Stratonos Pyrgos – Migdal Šar – Sebastos: History and Archaeology

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> To rescue from oblivion the memory of former incidents, and to render a just tribute of renown to the many great and wonderful actions, both of Greeks and Barbarians . . .
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> Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.1

In the last two decades, substantial scholarly activity has been devoted to the study of Straton's Tower, the settlement that preceded Caesarea, particularly in light of the large-scale land and underwater excavations undertaken by several expeditions to the site. This chapter addresses three issues in the history of this pre-Herodian town: first, its names in both Graeco-Roman and Hebrew sources, and then the evidence for and current ideas about its fortifications and harbor facilities.

The Names of the Pre-Herodian Town

The earliest epigraphic reference to a coastal town called Στράτωνος πύργος (Straton's Tower) is attested in *P. Zen* 71 (*P. CairZen* 59004), dated to 259 B.C.E.[1] The name is a new Greek toponym on the coast, but unlike most other Hellenistic designations, it was not one given to an existing settlement, but to a town evidently founded when the Ptolemies controlled the Paralia, the coastal strip between Phoenicia and Egypt. The nearest major port was the ancient city of Dor, 13 km. to the north. From a regional perspective, the new site was approximately equidistant from Ptolemais/Acco, Scythopolis/Beth Shean and Iop(p)e/Yafo, the latter being situated 52 km. to the south.

Straton's Tower is also listed in *P. Oxy* 1380, a text of particular interest for our subject.[2] Although the papyrus is dated to the second century C.E., it is a copy of a document evidently composed before the founding of Caesarea. It lists various epithets and personifications of the goddess Isis, under which she was worshiped along the

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[1] F.-M. Abel, "La liste géographique du papyrus 71 de Zénon," *RBibl* 32 (1923), 409–15.

[2] B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part 11 (London, 1915), 190.

Levantine coast. At Straton's Tower, we are informed, Isis was adored in two aspects. first as Hellas, the personification of Greece, and also as Agathe (the Good). The choice of these particular aspects of her cult is evidently a reflection of the fact that a majority of the local population had strong Hellenic ties. These manifestations of Isis probably also point to a Greek element associated with the foundation of the site. The predominantly Greek nature of this town was also underscored in the writings of Josephus (*AJ* 20.173; *BJ* 3.442). It would appear, therefore, that when Herod later refounded the city and dedicated it to Augustus and Roma, he was deliberately shifting the religious and cultural focus of the town, from Greece to Rome.

If Isis was also the patron deity of Straton's Tower, it is tempting to conjecture that a temple of Isis-Hellas-Agathe was situated on the prominent height now known as the Temple Platform, perhaps on the very site where King Herod later constructed his Temple of Roma and Augustus. Isis was particularly favored in the coastal towns, due to her worship as Isis Pelagia (Maritime Isis). In that aspect, the goddess was the patroness of sailors, as well as of the (Isis-)ship launching (τὰ πλοιαφέσια), her annual nautical festival and procession, which inaugurated the sailing season.

The ceremony originated in Egypt, but was celebrated in numerous Mediterranean harbor towns, including the port of Rome at Ostia. In Latin, the festival was known as *Isidis navigium* (the sailing of Isis),[3] and was held on 5 March. It is surely more than coincidental to find, in a report by Eusebius (*Mart. Pal.* 11.30), that in the year 310 C.E. the people of Caesarea celebrated the traditional birthday of their city-goddess Tyche on that very date. It would appear that the reformed cult of Tyche in Roman Caesarea[4] absorbed some earlier Hellenistic practices of the Isis cult.

While the nautical festival was probably held in Straton's Tower, we cannot yet say where the presumed sanctuary of Isis was located. Thus far no certain pre-Herodian temple remains have been unearthed. In 1990 and 1992, evidence of cuttings and a massive foundation were uncovered in the bedrock of the Temple Platform, in the Combined Caesarea Expeditions (CCE) Area TP1. The excavators are inclined to attribute these works to the Herodian rather than the Hellenistic period.[5]

Josephus had occasion to refer to Straton's Tower primarily when he was discussing the founding of Caesarea. But he knew of a structure in Jerusalem also known as Στράτωνος πύργος, a site associated with the Hasmonaean fort called the Baris. He alludes to this Straton's Tower in an intriguing episode concerning a prophecy and mistaken identity, during the rule of the Hasmonaean Judah Aristobulus I (*AJ* 13.307–13). As Judah ruled for only one year, this episode can be dated to 104/3 B.C.E. The point of the tale was that the Straton's Tower on the coast was better known than its namesake in the center of Jerusalem. The coastal city was, therefore, of some importance long before Herod, but was long past its zenith when he came to the throne.

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[3] Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* 11.8–17; Firmicus Maternus, *The Error of the Profane Religions* 2.

[4] R. Wenning, "Die Stadtgöttin von Caesarea Maritima," *Boreas* 9 (1986), 113–30.

[5] Holum et al., "Preliminary Report," 103–4; "Raban et al., *Field Report* (1992), 53.

Various proposals have been advanced to account for the foundation and the name of Straton's Tower. The first etymology is already found in the Byzantine period, in the Novels of Emperor Justinian issued in 534–546 C.E. In the preface to Novella 103, we are informed that the site was first named after a Hellene called Straton, but later renamed Caesarea by Vespasian. Conveniently, this account omitted the earlier history of the city. A bronze cup in Paris, dated to 340–360 C.E., offers a pictorial version of the Roman tradition recorded by Justinian, as it most likely depicts the Roman imperial refoundation of the city,[6] whose official name was thereby changed to Colonia Prima Flavia Augusta Caesarea. The revisionist version of Justinian named Straton as the founder of the first settlement at the site of Caesarea, but utterly excluded the role of Herod of Judaea as the builder of the city and its great harbor. This must be understood in light of the lasting impact of the Bar-Kokhba war (131–135 C.E.), which led to the official erasure of the very name Judaea from Roman and Byzantine political terminology.[7]

The names Straton and Caesarea were already linked in a single toponym even before the refoundation of the city by Vespasian. In a Latin inscription from his reign, dated to 71 C.E. (*CIL* 10.867), the site is termed *Caesarea Stratonis*. A century later, Ptolemy (*Geog.* 5.16.2, 8.20.14) called the city Καισάρεια Στράτωνος, while in an inscription dated to the end of the second century C.E. (*IGLS* 1620b) we find the variant name Καισάρεια τῆς Στράτωνος (Caesarea of Straton).[8] These epithets for Caesarea may originally have been necessary to distinguish it from its namesakes in the Roman realm. Josephus certainly intended this when he referred to the city as Καισάρεια Σεβαστή (*AJ* 16.136). But these epithets also indicate that the Greek name Straton still played an important part in the heritage of Caesarea after its refounding as a Roman city.

