Johanne Slettvoll Kristiansen, Marius Warholm Haugen, and Angela Fabris

A Cultural History of European Lotteries – Introductory Essay

In 1834, two years before the French state lottery was abolished, an author named Es. Blake published a short text painting a picture of how this institution had affected contemporary Paris:

> Go to the capital's populous neighbourhoods, place yourself next to a lottery office, the day before the Paris drawing [...]. Watch all the *commères* [female busybodies] tell each other their dreams and gravely discuss the probabilities. This or that number is a hundred-and-fifty drawings old, it must well decide to come out; they have consulted the fortune teller or leafed through *the explanation of dreams* [...]. They finally make up their mind, when their turn is up, for there is a *queue*; they approach the fortunate office, come out with their ticket, and, trying to hide the joy created by hope, they return home, promising well that, the next day, all this old furniture, this filthy abode will be abandoned for ever.[1]

This literary tableau depicts several elements that had been central to the cultural perception of the state lottery, from its establishment in 1776 until the abolition of 1836. The text introduces the reader to a typical player figure, the female "busybody", for whom playing the lottery is a social activity, and to the typical environment where this takes place, in and around a Parisian lottery office. Blake also depicts a particular form of superstition attached to the lottery: the belief in the possibility of predicting the winning numbers. This magical thinking appears as a combination of ancient practices – divination and dream interpretation – and the mathematical notion of probability, testifying to what John Eglin has described as a "mystique of probability" characteristic of this period.[2] Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the text depicts the lottery as providing the players with pleasurable hope, which nourishes the imagination, as they picture what to do with the big win.

This imaginative work is what the literary scholar Jesse Molesworth has referred to as "the lottery fantasy",[3] the impulse of lottery players to imagine a "spe-

1 Es. Blake, "La Loterie royale", in *Paris, ou le Livre des Cent-et-un*, ed. Pierre-François Ladvocat (Ladvocat, 1834), 134. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are ours.

2 John Eglin, *The Gambling Century: Commercial Gaming in Britain from Restoration to Regency* (Oxford University Press, 2023), 31.

3 Jesse Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 25.

 https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111445540-001

cific change in circumstance", picturing themselves as in a "plot" in which they are the lucky winners.[4] This "fantasy" points to a striking continuity in the cultural perception of lotteries. Almost a hundred years after Blake's text, the same imaginative mechanism is described by an anonymous advocate of lottery playing as a form of "fiction":

> To purchase a ticket in a lottery, indeed, is to buy a kind of fiction in which oneself is the hero. It is to see oneself, in one's mind's eye, happy and rich, free from all the cares and anxieties involved in earning a living, able to buy a cottage in the country, to take as long a holiday as one wishes.[5]

Both Blake and the anonymous writer point to what is arguably the lottery's most powerful allure, namely the possibility for players to daydream, to imagine a better future or the fulfilment of a particular desire. This allure remains a key factor for contemporary lottery schemes, if we are to believe Jonathan D. Cohen's recent study of US state lotteries:

> For many players, the fantasy is the point. Gamblers buy tickets for a chance to dream, the opportunity, for a few days or a few moments to imagine what it would be like to hit the jackpot and spend their newfound riches. Tucked inside this fantasy, though, is an understanding that it might just come true, that every ticket provides a small though very real chance of winning.[6]

Not only is dreaming of wealth what motivates players to venture in the lottery. Being allowed to fantasise might itself also be a central part of the motivation. Endowed with its own value, the lottery fantasy is, nonetheless, inextricably linked to the monetary stakes. For even though it is possible to fantasise about winning the lottery without having played, actually placing a bet and obtaining a real, if minuscule, chance of winning, affects the imagination, as any lottery player will tell you.

Looking more closely at the notion of fantasy, we can distinguish between *the* lottery fantasy and lottery fantas*ies:* the first is a sort of cultural trope, the idea of sudden, effortless, and potentially life-transforming wealth; the second term re-

---

4 Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, 22. On the lottery as a "place for the formation of dreams" and the idea of "changing one's fate", see also Paolo Macry, *Giocare la vita: storia del lotto a Napoli tra Sette e Ottocento* (Donzelli Editore, 1997), 85.

5 "Chance", *The New Statesman and Nation*, 6 June 1931. Also cited in Reuven Brenner, "Gambling and Speculation: Perceptions and Reality", in *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, ed. Manfred Zollinger (Routledge, 2016), 218–219.

6 Jonathan D. Cohen, *For a Dollar and a Dream: State Lotteries in Modern America* (Oxford University Press, 2022), 6.

fers to the specific dreams of individual players, engendered by the first trope. The conditional sentence "If I won the lottery, I would…" is the basic structure of such fantasies.[7] Furthermore, since the chances of winning the big prize are remarkably small, the lottery fantasy also depends on the idea that "it could happen to you", regardless of these poor odds. This idea is a long-lived trope in the representation of lotteries, appearing, for instance, in the title of Andrew Bergman's 1994 romantic comedy, *It Could Happen to You*, starring Bridget Fonda and Nicolas Cage.[8] In a cautionary tale from 1796, entitled "The Wonderful Advantages of Adventuring in the Lottery", the English moralist writer Hannah More sets out to expose the mechanisms and dire consequences of the lottery's lure.[9] It tells the story of the servant John Brown, who falls prey to this lure and enters a slippery slope of compulsive lottery playing that eventually leads to murder and execution. Brown's tragic descent begins with the lottery fantasy, mediated by a hand-bill advertisement:

> Casting his eye over the advertisement, the thought struck him that he would *try his fortune.* 'Why may not I get a prize as well as another?' said he to himself; 'and if I get the twenty thousand pound prize, or *even* one of the ten thousands, I shall be as great a man as my master?' It was a woeful moment for poor John, when this imagination fastened on his mind.[10]

Here, the idea that "it could happen to you" and the conditional sentence ("If I win…") come together to form an "imagination" that inspires Brown to buy a ticket. The player's individual fantasy is not extensively developed here, but the text points to his desire for upward social mobility, a common feature of many lottery fantasies, as they are represented in satirical portrayals of lower-class lottery players.

As More's story demonstrates, the lottery was presented by critics as possessing a powerful "imagination" with devastating effects on the social fabric of late eighteenth-century Britain. An extensive transatlantic circulation of More's text,[11] as well as several translations and adaptations into French,[12] further reveal that this was not a purely British concern. A few years prior, at the dawn of the French

---

7 See also, *infra*, Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga, "If I Had the Great Prize".

8 Andrew Bergman, "It Could Happen to You" (TriStar Pictures, 1994).

9 For a further analysis of this text, see, *infra*, Paul Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature", section 4.

10 Hannah More, *The Wonderful Advantages of Adventuring in the Lottery!!!* (J. Marshall, 1796), 3.

11 Michelle Burnham, *Transoceanic America: Risk, Writing, and Revolution in the Global Pacific* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 62.

12 Hannah More, *Les Merveilleux Avantages de mettre à la loterie* (J.J. Paschoud, 1819); *La Loterie* (La Société des traités religieux de Paris, 1823).

revolution, the bishop and future statesman Talleyrand had argued for the abolition of the French state lottery precisely by denouncing its corruptive nature and nefarious social consequences. Like More, he explains the lottery's allure by its evocative, imaginary power: the French people are being "intoxicated by the fanciful hope of the *Quine* [the biggest prize in the state lottery, with very poor odds], which enthuses the minds to the point of insanity".[13] Such is the power of lottery fantasising, Talleyrand's hyperbolic argument goes, that it threatens to deprive players of their mental faculties. And where More's character commits murder, Talleyrand claims that the French lottery craze had led to an increase in suicides, a commonplace among critics and moralists.[14]

All the examples quoted above point to important common features in the perception of lotteries, spanning three centuries. Firstly, lotteries were seen as inextricably linked with the imagination. Regardless of whether this connection was considered as dangerously seductive or as an innocent pastime, fantasising was considered a main interest of the game. Secondly, lotteries have for a long time been subject to debate, concerning their moral, political, and financial legitimacy. Thirdly, the cultural representation of lotteries takes on diverse forms of expression, within different literary genres, in advertisements, political pamphlets, and the periodical press, as well as in scholarly studies.

Behind this continuity lie, however, important historical, cultural, and even generic differences. Blake's literary narrative has, for instance, different functions not only compared with Talleyrand's pamphlet, the anonymous letter to the *New Statesman*, or Cohen's scholarly study, but also with More's cautionary tale, where the literary form serves primarily as a rhetorical device intended to keep readers on the straight and narrow path. Furthermore, the texts are embedded in very different social, economic, and cultural contexts: late eighteenth-century France and England, the French July Monarchy, interwar Britain, twenty-first-century USA. And although the fantasy of sudden, effortless wealth often remained much the same, the singular fantasies of the historical players are likely to have varied, with historical contingencies conditioning both what it is possible to dream *about* and the social and economic situations players are dreaming *from.*[15]

---

13 Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, *Des Loteries. Par M. l'évêque d'Autun* (Barrois l'aîné, Libraire, 1789), 10 – 11.

14 See, *infra*, Tilman Haug, "Selling Like a State", section 5, and Marius Warholm Haugen, "Plus de loterie", section 1.

15 See, for instance, Terwisscha van Scheltinga's study of early modern lottery rhymes, *infra*, "If I Had the Great Prize". For more on this genre, see also: Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga, "Iets of…? De Brugse loterijprozen van 1446", *Madoc* 36, no. 1 (2022); Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga, "'Out of Love for the Poor and in Hope of Profit': Early Modern Lottery Players and Their Reasons

In fact, the texts also refer to distinctly different games, from the "simple" drawing of lots, precursors to modern-day raffles, to the more complex Genoese-originated *lotto*, similar to, but not to be confused with, modern lottos (see below, section 2, "Lottery schemes explained"). The different lottery forms may have affected people's imaginations differently, determined by two factors in particular: whether the ticket price was low enough to include a broad sociological range of players, and the nature (including the size) of the prizes. As the contributors to this volume show, different concerns were attached to the various lottery forms, with the Genoese lotto being perceived as particularly dangerous.

The examples quoted above are part of a much longer and complex history of lotteries that goes back at least to the medieval period. This history has received increasing scholarly attention over recent decades, primarily from historians,[16]

for Playing the Haarlem Lottery of 1607", *Ludica: annali di storia e civiltà del gioco* 30 (2024); Dick E.H. De Boer, "Fun, Greed, and Popular Culture. Lotteries and Lottery-Rhymes as a Mirror of the Cultural Legacy of the Low Countries' 'Long Sixteenth Century'", in *Netherlandish Culture of the Sixteenth Century: Urban Perspectives* (Brepols, 2018).

