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NEUROLOGICAL STAMP

Sir David Bruce (1855–1931) and Themistocles Zammit (1864–1935)

Sir David Bruce was an Australian by birth. He graduated from Edinburgh in 1881 and spent a large part of his career as a military physician. While stationed in Malta, he studied Malta fever (brucellosis or undulant fever). In 1887 he discovered the causal organism at first called *Microoccus melitensis* but later renamed *Brucella melitensis*. Themistocles Zammit was engaged in public hygiene activities around the Mediterranean and Malta, and became acquainted with Bruce. In 1905 it was discovered by Zammit, who was born in Valletta, Malta that Malta fever was transmitted by goats. Neurological complications of Brucellosis are now well recognised.

In 1894 Bruce found that nagana, a fatal disease of horses and cattle in central and southern Africa, was caused by a trypanosome named after him (*Trypanosoma brucei*). This was transmitted from antelopes by the tsetse fly (*Glossina morsitans*). This work was of great help with his later research on sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis), in which he showed that another tsetse fly (*Glossina palpalis*) was the vector of the disease and the disorder was caused by *Trypanosoma gambiense*.

Bruce and Zammit are portrayed on a commemorative stamp issued by Malta for the international antibrucellosis congress held by the FAO in Valletta in 1964 (Stanley Gibbons 316, Scott 298)

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