Acts 17.28

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ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῴμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐμέν, ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ’ ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν. Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐμέν.

The great Areopagus speech in Acts has generated a considerable literature, and this particular verse has played a prominent role in the discussion. The following points may be taken as established: (1) The plural τινες τῶν...ποιητῶν is a normal Greek method of introducing a single and specific poetic quotation. (2) There is in fact only one piece of poetry cited here, namely τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐμέν= Aratus, Phaenomena (beginning of) verse 5. (3) Commentators who have maintained, because of the plural τινες, that the author of Acts is also quoting Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus, verse 4, ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐμέν, are wrong. (4) Those who, for the same reason, argue that ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῴμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐμέν is a poetic quotation are also wrong.

It is with these last words that the present paper is concerned. Are they a (prose) quotation or an original coinage on the part of

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1 For references see especially Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles (Philadelphia 1971, transl. from the 14th German ed. of 1965) 516, 524–25. I do not pretend to have read all the literature. As a matter of convenience, the author of Acts shall be referred to as Luke; no judgement on actual authorship is intended. For a good statement on this question see A. D. Nock in Gnomon 25 (1953) 502= Essays on Religion and the Ancient World II (Cambridge [Mass.] 1972) 827.


3 cf. cit. (supra n.2) 40–42. To the examples there adduced add Arist. Pol. 1252b 7ff διὸ φασὶν οἱ ποιηταὶ (there follows Eur. IA 1400); Theod.Met. Misc. philos. et hist. p.515 Mueller-Kisling καὶ ποιηταὶ δὲ φασὶν (there follows Mel.fr.adesp. 103 Page); Zenob. 5.100 διὸ καὶ εκώπατοντες αὐτῶν οἱ ποιηταὶ ἔλεγον (there follows Philemon fr.190 K.); see also Pearson on Soph. fr.1048 (for Et.Gud. p.142.46) and Ammonius s.v. διαβόστος, p.35.15 Nickau. Naturally, τῶν ποιητῶν τινες may also be used in a strict plural sense, e.g. Isocr. 2.3, 9.72; Diod.Sic. 3.65.

4 ἐμέν is a trivialization of Aratus' ἐμέν.

5 See further below, p.353.
Luke? And if the latter, was there a model for them? Opinions have differed. Eduard Norden, for instance, compared the language preserved in Arius Didymus, *Epitome* 26 (= H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* p.461.23–25): ο δὲ Χρύσιππος χρόνον εἶναὶ κινήσεως διάστημα... καὶ κατὰ μὲν τὸν χρόνον κινεῖται τε ἐκαστά καὶ εἶναι. He went on to conclude, “Wenn wir endlich noch die bekannten stoischen Etymologien erwägen: Ζεὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ πάσι δεδωκέναι τὸ ζην (Chrysippus bei Stob. ecl. 1 31, 12W.), καλοῦμεν αὐτῶν καὶ Ζῆνα καὶ Δία... ὡς ἄν εἰ λέγομεν δὲν ζῶμεν (Ps. Aristot. de mundo c. 7 401 a 13), wo also die Übereinstimmung mit der Stelle der Acta sich bis auf die Verbalform selbst erstreckt, so werden wir in ζῶμεν, κινοῦμεθα, ἐεμὲν stoische Begriffe zu erkennen haben, die aber vielleicht erst der Verf. der Acta zu einer formelhaften, feierlich klingenden Trias verbunden hat.”

6 Haenchen’s comment *ad loc.* is, “This anticlimax has not yet been found elsewhere. That Luke himself constructed it is unlikely: he would himself have maintained no such immanence of man in God as the wording of the text asserts. It must be a matter of a received Stoic formulation. ...Hommel (199) proposes a triadic Platonic formula.”

7 Before considering the question of a specific philosophical source, a more fundamental point should be made.

ζῶμεν καὶ κινοῦμεθα καὶ ἐεμὲν: It can be shown that this phrase, both in diction and in form, is idiomatic Greek of a familiar type. Formally, the words constitute a tricolon, an old and frequent pattern of the Greek language. Eduard Fraenkel has called attention to “...the widespread type of ‘tricolon’ in which the third member is expanded.”

