

VIII: Cosmology

The universe of Advanced Magic World differs substantially from the cosmology of today. In the universe of today, the universe is continuously expanding with no signs of stopping. Our solar system places the sun in the center and has the planets, including the Earth, traveling around it in elliptical orbits. What made the medieval universe different from what we know today?

In medieval times, the most important concept was in the perfection of the universe. The accepted model of the known universe used the cosmology devised by the Greek astronomer Ptolemy. A geocentric universe, the Earth was placed in the center of the universe and was both fixed and unmoving. The moon, sun, planets, and stars surrounded the Earth in a series of spheres that moved.

Ptolemy derived his geocentric universe from Aristotle's ordered universe. In this universe, there were two main regions: an earthly region, malleable and corruptible, and a heavenly region which was the opposite of the earthly region in that it was both unchangeable and perfect. Aristotle's version of the universe had some 55 different spheres. Each sphere was given its motion by an object known as the Primum Mobile, or "Prime Mover".

The cosmology of Advanced Magic World is divided into several areas, each with its own physical laws and realities. In traveling order, from innermost to outermost, are the Material Plane, the Ethereal Plane, the Sublunary Sphere, the Sphere of Luna, the Astral Plane, the true Spheres, the Primum Mobile, and the Empyrean Paradise. The true Spheres are where the deities the characters worship reside, though in time even the gods die. The Primum Mobile is the main motive force that keeps the universe moving, and as such is not a "place" that can be visited. The Empyrean Paradise is the final resting place for the worthy dead, whether mortal being or god, the rest being fed to the Primum Mobile to keep the universe turning.

THE MATERIAL PLANE

As noted before, the Earth was placed at the center of the universe, and all the celestial objects moved around it. The Earth in which the adventures were born and live is the Material Plane of Advanced Magic World. The Earth of Advanced Magic World is an alternate Earth, with identical geography, but with a wildly different history.

On this Earth, the Americas are the "old world" and mythology is real. Magic works, though its power is slowly declining. The ability to alter reality by use of a wish was lost long ago along with many other powerful spells. The ability to make magic items is limited to creating simple items such as weapons, armor, and potions. The knowledge of how to make the more advanced magic items, the rings, the rods, staves, and wands, is lost to those beings that inhabit the Earth. This is "normality" for the denizens of this Earth.

THE ETHEREAL PLANE

Surrounding the Earth, the sublunary sphere, and touching the sphere of Luna is a thin layer of ether, which serves as a means

of travel to any of the elemental planes in the sublunary sphere, or access to the sphere of Luna. The Ethereal Plane, as it is called, coexists with the Material Plane and the planes that it connects to. The Material Plane itself is visible from the Ethereal Plane, but it appears muted and indistinct, its colors blurring into each other and its edges turning fuzzy.

While it is possible to see into the Material Plane from the Ethereal Plane, the Ethereal Plane is usually invisible to those on the Material Plane. Normally, creatures on the Ethereal Plane cannot attack creatures on the Material Plane, and vice versa. A traveler on the Ethereal Plane is invisible, incorporeal, and utterly silent to someone on the Material Plane.

The Ethereal Plane is mostly empty of structures and impediments. However, the plane has its own inhabitants. Some of these are other ethereal travelers, but the ghosts found here pose a particular peril to those who walk the fog. The plane has no gravity, so objects float and thrown or propelled objects keep on traveling until striking an object. However, since there are few or any objects in the plane, the object will essentially continue to move forever. Magic works normally here, but does not cross onto the Material Plane unless designed to do so.

THE SUBLUNARY SPHERE

The sublunary sphere consists of the four basic elements that make up all living things: air, earth, fire, and water. Each of these elements has a plane all its own, where the physical laws that characters would be familiar with may not necessarily apply. The Ethereal Plane touches upon these planes, and denizens of both the Material Plane and the elemental planes travel back and forth.

