

A Phono-Semiotic study into historical links of ‘/sʃɑ:n/’.

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Abstract

This article sheds a new light on the historical links and phono-semiotic interpretations of /sʃɑ:n/ sound in various languages of the world, particularly Arabic, English, Greek German, Persian, Urdu, Punjabi, and Sanskrit. By studying various signifiers and signifieds of this sound, the study enumerates and strengthens the hypothetical link connecting English, Arabic, and Indo-European languages. The study tries to find answers to three basic questions. (1) Where the sound /sʃɑ:n/ could have come from? (2) In what different forms does it spread in different languages? (3) How, semiotically it stands for the signified ideas it stands for? Using the lexical root theory as proposed by Jassem (2012a, 2012b, 2014a, 2014b) the study digs into possible cognates of the sound /sʃɑ:n/ and establishes a semiotic link of English, Arabic, and Indo-European languages.

Keywords: historical linguistics, phonetics, semiotics, Indo-European languages, lexical root theory.

1. Introduction

Historical linguists of the 19th century tried to find similarities between Arabic, German, and English languages (Haase, 2012). In this regard, Fellman (1978), Dundes (1992), Levin (1995), Daube (2000), and Bomhard (2011) are only a few to mention. Levin (1995) emphatically advocated that Semitic languages have great morphological and vocabulary sharing with Indo-European languages. He believes that Indo-European and Semitic sharing testifies that these language communities have been in intimate contact. He relates Arabic words قرن ، عين ، ، جمل with Latin *Caball*, and *Cornu(m)* and Old English *Eagon* respectively. Similar is the opinion of Sergent (1995) who strongly believes in the common origin of Ind-European and Semitic families. Historical linguistics is all about establishing the identity of a particular language. Language is an inseparable part of our social living. So, the identity of language is invariably connected with our social identity which ultimately is tied up with our self-identity. Knowing our language’s history and words’ etymology is as challenging and self-awakening enterprise as is the knowing of one’s own personality, ancestry, or history. Two things hold special importance in our lives; one is our native language, and the other is the land, the soil we belong to. Regarding the starting point of historical study, Whiter (1822) states that “Languages are formed from terms relating to the *Earth, Ground, The SOLUM, SOIL, CLAY, &c. &c*” (p.28). Hence, in order to know the etymological formation of a language, one can begin with the terms related to the Earth. The idea of this study germinated from a quest to know the meaning of my country’s name *Pakistan*, پاکستان /pa:kɪsʃɑ:n/ which is a combination of two words *Pak* پاک /p a: k/ and *stan* ستان /sʃɑ:n/. Its generally accepted meaning is *the land of the Pure*. The first word *Pak* پاک /pa:k/ means pure, good, and

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sacred (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2020) while the second word *stan* ستان /s̪tɑːn/, which is claimed to be a suffix from Persian language and means “a place abounding in” something (Hayyim, 1934, definition 2: Badakhshani, 2004, p.534), and it also means a place where somebody dwells (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2020). It is also considered of Sanskrit origin (Satyanarayana, 2017). The overarching idea that it stands for is the *land*. Even varying vowel and consonantal inflections of /s̪tɑːn/ as a sound-signifier do not render it inappropriate to be linked to signified ideas of *land*, or *place*.

In this research, *stan* /s̪tɑːn/ as a sound signifier is studied in English, Persian, Sanskrit, Greek, German, and Arabic, and its signified ideas are discerned. The sound and semiotic similarity helped in finding a probable cognatic link across these languages. The point that this study tries to make is that although generally *stan* ستان /s̪tɑːn/ is traced back to Persian language, however, the Phono-semiotic analysis relates it to English as well as other cognate offshoots in different Indo-European languages, which in turn have their roots in Arabic words. Besides reaffirming Indo-European links of languages, the paper establishes Indian-Arabic-European linguistic connections through the study of this particular sound /s̪tɑːn/ and what it stands for.

1.1. Research Questions

- (1) Where the sound /s̪tɑːn/ could have come from?
- (2) In what different forms does it spread in different languages?
- (3) How, semiotically it stands for the signified ideas it stands for?

1.2. Objectives

Objectives of the study include:

- 1- Finding the cognates by relating the/s̪tɑːn/ sound and its signifieds across different languages.
- 2- Discovering as to how English, Arabic, and Indo-European languages might be related in determining signifieds of /s̪tɑːn/.
- 3- Proving, through phono-semiotic analysis, that Arabic is the source of cognates in Indo-European languages.
- 4- Make a contribution to Lexical Root Theory and suggest some corrections.
- 5- Elaborate comparative method of analysis through using phono-semiotic approach.

1.3. Methodology

Phono-Semiotic comparative methodology has been adopted to determine what sounds stand for. In order to find the cognates, prefixes, and suffixes are stripped off of the lexical roots according to Lexical Root Theory as proposed and demonstrated by Jassim (2012a, 2012b, 2014a, 2014b). Beginning with -stan, the research studies the English word Stone’s phono-semiotic derivational cognates in other languages including Persian, Urdu, Punjabi, Sanskrit, German, Greek, and English, and finally discerned its roots in Arabic. Sound and semantic correspondence is a way to cognate identification. Phonetic transcription helped to establish consonantal patterns of words, whose sound and semiotic resemblance (i.e. letters and sounds standing for a similar idea) then established lexical roots and cognatic relations.

1.4. Note on Phonetic Transcription

For a better understanding of the readers, IPA transcription signs have been used for English, while, IPA signs, as adopted and described in the Urdu Phonetic Inventory (2015) by the Center for Language Engineering, University of Engineering and

Technology Lahore, Pakistan, have been used for transcription of Urdu, Punjabi, and Arabic sounds.

1.5. Phono-Semiotic Analysis

Apart from looking for the answer to the question as to which the oldest language in the world is, historical linguists are always keen to dig out the relations of languages through the study of etymological roots and cognates. When the scientific study of comparisons of historically related languages started during the 18th and 19th centuries under the influence of works of linguists like Sir William Jones (1746-1794) and Neogrammarians, the sound changes emerged as the most prominent area of study (“Historical Linguistics”, 2010). That is why Campbell (1999) is of the view that the most thoroughly studied area of historical linguistics is sound change. The sound is also the most important source for identifying cognates in languages. Cognates are words of similar etymological origin (Crystal, 2011). If words are cognates, it means those languages they are part of, have come from a common ancestor (Trask, 2000). The first step towards discerning cognates is to find basic phonic relations of various words in different languages. The second step is to look for semiotic similarities of what they stand for. In various languages, words may have similarities of sounds, but if they stand for the same or closely related signifieds, the cognancy level increases. Sometimes words with similar sounds do not have similar meanings. However, they are still considered cognates on the basis of the knowledge of semantic shift (Turchin, Peiros, Gell-Mann, 2010). For example, the English word *clean* and the German word *klein* are cognates but the German word means ‘small’. But what about a situation where it is difficult to determine semantic shift because of the shortage of evidence or a situation in which it has not yet been determined at all? In this situation, phonic and semiotic relevance is the only way to at least find a hypothetical relation until a real proof is found. When a word moves from one language to another, it may change sound and meaning. Change of sound occurs in terms of a letter’s position in relation to other letters in the word. Prothesis, Epenthesis, Anaptyxis, Excrescence, Elision, Apheresis, Syncope, Apocope, and Merger are a few such changes. Meaning is the signified that a particular sound or a combination of sounds stands for. While moving from one language to another a word may retain its signified or may adopt an opposite or metaphorical sense. Hence, for historical reconstruction, it is more authentic that a cognatic relevance is established only when a word resembles the original word phonically in consonantal patterns and also stands for the same or related signified. Whiter (1825) believes that in etymological studies, “cognate consonant” referring to the same idea should be focused. I call this semiotic relevance. When two words in different languages have the same consonantal sounds and stand for similar signifieds, they are likely to be cognates. In short, phonic, and semiotic relevance binds words in a better way in a relationship we call cognates.

