

Historical Fact and Literary Representation in Mukhtar Magauin's *Kipchak Aruy*: A Survey-Based Study of Readers' Comparative Perception

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Abstract—This research article examines readers' perceptions of historical data and authorial interpretation in Mukhtar Magauin's *Kipchak Aruy*. The primary objective of the research is to empirically assess readers' ability to distinguish between historical evidence and fictionalized historical narrative, their level of trust in the author's reconstruction, and the cognitive and emotional impact of the work. The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. A total of 157 respondents voluntarily participated in the research. Data were collected via Google Forms and analyzed using the R statistical software environment. The questionnaire was structured around a three-factor model: (1) familiarity with the literary work, (2) perception of historical evidence and fictional narrative, and (3) interpretation and evaluative response. The findings indicate varying levels of familiarity with the text among respondents. Nevertheless, the historical period depicted in the work was rated as highly comprehensible, and the integration of historical information with artistic imagination was largely perceived as authentic and convincing. The majority of respondents considered the author's interpretation credible and evaluated the work as a text that both deepens historical knowledge and generates emotional engagement. Moreover, the literary text was widely perceived as a cultural medium that complements academic historiography. The results demonstrate that historical prose plays a significant role in shaping historical consciousness in readers' minds and that the synthesis of historical evidence and literary reconstruction fosters interpretive openness and meaningful engagement.

Index Terms—fiction, historical interpretation, reader perception, Kazakh prose, survey research

I. INTRODUCTION

History is understood in different ways. In its most general sense, it may be defined as a field within the humanities,

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as a perspective on past events, or as a subject taught in general education schools. History can also be described as the evidentiary foundation of information about the past. It encompasses the sequences and stages of events experienced by independent states, empires, and even the world as a whole.

It is undeniable that history is closely connected with state policy. It not only collects and narrates past events, the lives of historical figures, and the experiences of sovereign states, but also plays a crucial role in shaping a nation's and a state's collective historical narrative. This can be observed in developments occurring in any country – for example, in television programs, information websites, educational textbooks, the celebration of public holidays and anniversaries, museum exhibitions, and especially in literature, among other cultural practices. The perception of these representations – through seeing, hearing, and reading – forms attitudes toward history, whether positive or negative, and contributes to the construction of national memory at a certain level.

Whenever the issue of renewing or revisiting history is raised, attention inevitably turns to scholarly historical sources. As a result, a single historical source (texts and evidence preserved in history) may give rise to multiple theoretical interpretations. Different historians, depending on their perspectives and positions, may produce interpretations of events that do not coincide with one another. This, of course, depends on the historian's intellectual disposition, cultural background, and level of knowledge.

At the same time, every literary work contains traces of the past. The author interprets past events by linking them with the present through a fictional text. The representation of historical data within a literary text inevitably generates historical discourse.

There are several approaches to the study of historical data: the historical-biographical method, the historical-genetic method, the historical-diachronic method, the historical-dynamic method, the historical-systemic method, the historical-typological method, and historical interpretation (Chubaryan, 2014).

The many existing conceptions of history can be reduced to two principal perspectives. First, history may be understood as the totality of past events and facts; second, as a discourse that re-enacts and revives past events – that is, as historical discourse (Duka, 2005).

A historical literary work is grounded primarily in both history and art. Its defining characteristic is its historicity: it portrays historical events, historical time (epoch, period, etc.), and historical space, as well as historical figures (khans, viziers, warriors, and others) on the basis of particular historical sources.

Historical works possess enormous potential in shaping public consciousness. Public opinion is, in essence, the product of individual historical consciousness. A person's understanding, experience, assimilation, perception, and evaluation of history constitute historical consciousness. This consciousness encompasses two major dimensions. The first includes recognition, remembrance, assessment of the present, and anticipation of the future. The second concerns an individual's self-awareness regarding their place, role, and significance within historical processes. This second dimension may be termed the "subjective consciousness of history." The subjective consciousness of history can be analyzed from humanistic, subjective, and heroic perspectives (Alpysbaev, 2008, p. 15).

No one would deny the significant role of literary works in the revitalization of historical consciousness. The proliferation of historical literature is indeed a manifestation of the awakening of historical consciousness. Within the category of historical discourse, the writer's perspective in a literary work inevitably embodies subjectivity.

The scholar Alpysbaev (2008) distinguishes two principal methods of employing documentary sources in historical novels. "In the first method, the documentary fact becomes an element of composition and serves to delineate a broad panorama of the depicted epoch. This is precisely the feature that distinguishes the historical novel from other documentary-based works of art as well as from scholarly studies. In the second method, the document is incorporated into the work in its pure form or with slight artistic elaboration and functions as a compositional element" (p. 75).

Historical works in Kazakh literature have been examined and continue to be studied. However, there is a noticeable lack of scholarly research on the impact of documentary-based historical works on readers' consciousness and on the level of readers' reception. In some countries, including in relation to historical data in Kazakh literary texts, readers' reception remains insufficiently explored. The aim of this research article is therefore to analyze how readers distinguish and interpret historical data and its authorial interpretation in Mukhtar Magauin's *Kipchak Aruy*.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on documentary historical prose can be found in world literary scholarship; however, it should be noted that such research remains relatively limited in scope. For example, Toker (1997) proposes an alternative to the view that positions documentary literature as an intermediate phenomenon between fictional and non-fictional discourse. Ihnativ (2018) examines the genre-specific features of the documentary prose of Nobel Prize laureate Svetlana Alexievich. In addition, the interconnections between historiographic fiction, documentary genre, and autobiographical memory – explored through the oeuvre of particular writers – have also become the subject of scholarly inquiry (Godime, 2024).

