

Added title page: "Omanuth" publishing house : a historical and bibliographical analysis of its publications / Galia Kaper

Abstract

The "Omanuth" ("Art") Publishing House was one of the most significant and influential publishers operating in the sphere of Hebrew culture between the 1920s and the 1960s. Established abroad, the publishing house subsequently relocated to Mandatory Palestine. Its primary mission was the publication of literature for children and youth, encompassing both fiction and textbooks, which served the education system of the Jewish community (Yishuv) both before and after the establishment of the State of Israel.

This study analyzes the complete corpus of the "Omanuth" Publishing House, comprising 1,159 titles, as well as 75 additional titles printed by the printing press under its ownership. The research methodology is based on the "Livre et société" (Book and Society) approach, which posits that bibliometric analysis of book collections serves as a tool for revealing socio-cultural trends and reflecting the profile of society and readership during a given period.

For the purpose of this study, a comprehensive database was constructed wherein each book was coded according to diverse parameters: genre (original vs. translation, textbook vs. fiction), creator identity (authors and translators, age, and gender), subject matter, and original language. The data was processed, cleaned, and standardized using the OpenRefine platform to ensure reliability, and subsequently analyzed statistically.

The findings characterize "Omanuth" as a publisher with a distinct educational-national agenda, aimed at shaping the character of the younger generation in the Hebrew Yishuv. Content analysis reveals an extensive focus on Hebrew language and literature, Jewish history, and knowledge of the Land of Israel (Yediath HaAretz). This is evidenced by the dominance of readers (anthologies), grammar books, history textbooks, and narratives documenting the Zionist enterprise. A guiding hand is also discernible in the realm of translated literature, where the publisher prioritized works related to Jewish history or adventure literature emphasizing values of pioneering (Chalutzit) and boldness.

Chronologically, the publisher's activity peaked during the 1930s. Following the establishment of the State of Israel (late 1940s and 1950s), there was a resurgence in activity, albeit on a more limited scale compared to the past; by the late 1960s, operations gradually waned and ceased.

From a sociological perspective, the study highlights a significant underrepresentation of women among authors and translators, with a surprising exception in the field of mathematics textbooks. Furthermore, it is evident that the majority of the creators (numbering over 400) were notably young.

Finally, the study reveals that, unlike the publishing house, the "Omanuth" printing press, which operated during the first decade in the country, did not serve an educational function. Instead, it operated as a purely commercial entity, printing diverse materials for external clients, thereby serving as an economic anchor for the publishing operations.

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