16 Anthologies and book-length studies dedicated to lottery history include: Stephen M. Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery. The History of a Revolutionary Game of Chance* (The University of Chicago Press, 2022); Marie-Laure Legay, *Les Loteries royales dans l'Europe des Lumières: 1680–1815* (Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2014); Giovanni Assereto, *'Un giuoco così utile ai pubblici introiti': il lotto di Genova dal XVI al XVIII secolo* (Edizioni Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche; Viella, 2013); Ulrich Schädler, ed., *Créateurs de chances. Les loteries en Europe* (Le Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2012); Roberto Garvía, ed., *Fortuna y virtud: historia de las loterías públicas en España* (Sílex, 2009); Francesco Colzi, *La fortuna dei papi: il gioco del lotto nello Stato pontificio tra Sette e Ottocento* (Editoriale scientifica, 2004); Gerhard Strejcek, ed., *Lotto und andere Glücksspiele: rechtlich, ökonomisch, historisch und im Lichte der Weltliteratur betrachtet* (Linde, 2003); Johan Koppenol, *Leids heelal: het Loterijspel (1596) van Jan van Hout* (Verloren, 1998); Macry, *Giocare la vita*; Günther G. Bauer, *Lotto und Lotterie* (Katzbichler, 1997); Bruno Bernard and Michel Ansiaux, eds., *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire* (Loterie nationale; Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994); Anneke Huisman and Johan Koppenol, *Daer compt de Lotery met trommels en trompetten! Loterijen in de Nederlanden tot 1726* (Verloren, 1991). In addition, important historical contributions feature in separate articles and chapters, for instance: Jeroen Puttevils, "The show must go on – De performance van de loterij in de Nederlanden (15de–16de eeuw)", *Nieuwe tijdingen: over vroegmoderne geschiedenis / Vlaams-Nederlandse Vereniging voor Nieuwe Geschiedenis* (25.10 2019); Bob Harris, "Lottery Adventuring in Britain, c. 1710–1760", *The English Historical Review* 133, no. 561 (2018); Robert D. Kruckeberg, "'A Nation of Gamesters': Virtue, the Will of the Nation, and the National Lottery in the French Revolution", *French History* 31, no. 3 (2017), https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crx035; James Raven, "Debating the Lottery in Britain c. 1750–1830", in *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, ed. Manfred Zollinger (Routledge, 2016); Robert D. Kruckeberg, "The Royal Lottery and the Old Regime: Financial Innovation and Modern Political Culture", *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014); Jeroen Puttevils, "The Lure of Lady Luck: Lotteries and Economic Culture in the Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Low Countries", in *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, ed. Manfred Zollinger (Routledge, 2016); Manfred Zollinger, "Entrepreneurs

with some key contributions from literary scholars and art historians.[17] Much remains to be written, however, on lotteries and the cultural imagination. The aim of the current volume is to examine the ways in which lotteries were imagined in early modern and long eighteenth-century (western) Europe. The main emphasis is placed on the latter period, which the late Manfred Zollinger has called "the golden age of lotteries".[18] Lottery schemes flourished across Europe during the eighteenth century, and with them, the representation of lotteries in literature and art also burgeoned. This volume examines how lotteries were represented and discussed, through a series of interconnected case studies from the German-speaking areas, Britain, the Low Countries, Denmark-Norway, France, Italy, and Spain. The different chapters bring into dialogue a wide range of mate-

of Chance: the Spread of Lotto in XVIII Century Europe", *Ludica* 12 (2006); Anne L. Murphy, "Lotteries in the 1690s: Investment or Gamble?", *Financial History Review* 12, no. 2 (2005); Stephen M. Stigler, "Casanova, Bonaparte, and the Loterie de France", *Journal de la société française de statistique* 144, no. 1–2 (2003); Dick E.H. de Boer, "De triomftocht der prozen. Loterijwezen en volkscultuur in de Nederlanden tot het eind van de 17de eeuw", *Spiegel historiael* 4 (2001); James Raven, "The Abolition of the English State Lotteries", *The Historical Journal* 34, no. 2 (1991), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00014187. Lotteries are often also included in broader studies of the history of gambling: Bob Harris, *Gambling in Britain in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2022); Eglin, *The Gambling Century*; Elisabeth Belmas, *Jouer autrefois: essai sur le jeu dans la France moderne (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle)* (Editions Champ Vallon, 2006); Manfred Zollinger, *Geschichte des Glücksspiels: Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Böhlau, 1997); Francis Freundlich, *Le Monde du jeu à Paris: 1715–1800* (Albin Michel, 1995).

17 Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga, Sara Budts, and Jeroen Puttevils, "(Fe)male Voices on Stage: Finding Patterns in Lottery Rhymes of the Late Medieval and Early Modern Low Countries with and without AI", *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 139, no. 1 (2024), https://doi.org/10.51769/bmgn-lchr.13872; Marius Warholm Haugen, "The Lottery Fantasy and Social Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Venetian Literature: Carlo Goldoni, Pietro Chiari, and Giacomo Casanova", *Italian Studies* 77, no. 3 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1080/00751634.2022.2069409; Marius Warholm Haugen, "Translating the Lottery: Moral and Political Issues in Pietro Chiari's La Giuocatrice Di Lotto and Its French and English Translations", *Comparative Literature Studies* 59, no. 2 (2022); Sophie Raux, *Lotteries, Art Markets, and Visual Culture in the Low Countries, 15th–17th Centuries* (Brill, 2018); Michael J. Call, "Fortuna Goes to the Theater: Lottery Comedies in Seventeenth-Century France", *French Forum* 40, no. 1 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1353/frf.2015.0012; Jessica Richard, *The Romance of Gambling in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Molesworth, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*; Thomas M. Kavanagh, *Dice, Cards, Wheels: a Different History of French Culture* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Guy Spielmann, "Mise (s) en jeu: loteries, brelans et spéculations, chevilles dramatiques dans la comédie", in *Art et argent en France au temps des premiers modernes (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)*, ed. Martial Poirson (Voltaire Foundation, 2004); Thomas M. Kavanagh, *Enlightenment and the Shadows of Chance: the Novel and the Culture of Gambling in Eighteenth-Century France* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

18 Manfred Zollinger, "Ce 'sort ingénieux'. Six siècles de loteries en Europe", in *Créateurs de chances. Les loteries en Europe*, ed. Ulrich Schädler (Le Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2012), 53.

rials: lottery tickets and advertisements, pamphlets and periodicals, visual art, popular songs, poetry, prose fiction and plays, political, moral, and judicial treatises. This material suggests how early modern and long eighteenth-century lotteries were perceived as inviting fantasies, dreams, and daydreams; as engendering folly, superstition, and compulsive playing; as leading to social misery, bankruptcy, and suicide; as betraying questions of risk, trust, and fairness; and as being deeply embedded in the political and financial development of an emerging modernity. Before coming to these issues, however, we need to look more closely at the history and nature of the different lottery forms.

1 A brief history of European lotteries

What is a lottery? The answer is more complicated than one might expect. The English term "lottery" and its European-language equivalents – *lotinghen*/*lotherij*/*lotherie* (Dutch), *loterie* (French), *Lotterie* (German), *lotto* (Italian), *lotería* (Spanish), *lotteri* (Danish) – refer to a variety of schemes and practices, which is further complicated by the use of other, partly overlapping terms – *ventura*, *blanque*, *Glückshafen*, *Glückstopf*, *rifa*, *raffle*. What these terms have in common is the randomised selection (in principle) of lots or numbers, resulting in the distribution of a prize, either monetary or as an object. Following Ulrich Schädler and Manfred Zollinger's definition, the lottery is a game combining a randomised drawing with the placing of a bet on the outcome, regulated by a contract between the player and the organiser which "stipulates the payment of a specific amount of money or the remittance of a particular object" should the player's number or ticket be drawn.[19]

While the drawing of lots as a religious or political ritual has roots stretching back to Antiquity, the lottery, understood as a monetarily incentivised game, seems to have originated only in the late medieval period. The political practice of assigning public offices by the drawing of lots was, nonetheless, closely linked to the emergence of lotteries, which developed as subsidiary events to such drawings. In Genoa, a series of annual lotteries, called *Floreni sortium*, were organised between 1374 and 1468, as "public lotteries coupled with draws for public office".[20] In the same period – possibly through the influence of Genoese merchants – lotteries developed in Flanders, with Bruges as the main centre, where the first

19 Ulrich Schädler and Manfred Zollinger, "Introduction", in *Créateurs de chances. Les loteries en Europe*, ed. Ulrich Schädler (Le Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2012), 10.

20 Giuseppe Felloni and Guido Laura, *Genova e la storia della finanza: una serie di primati? – Genoa and the History of Finance: A Series of Firsts?* (Brigati Glauco, 2004), 72; Zollinger, "Ce 'sort ingénieux'", 37.

documented lottery was drawn in 1441.[21] Lotteries further spread to the German-speaking regions and the northern Low Countries,[22] and, throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, developed in other Italian cities and city-states.[23]

Owing to extensive connections between Italy and France in the sixteenth century, the Italian Wars (1494–1559), and the marriage of Catherine de' Medici with Henry II in 1533, lotteries were introduced in the French realm.[24] Francis I authorised the first royally sanctioned lottery in 1539.[25] The first French lotteries were called *blanques*, from the Italian *bianca*, pointing to the white prize-less tickets, *blanks*, as opposed to the tickets indicating that the holder has won a prize, written in ink. In the following, we will refer to this form as a *blanks and prizes lottery*. Regarding Britain, English merchants are thought to have brought the passion for lotteries from mainland Europe in the sixteenth century, probably from the Low Countries. Elizabeth I authorised the first official lottery drawn in London in 1566.[26] Numerous lottery schemes appeared in France and England over the seventeenth century, including a *blanque royale* organised in 1660 for the celebration of Louis XIV's marriage to Maria Theresa of Spain.[27] An Act of Parliament established the first state lottery proper in England in 1694, inaugurating the eighteenth-century age of state-sanctioned lotteries.[28]

---

21 Puttevils, "The Lure of Lady Luck", 62. See also, *infra*, Puttevils, "Criticising the Lottery in Its Cradle".

22 On Germany, see Jean-Dominique Delle Luche, "La Fortune du pot. Les loteries municipales en Allemagne (XVe–XVIe siècles): divertissement collectif, prestige municipal et concurrence urbaine", *Revue historique* 687, no. 3 (2018), https://doi.org/10.3917/rhis.183.0553. See also, *infra*, Haug, "Selling Like a State", section 1. On the Low Countries, see, *infra*, Puttevils, "Criticising the Lottery in Its Cradle", and Jeroen Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact".

23 Evelyn Welch, "Lotteries in Early Modern Italy", *Past & Present*, no. 199 (2008), http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096710.

24 Claude Bruneel, "Les Loteries de l'Europe méridionale", in *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire*, ed. Bruno Bernard and Michel Ansiaux (Loterie nationale; Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994), 100.

25 Belmas, *Jouer autrefois*, 306.

26 Helma Houtman-De Smedt, "La Fièvre de la loterie et du lotto s'empare du nord-ouest de l'Europe au cours des XVIIIe et XIXe siècles", in *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire*, ed. Bruno Bernard and Michel Ansiaux (Loterie nationale; Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994), 176. See also: David Dean, "Elizabeth's Lottery: Political Culture and State Formation in Early Modern England", *Journal of British Studies* 50, no. 3 (2011), https://doi.org/10.1086/659829; David Dean, "Locality and Self in the Elizabethan Lottery of the 1560s", in *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Norman L. Jones and Daniel Woolf (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2007).

27 Belmas, *Jouer autrefois*, 311.

28 For a detailed account of the first scheme, the so-called "Million Lottery", see Cecil L'Estrange Ewen, *Lotteries and Sweepstakes: An Historical, Legal, and Ethical Survey of Their Introduction, Suppression and Re-establishment in the British Isles* (Heath Cranton Limited, 1932), 127–130.

Like the seventeenth-century French lotteries, English state lotteries included both blanks and prize tickets, and did so until the final draw in 1826, the key difference between schemes being the investment offered by early "blank" bonds.[29] A particular strand of lottery schemes of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were not "hit-or-miss" games, where the player either won or lost, but annuity schemes, also referred to as lottery-loans, guaranteeing a certain return on investment. Lotteries of this kind existed in several countries and regions, notably in England, France, the Low Countries, and in the German-speaking area.[30] In England, most state lotteries between 1694 and 1768 incorporated investment opportunities into the scheme.[31] These lotteries were, in effect, loans to the government, which repaid the loan in instalments (annuities) over a fixed period. Depending on the scheme, the investment was repaid with or without an added return in the form of interest. Modern readers might be puzzled by the ascription of the term lottery to describe these arrangements, which looked more like investment opportunities than games of chance. The most popular variants offered significant chance bonuses for lucky ticket holders, thus justifying the designation as a lottery. However, although participants did not risk losing their stakes entirely, the annuities carried the risk of capital depreciation, which, according to Ewen, made them speculative enterprises with a small probability of any real financial gain.[32]

By the late seventeenth century, another scheme had seen the light of day, namely the *Klassenlotterie*, or class lottery, often referred to in the period as the "Dutch lottery". A blanks and prizes game based on a system of tiers, or classes, this scheme entailed dividing the single lottery into successive drawings, with increasing ticket prices and potential prizes (see more in the following section). An important institution, the Dutch *Generaliteitsloterij*, established in 1726, became one of the largest class lotteries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Class lotteries were particularly popular in central Europe.[33]

---

29 Raven, "The Abolition of the English State Lotteries".

30 See Ewen, *Lotteries and Sweepstakes*, 127–163; Legay, *Les Loteries royales*, 47–59; Murphy, "Lotteries in the 1690s". See also, *infra*, Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact", section 1, and Haug, "Selling Like a State", section 1.

