The French Campaign on Jaffa, March 3rd–14th 1799

Abstract

This research introduces the French campaign against Egypt beginning in 1798, the reasons for the French campaign against Palestine, the path of the French forces to Jaffa, the progress of the forces until the imposition of the siege, the demand to hand it over, the refusal of the commander of the garrison - Ahmed Agha - to go ahead with that and the subsequent attack on the city by Bonaparte, who started bombing the city and its walls. This research has also dealt with the resistance of the Jaffa garrison which was unable to stop the progress of the French forces. This eventually led to the storming of the city and the subsequent looting and killing carried out by the French soldiers against the native people. This research has additionally examined the special agreement whereby the Jaffa garrison soldiers surrendered to the French forces in return for securing their lives and Bonaparte and his military council discussing the fate of these prisoners. This resulted in the decision to execute all of the garrison soldiers who numbered an estimated 3,000. The research has further noted the spread of the plague among the French army in Jaffa and the discussion of the suspicion that Bonaparte poisoned the sick soldiers. The study has additionally touched on the two letters that Bonaparte sent on March 9th 1799 to the residents of Palestine and Ahmed Pasha Al-Jazzar. The research ends with a conclusion that includes the most important results of this interpretation.

Keywords: French campaign, Jaffa, Napoleon Bonaparte, The Ottoman Empire.
Introduction
France was the first European country to obtain commercial concessions from the Ottoman Empire since the signing of the Concessions Treaty between the two countries in 1536. Since then, France's relations with the Ottoman Empire have distinguished the relationship from among those established with the rest of the European countries involved. This relationship continued until the arrival of the French campaign in Egypt in 1798 led by the French officer Bonaparte - Napoléon Bonaparte later on - (August 15th 1769 to May 5th 1821).

Bonaparte aspired to be a revolutionary Christian and to possess an imperial glory that would rewrite the boundaries of civilization and sovereignty on a global scale. He intended to do this by establishing his own empire in the east, to be based in Egypt. It was here in early 1798 that he proposed a military campaign to take it over in order to protect French commercial interests while attacking the interests of his "central" enemy, Britain, by cutting out the means of available transportation between it and its colonies in India and the East Indies. This was in addition to the establishment of a French presence in the east with the ultimate dream of connecting the areas in the future with the aid of the Sultan of Mysore "Tipu" (December 10th 1782 – May 4th 1799). The Sultan was France's loyal ally against Britain and his influence in India greatly threatened Britain's interests in the important regions of the world.

The French forces sailed from the port of Toulon on May 19th 1798 with a fleet of 6 squadrons comprised of 13 warships, 14 frigates and 400 ships in order to transport 36,000 French soldiers. On his way to Egypt, Bonaparte occupied the island of Malta. A few days later, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs William Granville also known as William Granville, 1st Baron of Granville (June 8th 1791 – February 20th 1801), confirmed that Bonaparte traveled from Malta to Alexandria from the port of Abu Qir on July 1st 1798 and had entered Egypt. Britain sent its fleet under the command of Admiral Horatio Nelson (1771 - 1805) to hunt down the French forces. The British fleet clashed with the French fleet in the battle of Abu Qir on August 2nd 1798 and most of the French fleet was destroyed, thus Nelson managed to impose a comprehensive naval blockade against the French forces in Egypt.

The British ships’ observation of the French campaign in Egypt and the defeat of the French forces in the naval battle of Abu Qir became apparent.
in the natural context of the British colonial policy that sought to preserve its interests in the East, especially in India, from any threat that France might pose. France was considered to be the greatest colonial rival to Britain in the European continent.

The beginning of the French campaign against Palestine and its causes

While Bonaparte was busy settling matters in Egypt during the fall and winter of 1798, he received news of the Ottoman Empire joining the British-Russian alliance against France and that two Ottoman armies were on their way to attack his forces in Egypt. This was in addition to one of the forces having been assembled on the island of Rhodes. Its goal was to land on the coast of Palestine. As for the other force, it was based in Damascus and its goal was to march through Palestine and across the separating desert to Egypt. The plan was to establish a base in Acre.

Bonaparte’s popularity and resources in Egypt had also diminished. He became eager to gain control of the “treasures” collected by the governor of Acre, Ahmed Pasha al-Jazzar (May 1777 - April 1804) during his rule, especially since it had become almost certain that the war was going to be with the Ottoman Sultan. The war was imminent which would make it difficult for Bonaparte to defend himself later against the Ottoman army. Bonaparte decided in early 1799 that the best defense was to attack the Ottoman Empire before it had completed its preparations and to work to secure Egypt by controlling Palestine, which enjoyed strategic importance.

Bonaparte also wanted to deprive the British fleet of the food supplies that it got from Syria, especially from Jaffa and Acre. Bonaparte had to fight on 3 fronts against the Mamluks, the Ottoman Empire and Britain without a naval fleet or any hope of receiving aid from France.

This strange behavior may explain Bonaparte’s adventurous personality after the defeat of his forces at Abu Qir, the siege imposed on him by the British fleet, his inability to obtain any military or logistical supplies from France, the expected fighting on more than one front and the instability of the situation in Egypt. All of these factors go against any hasty behavior that Bonaparte might engage in, such as preparing a campaign against Palestine in such extremely difficult circumstances.

Bonaparte, on February 1st 1799, walked at the head of a French army consisting of about 13,000 soldiers en-route to Syria. The French infantry force consisted of four military divisions. The first was led by Général Jean-Baptiste Kléber (March 9th 1753 - June 14th 1800), the second by Général Régnier, the third by Général Bon and the fourth by Général Lannes. The
French artillery was under the command of Général Dommartin while the engineering teams were under the command of Général Caffarelli.

As for the composition of the French army, there were 9,932 infantry soldiers, 800 cavalry, 370 engineers, 1385 artillery, 400 guides, and 80 camel commanders which carried the baggage and food of the soldiers in the Sinai desert. It was decided that Bonaparte would secure Acre with 3 French frigates carrying heavy artillery that had been rescued from the naval battle of Abu Qir. However, ships from the British fleet later captured it off the coast of Haifa.

