



THE PAST AND THE PRESENT OF BOOK PUBLISHING IN KURDISH LANGUAGE IN TURKEY

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CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH AND SOME TERMS

Nowadays, the Kurds live in the territories of the states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia and Lebanon. In most of these countries the use of the Kurdish language has been banned in one way or another and the Kurds have fought for the right to write and publish books and periodicals in their mother tongue for a long time. In this research I will try to describe the condition of Kurdish book publishing in Turkey and Syria.

It would be useful to remind the reader of the following facts in connection to the research:

The Kurdish language has different dialects and is written in three different alphabets: the Arabic, the Latin and the Cyrillic. In Turkey the Arabic alphabet was used until 1928 and then replaced with the Latin. The Kurdish dialects *Kurmanci* and *Kirmancki* (*Kirdki*, *Zazaki*, *Dimilki*) are spoken in Turkey, and books are published in them. *Kurmanci* is the only dialect spoken in Syria. The Arabic alphabet is the official one in Syria and writing and publishing books in Kurdish is not allowed there. Ignoring the ban, Kurdish writers who write in Kurdish use the Latin alphabet like the Kurds of Turkey, not the Arabic one.

The word Kurdistan which means “country of the Kurds” has been in use for nearly 900 years. Kurdistan is now divided between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. The Kurds call these parts Northern Kurdistan, Eastern Kurdistan, Southern Kurdistan and Western Kurdistan. Northern Kurdistan will mean in this research the eastern and south-eastern regions of Anatolia, and Western Kurdistan will mean the northern part of Syria, close to the border with Turkey. In this study the term Kurdish writer denotes a person who has published at least one book in Kurdish, and the term Kurdish publishing house denotes a company that has published at least one book in the Kurdish language.

1. KURDISH WRITERS AND BOOK PRODUCTION IN TURKEY

Because their mother tongue was banned, Kurdish writers show differences from other writers in certain aspects. The current situation and their specific problems can be better understood in the context of the events in the past, the long-lasting ban on their language and the oppression. This is also essential for a better understanding of the current situation of Kurdish book publishing.

That is why I will first focus on the historical background and the situation of the Kurdish language in Turkey. When and why did the ban on Kurdish publications start? How was this put into practice?

1.1 A forbidden mother tongue

At present, the Kurds are considered to be “the biggest nation in the world, deprived of its own state, of self-government and basic human rights” (1). It is difficult to estimate the exact number of the Kurdish population in Turkey. The main reason is that people in Turkey were not allowed to call themselves Kurds until recently. Research shows that the official statistics about the Kurdish population do not reflect the truth. Different sources give varying data about the Kurdish population. Here are the statistics about the Kurdish population in two sources (2):

	<i>Servet Mutlu</i>	<i>M. İzadi</i>
<i>The Kurdish population in Turkey</i>	7 046 025	13 800 000
<i>percentage ratio of Kurds to the total population of Turkey</i>	12	24,3

According to a Kurdish researcher, the Kurds formed 30 % of the total population of Turkey in 1997 (that is to say 19 million) (3).

Before the World War I a great part of Kurdistan was within the Ottoman Empire, and the rest – within the state of Iran. Although during the war the Ottoman Empire lost a sizeable portion of its territories, it managed to keep Kurdistan. On 10 August 1920 the Treaty of Sevres was signed between the vanquished Ottoman Empire, and the victorious Great Britain, France and their allies. According to articles 62 and 63 of this treaty, a local autonomy was envisaged in the region where the Kurdish population prevailed. What is more, one year after the Treaty had come into force, provided that the Kurds in this region could prove that the majority of the population there wanted independence, they could address the League of Nations with this demand. If

the organization reached the conclusion that this population had the right to independence and recommended that Turkey should announce the Kurds independent, Turkey had to accept this recommendation and waive all its privileges and rights in the said territories (4).

Nothing of this sort happened. In 1923 replacing the Ottoman Empire with the new Turkish state, Mustafa Kemal announced the Republic of Turkey. The Treaty of Lausanne signed on 24 July 1924 between the Turkish Republic and the western states determined the borders of Turkey. According to this treaty, Kurdistan, rich of petrol and other natural resources, was divided between Turkey and the contemporary Iraq and Syria. The borders remain the same today. The Treaty of Lausanne did not mention the rights of the Kurds at all.

There are various minorities in Turkey such as Arabs, Greeks, Jews, Syrians, Laz, Georgians, Albanians, Circassians, Chechens and others whose mother tongue is not Turkish. As the Treaty of Lausanne guaranteed ethnic rights to non-Muslim minorities, only the Greeks, the Jews and the Armenians were allowed to read and write in their mother tongues.

On 3 March 1924 the publications in Kurdish were banned (5). According to article 14 of the Plan for Reformation of the East dated 1925 the cities and towns where Kurds live were listed, and speaking Kurdish there was banned:

“People who speak a language other than Turkish in state and municipality institutions, and other organs and administration, in schools, at the marketplace in the district and regional centers of Malatya, Elâziz, Diyaribekir, Bitlis, Van, Muş, Urfa, Ergani, Hozat, Erciş, Adilcevaz, Ahlat, Palu, Çarsançak, Çemişgezek, Ovacık, Hınımansur, Behisni, Arga, Hekimhan, Birecik, Çermik, will be brought before the courts for committing a crime against the state and the local authorities.” (6)

Authorities wanted to hamper reading and writing as well as speaking of Kurdish outside the home. The names of Kurdish villages and towns were changed to Turkish ones. Parents were not allowed to give their children Kurdish names. Kurdish songs were banned. The official statement of the Kemalists was that the Kurds were “Turks from the mountains” and that there wasn’t a distinct Kurdish nation. The names “Kurd” and “Kurdistan” were removed from geographical maps and books. These words were made taboo. Absurd things have happened because of this situation. For example, even in the year 2005 Turkish Airlines (THY) cancelled an Iraqi woman’s plane ticket from Stockholm to Iraq because her name was “Kurdistan” (7). Another example in the papers is the dismissal of Prof. Dr. Diemut Majer for calling the Eastern part of Turkey Kurdistan during his lecture at the *Bilkent* University in Turkey (8).

Turkish authorities try to hinder the Kurds from giving Kurdish names to their children not only in Turkey but also abroad, and they try to impede education in their mother tongue. For example, in 1985 the Swedish ambassador in Ankara and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm received a warning notice because the Kurdish personnel taking care of 15 Kurdish preschoolers in a nursery school in Stockholm were speaking Kurdish with them (9).

During the Ottoman era there was no ban on speaking Kurdish until 1898, the publication of the first Kurdish newspaper, *Kurdistan*, which was immediately banned. Between 1908 and 1923 a few Kurdish newspapers and magazines were banned due to political reasons but the Kurdish language was not banned. The books in Kurdish were not banned either. Kurdish was taught in the “medrese” schools of Kurdistan.

Prohibition in this field appeared on the very first days after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. According to the first Turkish constitution of 1924, “*Islam is the religion of the Turkish state, and Turkish is its official language*” (10). The state took political measures which aimed at forceful assimilation. During the 1930s the state acquired the official theories known as “the Turkish History thesis” and “the Sun-Language theory”. According to the former, the Turkish race was the mother of all races. According to the latter, all languages in the world originated from Turkish. The Turkish policy towards Kurdish is a typical example of *linguicide* (language genocide) (11). According to the Turkish sociologist İsmail Beşikçi Kurdistan was not even a colony because colonies have borders and status, whereas Kurdistan is divided and the existence of Kurds is denied (12).

As a reaction against the repressive policy of the Turkish state the Kurds rose in rebellion several times. In the battles between the Turkish army and the Kurdish rebels in 1925, 1927-1930 and 1937-1938, tens of thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands were forcefully sent into exile to regions where Turks lived.

A Kurdish national movement flourished in the 1960s and the 1970s after a long silence when a few Kurdish intellectuals tried to publish books and magazines in Kurdish but each attempt was met by the severe measures of the authorities.

In 1960, 1971 and 1980 the military junta came to power in Turkey. There were mass arrests. Thousands of Kurdish politicians and adolescents were tortured. Many of them were forced to emigrate to other countries. Sometimes even a Kurdish alphabet book was the reason for its author's arrest. For example, in 1968 Emin Bozarslan was arrested and held in prison for four months because he wrote a Kurdish alphabet book (13).

Publishing in Kurdish was interrupted especially after the military interventions of 1971 and 1980. A new constitution was created in 1982. According to article 26 of this constitution “a language banned by law cannot be used to express and spread ideas”. According to article 28 “press is free” but “may not publish anything in any language which is forbidden”. On 19 October 1983 a new law # 2932 was introduced to determine the languages which were “forbidden”. According to the law, languages which “were not the first official languages of states recognized by Turkey” were forbidden. People expressing ideas in any of the forbidden languages would be imprisoned between 6 months and three years. According to article 31 a printing house printing books in forbidden languages could be closed (14).

The sociologist İsmail Beşikçi is a good example of a man who suffered because of the oppression against the Kurds. He has stayed in prison for 17 years and 2 months so far because he wrote books about the Kurds. He was also sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment and 5 years of house arrest because of a letter he wrote to the chairman of the Swedish Writers' Syndicate in 1981. 32 of his 36 books published so far have been banned (15). His publisher was arrested due to instigation of separatism.

The law # 2932 banning the Kurdish language was revoked on 12.04.1991 by the law of war on terror. However, the ban still continued. For example, the 1996 Istanbul edition of the romantic epos *Mem and Zin* written in Kurdish in 1695 was banned and confiscated, and as the translator M. Emin Bozarslan did not live in Turkey, the publisher İhsan Türkmen was sentenced to 13 months and 10 days of imprisonment and a fine(16).

At a time when it was trying to become a member of the European Union, Turkey found itself in a situation where it could not openly defend the old restrictions on Kurdish. Some secret state documents which were publicly revealed (17) show that other methods were used for impeding the development of the Kurdish language. The official document # 472 sent to the security services by the Minister of Interior Meral Akşener on 3 January 1997 serves as an example of these secret documents. It reads:

“Taking administrative and legal measures against those who open research institutions for spreading the Kurdish language, for developing it into a written and literary language, and organizing Kurdish language courses...” (18)

In the 1990s in Northern Kurdistan a new development was the issue of migration. As a response to the guerrilla war fought by the PKK, the Turkish security services set thousands of Kurdish villages on fire, depopulating entire villages. Several million people from these villages had to migrate to towns. Thus the security services tried to eliminate the guerrilla support in villages. Another reason for forceful migration was that the Kurds settling

into towns where Turkish was spoken would be more easily assimilated and turkified.

