The Gnomic *qatal*

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Abstract
The present paper offers a cognitive and typological approximation to the problem of the gnomic *qatal*. It demonstrates that the gnomic sense of the *qatal* can be chained to the remaining semantic potential of the gram by making use of certain typological templates or universals, i.e. by so-called gnomic branches of the anterior path. Given that, from a cross-linguistic perfective, certain subtypes of a present perfect (inclusive, frequentative, and experiential perfects, as well as an anti-perfect) naturally generate gnomic extensions (following a development referred to as "gnomic branches"), that the dominant portion of the semantic potential of the *qatal* covers the domain of a perfect, and finally that all the examples of the BH gnomic *qatal* (if derived from active roots) may be viewed as generated in prototypical perfect contexts (the gnomic use of the *qatal* stems from its use as an inclusive, frequentative, experiential, and anti-perfect), the gnomic value of the gram may be cognitively (both conceptually and diachronically) chained to the remaining sphere of its semantic network by employing the "gnomic branch" linkage. In this manner, the gnomic value ceases to be aberrant and, on the contrary, becomes a fully rational component of the semantic potential of the gram. As a result, we propose a model (a map) that in a more consistent and more holistic manner represents the semantics of the entire *qatal* category; it accounts for all the senses, the gnomic values included.

Keywords: Biblical Hebrew, verbal semantics, grammaticalization, cognitive linguistics

1. Introduction

When analysing values of the *qatal* form in Biblical Hebrew (BH), one can hardly ignore cases where, more or less surprisingly, the gram – which typically functions as a perfect and also a (perfective) past – expresses atemporal or universal activities and situations. This is what has commonly been denominated as the "gnomic *qatal*" – a particular type of use of the suffix conjugation in which the *qatal* construction introduces general truths. In this usage, which is found to be principally abundant in the book of Proverbs, the formation allegedly corresponds to modern Indo-European simple presents, which, when employed in maxims and aphorisms, depict extra-temporal constant facts:

(1)
חַכְמֹ֣ות נָ֭שִׁים **בָּ֣נְתָה** בֵיתָ֑הּ וְאִוֶּ֥לֶת בְּיָדֶ֝יהָ תֶּהֱרָֽסֶנּוּ
The wise woman **builds** her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands (Prov. 14.1)[1]

[1] All the BH *qatal* forms that are employed in a gnomic sense (as well as grams that provide a gnomic value in other languages) will be indicated in bold formatting. For the sake of clarity, English constructions that render the *qatal* forms from the Hebrew quotes will likewise be distinguished by bold typeface.

1.1. Grammatical tradition

The fact that the *qatal* may provide a gnomic sense has been acknowledged in almost all important grammars and linguistics descriptions of the BH verbal system. Although the phenomenon has been well known, its explanation is far less straightforward and consistent. Among all the opinions related to this usage of the suffix conjugation, it is possible to distinguish three main trends.

First, a vast group of scholars limit themselves to a simple observation that the *qatal* may express atemporal general truths without, however, attempting to provide an explanation for such a supposedly aberrant function. For instance, Brockelmann (1956: 42), Grether (1967: 209), Lambdin (1971: 3), Jenni (1978: 265), and Van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze (1999: 146) notice that when employed in poetry, proverbs, and maxims, the *qatal* is able to denote gnomic situations, general habitual activities, or atemporal experiences, and thus approximates the simple (general) present of English or the gnomic aorist of Classical Greek.

The second (and certainly the most numerous) faction of grammarians, similarly to the aforementioned position, maintains that the BH gram offers a gnomic sense but, in contrast with it, intends to relate this value to the prevalent meaning of the suffix conjugation. Among all the scholars who adhere to this view, it is possible to detect three different sub-groups that diverge in such a way that a semantic connection between the *qatal* and its gnomic sense is posited. In other words, researchers disagree as to how to justify the use of the gram as a vehicle of general truths.

Most commonly, scholars relate the gnomic value to what, in modern terminology, we could label as an experiential perfect. For example, Ewald (1863: 351) argues that the *qatal* of a general truth may be explained as stemming from the experience – a fact has been proven by experience and is therefore considered as definitive. A similar explanation has been proposed by Müller (1883: 2) and Driver (1892: 17) who argue that the *qatal*, in its gnomic function, expresses propositions of general character confirmed by experience. It is an experiential perfect where general truths correspond to facts that have actually occurred and are thus verified by their real incidence. Davidson (1902: 60) and Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley (1910: 312) maintain the experiential foundation of the gnomic *qatal*, and furthermore link this type of the suffix conjugation to the frequentative sense of – in their terminology– the "perfect". That is to say, in the gnomic usage, the *qatal* is employed as a frequentative perfect of experience (as it introduces actions that have been proved *de facto* by their previous occurrence and that moreover have frequently been taking place; cf. Davidson 1902: 60) and as a recurrent perfect of experience (as it denotes facts that have formerly occurred, thus belonging to common experience, and that are still of constant recurrence; cf. Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley 1910: 312).[2] Recently, the perfectal link, albeit additionally grounded in a temporal nuance of the *qatal* form (viz. its past value), has been postulated by Joosten (2012). Joosten (2012: 204–205) claims that the gnomic *qatal* "originated in the observation of past occurrences". Subsequently, these temporally remote past facts – viewed as truths

[2] The two definitions are highly similar. However, the former links the experiential perfect with the value of a frequentative perfect while the latter relates it to the sense of an inclusive perfect.

known from experience – were reanalysed as atemporal situations and proverbial states.[3]

Other grammarians understand the connection between the gnomic usage of the *qatal* and its prototypical value in aspectual terms. For instance, according to Joüon (1923: 296–297), the *qatal* of universal truths should be explained by means of the aspectual force of the gram, namely by its global, unique, and instantaneous character (cf. also Joüon and Muraoka 2009: 333). To be precise, the fact that the *qatal* expresses an action that is "unique ou instantanée" (Joüon 1923: 296) explains "[son] emploi […] pour exprimer une vérité constante" (*ibid.*: 297). In a similar vein, Watts (1951: 24–25) alleges that when the *qatal* conveys typical characteristics, it presents a single event or situation that exemplifies a property of a person or a thing.[4] In his view, although such perfects appear in present time, they extend beyond the actuality, referring to "a broad unrestricted present" (Watts 1951: 25). Similarly to Joüon (1923), Waltke and O'Connor (1990: 488, 506) claim that gnomic or "proverbial" *qatal* portrays a universal situation or activity as a single event. This global view, in turn, justifies the use of the suffix conjugation, which, according to them, is defined as a perfective aspect.[5] Finally, in contrast with the two subgroups that explain the gnomic *qatal* as a manifestation of the taxis (perfect) or aspectual (perfective) nature of the gram, other scholars do not infer the gnomic function from the inherent semantics of the *qatal*, but rather justify it by making use of the concept of neutralization of the taxis-tense-aspect load of the gram. For instance, according to Cook (2002: 221–222), when the *qatal* (which is, in his opinion, a perfective construction) expresses timeless and omnitemporal statements, its aspectual (as well as temporal) potential is cancelled because the perfectivity (surfacing typically as past perfectivity) is incompatible with gnomic present tense.[6]

Beside the two factions presented thus far, one may also detect a third group of researchers who seemingly deny the gnomic interpretation of the gram. One of its most prominent members is Rogland, who in his in-depth analysis (cf. Rogland 2003) argues that the majority of proverbial *qatals* do not require an interpretation in terms of a gnomic atemporal present, but should rather be explained as past tenses, in accordance with the ordinary semantic definition of the gram, viz. a past tense (*ibid.*: 40, 46). In other words, proverbs that express universal truths employ *qatal* forms in its (i.e. the *qatal*'s) regular – in Rogland's view – past function. It is a proverb that presents a gnomic statement, but not the verb itself, which, quite the contrary, preserves its inherent non-gnomic past temporal value. More specifically, it functions as a simple past of experience or observation (*ibid.*: 24–25), a global or aspectually neutral past (*ibid.*: 35, 37), and a relative past (*ibid.:* 43–44). By doing so, the *qatal* in maxims is a past tense with none of the habitual or imperfective nuances

[3] Joosten (2012: 208) regards this gnomic value of the *qatal* as a diachronic and conceptual basis of modal (counterfactual) uses of the BH suffixed conjugation.

[4] He labels this usage of the suffix conjugation a "characteristic perfect" (Watts 1951: 25).

[5] In an analogical manner, Sasson (2001) understands the gnomic *qatal* as an expression of the inherent perfective aspectual value of the suffix conjugation.

[6] However, in a later study, Cook (2005) rejected his previous view and, probably under the influence of Rogland's ideas, understood most *qatal* forms in proverbs as "regular" (i.e. fully identical with the *qatal* in non-proverbial material) pasts or perfects (for details, see the next paragraph).

typical of general gnomic presents (*ibid.*: 37). Rogland's view has influenced Cook who, in his later paper (2005: 130), explains the *qatal* forms in the book of Proverbs as fully identical with the *qatal* in non-gnomic texts, i.e. as perfects or pasts. Since the *qatal* in the proverbial material does not comply with the tendency whereby present and imperfective forms are prototypically used in generic and gnomic statements, and given the fact that past tenses are cross-linguistically quite acceptable in maxims and anecdotes, Cook (2005: 130) argues that this use of the suffix conjugation should not be viewed as a gnomic present, but rather as an example of an "anecdotic" past tense, i.e. as a past tense used in maxims or proverbs. Thus, he infers, it should be translated with the same taxis, temporal, aspect, and modal (TTAM) load as the examples of the *qatal* in non-gnomic texts (*ibid.*: 131).

1.2. Problem, methodology, and research strategy

1.2.1. Problem

The explanation of the gnomic *qatal* is typically based on a derivational or inferential procedure whereby the gnomic sense (or any other value that a given linguist claims to be patent in the proverbial material; cf. Rogland 2003 and Cook 2005) is derived from the so-called main, inherent or invariant meaning of the form.[7]

Thus, grammarians commonly argue that in the gnomic usage – in accordance with the prototypical meaning of the gram identified as a perfect, a perfective, or a past – the *qatal* denotes previously accomplished, complete, or past events, respectively. Accordingly, the alleged invariant taxis, aspectual, or temporal value of the formation is seen as a basis for a semantic extension available in the gnomic usage. Depending on the definition of the gram adopted by a scholar, the gnomic use is hence understood as derived from and akin to a perfect of experience (taxis), a perfective (aspect), and a global past (tense).

As will be evident from the further discussion, the entire problem of the gnomic *qatal* (and thus its possible solution) may be envisaged from a completely different perspective, where the gram is viewed in dynamic terms as a manifestation of certain evolutionary processes.

1.2.2. "Dynamic" semantics[8]

Discussing the issue of semantics of a gram, two problems immediately emerge. What is the value of a form when it (i.e. this form) appears in a specific context, and what is the value of a form viewed as a whole, i.e. when it is considered as a component of the verbal system? In order to avoid such confusion in our analysis, the first phenomenon will be labelled as a "sense" and the other a "meaning".

[7] This same procedure has been employed in the descriptions of gnomic uses of perfects or pasts in languages such as Greek and Akkadian that have sometimes constituted comparative evidence in studies devoted to the BH gram. On the gnomic type of the Greek Aorist, see Smyth (1956: 1931) or Humbert (1954: 124–125) and on the gnomic variety of the Akkadian *iprus*, see Mayer (1992), Metzler (2002), and Loesov (2004).

[8] The present study is the fifth article dedicated to the semantic analysis of the BH *qatal* by this author. The four previous papers dealt with performative (Andrason 2012a), counterfactual (Andrason 2013a), prospective (Andrason 2013b), and precative senses (Andrason 2013c). As a result, some portions of the introductory sections devoted to methodological and theoretical issues (section 1.2.2.) are similar.

Sense

A sense may be defined as a concrete value which is displayed by a locution in a specific place and time, and which is "experimentally" measured by employing determined semantic domains or categories. It is thus a value a gram receives in a precise context, a value that is categorized by means of available conceptual structures. This implies that atomic senses depend on their contextual settings (i.e. on linguistic and extra-linguistic factors) and on *our* classification devices (i.e. on properties of humans conceptual categories; cf. Evans and Green 2006: 352–353, 368, Nikiforidou 2009: 17, 26). The definition of a sense may in fact be reduced to the following statement: a sense is a compatibility of a form with a concrete context. As supported by modern science, no two contexts describing the real world are perfectly identical. Quite the reverse: they invariably differ in some parameters. The detection of this dissimilarity depends on the precision in describing the environments under consideration. Coarse-grained (macroscopic) analyses typically group various contexts as equal while narrow (microscopic) studies treat previously indistinguishable milieus as different. But, whatever our level of precision, in an ultimate – i.e. the most atomic – description, two contexts are always dissimilar due to the infinite complexity of the universe. Since senses are contextual phenomena – they emerge in and/or are compatible with determined milieus – and since no two contexts are ideally duplicate, no two senses can be perfectly the same. In a certain approximation, all senses somehow differ because the contexts in which they appear – if analysed with the highest precision – are dissimilar (Auyang 1998: 344, Smith 1998: 51–67, 90–115, Wagensberg 2007: 56–57, 60, Schneider and Sagan 2009: 55). Moreover, one should note that in living languages a form appears in an indefinite number of uses and thus contexts. It is clear that two uses always constitute two different contexts because they must differ at least in temporal settings. As a result, a form may be found in an infinite number of contexts, delivering a likewise infinite number of senses. Certainly, such a fragmentary description of reality (in our case of a verbal gram) is unpractical. Therefore, we employ larger concepts that enable us to encompass various contexts and senses, and inversely to reduce the infinite amount of data to a finite and workable series. This precision is linked to our categorization technique (Auyang 1998: 344, Prigogine 2009: 213). Thus, the number of senses "observed" empirically by a scholar when providing a taxonomy of uses of a gram is closely related to how reality is divided into conceptual boxes. If the "measuring tools" (viz. concepts) are broad, a construction may seem to convey a few senses (or even if extremely wide taxes are used, a single sense in all uses). If, on the contrary, our conceptual devices are sufficiently sensitive, a gram may seem to provide ten, hundreds, or thousands of senses (if our concepts are extremely atomized, the number of sense will become infinite). Typically, the former description assures conceptual consistence of a phenomenon but is imprecise, while the latter provides a far too detailed and disordered view. It is important to emphasize that any such categorization is external to the universe (and hence to language) itself, being tied to our theoretical structuration. What is empirically certain or objective (if anything can be absolutely objective in science) is that a form may appear in a potentially infinite amount of uses and hence in an infinite number of contexts which at an ultimate lev-

el invariably differ in certain parameters due to the complexity of the real world. Consequently, if the world's complexity is envisaged, a form is inherently polysemous – the range of this polysemy is infinite but, depending on our categorization, it will appear as more (high fragmentarization) or less (law fragmentarization) extensive. Polysemy (or diversity of senses) is the norm in languages of the world. Hence a form almost regularly provides several senses that in some cases appear extremely unrelated and even contradictory to each other (Evans and Green 2006: 169, Bybee 2010: 183, 186–187).

