

The Hand of Fatima

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The Hand of Fatima

The Khamsa in the Arab-Islamic World

By

Eva-Maria von Kemnitz

Edited, reviewed, and finalised by

Amina Inloes



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In Memoriam
Professor Eva-Maria von Kemnitz (1950–2017)



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Preface

About a year ago, I was told Eva-Maria von Kemnitz had died, she had left behind a book manuscript, and would I finish it. I agreed, both because it seemed the decent thing to do, and also because it seemed interesting. Since then, I have joined Prof. von Kemnitz on an intriguing journey throughout the world of the *khamsa*.

Like many others, I had never taken more than a cursory notice of the jewelled hands and eyes that populate Jewish and Muslim regions as well as, increasingly, consumer outlets like Target and eBay. While I understood the general idea behind them, didn't think twice when I saw them on women or children, and even owned a couple myself, it had never occurred to me to delve deeper into the origins or symbolism of the hand. At the same time, this became a more pressing issue when, in 2021, a government fatwa in Turkey denounced the use of traditional, and extremely popular, eye-shaped blue glass amulets.¹ While, despite the fatwa, these amulets remain popular, this has led to religious enquiries about the evil eye symbol and the *khamsa*. Are these Islamic? Are they acceptable? What are they at all?

Thus, I have added my pen to Prof. von Kemnitz's. Originally, it was titled *Under the Spell of the Khamsa: The Symbol of the Hand in Arab Islamic Context*; however, the decision was made by myself, her son, and the publisher to rename it to *The Hand of Fatima* since the term 'the hand of Fāṭima' has become ubiquitous. Since this book is based on her private collection and sustained interest in *khamsa* pieces, it is eminently her work. At the same time, given the nature of picking up on a work after the author's departure, it was inevitable that my voice and views would intervene in the work. This is especially the case since, in recent years, research on Islamic occultism has flourished, challenging assumptions about amulets, talismans, and Islamic orthodoxy. A stunning visual display of the developments in this field was the exhibition entitled *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural*, and parallel conference, held at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford from 2016–2017. Sparkling from the cover of the exhibition guide are two intricately jewelled, and extremely expensive, hands fashioned from gold, rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and pearls. That year also saw the publication of Michael Muhammad Knight's *Magic in Islam*, which presented the findings of often inaccessible or obscure academic

1 Andrew Wilks, "Turkey's religious authority denounces 'evil-eye' charms", in *Aljazeera* (21 January 2021) <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/23/turkeys-religious-authority-bans-on-evil-eye-charms>>. Accessed 2 January 2022.

literature on Islamic occultism to a broader audience, and also heralded an increased popular fascination with the Muslim metaphysical.

Fortunately, it was a pleasure to discover that the areas of expertise that Prof. von Kemnitz and I bring to the table mesh quite nicely, each making its own contribution to the work. Most anything about art or art history is absolutely the work of Prof. von Kemnitz. Discussions about Algeria, Brazil, and al-Andalūs are also almost wholly hers. In contrast, the main areas I was able to fill in pertained to Islamic scripture, theology, and law, as well as Shi'ism, so these sections of the book reflect more of my own hand.

Beyond that, research works are almost always a group effort. Thus, I would like to acknowledge the sound counsel of Fahmida Suleman, Abdurraouf Oueslati, William Gallois, and Ismail Poonawala, and to thank those who contributed photos or assisted with photo reprint permissions. Last but not least, the tireless efforts of her son Filipe Ortigão-Neves in seeing this work come to fruition must be acknowledged.

As I traced Prof. von Kemnitz's steps through the *khamisa* community – curators, historians, artisans, shopkeepers, and others – I was touched by the outpouring of support for Prof. von Kemnitz and her loved ones. In addition to her departure, one running theme throughout this book is the sense of loss when a private or public collection or art or artefacts is dispersed. Hopefully, this book helps Prof. von Kemnitz's collection and legacy live on.

Amina Inloes

The Islamic College, London, UK

September 2022

Acknowledgements

The family of Professor Eva-Maria von Kemnitz would like to thank the publishing house Brill, and in particular Ms Kathy van Vliet and Mr Abdurraouf Oueslati, for pursuing the publication of this book. At the time of her decease, Professor von Kemnitz was working on this manuscript, then divided into four parts. The first two were mostly complete, the latter two were work in progress. The publication of this volume would not have been possible without the work and dedication of Dr Amina Inloes, who revised, edited, and finalised the book, contributing to it with her own expertise. Our appreciation and gratitude go to her for making Professor von Kemnitz's last work see the light of day.