Since the nineteenth century, other scholarly opinions were advanced regarding the name Straton's Tower. The majority of these ideas, following the proposal of E. Schürer,[9] favored the notion that the town was founded by Phoenicians before Alexander the Great, and was named after her founder, the king of Sidon 'Abd-Ashtart I (372–359/8 B.C.E.), whose Hellenized name was Straton. We should here note that this explanation was not advanced as the etymology of Στράτωνος πύργος in Hasmonaean Jerusalem. Numismatic evidence indicated that in the fourth century B.C.E., there were not two but three kings of Sidon named 'Abd-Ashtart,[10] but this con-

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[6] E. Will, "La Tour de Straton: Mythes et realités," *Syria* 64 (1987), 245–51; *Herod's Dream*, 13.

[7] *Contra* D. W. Roller, "The Problem of the Location of Straton's Tower," *BASOR* 252 (1983), 65; and Wenning, "Die Stadtgöttin," 116.

[8] On this text, see D. R. Schwartz, "'Caesarea' and Its 'Isactium'" [Hebrew], *Cathedra* 51 (1989), 21–34.

[9] *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, vol. 1, ed. N. N. Glatzer (Edinburgh, 1886–90; repr. New York, 1961), 19.

[10] J. W. Betlyon, "A New Chronology for the Pre-Alexandrine Coinage of Sidon," *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 21 (1976), 11–35.

tributed little to previous discussions centered around which of the first two monarchs was the presumed eponymous founder of the site.[11]

The minority opinion among scholars held that the name had nothing to do with any Phoenician ruler. K. B. Stark took a position similar to that promoted by Justinian, namely, that the town was named after a Ptolemaic officer named Straton.[12] L. Kadman offered still another explanation: the site name reflected that of a presumed temple of Phoenician Astarte in the town.[13] Several years ago, in light of the excavations of the Caesarea Ancient Harbour Excavation Project (CAHEP) and other archaeological evidence, I argued that the town was indeed not a Phoenician foundation, but rather that the founder was the energetic Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283–246 B.C.E.), well known for his maritime activities both on the Mediterranean and along the coasts of the Red Sea.[14]

Moreover, it seemed to me that the site was probably named after an admiral named Straton, who gave his name to an island in the Red Sea called Στράτωνος νῆσος (Straton's Island).[15] I also suggested that the Hebrew name of Straton's Tower — which I believe was *mgdlśr* (Migdal Śar) — supports the proposed Hellenic etymology of the town's name, as it appears to be a popular translation of the Greek name. The very fact that a separate Hebrew name was created for this site suggests that the traditions about the Hellenic origins of the town are essentially authentic.

There has been relatively little discussion of the Hebrew name of Straton's Tower, primarily because of the ambiguity and obscurity associated with the reading of the name. The Hebrew appellation of Straton's Tower is preserved in a truly bewildering number of variants in Talmudic manuscripts and other ancient commentaries. Without a decisive source, it was not possible to determine which alternative reading was preferable. The key to this puzzle was at last provided by the mosaic text unearthed at the synagogue of Rehov.[16] This lengthy and well-preserved halachic document in stone finally established the correct consonantal orthography of the name, but there still remained a problem as to the correct word division.

In the section relevant to this discussion, the Rehov synagogue text lists four coastal landmarks, in geographical order from south to north, which constitute the Mediterranean boundary points of the Holy Land. The sacred soil is defined as the territory east of these points, being the land supposedly possessed by those who returned from the Babylonian exile. In this passage, a lingering ambiguity is the consonant group *śrwśn*, between the second and third landmarks, which may be read as

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[11] L. I. Levine, "À propos de la fondation de la Tour de Straton," *RBibl* 80 (1973), 75–88.

[12] K. B. Stark, *Gaza und die philistaeische Küste* (Jena, 1852), 450.

[13] Kadman, *Coins*, 52.

[14] R. R. Stieglitz, "Straton's Tower: The Name, the History, and the Archaeological Data," in A. Biran and J. Aviram, eds., *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990* (Jerusalem, 1993), 646–51.

[15] Ibid., 649. Mentioned by Strabo (16.4.8.) and Pliny (*NH* 6.29).

[16] See Y. Sussmann, "A Halachic Inscription from the Beth-Shean Valley" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 43 (1974), 88–158, and "The 'Boundaries of Eretz Israel'" [Hebrew], ibid., 45 (1976), 213–57.
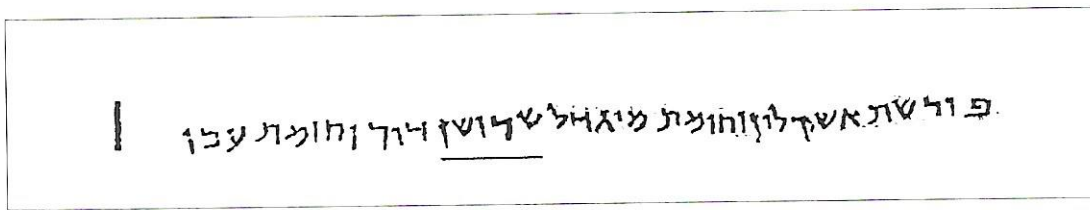
פ. ור שֵׁתַ אשתרלוזוחומת מיגֿדֿל שֵׁרֿושן דור וֿחומֿת עבן

Figure 1. Pertinent section of line 13 in the Rehov Synagogue mosaic text. The underlined letters are to be read as two words: śar wĕ-šēn, "Śar and the cliff of."

one word or two, namely, śr wšn (fig. 1). The proper reading, to my mind, is the latter, which would then yield the following translation (Rehov mosaic, middle of line 13):

pwršt 'šqlwn whwmt migdl śr wšn dwr whwmt 'kw

The Crossroads of Ascalon,
and the Wall(s) of Migdal Śar,
and the Cliff of Dor,
and the Wall(s) of Acco . . .

