

# Callirhoe

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## *Hot Springs*

The hot springs at Callirhoe were famous in antiquity. There are more than sixty springs in the area, of varying temperatures. Water from the hottest spring is 143° F (62° C). They were visited by Herod the Great at the end of his life, and Callirhoe is depicted on the [Medeba map](#) with three buildings, palm trees, and the caption "the hot springs of Callirhoe."



## *Herod's Visit*

Josephus writes, "Yet did [Herod] struggle with his numerous disorders, and still had a desire to live, and hoped for recovery, and considered of several methods of cure. Accordingly, he went over Jordan, and made use of those hot baths at **Callirhoe**, which run into the lake Asphaltitis, but are themselves sweet enough to be drunk." (War 1.33.5, trans. by Whiston)

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## *Herodian Palace Remains*

Archaeologists have uncovered several ancient villas, first built in the Early Roman (Herodian) period. One large villa had two buildings with a central courtyard. One of the buildings had a plastered pool that received water via a channel from a spring to the east. The site was apparently destroyed in the Jewish Revolt in AD 70.



## *Harbor Excavations*

The site was first identified as Callirhoe by Ulrich Seetzen in 1807. Recent excavations have revealed the remains of a harbor. The harbor is evidence of ancient boat traffic on the [Dead Sea](#). It is likely that Herod the Great traveled here by boat at the end of his life.