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Болашақ-Баспа
2026

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МАЗМҰНЫ

Адиширинов К.
Мұхтар Мағауиннің прозасындағы әдеби кеңістікті картаға түсіру.....7
Карагөз Н., Сөйлемез О.
Бекір Чобанзаденің «Туған тіл» өлеңіне онтологиялық көзқарас.....22
Ибрагимова Т.
«Шеки фехлеси» газетіндегі фольклор мәселелері.....36
İşcan T.
Бөлшектеніп бара жатқан әлемдік тәртіптегі стратегиялық автономия: Қазақстан мен Мексиканы салыстырмалы талдау және Түркия мен Бразилия тәжірибесі.....47
Кабжанов А., Ахметова А.
Қазақстандағы конституциялық реформа: жаңа ережелерді талқылау және енгізу.....61
Ретракция туралы мәлімет.....74

ОГЛАВЛЕНИЕ

Адиширинов К.
Картирование литературного пространства в прозе Мухтара Магауина.....7
Карагоз Н., Сойлемез О.
Онтологический взгляд на стихотворение Бекира Чобанзаде «Тувган Тиль».....22
Ибрагимова Т.
Фольклорные вопросы в газете «Шеки фехлеси».....36
İşcan T.
Стратегическая автономия в фрагментирующемся мировом порядке: сравнительный анализ Казахстана и Мексики с учетом опыта Турции и Бразилии.....47
Кабжанов А., Ахметова А.
Конституционная реформа в Казахстане: обсуждение и внедрение новых положений.....61
Информация о ретракции.....74

CONTENTS

Adishirinov K.
Mapping Literary Space in Mukhtar Magauin’s Prose.....7
Karagoz N., Soylemez O.
Ontologıcal vıew to Bekır Çobanzade’s poem “Tuvğan Til”.....22
İbrahimova T.
Folklore issues in the newspaper “Sheki fehlesi”.....36
İşcan T.
Strategic autonomy in a fragmenting world order: Kazakhstan and Mexico in comparative perspective, with lessons from Türkiye and Brazil.....47
Kabzhanov A., Akhmetova A.
Constitutional reform in kazakhstan: deliberation and implementation of new provisions.....61
Information about retraction.....74

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Mapping Literary Space in Mukhtar Magauin's Prose

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the structure of literary space in Mukhtar Magauin's prose by integrating toponymic, quantitative, and geospatial approaches. The corpus comprises six prose works characterized by a rich system of spatial references: *The Death of a Greyhound*, *The Dead and the Living*, *Right and Left*, *The Marrow of the Vulture*, *Children of One Ancestor*, and *The Fifth Livestock*. Through close reading of the complete texts, geographical, historical, local, and mythological spatial units were manually identified, while their frequency, type, spatial layer, coordinates, and mapping status were recorded in a structured database. The study employed literary-spatial analysis, typological classification of toponyms, frequency analysis, geocoding, and digital visualization using Leaflet and ggplot2 in R. The analysis identified 60 distinct spatial units. Almaty, Naryn, Egypt, the Golden Horde, Semey, and the Nile emerged as the most frequent spatial nodes. Choronyms and oikonyms constituted the dominant typological categories, whereas natural and historical spaces formed the most prominent spatial layers. The findings demonstrate that toponyms not only locate narrative events but also represent historical memory, cultural identity, national worldview, and symbolic meaning. The geospatial map further revealed connections among local, national, historical, and civilizational scales. The study's novelty lies in applying an integrated model that combines literary interpretation, structured spatial data, and digital cartography to Magauin's prose. This approach offers a methodological basis for comparative research on spatial poetics in Kazakh literature and for the further development of Digital Humanities projects.

***Keywords*:** toponymy, literary space, spatial representation, digital humanities, geospatial database.

Мұхтар Мағауиннің прозасындағы әдеби кеңістікті картаға түсіру

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Аннотация

Зерттеудің мақсаты – Мұхтар Мағауин прозасындағы әдеби кеңістіктің құрылымын топонимдік, сандық және геокеңістіктік әдістерді ұштастыра отырып анықтау. Зерттеу материалы ретінде кеңістіктік атаулар жүйесі айқын көрінетін алты прозалық шығарма алынды: «Тазының өлімі», «Өлі мен тірі», «Оң мен сол», «Құзғынның қу жілігі», «Бір атаның балалары» және «Бесінші түлік». Мәтіндерді тұтас оқу барысында географиялық, тарихи, жергілікті және мифологиялық кеңістік бірліктері қолмен белгіленіп, олардың жиілігі, типі, кеңістіктік қабаты және географиялық координаттары дерекқорға енгізілді. Зерттеуде әдеби-кеңістіктік талдау, топонимдерді типологиялық жіктеу, жиілік талдауы, геокодтау және R

ортасындағы Leaflet пен ggplot2 құралдары арқылы цифрлық визуализация әдістері қолданылды. Нәтижесінде 60 дербес кеңістік бірлігі анықталды. Алматы, Нарын, Мысыр, Алтын Орда, Семей және Ніл ең жиі кездесетін кеңістік түйіндері болды. Типологиялық тұрғыдан хоронимдер мен ойконимдер басымдық танытты, ал табиғи және тарихи кеңістік негізгі қабаттар ретінде ерекшеленді. Талдау топонимдердің оқиға орнын көрсетумен шектелмей, тарихи жадты, мәдени бірегейлікті, ұлттық дүниетанымды және символдық мағыналарды қалыптастыратынын көрсетті. Геокеңістіктік карта жергілікті, ұлттық және өркениеттік кеңістіктердің өзара байланысын көрнекі түрде ашты. Тарихи аумақтар шартты координаттармен белгіленіп, нақты географиялық нысаны анықталмаған символдық бірліктер картаға енгізілмеді. Зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығы – Мағауин прозасын әдеби талдау мен цифрлық картографияны біріктіретін біртұтас модель арқылы қарастыру. Ұсынылған тәсіл қазақ әдебиетіндегі кеңістік поэтикасын салыстырмалы зерттеуге және цифрлық гуманитаристика жобаларын дамытуға әдіснамалық негіз бола алады.

