The Heidenmauer: or, Have We Progressed beyond the Pagans?

By Norman Barry

I: A flawed historical narrative or history as invented by a legend builder?

Cooper's 1831 outing to explore the ruins of Limburg Abbey and the Hardenburg [1] together with archaeological sites such as the Teufelsstein and the Heidenmauer itself, was conducted with his son and a tailor with time on his hands named Christian Kinzel.

Conversation was conducted in French due to Cooper's problem with German. The reader is informed that Kinzel had "lived a little in France." The question of the quality of Kinzel's French and how well informed he was about the history of Dürkheim remains unanswered.[2] It would nonetheless appear that the information provided by Kinzel from the outing was not thoroughly researched by Cooper as to its veracity.[3] There is also the more far-reaching question of just how much historical veracity Cooper was after. Did he want to provide an objective historical chronical, or, much more in Cooper's sense, was he seeking to present a *reconstruction* of history that pointed to a particular moral or lesson to instruct his American readership?

But first, the historical inconsistencies:

1) Although the novel is set in the 16th Century (Ch. 1, p. 26), Count Emich VII (1410-1495) lived long before the birth of the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther's 95 Theses were first published in 1517. In other words, historically speaking, Protestantism could not have played a role in determining the actions of either Count Emich or the townspeople of Dürkheim. [4]

2) The following is an account of Count Emich's attack in the year 1470:

> "The troops of the Leininger, reenforced by the soldiers of Veldenz, attacked Limburg on August 14, 1470, blasted gates and doors open, and invaded the abbey. The unarmed monks were unable to resist the attack. Everything of value was seized as plunder and carted by horse and wagon from the abbey to the base of operations in Wachenheim. Only the sanctuaries and the library remained unscathed by the attack."
>
> Dr. Emil Becker-Bender, ***Bad Dürkheim und die Limburg*** (Stadtverwaltung Bad Dürkheim, 1977), p. 42 – *my translation*

Several observations can be made:

a) The conflagration depicted in the novel did not take place in 1470 but much later, in 1504 under Count Emich VII's son.

b) Cooper's account of the attack does not leave the library unspared. [5]

c) The townspeople of Dürkheim did not participate in the attack.

d) The abbey was not completely devastated. In fact, Limburg Abbey was at least in partial use up to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

3) Bonifacius (=Ger. Bonifaz), Wilhelm of Venloo, abbot from 1481-1483,[6] was not contemporaneous with the plundering of the abbey. The presiding abbot of Limburg Abbey at the time of the attack was Heinrich Ulmer von Dieburg (abbot from 1446-1481). That Limburg Abbey represented a threat to Emich resulted from the coalescence of both spiritual and temporal authority in the abbey itself.[7] A contributing factor, apart from obvious territorial disputes behind the attack, was the abbot's

The ruins of Limburg Abbey.

inability to instill discipline and enforce the rules of St. Benedict, a point Cooper repeatedly makes in his novel.

4) In 1504, Emich VIII, who succeeded his father in 1495, conducted together with the landgrave, Wilhelm of Hesse, a second and more devastating attack on the abbey. Dürkheim was also not spared. [8] The abbey was the scene of a terrible conflagration. One monk named

Johannes (=Father Johan), a lay brother and carpenter, was unable to flee due to his age and was consumed in the flames.[9] (The fanatic Johan of ***The Heidenmauer*** obviously plays a very different role.)

A view of the ruins of Hardenburg Castle as seen from an outer wall of Limburg Abbey.

5) The Elector Palatine, sitting "on a tottering throne" [10] sounds like Frederick V. He was the Elector Palatine from 1610 to 1623. He also had a short reign as King of Bohemia (1619-1620), hence "the Winter King". Frederick was chosen for Bohemia because he was a Calvinist. [11]

6) Charles V (designated by Cooper as "Charles Quintus," p. 163) was the Holy Roman Emperor from 1519 to 1556. He was also King of Spain from 1516-1556. Needless to say, his reign is much too late for either 1470 or 1504.

> "Thou (=Count Emich) knowest that the arm of Charles is long enough to reach from the distant Madrid to the most remote corner of Germany, and that his vengeance would be as sure as it would be fearful!" ***The Heidenmauer***, Ch. 9, p.162.

7) The Knight of Rhodes, Albrecht of Viederbach, would have departed Rhodes after the Ottoman conquest on January 1, 1523. Consequently, he is not a contemporary of Count Emich VII.

8) The pilgrimage to Einsiedeln Abbey is a fabrication, no doubt due to the impact Einsiedeln made on Cooper in 1828. Instead of an incredibly lenient punishment for the attack on the abbey as presented by the novel, and in spite of the apparent historical noninvolvement of the citizenry of Dürkheim (in contradistinction to Cooper's novel), the town of Dürkheim, together with its fortifications, was completely devastated in 1471, with most of the townspeople left homeless.[12]

It would appear that Cooper used his tailor-guide as a convenient scapegoat for his own recreation of history:

> "Should any musty German antiquary discover some immaterial anachronism, a name misplaced in the order of events, or a monk called prematurely from purgatory, he is invited to wreak his just indignation on Christian Kinzel, whose body and soul may St. Benedict of Limburg protect, for evermore, against all critics."
>
> ***Heidenmauer***, Introduction, p. xxiii

II. The Heidenmauer

As pointed out by Ernest H. Redekop[13] in 1989, the Heidenmauer was of Celtic origin (ca. 500 BC). That Cooper identified it with a Roman fortification, its ruins used by Atilla the Hun, can easily be forgiven in that a Roman stone quarry, the Kriemhildenstuhl, is directly in the face of the hill leading to the ring wall.

Nowadays, there is little to see of the fortification. The original walls were built of wooden posts and crossbeams filled with stones and sand. Through the course of the ages, the wood rotted and the walls crumbled. A hiker strolling past the former walls might notice large piles of moss-covered stones without realizing that there was once a strong fortification.