This reading, I believe, provides the clearest and most balanced description of the four designated boundary points, as each site alludes to a specific landmark within or near an urban center. In contrast, if we adopt the alternative but more common reading by combining the two words śr + wšn, we are left with a truly awkward passage. Nevertheless, this alternate reading was the one preferred by most scholars before the discovery of the Rehov inscription, and Sussmann also accepted this reading in his study of the mosaic, although he did so reluctantly due to the difficulty noted above.[17]

By eliminating the word division between śar and wĕšēn, scholars have created needless difficulties for both the second *and* the third name in this passage. I believe such a reading is highly improbable for two reasons. First, it clearly disrupts the very specific syntax and symmetry of our proposed reading; second, if we accept this interpretation, it creates another halachic problem since the boundary "point" of Dor is thus totally eliminated. From a legal viewpoint, it seems untenable to have an entire territory of the city-state as a boundary point, while in the very same passage specific landmarks are named in connection with each of the other three cities along the Mediterranean coast.

Furthermore, the alternative reading also leaves us with an inexplicable name šrwšn (vocalization unknown). This term is often corrupted in modern Hebrew studies into the word šrwšn (Sharshon), instead of *Sheroshen vel sim.*, simply because the consonantal pattern of šrwšn is quite anomalous in Hebrew. Therefore, I proposed that there was no such Hebrew name as *migdāl šrwšn*, for it was simply a copying error.[18] We should, instead, read our second boundary point as *wĕ-ḥômat -ôt migdal śar* ("and the Wall[s] of

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[17] Sussmann, "The 'Boundaries,'" 228 n. 82.
[18] Stieglitz, "Straton's Tower," 647.

Migdal Śar"), followed by the third boundary point, *wĕšēn dôr* ("and the Cliff of Dor").

The Hebrew name *migdal śar* (Chief's Tower) has early typological antecedents in such biblical toponyms as Migdal 'Eder (Gen. 35:21), Migdal Gad (Josh. 15:37), and Midgal El (Josh. 19:38). It is a fairly good rendering of Straton's Tower, which can be interpreted to mean "Commander's Tower." Thus the Hebrew term *migdal* (construct state), "Tower (of)," translates the word *pyrgos* and the Greek genitive perfectly, while the Greek personal name *Straton*, derived from the verb *strateuo* ("lead an army, make war"), was appropriately translated by the Hebrew noun *śar* ("chief, commander"), whose denominative verbal root is *ŚRR* ("to rule, command"). The Hebrew name, then, is a reasonable rendering of its Greek source, in accordance with the well-known practice of changing or translating place names during periods of political reorganization.

We can actually provide a precise date for this change of name. According to *Megillat Ta'anit* 9, a text dated to about 125 C.E., Migdal Śar was captured by the Hasmonaeans on the 14th of Sivan (= June).[19] The year in question is evidently 103/2 B.C.E., during which King Jonathan Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 B.C.E.) was allied with Cleopatra III in the war against her son, the king of Cyprus Ptolemy IX Soter II (Lathyrus).[20] Josephus (*AJ* 13.324) relates that the ruler (*tyrannos*) of both Straton's Tower and Dor at that time was Zoilos. He was evidently a military man who managed to carve out for himself an autonomous coastal enclave during the civil conflicts among the Seleucid pretenders. The date for the beginning of his rule remains unknown, but the end came in the spring of 103 B.C.E. Zoilos was eliminated by Ptolemy IX, Jannaeus captured Straton's Tower in the summer of that year, and the Greek name Στράτωνος πύργος was replaced by the Hebrew designation *mgdl śr*, Migdal Śar.

It is noteworthy that, in later centuries, only this Hebrew name was used in rabbinic literature to designate the pre-Herodian town, doubtless for political reasons, while the name Caesarea is attested rather frequently in the Hebrew sources. This would also suggest that the Hebrew name Migdal Śar refers to a separate entity, one that was adjacent to Caesarea. That can only be the harbor quarter and its port called Sebastos. In the Roman era, it became necessary for Hebrew sources to refer to this pre-Caesarea entity because, as we have seen, the prominent wall(s) of this "old city" of Caesarea were designated by the rabbis as a boundary landmark for ritual purposes.

The old city of Straton's Tower, or Hebrew Migdal Śar, was considered outside the Holy Land, but the adjoining Herodian Caesarea was decreed to be within the sacred soil. In the case of the port of Sebastos itself, as distinct from the "old city" east of it, a special approach was adopted. The produce derived from ships anchored in the har-

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[19] L. I. Levine, "The Hasmonaean Conquest of Strato's Tower," *IEJ* 24 (1974), 62–69.

[20] On these events, see A. Kasher, "Josephus on King Jannaeus' War against the Hellenistic Cities" [Hebrew], *Cathedra* 41 (1986), 11–36; and his *Jews and Hellenistic Cities in Eretz-Israel* (Tübingen, 1990); also R. R. Stieglitz, "Ptolemy IX Lathyrus on the Coast of the Levant," *Proceedings of RES MARITIMAE 1994* (Nicosia, 18–20 October 1994), in press.

bor of Caesarea was treated as ritually suspect, that is, there was doubt as to its ultimate provenance. Such a regulation is probably a reflection of circumstances that suggest substantial local coastal traffic, in which agricultural produce was a primary component. In any event, the produce from Sebastos was liable to the tax regulations (*t. Dem.* 1:3).

