

To his leadership Vulkerath Sootscale, honoured ruler of the prodigal Rahastan assembly of tribes.

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, Friend of the Cnidarians, the Starblessed, Binder of Men, Cleaner of Latrines, First Sword of the Surf, Brine-bound and Iron Willed. May the stars whisper his words to you this day, so that you may hear them and rejoice.

Your kind words gladden my heart, for it is good to hear of your people and the frankness of your words. I will endeavour to tell you of my own history and the people which I have been entrusted to rule.

We are a varied people, of many colors, races and creeds. The elders speak of the times before the leviathans, when we were scattered across a hundred islands. By the time we learned to bind the beasts to our will and reconquered the waves, only eight remained. As a storm washes away the sand to reveal the rock beneath, we have emerged stronger than we once were. Tribes from all eight islands now work together, though my rulership is one of consent like your own - every tribe sends its navigators, who elect a ruler from amongst their number. I am the 14th king since the day of first-binding, and I have brought many beasts and men under our banner. If you wish I will send you the thirty-three poetic stanzas of my rule, that you might wonder and glory at my deeds.

I myself come from human parents, though three generations ago mighty Anu'marat from the Blackscar tribe held the same office. Many of our tribes are human, though the frogmen dominate the bay of scales and lizardmen tribes reside in many of our most ferocious jungles, whilst the wise Cnidarians prefer the smallest islands and the deepest bays. Though all but the Cnidarians reside upon the land, we are a people of the sea and stars, and the most honoured amongst us are the sailors and Navigators who link the islands and guide the mighty turtle-spawn upon whom our mightiest hulks are built. You may see these in your ports if our peoples one day meet, though the fearsome waters of the Labyrinth separate us. We are a boastful people, and to insult and to praise poetically are amongst our highest arts.

I find it curious that you speak so openly of knowing little of war. Are you not worried that others will take advantage of your weakness, cousin? My own people are well versed in conflict, for we are one people, but many tribes that do not always agree. Perhaps we can teach your people to defend yourselves, should the need arise. Tell me more of how you are elected, and of the broods you raise - our tribes do not raise our children for such specific purposes, though we bind ourselves to tasks to earn our adulthood.

Sadly, whilst you have flattered us with your frank words, the dishonesty of other rulers has worried my councillors - what kind of world is this where rulers hide themselves in shadows? I am intrigued at your reports of that land, for when my own human traders visited them they were met by a human speaking one of our old dialects, who plied them with enchanted coins designed to spy on my people. I will ask other rulers how their traders were met - the similarity of how our traders were met makes me suspect shadowy magics have been used to deceive us both as to that land's true nature. May Anat's cold light pierce through such deceptions. The Quorum have responded to our request for an apology with insults and jibes and refused our requests for an embassy. I can only hope your own contact with them has been happier.

But such things are no way to end a letter of friendship. We are gladdened by your acceptance of our offer of trade. You say you are raising a brood of your people to send to us? Please do so, we would be honored to extend to them all hospitality. All children and prodigal peoples have a right to earn a place amongst our people, and serve until they are granted citizenship. Should you wish these individuals to live amongst us as more than just visitors, I could offer them an honoured position amongst the retinue of my uncle Hyper'flar, one of our oldest and finest Navigators. I myself earned my citizenship under his tutelage, and my service is touted amongst my most honoured titles.

Under the eye of Anat, the star-that-is-close, my words are bound in new friendship.

Mansa Sino'otollo

(Attached to the letter is a shiny rock)