8 The words that follow in *Acts* (ὡς καὶ τινε... γένος ἐεμὲν), with the final ἐεμὲν echoing the earlier ἐεμὲν, probably have reference primarily to the third member and in a sense may serve to make the entire verse a tricolon of this expanded type. But expanded or not, there is a formal tricolon here. As for the diction, it too reveals a very old and characteristic feature of Greek, the collocation of several verbs as an emphatic means of expressing

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7 Haenchen, *op.cit.* (supra n.1) 524 n.3. The Hommel reference is to H. Hommel, “Neue Forschungen z. Areopagrede Acta 17,” *ZNW* 46 (1955) 199.

8 Fraenkel on Aesch. *Agam.* 1243; see also the *General Index* to his edition of *Agamemnon*, *s.v.* τρίκαλον (vol. III p.841).
existence. Among the verbs found so collocated are εἶναι, ζῆν and κινεῖθαι (as well as other verbs of motion, e.g. ἔρπειν, περιπατεῖν). The evidence for this usage is quite abundant; examples which chance to occur in the philosophers are often quite untechnical Greek. I offer some illustrative material:

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II. 1.88 ἐμεῖς ζῶντος καὶ ἐπὶ χθόνι δερκομένου (cf. Od. 16.439); II. 17.447 πάντων, ὡσα τε γαῖαν ἐπὶ πνεύμα καὶ ἐρπεῖ (= Od. 18.131); Aesch. Pers. 299 ζῇ τε καὶ φῶς βλέπει; Agam. 677 καὶ ζωντα καὶ βλέποντα; Soph. Phil. 883 ἀνώδυνον βλέποντα κάμπτεοντ' ἐπὶ (tricolon); Trach. 234–35 ἵσχυντά τε καὶ ζῶντα καὶ θάλλοντα κοῦ νόσω βαρῶν; Eur. IA 1225 ζῶσαν τε καὶ θάλλουσαν; fr.372 τὰ Δαιδάλεια πάντα κινεῖθαι δοκεῖ | λέγειν τ' ἀγάλμαθ'; Antiphanes fr.221 K. ζῶντα περιπατοῦντά (τε); Aeschin. 3.94...τὰ δέκα τάλαντα, ζῶντων ἑφθανεν τ' ἐνεκα; Antipho Soph. fr.60 D.-K. ζῇ τοῦτο [sc. ἡ παίδευσις] καὶ θάλει διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου; Pl. Symp. 203ἐ θάλει τε καὶ ζῇ [sc. Ῥξος]; Resp. 369δ τοῦ εἶναι τε καὶ ζῇ ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ἐνδαμονεῖ ἄφω καὶ πόλις; Arist. Gen.Corr. 318b25 καὶ ζῆν καὶ εἶναι; Iambl. VP. 212 [=D.-K. VS 9] I.476.16] ἢ εἰς τὸ εἶναι τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὕτη θάλει τε καὶ ζῇν ἄφως λ ἔνεκα; LSJ s.v. φρονέω ἑπ' ...ζών καὶ φρονών ἀλιγενείς, ἑνεκα; Legg. 945δ ἢ πᾶσα αὐτщий ἐπὶ ζῶντα καὶ βλέποντα καὶ ἑπεξέλαθε σε καὶ ἐπὶ. See Fraenkel ad loc.

I conclude that, so far as diction and structure are concerned, the words ζῆμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἔμετ' could have been composed even by someone qui numquam philosophum audivit. Even κινούμεθα, which has often conjured up formal theories of Motion, κίνησις, is as old as Homer in a non-technical sense, II. 1. 46–47: ἀκλαγχείν δ' ἀρ' ἀκτοὶ ἐπ' ὁμοίων χωρισμένου, ἢ αὐτοῦ κινηθέντος. δ' δ' ἢ ἔκτη ἔνεκα. It is important to have thus established the roots of this language in normal, prephilosophical Greek. It does not follow that Luke had no philosophical source. For it is an easy matter to produce comparable

9 Touph conjectured χλωρόν τε καὶ βλέποντα on the basis of Hesychius: χλωρόν τε καὶ βλέποντα τοῦ ζώντα. See Fraenkel ad loc.

10 Λέγειν F. G. Schmidt: βλέπειν MSS.

11 So P. Oxy. IV 703: ὀρῶντων MSS. (More precisely, because of a gap, it is uncertain whether the papyrus had ζῶντων instead of, or in addition to, ὀρῶντων. The former is more probable.)

