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“I Know That I Hung, on a Windy Tree” The Parables of the Indoeuropean Jesus

The god who dies but rebirths is an often-reappearing legend in many religions. Amongst the numerous deities sharing these features, it seems that the self-sacrifice narrative regarding the Germanic Odin and Celtic Esus gives perhaps the most valuable insight into the Indo-European belief system. According to the data, human victims offered to both deities were hung on a tree and stabbed by a spear. This paper investigates whether were first Christians inspired by these polytheistic teachings, presumably incorporating non-Semitic ideas into the Parables of Jesus Christ. Especially the remarkable resemblance between the name of Jesus and Esus, and by examining connected linguistic and archaeological hints, an overall conclusion will be proposed.

Keywords: Jesus, Odin, Esus, Self-Sacrifice, Indo-European, Religion

If we think about Christianity as solemnly of Semitic export in Europe we can easily fall into the trap of a hasty conclusion, because it seems that things were not utterly straightforward. Truth is Christianization never had a one-way route, even from the period when it was spread orally in Aramaic and Greek, followed by written information.¹ Moreover, there has always been a kind of parallelism as it absorbed indigenous components just as indigenous beliefs engaged with the aspects of Christianity. For instance, while expanding, it immersed the values of the converting Roman aristocracy, like pagan rites and their calendar.² Seen as an odd entity in the beginning, it

¹ Zoroastrianism impacted Jewish teachings and neo-Platonism influenced early Christians, see BARR (1995).

² KAPLAN (1995).

competed with the Roman-worshiped divinities by transferring their roles onto Christian figures in an effort to limit their power.³ Question is, were there any ‘barbarian’ godlike figures that could be integrated into the rising Christian doctrine? ‘Syncretism is an incorrect description [...]’ as to old Europeans ‘Christianity was a self-characterization’,⁴ which perhaps could be the core reason why accumulated citizens of the Late Empire effortlessly accepted the new religion.

Wotan, Id est, Furor

According to the 10th-century accounts of Ibn Rustah, the Persian explorer, in the area of the city of Novgorod was a practice in which ‘any medicine man could seize a man or animal, put a rope around his neck and hang him until he dies, saying he is a sacrifice to God’.⁵ As Robert Dutton suggested in his PhD. thesis, the Lord of Death to whom the writer is referring is, without doubt, reminiscent of the widely revered Germanic deity Odin (the term Germanic is perceived as most accurate when addressing the mythology of the people belonging to the Germanic language family, along with interchangeable Norse, Scandinavian, and Icelandic).⁶ And the heading of this chapter is possibly the finest interpretation of Odin’s divine character out there, provided by Adam of Bremen in his 11th-century script, explicitly associating Odin with ‘rage’.⁷ Indeed, the etymology of his name is self-revealing his functions and the reason for the deity’s high position in the vast Pan-Germanic pantheon: OG *Wotan/Godan*, ON *Óðinn*, and OE *Wōden*, which all stemmed from Pre-Gmc **Uoh₂-tós* (eng. God-inspired) and PGmc **Wōđanaz* (**wōđaz* ‘rage’ + **-naz* ‘master of’), with a possible link in PC **wātis* (eng. seer) and LT *vātēs* (engl. prophet).⁸

³ SALZMAN (2002), RAUSING (1995).

⁴ LOTMAN (1990: 130).

⁵ LUNDE et al (2012: 127).

⁶ DUTTON (2015); CAWLEY (1939). Yet, we shouldn’t write off Slavic presence there, see: HRAUNDAL (2014: 84).

⁷ ORCHARD (1997: 168–69).

⁸ PUHVEL (1987: 167), DE VRIES (1957: 27; 1962: 416).

In classical manuscripts, Odin, the Dumézilian one-eyed sovereign of magic and fury,⁹ is usually concealed under the Roman label as Mercury [Tac. *Germ.* IX] or in the Early Medieval period as Mars [Jord. *Get.* IV, 40–41]. As we are told by the cited authors, human sacrifices were offered as a pledge to the alleged Odin’s equivalents. As well, Plutarch noted that Cimbrian warriors were sacrificed after being defeated by Romans in a way by hanging [Plut. *Vit.* 27]. Well, the reason why Odin is often brought into connection with the deity to whom hanged and speared human sacrifices are bequeathed is the data coming from the Old Norse oral tradition, finally gathered and written down by Christian authors, primarily Icelander Snorri Sturluson. We learn that Odin self-sacrificed himself to himself, particularly in the passage from the poem *Hávámál*, as he hung and starved for nine nights on a windy tree while wounding himself with the magical spear *Gungir*; all in order to pursue intellectual arts, that is, runes carved within the tree – which is by all means *Yggdrasil*, the World tree (most likely ash or perhaps willow tree). The fact the oral tradition was documented by Christians goes in favor of the Christian influence.

