

KurdiLit

Network for Kurdish Literature and Publishing in Turkey

**Kurdish Literature and Publishing in Turkey:
Writers, Translators, Publishers, and Journals (February - June 2016)**

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Introduction

The status of and limits upon the use of the Kurdish language in Turkey, a point of contention in the process of democratization in the country, is poised to remain on the public agenda in the coming years. Demands, justified on the grounds of freedom of expression in political life, cultural rights, and language rights, have a large role in enriching discussions over multiculturalism and multilingualism in Turkey. Efforts to have Kurdish officially recognized and to disseminate it throughout social life, especially in the demand for education in one's mother language, occupy an important place in this field. The institutions constituted and methods developed by the Kurdish political movement against the political and social mechanisms for repressing language continue to give inspiration to various minority groups' demands for linguistic rights in Turkey.

It would not be misleading to claim that the insistent use of the Kurdish language has become a means of struggling against the obstacles and oppression to which Kurdish identity and culture have been subject. While projects focused on mother tongue education play a central role in this arena, the expanded use of the Kurmanjî and Kurmanjkî dialects of Kurdish in literature, theatre, cinema, and other artistic pursuits is part of this language-based struggle. Nonetheless, works of culture and art produced in these dialects are usually handled within a frame limited to political debate. Beyond such debates, however, attending to Kurdish-language culture and art on the scale of other cultural and artistic production across the globe can be seen as a potentially valuable means of opening new channels of production, increasing visibility, and overcoming obstacles that the Kurdish language faces.

Literature, which is directly related to the status of language and the limits upon its areas of use, is a branch of the arts in which the impact of political discussions is felt in both production and dissemination. It is no coincidence that Kurdish literature and publishing activities in Turkey increased in the 1990s, in the years when conflict and political struggle became most violent. With the surge in literary production that accompanied the state suppression of Kurdish identity, the Kurdish language took on a role that refuted the national identity being forced upon Kurdishness. It is clear that discussion and production of Kurdish literature intensified around the Mesopotamia Culture Center (1991) and the Istanbul Kurdish Institute (1992). Around the same time, Azadiya Welat newspaper, which began publishing weekly in 1994 and played an important role in the development of Kurdish in that period, included the work of writers and poets. In these years, when writers and publishers experienced at least as many constraints as politicians, literary actors were arrested and punished for what they wrote and published. Their activities nonetheless

continued in the 2000s, increasing with the participation of more actors and generating a distinct identity of Kurdistan. Some publishing houses moved their headquarters from Istanbul to Diyarbakır. New publishing houses were established across Kurdish cities, particularly in Diyarbakır. Works of world literature were translated and published in Kurdish. This mobilization was accompanied by a rise in Turkish presses publishing works in Kurdish and a demand for Turkish translations of Kurdish works. With the support of the Diyarbakır Kurdish Institute and Kurdî-Der, new projects in language and literature were undertaken. These institutions were joined in 2010 by the literature unit of the Cegerxwîn Cultural Center established by the Kayapınar Municipality of Diyarbakır.

In conjunction with these developments in the field of Kurdish literature and publishing, the government of the time announced a series of reconciliatory measures, first presented as the “Kurdish Opening” in 2009 and later known as the democratization packets, measures which gave permission for 24-hour broadcasting on private channels in languages and dialects other than Turkish. Similarly, the Council of Higher Education (Yükseköğretim Kurulu or YÖK) made a decision that allowed for the establishment of institutes and research centers in other languages and dialects; as a consequence, Living Language Institutes were established at public universities and Kurdology departments were built into the structure of these Institutes. The first state-sanctioned Kurdish-language television broadcasting began in 2009. Kurdish entered a process of recognition and normalization by the public on one hand and the intellectual community on the other. Work on Kurdish language and literature, such as research, seminars, and conferences, was brought onto an academic platform, successfully awakening an interest in Kurdish literature both in Turkey and abroad. Despite these developments, this momentum is far from rendering Kurdish literature and its actors visible in Turkey and on the world stage. Kurdish language and literature continues to occupy a disadvantaged place in the cultural map of Turkey because it has not gained status as an official language, and because there is a lack of cultural policies that encourage and support cultural diversity.

