



Valletta in Motion – Pictures filmed in the city

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Abstract

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This research sets out to explain the challenges experienced by all the different parties involved in the film industry participating in the productions stages of the filming by the foreign and local film crews in the manner indicated in the government policies written to protect the historic and cultural locations on the Maltese islands. Focused on these streets and buildings in Valletta the local council is contacted and informed to allocate the license's required following the city by-laws so to start and keep operating the film production. Three interviews, were held with three different entities in the industry, who shared their expereinces of their daily on-going challenges faced by the choices made of the Valletta streets, buildings, statues and piazzas. The understanding and importance for the 100% protection shown by all parties, while using these different cultural heritage locations, while protecting the cultural and heritage of these locations filling in as other cities detailed in the script takes precident over the economical control of the daily financial budget and travelling costs and expenses. The focus is all about following the rules and regulations stated by the Cultural and Heritage policy in the processes guaranteing the 100% protection to all these chosen streets, buildings, palaces, churches, statues, and piazzas and parks. Although the local film and tv production industry has the shared knowledge and experience, understanding the steps to follow up with all the necessary precautions to fund the proper protection required for all the locations chosen and be liable for ny damages caused. All the different entities in the local and foreign industry agree to take 100% ownership of their positions while understanding the importance required for full protection of all these chosen locations in Valletta. The increasing significance of the economical rewards and potential impacts offered to the foreign and local companies by the different choices of these historical and cultural choices of the streets and fortifications are the many reasons Valletta is chosen by the film production companies. These choices offering a variant number of different ways of playing their part in the movie script.		

Declaration of Authenticity



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Declaration:

I hereby declare that this research study is based on the outcome of my own research. I, as the author, declare that this research study is my own composition which has not been previously produced for any other qualification.

The research study was conducted under the supervision of Tara Darmanin

January 2024

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1. Introduction

Screen Malta (The Malta Film Commission) in the Film Production Guide state that 'The Islands offer an diverse landscape that could double for virtually anywhere old and new in the Mediterranean as well as several other places' (MFC, 2014. p. 7). Malta is marketed as having no limitations when it comes the diverse Maltese locations that can be used for filming. As such Malta has been dubbed as being the 'mini-Hollywood of the Mediterranean' (Graziano, 2015. p. 67).

This diversity of Maltese locations, coupled with financial incentives available to production companies, is a major contributing factor which has led to an exponential increase in the number of filming projects being shot in Malta. As a direct result of this increase the need was felt to set up the National Film Policy 2016-2020 to regulate this growing industry. The scope of this research is to examine how, since the release of this policy in 2016, the impacts of filming at historic urban contexts are being managed, including the impact on local residents and communities, both during and after filming

1.1 Research Question

How cultural heritage locations in Valletta are used and portrayed in films?

1.2 Justification of the research chosen

This research aims to better understand and analyse the process involved of the portrayal of locations in Valletta. In business there is a saying for a very successful business adventure you require Location! Location! Location

Close to twenty-three years ago an Academy Award winning film by Ridley Scott and actors Craig Russel and Phoenix Joaquin –Gladiator- was partial filmed in Malta. This over the years had a phenomenon success and piqued the interest of other production companies choosing Malta as a successful destination for locations. Screen Malta (Malta Film Commission) with the support and incentives has supported further production companies to choose Malta for locations.

One of the main reasons in 2016 Assassins Creed chose the locations of the Capital of Malta, Valletta, was because it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site which has been especially targeted because of this additional prestige.

The increase of films being produced in Malta has reached a substantial growth through the support of Screen Malta (MFC) incentives and rebates and the colourful social media shared by the visiting talented actors posting their own personal adventures walking the streets of Valletta on their own time sharing their wonderful experience discovering Valletta.

1.3 Objective of this research

In 2022, the film industry in Malta contributed €120 million to the Maltese economy, which is the largest economic injection from this sector the country has seen in the last 10 years. These positive results were the result of a total of 24 productions involving feature films, TV series, and reality shows coming from the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Switzerland, Austria, Norway, Germany, and Egypt (Times of Malta).

The Maltese film industry witnessed a dramatic change from 2016 where €68 million was injected in the economy from 22 different international productions, these film productions chose Malta as a filming location. The Government of Malta through the Malta Film commission has offered financial incentives for the audio-visual industry to make Malta more alluring to foreign film industries. Film productions can benefit from a rebate of up to 40% (MFC, 2016. p. 11).