Just as documentary prose has the capacity to attract readers' interest, documentary drama likewise possesses a strong ability to capture the audience's attention (Zilliaceus, 1972). The relationship between documentary and fictional texts is a complex issue. As Ovcharova (2013) observes, any narrative seeks to impose a certain logic on the flow of real events and transform them into a coherent story, and this process may lead documentary narration to evolve into a literary text.

For this reason, documentary fiction remains comparatively underexplored in relation to other literary genres (Foley, 1986). Furthermore, research on documentary fiction in literature is indisputably scarce (Vice, 2003).

Even in works that do not fall within the category of “historical literature,” historical facts frequently appear. This phenomenon serves as an analytical tool enabling scholars to identify the blurred boundary between factual and imaginative discourse (Foley, 1980). In certain countries, the strengthening of documentary historical prose appears to stem from the belief that literature should enlighten readers, thereby contributing to the improvement of society and the resolution of social problems (Qasimli, 2019). However, such an approach often overlooks the presence of authorial position and authorial voice within documentary prose (Górska, 2017).

Therefore, the analysis of the genre-specific features of documentary prose, its connection with historical and social context, and its place and function within literary tradition (Caldwell, 1986), as well as the examination of the impact of historical data in fictional texts on readers’ reception, remain pressing and relevant issues in contemporary literary studies.

In literary studies, recent years have seen growing attention to the shared cultural-cognitive space between the writer and the reader (Rocha, 2024). The analysis of the relationship between the author and the reader reveals the postcolonial dimensions of literature and demonstrates the role of liberal humanism in bridging the gap between colonized peoples and colonizers (Jweid & Al-Khamisi, 2024).

It is evident that integrating literary texts into the reading process enhances students’ analytical skills. The results of data collection, analysis, and discussion indicate that students perceive LBI materials as engaging, challenging, and morally instructive (Baharuddin, 2025).

Moreover, contemporary developments clearly show that studying the relationship between artificial intelligence and literature has become increasingly important (Saddhono et al., 2024). Likewise, examining adolescents’ reading culture on social media platforms and assessing the influence of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube on teenage reading and education remains a highly relevant issue (Kovalova et al., 2024).

The object of the present study is Mukhtar Magauin’s *Kipchak Aruy*. The narrative of *Kipchak Aruy* is grounded in the history of the Western Kipchaks, who occupy a distinctive place in world history. The relationship between the sculptor and the writer in the text is interwoven with ancient stone inscriptions and historical events inherited from our ancestors, guiding the reader into the profound depths of the fictional world.

Several scholarly articles have sought to explore the content and significance of M. Magauin’s *Kipchak Aruy*. For instance, Adaeva and Sultanova (2022) analyze the conceptual field of the novel through the key concepts of “art,” “freedom,” “man,” “woman,” and “beauty,” thereby examining the writer’s individual conceptsphere. Kishkenbaeva (2017) focuses on the authorial image in *Kipchak Aruy*, the narrator-character concept, and the unity of author-narrator-character. She also situates the novel within postmodern literary discourse, highlighting the interconnection between the old and the new in Magauin’s novels, as well as the function of folkloric elements and traditional worldview in the text.

Literary scholar Zhambek (2018) considers *Kipchak Aruy* one of the transgressive works in Kazakh literature that intertwines with folkloric and mythopoetic consciousness, interpreting the free movement of characters across space as a transgressive strategy characteristic of postmodernism. Similarly, Asanov and Tilemisova (2023) examine the writer’s use of mythopoetic techniques in their study. Researcher Kabilov (2011) observes that “in the novella *Kipchak Aruy* and the novel *Zharmak*, the prominent writer M. Magauin successfully employed mythological and phantasmagorical elements, introducing innovative techniques of artistic representation. These works may indeed be regarded as early examples of a new type of Kazakh prose that effectively juxtaposes folkloric consciousness and real reality. In Magauin’s aesthetics, ironic cognition’ occupies a distinct place. It appears as a means of a particular attitude toward the world, expressed through grotesque-ironic (or tragic-ironic) pathos and at times intertwined with imaginative-fantastic lyricism.

Likewise, Toishanuly (2020) evaluates Magauin’s works written during the years of independence as inaugurating a new direction in the artistic exploration of reality, describing them as a powerful phenomenon that revitalizes national spirit. According to the scholar, the classical writer who brought the breath of Turkic spirit into world literature has, particularly in his later works, produced texts that are formally complex and methodologically innovative (Toishanuly, 2020).

In the present research, as noted above, we compare the historical events depicted in the literary work with verified historical sources, analyzing their interpretation within the fictional text and examining readers’ reception of these representations.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was designed as a quantitative investigation aimed at empirically examining the phenomenon of historical literary text reception. Drawing on the reader-response perspective, the research is grounded in the theoretical assumption that textual meaning is constructed not solely at the authorial level but through the reader’s cognitive and interpretive engagement. Accordingly, the study employed a descriptive and interpretive cross-sectional survey design.

The primary objective of the research was to identify the structural components of readers’ reception of M. Magauin’s *Kipchak Aruy* and to analyze them through a three-factor model:

1. Level of familiarity with the work – including reading experience, reading motivation, and genre perception;

2. Perception of historical data and fictional narrative – including comprehension of historical information and the ability to distinguish between historical fact and literary reconstruction;
3. Interpretation and reader evaluation – including trust in the author's interpretation, cognitive impact, and emotional reception.

These factors allow for a comprehensive analysis of the reader's interaction with a historical literary text.

Participants

A total of 157 respondents (N = 157) participated in the study. The participants were voluntarily recruited from a Kazakh-speaking audience and represented varying levels of experience in reading literary texts. Purposeful sampling was employed, as the research specifically aimed to assess the reception of a particular historical literary work. All respondents participated anonymously, and the collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes.

Research Instrument

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire developed on the Google Forms platform. The survey consisted of 15 closed-ended questions, each offering multiple response options. The items were designed based on theoretical approaches to historical text reception and prior studies in literary reader-response research.

