

Ethnohistorical Processes, Demographic Structure and Linguistic Determinants of the Island of Vis

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims at describing the most relevant background data on geomorphological, economic, ethnohistoric, demographic and linguistic features of the island of Vis. As an introduction to future holistic anthropological research on the island, it seeks to identify both internal and external impulses of change and/or continuity of the island population structure within a wider socio-cultural and historical context. The ethnohistorical and demographic data indicate a higher degree of isolation throughout history as compared to other islands in the region and a continuous depopulation trend during the last century. The analysis of the existing linguistic data on two main settlements shows a certain amount of intradialectal micro-differentiation, which is mainly due to various social and non-linguistic reasons.

Introduction

A long-term anthropological research of the population structure of the East Adriatic rural populations, conducted so far on a number of Adriatic islands and other regions, has now been extended to the investigation of the population structure of the island of Vis. Being a part of a more comprehensive biological and socio-cultural investigation presently underway, the purpose of this study was to esti-

mate basic geographical, historical, economic, demographic and other socio-cultural (linguistic) factors that directly or indirectly might have influenced the formation of the island population structure. The strategy of the applied method elaborated in the previously published works^{1–4} was aimed at identification of internal and external impulses of change and/or continuity of rural populations

within a wider socio-cultural and historical context.

The island of Vis is situated between 43° 12'N and 43° 05'N in latitude, and 16° 03'E and 16° 15'E in longitude and belongs to Middle-Dalmatian islands. It is the westernmost populated island of the Adriatic archipelago. It is 55 km far from Split and 147 km from Monte Gardano, which is the nearest town on the Italian coast. The island of Vis is, therefore, an open-sea island. Its surface area amounts to 90.3 km². The closest island is Hvar, which is about 16 km NE from Vis just across the Vis Channel. The island of Biševo is 4.5 km SW, and Sveti Andrija 25 km W from the island of Vis. The island stretches in the direction E-W. It is 17 km long and 8 km wide and its coast-line is 76.6 km long⁵ (Figure 1).

The upper-cretaceous limestone layers, which build the island of Vis, stretch in the NE-SW direction. The most wide-spread geological formations that they form are gently rounded limestone ridges and closed Karst valleys. The ridges are highest in the western part of the island where the highest peak of Hum (587m) is situated⁵.

The northern and southern coasts are built of limestone and are, therefore, only slightly indented. There is a fine harbor at Vis town on the NE corner of the island, while a lesser anchorage is located on the western shore at Komiža. There are several very small harbors/landing points, namely at Milna and Oključna⁵.

Vis is one of the most wind-exposed Adriatic islands. The most frequent winds are NW (maestral) and SE winds, both very maritime. Summer temperatures are lower and winter temperatures considerably higher than on the mainland. The average temperature in July, which is the warmest month of the year, is 24.0°C and in January, the coldest month, it is 8.8°C. The average amount of

rain is lower than on the mainland and amounts to only 557 mm p.a. Summers are dry with only some 40 mm of rain, so that summer draughts and scarcity of water are common. Due to the prevalently limestone geologic structure, there is no spring water except for the spring in the vicinity of Komiža⁵.

In the past the island vegetation consisted primarily of the autochthonous Mediterranean woods *Quercetum ilicis*, which seems to have been destroyed by burning and cutting since early history. The arable lands are situated in Karst valleys and are covered with red soil and sand. The Mediterranean woods on limestone ridges gradually deteriorated into dense evergreen underbush. The most common uncultivated vegetation of the island is made up of holm oak (*ilex*), wild olive trees, and some carob woods in the SW of the island⁵.

The Greeks introduced agriculture well suited to the island, primarily wine and olive-growing. Supposedly, they also brought the then known fishing tools. Along with the already existent sheep and goat breeding among the Illyrians, these innovations initiated a Mediterranean poly-cultural organization. The vine used to cover all arable lands, so that already in the ancient times Vis was well known for its wine. Until the 15th century fishing was not popular among islanders who feared sudden pirate attacks. However, from the end of the 16th century until the mid-1800's Vis shared fishing-grounds with the nearby islands and exported salted fish to the main export markets on the Adriatic coast. Fish soon became the chief export item of the island population, which earned a profitable market surplus. The first Dalmatian fish cannery was established in Komiža in 1890 and by 1930s the island was the center of Dalmatian fish industry. The main economic activities of the island today are still vine-growing and fishing, ac-

accompanied by adequate industries, as well as the growing of early vegetables, citrus fruits, almonds and palms. With its fish cannery Komiža is the fishing center of the island. Due to the status of Vis as a border-zone until 1969 and the curfew for foreigners until 1976, tourism started to develop slowly only in the last two decades⁵.

Today the administrative center of the island is the town of Vis, which is connected to the main regional center of Split by a couple of ferry lines per day. Altogether there are 16 places on the island. Vis and Komiža are the biggest and most important ones, whereas the other 14 are mainly situated in the interior.

Ethno-History and Demography of the Island of Vis

The population history

The prehistory of the island of Vis is only slightly known, and only a few fragments of very characteristic ceramics that can be dated back to the 6th millennium BC witness the earliest traces of men on the island⁶. The Illyrians, who are the first islanders known by name, came to the Dalmatian coast probably in the 2nd millennium BC. Four buildings, one open settlement without a defense system and seven tumuli date from that period⁸.

The Greeks from Syracuse colonized the East Adriatic coast in the course of the 4th century BC, and founded the colony of Issa on the island. It soon became the principal Greek stronghold on the Adriatic. However, there are historical records according to which the Greeks never assimilated with the native Illyrian population on the islands of Vis, Hvar, Brač and Korčula. The Greeks populated only one settlement on the island, which they fortified with defensive walls and out of which the town of Vis grew later on. The image of the Illyrian contemporary

ruler Ionio on Greek coins proves that the colonizers and the native population maintained good relations⁷. In the course of the 4th and 3rd century BC, Issa gained its independence and won a lead over a part of the Adriatic. It minted its own coins, started ceramic production and vine growing, and set up a fleet and a mercantile network on the Dalmatian mainland. They also started establishing their own colonies such as Tragurium at the site of the present Trogir, Epetion where present Stobreč is, and Lumbarda on Korčula island. From 400 BC until 50 BC, i.e. for 350 years, Issa was an independent state on the Adriatic⁷.

