

”In” or ”About”?

Gospel of Thomas 52 and ”Hebraizing” Greek

Bentley Layton’s edition and Thomas O. Lambdin’s English translation of the Coptic text¹ present the *Gospel of Thomas* saying 52 as follows:

πεχαυ ναυ η̅σι νεφμαθη̅της δε̅ χουταυτε̅ η̅προφη̅της
αυ̅ωα̅δε̅ ρ̅η̅ πικρα̅ηλ̅ αυ̅ω̅ αυ̅ωα̅δε̅ τη̅ροϋ̅ ρ̅ρα̅ι̅ η̅ρη̅η̅κ̅
πεχαυ ναυ̅ δε̅ α̅τε̅τ̅η̅κ̅ω̅ η̅πε̅το̅η̅ η̅πε̅τ̅η̅το̅ ε̅βολ̅ αυ̅ω̅
α̅τε̅τ̅η̅ω̅α̅δε̅ ρ̅α̅ νε̅τ̅η̅ου̅τ̅ – His disciples said to him:
”Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel, and all of them
spoke in you.” He said to them: ”You have omitted the
one living in your presence and have spoken (only) of the
dead.”

In this article I would like to discuss the first part of the saying. The disciples state that 24 prophets spoke ”in” (ρη̅η̅η̅κ̅-) Jesus. What does it mean? In the first half of the article, I will survey the interpretations that have been proposed by various scholars up until now and try to show why these proposals seem to be unsatisfactory. In the second part of the article, I will offer my own solution to the problem.

At least three different interpretations of ρ̅ρα̅ι̅ ρ̅η̅- in saying 52 have been offered by scholars.

(a) The first interpretation I would like to discuss is the one of Tjitze Baarda.² Baarda suggests that ρ̅ρα̅ι̅ η̅ρη̅η̅κ̅ in saying 52 renders περι̅ σοϋ̅ or ἐπι̅ σοϋ̅ in the Greek *Vorlage*. While I agree with his thesis that ”[t]he rendering ’about you’ seems to be the

most appropriate, for it reflects the common early Christian idea that the Old Testament prophesy spoke about Jesus”, I do not find his retranslation convincing since he does not offer any argument why the Coptic translator would render περι̅ σοϋ̅ or ἐπι̅ σοϋ̅ with ρ̅ρα̅ι̅ η̅ρη̅η̅κ̅. Crum gives no example of rendering περι̅ with ρ̅ρα̅ι̅ η̅η̅-.³ As for the preposition ἐπι̅, Crum lists two Sahidic texts where it is rendered with ρ̅ρα̅ι̅ ρ̅η̅-, but only one of them, Wisdom 12:17, seems to be valid.⁴

ισχυ̅ν̅ γ̅αρ̅ ἐ̅ν̅δει̅κ̅ν̅υ̅σαι̅ ἀ̅πισ̅τοϋ̅με̅νο̅ς̅ ἐ̅πι̅̅ δ̅υ̅να̅μ̅ε̅ω̅ς̅
τε̅λει̅ο̅τη̅τι̅ κα̅ι̅ ἐ̅ν̅ το̅ι̅ς̅ ε̅ι̅δο̅σι̅ το̅̅ θ̅ρα̅σο̅ς̅ ἐ̅ξ̅ε̅λ̅ε̅γ̅χ̅ει̅ς̅ – For
on the basis of the completeness of your power you show
your strength when you are distrusted, and you rebuke
any insolence among those who know (you).⁵

1 Layton 1989, 1:72–73.

2 Baarda 2003, 10.

3 Crum 684b. One might add that περι̅ is never translated with ρ̅ρα̅ι̅ ρ̅η̅- in the Sahidic New Testament. See Wilmet 1957–9, 3:1468.

4 The first instance, Ps 105:29, appeared there due to a misprint, since it is actually an example of rendering ἐν̅ with ρ̅ρα̅ι̅ ρ̅η̅-. I should mention though that Ⲛ and few other witnesses read ἐπ̅ αϋ̅τοϋ̅ς̅ instead of ἐν̅ αϋ̅το̅ι̅ς̅. Still, we have no reason to suggest that the Sahidic translation of Ps 105:29 had ἐπι̅ in its *Vorlage*.

