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## 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.

### Introduction

Recent years have witnessed a strong reorientation in pre-modern literary and historical research, especially since the interest has increasingly focused on global perspectives as they emerged already in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and which then witnessed their strong development latest since the fourteenth century. Medieval Studies and Early Modern Studies have simply realized that the traditional nationalist approach amounts to a self-limitation not adequate for the actual study purpose, which applies, however, for many other disciplines as

well. Ideas have always wandered across the globe, and despite many limitations by religion, languages, and geographical barriers, they have tended to influence other cultures as well. We are hence well advised to read the Middle Ages and the early modern age through the lens of globalism as improbably as that might appear for older scholarship.

In fact, philology is currently undergoing a major paradigm shift, profiting from the larger debate on globalism and globalization (a form of colonialism) in modern times. While it was most likely that global perspectives were developed only by major individuals who were bold enough to travel long distances and to learn from foreign cultures, we still can recognize a growing network of global dimensions already since the high and late Middle Ages. Examples of such travelers, diplomats, merchants, poets, etc. can be found both in the West and the East, whether we think of Marco Polo or Ibn Battuta, not to mention the Turkic-Chinese emissary Rabban Sauma (ca. 1220-ca. 1294) who visited Europe on an extensive tour to meet some of the major political leaders. (see, for instance, Hengs, 2021; the contributions to Holmes and Standen, ed., 2018, and to Klimek, Troyer, Davis-Secord, and Keene, ed. 2021)

Both historians and literary scholars, and so also art historians have recently begun to investigate the issue of pre-modern globalism from many different perspectives, consistently arguing against postmodern claims that this phenomenon was specific or characteristic only of the time since ca. 1950, or perhaps since ca. 1800. Currently, the wind in favor of recognizing the early history of globalism is blowing into a different direction, and new evidence from many different corners confirms that the phenomenon of globalism was much more prevalent in earlier times than we might have assumed. (see now the contributions to Classen, ed., 2023) Critical investigations have demonstrated, above all, that many pre-modern literary, historical, and artistic sources contain significant voices reflecting a clear awareness of the wider world far beyond Europe. International trade between Europeans and their southern and eastern neighbors flourished already since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and high-ranking clerics, administrators, diplomats, and rulers enjoyed numerous contacts with their colleagues in the entire Mediterranean zone, leading to many exchanges of gifts. (Höhl, Prinz, and Ralcheva, ed. 2022)

The purpose of this paper consists of alerting us to this somewhat ignored choir of travel writers who expressed from very early on their impressive understanding of global issues, either based on their own reading (John Mandeville) or through their travels. (Felix Fabri) By selecting representative German sources from the fourteenth through the seventeenth, and then also eighteenth centuries to some extent, this study will outline the productivity of employing the notion of globalism for a better understanding of the existing global networks of trade, science, philosophy, literature, the arts, and politics already in the pre-modern world.

Literary scholars have already moved far ahead in this direction, identifying many different features of globalism in the Middle Ages and beyond, considering, for instance, the global distribution of fables, of specific narrative motifs (the mermaid, the trickster, etc.), and of literary topics (such as the life of Gautama Buddha in the story of *Barlaam and Josaphat* spreading from India both to China and beyond and to the entire West). Much of that material must have traveled through accounts shared by merchants or diplomats on international missions. (Euben, 2006)

Most recent research has focused on English, French, Spanish, or Italian writers since those lived in countries often determined by international trade. We have also learned much about Arabic and other eastern travelers, whereas the connections between North and South remain mostly murky and await further examinations. (see, however, Young, 2015) The best evidence for globalism always consists of textual or visual documents, but then also material objects as trading goods, especially textiles and ceramics, weapons, and other metal works. (cf. the contributions to von Fircks and Regula Schorta, ed., 2016; Höhl, Prinz, and Ralcheva, ed., 2022)

However, examining literary and other entertaining or informative narrative texts (so-called ego-documents) best facilitates the critical probing of global perspectives which the various authors presented to their audiences, such as the anonymous author of the famous, highly popular novel under the title *Fortunatus*. (printed in Augsburg in 1509) The protagonist, enriched by an inexhaustible wallet, has the opportunity to traverse the entire European continent and then also to explore the eastern world, including Egypt, the Holy Land, Persia, and India. (quoted from Müller, ed. 1990, 383-583) The poet might have been the Franciscan Stephan Fridolin (ca. 1430-ca. 1498), as Hannes Kästner has argued. Since the Franciscans were in the forefront of global missionary activities well before the Jesuits. (Roest, 2015; McClure, 2017; Pizzolo, 2020), Kästner's suggestion appears to be well founded (cf. also Kiening, 2022) Fridolin lived in Nuremberg during his last decades of his life, supervising especially the St. Clair convent, and it was in Nuremberg where Martin Behaim built the first globe in 1492, his "Erdapfel." We might be able to identify, in other words, this novel, *Fortunatus*, as a key text from the turn of the century signaling a paradigm shift leading over to more global connections between Europe and Asia.

