Daniela Meneghini

A NEW APPROACH TO ANALYZING THE USE OF THE WORD ÑYINE (MIRROR) IN BIDEL’S GHAZALS *

بيبَّل سخَّنت نَبَّات جز أنشأ تحيَّر
كُو آنِه تاَ صَفَحه دِيوان تو باَشَد

Bidel sokhan at nist joz ensbâ‘-e tabayyor
ku ñyene tâ safhe-ye divân-e to bâšad

O Bidel, your words are but a discourse on amazement,
Where is the mirror, that it might become a page of your divân?

Introduction

In this paper I should like to illustrate the objectives and methods in an ongoing research project in the Iranian section of the Department of Eurasian Studies (Ca’ Foscari University - Venice). Conceived and conducted by Professor Riccardo Zipoli and myself, the project aims to analyze the grammatical and semantic functions of the word ñyine (mirror) in the ghazals of Bidel, and subsequently to attempt to identify the contextual features of the theme (or themes) related to this word. Ñyine is, in general, an important thematic element in Neoper- sian lyrical poetry.¹ With various connotations, it is used in different thematic spheres, such as earthly and mystical love, descriptions of nature and material life, philosophical reflections, etc.² It is a highly connoted polysemous lemma, full of symbolic implications and as such very malleable and suitable for rhetorical purposes, especially as a support for metaphors,

* An abridged version of this paper has been read at the International Seminar on Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil held in Delhi, 17-21 March 2003, organized by the Department of Persian of Jamia Millia Islamia.
comparisons and examples. All of this suggests that it constitutes a very interesting field of enquiry.

The central role of this motif in Bidel’s poetry has often been highlighted by several scholars. In the section dedicated to ghazals in the book, *Life and works of Abdul Qadir Bedil*, by Abdul Ghani, the mirror is included among the poet’s ‘pet words’ together with other often related terms, such as *jowbar, shishe, hayrat, nafas, sang* and *shekast*. This idea was to be amply developed in two articles some years later. In the *Shâ’er-e âyinehâ*, Shafi’i Kadkani comments that ‘the motif of the mirror in Bidel’s poetry is the most frequent and that is why I have called him the poet of mirrors. If we wish to understand the most important mystical and philosophical messages in his verse, we need go no further than the image of amazement (*tabayyur*).’ This suggestion was confirmed shortly afterwards by M. Abdol ‘Aziz Mahjur who, in his valuable volume *Âyinebandán-e hayrat-e Bidel* (Peshâwar 1376/1998), explained and commented more than 170 lines containing the word *âyine*, when focusing on the theme of *hayrat*. In the first extensive anthology of Bidel’s ghazals in Italian, *Il canzoniere*

3 In the pioneering studies on Bidel published by the great Italian Iranist A. Bausani there is strangely no specific mention of the image of the mirror: cf. A. Bausani, ‘Note su Mirzâ Bidel (1644-1721)’, *Annali dell’Istituto Universitario di Napoli*, VI (1954-1956), pp. 163-199, reprinted with some minor adaptations in A.Q. Bidel, *Il canzoniere dell’alba*, cit., pp. 37-68; ‘Note sulla natura in Bedil’, *Annali dell’Istituto Universitario di Napoli*, XV, 1965, pp. 215-228; ‘L’opera di Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil’, *Il Veltro*, XVI, 5-6, 1972, pp. 447-463. At various points in his studies Bausani actually admits that when faced with Bidel’s vast work and thought, there is often a danger of focusing on a single aspect (which in a certain sense is what we wish to do) and of making generalizations on the basis of partial observations (a pitfall we seek to avoid in our project).

4 Abdul Ghani, *Life and works of Abdul Qadir Bedil*, Lahore, 1960, p. 144; significantly in the same chapter on ghazals we note how in some of the verse examples cited the term *âyine* is very frequently present (cf. p. 137, 143, 144, 146, 150, 153, 157, 161, 163, and 164), especially the part in which the author tries ‘to find the basic idea around which his entire verse revolves’.


