

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

UDC 2-282.8:130.2(477)

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Hesychasm as a Mystical Path to Deification in the Context of Ukrainian Medieval Thought

Purpose. The main purpose of this research is to analyse the anthropology of hesychasm in medieval Ukraine in its relationship with spiritual values, to identify the role of hesychasm in shaping the spiritual outlook of Ukrainian society of that time, and to determine its impact on the modern understanding of human nature, spiritual development and the path to deification in the context of universal religious and philosophical traditions. **Theoretical basis.** The research is based on modern methodological approaches aimed at studying the relationship between religious anthropology and spiritual values in the context of medieval Ukraine's hesychasm. The paper examines the philosophical and theological concepts related to hesychasm of Ukrainian thinkers of the Middle Ages, as well as their connections with modern world religious and philosophical traditions. In particular, the authors analyse the influence of hesychasm on the formation of spiritual identity, ethics and morality, as well as its significance in the context of the search for values that contribute to the spiritual development of humanity as a whole. **Originality.** The originality lies in the comprehensive study of the influence of hesychasm as a religious phenomenon on the formation of spiritual values in medieval Ukraine and their reflection in the context of cultural and religious processes. **Conclusions.** Hesychasm as a religious practice had a significant impact on the formation of spiritual values in medieval Ukraine, contributing to the development of individual and collective spirituality, as well as to the restoration of the connection with the Divine. The study of hesychasm in the context of spiritual values demonstrates how Ukrainian thinkers adapted and integrated elements of Eastern patristics and Neoplatonism, creating a unique religious and philosophical tradition. The study shows that hesychasm in Ukraine contributed to intercultural dialogue, enriching both local and global religious thought through the exchange of ideas and practices. The study of the anthropology of hesychasm is important for understanding contemporary spiritual pursuits and their roots in historical context, which can help to shape new ways of finding meaning in life and identity. It is necessary to continue studying the influence of hesychasm on contemporary cultural and religious processes, which will contribute to a deeper understanding of spirituality in the modern world.

Keywords: anthropology of hesychasm; spiritual values; medieval Ukraine; deification; philosophical-religious thought; mystical experience

Introduction

Awareness of man's place in the world and the search for ways to achieve spiritual growth have always been central aspects of human existence. Medieval Ukraine, with its deep Christian traditions, became an arena for the development of hesychasm, a mystical doctrine that focuses on the inner life and direct communication with God. This doctrine, which has gained popularity among Ukrainian thinkers, leads us to an understanding of spiritual practices that contribute to the deification and transformation of human nature.

The relevance of studying the anthropology of hesychasm in the context of spiritual values is especially growing in the context of the current challenges posed by globalisation to society

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(Hudzenko et al., 2024). "All the hesychasts, no matter what nationality and historical period they belong to, are united by a single system of worldview, a single patristic and literary heritage, and a similar way of life" (authors' transl.), as S. Shumylo (2018, p. 57) rightly notes. In the context of rapid changes affecting the spiritual sphere, the study of traditional values, such as those contained in hesychastic practices, can provide new perspectives for personal growth and collective identity. Understanding the mystical experience offered by hesychasm can be an important resource for renewing spirituality, maintaining psychological health and social stability.

Our study aims to identify the links between the anthropology of hesychasm and spiritual values, as well as to study the impact of these links on the formation of personal identity in the Ukrainian context. The hypothesis assumes that elements of hesychasm, implemented in modern practice, can increase the level of spiritual development, help overcome crisis situations and contribute to a deeper understanding of one's own essence in the modern world. In our work, we will analyse the works of well-known researchers who cover this topic, in particular, Ignatyev (2014), Eskov (2014), Nyunt (2015), Bosman (2024), Pavlyk (2021), Athanasopoulos (2020) and others.

Purpose

The purpose of the article is to study the anthropology of medieval Ukraine's hesychasm and its significance in the context of spiritual values, as well as to identify the influence of this doctrine on modern concepts of spirituality and personal development.

