

David Freedman

**Counting Formulae  
in the Akkadian  
Epics**

As with any study of Akkadian literary devices, our starting point in the investigation of the counting formulae<sup>1</sup> in the Akkadian epics must be the Sumerian material. Sumerian poetry is not particularly rich in counting formulae, but a few observations can be made nevertheless. Except for passages where numbers are used in an  $n//n$  balance,<sup>2</sup> there seems to be one basic pattern of numerical literary device, with the formulaic counting off of items in a list by ones.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>By "counting formula" I mean a literary device in which a series of things is counted by three or more consecutive numbers.

<sup>2</sup>"D(escent of) In(anna)":169; "F(lood) S(tory)":203-204; AnOr 15, p. 76, #2:12-13. Although the 5//10 balance in the "Curse of Agade":66-71 might be attributed to the general irregularity of the text (cf. Kramer, ANET<sup>3</sup>, pp. 646-647), its reappearance in the Shukallituda Myth (Kramer, HBS, pp. 72-74) and the parallelism of 2//3 and 30//40 in "The Dispute Between Cattle and Grain" (HBS, p. 111)--if the latter is indeed to be included here--makes further study of number parallelism in Sumerian desirable.

<sup>3</sup>The material is too meager for certainty; but there seems to be a tendency (in earlier texts?) to introduce the formula with a statement of how many units are to be counted and to count using the ordinal numbers, as in "G(ilgamesh and the) L(and of the) L(iving)":34-45; DIn:120-140; FS:91-97 (after Kramer's restoration in ANET, p. 43c, as opposed to that of Civil apud Lambert and Millard, A(tra-)H(asis), [Oxford, 1969], pp. 140-141, 171); and--unless we take the text as purely historical--the Tummal Inscription: 6-26 (Kramer, apud Garelli, Gilgameš, p. 61, 63).

The Sumerian counting formula is used to count off a list of five (the antediluvian cities,<sup>4</sup> the dunkings of the mashmash<sup>5</sup>); seven (Gilgamesh's protecting demons,<sup>6</sup> the gates of the underworld,<sup>7</sup> the ni-te-a's of Humbaba,<sup>8</sup> the melammu's with which Enlil invested Gilgamesh,<sup>9</sup> the stations of Inanna's flight from Eridu to Erech,<sup>10</sup> and the sons who ease the way of their fathers who are in the underworld<sup>11</sup>); or nine units (the months of pregnancy<sup>12</sup>).

In general, we can say that Sumerian counting formulae are used to count items which can be easily counted, such as cities and demons; to measure distance when in conjunction with a verbum movendi; and to measure the passage of time in conjunction with static verbs. The formula in the Nippur texts was usually introduced by a statement of the total number, and consisted of enumeration by ones of the things counted.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>FS:91-97.

<sup>5</sup>HBS, pp. 206-207.

<sup>6</sup>GLL:34-45.

<sup>7</sup>DIn:120-140.

<sup>8</sup>Garelli, Gilgameš, p. 70:52-73, cf. Wilson's translation, ANET, p. 107. This text is from Larsa; but the Nippur text (ANET, p. 49d:139-145) has an apparent abbreviation.

<sup>9</sup>Garelli, Gilgameš, p. 71:110-118.

<sup>10</sup>HBS, pp. 102-103.

<sup>11</sup>"Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Underworld," cf. Heidel, Gilgamesh epic, p. 100; Schott and von Soden, Das Gilgamesch Epos (Stuttgart, 1966), pp. 105-106.

<sup>12</sup>"Enki and Ninhursag":76-85. The customary introduction is absent because the nine months of pregnancy is a known number not needing an advance summary. The parallel passages in lines 104-106 and 123-124--already seen as noteworthy by Kramer (ANET, p. 39, nn. 36-37)--are probably abbreviations rather than true variants. Abbreviations in ancient Near Eastern texts have so far been altogether neglected.

<sup>13</sup>The only apparent exception to the pattern is the account of the trip of Enmerkar's herald to Aratta over seven mountains, in which the numbers 1-4 are lacking. Certain conditioning factors are present, however, which account for the change from the norm. The first two thirds of the account is part of a command-action sequence, the command of which appears in Inanna's instructions to Enmerkar and is repeated in Enmerkar's instructions to the Herald (HBS, pp. 23, 24). In order to show the herald's obedience, the passage is repeated here. Not critical to Inanna or Enmerkar are the real hardships of the journey. They are to the herald, so the text

Since the formula that counts off "tangible" items seems to be the origin of the counting formula in all its forms, our discussion of the Akkadian material will begin with it. We find that heartland Mesopotamian texts continue the Sumerian tradition almost unchanged. Thus we find  $n/\underline{n}(+1)$ <sup>14</sup> or enumerations by single units of three (the snorts of the bull of heaven<sup>15</sup> and the attempts of the eagle to escape the pit<sup>16</sup>) or seven items (the sons of dead men,<sup>17</sup> the plundering warriors,<sup>18</sup> and the weapons given to Era<sup>19</sup>).