6 Shafi’i Kadkani, *Shâ’er-e âyinehâ*, Tehran, 1374/1995-6, p. 323; this is a collection of essays followed by a short anthology; the book ends with a glossary of key words in Bidel’s poetry; each entry is followed by concise but comprehensive explanations. In addition to *âyine* the entries in the glossary also include *âb-e âyine, khâne-ye âyine, âyinekhâne, âyine-ye zânu, jowbar-e âyine* (pp. 322-325).
THE USE OF THE WORD ĀYINE (MIRROR) IN BIDEL'S GHAZALS

dell'alba, there are many amply commented images involving the mirror: in the texts selected (50 ghazals) the term āyine occurs 74 times and as many as 44 notes are dedicated to explanations of images, allusions, comparisons and metaphors associated with the word. In a recent conversation, when Prof. Zipoli was outlining our project, Shafi‘i Kadkani commented that studying the mirror in Bidel’ ghazals involved addressing the general principles of Bidel’s poetry. The noted Bidel scholar Professor Asadollāh Habib shares this view and has called for and encouraged a thorough study of the image of the mirror in Bidel’s poetry. 7

To form a merely quantitative picture of the ‘weight’ of this word in Bidel’s ghazals, you only have to compare some figures taken from Lirica Persica; 8 in 1,000 lines of verse (88 ghazals), selected according to a criterion of ‘guided randomness’ from the corpus of Bidel’s ghazals, 9 the term āyine occurs 84 times. After del and bidel, it is the noun with the highest frequency in the sample. 10 In a list of lemmas ordered by frequency, 11 the

7 An essay by Asadollāh Habib, entitled 'Il mondo e il suo creatore', is published in A.Q. Bidel, Il canzoniere dell'alba, cit., pp.69-85; this is the Italian translation of part of a book in Persian on Bidel entitled Sāye-ye sedā (forthcoming).

8 The data mentioned here comes from the CD-ROM: D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, Hyperfolia 1, Lirica Persica 17, Venice 2001. This CD-ROM provides navigation tools for browsing and searching a wide database (20,000 lines in both Arabic-Persian characters and the Lirica Persica transliteration system) complete with concordances, lexical lists, statistical indexes, and rhyme, refrain, and meter lists. The database has two different levels: Authors and Corpus. The Authors level presents 20 separate samples of 1,000 lines taken from the ghazal collections of 20 great Persian poets (Sanā‘i, Anvari, Khāqānī, ‘Attār, Rumi, ‘Erāqi, Sa‘di, Amir Khorshad, Khwājū Kermānī, Salmān Sāvāji, Hāfez, Kamāl Khojandī, Jāmī, Bābā Feghānī, Ahlī, Vahshi, Nazīr Nishāpūrī, Tāleb Amoli, Sā’eb and Bidel) with a series of lexical and statistical files. The Corpus level presents the lexical and statistical material of 20,000 lines as a whole, and thus is a sample of the Persian ghazal lexical system in general. Lirica Persica Hypertext also includes three search tools which can be applied to a single author sample or the complete Corpus in order to retrieve Contexts, Morphological Elements and Lexical Solidarities.

9 D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, cit., Main Page > Hypertext > Sampling.

10 If we add to the occurrences of the lemma āyine those of its compounds (4 āyinedār, 1 āyinedārī, 1 āyinedide), we obtain a frequency of 90, a higher figure than the number of ghazals (in theory, at least one mirror for every ghazal).

