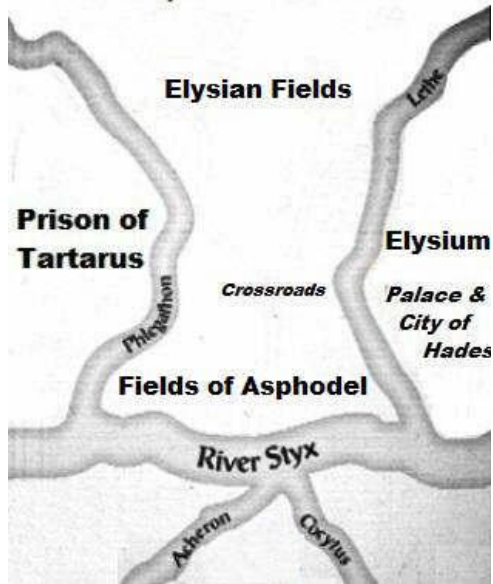


Hades, the Underworld



Myth: Hades/ Underworld

The Underworld was hidden deep in the earth and was the kingdom of the dead, ruled by god Hades. Hades was a greedy god, whose sole purpose was to increase the number of souls in his kingdom; at the same time, he was very reluctant to let any soul leave. The Erinyes were welcomed in the Underworld.

For most souls, life in the underworld was not particularly unpleasant. It was rather like being in a miserable dream, full of shadows, ill-lit and desolate, barren of hope; a joyless place where the dead slowly faded into nothingness.

Geographically, the Underworld was considered to have been surrounded by five rivers: the Acheron (river of woe), the Cocytus (river of lamentation), the Phlegethon (river of fire), the Styx (river of unbreakable oath by which the gods took vows), and the Lethe (river of forgetfulness). Past the rivers, a diamond gate, guarded by Cerberus, formed the entrance to the kingdom. Deep within the kingdom, lay Hades' vast palace, full with guests.

Upon death, a soul was led by Hermes near the entrance of the underworld, where the ferry awaited to carry it across the Acheron. There was a single ferry run by Charon, the boatman who took the souls across the river. Only those who could pay the fare with coins placed on their lips when buried were granted passage; the rest were trapped between two worlds. After the boat ride, the souls entered through the gates; Cerberus allowed everyone to enter, but none to leave. The souls then appeared before a panel of three judges, Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Aeacus, who passed sentence based on their deeds during their previous life. The souls who were good went to the Elysian Fields, while the others were singled out for special treatment; Sisyphus and Tantalus are two examples of souls that were sentenced to be tormented for eternity.

Source:

http://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/Places/The_Underworld/the_underworld.html

The imaginary world of Hades the Underworld was believed to be located in a subterranean region. It was the world of the dead where all souls passed after their time on earth. The River Styx was a great black river that encircled Hades the Underworld. The only way to cross the River Styx was in a ferryboat rowed by a terrible, silent boatman named Charon the Ferryman. In the dominions of Hades there were several main areas:

- Elysium and the Elysian Fields (Paradise)
- The city and the palace of Hades
- The Asphodel Meadows (Abode of those who led lives of near equal good and evil)
- Tartarus (Hell)

Map of Hades the Underworld

The above picture of the imaginary Map of Hades the Underworld provides an overview of the world of the dead.

The Five Rivers of Hades the Underworld

Five rivers flowed through Hades the Underworld:

- The River Styx
- The River Acheron
- The River Cocytus
- The River Phlegethon
- The River Lethe

Mythical Facts about Hades the Underworld for Kids

Subject: Information and Facts about Hades the Underworld

The Underworld: The Underworld, also known as the Infernal region, was believed to be inhabited by the shades or spirits of the dead and their keepers

River Styx: The River Styx (meaning Hateful) was a great black river that encircled Hades the Underworld. The only way to cross the River Styx was in a ferryboat rowed by a terrible boatman named Charon

River Acheron: The River Acheron (meaning sorrow) was also known as the River of Pain that flowed from the River Styx and believed to carry pains for mortals. It also carried the good souls from the Underworld that were sent back to earth after 1000 years to be born again into living beings

River Cocytus: The souls that had committed a terrible sin in a moment of passion but had lived in repentance for the rest of their earthly lives were sent to Tartarus. But after one year

suffering the torments of hell were sent down the River Cocytus (meaning lamentation) to face a further judgement. The souls of the unburied dead were said to wander along its marshy banks

River Phlegethon: The River Phlegethon (meaning flaming) was described as "a stream of fire, which coils round the earth and flows into the depths of Tartarus".

River Lethe: The good souls of the dead had to drink from the River Lethe (meaning oblivion & forgetfulness) which made them forget all they had done and suffered when they were alive

Elysium: Elysium was described as a Paradise and domain of the good souls of the dead and where many of the gods and goddesses of the Underworld resided

City and Palace of Hades: The golden Palace of Hades was located in Elysium and was the seat of power over the Underworld that was ruled by the god Hades, the King of the Underworld and his wife, Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld. Hades held court in the palace which was located in Elysium beside the Pool of Lethe and this, and the City of Hades, was the abode of other important gods and goddesses who resided in Hades

Cerberus: Hades the Underworld was guarded by Cerberus the monstrous three-headed dog whose howls could be heard across the realm. Cerberus permitted all shades to enter, but none to return. The sight of the huge and monstrous Cerberus confronted the souls of the dead when they alighted from the ferryman's boat following their journey across the River Styx.

The Judges of the Dead: In the forecourt of the Palace of Hades sat the three judges of the Dead called Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Aeacus, guarded by Cerberus the three-headed dog, who judged whether the life of a mortal had been good or evil.

The Death Fates (the Keres): The Death Fates, or Keres, were present at the judgement when the ultimate fate of a mortal was about to be decided and after their confessions weighed the person's 'Ker', or life force.

The Crossroads of Hecate: When the judgement was made the souls were sent to the crossroads, sacred to Hecate, where three roads meet. The souls were then directed to the Fields of Asphodel if they had lived neither virtuous nor evil lives, sent by the road to Tartarus if they were evil, or sent to Elysian Fields (Paradise)

Archives of the Fates: The Fates (Moirai) kept the Archives of the Fates that contained the complete records of all mortals and events, on indestructible tablets of brass and iron

Elysian Fields: The Elysian Fields was the residence of the good souls. "Elysian the fields of the blessed, where flowers of gold bloomed in beautiful meadows"

Fields of Asphodel: The souls of mortals who had been both good and evil on earth were sent

to the Asphodel Meadows in the Underworld for unending toil and hardship. Hades possessed a herd of immortal, sable-black cattle which roamed the asphodel fields under the care of the evil, supernatural herdsman Menoetes.

Tartarus: The infernal regions, described in the Iliad as situated as far below Hades as heaven is above the earth. It was the place of punishment for the spirits of the wicked.

Source: <http://www.talesbeyondbelief.com/greek-gods-mythology/hades-underworld.htm>