



To my honoured ally, the Head-of-headmasters

Bellor now writhes with vapours that arise
From foul sweat and cruel humours
"Bring out your dead" the corpse-man cries
as men choke on pus-filled tumours.

I deeply regret to hear of the extent of this shaking plague, and I have written words of mourning. However, I believe I can assist in your search for the culprit. The originator of the plague was the being known to us as FRIEND.

Is this entity known to you? My shamans have determined it is some manner of god or titan. This entity has written to us, providing some gifts of wealth and information. In return, much as I sent you the corpses of Quorum, I sent one to FRIEND. For this I was told we had earned a prize: to be immune from a coming plague. We did not request this, and I cannot say whether this plague was unleashed by FRIEND or merely predicted, but it convinces me of the terrible power of this being. I do not regret that my people were spared the ravages you suffer, but nor did I wish our trading partners to suffer so. In future, perhaps we can aid each other in investigating and dealing with FRIEND? In the short term, I will be sending our Navigators with medicines, and servants from whom you could draw blood, in the hopes that study can unlock and transfer this immunity.

As to the incident on our own soil: I accept your word, and honour you for it. We have recently had a missive from Grovel informing us that an assassin made a rather obvious attempt on the life of a Grovel official whilst shouting "for Keitan!" This was, obviously, not commissioned by my own hand. The assassin would not have failed if so. This makes me agree with your assessment that the Quorum are attempting to disrupt and poison the relations of other nations, and makes attempting to bypass their shapeshifting a priority. We would be willing to pay a significant amount of



wealth for a method of detecting them - either spells our navigators could learn, or magical items.

It grieves me to further burden you with sorrows, but in light of our pledge to provide you with military protection I'm afraid I must share information I have obtained from correspondence with Empress Adélaïde de Val-d'Oise de Lesdigière. Please find her words as relating to Al'Daric below:

"That of the Headmaster of Al'Daric, towards our southern borders, tis of mysterious composition and of unknowable ambitions. Tis, nay, was mine aim to build strongholds within their territories to protect and defend thine people's. Theirs are of greatest similarities to my own, both in physical composition and cultures, thus twas our aim to make them a protectorate under our Empire. Yet, despite these ambitions, communications proved a greater difficulty than I wished. Thereafter, by time we'd've gathered forces to instill such a Protectoracy, the Great Cataclysm occurred, bringing us to present day.

[...]

"We seek the occupation, taxation and protection of the Daricians far before we see ourselves attempting to occupy and safeguard [The Quorum]"

Elsewhere, she notes that she will undertake to conquer new protectorates "as soon as Tauhan is pacified." My fleets stand ready to defend your ports, and I have an idea to prevent this occupation from coming to pass, if you wish to hear it. Do you have any information on Dun Sancerre's forces or lands that would help plan?

For reasons that I hope are obvious, I would request that you not share any information in this letter further (or at least not its provenance).

May the prince-of-stars shed his golden light upon the wealth flowing between our lands.

From his majesty Mansa Sino'otollo, the Shark-Binder, Voice of the Navigators, High King of the Three Fleets, Ruler of the Six Seas, Lord of the Nine Islands, Warden of Northern Tauhan, the Starblessed, Councillor of the Cnidarians, Good Buddy, Walker of the Elder Path, Binder of Men, Cleaner of Latrines, First Sword of the Surf, Brine-bound and Iron Willed.



Mansa Sino'otollo