

THE MACELLUM OF CORINTH

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OF over twenty-five Latin nouns in the Greek New Testament,¹ Paul of Tarsus, though an extensive contributor to its pages and himself a Roman citizen, is responsible for very few. Apart from a single verse whose Pauline authorship is to be suspected because it occurs in 2 Timothy (4 13 τὸν φελόνην, *paenulam* . . . τὰς μεμβράνας, *membranas*) there are only two Latin words in Paul: τῷ πραιτωρίῳ (*praetorium*, Phil. 1 13) and μακέλλω (*macellum*, 1 Cor. 10 25). It is with the latter that this paper has to do.

Paul is dealing with a problem of conscience raised at Corinth about food offered to idols, and when speaking in his more liberal mood—for I am persuaded that Paul himself is somewhat of two minds on the question—boldly advises the Corinthians: “Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.” “In the shambles” is the English rendering since Rheims of the Greek ἐν μακέλλῳ. The older English was “flesh market.”

Now I must at once admit that there is some doubt as to the original language to which μάκελλος² belongs. Varro, *de*

¹ For lists of Latin words in the N.T. (practically all nouns) see Grimm-Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.*, 1886, 693; S. Buss, *Roman Law and History in the N.T.*, 1901, 469 f, 472; Blass-Debrunner, *Neutestamentliche Grammatik*⁶, 1931, §5; Abel, *Grammaire du Grec biblique*, 1927, xxxiii ff.

² I deliberately write the word as μάκελλος as does the latest edition of Liddell and Scott, not μάκελλον and suggest that N.T. lexicists, which have invariably written the neuter, follow suit. The Modern Greek is masculine and so is the only inscriptional occurrence which shows the gender (from Mantinea, see below). Another instance plainly masculine but of unknown date is the

lingua Latina, v. 146 thought it Greek and of Dorian-Ionic origin.³ Modern etymologists regard it as of Semitic origin like the Hebrew מַכְּלָל .⁴ But both the word and the institution appear in the Hellenistic age to be regarded as Roman.⁵ As early as 179 B.C. a *macellum* was built at Rome replacing the specialized markets called forums like the *forum piscarium* that was burned in 210 B.C.⁶ Of course it may be that it was based on Greek models in architecture. But that need not mean also in name, and the Latin word occurs in inscriptions in many towns of Italy and of the Latin speaking colonies.⁷ The word is much more rare in Greek, though it is attested in Greek inscriptions for Sagalassos in Pisidia, and Mantinea and for other cities in Asia Minor or the Greek mainland.⁸ The best

scholion on Aristophanes *Equit.* 137: ὁ δὲ Κύκλος Ἀθήνησιν ἐστὶν καθάπερ μάκελλος ἐκ τῆς κατασκευῆς τὴν προσηγορίαν λαβὼν, ἐνθα δὲ πιπράσκειται χωρὶς κρέων τὰ ἄλλα ὄνια καὶ ἐξαιρέτως δὲ οἱ ἰχθύες. A similar masculine *macellus* in Latin (archaic or poetic?) is attested in Martial 10, 96, 9 and perhaps in Pomponius, *frag.* 38 (*Petitor* or *Cretula*, O. Ribbeck, *Comitorum Romanorum fragmenta* 1898, p. 276).

³ μάκελλον is said to appear in Ionic and Laconian (Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary*, s.v.). But this statement also rests simply on Varro. According to L. Hahn, *Rom und Romanismus im griechisch-römischen Osten*, 1906, 249 note 6, the word came back into Greek 'als angeblich lateinisch.'

⁴ A. Walde, *Indogermanische Forschungen*, xxxix, 1921, 82.

⁵ Like many other Latin words found in the Greek New Testament *macellum* was a loan word in Aramaic also. See S. Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud*, ii, 1899, 349; Strack-Billerbeck *Kommentar zum N.T. aus Talmud und Midrasch*, iii, 1926, 420. The persistence of the word in middle and modern Greek shows that it was ultimately accepted. See Gustav Meyer, *Neugriechische Studien* III. *Die lateinischen Lehnwörter im Neugriechischen. Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie*, 132, 1895, p. 41. It means butcher shop, as does the Italian *macello* descended from the Latin.

