

THE BANQUET MOTIFS

IN KERET

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The description of Lady Hurriya's banquet in the Ugaritic legend of King Keret (III K:4-6) is paralleled structurally and, to some extent, semantically by that of Wisdom's banquet in the 9th chapter of the book of Proverbs. Moreover, the structure of these two banquet descriptions may be thought of as a reflection of a conventional literary motif. The motif in question is comprised of two basic elements: (I) the preparation of the banquet; (II) the summoning of the guests. The apparently fixed sequence of these two events in our two texts, and not merely their inclusion in each, is taken here as an especially significant feature. Analysis of the two basic elements reveal further literary characteristics which themselves reflect individual motifs appearing within the framework of the more general motif. These, again, involve both the inclusion of specific events, and their appearance in a fixed sequence.

The present study endeavors to discuss selected features of the two parallel texts in terms of the broader banquet motifs which they reflect. To this end, comparative material from several other banquet descriptions in ancient Near Eastern literature will be presented. It should, however, be stressed from the outset that no claim is being made for the existence of a single, uniform literary motif to which all banquet descriptions in the literature of the ancient Near East necessarily conform. Rather, the focus is upon recognition of several different motifs which may appear in a variety of combinations. Further, our use of the term "motif" implies only an attested literary pattern, or convention, not a rigid canon from which there can be no departure.

The passages in question from Keret and Proverbs 9 may be structurally analyzed as follows:

III K 4:15-20, 26-28¹

Proverbs 9:2-5

I. The preparation of the banquet

ttbh šmn [m]r [i]h
tpth rhbt yn

טבחה טבחה
 מסכה יינה
 אף ערכה שלחנה

II. The summoning of the guests

lh trh tšrb
lh tšrb zbyh
tr hbr rbt
hbr trrt

שלחה נערחה תקרא
 על גפי מרמי קרה
 מי פחי יסר הנה
 חסר לב אמרה לו

.....
 [wt] cn mtt hry
 [llh] m lšty štkm
 [dbh l] krt bclkm

לכו לחמו בלחמי
 ושחו בייך מטכתי

Translation²

I.

She prepares the fattest
 of her [stall-fed-ones];
 She opens a jar of
 wine³.

She has slaughtered her
 beasts,
 she has mixed her wine,⁵
 she has also set her table.⁶

II.

Into her presence she
 causes his peers to
 come,
 Into her presence
 his barons she
 causes to come:⁴

She has sent out⁷ her maids
 to call⁸
 from the highest places in
 the town,
 "Whoever is simple, let
 him turn in here!"
 To him who is without
 sense she says⁹,
 "Come, eat of my bread
 and drink of the wine
 I have mixed."

.....
 [And] Lady Hurriya [dec]lared:
 "[To ea]t, to drink have I
 summoned you:
 Your lord Keret [hath
 a sacrifice]."

The sequence of preparation-summoning which is evident in the structure of both texts, is encountered in several other ancient Near Eastern banquet descriptions. In the Ugaritic Baal epic¹⁰, for example, a lavish banquet, prepared to celebrate the completion of Baal's palace^{10a}, is described as follows:

