

# Love, Self-deceit, and Money



## LOVE, SELF-DECEIT, & MONEY

*Commerce and Morality  
in the Early Neapolitan  
Enlightenment*

KOEN STAPEL BROEK

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"Love drives and gives life to the commerce of mankind." Thus, the sixteen year old Ferdinando Galiani (1728-1787) presented his project to understand the sociable nature of man. This observation, a reflection of his own position on the relation between trade and virtue, hinted at what the mature works of Galiani, one of the most noteworthy economists and wits in eighteenth-century Italy, would eventually yield. In Love, Self-Deceit, and Money, Koen Stapelbroek reconstructs the Early Neapolitan Enlightenment debate on the morality of market societies, a debate that hinged on the preservation of Naples' independent statehood in a global arena of commercial and military competition. Galiani rejected the moralizing and mercantile ideas of his contemporaries regarding the dangers threatening Naples, and, in his *Della moneta* (1751), he justified the systems set in place by the Neapolitan government. With reference to early, previously unstudied lectures on self-deceptive 'Platonic love,' Koen Stapelbroek examines Galiani's role in the wider debate, arguing that his early moral philosophical and historical work suggests a great deal about his political-economic stance, including his assertion that money is the ultimate ordering principle in the universe. As a study of one of the most idiosyncratic minds of the Enlightenment period, Love, Self-Deceit, and Money shows how diverse ideas of the development of individual passions into social dispositions, commerce, and reform politics dovetailed seamlessly in the intellectual climate of eighteenth-century Europe.

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