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INITIATION AND METHOD OF HESYCHASM

[...] Men who have lived shortly before us and who bore witness to and manifested the power of the Holy Spirit, have transmitted it all to us verbally. Such were Theoleptos¹, the much revered head of the Church of Philadelphia, who legitimately bears his name and was indeed a true theologian and a sure seer of the truth of the mysteries of God and who, from his church, as from a lamp, shed light for all the world. There was Athanasius, who graced the patriarchal see for many years and whose relics were glorified by God; there was Nilus who came from Italy, the follower of the great Nilus; Seliotes and Elias who were in no way second to him; Gabriel and Athanasius who were granted the gift of prophecy. All these and many others who lived before them, with them and after them, encourage and exhort those who will pursue to maintain this tradition, despite the fact that new teachers² of Hesychasm, who know nothing about it and teach not from experience but from their own theories, or rather prattle about it, strive to refute and depreciate it, with no kind of profit for their listeners. But we have talked personally with some of these saints and had them as our masters.³

We begin this short chapter on Hesychasm with the above quotation in order to confute the opinion of those who believe that this is nothing but a mere expression of Mysticism. It is in fact evident that Hesychasm is the esoterism of the Orthodox Church, addressed to an elite and distinct from the exterior religion of the faithful.

The Scripture presents an aspect to most people, even if they think they understand its meaning, and another to the person who has dedicated himself to continuous prayer⁴, that keeps the thought of God always within himself, as if it were his own breath.⁵

The Mystical interpretation is to negate the genuinely initiatic nature of Hesychasm, the existence of a master-to-disciple transmission, and consequently the existence of a method based on acquired notions that must be put into practice by following rigorously the injunctions of the master⁶. Indeed, Saint Gregory Palamas, the highest theologian of Hesychasm, affirmed in consonance with Saint Gregory of Nyssa⁷ that the chain of masters went back to Moses:

¹ Theoleptos (permeated with God), bishop of Philadelphia (~ 1282-1328) was the master who conferred the Hesychast initiation on Saint Gregory Palamas: "The great Theoleptos, true splendour of Philadelphia, imparted these teachings to Gregory together with other masters, and ascended and descended from that sacred *Hesykia* and cohabitation on the mount of holiness, that is the holy helm of the Church, and, as a father and spiritual guide, exhibited all the extraordinary goods that came to him from the heavenly Fathers. After having excellently initiated him also into sacred temperance and intellectual prayer, he admirably inspired Gregory also in the practice while still living in the midst of the noises of the world." Philotheus Konkinos, "Encomiastic discourse on the life of our father among the saints, Gregory Palamas", in Gregory Palamas, *Atto e Luce divina*, Ettore Perrella (ed.), Milan, Bompiani, 2003, p. 1365. We apologize for the pedantic and lengthy translation made by the editor of this book who makes so difficult the reading of texts of such great importance.

² Appearing in the text as *didaskaloi*, masters. However, the terms *patér* (father) and *géros* (elder) are more commonly in use (*staretz*, in Russian).

³ Gregory Palamas, *Atto e Luce divina*, cit., p. 357.

⁴ Based on Jesus's injunction "When you pray, enter your room, and when you close the door, pray." *Gospel of Saint Matthew*, VI.6.

⁵ Saint Peter of Damascus in *Philokalia - The Complete Text*, G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, Kallistos Ware (tr. & Ed.), Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Revised edition (January 1, 1983), III vol. p. 960. The *Philokalia*, published in Venice in 1782 by Nikodimos Agioritis and Macarius of Corinth, is a compendium of the homonymous ancient collection by Origen, in which the most important writings of Hesychasm produced from the 4th to the 15th century were compiled together. It is the richest source on this subject.

⁶ The position of the Catholic Church is quite understandable. Having lost all initiation, she has also forgotten what it is, comforting herself with sporadic phenomena of spontaneous mysticism. On the other hand, the same incomprehension and disinterest from Western people and circles in the search for a traditional solution to their own existence remain unjustified.