After this elaboration which I think will help illustrate the milieu of repression and harassment, we can turn our attention to the problems of the writer.

1.1.1 Writing in a banned language

A few years ago 37 writers responded to a questionnaire I had prepared to understand how Kurdish writers lived in Northern Kurdistan under conditions of severe censorship and prohibition and their effects on them (19). Most of the Kurdish writers living in Sweden now were children at the time of the severe oppression in Turkey against the Kurdish language when almost no books were published. They spoke Kurdish at home and in the street but that was all. I asked the writers how old they were when they saw a book in Kurdish for the first time and here are their answers (20):

<i>The age when they first saw a book in Kurdish</i>	<i>Number of the writers</i>
<i>0-10</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>10-15</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>16-20</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>21-28</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>37</i>

These books were seldom given to them by their parents. One of the reasons was the parents' illiteracy, and a second reason was that these books were regarded as “dangerous”, a cause for severe punishment. Usually the said writers were given their first Kurdish book by their friends (21).

<i>How did they get their first book in Kurdish</i>	<i>Number of the writers</i>
<i>From their father</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>From their uncle (maternal)</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>From their uncle (paternal)</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>From their brother</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>From the imam</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>At home</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>In a bookshop</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>From a friend</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>After their arrival in Sweden</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Do not remember</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Altogether</i>	<i>37</i>

What was their reaction at the sight of the first book in Kurdish? Most of them answered as: “I was very happy”. Some of them revealed that they were surprised. They had not believed in the existence of books in Kurdish before that. The humiliating state policy caused many Kurds to lose their self-confidence and let them believe that their language had no value (22):

The statistics below reflect the current situation in Turkey of the Kurdish publishers that I have interviewed:

<i>Publishers' age when they first saw a book in Kurdish</i>	<i>Number of the publishers</i>
<i>0-10</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>10-15</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>16-20</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>21-30</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Do not remember</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Altogether</i>	<i>12</i>

Most of the Kurdish writers have stayed in prison because of their political activities or of their writings. Some were tortured (23). As one says (24), “writers have experienced prison, politics or the mountain” (25).

The reasons for some of the writers’ arrests were quite different. For example, one writer was arrested because he was distributing the Kurdish alphabet. Another one was arrested because he was found to be in possession of Kurdish songs, and two other writers – because they sold books in Kurdish. Most of them were beaten by their teachers in their childhood because they spoke Kurdish at school (26). There are also quite a few writers whose brothers or other relatives had been killed by the security services.

The most severe oppressions started after the military intervention in 1980. For example, young men thrown in military jails were tortured by being forced to memorise Turkish marches and to sing them every day. During prison visits, the prisoners at military prisons were not allowed to speak Kurdish to their relatives who could not speak any language but Kurdish.

Harold Pinter was sent by the international PEN club to Turkey in 1985 to meet the writers in prison, and he wrote the play *Mountain Language* inspired by the situation there. Staged in various countries around the world, the play is about Kurdish prisoners who could not speak Kurdish to their mothers during prison visits (27).

The Turkish state reacted more severely to Kurdish publications than to weapons. A Kurdish writer says:

“The police found a photograph and a gun when they searched me. I had a photo taken in front of the Kurdish newspaper named “Roja Welat”. I was not accused of being in possession of a weapon but I was taken to court because of the photo taken in front of a Kurdish newspaper’s poster” (28).

A young man who was a student at the time has told me the following:

“In 1978 the police arrested me because they found Kurdish books at my home. They tortured me. When they arrested me again in 1981, during interrogation a friend said that I knew Kurdish better and I was tortured again while loud music was playing.” (The police was playing loud music to silence the screams of the people being tortured) (29)

So, people were tortured not only because they wrote in Kurdish but also when they read, distributed, kept Kurdish publications at home and even when they “knew Kurdish better”. The results of the questionnaire with Kurdish writers (30) and my conversations with authors, publishers and owners of publishing houses have made it clear that most of them, especially during the period of the military junta, had to hide their books, for example by digging them underground, not to be found by the security services. Out of fear of being caught, the books were sometimes burned by the writers themselves or their families when they (the writers) were away.

Many of today’s writers who used to be teachers at the time of the military interventions in 1971 and in 1980 got fired, were sent to exile or banned from teaching in Kurdistan.

These clarifications will help illustrate the difficulties writers faced in the past.

With the exception of a few people who studied in Stockholm and Paris, Kurdish writers from Northern Kurdistan did not study their mother tongue at school but learned it on their own. Their answers to the questions in the questionnaire have made it clear that 20 out of 37 writers learned to write in Kurdish after the age of 18 (31).

<i>Age when they learnt to write in Kurdish</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>8-10</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>11-18</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>19-35</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>37</i>

Almost none of these writers spoke Turkish before they started school. Contemporary writers grew up under the conditions of a banned mother tongue without the opportunity to study it. That is why most of them write in two languages – Kurdish and Turkish. Some of them have even translated the books they had written in Turkish and published them in Kurdish.

An interesting outcome of the oppression and bans is the use of pseudonyms. At least one third of the Kurdish writers in Turkey use pseudonyms. There are various reasons for that. One of them is the risk of recognition by officials and security forces. Some of the writers use pseudonyms because they work at state institutions and find it risky to reveal their names.

Sometimes a writer uses different pseudonyms in order to provide more names to sign the articles in newspapers and magazines. For example, instead of writing three or four articles signed by the same name in any one issue, the writer uses a different pseudonym for each article.

Another reason authors use pseudonyms is to sign their works with Kurdish names instead of their real names of Arabic or Turkish origin. A few Kurdish writers living in Europe have changed their names to European ones like Fred Elifson and Jean-Claude Hussais.

Some writers use more than one pseudonym. The true identity of some of the pseudonyms used by Kurdish writers in the past remains unsolved to this day.

Due to the problems listed above, books of Kurdish writers can not be distributed widely to sell well. That is why published books do not ensure enough profit. There are no Kurdish writers in Northern Kurdistan who make a living from books. With a few exceptions no writer has ever been paid royalties or a fee for the Kurdish books he has written because publishers say these books can not even cover printing costs. Then why do these people write in spite of all the difficulties and risks?

It is not easy to pinpoint why a writer writes or what the factors and motives that nourish and effect his writing are. Unraveling the reasons for writing is difficult even for the writer himself but one can say that most Kurdish authors write for idealistic reasons, not for profit. I think there are several reasons for writing and no doubt these vary from writer to writer. Writing in Kurdish means standing up for your identity, for some writers it is a matter of honor (32).

Most of the writers responding to the questionnaire say that writing in Kurdish is a patriotic duty. I believe this alone can not adequately explain why writers write. People believe that expressing emotions and thoughts in

their mother tongue is more meaningful and important. They want to send a message to society by writing. Some of them need to express themselves in this way. Sometimes writing is a kind of therapy. For some, writing especially in exile is a means of battling against solitude, a way to communicate with other people.

On the other hand, writing is respected among the Kurds. Thus, psychological factors like trying to achieve a high social status also influence writing. The feeling experienced when one is read by others is not easy to explain.

I think state oppression and torture have motivated some people to write. There are clues to this driving force in some writers' explanations (33). Perhaps some of the writers started writing because of the torture they had undergone; the smell of torture and prison permeate their works.

Kurdish writers have different motives to write but the political milieu and national oppression seem to be common factors.

In the matter of the number of Kurdish writers, I have been able to establish 254 authors of books written in the dialects of Kurmanci and Kirmancki (Zazaki) until 2006 in Turkey, including the Ottoman era. The fact that there are only 6 women among them reveals the place of women in Kurdish society.

Here are some other characteristics of Kurdish writers who have published books in Turkey:

	number
<i>Writers from Northern Kurdistan, writing in the Kurmanc dialect.....</i>	195
<i>Writers from Northern Kurdistan, writing in the Kirmanck (Zaza) dialect</i>	39
<i>Writers from Western Kurdistan (Syria).....</i>	10
<i>Writers from Southern Kurdistan (Iraq).....</i>	1
<i>Writers from Eastern Kurdistan (Iran)</i>	1
<i>Writers from Armenia.....</i>	8
<i>Altogether</i>	254

Writers from Northern Kurdistan whose books published in Turkey:

	number	percent %
<i>Writers living in Northern Kurdistan and Turkey</i>	148	63,24
<i>Writers living in Europe.....</i>	56	23,93
<i>Dead</i>	30	12,83
<i>Altogether</i>	234	100

As far as I have managed to find out, a considerable number of the writers comes from the cities of Mardin and Diyarbakir.

Quite a few of the Kurdish writers living in Turkey are teachers and clergymen (mela). Teachers especially play an important role among modern Kurdish men of literature. Many try to teach and write at the same time.

There are also those who write in prison. The Kurdish writers writing in their mother tongue in prison experience additional problems in that the prison administration requires a Turkish translation of each work. Otherwise the permission to send it to the publisher is not given. The imprisoned writer who has already written a Kurdish book does not take it onto himself to do the translation as well and gives up publishing his book.

1.2 Translators

I have found 67 translations among the Kurdish books published in Turkey (10,2 %). At least half of them have been translated from Turkish and the rest – from English, Arabic and Persian. There are also a few books translated from Southern Kurdish (Sorani dialect) to the Kurmanci dialect. There are translations of Moliere, Ernest Hemingway, Che Guevara, Alexander Soljenitsin, Victor Hugo, T. S. Eliot, Edgar Allan Poe, Ezra Pound, Walt Whitman, William Butler Yeats, Harold Pinter.

Besides the translations from other languages, there are new editions of Kurdish books previously written in the Arabic or the Cyrillic alphabet transcribed into the Latin alphabet. There were numerous Kurdish works written in the Arabic alphabet all over Kurdistan during the Ottoman period and at present there are such works in Southern and Eastern Kurdistan. If all the hand-written and printed Kurdish works written in the Arabic script in the past is taken into consideration, the importance of this historic heritage will be understood better. It is very important to transcribe these into the Latin alphabet in order to make them available for the new generations. The same applies to transcribing the hundreds of books written in the Cyrillic alphabet and published in Armenia.

Publishers usually pay the translators with books instead of money. Among the translators to Kurdish one may name Yakup Karademir, Kawa Nemir, Mazlûm Doğan, Selim Temo and Osman Mehmed. According to the information given by Osman Mehmed (34), if translators are paid, they are paid much less than the translators to other languages in Turkey. What is more, the honorariums are often delayed and in general, translators into Kurdish are not taken very seriously by publishers. Osman Mehmed who lived for some time in Southern Kurdistan and was a translator there, says that translation honorariums there are two times higher than in Turkey.