The financial incentive in the form of a cash rebate shall not exceed a maximum rebate of forty percent (40%) of the eligible expenditure of a qualifying production, which shall be exempt for the purpose of the Income Tax Act, as outlined. The Maltese film industry's expansion has had both beneficial and bad effects on local communities and historic urban environments. In Malta, there has been a lack of knowledge on the implications for local inhabitants and communities, which may endure even after the filming is over, and little attention has been devoted to this issue.

Ms Michaela Borg, in her dissertation "Conservation of Heritage through Film," argues that filming at historic sites has a negative impact on Malta's heritage due to inadequate supervision and regulation (Borg, 2017). This study aims to expand on previous studies by examining the influence on urban areas and how new productions handle these issues. The use of cultural heritage sites may be beneficial, but it can also lead to site deterioration if the filming is not properly controlled. Michaela Borg's thesis explores the influence of filmmaking on heritage places, stating that it is a "double-edged sword." Directors are usually very careful of maintaining the site's perfect condition. Third parties, like sub-contractors and film crews, may produce oversights or unforeseen events (Borg, 2017, p. 25). The proper use of the site should always be a prerequisite for using it. Directors have no right to do damage or harm, for whatever reason.

Presently the success of *Gladiator* filmed in 2000, has brought back Ridley Scott to Malta to produce and film *Gladiator 2* at Fort Racosoli. Unfortunately, the writers and actors strike has stopped the product for a few months but presently they are wrapping up the movie

Through the power of social media many people were aware of this film production which was a boost in the interest of the film industry. So much so that Screen Malta decided to organise a film day to the visit the set location of *Gladiator 2* which was received quite well by the locals and visitors

to the island. Most people who own a mobile posted their visit on their personal social media

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining the potential of film and cultural tourism in Valletta.

Despite its cultural potential, Malta's tourism business focuses mostly on sun and sea. Malta's potential for cultural tourism, centering on Valletta, a fortified ancient city that overlooks the Grand Harbour. Malta's capital city, with an area of 0.8 km², is the smallest of the European Union's 28 current member states' capitals. Valletta has been a popular movie location due to its historical significance, gorgeous architecture, and strategic location in Europe. The city's well-preserved architecture serves as an authentic backdrop for historical films, and its fortified historic structures and breath-taking views of the Grand Harbour have made it an appealing location for filmmakers aiming to portray the atmosphere of a bygone age (Ebejer, 2018).

Valletta's status as Malta's capital city has made it a popular destination for filmmakers looking to showcase the country's cultural and historical legacy (Camilleri & Azzopardi, 2021). Culture and history have taken a back seat in Malta's tourism industry for more than 50 years. Since the mid-1990s, Malta's tourist policy has shifted, with a greater emphasis on culture and heritage, while sun and sea tourism remains a priority. Valletta underwent changes because of public and private investment, making it more suitable for cultural events and tourism.

Malta's National Film Policy was established in 2016. The National Film Policy was established for a reason—it was discovered that the film industry management in Malta lacked established instructions and had not been updated. A driving force for the creation of the National Film Policy 2016-2020 was the sheer volume of errors made both during and after the filming process. Examining the policy, bearing in mind the issues raised in order to streamline and protect the film industry. After comparing the policy to other policy-making documents pertaining to filmmaking, gaps in the policy were found.

The film industry makes and distributes films of various genres, with never-ending stories involving realism and science fiction. To meet the criterion in a highly competitive market, the directors' sources must be legitimate in order to keep the focus on the script, which provides a

story in the context of filmmaking, rather than the financial aspects of every decision that must be made.

Producers and directors must make the best use of the available location alternatives and are continually on the lookout for suitable filming settings. As a result, filmmaking projects may have a variety of repercussions on such environments, particularly those having heritage significance and that are potentially susceptible. Film's participation in the National Culture Policy allows as the medium to be recognised as a cultural product. Indeed, it firmly situates film within a comprehensive framework in which stockholders are recognised and objectives relating to the applicable medium are outlined. Michaela Borg stated, 'this industry has had a negative impact on Malta's heritage, largely because filming at historic sites is not sufficiently supervised or regulated' (Borg, 2017).

Cultural heritage as a location becomes a significant character in the story because it offers a sense of realism, which is the purpose of its employment. The filmmaker will be concerned with shooting the surroundings slowly and closely so that the viewer may analyse the scene and draw his own judgements about the character.