However, well before 1500, the anonymous narrative by a Cologne citizen, *Der Niederrheinische Orientbericht* (ca. 1350), underscores in rather dramatic terms what global perspectives were already in place during that time, which easily extended, depending on the individual circumstances, from western Europe all the way to the Middle East, to modern-day Kazakhstan, Persia, India, and even China. (Brall-Tuchel, ed. and trans., 2019; Micklin, ed., 2021). Below, I will examine his report more in detail to illustrate how much we can recognize here a global mindset already in the fourteenth century, which then was followed by numerous other attempts to report about distant worlds in German narratives.

This paper thus intends to break with several traditions and to open new vistas toward a more inclusive worldview as it emerged among European writers from the late Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. Whereas a majority of scholars continues to hold on to the approach that globalism did not begin until ca. 1750 or 1800 (e.g., Domenig, 2021), medievalists such as Geraldine Hengs have argued for a much earlier date regarding these new developments. (Hengs, 2021; see also Preiser-Kapeller, 2020; Frankopan, 2019; and the contributions to Savoy, ed., 2017, etc.) My own observations and conclusions mostly concur with their findings and expands on their arguments. Undoubtedly, since ca. 1600, world explorations grew tremendously, setting the stage for a much more intensified globalism (Mulsow, 2022), but we would not do justice to this phenomenon if we ignored earlier indications and testimonies.

But there is also the strong tendency among many historians to accept the year 1500 or so as a fairly strict dividing line between the Middle Ages and the early modern age. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of globalism cannot be limited to specific periods and instead depends much more on unique conditions at various locations at specific times, framed by the right political and military conditions. (such as in the earlier case of the Mongols, hence the *Pax Mongolica*; but cf. the critical comments by Askew, 2017) Instead, if there were such conditions allowing individuals across the world to travel, to meet, to barter, or to communicate with each other, then we would have to acknowledge that there existed a much broader spectrum of voices from various centuries.

In particular, as we will observe, globalism represents a process that grows and fades again and has always been subject to many different external factors in politics, military history, economics, the visual arts, and religion. We could, for instance, easily identify the early medieval Vikings and the Arabic conquerors as global players, but they did not continue in their endeavors much beyond ca. 1000. In other words, in order to gain any good comprehension of this phenomenon, we need to accept a much broader historical perspective and recognize a continuous discourse across the centuries, cultures, languages, and religions. As Geraldine Heng and Lynn Ramey note meaningfully:

For euromedievalists, the asynchrony of temporalities across the globe importantly

upturns old tyrannies of periodization in the West, including that simple binary of premodern and modern eras nested within a monolithic model of linear time that is the staple clone of western academic and public discourse. Time in the West sees modernity as a unique and singular arrival that ends the long eras of premodernity, instantiating the origin of new, never-before phenomena: the Scientific Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the beginnings of colonization, empire, race, et alia. (2014, 4)

The example of *Fortunatus*, among other literary cases, strongly confirms this and similar observations, underscoring the productivity of the critical approach to pre-modern globalism. To illustrate this further, this paper will discuss first an amazing fourteenth-century Low German author whose name and identity is mostly unknown. Subsequently, I will turn to a seventeenth-century diplomat and writer, Adam Olearius, and finish with comments on the global missionary organization of the Jesuits since 1540, which grew tremendously over the centuries, until it was finally banned globally in 1773.

As surprising as it might sound, pre-modern globalism was closely associated also, and quite significantly, with German writers, travelers, artists, and philosophers. Our three examples will demonstrate this fact convincingly, if we keep in mind that globalism was not necessarily a universal attitude embraced also by the masses of people who did not even have any opportunity to go abroad for any extended period of time. Instead, if at all, then intellectuals, politicians, artists, and others were at the forefront of building bridges with other cultures, peoples, religions, and regions, which is probably not that different from the conditions today, irrespective of mass tourism in the twenty-first century.

