

Statistics for 2012

As Hebrew Book Week approaches, the National Library reports:

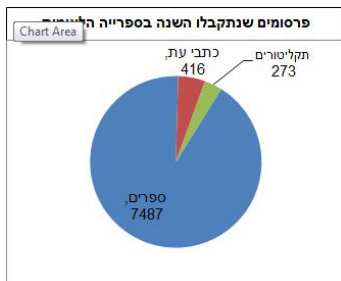
In 2012, 8,176 new publications were issued (1,000 more than in 2011)

Other interesting statistics include:

- 81% of the books are original Hebrew works, while the rest are translations from other language
- Approximately 16% of the books (1,224) are works of prose or poetry
- The number of books for children and youth has increased (836 new books this year compared with 660 last year)
- 212 of this year's publications are about cooking, culture and leisure
- Some 60% of the publications are commercial, 16% self-publications, and the rest published by institutions, organizations, associations and government offices
- The National Library obtained 100 electronic books, for the first time.

The traditional book, in its 550 year old format, has been eulogized for some time now. Many have pronounced it dead, killed by film, radio, television, computers, the Internet and of course "the youth of today". They say nobody reads anymore. They say that at best, people read inarticulate talkbacks. They say that our concentration span is now 140 characters, text messages and Whatsapp. They couldn't be more wrong.

There are those who challenge the prophets of doom, claiming that people are indeed reading. What's more, books still exist, in their essence. They may have changed their physical form, but they continue to thrive in electronic format. Why mourn paper? Paper may be dead but it is nothing more than a vehicle. Books are alive and well in the digital realm.



לעזרה לח

It is common knowledge that we read differently now, but to tell the truth, common knowledge is not always reliable. Consider the status of the ostensibly dying book in Israel of 2012:

In 2012, in accordance with the Israeli Books Laws, the National Library registered at least 8,176 new publications. Of these, 7,487 were books, 273 were CDs and 3,484 periodicals (newspapers, local bulletins, journals, and weekly Torah portion flyers). 416 of the latter were published for the first time this year:

The figures speak for themselves to some extent, but there is more evidence at hand. By way of comparison, in 2011 the National Library registered 6,876 new publications. 6,302 of these were books of various kinds: government publications, commercial and private publications, research studies, non-fiction, fiction, religious texts and children's books in various languages, genres and styles. This is certainly a respectable number. In 2004, the year Facebook was launched, there were no less than 6,436 new books registered by the National Library.

In light of the above, can we really speak of the death of the book and a decrease in the reading population? A visit to the National

Library would indicate otherwise. The 7,487 book issued in 2012 (1,000 more than in 2011) uphold standards set in previous years. The increase in publications registered this year attests to the strengthening of the National Library's position, both internationally and in the local cultural and intellectual arenas, as it undergoes a process of renewal. The National Library is proud to undertake its mission: to collect all published materials through cultivating relations with Israeli publishers and authors.

The numbers cited here refer to every book and periodical published in 50 copies or more, from the State Comptroller's Report to the Hebrew translation of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The catalogue of the National Library enables us to break the numbers down so that not only do we know how many books were published in Israel in 2012, but we know what they are.

Hebrew and Other Languages

Of the new books registered by the National Library in 2012, 6,527 are in Hebrew, 472 in English, 220 in Russian and 181 in Arabic.

1,419 of the total number were translated from other languages and the rest – 81% – were original Israeli works.

As might be expected, the majority of the translations were from English. However, there were also translations from no fewer than 38 languages, among them: German, French, Spanish, Italian, Yiddish, Russian, Polish, Farsi, Japanese, Amharic, Czech, Catalan and Albanian. Works from the far north – Sweden, Norway and Finland – were also translated. There is even an anthology of poems translated into Hebrew from Tamil. The Israeli book market has eclectic tastes.

1,308 of the above 1,419 translations were into Hebrew. The others were translated into Arabic, English, Russian and a few into Spanish, French and German.

