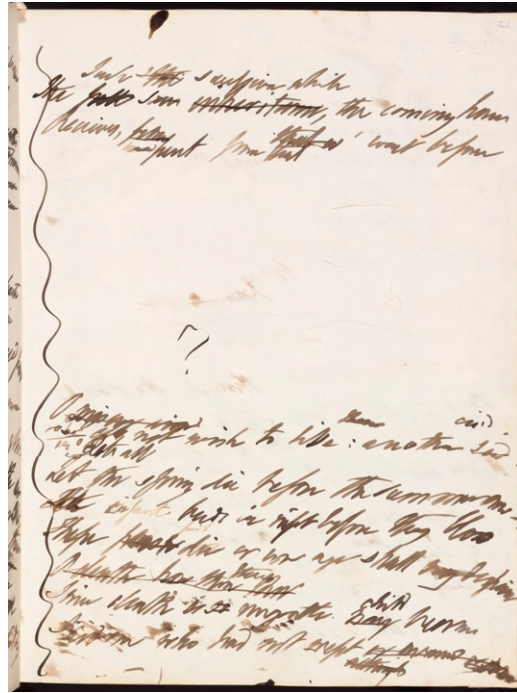


Figure 2. MS Shelley e.18, p. 21. Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. Source: Digital Bodleian, <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/> Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0.

line may signal redestination, suggesting a re-direction of the passage into a different textual route. A closely related formulation, indeed, appears in the published version of *Adonais*: ‘The bloom, whose petals nipt before they blew / Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste’ (1984: 29; line 6.52).

In addition to containing what Anthony Knerr has described as an ‘extraordinary mosaic of literary allusions’ (2014: 9), *Adonais* is partly assembled from fragments of Shelley’s other works, taking shape within the overlapping space of his writing practices and reflecting the pressure exerted by adjacent drafts, including, as Stuart Curran observes, *A Defence of Poetry* (1996: 65–76). Stanza 29 of *Adonais* (P. B. Shelley 2014: 39; lines 253–5, 257–9) in particular, incorporates and reworks five lines from the miscellaneous annotations in e.8.112, material that was not originally conceived for the elegy. In this sense, *Adonais* exemplifies a model of creativity grounded in simultaneity rather than succession: the poem is

sustained by a broad reserve of textual possibilities, consistent with Shelley's understanding of literary writing as inherently incomplete and continuously reshaped, maintaining what he describes as 'a permanent relation to the present and to all succeeding ages' (1964: 2.284). Read in relation to the Mediterranean milieu in which these notebooks were produced, this simultaneity takes on a more specific inflection, resembling a form of circulation in which textual elements remain in motion, reappearing under altered conditions, in a manner that recalls shifting currents and their capacity to redistribute and reconfigure what they absorb.

Towards Blue Authorship

Creative concurrence with *Adonais*, in turn, significantly influenced the development of 'Ginevra', a process best understood within a shared writing context, where phrases, motifs, and affects remain available and can be reconfigured across projects. Shelley's initial spark of interest in the ancient Florentine legend likely centred on the theme of arranged marriage and was connected to his involvement with Teresa or Emilia Viviani, a young woman confined to a convent while awaiting such a union (see Worthen 2019: 291–92). This foundational emphasis in Shelley's version of 'Ginevra' appears, however, to have been reoriented as reflections on Keats's death and the indignation voiced in *Adonais* entered the same compositional frame.

In the final extant lines of the narrative poem, the theme of marriage as 'life's great [cheat]' (e.8.125rev) recedes into the background, while the bride's death acquires a more figurative charge. It becomes a meta-reflection on the strained relation between imaginative poetry and unimaginative criticism, a tension that drains literary creation of its vitality. Crossed-out annotations in e.18.23 further suggest that, at one stage, Shelley contemplated a denunciation of reviewers akin to that articulated in *Adonais*, where they are figured as having driven Keats to his untimely death:

[then was knoll'd]
The bell of death, & ~~soon the artists came~~
~~and the priests came & found~~
~~and the priests came & found~~
... the priests came, & found
... ~~Like crows after an eagle that~~

