Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga

"If I Had the Great Prize…" – Lottery Fantasies in Lottery Rhymes from the Early Modern Low Countries

> One sets his heart on getting money, another land, and another, houses […] Grief itself would burst its sides laughing at the humour of a book one might write about the ineffable thoughts of those anticipating that they will win a share of the lottery's six thousand gold pieces. One man is thinking about decorating the apartments of his house; another embroiders cloth; another buys horses.[1]

In his satirical letter from 1537 criticising lotteries, Italian author Pietro Aretino describes how lottery players get carried away by their dreams. The picture he paints is of people of all classes imagining themselves buying luxury and high-status items, such as horses, land, and embroidered cloth. This leads to social disorder, as poor people sell their real possessions for hypothetical riches.

Aretino's depiction of early modern lottery players, whose imaginations are activated by the possibility of winning a substantial prize, corresponds with research into modern-day players of lotteries. In the words of sociologists Jens Beckert and Mark Lutter, by offering potentially life-changing prizes, the lottery acts as "a trigger for daydreams, a vehicle for the momentary escape from reality".[2]

Aretino's description of players' fantasies is, however, not neutral. The addressee of the letter, Giovanni Morenti, was the person responsible for organising lotteries in Venice at the time. Aretino's letter is an attack on the practice, which, according to him, deceives the poor by making them think that they have a chance to join the ranks of those above them.[3] It is no coincidence that the fantasies in the letter revolve around things associated with the elite, from owning land to possessing exquisitely decorated apartments. Aretino's letter is an early example of the trope of the deluded and usually poor lottery player, which went on to become a staple in lottery literature and lottery criticism.[4]

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1 Quoted in Evelyn Welch, "Lotteries in Early Modern Italy", *Past and Present* 199, no. 1 (2008): 101–102.

2 Jens Beckert and Mark Lutter, "Why the Poor Play the Lottery: Sociological Approaches to Explaining Class-Based Lottery Play", *Sociology* 47, no. 6 (2012): 1155.

3 Welch, "Lotteries in Early Modern Italy", 102.

4 There are numerous examples of the trope given throughout this volume. For good examples, see, *infra*, Michael Scham, "The Failed Promise", and Inga Henriette Undheim, "Lottery Dreams".

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This begs the question: what did actual early modern lottery players fantasise about? What goods did they aspire to possess? Were their fantasies sober and reasonable, or outlandish and wild? Were they inclined to share their winnings with family, friends, or those less fortunate, or were their wishes selfish in nature?

Lottery rhymes – short texts submitted by players of early-modern lotteries in the Low Countries – offer an opportunity to explore these questions. Registered when players came to buy their tickets, and read out during the public draw, the lottery rhymes often focus on the player's participation in the lottery. Many of the players used the fixed formula "if I had the great prize, I would…". This formula invited players to share any fantasies they might have had. This chapter uses lottery rhymes from two lotteries held in the early modern Low Countries, one drawn in Bruges in 1555 and one drawn in Haarlem in 1607, to examine the fantasies their players shared with the world. The analysis will consider the historical context, including the context of the lottery: who organised it and for what cause. A particular focus will be the potentially gendered nature of the fantasies.

An intriguing example of the effect of gender on the fantasies of modern-day lottery players comes from an article by sociologist Emma Casey. She notes that the dreams of British working-class women were often connected to their self-identification as caregivers. Rather than spending their imaginary winnings on extravagant consumer goods, they used it for the benefit of their families. As Casey states, "even the most supposedly 'free' space of daydreaming is constrained by limitations and boundaries. Identity is in part, constructed, reproduced and developed via the dream of the lottery jackpot".[5] The following chapter will examine this link between lottery fantasies and the social reality of the early modern lottery player.

The lottery rhymes were public texts, as they were performed during the draw. This chapter will treat the lottery rhymes not as unmediated representations of the lottery players' innermost desires, but as texts where a (gendered) identity is constructed through the fantasy presented to the audience.

5 Emma Casey, "Working Class Women, Gambling and the Dream of Happiness", *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 131.

1 Lottery rhymes as a source

In the lotteries of the early modern Low Countries, it was customary for players to submit a short text when buying a ticket.[6] These "lottery rhymes" were then read out when the player's ticket was drawn. The draw was a public event, which usually took place in a central location in the city where the lottery was organised. In the system used for lotteries in the Low Countries at the time, all tickets were drawn. After a ticket was drawn, the drawer extracted a piece of paper from another basket. If this had a prize written on it, the ticket drawn before was a winner. Most of the pieces of paper were *blanks*, however, and were left empty. Lottery rhymes were likely a response to this system, as they livened up the increasingly long draws. The oldest surviving lottery rhymes of the Low Countries date from 1446, from a lottery held by the city of Bruges. As the first recorded lottery was drawn in the same city only five years before, in 1441, lottery rhymes seem to have been a part of the Low Countries' lottery from the beginning.

Where the first lottery rhymes mostly consisted of only a few words, the texts quickly became longer and more complex. From around the middle of the sixteenth century, most rhymes took the form of couplets: two lines, with the last words of each line rhyming. In theory, a lottery rhyme could be about anything. A player of a lottery in Bruges drawn in 1555 reminded the audience of the first sin, with his lottery rhyme "that Adam bit in the apple/it caused great sorrow for all of us".[7] A lottery rhyme from the Haarlem lottery drawn in 1607 commented on the ongoing war of the Dutch Republic with Spain, as the player asked: "I'm taking part out of great charity/Tell me drawer, is [Spanish general] Spinola dead?".[8] However, a majority of lottery rhymes dealt with the player's participation itself. Players asked the drawer what he would draw for them, expressed their desire for the prize, or explained how they had raised the money for their tickets. For instance, a woman called Trijn Claes, who participated in the Haarlem lottery, said she had "sold her flax/And brought the money into the lottery [i. e. bought one or more tickets]".[9]

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6 For more information about the history of lotteries in the early modern Low Countries, see, *infra*, Jeroen Puttevils, "Criticising the Lottery in Its Cradle", and Jeroen Salman, "The Political, Socio-Economic, and Cultural Impact".

7 Rijksarchief Brugge (afterwards called RB), Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-Kerk (Nieuw Kerkarchief) (OLVK) 1456, register 3655, 7r.

8 Noord-Hollands Archief (afterwards called NHA), Oudemannenhuis te Haarlem (afterwards called OH) 4, register 26, 4v.

9 NHA OH 3, reg. 58, 2r. The flax may refer to spun flax, used to make linen.

Lottery rhymes were submitted by the player when they bought their tickets. The ticket seller, authorised by the organisers of the lottery, would write the lottery rhyme down in their register together with the number of tickets bought. Therefore, the players did not have to be literate to submit a lottery rhyme. This makes lottery rhymes a wonderful source to explore the voices of those who do not usually leave records themselves, such as women and poor people. Apart from the lottery rhyme, the ticket seller often recorded details about the player's identity in their register, such as the name, place of residence or occupation. These identifications are not part of the lottery rhyme and would not have been read out on stage. They were purely for the benefit of the organisers, to ensure that the prizes were delivered to the right people. These identifications make it possible to categorise lottery rhymes according to the gender of the player, even if the rhyme itself does not contain any identification. Extra details identifying the player were usually only added to the entry if the lottery rhyme did not already contain this information. If a player was mentioned by name in the rhyme itself, there was no need to repeat it.

