

## THE RUINED VINEYARD MOTIF IN ISAIAH 1–39: INSIGHTS FROM COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

The most well-known depiction of viticulture in Isaiah, and perhaps all of the HB/OT, occurs in 5,1-7<sup>1</sup>. In this extended parable<sup>2</sup>, many resonate with the experience of the vine keeper in verses 1-4. As the vine keeper's labor over his beloved vineyard results in putrid grapes, God's anguish over Israel's injustice is palpable to most readers. The experiences behind verses 5-6, however, are more alien: allowing hedges to be removed, walls to be breached, and the vineyard to be trampled amidst military disruption<sup>3</sup>. The prophets of ancient Judah and Israel, however, embedded as they were in their eastern Mediterranean society, were mindful of the social significance of vines and their vulnerability during times of war. In order to illuminate this reality, this article will survey the motif of vine destruction in Isaiah 1–39 (5,5-6; 7,23; 16,8-9; 24,7; 32,12)<sup>4</sup> in light of its symbolic potency within ancient Israel through the assistance of Cognitive Linguistics — first by considering *relations* within utterances

<sup>1</sup> Reconstructions of viticulture in ancient Israel often use Isa 5,1-7. See, e.g., V.H. MATTHEWS, "Treading the Winepress: Actual and Metaphorical Viticulture in the Ancient Near East", *Food and Drink in the Biblical Worlds* (eds. A. BRENNER – J.W. VAN HENTEN) (Scmeia 86; Atlanta, GA 1999) 19-32; C.E. WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine. Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (HSM 60; Winona Lake, IN 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Debate surrounds the form of Isa 5,1-7. For arguments that this is a parable of some sort, see G.T. SHEPPARD, "More on Isaiah 5:1-7 as a Juridical Parable", *CBQ* 44 (1982) 45-47; J.T. WILLIS, "Genre of Isaiah 5:1-7", *JBL* 96 (1997) 337-362; G.A. YEE, "A Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5:1-7 as a Song and a Juridical Parable", *CBQ* 43 (1981) 30-40. See, however, R. BARTELMUS, "Beobachtungen zur literarischen Struktur des sog. Weinberglies (Jes 5,1-7): Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der formgeschichtlichen Methode bei der Interpretation von Texten aus dem corpus propheticum", *ZAW* 110.1 (1998) 50-66, who observes that formal parallels between 5,1-7 and other parables are lacking.

<sup>3</sup> YEE ("A Form-Critical", 38) identifies invasions by Assyria as the historical backdrop for these verses that anticipate judgment. See also G.R. WILLIAMS, "Frustrated Expectations in Isaiah V 1-7, A Literary Interpretation", *VT* 35 (1985) 464.

<sup>4</sup> Although diachronic concerns receive some attention, Isaiah 1–39 serves as a literary unit for considering how the concept of the ruined vineyard operates there within. There are no references to ruined vineyards after chapter 32, but I have extended the corpus through to chapter 39 because, as is noted at the end of the essay, the prospect of eating from vineyards in 37,30 resonates with the ruined vineyard motif set during the Assyrian era in the first half of the book (esp. 5,1-7). A different division of the book (e.g., 1–33) would not alter the argument of this essay. For a helpful orientation to Cognitive Linguistics and its use in Biblical Studies, see E. VAN WOLDE, *Reframing Biblical Studies. When Language and Text Meet Culture, Cognition, and Context* (Winona Lake, IN 2009).

and then *semantic domains* that inform the ruined vineyard motif<sup>5</sup>. It will become evident that the centrality of the vine within society and its correspondence with peace and joy make the vine's destruction amidst war a powerful symbol in Isaiah 1–39 for capturing the weighty reality of divine, violent judgment.

## I. THE RUINED VINEYARD AND RELATIONS WITHIN UTTERANCES

As a more marginal motif within Isaiah 1–39, research on the ruined vineyard has been limited primarily to identifying the place of particular passages within a stream of linguistic traditions. Passages containing שְׂמִיר and שִׁית (“thorns and thistles”; 5,6; 7,23; cf. 32,12 [קִרְן שְׂמִיר]) — terms occurring only within the book of Isaiah (cf. 7,24–25; 9,17; 10,17; 27,4)<sup>6</sup> — are either attributed to the prophet Isaiah<sup>7</sup> or later scribes utilizing the prophet's traditions<sup>8</sup>. The depiction of a breach (פֶּרֶץ) in a vineyard's walls (גֶּדֶר) as a metaphor for Israel in Isa 5,5–6 and Psalm 80 — an exilic or post-exilic psalm — leads some to date the passages to the same era<sup>9</sup>. Isaiah 16,8–9 and Jer 48,32 both depict weeping (בִּכָה) over the vines (נֶפֶךְ) of Jazer (יַעֲזֹר) and Sibmah (שִׁבְמָה), so discussion revolves around whether Isa 16,8–9 is a base text for Jeremiah or shares a later

<sup>5</sup> If this study were limited to explicating the metaphor of the vineyard within 5,1–7 or 27,2–6 — extended parables — the application of metaphor theory to those texts would be an additional way Cognitive Linguistics could aid this study. See especially Harshav's notion that *fields of reference* develop and interact within a text to create a textual world within which an extended metaphor can be grasped as they activate “world-cognitions”: B. HARSHAV, “Metaphors and Frames of Reference. With Examples from Eliot, Rilke, Mayakovsky, Mandelshtam, Pound, Creely, Amichai, and the New York Times”, *Id., Explorations in Poetics* (Stanford, CA 2007) 32–75.