The size of the French army was considered to be few in both number and armaments compared to the hopes and aspirations that Bonaparte wished to achieve (the occupation of Syria). It also seemed weak compared to the size of the forces that it was expected to face. Despite this, Bonaparte was determined to complete what he had planned.

The French forces followed the Mediterranean coast until they reached Al-Arish, which surrendered to them on February 8th 1799. After leaving, the French forces suffered greatly from thirst as some of the soldiers had already exhausted their food supplies. Heavy rains disturbed the French forces and upon the arrival of the French forces at Khan Younis which had been abandoned by its garrison, all foodstuffs contained therein were used. This was in addition to 6 camels being slaughtered and the meat distributed to the French forces. At noon, the French forces resumed their march toward Gaza.

The scouts of the Ottoman army were watching from the highlands on the outskirts of the city to observe the progress of the French army. They soon dispersed and set off back to the interior of Palestine. The French forces entered Gaza without a fight on February 25th 1799 where the Ottoman forces had left large quantities of food and war ammunition.

In order to compensate for the deprivation that they suffered from, the French soldiers looted Gaza City including clothes, some of which were contaminated by the plague. This caused many problems for the French army and after the four-day heavy rain stopped, the French forces left Gaza on March 1st 1799 to Ashdod, which they arrived at night on the same day after its people left it to travel to the south of Hebron.

After Ashdod, the French forces headed to Ramla where they found a large quantity of wheat and barley stores. This became a major food resource.
They stayed in Ramla for two days before signs of the plague began to spread among the soldiers.

It can be said that Bonaparte's march with his army along the Mediterranean coast was because of his desire to obtain a port in order to gain a foothold through which he could obtain sufficient support for his armies from France.

Causes of the French campaign against Jaffa

Jaffa is located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It was built on a high hill and its foothills were surrounded by walls reinforced with towers. The heart of the city built on the hill was visible above it and the hills in the south were connected by a series of low sand dunes. In the south and east of the city, there was very thick cover provided by orange and lemon groves of a large size.

Inside Jaffa, the houses were built of stone while the streets were a maze of narrow passages and stairs. There were also many tall buildings. Most history books emphasize the abundance of Jaffa’s farms and their irrigation systems which are able to provide water adequate enough for the city in the event of a siege.

When Bonaparte wrote his diaries while isolated on St. Helena Island, he said the following:

"Jaffa is the only port on the road from Damietta to Palestine, and that possession of this port was necessary to maintain maritime contacts with Egypt, in order to unload military supplies of the army specials like guns and artillery that are transported by ship."

Bonaparte asserted that it was against all rules of prudence to act against Jerusalem before Jaffa was occupied.

Bonaparte arrives in Jaffa and imposes the siege

The strength of the Jaffa garrison at that time ranged between 4 - 5 thousand Albanians (Arnaout), Moroccans and Sudanese soldiers led by Ahmed Agha. There were also a good number of Egyptian "Mamluks" forces from Ibrahim Bey's force. According to the French official sources, the Arish Ottoman garrison who surrendered to Bonaparte "under oath" to not to take up arms after their surrender had actually joined the Jaffa garrison. At the time, there was a unit of at least 40 Ottoman field artillery that had been specially trained by French advisers before French-Ottoman relations deteriorated in 1797.

Bonaparte was correctly looking at his main problem, the limited time available to him. He had to control Jaffa through a "Blitzkrieg" and defeat the Ottoman forces coming from Syria. This was so then he could return to
Egypt in time to face the naval landings expected by the Ottoman forces. Depending on the weather and sea conditions, the portable forces were to land at Alexandria in order to cordon off the French in Abu Qir Bay in May or June 1799. Bonaparte therefore had only 8 to 10 weeks to complete the conquest of Palestine and to arrange for her defense before returning to Egypt again. Nevertheless, Bonaparte unexpectedly lost two precious weeks during the siege of El-Arish so he had to try to make up for a lost time by accelerating the occupation of Jaffa.

Bonaparte ordered his army chiefs on March 2nd 1799 to move on Jaffa at 7 am the following day, March 3rd 1799. The front of the French army arrived under the command of Général Kléber and the city was surrounded by a weak fence rising four meters and one meter wide. This was very similar to the pattern of the walls in the middle centuries without trenches. This was until the traveler Cont Volley said that this wall was a "Garden Wall." The walls were surrounded by towers fixed with cannons. There were two fences west of the city towards the sea aimed at protecting the port and the road to it.

When Bonaparte arrived in Jaffa at 3 pm on March 3rd 1799, he immediately began conducting a comprehensive survey in order to begin his plan to take over the city. The French reconnaissance teams worked with the artillery, engineers, and other teams to work towards obtaining the information necessary to implement the decided plan, after which Bonaparte ordered Général Caffarelli to officially lay siege to the city.

Général Kléber started by dividing up the French forces early in the morning in order to tighten the siege of the city. When approaching the walls, artillery shells were fired from within onto the approaching French forces. The forces were settled further away on a high place so then they could see and explore the city closely. The French forces also monitored the Mediterranean coast by hiding among the sandy hills. When Bonaparte approached the city walls, he encountered resistance from the Jaffa garrison. During the return, one of the shells fell near him and would have hit him had he not been sheltering among the mounds, bushels and sand. Some sources mention that Bonaparte narrowly escaped death after a sniper's bullet pierced his hat.

**Bonaparte demands the surrender of Jaffa**

Bonaparte sent a French officer with another trumpet early in the morning of March 3rd 1799 with a letter to the commander of the Jaffa garrison,
Ahmed Agha. This was in order to present an offer of honorable surrender to Jaffa in exchange for not attacking the residents and garrison of Jaffa.