***Кілт сөздер*:** топонимия, әдеби кеңістік, кеңістіктік көрініс, цифрлық гуманистарлық ғылымдар, геокеңістіктік дерекқор.

Картирование литературного пространства в прозе Мухтара Магауина

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Аннотация

Цель исследования – выявить структуру литературного пространства в прозе Мухтара Магауина посредством сочетания топонимического, количественного и геопространственного подходов. Материалом послужили шесть прозаических произведений с выраженной системой пространственных обозначений: «Гибель борзой», «Мёртвые и живые», «Правое и левое», «Бедренная кость грифа», «Дети одного отца» и «Пятый скот». В ходе сплошного чтения текстов вручную фиксировались географические, исторические, локальные и мифологические пространственные единицы; сведения об их частотности, типе, пространственном слое и координатах вносились в структурированную базу данных. Использованы методы литературно-пространственного анализа, типологической классификации топонимов, частотного анализа, геокодирования и цифровой визуализации с применением Leaflet и ggplot2 в среде R. В результате выявлено 60 самостоятельных пространственных единиц. Наиболее частотными пространственными узлами оказались Алматы, Нарын, Египет, Золотая Орда, Семей и Нил. В типологическом отношении преобладают хоронимы и ойконимы, тогда как природное и историческое пространство образуют ведущие пространственные слои. Анализ показал, что топонимы не только локализуют события, но и участвуют в репрезентации исторической памяти, культурной идентичности, национального мировоззрения и символических смыслов. Геопространственная карта позволила наглядно представить взаимосвязи локального, национального, исторического и цивилизационного уровней. Научная новизна исследования состоит в применении к прозе Магауина единой модели, объединяющей литературоведческую интерпретацию, структурирование данных и цифровую картографию. Предложенный подход может служить методологической основой для сравнительного изучения поэтики пространства в казахской литературе и развития проектов цифровой гуманитаристики.

***Ключевые слова*:** топонимия, литературное пространство, пространственное представление, цифровые гуманитарные науки, геопространственная база данных.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of Digital Humanities has transformed literary studies by combining close reading with corpus analysis, natural language processing, geographic information systems (GIS), geocoding, and digital cartography. These methods make it possible to identify, classify, and visualize spatial references and to reveal patterns that may remain unnoticed in traditional textual analysis. Literary space is therefore examined not merely as the setting of events but as a structural and symbolic system that organizes narrative meaning, historical memory, cultural identity, and an author's worldview.

The theoretical foundations of this approach can be traced to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope and Yuri Lotman's semiotics of space, both of which established space as a fundamental category of literary meaning. The subsequent spatial turn expanded this perspective. Conkan and Gârdan (2020) connect the study of literary space with geocriticism, literary geography, transnational studies, and digital humanities, emphasizing its historical, social, and cultural dimensions. Hones (2011) similarly defines literary geography through the relationship between textual and actual geographical space and demonstrates that spatial organization shapes narrative events, characters' worldviews, and cultural environments.

Literary mapping offers an important means of representing these relationships. Building on broader theories of socially and culturally produced space (Lefebvre, 1991) and the cartographic study of literary systems (Moretti, 1998), Perenič (2014) identifies literary maps as a major tool for investigating and visualizing interactions between real and imagined places. Boschetti (2012), in turn, argues that literary space should not be limited by national borders, since world literary space emerges through interaction among cultures, traditions, and historical contexts. These approaches are particularly relevant to works in which local geography intersects with broader historical and civilizational narratives.

Digital Humanities provides the methodological framework for extending such analysis. Berry (2012) notes that computational technologies have changed the processing and interpretation of large-scale textual data. Svensson (2010, 2013) describes Digital Humanities not simply as a set of tools but as an interdisciplinary research paradigm with significant epistemological implications. Dalbello (2011) likewise shows that digital practices transform both knowledge production and the objects of humanities research. At the same time, Fiormonte (2012) warns that digital methodologies must account for cultural and linguistic diversity rather than privilege dominant languages and traditions. This principle is especially important for the digital study of Kazakh literature. Sula (2013) further emphasizes the role of digital projects in organizing, preserving, and disseminating cultural information through connections with libraries, archives, and heritage institutions.

Geospatial databases strengthen this framework by enabling spatial units to be systematically structured, connected, analyzed, and visualized. Voisard and David (2002) demonstrate the importance of spatial data modeling for representing relationships among geographical entities, while Bereta and Koubarakis (2016) show how semantic technologies can improve access to and integration of geospatial information. Breunig et al. (2020) identify geospatial data management as a central link among data collection, modeling, visualization, and analysis and stress its contribution to reproducibility and long-term data availability. Recent research also points to the interpretive and educational potential of interactive mapping. Mitchell (2025) describes literary space as increasingly shaped by interaction between physical and digital environments, whereas Opach et al. (2025) demonstrate that digital literary maps offer new ways to explore place names and literary geographies.

From a linguistic perspective, toponyms are not limited to geographical identification; they preserve historical memory, cultural experience, and collective perceptions of space. In literary discourse, they may represent social environments, historical periods, cultural identities, and authorial positions. Their classification and spatial visualization therefore provide insight into both the linguistic structure of a text and the cultural meanings encoded within it.

