PROSTOR

31 [2023] 1 [65]

A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING
ZNANSTVENI ČASOPIS ZA ARHITEKTURU I URBANIZAM

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Fig. 1 The symbolic images of the city of Djidjelli

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Forging the City Image during the French Colonial Period (1883-1962) in the Case of Jijel (Algeria)

CITY IMAGE
COLONIAL URBANISM
French colonial period (1883-1962)
Jijel (Djidjelli), Algeria
URBAN BRANDING

The urban configuration of Algerian cities reflects the influence of French colonization (1883-1962). This is characterized by a collection of contrasts and overlays of different forms of architecture and urbanism. In all urban agglomerations in Algeria, the colonial section remains the most prominent and structured. This legacy of colonial architecture and urban planning has ignited a national debate in political and academic circles regarding its classification as heritage. This current study contributes to the debate by adopting a neutral and scientific approach in order to smooth things out and shed light on the role and creation of urban form and its image, specifically through the example of Jijel. The notion of urban image is explored through colonial architectural achievements, urban planning, and artistic endeavours that were emblematic of the city during the colonial period and continue to be so today. This article showcases various works created during the colonial period in Jijel, those that still convey an identity that defines the city. The concern for this identity is substantiated by a research project that seeks to identify the city's image through significant architectural works across different epochs and determine those that accurately convey the city's identity within the country.

INTRODUCTION

The urban fabrics of Algerian cities are comprised of multiple layers, each representing distinct historical periods and often overlapping or coexisting. These strata showcase noteworthy architectural accomplishments ranging from the Roman and Phoenician eras to the Arab-Muslim and colonial periods. Being the most recent, the colonial period has left a significant imprint on the urban space and architectural landscape of contemporary cities. At the onset of colonization, the inadequate state of urbanization in the country offered an opportunity to experiment with imported urban models and architectural styles.

In addition to the principle of installing urban spaces that are more suited to the Western way of life, these works also conveyed a sense of civilizational development and symbolized the level of development of the occupants. Furthermore, they aimed to establish colonial authority and imprint the mark of new power through urban and architectural works.

Architects and urban planners expressed themselves through their works, spanning from the north to the south and from the east to the west of the country, by promoting an urban and architectural style that adhered to the trends prevailing in Europe at the time. Over the last 130 years, Algerian cities have undergone a significant transformation in their appearance due to urban planning and development that set them apart from previous eras.

Each city has witnessed the metamorphosis of its territory and the creation of its unique urban identity, which is manifested in notable architectural structures, urban landmarks, and a distinct urban configuration. The new configuration of our cities, under the framework of urban reappropriation, catered primarily to the occupying culture and society, which favored a different urban model and epitomized a "civilized" way of life. The urban marketing of that time assigned to each city a symbolic urban image that essentially represented civilization.

The Algerian society is currently engaged in a debate regarding the urban and architectural heritage of a specific period. This debate seeks to address the question of whether colonial achievements can be considered national heritage. Algerian daily newspapers have continuously followed this fervent debate, with the November 13, 2014 edition of El-Watan (Pp 02) titled "Colonial Architecture, Asset or Burden?" and opening the discussion by asking: "Sixty years later, can these "ramifications of war" be claimed as part of Algerian identity?"

While waiting for the resolution of this challenging issue, there is a growing interest in the current research on the production of city images during the colonial period. This problem is being explored through the example of Jijel, a medium-sized city called Djidjelli. The research aims to identify the most representative image of the city and analyse the process of the production of the urban and architectural elements that shaped the city's image over a long period, extending until the present.

Situated in the North East and overlooking the Mediterranean, Jijel has had a tragic urban history. The destruction of the old city by a swamp in 1873 coincided with the arrival of the French in the region. The Ottoman city was 80% demolished, leading to the displacement of the city's inhabitants. The reconstruction of the city on a virgin land provided the French colonization authorities with an opportunity to express their urbanistic and architectural ideas freely.