2.2 Start of Malta's Film Industry in Valletta

Despite the challenges the pioneering efforts of early filmmakers in Valletta laid the foundation for the development of Maltese cinema. Over the years, filmmakers and artists continued to build on this legacy, leading to the growth of a distinct Maltese film industry. Valletta's rich history, architecture, and unique landscapes have continued to serve as valuable settings for modern Maltese filmmakers. The beginnings of filmmaking in Valletta during the early 20th century were marked by challenges but also by the dedication and creativity of pioneering filmmakers like Carmelo Muscat. The first known screening of moving pictures in Malta took place in Valletta in 1896, just a year after the Lumière Brothers' historic screening in Paris.

This event marked the introduction of cinema to the Maltese islands. One of the early pioneers of Maltese cinema was Carmelo Muscat, who is believed to have started filming around 1910. Another notable figure was Alessandro Blasetti, an Italian filmmaker who spent time in Malta during the early 1920s. He made a documentary titled "Valletta" in 1925,

showcasing the beauty and historical significance of Malta's capital. Their contributions laid the groundwork for the development of Maltese cinema, and today, Valletta's historical charm continues to inspire filmmakers in Malta, preserving the city's cinematic legacy.

During the filming of *Casino Royale* in 1968, British director Val Guest published an article in the *Times of Malta* in which he portrayed the small newly independent island as a promising low-cost alternative to more established production locations such as Italy, Spain, and France. Guest was aware of an emerging film industry in a country keen to entice Hollywood to its doorstep.

Malta was eager to accommodate foreign manufacturers, but without an effective structure in place for at least 40 years, international production was intermittent and haphazard at best. It wasn't until the early 2000s that Malta emerged as a credible rival in the worldwide film production network, dubbed 'the tiny Hollywood of the Mediterranean' by Daniel Rothschild in the *London Times*. However, Malta lacked a big pool of competent film producers, there were no sufficient sound stages for large-scale productions, and there was no formal or accepted tradition of producing or promoting domestic films locally or abroad (*Times of Malta*).

2.2.1 Changing the interaction on Culture Heritage

The Council of Europe Convention, which defines cultural legacy as "the interaction of people and places over time" (of Europe, 2005, p. 2). This has given people the right to speak up about their city. Another key element is that local communities have the right to enjoy and learn about their cultural heritage (Cultural Heritage Act 2016, p. 4).

Citizens must also conserve and maintain this cultural heritage for future generations (Chapter 445, article 4.2 of the Cultural Heritage Act of 2016). With a significant rise in governmental financing for culture and the arts, the government carefully consider the effects of a creative industry on the economic growth of cities.

Assuming that the external pressure brought on by Malta's EU membership in 2004, along with the Council of Europe's decision to make Malta the European Capital of Culture in 2018, has affected the government's large spending in culture. According to UNESCO, because of the development of social media, today's society is open to new learning methodologies, which promotes knowledge of the past and how we can learn from those who came before us,

giving us a clear idea of how we can weave the past into our future, cultural heritage is becoming increasingly important to our society.

Today, society recognises that a free-standing structure cannot survive without its significance spreading to the surrounding environment (UNESCO, 2013. p. 12). More recently, there has been widespread acceptance that human contact has altered the entire environment, and so it can be considered a legacy (UNESCO, 2013, p. 12).

This encounter has extended the idea of what constitutes heritage. The 1972 World Heritage Convention defines 'heritage' as monuments, groups of buildings, and locations' (UNESCO, 2013, p. 12). This concept does not limit or exclude what can be considered essential for current and future generations.



Figure 1: The Heritage Cycle (Thurley, 2005.)

Figure 1: Simon Thurley and his heritage cycle (2005, p. 49). Providing a clear picture of how we integrate our history into our future. Understanding our heritage by discovering the worth of our modern values through education, new studies, and new discoveries.

The heritage cycle (Figure 1) has helped individuals better understand themselves by bringing the past to life (Baker, D., 1999. p. 3), (Thurley., 2005. p. 49). As a result, society began to recognise the significance of the past in comprehending the shape of present society. They understood, and as a result, they respected and cared more about the cultural heritage that had been entrusted to us. Another component that has altered over time is a person's perception of cultural heritage. Until the early twentieth century, society considered a structure as a cultural property unrelated to its surroundings (UNESCO., 2013. p. 12)

Despite widespread recognition of the need of protecting heritage assets, historic sites continue to be harmed. When embarking on new projects, it is critical to have a thorough awareness of the site's values and significance.

