

## ἄδης

**1. Greek literature.** The etymology of ἄδης or Ἄιδης (in epic poetry Ἄϊδης) is still debated. It is perhaps the verb ἰδεῖν with alpha privative, which would then connect Hades with what is “un-seen” (Indo-European *\*a-wid*; see RUIJGH, *Scripta minora*, 575–576); cf. the magic helmet quoted in Homer, *Il.* 5.845 (“Ἄϊδος κυνέη”), which renders the bearer invisible. FRISK and BEEKES (s.v. Ἄϊδης) discuss the proposal (made by Thieme) that the word derives from Indo-European *\*sṃ uid-* [Sanskrit *sám vid-*] as “das Sichzusammenfinden [gathering of the family in the Underworld]”. BEEKES rejects this, “as then Ἄιδ- should denote the Underworld, not the God of the Underworld.” – The aspiration in the Attic ἄδης probably arose by contraction from ὁ Ἄϊδης (JUCQUOIS/DEVLAMMINCK, *Compléments*, 20; BEEKES, s.v., both quoting J. C. Kamerbeek); this seems to have been forgotten in later times, so that the noun was again used with the article: ὁ ἄδης, as it is often found in the LXX.

In the patristic period, Methodius of Olympus (*Res.* 2.28), quoting Origen, seems

to confirm the first of the proposed etymologies, connecting ἄδης with τὸ ἀειδές (διὰ τὸ μὴ ὀράσθαι, “because it is not seen”; see CONSTAS, “Middle State of Souls”, 98 n. 23). Plato, *Crat.* 404b, seems to know this etymology (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀιδούς), but then strangely connects Ἄιδης with εἰδέναί (“the knowledge of all beautiful things”).

Homer employs Ἄϊδης only as a proper noun, in relation to life in the underworld; see the expression εἰν Ἄϊδαο δόμοισι “in the houses of Hades” (*Od.* 4.834), which is also used in an elliptic form: εἰν Ἄϊδαο (sc. δόμοις, e.g. *Il.* 22.389), similarly εἰς Ἄϊδαο (sc. δόμους, e.g. *Il.* 21.48); Attic: εἰν/εἰς Ἄϊδου (sc. οἴκῳ/οἶκον, e.g. Sophocles, *Ajax* 865). In *Il.* 23.244, Ἄϊδης is used more specifically for the place where the spirits of the deceased are found, according to a wide-spread idea in Greek culture. Indeed, to cross the “gates of Hades” signifies entering the world of the dead (see Homer, *Il.* 5.646; *Od.* 14.156; Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1291, etc.). Hades is described as a “terrible recess” (δεινὸς μυχός, Anacreon, fr. 50.9–10; ἐξ ἀνηλίων μυχῶν, Euripides,

*Herc. fur.* 608) and a “cavern” (σπέος ... Ἄιδαιο, Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argon.* 2.735). Lucian, *Luct.* 2, ironically states that most people “assume the existence of a deep subterranean hole called Hades; spacious, murky, and sunless (τόπον τινα ὑπὸ τῆ γῆ βαθὺν Ἄιδην ὑπελήφασιν, μέγαν δὲ καὶ πολύχωρον τοῦτον εἶναι καὶ ζοφερὸν καὶ ἀνήλιον)”. In classical Greek culture, Hades as a place refers either to a dwelling common to all the shadows, or to the specific place of punishment of the wicked, in opposition to the Elysian fields (CUMONT, *Lux Perpetua*, 55–77, 189–219). Accordingly, there are various accounts related to the descent into the underworld (the καταβάσεις, see MAZZINGHI, *Notte di paura e di luce*, 42–43). In the Hellenistic period, philosophical reflection borrows a Platonic concept of Hades as the soul in a state of fear due to an evil conscience rather than a true and distinct place (see Plato, *Leg.* 904c–905d). Thus Ps.-Plutarch, *Cons. Apoll.* 106C–F, emphasizes how the “gloomy Hades” (ζοφερός Ἄιδης) need not be feared; cf. Plutarch, fr. 178 Sandbach, which presents death as an initiation: The non-initiate will be surrounded by all the fears of darkness.

