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Counting Formulae in the Akkadian Epics

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

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

[2]"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[3], 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.

[3]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, pp. 61, 63).

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

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.[13]

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[4]FS:91-97.

[5]HBS, pp. 206-207.

[6]GLL:34-45.

[7]DIn:120-140.

[8]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.

[9]Garelli, Gilgameš, p. 71:110-118.

[10]HBS, pp. 102-103.

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

[12]"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.

[13]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 "tan-
gible" 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 $\underline{n}//\underline{n}(+1)$[14]
or enumerations by single units of three (the snorts
of the bull of heaven[15] and the attempts of the eagle
to escape the pit[16]) or seven items (the sons of dead
men,[17] the plundering warriors,[18] and the weapons given
to Era[19]).

Of the three passages from the Sultan
Tepe version of the Nergal-Ereshkigal myth which count
"tangible" items, one[20] is an enumeration of the por-
ters 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.[21] Here the count-
ing 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 hard-
ships 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.

[14]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).

[15]Gilg. VI:123-128.

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

[17]Gilg. XII:99-118 (restoration based on the Sumerian).

[18]Cuthaean Legend, 37-48.

[19]Era Epos I:30-40.

[20]"N(ergal and) E(reshkigal)," vi:19-29.

[21]N-E, v:34'-35', and 49'-52'.

traveled. The Akkadian passages,[22] 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 count-
ing 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. Evi-
dently the poets made only a tentative beginning, tell-
ing progress in biru's by 20//30.[23] 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,[24] and of the ascent and descent of Etana and
the eagle.[25] The Gilgamesh passage has been well
described by Oppenheim:[26]

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[27] words,[28] whose monotonous intensity admirably reflects
the mood of the traveler. To the description of the eighth
station the word i-ṣar-ra-aḫ "he cries out (in fright)" is added

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22"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.
23Gilg. V, iii:44-45 = XI:283-284 = 300-301.
24Gilg. IX, iv:44-v:46.
25Langdon, "The Legend of Etana and the Eagle," Babyl. 12
(1931), p. 45:23-33, p. 49:17-39.
26Or NS 17 (1948), p. 47.
27x bīru ina kašādišu   When he reached the nth biru
šapat ekletumma ul ibašši nūru   The darkness is so dense / that
ul inaddinšu ana amāri   there is no light, / Nor will it
panassu arkassu   let him see ahead or behind.
28Oppenheim's interpretation minimizes the problem of a 23-
line break which has posed a tantalizing puzzle to all the commen-
tators between the second and fourth stations. His suggestion makes
use of only five of those lines.

to mark the climax.[29] When reaching the ninth, Gilgamesh already
feels a draft blowing (napāḫu)[30] against his face.[31] 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).[32] In the eleventh
"the dawn breaks" ([11 bīru ina kašādišu] it-ta-ṣi la-am-^dšamši)
to full light ([12 bīru 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 stub-
bornly 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[šuma][33]
erû ana šâšumma ana Etana izzakkar[šu]
dugul ebrī mātu kī ibaš[ši]
ṣubbi tâmtum idāte ša É.[KUR]
mātum-me li-mid-da šadâ tâmtum itūra ana mê [. . .]
šanâ bīra ušaqqī[šuma]
erû ana šâšumma ana Etana izzak[karšu]
dugul ebrī mātu kī ibašši mātum-me [...]

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[29]More precisely, iṣarraḫ seems to mean "he hurries on" and
reflects the zeal with which Gilgamesh now presses on. "Cries out"
would require a form of šurruḫu. (See CAD Ṣ, pp. 99d and 101a.)
Line 35 should be restored to read 8 bīru ina! kašādišu iṣarraḫ, and
the rest of the passage follows the wording of the first seven
biru's.

[30]Verbs used with wind are zâqu, alāku, and perhaps even
bâ'u. One can also speak of tīb iltani and even iltanu rākibu. The
verb napāḫu does not seem to be used of winds--despite its relation-
ship to Hebrew nāpaḫ--but of fire, fever and disease, and the
heavenly bodies.

[31]9 bīru [ina kašādišu] iltanu
[....]-ha panîšu
[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.

[32]10 bīru ina kašādišu
....qitrub
....ša bīrī

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

šalša bīra ušaqqīšuma erû ana šašumma 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 tarbaṣi
šanâ bīra [ušaqqīšuma]
ebrī naplisma mātu kī [ibašši]
ittūr mātu ana musarê [...]
u tâmtu rapaštu mala buginni
šalša bīra [ušaqqīšuma]
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 imdaḫaršu ina [...]
šanâ bīra issu[kamma]
erû imqutamma imdaḫar[šu ina ...]
šalša bīra issu[kamma]
erû imqutamma imdaḫar[šu ina ...]
... ana qaqqari [ša Anim]
erû imqutamma imda[ḫaršu ina ...]
... erû i-ḫaš-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 repe-
titions not only capture the feeling of the plunge, but
also echo the rapid beating of Etana's heart. Nonethe-
less, 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 šâšumma [izzakkara ana Gilgāmeš]
duppir Gilgāmeš [leqi parīsi]
mê mūti qātka ā iltapit . . . .
šanâ šalša u rebâ Gilgāmeš leqi parī[si]
ḫanša 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 dis-
cussed 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 con-
ceived refrain--characterize the counting formulae that
measure distance.

