

Some Simple Beer Stein Cognates

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Reading beer steins with German text might be easier than you think because many German words have English cognates (look-alikes and sound-a-likes). This is because English and German are both classified as Teutonic languages since they both descended from Old Norse, the language of the Vikings. Look at the legend on the stein in figure 1: "**Hopfen giebt Wundertropfen**" which translates to "Hops give wonder drops". If you sound out the German words phonetically, you can understand the similarity and there is a good clue with the hops vine pictured on the body of the stein.



Figure 1

Once you're familiar with the first example, the second example (figs. 2-4) should come easily: "**Hopfen u. Malz Gott erhalts.**" translates to "Hops

and malt God holds (maintains, preserves) ". There are several things to notice already: The "**u.**" = "**und**" = "and" in English; All nouns in German begin with a capital letter.



Figure 2

Figure 3



Figure 4



There are many steins with city scenes that have the phrase "**Gruß aus....**" which translates to "greetings out of (from)....". Note the "**ß**" is an "**s**" and "**z**" combined and transcribes to "ss" in English and sometimes in modern German.

The familiar scene on the stein in figure 5 has the legend "**Gruß aus München**" at the top

(fig. 6) and the figure of the "**Münchener Kindl**" at the bottom (fig. 7).



Figure 5

The city name "**München**" is derived from the word "monk" and came from the 8th C. Benedictine monks that settled Munich. The symbol of the city of Munich is the "**Münchener Kindl**" which means Munich child or monk child. We all started school with "Kindergarten" which translates literally to "children's garden". Notice also the

"**Rathaus**" (ratification house; town hall) with its famous "**Rathskeller**" (town hall cellar). The word "**Rat**" has the same route as our word "ratification" and relates to official government dealings which might have been done in the town hall and related events done in its cellar. Right next to the "**Rathaus**" is the famous "**Hofbrauhaus**" (court brew house; brew and house are obvious cognates here.) (fig. 8) where the meetings might have consummated with another "**Maß**" (measure = 1 liter) of "**Hofbräu**" (court brew served in the **Hofbrauhaus**).



Figure 6



Figure 7

The scene below is the "**Karlstor**" (Karl = **Karl der Große** = Charles the Great = Charlemagne; **Tor** = door = gate). The scenes in figure 9 are the "**Liebfrau Türme**" (Beloved Lady's Towers) on the "**Kirche**" (church of the same name). The lower scene is of the "**Prinzregent Theater**" (you should be able to figure this one out). Note that Archaic German "**Th**" = modern German "**T**" and they both have the "T" sound."



Figure 8

Figure 9

The ancient Romans occupied England south of Hadrian's Wall (and for awhile the Antonine Wall in southern Scotland) and **Germania** as far north as the city of **Cöln** (Cologne from Latin **colonia** meaning colony). Note here that German words starting with "C" from Roman influence were much later changed to "K". This story is nicely depicted on **Mettlach** stein #2100 seen in figure 10 with the legend "**Prosit**". The front of the stein shows one of the "**Alte Germanen**" (old, in this case early, Germans) often referred to as "**Bärenhäuter**" (bear's hide, one wearing a bear's skin) introducing a skeptical Roman to "**Bier**" (beer) in a "**Steinkrug**" (stone drinking vessel, where we get the word "stein").

The lid in figure 11 also has a stein accompanied by its favorite "**Radieschen; Rettig**"

(radish; a Bavarian delight with beer). The old Romans appreciated this new beverage so much



Figure 10

that they presented the old Germans with a way of toasting to it also on the front of the stein, the German word "**Prosit**" or shortened "**Prost**"



Figure 11

coming from the Latin "**pro sit**" (for situation or better for your health). The Romans also provided a way to write it down in Roman print.

— PROSIT!

Transcription of old German print and script into Roman equivalents and many German stein phrases with translations can be found in a compilation called "1001 German Beer Stein Translations" by SCI Master Steinologist Col. Lester E. Hopper, Al E. Gator Press 1994. This document is also available on the SCI website.

** We will be adding to Les Hopper's translations on the SCI website a separate section containing photos of actual steins with verses and their translations. Readers are welcome to submit photos of steins with verses to the SCI Webmaster and we will translate them and add them.

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