However, Odin’s dramatic soliloquy, from stanzas 138–141 below, is so intriguing that it has been the subject of an academic debate for over a century, even up to the recent discussions:

(138) I know that I hung on a windy tree,
All of nine nights, Wounded by a spear
and given to Odin,
self to myself, on that tree
which no one knows
of what roots it sprang.

(139) For loaf they did not give me,
nor for some horn,

⁹ Which is opposite to god Týr, whose area is justice and war, see DUMEZIL (1987) and GRUNDY (2014: 128–141).

I peered down, I took up secrets,
 screaming I grasped,
 I fell back from there.

(140) Nine mighty songs
 I took from the wise son
 of Bolthor, Bestla's father,
 and drink I did get
 of the precious mead,
 drenched with Odrerir.

(141) Then I began to thrive,
 and be wise and
 grow and be satisfied,
 Word to me of word, directed word,
 deed to me of deed, directed deed.

A scientific consensus regarding Odin's self-immolation is generally that by this deed he is gaining occult wisdom, the foresight to a cosmic event, and access to another world – resulting in new abilities for development in mental as well as bodily capacities upon returning from his ordeal.¹⁰ 'The point is not for the initiand to die for real [...] as in an execution',¹¹ since Odin's myth itself is not strictly about sacrifice and death, but rather a reflection of a rite of passage handled by the worshipers of the actual cult. As advocated by Daniel Bray: ' [...] within Norse religious practice, a sacrificial ritual was one of the most central acts of religious observance'.¹² As the matter of fact, this kind of activity was observed by Adam of Bremen: 'Every nine years [...] nine heads of every living male creature are offered [...] the bodies are hanged in a grove which stands behind the temple. The grove is so holy for

¹⁰ KURE (2004) and EVANS (2004).

¹¹ DUTTON (2015: 71).

¹² ON *blot*, see Bray (2002: 123).

the heathens that each of the separate trees is believed to be divine [...].¹³ At this point, we can observe the actual ‘embodiment’ of an oral institution, as this sentence corresponds with the *Hávámál*’s line where Odin is suspended for nine nights on a hallowed tree. Supplementary, the fabled echo of the ritual reenactment is attested in the legendary Norse lore where hero Starkad is sacrificing king Vikar by strangling him with a noose of willow around his neck and finally piercing him with the javelin.¹⁴

For those acquainted with the Crucifixion found in the Gospel, you may have by now noticed some resemblances. Parables of the Christ portray Jesus of Nazareth having been pierced in the ribs by the ‘Holy Lance’ while being suspended on the Cross, a wooden structure: *Sed unus militum lancea latus eius aperuit et continuo exevit sanguis et aqua* [JN 19/34]. With remarkable likeness, in both cases, the weapon as a symbol of power is ending the ceremony. To be precise, Jesus is voluntarily sacrificing himself (God the Son) to himself (God the Father) to save the world, while Odin is trying to prevent Ragnarok, the end of the Norse gods and men.

After the path of exhausting martyrdom and death, they both miraculously come back to life. The ‘dying-and-rising god’ narrative, confirmed in a number of mythologies, was promoted by Sir James Frazer. The scholar claimed that all the essential features of Christianity could be found in the earlier religions (chiefly subsequent resurrections of Attis, Dionysus, Osiris, Innana, etc.); and let us add that *Interpretatio Christiana* was even promoted by the Church itself.¹⁵ Regardless of the mentioned, assumptions that the central story and other parts from the New Testament could be of (Indo-) European origin are mostly rejected by modern scholars.¹⁶

Nonetheless, some other parallels between Odin and Jesus may advocate that Frazer’s claims are not so old-fashioned. For example, coming from the poem *Griminsmol*, Odin is bound between two pillars of blazing fires, while Christ hangs between two crosses holding criminals. Also, Jesus is

¹³ Ibid, 129.