<sup>6</sup> 1 QHa XVI, 25 uses שְׂמִיר וְשִׁית metaphorically to contrast with a state of well-being. For more on this expression in Isaiah, see K. NIELSEN, *There is Hope for a Tree. The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* (JSOTSup 65; Sheffield 1989) 104–106.

<sup>7</sup> On 5,5–6, see H. WILDBERGER, *Isaiah 1–12* (trans. T.H. TRAPP) (Minneapolis, MN 1991) 178–179; A.J. BJØRNDALÉN, “Zur Frage der Echtheit von Jesaja 1,2–3; 1,4–7 und 5,1–7”, *NTT* 83 (1982) 89–100. On 7,23, see J.M. ROBERTS, *First Isaiah* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN 2015) 126; J. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 1–39* (AB; New Haven, CT 2000) 236. On 32,12–13, see G. FOHRER, *Das Buch Jesaja*, vol. 2 (Zürich 1962) 127–131; J. VERMEYLEN, *Du prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique*. Isaïe, I-XXXV, miroir d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël, vol.1 (Paris 1977) 425–426.

<sup>8</sup> On Isa 5,5–6, see B.S. CHILDS, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville, KY 2001) 241. On 7,23, see M. SWEENEY, *Isaiah 1–39 with an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL; Grand Rapids, MI 1996) 155–159 [Josiah]; BARTH, *Die Jesaja-Worte in der Josiazeit* (Vluyn 1977) 287 [exile]; U. BECKER, *Jesaja-von der Botschaft zum Buch* (Göttingen 1997) 34–35 [post-exile].

<sup>9</sup> E.g., BECKER, *Jesaja*, 132–133; VERMEYLEN, *Du prophète Isaïe*, 159–168.

provenance<sup>10</sup>. Isaiah 24,7 is explained as a post-exilic adaptation from a verse like Joel 1,10, which also contains the terms אביל, אמלל, and תירוש<sup>11</sup>. Although these tradition-linguistic observations are helpful, there are concepts more fundamental to understanding the motif that remain underdeveloped. This article utilizes several tools from Cognitive Linguistics — *relations* and *semantic domains* — to establish a stronger conceptual framework for understanding instances of the ruined vineyard motif in Isaiah 1–39. In this section, the notion of *relations* will be applied to the topic at hand.

In Cognitive Linguistics, *relations* is a notion that derives from the premise that an entity is understood amidst an interrelated web of mental relations. As an everyday example, if someone said, “I forgot my shoe”, an understanding of the concept [Shoe] in this sentence emerges out of a web of mental relations. As for the concept [Shoe] in the abstract, the human mind naturally foregrounds (the profile) one aspect of [Shoe], namely the product — a sole with a non-enclosed covering — and understands it in relation to a backdrop (base), namely that it belongs on a foot. Within the sentence, the modifier “my”, as well as its relation to the verb (“forgot”), extends the network of relations involved in understanding the utterance. *Relations*, then, stems from the recognition that a linguistic expression is an external manifestation of an interrelated web of concepts.

As for the concept [VINE], it can be defined through the interrelationship between the foregrounded aspect of [VINE], referred to as its profile, and its background aspect, its base (Fig. 1)<sup>12</sup>.

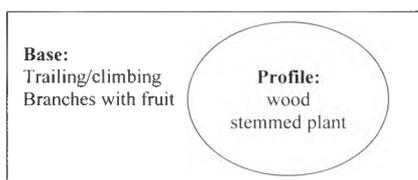


Figure 1 – Profile and Base of the concept [VINE]

Cognitive Linguistics also maps *relations* within phrases and clauses. Within clauses, there is interest in capturing the relationship between a subject — referred to as the trajector (tr), “the more prominent entity

<sup>10</sup> For an early date, see SWEENEY, *Isaiah 1-39*, 248. For a later date, although acknowledging the use of an earlier source, see H. WILDBERGER, *Isaiah 13–27* (trans. T.H. TRAPP) (Minneapolis, MN 1997) 125; VERMEYLEN, *Du prophète Isaïe*, 304-308.

<sup>11</sup> WILDBERGER, *Isaiah 13–27*, 485.

<sup>12</sup> On profile and base, see J.R. TAYLOR, *Cognitive Grammar* (New York 2002) 192-195; VAN WOLDE, *Reframing Biblical Studies*, 105.

within the conceptualization of a relation”<sup>13</sup> — and the object — referred to as the landmark (Im), the less prominent entity within the relation<sup>14</sup>. The next section will focus on relations within clauses.

### 1. שמיר ושית

Not only are שמיר and שית part of an Isaianic linguistic tradition, but their use within utterances takes place amidst an emphasis upon the absence of what is needed for a vineyard’s successful production. Isa 5,5b6c reads:

5b I will remove its hedge, and it will be burned up.	אסיר <sup>16</sup> משוכתו והיה לבער
5c I will breach its wall, and it will become trampled,	פרץ גדרו והיה למרמס
6a so I will make it a waste.	ואשיתהו בטה
6b It will not be pruned; it will not be hoed,	לא יזמר ולא יעדר
6c and it will come up with thorns and thistles <sup>15</sup> .	ועלה שמיר ושית

Isaiah 5,5b and 5c parallel one another. The first colon of each line describes God (tr) separating the primary landmark (ImP; “hedge”, “wall”) from the secondary landmark (ImS; “vineyard”; see Fig. 2)<sup>17</sup>. The second colon in each line describes the results of the first colon’s actions, with the secondary landmark from the prior colon becoming its trajector (Fig. 3).

