**The legacy of Ibn Battuta’s *Travels***

Unlike the impact of the *Travels of Marco Polo* on the European world, the account of Battuta’s travels had only modest impact on the Muslim world before the 19th century. While copies circulated earlier, it was French and English scholars who eventually brought *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* the international attention it deserved.

How does Ibn Battuta’s account compare with that of Marco Polo’s? Each traveler lived by his wits — they had that in common. Each took joy in dis- covering new experiences, and each exercised amazing perseverance and fortitude to complete extensive travels and return to their home country.

Yet there were many differences. Ibn Battuta was an educated, cosmopolitan, gregarious, upper-class man who traveled within a familiar Muslim culture, meeting like-minded people wherever he went. Polo was a merchant, not formally educated, who traveled to strange, unfamiliar cultures, where he learned new ways of dressing, speaking, and behaving. Ibn Battuta told more about himself, the people he met, and the importance of the positions he held. Marco Polo, on the other had, focused on reporting accurate information about what he had observed. How fortunate we are to have accounts from two contrasting intercontinental travelers from more than 600 years ago.