When composing their lottery rhymes, players could fall back on a large repertoire of pre-existing patterns (i. e. recurring phrases, structures, and rhymes). In the Bruges lottery of 1555, for example, the formula "Jesus of Nazareth" was extremely popular. Nazareth (Nasarenen) conveniently rhymed with the verb "to grant" (verlenen), giving players a way to ask Jesus for a prize. In the lottery of Haarlem of 1607, many lottery rhymes featured players who, like the aforementioned Trijn Claes, had sold something to then "bring the money into the lottery", i. e. to buy a ticket. These lottery rhymes usually used the recurring rhyme "verkocht" (sold) and "gebrocht" (brought). Throughout the period, new patterns were introduced, after which they sometimes became popular with players of subsequent lotteries. The "has sold…/brought the money into the lottery" pattern, for instance, does not appear in the lottery drawn in Bruges in 1555, but it appears in a lottery drawn in Leiden in 1596. Similarly, certain patterns might fall out of fashion, even if some players kept using them. Patterns were not usually bound to one lottery or geographic region.[10]

Although using a pattern was an easy way for players to come up with a lottery rhyme without too much effort, many patterns offered space for the players to personalise their rhymes. The above-mentioned "sold/brought into the lottery" pattern, could be filled in with any kind of object or experience appropriate to the

10 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): 18.

player. Moreover, that specific pattern would mostly have appealed to players who had in fact gone to some effort to acquire their ticket and wanted to mention it.

One popular pattern throughout most of the sixteenth- and early-seventeenth centuries was the "If I had the prize/I would..." structure. It already appears in the earliest collection of lottery rhymes, where a group of men "would rejoice" if they won the prize.[11] Throughout the period, and even within the same lottery, the exact phrasing could differ. In some rhymes, the players would "get" the prize rather than "have" it, and the prize could be "big", "small", or just a prize, but the pattern remains essentially the same. In Middle Dutch, the word used for prize is "lot". In the mid-sixteenth century, the pattern was used by twenty per cent of the players of the Bruges 1555 lottery. For instance, the lottery rhyme of two women named Barbelken Aerts and Maijken Verstapen states that "if they had the highest prize/They would tell it all around".[12] The pattern remained popular afterwards and was still used by twenty-two per cent of the players of the Haarlem 1607 lottery. A good example is the lottery rhyme of Jannetgen Claes, which states: "I, Jannetgen Claes, with my flat purse/If I get a good prize, I will buy a bodice with it".[13]

Players who used the "If I had, I would..." pattern were prompted to think about what winning a prize would mean to them. When looking for early modern lottery players' dreams, then, lottery rhymes which used the "If I had" pattern are a good starting point. The form of the rhyme, however, imposed some limitations. As lottery rhymes were generally short, players usually mention only one thing they would like to do or have, without going into much detail. Moreover, many rhymes built on this pattern only describe their post-win future in vague positive terms, for instance by using the phrase "[having the prize] would not hinder them". Even so, there are still quite a few players who mention concrete things, and some of them offer quite intricate ideas about the future, even within the short text of the lottery rhyme.

Although lottery rhymes can give us an insight into early modern fantasies, they should not be taken as straightforward expressions of the players' thoughts and emotions. Lottery rhymes were meant for performance. The draw took place on stage in the presence of an audience. The drawer, who read out the texts, was usually a trained performer, such as a town crier or a member of the local rhetori-

11 Louis Gilliodts-van Severen, "La Loterie à Bruges", *La Flandre. Revue des monuments d'histoire et d'antiquités* 45 (1867): 92.

12 RB TBO 125, 1456, reg. 3655, 5r.

13 NHA OH 5, reg.90, fol. 4r.

cian's chamber.[14] Many lottery rhymes acknowledge the presence of the audience or speak directly to them, asking for their attention or giving them advice. When submitting their lottery rhymes, players probably considered the effect of their words.

In the lottery rhymes that focused on the players' own participation in the lottery, the participants were likely concerned with the impression they made on the audience. Wendy Govaers, who has examined the rhymes of a lottery drawn in Den Bosch in 1506, argues that the elite used lottery rhymes to display their learning and erudition, and to show how rich and powerful their family was by buying a large number of tickets.[15] Evelyn Welch provides another perspective. According to her, players thought they could influence the outcome of the draw by presenting themselves as worthy of receiving the prize.[16] Rather than impressing the audience, these players were trying to impress God.

The desire to be seen as worthy to receive a prize, to conform with (gendered) expectations from society, or to subvert such expectations and make the audience laugh, played a role in the players' choice of lottery rhyme. This chapter studies the lottery rhymes as texts that construct a fantasy for the audience, which may or may not have fully corresponded with the player's own private fantasy.

2 The lotteries of Bruges 1555 and Haarlem 1607

The lottery that took place in Bruges in 1555 was organised for the benefit of Bruges' Church of Our Lady, which needed money for repairs.[17] In order to convince the public to participate, the lottery offered almost five hundred prizes. The main prize was a gilded silver cup that weighed more than a kilogram and included a sum of one hundred pounds as well.[18] Unfortunately, no information

14 Dick 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*, ed. Ethan Matt Kavaler and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (Brepols Publishers, 2017), 280.

15 Wendy Govaers, "'Vele rennen maar slechts één ontvangt de prijs'. Bossche loterijen in de 16de eeuw (deel II)", *Bossche Kringen* 8, no. 2 (2021): 26.

16 Welch, "Lotteries in Early Modern Italy", 103.

17 Maurice Vandermaesen, "Volkse rijmen bij een loterij ten bate van de restauratie van de O.-L.-Vrouwekerk (1555)," in *Van Middeleeuwen tot heden: bladeren door Brugse kunst en geschiedenis*, ed. Jean Luc Meulemeester (Bruges, 1983), 37.

18 RB TBO 125, 1456, reg. 3634, 2r. The prize was a silver gilded cup of five "mark", with one hundred pounds "grooten". A mark had a weight between 196 and 280 grams. A "groot" was the name of the coinage used in Flanders.

survives about the way the lottery was promoted. However, it is likely that the Bruges lottery would have used lottery posters depicting the prizes, and that the prizes would have been displayed in a prominent place in the city. Both practices were standard for lotteries by the middle of the sixteenth century.[19]

The lottery drawn in Haarlem in 1607 was one of a series of charity lotteries organised by various cities in the county of Holland between 1596 and 1620. As the newly formed Dutch Republic officially became Protestant, many charitable cases formerly funded by the Church now became the responsibility of the city governments. Lotteries were an especially convenient way to raise money for bigger projects.[20] The Haarlem lottery was meant to raise funds for the construction of a retirement home for old men. The charity angle was heavily emphasised in the promotion of the lottery. Although the lottery poster has not survived, accounts show that it would have depicted the plight of the old men, rather than the prizes.[21] Charity was also the theme of a rhetoricians' competition held in Haarlem during the last ten days of the subscription period. During this competition, rhetorician chambers from different cities and villages performed plays, songs, and refrains on the theme of charity.[22] Buying a ticket was equated to charity, and the people of Haarlem, and those who came to the city to see the spectacle, were encouraged to give to the poor by participating in the lottery.