In Phono-Semiotic analysis, the resemblance is sought on the basis of sounds of words which is further established through semiotic patterns of how those sounds are realised in writing. Although, Semiology already incorporates sound because Saussure (1959) designates a signifier as sound-image, however, Pierce (1931-35) introduced a triadic sign and incorporated a material object as a signifier standing for the signified. In my study, this materialized signifier is the consonantal reduction of letters, which is explained by Jassem (2012a, 2012b, 2014a, 2014b) who presented a framework of analysis that he called Lexical Root Theory.

1.6. Lexical Root Theory

In Lexical Root Theory, sounds are minimalized to consonants to find similarity because vowels are considered marginal due to their fluid nature. It is called *consonantal reduction*. Whiter (1822) calls it the “doctrine of Elementary Language” (p.i). He states:

Consonants were alone concerned in preserving and exhibiting the affinities of words, and that the Vowels were to be wholly removed from our regard, and even the rejected from our view. (Whiter, 1822, p.i)

Whiter (1822, p.55) believes that consonants must be focussed particularly in the etymological analysis of Eastern Languages. At another place, he elaborates that “the existence of *Cognate Consonants* containing the same idea or similar ideas should alone be regarded” (1825, p.a) in determining the affinity of words. He considers consonants as “*Elementary parts of Language*” (1822. p.33). Similarly, Jassem (2014b) opines that consonantal root determines real meanings, particularly in Arabic and this is what I will be applying to words of other languages as well. In this method, words are analysed by deleting affixes and then simplifying them to consonantal roots. For example, *explain* will be studied by reducing to its consonantal basics which is *pln*, and then looking for its corresponding meanings.

In this process, words are compared to look for consonantal movement and phonetic as well as semantic changes. Jassem (2014b) opines that sound change may occur due to changes in 1-place, 2-manner, and 3-voicing. Bilabial consonants become labio-dental which may turn into dental, and dental may move to alveolar, palatal, velar, uvular, pharyngeal, and glottal interchangeably. Manner of consonants may change stops to fricatives and affricates may become nasals or lateral whereas voiced consonants become voiceless or vice versa. While looking for consonantal movements one must also pay attention to insertion, deletion, merger, assimilation, and dissimilation. While analyzing semantic correspondence one must pay attention to singularity, multiplicity, split, convergence, divergence, as well as shift of meanings.

Form and meaning is yet another aspect of analysis to determine cognates wherein three aspects are looked for.

- 1- Words may have similar forms and similar meanings (*Pidar* in Persian and *Pita* in Hindi)
- 2- Words may have near similar forms and different meanings. (*Pater: father* and *Peter: Rock*)
- 3- Words may have different forms and similar meanings. (*Duva* in Hindi and *Two* in English)

Furthermore, words are studied in the light of historical facts as to whether there existed a relationship of languages being analysed or not. In this regard, besides others, two online sources have been consulted, including <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com> for Arabic and www.etymonline.com by Douglas Harper (2019) for English and other Indo-European languages. For Urdu, Oxford Dictionaries from <https://ur.oxforddictionaries.com> and Urdu Lughat from <http://urdulughat.info/> were major sources. For Punjabi language, the researcher depended on my personal knowledge being a native speaker of the language.

2. Literature Review

This research in hand, through phono-semiotic analysis, tries to determine plausible links of *-stan /sṭɑ:n/* in different languages including English, Arabic, and Indo-European, and analyse its signified concepts. Comparative reconstruction of words has been done in accordance with rules of sound change as delineated by historical linguistics as well as Lexical Root Theory as propounded by Jassem (2012a, 2012b, 2014a, 2014b). It merits a mention here, that although historical linguists focus on some pieces of evidence, however, the results and theories they deduce are probable ones as they talk about a process happening in times immemorial (Hock & Joseph, 2009). Similarly, in the current

research we may be deducing some probable results for which future research may provide evidence.

Besides Pakistan, there are at least seven countries namely Afghanistan, Hindustan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan which have *-stan* ستان /sṭɑ:n/ as part of their names. These countries have different national and local languages, which reflects that *stan* ستان /sṭɑ:n/ is part of the vocabulary of many different languages as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Countries' names ending with *-stan* and their languages.

Country	Phonetic Transcription	Language
1-Pakistan	pɑ:kisṭɑ:n	Urdu
2-Afghanistan	æf'gɑ:nisṭɑ:n	Pushto
3-Hindustan	hɪndu'sṭɑ:n	Hindi
4-Kazakhstan	kɑzɑk'sṭɑ:n	Kazakh
5-Kyrgyzstan	kɜ:rgɪ'sṭɑ:n	Kyrgyz
6-Tajikistan	tɑ:dʒɪki'sṭɑ:n	Tajik
7-Turkmenistan	tɜ:kmeni'sṭɑ:n	Turkmen
8-Uzbekistan	ʊz,beki'sṭɑ:n	Uzbek

Moreover, different regions in the world have *-stan* as part of their names like Sistan in Iran, Balochistan and Baltistan in Pakistan, Kurdistan in Iraq, Tataristan in Russia, Elbistan in Turkey, Gamlastan in Sweden, and Bantustan in South Africa to mention a few.

Rafferty (2022) believes that the suffix *-stan* /sṭɑ:n/ in Urdu and Persian languages is a marker of place. It is often described as of Persian origin wherein ستان /sṭɑ:n/ means *the land or place*. However, there is another explanation that *stan* is slightly modified form of Sanskrit word *sthan* स्थान /sṭhɑ:n/ as we find it in in Rajhistan /rɑ:dʒəsṭhɑ:n/ or with addition of final /ə/ we have it in Devasthan /d̪evəsṭhɑ:nə/ and Pujasthan /pu:dʒəsṭhɑ:nə/ (Satyanarayana, 2017). *Sthan* स्थान /sṭhɑ:n/ is also part of Punjabi language, for example, the most respected place of Sikh religion in Pakistan is called *Gurdwara Janam Isthana* which means the Gurdwara of *the place of birth*. In vernacular Punjabi, this word becomes *thaan* تھان /tʰɑ:/ (with final nasal sound) which also means *place*. In all these languages the words *-stan* ستان /sṭɑ:n/ or *sthan* स्थान /sṭhɑ:n/ has a meaning of the living place or land as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: /sṭɑ:n/ sound in Persian, Sanskrit and Punjabi languages.

