

## Ieremia to Eliade 1899: Notes and Queries

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I. In 1897, Lt. Gheorghe Ieremia (1868-1951) petitioned to have his surname changed from Ieremia to Eliade. This change would have been of little or no interest if Gheorghe Eliade, *né* Ieremia, had not been the father of Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), the internationally-renowned historian of religion and Romanian polymath.

The change of his father's name has been generally known to Eliade biographers and bibliographers on the basis of notices published in official sources such as the "Monitorul Óstei"<sup>1</sup>. The purposes of this paper are: 1) to publish the original documents officially ratifying the Eliade name change, found in the archives of the Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri; and 2) to discuss the reasons given for and the issues raised by and connected with this change.

II. The two documents published here are fairly straightforward; they are published below in the Appendix. The first is a report from the Minister of Justice, C. G. Dissescu, Nr. 8552, dated June 14, 1899, which approved the petition of Lt. Gheorghe Ieremia, dated July 8, 1897, to change his patronymic from "Ieremia" to "Eliade" on the basis of Article 8 on the law on names.<sup>2</sup>

The minister reported that he had ordered an investigation of the proposed change and found nothing to oppose it. In accordance with the law, Article 9, the proposed change was published six times in the "Monitorul Oficial" and several newspapers. No protests were received. Accordingly, the minister was of the opinion that the petition should be approved and submitted it to the Council of Ministers for its ratification on the basis of Article 12 of the law on names.

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<sup>1</sup> "Monitorul Óstei", nr. 57, December 24, 1899 OS, reproduced in Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade: o biografie ilustrată*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 2004, p. 41. It had previously been published in the MOF, nr. 78 for 1899. Curiously, the family name is erroneously given here as "Eremia" instead of "Ieremia". Such variations were common for the era, e.g. "Eliade" was also sometimes spelled "Eliad" and "Eliadescu"; "Ieremia" also occasionally appears as "Irimia". See Constantin Popescu-Cadem, *Mircea Eliade. Completări și rectificări biografice*, in RITL, vol. 33 (1984), nr. 1, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> ANIC, fond Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri, dosar nr. 33/1899, f. 227. For the legal issues involved, see Liviu Bordaș, *Conflictul generațiilor în România interbelică. Mircea Eliade și tatăl său*, in RITL, vol. 44 (2007), p. 39. He dates the petition as "toward the end of 1898", which is a discrepancy with the "1897" in the report.

The second document is the Journal of the Council of Ministers meeting of June 30, 1899.<sup>3</sup> Having received the report from the Minister of Justice, and in light of the fulfillment of the terms of the law on names, Articles 8 and 9, and on the basis of Article 12, the Council of Ministers approved the change of name from “Jeremia” to “Eliade” and ordered it published in the “Monitorul Oficial”. The petitioner would now be able to request that various government record offices make the appropriate changes. The Jurnal was signed by George Gr. Cantacuzino, the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; General C. Manu, Minister of Finance; Take Ionescu, Minister of Religion and Public Instruction; N. Fleva, Minister of Agriculture, Domains, Industry, and Commerce; Dr. C. Istrate, Minister of Public Works; and C. G. Dissescu, Minister of Justice.<sup>4</sup>

Following all of this, the Minister of War had to issue an order (Nr. 9.929, November 26, 1899), ratifying the change as well.<sup>5</sup> The new name was also adopted by Gheorghe’s younger brother Constantin (“Costică”), but not the youngest of the three, Pavel.<sup>6</sup>

Why was such a complicated and lengthy process necessary for such an apparently simple and uncontested matter? It was all because in 1895 a “Law on Names”, Nr. 1248 was enacted, which “transformed the area of names into a state regulated and protected property.”<sup>7</sup> “Historic” names were protected by the law. Among other things, this protected the “brand” of famous or rich families.

**III.** Why do people change their names? Numerous ethnic, political, and personal reasons are possible.<sup>8</sup> Generally speaking, such changes were unusual, at least before 1945, as witness the fact that in Romania it required approval at the very top of the government by the Council of Ministers.