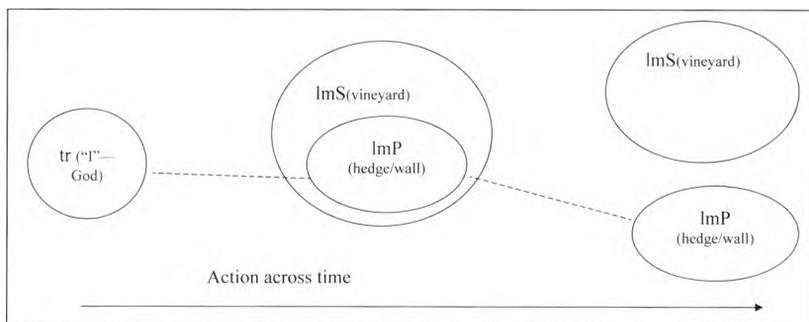


Figure 2 – Trajector separating primary landmark from secondary landmark in first colon of both Isa 5,5b and c

<sup>13</sup> VAN WOLDE, *Reframing Biblical Studies*, 106.

<sup>14</sup> See TAYLOR, *Cognitive Grammar*, 205-222; VAN WOLDE, *Reframing Biblical Studies*, 106-107, 171-176.

<sup>15</sup> On vineyard as the subject of 6c, see WILLIAMSON, *Isaiah 1–5* (London 2006) 323.

<sup>16</sup> The text reports the 1QIsa reading instead of the MT (הָסֵר).

<sup>17</sup> On primary and secondary, see VAN WOLDE, *Reframing Biblical Studies*, 175-176. One can distinguish between primary and secondary by detecting what is necessary and unnecessary to complete a sentence.

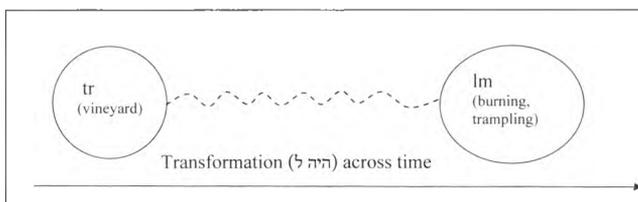


Figure 3 – Transformation resulting in second colon of both Isa 5,5b and c after protection removed in first colon

The conceptual logic, then, of 5,5b and c is that God (tr) will remove protective barriers (lmP) — hedge and wall — from the vineyard (lmS). As a result, the vineyard (tr) will be a context of burning and trampling (lm).

In verse 6, the lead clause *ואשיתו בהו* (“so I will make it a waste”) offers a summative statement about God’s plans to ruin his vineyard. The statement reverberates phonologically across the following lines in a way that unites 6a with 6b and c: *ואשית ... שמיר ושית*. Destruction leads to thorns and thistles. Whereas the focus in 5b and c was upon the removal of protection, 6b emphasizes the absence of viticulture habits through negated passive verbal constructions: *לא יזמר ולא יעדר*. Since the three verbs in 6a and b are imperfects (*יעדר ... יזמר ... יעדר*), the *w<sup>e</sup>qatal* in 6c (*ועלה*) is best understood as depicting the consequential action. A lack of pruning and hoeing (6b) results in the vineyard (tr) giving rise to *שמיר ושית* (lm; see Fig. 4).

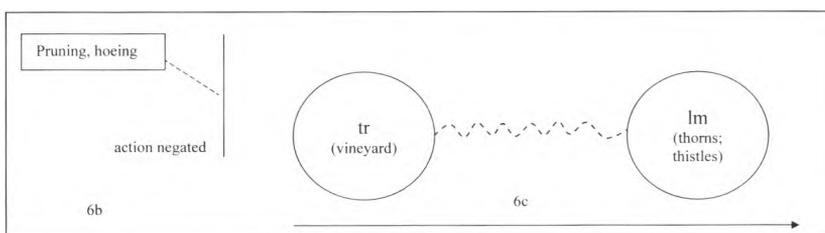


Figure 4 – Transformation resulting from absence of pruning and hoeing in Isa 5,6b and c

In 5b-c and 6a-c, the absence of what is essential for vineyard productivity — whether the removal of protection (hedge; wall) or the lack of cultivation (pruning; hoeing)<sup>18</sup> — give way to a depiction of the results<sup>19</sup>: burning and trampling (5b-c), thorns and thistles (6c).

<sup>18</sup> Absence continues in 6d with God commanding the clouds to withhold rain.

<sup>19</sup> The squiggly line represents change.

Isaiah 7,23 also utilizes שמיר ושית within a context where the essentials for vineyard productivity have been removed<sup>20</sup>. This is apparent through a comparison between 7,23 and 25.

23b every place where there would be 1000 vines worth 1000 pieces of silver	יהיה כל-מקום אשר יהיה-שם אלה גפן באלף כסף
c will become thorns and thistles.	לשמיר ולשית יהיה
...	.....
25a all of the mountains which with a hoe would be hoed	וכל ההרים אשר במעדר יעדרון
b You will not go there for fear of thorn and thistle.	לאתבוא שמה יראת שמיר ושית

Both 23b and 25a begin with כל+place. Most likely, כל-מקום and כל-ההרים are the same entities, as mountains (rather than valleys) are where vineyards grow, and the repeated use of שם in verses 23, 24, and 25 deictically draws attention to the same place. These places are followed by אשר clauses that describe a positive reality formerly associated with that place; where 1000 vines worth 1000 pieces of silver graced the landscape and where hoers were regularly at work. Both verses indicate a disruption between former associations with these places and the prospect of thorns and thistles. Figures 5 and 6 capture this (D = descriptor).

