



**7th Gaetano Cozzi Prize for studies on the history of games, 2023**

MIQUEL FAUS FAUS

*“Jugava e malmestia del seu”:*

*testimonios sobre los efectos del juego de azar en la Valencia medieval*

24th November 2023 **Citation**

The Prize awarded to Miquel Faus Faus for his study *“Jugava e malmestia del seu”*: pointers to the impact of gambling in mediaeval Valencia, is appropriate recognition of research that effectively exploits a number of invaluable documents to widen the panorama of games of chance in the specific ambit of mediaeval Valencia.

One of the essential merits of the work is, indeed, that it chose a specific area as a fertile observation point for a detailed study of games of chance.

After a sort of general overview, which includes a number of examples from Spain and elsewhere in Europe, together with a series of observations on the relevant legislation, which fluctuated wildly between the two poles of regulation and prohibition, Miquel Faus Faus goes on to highlight – in agreement with Guillermo López – how the high number of fines imposed in the area under examination in fact masked the presence of organised illegal gambling in the late 1300s and early 1400s.

The study uses detailed archival data to list the judicial sentences inflicted on gamblers and illustrates the moral condemnation of part of the Valencian community, who considered gambling to constitute a risk factor for family and entrepreneurial economic activities. In fact, as Faus Faus stresses, the situation must have been much more complex, given the amounts staked, the different types of games of chance played and the figures of the gamblers themselves, some of whom were notably well off.

This first section leads on to the most interesting part of the study, which comprises a critical analysis of the cases brought by two women in the first half of the 14th century, suing to reclaim their dowries in situations where the gambling habits of their respective husbands had resulted in substantial financial losses. His use of documentation relating to the two cases, which concluded in favour of the plaintiffs on 13th September 1325 and in March 1342, respectively, enables Faus Faus to create a partial reconstruction of the gambling panorama in the period under consideration and to demonstrate its partial acceptance, also by the social class to which the gamblers themselves belonged.



In stressing how this study demonstrates Miquel Faus Faus' possession of an accomplished historical and critical approach in his exploration of the gambling panorama in mediaeval Valencia, the Commission confirms that he be awarded the *Gaetano Cozzi Prize for studies on the history of games* for 2023 and that the study be published in the forthcoming issue no. 29 of the journal *Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco*.

The Selection Board, comprising members of the Scientific Committee  
of *Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco*:  
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