

Significant Sigla? Reconsidering the Apostrophe in P45

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Abstract: In P45, an apostrophe-like marking appears following certain indeclinable Hebraic nouns. Previous scholarship has variously suggested that this notation functions as an aid for pronunciation or word recognition or as a marker of elision. The contexts in which the apostrophe appears in P45, however, do not support the proposals of these previous treatments. Because of the lacunose nature of P45, we are only able to identify the occurrences of an apostrophe-like marking in P45, note its inconsistent appearance after indeclinable names, and confirm that previous suggestions about the apostrophe's function do not fully explain the function of the apostrophe in P45.

1. Introduction

Apostrophes have a varied use in early New Testament papyri. Scholars note that apostrophes sometimes appear after duplicated liquids or stops.¹ In these instances, the apostrophe occurs in the middle of a word and seems to aid with pronunciation.² Additionally, apostrophes often indicate elision

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1. For example, an apostrophe separates double *thetas* in $\mu\alpha\theta'\theta\alpha\iota\omicron\nu$ (P⁴), double *gammas* in $\alpha\gamma'\gamma\eta\omega\nu$ (P.Mich. 6871), and the double *lambdas* in $\alpha\lambda'\lambda\omega\iota$ (P.Wess. Taff. gr. 6, 7, line 5). See Simon Gathercole, "The Earliest Manuscript Title of Matthew's Gospel (BnF Suppl. gr. 1120 ii 3/P⁴)," *NovT* 54 (2012): 227–35; E. G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 13 n. 2.

2. Scott D. Charlesworth, "Public and Private—Second- and Third-Century Gospel Manuscripts," in *Jewish and Christian Scripture as Artifact and Canon*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Danny Zacharias (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2009), 160.

of a vowel at the end of a word.³ Typical to Koine Greek, the elision occurs when a word ends in a vowel and is followed by a word beginning with a vowel.⁴ This use may aid in pronunciation as well as word recognition.⁵ Lastly, in third-century papyri, an apostrophe appears after indeclinable foreign names.⁶ In this case, scholars have often posited that the function of the apostrophe is for word recognition.⁷ Yet the use of the apostrophe in P45 after indeclinable Hebraic spellings of Jewish names problematizes the suggestions of previous scholarship.⁸

P45 is a third-century Greek codex containing thirty fragments of what was once a complete collection of the four gospels and Acts.⁹ The writing in the thirty fragments is clear, indicating that this collection is the work of a

3. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, 13.

4. In P45, the apostrophe indicates elision with words such as ἀλλ' (John 11:30; Acts 10:35) and μετ' (Acts 15:4).

5. Heilmann argues that the sign was used as a reader aid to help with recognizing the word rather than a kind of pronunciation help. See Jan Heilmann, "Reading Early New Testament Manuscripts: *Scriptio continua*, 'Reading Aids', and Other Characteristic Features," in *Material Aspects of Reading in Ancient and Medieval Cultures: Materiality, Presence and Performance*, ed. Anna Krauß, Jonas Leipziger, and Friederike Schücking-Jungblut (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 187.

6. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World*, 13. See also James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 183 n. 399, who notes that the apostrophe appears "from time to time after proper names."

7. Ast's discussion of the apostrophe focuses on a fourth-century book and a codex. He notes that the apostrophe appears after "foreign nouns to indicate they were indeclinable." Wayment and Ladenheim, who observe the apostrophe after the name Ἰωακεῖμ, suggest that the apostrophe may "indicate that the name lacked an ordinary Greek declension." Ebojo notes that the use of the apostrophe in P46 after the names ἰσραηλ (2x) and ἀβρααμ is unclear. See Rodney Ast, "Signs of Learning in Greek Documents: The Case of *spiritus asper*," in *Signes dans les textes, texts sur les signes: Érudition, lecture et écriture dans le monde gréco-romain*, ed. Gabriel Nocchi Macedo and Maria C. Scappaticcio (Liege: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2017), 151; Thomas Wayment and Alexander Ladenheim, "A New Fragment of the Protoevangelium Jacobi," *HTR* 104 (2011): 381; Edgar Battad Ebojo, "When Nonsense Makes Sense: Scribal Habits in the Space-Intervals, Sense-Pauses, and Other Visual Features of P46," *BT* 64 (2013): 133.