1. Cf. the repetitions in IIIK 5-6 (reconstructed).
2. Translation of these two texts, and of all which follow, are the standard ones. No attempt has been made here to translate anew any of the texts cited. To have done so would have involved both the reader and the writer in numerous philological problems, which, though interesting in and of themselves, are not directly related to the interpretation offered here. For Keret: H.L. Ginsberg, *apud* J.B. Pritchard (Ed.), *ANET*², 1955, p. 146b. For Proverbs 9 : Revised Standard Version.
3. Cf. Job 32:19; also, Hesiod, *Works and Days*, ll. 814-815. Note that opening the jar of wine precedes the mixing, and is thus properly part of the preparation of the wine; cf. Homer, *Odyssey*, II: 337-343, III: 388-394.
4. Given the sequence preserved in lines 4-9 (in the imperative), one would expect here *tšḥ šb·m trḥ // tmnym zbyh* "She summons his seventy peers" // "His eighty barons." Despite the fact that ll. 4-9 form a somewhat closer structural parallel to Proverbs 9:2-4, the repetition in ll. 15-20 is employed, since the feminine verbal forms in the latter make for a more dramatic parallel to the Proverbs passage. A close parallel to the III form of *·rb* in the context of summoning to a banquet is found in *Enūma Eliš* III: 6, where the III form (imperative) of *abāku* is used: *šubika ana mahriya* "Summon...before me," *CAD*, vol. A, p. 5b.
5. "Mixing," not "drawing" of the wine is what is called for from the context of preparation of the wine. Coupled with the philological evidence for *msk* "to mix," Dahood's translation "She has drawn" (*Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology*, 1965, p. 64) is shown to be untenable. Cf., e.g. A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, 1951, p. 30, n. 62.
6. Absent in the Keret passage. But see IIAB, 4-5: 35-37; IIAB, 3: 14-16. Cf., e.g. Isa. 21:5; Ps. 23:5.
7. Dahood explains this act as a dismissal of the handmaids, comparing it to a similar action in VAB, D: 83-86 (*Proverbs and North West Semitic Philology*, 1963, p. 17).
8. Interpretations differ as to who is doing the calling. Thus, Dahood translates: "She dismisses her maidservants; She calls from the ridges of the city's heights" (*ibid.*, pp. 16-18). It is surprising that no parallel is drawn by Dahood between Wisdom and Lady Hurriya in this connection, as such a comparison would be decidedly in his favor.
9. Dahood's translation "He who lacks sense, let him reflect upon himself," ignores the fact that a verbatim quote of her invitation follows.
10. IIAB, 6: 40-46.
- 10a. Note that in the Proverbs 9 passage the banquet description follows notice of the construction of Wisdom's house (v. 1). See below, n. 36.

tbh alpm [ap] sin

šql trm [w] mria

il[m] g^clm d[t] šnt

imr qmš l[l] im

šh a^hh bbhth

a[r] yh bqrb hklh

šh šb^cm bn atrt

He slaughters both neat
[and] small cattle,
Fells bulls [together
with] fatlings;
Rams (and) one-year-
old[d] calves;
Lambs...k[i]ds.

He summons his bretheren
to his house,
His ki[nd]red within
his palace:
Summons Asherah's
seventy children.¹¹

This Ugaritic passage alone, however, would at most allow for tracing the preparation-summoning sequence in the Keret-Proverbs passages to a specific Canaanite proto-type; it would not allow for discussion of this sequence in terms of a conventional literary motif. Clearly, additional comparative material is a methodological necessity.

The Akkadian myth of Nergal and Ereškigal¹², for example, opens with an episode which may be viewed alongside the Baal passage:

inūma ilū iškunū kirēta

ana aḫātišunu Ereškigal

išpurū mār šipri

nīnu ulū nurradakki

u attī ul tēlēnnāši

šuprimma lilqū kurummatki

When the gods prepared
a feast,
They sent a messenger
To their sister Ereškigal, (saying):
"Even if we should
descend to thee,
Thou wouldest not
ascend to us.
(therefore) send
hither that some-
one may get thy
meal."¹³

According to this description, the invitation

11. H. L. Ginsberg, *op. cit.*, p. 134b.

12. Nergal and Ereškigal: 1-6. For a transliteration see R. Rogers, Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament, 1912, p. 131.

13. Translation: A. Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels, 1949, p. 129.

of Ereshkigal, despite the fact that she cannot attend, is extended after the feast has been prepared. Similarly, in the Hittite myth of Illuyankas¹⁴ the goddess Inaras prepares a lavish feast, after which she extends a personal invitation to her unsuspecting victim, Illuyankas.¹⁵

Clearly, whatever the more mundane Sitz im Leben of the preparation-invitation sequence be,¹⁶ the fact that it is included in banquet descriptions from several ancient Near Eastern literatures should justify viewing both the notice of the two events, and their sequence, as a distinct literary element, or motif. Further, the appearance of this motif in both Keret and Proverbs 9 may be seen as due to the influence of a literary convention proper to banquet descriptions.

This suggestion appears all the more plausible when it is recognized that the Keret-Proverbs banquet descriptions have in common several significant features, in addition to the preparation-summoning sequence, and that these features are adequately paralleled in other ancient Near Eastern banquet descriptions.

