

***Gelassenheit*<sup>1</sup> and Detachment:  
A psycho-historical study of Andreas Bodenstein  
of Karlstadt – and his conflict with Martin Luther  
by Ulrich Bubenheimer (1980<sup>2</sup>)**

*„They say I should recant and deny your [God's] Word, and they threaten me with separation, with excommunication, with cursing, with loss of honour and goods, with deprivation of life and limb. ... But this is nothing compared to the same suffering that the Spirit experiences when they dare to take the word of your promise from his heart. ... Therefore, Lord, look down from heaven, see my affliction and torment, tribulation and anxiety. I stand in the terror of hell, in the pain of death, in demonic temptations. I am nailed to your cross with hands and feet.“<sup>3</sup>*

This is how 34-year-old Andreas Bodenstein described his inner state on Thursday, October 11, 1520, in an open letter to his mother in Karlstadt, published with the title *Missive* [i.e., Letter] on the supreme virtue *Gelassenheit*. About 14 days earlier, when Dr. John Eck published the bull from Rome threatening Martin Luther with excommunication, he had added the name of his personal enemy, Dr. Karlstadt. Karlstadt was deeply frightened; unlike Luther, he had tried very hard in the years since 1517 to keep the pope out of the theological controversy and thus to avoid a break with Rome. The words above reflect the psychological struggle and dejection that the bull unleashed in Andreas Bodenstein. But already the following week, we encounter a very different Andreas in the polemical pamphlet "*Von päpstlicher Heiligkeit*" (On Papal Holiness), which was finished on October 17, 1520, and dedicated to a friend in his homeland, the knight Neidhart von Thüngen zu Sodenberg († 1522): "... the pope, cardinals and bishops should be subservient to all creatures, in particular to the king and the princes for the sake of God. Here they will excommunicate me and burn me for speaking against the liberty of the Church. Yes, dear <p. 251> fellows, if I speak against romish and tyrannical liberty and you excommunicate me, I laugh, and if I preach Christ's liberty to the laity, your banning and your cursing shall be a cool dew to me".

Dejection has given way to new courage and re-discovered self-confidence.

Andreas Bodenstein had these two minds (*Seelen*) in his chest: a gloomy and anxious depressive side, and the antithesis, a self-confident courage to face life that expressed itself actively and even aggressively. In order to understand Andreas Bodenstein, one must take into account the effect that the mood swings associated with these two minds must have had on both Bodenstein's actions and his respective theological statements. In a series of theses "On Tribulation and Election", also written in those decisive months of the Reformation, Bodenstein expresses the experience of depression with particular clarity:

*"The pain and feeling of the soul distanced from God's saints and cut off from God is expressed in a lack of praise of God and of 'sacrifices of praise' and in the absence of joy in the morning, in a troubled conscience and in the vision of one's own sins."*

Primary symptoms of a depressive state of mind surface here: the feeling of abandonment, joylessness and being weighed down after awakening, as well as feelings of guilt and self-accusation.

<sup>1</sup> Anabaptist scholarship has often used **yieldedness** for *Gelassenheit* and yielding for verb uses. McGinn used „**Releasement**“ to translate the title of Karlstadt's treatise, but he ends up writing mostly about *Gelassenheit* (see Ronald K. Rittgers and Vincent Evener (eds.): *Protestants and Mysticism in Reformation Europe*, p. 85). We've left *Gelassenheit* here but below (with words like **release**, **forsake**, and **let[ting] go**) we've tried to capture Karlstadt's usually active use of the term and Bubenheimer's description of the same.

<sup>2</sup> Lecture in Karlstadt/Main on November 15, 1980 on the occasion of the 500th birthday of Andreas Bodenstein (ca. 1480-1541). Published in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* vol. 92, issue 2/3 (1981) pp. 250-268.

<sup>3</sup> English translation of „The Meaning of the Term *Gelassenheit* and Where in Holy Scripture It Is Found“ in: E.J. Furcha, *The Essential Karlstadt: Fifteenth Tracts by Andreas Bodenstein (Carlstadt)* from Karlstadt, Classics of the Radical Reformation 8, Scottdale, PA 1995, pp. 27-39.

