

A. D. Xenopol on the Means of Improving Agriculture and the Romanian Villages

FLORICA ȘTEFĂNESCU

“Property is not only a right, but also an obligation.”
(A. D. Xenopol)

Florica Ștefănescu

Associate professor at the University of Oradea, a specialist in the history of economic thought and European economics. Author, among others, of the books **Gândirea economică a lui A. D. Xenopol** (The economic thought of A. D. Xenopol) (2003) and **Politici economice europene** (European economic policies) (2005).

THE PROBLEMS of agriculture and of the Romanian peasantry dominated the economic agenda of Romanian politicians between the second half of the 19th century and the First World War. They were approached by A. D. Xenopol (1847–1920) in no less than 39 studies, articles, reports and conferences, to which we can add those with a general economic character, while references to this problem are made in all of his studies, not only in the economic and historical ones. The true motivation of Xenopol in his endeavor to devise and apply some concrete measures for improving the peasants’ state is represented by the acknowledgement of the terrible situation in which peasants lived, as well as by his understanding and sympathy for this social category.

Legislative Measures

EVEN THOUGH Xenopol considered that the problem was not the absence of laws, but rather their defective application, he still pro-

posed many laws intended to clearly regulate certain matters and support the Romanian peasantry and agriculture. We believe that many measures suggested by Xenopol could have become the object of binding regulations. However, we shall include in the category of legislative measures only the ones Xenopol explicitly referred to as “laws.”

First, Xenopol argued firmly against some existent regulations or bills. Thus, he was against a new distribution of land to peasants, against a Rural House, against the idea that the state should buy the lands put up for sale in order to always have the necessary surfaces for a new distribution of lands, generally speaking, against any measures specific to “state socialism” and which “would accustom the peasant with the idea that he has the right to demand land from the state.”²¹ “Undoubtedly,” said Xenopol, “it is a very bad system to accustom the peasant to appeal to the state in all circumstances: schooling is free and so is the church service . . . when the peasants don’t have corn . . . they demand it from the state and the state gives it to them. The payment for this corn is delayed from one year to another and in the end the state cancels their debt, so the peasants become accustomed to be fed by the government. When they need land, the state helps again with lands given away without any selection.”²²

As argued by G. Zane, in formulating such ideas Xenopol did not defend the interests of the landlords, a category to which he did not even belong, but he “defends an outlook.”²³

More useful and more urgent, contended Xenopol, would be measures such as “revising and facilitating agricultural exchanges through state intervention,” “the easier lease of lands to peasants,”²⁴ as well as the support for peasants in “buying their own land when they feel the need to,”²⁵ even if it exceeded the maximum of 5 ha stated in the existent legislation, thus “forming even among the poor a real aristocracy.”²⁶

Considering matters from a political perspective, Xenopol appreciated the measures taken by the liberals for the encouragement of large-scale agriculture. In the same fashion, he criticized the initiatives of P. P. Carp’s government meant at “improving the peasants’ fate by changing their relation with the state,” such as the tax exemption for the peasants owning less than 6 ha of land. Xenopol considered the measure absurd and demagogical, as on the one hand it would have deprived the state of an income of at least 10 million lei every year, most peasants having less than 6 ha of land, and on the other hand it would not have improved their condition at all, the tax amounting to only a few lei per year.

Xenopol also raised a matter of principle, arguing that “tax is the permanent link between state and individual. It is the only thing constantly demanded at specific intervals, and it is dangerous for the very idea of state to sever this connection between citizens and the body politic.”²⁷

During the peasant revolts of 1907, Xenopol did not agree with the law which prevented tenants “from holding more than 4,000 ha of land” and which “allows the Public Minister to demand the annulment of existing contracts either directly or through intermediaries.”⁸ Xenopol considered that this law affected the tenants without helping the peasants, because the decrease in rented surfaces would not have determined the tenants to lower the price of subleasing. In addition, this law contravened to the principle of the freedom of transactions. Instead, he proposed a law which directly affected the peasants and which stated two things: “a) each owner or tenant should rent a part of his land to the peasants living on that land, at the price paid by the tenant to the landlord, a price which should remain unchanged in the future or maybe decrease; b) the obligation of the peasants to plow and fertilize the land and to pay the rent.”⁹ Xenopol even proposed that the state should take the land from the landlords “who can but do not want to put their land to good use,” starting from the idea that property “is not only a right, but also an obligation.”¹⁰

