

TO PAN: The Sum of All Things

Post by “Don” of March 9, 2020 at 11:47 PM

I was just reading the *Letter to Herodotus* in working on my personal Epicurean outline and realized I had forgotten how much I love the word Epicurus (and other ancient Greeks) used for the universe:

τὸ πᾶν

Transliterated, this is:

tò pān or simply "**to pan**"

This is the same "pan" as in "panhellenic" or "pantheism."

I've seen it translated as:

- the sum of all things
- the sum total of all things
- the universe as a whole
- the whole of being

... among others, sometimes using several of these in the same text for the same word: **τὸ πᾶν**. It takes all those English letters for 5 Greek ones.

I think one of the reasons it brings me so much pleasure is its simplicity. A definite article: **τὸ**, and a simple 3-letter word: **πᾶν**. I'm tempted to capitalize it, as in **To Pan**. Let the trumpets sound!

At its simplest, it could be translated **The All** or **The Whole**. It could also be translated as **The Everything Everywhere**. The word really encapsulates for me the elegance and succinct nature of the original classical Greek.

Sometimes it's the little joys that are the best 😊

Just had to share.

Post by “Cassius” of March 10, 2020 at 5:24 AM

Very interesting! Have you thought about the equivalent Latin? What would that be?

Post by “Don” of March 10, 2020 at 6:34 AM

Actually, the equivalent Latin (and English!) term would be "universe". From the [Elementary Lewis Latin Dictionary](#):

ūniversus adj.

unus+versus, all together, all in one, whole, entire, collective (opp. singuli): provincia: civitas: mundus: triduum, three days together , T.: de universis generibus rerum dicere: ut eadem sit utilitas unius cuiusque et universorum: in illum tela universi coniciunt, Cs.—Plur m . as subst, the whole body, all men, the mass, everybody : universi in omnibus fori partibus: si universi videre optimum possent, nemo delectos principes quaereret.—**Sing n . as subst, the whole world, universe** : in eodem universo (i. e. in universitate rerum): universi corpus.— Relating to all, general, universal : odium: oratoris vis: dimicatio, a general engagement , L.—As subst n ., in the phrase, in universum, as a whole, in general, generally : non nominatim, sed in universum, L., Ta.

Post by “Cassius” of March 10, 2020 at 7:18 AM

Ah very good, and that is why I have always been familiar with use of that word to mean "everything," and find it frustrating that some segment of modern physics wants to segment that term and consider "multiverse" or something else as larger than the universe itself. Why don't these guys just learn their Latin (and Greek!)?? 😊

Post by “Joshua” of March 10, 2020 at 12:47 PM

I like where your mind is, Eugenios, and can add an amateur poet's ear. I would even omit the English article;

All.

Or in Latin;

Omne.

The usage has an interesting precedence, in the worship of Odin or Woten: All-Father.

And as a prefix, even the second L is dropped;

Al-

-together

-mighty

-ways

"All things emerge into one, and a river runs through it." -Norman MacLean

Post by "Elli" of March 10, 2020 at 7:37 PM

Pan is considered to be one of the oldest of Greek gods. He is associated with nature, wooded areas and pasturelands, from which his name is derived. The worship of Pan began in rustic areas far from the populated city centers, and therefore, he did not have large temples built to worship him. Rather, worship of Pan centered in nature, often in caves or grottos. Pan ruled over shepherds, hunters and rustic music. He was the patron god of Arcadia. Pan was often in the company of the wood nymphs and other deities of the forest.

From here derives and the word "paganism", a term that defines polytheistic religions. The word Paganism comes from the Latin pagani, meaning man of the field, of the countryside. Far from the villages - mainly in the woods - where the peoples of Europe were celebrating the gods of their ancestors.

Invoking Pána with the music band Deamonía Nympe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIOSvMCmriU>

Kaloúme ton Pána, ton megalodýnamo theó.

We invoking Pana, the mighty god.

Ton voukolikó Pána, pou éinai to sýmpan tou kósmou.

The bucolic Pana, who is the Universe of Cosmos.

Post by “Don” of March 10, 2020 at 10:41 PM

Good old Pan the goat-god! Now THERE was a pleasure seeker! The video did evoke ancient Greece. Thanks for sharing!

I was wondering whether Pan the god and pan "the whole" were cognate. It looks like they may not actually be connected surprisingly.