Various ancient written documents, epigraphic monuments and material remnants acknowledge the importance of Issa. One of them is the inscription from Lumbarda discovered in 1877 which documented the regulation of property distribution between the Greek colonizers and the indigenous population of Korčula. Some documents also testify to the production of one of the best wines in the world at that time and to the active participation of the island's fleet as an ally to the Roman Republic in the wars on the Adriatic, in Greece and Asia Minor⁸.

A rare investigation of human remains discovered on Martvilo necropolis on Vis that date back to the period of Greek colonization shows that the contemporary inhabitants of Issa belonged to the Mediterranean type of long-headed, robust and tall people, who were seemingly more similar to the indigenous population than to the Greeks, who were shorter and more gracile⁸. These finds prove that the island was mainly settled by the Illyrians, while the Greek newcomers were less numerous, limited in distribution to the town of Issa and gradually assimilated with the natives.

In the 3rd century BC Issa, attacked by the mainland Illyrians, requested help from Rome. Since then it was a Roman

ally and employed its fleet to help Rome on the Adriatic and Mediterranean sea. During that period the Roman colonization and gradual Romanization of the indigenous Adriatic peoples began, which lasted until the Slavs' arrival in the 7th and 8th century AD.

According to Plinius, Issa was referred to as *civium romanorum*, i.e. it was an independent state with its own colonies on the mainland and on Korčula, linked to Rome by mutual amity and defense⁸. Following the example of Romans, the people of Issa also built a theater, thermae and a forum, the remains of which today testify the long period of Roman colonization.

At the time of great migrations in the 7th and 8th century AD the Slavs reached the Dalmatian coast and the islands. In his work *De administrando imperio* Constantine Porphyrogenitus confirms that Vis was already inhabited by Slavs by the 10th century. He also mentions Slavic place names on Vis such as Velo Selo, Poje, Pospilje, Polhumje, Oključina, Dragodid, and Knezrot⁹.

At the time of the Slavs' arrival on the island the ancient population mainly lived in their town of Issa, and only few of them inhabited the rest of the island. In the course of time the Slavs married and intermingled with the resident population of Illyrian and Roman origins and assimilated the ancient population so that Vis was a completely Slavonicized town by 997 AD when the Venetians arrived⁸. The towns were destroyed and the population was enslaved. Some people escaped and settled in the hinterlands of the island. They founded several settlements in the hills, some of which exist to this day.

In 1145 the Venetians subjugated both Vis and Hvar to the prince in Zadar. After a short Byzantine rule during the Early Middle Ages, 1180 Vis came under the Croatian-Hungarian rule. In the 13th century it was ruled by Croatian-Hungarian

rulers before it recognized Venetian rule in 1278. It was again under Croatian-Hungarian rule at intervals before it was finally occupied by the Venetians in 1420⁵. Administratively the island of Vis belonged to the Hvar municipality since the 12th century until the end of the Venetian rule in 1797. The noblemen of Hvar were given properties on Vis and the local population became tenant farmers with almost no landholding rights to the Hvar »landlords.« The records of 1331 from Hvar, indicate that fishing was a very important occupation in Komiža at that time, while a document dated 1367 reveals that the family name »Petric« should be considered as the oldest family name in Komiža; that family name has been preserved through the centuries and is still present in Komiža to this day¹⁰⁻¹². The 1380 Hvar declaration documented the first list of land owned by the Hvar community on the island of Vis. Until the end of the 15th century all the settlements including the main village of Velo Selo were situated in the interior part of the island (Figure 1). In the war between the Venetians and the Duke Ercole di Ferrara in 1485 Velo Selo was completely destroyed and burned down and was never rebuilt thereafter⁸.

After the 15th century coastal settlements began to prosper under the Venetian rule. The inhabitants of Velo Selo moved into the Port of Sv. Juraj (today the town of Vis), which was founded in the vicinity of the ruins of the Ancient Issa. The inhabitants of Dibje Selo, however, moved into the spacious Komiža Bay, which started to develop as a fishing settlement⁷.

The various land and contract documents from the first half of the 16th century provide the first records of the oldest family names in Komiža: Vitaljić, Foretić, Radić, Vokijarević, Ilić, Pribičić, Bozanić, Jurković, Nikolić, Gridasić, Radovanović, Cvitić, Petراسić, Korculanin, Sfiro, Bor-



Fig. 1. The island of Vis.

čić, Mardešić, Bogdanović, Bogdanić, Orujić, Radojević, de Magri, Pavšić, Marđić, Castalol, Priščić, Catalano, Polutino-
vić, Jakšić, Sokolić, Martuloso, Primotić and Bakulić.

By the examination of parish registers it is possible to trace down the formation of the island population structure of the island since 1587. In the first parish register, which covers the period from 1587 to 1628, 175 last names were included. Besides these names the newcomers were registered by their place of origin: Dubrovnik (9), Poljica (3), Pelješac (2), Vranjic (1), Perast (1), Zadar (1), Podgora (1), Zlarin (1), Furlanija (1), Rijeka (1), Klis (1), Sali-Dugi o. (2), Mljet (1), Split (4), Omiš (5), Vlah-Murlak (2)^{10–12}.

The parish registers since 1628 include only the inhabitants of Sv. Juraj

and Kut, which merged into the town of Vis later on, and of the village population in the same parish. The inhabitants of inland hamlets were not recorded and only occasionally persons from Velo Poje, Žena Glava, Podhumlje or Budihovac were mentioned. The registers were kept in Latin and recorded not only the names of the families that lived on the island, but also their vocation and a whole range of other data that can give an insight into the living conditions on the island at that time^{10–12}.