5 I altered the NRSV translation in order to present the text in a way the Coptic translator understood it.

ΚΟΥΩΗΓ ΓΑΡ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΤΕΚΘΟΗ ΕΤΕ Ν ΣΕΝΑΖΤΕ ΕΡΟΣ ΔΗ,
 ΖΡΑΪ ΖΝ ΤΗΝΤΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ ΝΤΕΚΝΟΜΤΕ, ΕΚΤΑΜΟ ΜΗΟΟΥ
 ΕΠΕΚΑΜΑΖΤΕ ΖΝ ΝΕΤΣΟΟΥΗ ΜΜΟΚ – For in the complete-
 ness of your power you reveal your strength while they do
 not believe in it, and you show your power among those
 who know you.⁶

Of all the numerous instances of rendering ἐπί with
 ΖΡΑΪ (or ΕΖΡΑΪ) + a preposition listed in the *Concordance du Nouveau Testament sahidique*⁷ I was able to
 find only one example where ἐπί was rendered with
 ΖΡΑΪ ΖΝ-, Acts 3:16.⁸

καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ τοῦτον ὄν θεωρεῖτε
 καὶ οἴδατε, ἔστερέωσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡ πίστις ἡ δι'
 αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ τὴν ὀλοκληρίαν ταύτην ἀπέναντι
 πάντων ὑμῶν – And by faith in his (i.e. Jesus') name, his
 name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and
 know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him
 this perfect health in the presence of all of you (NRSV).

ΔΥΩ ΖΡΑΪ ΖΝΤΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΜΠΕΦΡΑΝ ΠΑΪ ΕΤΕΤΝΝΑΖ ΕΡΟΖ ΔΥΩ
 ΕΤΕΤΝΣΟΟΥΗ ΜΜΟΚ ΔΡΤΑΔΡΟΖ ΝΣΠΕΦΡΑΝ ΔΥΩ ΤΠΙΣΤΙΣ
 ΤΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΟΟΥΤΥ ΔΣΤ ΝΑΖ ΜΠΕΙΟΥΧΑΪ ΜΠΕΤΝΗΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ
 ΤΗΡΤΝ – And in the faith of his (i.e. Jesus') name his name
 made him whom you see and whom you know firm, and
 the faith that is through him gave to him this health in
 front of all of you.

Wisdom 12:17 and Acts 3:16 appear to be the only
 two instances where ἐπί is rendered with ΖΡΑΪ ΖΝ-.⁹
 In both cases, the Coptic translators seem to understand
 the meaning of ἐπί with dative as "on the basis of"¹⁰
 and thus translated it with ΖΡΑΪ ΖΝ-. In neither of
 these cases, does ἐπί introduce the subject of speech.¹¹
 If the Coptic translator of *Thomas* had ἐπί σοῦ in
 the Greek *Vorlage*, it would be a very unusual and,
 more importantly, unmotivated decision to render it
 with ΖΡΑΪ ΝΖΗΤΚ.¹²

It should be noted that, according to Crum, Coptic ΖΡΑΪ ΖΝ- usually renders Greek ἐν. With the
 exception of Baarda, all scholars, including myself,
 assume that the same is the case with *Thomas* 52.

(b) Uwe-Karsten Plisch translates ΖΡΑΪ ΝΖΗΤΚ
 with "through you" and suggests that ΖΡΑΪ ΖΝ- in
 saying 52 has the same instrumental meaning as

ἐν in Hebrews 1:1–2. According to Plisch, "Jesus is
 addressed as the personified Wisdom of God who
 expressed herself through the mouth of Israel's
 prophets".¹³ I do not find this interpretation possible.
 The concept described by Plisch is present neither
 in Hebrews 1:1–2¹⁴ nor in *Thomas* 52.¹⁵ Indeed,
 if we translate ΖΡΑΪ ΝΖΗΤΚ with "through you", the
 disciples would state an opposite idea, that it was
 the prophets who spoke through Christ, not vice versa!

(c) A third option is that the prophets spoke "in"
 Jesus in the same sense as they spoke "in" the Spirit.¹⁶
 Of course, the idea that a true prophet prophesies
 ἐν πνεύματι, i.e., "by the Spirit", is quite common
 in early Christian literature.¹⁷ Still, I cannot remember
 any source that states that the prophets spoke
 ἐν Χριστῷ, i.e., that it was Jesus, not the Spirit, who
 inspired the prophets.

