

CHRISTOPHER BRINKER

## The Meaning and Significance of the Old Assyrian *sikkātum*

### Abstract

This article reviews the published corpus of Old Assyrian letters containing the noun *sikkātum*. Here it is argued that the *sikkātum* was not a religious procession, but instead that it was an extramural marketplace. Trade at this marketplace involved a high volume of metals and probably operated only seasonally, relating to the arrival of the earliest caravans in Anatolia. Furthermore, it is suggested that *sikkātum* is related to the west semitic word *sukhōt* and was used to refer to this seasonal extramural metals marketplace by metonymy.

Keywords: Old Assyrian Trade, Marketplace, *sikkātum*

### Introduction

A great deal of scholarly knowledge concerning the extent of economic complexity centered around the Old Assyrian *kārum* system in Anatolia came with the decipherment of key terms and phrases extant in the so-called Cappadocian tablets. This paper is concerned with such a problem of word definition, the Old Assyrian noun *sikkātum*. Previous studies have failed to identify correctly the types and sources of anxiety expressed by Old Assyrian merchants in connection to this term, nor why it seems to have disrupted normal trade relations. Most recently, in 2005, Guido Kryszat attempted to explain the phenomenon by relation to later attested Hittite ceremonial processions through the Anatolian countryside. Through a survey of the published corpus and the systematic analysis of the use of the word, a new and specialized definition unique to the Old Assyrian corpus will become apparent. This definition casts further light on the economic landscapes of Anatolia during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, and has implications for the study of the lexicographic relationship between Old Assyrian and West Semitic dialects, a topic which has recently emerged as an area of interest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For example, L. Kogan (2006).

A survey of the literature concerning Old Assyrian tablets from Anatolia yields at least 43 distinct occurrences of the noun *sikkātum*.<sup>2</sup> This corpus includes fully published tablets in cuneiform and transliteration, as well as those cited by scholars in transliteration and translation, often in footnotes, but not properly published. Some instances of the word appear on nearly complete tablets, and some are so fragmentary that the word appears with little useful context. The texts in which the word *sikkātum* appears vary in tone but include mostly business letters written between merchants and their clients and associates. The corpus also includes two recently published treaty texts<sup>3</sup> excavated at *kārum Kaneš*. These treaties address commercial arrangements between the *kārum* itself and local rulers. A third text appears to be a letter from the *kārum Kaneš* to a local ruler. Finally, the corpus also includes the literary text kt j/k 97, the Old Assyrian Sargon Legend.<sup>4</sup>

The reading of the word *sikkātum* is uncertain and is a convention used throughout the literature, though there is no reason to assume that it is anything but a phonetic spelling. The first two syllables of the word are always written *sí-kà* (ZI.GA). At least three meanings of the noun are attested in this corpus. The first two are clearly derived from the basic meaning of *sikkatum* A in CAD. Both fall within its semantic range as cone-shaped objects. One example of such an occurrence is in the Old Assyrian Sargon Legend, where the word refers to a piece of surveying equipment.<sup>5</sup> A second involves equipment in the possession of merchants.<sup>6</sup> The third and most common use of the word in the OA period, *sikkātum* B in CAD, seems to denote an event outside of a merchant's control and hazardous to trade. This study will be concerned with the definition of this particular use of the word. *sikkātum* B often appears as the subject of a nominative sentence, occasionally with enclitic markers. It is a feminine plural noun, as it is attested in the plural by the preservation of its *a*-vowel, and often a feminine plural verb.<sup>7</sup> Veenhof also indicates that once it is used with a form that is either a singular or plural masculine verb, and rightly concludes that, "it is the people *en masse* themselves [that] apparently constitute the essence of the *s[ikkātum]*."<sup>8</sup> The

<sup>2</sup> AAA 1 10 (Liv 10), Benemian 4, BIN 4 51, C 1, C 18, CCT 2 16b, CCT 4 10a, CCT 4 31a, CCT 6 7c, HUCA 40/41 56 (L29-587), I 565, I 598, ICK 1 135, Ka. 259, Kt a/k 583b, Kt d/k 5, Kt g/k 185, Kt j/k 97, Kt m/k 3, Kt n/k 128, Kt n/k 388, Kt n/k 794, Kt n/k 1052, Kt n/k 1689, Kt v/k 57, Kt 87/k 384, Kt 87/k 453, Kt 87/k 461, Kt 88/k 298, Kt 88/k 658, Kt 91/k 423, Kt 92/k 129, Kt 92/k 526, Kt 00/k 10, KTP 6, KTS 1 57a, KTS 2 19, KUG 41, TC I 118, TCL 4 104, TCL 4 128, TCL 14 (TC 2) 37, TTC 26.

<sup>3</sup> S. Çeçen – K. Hecker (1995). C. Günbattu (2004), 249–268 and C. Günbattu (1997a), 25–37.

<sup>4</sup> C. Günbattu (1997b), 131–135.

<sup>5</sup> Kt j/k 97, 44-50: *i-na wa-ša-i-a / ša NA<sub>4</sub>.GU<sub>6</sub> ù NA<sub>4</sub>.ZA.GÌN / qá-nu-a-am lu ar-ku-ús-ma / a-na ma-tim lu ú-za-iz / ša-du-a-am / hu-ma-nam a-ši-ni-šu / am-ha-šú-ma / ki-ma sí-ki-tim / i-ba-ri-šu-nu / ša-al-mi ú-ša-zi-iz*, "At my departure I made a rod from carnelian and lapis lazuli. I made borders upon the lands. I divided mount Humanum in two and set up my statue in its middle like a s."

<sup>6</sup> ICK 135, 13–17, following M. Ichisar (1981), 234–235: *12 na-ru-qá-tim* <sup>14</sup> *ù e-ba-al sí-kà-tim* <sup>15</sup> *ku-nu-uk-ma* <sup>16</sup> *iš-ti a-li-ki* <sup>17</sup> *šé-bi<sub>4</sub>-lam*, "12 bags and *ebal* s. seal and send to me by courier." See also S. Çeçen – K. Hecker (1995), 37 and J. G. Dercksen (2004), 276.

<sup>7</sup> TC 2 37, 14–16 following M. Ichisar (1981), 347: *tù-wa-ar* <sup>15</sup> *sí-kà-tim qú-ru-ub* <sup>16</sup> *a-dí 10 u<sub>4</sub>-me-e i-tù-ra-nim* <sup>17</sup> *ši-im ša-áp-tí-kà* <sup>18</sup> *URUDU i-ba-ši : KÙ.BABBAR* <sup>19</sup> *ù GUŠKIN : a-na-kam : a-šé-[e]-ma* <sup>20</sup> *lá-šu*, "The return of the s. is near. Within 10 days it will return. There will be copper available as payment for your wool. I searched for silver and gold, but there is none."

<sup>8</sup> K. Veenhof (1989), 522. CCT IV 10a, 17 following M. T. Larsen (2002), 63 f: *sí-kà-tum [ú]-ší-ú or [ú]-ší-ú*, "The s. went out."

*sikkātum* is able to depart and to return. It is presumably departing from and returning to the location from which the author of the letter is writing. Once, its return is described as ‘imminent’. Once, it is described as far away. People can also go to, depart towards and from, and return from the *sikkātum*. In a few cases, individuals are recorded as residing at the *sikkātum*.

