ROMANIANS AND THE NOBEL PRIZES FOR SCIENCE AND LITERATURE

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Abstract:
There is much to be said about the Nobel Prizes. Numerous pages are written each year to promote, describe, analyze and criticize the prizes, their initiator and their evolution since 1901. The purpose of this study is to bring back to light from the dust of the archives information about those Romanians who were ahead of their times through their outstanding thinking and understanding of the world. Little has been written about those nominated, since it has been considered more relevant to focus on the winners. There were plentiful creative minds who only needed an opportunity to be known to the world. Famous Romanian names show up from the archives and the nomination database provided by the Nobel Institution and enable us to get a broad perspective of the nominators and the nominees. Ironically, as in the case of the Nobel Peace Prize, most of those who genuinely had a chance to win were never nominated.

Rezumat:
Articolul de față vine să continue prezentarea despre Premiile Nobel pentru Pace publicată în numărul anterior al acestei reviste. Daca până astăzi nu există nici un laureat român al Premiului pentru Pace, în domeniul medicinei și literaturii românii au fost mai norocoși. Cercetările medicale efectuate de minți românești în laboratoare performante puse la dispoziție de universități străine au condus la obținerea mult râvnitului Premiu Nobel. Despre românii care s-au adaugat astfel elitei mondiale a creierelor s-a scris destul de mult. Puține informații există însă despre cei nominalizați pentru aceste prestigioase Premii, dar care n-au avut șansa de a fi selectați. Meritele lor, așa cum au fost ele scoase în evidență de scrisorile de nominalizare, s-au adăugat voluminoaselor dosare existente în arhivele Institutului Nobel, îngroșând rândurile celor care au aspirat
cândva la recunoaștere științifică sau literară. Nume extrem de cunoscute  românilor se prezinta acum dintr-o noua perspectivă, aceea de nominalizat pentru unul dintre cele mai prestigioase premii din lume.

**Key words:** Romanians; Nobel Prizes; nominations; Literature; Science.

As mentioned in a previous article\(^1\), there is much to be said about the Nobel Prizes. A lot of pages are written each year to promote, describe, analyze and criticize the prizes, their initiator and their evolution since 1901. The purpose of this study is to bring to light from the dust of the archives information about those Romanians who were ahead of their times through their way of thinking and understanding of the world. Little has been written about those nominated, since it was considered more relevant to focus on the winners. Their works were considered groundbreaking by the Nobel Committee in Stockholm who awarded them the Prize. There is a significant list of names nominated for their discoveries in Physiology or Medicine or the quality of their literature. The few lucky won the Prize, a few ended on the short list, while others were “ignored” even though their discoveries were of considerable importance and could match any other researchers or writers in the world.

Romanians do not have many Nobel Prize winners and in order to understand their association with such a prestigious award a good start is to take a look at those nominated. There were plenty creative minds who only needed an opportunity to be known to the world. Romanian scientists, authors and politicians of the past have tried to promote their elite. The big number of letters received every year by the Nobel Committee are a proof of their increasing involvement. Famous Romanian names show up from the archives and the nomination database provided by the Nobel Institution enable us to get a broad image of the nominators and the nominees. Nevertheless, as in the case of the Nobel Peace Prize, most of those who genuinely had a chance to win were never nominated.

Researchers such as Constantin Levaditi\(^2\), Victor Babeș\(^3\) and Ioan Cantacuzino\(^4\) were nominated for the Nobel Prize while Nicolae Paulescu\(^5\),

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\(^2\) Constantin Levaditi (1874-1953) Romanian microbiologist, physician and researcher, naturalized in France. Honorary member of the Romanian Academy and member of the...
E. Juvara\(^6\), George Marinescu\(^7\), Mina Minovici\(^8\) and Alexandru Obregia\(^9\) are to be found among those signing recommendation letters.

French Academy of Medicine, research assistant at the Institute Pasteur in Paris. Levaditi is one of the founders of modern infra-microbiology, a special value having his studies of polymorphic erythema, syphilis, polio, encephalitis, vaccino-and chemotherapy.

\(^3\) Victor Babes (1854-1926) comes from a Romanian family who emigrated to Hungary and then to Austria. Therefore he studied in Budapest, obtaining a doctorate in science. Interested in the studies of Louis Pasteur, Babes moves to Paris to work with him. He is the biologist and one of the first bacteriologists to make valuable contributions in the field of infectious diseases such as rabies, leprosy and tuberculosis. In 1885 he published the first Treaty of Bacteriology in the world and initiated the anti-rabies vaccination in Romania. He become a professor at Carol Davila Institute in Bucharest and member of the Romanian Academy in 1893. Babes was awarded the Legion of Honor by the French Academy of Sciences. The Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca bears his name.

\(^4\) Ioan Cantacuzino (1863–1934) was a Romanian professor, academician, physician, microbiologist, founder of the Romanian School of Immunology and Experimental Pathology. In 1895 he obtained his Doctorate in Medicine with the thesis: Recherches sur le mode de destruction du vibron cholérique dans l’organisme. He worked at the Institute Pasteur in Paris, assisting Ilya Mechnikov who received the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1908 for the discovery of phagocytosis. Cantacuzino nominated in 1924 the Director of Pasteur Institute professor Emile Roux. The letter is signed Jean Cantacuzène. Nomination database-Physiology or Medicine. Nobelprize.org. 31 Jan 2009 http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=1729.

