

# The Valley of Raura

A rural Andean campaign setting for low-level adventures in D&D

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## Introduction

A shepherd boy rests atop the mossy remains of a short, ancient stone wall and idly watches his herd of alpacas graze the coarse grass of the highland plains. Some of his animals find refuge from the bright midday sun and laze under the shadow of a large slate dolmen. Hearing a clamor in the distance, the boy rouses from his daydream and wanders towards the cliff at the edge of the plains. Kneeling, he sees ferrymen bringing goods down the river Simbal to the town of Raura. The grizzled rivermen fight against the current, its waters swollen and strengthened by the late summer rains. They shout at each other as they row, wrestling to keep their vessel level against the wild course of the stream. With coordination honed over years together, they maneuver to give the rocky shoals a wide berth. Soon they pass the bend and the boy loses sight of them, though their voices continue to echo on the Valley's walls.

Further downstream, on the outskirts of Calusa, a priestly congregation prepares for the annual pilgrimage to the remains of the Alazaea, a chapel believed to keep the restless spirits of the region at bay. They toil engaged in solemn silence, broken only by farmers coming to provide offerings in remembrance of those they've lost. The priests ready their mules and make sure all is safely bound. To see them, focused and disciplined, one would think this too part of the ritual, but the reality is far grimmer. Too many of the Gray Congregation have been lost to the treacherous conditions of the pass through the western mountains; carelessness here claims lives.

Elsewhere, in one of the beshadowed forests of the Valley, a group of trappers go about their work fetching hare and quail. They step through brightly colored flowers, bathed in the verdant light that pierces through the canopy. The breeze rustles through the trees like the tide upon the shores of a nearby lake. As one of them approaches the edge of the treeline, a more seasoned trapper rushes to him. With a hushed but scolding tone, she urges the novice to remain hidden by the trees for the hills are filled with Qari. They will see his presence as trespassing. Already they risk much by trapping here, but game grows scarce as summer draws to an end. Soon, the rains will bring floods and give way to cold and hunger.

Such is life in the Valley of Raura: it is a place at the intersection between idyllic beauty and the brutality of nature, where survival is earned only through hard work. Inhabitants of the valley live their lives amidst towering mountains, rushing rivers, lush forests and bountiful fields. All around them, however, they can find what remains of those who once dared called this place their home. From ancient stone structures of long-forgotten origins to the recent remains of nearby towns lost to raids, adventure lies in wait for those brave enough to find it - or those unfortunate enough to be found by it.

## What's Inside

The Valley of Raura, presented throughout this document, is meant as a setting for game masters who are looking to design content for low level adventurers in their table-top roleplaying games. Although it is mostly inspired by the D20 system, it has been designed to be easily portable to any roleplaying system. The content of this document can be used as a starting point from which to create scenarios, quests and complications for your players to encounter and enjoy.

More concretely, this document is meant to provide the information you need to determine where sources of conflict, drama and need can spark in this place. Given the remote nature of the setting, its reliance on self-governance and the harsh conditions of the place, there are many powderkegs waiting to ignite. Situations that start locally can easily grow in scope to keep your players engaged throughout the early stages of their adventuring career while giving them the feeling that they are making a tangible difference in the world they inhabit.

From a cultural perspective, this setting takes heavy inspiration from the Pre-Columbian period of South American history. The setting seeks to act as a fantastical version of the real-world history and culture of the Andean civilizations that existed in what are the present-day countries of Peru, Bolivia and Chile. As such, this setting presents a pastiche of the cultures, aesthetics, traditions and mythologies; no representation is completely faithful to its original counterpart and while some names are inspired by real-world historical figures and civilizations, their presentation in this setting is meant to interest the reader learning more about them rather than treating them as fact.

## Adapting D&D to the Setting

To maintain the image of a cohesive representation, the document ahead does not make mention of traditional elements of the D&D setting, such as established races or mentions of any specific setting such as Faerûn. For DMs looking to integrate this setting into the regular ruleset consider the table below for conversion between the civilizations presented in this setting and the races and monsters presented in the core D&D rulebooks. However, this is only a suggested adaptation - DMs are free to replace which races apply to which creatures to fit with the rest of their own setting as best they see fit.

Table 1 - Conversions

Real World Civilization	High-level overview	Rauran Equivalent	D&D race most likely to apply
Wari	Militaristic and expansionist kingdom in the Andes	Qari	Orcs Goblinoids Kobolds
Tiwanaku	Long lasting civilization who settled a federation of autonomous communities	Tiwaku	Elves
Chavin	A civilization of religion-centered stone-masons whose architecture and art survives carved in massive stone structures	Wantar	Dwarves
Inca Empire	A vast empire that spanned almost the entire western coast of South America, with the main capital square in the middle of the Andes. Fell apart due to invading forces and internal infighting.	Chimor Empire	Humans

In addition to this, the setting makes use of terms based on the Quechua and Aymara languages - the real-world languages spoken by a large number of people in the Andes. Some of these words are explained in context in this document but a glossary can be found below in case DMs want to adjust these words to more closely match factions in the campaign settings they're fitting this valley into.

Table 2 - Glossary of Andean terms

Term	Meaning
<i>Amauta</i>	Teacher, scholar or master. The amauta was a position of tutelage, a sort of tutor for children in the Inca Empire - especially for the children of nobility.
<i>ichu</i>	A type of grass that grows in the Andean highlands. Used mostly as feed for cattle and livestock.
<i>rirpu</i>	A mirror or other reflective surface
<i>tupac</i>	Emperor or leader
<i>-wasi</i>	Suffix meaning "home of" or "place of"

# The Valley As a Setting

## Geography

The Valley of Raura was formed in the heart of the *Sumac* mountain range thousands of years ago as glaciers cut through the region. As the ice retreated, the first shape of the valley came to be - a wide, flat plain besieged by the mountains the glaciers cut through. Rivers formed from the meltwater and the rain that collected in the basin and over countless years they eroded the ground to form deeper and narrower corridors through the land.

Despite the drop in elevation caused by the eroded land, the valley is an alpine environment - elevation ranges between 6,500 to 11,000 feet on the flat areas of the valley. This drastic difference in elevation creates the conditions for the enormous diversity in flora and fauna the valley is blessed with. Nevertheless, visitors to the valley often speak of the dangers of not waiting to get acclimated - people unaccustomed to the place risk getting altitude sickness when performing anything more demanding than a light walk.

Amongst the peaks that crown this part of the *Sumac* mountain range, three stand above the rest. The most notorious, *Apusuyunuy* [The Dreaming Mountain], is a dormant volcano that sits in the middle of the valley. The Raura river gives shape to its skirts, causing it to stand out even further and become a landmark of the valley. Further north, the jagged, snowy crest of *Qispi Tupac* [The Shining Emperor] commands the title of the tallest mountain in the reach. It stands out from its surrounding mountains to such an extent that people use the shine of dawn's light upon its peak as the common metric for when the day is supposed to start. Lastly, *Lachihuana* [The Hive], the peak north of the *Alazaea*, is known for the many caves that can be seen on its slopes. Early settlers of the Valley used the natural openings of the mountain to carve it into a catacomb as a place to put their dead to rest. While many expeditions have been organized to venture into its reaches, no one is sure of the full extent of these catacombs.

## Ecology

The lower elevations of the Valley of Raura are blanketed by thick forests of mountain pine and alder while its soils are bountiful for most crops and bush plants. This vegetation provides the basis for the ecological chain that coexists in this part of the region - from hares and guinea pigs to up to small deer and pumas. Further up the valley, conditions are harsher and the vegetation reflects this: trees become shorter in height, almost stunted in their growth,

and less dense. Instead of thick mats of bushes, the higher altitudes of the valley are home to large plains of grass referred to as *ichu* by those that live here.

This plant is used as fodder for livestock, in particular the alpaca and llama that have been domesticated by the locals. The fibers of this grass are coarse and thick, which makes it well suited for rope-making, roofing and, when mixed with clay, it makes bricks that are highly durable and provide good insulation. These bricks are the most common building material in the region and their coarse texture gives Rauran architecture its distinctive look. For these reasons, the *ichu* grasslands have been culturally important for the people of the valley for generations.

Given the decrease in vegetation, the wildlife in this part of the valley is also less dense. Pumas use the cover of *ichu* to hunt for alpaca and llama but their population is much smaller than further downstream. Instead, this region is home to several types of birds and smaller mammals such as rodents and hares.

## History

*Excerpts from "Chronicle of the Settling of the Valley of Raura, Its People and Its Customs" by the Amauta Yupanqui, foremost historian of the valley.*

### Prehistory

There have been many attempts to settle the valley over the course of its development but the histories of these attempts have been lost to time, for the most part. Archaeological remains suggest sentient races have attempted to tame these lands over the course of tens of thousands of years. The most prominent of these remains include the megalithic structures found throughout the valley - dolmens, massive stone gates and runestones. The alphabet found on the carvings of these latter structures suggest that the earliest settlers of the valley were either giants or Wantar, as the design of their carved runes is reminiscent of those found to be common to both alphabets.