The questionnaire was organized into three main sections:

- familiarity with the text and reading experience;
- perception and differentiation of historical information;
- evaluation of authorial interpretation and the overall impact of the text.

Responses were collected using ordinal and categorical scales, enabling quantitative analysis and the calculation of descriptive statistical indicators.

Data Collection Procedure

The survey was administered in an online format and distributed to respondents via a shared link. Participants were first asked to familiarize themselves with the literary work and subsequently complete the questionnaire. All data were collected within a single time frame and exported to Excel format for further analysis.

Data Analysis

Data processing and statistical analysis were conducted using the R statistical software environment. The analysis proceeded in several stages.

For each response option, the following indicators were calculated:

- number of participants (N),
- mean value (Mean),
- standard deviation (SD).

These descriptive statistics made it possible to identify the general patterns and tendencies in readers' responses.

To determine the statistical significance of each response category, p-values were calculated. In order to reduce the risk of Type I error resulting from multiple comparisons, adjusted p-values (p_{adj}) were applied. Additionally, effect size was computed to assess the practical significance of the findings. The calculation of effect size allowed for the evaluation of the magnitude of statistical differences, thereby preventing interpretations based solely on p-values.

All results were grouped and analyzed according to the three theoretically predefined factors. Each factor was examined separately, enabling a systematic interpretation of the structural components of reader reception.

The survey items were developed on the basis of theoretical scholarship on historical literary text reception, ensuring content validity. While focusing on a single literary work enhanced the contextual specificity of the findings, this approach may limit the generalizability of the results to historical prose as a whole.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical standards were fully observed during the research process. Participation was voluntary, no personal data were collected, and all responses were processed anonymously.

IV. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The Interrelationship Between Historical Evidence and Authorial Interpretation: Literary Reconstruction in Kipchak Aruy

Since gaining independence, Kazakh literature has witnessed a significant increase in the number of historical works. Writers have begun to address previously unspoken, unwritten, and ideologically restricted topics that were inaccessible during the period of totalitarian pressure. Historical works written during the Soviet era have been revisited, re-examined, and reassessed from new critical perspectives.

Contemporary Kazakh historical novels demonstrate considerable genre diversity. The nature of the life material, the writer's artistic purpose and inclination, and the traditions of Kazakh aesthetic culture have shaped historical prose in distinctive ways. Each Kazakh historical novel reveals signs of innovative genre experimentation. In some works, a chronological sequence of events is foregrounded; in others, the plot organically merges with the psychological traits of the protagonist, allowing broader space for artistic imagination. In certain cases, direct interpretation and analytical commentary predominate, accompanied by a journalistic tone, whereas in others, strong emphasis is placed on the biographical foundation of the hero. The avoidance of rigid, formulaic patterns and the search for appropriate artistic

forms are closely related to the expansion of creative freedom in literature, the writer's thorough engagement with historical reality, and the firmness of their worldview.

One of the most prominent representatives of Kazakh classical literature, Mukhtar Magauin, in his work *Kipchak Aruy*, presents a literary text richly interwoven with historical data and characterized by the intersection of multiple genres (folkloric, mythological, magical, postmodernist, and others). The narrative employs literary devices effectively and constructs the categories of author-character and author-narrator through psychoanalytic and mythopoetic elaboration (Magauin, 2007).

The foundation of *Kipchak Aruy* lies in the deep strata of history, particularly in the unparalleled sculptural monuments known to world scholars as the "Orkhon" balbal stones – unique historical markers of ancient steppe civilization.

The central characters of the literary work are Sarzhan Kobekov and Aisulu Begim – the sculptor and the sculpture (balbal). A balbal is a stone monument in human form carved during the ancient Turkic period. Most were erected in honor of rulers and distinguished nobles. These sculptures were created by master stone carvers (bädizshi). In S. A. Pletneva's monograph on Kipchak stone sculptures, figure 818 ANA, discovered in the Sumy region (Chernukhino-Pereval district), is identified with Aisulu Begim – the name assigned to the character by the sculptor-hero.

Why did the writer name the protagonist "Sarzhan Kobekov"? An examination of the semantic layers of the word Sarzhan is revealing. Sarja historically denotes: (1) a type of ancient weapon; (2) a wooden measuring instrument used for land measurement (a unit equal to approximately three cubits, or 2.13 meters). The nineteenth-century lexicographer L. Budagov defines saryja as a bow decorated with bone and painted yellow (Budagov, 1969). The archaic form saryja has been preserved in Kazakh usage and gradually evolved into sarjai and eventually Sarzhan (Syzydykova, 1980).

Furthermore, the name carries implicit associations with Sultan Sarzhan Qasymuly, a grandson of Ablai Khan and one of the leaders of the 1825-1836 national liberation uprising against the colonial policy of the Russian Empire. Following Sarzhan Qasymuly's death, the struggle against Russian colonial rule continued under the leadership of his brother, Kenesary Qasymuly (1837-1847).

Thus, given that the protagonist is a sculptor (bädizshi), his name symbolically resonates with the image of a bone-decorated, yellow-painted bow – an image that evokes both weaponry and cultural memory. The color yellow (sary) in Kazakh symbolism is often associated with longing and nostalgia for the past. The metaphorical connotations of the bow and arrow – suggesting flight across centuries (from the twelfth to the twentieth century), spiritual freedom, and resistance – align with the character's yearning for liberty, his admiration for the indomitable spirit of his ancestors, and his opposition to colonial domination and totalitarian constraint. In this sense, the symbolic dimension of the name Sarzhan parallels the historical aspirations embodied by Sultan Sarzhan Qasymuly.