Closely related to the passages mea-
suring distance traveled are passages marking the pass-
ing of time. Indeed, the criterion for deciding
between the two lies with the nature of the verb:
verba movendi require formuale 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[34] is limited to
$n//n(+1)$[35] and one counting to three years, by ones.[36]
Late Assyrian texts still favor $n//n+1$[37] to the near
exclusion of $n//n$,[38] but now the possibility of count-
ing 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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[34]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).

[35]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.

[36]A-H, 78:9-18.

[37]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).

[38]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[39] is reached.[40] In the
Neo-Assyrian version of Atrahasis, the forty years of
toil of the gods is counted by tens (p. 45:10-13),[41]
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.[42] 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:[43]

ana šadî Niṣir ītemid elippu	The ship landed on Mt. Nisir.
šadû Niṣir elippa iṣbatma ana nâši	Mt. Nisir seized the ship and
ul iddin	would not let (it) move.
ištēn ūma šanâ ūma šadû Niṣir KI.MIN	A first day, a second day,
šalša ūma rebâ ūma šadû Niṣir KI.MIN	Mt. Nisir, etc.
ḫanša šešša šadû Niṣir KI.MIN	A third day, a fourth day,
sebû ūmu ina kašādi	Mt. Nisir, etc.
ušēṣīma summata umaššer	A fifth, a sixth, Mt. Nisir, etc.
	But[44] on the seventh day's arrival,
	I let out the dove, and set (her)
	free.

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[39]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 Fest-
schrift (1925), pp. 128-136; Roscher, Die enneadischen und heb-
domadischen Fristen und Wochen der altesten Griechen, ASGW 21/4
(1903) and Die Sieben und Neunzahl in Kultus und Mythus 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).
[40]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.
[41]Cf. OB version, p. 44:37-38, where there is only a state-
ment that the toil of the gods lasted 40 years.
[42]A-H, 110:10-26 = 112, vi:1-15.
[43]Gilg. XI:140-146.
[44]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 [aḫḫū kilallān]	They embraced [one another],
ana mayyāli ši[tmuriš45 īterbūma]	and passionately they got into bed
ištēn ūma šanâ ūma ṣallū[ma šarrat	together.46
Ereškigal u Erra]	A first day and a second day they made
[šalša] ūma rebâ ūma [KI.MIN]	love, [Queen Ereshkigal and Erra];
[ḫanša] ūma šešša ūma [KI.MIN]	[a third] day, a fourth day, etc.;
sebû ūmu [ina kašādi]	[a fifth] day, a sixth day, etc.;
Nergal ina lā bašîšu [. . . .]	But when the seventh day [arrived],
arkīšu itbala [. . . .]	Since Nergal was not there, ...
mušrinnīma aḫā[tī]	. . . .
ē tuštaribī [. . . .]	"Release me, my darling,47
lullikma ana erṣet lā târi [lutūr]	Do not be furious . . . .
	Let me go and come back48 to the Land
	of No Return."

This passage cannot be viewed apart from its more
Mesopotamian49 parallel in vi:35-42:

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

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

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

47For 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.

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

49See 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
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.
ḫanša [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 pâšu 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[50] and one true counting formula that
has possible Mesopotamian influence.[51] Among the for-
mulae 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,[52] despite the penchant
of biblical writers to borrow and better Canaanite forms.

The earliest[53] example of the formula is
in IIAB 6:22-35:

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[50]Song of Ullikummis, end of I-a, ANET, p. 121c. Note the
interesting isogloss with 5//10 in Sumerian.

[51]Song of Ullikummis, end of I-c, ANET, p. 122a.

[52]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 cer-
tainly does not belong, for the seven days is not a petrified
literary device there.

[53]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; there-
fore 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
  nblat bhklm
hn [y]m wtn
  tikl išt bbhtm[54]
  nblat bhklm
tlt rb[c] ym
  tikl [i]št bbhtm
  nbla[t] bhklm
ḫmš t[d]t ym
  tikl išt [b]bhtm
  nblat b[qrb hk]lm[55]
mk[56] bšb[c] y[mm]
  td[57] išt bbhtm
  nblat bhklm
sb ksp lrqm
  ḫrṣ nsb llbnt

A fire is ignited in the houses,
  flames in the palaces.
Lo! a [d]ay and a second,
  fire burns in the houses,
  flames in the palaces.
A third, a fourth day,
  [fi]re burns in the houses,
  flam[es] in the palaces.
A fifth, a s[ix]th day,
  fire burns [in] the houses,
  flames wi[thin the pa]laces.
Behold! on the seventh d[ay],
  the fire is extinguished
    in the houses,
  the flames in the palaces.
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 bšb[c]
ymm[58] 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.