Debate reigns on the validity of this theory, however, as the megalithic structures seem deliberately designed to coincide with celestial events, something that is unusual for either culture. Scholars have proposed explanations ranging from a now-extinct species that once shared the alphabet up to a Wantar culture that worshiped the heavens as a reflection of the wealths of the earth. However, no oral traditions remain of this in the local Wantar populace (or if they do, they do not share these with outsiders).

Whatever the origin of these structures truly is, their design seems patently religious in purpose rather than civic or military. This has prompted the population to assign superstitious

value to these structures and contemporary cultures devote a few festivals to adorning these structures to keep the spirits they house at peace. Likewise, the merchants whose routes take them by these remains often leave offerings for good luck and safe travels. Although folkloric in nature, these activities are not entirely groundless; trace amounts of divine magic have been reported to emanate from the runes and land on which they stand.

In addition to the architectural remains of past builders, the vast necropolis that fills the winding caverns of Lachihuana also reveals to scholars the fate of other early settlers of Raura. What segments of this network of catacombs have been mapped out indicate that an ancient snake cult once held dominion over this valley. The burial sites that line the walls of Lachihuana bear the symbols of a serpent deity which share no resemblance to any that currently exists. The myriad sarcophagi in the mountainous tomb are fantastically preserved, however, a testament to the devotion of these people to the sanctity of their burial rites.

Aside from these salient archaeological sites, researchers of the valley have found vast evidence to suggest that early settlers of the mountainous surroundings of the valley were the ancestors of the Qari clans that endure to this day. While clan names have changed as bloodlines rose, diverged or stopped, most Qari of the Valley can trace their ancestry back to times long before the major human settlements became established in the Valley. Indeed, the few ethnographical missions the clans have allowed reveal the Qari to consider themselves the true rulers of this valley. Feuds over which bloodline holds the true right to rule are the major cause which has prevented the clans from organizing a united front. Their history is recorded as lavishly decorated textile tapestries, a medium they pride themselves on mastering. Qari warriors adorn themselves in cloth and fabric to indicate their status and rank.

## The Rise and Fall of Caêl Lussae

The best kept historical records of the valley are in the hands of the Tiwaku who call this place their home. They have written accounts, tapestries, etched pottery and songs that help understand how the valley evolved in time to its current state. Their records tell of a Tiwaku settlement established here about twelve hundred years ago. Long before any of the current human towns came to be, the Tiwaku settled in the forests north of what would now be Calusa. By their estimation, about thirteen hundred individuals moved in and built the wooded refuge of Caêl Lussae. This holding was kept hidden by fog and canopy - the Tiwaku knew that the local population of Qari would not take their intrusion kindly.

The first age of Caêl Lussae, the Sprouting Season, encompassed two full generations of Tiwaku - approximately six hundred years in human terms. During these centuries, the



domains of the refuge grew and the place turned from a hidden retreat in the forests to a sprawling network of small but self-sufficient settlements. These acted as separate city states which came together to celebrate council at the foot of *Apusuyunuy*, in a place modernly referred to as Dolmen Gate. By the end of the first age, the population of Tiwaku in the valley had increased five-fold but peace between the city states was tenuous. Expansion had brought cultural distance between the city states and civility was breaking down. More importantly, expansion had meant that the existence of the Caêl Lussae civilization could no longer be kept secret from the local Qari. Tales of raids and tapestries of combat date from the end of this era.

The second age of Caêl Lussae, recorded as the Withering in song, had a duration of a full Tiwaku generation. Trade agreements and diplomacy began to break down as leaders of the separate ruling houses grew mistrustful of each other. Any slight - be it real or perceived - in council sessions was accompanied by members of the ruling houses forming ranks and cutting off communication between their domains. In time, council was perceived to be a formality and was subsequently disbanded. The Tiwaku preferred to leave each other be and find peace in their own communities rather than forcing a cooperation that felt unsustainable. Census estimates from this age are hard to come by and those that survive offer conflicting accounts - a reflection of the breakdown in the continuity of this civilization. During the end of this age, we also get the first mentions of the founding of Kotosh, discussed in the next section.

In this vacuum of cooperation and communication, the underlying threat of Qari raids grew unchecked. This marks the third and final age of Caêl Lussae - referred to as the Long Sunset. Violence escalated in the valley over the course of a hundred years, which only exacerbated the isolation of the different Tiwaku city states. Travel in the Valley required either very large numbers or heavy armament and that made trade costly and difficult. Playing to the advantage of the separate Tiwaku settlements was the fact that their enemy faced a similar internal disorganization. Fragmentation on both sides of the conflict meant that the fight was, for all intents and purposes, a stalemate. However, after this period of escalation, accounts mention the rise to power of a chieftain known as Qiru. His campaign unified the three largest Qari tribes and with this newfound numerical superiority, Qiru was able to effectively cordon off individual city states and raze them. This tipped the balance of the war, which led to the reformation of the Tiwaku council at Dolmen Gate. By this point, however, it was too little, too late. Oral tradition recounts how the last few city states organized to mount a resistance. In the Battle of the Two Rivers, held at the junction of the Simbal and the Raura, Qiru's forces faced what remained of the Tiwaku defense. In mournful recollection, orators tell of the gallant fight the Tiwaku put up in

the face of overwhelming numbers - specifics vary but proportions range from being outnumbered threefold to being outnumbered fivefold.

The Tiwaku faced a crushing defeat that day but Qiru would not survive the battle. Without the influence of the charismatic warchief, the Qari clans soon fell to infighting but Tiwaku society had been reduced to a shadow of its former self. Census documents that survive to this day indicate that the population count for the Tiwaku after this encounter was as little as two hundred, with no central domain to call their own. They retreated farther south, to the forests southwest of Calusa, where the surrounding mountains offered great defensive value.

## Kotosh

The Wantar city known as the Seat of Gold in the common tongue was founded at the end of the second age of Caël Lussae. Allegedly dug into the northernmost part of the mountain range, the Wantar mostly kept themselves secluded. Evidence of diplomatic or trade exchange between their civilization and the Tiwaku is limited. Little information of this city survives to this day as a result. Prominently, however, their most salient legacy is the construction of two massive stone bridges built soon after their arrival. Their construction was presented to the Tiwaku as a gesture of goodwill and of intent to trade but no significant trade deals came of this. This has led scholars to speculate the bridges were meant to serve a separate purpose, but no unified theory exists to explain these structures.

What little is known about the founders of Kotosh is that they must have traveled into the valley from the north, which prompts historians to propose that they are an offshoot of other Wantar civilizations that exist on the opposite side of the Sumac range. These migrant Wantar would have sought to establish a foothold in this region to establish mines, as the mountains have historically been a rich source of iron, silver and copper.

Accounts of the Battle of the Two Rivers indicate that a group of Wantar surprisingly descended from the mountain in assistance to the remaining Tiwaku defense. This is the last record that exists of the kingdom - since the settling of the Valley of Raura by humans, no one has found the entrance to the Seat of Gold. Despite Wantar representing a significant population of the contemporary towns of the valley, none can (or indeed, none will) disclose where the entrance to Kotosh can be found or if the reclusive kingdom's existence endures.

## Human settlement of the Valley

Human settlement of the valley is a relatively modern event. Approximately three hundred years ago, the emperor of Chimor commanded this region be conquered and annexed into his empire.

He dispatched a contingent of over five thousand soldiers to chart and map the region. Led by general Rumi Nawi, the men established their first settlement in what would become modern Calusa. At this location, they found the emplacement of what had once been previous fortifications of the Caêl Lussae and built atop them. From this entrance to the valley, scouts were sent out to map and explore the surrounding area.

