As part of my undergraduate research with EBBA, I contributed and created transcriptions of the Houghton Collection. It was important to follow EBBA's rules of Transcription as to not alter the original ballad's font and format. Some common rules required the replacement of “f” with “v,” “c” with “e,” and “vs” with “w.” It is also important to adhere to the imitation of the original ballad's font and format. Black Letter to Times New Roman, White Letter to Italic Times New Roman, and Italic White Letter to Bold Italic Times New Roman. At first, it was difficult to account for every rule of transcription in every ballad. After some time, I became more comfortable with the process and gained a better understanding of how and why every rule was crucial to the preservation of the original ballad.

Ballads and music go hand in hand, and it was beautiful to still be able to witness the development of the tune via a ballad's elements of story telling, rhyme, dialogue, and/or repetition. Some of these elements are noted in Figure A, from “The Mariner’s Delight” or The Seaman’s SEAVEN WIVES.” This ballad tells the story of a young maid, Susan and her prohibited love with a Mariner, who had seven wives. The ballad develops its rhythmic tune through words like “grave” and “gravest;” also, “Love” and “prove.” These specific components add to the overall aesthetic of the ballad.

The elements that were previously mentioned can be better understood when assessing them through a recurrent topic in ballads—courtly love. Similar to ballads, the notion of courtly love can be traced to its origins in the Middle Ages. Courtly love can be understood through Figure B, as “Cupid’s Master Piece: OR Long Wist for Comes at Last: Or, The happy Meeting of William and Mary” comes to represent some of the topic’s attributes. This ballad was inspired by the royal courtship of King William III and Queen Mary II. Ballad elements intertwine with the concept of courtly love in that they add emphasis to the subject, the woman or man involved in the relationship. In this specific ballad, the name of William is white-lettered as opposed to black-lettered. The rhetorical attribute of courtly love is corroborated as William “woos” his wife “with Arms full of Charms” and makes “her Heart glad.” Ballads treat the idea of courtly love with a lot of flexibility, allowing me to gain an in-depth understanding of the different experiences created by a love that is reciprocated and by an unrequited love.

Working with EBBA allowed me to step back into history and gain a riveting outlook on the literary culture of the past. It was an honor to participate in crucial decisions regarding the aesthetics of Early Modern ballads. The team always offered insightful feedback to facilitate the transcription process. In doing so, EBBA thrives in making these works of literature more accessible to future generations while preserving the essence of the original ballad. I hope that my contribution allows for the resonance of the tunes and romance embodied by these ballads, into future generations.