Language	Suffix or Word	IPA transcription	Meaning
Persian	ستان	sṭɑ:n	Place, land
Sanskrit	स्थान	sṭhɑ:n	Place, land
Punjabi	تھان	tʰɑ: (with nasal A_A_N)	Place, land

Harper (n.a) mentions a hypothetical theory according to which *-stan* /sṭɑ:n/ comes from proto Indo-Iranian *sta-*. Persian word ایستادن /i:sṭɑ:d̪ɑn/ which means *standing on a place* and from this English word *stand* or even *station* is supposedly derived (Poojary,2017). Harper (n.a) also provides numerous words in different Indo-European languages which are based on *sta-*.

"Sanskrit *tisthati* "stands;" Avestan *histaiti* "to stand;" Persian *-stan* "country," literally "where one stands;" Greek *histēmi* "put, place, cause to stand; weigh," *stasis* "a standing still," *statos* "placed," *stylos* "pillar;" Latin *sistere* "stand still, stop, make stand, place, produce in court," *status* "manner, position, condition, attitude," *stare* "to stand," *statio* "station, post;" Lithuanian *stojuos* "I place myself," *statau* "I place;" Old Church Slavonic *staja* "place myself," *stanu* "position;" Gothic *standan*, Old English *standan* "to stand," *stede* "place;" Old Norse *steði* "anvil;" Old Irish *sessam* "the act of standing."

According to yet another theory, *-stan* is derived from the Tamil word *thalai* //t̪h̪əlaɪ/, which means “elevated place” (Thirumalai, 2018).

But when we look at and hear the English word *stone* /stəʊn/ and German word *Stein* /ʃtaɪn/, they sound pretty much close to *-stan* /stɑ:n/. Although *stone* and *stein* are different words in different languages, yet they resemble phonically except for the diphthong /əʊ/ and /aɪ/, while semantically they stand for the same thing. They have the same consonantal base as Persian and Sanskrit words and their syllabic reduction yields /t/ as initial and /n/ as final while /s/ and /ʃ/ is pre-initial. Is there a semiotic relation among the *stone*, *stein*, and *-stan* that refers to a place of living made out of stones? Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries (n.d) explain *Stone* as “a hard solid mineral substance that is found in the ground, often used for building.” Gawron (2012) describes the gradual change of the sound of *Stone* in Modern, Middle, and Old English respectively in the following manner as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Changing pronunciation of stone in Old, Middle and Modern English.

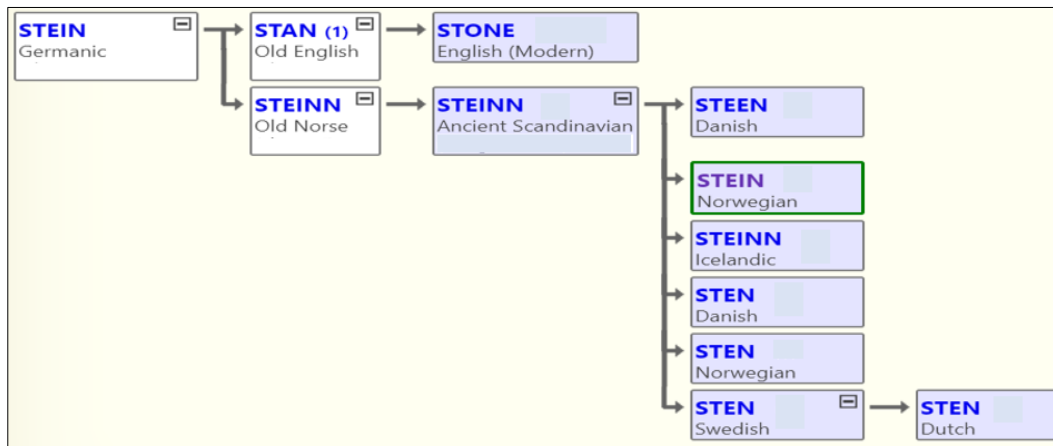
	Old English	Middle English	Modern English
Stone	/stɑ:n/	/stɔ:n/	/stəʊn/

It clarifies that *Stone* was pronounced as /stɑ:n/ in Old English and that equates it with the Urdu word *-stan* ستان /stɑ:n/. Now the question arises, as to where has this word *Stone* come from in Old English? Harper (2019) describes that:

Old English *stan*, used of common rocks, precious gems, concretions in the body, memorial stones, from Proto-Germanic **stainaz* (source also of Old Norse *steinn*, Danish *steen*, Old Saxon *sten*, Old Frisian *sten*, Dutch *steen*, Old High German *stein*, German *Stein*, Gothic *stains*).

It not only proves that *Stone* has been derived from the German word *Stein* but also shows that it spreads across many other European languages. Campbell (1996) draws the details in the following manner as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Stein in German and Other European Languages (Adapted from Campbell, 1996).



All these words with base root /s-tn/ carry the same meaning even when they are embedded as a part of the combination of words. For example, the Anglo Saxon word *eornan-stan* and Icelandic (Old Norse) expression *iarkna-steinn* mean the same i.e. precious stone (Wedgwood, 1859). Here *stan* and *steinn* refer to stone.

In German language, there is a plethora of words that carry this sound. At least 49 places and cities in Germany contain *stein* as part of their names. German cities Arnstein, Beilstein, Eppenstein, Falkenstein, Grebenstein, Holstein, Idstein, Konigstein, Lahnstein, Neuenstein, Pottenstein, Ramstein, Schauenstein, Taunusstein, Warstein, Zavelstein are only few examples to mention. Hence, *stein* becomes associated with places of living.

According to Campbell (1999, p.368), the similarity of places' names can play an important role in determining the relationship between languages. On the basis of this, we can say that the English word *Stone*, Persian and Urdu *-stan* ستان /s̥tɑ:n/ and German *Stein* stand for the same concept i.e. the place of living.

3. Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Consonantal Reduction

The consonantal reduction of all these words is /s-tn/. We need to keenly observe /s/ and /tn/ relationship in /s-tn/ sound. Is the sound /tn/ separable from /s/ and can it still refer to the same or related signified? The answer is, yes. For example, /tn/ sound in the name *Taunus* /təʊnəs/ has a /tn-s/ pattern and it stands for a mountain range in the north of Germany. There is something peculiar about /tn/ sound. Sound /s/ seems additional. From this example, we can conclude that the sound /tɑ:n/ from the initial meaning of stone or rock may also refer to high-altitude mountainous land which is a pile, a heap, a huge collection or buildup of rocky soil. Thus, the focal sound, which is a pivot, is /tn/ sound which refers to all these signifieds; a rock, a place, a mountainous region, etc. This sound turns into the English word as *town*, which means a place of living and we find it as /tən/ in the names of many many cities around the world like Arlington, Burton, Kensington, and Southampton. Campbell (1999, p.369) says that *-ton* in such names stands for *town*. Talking about the meaning of the word *town* and its cognate sounds Harper (2019) opines that:

Old English *tun* "enclosure, garden, field, yard; farm, manor; homestead, dwelling house, mansion;" later "group of houses, village, farm," from Proto-Germanic **tunaz*, **tunan* "fortified place" (source also of Old Saxon, Old Norse, Old Frisian *tun* "fence, hedge," Middle Dutch *tuun* "fence," Dutch *tuin* "garden," Old High German *zun*, German *Zaun* "fence, hedge"), an early borrowing from Celtic **dunon* "hill, hill-fort" (source also of Old Irish *dun*, Welsh *din* "fortress, fortified place, camp," *dinas* "city," Gaulish-Latin *-dunum* in place names).

It is worth noticing that both *Stone* and *Town* words of modern English are related to Old English from where they are linked up to the German language and ultimately thought to have emerged from a Proto-Indo-European language (PIE). Harper opines that *Town* emerged from "PIE **dhu-no-* "enclosed, fortified place, hill-fort", while *stone* emerged from **stoi-no-*. He writes:

PIE **stoi-no-*, suffixed form of root **stai-* "stone," also "to thicken, stiffen" (source also of Sanskrit *styayate* "curdles, becomes hard," Avestan *stay-* "heap;" Greek *stear* "fat, tallow," *stia*, *stion* "pebble." (2019)

It is at this stage that we need to look beyond the Proto-Indo-European perspective. Algeo (2010) believes that Proto-Indo-European and languages derived from it were spoken from "Europe in the west to India in the east" (p.51). However, in between are the great spans of the Arabian Peninsula. Proto-Indo-European might not be the source, rather themselves may be a derived version from yet another proto-language. Jassem (2014b) believes that "Indo-European languages are not only genetically related but also are directly descended from one language, which may be Arabic language in the end"(p.23). Jassem (2018) relates the sound /tn/ (after consonantal reduction) in the word *town* and its sense, to Arabic words طين /t̤i:n/ and وطن /wət̤ʕn/. Grammarians may regard وطن /wət̤ʕn/ as of different root in Arabic language but as a semiotician, I see it as an extension of what طين /t̤i:n/ stands for in relation to man's abode. وطن /wət̤ʕn/ stands for "the place of abode or residence of a man: a man's settled place or abode; his place of constant residence; his dwelling; his home" (Lane, "وطن", 1968). Jassem (2018) also relates *town* with the Arabic word طين /t̤i:n/, al-teen الطين / ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ in the same way. *Teen* طين /t̤i:n/ means soil, "loam, clay, marl; mud, mire" (Salmoné, "طين", n.d). Lane (1968) defines طين /t̤i:n/ as "clay, earth, or mud" which means that it refers to the same

thing that *stone* stands for. And thus, we have a sufficient reason to equate /tn/ in طين /t'i:n/ and /tn/ in *stone* /s-tn/. Lane gives two examples of usage of طين /t'i:n/ as يَوْمَ طَانٍ /jəʊmun t'ɑ:n/ and مَكَانُ طَانٍ /məkɑ:nun t'ɑ:n/ meaning thereby the day and land full of mud respectively. He defines Adam as ابْنُ الطَّيْنِ /ibn ət. t'i:n/ meaning thereby *the son of soil*. The way Adam is termed the son of soil in Arabic language, similarly human beings in general are associated with the land they come from. The reason for this is that things are related to their origin and man's origin is mud, soil, or earth. This connection with soil forms the basis of other expressions in Arabic language as we find that from الطَّيْنِ /ət.t'i:n/ (soil, mud, earth, land) comes the word الطَّيْنَةُ /ət.t'i:nə/ which means "Material substance considered as that of which a thing having form consists. b3: and hence,] (tropical:) The natural, or native, constitution or disposition." (Lan, "طين", 1968). When طين /t'i:n/ in form of stone, soil, mud, earth, land becomes piled up as a mount of *teen* (طين /t'i:n/) it becomes mountain. In Arabic it is called جَبَلٌ /dʒəbəl/. As from طين /t'i:n/ comes الطَّيْنَةُ /ət.t'i:nə/ (the base), similarly, from جَبَلٌ /dʒəbəl/, which means mountain (highland place made of mud, rocks, and soil), comes جَبَلَةٌ /dʒəbəl.la/, which means the origin, or the base.

الطين / ət.t'i:n/	soil, mud, earth, land	الطَّيْنَةُ / ət.t'i:nə	substance, origin, nature
جَبَلٌ /dʒəbəl/	mountain (made of mud and soil)	جَبَلَةٌ /dʒəbəl.la/	origin, the base,

Hence, stone, mud, soil, land, and earth, refer to the origin, the basis, or the place one hails from. Such is the association of *stone* with سَتَانٌ /stɑ:n/ and with *town* /tɑʊn/ and ultimately with طين /t'i:n/ and وطن /wət'ən/. The roots of *stone*, which came down to us in various forms including سَتَانٌ /stɑ:n/ and *town* /tɑʊn/, can be effectively traced to both these Arabic words طين /t'i:n/ and وطن /wət'ən/ on the basis of their phonic and semiotic resemblance. The consonantal reduction of all the words' sounds in the following Table 5 shows that /tn/ sound and similar or closely related meanings are shared by all of them. This resemblance of signifier and signified binds them into a relationship that we may call *cognate*.

Table 5: List of words, their transcription, consonantal reduction and meaning

Sr. No.	Language	Word	*English Transliteration/ **English word for the same expression	IPA	Consonantal reduction	Meaning
1	Persian/Urdu	ستان	*Staan	/stɑ:n/	/s-tn/	Place, land
2	Sanskrit	स्थान	*Sthaan	/stʰɑ:n/	/s-tʰn/	Place, land
3	Punjabi	تھاں	*Thaan	/tʰɑ:~:/ (with nasal A_A_N)	/tʰn/	Place, land
4	German	Stein	**Stone /stəʊn/	/ftam/	/sh-tn/	Stone, rock
5	English	Stone		/stəʊn/	/tn/	Rock
6		Town		/tɑʊn/	/tn/	Place of living
7	Arabic	الطين طين	*At-teen *Teen	/ət.t'i:n/ /t'i:n/	/t'n/	Clay, earth
8		وطن	*Watan	/wət'ən/	/w-t'n/	Living place, Homeland
9		فلسطين	*Palestine	/fɪlɪst'i:n/,	/fls-t'n/	Homeland of Palestinian people
10		تین التین	* Teen *At-teen	/tj:n/ /ət. tj:n/	/tn/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Fig. • One of the two mountains in Syria
11	Greek	Αθήνα	*Athena	/ə'θi:nə/	/tʰn/	Mythological deity of Athenians

