



Enoch, by Gary Smith

# A Strange Thing in the Land

## The Return of the Book of Enoch, Part 5

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We must understand that the *Spirit of God* tells men both what and when to write—"you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me" (D&C 9:9, 76:115), what records to translate—"Touch them not in order that ye may translate; for that thing is forbidden you" (Eth. 5:1, 1 Ne. 14:28), and the imperative behind the operation: "Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me to make these plates for a wise purpose in him, which purpose I know not." (1 Ne. 9:5.) "I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me." (W. of Morm. 7.) They are to serve "for the instruction of my people . . . and also for other wise purposes, which purposes are known unto the Lord." (1 Ne. 19:3.) The writings are placed completely outside of men's economy, and "no one shall have them to get gain . . . and whoso shall bring it to light, him will the Lord bless. For none can have power to bring it to light save it be given him of God." (Morm. 8:14-15.) As to the implements and instructions, "whosoever has these things is called seer" (Mosiah 28:16), and his power "is a gift from God . . . and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish" (Mosiah 8:13). All of which does not exonerate the seer from using his own wits (see D&C 9:7-8, Mosiah 1:2-4) and learning all he can of "the language of his fathers" and "concerning the records . . . that thereby they might become men of understanding" (Mosiah 1:2-3).

The economy of the books is no mere toy for the weak minds of men to play with; it follows a pattern that extends to other worlds. The books that men keep on earth are matched by *books kept in heaven*: Adam's heavenly Book of Remembrance is duplicated on earth by a Book of Life, "the record which is kept in heaven . . . or, in other words . . . whatsoever you record on earth shall be recorded in heaven. . . . It may seem . . . a very bold doctrine that we talk of—a power which records or binds on earth and binds in heaven. Nevertheless, in all ages of the world, whenever the Lord has given a dispensation of the priesthood . . . this power has always been given." (D&C 128:7-9.) What is above is projected and recorded below: "Thou [the scribe] shalt write for him [the prophet]; and the scriptures shall be given, even as they are in mine own bosom." (D&C 35:20.) And what is below is projected above and recorded there: "The alms of your prayers have come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and are recorded in the book of the names of the sanctified, even them of the celestial world." (D&C 88:2.)

The record is the source of all else, and from it come those writings that have ever been the *cornerstone of civilization*, a weak terrestrial reflection of the sublime. Aside from their holy offices, "they have enlarged the memory of this people," and preserved them from "incorrect tradition," thus

keeping civilization on the track. (Al. 37:8-9.) They check the corruption of the language and the loss of religion (Om. 17), and though a great leader like Zarahemla might be able to give "a genealogy of his fathers, according to his memory" (Om. 18), still "it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all of these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates" (Mosiah 1:4), without which, says Mosiah, "even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief . . . like . . . the Lamanites" (Mosiah 1:5).

The kings and leaders of the people, as the trustees of the heritage of culture and dominion, are the regular keepers of the record, "which is had by the kings" (Om. 11), handed down from father to son, with special preparation and instructions (Om. 1, 4, 9), along with the national treasures of which they are a part—the Liahona, seer-stones, sword of Laban; the whole thing is summed up in Alma 37:2-3 and comes down to our own time when the Whitmers were promised a view of these things (D&C 17:1). Others beside the prophet were encouraged to ask for the gift to look into "all those ancient records which have been hid up, that are sacred" (D&C 8:11), and "to obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms" (D&C 93:53), as the Prophet was of "all good books . . . languages, tongues, and people" (D&C 90:15), that they might not approach the sacred depository with vacant minds.

If one lightly assumes that Joseph Smith got these ideas from the Bible, where they are indeed implicit but by no means obvious, let us bear in mind that his contemporaries shrieked in derision when they heard him; and what scandalized them most of all was the idea of a second or third witness to place beside the Bible, in spite of "the divine law of witnesses." But the young prophet, far from simply running on about ancient plates and parchments, angels and seer-stones ("the jibberings of a crazy boy," writes one Harvard don), actually went ahead and produced the wonderful volumes of which he spoke—full-length texts, broad fabrics of immense detail, enough rope to hang any imposter twenty times over. If the hypothetical house of books is a wonderful creation, with what astonishment must we view the real and solid structure erected single-handed by the youthful prophet in the midst of countless distractions and afflictions?

