

## **The Balkans and the Ottoman Empire in the travelogues of Vítězslav Hálek**

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Czech poet and writer Vítězslav Hálek (1835–1874) made his living primarily as a journalist during his lifetime. From 1861 until his death, he worked primarily in the editorial office of the newspaper *Národní listy*, owned by the prominent Czech politician and publisher Julius Grégr, but he also published in other periodicals. Hálek's premature death was perceived as a significant loss to Czech culture, as he was one of the most important figures in Czech literature and culture of the time, including one of the main organizers of the artists' association (the *Umělecká beseda* association in Prague). Julius Grégr, together with Vítězslav Hálek, were aware that travelogues were a popular reading genre, and Vítězslav Hálek – as well as another prominent writer of the time, Jan Neruda – thus printed various travel sketches and longer travel reports in the newspapers, especially in *Národní listy* and *Hlas*, which was later merged with *Národní listy*. This contribution, based on the methods of cultural analysis, focuses on Hálek's travelogues from the Balkans (between 1865 and 1869), which represent a dominant component in his travelogues, although he also stayed in Hungary (1873) and Galicia (1862). He visited not only the territory that was part of the Habsburg Monarchy, but also the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan states and nations that separated from it. He was not only in Constantinople itself, but he sailed on the Black Sea, visited Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, stayed on the Croatian coast and in places that today belong to Italy (Trieste). On his travels, he noticed not only monuments and nature, but also everyday life, national problems and the Czech minority in the Balkans. The focus of the paper will be on eco-cultural aspects in Hálek's travelogues.