Why did the Jeremia brothers change their surname? This turns out to be a more speculative task than one would imagine. It is possible that the original petition, referred to in the Ministry of Justice report, might have stated a reason or reasons. A search of the Ministry of Justice archives would be in order. Baring new information from that source, here are some of the explanations that have subsequently emerged.

First and foremost, we have explanations provided by Mircea Eliade himself.<sup>9</sup> He writes in his *Autobiography*:

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<sup>3</sup> ANIC, fond Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri, dosar nr. 33/1899, f. 228.

<sup>4</sup> Mioara Tudorică and Ioana Burlacu, *Guvernele României între anii 1866-1945. Liste de miniștri*, in RA, vol. 32 (1970), p. 437. Not present was General Iacob Lahovary, Minister of War.

<sup>5</sup> „Monitorul Ōstei”, 1899, in Mircea Handoca, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Autobiography*, volume I, 1907-1937, Journey East, Journey West, translated by Mac Linscott Ricketts, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1981, p. 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> Liviu Bordaș, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>8</sup> A sample of some of the reasons may be found at [www.deedpoll.org.uk/WhyDoPeopleChangeTheirName.html](http://www.deedpoll.org.uk/WhyDoPeopleChangeTheirName.html); [www.exploreancestry.co.uk/how-surnames-change-over-time.html](http://www.exploreancestry.co.uk/how-surnames-change-over-time.html); and [www.legalzoom.com/tips-trends/lifestyle/top-10-reasons-people-change](http://www.legalzoom.com/tips-trends/lifestyle/top-10-reasons-people-change). All accessed June 21, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> In passing, it is worth noting that Mircea Eliade’s birth certificate lists him as “Gheorghe-Mircea Eliad” (Constantin Popescu-Cadem, *op. cit.*, p. 145). Liviu Bordaș, *op. cit.*, p. 38,

My father was a Moldavian from Tecuci.<sup>10</sup> Born Ieremia, he changed his name to Eliade. His French-Romanian dictionary, which I carried throughout lycée, was signed ‘Gheorghe Ieremia’... I never knew for certain why Father and Uncle Costică had changed their names from Ieremia to Eliade, nor why the other brother insisted on remaining Pavel Ieremia. My father said that they did it out of admiration for the writer Eliade-Rădulescu. I was quite young when I stayed for the last time with my paternal grandparents at their home in Tecuci, and it never occurred to me to ask them what they thought of the change.<sup>11</sup>

Why Ion Heliade Rădulescu?<sup>12</sup> Though a well-known personality, he was a terribly controversial, polarizing, maddeningly contradictory Muntenian literary and political figure of the 19th century, influential in the Romanian “awakening” that eventually led to the emergence of the Romanian Kingdom, but his attraction for two career military men from Moldova is obscure.<sup>13</sup>

Another suggestion was made by Eliade in 1978. There he argues that his father found it rather tiresome being made fun of in school for having a name – Jeremiah – that was synonymous with laziness and indecisiveness. He decided that when he became a major he would change it.<sup>14</sup> It is true that

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mentions this and attributes the dropping of “Gheorghe” to Eliade’s parents who called him “Mircea”. It is not uncommon for parents to use a child’s second name when its first name is the same as that of one of the parents. Popescu-Cadem also mentions that the birth was registered by one of his mother’s uncles, which raises the question of where Gheorghe Eliade was when Mircea was born. Bordaș provides evidence that the father was stationed in București between March 1, 1906 and June 15, 1907, p. 47. Was he involved in the repression of the 1907 peasant uprising?

<sup>10</sup> Actually, he was born in a village of less than 2,000 inhabitants some 40 kilometers northwest of Tecuci called Podu Turcului (Liviu Bordaș, *op. cit.*, p. 44). Tecuci, with a population of 13,400 in 1899, was the county seat of the județ of the same name. Geographical information in this paper is taken tacitly from George Ioan Lahovari, C. I. Brătianu, and Grigore G. Tocilescu (eds.), *Marele dicționar geografic al României*, four volumes, București, J. V. Socecu, 1898-1902.

<sup>11</sup> Mircea Eliade, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 4. Mircea Handoca, *Viața lui Mircea Eliade*, second edition, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 2000, p. 7, accepts this view.

