



## GAOTĒMA

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**GAOTĒMA**, an Avestan proper name only attested in *Yt.* 13.16: “An eloquent man will be born, who makes his words heard in verbal contests, whose judgment is sought after, who comes away from the discussion victorious over the defeated GaotĒma.” The word is a superlative formation of Av. *gau-* “neat, cow” (Kellens, p. 404, but it cannot be excluded that it is a borrowing from Skt. *gótama-* or *gautama-* (descendant of Gotama), also epithet of Buddha (Pāli *gotama-*). So the idea arose (Herzfeld, pp. 628 ff.; Altheim and Stiehl, pp. 17-20) that the Avestan passage refers to a historical dispute between Zoroaster and Buddha, i.e., between a Zoroastrian and a Buddhist (so at least Herzfeld, pp. 628 ff. and Altheim and Stiehl, pp. 17-20). Hertel (p. 140) sees in GaotĒma the Vedic Ṛṣi Gótama (attested often in the Rigveda) or a member of his family. Modern research views these theories negatively (see Mayrhofer, 1992, I, p. 497 with further literature). It is also possible that the proper name *Ka-u-da-ma* of the Persepolis tablets is linguistically the same as GaotĒma (Mayrhofer 1973, p. 180; Idem, 1979, p. 47).

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