

**Archiving Dossier Narrative
Image du Monde Challenge Project
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Archive Date: February 22, 2021**

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Abstract

The *Image du Monde Challenge* created limited-term teams of international paleographers and scholars to transcribe different digitized IIF-compliant manuscript copies of the mid-thirteenth century verse treatise, *Image du Monde*, by Gossuin (or Gautier) du Metz. It was launched as a follow-up to the highly successful *La Sfera Challenge* series (DOI:[10.34055/osf.io/4ghzu](https://doi.org/10.34055/osf.io/4ghzu)), but with francophone rather than italophone source material. The project was completed in two separate competitions, each of which transcribed roughly half the text.

Project Contributors

The project included many people in different roles. Here is a compilation of the people who contributed to the project (note that some people filled multiple roles in different phases of the project and are listed more than once):

Primary organizer

Laura Morreale

Archivists

Monica Keane, Laura Morreale, Christine Kralik

Participants: *Image du Monde I*

Judges

Michelle Szkilnik
Joseph Johnson
Keith Busby

Team 1

Team Lead: Laura Cleaver

Team Lead: Laura Morreale

Transcribers: Sara McDougall, Jason Jacobs, Adam Bishop, Gene Lyman, Anne Latowsky, Debora Dameri, Anne McLaughlin, Natasha Romanova

Team 2

Team Lead: Brian Reilly

Team Lead: Anna-Amicia Litwinska
Transcribers: Juliana Amorim Goskes, Aaron Macks, Rose McCandless, Isabella Magni, Tamsyn Mahoney-Steel, Hannah Morcos, N. Kıvılcım Yavuz, Bella Scindens

Team 3

Team Lead: Laura Ingallinella
Team Lead: Henry Ravenhall
Transcribers: Caterina Agostini, Marguerite Bordry, Fariba Kanga, Monica Keane, Ryan Low, Edward Mills, Meg Oldman, Dot Porter

Team 4

Team Lead: Jesse Hurlbut
Transcribers: Chris Callahan, Katharine C. Chandler, Aline Douma, Ségolène Gence, Yasmin Ibrahim, Louisa McKenzie, Marie Richards, Kathryn Rimmasch, Anna Siebach-Larsen

Team 5

Team Lead: Kathy Krause
Team Lead: Stephanie J. Lahey
Transcribers: Matt Westerby, Alvionne Karpinski, Caitlin Postal, Anna M. Klosowska, Robert Clark, Maria M. Olson, Eric Ensley, Stacy R. Graham

Participants: *Image du Monde II*

Judges

Marguerite Bordry, S.C. Kaplan, and Gustavo Riva

Team 1

Team Lead: Laura Cleaver
Team Lead: Natasha Romanova
Transcribers: Adam Bishop, Debora Dameri, Liz Hebbard, Jason Jacobs, Christine Kralik, Nathalie Lacarriere, Courtney Selvage, Meg Smith

Team 2

Team Lead: Holly Barbaccia
Team Lead: Anna-Amicia Litwinska
Team Lead: Anne McLaughlin
Transcribers: Ahmet Deniz Altunbas, Mary Flannery, Kyle Ann Huskin, Karl Kinsella, Aylin Malcolm, Emily Steiner, Karl Steel

Team 3

Team Lead: Toby Baldwin
Team Lead: Aaron Macks
Team Lead: Hartley R. Miller
Transcribers: Izzy DeSanctis, Christ Fadel, Charlotte Gauthier, Erika Graham-Goering, Laura Ingallinella, Louisa McKenzie, Claudia Wittig

Team 4

Team Lead: Jesse Hurlbut
Team Lead: Stephanie J. Lahey
Transcribers: Caterina Agostini, Chris Callahan, Francesco Ciabattoni, Benjamin Kozlowski, Tamsyn Mahoney-Steel, Camila Marcone, Kathryn Rimmasch, Anna Siebach-Larsen

Team 5

Team Lead: Laura Morreale

Team Lead: David Joseph Wrisley

Transcribers: Anna de Bakker, Estelle Boudillet, Piergiorgio Consagra, Estelle Gueville, Iwona Krawczyk, Anne Latowsky, Jagoda Marszalek, Lynn Ramey

Financial and Institutional Support

Support for the project came from the IIF Consortium, FromThePage, and Stanford Libraries.