Thus, the verbatim presentation of the personal invitation issued by both Lady Hurriya¹⁷ and Wisdom¹⁸ may be viewed alongside that issued by the goddess Inaras in the Illuyankas myth:

"See ! I am holding a celebration.
Come thou to eat and drink."¹⁹

Also to be compared is the invitation (transmitted to a messenger) issued by Anshar in Enūma Elish:²⁰

<u>lišānu liškunū ina kirēti lišbū</u>	Let them converse (and) sit down to a banquet
<u>ašnan likulū liptiqū kurunna</u>	Let them eat bread (and) prepare wine. ²¹

14. See the translations by A. Goetze (ANET², pp. 125-126) and T.H. Gaster (Thespis, 1950, pp. 257-267).

15. For a biblical reflection of this sequence see Zeph. 1:7.

16. E.g., the slaughtering and preparation of meat is a long process, and so the invitation is extended only when the food is actually ready. Any discussion, however, of either the more remote, or immediate origins of the motifs discussed here is beyond the scope of the present study.

17. IIR, 4: 26-28.

18. Proverbs 9:5.

19. Goetze, op. cit., p. 125b.

20. Enūma Eliš III: 8-9.

21. Translation: A. Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, 1951, p. 30.

Moreover, analogous exhortations to eat and drink are encountered in Ugaritic Poetry. In short, the presence of a somewhat formulaic verbatim invitation may be considered a distinct element, or motif in ancient Near Eastern banquet descriptions.²²

A further element common to the Keret-Proverbs passages, which may likewise be analyzed as an ancient Near Eastern literary convention, is the sequence of events in the preparation of the banquet. There, the preparation of the meat (=slaughter of the animals) precedes the preparation of the wine (=mixing). It is interesting to note that the meat-wine sequence is reflected in literary descriptions of serving and consumption, as well as preparation.²³ The remainder of this study will be devoted to the application of the banquet motif principle to the interpretation of the meat-wine sequence. That is, an attempt will be made to document some of the literary affinities of this element of the Keret-Proverbs banquet description. At the same time, it is hoped that a useful perspective may be gained vis à vis the respective banquet descriptions cited in this connection.

The sequence of meat-wine in ancient Near Eastern banquet descriptions seems to be a literary convention of considerable antiquity and wide distribution.²⁴ This sequence has several analogues in Ugaritic poetry, for example. In the Baal epic²⁵ there is a rather lengthy banquet description which includes the following passage:

22. Cf., e.g. SS: 6; IIAB, 4-5: 35-38.

23. Note a particularly glaring exception to this sequence with reference to serving in IIIK, 4: 24-25. The "bowl" (Ugaritic ṣ^{c}) clearly refers to a wine (liquid) receptacle, rather than to any type of meat platter (cf. VAB, B: 32; I*AB, i: 21 where ṣ^{c} // ks). The idiom y^{d} $\text{b}^{\text{s}^{\text{c}}}$ š^{l} may be compared to the recurring Homeric formula "they put their hands to the good things that lay ready before them" (cf., e.g. Odyssey I: 149; translation: R. Lattimore, The Odyssey of Homer, 1967, p. 31), as well as to the Sumerian "The king put a hand to the food and drink" ("Hymn to Inanna", translated: S.N. Kramer, Expedition, 1962, vol. 5, No. 1, p. 30).

24. Aside from consideration of the Mesopotamian, Ugaritic and Hebrew material, it should be borne in mind that Homer employs the same sequence in banquet descriptions, and does so with marked regularity (cf., e.g. Odyssey I: 106-112; II: 55-58; IV: 55-58; 620-624; IX: 5-10; 161-162; X: 184; 467-468; XX: 247-256). Gordon's brief remark on our passage from Keret (The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilization, 1964, p. 148) that "the feast is built around meat and wine, quite as in the Homeric tradition. Fruits and vegetables (however much they were eaten in daily life) play no role at the festive board" gains in significance when the meat-wine sequence is viewed as a literary convention.

25. IIAB, 6: 57-59. Cf. IIAB, 3: 41-44 (restored); I*AB, 4: 13-16 (restored).

wpq mrg'tm td

bhrb mlht qš [m]ri

tšty krp[nm y]n

[bks hrš dm 'sm]

They sate them with fat-
ness abundant,
With tender [fat]ling
by bounteous knife;
While drinking the [wine]
from [flag]ons,
[From gold cups the blood
of vines].²⁶

While this passage is not without difficulties,²⁷ the sequence td//qš mri - yn//[dm 'sm] is clear. A similar passage, also from the Baal epic²⁸, employs the meat-wine sequence as follows:

qm yt'r wyšlhmnh

ybrd td lpnwh

bhrb mlht qš mri

ndd y'šr wyšqynh

ytn ks bdh

krpnm bklat ydh

He rises...and gives him
to eat.
He cuts the fat meat before
him,
With bounteous knife
fatling's tenderness.
He stands, serves liquor,
and gives him drink.
He places a cup in his
hand,
A flagon in the grasp
of his hand.²⁹

In this text the sequence of the verbs šlhm ("to give to eat") and šqy ("to give to drink")³⁰ certainly underscores the presence of a meat-wine sequence. At the same time, it suggests that the meat-wine sequence in Ugaritic banquet descriptions is to be associated, in one way or another, with the well attested fixed sequence in parallelism of the verbs lhm//šty³¹ ("to eat"//"to drink"). However, the weight one should ascribe to this association as an explanation for the presence of this conventional sequence of events in banquet descriptions is a moot point, to which we will return presently.

