



Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present

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Gambling is a fascinating subject which for many centuries has attracted public interest. Yet, despite its ubiquity, gambling (or gaming) leads a marginal existence within the boundaries of scholarly research. Providing a longue duree survey, this volume promotes a historical understanding of the subject enriched with a diverse academic approach that draws upon sociology, economics and psychology.

Each chapter in the collection is the work of a renowned scholar with a long standing interest in gambling research. The contributions offer historical analyses of the medieval origins of the 'Gambler State' and of mathematical risk calculation. They cast light on the roles of different stakeholders in gambling including the playing public, business, and the state. They provide a controversial discussion of the alleged 'pathological' nature of chance games and the reasons for either regulating or freeing them from state control. Last but not least, two authors deal with country-by-country specifics in gaming cultures and gambling markets.

Taken as a whole, the chapters in this volume chart the development of European gambling culture from the medieval to modern times. In so doing it provides essential context for both historical and current debates about the nature of gambling and lotteries, addiction to gambling, poverty and social degradation on the fringes of the welfare state.

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