Archaeological Evidence for the Walls of Migdal Śar

Over the years, scattered Hellenistic remains have been found in various parts of Caesarea by several archaeological teams.[21] Most of these finds were situated north of the Crusader city, but others were found within its walls and a few were located to the south. All the Hellenistic finds were within the so-called inner fortification walls, suggesting that these constitute the maximum extent of Straton's Tower. The published material consists of ceramics and coins, dated in the main to the second and first centuries B.C.E.[22] What is noteworthy in these reports is the lack of evidence for pre-Herodian architectural remains. There are also substantial quantities of unpublished Hellenistic ceramics from the area of the Byzantine synagogue excavated by M. Avi-Yonah and A. Negev.[23] In that area, their teams also uncovered remains of a large Hellenistic structure laid on virgin soil.[24]

CAHEP excavations in area J3, in the 1982–87 seasons, also unearthed a considerable assemblage of typical Hellenistic pottery. These included Megarian wares, fish plates, West Slope ware, Eastern Sigillata A, Double-Mouth vessels, and stamped wine amphora handles.[25] These ceramics were associated with scant Hellenistic structural remains built directly on the bedrock.[26] Among the finds made in the 1982–88 seasons were sixteen stamped Rhodian wine amphora handles which have parallels in both northern and south Palestinian sites (see the appendix below). The legible names of the eponyms and fabricants are dated primarily Period IV (175–146 B.C.E.) in the system

[21] See the map in Roller, "The Wilfrid Laurier University Survey of Northeastern Caesarea Maritima," *Levant* 14 (1982), 92.

[22] D. W. Roller, "Hellenistic Pottery from Caesarea Maritima: A Preliminary Study," *BASOR* 238 (1980), 35–42; Levine and Netzer, *Excavations*, 138; A. Raban, "The City Walls of Straton's Tower: Some New Archaeological Data," *BASOR* 268 (1987), 71–88, and "In Search of Straton's Tower," in *Caesarea Papers*, 7–22; A. M. Berlin, "Hellenistic and Roman Pottery, Preliminary Report, 1990," ibid., 112–28.

[23] M. Avi-Yonah, "Notes and News: Caesarea," *IEJ* 6 (1956), 260–61; A. Negev, "Caesarea," in M. Avi-Yonah, ed., *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* [Hebrew], vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1970), 500–509.

[24] M. Avi-Yonah and A. Negev, "Notes and News: Caesarea," *IEJ* 13 (1963), 146–48; A. Negev, *Caesarea* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1967), 13.

[25] Raban, "City Walls," 78–86; R. R. Stieglitz, "Notes and News: Caesarea Maritima — Excavations on Land, CAHEP 1986 Season," *IEJ* 37 (1987), 187–88; A. Raban and R. R. Stieglitz, "Notes and News: Caesarea Ancient Harbour, 1987," *IEJ* 38 (1988), 273–78; Oleson et al., *Finds*, 139–47.

[26] A. Raban et al., "Caesarea and Its Harbours: A Preliminary Report on the 1988 Season," *IEJ* 40 (1990), 249–52.

developed by V. R. Grace.[27] When we consider the entire assemblage of ceramics from CAHEP Area J3 and from the Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima (JECM) Field G, the materials suggest a flourishing settlement, as indicated by *P. Zen* 71, long before Zoilos established his autonomous enclave in the region at the end of the second century B.C.E.

The scattered but relatively homogeneous archaeological remains, dated primarily to the third–first centuries B.C.E., unearthed at Caesarea during a period of more than thirty years, substantiate the literary references about a prosperous Hellenistic town, while the find spots suggest that the extent of the site was within the inner fortification wall. This wall, with its two massive round towers in the north, was attributed to either late Hellenistic or Herodian times, with a majority of scholars favoring the later date.[28] More recently, Raban has tentatively proposed that this wall also encompassed another section, now incorporated into the great vault in CAHEP area I3.[29] He also argued that these fortifications were built by Zoilos and that they terminated southwest of the Temple Platform (see line Z in fig. 2). On the other hand, J. A. Blakely dated the inner wall as Herodian, but he concluded that its *terminus a quo* is 128 B.C.E., which would allow for it to have been built by Zoilos.[30]

A passage in Josephus (*AJ* 15.292–93) suggests that Herod rebuilt the neglected walls of Straton's Tower, since the town was previously known as a fort (*phrourion*), and therefore did presumably possess fortification walls. The question is what was the course of those pre-Herodian walls. A clue may be found in the remark of Josephus that the rebuilt town of Caesarea was constructed in a circle around its harbor (*AJ* 15.338). I interpret this to mean that Herod's architects followed the general outline of the ruined town of Straton's Tower, but this does not mean that the presumed Herodian inner fortification wall (line H in fig. 2) was built directly atop the late Hellenistic walls of Zoilos.

The inner fortification wall, as delineated by the Italian expedition and by a later surface survey,[31] does indeed extend "in a circle around the harbor," terminating at the theater, although its precise course is still uncertain. The wall is clearly visible in a German aerial photo of 1917 published recently, while it is only very faintly discernible in the Reifenberg photo.[32] One may wonder why Herod needed to fortify Caesarea at all, for surely it was not against a foreign attack during the Augustan age.

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[27] For references, see V. R. Grace, "The Middle Stoa Dated by Amphora Stamps," *Hesperia* 54 (1985), 1–54.

[28] Roller, "Survey of Northeastern Caesarea," 92.

[29] Raban, "City Walls," 78–86.

[30] Blakely, "Stratigraphy and the North Fortification Wall of Herod's Caesarea," in *Caesarea Papers*, 26–41.

[31] Frova, *Scavi*, followed by Ringel, *Césarée*; Roller, "Survey of Northeastern Caesarea," 92.