A further instance of the meat-wine sequence

26. Translation: H.L. Ginsberg, *op. cit.*, p. 134b.

27. Cf. the contrasting translations of Gaster (*Thespis*, p. 192) and Gordon (*Ugarit and Minoan Crete*, 1966, p. 72).

28. VAB, A: 4-11.

29. Translation: H.L. Ginsberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 135b-136a.

30. Cf. M. Held, *JBL* 84 (1965), p. 280, n. 45.

31. Cf. *idem*, *Leshonenu* 18 (1953), p. 148.

in Ugaritic banquet descriptions is found in one of the Rephaim texts.³² The description of the preparation of the meat is as follows:

<u>tbh</u> <u>alpm</u> <u>ap</u> <u>šin</u>	He slaughters both neat and small cattle,
<u>šql</u> <u>trm</u> <u>wmri</u>	Fells bulls together with fatlings;
<u>ilm</u> <u>sglm</u> <u>dt</u> <u>šnt</u>	Rams (and) one-year-old calves;
<u>imr</u> <u>qmš</u> <u>llim</u>	Lambs...kids. ³³

Following this description, after a brief digression, there begins a description of the serving of the wine at this banquet:

<u>hn</u> <u>ym</u> <u>yšq</u> <u>yn</u> ³⁴ ...	Behold a day he pours wine.... ³⁵
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The same order of events (i.e. order in the description of events) may be observed in the description of Utnapishtim's banquet for his workmen³⁶ in the Gilgamesh epic:³⁷

<u>ana</u> ... <u>uṭṭabbiḥ</u> <u>alpi</u>	Bullocks I slaughtered for [the people];
<u>ašgiš</u> <u>immeri</u> <u>ūmišamma</u>	Sheep I killed every day.
<u>siri</u> [<u>šu</u> <u>kur</u>] <u>unnu</u> <u>šamnu</u> <u>u</u> <u>karānu</u>	Must, red wine, oil and white wine,
<u>ummā</u> [<u>nu</u> <u>ašqi</u>] ³⁸ <u>kīma</u> <u>mē</u> <u>nārimma</u>	I [gave] the workmen to drink as if it were river water. ³⁹

32. III Rp, B: 12-14.

33. Translation: H.L. Ginsberg, *op. cit.*, p. 134b on the parallel text in IIAB, 6: 40-43.

34. 1. 17. The description of the serving of the wine continues on to 1. 19.

35. Translation: C.H. Gordon, *Ugarit and Minoan Crete*, 1966, p. 142. Both the text, and Gordon's translation, are cited only partially here. Although the text is particularly problematic, the meat-wine sequence is certainly beyond doubt.

36. In this context, it is interesting to note that provisions for the workmen in the Hittite "Ritual for the Erection of a New Palace" (A. Goetze, *op. cit.*, p. 358a) are listed in the same sequence (i.e. oxen-sheep-wine) as that of the foods given to Utnapishtim's workmen.

37. Gilgamesh XI: 70-73.

That the meat-wine sequence is attested in this Mesopotamian banquet description is especially significant. Unlike Ugaritic poetry, Akkadian epic is not bound to the use of parallel words in fixed sequence. Consequently, unlike the Ugaritic passages, the conventional sequence in the description of events here may not be dismissed as simply a reflex of the fixed order of the Ugaritic synonymous pairs lhm//šty ("to eat"//"to drink") and lhm//yn ("food"//"wine").⁴⁰ Rather, both the Ugaritic and Gilgamesh banquet descriptions may be best viewed as reflections of a conventional literary motif.

It is significant that the Ugaritic-Gilgamesh correspondence is not restricted to the meat-wine sequence. An additional affinity may be seen from the somewhat formulaic quality of the first lines of the Gilgamesh passage under consideration:

.... <u>uṭṭabbiḥ</u> <u>alpī</u>	Bullocks I slaughtered

<u>ašgiš</u> <u>immerī</u>	Sheep I killed.....