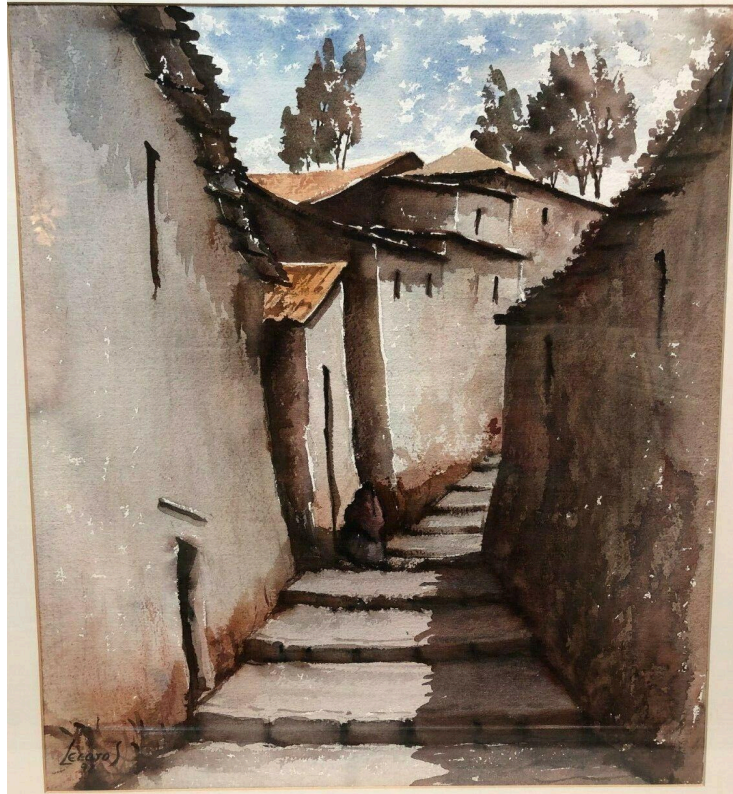
This led them to make contact with the survivors of Caêl Lussae, from which they derived the name of their newfound town. Preferring to engage with the Tiwaku in peace, Rumi Nawi gave them shelter in the keep he built at Calusa. From here, historical reports indicate that once Calusa was established, more settlers soon arrived and turned the region into a sprawling agricultural hub. Farmers of the Chimor Empire were famous for their terracing technology, which allowed them to increase arable land in the valley tremendously.

Backed by forces from the Chimor Empire, Rumi Nawi led a successful campaign in establishing dominion over the valley. Having gleaned information from the surviving historical Tiwaku sources and with his own military prowess, several more towns were established in the valley. These towns were designed according to how Rumi Nawi perceived his logistics needed to develop as he progressed with his campaign. Towns were either military centers, agricultural centers or trade hubs to facilitate resources to reach deeper into the valley. At the height of his campaign, however, Rumi Nawi was recalled by the emperor to address the kidnapping of his daughter by Ollantay, fellow general of the Chimor army. Ollantay's crime and subsequent rebellion would prove a serious military problem, one costly in terms of lives and resources. The fall of the Chimor Empire would soon follow, essentially leaving the inhabitants of the valley to fend for themselves and organize.

This leads us to the present day status of the valley. Of the fifteen settlements founded during Rumi Nawi's campaign, only four towns remain but they have become well established. Raura, despite being founded after Calusa, grew significantly due to its privileged position at the junction of the two main rivers of the basin. The other towns have been lost either to raids or simply to the harsh weather conditions of the valley.

# The Towns of the Valley

## Raura



Watercolor by Hugo Lecaros, 1992

### Overview

Raura, the valley's eponymous town, gets its name from the major river that runs on its eastern border. Originally, it was the third town built by Rumi Nawi, who saw the junction of the streams as a key logistic position to hold throughout his campaign. The first structures built here were the river port and its walls. Over time, as Rumi Nawi's campaign north continued, Raura continued to grow and develop. Now, the place is home to a permanent population close to a thousand people.

### The People

Owing to its location and facilities, Raura is home to a variety of the folks that make up the population of the valley. Among the other human settlements, it can be thought of as cosmopolitan in its diversity.

The majority, representing almost two thirds of the population, are humans. Of these, a large proportion are of Chimor descent, given the historical roots of the settlement of the valley. They inherit their ancestors broad chests, sharp features and tan complexion. That being said, the valley's bounty has brought in people from other parts of the world and humans of many other origins call this place their home.

The second largest group are the Wantar of the valley. They belong to one of two clans: the *Pachakalpa* [Strong Ground] or the *Qorilamkay* [Goldworks]. Relations between each clan are cordial though distant, cooled by the memory of an unresolved dispute regarding proper wedding etiquette that arose during the last inter-clan marriage. This issue is regarded as matters of the Wantar, so it is not shared with those outside the clans. Overall, the Wantar get along well with members of the other races but human families are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The humans that have been established for a long time in the valley can boast of sharing ale with the Wantar, while newcomers often have to prove themselves before they are trusted.

The third large sector of the population is made up of the Tiwaku that live here. Compared to other towns in the valley, their representation in Raura is small. The hustle and bustle of the port is not attractive to the Tiwaku, so few choose to permanently settle here (or at least, permanently as evaluated through the eyes of humans). They have formed a tight community, building their homes close to each other and establishing a Tiwaku neighborhood. Over time it has grown into the artistic heart of the town, where aspiring artists and craftsmen seek apprenticeship from the Tiwaku. They welcome the chance to share their ways, so they encourage this behavior by hosting seasonal exhibitions and events in their neighborhood.

Aside from the established residents of Raura, the mercantile nature of the town brings migrants and merchants from afar. Some who make the journey choose to stay and call the valley home. Given the town is still growing, there is ample opportunity for employment which gives migrants more reason to seek their fortunes and establish their lives in this town.

## Government

Raura is governed by a council composed of three elected representatives of the three major races that make up the town. In most situations, this council convenes monthly to address outstanding issues in the town, administer trade and discuss policy. Its members are renewed every year at the end of summer, though re-elections are not uncommon. As long as they are re-elected, members can legitimately stay on the council as long as needed.

Outside of these meetings, each of the different races has means of self-governance to dictate how they will carry out the elections for their representatives and who is allowed to run.

For the humans, representatives are elected by means of town-hall meetings where volunteers are given the floor to propose their candidacy and then a show of hands elects the winner. Meanwhile, the Tiwaku lean on their traditions in the valley and the social standing of each family to determine who would be best suited to represent their interests. Voting happens between the internal leaders of each family and the general Tiwaku population is not involved. Finally, the council members for the Wantar are elected in accordance to keeping the clan power structure balanced: the eldest representative from each of the clans and a priest of their patron deity as the third impartial member. For most matters, each of the races raises issues and grievances internally and the representatives bring these issues to bear in meetings.

This council is also in charge of the safety of the town. Coordination with scout masters and the city guard is key to their responsibilities. In the case of raider sightings, the council will organize emergency meetings to gauge response and prepare accordingly. These steps have kept Raura safe but they heavily rely on council members willingly cooperating and approaching the table to discuss in good faith.

## Economy

The people of Raura are mostly traders and fishermen; the land around the town itself is too rocky and steep to properly sustain agriculture. Raurans buy their crops from Calusa and get their meat and livestock from Simbal and Viscas. To pay and barter for the goods they purchase, Raurans take advantage of the rich clay and stone deposits that surround them to produce goods the other towns need. The *Pachakalpa* run a large masonry workshop to produce building stone, tools and craftworks. Meanwhile, a communal kiln is used to bake clay into either *ichu*-bound brick or pottery. The latter of these serves two roles in the economy of the town: pottery is either bartered as a practical household appliance (cooking pots, jugs for storage and so on) or sold and bartered as ornamental pieces.

Despite not being an agricultural town, Raura is home to the largest windmill in the valley. By virtue of its position conjoining the basins of the Simbal and Raura rivers, there is ample wind to make use of. Cereals brought upstream from Calusa are ground to flour in this mill, which is then distributed to other towns for consumption.

Raura's location affords it its great advantage for trade. It is located close to one of the bridges built by the Kotosh, meaning it has land connectivity to the rest of the settlements of the valley. These land entrances into Raura see heavy traffic during the rainy period that accompanies the end of summer and the start of autumn, when the rivers swell and become too risky to navigate. Likewise, these routes also see more traffic during the winter months when

sections of the river become frozen over or too laden with heavy ice. Throughout the rest of the year, however, the people of Raura rely heavily on the flow of the river to conduct trade as it is the most efficient method of transportation.

## Notable Locations

### The Dock

The river dock is the busiest place in Raura, for most of the day and the year. Running it requires the presence of dockhands, warehouse attendants, carpenters and scribes, all of whom go about their business throughout the busy hours of the day. Activity in the docks often starts at the break of dawn and dies down a little after sunset.

Because of this heavy traffic, many small venues and businesses have been built in this place, adding to the crowded nature. The people working the dock need a place to eat, so restaurants and eateries emerged to provide. Likewise, inns and taverns to cater to those in need of recreation and rest are also abundant in this place. Of these, the largest one is the Singing Breeze; one of the oldest buildings in the town, run by the same family since its construction.

Unsurprisingly, the docks can also be dangerous to those not used to the hubbub. Though crime in Raura is not a serious problem, unwary travelers can be the victims of pickpockets and those looking for company at night might wake up in the morning to find the experience cost more than what was bargained for. That being said, no organized form of crime exists in the city - most are opportunists who take advantage of those too naïve to look out for themselves.

### Old Alder Square

A knotted and twisted alder sits square in the middle of this large, stone-walled park. Tied to its many branches are a myriad strips of cotton, each of them inscribed with wishes, prayers or local family names. Around the tree, carefully carved wooden benches sit on the sides of pathways that snake through the grounds of this place. Sheltered from the sun by gazebos and the carefully curated canopy of this place, people lounge and rest. The houses that surround this park are very elaborate in their design and stand out from the other Rauran houses by virtue of their building materials and aesthetics. At night, the eerie, soft light of fireflies illuminates the space between the boughs of the trees.

