

MIRCEA ELIADE
BETWEEN THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS
AND THE FALL INTO HISTORY

MIHAELA GLIGOR (EDITOR)



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On the cover: Mircea Eliade. Photo from Mircea Eliade Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library (courtesy Liviu Bordaș).

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Nowadays, Mircea Eliade is more studied than ever. This is evidenced by the high number of volumes on Mircea Eliade's life and work, which are being published all over the world. Whether one refers to his correspondence, his literary or scientific works, or to his slightly political articles from the interwar period, Mircea Eliade – his oeuvre as well as his personal life – is still taken up by specialists and the public.

The present volume comes out as a result of an international seminar – *Mircea Eliade between the History of Religions and the Fall into History* – held on April 2, 2012, in Cluj-Napoca. It contains dr. Henry Pernet's lecture given on that occasion and also three other articles signed by specialists in Eliade's oeuvre and his political implication. The volume offers to its readers an important and valuable correspondence on the subject of Eliade, between Ioan Petru Culianu and Mac Linscott Ricketts, edited and introduced by Liviu Bordaș.

During the last few years, Mircea Eliade's political past and the alleged influence of this past upon his scientific work has been considered the starting point for several controversies, which were analyzed by reputable scholars and also rejected. Although the

suspicious and accusations brought to Eliade have been numerous, his life and work should not be interpreted (only) on the basis of his political options during a very limited period of his life, simple sympathies from his youth and without taking into account the historical context which generated these sympathies.

With this volume we offer four different perspectives on Mircea Eliade, the man and the scholar, caught between the history of religions and the fall into history. Many thanks to all participants to our international seminar, especially for constructive discussions, to each contributor, to the Department of Humanities of "George Barițiu" History Institute of Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca for hosting the seminar and, nevertheless, to Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, for supporting the seminar and this volume through project number PN-II-RU-PD-2011-3-0014: "The Intellectual Origins of anti-Semitism. Cultural Elements and Symbolic Representations in Interwar Romania".

Lasting impressions: Mircea Eliade¹

Henry Pernet

In the introduction to the publication of our correspondence², I recounted how, as a young student in business administration and political science, I was granted an interview by Mircea Eliade in August 1961, and how this encounter made me resolve to go and study history of religions at the University of Chicago.³

Here, I would like to come back to a remarkable note Mircea Eliade made in his unpublished journal on March 15, 1969:

Like all my other former students, Kees [Bolle] – more or less “unconsciously” – believes that he too can construct an “original position” in opposition to

¹ Lecture delivered at the International Seminar *Mircea Eliade between the History of Religion and the Fall into History*, Cluj-Napoca, April 2, 2012. I have mostly retained the oral style of the whole and added only the most necessary references.

² Mircea Eliade and Henry Pernet, *Correspondență, 1961-1986. Dragul meu prieten*, edition by Mihaela Gligor, Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2011. See also Henry Pernet, *Correspondance avec Mircea Eliade. 1961-1986*, Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2012.

³ Eliade and Pernet 2011:13-18.

my ideas. I must add, not *all* my former students, but only those who were closely associated with me, with whom I worked seriously, whom I helped. I'm not angry. It's natural. It's the revolt against the "father" (the most characteristic example: Pernet)⁴.

Eliade doesn't provide us with the list of all the students he had in mind, a list that would certainly extend beyond 1969. Therefore, all I can do is to tell you what happened to me and how I became "the most characteristic example" of these students.

In 1963, the year of my arrival at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Mircea Eliade was about to reach the summit of his career: his main works in history of religions were already available in English (with the exception of *Shamanism* that would be published in 1964); the first issue of *History of Religions*, a new journal edited by Mircea Eliade, Joseph M. Kitagawa, and Charles Long, was published in the Summer of 1961;⁵ Eliade was appointed as a

⁴ I owe access to this note to Mac Linscott Ricketts. Kees W. Bolle received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. His specialty was Hinduism and Mircea Eliade was his mentor.

⁵ It opened with Eliade's definition of the discipline: "History of religions and a new humanism," reprinted with revisions in Eliade 1969:1. A number of ideas presented in this manifesto were foreshadowed in the series of twelve articles published by Eliade in *Cuvântul* between September 6 and November 16, 1927, under the title "Itinerariu Spiritual": the obsessive idea to create a new man, a total man, the critique of the positivist excesses in culture, the fight against the triumph of science in human questions that should be dealt with by philosophy and the arts, the refusal of a certain form of Western rationality, the insistence on an authentic

Sewll L. Avery Distinguished Service Professor in the University of Chicago;⁶ and in the Spring of 1960, the first university thesis about his thought was published.⁷

I arrived in Chicago on September 3rd, 1963. The next morning, I went to the Divinity School, walked upstairs to the History of Religions Department's secretariat where I met Charles H. Long. He had already prepared a plan for my studies that would allow me to move ahead with my work in history of religions at the same time that I prepared for the comprehensive examinations required by the Divinity School in Bible, Systematic Theology, Church History, Ethics & Society/Religion & Personality. For my first year, Charles Long had selected courses on the History of Christian Thought, an introduction to the Old Testament, and Eliade's course on Primitive Religions, complemented by the equivalent of one course in which Long would tutor me and guide my readings in history of religions, and the equivalent of one course in which Mircea Eliade himself would guide my researches in history of religions.

Mircea Eliade's course on "Primitive Religions" began on October 15, 1963. Both advanced students

opening to experience, culture understood as spirituality, the will to fight provincialism, etc. See Ricketts 1988: 245-269.

⁶ "Out of more than one thousand professors in the University there are only twenty distinguished chairs." Letter of March 26, 1963, from William N. Weaver, Divinity School Dean of Students.

⁷ Welbon 1960. Guy Welbon went on to receive his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1963.

and beginners like me attended. It gave me an opportunity to discover the two facets of Eliade in the classroom. There was the professor who followed the syllabus and transmitted his knowledge by referring to his notes; this Eliade often spoke in a monotonous tone of voice and hardly stirred his audience. And then there was the erudite, brilliant, charismatic Eliade, who came alive in response to a question or a student presentation; that Eliade did not hesitate to go beyond the parameters of the class and, in a few minutes, was able to present a vast panorama.

The first part of the course dealt in-depth with Australian Aborigines and would become the basis of one of his books (Eliade 1973) but, indirectly, it would also be at the root of the feminist revolution in history of religions. Indeed, listening to Eliade speaking of Australian religions, a graduate student, Rita Gross, discovered that androcentrism dominated history of religions as a discipline:

But *homo religiosus* as constructed by the history of religions does not include women as religious subjects, as constructors of religious symbol systems and as participants in a religious universe of discourse. History of religions really only deals with women and feminine imagery *as they are thought about by* the males being investigated, whether specific males in a specific religious situation or the abstract model *homo religiosus* are the subject of inquiry. Since the discipline of history of religions is basically concerned with discovering and understanding humans as religious beings, the

androcentric limitations of the construct *homo religiosus*, religious humankind, constitute a very severe liability indeed.⁸

In his course on “Primitives,” Mircea Eliade tackled the idea that bones are at the basis of life and must therefore be collected so that the Master of Animals can give them a new flesh. In this perspective, since thanks to the Swiss school system I had no problem reading German, Eliade suggested that I write the paper required for the course on instances of the Master of Animals collected in European and Eurasian legends by Leopold Schmidt, an Austrian folklorist (Schmidt 1952). In my paper, I did express some methodological reservations about Schmidt’s work but the most significant impact of Eliade’s suggestion was to orient me towards folklore, an interest that I have maintained till today. It was only in the following year that I began to express serious reservations on aspects of Mircea Eliade’s method and theories.

I went home to Switzerland for the summer vacation of 1964. In anticipation of Eliade’s course on prehistoric religions beginning in October, I visited

⁸ Gross 1977:10. Rita Gross went on to write the first dissertation on feminism and religious studies, the first article on female God-language in Judaism, and the first major feminist analysis of a non-Western religion. See Gross 1996:3. Together with another participant in Eliade’s class on “primitive religions,” she also co-edited the first comprehensive book about women’s religious lives in cross-cultural perspective. See Falk and Gross 1989.

bookstores in search of new publications in this field. I was lucky enough to find a just published remarkable little book that I read with the utmost interest (Leroi-Gourhan 1964).

This book championed a methodological revolution and, among others, attacked the use of ethnological parallels to understand the Paleolithic. Indeed, up until about the middle of the 1950s, in order to interpret the Paleolithic documents, scholars had looked to the peoples of northern Asia, as well as the Inuits, the Indians of North and South America, the rock art and rock engravings of North Africa, the Bushmen of South Africa and the Australian tribes. However,

[...] the addition of analogies between heterogenous facts does not constitute proof. The fact that the most competent scholars in turn suggest totemism, hunting magic, sacred dances, masked sorcerers, gods, spirits, etc. shows the insufficiency of the method (Laming-Emperaire 1962:138).

According to Leroi-Gourhan, this kind of makeshift comparativism had pretty well paralyzed the scientific imagination, which tends to invent the means to advance evidence and control facts.⁹ Therefore, in a

⁹ Leroi-Gourhan 1964:4. Later, Leroi-Gourhan would set strict conditions for a recourse to ethnological documents: "la comparaison ne peut pas consister à assimiler le document préhistorique à des matériaux cueillis au hasard de lectures ethnographiques. Une double condition doit être remplie: l'identification détaillée du document préhistorique et celle des

first move, scholars needed to suspend the use of ethnological parallels and take a just inventory of what is known and what has been borrowed from other societies.

At first sight, I knew that these remarks would create a big problem for Mircea Eliade, whose approach to prehistory gave a significant role to ethnological parallels. Nevertheless, in October 1964, I showed him the book and he borrowed it from me immediately. When we met again a little later, Eliade presented me with a signed copy of *Shamanism* (Eliade 1964) and told me that Leroi-Gourhan was wrong and that one should not in any case give up ethnological parallels. I pointed to the idea that it was a first stage, aiming at bringing out what could be considered established fact “rather than making for the umpteenth time an inventory of what prehistoric man *might have had* in common with those considered to be savages.”¹⁰ Eliade remained unconvinced.

As I glanced through the English translation of *Shamanism* to assess how different this new edition was compared to the original French version (Eliade 1951), I stopped at two new paragraphs opening with this declaration: “Recent researches have clearly brought out the ‘shamanic’ elements in the religion of the Paleolithic hunters” (Eliade 1964:503). Eliade based this rather categoric statement on the hypotheses

matériaux ethnographiques qui lui sont comparés.” Leroi-Gourhan 1975:54.

¹⁰ Leroi-Gourhan 1964:9, translation mine.

proposed by one author who interpreted a famous scene at Lascaux as a shamanic trance, and mysterious perforated batons as drumsticks (Kirchner 1952). However, in both cases, there were a number of other possible, even more convincing, interpretations.¹¹ There was no conclusive evidence in favor of a “shamanic” interpretation.

For Eliade’s course on prehistoric religions, I prepared a paper on the feminine statuettes of the Paleolithic. I presented a critical reading of the principal text required for the course (Maringer 1960), going back to sources that the author cited and showing that he had wrongly interpreted them. My claim, that too great an importance had been given to interpretation as opposed to analysis, was to become one of my recurrent criticisms. Following Laming-Emperaire and Leroi-Gourhan, I concluded that we should devote ourselves to a critical approach, made necessary by years of projections of ethnological parallels onto prehistory. I also expressed my doubts about the use of terms like “structure” and “archetype.” Although my paper contained reservations about certain aspects of his method, Eliade accepted it without problem.

By the mid-sixties, it was clear that, in the United States, the number of new positions in history of religions was multiplying. Nevertheless, it was also evident that, contrary to the hopes expressed by

¹¹ For instance, see Leroi-Gourhan 1964:127-129, 147-148; *id.* 1977; also Laming-Emperaire 1962:287.

Eliade on several occasions,¹² this increase did not correspond to a true improvement in the situation of the discipline because the growing interest in the field did not call for “wide horizon” generalists, the only kind of scholars who could have guaranteed the autonomy of the discipline as Eliade understood it. On the contrary, the unfolding scenario accelerated the tendency towards specialization. Two essential factors seemed to me to have been at work in this evolution: first, the different problems and conflicts in which the United States was implicated in the world created a need for targeted expertise, and scholars and universities responded to this demand in certain areas or in particular religious traditions; secondly, no student could ever imagine becoming a new Eliade and mastering the ever-growing bibliography of the history of religions in its totality, which also resulted in the withdrawal into specialization.

Four years after his manifesto on “the new humanism,” Eliade wrote a new article opening with an acknowledgement: “Let us recognize it frankly. History of Religions, or Comparative Religion, plays a rather modest role in modern culture”¹³; followed by an assessment: the cause of this situation is to be found in “the inhibition from which historians of religions suffer at present” (55). Eliade goes on to repeat that

¹² Eliade 1969:2-3; *id.* 1965:9-15; *id.* 1988b:208.

¹³ Reprinted with revisions in Eliade 1969:54.

The History of religions is not merely a historical discipline [...]. It is equally a *total hermeneutics*, being called to decipher and explicate every kind of encounter of man with the sacred, from prehistory to our day. Now, by reason of modesty, or perhaps from an excessive timidity [...], historians of religions hesitate to valorize culturally the results of their researches (58).

Their “excessive specialization” allows them “to station themselves for the rest of their days in the sectors they have learned to frequent since their youth” (62). Eliade calls this “spiritual timidity” a “defeatist attitude” rewarded by the progressive disinterest of the public in the historians’ works (59).

Eliade reprimanded the scholars but at no time did he question his vision of the discipline, nor why he should be the one to define it. This repeated the 1927 situation with the *Itinerariu Spiritual*:

Just as decades later, as an historian of religions, he would presume to prescribe the proper parameters and goals for his whole discipline, so now [in 1927], as a member of the “young generation,” he presumes to define the spiritual structure and destiny of the entire age group. In the one instance as in the other, Eliade identifies himself with the group, making himself its representative, and at the same time steps to the helm as the one man who, because of his clear vision, is best qualified to direct the course the group is to take. In both cases he assumes the leadership role with utmost simplicity and ingenuity. He speaks with the confidence and self-assurance of one who

knows he has earned, by his extraordinary labors, the right to speak. And in both cases he is accepted as leader by some – but not all – of those he proposes to lead. (Ricketts 1988: 246).

Although this is not the place to make a detailed examination of the reception of Mircea Eliade's works, it is important to note that it varied widely. The first revised version of his doctoral dissertation published in 1936 as *Yoga. Essai sur les origines de la mystique indienne* was almost universally lauded by specialists. It established Eliade as an orientalist.¹⁴

In his "Introduction to the 2009 edition," David Gordon White notes that this excellent reception

[...] is not surprising. Nothing like it had ever been written before [...] and so, shortly before his thirtieth birthday, he had established himself as an, if not the, international authority on yoga [...] Some forty years on, this remains a groundbreaking work, unsurpassed as a resource for understanding yoga on its own terms, and a seemingly inexhaustible mine of insights into the what, the how, and the why of yoga [...] the first truly mature and comprehensive study on yoga ever written (Eliade 2009:xx, xxv).

Mircea Eliade's other books did not receive the same welcome. *Le chamanisme et les techniques*

¹⁴ Țurcanu 2003:236-237. Eliade published a French revised and enlarged version in 1954 and the English translation in 1958 (see Eliade 2009).

archaïques de l'extase (Eliade 1951) met with strong criticisms from specialists. Eveline Falck, for instance, considered Eliade's study as

necessarily superficial. To draw a parallel, in such a cursory survey, between elements arbitrarily isolated from their social and religious contexts cannot, as we have already indicated, lead to any conclusive result [...] If we consider the shaman simply as an ecstatic or a healer, we shall arrive at a definition which is universally valid only because it is vague, but which no longer corresponds to any concrete reality (Falck 1953:110, 114).

Le chamanisme was at first considered a literary construction "derived from Eliade's personal understanding of shamanism, inspired by a mystical attitude."¹⁵ Moreover, as Paul G. Bahn put it:

Unfortunately, over the past few decades, the concept of "trance" has been firmly but spuriously, linked with shamans, to the extent that in many people's minds, not least many of those who promote the "trance theory" in rock art studies, "shamanism" is equated with "trance." The blame for this fundamental error can be attributed to the popular writings of Mircea Eliade.¹⁶

¹⁵ Hamayon, Roberte Nicole, in Francfort and Hamayon 2001:24.

¹⁶ Bahn, Paul G., in Francfort and Hamayon 2001:55. On the "trance theory" in rock art studies, see for instance Clottes and Lewis-Williams 2007; Lorblanchet et al. 2006.

My main focuses in history of religions were societies without writing. Therefore, I read a number of works written by anthropologists and ethnologist, and I was quite surprised of how little response they gave to Eliade's works. In 1965, for instance, the famous British professor of social anthropology at Oxford, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, published a series of conferences examining

the manner in which various writers who can be regarded as anthropologists, or at any rate as writing in the anthropological field, have attempted to understand and account for the religious beliefs and practices of primitive people (Evans-Pritchard 1965:1).

I did not find any mention of Mircea Eliade in it, even though scholars such as Claas Jouco Bleeker, Rudolf Otto, and Raffaele Pettazzoni were mentioned. Evans-Pritchard would most probably have included Eliade in what he said of comparative religion and the comparative method:

Comparative religion is a subject hardly represented in our universities, and the data of what claims to be such are derived almost entirely from books [...] There was precious little comparison, if we mean analytical comparison. There was merely a bringing together of items which appeared to have something in common. We can indeed say for it that it enabled the writers to make preliminary classifications in which vast

numbers of observations could be placed under a limited number of rubrics, thereby introducing some sort of order; and in this it had value. But it was an illustrative rather than a comparative method [...]. A large number of miscellaneous examples were brought together to illustrate some general idea and in support of the author's thesis about that idea. There was no attempt to test theories by unselected examples (*id.*:119, 10).

Anthropologists who mentioned Eliade at all most often criticized him, especially by attacking his method. Edmund Leach provided the most extreme example of this attitude; his *ad hominem* attack, led in a particularly appalling tone, furthermore revealed an incomplete knowledge of Eliade's work, which does not mean that all his remarks lacked pertinence.¹⁷ On the other hand, Victor Turner presented one of the exceptions in this essentially critical landscape; he did not hesitate to refer to Mircea Eliade and even published Eliade's *Australian religions* in the series he was editing.¹⁸ Eliade hoped to associate Turner closely to the History of Religions Department but the anthropologist's premature death in 1983 put an end to this project.

The rejection of an Eliadian history of religions by disciplines which should have been its natural

¹⁷ Leach 1966:28-31. Also see Dudley 1977:37-42. For an account of the debate between Mircea Eliade and Clifford Geertz, see Girardot 2005:70-71.

¹⁸ For instance, Turner 1974:189, 239; *id.* 1977:38. *id.* 1982:83; and see Eliade 1973.

partners in my view (anthropology, ethnology, history, prehistory) appeared to me to signal the existence of a serious problem of method in the history of religions.¹⁹ I had already, on several occasions, expressed my reservations about defining our discipline as one dealing with religious experience. I claimed that we had no access to any actual experience and that, like anthropology, we could only deal with what people did and/or said they did.

In April 1967, I attended a seminar that provided me with the opportunity to confront my doubts and my reservations; I wrote a long paper, a bit pompously entitled "From history of religions to comparative science of religions." In it, I noted that students of history of religions faced a discipline totally lacking unity and, to a large extent, still struggling to find its self-identity. These students quickly discovered that quite a number of scholars disagreed on the very goal of their study, and that very few of them agreed on a common method.

This situation had a strong inhibiting effect on the students who found themselves in a position of total insecurity, which prompted them to specialize in one area and, very often, in one of the several possible approaches. At the end of my analysis, I recommended that our discipline:

¹⁹ Later, Douglas Allen would note that "la plupart des anthropologues, sociologues, philosophes et historiens des religions, ou bien ignorent l'oeuvre d'Eliade, ou bien refusent de la prendre en consideration" (Allen 1982:24).

- drop unnecessary presuppositions, such as the *sui generis* nature of the religious experience and its expression;
- renounce the presupposition of the existence of a “trans-conscious” (Eliade 1996:454) and, in general, refrained from relying on psychological conceptions until they had received some empirical verification;
- abandon the contention that the religious man is the total man, i.e., that total man is religious; to me, this postulate was unacceptable as an onto-theological position;²⁰
- agree on a method of empirical verification that fit both the requirements of a more scientific approach and those of the particularity of our field, granted that this would be found only after a certain amount of trial and error.

This paper was accepted in partial fulfillment of my Master’s degree. Although Mircea Eliade never talked to me about it, I suspect that this effort of mine went a long way toward winning me the title of “most characteristic example” quoted at the beginning of the present article.

²⁰ “Modern man, radically secularized, believes himself or styles himself atheist, areligious, or, at least, indifferent. But he is wrong. He has not yet succeeded in abolishing the *homo religiosus* that is in him: he has only done away with (if he ever was) the *christianus*. That means that he is left with being ‘pagan,’ without knowing it. It also means something else: an areligious society does not yet exist (personally, I believe that *it cannot exist*, and that if it were achieved, it would perish after a few generations from boredom, from neurasthenia, or by a collective suicide...);” Eliade 1989: 164-165.

What my paper did not say was that I had slowly reached the conclusion that Eliade was fundamentally a philosopher; as such, the history of religions he defended was not the science I had hoped to find with him, but an unfalsifiable system in which the main notions were held as postulates.²¹ Therefore, it was inconceivable that he would ever accept to take up the issue of an in-depth transformation of his method. At this time, I was presumptuous enough to imagine that I could propose a revised method for the history of religions (certainly closer to the social sciences) and that I could make this enterprise the topic of my dissertation.

By the end of October 1967, I had fulfilled all the preliminary requirements for the Ph.D. except for the dissertation. Because my exchange visitor visa made it a requirement for me to spend two years in my country before I could be eligible for another visa, I

²¹ As an appendix to *Mémoire II*, the editor added an "Autobiographical Fragment" originally published in 1953 in *Cahiers de Dor* no. 7 (Eliade 1988a:257-279; this text was not included in the English edition). In it, Eliade indicates that the readers he was interested in first and foremost "were 'the philosophers' (in the widest sense of the word)" (261). "Efforts made to know and understand the situation of man in the Cosmos are more akin to philosophy than science" (259); "those of my studies and works that could be considered as 'scientific,' I rather judge them to be 'philosophical'" (258). "Sometimes, these philosophical works have been able to pass for simple erudite contributions in specialized fields (orientalism, history of religions, ethnology, and folklore). The proof to the contrary is easy to produce: read them forgetting the footnotes and references and you will rediscover the philosophical issues" (262; my translation from the French).

hastened back to Switzerland where I remained in constant correspondence with Mircea Eliade for whom I carried out various tasks.

In a letter dated June 8, 1969, Eliade wrote to me: "After all the work that I imposed on you, – I don't dare ask you: where are you with your dissertation?" In my response of June 14, I described the structure that I had decided on for my work, the third part of which was to be an epistemological study of history of religions.

Rather than trying to find bearings in the methodological *tohu-bohu* [confusion] that is history of religions (in my opinion! we have argued enough about this topic), this part will be an attempt at defining the standing of HR in the context of our current understanding of what constitutes knowledge, not the standing that HR has in actuality today, but the standing that, in my view, it ought to have.

On July 7, Eliade wrote:

I spent the most depressing fortnight since, maybe, ten or twelve years: I was (I still am) tired, unable to work well, depressed. The most annoying: I am putting the finishing touch of the last chapter of a book I begun in 1955 (*From Zalmoxis to Gengis Khan*), and I'm only making halting progress [...] Despite my fatigue (and my disgust for any "academic" problem), I read and meditated, with interest, the developments of your work in progress. I agree absolutely. The third part seems

especially fascinating with all the adventures it entails (for, is there anything more adventurous than a “methodological” discussion about a discipline that is losing its identity?)²²

Despite Eliade’s approval, after some time this methodological project bored me and I eventually chose to present some of my methodological ideas through a critical analysis of theories about ritual masks (Pernet 2006).

This same period also saw the reappearance of allusions to Mircea Eliade’s political past. He had had to face it immediately after World War II, particularly in France and in Italy. In 1966 a young Romanian psychiatrist in Chicago confronted me brutally with what he called Eliade’s Nazi past.²³ Eliade had told me of his fervent nationalism and anticommunism; “Nazism” seemed an unquestionable misuse of language. From the time of that first revelation, however, I paid special attention to what Mircea said, without ever detecting the slightest trace of anti-Semitism in his speech or comportment, however.²⁴

As far as I could judge, if he had once been anti-Semitic, Eliade had changed. I had a relationship with the post-war Eliade and I thus considered whatever possible prior anti-Semitism he’d harbored to be subject to a statute of limitation. But now, in early

²² Eliade and Pernet 2011:139-143.

²³ See Eliade and Pernet 2011:28-29, 193-194.

²⁴ An observation confirmed by other students of Eliade’s; for instance, Allen 2005:22-23; Lincoln 2000:146.

1972, an Israeli review identified him as a member of the Romanian fascist Iron Gard and published extracts from the journal of Eliade's Jewish friend Mihail Sebastian proving the allegation. The suspicions and the questions about him and about his work kept growing and Eliade had to suffer them until his death.²⁵

Beginning in the mid-sixties, Mircea Eliade was honored all over the world: numerous doctorates *honoris causa*, elections to American, Belgian, Austrian and British academies, French Légion d'honneur, etc. But, as we moved into the seventies, he was also right when he stated that history of religions was losing its identity, i.e., the identity that he had defined for this discipline. The main problem was Eliade's methodology and now, it was not just students that poke holes in or propose revisions of his method in their papers, it was openly contested in articles and books that grew more numerous every year. Therefore, at the very time Eliade was reaching the summit of the recognition he had always craved, he was also faced with his political past and with the fact that he had "failed to offer a methodology that would give the field a unified discipline."²⁶

²⁵ On all this, see Turcanu 2003:483-487. Cf. Müller 2004; Junginger 2007. Gligor 2007 and 2010. And Sebastian 2000: for instance, March 2, 1937.

