

Story 1284 (1989 Tape 13)

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Sivas Province

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Two Laz Swimmers

One day Temel¹ and Hasan, who lived along the shore of the Black Sea, decided that they would swim from Turkey to America. They were very good swimmers, and so on the following day they began swimming. They swam the length of the Black to the Bosphorus. Passing the Bosphorus, they swam across the Sea of Marmara and through the Dardanelles to the Mediterranean. From the Mediterranean they swam into the Atlantic Ocean.

After they had been swimming for thirty-three days, they came within view of the Statue of Liberty. Then Temel shouted to his friend Hasan, "Hasan, I'm tired! I'm going to turn around and go back!"

¹The names Temel and Dursun are not restricted to Laz males along the Black Sea. But in fact those names are so common among Laz men that Temel and Dursun in folktales almost invariably signal Laz. Laz people are allegedly dull-witted and prone to misadventures of all kinds. Countless anecdotes and tales recount their ludicrous blunders. Of course, this is simply an ethnic stereotype, for Lazes are no more stupid or clever than any other group of people.