12 Cf. κινεῖσθαι in Eur. fr.372 (supra).

Clearly, whether from the viewpoint of Greek in general or of philosophic Greek in particular, ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζώμεν καὶ κινοῦμεθα καὶ ἐσμὲν is, in diction, phrasing and structure, established usage. This may show that Luke had a real feeling for Greek idiom, not that he has necessarily introduced an actual quotation here. Indeed, were it not for the fact that τίνες τῶν... ποιητῶν—another piece of idiomatic Greek—had, through a misunderstanding of the plural, conditioned readers to expect two quotations, it is doubtful whether anyone would ever have regarded the words in question as borrowed goods. For the thought-sequence itself strongly argues for the presence of a single quotation, as a paraphrase will make clear: “For in Him we live and move and have our being, as I can demonstrate even (καὶ) from your own literature: ‘For indeed we are the offspring of this one’. (29) Being therefore God’s offspring we ought not ...” The quotation from Aratus is introduced as a formal ‘proof’ of the preceding statement. Then verse 29 begins by paraphrasing the quotation and drawing an inference therefrom (γένος ὄν υπάρχοντες τοῦ θεοῦ...). If verse 28 had begun with a quotation, the καὶ in ὡς καὶ τίνες would have little point, and the plural τίνες, which cannot look backwards and forwards at the same time, would seem to be doing precisely that. Bad Greek and bad rhetoric.¹³

¹³ In the paper referred to in n.2, I argued that there were only three ‘classical’ quotations in the New Testament (Aratus in *Acts* 17.28, Euripides or Menander in *I Cor.*
The question of philosophic content may now be considered. Attempts to pronounce the words peculiarly Platonic are fanciful and may be dismissed. It is a widely-held opinion that ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζωμέν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν is specifically Stoic. Norden, as we have seen (supra), was a strong advocate of this position. His arguments are not cogent. (1) A doxographic handbook, in an account of Chrysippus' teaching about time, collocates κυνείτιμα and εἰναι. It has been documented above that such collocations are normal even in pre-philosophical Greek. (2) The "well-known Stoic etymologies" of Zeus derive the word from ζην and δίας; in one passage of the De mundo the etymology is explained by the words διὸ δὲ ζωμέν, "where the agreement with Acts extends even to the verb form." The derivations of Zeus from δίας (= Δίας) and ζην (= Ζήνα) are Stoic in the sense that the Stoics accepted them. They are neither original with that philosophical school nor peculiar to it. The etymology from δίας is probably alluded to already in Hesiod, Erga 2–3 and in IG 14.268 (Selinus, 5th cent. B.C.); both etymologies in Pl. Crat. 396β . . . διὸ δὲ ζην ἄεὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ζῶσιν ὑπάρχει. Other passages could be cited. The parallelism in διὸ δὲ ζωμέν ἐν φό ζωμέν fits a normal pattern and is nothing unique; the evidence has already been given. All this quite apart from the fact that there is not the slightest reference to a 'Zeus' etymology in Acts. What point would it have in a speech proclaiming to the Greeks the ἱερὸς θεός? Haenchen described the words in Acts as a "received Stoic formulation"; he considered it improbable that Luke coined them because "he would himself have maintained no such immanence of man in God as the wording of the text asserts." The argument is fallacious; if Luke had strong theological objections to the thought, he would no more have borrowed the formulation than have composed it himself.

Even though some of the evidence adduced is thus faulty, it would be foolish to deny the presence of Stoic coloration in the Areopagus