Another important property of any polysemy – either extended (in a more atomic description) or minimal (in a more coarse-grained description) is that it is not a random cluster of disparate and accidental values. One of the most fundamental principles with respect to polysemy is the fact that diverse senses conveyed by the same form are necessarily related. Relatedness of senses is a constant feature in languages and constitutes one of the tenets of cognitive linguistics. First of all, it is commonly accepted that polysemy is a phenomenon that affects all the levels of a language (phonology, morphology, and syntax) and all of its components, be they lexical (lexical semantics) or functional (i.e. the *core*-grammar or "functional" semantics; cf. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2007: 140, 147–148). Scholars also agree that polysemy – as a categorizing phenomenon – represents a form's total meaning as a solid conceptual category of distinct but related senses (Taylor 2002:98). In other words, the meaning of a grammatical entity consists of a number of wholly distinct yet demonstrably related senses (Janssen 2003: 96, Evans and Green 2006: 352). The fact that the senses of an item are connected signifies that they are somehow linked to the conceptual prototype or the central value (cf. Lakoff 1987: 12–13, Gibbs 1994: 157, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2007: 140, 147–148, Evans and Green 2006: 36, 331). Put differently, there is, by definition, "a motivated [linear or non-linear] relationship between polysemous senses" from a central value to its extensions (Cruse 2004: 108; see also *ibid.*: 109–110).

In even stronger terms, linguists talk about "a cognitive fact": polysemous meanings are related in reasonable and methodical ways (Tuggy 2003: 323–324). Polysemy "is not just a matter of being different meanings attached to a form". On the contrary, in polysemy, the connection among the senses is inherently logical and systematic (*ibid.*: 348–350). A polysemous space constitutes a well-ordered conceptually solid whole (cf. Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991: 224–225). The relation unifying the senses is reasonable and systematic because polysemous extensions reflect and arise from universal human cognitive mechanisms (such as metaphor, metonymy, abduction, image-schema transposition, etc.) that ensure a conceptual bond among numerous values, even the most distinct ones. More concretely, applying the aforementioned cognitively "natural" procedures, speakers expand one sense into another and in this manner construct superficially incongruent polysemous compositions (cf. Taylor 2002: 138–139, Tuggy 2003: 348–350, Evans and Green 2006: 332–352; see also Ibarretxe-Antuñano 1999: 29–30).

Meaning

Due to the invariably polysemous behaviour of grammatical entities, the understanding of the meaning of a gram as an invariant sense – i.e. as an identical semantic domain presented in all uses – can no longer be sustained. As explained, a single grammatical formation is able to provide a wide variety of senses that may be extended virtually *ad infinitum*. A form never offers only one sense which is duplicate in all contexts because all contexts – and hence all senses – always differ in some parameters. The identity of the senses provided in all contexts would only be possible in an extremely coarse-grained approximation wherein the infinite complexity of reality is deliberately disregarded. Such an approach clearly clashes with empirical facts concerning reality.

The immeasurable intricacy of the universe not only rules out understanding the meaning of a form as a value that is identical in all uses, but also shows that the application of the so-called "invariant" string (i.e. the semantic portion that is present in all uses) for determining the meaning of a gram is, in fact, dysfunctional. Typically, a semantic string that is shared by all the senses provided by a form (or that appears in all the contexts where the form appears) belongs to the most general or coarse-grained conceptual box, with which it is possible to embrace all senses. Of course, certain senses that belong to a given polysemy always have a common or collective string, but a string that would belong to all of them corresponds to the most coarse-grained interpretation possible. The problem is that in the case of highly developed polysemous structures (for instance, formations that constitute the core of the verbal system), this invariant string delivers such coarse-grained information that its epistemological or scientific validity is insignificant (on the incompatibility of the invariant meaning hypothesis with usage-based theory, see Bybee 2010: 183–193).

Since polysemy arises because a form spreads – through metaphor, metonymy, or other cognitive mechanisms – to new environments where it acquires new (previously unavailable) senses, two adjacent senses (i.e. a sense and its immediate metaphorical extension) typically share one or more semantic traits (the range of shared elements again depends on our categorization). But after a certain reiteration of the procedure of extending one sense to another, the semantic relation of an *n* extension and the original input may become extremely loose, being embraceable only under some highly coarse-grained and insignificant labels (cf. the Polish adjective *zielony* 'green' that in company of the noun *pojęcie* 'idea' acquired, by metaphorical extensions, the sense 'null, no').[9] This means that the very idea of an invariant string – although sometimes relatively useful for "small" polysemies – cannot be treated as precise, because its significance for "large" polysemies is minimal or even null.

Furthermore, when searching for an invariant string, with which the meaning of a gram would be defined, a linguist disregards all the remaining values and thus ignores the non-shared portion of the polysemous space that may in fact be highly relevant for an appropriate comprehension of the form. Put differently, if a string that

[9] Native speakers establish the following conceptual link relating these two senses: [green] > [unripe, immature] > [unimportant, insignificant] > [null].

is present in 90 per cent of the uses fails to appear in the remaining 10 per cent, it cannot be employed to define the gram although it does say something important about this construction. Similarly, if a formation appears 50 per cent of the time with a string – especially in certain types of contexts – this value would be disregarded in the total semantic definition of the gram; it is not accessible in all the uses. However, it may provide a significant insight into the form's semantics. For example, it is a well-known fact that in various languages the gram which functions as a general present and a simple future (with both perfective and imperfective readings), is typically restricted to an imperfective force in a past time frame (see the Hebrew *yiqtol* in Andrason 2010a). This fact additionally weakens the relevance of the concept of an invariant string (or invariant semantic domain) in the demarcation of a gram's meaning (cf. Bybee 2010: 186).

Since the meaning cannot correspond to the invariant sense and cannot be equated with an invariant string in all senses, how can it be defined? As maintained by cognitive linguistics, a form's meaning is to be understood as its entire semantic potential. Such potential is equivalent to the total semantic space that includes all possible individual senses (shades of meaning) empirically "recorded" in specific realistic cases, i.e. in concrete contexts. Thus, the meaning of a formation is viewed as a set-theoretic union of all individual atomic senses that empirically exist in specific environments. This also means that since atomic values clearly depend on their contextual milieus, the entire meaning of a form – its total semantic space or network of interrelated values – is necessarily a contextual phenomenon (Evans and Green 2006: 352–353, 368 and Nikiforidou 2009: 17, 26). Furthermore, respecting the relatedness principle, cognitive linguistics represents the semantic and functional potential of a gram as a map where each sense is conceptually related to another, forming a network of interrelated components (Evans and Green 2006: 331–333).

As a result, the traditional structuralist dichotomy between the inherent-invariant meaning and contextual realizations must be replaced by a more realistic distinction between an empirical level analysis (concrete "experimental" data or senses displayed by a locution in a specific place and time) and their summation into a coherent whole (the gram's total meaning) at a theoretical system's level (cf. already Dahl 2000a: 14).

Dynamic description of verbal meaning

Since any extension from one sense to another unavoidably implies a chronological order (i.e. a more original sense is the basis for a subsequent extension), any conceptual input-output relation among components of a polysemy is not only abstract (viz. conceptual *sensu stricto*) but also – and, in fact, necessarily – diachronic. In this manner, a synchronic polysemous network reflects a realistic historical progression: by incorporating new senses or abandoning older ones, it expands or reduces the range of an available semantic space. The connection among the elements of a polysemous grid is invariably historical because polysemy reflects a historical change; it "explain[s] synchronic variation as resulting from diachronic change" (Lawandows-

ka-Tomaszczyk 2007: 140). In other words, conceptual connections which exist among components of a given polysemy represent diachronic processes whereby older senses gave rise to new senses due to the spread of the form to new contexts (cf. Heine, Cladi, and Hünnemeyer 1991: 221–225, 227–228, 260–261, Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994: 15–19, Tyler and Evans 2003: 344–346, Van der Auwera and Gast 2011: 186–188, Bybee 2010: 198–199).

Since a given synchronic – in principle atemporal – variation (e.g. different senses of a form) stems from a historical process as "a temporary outcome of an ongoing-change" (Sadler 2007:33) or is a typical by-product of grammaticalization, it can logically be described in dynamic terms, making use of a diachronic process (Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991: 261). This dynamic representation of a polysemy is provided by employing models based upon grammaticalization chains or grammaticalization paths. Such chains and/or paths are mainly viewed as diachronic principles that schematize the evolutionary pattern of a given grammatical "taxonomical" class. However, since a synchronic variation is a temporary result of unceasing processes and fluctuations, a diachronic rule or (statistical) universal can be used to map – and to relate – different senses synchronically offered by a form. To be precise, the models of grammaticalization paths offer two dimensions: a diachronic dimension (they portray diachronic phenomena showing the evolution of a given form), and a synchronic dimension (i.e. they constitute dynamic relational patterns which represent the internal organization of a synchronic polysemy specifying the connection among its components; Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991: 221–222). As a result, these evolutionary templates can be used to account for the synchronic structure of a language (*ibid.*: 252). In particular, all the senses displayed by a form can be viewed as corresponding to stages located along the chains. Some of them are less grammaticalized; these are less advanced stages on the chain which are also historically older. Others are more grammaticalized, corresponding to more advanced stages on the chain and developing later (cf. Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991: 227–228). By linking all the sense of a form by means of a diachronic, typologically universal scenario, the path or grammaticalization chain model represents the polysemy of an entity as cognitively (both conceptually and diachronically) solid and consistent (cf. the concept of panchrony in Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991: 260–261).

For certain modern languages and certain grams, it is possible to trace the extensions of senses from one to another and thus to establish a map of a semantic network that is built on direct diachronic data. Employing tangible evidence (e.g. texts) we can see how the form has been modifying its semantic space by adding new senses and/or losing others. In such cases, the order and logic of a synchronic semantic network can be determined by making use of diachronic processes. These diachronic processes show how conceptual extensions have actually occurred and establish the real order of a spread of the gram to new contexts. Put it simply, a synchronic variety of senses are arranged to match a concrete realistic development as documented by palpable evidence. The connection among senses, available synchronically, merely copies the historical development of the polysemy as testified by the existing data or tangible linguistic "fossils" (cf. the mapping of the semantic

potential of the Roman compound and simple perfect and past tenses which can be traced from Latin to the present; for details see Squartini and Bertinetto 2000).

However, in many cases, linguists do not have access to direct diachronic data that could establish the historical – and hence conceptual – linking among components of a polysemous map. In these cases, one may use common typological tendencies – or following a stronger view, universal laws – that codify a semantic evolution, and thus meaning extensions, typical for determined "species" of grams. In respect to the verbal system, these developmental principles (labelled "paths") offer a model of exemplary evolution, specifying how aspects, tenses, and moods are shaped, how they develop and what their ultimate outcomes can be (Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994, Dahl 2000b, Andrason 2011a). In other words, they predict – with a margin of error, which is inevitable in such studies – how verbal grams acquire new values and what spectrum of possible semantic extensions of a form can exist. With these, to some extent, universal moulds or templates in hand, we can propose a typologically plausible organization of semantic potentials that have been measured synchronically. Put differently, we employ paths as matrices for mapping senses offered by a gram and propose a logical (both diachronic and conceptual) ordering of the components of a semantic network. We compare the synchronic variety of senses provided by a formation with universal developmental scenarios and arrange them (i.e. these synchronic senses) in such a way that they would match a given evolutionary pattern (*vide* Andrason 2010a: 1–63; 2011b: 1–50 and 2011c: 30–34). As a result, the gram's semantic potential (its set-theoretic union of polysemous senses) – and hence its total meaning – is understood as a fragment of a cline or a cluster of them (*vide* Van der Auwera and Gast 2011: 186–188, 281 and Andrason 2010a: 22, 2011a: 69–73, 2011b: 30–31, 2011c: 30–31, 34).

In this manner, all superficially unrelated or incompatible values – in accordance with the relatedness principle – are mapped within the same network and are chained by means of typological universals. They are comprehended as "frozen" vestiges of certain diachronic movements that, although not directly documented, are typologically plausible. Consequently, senses echo concrete diachronic stages (hypothesized by employing not concrete diachronic data but rather typological laws) during which older values were expanded to novel contexts and assumed new functions.

Since every synchronic property of a form corresponds to a precise stage of a certain diachronic phenomenon, the method has been labelled as "panchronic" (a combination of synchrony and diachrony) or "dynamic" (the present state of affairs depicted as a dynamic process; cf. Heine, Claudi, and Hünnemeyer 1991: 248, 251 and 259, Nichols and Timberlake 1991, Łozowski (2000: 32), Andrason 2010a: 18–19, 2011a: 69–73, 2011b: 28–34, 2011c: 17–21, and 2012a: 15, 18–20).[10] In the panchronic or dynamic approach we employ evolutionary templates (i.e. typological tendencies, dynamic laws, or developmental universals) and/or make use of concrete historical evolutions to posit a synchronically valid representation and classification of the meaning of a grammatical entity in a dynamic, process-like manner (cf. Andrason 2011b: 31–34, 2011c: 19–20, 2012b: 10–17).

[10] Grygiel (2005: 98) affirms that panchrony constitutes the most objective representation of languages understood as a spatial and temporal continuum.

1.2.3. Research strategy

Complying with the relatedness principle as well as with the constraint of non-derivability of less prototypical values from an allegedly inherent meaning, in the present study we aim to offer a typological solution to the problem of the gnomic *qatal* and show how the gnomic sense of the suffix conjugation should be chained to the remaining semantic potential of the gram. That is to say, by making use of certain typological universals, we will demonstrate how the gnomic value of the *qatal* has most probably arisen and how it should be networked to the remaining semantic load ofthe category. As a result, the gnomic use will cease to be aberrant and instead will be incorporated as a fully rational component of the grid that has emerged following certain typologically universal evolutionary scenarios. This will, in turn, lead to a more consistent and holistic understanding of the entire *qatal* category.

Since the *qatal* has been defined as a manifestation of the resultative path (Andersen 2000: 31, Cook 2002: 209–219, Andrason 2011a, 2013b) and as a materialization of a modal contamination path that the original resultative expression has followed (Andrason 2011a, 2012b, 2013c), the gnomic value has most probably arisen as a stage of this trajectory or as a stage on a cline that branches from the resultative track and its modally contaminated varieties.