These psycho-historical observations demand that we ask about the causes of Andreas Bodenstein's obvious personal crisis in the autumn of 1520. This question will broaden into questioning about the development of Bodenstein's personality and provide us with an occasion to consider the origins that shaped Bodenstein: his family, his parents, his upbringing and his home.

With respect to Bodenstein's crisis in the autumn of 1520, the external cause and the deeper causes must be distinguished. The external cause was his unexpected inclusion in the bull threatening excommunication, which demanded that he recant his teaching within 60 days. This threat of excommunication compelled him to take a step he had wanted to avoid, namely the break with Pope Leo X. What were the reasons for Bodenstein's long loyalty to the pope? It is obvious to cite the fact that the ban threatened his material existence, his benefice as archdeacon in Wittenberg. Indeed, Bodenstein's well-funded position could have had a braking effect on his **<p. 252>** stance towards Rome. But this was not decisive, for precisely in October 1520, when the conflict with Rome became unavoidable for Bodenstein, he immediately announced in the letter to his mother that he would, if necessary, renounce the archdeaconate for his beliefs; shortly afterwards he returned his privilege of a papal vice-count palatine, the so-called *Vicecomitat*, which he brought back from Rome in 1516. Bodenstein, who like his contemporaries had not despised benefices up to that point, later proved repeatedly that he was more willing than many of his colleagues to sacrifice material existence for his convictions.

Bodenstein permits us to examine how inner, psychological bonds are much stronger than outer ones. The deeper reasons for Bodenstein's originally conservative stance towards the Pope lay in his soul, in his attachment to his mother. The separation from the pope required from Bodenstein a far more difficult separation, namely the letting go (*Ablösung*) of his mother. We can see this already in the fact that Andreas, before he wrote against the Pope, turned to his mother, who with her own piety had taught him obedience to the pope in his childhood.

A lot can be known about the parents of Andreas Rudolff alias Bodenstein (*Rudolff* is a part of the family name, not a middle name) and their piety. Andreas' mother Katharina Bodenstein was born Katharina Demudt and came from the country town of Hammelburg—which then belonged to Fulda—near the city Karlstadt on the Main. From this Hammelburg family we still know of Andreas' uncle, Nikolaus Demudt. He had taken the habit as an Augustinian regular canon in the monastery *Neuwerk* near Halle and had become provost and archdeacon there in 1519; thus he belonged to the higher clergy like his nephew Andreas, the Wittenberg archdeacon. Demudt was in good standing with his employer, Cardinal Albrecht of Mainz. In 1519/20, he worked (with fleeting success) to mediate between the Wittenberg theologians and the cardinal, before he himself fled from his monastery to Wittenberg in 1523 and married. His nephew Andreas, who had dedicated two writings to him in 1521, thus logged a success in his own family.

The pre-Reformation career of Nikolaus Demudt points to good relations between the Demudts and the church. We can prove this even more directly with Andreas' father. The family of the father Peter Bodenstein probably goes back originally to a landed gentry family from Bodenstein that had settled in Eichsfeld and Thuringia; the branch to which Peter's family belonged **<p. 253>** had already become burghers, but still retained the coat of arms of nobility. This family coat of arms was used by Andreas on his 'Wagons' broadsheet of 1519 and by his relative, the jurist Dr. Leonhard Bodenstein († 1549) in Nuremberg. The father Peter Bodenstein was also not a native of Karlstadt, but most likely came via Hammelburg to Karlstadt.

Nevertheless, Peter Bodenstein soon became one of the most respected citizens of Karlstadt. In 1481 he is recorded as one of the town's two mayors. In 1485 he was master of the brotherhood of St. Nicholas and St. Urban at the local parish church and as such he was involved in the administration of foundations for the mass and for the poor. He died sometime before 1515, while Andreas' mother was still alive in 1525.