\(^5\) Nicolae Paulescu (1869-1931) the Romanian inventor of insulin, supposedly “ignored” by the Nobel Committee in awarding the Nobel Prize for Medicine for 1923 in favor of the Canadian Frederic Grant Banting. His name appears in one letter of nomination sent by a group of Romanian professors for Thomas Ionnesco. Nomination database-Physiology or Medicine. Nobelprize.org. 31 Jan 2009 http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=1706. However, the Nobel Committee in Stockholm cannot be accused of “ignoring” the Romanian researcher, as no letter of nomination was sent to Stockholm on Paulescu’s name in 1923 or in any other year. According to the Statutes of the Nobel Institution, one must first be nominated in order to receive the Prize.

\(^6\) Ernest Juvara (1870–1933) was a Romanian doctor, professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest famous for his new surgical techniques, for creating new surgical instruments and for his contributions in bone implants. He was awarded the Star of Romania in the rank of knigt. Nomination database-Physiology or Medicine. Nobelprize.org. 31 Jan 2009 http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=1706.

\(^7\) Gheorghe (George) Marinescu (1863-1938) was a Romanian neurologist, founder of the Romanian School of Neurology. He worked as assistant at the Bacteriological Institute with Victor Babes who sent him to Paris to undertake postgraduate training at the Salpêtrière Hospital. Marinescu is the first in the world to use science films for medical purposes. He is among those nominating Babes in 1924. Nomination database-Physiology or Medicine. Nobelprize.org. 31 Jan 2009 http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=1662.
For example, Levaditi appears as a nominator already in 1914 and is himself nominated first in 1922 by a Belgian professor from Louvain\(^\text{10}\). In 1930, the Nobel Committee receives three nomination letters for Levaditi signed by Carl Kling\(^\text{11}\), a Swedish professor at the Karolinska Institute “for his work on the use of bismuth and stovarsol in the treatment of syphilis” and by a group of French professors for “work on metallotherapy in the treatment of spirochaete diseases”\(^\text{12}\).

Levaditi received five more nominations in 1931 from Stockholm\(^\text{13}\), Bucharest\(^\text{14}\), New York and Berlin. Phoebus Levene\(^\text{15}\) from the Rockefeller

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8 Mina Minovici (1857-1933) was a Romanian forensic scientist, famous for his extensive research regarding cadaverous alkaloids, putrefaction, simulated mind diseases and criminal anthropology. He was Director of the Institute for Legal Medicine built in Bucharest and the founder of the modern medico-legal system. Minovici was the first to expand the concept of the morgue and created the term of “legal medicine” as a way of organizing research, teaching and forensic activity. His Institute built in 1892 was demolished in 1985 by the Ceaușescu regime. Nomination database-Physiology or Medicine. Nobelprize.org. 31 Jan 2009 http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=1666.


13 This letter is signed by Israel Holmgren (1871-1961), also professor at the Karolinska Institute. Despite of what his name might suggest, Israel Holmgren was not Jewish himself. Nomination Database - Physiology or Medicine Nobelprize.org. 31 Jan 2009 http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=1493.
Institute for Medical Research in New York, head of the biochemical laboratory at the Rockefeller Institute, recommended Levaditi for his "work on the chemical constitution of the animal cell, especially the structure of thymonucleic acid".

From Berlin comes another nomination letter signed by Ferdinand Sauerbruch for "Levaditi’s activity in the introduction of salt free diet in the treatment of wounds, work on tuberculosis and lung surgery". Between 1932 and 1939 new letters of nomination for Levaditi continued to arrive on Nobel Committes’s table, Karolinska Institute and Rockefeller Institute numbering among the nominators. His research was, unfortunately, not rewarded with the Nobel Prize for Medicine, but it was highly regarded by eminent scientists from all over the world.

Victor Babeș was another Romanian researcher whose name is often found in the nomination letters for the Nobel Prize in Physiology and

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15 Phoebus Levene (1869-1940) was a Russian-American biochemist who studied the structure and function of nucleic acids. He was born into a Jewish family in Russian Lithuania but grew up in St. Petersburg. There he studied medicine at the Imperial Military Medical Academy and developed an interest in biochemistry. In 1893, because of anti-Semitic pogroms, he and his family emigrated to the United States and he practiced medicine in New York. In 1905, Levene was appointed as head of the biochemical laboratory at the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research. He spent the rest of his career at this institute.


18 Ernst Ferdinand Sauerbruch (1875-1951) was a German surgeon, famous for his inovative techniques and controversial due to his connection with the Nazi regime.

Medicine. Acknowledged today as one of the greatest personalities of Romanian medicine, 13 letters were sent to the Nobel Committee for Babeș in 1924 for “his work on the pathological anatomy, symptomatology, prophylaxis and treatment of pellagra.” Babeș’ scientific endeavours were wide-ranging. He was the first to determine the presence of tuberculous bacilli in the urine of infected patients. He also discovered cellular inclusions in rabies-infected nerve cells. Babeș was one of the founders of serum therapy, and was the first to introduce rabies vaccination to Romania. The recommendations sent for him are outstanding and illustrate the degree of respect he enjoyed among his fellow researchers. The letters are signed by well known names of Romanian interwar medicine, making him one of the few Romanian candidates for the Nobel Prize recommended solely by his own fellow Romanian researchers. In spite of so many recommendations sent for Babeș, the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine went that year to Netherlands, to Willem Einthoven for his discovery of the electrocardiogram.