The letter stated the following:
"Ahmad Pasha El-Jazzar had started the hostilities against him in Al-Arish, and that “God” won the French army that controlled it, and that Bonaparte did not want war; had it not been for El-Jazzar to start, and Jaffa was besieged from all sides, and that the French artillery batteries apply the blockade to it, and within two hours it can demolish the fences and destroy the defenses. In this letter, Bonaparte affirmed his desire to provide protection to the Jaffa garrison, and to protect the city in exchange for surrender; and that it would delay the start of the bombing until 7am the following day."

Soon after the officer and his companions entered the city, the French soldiers watched in amazement and awe as the heads of the two were lifted using spears above the main gate of Jaffa Castle. Their bodies were thrown off the walls outside which led to the spread of shouts of revenge from the gathered French army.

It was clear from the ongoing developments that Bonaparte wanted to limit as much as possible the loss of life during his military campaign against Palestine due to the British blockade on him in Egypt and the difficulty he had when it came to compensating for his losses. He made an effort to occupy most of the cities in a peaceful manner without a fight.

The sources do not mention the reasons why Ahmed Agha did not surrender to the French forces. There are many suggested reasons for this, such as the following:

a. The existence of orders from Ahmad Pasha El-Jazzar to resist, as the siege will weaken the French forces before they come to Acre, which is considered to be the capital of Al-Jazzar.

b. The strict leadership qualities of Ahmed Agha which will become more evident during the fighting.

c. Ahmed Agha believed that Jaffa's fortifications would protect him and his forces from the French.

Preparing to attack Jaffa
Bonaparte decided to take advantage of the regular and well-known siege works because placing artillery batteries safely to allow them to work regularly and naturally could take a whole week. He decided to make use of the tree cover and sand-undulating land in order to push his artillery just 150
meters from the walls of Jaffa, as well as the assembling of its attacking forces within a short distance of the walls.

Bonaparte's plan to attack included three main stages: firing artillery shells, creating holes in the fences and then attacking the Jaffa garrison inside the castle. This plan stemmed from his need to maintain the pressure of the attack and to increase it in the face of what was perceived as constant resistance in Jaffa. This was especially so after his experience during the Cairo uprising. The siege of Al-Arish taught him not to underestimate Eastern ingenuity when defending fortified places.

Général Lannes was then assigned the task of leading a major attack on the southern sector of the city while Général Bon was assigned the task of a secondary attack only, despite the apparent weakness of the walls of Jaffa there. Bonaparte intended to give his forces a real opportunity to penetrate the city walls while the general headquarters of the French forces were placed near a large rainwater pool, protected by citrus orchards.

Under the cover of night on March 3rd – 4th March 1799, work began. Five artillery batteries were installed, 4 of which were directed against the southern wall of Jaffa in addition to one to support the French forces in the northern sector of the city. There were also 13 field-cut artillery batteries under Bonaparte's command personally, with most of them being 12 gauge, 8, 6, and 3 inch. There was also a group of 6-inch howitzers and 6-inch mortars as well, and many of the 16 heavy artillery pieces were shipped on to the remainder of the French fleet ships commanded by Captain Standelet. They were also put on cargo ships collected for this purpose from the Egyptian ports. These ships had started their journey north without contacting the ground forces, forcing Bonaparte to make an attempt to storm Jaffa with only the light artillery available under his command.

The French forces also installed a battery consisting of four 12-inch cannons and a mortar between the trees about 200 meters south of the walls of Jaffa. The aim was to create holes in the city walls from the south and southeastern sides. The location to be bombed in the southern wall was chosen in order to create the necessary gap to enable the French forces to reach the high buildings located directly behind the wall. This was in order to turn them into a focal point to secure the gap and as a basis for further penetration into the city. An additional 3 artillery batteries were later installed, providing new fire support and covering the walls during the ground assault on Jaffa.
As for the artillery batteries in North Jaffa, the mission was mainly to support the efforts of Général Bon in addition to covering the entrance to the port of Jaffa to prevent any ships from escaping. This was so then they could become future French spoils, especially since the French forces had an urgent need for marine vessels and cargo ships, including small-sized boats, in order to maintain a "naval base" especially after the destruction of the fleet at the Abu Qir naval battle.

Despite Bonaparte’s urgency, the task of installing the artillery batteries and fortifying the infantry sites by building barricades, building communication paths, trenches and fortifying them with dust bags continue. This was not completed until dawn on March 7th 1799.

The French military capabilities used in the siege of Jaffa at the time were not great, given that France was a colonial and influential country. This may have been due in part to the British blockade imposed by the British Navy on the French forces in Egypt and Syria. Still, the weapons available were sufficient compared to the military capabilities of the humble garrison of Jaffa.

French army bombed Jaffa

The bombing of Jaffa began at 7 am on March 4th 1799 as planned. This was after the messenger of Bonaparte and the trumpeter were killed and he refused to surrender the city while it was also before completing all of the preparations for the stationing of his forces and artillery. This included where the artillery batteries fired 20 shells per hour per cannon in order to make the necessary holes to break down the walls of Jaffa. However, it was not until two o’clock in the afternoon that the holes were made. The reason was not the relatively light caliber of the French artillery or the misconception that the city walls would not stand up to the artillery. It was because the French plan did not take into account the fact that in Jaffa, as is the case in many eastern places, the ground part of the castle was much higher than it is outside of the walls. It appeared that the French artillery was not sufficiently targeting the upper places parallel to the surface of the castle from the inside and that most of the shelling was in the lower places of the walls. The explosive force was therefore being absorbed.

Nevertheless, the influence of the cannons began to appear on the city walls around 2 pm on March 4th 1799 when two small breaches were made. They were at the top of the fence. Because the time was short, Bonaparte focused all of the firepower on widening the penetrated areas in order to expand them sufficiently to attack as quickly as possible. The next morning on
either the March 4th or 5th March 1799, it was believed that some ships wanted to leave Jaffa port. The engineering corps, artillery and naval weapon officers were sent to install a battery consisting of 8 6-inch howitzers on the coast in order to control the port and to prevent any ship from entering or leaving.