Elemental Plane of Air: This plane consists of an infinite expanse of breathable air, with no ground, water, or other natural materials. The Elemental Plane of Air is the most comfortable and survivable of the planes of the sublunary sphere, and it is the home of all manner of airborne creatures. Indeed, flying creatures find themselves at a great advantage on this plane. While travelers without flight can survive easily here, they are at a disadvantage.

Mostly open space, the Elemental Plane of Air has just a few bits of floating stone or other elements. The plane has a breathable atmosphere, though occasionally clouds of acidic or toxic gas do occur. Beings of the Elemental Plane of Earth are not comfortable here, having no natural earth to connect with, and try to avoid this plane as much as possible. Natives to this plane determine their own "up" and "down", and thus gravity is subject to their whim. Anything that is not propelled by something or someone does not move on this plane.

Spells that deal with this element have their range and effects doubled, while spells that deal with the earth are only at half effectiveness.

Elemental Plane of Earth: Not to be confused with the Material Plane, this plane consists of solid earth. An unwary and unprepared traveler may find himself entombed within this vast solidity of material and have his life crushed into nothingness, his powdered remains a warning to any foolish

enough to follow. If lucky, travelers to this plane will find a natural cavern to base themselves in, hopefully with air in it. Despite its solid, unyielding nature, the Elemental Plane of Earth is varied in its consistency, ranging from relatively soft soil to veins of heavier and more valuable metal.

Being mostly solid, the Elemental Plane of Earth has few areas where creatures not of the plane can exist. Unless in a cavern or other such location that has a breathable atmosphere, suffocation is very likely. Individuals with the inability to burrow are entombed within the earth and must dig themselves out of their tomb at a rate of five feet per 10 minutes time. Beings from the Elemental Plane of Air do not care for this plane because of the feeling of tightness and claustrophobia that this plane generates. Beyond the difficulty in moving, these beings do not suffer other ill effects.

Spells that deal with this element have their range and effects doubled, while spells that deal with air are only at half effectiveness.

Elemental Plane of Fire: Everything is alight on the Elemental Plane of Fire. The ground is nothing more than great, ever-shifting plates of compressed flame. The air ripples with the heat of continual firestorms, and the most common liquid is magma, not water. The oceans are made of liquid flame, and the mountains ooze with molten lava. Fire survives here without need for fuel or air, but flammables brought onto the plane are consumed readily.

Travelers that visit this plane do not survive long, as the intense heat and fire of this plain will eventually cremate the characters. Items that are flammable on the Material Plane immediately catch fire and are incinerated. Any clothing worn catches fire and eventually becomes nothing more than charred remnants. Individuals themselves take 3-12 points of damage for every round that they are on this plane. Beings from the Elemental Plane of Water actively avoid this plane, as these creatures, if brought to the Elemental Plane of Fire, take 3-24 points of damage per round as they quickly evaporate.

Spells that deal with this element have their range and effects doubled, while spells that deal with water are only at half effectiveness.

Elemental Plane of Water: A sea without a floor or surface is the easiest way to describe the Elemental Plane of Water. Consisting of various kinds of water, fresh, salty, boiling, and ice cold, the infinite seas of this plane are lit by a diffuse glow and are in constant motion, wracked by currents and tides. Creatures live here in settlements formed by bits of flotsam and jetsam suspended in the endless seas, drifting eternally on the tides of the plane.

Creatures of this plane determine for themselves what is “up” and “down”, similar to the Elemental Plane of Air. Unlike the Elemental Plane of Air, rising or sinking takes longer, but it is also less dangerous than on the Elemental Plane of Air. Also unlike the Elemental Plane of Air, the traveler to this plane needs to figure out how he is going to breathe. Unless he can find an air pocket, or cast a spell to allow him to breathe

underwater, he will drown. Creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire actively avoid this plane, as they take 1-6 points of damage each round that the creature remains on the plane.

Spells that deal with this element have their range and effects doubled, while spells that deal with fire are only at half effectiveness.

