A Special Issue Launch:
“Middle Eastern Languages in Diasporic USA Communities”

Issue Editors
Maryam Borjian & Charles Haberl

A Panel Presentation:
Opening Remarks: Ofelia Garcia (Graduate Center, CUNY)

At the Intersection of Language and Social Variables: Middle Eastern Languages in the US: Maryam Borjian (Rutgers) & Charles Haberl (Rutgers)

Turoyo Neo-Aramaic in Northern New Jersey: George Kiraz (Princeton)

It is the Hardest to Keep: Kurdish as a Heritage Language in the United States: Amir Sharifi (CSU, Long Beach)

Juhuri: From the Caucasus to New York City: Habib Borjian (Columbia) & Daniel Kaufman (Queens, CUNY)

Hebrew Learning Ideologies and the Reconceptualization of American Judaism: Sharon Avni (BMCC, CUNY)

Issues and Challenges in the Teaching of Arabic: Hanan Kashou (Rutgers)

This special issue can be considered a response to Pierre Bourdieu’s call. By situating Middle Eastern languages within the diasporic context of the United States, it brings together scholarship that explores the intersection and intersectionality of language with the social variables that exist in society and the implications of such interactions upon languages and their speech communities with regard to language use, attitudes, learning, maintenance, and/or attrition. Although the Middle East is our geographical focus, the eight languages that are brought together in this volume have different origins, belonging to different language families, including Afro-Asiatic, Indo-European, and Turkic. Not only does this volume focus upon vibrant and widely spoken Middle Eastern languages that are national in their countries of origin, namely Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hebrew, and more recently Kurdish, but also upon smaller languages that enjoy no official or national status anywhere, notably Western Armenian, Turoyo (a form of Neo-Aramaic), and Juhuri (or Judeo-Tat a form of Tat and part of the larger Judeo-Persian language family).