

P.Warren (= *Pap.Lugd.Bat. 1*)

Local Dutch tradition (transmitted only orally) has it that in 1935 a collection of 21 Greek, mostly documentary papyri was donated by an English collector, Mr. E.P. Warren, to a specially created Dutch scholarly foundation, “The Leiden Papyrological Institute.” The following note⁸ grew from a desire to learn more about this enigmatic figure who donated so liberally a set of ancient documents that was published in 1941 under the title “The Warren Papyri.” After all, his donation represented a substantial amount of money.⁹ Moreover, the author of this note was also struck by the observation that, though it might have been appropriate to give the full names of the new Maecenas, nowhere in the volume that bears his name are the benefactor’s initials resolved. So, who exactly was this Mr. E.P. Warren?

In an attempt to obtain some quick information I searched (on January 13, 2010) on Google for “Warren + papyri,” which took me through Google Books to a reference that looked promising: “The Warren Papyri: (P. Warren). By Edward Prioleau Warren, Arthur Surridge Hunt, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden. Papyrologisch Instituut.” This creates the impression that (1) the Warren papyri were edited by these two gentlemen and that (2) they themselves were once attached to the Papyrological Institute of the University of Leiden.

Now, within this context it is illuminating to quote the opening of the editorial preface to the volume dated “Leyden, May 20, 1941” and signed by M. David, B.A. van Groningen, and J.C. van Oven (p. ix):

The 21 Greek papyri collected by the late E.P. WARREN had been entrusted for publication to A.S. HUNT, who edited nine of them¹⁰ before his lamented death in 1934. Through the kind intercession of Mrs. A.S. HUNT, Dr. H.I. BELL, and Mr. T.C. SKEAT, the collection was given to the Leyden Papyrological Institute by H. ASA THOMAS ESQ., its new owner. To all these persons we tender our sincere thanks.

By no means, therefore, should one think that at some moment before his death A.S. Hunt was a member of the staff of the Leiden Papyrological Institute. That institution was created only in 1935, and on this matter the information

⁸ Part of a paper about “Milestones in the History of Papyrology in Leiden” given on the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Leiden Papyrological Institute, January 18, 2010.

⁹ For an idea of contemporary prices, see, e.g., E. von Scherling’s sales catalogues *Rotulus* 3 (1933) and 4 (1937), available on the Internet under <http://www.islamic-manuscripts.info/reference/index.html>.

¹⁰ The nine texts edited by Hunt are nos. 1, 3, 5-10, and 21 (note by K.A. Worp).

provided by Google Books is incorrect. Moreover, nowhere in the edition itself (dedicated [p. vii] “To the Memory of E.P. Warren and A.S. Hunt”) are the initials “E.P.” preceding the family name “Warren” resolved. Therefore, one may well wonder, why on Google Books these initials are resolved as “Edward Prioleau” (pronounced “PRAY-low”), and what more is known about this Edward Prioleau Warren.

Here one can profit from other resources available on the Internet. A quick search for this set of names in the English Wikipedia provides the information that this man was an English archaeologist and architect who practised extensively in Oxford, no doubt helped by the fact that his brother, Sir Herbert Warren, was President of Magdalen College. During the First World War he was seconded to the Serbian Army, and afterwards designed the War Cemetery at Basra. In 1916, he is said to have had considerable experience of hospital construction. At the beginning of his career, he built and altered a number of churches, but he is known principally for domestic buildings in an understated revival of English late 17th century styles: his main works were lodgings for Oxford colleges and minor country houses. He died on 23 November 1937.

Now there is, of course, nothing inherently wrong with a British architect/archaeologist’s collecting papyri. This Mr. Edward Prioleau Warren, however, turns out to be certainly not the man who gave his name to the Warren papyri. For getting closer to that man, it is necessary to first find out what is known about Mr. H(arry) Asa Thomas Esq. Here, again, the Internet comes to the rescue: via a search for this name on Google one learns that he is mentioned several times as the beneficiary of the will of a certain Edward Perry Warren, and in fact the latter must be our man. The basic details of his life are set forth in an article in (again) the English Wikipedia which I quote while adding in footnotes some additional information collected by me from other sources:¹¹

Edward Perry Warren (8 June 1860 – 28 December 1928), known as “Ned Warren,” was an American art collector, and a writer of works proposing an idealised view of homosexual relationships. He was one

¹¹ For further biographical information the Wikipedia article itself refers to the article by D. Sox written for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available on the Internet through subscription. I have checked both versions and came to the conclusion that the basic facts provided by the (freely available) Wikipedia are not substantially different from the information provided by the *DNB* (for which one may be charged). The editor of *BASP* informs me that there is not a word about the papyri in D. Sox, *Bachelors of Art: Edward Perry Warren & the Lewes House Brotherhood* (London 1991).

of six children of a wealthy family¹² of Boston, Massachusetts. He was educated at Harvard and later at New College, Oxford¹³ where he met John Marshall, with whom he formed a close and long-lasting relationship. The two set up house together at Lewes House, a large residence in Lewes, East Sussex¹⁴ where they became the centre of a circle of like-minded men interested in art and antiquities who ate together in a dining room overlooked by Lucas Cranach's Adam and Eve (now in the Courtauld Institute of Art). He spent much time on the Continent of Europe, collecting art works many of which he sold to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. His published works include *A Defence of Uranian Love*, which proposes a type of same-sex relationship similar to that prevalent in Classical Greece, in which an older man would act as guide as well as lover to younger men. He is perhaps best known today as the purchaser of the Roman silver drinking vessel known as the "Warren Cup," which he did not attempt to sell during his lifetime, because of its explicit depiction of homoerotic scenes. It is now in the British Museum.¹⁵ He also commissioned a version of *The Kiss* from Auguste Rodin which he offered to the local council in Lewes as a gift – it was rejected as "too big and too nude," but is now in the Tate Gallery.¹⁶

Given Warren's family and educational background there is nothing startling in his collecting Greek papyri. It is surprising, however, that it has taken so long to uncover the link between this American collector and the papyrus collection in the Netherlands that bears his name. Moreover, this investigation demonstrates (unsurprisingly) that not all bibliographical information provided by the Internet is reliable and that one should check and double-check.

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¹² Active as manufacturers of paper; see the website http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S._D._Warren_Paper_Mill.

¹³ Where he was a student of the Classics.

¹⁴ Near Brighton on the South coast of England. For the history of the Lewes House, see the website <http://www.lewes.gov.uk/business/15716.asp>.

¹⁵ See the Wikipedia article http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Cup.

¹⁶ For this sculpture, see, e.g., the website <http://www.sculptureexhibitions.com/archive/rodin/timeline.htm>.