The churchly piety of the parents is evident already in their choice of a first name for their son. Born in 1486, the reformer was named after the patron saint of the parish church of St. Andrew. Andreas Bodenstein mentioned this saint, who is commemorated on November 30 and whose image—with the St. Andrew's cross—can be found in the parish church on the keystone of a choir arch, as an exemplary martyr to his mother as late as 1520, although by then he was already suspicious of the veneration of saints:

*"St. Andrew rejoices in his heart that he should die on the cross because of his Master, Jesus Christ. He was a devout saint. Why should I, a poor and great sinner, not desire to die too? If I flee bodily death, the eternal death of hell will destroy me body and soul."*

<p. 254> Andreas Bodenstein, who also upheld St. Symphorian in a similar way, addressed his mother by making conscious, positive use of familiar elements of her piety in order to sway her to his side, if possible, in the affair with the pope. Andreas' own participation in the veneration of the saints, as it was carried out in his birthplace, is documented in his second publication, the 1507 scholastic work *Distinctiones Thomistarum* (Distinctions of the Thomists). At the beginning of this work he invokes the following saints: 1. the Holy Trinity - in the parish church of Karlstadt there was an altar of the Holy Trinity; 2. the Virgin Mary - in Karlstadt there was a "Brotherhood of Our Lady and St. Sebastian"; 3. St. Catherine, the patron saint of his mother. Along with the veneration of saints, Andreas was also (he reported) *"reared and educated from his youth in reverence and respect for images; and I have a pernicious fear, which I would like to get rid of, but cannot."* In his Missive Bodenstein also names his godparents among those responsible for his religious education:

*"I have promised God and the Christian Church, through my godparents or godmothers (who lifted me out of the waters), while and before I was baptized, to abide and die in the faith. [...] Why should I not fulfill the vows of my godparents who committed me to God before my baptism?"*

We see here that "gelassen" has the active meaning of "to release (*verlassen*)" or "to let go (*loslassen*)": Whoever can let go of something is "gelassen". Although Bodenstein in the Missive addresses his entire family, the mother as the recipient stands in the foreground. Separation from her is like a mental cutting of the umbilical cord, a very painful process:

*"I remember the word of Christ, who thus says: 'You should not think that I have come to send peace upon the earth; I have come to send the sword.' [Mt 10,34] That same sword divides children from parents and wives from husbands, brothers from sisters, yes even the soul from the body, as is written [Heb 14,12]. The sword separates soul and body and places the human being completely in God's will [...] Countless sighs and pains rise in the person who does not take the sword into the hands of faith, for this is the sword that now separates (*geteilt*) me from the Pope [...]"*

The separation from the Pope is a separation that is also visible outwardly; the separation from the mother is the deeper inner detachment (*Ablösung*). Bodenstein expressly speaks of outer and inner Gelassenheit:

*"I know that I cannot be a disciple and follower of Christ, if I don't leave father and mother, brother and sister, all friends and my own nature, skin and hair. Everything must be released [= gelassen]—everything that is in me and outside me, everything in soul and body that keeps me from the Kingdom of Heaven. The good Lord grant me this, amen. For I know that there is no greater virtue on earth and in heaven than releasement [= Gelassenheit], when one leaves [*verlasset*] all his goods, honour, friends, body and soul".*

To cling to the mother now instead of going one's own way—that is, symbiotic attachment—would be the opposite of releasement:

*"If you were attached to the Pope, and I wanted to attach myself to you, I would become hateful toward Christ and his enemy [...] Yes, I must leave [*gelassen*] not only you, but also myself; I must have no regard for my body and life".*

After detachment from mother and father, kin and home, maternal piety and the old faith, comes the most difficult task of detachment from one's own life — the readiness to die. It is no coincidence

that Bodenstein, at the age of 54, one year before his death in Basel (24 December 1541), wrote a long series of theses on Gelassenheit - for which he used the Latin term "abnegatio" <p. 257> — as the prelude to a planned but unfinished major theological work: "Fundamental Teachings of Holy Scripture" (*Loci communes sacrae scripturae*).

