

The world according to the ancient Greeks:

3 Parts of the World:

Mt. Olympus: where the immortal (beings who would never die) deities lived
Deities ate ambrosia and drank nectar to make them immortal
Humans were not allowed to eat ambrosia or drink nectar – they were not permitted to know about the deities’ secrets to immortality

Earth: where living mortal beings lived (humans, demi-gods [half-human, half-diety], animals, and monsters). If you were alive, and would someday die, you lived on Earth.

Underworld: where dead people (called shades) “lived;” all of which was ruled by Hades

- A. When a shade went to the Underworld, it had to cross the River Styx to get in.
1. The shade had to pay the ferryman, Charon, one gold coin to get across the River. The ancient Greeks buried their dead with a gold coin under the tongue to be sure they could pay the fare. This way, the shade could get into the Underworld and have a chance to either go to the Isles of the Blessed, or be reincarnated.
 2. No living beings were allowed in. Cerberus, the 3-headed dog, guarded the banks of the river, and would eat those trying to bribe him with honey.
- B. Once across the River, the shade went to one of three parts of the Underworld:
1. **Asphodel Fields**
 - a. This is where ordinary, average people went.
 - b. Gray and shadowy, very boring.
 - c. Shades here wanted to be reincarnated (given another life to live on Earth).
 2. **Tartarus**
 - a. This is where people who had led evil lives went.
 - b. They were given individual, hideous punishments decided upon by Hades.
 - c. Shades here wanted to be reincarnated.
 3. **Elysian Fields**
 - a. This is where people who had led extremely good, heroic lives went.
 - b. This was a place of bliss and happiness.
 - c. Shades here did not want to be reincarnated. However, sometimes the deities decided they were need on Earth and gave them another life to live.
 - d. If a person lived three heroic lives, and got sent to the Elysian Fields three times, that person got to go to a special part of the Elysian Fields called the Isles of the Blessed. If a person got to the Isles of the Blessed, that person never had to be reincarnated again.