An important law, according to Xenopol, would have been the law for the establishment and functioning of a rural bank meant to extend loans in advantageous conditions to peasants, thus allowing them to rent or buy land. However, the bank itself was not to buy land in order to resell it to peasants. The law was to exclude any grace periods or rescheduling of debt, because “the peasants should realize that while affordable loans are readily available, they must always be careful to return the money in time lest they should just as easily jeopardize their fortune.”¹¹

Xenopol thought that, despite all possible inconveniences and difficulties, laws had to be passed in order to: 1. set the rent for the land subleased to peasants; 2. set the price of agricultural works (measures adopted by the liberal government of 1907–1911); 3. ensure the correct measurement of the rented land and of the land worked by the peasant; 4. provide penalties for all categories of abuses committed by tenants, owners, peasants or the state. In connection with abuses, Xenopol claimed that they were to be considered no longer misdemeanors but rather instances of “fraud . . . and therefore felonies.”¹² In what concerns the peasants’ abuses, he referred to the “Russian law” that “sentences to one month in prison the laborer who does not willingly come to work at the time agreed upon or who leaves before finishing it. The same punishment is applied to the laborer who works for several employers at the same time and is paid in advance for work he knows cannot be done in time.”¹³ Such regulations were necessary, according to Xenopol, because the peasants could not be allowed to do as they wished.

Taking the matter to its logical conclusion, Xenopol contended that, as a consequence of the application of the aforementioned regulations, “with the peas-

ants paying less for the land rented to them and getting more money from agricultural labor, they will certainly save some money from the annual gains and this money, combined with other measures . . . will increase their savings at the popular bank and will enable them to meet the conditions imposed for the extension of loans from the agricultural bank. By renting land . . . the peasants will become rich . . . and will even manage to buy land for themselves.²¹⁴

Another law suggested by Xenopol is the one concerning pastures, inspired by the law on forests. Thus, reckless landlords would have been prevented from planting crops on the entire surface they held in order to increase their income from the sale of grain. The same law was to regulate the obligation of each tenant and of each landowner “to leave one part of his land for pasture.”²¹⁵ The peasants would send their cattle to graze there for a certain price, and the law was to stipulate the “number of cattle allowed on the pasture.”²¹⁶ Combined with other measures, such as the creation of manmade pastures, this would have solved a great problem facing Romanian agriculture and the peasants: the steady decrease in the number of cattle, with all the negative consequences that it entailed for both agriculture and peasant life.

A very important law, Xenopol claimed, was the one against loan sharks, providing not only for lower interest rates but for fines against the lender “amounting to the surplus of interest.”²¹⁷ This would have reduced the financial exploitation of the peasants, subjected to huge pressure and often forced to resort to this kind of loans. Such a law would have completed the law concerning the organization and functioning of the rural bank, bringing thus hope to the peasants.

Xenopol thought that a forestry law regulating private woods had to be passed alongside the existing one concerning the public forests. This law would have regulated the exploitation of private forests and prevent the irrational felling of trees, useful, according to the peasant mentality, only as firewood. Furthermore, landlords were to plant trees in the places unsuitable for agriculture, putting an end to their continuing deterioration and turning into “productive lands those that do not bring any income today.”²¹⁸ Generally speaking, Xenopol considered, the law should provide for the large-scale planting of trees all over the country “in order to restore the decreasing number of trees,”²¹⁹ a phenomenon with negative effects on the quality of the air and also on the beauty of the forests.

In social terms, a very important law would be the law against drinking, targeting both the drinker and the supplier. The law, indicated Xenopol, should provide “very harsh punishment for the pub owners who sell drinks on credit, credit that could not be challenged, and who barter their liquor.”²²⁰ This law was to reduce the number of pubs and ban alcoholics from public office. While measures against alcoholism were clearly necessary, governments avoided adopt-

ing such laws arguing that they would have affected individual freedom. The real motive were the interests of those making money from alcohol consumption: the alcohol producers and the state. Unchecked alcoholism, however, threatened to “sap even the remaining vigor of this terribly afflicted nation.”²¹ The most radical means of fighting drinking in excess would be, according to Xenopol, a state monopoly on the sale of alcohol, but he was aware of the fact that this would not be accepted by all decision makers.

