



LA VILLA ROMAINE DE CARTHAGE

« *Omnia vincit Amor* : et nos cedamus Amori »

("L'Amour triomphe de tout : et nous aussi, nous cédon à l'Amour")

Virgile, *Bucoliques X*, vers 69

L'immense cryptoportique, le péristyle carré,

Les innombrables fleurs, l'octogonal jardin,

Je me rappelle, ô âme, le jeune patricien

Jouant avec les grives près du bassin bleuté.

Je me rappelle l'autel où, plus légère que l'air,

Tu inclinais ta tête, mon immortelle princesse,

Pour honorer les dieux et rendre la liesse

A ces lieux peuplés d'ancêtres séculaires.

Puis, courant vers moi, les yeux remplis d'azur,

Tu enlaçais mon corps comme le jasmin grimpant

Enlace dans son étreinte les plis du marbre blanc

Pour rendre plus brillante l'antique architecture !

En quelle année ce fut ? Ô mosaïque splendide,

Rappelle-moi son nom et son sourire candide !

Athanase Vantchev de Thracy

ENGLISH :

The Roman Villa At Carthage

□ *'Love conquers all: let us surrender to love.'* □

Virgil, Eclogues X, 69

The immense cryptoportico, the square peristyle,
the countless flowers, the octagonal garden,
I remember too, O my soul, the young patrician
playing with song thrushes near the blue-tinted pond.

And I remember the altar, my immortal princess,
where, lighter than air, you inclined your head
to honour the gods and bring joy back
to these places where our earthly ancestors still lived.

Then, running towards me, your eyes full of azure,
you clasped me to you like a climbing scented jasmine
clasps in its frail embrace the folds of white marble

and makes the architecture of the Ancients even more magnificent!
In what year was that? O wonderful mosaic,
remind me of her name and her artless smile!

translated from the French of Athanase Vantchev de Thracy by Norton Hodges

ENGLISH (My translation into English):

THE ROMAN VILLA OF CARTHAGE

□□□□□□□□□□ (sonnet)

‘Omnia vincit Amor: and our cedamus Amori ‘

□ (The Love triumphs over everything: and we too, we give in in the Love)

Virgil, *Eclogues X*, verse 69

The immense cryptoportico, the square peristyle,

The uncountable flowers, octagonal garden,

I remember, ô soul, the smiling young patrician,

Playing with the song thrushes near the bluish pond.

I remember the altar where, lighter than the air,

You incline your head, my immortal princess,

To honour the gods and return the jubilation

In these places populated with secular ancestors.

Then, running towards me, eyes filled with blue sky,

You enlaced my body as the climbing fragrant jasmine

Enlaces in its frail arms the folds of the white marble

To make more magnificent the classic art structures!

In what year was that? O wonderful mosaic,

Remind me of her name and her artless smile!

□

Notes:

Carthage: an ancient city and state of northern Africa on the Bay of Tunis northeast of modern Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, founded by the Phoenician queen Dido in 9th century B.C. Carthage became the centre of Carthaginian power in the Mediterranean after the sixth century B.C. The city was destroyed by the Romans at the end of the Third Punic War (146 B.C.) but was rebuilt by Julius Caesar and later, (A.D. 439–533) served as capital of the Vandals before its virtual annihilation by the Arabs (698).

In 1987, I visited many times Carthage and specially the famous roman villa with its unforgettable immense mosaic who one can admire today in Museum of Bardo (Tunis). The villa is enormous and belonged probably of a great roman patrician family.