

"Five" in In Glory Like Their Star [Digest]

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 09 Oct 2001

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James Jordan — 09 Oct 2001, 16:24

At 04:20 PM 10/9/2001 -0400, you wrote:

The PIE for "five" is *penkwe, not *pan

The PIE for "all" is *pan or *pant.

I don't have my references here, but I believe the two are distinct.

-John

Hmmm. I'm no expert here at all, but I happened to be listening to a series of lectures on the History of the English Language from The Teaching Company, and the speaker said that "five" and "all" (pn and pn) were basically the same. That's what jogged my dim memory. I don't recall if that's because of the number of digits in a hand. At any rate, the real question is what Wolfe thought, given the way he likes to trade on etymologies, and this explanation is all I've come up with that begins to make sense. I guess somebody could ask Wolfe, but he'd probably just smile....

Jim Jordan