¹⁴ PUHVEL (1987: 245).

¹⁵ BARSTAD (1984). See more at: METTINGER, TRYGGVE (2004).

¹⁶ For example by EHRMAN (2012).

offered vinegar, and in stanza 140 tree-suspended Odin is drinking precious mead. Furthermore, Odin dies on the 9th day, and the commemoration of Christ is on the 9th hour, a number often brought into connection with Indo-European cosmologies and folklore.¹⁷ In other sequences Jesus is capable to replicate fish and bread, he possesses powers of healing, and he can communicate with the other world, all in the interest of common folk. Perhaps more egoistically, Odin magically replicates gold rings, preaches and heals, and travels between different realms.

At first sight, these parallels could support Joseph Cambell's monomyth theory, however, it would be an explanation too simplified to offer. Yin/Yang situations rather display inherited IE functions in the case of Odin, later adhered to Jesus, and not Jung-type meaningful coincidences, immensely promoted by Cambell's followers.¹⁸ As it happens, could similarities stand as a daily-political result of the incorporation of 'barbarian elements' into the Roman religious doctrine?

But for now, let us go back to the central scene. Numerous authors dealing with this topic are warning about its lack of information. For instance, Odin's last nine nights are opposed to the unattested length of time that Christ spent on the Cross. Whereas, if we apply Oliver Freiberger's method, the accentual context is the act of hanging, despite variances.¹⁹ Folklorist Alan Dundes argued that exactly the absence of Jesus's childhood and youth illuminates 'precisely the case for almost all heroes of tradition'.²⁰ If the latter is not spot-on, why the Cross was metaphorically described as a tree in a way like it should mimic the heathen story of the Dundes' hero:

Acts 5:30: 'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and
hanged on a tree'

Acts 13:29: 'And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they

¹⁷ Number 9 is considered a divine number in the Indo-European belief system, see COHEN (2019).

¹⁸ CAMELL (1949).

¹⁹ See FREIBERGER (2019).

²⁰ DUNDENS (1980).

took him down **from the tree**, and laid him in a sepulchre’

Galatians 3:13: ‘ [...] for it is written, cursed is every one that **hanged on a tree**’

Peter 2:24: “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body **on the tree** [...]’

Considering the above said, it is aware the World tree is essential to the shamanic figure, as Cosmic Mountain is to Greek Prometheus.²¹ One of the main traces often attached to Odin is an aspect of shamanism, a complex religious phenomenon non-exclusive to Siberia and Central Asia. His myth corresponds with the initiation rites of many cultures, and namely, Odin’s followers were known for techniques of trance. Mircea Eliade postulated that ‘the fundamental power of the shaman is ecstasy, that is the ability of the shaman’s soul to move out of the shaman’s body and then wonder in the whole world [...] for different purposes, especially healing, and divination, and also guiding souls of the dead toward the netherworld’, and that ‘the principal function of the shamanism is magical healing and ability to communicate with the dead, without thereby becoming their instrument’.²² Thus, a shaman is a Mercury-like mediator, a prophet, and a seer (all in connection with Odin’s function), with mastery over elements, and a shape-shifter accompanied by animals (parallel to Odin’s metamorphosis, his two ravens and 8-legged steed). As defined by Jan Kozak, Odin’s self-immolation brings to mind internal and external aspects of the factual ritual experience, allowing him later to receive Sacred Mead.²³

It is noteworthy that all the above-mentioned can be as well used while describing Jesus’ characteristics, even if we confess there is no definitive image of him due to many teachings that existed and still exist today in Christology. The functional approach focuses on Jesus’ identity concerning his functions as a preacher and healer,²⁴ evidently found in the other Indo-Eu-

²¹ ELIADE (1951: 266, 270). See more at FORNEUT (2020: 13; 19).

²² Ibid, 3–4, 5, 215, 379–83.

²³ The so called ‘Stereomyth’ proposed by KOZAK (2017: 187).