²⁶ Dudley 1977:119. In other words, "Eliade's theory is a grand one (if it is at all a theory) about both the Cosmos and Man's essential nature, but it is 'non-translatable' into a tractable methodology" (Jensen 2003:67)

Having come to think of Eliade as a philosopher rather than as a scholar with an unacceptable method, allowed me to keep appreciating his numerous qualities: his simplicity, his generosity, his incredible erudition, his creativity, his challenging and fertile insights and intuitions, his humor, and his great humanity. Our bond was remarkable given that I was – am – an atheist, who embraced history and anthropology at the expense of trans-history and ontology: a “modern man” in Eliade’s sense.²⁷ My relationship of student to teacher was transformed into friendship and then affection; affection for him that I hold intact to this day. As to understanding why, on his part, Mircea Eliade never ceased showing interest in and friendship for me; I don’t have the slightest idea: we never spoke of it together.

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Mircea Eliade and the *Terror of History*

Mac Linscott Ricketts

In the new *Preface* that Mircea Eliade wrote for the “Torchbook” Edition of *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1959)¹ which bore the name *Cosmos and History*, the author stated that although he would no doubt write the book differently now from the way he had done it a decade earlier (1949), “I still consider it the most significant of my books; and when I am asked in what order they should be read, I always recommend beginning with *Cosmos and History*” (p. ix). Why?, the prospective reader may ask. Perhaps because it deals with Eliade’s most fundamental concept: the radical distinction between “archaic” man and “modern” man – that is between the member of a “traditional” society whose life is based on imitation and repetition of

¹ First published in French as *Le mythe de l'éternel retour: archétypes et répétition* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1949). English translation, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. by Willard Trask, Bollingen Foundation, Inc., 1954; *Cosmos and History, The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1959.

“archetypes” (paradigmatic myths and rituals) which give his existence “metahistorical” meaning, and the post-Hegelian man of contemporary societies who lives in a world in which history has no transcendental meaning. As he makes plain in the *Foreword* to the original edition (1949, slightly modified in 1952), Eliade’s object in writing the book is to call the attention of “the philosopher and the cultivated man in general” to a view of History in traditional societies that is very different from their own.

Had we not feared to appear overambitious, we should have given this book a subtitle, *Introduction to a Philosophy of History*. For such, after all, is the purport of the present essay; but with the distinction that, instead of proceeding to a speculative analysis of the historical phenomenon, it examines the fundamental concepts of archaic societies – societies which, although they are conscious of a certain form of “history,” make every effort to disregard it. [...]

The meaning and function of what we have called “archetypes and repetition” disclosed themselves to us only after we had perceived these societies’ will to refuse concrete time, their hostility toward every attempt at autonomous “history,” that is, at history not regulated by archetypes (p. xi).

In the *Torchbook* Preface, Eliade elaborates on these remarks:

The chief difference between the man of archaic and traditional societies and the man of modern societies [...] lies in the fact that the former feels himself indissolubly connected with the Cosmos and cosmic rhythms, whereas the latter insists that he is connected only with History (p. vii).

In other words, Eliade defines “modern man” as a believer in “historicism.”

Chapters One and Two of *Cosmos and History* deal principally with illustrations of myths and rituals typical of “archaic” and traditional peoples. The point is stressed that everything is done in conformity with “archetypes,” that is, with “sacred models” revealed *in illo tempore*, the “timeless-time” of the beginnings. Like the mystic, like the religious man in general, the primitive man lives in a continual present, Eliade says (p. 86). The archaic man inhabits a *meaningful* world, which repeats itself like the cycles of Nature. Eliade does not see this as evidence of a desire to return to animality, but as a “thirst for the ‘ontic,’ a will to be, to *be* after the fashion of the archetypal beings whose gestures he constantly repeats” (pp. 90-91).

Chapter Three, entitled “Misfortune and History,” addresses the question of how humans have tolerated history, with all its adversities. For archaic and traditional peoples, catastrophes in nature and history (floods, droughts, plagues, invasions, slavery, etc.) were all held to have some meaning, and the aid of priests, sorcerers, etc. was sought to discover their causes and alleviate them. “Suffering is perturbing,”

Eliade asserts, “only insofar as its cause remains undiscovered” (p. 98).

The *Old Testament Hebrews*, whose prophets “were the first to discover the meaning of history,” prophesied Israel’s defeats at the hands of foreign armies, interpreting them as the result of their apostasy from their true God, Yahweh² (pp. 102-108). By accepting the explanation given by their prophets, the nation did not lose faith in Yahweh. Later, there developed the concept of a coming Savior, at the end of time. “Messianic beliefs in a final regeneration of the world also indicate an anti-historic attitude,” Eliade affirms.

In the Messianic conception, history must be tolerated only because it is known that, one day or another, it will cease. [...] But the will to put a final and definitive end to history is still an anti-historic attitude, exactly as are the other attitudes (pp. 111-112).

Turning to India, Eliade states that “Indian speculations on cyclical time reveal a sufficiently marked ‘refusal of history’” (p. 117). For both Buddhists and Hindus, salvation means to escape from the cosmic cycle – that is, from time. By declaring that the world is now in the final and most degenerate era, the *Kālī Yuga*, suffering can be accepted. Moreover, it offers consolation to the man who lives

² Cf. “Catastrofă și Mesianism,” in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc*, vol. 1, edited by Dan Zamfirescu. Bucharest: “Roza Vânturilor”, 1990 (reprinted from *Destin*, 3, April 1952).

“under the terror of history,” Eliade says, since the sufferings help him to understand the precariousness of his human situation, as well as to resign himself to his fate (p. 118). Notice that here is the first reference in the book to “the terror of history,” which will be the theme of the final chapter.

The balance of the chapter examines Hellenistic, Roman, and Oriental views, especially Iranian, Babylonian, Judeo-Christian, and other doctrines concerning cosmic cycles and the end of the world. But, as Eliade points out,

[...] even within the framework of the three great religions – Iranian, Judaic, and Christian – [...] there still survive certain traces of the ancient doctrine of the periodic regeneration of history. In other words, history can be abolished, and consequently renewed, before the final *eschaton* is realized (p. 130).

Moreover, no matter how “tragic, pathetic, unjust or chaotic” the historical moment may be, the individual is always free to withdraw from it and seek consolation in philosophy or mysticism.

This sketchy summary of the first three chapters of *Cosmos and History* passes over many important and interesting observations made by the author, because I am eager to arrive at the theme of my article, which is the subject of the fourth chapter: “The Terror of History.” But in order to understand that chapter properly and to appreciate its place in the economy of

the finished volume, we need to examine the origin and evolution of the book.

The inception and writing of *Cosmos and History*

On New Year's Day, 1944, in Portugal, Eliade reflected in his *Journal* on what he had accomplished (in writing) during the past year: 243 pages of the novel *Apocalips* (never finished), a book on the Romanian Legend of Manole, the Master Mason³, and *circa* 40 oversized pages of the work that would become *Traité de l'histoire de religions*⁴. But he laments the fact that he had lost, in 1943, "At least 500 hours [...] in 'historical' depressions and fears derived from the military catastrophes in which the fate of Romania is always involved, directly or indirectly."⁵ But the first indication that he is thinking of writing a book on the subject of the last chapter of *Cosmos and History* is a journal entry for 29 January 1944:

I'd like to write someday [about] this dreadful thing: *the terror of history*, the terror of man in

³ Mircea Eliade, *Comentarii la Legenda Meșterului Manole* (*Commentaries on the Legend of Master Manole*), in *Meșterul Manole. Studii de etnologie și mitologie*. Edited and notes by Magda Ursache and Petru Ursache, *Introduction* by Petru Ursache. Iași: Junimea, 1992.

⁴ He was calling it then *Prolegomene la istoria religiilor* (in Romanian). It had been begun in 1940 in England.

⁵ Eliade is thinking of the defeats suffered by the Axis armies (which included several Romanian divisions) at Stalingrad, Kharkov, the crossing of the Dniester by the Soviets, etc.

confrontation with man. It is not true that man is afraid of Nature, of the gods: this fear is minimal compared to the horror which he has endured, for millennia, in the midst of history. Our epoch is *par excellence* a terrorized epoch. The future masterpieces of world literature will be created setting off from this terrifying experience.

On the tenth of March, thinking about the course of the war, he records having “the sentiment of immanent, inevitable historical catastrophe.” Much of the time that winter and spring he was sunk in a mood of deep depression.

The Russian crossing of the Dniester River and the Anglo-American bombardment of Bucharest prompted him to write on 6 April:

A final disgust for history. A craving for suicide. [...] I go about the city [Lisbon] and say to all the Portuguese I meet, “You know: if Romania falls, all of Southeastern Europe will fall. The Russians will be in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. And when they take Germany, they will be on the shores of the Tagus⁶. No one will stop them.”

And yet – I can’t believe that it will be *like that*. Then, nothing would make sense in history. Who will justify our deaths and tragedies of hundreds of years?

I’m thinking of writing a book, *The Terror of History*, on this theme: that until a little while ago, every personal tragedy and any ethnic catastrophe had its

⁶ A river that flows through Lisbon.

justification in a cosmology or some soteriology (cosmic rhythms, reabsorption in water, *ekpyrosis*, or purification by fire, cycles of history, “our sins,” etc.) Now, history simply terrorizes – because the tragedies provoked by it no longer find justification or excuse.

On June 21, he says he has become indifferent to the great events happening in France (the Allied invasion), and that his only concerns for the past week have been “theoretical.” For the first time, he refers to his planned book by name: “I’m thinking of new chapters for *Cosmos and History*. Can’t write anything for *Prolegomene*.”

Still, he did not begin writing the book until the following year. In the meantime, Romania had surrendered to the Soviets (23 August 1944), Eliade had lost his beloved wife Nina to a lingering, agonizing case of cancer (20 November), and he had been dismissed from his post at the Romanian Legation. In the throes of deep grief, about six weeks after Nina’s death, he wrote in his journal:

My thoughts run from one book to another: now I want to take up *Cosmos and History*⁷, now to return to *Prolegomene*,⁸ now I’d like to write a book challenging the modern world, an invitation to absolute freedom which I decipher in certain myths

⁷ This was the original title of the book, as is shown here. See “Preface to Torchbook Edition,” p. vii.

⁸ He had continued working on that volume up to the eve of Nina’s death.

and discover living still in certain man, even in our time (yogis, mystics [...]; the freedom man *could obtain* if...).

That which tempts me especially is a settling of accounts with Hegel and with historicism. I feel that I possess some intuitions that could develop into a great vision of the whole. But I can't concentrate. I can't decide to begin to work.²⁸

At this time Eliade was doing a great deal of reading – from the Bible, Leon Šhestov, Kierkegaard, and certain philosophers (such as Dilthey and Heidegger), but he simply could not write anything except journal notes. Ideas for *Cosmos and History* were in his mind, however, and he was eager to start writing it. “My mission in the culture of the twentieth century is to rediscover and make alive the pre-Socratic world,” he declares on 4 January. Finally, on 13 February, he is able to announce: “I have begun *Cosmos and History*. I chose today because it is Tuesday, and it is the 13th!”²⁹ Journal entries appear frequently now: on 14, 16, 19 February, 15 March, and 11 April. On the night after he had started writing, he suffered insomnia until 4:00 a.m. In the daytime, he made a donation of soup at the church for 20 persons, “for Nina’s soul.” Despite a mood of great sadness, he managed “by hook or crook” to draft three pages.

²⁸ *Journal*, 3 January 1945.

²⁹ Not May 1945, as he remembered when writing the “Preface to the Torchbook Edition” (p. vii).

Oppressed by the enormous number of things I know and would like to say, without losing the reader in a labyrinth in which I today walk with a superb certainty. I'd like to summarize, and yet I can't ignore a lot of little-known facts, which are, in my opinion, incompetently interpreted.

On 16 February he was able to write all day on *Cosmos and History*. He states modestly,

I can't say that I've created anything, my work of today being mostly a summary of results published six or seven years ago (*Cosmologie și alchimie babiloniană, Comentarii la Legenda Meșterului Manole*). But it is necessary to start from things known by the reader in order to arrive at other, new ones. Moreover, I have the impression that my so-called scientific publications have not been read very much, or, in any case, they have not been read by those who could understand them. *Cosmos and History* is addressed in the first place to philosophers.

But in the published volume, he broadened the field of readers to include any "cultivated person," as we have seen.

The next journal notation about the book is for 19 February: "Have written thirty pages, in the format of *Prolegomene*" (that is, large-sized sheets). In the entry dated 15 March, Eliade meditates on his own experience of the "myth of the eternal return," and the

necessity of man's reconciling himself to living in the "Cosmic rhythms."

I'd like to formulate in some way – in a play, a novella, an essay – the sad reconciliation that I feel sometimes in those late night hours: the cosmic alternation, the day which follows the night, without fail, *whatever happens*; the spring which follows winter. The eternal return. This myth must be revived, if life still has any meaning, if it still deserves to be lived. *Cosmos and History* poses the anthropological problem only, of the despair of modern man, devoid of any living myth which could justify, recompense, or give meaning to the sufferings, deceptions, and injustices endured on account of history. But not only this problem of "the terror of history" demands to be resolved, but also the other, equally urgent, of the reconciliation of man *in time*, of his salvation through the simple fact that he participates in a temporal, rhythmic Cosmos, rich in alternations.

Soon after writing this, on 21 March, he interrupted work on the book, as he mentions in a notation of 11 April. He returned to *Prolegomene*, but he also penned a little article while he was staying at his last residence in Portugal, a humble cottage on the beach at Cascaes, that seems related to his volume on *Cosmos and History*. Entitled "Historicism and Interiorization"³⁰ it contains Eliade's clearest statement

³⁰ "Istorism și interiorizare," published in *Indreptar*, I, Sept.-Oct. 1951, pp. 10-11; *Înșir'te Mărgăritare*, I, Sept.-Oct. 1951; republished

on what he means by “historicism,” and how he judges it.

That which was later called “historicism,” the desire to know *exactly* and in the smallest details all that has happened in the past. [...] is a creation of the nineteenth century. [...] Not just “historical” events properly speaking are important, but all that has happened in time: the development of human institutions, language, the evolution of the human species, as well as all other species, etc. [...] A thing is validated as an object of knowledge when its origin and evolution are deciphered. Hence the obsession with beginnings, with origins; hence the search for global explanations of language, religions, myths, institutions, etc. A religion is understood, for example, not by knowing its inner structure, but by learning its origin, the obscurities of its germs.

Eliade, of course, rejects this method, which he says “impoverishes and sometimes even annihilates” the object. For Eliade, the essential thing to know about myths or rituals is their *own mode of being* in the world. “Only after their authentic meaning has been revealed can one pass on to their *history*.”

But the point of the article is that the historicistic attempt to seek the “origins” of things discloses “a vast attempt at interiorization, a gesture of the spirit to withdraw into itself.” Prior to historicism, the road to

in Mircea Eliade, *Împotriva deznădejdiei*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1992, pp. 89-91.

knowledge of the self was meditation, Eliade states. Now, paradoxically, historicism, although apparently extrinsic to the spirit, is a “degraded introversion [...] through which the spirit tries to find itself again,” by penetrating to the depths of things! This is true, Eliade contends, not only in historical studies, but also in the natural sciences, physics, chemistry, etc.

Despite his work on *Prolegomene* and the writing of occasional articles such as the one just described, the summer months were relatively unproductive ones for Eliade as he waited for a passport and visa for himself and Nina’s daughter, Giza, that would allow them to emigrate to Paris. The prized documents came in late August, train tickets were secured, and on the 13th of September they bade farewell to Portugal forever.

Eliade in Paris

It was early Sunday morning, September 17, when a “new life” began for Eliade and Giza, in Paris. The first months were spent in trying to adjust to using the French language, trying to make a living, and blending into the intellectual life of the French capital.³¹

Eliade had a few good friends living there already, and soon he had met many more persons who would

³¹ See Mac L. Ricketts, “Eliade’s First 500 Days in Exile,” *Inter Literas et Terras, II, Cross-Cultural Studies, Mircea Eliade*, Editura Universității Suceava, 2007, pp. 158-181.

become important in his life. He was engaged by a publisher to write a condensed version of his 1936 thesis³², and invited by Professor Georges Dumézil to lecture at the Sorbonne in the winter of 1946. Selecting material from *Prolegomene*, translated – with help – into French, he addressed small audiences for twelve sessions on the subject of *The Morphology of the Sacred*.

Denounced by Romanian Communists for his former “Iron Guard” connections, he lost the opportunity for a three-year contract at *Hautes Études*. However, the open-minded publisher of the leading French history of religions journal invited him to write a major study on shamanism (a subject on which Eliade had done much research).³³ There would follow many other articles in French reviews. On 29 July 1946, he returned to work on *Prolegomene*, revising the text in the French translation. This volume, finished in 1948, would be published early in 1949 as *Traité d’histoire des religions*. But Eliade had not forgotten about *Cosmos and History*.

On the 29th of November, 1946, while he still had much work to do on *Prolegomene*, he wrote in the *Journal*: “I think I’ll finish *Cosmos and History*, with an effort, in six or seven weeks. [...] I’ll work during January-March in order to finish it,” he says optimistically.

³² Written in 1946-47, it was published as *Techniques du Yoga*, Paris: Gallimard, 1948.

³³ “Le problème du chamanisme,” *Revue de l’histoire des religions*, 1946, pp. 5-52.

On 20 December we find that he has been doing a great deal of reading on the subject of the annual ceremonies observed around the world to mark the coming of the New Year:

For many years, I've liked rereading, on the approach of Christmas, about the legends, rituals, and customs of the Twelve Days of Christmas, etc. (between Christmas and St. John the Baptist's Day): animal masks, Carnival-like ceremonies, legends of headless horses, which appear on the night of the New Year, etc. [...]

Everywhere, the twelve days that precede and succeed the New Year constitute a decisive moment in the life of the community. Then the souls of the dead visit the living, then the initiations of adolescents take place, etc. [...]

But why does the coming of the dead occur *only* and *everywhere* on New Year's Eve? Because the New Year represents not only the critical moment of the year (the "chaos" that is installed immediately after the conclusion of a temporal cycle), but also a cosmogonic moment. The New Year repeats creation [...]

The souls of the dead draw near to the living because they hope for a *repetition* (however ephemeral) of existence [...], or they hope implicitly in an *abolition* of Time, therefore in a transcendence of their condition as shades. I will develop all these things in the little book on which I've been working for several weeks, *Archétypes et répétition* (in Romanian, I first called it *Cosmos și Istorie*).

Indeed, the myth and rites of the New Year were to constitute a major part of the published book. Incidentally, this is the first mention of the new name (*Archétypes et répétition*), and Eliade gives no explanation here or elsewhere for the change of name.

On 2 January 1947 he records in the *Journal*³⁴ that he has read all day and taken notes for the second chapter of *Archétypes et répétition*, the one that deals especially with New Year ceremonies and myths. Ten days later he is working on the ending of the first chapter. Regarding the book, he asserts:

It is certainly my most important theoretical work, more important even than *Prolegomene*, because it connects, completes, and gives meaning to *all* my scientific and theoretical works of the past ten years. [...] Being obliged to make a short book, I won't let myself be tempted by erudition [...]. Certain philosophical problems which I have pondered for years are raised and resolved (?) for the first time. It is, in any case, a very good introduction to the philosophy of history. It could even have that as its title³⁵.

He did not mention the book again until 17 February (a Sunday), when he complains,

Although I've reflected continually on certain problems and have succeeded in seeing them very

³⁴ This notation is found in the unpublished *Journal Manuscript* (*Journal MS*).

³⁵ *Journal MS*, 12 January 1947.

clearly (e.g., that of the New Year in archaic religions), the book progresses slowly. This week I wrote six pages, after having done nothing for many weeks but read and reread, in order to complete the information and make the plan for this damned Chapter II.

Near the end of February, he estimates that he will be able to finish *Archétypes et répétition* and maybe *Prolegemene* too within a few more months, “if my current interest for such studies lasts.”³⁶

On March 1, he records that he worked very late the night before on Chapter II of *Archétypes et répétition*, and now he can foresee the end of it.³⁷ The next day he is happy to report that he has finished writing and is almost done transcribing Chapter II.³⁸

After taking a “break” from *Archétypes*, he returned to it on 23 March:

I resume work today on *Archétypes et répétition*, interrupted two weeks ago. I begin Chapter III, (the last one I hope!), the hardest, the most “elusive,” which I still don’t know how to direct so that I don’t come out at the problem of the philosophy of history – a problem I’m determined at all costs to reserve for a later volume.³⁹

³⁶ *Ibidem*, 27 February 1947.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, 1 March 1947.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 2 March 1947.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 23 March 1947.

It was nearly the end of April he when he took up the work on Chapter III again, hoping to finish it a few days. "After that will follow a brief final chapter, with some philosophical considerations – pointing toward the future book I'm planning on the philosophy of history."⁴⁰ Finally, on 12 May, "with a great effort," he finished the first draft of the third chapter, but he cautions himself:

I must resist the temptation to transform this essay into a monograph. Its purpose is to raise problems, not resolve them. But someday I want to settle accounts with "historicism", especially the historicism of Croce.

The unpublished *Journal* of 1947 is replete with pathetic references to Eliade's financial difficulties. He was continually forced to borrow money from friends or to take anything he had of value to the pawn shop. One reason he was in a hurry to finish *Archétypes et répétition* was because he would be paid for it, and he desperately needed the money to pay his rent. Nevertheless, his progress was slow, because he held himself to a high standard of research.

On 13 May, for example, he was reading Hegel's *Lessons from the Philosophy of History*. As he does so, he says,

I find "inaccuracies" and misconceptions at every step, but how admirable is this attempt to

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 30 April 1947.

encompass everything, to take account into account and valorize all things! [...] Reading Hegel, not only are you invited to see a *meaning* in world history, but above all, you see that it's possible to speak about a universal history which is not just a juxtapositioning of separate chapters. [...] I oppose with all my might Hegel's "historical" vision, and in *Archétypes et répétition* I show why. But that doesn't keep me from admiring his œuvre.⁴¹

Eliade always "transcribed" the first draft of anything he wrote. When he was transcribing Chapter III, he was surprised to discover the "poverty of the vocabulary and the simplicity of the syntax." He seems to have been writing still in Romanian, because he says the text will be translated immediately into French, but nevertheless he is appalled.⁴²

He put the finishing touches to Chapter III on 25 May, and returned to *Prolegomene*. "For the time being," he wrote, "I'm giving up the idea of a short, final chapter which I had hoped to present along with the rest of the manuscript."⁴³ This decision is surprising, inasmuch as the subject of Chapter IV, "The Terror of History," was the original inspiration for the volume! But he had not in fact abandoned the plan of writing the fourth chapter. On 13 June he reminds himself that he must do it. By 1 July, Giza

⁴¹ *Journal*, 13 May 1947 (published).

⁴² *Journal* MS, 15 May 1947. On the man who "corrected" *Archétypes*, see 17 August 1947, *Journal* MS.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 25 May 1947.

(replacing Nina in her secretarial function) has typed the first three chapters, but Eliade says he has neither the strength nor the desire to read and correct them. Two weeks later (13 July) he reminds himself: "I still have to write the last chapter of *Archétypes et répétition*, and two chapters for *Prolegomene* [...]"⁴⁴ As he proceeded with *Prolegomene* (Ch. XI: "Sacred Time and the Myth of the Eternal Return" – what he called in the *Journal* "magico-religious time"), he drew heavily on material already written for *Archétypes et répétition*⁴⁵.

The journal entry for 27 August, only a part of which has been published, merits being quoted more extensively:

That which keeps me from *living*, properly speaking, from taking part in "history," from giving free rein to my instincts and effusions – is the consciousness that I *have to do something*, that I *must* finish my "*œuvre*." The sentiment is not only paralyzing, but also sterilizing. The ideal demanded of me is to cease as a living being, and to limit myself exclusively to the function of producing the "*œuvre*." [...] For me, at times, it becomes unbearable. [...] For example, I'm burning with the desire to say several things relative to modern history, to have a conversation with men of the dialectical moment, and to show them the horrors in Romania, to tell them not to risk their lives in a civil war, no matter what the horrors may be, just because they feel they *must* protest against the

⁴⁴ *Journal*, 13 July 1947 (published).

⁴⁵ *Journal* MS, 20 and 25 August 1947.

terror of contemporary history. But I don't permit myself to do any of these things.

I don't let myself read the newspapers, since the news from the homeland is so tragic that I can't do anything all day after reading about it. My misfortune is that I cannot work without *believing* in my work. And it is enough for me to hear how thousands of National-Peasantists are being tortured in the "democratic" prisons of my country for me to cease believing in writing, in my own work. I realize then that I must do something else, anything else. Although a second of reflection brings me back to reality. What else can the *lone man* do in this apocalyptic history?⁴⁶

Here we see Eliade confronting and struggling with "the terror of history" as it existed then in Communist Romania. In the next few years several Romanian-language "exile periodicals" appeared at Paris, Munich, Madrid, and elsewhere, and in these Eliade was able to publish articles addressed to his fellow countrymen.⁴⁷

In the final months of 1947 and the early months of 1948, he worked on the last two chapters of *Prolegomene*, finishing the book in April, 1948.⁴⁸ He also showed what he had written on *Archétypes et répétition* to friends and potential publishers, who all

⁴⁶ *Journal* MS, 27 August 1947. Compare with the modified and truncated published text.

⁴⁷ See Mircea Eliade, *Împotriva deznădejzii*, edited by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1992.

⁴⁸ *Journal* MS, 11 April 1948.

were “enthusiastic.” Fighting “a sudden passion for literature,” he forced himself to return to *Archétypes*.⁴⁹

By July, he had decided to rename the book again. As he explains:

For many years, my true problem has been, and remains, the problem of Time. That’s why *Archétypes et répétition* will be named, as is also appropriate, *Le Mythe de l’éternel retour* [...].⁵⁰

But it was October before he finally began writing on the book again:

I return to *Le Mythe*.... I see much more clearly the point of the last chapter, but I hesitate to open here, in a few pages, the problem of *History*. And, nevertheless, I ought to do it. Why should I keep postponing the statement of these ideas for another book, which I don’t know when I’ll write, or even if I’ll ever get around to writing?⁵¹

In his journal entry for 2 November, as he is finishing the book, he complains of the cold temperature in his room. He leafs through the *Journal* for 1945, when he was beginning the work.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 13 June 1948. All his life, Mircea Eliade alternated between writing fiction and scholarly works.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 8 July 1948.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 28 October 1948. In the published *Journal*, he revised the last two sentences: “And nevertheless, I will have to do it. Around me, everyone is asking *how much more time* do we have, when ‘will there come...?’”

It's strange how my panic of that time, my belief in the immanence of war, anticipated the international tension that followed. But for the last several weeks, I've been calmer. No longer do I believe – fortunately – that war will break out in a month or two.