<sup>12</sup> His name also presents a number of ambiguities. How did Ion Rădulescu become Ion Heliade Rădulescu? Was it “Eliade” or “Heliade”? Hyphenated or not? George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române dela origini până în prezent*, București, Editura Fundația Regală pentru Literatură și Artă, 1941, p. 129, tells us he was given the name “Eliade” while attending the Școala Grecească at Schitu Măgureanu based on his father’s name “Ilie”. Călinescu makes the point that Heliade hated his Greek teachers because they held themselves to be greatly superior to Romanians, which would seem to invalidate the idea that “Eliade” had anything to do with Greece (Hellas) or Greeks as such. According to Paul Cornea (ed.), *I. Heliade Rădulescu*, București, Editura Eminescu, 1980, p. 64, prior to 1848, the writer used “Eliade”; after 1848 “Heliade” was his preferred form. The usual modern usage is Ion Heliade Rădulescu.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Cornea writes that “Few people were more horribly slandered in their lifetimes. And however much Heliade tried to explain himself (a goodly part of his work was of a memorialistic nature written with a justificatory purpose) he was not always convincing and his reputation remained because of this prejudiced.” Paul Cornea, *I. Heliade Rădulescu în conștiința criticii românești*, in idem, *I. Heliade Rădulescu*, 1980, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Încercarea labirintului. Convorbiri cu Claude-Henri Rocquet*, traducere de Doina Cornea, București, Editura Humanitas, 2007, p. 13.

Heliade Rădulescu was a fiery-tempered, cantankerous Muntenian, with a reputation for not mincing words. Perhaps Gheorghe Ieremia hoped to re-invent himself as a leader, a take charge kind of guy. Perhaps changing his name would help advance his (and his brother's) military careers.

In 1984, Constantin Popescu-Cadem published an article based on scouring various archives that brought a number of corrections and clarifications to Eliade's early biography. He argues that the two brothers pure and simple derived their new name from their father's name, which was Ilie.<sup>15</sup>

Mac Linscott Ricketts, whose massive biography of Mircea Eliade leaves practically no stone unturned, does not take this any further. His account is a synthesis of the two Eliade accounts and that of Popescu-Cadem.<sup>16</sup>

In 2003, Florin Țurcanu's magisterial *Mircea Eliade. Le prisonnier de l'histoire*<sup>17</sup> appeared in France. A slightly expanded Romanian edition soon followed.<sup>18</sup> Țurcanu argues that "Eliade" is a Romanian form of a Greek name. He thinks it odd that Mircea Eliade passed over the name change rather casually, and points out that the younger Eliade is, in fact, the only known source for the "they admired Heliade Rădulescu" hypothesis.

Țurcanu speculates that "The choice of a fairly uncommon name<sup>19</sup> with a prestigious resonance and an essentially urban air might be explained by the wish of two brothers who wanted to blur the provincial origins and peasant ascendance of their family," and who wanted to climb the social ladder. This was not atypical for late 19th century Romania.<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, in 2007, Liviu Bordaș, published a heavily documented article that focussed on the generational conflict between Mircea Eliade and his father and shed further light on the name change.<sup>21</sup> The piece begins with a discussion of name changes in general and asks the question: "what is hidden and what is revealed" in the name change of Mircea Eliade's father. He points out that Heliade Rădulescu was still a figure that excited a lot of animosity, so much so that in 1898, Heliade's "most-faithful disciple", N. B. Locusteanu, found it imperative to publish the polemic volume *Ion Heliade și detractorii săi*. However, Bordaș seems to believe that the Ieremia brothers were indeed influenced in their choice by a patriotic admiration for a man whose "name was

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<sup>15</sup> Constantin Popescu-Cadem, *op. cit.*, p. 145-146.

<sup>16</sup> Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Mircea Eliade. The Romanian Roots, 1907-1945*, two volumes, Boulder CO, East European Monographs, vol. 1, 1988, p. 10 and p. 1218, note 5.

