

0514. JOHANN BAPTIST BECKÉ¹ TO LEOPOLD MOZART, SALZBURG

*Monsieur mon tres cher Ami!*²

[Munich, 29th December, 1778]

I count this very day among my most pleasant. I have the good fortune of seeing your dearest, esteemed son in my house almost the whole day. He arrived here safely on the 25th and we have almost always been together since the 26th; [5] he is burning with longing to embrace his dearest, most precious father, which will take place as soon as his circumstances here permit; only he makes me – almost despondent, since I have hardly been able to get him to stop weeping for an hour now. He has the best of hearts. I have never seen a child who bears more feeling and love towards his father in his bosom than your esteemed son. [10]

A slight fear is coming over him, as if your reception for him were to be less tender than he wishes. But I place quite other hopes in your fatherly heart. He certainly deserves to have all love, all pleasure at his father's side. His heart is so pure, so childlike, so sincere towards me, how much more so will and must it be towards his father? [15] One must only hear the words from his own mouth, and who would not grant then him justice as having the best of characters, as the most sincere and honest of men? But how many such persons are there in the world? Best of fathers, you and your 2 children are such as deserve this praise, this approval and fame.

[20] If time and circumstances permitted, I would accompany your son to Salzburg myself; but why must this come at just the time when one is tied up? Oh, how much I would love to have a friend such as yourself to open up my heart to him, but there I must comfort myself with future hopes. Your esteemed son will tell you one thing or another about how I feel regarding the alteration³ here: [25] how many are the duplicities which one must bear if one is a step-child. I beg you, write to us soon, assure us of your true fatherly love, for your esteemed son's heart is no longer quite in order because of the strength of his feelings towards his father. Be sure to make his stay in Salzburg most pleasant and friendly. He finds all his delight, his whole pleasure [30] in his father and sister; he knows nothing more besides these in this world; I am writing this to you alone.

In 2 days we have the New Year: God grant you new strength, may he make the aim of your life the comfort and pleasure of your children for countless years; but may he also preserve your dearest children in the best of health to the joy of their dearest father, and thus you should live forever with each other, and all imaginable blessing and good wishes will come upon you. In conclusion, I beg you to continue to consider and recognise me as your true friend.

Thus I end the old year contentedly and begin the New Year full of hope that I will still have friends, [40] with which plea I close and remain

your
true sincere
friend and servant
Becké

[45] N.B. My most devoted compl / to your Mlle. Daughter and / *Mademoisll Ballonini.*⁴

¹ Johann Baptist Becké (1743-1817), flautist in the court music in Munich, kept the Mozarts informed about developments there. This letter was surely written at Wolfgang's request. Wolfgang probably felt burdened about the death of his mother, for which Leopold suggested he bore some responsibility, and by his general failure in Paris.

² = "Monsieur, my very dear friend!"

³ BD: Becké was in the Munich court music; now it was being fused with the Mannheim court music following the succession of Karl Theodor.

⁴ BD: Cf. No. 0509/24. Maria (Franziska?) Ballo, later married the actor Johann Georg Murschhauser, who is named in Nannerl's diary (cf. No. 0529/9).