



Der Sonderforschungsbereich 980 und das Institut für Altorientalistik laden im Sommersemester 2018 ein zu einem Seminar von

**Prof. Dr. Paul Delnero**  
**(The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore)**

mit dem Titel

**Texts Before Texts:  
How and Why Were Mesopotamian Texts Written?**

Textual criticism – the study of the changes texts underwent as they were transmitted in writing over time – has been and continues to be of fundamental importance in the editing, translating, and interpreting of Mesopotamian literary works. Until recently, traditional models of textual criticism, which assume that changes in the content of texts over time can be explained as either intentional redactional modifications or the law-like occurrence of errors that result from mistakes made while copying inattentively from another written exemplar, have been the primary framework that has been used to account for textual variation in Mesopotamian texts. However, a growing awareness that Sumerian and Akkadian literary works are rarely, if ever, traceable back to a hypothetical original, or were only ever transmitted by copying existing written versions of the texts faithfully and exactly, has led to the consideration of other ways in which these works were transmitted over time, including the role played by oral performance, memorization, and scribal education in shaping and influencing the content of the surviving written sources for these compositions on a case-by-case basis. In this seminar, the social contexts in which Mesopotamian literary compositions were put in writing, and the influence non-written modes of transmission had on the written transmission of texts in these contexts, will be explored from traditional philological and contemporary theoretical perspectives, which will be applied to case studies of texts of different types.

**Opening Talk: Texts Before Texts: Orality, Writing, and the Transmission of Sumerian Laments**  
Donnerstag, 21. Juni, 16.00-18.00, Institut für Altorientalistik, Raum 2.2059, Fabeckstr. 23-25, 14195 Berlin

**Seminar 1: Orality and Writing: Reconsidering the “Great Divide” and the Function(s) of Writing in the Transmission of Sumerian Literary Works**  
Donnerstag, 28. Juni, 16.00-18.00, Institut für Altorientalistik, Raum -1.2057, Fabeckstr. 23-25, 14195 Berlin

**Seminar 2: Ritual and Writing, or: How Could People Who Could Not Read or Speak Sumerian Understand the Content of Sumerian Texts?**  
Donnerstag, 5. Juli, 16.00-18.00, Institut für Altorientalistik, Raum -1.2057, Fabeckstr. 23-25, 14195 Berlin

**Seminar 3: The Social Lives of Mesopotamian Texts: How did the Social Contexts in which Sumerian Texts Were Copied Contribute to Textual Variation, and How Can Texts whose Content is Variable Be Edited?**  
Donnerstag, 12. Juli, 16.00-18.00, Institut für Altorientalistik, Raum -1.2057, Fabeckstr. 23-25, 14195 Berlin

Um Anmeldung per Email an [schrakam@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:schrakam@zedat.fu-berlin.de) wird gebeten.