The tripartite title of the novel is

dominated by the German "Heidenmauer", a word few in the English-speaking world might be conversant with. As the title of a novel, it is mysterious, somewhat forbidding, and hardly a title to hit the best seller list.[14] Cooper's translation is "the Pagan's wall." [15]

Given Cooper's sympathetic rendering of the Catholic mass at a time when Catholicism was demonized in the United States as well as the extremely tolerant acts of penance in Einsiedeln so that all might be "forgiven and forgotten,"[16] the reader can only regard the novel as an exhortation for tolerance, for the ability to forgive, and to accept the inherent inconsistency in mankind as a weakness that most cannot overcome on their own. Cooper allows that each culture and each religion contains basic rites and practices that are not outmoded or "primitive" but have been adopted by later ages as a valid approach to the worship of God:

> "We have inherited many of the vestments and ceremonies, which are retained in the Protestant churches, from Pagan priests; nor is there any sufficient motive for abandoning them, so long as they aid the decencies of worship, without weakening its real objects. The Pagans themselves probably derived some of these very practices, from those whom we are taught to believe had direct communion with God, and who should have best known in what manner to render human adoration most acceptable to the ruler of the universe."
>
> ***Heidenmauer***, Ch. 24, pp.374-375.

The Heidenmauer and Teufelsstein are not merely heathen remnants of a bygone age. As Ulrike points out to Count Emich during the search for the "ghost hounds" and the supposedly winged ghost of Berchthold, "God is here (=they are standing beside the Teufelsstein), as he is among the hills we have lately quitted – on that fair and wide plain below – and in thy hold! –"[17] For Cooper, not simply an abbey or a chapel in a castle but nature itself represents the temple of God's creation.

It is obvious from the forgoing that Cooper was not a stickler for dogma. His final acceptance of membership in the Episcopal Church was only to quell the fears of his strongly Episcopal family, who were afraid that the soul of an "unchurched" Cooper might be imperiled.

III. The saga of Adelinde

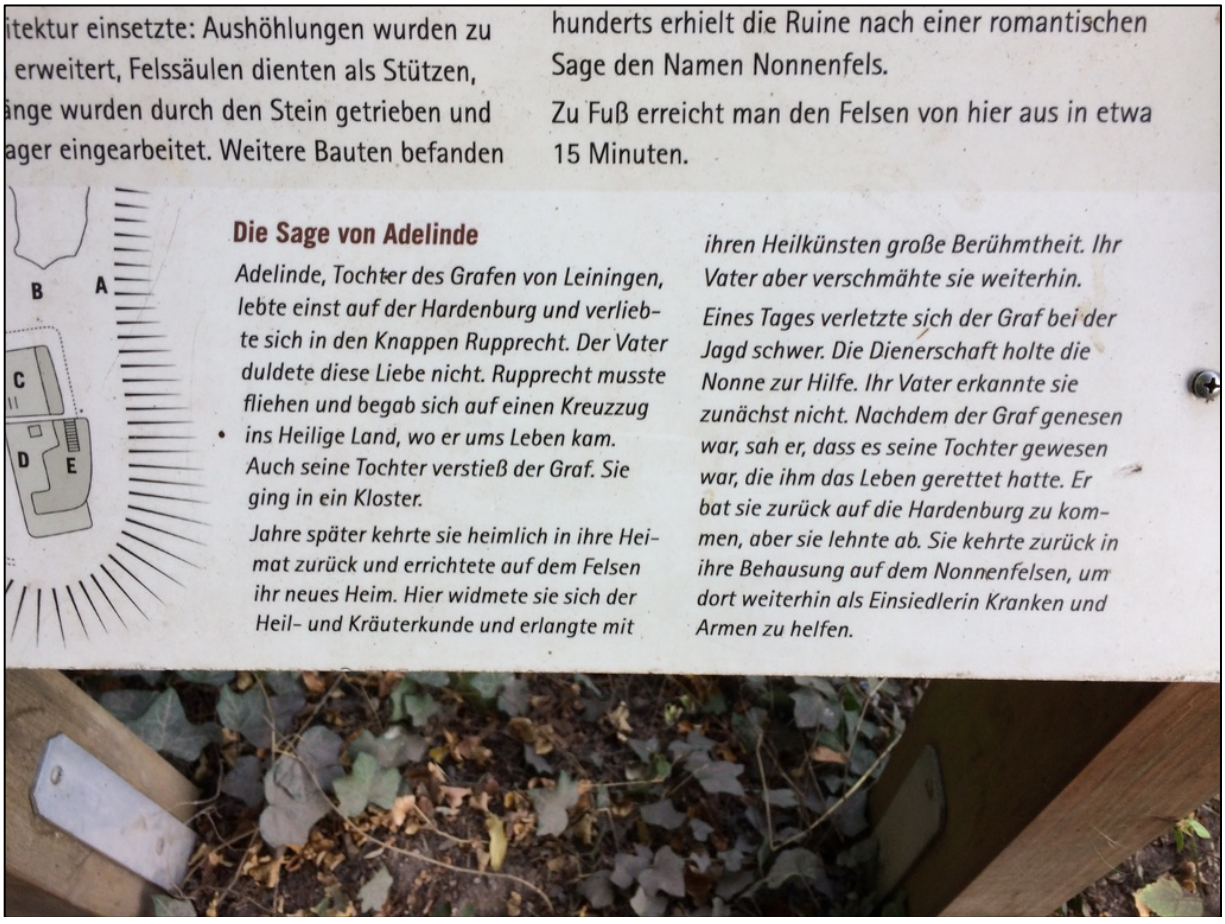
Among the Palatinate legends is that of Adelinde, which Cooper obviously picked up and rewove in his novel.