Xenopol also envisaged a series of regulations concerning the educational policy, particularly in what concerned agricultural schools. He believed that peasants should be made to see education with different eyes, and therefore demanded as an immediate measure the reduction with six months of the military service for literate peasants. Xenopol thought that this measure would decrease the number of illiterate peasants and put an end to a situation in which Romania found itself lagging “even behind the Bulgarians.”²² In their turn, agricultural schools had to be restructured. Their number was to increase and they should become more attractive for the young men, presently offered the chance of a shorter military service and promising job prospects. The agricultural schools should offer, according to Xenopol, three specializations: notaries, who should deal with all the real problems of the village, the mayor having only political duties; itinerant agronomists, who should disseminate knowledge of modern scientific agriculture; village inspectors, who should verify all documents and activities in the village. In order to ensure the presence of agricultural school graduates in such positions, the law was to forbid them from taking any other job, with the exception of special situations in which gifted young people could take additional exams and attend other theoretical courses.

Xenopol was convinced of the necessity of such a regulation in a country where agriculture was the basic branch of the economy and where most people worked in agriculture. Xenopol thought that the schools for teachers should also be restructured, as well as the theological seminaries, because it was ridiculous for a country priest to know Greek and Latin, but not to be able to teach peasants how to raise silk worms.

Measures Having an Economic Character

ACCORDING TO Xenopol, the first and most important measure was the establishment of a national industry, which would mark the end of all problems and threats faced by an agricultural country. This idea must have been borrowed from E. List, who had said that “agriculture thrives not when dominant, but when properly counterbalanced by industry.”²³

Xenopol argued that in the past agriculture had been enough to cover existing needs, but “today the demands of a more affluent lifestyle cannot be met by an old system of generating wealth,”²⁴ both privately and publicly. The needs of the country had increased: roads, bridges, railroads, a powerful army, and for all of these money was needed. Consequently, survival demanded the development of a national industry and the elevation of labor itself: “From the rough, beastly toil, to the intelligent work worthy of a human being.”²⁵

While in his first economic studies Xenopol had advocated a large industry, at the end of the 19th century he favored agricultural industries, processing the local produce and encouraging the diversification of crops, thus diminishing the risk of losses. The transition from an extensive to an intensive agricultural model would make more land available for grazing. This would in turn favor animal husbandry and lead to an increase in the availability of manure. The livestock could be sold as such or processed into canned meat, glue, dairy products, fabrics, etc. by the new factories. This way, “instead of exporting at low prices the products of our land in the primitive form of cereals, we would export them after processing and at a higher price.”²⁶

Xenopol believed that the industrial movement should not begin with fineries such as silk and velvet, but with cloth and ropes, for which the raw materials were readily available. In addition, he believed it necessary to bring in foreign specialists (“of Latin origin, of course”) who could teach us how to process hides and wood or make rope, also increasing our population.

On the other hand, peasants had to give greater importance to both land and cattle. The peasants were to have the obligation of plowing the land in autumn, when more time was available. Thus, in winter, the roots of the weeds would have frozen, eventually making the peasants’ work easier.

The peasants had to give up the practice of monoculture, which impoverished the land and provided them and their families with improper nutrition, and start cultivating other plants than just corn: other cereals—wheat, barley, millet—and also vegetables—potatoes, lentils, pea, etc. A varied nutrition, privileging bread over polenta, would have reduced “corn, like in almost every country in the world, to animal fodder.”²⁷

Another solution to the problems of animal husbandry was the creation of manmade pastures, with clover or alfalfa, knowing that “in Europe, generally, with the exception of Switzerland, England and the Netherlands, because of the special conditions in that countries, natural pastures have almost disappeared, being replaced by the clearly more productive manmade ones.”²⁸ Even if the manmade pastured had to be plowed more deeply, this was to be done only once every seven years and peasants could join forces and use more oxen at one time.