This plan is already an indication of Andreas' reawakened will to live after his depressive anxieties. The final unconscious [*letzte geheime*] cause of his depressed state was the feeling of guilt in the face of the inner voice of the mother, who called out to Andreas: "Dear son, follow the Pope!" As I have already noted in the introduction, just one week later, after Andreas had freed himself from this, he could sound the battle cry with his writing "On papal holiness", in which he summons the entire Frankish nobility through Neidhart von Thüngen to the reform of the papacy. He had gotten to know the pope during his stay in Rome in 1515/16:

*"The Pope should have the divine book in his hand and rule all Christians from it. [...] I know, and we all see it plain as day, that the Pope judges from his decrees and executes spiritual and worldly matters by his own law. That alone would be enough for sensible Christians to rise up against the Pope, to reform him. [...] Therefore let us now awake (to our salvation) and let us reform the pernicious lion"*.

Even now Bodenstein does not call for the abolition of the papal office, but for its reformation. The most important goal—which alone was enough to satisfy him, if necessary—was the demand that the pope subject himself to Holy Scripture just like all other Christians and laypeople, i.e. surrender any claim to infallibility and singular authority in the interpretation of scripture. Papal infallibility, which did not become church dogma until 1871, but which was claimed already by popes in the 16th century, was then represented in its most uncompromising form by Bodenstein's Roman university colleague, the curial court theologian and palace master Silvester Mazzolini Prierias († 1527), who made a name for himself as a prosecutor in the process against Luther in Rome.

Bodenstein had already clashed with this extreme Papalist in 1515/16 during a theological disputation at the *Sapienza* on the question of Scripture's place in the hierarchy of ecclesiastical authorities and norms. It can be assumed that a certain esteem of Holy Scripture had been imparted to Bodenstein himself within the framework of the late-medieval <p. 258> lay piety of his Franconian parental home, since he refers to the fact that his godparents had committed him to the Holy Scriptures in the baptismal vows, which he later repeated (perhaps in 1510 as he gave the doctoral oath of theologians). That principal concern is already summarized on the title page of his treatise on the papacy:

*"This booklet concludes on the basis of Holy Scripture that papal holiness all too often can err, sin and do wrong. Whoever doesn't believe this is an evil non-christian."*

At the same time Bodenstein joins theological criticism of the Pope's claims to infallibility with social criticism of the pope's accumulation of power and splendour, which Bodenstein bases on his own observations of papal processions and worship services during his Rome journey and which *mutatis mutandis* do not lack a certain currency<sup>4</sup>:

*"Of the many horses: The Pope errs in that every day he acts contrary to God's prohibition and Christ's example [...] Now, because the Pope [...] is a spiritual ruler, it is much less befitting for him—as opposed to a worldly king—to hold such an excessive number of horses, which he drapes with silver, gold, pearls and precious stones, and yet all this is unnecessary for him. But at the very same time, the poor must suffer need and anxiety [...] I do not grant to him at all that he makes these expenditures for the honor and praise of the papal estate. " [...] "Also many poor people suffer hunger, whom the Pope could well feed with such useless money. But he [...] wants us to [...] celebrate him and to cultivate such unchristian honor against God"*.

<sup>4</sup> Bubenheimer refers to the Visit by Pope John Paul II to the Federal Republic of Germany on 15-19 November 1980.

Bodenstein's writing is very deliberately aimed at the Renaissance Pope Leo X. Under him, a separate trial against Bodenstein in Rome soon got underway. However, the issuing of an already drafted bull of excommunication was interrupted by the death of Leo on December 1, 1522, and under the succeeding reform-minded Pope Hadrian VI, Bodenstein's trial apparently was not continued. Thus, unlike Luther, he escaped explicit personal excommunication. Bodenstein's writings appeared on various indices of forbidden books beginning in the 1520s. In the later Roman indices from 1559 onwards, which applied to the whole church, there was a blanket prohibition of all of Bodenstein's writings. In earlier local lists (first in Paris in 1522), Bodenstein's writing against the Pope is not mentioned; instead his Latin treatise against celibacy and monastic vows, written in June 1521, was banned; obviously, its effect on the clergy was feared most.