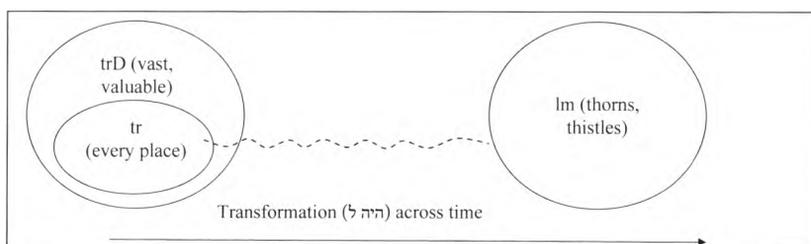


Figure 5 – The transformation of the trajector from a place of valuable vines into thorns and thistles in 7,23

<sup>20</sup> On the relationship between 5,1-7 and 7,18-25, see H.G.M. WILLIAMSON, “Poetic Vision in Isaiah 7,18-25”, *The Desert Will Bloom*. Poetic Visions in Isaiah (ed. A.J. EVERSON – H.C. KIM) (Atlanta, GA 2009) 77-89.

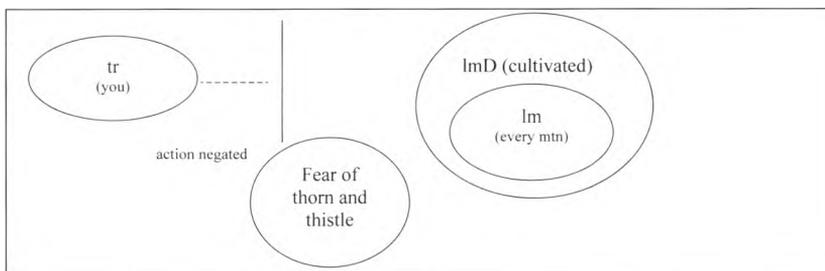


Figure 6 – The trajector does not undertake action to go to landmark previously viewed positively due to fear of thorns and thistles in 7,25.

In light of 7,23 and 25, שמיר ושית (7,23), including fearing them (7,25), are an antithesis to the positive associations of wealth and labor. שמיר ושית replace the vineyards in 7,23-25 to indicate a dreadful reversal from wealth and labor to unproductive, abandoned, dangerous reality.

Thus, in both 5,5-6 and 7,23 and 25, שמיר ושית captures the horrific outcome when essentials for vineyard production — whether protection or labor (עדר) — are disrupted and vineyards become vulnerable and no longer tended <sup>21</sup>.

## 2. אמלל

Although one might isolate 16,8-9 and 24,7 from one another on tradition-historical grounds, the use of the verb אמלל (“to wither”) in both passages invites reflection. Depictions of vines withering occur in contexts concerned with the loss of the fruits of the vine, and this leads to mourning. In 16,7, a lament arises over the raisin cakes of Qir-Haresheth. An explanation of this lamenting unfolds in 16,8. <sup>22</sup>

<p>8a For the terraces of Heshbon are withered,  b the vine of Sibmah.  c The lords of nations have struck <sup>22</sup> their choice vines,  ...  9a Therefore, I am weeping with the weeping of Jazer,  for the vine of Sibmah...</p>	<p>כי שדמות חשבון אמלל  גפן שבמה  בעלי גוים הלמו שרוקיה  ...  עליכן אבכה בבכי יעזר גפן שבמה</p>
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<sup>21</sup> See 32,10-12. קרן שמיר occurs in areas that were previously vineyards.

<sup>22</sup> Some take “choice vines” as the subject of הלם (cf. BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 1–39*, 295; WILDBERGER, *Isaiah 13–27*, 113). It is most natural to have “the lords” as the subject; so W.A.M. BEUKEN, *Jesaja 13–27* (Freiburg 2007) 123.

Verse 8a opens with a passive construction, where the trajector, “the terraces of Heshbon”, undergoes a change of state, “withered”. The parallel line that follows (8b), “vine of Sibmah”, uses the same passive verb through ellipsis. This second line (8b) both specifies that vines are the feature of the terraces in the first line that should come to mind and expands the purview of withering beyond Heshbon to another city well-known for its wine: Sibmah (see Fig. 7) <sup>23</sup>.

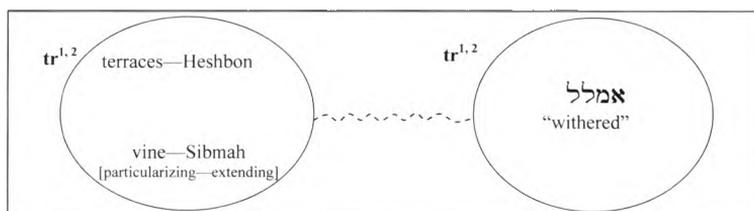


Figure 7 – Passive Transformation of Trajectors into Withered State in Isa 16,8a

The third line in verse 8 identifies the cause of the withering of the vine — the lords of the nations have struck the “choice vine” (שרק). By returning to the vine of Sibmah in verse 9, which was described in 8 as אמלל, the withered vine remains in view. Why describe the ruined vineyard as “withered”? An internal explanation emerges by understanding the כִּי in verse 8 as explanatory of verse 7. There will be weeping for raisin cakes (אשִׁישִׁים) because the vine is withered. In verse 10, the absence of joy is highlighted due to a lack of wine in the vats, with no hope for replenishment. The withering of vines receives focus when there is lament over the loss of the products of the vine.