Translating into Kurdish has not become a profession yet. It does not ensure enough profit, so translators have to do something else as well. On the other hand, there is no control on the quality of translated and transcribed works, and as there is almost no serious literature of criticism on the topic, there are many inaccurate translations and transcriptions filled with errors.

1.3 Designers

I have just managed to meet and talk to one book designer (35). Book designers are still not paid for their work.

1.4 Proof-readers

Proof-reading is usually done by the Kurdish publishers themselves or their employees. Those who do not know the written language well enough to proof-read Kurdish texts ask their friends and acquaintances to do the job. Proof-reading is rather a sort of a favor to friends and not paid work. Some writers proof-read their own books or they submit their books to publishers in their final versions (36).

Proof-reading is also done for a fee, albeit rarely. Osman Mehmed who sometimes does proofreading for a fee reveals that payments are very modest and usually quite delayed (37).

1.5 Pre-printing

Authors either use computers and typewriters or simply submit the handwritten manuscripts to publishers.

Out of the 12 publishers I have spoken to (38), only the owner of Nûbihar Publishing House says that they pay for pre-printing; the rest of the publishers admit they do it on their own or ask their friends to help them for free (39).

1.6 Cover designers

Although there are Kurdish publishers who make their own book covers, in general this is done by professional designers, artists, etc. The price for making a cover varies between 60 and 300 New Turkish liras (between 42.84 and 214.20 USD) (40). There are some impressive covers. For example, some of the book covers of Avesta Publishing House received mentions at the Exhibition of Graphic Productions in Istanbul in 1999 and 2000.

1.7 Writers' organizations

Kurd-PEN, founded in 1988 in Germany and a member of PEN-International, aims at developing the Kurdish language and literature. It

engages with Kurdish writers' problems, and from time to time work with writers' organizations from other countries.

A few years ago an association called “Kurd-PEN Writers' Association” was founded in Diyarbekir. However, because the PEN International center did not recognize it and the Kurd-PEN based in Germany was against it, the association had to give up using this name.

1.8 Literature contests and awards

Although there are no organizations in Turkey to award Kurdish publications annually, some contests for short stories and poetry have taken place. For example, every year from 1997 to 2001 “Jiyana Rewşen” magazine organized a contest for short stories and poems where about 50 poets and 30 writers took part. The Kurdish Institute in Istanbul organized a contest for short stories in 2003 (41). The Kurdish Institute also has been granting a prize in the name of Feqî Huseyn Sağnıç since 2005.

Some Kurdish organizations in Europe also grant awards to Kurdish writers. For example, in 2002 Apec Publishing House from Sweden granted awards to the short story writers Roşan Lezgîn and Dilawer Zeraq who live in Diyarbekir. Apec Publishing House acknowledged the translator Osman Özçelik with an award for translation(42). Previously The Federation of Associations of Kurdistan in Sweden had also granted awards.

In recent years The Federation of Workers' Associations of Kurdistan (Kom-Kar), which has branches in several cities in Germany, has been giving annual prizes. The Pîremêrd Award from Southern Kurdistan can be added to the list.

2. BOOK PUBLISHING IN KURDISH LANGUAGE IN TURKEY

As far as I have managed to find out, the total number of Kurdish books which have been published in Turkey including the Ottoman era to 2006 is 654.

2.1 The Ottoman Era (1844-1923)

Kurdish books dating from the Ottoman era are mainly manuscripts in verse. Although there were some written in the Yezidi, Armenian or the Assyrian alphabet, most of them were written in the Arabic alphabet. The press and printed works play an important role in the spreading of ideas and the standardization of a language. However, until the First World War the Kurds in Kurdistan did not have a printing house. The existing printing houses were owned by the state or by Western missionaries. That is why the first books in Kurdish were printed outside Kurdistan in cities like Cairo and Istanbul.

The national movement of the Kurds who were still living in a feudal structure started later than the movements of other people living within the Ottoman Empire. The development of Kurdish publishing in general mirrors the progress of their national revival.

There was a *Kurdistan* Newspaper printing house in 1898 in Cairo (43) as well as the printing house “*Metbe’a Kurdistan ‘Ilmiye*” (Scientific printing house of Kurdistan) owned by a Kurd called Ferecullah Zekî El-Kurdi in 1911 but we do not know if Kurdish books were printed there (44). Abdurrahman Bedirhan and Abdullah Cevdet, the Kurds who had been opposing the Ottoman sultan, tried to buy a printing house during their stay in Switzerland, but the ambassador of the Ottoman Empire was annoyed and expressed his concern to the state officials there (45).

Liceli Kurdîzade Ehmed Ramîz ve Motkili Xelîl Xeyalî started a Kurdish printing house in Istanbul in 1908 with their friends (46). It is also known that in Istanbul in 1910, there was the Matbaa-i Amedi printing house owned by a man from Diyarbakir, where books related to Kurds were printed (47).

Ekrem Cemilpaşa was the first of the nationalists from Northern Kurdistan to buy a printing house in Diyarbakir and publish the *Gazi* newspaper in 1918 (48).

The first Kurdish book in Istanbul was printed in 1844. This book by the famous mystic Mewlana Xalidê Neqşîbendî was not completely in Kurdish. It comprised of poetry in Arabic and Persian with a few poems in Kurdish.

As far as I have managed to find out the number of books published in Kurdish since 1844 until the announcement of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 is about 20. All these books were published in Istanbul with the exception of one in Diyarbekir and another one in Cairo.

Liceli Kurdîzade Ehmed Ramîz, who was publishing and printing books in Cairo and Istanbul during the Ottoman era, addressed the readers on the back cover of a Kurdish book published in Cairo in 1906 with the following words:

“... I am going to publish and print books and brochures in Kurdish this time. Please, send me the Kurdish books you have so I can print them in the name of your virtue and endowment or for the diligence and honor of your people. Afterwards I will give [people who have sent books] a few copies with the original” (49)

Almost half of the Kurdish books written in the Arabic alphabet and published during the Ottoman era materialized in 1918-1919. The reason is that the Ottoman army was defeated during the World War I, the English occupied what nowadays is Iraq, the French –Syria. Using the weakness of the Turks, the Kurdish notables living in Istanbul at the time created their organizations and published a few magazines and books.

During the Ottoman age Armenian people and Western missionaries published a few Kurdish translations of the Bible. Between 1856 and 1911 in Istanbul at least five Bibles in Kurdish were published together with a Kurdish alphabet book in the Armenian alphabet (50). Two Kurdish translations of the Bible were published in 1922 and 1923.

To summarize, during the Ottoman era about 30 Kurdish books written in different alphabets were published altogether.

According to the Treaty of Lausanne in 1924, Turkey, England and France divided Kurdistan among themselves. Northern Kurdistan remained in Turkey, Southern Kurdistan under British rule, Western Kurdistan – French. British policy in Southern Kurdistan was different from the Turkish one. Instead of banning Kurdish they started using it for their own goals, publishing magazines in Baghdad and Silêmanî under their control. They made their propaganda in Kurdish. Publishing in Kurdish continued after the British withdrawal from Iraq.

2.2 The republican Era (after 1923)

2.2.1 From 1923 to 1965

During the republican period the government in Turkey exercised even greater pressure on languages than the Ottoman authorities. For example, after 1839 the Ottoman state published the first official newspaper “Takvim-i Vakayi” in Turkish, Arabic, Greek and Armenian.

As the Arabic alphabet was used in Turkey prior to switching to the Latin alphabet in 1928, new generations have not been able to read literature published during the Ottoman era.

Until 1946 Turkey was governed by one party and one leader. After 1946 other parties started being formed. Kurdish newspapers and magazines could not be published until 1948 because of oppression. After 1948 some Kurdish intellectuals spoke about the Kurds not openly but indirectly with hints in magazines they published in Turkish. There were exceptions though. Some writers dared to speak openly about the Kurds and human rights. In 1959 when the Turkish newspaper "İleri Yurd" printed a few lines in Kurdish by Musa Anter, a court case was immediately opened against the writer.

Because of the Turkish policy in the period 1923-1965, only two religious books in Kurdish were published. Both were written in the Arabic alphabet. As new generations could not read the manuscripts and printed publications written in the Arabic alphabet before 1928 and as it was impossible to publish new books in the Latin alphabet, the written Kurdish almost disappeared. The following generations nearly stopped believing in the existence of Kurdish books or the possibility of writing books in Kurdish.

2.2.2 From 1965 to 1980

Some new democratic rights were stated in the changed constitution of 1960. However, founding Kurdish organizations was not allowed. In 1965 there came a change. The Kurds established a party of their own for the first time in the republican period in Turkey. This party was formed illegally and had many successors in the 1970s - organizations and other parties. These organizations usually published periodicals (51). Most of these legal and illegal periodicals were banned.

A play in Kurdish and a Kurdish grammar book were the first books to be published in 1965 after a 40-year silence. The play was written in prison by the writer and journalist Musa Anter. Anter was killed by the security services some years later in 1972 at the age of 74 (52).

Three more books were published between 1966 and 1970. As the military junta took control in 1971, just one Kurdish book was published between 1971 and 1975.

A few books were published after 1975; between 1975 and 1980 nine books were published altogether.

All of them were banned.

To sum up, in the period 1923-1980 not more than 20 Kurdish books were published in Turkey.

2.2.3 From 1980 to 2005

In 1980 military junta took control again. It was impossible to publish books in Kurdish again until 1990. The junta did not just ban Kurdish books and periodicals but many Turkish publications too. According to a research, 3472 publications were banned in Turkey between 1949-1984 and 927 - between 1980-1984 (53).

During the long lasting ban on the use of Kurdish, the state took all the measures it could to hinder printing and distribution of Kurdish publications. Aside from autocensor we can list the following:

Laws which envisaged punishment for people who write, distribute and possess Kurdish publications were passed. Police confiscated publications which managed to appear in spite of the bans. Kurdish writers and journalists were arrested, tortured, wounded and even killed. In actual fact, writers Musa Anter and Hüseyin Deniz were killed. According to the Association of Contemporary Journalists, in the years between 1992 to 1996 at least 14 people working for Kurdish newspapers were killed (54). According to another research of the same association 14 newspaper correspondents were killed in Northern Kurdistan just in 1993 (55).

Usually printing houses did not print Kurdish works because of the risk. Distribution was also a considerable problem as post offices and distribution firms did not work with Kurdish publications. As far as the police was concerned it was a crime to possess a Kurdish book. Arif Sevinç, the owner of Deng Publishing House says publishing Kurdish literature in these difficult circumstances was a sort of guerrilla activity carried out in towns.