11 D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, cit., Main Page > Authors > Bidel > Browse > Lemmas & Types > Frequency List of Lemmas.
position of āyine is surprising, since it comes even before lemmas like ān (adjective/demonstrative pronoun) and to (personal pronoun). Moreover, āyine is ranked second in the list of words making up the typical vocabulary\(^{12}\) of the sample of Bidel’s ghalas,\(^{13}\) again only the poet’s takhallos comes higher. Of the 88 ghalas, āyine has a very high frequency when compared to the other 19 samples\(^{14}\) taken into account in determining the poet’s typical vocabulary (the sample closest to Bidel’s is that of Sā’eb, in which āyine only features 38 times). In the overall corpus of Lirica Persica, āyine occurs 236 times (in the 161st position in order of frequency, and comes immediately after key words in the canonic ghalal vocabulary such as bāde and sāqi),\(^{15}\) but the various authors considered contribute in extremely different ways to this overall frequency: compared to all the other 19 authors, Bidel makes much more use of the term.\(^{16}\) Lastly, on the basis of data gathered in the first stage of our research into the term āyine in Bidel’s ghalas, we find that in the first 350 ghalas there are as many as 289 lines with this term (258 times standing alone, 4 times in derivatives, and 27 times in compounds).

This ‘quantitative’ evidence and various scholars’ intuitions and remarks have not yet been followed up by a comprehensive work considering all the occurrences of this word/concept in the corpus of the ghalas in order to provide a description

\(^{12}\) The Typical Vocabulary table provides the list of lemmas differentiating the vocabulary of one sample from the vocabulary of the other samples. To form this list we worked out the Standardized Deviation (S.D.) for the lemmas in each sample. This coefficient measures (in term of probability) the deviation of observed values from their theoretical equivalents (i.e. from those expected in a random distribution). Cf. D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, cit., Main Page > Authors > Bidel > Browse > Statistical Tables > Typical Vocabulary Table > i.

\(^{13}\) Cf. D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, cit., Main Page > Authors > Bidel > Browse > Statistical Tables > Typical Vocabulary Table > go.

\(^{14}\) See note 8.

\(^{15}\) D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, cit., Main Page > Corpus > Browse > Frequency List of Lemmas.

\(^{16}\) Despite its far from uniform use in the 20 samples extracted from the collections of the authors considered to be of key importance in the history of the ghalal, āyine does belong to the Common Vocabulary, i.e. to the list of lemmas which because of their frequency and distribution (Usage Coefficient) belong to the basic vocabulary of the classic ghalal; cf. D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, cit., Main Page > Corpus > Browse > Common Vocabulary.
THE USE OF THE WORD "AYINE (MIRROR) IN BIDEL'S GHAZALS

made not simply on the basis of a series of lines chosen for illustrative purposes but by taking into account all the contexts in which the word is used. The aim of our project is in fact to describe as completely as possible the motif of the mirror as delineated and used in Bidel's ghazals. Describing the use and functions of "ayine in all its contexts can make a major contribution to our understanding of the theme. By addressing the work in this perspective and developing a research method guaranteeing the systematic handling of the great quantity of data necessarily involved in this approach, we will be able to describe a fundamental motif in Bidel's poetry in a highly detailed and objective way.

Methods

The first stage of the work consists in identifying the line-contexts (i.e. each complete line containing the lemma in question). For this purpose we used the following edition: M.A.Q. Bidel Dehlavi, Kolliyat, edited by Kh. Khalil, 4 vols., vol. I (ghazaliyät), Kâböl 1341/1962-3. As regards the lines of verse in our corpus we will check each of them to see if they are among those commented in S. Saljuqi, Naqd-e Bidel, Kabul, 1343/1964-5. If this is the case, we will have a comparison for our reading and interpretation of the line in question.

In the absence of an electronic version of Bidel's ghazals, the lines of verse obviously have to be found manually. All of the ghazals are read to identify the lines containing the lemma "ayine, both as a simple word and in other lemmas containing it, either derivatives or compounds. To form a quantitative