<sup>17</sup> Paris, Édition La Découverte, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Florin Țurcanu, *Mircea Eliade: prizonierul istoriei*, București, Editura Humanitas, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Apart from Heliade Rădulescu, the only other person of note with this name was Pompiliu Eliade (1869-1914), the cultural historian whose *De l'influence française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie. Les Origines made a big splash in 1898-1899*. See Liviu Bordaș, *op. cit.*, p. 39, and Al. Duțu, *Prefață*, in Pompiliu Eliade, *Influența franceză asupra spiritului public în România. Originele*, traducere de Aurelia Creția, București, Editura Univers, 1982, p. V-XXII.

<sup>20</sup> Florin Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 31-33.

<sup>21</sup> Liviu Bordaș, *op. cit.*, p. 37-64.

considered an agenda for modern Romanian culture,<sup>22</sup> but no evidence is presented for this other than inference.

Bordaș suggests that an appropriate name was important for budding military men, which he strengthens with an *apropos* quotation from Heliade Rădulescu: “Where have you seen a cavalier with a commonplace name?”<sup>23</sup> Heliade goes on: “Cavaliers need to have prestige” and indicates that adding Heliade to his name turned out to be a very effective strategy, much more so than remaining a “simple Ion or Rădulescu.”<sup>24</sup> He concludes by agreeing with Eliade’s 1978 explanation concerning the slang meaning of “Jeremia”, though he thinks the proverbial meaning is more along the lines of being a synonym for someone foolish or awkward.<sup>25</sup>

Though the social-climber explanation, suggested by several scholars above, is speculative, there is considerable good, but not overwhelming, evidence for it. Gheorghe Eliade was a military man who seems to have leveraged his career<sup>26</sup> to marry into a prosperous București family descended from a Southern Muntenian innkeeper that had moved to the capital and made good.<sup>27</sup> His mother, Ioana V. Stoian (“Jeana”, 1884-1974), was born in București. A marker of her own parents’ wealth and status was an education at the fashionable and prestigious Notre-Dame-de-Sion school.<sup>28</sup> When she and Gheorghe were married in 1904, she was just 20 years old, while he was 36.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37. This is one reason why confirming the date of the original petition as 1897 would be useful since it would have come before Locusteanu stirred up the hornet’s nest in 1898, as well as prior to the “other” Eliade’s book was published in the same year.

<sup>23</sup> The word translated here as “commonplace” could also have the meaning “vulgar”.

<sup>24</sup> Liviu Bordaș, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40. When his father died in 1951, Eliade recalled that his father wanted to come across as firm and unbending, but was not. Unpublished memoirs cited in Mircea Handoca, *Mircea Eliade: o biografie ilustrată*, p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> He had been posted to București in 1899-1901 to the Institutul Geografic al Armatei, but did not succeed in this promotion. He was transferred to the Mihai Viteazul Regiment and then moved to the 9th Regiment at Râmnicu Sărat in 1904, returned to București in 1906, before being transferred back to Râmnicu Sărat in June of 1907. Liviu Bordaș, *op. cit.*, p. 44-49, based on a close analysis of his military records. His evaluations prior to 1899 were relatively positive, but starting with his assignment to the Institutul Geografic, were increasingly negative when not mediocre. So much for reinventing himself. It seems clear that he gave up on any promotions other than through seniority, becoming a captain only just before the war. However, his brother, Eliade’s uncle, eventually became a general, p. 49. See also Cornelia Ghinea, *Militari din familia lui Mircea Eliade*, in „Argeș. Revistă Lunară de Cultură”, martie 2005, nr. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 16-17. “No one knew exactly where my [maternal] great grandfather had come from. From Dunărea, said Uncle Mitache. From the Olt, held one of the aunts, and she told me even the name of the village: Arvirești. As proof she reminded me that my mother’s name was Ioana Arvira.” However, there is no “Arvirești” in either the *Marele dicționar geografic* or the comprehensive Ion Cămărășescu (ed.), *Ghidul drumurilor din România*, București, Cultura Națională, 1928. Constantin Popescu-Cadem, *op. cit.*, p. 146, argues that this account is completely without foundation. In *Încercarea labirintului...*, p. 14-15, Eliade specified that the mother was from “an Oltenian family” and that his parents met in București.