> "Adelinde was the daughter of the Count of Leiningen. She lived in Hardenburg Castle and fell in love with the soldier Rupprecht. Her father did not consent to their union. Rupprecht was forced to flee and took part in a crusade to the Holy Land, where he was killed. The count's daughter was disowned and sent to a nunnery.
>
> "Years later she secretly returned where, outside the town by a projecting rock called the Nonnenfels (=the nun's rock), she made her new home. Here she devoted herself to healing and the study of medicinal herbs. As a result of her good works, she achieved great fame. Her father, however, continued to reject her.

> "One day while hunting, the count was seriously injured. The count's retinue accepted the nun's help. Her father, at first, did not recognize her. After the count had recovered, he realized that it was his daughter, who had saved his life. He asked her to return to Hardenburg, but she refused. She returned to her simple lodging at the Nonnenfels, to continue helping the sick and the poor as an anchorite."
>
> (*My translation from the German*.)

I encountered this saga just outside the entrance to the ruins of the Hardenburg in September 2020. It was a small placard located such that one could look across the valley from Hardenburg to the Nonnenfels, optimistically judged to require only 15 minutes on foot.

The tale of the anchorite Odo of Ritterstein, "the Anchorite of the Cedars," and Ulrike Hailzinger Frey, wife of Dürkheim's Burgomaster Heinrich Frey and mother of Meta, is an inverted tale of Adelinde. Instead of a nun doing good works, we have Odo of Ritterstein sequestered inside the Heidenmauer, functioning as a holy anchorite.



itektur einsetzte: Aushöhlungen wurden zu erweitert, Felssäulen dienten als Stützen, ánge wurden durch den Stein getrieben und ager eingearbeitet. Weitere Bauten befanden

hunderts erhielt die Ruine nach einer romantischen Sage den Namen Nonnenfels.

Zu Fuß erreicht man den Felsen von hier aus in etwa 15 Minuten.

B A C D E

Die Sage von Adelinde

Adelinde, Tochter des Grafen von Leiningen, lebte einst auf der Hardenburg und verliebte sich in den Knappen Rupprecht. Der Vater duldete diese Liebe nicht. Rupprecht musste fliehen und begab sich auf einen Kreuzzug ins Heilige Land, wo er ums Leben kam. Auch seine Tochter verstieß der Graf. Sie ging in ein Kloster.

Jahre später kehrte sie heimlich in ihre Heimat zurück und errichtete auf dem Felsen ihr neues Heim. Hier widmete sie sich der Heil- und Kräuterkunde und erlangte mit ihren Heilkünsten große Berühmtheit. Ihr Vater aber verschmähte sie weiterhin.

Eines Tages verletzte sich der Graf bei der Jagd schwer. Die Dienerschaft holte die Nonne zur Hilfe. Ihr Vater erkannte sie zunächst nicht. Nachdem der Graf genesen war, sah er, dass es seine Tochter gewesen war, die ihm das Leben gerettet hatte. Er bat sie zurück auf die Hardenburg zu kommen, aber sie lehnte ab. Sie kehrte zurück in ihre Behausung auf dem Nonnenfelsen, um dort weiterhin als Einsiedlerin Kranken und Armen zu helfen.

Above: A snapshot of the saga of Adelinde opposite the entrance to Hardenburg Castle.

The gist of the saga is that a stratified, feudal society will generally not accept marital unions in which one party marries beneath its social rank. Adelinde's father was unwilling to allow her to marry a mere soldier. Cooper transforms the saga of Adelinde into a complex tale bridging two generations. It begins with Ulrike Hailzinger Frey, whom Cooper designates as the heroine of ***The Heidenmauer***. [18]

Ulrike is not a nun, nor does she do good works by healing the sick and helping the poor. Yet she obviously possesses in Cooper's mind certain qualities that distinguish her beyond those of other characters in ***The Heidenmauer***. She is married to Heinrich Frey, the Burgomaster of Dürkheim. At the time of their marriage, Heinrich was penniless, whereas Ulrike hearkened from the well-to-do Hailzinger family. In other words, Heinrich's union with Ulrike moved him up in the social world. Heinrich, however, was ambitious and a good businessman. He was able to move up even further in the world through his own efforts. Unfortunately for both Ulrike (who wanted her daughter to marry the man she loved) and her daughter Meta, Heinrich worshipped the accumulation of wealth. [19] Meta was in love with the forester Berchthold Hintermayer, a financially unpromising union Heinrich would never consent to.

As a young woman, Ulrike was sought-after. In Count Emich's case, he was in love with Ulrike, but – here again – his father forbade the union as Ulrike was not of nobility. Consequently, Emich was coerced to marry a member of his own class. [20]

The tale of Ulrike and Odo of Ritterstein, who were betrothed although Ulrike was not of nobility, did not result in tragedy due to an irate parent. Instead, the young noble, while intoxicated and imbued with reformist notions, and in order to scare a monk, defiled the host in Limburg Abbey.[21] This one precipitous incident becomes a turning point in Odo's life. He flees, becomes a vagabond, continually doing penance for his one act of sacrilege. One might question if Cooper's own ill-considered gun powder student prank at Yale University, which resulted in his expulsion, might bear some small similarity to Odo's defilement of the host. It should be pointed out that Odo is not excommunicated by the Church and that, after twenty years, a special midnight mass is held in Limburg Abbey for Odo (after a generous payment in gold) on the exact day of his act of sacrilege. It is during this special mass that the attack on Limburg Abbey is initiated. That Odo's treats his act of sacrilege as unforgivable and consequently requires acts of penance till the end of his life, stands in glaring opposition to the easy forgiveness offered those who set fire to Limburg Abbey. Just like Adelinde, Odo has returned to Dürkheim where he dwells in the Heidenmauer as the "Anchorite of the Cedars," offering succor and his blessing to the Dürkheim townspeople.

