

## CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

### SYRASP Working Group 2022-2023: Prison Narrative and the Archive

We are pleased to invite expressions of interest to join the working group of the ERC-funded project [SYRASP](#) (“The Prison Narratives of Assad’s Syria: Voices, Texts, Publics”, Grant Agreement No. 851393), headed by P.I. Dr. Anne-Marie McManus and based at the [Forum Transregionale Studien](#), beginning in summer 2022.

#### Working Group Theme

The following are examples of the thematic questions that will drive our collective inquiry and discussions:

- What kind of “archival” document is a prison narrative?
- What kind of knowledge(s) does it produce, and for whom?
- What is at stake when a prison narrative is recorded – written, filmed, digitally recorded, and/or transcribed – and placed within the framework of an archive?
- What is its relationship of prison narratives to collective pasts and imagined futures?
- What kinds of community are prison narratives expected, hoped, and/or able to form?

The possible answers to these questions quickly fragment across myriad factors, including the location and status of the archive (e.g., material, digital; state-supported, counter-state, activist, artistic, familial; established, aspirational); the respective positionalities of narrator, recorder, and/or listener(s); and the form and content of the narrative itself.

In monthly, hybrid (online/in-person) meetings, SYRASP’s working group will study past and contemporary efforts to document, record, and archive information and experiences relating to incarceration in Syria, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and other global locations, encompassing the media of text, sound, and image. Alongside traditional understandings of archives, we will explore the role of art and literature today in gathering, documenting, and representing prison narratives, as well as critically questioning the ethics and epistemology of archiving such narratives. And while theories and imaginaries of archives will inform our discussions, praxis and activism – the various labors of collecting, sorting, and sharing prison narratives – will play a central role throughout the working group.

Meetings will include presentations and discussions of research, literature, and/or artworks by practitioners, researchers, artists, authors, and activists, which will be supported by critical and academic readings. Researchers at various stages of the academic track – from MA onwards – as well as artists, writers, and independent scholars engaged with the topic are welcome to apply. We anticipate producing publications, both individual and collective, that will take shape through the

group's activities. Joining the working group entails a commitment of good faith efforts to attend meetings regularly and in a spirit of active, collegial engagement.

To apply, please submit 3-4 sentences introducing yourself and explaining your interest in the working group, as well as a CV to [syrasp@trafo-berlin.de](mailto:syrasp@trafo-berlin.de), ideally by May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Applications will, however, be read on a rolling basis.