According to the Wikipedia article for **Pan (god)** (yeah, it is Wikipedia so follow up with its sources!):

Many modern scholars consider Pan to be derived from the reconstructed [Proto-Indo-European god](#) **Péh₂usōn*, whom these scholars believe to have been an important pastoral deity[5] (**Péh₂usōn* shares an origin with the modern English word "pasture").[6] The [Rigvedic](#) god [Pushan](#) is believed to be a cognate of Pan. The connection between Pan and Pushan was first identified in 1924 by the German scholar Hermann Collitz.[7][8] The familiar form of the name Pan is contracted from earlier *Παων*, derived from the root **peh₂* (guard, watch over).[9] According to Edwin L. Brown, the name *Pan* is probably a [cognate](#) with the [Greek](#) word *ὄπάων* "companion". [10]

And according to the [Online Etymology Dictionary](#):

pan-

word-forming element meaning "all, every, whole, all-inclusive," from Greek *pan-*, combining form of *pas* (neuter *pan*, masculine and neuter genitive *pantos*) "all," **from PIE **pant-* "all"** (with derivatives found only in Greek and Tocharian).

So two different Proto-Indo-European roots entirely: **peh₂* "guard, watch over" led to Pan the god and **pant-* "all" led to *το παν* "the universe"! That surprised me.

Post by “Hiram” of March 11, 2020 at 1:35 PM

Lucretius refers to "The Great All" when he describes the evils of war. He describes species of animals being driven mad in fury when used for battle, and at the end of the passage he explains that this may not have happened on Earth, but "may have happened in the Great All", in some other planet--so it turns out the entire scene (in Book V) was science fiction.

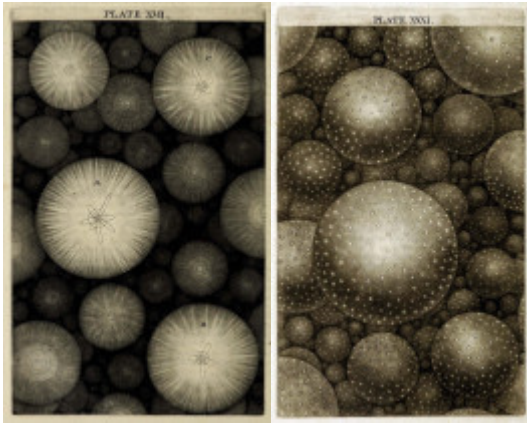
Post by "Cassius" of March 11, 2020 at 2:17 PM

Good catch as to that reference - here it is in Bailey, so we can find the Latin:

If ever they thought they had been tamed enough at home before the fight, they saw them burst into fury, when it came to conflict, maddened by the wounds, shouting, flying, panic, and confusion, nor could they rally any part of them; for all the diverse kinds of wild beasts would scatter hither and thither; even as now often the Lucanian kine cruelly mangled by the steel, scatter abroad, when they have dealt many deadly deeds to their own friends. [If indeed they ever acted thus. But scarce can I be brought to believe that, before this dire disaster befell both sides alike, they could not foresee and perceive in mind what would come to pass. And you could more readily maintain that this was done **somewhere in the universe**, in the diverse worlds fashioned in diverse fashion, than on any one determined earth.] But indeed they wished to do it not so much in the hope of victory, as to give the foemen cause to moan, resolved to perish themselves, since they mistrusted their numbers and lacked arms.

HMMM - I cannot find that in Munro, and i see that Bailey has it in brackets, so it may be something added in later. I will have to come back later to look at this.

Post by "Eikadistes" of March 20, 2022 at 12:24 PM



Post by “Cassius” of March 20, 2022 at 12:26 PM

Thanks Nate - this (the "universe" of everything as a while) is another topic we discussed in Episode 114 of the Lucretius Podcast recorded today.

Post by “Joshua” of March 20, 2022 at 3:55 PM

Quote

the "universe" of everything as a while

A good long while! ☐☐

We talked about that as well, ironically; in the Epicurean universe, things tend to endure. This allows us the reasonable expectation that change comes slowly, which is important for two reasons: it means (*contra* Heraclitus) that the pace of change is slow enough for things to remain explicable or understandable, thus evading a back-door into skepticism; and it means that you won't find Epicureans, like Millerite Christians, crowded onto mountaintops to get closer to heaven and the rapture.

Post by “Pacatus” of March 23, 2022 at 3:27 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

Actually, the equivalent Latin (and English!) term would be "universe". From the Elementary Lewis Latin Dictionary:

Universus is surely the most direct and proper translation into Latin. From *unus* (one) and *versus* (turned, as in "turned into"). [From etymonline.com and Wiktionary.]

But another (more expansive, less literal) possibility, it seems to me, is *mundus*, apparently a calque from the Greek *kosmos*, which carries the further implication of order (cosmos as opposed to chaos). In my own playing with the Latin (for my own contemplation as a total schlock), I have used *totus mundus*: the whole world.