The resistance in Jaffa
The Ottoman Jaffa garrison was not in a state of inactivity or observation during this time. The garrison forces attempted to obstruct the progress of the blockade while the Mamluks and other local forces harassed the French forces as they came to besiege Jaffa along roads and paths from Ramla to Jaffa. As a typical example of the resistance, these forces ambushed a reinforcement faction from the French army when they raided northwest of Rama. Despite the fact that the soldiers sheltered from the camels, 12 French soldiers were killed in the ambush and most of them were wounded. The advanced French forces were also met by the resistance of the Jaffa garrison while preparing to tighten the siege. The garrison was able to demolish part of the work done at the sites where the artillery was installed and fortifications built. This led to the retreat of the French forces. As such, the Jaffa garrison carried out a consistent series of major attacks from the afternoon of March 6th 1799 until sunset. While the attacks were repulsed by the French forces, they succeeded at destroying most of the French artillery batteries and seizing a large amount of siege tools and small weapons, in addition to causing several fatal injuries among the French soldiers.

The French forces were also met with resistance on the western front of Jaffa from the seaside. Some of the French forces went to this area in order to counter the resistance, but did not push hard enough to achieve victory at the time. Later, Lannes moved half of one of his brigades to this side in order to prevent any Ottoman move from the sea-side. Despite all of these attacks, Bonaparte did not lose his control. He transferred his sense of success to all of his forces as they succeeded on the night of March 6th 1799. Not only did they repair the damages and complete the entrenchments of the French sites, but they also strengthened and expanded their control, installing cannons and bombing the city again at 8 o’clock the next morning on March 7th 1799.

It was clear that the resistance against the French soldiers was somewhat effective but it was not enough to break the siege of Jaffa or to force them to
withdraw. This might have been one of the reasons why Bonaparte stormed Jaffa as soon as possible and tried to stop the resistance that was draining his forces.

**Storming of Jaffa by the French army**

The French forces attacked between 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon of 7th March 1799, causing a major and practical breach in the walls of Jaffa. The French forces began storming the city after they succeeded in providing an unstable foothold for their forces in the lower parts of the walls. The progress of these forces had been slow due to the rubble falling down due to the bombing under the walls. The French forces attacking came under strong and continuous fire from the neighboring towers and from the high houses. The French artillery support batteries worked to silence the garrison guns but they were not able to achieve any impact at the time. As a result, the French engineers who cleaned the gaps suffered heavy losses, as did the 22nd French brigade that formed the breakout force at the time. Its commander, Colonel Lejeune, was killed and Général Lannes succeeded him. Brigadier Général Rambeau was given command of another division of French forces.

Rambeau stormed the walls of Jaffa with help from the French engineers amid heavy fighting. The Ottoman garrison remained resilient to the point where the soldiers who tried to exploit Rambeau's success were dismissed twice during the attack. This continued up until another 3-inch cannon was installed to aid in the penetration efforts. However, the French forces did not achieve the desired results due to the garrison soldiers sitting on the high rooftops of Jaffa.

To get rid of this hurdle and to support the advance of the French army, a small number of ground-breaking forces and infantrymen were hastily assembled under the command of engineering team leader engineer Captain Ayme, whose first attempt to reach high rooftops failed. In the second stage, he succeeded with only two of the advance forces in achieving this. The bombing was severe in order to draw the attention from the small group of soldiers. Ayme was the first French soldier to enter Jaffa.

Other groups of French forces also managed to storm the walls of Jaffa. They found themselves in an underground cellar that was once part of a previous building. The groups in this cellar became completely isolated from the other groups of French forces on the ground. This resulted in a feeling of complete isolation from the external events. The necessary way
was to infiltrate the city without observing its defenders. Ayme and his companions infiltrated the gap. Fortunately, they were not harmed. Although the general French attack was broken by the Jaffa garrison, a portion of the French forces took advantage of the presence of basements and corridors and began to attack again, firing at the garrison soldiers. They were able to eliminate them gradually. This encouraged Général Bon of the progress of his part to play in the fight. He strived to penetrate the walls of Jaffa from the north where he discovered the weakest spot in the walls, very near to the coast. Some of his forces expanded the gap in the wall from the east as well, while his main offensive was along the shore. Once they entered the fences, the walls were cleared from the inside until they reached the port. Under the cover of darkness, they were ineffectively harassed using fire aimed at them from the high houses. The fires were soon extinguished and the French forces took complete control of the entire port area. The Jaffa garrison noticed the disintegration of the defending forces and started to withdraw into the city. They were fighting from one house to another. The organized resistance stopped at about 8 o'clock in the evening of March 7th, 1799 after the castle was completely seized. The battle had been waged by the French soldiers with courage and discipline. The garrison was heroic in its defense. The removal of the rubble, demolition, and fortifications then officially started. However, the nuclei of the defenders held out until the noon of the next day, March 8th, 1799. Although looting was taking place everywhere, the Ottoman flag was still flying over the port of Jaffa which made some of the Ottoman supply ships enter the port. They were soon controlled by the French, and the ships were transported and added to the tiny fleet under Bonaparte's command. The cargo was important to the French forces, who were still suffering from shrinking supplies day after day. After the battle, the French found 50 cannons, 30 of which were European-made, along with massive stores full of food supplies. The French army's control of Jaffa Castle was, in the end, a living embodiment of the advanced French military power despite its scarcity and of modern military systems and effective military plans. This relates to the exchange of the old and the new quantitatively and qualitatively. The rickety walls had not been properly maintained and reinforced, similar to the rest of the castles and walls. It is true that courage was present in Jaffa but it was not sufficient by itself to stand up to the French army.
Looting and killing in Jaffa

The ongoing purging of the enclaves of Jaffa turned into a rash of killings and robberies inside the city. The storming of Jaffa was a "massacre horrible", as the city suffered after its surrender from "Horreurs de la Guerre" for 24 hours. It cannot be imagined a scene more horrifying than what happened where the streets were crowded with corpses. There were children slaughtered in the arms of their mothers and everywhere in the city, it was possible to hear the regretful screams of the women whose husbands had been killed. The French soldiers massacred whole families, and the women whose husbands or their sons were killed brought their relatives out from under the heaps of corpses for burial. When they saw the French soldiers, they escaped as quickly as possible. Those who remained alive in Jaffa did not dare to meet others survivors or even speak to themselves.

