

The Appeal of Eros to Apollo: A New Manuscript for New College, Oxford

Born the fourth of five children into a rich family in Waltham, Massachusetts, art collector and writer Edward ‘Ned’ Perry Warren (1860–1928) was schooled in Boston, Massachusetts, and subsequently graduated from Harvard in 1883. Thereafter he determined to live abroad, and he came to New College to study Classics, matriculating in 1883 and graduating five years later. In 1883–4 he was living—he records—in ‘Grove Cottage, Holywell’; and in 1887 he was at 31 Holywell Street, just across the road from college.¹ It was during his second year at Oxford that Ned Warren met Liverpoolian and fellow New College student John Marshall (1862–1928), who had been intending to train for the Anglican priesthood. John Marshall abandoned those plans, and he and Ned Warren became lifetime romantic partners—and business partners too. They settled in Lewes House, a Georgian residence in East Sussex—living among a brotherhood of like-minded men devoted to art and antiquities—and Warren and Marshall began amassing a fabulous collection of antiquities. From his collection, Warren is



Ned Warren and John Marshall in 1895—they called each other ‘Puppy’
Photograph by Edward Reeves (1824–1904)

perhaps best known for the so-called ‘Warren Cup’, a silver Roman drinking cup (15 BC–15 AD) now held in the British Museum, and which depicts two scenes of male homosexual love-making.² He would also accrue an important collection of books and manuscripts over the course of his life. A catalogue for a Sotheby’s sale of his books after his death suggests that Classics predominated, but his collection also contained works by such writers as J. A. Symonds (1840–1893), Walt Whitman (1819–1892), and Oscar Wilde (1854–1900)—as well as a first edition copy of *The Inn of Tranquillity* (1912) by Nobel literature laureate John Galsworthy, who was a student at New College while Warren was there.³

In 1907 John Marshall married Ned Warren’s cousin Mary Emma Bliss (1856–1925), though the close association between the two men would continue. Three years after Mary’s death in 1925, Warren and Marshall also died; all three were eventually interred together in the English Cemetery at Bagni di Lucca in Tuscany. While he is best remembered today for his collecting of Greek and Roman antiquities, Warren was also an author of works exalting same-sex love (i.e. on ‘Uranian’ themes), writing under the pen-name of Arthur Lyon Raile. His most famous—and notorious—work was his apologia *The Defence of Uranian Love* (1928–30),⁴ but he wrote poetry and

¹ Osbert Burdett and E. H. Goddard, *Edward Perry Warren: The Biography of a Connoisseur* (London: Christophers, 1941), p. 54; David Sox, *Bachelors of Art: Edward Perry Warren & the Lewes House Brotherhood* (London: Fourth Estate, 1991), p. 22.

² See John Potvin, ‘Askesis and the Greek Ideal: Edward Perry Warren and Lewes House’, *Bachelors of a Different Sort: Queer Aesthetics, Material Culture and the Modern Interior in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), pp. 131–60; <www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1999-0426-1> (Accessed: 28 July 2022).

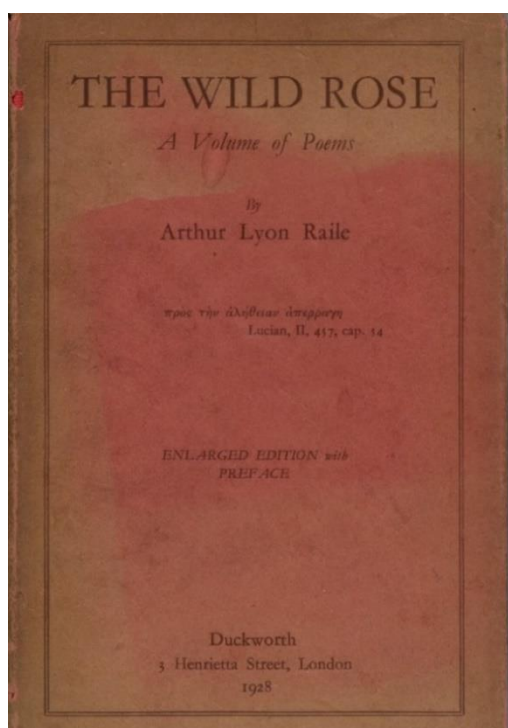
³ *Catalogue of the Library from Lewes House, Lewes, Sussex, Collected by the Late E. P. Warren, Esq., M.A. [. . .]* (London: Sotheby & Co., 1929), New College Library, Oxford, Bib/WAR.