Statement of basic materials

V. Ignatyev believes that the scientific relevance of the problem of hesychasm lies in the contradictory views between classical philosophy and theology. In his opinion, it is necessary to identify the reasons for this confrontation between the practical followers of hesychasm and the academic theorists of Eastern religious and philosophical discourse. He points out that the negative or indifferent attitude to hesychasm can be explained by the influence of Western philosophy based on Aristotelianism, which contributed to the establishment of rationalism and normativity in theology. This, according to V. Ignatyev, led to the criticism of hesychasm in the fourteenth century, when it was often identified with heretical movements. Hesychasm remains insufficiently studied, as the difficulty lies in its theological nature, which was formed within the framework of medieval dogmatic discourse. However, V. Ignatyev (2014) notes that modern theology is gradually turning to the anthropological aspect, where hesychasm is considered in a philosophical and cultural context.

S. Eskov notes that hesychasm is an important subject of philosophical and anthropological analysis because it combines individual spiritual practice with a collective tradition. According to Eskov, the main criteria of hesychasm include peace, mental activity, purification of the heart and mind, as well as bodily practices and contemplation of divine light. He also sees hesychasm as a meta-organic phenomenon that combines the anthropological aspect with historical traditions, and as a form of monastic life, that emphasises asceticism and spiritual unity. The scholar notes that external ascetic solitude promotes inner peace, which is necessary for prayer and communication with God. According to the author, the main criteria of hesychasm include: 1) calmness: the pursuit of inner and outer peace through silence and solitude; 2) mental activity: unceasing prayer and remembrance of God, which is a central aspect of the practice; 3) purification of the mind and heart: control of thoughts, struggle for inner integrity through prayer;

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4) bodily techniques: combining prayer with breathing, which promotes psychosomatic concentration; 5) contemplation of uncreated light: visualisation of divine light, which testifies to deification. Thus, S. Eskov (2014) argues that hesychasm is a path to divine unity through ascetic practice that encompasses all aspects of human nature.

Moe Moe Nyunt notes that in the complex history of Christianity, two ancient Christian spiritual practices have emerged that were shaped by their respective cultural contexts. The different cultural environments of hesychasm and divine reading reveal the following aspects: 1) the importance of balance between religious and social culture in the context of solitude and shared spiritual practices; 2) understanding the ways in which people achieve spiritual satisfaction in different cultures; 3) offering a verbal meditation practice for those from an oral culture, as well as a silent and visual practice for people from a more enlightened culture; or a combination of both practices in mixed cultures; 4) recognising the importance of spirituality as defined by representatives of Eastern and Western cultures.

The scholar believes that the essence of a holistic worldview of spiritual experience can be learned through the teachings of Sophrony (1896-1993), a hermit who spent seven years in the desert of Athos as a hermit. He openly shared his spiritual experience, stating: "I was living in two worlds. One I apprehend through sight, hearing and the rest of my physical faculties. In the other world I was spirit only – all listener, all expectation. I tried hard to see – but saw with other eyes" (Nyunt, 2015, p. 87). Moe Moe Nyunt believes that when a person attains divinity, he or she receives a certain divine wisdom that allows him or her to recognise all phenomena (past, present and future) in both the secular and spiritual worlds, as well as in the universe. In fact, the search for a holistic spiritual experience in postmodernism is possible thanks to ancient Christian mystical practices such as hesychasm and *lectio divina*. Both practices offer an experience of spirituality based on inner peace. This approach emphasises the importance of silence and meditation in spiritual development, noting that personal experience is the key to understanding deeper truths (Nyunt, 2015).

C. Bosman in his book "Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer: Spiritual Formation in an Ecumenical World – Exploring the Practice of the Eastern Orthodox Jesus Prayer with the Evangelical Protestant Tradition" notes that the practice of the Jesus Prayer in the context of hesychasm and the tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church has a deep connection with evangelical Protestantism. He emphasises that this prayer can be an effective means of achieving spiritual growth and inner peace. C. Bosman analyses the theological foundations of hesychasm, as well as the Jesus Prayer as a path to unity with God and deep spiritual experience. The scholar examines the historical development of this practice, its significance in Orthodox spiritual life, and its possible influence on Protestant traditions. He believes that prayer has a transformative potential and emphasises the importance of dialogue between different Christian traditions seeking a deeper spiritual connection. C. Bosman tries to prove that the Jesus Prayer can serve as a bridge between Orthodox and Protestant beliefs, opening up new possibilities for ecumenical cooperation. In his work, he offers a detailed analysis of spiritual practices and recommendations for their integration into modern Christian life (Bosman, 2024).