Narrative Section 1. Project Rationale and Scope

The *Image du Monde Challenge* created limited-term teams of international paleographers and scholars to transcribe different digitized IIF-compliant manuscript copies of the mid-thirteenth century verse treatise, *Image du Monde*, by Gossuin (or Gautier) du Metz. It was launched as a follow-up to the highly successful *La Sfera Challenge* series (DOI:[10.34055/osf.io/4ghzu](https://doi.org/10.34055/osf.io/4ghzu)), but with francophone rather than italoophone source material. The hope was to introduce the format and tools of the transcription challenge to a different set of scholars, thus widening its influence and impact.

These international transcription challenges have been a concerted effort to confront the social isolation imposed by the global coronavirus pandemic. The transcription teams competed to determine which group could transcribe its version of the text most accurately, quickly, and cooperatively. The goals and results of the competitions were threefold: 1. to introduce project participants to IIF and the FromThePage transcription platform, 2. to advertise this methodology to the larger community of scholars who work with manuscripts and 3. to demonstrate how transcribed texts, once complete, may be manipulated in the digital environment.

Procedure:

Image du Monde was organized into two separate competitions, each transcribing roughly half the text. *Image du Monde Part I* took place between five teams from September 25-October 9, 2020, and *Image du Monde Part II* will take place between another five teams from January 8-22, 2021. Each transcription team united around a different IIF-compliant *Image du Monde* manuscript. The digitized manuscripts used are listed below:

Image du Monde Manuscripts

Team 1, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Fonds Français 14964, ff. 1r-117v.

<https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc455081>

Team 2, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Fonds Français 2173, ff. 1r-56v.

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10022504n>

Team 3, Chantilly, Bibliothèque du château, 0477 (1469).

<https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/iif/339/canvas/canvas-188784/view>

Team 4, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MS 3516, ff.

160-179v. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55000507q/f325.item>

Team 5, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Fonds Français 24428, ff. 1r-48r.

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10527646p>

Competition Rules:

Each team was composed of no more than 12 members, to include 10 transcriber/reviewers and 1-2 editors. At least one of the editors were also to be designated as team lead. Participants needed to sign up at least one day prior to the start of the competition and be approved as a member by the team leader.

Each team needed to have at least one (virtual) participant meeting to establish standards and working methods. Successive meetings will be held at the discretion of the team lead. Each page had to be transcribed by one team member, reviewed by a second, and approved by one of the editors before it would be considered complete. Dated transcription logs were included with each transcription submission.

Each competition took place over the course of 2 weeks. *Image du Monde I* was from 12:00 PM GMT Friday, September 25, 2020 to 12:00 PM GMT Friday, October 9, 2020 and *Image du Monde II* was from 12:00 PM GMT Friday, January 8, 2021 to 12:00 PM GMT Friday January 22, 2021. Teams that completed their transcriptions before the stated deadline were able submit their contributions as soon as they were deemed complete.

Competition Criteria:

Transcriptions were judged by three criteria, in order of importance:

1. Accuracy
2. Speed
3. Team participation (those submissions that include participation from several members of the team will earn a higher ranking).

Only digital submissions were acceptable, and needed to include:

1. A link to the transcription,
2. A completed transcription log with names of transcribers, reviewers, and sign-off editors
3. A team page with at least 4 progress updates.
4. A witness-specific transcription guideline (see below)

Transcription guidelines were posted on the main website to help teams as they began to transcribe (i.e., suggested approaches to spelling, letter forms, capitalization, etc.), which can be reviewed at [OSF.IO/DG4N9/](https://osf.io/DG4N9/), listed as “Transcribing_Image_du_Monde.pdf”. However, once transcription work began on any particular manuscript, the individual norms of the scribe dictated how the work should be transcribed. Therefore, each team produced a transcription guideline for their manuscript with their final submissions.

Judging the Competition:

Judges were members of the IIF consortium, and the decision of the judges was final.

