On the 7 June 1597 an elderly professor of Greek at Tübingen, Martin Crusius (1526-1607), recorded a dream in his diary:¹

A dream: 3rd hour before sunrise. We were seated at a table in Constantinople. The Turk drank to my health (kindly and with seemly merriment), and I, rising to my feet, said: Most gracious Emperor (Allgnaedigster haerr Kaiser), after which he spoke in German to some people [seated] at another table, while still seated with us; I do not know what he said. I therefore said humbly: Most gracious Emperor, where did your Imperial Majesty learn German? He replied: “From people around me.” Then I awoke. I later got up at the 4th hour. This too did I ask: “Most gracious Emperor, is there not something, perhaps an old Greek book, I could take home with me (to Germany)?” He replied: “Oh yes, let us have a look among our books”. So much for this.

In his waking hours, needless to say, Crusius never met the Sultan; in fact, he rarely ventured outside Tübingen, and while Mehmed III is often mentioned in Crusius’ diary, it is in a matter of fact vein, concerning his military exploits, usually his prolonged struggle with the Habsburgs. And yet, in a way, this dream reflects more reality than is evident at first glance.

Since the 1540s we find a growing interest among German Lutherans in Byzantine writings and a curiosity as to the post Byzantine fate of the Greeks and their Church. Crusius, whose academic career spanned from the 1540s to the first years of the seventeenth century, stood at the centre of this “discovery” of post Byzantine Greeks.

¹ I am grateful to Dr Reinhard Flogaus for his valuable comments on this paper. Needless to say, I am alone responsible for any remaining errors and misconceptions. This curious entry in Crusius’ diary, written in a mixture of Latin, German, and Greek is printed in W. Göz and E. Conrad (eds.) Diarium Martini Crusii 1596-1597 (Tübingen, 1927) p. 348.
Modern Byzantinists tracing the history of their profession have paid considerable attention to its sixteenth century roots. While the editing and translation of Byzantine sources since the 1550s was by no means a German or Lutheran preserve, Lutheran philologists' predominance in the field is patent. Suffice it here to mention Hieronymus Wolf (1516-1580) and his *editio princeps* of Zonaras and Choniates (1557), to which he added Nicephorus Gregoras five years later to form the *Corpus Universae Historiae Byzantinae*, Wilhelm Xylander (1532-1576) and his erstwhile student in Heidelberg Johannes Löwenklau (1541-1594), and Wolf’s student and successor in Augsburg David Hoeschel (1556-1617).

The same studies of German Late Humanism and Byzantine letters also make the convincing argument that the philological activity of the day did not make a clear distinction between Byzantine and ancient Greek texts, and that a clear dividing line between Greek antiquity and Medieval Greek did not yet exist. At the same time these studies have discerned an ambivalent stance of German Humanists towards Byzantines and contemporary Greeks; while not being clearly distinguished from their ancient predecessors, neither were they distinctly opposed to their Ottoman adversaries and later lords.

A different, though related, perspective has been to view sixteenth century interest in Byzantine history and contemporary Greece as an early phase of Philhellenism, in a sense, as a sixteenth century precursor to the better known Philhellenism of the Romantic age. Such interpretations tend to focus on the life and opinions of the above-mentioned Crusius, who entertained an enthusiastic interest and sympathy for almost anything related to Greek, and was among the few Latins of his day to acquire a command of contemporary Greek (*barbarograeca* as he termed it).

A third strand of interpretation concentrates on the growing interest of sixteenth century Lutheran theologians in the Greek Orthodox Church of their day; an engagement

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2 Johannes Löwenklau (Leuncavius) was Reformed rather than Lutheran and was thus barred from a professorship in Heidelberg. While he shares several traits with his Lutheran counterparts, he occupies an ambivalent position at the fringes of the milieu considered here, with considerable differences of world-view. See M.-P. Burtin, “Un Apôtre de la Tolérance: l’Humanist Allemand Johannes Löwenklau, dit Leunclavius (1541-1593?)” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 52(1990), pp. 561-70.


4 Reinsch, op. cit., p. 49.

which has its roots with the Wittenberg Reformer Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560) in his later years and the following two generations of Lutheran theologians. This interest culminated with the ecumenical correspondence (1573-1581) between Lutheran theologians of Tübingen and the Patriarch of Constantinople Jeremias II, which was initiated and kept going by a group of Tübingen theologians. The Lutheran theologians of Tübingen, convinced that they shared most essential beliefs and practices with their Greek contemporaries, were soon proven wrong yet persistently kept up the correspondence until the Patriarch finally put an end to it in 1581. Here too Crusius, who served as translator, played a pivotal role.

