# Plan Overview

*A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline*

**Title:** Women's Iconography in the Twenty-First Century

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**Affiliation:** Durham University

**Funder:** Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

**Template:** AHRC Data Management Plan

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**Project abstract:**
Women's iconography is the largest global twenty-first-century movement of Christian sacred art, which has emerged over the last fifty years as a result of a thriving market of specialist iconography workshops. At this time, the movement is undocumented: there is no full-length study of women's iconography, or its history, and no article discusses it as a global phenomenon. *Women's Iconography in the Twenty-First Century* will address this challenge by establishing the understudied practice as a subfield of Religious Studies. In doing so, it will build on the pilot IAA project of the same name at Lancaster University (2023–25) by using the network established through community engagement events as the basis for participant observation and qualitative interviews that will inform two research articles. Expansion and enhancement of the first digital archive of women's iconography, hosted by Lancaster University (the project's CO-I), will give the public access to works that are otherwise difficult to view through a pilot digital walkthrough of an enclosed Greek women's monastery. The project will further document women's iconography through a published bi-lingual proceedings from a week-long international conference at the Orthodox Academy of Crete (OAC) and will raise awareness of the work of women iconographers, who have historically been excluded from the practice, through establishing an International Women's Iconography Network. A public events series, including three pop-up exhibitions, a symposium, and a roundtable, with with our ten local, and international partners, will promote public understanding of the influence the Orthodox icon on modern art and its engagement with contemporary life, including the role of religion in peacekeeping, the impact of devotional imagery on present-day contemplative practices, and women's self-representation and cultural importance in Christian worship spaces as it relates to their broader visibility in the secular world.

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# Women's Iconography in the Twenty-First Century

## Data Summary

### 1. Briefly introduce the types of data the research will create. Why did you decide to use these data types?

The project is a documentary study of the creative practice and ministry of female iconographers. It will produce quantitative and qualitative data concerning these practitioners in the form of: a digital archive, online questionnaires, blog posts, notes from participant observation and transcriptions from interviews. I will also keep a fieldwork journal to document my observation of iconography workshops, which will include some identifying details of my participants and descriptions of my interactions with them.

These data types are appropriate for documenting the myriad aspects of the movement and will contribute to my publications. 'Big data' from the surveys will enable me study the movement's demographics and trends, such as the proportion of iconographers from each denomination, a breakdown of iconographers by nationality, and the number of iconographers who have faced systemic barriers to success. In the qualitative interviews, iconographers will be able to speak for themselves and characterise the aesthetic qualities of their work, the purpose of their ministry, and the origins of the broader movement of women's iconography. Participant observation in iconography workshops will model how the movement attracts new members, its effect on community life, and the development of female iconographers' hallmark styles and artistic philosophies.

The project's digital outputs will raise public awareness of the movement and promote the work of women who have faced barriers to success. The archive provides a repository of images that are otherwise difficult to view along with a collection of artists' bios. Similarly, the blogposts will document our experiences in iconography workshops (with participants' permission) and thereby provide the public with a rare glimpse into the research processes behind the Anthropology of Religion.