Narrative Section 2. Project Trajectory

This project consisted of a crowd-sourced transcription competition of manuscripts of the mid-thirteenth century French verse treatise, *Image du Monde*, by Gossuin (or Gautier) du Metz. This French competition was closely modeled upon the highly-successful Italian transcription competition, *La Sfera Challenge* (DOI: [10.34055/osf.io/4ghzu](https://doi.org/10.34055/osf.io/4ghzu)), which had taken place in summer and fall of 2020. It used the same platforms, modes of team formation and competition rules. As in the previous competition, five teams of about ten scholars were each tasked with transcribing a different manuscript copy of the same text from different repositories in the allotted two-week time period. However, since the source text is significantly longer, the transcription of the entire manuscript was staged in two phases: the first half in September/October 2020, and the second half in January 2021.

Team members were recruited from the organizers’ professional networks, including participants in the previous transcription contest, and from open calls on social media that circulated about ten days before the start of the contest. Teams were quickly filled and over fifty people participated in *Image du Monde I*. The

judges applauded the efforts of the teams, deeming the transcriptions ‘semi-diplomatic’ and giving advice to improve the quality of the transcriptions that was implemented in the next phase, *Image du Monde II*. The blog and social media posts written during the transcription contest show that *Image du Monde I* has already led to interesting research into the features of the different manuscripts and of the texts. However, as an exercise in community-building for medievalists, the transcription challenges also show clear pedagogical value in the way that it allows scholars to practice and further develop their paleographical and language skills in a supportive and enthusiastic team environment.

The participants in *Image du Monde II* were sourced in a similar way to previous competitions, but Laura Morreale used a google form to help distribute veteran participants on different teams according to their preferences and skills. Using feedback from the judges and participants, there were a few changes to competition for the second iteration. For example, the transcription norms were kept from the first challenge with some modifications following the suggestions from the first round of judging, some of which required more training participants in new skills. For example, Teams 4 and 5 encoded abbreviations using an annotator built by FromThePage specifically for this project. The *Image du Monde Challenge* also facilitated a tutorial by a team from the Ecole des Chartes hosted a small workshop on using the lemmatizer pyrrha, using the materials created from the first Image du Monde Challenge. At this time, the judging of the transcriptions of *Image du Monde II* has not been completed, but we anticipate that they will be higher quality than the first round, since the first judging gave excellent suggestions for improvement that were then implemented for the second half of the manuscripts.

As with the *La Sfera Challenge*, participants in both iterations of *Image du Monde* have reported a high level of satisfaction with their experience during and after the event, and the project has sparked the beginnings of innovative new research. During the contests, teams used social media to report on their findings and progress, especially on Twitter with the hashtags #ImageDuMonde and #ImageDuMonde2. Team members also wrote about their findings and challenges during the contest on the team webpages, as well as on their professional or institutional blogs.

The long-term goals of the project are to contribute to the creation of scholarly editions of the text, and further the study of medieval geographical treatises, but some smaller follow-up efforts are already underway. As mentioned above, twenty *Image du Monde* participants met with a team from the Ecole Nationale des Chartes to begin lemmatizing the version found in BNF ff 14964 (Team 1), and this may lead to a full lemmatization of several of the transcribed texts. Another group is working with the transcribed and encoded version from Team 5 (BNF ff 24428) to train a model for machine reading, in an effort to produce a computer-generated version of the remaining texts in the manuscript. Along with our sponsors at FromThePage, one participant is working on ways to encode the diagrams from the text to render them in the transcription as well.

Narrative Section 3. Project-Specific Digital Objects and Platforms

The website for the project was created in Wordpress.com using the Ixion theme. There are no installed plug-ins.

The manuscript transcriptions were created in FromThePage, using five digitized manuscripts from different repositories.

