Caesarea, on the site of Hellenistic Straton’s Tower, is located in a central position on the eastern Mediterranean coast, between Ioppe and Dora—much older maritime cities. Its natural conditions were not favorable as those of the other two for an organic evolution of a prospering settlement in antiquity; its foundation and development were the result of rulers’ initiatives. Straton’s Tower—the earliest settlement at the site—was founded as a trade post by the Ptolemies. It had a landing-place (prosormos), and by the end of the second century BCE, before falling under Hasmonaean control, it became a town subordinate to the tyrant of the much older, larger, and important city of Dora.

The foundation and prosperity of Caesarea were a direct result of Herod’s decision to build a large deep-water port, applying the most elaborate Roman harbor-technology, and to found a new city that became the administrative capital of his expanding kingdom (Josephus, War 1.408–415; Ant. 15.331–341). Its prosperity continued as long as it served as a provincial capital and its harbor functioned, serving the international trade. A network of five radiating routes connected the maritime city with its countryside and with inland cities farther away (Fig. 1).

Following the Arab conquest in 640 or 641 Caesarea underwent a sharp decline, shrinking in size about ten times relative to its former extension (see infra, Chapter Six); following the final defeat of the Crusaders it was altogether deserted. In 1884 twenty families of Muslim Bosnians were settled by the Turkish authorities among the ruins, within the confines of the Arab and Crusader walls, staying there until 1948. The scattered houses, each with an extensive garden, appear in the aerial photographs taken in 1918 (Fig. 2), and in 1944 (Fig. 3). In 1940 Kibbutz Sdot Yam (visible in Fig. 3), was founded to the south of the Byzantine city wall. The extra-mural area, within the confines of the Herodian and Byzantine city walls, was already divided into agricultural plots, including the oblong arena of the Roman circus on the south-east. With a somewhat different parceling, such is more or less the condition of this extra-mural area to the present (Fig. 4). When archaeological excavations were begun by A. Negev to the south of the Crusader town in 1960–61, this ground (to be labeled later Areas
CC, KK and NN), served as pasture land (Figs. 5 and 6). The studies presented in this volume are the result of my excavations in these areas during the years 1993–1998 and 2000–2001.¹ On the west, all that is left above sea level of the submerged gigantic Herodian harbor is a tiny touristic haven used for swimming and diving, protected by a simple narrow fishing wharf (Fig. 7).

Nine of the twelve studies presented here (see the list below), were previously published elsewhere, the earliest in 1996 and the latest in 2010; one more (no. VI) is forthcoming in 2011, originally having been written for publication elsewhere. Chapter Three has so far been published only in Hebrew, in Joseph Geiger, Hannah M. Cotton, and Guy D. Stiebel (eds.), Israel’s Land. Papers Presented to Israel Shatzman on His Jubilee (Jerusalem: The Open University of Israel and Israel Exploration Society): 135–56. Articles nos. I, II, VI, VII, and XII were previously published in Hebrew as well. Chapter Five was written for the present book.

The original articles were slightly modified and updated. An author-date system of references was adopted throughout, and a unified bibliography follows the articles. The illustrations—some of which originally appeared in several articles—are numbered consecutively throughout, with no repetitions. They are brought together at the end of the book.

The idea to collect my dispersed essays and publish them together came to my mind at the end of my term of stay as a Research Fellow at NIAS—the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies at Wassenaar (February–July 2008). Work on the volume was concluded in April 2010, while I was a Research Fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Advanced Studies. Thanks are due to my partners in the Flavius Josephus research group at NIAS—Prof. Jan Willem van Henten of the University of Amsterdam and Prof. Daniel R. Schwartz of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem—for their encouragement. I am also deeply indebted to Prof. Pieter W. van der Horst of the University of Utrecht for his good advice, and to Prof. Martin Goodman of Oxford, chief editor of the Brill series Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, and

¹ For the story of the excavations and preliminary reports on the architectural complexes uncovered in these areas, see Patrich et al. 1999; Patrich 2008. Though these articles are not reproduced in the present volume, much of the archaeological information is dispersed in the various articles presented here. For the final report on the objects retrieved from these excavations see Patrich (ed.) 2008.