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*I will Follow him through Woody Mountains and Water*: Semantic-Pragmatic Analysis of a Formula within the Context of Consensual Abduction

The starting points for this paper are Vuk’s testimony about the bride kidnapping in the Serbia of his time and the formulaic parts of speech pronounced during the trials, which Vuk mentions. Through a semantic-pragmatic analysis of the formulae used in trials, the author draws attention to some indicators of *faux archaism* perceived in them. A special attention is paid to the formula *I will follow him through woody mountains and water*, which the girls would pronounce when they wanted to admit their willingness to abduction. In order to reach the full pragmatic function and meaning of this formula within the specific communication context of the trial, the author compares the relevant elements from the Vuk’s testimony with the historical and legal archive materials and traces them further on through the folk songs in which those elements appear. The results of the comparative analysis of those songs, within their own pragmatic contexts, point towards certain mythic patterns related to the idea of fertility. This leads the author to the hypothesis that in the past the marriage by consensual abduction was a recognized institution in the customary law and that this practice had its foothold in mythological ideas and beliefs.

*Key words:* woody mountain, water, ranilo, consensual abduction, marriage by capture, deer