During this period, the city acquired a collection of architectural structures and specific urban accomplishments that have shaped its distinctive identity. Postcards serve as a crucial communication tool for portraying urban imagery in contemporary urban marketing. Among the urban images depicted during the French period, we will initially select the images of the city that elicited the most significant responses in communication and conduct a survey to determine the representative image and evaluate its sustainability. To deconstruct the process involved in creating this image, we conducted architectural analysis tests

in the urban areas. Our work entailed scrutinizing the symbolism of the fabricated image and its adoption by the general public.

Does French Colonial Heritage have a Collective Meaning?

The presentation of the concepts of "urban identity" and "heritage" serves as a logical extension of this section since these two ideas are frequently intertwined. Belhadef (2016) emphasizes the importance of identity in constructing any society, asserting that the act of building reflects the builder's identity and inspirations. Today, our cities strive to establish a distinct identity amidst the globalization of constructions and architectural styles. Unfortunately, the production of post-colonial architecture and urbanism has not facilitated the reconstruction of recent urban identities. As Oulebsir (2000: 26) notes, urban and architectural identity elements are still associated with the colonial period, and many view the notion of heritage as a legacy of French colonization.

According to UNESCO's definition of heritage, it is a legacy of the past that we enjoy today and pass on to future generations. Vincent (1992) defines heritage as a set of tangible and intangible cultural elements charged with multiple meanings that have a collective dimension and are transmitted from generation to generation. Based on these definitions, the question arises whether French colonial heritage carries meaning with a collective dimension (Vincent, 1992; Aiche, 2006; Kaufmann, 2009; Obad Ščitaroci et al., 2019). This issue, as Aiche (2006) assert, becomes destabilizing for a whole generation that identifies its roots with a heritage representing otherness. Beyond the artistic or economic value of cultural goods (Palaiologou & Griffiths, 2019; Terracciano et al., 2017), the notion of identity is fundamentally linked to heritage and its translation into the symbolic urban image (Kagan, 2022; Low et al., 2005; Phetsuriya & Heath, 2021). The recognition of a legacy as heritage that does not carry values recognized by all as determining its own identity can be an insurmountable compromise for some ideologies (Kaufmann, 2009; Obad Ščitaroci et al., 2019). This debate is still relevant in Algerian cities and, regrettably, is often tainted by nostalgia and ideology.

Whether or not the architectural works that carry references to Algerian architectural identity during the French period should be considered heritage depends on several factors (Ginting & Wahid, 2017; Ujang & Zakariya, 2015; Remini et al., 2011). One important factor is whether these works have enduring cultural or historical significance to the local community or the wider world. If they are rec-ognized as important cultural or historical artefacts, then they may be considered part of Algeria's heritage. The loss of built heritage in cities like Jijel, which also resulted in the loss of their urban identities, is a common problem in many parts of the world. The destruction or alteration of historical structures can have a profound impact on a city's sense of identity and can lead to the loss of important cultural and historical information.

In the case of Jijel, the city's urban image was created by the French during the colonial period, and no urban or architectural elements were inherited from its past. This underscores the importance of preserving historical structures and urban fabric in order to maintain a city's sense of identity and cultural heritage. In cases where historical structures have been lost, efforts can be made to reconstruct or replicate them in order to revive the city's cultural heritage and identity. Its past, which was ravaged by natural circumstances and overrun by French colonization, has been forgotten and ignored by the architects and urban planners of the time. The city and its image were reconstructed during this period by the new occupants, namely the French.

Materials and Methods

In order to approach the subject of study we have adopted a working method in 3 phases:

— **The first phase: Image selection** — The primary objective of the initial stage is to underscore the architectural, artistic, and urban aspects that were featured in postcards during and after the French era. To achieve this, we will adopt a case study approach, drawing upon a series of tourist postcards of Jijel, accessible on the Internet. Through this investigation, we shall endeavour to demonstrate how postcard imagery, as a medium of communication and representation, contributes to the creation of urban identity. Our research involves the selection and analysis of over 100 historical postcards predating 1962. Among these, we have identified the five most frequently depicted images, which we examine within their urban context to comprehend the symbolism they convey.