The storming of the French forces into Jaffa has turned into a nightmare of "unbridled theft, rape, arson, and willful killing", regardless of age, gender or nationality. The Greeks Armenians and other local Christians were killed in Jaffa, including French citizens alongside Muslims in Jaffa. The total death toll was about 1,500. Blood ran through the streets of Jaffa like gushing water. The French officers who tried to intervene were threatened, physically and assaulted by the soldiers who were invading as part of the "Murderous Frenzy ".

The French soldiers also stole some of the jewelry that women and children wore. They looted shops and large quantities of different foods such as rice, flour, oil, in addition to coffee, sugar, tobacco and quantities of gunpowder. It can be said that the losses incurred by the city due to looting are estimated at several millions and the French soldiers sold everything at very low prices. The locals bought their property back again and many soldiers made a significant profit from doing this.

The French soldiers' robbery and plunder was explained as being retaliation as the city refused the "honorable surrender" that cost them many dead and wounded. Some of the French forces included many criminal elements, and most of them lacked any motive other than the spirit of robbery and plunder.

This was also due to the general frustration of the French forces who felt hated by the local population. The locals considered them to be "unbelievers" who had come to conquer the Islamic lands. Moreover, the conflict between the French army and the Egyptian population exacerbated matters as Bonaparte took stringent measures to punish the French soldiers...
guilty of killing the Egyptians, even if evidence of their accusation was not presented. The French campaign left for Palestine after the leadership of the French army executed 10 French artillery soldiers from the 32nd Brigade who had been mistakenly accused of killing 3 Egyptian women. The real culprits were discovered immediately after that which caused great dissatisfaction among the soldiers. This partially overwhelmed the events of the French campaign against Jaffa. Bonaparte seems to have had to lessen the negative energy of his soldiers after these events, especially after the pent-up feelings reached their climax and reached a boiling point, especially after the French officer and his companions were beheaded. It can therefore be said that the looting and frustration that occurred was as a result of the accumulation of disappointments, frustration and anger among the French soldiers.

After Jaffa was plundered by the French soldiers, Bonaparte sent his assistants, Beauharnais and Gracieur, to appease the soldiers, to soothe their anger as much as possible, to monitor what was happening and to report to him accordingly. It is true that he was unable in the beginning to stop these events at their height, especially since he was staying in his camp outside the city. He was able to restore order the next morning.

In addition to the above, the French soldiers were "occupying" a land that was not theirs and controlling people that were not like them. A colonial spirit possessed them completely and they wanted to bring that to a conclusion: either for them to surrender or to kill them, bringing about devastation and destruction. This may in itself be a message that Bonaparte wanted to send to his enemies. The message was specifically addressed to Ahmed Pasha, the Butcher of Acre.

Capturing the Jaffa garrison
Jaffa's garrison had withstood the attack for only thirty hours until French forces took control of it. Bonaparte wrote that on the fifth hour of March 7th 1799, they were the "Masters of Jaffa". After that, according to contemporary sources, about 80 French soldiers fell and about 125 others were wounded.

Although the French forces controlled most of Jaffa, there were still pockets of resistance. They were on the defensive and stationed in either fortified buildings or mosques. When they were besieged - and most of them were Albanians - they demanded to be able to lay down their arms and surrender to the French forces in exchange for guaranteeing the preservation of their
lives, thus obtaining amnesty. Otherwise, they would fight until their last breath. This was accepted by the leaders of the French army and accordingly, they threw down their weapons and they went to the French camp as prisoners of war on March 7th 1799.

The number of prisoners totaled about 4,000 soldiers from Ahmed Pasha El-Jazzman’s forces in Jaffa, including 1,200 Turkish artillery and 2,500 Albanian and Moroccan soldiers. Bonaparte sent more than 500 soldiers to their cities in Damascus and Aleppo and 400 – 500 Egyptian soldiers were released 500. It was said that the number of servants, camel drivers, Egyptian soldiers and scouts who were captured numbered 700 people. They were released and arrived in Egypt, praising the respect that they had received from Bonaparte. He said: "I was merciful with the Egyptians. And with the people of Jaffa, but I was very desperate with the garrison, whose weapons were still in their hands."

Discussing the fate of the prisoners

Bonaparte was walking in front of his tent when he noticed many prisoners approaching. He said in deep sadness: "What do you want me to do with these men? I'm feeding them or transporting them by ship to Egypt or France? Why is this happening to Satan?" After Bonaparte listened to many opinions in anger, he severely reprimanded Eugene and Croisier for their behavior in terms of ensuring the prisoners’ safety. There were 4,000 prisoners and it was necessary to determine their fate. Bonaparte addressed the responsible officer and said: "It was your duty to die, instead of bringing these miserable creatures to me. What do you want me to do with them?" He then commanded the prisoners to sit down before he erected a tent for them to shelter under. Their hands were tied behind their backs and a little bread and biscuits were given to them, collected from the weak supplies of the French army.

Therefore on the first day of the prisoners’ arrival, a War Council was held with Bonaparte as the supreme commander of the French army in order for him to deliberate and determine the path that should be followed regarding the prisoners. They did not reach a decision. The next evening, the daily reports of the French army leaders came. They only talked about the failure to provide food rations for the French soldiers, the complaints of the soldiers and their dissatisfaction with seeing their bread being given to the "enemies", meaning the prisoners. The reports were worrying, especially the report of Général Bon, where he expressed fear of a rebellion by the French
soldiers because of the prisoners and the food spent on them at the expense of their rations.