At 11:00 p.m., he records that *Le Mythe* is completed, except for the Preface. Summarizing its “history,” he states:

Begun in March [actually, February] 1945 at Cascaes, quickly dropped and then taken up again in the winter of 1946-47, finished provisionally in May of 1947, [it] is now definitively concluded. I consider it my most important book, despite its imperfections and the allusions (which will not satisfy anyone) of the last chapter.⁵²

The publishing house “Gallimard” was waiting for *Le Mythe*, and it was in the press by January 1949. Eliade saw it in a bookstore window 27 May, and did “book service” for it a few day later.⁵³ In April, the Italian historian of religions, Raffaele Pettazzoni, came to Paris, and Eliade met at last this man he had long admired.

We discussed *Traité* for two hours; ‘historicist’ that he is, he rejects my theses about archetypes. But he

⁵² *Ibidem*, 3 November 1948; revised and shortened in published *Journal*.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, 3 February; 27, 31 May 1949.

apologizes all the while, repeating continually that I have renewed religious studies, etc.⁵⁴

After *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour* had been published, Eliade received appreciative comments from B. Croce, H. de Lubac, Karl Meuli, Eugenio d'Ors, and others.⁵⁵ D'Ors, whom Eliade had known in Portugal, was "enthusiastic," Eliade says, "because I've brought out the Platonic structure of archaic and traditional ('popular') ontologies." But Eliade is disappointed since he thinks d'Ors has not understood his point about the ritual abolition of time, which necessitates repetition.⁵⁶ He has the same criticism for other reviews he has read:

All excellent, but I have the impression that my most important thesis – the necessity for "repetition," that is, for the re-creation of the world – is not clearly understood. The function of repetition is existential; it is the will to *continue life*, hoping to repeat it *ad infinitum*.⁵⁷

By now, the end of October 1949, Eliade was already involved in writing what would become his last and greatest full-length novel, *Noaptea de Sânziene*, published in English as *The Forbidden Forest*.⁵⁸ This

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, 3 April 1949; revised in published *Journal*.

⁵⁵ *Journal*, 16 June 1949.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 3 October 1949.

⁵⁷ *Journal* MS, 29 October 1949

⁵⁸ Mircea Eliade, *The Forbidden Forest*, Notre Dame (Indiana) and London: Notre Dame University Press, 1978, translated from the Romanian by Mary Park Stevenson and Mac Linscott Ricketts.

novel can only be understood as the literary expression of Eliade's ideas about time, as set forth in *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*, which should be read before, or in conjunction with the novel.

Back to *Cosmos and History*, Chapter IV

Chapter IV, "The Terror of History," is subdivided into four sections. In the first section, "The Survival of the Myth of the Eternal Return," Eliade begins apologetically by admitting the problem raised in this chapter exceeds the limits he had intended for the book. To compare the man of traditional societies, who "accorded the historical event no value in itself, with "modern, historical man" would require analyzing all varieties of modern historicisms,⁵⁹ and to do so would "carry us too far from the principal theme of this study." Therefore, he proposes to examine only "the solutions offered by the historicistic view to enable modern man to tolerate the increasingly powerful pressure of contemporary history" (p. 141).

But before doing so, he reviews what he has said in the first three chapters of the book, reminding the reader of the ways people of traditional civilizations have defended themselves against history,

⁵⁹ See *Cosmos and History*, footnote 19, p. 150, for a list of some "historicisms."

[...] either by periodically abolishing it through repetition of the cosmology [...], or by giving historical events a metahistorical meaning [...].

The Christianity of the popular [agricultural] European strata never succeeded in abolishing either the theory of the archetype [...] or the cyclical and astral theories (according to which history was justified, and the sufferings provoked by it assumed an eschatological meaning) (p. 142).

Among ecclesiastical leaders and theologians, two general conceptions of time contended down through the centuries: the *linear*, from the Fall to the Redemption, and *cyclical*, including theories of astral fatality. Eliade sees the cyclical view as having a revival recently, in various forms, with Nietzsche, Spengler, Toynbee and others (p. 246). He finds this quite meaningful:

The formulation, in modern terms, of an archaic myth betrays at least the desire to find a meaning and a transhistorical meaning justification for historical events. Thus we find ourselves in the pre-Hegelian position, the validity of the "historicistic" solutions, from Hegel to Marx, being implicitly called into question (p. 147).

In the second section of this chapter, "The Difficulties of Historicism," Eliade points out what he considers the faults of Hegel's viewpoint, and its inadequacy for dealing with the problem of "the terror

of history." "From Hegel on, every effort is directed toward saving and conferring value on the historical event as such," Eliade says. Teaching a strict philosophy of historical necessity, Hegel was obliged to see in every event the will of the "Universal Spirit." Eliade observes that there was, in this view, a parallel with the Hebrew prophets, who also proclaimed that every historical event was a manifestation of the will of God. "But with Marx, history cast off all transcendental significance; it was no longer anything more than the epiphany of the class struggle." Yet, Eliade admits, Marxism preserves a meaning to history: events are leading to a final elimination of the terror of history in an "age of gold" (pp. 148-149).

For Eliade, "The terror of history becomes more and more intolerable from the viewpoints afforded by the various historicistic philosophies." He does not propose to discuss the philosophies in this book, he says, but he wants to know one thing:

How can the "terror of history" be tolerated from the viewpoint of historicism? [...] We should wish to know, for example, how it would be possible to tolerate, and to justify, the sufferings and annihilation of so many peoples who suffer and are annihilated for the simple reason that their geographical situation sets them in the pathway of history [...].

He names specifically southeastern Europe as an example.

How can man tolerate the catastrophes and horrors of history – from collective deportations and massacres to atomic bombings – if beyond them he can glimpse no sign, no transhistorical meaning? (p. 151).

But Eliade is optimistic:

There is reason to foresee that, as the terror of history grows worse, as existence becomes more precarious because of history, the positions of historicism will increasingly lose prestige. [...] It is not inadmissible to think of an epoch not too far distant, when humanity, to ensure its survival, will find itself reduced to desisting from any further “making” of history [...] and will confine itself to repeating prescribed archetypal gestures [...] (pp. 153-154).

There he leaves the matter, saying that he plans to pursue “these speculations” elsewhere.

The third section, “Freedom and History,” compares modern man’s “freedom to make history” with traditional man’s adherence to archetypal norms and gestures, which seems, to the former, to be a reversion to “nature,” born of a fear of doing anything new or unusual. However, “modern man,” as Eliade puts it,

can be creative only insofar as he is historical; in other words, all creation is forbidden him except that which has its source in his own freedom; and, consequently, everything is denied him except the freedom to make history by making himself.

But, Eliade contends,

it is becoming increasingly doubtful that modern man can make history. History is being made by smaller and smaller elite, even being reduced in many cases to a single dictator, so that the average man who would be free must flee, take refuge in a subhuman existence, or commit suicide. In contrast, the man of archaic civilizations enjoys the freedom to be creative – by being able to annul his own history and begin a new, pure existence each year (pp. 154-159).

In the last section of Chapter IV, entitled “Despair or Faith,” Eliade presents what he sees as the alternatives available to modern man, in the face of the terror of history. If historicism is not the answer, then what is? “Basically, the horizon of archetypes and repetition cannot be transcended with impunity unless we accept a philosophy that does not exclude God,” he declares.

And indeed, this proved to be true when the horizon of archetypes and repetition *was* transcended, for the first time, by Judæo-Christianity, which introduced a new category into religious experience: the category of *faith*.

Here Eliade cites Abraham who trusted Yahweh (concerning the sacrifice of his only son), whose faith can be defined as “for God, all things are possible,”

and the *Gospel of Mark*, 11: 22-24, which implies that everything is possible, through faith, for man as well.

Faith, in this context, as in many others, means absolute emancipation from any kind of natural "law," and hence [...] the freedom to intervene even in the ontological constitution of the universe. It is, consequently, a pre-eminently creative freedom. In other words, it constitutes a new formula for man's collaboration with the creation – the first but also the only such formula accorded him since the traditional horizon of archetypes and repetition was transcended. Only such a freedom [...] is able to defend modern man from the terror of history – a freedom, that is, which has its source and has its guarantee in God (pp. 160-161).⁶⁰

Eliade continues,

We may say, furthermore, that Christianity is the "religion" of modern man and historical man, of the man who simultaneously discovered personal freedom and continuous time. [...] It is only by presupposing the existence of God that he conquers, on the one hand, freedom (which grants him autonomy in a universe governed by laws [...]) and, on the other hand, the certainty that historical tragedies have a transhistorical meaning, even if that meaning is not always visible for humanity in its present condition. Any other situation of modern man leads, in the end, to despair.

⁶⁰ Compare *Journal*, 1 January 1945.

And finally,

Christianity incontestably proves to be the religion of “fallen man,” and this to the extent that modern man is irremediably identified with history and progress, and to which history and progress are falls, both implying a final abandonment of the paradise of archetypes and repetition.

These quotations from the last section of the book seem to present Eliade as a man of faith and a true believer, who had found in Christianity the answer to his own problem of the “terror of history” (the fall of Romania and its occupation by the Soviet Union, as well as his personal trials). Still, we must withhold a final judgment, because he is careful always to speak in the third person. However that may be, when it has been studied closely, *Cosmos and History* endures, as Eliade believed it would, as his most important theoretical volume.

Ioan Petru Culianu, Mircea Eliade, and *Felix culpa*

With the I.P. Culianu - M.L. Ricketts Correspondence

Liviu Bordaș

1. More than one time Ioan Petru Culianu (1950-1991) had acknowledged himself – with a more or less declared modesty – a disciple of Mircea Eliade, to whom he bound his whole existence. Once was in an interview recorded on 30 October 1984. Speaking then about the importance of Eliade in Romanian culture, he affirmed that this man was “the opener of a school which as yet has not given many fruits, but which, undoubtedly, will give them.”¹ It is unnecessary to add that the most important representative of the “Eliade school” in Romanian culture was he himself, and Culianu was very conscious of his position.

His discipleship of Eliade was, already in the 1970s, troubled by hostile winds of a non-academic nature. These brought into discussion again the political specter

¹ Published by Andrei Oișteanu, without the introductory part referring to Eliade, in *Revista de istorie și teorie literară* (Bucharest), XXXIII, no. 3, July-September 1985, pp. 89-93; the missing fragments were published later in *Litere, arte & idei* (Bucharest), I, no. 5, June 10, 1991, p. 7.

of the 1930s and 1940s believed – or hoped – to have been buried by behind the Iron Curtain. More precisely, they resurrected the accusations of philo-fascism and anti-Semitism, which had already been propagated, with a degree of success, in 1945-1956 when Eliade had sought a new path in Paris. As is known, Culianu felt himself duty-bound to repulse them, but the master was not too pleased by the initiative of the disciple, rather awkward – it must be said – even if well-intentioned. The texts which he wrote in the 1970s remained unpublished.² In the last years of Eliade's life, nevertheless, he published two articles on this theme.³

After his death, the accusations, previously heterogeneous and founded mostly on hearsay, became increasingly more organized and documented. Among the burdens which Culianu assumed as part of the inheritance from the master was that of clarifying his interwar political involvement and to show the lack of foundation for the faults which were being brought to him.

² "Ce spune și ce nu spune Mircea Eliade" ["What Mircea Eliade says and what he doesn't say", 1974]; "Citesc în *Il Popolo*" ["I read in *Il Popolo*", 1978], in I.P. Culianu, *Studii românești*, II, Iași: Polirom, 2009, pp. 241-247; "Apendice 2. Mircea Eliade între 'burghez' și 'antiburghez'" ["Appendix 2. Mircea Eliade, between 'bourgeois' and 'anti-bourgeois'", 1978], in *idem*, *Mircea Eliade*, 3rd ed., revised and enlarged, Iași: Polirom, 2004, pp. 317-335.

³ I.P. Culianu, "Mircea Eliade und die blinde Schildkröte", in Hans Peter Duerr (ed.), *Die Mitte der Welt. Aufsätze zu Mircea Eliade*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984, pp. 216-243; "Mircea Eliade et le long combat contre la racisme", *Nouvelle Acropole* (Paris), 81, 1985, pp. 3-4.

2. Interesting information about these concerns of Culianu is brought by his unpublished correspondence with another pupil of Eliade, Mac Linscott Ricketts, who was on the way to becoming the most important biographer of their common master.⁴ Their exchange of letters started timidly and episodically at the beginning of the 1980s, and only after the death of Eliade is it transformed into a true intellectual and human relationship. For almost two years, from May 1986 till February 1988, with little pauses, the two write to each other continuously, whereas in the next two years their correspondence becomes more rare.

The principal subjects of this exchange of epistles concern the manuscripts of the Professor, his unfinished books or their translation into English. Among other things, they furnish data that help us to

⁴ See letters at the end of this article. I thank Professor Ricketts for the letters and permission to publish them. The letters of Culianu are reproduced after the originals found in the personal archives of Prof. Ricketts, while his own letters after copies or drafts kept together with them. Unfortunately, as internal evidence shows, not all of the latter have been preserved. For example, Ricketts' first letter of 30 October 1980, his responses to Culianu's letters numbers 1, 3, 5, 15 (9 September 1986), 16 (31 October 1986), and 17 (8 and [?] December 1986), his letters of 2 June 1989 and [?] December 1989, his responses to letters 37 and 38 (11 December 1990). A small part of this correspondence was discussed by Sorin Antohi in 1995, based on the personal archive of Culianu. Cf. postface "Culianu și Eliade. Vestigiile unei inițieri" ["Culianu and Eliade. The remnants of an initiation"], at I.P. Culianu, *Mircea Eliade*, op. cit., pp. 351-369 (363-367).

reconstitute the destiny of the fourth volume of *The History of Religious Ideas*.⁵ By virtue of his role as Eliade's literary executor, Culianu mediated between Ricketts and Christinel Eliade or various editors. Most often they return in discussion to the second volume of the *Autobiography*, translated into English by Ricketts, and to his monumental monograph about the Romanian years of the Professor. Both volumes appeared in 1988⁶ and would attract new reactions concerning the political engagement of the young Eliade. But, already in April 1987, their correspondence had begun to revolve around these matters.

After Eliade's death, some of his new critics who concentrated on his political sympathies of the 1930s, presented Culianu as an apologist for his master, a term with nuances running from a simple defender to a zealous supporter and panegyrist. The first to do it was the Marxist anthropologist Vittorio Lanternari (1918-2010) in an attempt to support the older critical articles of Furio Jesi (1941-1980) and Alfonso Maria di

⁵ On this see my article: "'Întotdeauna far într-o lume nihilistă'. Mircea Eliade și Ioan Petru Culianu – completări documentare" ["'Always a beacon-light in a nihilistic world'. Mircea Eliade and Ioan Petru Culianu – documentary contributions"], forthcoming in *Studii de istorie a filosofiei românești* (Bucharest), VIII, 2012.

⁶ M. Eliade, *Autobiography*, II, 1937-1960. *Exile's Odyssey*, trans. from the Romanian by M.L. Ricketts, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1988; M.L. Ricketts, *Mircea Eliade, The Romanian Roots. 1907-1945*, 2 vols., Boulder: East European Monographs (distributed by Columbia University Press, New York), 1988.

Nola (1926-1997) in response to Culianu's rebuttal.⁷ One could wonder whether some of these Eliade critics aimed not only to minimize Culianu's interventions – seen as a disciple and follower of his – but perhaps to push him to minimize them himself. Very probably this was the intention of Lanternari, who wrote to him on 6 April 1987, in order to communicate to him, together with his article, new criticisms of the Professor (on the basis of an unpublished article of Radu Ioanid).⁸

The reaction didn't wait, but it was not the expected one. Culianu responded on 28 April, exonerating himself from the charge of "apologist", but insisting that Eliade was not a member of the Legion or an anti-Semite, that he was in fact an anti-Nazi by virtue of the fact that he was a Salazarian.⁹ In his view, Lanternari's arguments do not seem to be supported by a solid argument. Especially, Culianu was not persuaded by the existence of articles in *Buna Vestire*, and he believed that the accusations were based exclusively on Mihail Sebastian's journal, a subjective document which proved nothing.

Together with this exchange of letters with Lanternari, he sent to Ricketts a copy of a letter to the historian Arnaldo Momigliano (1908-1987), then visiting professor at the University of Chicago, the one who brought to his attention Lanternari's article before the

⁷ V. Lanternari, "Ripensando a Mircea Eliade", *La critica sociologica* (Rome), no. 79, October-December 1986, pp. 67-82.

⁸ *Addendum 4*.

⁹ *Addendum 5*.

latter had written to him.¹⁰ It may be surmised that the letter from the professor in Rome had been dispatched by the fact that Momigliano had communicated to him the reaction of Culianu, whom the reading of his article had not made him change his position already expressed concerning the political sympathies of the young Eliade. If this hypothesis is verified, it is one argument more that Lanternari intended to push Culianu to re-evaluate his position, in the sense of accepting, even partially, some of the things which had been imputed to his master.

As a result of this confrontation in letters, Ricketts communicate to him the “supposedly incriminating” texts from the journals *Vremea*, *Buna Vestire*, and *Sânzana*, about whose existence Culianu was in doubt. But their reading – taking into consideration the fact that the most “engaged” among them (the response to the questionnaire “Why do I believe in the victory of the Legionary Movement”) had not been written by him – did not change his position one whit. Culianu realized that Eliade had been closer to the Legion than he would like to have believed, but in spite of this fact he had not been a member of the Legion or an anti-Semite or philo-Nazi. On the basis of these articles, he prepared two lectures for the Romanian section of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), where he read them in July. They were intended to demonstrate exactly this thing: that Eliade was just a “militant sympathizer” of the

¹⁰ *Addendum* 6 (29 April 1987).

Legionary Movement, not a member, much less a philo-Nazi or anti-Semite.¹¹

Although he wrote to Lanternari that as long as he does not *demonstrate* his accusations, he has no reason to make a reply to his article, in the two radio broadcasts he has strengthened his old position precisely on the basis of proofs the Italian professor ought to have produced. Culianu considers Mihail Sebastian's assertions passionate and "desolately wrong". Based on such allegations, the attack in the "phantom bulletin" of a Communist tendency, *Toladot* in Jerusalem, has provoked a fiery polemic in Italy (i.e., F. Jesi, A.M. di Nola, etc.) where even today is taking place a "campaign full of surprises." The last expression refers (also) to Lanternari, but this one had no way to taking note of it or of the reaffirmation of the position of his Romanian colleague. Unfortunately, neither could Culianu know about the critical supplement which the Italian anthropologist had added to his revised version of his article.¹²

On 20 May 1987, he wrote to Ricketts that the next session of the American Academy of Religion (Boston, 5-8 December 1987) would have a section dedicated to Eliade at which "some fools" would talk about his

¹¹ "Mircea Eliade and Nae Ionescu" and "Mircea Eliade from 1937 to 1945" (in Romanian), in I. P. Culianu, *Studii românești*, II, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-167, where they are dated erroneously 1988. Correct date attested in the letter to Ricketts of 13 November 1987 (no. 30).

¹² "Un maestro visto a distanza: Mircea Eliade tra scienza e vita", in V. Lanternari, *Antropologia religiosa. Etnologia, storia, folclore*, Bari: Dedalo, 1997, pp. 313-356 (334-336, 353-354).

political associations in youth. The fools named were Adriana Berger and Ivan Strenski. He expressed his hope that someone would be present, capable of giving a response. This someone was Prof. Ricketts himself, who had argued that there did not exist any proof that Eliade was a member of the Legionary Movement, but that there were many proofs on the contrary that he was not an anti-Semite. The arguments of Adriana Berger, ardent sycophant of Eliade while he lived, were based on hearsay, indirect sources, and presuppositions. She made also grave confusions, identifying the chief of the Legion, Horia Sima (1906-1993) with the poet Horia Stamatu (1912-1989), and the esoteric Italian group "Ur" with a secret *cuib* (nest) of the Legionary Movement.¹³

At the beginning of 1988, responding to a letter in which Mac Ricketts had described the recent AAR meeting in Boston, Culianu considers Adriana Berger as "scholarly irresponsible" and "clinically crazy".¹⁴ Her method is called "paranoiac history", a form of poststructuralist historiography in which she excels. Referring to what Berger maintains she found out from Horia Stamatu about Eliade's membership in the Iron Guard, Culianu affirms that it is improbable that she met him personally, because otherwise she would

¹³ Letter of Ricketts, 11 December 1987 (no. 31).

¹⁴ Culianu's statements can be supported from numerous places in the correspondence of A. Berger with Eliade. *Mircea Eliade Papers*, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, box 63.20 (three other letters scattered in boxes 70.9, 73.1, and two unpublished papers with dedications in box 135.5). V. *infra*.

not have confused him with Horia Sima. He considers it more probable that she had gathered information from Mircea Eliade's archives when she was engaged as his personal secretary (January to May 1984). More precisely, from the letters Culianu sent to the Professor in the years 1977 to 1979, when he himself thought to have found serious analogies between his works and Legionary ideology. Immersing himself into the subject more deeply, however, he arrived at the conclusion that these resemblances are very general and due the spirit of the era (*Zeitgeist*). Adriana Berger probably made photocopies of these letters, without Eliade's permission – as Culianu found out – but, as it seems, she was not able to decipher and interpret them correctly.¹⁵

Already in the fall of 1987, upon learning that Eliade's "political" articles of 1937 had been translated in Italy and probably will be published,¹⁶ Culianu writes to his American colleague that the two of them, together with Roberto Scagno, ought to offer explanations about this moment in the Professor's biography.¹⁷ It is understood that it was a matter of writing a book together and to publish it in Italy. Since those articles were not eventually published, the project was not discussed further.

¹⁵ Letter to Ricketts, 19 January 1988 (no. 32). See also letter to Lanternari, 28 April 1987 (*Addendum* 5).

¹⁶ It is not known to whom to attribute the initiative. It could very well be linked to Vittorio Lanternari and Radu Ioanid.

¹⁷ Letter of 22 October 1987 (no. 28).

A little over a year later, on 16 November 1988, Culianu telephoned Ricketts to talk again about the project of a book “in defense of Eliade”. This time it was to be published in U.S., by Macmillan, and edited by Wendy Doniger – “Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions” at the Divinity School –, but with Matei Călinescu and himself in the role of “silent editors”. The book would contain the “allegedly incriminating” articles of 1937-1938, translated and commented on by Mac Ricketts, as well as articles by all the critics and supporters of Eliade who could write about him authoritatively.¹⁸ Among those considered were Eugen Weber, Keith Hitchins, and Seymour Cain. But although Ricketts had translated into English the articles, the project could not be continued on account of Eliade’s wife. Christinel could not understand what was happening, and she suffered even at articles of good faith, which – like those of Culianu – tried to put the whole matter in the light of history and documents.¹⁹

The first article published by Culianu on this theme after the death of Eliade was based on the recently printed monograph of Mac Ricketts.²⁰ However, it displeased Christinel so much that he felt obliged to withdraw his review of Ricketts’ book, which was to have appeared in the Philadelphia-based

¹⁸ A summary of the telephone conversation noted by Ricketts at the time (no. 34).

¹⁹ See Culianu’s letter of 7 June 1989 (no. 37).

²⁰ I.P. Culianu, “Invito alla lettura di Mircea Eliade”, *Abstracta* (Rome), no. 35, March 1989, pp. 38-49.

Romanian “alternative cultural journal” *Agora*. In the meantime, there had already appeared many accusatory reviews²¹ and articles which propagated a biased and exaggerated political critique. These latter bore the signatures of Radu Ioanid,²² Alfonso M. di Nola,²³ and, the most insistent of all, Adriana Berger.²⁴ Taking the opposite side, in addition to Ricketts with

²¹ Ivan Strenski, “The sorrow and secrets of Mircea Eliade”, *Los Angeles Times*, 22 January 1989; Robert Irwin, “Sympathy for the Archangel”, *The New York Times Book Review*, 94, 5 March 1989, p. 48; Edgar Reichman, “Les pièges mortels d’Eliade. Quand l’écrivain roumain succombait à la fascination d’une mythologie funèbre”, *Le monde* (Paris), 20 October 1989, p. 36; George Steiner, “Ecstasies, not Arguments”, *The Times Literary Supplement* (London), IV, no. 565, 28 September - 4 October 1990, pp. 1015-1016.

²² R. Ioanid, “Mircea Eliade e il Fascismo”, *La critica sociologica* (Rome), no. 84, January-March 1988, pp. 16-29. See also his book *The Sword of the Archangel. Fascist Ideology in Romania*, translated by Peter Heinegg, Colorado: East European Monographs, distributed by Columbia University Press, New York, 1990, pp. 82, 107, 114, 125, 137, 143-147, 155-156.

²³ A.M. di Nola, “Mircea Eliade tra scienza delle religioni e ideologia ‘guardista’”, *Marxismo oggi* (Milan), nos. 5-6, September-October 1989, pp. 66-71.

²⁴ A. Berger, “Ciudatul destin al unei scrisori a lui Mircea Eliade către Al. Mirodan” [“The strange fate of a letter of Mircea Eliade to Al. Mirodan”], *Minimum* (Tel Aviv), II, no. 18, September 1988, pp. 47-49; “Fascism and Religion in Romania”, *Annals of Scholarship* (New York), VI, no. 4, 1989, pp. 455-465; “Anti-Judaism and Anti-Historicism in Eliade’s Writings,” paper read to the annual session of the American Academy of Religion, New Orleans, 17-20 November, 1990; an article by the same name in Hebrew appeared in *Hadoar. The Jewish Histadruth of America* (New York), 70, no. 21, June 1991, pp. 14-17.

his monograph, were Seymour Cain (1914-1997),²⁵ a good connoisseur and scholar of Eliade's work, and the young doctoral student at Edinburgh, Bryan S. Rennie.²⁶ Culianu himself had written an article in the form of an ample review of Ricketts' recent English translations of parts of Eliade's *Journal* and *Memoirs*, as well as of his own monograph, which Culianu considers "the definitive work" about the Romanian period of Eliade's life and work. Unfortunately, this will be the last text he was to publish about the question of "felix culpa", as it will be called in years to come.

On 4 December 1990 Culianu communicated to Mac Ricketts that Adriana Bergers's repeated criticisms of Eliade don't "carry any weight", in his opinion. In his last letter to him, on 3 April 1991, he refers to her article "Fascism and Religion in Romania" as representing "new mischiefs".

3. Culianu's last article, which discusses the most recent books referring directly to the political sympathies of Eliade in youth, will appear

²⁵ S. Cain, "Mircea Eliade, the Iron Guard, and Romanian Anti-Semitism", *Midstream. A Monthly Jewish Review* (New York), 35, November 1989, pp. 27-31.