— **The second phase: Field survey** — The second phase encompasses a perceptual approach to survey both the local and visiting population, with the objective of determining the most representative image of the city of Jijel. Throughout this essay, our focus is on the depiction of the city during the colonial period. Therefore, we aim to address the following questions:

1. Among the images of the city portrayed during the colonial period, which image best epitomizes the city?
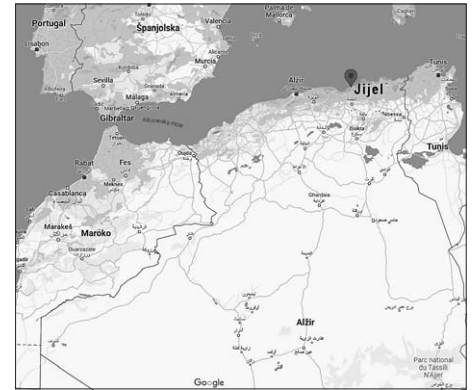
Fig. 2 Location of the city of Jijel on the map of Algeria

2. Do the perceptions of the city's representativeness differ between local inhabitants and visitors?

3. Does the population's nostalgic perception of this period affect the image of the city?

To answer these questions, we conducted a survey over a ten-day period, including the weekend when there was a higher influx of visitors to the city. The sample size of 400 participants was determined by the number of responses obtained during this survey period. The four images of the city analysed from postcards were compared to identify the most fitting representation and the one through which the city is commonly recognized.

The distribution of respondents based on their origin (local or visitor) aims to address the second question regarding differing perceptions of the city's representativeness (Merzoug et al., 2020; Ali Khodja et al., 2019). Furthermore, the distribution of the surveyed population by age group (under 40 and over 40) was carried out to account for any nostalgic effects that could potentially bias the results.

— **The third phase: Syntactic analysis** — Through a syntactic analysis and in the form of an essay (Spain, 2014; Lenzholzer et al., 2018; Van Nes &Yamu, 2017; Önder & Gigi, 2017), we aim to explore the principal urban elements that have contributed to the construction of the urban image of Jijel city. By situating the representative urban image within its urban context, we endeavour to dissect the urban and architectural factors that have facilitated and continue to facilitate the emergence of this image.

RESULTS

Subheadings can be used to structure this section, which aims to present a succinct and accurate account of the experimental findings, their analysis, and the resulting conclusions. Specifically, it should describe the results in a clear and objective manner, explain their significance and implications, and draw valid inferences based on the data.

The City of Jijel Deprived of History and Identity

The examination of the historical record of Jijel city brings to light the unfortunate events that occurred in this coastal urban centre in 1856, as well as the circumstances that led to the establishment of the colonial city (Van Nes & Yamu, 2021; Mahbub, 2019; Roula & Bouchair, 2021).

Jijel, which was known as "Djidjelli" during the French colonial era, is an ancient city situated in the North-East of Algeria. According to Retout (Bouhelouf et al., 2019), the Phoe-

nicians were credited with the founding of the city, establishing a counter or emporium, or perhaps encountering a pre-existing sedentary population. It is likely that a Berber village had already existed on the peninsula, which was considered an easily defensible location against external attacks, a factor that the Kabyle have traditionally taken into consideration when selecting village sites (Malaurie, 2003). The remaining witness of this period is a cemetery "consisting of tombs" located northeast of the city.