Both Ugaritic and Hebrew employ semantically⁴¹ and structurally identical formulae within the context of banquet (preparation) descriptions. Thus, for example, in both the Rephaim text and one of the Baal passages quoted above⁴² we encounter:

<u>tbḥ</u> <u>alpm</u> <u>ap</u> <u>šin</u>	He slaughters both
.....	neat (= "bulls") ⁴³
	and small cattle
	(="sheep"). ⁴⁴

38. The restoration išti ("he drank") offered in R. Campbell Thompson, The Epic of Gilgamesh, 1929, p. 61, is hardly acceptable. The context requires a verb (first person) describing an action by Utnapishtim (cf. uṭṭabbiḥ, ašgiš), rather than one describing an action performed by the workmen (e.g. "they drank", which in any event calls for the form ištū). Heidel's translation (see n. 39) clearly presumes a restoration ašqī.

39. Translation: A. Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament parallels, p. 83.

40. In Ugaritic cf., e.g. I*AB, A: 24-25; IIAB, 4-5: 35-37; SS: 6; IAB, 6: 42-44 (cf. Gilgameš VII: 36-37).

41. I.e. ṭabāhu=tbḥ= חטש ; šagāšu= גרש (cf. M. Held, JAOS 79, 1959, p. 170); alpu=alp= בקר ; immeru (= šēnu)=šin= יאצ .

42. See above, notes 32 and 10 respectively .

43. Parentheses mine. Ginsberg's more precise translation (see n. 44) "neat and small cattle" (cf. M. Held, op. cit., p. 174) should not obscure the semantic identity of alpu=alp and immeru=šin.

Further, in Isaiah 22:13, for example, we read:

והנה שזון ושמחה
 הרג בקר ושחט צאן
 אכל בשר ושחוח יין
 אכול ושחו כי מחר נמוח

and behold, joy and
 gladness,
slaying oxen and
killing sheep,
 eating flesh and
 drinking wine.
 "Let us eat and
 drink⁴⁵, for
 tomorrow we die".⁴⁶

Such being the case, there should be no fundamental objection to relating the meat-wine sequence in Gilgamesh to that found in the Ugaritic passages already cited, especially the Rephaim and Baal texts from which the above quotation was taken. For the latter, like Isaiah 22:13, combine both the "formula" at issue, and the meat-wine sequence.

Several biblical passages may be viewed along with this verse from Isaiah as reflections of the meat-wine sequence in banquet descriptions. Thus, for example, in Isaiah 25:6 the Lord prepares for the nations

משה שמנים
 משה שמרים
 שמנים ממחים
 שמרים מזקקים

...a feast of fat things,
 a feast of wine on the lees,
 of fat things full of marrow,
 of wine on the lees well
 refined.⁴⁷

Further, when Amos (6:4-6) speaks out against the excesses of his age, he singles out

השכנים על בטוח עין
 וסרחים על ערשותם

those who lie upon beds
 of ivory,
 and stretch themselves
 upon their couches,

44. Translation; see note 11.

45. Note, the exhortation to eat and drink (expressed by the infinitive absolute in the cohortative sense; cf. G-K-C, p. 346) is very reminiscent of the verbatim invitation formula discussed above.

46. Translation: RSV.

47. Ibid.

ואכלים כרים מצאן
ועגלים מתוך מרבץ
הפרטים על פי הנבל
כדוד חסבו להם כלי שיר
השתים במזרקי יין
וראשיה שמנים ימשחו....

and eat lambs from the
flock⁴⁸,
and calves from the midst
of the stall;
who sing idle songs to the
sound of the harp,
and like David invent for
themselves instruments
of music;
who drink wine in ("from")
bowls,⁴⁹
and anoint themselves with
the finest oils...⁵⁰

In addition to preserving the meat-wine sequence, this passage from Amos presents considerable material for the study of banquet motifs. That is, like the Keret-Proverbs passages, it may be treated as a topical unit comprised of several distinct motifs. The Amos passage is to be interpreted not as a haphazard enumeration of popular abuses, but rather as the description of one elaborate banquet, utilizing several well attested banquet motifs. That such is the case may be seen from a comparison of the various elements in its description with motifs found in banquet descriptions elsewhere.