In post-Homeric usage, ἄδης also generally indicates the tomb, or death itself, as in Pindar, *Pyth.* 5.96; *Isthm.* 6.15. The genitive ἄδου can then assume an adjectival function and indicate someone devilish or something deadly: e.g. Ἄιδου μαγείρος, a “murderous butcher”, speaking of Polyphemus (Euripides, *Cycl.* 397); Ἄιδου μητέρα, a “devilish mother” (Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1235); δίκτυόν τι γ’ Ἄιδου, “some deadly net” (Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1115).

Finally, Ἄδης is also personified and considered as a deity; Hades is the brother of Zeus, and therefore known as “subterranean Zeus” (Homer, *Il.* 9.457), as well as the spouse of Persephone. Apart from the famous myth related to the Rape of Persephone, Hades is a deity that appears in few myths. In Homer, *Il.* 9.158, he is defined as “the most hated of all the gods”; see also the story of Hades told in *Il.* 15.187–193. In the post-Homeric period, Hades is sometimes presented

as the judge of the dead (cf. Aeschylus, *Eum.* 273). In a philosophical context, Plutarch identifies Osiris with Hades (*Is. Os.* 382E–383A). In the Mysteries, Hades is also identified with Sarapis, Zeus and Helios (Julian, *Or.* 4.10; cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.18.18).

**2. Papyri and inscriptions.** The term ἄδης is common in the Greek funerary inscriptions (GG, Index, p. 366, lists over sixty epitaphs) as well as in the Jewish funerary inscriptions of Greco-Roman Egypt, in which one finds the different meanings indicated above. An inscription originating in Leontopolis, dating between the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C.E. and the early 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. C.E. (*CIJ* 1508.8), mentions Ἄιδη[ς] which “has taken me unawares”, personifying Hades and possibly alluding to the Rape of Persephone (*JIGRE*, 63). In an inscription of the same period (*CIJ* 1511), the expression ἦλθον δ’ εἰς Ἀείδαν (line 3) simply indicates dying, while εἰς μυχὸν αἰώνιον ἐν σκοτίᾳ (line 4) indicates Hades as a dwelling of the dead. The mention of Hades’ “recess” (μυχός) is classical (→ 1.). In another stele from Leontopolis (*CIJ* 1530 = GG 429), the deceased Arsinoe affirms in line 16 to be going εἰς Ἄιδαιο δόμους “into the house of Hades”, and in line 10 the “dark region of Lethe” is mentioned; see also *CIJ* 1530a.2 (αὐτὸς ὁ πανδαμάτωρ ἤρπασεν εἰς Ἄιδην “the all-subduer himself has seized [him] into Hades”). The Hellenized Jews of Egypt seem to follow a very traditional Greek idea of Hades, which is also present in Greek-speaking Palestinian Judaism: The deceased go to a land of the dead. An inscription of Bet She’arim (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. C.E.) pictures the deceased speaking thus: καὶ γ’ ἔλθ[ων] εἰς Ἄιδην (*IBetShe’arim* 127127 [p. 45]; cf. *CIJ* 1511 above). The use of the term “Hades” in these metrical epitaphs is due to a convention and does not necessarily entail a belief in immortality (PARK, *Conceptions of Afterlife*, 36–37).

As for other inscriptions, the Isis hymn of Andros (*IG* XII,5 739, 1<sup>st</sup> cent. B.C.E.) mentions Hades twice (lines 43, 99), understood as the kingdom of the dead from which the initiated can be saved by participating in the rites of the Mysteries (see PEEK, *Isishymnus*,

15–22); for Hades as a dark place see EG 372.13 (ἰς Ἄϊδα δόμου τὸν ἀφενγέα χῶρον).

