UNLOCKING THE LOVE-LOCK
The History and Heritage of a Contemporary Custom
Ceri Houlbrook

Pb 978-1-78920-985-3 • $29.95/£23.95 $19.47/£15.57
eBook 978-1-78920-923-5
January 2021 • 260 pages, 50 illus.

DESCRIPTION
A padlock is a mundane object, designed to fulfil a specific – and secular – purpose. A contemporary custom has given padlocks new significance. This custom is ‘love-locking’, where padlocks are engraved with names and attached to bridges in declaration of romantic commitment. This custom became popular in the 2000s, and its dissemination was rapid, geographically unbound, and highly divisive, with love-locks emerging in locations as diverse as Paris and Taiwan; New York and Seoul; Melbourne and Moscow. This book explores the worldwide popularity of the love-lock as a ritual token of love and commitment by considering its history, symbolism, and heritage.

“This is a well-researched and thoughtful assessment of a fascinating topic.” • Sarah Randles, University of Melbourne

“...this is an eminently enjoyable and thorough investigation of a popular phenomenon through the lens of heritage and folk tradition.” • Sara De Nardi, Western Sydney University

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Ceri Houlbrook attained her doctorate in Archaeology from the University of Manchester, and is a lecturer in Folklore and History at the University of Hertfordshire. Her primary research interests are contemporary folklore and the material culture of popular customs and beliefs. She has published previously on the British phenomenon of coin-trees and the history and folklore of concealed objects.
CONTENTS

List of Illustrations

Introduction

Chapter 1. Dating Love: A History of The Love-Lock Custom
Chapter 2. Consuming Love: Folk Custom and Popular Culture
Chapter 3. Excavating Love: The Material Culture of Love-Locking
Chapter 4. Locking Love: The Ethnography of Love-Locking
Chapter 5. Symbolizing Love: The semiotics of love-locking
Chapter 7. Unlocking Love: Controversy and Heritage

Concluding Thoughts: A Final Case-Study

Appendix 1
Appendix 2

Bibliography

For online purchases please visit www.berghahnbooks.com and use 35% discount* code SAA2021 at checkout. Valid through May 17th, 2021.
Shipping charges will apply. For individual orders placed directly with the publisher.

If you wish to place an order by email or phone please contact the appropriate Berghahn Customer Service:

UK, Europe, the Middle East, India, and Africa: (c/o Turpin Distribution):
Email: berghahnbooks@turpin-distribution.com • T: +44 (0) 1767 604 976

The Americas, Australia, Asia-Pacific and China: (c/o Ingram Publisher Services):
Email: IPSJacksonOrders@ingramcontent.com • T: (1) 800-343-4499