### Previous Research

The first definition of *sikkātum* was proposed by Eißer and Lewy, who interpreted the signs *sí-kà-tim* as ZI.GA<sup>tim</sup> and understood it as a writing for *šītum* in both AAA 1 10 and KTS I 57a, with the meaning “Ausgang, Ausgabe, Abgabe”.<sup>9</sup> The noun *šītum* is attested in the OA period, but it is only spelled phonetically. Other interpretations have tended to center around either military or religious definitions. In 1950, Landsberger and Balkan suggested the definition “Heerbann, Thing,” from the observation that the *sikkātum* disrupted trade and was a general source of anxiety.<sup>10</sup> This later influenced the CAD’s own definition of *sikkātum* B. This interpretation was rejected by Hecker in 1966, on the basis of four observations: 1) during the *sikkātum* the city was empty, 2) only single persons at a time were attested as traveling to the *sikkātum*, which was also somewhat expensive to do, 3) these individuals knew approximately when the *sikkātum* would take place, so that they had time to prepare themselves, and finally, 4) safe return from the *sikkātum* is never questioned. These observations led Hecker to conclude that the definition of *sikkātum* as a preparation for war, or a draft as a response to it, was unlikely. Instead, he proposed that the *sikkātum* was a festival, explaining its name by hypothesizing that the festival involved the ceremonial driving of a nail or peg, drawing upon cultic OA foundation cones at Aššur (also referred to in the singular as *sikkatum*).<sup>11</sup> This argument influenced AHW’s translation of the OA *sikkātum* as “Pl. ein Symbol für ein Fest ?” In his 1983 edition of I 598, Gwaltney suggested a few possibilities for the meaning of *sikkātum*. These included: 1) a sickness (attested in both AHW and CAD, derived from its primary meaning), 2) a substantivized form of the verb *sikkātum*, alluding to the blocking of roads to bad weather, and finally the interpretation he sides with, 3) a stative subjunctive G stem form derived from *sí’āqum* ‘to be small, narrow, in distress’.<sup>12</sup> While the latter definition does fit in the context of the impairment of trade and travel, it fails to account for travel to the *sikkātum*, such as in kt 91/k 423<sup>13</sup>, C 1<sup>14</sup>, and KUG 41<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> G. Eißer – J. Lewy (1930), 288.

<sup>10</sup> B. Landsberger – K. Balkan (1950), 256.

<sup>11</sup> K. Hecker (1966), 105–106.

<sup>12</sup> W. C. Gwaltney (1983), 78.

<sup>13</sup> 24–26: *á-ma a-na sí-kà-tim* <sup>25</sup> *nu-úš-ú i-lí-a : i-na* <sup>26</sup> *ki-ša-ar-ši-im i-ni-dí*, “Before we could depart for the s., they put Ilia in jail.”

<sup>14</sup> 3–5 following K. R. Veenhof (1989), 521: *a-na-ku me-ra-kà : a-ta a-bi* <sup>4</sup> *me-er-dam : a-mì-am : di-nam* <sup>5</sup> *a-na sí-kà-tim : a-lá-ak*, “I am your son; you are my father. Give that *perdum* to me. I am going to the *sikkātum*.” Here, Veenhof demonstrates the *perdum* must be a type of equid hybrid.

<sup>15</sup> 5–6 following K. Hecker (1966), 104: *a-na sí-kà-tim* <sup>6</sup> *i-tí-ši*, “He has gone out to the *sikkātum*.”

Recently, some researchers have recognized the relationship between the *sikkātum* and the availability of metals for trade. Already in his 1967 edition of kt d/k 5, where Balkan erroneously restored *sikkāt-kunu*, he noted that “the term is rather common in the context of provincial Anatolian copper deals.”<sup>16</sup> In his 1997 edition of kt n/k 388, Günbattı cited three texts (kt n/k 1689, kt v/k 57, and kt n/k 128), and concluded that the *sikkātum* is “a kind of ‘fair’ which takes place in a certain time and place, during which mainly various metals, apart from other things, are sold and bought.”<sup>17</sup>

The first study of the word in the OA period was published in 2004 by Guido Kryszat.<sup>18</sup> This was the first in a series of articles intended to shed light on the cultic practices of Anatolia during the OA period. Beginning with religious practices described in Hittite texts, Kryszat projected cultic ceremonies attested there into the Old Assyrian period, hypothesizing that such ceremonies would be reflected in the OA “Cappadocian” texts from Anatolia. The *sikkātum* presented itself as an ideal candidate for such an identification. Its etymology and meaning were both unknown at the time of his study, and the contexts in which it was found could support a cultic interpretation, as suggested by some previous scholars. A more systematic analysis of the contexts in which the *sikkātum* appears, however, ultimately leads to the rejection of his hypothesis.

In his study of the word, Kryszat maintains that the *sikkātum* is an Anatolian cultic gathering. He explains, like Hecker, that its Assyrian name must be related to the driving or use of nails.<sup>19</sup> Such cultic activity is not otherwise attested in later Hittite texts. Twice Kryszat notes the disruption that the *sikkātum* has on the trade of Assyrian merchants, remarking once it is clear from his corpus that, “die Handelstätigkeiten waren während der Dauer der *sikkātum* nahezu gänzlich unterbrochen.”<sup>20</sup> This echoes the previous observation made by Hecker in 1966, but misses the more subtle context identified by both Balkan in 1967, and Günbattı in 1997. The *sikkātum* is only attested as disrupting the trade of metals.

The Hittite KI.LAM festival, which serves as Kryszat’s comparison to the *sikkātum*, lasts three days in the countryside outside the city. The *sikkātum*, according to Kryszat’s corpus, can last as long as ten days<sup>21</sup>. One of these texts actually describes the return of the *sikkātum* in ten days as ‘imminent,’ implying that it lasted much longer.<sup>22</sup> Kt v/k 57<sup>23</sup> sug-

<sup>16</sup> K. Balkan (1967), 408.

<sup>17</sup> C. Günbattı (1997a), 34.

<sup>18</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 15–45.

<sup>19</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 17.

<sup>20</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 16.

<sup>21</sup> See TC 2 37 in note 7. Also, kt n/k 1689, 14–16: *sí-kà-tum a-na* <sup>15</sup> *10 u<sub>4</sub>-me-e i-tù-ra-nim-ma* <sup>16</sup> KÙ.SIG<sub>17</sub> *a-ša-a-ma*, “Within 10 days the *s*. will return and I will purchase gold.”

<sup>22</sup> See TC 2 37 in note 7.

<sup>23</sup> 10–24 following S. Çeçen – K. Hecker (1995), 38 n. 14: *um-ma a-na-ku-ma* <sup>11</sup> KÙ.BABBAR *ku-un-kà-ma* <sup>12</sup> *lá-ma a-na sí-kà-tim* <sup>13</sup> *tú-ša-ni lá-at-bé-ma* <sup>14</sup> *lá-ta-lá-ak-ma iš-tí-ku-nu* <sup>15</sup> *lá a-sà-ki-ir ú-ma-am* <sup>16</sup> *iš-tù ša-lá-tù-a-ar* <sup>17</sup> *a-na sí-kà-tim* <sup>18</sup> *ní-tí-ši a-ḫi a-ta be-lí* <sup>19</sup> *a-ta i-na tù-a-ar* <sup>20</sup> *sí-kà-tim a-wi-lí* <sup>21</sup> *an-na-ḫi-id-ma* KÙ.BABBAR <sup>22</sup> *u-ša-ak-na-ak-šu-nu* <sup>23</sup> *wa-ar-ḫa-am iš-té-en<sub>6</sub>* <sup>24</sup> *lá ta-ḫa-da-ar*, “Thus I said: ‘Seal the silver and before you depart to the *s*. let me arise and let me leave from you (so that) I will not be trapped.’ Today we will go away from Šalatuwar to the *s*. You are my brother. You are my lord. At the return of the *s*. I will appeal to the men and I will have them seal the silver. One month, do not be gloomy.”

gests that the *sikkātum* might last as long as a month. Individuals with Assyrian names are attested as traveling to and from the *sikkātum*.<sup>24</sup> The duration of the *sikkātum* makes its identification as a primarily cultic gathering doubtful. The frequent attestation of Assyrian attendees casts doubt on its description as an Anatolian gathering.