[32] H.-P. Kuhnen, *Nordwest-palästina in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit: Bauten und Gräber im Karmelgebiet* (Weinheim, 1987), pl. 75.2. A. Reifenberg, "Caesarea: A Study in the Decline of a Town," *IEJ* 1 (1950–51), 20–32, pl. ix, fig. 1.
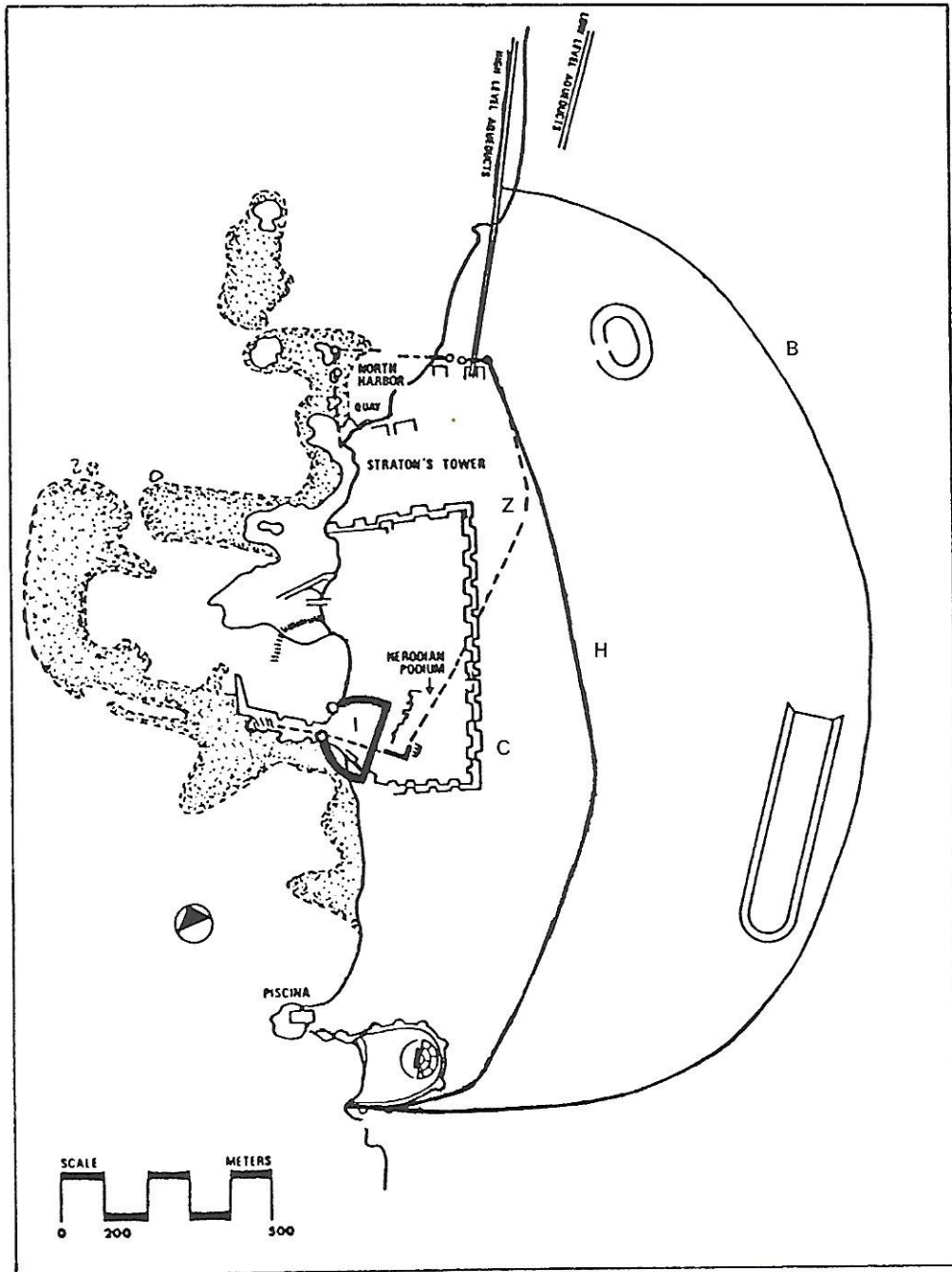
Figure 2. Fortification walls of the Byzantine era (B), Hellenistic and/or Herodian (H), and Crusader period (C). The conjectured wall of Migdal Śar, built by Zoilos (Z), is after Raban. The Herodian inner harbor (I) is partially schematic, as only its eastern quay and the northern round tower are certain. Drawing by the author, after Raban

Josephus, in the passage noted above, explicitly stated that the reason for the Herodian fortifications at Samaria and Jerusalem, and evidently at Caesarea as well, was internal political considerations: Herod was fearful of his own subjects.

In addition to the city of Caesarea, Herod also built the new artificial harbor complex as a distinct entity. The reason for this dichotomy is almost certainly rooted in the king's dynastic and economic circumstances, and is supported by both literary and numismatic evidence.[33] In theory, therefore, it would have made good sense for the Herodian planners to rebuild the ruined wall(s) of Migdal Šar, which would then serve to secure both the harbor quarter and the boundary between Caesarea and Sebastos. The question arises whether only part of the inner fortification wall is of Hellenistic date, and was rebuilt by Herod, as proposed by Raban, or, if the wall(s) of Migdal Šar followed another course entirely and are still to be unearthed.

The archaeological solution to these conjectures will, it is hoped, be provided by the ongoing excavations, and the stratigraphic dating of several sectors along the entire course of the inner fortification wall. Such an investigation will also establish, in addition to the chronology, the still uncertain course of the wall along its southern border and the exact location of its southern *terminus* on the coast. If the entire wall is Herodian, then we must seek the late Hellenistic walls of Zoilos — the walls of Migdal Šar — to the west of the inner fortification wall.