THE SPHERE OF LUNA

Outward from the Sublunary Sphere, the Ethereal Plane continues to flow until it reaches the Sphere of Luna. Luna is the gateway to travel among the true spheres, as it is the only sphere that touches both the Ethereal and Astral Planes. As a side effect of both the Ethereal and Astral touching the Sphere of Luna, most astronomers in Advanced Magic World do not consider the Sphere of Luna a true sphere. A traveler stepping onto the surface of Luna from the Ethereal Plane sees the grayness of the ethereal plane stretching out into “space”, mixed with dim views of the other spheres as they rotate about the Earth. Unlike our moon today, Luna is alive, with various plants, animals and humanoids living on its surface. As the gateway to the spheres, Luna hosts many beings from the spheres as well as many humans and humanoids from Earth.

On the Sphere of Luna, magic does not function at all. Divination cannot detect subjects here, and spellcasters cannot use spells to move from place to place, such as teleport. Magic items on this plane become ordinary and non-magical. Movement spells, especially Astral Spell, do not work here at all. In locations throughout the sphere, permanent planar portals exist to shuttle travelers to the Sphere of Mercury or the Astral Plane, if they wish to travel further away from Earth. If they wish to go back to Earth or the Sublunary Sphere, portals exist to allow travel in that direction as well.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

The Astral Plane exists in the spaces between the true spheres. When characters move through a portal on the Sphere of Luna, or project their spirits to a different plane of existence through use of Astral Spell, they travel through the Astral Plane. Spells that allow instantaneous movement across a Sphere or Plane briefly touch the Astral Plane.

The Astral Plane is a great endless expanse of clear silvery sky above and below. Occasionally solid material can be found here, but the Plane is otherwise open and infinite. Just as with the Elemental Plane of Water, the small clumps of matter in the Astral Plane are home to travelers and refugees from other planes. To them, the Astral Plane is home.

Creatures on the Astral Plane determine what “up” and “down” is for them. Movement is by mental power, and is determined at a rate of INT x2 feet per minute. If traveling onto this plane through use of Astral Spell, a link to your physical self is established. This link, looking like a rope, keeps mind and body together during the journey in the Astral Plane. When your astral self reaches its destination and sets foot on a Sphere, a new body forms around you with all its possessions. Very few things can break this connection, but the results are dire if the connection is broken. If the connection should be broken while still traveling the Astral Plane, both mind and body die. If the

connection is broken after a new body is formed on another Sphere, the old body dies but you continue existence in the new body.

While on the Astral Plane, travelers and residents do not age, and have no need of food or water. Poison does not work on the Astral Plane. Natural healing does not work while in the Astral Plane, but resumes functioning once a body is created on a Sphere. Magic is more efficient on the Astral Plane than on Earth in that it costs 2POW less per spell to cast, though each spell still costs a minimum of 1POW to cast, regardless of level. However, the magic is not as potent. All spell effects are reduced by half while on the Astral Plane. On the Astral Plane, any spell cast with a duration of other than Instantaneous is permanent until dispelled.

THE TRUE SPHERES

After leaving the Sphere of Luna, the view of the cosmos is magnificent here. Unlike the Sphere of Luna, whose view of the cosmos is shrouded in ethereal fog, the view from the spheres (except Venus) is absolutely breathtaking. A faint silver glow from the Astral Plane permeates the sky, the effect being similar to a full moon on Earth. The twinkle of the brightest stars on the surface of the Sphere of Fixed Stars adds to the effect. All is perfection in the sky. However, in contrast to the perfection of the sky the worlds that make up the Spheres are all vastly different. From Mercury's capriciousness and rapidity to the rigid order that makes up the Sphere of Fixed Stars, each of the worlds is far different. They are this way at the whim of the immortals that live on each world.