The War Council met again and all French army generals were summoned to attend. For several hours, they discussed the issue of the prisoners within the framework of the desire to find a solution that would enable them to save the lives of the “unfortunate Prisoners, and the most urgent question was: Should they be sent to Egypt? Can this be done?

The question of Bonaparte's deportation of the prisoners from Jaffa to Egypt required the sending of French forces to accompany them, which would weaken the small French army in a country full of enemies. Even if that happened, there would not be enough supplies to allow for the safe arrival of the prisoners and the French soldiers accompanying them. Besides that, his soldiers may have had to cross hostile areas that may threaten their lives. Sending the prisoners on the ships in the port was in itself a useless idea because there were no ships that were sufficient enough in the absence of French aid reaching them through the Mediterranean due to the British naval blockade.

Bonaparte also considered taking the prisoners when he moved to occupy Acre. Here the issue of providing food arose again and imposed itself full force along with the dangers that could arise during the march there. There was also the question of what should be done with the prisoners when the French forces entered the walls of the city. Therefore, the same embarrassing questions were increasingly been repeated regarding the issue of tightening the control and security associated with the prisoners.

Bonaparte also seriously considered the release of the prisoners but he did not trust the honor of those he called "Barbarians." He feared that they would go to Acre and support its ruler, Ahmed Pasha El-Jazzar, against his forces again or that they support the residents of the Nablus mountains. The latter were known for harassing the French army, considering it to be a religious act. Bonaparte affirmed that a number of the captives were Turkish soldiers who had been captured shortly before in Al-Arish. They were released on the condition that they go to Baghdad and that any weapons would not be used against French forces. Instead of committing to what they had promised, they went to Jaffa in clear violation of the conditions of their surrender. They defended it until the end which cost the French forces a number of French soldiers. Bonaparte declared that if the
prisoners were released, he guaranteed that they would go to Acre and fight the French army again, as they did in Jaffa.

Bonaparte also confirmed that he had sent an officer and his companion to the commander of the Jaffa garrison to request a truce, and to hand over Jaffa peacefully without a fight. The heads of the two were raised on bayonets over the fence of Jaffa. This had a great impact on the determination of the fate of the prisoners of the Jaffa garrison. Bonaparte emphasized that it was impossible to leave part of the small French army to act as guards.

The prisoner problem was one of the greatest problems that had faced Bonaparte up until then. The options were considered to be limited in light of the conditions in which the French army was living and based on many military, logistical, and rationing constraints.

Whatever the case, Bonaparte needed to act to raise the morale of his forces and weaken the morale of his enemies in Acre after the unexpected resistance shown by the Jaffa garrison. Bonaparte apparently thought seriously about throwing terror into the hearts of the garrison of Acre, whose walls were stronger, its garrison was larger and its weapons were better than it was in Jaffa, so it was the massacre of Jaffa.

Execution of the Jaffa garrison

After Bonaparte ordered the demolition of the wall of Jaffa, the issue of prisoners was discussed in Jaffa for a period of three days by the War Council in the light of all of the circumstances discussed earlier. As a result, the Council unanimously decided on March 9th 1799 to release all peaceful residents such as women, children and aged persons. This did not extend to armed soldiers. It was decided to release the people of Damascus, Aleppo and Egypt carefully in order for them to return to their homes. Perhaps this was due to Bonaparte's knowledge that the Egyptians were going to return to a country that was already under his control. They would speak of Bonaparte's mercy with them and his intensity with his enemies. Because Bonaparte intended to occupy the Dome of the Cities of the Levant, he hoped that the captives of Damascus and Aleppo would convey a positive image of him before he occupied them.

It was also decided by this council to issue the "Decree of Death" to execute all Jaffa garrison soldiers. Accordingly, the garrison captives were brought to the French camp and divided into two parts. The first section consisted of about 2,500 soldiers and the second consisted of about 1,600 other soldiers. Bonaparte and his leaders at the time had a sense of "perfect conviction"
that he could not do other than what should be done regarding the execution of the prisoners. It was an urgent and something that was unanimously approved by the War Council.

Whatever the case, Kléber protested "magnanimously" against the decision to execute the prisoners and the commander of the division refused to execute the prisoners, until written instructions were sent from Berthier ordering him to obey the issued orders. On March 10th 1799, the prisoners were taken from Jaffa amidst a large battalion of French soldiers who surrounded them from all sides under the command of Général Bon. The prisoners expected their fate but they did not beg and did not complain. They walked composed and silent while some of the high-ranking captive officers urged their soldiers to follow the example of the companions of the prophet Mohammad and to surrender to their destiny which was "written on their forehead".

When the French forces reached the sandy hills to the southeast of Jaffa, the prisoners were divided into small groups and shot with rifles. The execution took a long time and those who remained alive from the wounds were stabbed with bayonets after they ran out of live ammunition. They were all killed in "cold blood" after precautions were taken so then none could escape. Their bodies were gathered together in a pyramid and they remained without being buried. Their white bones remained spread over the sand, visible to the public for a long period of time.

Many of the prisoners who were executed near the Jaffa coast on the Mediterranean managed to escape and swim to the rocks and coral reefs away from the gunshots. The French soldiers put their guns on the sand in order to urge them to return. They used the signs of Egyptian reconciliation common at the time in the country. When they returned, they were shot and killed before they even reached the coast and subsequently they disappeared among the crashing waves.

Whatever the case, the French army under Bonaparte committed its "massacre" of the Jaffa garrison and spent their lives in flagrant defiance of the pledge made by its officers to the prisoners. The historian Miot stated that the number of dead due to the massacre was between 2000 and 3000. The historian Hazlitt raised this number to between 3000 and 4000. Another historian mentioned that the number was 4000 or more while Scott and other historians stated that the number of those executed totaled 3000 prisoners. This is what most historians have since agreed upon.
Bonaparte sought to use various excuses to justify his committing of the massive massacre, denying that he had ordered the execution of such a number while confirming that he had ordered the execution of 1000 or 1200 only.

