

Jerusalem, Warsaw, Athens: New Perspectives on Research

Illustrated Talk at the National Museum – 30 October 2013

This illustrated talk will cover some of the subjects researched on a recent field trip by the author, currently Tagore National Fellow, National Museum, New Delhi. She visited Jerusalem (26 May – 30 May, 2013), Warsaw (30 May 2013 – 05 June 2013) and Athens (05 June – 09 June 2013).

In Jerusalem she visited the UNESCO Incense Route world heritage sites of Mamshit, Shivta and Advat while museums included the Israel Museum and the Bible Lands Museum. The main target was to examine the *kalamkari* items in the collection of the Armenian Cathedral of St. James. She also encountered the Crusades at the Church of Holy Sepulchre. She will talk on the textiles she found, the contemporaneous cultures in this part of the world with those of Mohenjodaro and Harappa and the different groups who gather to worship at the Church of Holy Sepulchre.

Warsaw was mainly important for the sashes, *pas kontuszowy*, called *patkas* in this country, which formed an accessory to the traditional male dress, the *kontusz*. The story is extraordinary and needs to be told. Apart from Ewa Orlińska Mianowska, Curator of Textiles, National Museum, Marcin Skalski-Truskolaski, working on the *kontusz* at the Museum, Royal Castle were extremely helpful in this quest. The story of the *pas kontuszowy*, with its many little known ways, will be reported.

Athens was mainly important for the light thrown on Indian printed cottons of Gujarat origin called “Fustat Textiles” as a matter of convenience. These have been excavated in Fustat and Quseir al Kadim in Egypt. These items were viewed at the Benaki Museum, Athens. It was now possible to identify those of Indian as against those of Egyptian and Armenian (they were then present in Istanbul known at the time as Constantinople) manufacture. Greek costumes and information gleaned from the Benaki Museums as well as the Acropolis Museum, National Archaeological Museum and the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens will also be presented.

Connecting the three capitals visited, the role of the Armenians as middle men who linked the trade of the Indian sub-continent to these foreign climes will also be mentioned.