Rui Manuel Ramalho Ortigão Neves, husband

Filipe Miguel von Kemnitz Ramalho Ortigão Neves, son

12 June 2022

The Life of Eva-Maria von Kemnitz

Professor Eva-Maria von Kemnitz (1 May 1950–1 November 2017) was born in Warsaw, Poland. Between 1967 and 1971, she studied Economic Sciences, specialising in Foreign Trade, at the Higher School of Planning and Statistics in Warsaw. From 1971 to 1976 she studied Oriental Philology at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Warsaw, where she specialized in Arab and Islamic Studies. She defended her Master's thesis entitled "Traditions of Arab-Muslim Culture in Portugal" with which she graduated with the final classification of "Very Good".

She came to Portugal following the award of a two-year scholarship grant by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in August 1976, to pursue her research for a study on the *Consequences of the Discoveries in the Portuguese Society of the 16th Century*. In the summer of 1977, she attended the Portuguese Language and Culture course for foreigners at the University of Coimbra. What was to be a temporary stay in Portugal would soon be prolonged indefinitely. She married in 1979, taking Portuguese citizenship. The following year her son was born.

In July 1981 she attended the Seminar Course on Ibero-Arab History and Civilisation organized at the University of Evora, Portugal. Here she met the organiser, Professor Adel Sidarus, with whom she started a close collaboration that would last throughout her life.

In 1988 she obtained – belatedly – the recognition of the academic qualifications completed in her native Poland. She also proceeded to pursue her second passion: museums. Between 1989 and 1991 she completed the postgraduate course of Museum Curator. She interned at the Maritime Museum and prepared a monographic study entitled *The Arab-Islamic Heritage Centres in Portugal considered in the context of local, regional and national development in the reutilisation of museological heritage and cultural tourism*. She also elaborated a proposal for the exhibition of the Islamic Art Collection of the Casa Museu Dr Anastácio Gonçalves in Lisbon. From 1991 to 1992 she took the Arts Management Course at the National Institute of Administration, where she developed a project entitled *Towards the Enhancement of Knowledge of the Islamic Heritage of Portugal*.

In 2001 she pursued, with a grant from the Foundation for Technology and Science (Portugal), her PhD at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the Nova University in Lisbon. Her research proposal studied Orientalism in Portugal within the scope of Luso-Moroccan relations and was supervised by Professors Adel Sidarus and José Esteves Pereira. She defended her thesis *Orientalism in Portugal, in the European Context and in the Luso-Maghrebian*

Relations in 2006, and was awarded the final grade of “Very Good with Distinction and Praise, by unanimity”.

Professor von Kemnitz lectured at various institutions. In the academic year 1979–1980 she was guest assistant at the Arab Studies Section of the University Institute of Evora, Portugal, by invitation of Professor Sidarus. In the 1980s and 1990s she lectured at several universities in Lisbon. In 1983 she lectured on the *Issues of the Contemporary Arab world and the Oil Crisis* at the Faculty of Sciences and Technology of the Nova University, within the framework of the module on Introduction to Contemporary Thought. In 1985 she taught a cycle of three lectures on the theme of Arab Influence on Portuguese Language at the Nova University, this time within the framework of a course on Portuguese Regional Cultures. In 1991 she assisted in the delivery of the first Open Course on Islamic Civilisation offered by the Autonomous University of Lisbon, and later in 1994 she collaborated in the delivery of the second edition of this same Open Course.

From 2000 onwards she worked with the Portuguese Catholic University. From 2002 to 2014 she was Coordinator of the postgraduate and master’s programmes in Oriental Studies at the Institute of Oriental Studies. She lectured in both these programmes and also in the master’s programme of Studies on Women in the Arab-Islamic World, also delivered by the Institute of Oriental Studies.

From the early 1980s, Professor von Kemnitz was engaged in several activities which aimed to deepen and disseminate the field of Arab Studies in Portugal, helping to create new institutions and promoting museology as means of conservation and dissemination. In 1982 she was in the founding team of the Institute of Arab Studies of Algarve, actively participating in the organising and installing committees. In 1986 she was elected Second Secretary of the Board of Director of this Institute.

As a museum curator, she began working at the Ajuda National Palace in January 1991. In 1993 she collaborated with the Portuguese Institute of Museums to produce an inventory of the Islamic Heritage in the collections of the museums linked to this body. From this endeavour Professor von Kemnitz then proceeded to study and inventory the Islamic Collection of the National Archaeology Museum. This was the critical step for the publication of the catalogue of that collection which would then open to the public in the exhibition *Islamic Portugal: the last signs of the Mediterranean*. The catalogue of this exhibition featured an article and 34 entries on different pieces by Professor von Kemnitz. She also actively participated in colloquia and guided tours of this exhibition. Following this project, Professor von Kemnitz participated

in the editing work for the 100th anniversary edition of the scientific review *O Arqueólogo Português*.