12		Αθήνα	**Athens	/æθənz/	/t ^h nz/	Greek metropolis
13		Αθηναίος	*Athinaios **Athenian	/ə'θiniən/	/t ^h nn/	Belonging to Athens. Borne out of the soil. Son of the soil.
14		χθών	*Kthōn **Chthon	/xθɔn/ /θɔn/ /ʃθɔn/ /kθɔn/	/k ^h -t ^h n/ /tn/ /ch-tn/ /k-tn/	The Earth
15		Χθόνιος	*Kthónios **Chthonian **Chthonic	/xθɔniɔs/ /θəɔniən/ /θɔnik/	/k ^h -tn/ /tnn/ /tn-k/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the earth (“Chthon”, 2011) • Sprung from the earth (II) and native of a country (2). (Liddell & Scott, 1940)
16		αλλοχθόνιος	**Al.loch.thon	/əlx-θən/	/l-k-tn/	A large body of rock that has moved a great distance from its original location (DiPietro, 2012, p.343)
17		Τιτάν	**Titan	/tɪtən/	/t-tn/	Son of the Earth
18	Urdu/Turkish	خاتون	*Khatoon	/xɑ:tu:n/	/k ^h -tn/	Respectable woman, Lady,
19	Urdu/ Punjabi/ Hindi	چٹان	*Chataan	/tʃətɑ:n/	/ch-tn/	Mountain, hill, rock
20	Urdu/Persian	ستون	Stoon	/sṭu:n/	/s-tn/	Pillar (generally made out of stone)
21		ستوان	Sutwan	/suṭvɑ: (with nasal A_A_N)	/s-tn/	Upright, straight
22	Arabic	اسطوانة	Astwana	/ʌst ^ʕ vɑ:nə/	/s-tn/	Pillar
23	Urdu/ Punjabi/ Hindi	آستانہ	Astana	/ɑ:sṭɑ:nə/	/s-tn/	Revered place of saint

3.2. Other /tn/ embedded words and their semiotic significance

For further elaboration, I will discuss the spread of طين /t^ʕi:n/ and وطن /wət^ʕən/, as the hypothetical origin of *stone*, *stein*, *town*, and ستان /sṭɑ:n/, signifying diverse referents like mud, clay, earth, place of living, homeland, in yet another direction of the world where we find /tn/ embedded words. For clarity see Fig. 1.

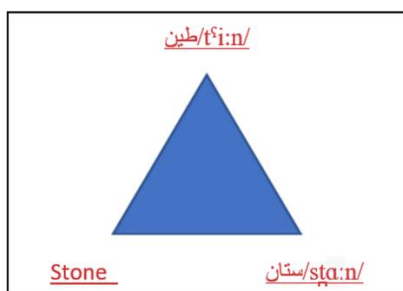
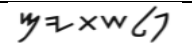


Fig. 1: Relation of stone with Persian and Arabic words

The first such word is Palestine. In Arabic, Palestine is written as فلسطين /filist^ʕi:n/, wherein we find an embedded sound of طين /t^ʕi:n/. Having established that طين /t^ʕi:n/

(mud, soil, earth) is linked with place of living which is also evident from the Arabic word *وطن* /wəṭʕən/ (homeland), one can look into the possible meaning of the word *فلسطين* /filistʕi:n/. There is a cogent reason for this. Despite all the probable evidences, the origin of the word *Palestine* remains shrouded in doubt and is a matter of debate (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d). There are different arguments regarding its meaning. According to one argument, mostly upheld by the western historians, the word *Palestine* or Arabic *فلسطين* /filistʕi:n/ is thought to have come from *Philistine*; a name ascribed to sea peoples who came from Crete during 12 BCE and invaded southern coast of today's Palestine, which was at that time already inhabited by Canaanites and Israelis. The place of living where these invaders established their habitat was termed as *Philistia*. Harper (2019) says that *Philistia* came from Hebrew *Peleshet* which means the land of Philistines. Benner (2017) determines the word as *פְּלִישְׁתִּי*, or “*p’liysh’iy*” which literally means “one of *peleshet* / *Philistia*.” The plural form is *פְּלִישְׁתִּים* (*peliyshitim*) and literally means “ones of *peleshet* / *Philistia*.” However, Benner (2017) as well as Sumner (1998-2019) opine that its root in Hebrew is *פֶּלֶשׁ* (*Pelesh*) (P-L-Sh). Benner (2017) says that *Pelesh* means “to wallow” or to roll. And *philistine* means “one who wallows.” It seems a kind of sarcastic epithet for people who keep on rolling like animals on the southern coastline of the Mediterranean Sea and are not permanent settlers. It is important to note that the activity of wallowing itself stands for rolling in *طين* /tʕi:n/ which is mud; a mixture of earth and water “الطينُ: التراب والماء المختلط” (Isphahani, n.d). The word *פֶּלֶשׁ* (*Pelesh*) also means “invader” (Lipshitz, 2017: Orr-Stave, 2017). In both cases, it refers to people who secretly enter into a land already populated by other tribes of antiquity. This could not have been a happy union. The native tribes call the newcomers as invaders or wanderers. Sumner (1998-2019) describes that Greek Septuagint (n.d.) (the earliest extant Greek translation of the Old Testament) translates *Philistine* as *allophyloi* or *Foreigners*. Rightly so, because those sea peoples were not local or *the sons of soil*. If this be so, then the word *Philistine* seems a binary way to define the *Other* in opposition to one's own *Self*. For clarity see Table 6.

Table 6: Information adapted from Mebust (2019), *allophyloi* also in Taylor & Eynikel (2009).

Paleo-Hebrew (From right to left)	Transliteration	Greek Translation	English Transliteration	English Meaning
 ← m i t s l p	<i>Ph'lish'tim</i>	ἄλλόφυλοι	allophyloi	<i>Foreigner, alien, from another tribe</i>

In earliest Hebrew Bible, written in Paleo-Hebrew, *philistines* are named as *Ph'lish'tim* and we can see that it comes very close to Arabic word for *فلسطين* /filistʕi:n/. Exchange of the last /n/ sound with /m/ sound is not strange as we see in the example of the relatedness of *khamsa* with Greek *pente* as suggested by Jassem (2014b). In this example, *kh* is replaced with *p*, and *m* is changed with *n*, whereas *t* takes place of *s*. Such a replacement of /m/ with /n/ sound is plausible because /n/ and /m/ both are nasal sounds.

