*Par ac somnia sit*: Latin on the Set of *Fright Night* (2011)

The study of classics and film has become in recent years a significant and rewarding critical sub-field in the study of classical receptions. Numerous books, articles and reviews have been published lately exploring the ways in which films and television programs represent and reinvent the ancient world, whether they seek to depict historical events and personages, draw on mythological and literary themes, or utilize other cultural aspects of antiquity, such as the ancient languages, to imbue the entertainment on screen with a sense of drama or sophistication. Whenever a movie or television series aims to recreate the ancient world or some feature thereof, filmmakers have often called upon professional classicists to aid them as academic consultants, or perhaps at least to suggest that a veneer of erudition has been added to the production. While the nature of these interactions between filmmakers and professors can vary quite a bit, running the gamut from frustrating (Coleman 2004), to humorous (Milnor 2008), to rather self-aggrandizing (Fox 2005), what is certain is that filmmakers tend to reach out to traditional experts in specific disciplines rather than to scholars of classics and film who study the process of reception itself.

Thus it came as something of a surprise when I was contacted by the producers of the new *Fright Night* (set for an October 2011 release), a remake of the 1985 vampire cult classic movie, to serve as an academic consultant for Latin dialogue to be spoken by one of the actors in the film. This presentation will describe my professional interactions with several people working on this film, from the production assistants who first contacted me, to the dialect coach with whom I worked closely to prepare the lines of dialogue to be used in the film, to the actor whom I coached in Latin pronunciation and delivery. In this presentation, I will explore what it was like for a scholar of classical receptions to watch a cinematic classical reception happening *in real time*, that is, how actual filmmakers and actual actors relate to and talk about the process of reception in which they are unwittingly engaged. Most importantly, this presentation will consider how the experience on a movie set can affect our understanding – and indeed even influence our practice – of current scholarship about classics and film.

# Coleman, Kathleen M. (2004). “The Pedant Goes to Hollywood: the Role of the Academic Consultant.” In M.M. Winkler, ed. *Gladiator: Film and History*. Oxford and Malden: Blackwell. 45-52.

# Fox, Robin Lane (2005). *The Making of Alexander: The Official Guide to the Epic Film Alexander*. London: R & L.

# Milnor, Kristina (2008). “What I Learned as an Historical Consultant for *Rome*.” In M.S. Cyrino, ed. *Rome Season One: History Makes Television*. Oxford and Malden: Blackwell. 42-48.