31 For more on this, see, *infra*, James Raven, "Imagining Trust and Justice".

32 Ewen, *Lotteries and Sweepstakes*, 162.

33 Zollinger, "Ce 'sort ingénieux'", 56–57. For more on the *Generaliteitsloterij*, see, *infra*, Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact". A British variant, referred to as a "classis lottery", was introduced in London in 1711. For more on this, see Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 146–149.

Arguably the most successful lottery form of the eighteenth century was the so-called *lotto di Genova*, the Genoese numbered lottery, a distinctly different game from the blanks and prizes lotteries. Once more, as the name implies, the place of innovation was Genoa, where this new lottery form emerged at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century.[34] The historiography of the Genoese lotto has been fraught with inaccuracies and myths, many stemming from numerous eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century accounts that increased with the European spread of the game.[35] What we do know is that a practice began in the 1570s of electing every six months five new members to the two Genoese *collegi*. The election took the form of a drawing in which the names of the electable citizens were put in an urn, called the *Seminario*, and from which the "innocent hand" of a child drew five names. From this practice, a subsidiary game developed, which consisted of placing bets on the drawing, a game that was to be called *il gioco del Seminario.*[36] Eventually, the game was detached from the political event when, in the terms of Stephen M. Stigler, "at some point an entrepreneur realized that one could hold the lottery without having the election".[37] The game was officially prohibited and continued to develop more or less clandestinely until it was authorised in the 1640s.[38]

What came to be known as the *lotto di Genova* spread to other parts of the Italian peninsula throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in Naples, Rome, Milan, and Venice.[39] By the mid-eighteenth century, this lotto had moved across the Italian borders, to Munich (1734), Vienna (1751), and Paris (1757).[40] In the latter half of the century, it continued its way across Europe, reaching Brussels (1759–1760), Spain (1763), other German states and Poland (1760s and 1770s), and Scandinavia (early 1770s).[41]

Despite this European lottomania, the Genoese lottery did not completely displace other lottery schemes. Instead, various lottery types coexisted in the eighteenth century, even within singular countries or regions. Blanks and prizes lotteries ran alongside the French lotto for several decades, although a *de facto*

34 The term *lotto* predated the invention of this particular lottery scheme, referring, in an Italian context, to simple lotteries. Zollinger, "Entrepreneurs of Chance", 82.

35 Assereto, *Un giuoco così utile*, 11–14; 19–21.

36 Assereto, *Un giuoco così utile*, 14–17.

37 Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 19.

38 Assereto, *Un giuoco così utile*, 23–27.

39 Bruneel, "Les Loteries de l'Europe méridionale"; Colzi, *La fortuna dei papi*.

40 On the spread of the *lotto di Genova* in Europe, see Zollinger, "Entrepreneurs of Chance".

41 Zollinger, "Entrepreneurs of Chance", 83–84. For a list of mid-eighteenth-century *lotto* institutions, see also Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 57. On Scandinavia, see, *infra*, Johanne Slettvoll Kristiansen, "Innovation, Temptation, and Mathematical Education".

monopoly was established in 1776 by the creation of the Loterie Royale de France. Competition between the *lotto* and other lottery forms, notably variants of the class lottery, also developed in the Low Countries, the German-speaking regions, and Scandinavia.[42] An exception is Britain, where the lotto was never introduced, despite attempts by the lotto entrepreneur Giovanni Calzabigi (and possibly also Giacomo Casanova).[43]

Regardless of the forms adopted in the various countries and regions, eighteenth-century lotteries tended towards centralisation and the establishment of royal and/or state-sanctioned lotteries, as the lottery developed further as a "fiscal" instrument, filling the coffers of states and princes.[44] Some lotteries were privately operated, and while many were policed and prohibited by the governing authorities, others enjoyed protection through a state monopoly. These state-sanctioned lotteries existed in a grey area between private and official. The trend in the eighteenth century, however, was for private initiatives to be either banned or abandoned by European governments, who sought to channel income into state coffers.[45] An important element in this development remained the international and regional competition between different lotteries, which legitimised the establishment and/or preservation of state lotteries.[46]

2 Lottery schemes explained

Almost all the lotteries examined in this volume – and all eighteenth-century lottery schemes – were modelled according to one of the two following structures: the blanks and prizes lottery or the lotto. In the former, a finite number of pre-numbered tickets (say, 10,000), were placed in one wheel. During the draw, each ticket was matched with either a prize or a blank, which was placed in another wheel. This system required most of the tickets to be sold before the draw-

42 Houtman-De Smedt, "La Fièvre de la loterie".

43 Zollinger, "Entrepreneurs of Chance", 84. Calzabigi was instrumental in establishing several European lotto enterprises. A Genoese lottery may have been proposed in Britain as early as 1662, but it was probably never established. On the attempts to bring lotto to Britain, see Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 19–21; 56–60.

44 Zollinger, "Ce 'sort ingénieux'", 75–76.

45 Zollinger, "Entrepreneurs of Chance", 81. As Jeroen Puttevils argues in his chapter, this development already began in the sixteenth-century Low Countries. See, *infra*, Puttevils, "Criticising the Lottery in Its Cradle".

46 Legay, *Les Loteries royales*, 105–110.

ing could take place.[47] Owing to the large number of tickets, however, the sale and drawing could take days, weeks, months, and even years to complete.[48] Most eighteenth-century blanks and prizes lotteries were based on this essential structure of two wheels and the matching of blanks or prizes with pre-numbered tickets. This system decided the winners, regardless of whether prizes came in the form of ready cash, annuities, commodities or properties, and whether the lottery was run by private entrepreneurs or the state.[49]

Aside from this fundamental structural similarity, blanks and prizes lotteries varied greatly. The number of tickets could vary, as could the ratio of prizes to blanks, and bonuses could be attached to the drawing of the first and last ticket as well as to buying the highest amount of tickets. Organisers often published detailed lottery plans ahead of the draw to inform the public of the specific terms of each lottery. More fundamentally, lotteries organised according to this two-wheel model could be operated as stand-alone events, or they could be arranged within a series of drawings known as "classes".

Class lotteries usually comprised four to six classes, with increasingly large prizes. To win a prize in the last and most lucrative class, players were required to purchase a ticket for the first one and then to renew it for each class. After the final class, it was possible to renew the ticket for the next lottery, which meant that tickets might stay within the same family for years.[50] This not only encouraged people to keep playing "their" numbers, but also functioned as an entry barrier, given that tickets were finite. Price was another barrier. In the Dano-Norwegian case, a class lottery ticket cost ten rixdollars when the lottery was established in 1753 (this seems to have risen to twelve rixdollars in 1771), while a ticket in the Dano-Norwegian lotto could cost as little as eight skillings, depend-

47 Roberto Garvía, "Syndication, Institutionalization, and Lottery Play", *American Journal of Sociology* 113, no. 3 (2007): 621.

48 Puttevils, "The show must go on – De performance van de loterij in de Nederlanden (15de–16de eeuw)". See also: Garvía, "Syndication", 616; Zollinger, "Entrepreneurs of Chance", 83; Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 19.

49 Not all lotteries offered money prizes, but merchandise or commodities such as art, jewellery, furniture, and even real estate. On the distribution of art through lotteries, see Raux, *Lotteries, Art Markets.* A particular strand of land property lotteries, involving chateaux and nobiliary titles, became popular in the early nineteenth century. Zollinger, "Loteries de châteaux". Comedies representing this form of lottery are examined by Marius Warholm Haugen, *infra*, "Staging Lotteries", section 5.

50 Kirstine Bjerre Bergholdt, "Det danske klasselotteri. Det danske klasselotteris historie 1753–1925" (Master diss., University of Copenhagen, 2004), 15.

ing on the size of the bet.[51] There were ninety skillings in a rixdollar, which meant that for each class lottery ticket, you could purchase 120 lotto tickets.

The class lottery became the most popular blanks and prizes lottery in central Europe over the course of the eighteenth century, even though single-draw lotteries offered more flexibility and adaptability to public demand. While promoters of single-draw lotteries could respond to market shifts immediately after the draw, operators of a class lottery had to keep to the announced number of classes and to the other details of the publicised plan, before making eventual changes.[52] Despite this seeming disadvantage, the class lottery became extremely popular and would come to suppress the single-draw lotteries. This was due to a particular competitive edge, namely its ability to inspire rising expectations among consumers. The "expected value" of a class lottery ticket was perceived to increase with each drawing, and this presumably caused players to renew their ticket instead of trying their luck in a competing neighbouring single-draw lottery. In areas with less competition, however, promoters had less incentive to operate a class lottery. There, it made sense to opt for the more easily adaptable single-draw lottery.[53]

Operators of blanks and prizes lotteries could depend on various mechanisms to avoid great losses. The size of prizes was set in advance, and the information was publicly available.[54] Provided enough tickets were sold, the money from the sales covered administrative costs and produced a profit margin, while the remaining sum was allocated for the prizes. Via a plan typically published ahead of the drawing, everyone had access to the details of the scheme, including the proportion of winning tickets to blanks. Because the prizes were based on money from ticket sales, and because the operator knew the number of winning tickets beforehand, they did not take on risk on the same level as the operators of lotto, which was an odds game.

There were nevertheless risks involved. In terms of sales, blanks and prizes lotteries could be sluggish affairs and public demand fluctuated. Operators were

51 Bergholdt, "Det danske klasselotteri", 38. Peter Nicolai Svensen, *Tal-Lotterier, deres Natur og Beskaffenhed, som giver tydelig Oplysning om Spille-Maaden* (Kiøbenhavns Adresse-Contoir, 1771), Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, 32; *Plan til det under 12 Januar. 1771 allernaadigst privilegerede Tal-Lotterie*, 1771–1773, 347, Rentekammeret, Tyske Afdeling, Tyske kammer, Sager vedr. tallotteriet i Altona, D9.1, Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen, art. IX.

