

When the first small groups of humans emerged out of Africa, eventually to populate the entire earth, they brought something with them. They brought *ideas*. These ideas spread worldwide along with their carriers, and they did so for the most understandable of reasons for they proffered hope that death could be beaten.

Religion, brought out of Africa, is present among all peoples everywhere. Mythology too appears to have come out of Africa and to have been there from the beginning, an initial constituent of our humanity. No human society, African or non-African, has been found lacking mythology. This too is understandable, for it was with mythology that our ancestors "told the skies" and it was from the skies above that immortality was to be sought.

The sky-gods of our ancestors had a secret. The secret was not omnipotence. Indeed, some of these gods were depicted as outright bumbler. But they were immortal, and some also had the ability to bring the dead back to life. Immortality was the secret of the gods everywhere and astronomy is commonly considered to be the oldest science everywhere. In historic times, Mercury, Venus, Mars and Jupiter would be the names of planetary gods engaged in eternal recurring cyclical *undying* existence.

And the calendar, which depends on the Sun and the Moon, would become the affair of the Church.

Small groups followed their stars north, then east and west, out of Africa. But most remained. Among them were the ancestors of the Bushman peoples of southern Africa and the ancestors of the Hadza of northern Tanzania.

*Mantis and his Friends*, published in 1923, introduced some of the fantastic animal-human characters who inhabit the mythological world of the Bushman. Mantis himself is a small green-colored troublemaker who interferes with antelope hunters and has a generalized penchant for turning stable situations into chaos. Yet he, and he alone in the mythology of the /Xam Bushman, possesses the ultimate mythological ability, which is to bring the dead back to life. Mantis has a proper name, /Kaggen, which, as is the case with "/Xam", is spelled with one of the non-alphabetical signs used to represent the diverse clicking sounds that characterize Bushman languages.

/Kaggen is a braggart, "My name is /Kaggen!", he proclaims, "No one equals me!". Yet he loses most of the many fights he provokes. But when he does win, he ascends and gloats, "My name is Penis! The man has done it!"

In common with the Greek Ouranos and the Egyptian Osiris, /Kaggen, who is Mantis-Penis, belongs to the mythological beginning.

According to Harald Reiche (1922–1994), who was Professor of Classics and Philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the "true identity" of a foreign deity could be recognized once its attributes were known. Reiche cited authors as different in style and period as Solon, Herodotus, Caesar, Plutarch, Tacitus, and the creators of the Babylonian creation epic, claiming that each one had indicated in one manner or another that he had the ability to make such identifications. If correct, this means that all the local and all the foreign gods known to these writers must have been derived from a single original tradition or pantheon. In similar manner, bilingual Sumerian-Eblaite dictionary tablets unearthed in Syria equate the names of deities in one language to names in the other, as we equate Hermes to Mercury, both wing-footed celestial messengers, or Zeus to Jupiter, both of whom "hurl".

The best-known "attribute" of mantises is surely the propensity of the female to decapitate the male upon mating. This again suggests identity with the Greek Ouranos who loses his sex organ while mating with Gaia, and with the green-skinned Osiris of Egypt, famously dismembered, his penis eaten by a fish.

The seemingly concordant attributes of Mantis, Ouranos and Osiris suggest that some of the imagery and traditions of the Bushman may have been preserved by later civilizations.