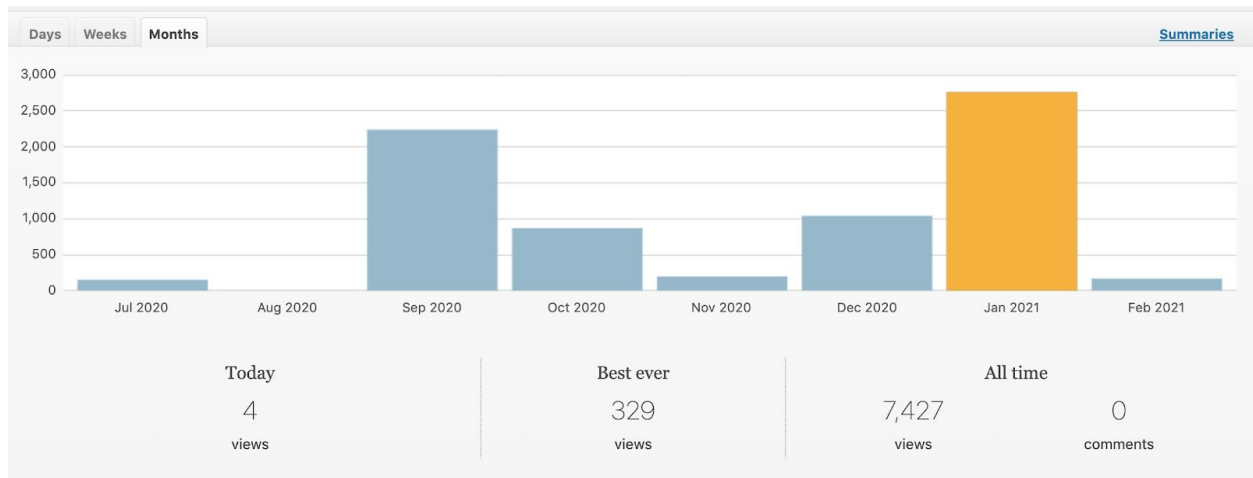
Collaborative spreadsheets and documents for team use were created and shared in Google Docs.

Digital objects collected for the project include all project webpages (converted from HTML to .pdf) and associated documents provided by individual contributors, housed in the platform’s document library (in .pdf format).

A full listing of digital objects can be found in the persistent identifier DOI, at [OSF.IO/DG4N9/](https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-4444444/v1) in the folder 'Static Pages'.

Narrative Section 4. Project Outcomes (including analytics)

Site analytics reveal that as of July 25, 2020, the project site has been viewed over 7,400 times. According to the geographical survey, visitors to the site have come from all over the world.



The participants in the challenges were in North America, Europe and the Middle East, thus the project can be said to be strengthening international connections and networks between medievalists.



Interactive participant map here:

<https://lморреале32.carto.com/builder/2fa82c86-788b-46b7-844a-650a49ed1f7a/embed>

The Image du Monde Challenge promises to continue to replicate the success of the transcription challenge format. Project Lead Laura Morreale presented a workshop on the *Image du Monde* Challenge and its methodology at the University of Tennessee Knoxville’s Marco Institute Manuscript Conference (February 5-6). The presentation, “Of Manuscripts, Merchants, Monsters, and Maps, or: Creating Virtual Research Spaces for Medievalists,” featured participants from previous challenges, including N. Kivilcim Yaviz, Carrie Beneš, Benjamin Kozlowski, Debora Dameri, and Elena Brizio, among others. Additional challenges focused on different texts are also in the planning stages, and members of the community have asked for advice on how to structure such a digital event successfully.

Narrative Section 5. Documentation Statement

Image du Monde has chosen the Attribution 4.0 International Creative Commons License. For more information [see this link](#).

Narrative Section 6: Project Bibliography

A full list of primary and secondary sources for this project can be found in the project PDF files, located at the persistent identifier address, [OSF.IO/DG4N9/](#), listed as “Bibliography and Resources – The Image du Monde Challenge.pdf”.

Narrative Section 7: Related Project Records

La Sfera Challenge

Project Catalogue record URL: <https://osf.io/preprints/bodoarxiv/4ghzu>

Project Catalogue record DOI: 10.34055/osf.io/4ghzu

Persistent Identifier Link: <https://osf.io/jfyuh/>

Persistent Identifier DOI: 10.17605/OSF.IO/JFYUH