The use could also be transitory and limited in scope, such as filming at a historical monument. Heritage locations have been exploited in films since the dawn of cinema (Reynolds, 2016, p. 48). Many World Heritage sites in Croatia, Morocco, Malta, and other countries served as filming locations. When kept and treated properly, legacy can offer a setting with the authenticity that viewer's desire. Films can have a symbiotic relationship with heritage sites through the benefits of employment, business, film tourism, and location fees (Reynolds, 2016. p.49).

2.2.2 Physical effects for Locations

Every year, hundreds of films are made in various areas across the world. Fortunately, only a few incidences of site damage have occurred in relation to the amount of location shooting taking place. This, however, does not mitigate the harm done (Reynolds, 2016, p.53). Historic structures and sites are irreplaceable. Anything that happens to heritage, from minor physical harm to the destruction of an ingredient during creation, is always a permanent loss.

The after-effects of filming are not always unpleasant but can also be positive. A noteworthy example is the film *By the Sea*, which was shot in Mgarr ix-Xini, Gozo, the crew cleaned up all the garbage and trash that gathered during filming leaving the bay and its surroundings in better condition than they found them.

In November 2010, the HBO series *Game of Thrones* filmed a pivotal sequence from Season 1 at the Azure Window, depicting the marriage of Daenerys Targaryen and Khal Drogo. During this scene, the production put artificial sand around the Azure window without proper protection, instead opting for a permeable fabric through which sand infiltrated (Gleave, E., 2016) & (Borg Micallef, A., 2014).

The Dwejra location is home to a broad range of fauna and habitats, both on land and beneath the sea. The site has been on Malta's Tentative List of monuments that the country may consider nominating for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List in the future since 1988 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2008). MEPA ordered the film production company to clean up the location, but heavy gear was employed, exacerbating the situation. Even though

the production firm violated the terms of the filming permit, apologised, and paid the penalty, Anders (2011) maintained that it was the subcontractor who harmed the ecology.

According to Alfred E. Baldacchino, a former MEPA official, there was a lot of miscommunications between the Fire & Blood production and MEPA (Anders, 2011). Following Season 1, the production elected to film in Croatia rather than Malta. MEPA received a tongue lashing from the film industry for losing such an important filming client who would have brought money to Malta.

2.2.3 Films in Valletta

Filming in built heritage sites such as Valletta is a complex operation with several stakeholders in place. Many films have chosen Valletta as a filming location and the Malta Film Commission supports the work with the Valletta Local Council for this to be facilitated. Since scenes shot in Valletta are usually street scenes it is up to the Planning Authority to allow and oversee shooting.

Malta has been featured in several films and continues to be replicated with each new one. At various stages of a filmmaking production, people from many sectors are brought together, ranging from location managers to local council members to actual residents of the streets where the filming occurs.

The film *Assassin's Creed* a production was filmed in September and October of 2015. The streets of Valletta were used for filming scenes in *Assassin's Creed* (Figure 1). This film was chosen because it's still recent enough to be fresh in people's memories, while on the other hand, enough time has transpired to allow for a consideration of the longer-term implications of the usage of these streets as filming settings. Michael Fassbender is the primary character and one of the producers. *Assassin's Creed* was directed by Justin Kurzel and stars Michael Fassbender, Marion Cotillard, Jeremy Irons, and Brendan Gleeson.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the approach for gathering information to address the proposed research question. The methodology used was that of qualitative research an appropriate method for this research because it allowed the interviewees to offer their specific expertise

and experience on the limited resources of walking film tours and the culture and heritage of film locations. This method was interviews with people familiar with the local film industry.

3.2 Interviews

Interviewing the entities or persons in order to obtain information about the various points of view about film production and the utilisation of filming locations was a fundamental part of the research methodology. Open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were used to do this (Neuman, 2007, p. 177). Instead of being more rigidly planned, the interviews were semi-structured, which gave the respondents greater freedom in how they answered (Stig Sorensen, 2009, p.169). It was open to the respondents to discuss or bring up any impact the film production had on their day-to-day existence or their local surroundings (Stig Sorensen, 2009. p.169).

In order to obtain as much information and specifics as possible, the researcher conducted each interview one-on-one and on a personal basis (Neuman, 2007, p.179). The interview questions were developed for each.

There were three different set of interview questions for different interviewee categories.

