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Woronzoff-Dashkoff, A. "Dashkova: A Life of Influence and Exile." Transactions Vol. 97, pt. 3. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2008. xxii + 331 pp. \$29.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-87169-973-2.

She married a real Prince, lived in a castle, had a godmother more powerful than any fairy and yet did not live happily every after. In her "Memoirs," Ekaterina Dashkova (1743-1810) recognized the fairy-tale quality of her life: "I had the impression of being an unhappy princess over whom a wicked wizard had cast an age-long spell" (p. 242). In "Dashkova: A Life of Influence and Exile," Alexander Woronzoff-Dashkoff assesses his most famous ancestress' public and private life. Yet, in his "Epilogue," he describes a heartbreaking trip to Dashkova's estate in the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Seeing her beloved Troitske in ruins led him to conclude that "any notion of the actual recovery of Dashkova's sacred space dissolved in the face of the violated terrain where her church once stood, its destruction reinforcing the notion of a lost home, once a family shrine, that for me now depended completely on textual reconstruction" (p. 283). Demonstrating an encyclopedic knowledge of eighteenth-century primary sources, politics, families, and personal relationships, Woronzoff-Dashkoff accomplishes both his scholarly and personal purposes by vividly recreating Dashkova's life. He argues that she succeeded at doing man's work in a man's world by assuming a series of disguises and donning convincing masks.

Although Dashkova was provided with every luxury by her uncle, Chancellor Mikhail Vorontsov, the absence of close relationships with her parents and siblings created a sense of exile. The most significant even in her early life was the coup that brought Catherine II to the throne. Woronzoff-Dashkoff emphasizes Dashkova's idealism, commitment to Enlightenment principles, and devotion to Catherine II as motivation for her involvement. He argues that Dashkova played an important role by recruiting conspirators and providing her salon as a meeting place. However, her enthusiastic participation alienated not only her family but Catherine II as well, leading to a long period of actual exclusion from court life. In the 1760s, Dashkova also had to deal with the untimely deaths of an infant son, her husband, and close female friends. The author completely rejects the prevailing image of Dashkova as a miser. She responded to her hardships by becoming a frugal and efficient manager of her estates and children. However, he argues that "Dashkova too often expressed an almost obsessive love for her children through dominating and manipulative behavior. The program of study she introduced neglected outdoor physical activity and was so mentally rigorous that it undermined the children's health" (p. 93).

In 1768 she secured permission to travel abroad. Financial constraints required her to travel incognito. "Moreover, concealment was now a way of life for Dashkova as she cloaked her feelings, withdrew from court, and never expressed her disillusionment openly. Rather, she created masks for unrecognized or unarticulated anger" (p. 96). Although she saw the major sites and met the elite, she was not able to improve her relationship with Catherine. Therefore, Dashkova went to England to educate her son, ignoring the needs of her daughter whom she forced into a loveless marriage.

Upon her return to Russia, Dashkova entered her period of greatest influence. Woronzoff-Dashkoff argues that "Catherine propelled Dashkova to the center of Russia's cultural and intellectual life as head of two academies where from 1783 to 1794 she was to have a profound influence on the developments of education, science, and scholarship in Russia" (p. 156). He admits that she could be "dictatorial ... inflexible, overbearing and biased" (p. 175). However, the author describes her as an administrator that would fulfill most modern faculty members' dreams. "One of her early goals was to free the academicians from excessive committee work and the burden of bureaucratic and administrative chores. She also set out to relieve scholars of outside interference and to foster a climate of research and scholarship" (p. 168).

Dashkova's last years were characterized by estrangement and exile. She angered Catherine and alienated her children. Although she supported Paul's claim to the throne, he was so angered by her betrayal that he briefly exiled Dashkova. She never returned to court. She spent her last decade on her estate near Moscow. Her isolation was relieved by the long visit of the Wilmot sisters. At their urging, she organized her papers and wrote her autobiography. However, Woronzoff-Dashkoff concludes that "the life of a woman of great intellect and prominence ended in personal tragedy because, despite her own advanced and liberal education, she could not meet and come to terms with her daughter's special needs" (p. 223). --**Sherri Thompson Raney, Oklahoma Baptist University**