The end of a novel with few characters of heroic status is uplifted by the unexpected union of Meta and Berchthold.[22] Through the intercession of Ulrike, Odo signs over his castle and fortune to Meta and Berchthold, thus receiving Heinrich's immediate blessing. They are married the very next day. Not content with Meta and Berchthold's being catapulted into royalty, Cooper also adds a moving tale of the last days of Odo, who after much wandering again returns to Dürkheim. Cooper cagely does not confirm whether the corpse found in the anchorite's hut within the Heidenmauer was indeed Odo's. Instead, he writes:

> "Those who love to throw a coloring of romance over the affections, are fond of believing this was the Hermit, who had found a secret satisfaction, even at the close of so long a life, in breathing his last on the spot where he had finally separated from the woman he had so long and fruitlessly loved" (—final page).

IV. Ulrike Heilzinger Frey, Cooper's role model of womanhood?

What, exactly, distinguishes Ulrike from the other characters in the novel? Perhaps the most obvious aspect is that, unlike Count Emich or her husband, she is not wracked by doubt as to

her course of action. She does not attempt to justify her actions by questionable argumentation or self-delusion. Ulrike cannot be bribed by Emich to foster dissent against Limburg Abbey so that Berchthold Hintermeyer will receive a better-paying position. She instinctively knows what is right; she "simply" follows her conscience. She understands the difference between corrupt monks and altars erected to the glorification of God. She will not repeat Odo's youthful mistake of committing sacrilege to punish a corrupt monk.

It is clear that Odo was her first love. What is not clear is whether love plays a significant role in her relationship to her husband, who after Emich and Odo, was the third suitor. Whether, however, she may be termed "a virtuous, but unhappily paired woman" (Ch. XII, p. 207) is suggested but left unanswered. Ulrike's role towards her husband is that of a submissive, dutiful wife, whose basic concern is the future happiness of her daughter. Her best friend, the widow Lottchen Hintermeyer, mother of Berchthold, must be placed at least on a level with her husband Heinrich. Whether by "some warm argument" [23] with her husband, or by attempting to achieve the future happiness of her daughter by ardent appeals to both Count Emich and Odo, Ulrike does not give up. One sees, that in the end, she is successful. Although her husband trusts her completely, she is nonetheless "a mere housewife" in his eyes. [24]

Ulrike's husband dutifully waits for her return outside the Heidenmauer while his wife converses with the anchorite, her former betrothed. Whereas Emich, who is also present, questions Odo's intentions ("he who playeth the masquerade of penitence and seclusion"), Heinrich merely states, "…Ulrike fancieth he hath qualities that are not so evil, and a woman's taste, like a child's humors, is easiest altered by giving it scope." [25]

The good woman is in Cooper's eyes the moral pillar of the family. Her basic concern is moral instruction of the children. She should also provide her husband moral support. Being a woman, she is, however, on a lower level than her husband (e.g., "a mere housewife"). A woman's possession of her own property, for example, or the question of divorce, themes treated in *The Ways of the Hour*, were unknown even in the young American Republic. As Cooper's *Ways of the Hour* suggests, most men (Cooper included) were uncomfortable with the idea of a truly emancipated woman.

Ulrike is the moral superior of both her husband and her former suitors. With Odo, she is compassionate, attempting to show him that his craving for further penance will not give him peace. She is, for a short time, almost successful in convincing Berchthold and her husband to desist in the destruction of the abbey.[26]

V. The saga of the Teufelsstein

The Teufelsstein was a cult site probably going back to the Celts. Its name ("the devil's rock") relates to a saga involving the construction of Limburg Abbey. Wily Benedictine monks were able to trick the devil into believing that a tavern was to be built where inebriated patrons' souls could easily be reaped. The "father of sin" (Cooper's phrase) completed construction with amazing alacrity. Only when the abbey's bells rang for prayers did Satan realize he had been duped. In a fit of rage, he then attempted to lift the rock and hurl it down upon the abbey. According to Cooper "the stone was too firmly rooted to be displaced" (xix). But as a result of the devil's useless exertions, imprints of his struggle were left on the rock. Another version alleges that through God's intercession the rock began to melt like butter. According

to this version, when the devil sat down on the rock, his backside, feet and tail left imprints, which can be seen to this very day. [27]

The saga of the rock meant that Limburg Abbey's birth was compromised by its association with the devil. Moreover, the piety of monks who could outwit the devil was placed in question.

That Bonifacius, the Abbot of Limburg Abbey, did not have his monks following the rules of St. Benedict, is alluded to a number of times throughout the novel. The additional suggestion of the implicit spread of Lutheranism with its criticism of many rites within the Catholic Church only added fuel to the condemnation of the monks.

Myself by the Teufelsstein in September 2020, trying to make out where the impression of the tail was located. I did not climb to the top as the younger and more athletic Cooper did.

Although the specter of Lutheranism is passively lurking in the background, Cooper utters not a word regarding the practice of indulgences. Also, Odo von Ritterberg's transgression in defiling the host is not treated in the background of Lutheranism, where the Catholic belief in transubstantiation is questioned.

The "debauch" or drinking contest between Bonifacius and Count Emich also did not shed a positive light on what ought to have been a pious abbot. (Hugh C. MacDougall, in his thought-provoking article on ***The Heidenmauer***, refers to this additional saga of the Palatinate.[28]) The winner was to reap complete control of the produce of the grape harvest in a vineyard

contested by Limburg Abbey and the Hardenburg. Aided by his quick-witted young forester Berchthold, Emich was able to win the drinking bout by the skin of his teeth.

It should be noted that, in general, Cooper does not really detail what the infractions of the Limburg monks were. Gottlob, the cow-herd and foster brother of Berchthold Hintermeyer, does, however, point out, "Look you, Master Berchthold, these friars of Limburg eat the fattest venison, drink the warmest wine, and say the shortest prayers of any monks in Christendom!"[29] The only clear example of "evil doing" was the trickery hatched out by Brothers Siegfried and Cuno.[30] These two disreputable monks also stood as Bonifacius's seconds in his debauch with Emich. (Neither monk lasted long.) Siegfried and Cuno's object was to make the townspeople of Dürkheim believe that the young forester, Berchthold, who was mistakenly believed to have died the night of the Limburg conflagration, was now a ghost flying about with his two ghost-like if not ghost hounds. Through the application of superstitious fear, the two monks believed it would make the townspeople more malleable to the Catholic faith.