Of the three passages from the Sultan Tepe version of the Nergal-Ereshkigal myth which count "tangible" items, one<sup>20</sup> is an enumeration of the porters at the gates of the underworld. The origin of that passage and its form are both Sumerian, as can be seen by comparison with the distance formula below. There are, however, irregularities in the counting patterns of the other two passages, both of which describe Namtar's search for Nergal.<sup>21</sup> Here the counting is done in pairs rather than in single units. We can hardly reject the explanation that these passages reflect some extra-Mesopotamian influence, which we will later be able to define more readily.

Although it began as a counting of "tangible" items, the counting of the successive gates of the underworld was, by extension, already in Sumerian literature made a way of measuring distance

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lengthens his journey with an eye to the lines "Lifted his eyes," etc; but, relying on the lines "He ascends the ... mountains, /He descends the ... mountains," etc., to convey the length and hardships of the journey, the text counts only the fifth, sixth, and seventh mountains. By such a careful choice of detail, the poet artfully gives us the feelings of the herald.

<sup>14</sup>Gilg. VI:51-52 (the pits dug by Ishtar for her lovers) and 123:128 (men killed by the snorts of the bull of heaven).

<sup>15</sup>Gilg. VI:123-128.

<sup>16</sup>Etana, M(iddle) A(ssyrian): Ebeling, "Ein mittelassyrisches Bruchstück des Etana-Mythus," *AfO* 14, p. 302:14-20; 305:7-8 (plus the restorations); and N(eo-) A(ssyrian), p. 307:6-17.

<sup>17</sup>Gilg. XII:99-118 (restoration based on the Sumerian).

<sup>18</sup>Cuthaeen Legend, 37-48.

<sup>19</sup>Era Epos I:30-40.

<sup>20</sup>N(ergal and) E(reshkigal), vi:19-29.

<sup>21</sup>N-E, v:34'-35', and 49'-52'.

traveled. The Akkadian passages,<sup>22</sup> then, seemingly derive from the passages in the Descent of Ishtar which correspond to the Descent of Inanna: 120-140 and its parallel texts. The Sumerian tradition of counting by ones in these passages has been retained to the extent that even the ordinal numbers are used.

The logical extension of the counting of gates or stations was the counting of biru's. Evidently the poets made only a tentative beginning, telling progress in biru's by 20//30.<sup>23</sup> With the success of the tentative innovation, the Ninevite authors tried two daring experiments in expression: a description of Gilgamesh's harrowing trip to the mountains of Mashu,<sup>24</sup> and of the ascent and descent of Etana and the eagle.<sup>25</sup> The Gilgamesh passage has been well described by Oppenheim:<sup>26</sup>

In the description of the twelve stations of this strange passage the poet proceeds with fine dramatic sense. The darkness of the first seven "double hours" is described with identical<sup>27</sup> words,<sup>28</sup> whose monotonous intensity admirably reflects the mood of the traveler. To the description of the eighth station the word i-ṣar-ra-aḥ "he cries out (in fright)" is added

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<sup>22</sup>"D(escent of) Is(htar) " :42-63, rev.:38-45; N-E, i:19'-27', iii:41'-49', and vi:19-29, which last counts the porters of the gates. Hardly separable from these passages is the passage with the stationing of the fourteen monsters at each of the doors to Ereshkigal's palace in the Amarna version of N-E, rev.:68-74. The number fourteen rather than the usual seven may be due to Egyptian influence.

<sup>23</sup>Gilg. V, iii:44-45 = XI:283-284 = 300-301.

<sup>24</sup>Gilg. IX, iv:44-v:46.

<sup>25</sup>Langdon, "The Legend of Etana and the Eagle," Babyl. 12 (1931), p. 45:23-33, p. 49:17-39.

<sup>26</sup>Or NS 17 (1948), p. 47.

<sup>27</sup>x biru ina kašādišu  
šapat ekletumma ul ibašši nūru  
ul inadinšu ana amāri  
panassu arkassu

When he reached the nth biru  
The darkness is so dense / that  
there is no light, / Nor will it  
let him see ahead or behind.

<sup>28</sup>Oppenheim's interpretation minimizes the problem of a 23-line break which has posed a tantalizing puzzle to all the commentators between the second and fourth stations. His suggestion makes use of only five of those lines.

to mark the climax.<sup>29</sup> When reaching the ninth, Gilgamesh already feels a draft blowing (napāḫu)<sup>30</sup> against his face.<sup>31</sup> At the tenth he realizes (from an indication which a break in the tablet has hidden from us) that the end is near (qit-ru-ub).<sup>32</sup> In the eleventh "the dawn breaks" ([11 būru ina kašādišu] it-ta-ḡi la-am-d<sup>x</sup>šamši) to full light ([12 būru ina kašādišu] namirtu šaknat) at the twelfth and last station.

To Oppenheim's notes can be added the observation that the poet is so urged on by his desire for drama that he increases the total from the traditional seven to twelve in order to achieve his effect. Nevertheless, the Sumerian tradition of counting by ones is stubbornly maintained.