Here we face the intriguing situation that particularly German writers were at the forefront of this development of globalism, or strongly participated in it although their country did not border the Mediterranean and did not maintain particular economic ties with the other continents. The number of travelogues by German pilgrim travelers and others about the Holy Land and neighboring countries proves to be astoundingly high, which allows us even from that perspective to talk about early stages of a growing globalism. (Halm, 2001) However, Christian travelers from across Europe going to the Holy Land, or Muslim travelers aiming for Mecca as the most holy site for Islam still pursue fairly narrow perspectives and do not really take into view the world at large beyond the religious centers; they tended to be guided and controlled in their movement, and mostly returned the same way as they had used on their way over.

Global citizens, already in the pre-modern world, by contrast, would have to be identified as explorers, curious individuals, open-minded travelers who easily transgressed all kinds of barriers, and demonstrated a certain degree of interest in foreign cultures and peoples. Well known and really famous representatives were the Friar John of Pian de Carpine (<https://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/carpini.html>), the Venetian merchant Marco Polo or Odorico da Pordenone, apart from many other Franciscan missionaries but we find others as well from the German-speaking lands who served as diplomats or in similar roles. (see the contributions to Classen, ed., 2018)

### ***Der Niederrheinische Orientbericht***

Only very recently has this anonymous account gained the full attention by scholarship, but many specific aspects of this report about the Middle East and neighboring countries, including Georgia, Armenia, and Turkey, remain to be examined more carefully. This Low German author apparently spent ca. twelve years somewhere in Syria and/or Egypt and related many very concrete events that he observed especially in Cairo at the Mamluk court. Although we do not know anything about the author's biography, we can be certain that he was a wealthy individual, most likely from Cologne, did not necessarily work as a merchant but might have

been a kind of diplomat in the archbishop's service. He was not of Jewish descent as Brall-Tuchel surmised (19) since he often comments negatively about Jews in the Holy Land and once remarks simply in passing that Jews had suffered from a pogrom in Cologne. (Tuchel 1349; here 44)

The author obviously drew from a number of learned sources, but he also relied heavily on his personal experiences. All this hence amounts to a rather convoluted treatise in which many parts of the Middle East are extensively discussed with a focus both on the geophysical and the historical-political dimensions. The reader is informed about the mythical kingdom of Prester John, the kingdom of Georgia, the kingdom of Armenia, and then, most extensively, about the world of the Muslims, particularly in Egypt and also in Syria. The author adds remarks about the Tartars, i.e., the Mongols, discusses the caliph of Baghdad, and includes even considerable data about the ruler of the Mongols, the khan. There are also references to Persia and India, so altogether this writer can be credited with having developed an extraordinary global perspective.

This perspective, however, is hardly influenced by Eurocentric concepts; instead, as we read from time to time, the author acknowledges otherness as an essential component commonly determining the relationship between different people: "Und dese lude dunckent dat wir also seltzen sin als sy uns." (38; And those people think that we are just as strange as we think they are) We note also that the account is filled with references to alternative groups of Christians whom he regularly identifies as "snode kyrsten" (42; bad Christians). He really means, contrary to Brall-Tuchel's translation as 'bad Christians' (e.g., 43), simply other types of Christians, i.e., Orthodox Christians, Nestorians, etc. Most intensively, however, he reflects on what he himself had observed in Egypt and what his readers might find the most interesting. Most of the details contained in this report would not need to be examined, especially not the extensive list of animals and plants in the Middle East. What matters here is the global perspective which manifests itself in many different perspectives.

Naturally, the Holy Land assumes, from the start, center position, but the author emphasizes immediately that he will shed much light on the many other countries surrounding or neighboring it. He does not pursue a pilgrim's interest; instead, he wants to approach his self-set task as an encyclopedist, discussing castles and cities, rulers, religious leaders, and the various peoples. He takes into consideration, in equal fashion, Christians, Jews, and Muslims, the latter here identified always as "heiden" (30; heathens), which implies, of course, a specific Christian orientation. After all, the author addresses the audience back in Germany and never deviates, as we would not expect in any other way, from the firm conviction that Christianity is the only true religion.