This issue is especially significant in Kazakh literature, where landscape, territory, history, and national identity are closely interconnected. Mukhtar Magauin's prose is particularly suitable for

spatial analysis because geographical, historical, and mythological place names function as key elements of his literary world. The Golden Horde, Dashti-Qipchaq, Karakorum, Qazygurt, Egypt, and the Nile connect Kazakh historical memory with wider civilizational narratives, while Almaty, Semey, Naryn, and Bulghyrtau represent local and regional spatial layers. Thus, space in Magauin's prose is not simply a narrative background but a mechanism through which historical consciousness, national identity, and cultural memory are articulated.

Despite extensive scholarship on literary space, literary geography, mapping, Digital Humanities, and geospatial data management, Mukhtar Magauin's toponymic system has not been systematically studied through a combination of literary and geospatial methods. The present study addresses this gap by identifying spatial units in selected prose texts, classifying them according to type, frequency, spatial layer, and geographical coordinates, and integrating the results into a geospatial database and an interactive digital map. Bakhtin's chronotope and Lotman's semiotics guide the interpretation of narrative and symbolic spatial functions; literary geography and geocriticism inform the distinction between textual and geographical space; and Digital Humanities and geospatial data modeling provide the procedures for structuring, counting, and visualizing the identified units. The aim is to reveal the spatial organization of Magauin's literary world and demonstrate the value of digital visualization for the study of Kazakh prose. The novelty lies in applying a single, reproducible literary-geospatial model to Magauin's works and integrating literary studies, linguistics, geography, and Digital Humanities.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Materials

The bounded corpus comprises the complete texts of six prose works by Mukhtar Magauin: The Death of a Greyhound (Tazyńyń ólimi), The Dead and the Living (Óli men tiri), Right and Left (Oń men sol), The Marrow of the Vulture (Qújdyń qu jyligi), Children of One Ancestor (Bir atanyń balalary), and The Fifth Livestock (Besinshi túlik). These works were selected purposively because they contain sustained and varied spatial reference across local, national, historical, and civilizational scales. The six works, rather than isolated excerpts, formed the unit of corpus selection; every occurrence of an eligible spatial unit in these texts was examined. The corpus is therefore analytically focused rather than representative of Magauin's entire prose oeuvre, a boundary considered in the limitations below.

2.2. Data Collection and Identification of Spatial Units

The first stage involved close reading of all six texts and manual identification of spatial units. The coding unit was an explicit proper place name or a conventional historical-geographical designation. Generic landscape terms were included only when the narrative treated them as a discrete named or recurrent locus; otherwise, they were excluded. Eligible units comprised oikonyms (settlements), hydronyms (water bodies), oronyms (relief features), choronyms (territories or regions), historical place names, and local spatial references. Each occurrence was recorded and counted to establish frequency within the bounded corpus.

Each unit received one primary typological category based on the kind of referent and one spatial layer based on its dominant narrative function. Context guided potentially ambiguous cases. For example, the Golden Horde was coded as a historical place name and assigned to the historical-civilizational layer because it denotes a past political-territorial formation, whereas Qazygurt was coded primarily as an oronym but assigned to a mythological layer when the passage activated its sacred or legendary associations. Assigning one primary category prevented double counting, while the layer field retained the unit's literary function. The resulting dataset recorded the toponym, every observed occurrence, total frequency, primary type, spatial layer, coordinates where applicable, and mapping status.

2.3. Geospatial Database Construction

At the second stage, a geospatial database was created. Each identified spatial unit was assigned a unique identifier and entered into a database structure consisting of the following fields:

- ID;
- Toponym;
- Frequency;
- Type of spatial unit;
- Latitude;
- Longitude;
- Spatial layer;
- Mapping status.

Geographical coordinates were assigned through publicly available geographic reference sources and geocoding procedures. Contemporary settlements were represented by standard point coordinates; rivers and mountains by a representative point associated with the named feature; and extensive historical territories by an approximate representative centroid used only for visualization. Such historical coordinates were flagged as approximate rather than treated as exact boundaries. Symbolic or mythological references were mapped only when a recognized physical referent could be identified; otherwise, they remained in the database but were excluded from point-based visualization. The resulting database contained 60 distinct spatial units extracted from the six works.

For typological analysis, each unit was assigned to one of the mutually exclusive primary categories defined above. Spatial layers were analytical rather than purely physical: natural space covered landscape and environmental features; local, rural, regional, and urban space described narrative scale and settlement context; historical and historical-civilizational space captured references whose primary function was to activate the past or a broader civilization; and mythological space identified locations whose narrative force depended on sacred or legendary meaning. These operational criteria connected the theoretical distinction between geographical location and culturally produced literary space to the subsequent analysis.

2.4. Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative stage focused on frequency analysis and typological classification. Frequency counts were calculated for all identified spatial units in order to determine the most prominent spatial markers in the corpus. Descriptive statistics were used to identify dominant spatial categories and patterns of distribution.

The analysis was conducted in the R statistical environment. The **readxl** package was used to import the geospatial database, while **dplyr** was applied for data manipulation, sorting, and frequency calculations. Typological distributions were visualized using the **ggplot2** package. Frequency rankings and category distributions were subsequently used to interpret the spatial organization of Mukhtar Magauin's literary world.

2.5. Digital Visualization

The final stage involved the development of a digital visualization prototype in R with the Leaflet package. Each mappable unit was represented by an interactive marker linked to its standardized name, frequency, primary type, spatial layer, and coordinate status. Units without defensible point coordinates were retained in the database but not forced onto the map. The visualization was used to examine geographic distribution and relationships among local, regional, historical, and civilizational spaces. The map is currently a research prototype without a permanent public URL; the geospatial dataset and Leaflet files are available from the author upon reasonable request and may be supplied as supplementary material.

The interactive map served as a tool for examining the geographical distribution of spatial units and identifying relationships among local, regional, historical, and civilizational spaces represented in the texts. In addition, typological distributions were visualized through statistical charts generated with **ggplot2**, providing a complementary representation of spatial structures.

