A336-Eur-Bulgaria-Odessos-Thracian Rider Plaque-Marble-4th century BCE



Fig. 1. Thracian Rider Plaque from Odessos-Marble-4th century BCE. The rider as a divine psychopomp with a halo signifying his divinity, is approaching a newly deceased who is wrapped in linen shrouds, who is about to be carried away to the Hereafter.

Case No.: 4

Accession Number: A336

Formal Label: Odessos-Thracian Rider Plaque-Marble-4th century BCE

**Display Description:**

The Thracian Rider cult is known from 4th century Greek and Latin inscriptions that describe him as "the hero" (*o ἥρως*, *o hḗrōs*), which is linked to the Thracian term for "the hero," *o \*ierus*, or *o \*iarus*. The demonstrative article is important for its suggests an importance that elevates the epithet. Hence, the Thracian Rider as *o ἥρως* was a divinity on the same level as the Greek mythic *o ἥρως* (Detschew 1957: 200) and he was even called ο μεγάλος θεός (megalos theos*,* "great god"), being identified on the same level with Asclepius, Apollo, Dionysus and Silvanus.

This Thracian Rider Plaque from Odessos dating to the 4th century BCE shows the rider as a divine psychopomp with a halo signifying his divinity. He is approaching a newly deceased who is wrapped in linen shrouds, who is about to be carried away to the Hereafter. This plaque invokes the Rider’s rôle as *ο σωτήρας* ("savior").

LC Classification:  DF261.T6

Date or Time Horizon: 4th century BCE

Geographical Area: west coast, Black Sea

Map



GPS Coordinates: [43°13′N 27°55′E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Varna&params=43_13_N_27_55_E_region:BG_type:city(335177))

Cultural Affiliation: Thrace

Geographical Area: Moesia Inferior

Medium: Marble

**Dimensions**: H 166.50 mm, 6.56 in  
**Weight: 980 g, 2 lb 2.5 oz**

**Provenance**: Odessos

**Condition:** original

**Discussion:**

The cult was particularly influential in Thrace, Dacia and in Moesia Inferior on the western shore of the Black Sea (modern Romania and Bulgaria) during the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE where he became associated with the hero of the Getae mystery religion of Dacia, which diffused among Roman legions after 106 CE, when Trajan conquered Dacia and made it a Roman province.

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