His geographic perspective does not always seem to correspond with reality since he situates Nubia in the east of Jerusalem, followed by the kingdom of Tarsia. North of that he situates the kingdoms of Georgia and Armenia, and also Greece. In terms of religion, he notices that all the people, whether Christians or not, pursue a somewhat different faith and frequent their own churches, hence stay strictly away from all others. The author places much emphasis on the mythical ruler, Prester John (Abdelkawy Sheir, 2020, and also addresses at length the origin of the Holy Three Magi, which makes good sense considering their great role as patron saints of the Cologne cathedral. (Beer, ed., 2014; Finger, ed., 2015)

As is often the case in pre-modern travelogues and similar narratives about foreign worlds, facts and fiction are not clearly separated, probably because most writers, and so our anonymous, drew from a variety of popular sources deeply determined by mythical thinking. But our anonymous author constantly makes intriguing efforts to open perspectives toward the people in the various foreign countries whom he identifies as very similar and worthy as the Europeans, such as in the case of Indian knights:

Vort de riddere in Indien haldent sich zo mail reinlich in allen dingen und iagent und beissent ind dragent alze cosliche cleyder und costliche gulden gurdele und costliche

bogen cochger und pyle war sy hene rident of gaent und en wysse van geyme ungemache dan aller wallust. (34)

[The knights in India behave very orderly in all matters; they go hunting animals and do falconry. They wear very elegant clothing, have golden belts, and they use precious bows and arrows when they ride out to meadows, not experiencing any discomfort, only joy and happiness.]

However, regarding the women in India he offers only negative comments because they are dark-skinned. Nevertheless, when he considers their clothing and jewelry, he is then filled with great admiration as well. (34) Then he praises the merchants for their intelligence and wit and their ability to communicate with signs, which would be due to the fact that in India the rising of the sun and the movement of the stars would cause so much terrifying noise. (36) The author might combine here fact with fiction, but what matters for us is only that he entertained specific notions about the world of the East and encouraged his readers to pay attention to the foreign cultures and customs as basically equal to their own. His narrative is consistently predicated on the explicit or implicit claim that he drew from his own experiences, although he also fell back to traditional monster lore, reporting about dwarfs, Blemmyes, cynocephali, etc. 36–38, partly following the model set up originally by Pliny the Elder. (C.E. 23-79) partly embellishing the narrative with much more realistically seeming features, identifying all those people, monstrous or not, as wealthy merchants who are richly dressed, adhere to eastern forms of Christianity or follow the faith embraced by their lords.

In many respects, this author proves to be an anthropologist or ethnographer, to use modern terms, making great efforts to describe many details of the foreign worlds, whether in Greece, Armenia, Georgia, Egypt, or in the countries further to the east. Religious details mattered much for him, but he mostly refrained from judging, apart from calling the non-Catholics ‘bad Christians’ throughout. Beyond that, he informs his readers about the various fashions, legal procedures, burial practices, and the relationships between the genders (especially in the Muslim lands). As the author notes, in a way outlining once again the overall purpose of his report, there are many different kinds of people living in the Middle East with different religions and customs (70) whom the Europeans simply have to acknowledge as their neighbors, so to speak.

Although we detect some negative remarks about those individuals of different faiths, such as the Orthodox Christians and the Muslims (“dolle lude,” 70; crazy people), the *Niederrheinische Orientbericht* ultimately proves to be a fairly objective account about many different countries and peoples in the Middle East, underscoring for the European audience that this world is populated by a wide range of individual groups or nations, whether the Christians agree with that or not. In a way, we might conclude that the anonymous author normalized the relationships between both parts of the world by way of painting a surprisingly realistic, though at times also fictional account of Egypt, Georgia, Armenia, Persia, India, and the Mongolian empire.

Most significantly, he observed that Christians and Muslims enjoyed rather tolerant relationships in the Islamic cities because the legal conditions protected both sides equally. (86; for more on toleration in the pre-modern world, see Classen, 2018/2021) He was filled with praise for the Mamluk sultan in Cairo who treated his Christian and Jewish prisoners rather humanely. (130) In fact, he paid great respect to all pilgrims, monks, and hermits, that is, to all those who had dedicated themselves to religious devotion. (112) The author also underscored many positive features of Turkey both in terms of the natural and the political conditions (122), and thus he undermined many xenophobic attitudes about the Ottomans prevalent in the west. Similarly, the audience is consistently encouraged to view the Fatimid Muslims, the

Tartars/Mongols, the Persians, and the Indians through a rather neutral lens and to acknowledge their accomplishments.