²⁶ The results of his research which demonstrated the falsifications of Adriana Berger, written at the beginning of 1991, were not published until the end of the following year. Bryan S. Rennie, "The Diplomatic Career of Mircea Eliade: A Response to Adriana Berger", *Religion* (London), 22, no. 4, 1992, pp. 375-392.

posthumously, in January 1992.²⁷ Contrary to what some authors have written about the attitude of “the last” Culianu toward his *maestru*, this text shows him preoccupied with defending him from false accusations of the detractors like the earlier articles (he even took some ideas and phrases from the two lectures given on Radio BBC). The only difference from these is his care in handling the sensibility of Christinel, attitude which returns frequently in the correspondence with Ricketts. Inasmuch as it was discussed very little, and not included until now in the Romanian edition of Culianu’s works, it merits our giving more attention to it in this article.

Starting from the assumption that Eliade can be considered a living illustration of the way an individual is the product of a certain historic situation, Culianu insists on the necessity of contextualizing his work. The Eliade of the 1960s and 1970s was one of the most influential savants in the struggle against racism and ethnocentrism. The fact that, for a short period toward the end of the 1930s, he paid tribute to “Romanian ethnocentrism” comes as a shock for the great number of those who knew him. How could he have arrived here, after until then his political attitude had been a democratic one, and his best friend had been a Jew? Eliade superimposed the image of Gandhi’s non-violence upon the “Romanian Fascists”, considered by

²⁷ I.P. Culianu, “Mircea Eliade, *Journal I, II, III, IV; Autobiography* vol. 1, 2; Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Mircea Eliade: The Romanian Roots, 1907-1945*”, *The Journal of Religion* (Chicago), 72, no. 1, January 1992, pp. 157-161.

Culianu as “the absolute losers of history”, who had succeeded to the point of spending the war in German concentration camps, alongside of those they hated: Jews, Gypsies, and homosexuals.

Culianu joins other scholars of Eliade, such as Mac Ricketts and Seymour Cain, in considering his sympathy for the Legionary Movement as the result of a political naïveté without consequences, and in denying the existence of any anti-Semitism in his political and scholarly options. His increased sensitivity for the sufferings of the Romanians could blind him temporarily to the sufferings of others. In spite of this, Eliade was an especially generous person. Culianu finds in his journal, at a certain moment, an emotional “antiracist manifesto” (to which he also referred in an article of 1990). His conclusion is that, in spite of the episode of 1937, he remained, in his role as a savant, one of the most lucid combatants for the cause of the Other, that is the many, the neglected, the oppressed, and misunderstood down through the long history of Western civilization.

Although he refers principally to Ricketts’ monograph, published in 1988, this review article includes also the English versions of *Memoirs* (1980, 1988) and of *Fragments d’un journal* (1989, 1990). The last of them – vol. I of the journal – came out in March 1990, but was already known by him in the French edition of 1973. The fourth volume, from which Culianu also

cites, appeared in January 1990.²⁸ Thus, this date can be considered the *terminus post quem* of the redaction of the review. The *terminus ante quem* is given by his letter to Ricketts of 4 December in which he informs him that he has written it already. Two other short texts about Eliade, which could possibly dispute the last place in the chronology of the redaction, do not change or contradict anything supported in the review article.

In September 1990, in the article “Eliade koan”, he writes that the good-heartedness of this man extended, just like his patriotism, to the point of the absurd. Although he did not assume a political affiliation, he loved his country “with absurdity”. Culianu added that, at the end of the 1930s, he dreamt of it as a kind of a dazzling paradise, created through the apparition of a “new man” endowed with all virtues, and therefore an example for all humankind. So much for Eliade’s Legionary sympathies. Culianu goes on to describe how in his novellas Eliade looks kindly and with a superior understanding, even upon a *Securitate* (Secret police) officer of the 1950s, whom – we must add – represented all that could be opposite to his dream of 1937.²⁹

The other text, the preface to the last volume of *The History of Religious Ideas*, dated 2 December 1990, was not a place for approaching sensitive matters in

²⁸ Thanks to Prof. M.L. Ricketts for providing the dates of publication of the volumes of the *Journal* translated by him.

²⁹ I.P. Culianu, “Eliade koan”, *Lumea liberă* (New York), no. 101, 8 September 1990, p. 9; republished in *Păcatul împotriva spiritului. Scrieri politice*, Bucharest: Nemira, pp. 120-122 (122).

Eliade's biography. Nevertheless, Culianu did not miss the chance to recall the fact that he regarded in a superlative way the work of Henri Maspero (1882-1945), the French Sinologist of Jewish origin, who had perished in a Nazi prison camp.³⁰

On the same day he gave an interview in which, inevitably, he was asked about the accusations brought to the Professor and about his connections with Nae Ionescu and the Legionary Movement. Here again, keeping himself at a distance personally, Culianu maintains that one cannot impute to Eliade an intimacy with Nae Ionescu, and denies that he was a Legionary or an anti-Semite. He admits that he "fell into the trap" of a generalized language which seemed then to make sense, and that owing to his candor, he saw only the generous parts of "a movement", without understanding the shadows. That Eliade had begun as a democrat, but in the year 1937 he "slipped", however only in three articles with chauvinistic-xenophobic nuances. And finally, that he understood in a different way, a very personal one, what the ideologists of Orthodoxy were speaking at that time. His political articles from the other years are, in Culianu's opinion, "amazingly well-intentioned and timely".³¹ The author

³⁰ I.P. Culianu, "Vorwort", in M. Eliade, *Geschichte der religiösen Ideen*, vol. III/2, Freiburg i. Br., Basel & Vienna: Herder, 1991, pp. 5-6 (6).

³¹ I.P. Culianu, "Lumea est-europeană – o tragică pierdere de timp, de oameni, de energii", ["The East-European world – a tragic waste of time, men, and energy"], interview by Gabriela Adameșteanu, 22 (Bucharest), II, no. 13, 5 April 1991, pp. 8-9, 15 (9, 15); republished in *Păcatul împotriva spiritului*, op. cit., pp. 38-54 (46-48, 54).

of this interview, a well-known and respected writer, assures us that his answers were spontaneous and his attitude one of solidarity with Eliade, not of furious revolt or of bitter disappointment, as some have tried to interpret it later.³²

Culianu declared even to his fiancée – in the same year, 1990 – that Eliade had not been a member of the Iron Guard³³ and that he was not a “bad man”.³⁴ The fact that he did not consider him a former Legionary, much less a philo-Fascist, is proved by his naïve belief that Eliade would have been the ideal person to become the president of a democratic Romania, where the office would have been an honorary and symbolic chair.³⁵

³² Gabriela Adameșteanu, “Istoria unui interviu după zece ani” [“The story of an interview, ten years later”], in Sorin Antohi (ed.), *Ioan Petru Culianu. Omul și opera*, Iași: Polirom, 2003, pp. 213-233 (227, 230).

³³ This fact is supported even by important members of the Legionary Movement, such as the former commandant Vasile Posteuță, on whose book Mac Ricketts draws Culianu’s attention in a letter of 29 November 1988 (no. 35). V. Posteuță, *Dezgroparea Căpitanului*, ed. by Al. Ronnett, Madrid: Ed. Mișcării Legionare, 1977, pp. 35-36. To this can be added a notation in his journal, published posthumously. V. Posteuță, “Jurnal”, in *Mircea Eliade în conștiința contemporanilor săi din exil*, ed. by Gabriel Stănescu, Norcross: Criterion, [2001], pp. 272-277 (275, 28 October 1958).

³⁴ Ted Anton, *Eros, Magic, and the Murder of Professor Culianu*, Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996, p. 117; *Eros, magie și asasinarea profesorului Culianu*, Romanian edition, revised and enlarged, trans. by C. Felea, Bucharest: Nemira, 1997, p. 277.

³⁵ I.P. Culianu, “Viitorul României în unsprezece puncte” [“Romania’s future in eleven points”], *Lumea liberă* (New York), no. 66, 6 January 1990, pp. 19, 30-31; republished in *Păcatul împotriva spiritului*, op. cit., pp. 59-69 (62).

4. The death of Culianu brought a capital disservice to Eliade, since it interrupted several things important for his posterity: 1) the publication of his literary estate; 2) the clarification of young Eliade's political and religious views, with competence, efficiency, and from a position of academic prestige, able to counteract that criticism which availed itself of incomplete and not fully understood historical data in order to attack his works and ideas; and, perhaps most importantly of all, 3) Eliade's "school", which – despite his methodological and theoretical dissidence – Culianu was, among all the pupils of the *maestru*, the most desirous of and capable of continuing it.

In the years which followed Culianu's death, the criticism of Eliade, focusing on his political sympathies before the war, intensified. In the first two years there appeared studies by a number of Jewish-Romanian intellectuals, like Norman Manea,³⁶ Leon Volovici (1938-2011),³⁷ and Isac Chiva (1925-2012),³⁸

³⁶ N. Manea, "Happy Guilt: Mircea Eliade, Fascism, and the Unhappy Fate of Romania", *The New Republic* (Washington, D.C.), 5 August 1991, pp. 27-36 (Fr. trans. in *Les temps modernes*, Paris, no. 549, April 1992, pp. 90); republished in N. Manea, *On Clowns. The Dictator and the Artist*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld Press, 1992, pp. 91-121.

³⁷ L. Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism. The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*. Oxford: Pergamon Press (for Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University of Jerusalem), 1991, pp. ix, 72-74, 76-77, 78-79, 83-85, 87-92, 99, 101, 104-105, 110-111, 120-126, 131, 134-136, 141-147, 149, 191.

while in the ensuing years other texts by Adriana Berger³⁹ and the book of Daniel Dubuisson.⁴⁰ After that, this genre of literature begins to multiply exponentially, growing to a certain extent from itself.

On the other hand, a rather large number of authors who wrote about Eliade and Culianu projected upon them their own expectations. They also projected the “felix culpa” question upon their entire relation, and interpreted it in a political key, committing with nonchalance a whole chain of hermeneutic violence. Personally, I am wholly sympathetic with creative hermeneutics, although I am not an unconditional adept of it. This idea has been misunderstood by many of its recent adepts. Its golden rule could be summed up this way: creativity is welcome and fertile *after* the possibilities offered by data existent within their limits and their context have been exhausted. That is, after cautious hermeneutics, one which tries to reduce to the minimum the possibility of falsification of the meaning.

³⁸ I. Chiva, “A propos de Mircea Eliade. Un témoignage”, *Le genre humain* (Paris), no. 26, Autumn 1992 - Winter 1993, pp. 89-102.

³⁹ A. Berger, “Mircea Eliade’s Vision for a New Humanism”, *Society* (Dordrecht), 30, no. 5, July-August 1993, pp. 84-87; “Mircea Eliade: Romanian Fascism and the History of Religion in the United States”, in Nancy A. Harrowitz (ed.), *Tainted Greatness. Antisemitism and Cultural Heroes*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994, pp. 51-74.

⁴⁰ D. Dubuisson, *Mythologies du XXe siècle. Dumézil, Lévi-Strauss, Eliade*, Lille: Presse Universitaires de Lille, 1993; English trans., *Twentieth Century Mythologies. Dumézil, Lévi-Strauss, Eliade*, London: Equinox, 2006.

It is beyond a shadow of a doubt that Ioan Petru Culianu did not share the positions of the extreme right: nationalism, Orthodoxy, and racism, with its anti-Semitic variant. These attitude, not too clear during his Italian period (1972-1976), become pronounced in the American one (1986-1991), and even militant in the last years of his life. In spite of this fact, Eliade's alleged political engagement never became the object of his pupil's attacks. On the contrary, as we have seen, until his last breath, he insisted on defending him from these accusations. Even after all the allegedly incriminating pieces had come to the surface: especially after the publication of Mac Linscott Ricketts' monograph in 1988, and the attempt to translate into English all of Eliade's political articles of the 1930s.

In this process, Culianu even tried to change already-established perceptions of Nae Ionescu, the Legionary Movement, and Ion Antonescu. The Legion he wanted to reshape its exaggerated image of a party of the extreme right, calling it "Archangelic Socialism" (the formula of Nicholas Nagy-Talavera) and seeking its roots in Russian Narodnicism (Populism) and Slavophilia. Legionary anti-Semitism was only economic, not racist. Before manifesting sympathy for the Movement, Nae Ionescu (and also Eliade) was for the left rather than the right. Antonescu was honest, but not very intelligent. The dictatorship of Salazar was a democratic one, not totalitarian. Finally, Culianu puts the larger part of the misunderstandings on "Eliadian irony", which consisted in "never

making *his own* position specific, allowing thus his interlocutor to believe anything". He was not philo-Orthodox but a "Christian nonbeliever". While the roots of the modern West are racist, Eliade was a tireless fighter against racism, through his works which try to understand non-Western and so-called "primitive" cultures in their own dignity.

The reasons for this attitude are complex. On the one hand, we have no cause to doubt Culianu's sincerity when he affirms that Eliade was never a member of the Legionary Movement, but a naïve sympathizer, who saw it as a movement of spiritual and moral reform. He was convinced that his *maestru* had not been a philo-Fascist nor anti-Semite, but on the contrary that his whole *oeuvre* is a pleading against the racism and cultural colonialism of the white man. On the other hand, the defense of Eliade from his detractors, both politically and scholarly, was also an act of self-defense, by virtue of his irreversible association with him. Not only when he regrets his connection – minimal and lacking in consequences, he insists – with the Legionary Movement, but also when he takes a distance, theoretical or methodological, from Eliade, he does it in a non-belligerent spirit, of reciprocal comprehensive good-will.⁴¹

⁴¹ In 1986 he rejects affirmations about the obsolete character of Eliade's ideas, which would pertain to an outdated epistemological paradigm, maintaining that on the contrary, his work prefigures a paradigm which only then had begun to be manifest, through the so-called "anarchic anthropology". I.P. Culianu, "Avers și revers în istorie. Câteva reflecții cvasi-epistemologice despre opera lui Mircea

It should be recalled that Eliade reacted similarly with regard to Nae Ionescu, toward whose theoretical and methodological orientation he had taken a distance even during his professor's lifetime. After his death, he took a distance also from his political engagement (which he had also followed – here an analogy with Culianu does not exist) but without becoming a critic of the *maestru*.

These conclusions imposed by texts are more powerful than the inferences and presuppositions made on the basis of indirect evidence which try to transform “the last” Culianu into a political critic if not even an opponent of Eliade. Until the publication of direct proofs which contradict them, they remain standing. The only direct proofs to the contrary that can exist are other texts that Culianu might have elaborated or began to elaborate after 1986 (and especially after 1988). The journal and correspondence are also very important, but only as secondary witnesses. The reasons are evident. In letters, as also in conversations (especially with those critical of Eliade), the author comes into meeting of the other with an *interface*, determined in good measure by the interlocutor, by his ideas, convictions, and expectations. In a journal, even if we attribute to it absolute sincerity and total authenticity (which in reality do not exist), the author appears with his

Eliade” [“Obverse and reverse in history. Some quasi-epistemological reflections on Mircea Eliade’s work”], trans. by Dan Petrescu, *Revista de istorie și teorie literară* (Bucharest), XXXIV, nos. 2-3, April-September, 1986, pp. 127-136.

private ego, with ideas and attitudes which do not take part necessarily in his public identity, in that which he wants to be perceived by others as being his opinion. On the contrary, if the positions of Culianu in his journal, letters, and private conversations do not pass into published texts, this means very clearly that he did not mean for these to be more than they are.

What were they, then? How much sincerity and how much need for adaptation to the position of the other or to the current convention about what is good or what is bad do they contain? The response to this question can only be given after the publication of the whole of Culianu's manuscripts, of his journal, and his correspondence. And one would like to believe that they will be published without pious intentions to censure and misappropriate his opinions or to grade their reception according to the agenda of the editor. Until then, it should be hoped that the discussions will take into account not only all the data of the problem, but also all its indeterminates – a thing which, regrettably, has been seen rather rarely in the two decades elapsed since Culianu's death.

Ioan Petru Culianu - Mac Linscott Ricketts
Correspondence

1

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

I. P. Culianu
Instituut voor Romaanse Talen
9712 TS Groningen
Grote Kruisstraat 2¹
Telefoon 115872 / 115873

Prof. Mac Linscott Ricketts
Louisburg College
Louisburg, North Carolina 27549 USA

Nov. 10, 1980

Dear Professor Ricketts,

I am afraid I cannot satisfy your kind request expressed in your letter of Oct. 30.

I have only one copy of my book left, and I have to keep it for myself.¹ But there are more possibilities to purchase a copy from the Publishing House as further indicated:

a) Write me, and I will try to do it myself, but it will take twice the time to get it to Groningen from Assisi and to Louisburg from Groningen.

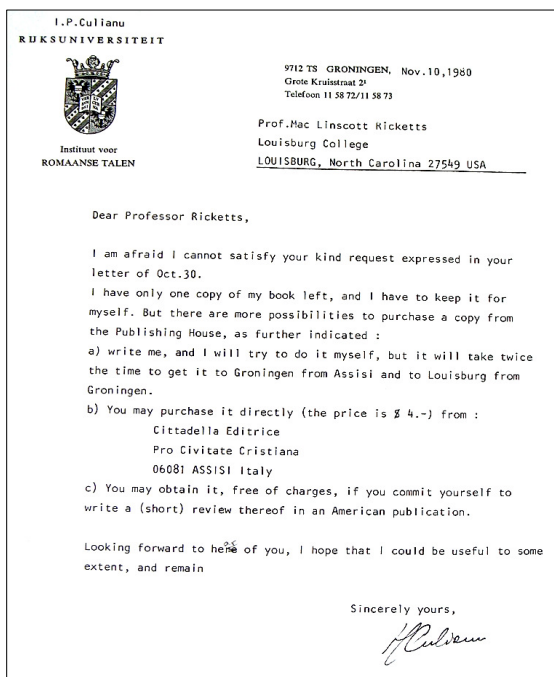
¹ I.P. Culianu, *Mircea Eliade*, Assisi: Cittadella Editrice, 1978, 192 pp. (series "Orizzonte filosofico", ed. by Italo Mancini).

b) You may purchase it directly (the price is \$ 4.-) from: Cittadella Editrice, Pro Civitate Cristiana, 06081 Assisi, Italy.

c) You may obtain it, free of charges, if you commit yourself to write a (short) review thereof in an American publication.

Looking forward to hear of you, I hope that I could be useful to some extent, and remain

Sincerely yours,
I. P. Culianu



M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

Ioan Culianu
 Dept. of Romance Languages
 University of Groningen
 Groningen, Netherlands

[12 July 1983]²

După cererea lui M.E., anexez fotocopia [cărții] *Întoarcerea*³ și un exemplar din *Imagination and Meaning*.⁴

Să reușiți la traducere.

Al Dvs.,
 [Mac Linscott Ricketts]⁵

² Date on the postmark.

³ M. Eliade, *Întoarcerea din Rai*, Bucharest: Ed. Națională Cornei, 1934, 392 pp.; 2nd revised edition, Bucharest: Ed. Cugetarea, 1943, 419 pp.

⁴ Norman Girardot & Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Imagination and Meaning. The scholarly and literary worlds of Mircea Eliade*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1982, 214 pp.

⁵ At Mircea Eliade's request, I am sending attached hereby the photocopy of *Întoarcerea* [*din Rai*] and a copy of *Imagination and Meaning*. I wish you success with your translation. Yours, [Mac Linscott Ricketts] (in Romanian).

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Korreweg 60A
9715 AD Groningen
The Netherlands

To: Mac Linscott Ricketts
Louisburg College
Hillman Hall
Louisburg, NC 27549

Aug. 24, '983

Dear Professor Ricketts,

Please forgive me for the long delay I put to answer your kind invoice. In fact, I only returned three days ago from a rather long vacation.

I am very grateful to you both for the book edited by you and Mr. Girardot and for the photocopy of M. Eliade's novel.

I am also sending you, under separate cover, some off-prints, with the regret that, as always, those which I consider as the most interesting are not available anymore.

I hope to have an early opportunity to review *Imagination and Meaning*, perhaps together with another book on M.E. recently translated into French.⁶ I will keep you informed.

⁶ Douglas Allen, *Mircea Eliade et le phénomène religieux*, tr. from the American by Constantin N. Grigorescu, foreword by Mircea Eliade, Paris: Payot, 1982, 276 pp.

I am looking forward to hear of any material published by you on Mircea Eliade. In my turn, I will certainly do the same. I am also looking forward to read your contribution to the volumes edited by H.P. Duerr.⁷

In true respect,
I. P. Culianu

Aug 24, '83

Korreweg 60A
9715 AD Groningen
The Netherlands

D. Lee Gwathmey Ricketts
Louisburg College
Hillman Hall
Louisburg, NC 27549

Dear Professor Ricketts,

Please forgive me for the long delay I put to answer your kind advice. In fact, I only returned three days ago from a rather long vacation.

I am very grateful to you both for the books edited by you and Mr. Grandet and for the photo-copy of M. Eliade's novel.

I am also sending you, under separate cover, some off-prints, with the regret that, as always, those which I consider the most interesting are not available any more.

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In true respect,
I. P. Culianu

⁷ M.L. Ricketts, "Criterion", in: Hans Peter Duerr (ed.), *Die Mitte der Welt. Aufsätze zu Mircea Eliade*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984, pp. 193-215.

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

Louisburg College
 Founded 1787
 Louisburg, North Carolina 27549

Prof. Ioan Culianu
 Divinity School
 University of Chicago

5 May 1986

Dear Professor Culianu,

I am very sorry I was unable to come to Chicago for the memorial service for Mircea.⁸ However, I plan to come some days from now, on 17 May, to stay until 20th. Originally, I made airplane reservations for those dates, planning to see and talk with Mircea about the book I am writing,⁹ and about the *Autobiography*¹⁰ on which he was working.

⁸ Mircea Eliade passed away on 22 April. The memorial service was held on 23 April at the Rockefeller Chapel in Hyde Park.

⁹ Published two years latter. M.L. Ricketts, *Mircea Eliade, The Romanian Roots. 1907-1945*, 2 vols, Boulder: East European Monographs (distributed by Columbia University Press, New York), 1988, 1453 pp.

¹⁰ The second volume of his recollections, published in 1988, in both French and English translations. M. Eliade, *Mémoire II. 1937-1960. Les moissons du solstice*, tr. from the Romanian by Alain Paruit, Paris: Gallimard, 1988, 279 pp.; *Autobiography, II. 1937-1960. Exile's Odyssey*, tr. from the Romanian by Mac Linscott Ricketts, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1988, xii+224 pp.

Norman Girardot, who attended the service, wrote to me that you are on charge of Mircea's papers, so I will need to see you about the *Autobiography*. I have wanted to meet you anyway, so now I at least have the opportunity to do so.

When I arrive on Saturday, May 17, I will call Christinel and find out how to reach you.

Most sincerely yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts



Louisburg College
FOUNDED 1787
Louisburg, North Carolina 27549

5 May 1986

Prof Ioan Culianu
Divinity School
University of Chicago

Dear Professor Culianu,

I am very sorry I was unable to come to Chicago for the memorial service for Mircea. However I plan to come some days from now, on 17 May, to stay until the 20th. Originally, I made airplane reservations for those dates, planning to see and talk with Mircea about the book I am writing, and about the *Autobiography* on which he was working.

Norman Girardot, who attended the service, wrote to me that you are in charge of Mircea's papers, so I will need to see you about the *Autobiography*. I have wanted to meet you anyway, so now I at least have the opportunity to do so.

When I arrive on Saturday, May 17, I will call Christinel and find out how to reach you.

Most sincerely yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

I. P. Culianu
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637
The Divinity School
Swift Hall

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts
Louisburg College
Louisburg, N.C. 27549

May 9, 1986

Dear Professor Ricketts,

I am very grateful to you for your letter of May 5, 1986.

I think we talked on the phone when M. Eliade was in hospital. It is a long time since I wanted to meet you, but this is the first time in 11 years I happened to be in the USA. And then the tragedy happened, which no one expected, since Professor Eliade was certainly the same wonderful person in all respects when I arrived here, only a little depressed.

I would be very pleased to meet you in a few days. In fact, I am looking forward.

But let me tell you all I know about the *Autobiography* at the present moment, so you will decide if it's worth a trip to Chicago:

The *Autobiography* is not *quite* complete, but will be published in this form. Several parts of it belong to the papers saved from the fire in last December, which Prof. Eliade and I managed to sort out one week before he had the stroke. But the whole manuscript is in Paris, either with his step-daughter or in the Charles-Dullin apartment. Gallimard has the rights and I think – though I’m not completely sure, since I have to study this matter very carefully, together with Mrs. Eliade – that rights for an English translation should be purchased from Gallimard even if it is a direct translation from Roumanian. But, once again, I plan to study the situation in the following weeks of my stay here.

Indeed, Mr. Eliade asked me several times to take care of all new editions of his published and unpublished work, but I am not familiar with his will yet. I think indeed that I am supposed to help Mrs. Eliade doing all this.

Though, of course, I would be more than pleased to finally meet you, I am not sure whether I could help you more than that at the present moment.

The Divinity School was so generous to promise me all the help I need to sort out the Eliade papers in the next few weeks. I will be in touch with the Regenstein Library, which is supposed to take over several papers to complete the Mircea Eliade Special Collection. I will myself take over a few papers that could be of help in what I understand as being my part of the job, i.e. gathering all materials relevant to bring about editions of his unpublished work and to

improve – according to his own explicit request – all new editions of his previous published works.

When all this operation would be over, I assume that we could have a sensible talk about all this and I promise you all the help you need in finding out whatever you need and you think it could be in my possession. I intend to catalogue the documents I am going to take over to Groningen, and I will leave a copy with Mrs. Eliade and another copy (which will also be deposited with the Dean of the Divinity School¹¹) with Mr. Eliade's former secretary, Mr. Peter Chemery.

Looking forward to hearing of you, I remain, in the meantime,

Most sincerely yours,
Ioan P. Culianu

¹¹ Franklin I. Gamwell, professor of Religious Ethics, Philosophy of Religion and Theology, was Dean of the Divinity School from 1980 to 1990.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Culianu
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637
The Divinity School
Swift Hall

May 21, [1986]

Dear Professor Ricketts,

It was good to meet you.

Here a copy of my reply to Carasco / Dean
Gamwell.

I will see that your request will be answered.