8. Furthermore, previous scholarship has at times misidentified other markings in P45 as the apostrophe, which has led to confusion in the literature. See, for example, Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 183 n. 399, where Royse identifies the marking following the name [σιλα]ν in P45 Acts 15:22 as an apostrophe, though the marking following [σιλα]ν is a diagonal line, not an apostrophe.

9. The folios of P45 contain two portions of Matthew, six of Mark, seven of Luke, two of John, and thirteen of Acts. For discussion on Kenyon's initial study of these

skilled scribe.¹⁰ The clarity of the P45 text provides us with examples of an apostrophe appearing after nine different names a total of eighteen times. The names include significant biblical sites (Jerusalem, Bethany, Shechem), biblical characters (Abraham, Isaac, Saul, Joseph, Jacob), and a pagan deity (Beelzebul). In each case, the apostrophe occurs after the indeclinable Hebraic form of the name.

Several factors, however, complicate this pattern in P45. First, the apostrophe does not appear consistently after every indeclinable Hebraic name. Several other indeclinable names occur throughout the manuscript but without an apostrophe.¹¹ Second, several names with the apostrophe also appear as Hellenized and declinable forms elsewhere in P45, suggesting that a more-user friendly form was available and known to the scribe (e.g., *ιακωβος* in Mark 9:2).¹²

In this article, we analyze the occurrence of the apostrophe after indeclinable foreign names in P45. For each name that contains an apostrophe, we discuss the form of the word in the papyrus and any diacritical marks included with the name. Additionally, we note the letters that immediately follow the last letter of the name in order to discern if the letter combinations suggest that the apostrophe functioned as a pronunciation aid. We also address whether the indeclinable name occurs elsewhere in P45 as a Hellenized form. While previous scholarship has suggested that the apostrophe occurs as a reader aid after indeclinable foreign names, we suggest that the inconsistent occurrences in P45 call for more nuance with this proposal. The fragmentary nature of P45, however, hinders definite conclusions about the apostrophe's pattern of usage.¹³

texts, as well as P45's place in the Chester Beatty collection, see Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 104–5.

10. Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 106. See also Frederic G. Kenyon, *Fasciculus II: Gospels and Acts (P45)*, (London: Walker, 1933), ix.

11. These include *δανιδ* (Matt 20:31), *χοραζειν* (Luke 10:13), *καφαρναουμ* (Luke 10:15), *πασχα* (Matt 26:2; John 11:55), *ταβειθα* (Acts 9:36), and *ισραηλ* (Acts 10:36). Nazaraeth (*ναζ[αρ]εθ*; Acts 10:38) may also be included in this list. The fragment, however, is too damaged to confirm with certainty.

12. For a discussion concerning spelling conventions of personal names and reader clarity, see Lawrence Ronald Lincoln, "The Use of Names as Evidence of the Septuagint as a Source for Josephus Antiquities in Books 1 to 5," in *Septuagint and Reception*, ed. Johann Cook (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 191–92.

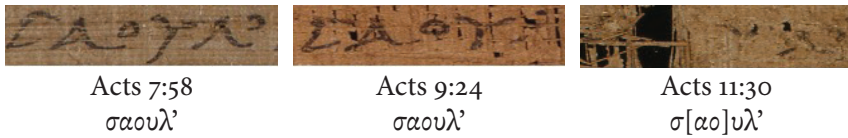
13. Scholars have estimated that P45 once contained about 220 leaves, while only 30 leaves remain currently extant (roughly 14%). Within those 30 leaves, portions of the papyri are either missing or too damaged where other indeclinable names occur

2. Analysis

2.1. Saul (σαουλ)

The word *σαουλ* is extant in five places in P45: Acts 7:58; 9:24; 11:30; 12:1; and 13:7. In Acts 7:58, 9:24, and 13:7, all five letters of *σαουλ* are clear, as is the apostrophe following the final *λ* of each word. In Acts 11:30, only the final *υ* and *λ* of *σαουλ* are visible, along with the faint apostrophe following the *λ*. The name *σαουλ* appears faintly in Acts 12:1, and just after the final *λ* an apostrophe is visible. The final *λ* of *σαουλ* is followed variously by *ε*, *η*, and *κ*, which indicates that the apostrophe likely does not aid pronunciation when it appears after *σαουλ*. The following figure shows how *σαουλ* and the apostrophe appear together in P45.

