In 1913 Eduard Norden published his *Agnostos Theos*. The substance of his thought on the first sentence of *Acts* 17,28 consists in the following passage (p. 22): “so werden wir in ζῦτεν, κινούμεθα, ἐσμὲν stoische Begriffe zu erkennen haben, die aber vielleicht erst der Verf. der Acta zu einer formelhaften, feierlich klingenden Trias verbunden hat.”

In the same year the Commentary on the Acts by the Nestorian Isho’dad of Merv (c. 850 A.D.) was brought out. As he states in his introduction to this Commentary, J. Rendel Harris found Isho’dad’s reference to Minos to be a verification of his conjecture, published in the *Expositor* (October 1906 and April 1907), that the words ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῦτεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμὲν are actually a quotation from a poem *Minos* of Epimenides. This view was adopted by such scholars as Martin Dibelius and Kirsopp Lake.

Only many years after the publication of Isho’dad’s Commentary did Max Pohlenz come to devote the last pages of his article “Paulus und die Stoa” to arguments against the hypothesis that Epimenides is the source of *Acts* 17,28a, and it was in view of these arguments that Dibelius changed his standpoint. Further, Hildebrecht Hommel took up and expanded Pohlenz’s concluding words (p. 104): “Er (Lukas) hat den Vers des Stoikers Arat zitiert, den er vielleicht schon bei Poseidonios angeführt fand, und von diesem hat er den Gedanken ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῦτεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμὲν übernommen.” He quotes in particular a passage from Plutarch, *De tranq. animi* 20, 477 CD, which he considers to

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5. See Dibelius, op. cit., 187–188.
be derived from Posidonius and in which he indicates the presence of motifs parallel to Acts 17,28a and 29. His comment reads (p. 166): “Hier wird der Fundort Poseidonios deutlich nicht nur für die Formulierung des Gedankens von Leben und Bewegung und Sein des Kosmos, also auch des Menschen, in Gott, sondern auch für den ursprünglichen Zusammenhang mit einer wohlbegründeten Ablehnung des Bilderdienstes, wie sie in der Areopagredde sich ebenfalls gleich darauf findet (v. 29).”

Both Pohlenz and Hommel are in line with Norden in treating the words εν αυτῷ γὰρ ζωὰν καὶ κινοῦμεθα καὶ ἔσμεν as an offshoot of Stoic thought. But, while the former point to Posidonius, Norden does not specify the source in the passage quoted above; he emphasizes rather the originality of the threefold formula whereby Stoic material was converted.

What exactly is the formula in question? It is, in linguistic terminology, a trinomial7 with its three members interrelated by a complex semantic linkage. Let us call the words ζωὰν, κινοῦμεθα, ἔσμεν A, B and C respectively. Either the whole formula may be considered as an accumulation of near-synonyms, or only A and B could be taken as mutually complementary and together be a subdivision of C, or B and C may involve an opposition and together be a subdivision of A.

Although there can be arguments in favor of each of these interpretative possibilities, we adopt the first as being the simplest and the most inclusive. Our formula would be the figura per adiectionem known as synonymia,8 and the purpose it serves would then be that of amplificatio.9 No pantheistic meaning, as Pohlenz has it, should thus be attributed to it.

The Areopagus Speech contains another synonymic formula amplifying the concept of life:10 αυτὸς διδόως πᾶσι ζωῆν καὶ πνοῆν καὶ τὰ πάντα. Concerning this formula, Dibelius says11 that “the tautology (ζωῆ και

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8 According to one of the ancient definitions quoted by Heinrich Lausberg, Handbuch d. literarischen Rhetorik I (Munich 1960) 330: synonymia est quotiens in conexa oratione pluribus verbis unam rem significamus (Isid. 2,21,6). Our formula was certainly treated as a synonymic unity in such transpositions as καὶ πάντες οἱ ἐν Χριστῷ ζῶντες καὶ κινοῦμενοι καὶ δίνες (Gregory of Nyssa, In Ecclesiasten Oratio V, 684M).
9 With reference to this point, Lausberg says (loc. cit.): „das vom Sprecher Gemeinte wird durch mehrere synonyme Termini umrissen, abgesteckt und verschieden beleuchtet.”
11 Op. cit., 46