²⁴ ELIADE (1951: 8).

ropean religions. All shamans must go through some form of initiation, *Via Dolorosa* in this case. 'This experience, which may take the form of sickness, visions, or dreams all entail a 'symbolic death' and resurrection after suffering, enchanting his status through suffering", becoming a 'wounded healer'.²⁵ It is no amazement that, during conversion to Christianity, some African tribes were syncretizing Jesus and *nganga*, their healer and psychopomp, as noted by John Daniel Dadosky, who explored the notion of Christ as the shamanic figure.²⁶ Besides, Native Americans rejected the word Shaman as foreign, as they preferred the term 'medicine man' or 'spiritual elder'.²⁷

If we search further, Jesus draws his power from his close relationship with God like a mediator to actualize healing, '[...] a major concern in the Gospel depiction of Jesus'.²⁸ For example, he uses prayer to heal [MK 9:29], and the power of God to do so [MT 12:28]. Others heal by touching his cloak [MK 5:25–34, MK 6:56], and let us not forget the epiphany of Odin the Hooded-one (ON *Grímnir*). Jesus is using mud mixed with his saliva to cure the blind man [JN 9:6–7]. Other commonly invoked shamanic techniques are laying on the hands [Mark 6:5, LK 22:51], the power of visions [MK 10:32], going out of his mind [Mk 3:21], or better to say – out of himself.²⁹ Jesus controls spirits [LK 10:17, MK 1:12], and he was accused of practicing witchcraft and sorcery by the Romans. Whilst Odin created certain things (Midgard and runes), Jesus is the Creator of all things [JN 1:1–3], which is again only different in Freiburger's manner.

Now, if we took into consideration these traits mutual for Odin and Jesus, naturally we must ask ourselves which is older and who influenced who? Even if the author of this paper considers that neither is true, which will be discussed in the next chapter, the archaeological perspective is necessary. Ma-

²⁵ Ibid, 33, and BORG (1989: 116). Odin performed another form of self-sacrifice by surrendering his left eye so he might take a drink from Mimir's well; it is also noted that Jesus had damaged eye [MT 5:29].

²⁶ DADOSKY (1993: 18) calls Eliade's attempt to define shamanism the least hazardous of them all.

²⁷ GOULD, KOLB (1964: 38).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid; 40.

terial confirmation of neck-hanging victims, like those of Tollund Man found in Denmark, predates the arrival of Christianity in Northern Europe by almost 1500 years.³⁰ Not to mention, Scandinavia has a multitude of surviving place names specifically denoting sites of hanging, and it is hard to believe these are all Christian influences.³¹ Indeed, it is reported that the Norse poems were the works of many men, from many different times, but the ‘mythological poems seem strongly marked by pagan sincerity [...]’ and ‘[...] it seems likely that [...] the poems dealing with the gods antedate the year 1000’.³² To put it more simply, the hanging myth could not have been inspired by Christian stories because Christianity was not there at the time – it arrives 2–3 centuries before most of the stories were written by Christians.

An unparalleled example of intermixed both pagan Nordic and Christian culture is a massive carved rune stone from the 10th century, found in the town of Jelling in Denmark. It was ordered by king Harald as a symbol to advertise the emergence of new Christian statehood, an obligatory condition for any state wishing to participate in international medieval politics. The stone, undoubtedly representing ancient shamanic rock art, depicts a figure of what should be a crucified Christ, standing in the shape of a cross, but entangled in what appear to be branches of a tree.³³ The sentence carved under the image demonstrates that Jesus’ function substituted the one of Odin in medieval Scandinavia: ‘Behold, Christ has taken the place of Odin’ (**Figure 1**).

A tremendous amount has been written about Odin and the aspects of the cult that surrounded him,³⁴ yet little progress has been made beyond general regarding his synthesis with the legacy of Jesus Christ. Odin’s self-immolation as solemn proof of the Indo-European origin of Jesus’ characteristics is still lacking solid grounds. It is hard to agree that Odin, an immortal who is

³⁰ See GLOB (2004).

³¹ DUTTON (2015: 89–90).

³² BELLOWS (1936: 17–18).

³³ KURE (2004: 68–73).

³⁴ INSOLL (2004: 5) declares ‘cult’ a pejorative term due to its connotations of marginality and ‘freakish’ nature.

also mortal, influenced the Parables of Christ, and the Semitic traditions did not. For example, traces of shamanic figures in ancient Israel do occur, like Elijah and Hanina ben Dosa.³⁵ Although we do concur that Odin's story was a perfect substrate for incoming faith, this doesn't explain why the hanging motive was widely familiar in the early Empire, if we know that Germanic tribes were integrated in the later centuries. From that standpoint, our aim is not to question already established opinions of the subject, but to supplement them with additional data.