Figure 1. Saul in P45¹⁴



to observe any scribal markings following the end of the word. These include [τερικω] (Matt 20:29), *δαυιδ* (Matt 20:32; 21:15; Acts 13:34, 35), *πασχα* (Matt 26:18, 19; Acts 12:4), *γεσσημ[ανι]* (Matt 26:36), A[βελ] (Luke 11:51), [Μαριαμ] (John 11:31), [εφραιμ] (John 11:54), *ισραηλ* (Acts 5:32; 7:37; 9:15), [γαμαλιηλ] (Acts 5:34), *χα[νααν]* (Acts 7:11), *Εμ[μωρ]* (Acts 7:16), and [Ααρων] (Acts 7:40). Furthermore, even with the nine names where we observed apostrophes, the fragmentary nature of P45 limits our ability to conclude whether an apostrophe was consistently applied to these names elsewhere in the manuscript. For example, the occurrences of *σαουλ* in P45 represents only about 33 percent of its occurrences in the gospels and Acts. Similarly, the following percentages represent the extant occurrences of the other names where the apostrophe occurs in P45: *ιακωβ* (18%), *Ιερουσαλημ* (16%), *Ιωσηφ* (9%), *συχεμ* (50%), *Αβρααμ* (5%), *βεελζεβουλ* (29%), *βηθανια* (8%), *ισαακ* (8%). Thus, the very fragmentary nature of P45 limits our ability to make any firm conclusions regarding a consistent pattern with the apostrophe throughout P45. Many thanks to our anonymous reviewer for comments on these points. See further Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

14. All images from the digital collection made available by the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung on <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/manuscript-workspace>.



Acts 12:1
[αο]υλ'



Acts 13:7
σαουλ'

Royse notes that the spelling *σαουλ* in P45 matches the spelling usually reserved for Israel's king "in the majority of manuscripts of Acts."¹⁵ This spelling corresponds to the Hebrew לַוֹּשׁ rather than the Hellenized *σαυλος*.¹⁶ The name Saul appears twenty-five times in Acts, and in many manuscript traditions it is written as *σαυλος*.¹⁷ Of those twenty-five occurrences, the four extant locations in P45 all read *σαουλ*, which may suggest a preference for the spelling *σαουλ* in P45, though too few examples are extant to establish a definitive pattern of notation following the name Saul in this manuscript tradition.¹⁸

2.2. Jacob (ιακωβ)

The name Jacob appears four times in P45 in an indeclinable Hebraic spelling and in declinable Hellenized forms. The indeclinable Hebraic form appears one time and is followed by an apostrophe (Acts 7:14). The papyrus is very badly damaged, however, and the only letter that can be identified is the final β. The following letter is a κ, which adds to the variety of letters following other names.¹⁹ The only other diacritical mark associated with the word is a large dot, which is a secondary mark in P45 used to indicate the end of a clause.²⁰ Additionally, a Hellenized form of the name, *ιακωβος*, appears in Mark 9:2 (*ιακωβον*), Luke 9:28 (*ιακωβον*), and Luke 9:54 (*ιακωβος*) without the apostrophe.²¹ Figure 2 below shows the name with the apostrophe as well as the Hellenized forms of the name in P45 that appear without the apostrophe.

15. Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 182.

16. Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 183. Royse cites the work of Lagrange and Hoskier, who made a similar observation. See M. J. Lagrange, "Le Papyrus Beatty des Actes des Apôtres," *RB* 43 (1934): 68; and H. C. Hoskier, "Some Study of P45 with Special Reference to the Bezan Text," *BBC* 12 (1937): 52.

17. Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 182.

18. Royse, *Scribal Habits*, 183.

19. For example, Joseph is followed by a τ, δ, and ο. See discussion below.

20. Kenyon, *Gospels and Acts (P45)*, ix.

21. *ιακωβος* also appears in Acts 12:2. However, the papyrus is damaged, and the end of the name is missing.

Figure 2. Jacob (ιακωβ and ιακωβος) in P45



Mark 9:2
τον ιακωβον και

Luke 9:28
κα[ι] ιακωβον κα[ι]

Luke 9:54
μαθηται ιακωβος και



Acts 7:14
ιακω]β' και

2.3. Jerusalem (Ιερουσαλημ / Ιεροσολυμα)

The toponym Jerusalem is extant in eleven places in P45. In five places, Jerusalem is spelled *ιερουσαλημ* and is followed by an apostrophe (Luke 9:53; 13:34; Acts 11:2; 13:27, 31).²² Words after the spelling *ιερουσαλημ* and followed by a clear apostrophe are followed by δ, ι, η, κ, or ο. In Luke 9:31, 9:51, and 10:30, Jerusalem is spelled *ιερουσαλημ* but not clearly followed by an apostrophe. The damage to the papyrus makes it impossible to confirm whether or not an apostrophe appeared after Luke 9:31 and 9:51, and the mark following Jerusalem in 10:30 is too unclear as to identify it with clear apostrophes in other texts. Words beginning with ε, κ, or ο follow Jerusalem in Luke 9:31, 51, and 10:30. In three places, Jerusalem appears in its Hellenized spelling: John 10:22 (*ιεροσολυμοις*), Acts 11:27 (*ιεροσολυμων*), and 15:4 (*ιεροσολυμα*).²³ In each instance, the word is not followed by an apostrophe. Additionally, words following Jerusalem in John 10:22, Acts 11:27, and 15:4

22. Some scholars suggest that the Hebraic spelling (*ιερουσαλημ*) carries religious connotations, designating it as “the seat of Jewish authority.” See Josep Rius-Camps, “The Spelling of Jerusalem in the Gospel of John: The Significance of the Two Forms in Codex Bezae,” *NTS* 48 (2002): 84–94; J. K. Elliot, “Jerusalem in Acts and the Gospels,” *NTS* 23 (1977): 462–69; Dennis D. Sylva, “Ierousalēm and Hierosolyma in Luke-Acts,” *ZNW* 74 (1983): 207–19. Ignace de la Potterie, “Les deux noms de Jérusalem dans les Actes des Apôtres,” *Bib* 63 (1982): 153–87. See also Thomas C. Geer Jr., “The Presence and Significance of Lucanisms in the Western Text of Act,” *JSNT* 39 (1990): 59–76. Elliott noticed, in particular, that the Hebraic spelling “occurs in contexts where a Jewish speaker is addressing Jews, or where the context places the story in Palestine (Elliot, “Jerusalem in Acts,” 463). The evidence available regarding Jerusalem in P45 is too lacunose to corroborate theories of spelling significance.

23. Some suggest that the so-called Hellenistic spelling of Jerusalem (*ιεροσολυμα*)

begin with π and χ . Surveying the different spellings of Jerusalem and the words that follow them yields no pattern to suggest that pronunciation is a factor that determines spelling or annotation.

