

**“Even less than these words ought to convince those of sound mind” – A letter from Damascus.**

A letter from a woman living in Damascus to Sitt al-Nās. The writer is an older cousin of Sitt al-Nās (although the writer calls herself “paternal aunt” and calls her cousin “my daughter”) and perhaps also her former mother-in-law. The writer’s son passed away and now she begs Sitt al-Nās to join her in Damascus.

T-S 18J3.4, unpublished. Draft translation by Oded Zinger.

Salvation is from God (alone)!

Your letter arrived, My daughter and dearest to me of all people. May God reunite me with you soon. You know how much I love you and your place in my heart. I did not cut off my letters to you except that God, the exalted, tested me with the death of my son, Abū l-Khayr, (may he) R(est in) P(eace). My stratagems collapsed and my plan dwindled. With my great sorrow and faltering speech, your place in my heart is great.

Now listen to what I am telling you and advising you: rise and get up, and God will grant you success. For the cloth that is left for me will be for you. For no relative remains for me but you, and you are in the place of a son. So do not linger, for I know not when my time will come. If you arrive, if God wills it, my heart will be at rest, and my eyes will be pleased. I will find consolation in seeing you and I will be fortified with your being with me. I pray to God that He will give (?) you to me. Regarding your saying in your letter “consider me as the same age of your daughter” - know that in my heart you are in her place and like her when she was alive, and (even) dearer than her. I am awaiting your arrival that will heal my longing for you. I wanted to send you something which would assist you on the road, (but) no trustworthy man was around. Do not linger. Sell what is below you and what is above you, take loans and leave. I will pay (these debts) for you. I will do for you all that you like.

Verso:

Know that Damascus is famed among all other cities for its great excellence and (for having) good and religious Jews. If you come you will be happy. You will obtain what you want and I will obtain through you what I want. Even less than these words ought to convince those of sound mind, especially with someone as smart as you. That which is hid[den] in my heart is more and more than what I told you. May God give me what I hope for you, and make you the happiest of girls, support you and support us in his mercy.

I send greetings of peace to you, and to your mother peace.

Address:

May it arrive at the dear daughter, Sitt al-Nās, daughter of R(abbi) Moses, may he rest in Peace, son of Josiah, may God will be pleased with them.

From her paternal aunt, who longs to see her. The daughter of Joseph son of ..... Josiah may he rest in Peace.