Kryszat finds further support for his cultic hypothesis in the one extant description of the city being ‘empty’ during the *sikkātum*.<sup>25</sup> This was apparently true for the KILAM festival. It is difficult to believe, however, that a city was empty for ten days or perhaps even a month during the *sikkātum*. It is clear that we cannot take statements as such at face value. Instead, this assertion that the city is ‘empty’ must be related to the more frequent observations that the market is disrupted<sup>26</sup> and some metals are absent from the marketplace during the *sikkātum*.<sup>27</sup> kt v/k 57 suggests one reason for the unavailability of metals and the disruption of trade is the departure of merchants themselves from the city and their attendance at the *sikkātum*.<sup>28</sup> The author of kt 92/k 526 demonstrates Kryszat’s hypothesis to be incorrect when he describes a riot inside the town in which he is residing, resulting from some sort of misfortune which befell the local prince who is at the *sikkātum*.<sup>29</sup>

Kryszat’s hypothesis that local rulers played an integral ceremonial role in the *sikkātum* festival is not defensible upon close scrutiny of the corpus. This argument stems primarily

<sup>24</sup> See kt v/k 57 in note 23. AAA 1 10, 7–10 differently: *in-nu-mi*<sup>8</sup> *a-na sí-kà-tim*<sup>9</sup> *i-lna*<sup>10</sup> *i-li-ku*, “When Innaya went to the s.” kt 91/k 423, 24–26 following G. Kryszat (2004), 31: *lá-ma a-na sí-kà-tim*<sup>25</sup> *nu-úš-ú i-lí-a : i-na*<sup>26</sup> *ki-ša-ar-ši-im i-ni-dí*, “Before we could depart for the s., they put Illia in jail.”

<sup>25</sup> TC 2 37, 3–5, differently from M. Ichisar (1981), 347: *a-na-kam ki-ma sí-kà-tù-ni*<sup>4</sup> *i-qé-ra-áb a<-lim*<sup>K1 5</sup> *ma-ma-an : lá-šu-ma*, “Here, because there is s., there is no-one near the city.”

<sup>26</sup> CCT 4 10a, 8–35 following M. T. Larsen (2002), 63 f: *ni-iš-pu-ra-kum*<sup>9</sup> *i-na šé-ep : šu*<sup>d</sup> *IM*<sup>10</sup> *um-ma né-nu-ma : a-dí*<sup>10</sup> *u<sub>4</sub>-me*<sup>11</sup> *a-li-ku : a-dí ší-ni-šu*<sup>12</sup> *ù ša-lá-ši-šu*<sup>13</sup> *l<sub>i</sub>-lu-ku-l<sub>i</sub>-ni*<sup>14</sup> *ma a-ni-ma*<sup>14</sup> *5 ma-na TA KÙ.BABBAR*<sup>15</sup> *nu<sup>2</sup>-na-ša-ra-kum*<sup>16</sup> *wa-ar-ki-[š]u-nu-ma*<sup>17</sup> *sí-kà-tum [ú]-ší-ú*<sup>18</sup> *ma-ḫi-ru-um pá-ru-ud-ma*<sup>19</sup> *i-na re-eš<sub>35</sub> ba-áb-tim*<sup>20</sup> *ú-lá na-ad-ú-ma : pá-am*<sup>21</sup> *ú-lá nu-ma-lá KÙ.BABBAR-pu*<sup>22</sup> *da-nu : a-na KÙ.BABBAR ma-dim*<sup>23</sup> *e-ta-ad-gu<sub>5</sub>-ul*<sup>24</sup> *ši-mu ba-at-qú-ma i-lí-a*<sup>25</sup> *a-na wa-aḫ-šu-ša-na*<sup>26</sup> *aṭ-ru-sú i-na KÙ.BABBAR a-nim*<sup>27</sup> *4 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR KI šu-a-nim*<sup>28</sup> *al-qé-ma DUB-pá-am*<sup>29</sup> *ḫa-ar-ma-am ša ku-nu-ki-a*<sup>30</sup> *šu-ut il<sub>5</sub>-qé ša a-na*<sup>31</sup> *1 ma-na GUŠKIN*<sup>32</sup> *ša i-na nu-ru-uq a-šur-e-/mu-qí*<sup>33</sup> *lá-ap-tù*<sup>34</sup> *ša-bu-a-ni-ma*<sup>35</sup> *lá ni-tù-ru-šu-ni*, “We wrote to you through Šu-Adad (saying) thus: ‘Within 10 days travelers, either 2 or 3 times will come here and then for each, 5 minas of silver we will set aside for you.’ After their (departure), the s. went out. The market is disrupted and from the head of the gate it (silver) is not being given and (our) promise we cannot fulfill. Silver is expensive. Of much silver, do not expect. Because prices are low, I have sent Illia to Waḫšušanna. From this silver, 4 minas from Šu-anim I received, and a tablet certified with my seal he received which (says): (30–35) “Concerning the 1 mina of gold, which from the joint-stock company of Aššur-emuqi was booked, we have been paid in full and we shall not bring the matter up again.” I 598, 6–13 differently from G. Kryszat (2004), 34: *a-na-kam*<sup>7</sup> *sí-kà-tum-ma*<sup>8</sup> *ma-ḫi-ru-um / pá-ru-ud*<sup>9</sup> *a-dí 2 u<sub>4</sub>-me sí-kà-tum*<sup>10</sup> *i-pá-í-ra-nim*<sup>11</sup> *a-ma-lá té-er-tí-kà*<sup>12</sup> *lu KÙ.BABBAR lu KÙ.SIG<sub>17</sub>*<sup>13</sup> *ú-šé-ba-lá-kum-ma*, “Here there is s. and the market is disrupted. Within 2 days the s. will conclude. In accordance with your instructions, either silver or gold I will send to you.”

<sup>27</sup> For instance, kt n/k 1689, 4–7, differing from G. Kryszat (2004), 33: *ši-mi ta-dí-in-ma*<sup>5</sup> *URUDU i-ba-ši sí-kà-tum*<sup>6</sup> *ú-ša-ma i-na ma-ḫi-ri-im*<sup>7</sup> *KÙ.BABBAR ú KÙ.SIG<sub>17</sub> lá-šu*, “There is copper available for the goods you gave. The s. has gone out and in the marketplace there is no silver or gold.”

<sup>28</sup> See note 23.

<sup>29</sup> 6–10 differently from C. Günbattı (2001), 158: *annakam rubā’um i-sikkātīm maqītma ina qerab Alim*<sup>K1</sup> *siḫītum šaknat u ana qaqqadātini palḫāni*, “Here the prince at the s. is *maqīt* and in the city there is an uprising and we fear for our lives.”

from 4 different texts. First, in kt 87/k 384<sup>30</sup> Kryszat interprets the word *kanešim* as the prince of Kaneš, and he understands the text as a warning to the addressee to stay away (from *Kaneš*) until the prince returns there (with the *sikkātum*).<sup>31</sup> There is no convincing reason to interpret *kanešim* in this way in this text. It could refer to any number of Kanešites, either Assyrian or Anatolian, of any office, or none at all. There is also no reason to assume the *kanešim* will be returning *with* the *sikkātum*, as opposed to returning *from* it. Kt n/k 388 refers to its writer's meeting with a prince upon that prince's return from the *sikkātum*.<sup>32</sup> Again, Kryszat assumes this to be the prince's return *with* the *sikkātum*.<sup>33</sup> He interprets kt g/k 185 in much the same way, but little context of this unpublished tablet is given and it is difficult to say anything further.<sup>34</sup> Finally, kt 92/k 526 relates an event of apparently great political importance, which took place at the *sikkātum*.<sup>35</sup> It mentions that a prince is *maqit* at the *sikkātum*. Kryszat understands this to mean that the prince, who must have been playing an important ceremonial role, died during the fulfillment of the physically demanding cultic task.<sup>36</sup> The prince's death is probably recorded here, though other translations of *maqit* could be offered. The text gives no clue as to the cause of his death, and any guess is entirely speculative. Whatever happened to the prince at the *sikkātum*, the author of the letter implies it is responsible for the present rioting inside the city. Kryszat suggests the reason for upset inside the city results from the fact that the prince did not fulfill his ceremonial role.<sup>37</sup> It is much more likely that the prince's death was unexpected and the rioting is the result of a succession struggle, regardless of the cause of death. Despite recording the occasional presence of local rulers at the *sikkātum*, and in the last example perhaps the death of a local ruler, these texts do not clearly suggest any cultic role for local rulers at the *sikkātum*.