This park marks the center of what is unofficially known as the Tiwaku neighborhood in the city. It is a place of music, rest and peace, kept and maintained by the many Tiwaku that live

around it. Visitors from all origins are allowed and the Tiwaku allow events to be hosted in this place, but only when approval is granted by the neighbors of the park.

Given it is treated by the Tiwaku as their cultural heritage, this place is guarded in a way that the dock isn't. Despite both places being busy, the Tiwaku that make this place their home choose to voluntarily run patrols. Anyone seen being hostile or misbehaving is escorted out and can be banned for life. To its keepers, this place has a sanctity to it they wish to preserve, one made to stand in comparison to the hustle and bustle of the rest of the town.

### The Singing Breeze

Commanding the view in front of the docks, this large brick tavern stands as a testament to the importance of location and tradition in business. The Singing Breeze was built during the founding days of Raura by the Upanqui family, though it didn't start out as a tavern, but rather as a family home. As the settlement of the surrounding area took place and the dock was established, civilian members of the Upanqui family would feed the dockworkers and rivermen that came to town. As the years passed, their cooking and hospitality garnered a reputation in the valley that meant most out-of-towners would look to the Upanqui family for food and shelter. Over time, they expanded the building to accommodate more people and build bigger kitchens and the business of the Singing Breeze flourished.

The true gem of the kitchen is the clay oven used to prepare most meals. Large orders of flat bread filled with cheese are baked early in the morning. The warm months of summer usually sees baked fish for lunch while the colder weather the rest of year instead calls for soups, stews and braised meats.

Culturally, the Singing Breeze is a place of rest, recreation and laughter. When times are good, people head here to celebrate and share. When times are hard, they go here for respite, shelter and the warm support of friendly faces. Given its heritage, history and its place in the hearts of Raurans, the smooth operation of the Singing Breeze is synonymous with peace in the valley.

## Calusa

### Overview

Built over the ruins of the Tiwaku, Calusa is a town that illustrates the tumultuous history of the valley. The buildings all have, as their foundations and base, a layer of restored woodcraft that tells the story of those who once tried to tame this land long ago. On top of these rise the white-painted *ichu* bricks that give the towns of this valley its distinctive architectural look.



Similarly, the people of Calusa represent a mixture of the attitudes settlers have in this valley. Most of the people here are either established settlers, who know the tragedies that lie under their feet and know to give the valley its due respect or they are fresh-faced migrants, seeing the bountiful land through the lens of its promise and potential.

Close to six hundred people call this place their home, though the town can hold as many as nine hundred in the spring and summer months when trade is bountiful. Of note, this place is home to the *amauta* Pacha Yupanqui, a history scholar who has devoted his life to the chronicling of the history of the valley. He founded the Archaeological Society of the Valley of Raura, which he leads.

## The People

Calusa is mostly populated by humans; they make up the vast majority of those who chose to live here. The Wantar population barely represents one-in-ten and the Tiwaku are even less numerous; mostly because the town holds too many reminders of the things they've lost.

Given that Calusa is the entrance to the valley, it's also the town with the largest proportion of non-locals and temporary inhabitants. Merchants who come to the valley usually stay a few days when starting their trading route or when getting ready to head south and leave the region. Because of this, Calusan folks are more used to foreigners and are considered by them to be the more polite folk of the valley.

The humans born here show clear Chimor descent, though the fairer weather on the mouth of the valley often means they see more days of sunshine than those upstream. This, coupled with the agricultural specialization of the town, means that Calusans are often more suntanned than their Rauran compatriots.

Aside from these minor differences, Calusans are known for their superstitious ways. Some say it is due to their town being built over the ruins of another, some say it is due to their close proximity to the catacombs in Lachihuana. Whatever the origin, the people of Calusa have several small rituals they observe to keep what they believe to be harmful spirits and bad luck away. Perhaps as a consequence of this, locals are also extremely religious: they are loath to miss religious celebrations and hold the local clergy in high regard.

## Government

The town of Calusa is governed by an elected mayor who is advised by a cabinet of people he chooses when taking office. Normally, this cabinet is composed of at least one member of the traders guild, a religious advisor and an agricultural advisor. There have been

deviations of this pattern in the past; namely, there have been two mayors who have chosen to lead without the help of a religious advisor. In the first case, a terrible drought waylaid crops which impacted the production of food for the entire valley. In the second, the acting mayor died when visiting the nearby terraced farms when a landslide hit the road he was traveling on. No other mayor has refused a religious advisor since.

Elected separately from the mayor, the town guard and militia is organized by the cacique. However, this position is not renewed as frequently as the mayoral one, given that only the hardest Calusans run for it. Keeping the peace in this town is a complex task. Despite being known for their politeness, the people of this town have a tendency to be roused into mobs and take justice into their own hands. Caciques face the dual task of making sure people are kept safe from external threats and crime, while at the same time making sure they are kept safe from each other.

Mayors in Calusa serve office for three years and are elected during a town-hall meeting. The locals like to half-joke that they also reserve the right to un-elect mayors, as in some notorious cases of political incompetence and corruption, acting mayors have been ousted and subsequently lynched.

## Economy

The principal economic activity of Calusa is agriculture. Its location at the foot of the valley, where the land is flatter, gives it access to a large quantity of arable land. That, coupled with complex irrigation systems and terraced farming techniques, allows the people of Calusa to harvest large quantities of food which they use to barter and trade with the upstream towns.

Agricultural fields and ownership of the land is derived from the Chimor custom of *ayllu*. Every family, defined as large associations that take blood and marriage ties into account, owns a parcel of land. They all share the task of working on that parcel to produce what they require to subsist as well as what they intend to post for trade. However, membership to the *ayllu* is not exclusive to kinship - prospective members gain access to the *ayllu* so long as they meet the reciprocal obligations of labor required. Given that ownership can't be consolidated and that participation is voluntary, tensions for land ownership are low.

In addition to this, within a few days travel distance, Calusa has access to lush forests. Mass logging is impractical but the locals do find value in harvesting timber from these woodlands as well as using them for trapping and hunting grounds. From these industries, the people make leathers and furs that they also trade with though more so export out the valley

than use them to trade internally. As regards to the timber, it is mostly used by wainwrights as merchants who come to the valley are often in need of repairs.

As with the other towns, the river is the main source of trade for Calusa year-round. Because of its lower elevation, this section of the river has a wider bed which means that navigability is not so dependent on the swell of the current. Temperatures in this part of the valley are also much less dynamic, meaning that freezes are less frequent in the winter.

The location of Calusa as the entrance to the valley also makes it an important trading hub. Because of the cramped space within the city walls, trade has to be conducted within the marketplace and obtaining a space to trade requires being granted a trading license by the mayor. To reduce the bottleneck caused by this process, a licensing office was opened but because it is now the only way to legally conduct business in the city, it has fallen under the control of a criminal organization. They charge large fees to conduct business legitimately, destroy or otherwise sabotage the setups of unlicensed vendors and manipulate merchants to smuggle controlled goods between the towns. The organization is run by a family of Tiwaku scribes who have bribed their way to stability - though some caciques have locked horns with them over the years and have subsequently met their deaths in suspicious circumstances.

## Viscas

### Overview

A hamlet on the azure shores of *Rirpu* lake, Viscas is among the more recently founded towns in the valley, founded about eighty years to this day. Home to a population barely over two hundred people, the few houses that break the skyline gather around the boardwalk and the fishing dock. The pace of life here is slower than in the other towns, and it has every reason to be because Viscas boasts the highest elevation amongst the towns of the valley, at a breathtaking altitude of over 11,000 feet. The shores of *Rirpu* marked the last push in Rumi Nawi's campaign to settle the valley.

### The People

The composition of Viscas is evenly distributed between Wantar and humans and both of these populations lean towards younger generations. The villagers here prudently regard the land that surrounds them as wild. Though predators and natural dangers are scarce, the fringe location of the town borders on territory the Qari of the valley still consider their own. In preparation for this,

the people who came to settle the town did so well armed and scouting the neighboring hills and mountain passes are tasks undertaken with grim seriousness.

In its time, Viscas has dealt with small raids and its people know full well the value of staying trained and vigilant. The constant presence of this threat juxtaposed with the serene and idyllic beauty of the lake informs the personality of Viscans. They often stand out from others in the valley because of their dry humor and level-headedness. To call something as being *worth a Viscan frown* is used by Raurans to convey very complex or dire situations.

By the same token, Viscans are fiercely loyal and understand full well the value of cooperation and the downsides of operating in the fringe of society. They are a tight-knit community by virtue of having a very apparent common threat.

## Government

The population of Viscas is small enough that no elected leader is necessary. Even the Wantar that have settled here claim no allegiance or loyalty to any broad clan - they forewent those relationships by coming to settle in the frontier.