Kurdistan was governed by different martial laws for a long time (OHAL). There was even more severe oppression on Kurdish literature during this period which lasted until 30.11.2002 .

Briefly speaking, Kurdish publications in Turkey used to follow the same routine: A book was published and then banned, the writer and publisher were charged. Readers found to have Kurdish literature on their persons or at their homes were also prosecuted.

2.2.4 Finally the ban is lifted

After all these oppressive measures stated above important changes took place in the 1990s. The ban on publishing Kurdish books and periodicals was lifted in 1991 by rescinding law # 2932. Article 28 was repealed in 2001. On 3 August 2002, the Turkish Parliament adopted the European Union Harmonisation Package. A legal arrangement making private courses for teaching Kurdish legal and allowing radio and TV broadcasting in Kurdish

under certain conditions was approved. In 2003 the law concerning Kurdish names was changed. Article 8 of law # 3713 on war on terror was rescinded on 15.07.2003 by law # 4928. Following the lifting of the ban, the number of Kurdish books published increased, reaching 212 between 1990 and 1999.

Although the lifting of the ban on Kurdish means removing a very big obstacle in the path of writing in Kurdish, there are still some obstacles in application. Even in 2006 there are cases against Kurdish names in court. For example, the prosecutors' office in Siirt brought an accusation against the Center for Culture and Art in Botan because of its sign in Kurdish "Navenda Çand û Hunera Botan" (56). At the same time, although quite rare, court cases have been opened against a few Kurdish books. The cases against "Girê Şêran" (Mount of Lions) by Menaf Osman and "Gulên Azadiyê" (Roses of Freedom) by Qahir Firat among Aram publications are examples of this.

Some university academics have drawn attention to the fact that despite the lifting of the ban, when United Nations conventions are taken into consideration, there is still linguistic genocide against the Kurdish language and cultural genocide against Kurdish culture in Turkey due to the obstruction of education in the mother tongue and other reasons (57). Even when languages are not forbidden, "the unequal distribution of economic, political and cultural power works against the survival of the disadvantaged languages" (58).

On the other hand, after the lifting of the ban on Kurdish, other problems concerning Kurdish writing and book publishing can be seen more clearly. First and foremost, written Kurdish is problematic as it was banned for a long time and has not been used in education. It has limited potential of expression, especially in scientific topics. It has problems of terminology. At the same time readers who have not had the opportunity to study this language at school experience difficulties in understanding it.

The numbers below show the development of Kurdish book publishing according to years.

Books in Kurdish published in the period 1923-2005:

Year	Number of published books
1923-1970	6
1971	1
1972-1974	-
1975	1
1976	2
1977	2
1978	2

1979	2
1980-1989	-
1990	3
1991	18
1992	38
1993	19
1994	19
1995	18
1996	24
1997	15
1998	26
1999	32
2000	34
2001	35
2002	69
2003	79
2004	77
2005	73
<i>Books with unknown year of publication</i>	33
Total	628

It is known that at least 103 of these publications were first published abroad, mainly in Sweden.

2.3 Books published in the KIRMANCKI dialect

Although Kurmanci is the dialect spoken by the majority in Northern Kurdistan, the Kirmancki (Zazaki) dialect is spoken in some provinces. It is estimated that those who speak Kirmancki represent one quarter of the total Kurdish population there.

Out of a total of 654 Kurdish books published in Turkey, 74 (11,3 %) are written in the Kirmancki dialect, and the others 580 in Kurmanci. *Vate* Publishing House only publishes books in Kirmancki.

2.4 Genres of the published books

Published books have different genres. Most of them are fiction books and poetry.

The distribution of the Kurdish books (published in Turkey) according to their genre is as follows:

Topic or genre	Number of pulished books
<i>Poetry</i>	174
<i>Novels</i>	69
<i>Short stories</i>	65
<i>Folklore</i>	61
<i>Children's books</i>	15
<i>Plays</i>	12
<i>Memoirs</i>	9
<i>Biographies</i>	8
<i>Anthologies</i>	4
<i>History of literature</i>	3
<i>Dictionaries</i>	38
<i>Religious books (except poetry)</i>	26
<i>Textbooks and school aids</i>	19
<i>Alphabet books</i>	12
<i>Grammar books</i>	8
<i>History books</i>	11
<i>Politics</i>	8
<i>Reportages</i>	4
<i>Philosophy</i>	3
<i>Dictionaries of spelling</i>	3
<i>Kurdish personal names</i>	2
<i>Collections of articles</i>	2
<i>Other topics</i>	21
<i>Unknown topics</i>	77
Total	654

Here is the distribution of books if only translations are taken into consideration:

Topic and genre	Number of publications
<i>Poetry</i>	22
<i>Novels</i>	12
<i>Short stories</i>	6
<i>Plays</i>	3
<i>Children's books</i>	2
<i>Memoirs</i>	2
<i>Biographies</i>	1
<i>Religious (except poetry)</i>	9
<i>Political</i>	3
<i>Historical</i>	2
<i>Dictionaries</i>	1
<i>Unknown topic</i>	4
Total	67

It is obvious that poetry, novels and short stories prevail among both the original works and translations. A large number of translated religious books stands out among non-fiction books. While the percentage of translated religious books is 13,47 %, the ratio of original religious works is 2,89 %. I believe that the small number of translations or original critical books and books in social and positive sciences has to do with problems of terminology in written Kurdish and the inadequate Kurdish of those who have the knowledge to write in these fields. Written heritage on these topics is almost non-existent whereas there is a relatively rich heritage of poetry books.

The 29 books published in 2004-2005 by the Kurdish Cultural Foundation in Stockholm can be added to the original and the translated children's books above. These books were published with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). 18 were written in the Kurmanci dialect and 11 in the Kırmancki (Zazaki) dialect. They were distributed by the Kurdish Institute in Istanbul. They were printed in Turkey, some with a print run of 5000, others - with a print run of 2000 or 3000 and were given away to children in towns where Kurds live (59). Among these books there are translations of works of authors like Daniel Defoe and Victor Hugo.

There are no Kurdish talkingbooks and audiobooks in Turkey for the visually impaired. A few such Kurdish books have been prepared in Sweden (60).

2.5 Book annotations

One may come across Kurdish book annotations in Kurdish or Turkish newspapers and magazines published by Kurds. They can also be found in magazines of some Turkish political groups albeit very rarely.

With the exception of the three publishers (61), all the others I have talked to say they do not pay for reviews of newly published books in magazines and newspapers. Only Deng Publishing House has a catalogue of publications. Most publishers have only one- or two-page lists of their publications. They provide these lists to distributors or bookshops or take them to book fairs and other events.

From time to time, the Roj TV broadcasting in Kurdish presents book reviews but mostly of authors and publishers close to the PKK.

I could not find any Kurdish publishers' websites on the Internet. Some of the publishers say that they can not afford it.

2.5.1 Annotations in publications in Kurdish

After 1990 the Kurds have published several newspapers and magazines. There are more than 20 bilingual periodicals and fewer ones just in Kurdish or in Turkish. In general the above-mentioned periodicals have had a short

life-span. Of the periodicals which have survived to this day, I have managed to see these:

Kurdish language periodicals – Azadiya Welat, Nûbihar, Vate, W Wêje Çand Huner.

Bilingual (in Kurdish and Turkish): Dema Nû, Tîroj, Bîr, Vesta.

Just in Turkish: Ülkede Özgür Gündem, Deng, Serbesti.

Annotations and book advertisements may be found in all of them. Book reviews in Kurdish periodicals usually comprise very brief information about a newly published book or longer descriptions paying tribute to a book. They sometimes print book covers or lists of publications but serious critical reviews can rarely be found there. From time to time these periodicals publish author interviews.

2.5.2 Annotations in publications in Turkish

Among the periodicals published by Kurds in Turkish, annotations on Kurdish books can be found in Ülkede Özgür Gündem, Deng, Serbesti, and also some periodicals of leftist Turkish organizations. From time to time Islamist newspapers Yeni Şafak and Akit introduce religious literature of Nûbihar publications.

Kurdish newspapers and magazines sometimes present or advertise books of publishers with whom they have business relations or share similar political views. For example:

Publishing house	Newspaper or magazine
<i>Aram Publishing House</i>	<i>Ülkede Özgür Gündem, Vesta, Azadiya Welat</i>
<i>Doz Publishing House</i>	<i>Serbesti</i>
<i>Deng Publishing House</i>	<i>Deng, Dema Nû</i>
<i>Nûbihar Publishing House</i>	<i>Nûbihar</i>

Among Kurdish publishers only Doz Publishing House have advertised their books in periodicals like the big Turkish daily newspapers Hürriyet, Milliyet, Radikal. Accepting ads in Kurdish is something new for the Turkish newspapers. The owner of Doz Publishing House said that he tried to advertise in Özgür Gündem newspaper too, but the newspaper refused the proposal(62).

Apart from this, the lists of Kurdish publications can be found in some catalogues such as the Book Catalogue published by TÜRDAV company.

3. KURDISH PUBLISHING HOUSES IN TURKEY

3.1 Kurdish publishers and publishing houses

Kurdish publishing houses in Turkey are founded either as one person firms or as LTD companies. One has to register at the Tax Office in order to start a company. Official registration of LTD firms is more expensive and the taxes for them are higher. Company owners become members of the Chambers of Commerce.

Publishers have to pay the following taxes:

1. 8 % VAT on sold books. When distributors take 40 %, almost half of the income from the books go to taxes.

2. There are withholding taxes on copyright/royalties and translation dues given directly to the taxation authorities. The payee is given only the balance.

Translators who do not have their own firms sign agreements prepared by publishers as they cannot issue invoices. So, publishers pay a withholding tax equal to 10 % of the honorarium, varying according to the agreement. When the expenses for stamp-duty and other expenditure taxes are added, the sum increases, the withholding tax becomes 10-15 %. In most cases the publishing houses deduce the withholding tax out of the translator's or author's honorarium. For example, if the publishing house pays 20 New Turkish Lira as taxation for a translation of 100 New Turkish Lira, he will deduce the amount from the payment due the translator; thus the translator will receive 80 NTL.

3. If there is any profit, there is taxation on it, too.

In 2000 more than 40 Kurdish publishing houses were established in Turkey and 15 of them succeeded in publishing more than 10 Kurdish books. Publishers with more than 20 Kurdish books are: Aram, Avesta, Deng, Doz, Elma, Weşanên Enstîtuya Kurdî, Nûbihar, Pêrî.