While the present inquiry is greatly indebted to the above-mentioned interpretations, I wish here to offer a different context to Lutheran interest in Byzantium and “discovery” of contemporary Greeks: that of a confessionalised humanist engagement with antiquity.

I wish to argue that the very nature of this milieu’s understanding of later Greek history went through a subtle, yet significant and traceable change during the latter half of the sixteenth century, and reflects both the growing availability of Byzantine texts and a concurrent change in their understanding of the history of the later Greek world, which is not directly derived from Byzantine sources.

As Crusius’ dream demonstrates, Greeks and the capital of their fallen empire were still associated with Greek manuscripts. That Greek scholars were still conduits of Greek manuscripts at this late stage is exemplified by the career of the poet and manuscript dealer Antonios Eparchos (1492-1571), who was active both in Venice as well as his native Corfu.

In 1544 Eparchos sold the imperial city of Augsburg a large collection of Greek manuscripts. The evaluation of the manuscripts was entrusted to the staunch Reformer Wolfgang Musculus (1497-1563). Yet, while Eparchos’ (not altogether felicitous) dealings with the city of Augsburg are a case of genuine cultural commerce, if not cultural exchange, his German contacts of the following year are a classic example of fundamental cultural

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8 For Eparchos’ career see E. Legrand, Bibliographie Hellénique des XVe et XVIe Siècles vol. 1 (Paris, 1885) pp. ccx-ccxxvii.
misunderstanding. While modern historians have been eager to celebrate the former, the latter has occasionally been tactfully played down, though cultural exchange and profound misunderstanding here, as is often the case, went hand in hand.

Having dealings with the city of Augsburg and Wolfgang Musculus probably brought the idea of contacting Philipp Melanchthon to Eparchos’ mind the following year. In a verbose letter composed in Atticised Greek, Eparchos urged the Wittenberg Reformer to put aside the “trifling wrangle” with the Catholic Church, which was, he explained, a gratuitous stumbling block to Christian unity in the West and, most importantly, diverting energy and attention, which could be better employed organizing a united Christian Crusade against the Turks. If the religious strife continued, Eparchos warned Melanchthon, Germany’s fate was sealed. For all his lavish compliments to the addressee, Eparchos crassly misunderstood the religious and political situation he believed he was addressing: Melanchthon and his colleagues should give up the folly of squabbling over definitions of things in heaven and address the urgent needs on earth, i.e. a Christian crusade against the Ottomans.

That Eparchos should have supposed such argumentation would convince even a relatively conciliatory Reformer is evidence of the single mindedness of his hopeless appeal and the religious and mental chasm between addressee and addressee. That Eparchos should have chosen to address Melanchthon may be an indication of the latter’s standing as champion of Greek studies and, as Eparchos states in his letter, due to his reputation as a conciliatory figure.

Melanchthon, expectedly, disapproved of the appeal, which to him smacked of preference of secular concerns over Christian doctrine, and was to his mind an unfair rebuke of Lutheran politics, which he believed posed no obstacle to a crusade against the Ottomans. He preferred not to reply himself, and asked his friend, Joachim Camerarius (1500-1574) to do so for him.10

While this first encounter with a living Greek was for Melanchthon an awkward embarrassment it marks a watershed in his attitude to the fate of contemporary Greeks. In the latter decade and a half of his life (Melanchthon died in 1560) we find a growing awareness to the fate of contemporary Greeks and their Church.11 A case in point is a short biographical

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10 Benz, Wittenberg und Byzanz pp. 18-22.
11 Benz, Wittenberg und Byzanz passim; idem, Die Ostkirche pp. 17-20.
declamation on Basil the Great (329-379) that Melanchthon composed in 1545.\footnote{De Basilio Episcopo, in C. G. Bretschneider (vol. 1-14) and H. E. Bindseil (vol. 15-28) (eds.) Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia: Corpus Reformatorum (Halle, 1843-1860) (hence CR) xi 657-84.} The biographical narration opens with the following statement:\footnote{ibid. 677.}

> When I observe Basils’ homeland and abode with my mind’s eyes, the consideration of the devastation the Turks have wrought upon that most flourishing and beautiful region causes me immense grief. [...] But who would now refrain from grieving, when we hear that those Churches and towns have been turned into Turkish stables and huts abounding with impiety, lechery, and cruelty; considering which, not only should we grieve Asia’s calamity but should also be perturbed by the peril looming over ourselves. If we wish to beat the Turks, and do fear a disaster similar to the Asian one, the causes should be removed. God’s wrath is to be assuaged by true offices of piety […]

The association of a prominent member of Christian Antiquity with the sad contemporary state of affairs is in my opinion a clear indication that later Greek affairs, and the fall of Constantinople were clearly on Melanchthon’s mind at the time. The final argument according to which the “Turkish peril” can only be encountered through an adoption of true religious practice, may be understood as an indirect riposte to Eparchos; not only was the Reformation not responsible for lack of substantial aid to the vanquished Greeks, it in fact offered, to Melanchthon’s mind, the only possible remedy to the Ottoman menace.