In 1996 she produced the script and supervised the production of two episodes of the television series *Caminhos* – a series produced within the scope of the airtime allocated to ethnic and religious minorities of the national broadcaster – namely *Muslim Lisbon* and *Islamic Santarém*. The following year she was the Scientific Commissioner for the International Seminar on the Contemporary Arab World organised by CULTURGEST in Lisbon. Also in 1997, she was the Commissioner of the exhibition that brought the work of Egyptian contemporary painter Naima El-Shishiny to the Cultural Centre of the Lisbon Central Mosque.

Professor von Kemnitz held career positions within the Civil Service, being appointed in 1999 to the permanent staff of the Portuguese Institute of Archaeological Heritage. In the same year she was transferred to the Office of International Relations of the Ministry of Culture. Amongst other projects, she participated in the final preparatory phase of the exhibition *Splendours of Portugal*, which she then accompanied as a museum curator in its iteration in Japan. In 2007, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, she took active part in the monitoring of the commemorations of the 200th Anniversary of the Arrival of the Portuguese Court to Brazil, as well as in the National Plans for *Inclusion* and *Integration of Immigrants*. She retired from the Civil Service in May 2017.

During this time, she was also active in other endeavours, especially those related to Oriental Studies and the role of women in society. She collaborated with the journal *Faces de Eva* from 2002 until 2017. Between 2012 and 2014 she was Coordinator of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Portuguese Catholic University. From 2014 to 2017 she was Senior Researcher at the Centre for Communication and Culture Studies of the same university. There she coordinated the project for the Dictionary of Portuguese-speaking Orientalists.

Her in-depth knowledge of different areas of the Arab-Islamic world saw her invited to give numerous conferences in this domain, as well as on subjects related to Central and Eastern Europe and related horizontal themes.

In 1977 she gave a lecture at the Casa do Algarve, in Lisbon, on *Islam in Poland – the presence of the Polish Tatars*. She gave numerous conferences on topics related to Al-Andalus and Portugal; the presence of Islam in different regions of the world; on the concept of Jihad; and Turkish culture. These were delivered in places as varied as the Lisbon Geographic Society, Vila Viçosa, the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Portugal, the Free University of Lisbon, and the City Council of Silves, amongst others. Two conferences,

both delivered in 1991 at the Casa Museu Dr Anastácio Gonçalves, deserve specific mention: *Specific Aspects of Islamic Art* and *Islamic Art in the Dr Anastácio Gonçalves Collection*.

In the field of jewellery, she delivered two conferences at the National Museum of Costume. The first in 1992, in the framework of the 2nd International Jewellery Symposium, on *Amber in Polish Jewellery* and the second in 1996 on the 4th edition of the same symposium about *Islamic Jewels from Al-Andalus*. This would mark the beginning of her interest in the *khamsa*.

Professor von Kemnitz lectured in Portuguese localities with significant historical links to the Al-Andalus: *The Arab-Islamic Presence in Portugal* and *The Islamic heritage of the Portugal*, at the Grémio Lisbonense in 1993; *Muslim Portugal* at the Associação Voz do Operário in 1994; *Islam in Portugal* delivered on occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Central Mosque of Lisbon in 1995 in a ceremony presided by the President of the Portuguese Republic; and *Islamic Sintra: Historical, Literary and Artistic Reminiscences* at the Municipal Library of Sintra in 2007.

She also lectured on international issues. Amongst them the conference on *Islam in Europe: Particularities and Perspectives* at the xxx Anniversary of the Islamic Community of Lisbon in 1998 and the roundtable on the works of Edward Said organised the bookshop *Ler Devagar* in 2003 on the occasion of the release of the Portuguese edition of his book *Orientalism*. Her interest in the relations between Portugal and Morocco were evidenced in the conference she delivered at the Maritime Museum on *The Role of the Portuguese Navy in the Relations with North Africa in the XVIII and XIV Centuries*.

Professor von Kemnitz was part of several cultural organisations, especially in Portugal and Poland. She was, as of 1971, a member of the Polish Society of Orientalist Studies. She was a member of the Lisbon based Friendship Association with Arab Countries since 1976; the Portuguese Association of Friends of the Castles since 1984; and she was co-founder of the Institute of Arab Studies in the Algarve, based in the city of Silves, to whose board of Directors she belonged since 1986.