52 Garvía, "Syndication", 622.

53 Garvía, "Syndication", 622.

54 Garvía, "Syndication", 616. See also Jeroen Puttevils, "Invoking Fortuna and Speculating on the Future: Lotteries in the 15th and 16th century Low Countries", *Quaderni storici* 52, no. 156 (3) (2017), http://www.jstor.org/stable/45390552.

not always able to sell all the tickets in time and were then faced with the dilemma of whether to continue with the drawing despite not having sold all the tickets, or whether to postpone the draw date until sales were high enough to cover prizes. The latter option could seriously damage their reputation and competitive standing, but the former meant that they risked meeting with a loss, if prizes were matched with sold rather than unsold tickets during the draw.[55]

When it comes to how the other dominant form of the eighteenth century, the *lotto di Genova*, was structured, there were also variations between different ventures, notably regarding how many numbers were drawn. The most common form was five numbers drawn from ninety, but one German lotto drew, for instance, six numbers from one hundred, and another six from ninety.[56] There were also variations in the payout rates for bets, which could change over time within the same lotto venture. But overall, most of the European lotto ventures were structurally very homogenous, and certainly not as varied as the group of lotteries organised with blanks and prizes. Players could bet on one or more numbers between one and ninety, of which five were selected in the public drawing. Moreover, there were several different betting choices (varying between the different ventures): the *estratto semplice* (Fr. *extrait*, one number); *estratto determinato* (Fr. *extrait déterminé*, also one number, but specifying in which order the number would appear among the five numbers drawn); *ambo* (Fr. *ambe*, two numbers); *ambo determinato* (Fr. ambe déterminé, two numbers in specified order); *terno* (Fr. *terne*, three), *quaterno* (Fr. *quaterne*, four); and, in France and some German states, the *cinquina* (Fr. *quine*, five).[57]

In the lotto, players thus had several choices to make. They could bet on only one number, or they could bet on several. However, it was not sufficient simply to list your chosen numbers on the ticket. Players were required to specify what combination they were betting on, and they had to pay for each bet placed. Let us imagine, for instance, that a player had chosen the numbers 8, 21, and 56 – all three of which were drawn, alongside two other numbers. At first sight, it might appear as though the player has won a bet on a *terno*, which in many European lottos yielded a reward of somewhere between 5,200 and 5,400 times your stake.[58] However, this would only be the case if the player had specified that they were betting on a *terno* composed of 8, 21, and 56. If the player had, for instance, placed bets on three simple extracts, they only received their stake times fifteen for each extract. Depending on the size of the stakes, this could cer-

55 Garvía, "Syndication", 621.
56 Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 57.
57 Garvía, "Syndication", 617; Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 57.
58 Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 57.

tainly yield a significant reward, but it would be nowhere close to what they could have won if they had placed a bet on the *terno*, something that lotto advertisers made sure to point out. The lotto allowed for great freedom for players to tailor their bets, and to combine many different options. Since players were required to pay for every bet placed, however, this could become a costly enterprise, which explains the critique of the lotto as a slippery slope into ruin and misery.

The Genoese lotto differed not only from other lotteries of the same period, but also from present-day lotto.[59] In modern versions, the proportion of numbers drawn to the total numbers available is very different from the classical lotto's five to ninety: a common European version is for six numbers to be chosen from forty-nine.[60] In Scandinavia, for instance, players choose seven numbers from thirty-four (Norway), thirty-five (Sweden), or thirty-six (Denmark). The Genoese lotto's intricate system of combinations and betting options is not utilised here; instead, present-day players bet on a string of numbers (six or seven in the examples above) and receive a prize if some or all the numbers coincide with the numbers drawn. The big prize is given to any player who has bet on all the correct numbers.

Another and more fundamental difference between classical and modern lotto is connected to the risk carried by organisers. The modern system is based on the so-called "pari-mutuel" or "totalisator" principle, where the prize fund consists of the money staked or "pooled" by players and divided among potential winners.[61] As such, the organisers of modern lotto carry far less risk than those operating eighteenth-century lottos. In the classical lotto, on the other hand, all successful bettors received their reward based on a system of predetermined payoffs.[62] Therefore, there could in theory be many simultaneous winners of huge sums and the promoters depended on a large capital fund to secure liquidity. Various mechanisms were put in place to reduce the risk of "breaking the bank", most notably the implementation of an office known as the *castelletto*, responsible for balancing the portfolio of bets by closing overcharged numbers.[63] Operating a lotto still entailed great risk, but in this risk resided perhaps also much of the

59 Note, however, that versions of the lotto di Genova are still operational in Italy and Austria. See Manfred Zollinger, "Dealing in Chances – An Introduction", in *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, ed. Manfred Zollinger (Routledge, 2016), 15.

60 D.R. Bellhouse, "Euler and Lotteries", *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Mathematics* 5 (2007): 386, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0928-2017(07)80020-X; Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 93–94.

61 Bellhouse, "Euler and Lotteries", 386; Zollinger, "Dealing in Chances", 16; Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 208.

62 Bellhouse, "Euler and Lotteries", 387; Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 208.

63 Garvía, "Syndication", 619; Legay, *Les Loteries royales*, 79–82.

game's allure, as "large payoffs helped build the lottery's reputation"[64] and allowed players to fantasise about exuberant returns on their wagers.

3 Lotteries and the cultural imagination

It may come as a surprise that the eighteenth century, a period associated with the fostering of rationality and scientific progress, was also a golden age of lotteries. It is less surprising when considering that the development of state-sanctioned lotteries was connected to major scientific developments, notably in the domain of probability theory, which accompanied the spread of the Genoese lotto in the second half of the century, helping to address the question of risk.[65] Furthermore, the emergence of lotteries as instruments of public credit and fiscality was entangled with the development of other financial and economic devices, such as insurance, tontines, annuities, and state bonds, all of which contributed to the emergence of a modern credit economy.[66] When considering, finally, that the long eighteenth century has been termed "the gambling century", the major developments in lottery history over the course of the century make more sense.[67] On the other hand, this development did not take place without considerable debate in the public sphere, with lotteries being considered by critics – including proponents of Enlightenment ideology – as an irrational, immoral, and even dangerous pastime.[68]

Talleyrand's political pamphlet and Hannah More' cautionary tale, referenced above, were contributions to this debate, itself part of a longer, transnational history of moral, social, and political discourse on lotteries. There is continuity to this history, notably with regard to the perception of lottery playing as an unproductive activity and a threat against morality and social order.[69] Jeroen Puttevils's chapter on the lottery discourse of the long sixteenth-century Low Countries shows that, although lotteries are usually represented favourably in government

64 Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 29.

65 See, for instance, Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 47–48.

66 Legay, *Les Loteries royales*, 47–59; Kruckeberg, "The Royal Lottery", 27; Harris, *Gambling in Britain*, 126.

67 Eglin, *The Gambling Century*.

68 On the moral and political critique of lotteries, see: Bruno Bernard, "Aspects moraux et sociaux des loteries", in *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire*, ed. Bruno Bernard and Michel Ansiaux (Loterie nationale; Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994); John Dunkley, *Gambling: a Social and Moral Problem in France, 1685–1792* (Voltaire Foundation, 1985).

69 Bernard, "Aspects moraux", 57–58.

documents of the period, many of the arguments dominating later debates began to take shape in this period.[70]

As Puttevils also points out, however, the sixteenth-century criticism was primarily targeted against private and unlicensed lotteries, with governments working to free licenced lotteries from moral objections. The critique of state-sanctioned lotteries is perhaps one of the most predominant features of the Enlightenment period, together with the decreasing importance of religious arguments. With the centralisation and monopolisation of lottery institutions and the use and/or perception of lotteries as fiscal instruments, came an increasing political critique. According to Manfred Zollinger, the "fiscalism" of eighteenth-century lotteries provoked responses from Enlightenment proponents and the "liberal" and politically conscient bourgeoisie, who targeted the state lottery institutions as part of their overall, alternative vision of the State, the responsibility of sovereigns, and the economic, social, and moral order.[71] In other words, lotteries were increasingly perceived as a problem in the relationship between the state and its citizens, or the sovereign and his/her subjects.

Certainly, the idea that the lottery functions as, or resembles, a fiscal device largely predates this development. The trope of the lottery as a tax on stupidity or credulity, alternatively as a tax on the poor – one that still prevails in the present-day collective consciousness[72] – can be traced back to the mid-sixteenth century, and the British economist and jurist William Petty, for whom the lottery was "a Tax upon unfortunate self-conceited fools".[73] Regardless, the fiscal trope seems to have accrued importance with the spread of state lotteries, including among those who defended the lottery institutions: the French finance minister Jacques Necker perceived the lottery as a tax "to which one submits voluntarily",[74] while William Pitt the younger, then Exchequer, stated that it was to be considered "a tax

70 *Infra*, Puttevils, "Criticising the Lottery in Its Cradle".

71 Zollinger, "Ce 'sort ingénieux'", 75–76.

72 A recent example can be found in the financial self-help author Dave Ramsey's *Total Money Makeover Updated and Expanded: A Proven Plan for Financial Peace* (Thomas Nelson, 2024), 56. Ramsey describes the lottery as "a tax on the poor and on people who can't do math".

73 William Petty, *A Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (N. Brooke, 1662), 45. A more well-known occurrence is found in the opening lines of Henry Fielding farce-opera *The Lottery* (1732): "The Lottery is a Taxation, Upon all the Fools of Creation". Henry Fielding, *The Lottery. A Farce* (N. Newman, 1733 [1732]), I, 5. For more on Fielding and the lottery, see, *infra*, Raven, "Imagining Trust and Justice", and Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature".

74 Jacques Necker, *Œuvres de M. Necker*, vol. 1 (J. P. Heubach et Compagnie, 1786), 103–104. On Necker's role in the development of the Loterie de France, see Robert D. Kruckeberg, "The Wheel of Fortune in Eighteenth-Century France: The Lottery, Consumption, and Politics" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2009), 198–199.

upon gambling".[75] As James Raven suggests, the development of state lotteries as fiscal devices in the eighteenth century are revelatory of the growth of state power.[76]

However, the ways in which the lottery institution was perceived to interfere in the relationship between state and citizens could take very different forms in the various European contexts. In his chapter, Michael Scham examines how the Spanish lottery, established by Charles III in 1763, was projected and presented as part of a larger Enlightenment project.[77] By contrast, Catherine II allegedly dismissed the lottery on the grounds that it would negatively affect the relationship with her subjects, and because she wished not to have her name associated with the wheel of fortune.[78] The Russian empress's fear seems to have come true in the case of Louis XVI of France: as Robert D. Kruckeberg has argued, the Loterie Royale de France contributed to undermining the status of the French monarchy by leading its citizens to perceive the king as a "predatory merchant".[79] With the establishment of the French royal lottery in 1776, the critique went, the sovereign was now the organiser of a game that duped his own subjects.

In other words, the lottery was perceived not only as a social and moral, but also a political issue. In the key year of 1776, the philosopher and encyclopaedist d'Holbach reflected on the problem that European state lotteries posed to the relationship between the state and its citizens, considering them "continuous traps" set by governments for the "greed of their subjects" and as constituting a "tax" on "voluntary dupes", and he deplored how they primarily affected the "simple minded" and the poor. D'Holbach shows a particular concern for the fundamental iniquity of the lotto, largely in favour of the state at the cost of private individuals.[80]

Certainly, this was also the case with the blanks and prizes lotteries, as illustrated by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*. The Scottish philosopher points out that a lottery can never be completely fair, as no organiser would take the risk without the promise of gain.[81] But the issue of fairness was even more promi-

---

75 William Pitt, quoted in "Proceedings of the First Session of the Seventeenth Parliament of Great Britain", *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, November 1791, 383.

76 *Infra*, Raven, "Imagining Trust and Justice".

77 *Infra*, Michael Scham, "The Failed Promise".