<p. 259> Bodenstein's turn in October 1520 from fear of breaking with the papacy to courageous continuation of the way of reformation he had begun was of great significance not only for his stance toward the Pope, but also for his entire future theological development. Bodenstein experienced this turnaround as a conversion. This experience of conversion was already reflected in his *Missive* to his mother, in which he speaks at the beginning of his great fears. After Bodenstein accepts separation from Pope and mother as the will of God, even in the face of martyrdom, with the words "Yes, Lord, it is right", he writes in a concentrated mystical language:

*"Christ is not to be found in friendship, but in his temple, where his word resounds and shines, where the Pharisees and the Hypocrites, the Pope and his fops, are amazed and turn foolish. In the same temple, which is a yielded person [ein gelassener Mensch], God, Christ our Lord, is found".*

For Andreas Bodenstein, the birth of God in the soul described here means spiritual renewal—rebirth. After this conversion Bodenstein became a "theologian of rebirth". The parallel of birth and rebirth is clear already in the structure of the *Missive*. The open letter has two parts: In the first Bodenstein converses with God, who can create rebirth, in the second part he converses with his mother, who gave birth to him in the flesh. It is evident in this parallel of bodily and spiritual birth that Bodenstein's mystical image of God was also shaped by positive primal experiences [*Urerfahrungen*] with his own mother—in a nutshell Andreas Bodenstein, similar to other mystics, represents a "motherly theology".

*"With something more than mildness, without any merit [of my own], you have re-birthed me with the Word of your truth, as is written, 'He has birthed us in the word of his truth, so that we might become his creatures.' In your word, that is, in your covenants and promises you have birthed us and made us alive for you spiritually, that is, in faith, love, consolation and hope".*

Bodenstein's thoughts on baptism, which differ from Luther's, are rooted in this experience, which he described as being redeemed 'as if born anew' from inner agony. Bodenstein refers several times in the *Missive* to the vow of his godparents, which was important to him; infant baptism was still unquestioned by him. And yet, as is so often the case with him, the new view silently develops. In the already mentioned theses "On Tribulation and Election" Bodenstein writes, *"Those baptized in the Spirit and with the water of tribulation are truly baptized."*[...] *"Spiritual affliction is a sacrament"* <p. 260> It was not a long journey from this spiritualization of baptism, through an ever stronger emphasis on "baptism in the Spirit", which for Bodenstein is the "true baptism" already in the Theses, to the consequent renunciation of infant baptism. When Bodenstein had finally convinced himself that there was no scriptural proof for the baptism of infants, he stopped the practice in his parish of Orlamünde on the Saale in 1524. In 1524, Bodenstein penned a work on baptism in dialogue form—just like his most influential treatise on the Lord's Supper, the "Dialogue or a conversation booklet on the abominable and idolatrous abuse of the most highly venerable sacrament of Jesus Christ", which was written around the same time. The book on baptism was confiscated in November 1524 when it went to print in Basel and has since been lost. What had become public was enough for Bodenstein to be regarded by many of his contemporaries as the "Father of the Anabaptists." In the period that followed, he kept in touch with Anabaptist circles, which were also influenced by Bodenstein's

theology of rebirth and sanctification. Bodenstein obviously differed from the Anabaptist practice in that he did not rebaptize people who had already been baptized, but simply stopped baptizing babies, probably with a view to a planned later baptism of adults. Bodenstein, however, did not let the question of baptism become a confessional dividing point; he himself later practiced infant baptism again as a father and pastor. We can assume nevertheless that he would have preferred it otherwise. However, moderation on this point made possible Bodenstein's position among the Swiss Reformers in Zurich (1530-1534) and Basel (1534-1541), after the Lutherans had decisively expelled him.

