


The National Library Presents 2015 Israeli Publishing Data

Among the highlights:

- A total of 8,537 new works were published in 2015, including 7,843 books and 225 ebooks.
- 959 children's and young-adult books were published, with fantasy and science-fiction the most popular themes.
- Large and small-size publishers are gaining over mid-size publishers.
- A slight rise in debut books: 388 as opposed to 372 last year.
- Israelis love poetry: 345 books of original poetry in Hebrew were published in 2015.
- Original Hebrew Literature and Prose: over 120 books were written on relationships between men and women, around 75 on family relationships, around 30 new books about the Holocaust and 12 books about soldiers during and after their army service.
- Rise in books published in French: the number of new books in French in 2015 was more than double the number of books published in French in 2014.

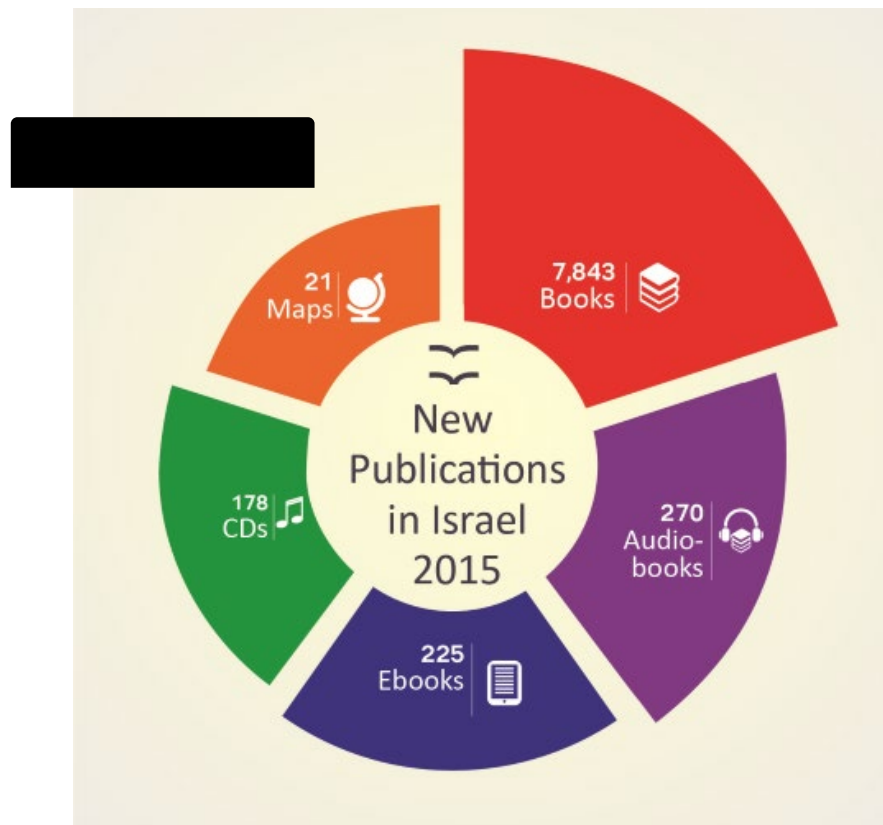
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The National Library is releasing the annual figures on publishers in Israel, translated books, publishers' areas of specialization, and other important topics that can shed light on digital, social and cultural trends in Israel. The data refers to books that reached the National Library during 2015.

As we know, a copy of any publication either printed or produced in Israel must, by law, be deposited with the National Library. These include books, newspapers, magazine and journals, CDs and in recent years also digital and audiobooks.

