Visions of Heaven and Hell: The Afterlife in World Art  
Week 3, Spring Quarter, 2015  
Roberta Shaw

Ancient Greece - Chronology for periods covered in this course:

Geometric period         Dipylon Cemetery vase         900 – 720 BCE
Orientalizing period     “Black-figure” pottery               620 – 480 BCE
Archaic period           “Red-figure” pottery               480 – 450 BCE
Early Classical period   450 – 330 BCE
Classical period          450 – 330 BCE
Hellenistic period       330 – 30 BCE

Important Persons: Homer, dates unknown, thought to have been the author of The Iliad and The Odyssey, which were written down in the 8th century BCE after the Greek alphabet was developed. Playwrights: Aeschylus (“Oresteia”, 458 BCE); Sophocles (“Antigone”, 441 BCE); Euripides (“Alcestis”, 438 BCE).

Greek Underworld, named for the god in charge, Hades.

Residents: Hades and Persephone – King and Queen of the Dead; Aeacus, Rhadamanthus and Minos – Judges of the dead; twin brothers Thanatos – god of death, and Hypnos – god of sleep; Charon – the ferryman who carries the souls of the newly deceased across the rivers Styx and Acheron in Hades; Cerberus – the three headed dog at the entrance to Hades.

Geography: The five rivers in Hades – Styx (river of hatred), Acheron (woe, pain), Lethe (forgetfulness, oblivion), Cocytus (wailing), and Phlegethon (fire-flaming). The four regions of Hades – Tartarus, where the most wicked are tortured, Fields of Punishment, Asphodel Meadows, Elysium (Elysian Fields) and Isles of the Blessed (islands in the realm of Elysium).


Etruria - Between the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, a people known as the Etruscans gained control of northern and much of central Italy. They were deeply influenced by Greek culture (by this time Greeks had established important colonies in southern Italy’s coastal regions). By the 5th c. BCE the Romans were becoming the supreme power in Italy, and were unifying the country under the Roman Republic.

Rome

The Roman Republic         509 – 27 BCE
The Roman Empire            27 BCE – 395 CE

Emperor Augustus reigned from 27 BCE to 17 CE. Vergil wrote The Aeneid from 29 to 19 BCE. In the story, the hero Aeneas visits the underworld.