Even more imagination and dramatic sense are exhibited by the author of the Etana Epic when he tries to describe flight:

uddanninma irtabi bilassu ištēn bīra ušaqqī[šūma]<sup>33</sup>  
 erū ana šāšumma ana Etana izzakkar[šu]  
 dugul ebrī mātu kī ibaš[ši]  
 ṣubbi tātum idāte ša É.[KUR]  
 mātum-me li-mid-da šadā tātum itūra ana mē [ . . . ]  
 šanā bīra ušaqqī[šūma]  
 erū ana šāšumma ana Etana izzak[karšu]  
 dugul ebrī mātu kī ibašši mātum-me [ ... ]

<sup>29</sup>More precisely, išarraḫ seems to mean "he hurries on" and reflects the zeal with which Gilgamesh now presses on. "Cries out" would require a form of surruḫu. (See CAD S, pp. 99d and 101a.) Line 35 should be restored to read 8 būru ina! kašādišu išarraḫ, and the rest of the passage follows the wording of the first seven būru's.

<sup>30</sup>Verbs used with wind are zāqu, alāku, and perhaps even bā'u. One can also speak of tīb iltanī and even iltanu rākibu. The verb napāḫu does not seem to be used of winds--despite its relationship to Hebrew nāpaḫ--but of fire, fever and disease, and the heavenly bodies.

<sup>31</sup>[...]-ha panišu  
[šapat ekletumma ul ib|ašši nūru  
[ul inaddinšu ana amāri pan|assu u arkassu.  
 The line division here presents some problems, for we would expect iltanu at the beginning of line 39 rather than at the end of line 38.

<sup>32</sup>10 būru ina kašādišu

....qitrub  
 ....ša bīrī

<sup>33</sup>The -ma is to be restored throughout, after Jensen, KB 6/1, p. 114 and passim.

šalša bīra ušaqqīšūma erû ana šâšumma ana Etana [izzakkaršu]  
dugul ebrī mātu kī ibašši  
tâmtum itūra ana iki ša nukaribbi

.....

ištēn bīra [ušaqqīšū]ma  
ebrī naplisma mātu [kī i] bašši  
ša māti [...]  
u tâmtu rapaštu(m) mala tarbaši  
šanâ bīra [ušaqqīšūma]  
ebrī naplisma mātu kī [ibašši]  
ittūr mātu ana musarê [...]  
u tâmtu rapaštu mala buginni  
šalša bīra [ušaqqīšūma]  
ebrī naplis mātu kī ibašši  
appalsamma mātu kī [...]  
u tâmtum rapaštum ul išebbā [īnāya]  
ebrī ul elli ana šamê  
šakun kibsu [...]  
ištēn bīra issuk[amma]  
erû imqutamma imdaḥaršu ina [...]  
šanâ bīra issu[kamma]  
erû imqutamma imdaḥar[šu ina ...]  
šalša bīra issu[kamma]  
erû imqutamma imdaḥar[šu ina ...]  
... ana qaqqari [ša Anim]  
erû imqutamma imda[ḥaršu ina ...]  
... erû i-ḥaš-šal ša Etana

The eagle strengthened himself, for his burden was great.  
When he had flown him up the first "mile,"  
The eagle spoke to him, to Etana:  
"Look, my friend. What is the land like?  
View the sea and the edges of Ekur!"  
"The land . . . a mountain; and the sea has become . . . ."  
When he had flown him up a second "mile,"  
The eagle spoke to him, to Etana:  
"Look, my friend. What is the land like?" "The land . . . ."  
When he had flown him up the third, the eagle spoke to him, to Etana:  
"Look, my friend. What is the land like?"  
"The sea has turned into a flooded gardener's plot."

.....

[They reach the level of Anu.]

When he had flown him up the first "mile,"  
"Look down, my friend. What is the land like?"  
"As for the land . . . .  
And the broad sea looks like a tub."  
When he flew him up a second "mile,"  
"Look down, my friend. What is the land like?"

"The land has turned into a garden bed,  
 And the broad sea looks like a trough."  
 When he had flown him up a third "mile,"  
 "Look down, my friend. What is the land like?"  
 "When I looked down, the land .... [My eyes] do not enjoy ...  
 My friend, I will not go up to the sky!  
 Turn around . . . ."  
 As he plunged down the first "mile,"  
 The eagle was descending evenly with him.  
 As he plunged down the second "mile,"  
 The eagle was descending evenly with him.  
 As he plunged down the third "mile,"  
 The eagle was descending evenly with him.  
 . . . . to the level of Anu.  
 The eagle was descending evenly with him.

Although the passage is fraught with difficulties, we can see, nevertheless, that the word order serves to increase the suspense, while the constant, close repetitions not only capture the feeling of the plunge, but also echo the rapid beating of Etana's heart. Nonetheless, all the counting is done by ones, in formal accordance with Sumerian tradition.