⁶ See Livy xxvi. 27; xl. 51, 4 f and Varro, *loc. cit.*

⁷ A good collection of examples in H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*, ii. 1, 1902, Nos. 5578-5592, but a fuller list (twenty-six cities) in Schneider's article mentioned below.

⁸ *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* xvii, 1893, 261, No. 45 (Apollonia? of Pisidia); *ibid.* xx, 1896, 126 (= Dittenberger, *Sylloge* 783, line 45, Mantinea i/B.C.); *ibid.* x, 1886, 420 (near Thyatira); O. Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Mäander*, 1900, No. 179, line 21 (ii/A.D.). The examples from Epidaurus (*Inscriptiones Graecae* IV² 102 *passim*) and Sparta (*ibid.* V. 149) may be both earlier and different.

evidence of its non-Hellenic character is the fact that only two Greek literary authors⁹ are cited for the word: Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 54 p. 277D, and Dio Cassius lxi. 18 and both seem to indicate its alien character in the usual way with Greek litterateurs. Dio's Epitome tells how Nero consecrated τὴν ἀγορὰν τῶν ὄψων, τὸ μάκελλον ὠνομασμένον, while Plutarch asks why the Romans called the meat shops *macella* or *macellas* (διὰ τί τὰ κρεοπώλια μάκελλα καὶ μακέλλας καλοῦσι:).

Corinth in the days of Paul was one of the most Roman of eastern cities. This is shown by inscriptions found from the First Century which are almost all Latin. It was built by Julius Caesar upon a site forsaken for a century. It was the center of the provincial government in Achaia. Above all it was a Roman colony. It was therefore natural that the Latin word should be current in Corinth and that Paul should use it—in spite of his usual purism.

Indeed Paul not only uses the Latin word but uses it apparently with a certain familiarity. At least ἐν μακέλλῳ has no article, and grammarians regard such omission of the article in prepositional phrases as due in part to the frequency of their use.¹⁰ Certainly that is the case in English "at home"—"to town"—"at church"—"at market," and we make the same assumption with the evangelists' ἐν οἰκίᾳ (Luke 8 27; cf. ἐν οἴκῳ Mark 2 1; 1 Cor. 11 34; 14 35), ἀπ' ἀγροῦ (Mark 15 21=Luke 23 26; cf. ἐν ἀγρῷ Luke 12 28; 15 25; 17 31), ἐν συναγωγῇ (John 6 59), ἀπ' ἀγορᾶς (Mark 7 4; cf. ἐν ἀγορᾷ Luke 7 32). If ἐν ἀγορᾷ

⁹ In Christian Greek literature also one has to go several centuries after Paul to find another occurrence of the word, e. g. Palladius' *Historia Lausiaca* 1066D (ed. Butler 60.17): ὥσπερ γὰρ κύων ἐν μακέλλῳ τῇ συνηθείᾳ οὐκ ἀρίσταται, ἀν δὲ κλεισθῆ τὸ μάκελλον καὶ μηδεὶς αὐτῷ μηδὲν δῶ, οὐκέτι ἐγγίξει. Sophocles *Lexicon* cites Socr[at]es *H.E.*] 177A and Aster[us] of Amasea] 473B. The reference in F. Zorell, *Lexicon Graecum Novi Testamenti*, 1931, s.v. to "pastor Herm" is an error due to the occurrences in P Herm, i. e. *Corpus Papyrorum Hermopolitanorum*.

¹⁰ On anarthrous prepositional phrases see A. T. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek N.T.*, 1914, 791-793; Moulton, *Prolegomena*, 82; Blass-Debrunner, §255; F. Eakin, *The Greek Article in First and Second Century Papyri in American Journal of Philology*, xxxvii, 1916, 333 ff.

is a "short-cut" phrase why not the nearly synonymous and equally anarthrous ἐν μακέλλῳ?¹¹

At this stage let me go back to a day in July, 1933, which I spent at Corinth going over the excavations that have been carried on there by the American School of Classical Studies in Athens in more than twenty campaigns since 1896. I was especially anxious to see first hand the Erastus inscription which I had the pleasure of bringing to the attention of this Society three years ago and of discussing more fully in the JOURNAL (L, 1931, 42-58). There was also to be seen the site identified, but without very clear remains, of the Basilica in which Paul was brought for a hearing at the judgment seat of Gallio. But what was particularly unexpected by me was to note among the inscribed fragments of marble in the new museum one containing quite clearly MACELLV.