Sincerely,
Culianu

[Attached the letters in *Addenda* 1 and 2]

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

Louisburg College
Louisburg, NC 27549

21 May 1986

Dear Ioan,

On the way home I have remembered several things I should have told you or discussed with you in Chicago.

First, you may not be aware of the fact that Mircea had a number of boxes of papers (and perhaps other things) stored at some place in Paris other than the apartment of Pl. Charles Dullin. Christinel can give you the address, no doubt, if you do not know it already. Both Handoca and I, when we visited Mircea in Paris, were told that these materials had been in storage there for a long time, and Mircea no longer remembered what was there. I suspect that several important unpublished manuscripts will be found there: for example *Ștefania* (part of *Viață nouă*), *Apocalips* (incomplete also), *Tinerețea lui Balzac*, and perhaps the play "Aventură spirituală" (also called "Euridice"). Probably there are other manuscripts *inedite* as well – who knows what you may find?

Second, you should know that when Handoca was in Paris last fall he photocopied some 200 letters from 1950-1954 and the text of the play "Oameni și pietre".

He sent me also a copy of the play, and I think he intends to publish the text of it in Romania next year (if not sooner).¹² The Professor also promised to send him the text of "Aventură spirituală" from Chicago thinking it was here.

I suppose you know that Handoca and C. Noica have been given access (by D-na Alexandrescu) to the boxes of materials stored in her attic: Eliade's papers and notebooks from before the War. They sent copies of some of these things to Mircea and he, in turn, gave them to me: in particular, *Romanul adolescentului miop*, *Gaudeamus*, and some of the juvenile *nuvele*.¹³ (He did not seem to be interested in them.) Handoca has sent me a number of these papers (copies of them I mean) also. I enclose a list of what I have of the unpublished works. Handoca, however, had a great many more – either the originals, or transcriptions. I think he has completed a catalogue of what he and Noica found. You will, of course, need to be in correspondence with him. He and Noica have already published a few examples from this vast treasure-hoard. Apparently, they believe that they have the right to publish anything that they found; probably the Professor gave them permission, but maybe not in writing (just as he did with me).

¹² M. Eliade, "Oameni și pietre" ["Men and stones"], ed. by Mircea Handoca, *Revista de istorie și teorie literară* (Bucharest), XXXIII, no. 3, October-December 1985, pp. 84-96; XXXIV, no. 1, January-March 1986, pp. 88-94.

¹³ Short stories (in Romanian).

Both Handoca and I have other materials you should know about. We have the Romanian texts of the published parts of the *Journal* that have appeared in French, except for two sections: 9 October 1959 to 10 March 1963, and February 1965 – May 1967. (These were "lost" by the man who translated them into French; however, a copy *might* exist somewhere in the apartment of Paris!) We also have the Romanian text for the *Autobiography*, through Chapter XXIII. Several years ago, Mircea, as an experiment, had a part of the *Journal* photocopied; several copies were made, and I was given one; however, my copy is missing about 50 pages: nos. 51-98. This is from the journal that he began just after arriving in Paris (first entry, 17 September 1945). If you happen to find these missing pages somewhere among the papers, I would like very much to have them. (I can get them later from Regenstein, of course, but it would be easier now.) I should have thought to look for them yesterday.

It was very good that we could meet; I enjoyed talking with you very much and you may be certain that I will work with you in any way I can to forward the work of the Professor we both admire so much. It was almost providential that you were in Chicago at the time of his death. How much harder it would have been for Christinel if you had not been there!

Because you expressed an interest in my dissertation,¹⁴ I am sending you the manuscript of a

¹⁴ M.L. Ricketts, *The Structure and Religious Significance of the Trickster-transformer-culture Hero in the Mythology of the North*

revised version which I made in 1969-70, hoping to have it published. This is one of the three copies that exist. Since 1971 I have not tried to keep abreast of developments in trickster studies; the subject no longer greatly interests me. I have not read the enclosed text for ten or more years, I think. Probably, today, I would find it naïve. But you are welcome to have it, and you may quote from it for any purpose, if you wish. (You are likewise free *not* to quote from it!) If you find the copy of my dissertation that I gave to the Professor, which is in two bound volumes, you may have it also. The manuscript will come in a separate package.

Let us keep in touch.

Sincerely yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Culianu
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637
The Divinity School
Swift Hall

May 27, 1986

Dear Professor Ricketts,

Enclosed you will find a photocopy of the 24th chapter of the *Autobiography* and Mrs. Eliade's check. Please notice that, until I discovered that I could change the format, I made two photocopies of the same page in order to cover the parts exceeding at the bottom. I'm sure you'll be able to read them.

Thank you very much for your letter. I'll look into that later and keep you informed.

Sincerely,
Ioan

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Culianu
The University of Chicago
The Divinity School
1025 East 58th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

June 2, 1986

Dear Mac,

It was a great and good surprise to receive your dissertation! I thank you very much!

I answered today (among other 30!) M. Handoca's letter and I'm sending you a xerox-copy of the answer. It concerns the Romanian editions. I will keep you informed.

More to come later. I will leave on June 16. My Dutch (permanent) address is: Korreweg 60A, 9715 AD Groningen, Tel. (50)-717887 / 635874/77.

Please excuse me for being so short. I'm overwhelmed by commitments. I'll take care that you will receive everything you need from Mr. Eliade's papers.

Warmest regards,
Ioan

[Attached the letter in *Addendum* 3]

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

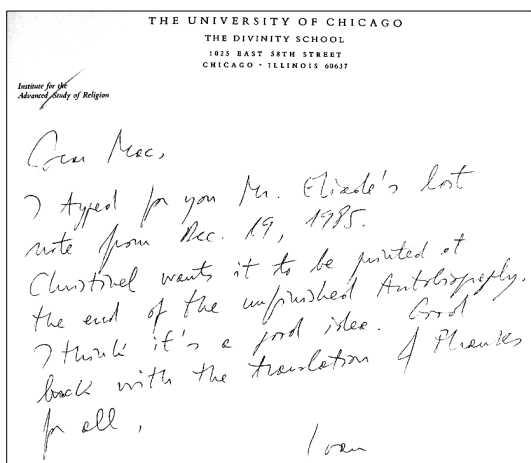
The University of Chicago
 The Divinity School
 1025 East 58th Street
 Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Mac,

I typed for you Mr. Eliade's last note from Dec[ember] 19, 1985.

Christinel wants it to be printed at the end of the unfinished *Autobiography*. I think it's a good idea. Good luck with the translation and thanks for all.

Ioan



M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

6 June 1986

Dear Ioan,

Thank you very much for the note about the fire, which is to be added to the end of the *Autobiography*. I believe Mircea did not write anything more in the *Autobiography* after the fire occurred.

Thanks also for the copy of the letter to Handoca. I'm glad you and he have communicated with each other. Thanks you also – and thanks Christinel – for the check to cover my room expenses while in Chicago. It was a very gracious gesture.

I have no news to add. Your burden of correspondence is very great, but I know you will handle it very conscientiously and expeditiously.

Drum bun,¹⁵

Mac

¹⁵ Have a good journey (in Romanian).

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

Louisburg College
Louisburg, N.C. 27549
U.S.A

15 July 1986

Dear Ioan,

I hope you have returned to a more "normal" life now in your home, with your family.

I am writing specifically about a lacuna in the typescript of Chapter XVI of the *Autobiography*. I had written long ago to the Professor, when I first received the typescript, but he did not tell me what was missing. The gap is at the bottom of the first page. Thinking that you may have the original manuscript, I am writing to you for help in supplying what is lacking. (No doubt, the French translator will have the same request.)

I believe you will have heard from Mr. John Shopp of Harper & Row about the publishing of the *Autobiography*, vol. II. I hope everything will proceed smoothly.

I have been thinking of suggesting that the "Carnet de vacanță"¹⁶ of which Mircea speaks so fondly in

¹⁶ M. Eliade, "Carnet de vacanță. Prin Italia", *Vremea* (Bucharest), IX, no. 500, 15 August 1937, p. 5; "Carnet de vacanță", II, *ibidem*, no.

Chapter IV of the *Autobiography* could be added to the English version as an appendix. I have the articles in photocopies (there are six, including the interview with Blaga¹⁷), and I could easily prepare translations. What do you think? I suggested this to the Professor himself, but he did not give me a definite answer. He asked me to send him copies of the articles, which I did, because he liked this "Summer Notebook" very much. I think the editor would agree, because the book will be a rather small volume, with only 10 chapters.

Hoping to hear from you soon, and with all good wishes...

Yours sincerely,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

The lacuna begins after this line: "...pentru că, în afară de faptul că dormeam pe..." and it ends before: "să văd și eu ce i se reproșează".

504, 12 September 1937, p. 4; "Carnet de vacanță. Heidelberg", *ibidem*, no. 508, 10 October 1937, pp. 5, 10; "Carnet de vacanță (1937). Valea Rhinului", *Universul literar* (Bucharest), XLVIII, no. 30, 29 July 1939, pp. 1, 3; "Carnet de vacanță (1937). Rhinul", *ibidem*, no. 34, 26 August 1939, p. 5.

¹⁷ M. Eliade, "Convorbiri cu Lucian Blaga", *Vremea* (Bucharest), X, no. 501, 22 August 1937, pp. 10-11.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Instituut voor Romaanse Talen
 Grote Kruisstrat 2¹
 9712 TS Groningen
 Telefoon 050-635885
 Faculteit der Letteren
 van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Ioan P. Culianu
 Korreweg 60A
 9715 AD Groningen
 The Netherlands

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts
 Louisburg N.C.

July 27, 1986

Dear Mac,

Thank you very much for your letter.

Unfortunately, though Mr. Eliade gave me two years ago to read several chapters of his *Autobiography* II, I do not have any typescript or manuscript thereof. I will address your request to Christinel, who might be able to supply an answer.

I called her today to ask her about your suggestion concerning the translation of the four articles / interviews. She agreed, but she asked to verify carefully if none of them is included in *Symbolism, the*

Sacred, the Arts, ed. by Diane Apostolos-Cappadona.¹⁸
(I think not.)

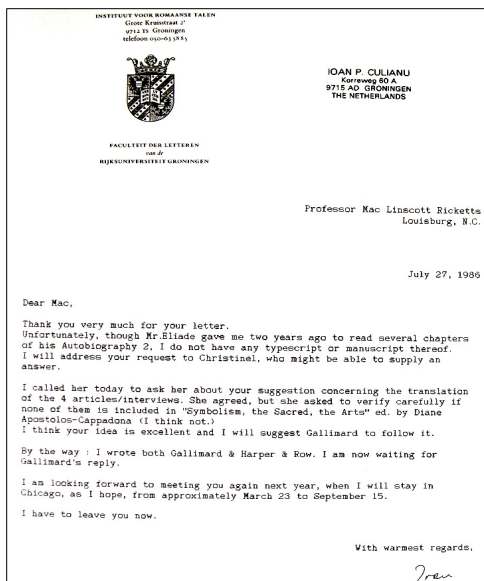
I think your idea is excellent and I will suggest Gallimard to follow it.

By the way: I wrote both Gallimard and Harper & Row. I am now waiting for Gallimard's reply.

I am looking forward to meeting you again next year, when I will stay in Chicago, as I hope, from approximately March 23 to September 15.

I have to leave you now.

With warmest regards,
Ioan



¹⁸ M. Eliade, *Symbolism, the Sacred, and the Arts*, ed. by Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, New York: Crossroad, 1985, 185 pp.

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

Louisburg, North Carolina
24 August 1986

Dear Ioan,

Thank you for your letter of 27 July which I received some time ago. I haven't much news, but tomorrow my college opens again for the fall semester, so I wanted to write before getting involved in other matters.

I have sent my translation of all the chapters of the *Autobiography* plus the five parts of "Carnet de vacanță" (1937) to Mr. Shopp at Harper & Row. He has not replied to me, but I have learned from past experience not to expect many letters from him. I believe he will correspond with you and Christinel in making the arrangements for publication. I will be quite content to share in the royalties on the same terms as were agreed upon for volume I.

I finished my own book, but it is a "monster": more than 1800 pages of typescript, some 300 of which are notes. I sent the last part of the text to the editor at Macmillan about three weeks ago, but as yet I have had no response. I fear that the book will be too long to be publishable.

In the paper *Lupta* I read about a review called *Contrapunct*, whose 2nd number has recently appeared,

and in which there is an article signed by you, plus another about Mircea Eliade.¹⁹ If possible (if you have an extra copy), could you send me these articles? What can I send to you?

I believe that Christinel will be going to Paris in about three weeks. Do you plan to meet her there? If so, I hope you will be able to gain access to the papers that are preserved in storage, "somewhere" in Paris. I believe some very valuable *inedite* manuscripts will be found in that lot of papers.

I was very happy to receive the news that you will be in Chicago again next spring and summer. I shall certainly plan to come to Chicago for a week or so during that time.

I trust you have had a pleasant and profitable summer, as have I.

Most sincerely yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

¹⁹ I.P. Culianu, "Religie și istorie" ["Religion and history"], *Contrapunct* (Köln), no. 2, 1986, p. 10; "La moartea lui Mircea Eliade" ["At Mircea Eliade's death"], *ibidem*, p. 45 (unsigned).

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities
and Social Sciences

Nederlands Instituut voor Voortgezet Wetenschappelijk

Onderzoek op het Gebied van de Mens- en

Maatschappijwetenschappen

Meyboomlaan 1.2242 PR Wassenaar

Tel. 01751-19302

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts

Louisburg College

501 North Main Street

Louisburg, N.C. 27549

September 1, 1986

Dear Mac,

Gallimard agreed to translate into French the five papers of Mr. Eliade you are now translating into English.

Would you be so good to send me a xerox-copy thereof at the address above?

With warmest regards,

Ioan P. Culianu²⁰

²⁰ Note by M.L. Ricketts: "Sent – 9.9.86 with note (not registered)". This note from 9 September is not preserved in his archive.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities
and Social Sciences

Nederlands Instituut voor Voortgezet Wetenschappelijk

Onderzoek op het Gebied van de Mens- en

Maatschappijwetenschappen

Meyboomlaan 1.2242 PR Wassenaar

Tel. 01751-19302

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts

Louisburg College

501 North Main Street

Louisburg, North Carolina 27549

U.S.A.

October 23, 1986

Dear Mac,

I had recently a talk with Christinel in Paris, and I have to inform you of the following:

1. She would appreciate if you could send her to Chicago a xerox of the English translation of the *Autobiography* II.²¹

2. We both thought that your idea of translating the "Carnete de vacanță" was excellent, but "Dayan"²²,

²¹ M. Eliade, *Autobiography*, vol. II, 1937-1960. *Exile's Odyssey*, op. cit.

²² A short-story which, at that time, was known only in French translation; M. Eliade, *Le temps d'un centenaire, suivi de Dayan*, tr. by Alain Paruit, Paris: Gallimard, 1981, pp. 142-218. The Romanian

which is a short story, would not fit into this non-fiction environment.

3. If the volume is still too thin, please let me know and I will make a choice of other Roumanian newspaper articles, which Mr. Eliade intended to gather in a volume edited by someone in Paris.²³ Please let me know how many pages you need.

I am looking forward to meeting you again, maybe next Spring.

With warmest regards,
Ioan²⁴

original will be published later, in M. Eliade, *Nuvele inedite*, ed. by M. Handoca, Bucharest: Rum-Irina, 1991, pp. 55-115.

²³ M. Eliade, *Briser le toit de la maison. La créativité et ses symboles*, ed. by Alain Paruit, Paris: Gallimard, 1986, 360 pp. See also Eliade's letter of 24 February 1984, in M. Eliade & I.P. Culianu, *Dialoguri întrerupte. Corespondență*, ed. by Tereza Culianu-Petrescu and Dan Petrescu, Iași: Polirom, 2004, p. 246.

²⁴ Note by M.L. Ricketts: "Answered 31 Oct. '86". This letter is not preserved in his archive.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities
and Social Sciences

Nederlands Instituut voor Voortgezet Wetenschappelijk

Onderzoek op het Gebied van de Mens- en

Maatschappijwetenschappen

Meyboomlaan 1.2242 PR Wassenaar

Tel. 01751-19302

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts

Louisburg College

501 North Main Street

Louisburg, North Carolina 27549

U.S.A.

Dec. 3, 1986

Dear Mac,

I am afraid I have to disturb you again concerning the *Memoirs*.

Since I moved to the address above, there are many papers I cannot trace back, among which the final note of Dec[ember] 19, 1985, that is supposed to close the book. Since you certainly have a xerox and my transcript thereof, would you be so kind to send a xerox to the French translator: Mr. Alain Paruit, 7 Avenue J.-B. Fortin, 92200 Bagneux, France.

I sent him over a xerox of the xeroxes you sent me, containing Mr. Eliade's articles that we decided to add to the book. Mr. Paruit told me that part of the

typescript is missing and, furthermore, in some of the xeroxes of the articles the right edge is missing altogether and the text cannot be completely reconstructed.

I would be very grateful to you if you were so kind to send him new xerox-copies of the whole stuff. For this you could send a bill, payable, I think, by the French publisher.

I hope you had a nice Thanksgiving's day together with your family and I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ioan Culianu²⁵

²⁵ Note by M.L. Ricketts: "I replied 12.8.86, sent the note (19 Dec '85), wrote to Paruit asking him to tell me what he needs, and told Culianu I had done so". These two letters are not preserved in his archive.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

The University of Chicago
 The Divinity School
 1025 East 58th Street
 Chicago, Illinois 60637
 Swift Hall

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts
 Louisburg College
 Louisburg, N.C.

April 15, 1987

Dear Mac

First let me tell you how good it is to be back in the U.S. and to resume our correspondence at a shorter distance than before.

I would like, on behalf of Mrs. Eliade, to make some comment on your "Preface" to the *Autobiography* II. She carefully read it, approved of it on the whole, and she has made the following observations: [...] ²⁶

I hope you are going to have no difficulty in making these small changes, as requested.

I hope to see you again before too late. In the meantime,

I remain, sincerely yours,
 Ioan Culianu

²⁶ A list of 16 minor corrections regarding mostly historical data.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637
The Divinity School
Swift Hall

Apr. 17, '87

Dear Mac

Christinel asked me to send you the news of the Universities in South America where the Eliades have been, to help you improve your preface:

Universidad Nacional de la Plata (Argentina),
doctor honoris causa

Universidad del Salvador (Buenos Aires), profesor
extraordinario de la Escuela de Estudios Orientales

Happy Easter to you and your family!

With best regards,
Ioan

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

22 April 1987

Dear Ioan,

Thank you for sending the letters (2) with corrections, changes, and additions to my "Preface" of the *Autobiography* II. I have made the changes in my text and will send a copy tomorrow to John B. Shopp of Harper & Row, San Francisco. I hope he will take immediate action. When I talked to him by phone, about three weeks ago, he seemed ready to go forward with the project and have the book available for the American Academy of Religion meeting in December.

Please reassure Christinel that the changes we made when I visited her in January will be incorporated in the book before it goes to press.²⁷

The editor at Macmillan Press has pronounced my own book on Mircea "too long", and so I will try another place soon. I believe that my only hope may be the Romanian American Academy. Other publishers want 500 pages or less – and my manuscript is 1500 pages, plus 330 of notes. Perhaps

²⁷ Christinel asked him to change certain things in both his "Preface" and translation. Apparently, they regarded Eliade's political sympathies of youth.

someday I will write a shorter book, but I do not have the *poftă*²⁸ to do so now.

For awhile I thought I might come to Chicago in May, but now I think I shall not. I must make a trip to Florida in June (family business), and then I will have to stay in Louisburg for the summer. I regret that I won't be seeing you consequently. Also, I regret being unable to go to Paris for the grand A.R.A. session that is planned for Mircea's honor and memory.²⁹

I hope the last part of *History* is "coming along" well. Also I hope you are enjoying your quarter at the Divinity School.

Please contact me immediately if I can ever be of service.

Most sincerely yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

²⁸ Appetite, desire, wish (in Romanian).

²⁹ The 12th Congress of the American-Romanian Academy of Arts and Sciences, at the University of Paris "Sorbonne", on 24-27 June 1987.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637
The Divinity School
Swift Hall

Apr. 29, '87

Dear Mac

Thank you for your letter of Apr. 22, '87. I enclose three xerox-copies of a recent correspondence between me and the professors Lanternari and Momigliano.

I did not tell Christinel anything about all this, as I would prefer to spare her any bad news. I understand that Mr. Lanternari is going to publish the diary of M. Sebastian. But I have never heard of anyone who *saw* the articles in *Buna Vestire*. Would you be so kind to confirm this?

Sincerely,
Ioan

[Attached the letters in *Addenda* 4, 5, and 6]

5 May 1987

Dear Ioan,

In response to your letter of April 29, I am sending you copies of my translations of the potentially incriminating articles Mircea wrote relative to the Legionary Movement in 1937-1938. It is unfortunate that I was unable to photocopy them, as I did several hundreds others; however, any material pertaining to the Guard was considered "unfit" to be taken from the country, and therefore I did not xerox these articles but only made English translations of them.³⁰

Handoca does not list them in his *Bibliografie*³¹ because of political conditions in Romania and because he does not want to call attention to their existence. However, it was he who told me about them initially. Dennis Doeing evidently didn't find them when he was doing his research.³²

Concerning the nefarious *Buna Vestire* article, Eliade insisted vehemently that he never wrote it, that he had refused to write an article (one of a series) on

³⁰ In the Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, in 1981.

³¹ Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade. Contribuții biobibliografice*, Bucharest: Societatea literară "Relief românesc", 1980, 240+25 pp.

³² Douglas Allen & Dennis Doeing, *Mircea Eliade. An annotated bibliography*, New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1980, 262 pp.

the subject "De ce cred în biruința Mișcării Legionare"³³, but that the editor had written one and signed his name to it. (There are other instances of this in Eliade's bibliography, in fact.) *I believe him*. The article is not in Eliade's style (when did he ever write with such a formal, wooden structure: points 1, 2, 3, etc.?). However, I believe it is based on articles Eliade had written over the years, and almost every point can be paralleled in something he did write. The reference to the Jews is not really anti-Semitic, only nationalistic.

I enclose copies of some articles in Romanian for which I do have the originals. Also, I am sending the *Toladot* article which seems to be the root of the trouble.³⁴ I corresponded for a year or two with Th. Lavi. He insisted that Eliade was a member of the Iron Guard, but offered no proof. Another person also has said that "it was known" that he was a member at the time. However, I looked in all the Guardist periodicals of that period, that were in the Biblioteca Academiei and I found no articles signed by Mircea Eliade.

Can you send me copies of Lanternari's and Nolla's articles, and your reply, please? Also, if you have published any other articles recently (especially

³³ "De ce cred în biruința Mișcării Legionare", răspunsul dlui Mircea Eliade ["Why do I believe in the victory of the Legionary Movement", the answer of Mr. Mircea Eliade], *Buna Vestire* (Bucharest), I, no. 244, 17 December 1937, pp. 1-2.

³⁴ Th. Lavi, "Dosarul Mircea Eliade" ["The Mircea Eliade file"], *Toladot. Buletinul Institutului Dr. J. Niemerover* (Jerusalem), I, no. 1, January-March 1972, pp. 21-27.

in Europe), I should like to have copies. (I have already the special *Limite* issue.³⁵)

If I can be of further assistance, do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

5 May 1987

Dear Ioan,

In response to your letter of April 29, I am sending you copies of my translations of the most potentially incriminating articles Mircea wrote relative to the Legionary Movement in 1937-38. It is unfortunate that I was unable to photocopy them, as I did several hundred others; however, any material pertaining to the Guard was considered "unfit" to be taken from the country, and therefore I did not xerox these articles but only made English translations of them.

Handoca does not list them in his *Bibliografie* because of political conditions in Romania and because he does not want to call attention to their existence. However, it was he who told me about them initially. Dennis Dosig, evidently didn't find them when he was doing his research.

Concerning the nefarious *Buna Vestire* article, Eliade insisted vehemently that he never wrote it, that he had refused to write an article (one of a series) on the subject, "De ce cred in biruinta Miscarii Legionare," but that the editor had written one and signed his name to it. (There are other instances of this in Eliade's bibliography, in fact.) I believe him. The article is not in Eliade's style (when did he ever write with such a formal, wooden structure: points 1, 2, 3, etc.?). However, I believe it is based on articles Eliade had written over the years, and almost every point can be paralleled in something he did write. The reference to the Jews is not really antisemitic, only nationalistic.

I enclose copies of some articles in Romanian for which I do have the originals. Also, I am sending the *Tolodot* article which seems to be the root of the trouble. I corresponded for a year or two with Th. Lavi. He insisted that Eliade was a member of the Iron Guard, but offered no proof. Another person also has said that "it was known" that he was a member at the time. However, I looked in all the Guardist periodicals of that period, that were in the Biblioteca Academiei and I found no articles signed by Mircea Eliade.

Can you send me copies of Lanternari's and Molli's articles, and your reply, please? Also, if you have published any other articles recently (especially in Europe), I should like to have copies. (I have already the special *LIMITE* issue.)

If I can be of further assistance, do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely yours,

Mac Linscott Ricketts
Mac Linscott Ricketts

³⁵ *Limite* (Paris), nos. 48-49, November 1986, contains a number of articles on Eliade.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

The University of Chicago
The Divinity School
1025 East 58th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Swift Hall

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts
Louisburg College
Louisburg, N.C.

May 13, 1987

Dear Mac,

I am very grateful to you for your letter of May 5.

Finally, I am in possession of the whole coveted file concerning Mr. Eliade's political sympathies in 1938-1940.

Last year I was probably too upset to carefully memorize what we had talked about this; my impression was that you had denied the existence of the *Buna Vestire* article, but you probably only confirmed my own contention that it was not written by him.

Anyway, things are not much changed and I do not feel like I should redefine my position: Mr. Eliade has never been an anti-Semite, a *member* of the Iron Guard, or a pro-Nazi. But I understand anyway that

he was closer to the I[ron] G[uard] than I might have liked to think.

I am sending you Mr. Lanternari's article. Useless to say, I think he does not know anything he's writing on, and the "baffling document" he is talking about can only be Sebastian's diary,³⁶ which reports things by hearsay and is good in a gossip newspaper. But you cannot write history based on *this*!

Chr[istinel] is going to send you a xerox-copy of the *Diary* 1978-1985 in case the U[niversity] of C[hicago] Press is signing a contract. Would you be willing to translate? Please let me know as soon as possible.