The monks as a whole are condemned for demanding ever higher tribute from Dürkheim. Here, again, a power conflict with Hardenburg is preprogrammed as Emich regards himself as the sole lord of Dürkheim.

VI. The good prior and the mad monk

Two monks stand out as almost exact opposites: Father Arnolph and Father Johan. Father Johan views the bulk of humanity as sinful beyond redemption and subject to damnation. Arnolph, on the other hand, is slow to condemn and tries to see the good in mankind. Charity and love are uppermost in his beliefs. He has no worldly interests and no ambition [31]. Due to his piety, the position of abbot would have been his for the taking.

Father Arnolph, the Prior of Limburg Abbey, is described as "the immediate spiritual governor of the community."[32] The puzzling question of why Arnolph, the Prior, or Bonifacius, the Abbot, were not capable of putting their house in order is never sufficiently answered. Arnolph is so esteemed by the congregation and by Emich, that one can go so far as to assert that he was "loved."[33]

When Emich attended Sunday Mass, it was Arnolph, whose sermon almost convinced Emich to desist in his evil plans:

> "The faith I preach is of God, and it partakes of the godlike qualities of his divine essence. He who would impute the sins of its mistaken performance to aught but erring creatures, casts odium on that which was instituted for his own good; and he who would do violence to its altars, lifts a hand against a work of omnipotence!"
>
> ***The Heidenmauer***, Ch. 8, p. 155

Only Johan's later vituperative and ill-considered comment that Emich should be damned crushed any thoughts on Emich's part of sparing the abbey.

Johan is passionate and fanatical in his beliefs. When the conflagration approaches the main altar, he attempts to ward off the invaders by appealing to their superstition. Before him he has laid out the alleged bones of Catholic martyrs, relics reputed to work miracles.[34] He dares the soldiers and townspeople to come closer lest they feel the wrath of God unleashed through the relics. Indeed, he would have perhaps succeeded in stopping the superstitious invaders in their tracks (Emich included) if Gottlob, the cow-herd, had not suddenly blown his ridiculous-sounding horn, making the invaders laugh.[35]

Here the question of the efficacy of relics is broached. Whether relics, which the Reformation rejected, were intended for foiling attacks or rather for healing the sick cannot be answered here. Although attempts were made to save mad Johan's life, he fled back to the altar and his relics. He was finally consumed by the flames, still believing in the power of the alleged bones of saints and martyrs. Cooper describes his grisly death as follows:

> "He kept his feet only for a moment, but withering fell. After which his body was seen to curl like a green twig that is seared by the flames."
>
> ***The Heidenmauer***, Ch. 21, p. 328.

Although Father Arnolph embodies a true sense of moderation and does all in his power to help those in need of help, he has not been designated a "hero" by Cooper. Nonetheless, Arnolph represents a shining light in the Limburg brotherhood. His example is applauded by all the members of the congregation. Even as Emich mocks Luther for marrying a nun, Arnolph is not prepared to condemn the act.

VII. Making sense of It all

As documented at the beginning of this essay, the events in the novel are either fabricated or arbitrarily conjoined. To add to the lack of historicity, sagas have been made use of to embellish the plot. In other words, a historical narrative has been created that never occurred. Particularly the pilgrimage[36] to Einsiedeln Abbey is solely Cooper's invention.

What is Cooper trying to get across to the reader? The lack of human bloodshed stands out in the novel, Father Johan being his own victim. Also, in the implicit backdrop of the Reformation, there seems to be a deliberate reluctance on the part of the Catholic Church to exact harsh measures on those involved in the destruction of Limburg Abbey. The apparent reason: Fear of driving the congregation into the arms of Lutheranism. All in all, a remarkable degree of clemency towards the pilgrims is shown. (Of course, Emich supplied a generous quantity of gold to the Church by way of reparations.[37]) Not even Emich has converted to Lutheranism. In fact, it was Emich who seconded the pleas of Lotte, Ulrike and Meta for a posthumous mass for the soul of Berchthold Hintermeyer, mistakenly believed to have perished in the conflagration. Here one can see the hold of certain practices within the Church on the hearts and minds of its members. (Lutheranism, for example, rejects the posthumous mass.)

The tale of Meta and Berchthold's change of fortune through the intercession of Odo winds to an end in the death of (shall we assume?) Odo on the final page of the novel.

Afterwards, Cooper abruptly delivers a final, sparsely worded closing paragraph in which he claims his object in the novel is to show "the high and immutable qualities of the good, the virtuous, and of the really noble." Yet these qualities are compromised throughout the novel by self-interest, greed, superstition, and sophistic thinking.

All the principal actors in the devastation of Limburg Abbey are wracked by doubt. Yet doubt alone is insufficient to make them desist. Taking Father Arnolph as a possible key to unlocking the meaning of the novel, we must regard our fellows with a charitable degree of tolerance, given their inherent imperfection. The Einsiedeln episode expands on this by allowing the Catholic Church itself to be forgiving, even with regard to the destruction of Limburg Abbey.

What was Cooper after? Nowhere does he openly mock or criticize practices within the Catholic Church. Rites, practices and obvious superstition are left for the reader to judge. Nowhere is religion in the United States placed on a higher level than Cooper's sympathetic description of the Catholic Church. Particularly, the hymns angelically sung by the choir of monks are extolled.

This reader's conclusion is that Cooper attempts to show the depth of religious feeling, too often misguided by superstition and perverted by greed or selfish inclinations. Whether Protestantism, Catholicism or Paganism, it is the degree to which one is able genuinely to commune with the Divine that determines the "validity" of one's beliefs and one's religion. [38]

Ulrike, the "heroine" of the novel, tries to convince Odo that his constant self-chastisement and craving for continued penance is exaggerated. When Odo responds that he has never met anyone so willing to "extenuate the sinner's faults", Ulrike responds:

> "Then hast thou never met the true lover of God or known a Christian. It matters not, Odo, whether we admit of this or that faith – the fruit of the right tree is charity and self-abasement, and these teach us to think humbly of ourselves and kindly of others." ***The Heidenmauer***, Ch. 31, p. 464.