Thus, the association of the "beds of ivory"/"couches" with the lavish partaking of meat and wine is paralleled, to some extent, by a brief feast description in the Gilgamesh epic:⁵¹

Gilgāmeš ina ēkallišū
iš[ta]kan ḥidūtu
utūlūma eṭlūti ša in[a]
mayāl mūši šallū

Gilgamesh celebrated a joy-
ful feast in his palace.
The heroes lay down, resting
on (their) night couches.⁵²

Similarly, the sequence of eating-drinking-

48. Akk. sēnu(m) can have the same meaning; cf. CAD, S, p. 128. Note the Ugaritic phrase imr bphd (IID, 5:16) "a lamb from the flock" (Ginsberg, op. cit., p. 151a). Also note that the sequence עגלים - כרים is analogous to the sequence līm - gīm d[ṭ] šnt in the banquet description from IIAB, 6: 42-43.

49. Here ב = "from" as in Ugaritic bks hrṣ dm 'šm (see n. 25). Note the dittography יין במזרקי יין במזרקי יין.

50. Translation: RSV.

51. Gilgamesh VI: 189-190, (cf. XII:147).

52. Translation: Heidel, op. cit., p. 55 (cf. p. 101 l. 147).

anointing (with oil) attested in the Amos passage is paralleled, for example, by the description of the "civilizing" repast enjoyed by Enkidu in the Gilgamesh epic:⁵³

īkul aklam Enkidu
adi sebēšu
šikaram išti'am
7 assammim

.....
šamnam iptāšašma

Enkidu ate bread
 Until he was sated;
 (Of) strong drink he drank
 Seven goblets.

.....
 He anointed himself with
 oil.....⁵⁴

Finally, the Amos passage includes notice of music at the banquet. In the Enūma Elish⁵⁵ we read that after the momentous construction of Esagila, the gods assembled and held a banquet, during (or after) which music was featured. Parallel instances from Sumerian,⁵⁶ Ugaritic,⁵⁷ Homeric,⁵⁸ and biblical⁵⁹ literature are not wanting in number.

This passage from Amos has been discussed at length to demonstrate the principle which has been basic to the approach followed in this study. That is, passages such as the banquet descriptions in Keret and Proverbs 9 may be advantageously viewed as organic topical (or episodal) units. By comparing passages in related literatures which deal with the same topic or episode, one is able to isolate the literary idiom, or repertoire of motifs, associated with that topic. Once the full range and variety of these motifs is appreciated, one gains a broader perspective from which to examine a given topical unit (e.g. a banquet description) in a given literature.

Thus, for example, the banquet unit in Keret, and that in Proverbs 9, stand out all the more boldly as parallel texts once it is clear that these two units employ the same component banquet motifs (e.g. (1) preparation-invitation sequence; (2) verbatim presentation of invitation; (3) meat-wine sequence), and do so in the same order. That is, they are revealed as structurally parallel banquet descriptions.

53. Gilgamesh II: 15-18, 24. Note the conventional verbatim invitation formula in ll. 10-14.

54. Translation: Heidel, *op. cit.*, p. 29. For eating-drinking-anointing in another Mesopotamian banquet description see Adapa Legend, fragment No. II, ll. 61-65. For Ugaritic see VAB, D: 84-89.

55. Enūma Eliš VI: 69-77. For a translation see A. Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, p. 49.

56. For a Sumerian example see the literature cited in n. 23.

57. Cf., e.g. VAB, A: 18-22; IIK, 1-2, 38-42; IID, 6: 30-32.

58. Cf., e.g. Odyssey I: 150-154; VIII: 61-70; IX: 1-11.

Adopting this perspective, we have at our disposal a structural criterion with which to analyze a given banquet description in terms of other such descriptions in related literatures.

The Amos passage above, like the Keret and Proverbs 9 passages, is a topical unit concerned with banquet description. Further, Amos' banquet description is likewise a structure built up of individual banquet motifs, all of which may be considered literary conventions. Yet, it includes three banquet motifs not present in the Keret-Proverbs 9 passages, and omits two which are present. Having approached the Amos passage in terms of its component elements, we are made more aware of the range of possible motifs, which may be combined in a variety of ways in different banquet descriptions. That is, the banquet description in Amos serves to highlight, as it were, the significance of the Keret-Proverbs 9 phenomenon. Using the criterion of structural correspondences between topical units, as well as correspondences between component motifs, literary affinities may be all the more fully appreciated.

59. Cf., e.g. Isa. 5:11, 12; 24: 7-9.