

Stein Collectors International, Inc.

Paragraph 11

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Published in Prosit in June 1986

The deeper we dig, the more information we find. The following is taken verbatim from the book, "100 Years of Brewing", The Western Brewer, H. S. Rich & Co., Chicago/New York, 1903 (pp. 689-690):

"Beer Drinking Customs at the University of Heidelberg"

We will now turn aside from the consideration of statistics, for a breathing spell, to consider the beer-drinking customs of this old and famous university, which are, in a large degree, typical of the practices in vogue at other like institutions of learning (and good fellowship) in Germany.

The beer code, or *Bier-Comment* of the Senior University, Heidelberg, as it is officially known, has passed through several revisions and editions since 1829. In common with other university beer codes, however, the Heidelberg laws begin with paragraph 11. Paragraphs 1 to 10 are left blank, being presumably the ten commandments of the Old Testament. The eleventh paragraph, or commandment of Heidelberg University reads: *Es wird fortgesoffen*, or, freely translated, "Keep on drinking."

According to the code a *kneipe* table, or society of drinkers, consists of a president, or senior student; juniors, known as *burschen*, or fellows; and freshmen, or *foxes*. The president manages the program, maintains order and decides the punishment meted out to offenders against the laws of beer. That the latter responsibility is a heavy one may be realized when it is known that a single section enumerates twenty-seven cases of liability to find, and another twelve more in which the offender is liable to *bier-verschiss* (beer excommunication). There are other more heinous offenses for which the punishment is both excommunication and fine - the latter always payable in beer.

The wretch who has lost his beer honor is indeed a pitiful case. Being declared under the ban by the president, he is forthwith "chalked down" (by a beer-honorable fox, as already described) with the opprobrious title, *bierschisser*, on the black-board, the pillory of weak-kneed drinkers. From this ignominious position he can only extricate himself by "fighting out" after the manner to be hereafter explained.



This character stein by Girmscheid is clearly all about drinking. The monkey, a common symbol for over-indulgence, is enjoying his pipe with his *Masskrug* bearing the paragraph 11 symbol.



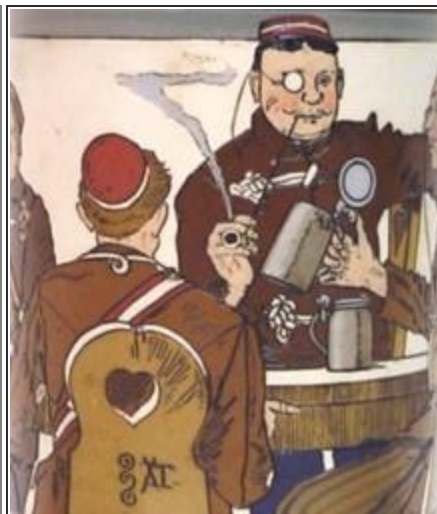
This etched stein shows the paragraph 11 symbol on the end of the keg of beer.

Meanwhile he can take no part in the musical diversions of the evening; he must not participate in the mysterious rite known as "rubbing the salamander"; he can not act as beer judge, umpire, or witness in a beer trial; he can not challenge any one to drink, or "drink in response" to any one who may challenge him; and generally he is in a very bad way.

To relieve himself of these painful disabilities, the beer-outlaw gives notices, through a beer-honorable *bursch* (for he is in to degraded a condition to do so in his own person), that he desires to "fight out", and inquires who is willing to act as his antagonist. Four champions having consented to do so, each is provided with a full tankard, and four more (all provided at the cost of the delinquent) are placed before the beer-excommunicate himself. Four times in succession, with five-minute intervals, he must empty a tankard, one of the opposing champions each time doing the same with his, or in default, himself falling into beer-excommunication. The beer-outlaw, having duly come up to time and emptied his four tankards, is again declared beer-honorable."

The description of these quaint customs continues, going into the etiquette of beer-drinking and the general behavior with which one conducted himself within the *kneipe*. The rules and regulations were extremely restrictive - but most conducive to serious beer drinking! SCI members such as Frank Poppy, Terry Hill and Art Chapman, no doubt would have gotten themselves into trouble continuously - but would have fought (drunk) their way out of the bier-verschiss without difficulty and with much delight.

And remember, all this was penned in 1903! As far as we are concerned, we will gladly go along with the definition of that famous Paragraph 11 presented here: **Keep on drinking!**



Mettlach 2051 shows the § 11 symbol in Roman numerals on the back of a chair in a student *Kneipen*. a perfect setting!



The § 11 symbol on the thumbflap of the 11th SCI convention stein (Milwaukee).