---


18 In an initial processing of the book, we found about 30 commented lines with the lemma "ayine.

19 In the Loghatnâme-ye Debbâdâ, the term "ayine appears as the first element in a limited number of derivatives and compounds; the following were recorded: "ayineafroz ("ayineforuz), "ayinebandân, "ayinebandi, "ayinepardâz, "ayinekbâne, "ayinedâr, "ayinedâri, "ayinedân, "ayineruyin, "ayinezadâ, "ayinezadâyî, "ayinekâr, "ayinegân, "ayineniyâm. For fixed syntagmas with "ayine as the first element, the same dictionary gives the following: "ayine-ye sekandari/eskandari (the mirror on a tower in the city of Alexandria, built by Alexander at Aristotle's behest, capable of reflecting ships a hundred miles away), "ayine-
idea of the use of the term āyine (standing alone, and in
derived and compound words) 20 in the whole set of Bidel's
ghazals and therefore the size of the corpus to be studied, we
can work out a simple proportion: a) as we mentioned earlier,
in the first 350 ghazals there were 289 lines with this term; b)
the divan contains around 2,780 ghazals (a total of around
31,000-32,000 lines); c) we must therefore assemble a corpus of
from 2,200 to 2,300 lines. 21

The set of line-contexts found is then transcribed, respect-
ing the metric scansion, according to the rules set out in the
Lirica Persica project. 22 This decision enables us to apply to
the transliterated texts a package of programs called Ghazal,
which provides the tools for some statistical-lexical analyses of
the lines. In this way we can obtain a series of lists providing
general quantitative and qualitative data on the linguistic sub-
stance of the āyine corpus; it will be possible to draw up the
frequency list of lemmas and the lemma concordance. The fre-
quency list is crucial in identifying key words linked to the
presence of āyine, while the concordance is required to imme-
diately find the occurrence of the lemmas in individual lines in
order to study them and then treat them in a coherent way in
the translation. We can also make a list of the words in reverse
alphabetical order to highlight the presence of assonant terms,
the prevalence of certain rhyme words, etc. By using some

ye carkh (sun), āyine-ye pil (a large drum played on elephant-back), āyine-
ye chini (metal mirror, made of steel, copper, silver or brass, synonymous
with sajanjal or āyine-ye balabi o āyine-ye rumi), āyine-ye khâvari (sun), āyine-
ye deqq (a deforming mirror, but also an unseemly spectacle or a person in
pain), āyine-ye zânu (kneecap), āyine-ye gardân (the sun). The Farhang-e
Anandarâj, considerably supplements this list, especially as regards new syn-
tagmas (more than 40), thus confirming the importance of the theme in the
context of Indo-Persian literature.

20 To streamline the exposition, henceforth we will only use the expres-
sion 'the term āyine' or simply 'āyine', to refer not only to the occurrence
of the individual lemma but also to occurrences of its compounds and der-
rivatives.

21 If we base our calculation on the occurrences of āyine in the 1,000
lines of the Lirica Persica sample, we can assume a corpus of over 2,600
lines. Since the average value calculated for 350 ghazals is more reliable
than the average for 88 ghazals, we believe a more plausible projection will
in any case be a corpus of 2,200-2,300 lines, which may even be liable to
a slight increase.

22 D. Meneghini, Lirica Persica Hypertext, cit., Main Page > Hypertext >
Transliteration / Lemmatization / Compounds / Encoding Homonyms.
THE USE OF THE WORD ĀYINE (MIRROR) IN BIDEL'S GHAZALS

procedures of Ghazal, we can also make partial corpuses by automatically retrieving lines in which the term āyine appears together with one or more lemmas of particular interest (jowbar, hayrat, chashm, etc.). In this way, in suitably isolated smaller sets of line-contexts, we can check aspects of the function of the mirror, the dynamics associated with certain images, specific allusions, etc.  

The transcription of each line-context is followed by its translation, which although meant for the overall comprehension of the message, tends to be as literal as possible. In translating āyine, we have always used the word 'mirror'. This allows us not only to identify the word immediately but also to reconstruct the syntagmatic connections surrounding the word in the translated form. The translation is thus only for the purposes of gathering information about 'the mirror', organized so as to highlight the meaning and function of the mirror and its relation with contextual elements.

A number of preliminary observations must be made.