Her interest in museums and the Arab-Islamic World is reflected in her active participation in the Portuguese Museology Association since 1989; the International Council of Museums since 1991; as well as the Luso-Arab Cooperation Institute since 1995, of which she was vice president since 1999; the Portuguese Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, since 1998; and the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamologues since 2002. She was also a member of the International Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Decade of Human Rights Education, the International Association IUS PRIMI VIRI, Rome, since 1994. She also did voluntary work in the field of culture,

giving lectures and organising museum visits for the youth of the Islamic Community of Lisbon.

She was decorated by the President of the Republic of Poland in 2012 with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Polish Republic – a medal intended to recognise the merit of foreigners and Poles residing abroad who have distinguished themselves in contributing to international or bilateral cooperation between Poland and other countries.

She passed away, suddenly, and unexpectedly, on 1 November 2017. Amongst the projects she had at hand were the coordination of the Dictionary of Portuguese-speaking Orientalists, for which she also wrote several entries, and this very book.

Fernando Branco Correia
Professor, University of Évora

The Works of Eva-Maria von Kemnitz

Professor Eva-Maria von Kemnitz began her academic production with a master's thesis in Oriental Philology on "Luso-Arab culture", presented in 1976 at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Warsaw, in her homeland:

- "Tradycje kultury arabsko-muzulmanskiej w Portugalii" (Traditions of Arab-Muslim Culture in Portugal) (Master's Thesis, University of Warsaw, 1976).

Before studying Oriental Philology, she attended, between 1967 and 1971, the Higher Course in Economic Sciences (Specialization in Foreign Trade), at the Higher School of Planning and Statistics in Warsaw.

Whilst pursuing her master's thesis she managed to obtain a scholarship for the two following years (1976–1978) from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, to pursue her research in Portugal. She turned her attention in particular to the Age of Discoveries, with the theme "Consequences of the Discoveries in Portuguese society in the 16th century". Various circumstances intervened that only allowed her to publish her findings in 1986:

- "Contributo da marinharia islâmica para os Descobrimientos Portugueses" (Contribution of islamic seamanship to the Portuguese Discoveries), *Al-Furqan*, special issue (1986), 18–24. This work was presented at the colloquium organized by the Islamic Community of Lisbon.

1 Luso-Moroccan Relations

The most substantial part of Professor von Kemnitz's academic research and production was on the topic of "Portuguese-Moroccan relations".

Following her previous research on Arab culture and in particular a surge of interest in Arab Studies in Portugal at the end of the 18th century, Professor von Kemnitz began in 2002 her doctoral thesis at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Her research was pursued with the Centre for African and Asian Studies where at that time one of the ongoing projects was on the general theme of "Colonial and Postcolonialism in the Lusophone World (16th–21st Centuries): Discourses and Strategies", namely: "Orientalism and Relations between Portugal and North Africa (18th–20th Centuries)".

She obtained a grant from the Foundation for Science and Technology. Her work was developed under the joint direction of Professor José Esteves Pereira

(FCSH/UNL) and myself. The thesis was completed in 2006 and published a few years later by the Portuguese Diplomatic Institute:

- *Portugal e o Magrebe (séculos XVIII/XIX): Pragmatismo, inovação e conhecimento nas relações diplomáticas* (Portugal and the Magrheb (XVII–XIX centuries): Pragmatism, innovation and knowledge in diplomatic relations), Série D – Biblioteca Diplomática, nº 19 (Lisbon: Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros-Instituto Diplomático, 2010). (597 pp.)

This voluminous work was preceded and complemented by a set of articles published between 2002 and 2009, either within the scope of the Colloquiums of Military History organized in alternance by Portugal and Morocco – and consequently published in the respective Proceedings – and as conferences at the Academia de Marinha (Marine Academy), the Portuguese Navy’s cultural body.

- “As Instituições militares portuguesas nas relações com Marrocos nos séculos XVIII e XIX” (The Portuguese military institutions in the relations with Marroco in the XVIII and XIX centuries), in *Actas do XII Colóquio de História Militar: Laços Histórico-Militares Luso-Magrebinos* (Lisbon: Comissão Portuguesa de História Militar, 2002), 147–161.
- “Moroccan envoys in Portugal (17th–19th centuries)”, in *Mağāz, Culture e Contacti nell’area del Mediterraneo: Il ruolo dell’Islam*. Atti 21. Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Palermo, 2002, ed. Antonino Pellitteri (Palermo: Facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell’Università di Palermo, 2003), 179–190.
- *A participação da Armada portuguesa nas relações com o Norte de África nos séculos XVIII e XIX* (The participation of the Portuguese navy in the relations with North Africa in the XVIII and XIX centuries) (Lisbon: Academia de Marinha, 2004). (45 pp.)
- “L’Alliance luso-marocaine dans le contexte du conflit opposant l’Europe et Maghreb (XVIII^e–XIX^e siècles),” in *Aspects économiques de la défense à travers les grands conflits mondiaux* (Actes du XXX^e Congrès International d’Histoire Militaire – Rabat, 2004) (Rabat: Commission Marocaine d’Histoire Militaire, 2005), 473–484.
- “Duas missões portuguesas em Marrocos durante a Guerra Peninsular: Os relatórios do intérprete Fr. Manuel Rebelo da Silva (1770–1849)” (Two Portuguese missions to Morocco during the Peninsular War: The reports of interpreter Friar Manuel Rebelo da Silva (1770–1849)) versão francesa: “Deux missions portugaises au Maroc pendant la Guerre Péninsulaire: Les rapports de l’interprète Frère Manuel Rebelo da Silva (1770–1849)”,

