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AMAZONIA

>>>> BEGIN FACTS AND DEMOGRAPHIC BOX

Amazonia: Am-ah-zone-ya

Population: 250,430,000

Prominent Languages: Amazonian Portuguese, Spanish, English, Nheengatu

Administrative Regions: Centro-Oeste, Norte, Nordeste, Noroeste, Sudeste, Sudoeste, Sul

Government Type: Draconic Triumvirate

Bordering Countries: Argentina, Aztlan, Bolivia, Caracas, Carib League, French Guiana, Paraguay, Peru

Geography: Lush rainforest fills the Amazon River Basin in central Amazonia, from the foothills of the Andes to the Atlantic ocean. South and north of the basin the topography rises to highlands and mountains, including the Serra de Mar in the south along the coast, the Serra do Espinhaço in the east, and the Guiana highlands to the north.

Notable Features: Amazon River, Amazon Rainforest

>>>> END FACTS AND DEMOGRAPHICS BOX

A BRIEF HISTORY

When VITAS crossed the Atlantic from Africa in late 2010, it found a region with a hot, humid climate, rampant air and water pollution, and overcrowded, poverty-stricken cities—in short, perfect incubation grounds. The disease ripped through the shantytowns with frightening speed and lingered to ravage the desolate ghettos. The government turned its efforts to deal with the epidemic just as the Amazonian Rainforest began an aggressive Awakening, with the plant life experiencing a period of explosive growth. The indigenous tribes of the interior had to adapt to the new perils of the Awakened rainforest, but also had first access to its vast pharmaceutical potential, which stemmed the toll of VITAS in their isolated communities.

By 2012, the Brazilian government had a plan to deal with both problems at once: slash and burn to cut back the encroaching forest in order to build cheap housing for the poor. The program was bitterly opposed by many eco-conscious citizens and the native peoples of Brazil, who organized into the Fundação Nacional de Índios (FUNAI). Some ecoterrorist cells actively fought the logging, but the government continued to clear the forest until 2020, when funding for clear-cutting ran out.

Unable to fund the logging themselves, the government turned to private business, opening up vast tracks of virgin forest to exploitation by various corporations. In response, FUNAI began using magic and guerrilla warfare to actively oppose intrusion in the rainforest and cut off access to many interior communities. Led by a trio of great dragons, FUNAI began an active rebellion against the Brazilian government, supported by massive civil unrest in the cities, which culminated in the decapitation of the existing government at Manaus and Brasilia in 2034. The great dragon Hualpa announced the creation of Amazonia through his voice, FUNAI leader Pajé Arani, that same year.

The new government established by the Awakened forces immediately instituted policies of ecological and indigenous cultural preservation, beginning with the depopulation of cities in the country's interior and an immediate end to all logging. Aztechnology assets were nationalized; other corporations were offered nominal reparations for the seizure of their properties in the Amazonian interior. Free elections were held, but the restructured government sharply limited their powers; the three dragons presiding over the coalition of tribal and Awakened forces were essentially in control.

In 2039, Amazonia began an expansionist phase. Civil unrest from the Night of Rage destabilized Guiana and Suriname, and the governments capitulated to Amazonia after making a token request to join the new Awakened state. Amazonian support to the rebels in Uruguay led to a successful coup in 2047, and the former nation joined Amazonia as an autonomous province. Brief military actions established Amazonia's borders with French Guiana, Argentina, Ecuador, and Peru, which called on corporate interests or allies for support.

In 2049, Amazonia and Aztlan simultaneously invaded and conquered Colombia and Venezuela, stopping only outside the city of Caracas, due mainly to United Nations intervention. The Amazonia-Aztlan border remains actively patrolled, with forces from both nations stationed along it.

MAJOR CITIES

Amazonia is nominally a republic, but the citizens that the government represents are the trees, the rivers, and the land itself. Metahumanity has a very poor track record of caring for the native environment, and so the bulk of the

metahuman population is strongly encouraged to live in large, high-population-density urban sprawls on the coasts. Indigenous peoples and individuals that can maintain a stable, low-impact coexistence with the surrounding wilderness are permitted to live in the interior, but settlements of more than a few hundred people are almost nonexistent.