The Assyrian poets forged ahead in a new direction with their extension of the distance formula to include measuring distances by means of the poles in the famous punting passage in Gilg. X, iv: 1-8:

Uršanabi ana šāšumma [izzakkara ana Gilgāmeš]  
 duppir Gilgāmeš [leqi parīsi]  
 mē mūti qātka ā iltapit . . . .  
 šanā šalša u rebâ Gilgāmeš leqi parī[si]  
 ḥanša šešša u sebâ Gilgāmeš leqi parī[si]  
 sam(a)nâ tišâ u ešra Gilgāmeš leqi parī[si]  
 ištenšerâ šinšerâ Gilgāmeš leqi parī[si]  
 ina šina-šūši Gilgāmeš ugdammera par[īsi]

Urshanabi spoke to him, to Gilgamesh:  
 "Press on, Gilgamesh. [Take a pole.]  
 Let your hand not touch the water of death.  
 A second, a third, a fourth pole, take, Gilgamesh;  
 A fifth, a sixth, a seventh pole, take, Gilgamesh;  
 An eighth, a ninth, a tenth pole, take, Gilgamesh;  
 An eleventh, a twelfth pole, take, Gilgamesh."  
 At one hundred and twenty, Gilgamesh had used up the poles.

Here the poet builds almost unbearable tension with the first twelve poles, but his sudden jump to 120 is the most dramatic way he can express the relief of Gilgamesh at his safe arrival. The variance with

the regular Sumerian counting pattern in this passage is to be explained on the basis of the phenomenon discussed below where further discussion of the present passage will be found.

Although there are radical changes in the subject matter and in the nature of the counted object from the Sumerian to the Akkadian formulae that measure distance, the basic elements of the Sumerian counting formula are maintained until the end of the Akkadian literary tradition. The counting by ones, the frequent use of the ordinals, and the use of refrain--not just mechanical repetition, but artistically conceived refrain--characterize the counting formulae that measure distance.

Closely related to the passages measuring distance traveled are passages marking the passing of time. Indeed, the criterion for deciding between the two lies with the nature of the verb: verba movendi require formulae measuring the distance traveled, whereas static verbs will result in passage-of-time formulae, just as in Sumerian.

The Old Babylonian material for the passage-of-time counting formula<sup>34</sup> is limited to  $n/n(+1)$ <sup>35</sup> and one counting to three years, by ones.<sup>36</sup> Late Assyrian texts still favor  $n/n+1$ <sup>37</sup> to the near exclusion of  $n/n$ ,<sup>38</sup> but now the possibility of counting off each of the passing years is exploited. In the Neo-Assyrian versions of Gilgamesh, the days are counted off without a regular pattern until a total

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<sup>34</sup>Note that the O(ld) B(abylonian) Atrahasis (p. 44:33-38) does not count the forty years that the gods toiled, whereas the NA version of the same lines counts 10-20-30-40 (p. 45:10-13).

<sup>35</sup>Gilg. II: ii:6-10 (6//7; cf. the NA version's 6//7, Gilg. I, iv:21-23); Gilg. X, ii:5-9 (7//7; cf. the NA version's 6//7, X, ii:1-5 = iii:21-24); and Enūma Elish 6:60-62, if the passage does indeed belong here.

<sup>36</sup>A-H, 78:9-18.

<sup>37</sup>Gilg. I, iii:46-51 (1//2); I, iv:21-23; X, ii:1-5 = iii:21-24 (restored); XI:198-199 (all 6//7).

<sup>38</sup>Compare 6//7 in Gilg. X (NA), ii:1-5 with 7//7 in X (OB), ii:5-9. Gilg. XI:127-130 presents a conflate of devices, with 6//6 and the formulaic introduction of the seventh day.

of three, seven, or twelve<sup>39</sup> is reached.<sup>40</sup> In the Neo-Assyrian version of Atrahasis, the forty years of toil of the gods is counted by tens (p. 45:10-13),<sup>41</sup> and the six years of suffering by the human race are counted off one at a time to mark the horror of the ever increasing plague.<sup>42</sup> Still present in the time-counting formulae is strong Sumerian influence.

Two passages not yet mentioned that count seven days merit particularly close attention since they count off the days in pairs. The counting of items in the formulae in pairs is, as we have seen, not characteristically Mesopotamian. The first of the passages is the description of the resting of Utnapishtim's ark:<sup>43</sup>

ana šadî Nišir îtemid elippu	The ship landed on Mt. Nisir.
šadû Nišir elippa iŝbatma ana nâši	Mt. Nisir seized the ship and
ul iddin	would not let (it) move.
ištên ūma šanâ ūma šadû Nišir KI.MIN	A first day, a second day,
šalša ūma rebâ ūma šadû Nišir KI.MIN	Mt. Nisir, etc.
šanša šešša šadû Nišir KI.MIN	A third day, a fourth day,
sebû ūmu ina kašadi	Mt. Nisir, etc.
ušēšīma summata umaššer	A fifth, a sixth, Mt. Nisir, etc.
	But <sup>44</sup> on the seventh day's arrival,
	I let out the dove, and set (her)
	free.