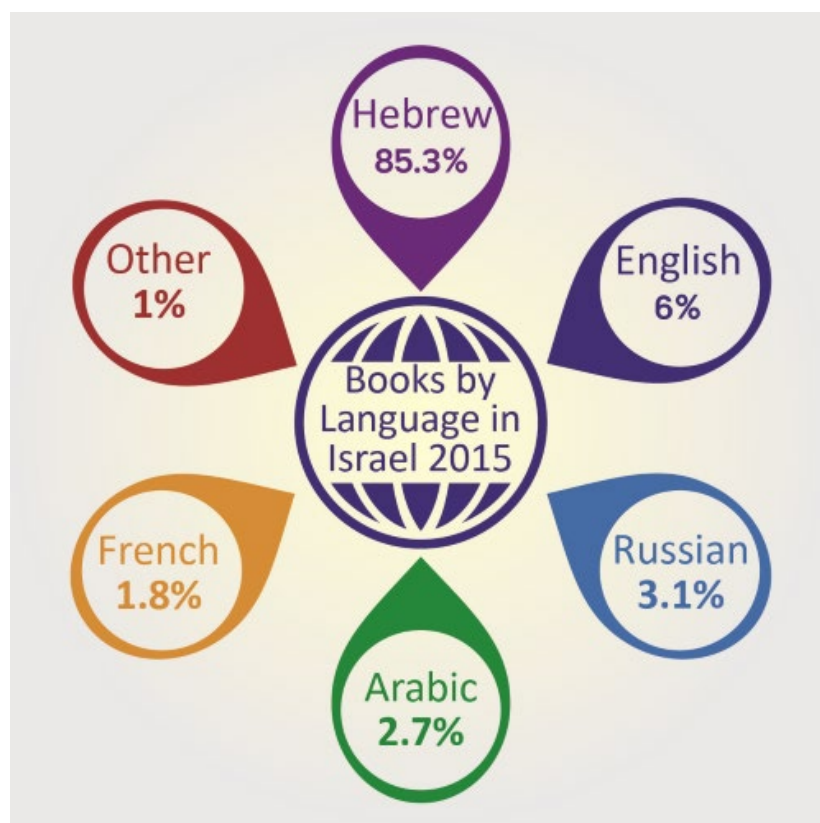
In 2015 the National Library received 8,537 new publications

7,843 books; 178 CDs; 21 maps, 225 ebooks and 270 audiobooks. Magazines, journals, newspapers, archival material and the like are not included in the report.



Hebrew and Other Languages

Of course, most books published in Israel are in Hebrew (85.3%), followed by books in English (6%). A small increase was recorded in books in Russian (up from 2% last year to 3.1% of all books published in 2015), along with a significant increase in French-language books (1.8% of all books published, more than double the previous year's number). Arabic maintained its relative position (2.7%), and 17 other languages make up less than 1%.



Prose and Poetry

Similar to 2014, this year 1,404 books in the category of prose and poetry were published, which accounts for 18% of all Israeli publications (identical to the number in 2014 and 16% in 2013). The majority (1,150 books) were in Hebrew, and the rest in Russian, English, and Arabic.

1,006 books in the prose and poetry category were written in Israel. The rest, 398, were translated from a variety of languages. The Israeli reader is exposed to more books that have been translated from English (more than 70%), but also other European languages, with French (around 8%) an especially important source for Israeli readers. Only a few books were translated from Asian, Slavic or other languages.

84% of the books that were written in Israel (849 books) were written in Hebrew. The remainder were written in Arabic, Russian, English, and in 7 other languages.

What Was Written in Hebrew in 2015?

Hebrew Israeli literature is divided into a few genres. The largest is prose (all books of all genres) includes 464 books, followed by 345 books of poetry. In addition, 69 collections of short stories reached the Library as well as 8 plays (some of the books are included in more than one category).

Of the more than 100 original books whose stories are about an event in a particular place, 84% are situated in Israel and only 3% are not connected with Jews, Israelis or the Holocaust. In contrast, the characters in the stories relate to a wide array of ethnic groups and their lives in Israel and abroad, including from Teheran, Russia, Egypt, Iraq and 5 stories about Ethiopians living in Israel.