The Turkish military occupation of the Balkan peninsula since the end of the 15th until the end of the 17th century caused great migratory waves from the hinterland towards the Adriatic coast. Migrations were particularly frequent around 1570 during the Cyprus war

(1571–1573), Kandian war (1645–1669), Morean war (1683–1699) and in the first half of the 18th century (1714–1718). The Venetian Republic populated the Middle-Dalmatian islands with refugees from Makarsko Primorje, Poljice and Dalmatinska Zagora. The immigrants were given land and special privileges, which guaranteed them safety for their wives and children, while they were obliged to serve in the Venetian army. They were allowed to export their products to Venice and other places in the Venetian Republic without paying taxes, but were not allowed to marry with the natives. These migrations provided with new population Vis and other Dalmatian islands that were demographically weakened by wars, poverty and illness^{13–19}. However, the privileges caused hostility between the old and new population and might have caused biological (reproductive) isolation of the two groups^{13–19}.

From 1646 to 1672 forty families immigrated to Vis settling on both municipal and private land. Unfortunately, no complete listings of those immigrants are available so it is impossible to determine which families came to the town of Vis and other places, except only partially from the subsequent censuses. This is how we know that the Dorotić's arrived from Makarsko primorje in 1662, and that the family of Pavao Martinis, who was supposedly a Turk baptized later in life, came to Vis in 1679^{7,11–13}. A few last names mentioned in the mainland Poljice at that time are still preserved on Vis, which can mean that some of them might have settled on Vis in the course of the 16th and 17th century escaping before the Turks. There are various documents on new immigrants' gatherings, representatives' elections, defense of their privileges and clashes with the native population^{7,10–12}.

As a result of the economic flourishing of the island at the beginning of the 19th

century new settlers, artisans, traders and seamen came to the town of Vis from the neighboring islands, mainland and more distant cities. At the same time, the agricultural labor force was on the ebb and laborers from other Dalmatian towns and villages were hired. The majority of the hired labor force originated from Kaštela and other places in the surroundings of Split and from Dalmatinska Zagora. Many settled permanently on Vis and started families there^{10–12}.

Between the fall of the Venetian Republic in 1797 and the Congress of Vienna in 1815 Vis was subject to constant administrative changes. In 1797 it came under the Austrian rule and in 1805 under the French rule. After it had become a center of piracy and smuggling, it went through a short and sudden period of economic prosperity. In 1815 Vis was annexed to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which set up a new municipal government, court, customs, port authority and kept a permanent army⁵.

After the Italian occupation in WWI Vis was incorporated into the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. In WWII it was occupied by the Italian and German army and later on became a part of Yugoslavia. Due to military and safety reasons, the island was turned into a military naval base with as many as 40 different military objects. It was made inaccessible to foreigners, the tourism was halted at the time when its neighboring islands recorded constant inflow of tourists. As the chief military stronghold Vis was practically under the occupation of the Yugoslav army. It re-gained its »freedom« in May 1991 and today it belongs to the Split-Dalmatian county of the Republic of Croatia⁵.

Demography

According to the official census from 2001, 3,735 inhabitants lived in 16 settlements on the island of Vis²⁰. The average

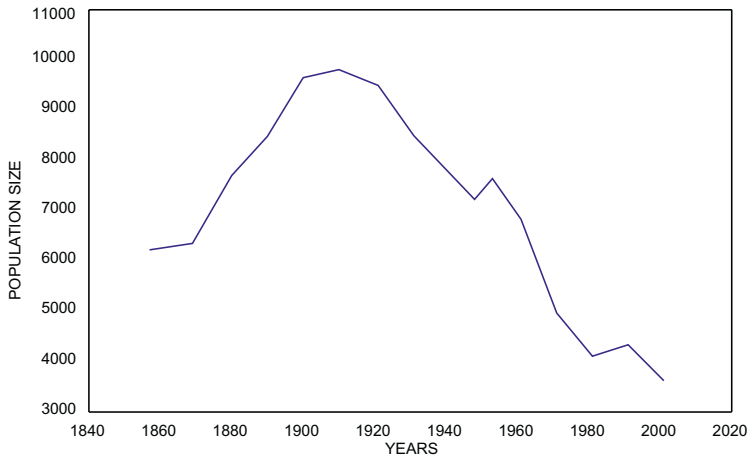


Fig. 2. Population size on the island of Vis from 1857 to 2001.

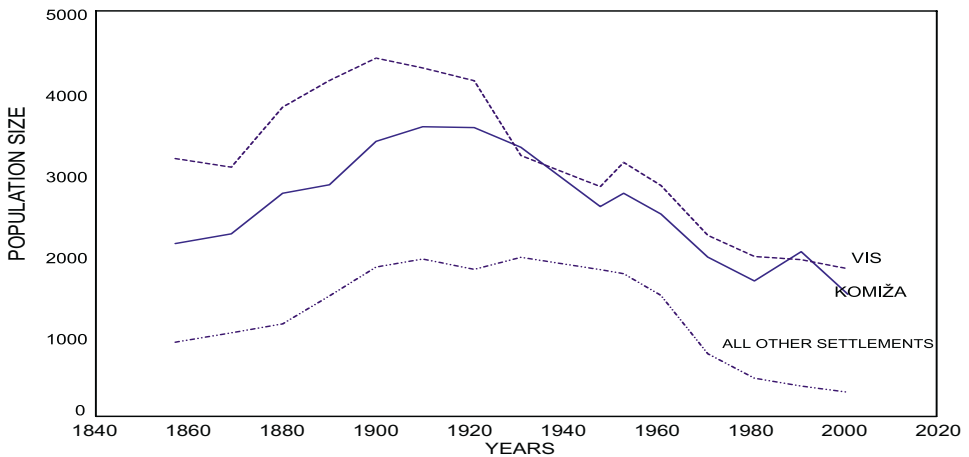


Fig. 3. Population size of the villages on the island of Vis from 1857 to 2001.

density is 41.3 persons per km². Like on other islands along the Dalmatian coast, very small settlements prevail on the island of Vis as well, where 14 out of 16 settlements number less than 100 inhabitants. There live only 6 inhabitants in the smallest village of Oključna, while Vis and Komiza have the highest number of inhabitants (1,554 and 1,829 respectively)²⁰. Most of the small villages are situ-

ated on the edges of the central field in the southern part of the island²¹ (Figure 1).