15.33, 'Epimenides' in Ep. Tit. 1.12). I repeat briefly here an argument presented in detail on pp.42–45 of that paper. Certain church fathers, Greek and Latin, appeal to these quotations in order to justify the study of pagan Greek literature by Christians. "Three quotations," as I there wrote, "from all of the New Testament . . . are not many. The probable inference is plain: If these Christian apologists for the classics had known of other quotations in the New Testament which would have bolstered their argument, they surely would have cited them. We must conclude that they knew of no others . . ." (p.45). This argument from silence still seems to me to have a certain force; it tells against the presence of a verbatim Stoic (or other) quotation here.
speech. Clearly Luke had some familiarity with popular Greek culture and philosophy and uses it to very good effect. That he was steeped in Greek philosophy cannot be demonstrated. The most tangible piece of evidence is the citation from Aratus, and that unfortunately is ambiguous: (1) Aratus was a Stoic. (2) The quotation comes not from a formal philosophical treatise, but from an extremely popular poem on astronomy. Luke did not therefore have to study philosophy to be familiar with the passage. Nevertheless the fact remains that he was able to produce an apt motto from a relevant Stoic context.\textsuperscript{14} εν αυτῷ is often taken to be proof of formal Stoic pantheism; this is the point of Haenchen’s reference to the ‘immanence of man in God’ in this verse \textit{(supra)}. The prepositional phrase need not be so interpreted; even Plautus, \textit{vir comicus}, can write “\textit{Iuppiter, qui genu’ colis alisque hominum, per quem vivimus’ vitalem aevom | QUEM PENES spes VITAE sunt hominum omnium eqs.” \textit{(Poen. 1187–88)}. Similarly here εν αυτῷ could be interpreted to mean ‘we are dependent upon God for our very existence’, an unobjectionable statement for a Christian. Compare Dem. 18.193 εν γὰρ τῷ θεῷ τὸ τούτου τέλος ἠν; see further LSJ s.v. εν 1.6. The closest parallel to εν αυτῷ ζωμεν may well be Christian, \textit{John} 1.4 εν αυτῷ ζωή ἠν. But the educated Greek reader would more likely take the words in a Stoic (pantheistic) sense. This ambiguity, which results in a sentence acceptable to both Greek and Christian, is no coincidence. Luke knew exactly what he was about and coined a phrase perfectly suited to his purposes. It is much less probable that he found ready-made a Stoic quotation of such theological flexibility. If this analysis is correct, Luke knew something of Stoic pantheism; it need not have been a great deal.

Consideration of Stoic accounts of pantheism leads to the same result. For the regular way of expressing this doctrine in Stoicism is to say that the deity pervades, is immanent in, all reality, not that man is immanent in God. Proclus in Plat. \textit{Tim.} p.297 Schneider [=\textit{SVF} 2.308.3–4] ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸς θεὸς . . . διήκει διὰ τὸν κόσμον καὶ διὰ τῆς ὕλης κτλ. Alexander Aphr. \textit{De mixtione} p.224 Bruns [=\textit{SVF} 2.112.29–31] . . . μεμίχθαι τῇ ὕλῃ λέγειν τὸν θεόν, διὰ πάσης αὐτῆς διήκοντα κτλ. Clemens Alex. \textit{Protr.} p.58 Potter [=\textit{SVF} 1.42.18–20]

\textsuperscript{14} For the aptness of the original context in Aratus, see M. Dibelius, \textit{Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte} \textsuperscript{3} (Göttingen 1957) 49–50.
... τούς ἀπὸ τῆς Στοὰς ... διὰ πάσης ὀλης ... τὸ θεῖον διήκευν λέγοντας. Diogenes Laertius 7.147 [=SVF 2.305.17ff] εἶναι δὲ τὸν μὲν δημιουργὸν τῶν ὄλων ... κοινὸς τε καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ τὸ διήκον διὰ πάντων ... Διὰ μὲν γὰρ φασὶ δὲ δὲ τὰ πάντα κτλ. Observe that δι’ ὄν τὰ πάντα (compare δι’ ὄν ζῶμεν etc.) is explicitly linked with the all-pervasiveness of the deity. Scholars have been too quick to see ἐν αὐτῷ as a specifically Stoic phrase and concept; it is not.

There is one further, and tantalizing, clue. In the Hymn to Zeus of the Stoic Cleanthes a phrase occurs so similar to Aratus’ τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐκμέν that many have believed that both passages are being quoted in Acts. That is not the case (supra), but it is not unreasonable to suppose that Luke could have known both passages. Here are verses 4–5 of Cleanthes’ Hymn:

ἐκ τοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐκμέν, ἰδίου, μίμημα λαχώντες μοῦνοι, δει εἰ ὅτε καὶ ἔρπει θνήτ’ ἐπὶ γαῖαν.

In verse 5 ζῶει τε καὶ ἔρπει is a collocation of verbs of the same formal type as in Acts; many examples have already been adduced. All three verbs of Acts have their counterparts in these two verses—ζῶμεν/ζῶει, κινούμεθα/έρπει, ἐκμέν. It is very tempting to see here the very Stoic material whence, in part at least, Luke fashioned his own original creation ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐκμέν. This is undemonstrable; these lines remain a valuable final comment upon our passage.

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15 For the most recent discussion of this still unsolved crux see G. Giangrande in AntCl 42 (1973) 181–84.