Significantly, in De Basilio Episcopo (1545) the picture we get is of total devastation and no mention is made of any ‘remnants of the Church’, an otherwise common phrase in his writings. Melanchthon’s interest in contemporary Greeks culminated in the realisation that a Greek Church still existed with the prolonged sojourn in Wittenberg in 1559 of a Serb by the name of Demetrius, who served as deacon in Constantinople and was sent to Wittenberg to learn at first hand about the nature of the Protestant movement. When he departed Demetrius was handed a Greek translation of the Augsburg Confession as well as a letter by Melanchthon (in Greek) to the Patriarch of Constantinople Ioasaph II. Melanchthon died some months later, and the Patriarch, if he indeed received the letter, never replied.\footnote{Benz, Die Ostkirche p. 18f.} The letter itself, however, is extant. In it Melanchthon assures the Patriarch that the Greek Orthodox and Protestants share all essentials, and beseeches him to pay no heed to Catholic
slurs. Melanchthon assures the Patriarch that both Churches adhere to Scripture, the prophetic and apostolic writings, are heirs to the teaching of the (Greek) Fathers, and adhere to the first Synods.\textsuperscript{15}

Three years before this encounter with the “remnants of the Greek Church” Melanchthon composed a declamation on the fall of Constantinople, which was probably inspired by the publication of a Latin translation in March 1556 of Laonicus Chalcondyles’ \textit{De origine et rebus gestis Turcorum} (\textit{On the Origin and Deeds of the Turks}). The Athenian historian Laonicus Chalcondyles (c. 1430-1490) offered Renaissance readers a contemporary’s account of the fall of Constantinople and other remnants of Byzantine sovereignty in an historical account which is full of admiration for Mehmed II and the great achievements of the Ottomans, whose rise from obscurity to greatness it chronicles. The Zurich born pastor Konrad Clauser (c.1520-1611) translated the History into Latin. The work was printed in Basel by Johannes Oporinus (1507-1568), who was later to publish the \textit{Corpus Universae Historiae Byzantinae}. It is worth noting that while Clauser’s Latin translation seems to have enjoyed considerable popularity, and a French translation followed in 1577, the Greek \textit{editio princeps} only appeared in Geneva in 1615.\textsuperscript{16} This general context of a growing awareness to the fate of later Greeks without yet a clear idea of the nature of a contemporary Greek Church sets, in my opinion, the general context of Melanchthon’s \textit{De capta Constantinopolis} (On the Capture of Constantinople), which was delivered at the university of Wittenberg in 1556.\textsuperscript{17}

Melanchthon opens the account of the fall of the capital of the ‘Greek Empire’ (\textit{imperium graecum})\textsuperscript{18} thus:\textsuperscript{19}

This year is the hundred and third after the Turks, on the twenty ninth of May, after a fifty four day siege, forcefully captured Constantinople, which was not only the stronghold of the Greek Empire but also an abode of learning and an ancient residence of the Church, following the most cruel murder of the emperor, his wife, daughters and sons and that of many noble families and many of the common folk.

\textsuperscript{15} Printed by Martin Crusius in \textit{Turco-Graecia} p. 557 (found also in CR ix, 922f.).
\textsuperscript{16} See F. Hieronymus in \textit{Griechischer Geist aus Basler Pressen} \url{www.unibas.ch/kadmos/gg ad loc}.
\textsuperscript{17} CR xii, 153-61.
\textsuperscript{18} Melanchthon and his contemporaries repeatedly refer to Byzantium as the ‘Greek Empire’. ‘Byzantium’ for most sixteenth century writers was no more than a geographical term designating the site of the Dorian colony founded by the Bosporus in the seventh century B.C.
\textsuperscript{19} ibid. 153.
This opening statement is a good indication of Melanchthon’s sympathy for the subject matter, but equally of the limits of his information on Byzantine history. Whether he truly believed the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI, had perished with his wife, daughters, and sons, or whether it was a guess or convenient rhetorical flourish (\textit{facta caede crudelissima imperatoris, coniugis, filiarum et filiorum})\textsuperscript{20} a better informed writer would have realised this to be impossible since Constantine XI was twice widowed, unmarried, and without issue at the time of the city’s fall.\textsuperscript{21}

More important perhaps is Melanchthon’s repeated acknowledgement here of Constantinople’s standing as a centre of learning as well as an “ancient residence of the Church”. A sombre sense of urgency pervades since the Turks are now devastating Hungary and not just Greece, Melanchthon admonishes his audience, a consideration of Constantinople’s fate offers a dismal foretaste of what Germany itself is about to suffer.