The ball that Bodenstein's Roman opponents dropped was picked up by his former Lutheran confederates: Not the Roman but the Wittenberg Church excommunicated Andreas Bodenstein. Now he was hit by what he had expected from the papacy in October 1520: Martin Luther prompted Bodenstein's expulsion from Saxony in September 1524. For Bodenstein, the flight from town to town began, ostracized by Luther's false accusation that he was a rebel and in cahoots with Thomas Müntzer. Bodenstein's origins in the town bourgeoisie and his relations with the local nobility — the people of Thuengen mounted a bitter and successful resistance against the peasants on the Sodenberg — **<p. 261>** made him from the outset someone who was not a natural political ally of the peasants. Andreas Bodenstein, who in the final phase of the Peasants' War in June 1525 found shelter for a week with his mother in Karlstadt and during this time held a public evangelical sermon there in his home town, was forced to experience that even the peasants of his homeland sought to kill him, the priest. Bodenstein largely supported the social demands of the peasants, but he rejected the revolt. Bodenstein remained a legitimist in political terms: *"I know that you much prefer that I let myself be strangled rather than deny my prince or betray a town."*

The fact that Bodenstein at the same time pursued trends to strengthen city authorities vis-à-vis the territorial princes and to oppose the nascent development of the territorial church in favour of autonomous individual congregations was also in line with the interests of the urban bourgeoisie of that time.

The tenacity of the dispute between Luther and Bodenstein cannot be explained on the basis of Bodenstein's political stance — indeed it cannot even be understood sufficiently on the basis of their actual theological differences. From a psychohistorical point of view, the dispute looks like a fierce rivalry between colleagues. Since the biographical archetype of such conflicts is often the rivalry of siblings, the historian who also considers depth psychology will be interested in the position of Martin Luther and Andreas Bodenstein in their line of siblings and in their relationship to their siblings. Unfortunately we know very little about this. Luther's father, Hans Luther, is said to have had eight children, of whom the sons Martin and Jakob, later alderman in Mansfeld, and the four daughters Barbara, Dorothea, Marie and Katharina are documented. Among Andreas Bodenstein's siblings we know four brothers by name, and we know that he had sisters.

**<p. 264>** Luther and Bodenstein were like two brothers of approximately the same age. Bodenstein was only 3 years younger than Luther. But just this small age difference could have significance. For Bodenstein (the younger of the two) was the senior colleague in the college of Wittenberg theology professors, in which a seniority principle prevailed according to the order of doctoral degrees: Bodenstein became doctor and professor in 1510, two years before Luther; Bodenstein promoted Luther in 1512 because the task had fallen to him within the rotation of professors. In a figurative sense, Bodenstein was an "older brother", who then returned from Rome in 1516 with a second doctor's cap. Quarrels and friction between the two colleagues are documented from this point. Although they initially presented a common outward front in their shared reformation — as rival brothers usually do when threatened from outside — inwardly each tried to outdo the other. The topic of conflict was: Who is first? The original constellation between 1517 and 1521 settled in favour of Luther: he had unequivocally risen to become Wittenberg's leading theologian. But then he involuntarily disappeared into the Wartburg in May 1521 and had to watch how Andreas Bodenstein

gradually took over the leadership of the Wittenberg Movement. Luther was hardly aware of what he was doing when, after returning from the Wartburg in March 1522, he preached to the Wittenberg laity, who had previously backed Bodenstein:

<p. 265> "[...] dear brothers, follow me, I never spoiled it. I was also the first whom God put to this plan. [...] I was also the one to whom God first revealed it to preach his words." [...] "You could have asked me about it [i.e. the reforms that were made]. I was not so far away. You could have reached me with letters."

Luther makes such an enormous claim to leadership that one can suspect a rattling of his self-esteem lay behind these statements.