Such a cultic role is also hypothesized for the *rabi sikkāti*, although Kryszat notes that, from the 26 texts in his corpus concerning this individual, a cultic role is never overtly attested.<sup>38</sup> Instead, this official is attested mostly by his commercial dealings with Assyrian merchants where he is often involved in the buying of goods, often metals and, notably, *amūtum*, or meteoric iron.<sup>39</sup> TCL 4, 104 connects the availability of *amūtum* with

<sup>30</sup> kt 87/k 384, 27–34 following G. Kryszat (2004), 29: *šī-tí AN.NA-kà ki-ma sí-kà-tù-ni* <sup>28</sup> *a-dí-ni : na-dí : i-na* <sup>29</sup> *tù-wa-ar sí-kà-tim* <sup>30</sup> *AN.NA-kà a-da-ma* <sup>31</sup> *a-ta-be-a-ma a-ta-la-kam* <sup>32</sup> *sí-kà-tum da-na a-dí* *tù-wa-ar* <sup>33</sup> *kà-né-šī-im ra-ma-kà ša-sé-er* <sup>34</sup> *la té-ra-ba-am*, “Because there is s, the balance of your tin, which I gave (sold), is (still) deposited. At the return of the s. I will realize<sup>7</sup> your tin. I will set out, and I will leave. The s. is guarded. Until the Kanešites return, protect your heart. Do not come here.”

<sup>31</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 22 f.

<sup>32</sup> 4–7, following C. Günbattu (1997a), 25–37, who is followed by G. Kryszat (2004), 34: *a-na ru-ba-im iš-tù sí-kà-tim* <sup>5</sup> *i-tù-ri-šu i-bá-tí-šu* <sup>6</sup> *am-ḥu-ur-šu-ma er-ba-am* <sup>7</sup> *a-ru-ba-im*, “Unto the prince, at his return from the *sikkātu*, in his region, I appealed to him and I gave him a gift.”

<sup>33</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 23.

<sup>34</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 35.

<sup>35</sup> See kt 92/k 526 in note 29.

<sup>36</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 23.

<sup>37</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 23.

<sup>38</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 27.

<sup>39</sup> K. R. Veenhof (2008), 228.



the return of the *sikkātum*.<sup>40</sup> Each town seems to have had its own *rabi s*. His exact position in the local hierarchy is not clear, though he is sometimes attested in legal dealings with Assyrians. He can sometimes be in command of soldiers or other officials, including the *allahhinnu*, whose precise function is also unknown, but whose commercial interactions with Assyrian merchants are also well attested.<sup>41</sup> One text in the corpus, C 1, records an individual's travel to the *sikkātum* where he will receive the office of the *allahhinnu* from the local ruler.<sup>42</sup> What we know of the *rabi s* suggests that he was somehow in charge of the administration of the *sikkātum* itself, and that this role often involved the buying and selling of metals, including meteoric iron.

Kryszat also identifies different phases of the *sikkātum*. In addition to its departure and return, as already mentioned, Kryszat identifies a “Höhepunkt”, indicated by the verb *danānum*, which he translates as “sind/werden stark”.<sup>43</sup> Three texts describe the *sikkātum* this way. CCT VI, 7c is an appeal by a merchant that his goods should be sent before the *sikkātum* becomes ‘strong’.<sup>44</sup> Kt 87/k 384 contains a warning to stay away because the *sikkātum* is ‘strong’.<sup>45</sup> Finally the writer of I 565 remarks that the *sikkātum* is ‘strong,’ but has not yet returned, implying it normally returns after reaching this state.<sup>46</sup> Once, the road is described as ‘strong’, because there is *sikkātum*, though this text is omitted from Kryszat's corpus.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>40</sup> TCL 4 104, 11'–13': *a-dī 5 UD-mi t[ū-wa-ar] sī-kā-tim* <sup>12'</sup> *a-ša-me-ma URUDU am-ta* <sup>13'</sup> *i-pa-ni-a a-na-di-ma a-ta-al-ak*, “Within five days I will hear the r[eturn] of the *s*. and the first copper (and/or) iron I will deposit and I will go.”

<sup>41</sup> K. R. Veenhof (2008), 227–228.

<sup>42</sup> C 1, 1–32 following K. R. Veenhof (1989), 518 f: *um-ma hu-ḥa-ri'-ma-ta-ku-ma* <sup>2</sup> *a-na i-na-a qī-bi-ma* <sup>3</sup> *a-na-ku me-ra-kā : a-ta a-bi* <sup>4</sup> *me-er-dam : a-mi-am : di-nam* <sup>5</sup> *a-na sī-kā-tim* <sup>6</sup> *ku-a-um : me-ra-kā : a-na-ku* <sup>7</sup> *i-na šé-pé-a a-lá-ak* <sup>8</sup> *dī-na-šu-ma a-na sī-kā-tim* <sup>9</sup> *lá-ar-kā-áb-ma lu šu-um-kā* <sup>10</sup> *a-ni 4 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR tī-ri* <sup>11</sup> *ša 2 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR pe-er-dam* <sup>12</sup> *ke-e : i-ba-ši : a-ni : dī-na-šu-ma* <sup>13</sup> *3 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR : lá-áš-qūl* <sup>14</sup> *a-ni : pá-ar-šé-e* <sup>15</sup> <sup>2</sup><sub>si-na</sub> *ru-ba-um ú-ša-aš-ba-ta-ni* <sup>16</sup> *a-lá-ḥi-nu-tám* <sup>17</sup> *ú šī-na-ḥi-lu-tám* <sup>18</sup> *ú er-ba-am : a-na* <sup>19</sup> *ru-ba-im : ma-dam : aq-bi* <sup>20</sup> *a-ni : i-na ḥa-ra-nim* <sup>21</sup> *a-ni-tim : šī-im : pe-er-dī-kā* <sup>22</sup> *KÙ.BABBAR : lá té-ri-ša-ni* <sup>23</sup> <sup>H1.A</sup> *TÚG* <sup>H1.A</sup> *UDU* <sup>H1.A</sup> *ú SÍG* <sup>H1.A</sup> <sup>24</sup> *lu-šé-bi-lá-kum : šu-ma* <sup>25</sup> *lá li-ba-kā šú-ḥa-ru-ú-a* <sup>26</sup> *a-ma-kam : a-na šī-mi-im* <sup>27</sup> *li-dī-nu-ma : KÙ.BABBAR-áp-kā* <sup>28</sup> *li-iš-qū-lu-ni-kum* <sup>29</sup> *šu-ma : pe-er-dam tū-šé-ba-lam* <sup>30</sup> *ú šú-ḥa-ar-kā šu-up-ra-am* <sup>31</sup> *u<sub>4</sub>-ma-kál : la i-be<sub>4</sub>-du* <sup>32</sup> *a-na sī-kā-tim : a-lá-ak*, “Thus (says) *Ḥuḥarimataku*, speak to *Innaya*: Give me that mule. I am going to the *s*. I am your son. Shall I go on foot? Give it to me and I will ride to the *s*., and may it be in your name. Now, there are 4 minas of *tiri*-silver. For the price 2 minas a mule must be available. Give it to me now and I will pay you back 3 minas of silver. Now, the *ru<sub>ba</sub>'um* is granting 2 offices to me: the *allahhinnutum* and the *šinahilitum* and I have promised him much as a gift. Now, with this caravan I cannot repay you the price of the mule. I will send you garments, sheep, and wool. If that is not your desire, my servants there will sell them and they will pay silver to you. If you send your mule to me, and you dispatch your servant, he must not delay a single day. I am going to the *sikkātum*.”

