

Laz in Georgia and Turkey: Past and Present

Sophiko Daraselia

Rusudan Gersamia



University of Leeds
Ilia State University



Overview



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- The language: historical background
- Past and present
- Statistics: number of speakers
- What Laz people do

The Language



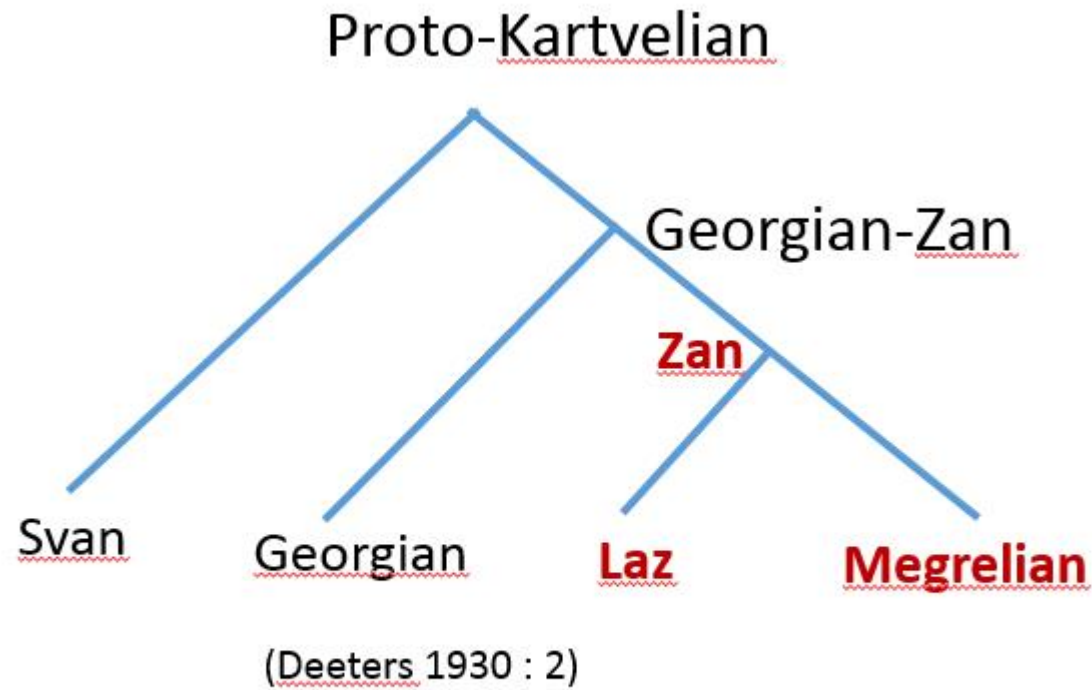
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- Laz is one of the four **Kartvelian languages**