Let us explain this assumption in more detail. It has recently been demonstrated that the statistical nucleus of the semantic potential of the *qatal* may be contained in its totality and viewed as a portion of the anterior track (Andrason 2010b: 610, 2011a: 281, 305–307, 2012a: 14–15, 38–41).[11] In this manner, present perfect (inclusive, resultative, frequentative, and experiential), indefinite, and definite past, as well as perfective and simple past functions, can be viewed as fully compatible and congruent – all of them being matched with consecutive stages on the anterior path.[12] It has moreover been argued that resultative-stative, stative, and present temporal values can be explained by employing a network of the simultaneous path (cf. Andrason 2011a: 282–283, 305–307, 2011b: 41–43, 2012a: 39)[13] while sporadic instances where the gram provides an evidential sense may be rationalized as having

[11] The anterior path is a sub-cline within the resultative track. Generally speaking, the anterior path predicts that resultatives evolve into perfects (first inclusive and resultative present perfects, later experiential and indefinite varieties) and then into past tenses (initially recent and discursive and subsequently general, remote and narrative). Moreover, during the development from a present perfect into a definite past, formations may experience another change, receiving an explicit aspectual making as a perfective (cf. Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994, Dahl 2000b, Cook 2002; for a far more detailed treatment of the anterior path and its relation to the resultative trajectory with all its sub-tracks, see Andrason 2011a: 35–45, 2011b: 10–16 and forthcoming (a)).

[12] Here belong pluperfect uses and certain future senses as well (Andrason 2011a and 2013b).

[13] The simultaneous path, another sub-cline in the resultative track, shows the manner in which resultative proper grams develop into present tenses (cf. Maslov 1988: 70–71, Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994: 74–78, Drinka 1998: 120, and especially Andrason forthcoming (a)). To be precise, the cline predicts that certain resultative proper grams evolve into simultaneous resultative presents (the main emphasis is put on the resulting state while the prior action is only merely suggested), subsequently into stative presents (resultative undertones become unavailable and the only remaining sense corresponds to a static quality or situation) and finally into simple present tenses (for a more detailed discussion of the simultaneous path, see Andrason 2011a: 40–45, 2011b: 13–15 and forthcoming (a)).

arisen due to the evidential path[14] (cf. Andrason 2010b: 623–624, 2011a: 282). Finally, certain modal functions of the gram – e.g. real counterfactual, unreal counterfactual, and real factual (precative) – have been classified as a manifestation of the modal contamination path of the original resultative input.[15]

In light of the dynamic definition of the *qatal* (i.e. as portions of the three subtrajectories of the resultative path), it is highly plausible that the same cline constitutes the basis for the gnomic usage. Thus, one may tentatively assume that there exists a conceptual and diachronic link between post-resultative grams (i.e. grams that develop along a resultative path reaching more and more advanced sections) and the gnomic function. In order to employ such a link as a binding mechanism that coordinates the gnomic *qatal* with the rest of the senses of the suffix conjugation, we must demonstrate the universal character of such a relation between the value of gnomicity and post-resultative grams. In particular, we are compelled to provide typological evidence showing that originally resultative grams and their diachronic successors are somehow predisposed to undergoing semantic extensions into the gnomic domain. Once the evolutionary relation between the post-resultatives and the gnomic sense has been established and its universal character explained, we will be able to use it as a matrix for networking the gnomic value of the *qatal* to the remaining space of its semantic map.

We will, however, start our study by making certain basic clarifications concerning the concepts of a "gnomic sense" and a "proverb" and by establishing a clear distinction between the two phenomena. More specifically, in the subsequent section (2.1.), we will discuss a purely formal textual phenomenon of proverbs, maxims, and anecdotes. Afterwards, in section 2.2., the gnomic sense will be defined and the most typical cross-linguistic means of its expression (grams that belong to the imperfective-present continuum) will be presented. Next, we will offer a detailed typological analysis of the relation that exists between the post-resultatives and the gnomic sense (section 2.3.).[16] After that, the gnomic use of the suffix conjugation will be studied. First, all

[14] In accordance with this path (the third sub-cline within the resultative track), certain resultative proper forms evolve into evidential grams following the following subsequent stages: a) inferential, based upon resulting visible traces; b) inferential, based upon general assumption and hearsay; and c) broad non-first-hand evidential (cf. Lindstedt 2000, Johanson 2000, 2003, Aikhenvald 2004: 112–117, 279–281, Andrason 2010b).

[15] Modal contamination codifies a process during which indicative formations (because of their consistent use in clearly modal contexts) gradually adopt the modal meaning of their environment as their own and are finally converted into genuine moods (Dahl 1985: 11, Hopper and Traugott 2003: 82, Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994: 25–26, Andrason 2011a: 300–304; cf. also Andrason 2011d: 6–8).

[16] It is important to note that an exact evolutionary connection between grams developing along the anterior cline and the gnomic sense has not yet been posited. For instance, Bybee, Perking, and Pagliuca (1994) do not establish any particular path linking the idea of gnomicity with resultatives, perfects, perfectives, and/or past tenses. This means that we cannot merely use a typological "gnomic cline", because such a cline has not yet been proposed. Certainly, scholars have long been aware of the relation between the gnomic value and resultatives, perfects, perfectives, and pasts, however, they have not designed an evolutionary model (a cline) where this value would be explicitly and precisely located. Therefore, the task of "discovering" a diachronic (and hence conceptual) connection between the gnomic value and verbal constructions evolving in accordance with the anterior path falls on the author of the present study. In other words, the current paper must include a special typological section dedicated to a universal relation between resultative diachronies (grams that develop along the anterior path) and the gnomic sense. We must clarify how the gnomic value is related to grams located at a given stage of the anterior path (or spanning certain por-

examples of the gnomic *qatal* in Proverbs will be introduced and classified in accordance with the typological evidence (section 3.1.), and then cases of the gnomic value of cognate forms in other Semitic languages will be discussed (section 3.2.). Finally, we will propose a typologically plausible link chaining the gnomic *qatal* to the remaining semantic potential of the gram. In this manner, a more holistic semantic map of the category will be posited, i.e. a map which includes both the characteristic senses as well as the less prototypical gnomic value (Section 4.).

2. Gnomic sense and its expressions

When discussing the issue of the gnomic sense, important distinctions must be made. First, one needs to differentiate between the formal level (proverbial texts, a literary genre that expresses timeless truths) and the semantic level (a gnomic sense or the value of universal truth).[17] Furthermore, one must acknowledge that the gnomic value itself can be conveyed by various grammatical constructions. Given the inherent polysemy of grams, a semantic domain – the gnomic value, included – can be expressed by several types of forms. Put differently, since grams are regularly polysemous, they almost by definition overlap in certain areas and hence parts of their semantic maps intersect.[18] In our research, we will describe two exemplary types of formations that are cross-linguistically employed to convey the gnomic value: gnomic imperfectives or broad presents (grams that are regarded as the most prototypical expressions of the concept of gnomicity; cf. section 2.2.) and post-resultative grams that frequently can transmit the idea of gnomicity (cf. section 2.3.).

2.1. Proverbs and their "tenses"

Proverbs and maxims constitute an environment that is particularly propitious for the use of forms in a gnomic sense. They are defined as a "traditional, conversational, didactic genre with […] a potential free conversational turn [and] preferably with figurative meaning" (Norrick 1985: 78) which typically expresses general principles that may be treated as omnitemporal rules (Frykenberg 1996: 98–99). It is also important to notice that proverbs function as almost complete "small" texts. This means that they are not grammatically tied to the remaining part of the utterance or discourse, being instead only related to it at a conversational or pragmatic level (Friedman 1999: 140). *De facto*, maxims may constitute short stories or, in an ex-

tions of it). We must specify the exact location of the gnomic sense and its stage on the anterior trajectory. Only once the gnomic sense has been incorporated into the model of the anterior path, and the exact position of the gnomic stage in the entire map has been established, will it be possible to employ this path as a template for chaining the gnomic *qatal* to the remaining portion of its semantic potential. As a result, the needed, extensive and purely linguistic typological study will lengthen the present article.

[17] Rogland (2003) incorrectly claims that both terms lack precision.

[18] For instance, the concept of futurity may be conveyed by properly future grams, "present" tenses (i.e. formations that are usually labelled as present tenses or that typically function as such), agentive modal expressions and subjunctives (syntactic moods), or even by post-resultative constructions (i.e. formations that derive from resultative proper grams).

treme case, elaborated anecdotes relating certain events that are not directly connected to the rest of the text. Such anecdotes may thus communicate events and situations – disconnected from the main narration or discourse line – presenting them as successive historical actions. Only a proverb, maxim, or, especially, anecdote in its entirety – viewed as a message in its totality – is relevant to the text. Its "internal" temporal organization may, on the contrary, be completely independent of the argument of the discourse or narration.

Given their grammatical "independency", proverbs, maxims, and anecdotes may employ virtually any verbal taxis, tense, aspect, or mood with all possible taxis, aspectual, temporal, and modal values. As already explained, proverbs may constitute short descriptions or small texts on their own. The message they carry or the situation they create – truths derivable from the whole story – is omnitemporal and gnomic, but this is not necessarily the case for the verbal forms themselves that are employed in a proverbial fragment. Thus, examples where futures, perfects, pasts, or modal formations are used in maxims or small complete anecdotic texts do not *per se* trigger a gnomic interpretation of such forms. As a result, it is not necessary that grams employed in a gnomic genre express a gnomic value. Quite the opposite, they may function as genuine futures, perfects, pasts, or moods.[19]

2.2. Gnomic sense and its expressions

Among all senses that may be conveyed by grams in proverbs, maxims, and anecdotes, it is possible to distinguish one which could be labelled as properly gnomic. This value or semantic domain has been defined as "a (subjectively assumed) universal truth", i.e. a universal truth that may be subjective.[20]

The gnomic value is most commonly conveyed by certain imperfective grams, especially by so-called "gnomic imperfectives"[21] (Bertinetto and Lenci 2010: 17, 29, see also Friedmann 1999, Rogland 2003, Cook 2005). According to Bertinetto and Lenci (2010: 18, 24, 28), a gnomic imperfective gram expresses law-like generalizations with a strong normative character which represent exemplary properties of an individual or of a class of individuals and which are valid for a determined period of time. However, gnomic imperfectives – besides its central gnomic cord – typically provide other "collateral" values, closely related to the idea of a universal truth. In particular, gnomic imperfectives constitute *de facto* a collection of more specific senses such as habitual (2.a), attitudinal-potential (2.b-c), generic (2.d), and

[19] Rogland (2003: 22) correctly criticizes the opinion that proverbs should use normally a form that conveys general truths, viz. a present tense, because they *per definitionem* express general truths. In his opinion, this is an oversimplification, because proverbs in various languages commonly use past tenses. Thus, although the present tense is cross-linguistically frequent in proverbs, it cannot be defended that it is the proper tense for sayings and maxims. According to Rogland, languages are very lax in selecting tenses in gnomic statements and general truths therefore can be found in the three temporal spheres. Hence, they are expressed not only by present tenses but also by past and future grams (*ibid*.: 22).

[20] This definition may be derived from Bertinetto and Lenci (2010) and was suggested to me by Pier Marco Bertinetto in an e-mail exchange on 14.08.2012.

[21] Broad or general presents constitute a sub-class of imperfective grams. These are imperfective constructions narrowed to the present time frame.

individual-level[22] (2.e) value. Inversely, the four previously mentioned semantic nuclei are regularly extended to gnomic readings. This also means that if the four senses (habitual, attitudinal-potential, generic, and individual-level) have been grammaticalized as independent grams, such gram types typically develop a gnomic force.[23]

(2) a.
John easily **gets** angry with his colleagues

b.
John **smokes** cigars

c.
John **speaks** Swahili

d.
Dogs **have** four legs

e.
Elina **is** Finnish

It should be noted that the activity or situation conveyed by the predicate in gnomic imperfective formations is characteristically bound by "quasi-universal" quantifiers, such as the adverbs *always*, *normally*, *typically*, *usually*, etc. (Bertinetto and Lenci 2010:25). This "quasi-universality" implies that general gnomic statements admit of exceptions (Krifka *et al*. 1995). They rather refer to a potential capacity or role of the individual and hence may be violated in a concrete actualization while still remaining valid for normal or prototypical circumstances (Bertinetto and Lenci 2010: 25–26 and Boneh and Doron 2010: 352 and 355). This property of gnomic imperfectives has led to the conclusion that such formations are best explained by making use of intensional models (Bertinetto and Lenci 2010: 28). Thus, gnomic sentences do not express propositions concerning the actual world, but rather "statements that need to be evaluated with respect to a contextually determined set of possible worlds or situations" (Bertinetto and Leci 2010: 28). In that manner, the gnomic imperfectives – the most typical expression of the gnomic sense – display the following characteristics: (1) they tolerate exceptions, (2) express law-like truths, and (3) by accounting for potential functions of the subject, fail to necessitate a concrete actualization (*ibid*: 27–28).

[22] An individual-level predicate is true throughout the existence of an individual. When an individual-level predicate occurs in past tense, it gives rise to what is called a lifetime effect (Carlson 1977, Kratzer 1989 and Chierchia 1995, Carlson and Pelletier 1995).
[23] It should be observed that all of these values/grams also imply a degree of durativity and stativity.

2.3. Anterior path grams as expressions of the gnomic sense

As already mentioned, given the principle of polysemy, it should be possible to express the semantic domain of gnomicity – apart from conveying it by gnomic imperfectives – also by means of other types of grammatical formations. This being said, an immediate question arises: what other grams can convey gnomic nuances?[24]

Having defined the concept of gnomicity and having described gnomic imperfectives – constructions that constitute the main device in expressing the gnomic meaning – we can propose a set of properties which should characterize a gram that is employed with a gnomic value. First, formations that are used with a gnomic force should denote potentially subjective universal truths. That is to say, they are required to introduce personal or universal normative generalizations, specifying exemplary traits of individuals that hold for a determined period of time. Moreover, their meaning is likely to be somehow related to the nuances of habituality, potentiality, and characterization (generic and individual-level domain) that typically co-occur in gnomic imperfectives. By doing so, such expressions – although still viewed as universal truths – would tolerate exceptions and fail to require actualizations. Since habituals, potentials, generics, and individual-level formations typically develop gnomic readings, if a gram is employed with a habitual, potential, and characterizing force, it is probable that it could also convey a gnomic value. For instance, taking into consideration the fact that habituals commonly create intensional situations and lend themselves to gnomic readings (Boneh and Doron 2010: 360, cf. also Palmer 2001: 179 and Hellenthal 2007: 31), one may assume that grams that convey any type of a habitual value would be suitable for gnomic extensions; in certain contexts, they may be interpreted as gnomic formations (Boneh and Doron 2008: 321; vide also see Carlson 1977 and Krifka *et al*. 1995).

Other types of grammatical constructions which – alongside the gnomic imperfectives and broad present tenses – have been reported to express gnomic nuances are perfects, perfectives, and past tenses (i.e. grams that develop along the resultative cline and, in particular, along the anterior cline). This property of perfects, perfectives, and past formations seems to be quite well-documented cross-linguistically (cf. Friedman 1999 and Rogland 2003; cf. also Norrick 1985:3, Spasov, Topolińska

[24] Given that the chaining is required to be based on typological "universals" (or under a less categorical assumption, on common evolutionary scenarios), in this section, we will analyse typological data from a broad spectrum of non-Semitic languages. What we are trying to do in this section is to show a common developmental and thus conceptual link between grammatical categories developing along the anterior cline and the semantic domain of gnomicity. To be precise, we will demonstrate that grammatical categories (concrete grams from distinct languages) which otherwise evolve along the anterior past (resultative proper constructions > young anteriors > old anteriors > past tenses), besides gradually acquiring values typical of these categories, also (although with a different frequency and intensity) convey gnomic values.