Figure 3. Jerusalem in P45 Acts

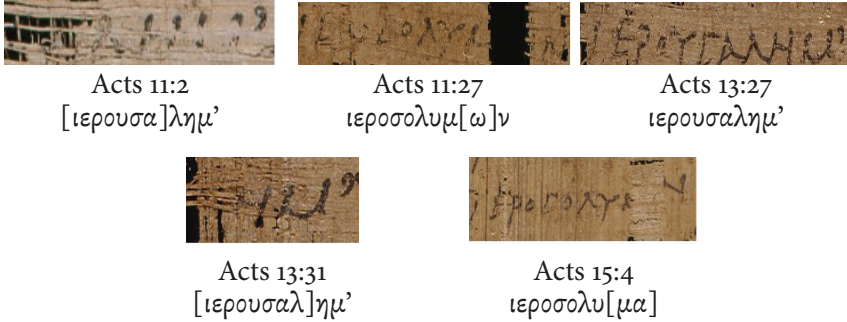


Figure 4. Jerusalem in P45 Luke

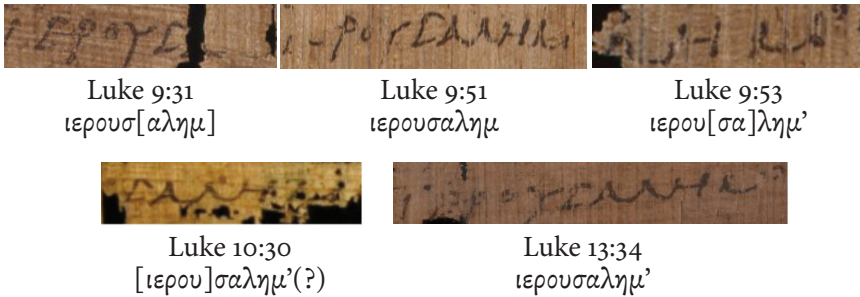
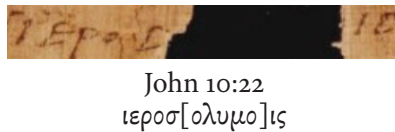


Figure 5. Jerusalem in P45 John



Images of Luke 10:30 show a small dot just above the final μ . This dot may indicate that a marking such as the apostrophe was originally present, or it may simply be damage to the manuscript.

appears to denote a neutral “geographical location devoid of religious connotations” (Rius-Camps, “Spelling of Jerusalem,” 85).

Figure 6. Luke 10:30 Positive and Negative Images



Luke 10:30 Positive



Luke 10:30 Negative

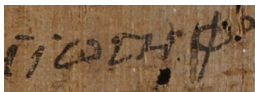
A similar dot appears above the final μ in Luke 9:51, though the readability of this, too, prevents us from drawing absolute conclusions about the significance of the marking above the final μ .

Of the eight appearances of the Hebraic spelling, we can confidently say that five are followed by an apostrophe (Luke 9:53; 13:34; Acts 11:2; 13:27, 31). The text following the remaining three occurrences of Hebraic spelling (Luke 9:31, 51; 10:30) makes it impossible to say for certain whether an apostrophe appears after these terms. None of the occurrences of the Hellenistic spelling (John 10:22; Acts 11:27; 15:4) is followed by an apostrophe. It is tempting to see a pattern wherein the indeclinable Hebraic spelling of Jerusalem is followed by an apostrophe, though the appearance of the indeclinable Hebraic spelling in Luke 9:31, 51, and 10:30 complicates this pattern. Too little evidence remains for us to determine the extent or consistency of this pattern throughout the original P45 manuscripts.

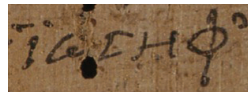
2.4. Joseph (Ιωσηφ)

The name Joseph appears three times in P45 with an apostrophe (Acts 7:13, 14, 18). Each time the name is spelled the same way (Ιωσηφ). The name is followed by a variety of letters (τ , δ , and \omicron), which complicates the hypothesis that the apostrophe may aid pronunciation. Other scribal marks surrounding the name include diacreses over the initial iota where the iota has been preserved. Figure 7 below shows the name and apostrophe for each occurrence.

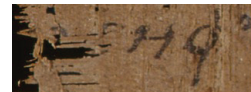
Figure 7. Joseph (Ιωσηφ) in P45



Acts 7:13
 ανεγνω]ρισθη ιωσηφ'
 τοις αδελ[φοις



Acts 7:14
 του ιωσηφ'
 αποστ[ειλας



Acts 7:18
 ι]ωσηφ' ουτος

2.5. Shechem (συχεμ)

The place name Shechem appears one time in P45 (Acts 7:16). The name is indeclinable and followed by an apostrophe. The papyrus is damaged, however, and the only letter that remains of the word is the final μ . The name is followed by a κ , which should not present an issue with pronunciation. For example, Jerusalem (ιερουσαλημ) is followed by a κ in Luke 9:51, and the name is not followed by an apostrophe. Shechem also appears with a large dot above the μ , which likely indicates the end of the clause. Figure 8 below shows the name with the apostrophe and the words surrounding the name are reproduced for context.

