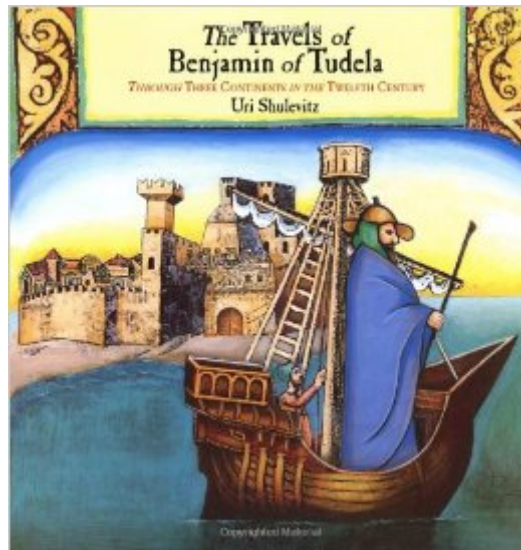


The book was found

The Travels Of Benjamin Of Tudela: Through Three Continents In The Twelfth Century



Synopsis

Through Three Continents in the Twelfth Century Imagine a time when streets were narrow and dirty, towns were surrounded by walls, brigands lurked alongside roads that were treacherous and few, bridges over rivers were rare, and a man setting out on a journey never knew if he would return alive. It was the year 1159 when the medieval Jewish traveler Benjamin left his native town of Tudela in northern Spain on an adventure to see the places he had read about in the Bible. He traveled for fourteen years - from Rome to Constantinople to Jerusalem to Baghdad, among others - by ship, by cart, and on foot, enduring great hardships in his quest for knowledge of other places and people. Working from Benjamin's original chronicle, written in Hebrew, as well as other sources on the period, Uri Shulevitz captures the true spirit of this amazing adventurer, using a text written in the first person and superlative illustrations. *The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela* is a 2006 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 920L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 48 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR); 1st edition (April 6, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374377545

ISBN-13: 978-0374377540

Product Dimensions: 10.8 x 0.5 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (10 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #482,649 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #54 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > European](#) #97 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Exploration & Discoveries](#) #134 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Medieval](#)

Age Range: 9 - 13 years

Grade Level: 3 and up

Customer Reviews

Beautifully written and illustrated, *The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela* takes us on an incredible journey through the ancient Jewish world into the Diaspora nine hundred years ago. As the story unfolds, we visit one enchanting city after another and experience with our imaginations and

amazing illustrations the sights, sounds, and smells of each beautiful and mysterious location. Don't miss this great adventure!

Introducing primary aged children to history is essential. A well-designed picture book is one method worth pursuing. Anyone seeking information about medieval life should read *The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela: Through Three Continents in the Twelfth Century* (Douglas & McIntyre Publishing Group, 2005). This book is written by award-winning author and illustrator, Uri Shulevitz. It is a fictionalized first-person account of Tudela's 14-year journey. Twenty-first century children are accustomed to a wide array of modern conveniences. Being able to imagine the primitive lifestyle of the Middle Ages is enhanced by the reading of first-hand accounts. Unfortunately, few pertinent documents have survived. Benjamin's Hebrew account is among the most famous. Benjamin introduced his contemporaries to some places that were previously unknown while maintaining a nonchalant voice. These original writings are usually reserved for historians and adult history buffs. Using extensive research funded by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Uri combined many of the factual elements of Benjamin's Hebrew writings with a fictionalized voice. Benjamin's words and thoughts allow modern readers to visualize the perils of traveling during this turbulent time while learning about many historical events. Modern day adventurers have the luxury of traveling by plane, modern railroad systems, and via luxury cruise ships. Benjamin's bare bones land treks were accomplished by traveling by foot and in wagons. Sea travel was faster, but limited to rudimentary barges and small boats. Pirates, diseases, and inclement weather were major concerns. In the beginning of the book, Uri provides a map of Benjamin's travels. This illustration reveals Benjamin's amazing accomplishments. He left his home in Spain and bravely explored Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Persia, China, and Egypt before he made his way back to Tudela, Spain. Uri skillfully added many facts that provided a colorful and thought provoking overview of medieval life. He simultaneously put different events and places into historical perspective. Readers young and old will be inspired to want to learn more about the interactions between Christian Crusaders and Muslims. The role of the Assassins or Hashishin is likewise a noteworthy aspect of medieval history. Benjamin's journey is seen through the eyes of a European Jew. Thus, his perceptions are based on a Jewish mindset that ties each place to Jewish history and survival. Uri's illustrations add to the understanding of Benjamin's journey. The vibrant colors help to engage the reader. *The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela: Through Three Continents in the Twelfth Century* would be the perfect book to share with

anyone who is interested in the Middle Ages, notable European sites, and Jewish history.

I read this with my 7-year-old daughter, and we both loved it. It's a fascinating story that effortlessly weaves in history and geography. The pictures are beautiful.

To say this is a picture book is misleading. This book is a work of art and history for readers 8 through 12, with mature 5 to 7 year olds enjoying this as a read-aloud in sections for a few nights running. Uri Shulevitz's captivating artwork always sets apart his books, but in this case, his writing is also truly magnificent. Told largely in a first-person narrative adapted from the Hebrew with additional historical sources, Shulevitz really runs with the voice of Benjamin. He becomes as compelling as the true-life adventure he tells. As a gift (or even as class project), it would make a neat paring with Demi's *Marco Polo*, which is less readable, though similar in theme and also with gorgeous artwork. Boys will particularly like this book, I think.

Straightforward book of the wanderings of a Jewish man around the Mediterranean and Persia in the 1100's. Does not go much into the dangers of travel, and mostly recounts how unpleasant and difficult the journey itself was. Tells briefly some of what there was to see. I was troubled to see that this book claims (in passing) that the captive Israelites built Egypt's great pyramids. The pyramids were already a thousand years old when the Bible's Joseph was in Egypt. This is a fairly common misconception, but it would be nice for books like this to set the record straight.

In 1159, Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish man living in Spain, set out on a 14 year journey across the Mediterranean Sea and through the Middle East. His Hebrew-language journal is a wonderful look into the world of the twelfth century, but it is not accessible to many people. Well, in this wonderful book, author Uri Shulevitz retells Benjamin's story for the younger reader! Large and lavishly illustrated, this book does an excellent job of retelling Benjamin's story in a manner that is easily grasped by the younger reader. But, don't write this book off as mere childishness. Not being content to merely entertain, the author includes a number of interesting sidebars, in which he explains things being discussed. Overall, I found this to be a fascinating book "entertaining and informative. I highly recommend this book to those who have younger readers who want something distinctly non-childish. I highly recommend this book!

It didn't meet my expectations. I thought I was getting the real manuscript, translated into English, of

course. Instead I got a children's book...pretty but not helpful for my research....Neil Rolde

My daughter wanted this for summer reading and found it interesting. It's one of those books that she didn't take as an obligation to read.

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