#### *According to the Latest News*

The foregoing brief survey of a theme long familiar to Latter-day Saints and odious to others is to prepare our patient reader for a visit to the strange and wonderful edifice that houses the emerging Enoch literature, for it is built on precisely the same plan as that set forth by the Prophet Joseph to explain the holy books that he gave us.

We begin with Enoch keeping the *books of Adam*, recalling that the words and prophecies of

Adam were "all written in the book of *Enoch*" (D&C 107:57), who reminded his people, "the first of all we know, even Adam. For a book of remembrance we have written among us . . ." (Moses 6:45-46). Now according to the Zohar, "Enoch also had a book which came from the same place as the book of the Generations of Adam."<sup>204</sup> Rabbi Eleaser said that Adam hid the book that the angel Raziel, the purveyor of the heavenly secrets, gave to him, and that Enoch later found it, and that it was next delivered to Noah by Rafael and so passed on to Shem and hence from one generation to the next.<sup>205</sup> It is implied in Genesis 5:1-2 that the human race was fully launched when the Book of the Generations of Adam was inaugurated, since Adam and Eve were set apart (*barā*), and given a name and a blessing. A very old tradition equates true humanity with Enoch the record-keeper, a more complete man than Adam himself.<sup>206</sup> The early Christians were fond of the Book of Adam, according to Epiphanius,<sup>207</sup> and A. Vaillant, the authority on the Slavonic Enoch, maintained that the Christian Enoch book was not taken from Jewish sources but from an old lost Book of Adam and Seth.<sup>208</sup>

But everywhere Enoch is credited with being the scribe and transmitter par excellence, "the Righteous Scribe, the Teacher of heaven and earth, the Scribe of Righteousness."<sup>209</sup> The "Joseph Smith Enoch" brings forth the books, including Adam's, as a testimony and a witness to his generation (see Moses 6:46); even so, according to Jubilees "Enoch was the first to write a testimony, and he testified among the generations of the earth . . . he understood everything [cf. Moses 6:37, 7:67], and wrote his testimony" (Jub. 4:18f); and the Testament of Abraham reports that "God gave him [Enoch] the task to write down all the good and bad deeds that a man's soul would commit."<sup>210</sup>

In the secretarial line, preeminence goes to Enoch, "to whom the angels showed and taught all things both in heaven and in earth . . . and he wrote everything down" (Jub. 4:21), "the man of intelligence, the great writer, whom the lord took to be a seer of the life above . . ." (2 En. Intd.),\* who was commanded by God to "take these books which I have written back to earth to your children . . . that they shall read them and know me for the Creator of all, and distribute the books children to children, generation to generation, nation to nation . . ." (2 En. 88:6-9). Inevitably the saying went

\*Hereafter 1 En. will stand for the R.H. Charles translation of the Ethiopian Enoch (1912-13); 2 En. for the Slavonic texts edited by A. Vaillant (1952, above, n. 208); 3 En. for the Greek Enoch texts contained in both C. Bonner, *The Last Chapters of Enoch in Greek* (1968) and M. Black, *Apocalypse Henochi Graece* (1970). The text of the Gizeh Fragment (Greek) is found in the appendix of R.H. Charles's *Book of Enoch*, (Oxford, 1912). *BIM* refers to Hebrew and Aramaic Enoch texts in A. Jellinek, *Bait ha-Midrash* (Jerusalem, 1967).

abroad in the land that it was that man who "first learned and taught writing, and was deemed worthy to reveal the divine mysteries."<sup>211</sup>