I did not tell Chr[istinel] anything about the whole Lan[ternari]-Mom[igliano] connection. She is not well enough to bear the emotion of this new attack on the memory of her late husband.

With warmest regards,
Ioan P. Culianu

³⁶ It was actually an article by Radu Ioanid (see bellow).

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

15 May 1987

Dear Ioan,

I received the Lanternari article and your letter today. Deciphering Italian is painful and tedious for me, but from what I can read, Lanternari has taken fragments from here and there and constructed a picture that is at least half-imaginary. It is undeniable that Mircea was sympathetic toward Codreanu and the Legionary ideals (above all, "omul nou" and traditional Romanian virtues), but there is no evidence that he shared the anti-Semitism of the movement. All the evidence that I have seen which would make him a *member* of the Legion is circumstantial. People *say* he was a member, but they offer no proof. (A Romanian Jew wrote to me once that he belonged to the "Răzleți" – supposedly a subsidiary group – but I know nothing of this group. Do you?) I think Eliade believed the Legionary movement was comparable to Gandhi's movement in India and Buchman's "Oxford Group Movement" (Moral Rearmament) in England – a "spiritual revolutionary" movement. Later, he realized it was not, or at least it ceased to be after the purges of 1938-1939.

I should be pleased and honored to translate a third volume of *Jurnal*, that for 1978-85. I will have the

time to do it this summer; indeed, my summer vacation has already begun. (It ends about August 20, however!) Please ask Christinel to send me a copy, and I can begin very soon.

I have heard nothing from Mr. John Shopp at Harper & Row since sending him my revised "Preface" to the *Autobiography* II. Perhaps you should call him and try to get things moving. I called him about six weeks ago, and he was very cordial; I believed he was eager to see the book in print before the American Academy of Religion meeting in December. His number, in case you do not have it, is 415-477-4400.

Most sincerely yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

The University of Chicago
 Chicago, Illinois 60637
 The Divinity School
 Swift Hall

May 20, '87

Dear Mac,

Many thanks for your nice letter of May 15.

I talked to Chr[istinel] on the phone; she has a visitor, so I will see her *next week*, make a x[erox]-copy of the diaries 1978-1985 and send it to you.

She does not have a contract with the U[niversity] of C[hicago] Press *as yet*, but it will be coming in a few weeks (or maybe months). We considered if you would undertake the translation before the contract has been signed.

You have been immensely helpful to me in completing my Eliade-file and I am very grateful. There is going to be an Eliade-panel on the next A.A.R. convention,³⁷ where some fools will try to bring this up. I hope there is going to be somebody to give a reply. Chr[istinel] does not know anything about this and I don't think she would be too upset if we should try to prevent her from getting upset.

With best regards,
 Ioan

³⁷ The annual convention of the American Academy of Religion, at Boston, on 5-8 December 1987.

4 June 1987

Dear Ioan,

I received the copy of the *Journal* for 1978-85 yesterday, and have begun to translate it. However, I already had the material for 1978 (which was, of course, included in *Fragments d'un journal* II). I have, in fact, a complete translation of all the material in vol. II of *Fragments*, made from the Romanian typescript which Mircea gave me. At one time Harper & Row was interested in publishing *all* the journal excerpts from 1970 on.

Have you any news from Mr. Shopp?

I notice at the end of your contribution to *Die Mitte der Welt* ("M[ircea] E[liade] und die blinde Schildkröte") that it was translated from English. I would like very much to have a copy of that English original, if you would be willing to send it to me. I am to be one of the participants in the American Academy of Religion session on Eliade in December, speaking on the very subject of his alleged involvement with the Legionary Movement. Ivan Strenski will be the "respondent" and Adriana Berger the other participant.

If I encounter any difficulties with the translation of the journal excerpts, I'll let you know. How much

longer will you be in this country? I believe you will be going to Paris soon for the A.R.R. session.

Most cordially, yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

4 June 1967

Dear Ioan,

I received the copy of the Journal for 1978-85 yesterday, and have begun to translate it. However, I already had the material for 1978 (which was, of course, included in Fragments d'un Journal, II). I have, in fact, a complete translation of all the material in vol. II of Fragments, made from the Romanian typescript which Mircea gave me. At one time Harper and Row was interested in it, but not now. Would the University of Chicago Press be interested in publishing all the Journal excerpts from 1970 on?

Have you any news from Mr. Shopp?

I notice at the end of your contribution to Die Mitte der Welt (M. E. und die blinde Schildkröte) that it was translated from English. I would like very much to have a copy of that English original, if you would be willing to send it to me. I am to be one of the participants in the American Academy of Religion session on Eliade in December, speaking on the very subject of his alleged involvement with the Legionary Movement. Ivan Strenski will be the "respondent" and Adriana Berger the other participant.

If I encounter any difficulties with the translation of the Journal excerpts, I'll let you know. How much longer will you be in ~~that~~ ^{this} country? I believe you will be going to Paris soon for the A.R.R. session.

Most cordially, yours,

Mac Linscott Ricketts

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

Louisburg, N.C. 2749 USA
19 July 1987

Dear Ioan,

I have finished translating and typing the *Journal Fragments* you sent me at the end of May. It amounts to 155 pages, typed. There were, however, a few lacunae in the copy I received:

There was no page 24 (July 1979)

Top of page for 10 November 1981

Top-page following 22 April and before 24 June 1982 (insert?)

Tops of these pages: 25 April 1984, 20 June 1984 (only 1-3 lines missing, I believe), 25 February 1985, 21 May 1986

I hope you have a copy of the text and can supply me what is missing, so that I don't have to bother Christinel about this.

There were two or three places where an "entry" was obviously out of place, due to having been copied from loose leaves, I presume. At those places I have taken the liberty of rearranging the order.

I have not heard any report as yet from the A.R.A. Conference in Paris. No doubt it was a grand affair. I would appreciate it very much if you could send me a program from that congress.

I hope that the University of Chicago Press will be prompt in accepting the *Journal* III for publication.³⁸

I trust you are having a productive summer.

Yours most cordially,

Mac Linscott Ricketts

Louisburg, N.C. 27549 USA
19 July 1987

Dear Ioan,

I have finished translating and typing the "Journal Fragments" you sent me at the end of May. It amounts to 155 pages, typed. There were, however, a few lacunae in the copy I received:

There was no page 24 (July 1979)
Top of page for 10 November 1981 1981
Top—Page following 22 April & before 24 June, 1982 (insert?)
Tops of these pages:

25 April 1984
20 June 1984
25 February 1985 Feb
21 May 1986

(only 1-3 lines missing,
I believe)

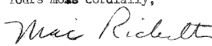
I hope you have a copy of the text and can ^{supply} ~~supply~~ me what is missing, so that I don't have to bother Christinel about this.

There were ^{two} or three places where an ^{entry} ~~entry~~ was obviously out of place, due to having been copied from loose leaves, I presume. At those places I have taken the liberty of rearranging the order.

I have not heard any report as yet from the ARA Conference in Paris. No doubt it was a grand affair. I would appreciate it very much if you could send me a program from that congress.

I hope that the University of Chicago Press will be prompt in accepting the "Journal, III" for publication. ~~publication~~ ^{publication}

I trust you are having a productive summer.

Yours most cordially,

Mac Linscott Ricketts

³⁸ It will be actually the fourth volume: M. Eliade, *Journal*, IV. 1979-1985, tr. from the Romanian by M.L. Ricketts, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1990, viii+167 pp.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

Instituut voor Romaanse Talen
 Grote Kruisstrat 2¹
 9712 TS Groningen
 Telefoon 050-635885
 Faculteit der Letteren
 van de
 Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Oct. 22, '87

Dear Mac,

When I got back to Groningen on Sept[ember] 21, I found your letter of July 19 sent to my old address (new address: P.O. Box 1722, 9701 BS Groningen, The Netherlands).

In the meantime, Christinel had told me that you had obtained information directly from her.

Thus, I'm writing you to confirm that the A.R.A. Conference was very big – maybe *too* big, and we missed you. I had a flu at the time, thus I could not attend more than the meeting I presented myself and a few other panels on which I was too.

I know other Eliade-Conferences are scheduled, but I have not been invited. In Italy somebody translated Mr. Eliade's 1937 articles and they are going to publish them. I think both of us, and R[oberto]

Scagno, should try to provide explanations, but we need a publisher to give as an opportunity.

How about your Eliade book? Are you cutting it down to more accessible dimensions?

I look forward to meeting you some time and wish you the best.

Ioan Culianu

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Ioan Culianu

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

Prof. Ioan P. Culianu
 P.O: Box 1722
 9701 BS Groningen, Netherlands

Louisburg, N.C. 2749 USA
 3 November 1987

Dear Ioan,

Glad to hear from you again after the long delay. I was not able to obtain the missing lines from the journal pages, but apparently they were not too important.

I was very sorry to learn that someone has been asked to translate the second portion of the *Journal* 1970-78 from the *French*,³⁹ because I have already made a translation of these years from the Romanian text Mircea gave me many years ago.

I obtained an English version of your "Blind Turtle" article from Dr. Lacocque.⁴⁰ I can read and understand it much better in English! It will be useful for me to have this when I go to Boston in December.

³⁹ M. Eliade, *Journal*, III. 1970-1978, tr. from the French by Teresa Lavender Fagan, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1989, 370 pp.

⁴⁰ Pierre-E. Lacocque, psychologist, clinical supervisor at the Lutheran General Hospital, Park Ridge, Illinois, a good friend of Eliade.

I am sorry that the disputed articles will be published in Italy. I only hope they will be published accurately.

The good news is that my book will be published in its entirety! The East European Monographs series of Boulder, Colorado, will do it; in fact, the proofs are supposed to be ready by December (I have 500 pages already). Maybe by next June it will be in print – in two volumes of about 600 pages each. I have a long chapter on Eliade's "spiritual nationalism" which I hope will be helpful.

Mircea Handoca says that you and Sorin Alexandrescu found some manuscripts in Paris last summer. Is this so? What did you find, exactly? We were hoping that the texts of several books and plays mentioned in the *Journal* would be there. Naturally, I want to be able to read whatever is found! I talked to Christinel on the telephone about this, but she didn't think anything very important had turned up.

Will you be coming to America next spring? I hope we can get together for consultation again before much time.

Most sincerely yours,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

P.S. What has happened to plans for a volume four of *History*?

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

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Telefoon 050-635885
Faculteit der Letteren
van de
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Nov. 13, '87

Dear Mac,

Thank you for your recent letter.

I am very happy that your book has been accepted! This will be the most important and extensive bio-bibliography on the Eliade topic.

I am also glad you will attend the A.A.R. convention in December.

I am sending you here the text of two broadcasts for the BBC (July 1987).⁴¹ This reflects my new understanding of the situation.

With best regards,
Ioan

⁴¹ "Mircea Eliade și Nae Ionescu" and "Mircea Eliade din 1937 până în 1945", published in I.P. Culianu, *Scrieri românești*, vol. II, Iași: Polirom, 2009, pp. 160-167.

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

11 December 1987

Dear Ioan,

I have returned from the session of the American Academy of Religion at Boston, at which I read a paper on Mircea's involvement with the Legion in the thirties. It was a good thing that I went, because the two other persons who presented papers believe Mircea was full member of one of the nests and that he expressed anti-Semitic statements in those years.

Of course I showed a different picture of the situation. I distributed a chapter of my book (about 65-70 pages) and presented a shorter oral communication declaring that there was no evidence that he belonged to the Guard and much evidence that he was never anti-Semitic.

However, Adriana Berger tried to show the opposite. She made quite unsupportable claims based on hearsay and circumstantial evidence. She referred to the statements of Evola and Horia Sima, as well as Lavi, etc., etc. She says she talked to Horia Sima (but the man she spoke with was Horia Stamatu – whom she maintains is the same man. Is that right? I don't think so.) I do not read Italian, but as best I can make out, Evola does not say that Eliade *belonged* to the Legion, but only that he was in the "ambiance" of

Codreanu. But what is the "Ur Group"? Adriana stated that it was a secret Guardist nest, but I believe she is wrong. (I am referring, of course, to *Il Cammino del cinabro*, pp. 139-140.)

Citing Sima's *Histoire du Mouvement légionnaire*, Berger maintained that Eliade belonged to the "Răzleți", consisting of men who wanted to keep their membership secret in case the Movement failed. Then she claimed that for three years (1934-37) Eliade wrote "camouflaged" pro-Legionary articles, thus proving his loyalty for the required three-year probationary period – and he joined officially in 1937! It is truly fantastic. And all this from someone who once was a worshipper of Eliade!

I believe the majority of the people present (about 500) were suspicious of what Berger said (and also the other speaker, Ivan Strenski, who has long been critical of Eliade). Several persons approached me afterward and wanted reassurances from me that Berger was not telling the truth. I believe that most of the people understood I had given a more honest presentation. But there are others who will believe what they want to believe.


For the time being, I don't think Berger will publish her paper (because it is still in rough draft). But when she gets the chance, I'm sure she will try to have it published. Meanwhile, what is happening in Italy?

Thank you for the several articles and talks you sent me recently; I'm glad you are getting out the world.

Please let me hear from you about the "Ur Group", and the things I asked you in my last letter (*Histoire IV*; papers found in Paris). Meanwhile, I wish you happiness in the approaching Holiday season.

[Mac Linscott Ricketts]

INSTITUUT VOOR ROMANSE TALEN
Grote Kruisstraat 2
9712 TS Groningen
telefoon 030-63183



FACULTEIT DER LETTEREN
van de
RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT GRONINGEN

Professor Mac LINSOTT RICKETTS
Louisburg College
LOUISBURG, NC 27549
USA

Jan 19, 1988

Dear Mac,

I was delighted to receive (yesterday; I have been abroad for a while) your letter of Dec 11 concerning the AAR meeting.

Adriana Berger, I think, is clinically crazy. However, she is scholarly irresponsible anyway.

Horia Sima was the chief of the Iron Guard after Codreanu's assassination in 1937. After the short-lived joint government with Ion Antonescu, he spent the WW years in a camp in Germany, being detained like practically all Iron Guardists. Including Horia Stamatu, a minor young poet who had won a prize in 1934. I wrote an article on him a few years ago. Horia Stamatu, who lives in Freiburg i. Breisgau (FR of Germany) is a picturesque character. He tried to convince me that the Iron Guard was OK; in fact, he sent me a lot of information, from which I made up that the Guard...was not OK! This led to a break with him, after which he started accusing me of being something like a defector or so. He frequently accuses persons of being spies, etc., and did this with his best friend, the poet Stefan Baciu of Hawaii. Stamatu is a typical case of paranoia. But he is not at all Horia Sima, who was well and alive, I think, a few years ago, in Madrid if I am not wrong.

Adriana's method is called paranoiac history. It is, I think, a form of post-structuralist history in which she excels.

Stamatu never claimed that M.Eliade had been a member of the Iron Guard, but he gave anybody information according to which M.E. was close to the movement and worshipped Codreanu. I doubt Adriana ever met Stamatu. She was, as you know, in charge of M.Eliade's archive; she read all the letters addressed to M.Eliade, who, being the finest possible man, made no distinction between public and private. I strongly suspect Adriana read (and misunderstood) some of the letters I had sent M.Eliade in 1977-79, two years in which I also claimed to have discovered strong analogies between M.E.'s work and the ideology of the Iron Guard. Serious study showed me that the relationship was very general, and, as you always have maintained, rests on a specific *Zeitgeist*. If Adriana had ever met Stamatu, she would not say he was Sima! I was told that she made unauthorized xeroxes of M.E.'s correspondence, for which she was denied access to his office. She might have a xerox of my letters (burnt in the 1985 fire!), which she is unable to decipher.

The Ur-Group was created in Italy by Julius Evola, and still exists. They publish esoteric books and have a publishing house in Padova, if I am not wrong. I think they held Eliade in high esteem, like Evola did. So what?

No papers of any importance have been found in Paris. *Histoire IV* is in process. Time will show which publisher is going to print it, since I may withdraw it from Payot (Direction changed).

Not really yours,

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

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 Grote Kruisstrat 2¹
 9712 TS Groningen
 Telefoon 050-635885
 Faculteit der Letteren
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 Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts
 Louisburg College
 Louisburg, N.C. 27549 USA

Jan. 19, 1988

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ago.⁴² Horia Stamatu, who lives in Freiburg im Breisgau (FR of Germany) is a picturesque character. He tried to convince me that the Iron Guard was OK; in fact, he sent me a lot of information, from which I made up that the Guard... was not OK! This led to a break with him, after which he started accusing me of being something like a defector or so. He frequently accuses persons of being spies, etc., and did this with his best friend, the poet Ștefan Baciu of Hawaii. Stamatu is a typical case of paranoia. But he is *not at all* Horia Sima, who was well and alive, I think, a few years ago, in Madrid, if I am not wrong.

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⁴² I.P. Culianu, "Some Considerations on the Works of Horia Stamatu", *International Journal of Rumanian Studies* (Amsterdam), II, nos. 3-4, 1980 [1985], pp. 123-134.

⁴³ From January to April 1984.

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No papers of any importance have been found in Paris. *Histoire IV* is in progress. Time will show which publisher is going to print it, since I may withdraw it from Payot (Direction changed).

Most cordially yours,
Ioan

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

1 February 1988

Dear Ioan,

Thank you very much for your informative letter of 19 January which I received today. But before commenting on it, I want to hasten to congratulate you on your appointment to the Divinity School faculty! I am truly pleased that this thing which I have long desired has happened: it reconfirms my faith in "powers that be" at the University of Chicago. I have heard the news from Christinel, and I almost wrote to you earlier; however, I was expecting your reply from day to day, so I waited.

Your comments and information about Adriana supplemented what I already knew. She is undoubtedly, an unstable personality. I hope she will not be successful in publishing any of her paranoid fantasies, relative to Mircea.

I had become persuaded from other sources, since writing to you that Horia Sima and Stamatu could not possibly be the same person. I remember seeing poems by Stamatu in Romanian reviews (*Vremea*, at least) when I was in Bucharest. Also, I read him frequently in *Cuvântul românesc*.

Thanks for the data on the "Ur Group"; it certainly is not what Adriana makes it seem to be in her paper (she called it a secret Legionary nest!).

I am sorry no significant papers have been found in Eliade's Parisian archives. Handoca was sure that "Aventură spirituală" had been uncovered. I believe that important papers exist; hopefully, they will be found some day.

I am glad to hear that *Histoire* IV is "in progress." Its completion is much anticipated. I suppose you know that the *Autobiography* II is to be published by the University of Chicago Press rather than Harper & Row.

Again, hearty congratulations on the appointment and I look forward to having you in this country, at Chicago, and working with you in years to come.

With all good wishes,
[Mac Linscott Ricketts]

**I. P. Culianu telephone call
to M. L. Ricketts**

Culianu called Nov[ember] 6 about plans for a book in defense of Eliade, to include all allegedly incriminating articles of 1937-38. I would translate these and write a commentary article. Wendy D[oniger] O'Fl[aherty] to be the editor. Culianu and Călinescu⁴⁴ silent editors. Ask for all critics and supporters who are knowledgeable to write articles. Wants me to help pick contributors. Weber.⁴⁵

Christinel *not* to know about it.

[memo note by Mac Linscott Ricketts, 6 November 1988]

⁴⁴ Matei Călinescu (1934-2009), professor of comparative literature at Indiana University, Bloomington.

⁴⁵ Eugen Joseph Weber (1925-2007), a Romanian-born American historian, professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

29 November 1988

Dear Ioan,

It was very good to see and talk with you in Chicago. I regret that I had so little time to stay and thus missed the reception at the Divinity School Sunday afternoon.

I enclose some articles that will be of interest to you: "I-a mâncat capul politica!",⁴⁶ "Ciudatul destin al unei scrisori a lui M[ircea] E[liade]" (by A. Berger),⁴⁷ and an excerpt from a book by Posteuță⁴⁸ which states that Eliade was not a member of the Legion. (It was this statement that I referred in Chicago, which I mistakenly ascribed to H. Sima.)

Seymour Cain's address: 2845 Arnoldson Ave., San Diego CA 92117.

⁴⁶ M. Eliade, "I-a mâncat capul politica" ["Politics ate his head"], *Îndreptar* (München), I, no. 9, August 1951, pp. 1, 3.

⁴⁷ A. Berger, "Ciudatul destin al unei scrisori a lui Mircea Eliade către Al. Mirodan" ["The strange fate of a letter of Mircea Eliade to Al. Mirodan"], *Minimum* (Tel Aviv), II, no. 18, September 1988, pp. 47-49.

⁴⁸ Vasile Posteuță (1912-1972), poet and former Legionary commander, wrote a book on Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, which was published posthumously. *Dezgroparea Căpitanului*, ed. by Al. Ronnett, Madrid: Ed. Mișcării Legionare, 1977, pp. 35-36.

Keith Hitchins (I believe) is at the University of Illinois, Urbana, in the History Department.

I will continue preparing translations of articles for the projected book, and will send them to you later. Please keep me informed of developments.

Most sincerely yours,
Mac Ricketts

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

19 January 1989

Professor Ioan P. Culianu
The Divinity School
The University of Chicago
Chicago, IL 60637

Dear Ioan,

I enclose translations of all the articles I have found that I believe would be suitable for inclusion in the proposed book. There are many more of them than I thought there would be! I will leave it up to you and the others who edit the book to decide which ones can be included and which must be excluded.

Not having heard from you since our meeting in November, I am wondering, naturally, what progress has been made toward preparing the book. Let me know what else I can do to help. (I have not undertaken to write an article, thinking that I would wait until I knew what other articles would be published in the volume.)

Now that these translations are finished, I shall return to *Huliganii*,⁴⁹ of which I have about 65% remaining to perfect and type.

⁴⁹ M. Eliade, *Huliganii*, Bucharest: Ed. Națională Ciornei, 1935; 2nd ed., 1936; 3rd ed., Bucharest: Cugetarea, 1943, 457 pp.

I trust you have been well and are enjoying your work at the Divinity School. Is Christinel well? Give her my most sincere good wishes.

Cordially,
Mac Linscott Ricketts

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

1025 EAST 58TH STREET
CHICAGO - ILLINOIS 60637

Swift Hall

June 7, 1989

Dear Mac:

Thank you for your kind letter of June 2.

The two pages "Oriente-Occidente" appeared in "La Nazione" (Florence), March 4, 1989. The literary fragment was from a volume of short stories called "The Emeralds Collection" which was in print in Italy a few months ago.

I do not know much about the ongoing publishing of M. Eliade's "Journale"; I think Brent told me that you would send him the 1945-55 years. I do not see much of him.

Everything we talked about last November, and even more than that, is completely blocked. Mrs Eliade strongly disliked my Italian article (which I sent you), in which I was largely referring to your book in order to present Mr Eliade's evolution between 1934 and 1937. As a result, nothing is going on, and in order not to make her suffer (since she obviously does not understand the situation), I even had to withdraw my "Agora" review to your book from the press. I was extremely embarrassed, but I think that was the right thing to do. As you know, Wendy was supposed to start the whole thing; yet she does not intend to take any step. By the way, Charlie Smith left Macmillan and we are left without a publisher.

Norman Girardot sent me a great article for the 4th volume of the "History". I trust the volume will be in print next year, if the last paper comes in on time.

June 3-4 Mr Eliade's ^{her}burned library was sold in Swift hall. I bought 2 boxes, Larry Sullivan bought 10 boxes of books. He was very sad. I was less so, since I had to deal with those books since the beginning... of the end.

Best regards,


Ian

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

The University of Chicago
 The Divinity School
 1025 East 58th Street
 Chicago, Illinois 60637
 Swift Hall

June 7, 1989

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⁵⁰ There were published two articles under this heading: Grazia Marchiano, "Il Maestro Eliade. Lungo viaggio con Mircea fino al cuore del mistero", and I.P. Culianu, "Così quei trecento monaci persero le loro visioni", *La Nazione* (Florence), 4 March 1989.

⁵¹ I.P. Culianu, *La collezione di smeraldi. Racconti*, tr. by Cristina Cozzi, Annalaysa Di Lernia, Marco Grampa and Maria Teresa Pini, Milan: Jaca Book, 1989; the fragment is from the short story "Il rotolo diafano", pp. 9-32.

⁵² T. David Brent, editor at the University of Chicago Press.

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Best regards,
Ioan

⁵³ I.P. Culianu, "Invito alla lettura di Mircea Eliade", *Abstracta* (Rome), no. 35, March 1989, pp. 38-49.

⁵⁴ Not published so far in the series of I.P. Culianu's works, at Nemira and later Polirom publishing houses.

⁵⁵ Charles E. Smith (1937-1997), vice-president and publisher of the Macmillan Reference Division, left the Macmillan Publishing Company after 25 years in its service, and moved to Simon & Schuster publishing house.

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

The University of Chicago
 The Divinity School
 1025 East 58th Street
 Chicago, Illinois 60637
 Swift Hall

Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts
 Louisburg College

Dec. 4, 1990

Dear Mac,

I apologize I couldn't get back to you the last time you wrote me a kind letter which I found, I think, upon my return from Massachusetts in January this year. In February I left for Italy where I taught one quarter, and I spent the summer in Massachusetts. But I used the xerox you sent me (Seymour Cain's paper on Eliade)⁵⁶ and, in the meantime, I also wrote a review article on works by and on Eliade, including your monumental volumes.⁵⁷

Unfortunately I do not have a spare copy of the *Dictionnaire des Religions* signed by Eliade and myself,

⁵⁶ S. Cain, "Mircea Eliade, the Iron Guard, and Romanian Anti-Semitism", *Midstream. A monthly Jewish review* (New York), 35, November 1989, pp. 27-31.

⁵⁷ It appeared posthumously. I.P. Culianu, "Mircea Eliade, *Journal I, II, III, IV; Autobiography* vol. 1, 2; Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Mircea Eliade: The Romanian Roots, 1907-1945*", *The Journal of Religion* (Chicago), 72, no. 1, January 1992, pp. 157-161.

which was in print this spring with the publisher Plon (8, rue Garancière, 75006 Paris). It's been doing very well so far, and was even "Great Book of the Month" September. The new edition was issued in September. You may ask a copy for review, if you wish.

I do not have *Revista scriitorilor români* 23;⁵⁸ I only have 6 and 7. I also have *Revista de istorie și teorie literară* 34 / 1986.⁵⁹

Adriana's book⁶⁰ was rejected. I haven't seen her article in *Annals of Scholarship*.⁶¹ She sent a paper to the A.A.R. conference in New Orleans,⁶² which the chair read for her. I didn't attend, but it was referred to me that she repeated what she wrote in that article. Doesn't carry any weight, according to me.