The number of inhabitants has oscillated in the last 150 years²² (Figure 2). The first official census was taken in 1857 when 6,226 inhabitants were registered²². Until 1910 the total number of inhabitants was on the increase as the consequence of a sudden development of vine growing and fishing. The reason be-

TABLE 1
THE ISLAND OF VIS POPULATION ACCORDING TO ECONOMIC ACTIVITY (1991)

Village	Total	Industry and mining	Agriculture and fishing	Forestry	Construction	Traffic	Trade and entertainment	Tradesmanship	Housing and communal	Cultural and social	Public and administrative	Other
1. Borovik	10	5	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
2. Dračevo Polje	4	2	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
3. Komiža	1194	609	226	48	–	1	17	43	94	22	31	103
4. Marinje Zemlje	5	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
5. Oključna	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
6. Plisko Polje	4	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
7. Podhumlje	16	9	5	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
8. Podselje	13	7	2	2	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–
9. Podstražje	14	7	2	2	–	–	–	2	–	1	–	–
10. Podšpilje	29	15	5	7	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	–
11. Rukavac	14	8	3	2	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
12. Vis	1412	725	163	73	1	2	7	54	101	29	15	242
13. Žena Glava	34	17	9	7	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Total	2752	410	417	149	1	3	26	101	197	53	47	346

yond such sudden flourishing was vine disease filoxera that destroyed vine in other European regions and opened up an opportunity for Dalmatian winemakers to enter a huge wine market. A new labor force arrived to the island to work in the vineyards and a large part of it stayed there permanently^{13–19}.

In 1910 a depopulation trend was initiated by massive emigrations, mostly to overseas countries. The downfall of sailing ships and the so-called Wine Clause (1892–1905) were the main causes of the economic crisis and strong emigration^{13–19}. The Wine Clause disabled the export of Dalmatian wines in the Austrian countries. Filoxera, which later spread to Dalmatia as well, only intensified emigration. Vineyard restoring is unfortunately a long process and on most islands the number of vineyards has, therefore, never again reached figures from the beginning of the century^{13–19}. A considerable population decrease, apart from the

emigration in the pre-World War I period, which is clearly shown in the population census from 1920 to 1948, was also caused by losses in WWII¹³. The first census that shows a slight population increase was in 1953 when the population reached 7,643²². After that year, however, a faster economic development of the coast acted as a pull-factor for the inhabitants of Vis and 1953 also marked a new negative turn in demographic trends. The greatest decrease of population was recorded in the 1961–1971 period when it hit the bottom line of –27.9%. The negative trend has not been stopped ever since. By the next census, the intensity of the demographic decrease was slowed down to –18.1%²³.

Population growth and a positive migrational trend during this long period were recorded only in the two coastal settlements of Vis and Komiža. It is evident from Figure 3 that the depopulation process was most prominent in small inland

TABLE 2
THE ISLAND OF VIS – NUMBER OF INHABITANTS AND ESTIMATED EFFECTIVE SIZE

Village	1910	1961	1971	1198	1199	2001	N _{ef}
1. Borovik	75	69	29	15	17	19	8.31
2. Dračevo Polje	17	99	41	24	11	9	5.93
3. Komiža	3572	2495	1965	1669	2032	1554	683.88
4. Marinje Zemlje	307	238	114	64	39	35	23.23
5. Oključna	304	118	44	8	11	6	4.79
6. Plisko Polje	88	57	36	28	21	22	10.78
7. Podhumlje	355	235	110	70	60	41	27.96
8. Podselje	123	84	56	39	31	23	14.36
9. Podstražje	200	125	78	52	36	24	17.46
10. Podšpilje	91	141	74	56	42	14	13.82
11. Rukavac	127	111	70	39	36	48	18.97
12. Vis	4297	2847	2233	1971	1932	1829	768.19
13. Žena Glava	254	215	120	76	70	65	33.47

TABLE 3
THE ISLAND OF VIS VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1961, 1971, 1981 AND 1991

	1961	1971	1981	1991
1. Total number of inhabitants	6834	4970	4111	4338
2. Number of births	987	640	549	434
3. Birth rate	16.6	10.6	12.0	10.3
4. Number of deaths	700	791	818	807
5. Mortality	11.7	13.1	17.9	19.0
6. Natural growth	287	-151	-269	-368
7. Vital index	141	80.9	67.1	53.7
8. Rate of migration	14.9	-25.8	-12.8	3.7

villages where the main activities were farming and cattle breeding. Vis and Komiža developed fishing and food industries with an emphasis on fish, olive, wine production as the main economic activities, which is the chief reason for the gravitation of the inland population towards these two towns (Figure 3)²¹. Table 1 shows the economic activity of the village population in 1991, and the gravitation of the interior villages towards Vis and Komiža. Table 2 shows the distribution of the total population on the island as well as the effective size within one generation for 1910–2001. Except for the two main settlements the effective size is negligible ranging from only 4.8 to 33.5.

A long-term emigration weakened the biological-reproductive basis so that the negative natural growth has been its logic consequence²³. Table 3 shows vital statistics for the island of Vis over the past few decades (1961–1991). The data indicate a steady increase of death rate (from 11.7‰ to 19‰), a decrease in birth rate (from 16.6‰ to 10.3‰) and a consequential decrease in natural growth. The migrational rate in the same period was -25.8‰ compared to, for instance Hvar where it reached 4.9‰^{24,25}. The last recorded birth rate was lower than the birth rate for the whole country (13.2‰)²³.