Almost as the final word in the historical and political report, the author comments about the many unusually looking people at the court of the Mongol ruler: “de dunckent dat wir also seltzen sin als sy uns dunckent.” (148; they assume that we are as strange as we consider them to be strange) Xenophobia is thus placed on its head insofar as foreignness is recognized as a natural consequence of the fact that there are so many cultures in this world. We recognize here a remarkable strategy of equalizing, which constitutes a foundation for globalism in mental-ideological terms. This finds also vivid expression in the second part of the treatise in which the author turns his attention to the local fauna and flora, offering extensive discussions of a wide range of animals and biological products. Consequently, there is then no real conclusion because the account could continue infinitely. Since the author appeared to have satisfied himself with many important details, there was apparently no reason to continue once he had remarked on trade with scarlet which some managed to trade with great profit, whereas others would not understand how to succeed in this business. (200)

We recognize here many indicators of a global awareness and global attitude since the author accepted it as his task to provide as much information about the many different countries in the Middle East as possible. There are very few value judgments, but a great desire to learn a maximum of details concerning cultural, religious, political, military, and everyday aspects and thus to instruct his readers to the best of his abilities. The *Niederrheinische Orientbericht* reflects, particularly through its lack of pretentiousness, a novel open-mindedness regarding the entire world to the east of Europe. Although he writes from the perspective of a Christian, he harbored hardly Eurocentric ideals and invited his readers to enjoy the alterity of the Orient with its many kingdoms, unusual animals and plants, and often a high level of morality and ethics.

### **Adam Olearius and Persia from a German Point of View**

Curiously, the *Niederrheinische Orientbericht* did not enjoy much popularity, considering that it has survived only in two manuscripts. It was never printed. But the interest in the foreign worlds continued to exert a considerable impact throughout Europe, as the success story of *Fortunatus* indicates. We could also refer to numerous other travelogues about India and the New World composed in many languages. Here I want to examine the travelogue by the North German ambassador, scholar, poet, and librarian Adam Olearius who went so far as to Moscow and, on a second world tour, all the way to Persia. His account, another ego-document, falls beyond the traditional boundaries defining the Middle Ages, but in terms of the global perspectives developed here, it allows us significantly to trace the discourse on globalism into the early modern age. (Olearius, 1656/1971)

Moreover, here we encounter a traveler who took quite a different route toward the East and who pursued hardly any mercantile or religious interests. Instead, Olearius traveled in diplomatic services and was personally motivated to study Persian and other cultures and to teach his audiences back home about an Oriental world that had traditionally intrigued the West. (Classen, 2022) As his travelogue clearly indicates, he was particularly concerned describing in greatest detail the route that his company took and thus to create a kind of mental map for subsequent travelers who would be interested in making their way from the southern coast of the Baltic Sea to Moscow and from there down to Persia.

Olearius, a sort of Renaissance man with extensive advanced education, was the secretary to the ambassador sent by Frederick III, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp (northern Germany), first to the Moscow tsar and then to the Shah of Safavid Persia. He also utilized the unique opportunity of his two long journeys to the East to study extensively the culture and language of the Persians, to translate much of their medieval poetry, and thus to convey much of the Eastern world to his western audiences as studied by himself during his stay at the Persian court.

Olearius joined two major diplomatic journeys, the first in 1633, which started from Gottorp in the duchy of Schleswig on October, 22, 1633 and travelled via Hamburg, Lübeck, Riga, Dorpat (where they stayed for five months), Reval (today Tallinn), Narva, Ladoga, and Novgorod to Moscow, where they arrived on August 14, 1634. The embassy was able to establish an advantageous treaty with Tsar Michael of Russia, and then they returned to Gottorp on December 14, 1634, arriving home on April, 1635. Although Russia was not that extremely far away from the European heartlands, we would have to acknowledge that this travel by a whole group of diplomats and merchants represented a major political outreach far to the northeast. Of course, the Hanseatic League had already established a dense network throughout the Baltic Sea, so journeying along that route to the north and then east toward Moscow was no longer a particularly exotic enterprise for those Germans, even a bit after the rapid decline of the League since the late sixteenth century. (apart from a legion of research literature, mostly in German, such as Kümper, 2020, see now the contributions to Harreld, ed., 2015)

The real goal, however, was not the Russian empire, but Persia. The company with Olearius embarked on its next journey on October 22, 1635, leaving from Hamburg and reaching Moscow on March 29, 1636, where they paused until June 30, when they departed again on June 30 aiming for Balakhna near Nizhniy Novgorod. There, some of their agents whom they had sent ahead, had prepared a ship for them with which they sailed down the Volga and then across the Caspian Sea, at times experiencing accidents when their ship ran aground in shallow waters, such as near Darband on November 14, 1636. Eventually, however, the company, having passed by Shamakhy (with a three months' rest here), Ardabil, Soltaniyeh and Kasvin, reached the Persian court at Isfahan on August 3, 1637, where they were welcomed by the Safavid king, Shah Safi, on August 16, 1637.