⁴ Arthur Lyon Raile, *A Defence of Uranian Love*, 3 vols. (London: Privately printed [by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., of London and Aylesbury], 1928–30). A copy of this work, very scarce in its original printing, is held in the Bodleian’s Sackler Library, J.ii.230. The text is reproduced within volume 1 of *The Collected Works & Commissioned Biography of*

fiction as well, and New College Library has copies of some of his works (which are rare), and of other items relating to him too.

For Ned Warren, a wild rose was a symbol for the ‘comrade-love’ of Ancient Greece. And the front cover of his short fable *The Prince Who Did Not Exist*, published in 1900 in an edition of 350 copies, bears a wild rose illustration. His story of a fairy-tale prince—who therefore does not exist—falling in love with a young lady who does exist is printed on Japanese-fold paper by D. B. Updike at the Merrymount Press, with three full-page wood cuts by Arthur J. Gaskin, and published by Charles Scribner of New York. It was published under his real name, rather than his *nom de plume* of Arthur Lyon Raile, and it is dedicated to Mary Bliss. Indeed, the princess in the story seems almost a precursor of Mary Bliss, and the triangular Warren-Marshall-Bliss relationship has something of an odd fairy-tale quality about it in keeping with Warren’s fable:

For the existence of a young lady is sometimes unfortunate, though she may be a very useful and respectable person, as this one indeed was.⁵



Ned Warren’s most important collection of poetry—itself an expansion of his earlier *Itamos: A Volume of Poems* (1903)⁶—is *The Wild Rose: A Volume of Poems*. This appeared in 1909 containing eighty-six poems, and then in an enlarged edition in 1913, and finally in 1928 in an enlarged edition which contains a preface and ninety-five poems in total. His poetry exalts same-sex love and the Greek ideals of Platonic love and comradeship, and all three printings were published under his pen-name Arthur Lyon Raile. New College Library is fortunate to hold copies of both the 1909 and 1928 editions, which survive in only a handful of libraries.⁷ The volumes are dedicated ‘To J. M.’, that is, John Marshall. Our 1909 copy is in the original publisher’s gold-embossed, suede leather binding, and it bears the pictorial bookplate of Timothy D’Arch Smith (*b.* 1936), bibliographer and scholar of English ‘Uranian’ poetry. Our 1928 copy is in bright red linen boards and its original dustjacket, with an ‘Author’s Compliments’ slip.

New College Library, Oxford, NC/WAR

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The library also holds a copy of his *Alcmaeon, Hypermestra, Caenus*, a free rendering in prose of Greek legends.⁸ This was published in Oxford under his own name in 1919, and by now with his Oxford credentials to the fore; the imprint is ‘B. H. Blackwell, Broad Street’, and Warren appears on the

Edward Perry Warren, ed. Michael Matthew Kaylor, 2 vols. (Brno: Masaryk University Press, 2013), New College Library, Oxford, NC/WAR.

⁵ Edward Perry Warren, *The Prince Who Did Not Exist*, with pictures by Arthur J. Gaskin (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1900), ‘Chapter i’ [no page numbers]. New College Library’s copy, at NC/WAR, is copy 214 of a limited edition of 350 copies.

⁶ Arthur Lyon Raile, *Itamos: A Volume of Poems* (London: Grant Richards, 1903).

⁷ Arthur Lyon Raile, *The Wild Rose: A Volume of Poems* (London: David Nutt, 1909) and his *The Wild Rose: A Volume of Poems* (London: Duckworth, 1928), both held at New College Library, Oxford, NC/WAR.