<sup>28</sup> Florin Țurcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

She also brought with her a very substantial dowry in cash, investments, and a house.<sup>29</sup>

Eliade's parents were certainly concerned with their place in society. This is confirmed by his parents' reaction to his decision in 1933 to marry Nina Mareş. "It seemed... catastrophic in the eyes of my family. My parents had dreamed of someone entirely different from a telephone company secretary, a divorcée with a little girl in an obscure boarding school." His brother, Nicu, had earlier "married a poor girl, and... I was their last hope."<sup>30</sup>

Against that, Eliade emphasized in his *Autobiography* that he was a product of a family of Moldovan "răzeşi" (independent free peasants that had resisted feudalism) on one side, and an entrepreneurial Muntenian family on the other: "I was proud of the fact that I was only three generations removed from peasants – that although born and bred in a city, I was still so close to the 'soul of the country'."<sup>31</sup> This doesn't reflect a parvenu or *ciocoi* attitude, though, of course, the younger Eliade already was part of the lower middle class (albeit in somewhat reduced straits after the war), while his father had started out as a peasant.<sup>32</sup>

On another front, Mircea Eliade's parents, especially his father, had great hopes that their two sons would become great musicians. Following the war, he even hired a hall for a piano concert by Mircea. This could be taken as another social climbing aspiration... or just a manifestation of normal parental optimism for their children.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, in terms of aspirations, mention could be made of a failed attempt by Gheorghe Eliade at entrepreneurial activity. In 1914, he was so impressed by a vacation that the Eliade family took at the Dobrogean mud bath spa town of Techirghiol

that he decided on the spot that we much have our own villa, where we could spend the whole summer. In that same year he found and bought a lot, up on the hill and when we returned the next summer, the beginning of a villa was waiting for us: two rooms with a veranda, and a kitchen in the back yard.

It turned out that the hill location made building as well as digging a well very expensive and the hike up the hill was

quite a walk when carrying luggage, packages, and boxes!... But my father's enterprising spirit did not stop here. He calculated that if he built another suite of rooms, he could rent them during the summer. And after he had recovered the cost

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<sup>29</sup> Constantin Popescu-Cadem, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 265. Nina Mareş was also considerably older, being born in 1891. See Constantin Popescu-Cadem, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>31</sup> Mircea Eliade, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 16, the phrase is "talpa țării".

<sup>32</sup> Idem, *Încercarea labirintului*, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> Idem, *Autobiography*, vol. I, p. 22-24.

of building them, from the extra money he could accumulate a dowry for our sister, Cornelia... The next year 'Villa Cornelia' had come into being.

Alas, when Romania entered the war in 1916, Bulgarian troops occupied the area and when the Eliades returned to Techirghiol in summer 1919, "we found only the walls."<sup>34</sup> This denouement was not entirely Gheorghe Eliade's fault and certainly one can empathize with his desire to provide for his daughter. On the other hand, the villa project was, at least in part, another unfortunate example of social over-reach.

**IV.** Several questions remain from what has been said above that could use further investigation:

1. What was the date of the petition submitted by Gheorghe Eliade for his name change? The report published in the Appendix says July 9, 1897, but Bordaș has December 1898. The earlier date would undermine a number of inferential arguments usually accepted.

2. Is the text of the original petition available in the Ministry of Justice archives? This might provide important information about the case made by the Jeremia brothers.

3. Is there any direct – other than inferential – evidence of the claim made by Mircea Eliade that the Jeremia brothers' request for a name change was based on their admiration for Ion Heliade Rădulescu? Perhaps the original petition might shed light on this.

4. When and how did Eliade's parents first meet?

5. Where did his mother's family come from exactly? This is variously described by Eliade as Muntenia, the Danube region, and Oltenia, but these assertions are vague and don't bear up under closer examination. This is not surprising given that Eliade began working on these late in life and in exile, where he did not have access to many resources about his parents or his youth.

6. Was Mircea Eliade's birth name "Gheorghe-Mircea" or was this just a scribal error?

7. Gheorghe Eliade was apparently not present at Mircea Eliade's birth, since the birth was registered by another family member. Bordaș's research shows that he was stationed in București at the time. Where was he on February 28, 1907?