The Language



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ProtoKartvelian Language

4th millennium BC



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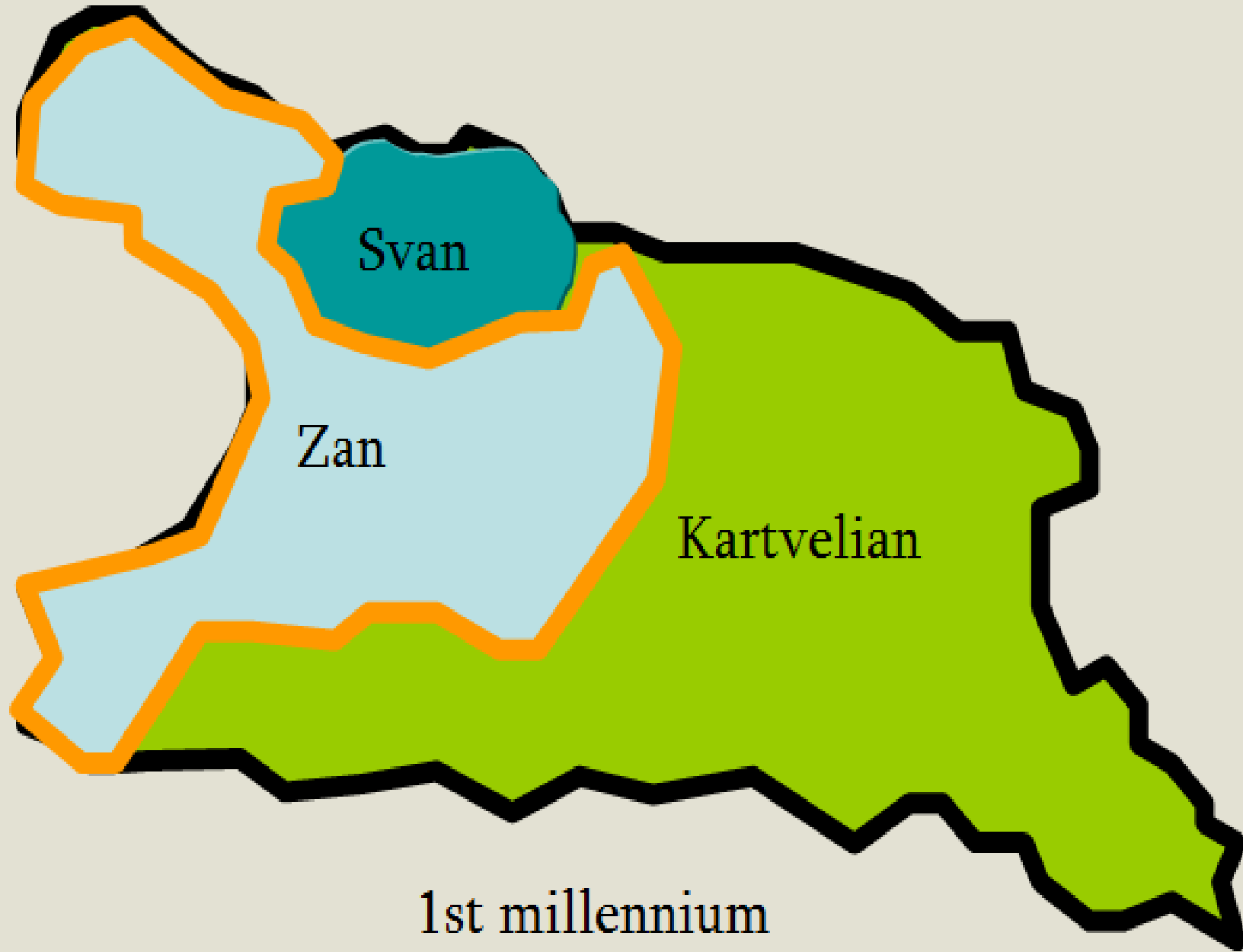
Svan