⁸ E. P. Warren, *Alcmaeon, Hypermestra, Caenus* (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1919), New College Library, Oxford, NC/WAR.

title page as ‘E. P. Warren, M.A. Honorary Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford’. Warren had originally considered both Corpus—and Balliol—as a place of study before determining instead on New College; he writes of how ‘the “tremulous intonation” of the service at New College delighted me’.⁹ The Corpus Christi fellowship had been bestowed to recognise Warren’s commitment in 1915, when he moved into rooms at Corpus, to bequeath to that college a large endowment in order that it might in time revive its praelectorship of Greek. But the conditions Warren initially insisted upon for such a donation reveal how extremely important to him was his vision for a Hellenic brotherhood—with the male praelector’s associating closely with his students, and the praelector’s being a bachelor who would teach within the walls of the college only, and never in the presence of women.¹⁰

Warren’s 1928 preface to *The Wild Rose* sets out his statement on his own poetry: ‘In short, love in maturity, Paganism and Christianity combined, verse that expresses no current beliefs, involution of style condensed and perhaps constricted, definition instead of abandonment: these are the marks of the book’. His poem ‘The Pride of Life’ appears in all three printings of *The Wild Rose*—and its opening lines are indicative of the decadent style and content of many of the poems: ‘Grasp man’s delight. Reach out thy hand anew / for pleasure. Slake thy thirst upon the streams’.¹¹ Some stanzas from his paean to Eros, dated 30 March 1902, titled ‘Hymn to Love’, and published in both *Itamos* and *The Wild Rose*, also provide a good example of, notably, his Classics-inspired love poetry:

With healing in thy wings re-risen to bless
thou comest in Hellenic nakedness,
spurning each terror-stricken soul
that shuns thee whole;

and I perceive thee, as a monk distraught,
or philosophic sage inured to thought,
my see beyond the book or prayer
his dream in air;

and I believe thee, as a vision sent
to mourner in perpetual banishment
from his own ruined hearth and home
in Greece or Rome;

and I receive thee, as a lover’s call
the lad that heareth footsteps in the hall,
and starteth trembling in his seat to catch
the lifting latch.¹²

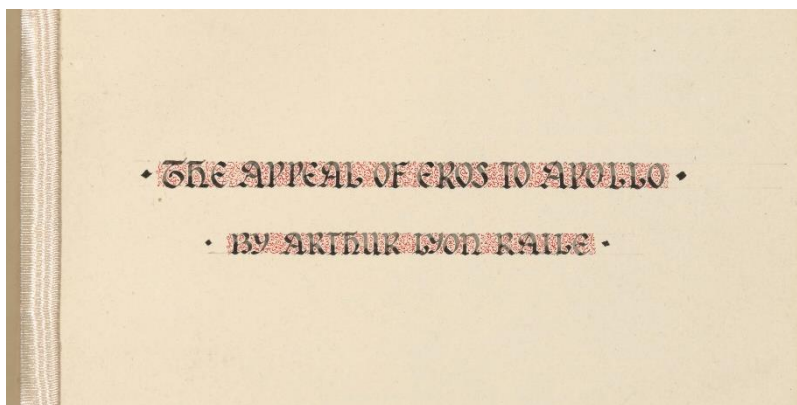
The occasion to acquire a significant and beautiful literary manuscript with associations to New College is always a red-letter day for the library. And earlier this year, we were most fortunate to add to the library’s outstanding collection of manuscripts our most recent acquisition—MS 379.

⁹ Burdett and Goddard, *Edward Perry Warren*, p. 52.

¹⁰ For more on Warren’s vision and plans focusing on Corpus Christi College, Oxford, see *ibid.*, pp. 364–93, as well as Sox, *Bachelors of Art*, pp. 96–104, and Emily Rutherford, “‘Never in the Presence of Any Woman’: Male Homoeroticism and Elite Education”, *History Workshop Online* (21 January 2019): <www.historyworkshop.org.uk/never-in-the-presence-of-any-woman-male-homoeroticism-and-elite-education/> (Accessed: 28 July 2022).

