



South Tyrol – Land of Myths and Legends

The Devil On The Schlern Massif

Long ago, there was a saying in Völs: “After Michaelmas (29 September), the alpine pasture belongs to the devil. He doesn’t tolerate anyone going up there”. Even in the village below, the people had attached straw Michaelmas crosses above their barn doors since ancient times so that neither man nor beast should suffer harm.

Now Violer, a farmer from Ums, had a piece of pasture meadow up on the Schlern Massif. One particularly good year, he had ventured to stay up on the massif, together with his servant, past Michaelmas. He still had aromatic grass that could be mowed, which would be a welcome boon during winter.

Late that evening, they went to lay down on the hay to sleep. Suddenly, they heard something: the way that shingles rattled and creaked, it sounded like someone was up on the roof of the hut. Both men began to shudder, for they were all alone on the alpine pastures of Schlern. Their fear grew and grew. Then suddenly opened the door to the hut. In came a hunter with goat’s feet. With a savage expression, he looked up towards the haystack where the two men were lying frozen: frightened to death, they dared not move a muscle. Then he disappeared, slamming the door behind him with a bellow.

This was a good lesson for Violer: the next year, we can assure you that he finished his hay harvest on the Schlern Massif before Michaelmas. He didn’t stay up there even an hour longer, for he knew that Schlern did, indeed, belong to the devil after that day.