Instead, the people of Viscas gather weekly to share, organize and discuss. The last day of every week, the townsfolk hold a large roast where everyone brings something to contribute. During this gathering, important news is communicated and, if anything requires discussion, it is organically discussed here. Responsibilities for the week are expected to be voluntarily taken; Viscans don't shy away from duty or hard labor. Indeed, Viscans govern themselves by following the main three laws passed down from the rule of the Chimor Empire: do not steal, do not lie and do not be lazy.

Should there need to be, trials are handled in this space as well. Given the community values its relationships and its members greatly, it gives its members a space to present their defense should they have been found in violation of the three laws. Failure to persuade the population usually results in exile rather than corporal punishment - Viscans hold the belief that cruelty helps no one. However, they do not tolerate transgressions in their midst, so criminals are outcast from the town.

## Economy

The town of Viscas trades little as it is mostly self-reliant. Save for pottery from Raura, most basic needs are met by what is produced locally. When they do need to trade, Viscans often bartered smoked fish, weaved goods made from *ichu* fibers and powdered pigments they extract from nearby cobalt and copper deposits.

Unlike the other towns in the valley, however, most trade to Viscas needs to happen by land route. *Rirpu* lake feeds into a waterfall that then becomes the origin of the river Raura. Between the waterfall and the steep gradient of the valley, it is prohibitively impractical to navigate downstream directly from Viscas.

The reliance on land trade routes further reinforces the economic isolation of Viscas - the canyons through which the road winds are treacherous and house a large number of hiding spots, which make good grounds for ambushes by bandits and raiders. Moreover, once the rain and snow starts, the roads become perilous to traverse. The sheer cliffs on the side of the road coupled with the frequent mud and rockslides make traversal in the wet season a fool's quest.

## Simbal

### Overview

Nestled on a large, flat mesa that is shaped by the two rivers that surround it, the acropolis of Simbal stands above its immediate surroundings. The white paint of its brick walls shines with the light bounced off the snowy peaks of the mountains that surround it. Large terraces have been carved onto the mesa's cliffs, where crops grow and livestock graze. These terraces serve as the town's defenses as well; they offer wide views of the surrounding terrain and all access routes to the city. A long, winding stone staircase leads down from amidst these terraces to a stone bridge that crosses the gentle stream that downhill grows to become the mighty Simbal river.

### The People

Simbal is a city mostly populated by Tiwanaku and Wantar, with the human population representing a minority of the close to seven hundred people that make up this settlement. This sets the city apart in not only its architecture but also its customs. While it was originally built during Rumi Nawi's campaign, the Wantar have made substantial modifications to the layout and buildings of the city to take advantage of its situation to make the city more defensible. Over the years, the effects of these changes have been validated as the city has repelled several raids by Qari and even survived a few wild monster attacks in its history.

Perhaps as an effect of this unassailability or by virtue of living on the mesa, people from other towns say that those of Simbal tend to look down at others. They are quick to criticize and point out flaws while they take great pride in their own accomplishments. The people of Simbal also place great value on the importance of history and precedence - the city is home to a large

library and a number of architectural relics that endure from the days of Rumi Nawi, chief amongst them a stone sundial inlaid with finely carved golden filigree.

## Government

Similar to Raura, Simbal is ruled by a council, albeit a larger one. The Simbal council is composed of at most ten seats and convenes at noon at the amphitheater of the sundial twice a month. Members of the council must change every 5 years and the incumbent members elect their successors by holding a final session where nominees are evaluated and discussed. If an incomplete council is established, the new council can elect the missing members or choose to have empty seats.

Members of the council set the policy for the city in public hearings. Members of the general populace are allowed to witness their debates and are allowed to offer opinions at regular intervals, but council members have final say on what policies go into effect. When the council is not in session, council members are expected to be present for the different economic and cultural activities that go about in the town - they are expected to have intimate knowledge of what goes under their rule. Indeed, fact and knowledge checking make the base of council debate and it marks the underlying flow of political power. Because of this, knowledge brokers are powerful individuals and can help stir government action in directions that best suit them.

## Economy

The economic activity of Simbal is dominated by agriculture, masonry and metallurgy. The city has access to mineral rich mines in its defensive domain and actively draws from them to produce resources that are traded downstream to the rest of the valley. By virtue of this and its culture, Simbal greatly values luxury items such as pottery, textiles, dyes and spices, which they get from trading with Raura downstream.

Trade is the most vulnerable aspect of the Simbal economy - the dock requires being at river level, which is far away from the city's walls and defensive terraces. Land routes to and from the city are less vulnerable than to Viscas, though they are much slower than river trade and they do border a forest that Rauran's believe to be haunted. The promise of good sales can motivate merchants to make the land journey but most prefer to go by river, even if that requires a few days' wait in Raura.

The other main economic activity in Simbal is knowledge brokering. Council members often pay people learned in the minutiae of the city to advise them on the facts and figures they'll need in session. To avoid having to personally micromanage the different industries and

activities of the city, they delegate the task to this set of people who interface with others who know the value this information has. As such, a sort of mercenary attitude has developed to the sharing of knowledge and it has begun to be treated as a commodity to be traded.

## Other Places of Note

### Dolmen Gate

At the foot of *Apusynuy*, an ancient civilization of the valley constructed a structure of cyclopean masonry. The full extent of the original structure is unknown but what remains is a massive gate, at least four times the size of the average person. The boulders that make up this gate are meticulously worked so they fit together with barely any clearance.

The orientation of the threshold is orientated east-west, which means that once a year, on the cusp of summer, the sunrise over *Apusynuy* can be perfectly seen through the center of the threshold. This is emblematic of other such structures throughout the valley, which all seem to keep *Apusynuy* as the central focus of their intent. This had led scholars to believe that Dolmen Gate was the entrance to a long gone fortress that recognized the implications of the volcano. The absence of nearby structures implies that whatever surrounded Dolmen Gate was destroyed, likely during a major eruption.

Arcane investigators who have ventured to these and other ruins in the valley have determined that traces of protective magic still permeate the stones of these monolithic structures. It has been theorized that these wards protected these structures throughout the eruption of *Apusynuy* when it was still an active volcano. Others postulate they have merely prevented these structures from being dismantled by the more mundane yet insistent forces of regular weather patterns.

Be it as it may, the people of Raura have treated Dolmen Gate as a kind of talisman throughout the many stages of its history. Contemporary inhabitants go out of their way when traveling between Calusa and Raura to leave offerings at the gate - a custom that is explained by many different beliefs as to the benefit of the activity. Some claim it protects those who live, while others claim it guarantees safe passage in the afterlife.

A more insidious belief is that Dolmen Gate was not the gateway to a larger structure but rather another plane of existence. Believers of this theory claim that this structure was built by the people of the snake cult of *Lachihuana* as a way of contacting their god and opening a gateway to allow it and its minions passage into the material world. They take the implied

worship of *Apusuynu*, a metaphor for destruction and desolation, and the closeness of the gate to *Lachihuana* as basis for these claims.

Whatever the true use of these stones was, they continue to silently keep their age-old secrets.

### The Alazaea

A much more recent edification that has become historic in the valley is the remote shrine known as The Alazaea. Built on the foothills of *Lachihuana*, this shrine was built as the staging grounds for a hallowing mission of the mountainous necropolis. Before its construction, the mountain passes that surrounded *Lachihuana* were referred to by such colorful names as Madman's Crest, Howling Pass, Wailing Canyon and so on. These names were in reference to multiple sightings of supernatural phenomena by travelers in this part of the valley.

Members of the Gray Congregation, a religious organization concerned with proper burial rites, established a mission here to begin their work in calming the spirits that accost these lands. Made to house large groups of acolytes and priests, the shrine is a large *ichu* brick construction with a tall bell tower that is surrounded by a walled courtyard and a complex of smaller residences.

The mission remained in activity for a long period of time - consistent efforts to calm the spirits of the mountain have been recorded for over one hundred years. However, the isolated nature of the shrine made it vulnerable to raids and attacks. Qari raiding parties, bandits and the very spirits they sought to calm were some of the dangers that the congregation had to endure while undergoing their religious undertaking.

Reports by the priests who settled The Alazaea included records of objects that moved on their own, priest testimonies of hearing whispering or even people speaking to them, apparitions walking around or on the grounds of the complex and even a few cases of possessions. Reports of the events that happened outside the grounds of the shrine include animals behaving erratically, reports of disembodied screams in the mountain trails, priests have reported experiencing nightmarish visions and sudden temperature dips, reaching even freezing temperatures in mid-summer.

The shrine itself was abandoned not too long ago - the constant threat of danger took too great a toll on the Gray Congregation, which mostly relocated its headquarters to Calusa. Now, the shrine acts a staging point by pilgrims and itinerant members of the mission, who stop at the shrine to rest for the night before venturing deeper into *Lachihuana* and its many



catacombs. Because of the longer nature of the voyage, the priests are not averse to hiring travel guides and security, though they are very open on the natures of the horrors prospective hirees might experience - the last thing they need is for hirelings to panic and flee.