Whatever the case, the French never denied the massacre in Jaffa and they differed over the number of victims. The French campaign against Jaffa was marked by unprecedented horrors at the time, particularly when the British ambassador to Istanbul Elgin told Foreign Minister Granville that Bonaparte had become stripped of his humanity by killing the captive Jaffa in a cold act as part of a terrible massacre. The Turks were waiting for the opportunity to respond to the massacre, which has gone on to always be a disgrace in the history of Bonaparte.

Whatever the justifications presented by Bonaparte or the French historians to justify the massacre of Jaffa, the massacre was large and the justifications were flimsy. Bonaparte could have spared their lives especially since the handing over of the garrison soldiers was in exchange for the preservation of their lives, a tradition known and practiced since ancient times. Therefore it can be said that the massacre, along with being "brutal", also lacked the "minimum moral standards."

The spread of the plague in the French army

The French forces established their first hospital during their campaign against Palestine in Al-Arish. At that time, it consisted of 200 beds. Another hospital was also established in Gaza with 150 beds which demonstrated in a way that the plague had already started to spread in the French army since the control of Al-Arish. It first began in Gaza before it spread and was officially discovered in Jaffa. Some historians believe that the plague spread among the French soldiers after they looted houses in Jaffa and took Turkish clothing. The next day, the French army command issued orders for every soldier to bring his spoils to the field. All clothes were burned but this procedure came too late. The disease had already reached a certain magnitude. Those with the disease were carefully separated from the rest of the soldiers and were immediately taken to the nearest hospitals.

The French doctors officially announced the presence of the plague in Jaffa and the Armenian Convent, which served as the main hospital for the French forces, was filled with patients. When the disease was diagnosed, the medical staff, nurses and French monks fled. They left the patients. A proposal was presented to burn the house that was inhabited by the sick soldiers. The hospital administrators were given 30,000 pounds to buy food...
and beds for the patients and the nurses were promised good incentives. Royer, the chief pharmacist who stayed in Gaza, was responsible for sending more lemons from Gaza, which at the time were considered useful for preparing medicine for the disease.

The number of patients with the plague increased, reaching 400 patients being treated in the hospital in Jaffa. The proportion of patients infected also increased rapidly, which increased the spread of the disease. The measures that could be taken were very limited. The medical devices at the time were simple and of limited efficacy. The use of ancient experimental methods, which were used fairly widely otherwise, did not do any. Quarantine in Jaffa was also not possible for military reasons, which led to the wider spread of the disease to the point of 5 - 6 French soldiers dying every day.

As for Bonaparte, he asked both the doctors and officers to take the necessary measures in Jaffa after discovering that the soldiers had been infected with the plague. He ordered for them to send the injured to hospitals and to separate them from the rest of their colleagues, although Bonaparte was able for a short time to convince them that what had happened was just a fever associated with the lymph nodes and not the plague. In order to persuade them to do so, Bonaparte, on March 21st 1799 with two of his aides and senior medical officials, the doctors Larry and Desgenettes, visited the sick French soldiers. He took a tour of the hospital and shook hands with them. He stayed there for more than an hour and a half, listening to the patients and speaking to them with words of sympathy and encouragement from a place of unspeakable affection. Others were helped to carry the body of a miserable soldier wearing his rough clothes as he had died of the disease. Bonaparte told the soldiers that what he did had nothing to do with the plague, which resulted in a feeling of confidence among the soldiers. They were already convinced that if they had contracted the plague, Bonaparte would not have dared visit them and shake their hands. It was said that this psychotherapy somehow helped some of the victims to overcome the plague. Bonaparte's visit to his plague-infected soldiers had a significant positive impact in terms of encouraging the French soldiers and even some surgeons and nurses who had abandoned the sick to return. They were ashamed and returned to perform their duties. It was clear that Bonaparte was working to reassure his soldiers, to raise their morale and to encourage them. This is what, from the point of view of some
historians, proved the "humanity" of Bonaparte on the one hand and the fact that he was a leader who cared about his soldiers on the other. It is likely that the plague began to spread among the ranks of the French army in Al-Arish and Gaza before the siege and attack of Jaffa, especially since the French presence in Jaffa was for only a few days. The presence of the large number of injured and dead can only be explained by the presence of the disease in the ranks of the army earlier on.

Bonaparte’s poisoning of the sick soldiers in Jaffa
Before Bonaparte left Jaffa, there were at least 7 or 8 French soldiers infected with the plague. It was clear that they would not recover and that their presence would spread the infection among the ranks of the French army. Some of the patients thought that the French forces would abandon them and that they would be left to the Turks When the Turks entered Jaffa, the sick would be exposed, according to their expression, the "Dreadful Tortures" inflicted on the prisoners.

Many foreign sources recall that Bonaparte requested that there be a "merciful death" for those infected with the plague by giving them doses of opium. After all, his leaders and his doctors realized that they would not recover. This was seen of as a "virtue" and not a "crime." He had to make a decision about giving them a "merciful death" by giving the sick soldiers doses of opium, or letting them die as a result of torture at the hands of the Turks.

Bonaparte's request to kill his infected soldiers with doses of opium became known widely in Europe. Sir Robert Wilson mentioned that the "bloodthirsty monster", meaning Bonaparte, had poisoned 580 of his sick soldiers in Jaffa. The opium was just to relieve itself of the hassle of caring for them. This was a rumor popularized and believed throughout Europe and America.

Bonaparte denied that he had poisoned his soldiers and that if he had done so, his soldiers would have insulted and turned against him. Therefore it can be said that the accusations against Bonaparte were "just propaganda" in order to harm the French and the person of Bonaparte, as said by Sir Sydney Smith. He was the archenemy of Bonaparte who entered Jaffa immediately after leaving the French army. He was not given any hint about Bonaparte poisoning a number of his soldiers. At the same time, Bonaparte affirmed that the patients were his children and that he loved them. He had not committed any manner of crime against the patients and despite all of the defamation against his person, he was not afraid.
Bonaparte demonstrated his position on the sick by leaving the sick alive. He ordered 400 - 500 French cavalry soldiers to guard them in Jaffa in order to prevent their torture at the hands of the Ottomans. Most of the patients died before the French forces left for Acre. It was said after that Sidney Smith found that only one or two of these patients were alive but French sources did not mention leaving any of the patients behind.