⁷ Gregorio di Nissa, *La vita di Mosè*, Manlio Simonetti (ed. by), Milan, A. Mondadori Ed., 1984, *passim*.





The doctrines, today commonly known and recognized by all and publicly preached, existed as mysteries¹ of the law given by Moses.²

The continuity of the chain of masters from Moses is of great importance since it implies that not only does the initiatic transmission (*parádosis*) of Hesychasm descends from Jesus as founder of Christianity, but from the very Essenes³. There is no doubt that in the Hesychasm of the origins, from as back as Origen and Clement of Alexandria, had already merged a Neoplatonic current. However, Saint Gregory Palamas affirms that in his time such current had already degenerated into Messalianism, a gnostic sect that rejected the practice of any formal religion and engaged exclusively in the invocation of the hearth⁴. He, therefore, highlighted the difference between the regular Hesychasm from such form of theurgic-Gnostic degeneration⁵.

The prevailing doctrine of Hesychasm can be outlined in the following way: two levels must be distinguished in the notion of God. The highest level corresponds to the divine Essence, one and trine. The Essence can be conceived and described in an apophatic way, so as to remove any limitations from it. The Essence is therefore in-finite, in-describable, in-effable, un-knowable and, therefore, in-visible. Nevertheless, God can be known and seen as uncreated Light. This uncreated Light is the “site” of divine acts. By “divine acts” we do not mean the mutable actions in a temporal sense, but the thoughts, volitions and attributes of God that remain uncreated as such. The initiate who has reached the *hesykía*, that is peace and inner immutability, can see the divine light and “become one” with it. Therefore, it is said to be:

natural ray without the principle of deity, as a light of deity, glow of deity, unlimited diffusion of divine magnificence, deity of God, immaterial light, eternal, incomparable, uncreated [...] Direct witnesses, initiators and followers of truthful light do not cease, over the centuries, to formulate these expressions and other similar ones; those who have been initiated to celebrate it in such way, starting from the initiatory union with it.⁶

Hesykía is, therefore, the state of bliss (sskrt. *ānandin* or *śānta sthāna*) deriving from the union (*samādhi*) of the initiate with the divine, which is the goal of the ways of knowledge of the non-Supreme (*aparabrahma vidyā*).

The Hesychasts kept the maximum discretion about their ritual and method, discretion that intensified after the controversy caused by Barlaam of Calabria concerning the contemplation on the navel.

The Hesychast initiation (*teleté*), although mainly conferred on monks, is not infrequent among lay people who have taken on a lifestyle of inner renunciation. It is mainly in Russia that secular Hesychasts have taken on the habit of the pilgrim, traveling from monastery to monastery and from hermitage to hermitage⁷. Provided the aspirants are sincere, qualified and yearning for entering the

¹ Quite appropriately, the curator and translator of the book added to a note that: “The word ‘mystery’, here, as anywhere else in Palamas, must be understood in an initiatic sense.” Gregorio Palamas, *Atto e Luce divina*, cit., p. 357, n. 1. We would like to add that all the derivatives of the verb μύω (mýō, to remain silent) also refer to the initiatory domain in the language of Hesychasm, being the Latin concept of ‘mysticism’ completely foreign in this tradition.

² Gregorio Palamas, *Dal Sovraessenziale all’Essenza*, Ettore Perrella (ed. by), Milano, Bompiani, 2005, p. 1249.

³ According to the authoritative opinion of Benamozegh, the initiatory organization of the Essenes was transmitted to the Jewish tradition by Jetro, the “pagan” father-in-law of Moses. Elia Benamozegh, *Gli Esseni e la Cabbala*, Milano, Armenia Ed., 1979, pp. 69-78.

⁴ It is well known that in religious traditions, exoteric practices remain mandatory even for those who have passed into the initiatory domain. This does not happen in other traditions, such as, for example, in the Far East where those who obtain a Taoist initiation are freed from any Confucian obligation.

⁵ In the Latin Catholic Church had great doctrinal importance the confluence of the two pre-Christian currents of the Roman Pythagoreanism and the Celtic druidism, which are completely absent in the Byzantine side of the Church.