Ioan Cantacuzino is also present among other scientists recommended for the Nobel Prize and received four nomination letters in 1933. The letters are all signed by French professors from Reims who recommended Cantacuzino for his “work on immunity reaction on
invertebrates and contact immunity”\(^\text{26}\). Born in Bucharest as a member of the ancient Cantacuzino\(^\text{27}\) family, he graduated from the University of Paris’ Faculty of Sciences and Faculty of Medicine, and worked at several hospitals in Paris, obtaining his doctorate in 1894. Later in the same year, he began his academic career as an adjunct professor at the University of Iași, and returned to Paris after two years to serve on the staff of the Pasteur Institute, where he worked under the direction of Ilya Mechnikov\(^\text{28}\).

Ștefan Procopiu\(^\text{29}\) who studied in Paris together with Marie Curie and Paul Langevin, was also frequently discussed by the Romanian media, but he was actually never nominated. Procopiu is famous for his discovery of magneton, two years before Niels Bohr\(^\text{30}\). Bohr was nominated and received the Nobel Prize, while Procopiu appears only as nominator at the request of the Nobel Committee for Physics\(^\text{31}\).

There are also some who were allegedly of Romanian origin such as Ilya Mechnikov\(^\text{32}\), who apparently descended from the famous Moldavian

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\(^{26}\) Nomination Database - Physiology or Medicine Nobelprize.org. 31 Jan 2009 http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/nomination.

\(^{27}\) The Cantacuzino or Cantacuzène family is a princely family of Wallachia and Moldavia, a branch of the Greek Kantakouzinos family, descended from the Byzantine Emperor John VI Cantacuzenus. The genealogical link between Byzantine Greek and Romanian Cantacuzinos have been extensively documented. There is also the Russian branch of Cantacuzino family, which is an offshoot of the Moldavian branch. As a consequence of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet occupation of Romania after World War II, the last two branches now live mostly in Western Europe and North America. See: Jean-Michel Cantacuzène, *Mille ans dans les Balkans* (Paris: Éditions Christian, 1992). One of the Cantacuzène, Prince Ștefan Cantacuzino settled in 1944 in Sweden.

\(^{28}\) See the footnote 32.

\(^{29}\) Ștefan Procopiu (1890-1972) Romanian physicist who obtained his Ph.D. in 1924 with a study about the electric birefringence of suspensions. After studying Planck’s quantum theory and Langevin’s magnetism theory, Procopiu established the magnetic moment and determined the physical constant of the magnetic moment called magneton. Ștefan Procopiu published his results two years before Niels Bohr made the same discovery independently. Their theory is known today as Bohr-Procopi u magneton. Bohr received the Nobel Prize because his research was widely recognised and he came into the attention of the Nobel Committee by nomination.

\(^{30}\) Niels Henrik David Bohr (1885-1962) Danish physicist who made contributions to understanding atomic structure and quantum mechanics and received the Nobel Prize for his discovery of magneton.


\(^{32}\) Ilya Ilyich Mechnikov (1845-1916) Russian microbiologist who was doing research in immunology field. Professor at the Universities of Odessa and St. Petersburg and researcher at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, he receives the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1908. The Nobel
family of Nicolae Milescu Spătarul\textsuperscript{33}. He received the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1908 for the discovery of phagocytosis and his work on immunity. Mechnikov was born in Ukraine where his father Ilya Ivanovich was an officer in the Russian Imperial Guard. According to some authors\textsuperscript{34} he was a descendant of Yuri Ivanovich Milescu Spafarri, the grandson of the scholar, diplomat and traveller Nicolae Milescu Spatarul. Yuri’s son will translate his Romanian name, Spatarul, into Russian Mecinik which means sword bearer, hence the name Mechnikov. His alleged Romanian roots may have been subject of discussion between Mechnikov and Ioan Cantacuzino, taking in consideration their close collaboration at the Pasteur Institute in Paris.

Another example is Pyotr Leonidovich Kapitza or Petru Căpiță, who won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1978 for his inventions and discoveries in the field of low temperatures physics. Kapitza claimed that he had Moldavian roots, and while being in Chișinău he would like to know more about his relatives buried in the cemetery on the Armenian street. There are, however, no documents to provide detailed information on his Moldavian origins\textsuperscript{35}.

The most controversial case of a Romanian whose discoveries were “overlooked” by the Nobel Committee in Stockholm, which later admitted it, is that of Nicolae Paulescu. At the 1921 session of the Biology Society, Nicolae Paulescu presented the results of his research, the role of pancreatic extract in diabetes. His research was published in Comptes rendues des

\textsuperscript{33} Nicolae Milescu Spătarul (1636-1708) scholar, geographer and Romanian diplomat, born in Moldavia at Miclești. Moldavian representative in Constantinople, Berlin and Stockholm. In 1659 he received the rank of a Spătar (the chief of army) during the reign of Gheorghe Ghica. Milescu Spătarul follows his king, prince Gheorghe Ștefan into exile to Stockholm and then to Russia where he becomes a favorite of the Orthodox Patriarch, Petru Movilă, also a Romanian. Tsar Alexei I (1629-1676) was impressed by his intelligence and diplomatic skills and sent him with various missions to Asia. Milescu Spatărul was often compared to Marco Polo due to his diplomatic travels to China.