It is important to clearly distinguish between a semantic domain, on the one hand (i.e., a sense, a specific value or a piece of information conveyed by a form), and a grammatical category (or a form), on the other. For example, the label "future" can refer to two distinct phenomena. First, it can indicate a concrete sense conveyed by a given form which also provides other senses (observe that the sense of futurity can be conveyed by grams that are defined as present tenses, moods, or even past tenses). Second, it can refer to a grammatical category of a future tense, i.e. to a category whose most typical uses cover the domain of futurity (observe that future tenses besides conveying the idea of future also possess other common semantic properties).

and Spasov 1986:10, 47). However, no typological explanation of the phenomenon has been proposed thus far. First, scholars have failed to determine the exact location of the stage where the extension from a post-resultative sense to a gnomic value takes place. And secondly, they have likewise failed to define the nature of this "surprising" trait of post-resultatives; that is to say, they have not clarified the difference in the compatibility with the gnomic sense displayed by non-advanced (resultative proper or young perfects) and advanced grams (old perfects, and (perfective) pasts).[25]

As previously explained, the anterior and simultaneous tracks constitute two major developmental trends within the resultative path. This inversely means that resultative proper inputs typically evolve along two different clines: the anterior one and the simultaneous one. When developing in accordance with the latter scenario (characteristic of non-dynamic or adjectival roots), they transmute into broad, general present tenses, passing through the stage of statives (cf. Andrason forthcoming (b)). Thus, they are typologically suitable to acquire functions characteristic of gnomic imperfectives. Especially, in their last stage – when they operate as general present tenses indistinguishable from presents that have arisen from properly imperfective grams (cf. the preterite-present verbs in Germanic languages) – they are entirely compatible with the gnomic domain. This indicates that the connection between these types of grams and the gnomic value is "natural" and evident. Developing towards the stage of a broad general (imperfective) present and having previously acquired the stative sense (also typical of gnomicity), they unsurprisingly lend themselves to gnomic extensions (cf. a similar observation in Rogland 2003:24). The interesting and troublesome matter is the relation between the other type of post-resultative formation (i.e. those that are situated along the anterior path) and the gnomic domain. Why can resultative proper grams, perfects, and perfective or simple past tenses express the gnomic value? Is it possible to posit a universal law that connects such grams to the gnomic sense and thus to establish a solid conceptual-diachronic linkage that would explain the gnomic sense of the BH *qatal*?

In this section of the paper, we will provide extensive typological evidence that will enable us to posit a systematic connection between post-resultatives (resultative proper 2.3.1., young anteriors 2.3.2., old anteriors 2.3.3., and pasts 2.3.4.) and the gnomic sense. In this way, we will propose a universal evolutionary scenario – a path – that links such grams and the idea of gnomicity. Consequently, an "aberrant" behaviour of perfects and pasts will be explained and cognitively justified. Having ascertained the exact nature of this commonly noticed connection, we will be able to explain the relation between the anterior path *qatal* (i.e. the dominant portion of the semantic space of the BH suffix conjugation) and its gnomic variety.

2.3.1. Resultative proper

Resultative proper grams (such as the English *is written* or the Spanish *está escrito*) constitute diachronic inputs of the anterior path; it is from them that perfects and (perfective) past tenses arise. In their most prototypical usage, such constructions

[25] These labels will be explained later in this section.

convey a complex sense or a two-fold piece of information; they express static non-dynamic qualities of a being or thing, viewed as resulting from previously performed activities (Maslov 1988: 64, Jaxontov 1988: 101, Sil'nickij 1988:88, 96–97). Additionally, resultative proper grams typically display an intransitive and (if derived from dynamic and transitive roots) de-transitive force (Nedjalkov 2001: 929).

However, typological data teach us that resultative proper formations also are commonly employed in a gnomic function, that is, to express general truths, habitual states, or permanent – potentially universal – situations. In this usage, resultative proper grams may appear with typical quasi-universal quantifiers such as *always*, *usually*, *typically*, *normally*, or *never* and refer to timeless everlasting properties, typical of an individual or a class. Although the idea of the prior action which has triggered the present state is still available, the temporal duration of this state is hereby expanded from the ongoing present to a general and omni-temporal present. The resultant static condition is not only current but also permanent.[26]

As indicated by evidence provided by several Indo-European branches such Germanic (Icelandic (3.a), English (3.b), and Vilamovicean (3.c)), Slavic (Polish (3.d) and Russian (3.e)) and Romance (Spanish (3.f) and French (3.g)), as well as from the Niger Congo family (Mandinka (3.h)), it possible to argue that there is virtually no restriction in the usage of resultative proper constructions in gnomic statements. Resultative proper locutions – when situated in a present time sphere – may indicate not only actual or transitory characteristics (current results of former activities) but also, if the context requires and the enunciator wishes, stable and permanent qualities derivable from previous actions. These invariant or permanent conditions may subsequently be viewed as typical, general, and universal, thus giving rise to gnomic uses.

(3) a.

Spánverjar	**eru**	alltaf	**komnir**	seint
spaniards	are	always	come	late

Spaniards always come late

b.

Russians **are** usually **drunk**

c.

Dy	oüta	**zajn**	**gyrjyt**	diöh	dy	benzyn
the	cars	are	propelled	by	the	gas

The cars are propelled by gas

[26] It is important to note that resultative proper constructions commonly offer three main senses. As already mentioned, they are extensively employed with the sense of a resultative proper – two portions of the semantic information (i.e. the prior action and the resulting state) are equally important. However, they also can convey the value of a resultative stative and stative with non-resultative nuances (see for instance the Akkadian *parsāku*; Huehnergard 2005: 19 and Andrason 2011: 186–206). Again, one should clearly distinguish between a grammatical category and the senses it can convey. The three values offered by the *parsāku* and other resultative proper grams correspond to cross-linguistically common semantic domains with which resultative proper construction are usually compatible.

d.
Chłopcy z mojej klasy **są** zwykle **zmęczeni**
boys from my class are usually tired
The boys from my class are usually tired

e.
Магазины всегда **закрыты** во время рождественских праздников
shops always closed in time Christmas holidays
Shops are always closed during the Christmas holidays[27]

f.
Los finlandeses normalmente **están** **deprimidos**
the Finns typically are depressed
Finns are typically depressed

g.
Les igloos **sont** **formés** de blocs de neige compacté
the igloos are made of blocks of snow compacted
Igloos are made of compacted snow blocks

h.
M **be** **sabatiriŋ** Basse
I am lived Basse
I live in Basse

It must also be observed that, just like exemplary gnomic imperfectives, this type of formation tolerates exceptions (cf. a Spanish example in 4.a), does not require a concrete actualization (cf. Polish and Mandinka examples in 4.b-c), and expresses potential-attitudinal activities (4.d). This almost "innate" compatibility of resultative proper grams and the gnomic domain becomes evident if one considers their highly frequent usage in overt generic statements, e.g. in definitions, classifications, and exemplifying descriptions (cf. the English expressions *is defined as*, *is agreed that*, *is called*, *is labelled*, *is referred to*, *is characterized by*, etc.; 4.e). This usage of resultative constructions in definitions, permanent prescriptions, and laws is extremely common, being documented in an impressive number of languages: e.g. Polish (*Ta ulica jest nazwana imieniem słynnego pisarza* 'This street is named after a famous writer', *Jest wszem znane* 'It is known to everyone'), Russian (*известно всем* 'It is known to everybody'), Spanish (*Está prohibido fumar en las estaciones de tren* 'smoking is forbidden at train stations'), French (*Il est convenu d'être indulgent envers les médias locaux* 'It is expected/accepted to (i.e. one should) be indulgent towards the local media', *Il est issu de la famille des Bourbons* 'He comes from the family of the Bourbons', *Il est interdit d'interdire* 'it is forbidden to forbid'), Icelandic (*það er viðurkennt að* 'it is accepted that') and many others.

[27] This example shows that the auxiliary *be*-type verb is not obligatory in resultative formations in general and in their gnomic usage in particular.

(4) a.
Aunque este Juguete funcione,
although this toy works
Although this toy works,

los juguetes de China **están** siempre **rotos**
the toys from China are always broken
Chinese toys are always broken

b.
Banki **są** **zamknięte** wieczorem ale ten jest teraz otwarty
banks are closed in-the-evening but this is now open
Banks are [typically] closed although this one is open now

c.
Luŋ-wo-luŋ a **be** **saasaariŋ**.
every day he is been.sick
He is sick every day.

Bari a maŋ saasaa saayiŋ
but he is.not sick now
But today he is not sick

d.
Humans **are given** free choice and free will

e.
A triangle **is defined as** a 3-sided polygon

2.3.2. Young anteriors

Young anteriors are grams that are typically employed in dynamic (and transitive, if possible; Nedjalkov 2001: 928–929, 932, 937–938) present perfect senses. More specifically, they function as inclusive, iterative, resultative, experiential, and indefinite perfects.[28] Amongst all of the archetypal perfect uses, it is possible to distinguish three that are particularly propitious for generating gnomic readings; as will be demonstrated in the following discussion, inclusive, iterative, and experiential perfects almost regularly prompt gnomic extensions.

An inclusive perfect expresses an activity or a state that persists without disruption from a determined moment in the past to the present temporal point (Jónsson 1992: 129–145). By indicating a permanent state or an activity that originated in the past but that, since then, constitutes an invariant – or rule-like – phenomenon in the subject's world, the value of an inclusive perfect is close to the concept of habituality and gnomicity. This constancy – or quasi-universality – can be overtly expressed by means of adverbs and expressions such as *always*, *usually*, or *since ever* (5.a-c). Moreover, formations that are employed with an inclusive perfectal force, in their

[28] These labels will be explained later in this section.

habitual and gnomic readings, do not require actualization but tolerate exceptions and indicate potential situations (5.d).

(5) a.
God **has** always **loved** men (= God loves men)

b.
Humans **have** always **had** two legs and two arms (= Humans have two legs)

c.
Humans **have** always **lived** on Earth (= Humans live on earth)

d.
I **have** always **been** a teacher (= I am a teacher although I am not teaching right now)

In cases where telic verbs are employed, the perfect does not express a continuous state or uninterrupted activity, but rather implies a habit of repeated independent actions that, however, may be viewed as an incessant custom of achieving something. This is what has been referred to as frequentative perfect (e.g. the Portuguese perfect in Squartini and Bertinetto 2000:409). Being semantically akin to the habitual domain, such perfects commonly introduce characteristic properties of individuals, presenting them as generally valid or universal (6.a–b). Again, exceptions are tolerated and a nuance of potentiality is available (6.c–d).

(6) a.
In Gambia houses **have been made** of mud and straw (= People build houses in that manner)

b.
The justice system **has killed (been killing)** innocent men for ages (= The justice system kills innocent men)

c.
In this country, parents **have** always severely **punished** wicked children; but not this couple

d.
Tom **has smoked** his entire life (= He smokes even though he is not smoking at this precise moment)

Likewise, the experiential perfect can be employed with a gnomic force by suggesting that the subject possesses a given quality because a certain activity or situation constitutes his or her experience. Experiential perfects typically indicate that the subject has had the experience of performing a certain activity (e.g. *I have read*

Principia Mathematica; Jónsson 1992: 129–145). This action may have taken place in a distant past although this past time moment cannot overtly be expressed. In the gnomic function, experiential perfects denote stable, constant, general, and (subjectively) universal qualities. However, in contrast with the universal and frequentative varieties, the universality is related not to the perfectal activity itself, but to the idea of current relevance typically conveyed by such anteriors. Namely, it corresponds to the slot of the information that is inferred from the previous action and that has been lasting from the moment the event occurred until the present time. This inferential portion of the meaning – and not the experienced event itself – may be viewed as invariant, typical, habitual, generic, and hence gnomic (7.a–d). This means that contrary to inclusive and frequentative perfects, the activity conveyed by a verbal root in this type of anterior is incompatible with the intensional domains of non-actualization or potentiality as well as with the value of habituality. It corresponds to a single event, an undeniable fact that has taken place. The inferences drawn from this experienced episode may, however, be understood as habitual and permanent possibly, thus triggering gnomic interpretations.

(7) a.
I **have seen** God (= I believe in God)

b.
They **have seen** the evil of the world (= They know it)

c.
This person **has killed** a man (= He is a murderer)

d.
My child **has graduated** from law school (= He is a lawyer)

In certain contexts, present perfects introduce independent – each time fully accomplished – events that have occurred on more than one occasion, without constituting a solid continuous sequence (cf. inclusive and frequentative perfects) and without triggering inferences that could provide such a habitual reading (experiential perfect). This is a type of anterior which could be labelled as "iterative indefinite perfect",[29] e.g. *each time he has come he has asked for my sister* (compare with the frequentative perfect *he has been coming here many times today/this month…*). Obviously, due to the fact that they indicate a habit of performing individual actions, such iterative indefinite perfects, may be extended to a gnomic usage. The repetition of an event can be viewed as habitual and thus as forming a stable invariant routine in a person's life:

[29] The indefinite perfect expresses events that clearly have occurred in the past. The main emphasis is placed on the past action itself without, however, situating it at a definite moment in the past. The verbal form is not accompanied by any overt past temporal specifier (Lindstedt 2000: 369 and 379).

(8)
Each time humans **have tried** to defy the gods, they **have been punished**

Additionally, negative varieties of the above mentioned types of the anterior, so-called "anti-perfects", commonly express permanent states or generic activities, and thus are compatible with a gnomic usage:

(9) a.
Humans **have** never **lived** on Jupiter (= Humans do not live there)

b.
Houses in Gambia **have** never **been built** out of bricks (= People in Gambia do not build houses out of bricks)

c.
Humans **have** never **flown** (= Humans do not fly)

d.
Humans **have** never **been** to Jupiter (= Humans do not live on Jupiter)

Having described semantic properties of young anteriors, it is evident that these grams almost *per definitionem* incline themselves towards habitual, generic, and characteristic – and hence gnomic – uses. Since young anterior formations commonly offer inclusive, frequentative, experiential, indefinite, iterative, and anti-perfect senses – values that naturally give rise to gnomic extensions – they are automatically suitable for the gnomic usage as well. In order to further illustrate this phenomenon, in addition to the English examples introduced previously, one may provide data from Icelandic (10), Spanish (11), and Classical Greek (12).

The Icelandic perfect – a young anterior gram employed as an inclusive, frequentative, resultative, experiential, and indefinite perfect – can convey habits, customs, characteristic states, and conditions that may be potential and non-actualisable:

(10) a.

Ég	**hef**	**starfað**	sem	þjónn	alla	æfi
I	have	worked	as	waiter	all	life

I have worked (been working) as a waiter all my life

b.

Hann	**hefur**	**reykt**	síðan	alltaf
he	has	smoked	since	always

He has always smoked (been smoking forever)

c.