These 8 publishers have published 320 (48,9 %) of all the Kurdish books published in Turkey so far. The production of the two publishers (Avesta and Pêrî Publishing Houses) with the greatest number of publications is 130 books (19,9 %).

Many publishers have quit after a few publications. In 2005 the number of operational publishing houses that have published at least one book is 16. 12 of them were founded on the dates below:

Komal (1974), Deng (1989), Doz (1990), Weşanên Enstituya Kurdî (1992), Nûbihar (1992), Avesta (1995), Pêrî (1997), Aram (1997), Elma (2002), Vate (2003), Lîs (2004), Bîr (2005).

Four of the owners are ex-teachers, two have university degrees in communications, two – in humanities, four have quit their higher education due to political reasons. Six of them are writers at the same time. Before taking up publishing, most of them served time in prison during military junta rule or later because of their struggle for Kurdish national rights or because of their activities in political organizations. Some of them were imprisoned without being sentenced.

Owner of a publishing house	Time spent in prison
<i>Owner of Avesta Publishing House</i>	<i>5 months</i>
<i>Owner of Deng Publishing House</i>	<i>4,5 years</i>
<i>Owner of Doz Publishing House</i>	<i>3 years</i>
<i>Owner of Elma Publishing House</i>	<i>2,5 years</i>
<i>Owner of Pêrî Publishing House</i>	<i>Nearly 7 years</i>
<i>Owner of Komal Publishing House</i>	<i>There have been a few owners and managers and most of them have spent time in prison.</i>

There are owners of Kurdish publishing houses who have stayed in prison or paid fines because of publications in Turkish, too.

Recently there have been Kurdish publishers that specialize in specific fields. For example, *Nûbihar* Publishing House mainly publishes religious literature, *Lîs* and *Belki* publish fiction, and *Vate* Publishing House – books in the Kirmancki (Zazaki) dialect.

In recent years some Kurdish publishing houses and Kurdish periodicals have moved their centers to Diyarbekir, and new publishing houses have been established there.

Four of the offices of the 12 publishing houses whose offices I saw are at present in Diyarbekir and the rest, in Istanbul. Five of the publishers in Istanbul (63) are to be found in Taksim and Beyoğlu, where there are plenty of cultural and publishing activities. Publishing house centers are usually comprised of rented small flats of one or two rooms. One of the publishers I met lived in the office as he could not afford to rent another flat.

The only Kurdish publishing house which has several employees working for salaries is *Aram* Publishing House. Seven people work there including the owner.

The number of computers publishing houses own varies between one and five. Most of the publishers have a scanner and some of them have photocopiers. Some of the publishers sell small quantities of books in their offices but none of them sell on-line.

Publishing houses owned by non-Kurds and some leftist organizations have also published Kurdish books but the number is quite small. For example, about 10 such books have been published in 2000s.

3.1.1 Publishers' organizations

Kurdish publishers in Turkey do not have their own organization. As far as I could find out, among the Kurdish owners of publishing houses only *Vate*, *Avesta* and *Pêrî* Publishing House owners are members of the Turkish Publishers Association. The owner of *Nûbihar* Publishing House is a member of the Association of Press and Publishing.

The annual membership fee of the Turkish Publishers Association for 2006 is 40 New Turkish Liras, which some publishers consider to be too expensive for membership.

3.2 Printing houses and printing

I mentioned earlier that pre-printing is done by the Kurdish publishers themselves and covers are made by designers, artists and other professionals. Texts of books for publishing are taken to printing houses in tracing paper, and the colourful parts and pictures – in films.

With the exception of a few publishers like *Öz-Ge* and *Beybûn*, almost all books published by Kurdish publishers have been printed in Istanbul. Although there are printing houses in Diyarbakir, even Kurdish publishers with offices there print their books in Istanbul because printing is cheaper there. According to Deniz Gündüz, owner of *Vate* Publishing House, the lack of printing houses with suitable prices and conditions in Kurdish cities has a negative influence on Kurdish book publishing. A publishing house based in Istanbul is far from the towns where Kurdish is spoken and thus from its readers, and transportation of the books to Kurdish towns and their distribution there is also more expensive and difficult.

There is no Kurdish publishing house that prints its books abroad. *Print on demand* is not practised in Kurdish publishing yet.

Printing machines are usually Heidelberg and Roland Parva.

Some publishers buy their own paper whereas others rely on the printing houses. If the publisher supplies his own paper, he gets a discount for printing.

3.3 Print run

Print-run of books published in Kurdish varies between 1000 (most often) and 5000.

According to my findings, the print-run of 305 books is as follows:

Print run	Number of books
1000	175
1100-1500	77
1700-1750	6
2000	25
3000	15
3500	2
5000	5

As indicated above, 175 out of the 305 books (57,4 %) have a print run of 1000.

The expenses to print 1000 copies of a book of about 100 pages are between 700 and 1000 New Turkish liras (approximately 500-714 USD).

As I have already stated, dictionaries and grammar books are the books which are most often printed and bought. After that come poetry books of famous poets like Cîgerxwîn and Ebdulla Peşêw, as well as novels and short stories of a few popular writers. Religious books are often published and sell well too, together with some classical poetry of *Nûbihar* Publishing House.

3.4 Book distribution and sales

3.4.1 Bookshops

Books in Kurdish are sold in some bookshops in major cities of Turkey such as Istanbul, Ankara, Adana, Mersin, Konya and in cities and towns with a Kurdish population such as Ağrı, Diyarbakir, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Elazığ, Erzurum, Hakkari, Kars, Mardin, Muş, Tunceli, Urfa, Van. The cities with the greatest sales are Diyarbakir, Mardin, Batman, Istanbul and Mersin.

When bookshops receive the books directly from the publishing houses, they get 40-50 % of the profit from the sale; if the book is provided by a distributor, the sale profit drops down to 30 %. There are bookshops that buy books directly from publishers and pay immediately, thus getting a discount of 50-60 %. Some Kurdish publishers I have talked to say they usually take the Kurdish books to bookshops themselves and that big distributors do not show much interest in these books.

Kurdish publishing houses *Avesta* and *Nûbihar* have their own bookshops as well. The bookshop of the former is in Diyarbekir and of the latter – in Istanbul.

Medya bookshop in Istanbul mostly offers books in Kurdish and books on Kurdish topics. There are such bookshops in Diyarbekir, too. They are situated in the central areas of towns.

Medya bookshop was founded in 1997. Its owner says he was visited by the police at least three times a month during the first years. Policemen threw the books on the shelves onto the floor, treaded on them and threw their fags on them. They insulted the owner and sometimes hit him on the head with a book to force him to give up selling such books. At times he was handcuffed and had to spend a few nights in the police station. Sometimes even his customers were arrested with him. The owners of the shops nearby stopped greeting him, thinking that he must be a very dangerous man. After the law was changed in 2003 the police stopped disturbing him.

The owner of the *Avesta* bookshop founded in Diyarbekir in 1999 says he used to experience pressure too but the police do not disturb him anymore. He says he sells books on credit and deferred payment.

3.4.2 Book distribution

Books in Kurdish are sold in the bookshops of some provincial and district centers. Publishers provide them with the books directly or via distributors. Usually there are problems between publishers and bookshops because the bookshops either delay payment or do not pay at all. When the books are distributed via distribution firms, publishing houses deal with the distributors and not the bookshops. Most of the big Kurdish publishing houses use distributors but the latter take just a few Kurdish books saying they hardly sell. These firms keep 40-50 % of the sales themselves. Kurdish publishers have no distributing firms yet.

Books are also sold by commercial travellers. These travelling salesmen go to mountain villages which are of difficult access for distributing firms and bookshops and sometimes sell the books on deferred payment to the teachers there. In this way, they find new readers. Commercial travellers take 50 % of the sales. *Avesta* publishers sell books to several such commercial travellers in Batman, Diyarbekir and Ankara (64).

I have talked to such a person selling Kurdish books in Istanbul. He buys books from publishers, getting a 50 % discount. He combines the books in thematic sets – dedicated to Kurdish literature, history and other topics, and prepares colorful catalogues with the covers of these books. Young people and students take these catalogues around in predominantly Kurdish

neighbourhoods such as Gazi and Bağcılar in Istanbul and sell the books on deferred payments. The youngsters get 20 % of the sales (65).

Publishers like *Aram*, *Kürt Enstitüsü*, *Komal*, *Deng*, connected to political organizations have an advantage in terms of distribution because their supporters and committees also sell their books.

There are publishers who try different approaches. Together with organizations which work with bookshops, the municipalities and cultural organizations in various provinces and administrative districts, *Lîs* publishers organize literary events like poetry evenings and literary discussions devoted to its writers. At such events readers have direct contact with writers and at the same time buy books (66).

Some authors sell a part of their own books and give the money from the sales to the publishers. Some authors even pay for their publishing expenses, sell some of the copies and give the money from the sales to the publishers.

Publishers usually use cargo services to send books to other cities. Mailing of books and periodicals is cheaper than that of other goods. There are also books distributed for free which is called “protocol” by Kurdish publishers. The number of such books varies between 20 and 200. These free books are sent to writers, newspapers, websites, distributors and organizations. Many Kurdish publishers send books to prisoners free of charge and some donate books to libraries.

The owner of *Aram* publishing house says that they have published a few books which were financially supported by the local governments. These books, with a print run of 2000 each were given to the local governments which distributed them among the population for free. These are rare cases.

However rare one does come across people who financially support Kurdish book publishing.

Some publishers send books to Kurdish organizations in Southern Kurdistan (Iraq) and in Europe for free. *Nûbihar Publishing House*, the only Kurdish publisher of religious books, sends some books to Kurdish magazines and authors in Iran.

3.4.2.1 Book distribution abroad

3.4.2.1.1 In Europe

It was very difficult to send Kurdish books to Europe by mail or through customs control before the changing of the law in 2003. The police and other officials created big problems for Kurdish publications or did not let them go through (67). The owner of *Nûbihar Publishing House* says that in 1996 he

sent Kurdish books by mail and afterwards he found them thrown away – the post officials had taken the fee but had not sent the books. However, customs formalities and mail services became easier after the law was changed. There are still court cases against people who have received “banned” books from Europe though. For example, the case against Mehmet Eren, an employee at Deng Publishing House in Diyarbakir was still continuing in February 2006 (68).

Some Kurdish publishers send books to sell to the Kurdish clubs or friends in Europe. The books are more expensive in Europe because the postal expenses are included in the price.

3.4.2.1.2 In Southern Kurdistan (Iraq)

Avesta Publishing House has made an agreement to send approximately 30 copies of its publications to a book seller in the town of Duhok in Southern Kurdistan. The books are currently being sold there but at lower prices than in Turkey. There is no postal service between Turkey and Iraq now but undoubtedly book sales will increase when the post starts functioning.

