This article was downloaded by: [New York University]

On: 16 February 2015, At: 11:15

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Journal of Geography

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjog20>

The Grape Harvest in Asia Minor

Isabel M. Blake ^a

^a Hampton Institute , Hampton, Va

Published online: 07 Feb 2008.

To cite this article: Isabel M. Blake (1918) The Grape Harvest in Asia Minor, Journal of Geography, 16:7, 265-266, DOI: [10.1080/00221341808983840](https://doi.org/10.1080/00221341808983840)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00221341808983840>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

THE GRAPE HARVEST IN ASIA MINOR

By ISABEL M. BLAKE

Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va.

THE grapes of Asia Minor have a greater food value than most of our species, being more meaty and substantial. The peasants almost live on grapes and bread during certain seasons of the year. The district just south of the Turus and east of the Amanus Mountains, west of the western-most bend of the Euphrates and north of Aleppo is one of the most famous grape regions of the Turkish empire.

With the Armenians, the beginning of the grape harvest is at "Water Easter," early in August, a festival in commemoration of Gregory the Baptizer, founder of their church. On this day, the people are wont playfully to "baptize" each other in the streets, and the fountains are surrounded by groups of merry, dripping children, who make a game of throwing water and dodging it. On that day, also the people first repair to the vineyards, as there is a superstition, strictly observed, that grapes should not be gathered before this festival. On that evening, for the first time of the year, donkeys bring home baskets loaded with the juicy fruit, and every peasant whom you meet will offer you a bunch of the first-fruit of his vineyard.

For those of the city people who own vineyards, the grape-harvest constitutes the summer outing. They live in their vineyards for several weeks, enjoying the fresh air and freedom, and gathering the different choice varieties that succeed each other, such as the "Bubble", a delicate white grape from which the skin may be removed, or the "Colonel," a hard, rich, ruddy kind.

In October comes a species that is not considered edible, but, being small, tasteless and very prolific, is used in the manufacture of grape sugar, and sweet-meats. It is interesting to visit the place where this process is going on.

Several owners of vineyards generally combine to build a crude sugar refinery. This consists of a row of stone huts where the workmen sleep, a stone or iron kettle, into which the grape-juice runs through great troughs, from the press where it is tramped out by the feet of workmen. It is a comfort to notice that these men always wash their feet carefully before entering the press, so that perhaps one ought not to object to this method of working, any more than to a cleanly woman kneading bread.

The juice is boiled and skimmed in great kettles, and the whole place reminds one strongly of a maple sugar camp, except for the difference in season, and in the product. This last is a very delicious molasses. Sometimes it is boiled down and beaten

till it is almost as hard as butter and is very light. It is called *pek mez*.

At this time of year every home becomes a candy factory. The art of making the grape-juice sweets requires great skill, and the women who can do it acquire special fame. It is the custom for several related households to gather in the court-yard of one, and manufacture all the sweets to be laid up for consumption that year. When they have finished at one house, they all gather at the next. For three weeks, all members of all the households are busy making rounds, helping to prepare the sweets, under the direction of the most skilled members of the family. The whole time and the entire house of any one family is given up to this process, and afterwards, there is a grand house-cleaning.

It is worth while to visit a court-yard where this is going on. In one corner is a stone fire-place over which is a huge iron tub, full of the boiling juice. At a certain stage, starch is mixed with this to give coherence to the sweets. These are of different forms. Whole bolts of white cotton cloth are spread on the pavement and covered with a coating of the grape and starch mixture. When hardened it comes up in sheets, from which pieces are torn and folded carefully into layers with spices, sugar and chopped nuts between. Or halves of walnuts; pistachios or almonds are tied at regular intervals on long strings. These are dipped in the grape-juice and starch, and hung on racks, where they harden and form the Oriental "stick of candy". Into the residue in the pan, cracked wheat and spices are stirred, forming a sweet, sticky cake.

A Westerner does not acquire a taste for these sweets at once, for they seem insipid, but the hot, thick molasses, or the cool "grape butter" are delicious.

Before the war, considerable quantities of these peculiar sweets were shipped to New York, for the consumption of our Oriental population.

Professors C. K. Leith and V. C. Finch, of the Department of Geology and Geography of the University of Wisconsin, have been called to Washington to serve as expert assistants to the U. S. Shipping Board, Professor Leith in connection with minerals and Professor Finch in the capacity of agricultural geographer. Both have leave of absence from the university for the present semester. Professor Walter S. Tower of the Department of Geography of the University of Chicago is acting in a similar capacity.