

DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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KELLENBENZ, Hermann (Süssen, 1913 – Tannried, 1990)

Hermann Kellenbenz was born on 28 August 1913 in the city of Süssen (formerly the kingdom of Württemberg, now the state of Baden-Württemberg in Germany). During his high school education in Göppingen (Württemberg), Kellenbenz acquired self-taught knowledge of the Spanish language. He studied history, history of art, and history of literature at the universities of Tübingen, Munich, Kiel and Stockholm. In 1938 he received his doctorate from the University of Kiel (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany) with his dissertation (supervised by the theologian Otto Scheel) (1876-1954) on Swedish history and politics in the domain of Schleswig-Gottorf in northern Germany, entitled *Holstein-Gottorf, eine Domäne Schwedens. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der norddeutschen und nordeuropäischen Politik von 1657–1675* [Schleswig-Gottorf, a dominion of Sweden. A contribution to the history of the politics of northern Germany and northern Europe in the years 1657 – 1675], published in 1940.

After his doctorate, Kellenbenz worked at the *Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des Neuen Deutschland* [New Germany History Institute], where he took part in the research into the history of the Jews in the city of Hamburg (Germany). He was a soldier in the Second World War and was seriously wounded on the Eastern Front. He returned as a war invalid. He then began his university career and taught history at the universities of Regensburg (1948-1950) and Würzburg (1952-1957). Still in Würzburg, Kellenbenz presented his dissertation entitled *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe. Ihre wirtschaftliche und politische Bedeutung vom Ende des 16. bis zum Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts* [Sephardic Jews located along the lower Elbe River. Their economic and political importance from the late 16th century to the early 18th century]. Even today this work is considered one of the most important on the subject of Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin, largely due to its use of various European archival sources. During his research—first as part of a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship at the Research Centre for Entrepreneurial History at Harvard University (1952-1953) and then at the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes Paris VI* [Escola Prática de Estudos de Alto Nível Paris VI] (1953-1954)—he collaborated with several international historians, such as Arthur H. Cole, Frederic C. Lane (USA), and Fernand Braudel (France). This collaboration continued until Kellenbenz's death.

Following his research, Kellenbenz published his work entitled *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- und Spanienhandel 1590-1625* [Entrepreneurial forces in the Spanish-Hamburg and Portuguese-Hamburg trade from 1590 to 1625]. This work reflects the greater attention that Kellenbenz paid to the actions of individuals in society, a vision that was the starting point for his historical analyses. Thus, while this line was visible in his historiographical production, he rejected the historiographical current that was beginning to give greater importance to society from a global perspective. He thus rejected a pure structural historiography and



continued with the Germanic tradition of producing and writing history based on sources and individualism throughout history (Leopold von Ranke). From this perspective, his attitude can be seen as a countercurrent to German historiography in the post-World War II era, which was beginning to give a greater importance to social history. Against Kellenbenz's matrix, historians such as Hans-Ulrich Wehler (1913-2014) felt that he was a "frozen traditionalist who stuck with an outdated and old-fashioned historicism". Since Kellenbenz himself never spoke about his vision of history, nor did he teach a single specific current throughout his professional career, it seems impossible to determine and characterise his works within a specific German national or international matrix. He himself became interested in learning about and following theoretical and historiographical developments. Summarising his wide-ranging historiographical output, it can be said that in most of his works, Kellenbenz used historical individualism, directing his interest towards the study of ethnic and social groups (most of which were international merchants) and their action and importance at an international level—from the Middle Ages to the modern era and including minorities—using prosopographical methods.