However, their negotiations did not achieve the same success as back in Moscow. Olearius used his time for extensive studies of the local language and culture, especially medieval Persian poetry, of which he collected many samples and translated them into German. The company then left Isfahan on December 21, 1637, and returned home via Rasht, Lenkoran, Astrakhan, Kazan, Moscow, and then the usual route down the Baltic Sea coast. At Reval, Olearius opted for his own direction and took a ship directly for Lübeck on April 15, 1639.

Subsequently, the duke appointed him as librarian in the palace of Gottorp, and as the keeper of the cabinet of curiosities (*Kuriositätenkabinett*). In 1651, for instance, Olearius purchased the collection of the Dutch scholar and physician, Bernardus Paludanus for the own library. He died at Gottorp on February 22, 1671. (Dünnhaupt, 1991; Brancaforte, 2003).= Very similar as his predecessor, the anonymous author of the *Niederrheinische Orientbericht*, but with a different geo-physical emphasis, Olearius deftly continued with the tradition of writing narratives determined by global perspectives and interests. He reflected extensively on his personal contacts in the foreign lands, and related what he had learned abroad to his audience back in Germany.

His detailed account of the journey and the cultural experiences, his *Beschreibung der muscowitischen und persischen Reise* (Description of the Muscovite and Persian Journey), appeared in Schleswig first in 1647, which the was re-edited or re-published numerous times first in 1656 and then in 1663, 1666, 1670, and 1669, and translated into English in 1662, 1669, and 1762, into French in 1656, 1719, and 1727, into Dutch in 1651, 1658, and 1670, into Italian (covering only the Russian travel section) in 1658 and in 1691 (covering the Persian section), into Latin in 1720 and 1730, and into Russian in 1870 and following. In short, here we deal with an early modern bestseller, which makes the global perspectives offered by the author even more important for our investigations. In addition to this major treatise, under Olearius's direction, a group of craftsmen produced the celebrated globe of Gottorp and armillary sphere between 1654 and 1664; Duke Frederick's grandson, Christian Augustus, later passed this globe on to Czar Peter the Great of Russia in 1713.



Olearius's *Beschreibung*, certainly only one of many other contemporary travelogues published in a variety of languages (Singh, ed., 2009), stands out for the realistic character overall, the great interest in the Persian world in cultural terms, and the poet's personal fascination with medieval Persian language and literature (Brancaforte, 2017; Classen, "Persia in German Baroque Literature," 2021), consists of a massive report covering a vast amount of information that cannot be reviewed here specifically. Instead, the only question that concerns us here is to what extent the author reflected an awareness of how much East and West were actually connected and that the western readers would be able to profit from a thorough study of Persian poetry and music. In a previous study, I outlined already the extent to which Persia at large mattered for seventeenth-century intellectuals, poets, artists, merchants, and politicians. (Classen, "Global History," 2021)

The fact itself that this group of German ambassadors and others successfully reached their goal of Isfahan, deserves full credit from the perspective of the global outreach they effectuated, but Olearius sheds also important light on the many challenges that they often faced and that then were overcome by means of external help by the various locals. He approached his task very much as a sober observer and maintained, as far as we can tell, a relatively objective perspective.

Just as in the *Niederrheinische Orientbericht*, or almost even more than that late medieval narrative, Olearius demonstrated greatest interest in presenting the ordinary life conditions in the foreign world by discussing the various fashions, the languages, the people's physical appearances, widows, religions, funeral rituals, public expressions of sorrow, etc. (e.g., 310–11, in the English translation). Like in the case of countless other travelogues, the author faced threats by hostile forces, had to deal with many different languages, among many other problems, but he obviously succeeded to achieve his specific goals and reached the Persian capital and to reach out to the local ruler and his court.