| Data Created/Collected | Data Type | Data Format | Volume | Planned Storage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Digital Walkthrough | Photographs & Video | 360° Virtual Tour. | 1 pilot walkthrough | Publicly-accessible digital archive on Lancaster University's Digital Collections (LDC). |
| Images of Icons | Photographs | JPeg | 800 dpi per image (3-20 images per collection with an aim for 50 collections) | Git-Hub Repository Publicly-accessible digital archive on the LDC. |
| Iconographers' bios | Textual Data | Word | 500 KB | Git-Hub Repository Publicly-accessible digital archive on the LDC. |
| Metadata incl. copyright information for images | Textual Data | XML | 2 MB | Publicly-accessible digital archive on the LDC. |
| RA Blog Posts | Textual Data | WordPress | 20 x blog posts concerning fieldwork and public events | Publicly-accessible on the project website, www.contemporarywomenicons.wordpress.com |
| Online Questionnaires x 60 | Statistical Data | Microsoft Excel | 100 KB | JISC Online Surveys/Durham University SharePoint |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group Interview Recordings | Recorded Data | 2 x Handheld Voice Recorders with encryption and PIN lock - project use only | 10 x recorded interviews on device | Locked draw in office cabinet while on-site/kept in small portable safe during field research. |
| Individual Interview Recordings | Video and/or audio | MS Teams Recording | 5 | MS Teams closed group |
| Group Interview Transcriptions made by RA / Automated individual interview transcriptions made by MS Teams | Textual Data | Word | 3 MB | Durham Research Data Repository with participants' identifying details redacted, anonymised, or fictionalised as appropriate. |
| RA Participant Observation Notes | Textual Data | Word | 3 MB | Durham University SharePoint |
| Fieldwork Journal | Textual Data | Notebook | 1 x large notebook | Locked draw in office cabinet. |
| Conference Proceedings/Exhibition Catalogue | Textual Data | Book published by OAC | 15 x essays / exhibition catalogue of 60 images - ca 250 pages. Produced in digital and print formats (print-run of 200 copies). | Available for purchase and freely provided to all participants. |
| 2 x Research Articles | Textual data | To be published in peer-reviewed, open-access journals | 10 MB | Open-access/publicly available. |

**Roles and Responsibilities for Data Stewardship**

For the duration of the project:

- Project Lead and Technician responsible for documentation and transition management to be supported by project management training provided by Durham's Research and Innovation Services (RIS)/Lancaster's Research and Enterprise Services (RES) during the course of the grant.
- Project Lead and RA responsible for data acquisition, completeness and quality.
- Project Lead and RA responsible for accurate translation and ingest of data into MS SharePoint.
- Technician and RA responsible for accurate translation and ingest of data into Lancaster Digital Collections (TEI).

Post-project preservation:

- Technician to create/maintain GitHub repositories of source and target (LDC) collection material; this

will be in the GitHub cloud for Lancaster: [https://github.com/lulibrary/](https://github.com/lulibrary/) - access and privacy controls to be decided in liaison with Project Lead.

- Lancaster University to ensure continued access to collections on the LDC platform as required by project funder research data management conditions.
- Project Lead to supply all data (including any generated by Lancaster for LDC platform) to relevant Durham University preservation systems (DRO-DATA) in accordance with Durham University's policies; technician to liaise with relevant parties to provide access.
- Project Lead to ensure shared access to any third-party hosting service accounts (e.g. YouTube) using non-personal credentials where possible and a departmental mobile phone, or shared mailbox, for MFA.
- Project Lead and RA to erase sensitive personal data (audio and video recordings) from voice recorders/MS teams accounts after transcription has taken place and before the completion of the project.

## Data Collection

**2. Give details on the proposed methodologies that will be used to create the data. Advise how the project team selected will be suitable for the data/digital aspects of the work, including details of how the institution's data support teams may need to support the project**

**Quantitative data** will be obtained directly from the subjects. **Anonymised JISC questionnaires** will be circulated to all sixty participants of the First International Conference of Women's Iconography with **tick-box/e-signature consent**. Jisc Online Surveys is designed for anonymity—preventing research teams from accessing respondents' IP addresses. To ensure the survey isn't globally open and targeted by spam-bots, I will limit access controls to the email list of conference delegates—generating unique URLs/Respondent IDs for each person. Anonymity will be retained by ensuring that questions don't ask for names, emails, or other direct identifiers, and switching on the anonymity toggle. Invitations will be issued using the JISC invite/reminder feature to safeguard access to the survey link. A short screening question at the start of the survey will further protect against unwanted subjects spamming the survey.  All **data for the archive**, including bios, photographs and metadata, will be attained directly from participants by the RA. The **metadata** includes copyright information for all artwork and associated images, and will be converted into XML format by the technician (Andy Hartland, Lancaster University). Images are watermarked upon request to prevent illegal reproduction.