Here, Shelley draws imagery from Pindar, bringing Greek lyric material into contact with his Italian source. He studied the Theban author extensively; in particular, passages from the *Isthmian Odes* intersect the draft of *Ginevra* in e.8.132–131rev, with the poem seemingly filling the empty pages around these pre-existing notes. In *The Second Olympian Ode*, Pindar allegorically compares himself to an eagle soaring through the sky pursued by a flock of noisy crows, representing his detractors and critics who chatter vainly as they fail to reach or hinder his flight.¹²

In *Adonais*, the eagle that can ‘scale / Heaven’ (P. B. Shelley 2014: 34; 17.147–8) is associated with Keats, most obviously due to his frequent references to this bird in his works. Kelvin Everest has noted that this comparison anchors a web of ‘sophisticated’ cross-references to classical sources ranging from Aeschylus’s *Agamemnon* to Homer’s *Odyssey* (2021: 101). To this network might be added Shelley’s interception of sources also used by Keats, including Dante’s *Inferno* (IV.94–6) and *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (II.iv.11), where the eagle represents the highest form of poetic expression.¹³ He may also have in mind the eagle imagery in *Paradiso*, where the sacred emblem of the Roman empire is presented as a personified corporate body of souls united in purpose and sentiment (19.19–21).

Read together, these references trace a symbolic constellation whose coherence takes shape within a Mediterranean continuum of texts, myths, and political imaginaries. The sea, in this perspective, functions as a cradle of cultural transmission and exchange, a space that is ‘[a] thousand things at once. Not one landscape, but landscapes without number. Not one sea, but a succession of seas. Not one civilization, but a number of civilizations, superimposed one on top of the other’ (Braudel 1985: 4). *Adonais* draws on this condition of co-presence to figure Keats’s poetic afterlife as a form of social and artistic interconnectedness, a fusion of creative energies enduring through ‘a community of poets’, probably ‘an idealized version of the real circle of writers’ in Pisa (Cox 1995: 393).

Agency dispersed across such a community reinforces an understanding of the compositional and editorial history of ‘Ginevra’ as following a sea-based logic. Situated within a Mediterranean milieu and shaped by its material and cultural conditions, the poem internalises a mode of organisation grounded in simultaneity and continual reconfiguration. Its textualisation unfolds as a wet ecology of transmission, where authorship does not function as a stable attribute of a single agent, but takes shape as

the contingent outcome of multiple, co-operating forces: reading practices, social exchanges, translation, loss, and editorial mediation operate in concert, each contributing to the configuration of the poem's possibilities.

'Ginevra' thus exemplifies a decentralised model of literary production, in which the poetic voice remains at once singular and collective. This logic extends into the posthumous phase of Percy Shelley's drafts, where Mary Shelley's editorial intervention – despite its stabilising aims – continues to operate within the same ecological principle of interdependence, whereby textual form arises from the interaction of multiple agents and materials. Read in this light, Percy Shelley's assertion that poetry maintains a 'permanent relation to the present and to all succeeding ages' (1964: 2.284) acquires a more materially grounded resonance. What continues in time is the capacity of writing to be re-engaged, re-situated, and re-articulated as it moves across contexts, agents, and temporal frames. In this sense, the unfinished fragment 'Ginevra' represents a model of literary creation that is relational and open-ended: sea-thinking names the analytic disposition that makes this model legible, disclosing how a marine milieu extends the conceptual and material reach of modern manuscript studies.

ORCID

Ilaria Natali  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4484-7994>

Notes

1. References to Shelley's notebooks are cited parenthetically in the text using the Bodleian shelf mark, followed by the relevant page number. The primary facsimile editions consulted are Webb and Crook (1997) and Adamson (1992). All manuscripts analysed in this essay are also available through Digital Bodleian.
2. See *Percy Bysshe Shelley, Bodleian MS Shelley adds. e.18*, digital image. Digital Bodleian (<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/5fcbaa1b-e54f-4536-a2ff-aaeab1f24c85/surfaces/9c75e766-a056-450b-a246-0aafec1b1c3c/>).
3. See especially letters 709, 711, 715, 718, and 719 in P. B. Shelley 1964, 2: 427–41.
4. Bodleian MS Shelley adds. e.20 is among the manuscripts recovered after the fatal shipwreck in which Percy Shelley drowned on 8 July 1822. Shelley and his companions, Edward Ellerker Williams and a young boatman, were lost when their open sailing boat, the 'Don Juan' (also referred to as 'Ariel'), sank in a summer storm. See also the water exposure in Shelley's 1819–21 Huntington Notebook no. 1, HM 2176 (digital facsimile available at Huntington Library).
5. On this topic, see Crook (2001: 73–88).