In case charity was not sufficient incentive, the lottery also offered more than seven hundred prizes to draw people in. The biggest of these was a silver, gilded cup that weighed 2,4 kilograms, and came with six hundred guilders. But even the fifth prize, a silver cup weighing half a kilogram, and 120 guilders, had the potential to significantly change someone's life.[23] The prizes were displayed in the centre of Haarlem in a special cupboard and would surely have fired up the imagination of those who saw them.

19 Sophie Raux, *Lotteries, Art Markets, and Visual Culture in the Low Countries, 15th–17th Centuries* (Brill, 2018), 73–74.

20 Anneke Huisman and Johan Koppenol, *Daer compt de Lotery met trommels en trompetten! Loterijen in de Nederlanden tot 1726* (Verloren, 1991), 33–34.

21 Kitty Kilian, "De loterij van Haarlem 1606–1607. Een onderzoek naar de mentaliteit van Hollanders en Zeeuwen in de vroege zeventiende eeuw" (Doctoral diss., Utrecht University, 1988), 12.

22 Bart A.M. Ramakers, "De 'Const' getoond. De beeldtaal van de Haarlemse Rederijkerswedstrijd van 1606", *Hof-, staats- en stadsceremonies. Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 49 (1998): 131.

23 NHA OH 12, fol. 2r and 4r.

Tickets for the Bruges lottery cost three "stuivers", a little more than half a day's wage for a master mason.[24] In the Haarlem lottery of 1607, the price of a single ticket was six shillings, which would have been around one third of the day's wage for a master mason at the end of the sixteenth century.[25] Though slightly expensive, playing the lottery was not just for affluent people. Lottery players also included washerwomen, apprentices, maidservants, and sailors.

Both lotteries sold tickets in many different cities across the Low Countries. Most of the Bruges lottery tickets were sold in Antwerp, then the biggest and most affluent city in the Low Countries. Likewise, the biggest group of buyers in the Haarlem lottery was based in Amsterdam, where there were at least 150 ticket sellers.

For the Bruges lottery, thirty-two registers from ticket sellers survive, which together contain 6,061 lottery rhymes. It is unclear whether this represents all the tickets sold. The almost 25,000 lottery rhymes from the Haarlem lottery survive in 670 registers from ticket sellers.[26] This chapter explores a sample from these registers, consisting of all sixty-two registers from ticket sellers based in Haarlem, as well as a sample of twenty-nine of the Amsterdam registers. Together, these registers contain 6,332 lottery rhymes. Most of the surviving lottery rhymes in both lotteries are in Dutch, but some players submitted lottery rhymes in Latin, French, or other languages. This chapter only takes Dutch lottery rhymes into account.

Women made up a significant part of the players: twenty-eight per cent of the Dutch lottery rhymes in the Bruges lottery, and forty-three per cent of the Dutch lottery rhymes in the Haarlem lottery were submitted by women. These numbers make it possible to compare male and female lottery players' fantasies in a systematic fashion. The gender of players can be ascertained based on identifications included in or accompanying the lottery rhyme in the registers of the ticket sellers. Since the identifications had an administrative function, and were used to identify the player if they won a prize, it is unlikely that players would have used a false name or would have pretended to be of a different gender. It is, however, possible that some tickets were bought for a player by another person. The analysis does not include lottery rhymes that did not include or were not accompanied by an identification.[27]

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24 Etienne Scholliers, "Lonen te Brugge en in het Brugse Vrije (XVe–XVIIe Eeuw)", in *Dokumenten voor de geschiedenis van prijzen en lonen in Vlaanderen en Brabant, Deel II (XIVe–XIXe Eeuw)*, ed. Charles Verlinden (De Tempel, 1965).

25 Kilian, "De Loterij van Haarlem 1606–1607", 18.

26 Kilian, "De Loterij van Haarlem 1606–1607", 33.

27 The total number of Dutch lottery rhymes that can be linked to an identification is 3223 for the Bruges lottery and 5889 for the Haarlem lottery.

In the Bruges lottery, 995 lottery rhymes used the "If I had" pattern, which equals thirty-one per cent of the total number of Dutch lottery rhymes submitted by male or female players. Of the Dutch lottery rhymes submitted by men and women in Haarlem, 1,305 lottery rhymes (twenty-two per cent) used the "If I had/I would..." pattern. The lower usage of the pattern in the Haarlem lottery is most likely the result of other patterns becoming more popular, such as the previously mentioned "I sold-bought tickets" pattern. It is also possible that the focus on charity in the Haarlem lottery's advertising resulted in fewer players emphasising the prize in their lottery rhyme.

The next sections will explore the most widely shared fantasies of the Bruges and Haarlem lottery players in the lottery rhymes using the "If I had" pattern.

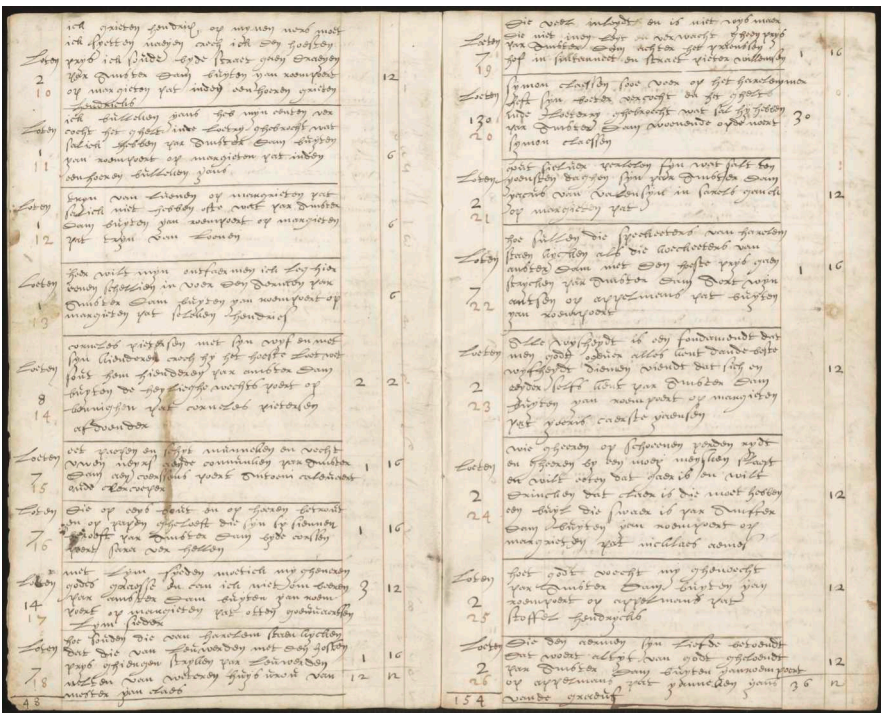
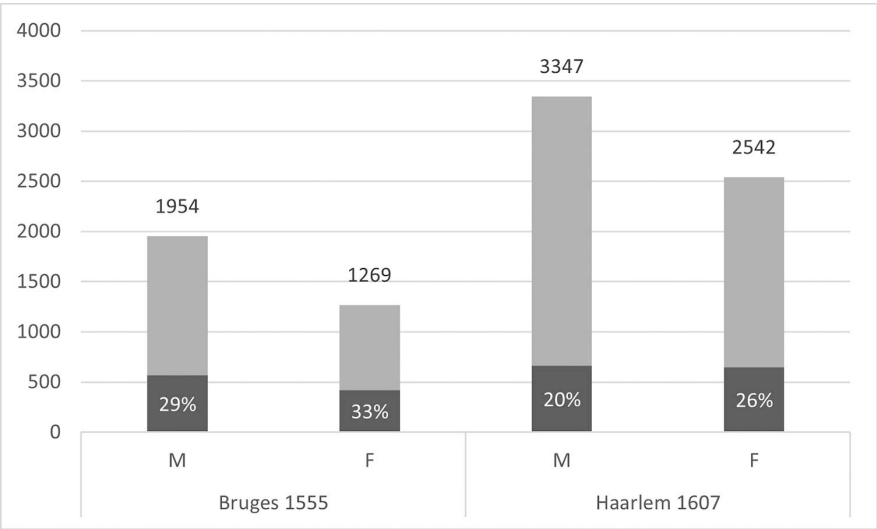


Figure 1: Example of a register for the Haarlem lottery of 1607, with the lottery rhymes and personal details of participants. Noord-Hollands Archief, Oudemannenhuis te Haarlem 5, reg. 107, fol. 1v-2r.