<sup>39</sup>For the significance of these numbers, see Johannes Hehn, Siebenzahl und Sabbat bei den Babyloniern und Alten Testament, LSS 2/V (Leipzig, 1907) and Zur Bedeutung der Siebenzahl, Marti Festschrift (1925), pp. 128-136; Roscher, Die enneadischen und hebdomadischen Fristen und Wochen der ältesten Griechen, ASGW 21/4 (1903) and Die Sieben und Neunzahl in Kultus und Mythos der Griechen, ASGW 24/1 (1904); and Cassuto, "Biblical Literature and Canaanite Literature," Tarbiz 13 (1942), pp. 206-207 (in Hebrew), and The Goddess Anath (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 35-36 (in Hebrew).

<sup>40</sup>Gilg. I, ii:42-45 (3, counted 1,2,3); VII, iv:6-12 (Th[ompson], p. 34; 12, counted 1-2, 3-10, 11-12). Gilg. XI:48-79 may belong here if lines 50-52 had the numbers 1-4. The counting of the seven breads to mark the seven days of Gilgamesh's sleep (XI:215-218 = 225-228) certainly belongs here; each bread is counted singly.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. OB version, p. 44:37-38, where there is only a statement that the toil of the gods lasted 40 years.

<sup>42</sup>A-H, 110:10-26 = 112, vi:1-15.

<sup>43</sup>Gilg. XI:140-146.

<sup>44</sup>Some of the force of the -ma in the following line has been brought up here.

The second passage is in the Sultan Tepe version of Nergal and Ereshkigal, iv:9'-19':

innadrūma [aḥḥū kilallān]	They embraced [one another],
ana mayyāli ši [tmuriš <sup>45</sup> īterbūma]	and passionately they got into bed
ištēn ūma šanā ūma ṣallū [ma šarrat	together. <sup>46</sup>
Ereškigal u Erra]	A first day and a second day they made
[šalša] ūma rebā ūma [KI.MIN]	love, [Queen Ereshkigal and Erra];
[ḥanša] ūma šešša ūma [KI.MIN]	[a third] day, a fourth day, etc.;
sebū ūmu [ina kašādi]	[a fifth] day, a sixth day, etc.;
Nergal ina lā bašīšu [. . . .]	But when the seventh day [arrived],
arkišu itbala [. . . .]	Since Nergal was not there, . . . .
mušrinnīma aḥā [tī]	. . . . .
ē tuštarībī [. . . .]	"Release me, my darling, <sup>47</sup>
lullikma ana eršet lā târi [lutūr]	Do not be furious . . . .
	Let me go and come back <sup>48</sup> to the Land
	of No Return."

This passage cannot be viewed apart from its more Mesopotamian<sup>49</sup> parallel in vi:35-42:

[i] nnadrūma aḥḥū kilallān	They embraced one another,
ana mayyāli šitmuriš īterb[ūma]	and passionately they got into bed
ištēn ūma šanā ūma 'ṣallūma šar'rat	together.
Ereškigal u Er]ra	A first day and second day they made
	love, Queen Ereshkigal and Erra;

<sup>45</sup>For the association of šamāru with love, cf. Song of Songs 8:6, where czz (= ezēzu, a common parallel to šamāru) is used.

<sup>46</sup>The present editions of the text ignore the force of the I/2 here.

<sup>47</sup>For a similar use of Akkadian māru(m), cf. Held, "A Faithful Lover in an Old Babylonian Dialogue," JCS 15 (1961), p. 13a, note to I, 14; and for Hebrew ḥwt, cf. Freedman, "A New Approach to the Nuzi Sistership Contract," JANES 2 (1970), p. 85, note 26.

<sup>48</sup>For this restoration, see Gurney, "The Sultantepe Tablets: VII, The Myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal," AnSt 10 (1960), p. 118.

<sup>49</sup>See Gurney, ibid., p. 131, n. to vi:37-42: "If we restore two days in every line, as in 37, the unlikely total of eleven days is reached. The epic style requires a series of either seven (passim) or twelve (e.g., Gilgamesh III, vi, 7-12 [Th. p. 34, now generally considered VII, iv]; IX, iv, 47-v, 46, X, iv, 1-7)."

šalša ūma [KI.MIN]	a third day, etc.
rebâ [ūma KI.MIN]	a fourth day, etc.
ḥanša [ūma KI.MIN]	a fifth day, etc.
[šešša ūma KI.MIN]	a sixth day, etc.
[sebû ūmu] ina kašādi	But when the seventh day came,
[Anu pāšu īpuš]ma iqabbi	Anu opened his mouth and said
[ana Kaka sukkallišu] amat izzakkara	speaking a word to his vizier Kaka:

A comparison between the last two passages betrays a tension between two traditions, as we would expect in a peripheral area such as Sultan Tepe. But where does the seven-day counting formula with counting in pairs originate?