A. The first problem to be solved is how to deal with two (or more) occurrences of āyine in the same line, i.e. is it more accurate to consider such lines as one context with two or more occurrences, or two or more different contexts, thus counting a line-context for every occurrence of āyine? The answer lies in bearing in mind that each occurrence of āyine has a specific function and is linked to the other components in the line – even with a possible 'double' – through its own semantic and syntactic relations. Thus when āyine occurs twice in the same line we count two identical line-contexts. This means that the number of line-contexts is more than the number of lines. Similarly, given that the overall corpus is increased, the number of tokens, types and lemmas will be augmented by those in the repeated line-contexts. From a methodological point of view, this seemed the most coherent and suitable way to work. For analytical purposes, in fact, this procedure turns out to be more complete and accurate.

B. As for our decision to work in contexts isolated from the

---

23 The data for a corpus of lines transcribed, processed and lemmatized according to the rules of Lirica Persica can be compared with the data supplied by the Lirica Persica Hypertext database, thus providing material for some cautious weighted comparative observations.

163
rest of the poem, it should be remembered that a line of a Persian ghazal may be considered an independent microcosm, and this allows us, for example, when identifying a theme, to forgo an analysis of the whole poem to which it belongs. Nonetheless, we will refer to the whole poem in those cases in which the line-contexts are not comprehensible individually, through the lack of a subject or otherwise, or when the thematic sphere cannot be understood from an isolated reading.

C. It must be said that the contexts with the lemma ḏyine by no means account fully for the theme of the mirror in Bidel’s ghazals. The concept of the mirror is also alluded to by other terms such as ḏgine, merʿat, sajanjal, etc. Moreover, the motif is also referred to more indirectly, and any allusions to it would have to be identified and reconstructed individually. Since our analysis only concerns the motif of the mirror in the ways it is specifically referred to by the lemma ḏyine, the scope of our study in terms of the theme of the mirror is limited, and this must always be borne in mind when interpreting general observations.

Tools

A set of around 2,300 lines is obviously a large corpus. While this size of corpus could discourage embarking on a particularly detailed in-depth work project, it does confirm the central importance of the image of the mirror in Bidel’s poetics. Given a corpus of this size and an image we know to be extremely complex, articulated and charged with symbolic implications, the choice of tools is of prime importance. To obtain a comprehensive description of the image of the mirror we will have to break down – as free as possible from subjective interpretations – each line into its constituent information (horizontal or syntagmatic deconstruction), in order to re-compose this information according to general criteria of synthesis outside the individual contexts (vertical or paradigmatic re-construction). By following this method we can make an overall picture of ḏyine which, built according to the individual con-

24 Cf. the even more extreme hypothesis proposed by Shafi’i Kadkani, Shā’er-e ḏyinebā, cit. p. 73-80, who claims that in Bidel’s ghazals even the individual hemistich may be considered an independent unit.
25 Cf. notes 2 and 19.
texts, will, however, go beyond the meaning of the individual occurrences. The key features in this approach are: 1) the constant obligatory focus on the elements actually present in the text, insofar as each piece of information identified comes from the text itself and is not deduced from personal impressions and suggestions or external references; 2) exactly the same criteria for the analysis will always be applied to every line.

To handle the enormous quantity of data provided by a corpus of this kind (in terms of theme and size) accurately and systematically, each line will have to be read in exactly the same way, according to a constant information scheme, i.e. presenting the description of 'each mirror' according to a strict uniform grid. Only by approaching the work in this way can we guarantee the advantages of applying an objective method and at the same time manage effectively and systematically the great amount of information gathered.

To this end, we drafted a database using Filemaker® (a data management program) containing all the fields deemed necessary in describing the denotative and connotative aspects of ayine and its uses and functions. Each individual line of verse has a corresponding record. If ayine is present two or more times in a single line, on the basis of the reasoning mentioned above (see A), we will compile a separate record for each individual occurrence.26

