

Khirbet Marous (Arabic for the Ruin of Marous), or Meroth in Hebrew, is situated in Upper Galilee about 16 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Josephus explained that the village of Meroth marked the northern limits of Galilee, and this site is believed to be that village. Josephus also claims to have fortified this village in the First Jewish Revolt against Rome. Excavations were first carried out in 1982 by the Israel Department of Antiquities under Zvi Ilan and Emmanuel Damati.

The main public building, a magnificent synagogue, stood 74 feet long and 55 feet wide. Interior space is divided into a nave and two side aisles by two rows of columns. The column bases can still be seen *in situ* in this view. About 100 coins dated from the mid-fourth to the mid-fifth centuries C.E. were found underneath a mosaic floor of the synagogue. Another hoard of 485 coins was found in a western auxiliary room, called the treasury by the excavators. The name is certainly appropriate, as 245 coins in the hoard are gold (the rest are bronze). Most of the coins date to the late Byzantine period (sixth and seventh centuries C.E.), but the earliest dates to the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.E.) and the latest to 1193 C.E. (the Crusader period). The synagogue excavations also revealed intriguing mosaic floors, an inscribed bronze amulet and classrooms for children and adults. Other remains at Khirbet Marous include a fortification system, a moat, cisterns, tombs, underground halls, a wine press, an olive press and two ancient roads.