Each world, in addition to being the homes of the immortals, is the main habitat for mortal creatures and beings of a specific alignment. Therefore, some 90% of the creatures and beings found on a specific world will be of the world's alignment. However, since each of the spheres is a stepping stone to spheres farther out (except the Sphere of Fixed Stars), other alignments freely visit here. Those other alignments may suffer from persecution on the Sphere in question.

Magic spells on these worlds function normally but due to their location compared to Earth, all spells cost an additional 2POW to cast. Magic weapons and armor are more strongly tied to Earth than spells. For every Sphere a character travels away from the Sphere of Luna, Magic weapons and armor lose one level of bonuses. For example, a sword that has a 25% bonus to hit would be +20% to hit on the Sphere of Mercury, +15% to hit on the Sphere of Venus, and so on until at the Sphere of Saturn, the weapon would be non-magical. No mortal magic from Earth can counteract this effect. Beings native to the Sphere that create magic weaponry are not subject to this effect on the Sphere the weapon was manufactured on. If they move away from the source, either towards the Sphere of Fixed Stars, or towards Earth, the weapon will lose effectiveness as noted above.

The Sphere of Mercury: The home of Chaotic Neutrals, the Sphere of Mercury is a fast and disordered place. Essentially a cratered hunk of rock, the Sphere of Mercury zooms about the Earth in such a manner that time itself seems to speed up. Five years pass here for every year on Earth. Magic here, in addition

to costing more, also may have unpredictable side effects as shown below.

d%	Effect
01-19	Spell rebounds on caster with normal effect. If the spell cannot affect the caster, it simply fails.
20-23	A circular pit 15 feet wide opens under the caster's feet; it is 10 feet deep per level of the spell.
24-27	The spell fails, but the target or targets of the spell are pelted with a rain of small objects (anything from flowers to rotten fruit), which disappear upon striking. The barrage continues for 1 minute. During this time the targets are blinded and unable to cast spells.
28-31	The spell affects a random target or area. Randomly choose a different target from among those in range of the spell or center the spell at a random place within range of the spell. To generate direction randomly, roll 1d8 and count clockwise around the compass, starting with south. To generate range randomly, roll 3d6. Multiply the result by 5 feet for close range spells, 20 feet for medium range spells, or 80 feet for long range spells.
32-35	The spell functions normally. An item does not lose charges, and the effect does not count against an item's or spell-like ability's use limit.
36-39	The spell does not function. Instead, everyone (friend or foe) within 30 feet of the caster receives the effect of a heal spell.
40-43	The spell does not function. Instead, a deeper darkness and a silence effect cover a 30-foot radius around the caster for 2-8 minutes.
44-47	The spell does not function. Instead, a reverse gravity effect covers a 30-foot radius around the caster for 1 minute.
48-51	The spell functions, but shimmering colors swirl around the caster for 1-4 rounds.
52-59	Nothing happens. The spell does not function.
60-71	Nothing happens. The spell does not function. An item does not lose charges, and the effect does not count against an item's or spell-like ability's use limit.
72-98	The spell functions normally.
99-00	The spell functions strongly. Resistance Rolls against the spell incur a 10% penalty. The spell has the maximum possible effect.

The Sphere of Venus: This world is veiled by thick clouds which tend to obscure the view of the spheres that the other worlds enjoy. A lush jungle world, the Sphere of Venus is home to creatures, beings, and deities of Chaotic Good alignment. Other than the dense cloud cover, the Sphere of Venus is rather unremarkable. Approximately a year and a half passes here for every Earth year, and Magic works albeit at half effectiveness.

The Sphere of the Sun: The sun is the most brilliant object in the universe, so bright that it can blind beings from Earth just by looking at it. A big ball of hot gas, the Sun itself does not support any life. However, surrounding the Sun is a large ring of material where the native inhabitants, all of varying alignment, live. This sphere rotates about the Earth on a daily basis, and as such time is excessively rapid on the sphere, roughly 350 times as fast. The proximity to the Sun makes

magic here behave erratically, just like on the Sphere of Mercury.