The Aim and Scope of the Project

As suggested above, while Kurdish publishing has witnessed an acceleration in the past several years, the extreme limitations on the visibility of Kurdish literature in Turkey and internationally remains a problem both for producers and for readers. Based upon this observation, Diyarbakır Arts Center (DSM), Lîs Publishing House, and Literature Across Frontiers (LAF) designed the website **KurdîLit: Network for Kurdish Literature and Publishing in Turkey**. This project endeavors to bring together existing knowledge about actors in the field of contemporary Kurdish literature, which stands at a critical juncture of debates over cultural rights and freedom of expression in Turkey. In so doing, it aims to support the compilation and digital archiving of contemporary, basic information about actors (publishers, writers, translators, institutions of language and literature) that are active in the field of Kurdish literature and publishing in Turkey. By introducing Kurdish literature to interested circles in Turkey and Europe through this repository of data, this project works toward increasing communication among literary circles to allow these actors to tap into the

dynamism of literature in Europe. We expect that this communication will pave the way for efforts to translate Kurdish works into other languages.

KurdîLit was born out of the continuations of collaborative projects among the partner institutions in the field of Kurdish Literature following the Diyarbakır Comparative Literature Days event held in 2013. Work on the website began in February 2016 with reading and research on the past and present of Kurdish literature in Turkey. At the same time, we prepared a list of actors from the literature and publishing world. At this stage, in accordance with the guidance of our project content coordinator, Lal Laleş, we had meetings at the Kurdish Writers Association Diyarbakır headquarters and at the Batman branch, and received support in the preparation of these lists. In February, we held meetings in the cities of Diyarbakır, Istanbul, Mardin, Batman, and Van to introduce the project and generate a network, and we invited writers, translators, publishers' representatives, journal editors, and literature institutions from each of these cities to attend. Among the institutions that engaged in an exchange of ideas throughout this process include the Diyarbakır Kurdish Institute, the Kurdish Association for Democratic Culture and Democracy (Kurdî-Der), and the Cegerxwîn Academy Literature department, all of which have an important role in terms of the representation of Kurdish literature at the institutional level. During the meetings, there were discussions about ideas and recommendations concerning the design, content, and sustainability of a website intended to offer visibility to Kurdish literature. In keeping with the recommendations, it was decided to make space for profile information under four headings—writers, translators, publishers, journals. Subsequently, we contacted nearly 150 people. Lastly, after editing and proofing the website's content in three languages, we entered the texts into the site. The website was made accessible in June 2016, in conjunction with a concluding meeting to which literary actors from Diyarbakır and its surroundings were invited. In this first stage, we plan to introduce the website at a variety of literature events in Turkey and Europe.

Report Outline

This report was written over the course of this project, taking into account the ideas and recommendations of Kurdish literary actors, even as work on the website—the primary outcome of this project—was ongoing. It was put together on the basis of opinions collected during networking meetings, the profile texts prepared by literary actors, and the data collected from individual interviews with them as well as from responses to emailed questions; it should be read as an appraisal of the state of affairs concerning Kurdish literature and publishing in Turkey. This project rests upon the writers, translators, publishers, and journals active in this field, as well as their experiences in this field, and it is comprised by the mission that persons and institutions within the field of literature and publishing set for themselves, the problems they face in this field and the solutions they propose in response to them, and their predictions for the future of Kurdish literature and publishing.

I. Kurdish Literary Actors in Turkey

The field of literature is a world in which many diverse actors converge in a sum of activities both artistic and economic. In addition to the four main actors that the website focuses on—writers and translators, publishers and journals—institutions like the Kurdish Institutes, Kurdî-Der, and the Cegerxwîn Cultural Center also occupy an important place in Kurdish literature with the literary activities that they carry out. While the scope of this report focuses on writers, translators, publishers, and journals under the website’s four headings, the literary activities of these institutions are included, in line with information gleaned from our interviews.