At the outset Melanchthon posits two prophecies as a basis for his sombre prediction: Ezekiel’s prophecy (Gog and Magog) and prophecies by the Franciscan monk Johann Hilten (c.1425-1500), who predicted the conquest of Germany and Italy by the Ottomans by 1600.\textsuperscript{22} Hilten’s prophecy coincides with Melanchthon’s expectation of the world’s end in 1600, as set out in the preface of his universal history, the \textit{Chronicon Carionis} (1558/60), where he expounds the Talmudic \textit{Traditio Domus Eliae}. According to Hilten the conquest of the Holy Roman Empire in 1600 was a preamble to the renewal of Christianity and the final destruction of Islam, to be followed by the world’s end in 1651 – Melanchthon, however, passes this prophetic apodosis in silence. It is worth noting that among the writers discussed here Melanchthon is the only one to posit the fall of Constantinople within a prophetic and possibly apocalyptic context.

Before turning to the fate of Constantinople, Melanchthon expounds, by way of preface, the fall of Athens to the Ottomans. This in itself is misleading since he does not give the date of Mehmed II’s conquest of the Florentine duchy of Athens. The lower city was occupied by the Ottomans in 1456. The Duke of Athens Franco II and many of the citizens fled to the palace

\textsuperscript{20} ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Predictions of the subjugation of Germany to the Ottomans based on Ezekiel 38, 39 and Hilten’s vision were fairly wide spread among Lutherans. See R. Barnes, \textit{Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation} (Stanford, 1988) esp. ch. 2
on the Acropolis, where they remained until their surrender in June 1458 – i.e. five years after
the fall of Constantinople. 23

Paraphrased, Melanchthon’s account of Athens’ fall runs thus: The Florentine ruler of
the city died leaving behind a widow and young son. The widow fell in love with a married
Venetian who poisoned his own wife in order to marry her and gain rule over the city.
Mehmed was called on to intervene. He executed the Venetian and entrusted the city to a
relative of the young heir who in turn had the Florentine widow murdered. The young heir
called on Mehmed to intervene, fearing this relative was taking possession of what was
rightfully his. The Sultan, his patience exhausted, put an end to all this by ordering the
governor of Thessaly to conquer the city. Athens was later further devastated following a
rebellion.

All these events are understood by Melanchthon as forms of divine retribution. 24 He
then summarises: 25

Now naught is left but ruins, fishermen’s shacks and a rabble of wanderers of
barbarian stock, who have converged there by chance. This is the fall of the
city, which erstwhile displayed remarkable instances of virtues, was the
abode of learning and achieved great and worthy feats against the Persians
with prudence and valour, and in its rule was more moderate than either the
Spartans or the Thebans. Two thousand years separate Solon and this
Mehmed the destroyer of Athens.

Such praise, however tempered, of the fifth century B.C. Athenian empire, is absent from
Melanchthon’s account of ancient history in the Chronicon Carionis. Melanchthon,
furthermore, does not seem to appreciate the significance of Latin rule in the Peloponnesse
since the fourth Crusade, which can hardly be taken as a continuation of ancient or any other
Greek rule. Yet more revealing is the choice to preface his Fall of Constantinople with the
chronologically misleading account of the later Ottoman conquest of Athens. This, as his final
praise of Athens implies, is to set the fall of Constantinople within the context of Greek
antiquity, positing it within the framework of the two millennia, which separate Solon, its
founder in Melanchthon’s eyes, 26 and Mehmed II, its devastator.

23 F. Babinger, Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time (tr. R. Manheim) (Princeton, 1978) pp. 159f. and
Runciman, The Fall of Constantinople, p. 171.
24 CR xii, 154f.
25 ibid. 155.
26 For Melanchthon’s understanding of Solon’s legislation as a founding moment in Greek history see the
Chronicon Carionis (1558) CR xii, 788f.
The Athenian episode is also revealing since it is clearly a synopsis of Chalcondyles’ account of the fall of his native city. Unlike Melanchthon, Chalcondyles’ account is written in a matter of fact vein, despite the piquant nature of the story. Furthermore, the fall of Athens appears in Chalcondyles in its correct chronological position. There is nowhere in his account an attempt to give the fall of his native city the tragic significance attributed to it by Melanchthon. In stark contrast to the Reformer, Chalcondyles’ account is not hostile to Mehmed II, and immediately following the account of Athens’ fall Chalcondyles tells us of the Sultan’s visit to the city and his great admiration for its ancient monuments, which he ordered to be preserved. Melanchthon, who follows Chalcondyles’ account of the fall of Athens and in all likelihood read the paragraph immediately following, in which Chalcondyles describes Mehmed’s admiration for the monuments of Greek antiquity, passes the latter in silence and instead offers the historical epitome of Athenian history from Solon to Mehmed II.

