

# What ‘Bonaparte Visiting the Plague-Stricken in Jaffa’ Teaches About Our Own Plague-Stricken Time

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Martin Kramer is The Washington Institute's Walter P. Stern Fellow and author of one of its most widely read monographs, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America*.



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**The painting and the historical scene it depicts remind us that many aspects of the coronavirus pandemic—from equipment rationing to ‘Orient blaming’ to political clashes with medical science—are nothing new.**

**“T**he appearance of Bonaparte in Palestine was only like the passing of a terrible meteor, which, after causing much devastation, again disappears.” This was the verdict of the great Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz, who was referring to Napoleon Bonaparte’s short-lived invasion of Palestine in 1799. One possible reason for Napoleon’s failure was the plague. This is the point at which a huge neoclassical masterpiece comes in...

[Read the full article on the Mosaic website. \(https://mosaicmagazine.com/observation/history-ideas/2020/04/what-bonaparte-visiting-the-plague-stricken-in-jaffa-teaches-about-our-own-plague-stricken-time/\)](https://mosaicmagazine.com/observation/history-ideas/2020/04/what-bonaparte-visiting-the-plague-stricken-in-jaffa-teaches-about-our-own-plague-stricken-time/) ❖

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