2.6. Research Approach

Methodologically, the study combines qualitative literary analysis with quantitative and geospatial methods. The qualitative component focuses on the interpretation of toponyms and their linguistic and literary functions within the texts. The quantitative component examines frequency patterns and typological distributions. The geospatial component visualizes spatial representations through mapping techniques. The integration of these approaches enables a comprehensive investigation of literary space and demonstrates the potential of digital humanities methods for the study of Kazakh prose.

3. Results

3.1. Frequency Structure of Toponyms

Frequency analysis was used to identify the spatial references that organize the corpus most strongly. Repetition was interpreted as an indicator of narrative prominence, although frequency alone was not treated as proof of symbolic importance.

The analysis resulted in the identification of 60 spatial units. Among them, Almaty (27 occurrences), Naryn (18), Egypt (15), the Golden Horde (13), Semey (6), and the Nile (6) demonstrated the highest frequency values (Table 1). The repeated occurrence of these toponyms suggests that they function as major spatial reference points within the author's literary universe.

Table 1 – Most Frequent Toponyms in Mukhtar Magauin's Prose

No.	Toponym	Frequency
1	Almaty	27
2	Naryn	18
3	Egypt	15
4	Golden Horde	13
5	Semey	6
6	Nile	6
7	Uzyn-Agash	5
8	Bulghyrtau	5
9	Dashti-Qipchaq	4
10	Qazygurt	3

The distribution presented in Table 1 reveals the coexistence of several spatial dimensions within Magauin's prose. The most frequent toponyms include contemporary geographical locations, regional place names, and historical-civilizational references. This diversity indicates that literary space in the selected corpus is not limited to a single geographical scale but incorporates local, national, historical, and transregional spatial layers.

Almaty, which occupies the highest position in the frequency ranking, represents one of the principal spatial nodes in the corpus. As a major urban center of Kazakhstan, its frequent occurrence reflects the importance of contemporary national space within the author's literary geography. Likewise, Semey functions as another significant geographical reference associated with Kazakhstan's cultural and historical landscape.

Naryn, the second most frequent toponym, represents regional space and contributes to the localization of narratives within specific geographical settings. Its recurrence highlights the importance of regional environments in the construction of literary space and demonstrates the author's attention to geographically grounded representations of place.

The presence of Egypt and the Nile among the most frequent spatial units is particularly noteworthy. Unlike local and national place names, these references belong to a broader historical and civilizational sphere. Their frequency suggests that Magauin's literary space extends beyond the boundaries of Kazakhstan and incorporates wider cultural and historical horizons. Similarly, the

frequent occurrence of the Golden Horde and Dashti-Qipchaq points to the significance of historical memory in the author's spatial imagination.

The frequency analysis also indicates that historical and civilizational place names occupy a prominent position within the corpus. This finding suggests that space in Magauin's prose functions not only as a geographical framework but also as a medium through which historical knowledge and cultural memory are represented. The coexistence of contemporary geographical locations and historical spatial references contributes to the multidimensional structure of literary space.

Another important observation concerns the distribution of local place names such as Uzyn-Agash, Bulghyrtau, and Qazygurt. Although these toponyms occur less frequently than the dominant spatial markers, they contribute significantly to the localization of narrative events and enrich the spatial texture of the texts. Their presence demonstrates the interaction between local landscapes and broader historical and cultural spaces.

Taken together, the frequency pattern identifies a small group of recurrent spatial nodes while also showing movement among local, national, historical, and civilizational scales. These counts provide the quantitative basis for the typological and interpretive analyses that follow.

3.2.. Typological Structure of Toponyms

The 60 spatial units were next classified by their primary referent using the operational criteria described in the Methodology. The resulting distribution across choronyms, oikonyms, hydronyms, oronyms, local spatial units, and historical place names is presented in Figure 1.