Hann	**hefur**	alltaf	**verið**	heimskur
he	has	always	been	stupid

He has always been stupid

d.
Íslendingar **hafa** alltaf **varið** landið sitt
Icelanders have always defended country their
Icelanders have always defended their country

e.
Hann **hefur** **þekkt** hamingju
he has known happiness
He has known happiness

f.
Hann **hefur** **syngdað**
he has sinned
He has sinned

The young anterior in Spanish – a *have*-type perfect – may also sometimes be employed with a gnomic force. It should be noted that the Spanish gram has advanced somewhat along the anterior path. It namely fails to be used in a prototypical inclusive perfect sense, having instead acquired the value of a hodiernal (today) and/or hesternal (yesterday) past. This means that a common gnomic extension of the inclusive perfect use is lacking in Spanish and thus its accessibility to the domain of gnomicity has been reduced.

(11) a.
Siempre **ha** **cometido** el mismo error
always he.has made the same mistake
He has always made the same mistake (= He does it even now)

b.
Este hombre **ha** **matado**
this man he.has killed
This man has killed (= He is a murderer)

c.
He **estado** en China
I.have been in China
I have been to China (= I know this country)

d.
Nunca **he** **pecado**
never I.have sinned
I have never sinned (= I am not a sinner)

e.
Las mujeres nunca **han** **tenido**
the women never they.have had
Women have never had

los mismos derechos que los hombres
the same rights as the men
the same rights as men (= They still lack some rights)

The Perfect in Classical Attic Greek – a resultative proper and present perfect gram – may also be employed with a gnomic value, and thus denote universal truths. This universality is based upon the experience of having performed an action (experiential perfect) or stems from a continuity/habituality of situations or actions that have been occurring since a given moment in the past (inclusive, frequentative, and iterative experiential perfect; cf. Goodwin 1893, Smith 1920, Rydberg-Cox 2000)

(12) (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.1.38)

ἡ	ἀταξία	πολλοὺς	ἤδη	ἀπολώλεκεν
the	non-discipline	many	already	has ruined

The lack of discipline has already ruined [has been ruining] many men (Rydberg-Cox 2000)[30]

2.3.3. Old anteriors: past tenses with common perfect uses

Old anteriors are constructions that function as prototypical perfects as well as definite past tenses. In other words, they are past tenses which have not yet been reduced to solely past functions. In various languages, such formations are able to convey gnomic nuances, although this capacity is usually limited to typical perfectal contexts, i.e. when the gram is employed as an inclusive, frequentative, or experiential anterior as well as an anti-perfect. In other words, since old perfects may preserve some of their exemplary perfectal uses, such perfectal uses may, in turn – as was the case for young anteriors – give rise to gnomic extensions. In these instances, the form conveys gnomic value with all of its co-strings such as habituality, generic characterization of individuals and classes, potentiality, and non-actualization (i.e. tolerance of exceptions).

For example, in French, the *passé composé* is an archetypal present perfect and perfective past, especially as far as the spoken language and discursive texts are concerned. In environments that are typical of present perfects, the locution may provide gnomic values, particularly if it is accompanied by overt quantifiers such *toujours* 'always', *souvent* 'often', or *jamais* 'never'. In these cases, the gram expresses permanent situations, generic properties, or truths that are subjectively valid and/or omnitemporal (13; Grevisse 1975: 727–728)

(13) a.

J'	**ai**	**travaillé**	toujours	dans	cette	usine
I	have	worked	always	in	this	factory

I have always worked in this factory (= it is my job)

b.

Un	verre	de	vin
a	glass	of	wine

A glass of wine

[30] The Greek quotes have been obtained via the Perseus Project at Tufts University (www.perseus.tufts.edu).

n’	**a**	jamais	**fait**	de	mal	à	personne
not	has	never	done	some[31]	harm	to	anyone

has never done harm to anybody (= it is good)

The Akkadian language also possesses in its verbal repertory a gram – referred to as the *iprus* – that in most of its uses functions as a present perfect (especially in negatives) and past (either perfective or simple [preterite]; Huehnergard 2005: 19, 158 and Andrason 2010c: 333–337). Besides these common uses, the *iprus* may likewise be employed with a gnomic extratemporal value, introducing invariant or permanent situations, generic properties and typical activities (cf. Mayer 1992, Metzler 2002: 380, 743, Loesov 2004: 426–428).

(14) (YOS 11, 2:1–6)

a-ra-aḫ-ḫi	ra-ma-ni	a-r[a]-a-ḫi	pa-ag-ri
I.fertilize	myself	I.fertilize	body.my

I fertilize myself, I fertilize my body

ki-ma	na-ru-um	**ir-ḫu-u$_2$**	ki-ib-ri-ša
like	river	(has.)fertilized	banks.her

Like the river has fertilized [*or* has been fertilizing] its banks (Loesov 2004: 428)

Similarly, the so-called *l* past tense in Polish, both in its perfective and imperfective variety, may convey gnomic nuances. The Polish *l* past tense is a prototypical old anterior most commonly employed as a present perfect and past tense (either perfective or imperfective). In various perfectal uses, the gram expresses habitual currently relevant activities, permanent characteristics, or stable truths, thus giving rise to gnomic readings:

(15) a.

Zawsze	**mieszkałem**	tutaj
always	I.lived-IMPF	here

I have always lived here (= This is my residence place)

b.

Człowiek	zawsze	**grzeszył**
man	always	sinned-IMPF

Man has always sinned (= This is his nature)

c.

W	moim	życiu	**poznałem**	co	to	ból	i	rozpacz
in	my	live	I.knew-PRF	what	it	pain	and	despair

I have known pain and despair in my life (= I know them now)

d.

Widziałem	zło	tego	świata
I.saw-IMPF	evil	of.this	world

I have seen the evil of this world (= I know it now)

[31] The lexeme *de* is in fact a preposition ‘of, from’ but in negatives it is used with the force of an indefinite article.

e.
Nigdy nie **zgrzeszyłem**
never not I.sinned-PRF
I have never sinned (= I am a sinless man / I am not a sinner)

f.
Zwierzęta nigdy nie **mówiły** ludzką mową
animals never not they.spoke-IMPF human language
Animals have never spoken in a human language (= They do not talk)

It should be noted that the accessibility of such old anteriors to the gnomic sense strongly depends on their tolerance of specific perfectal contexts. This means that if the gram is still commonly employed as an inclusive and frequentative perfect, the possibility of it being used with a gnomic force is high. However, more typically, old anteriors are only common in the experiential perfect use. As already explained, gnomic readings of experiential perfects are quite particular because they stem from the inferential slot of meaning conveyed by an experiential perfect (cf. section 2.3.2.). For this reason, the gnomic usage of old anteriors seems to be more restricted than that of young perfects.

2.3.4. Past tenses

The last category located on the anterior path corresponds to prototypical past tenses, i.e. grams that in most cases function as definite pasts, while perfectal uses are normally expressed by other, younger formations. It must be emphasized that, although they are defined in grammar books as exemplary past tenses, these grams quite regularly provide certain additional semantic strings, especially those that reflect their perfectal "prehistory" (i.e. usages where, at earlier developmental stages, they functioned as present perfects). In other words, various past tenses admit some – unquestionably, highly restricted and infrequent – present perfect uses. Most commonly, such perfectal functions correspond to an experiential perfect and to an anti-perfect. This compatibility (which is certainly highly limited) with such experiential and "anti-perfectal" contexts enables a formation – in most of its functions approximating a definite past – to express gnomic truths. In so doing, it indicates stable, invariant, habitual, and typical situations, activities, or properties.

For instance in Classical Greek, the Aorist Indicative is a verbal formation that, in its most prototypical use, functions as a perfective past (observe that it is marked by a past marker, i.e. by the augment). Accordingly, it indicates past perfective (complete and/or completed) actions and events (Humbert 1954:141–144, Rijksbaron 1984: 12–15, 20, Hewson and Bubenik 1997: 28–34, 43–44). In light of the preponderance of this function, it is typically classified as a perfective past gram contrasting with the Imperfect (an imperfective past gram); both are marked by the augment (the past marker) and their main distinction is aspectual (Humbert 1954: 138, Rijksbaron 1984: 12, Hewson and Bubenik 1997: 29; see also Crespo, Conti, and Maquieira 2003:275–285). However, the Greek Aorist Indicative may also (especially in maxims and proverbs) express customary truths, omnipresent habits, permanent qualities, or activities typical of a class or an individual (Gilder-

sleeve 1900: 109–110, Humbert 1954: 145–146 and Rijksbaron 1984: 3–32). It should be noted that in such cases, the Aorist does not refer to the past but – given various contextual and pragmatic factors and as an exemplary young or old anterior gram – belongs to the present temporal sphere and indicates permanent and/or universal properties or situations (Thompson 1902: 320–321, Chantraine 1953: 178, Ruijgh 1971). This means that the universal or gnomic present value – besides being conveyed by the Present (a broad present tense) – is also expressed by the Aorist in Classical Greek.[32]

(16) a. (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 218)
παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω
he.suffered but and fool learned
But a fool has [always] learned from experience (But once he has suffered the fool realizes this)

b. (Isocrates, *To Demonicus 1.6*)
κάλλος μὲν γὰρ ἢ χρόνος ἀνήλωσεν ἢ νόσος ἐμάρᾱνε
beauty indeed for either time wasted or disease withered
For beauty is either wasted by time or withered by disease (Smyth 1956: 432)

c. (Isocrates, *To Demonicus 1.6*)
ῥώμη . . . μετὰ μὲν φρονήσεως **ὠφέλησεν**,
strength with indeed good.sense profited
Strength with judgment does good,

ἄνευ δὲ ταύτης πλείω τοὺς ἔχοντας ἔβλαψε
without but her more these having harmed
but without, it does greater harm to those that possess it

d. (Plato, *Laws 720D*)
ὁ δὲ ἐλεύθερος διδάσκει τὸν ἀσθενοῦντα αὐτόν,
the but free.man instructs the being.sick himself
The physician who is free instructs the patient himself

καὶ οὐ πρότερον ἐπέταξε
and not prescription put
and does not give a prescription

πρὶν ἄν τῃ ξυμπείσῃ
until PART[33] him may.have.convinced
until he in some way succeeds in convincing him

Similarly, in French one may find a highly advanced past tense that allows gnomic uses. The *passé simple* – commonly defined as a narrative simple past tense – is sometimes employed in order to express atemporal general universal truths or cus-

[32] Perhaps, in imitation of Greek conventions, Latin in certain cases uses its Perfectum (a prototypical present perfect and perfective or simple past) as a gnomic perfect.
[33] The lexeme *ἄν* is a particle indicating contingency.

tomary habits (Grevisse 1975: 725–726). As expected, this usage is particularly common in perfectal environments, especially with adverbs such as *toujours* 'always', *jamais* 'never', and *souvent* 'often'. In most such cases, the *passé simple* is restricted to gnomic genres such as maxims or anecdotes. It is *de facto* only in this proverbial usage that the gram reappears in the spoken language.

(17) a. (Grevisse 1976: 726)

Qu'	un	dîner	réchauffé	ne	**valut**	jamais	rien !
that	a	dinner	warmed-up	not	was.worth	never	nothing

A warmed-up dinner has never been worth anything (= it is worthless)

b. (*ibid.*)

Qui	ne	**sut**	se	borner	ne	sut	jamais	écrire
who	not	learned	himself	limit	not	learned	never	write

The one who has not learned how to limit himself, has never learned how to write[34] (= he does not know)

c. (Grevisse 1968: 1483)

Jamais	gourmand	ne	**mangea**	bon	hareng
never	greedy.one	not	ate	good	herring

A greedy person has never eaten a good herring (= he never eats it)

d.

Jamais	avare	ne	**fut**	riche
never	stingy.one	not	was	rich

A stingy person has never been rich(= he is never rich)

In a similar vein, albeit very sporadically, the simple past in Peninsular Spanish – a broad simple past tense – may denote extratemporal truths, habitual facts, or constant situations:

(18)

Quien	**tuvo**	**retuvo**
Who	had	had

Who has had [something], has had [it] (= someone who has had a quality, has always had some of it)

The fact that highly advanced past tenses gradually tend to disappear from the spoken language, and thus from any discursive perfectal contexts, and that their "spoken" and discursive character is typically preserved in frozen expressions such as proverbs or maxims (which, as already mentioned, are especially likely to contain gnomic imperfectives or broad present tenses), gives the impression that a past tense functions as a present tense. Put differently, being equivalent to the gnomic use of imperfectives and presents (by expressing habitual, generic, typical, and stable situations and activities) and having lost their properly perfectal nature (by failing to be

[34] The English translations are as literal as possible. As already mentioned, these examples are proverbs and hence their total conversational meaning is metaphorical.

employed as present perfects in discourse anymore), the perfectal uses of highly advanced past tenses, available in proverbs, are perceived as presents. However, they represent an older stage of the gram where it was commonly used with an inclusive, frequentative, experiential, and/or anti-perfect force, thus making it compatible with the domain of gnomicity.

2.3.5. Results of the typological study

Our data demonstrate that the gnomic sense is commonly conveyed by formations located on the anterior path. Resultative proper grams are especially frequent in the gnomic function. The number of resultative proper expressions used for gnomic statements is extremely large. They almost naturally express general truths, habitual states, or permanent – potentially universal – situations because the resultant state may be viewed not only as currently present or actual but also as permanent and thus universal. In this manner, resultatives overlap with gnomic imperfectives and broad presents; all of them are typically – and probably without restriction – means of expressing the semantic domain of gnomicity. This predisposition of resultative proper grams for gnomic extension stems from the fact that they typically include a nuance of stativity in their senses. As explained above, resultative proper formations are twofold semantic complexes in which a state is portrayed as acquired. This means that the nuance of a state is present in resultative proper constructions in its two most original uses as a resultative proper (two portions of the meaning are equally important) and resultative stative (the relevance of the resultant state is emphasized while the important of the prior action is less patent; cf. Andrason forthcoming (a)). Since the acquired (due to a prior action) state can be expanded to larger periods of time, resultative proper grams may indicate not only current resulting conditions but also permanent ones. Such permanent states (at least theoretically, acquired due to a previous action) can thus be employed to express invariant truths.

Young anteriors are other formations that virtually *per definitionem* lend themselves to habitual, generic, and characteristic, and, hence, gnomic uses. This stems from the fact that these grams commonly offer inclusive, frequentative, and experiential perfect senses (as well as their negative counterparts; cf. their use as an anti-perfect) which naturally give rise to gnomic extensions. The inclusive and frequentative perfects express universal truths, portraying them as rules that have been holding (inclusive) or repeating (frequentative) since a moment in the past to the present. The experiential perfect does not represent an activity, expressed by the verb, as habitual or constantly occurring. This type of a perfect rather provides some inferences that, since there are currently relevant, may be extended from the present actuality to a permanent view.