# Major Factions

## Friendly and Non Hostile Factions

Below is a list of the factions players are likely to interact with in a friendly (or at least non-hostile) manner. Depending on the reputation players build with these factions, attitudes between the factions and the players may change however.

### The Chasqui

<b>Members</b>	~220
<b>Leader</b>	Decentralized
<b>Headquarters</b>	Raura
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Open
<b>Internal Structure</b>	No internal structure
<b>Allied Factions</b>	Sundial Knowledge Brokers
<b>Rival Factions</b>	None

Communication between the towns of the valley is a key part in making sure raids, plagues and other misfortunes don't spread to the point where life in the valley becomes unsustainable. Though many methods of messaging are kept in the valley, the most traditional way of communicating messages from one town to another is by way of the Chasqui - messengers who run between towns delivering messages.

More concretely, Chasqui don't run the full length of the trail between each own. Instead, they run to stops on the messenger roads called *chasquiwasi* where they trade their packets and messages to a fresh messenger who then runs the way to the next chasquiwasi. This message relay system is capable of transporting a message a distance of 160 miles in a day.

This tradition is inherited from the days of the Chimor empire where it was employed as the main method of communication. To be a Chasqui, prospective members need to prove themselves in tests of physical athleticism as Chasquis may be expected to run a few times a day for several miles at a time.

The Chasquis enjoy good standing with most members of most factions - most everybody needs their messages sent in some capacity or another. However, the Sundial Knowledge Brokers pay special premiums to the Chasqui for the news and happenings in the other towns of the valley. Because of this, the route to and from Simbal is especially coveted by

the Chasqui but their placement along certain roads are dictated by inter-town government agreement - a process that, ironically, makes heavy use of Chasqui communication to transmit logistic options and deliberations.

## Rivermen

<b>Members</b>	~200
<b>Leader</b>	Sinchi Roca
<b>Headquarters</b>	Raura
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Open internally and externally
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Wide hierarchy
<b>Allied Factions</b>	None
<b>Rival Factions</b>	Merchants guild

The rivermen are the organization of people who devote themselves to transporting goods along the rivers of the valley. They form a guild-like structure, with a guild leader to whom the captains of the different vessels who travel the river report to. Each captain responds for their own crew and captains are allowed to compete with each other for business, though a portion of their business must be given to the guild.

The guild redistributes these earnings internally to the other captains, ensuring that any guild member benefits from a trading season, even if business for themselves has been a little lacking. This redistribution is done in reverse order of contribution - those who perceived less business get the most of these redistributed earnings as a way of helping the members less fortunate in a trading season. However, in order to be eligible for these earnings, a crew of rivermen must meet a minimum quota of contributions to the guild. This prevents crews from just idling throughout a season and expect to be paid anyways. This redistribution policy is appreciated by some members but detested by others and tensions regarding discussions of this policy often run high.

The guild of river men is led by a Rauran called Sinchi Roca - an now elderly man who sailed the river most of his life. He manages most of the administrative work of the guild and is currently in the process of creating a document that charts how the river behaves throughout the year, in an effort to study navigation routes that will make travel on its waters safer.

Members of this guild, in general, feud with members of the merchants guild, whom they perceive to be their direct competitors. The merchants guild mostly handles the trade that happens by land and the two are often at odds with regards to contracts and pricing.

### Merchants guild

<b>Members</b>	~100
<b>Leader</b>	Kura Occyo
<b>Headquarters</b>	Calusa
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Minor external secrecy
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Wide hierarchy
<b>Allied Factions</b>	None
<b>Rival Factions</b>	Rivermen guild, Calusan Licensing

The merchants guild is a loose association of merchants who travel by land to engage in trade in the valley. Run by a Wantar woman called Kura Occyo, the organization is mostly concerned with keeping track of what routes are being taken by the different merchants and what trade is being conducted.

Itinerant merchants that travel the valley are required to stop by Calusa at least once a month to report on their routes, the goods they've sold along with the quantities and the place where this business was conducted. Kura keeps records of this information to watch for trends which she has used to foresee food shortages in the valley caused by drought, pests or other unforeseen events that affect agriculture. For the most part, however, Kura keeps whatever findings she makes to herself unless they might impact the lives of people in the valley.

Other than this reporting of information, the guild exerts little authority over the individual merchants or partnerships that are registered as its members. There isn't a fee that must be paid and members are free to compete for business with each other freely.

The major rivalries of this faction are with the rivermen, with whom they compete as part of the logistic and trade network of the valley. Moreover, the merchant's guild is especially resistant to cooperating with the trade license office of Calusa as they believe them to be exceedingly corrupt. On this matter, the merchants do come together to discuss plans on how to influence the government to change their policy and to find ways around the licensing requirements.

## Archaeological Society

<b>Members</b>	20
<b>Leader</b>	Pacha Yupanqui
<b>Headquarters</b>	Calusa
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Open internally and externally
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Wide hierarchy
<b>Allied Factions</b>	The Gray Congregation, Sundial Knowledge Brokers
<b>Rival Factions</b>	None

The Archeological Society is a congregation of people who have devoted themselves to collecting and cataloging the history of the valley of Raura. Their members are a mix between explorers and scholars who travel the region uncovering the secrets that have been lost to time in this valley and trying to give meaning to the structures and remnants of the civilizations gone by.

Anyone can become a member of the Archaeological Society but this membership comes with certain obligations. Members are expected to contribute monthly in one of three ways: monetarily, with remains or with manuscripts. Monetary contributions are accepted so long as it can be determined that the origin of the money didn't come from the unauthorized sale of archaeological remains to unvetted third parties. Remains are whatever archaeological evidence can be safely transferred back to the organization's headquarters in Calusa for study and display. Manuscripts are the theses, chronicles and other writings that make up the bulk of the knowledge accumulated by the organization. To be accepted into the corpus of the society, manuscripts must be reviewed by at least three other members.

As such, members need to be able to read and write in order to keep records of what they find, the theories they pursue and the evidence they collect to prove or disprove their fellows theories. Given this requirement, members also concern themselves with establishing places of learning and education for the people of the valley - the only way to actively recruit new members is by establishing the infrastructure that gives them access to the skills the organization requires.

After having a manuscript accepted into the organization's records, members gain the rank of *amauta* - an officially recognized scholar. *Amautas* can take on as many as three apprentices and they are responsible for their development as well as their safety. Research

carried out by apprentices must be approved by their *amauta* to ensure that they are not endangering themselves too greatly in their pursuits.

Chief among the *amautas* and the founding member of the organization is the Rauran by the name of Pacha Yupanqui. A descendant from one of the founders of Calusa, Yupanqui began investigating the history of the valley from an early age and was dismayed to find that there was little record of the past kept by the descendants of the Chimor empire. To remedy this, he began a lifelong quest of piecing together the history of the valley.

Yupanqui can be described as a child-at-heart, with this passion for history shining through despite his elderly age. He deeply enjoys telling the oral histories he's committed to memory and reciting the lyrics to the songs that tell of history, mythology and customs of the valley. He's a prolific writer, having penned several of the volumes kept by the archaeological society himself. Though he's too old for it now, Yupanqui is also an adventurer at heart - in his youth, he accompanied members of the Gray Congregation on repeated pilgrimages to *Lachihuana* to record their activities and catalog findings in the catacombs.

Because of their interest in the discovery of history, members of the Archaeological Society often find themselves on good terms with the members of the Gray Congregation, who value their uncovering of sites where proper burial rituals have not been performed.

## The Gray Congregation

<b>Members</b>	~50
<b>Leader</b>	Atuq Machaguay
<b>Headquarters</b>	Calusa
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Public dogma. All other practices private
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Strict hierarchy
<b>Allied Factions</b>	Archaeological Society
<b>Rival Factions</b>	Cult of the Snake God

The Gray Congregation is a religious organization who concern themselves with the *blessed rest* - the eternity of peace that is afforded to those who have been given proper burial rites. To them, there is no greater suffering a soul can endure than to spend the afterlife in strife as a troubled spirit or to be denied rest by becoming an undead abomination.

They are an ascetic order that believes that discipline and the pursuit of service in accordance with the mandates of their religion are the greatest form of satisfaction a person can

experience. To this end, they dedicate long periods of the day to prayer and to providing labor to help people of the community. Chief among the tenets of their faith is the fact that, while death is a part of life, care should be given to the living to forestall their passage onto the blessed rest. People who come to the end of their life with unfinished business tend to become restless spirits, so they promote the idea of a healthy lifestyle when they proselytize to increase the odds of followers achieving the blessed rest.

In order to become a priest of the Gray Congregation, potential applicants must undergo a few years of training and education. During this apprenticeship stage, they are acolytes and become ordained once they are deemed worthy. Priests of the congregation have strictly defined roles that they must occupy for set amounts of time and until they meet certain ritual thresholds. Responsibilities change as priests gain ranks, with the highest positions having to lead missions and pilgrimages while being responsible for large groups of lower ranking priests.