Age-and-sex population structure (Figure 4) demonstrates all the possible con-

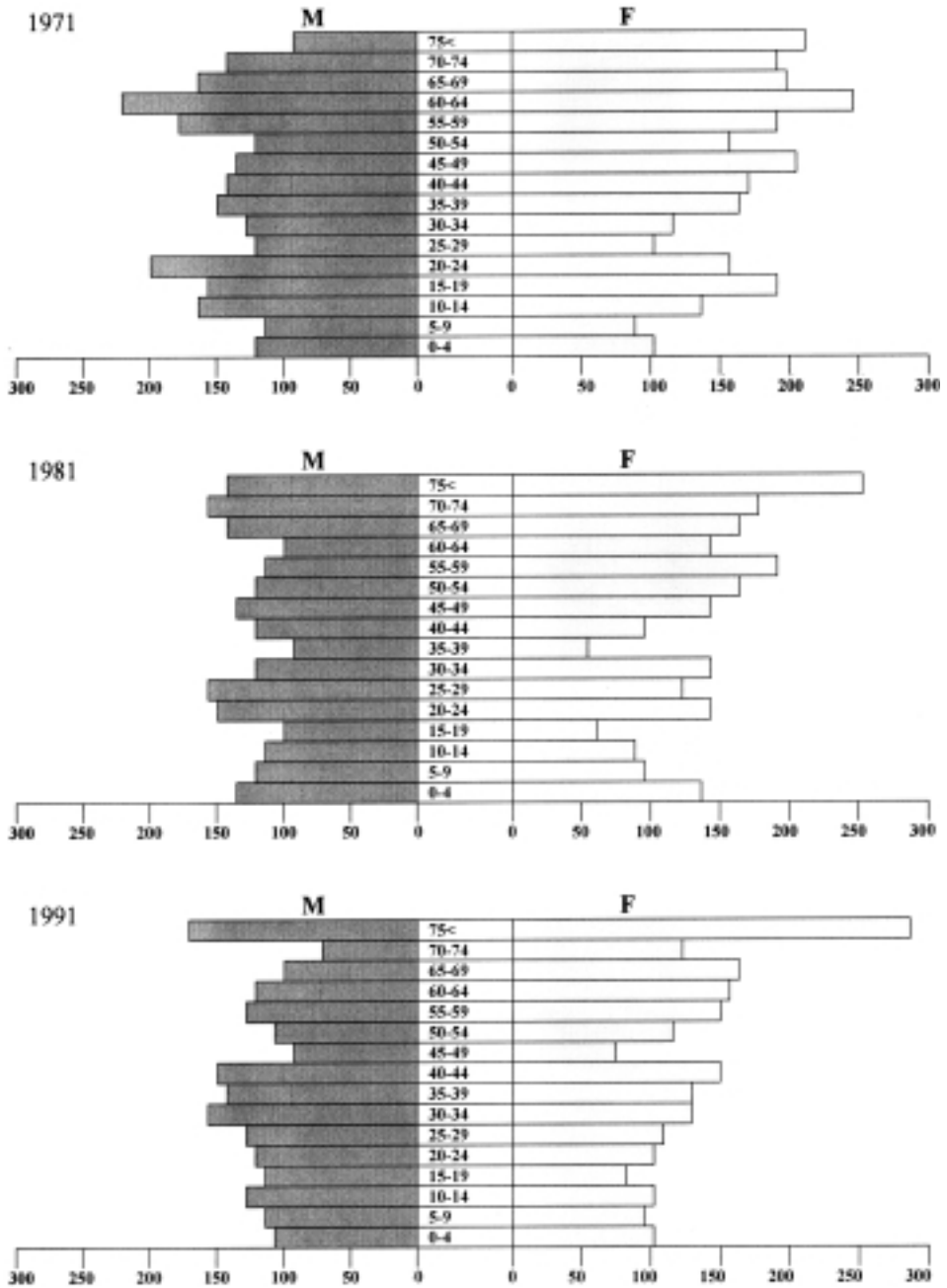


Fig. 4. Population distribution of the island of Vis in 1971, 1981 and 1991 according to age and sex.

sequences of a reduced demographic base: aging of the population, the population's decrease of reproductive ability, a lack of vital population cohorts and a whole range of other negative consequences of demographic and economic underdevelopment²³. Due to emigration of mainly male population and their dying in WWII, female population prevailed in older population groups on the island. However, the population structure according to sex balanced as the older generations were substituted by younger ones²³. The inherited disturbed population structure according to age caused by emigration of young people primarily towards Split and the capital of the Republic and the consequently reduced biodynamics resulted in a further decrease of the population size. Vis and Komiza, however, recorded a positive rate of migration caused by the difficulty to find employment out of the island. In ex-Yugoslavia the island was populated by militia, but this part of the population mostly moved out after 1991²³. The main overall conclusion that can be drawn from the above-presented data is that the population of Vis is very old due to a long-term selective emigration and a decreasing birth rate.

The Language of the Island of Vis

The linguistic background of Vis

Like other Middle-Dalmatian islands Vis was exposed to a constant linguistic reshaping in the course of the history. Significant cultural and linguistic changes were often the result of migrations to and from the island. These demographic movements gave rise to successive replacements of substratum languages of subdued populations by the superstratum languages of superior conquerors. Because of the island's relative isolation caused by its distance from the mainland, different strata and adstrata are well rec-

ognizable on Vis throughout history (Figure 5).

The oldest known stratum on the island is still reflected in the very name of Vis, which derives from a supposedly pre-Indo-European name Issa and which the Greeks adopted later on. Although the exact meaning of the word »issa« is unknown, it denotes »a fortress on water« according to some speculations. The Greek ἡ Ἴσσα was Latinized in the Byzantine time and became (*il*)la Issa > l'Issa > Lissa. According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus from the 10th century ἡ ὠρεὸς Ἰης was read Jis, and Skok further explains that *v* (=u) + *Jis* > *Vis*⁹. *Lessa*, *Lesa*, *Lysa*, *Lexe* and *Lisa* are other documented names of the island²⁶.