Writers and poets are the primary actors in this field, occupying a place both creative and productive. In accordance with the information gathered from the aforementioned institutions as well as from representatives of publishers and journals, we contacted 120 writers and poets who have published Kurdish-language works in Turkey. This number is on the rise, in conjunction with the number of writers and poets who contribute to Kurdish language periodicals; however, it is difficult to reach an exact number in this field. Another significant actor in the field of literature are translators who translate works of literature, in some sense reproducing them. A significant number of writers in the field of Kurdish literature are also simultaneously active as translators. Most of these are translations from Kurdish to Turkish or Turkish to Kurdish. Apart from Turkish, they translate works from European languages, particularly English, as well as from Arabic and Persian. Apart from these literary actors who are both writers and translators, there are very few published works done by literary actors who are solely translators. While we only contacted writers with published works in the scope of this project, we decided to include translators who do not have published works but who have contributed translations to periodicals within the scope of the project in order to obtain data that would allow us to measure the potential within the field of translation. By way of publishers, journals, Kurdî-Der, the Diyarbakır Kurdish Institute, and writers, we were able to reach twelve translators who are active only in the field of translation.

Publishers, who play an important role in putting Kurdish literature into circulation, constituted another important leg of the project. In periods when the limits on the use of Kurdish in public space were vague, when its criminalization was implemented on an arbitrary basis, publishers and publishing houses institutionally ensured the continued circulation of the Kurdish language. Among over thirty publishing houses and institutes that publish works of research and analysis aside from literature, some were closed in the past but continue their publishing lives with new names today.

Periodicals, which contribute to the continuity of literature and open space for new generations of literary actors, were a fourth focus of the project. Today, journals that include literary genres and literary criticism are accepted by all groups as the schools of Kurdish literature. We can say as well that every actor who continues to produce literary work as either writer or translator was first brought to readers by means of their publications in these journals. Additionally, most writers, translators, and researchers maintain their

connections with these journals over the course of their careers, keeping them in perpetual connection with their readers. Periodicals offer the possibility for different generations to bring their creations together; they also introduce new generations of writers, poets, translators, and researchers to publishers. Journals additionally play a role in opening channels of communication among literary writers and literary researchers from different parts of Kurdistan. In this sense, it would not be wrong to claim that journals play a role in building networks among literary actors. Journals too allow for more serialization of production and distribution than conventional publishing, thereby offering readers interested in literature access to world literature and critical essays. Lastly, by drawing the readers attention to literary works through the critical articles and research that they publish in the field of literature, journals are in a sense responsible for the introduction of works and actors. In the scope of this project, we established communication with twenty-two publishers and fourteen journals, primarily based in Istanbul and Diyarbakır, that are active in the field of Kurdish literature in Turkey.

In the meetings and interviews held over the course of the project, other actors in the world of literature were also touched upon. First among them are the readers, essential to the continuity of literary production. Every group we interacted with emphasized that readers interested in Kurdish literature and who support this interest with academic work are essential for the future of literature. On the other hand, these groups also underscored the roles of distributors, as well as bookstores and online bookselling platforms that bring works to buyers, in increasing the visibility of Kurdish literature and establishing sustainability in literary production. Lastly, these groups also touched upon the importance of reading groups and social media platforms, particularly in the stage of establishing journals.

II. Mission, Goals, and Activities

While evaluating the mission that groups interested in Kurdish literature in Turkey envision for themselves, it's necessary to consider the oppression and obstacles that Kurdish cultural identity faces in the country. We can say that the actors on the Kurdish literary stage today made first contact with literature in the 1980s and 1990s. These actors offered up their first literary works amid the political and social conditions of the 1990s. In the years when the ongoing war in Kurdistan became more violent in both official and semi-official domains, artistic and intellectual production—or rather, the exhibition of this production—was considered political propaganda and could be subject to criminal prosecution. Acts of journalism, journal publishing, and literature in the Kurdish language by many people could result in suspension from school and work, arrest, fines, prison sentences, extrajudicial execution or enforced disappearance.