- in *XIV Colóquio de História Militar: Comemorando 230 anos do Tratado luso-marroquino de 1774. Actas* (Lisboa, Nov. 2004) / *XIV^{ème} Colloque d'histoire Militaire: Commémoration des 230 ans du Traité luso-marocain de 1774. Actes* (Lisbonne, Nov. 2004) (Lisboa: Comissão Portuguesa de História Militar, 2005), vol. 1, 177–192 and 193–209.
- “Envoys, princesses, seamen and captives: The Muslim presence in Portugal in the 18th and 19th centuries,” in *Lusotopie*, 14/1 special edition, dossier Islam en Lusophonies, ed. N.C. Tiesler (2007), 105–113.
 - “Marrocos e a diplomacia portuguesa no reinado de D. Carlos I: Entre a tradição e novos ventos” (Morocco and Portuguese diplomacy during the reign of King Charles I: Between tradition and new winds), in *Actas do XVIII Colóquio de História Militar: Política diplomática, militar e social do Reinado de D. Carlos no Centenário da sua Morte* (Lisboa: Comissão Portuguesa de História Militar, 2009), 803–811.
 - “Le rôle des interprètes portugais dans la médiation diplomatique et culturelle entre le Portugal et le Maroc aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles,” in *Le Maroc et les mutations internationales* (Actes n° 22 – Actes du colloque organisé à Casablanca en hommage au professeur Othman Mansouri, 2008) (Casablanca: Université Hassan II Ain Chock, Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, 2010), 85–95.

This series should have been concluded with an article destined for publication with *The Journal of North African Studies, special issue Facets of exchange between North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula*, 19/1 (2014), entitled “José Daniel Colaço (1831–1907): A synthesis of the Portuguese perception of Morocco”, which was not published.

2 Arab Studies in Portugal

The key figures who helped to develop Luso-Arab relations were the arabist Friars of the Third Order of Saint Francis at the service of the Ministry of the Navy, then responsible for a large part of Portugal’s diplomatic relations. They were led by Frei Manuel de Cenáculo, who launched the Portuguese Orientalist movement, with a special impact on arabsim, during the Pombaline Enlightenment period.

Stemming from Professor von Kemnitz’s research interest in Arab Studies, she published a series of articles, some which have already been previously mentioned, and others that follow in the list below. Some of these are a direct offshoot from research she carried out between 1976 and 1978.

- “XI Kongres Europejskiej Unii Arabistów i Islamologów – Évora, Faro i Silves 1982” (XI Congress of the European Union of Arabists and Islamologists – Évora, Faro and Silves 1982), *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, 99 (1986), 79–95.
[A long essay about *Islam and Arabism in the Iberian Peninsula: Actas do XI Congresso da Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, ed. Adel Sidarus (Évora: Universidade de Évora, 1986).]
- “Estudos Árabes em Portugal: Um ensaio histórico-crítico” (Arab Studies in Portugal: A historical and critical essay), *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, Série 150 (Julho-Dez.) (1987), 19–37.
- “Les études arabes au Portugal”, *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* (Journal of Oriental Studies) 46 (1988), 79–95.
- “International contacts of the Portuguese Arabists (18th–19th cent.)”, in *Authority, privacy and public order in Islam* (Proceedings of the 22nd Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, October 2006), ed. B. Michalak-Pikulska & A. Pikulski (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 369–386.
- “Tavira, ponto de partida para o Mundo do Outro. Percorso de um tradutor arabista: Fr. José de Santo António Moura (1768–1840)” (Tavira, point of departure to the World of the Other. The path of an arabist translator: Friar José de Santo António Moura (1768–1849)) in *Actas das V Jornadas de História de Tavira* (Tavira, Câmara Municipal, 2006), 12–22.
- “The Centenary of the Republic and the Republic of Letters: Arabic Studies in Portugal 1910–2010”, *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* (Journal of Oriental Studies) 64/1 (2011), 121–132 (Volume in Honour of Krystyna Sharżyńska-Bocheńska and Danuta Madeyska).
- “Arabic scholarship in Portugal in the second half of the 19th Century”, in *Centre and Periphery within the borders of Islam* (Proceedings of the 23rd Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants – Sassari, 2006), ed. G. Contu (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 165–176.
- Editor, *Volume Comemorativo do Primeiro Decénio do Instituto de Estudos Orientais 2001–2012* (Comemorative Volume of the First Decade of the Institute of Oriental Studies) (Lisboa: Universidade Católica Editora, 2012).
- “Em Portugal: O orientalismo em fragmentos”, in *Portugal: Orientalism in Fragments*, *Revista de Estudios Internacionales Mediterráneos*, 21, (2016), 13–25. (A file with the proceedings of the International Congress “Orientalismos Periféricos”, organised in that same year by Maria Cardeira da Silva, at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Nova University of Lisbon.)
- Editor, *Estudos Orientais e Orientalismos em Portugal* (Oriental Studies and Orientalisms in Portugal) (Lisboa: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2018). (Volume of the proceedings of the homonymous colloquium “Oriental