<sup>43</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 20.

<sup>44</sup> 10–15 following G. Kryszat (2004), 31: *lá-ma* <sup>11</sup> *sī-kā-tum* <sup>12</sup> *id-ni-na-ni* <sup>13</sup> *lu-qú-ti ḥa'-[ra]-an* <sup>14</sup> *[x]-tim a-n[a]* <sup>15</sup> *[w]a-aḥ-šu-<ša>-na šé-bi<sub>4</sub>-il<sub>3</sub>*, “Before the *s*. is ‘strong’, my goods on the road ... unto *Waḥšušana* send.”

<sup>45</sup> See note 30.

<sup>46</sup> 5–7 following G. Kryszat (2004), 32: *sī-kā-tum* <sup>6</sup> *da-na a-dī-ni* <sup>7</sup> *lá i-ti-ra-nim*, “The *s*. is guarded. Up to now, it has not returned.”

<sup>47</sup> HUCA 40/41 56, 3–5 differently from W. C. Gwaltney (1983), 77 f: *ki-ma sī-kā-tū-ni-ma* <sup>4</sup> *ú ḥa-ra-nu-um da-na-at-ni* <sup>5</sup> *ḥu-ud-kā lá aṭ-ru-da-am*, “Because there is *s*. and the road is guarded, I have not sent *Hudka*.”

Kryszat identifies the negative effects that a ‘strong’ *sikkātum* has on trade, and the anxiety it causes Assyrian merchants, but he misinterprets it as the climax of a festival ceremony.<sup>48</sup> If the festival reaches its climax shortly before returning, and the presence of the climax inhibits trade, then anxiety to complete trade *before* the climax is a *non sequitur*. Instead, it makes much more sense to translate *danānum* here in the same way it is used in letters concerning smuggling. Two examples which illustrate this point clearly are ATHE 62 and CCT 4 18a.<sup>49</sup> In these two cases, *dannu* is in reference to the strength of the guard on the roads. The road in HUCA 40/41 56 is described then as being under strong guard. The guarding of the *sikkātum* in the other three texts may suggest by extension the guarding of the road, or both the *sikkātum* and the road.

Kryszat also extended his proposed meaning of *sikkātum* to a treaty text, kt n/k 794, involving the *kārum* Kaneš and a local prince.<sup>50</sup> This treaty contains the words *eblu* and *sikkātu* in close connection, seemingly in apposition in nominative sentences, representing conditions, which, when extant, render a local prince liable for losses suffered by an Assyrian merchant in his territory. Although Kryszat acknowledges that elsewhere the *eblu* and *sikkātu* refer to general equipment belonging to Assyrian merchants, he denies this meaning in this text.<sup>51</sup> Instead, he understands the *sikkātum* as the festival, and the *eblu* as a cultic procession.<sup>52</sup> He supports this hypothesis with two unsupported assertions. First, he finds the idea that a local prince would be held liable for all the losses suffered by foreign merchants in his land to be “unwahrscheinlich”.<sup>53</sup> In fact, this Ancient Near Eastern legal principle is well attested. It is made explicit, for instance, in the Hammurabi Legal Code.<sup>54</sup> This exact legal sentiment finds expression in Late Bronze Age treaties known from Ugarit.<sup>55</sup> Kryszat also asserts that such a metaphor could not be mutually

<sup>48</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 20.

<sup>49</sup> ATHE 62, 28–37 following K. R. Veenhof (1972), 307 f: *pá-zu-ur-tù-šu DUMU Ìr-ra-a a-šé-er* <sup>29</sup> *Pu-šu-ke-en<sub>6</sub> ú-šé-ri-a-ma* <sup>30</sup> *pá-zu-ur-tù-šu i-ši-bi-it-ma* <sup>31</sup> *Pu-šu-ke-en<sub>6</sub> É.GAL-lúm iš-ba-at-ma* <sup>32</sup> *a-na ki-šé-er-šî-im i-di ma-ša-ra-tum* <sup>33</sup> *da-na a-na Lu-ḫu-sà-dí-a Ḫu-ra-ma* <sup>34</sup> *Ša-lá-aḫ-šu-a à a-na ma-ti-ša a-di ša* <sup>35</sup> *pá-zu-ur-tim ru-ba-tum ta-áš-pur-ma* <sup>36</sup> *e-na-tum na-ad-a a-pu-tum mi-ma* <sup>37</sup> *lá tù-pá-za-ar*, “The son of Irrā sent his smuggled goods to Pūšu-kēn, but his smuggled goods were seized and the palace seized Pūšu-kēn and put him in jail. The guards are strong. The queen has sent messages to ... and to her country concerning the smuggling and eyes (lookouts) have been posted. Please do not smuggle anything.” CCT 4 18a, 14–20, also following K. R. Veenhof (1972), 308: *a-pu-tum a-ma-lá [a-w]a-a[t]* <sup>15</sup> [DUB]-*pí-a i-ḫi-id-ma* <sup>16</sup> *mi-ma lá tù-pá-za-ar ma-ša-ra-tum* <sup>17</sup> *[d]a-na à šu-ma’ iš-tí* <sup>18</sup> [ILLAT-*t*] *im ta-pá-ra-as-ma* <sup>19</sup> *[a-m]a-kam i-na Ti-mi-il<sub>5</sub>-ki-a* <sup>20</sup> *ki-lá-[š]-u*, “please follow the words of my tablet and do not smuggle anything. The guards are strong. If you want to separate from the caravan, keep it there in Timilkia.”

<sup>50</sup> 1–7 following S. Çeçen – K. Hecker (1995), 36: *i-na ma-ti-kà : eb-lu-um* <sup>2</sup> *sí-kà-tum : mi-ma ḫu-lu-qá-e* <sup>3</sup> *ša DUMU a-šur lá i-ba-šî-ú* <sup>4</sup> *šu-ma ḫu-lu-qá-ú-um* <sup>5</sup> *i-na ma-ti-kà : i-ta-áb-šî* <sup>6</sup> *lu ta-šé-e-ú-ma : lu* <sup>7</sup> *tù-ta-ru-ni-a-ti-ni*, “In your land there are *eblum*, there are *s*. (And so,) there is nothing stolen from a son of Aššur. If anything was stolen in your land, you will find it and you will return it to us.”

<sup>51</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 24.

<sup>52</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 24.

<sup>53</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 24.

<sup>54</sup> CH 23 following M. Roth (1997), 85: “If the thief is not caught, the man who is robbed shall take an oath concerning his lost goods and the city or governor on whose land and territory the goods were stolen will compensate him everything to which he swears.”

<sup>55</sup> RS 17.230 and RS 17.146 following J. Nougayrol (1955), 153 f.



comprehensible to two different ethnicities.<sup>56</sup> This opinion is disproven by the publication of a second treaty text found at *kārum Kaneš*, concerning the *kārum* and the city of *Ḫaḫḫum* on the Euphrates.<sup>57</sup> Çeçen and Hecker were the first to propose that the *eblu* and *sikkātu* might refer somehow to the power of the prince, triggering his liability when these two conditions were met.<sup>58</sup> Michel later proposed that these were actual physical symbols which, when on display, signaled the power of the local prince and his control over the countryside, thereby guaranteeing safe passage.<sup>59</sup> With the publication of kt 00/k 10<sup>60</sup> in 2004, Günbattı demonstrated that the *eblu* and *sikkātu* simply referenced equipment belonging to Assyrian merchants, and in this way they were a metaphor for trade.<sup>61</sup> The *sikkātum* mentioned in these texts were not related to cultic processions, but instead refer to some equipment belonging to Assyrian merchants. There is no reason to posit a cultic connection in either kt 00/k 10 or kt n/k 794.