Zan-Kartvelian

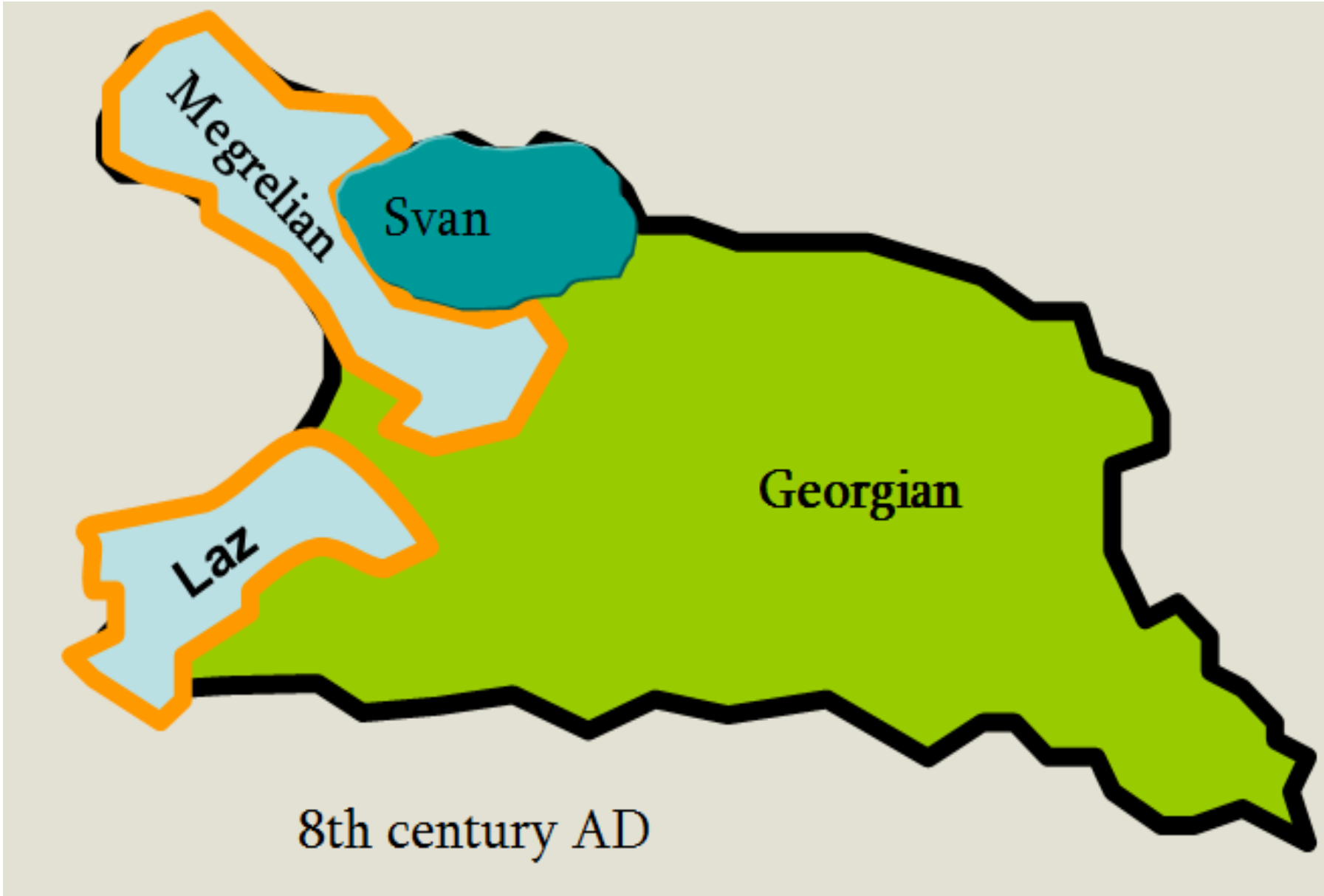
3rd Millennium BC.



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1st millennium



Migration



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- According to Javakhishvili (1913), Gamkrelidze & Ivanov (1985), Laz tribes migrated in few waves from their original 'homeland' Egrisi (Old Megrelian area) to:
 - 1) **Tshkumi** (Abkhazia) in 1st Century
 - 2) **Adjara** – in AD. 780, and
 - 3) **Trabzon** – in Ad 800-900

The Trabzon coast was uninhabited covered in forest. Laz people started establishing their permanent settlements / villages.