While Melanchthon in his later years showed a growing awareness and interest in the fate of latter day Greeks, it was his erstwhile student, the Rostock theologian and humanist David Chytraeus (1531-1600) who in 1569 first offered his readers a detailed account of the contemporary Greek Orthodox Church in his frequently reprinted Oratio De Statu Ecclesiae hoc tempore in Graecia Asia, Austria, Vngaria, Böemia & c. (An Oration on the current State of the Church in Greece, Asia, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, etc.).

Chytraeus was summoned to Vienna in 1568 by the emperor Maximilian II to draft a church ordinance for the Protestant communities of the Habsburg lands of Lower Austria. This endeavour was thwarted by strong Catholic opposition at the Habsburg court. Being neither able to return home to Rostock nor to work on the ordinance to any effect Chytraeus spent much of his time travelling in Austria and Hungary and got as far as the Hungarian

27 References to Clauser’s Latin translation of De origine et rebus gestis Turcorum are to the second edition by Oporinus as supplement to Hieronymus Wolf’s 1562 editio princeps of Nikephoros Gregoras: Nicephori Gregorae, Romanae, hoc est Byzantinae historiae Libri XII (Basel, 1562) hence Chalcondyles.
28 Chalcondyles 151.
30 Benz, Die Ostkirche p. 21; P. S. Fichtner, Emperor Maximilian II (Yale, 2001) pp. 148-54.
border with the Ottoman empire. He himself never made the journey into Ottoman lands but used his newly acquired acquaintances in Austria and Hungary to compose an account on the state of the Orthodox Churches - mostly but not exclusively, Greek Orthodox.

The tone at the outset of the work is of surprise and excitement at the survival of a Church in the remote south-eastern extremities of Europe, as well as wonder at their survival at the very centre of Turkey; and these, Chytraeus stresses, are by no means meagre remnants, but fairly elaborate ecclesiastical institutions. For Chytraeus this was a sure sign of divine benevolence and a source of comfort.31

The detailed account itself, while pervaded by sympathy for fellow Christians under Ottoman rule, is remarkably sober and void of the “Romantic” delusions about the discovery of Christian Antiquity. In fact, considering the fact that the first systematic and protracted Protestant-Orthodox exchange came four years later, the degree to which Chytraeus was informed is remarkable. Thus, for instance, apart from being aware of the elaborate Marian worship in Greece,32 he is aware of Thomas Aquinas’ translation into Greek and his popularity among many Greek scholars, as well as the Orthodox practice of celebrating mass for the dead, which he describes without passing judgement.33

Chytraeus’ sober account of contemporary Athens makes it clear that he thinks its days of glory are gone. And yet Chytraeus stresses that unlike reports to the contrary, the city of Athens still stands and even hosts a church of modest size. Like Melanchthon he too culls part of his information from Chalcondyles; yet while Melanchthon is careful to avoid Chalcondyles’ admiring observations about the Sultan, Chytraeus repeats the latter’s account of how Mehmed II was struck by the ancient monuments of the city.34

A clue as to the Byzantine Empire’s relation to Antiquity, and correspondingly the significance of the Ottoman conquest can be found, to my understanding, in Chytraeus’ detailed account of contemporary Athens:35

But let us return now to Athens, which was once the abode of all philosophy and eloquence, and later also of religious doctrine and all finer arts. These arts were renewed in Italy a hundred years ago thanks to the exile of Greeks [such as] Theodorus Gaza of Thessaloniki, the Athenian Demetrius Chalcondyles, Georgius Trapezuntius and Marcus

31 Chytraeus, Oratio, A2v-A3r
32 ibid. C3v-C4r.
33 ibid. C4r.
34 ibid. B8v.
35 ibid. C2v-C3r.
Musurus of Crete, and before them Manuel Chrysoloras who died in Germany at the time of the Council of Constance. Now, however, the study of ancient philosophy and more learned teaching has come to a standstill in Athens and in the rest of Greece, and I hear that most priests and monks are even ignorant of Ancient Greek. Furthermore, I have heard that in some places reading the ancient poets, orators, philosophers, or any of the other pagan writers is prohibited by episcopal laws.

The decline of learning is then epitomized in a pithy statement about the prayer books recited by Greek priests and monks: “They read but do not understand.” As a natural consequence of the quenching of pristine teaching Chytraeus goes on to discuss contemporary Greek “superstition”.