Evidence for the Hellenistic Harbor

Before examining the evidence for a Hellenistic haven at Straton's Tower, I should allude to the nearby coastal sites, which provide pertinent data about early coastal geomorphology. Tel Gador (Tell as-Sheikh Ziraq), about 7.5 km. south of Caesarea, features a promontory jutting out into the sea from the eroded coastal cliff adjoining it on both sides. At Givʿat Olga, about 1.5 km. north of Tel Gador, there are two smaller headlands enclosing a small cove between them. Along this sector of the coast, the primary anchorage would be found in the lee of a headland, to the northeast, due to the prevailing southwest winds. This nautical situation was accurately described by Josephus (*AJ* 15.333; *BJ* 1.409).

There were two additional havens near Straton's Tower in pre-Herodian times: one was located at Tel Tanninim, perhaps to be identified with the *Krokodeilon polis* mentioned by both Strabo (*Geog.* 16.2.27) and Pliny (*NH* 5.17.75), and located only 5 km. north of Straton's Tower. A much better port was situated at Tel Mikhmoret (Minet Abu Zabura), possibly the *Gĕdra šel Qīsrîn* (Gedra of Caesarea) in Hebrew sources (*t. Šeb.* 7:10–11). The tell, which was excavated in the 1980s,[34] overlooks a sizable cove

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[33] A. Raban, "Καισάρεια ἡ πρὸς Σεβαστῷ λιμένι: Two Harbours for Two Entities?" in *Caesarea Papers*, 68–74; Stieglitz, "Straton's Tower," 648 and n. 24.

[34] Y. Porath et al., "Mikhmoret, Tel," in E. Stern, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1993), 1043–46.

constituting an excellent harbor, which is located 11 km. south of Caesarea.

The only specific reference to a haven at Straton's Tower is by Strabo (16.2.27), dated just before the founding of Caesarea, who stated that the site had only one landing place (*proshormos*). This is significant, because Strabo apparently did not use the harbor terminology loosely. Furthermore, if multiple harbors existed at a particular site, they were duly noted. Strabo distinguished between various types of port facilities: (1) harbor (*limen*), (2) fortified harbor (*limen kleistos*), (3) anchorage (*hormos*), (4) moorage (*hyphormos*), (5) landing place (*proshormos*), and (6) dockyards (*neoria*, or *naupegia* in 16.664). All six types of havens appear in his description of the various coastal towns on Cyprus (14.681–85).

In agreement with both Pseudo-Scylax (*Periplus* 104) and Strabo, Josephus remarked that before Herod constructed the port of Sebastos there were no active harbors between Dor and Jaffa, and that, while Straton's Tower was indeed an advantageous place for locating a city, presumably due to its location and still existing structures, it had no noteworthy maritime facilities (*AJ* 15.331–33; *BJ* 1.408). In fact, he noted that Straton's Tower was then dilapidated (*kamnousa* in *BJ* 1.408) and its haven was an "inconvenient feature of the land" (*AJ* 15.334).[3]

When Straton's Tower was founded, about 275 B.C.E. according to the current archaeological finds from the first settlement remains, the primary anchorage would certainly have been located in the lee of the headland, where the modern marina is now located. It is possible that this headland was originally an offshore rocky islet. But it is reasonable to assume that such an islet was connected to the coast by either natural processes, or by the first settlers at this site, in order to create a sheltered haven. At its highest point, the bedrock atop this headland, or islet, was some 11 m. above mean sea level. As such, it was almost equal in height to that of the Temple Platform. This situation provided an ideal arrangement for the promontory to serve as a foundation for a fort overlooking the anchorage below. Such a structure was probably one of the first to be erected at the newly established site of Straton's Tower (fig. 3). It may well be that this presumed fort accommodated a prominent tower serving as a lighthouse. Some scholars, following the proposal of G. Schumacher,[35] had conjectured that such a tower (*pyrgos*), which was called after its founder, accounts for the name of the site.

It is not surprising to find that this promontory/islet was later used by Herod's engineers to serve as the base for the southern breakwater of Sebastos. In contrast to the modest landing place of Straton's Tower, the complex artificial port built by Herod was characterized by Josephus as "a harbor unwashed by waves" (*aklystos limen*, *AJ* 15.332), boasting within it two types of landing facilities: (1) docks (*katagogai* in *AJ* 15.332), also called inner recesses (*mychoi* in *BJ* 1.410), and (2) secondary moorages (*deuteroi hyphormoi* in *AJ* 15.332), also termed ample anchorages (*batheis hormoi* in *BJ* 1.410). The difference in the terminology used by Josephus in these parallel accounts