Figure 8. Shechem (συχεμ) in P45



Acts 7:16
εις συχ]εμ' και

2.6. Abraham (Αβρααμ)

Αβρααμ is extant in two places in P45: Luke 13:16 and Acts 13:26. In both cases, the spelling is the same, and the final μ of Αβρααμ is followed by an apostrophe. The name is followed by an \omicron in 13:16 and by a κ in 13:26. The writing in Acts 13:26 is clear, and the text of Luke 13:16 is faded but still readable. In both cases, an apostrophe following the μ of Αβρααμ is visible.²⁴

Figure 9. Abraham in P45



Luke 13:16
Α[β]ρααμ



Acts 13:26
Αβρααμ

24. In P45, the Hebraized transliteration Αβρααμ is used instead of a Hellenized transliteration Αβραϊος. Both spellings are transliterations of אַבְרָהָם, the Jewish patriarch, though the spelling Αβρααμ follows the Hebrew much more closely. See Naomi Cohen, “Jewish Names as Cultural Indicators in Antiquity,” *JSJ* 7 (1976): 99–112. Ilan suggests that spelling variations that differ from transliterations of the Hebrew are efforts to venerate the patriarch. See Tal Ilan, *The Western Diaspora 330 BCE–650 CE*, part 3 of *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 59.

2.7. Beelzebul (βεελζεβουλ)

The name Beelzebul occurs twice in P₄₅ (Luke 11:15, 18). Both times, the name is indeclinable and is followed by an apostrophe. In Luke 11:15, the name is followed by a τ, and in Luke 11:18, the name is followed by an ε. Again, the variety of these letters that follow the final λ of the word do not conform with any pattern that would suggest that the apostrophe is a pronunciation aid. Figure 10 below shows the name with the apostrophe and the words surrounding the name for context.

Figure 10. Beelzebul in P₄₅



Luke 11:15
εν βεελζεβουλ' τωι

Luke 11:18
εν βεελζεβουλ' εκβαλλει

2.8. Bethany (βηθανιαμ)

The name Bethany appears once in P₄₅ in John 11:1, and it is spelled βηθανιαμ. This spelling is abnormal, deviating from the typical spelling βηθανιας. The scribe's handwriting in this section of P₄₅ is particularly clear, so there is no question of the Greek characters used to spell this toponym. At the top righthand corner of the μ in βηθανιαμ, there is a marking that may resemble the apostrophes discussed above. The marking is drawn so that, at first glance, it appears to be a small hollow circle. It is possible, however, to observe a small space between what would be the first and final strokes of an apostrophe. As can be seen in figures 11 and 12, there is a faint horizontal line that breaks through the left side of the siglum and ends approximately three quarters of the way through the marking. We reason that this leaves the reader with two interpretive possibilities. First, this marking is a small circle that is different from the apostrophes discussed above. If this is the case, the marking is unique in P₄₅, and its meaning is elusive. Second, this marking is the same as the apostrophes discussed above. If this is the case, this may explain the abnormal spelling of Bethany in P₄₅ John 11:1, though the readability of this portion of P₄₅ and the inconsistent use of the apostrophe in P₄₅ make unequivocal conclusions impossible.²⁵

25. Other explanations of this spelling have been suggested, but without additional data these explanations are difficult to sustain. See, for example, the proposal

Figure 11. Bethany in P45



John 11:1
βηθανιαμ

Figure 12. An Apostrophe after βηθανιαμ



John 11:1
μ'