Figure 1. Interpretatio Christiana on the Jelling stone (after Teglbjærg 1982, 8, fig. 57).

The missing link

The holy places of IE tribes were woods and groves, and they applied the names of deities to that hidden presence that is seen only by the eye of reverence [Tac. *Germ.* IX]. Certainly, hanging ceremonies were made to be grasped and strongly recognized in the collective memory of the worshipers. And besides Prometheus, Old European pagan culture is full of transcendent fig-

³⁵ DADOVSKY (1993: 30–34).

ures resembling modern-day shamans. The historically judgmental tone of the term pagan, put aside how important part were shamanic customs in everyday life in Europe, for example, in the case of Etruscan auspices or Herodotus’ shape-shifting Neuri. Additionally, one other shaman-like deity worshiped in Britain and Gaul could be a reason why the hanging motive prevailed for so long in Europe, and as argued, divine auto-sacrifice was something not reserved for Christianity.

Even if the Gaulish deity Lugh could be a decent successor of shamanic traits discussed in this paper, it is in god Esus where we find the most similarities with functions attributed to both Odin and Jesus. Known for a few monumental statues and a line in Lucan’s text, Esus is a quite peculiar deity, to whom, according to the later commentators on Lucan’s work, human victims were sacrificed by being tied to a tree and flogged to death.³⁶ Right here is where Jan de Vries finds ground for comparison between Esus and Odin.³⁷ Supplementary, Esus is mentioned as part of the magical formula to invoke aid in curing throat trouble, apparently as a healer figure [Marc. *De Med.* 15, 106], and was conflated with Roman Mercury by *Interpretatio Romana*.

Recorded variants of the deity’s name are *Esus*, *Aisus*, *Hesus*, and *Aesus*.³⁸ A brief origin of it can be found in widespread u-stem attested in Umbr. *eso-no-* (divine, sacred), Etrusc. *aesar* and Venet. *aisu-* (god, divine), perhaps in connection with Latin *herus* (lord, master).³⁹ Further, this masculine u-stem could be based on a PIE root **eis-* (fury), making the name semantically the same as the Germanic *Wotanaz*. As well, the name Esus could stand for a Romanization of an original form, perhaps of **Aisus*, derived from PC *wesu-* (noble, respected).⁴⁰ Archaeological data provide documented personal names in obvious connection with the deity, like *Esunertus*, *Esumagos*, *Esugenus*, and most likely the tribal name of the *Esuvii* from Northwest Gaul.⁴¹

³⁶ OLMSTED (1994: 321).

³⁷ DE VRIES (1954: 98).

³⁸ DOTTIN (1920: 60).

³⁹ See BEELER (1956).

⁴⁰ DE VRIES (1954: 98).

⁴¹ ELIADE (1951: 167).

The imagery of Esus is also challenging in terms of understanding. On the pillar from Paris, he appears as a bearded deity wearing a loose tunic while cutting branches from a tree with his axe (Figure 2).⁴² Here is regarded as *nautae* in Latin (sailor), with a link to Odin's chthonic character as 'god of cargoes'. On the Trier pillar, Esus is accompanied by a bull and three birds.



Figure 2. The Gallo-Roman Pillar of the Boatman, 1st century BC (after Lachevardiere 1846).

Now, the query is why Esus is chopping the tree unless this too has somewhat to do with the death and rebirth of the tree itself, echoing the death and rebirth of the victims sacrificed to it. What we know is that hero-gods are always ambivalent; their authority extends into many areas of a mortal's life. The more important question we are seeking is does Esus has any connection with the image and function of Jesus Christ? Esus's characteristics and the ritual around him are linked with those of Odin, and Odin, as we settled

⁴² GREEN (1992: 103–104).

formerly, is replaced by the image of Jesus. However, the difficulties we are dealing with here are a lack of archaeological and historical data regarding Esus, even if it seems he was quite an important god in the Celtic pantheon. A possible explanation for this could be *Damnatio Memoriae* staged during the Principate, and the only reason for that would be precisely the deity's powerful background or rather a rising cult.⁴³

Pioneer comparisons between the names of Esus and Jesus were made early as the 19th century,⁴⁴ but up to these days, striking resemblances are considered coincidental. Yet, Esus's traits are remarkably close to those of Jesus described in the Gospels. First, Biblical Jesus is a carpenter, and Esus is a woodcutter. Second, Esus also heals, and third, he is a soul carrier. Pathway to knowledge is hidden in Esus' case, but his myth was akin to that of Odin, giving to the victims offered to him by hanging and stabbing with a spear to imitate god's deed. Therefore, Esus is equally a divine shaman figure as it gives the impression, followed by rites and animals.