In 24,7, there is the other depiction of the vine as אמלל. Verses 7-9 particularize God’s universal, eschatological judgment from vv. 1-6 within the context of a city <sup>24</sup>.

7a New wine is dried up <sup>25</sup>	אבל תירוש
b the vine withered.	אמללה-גפן
c All the merry-hearted groan.	ונאחו כל־שמח־לב:

<sup>23</sup> On the ability to particularize and develop thought in parallelism, see R. ALTER, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York 1985) 66-84. The diagram is a slight modification of R.W. LANGACKER, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, vol. 2 (Stanford, CA 1991) 202-203.

<sup>24</sup> WILDBERGER, *Isaiah 13-27*, 484-485.

<sup>25</sup> The LXX translates אבל with *πενθέω* (“to mourn”). It is most probable (with HALOT) to understand this as אבל II, “dry up”. So WILDBERGER, *Isaiah 13-27*, 478, 484.

The three lines in verse 7 relate closely. Line one (7a) begins by depicting how judgment has impacted the תירוש — seasonally fresh wine<sup>26</sup> — so that it is dried up. The drying up of the תירוש (tr<sup>1</sup>) is not a reference to wine evaporating; instead, the second line clarifies that the new wine will dry up due to the fate of its source (tr<sup>2</sup>): “the vine is withered”. The third line spells out the affective implications of the destruction of the vine: merriment (שמחה; tr<sup>3</sup>) has turned into groaning (אנה). This loss of joy continues through verse 11, as dances and singing often accompanying wine will cease. Figure 8 depicts the transformations of these three trajectors.

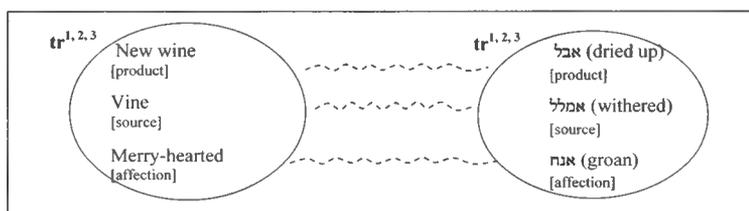


Figure 8 – Transformation of Trajectors through Passive and Intransitive Constructions in Isa 24,7

Again, as in Isa 16,8, the image of a vine withering in 24,7 occurs within a passage focusing on the loss of the vine’s fruits and its accompanying mourning, as is reiterated through verses 7-11<sup>27</sup>.

Thus, Cognitive Linguistics invites reflection upon how verbal expressions of a given motif figures into conceptual relations across an utterance. In the motif of the ruined vineyard, שמיר and שית coordinate with expressions that desire to capture the dreadful outcome of the absence of what is needed for the successful production in vineyards — particularly protection and labor (5,5-6; 7,23-25; cf. 32,10.12-13). When the speaker wants to capture the sad absence of the fruits of the vine, the notion of the withering (אמלל) vine comes into view (16,7-9; 24,7).

## II. THE RUINED VINEYARD AND SEMANTIC DOMAINS

Although the ruined vineyard motif finds unique expression within the aims of each passage, a common matrix of domains informs it<sup>28</sup>. “A

<sup>26</sup> WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 194-197.

<sup>27</sup> ROBERTS, *First Isaiah*, 314.

<sup>28</sup> On domains, see TAYLOR, *Cognitive Grammar*, 439-458.

domain may be defined as any knowledge configuration that is relevant to the characterization of meaning”<sup>29</sup>. For the concept [VINE], as with most concepts, many domains come together in its conceptualization. Three of the most prominent domains are sketched below (Fig. 9).

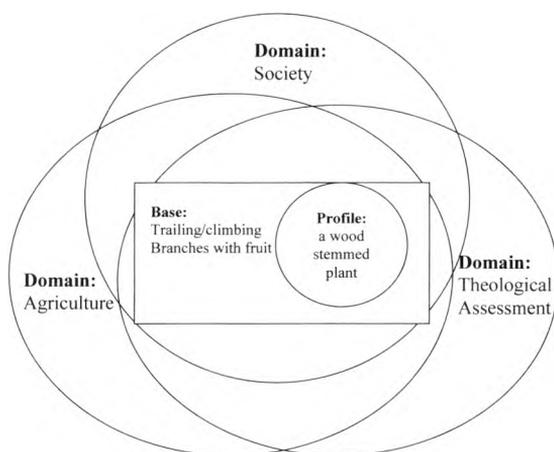


Figure 9 – Profile, Base, and Matrix of Prominent Domains for the Concept [VINE]<sup>30</sup>

### Domain One: Agriculture

As is common in the Mediterranean, vineyards are significant within Israel’s agricultural economy. This is apparent in our passages in several ways. For one, viticulture takes place in the hill country, with its rocky *terra rosa* soil<sup>31</sup>. The vine keeper in 5,1 chooses a hill for his vineyard<sup>32</sup>, כַּל־הַהַרִּים parallels כַּל־הַמְּקוֹם, and the vines in Moab’s terraces (שַׁדְמוֹת) are in view in 16,8. Additionally, a ruined vineyard entails the undoing of years, even generations of labor<sup>33</sup>. In 5,2, the labors of the vineyard owner are stressed: selecting a plot, soil broken up (עֲזוֹק) and de-stoned, choice seed planted, a tower built, and a winepress hewn. Not only are preparations and construction important, but it takes up to ten years of tending until a vineyard produces a full harvest. Ruined vines strike at the bond forged between people and their land over years of labor.