\textsuperscript{34} Sorin și Dan Riga, „Ascendența Românească a unui premiat Nobel,” Romanian Journal for Mental Health 16 3 (2007): 55-58. However, in his biography on the Nobel Prizes official website there is no mention of Mechnikov’s Romanian roots.

Paulescu published his discovery of the active principle of the diabetic pancreas, which he called *pancreine*, in a specialized Belgian magazine, *Archives Internationales de Physiologie*, under the title *Recherches sur le rôle du pancréas dans l’assimilation nutritive*. Although his publications preceded with almost a year the claim of Canadians Frederick Grant Banting and Charles Best of the discovery of *insulin* (the new name given to the active principle from the pancreas), the Nobel Prize for Medicine was awarded in 1923 to Banting and Macleod. Both laureates mentioned in their Nobel Lectures...
Paulescu’s name and his work. A possible explanation of this decision is that Paulescu was never nominated.

Responding to the international campaign to restore the truth initiated by the Scottish physiologist Ian Murray in 1969, the Nobel Committee recognized the merits and priority of Nicolae Paulescu in the discovery of insulin. Professor Arne Tiselius, director of the Nobel Institute in Stockholm, deplored the situation but stressed that according to the statutes of the Nobel Committee there was no possibility of an official repair. While admitting that Paulescu was worth obtaining the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1923, he expressed his hope that Paulescu's pioneering work will be rightly praised by the international scientific forums. At the bicentenary anniversary of discovery of insulin, the international medical forums and the Nobel Committee in Sweden have unanimously recognized the priority of Romanian scientist.

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43 Ian Murray (1917-1993) physician and researcher at Anderson College in Glasgow, head of Metabolic Diseases Department, vice-president of the British Diabetes Association and founding member of the International Diabetes Association. In an article for a 1971 issue of the Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Murray wrote: "Insufficient recognition has been given to Paulesco, the distinguished Romanian scientist, who at the time when the Toronto team were commencing their research, had already succeeded in extracting the antidiabetic hormone of the pancreas and proved its efficacy".
44 Although Banting and Best knew of Paulescu’s paper, they misinterpreted it. It turned out that neither of the two Canadians understood sufficient French. In a letter to Professor Ion Pavel on 15 October 1969, Charles Best apologized, saying: "I do not remember whether we relied on our own poor French or whether we had a translation made. In any case I would like to state how sorry I am for this unfortunate error and I trust that your efforts to honor Professor Paulescu will be rewarded with great success". Ion Pavel, The Priority of N.C. Paulescu in the discovery of Insulin (Bucharest: The Romanian Academy Printing House, 2005), 18.
45 Arne Wilhelm Kaurin Tiselius (1902-1971) Swedish biochemist, Nobel Prize laureate in 1948. He becomes vice-president of the Nobel Foundation in 1947 and then President of this organisation in 1960.
46 Pavel, 19.
The first Romanian, or better said, Romanian-born American who won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1974 was George Emil Palade. Dr. Palade shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1974 with Albert Claude and Christian de Duve. Awarding the prize, the Karolinska Institute argued that the three had been "largely responsible for the creation of modern cell biology." Working together with Claude, Palade perfected the electron microscope making possible the examination of cells without destroying them. He also helped develop a technique called cell fractionation, in which cells are broken apart and components are separated based on their density. In 1973, Dr. Palade moved to Yale, where he became the chairman of the new department of cell biology.

In his Nobel acceptance speech of December 1974, Dr. Palade said the new discoveries would lead to a better understanding of diseases, many of which are caused by cellular dysfunction. "Cell biology" he said, "finally makes possible a century-old dream: that of analysis of diseases at the

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47 George Emil Palade (1912-2008) famous Romanian doctor and researcher, laureate of the Nobel Prize for Medicine. His father was a university professor and his mother belonged to one of the oldest boyar families in Moldova, Cantemir family, tracing back to XVII-th century. He studied Medicine at the University of Bucharest. Palade spent the war years as a member of the medical staff of the Romanian army. In 1946 he leaved Romania and moved to United States together with his wife, Irina Malaxa. Irina Malaxa belonged to one of the richest Romanian families, her father being one of the many industry magnates the country had at the time. Palade continued his research with Professor Albert Claude at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. In 1952 Palade became an American citizen, working as a professor at Yale University and the University of California. In 1969, following the death of Irina Malaxa, he married Marilyn Gist Farquhar. Marilyn Gist Farquhar was herself a biologist, molecular medicine researcher, head of the Department of Molecular and Cellular Medicine at the University of California in San Diego. Most recommendations for obtaining the Nobel Prize did not come from Romania, but from his adopted country, the United States.

48 Albert Claude (1899-1983) Belgian biologist doing research on cancer prevention first in Germany and from 1929 at the Rockefeller Institute in New York. In 1949 he returned to Europe and became director of the Jules Bordet Institute and of Free University in Brussels, where he remained until 1970.