⁶ Gregorio Palamas, *Dal Sovraessenziale all’Essenza*, cit., pp. 317-319.

⁷ In Russia, the first documented Hesychast was the master of Saint Theodosius (? -1074). G. P. Fedotov (ed. by), *The Way of*





divine mysteries,

“[...] we have the duty to equally teach this practice non only to those who have renounce worldly life and are monks, but to everyone, men, women, youngster, wise and ignorant, and we must guide them with every care towards this end.”¹

The rite of initiation takes place through the passage of sanctifying grace by means of a “blessing” (*euké*),

[...] whose final goal is our initiation into the hidden mysteries of God and our being filled with ineffable wisdom through union with the Holy Spirit, so that each becomes a wise theologian (knower of God) in the great Church of God, illuminating others on the inner meaning of theology.²

This happens through the imposition of the hands (*epí thésis*) of the master on the head of the disciple in imitation of the gesture with which Jesus, and the Therapeuts before him, healed the ill³. After the initiation, the master transmits the initial prayer, *Kýrie Eléison, Chríste Eléison* (Lord forgive me, Christ forgive me)⁴. This prayer, spoken aloud or even shouted, has the function of opening the mind to the truths to which the Hesychast approaches, eliminating obstacles and obtaining the forgiveness of faults⁵. Later, the master will transmit ever shorter prayers, such as “remember me”⁶. In due course, the invocation (sskrt. *mantra*) of a single word (*monolexía*) is taught, a name attributable to Jesus (*Iesús*) - founder of oral tradition - or directly to the Lord (*Abba*⁷, i.e. father), to be repeated continuously. Finally, the Hesychast will have access to the higher mantras, such as *Elí Elí*⁸, whose meaning escapes any plausible translation from both Hebrew and Aramaic. As the disciple advances on the initiatory path, the pronunciation becomes more subdued, then whispered, until it becomes a silent invocation, entirely mental. With time, the invocation will flow automatically, continuously, driven not by the will, but by the natural pulsation of the heart. What is important is to empty the mind of thoughts:

“Please, master, teach me how prayer clears the spirit of every thought” The master replied: “Thoughts are concepts of objects. Among these, some turn to the senses, others to the spirit. The spirit that lingers between them turns these thoughts around. But the grace of prayer unites God with the spirit. By uniting it with God, it separates it from all thoughts. Thus, the spirit becomes simple, connatural and similar to God”.⁹

After the initiation, the Hesychast must choose a secluded place and seek isolation, a hermitage cell, a cave, a hut far from human settlements. He then arranges a stool a span high to sit on, his torso bent

Way of Pilgrim, Mineola, New York, Dover Pbls., 2003, pp. 15-49.

¹ Filoteo Konkinos, “Discorso encomiastico sulla vita del padre nostro tra i santi Gregorio Palamas”. (in Gregorio Palamas, *Atto e Luce divina*, cit. p. 1382).

² Nikitas Stíthatos, *Philokalia*, III vol., cit., p. 1338.

³ See Nuccio d’Anna, *La disciplina del silenzio*, Rimini, Il Cerchio, 1995, p. 182.

⁴ It is the modified verse of “Lord, Jesus son of David (meaning Christ, Messiah), have mercy on me, a sinner” pronounced by the blind Bar-Timaeus (meaning ‘son of the honoured’). Thus, crying out loud, he obtained healing (Gospel of Saint Mark, X. 47-48). Similarly, the initiate, who is like a blind man, can regain his sight. These initial supplications to be pronounced in the beginning are indeed only prayers, requests (sskrt. *yācñā*) addressed to the Lord in order to be heard. Differently, the repetition of a name is more properly defined as an invocation (sskrt. *mantra*).

⁵ It corresponds to the *yama* phase and the pronunciation of the *mantra* “*Oṃ Gaṇ Gaṇapataye Namaḥ*” of the yogic and tantric schools of India and to the repetition of the Sufic formula *astarghfīru-Llah*.