78 Alexandre Stroev, *Les Aventuriers des Lumières* (PUF, 1997), 206.

79 Kruckeberg, "The Royal Lottery", 51.

80 Paul Henri Dietrich Holbach, *Éthocratie ou Le Gouvernement fondé sur la morale* (Marc-Michel Rey, 1776), 259–260.

81 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. Andrew Skinner (Penguin Books, 1970 [1776]), book 1, ch. X, 210–211. See also: Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 177–178; Laurie Bréban and André Lapidus, "Adam Smith on Lotteries: an Interpretation and Formal Restatement", *The European Journal of*

nent in the case of the lotto, where the disproportion between odds and payout rates – i. e. between the likelihood of a bet succeeding and the reward offered – was overwhelming and the advantage greatly skewed in favour of the "bank". The topic of iniquity was recurrent in the anti-lotto discourse. Another Enlightenment philosopher, Jean-Baptiste-René Robinet, compared the French royal lottery to a father organising a banking game with his children.[82]

As already mentioned, the lotto scheme also entailed a greater degree of risk from the side of the organisers, due to its particular prize system. Indeed, the organisers could justify the disproportion between odds and payout rates by pointing to this risk. Their decision to assume risk was facilitated not only by safety mechanisms such as the castelletto, but also by developments within probability theory – specifically the law of large numbers – which made it possible to predict the odds as always over time being in favour of the "bank". As Eglin points out, however, gambling operators were often reluctant to trust this advantage, "rel[ying] instead on the psychological lure of the larger payoffs that accompanied betting options with larger odds".[83] Furthermore, critics argued that the players were unable to fully understand the odds, grossly overestimating their chances of winning.[84] As Johanne Slettvoll Kristiansen's chapter demonstrates, the questions of the public understanding (or the lack thereof) of probability and of the discrepancy between odds and payout rates were key aspects of the public controversy following the introduction of lotto in Denmark-Norway.[85]

In addition, it was reported that players acted with false convictions spurred by various superstitious beliefs and magical thinking, encouraged by almanacs and manuals proposing different divinatory methods for predicting the winning numbers.[86] In a period where science and pseudoscience often went hand in hand,[87] there was a market for selling works that combined dream interpretation with pseudo-cabalistic calculus, wrapped in a mix of occult and pseudoscientific rhetoric. In Es. Blake's 1834 narrative "La Loterie royale", players are presented

the History of Economic Thought 26, no. 1 (2019/01/02 2019), https://doi.org/10.1080/09672567.2019.1576057.

82 Jean-Baptiste-René Robinet, *Dictionnaire universel des sciences morale, économique, politique et diplomatique; ou Bibliothèque de l'homme-d'État et du citoyen*, vol. 24 (London, 1782), 181.

83 Eglin, *The Gambling Century*, 29. Stigler also points out that lottery organisers were more likely to trust experience rather than mathematical proof. Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 198.

84 Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 179. See also Legay, *Les Loteries royales*, 137–140.

85 *Infra*, Kristiansen, "Innovation, Temptation, and Mathematical Education". For similar considerations in the German context, see, *infra*, Haug, "Selling Like a State", section 5.

86 See, *infra*, Haugen, "Staging Lotteries", and Inga Henriette Undheim, "Lottery Dreams".

87 Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Harvard University Press, 1968), 23.

as "tell[ing] each other their dreams and gravely discuss[ing] the probabilities".[88] This might indicate how the notion of "probabilities" had become a household topic, even though that did not mean that people necessarily understood the subtleties of probability calculus. More importantly, it illustrates how, in the terms of Francesco Colzi, the practice of lottery playing was "composed by an inseparable unity of economic calculus and irrationality, in a union between behaviours dictated by reason and others inspired by dreams and superstition".[89] Not restricted to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this aspect seems still to characterise present-day lottery playing.[90]

Trust and fairness were other key issues in the development of state lotteries, as examined by both James Raven and Tilman Haug.[91] A lottery's success and profitability depended largely on the public's trust in the equity of operations: no lottery could function if foul play was suspected.[92] Therefore, an elaborate system was built around this need to secure public trust, most conspicuously perhaps in the elaborate ceremony surrounding the public drawings. To signal the fairness and impartiality of the drawings, blind-folded orphans typically selected the winning numbers or tickets, and these were subsequently announced to the public. High-ranking officials oversaw operations and made sure that everything transpired according to protocol. As Tilman Haug notes, lottery drawings were also subject to representation from operators seeking to emphasise the transparency and visibility of the procedure.[93]

Operators were obliged to uphold certain guarantees vis-à-vis players in order not to undermine public confidence; indeed, the lottery is often referred to as a *contract* between the operator and the player, by both contemporary commentators and later historians.[94] One commentator noted that the Danish lotto plan of 1771 could be viewed as "nothing other than a contract with the playing public", and that the operators were "obligated to uphold all of its stipulations".[95] The au-

88 Blake, "La Loterie royale", 134.

89 Colzi, *La fortuna dei papi*, 182.

90 Thierry Ripoll, *Pourquoi croit-on? Psychologie des croyances* (Éditions Sciences Humaines, 2020), 85; Charles Clotfelter and Philip Cook, "The 'Gambler's Fallacy' in Lottery Play", *Management Science* 39, no. 12 (1991).

91 See *infra:* Raven, "Imagining Trust and Justice"; Haug, "Selling Like a State".

92 See Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 29; Legay, *Les Loteries royales*, 119–131.

93 *Infra*, Haug, "Selling Like a State", section 3.

94 Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 90; Schädler and Zollinger, "Introduction", 10; Garvía, "Syndication", 615.

95 "Tanker om den nylig forefaldne Forandring ved Tallotteriet. Oversadt af det Tyske", digital edition from *Trykkefrihedens Skrifter (1770–1773)*, 2.15.8, The Royal Danish Library (https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs). Version 2.0, October 2021.

thor wrote in response to alterations made to the plan, which favoured the operator at the expense of the playing public. The sudden and unilateral change of terms was considered a breach of contract, resulting in a public outcry and diminished trust. The English state lottery experienced a comparable weakening of public trust, following a radical structural change in 1769. In his chapter, James Raven examines how trust declined when the low-risk annuity lotteries were abandoned in favour of considerably more risk-intense "hit or miss" lotteries.[96]

Debates on lotteries were not isolated events, but often belonged to broader social discussions, including more general debates on gambling.[97] Many critics discussed lotteries together with other games of chance, such as the French former gambler turned moralist, Jean Dusaulx, who included the state lotto in his two-volume diatribe on gambling, *De la Passion du jeu* (1779).[98] Many of the central arguments against lotteries were common for all forms of gambling, perceived as leading to moral corruption and dire social consequences. What set apart the critique of lotteries was, in the case of state-sanctioned schemes, the denunciation of the hypocrisy of governments who officially prohibited (but often tolerated) gambling,[99] while allowing and organising lotteries. In return, official justifications for state lotteries posited that they contributed to charitable causes, tempered excessive gambling, and improved social order.[100]

Another specificity of the lottery, and the lotto in particular, was its appeal to all social classes, with an entry cost often low enough to attract lower strands of society. Although entry barriers were put in place to reduce access for the very poor, the moral critique of the lottery presented it as a particularly dangerous game for precisely this group. Lotteries allegedly lured the poor into placing their last pennies on the illusory dream of sudden wealth, one which they were, furthermore, unequipped to handle, and which, in some cases, posed a threat to the established social hierarchies.[101] The satirical representation of players nourishing fantasies of upward social mobility and aspiring above their station is a recurring topic in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century lottery literature. Such fantasies were also transmitted in more positive forms in adver-

96 *Infra*, Raven, "Imagining Trust and Justice".

97 Dunkley, *Gambling*. See also, *infra*, Anne Beate Maurseth, "Jackpot".

98 Jean Dusaulx, *De la Passion du jeu, depuis les temps anciens jusqu'à nos jours*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (L'Imprimerie de Monsieur, 1779).

99 Eglin, *The Gambling Century*, 39.

100 See, *infra*, Scham, "The Failed Promise".

101 See, notably, in the present volume: Raven, "Imagining Trust and Justice"; Haugen, "Staging Lotteries"; Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact"; Maurseth, "Jackpot"; Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature"; Undheim, "Lottery Dreams".

tisements, as is examined in cases from the German states and England, by Tilman Haug and Natalie Devin Hoage respectively.[102] This in turn warranted responses from critics who argued that the various forms of lottery advertisements, including the publication of the winning numbers in the periodical press, contributed to spreading false hopes and the socially nefarious lottery fantasy.[103]

Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga's chapter provides access to the (mediated) fantasies of actual, early modern lottery players, indicating how their social aspirations, at least in this earlier period, were relatively modest, as well as gendered and socially determined.[104] Both Macry and Stigler have noted, moreover, that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century lotto players, both in Naples and France, seem to have preferred bets with shorter odds, such as the *estratto/extrait*,[105] an observation suggesting that the trope of the exuberant lottery fantasies may have been, if not an invention, then at least largely exaggerated by critics, playwrights, and novelists.

The fictional representations of lottery players predominantly portray shattered hopes of winning the big prize. Alternatively, they show players being duped into thinking they have won, in traps set to reveal their true character, usually as greedy or presumptuous.[106] In those cases where characters actually win, the purpose is usually to illustrate the corruption of gain. Anne Beate Maurseth's chapter zooms in on one such winner, a French servant who wins the big prize only to end up where he started, after having squandered his entire fortune.[107] Similarly, Paul Goring's and Inga Henriette Undheim's chapters examine cases where the moral message is clear: sudden wealth corrupts, not only the winners, but also their families, and even entire communities.[108] In these three cases, as in numerous other lottery representations, the social and moral critique extends beyond the phenomenon of lottery playing, to concern contemporary customs more generally, embedded in a broader societal critique. Marius Warholm Haugen argues, moreover, that the numerous eighteenth-century French comedies that represented the lottery – in all its various forms and schemes – had in common that

102 *Infra:* Haug, "Selling Like a State"; Natalie Devin Hoage, "Lottery Advertisements". On lottery advertising and publicising in the early modern period, see Raux, *Lotteries, Art Markets*, ch. 3. See also Welch, "Lotteries in Early Modern Italy", 86.

103 See Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 179–180. Tilman Haug examines, moreover, how the development of lottery advertising in the German context was affected by the increasing moral critique of the last part of the eighteenth century. See, *infra*, Haug, "Selling Like a State", section 5.

104 *Infra*, Terwisscha van Scheltinga, "If I Had the Great Prize".

105 Macry, *Giocare la vita*, 83; Stigler, *Casanova's Lottery*, 135.

106 *Infra*, Haugen, "Staging Lotteries".

107 *Infra*, Maurseth, "Jackpot".

108 *Infra:* Undheim, "Lottery Dreams"; Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature".

they engaged with larger economic developments and discourses, such as the increased importance of risk-taking and speculation.[109]

The cultural representation of lotteries was, however, not limited to condemnation and critique, but also betrayed ambivalence, fascination, and even praise. Naturally, the domain of advertising played a key role in transmitting positive depictions of the game, making use of various artistic and literary modes of expression, as Tilman Haug and Natalie Devin Hoage's chapters illustrate.[110] Other sources for light-hearted renditions of lotteries and lottery fantasies are the rhymes and sentences written on lottery tickets by players, a practice examined by Jeroen Puttevils and Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga for the early modern period, but also stretching into the eighteenth century.[111] In general, the representation of lotteries by artists and writers also covers a wide spectrum, from moral condemnation to a genuine interest, notably in the imaginative aspects of the game. As Angela Fabris argues, ambivalent attitudes towards the lotto are characteristic of the eighteenth-century Italian literary discourse.[112] In the French context, Marius Warholm Haugen examines cases of literary authors betraying fascination for the lottery's invitation to fantasise and daydream.[113] Moreover, as Haugen, Paul Goring, and Inga Henriette Undheim's chapters show, studying cases from nineteenth-century France, Britain, and Denmark-Norway, the cultural interest in the lottery lingered after the respective institutions had been abolished, visible through retrospective cultural responses that often betray a certain nostalgia for a bygone era.[114]

4 A transnational and transmedial history

The history of lotteries is fundamentally transnational: lotteries have spread and developed through a dynamic of "innovation and cultural transfer".[115] If Genoa was the birthplace of no less than two major innovations, both the medieval lot-

109 *Infra*, Haugen, "Staging Lotteries".

110 *Infra:* Haug, "Selling Like a State"; Hoage, "Lottery Advertisements".

111 *Infra:* Puttevils, "Criticising the Lottery in Its Cradle"; Terwisscha van Scheltinga, "If I Had the Great Prize". For rhymes and sentences on lottery tickets in the eighteenth century, see for instance *Liste des lots de la loterie tirée à Paris dans la grande salle de l'Hôtel de Ville* (L'Imprimerie royale, 1729).