49 Christian René de Duve (n.1917) was born in the United Kingdom from a Belgian immigrant family. In 1920 his parents returned to Belgium and de Duve studied at the Jesuit College in Antwerp then at the Catholic University of Leuven, where he became a professor in 1947. Specialist in biology and biochemistry de Duve was doing research on the distribution and fractionation of cellular enzymes in the liver, reaching the same conclusions as Claude and Palade in New York.

cellular level, the first step toward their final control”51. His discoveries later proved useful in understanding diseases and the protein production.

Physician scientists in all fields recognized the importance of his contributions to medicine, a reflection of his training as a doctor, which enabled him to view his science in the larger context of human disease. Palade established the *Journal of Cell Biology* (originally the *Journal of Biochemical and Biophysical Cytology*) in 1955, as well as the *Annual Reviews of Cell Biology* in 198552. One of Palade’s students, Günter Blobel, professor at the Rockefeller University, a Nobel laureate himself, said about his former mentor: “In cell biology, he is clearly the most influential scientist ever”53.

In 1990, at 77, he became the first dean for scientific affairs at the School of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego.

Those who knew him say he gave eloquent lectures and had a knack for clearly summarizing complex information. He had a vast knowledge of art, history, music and literature, being “an old-fashioned European gentleman”54.

Dr. Palade retired in 2001. The school named a building for him in 2004 and a professorship was endowed in his name in 2006. His death in 2008 meant a real loss for research and was marked by numerous scientific journals and the American media in general55.

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Alfred Nobel wrote in his Testament56 that the Prize for Literature should be awarded each year to the author who produced “the most outstanding work in an ideal direction”. This “ideal direction” was not always easy to judge, therefore, the Prize for Literature was often open for criticism, because it was so accessible to the public.

Compared with the science prizes, the Nobel Prize for Literature seemed much easier to be obtained, especially because of the high quality

of the Romanian literature. And, surprisingly enough, at the very beginning of the Nobel Institution and among those first nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1901 was Alexandru D. Xenopol\textsuperscript{57}. The paper proposed to be rewarded was "Les principes fondamentaux de l'histoire". The nominator, Julius Găvănescu was a professor, psychologist and esthetician from Iaşi, as he presented himself in his nomination letter\textsuperscript{58}. The same professor recommended Xenopol again in a letter sent to Stockholm in 1909\textsuperscript{59}.

Xenopol’s work makes an enormous contribution in presenting Romanians and their history to the rest of Europe. There was little information at the end of the 19th century about this part of the world which made it difficult for foreign scholars to understand Romania. Xenopol made this possible through his monumental work\textsuperscript{60}. What is fascinating here is the fact that the new Prize was already known in Romania at the time, making Xenopol one of the first to be nominated. The Romanian elite was eager to make its contributions known on the international arena.

Nevertheless, the list of Romanian writers is long, and their waiting lasted for more than a century. There are, of course, many authors who deserved to be rewarded with the prestigious prize for their works: Tudor

\textsuperscript{57} Alexandru D. Xenopol (1847 – 1920) was a Romanian academic, historian, philosopher, economist, writer and sociologist. He is the author of the first synthesis of Romanian history, being considered one of the greatest Romanian historians. In his writing \textit{The History of My Ideas (Istoria ideilor mele} reprinted in I. E. Torouţiu, \textit{Studii şi documente literare}, Vol. IV. Junimea, Bucureşti: Inst. Arte grafice Bucovina, 1933), he claims that his father had Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Xenopol studied Philosophy, Law and History obtaining his PhD in Law and Philosophy in Berlin and Giessen in 1871. Returned to Romania he become professor and rector of the University of Iaşi and a member of the Romanian Academy in 1893. Xenopol became also a member of the Society of Archaeology in Brussels and in 1916 he was elected as vice-president of the International Institute of Sociology and a member of the French Academy in Paris. In his 1899 French language "Les principes fondamentaux de l'histoire, the most well-known internationally, he argued for history being a true science which follows clearly defined laws and logic, thorough which the reasons for historical processes could be clearly defined. Alexandru Zub, A.D.Xenopol, 1847-1920. Biobibliografie, (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică Română,1973).


\textsuperscript{60} Alexandru Zub, “Istoriografia Română la Vârsta Sintezei,” in \textit{Eseuri de ieri si de azi, Biografii, Memori, Monografii} 1 (2005).
Arghezi\textsuperscript{61}, Mihail Sadoveanu\textsuperscript{62}, Nichita Stănescu\textsuperscript{63}, Marin Sorescu\textsuperscript{64} along with other familiar names from diaspora such as Emil Cioran\textsuperscript{65}, Eugen Ionesco\textsuperscript{66} or Gellu Naum\textsuperscript{67}. There is a Romanian author, Laurențiu Ulici\textsuperscript{68},

\textsuperscript{61} Tudor Arghezi (real name Ion N. Teodorescu 1880-1967) was a Romanian writer, best known for his contribution to poetry and children's literature. Based on his experiences and adventuros life, Arghezi uses in his poems a fresh vocabulary which represents the most original synthesis between the traditional styles and modernism. He has left behind a vast oeuvre, which includes poetry, novels, essays, journalism, translations and letters.

\textsuperscript{62} Mihail Sadoveanu (1880-1961) was a Romanian novelist, short story writer, journalist and political figure, member of the Romanian Academy. One of the most prolific Romanian language writers, he is remembered mostly for his historical and adventure novels. An author whose career spanned five decades, he was acclaimed for his visions of ancient solitude and natural abundance.