Whereas Hades does not appear in non-magical papyri until late antiquity, the magical papyri discovered in Egypt (2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C.E.–5<sup>th</sup> cent. C.E.) are of great interest because they contain material and traditions that date from earlier times. Among the rites described, there is one that is practiced with the purpose of obtaining salvation from Hades for the πνεῦμα of the deceased (PGM I, 177–180). PGM I, 341–347 is an adjuration of the “primal god . . . who destroys e’en in Hades”. Other incantations invoke Anubis, the jackal god connected with the kingdom of the dead, “who holds the keys to Hades” (PGM IV, 340), and Ogdoads whose name gives power over “the evil beings of Hades” (τῶν καθ’ ἄδου πονηρῶν, PGM XIII, 795–824). In all these cases, ἄδης refers either to the classical meaning of “death” or to that of “hell”, i.e. a place of punishment of the wicked.

**3. Septuagint.** *a) Statistical observations.* In the LXX, the term ἄδης occurs 111 times, either with or without the article; the majority of occurrences are in the book of Psalms (18), followed by Isaiah (11). It is relatively frequent in the Wisdom literature (10 times in Proverbs; 9 times in Job; once in Ecclesiastes; 10 times in Sirach and 4 times in Wisdom of Solomon). However, the lexeme is present only 4 times in the Pentateuch.

*b) Hebrew equivalents.* The Greek ἄδης is the usual translation of the Hebrew *šə’ōl* (60 occurrences), understood as the domain of the dead, conceived of as a subterranean place, mostly where the shadows exist in a state where there is an absence of life (cf. WÄCHTER, *TWAT* 7, 904–907); e.g. Deut 32:22: ἔως ἄδου κάτω, see also Job 11:8: βαθύτερα τῶν ἐν ἄδου. In a few cases ἄδης translates the Hebrew verb *mūt* “to die” (Job 33:22) or the noun *māwāt* “death” (Prov 14:12; 16:15; Isa 28:15; Sir 9:12; 14:12); see also Job 38:17 with the Hebrew *šalmāwāt* “shadow of death, deep darkness”. In Ps 93[94]:17; 113:25 [115:17], ἄδης renders the Hebrew *dū-māh* “silence”, while in Isa 14:19 it translates the expression *ʾabnê-bôr* “stones of the pit”.

*c) LXX use.* In 30 occurrences the LXX employs the expression εἰς ἄδου. The genitive after the preposition εἰς is a literary archaism, due to the ellipsis of an accusative, sc. δόμον or οἶκον (→ 1., see also LEH; USENER, “Griechisches”, 90–91); it occurs especially in the context of “descending” (καταβαίνειν) εἰς ἄδου, in the sense of “dying” (as in the inscriptions, → 2.): Gen 37:35; Num 16:30, 33; Ps 54[55]:13; 113:25[115:17]; Job 17:16; Bar 3:19; Ezek 31:17; 32:27. There is mention also of “leading” (κατάγειν) someone εἰς ἄδου: Gen 42:38; 44:29, 31; 1 Kgdms [1 Sam] 2:6; 1 Kgdms [1 Kgs] 2:6, 9; Tob 3:10; 13:2; Ps 30[31]:18, always with the same meaning: a descent into Hades with no possibility of return (Job 7:9); see also Am 9:2; Jonah 2:3 (ἐκ κοιλίας ἄδου “out of the belly of Hades”); Eccl 9:10 (ἐν ἄδῃ, ὅπου σὺ πορεύῃ ἐκεῖ “in Hades where you go”). Often the term ἄδης is placed in parallelism with death (θάνατος): Ps 6:6; 17[18]:6; 48[49]:15; 54[55]:16; 84[85]:49; 114[116]:3; Prov 2:18; 5:5; 7:27; Cant 8:6; Job 33:22 (where the Hebrew has *māwāt* “death”); Hos 13:14; Hab 2:5; Isa 28:15 (where Hebrew *māwāt* and *šə’ōl* are reversed in the Greek), 18; Dan 3:88. In many of these texts, Hades and death are also connected with sin; in Ezek 31:15, 16, 17, Hades seems to be a dwelling destined for sinners only. In Prov 15:11 ἄδης is placed in parallelism with ἀπώλεια “destruction”; thus also in Prov 27:20, where the insatiability of Hades is highlighted (see also Ps Sol 4:13; Job 26:6). The classical Greek conception of “gates of Hades” metaphorically understood as the entrance into the world of the dead is attested in Job 38:17. The expression *πύλωροι δὲ ἄδου*, set in parallel with *πύλαι θανάτου* “gates of death”, translates *šaʿarê šalmāwāt* “gates of darkness”; see also 3 Macc 5:51; Isa 38:10; Wis 16:13; Ps Sol 16:2. In Job 17:13 and Prov 7:27, Hades is called “house of the dead”; the “sleeping” of the dead in Hades is attested in Job 21:13 (cf. also Ezek 32:27). The personification of Hades is not very common in the LXX; see Hos 13:14; Isa 14:9 in particular. In Isa 28:15 “to make a pact with Hades” signifies to make a pact with Death himself.