Old anteriors may also be employed in a gnomic function, usually in typical perfectal contexts where they function as inclusive, frequentative, experiential, and anti-perfect. This signifies that the gnomic use of the old anteriors is limited to perfectal contexts, especially to those which characteristically stimulate gnomic extensions. Consequently, the accessibility of old anteriors to the gnomic value depends on their tolerance of a specific perfectal environment. Finally, since past tenses ad-

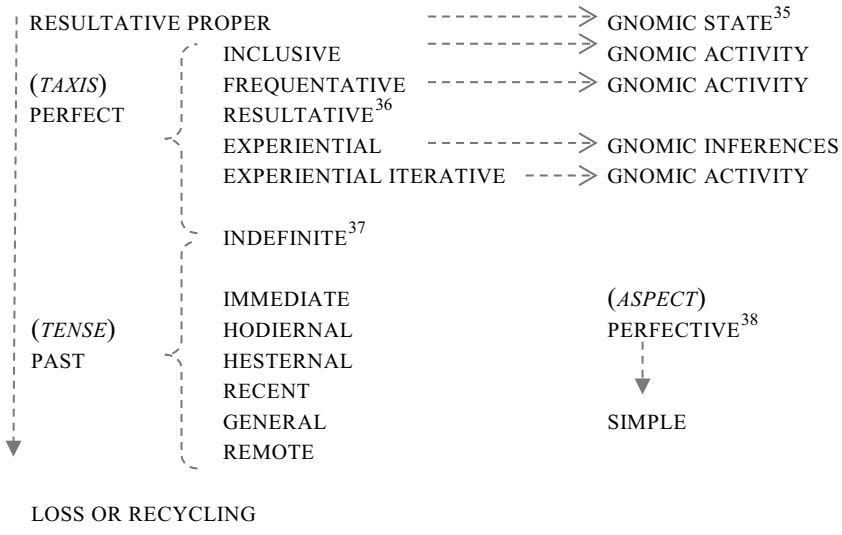

Figure 1. the anterior path and its gnomic "branch"[39]

mit some restricted and infrequent present perfect uses (especially, the experiential and anti-perfect one), they can express gnomic truths, indicating stable, invariant, habitual, and typical situations, activities, or inferred properties. Constituting an equivalent to the gnomic use of imperfectives and presents in proverbs or maxims, but having lost properly perfectal nature in discourse, such uses of the past tenses are regarded as "presents" instead of being linked to the inclusive, frequentative, experiential, and anti-perfect nature of the formation that may be preserved in proverbial texts.

[35] Due to the stative component in the meaning, and because of a typically intransitive and especially de-transitive effect, resultative proper constructions give rise to gnomic states and situations, and not to dynamic activities. In this regard, they contrast with perfects that introduce dynamic actions and can trigger dynamic gnomic senses.

[36] The resultative anterior introduces dynamic events, portraying them as highly relevant for the present state of affairs, e.g. *I cannot come to your party – I have caught the flu* (McCawley 1971).

[37] The indefinite perfect (labelled also as an indefinite past) is located between the present and past time spheres. It indicates clearly past events, without, however, specifying their temporal location. As for the former property, the gram approximates a past tense. However, given the latter characteristic, the formation behaves as a typical present perfect.

[38] As a definite past, the gram may undergo two (to some extent independent) types of evolution. One consists of increasing the temporal distance from the speaker's here-and-now: immediate > hodiernal (the same day or one day past) hesternal (yesterday's past) > recent > general (a person's life's past) and remote (historical and ancient) past. The other includes a transformation of the anterior into a perfective past and then into a simple past. This change is facultative and occurs in determined types of verbal systems. In should be noted that there is no precise stage-to-stage equivalence between the stages which link the indefinite past and various subcategories of the definite past on the one hand, and the development of the perfective past into its aspectually neutral variant, on the other.

[39] The vertical arrows in this figure symbolize the diachronic progression of resultative inputs on the anterior cline. The horizontal arrows stand for gnomic extensions (both conceptual and diachronic) of certain values developed in accordance with the anterior path.

To sum up, the propensity or compatibility of a gram with the gnomic domain seems to decrease with its progression on the anterior cline; it is typical and unrestricted for resultative proper grams, highly common for young anteriors, relatively widespread for old anteriors (as long as their present perfect uses are preserved), and rather infrequent – and conceptually disconnected – for past tenses. In light of the provided evidence, we may argue that the gnomic value constitutes a typical extension of the following senses located along the anterior path: resultative proper, inclusive perfect, frequentative perfect, and experiential perfect (as far as its inferences are concerned), as well as anti-perfect, which corresponds to negative perfect uses. This type of a semantic "enlargement" could be embraced under a common label, viz. "gnomic branch" within the anterior path, an extension that characterizes the evolution of original resultative formations which, during the stages of a resultative proper and a perfect (in particular, inclusive, iterative, and experiential perfects), develop the ability to be employed with a gnomic value.

3. Evidence

3.1. Biblical Hebrew – gnomic qatal in proverbs

As already explained, gnomic genres (e.g. proverbs), gnomic values (a semantic domain of subjectively assumed truth) and verbal forms that either appear in gnomic genres (it is possible to use virtually any taxis, tense, aspect, and mood in such this variety of text) or express a gnomic sense (e.g. gnomic imperfectives or broad present tenses) constitute different – although connected – phenomena. Proverbs certainly convey gnomic messages but the grams that appear in them may employ virtually any taxis, tense, aspect, and/or mood. The whole message – the situation depicted by a proverb – is atemporal, but not every verbal gram used in such "a small text" is necessarily so. Therefore the fact that a formation is used in proverbial texts does not *per se* trigger its understanding as a vehicle of the gnomic semantic domain. Only in some cases, do certain formations (most typically, gnomic imperfectives and/or broad present tenses) that appear in a gnomic genre *de facto* convey gnomic meaning.

Consequently, in our analysis of a gnomic use – whether alleged or real – of the BH *qatal*, only those instances of the suffix conjugation which, when appearing in an exemplary proverbial genre (e.g. in the book of Proverbs), express subjectively assumed universal truths (with typical co-strings, explained in Section 2. above), and which thus constitute semantic equivalents of a gnomic imperfective or a broad present of Indo-European languages, are worthy of analysis. In this section, we will show that one may encounter various instances where the *qatal* – found in Proverbs – can be understood as denoting subjective universal truths. This will demonstrate that the gram does (in certain cases) convey a gnomic value in a gnomic genre.[40]

[40] In our review, examples with stative verbs will be disregarded, because these predicates, when employed in a post-resultative form (such as the BH *qatal*), develop present – both actual and permanent, and hence universal – readings in accordance with the evolution along the simultaneous path. Put differently, since non-dynamic verbs in originally resultative constructions typically follow the simultaneous cline (acquiring senses corresponding to a stative present and present tense), their use for gnomic purposes is evident in contrast with the gnomic nature of certain perfects, perfectives, and past tenses that derive from resultative proper grams following the anterior cline.

In various cases, the gnomic value of the *qatal* form apparently stems from the fact that the gram is employed as an inclusive perfect (see examples 19.a–k, below). In such cases, the formation expresses an unceasing activity that has been going on for a period of time. This durative situation may be viewed as habitual, and thus give rise to generic or gnomic extensions. In this manner, an uninterrupted action that has begun in the past but which has been continuing to the present moment constitutes a permanent fact about the individual's life. It is interesting to note that such universal-perfect gnomic *qatals* usually alternate with clearly durative *yiqtols* (19.a–e), participial forms (19.f–h) or iterative *weqatals* (19.i). Furthermore, in a manner analogical to the *yiqtol* grams or participles, in all of the quoted examples, the *qatal* construction exemplifies a typical property of an individual, e.g. of a wise woman, the earth, God, oppressor, mocker, adulterer, parent, labourer, and scoffer.

(19) a.
חַכְמֹ֣ות נָ֭שִׁים **בָּ֣נְתָה** בֵיתָ֑הּ וְאִוֶּ֥לֶת בְּיָדֶ֝יהָ תֶּהֱרָֽסֶנּוּ
The wise woman **builds** [< **has** incessantly/continuously/habitually[41] **been building**] her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands (Prov. 14.1)

b.
תַּ֤חַת שָׁלֹושׁ֙ **רָ֣גְזָה** אֶ֔רֶץ וְתַ֖חַת אַרְבַּ֣ע לֹא־תּוּכָ֑ל שְׂאֵֽת׃
Under three things the earth **trembles** [< **has** incessantly/continuously /habitually **been trembling**], under four it cannot bear up (Prov. 30.21)

c.
עֵינֵ֣י יְ֭הוָה **נָצְר֣וּ** דָ֑עַת וַיְסַלֵּ֥ף דִּבְרֵי־בֹֽגֶד׃
The eyes of the Lord **watch** [< **have** incessantly/continuously/habitually **been watching**] over knowledge; but he frustrates the words of the unfaithful (Prov. 22: 12)

[41] The English translations with forms in the Present Perfect or Present Progressive Perfect (and with adverbs such as *incessantly* and *continuously* as well as with their extension towards the idea of gnomicity, the lexeme *habitually*) are principally employed in order to make a given perfect sense explicit. They are used as overt indicators of a determined perfect value from which the gnomic sense may have derived. Of course in various cases, such direct or literal "perfectal" renderings sound awkward and should hence be omitted in more refined translations. For instance, in example 19.a, the Present Progressive Perfect form, accompanied by the adverbs *incessantly*, *continuously*, and *habitually*, suggests that the gnomic value of the *qatal* may have its roots in the inclusive perfect senses. Thus, the English expressions in parentheses make an overt reference to the continuity of the action of building and taking care of one's house as opposed to someone who destroys it. This activity has supposedly started in the past and has, without interruption, been continuing until the narrator's present.

The English Present Perfects have also been employed in our translation because, just like the BH *qatal*, these grams evolve along the anterior path and are compatible with the idea of gnomicity. However, these English anterior-path constructions are not always the most adequate because, in English, the main means of conveying the gnomic value is by far the Simple Present tense. The Present Perfect and Present Progressive Perfect are certainly less acceptable. They have thus been chosen in our translations in order to preserve a possible link between certain perfectal senses/stages (inclusive, frequentative, and experiential perfect), on the one hand and the sense/stage of gnomicity, on the other. Again one should make a clear distinction between a sense (a semantic domain) and a grammatical category that conveys it. For further discussion of the issues related to translations, see section 4.2. below.

d.
נָ֭סוּס וְאֵין־רֹדֵ֣ף רָשָׁ֑ע וְצַדִּיקִ֥ים כְּכְפִ֝יר יִבְטָֽח׃
The wicked man **flees** [< **has** incessantly/continuously/habitually **been fleeing**] though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion (Prov. 28.1)

e.
תָּכִ֣ין בַּקַּ֣יִץ לַ֭חְמָהּ **אָגְרָ֣ה** בַקָּצִ֑יר מַאֲכָלָֽהּ׃
[The ant] stores[42] its provisions in the summer. It **gathers** [< **has [**incessantly/continuously/habitually **been gathering**] its food in the harvest time (Prov. 6:8)

f.
עֹשֵׁ֣ק־דָּ֭ל **חֵרֵ֣ף** עֹשֵׂ֑הוּ וּמְכַבְּדֹ֥ו חֹ֝נֵ֗ן אֶבְיֽוֹן׃
He who oppresses the poor **taunts** [< **has** incessantly/continuously/habitually **been taunting**] their Maker but whoever is kind to the needy honours God (Prov. 14:31)

g.
לֹ֣עֵג לָ֭רָשׁ **חֵרֵ֣ף** עֹשֵׂ֑הוּ שָׂמֵ֥חַ לְ֝אֵ֗יד לֹ֣א יִנָּקֶֽה׃
He who mocks the poor **taunts** [< **has** incessantly/continuously/habitually **been taunting**] their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished (Prov. 17:5)

h.
חוֹשֵׂ֣ךְ שִׁבְטֹ֣ו שׂוֹנֵ֣א בְנֹ֑ו וְ֝אֹהֲבֹ֗ו **שִׁחֲרֹ֥ו** מוּסָֽר׃
He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him **seeks** [< **has** incessantly/continuously/habitually **been seeking**] to discipline him (Prov. 13:24)

i.
כֵּ֤ן דֶּ֣רֶךְ אִשָּׁ֣ה מְנָאָ֑פֶת **אָכְלָ֥ה** וּ֝מָחֲתָ֗ה פִּ֥יהָ וְאָמְרָ֥ה לֹ֝א־פָעַ֗לְתִּי אָֽוֶן׃
This is the way of an adulteress: She **eats** [< **has** incessantly/continuously/ habitually **been eating**] and wiping her mouth and saying [used to say]: “I have done nothing wrong” (Prov. 30.20)

j.
נֶ֣פֶשׁ עָ֭מֵל **עָמְלָ֣ה** לֹּ֑ו כִּי־**אָכַ֥ף** עָ֝לָ֗יו פִּֽיהוּ׃
The labourer’s appetite **works** [**has** incessantly/continuously/habitually **been working**] for him; his hunger **urges** [< **has** incessantly/continuously /habitually **been urging**] him on (Prov. 16.26) (frequentative and experiential interpretations are also possible here)

[42] The *yiqtol* likewise expresses the idea of continuity and gnomicity. However, since it is a gram evolving along the imperfective path, a translation with the Simple Present (an English imperfective path gram) has been provided in this case.

k.
בִּקֵּשׁ־לֵ֣ץ חָכְמָ֣ה וָאָ֑יִן וְדַ֥עַת לְנָבֹ֗ון נָקֵֽל
A scoffer **seeks** [< **has** incessantly/continuously/habitually **sought]** wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for one who understands (Prov. 14.6)

Sometimes the *qatal* does not express an uninterrupted situation or habitual activity, but instead introduces a repetitive custom of independent actions, approximating the category of a frequentative perfect. It namely presents a generic characteristic of a class of individuals, stating that they have separately been behaving in such and such a manner; the situation on the whole is inclusive and universal, although it consists of multiple independent acts. Again, this iterativity and "inclusivity" may give rise to habitual and hence gnomic extensions:

(20) a.
דִּבְרֵ֣י נִרְגָּ֣ן כְּמִתְלַהֲמִ֑ים וְ֝הֵ֗ם **יָרְד֥וּ** חַדְרֵי־בָֽטֶן׃
The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they **go** [< **have** repeatedly **gone]** down to a man's inmost parts (Prov. 26.22 and Prov. 18.8)

b.
שַׁחֲו֣וּ רָעִ֣ים לִפְנֵ֣י טוֹבִ֑ים וְרִשָׁעִ֥ים עַל־שַׁעֲרֵ֖י צַדִּֽיק׃
Evil men **bow** [< **have** repeatedly **bowed**] in the presence of the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous (Prov. 14:19)

c.
נָחֲל֥וּ פְתָאיִ֑ם אֲ֝וֶלֶת עֲרוּמִ֗ים יַכְתִּ֥רוּ דָֽעַת
The simple **inherit** [< **have** repeatedly **inherited**] folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge (Prov. 14:18)

d.
יִרְאַ֣ת יְ֭הוָה רֵאשִׁ֣ית דָּ֑עַת חָ֝כְמָ֗ה וּמוּסָ֥ר אֱוִילִ֥ים **בָּֽזוּ**׃
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools **despise** [< **have** repeatedly **despised**] wisdom and discipline (Prov. 1:7)

e.
כִּי־רַבִּ֥ים חֲלָלִ֑ים **הִפִּ֣ילָה** וַ֝עֲצֻמִ֗ים כָּל־הֲרֻגֶ֥יהָ׃
Many are the victims she **brings** [< **has** repeatedly **brought**] **down**; her slain are a mighty throng (Prov. 7.26)

f.
עָרוּם֮ **רָאָ֪ה** רָ֫עָ֥ה **נִסְתָּ֥ר** וּפְתָאִ֑ים **עָ֝בְר֗וּ** **נֶעֱנָֽשׁוּ**׃
The prudent **see** [< **have** repeatedly **seen**] danger and **hide** [< **have** repeatedly **hidden]**, but the simple **go on** [< **have** repeatedly **kept going]** and suffer [< **have** repeatedly **been punished]** for it (Prov. 27:12)

g.
טָּמַן עָצֵל יָדוֹ בַּצַּלָּחַת גַּם־אֶל־פִּיהוּ לֹא יְשִׁיבֶנָּה׃
The sluggard **buries** [< **has** repeatedly **buried]** his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth! (Prov. 19.24 and 26.15)

Occasionally, the *qatal* gives rise to gnomic interpretation not because of the continuity, stability, or habituality of a situation or similar activities, but rather due to the experience of having performed an action. Functioning as an experiential perfect, the inference of the event's current relevance expressed by the gram is sensed as stable and invariant (cf. sections 2.3.2., 2.3.3. and the use of experiential perfects for gnomic purposes). In other words, the event expressed by the *qatal* has already occurred; what can be understood as universal are its currently relevant effects.[43] Again, such *qatal* forms typically characterize a class and individual (e.g. a man, a rich one, a poor one, and a wicked one), presenting their characteristic universal properties. It should be noted that this type of gnomic extension (i.e. gnomic values linked to and/or expanded from the experiential perfect) usually occurs with telic verbs that express ideas of finding, encountering, completing, or perishing.