⁶ “*Iesú thymésu me*”. Sentence pronounced by the Penitent Thief. *Gospel of Saint Luke*, XXIII, 42.

⁷ *Gospel of Saint Mark*, XIV.36; Saint Paul, *Epistle to the Romans*, VIII, 15.

⁸ *Psalms*, XXII.2; *Gospel of Saint Matthew*, XXVII.46; *Gospel of Saint Mark*, XV.34 (In this last Gospel the invocation appears in the form “*Elói Elói*”). All exegetes agree in recognizing in this repeated word the name *El*, God in Hebrew. However, no one has succeeded in giving an exact translation of *Elí* or *Elói*, nor of establishing exactly in what Semitic language was uttered by the Christ. It seems more likely that this may be a seminal invocation (sskrt. *bīja mantra*).

⁹ Maximus the Confessor in *Petite Philocalie de la prière du coeur*, Paris, éd. Cahiers du Sud, 1953, pp. 118-119. This last book contains an essential anthology from the original *Philokalia*, with some more recent additions.





forward, his head between his knees, his chin pressed against his chest. The repetition of the invocation, which the mind beats to the cardiac rhythm, is directed towards the heart. The sight must remain focused on the navel while the initiate inhales, together with the air, the intellectual inspirations coming from the Spirit of God.

A heart that has been completely emptied of mental images gives birth to divine, mysterious intellections that sport within it like fish and dolphins in a calm sea. The sea is fanned by a soft wind, the heart's depth by the Holy Spirit. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: "Abba, Father" (Saint Paul, Epistle to the Galatians, IV.6).¹

Since the chin resting on the chest oppresses the larynx, the inhaled air overheats and ignites a heat source in the chest. This fire, which is not the ordinary one of digestion, has the capacity to burn the imperfections due to original sin.

And it is not out of place to encourage novices to look after themselves first and to send their intellect into the body thanks to inspiration². [...] To those who have recently devoted themselves to this concentration, the intellect breaks out immediately after being aspirated. We must, therefore, bring it back immediately. Those who have not yet exercised sufficiently do not know that the intellect is the most difficult and most mobile thing to control. For this reason, some advise to pay attention to the breath in its continuous exhalation and inhalation, holding it for a short time. In this way, while they pay attention to the breath, they also control the intellect. With the help of God, they progressively learn to prevent their intellect from dispersing towards the worldly things that surround us. Thus, it is indeed possible to merge with God in one substance, without, however, "confusing with Him."³

It is as if the breathing of the Hesychast reproduces in a reverse sense the creative activity of God. By exhaling, God creates the world, by inhaling he reabsorbs it and dissolves it. Similarly, but inversely, while breathing in, the Hesychast takes the Lord into himself, whereas, while exhaling, he expels the individual limitations. The moment of union (sskrt. *Samādhi*) between divine and human occurs in the pause between the inhalation and expulsion of the air⁴. To make this experience more effective and prolonged, the initiate must tighten the throat even more, pressing his "beard" on the chest. This technique is very similar to that used in *Yoga*, known as *jālandhara bhandha*, which consists in the occlusion of the network of subtle channels (*nāḍī*), in particular the two main ones, *iḍā* and *piṅgalā*, thus temporarily arresting the motor agitation of the body.

Contracting the throat and pressing the chin firmly against the chest: this binding [bhandha], called jālandhara, removes senility and death [leads to immortality].

When the jālandhara bhandha is stabilized, characterized by the occlusion of the larynx, the drink of immortality⁵ no longer falls into the fire and the element of air is no longer agitated.

With the contraction of the throat it is possible to immobilize energetically the two nāḍīs.⁶

¹ Saint Hesychius the Priest, in *Philokalia*, III vol., *cit.*, p. 206.

² Reference to the continuous prayer breathing method: the first half of the prayer is pronounced while breathing in; a short pause follows, and with the expiration the invocation is concluded. [Note in the quote]

³ Gregorio Palamas, *Atto e Luce divina*, *cit.*, pp. 345-347.