⁵⁸ It contains three articles on Eliade by Emil Cioran, Titus Bărbulescu and Ilie Olteanu.

⁵⁹ In the three issues (1, 2-3, and 4) of 1986 there are several texts by and on Mircea Eliade, including articles signed by M.L. Ricketts and I.P. Culianu.

⁶⁰ The manuscript, titled *Mircea Eliade. The inner quest of a radical traditionalist*, was accepted by the Harper & Row publishing house (New York) in November 1986, and the contract was signed in March 1987 for 7.000 copies. However the publication was delayed due to changes in company's structure. In August 1988, the editors decided that it will come out in May 1989, with a different title, in 20.000 copies.

⁶¹ A. Berger, "Fascism and religion in Romania", *Annals of Scholarship* (New York), VI, no. 4, 1989, pp. 455-465. The article was published through Robert Segal, editor of the journal and friend of A. Berger.

⁶² A. Berger, "Anti-Judaism and Anti-Historicism in Eliade's Writings", unpublished paper to the annual conference of the American Academy of Religion, New Orleans, 17-20 November 1990; an article under the same title was published in Hebrew in *Hadoar. The Jewish Histadruth of America* (New York), 70, no. 21, June 1991, pp. 14-17.

Christinel is now in hospital for a few days, to perform some analyses. Today she was very stressed. I hope there is nothing wrong with her, except that she smokes too much and drinks four pints of coffee a day. I will give her your regards when she will be able to see me.

I met Bryan Rennie indeed. He's doing good work.

It was good to hear from you. Happy Holidays and I am looking forward to meeting you at our next opportunity.

Best,
Ioan

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
THE DIVINITY SCHOOL
1025 EAST 18TH STREET
CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

Seiji Hall

Professor Mac Ricketts
Louisburg College

Dec 4, 1990

Dear Mac:

I apologize I couldn't get back to you the last time you wrote me a kind letter which I found, I think, upon my return from Massachusetts in January this year. In February I left for Italy where I taught one quarter, and I spent the summer in Massachusetts. But I used the xerox you sent me (Beynon Cain's paper on Eliade) and, in the meantime, I also wrote a review article on works by and on Eliade, including your monumental volumes.

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It was good to hear from you. Happy Holidays and I am looking forward to meeting you at our next opportunity.

Best,
Ioan

I. P. Culianu to M. L. Ricketts

INCOGNITA

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Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts

Louisburg College

Louisburg NC 27549

3/4/91

Dear Mac,

I apologize for not having gotten back to you in a while, especially after you had the kindness to send me Adriana's new mischiefs.

Here all is well. I probably told you that the *Dictionary of Religions* signed by Mr. Eliade and myself was in print in Paris last spring and did quite well (in fact, it was selected "Great Book of the Month"). It will be in print next September with Harper S[an]

F[rancisco].⁶³ Also, there is (finally!) a German edition of the IVth volume of the *History of Religious Ideas*, but it is not the world edition.⁶⁴ (Germans have their own way of doing things.) The worldwide edition has been offered to the University of Chicago Press (it was handed in to Dr. T. David Brent on Jan[uary] 29, 1991).⁶⁵

The reason I am writing you is to ask you, on Mrs. Eliade's behalf, to send me a xerox of the Roumanian original of the 2nd volume of Mr. Eliade's *Memories*. Here everything has been deposited with the Regenstein Library and Mrs. Eliade only has access to the Collection. She finds it difficult to recover the manuscripts that have been deposited there. Please send me the bill, together with the manuscript, and Mrs. Eliade will reimburse you for the expense.

As you may know, I started a new journal last year, which intends to cover the gap left by the demise (or compromise) of other journals. I am sending you a form, in case you either want to order a free sample copy or if you think the library of your college may acquire it with a substantial reduction.

With best regards,
Ioan

⁶³ I.P. Culianu, *The Eliade Guide to World Religions*, with Hillary S. Wiesner, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991, 301 pp.

⁶⁴ M. Eliade, *Geschichte der religiösen Ideen*, Band III/2. *Vom Zeitalter der Entdeckungen bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by I.P. Culianu, Freiburg i. Br., Basel & Vienna: Herder, 1991.

⁶⁵ It will never be finalised and published.

M. L. Ricketts to I. P. Culianu

13 March 1991

Dear Ioan,

I enclose a copy of the typescript of Eliade's *Amintiri*, vol. II. I believe it is the complete text. It cost me \$ 9.25 for xerox charges. The postage is extra, of course.

I am enclosing also a copy of the manuscript by Bryan Rennie, received from him two days ago. He has carefully examined the whole extensive file on Eliade at the British Foreign Office (and he made copies of the most important documents). He is eager to have the manuscript published, so I am sending it on to you. Is it suitable for your *Incognita*? If not, perhaps you can help him to have it published in another journal. I am delighted with his research and his intelligence – *and* with his writing ability.⁶⁶

I don't know about your new journal and, yes, I would like to receive a sample copy.

It is good news that volume IV of the *History of Religious Ideas* is finished. I hope for a speedy acceptance and publication at the University of Chicago Press. I'm glad to hear the *Dictionary* will be

⁶⁶ The article was published next year; Bryan S. Rennie, "The diplomatic career of Mircea Eliade: A response to Adriana Berger", *Religion* (London), XXII, no. 4, 1992, pp. 375-392.

published in this country. I ordered a copy from Plon in December, but to date have had no reply.

Is Christinel aware of the attack of Adriana Berger on Mircea? I hope she has not known about these unfortunate acts.

With all good wishes,

Mac R.

It is good news that Volume IV of the History of Religious Ideas is finished. I hope for a speedy acceptance and publication at the U. of Chicago Press. I'm glad to hear the Dictionary will be published in this country. I ordered a copy from Plon in December, but to date have had no reply.

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With all good wishes,
Mac R.

Addenda

1

I. P. Culianu to Franklin I. Gamwell

I. P. Culianu
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637
The Divinity School
Swift Hall

Faculty exchange

Professor F. I. Gamwell
Dean of the Divinity School

May 20, 1986

Dear Chris,

I received today a copy of David Carrasco's letter of May 14, 1986, in which he suggests that you should initiate the formation of an editorial group to guide the publication of Professor Eliade's unpublished work.

I can only greet Professor Carrasco's initiative and emphasize its opportunity for as far as his publications in English are concerned. I would be delighted to be a member of this committee, as David Carrasco suggested.

As far as Mr. Eliade's interests in Europe are concerned – and, as you know, most of the copyrights

of his published and unpublished works lay with European publishers – I do not think the creation of a committee would be necessary. As Mr. Eliade's literary executor, I will assist Mrs. Eliade to the best of my abilities in facing this difficult task. As I already informed you and Professor Ricketts, I will ship to Groningen all the unpublished materials left by Mr. Eliade, of which you and Mrs. Eliade will receive a list upon sending. According to the agreements I made with Mr. Meyer⁶⁷ from the Regenstein Library, these materials will be sent to the Eliade Special Collections as soon as they will be in print.

According to Mr. Eliade's will, expressed several times during the last three years, I intend to make available his notes for volume IV of his *History of Religious Ideas* and to coordinate the project. I hope to receive from the authors, among whom Professor Carrasco himself, all the assistance I need.

With best regards,
Ioan Culianu

Cc: Mrs. Eliade, Prof. Carrasco, Prof. Ricketts

⁶⁷ Daniel Meyer, librarian at the Special Collections Research Centre of the University of Chicago Library.

I. P. Culianu to Henry Pernet

I. P. Culianu
The University of Chicago
The Divinity School
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Swift Hall

Mr. Henry Pernet
Chemin de la Teinture
1141 YENS Belgium

May 21, 1986

Dear Mr. Pernet,

Professor J.M. Kitagawa has had the kindness to send me over, through Mr. Peter Chemery, your letter of April 28, 1986.⁶⁸ I think this was the best thing to do, since I believe that I might be able to give you some of the information you need concerning Mr. Eliade's intentions toward the publication of the 4th volume of the *History*.

Let me start with more general things. As you probably know, Mrs. Eliade is the general executor of Mr. Eliade's will. I am going to be appointed, by

⁶⁸ Published in Henry Pernet, *Correspondance avec Mircea Eliade*. 1961-1986, Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2012, pp. 260-261; also in Romanian translation in: Mircea Eliade - Henry Pernet, *Corespondență*, 1961-1986. *Dragul meu prieten*, ed. by Mihaela Gligor, Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2011, pp. 294-295.

proxy, as a literary executor. All the ultimate decisions will belong to Mrs. Eliade herself. My functions will be that of an adviser for as far as the publication of the unpublished materials is concerned. One of these is, of course, the above mentioned fourth volume of the *History*.

Mr. Eliade and I have been several times to visit Mr. J.-L. Pidoux-Payot. Mr. Eliade expressed all these times the formal request that, should anything happen to him before he would be able to finish this work, I would be supposed to be in charge of it. I do not intend to contradict or disobey his wish in any way. Should the need arise, which I actually do not expect, the legal proxy would emphasize the legality of the claim.

Let me tell you what the situation concerning the 4th volume is. Mr. Eliade left part of the definitive manuscript for his contribution and many notes. All these materials, I think, could largely cover his part, for as far as, under these sad circumstances, the reader might expect. As far as I am concerned, and unless Mr. Pidoux-Payot thinks otherwise, the project will go on. Of course, it has been slowed down for the last few weeks, before these things have been brought to Mrs. Eliade's attention. At the present moment, the file containing Mr. Eliade's manuscript and notes is with me.

Let me emphasize one thing: I do not intend to interfere in any way with Mr. Eliade's thinking (though he expressed the wish to have me rewrite his contribution if need be; but that I will not do), nor do I have any claim to co-authorship or things of this kind. To quote Professor's Kitagawa's own words, I only

intend to "deal with all the Eliade's aftermath very methodically".

After this, and other, jobs will be completed, all Mr. Eliade's manuscripts in my possession will be turned to the Eliade Special Collections of the Regenstein Library. A list of the unpublished manuscripts and other papers that I will ship to Groningen will be left both with Mrs. Eliade and with Prof. F.I. Gamwell, the Dean of the Divinity School, who has been requested by several people to act as an arbiter concerning Mr. Eliade's literary aftermath, I cannot think of a better arbiter!

As far as your specific quests are concerned: I will ask Mr. Chemery to send you the texts Mr. Eliade promised to you. And I will immediately write Mr. Pidoux-Payot to tell him once again that, as far as I am concerned, I am ready to follow Mr. Eliade's will and instructions and to carry on the project.

Sincerely,
I. P. Culianu

Cc: Mr. Pidoux-Payot, Prof. Ricketts, Professors Gamwell, Kitagawa, Mrs. Eliade, Mr. Chemery

I. P. Culianu to Mircea Handoca

The University of Chicago
The Divinity School
1025 East 58th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637
I. P. Culianu

Mr. Mircea Handoca
Strada Latină 4
70244 București, sect. 2, of. 9
Roumania (Overseas)

June 2, 1986

Stimate Domnule Handoca,

Tragedia ale cărei amănunte, nu mă îndoiesc, le cunoașteți, mă face să vă răspund în locul Domnului Profesor Eliade și cu o întârziere ale cărei cauze nu sunt greu de ghicit.

În privința scrisorii Dvs. din 10 aprilie:⁶⁹ voi discuta cu Dna Profesor Eliade cererile Dvs. privitoare la edițiile românești ale operelor Dlui Profesor Eliade⁷⁰ și vă voi comunica ulterior rezultatul.

Pe viitor îmi revine sarcina dificilă și delicată de a o ajuta pe Dna Eliade în editarea tuturor edițiilor operelor antume și postume ale lui Mircea Eliade. V-aș

⁶⁹ Published in *Mircea Eliade și corespondenții săi*, vol. 2, ed. by M. Handoca, Bucharest: Minerva, 1999, pp. 194-195.

⁷⁰ The *Jurnal* and the first volume of *Memorii*.

ruga să luați direct contact cu mine la adresa mea din Olanda, unde mă voi întoarce după 15 iunie: Faculteit der Letteren, Grote Kruisstraat 2, 9712 TS Groningen, Olanda, Tel. (50)-635874/77.

Cu stimă,
Ioan P. Culianu

Cc: Mrs. Eliade, Prof. Ricketts

Vittorio Lanternari to I. P. Culianu

Università degli Studi di Roma «La Sapienza»
Dipartimento di Sociologia

Roma, 5 April 1987

Dear Professor Culianu,

I was invited by the Direction of *La Critica Sociologica*⁷¹ to write an article on Eliade, in the occasion of his recent death. Actually, as a historian of religions (particularly of the so-called "primitive religions"), I knew personally professor Eliade many years ago, and I had some pleasant encounters with him.⁷² In some occasions, I also cooperated for *History*

⁷¹ Franco Ferrarotti (b. 1926), professor of sociology at the University of Rome, founder (in 1967) and director of the journal. Between 1958-1963 was member of the Italian Parliament representing *Movimento Comunità*, a liberal socialist political organisation, which had as key cultural reference the journal *Comunità* (Milan), in which Furio Jesi will publish his critical political interpretation of Eliade's work.

⁷² He approached Eliade in June 1955 requesting his support in order to publish an article in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* (Mircea Eliade Papers, box 85.13). Eliade's unpublished journal records two meetings with him, in Rome, in the company of Ernesto de Martino (11 September 1959 and 17 September 1961), as well as a letter (19 January 1961), in response to an article in which Lanternari polemicize with him (*ibidem*, box 15.6, 9, 10)

of Religions, and in the latest time for *The Encyclopaedia of Religions*.

Of course, in preparing my article I was obliged to review the literature which was published on the great historian of religions in Italy and elsewhere, in the latest times. So, I met the article written by Di Nola⁷³ and your article in reply to him.⁷⁴ I made some enquiries to ascertain the real facts concerning M. Eliade's position in the time of fascism in Rumania. As you will find in my article, I took in it an intermediate position between yours and that of professor Di Nola. This means, that I ascertained that professor Eliade was really involved in Codreanu's movement and ideology; but I did not ascertain any sure witness about his "anti-Semitism". I declared in my article that we need more data and direct witnesses in order to pronounce a definitive sentence on the subject.

Now I am sending you a copy of my article;⁷⁵ but in the same time I am obliged to announce you that in short time I am feeling to rewrite the latest portion of my article. The reason is that I have received, in the meantime, a baffling manuscript from a Rumanian writer in which the ideological position of professor Eliade during the time of Codreanu in Rumania is

⁷³ Alfonso Maria di Nola, "Mircea Eliade e l'antisemitismo", *La Rassegna mensile di Israel* (Rome), XLIII, nos. 1-2, January-February 1977, pp. 12-15.

⁷⁴ I. P. Culianu, "Mircea Eliade und die blinde Schildkröte", in: Hans Peter Duerr (ed.), *Die Mitte der Welt*, op. cit., pp. 216-243.

⁷⁵ V. Lanternari, "Ripensando a Mircea Eliade", *La critica sociologica* (Rome), no. 79, October-December 1986, pp. 67-82.

extensively documented through a number of articles written by himself in *Buna Vestire* in those times and by means of other witnesses.⁷⁶ I am bitterly obliged, at present, to declare that your state concerning the building of a "black legend" on Mircea Eliade is to be considered insubstantial. I am really sorry. I am forced to make this remark. It is a debt to the correctness of historical information. Of course, I will send you the new contribution of mine, as soon as it will be published.

With my warm greetings,
Vittorio Lanternari

via Cerretti 13
00167, Rome (Italy)

⁷⁶ Most probably the article of Radu Ioanid, "Mircea Eliade e il Fascismo", tr. by Enrica Tedeschi, *ibidem*, no. 84, January-March 1988, pp. 16-29.

I. P. Culianu to Vittorio Lanternari

The University of Chicago
The Divinity School
1025 East 58th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637
Swift Hall

Professor Vittorio Lanternari
Università di Roma
Via B. Cerretti, 13
00167 Roma, Italy

April 28, 1987

Dear Professor Lanternari,

I am grateful to you for your letter of April 5, 1987, and your off-print on M. Eliade. Professor Arnaldo Momigliano has already been so gracious as to put the latter at my disposal.

Your contention that I might be M. Eliade's "apologist" on the Divinity School of the University of Chicago is doubly erroneous. On the one hand, I am only visiting this place. My permanent appointment is on the University of Groningen (Grote Kruisstraat 2, 9712 TS Groningen), The Netherlands. On the other, I am nobody's "apologist": *Amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas*. I spent two years of research in trying to understand what was true in the allegations of Jesi⁷⁷ and Di Nola.

⁷⁷ Furio Jesi, "Cultura di destra e religione della morte", *Comunità* (Milan), XXXII, no. 179, April 1978, pp. 1-42; reprinted in his book

During this time, my relationship with M. Eliade was impaired by suspicion. After all that time, I came to the conclusion that Eliade had *never* been an anti-Semite and had never been a *member* of the Iron Guard, though ambiguities of the years 1938-39 might wrongly suggest such an affiliation. Furthermore, he was an *anti-Nazi*, for being a Salazarian. Please find enclosed my 1984 article in which I unequivocally stated all this.⁷⁸

Articles published by M. Eliade in *Buna Vestire* are not listed in any of the two complete bibliographies I have at my disposal.⁷⁹ Of course, I will revise my position *if* the materials discovered by you seem to be reliable. Needless to say, unless you can send me xerox-copies of the alleged articles in *Buna Vestire*, that neither Mr. Ricketts nor other researchers have ever been able to find, I will not abandon the stance I have taken since 1982. The article you sent me contained no solid argument whatsoever toward the hypothesis that M. Eliade has ever been a member of the Iron Guard. Furthermore, I had quoted myself the bibliography you quote and I see no reason to take seriously any contentions made by neo-fascists or neo-Ironguardists.

Professor Momigliano remarked that, unless I can prove that the article in *Buna Vestire* does not exist, my

Cultura di destra, Milan: Garzanti, 1979, pp. 11-66. Also "Un caso imbarazzante", *Tuttolibri* (Turin), V, no. 15, 21 April 1979, p. 13; "Eliade, Mircea" in *Enciclopedia Garzanti di Filosofia*, Milan: Garzanti, 1981, pp. 242-243.

⁷⁸ I.P. Culianu, "Mircea Eliade und die blinde Schildkröte", *art. cit.*

⁷⁹ See the books by Mircea Handoca, and respectively Douglas Allen and Dennis Doeing quoted above.

arguments are not scientific. This is undeniably true. But first someone should prove to me that the article *does exist*. And your article was undoubtedly unable to do so. Therefore, I do not feel like I should give any public reply to it.

I would be delighted to have more intellectual exchange with you. Therefore I am sending you a list of publications. I would be happy to send you any item you might cross on this list before returning it to me.

Sincerely,
Ioan P. Culianu
Docteur d'État ès Lettres et Sciences Humaines
Visiting Professor & Guest Lecturer
The University of Chicago

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
THE DIVINITY SCHOOL
1805 EAST 5TH STREET
CHICAGO - ILLINOIS 60607

Snijff Hall Professor Vittorio LANTERNARI
Università di Roma
Via S. Cerretti, 13
00167 ROMA Italy

April 28, 1987

Dear Professor Lanternari :


I am grateful to you for your letter of April 5, 1987, and your off-print on M. Eliade. Professor Arnaldo Momigliano has already been so gracious as to put the latter at my disposal.

Your contention that I might be M. Eliade's "apologist" on the Divinity School of the University of Chicago is doubly erroneous. On the one hand, I am only visiting this place. My permanent appointment is on the University of Groningen (Grote Kruisstraat 2, 9712 TS Groningen), The Netherlands. On the other, I am nobody's "apologist" : *Amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas*. I spent two years of research in trying to understand what was true in the allegations of Jessi and Di Nola. During this time, my relationship with M. Eliade was inspired by suspicion. After all that time, I came to the conclusion that Eliade had never been an antisemite & had never been a member of the Iron Guard, though ambiguities of the years 1938-39 might wrongly suggest such an affiliation. Furthermore, he was an anti-Nazi, for being a Salazarian. Please find enclosed my 1984 article in which I unequivocally stated all this.

Articles published by M. Eliade in "Buna Vestire" are not listed in any of the two complete bibliographies I have at my disposal. Of course, I will revise my position if the materials discovered by you seem to be reliable. Needless to say, unless you can send me xerox-copies of the alleged articles in "Buna Vestire", that neither Mr Ricketts nor other researchers have ever been able to find, I will not abandon the stance I have taken since 1982. The article you sent me contained no solid argument whatsoever toward the hypothesis that M. Eliade has ever been a member of the Iron Guard. Furthermore, I had queried myself the bibliography you quote and I see no reason to take seriously any contentions made by neo-fascists or neo-Franguardists.

Professor Momigliano remarked that, unless I can prove that the article in "Buna Vestire" does not exist, my arguments are not scientific. This is undeniably true. But first someone should prove to me that the article *does exist*. And your article was undoubtedly unable to do so. Therefore, I do not feel like I should give any public reply to it.

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Sincerely,

Ioan P. Culianu
Docteur d'État ès Lettres et Sciences Humaines
Visiting Professor & Guest Lecturer,
The University of Chicago

I. P. Culianu to Arnaldo Momigliano

The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637
The Divinity School
Swift Hall

Professor Arnaldo Momigliano
The Quadrangle Club

Faculty Exchange

April 29, 1987

Illustre Professore,

Mi permetto di inviarLe uno scambio di lettere con il professor Vittorio Lanternari.

Ovviamente, siccome non servo altro che la verità, dovette pubblicare i documenti che nessuno finora è riuscito a ritrovare, farò *amende honorable*. Ma temo che la cosa di cui parli sia il diario dello scrittore Iosif Hechter / Mihail Sebastian (che fu il migliore amico di Eliade), il quale, di nuovo, non prova nulla. Qui bisogna che si ritrovino gli articoli su *Buna Vestire*, se ci sono, e questo non spetta a me, ma a coloro che accusano Eliade d'essere stato "membro" della Guardia di Ferro. Io sono convinto del contrario, per ragioni già esposte.

Ioan P. Culianu

Docteur d'État ès Lettres et Sc[iences] Hum[aines]

(Edited with notes by Liviu Bordaș)

Mircea Eliade and the Fall into History*

Mihaela Gligor

Famous and appreciated on all meridians, Mircea Eliade – the scientist and the writer – has created an *oeuvre* characterized by a profound humanism. Historian of religions, orientalist, ethnologist, sociologist, folklorist, essayist, short story writer, novelist, dramatist, memorialist – here are just a few of the multiple sides of his activity.

In the following pages we will insist on Mircea Eliade's career as a professor of history of religions at Bucharest University.¹ Also, we will examine the political influences that shaped his youth. For Eliade this interval (1934-1938) was, as Mac Linscott Ricketts recognizes, "a period of maturation and success [...], in

* This paper was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-RU-PD-2011-3-0014. It was presented at the International Seminar *Mircea Eliade between the History of Religion and the Fall into History*, Cluj-Napoca, April 2, 2012.

¹ Between 1934 and the middle of 1938, Mircea Eliade worked as an unpaid assistant to Nae Ionescu, Professor of Metaphysics and Logic at the University of Bucharest.

his work as a writer of fiction and religious historian".²

In his first volume of theoretical reflections published after his return from India,³ Eliade wrote:

Religions, if they were many, would be the *same*; but because they are *one*, they are different. And the unity of "religions" will finally be seen when each man has his own mode of approaching God, when the Supreme Being is revealed to each one directly, without the precedent of tradition or collective experience. Only then will there be a real, collective participation in the Supreme. When each has his own mode of approach, ritual and dogma proper to his religious experience, then the unity of religions will be manifest.⁴

Eliade developed these ideas in his courses at University of Bucharest. In these and in the seminars held during that period, Eliade formed the basis of many of his later books on the history of religion, works which would bring him international acclaim after the war. Along with his literary and academic activities during this period, Eliade continued writing

² Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile românești ale lui Mircea Eliade* (Mircea Eliade. *The Romanian Roots, 1907-1945*), 2 volumes, Bucharest: Criterion Publishing, 2004, translated into Romanian by Virginia Stănescu, Mihaela Gligor, Irina Petraș, Olimpia Iacob, and Horia Ion Groza, vol. 2, chap. 18, p. 5.

³ Mircea Eliade, *Solilocvii* (*Soliloquies*), Bucharest: "Cartea cu semne", 1932; reprinted, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1991.

⁴ Mircea Eliade, *Solilocvii*, op. cit. (1991 ed.), p. 59.

regularly for periodicals in Bucharest and cultural journals from around the country, maintaining his position of leadership amongst Romania's young generation:

From this key position he continued to support the priority of the spiritual over the political and economic and, at the same time, he called upon his generation to develop its cultural creativity and its renewal, on behalf of an ardent nationalism that would become increasingly evident during these years.⁵

As Florin Țurcanu notes, Eliade's academic career begins very ambiguously in November 1933. The university did not remunerate his post as Nae Ionescu's *locum tenens*, and the latter would pay him a part of his own lecturer's salary for four and a half years. Eliade was thus further bound to his former professor, towards whom he always felt obliged.⁶

He had the responsibility of lecturing a course and a seminar. As noted in his *Memoirs*, the topic of his course was *The Subject of Evil in the History of Religion*. His seminar was entitled *Dissolution of causality in medieval Buddhist logic*. These were subjects he had long studied, and therefore the related bibliographies were a familiar ground.

⁵ Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile românești ale lui Mircea Eliade*, op. cit., vol. 2, chap. 18, p. 5.

⁶ Florin Țurcanu, *Mircea Eliade. Prizonierul istoriei*. (Mircea Eliade. *Prisoner of history*), Bucharest: Humanitas, 2005, p. 261.

Some of Eliade's ideas concerning the history of religion had already been proposed in articles published before his Indian period. In one of these, "Magie și metapsihică" ("Magic and Metapsychics") Eliade writes: "Religious experience as a form of history would demonstrate confusion between the psychic *contents* and material *exteriorization*". Furthermore he states that

[...] combining the history of religion with metaphysical research will soon become indispensable. By such means the origin and development of religious phenomena will be explained.⁷

Eliade was appreciated by his professors, especially Nae Ionescu. As result of this, Ionescu not only took him as his assistant, but, in 1938 proceeded to the Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, obviously thinking of his young protégé, with the following request:

Mr. Dean, I propose the establishment of a lectureship in the history and philosophy of religions, connected to the logic and metaphysics chair. Sincerely, Nae Ionescu.⁸

⁷ Mircea Eliade, "Magie și metapsihică" ("Magic and Metapsychics"), *Cuvântul*, III, no. 786, 17 June 1927, pp. 1-2; reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Itinerariu spiritual. Scrieri de tinerețe, 1927* (*Spiritual itinerary. Writings from Youth, 1927*), edited by Mircea Handoca, Bucharest: Humanitas, 2003, pp. 206-207.