I have not found any Kurdish publishers who sell books from Turkey to libraries in other countries. Meanwhile Goran Candan from Stockholm sells books to libraries such as the Library of Congress and Harvard College Library in the USA (69).

3.4.3 Sales

Kurdish books published in Turkey sell between 100 to 1000 copies a year. Undoubtedly, the quantity varies according to the book and the publisher. The best selling books are dictionaries and grammar books. Here are a few examples:

1. Ferhengok (Cep Sözlüğü) Kurdî-Tirkî – pocket Kurdish - Turkish dictionary, *Welat* Publishing House.
2. Kurdî-Tirkî/Türkçe-Kürtçe Ferhengê Berîkê/Cep - pocket Turkish – Kurdish/ Kurdish - Turkish dictionary, *Doz* Publishing House.
3. Zana Farqînî, Ferhenga Tirkî-Kurdî - Kurdish - Turkish dictionary, *Weşanên Enstituya Kurdî*.
4. Baran, Dersên Zimanê Kurdî – Lessons in Modern Kurdish, *Deng* Publishing House.

The first book had four editions in 2002-2003 with a print run of 13500, the second one - three editions with a print run of 9000, the third one – two editions with a print run of 8000, and the fourth one – five editions.

Many of the owners of publishing houses I talked to publish books on Kurdish topics in Turkish. As most of the books in Kurdish cannot cover their publication costs, some publishers try to compensate for them with the mentioned books in Turkish.

3.4.4 Prices

Kurdish publishers sell books in Kurdish for very little money compared to books in Turkish (70). Books in Kurdish cost between 3 and 50 New Turkish liras.

Here are the prices of 183 Kurdish books published by 9 publishers (71):

Book prices in New Turkish liras	Number of books
3	1
4	8
5	52
6	30
7	34
8	15
9	11
10	5
11	4
12	6
13	6
15	4
19	1
20	1
22	2
23	2
50	1

Out of 183 books, the price of 116 (63,4 %) is between 5 and 7 New Turkish liras. To give an idea, let us remind the reader that the price of *Hürriyet* daily newspaper is 35 kuruş, and of *Cumhuriyet* – 50 kuruş (0,5 New Turkish liras).

3.4.5 Book fairs

In Turkey, annual book fairs are organized in big cities like Istanbul and Izmir. One has to pay a fee of 2500 New Turkish liras to participate in the biggest one - TÜYAP (Tüm Fuarçılık Yapım A. Ş.). Seven Kurdish publishers have taken part in this fair but the rest have not been able to afford it.

At the fairs Kurdish books are usually sold at discount prices.

In recent years book stands have been open at festivals in big cities.

A book fair has been taking place in Diyarbekir for three years. Sponsored by the Diyarbekir municipality, this fair was organized by Aram Publishing House in 2003, 2004 and 2005. The owners of *Doz* and *Bîr* publishing houses reveal that not only were they not invited but even prevented from participating in the fair because they sell books criticizing the PKK (72). Fatih Taş, the owner of *Aram* Publishing House which is one of the organizers of the fair responds to these accusations by saying that they only disallowed three books published by *Doz* Publishing House to be sold at the fair and did not prevent the sale of other books or hindered the participation of other publishing houses (73).

In 2005, another firm organized a book fair in Diyarbekir with the support of the governorship. Kurdish publishers say that they could not participate in the fair, (74) as some state officials told the fair organizers that Kurdish books were not to be displayed at the fair (75).

Vate, *Avesta*, *Komal*, *Apec* and *Nûdem* publishing houses took part in the book fair organized during the *Gelawêj* festival in Silêmanî (Southern Kurdistan) in 2005. Kurdish books written in the Latin characters were sold there for the first time. At the end of the fair, the authorities in Silêmanî bought all the books brought by these publishers.

3.5 Copyright

There are Kurdish publishers who have published books without informing the copyright holder. A publisher I talked to said he was not a professional when he did it and he could not get in touch with some authors who use pseudonyms and he thought all these works belonged to the Kurdish nation including him. He added he published the books not for profit but for readers' sake. Nobody dared to publish them at the time, he says, because they were banned but he took the risk of persecution. He confesses this kind of publishing is wrong and he tries to find the authors nowadays.

With this exception, owners of publishing houses say they do not publish books without permission from the right holders. Kurdish publishers rarely pay the authors. *Aram* Publishing House say that they have paid five authors between 5 and 10 % (76). Some Kurdish writers do not have any demands from publishers except for the printing of their books. Others get paid by receiving a number of copies of their books, varying according to the author and the publisher.

Usually, the agreement between the authors and the publisher is not written. According to the last version of the law, written copyright agreement

is necessary, which must have a positive impact on the problem. The owner of *Aram* Publishing House says he sometimes pays writers royalties, in other cases – pay them by books but he always signs agreements with the authors or the right holders (77). The manager of *Lis* Publishing House also says he signs agreements with the authors (78).

As stated earlier, some authors pay for the printing expenses of their books themselves. In these cases there is a risk that publishers cannot control the quality of the books. This decreases the quality of the books published. In spite of this risk, some publishers publish books of writers who pay for their own printing expenses. A publishing house has found the following solution: it has started a second publishing house for books which are not included in its publishing plans, and normally would not be considered for publishing, at least not immediately. This second publishing house publishes the books of writers who wish to pay the publishing expenses out of their own pockets to have their books published right away.

Some people who have lived in Europe publish their books in Turkey with the money they have earned abroad. The fact that the Euro and the Swedish crown (krona) are more valuable than the Turkish Lira makes it easier for these writers. There are publishers who say that they do not work this way and do not find it ethical to take money from the author to publish his book, although some writers become offended by this refusal(79).

3.6 Piracy

Pirated book-printing in Turkey is quite widespread. Just as some publishers publish books without the knowledge of the copyright owner or the translator, some people print books published earlier without the knowledge of the publishers and sell them cheaper on the street and in other venues. As these pirated books are cheaper, readers actively search for them. It is thought that there are pirate editions of only a few Kurdish books.

To avoid piracy the state has started providing publishers with revenue stickers. Selling books without revenue stickers is forbidden. Publishers say that although this is a way to reduce piracy, pirates manage to get a hold of stickers.

3.7 ISBN

Kurdish publishers receive ISBN for published books.

4. READERS OF KURDISH LITERATURE AND LIBRARIES IN TURKEY

Are there many readers of books published in Kurdish? There is no research on this issue. However, the data I have collected shows that the Kurds read fewer Kurdish books than those in Turkish. This is not surprising as there are no schools with Kurdish as the language of education and the number of people who are able to read Kurdish is limited.

4.1 Percentage of the Kurdish speakers

As the existence of Kurds was not officially admitted in Turkey until recently, the actual figure for the Kurdish population has not been established. However, in some censuses there are figures relating to Kurdish speakers. For example, the percentage ratio of people with Kurdish as a mother tongue or second language to the total population of Turkey according to years is given below(80):

year	1927	1935	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965
%	8,69	9,86	8,48	9,88	8,07	8,34	8,97

Research shows that the figures and percentages related to the Kurdish population in this census are not correct. For example, according to the census registers, while the population of Turkey increased with 16,3 %, the number of Kurdish speaking people decreased during the ten year period from 1935 to 1945 (81). It is known that the birth rate among the Kurdish population is high. The figures given by the census registers for Kurdish speakers in some provinces with Kurdish populations do not reflect the truth. Here are just three examples (82):

Tunceli province:

year	1950	1955	1960
Population speaking Kurdish	59022	27081	5727
Percent of the population speaking Kurdish %	55,9	22,2	-

Bingöl province:

year	1950	1955	1960
Population speaking Kurdish	74465	15152	88857

Percent of the population speaking Kurdish %	76,5	13,5	67,6
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Elazığ province:

year	1955	1960	1965
Percent of the population speaking Kurdish %	82,020	2,069	78,000

It seems that the Kurdish speaking population in Tunceli has decreased from 59022 to 5727 people in ten years. There seems to be a big fall in the five years between the censuses in 1950 and in 1955 in Bingöl. The census of 1960 also shows a decrease of 97, 5 % of the population in Elazığ, compared to the previous census in 1955. Then there is an extraordinary population growth in 1965 again. In actual fact, during these ten years there were no exceptional events to explain the sharp fluctuation of the population in these two provinces. It is clear that the census do not reflect reality.

4.2 Literacy in Turkish among the Kurds

As indicated by the figures below, the ratio of Kurds literate in Turkish is much lower than the Turkish average.

The percentage of people literate in Turkish with Kurdish as a mother tongue or second language (83):

year	1935	1945	1950
Men %	3,7	9,8	8,6
Women %	0,3	0,9	-

If one compares the percentage ratios of the illiterate people in the whole country with that of the illiterate people living in the provinces with a Kurdish population, it is easier to see the difference (84):

In 2000 the percentage of illiterate people in Turkey was 13 %.

Some provinces with a Kurdish population	Percentage of illiterate people (85) %
Şırnak	34
Ağrı	33
Sürt	33

<i>Şanlıurfa</i>	33
<i>Van</i>	32
<i>Diyarbakir</i>	31
<i>Muş</i>	31
<i>Batman</i>	29
<i>Hakkari</i>	29
<i>Mardin</i>	29
<i>Bitlis</i>	28
<i>Bingöl</i>	27
<i>Iğdır</i>	25
<i>Adıyaman (86)</i>	20
<i>Tunceli</i>	19
<i>Elazığ</i>	18
<i>Kahramanmaraş</i>	17
<i>Kars</i>	17
<i>Erzurum</i>	16
<i>Gaziantep</i>	16
<i>Malatya</i>	15
<i>Erzincan (87)</i>	13

It is clear that the percentage of the illiterate people in the said provinces with the exception of one is higher than the Turkish average. Where the percentage of literacy in Turkish is low, the percentage of Kurdish speaking people is higher on the whole.

As shown below, the percentage of the educated Kurds is much lower than the Turkish average in general (88):

The percentage ratio of people who have finished the eight-year primary school (89) in Turkey for 2000 is 35 %.