**Qualitative data will be collected through participant observation and semi-structured group interviews.** Dr Azelina Flint (Project Lead) and the RA (tbc) will attend eight iconography workshops run by the project's partners. Consent forms will be issued at the time of booking, and working agreements arranged with the iconographers in advance. Dr Flint will participate by creating an icon, while the RA will take observational notes and photographs with participants' consent. After the workshops, Dr Flint will conduct group interviews, acting as moderator and guiding discussion around the project's research questions. The RA will audio-record interviews using a handheld recorder reserved solely for this project and will later transcribe them. The Project Lead will quality assure the RA's transcription against the video recording and ensure that human transcriptions are categorised as such on DRO-DATA. To respect participants' privacy, no video recordings will be taken, and data will only be used for research purposes. Access to recordings will be restricted to the project team, ensuring data security. The Project Lead and RA will erase audio recordings from voice recorders after transcription has taken place and before the completion of the project.

**In-person individual interviews** will be conducted with two iconographers who work using direct instruction and a **further five virtual and/or in-person interviews** will be conducted with five new participants who will be recruited via open call on the project's website and various iconography listservs and networks. These interviews will follow the 'autobiographical narrative' method established by sociologist, Fritz Schutze. This approach requires the subject to narrate their life-story without interruption.

Following the completion of their story, the interviewer asks follow-up questions concerning their research interests and the themes that have arisen. The advantage of this method is that it will allow participants with whom I am unacquainted to define their ministries with minimal interference from me. With participants' written consent, virtual interviews will be recorded over the project leader's institutional MS Teams account with access being made available to the project team and interview subject only. Both the Project Lead and RA will quality-check the platform's automated transcription and will ensure that machine transcription is categorised as such on DRO-DATA. The Project Lead and RA will erase video recordings from MS Teams accounts after transcription has taken place and before the completion of the project.

**Research publications** will follow established conventions for humanities research. The two **research articles** will be **co-authored by the project leader and RA** and will be submitted to discipline-specific open access journals following standard protocols. **In collaboration with the OAC**, the **project leader will set up an editorial board** for the development of the **Conference Proceedings**. The board will consist of an **editor (the project leader), two specialist peer-reviewers, a translator, and a copy-editor (the RA)**. Participants wishing to publish in the proceedings will submit essays to the editorial board after the conference. Fifteen essays will be selected for peer review, then passed to the translator following revisions. The editors will finalise the manuscript for production once translation is complete. In addition to these essays, all sixty participants will be invited to submit a high-resolution photograph of their exhibited icon along with prescribed cataloguing information, which will form a catalogue section at the back of the proceedings. The **proceedings will be launched in the final month of the project** with all participants receiving a complementary copy, and the remaining print-run being marketed to university libraries.

## Short-term Data Storage

### 3. How will the data be stored in the short term?

Raw textual and statistical data will be made accessible only to the project team and stored via JISC Surveys and Durham University SharePoint. The two encrypted, PIN-locked project voice recorders and the fieldwork journal will be kept in a locked cabinet in the project office when on-site, and in two portable safes during field research. The Project Lead will be responsible for deciding what data is suitable for public sharing and for overseeing the transition management and storage of the interview transcriptions and surveys. The technician will be responsible for storing raw data for the archive on the GitHub repository. Both the Project Lead and the Technician will ensure that content is distributed appropriately to public platforms such as the LDC, and that no source data is made available by intermediate platforms such as GitHub. Archive data will be publicly accessible and protected by metadata specifying copyright information. Public interview transcripts will be uploaded to the Durham Research Online Datasets Archive (DRO-DATA), with all identifying details anonymised, fictionalised, or redacted as appropriate.

