

# ROMANIA'S AGRARIAN ECONOMY AND STRUCTURAL MUTATIONS FOR PASSING TO THE MODERN EPOCH

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## Abstract

*The world has always been a complicated conglomerate, in a continuous dynamic. The transition to the modern age, in the Romanian agrarian economy was a complex, lasting process with structural changes in the economy, in the technical activity, in the social life followed by mutations in the thinking of the entire society. The change of one mode of production, with another, of a social class, with another, has been carried out with the help of large determinisms, leaving visible traces, not only in rural areas, but also in urban areas. It was a lawlike, necessary and beneficial passage, that resulted in the placement and connection of Romania to the modern age. My study is the result of archival research, published papers, periodicals, general and special works, and is intended to be a synthesis of the most important legislative, economic, financial, social measures that have been necessary to restructure the romanian society, in general and the agrarian economy, in particular.*

**Key words:** *capitalism, restructuring, peasantry, agriculture*

**JEL Classification:** B11, B22

## 1. Introduction

The first visible signs of restructuring the Romanian society, of the transition to the modern age, showed with the first reign of Constantin Mavrocordat, in the Principality of Wallachia, under the influence of the Enlightenment ideas, by applying the first set of economic and administrative measures.

With the inherent difficulties specific to any beginning, the reforms encompassed the three Romanian Principalities, by creating of modern relationships, but with a slower pace.

"Between 1800 and 1848 years, the first signs of the capitalist economy are emerging and the Romanian Countries are moving from the Middle Ages to the modern period." [Djuvara 2013, p. 34]

Stimulated by trade and by the policy of reform of the central power, the agriculture has not expanded at the level of the given conditions by the good soil fertility, rich hydrographic networks and a favorable climate. Braking factors, besides the political and the low population density, they were: the unprofitability caused by the domination of the relations of free work rent and tithe, the low productivity of prevailing traditional agricultural techniques, the poor accumulation of capital and its non-participation in agricultural exploitation.

## 2. The measures for agriculture reforming

These did not have, first, in sight, the restructuring of the feudal system of production, For begining, the measures for agriculture reforming did not have first, in sight, the restructuring of the feudal system of production, they where merely, palliatives, which did not comply with the requirements of the free market.

The Organic Regulations, during the period 1821-1848 years, had operated some substantial restructurings regarding the right to own the estate, so that the owner acquires un exclusive use, over one third of the estate and the lots he is obliged to distribute to the inhabitants, they narrows, taking as a criterion a lower number of working cattle. Servitude duties were increased by growth of the working/day norm, ranging, from 12 compulsory and

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free days, to 48-56 days/year in Muntenia and in Moldova, even for 84 habitual days. In compensation, however, the tax burden was reduced and the new taxation system - the capita - has removed much abuses of the tax system.

The reducing of the the batch earth accorded to the submissive serf to the market influences and its attempt to expand it gave rise to the land conflict that has been cumulated with the aggravation of the serf work regime, will be the main cause for the peasantry to participate in the revolution of 1848 year.

### **3. Wage labor in agriculture**

Although experienced a gradual spread, has occupied a subsidiary role in the economy of the vast field, [Constantinescu 1998, p. 194-196] shifting, although more productive, to replace the free work and tithe relations that will prevail, until 1864 year.

### **4. The cultivation of the land and the leaseholding**

*The leaseholding* continued to play an important role in breaking down feudal relations. Although the lease form, after 1821 year, also had a partial feudal character, the lessee was, by definition, a merchant, because the main purpose of his business was trade. In this way, through the penetration of capital into agricultural exploitation, the commodity production was stimulated, especially after the abolition of the Turkish monopoly on the Romanian exports, mainly with grains and cattle.

*The cultivation of the land* - especially cereal production - was the area most affected by the social-political regime's vicissitudes and it was the central problem of the agrarian policy promoted by the throne, in order to ensure deliveries to the Porte, until 1829 year and later, on to the European market.