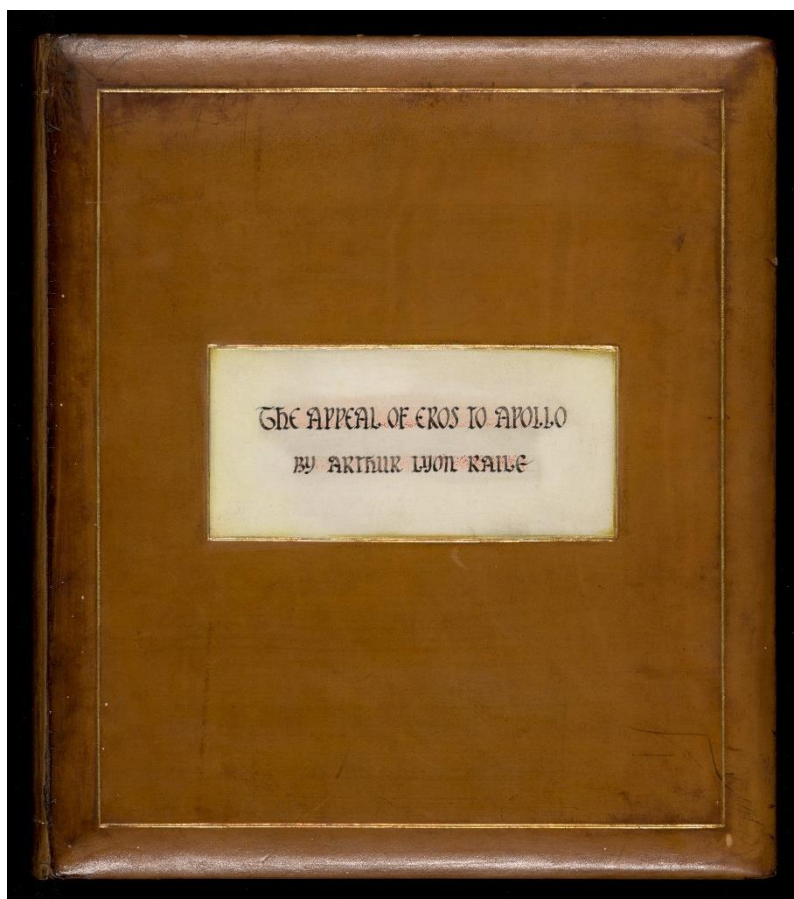
¹¹ Raile, *Wild Rose* (1928), pp. x, 19.

¹² Raile, *Wild Rose* (1909), p. 30.



New College Library, Oxford, MS 379, f. 1r [detail]
Title page, showing calligraphy and inks

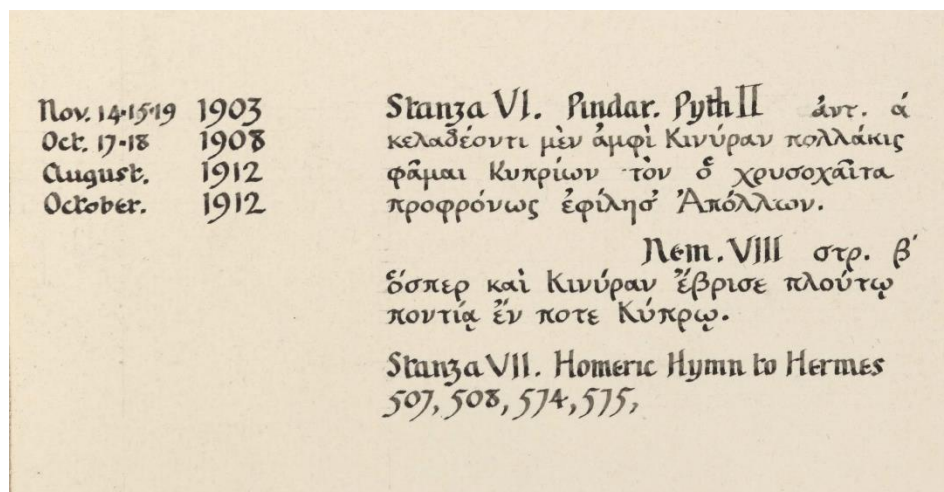
A calligraphic manuscript in black and red inks throughout, 'The Appeal of Eros to Apollo—By Arthur Lyon Raile' is bound in gilt-ruled calf, with a hand-lettered vellum inset to the upper board, and attractive watered silk endpapers.