Another contemporary channel for information about contemporary Greeks were travellers to the Ottoman Empire. While the best known is the Flemish imperial emissary to the High Porte, Ogier Ghislain van Busbecq (1522-1592), several German Lutheran travellers are of more immediate relevance in the present context.

One such traveller was a retired Fugger agent, Hans Dernschwam (1494-1568), who in 1553 joined an imperial delegation to Constantinople and Asia Minor out of sheer curiosity and at his own expense. Two decades later, two young Lutheran chaplains and former students of Martin Crusius, Stefan Gerlach (1546-1612) and Salomon Schweigger (1551-1622), stayed in Constantinople for several years as Lutheran chaplains to Imperial delegations.

Dernschwam in the 1550s and Gerlach and Schweigger a generation later, kept a detailed account of their journey, which reflect changing perceptions of contemporary Greeks – a change, I wish to argue, closely related to questions of historical periodization i.e. defining the contours of Greek Antiquity.

Dernschwam, embarking on his voyage in 1553, kept a diary during his journey to Constantinople and Asia Minor, which remained in manuscript until its publication by Franz Babinger in 1923.36 During his stay in the East Dernschwam purchased a manuscript of the *Epitome of Histories* by the twelfth century Byzantine chronicler Ioannes Zonaras. On his

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return he persuaded his former employer Anton Fugger to commission his librarian Hieronymus Wolf to edit and translate the work. It is thus that the 1557 *edito princeps* of Zonaras and his popularity in the later sixteenth century owe their inception to Dernschwam’s visit to the East.37

Dernschwam’s travel diary also affords us a view of Lutheran expectations of the Greeks and echoes, in layman’s terms, a typical reaction to post Byzantine reality. Shortly after arriving in Constantinople Dernschwam dwells at length on the Greeks’ adherence to the apostolic faith, but this, significantly, before he had any contact with Greeks in the city:38

[...]

and so the Pope holds no sway over the Greeks, for even now under oppression they remain obedient to their Patriarch throughout Greece, Egypt etc. and they adhere to their ancient Christian faith, which was handed down from the Apostles, more truly and steadfastly than the seductive Pope with all his monastic orders.

This is followed by further anti Papal invectives and praise of the Patriarch of Constantinople.39 The Greeks, with whom Dernschwam was not yet acquainted, are portrayed as a Protestant idealisation of the Early Church, in stark contrast to a corrupt Papacy, and are described as the source of all Christian teaching.40 Dernschwam concludes this lengthy excursus by postulating the purification of Western Christianity as a precondition for the liberation of Constantinople by a pious [Holy Roman] emperor.

During his stay in the city Dernschwam became aware of the discrepancy between his idealisation and the actual practices of contemporary Greeks. That such a sober disenchantment took place is hardly surprising, yet the crucial point for understanding Dernschwam, and, I would argue, Crusius later in the century, is the way he explains this discrepancy between his expectations and observations about three months after arriving in Constantinople:41

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37 Testimony to the significance of this publication are the repeated pirate editions which offered the Latin translation without the Greek (e.g. Paris 1567 and Cologne 1567) and the fact that by 1560 both a French and Italian translation were available. See K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur* (second edn. Munich, 1897) p. 374 n. 1.
38 *Hans Dernschwam’s Tagebuch*, p. 78.
39 ibid. p. 79.
40 ibid. p. 81.
41 ibid. p. 144.
It is no wonder that Christianity has deteriorated in Turkish lands. An indication for this is the fact that the Greeks make do with the mass, and otherwise know little about the Word of God, since the laymen are not preached to in the churches, and [the Word of God] is not presented to them. Even the tolling of bells is not allowed them in the whole of Turkey, nor are there clocks to be found anywhere. Small wonder that the Italians and their like are such godless Christians. This is because they are only seldom preached to, mostly during fasts, and their priests are predominantly mass performers like all papist monks and so too are the Greek monks, as I have come to know them. They are hermits who live in solitude, abstain from meat, fast a lot but drink wine; and the Patriarch of the Greeks is such a monk. Nor do they preach in their Greek language, which would be intelligible to the poor simple folk.

It is no wonder that Christianity has deteriorated in Turkish lands. Once Dernschwam realized the discrepancy between his prior expectations and the reality of Greek Orthodox practice, which for him was a form of Papism, it did not cause him to question his prior convictions about the Greek Church in Antiquity or in later times, but to dwell on the degenerate character of Christian worship under Ottoman rule.