The overall impression confirms easily that Olearius was an experienced, skillful traveler who never faced serious conflicts despite tensions, difficulties, misunderstandings, and the like, as most travelers have to deal with until today. As to be expected, the author clearly conveys a picture of otherness, as would be very natural for a northern German traveler in Persia, but we do not detect any specific Eurocentric attitudes, colonialist concepts, or personal arrogance regarding the foreign people. Instead, he worked hard to learn Persian, to study Persian poetry, and to translate much of it into German. The ultimate outcome of his diplomatic efforts might have been minor, if not negligible, but the report that he left behind created critically important intellectual and cultural bridges between both parts of the world.

We cannot yet tell to what extent he might have had a direct impact on the Persian court or the Persian poets, or whether the Persians developed an interest in Germany, but he certainly brought much information and hence much respect for Persia back to Europe. In short, we can certainly call him a cultural ambassador and a global citizen who demonstrated great respect for the world in the Middle Ages. The considerable success of his account not only in Germany until the end of the seventeenth century, but also across Europe through the various translations, underscores the huge impact which Olearius exerted on his contemporaries. On the one hand, he provided most accurate details about the travel route, on the other, he sensitized his audiences to the glory of medieval Persian literature and language.

Overall, Olearius paid great respect to the distant world in the Middle East, describing it in most positive and objective terms, without discrediting the Persians in any particular fashion, for instance, because of their different faith or language. Instead, this author, indicating from early on a global mindset, signaled in explicit terms how much the experience in Persia was eye-opening for him and that he wanted to share that with his audience. This globetrotter basically appealed to his audience to wander with him through the exotic world in the Orient and to recognize it as somewhat different and yet fundamentally similar. Globalism, as we observe it here, constitutes a form of intellectual, cultural, linguistic, political, and perhaps even religious rapprochement, in this case connecting northern Germany with Persia, certainly a

most unusual perspective and epistemological framework.

The author did not pretend that there were no differences between East and West, but he certainly underscored that behind the religious differences regarding the calendar, rituals, or processes, not to speak of the differences in matters of faith, he observed ordinary people with great cultural accomplishments, hence simply contemporaries who lived far away and yet impressed the author considerably in their own customs and practices. (e.g., 307-08) Olearius did not even shy away from describing the Islamic faith, quoting from the holy scriptures, and poetry from Persia. (e.g., 342)

We also learn about culinary customs, such as the preference for donkey meat served at the sultan's dinner table (403), which also was intended as a reminder for all people to observe humility and to practice modesty. Apparently, Olearius had acquired sufficient linguistic knowledge of Persian to communicate with the officials well, so his report, published in German, constitutes an extraordinary cultural bridge between the two peoples, in East and West. Without any doubt, we can thus identify this great travelogue as a major contribution to the discourse on globalism long before modernity. Although Olearius was certainly not aware of the anonymous *Niederrheinische Orientbericht*, we can recognize here a significant continuation of a shared intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness that allow us to call these two German writers truly globalists prior to 1800. (see the catalog for an exhibition curated by Brancaforte and Brentjes, 2012)

### **The Global Jesuit Network**

The foundation of the Jesuit Order by Ignatius Loyola in 1540 was a masterstroke by the Catholic Church to combat the enormous successes of the Protestant Church. The Jesuits focused primarily on education, missionizing, and conversion, and they soon achieved astounding breakthroughs and could thus contribute critically to the restoration of Catholic influence in many European countries. They subsequently, and this already immediately after their foundation, embarked on establishing a global network to reach out to the many different 'heathen' people across the world, though they tended to stay away from Muslim countries where they encountered too much opposition both by the Islamic clergy and the people. By contrast, the Jesuits established themselves especially well in Central and South America, east Asia, and Africa, and can thus be identified as early modern global players well before 1800. Their history has already been well documented, including their international network. (Friedrich, 2022)

Truly remarkably, since ca. 1700, so ca. fifty years after Olearius had published the first edition of his travelogue, a new stream of German-speaking Jesuit missionaries was finally allowed to enter the New World because the Catholic Church faced a severe shortage of Spanish or Portuguese members of the Order. At the same time, for the German Jesuits, the permission to travel to the Americas was a long-held dream, so they responded with great enthusiasm to this new opportunity. (Classen, 2013)

Tragically, for many different reasons that do not need to be analyzed here, the Jesuits faced much hatred and were finally banned from the Americas in 1767, and globally banned in 1773. Only in 1814, they were re-admitted, and they continue to be a thriving and productive monastic order operating on a global level until today. The missionaries commonly composed extensive reports about their experiences, and some also wrote personal letters to their families back home, such as Joseph Och, Bernhard Middendorf, and Philipp Segesser. (Segesser, 2012)

Already long before the expulsion of all Jesuits, the Graz librarian Joseph Stoecklein began to collect a vast corpus of texts composed by missionaries all over the world, translated them into German, and published them in the famous and highly popular *Welt-Bott*. (Classen, "Ein Bucherfolg," 2020) We are still far away from a careful analysis of this huge anthology, but we can be certain that those letters, reports, or other types of narratives, along with many

maps and images, created an enormously important publication platform for the consequences of religious, missionary globalism.