### 3a What backup will you have in the in-project period to ensure no data is lost?

Microsoft SharePoint and DRO-DATA enable regular backups from multiple locations and ensure that the data remains accessible to the technician even after the creator has left the institution. Both the project lead and the RA will be issued with a pin-locked, encrypted voice recorders. If one is lost, the data will remain secured and encrypted while back-up will be provided by the second recorder. This data will be supplemented by the RA's notes (made during the workshop) and their transcription of the interviews (based on the recordings) on DRO-DATA. Virtual Interviews will be stored on the project leader's institutional MS Teams account with access being made available to the project team and interview subject only. All data from the archive is backed up on the GitHub Repository. The GitHub repository is a collection of related files, usually the source code files, for a software library or system. The LDC source repositories are set to private by default, in order to protect from a data breach. The source data (word docs with

iconographers' bios) and the data derived from them (XML metadata, TEI documents) is kept in GitHub repositories - one repository per collection entry (iconographer). There are separate repositories for the top-level and intermediate-level landing pages. The source or converted JPEG2000 images are not kept in GitHub for size reasons; they are stored on SharePoint. The source images aren't publicly available, but the converted images are downloadable from the LDC platform. GitHub provides back-up for the archive during, and after, the project's duration, SharePoint, audio voice recorders, fieldwork notes and MS Teams recordings provide backup for qualitative interviews and survey data during the project's duration, while DRO-DATA provides long-term back-up for all qualitative field research after the project has ended.

## Long-term Data Storage

### 4. How the data will be stored in the long term?

Two articles will be published in open-access, peer-reviewed journals, and digital and print copies (200) of the Conference Proceedings will be sold to university libraries. Anonymised, redacted, or fictionalised interview transcripts will be stored on DRO-DATA. Archive materials will be hosted on Lancaster University's Digital Collections platform ([Women's Iconography in the 21st Century](#)) with backup provided by the GitHub repository. The archive was developed during the pilot project (2023–25), which was funded by Lancaster University's IAA scheme. It will be expanded and enhanced in collaboration with Lancaster University—a Co-Investigator of this project. Blog posts will remain accessible on the project website ([Contemporary Women Icons – An AHRC Impact Acceleration Project](#)).

### 4a. Where have you decided to store it, why is this appropriate?

Each data storage format is strategically designed to serve a distinct segment of the project's diverse audience: researchers, students, stakeholders, and the general public. DRO-DATA, Durham's long-term open-access repository, supports researchers by providing metadata and DOIs that enable data reuse, analysis, and proper citation. DRO-DATA also safeguards against the loss of raw data, as does GIT-HUB— the raw data repository for Lancaster University Library's LDC. Two peer-reviewed, open-access journal articles will communicate findings to academic audiences in the field. For the wider public, the digital archive expands access to the icons while also ensuring copyright protection through detailed metadata. The Conference Proceedings will be accessible to scholars and students through university libraries.

Together, these storage choices ensure that the project's outputs are, preserved, discoverable, and appropriately accessible to all relevant audiences, fulfilling both scholarly and public engagement goals.

### 4b. How long will it be stored for and why?

UKRI recommends storing data underpinning research findings for ten years after publication. Accordingly, redacted, anonymised, or fictionalised interview transcriptions will be available on DRO-DATA for ten years post-project. Durham University will be responsible for long-term preservation of this data. Participants may withdraw consent and have their data removed at any time, in line with the British Sociological Association's *Statement of Ethical Practice* (2017) and will be provided with contact information for Durham University's IT Services accordingly. Archive data will remain permanently on Lancaster University's Digital Collections platform with Lancaster University being responsible for its long-term preservation (artists will contact Lancaster's LDC team if they wish to amend their collections), and blog posts will be retained indefinitely on the project website for which the Project Lead will be responsible. Digital and print copies of the Conference Proceedings will be available for purchase by university libraries from the OAC at any time and may be retained indefinitely.

**4c. Costs of storage – why are these appropriate? Costs related to long term storage will be permitted providing these are fully justified and relate to the project Full justification must be provided in Justification of Resources (JoR)**

N/A. There are no costs currently associated with any of the data storage related to this project.