- A set of questions for the representative of the Malta Film Commission (1 interview)
- A set of questions for the local mayor of Valletta (1 interview),
- A set of questions for Director /Producer Jon Cassar, Los Angeles USA (24 TV Series on Fox) (1 interview).

3.3 Primary Data from three interviews

Meetings held at the office of the Malta Film Commission with Mr Jean Pierre Borg –Screen Malta Cultural Development Manager and Ms Susan Roland Policy Manager

The Meeting with Screen Malta the new brand identity of the Malta Film Commission with Cultural Development Manager Mr Jean Pierre Borg and Ms. Susan Roland Policy Manager has stated that the primary official role of Screen Malta is to attract film production companies to come shoot in Malta. It has been proven that every single film or TV production has an economic impact on the local economy, by generating money in different parts of the economy. Different business entities in the hospitality industry, hotels and restaurants, car

rentals, hiring of buses, employing people in different areas generating that monetary experience. Facilitate filming and ensure the setting up of an infrastructure that includes local film crews, equipment and anything that is available and required by the film industry. Screen Malta does support production to allocate locations, but the Malta Film Commission does not involve itself in the negotiations on these matters required.

The Malta film Commission offer services to find locations here in Malta and also abroad, if necessary, of course encouraging the production to always consider locations in Malta wherever possible. Production companies can shoot Malta as Malta or if necessary, shoot Malta as another country.

There are no conditions imposed as long as productions have a good intent and use Malta as a film location, and they can participate in incentives that offer a 40% rebate on expenses.

This has all an impact Malts does not currently any film permits and is not a regulator where filming is taken place. In Malta the Malta Film Commission requests that productions abide by the by laws and laws that govern everyone and everything of Malta If a certain part of Malta is chosen than the production will have to get in touch with the local council. Like for Valletta than they must visit the local council to obtain all the permits necessary to shoot a film. Different entities will be contacted like Heritage Malta when a cultural heritage building is required for shooting for example the Grand Masters Palace.

The churches are the Curia, if the location of Johns Co Cathedral is required than the foundation will be contacted. Every single location has their own conditions and contracts are drawn up between the parties. For closing streets, they need the police department. For the usage of Drones, they contact Transport Malta will be contacted. Sometimes security deposits will be required to be paid and returned after the shooting of the film is over.

The Malta Film Commission has Screen Malta has on their agenda an introduction targeting a niche market of Film Tourism producing national movie trails by using to capitalize on the movies filmed in Malta using the contact of those films and boost the Film Tourism market. The Malta Film Commission has spearheaded a Tourist guide course for licensed tour guides with the union of tour guides so that the participants will official are able to participate in this niche market of film guiding in Malta.

Also, a successful open house was held introducing the companies that work in the film industry. To close on the topic of social media the Malta Film Commission besides the support of the cash incentives, attached are a few obligations that include training of locals interested in the film industry, some include credits and the concept of focusing of shooting Malta as Malta .

One of the great incentives is to gather testimonials from actors who share their experience while working in Malta, either on their own personal social media or by sharing it on the Screen Malta web site.

Mr Alex Zammit (Mayor of Valletta).

A one-on-one interview was held at the mayor's office Mr Alex Zammit at the Valletta Local council, discussing the cultural and heritage of Valletta a UNESCO World Heritage Site the structure being used to support the film industry choosing Valletta as a prime location.

The questions asked pertained about the process in the following the regulations and by laws of the city of Valletta and Malta when the Production Company sends the Department head of Locations of the production company with the experienced Maltese location Manager whose expertise support the submission of the required paperwork to book the locations ,the police for closure of streets ,the availability of parking places ,the building of any specific structure, the liaison with the local residents of the chosen streets, the permission for using drones and the overall clean-up .

The local council supports the residents, but the film production team approaches the residents of the streets involved in filming. The local council facilitate the interaction by organizing information and promoting dialogue. They know that most people have stated that they are satisfied as firstly they do get monetary compensation for any inconvenience that might be caused by the filming on their streets. Also the film crews were attentive of their surroundings and people' needs while filming. Residents were happy with their treatment and expressed openness to future filming on their street. Residents of Merchant and East Street felt a sense of satisfaction in being picked to film and participate in high-budget films, in addition to the financial perks. Sometimes there will be a few issues but all challenges are usually solved amicably.

Jon Cassar (Director Producer based in Los Angeles, USA).