According to Toti, hesychasm is an Eastern Christian method of prayer based on invoking the Name of Jesus and the "descent of the mind" into the heart. This spiritual practice, which took its most expressive form in the 13th and 14th centuries on Mount Athos, is central to Christianity, as it involves the internal practice of constant prayer. Its goal is to achieve *metanoia* (transformation of the mind) and establish a personal connection with Jesus Christ through a continuous

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spiritual struggle that can be compared to the Muslim jihad al-akbar ("great holy war"). The scholar believes that analysing the symbolism that characterises this method and comparing the main elements of Hesychasm with Sufism and other traditional spiritual paths helps to understand the symbolic and anthropological aspects of this ascetic discipline more deeply (Toti, 2008).

In the work "Orthodox Mysticism and Asceticism: Philosophy and Theology in St Gregory Palamas' Work", hesychasm is considered as a central mystical tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy, especially characteristic of the teachings of St Gregory Palamas. Hesychasm focuses on inner concentration and prayer (in particular, the Jesus Prayer), which leads to spiritual purification and the ultimate goal of deification (theosis). The chapter "Hesychasm and Theology" (by Professor Georgios I. Mantzarides) emphasises the importance of hesychasm for Orthodox spirituality. Georgios I. Mantzarides notes that through this practice, a person can gain access to the Divine energies and understand the nature of God more deeply. Other chapters in the book, such as "The Legacy of St Gregory Palamas' Theology and Hesychasm in Romanian Orthodoxy", examine the influence of hesychasm outside Greece, especially in Romania. These studies show the importance of hesychasm as a path to spiritual perfection and its impact on the development of theological and cultural traditions (Athanasopoulos, 2020).

Thus, contemporary theology is increasingly focusing on the anthropological aspects of the hesychastic spiritual practice, which allows us to reconsider its meaning in a philosophical and cultural context.

Sergei Horujy examines anthropology through the prism of synergistic interaction between man and God, based on the doctrine of hesychasm. He analyses three levels of human nature: ontological, ontic and virtual, emphasising the importance of the distinction between the essence and energies of God introduced by Gregory Palamas. Horujy adapts this concept to understand spiritual growth, where a person strives for unity with God through prayer and ascetic experience (Elliott, 2011).

Yurii Semchuk's article analyses the anthropocentric approach to the practices of hesychasm and Sufism as methods of personal development and freedom. The author compares these spiritual traditions, emphasising their influence on the formation of human inner freedom and harmony through prayer, meditation and asceticism. The key to the mystical knowledge of the Almighty lies in self-knowledge, because the one who knows his soul knows God. The practices of hesychasm and Sufism are seen as ways of achieving spiritual perfection, enriching personal development and revealing human freedom in the context of philosophical anthropology. The scholar notes that the mystical schools of Islam and Christianity arose on the basis of ancient philosophical movements, intertwined with Neoplatonism.

The author emphasises that the transcendence of God makes him inaccessible to purely rational cognition, so mystics turn to spiritual practice, which involves the harmonisation of inner energies, not just the rejection of earthly pleasures. They achieve a state of balance through prayer and inner purification, which ultimately leads to spiritual insight, called the Light of Tabor. Through prayer and repentance, liberation from the ego and worldly temptations, which are the main obstacle to unity with God, is achieved. However, secular instincts often prevail in people, leaving them between two worlds – the temporal and the eternal. According to the scientist, mystical experience is manifested in three main images: "the eternal wanderer", "the suffering chosen one" and "the lover of God". These images symbolise different stages of the path to spiritual unity with God (Semchuk, 2015).

