

Title: *The Brixen Globes* [formerly known as the “Mounted Hauslab” Globe]

Author: unknown

Date: 1522

Description: One of two hand-painted globes—one terrestrial, the other celestial—known collectively as the “Brixen globes.” Both are hollow, built up of wood, and covered with gesso. The celestial globe differs slightly in construction, having a layer of felt or heavy paper between the wood and the gesso. Both are mounted in potentially original three-footed brass stands (bases mended), with horizon and movable meridian.

The *Brixen* globes, formerly known as the “Mounted Hauslab” globes, were acquired in the early 19th century by an Austrian ordnance officer, Franz Ritter von Hauslab. After Hauslab’s death in 1883 they entered the far-flung collections of the Prince Johann II of Liechtenstein and were apparently separated from one another. The terrestrial globe was mentioned in several scholarly publications between the 1870s and 1890s; the celestial pendant, however, was completely unknown until both globes were properly published by Oberhammer in 1926. For a long time afterwards the two globes were effectively lost. Although the terrestrial globe was mentioned in several later publications, no one seems to have actually seen it. At some point the two spheres were reunited by the New York dealer H. P. Kraus and sold to the American collector Paul Mellon. Shortly before his death in 1999 Mellon transferred the globes to the Center for British Art at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, the museum and research center that he had founded in 1977.

The *Brixen* globes are hand painted, but fully dependent on printed sources. The *Brixen* terrestrial globe is a manuscript globe made of wood and has a diameter of 36.8 cm; it is in excellent condition, and was constructed in 1522 at the order of Nicolaus Leopold as a gift for Sebastian Sperantius, Bishop of Brixen. J. Luksch has noted that the globe’s depiction of the New World is quite similar to that in Johannes Schöner’s 1515 globe (#328), but the *Brixen* globe does not have the unusual southern continent of Schöner’s 1515 and 1520 globes. Moreover, the handwriting on the *Brixen* globe is entirely different from Schöner’s. In fact, the globe exhibits more connections with Waldseemüller’s 1507 map (#310): Western Africa extends below the equator as it does on Waldseemüller’s map (but not on Schöner’s globe), and many of the legends on the globe are similar to those on Waldseemüller’s 1507 map and in his *Cosmographiae Introductio*. An attribution of the *Brixen* globe to Waldseemüller is impossible, however, for Waldseemüller’s geographical ideas had changed dramatically by 1522 (when the *Brixen* globe was made), as evidenced by the *Tabulae modernae* or modern, non-Ptolemaic maps reliably attributed to Waldseemüller in the Strassburg 1513 edition of Ptolemy’s *Geography*, and in Waldseemüller’s 1516 *Carta Marina* (#320). It does seem though that the anonymous cartographer of the *Brixen* globe was working from a copy of Waldseemüller’s 1507 map.

An inscription on the celestial globe notes that it was commissioned as a gift from Nikolaus Leopold to Sebastian Sperantius, Bishop of Brixen, in 1522. It may be deduced from this that Nikolaus Leopold gave the celestial globe to Sperantius as a mate to the terrestrial globe already owned by him, or that the terrestrial globe was made later as a mate to the celestial. That the globes are a pair is also strongly suggested by their identical measurements. It is also noteworthy that the sole surviving copy of the 1507 Waldseemüller map is bound up in a volume that at one time belonged to Schöner himself.

Because the globe reproduces the New World configurations of Schöner's 1515 globe, the *Brixen* terrestrial globe has been previously attributed to Johann Schöner. Recent scholarship now suggests the text on the globe is not in Schöner's hand, based on analysis of Schöner's handwriting in his annotated copy of the 1482 edition of Ptolemy's *Geography* and his 1520 manuscript globe (#328). Also there is a major exception in south of the apex of the southern American continent where there is not in the *Brixen* globe that immense region denominated by Schöner's *Brasilie Regio*. The northern section bears only the name *par. . . [ias]*. The southern section is likewise called *AMERICA*, but exhibits in addition a number of names belonging to the Lusitanian nomenclature already described in the *Kunstmanns* (#309), and set forth in the 1520 globe of Schöner (#328).