The Sphere of Mars: The Sphere of Mars is essentially a twin of the Earth, with air, water, and life in abundance. About half the physical size of Earth, Mars travels around the Earth in the space of two Earth years. The most remarkable sight on Mars is Olympus Mons, the largest mountain in the universe. Towering some 70,000 feet high, the summit of Olympus Mons is reputed to be the one point on the planet where it is actually possible to touch and perhaps enter the Astral Plane without aid of either portal or magic. Most Wizards of high POW scoff at this notion. To them it's of little concern, as magic works normally here. Neutral Good beings call Mars their home.

The Sphere of Jupiter: Home of Neutral Evil beings, the Sphere of Jupiter is a truly oppressive place. Always dark, as if in perpetual twilight, Jupiter travels slowly about its path, but due to its size has a detrimental effect on everything inhabiting it. As a result of Jupiter's large size, all creatures and beings on this world are treated as if carrying 2½ times their own weight, automatically encumbering them. One year on this sphere is equal to twelve Earth years. Magic does not work here at all, and beings needing to travel to the Sphere of Saturn or beyond require the use of portals.

The Sphere of Saturn: A near twin to Jupiter, the home of Lawful Evil creatures is not as oppressive as Jupiter in terms of its effects on creatures and beings. Saturn is perhaps the most beautiful world in the universe, with an expansive system of rings that circle the world. On Saturn, because of its large size, all the creatures are treated as if carrying 1½ times their own weight. Time is extremely slow here, in that one year equals 29 years on Earth. Magic works here without incident.

The Sphere of Fixed Stars: This sphere, being closest to the Primum Mobile, is perhaps the strangest of them all. Unlike the other true spheres, the Sphere of Fixed Stars is opaque, with points of light in fixed patterns blazing on its surface that can be seen from Earth. The entire surface, save for the points of light, are habitable, and many beings live comfortably on the sphere's surface. Unlike the planets that are attached to the other spheres, the Sphere of Fixed Stars has relative gravity. In other words, no matter where one is on the surface of the sphere, the surface is "down". This sphere rotates around the Earth in the space of one year, and as seen from Earth, is the standard by which the other Spheres are judged to move around the immobile Earth. Magic works here as if the caster was on the Astral Plane, but casting an Astral Spell does not permit the traveler to pass to the Primum Mobile. Only death can accomplish that.

THE PRIMUM MOBILE & THE EMPYREAL PARADISE
The "machinery" of the universe, the Primum Mobile is the motive force that keeps each of the spheres moving. The Empyrean Paradise is the idealistic force that keeps the populace moving. Neither place can be visited by any until death has claimed them. Chaotic Evil beings nominally call the Primum Mobile home, while Lawful Good beings do the same with The Empyrean Paradise. Since neither place can be visited until death, Lawful Good and Chaotic Evil beings tend to make their

home on the Sphere of the Sun, sometimes with disastrous results as the two come into conflict.

Upon death, a creature will be judged (based upon its alignment) as to whether it is worthy of eternal pleasure in the Empyrean Paradise, or eternal damnation in the "machinery" of the Primum Mobile. Use the following chart to note the final resting place of the deceased. The game master may allow the player an opportunity to state his case as to his final resting place, but the game master makes the final decision.

Alignment	Result
Lawful Good	The Empyrean Paradise
Lawful Neutral	The Empyrean Paradise
Lawful Evil	varies*
Neutral Good	The Empyrean Paradise
Neutral Evil	The Primum Mobile
Chaotic Good	varies*
Chaotic Neutral	The Primum Mobile
Chaotic Evil	The Primum Mobile

*A 50% chance of the character ending up in either location. Gauge the character's alignment and determine which axis of the alignment is stronger, then look on the next chart to determine the character's fate.

Alignment	Result
Lawful or Good	The Empyrean Paradise
Chaotic or Evil	The Primum Mobile

DIAGRAM OF THE UNIVERSE

