The term ‘Judaeo-Arabic’ refers to a type of Arabic that was used by Jews and was distinct in some way from other types of Arabic. It is by no means a uniform linguistic entity and the term is used to refer to both written forms of Arabic and also spoken dialects. The first section of the chapter examines the various forms of written Judaeo-Arabic and their importance for the history of Middle Arabic and Arabic dialects. A classification of written texts into three broad periods may be made: these periods being Early Judaeo-Arabic, Classical Judaeo-Arabic, and Late Judaeo-Arabic. The second section of the chapter gives an overview of the Arabic dialects spoken by Jewish communities in the Middle East. Most of these dialects differ in some way from the dialects spoken by their Muslim and Christian neighbours. They are far more diverse in their structure than the various literary forms of Judaeo-Arabic.

Arabic Historical Dialectology
Clive Holes (ed.)

This book, by a group of leading international scholars, outlines the history of the spoken dialects of Arabic from the Arab conquests of the seventh century up to the present day. It specifically investigates the evolution of Arabic as a spoken language, in contrast to the many existing studies that focus on written Classical or Modern Standard Arabic. The volume begins with a discursive introduction that deals with important issues in the general scholarly context, including the indigenous myth and probable reality of the history of Arabic; Arabic
dialect geography and typology; types of internally and externally motivated linguistic change; social indexicalization; and pidginization and creolization in Arabic-speaking communities. Most chapters then focus on developments in a specific region—Mauritania, the Maghreb, Egypt, the Levant, the Northern Fertile Crescent, the Gulf, and South Arabia—with one exploring Judaeo-Arabic, a group of varieties historically spread over a wider area. The remaining two chapters in the volume examine individual linguistic features of particular historical interest and controversy, specifically the origin and evolution of the b- verbal prefix, and the adnominal linker –an/-in. The volume will be of interest to scholars and students of the linguistic and social history of Arabic as well as to comparative linguists interested in topics such as linguistic typology and language change.