⁴ See Nuccio d'Anna, *La disciplina del silenzio*, *cit.*, p. 177.

⁵ *Pīyūṣa* o *amṛta*, a drink of immortality contained in the lunar cup of the skull. In ordinary man it flows through the *nāḍīs* and descends to the gastric fire where it is destroyed. For this reason, the profane, who does not know he possesses this potential in himself, squanders his *pīyūṣa* without using it to become immortal.

⁶ *Haṭhayoga Pradīpikā*, III. 70; 72-73. Needless to add here all the fanciful hypotheses that have been advanced on possible influences of other initiatic ways on Hesychasm. Some have seen you an influence from the Buddhist or *hindū* Yoga. Others have suggested a derivation from the practices of breath control used in some *ṭuruq* of the Islamic *tasawwuf* or even in Taoism, although neither of these initiatory ways know the technique of the voluntary laryngeal occlusion. To the moderns, who at most recognize their existence only to corporeal level, it always seems far-fetched that this type of knowledge arises





As the Hesychast devotes himself to breath control, he points his eyes to the navel, to prevent the aspirated intellectual power from being dispersed downwards¹.

*And considering that the concupiscent soul is at the centre of the belly in the navel, as sin exercises there its power, we shall therefore establish there the control of the intellect, which fights against the concupiscent soul with the intellectual prayer as weapon. In this way the demon, driven out by the bath of regeneration, will never return to dwell in the womb with the other seven evil spirits [the seven deadly sins], and thus preventing the situation [of the disciple] from returning worse than before.*²

This proves Barlaam's slander utterly wrong, namely the false accusation that the Hesychasts claimed that God resided in his navel. In reality, the abdomen is considered to be the seat of the passionate soul, where attractions for lust, gluttony and every sort of vice that drives us to enjoy futile and transient pleasures are produced. The navel, which is the subtle centre that presides over these lower components of individuality, must be kept under watchful observation. It is interesting to note that in India the most intellectual tantric ways, such as *Śrī Vidyā*, teach to avoid meditating on the lower subtle centres, those below the navel, considering them dangerous for their demonic nature (*āśura bhāvam*)³.

The use of the most noble subtle centres is therefore predominant in the method of Hesychasm. The first to be used in this method (sskrt. *prakriyā*) is the frontal centre, which is located between the root of the nose and the eyebrows. It is the seat of intellect and volition (sskrt. *buddhi*). Although this is the highest subtle component of the individual, the intellect is also extremely unstable and dispersed. This is due to its continuous exercise in investigating the external world and deciding how to react to its incessant stimuli. It is, therefore, the tool to investigate the relations between the external and the internal world. To dominate the intellect and guide it back to the unification of its thoughts is required a strong effort of concentration. Once achieved the control over this subtle centre by means of purifying prayers, from here it will be necessary to make use of the invocation of the name sustained by the control of the breath, directing it towards the heart through the following two other subtle centres.

The second subtle centre is located in the throat, between the root of the tongue and the mouth of the larynx. The thoughts produced by the intellect that descend to this centre are transformed into words. The mental source of emotions is situated in this centre, and it is here that the less reflective thought typical of the common man takes shape. Putting this centre under control is more difficult and is only possible with the help of the intellect already tamed.

The third centre is the one located on the upper part of the chest, where the chin applies pressure during the invocation. It is the centre of silence and solitude, where it is possible to restrain the incessant activity of the mind. Here, thoughts and feelings find a pause in their activities, tending to unify them (sskrt. *ekāgratā*).

The fourth centre corresponds to the vertex of the heart. Here, thoughts, emotions and sensations

autonomously, due to the fact that the nature of the subtle components of the human being is objectively such. Therefore, anyone with access to this knowledge can effectively experiment the tools and techniques to control their own *liṅga śarīra*.