<i>Provinces where Kurds live</i>	<i>People who have finished primary school %</i>
<i>Malatya</i>	40
<i>Tunceli</i>	39
<i>Kahramanmaraş</i>	30
<i>Kars</i>	29
<i>Diyarbakir</i>	27
<i>Mardin</i>	27
<i>Batman</i>	26
<i>Bingöl</i>	26
<i>Sirt</i>	25
<i>Muş</i>	23

<i>Van</i>	23
<i>Şırnak</i>	22
<i>Şanlıurfa</i>	22
<i>Ağrı</i>	21

4.3 Literacy in Kurdish

Because of the reasons I have already stated, very few of the Kurds in Turkey can read and write in Kurdish, most having learned it on their own. Kurdish language publications, especially newspapers and magazines have functioned as schools for them (90). Higher sales of alphabet books, dictionaries and grammar books in Kurdish reveal the interest in learning to read and write in the language.

4.4 Libraries in Turkey and Kurdish language editions

The role of libraries in cultural life and education is obvious. However, due to the ban on Kurdish in Turkey, libraries have not considered stocking Kurdish books. The situation remains unchanged to this day despite the lifting of the ban. My inquiry about Kurdish books at the district public libraries of the provinces of Istanbul, Yozgat and Diyarbakir revealed that not only were there no Kurdish books but the librarians were very surprised as it was the first time they were asked such a question. Due to the ongoing state propaganda against Kurdish to this day, neither the readers nor the librarians have thought that Kurdish books ought to be available in libraries. The denial of the existence of the Kurds and the Kurdish language had an impact on libraries, too. During this period, “removing Kurdish publications from libraries and destroying them was a meticulously executed activity. Library registers and catalogues were rearranged after this destruction. Trying to adapt the de facto situation to the new discourse became an important and indispensable task. The said libraries were, without a doubt, state libraries. As to the collections in private libraries, residences of the owners would be raided by the police for various reasons in an attempt to confiscate them (91).

Kurdish readers today, knowing that in the past Kurdish books were used for accusing people of and/or charging them with Kurdish nationalism, separatism, treason, etc., may still be filled with apprehension and do not ask for Kurdish books in libraries in an obvious form of auto-censorship. Many people, even some librarians have not gotten used to the idea that libraries must serve all citizens. The 61st congress of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) was held in Istanbul in 1995. Over 3000 people of different nationalities took part in the event. The delegates of the US Library of Congress recommended to IFLA to demand that the Turkish government guarantees the democratic rights of the Kurds in Turkey and suggested that this demand should be written in the final declaration from

the congress. Turkish delegates at the congress objected to this and said that if this proposal was accepted, Turkey would leave IFLA. As a result the demand was not written in the final declaration (92).

In Turkey the Ministry of Culture and Tourism has 1453 libraries. 1224 of them are public ones. 209 of the public libraries are situated in the 22 provinces with predominantly Kurdish populations (93). There are no Kurdish books even in the libraries of these predominantly Kurdish provinces. I have not found any research on the reading habits of the Kurds who read in Kurdish or Turkish.

4.4.1 The National Library

The National Library of Turkey is attached to the General Directorate of Libraries at the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. According to my findings, there are 170 Kurdish books in the catalogue of the National Library. A part of them were published outside Turkey, and the rest – in the country. Apparently even during the period of the ban the library kept many Kurdish books. Probably state officials had access to these books at a time when common readers could not.

According to the legislation, printing houses must send 17 copies of each published book to the following institutions:

To the Collection Directorate at the General Directorate of Libraries – 6, to the Provincial Police Directorate's Department of Security 4, to the nearest prosecutor's office – 3, to the Provincial Press Bureau – 2, to the Provincial Prosecutor's Office – 2.

Copies of printed books sent to the Collection Directorate are forwarded to the National Library. An employee at the library said that as there are no severe sanctions for not sending books, some printing houses do not send books to the Directorate. When asked how many copies of each publication are kept by the printing houses to be forwarded to the Directorate, Kurdish publishers have responded by figures varying between 10 and 21, possibly due to the differing number of copies demanded by different printing houses.

I found out that some Kurdish publishers do not know about the existence of the National Library. Some do not know it is in Ankara, confusing it with other libraries. Some of them know that at least one copy of each published book must be sent to the National Library.

The National Library publishes separate bibliographies of books and articles. Kurdish books and periodicals are registered in the book bibliography (Turkish National Bibliography). Kurdish fiction is registered under the heading "Eastern Hindu-European and Celtic Literature" - # 891.59, and periodicals registered as # 891.5905 (94). Although the employees at the National Library I talked to say that all books arriving there

are registered in the Turkish National Bibliography, a survey I made of the volumes covering 1991-2001 revealed that not even half of the Kurdish books published in Turkey during that period were registered.

Books are sent from the General Directorate of Libraries to libraries all over Turkey. The Committee for Selection of Publications at the General Directorate of Libraries makes decisions on which books are to be sent. The council includes representatives of some publishing houses and the undersecretary at the ministry.

With the exception of the Bosphorus University library which stocks a few Kurdish dictionaries and grammar books, I have not been able to find any Kurdish books in the libraries of Turkey I have searched. When I asked the employees at the General Directorate of Libraries for the reason of this absence, they said there was no ban on Kurdish but as “Turkish is the official language of Turkey, it is natural that Turkish books are kept in libraries. Besides, libraries have not demanded books in Kurdish so far”.

The owner of *Doz* Publishing House, Aliriza Vural, says he has written letters to 20 libraries, offering to send them books but none of the libraries have replied (95). The owner of *Pêrî* Publishing House, Ahmet Önal, says he has written a letter to the General Directorate of Libraries informing them of his new publications but the response he got was that the said books could not be bought due to “a lack of subsidies”. He adds that this was just an excuse because although he was given a negative response, the General Directorate of Libraries was buying books from other publishers at that time (96).

Among small towns in Kurdistan only the municipality of Varto has requested books from Kurdish publishers for its newly opened library which were then sent as a donation (97).

So far, there has not been any library founded by Kurds in Turkey or one which stocks Kurdish books (27 March 2006).

There are libraries established by Kurdish institutes in Europe and America within their own structures. In 1997 a Kurdish library was opened in Stockholm. The library is financially supported by the state and there are 3242 books in Kurdish (until 27 March 2006), plenty of periodicals, music recordings and CDs alongside publications in other languages.

5. E-PUBLISHING

Innovations of the Internet have an impact on the whole world as well as on Kurdish publishing, too. Many Kurds, Kurdish newspapers, magazines and institutions in the four corners of the world have websites. Kurdish publications and authors are introduced on some of these websites which also present interviews with authors, articles and poetry in Kurdish. Some Kurdish local governments have designed websites but they are usually in Turkish. Recently some have started creating websites in Kurdish. Books are published in PDF format on some websites. Here are the links to the websites I have managed to find:

	Number of books
http://www.nefel.com/epirtuk/epirtuk_overview.asp?RubricNr=4	22
http://www.amude.net/epirtuk.html	21
http://www.rojanu.org/dersen_zman/Dersen_zman.pdf	1
http://www.institutkurde.org/biblioth/livres/livgne.php	1
http://www.dilpak.de/download/download_k.html	5
http://www.geocities.com/malperanudem/pirtuk/	144 (articles and books)

Among the websites above, www.nefel.com presents mainly books of writers from Northern Kurdistan.

www.amude.net presents mainly books of writers from Western Kurdistan (Syria).

On www.rojanu.org one can read Kemal Burkay's (pseudonym Baran) book *Dersên Zimanê Kurdî* (Lessons in Kurdish).

The website of the Kurdish Institute in Paris contains a few French books about the Kurds and a book in Kurdish.

On www.dilpak.de there are five books by Alan Dilpak.

www.geocities.com presents books and articles with different genres.

6. MAJOR PROBLEMS AND TENDENCIES OF DEVELOPMENT OF KURDISH BOOK PUBLISHING IN TURKEY

Kurdish book publishing in Turkey has many problems. 12 of the Kurdish book publishers I have talked to (98), have emphasized the following two problems:

1. As readers are very few, sales are modest and usually not enough to cover the expenses.
2. As there are no Kurdish distributing firms, the existing ones are used but they do not pay enough attention to books in Kurdish and the distribution is not very efficient.

I would like to mention a problem which is not realized by many publishers, and which we may call “fear of the book”. As I have already mentioned in the section on libraries, many Kurds have not realized yet that the ban on Kurdish books has been lifted because they have lived through or have witnessed oppression against speaking, reading and writing in this language for many years. Lots of them still carry this fear they have experienced in the past. A Kurdish book has not been “normalized” in the minds of many Kurds, it is not seen as something “normal”. As Arif Sevinç, the owner of *Deng* Publishing House says a book in Kurdish, even a grammar book, is still looked upon as an “element of political crime” by many people.

6.1 New tendencies in Kurdish book publishing

After the lifting of the ban the number of published books in Kurdish increased in the 1990s and will probably go on increasing in the future.

An important factor influencing book publishing in Kurdish is the strengthening of the Kurdish national movement. Kurdish organizations establish cultural associations, institutions and publishing houses, and publish books, newspapers and magazines in Kurdish in proportion of their power. However, the support political parties give to people writing in Kurdish is limited with their members or followers. Parties usually withdraw their support whenever writers cross party boundaries or oppose the given political doctrine. For example, PKK has been known to attack such authors at times, verbally or physically. Narrow minded views such as enclosing literature and art within party boundaries are still found among Kurdish politicians but it is being gradually overcome these days.

The first Kurdish publishing houses were founded by political organizations. In the course of time, people who had left these organizations

or those who had never participated in them began founding publishing houses. Book publishing independent of political organizations seems to have taken off. For example, two publishers with more than 50 books published so far – *Avesta* and *Pêrî*, have never had any connections with political organizations. I am convinced that this tendency for independence and liberalization in book publishing will become even stronger in the future. I have observed Kurdish book publishing in Sweden develop along similar lines (99).

At present periodicals are mostly run by political organizations but independent periodicals carry some weight too. The latter are expected to become stronger in the future.

Another important development is the moving of Kurdish publishing centers to Diyarbekir or simply founding them there. Of the publishing houses with central offices in Diyarbekir, *Deng*, *Bîr*, *Lîs* and *Belki*, the last three were founded between 2003 and 2005. This is a new phenomenon because due to oppression in the past, all Kurdish publishers were based in Istanbul and Ankara.

The development in Kurdistan in this sphere has not been restricted with publishing centers; step by step literary events have started to be organized - like meetings with writers, readings, recitals, fairs, exhibitions, etc. Some of the local governments support such activities and some have created Kurdish websites. These are new phenomena which I think demonstrate a strengthening tendency by spreading to other Kurdish cities.

Until recently local periodicals were only published in Turkish. There are signs that Kurdish texts will be appearing in them before long. And locally published periodicals entirely in Kurdish will emerge soon.

Kurdish libraries might be founded in the future.