⁸ According to the request recorded by Dora Mezdrea in *Nae Ionescu. Biografie* (*Nae Ionescu. Biography*), vol. 4, Brăila: Istros Publishing House – Museum of Brăila, 2005, pp. 195-196. See also note 25, p. 586.

In this intercession,

The philosopher had beside him some of the most distinguished academic colleagues, whose signatures were written on this request [...]: Al. Rosetti, then Al. Marcu, P.P. Panaitescu and C.C. Giurescu.⁹

Although it received support, Nae Ionescu's request was not approved, and after only a few meetings of the Faculty Council, Nae Ionescu was removed from the Department of Philosophy.

However, in November 1935, Mircea Eliade began his third year at the University as Nae Ionescu's assistant. The topic of his course for this year is uncertain; maybe it was *The Upanishads and Buddhism*, perhaps *The Religious Symbol*¹⁰. Besides the editing of some index for *Yoga*¹¹, which the editor seems to have requested at the last moment, Eliade was free of the burden of this book¹² and could work on editing the

⁹ Idem.

¹⁰ The real title of the course could have been *Introduction in Religious Phenomenology*. See C. Noica, "Yoga și autorul ei" ("Yoga and its author"), *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* (*The Journal of Royal Foundations*), February 1937, p. 203.

¹¹ Mircea Eliade, *Yoga. Essai sur le origines de la mystique indienne*, Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner and Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă „Regele Carol II”, 1936.

¹² In a letter to his friend Argintescu, from 21 April 1936, Eliade wrote: "My book [*Yoga*] is about to be printed these days. I worked as a fool for the index. I finally freed myself of a great burden". See Mircea Eliade, *Europa, Asia, America. Corespondență* (*Europe, Asia, America, Correspondence*), I, A-H, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999, p. 29.

volume on Bogdan Petriceicu-Hasdeu.¹³ He continued writing regularly for *Vremea*, of course, and in 1936 he contributed for nearly one month to *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* (*The Journal of Royal Foundations*), often speaking on Radio Bucharest.¹⁴

As he confesses in *Memoirs*,

In the autumn of 1937, I had announced a special course on religious symbolism, in which I intended especially to study the aquatic symbolism and the Cosmic Tree [...]. Such issues captivated only a small group of students, whom I got to know better during the seminars on *De docta ignorantia* and the 10th book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. I had announced them for the following year, 1938-1939, a course on myth. But I did not get to teach it.¹⁵

Besides teaching, in that period, Eliade was deeply involved in writing. To his articles published in daily magazines, he added plenty of articles about history of religions, especially during 1937-1938. In the summer of 1937, in one of his articles, he wrote:

My researches this year lead me to adopting a new method in explaining the rituals, symbols and ideas of all archaic cultures.¹⁶

¹³ B. Petriceicu-Hasdeu, *Scriseri literare, morale și politice*, Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă Regele Carol II, 1937, 2 vols.

¹⁴ Many conferences were about India: Indian literature, Indian religions, etc.

¹⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Memorii* (*Memoirs*) 1907-1960, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1997, p. 339.

¹⁶ Mircea Eliade, "Carnet de vacanță, I" ("Vacation Notebook, I"), *Vremea*, 15 August 1937.

As for political side, Eliade believed from his youth that the destiny of his generation was to cultural rather than political production. For him, politics was a barren activity, unworthy of a true intellectual. For Eliade, politics were to be left to politicians; intellectuals would have more important things to do. Concerns which were minor in 1932-1933 evolved into major concerns during the following period. We can therefore make the statement that Eliade's interest

has changed from the individual to society and nation and from the preoccupation for the development of personality towards the preoccupation for the reconstruction of national culture.¹⁷

In articles published especially in *Vremea* between 1934 and the beginning of 1938 Eliade expressed his opinions on "Românism/Romanianism" and the duties of Romanian intellectuals within society. He set the basis of a philosophy which advocated a "higher patriotism", adequate for the young generation of intellectuals of the nation.

In Eliade's vision, the young intellectual would be able to avoid politics and use his intelligence to elaborate important papers on Romanian culture. He would be capable to lead the nation towards its true greatness and would provide it a place in history. Regarding the coming revolution, it would be a

¹⁷ Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile românești ale lui Mircea Eliade*, op. cit. vol. 2, chap. 18, pp. 167-168.

spiritual transformation, not a political or economic movement, and would be carried out by the “new man”,¹⁸ spiritually renewed, and not by the politicians.

At first, Eliade deplored the fact that all previous generations of Romania’s modern intellectual history were involved in politics, and that many of those belonging to his own generation were drawn into the same vortex. “I don’t think there is a country in the world which has spent so much energy in the field of party politics,” Eliade wrote in 1935.¹⁹

¹⁸ The *new man*, as conceived by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the leader of “Archangel Michael Legion,” was he who believed in rightness and spiritual renewal, he who was ready to sacrifice his life for the country. The Legion based its actions on feelings and it declared itself, from the beginning, a Christian movement, its sign/symbol being the icon of the Archangel Michael. “The Legion is a movement of a Christian type, the first Legion’s members being, all of them without exception, believers.” Prayer, uttered at the beginning of every day, is part of the Legion’s ceremony, being considered as “a decisive element of the victory.” But this prayer is addressed not only to God but also to “the mysterious forces of the unseen world,” which Codreanu believed to be “the departed souls, the souls of our ancestors.” After they have been perfected in life in the *cuib* (nest, smallest organizational unit), the work camp, and the “Legionary family,” they will have become “new men,” and Codreanu will imitate the Christ’s scenario (the “Great Commission”) and send his Legionnaires into the world to live, to fight, to work, to suffer and to sacrifice themselves for the Romanian nation. See C.Z. Codreanu, *Pentru legionari*, Sibiu: “Totul pentru țară,” 1936.

¹⁹ Beginning with the year 1935, Mircea Eliade wrote several articles which brought him closer to the Iron Guard in which he saw, as he often said, a political movement directly connected to the spirituality of the Romanian people. For an analysis of his

Not only had the great intellectuals of the 19th century (Heliade-Rădulescu, Hasdeu, Kogălniceanu, Maiorescu, and Eminescu) developed a “political passion,” but the current occupants of the main academic chairs as well: Nicolae Iorga, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Dimitrie Gusti, Nae Ionescu, P. P. Negulescu. According to Eliade such people, many of them philosophers, “by their preoccupations and spiritual structure should keep themselves as far as possible from the contingencies of the political fights.” And now, “after a glorious and spiritual beginning, the young generation has enrolled in political struggles,” he laments²⁰.

In his writings during these years, Eliade fights with all his power to keep his generation focused on the ideal of spiritual primacy. In 1934 Eliade thought that most intellectuals were cowards because they rushed to align themselves with political parties and fashionable movements, in order to ascend:

Any time there are politic psychoses floating in the air, any time something serious happens or is expected – a revolution, a severe reform, an attempt, an essential change of the social order – the poor Romanian “intellectual” loses his mind,

political writings, see Mihaela Gligor, *Mircea Eliade. Anii tulburi: 1932-1938*, Bucharest: EuroPress Group, 2007; a book about his political involvement.

²⁰ Mircea Eliade, “Turnul de fildeș” (“The Ivory Tower”), *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 382, 31 March 1935, p. 3. Reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc. II. România în eternitate (Romanian prophetism. II. Romania in eternity)*, Bucharest: “Roza Vânturilor”, 1991, pp. 74-77.

Eliade complains. Writing towards the end of the year, he deplores the fact that

All Christian intellectuals were afraid of the successes of the "Iron Guard" – and had begun to approve it, not because they liked the agenda of "The Guard," but because they feared being suspected and prosecuted after an eventual victory.²¹

This statement is significant not only for the remark it makes about Eliade's attitude towards politics, but for what it reveals about his opinion regarding the Legionary Movement at that time. Because for Eliade, as he testifies in his *Memoirs*, the Legionary movement had "[...] the structure and vocation of a mystical sect, not a political movement".²²

We should mention that at the beginning of 1934 Mircea Eliade was still politically neutral, as witnessed by articles he published under the pseudonym Ion Plăeșu in *Credința*.²³ After one month, Eliade bursts out in an inflammatory article, in the pages of the same journal, reproaching both the right and the left:

²¹ Mircea Eliade, "De ce sunt intelectualii lași" ("Why are the intellectuals cowards"), *Criterion*, year I, no. 2, 1 November 1934, p. 2, reprinted in *Profetism românesc. II. România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 31-33.

²² Mircea Eliade, *Memorii*, op. cit., p. 352.

²³ Ion Plăeșu (Eliade's pseudonym), "Ora prezentă" ("The present hour"), *Credința*, 5 January 1934; "Împotriva dreptei și împotriva stângii" ("Against the right and the left"), *Credința*, 14 February 1934.

What we are looking for to the right or to the left I have never understood. How can we imitate Nazism that persecutes Christianity, or communism that burns cathedrals [...]. Look to the right: people beheaded in Germany, thinkers persecuted in Italy, Christian priests tortured in Germany, Jews expelled. Look the left: Christian priests put to the wall in Russia, the freedom of thinking punished by death, the hooliganism of communists in Paris.²⁴

For this very reason intellectuals should stay away from politics, Eliade considers, because their thinking is always ahead of that of ordinary politicians.

It should have been said: *creators of deeds* – as compared to “practical people,” who are but repeaters of deeds, calligraphers or robots. As “the authentic intellectual” sees beyond the quotidian, understands the game of underground forces which prepare the history of “the day after tomorrow,” and knows how to interfere in it.²⁵

In other words, true intellectuals are “history’s builders.” Certain major analysts²⁶ of the period note

²⁴ Ion Plăeșu (Mircea Eliade’s pseudonym), “Împotriva dreptei și împotriva stângii,” *Credința*, 14 February 1934.

²⁵ Mircea Eliade, “Poimăine” (“The day after tomorrow”), *Criterion*, year I, no. 1, 15 October 1934, p. 5, reprinted in *Profetism românesc. II. România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

²⁶ For more details see Florin Țurcanu, *Mircea Eliade. Prizonierul istoriei* (Mircea Eliade. Prisoner of history), Bucharest: Humanitas, 2005; Leon Volovici, *Ideologia naționalistă și „problema evreiască” în România anilor ’30* (Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of

that Eliade became closer to the Legion as a consequence of his friendship with Nae Ionescu, the ideologist of the Movement. In fact, as Eliade himself stated,

The sympathy towards the Legion was indirect, through Nae Ionescu, and it did not have any influence whatsoever, in my thinking or my writings.²⁷

Emil Cioran also highlights Nae Ionescu's role in the orientation of the young generation towards the political Right Movement:

At the beginning, Nae Ionescu was the most important character after the King. At a certain time, I don't know exactly why, he broke with the king or the king broke with him. From that moment, he had only one thought: to get revenge. That is how he started to support the Iron Guard. This enlistment was primarily a personal one and secondarily a political one. It is certain that he drew us into his personal affair, and the last of the motives of his political game was revenge.²⁸

Romanian Intellectuals in the 30s), Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995. Leon Volovici stated that "the affiliation of the new generation of intellectuals to the 'Legion's revolution' was influenced by the affiliation, beginning with 1933, of the philosopher Nae Ionescu to the Iron Guard," op. cit., p. 91.

²⁷ Mircea Eliade's letter to Ioan Petru Culianu, 17 Jan. 1978. See Ioan Petru Culianu, *Dialoguri întrerupte, Corespondență. Mircea Eliade – Ioan Petru Culianu*, Edited by Tereza Culianu-Petrescu and Dan Petrescu, Foreword by Matei Călinescu, Iași: Polirom, 2004, pp. 125-129.

²⁸ Gabriel Liiceanu, *Itinerarii ale unei vieti: E.M. Cioran (Itineraries of a life: E. M. Cioran)*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995, p. 86.

As Eliade wrote down in his autobiography, „we all, his disciples and collaborators, were siding with professor's concepts and political believes”.²⁹ In Eliade's case, his friendship with Professor Nae Ionescu led to his questioning and detention in 1938, and to his imprisonment in the camp at Miercurea Ciuc for Legionary prisoners³⁰. Through Nae Ionescu's mediation, most of the members of the young generation were drawn into the politics of the right, captivated by its spiritual and ethical side and by the powerful personality of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

As Sorin Alexandrescu has noted,

What Cioran, Noica, and to a certain extent, Eliade admired in Codreanu, was precisely the courage to live the political myths up to the end, which they, the true intellectuals could live just as ideas. The Legionnaires wanted to undertake Romania's transformation, as expressed by Cioran: by fire and sword. How could Cioran not admire them? It was natural for them to be admired also by the philosopher of the sacred and spirituality, Eliade, who saw in them the most plenary Christian achievement of the Romanian people. We call this interpretation a naivety, from today's perspective.

²⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Memorii*, op. cit., p. 340.

³⁰ As he clearly recalls in *Memorii*: "I had been followed and arrested for my friendship with Nae Ionescu and because I was a regular contributor to a newspaper which had appeared with the government's authorization". See Mircea Eliade, *Memorii*, op. cit., p. 348.

But, in their perspective, at that time, those desperados seemed to have the crazy courage to actually live the symbols.³¹

At the beginning of the year 1937, membership in the Iron Guard began to represent for Mircea Eliade the true end of his generation:

None of the revolutions before [...] developed so completely under the sign of the spiritual, as that of the Romanian youth [...]. If it succeeds until the end – if it comprises the entire Romanian community – it will be the greatest revolution of the century.³²

Just like his model, Nae Ionescu, Eliade believed that “nation is not a political instrument, but a cultural one”.³³ Politics should not be put in first place, but the State should make the progress of culture its first duty. Thus, the first duty of the state – again, in Nae Ionescu’s words – is to “allow and assist each person in creating”.³⁴ Eliade had found the same idea in the

³¹ Sorin Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul român (The Romanian paradox)*, Bucharest: Univers, 1998, p. 217.

³² Mircea Eliade, “O revoluție creștină” (“A Christian revolution”), *Buna Vestire*, year I, no. 100, 27 June 1937, p. 3.

³³ Mircea Eliade, “Cultură sau politică?” (“Culture or politics?”), *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 377, 21 February 1935, p. 3; reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc. II. România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 62-65.

³⁴ Mircea Eliade, “România în eternitate” (“Romania in eternity”), *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 409, 13 October 1935, p. 3, reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc. II. România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 127-

duty of the state at Eminescu, Iorga and Pârvan.³⁵ Although culture came first for Eliade, nationalist politic slowly crept into his writings.

Between 1934 and 1938, Eliade felt obliged to participate in history, in the “civil life of his country,” not through enlistment in party politics, but through attempts in his articles in *Vremea* and other periodicals to bring changes to the national life of Romania. His orientation towards the right was clearly preferred, perhaps because of the fact that his professor had meanwhile become associated with Codreanu.

It is very important to mention that by that time (1935-1937), Romania had been infected for approximately a century by anti-Semitism and xenophobia. After the revolution in 1848, the concepts of “country,” “people,” and “nation” set the basis for an ideology founded on the cult of native traditions and values. The peasant, with his spiritual universe, became the prototype of the Romanian. Suspicion of foreigners, justified by external dangers, was also directed upon national minorities. The regime, incapable of providing for the welfare of the country, sought scapegoats, and found it in the person of the Jew, the foreigner within, who, in the opinion of the intelligentsia and the middle class, is to blame for the

130; cf. “Reabilitarea spiritualității” (“Rehabilitation of spirituality”), *Criterion*, year II, no. 6-7, January-February 1935, p. 1.

³⁵ Mircea Eliade, “Cultură sau politică?” (“Culture or politics?”), *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 377, 21 February 1935, p. 3; reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc. II. România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 62-65.

poverty of the entire people. In this context, the Legion of the Archangel Michael had come to save Romania and make it “proud as the Holy Sun in the sky.” “Romanianism” was affirmed as the main “doctrine”, and Orthodoxy became an end in itself.

You are almost ashamed nowadays to say that you are a nationalist, that you believe in the style of your race, that you are Orthodox and believe in heroism – when you see who is shouting during meetings the same words as you do,³⁶

Eliade wrote in 1935. At that time, Eliade had realized the danger of using the term; he knew he risked being identified as a Nazi sympathizer, and a racist, but at the same time, he thought that the term deserved to be saved and rehabilitated.

It is obvious that during 1934 and 1935, Eliade did not want to be associated with the right-wing extremists. In that period, Eliade’s opinion was that

[...] any Romanian wants to consciously take part in Romania’s spiritual or social life [...] he needs to assimilate the tradition of Eminescu – [Hasdeu] – Iorga – Pârvan. Otherwise, he would be incomplete.³⁷

³⁶ Mircea Eliade, “Cum încep revoluțiile?” (“How do revolutions begin?”), *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 380, 17 March 1935, p. 3, reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Profetism românesc. II. România în eternitate*, op. cit., pp. 69-72.

³⁷ Mircea Eliade, “Criza românismului?” (“The Crisis of Romanianism?”), *Vremea*, year VIII, no. 375, 10 February 1935.

At that moment, he saw in the Legion

The fulfillment of all his hopes for the young generation, the proof that he had not been wrong in 1927, when he characterized his generation as one focused on the issue of the spiritual. If the Legion managed to win the adhesion of the entire nation – as it seemed, in 1937, it was about to do – that meant the triumph of Romanism, for which Eliade had been fighting for several years, and would mean the creation of the “new Christian man”, the achievement of Romania’s holy mission.³⁸

In his enthusiasm, Eliade had lost the sense of perspective and overlooked the mistakes from the doctrines and practices of the Legion, whom, for years he had considered a movement of the right. Almost all of Eliade’s close friends – Haig Acterian, Marieta Sadova, Gheorghe Racoveanu, Constantin Noica and others – had become “sympathizers” of the Legion at the same time he did. The exception was Mihail Sebastian, who noted this change with sadness in his journal during that period.³⁹

Although he sympathized with the doctrine of C. Z. Codreanu and knew many members of the Legion, Eliade did not enroll formally in the Movement. Neither did his role model, Nae Ionescu, who preferred to support it without becoming a member.

³⁸ Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile românești ale lui Mircea Eliade*, op. cit., vol. II, chap. 22, pp. 202-203.

³⁹ Mihail Sebastian, *Jurnal (Journal)*, 1935-1944, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1996, p. 113.

In the report found in the SRI (Romanian Information Service) Archives and quoted by Florin Țurcanu,⁴⁰ Mircea Eliade is presented as “intimate collaborator of Professor Nae Ionescu” and editor of the latter’s collection of articles entitled *Roza Vânturilor* (*The Winds Rose*).⁴¹ In his Afterword at Nae Ionescu’s book, Eliade wrote that “everything the ‘young generation’ debated during that time – ‘experience,’ ‘adventure,’ ‘Orthodoxy,’ ‘authenticity,’ ‘lived experience,’ – had its roots in the ideas of Nae Ionescu”.⁴²

As Bryan S. Rennie has noticed,

even though he was not engaged in Ionescu’s political activities, Eliade’s friendship with the philosopher and his former affiliation with *Cuvântul* sufficed to establish a connection to the right.⁴³

Eliade’s most disputed article was one he denied having written.⁴⁴ Entitled “De ce cred în biruința mișcării legionare?” (“Why I believe in the victory of

⁴⁰ Florin Țurcanu, *Mircea Eliade. Prizonierul istoriei*, op. cit., p. 338. The quote reproduced by Florin Țurcanu is taken from the SRI Archives, FD, dossier 573, f^o 15, the note of 21 March 1938.

⁴¹ Nae Ionescu, *Roza vânturilor*, edited by Mircea Eliade, 1937. Reprinted, Bucharest: “Roza Vânturilor”, 1990.

⁴² See Nae Ionescu, *Roza vânturilor*, edition from 1990, p. 431.

⁴³ Bryan S. Rennie, “The Life and Work of Mircea Eliade” in Mihaela Gligor and Mac Linscott Ricketts (eds.), *Professor Mircea Eliade. Reminiscences*, Kolkata: Codex Publishing House, 2008, pp. 170-183. This quote is taken from p. 174.

⁴⁴ As he told to Mac Linscott Ricketts in 1981. Cf. Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile românești ale lui Mircea Eliade*, op. cit.; vol. 2, chap. 22, p. 205.

the Legionary Movement”), the article was part of the series of answers to the survey taken by the semi-official Movement newspaper, *Buna Vestire*.⁴⁵ Eliade denied repeatedly that he was the author of this article. But, the pseudonymous piece comprises many statements to which Eliade subscribed at that time. The article systematically presents five reasons for which the supposed author believes in the triumph of the Legionary Movement. These are summarized at the end: “I believe in the destiny of our people; I believe in the Christian revolution of the new man; I believe in freedom, in personality, in love.”

Although important and problematic, the political episode and all its consequences did not affect Eliade’s perception as one of the greatest and most successful of Romanian authors and as important personality in the field of history of religion, to whose progress he significantly contributed. Even there are religious historians, anthropologists, and social scientists who dismiss Eliade’s works, we should mention that today there are many who take Eliade’s writings on history of religions as starting point in their analyses.

Eliade’s investigation in the field of religious phenomenology has opened the way for many anthropologists and religious historians, who acknowledge their debt to Professor Eliade. And I

⁴⁵ “De ce cred în biruința Mișcării Legionare?” (“Why I believe in the victory of the Legionary Movement?”), an investigation in *Buna Vestire*, 17 December 1937. There answered the investigation, among others, professor Ion Găvănescul, on 9 December 1937 and dr. Corneliu Șumuleanu, on 14 December 1937.

refer especially to those who were his students and collaborators in Chicago, during the last 30 years of his life and career. Douglas Allen speaks of Eliade as “impressive, but also flawed, human being”. As seen by Douglas Allen, Eliade was “a frenetic person, full of nervous energy, dissatisfaction, and melancholy”. As a reply to the recent years’ accusations that Eliade was “anti-Semite”, the “Jew” Allen, who has spent many years around Eliade, says:

What is remarkable about my encounters with Eliade is that his warm, generous, and supportive relations with me, as with many of his other individual Jewish colleagues and friends, never exhibited the usual manifestations of anti-Semitism or personal hostility.⁴⁶

Many books about Eliade’s political past have been written in the last years. Among them, works in French of Daniel Dubuisson,⁴⁷ and Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine⁴⁸ are particularly critical in this respect. Another works of Ivan Strenski, Adriana Berger, and Leon Volovici raised specific questions: “had Eliade been a supporter of the Legion of the Archangel

⁴⁶ Douglas Allen, “Encounters with Mircea Eliade” in Mihaela Gligor and Mac Linscott Ricketts (eds.), *Professor Mircea Eliade. Reminiscences*, op. cit., pp. 17-30. This quote is taken from p. 29.

⁴⁷ Daniel Dubuisson, *Mythologies du XXe Siècle (Dumézil, Lévi-Strauss, Eliade)*, Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1993.

⁴⁸ Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, *Cioran, Eliade, Ionesco: L’oubli du fascisme*, Paris: PUF, 2002.

Michael (The Iron Guard)?" "Had Eliade been, and did he remain, anti-Semitic?"⁴⁹

Eliade's former students and collaborators were surprised by his past, but Eliade was not the only great figure that was trapped into politics. Contemporary with him and great scholars were Martin Heidegger, Carl Jung, Paul de Man, Joseph Campbell, and so on. As Norman Girardot considers,

Thus in all that has been written about Eliade's Romanian past, there has appeared to be little that was damning in the "smoking gun" way of de Man's wartime writings. "If it doesn't fit, then we must acquit" comes to mind, but I must admit that such a rhyming defense is not very convincing or comforting. Nevertheless, whatever the exact nature and extent of Eliade's involvement with ultra-nationalism in Romania in the 1930s, we should allow for the probability that his political and religious views evolved throughout his later life as a scholar in

⁴⁹ See especially: A. Berger, "Fascism and Religion in Romania," *The Annals of Scholarship* no. 6, 1989: 455-65; I. Strenski, *Four Theories of Myth in the Twentieth Century*, London: Macmillan, 1989. For contextualizing discussion of these accusations see Bryan S. Rennie, *Reconstructing Eliade, Making Sense of Religion*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996; Nancy Harrowitz, *Tainted Greatness: Antisemitism and Cultural Heroes*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994; and Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 30s*, New York: Pergamon Press, 1991. See also, Mircea Eliade, *Jurnalul portughez (The Portugal Journal)*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006.

exile in Paris and Chicago.⁵⁰

Also Mac Linscott Ricketts considers, “there is no doubt that Mircea Eliade tried to conceal his past, fearing what its revelation would mean for his career”.⁵¹ Although he wrote some political articles in his youth, his life and especially his work should be evaluated on other bases.

More than that, Mircea Eliade’s *Journal* is not published completely, and every year new details about his life come out. Until we’ll have all the cards on the table, the only thing we can do is to try to understand his past and his decisions. One thing is clear: we need to understand his life in order to understand his writings, because both are connected in many mysterious ways.

⁵⁰ Norman Girardot, “It Does Not Die: Personal Reflections on the End of Time of Mircea Eliade” in Mihaela Gligor and Mac Linscott Ricketts (eds.), *Professor Mircea Eliade. Reminiscences*, op. cit., pp. 71-100. This quote is taken from p. 95.

⁵¹ Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Former Friends and Forgotten Facts*, Norcross Georgia: Criterion Publishing, 2003, p. 270.

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As a historian of religions, Pernet served as an expert at the University of Lausanne, as well as at the Swiss National Foundation for Scientific Research for a program on "Cultural pluralism and national identity." He assisted Mircea Eliade in the preparation of some of his works in French, and edited a series of books on history of religions for the Editions Labor et Fides in Geneva.

Besides his book on *Ritual Masks: Deceptions and Revelations*, Henry Pernet has published a number of scholarly articles on masked rituals, in French and in English, including the entry "Masks" in the new edition of the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. His 25-year correspondence with Mircea Eliade was recently published in Romanian and in French.

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Professor Emeritus Ricketts holds three post-graduate degrees: a Master's in Theology degree Emory University (1954), a Master's in Divinity from the University of Chicago (1962), and a Doctorate in Philosophy from Chicago (1964). He taught history of religions at Duke University for five years, and a variety of religion courses for nearly twenty-five years at Louisburg College, in North Carolina.

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