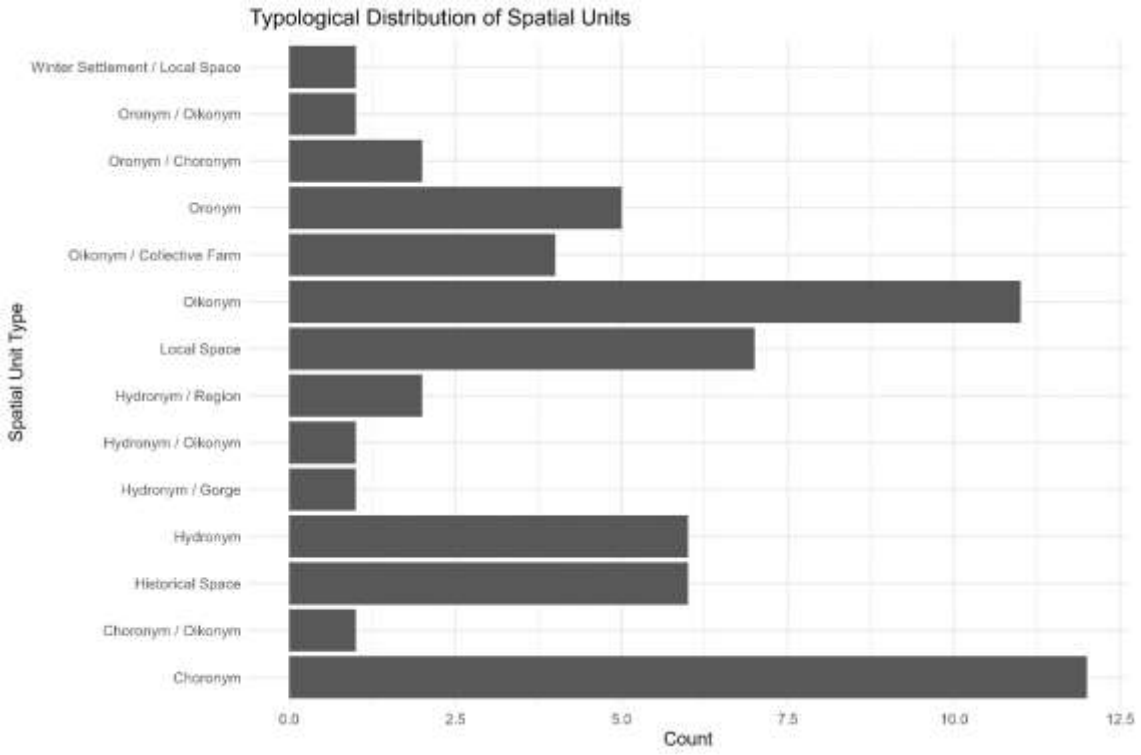


Figure 1 – Typological Distribution of Spatial Units in Mukhtar Magauin's Prose

The results demonstrate that choronyms constitute the largest category within the geospatial database, with 12 identified units. Choronyms refer to large geographical regions, territories, or political entities. Examples found in the corpus include Egypt, Europe, Russia, China, and Dashti-Qipchaq. The predominance of choronyms suggests that Magauin frequently constructs literary space through extensive historical and geographical regions rather than through isolated locations. This tendency reflects the broad spatial scope of his literary imagination and his interest in connecting local experiences with larger historical and civilizational contexts.

The second largest category consists of oikonyms, comprising 11 units. Oikonyms refer to

settlements, cities, towns, and villages. Among the most frequent examples are Almaty, Semey, Naryn, and Uzyn-Agash. The substantial presence of oikonyms indicates the importance of inhabited places in the construction of narrative space. These locations provide a concrete geographical framework for events and contribute to the realistic representation of social and cultural environments.

Local spatial units represent another significant category within the corpus. Seven units were classified as local spatial references. Unlike officially recognized geographical entities, these units describe specific localized environments and contribute to the detailed spatial organization of the narrative. Their presence reflects the author's attention to the immediate surroundings in which characters act and interact.

Hydronyms account for six spatial units identified in the corpus. Examples include the Nile, Ili, Sharyn, and Markakol. Hydronyms play an important role in shaping natural landscapes and frequently function as markers of environmental identity. In many cases, rivers and water bodies contribute to the historical and cultural significance of a particular region. Their inclusion in the literary space reinforces the connection between geography and cultural memory.

Historical place names also constitute an important category, comprising six units. This group includes references such as the Golden Horde and Dashti-Qipchaq. The presence of historical toponyms demonstrates the author's sustained engagement with the historical dimension of space. These spatial references extend the narrative beyond immediate geographical settings and connect individual stories with broader historical processes.

Oronyms represent five units within the database. Examples include Altai, Qazygurt, Ulytau, and Khan Tengri. Mountains and elevated landforms occupy a special position in Kazakh cultural geography and frequently carry symbolic significance. Their presence within the corpus contributes to the representation of both natural and cultural landscapes.

The typological distribution demonstrates that literary space in Mukhtar Magauin’s prose is not limited to a single category of spatial reference. Instead, it is constructed through the interaction of different spatial types, each contributing a distinct dimension to the overall spatial structure. Choronyms provide historical and civilizational breadth, oikonyms establish concrete geographical settings, hydronyms and oronyms shape natural landscapes, while historical and local spatial units connect narrative events to cultural memory and lived experience.

An important finding of the analysis is that large-scale spatial categories dominate the corpus. The predominance of choronyms and oikonyms indicates that Magauin’s literary space is organized simultaneously at regional, national, and transnational levels. This characteristic distinguishes his spatial representation from narratives focused exclusively on local settings and highlights the multidimensional nature of his literary geography.

The typological profile therefore establishes the heterogeneous material basis of Magauin’s literary space; the following section examines how those spatial references function within narrative discourse.

3.3. Linguistic and Literary Functions of Toponyms

Toponyms in the corpus perform functions beyond geographical localization. Close reading shows that they organize narrative space while activating historical consciousness, cultural memory, and national identity.

One of the primary functions of toponyms in the corpus is localization. Place names establish the geographical framework within which narrative events unfold and provide readers with a concrete spatial orientation. Toponyms such as Almaty, Semey, Naryn, Uzyn-Agash, and Bulghyrtau locate characters and events within recognizable geographical settings. However, even when performing a locational role, these place names often carry additional cultural and historical meanings. Consequently, localization in Magauin’s prose is rarely limited to geographical reference alone; it frequently serves as an entry point into broader cultural and historical contexts.

The analysis demonstrates that historical memory constitutes another major function of

toponyms in the corpus. Historical place names such as the Golden Horde, Dashti-Qipchaq, Karakorum, Egypt, and the Nile occur repeatedly throughout the texts. These spatial references are significant not because of their geographical position alone but because they evoke collective historical experience. In many cases, a single toponym activates an entire historical narrative. For example, references to the Golden Horde and Dashti-Qipchaq immediately connect the narrative with the political and cultural history of the Turkic and Kazakh peoples. Through such references, historical space becomes integrated into the literary present, creating continuity between past and present.

This tendency is particularly evident in *The Marrow of the Vulture* (*Qújdyń qu jyligi*), where historical and civilizational place names occupy a central position within the narrative structure. References to Egypt, the Nile, Karakorum, and Dashti-Qipchaq do not simply identify geographical locations; they function as carriers of historical knowledge and cultural memory. These toponyms expand the spatial horizon of the text beyond local geography and situate the narrative within a broader civilizational framework. As a result, literary space becomes a medium through which historical consciousness is preserved and transmitted.

The findings further indicate that toponyms contribute to the representation of cultural identity. In Magauin's prose, spatial references frequently function as markers of national culture and collective belonging. Place names such as Altai, Ulytau, and Qazygurt possess meanings that extend beyond their geographical significance. These locations occupy an important position in Kazakh historical and cultural memory and are often associated with foundational narratives, cultural traditions, and symbolic values. Their appearance within literary texts reinforces the connection between space and national identity.

