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**Pagan Otherness in the Christian Church
Iconography of Ancient Philosophers and Intellectuals in Russia
and the Balkans**

The Russian Orthodox iconography of ancient philosophers and thinkers has long attracted Western and Russian researchers. Greek and Roman philosophers depicted in Russian churches and in other visual sources have almost nothing in common with real historical philosophers: their images were based on Byzantine Apocrypha, in which philosophers were presented as righteous pagans, proclaiming the coming of Christ long before his birth. The author introduces for the first time three new sources, two of which – tempera paintings from the 18th century with Hermes and Aphrodite, and frescoes from the 17th century carved from the walls of the Moscow Novospassky monastery with images of Aristotle, Solon, Plutarch, and Anacharsis – are kept in the State Historical Museum in Moscow, and another illustrated 17th-century collection of aphorisms of the Hellenic sages named *Melissa*, is in the collections of the Russian National Library in St Petersburg. The author establishes a typology of all the ancient philosophers (as they were called in sources) found in Russian Orthodox iconography, dividing them into four groups: historical philosophers, historical intellectuals, sibyls, and gods. Thereafter, the text analyses the meaning of visual markers of Otherness that are present in all samples of the studied array of iconography. It is assumed that the meaning of such visual markers was that they showed the viewer the Hellenic sages as the Other. Ancient philosophers and intellectuals were presented as pagans from the East, since it was necessary to visually separate them from the real saints recognized by the Orthodox Church. Even though all of them were credited with prophecies about the rise of Christianity, the primary role of the above attributes was the visual differentiation of pagan philosophers from Orthodox saints.