"What about Kobek? ... 'Among the Turkic peoples, giving a person the name of an animal is a widespread custom...' That is correct. But the following is mistaken: '...For example, Kobyak and Konchak mean dog and bitch...' Kobyak, that is, Kobek, indeed means a large watchdog, whereas Konchak is a male personal name, not "bitch"; rather, qonzhyy means a bear cub" (Magauin, 2007, p. 7).

Kobyak – Kobek (a watchdog). Kobek (Kobyak) (date of birth unknown – died after 1184) was a khan of the archer Kipchaks (Western Kipchaks), located in the southeastern part of the lower Dnieper region, who launched several campaigns against Rus' during the 1170s-1180s. In the 1180s, he was considered the second most powerful Kipchak ruler after Khan Konchak (Qonzhyy). In 1184, Prince Sviatoslav of Kyiv, allied with other principalities, defeated the Kipchaks in battle and captured Khan Kobek, his two sons, and 7,000 Kipchak warriors.

In the novel, the writer describes Sarzhan Kobek Khan-uly's father, Kobek Khan, and his brothers as follows: "...Our khan-father repeatedly crushed the Russians of the steppe, destroyed their wooden fortresses, stormed the capital with its golden-domed churches, repelled the stubborn enemy, and established peace over the land. Then our elder khan and our valiant younger brother drove the forest-dwelling Russians into the snowy plains; the surrounding lands became peaceful. Fraternal relations were established with the Bulgars and kinship ties with the Magyars" (Magauin, 2007, p. 42).

According to extant historical records, in the twelfth century the Western Kipchaks indeed had a khan named Kobyak (Kobek) and two sons. However, no historical sources mention a middle son named Sarzhan Kobekuly. In the novel, during a dialogue between the sculptor-character and the writer-character, the sculptor declares:

"...I will finish the sculpture, and then the two of us shall return to our former time. To the year 1173 exactly. Aisulu is seventeen. I am twenty. We have just been united. We shall live until the present day – that is, until the year when the sculpture, the first sculpture, was created.

...Thirteen full years of life lie ahead..." (Magauin, 2007, pp. 48-49)

In the novel, Sarzhan Kobek Khan-uly and Aisulu Begim live together from 1173 for thirteen years. While in many cultures the number thirteen is associated with mystery or misfortune, in Kazakh traditional consciousness it carries a different connotation. One mushel (cycle of age) consists of twelve years (the first mushel being marked at thirteen). Furthermore, recalling the second meaning of the word sarja – a wooden measuring instrument corresponding to a length of three cubits (2 meters 13 centimeters) – we may consider the symbolic interplay between numbers and years in the writer's artistic construction.

If we juxtapose 1173 and 2 m 13 cm numerically: $1173 - 2 = 1171 + 13 = 1184$.

In 1184, when Kobek Khan and his two sons were captured, Sarzhan Kobekuly in the fictional narrative has already perished – transformed into a balbal stone. Aisulu Begim is thirty, Sarzhan thirty-three (thirty-three being traditionally associated with the age of Jesus Christ).

Alternatively, as the novel states: “...But in truth, until the year 1787, until we are finally shattered, we shall remain unaging, carefree, living together for another six centuries” (Magauin, 2007, p. 49).

If $1173 + 13 = 1186$. After Kobek Khan’s capture and death, in 1185-1186 Khan Konchak (Qonzhyyq), together with other khans, defeated Igor Sviatoslavich at the Kayala River. However, Konchak later sought alliance with Prince Sviatoslav, marrying his daughter to Sviatoslav’s captive son and releasing him in 1187. $1187 + 600 = 1787$.

In 1787, the Ottoman Empire suffered defeat in its war against Russia, launched in part to restore the Crimean Khanate and Georgia. The writer implicitly alludes to the idea that during the conflicts of 1787, Russia violently destroyed the ancient balbal stones left by the early Turkic peoples in the lands of the Crimean Khanate.

“...And then, perhaps, the present day. The third cycle of our eternal life...” (Magauin, 2007, p. 49).

Once again, attention may be drawn to the meaning of sarja – “a length equal to three cubits (2 m 13 cm).” Two individuals who lived only thirteen years in human form undergo three cycles in their eternal existence (1173, 1787, and the twentieth century).

Through this intricate interplay of historical fact, numerological symbolism, and literary imagination, Magauin constructs a multilayered narrative in which historical chronology, mythopoetic consciousness, and authorial interpretation converge within the artistic reconstruction of the text.

Since the writer intertwines the protagonist with elements of the mystical, he deliberately transforms and reconfigures historical data within the narrative. In the final dialogue between the writer-character and the sculptor-character, the latter states:

“...Of course. When I returned, the time for that sculpture had not yet come. But I brought it forward and depicted it earlier – seven years ahead of its destined time. It was extremely difficult. In fact, more difficult than here. Aisulu had not yet turned thirty. Yet even without a proper album at hand, I portrayed my begim as a thirty-year-old mother of the people.

...But I did not stop there. Immediately, I began carving myself. Perhaps Tengri revealed it to me in a dream. Without haste, yet urgently and tirelessly, I completed it in March 1180. Although I did not equal Aisulu, I too turned out magnificently. You, of course, have not seen it. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, it was shattered...” (Magauin, 2007, pp. 95-96)

Here, the sculptor-character explicitly notes that he created the sculpture seven years earlier than its predestined time. Thus, if $1173 + 13 = 1186$, Aisulu Begim’s stone sculpture was completed in 1179 ($1186 - 7$), while his own balbal was finished in March 1180. As depicted by the writer, the period between 1170 and 1180 represents the zenith of Kobek Khan’s fortune and the flourishing spirit of the Western Kipchaks. The absence of “Sarzhan Kobek Khan-uly” among the two sons captured in 1184 may symbolically suggest that his spirit had already entered the stone sculpture. According to ancient Turkic custom, a stone statue (balbal) was erected as a memorial marker upon a person’s death.

