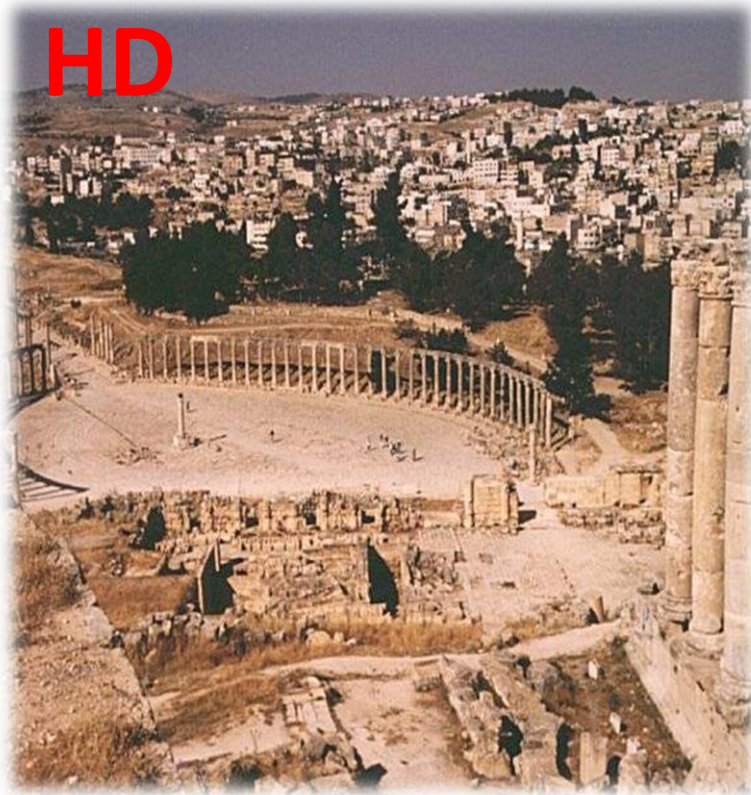




## Lost Civilizations: Jordan, Jerash : The Graeco-Roman city



Occupied since Neolithic times, the site was first built on by the Seleucids in the Hellenistic era. They were veterans of the army of Alexander the Great, who had conquered Syria, and – according to legend – named it Gerasa (the city of the Gerontes).

Put under pressure by the Nabateans, then the Jews, Gerasa adapted to the Roman conquest.

Conquered by Pompey in 63 BC, the town fell into the hands of the Romans, and with the alliance of the Décaopole (Dekapolis), became one of the ten principal cities of the Roman empire.

Jerash grew in strength because of its commerce and its Mediterranean agriculture, and reached its peak in the 2nd century under the Emperor Hadrian, who stayed there in 129AD.

He undertook a number of construction projects (the Southern Gate, the Triumphal Arch, and the Temple of Artemis, which characterise the town to this day) making Jerash into the second most important town of the province. The spread of Christianity, from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards, began a new period of growth for the town of Jerash, with the construction of churches.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, under the Emperor Justinian, a great collection of buildings were developed, including the Cathedral and the Churches of Saints Come and Damien, Saint John the Baptist, Saint George, and Saint Theodore – all close to the Temple of Artemis.

The decline of Jerash began with the invasions of Persians and Arabs, then under the Omeyyades. It was followed by earthquakes in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and ended in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, at the end of the Crusades, with the progressive abandonment of the town.

Jerash, in ruins, was buried under the sand, and survived for centuries, preserved from the depredations of the weather.

**Directed by Jacques VICHET** A documentary of 52'

*French Version*  
*English Version*

High Definition  
Digital Betacam 16/9