[35] "Recent Discoveries at Caesarea, Umm el Jemal, and Haifa," *PEQ* (1888), 134–40.
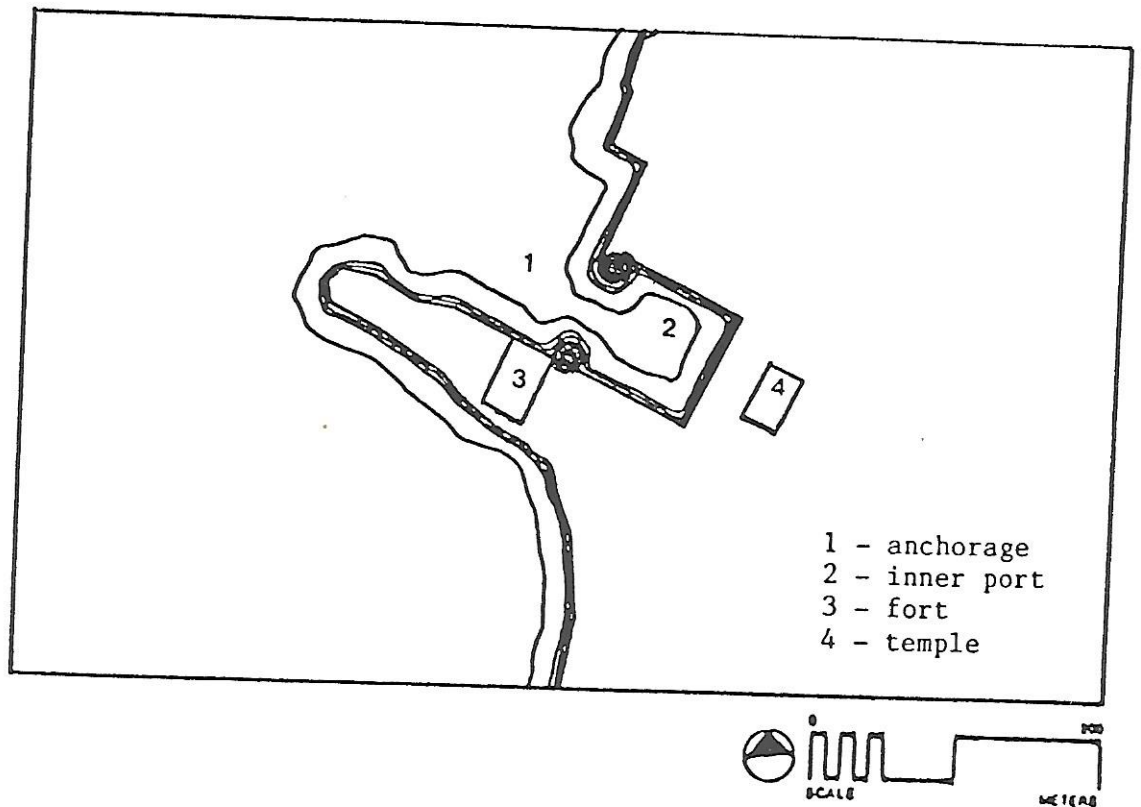
Figure 3. Conjectural reconstruction of the haven at Straton's Tower. If an inner harbor existed, it was evidently silted shortly after a major earthquake in 92 B.C.E. Drawing by the author

1 – anchorage
2 – inner port
3 – fort
4 – temple

may be attributed to his different sources rather than to his literary license.

It should be noted in passing that Herod rebuilt and changed the names of both places in his kingdom called *Stratonos Pyrgos*. First, the fort complex in Jerusalem was renamed the Antonia, evidently before 31 B.C.E. (*BJ* 5.238–45); then the coastal fort was rebuilt and called Caesarea, while its anchorage was transformed into a large harbor named Sebastos, all three names, of course, being in honor of his two Roman patrons.

While the literary evidence indicates that before Sebastos there was only a landing place at Straton's Tower, it is possible that, at the end of the second century B.C.E, Zoilos had expanded the original anchorage by excavating an inner basin in order to create a more secure naval base for his fortified town. The existence of such a pre-Herodian inner port seemed to be confirmed by the discovery of a massive round tower, some 13 m. in diameter, situated in shallow water in CAHEP area T1. Remains of a bonded wall were found on its northern edge. The tower was dated to the

Hellenistic era, and linked to its two counterparts in the northern inner wall.[36] Indeed, the resulting reconstruction by Raban, contrary to the reports of Strabo and Josephus, envisioned Straton's Tower as a *limen kleistos* with two separate harbors, one in the north and one in the south.[37]

I have no doubts about an anchorage in the south, but the evidence for a Hellenistic inner port, a *kothon* as it was called in Carthage and Hadrumetum, or a *kibotos* as in Alexandria, seems to be somewhat inconclusive. The current excavations reveal a rather substantial inner harbor, shown schematically in figure 2, situated directly below and to the northeast of the promontory/islet. This "inner recess" most likely served as a *neorion* (naval base) in the Herodian harbor. A much smaller basin may have been located there earlier, if the Hellenistic dating of the round tower and wall in CAHEP area T1 is substantiated. But even if such an inner harbor existed before 100 B.C.E. (fig. 3), it was already completely silted and·no longer usable, when Strabo recorded that Straton's Tower had only a landing place.

As for the alleged north harbor, it appears to me rather dubious. The basis for this proposal is primarily the remains of a section of wall (CAHEP locus **300**) preserved on the current shore and shallow water, which Raban interpreted as a quay.[38] My view is that this wall was not a dock but perhaps part of a fortification wall, just as is the case with the adjacent and parallel section of a poorly preserved Byzantine wall. In the Byzantine era, the beach was certainly to the west of the current shore, as the nearby remains of paved streets indicate. Indeed, the shoreline north of Sebastos was very much eroded in post-Byzantine times, and this means that the Hellenistic shoreline was almost certainly westward of the current beach. The recent suggestion by Raban[39] that the landing place mentioned by Strabo is to be identified with his proposed northern harbor is most unlikely, for it would mean that the main haven in the south, surely in the area of the modern marina, was completely ignored.

Evidence about the pre-Herodian site in the first century B.C.E. is meager. During the long reign of Jannaeus, Migdal Śar was apparently an active commercial center, if the numismatic finds are any indication of such vitality. More coins of Alexander Jannaeus have been found at Caesarea than those of any other Hellenistic ruler. However, this situation did not last long. The scholion to *Megillat Ta'anit* reports a major earthquake in 92 B.C.E, only a decade after Jannaeus conquered Straton's Tower.[40] According to this source, the tremor produced an extremely destructive tsunami along the coast;[41] these events may have caused severe structural damage to

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[36] Raban, "City Walls," 71–76.

[37] Ibid., 85.

[38] A. Raban, "The Ancient Harbours of Caesarea" [Hebrew], *Qadmoniot* 14 (1981), 80–88; idem, "City Walls," 74–78.

[39] "Straton's Tower," 21.

[40] H. Lichtenstein, "Die Fastenrolle," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 8–9 (1931–32), 347.

[41] N. Shalem, "Tsunamis in the Eastern Mediterranean" [Hebrew], *Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society* 20 (1956), 159–70.

the settlement at Migdal Šar. The town may have been partially abandoned, and probably within a period of a few years fell into disrepair.