This ancient city experienced a unique fate, as it was devastated by a flood in 1856 that destroyed 80% of the old city. Historical accounts, such as L.C. Feraud's work, which was republished in 2014, describe the events in detail. On the night of August 21 to 22, 1856, a violent tremor accompanied by an underground noise, similar to thunder, was felt in the small town of Gigelli. Almost all houses were shaken by the initial shock. The following day, the people returned to the city, feeling reassured by the calm that was beginning to return. However, around noon, an even more violent tremor, accompanied by underground detonations, produced deep cracks in the ground and made the sea bubble, shaking the earth again. The destruction was total, and an immense cloud of dust covered the scene of desolation like a funeral veil. Not a single house was left standing. This vivid description portrays the fate of the Phoenician city formerly known as Igilgili (Eshuis et al., 2014) and marks the end of pre-colonial heritage. This tragic event has remained etched in the collective memory of the city's inhabitants, robbing them of their urban identity.

This historical event coincides with the establishment of colonization (Fig. 3), presenting an opportunity for the latter to occupy the strategic "peninsula" space, which was highly valued by the military, while relocating the city to the surrounding plain. As a result, the citadel was transformed into a military ground, thus completing the urban and architectural traces of the precolonial period.

The Construction of Djidjelli

Capitalizing on this urban vacuum, the authorities of that era initiated the construction of the new city with the aid of military engineering as early as 1863. This impetus, reported by L.C. Feraud and re-edited in 2014, provided a remarkable impetus for the construction work of the new city. The European population swelled from 450 to 1200 inhabitants in a mere year and a half.

The new city was constructed on the agricultural land that was formerly situated in the plain adjacent to the citadel, designed as a city-district. Inscribed in a triangle, the verti-
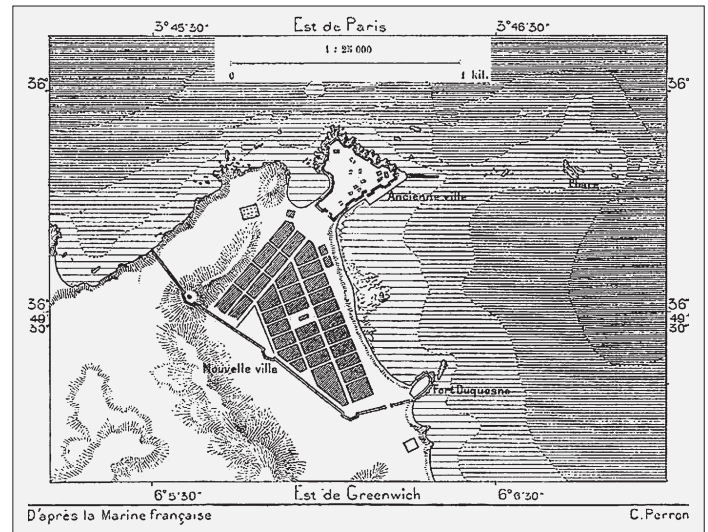
DJIDJELLI en 1664, estampe de DUVAL

Fig. 3 Sketch Of Igilgili

Fig. 4 Map of Scheslat 1887

ces of this triangle corresponded to the various entrances to the city. This urban grid likely resulted from an adaptation to the site. The implantation site, situated between the sea and the surrounding hills, was previously used as vegetable gardens by the indigenous population (Fig. 4). The axes that define the new city correspond to the boundaries of flat land. The urgency of constructing the city was a significant factor in selecting the site for the new city (Benzerra et al., 2012).

In 1861, a French surveyor named Scheslat hastily created the first master plan for the city of Djidjelli. The new urban layout consisted of a triangular shape with straight streets and blocks arranged in a chessboard pattern, and it had a program of facilities similar to that of European cities. This new urban grid drew inspiration from the urban planning of its time and was dominated by a military imprint, with straight streets leading to peripheral boulevards that intersected at the entrances to the city. These entrances, in the form of traffic circles, served as control points for major roads coming from the east and west (Mohdeb, 1988).