Biblical Hebrew is archaic Hebrew which is referred to as “the speech of Canaan” in the Bible (Barton, 2002). It means that Canaanites were living in this land before the arrival of Hebrews there in 1250 BC. Canaanites were Arabs and spoke Arabic language, or proto-Arabic language. According to The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2007), it was a “Semitic language spoken by the Canaanites in the third millennium B.C.E., a very archaic form of the languages later known as Phoenician and Hebrew.” Prof. Richard Steiner (in The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2007) opines that revelations of the earliest Semitic texts in Egyptian Pyramid inscriptions “show that Proto-Canaanite, the common ancestor of Phoenician, Moabite, Ammonite and Hebrew, existed already in the third millennium B.C.E.” This shows that although Hebrew is another Semitic language, and both Hebrew and Arabic are cognate languages, however, Arabic of Canaanites

predates Hebrew. Professor Moshe Bar-Asher (in The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2007) reiterates that Proto-Canaanite is the earliest Semitic language. An example of this is that one thousand years before the arrival of Hebrews, Canaanites had built a temple for the god of fertility *Lachma*, and named it as Bait *Lachma* (Loch, 2005, p.51) or *Beth le-hem* (Potts, 1922, p.55), which we know as بيت اللحم or Bethlehem. *Bait* or *Beth* is an Arabic word for house. Besides being a name for a god, *Lachma* is also close to an Arabic word لُقْمَةٌ, transliterated into English as *Luqma* /lʊkma:/ which means "A morsel, gobbet, or mouthful: what is [swallowed, or] eaten quickly, at once, of bread" (Lane. "لُقْمَةٌ", 1968). Because of this word, that particular place in Palestine is also called the house of bread (Potts, 1922, p.55). Hence, the language of Canaan must be Arabic or Proto-Arabic which also influenced Hebrew of later stage. When in 1000 BCE, the first capital of the Jewish kingdom was established, it was called *Yerushalayim* in Hebrew language as described by Harper ("Jerusalem", 2019). However, it is in reality an Arabic word. Al-Bhansi (2009) deciphers it as a combination of two words أُر /ʊr/ which means مدينة /mə'dɪnə/ (city) and شَلِيم /ʃəlɪm/, which means سلام /sa'la:m/ (peace). Hence, *Jerusalem* means the city of peace. However, in my opinion, it may also be an exact Arabic phrase دار السلام /dɑr əl- sɑ'la:m/ wherein the /d/ sound dropped. Hence, the complete phrase means *the house of Islam or the house of peace*. In this perspective, we can say that, in a land where Canaanite Arabic language was so rampant, فلسطين /filist'i:n/ may also be an Arabic word of reference used by those Canaanites and Hebrews for those sea people who were non-native foreigners. Such an effort to define the *Other* in a binary way could have resulted in expressions like ليس مواطنين /leisə mvat'i:ni:n/ or ليس طينيين /leisə t'i:ni:n/ meaning thereby that they are *not son of soil* and are rather *allophyloi* as translated by Septuagint or known as *the other group or foreigners*, whose name we find as *Ph'lish tim* in the Hebrew Bible (Roy, 1846, p.579).

Another argument mostly supported by Arab historians is that فلسطين /filist'i:n/ is a combination of الفلّس /əl-fils/ (coins) and الطين /ət'i:ni:n/ (mud). It means that the people of Palestine, known as Canaanites Arabs before the arrival of the sea peoples, were land cultivators, who became rich traders and were the first to deal in *fls* or coins (Abu Darbih, 2015): Muhammad, 2018).

According to yet another theory, propounded by Robbins (as cited in Mark, 2018), Palestine is named after a deity called *Pale*, while *Stine* in Palestine means the *land* and the whole word Palestine means *the land of Pale*. *Stine* سطين /st'i:n/ seems to be the seminal ancestor of the German word *stein* /ʃta:n/. In the light of our discussion we may reiterate the point that stone, mud, soil, land, and earth, refer to the place of origin, the place one hails from, and in this way Urdu word ستان /sʔɑ:n/, Punjabi word ستھان /sʔhɑ:n/ can be linked to *stone*, *stein*, *town*, which in turn can be traced back to طين /t'i:n/ and وطن /wət'ən/ as Jassem (2018) has described.

But further clarification is required when we find that /tʃn/ or /tʰn/ sound, as it appears in Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit, and Punjabi words (refer to Table 2), initiates from phoneme ت /tʃ/ and not from phoneme ط. The sound ط is a pharyngealized phoneme and Dickins opines that Sibawayh سيوييه, in his seminal work on Arabic Linguistics, categorizes it among emphatic consonants (as cited in Brierly, Sawalha, Heselwood, & Atwell, 2016). It is represented in IPA as /tʃ/ (Brierly, et al. 2016, p.173). Similarly, when we look at the Paleo-Hebrew word “𐤔𐤕𐤁𐤌” for Palestinian people, it uses the letter 𐤔 /tʃ/ and not the letter 𐤕 /tʃ/ which are letters ت and ط respectively in Arabic language. Hence, طين /tʃi:n/ cannot be regarded as the true ancestor of the word فلسطين /filist'i:n/ etymologically. It is also important to note that the English language does not have both these sounds and it represents both of them with the conventional /t/ sound which we find in *stone* and *stein* but not in ستان /sʔɑ:n/ which has a softer ت /tʃ/ sound in Arabic, Urdu and Persian languages like letter 𐤔 /tʃ/ of Paleo Hebrew. Although one cannot rule out a semiotic replacement of letter 𐤕 with letter 𐤔 because of the resemblance of both these signs, however, before concluding some final judgment I need to analyze another word in