Moreover, in order to prove his or her case the
 proponent of this interpretation would need to "explain
 away" the wording of the quotation we find in
 Augustine. In *Contra adversarium legis et prophetarum*,
 Augustine quotes a heretic who in turn quotes a
 saying of Jesus from "apocryphal writings".¹⁸ Augustine
 says that he does not know where his opponent got
 this testimony: "hoc testimonium de scripturis
 nescio quibus apocryphis protulit". The quotation
 runs as follows:¹⁹

Sed apostolis, inquit, dominus noster interrogantibus de
 Iudaeorum prophetis, quid sentiri deberet, qui de adventu
 eius aliquid cecinisse in praeteritum²⁰ putabantur, com-
 motus talia eos etiam sentire, respondit: *Dimisistis
 vivum, qui ante vos est et de mortuis fabulamini.*

He says, "When the apostles asked him what they should
 think of the prophets of the Jews who were thought to
 have in the past prophesied something about his coming,
 our Lord was disturbed that they should still have such
 ideas and answered them, You have abandoned the living
 one who is before you, and you tell stories about the dead"
 (trans. Roland J. Teske).

The affiliation of Augustine's anonymous adversary
 is unknown. John Kevin Coyle suggests that he could
 be a Manichaean "who has either misunderstood
 some of his own religion's tenets, or has

consciously chosen to broaden their implications.”²¹ Coyle’s suggestion is a tempting one since *Thomas* was quite popular among the Manichaeans.²² But even if Coyle’s suggestion is not right it is still quite probable that Augustine’s opponent was familiar with *Thomas*. Not only the second part of saying 52 is close to the words of Jesus cited by Augustine’s adversary, but also the first part of saying 52, the words of the disciples, has much in common with the sentence preceding the quotation in Augustine (in both cases we find the “prophets” that are somehow related to Israel/Jews, on the one hand, and to Jesus, on the other). It seems that Augustine’s adversary paraphrased the text quite similar to that of saying 52, and it is noteworthy that according to this source the prophets proclaimed *de adventu eius (scilicet domini)*, i.e. “about” Jesus, not “by” or “in” him.

(d) The last option that I would like to discuss in this section was never actually proposed by scholars, but it might be appropriate to discuss it as well in order to complete the picture. It is possible that ραῖ ρῖ- indicates connection or intimate association.²³ In this case, the prophets spoke “in Jesus” in the same sense as Paul spoke “in Christ.”²⁴ This interpretation seems to be dubious due to the context of the saying. Jesus seems to be unhappy with the idea that someone else’s witness might be necessary for the evaluation of his divine status, not with the notion that the prophets had close personal relations with him (or prophesized with his assistance as in the previous case). Moreover, Paul always applies the expression ἐν Χριστῷ to the present-day believers-in-Jesus and never to the Jewish prophets, i.e., the figures from the past. Finally, the wording of

derlying the Coptic translation was.