112 *Infra*, Angela Fabris, "The Ambivalent Perceptions of the Genoese Lotto".

113 *Infra*, Haugen, "Plus de loterie".

114 *Infra:* Haugen, "Plus de loterie"; Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Fiction"; Undheim, "Lottery Dreams".

115 Delle Luche, "La Fortune du pot", 556.

tery and the lotto,[116] other cities and countries developed lottery schemes that were in turn exported, England and the Low Countries being central, for instance, to the spread of annuity and class lotteries. In this history of cultural transfer, commerce has played a major role, in particular in the early stages of lottery history, with the activities of commercially strong city states such as Genoa, Venice, Bruges, and Antwerp being key factors for the spread of lotteries across Europe.[117] As Paolo Macry has noted, moreover, the "travel" of the class lottery seems to have "follow[ed] the trajectory of European mercantile capitalism".[118] As for the Genoese lotto, the operation of lottery "entrepreneurs" – primarily of Italian origin – was, as Manfred Zollinger has shown, crucial to its European success in the eighteenth century.[119]

But the transnational development of lotteries is also a history of warfare, geopolitical influence, and rivalry. If the French "discovered" lotteries in their campaigns during the Italian Wars, much later, Napoleon's conquests imposed the French Imperial lottery on the conquered areas, including in the Italian parts of the Empire, thus reversing the direction of influence. The need for financing warfare was also what, in some cases, caused and justified the implementation and continued existence of state-sanctioned lotteries.[120] A caricature made by the French artist François Godefroy in the context of the Revolutionary wars illustrates this aspect of state lotteries (figure 1). Portraying George III and William Pitt being thwarted by a French revolutionary, the caricature bears the inscription "The Juggler Pitt, supporting with a lottery the balance of England and the subsidies of the coalition".[121] The lottery is represented through the typical iconography of Lady Fortune, standing with one leg on the wheel and draped with a banner carrying the winning lotto numbers.[122] The fact that the English state lottery

116 Felloni and Laura, *Genova e la storia della finanza.*

117 Jan Dumoly, Jeroen Puttevils, and Wim De Clercq, *Te Brugghe ende eldere: omme daer advis te hebbene hoe men daer de lotinghen ghedaen hadde* (Borgerhoff & Lamberigts, 2021), ch. 4; Delle Luche, "La Fortune du pot", 553–554; Assereto, *Un giuoco così utile*, 59.

118 Macry, *Giocare la vita*, 26.

119 Zollinger, "Entrepreneurs of Chance".

120 Raven, "Debating the Lottery in Britain", 103.

121 François Godefroy, "Le Jongleur Pitt, soutenant avec une loterie l'équilibre de l'Angleterre et les subsides de la coalition", 1794. Gallica / Bibliothèque nationale de France, ark:/12148/btv1b6948211x.

122 For more on Lady Fortune as a symbol of lotteries, see: Florence Buttay, "La Fortune victime des Lumières? Remarques sur les transformations de Fortune aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles", in *The End of Fortuna and the Rise of Modernity: Contingency and Certainty in Early Modern History*, ed. Arndt Brendecke and Peter Vogt (De Gruyter, 2017); Annemie Buffels, "Les Pérégrinations de

was a blanks and prizes lottery, and not a lotto scheme like the French, is a detail that the French artist either ignored or deemed irrelevant for the representation; the important element was the central role of the lottery in the financing of the conflict. Since the French revolutionaries had abolished the state lotto, perceived as a remnant of the Old Regime, the caricature might also allude to lotteries as a tool for royal despotism, against which revolutionary France fought so bravely.[123] For reasons of fiscal expediency, resulting partly from the war, the French reestablished their state lotto in 1797.[124]

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 1: François Godefroy, "Le Jongleur Pitt, soutenant avec une loterie l'équilibre de l'Angleterre et les subsides de la coalition", 1794. Gallica / Bibliothèque nationale de France, ark:/12148/btv1b6948211x.

Dame Fortune", in *L'Art du jeu. 75 ans de Loterie nationale*, ed. Annemie Buffels (Loterie nationale; Fonds Mercator, 2009).

123 Kruckeberg, "A Nation of Gamesters".

124 Jean Léonnet, *Les Loteries d'état en France aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Imprimerie Nationale, 1963), 44–45.

Another key factor in the history of eighteenth-century lotteries was what Bob Harris calls the "transnational nature of the lottery market".[125] The fear of seeing money disappear into foreign lottery schemes justified the establishment of national monopolies and provided a central argument for the lottery's advocates.[126] Several chapters engage with this aspect of European lottery history, by examining the debates concerning the international and regional (and also national) competition. Jeroen Salman discusses the conflicts and issues connected with the attempt by Dutch authorities to centralise the lottery market and the resulting competition between the state lottery and local lotteries, as well as between provinces and cities.[127] Johanne Slettvoll Kristiansen examines how a public outcry accompanied the decision by Dano-Norwegian authorities to grant a lotto contract to a foreign entrepreneur, thus effectively breaching the monopoly of the Dano-Norwegian class lottery. And Tilman Haug shows how the transjurisdictional and transregional lottery market of the German states of the Holy Roman Empire was subject to a "war" of "advertising and counter-advertising", developing through a complex and diversified array of media and strategies.[128]

Haug's analysis thus also points to a key feature of the cultural representation of lotteries in this period, namely its transmedial character: tropes, figures, and motifs are being circulated and remediated through various media and forms of expression. Natalie Devin Hoage's chapter examines this transmediality through a specific manifestation, by showing how advertisements in early nineteenth-century Britain not only made use of existing media forms but also appropriated fictional characters from the theatre to transmit and sell the lottery fantasy.[129]

To what extent did the cultural representation of lotteries travel? The translation, appropriation, and circulation of specific texts constitute an important object of study in this respect. The translations of Pietro Chiari's "lottery novel" *La Giuocatrice di lotto* (1757) into German, French, and English, offer one example of how lottery texts travelled,[130] as do the aforementioned translations and appropriations of Hanna More's cautionary tale into French (together with its transatlantic

125 Harris, *Gambling in Britain*, 141.

126 Kruckeberg, "The Wheel of Fortune", 172–173; Harris, *Gambling in Britain*, 129. See also: Freundlich, *Le Monde du jeu*, 147–152; Legay, *Les Loteries royales*, 106–110.

127 *Infra*, Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact".

128 *Infra*, Haug, "Selling Like a State". See also Legay, *Les Loteries royales*, 106–112.

129 *Infra*, Hoage, "Lottery Advertisements".

130 For a study of the French and English translations, see Haugen, "Translating the Lottery". For more on the lottery in Pietro Chiari's work, see, *infra*, Fabris, "The Ambivalent Perceptions of the Genoese Lotto".

circulation), and the Dutch and French translations of Christian Fürchtegott Gellert's comedy *Das Los in der Lotterie* (1746).[131]

Often, these translations and appropriations highlight interesting aspects concerning the transnational representation of lotteries. For instance, Pietro Chiari's English translator intervenes in the public debate by defending lottery play and pointing in his preface to the superiority of the British lottery compared with schemes of mainland Europe, such as the Genoese *lotto* depicted in the novel.[132] Another example is the French playwright Louis-Benoît Picard, who adopts an idea found in a German comedy when writing his own play about a house offered in a lottery, a scheme that, he later points out, was rare in France.[133] What both cases reveal, is that the literary interest in lotteries often stems from its potential as a plot device, but also that the interest in the lottery as a cultural phenomenon goes beyond the various lottery schemes or forms, to concern the lottery as a principle of aleatory distribution or as a metaphor for chance. As James Raven puts it, "[a]bove all, those writing about the lottery, imaginatively, critically, and philosophically, engaged with wider social, cultural, and intellectual consequences of chance in the world",[134] an observation that rings true for the many cultural contexts examined in this volume.[135]

A common-European imagination of lotteries also emerges from the circulation of specific genres, a case in point being lottery almanacs, dream books, and divinatory manuals. These publications were often presented as translations from Italian, or as anchored in an Italian tradition, following the spread of the Genoese lotto (although fortune telling and superstition also accompany blanks and prizes lotteries).[136] Tilman Haug examines a particularly interesting almanac written in French, by French entrepreneurs helping to establish a lotto in the

131 See, *infra*, Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact", and Haugen, "Staging Lotteries".

132 Pietro Chiari, *The Prize in the Lottery; Or, the Adventures of a Young Lady. Written by Herself, From the Italian of L'Abbate Chiari*, trans. Thomas Evanson White, 2 vols., vol. 1 (B. McMillan, 1817), iv. See also, *infra*, Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature".

133 Louis-Benoît Picard and Jean-Baptiste Radet, *La Maison en loterie, comédie en un acte, mêlée de couplets* (Chaignieau aîné, 1818); Louis-Benoît Picard, "Préface", in *Œuvres de L.B. Picard* (J.N. Barba, 1821), 3–4. See more *infra*, Haugen, "Staging Lotteries", section 5.

134 *Infra*, Raven, "Imagining Trust and Justice", 89.

135 See, in particular, the insightful reading of the lottery novel *Le Gros lot* proposed by Maurseth, *infra*, "Jackpot".

136 See, *infra*, Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature". See also Harris, *Gambling in Britain*, 208–209.

German city of Mannheim, the content of which partly overlaps with manuals published for the French lotto.[137]

The lottery manual and the practice of divination also became literary motifs, which were both transmedial and transnational: they are privileged targets for satire in comedies, prose fiction, and ballads, from Italy to Denmark-Norway, passing through France.[138] This illustrates the most prominent transnational aspect of lottery representations, namely the circulation of particular literary motifs, tropes, and figures, such as the lottery soothsayer or the lottery divination manual. It should be pointed out, however, that the topic appears to have been particularly prominent in the Italian context, as illustrated in Angela Fabris's chapter.[139]

The figure of the cobbler as lottery player is another striking example of transnational and transmedial circulation, appearing in plays, ballads, and prose fiction, from southern to northern Europe.[140] The cobbler usually symbolises the humblest of lottery players, whose life would be completely transformed if they won the big prize. This recurring figure is likely the result of an older, common-European perception of the cobbler as the humblest of professions, echoing, as Michael Scham points to, a common classical heritage.[141] The Latin expression "Sutor, ne ultra crepidam" – "Cobbler, do not judge beyond the *crepida* [shoe]" – is one possible resonance here, which aligns with the critique of lotteries as a threat to established social hierarchies, indicating that the humble players best not aspire above their station. A similar message is transmitted, moreover, in La Fontaine's fable of the cobbler and the financer, another possible reference point for the eighteenth-century figure.[142]

More curious, perhaps, is the appearance in Spanish, Dano-Norwegian, and French texts, of a specific narrative, which Scham has termed, somewhat

137 *Infra*, Haug, "Selling Like a State"; *Almanach de Bonne Fortune de la Loterie Electorale Palatine pour l'année 1772* (Imprimerie de la Loterie Electorale Palatine, 1772); *L'Oniroscopie, ou Application des songes aux numéros de la Lotterie de l'École royale militaire* (Desnos, 1773).

138 *Infra:* Fabris, "The Ambivalent Perceptions of the Genoese Lotto"; Haugen, "Staging Lotteries", section 2; Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact", section 2; Undheim, "Lottery Dreams", section 3. See also: Haugen, "The Lottery Fantasy and Social Mobility"; Fabris, "La questione dei generi teatrali e delle figure dedite al gioco e alla lotteria ne *Il giocatore* di Luigi Riccoboni e ne *Le donne gelose* di Carlo Goldoni", in *Goldoni 'avant la lettre': evoluzione, involuzione, trasformazione dei generi teatrali (1650–1750)* (Lineadacqua, 2023).