To ensure the quality of agricultural works, peasants who had rented land were to be obliged to hire graduates of an agricultural school as their knowledgeable and skilful “foremen,” who would also recommend the type of seed adequate for plating. These people were to receive a monthly salary, representing a percentage of the net revenue of the farm. “If hired for a fixed monthly amount, they won’t do anything important,” Xenopol warned.²⁹ In their turn, they were to be accountable to representatives of the ministry of agriculture, because, as Xenopol sorrowfully admitted, even the village communities who “sought the leadership of more enlightened minds . . . fell victim to the malice of the leaders” who turned out to be conmen stealing from the peasants under the aegis of the ministry that had recommended them.³⁰

Xenopol deplored the fact that some works like drainage, irrigation or fertilization, common in almost all European countries, were not used here, because of ignorance or recklessness. He also demanded the widespread use of machinery, as that would have speeded up the works and increased their efficiency, also protecting the cattle by sparing them from such toil. The cattle had to be better tended to, receive more and better fodder, including pumpkins, turnips, beet, etc.; they had to be housed in stables and barns and properly cleaned. Besides, they were to be used for work only after reaching full maturity, because while “cattle here grow as if in the wild, they are put to work like domesticated beasts.”³¹ Xenopol did not believe that a changing of breeds through the adaptation of new ones to conditions in our country could produce better results than the “constant attention given to native breeds.”³² The precise application of these measures was to be verified by village inspectors, paid according to the number of bad habits they rooted out. In their turn, compliant peasants were to be rewarded, while the stubborn ones had to be punished.

We consider that most of the economic measures envisaged by Xenopol are very relevant and justified, but we must admit that many of them were hard to implement, as demonstrated by later developments. Fully aware of this fact, even Xenopol suggested that some of them be tested in pilot villages. If unsatisfactory, they were to be discarded and new and more suitable measures sought in their stead.

Measures Having an Administrative Character

XENOPOL ENUMERATED a set of such measures, from the ministerial reorganization necessary for the application of other measures to the practical initiatives requiring the involvement of the local administration.

The first measure was the systematization of villages and farms according to certain plans requiring the systematic construction of rows of houses. Large or small, the houses were to have tall doors and large, symmetrical windows. “Mayors should insist that when a house is built, they also erect a stable for the cattle and other outbuildings: barns, pens, coops, sties, etc., all of them sporting some decorations, such as a wooden flower in the center of the wall.”³³

For Xenopol, a house would not meet the practical and aesthetical demands if it did not have a flower-bed, a vegetable garden and trees for shade, as well as a yard enclosed by a wattle fence, a hedge, or at least by a “bank and ditch.”³⁴

An important problem, according to Xenopol, was the building of rural roads, which would facilitate the peasants’ movement.

Another important administrative measure envisaged by Xenopol was to end the itinerant trade in grain and other village produce and, concomitantly, to organize fairs in the nearby boroughs or towns. This measure would help the peasants obtain a price closer to the real one by directly selling their produce, without any middlemen. The peasants were to sell bigger amounts of produce, following the establishment of direct connections with the Danube ports or with the harbor in Constanța. For this, barns and sheds were needed in each village, ready to store the crop surplus of each peasant.

For a better diet, peasants were to be taught how to make bread from wheat flour, especially since wheat was less risky a crop than corn. Peasants could not object that baking bread took longer than making polenta, for bread was baked only once a week. As an experiment, bread ovens were to be introduced in each village, baking bread for the entire community. Similarly, each village would have benefited from the presence of a more efficient loom, operated by the more skilful women. If useful and efficient, such looms would have been most certainly purchased by other peasants as well.

Moreover, even the men were to do some jobs during the winter, because the forced winter repose meant that peasants lived for a whole year just off the work done in summer. Furthermore “idle time is the devil’s time.”³⁵ Thus, they could make wicker or straw mats or baskets, rope, or rustic furniture, wheels or other implements.

Xenopol passionately suggested that peasants use winter in order to study and learn about the agrarian economy and how to apply more efficient methods during the following year. In this respect, extremely useful would have been a village center, a place for the practice of various crafts and for lectures in wintertime, and for the raising of silkworms during summer.³⁶

Xenopol justly contended that the peasantry had always been neglected by the governing class. Even when something was done, this was more the natural evolution of things that the outcome of the decision-makers’ concerns. Several attempts

were made to introduce fourth class rail cars, but these were abandoned as economically inefficient. This angered Xenopol, who argued that the other classes were equally inefficient and that the fraction of the transportation costs “not covered by the price of the ticket is paid by those who toil in the fields, looking in wonder at the metal dragon darting across the plains irrigated with their sweat.”³⁷