As the piece has only seven other letters and these quite unintelligible the discovery of this single word is extremely tantalizing. But since the fragment in question was found in 1898, now thirty-five years ago, while so far as I know its one clear word has never been brought into connection with Paul's reference to a Corinthian *macellum*,¹² it is worth while now to do so. And the fragment does not stand quite alone; nine other

¹¹ None of the grammarians seem to note this instance. Would the absence of an article in Latin make its omission with a word borrowed into Greek any more likely? An instance in the papyri (C P Herm. i, 127, of the year 263-4 A.D.) includes an anarthrous phrase: Ἀδριανείου καὶ τῆς ἐκ λιβὸς στοᾶς καὶ μακέλλου καὶ στοᾶς ἐκτὸς μακέλλου. Cf. C. Wessely, "Die lateinischen Elemente in der Gräzität der ägyptischen Papyrusurkunden" in *Wiener Studien* xxiv, 1902, 138.

¹² This omission of reference to 1 Corinthians is all the more striking since of the persons mentioned below who deal with the inscription, West shows elsewhere an interest in the relation of the Corinthian Latin inscriptions to the New Testament, e. g. the famine of Acts 11 28 (p. 70) and the date and immediate successor of the Gallio of Acts 18 12 (p. 34); while de Waele, who published a resume of work in what he believes is the actual *macellum* is the author of the principal discussion of the relation between the Erastus of Paul and the Corinthian Erastus inscription and of an extensive article on "Korinthos in de dagen van St. Paulus" in *Studia Catholica*, iv, 1928, 145-170. Even the very up-to-date plates in E. Evans, *Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* (Clarendon Bible) 1930, do not include a picture of this stone.

fragments of the same inscription have been found, and furthermore another copy apparently of a similar inscription is represented by eleven fragments. These have now been carefully edited by Professors A. B. West and L. R. Taylor,¹³ on whose judgment I must depend in further statement about them.

Less than half of the whole inscription is available from the two incomplete copies. It seems to mention the builders of the *macellum*. They are Cornelii and the wife of one is Maecia. Possibly there is a connection with Q. Maecius, a Greek epigram writer.¹⁴ This is not decisive for date, but, apparently on other (epigraphic) grounds, the editor is willing to say (p. 103), "it is probable that they [the inscriptions] belong to the last years of Augustus or to the reign of Tiberius." The only other word that can be recovered as yet from the inscriptions is in the letters SCARIO which are thought to refer to a *forum piscarium* or fish market associated with the *macellum*.

While the excavations at Corinth¹⁵ do not yet entirely determine the location of the *macellum* mentioned in the inscription some guesses are already made which may be reported while we await further excavations of sites and, we may hope, discovery of other parts of the two inscriptions. F. J. de Waele is inclined to

¹³ *Corinth*. Vol. viii, Part ii. *Latin Inscriptions 1896-1926*, 1931, pp. 100 ff, Nos. 124 and 125 (with plate of each). No. 124 is thought to have consisted of three blocks, No. 125 of two blocks. The beginnings of the five lines in the first block of No. 124 read as follows:

Q . C O
M A E C
S E C V
M A C E L L V
I N E A . L O C

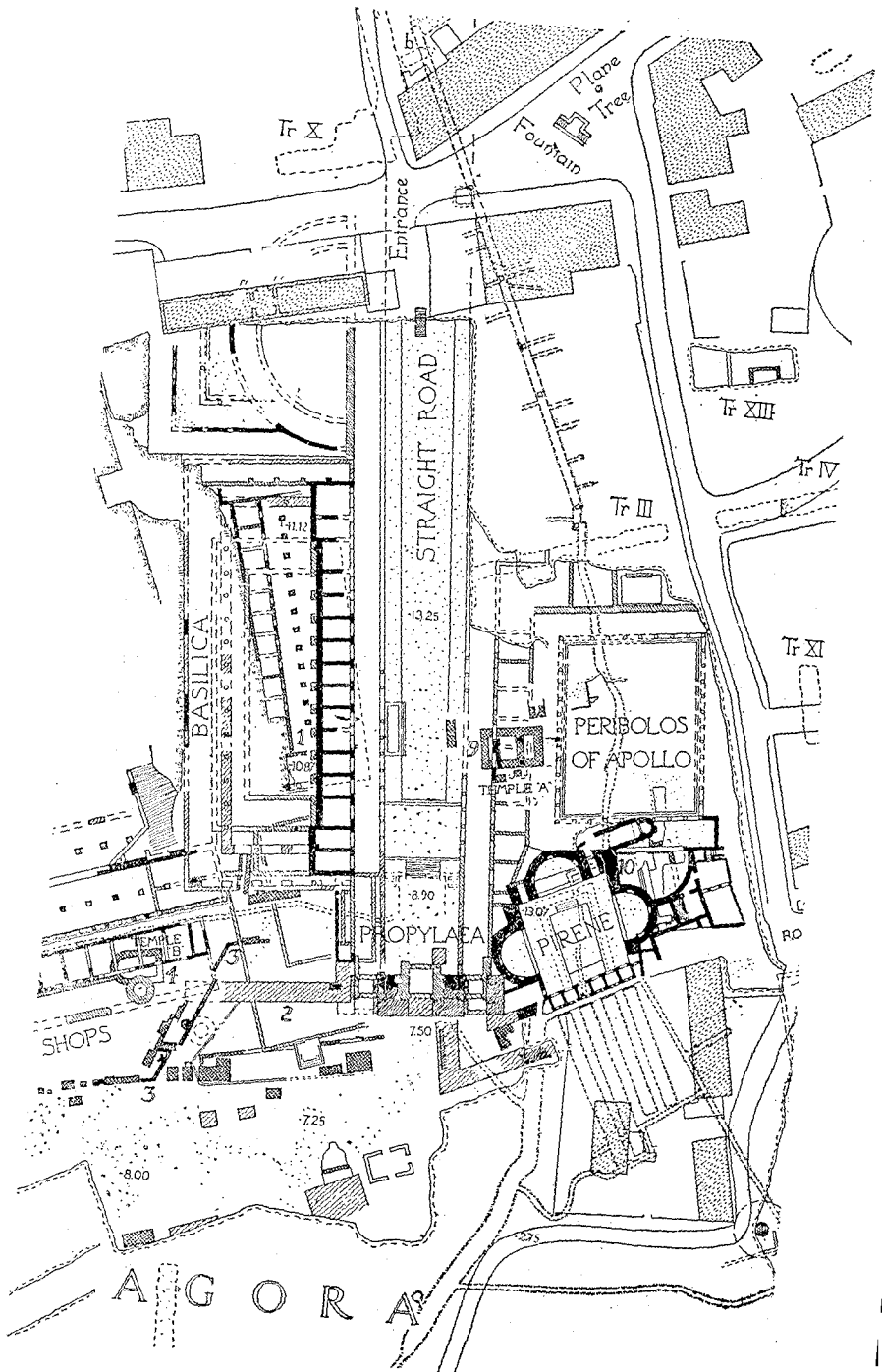
¹⁴ On Q. Maecius and his twelve epigrams in the *Anthologia Palatina* see Geffcken in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, *R. E.* xiv, 1928, 233 who dates him "wohl der frühen Kaiserzeit." In any case his date is before 40 A.D.

¹⁵ The accompanying map is a copy of part of the "Main Excavation Area 1896-1932," a plan drawn by W. B. Dinsmoor for R. Carpenter's *Guide* (see note 17 below). Of the three sites mentioned in the text (1) the Peribolos of Apollo is marked on the map by name. (2) The Greek Market is represented by the substructures marked 1 across the Straight (or Lechaëum) Road from the Peribolos. It is not in alignment with the Road as are the later and upper ruins on this site, viz. the row of shops along the road and the Basilica behind. (3) North of this is the area excavated by Broneer only up as far as the shaded area where the old museum stood.



Macellum Inscription—Corinth, No. 124.