Hittite texts offer no evidence of such a formula. In fact, Hittite numerical literary devices show only 5//10<sup>50</sup> and one true counting formula that has possible Mesopotamian influence.<sup>51</sup> Among the formulae which abound in Ugaritic poetry, however, is a formula which describes an activity that extends for six days with a change introduced in the seventh. The formula seems fairly well established by the time we meet it in the Baal Epic; it undergoes considerable development in the Aqhat Epic and runs through its own demise in the Keret Epic without leaving more than bare traces of influence in the Bible,<sup>52</sup> despite the penchant of biblical writers to borrow and better Canaanite forms.

The earliest<sup>53</sup> example of the formula is in IIAB 6:22-35:

<sup>50</sup>Song of Ullikummi, end of I-a, ANET, p. 121c. Note the interesting isogloss with 5//10 in Sumerian.

<sup>51</sup>Song of Ullikummi, end of I-c, ANET, p. 122a.

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Genesis 22:4, 42:18; Exodus 19:16; Joshua 6:3-20; Jonah 2:1; Job 2:13. Loewenstamm, "The Seven Day unit in Ugaritic Epics," Tarbiz 31 (1962), p. 235 (in Hebrew), adds Numbers 19:11-12, 19:19, and 31:19; but whether these passages belong is far from certain. He also adds Genesis 1:1-2:4; but this passage certainly does not belong, for the seven days is not a petrified literary device there.

<sup>53</sup>Loewenstamm, Tarbiz 31, p. 228, considers this passage a development of the formula because of the changes in the verb. But, in spite of the formula, the sequence must make sense; therefore the changes in the verb are for meaning, not the result of innovation. Moreover, it is unlikely that the most sophisticated occurrence of the formula (IID 1:1-18) would come within 50 lines of what he considers the most archaic occurrence, IID 2:27-40.

tšt išt bbhtm	A fire is ignited in the houses,
nblat bhklm	flames in the palaces.
hn [y]m wtn	Lo! a [d]ay and a second,
tikl išt bbhtm <sup>54</sup>	fire burns in the houses,
nblat bhklm	flames in the palaces.
tl̄t̄ rb <sup>c</sup> ym	A third, a fourth day,
tikl [i]št bbhtm	[fi]re burns in the houses,
nbla[t] bhklm	flam[es] in the palaces.
ḥmš̄ t̄[d]t̄ ym	A fifth, a s[ix]th day,
tikl išt [b]bhtm	fire burns [in] the houses,
nblat b[qr̄b hk]lm <sup>55</sup>	flames wi[thin the pa]laces.
mk <sup>56</sup> bš̄b <sup>c</sup> y[mm]	Behold! on the seventh d[ay],
td <sup>57</sup> išt bbhtm	the fire <u>is extinguished</u>
nblat bhklm	in the houses,
sb ksp lrqm	the flames in the palaces.
ḥr̄ṣ nsb llbnt	The silver turns into ...,
	the gold is turned into bricks.

The formula here consists of an introduction which establishes the parallelism of the refrain; hn ym wtn introducing the counting of six days in pairs, with the action repeated in a refrain after each pair of days. The seventh-day pivot is introduced by mk bš̄b<sup>c</sup> ymm<sup>58</sup> and is followed by a purpose-result clause. The seventh day's activity is closely related to the activity on the other six days, but it indicates that new subject matter must be introduced.

<sup>54</sup>Ugaritic apparently goes its own way here with an intransitive use of 'št 'kl b, which in Hebrew, Akkadian, and Aramaic would be transitive, with the b serving as a nota accusativi rather than as a locative preposition, as it is here. The alternative would have Kothar-wa-Hasis burn down the cedar portions of the palace he is building of cedar and bricks of silver and gold.

<sup>55</sup>The restoration, as in Driver, C(anaanite) M(yths and) L(egends) (Edinburgh, 1956), p. 98 makes use of all the room left in the break; Gordon's (UT, 172) and Loewenstamm's (Tarbiz 31, p. 228) hesitations to restore are overcautious. Evidently the poet restrained himself from using b//bqr̄b in the other stichoi because the material in them is so long already.

<sup>56</sup>Although Albright is right in separating this word from Egyptian m k because of the latter's appearances with the pronominal suffixes (JBL 60 [1941], p. 438; contrast Gordon UT, Glossary #1473), his connection with alleged OB mūk, "but," is not convincing.

<sup>57</sup>For the seventh-day passage, cf. Held, "The Action-Result (Factitive-Passive) Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic," JBL 84 (1965), pp. 273, 276-277.

<sup>58</sup>This much is in Loewenstamm's analysis, pp. 227-228.

The tradition is continued in the Aqhat Epic, but it is sophisticated by the genius of a poet.<sup>59</sup> Here the poet uses the apnk<sup>60</sup>-aphn<sup>61</sup> parallelism which the Aqhat authors coined, and he expands the introduction into two couplets which in turn are expanded into staircase parallels in the body of the formula. The second couplet disappears after the introduction but reappears after the sixth day to heighten the tension. The seventh-day activity here is the result of the actions on the other six days, and is an abrupt--note the lack of parallelism--transition to new material.