Graph 1: Percentage of Dutch lottery rhymes which use the 'If I Had' pattern in the Bruges 1555 and Haarlem 1607 lotteries, by gender. All data is taken from the author's database.

3 Dreams of saving money (or spending prudently)

The lottery players in Aretino's letter dreamt of luxury goods: embroidered clothing, a horse, a beautifully decorated house… However, most of the lottery rhymes using the "If I had…" pattern in the Bruges and Haarlem lotteries describe the future only in general and vaguely positive terms.[28] One Christiaen van Zeede, participating in the Bruges lottery, claims "he would receive [the great prize] gratefully".[29] In the Haarlem lottery, Duivertgen Claes says that "if she gets the highest prize/it would not be lost".[30] Many parents with children use an understatement – noting how a prize "would not hinder them".[31] In short, none of these lottery rhymes offer a more concrete plan or fantasy of what would happen

28 This is the case for fifty-seven per cent of the Bruges and fifty-four per cent of the Haarlem lottery rhymes that use the "If I had" pattern.

29 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3639, 53v.

30 NHA OH 4, reg. 65, 4r.

31 For example, "Grijete Evertsdochter mit beijde heur kinderen/Hadde zij tgroote lot ten zoude haer nijet hinderen". RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3627, 4v.

if the players won a prize. They are also surprisingly phlegmatic about winning. Perhaps this can be attributed to players' desire to seem humble and disinterested in material gain, whether this is for the benefit of the audience or God.

There are players whose fantasies go into more detail, but few of them bear a resemblance to the fantasies described in Aretino's letter. In fact, the most common thing mentioned by players in both lotteries is that they would "keep [the prize] well", i. e. save it, or that they would "not reduce" the prize by spending it.[32] Moreover, the Bruges lottery also has players who say they will spend the prize well, or that they would not spend it lightly. For instance, "Truijcken Torffdraghers with her three children" says she "would rather not reduce it",[33] and Cooman Leijn Jacobszoon "would not part with the prize lightly".[34]

One reason for the high number of players "keeping the prize" is that the Dutch word for keep, "bewaren", rhymes with the word for years, "jaren". Many who describe themselves as "young of years" therefore add that they would keep the prize well. The fact that "jaren/bewaren" offers a convenient rhyme must surely have contributed to the prominence of this post-win "dream", but there is also an inherent connection between being young and saving up for the future. The patterns commonly used in lottery rhymes merely offered possibilities to players. Young players did not have to mention their youth, and someone who wanted to say they would save the prize, did not have to rhyme "bewaren" with "jaren". Although the "jaren/bewaren" pattern was convenient, then, convenience would not have been the only motivation for players to make use of the pattern. One participant in the Haarlem lottery even makes the connection between his youth and saving up for the future more explicit. Isaack Schoets, "young of years", states that "if he gets a good prize/he would keep it until his marriage".[35]

In the Bruges lottery, many participants "with children" say they "would not reduce" the prize, rhyming "kinderen" (children) with "verminderen" (reduce). Players who use the "kinderen-verminderen" rhyme include "a widow with her eight children" from Antwerp,[36] "Adam pie baker with all his children" from Louvain,[37] and "Digne Vos with her children" from Bergen-op-Zoom.[38] Here as

32 This goes for eleven per cent of the Bruges lottery players who use the "If I had" pattern, and seventeen per cent of Haarlem lottery players.
33 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3651, 5r.
34 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3640, 4r.
35 NHA OH 3, reg. 24, 5v.
36 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3645, 28v.
37 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3646, 11v.
38 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3638, 4r.

well, there is a link between youth and being prudent financially, although in this case, the parents are the ones who are doing the saving.

Among the players saying they would save the prize, or spend it prudently, there is a clear difference between men and women. In both lotteries, women are significantly more likely than men to say they would keep the prize rather than spend it.[39] Moreover, the link between youth and keeping the prize is not as strong for women as for men. Whereas the male players who are planning to keep the prize exclusively describe themselves as "young of years", or give an age below twelve years old, female players also describe themselves as "old of years" or give an older age. In the Bruges lottery, "a widow of sixty-five years" from the village of Borgerhout near Antwerp bought one ticket. In the Haarlem lottery, Agneta Roij describes herself as the "widow of Adriaen Goossen, old of years",[40] whereas Claesgen Pauwelsen's daughter tells the audience she is "young of heart, old of years".[41]

Where saving the prize seems to have been inherently connected to youth for men, this was not the case for women. Perhaps the older women were so poor that they could not afford to spend money frivolously, not even the hypothetical winnings of the lottery. However, it is also possible that the difference is influenced by contemporary ideas about the roles of men and women. Prescriptive literature on marriage especially stresses the discrepant roles of husband and wife when it comes to money. Whereas the husband is supposed to earn the money, the wife is supposed to manage the household finances prudently. This means saving up and not spending excessively.[42] In his work on the sociability of early modern English women, Tim Reinke-Williams states that women's reputations were dependent on their skills as a housewife, an important part of which included managing the finances.[43] The lottery rhymes show a similar association of women of all ages with prudent financial management. The future that these female players could imagine, or the image of themselves they were trying to project, seems to have been influenced by the preconceptions surrounding their gender.

The popularity of saving the prize can be attributed to many factors. The ease of using a pre-existing pattern, which did not require one to fill in the future with

39 P-value Bruges lottery: 0.000038. P-value Haarlem lottery: 0.041792.

40 NHA OH 4, reg. 42, 4r.

41 NHA OH 3, reg. 19, 2v.

42 Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman. A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Sciences in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 57–58.

43 Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 72.

too many specifics, undoubtedly helped. Those players who said they would save the prize, or not spend it, also presented themselves as prudent or humble. This might have been an attempt to show themselves as worthy to receive the prize, or it might have been how they wanted to appear to the audience. The lottery rhymes about saving the prize might, however, also simply reflect people's actual fantasies. Keith Thomas has pointed out that, while people belonging to higher classes often assumed that the people below them must aspire to wealth, most of them were in fact simply looking for financial security.[44] Rather than a life filled with luxury and high-status possessions, the prize might have represented something far more desirable to many players, namely a relief from constant worry about money.

