

Abstract

The hitherto sole authentic portrait of the reformer Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (*1486) did not become known to the scholarly world until 1988. It was a small woodcut portrait on a broadsheet printed in commemoration of his death in Basel (on December 24, 1541). Until the mid-twentieth century, ideas concerning the physiognomy of the dissident Karlstadt had developed into the notion that he was of a «swarthy, (almost) negroid ... appearance.» At the same time, there exists a double portrait by Lucas Cranach the Elder of an anonymous man and his young wife, known to the scholarly world since the 1920s. It bears the year 1522. A comparison of the physiognomic features of the Basel broadsheet portrait (1541) with those of the unknown man on the Cranach painting indicates that they quite possibly depict the same person. Since Karlstadt's wedding with Anna von Mochau took place on Januar 19, 1522, there are strong reasons to assume that the Cranach double portrait constitutes the wedding image of the reformer and his young wife.

If this Cranach portrait (1522) really depicts Karlstadt, this has a number of implications for Reformation history: it represents the first painted portrait of a Reformer that can be exactly dated, it is furthermore the first portrait of a married Reformation clergyman, and finally it constitutes evidence that Karlstadt's iconoclasm of January 1522 did not mean a rejection of «secular» images outside of the church.

Alejandro Zorzín, Göttingen