In such a period, many Kurdish youth and intellectuals began participating in political action and staging resistance against the injustices to which they were subject. The writers, translators, publishers, and journal editors whom we interviewed said that they embraced literature within this struggle out of a desire to open space for the Kurdish language and

Kurdish identity. Within this process of “national awakening” against the policies of assimilation, they said that their literary activities may have begun as a reaction to the denial of their language and identity, but in time, these literary activities stopped being an existential issue and were sustained with legitimate literary concerns. Additionally, the destructive impact on language and culture that accelerated urbanization in the wake of forced migration was included among the causes that motivated these actors to protect and develop their language and culture. In short, writing was seen as a means of recollecting a past that had been papered over, as a means of bringing to life the values of a collective culture that had been denied.

Looking at the present, it would not be wrong to claim that these actors still espouse this mission. The beginning of the 2000s witnessed a rise in the number of writers and translators as well as publishers and journals. This increase was accompanied by institutional developments like the establishment of the Kurdish Writers Association and the Diyarbakır Kurdish Institute in 2004. The Kurdish Writers Association aimed to cultivate communication among Kurdish writers and to increase both the quality and quantity of works in the Kurdish language. The Diyarbakır Kurdish Institute, similarly, began to carry out research, compilation, and translation, especially regarding classical literature and folk literature, all the while supporting campaigns concerning the Kurdish language. In the past ten years, writers have published books containing research and compiled materials related to classical literature, folk literature, the Hawar school, the Tîrej school, the literature of exiles in Europe, Kurdish literature from the Caucasus, and the literature produced in the period after the 1990s. Along with these works concentrated on Kurdish culture and language, we can also note a rise in the number of works from the new generation of writers and poets as well as translations of works of contemporary world literature. Publishers have made efforts to cultivate readers by preparing various thematic series intended to draw the interest of different segments of readers and by organizing events in order to reach readers. Again, the rise in the number of journals of criticism and literature published in Kurdish is one positive development for Kurdish literature. Journal editors underscore the importance of keeping literary production alive as well as opening space for academic work in this field. Journals are seen as important vehicles for young writers and critics to present and improve themselves. By giving space particularly for examples of world literature and previously published literary theory from various countries, these efforts to quell the anxiety of sustaining the Kurdish language and Kurdish literature are a sign of not just quantitative but also qualitative developments in the field

III. Problems Facing Kurdish Literature

As has been mentioned, institutions and people who have been active in the field of Kurdish literature in Turkey have faced severe problems in the past. In addition to claiming that the field is relatively freer than in the past, and that consequently activities in the field have increased, it is nonetheless still possible to see cases in which publishing and writing in Kurdish is identified with propaganda, punished, or prohibited. Political pressure and

arbitrary punishment continue to be some of the most significant obstacles facing the distribution and consumption of Kurdish literature. In addition, the fact that Kurdish still has no official standing and remains quite limited in its use as a language for education has caused the already-elusive Kurdish reading public to shrink, limiting it to specific segments. At the same time, the limits on the use of Kurdish in everyday life circumscribes the quality of Kurdish works as well as the borders of the reading public. The production and consumption of literature is directly effected as the borders continue to shrink in everyday life.

In connection to these problems, which are directly related to the political context, financial difficulties emerge that negatively effect the quality and sustainability of literary work for publishers, journal editors, writers, and translators. The small size of the Kurdish literature reading public, along with this limited reading public's standard of living, are not adequate to keep the sector functioning properly. Additionally, publishing houses that publish in Kurdish are not able to take advantage of some forms of support that are available to publishers in Turkey. For example, Kurdish-language works are not accepted into libraries, they are not financially supported by literary institutions, and Kurdish literature and writers are not able to benefit from efforts to promote literature abroad. For example, the TEDA translation and publication support project started by the Ministry of Culture to promote the publication of Turkish-language works on culture, art, and literature in foreign languages does not include Kurdish or any language spoken in Turkey except Kurdish within the scope of its support. Having said that, the Turkish Publishers Association (Türkiye Yayıncılar Birliği) co-organized the 7th General Assembly on Publishing in Turkey with Istanbul Bilgi University on 12-13 May 2016, and added a clause on the right to read, write, and publish in one's mother tongue to their final declaration of proceedings. This clause indicates that the lack of recognition for Anatolian languages other than Turkish, the fact that they are not used in education, and their exclusion from state support have been cause for obstacles preventing creative production in these languages. Though such initiatives may seem merely symbolic, in fact they provide the foundation for eventual, potential advocacy work in this field.