From the beginning of the first Greek visits to the Adriatic in the 6th century BC until the period of their colonization in the 4th century BC, the island was inhabited by people that the Greeks referred to as the Illyrians. The Greek way of colonization was a crucial factor that influenced the linguistic history of the island. Unlike the Romans, the Greeks were not military conquerors that came to new areas in large numbers with the aim of assimilation with the native peoples. Their primary goal was the founding of strategic and trade outposts. This is witnessed by the Lombardian inscription found on the island of Korčula from the 4th century BC with 71 Greek and/or Illyrian personal names and patronymics chiseled on it. Some of these names are typical Greek names such as Aristofanes, Lizimahos, Theodoros, Dionysos, Nikias and some are Illyrian, e.g. Sallas, Mykilo, Sibalios, Sonylos, Sestos Klea, Tyru and others^{27,28}. These finds prove that Issa was culturally divided between the indigenous Illyrian population and the newcomers distinguished by specific ethnic characteristics. It is also the reason to believe that the Illyrian language spoken on the island at the time of the Greek arrival remained

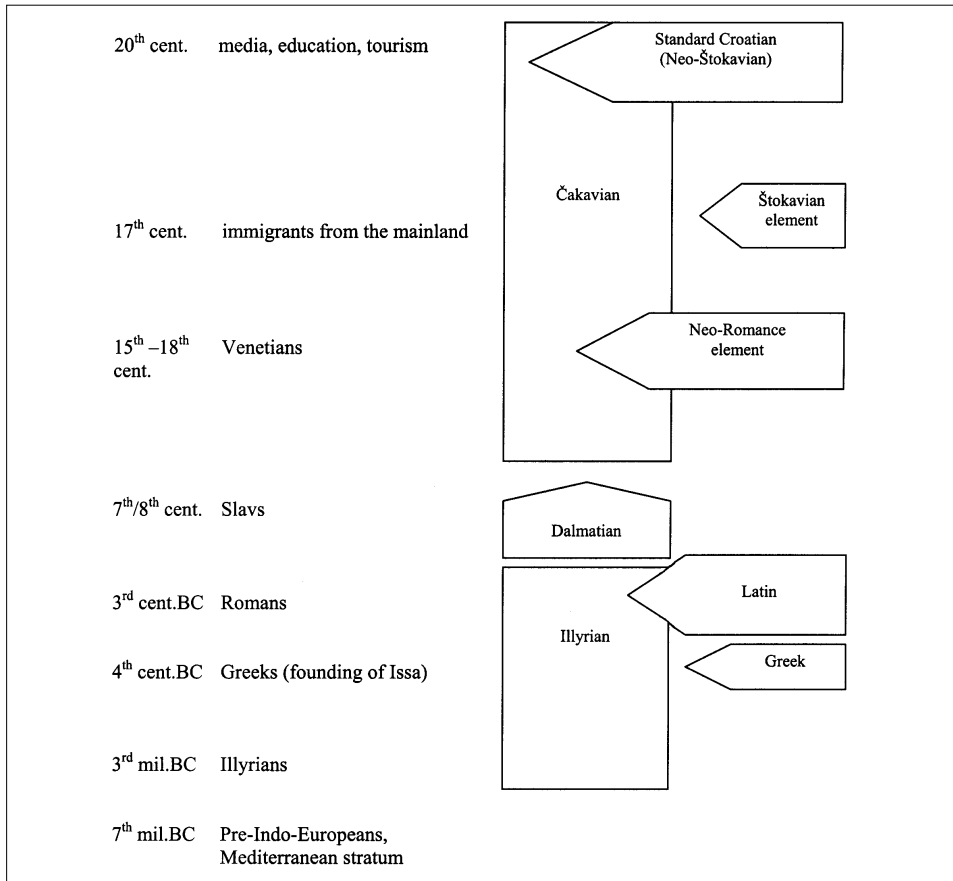


Fig. 5. Linguistic influences on the island of Vis throughout history.

well preserved until the Romans came and that it played a crucial role as a substratum language in the subsequent linguistic development.

The contacts of the Illyrians and the Romans lasted in these regions for about two centuries before the island came completely under the Roman rule during the civil wars. According to Plinius, from the 1st century on it is referred to as »Issa civium romanorum«, which suggests a strong Romanization of the island.

The only linguistic traits from the pre-Slavic period can be found in the topo-

nymy and remains of the Dalmatian (Romance) language. Skok mentions a rare Dalmatian noun *prior/pritur* (<praeieci-torium, Lat.) found only on Vis⁹. Although not exhaustive, the toponymy can still provide us with a much better insight into the presence of different linguistic layers on Vis before the arrival of Slavs. Beside the already mentioned name of Vis, the name of Komiza is seemingly of pre-Slavic origin, too. One of the hypothesis is that the name derives from the Greek personal name *Nikomedes*, which gave *Nikomedia* or the land prop-

erty of some Greek Nikomedes who lived on the island⁹.

The ancient Roman toponymy is more common on Vis than the Illyrian or the Greek. Skok mentions at least eight Latin place-names such as Kostirna (<gusterna), Kumpris (<cypressus), Nevaja (<novalis), Seket (<siccus), Skor (<scolium), Salbunara (<sabulum) and Promentur (<promontorium)⁹.

Every successive linguistic layer that appeared on the island of Vis left more numerous traces in its toponymy, which means that the Slavic place-names eventually prevailed when Slavs speaking the čakavian dialect of the Croatian language settled in the island around the 7th and 8th century. Although Vis was under the Venetian rule for centuries, the Slavic element was so stable in the island's toponymy all the time that the later Romance adstratum never significantly contributed to Vis place naming. However, it significantly influenced the vernacular, which still abounds in neo-Romance elements characteristic of the whole region that used to be ruled by Venice. The proof that the Venetian element permeated the already existent Slavic is seen not only in the vocabulary, but also in a phonetic phenomenon called cakavism. It refers to the substitution of phonemes ČŠŽ and CSZ by CSZ or ČŠŽ, the creation of which was at least partially influenced by the presence of the Venetian adstratum on the island of Vis, although different linguists diverge in the dating of the phenomenon^{29–32}. On the other hand, Hamm claimed that the Venetians played only a minor role in the creation of cakavism and he emphasized the importance of the internal language development instead³³. This hypothesis was later on partially approved and further elaborated by Muljačić by means of a contrastive analysis of the phonemic systems of Romance and Slavic vernaculars on the Adriatic. His conclusion was that »cakavism was gen-

erated by two factors: autonomous, internal, linguistic and heteronymous, external, sociolinguistic. The external factors can accelerate internal tendencies, but they can also be stopped and occasionally rejected«³¹.