(Photo by courtesy of A. B. West)



Part of Recently Excavated Area of Old Corinth.
 (From plan by W. B. Dinsmoor)

identify as a *macellum* the area of the Peribolos of Apollo in its early Roman state. Under the direction of Mr. B. H. Hill the Peribolos was excavated to the late Roman level, and again in 1929 it was investigated to a deeper level. In the later Roman Peribolos evidences were found of a row of shops facing northward on an open space with mosaic floor, but separated from it by a colonnade with paved sidewalk. The excavation of 1929 did not uncover entirely the space of the former early Roman construction, which de Waele is inclined to identify with the *macellum* of Paul's days.¹⁶

Secondly, there are the remains of a Fifth Century Greek Market found on the west of the Lechaem road. My colleague, Professor Rhys Carpenter, describes them as follows: "The site was cut out of the rock and clay of the Temple Hill, the foundations being generally a single course of stone set into the clay. The main hall of the building extended for 132 feet; and ranged down the length of it was a row of thirteen columns, for nine of which the square bases remain in place. The western wall of the hall was parallel with the line of column bases and ten feet distant, and for most of its length was pierced for a series of shops or stalls. Each little shop had at either side of its door a sort of display window with a small rectangular waterproofed tank or box. It is probable that a fish-market was once located in the vicinity."¹⁷

This description would suit very well the words "*macellum*" and "*piscarium*," but the remains in question are deep underneath the aforementioned Roman basilica, and since the latter dates from the century before Paul and Gallio the lower building could no longer have been in use as the *macellum* of Corinth.

A third area partly excavated in 1925 remains a possible site. This is due north of the building just described and on the same side of the Lechaem road. It is reasonable to suppose that when the site of the older Greek market was commandeered for

¹⁶ Hill, *American Journal of Archaeology*, xxxi, 1927, 71ff; de Waele, *Gnomon*, vii, 1931, 52. Cf. note 19.

¹⁷ Rhys Carpenter, *Ancient Corinth: a Guide to the Excavations*², 1933, p. 22, following here the material supplied by B. H. Hill and published by H. N. Fowler in *Art and Archaeology*, xiv, 1922, 197f.

a basilica a new market structure was built just beyond it. There is some evidence of a structure belonging probably to Roman times consisting of an open court paved with large marble slabs surrounded at least on the south and west by a colonnade with mosaic floor which in turn is surrounded with "a series of rooms probably used as shops with entrance from the porticoes." This is about all that one can learn from the report of Oscar Broneer who superintended the excavation of this limited but complicated area.¹⁸ As far as it goes it is compatible with a *macellum* existing in the time of Paul.

It does not behoove a layman to express a choice between these three sites especially in the confused state of the surviving remains of Roman Corinth. I must, however, express my surprise that it is assumed that both inscriptions had identical wording "*macellum cum piscario*" and that from this a single building called *Macellum Piscarium* is inferred.¹⁹

This is not the place to review our evidence for the general nature of the *macella* in the Roman empire.²⁰ Their architectural character is known from several extant remains, most clearly from the one at Pompeii.²¹ They were enclosed areas with two-story shops on at least three sides. In front of the shops was a peristyle in which the shoppers and even goods were kept dry in wet weather. In the middle was a *tholus* or circular cupola

¹⁸ O. Broneer, *American Journal of Archaeology*, xxx, 1926, 49-57.

¹⁹ See *ibid.* xxiv, 1930, 453 f; West, *op. cit.*, 102. In a letter (March 19, 1934) Dr. de Waele informs me that he has long seen the error of joining *macellum* and *piscarium* as the same building, and that in a forthcoming article in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, *R.E.*, Suppl. VI s.v. 'Korinthos' he will propose the existence in the first Christian century of two market buildings near the Lechaemum road, the *piscarium* and the *macellum* of the inscriptions, the latter identical with the building that Paul mentions and situated on the site later used for the Peribolos itself, the former north of the Roman basilica on the site of the later so-called fish-market. I am indebted to Dr. de Waele also for other information and help embodied in this article.

²⁰ See H. Thédenat in Daremberg-Saglio, iii. 1457 ff, and especially Schneider in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, *R.E.*, xiv. 129 ff, a very full and recent discussion. But neither of these articles mentions a *macellum* in Corinth on the basis either of Paul's letter or of the inscription.