- 10 See BDAG, s.v. ἐπί, 6a.
- 11 See LSJ, s.v. ἐπί, A. I. 2f.
- 12 Baarda (2003, 10), says that he is “not convinced by the retranslation ἐν σοί because then we would expect the Coptic preposition ρῖ-”, as in ρῖ πικραη. For my part, I am not convinced with Baarda’s argument. First, ρῖ- in ρῖ πικραη does not necessarily render ἐν, it could also render, e.g., εἰς. Second, the Coptic text of *Thomas* is very inconsistent. See, e.g., saying 74 where in one sentence we encounter two forms of the same Coptic word, ρωτε and ρω<τ>ε.
- 13 Plisch 2008, 133.
- 14 According to Heb 1:1–2, God is the one who spoke first through the prophets and then through Christ. Nothing is said about Christ speaking through someone: πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάσαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατέρας ἐν τοῖς προφήταις ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ. (NRSV: “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son”).
- 15 The idea of Jesus speaking through prophets is expressed in 1 Pet 1:10–11, in *Epistula apostolorum* 19, and in a saying quoted by Epiphanius: ὁ λαλῶν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, ἰδοὺ πάρεμι, i.e., “Behold, here I am, the one who speaks through the prophets” (Epiphanius *Panarion*, 23, 5; 41, 3; 66, 42; *Ancoratus*, 53). See Resch 1906, 207–208. Curiously enough, Epiphanius states that Jesus says this ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ. I found the reference to this saying in Gärtner 1961, 153–154.
- 16 Professor Antti Marjanen kindly drew my attention to this interpretation in a letter of 11 November 2011.
- 17 E.g., 1 Cor 12:3; Did 11:7–8; Barn 10:2, 10:9.
- 18 *Contra adversarium* II.4.14.
- 19 The Latin text is from Daur 1985, 102.
- 20 The word is in accusative, even though one would expect it to be in ablative. For this reason, a few scholars offer alternative translations of “in praeteritum”, e.g., “in Bezug auf der Vergangenheit” (Jeremias 1948, 64), “for the past” (Baarda 2003, 6). These alternative translations make the meaning of the whole sentence very obscure and, more importantly, are not necessary. In a large number of sources “in praeteritum” obviously means “in the past”, see, e.g., Plinius Secundus *Epistulae* X, 97, 2 (I owe this reference to Helena Panczová); Tacitus *Annales* XIII, 14, 1; Tertullian *Adversus Iudaeos* 13, 15. See also the sources listed in Blundell 1980–95, 1017. On the interchange of “in” with ablative and with accusative in Latin, see Hofmann & Szantyr 1997, 276–277.
- 21 Coyle 2009, 306.
- 22 The Manichaean sources never mention *Thomas*, but it is very probable that they have quotations from it. See, e.g., *Kephalaia* 163, 26–29 (cf. *Thomas* 5). The church writers report that the Manichaeans read a “Gospel of Thomas” and I do not see any reason to doubt that it was a version of the text from Nag Hammadi.
- 23 See BDAG, s.v. ἐν, 4c.
- 24 See, e.g., the expression ἐν Χριστῷ λαλοῦμεν (2 Cor 2:17; 12:19).
- 25 See, e.g., Meyer 2007, 146; DeConick 2006, 184; Moreland 2006, 82.

6 The Coptic text is from Lagarde 1883, 88.

7 Wilmet 1957–9, 3:1467. Sadly, there are many misprints on this page.

8 The Coptic text is from Thompson 1932, 8.

9 It should be noted that ἐπί is absent in some of the early manuscripts of Acts 3:16, e.g. in **S*** and B. See NA²⁷, *ad loc.* It is not clear what the reading of the Greek text un-

the saying we find in Augustine makes this interpretation as problematic as the previous one.

It is noteworthy that not only Baarda, but a number of other scholars as well felt that the context of the saying suggests that the prophets spoke "about" Jesus and thus translated the phrase as "all of them spoke of you".²⁵ However, none of these scholars offered any explanation for such an interpretation. The problem is that ραῖ ρῖ- actually means "in", not "about".²⁶ In what follows I will try to argue that ραῖ ρῖ- appeared in the Coptic text because the translator most probably failed to understand the expression in the Greek *Vorlage*.

One of the ways to deal with the obscurity of the *Thomas* sayings is to try to imagine what word or expression Coptic translator(s) might have had in the Greek *Vorlage*. Of course, speculation in this case is to a certain degree unavoidable, but since most of the *Thomas* sayings are present in a single Coptic manuscript, and since in certain cases there is no doubt that *Thomas*' translator(s)²⁷ or scribe(s)²⁸ made mistakes, this approach could benefit to our understanding of the text of *Thomas*. Since the meaning of the Coptic text of saying 52 is unclear, it is possible that the Greek text translated into Coptic had an ambiguous expression.²⁹ I suggest that the expression was λαλεῖν ἔν τινι.