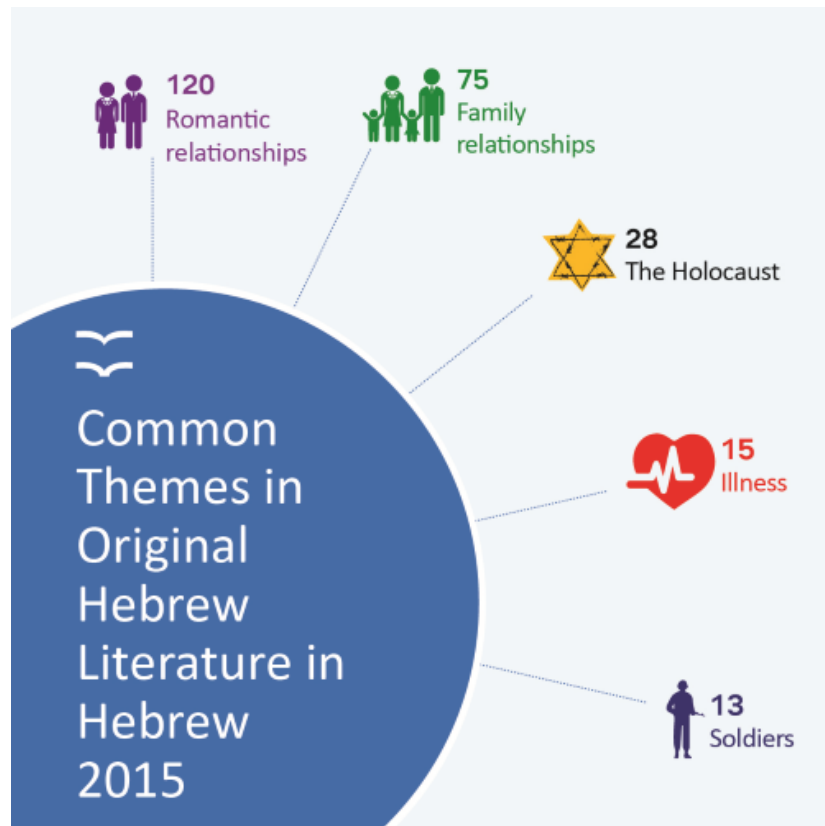


Common Themes in Original Literature

- Relationships between the sexes (120). In contrast, only a few books were published about same gender relationships.
- Family relationships (75), mostly involving parents and children but also comradeship and friendships.
- A relatively large number of books (28) dealt with events and occurrences connected to the Holocaust.
- In both children's and adult literature there is reference to significant life cycle events: pregnancy (1), infertility (2), illness (15), mourning (10), and more. Naturally, most of the books tend to present extreme or particularly difficult cases, such as *agunot* (2),

survivors/victims of physical and sexual abuse (5), psychological adjustment problems (14).

- 13 books this year dealt with soldiers and the IDF, including adjustment to civilian life after discharge from the army, relations between men and women soldiers, time spent in a military prison.



Debut Books

The term "debut book" has appeared with frequency in the media lately, but it is not always clear what is meant by it – does it include only prose writing, or is a first-time author of an academic research book also included in this category?

This year the National Library has decided to focus on debut books in the areas of literature for adults, including short stories and poetry. Excluded from this category were children's books, self-help books, reference books and leisure and recreation books.

The definition of an author who is "a writer of a debut book" refers to someone who was not known to have published a work in the fields of literature, prose or poetry for at least 24 years. If the author has published a work in an academic field of the humanities or the sciences, his or her first literary work will be considered a debut book.

According to these definitions, the Library received 415 debut books of which 388 were in Hebrew (as opposed to 372 debut books in Hebrew in 2014). Out of a total of Hebrew language debut books, 51% are fiction, 40% of the debut books are poetry, and 9% are short stories.

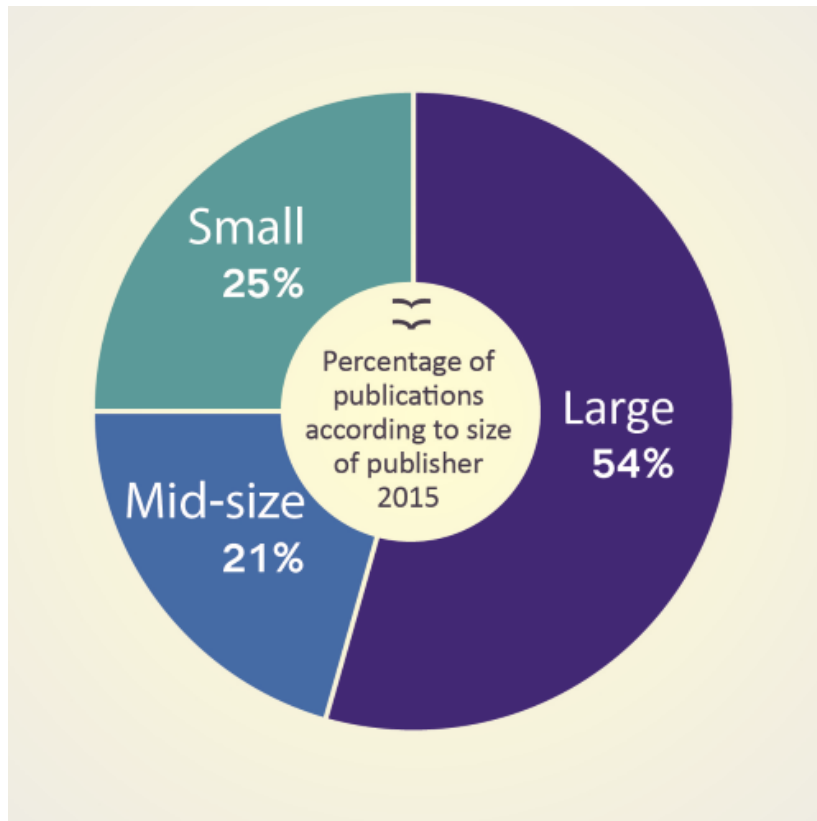
A Breakdown of Publishers in Numbers and Percentages

Analysis of the Israeli publishing industry is very complex. On the one hand, the names of the large and mid-size publishers are familiar to the reading public in Israel. On the other hand, there are many other "players" in the publishing field. Among the less well known are "boutique" publishers that specialize in foreign language books, public and government institutions and universities and government offices that put out professional publications, and there is also a large segment of private individuals who either self-publish or publish with the help of professionals but without the assistance of recognized publishers.