(21) a.
כִּי מֹצְאִי **מָצָא** חַיִּים וַיָּפֶק רָצוֹן מֵיְהוָה׃
For whoever finds me **finds** [< **has found**] life, receives favour from the Lord (Prov. 8:35)

b.
אַשְׁרֵי אָדָם **מָצָא** חָכְמָה וְאָדָם יָפִיק תְּבוּנָה׃
Blessed is the man who **finds** [< **has found**] wisdom, the man who gains understanding (Prov. 3:13)

c.
מָצָא אִשָּׁה **מָצָא** טוֹב וַיָּפֶק רָצוֹן מֵיְהוָה׃
He who **finds** [< **has found**] a wife **finds** [< **has found**] what is good and receives favour from the Lord (Prov. 18:22)

d.
עָשִׁיר וָרָשׁ **נִפְגָּשׁוּ** עֹשֵׂה כֻלָּם יְהוָה׃
Rich and poor **encounter** [< **have encountered**] this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all (Prov. 22:2)

e.
עֹצֵה עֵינָיו לַחְשֹׁב תַּהְפֻּכוֹת קֹרֵץ שְׂפָתָיו **כִּלָּה** רָעָה׃
He who winks with his eye is plotting perversity; he who presses his lips (is pinching his lips) **completes** (**brings** / **is bent on**) [< **has completed**] evil (Prov. 16:30)

[43] This means that in this usage, the experiential *qatal* may also be viewed as related to the domain of a resultative perfect if a resultative perfect is extended from the expression of qualities that are currently acquired (and, hence, transitory, or actual) to the expression of characteristics that (although acquired at some point) are now permanent.

In certain instances, the gnomic value stems from the anti-perfect use of the *qatal*. In this function, the gram indicates that a given activity or situation has not taken, or has not been taking place. This non-occurrence is viewed as a rule because it spans from a moment in the past to the present time. In such cases, one may render the universality of the statement by means of the quantifier *never*.

(22) a.

בֵּ֣ן חָ֭כָם מ֣וּסַר אָ֑ב וְ֝לֵ֗ץ לֹא־**שָׁמַ֥ע** גְּעָרָֽה׃

A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker **does not listen** [< **has not been listening / has never listened**] to rebuke (Prov. 13:1 and 13.8)

b.

שְׁתֵּ֣י בָנוֹת֮ הַ֤ב ׀ הַ֥ב שָׁל֣וֹשׁ הֵ֭נָּה לֹ֣א תִשְׂבַּ֑עְנָה אַ֝רְבַּ֗ע לֹא־**אָ֥מְרוּ** הֽוֹן׃

There are three things that are never satisfied, four that **never say** [< **have never said**]: "Enough!" (Prov. 30:15)

Finally, in a limited number of examples, a gnomic nuance may be explained as a string developed from the value of an iterative experiential perfect; a certain event has occurred on more than one occasion, without however constituting a solid continuous sequence. In this manner, the iterativity of independent actions may be viewed as a rule overtly quantified by the expressions such as *each time when…*. It is interesting to note that in this function, the *qatal* is usually accompanied by a *wayyiqtol* form (23.a–c).[44]

(23) a.

בָּֽא־זָ֭דוֹן וַיָּבֹ֣א קָל֑וֹן וְאֶת־צְ֝נוּעִ֗ים חָכְמָֽה׃

[Each time] when pride **comes** [< **has come**], then comes [has come] disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom (Prov. 11:2)

b.

צַ֭דִּיק מִצָּרָ֣ה נֶחֱלָ֑ץ וַיָּבֹ֖א רָשָׁ֣ע תַּחְתָּֽיו׃

[Each time] the righteous man **is rescued** [< **has been rescued]** from trouble, and it comes [has come] on the wicked instead (Prov. 11:8)

c.

עִ֣יר גִּ֭בֹּרִים **עָלָ֣ה** חָכָ֑ם וַ֝יֹּ֗רֶד עֹ֣ז מִבְטֶחָֽה׃

[Each time] a wise man **attacks** [< **has attacked**] the city of the mighty, he pulls down [has pulled down] the stronghold in which they trust (Prov. 21:22)

d.

בְּמ֤וֹת אָדָ֣ם רָ֭שָׁע תֹּאבַ֣ד תִּקְוָ֑ה וְתוֹחֶ֖לֶת אוֹנִ֣ים **אָבָֽדָה׃**

When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; and [each time] the hope of power **perishes** [**has perished**] (Prov. 11:7)

[44] This value is of course closely related to the frequentative perfectal sense.

To conclude this review of the gnomic *qatal* forms in Proverbs, an exemplary fragment (31:11–29) – an "anecdote" that constitutes a small textual unit – can be quoted in which various inclusive, frequentative, and experiential *qatals* trigger gnomic extensions. In this manner, the following passage illustrates that the gnomic use of the *qatal* may have its roots in different perfectal functions. However, in all of such cases, regardless their exact cognitive and conceptual origin, the suffix conjugation describes constant, generic, habitual, typical properties of a good wife:

(24)
בָּ֭טַח בָּהּ֣ לֵב־בַּעְלָ֑הּ וְשָׁלָ֥ל לֹ֝א יֶחְסָֽר׃
Her husband **trusts** [stative] in her and lacks nothing of value (Prov. 31:11)

גְּמָלַ֥תְהוּ טֹ֝וב וְלֹא־רָ֗ע כֹּ֣ל יְמֵי חַיֶּֽיהָ׃
She **brings** [< **has been bringing** (inclusive)] him good, not harm, all the days of her life[45] (Prov. 31:12)

דָּרְשָׁ֣ה צֶ֭מֶר וּפִשְׁתִּ֑ים וַתַּ֥עַשׂ בְּחֵ֝פֶץ כַּפֶּֽיהָ׃
She **selects** [< **has been selecting** (frequentative)][46] wool and flax and works with eager hands (Prov. 31:13)

זָמְמָ֣ה שָׂ֭דֶה וַתִּקָּחֵ֑הוּ מִפְּרִ֖י כַּפֶּ֣יהָ נָ֣טְעָ֔ה כָּֽרֶם׃
She **considers** [< **has been considering (**frequentative)**]** a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard (Prov. 31:16)

חָגְרָ֣ה בְעוֹ֭ז מָתְנֶ֑יהָ וַתְּאַמֵּ֥ץ זְרוֹעֹתֶֽיהָ׃
She **sets** [< **has been setting** (inclusive)] about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks (Prov. 31:17)

טָ֭עֲמָה כִּי־טֹ֣וב סַחְרָ֑הּ לֹא־יִכְבֶּ֖ה בַּלַּ֣יְלָ נֵרָֽהּ׃
She **perceives** [< **has perceived** (experiential)] that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night (Prov. 31:18)

יָ֭דֶיהָ שִׁלְּחָ֣ה בַכִּישׁ֑וֹר וְכַפֶּ֖יהָ תָּמְכ֣וּ פָֽלֶךְ׃
In her hand she **grasps** [< **has been grasping** (frequentative)] the distaff and **holds** [< **has been holding** (inclusive/frequentative)] the spindle with her fingers (Prov. 31:19)

כַּפָּ֣הּ פָּ֭רְשָׂה לֶעָנִ֑י וְיָדֶ֖יהָ שִׁלְּחָ֣ה לָאֶבְיֽוֹן׃
She **opens** [< **has been opening** (frequentative)] her arms to the poor and **extends** [< **has been extending** (frequentative)] her hands to the needy (Prov. 31:20)

[45] Observe the use of the temporal phrase *all the days of her life*.
[46] In examples 115–17, the frequentative sense is probably better rendered by the English Present, i.e. *she selects wool*, *she considers*, and especially *she sets about her work.*

לֹא־תִירָא לְבֵיתָהּ מִשָּׁלֶג כִּי כָל־בֵּיתָהּ **לָבֵשׁ** שָׁנִים׃
When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them **are clothed** [stative] in scarlet (Prov. 31:21)

מַרְבַדִּים **עָשְׂתָה**־לָּהּ שֵׁשׁ וְאַרְגָּמָן לְבוּשָׁהּ׃
She **makes** [< **has been making** (frequentative)] coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple (Prov. 31:22)

סָדִין **עָשְׂתָה** וַתִּמְכֹּר וַחֲגוֹר **נָתְנָה** לַכְּנַעֲנִי׃
She **makes** [< **has been making** (frequentative)] linen garments and sells them, and has been **supplying** [frequentative] the merchants with sashes (Prov. 31:24)

פִּיהָ **פָּתְחָה** בְחָכְמָה וְתוֹרַת־חֶסֶד עַל־לְשׁוֹנָהּ׃
She **speaks** [< **has been speaking** (frequentative)] with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue (Prov. 31:26)

קָמוּ בָנֶיהָ וַיְאַשְּׁרוּהָ בַּעְלָהּ וַיְהַלְלָהּ׃
Her children **rise** [< **have been rising** (frequentative)] and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: (Prov. 31:28)

רַבּוֹת בָּנוֹת **עָשׂוּ** חָיִל וְאַתְּ **עָלִית** עַל־כֻּלָּנָה׃
"Many women **do** [< **have done** (frequentative / experiential iterative)][47] noble things, but you **surpass** [< **have surpassed** (experiential)] them all" (Prov. 31:29)

Our data suggest that certain *qatal* forms of non-static roots found in a gnomic genre (Proverbs) convey values that are compatible with the idea of gnomicity, and thus convey (subjective) universal truths. All such gnomic readings seem to derive from the uses and contexts in which the *qatal* gram is (or could be understood as being) employed with the force of a dynamic perfect such as inclusive perfect, frequentative perfect, experiential perfect, iterative experiential perfect, or anti-perfect. In all of them, just like the underlying perfect sense, the gnomic activity is dynamic and active. It is never de-transitive, in contrast with the gnomic stativity arising from resultative proper constructions. This means that the gnomic value appears as a co-string of certain perfect senses which, as explained, are typologically propitious for gnomic extensions. In that manner, the BH *qatal* adapts to the typological rule detected in Section 2..

[47] Due to the proximity of the frequentative and iterative experiential perfect, two readings are possible in this example. One stresses the inclusivity of various events (in sum, they form an uninterrupted situation: *women have been doing noble things* or *each woman has been doing noble things*), while the other emphasizes the independence of such events (they do not form an uninterrupted sequence but are viewed as an iteration of separate actions: *each woman has done a noble thing*).

3.2. Cognate formations

The phenomenon whereby the Semitic suffix conjugation is able to express a gnomic value can be detected not only in Biblical Hebrew (as demonstrated by the examples introduced previously) but also in other members of this family of languages. Put differently, cognate formations of the BH *qatal* can denote (subjective) universal truths.

For instance, in Arabic, the *qatala* – a gram that most commonly functions as a present perfect and (perfective) past – can sometimes appear in proverbs and express general or atemporal activities and situations (Wright 1964: 1 and Danecki 1994: 153). It is usually argued that in such cases the construction portrays an event as having often taken place and as still doing so (see, for example, Wright 1964: 1). This signifies that the formation approximates the category of an inclusive or frequentative perfect (cf. 25.a as well as the first verb in the *qatala* in example 25.b). In other instances, a permanent characteristic or a generic activity stems from inferences related to the nuance of current relevance, typical of an experiential perfect (cf. 24.c).[48] Apart from Hebrew and Arabic, the Semitic suffix conjugation can also be found with a gnomic value in Ugaritic (cf. Tropper 2000: 715), Aramaic (see Rogland 2003 and the references therein), and Ethiopian (Dillmann 1974 [1907]: 553) where cognate constructions of the BH *qatal* and Arabic *qatala* – although typically employed as present perfects and (perfective) past tenses – may additionally introduce habitual activities, rule-like situations, and universal truths.

(25) a.
اتفق المفسرون
Commentators have been agreeing (Wright 1964: 1) (= they agree)

b.
انجز الحر ما **وعد**
A noble man has been keeping what he has promised (Danecki 1994: 153) (= he always keeps it)

c.
عاش من عرف قدره
He who know his value has survived (Danecki 1994: 153) (= is alive)

The Akkadian language provides additional interesting facts. In Akkadian there is a gram – labelled *parsāku* – that is a cognate formation of the BH *qatal* or Arabic *qatala*. Just like the other varieties of the suffix conjugation, it derives from a Proto-Semitic analytical expression built on the verbal adjective (or resultative participle) and an originally independent personal pronoun (cf. Kienast 2001 and

[48] The second verb in the *qatala* form in example 24.b may be understood either as an experiential perfect "what he has (once) promised" or as an iterative experiential perfect "what he has promised (on various occasions)."

Lipiński 2001; cf. also Andrason 2011a: 199–205, 287–288).[49] The Akkadian formation is most typically used as a resultative proper and is defined as a non-advanced portion of the resultative (both anterior and simultaneous) path (cf. Andrason 2011a). Since the *parsāku* frequently functions as a resultative proper it can likewise appear with an extra-temporal gnomic force (see example 26 below as well as the sentence in 3.h which has been quoted in section 2.3.1.; cf. also Mayer 1992 and Loesov 2004: 430–431).