Many publishers share the express wish to translate works from the world classics and from Southern Kurdish (Sorani). The percentage of translations will be growing in the future.

In recent years many books and magazines have been published in Southern Kurdistan. The language, literature and the publications of Northern and Southern Kurdistan will influence each other more and more. There will be more opportunities for the publications from Northern Kurdistan to be distributed and sold in Southern Kurdistan.

Some of the publishers I have talked to share the view that publishing is a matter of patriotism and ideal for them, not a mere source of profit. Others express their love for the job and talk of the satisfaction it brings them. Some

of the publishers say they are passionate book lovers and that is why they do this job. However, the number of those who publish books for profit will probably grow in the future.

Discussions about the different alphabets used by the Kurds in different states are continuing at present. The Kurds in Turkey and Syria use the Latin characters, the Kurds in Iran and Iraq use the Arabic characters and this prevents the Kurds living within the borders of different states from making use of one another's works. In recent years there have been vivid discussions among Kurds on this issue. More and more people support the idea that Kurds from Iran and Iraq must start using the Latin characters. One reason is that the Kurds from Northern and Western Kurdistan who use the Latin characters represent the majority of the Kurdish population. The Kurds from Northern Kurdistan do not know the Arabic characters but the Kurds from Southern and Eastern Kurdistan (Iraq and Iran), who use the Arabic characters know the Latin characters too, as they study a European language at school – usually English. This would make learning to write Kurdish with the Latin characters easier for them in case they would like to. Using Latin characters on the Internet is easier, too. Among writers living in Southern Kurdistan (Iraq) who speak the Kurmanci dialect, the tendency to use Latin characters is observed in practice. These writers follow the works written in the Kurmanci dialect in Northern and Western Kurdistan with great interest. From time to time some TV channels broadcasting in Southern Kurdistan present programs with subtitles in Latin characters. Authorities in Iraq and Iran oppose the use of the Latin characters by the local Kurds because the Arabic alphabet is the official one there. However, in time, the tendency to write with Latin characters among the Kurds there will increase. That is why these discussions about the use of alphabets as well as publishing more books with the Latin characters are important.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After the explanations above, we could say that the ban on the language and censorship were the main problems of Kurdish writers and book publishing for a long time. The history of Kurdish books in Turkey is all about oppression and censorship. Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, authorities have carried out a policy of severe nationalism, aiming at assimilating other peoples living within the boundaries of the state and speaking other languages. The condition of Kurdish publications in Turkey and Sweden are two different examples demonstrating the importance of cultural policy (100). That is to say, cultural policy can be used to both destroy or revive a culture. Although the policy of oppression applied by Turkey hindered the development of written Kurdish, it could not destroy the desire and the attempt to publish Kurdish books and periodicals. In spite of the linguistic genocide, the Kurds have, to a great extent, managed to preserve their language.

Naturally, Kurdish writers and publishers were influenced by the oppressive conditions they lived in. They only got the chance to become literate in their mother tongue as adults long after they became literate in one- even more- foreign language(s). The number of books in Kurdish has grown after the lifting of the ban and it will be increasing in the future. However, linguistic genocide must end for the number of readers and the sales to increase. The state must support the development of the Kurdish language which must be studied at school as the language of education.

None of the Kurdish publishers in Turkey have their own printing house. However, the Swedish experience has shown that the ownership of a printing house by Kurdish publishers will have a positive impact on Kurdish book publishing.

One of the greatest problems of Kurdish publishers is distribution. It is not enough to write and print books but they must reach the readers. However, distribution and marketing of Kurdish books are still unprofessional, done by amateurs not only in Turkey but in Europe, too. For example, there is still no network for distributing books in Kurdish. The solution of these problems will have a positive impact on sales.

One of the greatest problems of Kurdish literature I can see today is the lack of serious criticism. There is no survey on the reading habits of readers of Kurdish literature either although such information would be very important for literature, book publishing and libraries. It is known that national characteristics influence the way people read as well as gender, class, profession and life experience (101). "Ongoing ethnical and national conflicts require a new approach to the connection between literature and identity." (102)

Kurdish publishers who wish to increase sales should consider all this and develop new strategies.

Recommendations:

- Poetry days, story readings as well as writer autograph days could be organized in more provinces and districts.
- Contests for expressive poetry reading could be organized.
- An institution could be founded to award prizes for poetry, short stories and novels annually.
- Textbooks for Kurdish language courses could be written.
- An e-learning, central Kurdish IT School could be established.
- A bibliography of Kurdish publications could be prepared.
- Easy to read books written in a simple language could be published for children and young people.
- Readership surveys on the reading habits of Kurdish book readers could be carried out.
- Discussion about grammar books, dictionaries and spelling books could be started; the ones selected from the existing grammar books and dictionaries may be used for the standardization of the language by the writers, translators, publishers and journalists who welcome the idea. If the books in this field are insufficient, new ones could be written and published.
- A Congress of Kurdish can be organized periodically, for example annually, to discuss the problems of the language such as alphabet, terminology and the relation between dialects and to make suggestions.
- A Center or Committee for Kurdish Language could be founded to research and solve the problems of written Kurdish.
- Each publishing house could prepare and distribute its Books in Print catalogue.
- A few publishing houses could prepare and distribute Books in Print catalogue together.
- Book fairs could be organized in more provinces and districts.
- All Kurdish publishers could organize a book fair together.
- Newspapers, magazines and TV programs could dedicate more attention to Kurdish book reviews.
- More book advertisements could be published in newspapers and magazines.
- Courses and campaigns for education in Kurdish could be started.
- A Kurdish library and a center for documentation could be created.
- A campaign could be started for the promotion of Kurdish books and periodicals to be put at the reader's disposal in the already existing libraries in Turkey.
- A digital Kurdish library could be created on the Internet where people could read Kurdish books and existing such websites could be further developed.
- Publishers could design their own websites.
- Existing websites could publish more book reviews.
- More digital newspapers and magazines could be created.
- Existing digital newspapers and magazines could publish more book reviews.

APPENDIX

Aram Publishing House (Weşanên Aram)

Aram Publishing House was founded in 1997. It has published more than 20 books in Kurdish until 2006. Its owner is Fatih Taş.

Address:

Weşanên Aram
Cağaloğlu Yokuşu Hobyar Mah.
Cemal Nadir Sok. Uğur Han No: 18/305
Eminönü/İstanbul TURKEY

Avesta Publishing House (Weşanên Avesta)

Avesta Publishing House was founded in 1995. It has published over 70 books in Kurdish until 2006. This is the publishing house which has published the greatest number of books in Kurdish in Turkey so far. Its owner is Abdullah Keskin.

Address:

Weşanên Avesta
Evliya Çelebi Mah.
Aybastı Sok. No: 48/4
Beyoğlu/İstanbul TURKEY
Tel: 0090/212 251 44 80

Bîr Publishing House (Weşanên Bîr)

It was founded in 2005. Its owner, Turgut Ersoy, was earlier the owner of *War* Publishing House. The two publishing houses War and Bîr have altogether published 17 books in Kurdish until 2006.

Address:

Weşanên Bîr
İnönü Cad. Ma-Gül İş Merkezi No: 49
Dağkapı/Diyarbakır TURKEY
Tel: 0090/412 228 78 28

Deng Publishing House (Weşanên Deng)

It was founded in 1989. It has published over 40 books in Kurdish until 2006. Its owner is Arif Sevinç.

Address:

Weşanên Deng
Kurt İsmail Paşa 5. Sok.
Fırat 5 Apt. No: 2/1
Ofis/Diyarbakır TURKEY
Tel: 0090/412 223 89 23

Doz Publishing House (Weşanên Doz)

It was founded in 1990. Doz Publishing House has published 38 books in Kurdish until 2006. Its owner is Alirıza Vural.

Address:

Weşanên Doz
Taksim Cad. No: 71/5

80090 Beyoğlu/İstanbul TURKEY
Tel: 0090/212 297 25 05

Elma Publishing House (Weşanên Elma)

Elma Publishing House was founded in 2002, and has published 22 books in Kurdish until 2006. Its manager is Müslüm Yücel.

Address:

Weşanên Elma
İlk Belediye Caddesi 37/6
Tünel/İstanbul TURKEY
Tel: 0090/212 243 01 56

Kurdish Institute in Istanbul

The Kurdish Institute was founded in 1992 in Istanbul in connection with the Zend Limited Co. It has published over 40 books in Kurdish until 2006. The publishing manager is Zana Farqînî.

Address:

Weşanên Enstituya Kurdî ya Stenbolê
Mesih Paşa Mah. Ordu Cad.
Hadi Han. No: 305 K: 5
Laleli-Eminönü/İstanbul TURKEY

Komal Publishing House (Weşanên Komalê)

It was founded in 1974. Komal Publishing House has published 8 books in Kurdish until 2006.

Address:

Weşanxaneya Komalê
Katip Mustafa Çelebi Mah.
Hasnun Galip Sok.
Uğur Apt. No: 25 Kat: 3 Daire: 4
Beyoğlu/İstanbul TURKEY
Tel: 0212 243 83 97

Lîs Publishing House (Weşanên Lîs)

Lîs Publishing House was founded in 2004. It has published 10 books in Kurdish until 2006. Its owner is Ramazan Dağ.

Address:

Weşanên Lîs
Ma-Gül İş Merkezi Kat:1 No: 66
Dağkapı/Diyarbakır TURKEY
Tel: 0090/412 228 97 76

Nûbihar Publishing House (Weşanên Nûbihar)

Nûbihar Publishing House was founded in 1992. It has published over 20 books in Kurdish until 2006. Its owner is Süleyman Çevik.

Address:

Weşanên Nûbihar
P. K. 80 Fatih İstanbul TURKEY

Pêrî Publishing House (Weşanên Pêrî)

It was founded in 1997. It has published over 50 books in Kurdish until 2006, which makes Pêrî Publishing House the second Kurdish publishing house with the greatest number of Kurdish books published in Turkey, after Avesta Publishing House. Its owner is Ahmet Önal.

Address:

Weşanên Pêrî

Osman Ağa Mah. Söğütlü Çeşme Cad.

Pavlonya Sok. No: 10/19

Kadıköy/İstanbul TURKEY

Tel: 0090/216 347 26 44

Vate Publishing House (Weşanxaneyê Vateyî)

This publishing house was founded in 2003. Until 2006 it has published 16 books in Kurdish, mainly in the Kırmancki (Zazaki) dialect. Its owner is Deniz Gündüz.

Address:

Weşanxaneyê Vateyî

Katip Mustafa Çelebi Mah.

Tel Sok. No: 18 Kat: 3

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