This year, in light of the public debate about the Law for the Protection of Literature and Writers in Israel, we performed a more in-depth analysis on the number of new titles in relation to the size of the publisher.

The dominant trend is a significant increase in the number of books published by large publishers (that put out at least 50 books in the last year) and small publishers (up to ten books) and significant erosion in the number of books published by mid-size publishers (between 11 and 49 books).

The large publishers published no less than 54% of the total of all new books (in contrast to 50% in 2014). Small publishers registered an increase from 21% (in 2104) to a quarter (25%) of new books in 2015. Mid-size publishers recorded a 7% drop from 28% of all books in 2014 to just 21% in 2015.



Children's and Young Adult Books

It is difficult to cover the contents of all 959 children's and young adult books. Nevertheless here is some data on aspects of books in this category:

- This year at least 117 children's books in rhyme reached the Library, in addition to 23 books of poetry for children.
- 27% of children's literature is translated, mainly from English but also from Italian, Swedish, German and French. Not all are actually translated. Many of the books are in fact picture books for toddlers with the main translation being the pictures. Sometimes there were amusing mistakes, for example a picture book with clocks where the positions of the numbers 3 and 9 were reversed.
- Most translated book of the year: *The Little Prince* (5 separate editions); most translated author: Astrid Lundgren.
- Galila Ron Feder-Amit provided 12 new titles this year, followed by M. Safra with 7. The latter is representative of the men and women writers for the Haredi public who do not use their full names but sign their books using their initials and pseudonyms, such as A. Bat-Melech, A. Neyenboim, or "Leahle's Mother."
- Still popular are books by classic children's book authors such as Leah Goldberg and Levin Kipnis, who enjoy a constant renaissance thanks also to the initiative of "Pajama Library." Children's authors tend often to be "one-book authors," as on average children's book authors tend to write only two books over the years.
- Children's books feature a range of topics, much more than books for adults. There are books about regular house pets like dogs and cats, but also about the rhinoceros, ostrich, caribou and otter.
- Fantasy and science fiction are the favored subjects. Fairies, dragons, monsters and ghosts compete for space on the bookshelf next to astronauts and aliens from outer space.
- The present-day also finds a place on the shelf: books about Israel's wars, friendships between children from different ethnic backgrounds, coping with illness, or with parents' divorce. Two books about Ethiopia are just two examples from a variety of issues reflected in children's literature.
- Let's not forget babies: 72 cardboard books and 40 special form books were published this year.

Digital and Audio Books

One of the main challenges facing the National Library over the last years is collecting books and other publications in the digital world. In 2015, 225 electronic books were deposited in the Library. Another digital format gaining momentum is the audio book. 270 books published in 2015 recorded by the iCast company, were added to the Library, including recordings of children's books, the latest prose, literary classics and more. This year, poetry was also added to this format.

One of the main initiatives in the digital field this year was the collection of digital newspapers. Today, newspapers appear in a variety of forms, including printed newspapers, content sites, newsletters distributed via electronic mailing lists, and more. The Library is working on building a large and growing digital collection in this area, which includes over 200 newspapers, which will become a digital collection in the future. Newspapers arrive as files sent from the publishers or can be downloaded from the internet.

These activities are carried out in parallel to the archiving of copies of Israeli internet sites in ARCHINET: Israeli Internet Archive.

Director of the National Library Oren Weinberg, summarizing the annual report of the National Library, says that in recent years there has been increased awareness among publishers to send books, newspapers and all other relevant publications to the National Library, which has greatly enhanced the Library's ability to estimate and measure the information received as well as make sure that the Library's collections encompass the breadth of the publications in the State of Israel.

"By correctly analyzing the patterns of the publishers, we are able to trace fads and trends in Israeli culture. For example, changing emphasis in Israeli literature may confirm changes in the public's areas of interest and recreational reading habits," says Weinberg.

In his view, as regards the Law for the Protection of Literature and Writers in Israel, the report does not indicate a dramatic change in the scope of book publishers in the last years and there is no dramatic change in the number of publishers of debut books.

Changes following the introduction of the digital book also have been slow, but the increase in the variety and performance of devices supporting Hebrew may increase use of this digital format, and all the implications thereof.

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