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The Adventures of Marco Polo

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Freedman, Russell. *The Adventures of Marco Polo*. Illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline. Scholastic Books, 2006. ISBN 043952394x. \$17.99. 63 p.

Reviewer: Cassandra Fugal

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Explorers--Italy--Biography--Pictorial works--Juvenile literature; Polo, Marco--1254-1323?--Pictorial works--Juvenile literature; Asia--Description and travel--Pictorial works--Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

Marco Polo was not the first European to travel the Silk Road to China but the stories of his adventures spread throughout Europe. But to Thirteenth century Europe the stories of his journey to the court of Kublai Khan and his adventures in his empire seemed too fantastic to be true. Using different versions of Polo's own story, *The Description of the World*, Freedman recounts Marco Polo's voyage in this well written and accessible story for the modern reader. Ibatoulline's beautiful illustrations replicate artwork that depicts the time period or the places to which Polo traveled. In addition to Polo's own story, Freedman uses many other sources to give the reader a historical background of the time period and the places that Marco Polo visited. Freedman also uses these sources to introduce the debate that has raged for centuries: are the adventures Marco Polo described in *The Description of the World* true? Did he in fact travel to China and serve Emperor Kublai Khan? Freedman creates the right balance between depicting Marco Polo's adventures and debate that surrounds them. And Freedman lets the readers decide for themselves the truth of Marco Polo's adventures.