

[Meusnier, Norbert](#)

**The emergence of a mathematics of the probable in the 17th century.** (L'émergence d'une mathématique du probable au *XVII<sup>e</sup>* siècle.) (French) Zbl 0867.01008

[Rev. Hist. Math.](#) 2, No. 1, 119-147 (1996).

After an attempt to relate the seemingly insignificant beginnings of a calculus of games of chance of mid-17th century to the development of mathematical probability theory Meusnier hints to the relative rapid growth of a calculus of chances in the years 1708 to 1718, summarizes the theoretical part of Huygens's tract from 1657 in order to confront the reader with the result of the transformation of Huygens's tract into an art of conjecturing achieved by Jakob Bernoulli. I agree with the attempt to stylise Bernoulli as the originator of a calculus of probability, but I disagree with a presentation which tends to obscure the results achieved by others. So Meusnier mentions six publications of L. Daston in the bibliography but refers to her neither in the text nor in the footnotes despite the fact that her ideas and results are used in the text. Such a strategy is strengthened by an additional system of selfreferences.

Reviewer: [I.Schneider \(München\)](#)

**MSC:**

[01A45](#) History of mathematics in the 17th century

[60-03](#) History of probability theory

Cited in 1 Document

**Keywords:**

[calculus of probabilities](#); [Jakob Bernoulli](#); [Christiaan Huygens](#)