New College Library, Oxford, MS 379
Binding, upper board

Containing an apparently unpublished ten-stanza poem by Edward Perry Warren, which draws upon Pindar and Homer and which was composed over the course of nine years (1903–1912), our manuscript has a colophon with the inscription 'Transcribed by / T. G. Angell / Sep^r.–Oct^r. 1916'. A plausible candidate for the identity of the calligrapher might be Thomas Gravely Angell, half of

the architectural practice of Imrie and Angell. Perhaps Angell had been connected to the Lewes Brotherhood, in which case this manuscript may have been created as a gift for Warren himself. It has the added distinction of coming from the library of celebrated Australian comedian Barry Humphries (*b.* 1934)—aka Dame Edna Everage—also a major collector of books.



New College Library, Oxford, MS 379, f. 3r [detail]
Record of date of production, with references to Pindar and Homer

The text of the manuscript poem is set out below:

Where the gray willow falleth to the stream,
upon a marshy bank, with hands uplift
whither the clouds disclosed a whitening rift,
I saw a winged boy by dusky gleam
all naked to the chilly air
standing, as if in prayer,

and this I heard, spoken with voice submissive:

Apollo, I can answer not to these,
unworthy even to kneel before my knees,
who hate my, knowing not mine ancient bliss,—
revile me and the sacred arc
that shot the Uranian mark.

No paean hailed me, and I needed none.
The truth is ever what men hardly say.
The night is holier than holy day.
Sweeter the setting than the rising sun.
For worship due I had no care,
I who was everywhere:

under the covert of beloved eyes,
fawn-like, and in the decency restrained
(whereby the half is lost, the whole is gained)
tempering the curvature of gracile things
to finer limits, wherein earth
coineth her nobler worth,

by me accounted dear, but dearer far
the inner confluence of souls akin
when arms are clasped around the tender skin
of lovers known to either what they are
whose love of life and living aim
are single and the same.

Thou knowest, Apollo, whom the ambrosial health
of Cinyras withdrew from festal board
of gods to stablish him a mighty lord
in sea-girl Cyprus, overwhelmed with wealth.
Mid ruins still thou grieves where
Fell Hyacinth the fair.

And tell me whether, when thou wast bereft
by Hermes of thine oxen backward drawn
down by Onchestos to the Eleian lawn,
Zeus, recompensing graciously the theft,
cradled not in thine arms the child
by whom thou wast beguiled.

Thus I remind thee needless, for the strain
of blood divine we bear in common calls
thy second arrows from the morning halls
against the injurious whom I shoot in vain,
thee, archer of the poignant fire,
thee of the melting lyre.

And, if thy highest minstrelsy disdain
to charm barbarians, to my servant lend
some note of thine who paineth to defend
and herald me in my nascent reign,
and let thy lyre and light combine
to grace this son of mine.

In quietness and confidence he ceased
and stood expectant, while the waves of day
began in music round my head to play
pure as a canticle. The light increased;
and now irradiant o'er the fens
arose Arcitenens.

MS 379—New College Library's newest manuscript—was publicly displayed in college for the first time as part of the library's 'Queer Love and Literature' exhibition which we were pleased to host for the New College Society LGBTQIA+ reception on Sunday, 15 May 2022.

Christopher Skelton-Foord
Librarian
New College, Oxford