Map: Kingdom of Georgia



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GONIA
APSARI

KHUPATI

ARKABI

KORIDETI

ATINA

KORDULA

TAMBURI

TRAPIZONI

KERASUNI

KALIPARAU

RIZE

KALE

SUSURMENE

OPI-SATRAPELA

MACHKHA

POLEMONI

KOTIORA

PARNAKIA

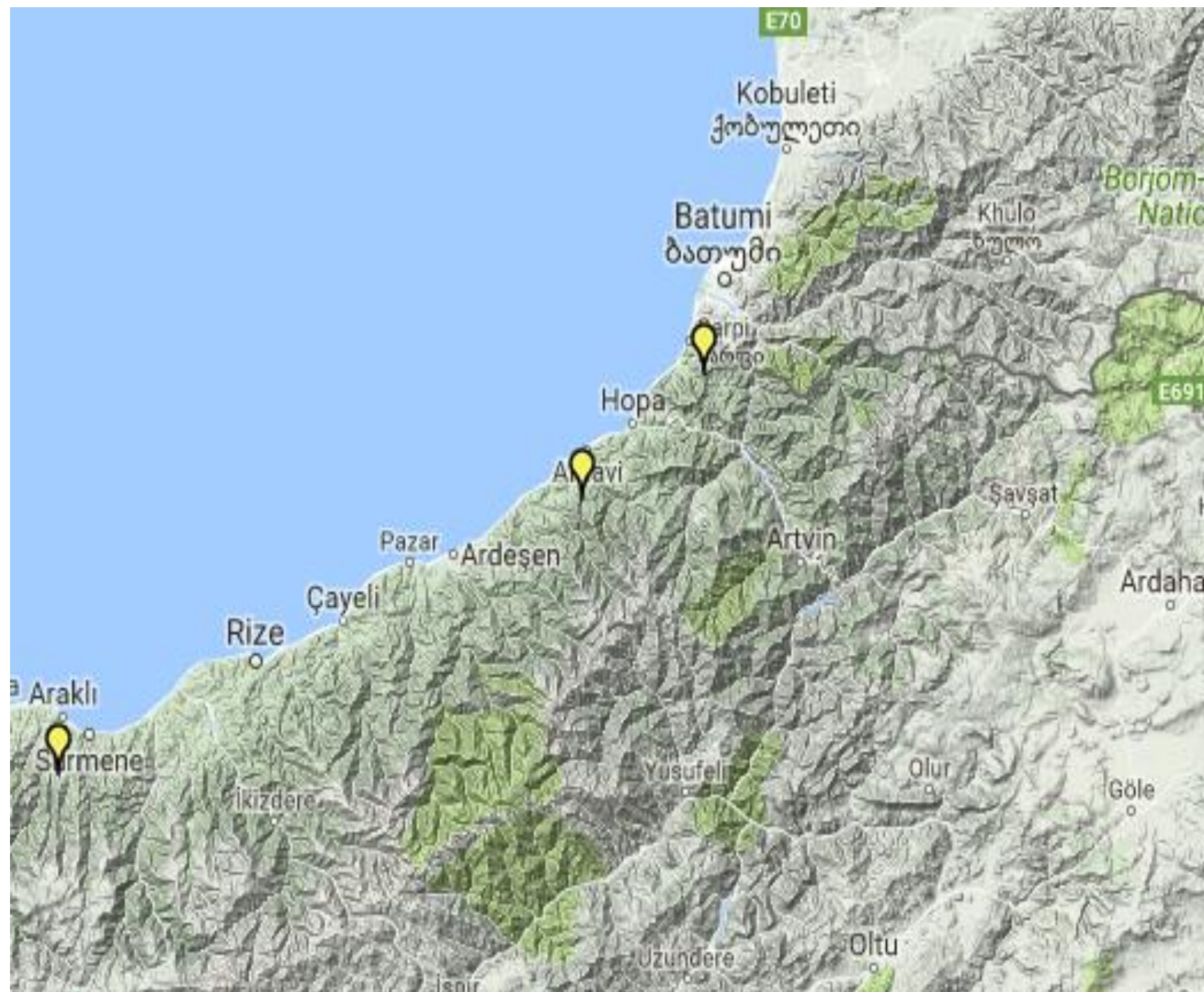
HENETI

OINE

LIMANI

ZIGANA

KALDIA



Laz: Geographical distribution



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1. The Laz language in Turkey: area from Sarpi- Rize

Historical background: Treaty of Kars (1921)

“The Kars treaty provided for the territory of the former Imperial Russian Batum Oblast to be divided. The southern half of the former oblast, largely correspondent to the Artvin Okrug with the city of Artvin, would be annexed to Turkey. The northern half, largely correspondent to the Batum Okrug with the strategic port city of Batum, would become part of Soviet Georgia as the Adjar ASSR (present-day Adjara).” (Wikipedia)

- As a result of this treaty, village Sarpi (the only Laz speaking village in Georgia) has divided into two parts.