The record is divided into four parts: the first contains information concerning the text of the line-context and its position; the second contains data about the morphological features and grammatical aspects of the word ayine; the third has a description of the substance and function of ayine and identifies the contextual elements; and the fourth contains all the data concerning the principal rhetorical figures directly involving the term ayine. The first two parts of the record organize information immediately identifiable in any context; in the third and fourth parts, on the other hand, the number and kind of fields are created on the basis of a general a priori idea about the information that a context may supply for the term ayine used in it. Obviously not all the contexts provide information on all the aspects suggested and therefore many fields will be

---

26 Much of the data in the line-records with more than one occurrence of ayine will be shared by the records of other co-occurrences (see, for example, the contextual elements).
left completely empty. As in other projects of this kind, however, it is important to predict from the outset what data could theoretically be supplied about an object like the mirror, and its function and use, in order to include the information required for its description according to a constant criterion. This consideration and the need to record certain information uniformly underlies the idea of proposing in each case, when it turns out to be possible, pre-established lists of data that can be introduced to each field in the record. A pre-established list of data obliges researchers always to express the same concept with the same formula, and thus enables them to find all the information inserted easily and reliably.

Let us now and look at the structure of the individual parts of the record in detail. The first part presents information about the position (page number in the original text, ghazal number, and line number) and the substance (text, transcription, and literal translation) of the line-context, the metric scan-sion of the line, and the position of the word āyine within it (as rhyme word or radif, in takhallos, matla‘, or maqta‘). Here is a list of the individual pieces of information (each piece of information has a corresponding field):

- Page number
- Ghazal number
- Line number
- Text of the line in Persian characters
- Transcription of the line in Latin characters
- Translation of the line
- Notes on the translation
- Meter of the line

**Āyine position:**
- Rhyme word
- Radif
- Takhallos
- Matla‘
- Maqta‘

---

27 In the edition of the ghazals we used, the poems are not numbered: since some pages have two or even three ghazals, we decided to number each poem for identification purposes.
THE USE OF THE WORD ĀYINE (MIRROR) IN BIDEL'S GHAZALS

The second part of the record presents morphological and syntactic information: some of this information can be encoded 
a priori, by referring to a list of data: in the following scheme, this list appears in brackets after the name of the field. 28 Let's now look at the kind of information (fields) we believe could usefully be included in the record:

Form of āyine (singular, plural, singular derivative, plural derivative, singular compound, plural compound)

Function of āyine (subject, direct complement, indirect complement, verbal syntagma)

Preposition preceding āyine (az, dar, be, ruy, sar, bi, bâ, etc. 29)

Preposition following āyine (az, dar, be, ruy, sar, bi, bâ, etc.)

Terms determining āyine

Terms determined by āyine

The third part of the record, the most important for our research purposes, presents contextual-semantic type information about the use of the mirror in the line being considered:

Principal function-action of the mirror (amazes, reflects man, reflects the phenomenal world, reflects the universal mysteries, makes one become lost in oneself, arouses passion, does not reflect man, does not reflect the world, brands, is a tool of knowledge (shows essence), prevents knowledge (shows appearance), distorts, is tainted by rust, is steamed up by breath, is broken, creates a link, etc.)

28 If the abbreviation 'etc.' appears at the end of the list it means we foresee the possibility of finding data not yet included in the list; if there is no 'etc.', the list should be considered as complete.

29 We predict the presence of simple prepositions or prepositional phrases.

30 We predict the presence of simple prepositions or prepositional phrases.
Secondary function-action \(^{31}\) of the mirror (see previous list)

Concrete contextual elements (rust, breath, image, iron, dust, pumice, ash, glass, parrot, hand, felt, custody, handle, comb, etc.)

Abstract contextual elements (amazement, knowledge, annihilation, reflection, beauty, brilliance, opacity, rotundity, etc.)

Elements associated with the mirror (heart, cup, phenomenal world, eye, soul, moon, sun, sky, pond, white hand, sore, forehead, brand, face, knecap, etc.)

Reason for association (colour, shape, clearness, opacity, substance, activity, etc.)

Who, what uses the mirror (I, you, us, Bidel, lover, beloved, people, nature, nothing, etc.)

Physical appearance of the mirror (shiny, opaque, white, stained, in pieces, round, pure, smooth, etc.)