<sup>29</sup> TAYLOR, *Cognitive Grammar*, 439.

<sup>30</sup> For a similar diagram, see VAN WOLDE, *Reframing Biblical Studies*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> On Israel’s ideal conditions for viticulture, see WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 27-41.

<sup>32</sup> קַרְנֵי refers to a mountain only in Isa 5,1 (cf. HALOT, 2, 1145).

<sup>33</sup> For more on viticulture, see MATTHEWS, “Treading the Winepress”, 19-32; WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*.

As contexts of work, the prospect of no longer hoeing (עדרר; 5,6; 7,25), resulting in thorns and thistles, indicates a major rupture between the land and its caregivers. Labor also involves harvesting (32,10) and treading (16,10; cf. 63,1-6)<sup>34</sup>, where the supply would be replenished (24,7-9); the absence of such labors indicates the undoing of the agricultural economy so central to Israel. Third, scholars estimate that families would have 1–2 liters of wine per day in ancient Israel<sup>35</sup>. The ruin of a product so central to daily life was no small loss. Thus, although certain passages gravitate to particular facets of agriculture, the concept of a ruined vineyard certainly entails a major blow to the hill country region, reaching those who labored over such vineyards and even impacting what was available at mealtime.

### *Domain Two: Society*

Although intertwined with agriculture, the vine interrelates with the domain of society in several respects. First, family structure and social class must come into view. On the one hand, vines held families together. Vineyards were an inheritance that linked one generation to the next. When Naboth refuses to give King Ahab his vineyard, it is because it was “the inheritance of my ancestors” (1 Kgs 21,3; cf. vs. 4). Although it is difficult to quantify, numerous families owned and worked their vineyards at the time of the prophet; the Samaritan Ostraca reveal tax records from the vineyards of poor families during the eighth century<sup>36</sup>. Entire families participated in the viticulture process<sup>37</sup>, including women. Indeed, as C. Meyers observes, women would carry a greater level of responsibility for the fields and vineyards during times of war<sup>38</sup>, so those women lamenting

<sup>34</sup> S. DAR, *Landscape and Pattern*. An Archaeological Survey of Samaria 800 B.C.E.—636 C.E. (Oxford 1986) 147-164, identifies 300 wine-presses in western Samaria, some built for individual farmers and others for entire villages. MATTHEWS, “Treading the Wine-press”, 2, notes that 117 winepresses are found in the vicinity of Megiddo.

<sup>35</sup> WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 211, estimates 1.9 liters per day from a 2 dunam vineyard. DAR, *Landscape and Pattern*, 160-161, calculates 1 liter per person per day for a 1.5-3 dunam vineyard.

<sup>36</sup> See A.F. RAINEY, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem, 2014) 221-222. The Gezer calendar and the design of the four-room house further support the family locus for viticulture (WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 46-59). This tempers M.L. Chaney’s portrayal of life in Israel during the Assyrian era as if only the royal and military elite owned vineyards: M.L. CHANEY, “Whose Sour Grapes?: The Addressees of Isaiah 5,1-7 in Light of Political Economy”, *Semeia* 87 (1999) 105-122.

<sup>37</sup> Family involvement in modern Iran may be a parallel; see WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 59-63.

<sup>38</sup> C. MEYERS, “Procreation, Production, and Protection: Male-Female Balance in Early Israel”, *JAAR* 51.4 (1983) 569-593, esp. 574-575, 578. See also C. MEYERS, “The Family

over the failing harvest in Isa 32,10-12 would be lamenting over vines they had tended.

On the other hand, although there was some degree of family possession of vineyards, the wealthy elite and their luxurious vineyards are often in view within Isaiah<sup>39</sup>. The parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5 is followed by accusations against those who are acquiring house after house and field after field (5,8-10). The warnings that their vineyards will not produce much and that their intoxication will catch up to them suggest that God is standing against powerful vineyard owners who have abused the poor in the process (5,10, 11, 22; cf. 3,14). As for 7,23, if the typical vineyard had 275 vines<sup>40</sup>, the ruin of a place with 1000 vines worth 1000 pieces of silver is an indictment against the (royal?) elite. Thus, the ruin of a vineyard is the loss of something central to a family system and/or a strike of judgment against the elite and their impressive vineyards.

Second, social occasions of celebration closely intertwine with the vine and its production. Whether during the process of harvesting (Jdg 9,27) or consumption (Ps 4,8[7]), joy accompanies the vine. For this reason, sorrow and lament accompanies the absence of wine. In Joel 1,12, we read: “The vine is dried up (יבש)... Surely joy has withered away (יבש) from the children of humanity”. In Isa 16,7-10, 24,7-9, and 32,12-13, there are explicit correlations between the ruined vineyard and the loss of joy. In 16,7-11, Moab “howls” (ליל) and “groans” (הגה) and the prophet weeps (בכה) and sheds tears (דמעה) over ruined vineyards; גיל, שמחה, and רגן now are absent from their orchards and vineyards. In Isa 24,7-8, the joyful (שמחי לב) will mourn and their joyous (משוש) instruments will cease due to the shriveling of the vine<sup>41</sup>. In 32,12-13, lament will occur since the fruitful vines are now thorns and thistles. Thus, as a symbol for and cause of joy within society, vines bond communities together in celebration; their ruin signals the end of an era of joy for that community.