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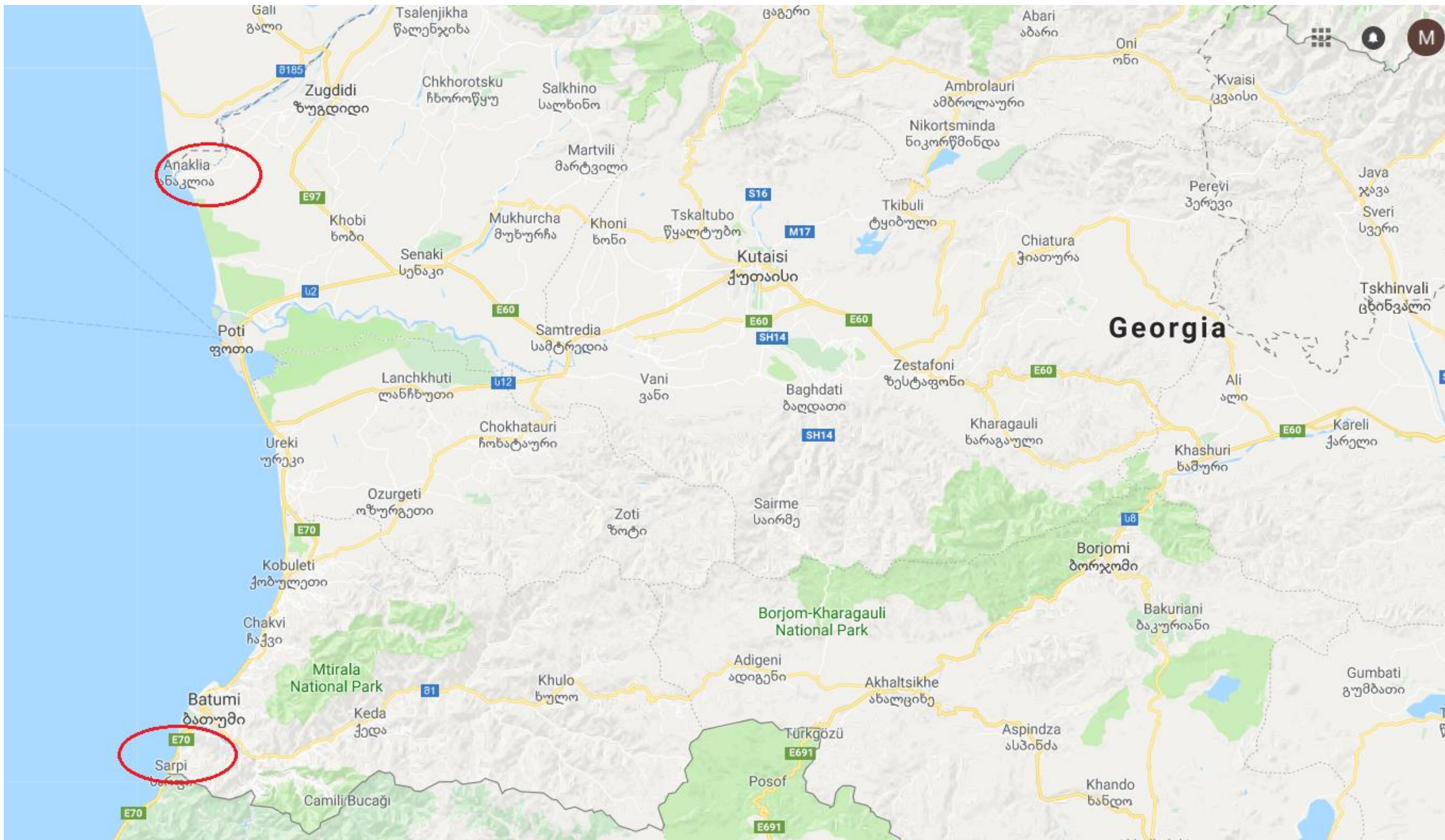
Activate Windows
Go to PC settings to activate Windows.