With the self-confidence of an original apostle of reformation, which came into view in the *Invocavit* sermons, Luther for the first time exposed himself to the accusation of being a new, Protestant pope. All the more so when he used the means of the Inquisition and religious intolerance — for the first time in the history of Protestantism — against Bodenstein: at his instigation, Bodenstein was subjected to censorship of his publications by the University of Wittenberg in the spring of 1522. Two years later, Bodenstein in Orlamünde on the Saale again pursued his own attempt at a reformation, which was based on his principle of an active lay Christianity responsible to the authorities and which culminated in the Orlamünde community's selection of Bodenstein as their pastor against the opposition of the authorities. Now Luther arranged Bodenstein's expulsion from Saxony. The necessary radical edicts were quickly issued by the princes; Bodenstein and his sympathizers were banned from their profession.

We can discover how lay people thought about the events in Wittenberg at this time through the pamphlet literature. In the anonymous pamphlet "Triumphus Veritatis - Sieg der Wahrheit (Victory of Truth)", which appeared after the Wittenberg Movement, Luther, Bodenstein and Ulrich von Hutten are still considered the triumvirate of the Reformation. The following thoughts are put into Bodenstein's mouth here:

"If I win the game as I expect,  
I will improve what Luther did:  
for what he has left  
of the Pope's realm, I'll try to banish,  
without leaving a single support,  
it must be reduced to rubble,  
and yet without sword and flame.

God grant it happens soon. Amen. Amen."

According to this voice from the people, Bodenstein is considered to be the more consistent one compared to Luther; Bodenstein will complete the work of Reformation. In another pamphlet Bodenstein is called the "crown of Holy Scripture". The echo and approval Bodenstein found in lay circles —<p. 266>, first in Wittenberg, then in Orlamünde and finally in many cities of Southern Germany— made him the ultimate rival for Luther. Where Bodenstein was praised and gained ground, Luther apparently felt this as a personal affront, as a narcissistic insult. And his reactions became all the more fierce and immoderate.

Luther repressed this personal problem from his consciousness. Well-known and typical mechanisms of such a process of repression can be observed:

1. The rationalization of the psychological problem with the help of theoretical arguments: "*The matter is good, but the haste is too fast,*" Luther conceded in the *Invocavit* sermons concerning the reforms carried out in his absence in Wittenberg. With his call to "spare of the weak," Luther justified the reversal of reforms carried out under Bodenstein's leadership—reforms which he considered correct in principle with the exception of the removal of images of the saints—only to carry them out a second time just two years later under his own direction. The extent to which this was a construction that could be derived from Luther's theology but that did not apply to the real situation

is shown by the fact that, the "weak" laity, who according to Luther were to be spared, according to the sources, hardly existed any longer in Wittenberg. The Wittenberg reform movement had been strongly supported by the Wittenberg laity since Christmas 1521; the evangelical "Order of the City of Wittenberg" in January 1522 was adopted by the city council against the vote of the mayor Christian Beyer, who felt obliged to the Elector. The "weak" consisted of a group of regular canons loyal to the old faith— to whom Luther paid no regard in 1523 — and of the Elector himself, who was troubled less by the religious than by the political side of the Wittenberg movement— namely by the suspicion of sedition, by the Wittenberg magistracy's assertion of power to emancipate itself from the sovereign, and by the demand of the Imperial Court at Nuremberg to halt reforms.

2. The second mechanism by which personal qualities are repressed from the self-image is the projection of one's own unconscious desires onto the opponent: Luther could not allow his own desire to be first in his consciousness. So it was the others who pursued such un-Christian and reprehensible intentions. One of Luther's constant accusations against Bodenstein was that of arrogance, which is the very term used to describe that desire for recognition. But when we see how Luther stereotypically made the same accusation against all Protestant dissidents who contradicted him, then the cause of this inflation of pride must be sought in Luther's own soul, where things went not in a holy but a human way according to the law of the beam in his own eye and the splinter in his brother's eye. <p.267>

3. The scapegoat mechanism: the extensive anti-Reformation polemic from the side of old believers, in which Luther was evil incarnate, understandably did not leave Luther unaffected. Among other things, Luther was defamed as a "Schwärmer"<sup>5</sup>. This slander, widely used at that time, means something like "radical". Luther unburdened himself by passing the buck: he publicly stigmatized Bodenstein as a "Schwärmer" par excellence.