[apnk dnll mt<sup>62</sup> rpi]  
 apn ġzr [mt hrnmy]  
 uzr<sup>63</sup> ilm ylh̄m  
 uzr yšqy bn qdš

[Thereupon Daniel the Raphaite],  
 immediately the Hero,  
 [the Harnamiyyu-man]  
 Serves oblations to the gods  
 to eat,  
 serves oblations to the  
 divinities to drink.

<sup>59</sup>A more traditional occurrence is IID 2:27-40. Unfortunately, two passages which might have taught us much are badly damaged: IID 2:44-46 and IID 5:1-3.

<sup>60</sup>Although this adverb appears in all the layers of the Epics (e.g., IAB 1:28, ID:38, IIRp:5, IIIK 2:8), the parallelism to aphn is only attested in Aqhat: ID:19 (IID 1:1), IID 2:27, IID 5:4, 13, 33.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. Akk. appuna, for which cf. CAD A<sup>2</sup>, pp. 189-190 and AHW, p. 60, where our word should be added as a cognate. Although the word appears in Old Akkadian, the majority of occurrences are in peripheral dialects.

<sup>62</sup>Gordon, UT, #1569, confuses this primary noun (= Akkadian mutu(m), Hebrew \*mt-- whose twenty-one occurrences, all in the construct plural, make it more than rare; contrast Gordon, ibid.) with mt II (<\*mwt), without considering that Hebrew 'dm, Akkadian etlu(m), and Aramaic br-nš are used to distinguish between mortals and gods, rather than forms derived from mwt.

<sup>63</sup>The etymology of this word is to be sought with Punic 'zr (KAI 98) and Neo-Punic Czr (= sacrorum in KAI 120:3, 121:2). Driver's (CML, p. 134) etymology from Arabic wadratu would require udr in Ugaritic, not uzr.

yd<sup>64</sup> [šth<sup>65</sup> yc<sup>166</sup>] wyškb  
 yd [mizrt] pyn<sup>67</sup>  
 hn ym wtn  
 uzr ilm dnil  
 uzr ilm ylhm  
 uzr yšqy bn qdš  
 tlt rbc ym  
 uzr ilm dnil  
 uzr ilm ylhm  
 uzr yšqy bn qdš  
 hmš tdt \*\*\*68 ym  
 uzr ilm dnil  
 uzr ilm ylhm  
 uzr yšqy bn qdš  
 yd šth dnil  
 yd šth yc<sup>1</sup> wyškb  
 yd mizrt pyn  
 mk bšbc ymm  
 wyqrb bc<sup>1</sup> bhnth<sup>69</sup>

He comes, puts on a garment  
 and lies down,  
comes, (dons) [sackcloth]  
 and spends the night.  
 Lo! a day and a second,  
 oblations to the gods does  
 Daniel,  
 oblations does he serve  
 the gods to eat,  
 oblations does he serve  
 the divinities to drink.  
 A third, a fourth day,  
 oblations to the gods does  
 Daniel,  
 oblations does he serve  
 the gods to eat,  
 oblations does he serve  
 the divinities to drink.  
 A fifth, a sixth day,  
 oblations to the gods does  
 Daniel,  
 oblations does he serve  
 the gods to eat,  
 oblations does he serve  
 the divinities to drink.  
 Daniel comes, a garment--  
 he comes, puts on his garment  
 and lies down,  
 he comes, (dons) sackcloth  
 and spends the night.  
 Behold! on the seventh day,  
 Baal approaches (E1)  
 with his plea.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup>Professor Held, in an oral communication, derives yd from ndy/ndd, which seems to be used, albeit with a double d, as an auxiliary verb in VAB 2:8, IVAB 2:17, IIAB 3:12.

<sup>65</sup>Driver (CML, p. 150) separates from Akk. ašitu prematurely, for Akkadian even knows an apocopated form in šit kišādi, "a neck mantle" (CAD, A<sup>2</sup>, p. 355 and Q, p. 221). Loewenstamm's swt (Tarbiz 31, p. 230) would show the consonantal w in Ugaritic, as it does in Kilamuwa:8 and Hebrew mswh, Exodus 34:33-35.

<sup>66</sup>Must mean "put on" in this context. Perhaps it is a D form. All the motifs in our passage are present in Joel 1:13.

<sup>67</sup>The text has pyn<sup>1</sup>, an obvious mistake; cf. line 16. Only Hebrew and Ugaritic know this verb, and the absence of the pair škb//lyn from Hebrew is purely accidental.

<sup>68</sup>The scribe has erased a šbc written by mistake.

<sup>69</sup>Ugaritic seems to go its own way with its usage of the verb hnn, for Akkadian has enēnu(m), "to have mercy" (Amarna only!), and utnennu(m), "to plead for mercy," = Hebrew hnn, "to have mercy," and hthnn, "to plead for mercy," and so for Aramaic.