(26) (A 3525:7 as quoted and translated in CAD Š/1 347a (an OB letter))

kīma	ša-mu-u_2	u	erṣetum	**dārû**	bēlī	lu	dāri[50]
like	heaven	and	earth	last	lord.my	may	last

Like heaven and earth last, may my lord be lasting

It is consequently possible to argue that the gnomic use of the suffix conjugation is a quite regular phenomenon in the Semitic family and affects the formation at all stages of its typological advancement, from the original (cf. the resultative proper stage as documented by the Akkadian gram) to the highly advanced phase (cf. the stage of an old anterior that allows even narrative past uses, as illustrated by the Arabic *qatala*). All such gnomic readings appear in uses that are typologically favourable for gnomic extensions and that correspond to stages on the following stages on the anterior path: resultative proper, inclusive perfect, frequentative perfect, experiential perfect (also iterative experiential perfect), and anti-perfect.

4. Conclusion

4.1. The gnomic sense in the semantic map of the qatal

Having analysed the phenomenon whereby certain post-resultative grams tend to prompt gnomic extensions, and having described the nature of the gnomic *qatal* itself, we may now proceed to positing a cognitive (conceptual and diachronic) explanation of the gnomic sense offered by the suffix conjugation and, thus, its accommodation within the entire semantic network of this BH category.

As explained previously, the *qatal* is a formation which historically derives from a resultative proper input. Its most frequent uses, which are typical for dynamic predicates, have been mapped by means of the anterior cline. Values such as present

[49] The term "cognate" means "genetically" and (from a dynamic perspective) "typologically related". As explained above, both constructions derive from the same PS input, i.e. a PS **qatVl*- formation built on a formally analogical verbal adjective (i.e. on the **qatVl* employed in a predicative function). Of course, the status of the Hebrew and Akkadian successors (either functional or semantic), and their place in the verbal systems of the two respective languages are clearly different. Nevertheless, the two forms reflect distinct stages of grammaticalization of the same (from a diachronic and typological point of view) construction which underwent a typical evolution in the two languages developing along the anterior and simultaneous path. This means that both constructions cover different portions of the anterior cline and therefore have different semantic and morphosyntactical properties (cf. a typical de-transitivity of the *parsāku*; for a panchronic comparison of the two formations, see Andrason 2011: 199–206, 281–290, 299–300, 305–306).

[50] The lexeme *lu* is an optative particle. The words *dārû* and *dāri* are two *parsāku* forms employed in the 3ms.pl and 3ms.sg, respectively.

perfect (inclusive, frequentative, resultative, experiential, and indefinite), perfective past, and simple past[51] ideally correspond to this universal developmental scenario (Andrason 2011a).[52] Given that, on the one hand, inclusive, frequentative, and experiential perfects (as far as inferences are concerned) as well as anti-perfects (which correspond to negative perfect uses) naturally generate a sub-development designated by us as a "gnomic branch", yielding gnomic uses, and given that, on the other hand, the examples of the BH gnomic *qatal* are regularly found in contexts of inclusive, frequentative, experiential (also iterative experiential perfect), and anti-perfect values, the gnomic sense of the gram can be explained – i.e. linked, both conceptually and diachronically – by employing the "gnomic branch" linkage. In this manner, the chaining, which originates in the aforementioned perfect values, justifies the possibility of using the category with a gnomic force and presents the entire semantic potential of the formation as a consistent whole – that is to say, as a rational and coherent network in which each sense is connected to another, being either its (conceptual and diachronic) ancestor or successor (cf. Figure 2).[53]

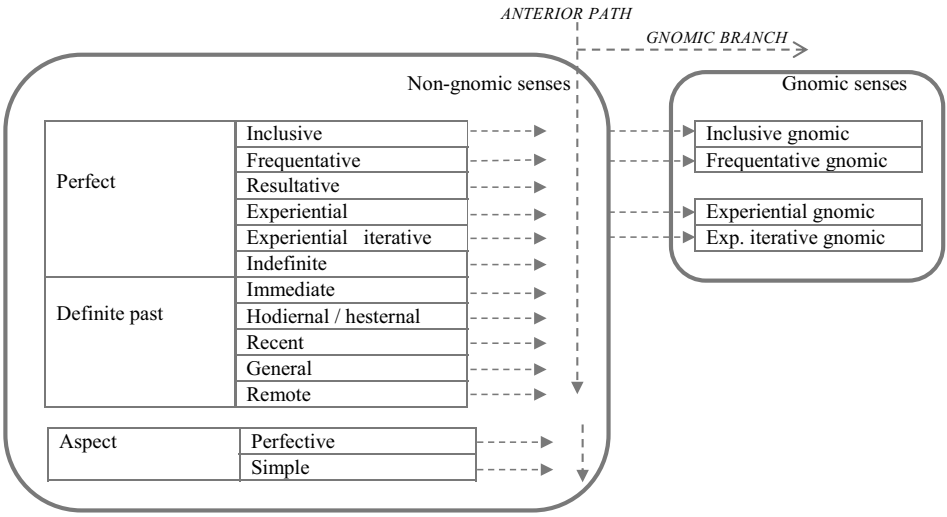

Figure 2. Map of the perfect-perfective-past senses of the BH *qatal* and their gnomic extensions (adapted from Andrason 2011a: 281)[54]

[51] These two latter senses are usually found in discourse, and do not appear in narration.

[52] As already has been mentioned, various senses provided by static verbs reflect anther sub-cline of the resultative path, viz. the simultaneous track.

[53] The resultative proper sense is unavailable at the time of Biblical Hebrew. In contrast with the original de-transitive, non-agentive, and patientive construction (still preserved in the Akkadian as the form *parsāku*), the *qatal* – when derived from active roots – is always a dynamic gram, having progressed on the anterior path.

[54] In this article, the BH *qatal* is treated as if its semantic potential has been "measured" at a single time t_0. This means that we consider Biblical Hebrew to be a historically static language – a synchronically consistent phenomenon. This is of course an approximation given the fact that the biblical text was composed over the course of several centuries, and thus different books may represent distinct diachronic stages of the language (see, Andrason 2011d: 24, 49; furthermore, it can also include certain dialectical variations). It shall be noted that for the sake of simplicity, the sense of an anti-perfect and its gnomic extension are omitted because they may be understood as negative variants of the other perfectal uses.

The results of our study are fivefold. First, we have detected a typological evolutionary scenario that links the grams evolving along the anterior path with the gnomic value. To be exact, we have determined the precise stages where the extension towards gnomicity can take place. In this manner, a solid typological, conceptual, and diachronic rationale behind the gnomic uses of anterior path grams has been provided. Second, the findings strongly recommend a gnomic interpretation of certain uses of the *qatal* form. In contrast with Rogland (2003), typological and cognitive evidence suggests that the gnomic *qatal* does exist. In this function, the *qatal* offers a sense clearly distinct from other, more prototypical, uses. Simply put, in Biblical Hebrew, the *qatal* may be employed as a vehicle of the idea of gnomicity. Third, the study offers cognitive, typological, and diachronic arguments in favour of the "perfectal link" between the *qatal* and the gnomic sense, and thus argues against the aspectual foundation of the gnomic *qatal* (cf. Joüon (1923: 296–297, Watts 1951: 24–25, Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 488, 506; cf. a similar hypothesis in Rijksbaron 1984:32 concerning the origin of the Greek gnomic Aorist). Fourth, our explanation – although slightly coinciding with theories that relate the gnomic *qatal* to its perfectal uses – refines the connection between the perfect and the gnomic sense. We have namely demonstrated that gnomic extensions originate not only in an experiential perfect (cf. Ewald 1863: 351, Müller 1883: 2, Driver 1892: 17, Gesenius, Kautzsch, and Cowley 1910: 312) but also in frequentative perfect and especially inclusive perfect senses and uses. Fifth, in contrast with all the explanations formulated thus far, our model avoids deriving the gnomic force of the *qatal* from an invariant total meaning or semantic string. There is no need to posit any invariant meaning, sense, or value since our map incorporates all possible semantic diversity of the BH form, while at the same time presenting it as a harmonious and logical phenomenon: a network fastened by means of determined universal evolutionary clines. As a result, the profound polysemous nature of the *qatal*, including its use with a gnomic sense, is both preserved and holistically represented in a cognitively plausible map.

4.2. Gnomic qatal and its translation

Once the relation of the gnomic sense to the remaining – and dominant – portion of the semantic potential of the *qatal* form has been established, a final question arises: how should the gnomic *qatal* be translated? In Section 2., we pointed out that a given semantic domain (e.g. futurity, inclusive perfect, perfective past, etc.), or a given specific atomic value, may be conveyed by various grammatical constructions.[55]

[55] For example, futurity may be expressed by simple present tenses, progressive presents, various modal constructions, or prototypical moods, as well as present perfects or even grams that are typically used as perfective pasts (cf. the *passé compose* in French, a broad present perfect and past tense that can also express certain values related to the idea of futurity). The sense of an inclusive perfect can be conveyed by present perfects, imperfective past tenses, and simple and progressive present tenses. The value of a perfective past can be expressed by perfective past tenses, simple past tenses (preterites), and even futures (e.g. the Polish Future Tense, which under special circumstances may introduce perfective past events in narration).

Consequently, semantic maps of such formations partially overlap; the semantic potentials of these constructions cover and/or are compatible with domains and senses that are similar to some extent.

As far as the idea of gnomicity is concerned, it is most typically expressed across languages by gnomic imperfectives or broad present tenses, although prototypical resultative proper grams and present perfects are also extensively used for gnomic purposes. Consequently, virtually any gram which is able to denote gnomic activities or situations can be employed in a translation in a target language, be it a gnomic imperfective, a broad present perfect, a resultative proper (although these constructions are typically intransitive and/or de-transitive), a present perfect (both young and old anterior), or even a highly advanced past tense that has preserved certain perfectal uses in proverbial genres. All of these grams may be used because all of them are compatible – albeit to distinct degrees – with a semantic domain of gnomicity.

However, since our data indicate that the instances where the *qatal* is employed with a gnomic force in the Hebrew Bible correspond to gnomic extensions of certain present perfect uses, we could argue as follows. If a target language possesses in its verbal inventory a post-resultative construction which has developed along the anterior path, acquiring various perfect stages that allow gnomic extensions, such a young or old anterior gram should preferably be used. This stems not only from a typological similarity with the gnomic *qatal* that has arisen during the evolution of the gram along the anterior path (cf. inclusive, frequentative, experiential, experiential iterative perfects, and anti-perfect), but also from the fact that grammatical formations regularly "colour" a given atomic semantic sense (a piece of information they convey in a specific place and time) with the remaining portion of their semantic potential. Thus, although present tense grams (i.e. grammatical formations developing along the imperfective cline) and perfects or past tenses (i.e. formations developing along the anterior cline) are both able to convey the idea of gnomicity, they do so in a distinct manner. First, their predispositions to express a gnomic value are distinct. For example, it is typical and unrestricted for gnomic imperfectives (i.e. highly advanced imperfective diachronies) while it is exceptional for past tenses (i.e. for advanced resultative diachronies). Second, grams evolving along the two clines have completely different semantic baggage associated with them. These two classes of grams possess clearly distinct scopes of polysemies; the former group reflects stages of the imperfective cline while the latter mirrors the stages of the anterior cline. Hence, they will cause two different sorts of associations when employed to express the gnomic sense in a specific time and place.

A gram can figuratively be understood as a piece of multicolour gum. At an exact historical point, and in a concrete context, only one of the possible senses is activated as being compatible with a certain semantic domain – a message to be conveyed. Metaphorically speaking, it is removed from the multicolour sphere of possible senses so that it can harmonize with the precise semantic domain shaped by the context. Nevertheless, as we select this exact sense from the gram's polysemy in order to render a specific piece of information, and, metaphorically, tug a fragment of the gum, other values-colours that the gram potentially possesses necessarily follow;

they are conceptually tied to the selected fragment which is being pulled, because all of them, jointly, constitute the gram's total meaning. Consequently, senses that reflect consecutive diachronic stages or conceptual extensions may be understood both as atomic, individual, and sharply separated – they correspond to distinct contexts or abstract semantic domains – and, at the same time, as intrinsically connected components which cannot be separated from the remaining semantic load, i.e. from the gram viewed as a dynamic evolutionary whole and, thus, a portion of a path. This internal connection of all senses conveyed by a gram – the polysemous network of a concrete grammatical construction – will cause the gnomic sense expressed by imperfective-path grams and anterior-path grams to be slightly different. Given that the gnomic *qatal* (when used with dynamic roots) is an anterior-path-type gnomic formation, one could recommend translations based on anterior-path grams.

On the other hand, however, it must clearly be stated that, due to the infinite complexity of real-world systems such as languages, no two grams (i.e. their semantic potentials) in two distinct languages can perfectly match each other. Quite the opposite, the polysemies of grams which are typologically highly similar always somehow differ. As a result, even though a language, for instance English, possesses in its grammatical inventory a present perfect formation that is able to express continuous, habitual, repetitive, durative activities, thus giving rise to gnomic extensions and uses, it is not mandatory that all gnomic examples of the BH *qatal* should be rendered in translations by means of the Present Perfect. This means that the English Present Perfects (*has done* or *has been doing*) – despite their typological and semantic proximity, and despite our definition of the BH construction as a resultative-path gram – cannot be regarded as the sole and exclusive possibility in rendering the gnomic *qatal*. In some cases, the use of the English Present Perfect is fully correct, but in others it seems to be awkward. This stems from the already explained fact that although a gram is compatible with a given semantic (abstract) domain, it also carries additional information (the remaining portion of its semantic potential) that impregnates the value provided in a specific context. This "impregnation" causes certain gnomic examples to tolerate the English Present Perfect with a distinct intensity or in a more appropriate or less appropriate manner. The dissimilarity of the English and Hebrew verbal systems is evident. Most importantly, while Biblical Hebrew possesses five or six central grams (*qatal*, long *yiqtol*, *wayyiqtol*, short *yiqtol*, *weqatal*, and possibly *qotel*) that must cover all the semantic domains cognitively available to humans, the English verbal organization is compounded of a much greater number of constructions. As a result, the polysemy of English grams is by definition less than that of BH formations. Inversely, verbal grams in English are more specialized. In this manner, although the English Present Perfect can be employed to convey gnomic nuances, it is not a prototypical vehicle of gnomicity. The exemplary means to express gnomic ideas are the Simple Present and Resultative Proper (*be* + participle). The semantic potential of the English Present Perfect formation is much more reduced and specialized (being typically used in perfectal functions) than the polysemy of the BH *qatal*. These facts argue in favour of translations based on grams that are more typical vehicles of the concepts of gnomicity

such as the aforementioned Simple Present tense or the Resultative Proper form (in the case of intransitive, de-transitive, or stative constructions).

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