In 63 B.C.E Pompey detached the entire coastal strip from the Hasmonaean realm (*AJ* 14.76), and under Gabinius, the governor of Syria in 57–55 B.C.E., several coastal sites were rebuilt (*AJ* 14.88). Whether the site and haven of Straton's Tower/Migdal Šar were also repaired is unknown. Even if Gabinius arranged for some rebuilding,[42] barely a generation later the town was already in ruins. In 30 B.C.E. the costal strip from Straton's Tower/Migdal Šar to Gaza, with the notable exception of Ascalon, was restored to Herod by Caesar Augustus (*AJ* 15.396). Only eight years later, in 22 B.C.E., Herod began the reconstruction of Straton's Tower and the building of her new artificial port.

The ongoing excavations at Caesarea will, it is hoped, provide solutions to the problems of the extent of Straton's Tower and the date of its foundation, the course of its fortifications, and the precise nature of the original Hellenistic haven, before the buildings of Caesarea and the harborworks of Sebastos transformed these entities. As we have seen, the old town was never entirely engulfed by the new metropolis. What remained were the older Greek and Hebrew names, and a rather prominent landmark called the Wall(s) of Migdal Šar, which became the line separating the sacred from the profane.

Appendix

Hellenistic Stamped Amphora Handles from CAHEP Area J3

The following is a preliminary catalogue of stratified Hellenistic stamped amphora handles, found during the 1982–88 seasons in CAHEP area J3. Of these handles, Nos. 1 and 3, found in CAHEP probe J1, were published by J. P. Oleson et al.[43] The Rhodian handles are dated according to the system established by Virginia R. Grace, in which Period IV is dated to 175–146 B.C.E.

1. **C82J1-23** from locus **20**; rectangular stamp inscribed:

Ἐπὶ Τιμο[υρ]   Under (the term) of Timo(urrhod)os,
[ρόδ]ο[υ]   (month) of D(ali)os
Δ[αλί]ου

Oleson et al.[44] read the eponym name as T[.]M[.]K[/] and suggested to restore it as Timokleidas. My reading of the preserved letters on the stamp is different, and does not support their proposal. The restoration of the name suggested here is based on a

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[42] T.W. Hillard, "A Mid-1st c. B.C. Date for the Walls of Straton's Tower?" in *Caesarea Papers*, 42–48, esp. 45.
[43] *Finds*, 139.
[44] Ibid.

comparison to a well-preserved parallel handle from Tel Dan.[45] The Rhodian eponym Timourrhodos is dated to Period IV, with parallels at Acco, Samaria, Nissana, and Delos, and possibly also at Beth Shean.[46]

2. **C82J1-29** from locus **20**; worn rectangular stamp.

3. **C82J1-60** from locus **20**; circular stamp with rose in center, framed by concentric circles, part of rim and neck preserved, inscribed:

Ἐπὶ Τι[. . .]	Under (the term) of Ti(. . .),
[Δ]αλίου	(month) of (D)alios

Oleson et al.[47] dated this handle to the second half of the third century B.C.E. The space on the stamp allows the restoration of the eponym name as Timourrhodos (Period IV) but, as they noted, many other eponym names beginning with TI are possible.

4. **C86J3-016** from locus **302**; worn rectangular stamp with traces of letters; very pale brown clay and slip; clay has much sand.

5. **C86J3-017** from locus **304**; worn rectangular stamp; reddish-yellow clay with sand, very pale brown slip.

6. **C86J3-018** from locus **302**; rectangular stamp with female figure on right, reddish-yellow clay with sand, inscribed in reverse:

Νυ[σ]ί[ο]υ	Of Ny(s)i(o)s

Rhodian fabricant, dated to Period IV. See No. 8 below. Parallels at Samaria, Shiqmonah, Delos.

7. **C86J3-068** from locus **303**; circular stamp with rose in center, framed by concentric circles, part of neck and rim preserved, inscribed:

['E]πὶ Γόργωνος	(Und)er (the term) of Gorgon,
Καρνε[ί]ου	(month) of Karne(i)os

This Rhodian eponym of Period IV(?) is also attested on handles found at Samaria, Gezer, Nissana, Marissa, and Delos.

8. **C86J3-070** from locus **309**; rectangular stamp with female figure on right, inscribed with a fabricant name of Period IV (see No. 6 above):

Ν[υσίου]	Of N(ysios)

9. **C86J3-071** from locus **303**; rectangular stamp with cornucopia on right, part of

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[45] See photo in *Qadmoniot* 19 (1986), 29 [Hebrew].

[46] Y. Landau and V. Tzaferis, "Tel Istabah, Beth Shean: The Excavations and Hellenistic Jar Handles," *IEJ* 29 (1979), 157.

[47] *Finds*, 139.

rim preserved, inscribed:

'Aθανο   Of Athanodotos
δότου

Rhodian fabricant, with parallels at Samaria, Gezer, and Delos.

10. **C86J3-072** from locus **304**; worn rectangular stamp.

11. **C86J3-073** from locus **304**; worn rectangular stamp.

12. **C87J3-224** from fill; worn rectangular stamp; reddish-yellow clay with pale brown slip, inscribed:

'Eπ[ὶ]   Und(er) (the term) of (. . .),
Δ[αλίου]   (month) of Da(lios)

13. **C87J3-225** from locus **328**; circular stamp with rose in center, framed by concentric circles; dense pink clay with very pale brown slip, inscription worn.

14. **C87J3-226** from locus **328**; worn rectangular stamp; dense pink clay with very pale brown slip.

15. **C88J3-255** from locus **352**; rectangular stamp; dense pink clay with very pale brown slip, inscribed:

Κρέο[ν]   Of Kreon
τος

Rhodian fabricant, known from Delos.

16. **C88J3-271** from fill above locus **361**; circular stamp with rose in center, no framing circles; dense pink clay with some red sand as temper, inscribed:

['Eπ]ὶ 'Aφροδ[ι]σί[ο]υ   (Unde)r (the term) of Aphrod(i)si(o)s

The Rhodian fabricant Aphrod(isios), known from Delos,[48] is probably not the same as the eponym named on this handle, who may be dated to the third century B.C.E.

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[48] V. R. Grace, "Timbres amphoriques trouves à Delos," *BCH* 76 (1952), 526.