

Cashman Kerr PRINCE

Tounoma mou katasterizo: On the Motives and Perils of Early Professionalization

While I cannot address the changes in our profession over the past few generations, I can discuss my own experience with early professionalization. Drawing on personal experience I situate myself in this trend. I chose to go on the conference circuit early in my career; in the first year of graduate study, I submitted a successful abstract to the APA. Later presentations included international professional conferences and graduate student ones. I comment on the differences and similarities between presentations at these different gatherings, focusing on the personal advantages and disadvantages, both immediate and long-term, of giving scholarly presentations at such an early stage of my career. I situate these personal reflections in the shift from Classics to Classical Studies, the shift from the traditional practice of philology to the wealth of diverse approaches for the study of Classical Antiquity current today. My goal is neither to praise nor condemn early professionalization; I accept this phenomenon as a feature of the current state of the academy and the academic job market, for better or ill. Rather, I address the consequences and implications of this change, presenting my experiences as an object lesson in the motives and perils of taking a place at the conference table early in an academic career.