"Latin *mundus* "world" was used as a translation of Greek *kosmos* (see [cosmos](#)) in its Pythagorean sense of "the physical universe" (the original sense of the Greek word was "orderly arrangement")." [etymonline.com]

Re *kosmos*: "Pythagoras is said to have been the first to apply this word to "the universe," perhaps originally meaning "the starry firmament," but it later was extended to the whole physical world, including the earth." (etymonline.com)

NOTE: I am taking some time to read through older threads on here, to stimulate my own thinking.

Post by "Don" of March 23, 2022 at 8:04 PM

I always get such a kick out of the fact that cosmos and cosmetics are directly related in etymology in that they "bring order to chaos."

Post by "Joshua" of March 24, 2022 at 12:12 AM

Also, lactose and galaxy!

Post by "Don" of March 24, 2022 at 8:41 AM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

Also, lactose and galaxy!

Exactly! 😄 Thanks for the reminder [Joshua](#) ! Ain't language fun!

Post by "Scott" of March 29, 2022 at 1:17 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

τὸ πᾶν

[Quote from Don](#)

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[Quote from Pacatus](#)

I have used totus mundus: the whole world.

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

kosmos: "Pythagoras is said to have been the first to apply this word to "the universe," perhaps originally meaning "the starry firmament," but it later was extended to the

whole physical world, including the earth.”

Well, what a romp! Thanks to Nate for bringing this old thread back to life! Else I would have never noticed it.

The above quotes and all the other discussion of this concept was a fun surprise for me. I don't know Greek at all, but this idea is one that is very significant to me. The English word "Universe" has become too "small" in some ways - as mentioned by Cassius I believe - what with all the "alternate" universes and multiverses, etc. So I started using the term "Ocean of Everything", by which I meant to capture ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING, including all those multiverses or whatever is out there. In this idea for me, there is nothing that is NOT captured by it. The physical, the intangible, and if there were gods or other "supernatural" things, those would still fall under this term. It's all part of the Ocean, for me.

I use this term in my daily meditations (which I modified a bit recently to make an attempt at my personal version of EP). For me the concept is important because this "Everything" or whatever it is called, is **Home** for all of us. We can never leave it, and we have always been in it. All of Time and Being fall under it. And for a while, we have been fortunate enough that some star dust came together into a patterned form we call being alive. And yet further, as humans, aware of our being here! What could be more amazing and fabulous than this, our Home? Isn't it *wonderful* to be Home? Always? 😊❤️

if we aren't every day in awe, we aren't paying attention

Post by “Don” of March 29, 2022 at 7:31 AM

Great post, [Scott](#) . Thanks for the comments. Your mentioning "home" made me think of another Ancient Greek word: Ο ΟΙΚΟΣ (ho oikos) which had a range of meanings encompassing home, the physical building(s), estate, and also all the members of the "family" (husband, wife, children, slaves).

The later Byzantine/Modern pronunciation of "eekos" gives English the eco- of ecology and economics.

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, οἶκος](#)

I think the Latin equivalent would be domus.

[Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, dōmus](#)

Post by “Scott” of March 29, 2022 at 10:54 AM

Very interesting, thanks for that, Don. I love how the concept of home is so expansive (even in English). It is at once thought of as the place I live, with my immediate family, but also wherever I feel I "belong". That can be quite large. Sometimes even as large as Everything. For me it was a kind of eureka moment when I one day felt that I "belonged" to the entirety of Everything. This was not an intellectual understanding - of COURSE I belong to "all that is". Obviously. It was an *EXPERIENCE* - that has never left me. And now I feel a great peace. I am unruffled if someone says there is more than our Universe, or Time and Being can stop and start again, or go away forever (to where?) or a god created the Universe, etc. I chuckle with good humor inside, because if there is a god, or some crazy ways the Universe organizes itself and flexes in unfathomable ways, or if it is all somehow intangible dreamlike stuff that only *seems* to be "physical", still all this is subsumed under the "All" that I call the Ocean of Everything. I'm Home.

I do not feel like I understand the physics of "all that is", which perhaps Epicurus DID feel due to his philosophy of physics, but I wonder if perhaps he felt a sense of belonging with it as I do because, one can, in different ways, have a coming to terms with it. A point at which the Everything is no longer alien. It's my place. It's Home. For both Epicurus and me, in our own ways, there is nothing "outside" of the Universe that can make it alien. We're Home!

Post by “Pacatus” of April 1, 2022 at 1:07 AM

[Quote from Scott](#)

if we aren't every day in awe, we aren't paying attention

Ah! Yes! (And yet I need to be reminded.)