139 *Infra*, Fabris, "The Ambivalent Perceptions of the Genoese Lotto".

140 *Infra:* Scham, "The Failed Promise"; Haugen, "Staging Lotteries"; Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact"; Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature"; Undheim, "Lottery Dreams".

141 *Infra*, Scham, "The Failed Promise".

142 Jean de La Fontaine, *Fables* (Le Livre de Poche, 2002 [1678]), 8, II, 234–236.

tongue-in-cheek, "the premature defenestration narrative".[143] Examined by both Scham and Undheim, in two Spanish plays and one Dano-Norwegian popular song respectively,[144] this narrative recounts the story of a couple who, wrongly believing they have won the lottery, begin throwing their belongings out the window to make room for new consumption. If the appearance of this narrative in distinctly separate literatures is intriguing, it is also a variation over a more general trope, echoing again La Fontaine and the fable of the hunters who sold the skin before the bear was shot, in other words, counted their chickens before the eggs were hatched.[145] Numerous satires make fun of lottery players who, convinced of their impending win, or tricked into believing they have already won, act before the fact and spend money they do not yet, and will never possess.[146]

Another common-European trope is found in the association between marriage and the lottery, especially prominent on stage, but also present in prose fiction and in advertisements.[147] Comedies and satires present the lottery as a means to secure a dowry, or even as a device to find and choose a spouse; the "marriage lottery", in which a young woman or man becomes the big prize, is a recurring motif in European literature, creating metaphorical resonances that present marriage *as* a lottery, but also serving to highlight the transactional and financial aspects of marriage in the period.[148] Although less prominent than in eighteenth-century fiction, the connection between the lottery and marriage was already present in the "fantasies" of early modern (female) players, as demonstrated by Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga's analysis of lottery rhymes.[149]

Let us point out, finally, that the circulation of specific tropes or figures is not unidirectional. On the one hand, the comic figure of the pseudo-cabalist lottery player – which became highly successful on the French stage[150] – seems to have made its first appearance in French through the translation of Carlo Goldoni's com-

143 *Infra*, Scham, "The Failed Promise".

144 *Infra*, Scham, "The Failed Promise", and Undheim, "Lottery Dreams". In addition, the narrative appears in an anonymous French story from 1825: "Le Bureau de loterie", in *L'Écouteur aux portes, petite revue morale et satyrique* (Louis Janet, 1825), 50.

145 La Fontaine, *Fables*, 5, XX, 178.

146 See, for instance, *infra*, Haugen, "Staging Lotteries".

147 Regarding advertisements, see, *infra*, Hoage, "Lottery Advertisements", section 2.

148 *Infra:* Haugen, "Staging Lotteries", section 4; Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact", section 2; Hoage, "Lottery Advertisements", section 2; Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature", section 1. For more on the cultural connection between lotteries and marriage, see also Amy M. Froide, *Silent Partners: Women as Public Investors During Britain's Financial Revolution, 1690–1750* (Oxford University Press, 2016), ch. 2.

149 *Infra*, Terwisscha van Scheltinga, "If I Had the Great Prize", section 7.

150 *Infra*, Haugen, "Staging Lotteries", section 2.

edy *La Donna di garbo*,[151] logically following the spread of the Genoese *lotto* and the genre of the divinatory manual. On the other hand, Balzac's *La Rabouilleuse* later influenced the Neapolitan "lottery novels" of Matilde Serao.[152] This is only one of numerous examples of how the cultural imagination of the lottery took shape through a web of connections extending between various cultural, national, and linguistic contexts, media, genres, and forms of expression, that together help us create a picture of how this game – in its many iterations – was perceived by contemporary commentators and observers.

This volume ends in the nineteenth century, but the history of lotteries did not, nor did the fascination for the lottery and its fantasy. While some European lottery institutions have had an uninterrupted existence until the present day, other institutions were (re)established in the twentieth century, with the age of the Internet bringing new developments in schemes and technologies.[153] Similarly, both the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries have produced new forms of lottery advertisements, through the advent of audio-visual and digital media, which largely present variations over older themes: "Lotto – Will you be next?"; "Give your dreams a chance"; "Don't wait for luck to happen", etc. Moreover, lotteries have continued to inspire works of fiction, from "highbrow" authors like Graham Greene ("The Lottery Ticket", 1938) and Jorge Luis Borges (*La Lotería en Babilonia*, 1944) to more "middlebrow" authors like Grégoire Delacourt (*La Liste de mes envies*, 2012) and Vladimiro Polchi (*I communisti che vinsero alla lotteria*, 2018), not to forget popular TV-series and films like *The Syndicate* (BBC, 2012–2021), Nadège Loiseau's *Trois fois rien* (2022) and, most recently, Paul Feig's *Jackpot* (2024). In other words, there is still much to be written on the cultural history of lotteries, and our hope is that the present volume will inspire other scholars to continue this work, by exploring the cultural, social, and political impact of the lottery fantasy until the present day.

151 Carlo Goldoni, "La Docte intrigante, ou La Femme accorte et de bon sens", in *Choix des meilleures pièces du théâtre italien moderne, Traduites en François, avec des Dissertations & des Notes*, ed. M.E.B.D. (1783).

152 Antonio Gramsci, "La Religione, il lotto e l'oppio della miseria", in *Opere di Antonio Gramsci: 4: Note sul Machiavelli, sulla politica e sulla stato moderno* (Einaudi, 1949), 288.

153 For the later history of European lotteries, see: Schädler, *Créateurs de chances. Les loteries en Europe*; Annemie Buffels, ed., *L'Art du jeu. 75 ans de Loterie nationale* (Loterie nationale; Fonds Mercator, 2009); Bernard and Ansiaux, *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire.*

Bibliography

Almanach de Bonne Fortune de la Loterie Electorale Palatine pour l'année 1772. Imprimerie de la Loterie Electorale Palatine, 1772.

Assereto, Giovanni. *'Un giuoco così utile ai pubblici introiti': il lotto di Genova dal XVI al XVIII secolo.* Edizioni Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche; Viella, 2013.

Bauer, Günther G. *Lotto und Lotterie.* Katzbichler, 1997.

Bellhouse, D. R. "Euler and Lotteries". *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Mathematics* 5 (2007): 385 – 394. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0928-2017(07)80020-X.

Belmas, Elisabeth. *Jouer autrefois: essai sur le jeu dans la France moderne (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle).* Editions Champ Vallon, 2006.

Bergholdt, Kirstine Bjerre. "Det danske klasselotteri. Det danske klasselotteris historie 1753 – 1925". Master diss., University of Copenhagen, 2004.

Bergman, Andrew. "It Could Happen to You". TriStar Pictures, 1994.

Bernard, Bruno. "Aspects moraux et sociaux des loteries". In *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire*, edited by Bruno Bernard and Michel Ansiaux, 55 – 87. Loterie nationale; Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994.

Bernard, Bruno, and Michel Ansiaux, eds. *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire.* Loterie nationale; Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994.

Blake, Es. "La Loterie royale". In *Paris, ou le Livre des Cent-et-un*, edited by Pierre-François Ladvocat, 131 – 149. Ladvocat, 1834.

Bréban, Laurie, and André Lapidus. "Adam Smith on Lotteries: an Interpretation and Formal Restatement". *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 26, no. 1 (2019/01/02 2019): 157 – 197. https://doi.org/10.1080/09672567.2019.1576057.

Brenner, Reuven. "Gambling and Speculation: Perceptions and Reality". In *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, edited by Manfred Zollinger, 216 – 234. Routledge, 2016.

Bruneel, Claude. "Les Loteries de l'Europe méridionale". In *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire*, edited by Bruno Bernard and Michel Ansiaux, 89 – 135. Loterie nationale; Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994.

Buffels, Annemie, ed. *L'Art du jeu. 75 ans de Loterie nationale.* Loterie nationale; Fonds Mercator, 2009.

Buffels, Annemie. "Les Pérégrinations de Dame Fortune". In *L'Art du jeu. 75 ans de Loterie nationale*, edited by Annemie Buffels, 48 – 59. Loterie nationale; Fonds Mercator, 2009.

Burnham, Michelle. *Transoceanic America: Risk, Writing, and Revolution in the Global Pacific.* Oxford University Press, 2019.

Buttay, Florence. "La Fortune victime des Lumières? Remarques sur les transformations de Fortune aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles". In *The End of Fortuna and the Rise of Modernity: Contingency and Certainty in Early Modern History*, edited by Arndt Brendecke and Peter Vogt. De Gruyter, 2017.

Call, Michael J. "Fortuna Goes to the Theater: Lottery Comedies in Seventeenth-Century France". *French Forum* 40, no. 1 (2015): 1 – 15. https://doi.org/10.1353/frf.2015.0012.

"Chance". *The New Statesman and Nation*, 6 June 1931.

Chiari, Pietro. *The Prize in the Lottery; Or, the Adventures of a Young Lady. Written by Herself, From the Italian of L'Abbate Chiari.* Translated by Thomas Evanson White. 2 vols. Vol. 1, B. McMillan, 1817.

Clotfelter, Charles, and Philip Cook. "The 'Gambler's Fallacy' in Lottery Play". *Management Science* 39, no. 12 (08/01 1991): 1521 – 1525.

Cohen, Jonathan D. *For a Dollar and a Dream: State Lotteries in Modern America.* Oxford University Press, 2022.

Colzi, Francesco. *La fortuna dei papi: il gioco del lotto nello Stato pontificio tra Sette e Ottocento.* Editoriale scientifica, 2004.

Darnton, Robert. *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France.* Harvard University Press, 1968.

de Boer, Dick E.H. "De triomftocht der prozen. Loterijwezen en volkscultuur in de Nederlanden tot het eind van de 17de eeuw". *Spiegel historiael* 4 (2001): 154 – 160.

de Boer, Dick E.H. "Fun, Greed, and Popular Culture. Lotteries and Lottery-Rhymes as a Mirror of the Cultural Legacy of the Low Countries' 'Long Sixteenth Century'". In *Netherlandish Culture of the Sixteenth Century: Urban Perspectives*, 271 – 293: Brepols, 2018.

Dean, David. "Elizabeth's Lottery: Political Culture and State Formation in Early Modern England". *Journal of British Studies* 50, no. 3 (2011): 587 – 611. https://doi.org/10.1086/659829.

Dean, David. "Locality and Self in the Elizabethan Lottery of the 1560s". In *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, edited by Norman L. Jones and Daniel Woolf, 207 – 227. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2007.

Delle Luche, Jean-Dominique. "La Fortune du pot. Les loteries municipales en Allemagne (XVe–XVIe siècles): divertissement collectif, prestige municipal et concurrence urbaine". *Revue historique* 687, no. 3 (2018): 553 – 592. https://doi.org/10.3917/rhis.183.0553.

Dumoly, Jan, Jeroen Puttevils, and Wim De Clercq. *Te Brugghe ende eldere: omme daer advis te hebbene hoe men daer de lotinghen ghedaen hadde.* Borgerhoff & Lamberigts, 2021.

Dunkley, John. *Gambling: a Social and Moral Problem in France, 1685 – 1792.* Voltaire Foundation, 1985.

Dusaulx, Jean. *De la Passion du jeu, depuis les temps anciens jusqu'à nos jours.* 2 vols. Vol. 2. L'Imprimerie de Monsieur, 1779.

Eglin, John. *The Gambling Century: Commercial Gaming in Britain from Restoration to Regency.* Oxford University Press, 2023.

Ewen, Cecil L'Estrange. *Lotteries and Sweepstakes: An Historical, Legal, and Ethical Survey of Their Introduction, Suppression and Re-establishment in the British Isles.* Heath Cranton Limited, 1932.