<sup>70</sup>The translation of this clause is fixed by the other two

The formula falls apart in the Keret Epic, where it appears four times in about 120 lines. In IK:106-109 and IK:218-222, the formula has been reduced to a mere counting of days.<sup>71</sup> The disintegration of the formula goes even further in Keret. In IIIK3:20-25, the formula is summarily dispatched with and only the pivotal seventh-day (here seventh year) phrase is maintained. The beginning of the formula occurs in IIK6:21-22; but the subject matter changes, and the formula is abandoned after the introduction.

There are, besides degenerations of the formula, a variant formula with a three-day sequence<sup>72</sup> and a formula of days-months-years-seven years.<sup>73</sup> In these passages the poet is so eager to get to new action that he does not want to get bogged down in the normal counting formula. He gives us either the beginning of the formula or its component parts to suggest the formula so familiar to us. The seven-day formula in Ugaritic and all its variants, as a matter of fact, exhibit the results of creativity by poets very much at home in their own medium.

Our choice of Ugaritic as the source for the Akkadian passages where the counting is done in pairs is contrary to current thought. Loewenstamm<sup>74</sup> follows Cassuto<sup>75</sup> in regarding the Ugaritic seven-day-sequence formula a borrowing from Akkadian on the basis of the Gilg. XI passage alone. This view cannot, however, be made in any way to conform to the facts.

First of all, elements that are constant in the Ugaritic formulae are completely lacking from the Akkadian. Refrains within the formula are introduced in

occurrences of qrb in speech formulae, IK:37 (where El comes to Keret in a dream to promise the end of his childlessness) and IIK 2:79. We should also note that in IIK 2:12, Baal takes Keret's plea for offspring before El. Loewenstamm's clause division at this point (Tarbiz 31, p. 229) is not in accord with Ugaritic style.

<sup>71</sup>Two less corrupt occurrences are in IK:114-119 and 194-211. For an intermediate step between the Aqhat passages and the Keret passages, cf. IIIRp B:21-27.

<sup>72</sup>IIRp:5-8, IRp:4-7 (IIIRp A:23-26), IK:194-199, 207-211 (where it is part of a complex mixture of motifs).

<sup>73</sup>IAB 5:7-9, IAB 2:26-27 (abridged to make sense), and ID: 173-181.

<sup>74</sup>Tarbiz 31, pp. 227-228, 235.

<sup>75</sup>Tarbiz 13, pp. 206-207.

Ugaritic before the body of the formula, but such an introduction is not present in the Nergal-Ereshkigal passage. Neither Akkadian passage makes use of interjections, a feature so important to the Ugaritic formula that the poets busied themselves to find variant interjections. Nor is the action on the seventh day in Akkadian as closely related to the action on the first six days as it is in Ugaritic, where the seventh day's action serves as a purpose-result clause or as an introduction to one. A strong argument can be made from the complete development and the careful definition of conditions affecting the counting formulae, their style, and their uses in both Ugaritic and Akkadian (except for the Gilg. XI and Nergal-Ereshkigal passages). Moreover, there is an arbitrariness in standard Mesopotamian formulae about the number of items counted which in no way corresponds to the two possibilities of three and seven in the Ugaritic formulae. And we should remember that the counting of time or distance in Akkadian is determined by the verb, while Ugaritic formulae count days or years only, no matter what the verb.

We should further consider that the supposed sources for the Ugaritic formula are a Sultantepe text and Gilg. XI. The former, being from the periphery, is hardly a standard for Akkadian style, while the latter is itself subject to strong West-Semitic influence.<sup>76</sup> We can well expect from these facts that the Akkadian formulae that look most like the Ugaritic are influenced from the West, rather than the reverse.

We must also consider the chronology of the texts. The Baal Epic, with the earliest occurrences of the formula in Ugaritic, is to be dated to 2000 B.C.E.; even the Keret text cannot be later than 1400 B.C.E. The Sultantepe Nergal-Ereshkigal is dated by Gurney<sup>78</sup> to "late Assyrian," and only the Neo-Assyrian copies of Gilg. XI have the passage that tells of the resting of Utnapishtim's ark. The Ugaritic tradition, with its edge of at least 600 years over the Akkadian tradition, should be considered the source of the latter.

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<sup>76</sup>We need only note here the absence of the episode of the sending of the birds from the Sumerian Flood Story. Should a careful study of the West-Semitic influences in Gilg. XI be made, the results would be startling.

<sup>77</sup>Personal communication from Professor Held.

<sup>78</sup>AnSt 10, p. 105.

And yet, the borrowing by the Akkadian authors is not slavish, just as their borrowing from Sumerian is really by adaptation. We have seen the ways that the Akkadian formulae have recast the Ugaritic device by means of additions and subtractions. But perhaps more important, the Ugaritic device was adapted to the purely Mesopotamian idea of counting twelves. Instead of counting in pairs, the poet counts mostly in triplets, and thereby achieves a synthesis of divergent traditions, a specialty of the Akkadian poets.