The God of Israel has power over Hades and is capable of causing death and giving life anew. This idea is expressed in 1 Kgdms [1 Sam] 2:6 (κατάγει εἰς ἄδου καὶ ἀνάγει), and again in Tob 13:2; Wis 16:13; see also Ps 29[30]:4. According to Ps 93[94]:17, the help of the Lord prevented the speaker's ψυχή from residing in Hades.

Sirach is a good witness of how Judaism in the Hellenistic period continues to employ ἄδης in the traditional sense; see Sir 14:12, 16; 41:4; 48:5; 51:6 where *šē'ōl* is translated in the sense of "death" or "world of the dead" (cf. also Sir 21:10), and Sir 9:12 where the Hebrew probably has the noun *māwat* "death" (see also Sir 28:21 in parallelism with θάνατος, as also in 28:21; 48:5; 51:6). In Sir 51:5–6, in particular, Hades is conceived of as a subterranean space (σύνεργυς ἄδου κάτω), residence of the dead (Sir 41:4) where there is no life (Sir 14:16) and where it is not possible to praise God (Sir 17:27; the idea is traditional, see Ps 6:6, etc.). With the expression ἔως ἄδου (Sir 9:12), Sirach describes Hades metaphorically as the natural limit of humanity, which does not delay in coming; see also Sir 14:12 where the expression διαθήκη ἄδου appears (see Isa 28:15). Hades is a true and real "pact", which governs the life of humanity (REITERER, "Die Vorstellung vom Tod", 184–188). Also Bar 2:17; 3:11, 19 uses ἄδης with the common meaning of a place where the dead dwell. As for the texts composed in Greek, 2 Macc 6:23; 3 Macc 4:8; 6:31 use ἄδης in the sense of "death".

The idea of Hades understood as a place of punishment of the wicked also appears. Some passages of LXX Proverbs move in this direction: the addition of the LXX to Prov 2:18, where ἄδης is placed in parallelism with the γηγενεῖς (→ γηγενής), the sons of Gaia, or the Titans, inhabitants of the Tartarus; the additions to Prov 9:18; 30:16 even place ἄδης in parallelism with τάρταρος, in Prov 14:12; 16:25 the Hebrew "the paths of death" becomes "the depths of Hades" (πυθμένα ἄδου). In the Psalms of Solomon, Hades is clearly a place of eternal punishment for the wicked: Ps Sol 14:9 (ἡ κληρονομία αὐτῶν ἄδης καὶ

σκοτός καὶ ἀπώλεια, in relation to shadows and damnation of the wicked); 15:10 (ruin, shadows, subterranean place); 16:2 (place destined for sinners). This idea probably first appears in Ps 48[49]:15–16.

In the Wisdom of Solomon (composed after 30 B.C.E.) the term ἄδης appears 5 times: in Wis 16:13 ἄδης indicates, according to common usage, the place where the dead dwell (cf. 1 Kgdms 2:6), but from which one may be delivered by God. In Wis 2:1, ἄδης is placed in the mouth of the wicked in relation to death from which no one can be liberated (οὐκ ἐγνώσθη ὁ ἀναλύσας ἐξ ἄδου). In Wis 1:14, the existence of a kingdom of Hades on earth (ἄδου βασιλειον ἐπὶ γῆς) is denied. In this occurrence, and especially in Wis 17:14[13] (the night escaped ἐξ ἀδυνατός ἄδου μυχῶν), ἄδης is certainly intended as the place of punishment of the wicked. In Wis 17:14[13], the idea is very close to that of "hell" and is connected with fear and with shadows that await the wicked, thereby expressing punishment of an eschatological type. However, Hades is defined as ἀδύνατος "powerless" (for the whole context of Wis 17:12–21[13–21] see MAZZINGHI, "Non c'è regno dell'Ade sulla terra", *passim*; IDEM, *Notte di paura e di luce*, esp. 130, 149, 184–185; furthermore → ἀδύνατος).