Arabic language which is التين / ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ or simply تين /t̤i:n/, which uses /t̤/ sound and whose consonantal reduction is also /tn/. Arabic word التين / ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ means fig: a fruit. But according to various sources including Mufradat ul Quran by Farahi, Mu'jam Al-Buldan by Yaqut al-Hamawi, Arabic English Lexicon by Edward William Lane, Taj al-Lugha wa Sihah al-Arabiya by Ismail bin Hammad al-Jawhari, Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran by Raghīb al-Isfahani, Majma Bihar al-Anwar fi Gharīb al-Tanzil wa Lataif al-Akhbar by Muhammad al-Fattini, Mukhtar al-Sihah by Zayan a-Din al-Razi, Almuḥkam wal-Muḥit al-Azam by Ibn Sida al-Mursi, Lisan al-Arab by Ibn Manzur, Taj ul-Arus fi Jawahir al-Qamus by Murtaza al-Zabaidi, all of them agree that التين /ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ is also a mountain in Syria (Arabiclexicon, “تین”, 2019). Lane, (1968), while defining تين /t̤i:n/, quotes al-Jawhari, Ibn Sida, and many others’ explanations about Quranic verses وَالسَّيْنِ وَالرَّيْثُونَ (Quran 95:1), which they believe are “two mountains of Syria...that produce the two fruit thus named”. Mountain التين / ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ is described to be extending from Hulwán, to Hemdán while الرَّيْثُونَ /zartu:n / is another mountain of Syria. Ibn Sida,(as cited in Lane, “تین”, 1968) besides describing them as mountains in Syria, also opines that التين / ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ refers to Damascus, and الرَّيْثُونَ /zartu:n / means Jerusalem or two mosques therein. Al-Zabaidi (2020) is of the view that التين /ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ may be the mountain of *Teena* / t̤i:na:/ which is like saying the mount *Sina* or the mount *Saini*. He narrates “طُورُ تَيْنَاءَ، بِالْفَتْحِ وَالكَسْرِ. وَالْمَدِّ وَالْقَصْرِ: بِمَعْنَى طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ”. Farahi (2019) describes it as a place in the north of Arabia. Here the question arises that why this word التين / ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ has become so much associated with a mountain and how this mountain became so important for mankind? On the basis of the narration of Torah and Quran, Farahi (2019) propounds that human beings spread on earth after prophet Noah (AS) and التين / ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ must have been home for the sons of Adam (AS) for a long time. I believe that semiotic signification of التين / ʔt̤. t̤i:n/ as a *place of living*, as *homeland* became so powerfully associated in human consciousness that from thenceforth mount became *mount+teen*, whose resonance we find in the English word *mountain*. Hence, whether it be ستان /st̤ɑ:n/ of Urdu and Persian, ستهان /st̤hɑ:n/ of Sanskrit, تهاں /t̤hɑ: / of Punjabi, *Stein* of German, or *Stone* and *Town* of English, they are intrinsically linked to Arabic sounds طين /t̤i:n/ or تين /t̤i:n/ not only phonically but also semiotically because in one way or the other all of them stand for homeland, earth, the soil one belongs to, or to be still more clear, the earthen existence of man. طين /t̤i:n/ and تين /t̤i:n/, appear to be etymological ancestors of *stone* and it is possible that two closely related sounds, whose consonantal reduction yields the same /tn/ sound, converged to stand for similar set of meanings. تين /t̤i:n/ has a wider semiotic significance because it stands for the mountain, as well as abode and homeland from where mankind spreads. Both these sounds could have played their role in sprouting of Indo-European words *stone*, *town*, *stein*, ستان /st̤ɑ:n/, ستهان /st̤hɑ:n/, or تهاں /t̤hɑ: / which, in their separate capacity stand for the same signifieds, which Arabic words represent together. The Middle East, as a center of human progress, played vital role in development of civilization as well as Phoenician Alphabets, and Phono-Semiotic sharing of Arabic language seems the most plausible possibility. The mountains and the land of تين /t̤i:n/, later occupied by Semitic races, became their homeland and they considered themselves as the sons of the soil. Hence, the sea people, who invaded the south-western shores around 1250 BC. may have been termed as فلسطيني or ليس تينيني, a sense which could have led to its translation as “*Allophiloī*” or *foreigners* in Greek Septuagint. It shows that /tn/, as consonantal reduction, has irrefutable connection with the signified concepts of land, soil, and homeland or even being native.

Further analysis of the /tn/ sound yields more similarities of words that could have inherited the converged meaning of تين /t̤i:n/ and طين /t̤i:n/. In this regard, my first attention was grabbed by three words i.e. Athenian, Athens, and Athena, whose consonantal reduction gives /t̤hnn/, /t̤hnz/, and /t̤h/ respectively which can be further reduced to /tn/ after merging consonantal clusters. According to Beekes (2009), these words are related to the land of Attica, however they are of pre-Greek origin. Let us see if further investigation adds up to our proposition that Arabic is the oldest language and a

phono-semiotic evidence of Athens' relation with طين /tʕi:n/ or تين /tj:n/ as a place of living or a place of one's origin can be developed. In this regard, we need to look into the popular Athenian belief of *autochthony* which means *born of the soil*. Athenian People believed that they were the sons of the soil and born of the earth. Erichthonius was an early king who was autochthonous or borne out of the earth (Erichthonius, n.d.). According to Keuls (1993, p.42) Erichthonius comes from *Chthon*, which means the earth. Explaining this word Clark (2012) states:

Because Erichthonius was born from the earth, the citizens of Athens had a special connection to the land.....Because their first ancestor was earthborn, all Athenians were autochthonous (“born from earth itself”, from “autos”, meaning “same” or “self”, and “chthon”, meaning “the earth”).The autochthony of the founder establishes the autochthony of the succeeding generations. (p.83)

When we apply consonantal reduction to Chthon (English /θɒn/, /ʃθɒn/, /kθɒn/: Greek χθών : Romanized Khthōn: IPA /xθɒn/), we get /tn/ ch-tn/, k-tn/ as well as /kʰtn/ sound and /tn/ is inherently part of them. Chthonian /θəʊniən/ (Greek: Χθόνιος, Romanised: : khthónios, IPA: /xθɒnios/) means “Of the earth” (“Chthon”, 2011) and “sprung from the earth” or even native of a county (Liddell, 1940). All these meanings relate English word Athenians /əˈθiːnjənz /, to Arabic word الطينيين /ətʕiːnijin/ because they were *chthonian* /θəʊniən/ or *chthonic* /θɒnik/ who had sprung from the earth and were native of the country. The use of Greek word *Chthon* /xθɒn/ is to be found even in geological terminologies for referring to rocks. For example, *al.loch.thon* /əlɒx-θɒn/ is a combination of *allo* meaning other and *chthon* meaning earth. According to DiPeitro (2012,) it is “A large body of rock that has moved a great distance from its original location” (p.343). At-teen الطين /ətʕiːn/, from its initial signifieds i.e. clay or earth, goes through a semantic shift and in the form of *Chthon* as signifier starts standing for things springing out of the earth. The Earth is assigned a motherly stature as well as a female figure because of its engendering power and ability. According to the mythological story of Erichthonius' birth, while seducing Athena, Hephaestus' semen fell on the earth from which Erichthonios (out of the earth) was borne. *Ge*, (name of the earth goddess), represented as a female figure signifying the mother earth, hands over Erichthonios to Athena (Keuls, 1993, p.42). See Figure 2.



Figure 2. *Ge* (the Earth) handing over Erichthonius to Athena. {adapted from Keuls(1993,p.43)}

Ge, which is the Earth, now stands for motherhood. Earth is also named as *Chthon* in Greek (“Chthon”, n.d). Earth is simultaneously *Ge* and *Chthon*. A phono-semiotic correlation is found between *Chthon* /xθɒn/ and the Urdu word of Turkish origin *Khatoon* خاتون /xaːtuːn/ which also stands for a *woman of noble origin* (“خاتون”, n.d). The word *Ge* itself has a phono-semiotic identical word in Urdu and Persian languages which is *Jaa*, جا /dʒaː/ and it also means *place* or the earth. See Figure 3.

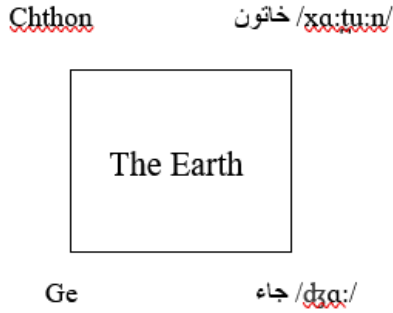


Figure 3. Relation of the Earth with Ge and other words with /tn/ sound

The relationship of Adam and the Earth, which Arabs describe as اِبْنُ الطِّينِ / ibn ʔt̪ t̪i:n/ or the son of the earth, or the soil (Lane, “طين”, 1968), the Greeks attribute it to the concept of *Autochthony*, because Erichthonius was borne out of the earth. Following is the correlative pattern that emerges out of this discussion.