8. What did Gheorghe Eliade do during the peasant uprising in 1907?

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 12-14.

**APPENDIX**  
**Two Documents on Gheorghe Eliades' Name Change**

**1. 1899 June 30, Bucharest. The Minister of Justice to the Council of Ministers.**

No. 6. Ședința dela 30 Iunie 1899

—227—

Domnilor Miniștri,

Domnul Locotenent Gheorghe Ieremia din batalionul 4 vânători, printr-o petițiune ce a adresat acestui Minister la 8 Iulie 1897, a cerut ca în temeiul art. 8 din legea asupra numelui<sup>35</sup>, să fie autorizat a schimba numele seu patronimic de „Ieremia” în cel de „Eliade” spre a se numi „Gheorghe Eliade”.

Ministerul, ordonând din oficiu o cercetare asupra temeiurilor acestei cereri prin parquetul Tribunalului Iași, a constatat ca nimic nu se opune ca D-l Locotenent Gheorghe Ieremia să’și schimbe numele patronimic în cel de „Eliade”.

Spre îndeplinirea dispozițiilor art. 9 din legea numelui s-au făcut cuvenitele publicațiuni prin *Monitorul Oficial* și gazetele *Voința Națională*, *Epoca* și *Liberalul*, de șese ori, la interval de câte o lună și nu s’a primit la Minister nici o opozițiune contra cererei D-lui Locotenent Ieremia în termenele prevădute de lege.

Fața cu cele preced subsemnatul sunt de părere că se pôte admite cererea de schimbare de nume patronimic a D-lui Locotenent Gheorghe Ieremia.

În temeiul art. 12 din lege am onore a supune cazul Domniilor Văstre să bine voiți a decide, dacă admiteți ca D-l Locotenent Gheorghe Ieremia din batalionul 4 vânători să’și schimbe numele patronimic de „Ieremia” în cel de „Eliade”.

Primiți, vă rög, Domnilor Miniștri, asigurarea înaltei mele considerațiuni, Ministru Justiției.

C. G. Dissescu<sup>36</sup>

Director<sup>37</sup>

No. 8552  
14 Iunie 1899

ANIC, fond Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri, dosar nr. 33/1899, f. 227.

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<sup>35</sup> The Legea asupra numelui was adopted on March 17, 1895 (Liviu Bordaș, *op. cit.*, p. 39).

<sup>36</sup> Holographic signature. C. G. Dissescu (1854-1932) was Minister of Justice from April 11, 1899 to July 7, 1900.

<sup>37</sup> Followed by an indecipherable signature.

**2. 1899 June 30, Bucharest. Journal of the Council of Ministers.**

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În ședința sa de astăzi, 30 Iunie 1899, Consiliul Miniștrilor, luând în deliberare referatul D-lui Ministru de Justiție cu No. 8552 relativ la cererea făcută de D-l Locotenent Gheorghe Ieremia din Batalionul 4 Vânători de a-și schimba numele seu patronimic de „Ieremia” în cel de „Eliade” spre a se numi „Gheorghe Eliade”.

Vădând că, în termenele prevăzute de art. 8 și 9 din legea asupra numelui, s’a făcut cuvenita cercetare asupra temeiurilor acestei cereri și publicațiunile necesare, și că nici o opozițiune nu s’a primit contra cererei de schimbare de nume patronimic a D-lui Locotenent Ieremia,

Consiliul, în temeiul art. 12 din lege, admite ca D-l Locotenent Gh. Ieremia să-și schimbe numele patronimic de Ieremia în cel de Eliade.

Acesta decisiune se va publica in Mon. Oficial. Ea este definitivă.

D-l Locotenent Gh. Ieremia are dreptul, conform art. 15 din legea numelui, a cere oficerului stărei civile rectificarea actelor de stare civilă după care va purta numai noul seu nume patronimic.

S/ G. Gr. Cantacuzino<sup>38</sup>, Gheneral Gh. Manu<sup>39</sup>, Take Ionescu<sup>40</sup>, N. Fleva<sup>41</sup>, Dr. Istrati<sup>42</sup>, C. G. Dissescu<sup>43</sup>.