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N. Pavlyk explores the spiritual practices of Jainism and hesychasm, which begin with the purification of the body and soul to foster morality and discipline, noting that this process helps to calm the mind and prepare the practitioner for further spiritual development. Purification techniques transform both moral and cognitive traits, reflecting the influence of ancient monastic traditions. Mystical experiences in these traditions are based not only on theory but also on bodily practices. Indeed, an analysis of ascetic practices reveals the importance of the body, in particular in relation to meditation postures, breath control, and concentration. Despite the similarity in purification techniques, there is a significant difference in the ultimate goal: in Jainism, it is liberation from karmic matter, while in Orthodoxy, it is communion with Jesus Christ. The emphasis on asceticism is an important element for interreligious dialogue, which should take place in the context of recognising the differences and similarities inherent in the spiritual practices of different religions (Pavlyk, 2021).

Joshua Schooping considers the concept of self-consciousness as the basis of all thoughts and actions. In particular, patristic anthropology views human not only through the prism of his or her divine origin, connected with the breath of the spirit of life from God, but also as a being who ontologically bears God's image. According to the author, bearing the image of God is a defining feature of human nature, so no deep anthropological knowledge of man can be obtained without this theological truth. The scholar notes that, although Eastern Orthodox patristic theology emphasises the apophatic aspect of God's essence, emphasising the supra-rational and ontological mystery of God, there is little discussion of the impact of this emphasis on anthropology, in particular on man's experience of God in the context of his/her own mysterious, divine nature. Since man is created in the image of God, and God is ultimately mysterious, the image of God in man must also bear this apophatic mystery as a fundamental component of his own being. The article explores the impact of divine apophaticism on theological anthropology, in particular in the context of the relationship between theology, spiritual life, and practice (Schooping, 2019).

Hence, hesychasm is a complex and multifaceted tradition that is being actively studied in the context of Christian spirituality and theology. Scholars such as V. Ignatyev, S. Eskov, Moe Moe Nyunt, C. Bosman and others emphasize its importance for understanding the connection between personal spiritual practice and collective tradition, as well as the influence of Western philosophy on its perception. Hesychasm acts as a bridge between different Christian traditions, opening up opportunities for ecumenical dialogue and cooperation. In particular, the practice of the Jesus Prayer in hesychasm can serve as a path to spiritual growth, inner peace, and deification. Recent studies indicate a gradual renewal of interest in hesychasm in contemporary theology, which contributes to its integration into modern Christian life and spirituality.

An examination of various spiritual practices (including hesychasm, Sufism, and Jainism) emphasizes the common goal of these traditions: to achieve spiritual growth and inner freedom through self-knowledge, prayer, asceticism, and meditation. While different religious contexts define different ultimate goals (e.g., liberation from karmic matter in Jainism and union with Christ in Orthodoxy), all of these practices emphasize the importance of harmonizing inner energies and purification. Thus, deep spiritual development is possible only through a combination of theoretical understanding and practical aspects, such as control over the body and mind. In addition, the study of apophatic theology points to the importance of the mystical aspect of human nature, which cannot be fully comprehended rationally. Thus, religious and mystical practices ensure the creation of a holistic anthropology, where the interaction of the spiritual and the physical leads to self-knowledge and approximation to the transcendent.

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Note that hesychastic ideas of godlikeness and deification of man appear in Ukraine against the background of historical and philosophical context formed by the ancient idea of the ratio of macro- and microcosm, as well as the Christian tradition of dichotomous division into divine and creative life (Hudzenko, 2019). The first theoretical sources on the basis of which thinkers of medieval Ukraine made their own philosophical generalizations were the works of Eastern patristic (John Damascene, Dionysius the Areopagite, later – Gregory of Sinai and Gregory Palamas) (Predko, 2005). A special role here was played by the Christian idea of deification, the embodiment of which was hesychasm. Some of its elements are found in the period of Kievan Rus, and the peak of popularity falls on the XIV-XVI centuries.

Translations of John Chrysostom, who focused on the ethical and religious content of the Gospel and was a teacher of charitable love agape in its social aspect (protected the poor and exposed the rich), were very popular among the ancient n educated population. Ephraim Sirin (IV century) was no less popular. His poetic works are characterized by biblical lyricism and moods of repentance. Ephraim Sirin attached great importance to prayer, which is an inexhaustible treasure trove of many boons. He equates prayer to a tree that is deeply rooted in the earth and is not afraid of any gusts of wind. The central idea of his teaching was the idea that deep grief over the destruction of the divine image in man leads to his purification and spiritual rebirth, opening the way to God's knowledge through revelation (Predko, 2005).