Stefan Gerlach and Salomon Schweigger were both theology students in Tübingen, and served consecutively as Lutheran chaplains to the first two Imperial delegations at the High Porte, and became Lutheran ministers on their return. Both kept a German travel diary, which in both cases were published several decades after their return home. Most importantly, perhaps, both Gerlach and Schweigger corresponded with their former teacher Martin Crusius during their travels in the Ottoman Empire. Crusius in turn published some of these letters as sources on the state of affairs in the Greek world, and enthusiastically publicized his former students’ exploits in the East in his own books, and even composed his own account of Schweigger’s travels in 1584, more than two decades before Schweigger himself published his travel diary.42

Gerlach and Schweigger, unlike Dernschwam two decades earlier, arrived in Constantinople after the “discovery” of the Greek Church in Lutheran circles. Their views on the Greek Church are critical from the outset. Writing in the 1570s (and probably editing their work at a later date), they were far better acquainted than Dernschwam with the reality of Greek

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42 This was appended to Crusius’ *Aethiopicae Heliodori Historiae Epitome. Cum Observationibus eiusdem* (Frankfurt, 1584).
Christianity before setting off on their journey. Their description of Orthodox practice is by far better informed than Dernschwam’s, but void of sympathy.

The difference between the two young theologians and Dernschwam can, of course, be explained as a professional and generational gap between a Protestant layman born in 1494 (and formerly employed by the Catholic Fuggers) and highly confessionalized Lutheran divines – Gerlach was to spend his later years inveighing against Calvinist doctrine. But though this is clearly part of the answer, a closer look at their former teacher, Martin Crusius, suggests a more complex and interesting shift in attitude.

Crusius closely followed his students’ exploits in the East, and was eager to draw as much information about contemporary Greeks as he could. The famous ecumenical correspondence with the Patriarch failed and left the Lutheran theologians disenchanted, and embarrassed. Yet for Crusius it was also the starting point for establishing contacts with Greek scholars. The most important among whom was the patriarchal protonotary Theodosius Zygomalas (1544-1614). Long after the theological correspondence had run its course Crusius and Zygomalas were still exchanging letters. Zygomalas supplied the Tübingen professor with sources on the political and ecclesiastical history of the Greeks since 1453. Most important perhaps was a political history of the Greeks, compiled by Zygomalas himself, which Crusius translated into Latin and published in 1584. Zygomalas was forced to sever his ties with the Germans by the Ottoman authorities, who suspected him of seditious dealings. In 1597 we find Crusius writing to various Greek dignitaries wondering whether his former correspondent was still alive. He was, however, for several years an invaluable source of information for Crusius and a broader readership on the fortunes of post Byzantine Greeks.

Crusius also had ample opportunity to hear demotic Greek since he hosted several Greeks in Tübingen, though in his later years he seems to have grown weary of the petitions of destitute Greeks, and finally wrote to the Patriarch of Constantinople, stating he would only receive petitioners whose pleas were authenticated by him.

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43 The correspondence was published in 1584 by unnamed Tübingen theologians: *Acta et Scripta Theologorum Virtembergensium, et Patriarchae Constantinopolitani D. Hieremiae: quae vtriq; ab Anno M. D. LXXVI. Usque ad Annun M. D. LXXXI. De Augustana Confessione inter se miserunt: Graecè et Latinè ab ijsdem Theologis edita.* (Wittenberg,1584).
44 See G. Fatouros “Theodosius Zygomalas” in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* vol. xiv col. 675-6
45 See e.g. Crusius’ letter of 18 July 1597 to the (by then deceased) Patriarch of Constantinople Ieremias II in Göz and Conrad (eds.) *Diarium Martini Crusii 1596-1597*, p. 368.
46 *Diarium Martini Crusii 1596-1597*, p. 368.
All this has earned Crusius in modern times the accolade of Philhellenist, a term he himself used. But a celebration of his enthusiasm for all things Greek has often obscured an interesting ambivalence.

The main scholarly result of Crusius’ interest in post-Byzantine Greeks is an extensive compilation of sources concerning post-Byzantine ecclesiastical and secular history published in 1584. Fifteen years later, in letters to two Greek Bishops resident in Venice, Gavrielos Severos (1541-1616) and Maximos Margounios (1549-1602) Crusius apologized profusely for the offence he realized he had caused by the work’s title: *Turco-Graecia*. In these letters of apology he professed anew his sympathy for contemporary Greeks and their plight. All this may be genuine, but to understand Crusius and his contemporaries’ view of Greeks under Ottoman rule we must turn to the *Turco-Graecia* itself in which Crusius explains this unlikely title:

I have given [my work] the title TVRCO-GRAECIA since it contains accounts of affairs since the fall of the Greek Empire under Turkish rule. Greece has been thoroughly turkified: Greece is subjugated to Turkish servitude, and moreover Greece is now guilty of many errors in religion and superstitions of which we were not at first aware. It is therefore with good reason that her misery should be lamented.