The symbolic function of toponyms is particularly visible in the use of culturally significant locations. Qazygurt, for instance, is not represented merely as a mountain. Within Kazakh cultural tradition, it is associated with sacred narratives and collective memory. Consequently, the toponym acquires symbolic value that exceeds its geographical meaning. Similar processes can be observed in references to Altai and Ulytau, which frequently function as symbols of historical continuity, cultural origins, and national heritage.

The analysis also demonstrates that spatial references contribute to the construction of emotional and psychological landscapes. In *The Death of a Greyhound* (*Tazyńyń ólimi*), natural spatial units such as valleys, springs, winter settlements, and local place names are closely connected with the emotional experiences of characters. The landscape is not presented as a neutral background but as an active participant in the narrative. Spatial references contribute to the atmosphere of the text and influence readers' perceptions of events and characters. In this context, literary space functions as an emotional environment rather than a purely geographical setting.

Natural space occupies a particularly important role in the representation of traditional Kazakh spatial consciousness. References to rivers, mountains, valleys, pastures, and winter camps frequently appear throughout the corpus. These spatial units reflect the historical relationship between people and landscape within nomadic culture. Consequently, they function as linguistic representations of cultural experience and traditional ecological knowledge. Through these references, literary space becomes inseparable from cultural memory and collective identity.

The findings additionally reveal that toponyms serve a worldview-forming function. Spatial references contribute to the construction of a specific perception of history, culture, and identity. This function is especially evident in texts where local, national, and civilizational spaces coexist. The frequent juxtaposition of Almaty and Naryn with Egypt, the Nile, and the Golden Horde illustrates how Magauin's literary geography connects immediate experience with broader historical narratives. Through this interaction of spatial layers, readers are encouraged to perceive local history within a larger cultural and civilizational framework.

Another important observation concerns the interaction between real and imagined spatial meanings. While most place names in the corpus refer to actual geographical locations, their literary function often transcends geographical reality. Literary space emerges through the transformation of

real places into symbolic, historical, and cultural structures. This process corresponds to contemporary theories of literary geography, which emphasize that literary spaces are not direct reflections of geographical reality but culturally mediated representations shaped by narrative and interpretation.

The results also suggest that toponyms play a significant role in connecting different spatial scales. Local place names coexist with regional, national, historical, and transnational spaces. This interaction creates a multilayered spatial structure in which different geographical and cultural dimensions remain interconnected. Such a structure is particularly evident in the coexistence of Almaty, Naryn, Semey, Egypt, the Nile, and the Golden Horde within the same literary corpus. These spatial references collectively form a literary geography that moves continuously between local experience and broader historical imagination.

In sum, the identified toponyms localize events, preserve historical memory, mark cultural identity, shape emotional landscapes, and articulate a national worldview. Their function depends on narrative context, which explains why a physical referent such as Qazygurt may also operate symbolically or mythologically.

3.4. Spatial Layers and Digital Visualization

The final analytical stage examined spatial layers and visualized the mappable units. The classification shows that natural, historical, historical-civilizational, local, regional, urban, and mythological spaces coexist and interact within the corpus.

The quantitative analysis of spatial layers showed that natural space and historical space constitute the most prominent categories within the corpus. Natural space accounts for the largest number of spatial units, followed closely by historical space. Additional layers include rural space, urban space, historical-geographical space, historical-civilizational space, mythological space, and transboundary space. The distribution of these categories suggests that the author’s spatial imagination is rooted simultaneously in landscape, history, and culture.

Table 2 – Distribution of Spatial Layers in Mukhtar Magauin’s Prose

Spatial Layer	Number of Units
Natural Space	11
Historical Space	10
Rural Space	6
Urban Space	4
Historical-Geographical Space	3
Historical-Civilizational Space	3
Other Spatial Layers	23

The predominance of natural space reflects the important role of landscape in Magauin’s literary universe. References to rivers, mountains, valleys, springs, pastures, and winter settlements appear throughout the corpus and contribute significantly to the construction of literary space. These spatial elements are closely connected to traditional Kazakh culture and frequently function as markers of collective memory and cultural identity. Rather than serving as passive backgrounds, natural landscapes actively participate in the representation of characters, emotions, and cultural values.

Historical space represents the second most significant layer identified in the corpus. Historical spatial references such as the Golden Horde, Dashti-Qipchaq, and Karakorum connect literary narratives with broader historical processes and cultural traditions. These spatial units extend the temporal and geographical scope of the texts, allowing historical memory to become an integral component of literary space. The frequent occurrence of historical place names demonstrates the importance of history in the author's spatial imagination and highlights the close relationship between geography and historical consciousness.

Urban and rural spaces also contribute to the overall spatial structure of the corpus. Urban

locations such as Almaty and Semey represent contemporary social and cultural environments, while rural spaces reflect traditional forms of life and community organization. The interaction between urban and rural spatial layers illustrates the coexistence of modern and traditional perspectives within Magauin's literary world.

A particularly noteworthy finding is the presence of historical-civilizational and mythological spaces. References to Egypt, the Nile, and other culturally significant locations expand literary space beyond national borders and connect local narratives with broader civilizational frameworks. Similarly, mythological locations contribute symbolic and cultural meanings that enrich the spatial structure of the texts. These layers demonstrate that literary space in Magauin's prose operates simultaneously at geographical, historical, cultural, and symbolic levels.

To investigate geographic distribution, the database was integrated into an interactive Leaflet map. Markers display the location, frequency, primary type, spatial layer, and coordinate status of each mappable unit. Figure 2 presents the geospatial distribution; it is a static representation of the interactive prototype.