On the other hand, the draconic triumvirate takes a very loose rein with the metahuman-dominated urban areas, leaving day-to-day existence in the hands of the freely elected municipal governments. Poverty and unemployment remain major issues, due mainly to Amazonia's refusal to accept the Business Recognition Accords, retention of a national currency (the *real*) alongside the nuyen, and strict pollution controls. In addition to metahumans, Amazonia also has one of the largest population of non-metahuman sapient in the world, particularly nagas, merrow, shapeshifters, free spirits, and lindworms.

Metrópolis (the *Metrópolis de Amazonia*) is the urban center of the Awakened nation of Amazonia; a conurban sprawl between the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and houses at least two hundred million sapient beings, a culturally diverse mix of metahumans, naga, shapeshifters, and at least six dragons, most notably the new mayor Pedrinho de Metrópolis, a feathered serpent. Non-metahuman sapient are still considered *metras* (resident of Metrópolis) and form their own communities in the urban forests of Rio and their own ethnic *favelas*. Not all of these communities are insular—the idea of Meta-Tropicalismo is very strong in Metrópolis, and there is a degree of interaction not normally seen in the Sixth World.

Metrópolis is a city of many faiths. Along with being the last and greatest bastion of Roman Catholicism in Latin America, it is home to a number of new, ancient, and revamped syncretic religions, many of which are practiced alongside Christianity and nearly all of which incorporate some Awakened element. Your average metra's view of magic is heavily shaped by religion, both what is possible and what is permissible, what is a sin and what is evil. Urban *umbandistas*, Macumba practitioners, and *capoeira* adepts on the streets of Metrópolis are often true believers who observe local custom and superstition to a degree.

Fortaleza and **Salvador** are the breadbaskets of Amazonia, the urban centers of the semi-arid region's many farm co-ops, where crops and animals are processed into food and goods destined for the rest of Amazonia and the world. KondOrchid is the largest corporate presence in these two cities, and the co-ops that serve it generally focus on producing hemp and coca; local laws regarding the use of these natural substances is fairly lax. Fortaleza and Salvador's food production is so important that the national government does not levy taxes in reals, but in a portion of pigs, microcattle, and chickens sent directly to Manaus—reportedly to supply the dietary requirements of the ruling dracoforms.

Paramibo and **Georgetown** are the former capitals of Suriname and Guyana, respectively, and the two colonial towns are Amazonia's ports on the Caribbean. A mass metahuman exodus of the interior, facilitated by government incentives to move into the coastal cities, has considerably bloated the two metroplexes. Beyond the colonial downtowns rise tall blocks of urban housing projects, most with rooftop gardens carefully divided between families. Substantial portions of both communities commute to the small towns built up around mines and low-impact refineries and waste processing centers in the interior.

Porto Alegre is Amazonia's southernmost port, and the major military training facility and dock for the Amazonian navy. Membership in the Amazonian military carries substantial benefits that are very appealing to the teeming millions of poor in Amazonia, and recruitment is intense and competitive. Porto Alegre is partially a military town and also contains the bulk of Amazonia's heavy industry—retained entirely to see to the needs of Amazonia's aging but powerful fleet.

Florianópolis could easily be mistaken for a European or NorthAm metroplex, and still carries its colonial charm and multiethnic traditions. The most open of Amazonia's cities, Florianópolis sees considerable tourist trade. The city council has recently negotiated a limited acceptance of the BRA within city limits with representatives of the Corporate Court, in the hope of attracting megacorporate investment. NeoNET, the PacRim Bank, and Eastern Tiger have already shown considerable interest.

Manaus became the national capital after the abandonment of Brasília; it is the only city in the Amazonian interior with a population over one million. The great feathered serpents Hualpa, Sirurg, and Arleesh all maintain lairs on the outskirts of the city, equidistant from one another around the city center; this rough triangle has effectively redefined the city limits. Nearly twenty-six percent of Manaus' inhabitants is made up of non-metahuman sapient, making it the largest mixed-sapient metroplex in the world. Travel to Manaus is accomplished almost entirely by zeppelin or boat.