In order to *strengthen of the pace of development of agriculture*, the central power organized extensive campaigns for the expansion of cultivated areas, set up a executive branch of authority by appointing bailiffs with the forced removal of the inhabitants to field work and the introducing of new control methods, over the agricultural potential (statistical record of sowing). The thron itself, has preoccupied with the import of seed and the improvement of varieties, or the introduction of new plants into culture, fact which exemplifies the growth of the state's role in the economy that is related to the enlightenment and physiocratuall ideology of the time. [Lungu and Cosma 2002, p. 88]

*The measures which aimed at encouraging and co-involvement the small household of the serf, by ensuring the right to use the land* have protected the working time, banning the logging of the tools, measures for the territorial organization of the village, etc.

In full agreement with the agrarian policy, the demographic policy of reign was laid - care for the country's population by the immigration stimulating (granting temporary, of exemptions or reducing the taxes burden, for exempteds and the run prohibiting from the estates.

### **5. Cultivating the earth**

*Cereal crops*, although was extended, to the Organic Regulations, occupied limited areas and the small area of sowing is explained by the agro-pastoral system, traditionally practiced that imposed the decommissioning of at least half of the arable land, leave "for rest" and transformed In the pasture, to the restore fertility.

*The emergence of specialized literature* for the popularization of more cost-effective technical procedures for the introduction of more productive plants and varieties into crops, the improvement of the conditions for the preservation of cereal products, the organization of agronomic education, the use of the agronomists [Edroiu 1978, p. 53], the geometrists, the veterinarians, The importer of tools and agricultural machinery which followed to be

manufactured in the country, etc., all this illustrate the new stage in which agriculture was going, in all the Romanian provinces.

*The main cereals cultivated* were wheat and maize, the first being mainly for export. [Cojocaru 1958, p. 492] The predominant variety was the autumn that found exceptional conditions of soil and climate, especially in the Romanian Plain. The predominant authoritarian cereal that gave Romanian peasant food was maize, which in 1831, held almost 81% of the entire cereal production, of Wallachia (Table no. 1) and 55% in Moldova Table no. 2).

**Table no. 1 Grain harvest in Wallachia in 1831 year, expressed (in oca)**

County	wheat	%	barley oats	%	maize	%	millet	%
Sl. Râmnic	1009580	3,36	4378940	15,2	4918940	1,23	3623360	10,3
Brăila	310960	1,03	1381000	4,81	206080	0,05	1023400	2,92
Buzău	605100	2,01	1351280	4,71	8865600	2,22	1527000	4,36
Secuieni	1499240	4,99	1562880	5,45	18759240	4,71	3334680	9,52
Prahova	952400	3,17	291840	1,02	5414700	1,36	438000	1,25
Ialomița	292250	0,97	1374470	4,79	3087300	0,77	1521800	4,35
Ilfov	4370992	14,50	3057860	10,6	23210880	5,82	3287680	9,39
Dâmbovița	1146112	3,81	275260	0,96	23339120	5,85	1085216	3,10
Vlașca	5061936	16,80	2524980	8,80	20239296	5,08	4233152	12,09
Teleorman	3238576	0,78	2499552	8,71	50354304	12,63	6003360	17,05
Muscel	no data	-	no data	-	7246440	1,82	no data	-
Argeș	763800	2,54	207240	0,72	13209840	3,31	175560	0,50
Olt	1734480	5,77	1150272	4,01	22409200	5,62	5036560	14,38
Romanați	124640	4,11	1090360	3,80	16737600	4,20	1980704	5,66
Vâlcea	1153680	3,84	397680	1,39	24453480	6,13	no data	-
Gorj	968400	3,22	239400	0,83	61200000	15,35	85000	0,24
Dolj	2484592	8,27	2377830	8,29	21845824	5,48	1041040	2,97
Mehedinți	3218760	10,71	4535640	15,8	73101240	18,34	615240	1,76
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30045498</b>	<b>6,10</b>	<b>28696378</b>	<b>5,83</b>	<b>398599084</b>	<b>80,95</b>	<b>35011752</b>	<b>7,11</b>
<b>492352712</b>								

492352712 oca x 1,276 kg = 628.244.602 kg (1 oca = 1.276 kg; approx. 3 lbUK)

Source - Hurmuzaki, XVII, p. 268 (the report of the French consul Lagan, dated 15 March 1832, the equivalent of the 1.25 kg, indicated by the consul).