By interpreting the essence of the interaction of mind, heart, soul, and Spirit in a person, man has historically formed the specifics of hesychasm as a mystical branch of Orthodox Christianity, which became the basis for the further development of the "philosophy of the heart" in Ukrainian thought (Nenya, 2006). In contrast to the Western mystical tradition, hesychasm develops its vision of the world and reality beyond the scientific achievements of philosophy and rationalism, preferring mystical insights as the main method of cognition of the world.

Cognition, as an integral part of theosis, consisted in interpreting the truth expressed in the Logos. The world was perceived as a book in which a person must find and understand the truth inherent in God. Ancient Russian thinking tended toward a "cognitive" vision of the world, where the word was a means of symbolization and mystical merger with God. This understanding of the word was reflected in the works of ancient Russian writers such as Metropolitan Hilarion, Cyril of Turov, Clement of Smolyatych (Batsevich, 2000, p. 147).

Hesychasm became a key part of the religious culture of Ukraine in the 15th and 16th centuries, exerting a significant influence on representatives of the conservative movement, including Ivan Vyshenskyi, Job Kniahynytskyi, and the Ostroh scribes. The echoes of this spiritual movement are preserved in the works of later thinkers such as Zacharias Kopystensky, Isaiah Kopynsky, Paisius Velichkovsky, Hryhoriy Skovoroda, and Pamfil Yurkevych. It is noteworthy that the spread of hesychastic ideas in the XIV–XV centuries was mainly through translations and copies of theological texts recommended for reading by Gregory of Sinai and Gregory Palamas, rather than through the creation of new works by the theorists of hesychasm themselves. Hesychasm called for distracting attention from everything "transitory" and "external" and focusing on the "internal" and "heart" that opens the possibility of contemplating the divine light (Rafalskyi et al., 2020, pp. 219-220). The main centre through which hesychastic literature spread to the Ukrainian lands was Athos. The other way through which hesychastic literature penetrated Ukraine was through Bulgaria.

Metropolitan Cyprian (ca. 1330-1406), who was educated in Bulgaria, Constantinople, and Mount Athos, contributed greatly to the spread of hesychasm in the Kyivan Metropolis. When he

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was appointed metropolitan, he brought with him many Serbian and Bulgarian religious texts recommended by the hesychasts. The hesychast ideology permeates Cyprian's work "The Life of Metropolitan Peter", dedicated to Metropolitan Peter of Rata in Kyiv. Metropolitan Gregory Tsamblak of Kyiv (1364-1426), a disciple of Patriarch Eutymius, made a more significant contribution. His works, in particular, "A Word of Praise to Eutymius of Tyrnov", reflect the transmission of the hesychastic doctrine from Gregory the Sinai through Theodosius of Tyrnov to Eutymius. Gregory emphasized that Eutymius, although a talented speaker, valued silence and did not feel his body while praying, which reflected the practice of deep cognition of God. Gregory Tsamblak's work "A Word on the Divine Transfiguration" is also considered to be hesychastic. In it, the author discusses the problem of the light of Tabor (Matytsyn, 2011, p. 60).

Vasyl Surazsky was one of the ideologues of hesychasm in the Ostroh religious and cultural centre. In his work "The Book" ("Knyzhysia", consisting of six chapters), there are frequent references to church authorities revered by hesychasts.