Cooper claims his object was to show the crowning virtues of man. In the context of *The Heidenmauer*, these attributes can only distinguish an unfragmented self [39], "Man at one with God," or, as Ulrike revealed to Odo, "The true lover of God."

VIII. Parallels between *The Heidenmauer* (1832) and "The Helmsman of Lake Erie" (1845)[40]

One might ask how a novel with no hero and one seemingly submissive heroine can in any way offer concrete parallels with the anonymous sketch "The Helmsman of Lake Erie," published 13 years later.

Yet the moral anchor in the helmsman's life is his "love of God."

> "He was known, from one end of Lake Erie to the other, by the name of honest John Maynard; and the secret of his honesty was his love of God."
>
> "The Helmsman of Lake Erie," ***The Church of England Magazine*** (London, England), June 7, 1845.

Ulrike, too, is a "true lover of God." The basic mindset of thinking "humbly of ourselves and kindly of others" is the precondition for self-sacrifice. The exhortation to "love God" runs through Cooper's writings as the hallmark of the religious man.[41]

Although Cooper does not designate a male "hero," Prior Arnolph is the closest one could possibly get to the truly pious man. As the conflagration spreads on the night of the desecration of the abbey, two monks stand guard over the main altar: Johan and Arnolph. Johan busies himself with relics, which he believes will defend the abbey from the depravations of the invaders. He escapes being saved and runs back to the altar, remaining at his post until overcome by the flames. While admittedly steadfast in his fanatical beliefs, Johan hardly qualifies as "heroic."

Then there is Arnolph, who attempts to create doubt in the mind of Count Emich as to the righteousness of his actions. When Arnolph realizes that Emich cannot be dissuaded, even though the tombs of Emich's ancestors are about to be desecrated by his own hand, the prior meekly withdraws.[42] Arnolph sees no sense in sacrificing his own life when nothing good will come of it. His statement:

> "I am not weak enough to resist when resistance is vain," mildly answered the Monk; nor am I quick to desert my post, while there is still hope."
>
> ***The Heidenmauer*,** Ch. 20, p.311.

Had there been hope of changing the course of events, Arnolph would have stood his ground, even in the face of the approaching flames.

Whether a printer's blunder or intentional, ***The Heidenmauer*** mistakenly names the hermit monk who founded Einsiedeln "Meinard." His actual name was Meinrad.[43] Both "Maynard" and "Meinard" are akin in their etymological emphasis on a "stout heart."

IX. The Cooperian Hero

In our times, it would seem that nearly anyone can qualify as a hero: soldiers, firefighters, and male/female nurses are often described as "heroes" or "heroic." As can be seen in ***The Heidenmauer***, a much higher threshold for heroism is set. Courage and bravery alone do not constitute a Cooperian hero. Count Emich, a soldier, may be unflinching in battle, but – despite his courage and tenacity – is not a hero. Also, love of country or patriotism do not meet Cooper's vision of a hero.

Universal truth, not regional or national, is the backbone of heroism for Cooper. And this truth is only to be found in the formulation: "love of God."

In 1836, Cooper published ***The American Democrat***. On the topic of religion, he had little praise for the practice of religion in the United States:

> "In America the taint of sectarianism lies broad upon the land. Not content with acknowledging the supremacy of Deity, and with erecting temples in his honor, where all can bow down with reverence, the pride and vanity of human reason enter

into and pollute our worship, and the houses that should be of God and for God, alone, where he is to be honored with submissive faith, are too often merely schools of metaphysical and useless distinctions. The nation is sectarian, rather than Christian."[44]

Cooper goes on to describe the bedrock of religion:

"Religion's first lesson is humility; its fruit, charity." [45]

These two principles constitute the moral makeup of a Cooperian hero. The contemporary *secular* hero, no matter how brave and self-sacrificing, is of a different caliber. The fabric of a Cooperian hero is inherently religious, though not sectarian.

As seen in ***The Heidenmauer***, Cooperian heroes are not an everyday occurrence. Have we, in fact, progressed beyond the Pagans? Cooper's response:

"We may claim to have improved on the opinions and practices of our predecessors, but we are still far from being the consistent and equitable creatures that, it is to be hoped, we are yet destined to become."[46]

Notes:

1) The contemporary spelling is now Hardenburg with a "d." Nowadays, the town where Cooper stayed is called Bad Dürkheim, because it is a spa (="Bad"). If one does not use the umlaut, the correct spelling of Dürkheim is Duerkheim. Cooper's spelling "Deurckheim" with "eu" is incorrect. The historical "c" has fallen into disuse.

2) ***The Heidenmauer; or, the Benedictines. A Legend of the Rhine*** by J. Fenimore Cooper. Reprinted from the 1868 edition published by Hurd and Houghton (New York). Introduction, p. xiv: **From the Michigan Historical Reprint Series**.

3) James Franklin Beard (Editor), ***The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper***, (6 Volumes, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1960-1968), Vol II , pp. 145-146:

At least there was the *intention* to research the Counts of Leiningen.

"When in Germany the other day, a groupe [*sic*] of ruins that I met , so beset my fancy, that I must give vent to the impression in three volumes duodecimo, according to rule – Now I have need of getting at the history of the Princes of Leiningen, who were formerly Counts of Haardenburg [*sic*], and I find there is an account of the family in the Almanach de Gotha, for the year 1827."[1]

Letter 234. To Mrs. William Cabell Rives, Tuesday evening – Paris. Oct – 18th 1831

James Franklin Beard's footnote to the above:
"1) Cooper cannot have found this brief, one-paragraph account of the Princes of Leiningen especially useful as a source for *The Heidenmauer*."