Laz: Geographical distribution



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- The Laz language is spoken in Georgia
 - 1) Sarpi: number of speakers 826 (in 2014)
 - 2) Kvariati, Gonio: several families
 - 3) Anaklia, Zugdidi: 16 families, 65 people (in 2015)



Dialects



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There are several classifications:

1. Atina, Vitse-Arkabe, Khopa (Marr 1910)
2. Khopa (Chkhal), Vitse-Arkabe, Atina (Chikobava 1936)
3. Pazar/Atina, Ardeşen/Artaşeni, Fındıklı-Arhavi/Vitse-Arkabi, Hopa/Xopa (Kutscher S., 2001)
4. Hopa, Pazar, Ardeshen, Findikli, Arhave (Lacroix, R., 2009)

Laz: Migration



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- Laz people usually reside at the Black Sea coast
- Migrations:
 1. Laz living in Abkhazia, migrated in 1st century,
 2. Laz living in Anaklia, migrated in 17th -18th cc.

Laz: Migration



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- **Laz in Abkhazia:**

Dialects: Arkabe, Atina.

The texts of these dialects has been recorded in 1930 by Chikobava.

Sadly, part of the Laz living in Abkhazia has been forced to migrate or even executed by the Soviet Union.

Laz: Migration



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- **Laz in village Anaklia:**

The last Laz texts recorded in 1970 by Irina Asatiani.

- Currently, Laz living Anaklia have culturally assimilated with local people and cannot speak Laz unlike their ancestors
 - => They speak Megrelian and Georgian

Statistics



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Number of speakers:

- UNESCO – 130,000
- Linguamon – 30,000 – 50,000
- Ethnologue.com – 33, 250

In Georgia:

- 2000-5000 (Lacroix R., 2009)
- 3000 (R. Asatiani, 2011, Axalaia 2015)
- 1200 – (Gersamia, 2005-2016) in Sarpi, Gonio, Kvariati, Batumi

Statistics



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Laz speakers in Georgia:

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Statistics



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Laz speakers in Turkey:

- **By 1935:**
 - a) Laz as the mother tongue: **63.253**
 - b) second language: **5.061**
- **By 1965:**
 - Laz as the mother tongue: **26.007**
 - Second language: **59.101**

Endangered language



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Kutcher S., 2008:

“the Laz language is spoken in a restricted area by a small number of speakers.... is only restrained to communication among family members in small speech communities”.

“Most Laz children get exposed to Turkish upon starting primary school the latest, if not earlier. While the older generations (speakers above 40) are typically bilingual younger people are either monolingual Turkish speakers or passive users of Laz, who can understand but cannot actively speak the language.”



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What Laz people do

Lifestyle



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- Laz mainly reside at the Black Sea coast
- Also, moved to live in nearby mountainous area to protect themselves from pirates
- The settlements were quite far from one another

Fishing



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- Main source of income: fishing
=> Very rich vocabulary related to fishing:

- Names of fish species
- Fishing equipment
- Producing fishing equipment
- Building boats

Laz: **mzoğa** 'Sea' **čxami** 'fish'

Megr: **zğva** **čxomi**



Agriculture



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- Agriculture: Not very favourable landscape and climate in Mountains
- On coastal areas: Maize



Agriculture

Maize cultivation is very popular in Megrelia as well

Laz: lazuti, lazti, lati 'maize'

Megr. Lati, laiti



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Hunting



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Traditional hunting with sparrow hawk



Hunting

Traditional hunting with sparrow hawk is still popular

- They train sparrow hawks to hunt for quails



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Hunting



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Vocabulary related:

- Rules for hawk training
- Hunting rules



Laz people



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Laz people



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Housing



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Folklore

Water mills:

- Specialized vocabulary related to

Water mills

- Water mills in folklore:

=> **činka (činkebi)** – mythical creatures living near water mills

=> **činka** – presented in modern Laz folklore too.

=> and in Megrelian!



The End!