It is noteworthy that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Ukrainian thinkers, such as Meletii Smotrytskyi, Kasian Sakovych, and others, drew ideas from Neoplatonism and hesychasm. For example, Ivan Vyshenskyi was one of the most prominent representatives of the philosophy of hesychasm (Kletsova, 2003, p. 44). Here are some quotes from Ivan Vyshenskyi's works ("The Book", "Theodulus' Short Answer", "The Wise Latynnyk's Quarrel with a Foolish Ruthenian") that are related to the ideas of hesychasm. They reflect a focus on inner spiritual life, repentance, the fight against passions, and achieving unity with God: "This short-lived life will pass away like a dream, it will soon be over! Let us therefore be ready for the glorious resurrection with good and purified lives, so that we may be on the right side" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 138). These words emphasise the transience of earthly life and the need to prepare for the eternal one through the purification of the soul, which is the essence of hesychasm. "Death is for those who love this world and have their minds fixed on it, who live and think for the sake of the body" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 134). Here, the idea of rejecting the mundane and focusing on the spiritual overrides bodily desires. "Our body is from the earth, and it seeks earthly burdens and food. But the spirit seeks to be lifted up from this flesh, but the dung and the delicacies of the flesh have bound it and do not let it go" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 135). This image resonates with the struggle between the corporeal and the spiritual, which is characteristic of hesychasm practice. "The devil fights with the body and against the soul" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 135). This statement reflects the idea of spiritual struggle, which is a key aspect of hesychasm. "The humbled one makes himself the least, and through this God exalts him" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 134). It emphasises humility as a necessary quality for achieving spiritual perfection. "Repentance needs no colour; for a body that repents, it is enough to cover its nakedness" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 134). Repentance as a way to purify the soul, asceticism in the expression of faith is the basis of hesychasm. "Whatever you prepare in this life, you will take in the future, and whatever you sow, you will reap there" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 138). This thought reminds us of the spiritual implications of eternal life, with an emphasis on self-improvement. "Be saved by faith, be saved by the commandments of the gospel, be saved by the law of the Father, be saved by a pure and undefiled life!" (authors' transl.) (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 136). The call to holiness of life and the fulfilment of the commandments resonates with the ideas of inner purification in hesychasm. These quotes demonstrate the deep connection between the teachings of Ivan Vyshenskyi and the hesychast tradition, especially in the aspects of spiritual struggle, humility, and achieving unity with God through inner purification.

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Here are also some quotes from Cassian Sakowicz's works ("Aristotelian Problems, or the Questions about Human Nature", "Treatise on the Soul") that may be related to hesychasm, in particular the idea of inner discipline, vigilance, spiritual purification, and the unity of body and soul. "That master is worthy of all disrespect who, while managing his house well and properly ordering his servants, does not know how to warn in advance of the danger that threatens him. And so is everyone who does not know how to manage the house of his body" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 164), – a statement about managing the body that reflects the importance of self-control and discipline, which are important aspects of hesychasm practice. "The soul is indeed the form that gives life to the natural body, which has different parts and capacities for being" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 170) – hesychasm emphasises the need for inner purification and unity of the body and soul to achieve spiritual progress. "Nature is reasonable in the necessary actions and does not waste in the unnecessary ones, for it does nothing in vain" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 170) – the idea that all activity should be aimed at cognition of God and purification of the soul is an important component of hesychasm. "The body is subject to the soul, and not the soul to the body" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 172) reflects the essence of hesychasm practice, where the soul should be superior to the body, which needs to be controlled and purified. "Knowledge is human perfection. Knowledge becomes true when one knows one's own and immediate causes of things" (authors' transl.) (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 170) – the hesychast path requires deep self-knowledge, which can be associated with the desire for spiritual enlightenment and unity with God. These quotes reveal important aspects of hesychasm, including the idea of inner purification, control of the body and soul, as well as knowledge and spiritual perfection.