2.9. Isaak (ισαακ)

The final personal name pertaining to this discussion appears in P45 Mark 12:26.²⁶ The final κ of the name ισαακ is visible just before the following word και . To the top right of the final κ in ισαακ , a faint marking is visible (see figures 13 and 14 below). The readability of this section of the papyrus precludes the possibility of identifying this marking with confidence, but the spacing between the final κ of ισαακ and the initial κ of και is wide enough for an annotation to fit comfortably. Furthermore, the position of this marking to the upper righthand of the κ in ισαακ corresponds to the placement of the apostrophes discussed above. The final κ of ισαακ also denotes that this is an indeclinable personal name, like the examples of indeclinable terms discussed above. While the placement and appearance after an indeclinable Hebraic name may suggest that the notation is an apostrophe, the mark's size is also inconsistent with other apostrophes in P45. Thus, the notation may simply be a sense division, which often takes the form of a small dot between two words.

by Royse (*Scribal Habits*, 184) that the P45 scribe may have been influenced to write βηθανιαμ by the similar βηθλεεμ . In his estimation, it may have been the final mu in βηθλεεμ that influenced the spelling of βηθανιαμ .

26. Many thanks to our anonymous reviewer for bringing this to our attention. The name Isaac is only extant in Mark 12:26 throughout P45.

Figure 13. A Possible Apostrophe after $\iota\sigma\alpha\alpha\chi$



Mark 12:26

χ' $\kappa\alpha\iota$ \omicron θ

Though this final mark is difficult to identify, it bears mentioning because of how closely it parallels the positions of the apostrophes in P45. Like the apostrophes discussed above, the mark in Mark 12:26 appears at the top righthand portion of the final χ , following the indeclinable Hebraic spelling of the name $\iota\sigma\alpha\alpha\chi$.

3. Conclusion

In P45, an apostrophe appears after the names Joseph, Jacob, Shechem, Beelzebul, Abraham, Saul, Jerusalem, Bethany, and Isaac. Given the range of names after which this apostrophe appears and the limited material available in P45, it is difficult to offer a precise explanation for this particular scribal mark. Our survey does demonstrate, however, that previous explanations have oversimplified its usage and underestimated its patterned application in P45. Likewise, the explanation that the apostrophe appears after “some personal names” fails to appreciate the kinds of terms marked by the symbol.²⁷

The Hebraic spelling of all nine names is well-established. Thus, our identification of their Hebraic spelling in P45 simply draws attention to a common feature shared by all nine terms that receive the apostrophe. This apostrophe likely had a more specific function than we are able to ascertain from the limited data in P45. However, we suggest that the data in P45 do not support explanations that identify the apostrophe as (1) a marker of elision; (2) a pronunciation aid between specific vowel combinations; (3) a pronunciation aid between liquids and stops; or (4) a recognition aid appearing after foreign words.

The apostrophe in P45 appears most frequently following indeclinable personal names and place names that are spelled in a Hebraic style, though, as shown above, this pattern is complicated by Luke 9:31, 51, and 10:30, where Jerusalem appears with a Hebraic spelling and the presence

27. See comments in Roysse, *Scribal Habits*, 183.

of an apostrophe is impossible to verify. The appearance of the apostrophe following Beelzebul in Luke 11:15, 18 and Bethany in John 11:1, too, corroborates the pattern of the apostrophe following indeclinable nouns, though it is unclear whether the spelling of Beelzebul and Bethany are particularly Hebraic in style. Furthermore, the absence of an apostrophe following other indeclinable Hebraic words such as David, Isaac, Chorazin, Capernaum, pascha, Tabitha, and Israel complicate the claim that apostrophes occur after indeclinable Hebraic or foreign names.

Although the lacunose nature of P45 precludes definite conclusions regarding the function of the apostrophe, enough evidence is available from P45 to confirm that previous suggestions about the function of apostrophes in New Testament manuscripts do not explain the function of the apostrophe in P45. The fraction of the gospels and Acts preserved in P45 also prevents us from determining whether there was a connection between the apostrophe and indeclinable Hebraic nouns throughout P45. Therefore, we are able only to identify the occurrences of an apostrophe-like marking in P45, note a possible broad (though inconsistent) pattern of usage, and confirm that previous suggestions about the apostrophe's function do not explain the function of the apostrophe in P45.