Third, a pre-requisite for viticultural success is social stability and tranquility<sup>42</sup>. For this reason, texts portray an ideal, peaceful future by speaking of vines (1 Kgs. 5,5 [4,25]; Mic. 4,4; Zech. 3,10; 8,12). In contrast, war is a great threat to social stability, and this is seen in the fate of vines

in Early Israel”, *Families in Ancient Israel* (eds. L.G. PERDUE et al.) (Louisville, KY 1997) 1-47, esp. 24-27; R. W. POE HAYS, “Sing Me a Parable of Zion: Isaiah’s Vineyard (5,1-7) and Its Relation to the ‘Daughter Zion’ Tradition”, *JBL* 135 (2016) 750-751.

<sup>39</sup> See CHANEY, “Whose Sour Grapes”.

<sup>40</sup> WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 211.

<sup>41</sup> ROBERTS, *First Isaiah*, 314.

<sup>42</sup> L.E. STAGER, “The Firstfruits of Civilization”, *Palestine in the Bronze and Iron Ages. Papers in Honour of Olga Tufnell* (London 1985) 172-188, esp. 177; WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 116-118.

as forces invade (cf. Jer 5,17; Joel 1,7). There are references to the destruction of vines in warfare across the ancient Near East over the centuries. From Egypt, Pepi I (2300s BCE) states: “After it had thrown down its enclosures, the army returned in safety; after it had cut down its figs and its vines”<sup>43</sup>. In a text from Ugarit, a commander reports: “BN HRNK has come (here), he has defeated the (local) troops, he has pillaged the town, he has even burned our grain on the threshing-floors and destroyed the vineyards”<sup>44</sup>. From Assyria, Sargon (724-705 BCE) describes a campaign against the Mannaeans, saying, “I cut down its splendid orchards, I cut down great quantities of its vines, I made an end of its drinking”<sup>45</sup>.

The ruined vineyard motif in Isaiah 1–39 evokes a context of military invasion. Invasions by Egypt and Assyria (7,18.20) serve as the backdrop to 7,23–25. In 16,8, it is the “lords of the nations” who will strike Moab’s vines. The opening verses of chapter 24 utilize language similar to Nah 2,1–2.9–10 to portray YHWH as a warrior who will lay waste to (בַּקַּק), devastate (בִּלְק), and plunder (בָּזַז) the earth (אֶרֶץ) and scatter (פָּרַץ) its inhabitants. Presumably, YHWH’s actions as a warrior at the start of chapter 24 are the cause of the withering of the vine in 24,7–8. In 32,12–13, an ancient hearer would know that land, fields, vines, houses, towns, towers, and watch stations (32,10–14) come to ruin through invasion<sup>46</sup>. The realities of vineyard destruction amidst warfare are what make the metaphorical trampling of Israel and Judah in 5,5–6 so devastating. The ruined vineyard signifies a context of social and political upheaval.

Thus, the ruined vineyard motif in Isaiah 1–39 has the capacity to signify devastating ruptures within family, judgment against the elite, the absence of joy, and upheaval amidst conquest by invading nations.

### *Domain Three: Theological Assessment*

The vine can also be a thermometer for where a nation stands in relationship to God. The flourishing of a vineyard can be a sign of God’s blessing of restoration, as is captured in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 6,11; Josh 24,13)

<sup>43</sup> WALSH, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 125. Later, Thutmose III (1490–1436 BCE) speaks of destroying Ardate’s grain, cutting down its trees, and consuming its wine (*ANET*, 239).

<sup>44</sup> D. PARDEE, “Emergency Report from a City-Commander (RS 19.001)”, in *COS* 3.45ff.

<sup>45</sup> *ARAB* 2,90, paragraph 164. See also *ARAB* 2,87–88, paragraph 160. For references to destroyed horticulture (presumably including vineyards), see, for Tiglath-Pileser III, *ARAB* 1,279, paragraph 776; *ARAB* 1,285, paragraph 792; for Shalmanesser III, *ARAB* 1,221, paragraph 608; for Sennacherib, *The Annals of Sennacherib*, 59, paragraph 29. See also J.D. SMOAK, “Building Houses and Planting Vineyards: The Early Inner-Biblical Discourse on an Ancient Israelite Wartime Curse”, *JBL* 127 (2008) 20–24.

<sup>46</sup> BLENKINSOPP, *Isaiah 1–39*, 434.



divine judgment and social upheaval figure prominently in the conceptualization of the ruined vineyard motif within Isaiah 1–39, while a given passage may emphasize different aspects of the impact of such ruin upon agriculture and society.

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this essay has been to offer a stronger conceptual foundation for understanding the ruined vine motif in Isaiah 1–39 with the help of Cognitive Linguistics. An examination of *relations* within each utterance exposes a tendency to use particular phraseology when attempting to depict either the aftermath of the removal of what is essential for vineyard flourishing (שמיר and שית) or the loss of the fruits of the vine (אמלל). The semantic domains of agriculture, society, and theological assessment locate the ruin of vineyards within the conceptual outlook of ancient Israel. Viticulture is central within the agricultural economy throughout the Levant, so the destruction of vines captures a significant economic rupture. Additionally, from a social perspective, military invasion is a serious threat to the well-being of vines, so their depletion captures the disruption caused by military invasion, which all five passages imply. Furthermore, vine destruction signifies a loss of joy throughout society, resulting in an era of mourning (16,8-9; 24,7-13; 32,9-14). What is more, the status of the vine is a gauge of YHWH's standing towards his people, as its destruction is often a sign of judgment explicitly noted in all of the passages except for 32,12. Thus, the centrality of the vine within the fabric of society and its correspondence with peace and joy make the vine's destruction amidst war a powerful symbol in Isaiah 1–39 for expressing the weighty reality of divine, violent judgment.