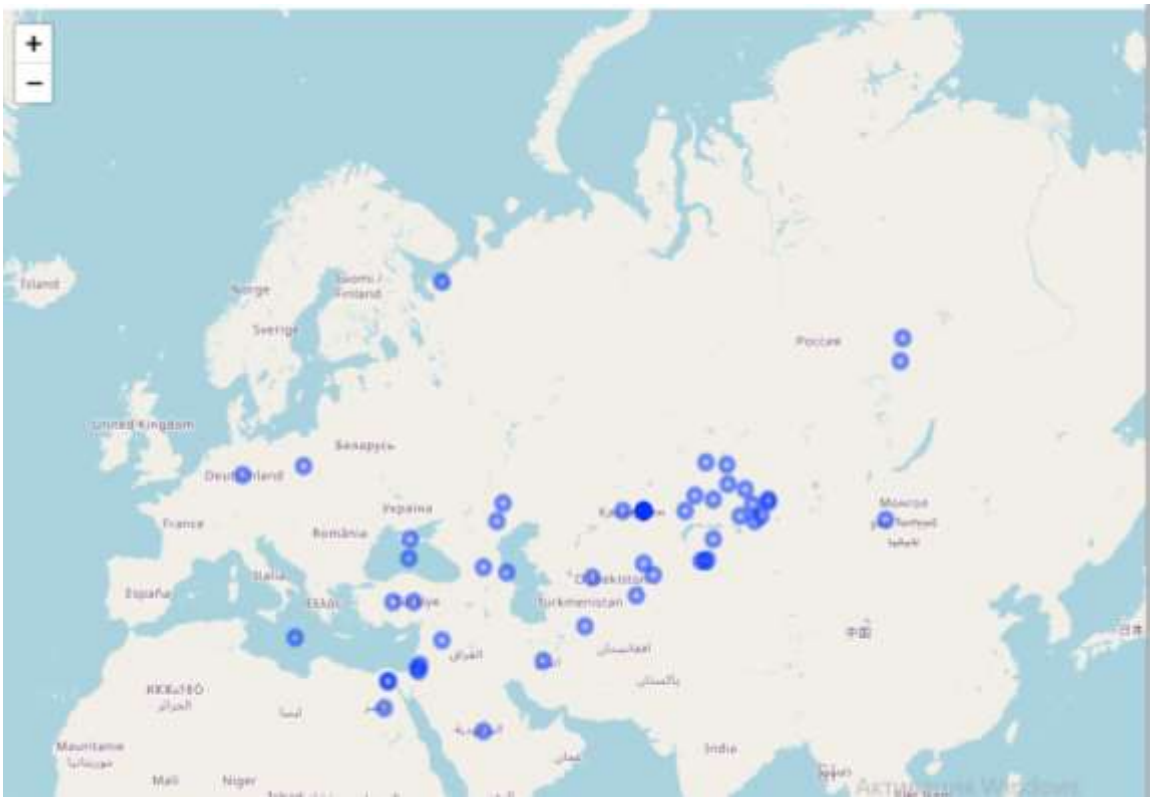


Figure 2 – Geospatial Distribution of Toponyms in Mukhtar Magauin's Prose

The digital map revealed several important patterns. First, the visualization confirmed that literary space in Magauin's prose extends well beyond the territory of Kazakhstan. Spatial units are distributed across Central Asia, Russia, Europe, and the Middle East. This geographical distribution reflects the broad historical and cultural horizons represented in the corpus and demonstrates the interaction between local and transregional spaces.

Second, the map highlighted the existence of several spatial clusters. The largest cluster is concentrated within Kazakhstan and includes locations such as Almaty, Semey, Naryn, Uzyn-Agash, and Bulghyrtau. A second cluster consists of historical and civilizational spaces associated with regions beyond Kazakhstan, including Egypt, the Nile, and territories connected with the Golden Horde and Dashti-Qipchaq. The coexistence of these clusters illustrates the multidimensional organization of literary space and supports the interpretation of Magauin's prose as a literary system that combines local experience with historical imagination.

The visualization also demonstrated the practical value of geospatial methods for literary studies.

By transforming textual references into spatially organized data, the digital map made it possible to identify relationships that are not immediately visible through conventional textual analysis. Spatial patterns, regional concentrations, and transnational connections became more apparent when represented visually. Consequently, the map serves not only as an illustrative tool but also as an analytical instrument that contributes to a deeper understanding of literary space.

The mapping results complement close reading by making regional concentrations and transregional connections visible. They should nevertheless be interpreted in conjunction with the texts and with the coordinate qualifications described in the Methodology.

4. Discussion

The combined analyses show that Magauin's literary space is organized through interacting geographical, historical, cultural, and symbolic dimensions. The value of the mixed approach lies in relating measurable patterns to textual functions rather than treating the map or frequency table as self-sufficient evidence.

One of the most significant findings concerns the dominance of historically and culturally marked toponyms. The frequency analysis showed that Almaty, Naryn, Egypt, the Golden Horde, Semey, and the Nile constitute the principal spatial nodes of the corpus. While Almaty and Semey represent contemporary and national space, Egypt, the Nile, and the Golden Horde belong to broader historical and civilizational spatial layers. This distribution suggests that literary space in Magauin's prose extends beyond immediate geographical surroundings and incorporates large-scale historical and cultural horizons. Such findings support Conkan and Gârdan's (2020) argument that literary space should be understood as a dynamic intersection of national, transnational, and cultural dimensions rather than as a fixed geographical framework.

The predominance of choronyms and oikonyms within the corpus further reinforces this interpretation. The results indicate that Magauin constructs literary space not only through specific locations but also through broader territorial and historical entities. This observation is consistent with Boschetti's (2012) conception of literary space as a field extending beyond local and national boundaries. In Magauin's works, spatial references frequently connect Kazakhstan to larger historical formations such as the Golden Horde and Dashti-Qipchaq, thereby situating national history within wider civilizational narratives.

