

To the Most Magnificent and Radiant Sir Nibbles of the Prodigal Ratlings, lord of Thongmadok, he who is red of tooth, long of tail, and mightyish of brain.

From his majesty Mansa Sino'otollo, the Shark-Binder, Voice of the Navigators, High King of the Three Fleets, Ruler of the Four Seas, Lord of the Eight Islands, the Starblessed, Binder of Men, Speaker to Beasts, Good Buddy, Cleaner of Latrines, First Sword of the Surf, Brine-bound and Iron Willed. May the salt-sea bring his words to you this day, so that you may hear them and rejoice.

I thank you for the grace and speed of your response. My merchants would be honoured to travel and trade with your people, and I extend the same courtesy to you. If you wish assistance in exterminating the man-eating ratlings you speak of, perhaps you might be interested in applying my monster tamers to your burrowing beasts, and mutually profiting from the results.

However, the travel tax you ask is too high - one gold piece is the highest we will go. As king I must direct my people to success and wealth - you have already experienced the unfortunate raids that come when my captains are frustrated in their mercantile endeavours. To speak frankly between rulers, your isolated mountain villages are too tempting for the independent captains. If I am to direct them to mutually profitable trade rather than raids, they must earn more from trade than from raiding - and such a high tax would mean the opposite. However, if a lesser tax is imposed, I can promise to direct my every effort to ensuring the raids upon your people cease, and to provide a welcome to your merchants upon our shores.

Under the light of the stars, my words are bound in salt and blood.

*Mansa Sino'otollo*

May he rule in glory, until he is replaced by someone better.