¹ In other words, one must observe that the air inspired, charged with intellectual energies, after having descended into the heart, should not be there but conveyed even lower down into the abdomen. From this last seat of the animalistic passions and instincts, which has its centre of control in the navel, the air with its unused intellectual energies could fall into that vital breath that the Yoga defines *apāna*, to then be expelled from the body together with the waste. See D.K. Aśvāmītra <https://www.vedavyasamandala.com/alcune-note-riguardanti-il-pra-a>.

² Gregorio Palamas, *Atto e Luce divina*, cit., pp. 349.

³ In fact, *Śrī Vidyā* begins the initiatory path from the heart (*hṛdaya cakra*) avoiding the development of the lower subtle centres. On the contrary, the tantric ways of the left hand (*Vāmācāra mārga*), which makes extensive use of the method of *Kuṇḍalinī yoga*, indulge in those risky practices. Even the most intellectual ways of the *tasawwuf*, such as the *Naqshabandiyya tariqa*, begin the way from the subtle centre of the heart (*latīfatul qalbi*), neglecting all the *latā'if* located in the lower part of the body.



reach the state of perfect peace (*hesykía*). In this state of oneness nothing foreign can be conceived. Time is transformed into the experience of the present moment. It is in this moment that one comes into contact with the personal God and every activity of the intellect and mind withdraws (sskrt. *samādhi*), except for the certainty of experiencing the dazzling divine light. It is a state that ceases only when the grace of the Holy Spirit suspends its influence¹. It is during this state that the Hesychasts meet God by visualizing Him in their hearts. As in all the ways of knowledge of the non-Supreme, also in Hesychasm the final goal is fully achieved only after the death of the body:

*With your breathing combine watchfulness and the name of Jesus, or humility and the unremitting study of death. Both may confer great blessing.*²

*Vaulting over all that lies between ourselves and death, we should always visualize it, and even the very bed on which we shall breathe our last, and everything else connected with it.*³

The visualization of the Lord, which is fully achieved only after death, is distinguished in two levels. In the first level the beholder, who is called *Christós* (Messiah, anointed King), “sees” God as something other from himself. It is in effect the conclusion of a royal initiatory path. In the second level, on the other hand, the visualization takes place from the “inside” of God, in a state of fusion with distinction. The *mýstes* participates unitarily in the nature of the Lord, with the exception of some divine characteristics from which he is excluded, such as that of creating and destroying the world. This supreme level is called *theósis*, deification.

[...] *through them [means] you may participate in the divine nature.*⁴

*Theosis [contemplation] is becoming by grace what God is by nature.*⁵

Today, this initiatory path of the Orthodox Church does emerge unscathed from criticism and falsifications. The Catholic Church, which beginning with the reform of Latin Catholicism had already begun to lose its initiatory priestly ways transmitted through the Benedictine monastic order⁶, as early as the 11th century considered Hesychasm a “pagan” heritage. No one knows on what grounds this assumption is actually based. Without hesitation, however, she welcomed with visible relief the calumnies promoted by Barlaam of Calabria, maintaining to this day an attitude of contempt. However, a fascinating pamphlet, appeared in Russia in 1881 and soon translated into various Western European languages with the title “*The Tales of a Russian Pilgrim*”⁷, began to have a favourable diffusion, particularly among Catholic lay people. The book then became fashionable after the catastrophic conclusion of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, on the wave of the uncritical ecumenism promoted by the new Catholic church. The ‘68 rebellion and the worldwide explosion of *New Age* have consecrated this short text as a must of globalist culture, completely distorting its meaning. The Jesuit priest Gian Vittorio Cappelletto, following these unconscious impulses and realizing the absence of esotericism in the Catholic church, decided to set right this deficiency by bringing in the Hesychasm with the silent complicity of the Vatican. However, instead of reaching out to Orthodox circles to receive the regular transmission of the initiation,

¹ Ieromnaco Anthony Bloom [monk and priest Andrei Borisovich ‘Bloom’], *L’Esicasmò Yoga cristiano, I centri sottili dell’essere umano e la Preghiera segreta nella tradizione del Monte Athos*, Milano, Ekatos, 2019, (I éd., Paris, Les Cahiers du Sud, 1953, pp. 25-49. This book, especially in its first part, is an invaluable guide to study the practice of the method of Hesychasm.