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[54]Ugaritic apparently goes its own way here with an intran-
sitive 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 alter-
native would have Kothar-wa-Hasis burn down the cedar portions of
the palace he is building of cedar and bricks of silver and gold.
  [55]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//bqrb in the other stichoi
because the material in them is so long already.
  [56]Although Albright is right in separating this word from
Egyptian m k because of the latter's appearances with the pronom-
inal suffixes (JBL 60 [1941], p. 438; contrast Gordon UT, Glossary
#1473), his connection with alleged OB mūk, "but," is not convin-
cing.
  [57]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.
  [58]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.[59] Here the poet uses the apnk[60]-aphn[61]
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 dnil mt[62] rpi]
   aphn ġzr [mt hrnmy]
uzr[63] ilm ylḥm
   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.

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[59]A more traditional occurrence is IID 2:27-40. Unfortunate-
ly, two passages which might have taught us much are badly damaged:
IID 2:44-46 and IID 5:1-3.

[60]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.

[61]Cf. Akk. appuna, for which cf. CAD A2, 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.

[62]Gordon, UT, #1569, confuses this primary noun (= Akkadian
mutu(m), Hebrew *mt--whose twenty-one occurrences, all in the con-
struct 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.

[63]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 waḏratu would require
udr in Ugaritic, not uzr.

78

yd64 [ṣth65 ycl66] wyškb   He comes, <u>puts on a garment</u>
    yd [mizrt] pyln67   and lies down,
hn ym wṭn   <u>comes</u>, (dons) [sackcloth]
    uzr ilm dnil   and spends the night.
    uzr ilm ylḥm   Lo! a day and a second,
    uzr yšqy bn qdš   oblations to the gods does
ṯlṯ rbc ym   Daniel,
    uzr ilm dnil   oblations does he serve
    uzr ilm ylḥm   the gods to eat,
    uzr yšqy bn qdš   oblations does he serve
ḥmš ṯdṯ ***68 ym   the divinities to drink.
    uzr ilm dnil   A third, a fourth day,
    uzr ilm ylḥm   oblations to the gods does
    uzr yšqy bn qdš   Daniel,
    yd ṣth dnil   oblations does he serve
    yd ṣth ycl wyškb   the gods to eat,
    yd mizrt pyln   oblations does he serve
mk bšbc ymm   the divinities to drink.
    wyqrb bcl bḥnth69   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.

He comes, <u>puts on a garment</u>
    and lies down,
    <u>comes</u>, (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 <u>comes</u>, a <u>garment</u>--
    he <u>comes</u>, puts on his garment
    and lies down,
    he <u>comes</u>, (dons) sackcloth
    and spends the night.
Behold! on the seventh day,
    Baal approaches (El)
    with his plea.70

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[64]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.

[65]Driver (CML, p. 150) separates from Akk. aṣītu prematurely, for Akkadian even knows an apocopated form in ṣīt kišādi, "a neck mantle"(CAD, A², p.355 and Ṣ, 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.

[66]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.

[67]The text has pynl, 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.

[68]The scribe has erased a šbc written by mistake.

[69]Ugaritic seems to go its own way with its usage of the verb ḥnn, for Akkadian has enēnu(m), "to have mercy" (Amarna only!), and utnennu(m), "to plead for mercy," = Hebrew ḥnn, "to have mercy," and htḥnn, "to plead for mercy," and so for Aramaic.

[70]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.[71] The disintegra-
tion 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[72] and a formula of days-months-years-seven
years.[73] 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[74]
follows Cassuto[75] in regarding the Ugaritic seven-day-
sequence formula a borrowing from Akkadian on the basis
of the Gilg. XI passage alone. This view cannot, how-
ever, 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

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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.
[71]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.
[72]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).
[73]IAB 5:7-9, IAB 2:26-27 (abridged to make sense), and ID:
173-181.
[74]Tarbiz 31, pp. 227-228, 235.
[75]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 inter-
jections, a feature so important to the Ugaritic formula
that the poets busied themselves to find variant inter-
jections.   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 intro-
duction to one.   A strong argument can be made from the
complete development and the careful definition of con-
ditions affecting the counting formulae, their style,
and their uses in both Ugaritic and Akkadian (except
for the Gilg. XI and Nergal-Ereshkigal passages).   More-
over, 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 Sultan-
tepe 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.[76]   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[78]
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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    [76]We need only note here the absence of the episode of the
sending of the birds from the Sumerian Flood Story.   Should a care-
ful study of the West-Semitic influences in Gilg. XI be made, the
results would be startling.

    [77]Personal communication from Professor Held.

    [78]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.