Brixen terrestrial globe: Western Hemisphere

As mentioned above, the terrestrial globe is closely derived from the large world map that accompanied Martin Waldseemüller's *Cosmographiae introductio* (St.-Die, 1507). It was the first map to bear the name *America*, and to show the new discoveries of the Spanish and the Portuguese. The globe is painted in varying shades of clear light brown, the seas darker, the lands lighter. The equator, tropic parallels, and Arctic and Antarctic circles are in gold, the equator being graduated in degrees. Four meridians are present, also in gold, zero degrees passing through Porto Santo, near Madeira. Outlines, mountain ranges, etc., closely follow Waldseemüller, care being taken to correct the distorted shapes inherent in his method of projection. The cities on the terrestrial globe are marked with points and sometimes with small buildings. Various inscriptions and legends are written in minuscule, in black and red. The word *Brixia*, prominently marking a town that was only the fifth largest in the Tyrol, is much too large, confirming the connection between the two globes.

The nomenclature and inscriptions are also entirely derived from the 1507 maps with two exceptions, but with considerable abridgement, due to the much smaller area available on the globe. Names are in black, with a few more important names or inscriptions in red. *Brixia* is written in larger red letters. *America*, so named on South America, is represented in three sections: the coast of South America from about the La Plata to about Panama; the coasts of North America, from a supposed strait near Panama, to about the Chesapeake; and the coast of Newfoundland. The latter is placed well east of its true position, probably to avoid the demarcation line of Pope Alexander VI, as it was a Portuguese discovery. The unknown west coasts of North and South America are covered with bands of ruffles, conventional representations of clouds.

The two exceptions to the Waldseemüller readings are (a) the legend on South Africa, *Tota ista pars affrice Ptolomeo incognita*, and (b) on *Hispaniola* (Sto. Domingo), *Hic nascitur guaiacum lignum*. In slightly different forms, these legends occur on the Apianus world map of 1520 (#331). This would suggest 1520 as the earliest possible date of creation, unless, of course, the Apianus map was earlier extant in manuscript form.

In conclusion, it must be remarked that the terrestrial globe does not incorporate the latest information gathered by the voyages of discovery, which naturally was available in Nuremberg. The absence of this information proves at least that it was not the leading globe-maker Johannes Schöner who made the *Brixen* terrestrial globe. Schöner in his globes of 1515 and 1520 also based himself on Waldseemüller's 1507 map, but introduced numerous improvements and additions. Already on the 1515 globe, for instance, he included, without any evidence for it, an Antarctic continent. The *Brixen* globe also failed to take into account Waldseemüller's own widely distributed 1516 map, the *Carta Marina*, which offered more information about the Americas.

Among the *Brixen* globe's few departures from Waldseemüller's 1507 map are two inscriptions from a second, more recent printed source: the world-map attributed to Petrus Apianus and published in an edition of Solinus by Johannes Camers (Vienna 1520) and again in an edition of Pomponius Mela (Basel 1522). The *Brixen* globe describes the island *Hispaniola*, for example, following Apianus' map, as *insula in qua capitur guaiacum lignum* (guaiacum wood, used as a remedy against syphilis). The caravel in the south Pacific Ocean on the *Brixen* globe, incidentally, which does not appear in Waldseemüller, has been interpreted as a reference to the circumnavigation of Magellan in 1522, providing a *terminus post quem* of 1523 for the terrestrial globe. But this is not at all certain. A similar caravel appears off the coast of South America already on the Apianus map of 1520, although further north than the one on the *Brixen* globe.

Location: Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts in the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven (shelf-mark L-1999-3-2a)

Size: 36.8 cm diameter

References:

Harrisse, Henry, *Discovery of North America*, pp. 491-92.

Wood, C.S., "Print technology and the Brixen Globes", in *Kunsthistoriker: Mitteilungen des Osterreichischen Kunsthistorikerverbandes*, 15/16 (1999/2000), p. 15-20.