Although the aim of this essay has not been to address how the motif contributes to the book's unity, this study will draw to a close with several suggestive reflections. For one, these texts may contribute to the cohesion between the sub-sections (1–12; 13–23; 24–27; 28–33) within First Isaiah. Isa 7,23 addresses Israel and Judah, while 16,8-9 extends the threat of vine destruction to Moab, with 24,7 universalizing this tragic destiny to all the inhabitants of the earth. Isa 32,12 returns back to Judah, as it foretells a time when a city's vines will no longer bear fruit. The confrontation of audiences in differing locales (whether Judah and Israel, Moab, or the entire world) and time frames (whether pre-exile, exile, or post-exile) with the same fate of vine destruction contributes to the goal behind the shaping of Isaiah 1–39 to enable the messages of judgment to be read and

appropriated as warnings for subsequent audiences<sup>50</sup>. Second, the metaphorical depiction of Israel and Judah as God's putrid vineyard (כרם) in 5,1-7 likely interrelates with the more literal expectation of God's plans to judge Israel, Judah, Moab, and the entire world by destroying their vines<sup>51</sup>. Third, the study above tells only one side of the story. The destruction of the vine is not the book of Isaiah's final word about the vine. From a more literal perspective, there are hopes that God's people will again enjoy the fruit of their vineyards after God saves Zion (37,30; cf. 65,21). Indeed, just after news of worldwide vine depletion in chapter 24, there is hope that all peoples will drink from the dregs of wine (ו שמר) at a celebratory feast hosted by YHWH (25,6-8)<sup>52</sup>. From a more metaphorical perspective, although God removes protection from his vineyard and allows it to be trampled in 5,5-6, 27,2-6 looks forward to a time when YHWH will again have a fruitful vineyard, as he protects it, waters it, and even declares that he will go to war against any thorns and thistles (שמיר שית; cf. 5,6; 7,23) that may arise<sup>53</sup>. God's people, his vineyard, will again experience divine favor, social stability, peace, and joy as they take root and spread across the entire world<sup>54</sup>. Thus, just as the centrality of the vine within the fabric of society and its correspondence with peace and joy make the vine's destruction amidst war a powerful symbol in Isaiah 1–39 for expressing the weighty reality of divine, violent judgment, so the renewal of the vine (literally and metaphorically) aptly symbolizes the new era of salvation.

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<sup>50</sup> See A.T. ABERNETHY, *Eating in Isaiah*. Approaching the Role of Food and Drink in Isaiah's Structure and Message (BIS 131; Leiden 2014) 65-67, who begins to consider how ruined vines in 1–12, 13–23, 24–27, and 28–35 promote cohesion across these units.

<sup>51</sup> On the connection between 5,1-7 and 7,23, see WILLIAMSON, "Poetic Vision in Isaiah 7,18-25", 79-81.

<sup>52</sup> For the view that 25,6-8 is capable of conveying a banquet both of judgment and salvation for both Israel and the nations in accord with the wider book of Isaiah, see M.P. MAIER, "Festbankett oder Henkersmahl? Die zwei Gesichter von Jes 25:6-8", *VT* 64 (2014) 445-464.

<sup>53</sup> L. Alonso-Schökel, "La canción de la viña: Is 27,2-5", *EstEcl* 34 (1960) 767-774, identifies affinities between Isa 5,1-7 and 27,2-6, suggesting that they are both "songs to the divine" (*canciones a lo divino*, 773) that are adapted from secular songs and spiritualized for religious purposes.

<sup>54</sup> On the relationship between 5,1-7 and 27,2-6 when read sequentially across the book, see B.J.M. JOHNSON, "'Whoever Gives Me Thorns and Thistles': Rhetorical Ambiguity and the Use of מיתן in Isaiah 27,2-6", *JSOT* 36 (2011) 105-126. See also E. JACOB, "Du premier au deuxième chant de la vigne du prophète Esaïe: Réflexions sur Esaïe 27,2-5", *Wort — Gebot — Glaube*. Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments. FS. W. Eichrodt (eds. H.-J. STOEBE et al.) (Zürich 1970) 325-330, who not only examines 27,2-5 as a reversal of 5,1-7 but also attempts to explain how this figures into the apocalyptic outlook of Isaia 24–27, which looks beyond unspecified contexts of conflict.

## SUMMARY

This article utilizes Cognitive Linguistics to present a stronger conceptual understanding of the motif of the ruined vineyard in Isaiah 1–39. First, a relations approach to utterances illuminates the function of particular terms used to describe the ruined vineyard (שמיר and שית; אמלל). Second, a domains approach to the ruined vineyard demonstrates how agriculture, society, and theological assessment inform this motif. The centrality of the vine within the fabric of society and its correspondence with peace and joy make the vine's destruction amidst war a powerful symbol in Isaiah 1–39 for capturing the weighty reality of divine, violent judgment.

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