The historical dates presented in the first section of the narrative and reiterated in subsequent parts (1173, 1180, 1787, etc.) are all attested within the broader history of the ancient Turkic peoples and the Western Kipchaks. Within historical discourse, the author does not alter the primary meaning of historical data; rather, he recontextualizes it artistically according to his creative vision.

Magauin intricately weaves the connection between the sculptor-character and the author-character through folkloric, fantastic, and mythological (or neo-mythological) symbols, interlacing magical and mythopoetic motifs with historical evidence. Through complex mystification, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and parapsychological dimensions, the writer reconstructs the historical consciousness of the character and the worldview of past centuries. Employing postmodern literary techniques – such as the manipulation of time and space, collage, play, and self-irony – he unifies the representatives of two great arts within a powerful imaginative framework. In doing so, he invites reflection on the continuity between heroic ancestors and their present-day descendants.

The use of precise historical data – particularly numerical markers – in *Kipchak Aruy* immediately attracts the reader’s attention, as these figures are directly connected to historical events. However, recognizing their deeper symbolic significance may require a certain level of historical knowledge, which not all readers possess. For this reason, the above analysis has been presented in detail.

The aesthetic appeal of the work lies in its refusal to adhere exclusively to a single mode – whether purely fantastic, mythological, Gothic, or folkloric. Instead, it interweaves multiple genres, embellishes temporal and spatial categories with mythopoetic elements, and constructs postmodern games and collages. The narrative initially persuades the reader of its plausibility, then gradually invites doubt and reinterpretation. It guides not only the reader but also the sculptor-character through the deep layers of history, ultimately connecting the past with contemporary life.

The reception of M. Magauin’s work in readers’ consciousness and its impact on their interpretive frameworks constitute central questions of this study. Accordingly, in order to examine readers’ reception and individual interpretations of *Kipchak Aruy*, we conducted a study grounded in reader-response theory, structured around a three-factor analytical model.

Results

Factor 1: Level of Familiarity with the Literary Work

The first factor describes readers' level of familiarity with M. Magauin's *Kipchak Aruy*, the motivational determinants influencing their decision to read the text, and their perception of its genre. This factor constitutes the foundational stage of the study, as readers' prior experience with the text directly affects subsequent patterns of historical perception and interpretation.

The initial analysis focused on respondents' level of engagement with the work. The findings indicate that a proportion of participants had read the text fully and attentively (Mean = 3.15; SD = 1.50); however, this result did not demonstrate statistical significance ($p = 0.406$; $p_{\text{adj}} = 0.473$). Similarly, although the option "I read it partially" showed a relatively higher mean score (Mean = 2.82; SD = 1.47), it remained at a borderline level of statistical significance ($p = 0.055$).

In contrast, the response "I am familiar with it only at the level of a general summary" yielded statistically significant results (Mean = 2.62; SD = 1.47; $p = 0.000315$; effect size = 0.38), indicating that a considerable portion of respondents were acquainted with the text without having read it in full. The most pronounced statistical difference was observed in the option "I have not read it" (Mean = 1.64; SD = 1.21; $p = 5.6\text{E-}21$; effect size = 1.36), suggesting a clearly identifiable proportion of participants who were entirely unfamiliar with the work.

Overall, these results demonstrate that the audience's reading experience is heterogeneous and that the level of familiarity with the text varies substantially among respondents.

TABLE 1
LEVEL OF READING ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LITERARY WORK (QUESTION 1)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
I read it in full and carefully	157	3.152866	1.498570	0.406473	0.472643	0.152866
I read it partially (not in full)	157	2.815287	1.466820	0.054587	0.075815	0.184713
I am familiar with it only at the level of a general summary	157	2.624204	1.469406	0.000315	0.000636	0.375796
I have not read it	157	1.636943	1.209751	5.6E-21	7E-20	1.363057

At the next stage, the motivational factors influencing the decision to read the work were examined. The results indicate that personal interest (Mean = 3.19; SD = 1.42) and reading based on recommendation (Mean = 3.07; SD = 1.59) demonstrated relatively higher mean values; however, these differences were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

In contrast, the influence of the academic curriculum (Mean = 2.73; SD = 1.50; $p = 0.0186$; effect size = 0.27) proved to be statistically significant. This finding suggests that engagement with the text is also shaped by institutional factors.

Thus, reader motivation appears to be formed through the interaction of internal factors (personal interest) and external influences (educational requirements).

TABLE 2
FACTORS MOTIVATING THE READING OF THE LITERARY WORK (QUESTION 2)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
Academic curriculum	157	2.732484	1.503765	0.018604	0.027359	0.267516
Personal interest	157	3.191083	1.419343	0.093605	0.123164	0.191083
Based on recommendation	157	3.070064	1.589689	0.661729	0.735255	0.070064

In the third question, the genre perception of the literary work was analyzed. The highest mean value corresponded to the mystical (mythopoetic) orientation (Mean = 3.25; SD = 1.49; $p = 0.018$). This finding indicates that readers tend to perceive the work not only through the lens of historical reality but also within a mythopoetic framework.

The postmodern orientation (Mean = 2.75; SD = 1.43; $p = 0.025$) and documentary prose (Mean = 2.41; SD = 1.45; $p = 2.04\text{E-}06$) options also demonstrated statistically significant results. Meanwhile, perception through the lens of transgressive poetics (Mean = 2.14; SD = 1.22; $p = 1.41\text{E-}12$; effect size = 0.86) showed a particularly pronounced distinction, suggesting that a segment of readers interprets the work as extending beyond traditional genre boundaries.

This genre's multilayeredness confirms the interpretive openness of the text.