### Analysis

Previous research has already demonstrated that the *sikkātum* is a gathering of people in the countryside outside of a city. As mentioned above, the people attested as traveling to, being present at, or returning from the *sikkātum* are both Anatolian<sup>62</sup>, and Assyrian.<sup>63</sup> At some level, the *sikkātum* involved the bureaucracy attached to the palace of that city, first in the form of the *rabi sikkātum*, but perhaps also the local rulers who were known to have traveled to it, at least on occasion.<sup>64</sup> No texts in the corpus explicitly mention the nature of the *sikkātum*, however, close examination of the corpus assembled here demonstrates a clear commercial aspect.

<sup>56</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 24.

<sup>57</sup> C. Günbattı (2004), 261.

<sup>58</sup> S. Çeçen – K. Hecker (1995), 37.

<sup>59</sup> C. Michel (2001), 150–151.

<sup>60</sup> kt 00/k 10, 11–18 following C. Günbattı (2004), 256 ff: *ša [ḫa]-[pī]-ri-im : i-na sá-[ar]-tim ú lá-mu-[t]im* <sup>12</sup> *lá [tù]-ša-ḫa-za-ni-ma : i-[l]i-pá-am* <sup>13</sup> *lá ú-ta-bu-ú-ma : ú-[nu]-tám : lá ú-ḫa-lu-qú-ni* <sup>14</sup> *i-li-pu-um : li-iṭ-b[u-m]a : i-na na-ri-im* <sup>15</sup> *SÁ.TU-ku-nu : ú ma-tí-ku-nu [mī]-ma ḫu-lu-qá-[um]* <sup>16</sup> *ša i-ḫa-li-qú-ni : a-dī-i : ebl-li-im ú* <sup>17</sup> *sí-kà-tim : ga-lam-li-im : [ú] [m]i-ma : šu-[um-š]u* <sup>18</sup> *lu tù-ma-lá-a-n[i ...]*, “Concerning *ḫapiru*, you shall not allow them crime and wickedness. They will not sink a boat, they will not steal equipment. Should a boat sink and in a river of your open country, or in your land, anything that is lost which they (the *ḫapiru*) took, including *eblum* and s., *gamlum* or anything at all you shall reimburse ...

<sup>61</sup> C. Günbattı (2004), 261.

<sup>62</sup> Kt a/k 583b, 7–11 following J. G. Dercksen, (1996), 202: ... *24 li-me* <sup>8</sup> *URUDU É.GAL* <sup>lum</sup> *ù té-ra-tù-šu* <sup>9</sup> *i-hi-ib-lu-nim-ma lá li-bi* <sup>10</sup> *i-li-ma i-na sí-kà-tí-im* <sup>11</sup> *[uš-bu-m]a*, “the palace and its officials became indebted to me 24,000 (minas) of copper and, alas, at the s. [they are residing]. See also kt 92/k 526, in note 42. See also kt n/k 388, in note 38. kt g/k 185, 3–6 following G. Kryszat (2004), 34: *i-na* <sup>dUTU</sup> <sup>4</sup> *ru-ba-um* <sup>5</sup> *wa-áš-ḫa-na-i-um i-na* <sup>6</sup> *sí-kà-tí-im i-tù-ra-ni*, “On the day the prince of Waḫḫan-niya returns to the s.” See C 1 in note 42.

<sup>63</sup> See note 24.

<sup>64</sup> See notes 32 and 35.

The *sikkātum*'s disruption of the metal trade seems to have been most severe with the most expensive metals. Gold and silver were simply unavailable from the marketplace during the *sikkātum*.<sup>65</sup> Once, gold, silver, and copper are attested as unavailable.<sup>66</sup> Tin is also attested once as unavailable.<sup>67</sup> These metals only became available in the market again with the return of the *sikkātum*.<sup>68</sup> This accounts for the anxiety of the Assyrian merchants who, because of the *sikkātum*, may be unable to repay debts in a timely fashion, such as is described in TC 2 37<sup>69</sup> and C 18.<sup>70</sup> Copper is available three times during the *sikkātum*,<sup>71</sup> and tin twice as well,<sup>72</sup> despite the absence of gold and silver. It is not clear from corpus whether less expensive metals were available from the marketplace in these examples, or if they were simply in circulation when the *sikkātum* began. Two texts suggests that it may have only been less expensive metals, already in private possession, that were still available during the *sikkātum*.<sup>73</sup> Another is unclear but seems to suggest that both copper and tin were generally available.<sup>74</sup> One text suggests that the disruption of the metals trade may have resulted in deflation.<sup>75</sup> Together, the evidence suggests that metals ordinarily traded for in the marketplace were unavailable, especially gold and large quantities of silver not ordinarily in wide circulation. It is unclear why the metal trade at the marketplace was not

<sup>65</sup> kt 87/k 461, 25–29 following G. Kryszat (2004), 30: AN.NA *ša a-zu-za* <sup>26</sup> *al-qé-ma* URUDU<sup>i</sup>-*šu* <sup>27</sup> *i-be-tí-a i-ba-sí* <sup>28</sup> *sí-kà-tum-ma* KÜ.SIG<sub>17</sub> <sup>29</sup> *lá-šu*, “I took Azuza’s tin and his copper is in my house. There is s. and there is no gold.” kt 87/k 453, 20–27 differently from both J. G. Dercksen (1996), 51 and G. Kryszat (2004), 29: *ši-tí* URUDU-*ka* 18 GÍN 7 *ma-na* <sup>21</sup> *a-na kà-ni-iš aš-ri-dam* <sup>22</sup> *ki-ma i-na da-áš-e-šu* <sup>23</sup> *sí-kà-tù-ni a-di u<sub>4</sub>-mì-im* <sup>24</sup> *a-ni-im* URUDU-*kà* <sup>25</sup> *i-ša an-dí a-šar ba-ru-um* <sup>26</sup> *u-ba-ra-šu-ma* <sup>27</sup> *a-na* KÜ.BABBAR *ú-ta-ar-šu*, “The balance of your copper is 18 shekels and 7 minas. I conveyed it to Kaneš. Because it is its (Kaneš’s) spring (or perhaps “As during its springtime”), there is s. From today your copper, that which I deposited, when possible, I will place it for sale and exchange it for silver.” Also see kt n/k 1689 in note 28 and TC 2 37 in note 7.

<sup>66</sup> See TC 2 37 in note 7.

<sup>67</sup> See note 30.

<sup>68</sup> CCT 4 31a, 15–18 following G. Kryszat (2004), 33: *be-el-šu-nu um-ma šu-u<sub>4</sub>-ma* <sup>16</sup> *i-na tù-a-ar sí-kà-tim* <sup>17</sup> *lu* URUDU *lu* KÜ.BABBAR *ša i-na* <sup>18</sup> *ba-áb-tí-šu ni-ma-ḥu-ru*, “Thus he (said) to their lord: ‘At the return of the s., there will be either copper or silver which we will receive from his shipment.’” Also see I 598 in note 26, kt n/k 1689 in note 21, TCL 4 104 in note 40, kt 87/k 453, in note 65, and TC 2 37 in note 7.

<sup>69</sup> See note 7.

<sup>70</sup> 23–25 following G. Kryszat (2004), 30: *sí-kà-tum* <sup>24</sup> *la na-tù-ma / pá-am / a-na* <sup>25</sup> *ba-áb-tí-kà u-lá nu-ma-lá*, “There is s. It is not appropriate and we cannot fulfill our promise to your investment.”