Other administrative measures concerned public health and the prevention of those diseases that sapped the physical and moral strength of the Romanian peasantry. Thus, while in terms of birthrates Romania was fourth in Europe, with 41–43‰, it was also third in terms of mortality rates, with 30‰, the child death rate reaching 20‰.³⁸

In the report presented to the Romanian Academy on Xenopol’s *Studies in Economics*, I. Felix challenged the author’s affirmation that agricultural work, in which women were forced to take part, consumed their psychological strength, making them incapable of having healthy babies. “We see, on the contrary,” wrote I. Felix, “that peasant children, although fewer in number than those of industrial workers, are generally healthier, and that the death rate among children is higher in industrial communities and lower in the agricultural communities, that the industrial work of the mother and sedentary life make her a little less capable of giving birth to healthy children than the modest agricultural works.”³⁹ Xenopol seemingly paid little attention to environmental problems and did not realize the negative impact of industrial development on the ecosystem, on the health of the people in special, exclaiming at one point: “When the blue sky of Romania is clouded by the dark smoke of our factories, when instead of the shepherd’s song that echoes in our mountains we hear the infernal noise of hammers and machines, when our cities are changed into workers’ camps, then and only then . . . we will be certain of our existence and look with confidence at the long future ahead of us.”⁴⁰

Concerning the ague or the swamp colds, Xenopol accused the authorities of not taking measures to drain the swamps located inside the country, if those along the Danube were more difficult to drain. This required the joint effort of all stakeholders: the governments who should earmark the necessary funds in their budget, plus doctors and village inspectors to supervise the work. The results would be an incontestable improvement in terms of public health, eliminating the underlying causes instead of targeting the effects by administering quinine to the sick people.

In the scientist’s opinion, even pellagra could be defeated. But for this to happen, caution was needed in order to eliminate old and spoiled food from one’s diet, and peasants also had to be persuaded to stop eating fresh corn from their own harvest, by giving them communal ovens to dry it and finally eat it properly. They were also to be encouraged to gradually replace polenta with bread.

Also, syphilis, a disease with physical effects but with moral causes, especially the bad habits of soldiers, could be controlled by way of a twofold measure: ordering soldiers to go to church on Sundays, recover the old beliefs and change their evil ways, and keeping soldiers infected with syphilis in the hospital at the end of their military service until their complete recovery.

Also, Xenopol proposed a better organization and functioning of rural pharmacies: charging an authorized person with the management of medicines and of the pharmacy; stopping or at least limiting the distribution of free medicine; raising the income of the rural medical staff.⁴¹

Community Measures

THE NUMBER of measures in this category identified by Xenopol is relatively small, a natural thing given the fact that for this period in the Romanian villages there was no strong community feeling or solidarity, even if it sporadically manifested itself in case of danger or during peasant riots.

An important role in bringing together the rural community and in providing help is given by Xenopol to a few state employees: teachers, priests, village inspectors, itinerant agronomists, mayors. First of all, they should give an example to the peasants in terms of setting up and running an establishment. Then they should organize communal activities allowing peasants to solve some of the problems of the village: building a paved road, clearing briar patches, planting the bluffs and the desolated places, the roadsides and the edges of the fields with saplings offered by the state. He recalled with regret the order given by Spiru Haret, minister of public instruction, but never applied, an order whereby a tree should be planted by every child in the village. Finally, they should hold weekly lectures on the priorities in a peasant's life, which "could have but positive effects and awaken them from their mental slumber."⁴²

HIS STUDIES on the economic situation of Romanian agriculture, peasantry and villages and the remedial measures proposed reveal the constant interest showed by Xenopol in this problem, an interest derived from his strong feelings of sympathy for his people. The press of that time stated that "The whole brochure [*Means of Correcting the Romanian Peasantry's State*, our note] shows his great love for the peasantry, a love derived from his clear understanding of the present situation, from his in-depth comprehension of our present and past social condition."⁴³