Fabris, Angela. "La questione dei generi teatrali e delle figure dedite al gioco e alla lotteria ne *Il giocatore* di Luigi Riccoboni e ne *Le donne gelose* di Carlo Goldoni". In *Goldoni 'avant la lettre': evoluzione, involuzione, trasformazione dei generi teatrali (1650 – 1750)*, 225 – 235: Lineadacqua, 2023.

Felloni, Giuseppe, and Guido Laura. *Genova e la storia della finanza: una serie di primati? – Genoa and the History of Finance: A Series of Firsts?* Brigati Glauco, 2004.

Fielding, Henry. *The Lottery. A Farce.* N. Newman, 1733 [1732].

Freundlich, Francis. *Le Monde du jeu à Paris: 1715 – 1800.* Albin Michel, 1995.

Froide, Amy M. *Silent Partners: Women as Public Investors During Britain's Financial Revolution, 1690 – 1750.* Oxford University Press, 2016.

Garvía, Roberto, ed. *Fortuna y virtud: historia de las loterías públicas en España:* Sílex, 2009.

Garvía, Roberto. "Syndication, Institutionalization, and Lottery Play". *American Journal of Sociology* 113, no. 3 (2007): 603 – 652.

Goldoni, Carlo. "La Docte intrigante, ou La Femme accorte et de bon sens". Translated by M. E.B.D. In *Choix des meilleures pièces du théâtre italien moderne, Traduites en François, avec des Dissertations & des Notes*, edited by M. E.B.D., 1783.

Gramsci, Antonio. "La Religione, il lotto e l'oppio della miseria". In *Opere di Antonio Gramsci: 4: Note sul Machiavelli, sulla politica e sulla stato moderno*, 288 – 292. Einaudi, 1949.

Harris, Bob. *Gambling in Britain in the Long Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Harris, Bob. "Lottery Adventuring in Britain, c. 1710 – 1760". *The English Historical Review* 133, no. 561 (2018): 284 – 322.

Haugen, Marius Warholm. "The Lottery Fantasy and Social Mobility in Eighteenth-Century Venetian Literature: Carlo Goldoni, Pietro Chiari, and Giacomo Casanova". *Italian Studies* 77, no. 3 (2022): 253 – 270. https://doi.org/10.1080/00751634.2022.2069409.

Haugen, Marius Warholm. "Translating the Lottery: Moral and Political Issues in Pietro Chiari's La Giuocatrice Di Lotto and Its French and English Translations". *Comparative Literature Studies* 59, no. 2 (2022): 241 – 270.

Holbach, Paul Henri Dietrich. *Éthocratie ou Le Gouvernement fondé sur la morale.* Marc-Michel Rey, 1776.

Houtman-De Smedt, Helma. "La Fièvre de la loterie et du lotto s'empare du nord-ouest de l'Europe au cours des XVIIIe et XIXe siècles". In *Loteries en Europe: Cinq siècles d'histoire*, edited by Bruno Bernard and Michel Ansiaux, 136 – 185. Loterie nationale; Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1994.

Huisman, Anneke, and Johan Koppenol. *Daer compt de Lotery met trommels en trompetten! Loterijen in de Nederlanden tot 1726.* Verloren, 1991.

Kavanagh, Thomas M. *Dice, Cards, Wheels: a Different History of French Culture.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.

Kavanagh, Thomas M. *Enlightenment and the Shadows of Chance: the Novel and the Culture of Gambling in Eighteenth-Century France.* Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Koppenol, Johan. *Leids heelal: het Loterijspel (1596) van Jan van Hout.* Verloren, 1998.

Kruckeberg, Robert D. "'A Nation of Gamesters': Virtue, the Will of the Nation, and the National Lottery in the French Revolution". *French History* 31, no. 3 (2017): 310 – 328. https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crx035.

Kruckeberg, Robert D. "The Royal Lottery and the Old Regime: Financial Innovation and Modern Political Culture". *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014): 25 – 51.

Kruckeberg, Robert D. "The Wheel of Fortune in Eighteenth-Century France: The Lottery, Consumption, and Politics". Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2009.

L'Oniroscopie, ou Application des songes aux numéros de la Lotterie de l'École royale militaire. Desnos, 1773.

La Fontaine, Jean de. *Fables.* Le Livre de Poche, 2002 [1678].

La Loterie. La Société des traités religieux de Paris, 1823.

"Le Bureau de loterie". In *L'Écouteur aux portes, petite revue morale et satyrique*, 33 – 56. Louis Janet, 1825.

Legay, Marie-Laure. *Les Loteries royales dans l'Europe des Lumières: 1680 – 1815.* Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2014.

Léonnet, Jean. *Les Loteries d'état en France aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles.* Imprimerie Nationale, 1963.

Liste des lots de la loterie tirée à Paris dans la grande salle de l'Hôtel de Ville. L'Imprimerie royale, 1729.

Macry, Paolo. *Giocare la vita: storia del lotto a Napoli tra Sette e Ottocento.* Donzelli Editore, 1997.

Molesworth, Jesse. *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic.* Cambridge University Press, 2010.

More, Hannah. *Les Merveilleux Avantages de mettre à la loterie.* J.J. Paschoud, 1819.

More, Hannah. *The Wonderful Advantages of Adventuring in the Lottery!!!.* J. Marshall, 1796.
Murphy, Anne L. "Lotteries in the 1690s: Investment or Gamble?". *Financial History Review* 12, no. 2 (2005): 227 – 246.
Necker, Jacques. *Œuvres de M. Necker.* Vol. 1. J. P. Heubach et Compagnie, 1786.
Petty, William. *A Treatise of Taxes and Contributions.* N. Brooke, 1662.
Picard, Louis-Benoît. "Préface". In *Œuvres de L.B. Picard.* J.N. Barba, 1821.
Picard, Louis-Benoît, and Jean-Baptiste Radet. *La Maison en loterie, comédie en un acte, mêlée de couplets.* Chaignieau aîné, 1818.
Plan til det under 12 Januar. 1771 allernaadigst privilegerede Tal-Lotterie. 347. Rentekammeret. Tyske Afdeling. Tyske kammer. Sager vedr. tallotteriet i Altona. D9.1. The Danish National Archives, Copenhagen.
"Proceedings of the First Session of the Seventeenth Parliament of Great Britain". *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, November 1791.
Puttevils, Jeroen. "Invoking Fortuna and Speculating on the Future: Lotteries in the 15th and 16th century Low Countries". *Quaderni storici* 52, no. 156 (3) (2017): 699 – 725. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45390552.
Puttevils, Jeroen. "The Lure of Lady Luck: Lotteries and Economic Culture in the Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Low Countries". In *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, edited by Manfred Zollinger, 57 – 71: Routledge, 2016.
Puttevils, Jeroen. "The show must go on – De performance van de loterij in de Nederlanden (15de–16de eeuw)". *Nieuwe tijdingen: over vroegmoderne geschiedenis / Vlaams-Nederlandse Vereniging voor Nieuwe Geschiedenis* (25.10 2019): 79 – 99.
Ramsey, Dave. *Total Money Makeover Updated and Expanded: A Proven Plan for Financial Peace.* Thomas Nelson, 2024.
Raux, Sophie. *Lotteries, Art Markets, and Visual Culture in the Low Countries, 15th–17th Centuries.* Brill, 2018. doi:10.1163/9789004358812.
Raven, James. "The Abolition of the English State Lotteries". *The Historical Journal* 34, no. 2 (1991): 371 – 389. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X00014187.
Raven, James. "Debating the Lottery in Britain c. 1750 – 1830". In *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, edited by Manfred Zollinger, 87 – 104. Routledge, 2016.
Richard, Jessica. *The Romance of Gambling in the Eighteenth-Century British Novel.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. doi:10.1057/9780230307278.
Ripoll, Thierry. *Pourquoi croit-on? Psychologie des croyances.* Éditions Sciences Humaines, 2020.
Robinet, Jean-Baptiste-René. *Dictionnaire universel des sciences morale, économique, politique et diplomatique; ou Bibliothèque de l'homme-d'État et du citoyen.* Vol. 24, 1782.
Schädler, Ulrich, ed. *Créateurs de chances. Les loteries en Europe.* Le Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2012.
Schädler, Ulrich, and Manfred Zollinger. "Introduction". In *Créateurs de chances. Les loteries en Europe*, edited by Ulrich Schädler, 8 – 15. Le Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2012.
Smith, Adam. *The Wealth of Nations*, edited by Andrew Skinner. Penguin Books, 1970 [1776].
Spielmann, Guy. "Mise (s) en jeu: loteries, brelans et spéculations, chevilles dramatiques dans la comédie". In *Art et argent en France au temps des premiers modernes (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)*, edited by Martial Poirson, 195 – 202. Voltaire Foundation, 2004.
Stigler, Stephen M. "Casanova, Bonaparte, and the Loterie de France". *Journal de la société française de statistique* 144, no. 1 – 2 (2003): 5 – 34.
Stigler, Stephen M. *Casanova's Lottery. The History of a Revolutionary Game of Chance.* The University of Chicago Press, 2022.

Strejcek, Gerhard, ed. *Lotto und andere Glücksspiele: rechtlich, ökonomisch, historisch und im Lichte der Weltliteratur betrachtet.* Linde, 2003.

Stroev, Alexandre. *Les Aventuriers des Lumières.* PUF, 1997.

Svensen, Peter Nicolai. *Tal-Lotterier, deres Natur og Beskaffenhed, som giver tydelig Oplysning om Spille-Maaden.* Kiøbenhavns Adresse-Contoir, 1771. The Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen.

Talleyrand-Périgord, Charles-Maurice de. *Des Loteries. Par M. l'évêque d'Autun.* Barrois l'aîné, Libraire, 1789.

"Tanker om den nylig forefaldne Forandring ved Tallotteriet. Oversadt af det Tyske". Johan Rudolph Thiele, 1773. In *Trykkefrihedens Skrifter,* The Royal Danish Library. https://tekster.kb.dk/text/tfs-texts-2_015-shoot-workid2_015_008.

Terwisscha van Scheltinga, Marly. "Iets of...? De Brugse loterijprozen van 1446". *Madoc* 36, no. 1 (2022): 2 – 10.

Terwisscha van Scheltinga, Marly. "'Out of Love for the Poor and in Hope of Profit': Early Modern Lottery Players and Their Reasons for Playing the Haarlem Lottery of 1607". *Ludica: annali di storia e civiltà del gioco* 30 (2024): 140 – 156.

Terwisscha van Scheltinga, Marly, Sara Budts, and Jeroen Puttevils. "(Fe)male Voices on Stage: Finding Patterns in Lottery Rhymes of the Late Medieval and Early Modern Low Countries with and without AI". *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 139, no. 1 (2024): 4 – 28. https://doi.org/10.51769/bmgn-lchr.13872.

Welch, Evelyn. "Lotteries in Early Modern Italy". *Past & Present*, no. 199 (2008): 71 – 111. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096710.

Zollinger, Manfred. "Ce 'sort ingénieux'. Six siècles de loteries en Europe". Translated by Béatrice Cady. In *Créateurs de chances. Les loteries en Europe*, edited by Ulrich Schädler, 36 – 97. Le Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2012.

Zollinger, Manfred. "Dealing in Chances – An Introduction". In *Random Riches: Gambling Past & Present*, edited by Manfred Zollinger, 1 – 26. Routledge, 2016.

Zollinger, Manfred. "Entrepreneurs of Chance: the Spread of Lotto in XVIII Century Europe". *Ludica* 12 (2006): 81 – 99.

Zollinger, Manfred. *Geschichte des Glücksspiels: Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg.* Böhlau, 1997.

Zollinger, Manfred. "Loteries de châteaux". Translated by Béatrice Cady. In *Créateurs de chances. Les loteries en Europe*, edited by Ulrich Schädler, 88 – 91. Le Musée Suisse du Jeu, 2012.