



## GĀW Ī ĒWDĀD

**GĀW Ī ĒWDĀD** (also *ēwagdād*), the name of the primordial Bovine in Zoroastrian mythology. Although the name *gav- aēvō.dātā-* appears in two Avestan litanies (*Nīāyišn* 3.2; *Sīh rōzag* 2.12) together with *māṇha- gaociθra-* “the Moon containing the seed of cattle” and *gaw- pouru.sarəδā* “the Bovine of many species,” the only other information is contained in the Pahlavi books, especially the *Bundahišn* and the *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram*. The meaning of the name is not altogether certain. The grammatical gender of *gav-* in Avestan is feminine, yet it can mean “cow” or include all bovine. In Pahlavi, since there is no grammatical distinction of gender, the actual gender of a *gāw* can only be decided by context. Here the *Bundahišn* gives clear evidence that, like the primordial man Gayōmard/t (see [GAYŌMART](#); the Gāw ī Ēwagdād was an hermaphroditic creature, for it has both semen (*Bundahišn* [TD2] 94.4) and milk (*Bundahišn* [TD2] 43.15). The second part of the name means “sole-created” or “created as one.” According to the *Bundahišn* ([TD2] 20.14 ff.) Gāw ī Ēwdād was the fourth of Ohrmazd’s primal creations, and, like the primordial Plant (*urwar*) and Gayōmard, who contained the potential seed of all plant life and humans respectively, it was created to be the progenitor of all beneficent animals. At the onslaught, Ohrmazd gave it *bang* (q.v.) to eat to lessen the suffering at the hands of Ahriman (*Bundahišn* [TD2] 43.11 ff.). After succumbing to Ahriman, Gāw ī Ēwdād fell to the right and the Gōšurun (q.v.) issued forth from its body as its soul. However, the semen was carried up to the Moon-station (cf. Av. *māṇha- gaociθra-*) where it was purified and became the pairs, male and female, of the ‘animals of many species’ (*gōspandān ī purr-sardag* = Av. *gav- pouru.sarəδā-*). When Gāw ī Ēwdād passed away, fifty-five



kinds of grain and twelve kinds of medicinal plants grew from its marrow, owing to its “plant-nature” (*urwar-cihrih*; *Bundahišn* [TD2] 68.1-3, 93.10-11); and further, drawing on another tradition, the author of the *Bundahišn* lists sesame, lentils, leeks, grapes, mustard seed, and marjoram as issuing from various of Gāw ī Ēwdād’s body parts ([TD2]93.11.14).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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