Rye was often grown wheat, usually 2/3 wheat and 1/3 rye, which created difficulties for export - after 1829 and barley and oats occupied large areas, especially in Moldova. Barley being very profitable was sold to the Ottoman army for horses and as a result, prices were more than five to six times higher than on the local market. The millet, sometime, the main cereal cultivated by peasants, was remained with a significant share in global cereal production.

*Vegetable growing*, with a pronounced commercial character, has seen a strong impetus, transforming large stretches of land into gardens, outside those around the house, especially near the cities and fairs. The impetus was given by the change and diversification of the diet, but also by the immigration of certain categories of Balkan populations. In the countryside, whole villages have specialized in gardening, using new techniques and acclimated vegetable seeds: pumpkins, eggplants, bay, okras, tomatoes, peppers, cauliflower and new cabbage varieties.

**Table no. 2 Grain harvest in Moldova, in 1831 (in kila)**

County	wwheat rye	%	barley oats	%	maize	%	millet buck- weat	%	No. peasant families
Suceava	6511	3,91	10700	8,46	17074	4,59	660	3,84	15663
Neamț	14219	8,53	21465	16,97	34104	9,17	291	1,69	19034
Roman	8779	5,27	8899	7,04	39415	10,60	41	0,24	11006
Bacău	6029	3,62	7147	5,65	57468	15,45	-	-	17760
Putna	5752	3,45	4302	3,40	42470	11,42	16313	9,50	22085
Tecuci	16709	10,0	12853	10,16	68997	18,5	3255	18,96	16388
Covurlui	69480	41,7	22186	17,55	13320	3,58	5550	32,32	9398
Tutova	7835	4,70	3904	3,09	18364	4,94	331	1,93	15791
Vaslui	3203	1,92	2254	1,78	15027	4,04	450	2,62	13353
Fălciu	5897	3,54	2191	1,73	6640	1,78	680	3,96	12557
Herța	1313	0,79	593	0,47	2508	0,67	99	0,58	3297
Dorohoi	7716	4,63	11306	8,94	22358	6,01	2707	15,76	10372
Botoșani	3777	2,27	8455	6,69	1262	0,34	540	3,14	8166
Hârlău	2287	1,37	2510	1,99	9954	2,68	190	1,11	8044
Cârligătura	1807	1,08	1239	0,98	6897	1,85	171	1,00	4010
Iași	5341	3,20	6442	5,09	16067	4,32	575	3,35	11859
<b>TOTAL</b> <b>682.296 hl</b>	<b>166655</b>	<b>24,4</b>	<b>126446</b>	<b>18,53</b>	<b>371934</b>	<b>54,52</b>	<b>17171</b>	<b>2,52</b>	<b>198783</b>

1 kila = 3,81 hl

Source - C. Istrati, loc. cit., p. 214, [equivalence, indicated by the author].

*Pomiculture* has been boosted due to increased money circulation, increased alcohol consumption, and the development of this horticultural branch, especially of plum orchards and necessary distilleries, was needed.

Encouraged by the gains obtained by the spirits selling, the prerogatives of the right to use the released land, the non-imposition of fruit at tithe and the policy of banning the importation of brandy, the villagers began, in the last decades of the 18th century, at the Sub-Carpathian area, to plant thousands of house plums trees, sometimes to the detriment of the fields and the hay surfaces, alarming the landlords.

In 1838 year, officially, Wallachia numbered 9,653,808 plums trees. In Moldavia and Transylvania, fruit growing has an extensive phase, but the plum tree will not occupy the same economic importance as the Muscel, Arges, Valcea, Prahova counties, probably, because of the widespread use of the Polish (under Polish influence) cereals.

