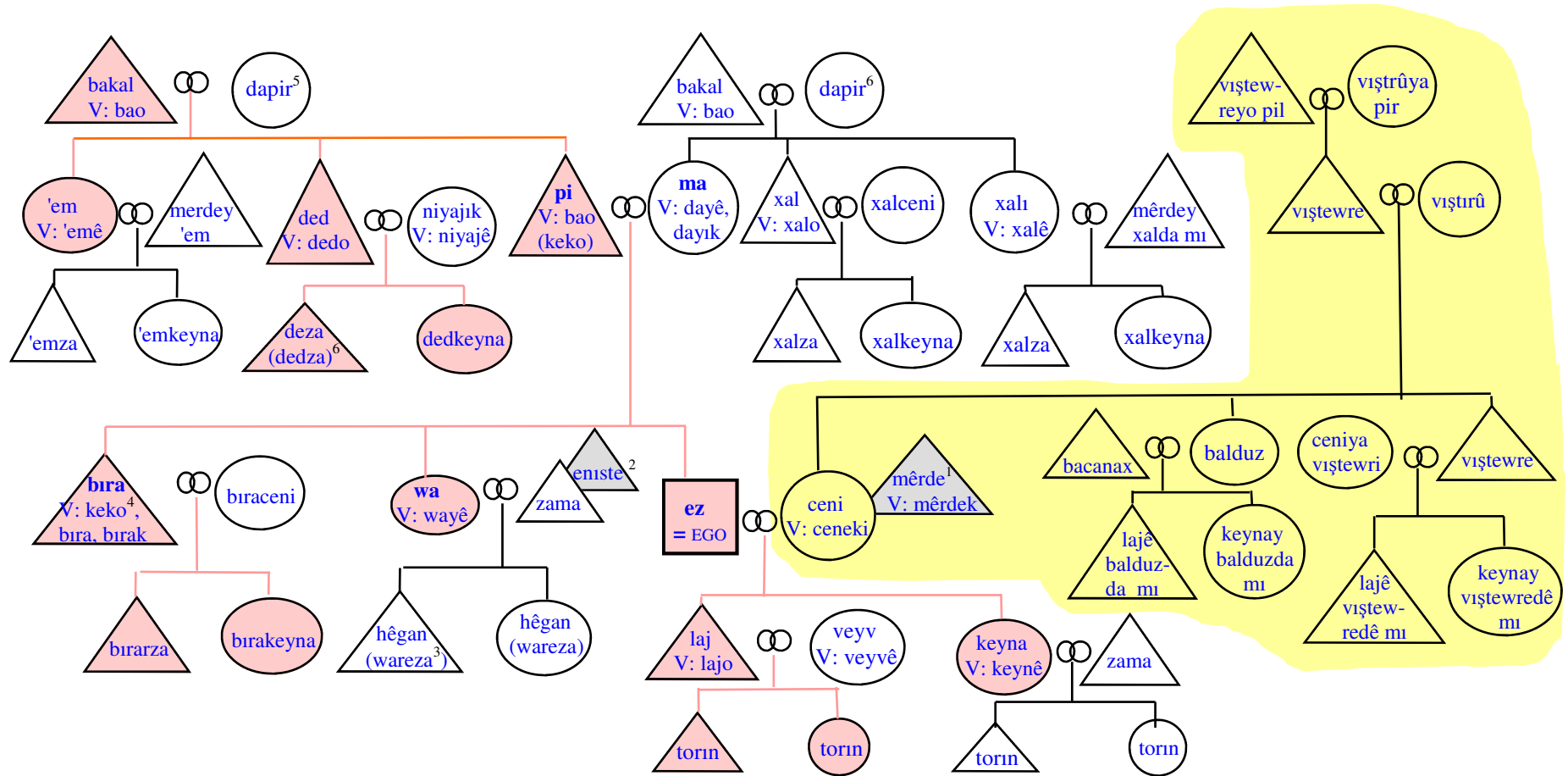


Zaza Kinship Terminology and Structure (Region of Çermik / Gerger / Siverek)



- ez** "I" (EGO), male
 ○ female
 △ male
 ○○ married
 — father's bloodline (Zazaki: sılale)
 ■ in-laws (Zazaki: kışta viştewra)
 V: form of address or vocative (if different from nominative)

Notes:

- ¹mêrde
²eniste
³wareza
⁴keko
⁵dapir
⁶deza

"husband"; *mêrdey mi* = my husband (if EGO is female)
 If EGO is female, the husband of the sister is called *eniste* (instead of *zama*)
 The old Zaza-form (in parenthesis) is rarely used today; *hêgan* is a Turkish loan.
 May be used to address older brother and father.
 The grandmother may be addressed with *dapir* or with *dayık*, *dayê* (see "mother").
 The short form *deza* is derived from *ded-za* according to mother tongue speakers.

Additions to kinship terms:

xalo, xalê, dedo “uncle, aunt” may be used to address elders respectfully who are not family related.
deza 2nd or 3rd cousins of father's bloodline are also called *deza*.

The following terms are not listed in the diagram:

demari “step mother”
weşni how wives call each other in polygamous marriages.
gorım how wife of EGO calls sister of EGO.
cêri how wife of EGO and wife of EGO'S brother call each other.

Description of the kinship pattern

Zaza society¹ is organized patrilineally and patrilocally. This means that lineage depends exclusively on the father not the mother. Relatives on the mother's side including the mother herself are in-laws, not blood relatives. The father's blood line is called “sılaley mı” or “merdimê mı” ('my people').

Children of the daughter are not considered to be of one's blood line, they belong to the lineage of the daughter's husband (i.e. the son in law) instead. This explains the joy over the birth of a son. A male descendant guarantees the continuation of one's paternal lineage. It is noteworthy that this fact is not represented in the terminology. Both descendants of the son and of the daughter are called “torın” (turkish *torun*).

As an outward expression of this structure of the society, the bride moves into the house of the groom at the wedding (*patrilocal residence*). The relatives of the wife, the in-laws, are called “kışta vıştewra” ('in-law side') collectively.

¹ This summary is based on research among Sunni Zaza, living in the region of Çermik, Gerger and Siverek. The results are based on interviews with various Zaza families.

² If maternal and paternal relatives are considered equally in determining one's lineage, individuals have overlapping lineages to which they belong. This kind of pattern is called a *bilateral descent*, and is displayed in a typical modern Western European society.

If there are problems or dissent among the relatives of a blood line, all members are held responsible. Problems of the in-laws are of no concern to one's blood relatives. These clear lines of understanding make it easier to live together.

Zaza society shows a pattern of unilineal descent, as each individual can be part of only one blood line.²

Marriage

When looking for a suitable marriage partner, Zaza society prefers partners of one's own blood line (endogamous marriage). The advantage of an endogamous marriage is that the descendants of the daughters will not be considered members of a different blood line, but will be considered relatives. This way, one's clan increases in number and gains more influence in society.

The disadvantage of an endogamous marriage is obvious when the marriage is not successful. Dissent and division within the clan cannot be avoided and hurt the group as a whole in the long run.

Exogamous marriages are frequent in Zaza culture as well. The advantage is seen in that disagreements between the spouses will not threaten the unity of one's clan, because the wife belongs to a different lineage.

Source:

Ember, Carol R. / Ember, Melvin. 1993. *Cultural Anthropology*.
Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

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