PART TWO

A TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION OF
ḤＡＦＬＡＴ ＩＢＲＡＨＩＭ ＡＬ-ＪＡＢＡＲＩＮ
A Note on the Transcription, Translation, and Notations

I have taken what is, at least in English language studies of Arabic dialectal works, the somewhat unorthodox step of transcribing the poetry into Arabic rather than Latin script. I have chosen to do so for a number of reasons. Most obviously, transcription into an Arabic script renders the text more accessible to native speakers of the language. Speakers of English can, of course, follow the translation. Moreover, the popularity of Arabic dialectal poetry in many parts of the Arab World, among both Palestinians and others, and in both written and oral forms, provides another incentive for using the Arabic script here. There are as yet no standards in place for writing the Palestinian dialect in Arabic script, although scholars have been working to develop such standards. The authors of Qūl yā Ṭīr, for example, propose using an approximation of the standard language (muqārabat al-fuṣḥā) in their transcription of Palestinian folktales.1 ʿAbd al-Lāṭīf al-Barghūthī, on the other hand, makes extensive use of diacritical markings to produce written texts that replicate the Palestinian dialectal pronunciation. I hope that my use of the Arabic script here, along with that of other scholars as well as poets and novelists, will help lead to the further development of such standards, not as a replacement for a continuing vibrant literary tradition in standard Arabic, but rather as an extension of the expressiveness of the Arabic script.

A number of factors make the task of transcribing and translating this text particularly daunting. As Muhawi has eloquently argued, the act of committing an oral text to writing is an act of translation, and like translation, it raises questions about intentionality and authenticity. In moving from an oral to a written means of communication, one eliminates the original context in which a text was performed.2

---

1 See Ibrahim Muhawi and Sharif Kanaana, Qūl yā Ṭīr: Nuṣūṣ wa-Dirāsah fī al-Ḥikāyah al-Shābiyyah al-Filastiniyyah (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2001).