The 259 books translated from Hebrew into other languages include government and institutional publications made accessible to Arabic-, Russian- and English- speaking Israelis.

What we read in 2012

The literary yield included 1,225 books of prose or poetry. 873 of these were original Hebrew publications and 351 translations from other languages. As is the case internationally, most translations are of English works, but we also have smatterings of German, Indian languages, Japanese, and even northern European items.

Not only do we read a lot in Israel, we write a lot too. This year there were 873 locally produced works of prose and poetry for adults (children's books will be elaborated upon below). The vast majority of these are in Hebrew, but the diversity of Israeli society adds variety to the yield: 50 titles in Arabic, 45 in Russian, 16 in Yiddish and works in ten more languages. A closer look at the 751 Hebrew titles shows a diverse array of pickings for the Israeli reader (and Hebrew-speaking reader in other parts of the world).

The large body of publications can be divided into several genres and subjects (the numbers add up to over 100% because some books appear in more than one category). 416 are prose, of which 43 are thrillers, 21 romantic novels, but only 10 fantasy (far less than in the children's category). We are clearly very concerned with family relations: 25 of the books are about male-female relations and another 34 about family dynamics. The Holocaust continues to concern us in fiction as well, with 26 original Hebrew works (compared with over 30 translated ones).

The short story is also a sought after genre, with 52 collections published.

Poetry continues to thrive with 354 new volumes this year, slightly less than last year's 369. Of these, 245 are original Hebrew works, 35 are translated and 74 were published in Israel in Latin languages. And if your heart should desire a book of Japanese verse translated into Russian, one was recently published in Israel.

Books for children and youth

Prophecies of doom and interminable complaints about the degenerate "youth of today" notwithstanding, the past year saw a significant rise in the number of books for children and youth that were issued: 836 books, 11% of the total number of books, an impressive figure in comparison with last year's 660. This is not counting the 305 new textbooks (the number having risen steadily over the past 5 years), 218 of which are translated into Hebrew from other languages including many fairy tales.

25 of the books are children's poetry and another 46 are written in verse. 35 children's books were about animals and fantasy, while the science fiction genre, which has done so well in recent years, added 57 titles to its ranks. 46 of the books included puzzles, popups and games of various kinds. 16 new editions of children's classics in stiff cardboard versions suited to very small children.

Furthermore, the re-translation of classic children's literature appears to be the trend. The Harpatka series issued new Hebrew translations this year of *The Jungle Book*, *King Solomon's Mines*, and others. Another series, *Harpatkaot Lanoar*, brought out *Winnetou: Savage to Saint* and *Captain Blood the Pirate*. Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* and *Secret Seven* were also reissued this year in as was a third Hebrew translation of *The Hobbit*. In addition to the fiction, 30 science books, dictionaries and encyclopedias for children and youth were issued this year, as were 45 biographies that will introduce the young generation to those that preceded

it.

25 books were published in Arabic as well as 71 books intended for the religious and ultra-orthodox communities.

There were only 3 children's books about the holocaust published, one of which was in German.

Non-fiction and special interest books

This year saw the publication of 288 biographies, 114 of them autobiographies, as well as 189 Jewish history books, 103 books about the land of Israel, 805 books dealing with the State of Israel from the perspectives of the liberal arts and social sciences, 80 books dealing with Arabic literature and 45 books on Hebrew or Arabic language. There were also 83 legal titles. The number of books dealing with the Israeli-Arab conflict decreased, numbering only 124 new works.

The library also received 453 new works of rabbinic literature: 263 of them on kabbalah and Hassidism, and 66 on Jewish philosophy. 260 hermeneutic works were published this year, along with 76 works of biblical commentary and

291 books on art and folklore were published this year.

As befits a nation that holds food in high regard, no fewer than 59 cookbooks were published this year and, to fill up the time not spent reading or eating, 153 guides to culture and leisure were issued.

80 books were published in the fields of popular science, nature and mathematics for a general audience.

And for those still short of bedtime reading, 76 telephone directories and 35 business directories were published.