الطين / ʔt̪ t̪i:n /, (clay), (earth)

مواطنین /mvat̪ʔini:n/ permanent residents of a particular area of the earth.

اِبْنُ الطِّينِ / ibn ʔt̪ t̪i:n/ (Adam: son of the earth, soil)

Autochthony (Erichthonius: borne out of the earth)

Here emerges a convergence of signifieds. *Chthon* pronounced as /xθɒn/ in Greek, stands for the Earth and it appears in Urdu and Turkish languages as *Khatoon* خاتون /xɑ:tu:n/ that stands for a woman. The woman is a signifier of motherhood and the man's birthplace. *Chthon*, pronounced as /tʃθɒn/ finds its cognate in Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi languages as *Chataan* چٹان /tʃɑ:tɑ:n/ which means mountain, hill, or rock. Table No.5 clearly exhibits that /tn/ sound is an inseparable part of all these words which, in one way or the other, refer to clay, mud, and earth as well as the place of birth, and homeland. As a child sprouts from the womb of a mother, similarly, the man belongs to the land he hails from.

Yet another connection of /tn/ sound with the earth or اِبْنُ الطِّينِ / ʔt̪ t̪i:n /, is to be found in the word Titans; the first tier of gods in Greek mythology. Harrison (1908) quotes Eustathius' words regarding the meaning of the word Titan:

We apply the word *titanos* in general to dust, in particular to what is called *esbestos*, which is the white fluffy substance in burnt stones. It is so called from the Titans in mythology, whom Zeus in the story smote with his thunderbolts and consumed to dust. For from then, the fine dust of stones which has got crumbled from excessive heat, so to speak Titanic heat, is called titanic, as though a Titanic penalty had been accomplished upon it. And the ancients call dust and gypsum *titanos*. (p.493)

Harrison (1908) further says that “cleansing”, “purification”, and “sanctification” with mud and even with white clay or gypsum continued as a ritual in Crete as well as civilized Athens. Hence, those men involved in such rituals were also called “the white-clay-men” (p.494). These seem to be two different stories. However, in both of them i.e. “Titans of mythology” and “Titans of rituals” one thing is common. It is their connection with mud and clay. Titans of rituals bedaubed themselves with *white earth*, while the Titans of mythology were “children of Earth, primitive giants rebellious against the new Olympian order.” (Harrison, 1908, p.499)

The consonantal reduction /tn/ is also part of some other words of Urdu, Persian, and Arabic languages. For example, Urdu word of Persian origin, *Stoon* ستون /s̪tu:n/ refers to the pillar or column which are generally made out of stone to build or decorate houses

and residential compounds since antiquity. Arabic word *Ustuwana* اسطوانة /ust^ʕuwa:nə/, which, in Persian appears as ستون /sṭu:n/ (Lane, “سطن”, 1968) also semiotically stands for an upright, straight, most probably a stony structure to hold the roof. This upholds the stance that ط /t^ʕ/ and ت /t/ are interchangeable phonemes as we have postulated in the case of Syriac letters ܬ /t^ʕ/ and ܬ /t/. Similarly, Urdu word *Sutwan* ستوان /suṭvā: (with nasal A_A_N sound) stands for smart, delicate, upright, straight things (like beautiful pillars) as well as high altitude plateau (Urdu Lughat, n.d).

Last but not least is the word *Astana* آستانہ /ɑ:sṭɑ:nə/ used in Urdu, Persian, Punjabi, Hindi, and other languages of South and Central Asia. *Astana* آستانہ /ɑ:sṭɑ:nə/ not only refers to the capital of Kazakhstan but also stands for a highly revered living place, the door, the house of a religious saint in South Asian culture (at least in Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi). The shrine of the saint is generally termed as آستانہ عالیہ /ɑ:sṭɑ:nə ɑ:lɪə/. It is the living abode or the burial place of the saint, which is considered a highly respected place of religious importance, where people gather and pray. Stone itself has a connection with the burial place of man in words like gravestone and tombstone. In Urdu and Punjabi poetry, آستانہ /ɑ:sṭɑ:nə/ may also refer to the adorable living place of the beloved. In both cases, a highly lovable, respectable place is called آستانہ /ɑ:sṭɑ:nə/. All the words discussed above are either stony structures or high-land living places which are connected to stone, which in turn is related to الطين / ٲٲ t^ʕi:n /; the soil, or التين / ٲٲ t^ʕi:n /; the abode of humanity, which is linked to the concept of وطن /wət^ʕən/; the land one hails from.

4. Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, I will now discuss my primary research questions and see if we have found their answers or not. In case of the question No.(1) Where the sound /sṭɑ:n/ could have come from, we have seen that /sṭɑ:n/ in its consonant reduction form /tn/ is not only linked to *stone*, *stein* meaning rocky substance but also in the form of *town*, it is a liveable area where people reside. The stone also makes the structure of the house, and the town reflects the homely spirit. This is how the stone is related to Arabic word الطين /ٲٲ t^ʕi:n/ while the homely spirit enshrined in the concept of town is derived from yet another Arabic word of similar sound pattern التين / ٲٲ t^ʕi:n/; which is not only a rocky structure but also the abode of humanity. All these ideas, the form, and the spirit, converge into وطن /wət^ʕən/; the homeland. *Stone*, *Town*, or *Stein*, are intrinsically linked to Arabic sounds طين /t^ʕi:n/ or تين /t^ʕi:n/ not only phonically but also semiotically because in one way or the other all of them stand for the earth, the homeland, the soil one belongs to, or to be still more clear, the earthen existence of the man. طين /t^ʕi:n/ and تين /t^ʕi:n/, appear to be the etymological ancestors of *stone* and it is possible that two closely related sounds, whose consonantal reduction yields the same /tn/ sound, converged to stand for similar set of ideas. As far as question No.(2) is concerned we see that /tn/ and its related concepts, are spread in many languages and in the form of many words containing the same /tn/ consonantal base. Table 5 emphatically puts forward this point. Finally, for question No.(3), let me put it straight that concepts enshrined in طين /t^ʕi:n/ and تين /t^ʕi:n/ and وطن /wət^ʕən/, when moved westward or to Europe, were realized in *stone*, or *town*, and when travelled eastward or to Persia and India, they became *stan* ستان /sṭɑ:n/; the place of living. In reality, a signified idea resides in the human subconscious mind, while sounds are different moulds. Words are reflections of those ideas and sounds. Phonic and semiotic similarity makes them cognates. The analysis of the sound(signifier) and signified ideas across different languages helps to comprehend their shared or shifted meanings which ultimately point to a cognatic relationship among those words and languages within which they are embedded.

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