What is behind these Jewish and Christian traditions? The idea that there was *such* a man as Enoch, the "Enoch figure" whom we shall get to know much better, is as old as the oldest human records. We go back to the proposition, clearly set forth in the book of Moses (6:5, 6:46; D&C 128:5), that, in the words of N. Tur Sinai, "the miracle of writing was one which the Ancients regarded as a gift from heaven."<sup>212</sup> It is apparent from the earliest records of the Sumerians that they "were not ignorant of the concept of a 'sacred book,' that is, of a divinely inspired, even dictated text, which contains the only correct and valid account of the 'story' of deity," according to A.L. Oppenheim, who further observes that the transmitter of the record according to the ancient doctrine, was not its originator, but only "a *kâsir kâmé*, 'one who collects/arranges/prepares the tablets' without interfering with the wording"—he is merely the transmitter of divine words; yet to function as such he himself must be inspired. He is "the collector of the tablets, but his information comes to him in a vision of the night," which he faithfully writes down in the morning.<sup>213</sup>

Such is the office of Enoch: "Bring out the books from my storehouse," says God to his angels in the Slavonic Enoch, "and a reed of quick-writing [shorthand], and give it to Enoch and deliver to him the choice books out of my hand" (2 En. 22:8). Thus instructed, the seer wrote down "the glories of the celestial throne on the one hand, and the endless combinations of the elements on the other." (2 En. Intd.)<sup>214</sup>

This introduces the cosmological element that is so conspicuous in the Enoch literature, Enoch being "the first among men that are born on earth who learned writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven." (Jub. 4:17.) God shows him "the Book of the Courses of the Luminaries of the Heavens." (1 En. 72:1.) The emphasis on cosmology, very prominent in the "Joseph Smith Enoch," was highly distasteful to the doctors of the Jews and Christians alike and was their strongest argument for rejecting it;<sup>215</sup> but the close affinity between the earliest writing and the signs of the heavens is undeniable.<sup>216</sup> Both among the Egyptians and the Chaldaeans, Clement of Alexandria reports, "writing and the knowledge of the heavens" go hand in hand;<sup>217</sup> the proper study of those apocalyptic writings so disdained by the doctors of the schools was, as H. Gunkel sums it up, eschatology, angelology, cosmology, and prehistory—all disturbingly tangible subjects.<sup>218</sup> The handing down of such records is nowhere more clearly stated than in the book of Abraham, 1:31: "But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs . . . God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the *creation*, and

also of the *planets*, and of the *stars*, as they were made known unto the *fathers*, have I kept unto this day . . . for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me." (Italics added.)

This literal-minded concern with the stars in their courses is a mark of antiquity and authenticity in the Enoch literature, as is the repeated reference to the heavenly *tablets*. "Observe, Enoch, these heavenly tablets," says the angel, "and read what is written thereon. . . . And I observed the heavenly tablets, and read everything . . . and understood everything, and read the book of all the deeds of mankind . . . to the remotest generations" (1 En. 81:1, see Moses 7:67). Here we meet the fusion of the heavenly and earthly books—are they one and the same?—as in the Joseph Smith writings. "I know a mystery; and have read the heavenly *tablets*, and have seen the holy *books* and have found written therein and inscribed regarding them. . . ." (1 En. 103:2; italics added.) "And after that Enoch began to recount [or read] from the *books* . . . 'what I have learned from the heavenly *tablets*'" (1 En. 93:1; italics added.) The impression is that the books were the earthly copies of the heavenly tablets: "the Lord has shown and made known, and I have read them in the tablets of heaven."<sup>219</sup> In Moses 7:67, "the Lord showed Enoch all things," and after a vision of heaven and earth he placed before the people "a book of remembrance . . . written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God." (Moses 6:46.) In this they recall the Tablets of the Law (Exod. 31:18), whose form M. Lambert traces to the Babylonian Tablets of Judgment.<sup>220</sup>

Indeed, "few religious ideas in the Ancient Near East have played a more important role than the notion of the Heavenly Tablets or the Heavenly Book";<sup>221</sup> "in the literature of early Judaism," in particular, they "play a considerable role."<sup>222</sup> The idea is at home in classical literature and hence it is assumed was taken over by the early Christians with their Book of Life.<sup>223</sup> In Rabbinic tradition, Abraham "being found faithful is declared a friend of God on the heavenly tablets, and every righteous keeper of the Covenant is registered in the same Book of Life";<sup>224</sup> the antiquity of this is supported by the Battle Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls: "And the covenant of thy peace nast thou engraved for them with a stylus of life, to rule over them in all appointed times of eternity,"<sup>225</sup> where the situation is closely parallel to one in the Book of Mormon, Mosiah chapter 5.<sup>226</sup>