\textsuperscript{63} Nichita Hristea Stănescu (1933-1983) is the most acclaimed contemporary Romanian poet and essayist, loved by the public and generally held in esteem by literary critics. Nichita Stănescu received numerous poetry awards, of which the most important was the Herder Prize in 1975. Unfortunately, he died relatively young, leaving behind some of the most important poetry in post-war Romanian literature.

\textsuperscript{64} Marin Sorescu (1936-1996) Romanian poet, playwright, and novelist. He had a very rapid ascension in the literary world and grew so popular that his readings were held in football stadiums. Many of his volumes were censored and delayed by the communist regime being published only after 1989. Sorescu often drew on history, mythology and the tradition of the absurd. His existentialist themes, at the same time universal and subjective, placed his work in the wide context of the avant-garde. Noteworthy, not only in Romania, but also in other East European countries, his anti-totalitarian tactics united a whole generation of writers.

\textsuperscript{65} Emil Cioran (1911-1995) known in France as Émile Cioran, was a Romanian writer, noted for his somber works in the French language. He studied philosophy at the University of Bucharest and in 1933 received a scholarship to the University of Berlin, where he graduated with a thesis on Bergson. While in Berlin he manifested sympathy for the Nazi regime and back in Romania he began taking an interest in the ideas put forth by the Iron Guard, a far right organization whose nationalist ideology he supported until the early years of World War II, despite allegedly disapproving of their violent methods. In 1937 he left for Paris with a scholarship from the French Institute of Bucharest which was then prolonged until 1944. After a short stay in his home country (November 1940-February 1941), Cioran never returned to Romania. He later renounced not only his support for the Iron Guard, but also their nationalist ideas, and frequently expressed regret and repentance for his emotional implication in it. From the moment of his departure, Cioran only published books in French. All were appreciated not only because of their content, but also because of their style which was full of lyricism and fine use of the French language. In 1949 his first French book, \textit{Précis de décomposition} (\textit{A Short History of Decay}), was published by Gallimard, the publishing company which came to publish the majority of his books later on, and was awarded the Rivarol Prize in 1950. Later on, Cioran refused every literary prize with which he was presented.

\textsuperscript{66} Eugen Ionescu (1909-1994) was a Romanian and French (his mother was French) playwright and dramatist, and one of the foremost playwrights of the Theatre of the Absurd. He studied French Literature at the University of Bucharest and started writing poetry and criticism, publishing in several Romanian journals. Ionescu and his family went
who tried to explain in his work published some time ago, why Romanian authors were not preferred by the Swedish Academy in contrast to other more successful foreigners. Ioan Luca Caragiale was the example at hand. Although his work is of momentous importance for Romanian literature, it is incomprehensible to readers outside the Romanian linguistic borders. If the Statutes of the Nobel Foundation emphasize the universal value of a work as the key criterion in choosing the winner, then Caragiale’s works are extremely valuable for the Romanian public, but have not an universal value being only an expression of what has been called Romanian Balkanism. No doubt the same can be said about the literary and cultural heritage of other small countries, Romania being not an exception in this regard. It is not easier to understand, for instance, Knut Hamsun or Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson than Mihail Sadoveanu or Ioan Luca Caragiale. They are all part of a European tradition that goes beyond national and universal, all of them contributing to the enrichment of the human mind.

to France in 1938 for him to complete his Doctoral Thesis. Caught by the outbreak of World War II in 1939 he remained there, living in Marseille during the war before moving with his family to Paris after its liberation in 1944. He did not write his first play until 1948 and in his plays Ionescu express modern feelings of alienation and the impossibility and futility of communication, parodying the conformism of the bourgeoisie and conventional theatrical forms. Ionesco was made a member of the Académie Française in 1970.

Gellu Naum (1915-2001) was a prominent Romanian poet, dramatist, novelist, children's writer, and translator, remembered as the founder of the Romanian Surrealist group. In 1933, he began studying Philosophy at the University of Bucharest. In 1938, Naum left for France where he continued his studies at the University of Paris. In 1941, Naum helped create the Bucharest group of Surrealists which survived until December 1947. The group succumbed to the vicissitudes of postwar Soviet occupation and successful Communist takeover of Romania's government. As Socialist realism had officially become Romania's cultural policy, he could only publish books for children. Although he published several books in the line of Socialist realism, which he renegated afterwards, he never stopped writing Surrealist poems. After the Romanian Revolution of 1989, he traveled abroad and gave public readings in France, Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. In 1995, the German Academic Exchange Service appointed him scholar at the University of Berlin.

Laurenţiu Ulici, Nobel contra Nobel (Bucureşti: Editura Cartea Românească, 1988).