TABLE 3
GENRE PERCEPTION OF THE LITERARY WORK (QUESTION 3)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
Fantastic (speculative fiction)	157	2.280255	1.440417	3E-09	1E-08	0.719745
Mystical (mythopoetic)	157	3.254777	1.488867	0.018044	0.027339	0.254777
Postmodernist	157	2.745223	1.427318	0.024808	0.035439	0.254777
Written in a transgressive mode	157	2.140127	1.216651	1.41E-12	8.78E-12	0.859873
Documentary prose	157	2.414013	1.454633	2.04E-06	6E-06	0.585987

Overall, the results of the first factor demonstrate that respondents' levels of familiarity with the literary work vary considerably: while some participants had read the text in full, others were acquainted with it only at the level of a general overview or had not read it at all. Reading motivation was shaped by both personal interest and the influence of the academic curriculum.

The variability in genre perception highlights the multilayered structure of the work and its diverse interpretive possibilities. These findings provide an important empirical foundation for explaining the patterns of historical and literary perception analyzed in the subsequent factors.

Factor 2: Readers' Perception of Historical Evidence and Fictional Narrative

The second factor was designed to identify the specific features of readers' perception of historical content, their ability to distinguish historical evidence within a fictional text, and their evaluation of the relationship between historical reality and authorial interpretation. This factor is significant as it reveals the cognitive mechanisms underlying the reception of historical prose.

First, the clarity of the historical period depicted in the work was examined (Question 4). The results indicate that the majority of respondents evaluated the historical period as sufficiently clear (Mean = 3.46; SD = 1.27; $p = 3.88 \times 10^{-5}$) or very clear (Mean = 3.41; SD = 1.36; $p = 2.88 \times 10^{-4}$).

In contrast, the responses "unclear" (Mean = 1.62; SD = 0.99; effect size = 1.38) and "difficult to comprehend" (Mean = 2.27; SD = 1.08; effect size = 0.73) demonstrated statistically significant lower values.

These findings suggest that, overall, the historical context presented in the text was accessible and comprehensible to readers.

TABLE 4
CLARITY OF THE HISTORICAL PERIOD (QUESTION 4)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
Very clear	157	3.414013	1.363652	0.000288	0.000636	0.414013
Sufficiently clear	157	3.458599	1.273449	0.0000388	0.0000971	0.458599
Difficult to comprehend	157	2.267516	1.082389	1.05E-11	5.83E-11	0.732484
Unclear	157	1.617834	0.990565	5.07E-22	8.46E-21	1.382166

In the next question, the nature of readers' perception of historical information was analyzed (Question 5). The majority of respondents perceived the historical material as evidence intertwined with artistic imagination (Mean = 3.42; SD = 1.34; $p = 0.000294$).

Although the level of perceiving the material as strictly factual historical evidence was also relatively high (Mean = 3.13; SD = 1.31), this result did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.318$).

The comparatively low score for the option "I could not distinguish" (Mean = 1.80; effect size = 1.20) indicates that readers were generally able to differentiate between the historical and fictional components of the text.

TABLE 5
CHARACTERISTICS OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION PERCEPTION (QUESTION 5)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
I perceived it as factual historical evidence	157	3.133758	1.311173	0.317934	0.387725	0.133758
Evidence intertwined with artistic imagination	157	3.420382	1.335547	0.000294	0.000636	0.420382
I could not distinguish between them	157	1.802548	1.179089	1.78E-18	1.78E-17	1.197452

Regarding the relationship between historical evidence and artistic imagination (Question 6), the results indicate that the responses "artistic element predominates" (Mean = 3.17) and "a balance is maintained" (Mean = 3.15) received the highest mean scores.

The comparatively lower mean value for the option "historicity predominates" (Mean = 2.85) suggests that the work is perceived more as an artistic interpretation than as a purely historical narrative.

TABLE 6
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORICAL EVIDENCE AND ARTISTIC IMAGINATION (QUESTION 6)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
The artistic element predominates	157	3.171975	1.251555	0.082127	0.110982	0.171975
A balance is maintained	157	3.146497	1.314687	0.115258	0.147766	0.146497
Historicity predominates	157	2.853503	1.213256	0.120678	0.150847	0.146497

In evaluating the use of historical evidence in a non-historical literary work (Question 7), the results show that the majority of respondents considered the inclusion of historical material appropriate when it serves a historical idea (Mean = 3.42; $p = 0.000079$).

In contrast, the viewpoint that such inclusion is "unnecessary" yielded a significantly lower mean score (Mean = 2.27; effect size = 0.73), indicating that readers generally perceive the presence of historical elements in fictional texts positively.

TABLE 7
THE ROLE OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IN FICTIONAL TEXTS (QUESTION 7)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
It is unnecessary	157	2.267516	1.237150	9.28E-10	4E-09	0.732484
Its use is appropriate	157	3.420382	1.301515	0.000079	0.000188	0.420382

In Question 8, the level of recognition of historical references was assessed. Respondents correctly identified information related to the Western Desht-i Kipchaks (Mean = 3.34) and the balbal stone monuments (Mean = 3.35).

By contrast, the comparatively lower mean score for the Russo–Ottoman conflict option (Mean = 2.08; effect size = 0.92) indicates a more selective and critical reception of historical information.

TABLE 8
RECOGNITION OF HISTORICAL REFERENCES IN THE LITERARY WORK (QUESTION 8)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
Information about the Western Desht-i Kipchaks	157	3.337580	1.421241	0.003882	0.006470	0.337580
The Russo–Ottoman conflict	157	2.076433	1.100940	1.11E-15	9.26E-15	0.923567
Description of the balbal stones	157	3.350319	1.522760	0.004636	0.007478	0.350319

Questions 9 and 10 assessed respondents' ability to distinguish between factual historical information and interpretation. The results indicate that participants recognized factual historical data at a relatively high level (Mean $\approx$ 3.36).

In contrast, the lower mean value for the option "historical imagination" (Mean = 2.16; effect size = 0.84) suggests that readers tended to prioritize historical accuracy and were generally oriented toward identifying verifiable historical elements.