6. Lastrì refers to a 'sentenza . . . stravagante', an eccentric ruling on the Church's part (1821: 1.121).
7. See, for instance, e.18.4–5, where Shelley either jots down multiple variants of the same line or strikes out all options for certain sections.
8. By referring to Mary Shelley's inclusion of lines that had been deleted in Percy Shelley's drafts, I am primarily alluding to lines 58–63 of the poem as printed in *Posthumous Poems*. The same editorial practice can also be observed in lines 163–64, 187–88, and 199–200 of the published text, all of which correspond to passages cancelled in Percy Shelley's manuscript drafts.
9. The text beneath the boat sketch in e.18.1, which is not crossed out, reads: 'the doves ~~within the~~ in the near pines, [each] like mothers / Made childless, sate complaining to each [moaning to one] other'. A strikingly similar image appears in Terrick Hamilton's translation of the anonymously composed Antarah, which reads: 'a flight of turtle doves came . . . and perching on the date trees, they conversed like childless mothers, and complained in the tones of women mourning the dead' (Anon. 1820: 2.194).
10. The expression '~~the tempest of her spirit~~' in e.18.7 also appears in *Mandeville* (1817: 3.268). An almost literal translation from Goethe's *Faust* appears in e.18.24, as noted by Crook (P. B. Shelley 1997: xxiv). Although notebooks e.8 and e.18 contain translations from other works by Calderón, Shelley appears to be reflecting more specifically on the Spanish writer's motif of the 'dream within a dream' in e.8.124rev, where he writes: 'like one within a dream / that he is dreaming'. A close parallel occurs in Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made Of* (2000: 423).
11. Mary Shelley does not mention Keats's death in her journals, which instead record the receipt of Horace Smith's letter bearing the news on 11 April (1987: 360).
12. As the scholia suggest, Pindar alludes to his rivals when writing of learned men who, 'like crows and chattering jays, with clamorous cries / pursue the bird of Jove, that sails along the skies' (*Second Olympic [sic] Ode*; Pindar 1810: 2.42).
13. For Keats's uses of Dante, see Vassallo (2000: 212) and Pollack-Pelzner (2007).

References

- Alighieri, Dante (2000–07), *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander, 3 vols, New York: Anchor Books.
- Anon. (1820), *Antar: A Bedouen Romance*, trans. Terrick Hamilton, 2 vols, London: John Murray.
- Bodleian Libraries (n.d.), *Digital Bodleian* <<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>> [accessed 15 April 2026].
- Braudel, Fernand (1985), 'The Mediterranean: Land, Sea, History', *The UNESCO Courier*, 38: 12, 4–12 <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000067988>> [accessed 15 April 2026].
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro (2000), 'Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made Of', trans. Denis F. MacCarthy, in *Eight Dramas of Calderón*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 376–440.

- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1965), *The Annotated Ancient Mariner: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ed. Martin Gardner, New York: C. N. Potter.
- Cox, Jeffrey N. (1995), 'Keats, Shelley, and the Wealth of the Imagination', *Studies in Romanticism*, 34: 3, 365–400.
- Crook, Nora (2001), 'Meek and Bold: Mary Shelley's Support for the Risorgimento', in *Mary versus Mary*, Naples: Liguori, pp. 73–88.
- Curran, Stuart (1996), 'A Defence of Poetry and Adonais: Configurations', in *Publishing, Editing, and Reception: Essays in Honor of Donald H. Reiman*, New York: Garland, pp. 65–76.
- D'Ancona, Alessandro (1863), 'Preface', in Agostino Velletri, *La storia di Ginevra degli Amieri [sic] che fu sepolta viva in Firenze*, Pisa: Nistri, pp. 7–20.
- Everest, Kelvin (2021), *Keats and Shelley: Winds of Light*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ferrer, Daniel (2011), *Logique du brouillon: Modèles pour une critique génétique*, Paris: Seuil.
- Ferrer, Daniel, and Jean-Michel Rabaté (2004), 'Paragraphs in Expansion (James Joyce)', in Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer, and Michael Groden (eds), *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-textes*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 117–36.
- Godwin, William (1817), *Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England*, 3 vols, Edinburgh: Constable & Co.
- Huntington Library (n.d.), *Shelley's 1819–1821 Notebook no. 1 (HM 2176)*, digital facsimile, <<https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/id/3913>> [accessed 15 April 2026].
- Isham, Howard (2004), *Image of the Sea: Oceanic Consciousness in the Romantic Century*, New York: Peter Lang.
- Jue, Melody (2020), *Wild Blue Media: Thinking through Seawater*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Keats, John (1958), *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Knerr, Anthony D. (2014), 'Background', in Michael Rossington, Jack Donovan and Kelvin Everest (eds), *The Poems of Shelley. Volume Four, 1820–1821*, vol. 4 of 5, London: Routledge, pp. 1–9.
- Lastri, Marco (ed.) (1821), *L'osservatore fiorentino sugli edifizj della sua patria*, 3rd edn, 8 vols, Florence: Gaspero Ricci.
- Milne, Fred W. (1976), 'Shelley on Keats: A Notebook Dialogue', *English Language Notes*, 13: 4, 278–84.
- Natali, Ilaria (2024), 'From Hand to Hand: The Legend of Ginevra degli Amieri and the Pisan Circle', *Prospero*, 29, 35–57, <doi: 10.13137/2283-6438/36803>.
- Peters, Kimberley (2015), 'Drifting: Towards Mobilities at Sea', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 40: 2, 262–72, <doi: 10.1111/tran.12074>.
- Pindar (1810), *Odes of Pindar*, trans. Gilbert West, 2 vols, London: Whittingham and Rowland.
- Pollack-Pelzner, Daniel (2007), 'Revisionary Company: Keats, Homer, and Dante in the Chapman Sonnet', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 56, 39–49.

- Rogers, Neville (1954), 'Shelley's Ginevra', *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 February, p. 112.
- Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft (1823), *Valperga; or, The Life and Adventures of Castruccio, Prince of Lucca*, 3 vols, London: G. and W. B. Whittaker.
- Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft (1971), 'Note on The Cenci', in *Poetical Works* by Percy B. Shelley, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 334–37.
- Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft (1987), *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844*, ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1824), *Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, London: John and Henry L. Hunt.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1964), *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1984), *Shelley's Adonais: A Critical Edition*, ed. Anthony D. Knerr, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1992), *Shelley's Pisan Winter Notebook: A Facsimile of Bodleian MS Shelley adds. e.8*, ed. Carlene A. Adamson, New York: Garland.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1997), *The Faust Draft Notebook: A Facsimile of Bodleian MS Shelley adds. e.18*, ed. Timothy Webb and Nora Crook, New York: Garland.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe (2014), *Adonais*, in Michael Rossington, Jack Donovan and Kelvin Everest (eds), *The Poems of Shelley. Volume Four, 1820–1821*, vol. 4 of 5, London: Routledge.
- Steinberg, Philip, and Kimberley Peters (2015), 'Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume through Oceanic Thinking', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 33, 247–264, <doi: 10.1068/d14148p>.
- Van Hulle, Dirk (2014), *Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Van Hulle, Dirk (2022), *Genetic Criticism: Tracing Creativity in Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vassallo, Peter (2000), 'Keats's "Dying into Life": The Fall of Hyperion and Dante's *Purgatorio*', in Allan C. Christensen, Lilla M. Crisafulli Jones, Giuseppe Galigani, Anthony L. Johnson (eds), *The Challenge of Keats: Bicentenary Essays, 1795–1995*, Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, pp. 207–17.
- Worthen, John (2019), *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Critical Biography*, Hoboken: Wiley.