4) Dr. Emil Becker-Bender, ***Bad Dürkheim und die Limburg mit Anhang: Ein Blick ins Mittelalter*** (Published by the City Council of Bad Dürkheim, June 1977). Pages 41-42 deal with the attack on the abbey by Emich VII in 1470.

5) ***Heidenmauer***, Ch. 19, p. 293.

6) ***Liste der Äbte des Klosters Limburg*** (*Wikipedia*). Bonifaz (=Bonifacius) was the 53rd abbot of Limburg. He was presiding from 1481-1483.

7) ***Heidenmauer***, Ch. 5, p. 97: "It is not alone to the religion of Christendom, as it existed in the time of Luther, that we are to look for an example of the baneful consequence of temporal and spiritual authority, as blended in human institutions. Christian or Mahommedan, Catholic or Protestant, the evil comes in every case from the besetting infirmity which tempts the strong to oppose the weak, and the powerful to abuse their trusts."

Also, ibid, Ch. 25, p. 382: "In that age, their Abbot was commonly a noble and ancient, and sometimes of a princely house; for, in maintaining its influence, the Church has rarely been known to overlook the agency of those opinions and prejudices that vulgarly exist among men. In every case, however, the prelate who presided over this favored community, possessed, in virtue of his office, the latter temporal distinction; being created a mitred Abbot and a Prince of the Empire, on the day of his consecration."

8) ***Bad Dürkheim und die Limburg,*** p. 45. In this conflict, Emich VIII was unable to protect his surrounding fiefdoms and Dürkheim. Dürkheim was plundered, and women and children were driven from their homes, many of whom were raped. "The reign of terror lasted nearly 40 days" (="Fast 40 Tage dauerte die Schreckensherrschaft.")

9) Ibid, p. 46***.***

10) Ibid, Ch. 9, p. 162:
"Father Arnolph understood the other's (=Count Emich's) meaning, for it was no secret that Friedrich was, just then, so pressed as to sit **on a tottering throne**; a circumstance that was known to have encouraged the long meditated designs of the Count of Hartenburg to get rid of a community, that thwarted his views, and diminished his local authority."

11) cf. "Frederick V of the Palatinate," *Wikipedia*.

12) ***Bad Dürkheim und die Limburg,*** p. 43,

13) Ernest H. Redekop (University of Western Ontario), "Cooper's Emblems of History," 1989: Accessible online in the James Fenimore Cooper Society's website. Also, "intractable (historical) problems" are alluded to in the article.

14) In an autobiographical letter to Rufus Wilmot Griswold, Cooper mentions the reception of his novels up to 1842. Of his three European novels; he writes:

"Bravo came next [after Wish-ton-Wish] and met with a better reception than any book from the same pen, with perhaps th(e)at <exception> of the Red Rover. This book was translated into Modern Greek.
"Heidenmauer followed, with much less success.
"Headsman did better; though by no means as well as the Bravo, or Red Rover."
Letters and Journals, Vol. IV, p, 344, Letter # 705, 10-18 January 1843?

15) ***Heidenmauer***, Introduction, p. xviii. Interestingly, in letter #237 of Nov. 6th 1831 (***Letters and Journals***, Vol. II, p.149) to his American publishing house, Carey and Lea, Cooper writes: "Any one [*sic*] who understands German will tell you that Heidenmaeur [*sic*] means Pagan's Camp, in the vernacular…."—Not only does he misspell "Heidenmauer" twice but also provides an incorrect translation. The more abusive term "heathen" is etymologically derived from the Germanic "Heiden-".

16) Ibid, Ch. 23, p. 342. Cooper uses "to pardon and forget."

17) Ibid, Ch. 30, p. 449.

18) Ibid, Ch. 30, pp. 452-453.

19) Although Heinrich Frey is only interested in the accumulation of wealth, he is not alone: Emich is just as greedy. The Limburg curtails Emich's domain and his power. That the novel should, through Heinrich's stubborn example, represent the rise of the Capitalism has little foundation. Cooper injects Lutheranism in the background as a passive force working against the Catholic Church. Yet to regard the novel's main theme as the Protestant Reformation elevates too much of the little provided. Cooper might want the novel to depict the transition from "one set of governing principles to that of another" (Ch. 30, p. 446), yet a dynamic encroachment of Lutheranism on the strongly Catholic communities and characters in the novel is missing. A political interpretation somehow showing the virtues of democracy in the outgoing Middle Ages also seems out of place. The only theme that resonates throughout the novel is of a moral nature – the weakness of man.

20) ***Heidenmauer***, Ch. 13, pp. 214-215.

21) Ibid, Ch. 16, pp. 262-263.

22) The young couple had been singled out by Odo from the beginning of his Heidenmauer stay. He knew Meta was Ulrike's daughter, and he also knew that the young couple were in love. The midnight mass held on the 20th anniversary of his act of sacrilege was the very mass that was interrupted by the attack by Emich and Frey. Not simply Johan was in dire risk of being consumed by the flames but Odo as well. The Knight of Rhodes and Berchthold first attempted in vain to save Johan. As the conflagration became more intense, Berchthold disappeared from sight. It was Berchthold, who was able to save Odo from the flames.
Although Berchthold's act of courage may have served to legitimize the transfer of Odo's titles to the young couple, it is obvious from the beginning that simply Odo's unwavering love of Ulrike was sufficient.

23) ***Heidenmauer***, Ch. 31, p. 460.

24) Ibid, Ch. 21, p. 316.

25) Ibid, Ch. 31, p. 460.

26) Ibid, Ch. 19, pp. 298-302.

27) Cooper's version of the saga of the Teufelsstein is on p. xix of the Introduction to ***The Heidenmauer*.** A slightly different version is to be found in **Teufelsstein (Haardt),** (*Wikipedia*) under "Legend of the Teufelsstein."