The apple of the "domnesc - lordly" and "paradise" which were said to be the best in Europe

Were planted on large surfaces, the apple tree of the varieties "domnesc - lordly" and "paradise" which were the best of Europe.

*The vineyards* were a very important place in the Romanian economy. Annual production of wine was estimated by foreigners, at more than four million hectares - in Moldova in the last decade of the 18th century, and in Wallachia, in the first decades of the next century, over 300 million liters, productivity rening, by weather events, by the geographical area, but in the better years it could reach to 90-100 buckets at ½ hectar (bucket - old unit of measure for capacities, varying by region, between 13-15 liters; pogon - half a hectare, ie 5,000 sq. M.)

In Moldova, the most appreciated varieties were from Cotnari vineyards (which could compete with Tokay and Bordeaux), Husi, Iasi, Nicoresti, Odobesti; în Romanian Country (Wallachia) - in Dragasani, Pitesti, Ramnic, Secuieni and in Transylvania, in the Tarnava area.

*The culture of technical plants* - hemp and flax - although it is ancient and well managed, under the conditions of the climate and soil from us, on the whole - at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the period that followed, occupied a fairly modest place In the Principalities. More importance was given to them in Transylvania which exported fabrics

and apparel, at provincial sisters, to prices that discouraged local producers. The flax and hemp were cultivated, not only for the fabrics of woven fabrics and braids, required in the Ottoman Empire, but also for the oil extracted from seeds that took way to the Ottoman Gate. [Oțetea 1977, p. 39]. (For example, the export from 1826 was - 256,124 flax and hemp flakes, 34,230 helleys and 515 kilos of flax seed, accounting for 9,44% of the total value of that year's exports to Turkey. kila - an old unit for grain, equal to about 660 liters, in Wallachia and 430 liters, in Moldova.)

There was a series of plants from which natural dyes were extracted, used for the processing of hides and textiles, but also, dyes from the spontaneous flora.

*Tobacco*, a plant introduced into culture towards the end of the seventeenth century, expanded quickly but was of inferior quality. The extra-Carpathian area was competed with imported tobacco from Turkey (expensive, of good quality, requested by boyars) and Austria (cheap for peasants).

## **6. Animal breeding**

*Beefs rearing* has continued to be the main source of wealth favored by excellent natural conditions, the high availability of pastures, imposed by the insufficiency of workplaces and subordinated to the cultivation of the land, driven by trade, to a greater extent than the other branches of production (the price of cattle being Always, more profitable, higher export opportunities, greener transport, which encourages smuggling across the mountains).

This occupation was hindered by tax and tax system abuses, the cattle tax - the peasant's principal weath - being one of the largest and most secure sources of income, for the institution of the reign. The livestock has been harmed many times, because of natural disasters, wars, epizootics, etc.

For the peasant, the animal husbandry was not only a resource for living, solving transport problems and carrying out labor obligations, but in particular cattle were the only way to "make" money for paying tax debits, that is why the cattle were "his currency of exchange".[Oțetea 1977, p. 40]

As the peasant's main fortune, the number of cattle was taken as the basic criterion in the calculation of the tribute per household, the distribution of the lots and the fowls. Stimulating to receive larger areas, some more entrepreneurial peasants were able to own 40 or even 50 big cattle or even, a few hundred sheeps, even in the case of loaves, but most had one or two cattle or were completely deprived by them. (According to a statistic made immediately after the application of the Organic Regulations, the peasants owned 96,882 horses, 195,533 mares, 310,948 oxen, 51,542 bulls, 281,017 cows, 1,482,542 sheep, 213,337 goats, 345,428 pigs.) [Cojocaru 1958, p. 155]

Cattle breeding was also, driven by the fact that Turkey was still, a large market for sale. Appreciate for quality, the oxen of Principalities were also, requested in the markets of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia and the horses, by German princes, for easy cavalry and for reproduction. In Moldova, attempts were made, not all, to improve the races with those brought from Albania, some Asian countries, etc., and in Wallachia, with those brought, from Moldova.