TABLE 9
DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN HISTORICAL EVIDENCE AND INTERPRETATION (QUESTIONS 9–10)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
Factual historical information (regarding personal names)	157	3.363057	1.209751	0.000318	0.000636	0.363057
Historical reality	157	3.331210	1.237183	0.000621	0.001149	0.331210
Authorial interpretation	157	3.108280	1.412307	0.386684	0.460338	0.108280
Historical imagination	157	2.159236	1.135158	9.95E-13	7.11E-12	0.840764

Overall, the results of the second factor demonstrate that readers are relatively capable of distinguishing between historical evidence and artistic interpretation. The historical period depicted in the work was evaluated as highly comprehensible, and the integration of historical information with artistic imagination was perceived as natural and coherent.

Furthermore, readers' support for the inclusion of historical elements in fictional texts, along with their high level of recognition of historical references, highlights the cognitive and educational potential of the work.

Factor 3: Interpretation and Reader Evaluation

The third factor was aimed at assessing readers' trust in the author's interpretation, the impact of the work on historical consciousness, readers' attitudes toward historical evidence in fiction, and the emotional and cognitive influence of the text. This factor provides a cumulative reflection of the reception patterns established in the previous two factors and allows for an evaluation of the function of historical literary texts in readers' consciousness.

First, the level of trust in the author's method of artistically interpreting historical evidence was examined (Question 11). The results indicate that the majority of respondents evaluated the author's approach as reliable (Mean = 3.55; SD = 1.27; $p = 1.5E-06$) or partially reliable (Mean = 2.67; SD = 1.21; $p = 0.0011$).

By contrast, the option "it raised doubts" demonstrated a very low mean score (Mean = 1.62; SD = 0.89; $p = 7.4E-24$; effect size = 1.38), confirming a generally high level of trust among readers.

These findings suggest that the historical reconstruction presented in the work appears credible and convincing to its audience.

TABLE 10
LEVEL OF TRUST IN AUTHORIAL INTERPRETATION (QUESTION 11)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
It appeared reliable	157	3.547771	1.273225	0.0000015	0.0000047	0.547771
Partially reliable	157	2.668790	1.205695	0.001133	0.002024	0.331210
It raised doubts	157	1.617834	0.888206	7.42E-24	1.85E-22	1.382166

In the next question, cognitive changes regarding the Kipchak period after reading the work were assessed (Question 12). The majority of respondents indicated that their knowledge had increased (Mean = 3.66; SD = 1.32; $p = 2E-08$) and that their interest had been stimulated (Mean = 3.55; SD = 1.35; $p = 1.1E-06$).

In contrast, the low mean value for the response "no change occurred" (Mean = 1.61; SD = 0.92; effect size = 1.39) suggests that the work had a substantial cognitive impact on readers.

These findings demonstrate that a literary text can effectively serve a complementary function in enhancing historical knowledge.

TABLE 11
COGNITIVE IMPACT OF THE LITERARY WORK (QUESTION 12)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
My knowledge increased	157	3.662420	1.318284	2E-08	6E-08	0.662420
My interest was stimulated	157	3.554140	1.346386	1.1E-06	3.7E-06	0.554140
No change occurred	157	1.611465	0.924383	2.39E-24	1.20E-22	1.388535

Question 13 examined readers' attitudes toward the use of historical evidence in fiction. The results indicate that the majority of respondents believe that authorial interpretation should be granted a degree of creative freedom (Mean = 3.31; SD = 1.28; $p = 0.0018$).

At the same time, the relatively high mean values for the options "it should be presented accurately" (Mean = 3.01) and "both should coexist" (Mean = 3.04) suggest that historicity and interpretation can function simultaneously within a literary text.

These findings indicate that readers tend to adopt a balanced perspective rather than insisting on strict historical exactitude alone.

TABLE 12
ATTITUDES TOWARD HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IN FICTION (QUESTION 13)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
It should be presented accurately	157	3.006369	1.365776	0.867848	0.923242	0.006369
Authorial interpretation should be granted creative freedom	157	3.312102	1.275275	0.001808	0.003117	0.312102
Both should coexist	157	3.038217	1.376941	0.915953	0.954118	0.038217

In comparing historical scholarship and literary fiction (Question 14), respondents highly rated the option "both complement each other" (Mean = 3.48; SD = 1.41; $p = 2.67E-05$).

In addition, the view that the literary work allows history to be felt more deeply (Mean = 3.29; SD = 1.31; $p = 0.0083$) was also prominent.

These findings indicate that literary texts possess a strong emotional impact and enhance readers' experiential engagement with history.

TABLE 13
COMPARATIVE PERCEPTION OF HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND LITERARY FICTION (QUESTION 14)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
The literary work allows history to be felt more deeply	157	3.286624	1.306056	0.008317	0.012995	0.286624
Historical scholarship is more precise	157	3.063694	1.279431	0.595826	0.677075	0.063694
Both complement each other	157	3.477707	1.412336	0.0000267	0.0000702	0.477707

In the final question (15), the impact of historical information within the literary text was assessed. The results indicate that the majority of respondents emphasized the cognitive value of the historical information (Mean = 3.73; SD = 1.22; $p = 3.87E-10$) as well as its emotional impact (Mean = 3.43; SD = 1.33; $p = 0.00035$).

By contrast, the perception of historical information solely as an artistic element yielded a lower mean score (Mean = 2.38; SD = 1.23; $p = 4E-08$).

These findings suggest that the emotional and cognitive functions of the text operate simultaneously.