According to the linguistic data recorded in 1960's, the island can be linguistically split into the western cakavian and the eastern čakavian area, which are more or less congruous with the administrative border that separates Vis and Komiza municipalities²⁹. It is interesting to mention that Hraste assigned a part of the town of Vis to the cakavian area, pointing out that »...numerous inhabitants of Podselje descended into the eastern part of the town of Vis called Kut, especially after the danger of pirates had gone, so that in the town of Vis itself there is speech of Kut and Luka. Luka is inhabited mostly by tradesmen, artisans and the descendants of the ancient Vis aristocracy, whereas peasants and farmers make up majority of the population of Kut«²⁹.

It is curious to know that Malecki characterized the whole town of Vis as a cakavian area, except for a small number of inhabitants of Kut who retained their čakavism either because they were fugitives who never fully assimilated with the rest of the population or because they were inhabitants of the interior villages which were čakavian at the time when they moved to Kut³⁰.

The analysis of linguistic micro-differentiation

As the purpose of this paper is to focus on all relevant factors that might have contributed to the formation of the present population of the island of Vis, we tried to complete the study by the analysis of local speech differences. Based on the assumption that language is an indicator of socio-cultural microevolution, we analyzed the available data of Vis and

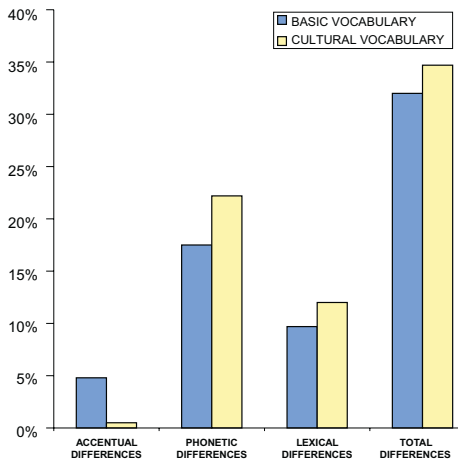


Fig. 6. Differences in the analyzed vocabulary of Vis and Komiža vernacular by type and percentage.

Komiža vernaculars respectively in order to make a preliminary assessment of homogeneity and/or heterogeneity of the population structure.

Data and methods

The analysis was based on the lexicostatistical method, which enables the assessment of genetic relationship between two languages or local vernaculars by comparing their basic vocabularies (a fund of words denoting some basic categories of general human culture, which is most resistant to change) and estimating a number of shared cognates that are phonetically, morphologically and lexically identical. The method was developed for the anthropological investigations of the East Adriatic populations, and its application to a number of Adriatic islands and other regions has shown so far that by means of the given method it is possible to observe the characteristics of linguistic microevolution to a certain extent^{3,34–38}.

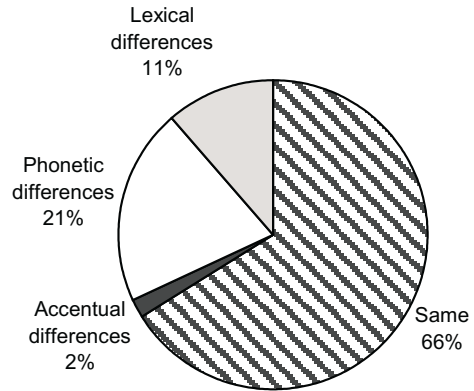


Fig. 7. The ratio of overall linguistic differences between Vis and Komiža vernacular.

The basic vocabulary in this analysis is the same one used and described in earlier studies^{3,34–38}, which is adapted to specific features of the čakavian dialect and other cultural and historical factors characteristic of the Adriatic population. The vocabulary analyzed in this work consists of 320 words selected from the dialectological questionnaires completed some 35 years ago in Vis and Komiža from the database of the Institute for Croatian language and linguistics in Zagreb.

The first step consisted of the analysis of the basic vocabulary containing 103 words. Later on the database was extended to comprise further 217 cultural vocabulary words, i.e. specific notions denoting material culture and social life, which are more prone to change and represent a more open lexical system than the basic vocabulary items. With respect to the restricted range of the analyzed corpus only phonological, accentual and lexical traits of the two vernaculars under investigation were considered, while the morphological ones were underrepresented and therefore excluded from the analysis.

The results of the linguistic analysis

Figure 6 presents the differences between the towns of Vis and Komiža found in the examined vocabulary, while the ratio of the overall differences is shown in Figure 7. Total differences found in the complete sample (320 words) account for 33.9%, out of which 61% refers to the phonetic differences, only about half that percentage to lexical (33.3%), while the share of the accentual differences is the lowest (5.5%). Exactly the same relations between the different segments of analysis were reached in the separate analysis of basic and cultural vocabulary. The percentage of the total differences was about 2.7% higher in the cultural vocabulary according to expectations. A more detailed analysis of the types of differences shows that the accentual differences were observed mainly in the basic vocabulary (4.8%) while the classic čakavian three-accentual system (˘˘˘) has been preserved by both vernaculars. However, the few found differences indicate the development of some innovations in the speech of Vis that mainly reflect a different distribution of the accentual inventory. In the speech of Vis, for instance, vowels under a short descending accent ˘ are lengthened. This is particularly characteristic of the vowel »a« (pärst > pāršt; brät > brät). Besides, there is a tendency in Vis towards a transfer of an old short accent from the ultimate syllable toward the beginning of a word (daskà > daska; ogônj > ògonj), while the old accent position has been preserved more systematically in Komiža. The examples of all observed differences are shown in Table 4.