Noah, after Enoch, reports, "The Lord has shown me and informed me, and I have read in the heavenly tablets, and I saw written on them that generation upon generation shall transgress . . ." (En. 106:19, 107:1); and after him Jacob, when "an angel descended from heaven with seven tablets in his hands . . . read them and knew all that would befall him and his sons . . . and he showed them all that was written on the tablets" (Jub. 32:21f). Next

"Moses yielded up to an angel the Tablets of the Division of the years . . . from the day of the creation to the time when the heavens and earth shall be renewed." (Jub. 1:29.) Thus the same tablets are handed down.

The books of Enoch contain information from all holy sources: "I Enoch will declare unto you, my sons, according to that which appeared to me in the heavenly vision, and which I have known through the word of the holy angels, and have learned from the heavenly tablets. And Enoch began to read from the books. . . ." (1 En. 93:1.) In the Slavonic

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version, Enoch, accompanied by two angelic guides, brings to earth "the books of hand-writing" to be handed down "from generation to generation." (2 En. 88:6-9.)

The heavenly tablets may be traced back as far as the Babylonian Tablets of Destiny: "These tablets express the law of the whole world . . . and they are truly the mystery of heaven and earth."<sup>227</sup> At the coronation, rehearsing the great creation rite of the New Year, the king was thought to be caught up into heaven, there to receive his copy of the tablets with which he returned to earth as his badge of divine authority.<sup>228</sup> On a like occasion in Egypt the monarch, according to the oldest of books, the Pyramid Texts, is hailed as "the King who is over the spirits, who unites the hearts—so says he who is in charge of wisdom . . . who bears the god's book, even Sia, who is at the right hand of Re."<sup>229</sup>

Back to the books of Adam for a moment, please. A very early Christian source reports that while God "was contemplating putting the breath of life into Adam, he took a book, and wrote therein

the names of those who should come forth from him and should enter into the kingdom which is in the heavens. . . . These are they whose names are written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world."<sup>230</sup> This is certainly close to the idea that the Saints, whose names are in the Book of Life, are "numbered among the people of the first covenant." (Morm. 7:10.) The members of the Qumran community are they whose covenant is "engraved with a stylus of Life."<sup>231</sup> After he had come to earth, Adam was given a Book of Knowledge by an angel sent to instruct him, giving him a knowledge of the mysteries—the ordinances—surpassing that of the angels.<sup>232</sup> According to the Zohar, Adam lost such a book upon leaving Eden, and when "he supplicated God with tears for its return . . . it was given back to him in order that wisdom might not be forgotten among men."<sup>233</sup> Another version has it that a holy book of seventy-two letters was given to Michael who gave it to Adam (those two are constantly being confused in the early writings), who based all his knowledge upon it.<sup>234</sup> When God ordered him to register all the animals, he "inspired Adam invisibly so that he could read aloud, and on the first tablets he read out the names of the animals as they passed before him." After Adam and Eve had thus been drilled in reading, "God transported his school to the Garden of Eden."<sup>235</sup>

Abraham, when he set up his model Garden of Eden at Hebron, also established a school in the midst of it;<sup>236</sup> in the preexistence Abraham had already learned the art of writing and was given the Book of Creation, but on earth he was not able to read it without assistance, and so his teacher Shem helped him at it.<sup>237</sup> Recalling that Abraham possessed "the records of the fathers" containing "a knowledge of the beginning of the creation" according to the book of Abraham 1:31, one is interested to learn that "the writings of Seth and Idrisi were handed down to the time of Noah and Abraham," Idrisi being usually identified with Enoch himself, but in this Mandaean source is called "the first after Enoch son of Seth son of Adam to write with a reed."<sup>238</sup>