The number of priests active in the valley has dwindled over the years. The trials of running the mission at the Alazaea has claimed the lives, faiths or minds of many priests. With reports of paranormal phenomena still being detected in the *Lachihuana* area, it's unlikely the mission will stop anytime soon, so the Congregation has stepped up its evangelism efforts to attract more followers to its ranks.

A Rauran by the name of Atuq Machaguay leads the Congregation's efforts in Calusa. She recently came into the position after the last high priest died during pilgrimage to *Lachihuana*. Confronted with the grim realities of the mission, she was the one who foresaw that the Congregation needs to change the approach it's been taking. She mandated the redoubling of evangelism while also opening up hiring opportunities for guides and adventurers to accompany mission members on their pilgrimages.

Atuq is an unflinching Viscan woman, stoic even by the standards of other Viscans. She's been on pilgrimage to *Lachihuana* twice, where she's experienced firsthand the many horrors that still lurk in that land. For this reason, she's open about what hirelings should expect to experience when accompanying the Congregation to the mountain - she has personally seen how panic makes situations worse. Atuq has a very keen eye for character and will refuse the service of anyone she believes will lose control on the journey to and from the Alazaea.

## Viscan Rangers

<b>Members</b>	15
<b>Leader</b>	Katari Pumacahua
<b>Headquarters</b>	Viscas
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Clandestine operations
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Single captain
<b>Allied Factions</b>	None
<b>Rival Factions</b>	Sican Qari Clan

Charged with the defense of Viscas, this band of rangers traverses the highland forests and nearby mountain passes scouting for Qari activity. Trained in stealth, ambush combat and military tactics, they form the advance line of defense for the Viscas population, eliminating threats where possible and giving advance warning of incoming raids when outnumbered. Viscan rangers operate within the territory claimed by the Sican Qari clan, so the two factions are in direct confrontation.

The rangers scout in small groups, often pairs but sometimes trios, to reduce the impact of their presence and maximize their chance at stealth. Their scouting routes are subject to heavy planning, meant to reduce the uncertainty of Qari movements to a minimum. To reduce the frequency with which they need to return to the town to report, they take trained crows with them which are released with letters to send reports back to town. A ranger patrol tour can take upwards of a fortnite.

As a means of reducing operations risk on capture, rangers are not aware of the orders or routes other rangers are given by Katari. This ensures that any rangers that are captured are incapable of compromising their fellows if subjected to interrogation by the Qari. To prevent this secrecy from causing friendly fire incidents, the rangers have learned to hail each other with the imitation of a bird call. Failure to respond in kind is taken as a sign of hostility.

The group is led by Katari Pumacahua, a Rauran woman who lost her parents to a Qari raid. Knowing her story isn't unique is one of the main drivers that motivate her to ensure the safety of her town. Because of this, Katari is resolute and determined. She is also not without cruelty - to her, the Qari are merciless and she believes the only way to interact with a merciless



enemy is to confront them on the same terms. Rangers under her command are under strict orders to attempt prisoner capture after ambushes for interrogation. Katari also holds the belief that Qari are unchangeable and irredeemable - she will not tolerate their presence and she brooks no dialogue with any member of the Qari people.

### Sundial Knowledge Brokers

<b>Members</b>	~25
<b>Leader</b>	Decentralized Organization
<b>Headquarters</b>	Simbal
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Clients and contracts are secret
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Unaffiliated cells
<b>Allied Factions</b>	The Chasqui
<b>Rival Factions</b>	Sundial Knowledge Brokers

The Sundial Knowledge Brokers is the loose coalition of knowledge brokers operating in Simbal. Members of this faction know of the existence of each other, as they compete with one another for business, but they are mostly unaware of the exact dealings each one is undertaking - as it happens, that is knowledge these people pay good money for.

The Knowledge Brokers are a mercantile organization, mostly concerned with obtaining the information they need to remain competitive in the market and sell their services to members of the council. Their day to day activities involve networking with the business owners, messengers, farmers and other members of the economic life of Simbal to gather as much information from them as they can to give that information to council members.

On occasion, Knowledge Brokers engage in sabotage activities, either at the behest of their patron council member or by their own volition, in order to decrease the standing of other council members. When done so unprompted, Knowledge Brokers do so to increase the going rate for their services - if a council member got dealt bad information it's because they haven't been working with the premium service providers. Doing this is heavily frowned upon, however. It is seen as dishonest competition that reduces trust in the institution in general and other brokers who hear about it often take steps to ensure offending brokers are taught a lesson.

## Hostile Factions

There are several factions that players will find generally antagonistic to their own objectives. While some of these factions can be interacted with to turn their inclination to the players away from hostility, doing so is exceedingly difficult - especially if the players are friendly with the factions mentioned in the previous section.

### Sican Qari Clan

<b>Members</b>	~600
<b>Leader</b>	Sican Tupac
<b>Headquarters</b>	Sican Territory
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	None
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Patriarchal hierarchy
<b>Allied Factions</b>	None
<b>Rival Factions</b>	Viscan Rangers, Viru Qari Clan

The Sican Qari Clan is the largest clan active in the region of the valley of Raura. They hold claim over most of the northeastern region of the valley - from *Apusuynuy* to *Rirpu* lake and further east. Within this domain, the clan has a nomadic lifestyle. They travel its breadth and settle within burrows and shelters built by their ancestors directly into the mountainsides. As they return to these places, they stop to weave new tapestries to commemorate important events that have happened to the clan and celebrate coming of age ceremonies.

The Sican have strong spiritual beliefs, which in turn makes them fiercely territorial. They believe that the spirits of their ancestors still exist within their lands which is one of the reasons why they repel interlopers with violence. To them, their entire domain is sacred and to tread upon it uninvited is sacrilege of the highest order. By extension, anything that this land has to offer is rightfully theirs by inheritance. To them, plundering the towns of the invading Raurans is not raiding but a rightful reclamation of clan property.

The Sican are led by their clan leader, to whom they refer to as Sican Tupac - a title more than an actual name. The latest Qari to occupy this mantle has placed great value in ensuring the lives of their clan - he does not wish to engage in combat because that leads to undue risks to his people. He has chastised the leaders of his army for approving of raids unsanctioned by his rule as he believes this will only stir the Raurans into seeking vengeance

and bringing further harm to the Sican clan. In the past, Sican Tupac attempted to engage in diplomatic contact with the humans of Viscas but his envoy party was treated as a scouting force and attacked on sight by the Viscan Rangers. This has dissuaded the Qari leader from attempting diplomacy again, though he remains steadfast in attempting to cool off tensions with the humans. Other members of his clan, however, are not as keen as he is for peace and are much more likely to interpret Rauran trespassing in their terrain as uncharitably as possible.

The Sican Qari clan can be identified by their love of bright blue and gold textiles. Their warriors have shawls, ponchos and headgear made of alpaca wool dyed with the cobalt dyes from the mineral deposits in their domain and sulfide mineral dyes ground from bright yellow rocks that can be found in the hot pools that surround *Apusuynuy*.

This clan is also in a feud with the Viru Qari clan, the other of the large clans that currently inhabit the valley. While their territories do not coincide, they share bloodline histories which makes the true determination of their territory muddy. While Sican Tupac has opted put a stop to hostilities between the two clans, the Viru hold much resentment and tensions between the two clans escalate frequently during negotiations and parleys.

### Viru Qari Clan

<b>Members</b>	~300
<b>Leader</b>	Viru Tupac
<b>Headquarters</b>	Taypiqala
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Secret to outsiders
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Patriarchal theocracy
<b>Allied Factions</b>	Cult of the Snake God
<b>Rival Factions</b>	None

The Viru Qari clan roam the steppes of the western bank of the Raura river, across the shores where Dolmen Gate rests. They claim their land extends from Apusuynuy to the west, such that all lands across the shores of the Rauran river belong to them and the turn of the river where Dolmen Gate rests is also theirs. While this last part is a fabricated claim on their part, there is enough bloodline history to suggest that Viru Tupac could defend some claim to the territory. On this, the Sican and the Viru have conflict. Unlike their Sican counterparts, the Viru are not nomadic, making their home in the hidden hamlet of Taypiqala.

The Viru have resented their position of weak strength in comparison to the Sican clan for some time and have been looking for something that will give them the edge against their Qari counterparts or the Rauran invaders who trespass their lands. To this end, Viru Tupac has established connections with the followers of the Cult of the Snake God, who believe the coming of their god to be at hand.

With their additional manpower and bolstered by their foul magic rituals, the Viru have found themselves with an extra edge in combat they did not enjoy before. This has led them to become more brazen in their pillaging and their raiding. They have learned to respect the might of Simbal but they have had their eyes set on the town of Raura for a while now and have been drawing up plans on how to properly raid the place.

Viru Tupac believes that taking the Rauran center of trade and usurping its place will put the Viru clan in a position of incontestible strength and that all other inhabitants of the valley will be forced to pay homage to him in order to allow trade to continue. In this, Viru Tupac's greatest weakness - his vanity - shows.