The Director /Producers Jon Cassar has over forty years of experience working in many TV and Film industry. He has directed and produced TV shows and a few movies, and is well known in the industry for directing and producing close to nine years of the Fox series '24 ' with Kiefer Sutherland. Mr Jon Cassar emphasises that there is a difference between the way the production and time management of a TV show is put into motion as it is a faster paced industry, requiring on the spot decisions if necessary, so that the show stays within budget. Mr Cassar mentioned that he takes pride in making the time to search for the right options when selecting the available locations.

A top priority in selecting the appropriate locations where the script is followed and to make changes in the script if necessary to accommodate the writers, to stay in budget as the constant moving of the crew and equipment is time consuming and costs more .So TV Shows film in studio and outside at the chosen locations which the production company have negotiated to use in filming As a result, filming production companies may have a variety of ways in dealing with all the permit requirements which most times have to be applied for many weeks before ,so depending on those time constraints ,Mr Jon Cassar will have to be creative and stay within the script and the budget.

3.4 Culture and Heritage

The film industry makes and distributes films of various genres, with never-ending stories involving realism and science fiction. To meet the criterion in a highly competitive market, the directors' sources must be legitimate in order to keep the focus on the script, which provides a story in the context of filmmaking, rather than the financial aspects of every decision that must be made.

Producers and directors must make the best use of the available location alternatives and are continually on the lookout for suitable filming settings. As a result, filmmaking projects may have a variety of repercussions on such environments, particularly those having heritage significance and that are potentially susceptible.

Film's participation in the National Culture Policy allows as the medium to be recognised as a cultural product. Indeed, it firmly situates film within a comprehensive framework in which stockholders are recognised and objectives relating to the applicable medium are outlined.

Michaela Borg stated, 'this industry has had a negative impact on Malta's heritage, largely because filming at historic sites is not sufficiently supervised or regulated' (Borg, 2017).

Cultural heritage as a location becomes a significant character in the story because it offers a sense of realism, which is the purpose of its employment. The filmmaker will be concerned with shooting the surroundings slowly and closely so that the viewer may analyse the scene and draw his own judgements about the character.

4. Results Analysis and Discussion

4.1 The Process of the development of filming in Valletta

Valletta's role as the capital city of Malta has also made it a focal point for filmmakers interested in using the country's cultural and historical heritage. Filming in built heritage sites such as Valletta is a complex operation with a number of stakeholders in place. Many films have chosen Valletta as a filming location and since scenes shot in Valletta are usually street scenes the Valletta Local Council provides permits when necessary (Valletta Local Council, Jan 2024). At various stages of a filmmaking production, people from many sectors are brought together, ranging from location managers to local council members to actual residents of the streets where the filming occurs.

Screen Malta (MFC) collaborates with several public organisations, including MEPA, Heritage Malta, the Lands Department, Transport Malta, and others (2016, p. 5). MEPA is currently divided into two different entities: the Planning Authority and the Environment and Resources Authority. These bodies approve production teams' use of specific sites and set filming restrictions. The Planning Authority and the Environment and Resources Authority reviews the application detailing the scene that will be shot and how the location will be amended to fit into the story. This authority balances the preservation of the sites and what the film producers want and need.

In my interview with Screen Malta representatives, information was shared about the filming process. The first component in filming is the application. The film production applies to film in Malta and chooses particular locations. This service of finding locations is offered by Screen Malta. The production company will then have to get in contact with the administration of entities such as Heritage Malta and others depending on the sites chosen to obtain the permission for filming in the said location being of Cultural and Heritage in Malta. The Grand Master Palace has been used by many films, including the recent film, Napoleon. The cultural heritage staff of the site may also find the need to consult with specialists. This planning stage

is very important in preventing incidents on historical locations and also to allow the requests of the filming productions.

The second component is the Location agreements (Flynn, 2017.). A contract is done between the film production and the entities that are responsible for the filming location. This provides an outline for the protection of the site during filming since it outlines what changes are allowed to be done to the site. This contract also lists various other details including timing, conditions for the use of the site and location fees.

The third component is the Site preparation for filming (Flynn, 2017.), during this process the location is dressed for filming according to the script. Depending on the films period, any modern items that can be removed from the site are removed and items that cannot be removed are covered by protective material while keeping it in line to the time period of the film. These are protected in high traffic areas used by crews and equipment. Any dressing in streets or heritage sites must be reversible once filming is complete. Mr Cassar informed that changes to the scripts happen frequently and so there needs to constant communication between the film production and the entities that safeguard the location or site.

