



South Tyrol – Land of Myths and Legends

Hans Lutz von Schussenried

It very much rankled the stonemasons of Bolzano (Bozen) that it should be a young Swabian man, Hans Lutz, who would set the crown upon the tower of the parish church – especially with so much money having gone into the construction of the building. They pondered their revenge. It was already in the plan that the church should have two towers so the mason's apprentice, Wilhelm Großmund of Bolzano, declared that he would build the second tower as crooked as Master William of Innsbruck had built the Tower of Pisa – if the project would be given to him. He also promised the other journeymen – who were equally envious of Lutz – he would stir up trouble with the master. Earlier that same day, he had placed a scaffolding board on the tower, for which construction had already begun. When Master Lutz would have come the next day as usual during the early construction period, he would surely have tumbled down.

As it happened, however, Großmund forgot something on the scaffold. As he hurried at daybreak, when everyone else was asleep upstairs, he forgot about the faulty board, fell down, and broke his neck. Upon waking, the envious youths were looking forward to the fall of the Master Lutz, and went to work gloating all the while. But they found that the one had fallen in the same pit that he had dug for the other, they believed that the devil had lured him up at midnight and cast him down. No one dared to help build the second tower any longer. Even today, one can still see a reminder of this event: a pair of shoes on the cornices of the church wall.

So it was that Großmund foundered; Master Lutz, however, completed his tower without further hindrance. It is said that the stately tower cost a huge amount of money and when the masons and sculptors lost their patience and never wanted to work on it again, the rich merchants of Bolzano carted in wheelbarrows of money, pouring it in front of them – which certainly made them pick up their chisels again.

The tower was completed: masterfully, impeccably and soaring gracefully skyward. On the third night after its completion, however, it began to lean to one side. Master Lutz, fearing a second hellish game, believed that Großmund could, with Satan's help, have accomplished not merely a hanging tower but a crumbling one. He thus took off in secret, fleeing the eerie specter, before he had even been paid the money for the construction. Upon his departure, the tower stopped sinking.