Studies and Orientalisms”, organised in 2014 by Eva Maria von Kemnitz in the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Centre for Communication and Culture Studies, Faculty of Human Sciences, Catholic University of Portugal, 2014.)

In the same line of publications, she joined us to publish together all the documentation preserved on Portuguese soil relating to the topic of Arab Studies, which she presented at an international conference, before its publication:

- (with Adel Sidarus) “Christian Arabic manuscripts in Portugal and the contribution of Arab Christians to the beginning of Oriental Studies (turn of 18th to 19th centuries),” in *Eastern Christianities: Scribes and Manuscripts* (2nd International Congress of Eastern Christianity – Madrid, 2008), ed. J.P. Monferrer (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 29–42.

She later expanded on the topic to include Brazil:

- “Quelques réflexions sur l’orientalisme au Portugal et au Brésil. Une vision comparative,” *Al-Irfane*, 1 (2015), 117–128.
- “Portugal and Brazil: Contrasting patterns in Arabic Scholarship,” in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Europe and beyond / Études arabes et islamiques en Europe et au-delà* (Proceedings of the 26th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants – Basel 2012), ed. M. Reinkowski & M. Winet (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 37–59.

3 The Dictionary of Portuguese-Speaking Orientalists

In the pursuit of her research on Arab Studies in Portugal and Brazil, Professor von Kemnitz launched the bold project of a Dictionary of Portuguese-speaking Orientalists, within the framework of the Centre for Communication and Culture Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the Portuguese Catholic University of Lisbon. Some articles are already available on the internet: <<https://orientalistasdelinguaportuguesa.wordpress.com/>>.

This project intends to rescue and preserve the memory of all those who contributed to the promotion of Oriental Studies in Portugal and to the dissemination of knowledge about the various Orients in the Lusophone space.

The Centre for Communication and Culture Studies set up a team of researchers that continue working on the Dictionary. Professors Artur Teodoro de Matos, Marília dos Santos Lopes, and João Teles e Cunha publicly presented the project and the team at the session in homage to Professor von Kemnitz, orientalist and former director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, that took place at the Catholic University of Portugal on 12 November 2018.

4 Other Dimensions of Luso-Arab Culture

- “Influência do árabe na língua portuguesa,” [The influence of arabic in the Portuguese language], *Revista Internacional de Língua Portuguesa*, 5–6 (1991), 34–44.
- “A presença árabe em Tavira: um caso de continuidade” [The arab presence in Tavira: a case of continuity] in *Tavira do Neolítico ao século XX* (II Jornadas de Tavira-Actas) (Tavira: Clube de Tavira, 1993), 109–118.
- “A construção de uma nova sociedade: O caso específico da minoria moura” (The building of a new society: The specific case of the Moorish minority) in *2º Congresso Histórico de Guimarães: Sociedade, Administração, Cultura e Igreja em Portugal do século XII*. Guimarães, 1997. Actas (Guimarães: Câmara Municipal e Universidade do Minho, 1997), 80–91.

5 Islamic Art

In her first years in Portugal, Professor von Kemnitz was not able to immediately pursue the university career she sought in her field, encountering various difficulties, chief amongst them the recognition of her foreign university qualifications. Faced with these obstacles she pursued a postgraduate course for “Museum Curators”, 1989–1991 and an “Arts Management” course, 1991–1992 at the National Institute of Administration.