As I have already pointed out, Coptic ραῖ ρῖ- usually renders Greek ἔν. Of course, ἔν normally means "in", but surprisingly enough, in the "translation Greek" it also might mean "about". According to Takamitsu Muraoka's *Lexicon*, in the Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible ἔν sometimes "marks the object of a discourse or thought".³⁰ Muraoka illustrates this unusual use of ἔν with eight examples: Deuteronomy 6:7; Psalm 1:2; 47:13; 118:15; Sirach 6:37; Lamentations 3:60³¹; Song of Songs 8:8 in LXX, and Daniel 10:11 in Theodotion's translation. One might add several other examples to the list.³² Moreover, ἔν is used in the same sense in Aquila's and Symmachus' translations³³ and probably in 2 Maccabees 1:7 as well.³⁴ It is noteworthy that we encounter the expression λαλεῖν ἔν τινι in at least four instances.³⁵

When we turn to the Coptic Sahidic translations of the verses listed above, we see that in most cases

ἔν is translated with ρῖ-.³⁶ In turn, λαλεῖν ἔν τινι is rendered with ρα.ⲗⲉ ρῖ- in Deuteronomy 6:7 and Psalm 118:46.³⁷

καὶ ἔσται τὰ ρήματα ταῦτα ὅσα ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαί σοι σήμερον ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ προβιβάσεις αὐτὰ τοὺς υἱούς σου καὶ λαλήσεις ἐν αὐτοῖς – And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart and in your soul. And you shall teach them to your sons and talk on [literally "in"] them (NETS).

ἦν νεῖρα.ⲗⲉ εἴρων ἦμοογ εἶοοτῆ ἦποογ μαρογωπε ρῖ πεκρητ αγω ρῖ τεκφυχη εἶρεκτσαβε νεκωμηρε εροογ αγω κεκακ εκερα.ⲗⲉ ἦρητογ – And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart and in your soul in order that you teach them to your sons and speak in them.

καὶ ἐλάλουν ἐν τοῖς μαρτυρίοις σου ἐναντίον βασιλέων καὶ οὐκ ἠσχυνόμην – And I would speak of [literally "in"] your testimonies before kings, and I was not ashamed (NETS).

αγω νεῖρα.ⲗⲉ πε ρῖ νεκμηῖτμηῖτρε ἦπεμτο εβολ ἦνερωογ εἶρωπε αν – And I spoke in your testimonies before the kings and I was not ashamed.

The translators of Deuteronomy 6:7 and Psalm 118:46 encountered an unusual expression λαλεῖν ἔν τινι in the Greek text and translated it with ρα.ⲗⲉ ρῖ-. I suggest that the same happened with the translator of *Thomas* 52, i.e. s/he rendered λαλεῖν ἔν τινι with ρα.ⲗⲉ ραῖ ρῖ- (there is no difference in meaning between ρῖ- and ραῖ ρῖ- in this case). The question remains, though, why someone would use such an unusual expression as λαλεῖν ἔν τινι.

To my knowledge, the expression λαλεῖν ἔν τινι meaning "to speak about someone or something" never occurs in Greek texts that are not translated from Hebrew.³⁸ Why would any author use such an expression? There are at least two plausible answers. The first option is that the author of the saying was deeply influenced by the Septuagint Greek.³⁹ The second option is that s/he intentionally used the expression. The disciples in saying 52 state that the coming of Jesus was predicted in the Hebrew Scrip-

tures,⁴⁰ and it is quite possible that the author made the disciples imitate the language of the Old Testament.⁴¹

To conclude, in this article I suggested that ρραι̅ ν̅ηητκ in saying 52 renders ἐν σοί in the Greek *Vorlage*. The Coptic translator found in the Greek text an expression λαλεῖν ἔν τινι. The preposition ἐν in this expression had an unusual meaning "about", specific to the translation Greek. Most probably the Coptic translator did not understand the meaning of the phrase and rendered ἐν with its usual Coptic equivalent, ρραι̅ ρ̅ν̅-. That is why in the saying 52 we read that the prophets spoke "in" Jesus, even though the context suggests that they spoke "about" him.⁴²

26 See Crum 1939, 684b; Steindorff 1904, 174–175 (§385); Layton 2004, 166 (§206).

27 A number of promising insights are listed in the commentary accompanying the new edition and translation of *Thomas* prepared by the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften. See Aland 1996, 517–546. For instance, they convincingly argue that ⲙⲛⲕⲱⲣⲉ ⲛ̅- in a meaningless phrase "that man is round about the lamb" (Lambdin's translation) in saying 60 is an erroneous (or rather too literal) rendering of the Greek expression εἶναι περί τι meaning "to be engaged in" (LSJ, s.v. εἰμί, C, IV, 6). See Bethge 1998, 48.