**4. Jewish literature in Greek.** In the OT Pseudepigrapha, the term ἄδης has the same range of meaning as attested in the LXX. It varies between Hades understood as the common residence of the dead, and of Hades conceived of as a place of punishment of the wicked. The first meaning occurs e.g. in *T. Reub.* 4.6, where it is connected, however, with premature death because of sin. In *T. Abr.* A 8.9–10; 19.7, Hades is connected with personified Death. In Ps.-Phocylides, *Sent.* 158–162, Hades is described as the common destiny ("common homeland") of all humanity. In *T. Job* 43.7, the wicked with "his tent" (i.e. his body) is said to be found in Hades. Here it is difficult to determine if Hades simply means the world of the dead or whether it refers to hell. This last meaning seems to dominate in *Apoc. En.* 102.5, 11; 103.7

(in reference to ψυχαί that are found in Hades). Here one finds a recurrent theme of late Jewish apocalypses: that of the “tour of hell”, which the visionary is called to accomplish (see HIMMELFARB, *Tours of Hell*).

In the sense of “hell”, Hades is attested in *Apoc. Bar.* 4.3, 6; 5.3: Identified with the serpent, probably that of Gen 3, Hades or hell appears to the visionary. However, in the text of *Sib.* 5.178, which is very clear, Hades is placed in parallelism with Tartar, a place reserved for criminals. On the other hand, in *Sib.* 3.393, 458, Hades rather refers to death. In the parts of the *Sibylline Oracles* that have been reworked by Christian tradents, the Homeric formulation εἰν Ἄϊδαο δόμοις (*Sib.* 1.84, 302; 12.77, 146; 14.184) appears, referring to death. *Sib.* 1.80–81 strangely connects Ἄϊδης with Ἄδᾶμ, an absurd etymology, which may reveal a euhemeristic approach to Hades perceived as a God (see WASSMUTH, *Sibyllinische Orakel*, 163–164).

The texts of *T. Levi* 4.1 (on the visit of the Most High, Hades is robbed of its captive souls) and *T. Benj.* 9.5 (the Spirit of God arises from Hades where it had first descended) are probably Christian interpolations that reflect the idea of the descent of Christ into the underworld (→ 5.). Likewise, the *Greek Apocalypse of Ezra* as extant is a Christian document, so that the occurrences of ἄδης reflect the Christian use of the word: *Apoc. Esdr.* 6.26 (which is actually a quotation of Luke 10:15: ἕως τοῦ ἄδου καταβήσει) and *Apoc. Esdr.* 7.2 (which attests the motif of the call of Adam from Hades: ἐκ τοῦ ἄδου ἀνεκαλεσάμην). In both cases, Hades represents hell; see also *Apoc. Esdr.* 6.26: εἰς τὸ τρύβλιον τοῦ ἄδου εἰσηλθὼν “I have entered into the bowl of Hades”.

Flavius Josephus stipulates that, according to the Pharisees, the souls of the just and of the wicked are found together in Hades (cf. *Ant.* 17.14; *Bell.* 2.163). Samuel is called forth from Hades, understood as the world of the dead (*Ant.* 6.332); in *Bell.* 1.596 it is rather a synonym of death. Josephus likewise reflects the conception of Hades understood as a place of damnation or also as a place of tem-

porary dwelling for the souls of the wicked (cf. *Bell.* 3.375 in relation to suicides: ἄδης σκοτεινώτερος). In *Bell.* 2.156 (Hades as a place of punishment for the wicked) and *Bell.* 2.165 (as hell or a common residence of the dead) the alternation between two different meanings of Hades is clear.