The valuable Apocalypse of Adam claims to be taken from a book handed down from Adam himself, containing an exposition of the gospel of salvation but dwelling with particular emphasis on the baptism of Adam;<sup>239</sup> this is particularly intriguing since the wonderfully condensed and powerful presentation of the gospel plan in the Joseph Smith book of Enoch devotes a whole page to the baptism of Adam. (See Moses 6:51-68.) Beginning with the reminder that God "called upon . . . Adam by his own voice" (Moses 6:51), all the words of Enoch's great sermon in the Joseph Smith Enoch are direct quotations from Adam and the Lord, Enoch's own calling being to hand on "the commandments, which I gave unto their father, Adam" (Moses 6:28).

The Pistis Sophia claims derivation from the two books of Jeu, "which Enoch wrote while I spoke with him out of the Tree of Knowledge and from the Tree of Life in the Paradise of Adam."<sup>210</sup> As he was praying, "an angel appeared to Adam, saying, 'The Lord has heard thy prayer, and sent me to bring thee words of purity and much wisdom. I will make thee wise through the words of this holy book, from which you will learn whatever shall befall. . . . Whoever, even to the last generation makes use of this book, must be pure and faithfully observe what is written in it.'" etc. [See Moses 1:35!] Then Adam fell upon his face before the angel who bade him rise, stand up, and be strong, and receive the book from his hand, concealing its contents from the unworthy. Then the angel departed in a roar of flame.<sup>211</sup> Adam's prostration reminds us of the Joseph Smith version, when Enoch presented the Book of Adam, "written . . . according to the pattern given by the finger of God" before the people, and they "trembled, and could not stand in his presence." (Moses 6:46-47.)

This book of Adam story is also told in the old book of Noah, which traces the record from Adam and Enoch to Noah; it begins with Adam's prayer after the fall, when the angel came to instruct him and gave him the book, which Adam hid in the ground and which was later dug up by Enoch.<sup>212</sup> Another account tells how Enoch was shown in a dream where Adam's book was buried and how he should obtain it; he went to the place early next morning and hung around until noon, lest he excite the suspicion of the people in the fields; then he dug up the book, whose characters were interpreted to him by divine revelation, learned from it the fulness of the gospel, and was so set apart by his knowledge that he withdrew from the society of men.<sup>213</sup> C.J. Van Andel finds it significant that the Enoch writings of the Jews are not based on the Torah, but go back to unknown works of great antiquity dealing with heavenly tablets.<sup>214</sup>

(To be continued.)

#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>204</sup>Zohar, ed. H. Sperling, et. al. (N.Y.: R. Bennet), 1:139 (Pl. I, 37b).  
<sup>205</sup>A. Jellinek, Bait ha-Midrash (Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1967), 3:xxxii.  
<sup>206</sup>Eusebius, Praeparatio evangelica, 7:viii and 11:vi, in Migne, Patrol. Graec. 21:520f, 856.  
<sup>207</sup>Epiphanius, Adversus haereses, 1:ii, 26, 8, in Patrol. Graec. 41:341f.  
<sup>208</sup>Andre Vaillant, Le Livre des secrets d'Enoch (Paris: Inst. d'Études Slaves, 1952), p. x.  
<sup>209</sup>H. Gunkel, in Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, 1(1898):299.  
<sup>210</sup>W. Leslau, Falasha Anthology (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1951), p. 100.  
<sup>211</sup>Georgius Cedrenus, Historiarum Compendium, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), p. 17.  
<sup>212</sup>N.H. Tur Sinai, "Shitir Shame, die Himmelschrift," in Archiv Orientalni 17 (1949): 433.

