



## GĒUŠ TAŠAN

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**GĒUŠ TAŠAN** (the fashioner of the Cow), a divine craftsman who figures prominently in the Gathas (q.v.) of Zoroaster but falls into obscurity in the Younger Avesta, being there associated with the fourteenth day of the month, known in Middle Persian simply as Gōš. Through his poetry Zoroaster articulated a new religious vision (*daēnā*; see DĒN) based on the reinterpretation of many traditional concepts. In his system the Gēuš Tašan is explicitly identified both with Ahura Mazdā himself and his creative aspect, the (Spēništa) Mainyu “The Most Beneficent Spirit.” To the question posed in *Yasna* 29.1 by the the soul of the Cow (Gēuš Uruuan): “Who fashioned me?” (*kā mā tašaṭ*), Zoroaster responds in *Yasna* 44.6 and in *Yasna* 51.7, there through the agency of the Spēništa Mainyu, “thou (Ahura Mazdā) hast fashioned the Cow” (*gqm tašō*), and in *Yasna* 47.3 it is the (Spēništa) Mainyu alone “who hath fashioned the Cow” (*yā.gqm..hēm.tašaṭ*). The explicit link to older concepts is made in *Yasna* 29.1 when the Cow also asks “For whom have you crafted me?” (*kahmāi mā θbarōždūm*) and in *Yasna* 29.6 when Ahura Mazdā says “Craftsman fashioned you for the husbandman and the herdsman” (*aṭ zī θbā fšuiiantaēcā vāstrāicā θβōrəštā tataša*). Thus, by associating the Gēuš Tašan with the Indo-Iranian demiurge θβōrəštar (Vedic Tvaṣtar), Zoroaster signals his origin. But, why is he the fashioner of the Cow specifically? As shown by Stanley Insler and Hanns-Peter Schmidt, the Cow is a metaphor for Zoroaster’s religious vision, and, moreover, as shown by Wolfgang P. Schmid, the Cow is also a metaphor in Vedic diction for poetry itself. Now, in Vedic and Avestan the root *takṣ-/taš-* can be used for horses and various material things such as chariots, but it is also widely employed with words for speech when poets



refer to their own creation of poetry. Since James Darmesteter's discovery of the connection of Av. *vacastašti*– (a strophe of the Gathas) and Gr. *epeōntektōn*, scholars have recognized an Indo-European idiom *wekwos- tekó-* (to fashion speech). Thus, it is clear that Zoroaster has substituted the metaphorical *gav*– for the traditional *vacah*– to create his “Fashioner of the Cow,” who is actually none other than an ancient *\*vacahah tašan*– (the Fashioner of Speech). That is, for Zoroaster it is Ahura Mazdā himself who is the master poet who inspires the religious vision in the human poet.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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