Montevideo is the capital of the autonomous state of Uruguay. The relatively low population density and high standard of living make Montevideo one of the more stable cities in Amazonia, and home to most of its banks and financial institutions, including the Land Bank and the Amazonian Stock Exchange, which exclusively lists local corporations and corporate co-ops (agricultural, mining, or craft). The Montevideo Club Sol Costeño de Football is Amazonia's most successful football team (even if, as the locals joke, most of them are from Metrópolis).

Montevideo the strongest bastion of Roman Catholicism remaining in Amazonia, and as the most predominantly Spanish-speaking city in Amazonia, is the center of the Vatican's efforts to relieve oppressed Roman Catholics in Aztlan, and the city has a substantial Aztlaner expatriate population. The legal status of these Aztlaners is that of resident aliens, and the government can export them at will—or execute them if they are caught spying. Such cases are unfortunate but receive substantial media coverage, both in Amazonia and Aztlan through the regional subsidiary of Sol Media.

SPECIAL LOCATIONS

Amazonia is an Awakened country, and, since it covers the majority of South America, contains hundreds or even thousands of sites of interest. The most prominent feature is the **Amazon River**, the largest river in the world which runs across the country. The Amazon and its tributaries are manalines following the natural geomancy of the landscape, and remains the most-used route of travel through the Amazonian interior, both by the indigenous tribal peoples and commercial traffic.

Iguaza Falls is a natural wonder of the world, a system of 275 waterfalls on the Iguaza River. Formerly, the border between Argentina and Amazonia ran through the falls, with a town on each side giving each nation their own access. Surrurg made a point of securing the site during Amazonia's aborted push into Argentina, and the Amazonians now retain control of both towns. The site is not known to be magically potent or strategically important, so the great dragon's interest in the area remains unclear.

Christ the Redeemer is a 38-meter tall soapstone and reinforced concrete statue of Jesus Christ, with arms outstretched to form a cross-figure, located at the peak of Corcovado Mountain in Metr pole. A key landmark of Rio de Janeiro, the Christ the Redeemer statue remains a focal point of Christianity in the increasingly pagan and syncretistic country. The Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro expanded the chapel at the site to accommodate a greater number of worshipers and compensate for the many small churches closed throughout Amazonia since the fall of Brazil.

The **Amazon Stonehenge** is an anomalous prehistoric monument located somewhere in the Amazonian interior; the exact site was overtaken by the rainforest in 2019 and all records of its original location disappeared in the Crash of '29. What records survive suggest a collection of ruined or partially ruined monoliths aligned to form an astronomical array—hence the comparison with Stonehenge in the United Kingdom. The Amazon Stonehenge has taken on almost a mythical character in Amazonian culture, with exaggerated stories of guardian shapeshifters protecting a hidden treasure.

The **Ing  Stone** was a collection of basalt stones covered with undeciphered glyphs, which had taken on an unhealthy focus for a number of ecoterrorist groups in Amazonia, primarily the C digo 515 and the Primeira Vaga. In 2066 Amazonian forces, led by the great feathered serpent Arleesh, cordoned off the area for a period of twenty-eight days, which was interrupted when a number of spirits penetrated the gigantic, warded tent around the site. Arleesh banished the spirits and melted the stone with repeated use of her breath weapon. Subsequent surveys of the area suggest that it is a mana ebb of considerable strength.

Amazonian Antarctica is the section of Antarctica claimed by Brazil as its Zone of Interest in 1986. The current Amazonian government retains these claims, though it has less interest in the region. It retains a permanently staffed scientific research station near the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula.

> The official history is half-truths and lies. The great feathered serpents—Hualpa, Surrurg, Arleesh—control the nation; the rest of us are merely tolerated. Only they know how much of what Brazil has suffered was due to their machinations, but there are rumors, stories told in the *favelas* to scare children. Blood-rites reminiscent of the Mayan death cults fueling the verdant rebirth of the Amazon; pre-Colombian artifacts and ruins that quietly resurrect themselves in the jungle, fresh offerings of flesh left on dusty altars. Madmen that haunt the jungle, driven dark and corrupt by their obsessions; and a valley of pyramids, each marked with the sign of a different insect. The dragons rule in Amazonia, and beneath them the naga, the shapeshifters, the lindworms and the Snake That Walks.

