



Juliana Dresvina, ed. *Thanks for Typing: Remembering Forgotten Women in History*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. 312 pp. \$29.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-350-15005-8.

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Those of us who were on Twitter back in 2017 probably remember the hashtag #ThanksForTyping that went viral, particularly among the academic set. It was started by Bruce Holsinger as a series of screenshots of acknowledgements pages from various books, which all had in common some platitude thanking the author's wife or female relative for typing their manuscript (or doing other crucial labors such as translation, editing, or even research and writing of entire chapters). The hashtag inspired a 2019 conference at Oxford University which resulted in the publication of this edited volume. In all, twenty contributed chapters in this book showcase the contributions, strategies, and lives of women on the lower end of a labor power dynamic with a more famous male figure.

Chapters are grouped by categorizing the role or specialty of the woman in question. These include "Secretaries and Editors," "Politicians and Activists," "Artists and Painters," "Mothers and Others," and "Poets and Writers." Some chapters fit into multiple categories, and I wish the choice had been made to be consistent about the type of classification scheme—either grouping by subject area, or by relationship, or even by other measures such as geography or time period. The

haphazard grouping, however, may have been chosen to hide the massive overrepresentation in certain areas within the book. For instance, the average chapter in this book is about a wife-and-husband dynamic, who worked in literature, in the twentieth century, in Britain. Categorizing along any of those lines would have made that instantly clear, but it becomes clear in any case in reading the book. Unfortunately, this means that some chapters started to blur together in my mind over time, and the ones that stuck with me were either particularly well written or outside the norm in some fashion. (Or both.)

Some chapters I would highlight include chapter 1, "M. E. Fitzgerald: Office Manager to Modernism," by Catherine W. Hollis, and chapter 4, "Thanks for Penguin: Women, Invisible Labour and Publishing in the Mid-Twentieth Century," by Rebecca Lyons. In the former, Hollis highlights the struggle of underpaid labor within a sphere which was in many other respects radical and progressive. If this sounds familiar to readers who work within academia, it should, and the author draws an explicit parallel. In the latter, Lyons explicates some of the many ways women's labor is embedded (and rarely credited) in the press stage of the publishing process. Chapter 19, "Golden Myfanwy:

The Domestic Goddess Who Turned the Screw,” by Eleanor Knight was also a stand-out chapter because of the author’s focus on the bounds of possibility and range within Myfanwy’s life, including the advantages, disadvantages, and complexities of the domestic in Myfanwy’s work. Knight encourages the reader not to pity her subject or mourn what might have been and instead fleshes out the richness of the life lived.

Chapters 5 (“Backing the Family: Servilia between the Murder of Caesar and the Battle of Philippi”), 9 (“Jeanne de Montbaston: An Illuminating Woman”), 10 (“Judith Leyster: The Artist Vanishes”), and 13 (“Haunting Augustine: St Monica as Mother and Interlocutor”) all stood out on the other hand because they all concern people and events from before the nineteenth century. In addition, and this is probably in part because the burden of an early modern historian contributing to a largely modern collection is often to over-explain what to them seems obvious, these chapters also tended to be much more methodologically detailed and thus interesting.

The strength of this book lies in the methodological suggestions and insights which are particularly useful to those of us who also work on underrepresented, marginalized, or “overlooked” groups. The chapters which tend more toward biographical summaries are less incisive and tend to be as interesting as the reader may or may not find the particular subject of the chapter. Chapter 18, “Murder, He Wrote’: Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning,” by Julia Bolton Holloway, is one such more biographical chapter, although given that a murder mystery lies at its heart, it is hard not to find it enjoyable, even if there did not seem to be many methodological takeaways. (Holloway does rely extensively on literary analysis, and so that aspect may be of methodological interest to scholars more aligned with those methods.)

The final chapter, “Double Act: U. A. Fanthorpe and R. V. Bailey, Partners in Rhyme,” by Elizabeth Sandie, is unequivocally excellent. Not

only is it the only chapter about a non-heterosexual couple; it is also one of the most detailed explications of how the subjects worked out their roles and strove to find creativity and fulfillment both as individuals and as a couple. Sandie worked closely with R. V. Bailey in writing the chapter, and it pays off in a big way both methodologically and emotionally. If as the reader you have somehow managed to get through the whole book as an academic exercise and emotionally distanced yourself from the intimate lives of those discussed, I dare you to read this final chapter and not feel something.

Finally, for historians of science, technology, and medicine, it must be said that there is in fact very little science, technology, or medicine in this book. The individuals covered are mostly writers and artists (with some politicians and activists), and literary analysis is perhaps the dominant methodology of the volume. The one exception is the epilogue, “‘That’s Not Writing, That’s Typewriting’: Machines and Masculinity from Cummings to Kerouac,” by Lisa Mullen. Mullen discusses the technology of the typewriter, its gendering, and how the act of writing is gendered, through the portrayal of writing in various works of print literature and film. But despite the general lack of science, technology, and medicine, the book is a welcome addition to the growing number of historical studies about laboratory assistants, “invisible technicians,” and scientific couples.

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