Ion Luca Caragiale (1852-1912) was a Romanian playwright, short story writer, poet, theater manager, political commentator and journalist. Caragiale is considered one of the greatest playwrights in Romanian literature, as well as one of its most important writers and a leading representative of local humor. His work, spanning four decades, covers the ground between Neoclassicism, Realism, and Naturalism, building on an original synthesis of foreign and local influences. His role in the Romanian context was likened to those of Honoré de Balzac in France and Charles Dickens in the United Kingdom.
The Romanian poet Mircea Cărtărescu wrote about these awards in 2008\textsuperscript{70}: It’s a great honor for a writer to be considered worthy of the Nobel Prize, but it is really a matter of chance. Coming from a small culture one is only rarely translated, therefore Romanian writers did not have a real chance to get the Nobel Prize. They had to fight political forces too, forces which tried to prevent the nominations. Of all authors, Liviu Rebreanu\textsuperscript{71}, Nichita Stănescu, Lucian Blaga\textsuperscript{72} and Marin Sorescu had probably the biggest chances to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. Worthy of a Nobel, along with those named above was also Arghezi, the greatest writer of our modernity, and Sadoveanu. Of Romanian contemporary writers those who deserve the Nobel Prize, without having actually had any real chance to obtain it, are the writer and poet Mircea Horia Simionescu\textsuperscript{73} and Mircea Ivănescu\textsuperscript{74}. More likely to be discovered in the future are Ana Blandiana\textsuperscript{75} and Paul

\textsuperscript{70} Mircea Cărtărescu, Cum stăm cu Premiul Nobel, in Evenimentul Zilei, 10.10.2008.

\textsuperscript{71} Liviu Rebreanu (1885-1944) was a Romanian novelist, playwright, short story writer, and journalist. He moved from Transylvania to Bucharest before the First World War. Joined several literary circles, and worked as a journalist. After the war, he became an important collaborator of different literary societies. In 1920 Rebreanu published his novel Ion, the first modern Romanian novel, in which he depicted the struggles over land ownership in rural Transylvania. For Ion, Rebreanu received a Romanian Academy Award and became a full member of the institution in 1939. Between 1928 and 1930 he was chairman of the National Theatre of Bucharest, and from 1940 to 1944 he was President of the Romanian Writers’ Society. Committed suicide in 1944 when diagnosed with cancer.

\textsuperscript{72} Lucian Blaga (1895-1961) was a Romanian philosopher, poet, and playwright. Lucian Blaga was a commanding personality of the Romanian culture of the inter-bellum period. He was a philosopher and writer acclaimed for his originality, an university professor and a diplomat. At the outbreak of the First World War, he began theological studies at Sibiu, where he graduated in 1917. From 1917 to 1920, he attended courses at the University of Vienna, where he studied philosophy and obtained his PhD. In 1926, Blaga became involved in Romanian diplomacy, occupying successive posts at Romania’s legations in Warsaw, Prague, Lisbon, Bern and Vienna. He was chosen a member of the Romanian Academy in 1937. In 1939 became professor of cultural philosophy at the University of Cluj, but was dismissed later on from his university professor chair by the new communist regime in 1948. After 1948 Blaga worked as librarian for the branch department (Cluj) of the History Institute of the Romanian Academy until 1960, being allowed to publish only translations.

\textsuperscript{73} Mircea Horia Simionescu (b. 1928) is a Romanian writer, journalist and essayist. He started his studies at the University of Bucharest, only to abandon in the second year because of a poor material situation. Graduates late, in 1962. In 1943 he starts a literary group, the future core of what will be called the Targoviste School. From 1950 Simionescu worked as editor for the Communist newspaper Scînteia (The Spark). Between 1971 and 1973 he was director of the Romanian Opera. Simionescu was characterized by literary critics as a precursor of the Romanian literary postmodernism.

\textsuperscript{74} Mircea Ivănescu (b. 1931) outstanding Romanian poet, writer and translator, forerunner of Romanian postmodernism, notably important for ‘80s generation. Ivănescu has published almost every two years a new volume during four decades. His lyrics, often depicting day-
Goma76, including then Norman Manea77 and Herta Müller, who are pretty close. This is, in my opinion, the list of Romanian authors with or without a real chance.

He seemed to have been right in case of Müller78 who was an unexpected and pleasant surprise for Romanians after so many years of waiting, although she belonged to the German minority. Despite the fact that the Romanian society, distorted by Communism, constitutes the main subject for her novels, Herta Müller’s literary talent was appreciated long before by the Romanian dissidents who manifested a critical eye towards dictatorship. In several of her interviews after obtaining the Nobel Prize, Müller mentioned the richness and the flavor of the Romanian language. *The Romanian language has nothing to do with the political system and its
to-day life, have rehabilitated narativity in Romanian poetry in the seventies, echoing American post-war major poets.

75 Ana Blandiana, real name is Otilia Valeria Coman (b. 1942) is a Romanian poet, essayist, and political figure. She took her name after Blandiana, her mother's home village. Her poems became famous especially after 1980 when Blandiana started writing protest poems, in answer to the increasingly harsh demands of the communist system. The secret services of Ceauşescu ('Securitate') attribute her a dissident status and her books will not be published. After the Romanian Revolution of 1989 she entered political life campaigning for the removal of the communist legacy from administrative office, as well as for an open society. She left literary work in the background although she did publish some volumes of poetry. Her work is translated into 16 languages.

76 Paul Goma (b. 1935) is a Romanian writer, also known for his activities as a dissident and leading opponent of the communist regime before 1989. Forced into exile by the communist authorities, he became a political refugee and currently resides in France as a stateless person. His work has been translated in most European countries.

77 Norman Manea (b. 1936) is a Romanian writer of Jewish origin, living in the United States, author of short fiction, novels, and essays preoccupied with the holocaust, the daily life in a communist state and exile. His most acclaimed book *The Hooligan's Return* is an original novelistic memoir, encompassing a period of almost 80 years, from the pre-war period, through the Second World War, the communist and post-communist years to the present. Norman Manea has been known and praised as an international important writer since early 1990s, and his work have been translated into more than 20 languages.