In sum, books and journals printed in Turkey are seldom able to recoup expenditures as a consequence of suppression, obstruction, a lack of incentive, inadequate readership, and marketing issues. Because of this, publishers and journal editors are unable to pay royalties to writers and translators, they are forced to limit the print amount, or they extend the publication period for periodicals. In fact, writers are sometimes forced to split the expenditures for their works with the publisher. Furthermore, because of the very low financial returns on literature, actors in this field are often forced to do other work in order to sustain themselves, a problem which negatively impacts the quality of the literary works being produced.

Another problem directly related to these financial obstacles is the inability for writers and translators to get sufficient editorial support before their works are published. The fact that most editing, translation, distribution, and public relations are done on a voluntary basis, both in conventional publishing and in journal publishing, endangers the sustainability of these publishers and journals and prevents the development of literary professionals in

these fields. As has already been mentioned, one of the reasons for the insufficiency of quality editorial and translation services is the fact that they do not provide literary actors wanting to work in these fields with enough income. For this reason, editors typically split their time concurrently between the tasks of writing and translation.

The problems experienced by distributors are another thing preventing literature from reaching its audiences. Most publishers and journals are unable to afford the amounts demanded by large distributors, but they also find the service of small distributors insufficient. There are some publishers and journal editors that handle distribution solely with their own resources. At the same time, it seems that public relations efforts are insufficient and that effective advertising has not been done to bring works to their audiences. The use of social media platforms on the internet in order to introduce work to readers is also inadequate.

Lastly is the fact that the visibility of literary works is limited to the cities where Kurdish readers are concentrated, and in some cases does not go beyond the cities in which the works were published. The extreme disproportion between the number of Kurdish works being translated into foreign languages and the number of foreign works being translated into Kurdish is another obstacle preventing an increase in the visibility of Kurdish literature in Turkey and abroad. Particularly when it comes to translation, there are very few translators connected to an international network and the same is true for publishers. Furthermore, as previously discussed, the work of Kurdish literary actors and their visibility follow a course directly related to the state of conflict in the region. This state of conflict inhibits literary production and consumption, both as an artistic and as an economic activity. Diyarbakır, one of the important centers for publishing and literature, has been in a state of ongoing violence since the summer of 2015. Publishers declare that this has made book sales fall and has brought publishing activities to a stopping point as well. We can also claim that events that introduced literary actors and journal publishers to their audiences have come to a stop as a result of this process.

IV. Relationships among Actors

The world of literature is a field in which actors have developed an intricate and complicated network of relationships with one another. The aforementioned problems and obstacles have also contributed to the development of unsound relationships among Kurdish literary actors. Actors across all fields of literary work emphasize that there is a lack of communication amongst themselves and that this diminishes the quality of their creative work. The limited number of relationships that writers have with one another has led writers and literary producers to close themselves off from one another. The same is true for translators. Moreover, there are also various problems in the relationships among the different working areas. Frequently mentioned are the deficiencies in the relationship between publishers and writers/translators. As described above, the financial difficulties experienced by publishing houses prevents them from establishing standardized

relationships with writers and translators, both in economic terms and in terms of the definition of work. Still, some writers have clarified that they were unable to publish their analytical work based on archival research, and that publishers justified this on the basis that the economic returns would be insufficient. While writers and translators criticized publishers on this issue, publishers nonetheless underscore that they are themselves in debt from trying to finance themselves in order to sustain their activities in the field of Kurdish literature. Publishers argue that it's necessary not to lose sight of the aforementioned disadvantages of publishing a work in Kurdish and that their publishing policies must be evaluated with this in mind. In this sense, we might say that journals have relatively more potential for productive relationships with other actors.

V. Recommended Solutions and Opportunities

For all actors in the world of Kurdish literature, the use of Kurdish as a language of education and its proliferation in the social domain seems like a solution to most of their problems. Keeping the Kurdish language on the social and political agenda and restoring its reputation are on the top of the list of these actors' priorities. They underscore that mother tongue education would be a short-term and long-term solution to the problem of quality and quantity that Kurdish literature is experiencing. It would thereby expand readership and make it possible for literature to enter people's homes. All of the actors are in agreement on the idea that the first step for Kurds to encounter their literature needs to be a step towards mother tongue education.