**Data Sharing**

**5. How the data will be shared and the value it will have to others**

Fieldwork notes will be shared internally via Durham University's SharePoint; research findings will be made publicly available through DRO-DATA (with appropriate permissions), and public engagement materials will be hosted on the digital archive and project website. Research articles will be published in open-access journals and the Conference Proceedings will be sold to university libraries and provided to delegates free of charge.

The archive is hosted by Lancaster Digital Collections (LDC)—a globally open, unrestricted and non-authenticated platform. The Creative Commons license for all collections is BY-NC-ND 4.0. This license requires users to give credit to the creator and allows for non-commercial reuse (such as, for example, in a conference presentation). The license protects photographic images of the icons (an important source of income for some iconographers) from reproduction for commercial purposes. Photographic images are also watermarked at iconographers' request to prevent illegal reproduction. All iconographers own the copyright to their images as is detailed in the metadata. The technical/descriptive metadata is supported by the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) standard. Images served by the LDC platform are tiled JPEG2000 images available through LDC's IIIF server. TEI metadata and images are downloadable from the LDC platform. TEI includes technical and descriptive metadata but no transcription. This will remain true for content developed during the Catalyst bid. TEI supports the embedding of other metadata schemata through its "xenoData" feature, and the LDC is considering the generation of other metadata formats (primarily MARC-XML) to enhance discovery of the LDC collections. Long-term, Lancaster University Library aims to provide a standards-based harvesting interface such as OAI-PMH to export these formats. Although this work will not take place during the Catalyst grant, the interface will be applied to the project's digital archive when collections on the LDC platform are updated. Iconographers are made aware of the risks of illegal reproduction by the PI/RA at the time they agree to be featured on the archive. They can request to have their collection removed at any time.

As the first public repository dedicated to women's iconography, the archive offers unprecedented access to this understudied movement and to works rarely seen by the public. The website will further demystify the fieldwork process and promote the work of female iconographers, who have historically been excluded from the practice. Open-access publication ensures global, unrestricted access to the project's research, regardless of institutional affiliation (or lack thereof). The Conference Proceedings will be readily available to stakeholders and students, serving as the first book on the subject for academic study and providing a platform for stakeholders to learn about each other's practices, foster networks, and develop expertise.

**5a. How the data will enhance the area and how it could be used in the future?**

The data will establish women's iconography as a subfield of Religious Studies and will enable other scholars in the discipline to research this area through studying the visual materials on the archive, analysing the interview transcriptions on DRO-DATA, and citing the articles and Conference Proceedings. It will also form the foundation for follow-on Standard Grant funding for the purpose of developing of a full-

length qualitative study. The archive and website will stimulate public engagement with women's iconography, thereby promoting the work of women who face considerable barriers to success in politically unstable locations, such as the Ukraine and Lebanon, as well as in their church communities.

**5b. Releasing the data – advise when you will be releasing and justify if not releasing in line with AHRC guidelines of a minimum of three years. If the data will have value to different audiences, how these groups will be informed?**

All research data will be released by the end of the project's two-year duration. Community engagement events, including a conference, roundtable, symposium, and three pop-up exhibitions, will raise public awareness across Britain, Ireland, and Greece. The archive and website will extend the project's global reach, providing links to open-access publications and research findings stored on DRO-DATA. Stakeholders will be notified of outputs via the project's ten specialist partners and through relevant associations, listservs, and websites. The Conference Proceedings will be marketed to university libraries in both print, and digital, formats—ensuring that students have access to this research.

**5c. Will the data need to be updated? Include future plans for updating if this is the case.**

N/A.

**5d. Will the data be open or will you charge for it? Justify if charging to access the data**

There will be no charges for accessing the data with the exception of the Conference Proceedings, which will be sold to university libraries—ensuring free access to students and researchers.

**5e. Financial requirements of sharing – include full justification in the JoR**

N/A.