On the other hand, there are speculations that Esus's name could simply be a title, as 'Our Lord'. Even if this is true, we can still find some parallels with Odin, who is often entitled as the 'All-father'. Perchance **Óðinn** is standing as a reflection of 'myself', 'one-self', and 'one-eye'. A possible IE source of 'The One' is maybe supported by OCS *єдинъ*, and Russian *один* (the one). Heathen's formula 'The only (one) Lord' would be a plausible reason for Romans to trans pass divine epithet onto Jesus, a human manifestation of 'One true God', including the functions and the cult, at least of Esus. Given that proposition, we know that Aram. *Iēsous* stands for 'healer, savior', comparing it to earlier said. We should take into consideration the potential form of **Aisus* and the fact Jesus was historically noted as *Lesus* in Latin. This could again be related to Pro-Sl **lěsъ* (forest, woodland). The connection of the word 'Jesus' with Hebrew *Yeshua* should carefully be questioned by scholars, regardless of the skepticism and the established paradigm, as it is not the historicity of Jesus put to the test here, but the revelation of 'Crypto-Paganism'.

⁴³ Esus is no longer attested epigraphically during the Principate, see more at Kos (1999).

⁴⁴ MORGANWG (1862). Paralles were made between Jesus and Caesar also, see CAROTTA (2005).

Possible interpretation

The modern understanding is that 'Myth's function is to explain' and 'the ritual's to obtain.'⁴⁵ Hanging rites were obviously in vogue since the Celtic and Germanic protohistory until the final Christianization of the Norse heathens in the Middle ages, even if various scholars are critical in implementing archaeological data for a ritual explanation.⁴⁶ The ecstatic agony of a shaman can be applied to both religious figures of Odin and Jesus Christ, and similarly, Esus's cult is akin to shamanism and shouldn't be ignored, even if we lack valuable information about the Celtic deity.

Christianity had become a major presence in Rome by the late 40s AD, and ever since it exchanged and absorbed elements of its worshipers who were previously labeled as heathens. As documented, numerous Celtic populations were engaged in Roman society after the Gallic wars. Assimilation, and thus incorporation of the language, customs, and beliefs gradually became 'Roman' in a way it was accepted. Wide use of the Celtic warriors in Roman legions and cults worshiped by them must have strengthened the power of Esus, hence, it would be reasonable and quite easy for Christian missionaries to convert those who already worship an old hanging god to revere a more powerful hanging god.⁴⁷ While each Indo-European people has a specific tendency as regards mythology, it is Romans who 'rewrote some sections of their mythology as the early history of Rome'.⁴⁸ In the same manner, as *Interpretatio Romana* did, giving a new cloak to the revered Celtic deity with *Interpretatio Christiana*, by absorbing the myth and the name of the influential god, would enhance the success of the religious program propagated by the correctors.

When finally proclaimed as the official state religion in the fourth century, Christianity was gradually adjusted by Roman sovereigns (who were already influenced by other Eastern cults like Mithraism) to the majority of the Empire's subjects with different ethnic backgrounds, lastly becoming

⁴⁵ SCHJØDT (2008: 69).

⁴⁶ HINES (2003).

⁴⁷ CHANEY (1960).

⁴⁸ FORTNEUT (2020: 18).

a byproduct of versatile Roman(ized) citizen. Further on, the fusion of the Germanic element in the civil and military system possibly did the same to Wotanaz as to Esus, as did later to Norse Odin. Whereas Odin and Esus truly share notable IE similarities, the ‘hanging’ of Jesus is likely not the monomyth’s result, as there are no such parallels coming from a Semitic genius. The sanction of Esus itself is rather more political and deliberately calculated by Constantine and his successors, with merging pagan and Christian teachings, repeated often throughout history.

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