After overcoming the difficulties of reaching Kurdish readers, the second stage appears to be the significant goal of making Kurdish literary producers and works visible and publicized in Turkey and across the globe. This is significant not only in terms of Kurdish literature being considered within world literature and cultivating its creators, but also in terms of being a financial transaction that satisfies publishers. On this topic, writers and translators claim that important roles fall upon publishing houses and literary institutions. They underscore the need to promote Kurdish literature alongside the other literatures of the world through various projects and events in order to have Kurdish-language works translated into other languages. They discussed the need to open the channels of communication and building networks by means of conferences, writers' appearances, expositions, and academic projects; the need to circulate Kurdish literature more widely; and the need to keep it on people's agendas. In this regard, they recommend using online platforms, social media communications, and other alternative models of communication.

Another important factor preventing Kurdish literature from reaching its audience is the fact that some of the provinces and districts where most of the Kurdish population in Turkey lives do not have bookstores. As a consequence, literary actors underscore the need to bring book fairs, expositions, book signings, poetry performances, and author readings to these provinces and districts, and to develop collaborations with publishers and local governments. Additionally, the other recommendations that they made included organizing

projects and events in conjunction with civil society organizations from the literary world in order to make Kurdish literature more visible and to help it reach its audience, as well as establishing partnerships on the subject of improving distribution and readership.

All the groups we interviewed mentioned the lack of communication among Kurdish literature producers themselves as well as the importance of organizing. They requested the constitution of platforms where publishers and journal editors can come together and share experiences, and that these would be effective through regular meetings. They shared the opinion that establishing institutes and academies that focus on specific periods of Kurdish literature, historical institutions, and important writers—in addition to institutions already producing academic research and working in fields related to literature and language, such as the Kurdish Institutes, Kurdî-Der, the Cegerxwîn Culture Center, the Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research (DİSA)—would help cultivate literary actors and writers as well as readers. They also emphasized the need for similar improvements to the Kurdish Publishers Association initiative, which publishers established to come together in order to discuss common problems and generate solutions.

These groups think that the communication between Kurdish literary actors and literary circles in Turkey and abroad is inadequate, and that this problem is amplified by the problems presented by the atmosphere of war. If this were overcome, they believe that holding various events that bring all these sides together as well as translating literary works would be able to strengthen this communication. Based on the important role that translation projects will play in advancing Kurdish literature and giving it space on the world literary stage, another recommendation made by these groups calls for the establishment of a translation association and the preparation of dictionaries and orthography books for translators. Many of those interviewed dwelled on the need for capacity development in the field of translation; translators' insufficient knowledge of necessary languages; and the need to continue working systematically in this field, taking care to protect the structure of the languages and avoiding translating from a second language as much as possible. Furthermore, those interviewed argue that it is a problem for Kurdish literary actors in Turkey to conduct most of their readings of world literature and literary theory in Turkish. They share the opinion that bringing works from the original language into Kurdish will be an important step in the development of Kurdish literature and literary criticism.

The Diyarbakır Book Fair, supported by the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality and organized for the second time this year, plays an important role in the present and future of Kurdish literature in terms of increasing the visibility of Kurdish literature and offering occasion for productive encounters with the reading public. When our interviewees requested these kinds of events or the support of local government for literature, they usually made reference to this event as an example. They request that organizations like PEN International and Kurdish PEN make more efforts towards increasing the international visibility of Kurdish literature and expanding the circulation of Kurdish literature around the world. All actors were in agreement on the need for relationships on the international level to not be established on a person-by-person basis, and that they should instead be brought into an institutional domain.

Over the course of this project's realization, from February to June 2016, the conflicts discussed in the meetings and interviews continued to make themselves felt upon the literary world as well. We might note that these circumstances have caused a general pessimism among literary producers. Having said that, all of these actors are in agreement that the most important opportunity before Kurdish Literature is the virgin territory of the field. Writers and poets underscore that there are so many more stories to write; translators, so many more works to be translated into and out of Kurdish; publishers, so many more talents to be discovered; and journals, so many more issues to prepare.