Within the scope of the first course, she prepared the following two studies:

- “Estudo monográfico referente ao Museu de Marinha” (Monographic study of the Marine Museum) (unpublished essay, 1990).
- “Os núcleos de património árabe-islâmico em Portugal considerados no contexto do desenvolvimento local, regional e nacional, no da reutilização do património museológico e no do turismo cultural” (The nuclei of arab-islamic heritage in Portugal considered in the context of local, regional and national development, in the reutilisation of museological heritage and cultural tourism) (unpublished essay, 1990).

And her final course work:

- “Estudo-Proposta de exposição e divulgação da Colecção de Arte Islâmica da Casa-Museu Dr. Anastácio Gonçalves” (Draft study to exhibit and publicise the Islamic Art Collection of the Casa Museu Dr. Anastácio Gonçalves) (unpublished essay, 1991).

As part of the second course, she developed the following project:

- “Towards the enhancement of the knowledge of the Islamic heritage of Portugal” (unpublished essay, 1992).

Following numerous conferences and interventions in various forums on museology, heritage and Arab-Islamic museum collections in Portugal, the following works were published:

- “Portugal and the fashion of turqueries,” in *Proceedings of the 14th International Congress of Turkish Art* (Paris, Collège de France, 2011), ed. Frédéric Hitzel (Paris: Collège de France, 2013), 809–818.
- “The khamsa: A recurrent symbol in artistic tradition in the global Islamic context,” in *Islam and Globalization: Historical and contemporary perspectives* (Proceedings of the 25th Congress of l’Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants), ed. A. Cilaro (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 581–607.
- “Dans le sillage des traditions ottomanes en Tunisie. La dernière Odalisque de Fayçal Bey”, in *Mélanges en l’honneur du Professeur Alia Baccar Bournaz: Carthage au cœur de la Méditerranée. Littérature, civilisation, interculturalité, dirigée par M. Chagraoui* (Tunis, Université de Tunis El Manar, 2015), 305–310.
- “Some remarks on the symbol of the hand in the Shi’i context,” in *Contacts and Interaction. Proceedings of the 27th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*. Helsinki, 2014, ed. J. Hämeen-Anttila et al. (Lovaina, Peeters, 2017), 209–220.
- “Orientalismo estético de inspiração islâmica: O caso de « figuras de convite »” (Aesthetic orientalism of islamic inspiration: the case of the « figuras de convite ») in *Estudos Orientais e Orientalismos em Portugal* (Lisboa: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 2018), X–Y.

6 Other Works on Islam

- “Escrita árabe: A escrita da Mensagem divina” (Arabic script: The script of the Divine Message) in *A escrita das escritas*. Catálogo, ed. L.M. Araújo (Lisboa: Fundação Portuguesa das Telecomunicações & Estar Edições, 2000), 103–110 (volume referring to the exhibiton “A Escrita: Traços e Espaços”, Museu das Comunicações, Lisboa, outubro 2000 a março 2001).
- “Muslims as seen by the Portuguese press 1974–1999: Changes in the perception of Islam”, in *Religious freedom and the neutrality of the State: The position of Islam in the European Union*, ed. W.A.R. Shadid & P.S. Van Koningsveld (Leeuven: Peeters, 2002), 7–26.
- “Assia Djebar (1936–2015): Uma voz insubmissa da Argélia” (Assia Djebar (1936–2015): An unsubdued voice from Algeria) in *Faces de Eva*, 34 (2015), 19–33.

- “Muslims (un)like the others: The Ismaili in Portugal,” in *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* (Journal of Oriental Studies) 69/2 (2016), 105–120 (Volume in Honour of Ewa Machut-Mendecka).

7 The Polish in Portugal

Professor von Kemnitz also took an interest in the life and experiences of the Polish expatriate community in Portugal, having published the following works:

- “General José Carlos Conrado de Chelmicki 1814–1890,” *Revista Militar*, 2^a Época, Nº 2381/82 (Junho/Julho 2000), 525–543.
- “General Chelmicki: Engenheiro e estratega” (General Chelmicki: Engineer and strategist), in *Actas do XVIII Colóquio “Portugal militar: Da Regeneração à Paz de Versalhes”* (Lisboa: Comissão Portuguesa de História Militar, 2003), 87–97.
- “O Fado da minha vida: Maria Danielewicz Zielinska (1907–2003)” (The Fado (fate) of my life: Maria Danielewicz Zielinska), in *Faces de Eva*, 12 (2004), 171–178.
- “A Vision from the Other Bank: Maria Danielewicz Zielinska’s contribution to the history of the Polish-Portuguese cultural relations,” in *Iberian and Slavonic Cultures: Contact and Comparison*, ed. B.E. Cieszynska (Lisboa: CompaRes, 2007), 73–78.