Encouraged by profit, animal husbandry was the sector where, after viticulture, capital was invested. They appeared entrepreneurs who produced meat - nessary in Constantinople.

After the opening of European markets, has increased the interest in cultivation of the cereals required for export, but the one for the cattle husbandry, has decreased. In the peasant households, they were, usually grown, under the open skies, in the house's yard or in a confined space (enclosure), the stables being almost unknown in the peasant courts. This made the diminish herd, during overly cold and snowy winters.

Among domestic animals, the largest share held by the sheep, making the Romanian Principalities, among the first large sheep producers in Europe, after Spain, England and

France. Some boyars' houses and some richer monasteries had four or five flocks that numbered a few thousand sheep. Every year hundreds of thousands of sheep were exported to the Ottoman Empire.

According to some authors, up to four million sheep and goats were growing only in Wallachia, and if we add approximately the same number in Moldova and about two million from transylvanian transhumance, we can say that the number was very high, for the middle of the nineteenth century. During the same period, three main sheep breeds were known: tzigaiia - especially in Moldova, barsana and stogosha (hybrid from tzurcana and tzigaiia). With the development of the factory, in 1805 year, in Wallachia, successful attempts were made to acclimatise a Spanish breed but which did not work in Moldova.

The rearing of pigs, under semi-subsistence conditions, was stimulated by the beech and oak forests, by the expansion of maize cultivation, ponds and swamps which provided very good growth conditions for these animals, with low costs, especially along Danube. From Wallachia, the exports were made in Transylvania and Austria, and from Moldova, to Russia and Poland.

The swimmer birds were kept under the same conditions, usually in addition to ponds and lakes, which then were sold for the sole purpose of making money to pay for their capitation (direct tax).

The variety of honey and lime acacia and lime forests allowed the widespread growth of an older occupation - begging. The export of wax and honey was mostly made in Turkey.

*Fishing* (in ponds, rivers, the Danube, and in lakes) and hunting, ancient occupations, continued to provide food for the population (large consuming - cities and monasteries) and goods for export. [Constantinescu 1977, p. 212]

## **7. The agrarian reforms of the XIX-th century**

From the multitude of components of the complicated agrarian problems in Romania, the peasant issue, that is, emancipation through reforms, primarily through agrarian reform, has been at the center of the revolutionary programs since 1848 year. It has been achieved gradually, depending on the socio-political and context historical conditions.

*In Transylvania*, the solving of the peasant issue was done under the pressure of the masses, even during the revolution, when the Diet of Cluj, June 6, 1848, forced by circumstances, voted the law on the abolition of the corvee and tithe of the former serfs, become free owners. Because the allodial lands were left to the hands of the nobles, the landowning problem of the hundreds of thousands of dependent peasants could not be achieved. This was due to the abusive attitude of the land masters who postponed the entry into force of the law or applied it in their favor. [\*\*\* 1987, p. 260-261]

After the defeat of the revolution, all measures adopted in the period 1848-1849, with the exception of the agrarian reform, were canceled. By means of documents signed by the emperor, called imperial patents, which recognized the granting of rights, in 1853 - for Crisana, Banat, Maramures and in 1854 - for Transylvania, the content of the 1848 reform was broadened and expanded. Thus, the dependent peasants (who held a batch of land), formerly excluded from the landowning, were also given the right to property. The same principle was maintained, namely the area owned by the serfs, on 1 January 1848. The amount of 72 million florins was established as compensation for the 932,994 ha assigned to 173,781 family members.

*In Bessarabia*, the state of serfdom was initially, removed, from the middle of the eighteenth century (1749), along with the reforms of Constantin Mavrocordat, while this historical province was part of Moldova.

I make this analysis on Bessarabia, considering that the province is a Romanian territory, with Romanian inhabitants, temporarily located outside the borders of the country of origin.