Where the mirror is

When the mirror is used or described (dawn, sunset, day, night, soon, late, beginningless eternity, endless eternity, yesterday, tomorrow)

Personifications

Miscellaneous

The fourth and last section, which may be seen not only in terms of its own informative value but also as a support to the third section, \(^{32}\) involves identifying and giving a summary description of a limited number of rhetorical figures, i.e. only

\(^{31}\) This field is required because the primary action-function has a secondary action-function as a consequence, for example a mirror reflecting a man may also prevent knowledge.

\(^{32}\) Using the data recorded in this section, we can reconstruct the dynamics of some associations: for example, we can check if the mirror is associated with the heart through a metaphor rather than a simile or tamthil.
THE USE OF THE WORD ÂYINE (MIRROR) IN BIDEL'S GHAZALS

those that seem to be of greatest importance for the theme of our study. It is made up of the following fields:

Metaphor:
Role of āyine (metaphorizing, metaphorized)
Tenor
Vehicle
Aim

Comparison:
Other term in the comparison
Function of āyine (first term, second term)
Aim

Tamthil:
Other term in the tamthil
Function of āyine (exemplified, exemplifying)
Aim

Morā'āt-e nadhir:
Components

Hosn-e ta’lil:
Description of the aetiology

Lafdhī figures:
Type of figure (Tajnis, Tekrār, Radd, etc.)
Other terms making the figure

As we mentioned earlier, many of the fields used for managing this information were configured as a pre-established list of data. In fact wherever we could, we tried to predict a series of responses as wide-ranging as possible to be inserted in the individual fields. This system aimed at avoiding the kind of elasticity/subjectivity in identifying and expressing information that would make this database of very little use. The accurate pre-definition of suggested ‘data’ is of primary importance in our working hypothesis. This pre-definition is obviously based on the direct experience of reading and analyzing the contexts of āyine, i.e. the result of an in-depth study of hundreds of contexts. Obviously, however, some pre-established lists can be
supplemented as the work gradually proceeds and completely 'new' contexts emerge compared to the information organized a priori. In fact the database is only used for managing data and must not be seen as a filter impoverishing information provided by the contexts. On the contrary, this system ensures no information is lost, since it obliges the researcher to reply to a series of observations about the text required in the process of filling in the fields. Obliging researchers to identify pre-established individual pieces of information within a grid, rather than have them formulate descriptive periphrases prevents them from dwelling on particular suggestions from a single context. Compiling the record, in fact, forces researchers to 'read' and translate into definitions all the information found in the line-contexts. The very fact of filling in the record entails guided thinking, leading researchers to carry out detailed analysis of various aspects. This working method, moreover, enables us to handle the information in a more useful and coherent way, avoiding above all subjective impressions (e.g. if the mirror's function of 'acquiring knowledge' is more frequent than that of 'reflecting absolute beauty', it will be revealed by the number of contexts and not the impression had during reading).

Once the record has been filled in, for each occurrence of ἀνὴρ, and the statistical-lexical lists for the corpus of lines drafted, we will have laid the material basis for analyzing the lemma in question and will be able to study its use, functions, denotations, connotations, symbolic implications and associated ideas, and anything else noticed during the study of the context in which it appears.
THE USE OF THE WORD ĀYINE (MIRROR) IN BIDEL’S GHAZALS

ABSTRACT
This paper describes a study to verify a specific methodology of research applied to a collection of line-contexts. The line-contexts in the study contain the word ‘āyina’ (mirror), retrieved from Bidel’s ghazals. This word has a high frequency in Bidel’s lyrical poetry and presents a very rich and complex system of uses, meanings, allusions and connections with other specific words and poetic images. Once all the relevant line-contexts had been found, a methodology was established in order to analyse the grammatical, semantic and rhetorical functions of ‘āyina’ and identify the contextual features of the theme in the most objective way possible. This enables us to avoid making subjective, partial observations in the description of the overall meaning and use of the word in question.

KEYWORDS