4 Dreams of charity in the Haarlem lottery

Charity is the second most common "dream" described by players in the Haarlem lottery overall. Charity is mentioned by eleven per cent of the Haarlem players who used the "If I had" pattern. Again, this is a long way from the riches and luxury that formed the core of Aretino's criticism of lottery players' dreams. The Haarlem lottery was a charity lottery, as the lottery's profit would go to the construction of the old men's home. Many players acknowledge the charitable goal of the lottery in their rhymes. Indeed, the Haarlem lottery has lottery rhymes that turn the "If I had" pattern around, with players emphasising that "if they did not have the prize, it would go to the poor", and that they therefore "would not be sad" if they lost.[45] However, others went further, and promised to give to the poor if they should happen to win. Claes Willemszoon of Delft tells the audience that "if he gets the highest prize/he gives the poor half".[46] Aeltghen Aelberss is less concrete but says she "will not forget the poor" if she were to get a prize.[47]

There is no significant difference between men and women in how often they mention that they will give (part of) their prize to charity. However, there is a difference between people buying a higher number of tickets than average and those

44 Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life. Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 110.

45 For instance, "Sanneken Clercx van Haerlem geboeren/Crijch ic niet ten is niet verlooren", NHA OH 3, reg. 16, 2r.

46 NHA OH 3, reg. 1, 4r.

47 NHA OH 3, reg. 3, 4v.

buying a lower number of tickets than average.[48] Players who buy a higher number of tickets are significantly more likely to promise their prize to the poor.[49] They are also more likely to specify how much they will give. One example is the above-mentioned Claes Willemszoon, who bought twenty-three tickets and promised the poor half of the prize should he win. Maritgen Cornelis van Foreest, who also bought twenty-three tickets, promised any prize she would win to the Lepers' house in Haarlem.[50]

The socio-economic status of the player cannot necessarily be determined from the number of tickets bought. Someone buying only a few tickets might have had the means to buy more but simply chose not to do so. Since lottery tickets were already relatively expensive, however, players who purchased more tickets than average must have been quite affluent. Moreover, buying many tickets meant that the player would have had more opportunities to present themselves to the audience. As each of their tickets would have borne the player's lottery rhyme, the number of times it was repeated throughout the draw would have reminded the audience of the money the player had spent or of the learning or power the player displayed. An article by Dick De Boer gives an example from the Leiden lottery of 1596, where Admiral Johan van Duivenvorde's lottery rhyme was read 4,690 times during the fifty-two day and night draw.[51]

A lottery rhyme in which a player pledged their winnings to charity, would have presented them in an especially good light, which would have been amplified if the player in question could afford a large number of tickets. A good example is the lottery rhyme from Jan Gerritszoon Schoterbosch. "I wanted to remember the old men", he states, "if a prize comes of it, I will give it back to them".[52] Schoterbosch was a prominent citizen of Haarlem, who sat in the council and held the function of alderman. His charitable lottery rhyme would have been heard 430 times during the draw, as Schoterbosch bought 430 tickets. Interestingly,

48 Averages were calculated separately for men and women, as women in both lotteries bought significantly fewer tickets than men. The link between charity and players who buy a higher number of tickets than average is also noted in Kilian, "De loterij in Haarlem 1606–1607", 86. It is further explored in Marly Terwisscha van Scheltinga, "'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.

49 P-value: 0.000218.

50 NHA OH 3, reg. 61, 4r.

51 Dick de Boer, "Feesten van burgerschap. Rederijkers, loterijen en de transmissie van burgerschapsidealen rond 1600", in *Feestelijke cultuur in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden.* Nieuwe Tijdingen. Over vroegmoderne geschiedenis, ed. Joop W. Koopmans and Dries Raeymaekers (Leuven University Press, 2019), 290.

52 NHA OH 3, reg. 67, 3v.

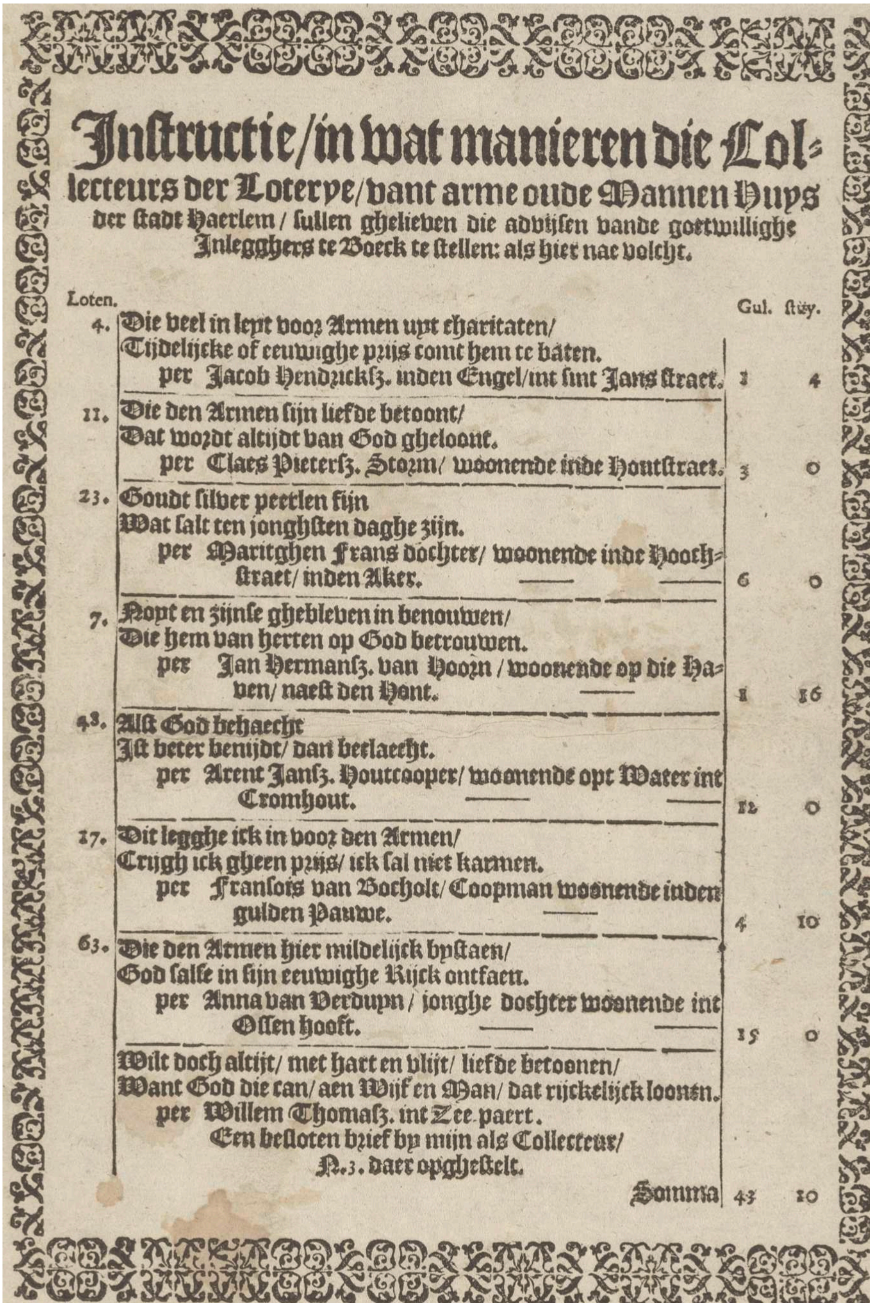
however, his lottery rhyme – like many other rhymes dealing with charity – does not contain his name, which meant that the audience had no way of knowing his identity simply from hearing the rhyme during the draw. Still, as it was customary to publish a list of winners and their lottery rhymes, his name would have been revealed to the public if he had won a prize.