[signature]<sup>44</sup>

ANIC, fond Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri, dosar nr. 33/1899, f. 228

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<sup>38</sup> George Gr. Cantacuzino (1832-1913), nick-named “Nababul”, was Prime Minister from April 11, 1899 to July 7, 1900, and again from December 22, 1904 to March 12, 1907. He was the leader of the Conservative Party from April 1899 to April 1907.

<sup>39</sup> General Gh. Manu (1833-1911), sometime military officer, was Minister of Finance, 1899-1900, Minister of War numerous times between 1869-1907, and Prime Minister, 1889-1891.

<sup>40</sup> Take Ionescu (1858-1922), lawyer and Minister of Religion and Public Works, 1899-1901. Was numerous other times a cabinet minister between 1891-1922, and Prime Minister, 1921-1922.

<sup>41</sup> N. Fleva (1840-1920), lawyer and Minister of Agriculture, Domains, Industry, and Commerce, 1899-1900.

<sup>42</sup> Dr. Constantin I. Istrate (1850-1918), medical doctor and professor, Minister of Public Works.

<sup>43</sup> Constantin G. Dissescu (1854-1932), lawyer and law professor; Minister of Justice (1899-1900). General Iacob N. Lahovary (1846-1907), military officer, was Minister of War, 1899-1901, and held other ministerial posts between 1891-1907, did not sign the decree and may not have been present.

<sup>44</sup> The document closes at bottom right with an indecipherable signature; probably that of a director of the Council of Ministers.

**De la Ieremia la Eliade, 1899: note și întrebări**  
(Rezumat)

*Cuvinte-cheie:* Gheorghe Ieremia, Mircea Eliade, literatura română, cultura română.

Este cunoscut că Gheorghe Ieremia (1868-1951), tatăl lui Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), renumit scriitor și intelectual, și-a schimbat numele în Gheorghe Eliade în 1899. În această lucrare public documentele originale care ratifică schimbarea de nume în Eliade și descrie conținutul acestora. În al doilea rând, analizez problema schimbării numelui ca pe ceva destul de neobișnuit la vremea aceea, deoarece presupunea un proces îndelungat finalizat cu aprobarea formală la vârful guvernului (Consiliul de Miniștri).

Motivul obișnuit oferit pentru această schimbare sunt respectul și admirația lui Ieremia pentru Ion Heliade Rădulescu, liderul politic și cultural din secolul XIX. Oricum, această explicație este slab documentată, bazându-se pe amintirile lui Mircea Eliade la jumătate de secol după aceea. Eliade este și singura sursă a ideii că Ieremia era un nume peiorativ, nepotrivit pentru un militar de carieră. O explicație mai simplă, dar tot ipotetică, este că numele era derivat din numele tatălui lui Ieremia: Ilie.

O altă speculație, care prin natura sa este dificil de documentat, era că Ieremia a dorit să ascundă originile sale de țaran moldovean când a avansat în ierarhia militară și socială și a ajuns în mediul mai sofisticat și competitiv al capitalei României. Aspirația socială nu este neapărat o pretenție, dar există destule dovezi că Gheorghe Eliade și soția sa nu numai că se vedeau avansând în societate, dar aveau obișnuitele speranțe ale părinților ca fiii lor să urce pe scara socială chiar mai mult. Este și un indiciu că toate acestea ar fi putut fi legate de conflictul între generații, care nu este ceva neobișnuit, dar este mai mult conjunctural.

Articolul prezintă un număr de întrebări nesoluționate referitoare la această schimbare de nume și sugerează câteva probleme de cercetare pentru viitor. Acestea includ încercarea de a găsi cererea originală de schimbare a numelui și constatarea motivului, dacă este dat vreunul; să aflăm mai mult despre originile soției lui Gheorghe Eliade, care avea probabil origini țărănești oltenești, dar făcea parte dintr-o familie înstărită din București la momentul căsătoriei; de asemenea, o prezentare mai detaliată a activității lui Gheorghe Eliade în 1907, anul în care Mircea a fost născut și anul ultimei mari răscoale țărănești din Europa secolului XX.