<sup>71</sup> KUG 41, 5–13 following K. Hecker (1966), 104: *a-na sí-kà-tim* <sup>6</sup> *i-tí-sí i-na tù-a-ri-šu* <sup>7</sup> *i-da-šu-<nu>-ma ú-šé-ra-šu-nu* <sup>8</sup> *ù a-na* URUDU <sup>9</sup> *ša ta-áš-pu-ra-ni* <sup>10</sup> *lu ša li-bi-a* <sup>11</sup> *lu ša E.GAL-lim* <sup>12</sup> *ú-š[é-ba-lá]-ma ú té-er-/tí-ni* <sup>13</sup> *i-lá-kà-ku-um*, “Unto the s. he has gone and on his return he will give them and I will have them sent to you. And concerning the copper about which you have written to me, either from myself or from the palace I will dispatch it and our instructions will come to you.” See also kt 87/k 461 in note 64 and kt n/k 1689 in note 27.

<sup>72</sup> kt n/k 1689, 18–23: *ki-ma a-na-kam* AN.NA <sup>19</sup> *ša-bu-ni* 1 GÚ 20 MA.NA 20 AN.NA <sup>20</sup> *ù 60 TÚG* <sup>21</sup> *a-na pu-ru-uš-ḥa-tim* <sup>22</sup> *ú-zu-bi<sub>4</sub>-iš-kà-am* <sup>23</sup> *ú-šé-bi<sub>4</sub>-il<sub>5</sub>*, “Because tin is inexpensive here, I sent 1 talent and 20 minas of tin and 60 garments to Purušhattum as your divorce payment.” Also see kt 87/k 461 in note 65.

<sup>73</sup> See KUG 41 in note 71 and kt 87/k 461 in note 65.

<sup>74</sup> See kt 87/k 453 in note 65.

<sup>75</sup> See CCT 4 10a in note 26.

functioning, considering the potential for profit is greater in times of deflation. kt v/k 57 shows that the disruption of trade was due to the absence of metal merchants from the marketplace.<sup>76</sup> Once, an amount of silver is recorded as being shipped to the *sikkātum*.<sup>77</sup> One text in particular implies that not only will metals be available for trade at the return of the *sikkātum*, but will in fact arrive from it.<sup>78</sup> Others show that the *sikkātum* inhibits caravan traffic to the cities.<sup>79</sup> This suggests that the *sikkātum* was an initial destination of some caravans. Such caravan traffic might account for the absence of the precious metals from the marketplace, and presumably their transfer to the *sikkātum*. Together, these texts suggest that some sort of commercial activity utilizing high volumes of expensive metals was taking place at the *sikkātum*. Large-scale transfers of property from caravans to the hands of private merchants might be facilitated in places outside of crowded city or marketplace walls.

It is not clear that the marketplace was actually closed during the *sikkātum*. Following his understanding of TC 2 37, Kryszat argues that the city was literally empty for the duration of the *sikkātum*. He finds support for this in his mistranslation of I 598, which he understands to demonstrate the physical barring of the marketplace as well.<sup>80</sup> His translation of *paṭāru* in line 10 of that text takes the marketplace as its direct object.<sup>81</sup> The word for marketplace, *maḥīrum*, is in the previous sentence and there is no reason to assume it should be referred to in line 10. Instead, one is forced to understand that the verb is intransitive with a third person feminine plural subject, clearly the *sikkātum*.<sup>82</sup> *paṭāru* offers a number of translations that would be consistent with this interpretation. Its primary meaning is “to undo” or “dismantle”. It is attested in the Old Assyrian period in association with the unfastening of tied packages.<sup>83</sup> As an intransitive verb, its attested meanings include “to conclude”, or “depart”. Thus, I 598 demonstrates a clear case where the *sikkātum* has gone out and the market is disrupted, but, once concluded, desired metals will become available. The text does not indicate that the entrance to the marketplace was physically barred. It is possible that some commercial activity was still taking place there during the *sikkātum*.

The *sikkātum* lasted at least 10 days, but possibly as long as 30. It is attested in at least two places, Kaneš and Waḥšušanna. The *rabi s.* is attested in Waḥšušanna, Ušša, Ḫudurut,

<sup>76</sup> See note 23.

<sup>77</sup> kt n/k 1052, 18–20 following G. Kryszat (2004), 36: 7 1/2 GÍN <sup>19</sup> *ša kur-ub-MUŠ a-na sí-kà-tim* <sup>20</sup> *ir-ku-bu*, “7 1/2 shekels, which Kurub-Ištar rode to the s.”

<sup>78</sup> See CCT 4 31a in note 68.

<sup>79</sup> kt n/k 1689, 5–17 slightly differently from G. Kryszat (2004), 33: *sí-kà-tum* <sup>6</sup> *ú-ša-ma i-na ma-ḥi-ri-im* <sup>7</sup> KÙ.BABBAR *ú* KÙ.SIG<sub>17</sub> *lá-šú* <sup>8</sup> *a-bí a-ta a-ša mi-ma* <sup>9</sup> *lá ú-šé-bí-lá-ku-ni* <sup>10</sup> *li-ba-kà lá tù-[lá]-ma-am* <sup>11</sup> *a-dí lá tù-a-ar* <sup>12</sup> *e-li-tim mi-ma* <sup>13</sup> *lá ú-šé-ba-lá-[kum]* <sup>14</sup> *sí-kà-tum a-na* <sup>15</sup> *10 u<sub>4</sub>-me-e i-tù-ra-nim-ma* <sup>16</sup> KÙ.SIG<sub>17</sub> *a-ša-a-ma* <sup>17</sup> KI *a-li-ki ú-šé-ba-lá-kum*, “The s. has gone out and in the marketplace there is no silver or gold. You are my father. Concerning everything I have not sent to you, do not let your heart be troubled. As long as any of the upstream (caravans) do not arrive I cannot send it to you. In 10 days the s. will return and I will purchase gold. I will send it to you with a messenger.”

<sup>80</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 21.

<sup>81</sup> G. Kryszat (2004), 34.

<sup>82</sup> See note 26.

<sup>83</sup> See K. R. Veenhof (1972), 31, especially note 62.

Ulamma, Wašḥania, Kaneš, and possibly also in Buruṣḫattum.<sup>84</sup> In kt 87/k 453<sup>85</sup>, the occurrence of the *sikkātum* at Kaneš in the spring might be attested. If so, this accords well with a connection to caravan traffic mentioned above, which might be expected to be at its heaviest after the spring thaw. If the *rabi s.*'s official duty was devoted entirely to the *sikkātum*, then its occurrence was at least seasonal, as perhaps suggested in text kt 87/k 453. The mention of the *sikkātum* in the letters is usually restricted to cases where merchants are unable to repay debts in time. It is difficult to imagine a scenario where these merchants would be surprised by the departure of the *sikkātum*, as it seems to have involved the coordinated departure of the precious metals and their traders from the marketplace. Instead, their problems seem to be related to the sometimes extended and uncertain duration of the *sikkātum*. A religious festival, lasting even 10 days, would not come unexpected. Merchants would be able to anticipate and plan for a short disruption of trade. The *sikkātum* seems to have lasted perhaps as long as a month with no clear duration. Instead of arising from a ceremonial activity, the anxiety attested in the corpus is best explained by the curtailment of metals trade inside city walls, complicating the sale of some assets and leading some traders to incur penalties for defaults or late payments of loans.

Another source of anxiety seems to be the guarding of the *sikkātum* and, once, the guarding of the road as a result of the *sikkātum*. This anxiety stems from taxes and tariffs paid on goods imported into Anatolia. Goods traveling into a city to be traded were first brought to the palace where taxes were levied.<sup>86</sup> Even goods passing through the territory of a local ruler were subject to tax.<sup>87</sup> Those taxes must have been levied by soldiers and officials on the roads, perhaps the same agents who policed the roads to keep them safe for caravan traffic. Avoidance of these taxes and levies also led to both the smuggling of goods into a town, and the use of smugglers' tracks to avoid tax on goods passing through a certain territory.<sup>88</sup> The sometimes guarded nature of the *sikkātum* mentioned in the corpus, as well as its affects on the road on at least one occasion, accords well with the hypothesis that it involved extramural commercial activity. The inevitable return of the *sikkātum*, once it reaches a guarded state, may also stem from the avoidance of such taxes as the cost of doing business outside the city may begin to outweigh any benefits.