The members of the Viru Qari clan identify themselves by the use of their muted crimson textile work. Their warriors drape thick red cloths over themselves which shield them from the elements and allow them to blend with the colors of the shifting ichu fields where they roam and hunt.

### Cult of the Snake God

<b>Members</b>	~65
<b>Leader</b>	Mizque
<b>Headquarters</b>	Caves north of the Azalaea
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Clandestine cells
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Decentralized hierarchy
<b>Allied Factions</b>	Viru Qari Clan
<b>Rival Factions</b>	Gray Congregation

With the recent efforts to calm the spirits of *Lachihuana* by the Gray Congregation, information on the age-old Cult of the Snake God made its way to the Archaeological Society. From here, a charismatic person now known only by the name of Mizque decided to revive the worship. By

first attracting a small group to form an initial cabal of followers and then relocating to a cave around the outskirts of *Lachihuana*, the modern version of the cult arose.

The cult's core tenet is that the ruins of Dolmen Gate are indeed a gate to the realm of the Snake God and that it is their divine mission to reactivate its magic to bring them forth to the material plane. Although the method of activation of the gate still eludes them, they hope that prayer and sacrifice made to the Snake God will awaken the old deity from its age-long slumber to show them the way to open the gate. Their efforts, while they have not been granted the knowledge their desire, have paid off in the sense that some entity has begun answering their prayers for divine powers. Ordained cultists of the Snake God have been seen performing divine magic which they have taken as a sign that the Snake God is in the process of returning. Whether or not it is the actual Snake God who has been answering their prayers remains unconfirmed.

The Cult operates by establishing decentralized cells in the populated areas of the valley. Here, a vetted cultist begins to set up a network and local following. Normally, this is done through a shell belief - usually a spirit that helps those who have been wronged to exact their revenge on those they believe wronged them. The original cultist will take stock of prospective followers who could be then presented to the true nature of the cult. Those that make the cut are vested as cultists by their patron but are not told of the original headquarters of the cult. Likewise, the central circle of the cult is unaware of the following each individual cultist amasses, as that preserves secrecy within the cult. Recruits that don't make the cut are then evaluated as prospective sacrifices for the Snake God and neophyte cultists are often tasked with performing the ritual sacrifice as a means for their ordainment as well to fuel the return of the Snake God.

### Calusa Licensing Consortium

<b>Members</b>	~30
<b>Leader</b>	Yunam Alalay
<b>Headquarters</b>	Calusa
<b>Level of Secrecy</b>	Administration office members are public. All other members are internally known.
<b>Internal Structure</b>	Strict hierarchy
<b>Allied Factions</b>	None

The Calusa Licensing Consortium is an organized crime organization that has formed around the bureaucracy required for merchants to secure a space to trade within the bounds of the city of Calusa. Given the limited space within the town's walls, merchants opening trading spots unchecked led to many of the cities becoming crowded bazaars, which made traversal through the already narrow streets hard for citizens. As a response to this, one of Calusa's mayors made it so merchants required a temporary license that granted them the ability to operate within the city. These permits are often limited to at most a week and no merchant can request an extension or a new permit unless a full month has passed since the last one ended or was suspended.

In an effort to delegate the task of the emission of licenses, the Licensing Office was opened which quickly became a hotbed for corruption. Agents of the licensing office would begin asking for bribes to give people licenses or they would suspend the license from merchants who refused to pay extortion fees. As the administrators of the licensing office became wealthier, they had more resources to strongarm the merchants, bribe the town guards to look the other way or get rid of people who got wise to the operation.

The leader of this operation is a Tiwaku man called Yunam Alalay and the members of the Alalay family occupy various administrative positions within the organization. Yunam is an extremely sharp man with boundless loyalty to his own family. To him, this is all just a means to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Alalay and, to him, the correct control of who is allowed to trade in the city is crucial to making sure that the right kind of business is conducted in Calusa.

The Alalay crime family is involved in many levels of crime - bribery, extortion, kidnapping, the sale of controlled substances, the sale of pilaged archaeological goods and murder. They tend to engage in crime through intermediaries, though some members of the Alalay family - Yunam included - are not above getting their own hands dirty if it reduces the amount of loose ends to deal with.

## Adventure Ideas

Adventures ideas in this setting document are presented along three main pillars for DMs to use according to the playstyle of their own tables. In each of the pillars, broad ideas for adventures are presented to readers but the specifics of how each play out are left to individual DMs to design. In addition, just because these three pillars are discretely presented, there is nothing stopping DMs from combining elements from them to produce more complexed and nuanced experiences for their players. The three pillars are:

### Drama

Explore the setting by getting involved in the interpersonal struggle of the people of the Valley of Raura. Adventures in this category make use of the tensions that exist between the different factions, the way superstitions in the valley can lead to conflict and how communal disputes can escalate.

#### Idea 1: Brokering peace with the Qari

Sican Tupac, the leader of the Qari, is tired of having his people engaging in needless bloodshed. He feels the best way for his people to flourish is if hostilities between the Qari and the other settlers of the Valley cease. He wants to sue for peace but has trouble reconciling the history of war his people have known for centuries. He fears that meeting with Raurans to broker a peace treaty could be seen as a sign of weakness internally in his clan and that this might cause others to try to usurp him and he doesn't trust that Viscan Rangers will respect anything signed.

Players in this adventure would be tasked with helping Sican achieve peace. They would be hooked into this adventure after a run in with him in a mountain pass on the road between Raura and Viscas. He would assert his presence and fight non-lethally if provoked and enlist the adventurers to have diplomatic outreach.

#### Idea 2: To Disarm a Mob

In the town of Calusa, a mob has been secretly stirred up by members of the Cult of the Snake God. The Cult has made an innocent person the scapegoat for their own rituals, the evidence

for which has been discovered by the people of Calusa who quickly identified the profane nature of the remains. Players need to find a way of proving the innocence of the person being accused by cooperating with members of the Gray Congregation, the cacique of Calusa and the Archaeological Society.

## Exploration

The Valley of Raura is a large place and the weather here is brutal. Adventures in this category challenge players to prepare for difficult travels to uncover hidden secrets in the valley while braving the difficult conditions of the place. Travelling to the monolithic ruins, accompanying members of the Gray Congregation on their way to the Alazaea and back and exploring the wooded remains of the destroyed Tiwaku cities are all examples of what would constitute this adventure. It would be convenient for DMs hoping to create adventures in this category to come up with weather tables and to set up the adventures in winter or the transitional seasons around it. In addition, the outlander background from the 5th Edition set of rules could substantially reduce the difficulty of these adventures, so keep that in mind when balancing for your designs.

### Idea 3: Weekend Getaway to Alazaea

The Gray Congregation is getting ready for its yearly pilgrimage to *Lachihuana* to calm the spirits of the dead who inhabit the mountain. To do so, they will set out on a large caravan that will take them through the mountains west of Calusa to the grounds of The Alazaea. Though run down, the old monastery can still house itinerant travelers, if only for a short period. Players have been enlisted to assist the caravan as security (or travel guides if your group feels more experienced handling overland travel in D&D).

Once they reach the Alazaea they are to remain on the grounds of the shrine along with a subset of the priests who have traveled to the mountain. Senior priests will travel to *Lachihuana* to perform passage rites but the rest must remain in the shrine to ensure they have a base camp to return to. Throughout their stay, players will have to keep their wits about them lest the supernatural phenomena lead them to madness and to potentially fatal outcomes.

### Idea 4: Finding Kotosh

The ancient remains of the Seat of Gold have been lost to time, though no one disputes that it exists somewhere in the valley. Stories of fantastic treasure, priceless artifacts and answers to



long historical riddles are kept within its forsaken halls. Players would be approached by a group of Wantar of one of the major clans in Raura with a proposal to launch an expedition in search of the ancient city of Kotosh. This would require them to gauge their food supplies, to prepare for all manner of weather and to navigate complex terrain.

## Heroism

Finally, in line with more traditional adventures in D&D, the towns in the Valley of Raura always stand on the brink of disaster and are in dire need of heroic figures who will step up to honor the call to adventure. These adventures are likely to be focused on combat encounters and so are better suited for parties looking to enjoy that side of D&D.

### Idea 5: Defend from a Qari raid

Emboldened by the powers gifted to them by the Cult of the Snake God, the Viru Qari clan has been attacking ships coming down from Simbal to Raura. Having learned their lesson against the high-walled acropolis of Simbal they now prepare to make a major offensive towards Raura. In this adventure, players would be part of the team in charge of defending Raura in stages. First, players would be part of scouting efforts to counteract Qari reconnaissance. Then, they would hold the line as the major offensive is unleashed upon Raura. The final stage of the fight would be a climactic battle against Viru Tupac, leading the Viru clan leaderless and unlikely to be a threat in the near future. For low level players, this would be a good way of setting up their folk hero background.

# Map