**Ethical and Legal Considerations**

**6a. Any legal and ethical considerations of collecting the data**

The project will follow recognised best practice in the Anthropology of Religion, ensuring the ethical collection, storage, and use of research data, with particular attention to safeguarding participants' rights, protecting their privacy, and securing their informed consent.
Quantitative data will be collected voluntarily via online surveys administered to delegates of the First International Conference of Women's Iconography. All responses will be anonymised, and consent will be documented through tick-box selection and e-signature.
Qualitative data will be gathered only with informed consent. All participants will receive information sheets and consent forms written at an accessible reading level (age 11), ensuring comprehension regardless of educational background. Participants in public workshops will be informed of my presence as a researcher at the time of sign-up, and working agreements will be collaboratively developed and signed

with all iconographers who are observed or interviewed.

To ensure participants understand the aims of the project and the implications of data access, I will hold a Q&A session before workshops begin. Following each workshop, a second Q&A session will use an Active Learning approach: I will present preliminary notes for participant critique, enabling them to challenge or amend my findings.

Group interviews with iconographers and their students will follow Campbell-Reed and Scharen's *Ethnography on Holy Ground* method, which incorporates spiritual readings, periods of silence, and prayerful reflection to foster respectful engagement among delegates with differing perspectives on the definition and purpose of iconography. This approach creates a safe, contemplative space for sharing spiritual autobiographies and experiences of artistic ministry across denominations.

The conference's final cross-denominational roundtable will further support ethical engagement by empowering delegates to collaboratively draft the 'Guiding Principles' and 'Core Values' of the International Network of Women Iconographers. This document will identify shared goals while acknowledging the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the network.

By embedding clear consent procedures, accessible communication, and collaborative knowledge-making into both the demographic survey process and the ethnographic fieldwork, the project ensures that all research activities respect participants' rights, protect personal data, and reflect the discipline's commitment to reflexive, culturally sensitive engagement with religious communities.

## 6b. Legal and ethical considerations around releasing and storing the data – anonymity of any participants, following promises made to participants

The project will follow recognised legal requirements and best practice in the Anthropology of Religion for the collection, storage, and release of research data, in line with the British Sociological Association's (BSA) *Statement of Ethical Practice* (2017) and UK GDPR regulations. Best practice in this field requires that informed consent be treated as an ongoing process rather than a one-off agreement, because participants' comfort with and understanding of the use of their data may evolve over time, especially in research involving personal belief, spirituality, and creative practice.

Participants will be reminded (through information sheets, consent forms, interviews, Q&A sessions, and disclaimers on the DRO-DATA platform) of their right to withdraw their data from storage at any stage and for any reason. Artists featured in the archive or on the project website can request the removal of their collections and information at any time. Participants will also have opportunities to review and comment on my fieldnotes during Q&A sessions and to offer feedback on both research articles at every stage prior to publication, ensuring accurate representation of their experiences. On request, identifying details will be redacted, anonymised, or fictionalised in all publicly available data.

Recordings of group interviews in public settings will be made only on encrypted, PIN-locked audio recorders designated for project use, ensuring that conversations are reproduced solely in publications that participants have reviewed in advance. A dual-recorder system will secure backup while maintaining encryption. Both devices, along with the fieldwork journal containing identifying information, will be stored securely—locked in the project office when on-site and in portable safes during fieldwork. Virtual interviews with participants recruited via open call will be stored securely on the Project Leader's institutional MS Teams account, with access restricted to the project team in a closed group format. Data from Qualitative field research will be transferred to DRO-DATA for ten years post-project. Durham University will be responsible for long-term preservation of this data. Participants may withdraw consent and have their data removed at any time, in line with the British Sociological Association's *Statement of Ethical Practice* (2017) and will be provided with contact information for Durham University's IT Services accordingly. Archive data will remain permanently on Lancaster University's Digital Collections platform with Lancaster University being responsible for its long-term preservation. Iconographers can request to have their collections amended, or removed, at any time.

By embedding ongoing informed consent into every stage of the research process, the project ensures that participants retain full agency over their contributions, that data is handled in accordance with legal requirements, and that all promises made during the research are honoured in the long term.