Both of these philosophical movements emphasised the importance of free will in achieving theosis and paid great attention to inner mystical experience (Hudzenko & Dobrodum, 2024). The worldview positions of hesychasm and Neoplatonism had common features, in particular, an emphasis on inner mystical experience and a vision of the state of ecstasy as the highest manifestation of the spiritual path to deification (Kletsova, 2003, p. 44). Both movements viewed ecstasy as the boundary of the mystical spiritual path, which gives access to divine cognition. As for Gerasym Smotrytskyi, his thoughts are closely related to the ideas of hesychasm, in particular, in that he promoted the need for self-absorption during prayer. He emphasised that the path to divine revelation and deification lies in focused prayer in solitude, during which a person can discover the "inner man" – the image of God restored through prayer (Levchenko, 2018, p. 187). Quotations from the book "The Key of the Kingdom of Heaven" (1587) related to hesychasm reflect the spiritual and inner-mystical practices that are the basis of the hesychast tradition, including attention to prayer, purification of the heart, and contemplation of God. Here are some of these quotes. "Follow the holy example unfailingly in your luminous youth and in the construction of your bodily temple, so that you may become a fruit of the Holy Spirit" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 111). This is a call to preserve inner purity through spiritual and bodily purification, which is an important aspect of hesychasm. "It is necessary to have a constant watchfulness for the fair state and for the new age, in which it is a pity to waste not only a long time, but even a day and an hour in vain and unnecessarily" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 111). This statement emphasises vigilance and awareness of every moment, which is part of the hesychasm approach to prayer and life in silence. "Be on your guard, because your adversary, the devil, does not sleep" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 112). This is a reminder of the struggle against passions and temptations, which is an important theme in hesychasm, where the practice of constant prayer effort is necessary for the purification of the soul. "Whom the invisible fear, the visible cannot stand against" (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 112). This statement refers to the

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forces of the spiritual world, in particular the fight against demonic influences, which is one of the foundations of the hesychast struggle for purification through prayer and self-observation. "Having taken spiritual armour from the sick and unskilled, we must take good care of ourselves by faith and give a true answer to our adversaries" (authors' transl.) (Shevchuk, 2019, p. 112). These words are a direct reference to spiritual struggle and self-defence through inner effort, which is in line with the hesychast principles of struggle for spiritual purity. Thus, the above quotes reflect the main themes of hesychasm – prayer, purification of the heart, struggle against passions, vigilance and achievement of inner peace through connection with God.

It is worth noting that the concept of hesychasm, along with Neoplatonic ideas, was widespread among Ukrainian philosophers of the late 16th and early 17th centuries who sought to synthesise Eastern Christian and Western European philosophical influences. Hesychasm became for them an important source of not only religious but also philosophical reflections on the nature of man, God, and the universe.

In this contextual framework, the ideas of hesychasm continued to shape Ukrainian philosophical thought, in particular, by influencing the development of the so-called "philosophy of the heart". This trend emphasised the importance of the heart as a symbol of human spiritual life and a place where the divine and human unite (Kalmykov et al., 2021). Hesychasm, with its emphasis on inner spiritual experience, became the basis for the further development of this philosophical tradition (Nenya, 2006).

The ideas of free will and spiritual growth embedded in hesychasm played an important role in Ukrainian philosophy of that era, providing an opportunity for the synthesis of religious and philosophical reflections aimed at achieving theosis, the process of human likeness to God. The influence of hesychasm, although transformed, remained significant in later periods, shaping Ukrainian philosophical thought and Orthodox spirituality.

Originality

The originality of the article lies in the study of the anthropology of hesychasm in medieval Ukraine and its influence on the formation of Orthodox spiritual thought. The paper also reveals the relationship between medieval Ukraine's hesychasm and spiritual values, which allows us to better understand the role of Ukrainian religious culture in the context of world Christianity. Particular attention is paid to the role of the contribution of hesychasm to the development of Ukrainian cultural and theological thought in the late Middle Ages.

Conclusions

The conclusions about the anthropology of medieval Ukraine's hesychasm in the context of spiritual values should be based on a comprehensive analysis of the interaction of the Ukrainian religious tradition with world religious-philosophical trends.

Firstly, hesychasm became the foundation for the development of the spiritual identity of medieval Ukraine. Its practice is aimed at achieving inner peace and continuous communication with God through prayer and meditation. This not only shaped personal spirituality but also influenced the collective worldview of Ukrainian society. Hesychasm helped people find harmony with themselves and the world, which was important in the context of the social and political challenges of the time.

Secondly, the significance of hesychasm goes beyond the national context. Its concept of spiritual purification, transformation of human nature and the search for divine light finds parallels

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in the spiritual values of other cultures. For example, the practice of Sufism in Islam also focuses on inner mystical transformation through prayer and asceticism, which emphasises the universal significance of such spiritual paths. Analysing these connections, we can conclude that the anthropology of hesychasm is not an isolated phenomenon, but it is integrated into the universal search for spiritual truth.