4.1.1 Filming in the streets of Valletta

Most directors and producer who visit Malta are astonished by the fortifications of the city Valletta. Furthermore, production teams also believe that filming in a UNESCO World Heritage Site would increase the production value of the film (Malta Film Commission, n.d. p. 15 - 16).

Many streets in Valletta such as Merchant Street, East Street and St Ursula Street are popular locations used repeatedly by famous directors and A list actors. These streets have been shown in big budget movies such as Midnight Express (1978) (Gladiator (2000) Count of Monte Cristo (2002) Munich in 2005, Eichmann (2007) Kon-Tiki (2012) World War Z (2013) ,The Promise (2016), Assassins Creed (2016), 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi (2016) and Murder on the Orient Express (2017). This was also stated by the representatives of the Malta Film Commission.

Shooting in the streets of a touristic capital city is not as simple, several issues arise from beginning to conclusion of the movie. During shooting the residents that live in that particular

street have to deal with the disturbance to their daily lives from dealing with the crews, the changes to the streets and not able to park in their streets. In the film the Promise (Interview Mayor), East Street was used for a night scene. Residents were affected in the night due to light and noise. Although some may find filming crews inconvenient, locals frequently work as extras during filming, resulting in a favourable connection between Valletta residents and production companies. East Street is a very popular street and so the filming industry must make sure to maintain a good relationship with the residents.

When the filming of these films happens in Valletta, the process is to contact the Local Council of Valletta. Ms Gabriel Aguis and Mayor Alex Zammit make sure that all the right paperwork for permits is filled and paid for. They also facilitate communication between residents and the Maltese location managers that are working for the movie.

4.1.2 How these street locations are portrayed.

In Midnight Express an old part of Fort St Elmo was used and a few streets in Valletta. In Gladiator a Valletta ditch of the fortifications were used. In the film Count of Monte Cristo the grand Harbour and the Siege Bell was the port of Marseille, in the film Munich the Athens apartment explosion scene was filmed in the block of the British Hotel just off St Ursula street also the Promise was meant to be Turkey and filmed on St Ursula Street and on East street ,In World War Z close to 90% of the film was filmed in the narrow streets of Valletta especially Strait Street ,fort St Elmo and the old car park near the old sea passenger terminal in Marsa area very close to Valletta. For the film Murder on the Orient Express, they used the area next to Fishermen's wharf known as Pinto Wharf. 13 Hours, The Secret soldiers of Benghazi used East Street. All these popular streets were used as locations as they were all dressed up to be another place related to the script of the film Munich.

All The film Assassins Creed was shot in Malta, Spain, and the United Kingdom. One of the most difficult problems for the production team was to recreate the world of 15th-century Spain. In 1492, the world was reconstructed in Valletta, Malta and Almeria, Spain, which also served as Seville, Andalucía (Malta Film Commission, n.d., p. 15). Merchant street in Valletta chosen for its well preserved historical building environment similar to Spain, early renaissance period (Malta Film Commission ,n.d.p.15)The church of St Dominic and St Dominic street all the way to the main street, Merchant street all the way down to the block of

Flats called Il Kamrate, was blocked off with a green screen for computer generated imagery (CGI) which is extensively employed in a number of films.

It was very important for the production to be able to film the scenes in a realistic setting and be able to also film the action scenes (including jumps and fight scenes) in the same real-life setting which would make the whole movie more authentic (Malta Film Commission, n.d. p. 11). In Assassins' Creed - a specific intersection had to be closed up for over a month, which was quite difficult. This is why the work with the Local council is important since it aims for a balance between protecting citizens and attaining positive results.

It was very important for the production to be able to film the scenes in a realistic setting and be able to also film the action scenes in the same real-life setting which would make the whole movie more authentic (Malta Film Commission, n.d. p. 11). According to Screen Malta, venues contribute to its appeal as a filmmaking location (2016, p. 5). Malta Film Commission constantly work to market Malta and the Maltese location as being able to double up for many other countries. However, one must safeguard Malta's cultural and natural legacy. A balance must be struck between film production and the use of these locations and sites.