TABLE 14
IMPACT OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION IN THE LITERARY TEXT (QUESTION 15)

item	N	Mean	SD	p_value	p_adj	effect
It had cognitive value	157	3.726115	1.222710	3.87E-10	2E-09	0.726115
It had an emotional impact	157	3.426752	1.326282	0.000350	0.000672	0.426752
It was perceived solely as an artistic element	157	2.382166	1.227542	4E-08	1E-07	0.617834

Overall, the results of the third factor demonstrate that readers engage with the text in an interpretively active manner. The high level of trust in the authorial interpretation, the increase in historical knowledge and interest, as well as the simultaneous presence of emotional and cognitive impact, all indicate the work's potential in shaping historical consciousness.

Readers do not perceive the literary text as opposed to academic historiography; rather, they view it as a complementary medium that enriches historical understanding and provides a deeper experiential and emotional engagement with the past.

Discussion

The findings of the study demonstrate that the process by which readers engage with historical literary texts is multilayered and complex. A combined analysis of the data across the three factors reveals that readers' prior familiarity with the text, their perception of historical evidence, and their interpretive evaluation are closely interconnected.

The first factor – level of familiarity with the work – indicates that the research audience was not homogeneous. While a portion of respondents had read the text in full, a considerable number were acquainted with it only at the level of a general summary or had not read it at all. Nevertheless, the strong statistical significance of the "I have not read it" option

(Mean = 1.64; effect size = 1.36) confirms that familiarity with the work constitutes an important variable influencing interpretive outcomes. Furthermore, the coexistence of personal interest and academic curriculum as motivational drivers suggests that literary reception depends on both internal and external factors. The genre perception results, which showed relatively high evaluations of mystical (mythopoetic) and postmodernist interpretations, further confirm the text's genre openness and semantic multiplicity.

The second factor – perception of historical evidence and fictional narrative – demonstrates that readers possess a relatively high capacity to distinguish historical information within a literary context. The evaluation of the historical period as “sufficiently clear” and “very clear” (Mean $\approx$ 3.4) indicates that the historical framework of the text was accessible to readers. At the same time, the high mean score for perceiving historical information as intertwined with artistic imagination (Mean = 3.42) suggests that readers intuitively grasp the hybrid nature of historical prose. The positive attitude toward the inclusion of historical evidence in non-historical texts indicates that readers perceive literature as a cognitive space. Moreover, the high level of recognition of specific historical references confirms that historical information presented in a literary form is retained in readers' consciousness.

The third factor – interpretation and reader evaluation – revealed the cognitive and emotional impact of the literary work. The high level of trust in the authorial interpretation (Mean = 3.55) indicates that readers consciously understand and accept the artistic representation of historical evidence. Furthermore, the increase in interest in the Kipchak period (Mean = 3.55) and the growth of knowledge (Mean = 3.66) after reading the work underscore the significance of literary texts in expanding historical awareness. The high evaluation of the cognitive value of historical information in the literary text (Mean = 3.73) demonstrates that the work functions not only as an aesthetic artifact but also as a cognitive resource.

A comparative analysis of the three factors allows for several important conclusions. First, readers' initial familiarity with the text influences the depth of their historical perception. Respondents who read the work in full were more inclined to perceive the historical interpretation as credible, whereas those with only superficial familiarity experienced greater difficulty distinguishing between artistic representation and historical reality. Second, the balance between historical evidence and artistic imagination is positively evaluated by readers, highlighting a defining feature of historical prose as a genre. Third, readers do not perceive literary texts as competing with academic historiography; rather, they regard them as complementary cultural instruments.

These findings are consistent with prior research conducted within the framework of reader-response theory. For instance, Mart (2019) emphasizes that the meaning of a literary text is not derived solely from the text itself but is constructed through a “transactional” relationship between reader and text. His research highlights how literary discussions enhance readers' emotional and intellectual engagement, fostering collaborative meaning-making and individual interpretation. Similarly, Spirovska (2019) applies reader-response theory in a university-level English literature course, qualitatively analyzing students' written assignments (character analyses) and classroom discussions according to Thomson's developmental model. Her study empirically demonstrates increased student engagement and the development of independent interpretive skills. In addition, Boubekur (2021) implements reader-response theory in the teaching of short stories to second-year students, employing methodological triangulation (questionnaires, classroom observation, and analysis of written work). By incorporating efferent and aesthetic reading strategies, the study empirically demonstrates improvements in students' reading and writing skills, critical thinking, and cultural comparison abilities.

In all these studies, reader-response theory underscores the principle that textual meaning is not solely transmitted by the author but is reconstructed through the reader's experiential engagement. In the context of the present research, this theoretical perspective is essential for analyzing how readers interpret historical literary texts. Moreover, the findings highlight the role of historical fiction in shaping cultural memory. Readers perceive the work as a space where historical consciousness and emotional experience intersect, reinforcing the cultural and interpretive significance of historical prose.

V. CONCLUSION

In this study, the specific features of readers' reception of historical evidence and authorial interpretation in Mukhtar Magauin's *Kipchak Aruy* were systematically examined for the first time. The empirical findings demonstrate that historical literary texts function not merely as aesthetic artifacts but also as cognitive mechanisms capable of shaping historical consciousness.

Readers perceived historical evidence in conjunction with artistic interpretation, evaluating them not as opposing elements but as mutually complementary components. One reason for this assessment lies in the author's skillful and logically consistent incorporation of historical material into the fictional narrative. The high level of trust in the authorial reconstruction confirms that the artistic reworking of historical sources can appear convincing and credible to readers. Furthermore, the increase in interest in the Kipchak period and the expansion of historical knowledge following the reading of the work highlight the cognitive potential of literary texts.

Overall, the study underscores the capacity of historical prose as a genre to revitalize historical consciousness and contribute to the formation of national memory. *Kipchak Aruy*, by integrating factual historical material with mythopoetic and postmodern interpretations, establishes a complex dialogue between historical reality and artistic imagination. This, in turn, confirms the relevance of examining historical literary texts through the lens of reader-response theory and

indicates the necessity of further, broader investigations into the phenomenon of readers' reception of historical evidence in fiction.

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