Hades understood as a place of punishment of the wicked appears with greater frequency in Philo, who also uses the term in a more traditional sense: see *Vit. Mos.* 2.281 in relation to those who descend alive to the world of the dead; see also *Her.* 45 (ἐν μυχοῖς Ἄϊδου), 78; *Somn.* 1.151 (the wicked who live in Hades) and *Legat.* 235. Philo uses the term in a metaphorical sense as well, concerning the life of the wicked, understood as “a life of hell”; thus in *Congr.* 57 “Hades” is used symbolically for the actual life of the wicked itself (ὁ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν Ἄϊδης ὁ τοῦ μοχθηροῦ βίος ἐστίν). *Post.* 31 speaks of the life of the wicked as of “the hell of the passions” (ἐκ τοῦ τῶν παθῶν ἄδου πρὸς τὸν δλύμπιον χῶρον ἀρετῆς). For a similar view in Hellenistic philosophy see Lucretius, *Rer. nat.* 3.978–1023.

**5. New Testament.** The term occurs 10 times in the whole of the New Testament, also varying between the biblical *š'öl* and hell. In Acts 2:27, 31, which quotes explicitly Ps 15:10 LXX, Hades seems to be the common residence of the dead or, more simply, of death itself. In Matt 11:23 and Luke 10:15, ἄδης, placed in parallelism with οὐρανός, is conceived of as a subterranean abyss described in many biblical texts (→ 3.). The same conception seems to be reflected in Luke 16:23, where Hades is very clearly the place of torment of the wicked (cf. the “prison” mentioned in 1 Pet 3:19, where Christ descends to deliver the just who await salvation). The “gates of hell” mentioned in Matt 16:18 and the “key of hell” attested in Rev 1:18 and held by the Risen One, reflect again the idea of a subterranean Hades, a sealed-off place, which is almost personified and approximated to Death and Evil in these two texts – entities over which God guarantees victory to the Christian community. An analogous personification of Hades, in direct

parallelism with ὁ θάνατος, is attested in Rev 6:8; 20:13–14 (cf. 1 Cor 15:55 v.l.). However, in these texts the boundary between the idea of Hades as a provisional residence of the dead, resurrected for judgment, and Hades understood as a place of eternal punishment, is rather permeable.

**6. Early Christian literature.** In the Apostolic Fathers, ᾠδης appears only 3 times, always within biblical quotations: *1 Clem.* 4.12 is based on the episode of Num 12:14–15, while *1 Clem.* 51.5 quotes Num 16:30–33. In both cases, Hades is understood as a place where the wicked dwell. In the sense of “dwelling of the dead” Hades is recalled in *Pol. Phil.* 1.2, where Acts 2:24 is quoted (according to cod. D).

In ancient Christian literature, the idea of Hades is often used in relation to the place where the souls of those who have died before the time of Christ dwell (sometimes in relation only to the souls of the wicked, see Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.6.44–45). In this sense, Hades is the place where Christ descends to deliver the souls of the just who had died before him, to whom he preaches the good news. This refers to an old tradition, already present in 1 Pet 3:19–20; *Ign. Magn.* 9.2; *Ev. Petr.* 41 (although the term “Hades” is absent); see also Maximus the Confessor, *Quaest. Thal.* 7. Often the κατάβασις of Christ into Hades is connected with the mystery of baptism (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 9.9; Basil, *Spir.* 35; John Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 40.1). On the topic of Christ’s descent into hell see recently GOUNELLE, *Descente*.

As in the NT, the Fathers sometimes conceive Hades as an intermediate place where the souls of the just await judgment (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.31.2; Hippolytus, *Univ.* 3). It is not uncommon, however, for Hades to signify more specifically the Gehenna, or hell, a place of punishment of the wicked (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.6.44–45; Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 23.37), where the fallen angels are eternally in torment (Origen, *Princ.* 4.3.10). In a Hades understood as such, there is no pos-

sibility of repentance (cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 16.7). In rarer cases, Hades is personified, taking the place of Death (John Chrysostom, *Coemet.* 1 [PG 49, 394]).

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