She also wrote a dozen book reviews, plus two dozen articles published in Portuguese and foreign journals.

8 Final Note

We note that Professor von Kemnitz’s prolific and varied research had international reach. Her work is reflective of her roots in the Polish orientalist school, a flourishing school since its “nationalisation” in the wake of the country’s independence, of which she was a faithful heir. It was also shaped by the life she shared between her two countries, Portugal and Poland, between which she established cultural and scholarly ties. For these latter endeavours she was deservedly decorated by the President of the Polish Republic with the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland on the occasion to his visit to Portugal in 2012.

Adel Sidarus

Professor Emeritus, University of Évora



Decoration of Prof. Eva-Maria von Kemnitz by the President of the Republic of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski, in Lisbon, April 2012

Prologue: The *Khamsa* and Me

Every book is personal. However, this unending adventure of following the hand symbol and its metamorphosis across time and space has occupied my mind and imagination for many years. Joyful moments of discovery have been followed by many of doubt, questioning different hypotheses and interpretations, in my constant search for an understanding of this fascinating symbol. It has also offered me the opportunity to contact others who share the same passion – whether in-person or otherwise – whose knowledge and experience has enriched my journey.

It all began with a simple silver *khamsa* amulet, whose artistic appeal captured my imagination. Attracted by the aesthetics of the *khamsa*, I began collecting them. This fascination led me to deepen my study of these pieces, despite an unencouraging remark from an Arab woman – a specialist in Arabic literature, no less. When I eagerly told her I was studying the *khamsa*, she retorted, “I never paid much attention to something we grew up to see – to laugh at – as a symbol of old-fashioned thinking.”

Still, I pushed on, impelled by my own personal interest in these *khamsa* amulets. Gradually, my research turned more towards a comprehensive understanding of the *khamsa*'s far-reaching symbolic significance, as I began to analyse the *khamsa* in the global context of Arab-Islamic cultures, and beyond. For the *khamsa* spans far and wide – many eras, many cultures, many faiths, and many regions. Although particularly prevalent among Jews and Muslims, the symbol of the open hand predates the Abrahamic traditions and has been “a universally recognised sign of divine power, protection and blessing among many ancient Near Eastern religions, as well as in Hinduism, Buddhism, and among all three Abrahamic faiths.”¹ Insofar as exploring the *khamsa* in all these traditions would be too much for one work, this book will take the reader on a journey with the *khamsa* throughout Arab-Islamic cultures, past and present.²

1 Fahmida Suleman, “The Hand of Fatima: in search of its origins and significance”, in *People of the Prophet's House. Artistic and Ritual Expressions of Shi'i Islam*, ed. F. Suleman (London: Azimuth Editions in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies in collaboration with the British Museum's Department of the Middle East, 2015), p. 173.

2 This led, among other things, to the publication of two papers: Eva-Maria von Kemnitz, “The *khamsa*. A recurrent symbol in artistic tradition in the global Islamic context”, in *Islam and Globalisation. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. Proceedings of the 25th Congress of l'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, ed. A. Cilaro (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2013), pp. 581–607; Eva-Maria von Kemnitz, “Porous Frontiers of the Hand Symbol”, in *In the Iberian Peninsula and Beyond. A History of Jews and Muslims (15th and 17th centuries)*, ed.

This book has been heavily driven by collection: collecting objects, collecting images, collecting information, and then shaping it into the narrative and interpretation that is to come. My goal was to introduce an innovative approach, situating the hand symbol as an object of study and research in the convergence of semiotics and the history of culture, from past to present. Hopefully, this work will inspire further discussion and debate.

J.A.R. Silva Tavim, M.F. Lopes de Barros, and Lúcia Liba Mucznik (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), vol. 2, pp. 258–270.

Notes on Transliteration

Throughout the work, the following transliteration system has been used for Arabic and Persian. An exception is for terms – usually used for jewellery, handicrafts, or other material artefacts – which have a standard spelling. The standard spelling has been retained in these cases to better facilitate further research.

a	ا	ṭ	ط
b	ب	ẓ	ظ
t	ت	‘	ع
th	ث	gh	غ
j	ج	f	ف
ḥ	ح	q	ق
kh	خ	k	ك
d	د	l	ل
dh	ذ	m	م
r	ر	n	ن
z	ز	h	ه
s	س	w (v for Persian)	و
sh	ش	y	ي
ṣ	ص	a	ة
ḍ	ض	’	ء
a	َ	ā	ا
i (e for Persian)	ِ	ī	ي
u (o for Persian)	ُ	ū	و