Notes

1. A. D. Xenopol, "Mijloace de îndreptare a stării țărănimii române," *Arhiva Societății Științifice și Literare din Iași* 18, 6 (June 1907): 253.
2. A. D. Xenopol, "Farmaciile rurale," *Noua revistă română* (Bucharest) 3, 19 (13 Sept. 1909): 294.
3. G. Zane, "Concepția economică a lui A. D. Xenopol," *Viața românească* (Bucharest), new ser., 25, 9 (Sept. 1972): 109.
4. A. D. Xenopol, "Chestiunea țărănească de V. M. Kogălniceanu," *Analele Academiei Române: Dezbateri* (Bucharest), 2nd ser., tome 29 (1906–1907): 370.
5. Xenopol, "Mijloace de îndreptare," 254.
6. *Ibid.*
7. A. D. Xenopol, "Demagogie neînțeleasă," *Opinia* (Iași) 8, 1216 (27 Jan. 1911).
8. A. D. Xenopol, "Mijloacele de-a liniști răscoalele țărănești," *Românul literar* (Bucharest) 3, 8 (11 March 1907): 106.
9. *Ibid.*, 107.
10. A. D. Xenopol, "Despre naționalism," *Convorbiri literare* (Iași), new ser., 3, 7 (1972): 268.
11. Xenopol, "Mijloace de îndreptare," 256.
12. *Ibid.*, 261.
13. *Ibid.*, 264.
14. *Ibid.*, 261.
15. *Ibid.*, 300.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, 311–312.
18. A. D. Xenopol, "Plantațiunile," *Zorile* (Iași) 1, 3 (June 1902).
19. A. D. Xenopol and A. Mironeanu, *Industria mătasei* (Bucharest: Socec, 1896), 41.
20. Xenopol, "Mijloace de îndreptare," 308.
21. *Ibid.*, 307.
22. *Ibid.*, 304.
23. F. List, *Sistemul național de economie politică*, trans. (Bucharest: Ed. Academiei, 1973), 277.
24. A. D. Xenopol and V. C. Buțureanu, *Industria berei și impozitul* (Bucharest: Socec, 1895), 9.
25. A. D. Xenopol, "Agricultura și comerțu," *Românul* (Bucharest), 13 Sept. 1880: 842–843.
26. Xenopol and Buțureanu, 14.
27. A. D. Xenopol, "Greniers de réserve et fours communaux," *Mouvement économique* (Bucharest) 1, 2 (1905): 444.
28. A. D. Xenopol, "L'Amélioration de la condition des paysans en Roumanie," *Mouvement économique* 12, 67 (1 June 1910).
29. Xenopol, "Mijloace de îndreptare," 295.
30. A. D. Xenopol, "Agricultura țărănească I," *Noua revistă română* 3, 23 (11 Oct. 1909): 357.

31. Ibid.
32. Xenopol, "Mijloace de îndreptare," 301.
33. Ibid., 316.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 315.
36. Ibid., 314.
37. A. D. Xenopol, "Starea economică a țăranului român," *Revista idealistă* (Bucharest) 1, 3 (1 May 1903): 446.
38. Xenopol, "Mijloace de îndreptare," 305.
39. "Raport asupra 'Studiilor economice' de A. D. Xenopol, întocmit de dr. I. Felix," *Analele Academiei Române: Dezbateri*, 2nd ser., tome 5 (1882–1883): 180.
40. A. D. Xenopol, "Starea noastră interioară: Economia, funcționarismul," *Românul*, 14 Sept. 1880: 850.
41. Xenopol, "Farmaciile rurale," 295.
42. Xenopol, "Mijloace de îndreptare," 314.
43. *Vieața nouă* (Bucharest) 4, 3 (1908).

Abstract

A. D. Xenopol on the Means of Improving Agriculture and the Romanian Villages

The paper briefly presents the measures proposed by the Romanian scholar A. D. Xenopol (1847–1920, historian, philosopher, economist and social thinker) for the improvement of Romanian agriculture, peasantry and villages in the second half of the 19th century. These legislative, economic, administrative and social measures were likely to contribute to the improvement of the Romanian peasantry's life, to the prosperity of the Romanian villages and to the effectiveness of Romanian agriculture. While he did not blame anybody for the poor state of Romanian agriculture, as it was—in his opinion—the result of historical fatality, he considered that the future was exclusively the responsibility of social forces: peasantry, landlords, bourgeoisie, and the political class. For this reason, he sought to identify and emphasize the means of changing this state of affairs, of improving the peasants' situation, starting with the measures that could eliminate abuse.

Keywords

A. D. Xenopol, Romanian agriculture, Romanian peasantry, Romanian village, second half of the 19th century