The peasant reform project was approved by the Tsar of Russia on February 19, 1861. This reform eliminated serfdom. The peasant became free, and the land was considered to be the property of the landlords who were obliged to give batches of earth in use, named *nadels*. In return for the surface received, there is an obligation to work for the benefit of the landlord or to give money. The novelty of the reform was that the law gave to the peasants, the right to redeem the *nadel* and to become, after two years, peasant owners. As long as the *nadel* was used without being bought, the peasants remained dependent on the landlords, being in the "temporarily forced" situation. The law also provided for a new organization of the village administration. [Boldur 1992, p. 355-356]

The Imperial Order on 1886 peasant reform, reached only a small minority of the Bessarabian rural population, being applied seven years later, in 1868. [Boldur, 1992, p 359] Dependent peasants have been appropriated (In the county of Hotin, the peasant received 8 1/2 Russian *deseatina*, Soroca - 8-9 1/2, Orhei - 8, Balti - 9 1/2, Chisinau - 8-9 1/2, Tighina 10 1 / 2- 11 1/2, Cetatea Alba, 13 1/2. (Russian *deseatina* - old unit of measure for surfaces, about 180-220 square meters), taking into account the quality of the land, when each received between 8 and 13.5 hectares of land, while in other parts of Russia only one hectare and a half. Finally, the peasants received land in compensation, in 20 years. After the reform, over lived in Bessarabia 100,000 households on average - a hectare each; 200,000 families - on average 3.5 hectares and 157,000 families - over 8 hectares.

### **8. The agrarian reform in Romania and becoming peasants as owners**

This was the central element of the entire legislative work during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. Pentru rezolvarea problemei țărănești, domnitorul, sprijinit de prim ministrul Mihail Kogălniceanu, a trebuit să înfrângă puternica opoziție a marii boierimi conervatoare, spre a putea decreta Legea rurală, din 14/26 august 1864, care reprezintă prima reformă agrară din istoria României.

By law, 515,422 families were appropriated; Of them, 408,109, were to take possession of a crop lot ranging from 7,8 hectares to 2,2 hectares, and nearly 60,000 families were supposed to be content, with only a house batch and a garden batch. [Adaniloae and Berindei 1967, p. 343-344] Generally, the coordinates of the reform were the following: the area of the land received - 1,765,000 ha - with an average of 3.77 ha per family. Of the total of 6,300,000 - 6,400,000 ha of cultivation, as at that date, the large private and state property remained to the last, after landing, 4,500,000 to 4,600,000 cultivated hectares, to which Added most of the forest massif.[Jeromescu 1907, p. 144] . Out of all the flockers, 48,342 were married who received 228,328 hectares; at the same time a number of 106,714 villagers were bought from the state estates, small lots that reached a total area of 546,593 hectares.

The peasants became legally free, because the law was abolished for "forever and all over Romania, the bogerescu, the *dijma*, the *dove*, the *apple days*, the *wood chariots* and other such tasks." [Giurescu 1973, p. 86] After applying the law, there were about 108,000 families left without land, and about 130,000 families were landed with insufficient land (1-2 ha). The compensation was fixed at 200 million lei gold. In practice, a system of economic dependence was maintained, between large and small property that embraced the form of agricultural settlements.

### **9. Conclusions**

The agrarian economy of Romania has thrived, because by becoming free, it has created for the peasants the possibility of cultivating the land extensively, for the beginning, the increase of the number of all animal categories, the acclimatization of new plants and varieties, the coming in contact with the new methods of exercising farmer's job, facts that have increased and broadened the category of earth workers, created capitalist social relationships

Despite all its limitations, the 1864 agrarian reform essentially, means the first major step in the implementation of the social program of the revolution of 1848, with decisive effects on the country's social and economic structures, marking the moment of generalization of the capitalist relations in whole of the Romanian economy. [\*\*\*\* 1907, p. 409-410]

In comparison with the agrarian reforms in the center, eastern and south-eastern Europe, during the same period, is a qualitative difference, between the Romanian law and the imperial patents in Transylvania (1853-1854) [Kovacs 1973, p. 136], wich they have legislated a factual situation. They was not created a new major social category and numerous peasant owners, as in Romania.

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