

# Health in British Colonial Malta, Cyprus and Ionian Islands

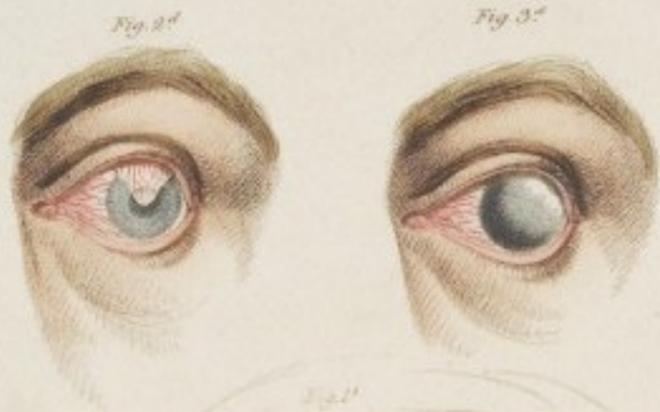
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The aim of this research is to focus on the historical changes in health and medical systems taking place in these islands during the British colonial rule in the 19th century.

- \* It will look in detail at how the British authorities dealt with fevers and **recurrent epidemics**, some of which were endemic to these islands.
- \* Were local health institutions suitably reformed by colonial rulers to entice local **patronage**?
- \* Indigenous **healing practices** versus British treatment of their troops.
- \* Why were some buildings or services built or **protected** by the British and others left in the care of the islanders?
- \* How far did the church bodies support **charities** and how much of that charity was provided by the British Government or private beneficiaries? Was Governmental aid seen by the natives as charity or as their right?



Ophthalmic Diseases

Courtesy of Wellcome Library

**Phthisis**—“The actual number of deaths while actually serving may be comparatively few, but of those retired on account of phthisis and other serious diseases, many succumb in no long time afterwards.”

*The Sanitary Commissioner of Cyprus, British Medical Journal, vol. 2, no. 1038 (Nov. 20, 1880).*

**Climate**—“Compare this climate to that of Malta! Why, there is no comparison. In Malta the stifling nights are hotter than the days... As to this winter climate of Cyprus, I can only call it perfection, it simply is the finest in the whole of the Mediterranean”.

*Esme Scott-Stevenson, “Our Home in Cyprus”, 1880.*

**Venereal diseases**—Malta was a particular significant case as it was said to be exceptionally well regulated under the Governorship of Sir Henry Storks, with venereal disease supposed to be virtually eradicated by the mid-1860s. Storks had attempted to address the problem of prostitution when he was Lord High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands, and claimed total success in eliminating the disease from Zante, Cephalonia and Corfu.

“Prostitution and Racialised sexuality; the regulation of prostitution in Britain and the British Empire before the Contagious Diseases Acts” by Howell, Philip in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2000, vol. 18.



The Naval Hospital at *Bighi* Malta

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