The islands formed by this grid were shared between the European and Algerian population. Most of these islands contained collective gardens, which were remnants of the agricultural past of the land in the blocks occupied by Europeans. Inner courtyards equipped with lemon trees and vines were occupied by the "natives." The reconstructed city can be viewed as a matrix, a set of micro-territories that groups were more or less likely to appropriate based on their social belonging and the meanings attributed to the space. The micro-territories created were reflected in the islands, with each islet attributed to a group, either "French" or "indigenous" Algerian, and each group organizing their urban space according to their ethnic and social belonging.

As a result of the post-war reconstruction, several notable architectural achievements emerged and were integrated into the new urban landscape. In an effort to assert their religious authority, the new leaders prioritized the construction of a church at the intersection of the urban triangle's diagonals. This grandiose and commanding structure with an architectural style reproducing the European model, served to establish the newcomers' religious power. Over time other significant achievements and artistic works were also erected in the urban area, conveying diverse symbolic aspects of Djidjelli city. These works collectively contributed to the formation of the city's urban image. The monumental works were prominently featured on postcards, which served as a highly effective tool for urban marketing during that time and played a key role in shaping the city's overall image.

Architectural and Urban Images Representative of the City of Jijel

To identify the architectural and urban images that represent the city, we conducted an online search and reviewed old postcards (as shown in Fig. 1), using specific keywords. We selected a sample of 100 postcards based on the following:

— old photos Jijel,
— postcard Jijel,
— photos Djidjelli,
— postcard Djidjelli.

The findings of this study reveal the unsurprising identification of four urban images that effectively represent the city of Jijel during the French period, namely the town hall, church, casino hotel, and statue of the fisher-

Table I Table of image processing results

	Number of matching images out of 100									
	Church		Town hall		Fisherman's statue		Hotel casino		Other		Total
Old photos Jijel	16	16%	12	12%	5	5%	8	8%	59	59%	100
Postcard Jijel	9	9%	11	11%	9	9%	14	14%	57	57%	100
Pictures of Djidjelli	6	6%	15	15%	8	8%	12	12%	59	59%	100
Postcard Djidjelli	11	11%	11	11%	7	7%	11	11%	60	60%	100
Average		11%		12%		7%		11%		59%	100

man (Table I, Fig. 5). These images, each depicting a distinct theme and building, are integral to the process of urban identification that was adopted in French cities, and their presence in Jijel is a reflection of the replication of this process in the city. (Picard, 1994; Blibli et al., 2015)

URBAN MARKETING AND THE SEARCH FOR THE NEW IMAGE OF THE CITY OF DJIDJELLI

To impose their influence and replace local history, the occupiers constructed the city according to the principles of French urban planning, with no reference to the pre-colonial city. Following the layout of the new city, streets and squares were named after historical figures and locations, such as Place Louis XIV, Rue des Gardes-Françaises, de Picardie, de Normandie, alluding to the

French expedition of 1664 on this African coastline, aimed at appealing to both locals and tourists (Retout, 1927; Labelle, 2007). It is worth noting that all the streets were named in this manner, with no reference to the region's own history. As part of an urban marketing strategy, symbolic images were created that incorporated the most recent colonial achievements and reflected the region's economic and landscape features. These images were specifically designed to embody the colonial identity.

– **Religious duality** – In the newly established city, significant emphasis was placed on the construction of a place of worship, with the church being the first notable building erected. Positioned prominently in the heart of the city, the Saints Simon & Jude Church, constructed in 1875 (as shown in Fig. 6), represented a symbolically significant edifice within a monumental architectural style. In contrast to its surroundings, this church was characterized by its gargantuan scale in relation to the city's Christian population, which at the time numbered only 704 individuals out of a total of 2122 (Safri, 2008).

The religious duality in the city engendered a power balance between the predominantly Muslim majority and the Christian minority populations. According to the national daily newspaper El-Moudjahed (2013), when the French authorities decided to construct a Christian place of worship, more specifically a church in the new city, the local population in Jijel responded by requesting representation for the Muslim faith as well. A petition was signed on July 29, 1871, and sent to the authorities in charge of the construction. Despite delays, the demand for Muslim representation was eventually accepted. This power balance between the different segments of the city's inhabitants is indicative of the quest for identity affirmation through religion.