Undoubtedly, however, these German-speaking Jesuits tended to be rather critical of the Spanish conquistadors, and they tried, as perhaps most vocally represented by Eusebio Kino (d. 1711), to the best of their abilities to reach out to the local population, to settle them, to teach them, and ultimately to convert and baptize them. Consistently, we observe, of course, a typical patronizing attitude determined by those missionaries who all had received an excellent education back home and were deeply driven by their Enlightened worldview that they brought the best of all human civilization to a primitive or even barbaric population in the New World.

As Ignaz Pfefferkorn (1725–ca. 1794), for instance, reveals many times, which is then echoed by virtually all other German Jesuit authors in the northern parts of Mexico (today shared by the US state of Arizona), a sort of imperialist attitude, as much as they tried very hard personally to reach out to their parishioners and support them to the best of their abilities, as long as those submitted under the Jesuits' principles and value system. They differed in that regard considerably from the two previously consulted sources/authors, especially because they were so profoundly inspired by their own Christian ideals (Classen, 2014).

Nevertheless, the many texts composed by those German-language Jesuit missionaries represent yet another body of evidence concerning the existence of globalism *avant la lettre*. Pfefferkorn, Och, Segesser, and many others demonstrated the great interest by German intellectuals and writers well before modernity in the countries outside of Europe, and they committed themselves actually much more to the people in the New World than all the previous authors and travelers. Those who subscribed to this missionary work never returned home, until 1767 when the Spanish crown forced all Jesuits to leave for good; many died on the journey home, but some of them survived and subsequently turned to writing down their experiences.

One more point deserves to be mentioned here to underscore the global perspective of this entire phenomenon. The Jesuit Order was first completely dominated by its Spanish and Portuguese, then French and Italian members. In the course of time, however, missionaries from the German Empire were also invited to work in the New World and elsewhere across the globe. They were not simply Germans; instead, they belonged to individual provinces of the Empire, so some were Bohemians, other Swiss, some were Swabians, others were Danish or Polish. The German language united them, although they all had to learn Spanish first of all in order to cope with the Hispanic Church Administration.

While they worked as missionaries in the New World, one of the first task for them was to learn the various native languages in order to hold sermons in the individual tongues. The Jesuits, however, operated globally, and there were missions (and continue to be there) in many countries with many different languages. We are hence justified to identify these missionaries as truly global players, whether they pursued religious or economic interests, whether they intended to promote the cause for the Spaniards, or whether they thought more of the well-being of their parishioners or future converts.

The native population probably viewed the missionaries from a very different perspective, regarded them as threatening foreigners, but in terms of the discourse of globalism before the modern age, we can certainly identify the Jesuit network, as manifested specifically through their writing, in this case in German, as a direct successor to the early efforts by the anonymous author of the *Niederrheinische Orientbericht* and by Adam Olearius.

## Conclusion

Altogether, we are now in a solid position to identify a certain stream of narrative voices from the fourteenth to the late eighteenth century reflecting a burgeoning interest in the global world, and this also from a German point of view. We have already identified, for instance, late medieval Franciscans, Venetian and Genoese merchants, and various diplomats as harbingers of that innovative discourse. To this we can now add a number of German voices that have not yet been fully recognized in that context as major contributors.

Undoubtedly, the physical volume of globalism, if we want to call it that way, was still far away from that phenomenon as it emerged since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Hopkins, 2002; Bayly, 2006; cf. also the contributions to Conrad, Andreas Eckert, and Ute Freitag, ed., 2007). Nevertheless, there is no doubt that our cases confirm vividly the presence of, awareness about, and interest in the foreign world with a considerable degree of respect for the new cultures and peoples by those German authors. Terms such as imperialism and colonialism could not yet be applied to them, whereas globalism certainly fits the picture in quite an impressive manner.

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