leaves the world much reduced and diminished. The Church in Russia, among others, has not escaped this tendency: "Sadly, there have... been absolute rejections of any contact whatsoever with 'heretics,' namely, any Christians outside one's own ecclesial borders, canonical or not." (p. 262) In Plekon's telling, these men and women reveal the immensity of God's love, and through their example we might be enabled better to live within that universality.

Living Icons moves forward by telling and retelling the individual stories, by crossing and re-crossing the terrain of this modern Orthodox witness. Overall, the effect is profound and inspirational, although at times the telling seems unnecessarily repetitive, obscuring through excessive layering the bright and sharp images of these "icons."

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Michael Wachtel. The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Poetry. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xi, 166 pp. $55.00 (cloth); $22.00 (paper).

Michael Wachtel's new book is in many ways a complement to his The Development of Russian Verse (Cambridge University Press, 1998) in that it provides many more incisive and rich brief readings of a great variety of Russian lyric masterpieces, both famous and some probably under-appreciated. My only quibble is that the volume is not so much an introduction as it is a fully satisfying and often quite challenging advanced survey of Russia's verse heritage with all the virtues of the earlier study. Rather than make general statements about a great mass of lyrics, Wachtel opts to examine closely a limited but highly representative selection of poems that often turn out to be intertextually linked. In almost every case the poem is cited in full, with a literal prose translation, followed by a page or two of painstaking and always meaningful commentary. A particularly satisfying quality is Wachtel's ability to find the lyric progeny for many poems, creating in effect conversations between poets.

Wachtel structures his Introduction in two halves. The first three chapters are devoted to concepts such as versification, language, and traditions. The last five cover several poetic genres or themes. Only a thumbnail, albeit very insightful, history is provided. Wachtel briefly but effectively introduces the major elements of verse, but unlike, for example, Boris Unbegaun (Russian Versification, Oxford University Press), Wachtel goes on to interpret each of the poems offered for illustration, the better to demonstrate how structure drives thought, a major issue of his Development. As a result, his Introduction provides valuable commentaries on many classic poems. As for general issues, perhaps Wachtel, like others, does not resolve the issue of whether single syllable pronouns are truly stressed, but his discussion of poetic language, for example, is always lucid. Particularly distinguished is his comparison of passages that have similar contents, but are set apart by their unique sound patterns and/or rhetorical devices. His evidently broad and extremely fine knowledge of Russian poetry allows him to develop many lines of intertextuality, a concept he gradually expands from allusion to citation to topoi and genre. His carefully chosen comparisons offer, in them-
selves, a wealth of new perspectives. At the same time he continually strikes a judicious balance between tradition and individual innovation.

The second part of the volume covers matters of interpretation as derived from various genres. It might appear that Wachtel uses this volume to cover verse genres he did not have space for in his earlier book, but this leads in toto to fuller coverage of Russian poetry. Throughout, Wachtel exhibits a gratifying interpretive flexibility, such as when he traces the “word-signals” of odes, then elegies in some unexpected directions, such as how the “beautiful disorder” of bellicose panegyrics like Lomonosov’s led to the domesticity of Derzhavin’s “Фелица,” and this in turn to light elegies by Batiushkov and Pushkin, finally to Mandel’shtam’s sleepless meditation on the Classical tradition underlying Western culture in “Бессонница. Гомер. Тугие паруса.” Of special interest is his detailed discussion of how Zhukovsky, one of the first translators, then a writer of ballads, adapted a folk heritage largely via Sir Walter Scott. As representatives of the ballad, Wachtel argues at some length, Lermontov’s “Ангел” and “Русалка” are linked by more than their common authorship and a number of shared features; both lacking narrative interest, they constitute a new genre, that of the philosophical ballad, and convey a mutually consistent perspective highly influential for subsequent poets. Notably “Русалка” presages Gippius’ “Баллада,” but this hardly prevents the latter from introducing new variations on the genre as well as the typical mermaid tale. Indeed, Wachtel suggests that Gippius inverted the traditional form, especially its characteristic gender relationships, as a means of adapting it to modern and possibly very personal ends.

One might question whether love poetry is as much a genre as it is a universal theme bounded by some expectations. Wachtel justifies opposing interpretations of Pushkin’s “Я вас любил,” then shows how Akhmatova’s “Я не любви твоей прошу” plays with these expectations, yielding greater psychological complexity. This is followed by yet more of the same in Tsvetaeva’s “Попытка ревности.” Wachtel overcomes a similar problem of generic indeterminateness/thematic expectations in nature poetry by emphasizing the role of the observer, whom he sees as a filtering consciousness, in Fet’s “Буря на море вечером,” saying “a depiction of the natural world is ultimately a landscape of the mind.” (p. 113) He contrasts Lermontov’s assertive self-personification of “Парус” with the passivity of Tiutchev’s “Есть в осени первоначальной,” noting that the latter is itself paradoxical and contradictory. Of special interest is Wachtel’s revealing the many surprises of Pasternak’s “Гроза моментальная навек,” which amount to “mental fireworks within the consciousness of the observer.” (p. 125)

In the final chapter Wachtel crafts what seems to be a new or at least less recognized genre, patriotic verse, going well beyond propagandistic odes. He includes in this category poems like Lermontov’s “Родина” which bypass clichés for a more objective view of the natural and folk resources of Russia, accepting the bad along with the good. In this sense he regards poems like Tiutchev’s “Эти бедные селенья” and Viacheslav Ivanov’s “Озёры” as extensions of nature poetry. Wachtel argues that poets such as Blok, Maiakovsky and Timur Kibirov incorporate this foregoing tradition, suggesting that “great poetry has a way of overcoming even its own subject matter.” (pp. 144-45) Wachtel concludes that, despite the inevitable fluidity of poetry, “genre remains an in-