Locations

There is a question as to the relation between the size of a population and the reading habits in a particular local and the quantity of publications issued there. The answer appears to be: not necessarily. While independent publishing is usually done close to home, the large commercial publishing houses are scattered in various, sometimes surprising, places. The most sought after publishing locales, includes for many self-publishing endeavors, are Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Jerusalem leads with 1,393 books published in the past year, followed closely by Tel Aviv with 1,336 titles. Next is Ramat Gan, where 382 books were produced, and then Or Yehuda (264) which is home to one of the large publishers, Bnei Brak (227), Beer Sheva (219) and Haifa (140).

Overall, books were published in 220 Israeli locales this year.

Titles by Type of Publisher

59% of the titles published this year were issued by commercial publishing houses.

The 10 largest commercial publishing houses produced 14% of the books published this year. Another 36% of the books were issued by one of the 100 large publishing houses in Israel, most of which are commercial and some of which are organizational e.g. university presses.

Government and academic institutions are responsible for 5% of the titles and various other organizations (associations, unions, institutes, museums, etc.) are responsible for another 15%.

16% were independently published by the authors.

In addition, the National Library received 1,123 Master's theses and 1,112 doctoral dissertations in various fields.

Periodicals in Israel

The National Library's periodicals collection includes all serial publications issued in Israel, including newspapers, journals, magazines, weekly Torah portion flyers, etc. There are 21 daily papers distributed throughout the country.

In 2012, the National Library received around 20,000 issues of the 3,484 active periodicals it holds. 2,832 of the periodicals are in Hebrew, 367 in English, 78 in Arabic, 70 in Russian and 53 in French. Periodicals in Spanish, German, Romanian, Yiddish, and a variety of other languages (such as Korean and Marathi (from India) and Esperanto) can be found in Israel.

29% of all the books published in Israel this year were published in Jerusalem. The multitude of research institutes and religious organizations in Jerusalem keeps the capital at the head of the list. In second place, with 24% of the publications, is Tel Aviv, followed by Haifa, Bnei Brak and Ramat Gan, with about 3% each.

416 of the serial publications that were deposited in the Library this year are new, i.e. were issued for the first time. 26 of these are in Arabic, 19 in Russian and 81 in numerous Latin languages.

Electronic Format

While print is clearly alive and well in Israel, electronic books have also begun to stake a claim. There are several companies active in the publications and sales of electronic books in the Hebrew market, with more distributors and stores emerging all the time, some specializing in electronic format and some adding it to their print interests. Electronic reading devices are increasingly supporting Hebrew text and even the established Hebrew publishers have begun to issue titles in electronic format. The National Library engages the electronic realm in two parallel planes: gathering and preserving electronic books published in Israel. In the past year the Library has registered over 100 electronic titles from small publishers and private initiatives, and dozens of newspapers are deposited in electronic format. At the same time, the Library is preparing to obtain the books of large publishers in concentrated delivery.

Israeli Publishers

Publishers that submit their publications to the National Library are listed in the Israeli Publishers Database. This is a comprehensive database of the Israeli publishing world, both past and present.

The database contains 1,611 publishing houses and various organizations actively engaged in publishing. Of these, 1,044 are commercial publishing houses, and 514 are organizations and institutions whose primary business is not publishing, but who produce and publish publications from time to time. 526 of the publishers and organizations listed in the database publish books for the religious and orthodox sectors.

41 publishers listed in the database publish primarily in English, while 338 publishers publish in English as well as Hebrew. 28 publishers publish mainly in Russian, and 54 publishers publish in Russian in addition to Hebrew. 29 publishers publish mainly in Arabic, and 52 publish in Arabic in addition to Hebrew or other languages.

Israeli Publishers Database: The History of Publishing Houses in Israel

The Israeli Publishers Database is a vast resource of information on the history of publishing in Israel. Its importance lies not only in its national and historic value, but also in its practical value. The database traces the copyright of works published in the region of Israel and makes it possible to locate copyright holders and heirs to publishing houses that no longer exist.

