



Globalism *avant la lettre* from a Late Medieval and Early Modern German Perspective: The *Niederrheinische Orientbericht*, Adam Olearius, and Jesuit Missionaries Across the Globe

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Abstract

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed a tremendous growth of globalism, at least in terms of European outreach and interest. We can identify this phenomenon particularly well through two different and independent sources, first, the publication of Adam Olearius's *Vermehrte Neue Beschreibung der Muscowitischen vnd Persischen Reyse*, 1647, and then the growth of Jesuit reports about their missionary activities all over the world carefully collected and published by Joseph Stoecklein ca. hundred years later in his highly popular *Welt-Bott*, compiled and published since 1726. Globalism is, of course a complex term, both for today and for the past. Everything depends on the narrator's perspective, the engagement with the other culture/s, and the reciprocity. Olearius appears to have achieved a major breakthrough with his travels to Russia and then later to Persia, introducing much of Persian culture to Germany. The Jesuits (Eusebio Kino, Ignaz Pfefferkorn, Joseph Och, et al.) provided their German (!) readers with astoundingly precise comments and reports about the New World in northern Mexico and in the province of Sonora (today, partly Arizona), while their many colleagues globally contributed their own reports about all four corners of this world. Combining these two perspectives, we can identify a very early but already very strong effort to learn more about the foreign world, to overcome the otherness (from a Eurocentric perspective), and to create a global platform far beyond what travelogue authors such as Marco Polo or Odorico da Pordenone had achieved in the fourteenth century, irrespective of their extraordinarily extensive travels to China. This paper, however, will begin, after I have reflected on the latest theoretical approaches to Global Studies, with a most unusual eye-witness account from ca. 1350, and then pursue the discourse on globalism as it developed over the following centuries, crossing several periodical barriers and bridging different narrative genres within the German-language context.

Keywords: Pre-Modern Globalism, *Der Niederrheinische Orientbericht*, Adam Olearius, the German Jesuit missionaries.