28 For instance, Harold W. Attridge suggests that in saying 6, the scribe mistook ⲙⲉ "truth" for ⲛⲉ "heaven", thus the Coptic text reads ⲙⲛⲉⲙⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ⲧⲧⲉ, i.e. "in the sight of heaven", while the Greek one reads [ἐνώπιον τῆ]ς ἀληθ[ε]ρίας, i.e. "in the sight of truth". See Layton 1989, 1:100–101.

29 I agree with the vast majority of scholars who believe that the Coptic Nag Hammadi text is a translation from the Greek.

30 Muraoka 2009, 232.

31 There is a misprint in the *Lexicon* in this instance (2:60

instead of 3:60).

32 Josh 1:8, Ps 71:6; 76:13, 118:16, 23, 27, 46, 47, 48, 78, 117, Neh 8:12, 13:7, Ezek 39:8, Job 26:14; Sir 14:20, 39:1 (all from LXX) and Dan 9:23 (Theodotianic version).

Most of these additional examples come from Muraoka's *Lexicon*, s.v. ἄδολεσχέω, διανοέομαι, λαλέω, μελετάω, συνήμι.

33 See, e.g., the translations of Ps 1:2 and 118:15 (Field 1875, 2:87 and 271).

34 See Schwartz 2008, 140. It is worthy of notice that 2 Macc 1:7 is also an example of translation Greek. According to Schwartz (2008, 132), the verse belongs to a letter that was originally written in a Semitic (Hebrew or Aramaic) language, hence the abundant use of καί. See also Lange 2007, 642.

35 Deut 6:7; Song 8:8; Ps 118:46; Ezek 39:8; all from LXX. In all these cases λαλεῖν renders the Hebrew verb לָבַר either in P¹EL or in P^UAL. In all cases except one (Ezek 39:8) the subject of speech is introduced by אֲנִי.

36 In Dan 10:11 ἐν is rendered with ρραι̅ ρ̅ν̅-.

37 The Coptic texts are from Ciasca 1970, 1:128 and Budge 1898, 128. There is no Sahidic text of Ezek 39:8. In Song 8:8 ἐν αὐτῇ is rendered with ⲉⲧⲃⲙⲏⲧⲉ. See Worrell 1942, 154.

38 I believe that there is no reason to suggest that *Thomas* was initially written in a Semitic language. The ideas of Nicholas Perrin, who thinks otherwise, are open to criticism. See Williams 2009.

39 In this respect, *Thomas* 52 is similar to the *Testament of Reuben* 3:8, where another "Hebraizing" expression, συνήμι ἐν τινι ("to understand regarding something"), is used.

40 There are two ways to interpret the "24 prophets". Most probably they represent the Hebrew Scriptures that according to 4 Ezra 14:45 (Syriac and Arabic versions) consist of 24 books. According to Flavius Josephus, all the Hebrew Scriptures were written by the prophets alone (*Contra Apionem*, I, 37). Another interpretation is proposed by Robert M. Grant and David Noel Freedman. They suggest that saying 52 refers to the Israelite prophets, not to the books. While *Vitae prophetarum* (the "Lives of the prophets") list 23 prophets, "Thomas reaches twenty-four by adding John the Baptist" (John the Baptist is mentioned in *Thomas* 46). See Grant & Freedman 1960, 153. Be that as it may, number 24 signifies completeness (see, e.g., Rev 4:4); thus, saying 52 speaks either of all the prophets of Israel, or of all the Scriptures written by those prophets and revered by the Jews.

41 One might even suggest that the expression λαλεῖν ἔν τινι was used in *Thomas* not just to imitate, but to parody the oddness of the translation Greek of the Hebrew Bible. A phrase about someone speaking "in" someone or something would most probably sound "barbaric" to a Greek speaker. It is worthy of notice that the second part of the saying might also parody the Hebrew Scriptures. According to Plisch, it is probable that the "prophetic perfect" in "you have spoken of the dead" is meant ironically. See Plisch 2008, 135.

42 Antti Marjanen discussed with me the problems that I deal with in this article a few times, and his critical comments were incredibly helpful.

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