

CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i-iv
ABSTRACT	v-viii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Geographical and basic geological background	1
1.2. Discovery of coal in the Šalek valley	6
1.3. Production of lignite and electrical energy	7
1.4. Historical attempts to convert lignite into products of higher quality and value	8
1.5. General problems encountered with the Velenje lignite mining	11
1.6. Basic geological and geotechnical studies in the last 40 years	13
1.6.1. Geology of the Velenje basin	13
1.6.2. Hydrogeology	15
1.6.3. Geomechanics and studies related to coal and gas outbursts	15
1.6.4. Data management and elaboration of coal reserves	18
2. GEOLOGICAL SETTING AND FACTS ABOUT THE VELENJE LIGNITE	19
2.1. Geological setting	19
2.2. Facts about the Velenje lignite	23
3. PETROLOGICAL AND RELATED STUDIES OF THE VELENJE LIGNITE BEFORE 1992	25
3.1. Petrography	25
3.2. Estimation of coalification rank by reflectance of huminite	28
3.3. Palynology	29
3.4. Geochemistry	30
3.5. Quality of coal	30
4. REASONS TO STUDY THE VELENJE LIGNITE – THE AIMS, INTERESTING ASPECTS AND HYPOTHESES	31
4.1. Thickness	31
4.2. Regional geological position and type of the basin	32
4.3. Accumulation of biomass	35
4.4. Peat growth and development of coal facies	35

4.4.1.	Low-lying mires and raised mires	36
4.4.2.	Topography, vegetation distribution and coal facies – hypothesis of aggradation	38
4.4.3.	Acrotelm and catotelm	39
4.5.	Ca-rich environment of peat formation and early coalification	41
5.	METHODS OF PETROLOGICAL AND GEOCHEMICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF THE VELENJE LIGNITE AFTER 1992	44
6.	PETROGRAPHIC CHARACTERIZATION OF THE VELENJE LIGNITE	47
6.1.	Lithotype concept for macroscopic description of coal	48
6.2.	Coal macerals and classification for soft brown coals	50
6.3.	Macro-petrographic lithotype characterization of the Velenje lignite	54
6.3.1.	Lithotype classification and codification for the Velenje lignite	55
6.3.1.1.	Characterization of the fragmental pattern	56
6.3.1.2.	Size limits of constituent elements of the lithotype components – introduction of the Uden scale into coal petrography	61
6.3.1.3.	Shape and orientation of the constituent elements	63
6.3.1.4.	Gelification	63
6.3.1.5.	Ratios between lithotype components – petrographic composition	65
6.3.1.6.	Lithotype classification and interpretation of peat-forming environments	69
6.3.1.7.	Elemental and isotopic composition of macro-lithotypes	71
6.3.1.8.	Codification of petrographic composition of lignite in borehole-cores	75
6.3.1.8.1.	Codification by source codes and weight code values	77
6.3.1.8.2.	Codification of bi-component lithotype varieties composed of non-neighbouring components	77
6.3.1.8.3.	Codification of poly-component lithotype varieties	79
6.3.2.	Petrographic logging of lignite in borehole cores	85
6.3.3.	Petrographic mapping of lignite in the underground mine workings	93
6.3.3.1.	Reasons for underground lignite mapping	95
6.3.3.2.	Characteristics of the objects mapped	95
6.3.3.3.	Selected examples of structural petrographic and tectonic interpretations at different localities of mining within the Velenje lignite seam	96

6.3.3.3.1.	Incline and the mining road to access the exploitation field D at the -5 height level in the Pesje sector	96
6.3.3.3.2.	Mining roads and long-walls in the Preloge sector	101
6.3.3.3.3.	Location of the gas outburst in the road »8« at the level -90C on the 6 th of February 2003	111
6.3.3.3.4.	G1/D and G2/A roads in the northern wing of the Preloge sector	113
6.4.	Micro-petrographic characterization of the Velenje lignite	116
6.4.1.	Petrographic analysis of lignite in boreholes P-9k/92 and P-8z/92	117
6.4.1.1.	Megascope description of lignite in boreholes P-9k/92 and P-8z/92	117
6.4.1.2.	Core sampling, preparation of polished blocks, and microscopic method	121
6.4.1.3.	Microscopic appearance of macerals composing the Velenje lignite	121
6.4.1.4.	Results of micro-petrographic analysis in boreholes P-9k/92 and P-8z/92	128
6.4.1.4.1.	Maceral groups	128
6.4.1.4.2.	Application of the petrographic facies indices	134
6.4.1.4.3.	Sulphur content	135
6.4.1.4.4.	Paleo-environmental interpretation based on Diessel's (1986) facies diagrams	136
6.4.1.4.5.	Relationship between the ash yield and the gelification index	138
7.	COAL RANK ESTIMATION OF THE VELENJE LIGNITE	141
7.1.	Rank determination by huminite reflectance	145
7.2.	Rank determination by the moisture content, gross calorific value, and the volatile matter and carbon contents	146
7.2.1.	Moisture content	146
7.2.2.	Gross calorific value (GCV)	147
7.2.3.	Volatile-matter and carbon contents	150
7.3.	Variation of the GCV throughout the P-9k/92 lignite seam profile	151
8.	INORGANIC-GEOCHEMICAL CHARACTERIZATION OF THE VELENJE LIGNITE	154
8.1.	Samples, methods, analytical results, and accuracy of analytics	154
8.2.	Short discussion whether to analyze "whole coals" or ashes of coals, and relation between the ash yield and mineral matter content	160

8.3.	Origin of mineral matter in coal	161
8.4.	Mineral matter and inorganic matter in coal	163
8.5.	Results of geochemical analysis	164
	8.5.1. Minor-element geochemistry	164
	8.5.2. Mineralogical investigations	168
	8.5.3. Trace-element geochemistry	172
9.	FINAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	179
9.1.	General geological setting	179
9.2.	Initiation, development and termination of the peat formation	179
9.3.	Lignite facies, segmentation of the seam, lithotype classification, and interpretation of the peat-forming environments on the basis of micropetrographic indices	181
9.4.	Paleofloristic evidences and petrography-based interpretations	185
9.5.	Coal rank evaluation of the Velenje lignite	187
9.6.	Relationships between petrographic, organic geochemical, inorganic geochemical and isotopic parameters, and related interpretation of the lignite's genesis	188
9.7.	Minor- and trace-element geochemistry of the Velenje lignite	190
10.	EPILOGUE	193
	REFERENCES - published	195
	OTHER SOURCES	214