

Presented study analyzes local oral tradition in the second half of the 19th century with particular interest in Prague local legends, their character, genesis and function.

The case study of Prague local legends, collected by Czech writer Popelka Biliánová, has two main goals: to analyse and classify these oral texts, and to connect their interpretation by their collector to Czech national movement, ethnic stereotypes and archeological, historical and mythological studies of the period. Prague local legends collected by Popelka Biliánová represent, unlike other Prague local legends, which were heavily influenced by medieval chronicles or literary tradition, in its larger part authentic oral texts. None of the collectors of Prague local legends before and after Biliánová's period, with possible exception of Biliánová's predecessor, historian Josef Svátek, was able to collect such authentic local folklore tradition. Biliánová's Prague legends could be classified as a folklore genre of superstitious legends and have relatively recent origin: some derive from Catholic pious legends connected to local churches and holy places (the oldest of them stemming from the 17th and 18th century), some are quite recent individual memorates.

Although Biliánová's Prague legends were collected mainly for support of Czech national movement, they had very complicated interpretations during almost hundred years of their existence as a literary phenomenon. Now are Prague local legends by Popelka Biliánová regarded both as part of Prague's genius loci, as well as representation of a unique collection of authentic local superstitious oral literature