Thirdly, the influence of hesychasm on the formation of Ukrainian culture and philosophy was manifested in the development of the so-called "philosophy of the heart", which emphasises the importance of inner spiritual experience and harmony between body and soul. This concept has become one of the key concepts in the Orthodox tradition and has played an important role in the development of Ukrainian religious thought over the centuries.

In addition, it is important to pay attention to the intercultural dialogue that hesychasm stimulated through the exchange of ideas with other religious systems. This interaction contributed to the enrichment of not only local religious culture but also the world's spiritual heritage. Hesychasm integrated elements of Eastern patristics, Neoplatonism, and ascetic practices, creating a unique Ukrainian religious and philosophical tradition.

In the context of contemporary globalisation processes, the anthropology of hesychasm remains relevant. Studying it allows us to better understand how spiritual practices of the past can influence the modern search for the meaning of life and personal identity. Hesychasm offers a path to spiritual development that can be useful in overcoming personal and social crises, particularly in a rapidly changing world.

In view of this, the study of hesychasm in the context of theological anthropology not only helps to gain a better understanding of the historical roots of Ukrainian spirituality, but also opens up new perspectives for the contemporary understanding of spiritual values. Hesychasm can serve as an example of how the integration of traditional religious practices into modern life can contribute to spiritual enrichment and intercultural dialogue.

Thus, hesychasm as a religious phenomenon not only influenced medieval Ukrainian culture, but also has the potential to influence contemporary religious and philosophical discourses aimed at finding new ways to deification and spiritual transformation.

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Ісихазм як містичний шлях до обоження в контексті української середньовічної думки

Мета. Основна мета цього наукового дослідження полягає в тому, щоб здійснити аналіз антропології ісихазму в Середньовічній Україні у її взаємозв'язку з духовними цінностями, виявити роль ісихазму у формуванні духовного світогляду тогочасного українського суспільства, а також визначити його вплив на сучасне розуміння людської природи, духовного розвитку та шляху до обоження в контексті загальнолюдських релігійно-філософських традицій. **Теоретичний базис.** Підґрунтя дослідження формують сучасні методологічні підходи, спрямовані на вивчення співвідношення релігійної антропології та духовних цінностей у контексті ісихазму Середньовічної України. У роботі розглянуто філософські й теологічні концепції, що стосуються ісихазму, українських мислителів епохи Середньовіччя, а також їх зв'язки із сучасними світовими релігійно-філософськими традиціями. Зокрема, проаналізовано вплив ісихазму на формування духовної ідентичності, етики та моралі, а також його значення в контексті пошуку цінностей, які сприяють духовному розвитку людства в цілому. **Наукова новизна.** Полягає в комплексному дослідженні впливу ісихазму як релігійного феномену на формування духовних цінностей у Середньовічній Україні та їх відображення в контексті культурних і релігійних процесів. **Висновки.** Ісихазм як релігійна практика суттєво вплинув на формування духовних цінностей Середньовічної України, сприяючи розвитку індивідуальної і колективної духовності, а також відновленню зв'язку з Божественним. Розгляд ісихазму в контексті духовних цінностей демонструє, як українські мислителі адаптували та інтегрували елементи східної патристики і неоплатонізму, створюючи унікальну релігійно-філософську традицію. Дослідження показує, що ісихазм в Україні сприяв міжкультурному діалогу, збагачуючи як місцеву, так і світову релігійну думку через обмін ідеями та практиками. Вивчення антропології ісихазму має велике значення для розуміння сучасних духовних пошуків та їхнього коріння в історичному контексті, що може допомогти у формуванні нових шляхів для пошуку сенсу життя та ідентичності. Необхідно продовжувати вивчати вплив ісихазму на сучасні культурні та релігійні процеси, що сприятиме глибшому розумінню духовності в сучасному світі.

Ключові слова: антропологія ісихазму; духовні цінності; Середньовічна Україна; обоження; філософсько-релігійна думка; містичний досвід

Received: 03.01.2025

Accepted: 13.06.2025