- <sup>213</sup>A.L. Oppenheim, "Mesopotamian Mythology II," Orientalia 19 (1950): 155-56.  
<sup>214</sup>M.J. Bin Gorion, Die Sagen der Juden, 1 (Frankfurt, 1913): 100.  
<sup>215</sup>I. Henderson, Myth in the N.T., p. 16, congratulates contemporary theology in having risen through demythologizing above the quasi-physical ideas of Paul. According to Origen, the church rejects any involvement with a physical universe whatever, nothing in its teachings being kata physin; the trouble with the Greek myths is that they are tainted with the physical. Patrol. Graec. 6:1260. Arnobius says such questions as "What is man? What is the origin of the soul? Whence comes evil? How large is the earth?" etc., are completely irrelevant; "Leave these things to God and care for your soul!" (Arnob. adv. nat. 2:61.) According to an official Roman Catholic Handbook, whoever says or believes that the physical heavens have any relationship whatever to God and the divine orders of Cherubim and Seraphim is anathema. (H.J.K. Denzinger, Enchiridion Symbolorum, Rome: Herder, 1957, no. 206.) Whoever studies the Creation, the Chariot or asks what is above, below, or beyond or what will be in the eternities, "it were better for him had he not come into the world!" (Mishnah, Hag. 2:1.)  
<sup>216</sup>See our discussion in the NEW ERA, Sept. 1973, pp. 42-43.  
<sup>217</sup>Clemens Alexandrinus, Stromata, 1: 23, 153, in Th. Hopfner, Fontes Hist. Relig. Aegyptiacae (Bonn: 1922.), p. 370.  
<sup>218</sup>H. Gunkel, Zum Verständnis des Neuen Testaments (Goettingen: Van der hoeck, & Ruprecht, 1910), p. 29.  
<sup>219</sup>En. 106:19; C. Bonner, The Last Chapters of Enoch in Greek (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftl. Buchgesellschaft, 1968), pp. 84-85. Chapter 106 is not included in the translations of Laurence, being a fragment of the book of Noah. Since the Ethiopic Enoch was the first known, its chapters and verse numbers are standard for all Enoch texts; thus En. 106 designates the same section, no matter in what language it is found.  
<sup>220</sup>M. Lambert, "Que portaient les tables de pierre?" Revue des Études Juives 82 (1926): 45-48.  
<sup>221</sup>G. Widengren, The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book (Uppsala Univ. Aarskrift, 1950), p. 7.  
<sup>222</sup>Ibid., p. 28.  
<sup>223</sup>E.R. Bevan, Sibyls and Seers (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1920), p. 111. Initiates to Greek mysteries must record their inspired visions on tablets and deposit them in the temple archives, Pausanias 9:39.  
<sup>224</sup>A. von Gall, Basileia tou Theou (Heidelberg: Heidelberg Univ., 1926), p. 313.  
<sup>225</sup>IQM (Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light, etc.) 12:3, in Y. Yadin, Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 314-15.  
<sup>226</sup>Mosiah 5:5-15, where the acceptance of the Covenant goes with the general engraving and sealing of names.  
<sup>227</sup>Widengren, pp. 11-12.  
<sup>228</sup>Ibid., pp. 7, 10-11.  
<sup>229</sup>Pyramid Texts, No. 250 (267).  
<sup>230</sup>Timothy Archbishop of Alexandria, "Discourse on the Abbaton," in E.A.W. Budge, Coptic Martyrdoms (British Mus., 1914), pp. 482-83.  
<sup>231</sup>Yadin, 314-15.  
<sup>232</sup>Bin Gorion, 1:264, 266.  
<sup>233</sup>Zohar, 1:138.  
<sup>234</sup>Bin Gorion, 1:263.  
<sup>235</sup>Barhadshabba, "On the Founding of the Schools," T315a, in Patrologia Orientalis 4:352.  
<sup>236</sup>Improvement Era, Nov. 1969, p. 120.  
<sup>237</sup>Bin Gorion, 2:143.  
<sup>238</sup>D.A. Khvol'son, Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus (St. Petersburg, 1856), 2: 502-03.  
<sup>239</sup>Apocalypse of Adam 85 (79, end).  
<sup>240</sup>Pistis Sophia, 245f.  
<sup>241</sup>Bin Gorion, 1:261-62.  
<sup>242</sup>Jellinek, BHM 3, 14, xxxii.  
<sup>243</sup>Bin Gorion, 1:269.  
<sup>244</sup>C.P. Van Andel, De Structuur van de Enoch-traditie en het Nieuwe Testament (Utrecht: Kemink & Son, 1955), p. 19.