28) Hugh C. MacDougall, "Exploring Man's 'Latent Sympathies' in ***The Heidenmauer***", 1995. Online: http://www.oneonta.edu/~cooper/articles/suny/1995suny-macdougall,html. MacDougall, footnote 18: "The legend now told has Abbot Bonifacius worsted not by the Count of Leiningen, but by the Burgomaster of a nearby town. See, e.g., ***Berlitz Travellers' Guide to Germany*** (New York: Berlitz, 4th ed., 1994), p. 505."

29) ***Heidenmauer***, Ch. 1, p. 31.

30) Ibid, Ch. 20, p. 454.

31) Ibid. Ch. 26, p. 395: "He is not ambitious, for thrice hath he refused the mitre!"

32) Ibid, Ch. 8, p. 154.

33) Although there is no direct mention of Maynard in "The Helmsman of Lake Erie" as being "loved," Theodor Fontane concludes his interpretation of "John Maynard" by adding the love not only of those who were saved but of their families and all of Buffalo.

> „Er hat uns gerettet, ***die Liebe*** sein Lohn." (Fontane's "John Maynard," last line)
> "He saved us, ***our love*** be his reward." (*my translation*)

34) Count Emich himself is susceptible to miracles. The eye of a small picture of the Virgin Mary seemed to suggest "reproach". Emich believes that "images and paintings have been known to speak, when it was Heaven's pleasure." ***The Heidenmauer***, Ch. 20, pp.308-309.

35) ***Heidenmauer***, Ch. 21, p. 323.

36) Ibid, Ch. 24, pp.372-373 for the Abbé's rejection of the necessity of pilgrimages. Also, in Ch. 24, p. 369, Heinrich Frey states: "Were things properly governed, the penances and pilgrimages, and other expiations of the Church, would be chiefly left to the women."
As pointed out by Wayne Franklin in ***James Fenimore Cooper: The Later Years*** (Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2017), p. 140, the role of the pilgrimage is repeated in ***The Headsman***, not to Einsiedeln Abbey but to the Great St. Bernard Abbey.

37) Ibid, Ch. 23, pp. 356-357. Emich expressed his reparation in gold differently: "To strip a churchman of his hoardings needeth but a bold spirit, a present bribe, and a strong hand."

38) Cooper's approach to regarding the depth of one's religious belief as reflected in one's moral conduct as more important than a particular religion's "validity," is reminiscent of Gottfried Ephraim Lessing's "Three-Ring Parable" in his 1779 play *Nathan der Weise* (=*Nathan the Wise*).

39) "Fragmented" in the sense that one is at variance with one's own conscience. In the first paragraph of Chapter 22, Cooper writes:

"Like all else that is good, it (=one's conscience) may be weakened and perverted, or be otherwise abused; but, like everything that comes from the same high source, even amid these vicious changes, it will retain traces of its divine author. We look upon this unwearied monitor as a vestige of that high condition from which the race fell; and we hold it beyond dispute, that precisely as men feel and admit its influence do they approach, or recede from their original condition of innocence."

40) The question whether the identity of the anonymous author of the sketch entitled "The Helmsman of Lake Erie" (first published in 1845 in London, England) can be linked to Cooper is the subject of a series of essays to be found in "Norman's Cooper Corner" in the Anne Huberman website www.johnmaynard.net.

41) Cf. Norman Barry, "A Language Comparison of the Writings of James Fenimore Cooper and 'The Helmsman of Lake Erie,'" Word/Phrase #52: "His Love of God," in Norman's Cooper Corner.

42) Count Emich perpetrates *two* acts of sacrilege: one is against the abbey, the other, is against his own ancestors, entombed in the abbey's crypt. As Emich points out, the thought of desecrating his ancestors' tombs kept him from acting much earlier.

> "Here lie my ancestors, Arnolph," answered the Count, huskily; and here, as thou sayest, have masses been said for their souls." ***The Heidenmauer***, Ch. 9, p. 164.
> Also:
> "(Arnolph speaking:) If thou hast no thought for posterity – none for thyself – none for thy God, Emich," the latter resumed, "bethink thee of those who have gone before. Hast already forgotten thy visit to the tombs of thy family?"
> "Thou hast me there, Arnolph! – those sacred vaults have been thy convent's shield these many months!" ***The Heidenmauer***, Ch. 20, p. 312.

43) ***The Heidenmauer***, Ch. 24, p. 365. Letter XVI of ***Gleanings in Europe: Switzerland Gleanings in Europe: Switzerland***, Letter XVI, p.167, unfortunately does not name the hermit. Also, cf. "The Line-up," Suspect No. 6, under "More Essays by Norman Barry" (johnmaynard.net)

44) James Fenimore Cooper, ***The American Democrat*** (Liberty Classics, Indianapolis, Indiana, Reprint: ***The American Democrat*** by James Fenimore Cooper, with an introduction by H. L. Mencken, Copyright 1931), "On Religion," p. 239.

45) Ibid.

46) ***Die Heidenmauer***, Ch. 27, p.420.

<u>Appendix I</u>:

Bad Dürkheim is to this very day famous for its wines. Just so its fame is not so easily forgotten, the town sports beside its enormous parking lot for tourists the largest wine barrel in the world. The Riesenfaß (="giant barrel") is, however, a restaurant and is not used for storing wine.

The pictures were taken either by the author or by Monika Kaiser in September 2020.

Bad Schussenried, December 29, 2020

<u>Appendix II</u>: (Next page)

Topographical map of Bad Dürkheim with major sites pertaining to *The Heidenmauer*.

1) Bad Dürkheim's Devil's Stone (=Teufelsstein); 2) Keltischer Ringwall (Celtic Ringwall=Heidenmauer); 3) Klosterruine Limburg (=the ruins of Limburg Abbey); 4) Hardenburg (=the ruins of Hardenburg Castle); and 5) the Nonnenfels (the saga of Adelinde). This section of the topographical map including eight hiking trails for tourists is taken from *Die Pfalz macht Urlaub. In Bad Dürkheim wandern zwischen Wald und Wein* (12/2016).