4.2 Film Tourism in Valletta

The Screen Malta policy also focuses on the variables that must be considered in order to promote screen tourism in Malta. First and foremost, one must identify the type of tourist who visits Malta. The phrase "film tourist" refers to a casual screen tourist who visits Malta for reasons other than filmmaking, with film-related activities coming second to their main motives (interview MFC). Malta now provides a 40% cash rebate to film projects, reinforcing the notion that film tourism would boost the economy. In my interview with Susan Roland and Jean Pierre Borg I was informed that the incentives are supported by the production use of Malta as Malta. Most times the production company will film Malta as another country. Screen Malta also share incentives of testimonials of actors who while working in Malta, they enjoy using their own personal social media to express their satisfaction in discovering Valletta and Malta and sharing it with their followers.

Films which were shot in Valletta were not blockbusters. These films were successful but not enough to boast an increase in film tourism in Valletta. (local council) informed that they do not record the number of tourists that visit Valletta specifically because they were influenced to visit through film. Screen Malta has introduced film trailers where film content is used to

promote the niche of film tourism, In one film filmed in Malta where Malta was filmed as Malta and dinosaurs were created and placed in the prominent square of St George in Valletta. The movie was Jurassic World Dominion.

Of Course, at the Upper Barrakka gardens there is a decent size board that presents many movies that have been filmed in Malta.

5. Conclusions

Valletta has been a favourite location for filming. Producers are continuously looking for settings to make films more authentic; streets and sites in Valletta are dressed according to the needs of the tale. The film tourism sector currently does not know the exact number of persons who visit Malta on film-related trips. This niche market is expanding. Screen Malta took the initiative to organise a film course, which was given and attended by licenced tour guides from the Union of Tour Guides who wanted to learn about the Malta film industry. They can be identified as film guides since they were given a lapel to represent their interest in this booming market.

Film tourism is a growing niche that is expanding in many ways, one of which is social media, which is used not only by film enthusiasts to express their own adventures discovering the locations where films were filmed in Valletta, but most importantly by actors who, while filming in Malta, share their own personal experiences discovering the city of Valletta and Malta.

Valletta Over the previous eleven years, the number of boutique hotels, bars, restaurants, and cafeterias in Valletta's less popular regions has increased significantly.

The Council of Europe Convention emphasises this issue, defining cultural legacy as "the interaction of people and places over time" (of Europe, 2005, p. 2). This has given citizens the right to speak out about their city.

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Figure 1: The Heritage Cycle (Thurley, 2005.)

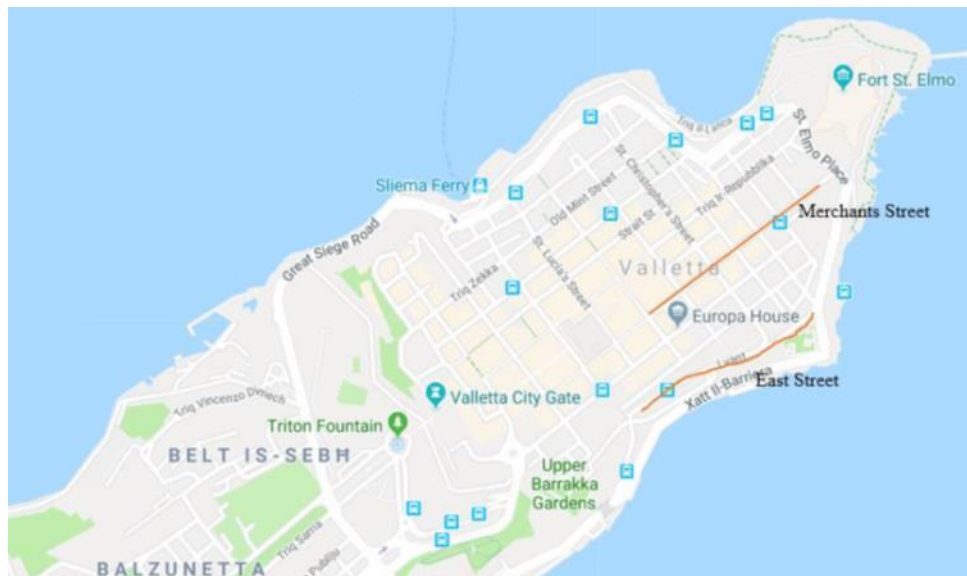


Figure 2: Map of Valletta, highlighting Merchant Street & East Street.



Figure 3: Assassin's Creed Film Poster. (Source: IMDB, 2018.)



Figure 4: Munich (2005) Director: Steven Spielberg



Figure 5: World War Z (2013) Director: Marc Forster



Figure 6: 13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi (2016) Director: Michael Bay

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