The Bruges lottery rhymes stand in stark contrast to those from the Haarlem lottery. In the former, only twenty-four lottery rhymes mention giving part of the prize to charity, and there is no clear connection between charity and players buying more tickets than average. As the Bruges lottery was not organised to finance a charitable institution, like the Haarlem lottery was, this is not very surprising. However, the Bruges lottery was also held for a good cause, namely the renovation of the Church of Our Lady. This cause barely features in the lottery rhymes of the Bruges lottery. A man living next to the St. Lois chapel promises half his winnings to it,[53] Neelken Verbeeke from Mechelen "would honour the mother of God" with her prize,[54] and a widow from Antwerp "would share [the prize] with the church and the poor",[55] but they are the only ones.

The fact that a lottery is dedicated to a certain cause does not mean that this cause will feature heavily in the participants' lottery rhymes. The promotion of the Haarlem lottery must be credited with the high incidence of players who promise their prize to charity. The lottery poster, the refrains and plays performed by the rhetoricians, and the lottery rhymes featured on the example page for the ticket sellers all informed the participants that the lottery's goal was not winning the big prize, but charity. The Bruges lottery rhymes thus indicate that the prevalence of charity in the Haarlem lottery is due to the type of lottery as well as to the advertising campaign. The Haarlem participants who promised their prize to the poor were following the narrative set out for them by the organisers. This does not, however, mean that they were not sincere.

In fact, some of them might have had another motive. Like the players who said they would save the prize, the players who promised to give to charity perhaps wanted to present themselves as worthy winners, either in the eyes of God or the audience. Those looking to impress God might have had their eyes on a bigger prize than the one offered in the lottery: heaven. The Reformed church, which had become the official church of Haarlem in 1581, taught that good works did not lead to salvation. However, the organisers of the Haarlem lottery very much promoted the idea that buying tickets equalled charity, and that

53 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3651, 12v.
54 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3650, 1v.
55 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3656, 5r.



Instructie/in wat manieren die Col-
lecteurs der Loterye/vant arme oude Mannen Huys
der stadt Haerlem/ sullen ghelieven die advijsen vande goetwillighe
Inlegghers te Boeck te stellen: als hier nae volcht.

Loten.		Gul.	stuy.
4.	Die veel in leyt voor Armen upt charitaten/ Tijdelijcke of eeuwighe prijs comt hem te baten. per Jacob Hendricksz. inden Engel/int sint Jans straet.	1	4
11.	Die den Armen sijn liefde betoont/ Dat wordt altijdt van God gheloont. per Claes Pietersz. Storm/ woonende inde Houtstraet.	3	0
23.	Goudt silver peerlen fijn Wat salt ten jonghsten daghe zijn. per Maritghen Frans dochter/ woonende inde Hooch-straet/ inden Aker.	6	0
7.	Hoopt en zijnse ghebleven in benouwen/ Die hem van herten op God betrouwen. per Jan Hermansz. van Hoorn / woonende op die Haven/ naest den Hont.	1	16
48.	Alst God behaecht Ist beter benijdt/ dan beclaecht. per Arent Jansz. Houtcooper/ woonende opt Water int Cromhout.	12	0
17.	Dit legghe ick in voor den Armen/ Crijgh ick gheen prijs/ ick sal niet karmen. per Fransois van Bocholt/ Coopman woonende inden gulden Pauwe.	4	10
63.	Die den Armen hier mildelijck bystaen/ God salse in sijn eeuwighe Rijck ontfaen. per Anna van Verduyn / jonghe dochter woonende int Ossen hooft.	15	0
	Wilt doch altijt/ met hart en blijt/ liefde betoonen/ Want God die can/ aen Wijf en Man/ dat rijckelijck loonen. per Willem Thomasz. int Zee paert. Een besloten brief by mijn als Collecteur/ N.3. daer opghestelt.		
	Somma	43	10

Figure 2: Example page for ticket sellers in the Haarlem lottery. Noord-Hollands Archief, Oudemannenhuis te Haarlem 3, register 7.

this charitable act would in fact lead to an eternal reward. This is the message of many of the lottery rhymes on the example page given to ticket sellers. One states: "The one who buys many tickets for the poor out of charity/Temporary or eternal prize will be his reward".[56] The players who promised their prize to charity might therefore have acted on an "afterlife fantasy" rather than a "lottery fantasy".

5 Dreams of spending

The percentage of players who intended to spend money on themselves is small. It is, however, larger in the Bruges lottery than in the Haarlem lottery. In the Bruges lottery, the lottery rhymes about spending make up eight per cent of the rhymes with the "If I had" pattern, while in the Haarlem lottery, only two per cent of rhymes with the "If I had" pattern refer to spending the money. Perhaps this is another result of the Haarlem lottery's emphasis on charity, which might have discouraged players to talk about desiring worldly goods. In both lotteries, there is no clear difference between male and female players in how often they talk about buying something.

Bruges and Haarlem players seem to have desired similar things. Food and drink are most often mentioned, followed by clothing and, in the Bruges lottery, objects such as pots.[57] In the Haarlem lottery, for instance, Peter Boutten "will buy new clothes"[58] and Sijmon Diricx declares that "a good piece of bacon will taste well in the stew pot".[59] Bruges participants Lijnken Verpelt and her maid from Antwerp "would make a new dress".[60] Sara Cotten imagines that she "would eat a sugared slice of bread every day" if she won a prize.[61] Alcohol is frequently mentioned, especially wine. In the Haarlem lottery, Pieter Jusparszoon "would pour [the prize] down his throat" [i.e. would use it to buy alcohol],[62] and Magdeleentien Matheus "would open her best beer".[63]

The things desired are not described in much detail. Players say they would buy or make a dress, without specifying things like colour or fabric, or embellishments like embroidery. This is perhaps due to the conventions of lottery rhymes,

56 Multiple copies survive in ticket sellers' registers. See, for instance, NHA OH 3, reg. 7.
57 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3646, 9v.
58 NHA OH 3, reg. 82, 2r.
59 NHA OH 3, reg. 75, 2v.
60 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3656, 2v.
61 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3655, 13r.
62 NHA OH 3, reg. 58. 3r.
63 NHA OH 3, reg. 70, 3v.

which do not invite lengthy descriptions. For the most part, though, the lottery rhyme fantasies do not especially give the impression of luxury.

Still, food, drink, and clothes were important social signifiers in early modern society. Even with the lack of details, the lottery rhymes demonstrate players' desire for consumption patterns associated with the higher classes. The preference for wine over beer is especially significant, as wine drinking became much more exclusive over the sixteenth century.[64] As such, consumption of wine became a luxury associated with the wealthy elite, while beer was drunk by everyone. In the same period, meat consumption also declined, which makes Sijmon Diricx' wish to have a piece of bacon in his stew sound more aspirational than it might originally appear.[65] The fact that Peter Boutten and Lijnken Verpelt specifically fantasise about new clothes fits into early modern ideas of luxury as well, as they point to a desire to follow the latest fashion.[66] It is notable that newer luxury items, such as glass and high-quality ceramics,[67] do not show up in the lottery rhymes. The fantasies of consumption expressed here are quite traditional.