Most probably, the accusations that Bonaparte poisoned the soldiers who had been infected with the plague by giving them large doses of opium are not supported historically. They may have come about in the context of offending France, Bonaparte and the French army in the atmosphere of colonial rivalry present between France and many other European powers.

Bonaparte's letters from Jaffa

The resistance against the French campaign in Jaffa did not stop. The people of Nablus attacked the French forces present in Jaffa more than once, and killed and wounded many of them.

Bonaparte, when in Jaffa, sent two of his most famous messages on March 9th 1799. The first message was addressed to the inhabitants of Palestine and the other to Ahmed Pasha El-Jazzar. In the first message addressed to the sheiks, scholars and other residents of the governorates of Gaza, Ramla and Jaffa, Bonaparte stated that he had come to Palestine only to expel the Mamluks and the army of Ahmed Pasha al-Jazzar, who he saw as not entitled to extend his influence to the areas of Jaffa, Ramla, and Gaza.

Bonaparte questioned the right that Ahmad Pasha El-Jazzar thought he had when he sent his forces to Al-Arish. This is what pushed him to war. Bonaparte asked the people of Palestine to maintain calm, confirming that those who befriended him would thrive and that those who would fought against him would perish, followed by stating what happened in Jaffa and Gaza.

As for Bonaparte's message to Ahmed Pasha Al-Jazzar on the same day, he said that since his entry into Egypt, he had informed the latter several times that he was not intending to launch a war against him. His sole goal was to expel the Mamluks. The Sultan had not responded to any of the proposals that he had submitted to him and that he hoped to end Ibrahim Bey's presence on the Egyptian border. Instead of doing so, he sent his forces into Gaza and collected a lot of ammunition. He stored it on all fronts which threatened his imminent entry into Egypt. He got the invasion underway after sending 2,000 of his men to Al-Arish Castle. This represented 6
military divisions inside the territory of Egypt which made it obligatory for Bonaparte to start from Cairo and go to war against him. Bonaparte confirmed that the governorates of Gaza, Ramla and Jaffa were under his authority and that he had dealt with the soldiers of Ahmed's Pasha El-Jazzar who placed themselves at his mercy with great generosity. He dealt with those who violated the laws of war and stood against him cruelly, stressing that he would march militarily within "a few days" to Acre. Bonaparte expressed his desire to be charitable to Ahmed Pasha El-Jazzar and not to offend him as an old man as he was about to die. He stressed that there was no real reason for him to be his enemy because he was an enemy of the Mamluks. In his letter, Bonaparte also confirmed that the provinces governed by Ahmed Pasha El-Jazzar were separated from Egypt by his control of the governorates of Gaza and Ramla. Bonaparte asked Ahmed Pasha El-Jazzar to be a friend again and to be an enemy of the Mamluks and the British. If this was the case, he would be blessed. If he did not respond, he would harm him. Bonaparte asked El-Jazzar to send a response by a man with full powers and for him to present himself to the French army with a white flag. He would order his soldiers to provide safe passage for him. This was paired with confirming that on March 24th 1799, he was going to march his army to Acre. El-Jazzar's reply to his message would need to come at least one day before.

Ahmad Pasha El-Jazzar responded to Bonaparte's message with an oral message saying the following: "I will not write to you, because I am determined not to communicate with you. You can walk to Acre whenever you want. I will be ready for you, and I will bury myself under the rubble of the place, instead of letting it fall in your hands".

Jaffa during Bonaparte's withdrawal from Palestine
Bonaparte issued his orders before heading to Acre to organize Jaffa from an administrative standpoint, as he had done in Gaza. However, the implementation of this organization did not take place due to his short stay in the country and the local contradictions, especially from the Muslims who did not adapt to the ideas of the French Republic that Bonaparte tried to impose. They saw in them completely strange ideas and were not ready to implement them.

The French forces left Jaffa on March 14th 1799 for Acre, which they failed to occupy due to Ahmed Pasha al-Jazzar's boldness, the immunity of the walls of Acre, the spread of the plague in abundance among the French...
forces and the help of the British fleet which prevented supplies from reaching Bonaparte across the Mediterranean from both Egypt and France. After the failure of the French campaign against Acre on May 21st 1799, the French army camp was dismantled. During its withdrawal and return to Egypt from Caesarea to Jaffa, all of the areas previously occupied were set alight. Both the Turks and Arabs attacked the French army and killed a number of them. A number of the French soldiers died because they were sick due to the heat of the air and the inflamed sand. They were unable to keeping up with their comrades so Bonaparte stopped in Jaffa to think about what to do with the patients in the hospitals. That was on May 25th 1799 and Bonaparte remained in Jaffa until May 27th 1799. The next day, May 28th they resumed the walk with what remained of his army to Egypt. After this, the "catastrophic" military campaign against Palestine ended.

**Conclusion**

From the study, it is clear that the French campaign against Palestine was a strategic necessity because of its importance and geographic location, which was no less important than Egypt. It was also clear that Jaffa was the first city to practically resist the French forces in Palestine. Jaffa's resistance was a major reason for Bonaparte and his military council deciding to execute an estimated 3,000 Ottoman soldiers, along with many other reasons that have been mentioned in the context of this research. The massacre resulted in a real stigma in relation to Bonaparte's military history and his life that has lasted to this day. This study has also concluded that the plague started to spread among the French army since the French control of Al-Arish. It first began in Gaza before it was officially discovered and dealt with in Jaffa. This study has also concluded that the issue of Bonaparte poisoning of his soldiers suffering from the plague was part of the propaganda at the time in order to harm the French in general and Bonaparte in particular.