² Saint Hesychios the Priest, *Philokalia*, III vol., *cit.*, p. 206.

³ Saint Hesychios the Priest, *Philokalia*, III vol., *cit.*, p. 193.

⁴ *2nd Epistle of Saint Peter*, I.4.

⁵ Saint Athanasius of Alexandria, *De incarnatione*, I.

⁶ See on this site: Petrus Simonet de Maisonneuve, <https://www.vedavyasamandala.com/35-l-apogeo-dell-impero-e-la-riform>; <https://www.vedavyasamandala.com/36-il-conflitto-tra-impero-e-papato> and <https://www.vedavyasamandala.com/37-cattolicesimo-e-ortodossia-la-sp>.

⁷ Anonimo, *I racconti di un pellegrino russo*, Bologna, La Cittadella, 1970.





indulging in the syncretism of the “interreligious dialogue”, he accepted the hasty opinion that Hesychasm was a method of Indian Tantric origin. In 1977 Cappelletto became a disciple of the deviated neo-*hindū* current known as *Ānanda mārga*. After this experience, he founded the community of “*Ricostruttori di Preghiera*”(reconstructors of prayer), self-proclaimed “*Catholic Hesychasts*” who pronounce mantras of Tantrism and perform pseudo *hindū* rituals, to the great satisfaction of the pontifical hierarchies.

Leaving aside these grotesque attempts, which clearly damage both the authentic *Hindū* and Orthodox traditions and that can be attributed only to the cadaverous spasms of the Catholic Church, we will conclude with the following observation. The lack of interest or even the “conspiracy of silence” surrounding Hesychasm from professed traditional circles appears highly suspicious. In fact, Orthodox Hesychasm represents the most natural, nearest and least traumatic solution for those esoterists born in the Catholic world who seek an authentic initiatory connection¹. In this case there would not be the obstacle of assuming habits, customs and mentalities that are secularly different and often in contrast with one’s own roots, which characterizes the conversion to another religion; nor, much less, would be felt the separation from one’s own roots caused by the mental acceptance and the putting into practice of far-off theologies, dogmas, rituals and beliefs. Certainly, the assumption of a traditional non-Christian form is still possible for anyone, as long as the seeker is particularly inclined by nature and duly qualified intellectually.

¹ Although also Orthodoxy is in decline due to the cyclical reasons that everyone knows, in Greece, especially in monastic circles, Hesychasm is not uncommon. Unfortunately, Greek ecclesiastical circles have been somewhat contaminated by politics and the “interreligious dialogue” with Catholics and Protestants. In several countries of the former Soviet bloc in contact with the Greek clergy, Orthodoxy is suffering a crisis of particularistic politics, certainly not positive. On the contrary, however, both in Russia and Serbia the collapse of the communist regimes has coincided with the resumption of an unexpected religious revival, with positive reflections at the monastic and secular Hesychasm. In Romania, the Hesychasm, up until then in full retraction, had a notable recovery in 1943 thanks to the escape from the USSR of the Russian *staretz* Father Ioan of Optina Pustyn’. At the end of World War II, the Romanian communist regime “returned” Father Ioan to the Soviets, who interned him in a Siberian Gulag where he died soon after. Unfortunately, the initiatory transmission line that he had left in Romania was quickly polluted by a “perennialism” that sympathizes even with the “dialogue between religions” that arose with the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (Marco Toti, “Religious Morphology, Hermeneutics and Initiation in Andrei Scrima’s *Il Padre Spirituale* (The Spiritual Father)”, *ARIES*, 11-1, 2011, pp. 77-97). Still in Romania, the presence of a very closed “traditional” circle - linked to the dark events of the bygone Maglavit and with tentacles in today’s Italian and French circles - is diverting the revived spontaneous interest towards the Orthodox tradition towards the suspicious direction of a “Dacia hyperborea” and in continuity with the “mission” of Joan of Arc.