A few lottery rhymes mention similar fantasies to the ones depicted in Aretino's letter. In the Bruges lottery, Anthonis Helias Montferrant from Middelburg "would make his house one floor higher",[68] and Joos de Raet from Nieuwpoort would "make an old house into a new one".[69] Michgiel de Witte "will come to buy a house in Haarlem" if he had the great prize.[70] Gijsphat van Noordermaert "would buy a horse".[71]

Although there are no significant differences between men and women in saying they want to spend the money, gender does seem to influence what exactly players wish for. More than half of the lottery rhymes by men in the Bruges and Haarlem lotteries refer to drinking alcohol. For women, the actions are more evenly divided between buying, eating, and drinking. Moreover, when men talk about alcohol, they usually mention the tavern, which no woman ever does. In the Bruges lottery, Gillis de Rijck from Antwerp says that "if he had the

64 Ineke Baatsen, "In Haste for Better Taste? The Social Effects of Changing Dining Culture in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Bruges", in *Inequality and the City in the Low Countries (1200–2020)*, ed. Bruno Blondé et al. (Brepols Publishers, 2020), 294.

65 Baatsen, "In Haste for Better Taste?", 295.

66 Margaret F. Rosenthal, "Cultures of Clothing in Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe", *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39, no. 3 (2009): 460.

67 Baatsen, "In Haste for Better Taste?", 298.

68 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3630, 1r.

69 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3633, 2r.

70 NHA OH 3, reg. 24, 3v.

71 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3656, 18v.

highest prize/he would go to the wine tavern".[72] Dirrick Ianzoon, participating in the Haarlem lottery, announces that "everything I will win, is for the [female] innkeeper".[73] The numbers are small, but the pattern is the same in both lotteries. Moreover, the link between alcohol, the tavern, and male players is also present in lottery rhymes which do not use the "If I had" pattern. The Bruges lottery features "two nice guys [who] came from the tavern".[74] Haarlem participant Jan van Delft "would rather drink whole than half" [75] and Tonis Volckertszoon "thought to drink the money, but changed his mind" and instead bought tickets for the lottery.[76] The lottery rhymes, and the dreams of male and female players, reflect the early modern associations of men with alcohol, and the tavern as a primarily male social space.[77]

When it comes to buying objects, rather than food or drink, women almost exclusively mention clothes. Men show a little more variation, like the earlier mentions of pots and a horse in the Bruges lottery or a ship[78] in the Haarlem lottery. The only woman who does not wish for clothes in the Bruges lottery is one Tanneken Bordinx, who wants to buy good malt with her prize. It is likely that she is related to the Jan Bordinx whose rhyme precedes her. He too wants to buy "good malt"; this makes sense given his occupation as a brewer. In general, women's dreams seem to be slightly smaller in scale than men's dreams. The only woman who talks about a house is Grietgen Claes, who participated in the Haarlem lottery. Her lottery rhyme also informs the audience why she is so concerned with her house, as it states that "She has an old house/It is crooked from old age/ If she gets the highest prize/She will pull it down".[79]

Apart from the common desires for material objects, food, or drink, there are some dreams that are unique to the participants who voiced them. For instance, Bruges participant Hendrick van Bolderen "with his high shoulders" says "he would dress all the whores of Paris" if he won a prize.[80] Another interesting rhyme in the Bruges lottery is by an unnamed woman identified as Master Damiaen's housewife, who states that "if she had the highest prize/she would

72 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3645, 9r.
73 NHA OH 3, reg. 3, 4v.
74 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3651, 1v.
75 NHA OH 3, reg. 86. 5r.
76 NHA OH 3, reg. 87, 3v.
77 See A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex, and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), especially 73–78.
78 NHA OH 3, reg. 76, 1v.
79 NHA OH 3, reg. 88, 6r.
80 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3643, 2v.

hold a good lying-in".[81] The lying-in refers to the period during and after giving birth, where female neighbours and friends came to visit the new mother, bearing gifts. Visiting prostitutes and having a good childbirth: both lottery rhymes are good examples of specific male and female desires.

6 Changing one's life

There are a few players who seem to envision a more substantial change to their lives than simply buying a superior kind of food or drink. Jennijn de Neue from Mechelen, who participated in the Bruges lottery, "would live long on [the prize]".[82] Similarly, Haarlem participant Geertgen Gerrits "would live off [the prize] honestly".[83] Financial security is also important to Lambert Franssen, who says that "if he gets a good prize, it will benefit him well in his old age".[84] Broer Dirckzoon of Harlingen, also participating in the Haarlem lottery, is thinking about the long-term future as well. He "will buy annuities" if he gets the highest prize, and so invest the winnings.[85] In the Bruges lottery, Maeijken Verleije from Bruges says she would "happily pay off her debt".[86]

Players who want to live off their prize might imagine a life where they do not have to work anymore. Other participants make this desire explicit. In the Bruges lottery, for instance, four women who refer to themselves as "fools" say "they would not spin anymore" if they won the main prize.[87] In the same lottery, Lijsken Baeren "would indeed leave off making clothes"[88] and Lowijs the mirrormaker "would no longer make mirrors".[89] Half a century later, their desires are echoed by participants from the Haarlem lottery. Trijntgen Fockensdochter, for instance, says that "if she had the highest prize, she would no longer spin"[90] and Meij Jans would "no longer make brushes".[91] Pieter Aelbertszoon says he has "sailed around the world", but if he gets the highest prize "he will do it differently".[92] The fantasy

81 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3645, 19r.
82 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3650, 15r.
83 NHA OH 3, reg. 1, 13v.
84 NHA OH 3, reg. 14, 6v.
85 NHA OH 5, reg. 90, 2r.
86 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3639, 22v.
87 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3651, 7v.
88 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3651, 7r.
89 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3654, 23r.
90 NHA OH 3, reg. 1, 13r.
91 NHA OH 3, reg. 65, 5r.
92 NHA OH 3, reg. 88, 8v.

of not having to work features in other literature of the time, such as in the texts dealing with the imaginary Land of Cockaigne.[93] It is also often associated with (poor) lottery players in later criticism and literature about the lottery.[94]

There are, however, a few lottery rhymes that imagine the prize as a way to get ahead in the world of work. These are only found in the Bruges lottery, and the players who submitted them are all male. Hector Pincoen, for instance, "would start his craft" if he won a prize.[95] For another participant, Jan Sijmons from Antwerp, winning a prize would offer a second chance, as his lottery rhyme tells us: "A ruined cloth merchant is a good broker/Could I obtain the highest prize, it would make me a merchant again".[96] Jan Laenssen from Amsterdam is hoping to set up his child with the prize money, and use it to "make his oldest son a pater [a priest connected to a religious order]".[97]

The lottery rhymes related to work show a difference between men and women. For quite a few men in the Bruges lottery, work is aspirational. They want a certain career, either for themselves or for a male relative, and the prize money would enable them to begin that career. No woman frames work in that way. This might reflect the reality of women's work, often low-paid and low-status. Work mentioned in the lottery rhymes certainly falls in these categories. Most women who give their occupation, or who mention what they do for a living, are involved in textile work or working as a servant.