VI. Predictions for the Future

Comparing against previous decades, Kurdish literary actors are positive in their appraisals of the current state of things. Having said that, it is possible to deduce two different dominant perspectives on the future. The first is based upon the increasing number of writers, poets, translators, and publishers on the Kurdish literary stage, which predicts that things are headed in a good direction. Actors who see things from this side think that strong writers are emerging from the new generation and these writers will be able to bring literature farther along by building relationships with the world. They express that the increase in communication about literature across the other parts of Kurdistan over the past decade is cause for hope.

At the same time, they think that positive developments in other parts of Kurdistan have increased interest toward cultural and artistic production across all of its parts. Following the Rojava Revolution, there was an increase in international awareness of the Kurds, as a consequence of which emerged a demand for the translation of books by Turkish writers into Kurdish. Literary producers who look positively on the future believe that political struggle will have positive effects on the recognition of Kurdish literature.

The second prediction, however, is based on the dwindling readership of Kurdish literature and the ongoing atomization of literary actors in their work, and foresees Kurdish literature growing sterile. Many people in the field of literature maintain that the new generation is moving away from Kurdish in spite of the current proliferation of Kurdish television, radio stations, and broadcasts, underscoring the drop in the use of the Kurdish language, especially in cities. They assert that this threat can only be overcome with the introduction of Kurdish in schools and the cultivation of a new generation with Kurdish literature; otherwise, they believe that the future of Kurdish literature is not bright.

Conclusion

This assessment was prepared as part of the KurdîLit website project carried out between February and June 2016, based upon field observations as well as interviews conducted over the course of the project with writers, translators, and representatives of publishing houses and journals. In these interviews, we tried primarily to learn how our interviewees assessed

the state of affairs of their respective fields, as well as their analysis of the problems and the kinds of solutions they recommended for these problems. Of secondary importance were our interviewees' relationships to actors working in other fields as well as discussions over the future of Kurdish literature in Turkey and the world. The experiences they relayed were combined with observations made during our work over the course of the project. In summary, this report can be read as an evaluation of the contemporary state of affairs that finds expression in the experiences of actors working in the field of Kurdish literature in Turkey.

All of the segments interviewed agreed that the biggest obstacle facing Kurdish literature production and consumption in Turkey is the fact that Kurdish is not a language of education and its place in social life is increasingly regressing. These conditions are aggravated by the inability of state institutions to develop culture and art policies that encourage and support cultural diversity. Whether directly or indirectly related to these circumstances, these segments also underscored the problems rooted in the internal dynamics of literature and publishing. Some of the problems they cited in describing these dynamics include the inability for literary production to find its audience, the fact that sound conditions for the production of quality literature and translation have not arisen, the problematic relationship between writers/translators and publishers, and the lack of visibility of literary production at the international level. While there are those who think that all these problems will cause Kurdish literature to close itself off and sterilize itself, there are others who think that Kurdish literature can carve a place for itself in the future by establishing various institutions and initiatives, and strengthening existing ones, to support literary production and publishing.

The KurdîLit website project was designed as a first step aimed at paving the way for efforts to increase the visibility and recognizability of Kurdish literature, both in Turkey and abroad. This report, on the other hand, was prepared with the hope of offering foreigners with an interest in the literature of this field some insight into the past and present conditions of Kurdish literature's existence, as well as the problems that Kurdish literature faces. As this summary account has shown, Kurdish Literature in Turkey faces an array of problems that stem from the system as well as from the internal workings of the industry. There is a clear need for more broadly comprehensive research and for larger and more evolved projects. In particular, translation workshops, publishing congresses, and the exchange of information and experiences regarding literary activities in other stateless languages, which can facilitate new encounters, work visits, and other events, appear important for the future of Kurdish Literature. In addition, projects that will increase the visibility and circulation of literary production and literary producers, in Turkey and internationally, can offer an antidote to some of the problems that Kurdish Literature faces today.

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