Any definition of *sikkātum* would be incomplete without an etymological explanation. It is here proposed that it is related by metonym to CAD's *sikkatum* A and has the more specific meaning 'tents'. The *sikkātum* might refer to the pegs of a tent, the nails of a temporary wooden shelter, or even the conoid shape of a temporary shelter made of supporting wooden poles and covered with cloth or animal skins.<sup>89</sup> During the OA period there is no word yet identified which means 'tent'. *kultāru* is only attested in the OB and SB dialects. Two MA period words sometimes translated as tent are *zaratu* and *maškanu*, but neither have been attested as such in the OA period. Additional support for this etymology can be

<sup>84</sup> G. Krysztat (2004), 27.

<sup>85</sup> See note 65.

<sup>86</sup> K. R. Veenhof (1972), 305.

<sup>87</sup> K. R. Veenhof (1972), 305.

<sup>88</sup> K. R. Veenhof (1972), 305–306.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *sikkat šēli*, in CAD S, 246 where this term, literally "s. of the side," is equated with ribs. The visual comparison between the rib cage and the frame of a tent is compelling.

found in the Hebrew word *sukh* (סוכה), plural *sukhōt*, which has the primary meaning of a tent or temporary shelter. The verb *paḷārum*, ‘to undo, untie, take down, etc.,’ intransitively applied to *sikkātum* is an especially good fit for such a translation. If this analysis is correct, *sikkātum* is another Old Assyrian word with a strong West Semitic connection, such as those already discussed by Kogan.<sup>90</sup> The determination of whether *sikkātum* constitutes a Proto-Semitic archaism, or West Semitic borrowing, would require further study.

It is not impossible that the *sikkātum* had a religious or even ceremonial aspect as Kryszat has suggested, however there is no explicit evidence of this in the OA corpus. His hypothesized connection with a cultic procession in the countryside is complete speculation, based on unsound methodological principles. Kryszat’s proposed definition was an inadequate attempt to account for the various characteristics of the *sikkātum* attested in the corpus, by projecting a later Hittite ceremonial tradition into the Old Assyrian period. Instead, a careful reading of the corpus entirely within an OA context demonstrates that the *sikkātum* was the focus of some sort of high volume commercial activity in the countryside outside a city. For nearly a century now scholars have been trying to identify the precise source of the anxiety caused among Assyrian merchants by the *sikkātum*. This anxiety was of two different sorts, first the unavailability of precious metals from local marketplaces, and second, the threat of taxes and tariffs on the roads and in the countryside outside of a city. The root of both was the disruptive commercial nature of the *sikkātum*, unrelated to either ceremonial or militaristic events. The exact nature of this commercial activity is still elusive but broad outlines can be identified, suggesting that it involved the arrival of seasonal caravans of goods from Aššur, perhaps likely taking place after the spring thaw, or especially then, and resulting in a high volume of trade which essentially moved precious metals out of the local town marketplaces, to the *sikkātum*, until such trade was completed or the benefits of such trade was curtailed by increasing taxes or tariffs. A forthcoming comprehensive analysis of texts detailing the activity of the *rabi s.*, while likely to conflate both business carried out in private as well as public contexts, inasmuch as these contexts operated exclusively, will likely suggest further refinements to an understanding of the *sikkātum* and its economic function in the *kārum* system of Anatolia.

### Bibliographie

- Balkan, K., Contributions to the Understanding of the Idiom of the Old Assyrian Merchants of Kanesh, Or. 36 (1967), 393–415.
- Çeçen, S. – Hecker, K., *ina mātika eblum*, Zu einem neuen Text zum Wegerecht, in: Dietrich, M. – Loretz, O. (eds.), Vom Alten Orient zum Alten Testament: Festschrift für Wolfram von Soden zum 85. Geburtstag am 19. Juni 1993, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995, 31–41.
- Dercksen, J. G., Old Assyrian Institutions, Nabije Oosten 2004. (MOS Studies 4)
- Dercksen, J. G., The Old Assyrian Copper Trade in Anatolia, Istanbul 1996. (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te İstanbul 75)
- Eißer, G. – Lewy, J., Die Altassyrischen Rechtsurkunden von Kültepe, Leipzig 1930. (MVAG 33)
- Günbatı, C., Two Treaty Texts Found at Kültepe, in: Larsen, M. T. – Dercksen, J. G. (eds.), Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen, Leiden 2004, 249–268. (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten te Leiden 100)

<sup>90</sup> L. Kogan (2006), 212–213.

- Günbatti, C., The River Ordeal in Ancient Anatolia, in: van Soldt, W. H. – Dercksen, J. G. (eds.), K. R. Veenhof Anniversary Volume, Leiden 2001, 151–160. (PIHANS 89)
- Günbatti, C., Two New Tablets Throwing Light on the Relations Between Anatolian Kings and Assyrian Merchants in the Period of the Assyrian Colonies, *ArAn* 3 (1997a), 25–37.
- Günbatti, C., Kültepe'den akadli Sargon'a ait bir tablet, *ArAn* 3 (1997b), 131–135.
- Gwaltney, W. C. Jr., The Pennsylvania Old Assyrian Texts, Cincinnati 1983. (HUCA Supp. 3)
- Hecker, K., Die Keilschrifttexte der Universitätsbibliothek Giessen, Giessen 1966. (Berichte und Arbeiten aus der Universitätsbibliothek Giessen 9)
- Ichisar, M., Les Archives Cappadociennes du Marchand Imdilum, Paris 1981. (Recherche sur les grandes civilisations, Cahier 3)
- Kogan, L., Old Assyrian vs. Old Babylonian: The Lexical Dimension, in: Deutscher G. – Kouwenberg N. J. C. (eds.), The Akkadian language in its semitic context: studies in the Akkadian of the third and second millennium BC, Leiden 2006, 177–214. (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten te Leiden 106)
- Kryszat, G., Herrscher, Herrschaft und Kultradtition in Anatolien nach den Quellen aus den altassyrischen Handelskolonien, *AoF* 31 (2004), 15–45.
- Landsberger, B. – Balkan, K., Die Inschrift des assyrischen Königs Īrišum gefunden in Kültepe 1948, *Belleten* 14 (1950), 219–268.
- Larsen, M. T., The Aššur-nādā archives, Leiden 2002. (Old Assyrian Archives 1)
- Michel, C., Correspondence des marchands de Kaniš au début IIe millénaire avant J.–C., Paris 2001. (Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient 19)
- Nougayrol, J., Textes en cunéiformes babyloniens des archives du grand palais et du palais sud d'Ugarit, Paris 1955. (PRU 6)
- Roth, M., Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, Atlanta 1997. (Writings from the Ancient World 6)
- Veenhof, K. R., Mesopotamia: The Old Assyrian Period, Fribourg 2008. (OBO 160/5)
- Veenhof, K. R., Status and Offices of an Anatolian Gentleman – Two Unpublished Letters of Huharimatu from *kārum* Kanish, in: Emre, K. – Hrouda B. – Mellink, M. J. (eds.), Anatolia and the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of Tahsin Özgüç, Ankara 1989, 515–525.
- Veenhof, K. R., Aspects of Old Assyrian Trade and its Terminology, Leiden 1972. (SDIOA 10)

Christopher Brinker  
 Department of Near Eastern Studies  
 The Johns Hopkins University  
 3400 North Charles Street  
 Baltimore, Maryland 21218