By no means can one claim that Bodenstein did not participate in the escalation of the rivalry described above. But he was more conscious of the problem than Luther. This insight led to his departure from academic life in 1523, as Bodenstein recognised the universities as a breeding ground for rivalry among colleagues. Withdrawal from the university and the termination of his own professional career was not easy for Bodenstein. In search of *Gelassenheit*, a new and painful letting go was now needed. Bodenstein's second writing about *Gelassenheit* was born in this new crisis. In self-critical distance from his previous ideals, Bodenstein writes here about universities:

*"In the universities, what else does one look for other than honor from others? Because of this, one becomes a Master, the other a Doctor—add to that a Doctor of Holy Scripture – [...] they want to be called our Masters and Doctors, even though they seek the honour of a doctor with such avarice and greed that they envy and persecute all others who have bought their honour. And they will not let anyone stand up or sit among them who does not have the same name. [...] See now what a worm self-regard [Annehmlichkeit] or Un-gelassenheit is [...] It is impossible that you should believe, as long as your honour pleases you, [...] that is: "You must forsake [verlassen] yourself".*

The attempted exit from the hardened collusion failed after it became clear that Luther was also not prepared to let Bodenstein pursue his own way of reformation outside of Wittenberg. When Bodenstein —after six years of persecution, oppression and material hardship— finally recognized the impossibility of bringing about his own lay-Christian/puritan variant of the Reformation on his own initiative, he joined the Swiss Protestants who were theologically close to him and who had also been branded as heretics by Luther. In return for finding material support for his family and a new theological and ecclesiastical home, Bodenstein in the 1530s accepted limitations to his more radical reform program. Nevertheless, the phase in Bodenstein's life in which he was least influenced by external constraints on his actions and thinking was in the years 1523-1525. It was above all in the <p. 268> mystical theology of these years that he found his personal identity.

<sup>5</sup> Widely translated as „fanatic“ in English scholarship, this German term refers to the untidy swarming of bees.



The city of Karlstadt — which made a public contribution to the rehabilitation of the original second man of the Wittenberg Reformation with the Andreas Bodenstein Jubilee of 1980 — gave its name not only to the Reformer Dr. Andreas Karlstadt, as his contemporaries called him, but also to an entire religious lay movement of the 16th century, the so-called "Karlstadtians". The history of the "Karlstadtians" is still largely unexplored. Since Bodenstein's teachings were the subject of controversial writings and academic disputations still at the end of the 16th century, we can assume there were laymen and theologians in Germany throughout the entire century who did not want to submit to Luther's denunciation of Bodenstein as a heretic. After this time, Bodenstein's mystical theology continued to work underground. In the 17th century two of Bodenstein's mystical writings appeared anonymously among the works of Valentin Weigel, a Lutheran pastor and mystic. Bodenstein probably influenced early Pietism through early Protestant mysticism; in his "Impartial history of the church and heretics" (1699/1700) Gottfried Arnold observed in Karlstadt "a great earnestness to serve and please God". In 1720, a Lutheran felt himself compelled to demonstrate anonymously Bodenstein's worthlessness against a group of so-called pan-sophists who referred to Bodenstein.

After Luther's demonization of him, Karlstadt's image was shaped by (among other works) the 1533 portrayal of Luther's pupil Erasmus Alber (around 1500-1553): "Against the accursed teachings of the Carlstadders / and all the leading figures of the Sacramentarians / Fanatics [*Rottengeister*] / Anabaptists / sacrament-blasphemers / Marriage slanderers / despisers of music / iconoclasts / enemies of holy days / and devastators of all good order". On a sample of four pages of the extensive volume, Karlstadt and his followers are honoured with the following tributes: donkey, fool, sacrament-desecrator, the silly Karlstadt, villains, fanatics, German Turks, pig farmers, brutes, Misanthropes . Thus for Luthernaism, the "fanatic" has finally become a subhuman "brute".