Crusius goes on to stress his great achievement in bringing this hitherto unknown chapter of Greek history to his readers; but this is a sad achievement. Athens, once the radiant centre of learning is reduced to the destitution of a fishing village, and the Greeks are immersed in error and superstition.

Revealingly, Lutheran laments for the changed fortunes of Athens often appear within the context of the fall of Constantinople. Since Melanchthon in the 1550s, in rounding up laments of the fall of Constantinople, the chronological framework discussed is usually from Solon to Mehmed II. Crusius explains the nature of the contemporary Greek Church as a “turkification”, despite his continued sympathy for Greece and the Greeks. This and countless similar utterances suggest that he understood the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople to be the closing of Greek Antiquity. That Crusius was not alone in this view is made patent by some of the poems written for him by several well-wishers and printed at

47 W. Göz and E. Conrad (eds.) *Diarium Martini Crusii* vol. ii (Tübingen, 1931) p. 386.
48 *Turcograeciae libri octo* 2°.
the beginning of the *Turco-Graecia*. Apart from fulsomely praising Crusius’ achievement, these poems also address the subject of post 1453 Greece. Hellas, we are told in florid Neo Latin and pseudo-Homeric Greek, once the envied abode of the Muses (etc.) fell to the murderous hands of the Turks (through her own fault) and is since piteous and barren. Lorenz Rhodomann (1546-1606), a Lutheran pedagogue and authority on Greek Letters expressed this view in a Greek poem he composed in Crusius’ honour. A literal prose translation of lines 1-18 runs thus:49

Hellas, exulting in the Muses’ revered eloquent monuments, was the most conspicuous and fragrant in all the land. From Parnassus’ stream she sent to the entire world the Hermes like waters of wise eloquence. Happy would she have been but for her love of internal strife. She who had achieved greatness through the possession of great wealth (abundance, it is known, breeds hubris) by her own hands forfeited her might, having acted foolishly she lost her sovereignty to the Turks. Thereupon the Muses (Aonids) having left their shrines took headlong flight beyond the snow-capped Alps to the valiant land of the Teutons [...] and shall converse with to the Germans instead of the Castalians.50 You, children of the beautiful land of Germany, pray to Christ for wisdom in addition to good fortune (worldly happiness). Now the migrant Muses adorn the abode of the German land with the far shining spark of wise men.

The motive of German inheritance is important and has an interesting Lutheran context, but for the present inquiry what is most important is the fact that Hellas herself was dead, and that she had died in 1453.

An echo of this view we can find three years later, in a textbook by one of Crusius’ friends and a former student of Melanchthon’s, Michael Neander (1525-1595) in his handbook on universal history, *Chronicon sive Synopsis Historiarum* (Chronicle or Synopsis of Histories) (1582), where he makes the following observation about contemporary Athens:51

In recent years Martin Crusius, an illustrious man, professor of rhetoric and Greek at the University of Tübingen, and a great old friend of ours has had letters sent to him by Christian Greeks written in Turco-Greek, Scythian and

49 *Turco-Graecia* p. 9r.
50 Inhabitants of the Muses’ spring in Parnassus.
51 Quoted from the later extended edition: *Chronicon sive Synopsis Historiarum* (Leipzig, 1586) 162v.
a mixture of Ancient and vulgar Greek (mixobarbara). Whereby the following too is worthy of mention: nowhere in Greece nowadays do people use a more barbarous idiom than in Athens. Athens, which was once the common school of mankind and the workshop of all instruction [...] it was by no means in vain that the following was announced to the Athenians by Oracle: ‘Do not praise the Athenians to me, they shall [one day] be [but] oxen hide’. That is, they shall be wineskins, and shall one day fall from their forefathers’ nobility, virtue, learning, refinement, eloquence and wisdom.

Two thousand years separate Solon, that wise governor of the Athenian state, and celebrated legislator, and Mahomet (Mehmed II), the destroyer of Athens.

The conquest of Constantinople by Mehmet II put an end to Athenian glory, begun with Solon’s legislation. The remaining Greeks for Neander are a strange people speaking a semi barbarous idiom, Turco-Greek and Scythian. Neander nowhere writes of “Christian Spaniards”, or “Christian Italians”, whose Christianity is taken for granted. In referring to Crusius’ correspondents as “Christian Greeks” it is clear that for Neander, and possibly his readers, with the fall of the Greek Empire the very identification of Greeks as Christians could no longer be taken for granted.

Greek Antiquity was over, and as Lutheran scholars’ idealised vision of Greeks as a latter day personification of Christian Antiquity was dashed, the Greeks’ fall from Ancient learning and pure Patristic doctrine became yet another instance of the mutability of worldly affairs as history approached its end.