> Marcos

> I wish I could say that was an exaggeration, but it's true that while they are idle dictators, the great dragons maintain their grip on the country and use it to pursue their own agendas. This feud with Aztlan begins and ends with Hualpa, it feels personal somehow.

> Frosty

> Sightings from 2012 say Hualpa originally laired in the Yucatan, maybe he lost something when Aztlan rolled in.

> Slamm-0!

> Ah, Metr pole, gateway to the Amazon. The weight of all those people, the smells of a hundred different cuisines (not all of them metahuman), the shadow of dragons in flight overhead, restrictions on traveling beyond the city limits or damaging the rampant rainforest growth, etc. My kind of town.

> Traveler Jones

> Especially during Carnival. The whole city comes alive; it's the biggest party in the Sixth World. You get so many good vibes going during Carnival that the air is thick with it, you can see the spirits and magicians float through the Astral, soaking it all in.

> Winterhawk

> If you two party animals are quite done, the basic rundown is that gangs and ghost cartels call Amazonia home, as well as the Amazonian Yakuza in Metr6pole. They run shit, especially in the poorer parts of the country. KondOrchid and the Olaya Cartel are so tight that Fortaleza and Salvador are basically their little drug factories, pumping out novacoke, ayahuasca, and deepweed for export to the Carib. The gangs are ethically diverse, violent, and driven; Amazonia has so many bloody cultures and subcultures that I leave counting them to the anthropologists with math subprocessors. Unique aspects: emphasis on syncretistic religions (some of whom sell BAD "sacraments"), the abnormally high number of sapient critters and free spirits (some of whom are using the gangs for their own ends), and the political connections of some of the gangs—imagine if everyone in a certain *favela* for the last two generations had belonged to a single gang, and one of their members was on the city council; that type of thing.

> Sticks

> Joking aside, it's easy to make the mistake that Metr6pole *is* Amazonia, but the rest of the country has their own handle on things. Not everyone is pleased being lower on the food chain, literally and symbolically, than The Great Scaly Overlords, and various rebellions exist—if they don't get co-opted into criminal endeavors, killed by toxic magicians leading ecoterrorist cells, run afoul of the Amazonian intelligence services, or say "Fuck it" and go off to Uruguay where things are sane and you can order a cold beer in a clean glass.

> Traveler Jones

> My friends, you speak too lightly of Amazonia. The word on the winds is war—Hualpa has Amazonia gathering her forces, around Caracas the crows gather in anticipation of the feast. Soon, all the work that is left will be for mercenaries and the righteous.

> Glasswalker

> He's not kidding. Latin American offers have been quietly flooding into the major mercenary outfits, and not just from Amazonia or Aztlan. Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay, the Carib—everyone's paranoid. No matter who wins when those bloody-handed nations go at it, the rest of LatAm is going to lose.

> Picador

> I cast my blood on the sands this morning and it was the outline of a continent. I had a vision of a pyramid over a lake. In the lake, a black dragon and a green one were fighting, trapped beneath a rock; a cubic black stone with veins of what look like gold or orichalcum. When the stone was taken away, the dragons were freed, and the pyramid crumbled.

> Axis Mundi

> While we're getting our hokum and mescaline trips out into the open, I'd like to remind everyone that Manuel Torres, one of the Draco Foundation board members, lives in Caracas and has a summer home in the Draco Foundation offices at Florian6polis. Torres is a painter and artist adept or enchanter of some sort that painted a mural of Amazonia for Hualpa—showing it covering all of Latin America.

> Clockwork

> When in the Amazon, bring your own food, water, and medical supplies, because the nearest town or city can be hundreds of kilometers of dense and angry jungle away, filled with paracritters, sangre del Diablos (the only tree in the Sixth World that will actually go for you), and people that have been living basically unchanged since the stone age.

> 2XL

> The latter, if you can make friends, are awesome. There are plenty of corps and magicians that pay out the ass for any plant or animal specimens from the Amazon, and there are entire

tribes that work on gathering reagents and crafting fetishes and binding materials that are happy to exchange `em for guns and medicine. Of course, most of them speak languages there are no linguasofts for and some of `em shoot you with poison-tipped arrows first and ask questions later, but wear a flak jacket and try to play nice. The rumors about head-shrinking and cannibals are almost certainly exaggerated.

> Jimmy No