²¹ A. Mau, *Pompeii in Leben und Kunst*, Chapter XII (in all editions, German or English, with plan and plates).

on pillars,²² or a fountain or pavilion. This central feature was the most characteristic item of a *macellum*.

In use it was not exclusively a meat market, but other foods were sold there including fish, fruit, bread. In some cases also non-edible goods were for sale, too. Interpreters of 1 Corinthians have assumed from the situation at Pompeii of a chapel for emperor worship in the *macellum*, that the religious connections with idolatry which some at Corinth feared were always physically close in *macella*.²³ I think that this is unlikely in any sense except that everywhere all public buildings, whether basilicas, temples, forums or *macella* tended to be located in a central city area. Animal food was, I think, the most constant factor in a *macellum*, and next to that fish, though there is no reason to doubt the possibility of a separate though connected *piscarium*, which some of the excavators at Corinth have proposed. At Pompeii the scales of fish found in the basin of the *tholus*, the charred remains of figs, chestnuts, plums, grapes, fruit in glass vessels, lentils, grain, loaves of bread, and cakes, give a vivid picture of the actual wares offered for sale there on that tragic day, the 24th of August, 79 A.D. The presence also in one shop of entire skeletons of sheep suggests that the meat may have been sold on the hoof or slaughtered in the *macellum* as well as sold already butchered or sacrificed in a temple.

The future excavations at Corinth may hardly be expected to yield quite such vivid pictures of the *macellum* as these from Pompeii. And perhaps they will never indicate more certainly where the *macellum* was, nor satisfy our curiosity as to how far when Paul recalled his first visit at Corinth in 50-51 A.D. the associations of the word in his mind would be with an "idol's house" or an "idol's table" and the actual sacrificial ceremony, and how far merely with a meat-and-provision market. Yet even such slight confirmation of the imagination as a single imperfect inscription has given us is to be welcomed.

²² See especially the design of a *macellum magnum* or *Augusti* erected in 59 A.D. at Rome on a coin of Nero reproduced in Thédenat's article.

²³ So Lietzmann in his *Handbuch*² and J. Weiss in Meyer, *Kommentar zum N.T.*² *ad loc.* An inscription from Bracara Augusta in Spain (Dessau, No. 3661) is a dedication *genio macelli*.

- seine Nahrung sein, damit er lerne das Böse zu verwerfen
 17a. und das Gute zu erwählen. Denn⁴² kommen lassen wird
 Jahwe über dich und dein Volk und über dein Vaterhaus Tage,
 wie sie nicht (mehr) gekommen sind seit dem Tage, wo
 18. Ephraim von Juda abfiel. An jenem Tage wird Jahwe
 herbeipfeifen die Bremse, die an den äußersten Nilarmen
 19. Ägyptens, und die Biene, die im Lande Assur (haust), und
 die kommen und fallen ein allesamt in die steilsten Talrinnen
 und in die Klüfte der Felsen und in alle Dornbüsche und in
 20. ⁴³ alle Tränken. An jenem Tage wird der Herr abscheren
 mit dem jenseits des Stromes gedungenem Schermesser das
 Haupt- und das Schamhaar, und selbst den Bart wird es fort-
 23. fegen. Und jeder Fleck, wo (jetzt) Weinstöcke stehn, das
 Tausend zu tausend Sekel, den Dornen und Disteln wird er
 24a. verfallen: mit Pfeilen und Bogen wird man dahin gehn.
 25. Und alle Berghänge, die (jetzt) mit der Hacke bestellt wer-
 den, dahin wird man (gar) nicht gehn, (aus) Furcht vor den
 Dornen und Disteln, und sie dienen den Rindern zum Tum-
 21. melplatz und den Schafen zum Zertreten. An jenem Tage
 wird jeder eine junge Kuh halten und ein paar Mutterschafe,
 22b. und von Rahm und Honig wird sich nähren alles, was übrig
 ist im Bereich des Landes.

⁴² כִּי vom Anfang des Einschubs V. 16.

⁴³ Bis auf die Worte אֲשׁוּר בַּמֶּלֶךְ hinter נָהַר.