



MERIDA, WINTER 1985

Al Kantara (*)

Sixty-four perfect half-circles
With the feet in the water
Like sixty-four eyes ever open,
 And the water flowing into and from,
 washing untiredly the hands
 of the Roman craftsmen.
(eventually a car crosses on,
unaware anachronism of our technology)

Al Kaçaba (**)

Dark reflections on a clouded morning
Shine from the steady surface.
Rough walls, square, regular and mineral
Watch the cross-flow, merciful
To 'Abd Allah ben Kulayb ben Tha'laba
And to 'Abd Al-Rahmen II Amir.
 Square stones carefully piled
 making an inward square yard
 paved with square colored small stones
 carefully arranged,
 gathered Roman patterns of life.

Al Jub (*)**

Underground, like a wet uterus
The Aljub, secretly communicating
With the river, taking from him
The strength that brought till us
The vine-shoots bred by Goths
In the square lintel of the entrance door.

Al Sook' (**)**

And us talking with all them,
Like in a cross-time market place where
They display hopefully the best of their craft,
Become more and more vivid
As we ask them,
As we look at their features.

They are friendly to each other;
newcomers
are welcomed by old owners
and given plenty of gifts:
- jewels, temples, books, tools -
they return: - breath, blood,
pieces of life -

And us fascinated pulling
The thin thread that makes all
The wanders come out of the past.

But it is 12 o'clock
WE MUST LEAVE!

(*) Bridge

(**) Castle

(***) Cistern

(****) Market place