The analysis also revealed the importance of natural space within the corpus. Natural spatial units constitute the largest spatial layer identified in the database. References to valleys, springs, rivers, mountains, winter settlements, and summer pastures occur throughout the texts and play a role that extends beyond simple environmental description. In *The Death of a Greyhound*, for example, spatial references such as Shilikti Sai, springs, and winter camps create an emotionally charged landscape that is inseparable from the experiences of the characters. These spatial elements contribute to the psychological atmosphere of the narrative and function as cultural markers of traditional Kazakh life. This finding supports Hones's (2011) view that literary space actively participates in narrative meaning-making rather than merely serving as a background for action.

Another important result concerns the role of historical toponyms in preserving and transmitting cultural memory. Place names such as the Golden Horde, Dashti-Qipchaq, Karakorum, Egypt, and the Nile are used not only to identify geographical locations but also to evoke historical knowledge and collective memory. In this respect, historical toponyms operate as cultural codes that connect individual narratives with broader historical experiences. The findings suggest that spatial representation in Magauin's prose functions as a mechanism through which national history is integrated into literary discourse.

The study further demonstrates that toponyms in Magauin's works perform multiple linguistic and literary functions. Beyond localization, they serve historical, symbolic, and ideological purposes. This multifunctionality challenges traditional approaches that treat toponyms primarily as geographical references. In Magauin's prose, place names become semantic units that contribute to the construction of identity, memory, and worldview. The symbolic significance of locations such as

Qazygurt, Altai, and Ulytau illustrates how spatial references may operate simultaneously on geographical, cultural, and mythological levels.

The geospatial database created in this study proved effective in organizing and analyzing literary spatial data. The systematic classification of spatial units according to frequency, type, spatial layer, and coordinates made it possible to identify patterns that are difficult to detect through conventional close reading alone. This result corresponds with the arguments of Voisard and David (2002), who emphasize the importance of structured spatial data models for understanding relationships among spatial entities. Similarly, the database developed in this research facilitated a more comprehensive examination of literary space.

The interactive digital map provided additional insights into the spatial organization of the corpus. The visualization revealed that Magauin's literary space extends far beyond the territory of Kazakhstan and includes regions associated with Central Asia, Russia, Europe, and the Middle East. This finding confirms Perenič's (2014) assertion that literary mapping can reveal relationships between real and imagined spaces that are not always apparent through textual analysis alone. The map demonstrated that local, historical, and civilizational spaces coexist within a single literary system and form interconnected layers of meaning.

The educational and analytical potential of literary mapping identified by Opach et al. (2025) is also evident here. Linking textual references to coordinates supports exploration of spatial patterns, while the accompanying type, layer, and coordinate-status fields prevent the visual interface from flattening historically or symbolically complex places into apparently equivalent points.

From a Digital Humanities perspective, these findings support Berry's (2012) and Svensson's (2010) view that computational methods can expand humanities inquiry. In this study, the database and map complement rather than replace close reading: quantitative and visual patterns direct attention back to the narrative contexts in which spatial meanings are produced.

Recent discussions of digital space further strengthen the relevance of this approach. Mitchell (2025) argues that contemporary understandings of space increasingly involve hybrid interactions between physical and digital environments. The interactive map created in this study can be interpreted as an example of such hybrid spatiality. Literary space, originally represented through narrative discourse, is transformed into a digital and visual form that allows new modes of interaction and interpretation. Consequently, the spatial structures embedded in literary texts become accessible through both textual and digital representations.

Finally, the findings support Jin and Ying's (2025) argument that literary space should be understood as a category closely connected to identity, existence, and cultural experience. In Magauin's prose, space is not merely a geographical framework but a means of articulating historical consciousness and national self-understanding. Through the interaction of local landscapes, historical territories, and civilizational spaces, the author constructs a literary world in which geography, memory, and culture are inseparable (Soja, 1996).

This study has several limitations. The purposively selected corpus contains six spatially rich works and therefore cannot represent the full range of Magauin's prose. Manual identification and functional classification involve interpretive judgment, even though the operational criteria were applied consistently. In addition, point-based mapping simplifies rivers, mountains, historical territories, and symbolic locations; approximate coordinates indicate visual reference points rather than historically exact boundaries. The present Leaflet map is a research prototype without a permanent public URL. Future research should expand the corpus, conduct independent coding checks, model extensive features as lines or polygons where evidence permits, and publish a versioned dataset and map in a stable repository.

5. Conclusion

This study identified and systematized 60 distinct spatial units in a bounded corpus of six prose works by Mukhtar Magauin. Combining close reading, toponymic classification, frequency analysis, a geospatial database, and digital mapping showed that Almaty, Naryn, Egypt, the Golden Horde,

Semey, and the Nile form the principal recurrent nodes, while choronyms and oikonyms constitute the largest typological categories.

The findings indicate that Magauin's literary geography moves among local, national, historical, and civilizational scales. Toponyms do more than locate events: depending on context, they preserve historical memory, mark cultural belonging, shape emotional landscapes, and acquire symbolic or mythological force. Natural and historical layers are especially prominent, linking landscape to cultural identity and the literary present to broader histories.

The geospatial model made regional clusters and transregional connections more visible, but its interpretive value depends on the methodological distinction between exact contemporary locations, approximate historical reference points, and unmappable symbolic spaces. Accordingly, the database and prototype map should be understood as complements to close reading rather than substitutes for it.

Within these limits, the study provides a transferable framework for literary-spatial research in Kazakh literature. Expanding the corpus, validating classifications through multiple coders, and publishing a stable version of the dataset and interactive map would strengthen future comparative work on Kazakh authors and literary geography more broadly.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Author Contributions

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the author upon reasonable request.

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