During his research in the Portuguese archives, Hermann Kellenbenz met Virgínia Rau, founder of the *Centro de Estudos Históricos (Instituto de Alta Cultura)* [Centre for Historical Studies (Institute of High Culture)], an attachment of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon, in 1958. At the same time, A.H. de Oliveira Marques—a student of Virgínia Rau at the Faculty of Letters—was studying the economic relations between Portugal and the Hanseatic League during the Middle Ages. He spent one year studying at the University of Würzburg, where Kellenbenz was professor of history. He supervised Oliveira Marques' thesis on German archives and libraries, and they developed a friendship that lasted until Kellenbenz's death. As a result of his acquaintance and contact with the Portuguese scientific community, Kellenbenz took part in the *IV Colóquio Internacional de Estudos Luso-Brasileiros: relações culturais, identidade e interlocução* [4th International Colloquium of Luso-Brazilian Studies: cultural relations, identity and interlocution] in 1959 in the city of Salvador da Bahia. At the same conference, relations intensified between the German historian and his Portuguese colleagues, Joel Serrão, Joaquim Veríssimo Serrão and Luís de Matos. During the 1960s, H. Kellenbenz was a professor of economic and social history at the University of Cologne and, at the same time, the director of the Economic Archives of the Rhineland-Westphalia region (Cologne): *Rheinisch-Westpfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv*. During this period, he also set up a research centre at the University of Cologne, called the "Kölner Forschungsinstitut" (Cologne University Research Institute). Continuing to investigate the economic relations between Germany and Portugal (and Brazil), the countless results of his research in world archives originated publications such as "*O projecto duma 'Casa de Contratação' em Lisboa*" [The 'Hiring House' project in Lisbon] (1960) and "*Os mercadores alemães de Lisboa por volta de 1530*" [German merchants in Lisbon around 1530] (1961), among others. Also, in this period he was invited to take part in the preparation of the *Dicionário de História de Portugal* [Dictionary of Portuguese History] directed by Joel Serrão, with entries on *Germans in Portugal*, *The Fuggers in Portugal* and *Imhoff*, among others. After that, H. Kellenbenz returned to the city of Nuremberg and the University of Nuremberg-Erlangen in 1970, where he had already been a teacher between 1957 and 1960. He remained in this city until his retirement in 1983.

He created the Cologne International Colloquium on Economic and Social History: *Kölner Kolloquien zur Internationalen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*, which aimed to unite and associate historians and researchers studying European economic and social history in post-war Europe during the 1960s and early



1970s. The first colloquium focused on the economic relations between Europe and the Iberian Peninsula during the Age of Discovery and the impact of the new international markets established and linked by maritime trade. The ones that followed focused on the importance of copper and iron in Renaissance Europe. The minutes of the conferences were published under the following titles: Foreign Merchants in the Iberian Peninsula during the 15th and 16th centuries, *Fremde Kaufleute auf der Iberischen Halbinsel*, Areas and main points of iron extraction and production in Europe (1500-1650), *Schwerpunkte der Eisengewinnung und Eisenproduktion in Europa (1500-1650)*, and Areas and main points of copper production and copper trade in Europe, *Schwerpunkte der Kupferproduktion und des Kupferhandels in Europa (1500-1650)* and the so-called "Kölner Vorträge" (Cologne Exhibitions and Lectures), which are still held today. At this time, he was appointed scientific director of the Fugger family archive, a role that allowed him to deepen his studies and research into Portuguese and Spanish documentation. In 1990 he published in three volumes a work that was probably his *magnum opus*: *Die Fugger in Spanien und Portugal bis 1560* [The Fuggers in Spain and Portugal until 1560]. After his retirement, he continued to take part in international colloquia and congresses, as well as the 2nd International Colloquium on the History of Madeira (1989), with a paper on "*Relações comerciais da Madeira e dos Açores com a Alemanha e Escandinávia*" [Trade relations of Madeira and the Azores with Germany and Scandinavia].

Hermann Kellenbenz's studies cover the areas of Modern History, European History, History of the Discoveries and European Expansion, Modern History, Economy and Society, Economic and Social History of Luso-German Relations, Fugger History and others. Throughout his professional career, he co-founded and co-edited (with Hispanist Richard Konetzke (1897-1960)) scientific magazines such as the *Jahrbuch von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* [Yearbook of Latin American History on the State, Economics and Society of Latin America] (since 1964) and the *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* [Quarterly Magazine of Social and Economic History] (since 1968), the latter created in 1903 by Hermann Aubin (1885-1969), and together with Otto Brunner (1898-1982) and Wolfgang Zorn (1922-2004). The *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* is one of the oldest scientific magazines in the field of economic and social history. It's currently still in continuous production and circulation. On his own initiative and out of a desire for international cooperation, he organised and edited the encyclopaedia *Handbuch der europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte* [Compendium of Economic and Social History], a compendium in which international historians collaborated and wrote about historical issues in their respective countries. The compendium was published in six volumes and is still considered one of the most important compendiums in the field today.

Hermann Kellenbenz's private and professional legacy is archived in the Economic Archive of the Rhine region in Westphalia (Cologne): *Rheinisch-Westpfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv*. In 1982 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Merit by the Federal State of Bavaria. Hermann Kellenbenz died on 26 November 1990, leaving the world a collection of more than 700 articles, entries in dictionaries and encyclopaedias, books, prefaces, and reviews. In 2014 the life and work of Hermann Kellenbenz were celebrated in the National Library of Portugal with a conference and exhibition entitled "Hermann Kellenbenz (1913-1990): ao Serviço da História" [Hermann Kellenbenz (1913-1990): At the Service of History].

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