78 Herta Müller (n.1953) German-born Romanian writer. Between 1973 and 1976 she studied Romanian and German literature at the University of Timişoara. During the student years Müller become a member of the so-called *Banat Action Group*, a group of young authors who demonstrated against communism. She worked as a teacher and then as a translator in a factory. After refusing to cooperate with Securitate she was harassed and forced to leave the country in 1987. Herta Müller’s talent was recognized and appreciated in Germany where she is considered one of the most talented German writers. The Nobel Prize for Literature in 2009 only come to confirm this fact. Most recommendations for Herta Müller the Nobel Prize came from her adoptive country.
richness and beauty cannot be destroyed by the ephemeral 50 years of communism⁷⁹.

Forced to leave at the age of 34 a country led by a dictator, it is remarkable how her books became best sellers in a country as Germany known for an abundance of writers. Müller knows of course that Ceauşescu's Romania gave her, inadvertently, the chance to win the Nobel Prize, as the Soviet Union propelled, all unwittingly, Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Her books were born not only of talent, but from her own experiences in one of the most horrible of the communist regimes. Once established in the free world, Müller only had to set in order the shattering stories she had in mind. And she did it masterfully. Her subjects were different though, emphasizing the misery of a communist society which developed in another manner than the one presented by Solzhenitsyn. The novelty of her work consists also in the fact that she managed to create a new language inside a language as she likes to express it. It was a kind of defense mechanism developed by many Romanians at the time in order to be able to survive. Müller refers in her books to the dehumanization of the individual in communism, the indifference and lack of respect for human beings promoted by the state. The world described by Muller is an universe of fear, lies, constant pressure, almost as a prison camp. Anyone who lived in Romania during that time will recognize the relationship between the individual and the communist state who tried to crush every freedom and liberty of mind. Herta’s only release or escape from reality was to write. In her Nobel speech⁸⁰ on December 7th, 2009 she mentioned: Writing is a form of silence; the only connection permitted is between your head and your hand; the use of voice is not allowed.

In Romania, emerged from communist straps, Müller’s works were highly appreciated. One of her first volumes, with an autobiographical character, Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger⁸¹ appeared in 1992. The novel was used as a basis for a screenplay produced in 1993 by the famous Romanian director Stere Gulea, called The fox is the hunter⁸². Müller

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⁷⁹ In an interview at the Romanian Athenaeum on the 29th of september 2010.
⁸¹ Herta Müller, Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger, republished at the Humanitas Publishing House, in 2010.
⁸² The fox is the hunter is a film using Herta Müller ‘s novel Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger, presenting the events prior to Romanians uprising in Timişoara in December 1989.
represents a success story for the German/Romanian literature after years and years of unsuccessful attempts.

The nomination of some authors proved to be just a legend, as in the case of Titulescu and the Peace Prize. There were a lot of discussions about alleged recommendations sent to the Nobel Committee in Stockholm for Liviu Rebreanu and Lucian Blaga. It has been claimed that Rebreanu was the favorite for the Literature Prize in 1924 and that the Committee would have decided in the last moment in favor of the Polish writer Władysław Reymont. The same story repeated in 1956 in the case of Blaga who supposedly had a real chance to earn the distinction that year, but the communist regime allegedly sent envoys to Sweden to protest against the nomination. Following the contact with the competent institutions in Stockholm, it appears that there was no letter of recommendation for Blaga.

As a consolation remains the idea that many of the geniuses of literature were not to be found among the winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature: neither Chekhov or Leo Tolstoy, for instance, Marcel Proust or Henrik Ibsen, Strindberg, Unamuno, Emile Zola, Maxim Gorky, Esenin, Rainer Maria Rilke or Eugene Ionesco. Yet, all these illustrious writers omitted by the Committee, will remain valuable without having received the Nobel Prize.

But since the Nobel Institution represents one of the most powerful “mind recognition” in the world, there has been intriguing to see how many Romanians were, at a moment, sharing the company of world’s sharpest minds. In this context, the Nobel archives represent a stimulating source of information which helps present in a new light the achievements of writers and scientists. Interesting is not only the collaboration between Romanian scientists who wanted to promote their own fellow countrymen, but also the fact that some of the Romanian scientists were recommended

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83 [www.nobel.se / Nominations / database](http://www.nobel.se/Nominations/database). There is no letter of nomination for Rebreanu for this year.

84 Władysław Reymont (1867-1926) Polish writer whose name was actually Rejment, best known for his novels about peasants. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1924 being preferred to Thomas Mann, Maxim Gorky and Thomas Hardy.

85 It has been claimed for a long time that Rebreanu was nominated by Basil Munteanu, who lived in France at the time, at the initiative of Mircea Eliade. Basil Munteanu (1897-1972) Romanian literary historian, critic, philologist, member of the Romanian Academy. He is the author of a History of the Contemporary Romanian Literature written in French and published in 1938. This work has been translated into several languages and is the most famous History of Romanian Literature abroad.
for the Nobel Prize by members of the Karolinska Institute or the Swedish Academy. Although being in the right place at the right time did not play in favor of Romanian scientists and writers’s aspirations to gain the Prize, it is enthralling to track the path of their life and activity as (re)presented in the world of Nobel Institution.

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