On the phonological level, where the greatest number of differences was observed (17.5% in basic and 22.2% in cultural vocabulary), the only systematically conducted changes include a more closed pronunciation of /ō/ pronounced /ū/ in Komiža equally as much in basic and cultural vocabulary (kūšt, štūl vs. kōšt, štōl),

TABLE 4
A SAMPLE OF ACCENTUAL, PHONOLOGICAL
AND LEXICAL DIFFERENCES

	Standard Croatian	Vis	Komiža
Accentual differences	prst	pärst	päršt
	majka	māti	mät
	uš	ušèòk	ušènok
Phonological differences	konj	kônj	kúnj
	kliješta	kišcà	klišcà
	pilić	pìplicić	pýlicić
Lexical differences	koštica	pínka	košćytša
	krijesta	krùna	grýva
	samostan	kuvènat	mústir

and a more closed /i/ which becomes /y/ under a short descending accent in Komiža (jažýk, šýša vs. jažik, šiša). Besides, although a typical čakavian substitution of the phonemes ČŠŽ and CSŽ with CŠŽ is characteristic of both Vis and Komiža, there are some differences in the distribution of these čakavian sounds in the two settlements (màšlina, pràškva (Vis) vs. màslina, pràskva (Komiža), ali: sùza, pàrsi (Vis) vs. sùža, pàrsi (Komiža)). In addition to the already mentioned ones, there are other phonetic differences, but because their distribution is not systematic, it is impossible to determine whether they are more typical of only one of the vernaculars under investigation. Depalatalization of /lj/, for instance, has in most cases been conducted in both varieties (prijatelj > pñjatej; postelja > poštèja, košulja > košùja, ecc.), and in some cases it is conducted in only one of them (butilja, Vis vs. butýja, Komiža, ali divji, Vis vs. divlji, Komiža). Consonantal cluster simplification by the degree of tension³² is often manifested in both vernaculars, although the analyzed data show that it is more frequent in Komiža than in Vis (zglób, Vis vs. žlùb, Komiža; klupko > klùlko, Vis vs. klùko, Komiža, but: šekârva, Vis vs. švekârva, Komiža).

The observed lexical differences indicate a greater foreign, notably Romance,

influence on the vocabulary of Vis (tam-bûr, vapor, kuvêrta, marênda, bandira vs. bûbanj, brud, krôv, užina, barjôk). In Komiza vernacular, the old Slavic lexemes are more numerous particularly in the kinship terminology where a greater number of distinctions of different extended family relationships have been preserved, while most of them have been neutralized and substituted by a corresponding Romance lexeme in Vis (dyver, jutârva vs. konjôd, konjôda).

Morphological and derivational traits observed (špinôt (m.), pomedôra (f.) (Komiza, špinâca (f.), pomedôr (m.) (Vis)) are also an indicator of certain differences in the examined vocabulary. Although these differences are rather restricted in scope in the examined corpus and hence excluded from the analysis, they are significant in that they, similarly to lexical items, also suggest the role of Vis as a receiver and mediator of innovations to other places on the island. Other paradigmatic morphological differences, such as the losing of the final -i in the imperative singular in Vis, described in the relevant literature, only confirm the existence of a more conservative character of the speech of Komiza²⁹.

From the analysis of the above-mentioned linguistic traits it can be deduced that both vernaculars represent a rather archaic form of čakavian and that the island of Vis was least exposed to the štokavian influences in the past. This suggests that all known immigrations into both Vis and Komiza discussed in the introductory part of the article, did not result in compact groups of immigrants. The immigrants to the island of Vis gradually and completely assimilated unlike the immigrants on the neighboring islands of Hvar, Brač and Korčula, where there is still one exclusively štokavian village while the štokavian influence on each of them is more or less noticeable in other places as well.

The size of the island (88.29 km², Hvar 299.6 km², Brač 394.57 km²) and its geomorphological traits might have also contributed to this kind of uniformity. As the relief map (Figure 1) shows, the highest ranges on the island stretch in E-W direction, i.e. along the valley that connects Vis and Komiza, which indicates that there is no significant hindrance to a good communication between the two main towns on the island.

Notwithstanding a relative linguistic homogeneity of the two settlements within the čakavian dialect, the overall differences indicate a certain micro-differentiation in the analyzed vernaculars, which might have been caused by mutual isolation of the two communities in the past, different immigration dynamics as well as by different origin of the immigrants, different economic orientation and social structure of the populations. Compared to the town of Vis, Komiza has always been farming and fishing settlement, which left a trace in a more conservative type of speech of its inhabitants. The role of Vis as a regional mercantile, naval and administrative center throughout history enabled a more intense communication with other islands, mainland and distant regions and consequently a greater exposure to the external linguistic influences. It is also reasonable to assume that the population of Vis was exposed to long periods of bilingualism thanks to its specific historical circumstances when foreign (primarily Romance) elements entered and with only slight alterations assimilated into the autochthonous language. On the other hand, Komiza and other villages on the island were monolingual and received the same foreign elements only indirectly through the city vernacular, which therefore, underwent more alterations on phonological, morphological and sometimes semantic level as illustrated by the given examples.

It is crucial to point out, however, that the observed linguistic micro-differentiation was based only on the vernaculars of the two biggest places on the island recorded in mid-20th century. In the continuation of the study it will be necessary to examine other places on the island as well as recent changes in the already analyzed ones to get a more complete and precise insight into linguistic differentiation and other relevant indicators of the

micro-evolutionary processes that have influenced the formation of the island population structure.

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ETNOPOVIJESNI PROCESI, DEMOGRAFSKA STRUKTURA I JEZIČNA OBILJEŽJA OTOKA VISA

S A Ž E T A K

U ovom radu iznesene su osnovne geomorfološke, ekonomske i demografske karakteristike otoka Visa te etnohistorijski i lingvistički podaci koji su utjecali na uobličavanje njegove populacijske strukture. Kao uvod u buduća holistička istraživanja na otoku Visu, rad nastoji odrediti unutarnje i vanjske čimbenike koji su mogli pridonijeti promjenama i/ili stabilnosti populacijske strukture unutar šireg socio-kulturnog i povijesnog konteksta. Etnopovijesni i demografski podaci pokazuju relativno visok stupanj izolacije u usporedbi s drugim otocima u regiji te stalan proces depopulacije tijekom prošlog stoljeća. Analiza postojećih jezičnih podataka za dva glavna naselja na otoku ukazuje na određenu mikro-diferencijaciju unutar čakavskog dijalekta koja je uglavnom posljedica društvenih i drugih nejezičnih razloga.