One of the most frequently mentioned jobs is spinning, which again reflects early modern women's reality. Most, if not all, early modern women would have been involved in spinning, both for their own household and for the market. However, spinning was a prime example of, in the words of Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, "low-paid, low-status, and non-organized work, done mainly by women".[98] To these women, work, and especially this type of work, would have been a necessity rather than a choice or a source of pride. Women playing the lottery might therefore not have aspired to certain types of work in the same way as men, for whom work could provide higher pay and status. Women's access to work was also less dependent on official structures like guilds, as many guilds

93 See Herman Pleij, *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life*, trans. Diane Webb (Columbia University Press, 2001).

94 See, *infra*, Scham, "The Failed Promise", and Undheim, "Lottery Dreams".

95 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3655, 20r.

96 RB TBO 125 1456, no register number, 5v.

97 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3651, 27r.

98 Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, "Segmentation in the Pre-Industrail Labour Market: Women's Work in the Dutch Textile Industry, 1581–1810", *International Review of Social History* 51, no. 2 (2006): 214.

did not allow women to join in their own right. Guild memberships cost money, which meant that the money of a prize might help a man to join a guild, or to become master. This seems to be the situation for Hector Pincoen. For many women, however, *marriage* rather than money gave access to certain types of work.[99] If women dreamt of doing a certain type of work, the prize money could not help them. That is, unless the prize would allow them to get married.

In the Bruges lottery, ten lottery rhymes mention marriage or love after winning a prize. In the Haarlem lottery, there are only four. An unnamed "girl" from Antwerp says "she would buy a husband with [the prize]".[100] Tannekin Daens from Ghent imagines that she "would have her pick of young men" if she won the main prize.[101] Amy Froide describes the close connection between lotteries and marriage prospects for unmarried women in early modern Britain. In fiction, unmarried women often play the lottery to win a marriage portion.[102] This connection was not just fictional, as shown by an English lottery rhyme cited by Froide, in which the player states that "I am a poor maiden and faine would marry/And the lacke of goods is the cause that I tarry".[103] Froide also quotes the maiden Sarah Cowper, who wrote in her diary that "I had conceiv'd a Jest that if I sho'd gett the 1000£ per An: how suitors wou'd haunt me for it".[104] For men, on the other hand, winning the lottery is linked to pursuing their passions or getting set up in life.[105]

One Haarlem lottery rhyme, submitted by maid-servant Neeltgen Willems, is very similar to the English one quoted by Froide: "Here comes a maiden into the lottery/If she gets the highest prize, it will help sell her/Because she does not have any goods, she cannot keep a lover/And she would rather not remain [alone]".[106] In these lottery rhymes, the link between money, marriage, and the lottery is made very explicit. Indeed, both Neeltgen Willems and the girl from Antwerp present marriage as a financial transaction: you can buy a husband with the prize, or sell yourself.

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99 Ariadne Schmidt, "Gilden en de toegang van vrouwen tot de arbeidsmarkt in Holland in de vroegmoderne tijd", *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 23 (2007): 164.

100 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3645, 26v.

101 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3636, 7v.

102 See also, *infra*, Marius Warholm Haugen, "Staging Lotteries", Paul Goring, "The Lottery in British Prose Literature", and Natalie Devin Hoage, "Lottery Advertisements".

103 Quoted in Amy M. Froide, *Silent Partners. Women as Public Investors during Britain's Financial Revolution, 1690–1750* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 31.

104 Quoted in Froide, *Silent Partners*, 57.

105 Froide, *Silent Partners*, 39.

106 NHA OH 5, reg. 103, 4r.

The link between marriage, the lottery, and women seems to be less strong in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Low Countries than in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Britain. Not only are there but a handful of lottery rhymes that allude to marriage, the players who submitted them are not exclusively female. In fact, in both lotteries, there is an even split between men and women dreaming of marriage or finding a lover after winning a prize. In the Bruges lottery, Jaques de Clerck "would buy a wife" with his prize,[107] and Hans van Wattijne "would get beautiful ladies with it".[108] In one of the two Haarlem lottery rhymes by men, Herman Janszoon "hopes to do well with his sweetheart" if he gets the highest prize.[109] The second male player, Dirijck Jacopszoon Heijn, is also aware of the power of money in the arena of love. "If I would charm one of the young ladies standing around [at the draw] with the prize/what would the lovers say who would lose their sweetheart?" he asks. As the most likely answer to any question asked at the draw would be "nothing" (as most tickets were blanks), Dirijck Jacopszoon assumes that a prize would make him triumphant with the ladies to the point where no one else can even get a word in.

Perhaps even more interesting, however, is the lottery rhyme by Maijken Jans van Enthone. "Frans Floriszoon, understand and remember this well", Maijken's rhyme begins, and continues: "If I get the highest prize, I will not marry you".[110] Maijken's lottery rhyme is unique in addressing someone other than God, the drawer, a public figure, or the audience. The message is also extraordinary. For whatever reason, winning a prize would make Maijken not want to marry the addressee. Perhaps the money would provide her financial freedom, thus allowing her to remain unmarried.

An important dimension to the lottery rhymes about work and marriage is humour. Although the players might truly have wished for a husband or a life without work, many of them are clearly meant to amuse the audience. The women in the Bruges lottery who fantasise about not having to spin again call themselves fools. The men and women who talk about buying a spouse or selling themselves are making fun of the marriage market by equating it with the actual market. Part of the humour of these lottery rhymes comes from the fact that the chances of winning are so low; the fantasy becomes laughable because everyone knows how unattainable it is. The cocky lottery rhyme of Dirijck Jacopszoon only works if the response of the drawer is "nothing". Many of the other fantasies

107 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3656, 3r.
108 RB TBO 125 1456, reg. 3654, 30v.
109 NHA OH 3, reg. 61, 3v.
110 NHA OH 3, reg. 24, 5r.

would no doubt also have taken on an ironic tone when followed by almost inevitable disillusion. Immediately, the fantasy is unmasked as just that: a fantasy, so far removed from reality that one just has to laugh.

7 Conclusion

The possibility of winning a big prize should have opened up a wide variety of lottery fantasies. In theory, dreams are unlimited. Anything that required money could be made into a reality with the lottery prize. In practice, though, players' fantasies – or at least the ones they presented to the audience – were very much influenced by their everyday lives and their gender. While women were more likely to talk about saving up and not spending the prize, men were more likely to say they would spend the prize on alcohol, especially in the tavern. For some men, the prize would allow them to do the work they wanted to do, while women were more likely to dream of not having to work anymore. Moreover, very wealthy players could comfortably promise the whole prize to charity and bolster their reputation in the process, while players with less to spend on the lottery were not as quick to do so.

Players might not have shared all their desires with the public, or they might have conformed to socially acceptable fantasies. Moreover, the possibility of winning a prize was so low that many participants might not have taken it very seriously. The fact that lottery rhymes were conventionally short also meant that players could only express simple desires. Lottery rhymes were simply not suited to more elaborate visions of the future. Still, the dreams that *were* expressed through the lottery rhymes provide insight into early modern lives, where people hoped to save up for their own or their children's future, wished to buy new clothes, or wanted to spend some time drinking wine at the tavern. Perhaps these fantasies even sound familiar to us now.

For most of the participants in the Bruges and Haarlem lotteries, their dreams remained just that: a dream. However, research on modern players suggests that the anticipation, and the opportunity to dream, are part of the fun of lottery play.[111] Early modern lottery players could hold on to their dreams for quite a while, as the subscription period and preparations for the draw took quite some time. During that period, their fantasies might have brought them some happiness.

111 Beckert and Lutter, "Why the Poor Play the Lottery", 1155.

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