– **Appropriation of local economy** – The city of Jijel has a longstanding local economy based on fishing, which can be traced back to antiquity. This tradition is a common feature of coastal cities, and is particularly prominent

Fig. 5 The representativeness of the images

11%

12%

7%

59%

11%

church   town hall   statue of the fisherman   Casino hotel   others
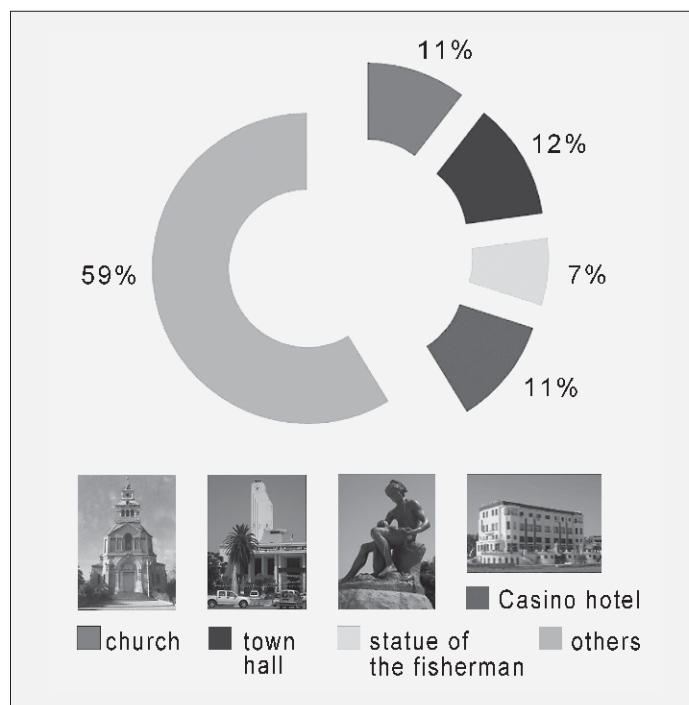
in Jijel, as evidenced by the frescoes depicting fishing scenes and various fish in the nearby Roman city of Djemila [34], which is situated 80 km to the south of Jijel and has an entrance faced in the direction of Jijel. Today, Djemila's museum houses numerous frescoes that detail fishing scenes, and this practice continues to be prevalent in the nearest city, Jijel.

The French colonial administration re-appropriated this economic function by introducing a common French practice. In French fishing ports, statues were erected to watch over the fishermen who went to sea. Given the region's potential for fishing and the existence of an ancient fishing practice, it was opportune for the French to develop this economic activity, along with all the practices associated with it, including the construction of a statue facing the sea to watch over the fishermen in accordance with the French tradition (Bennis, 2009).

The symbolic image of the fishing profession, as represented by a bronze statue of "a fisherman mending his net" (Fig. 7), remains a prominent feature of Jijel's urban landscape to this day. The statue was created by sculptor Guglielmo and cast by Thiébaut frères in 1888, and was originally placed at the entrance of the fishing port. It was presented at the 1888 exhibition and has since been relocated to the esplanade of the city hall headquarters. The statue depicts a figure of European descent (Fig. 7), and serves as a visual representation of the associated activity within a particular identifiable civilization.

– **Administrative power** – A significant accomplishment of Jijel city is evidenced by its city hall, as illustrated in figure 8. Situated at the confluence of the old and new parts of the city, as well as at the intersection of two of its main thoroughfares, it serves as a landmark within the urban landscape. Constructed in the 1930s by architects Bastélica and Guérineau, they are part of a generation of European architects, often born in Algeria and close to Peret and Le Corbusier, who wished to build Mediterranean architecture. Some have called them 'the Algerianists' according to Aleth Pierre (1994). The City Hall building was constructed during the 1930s, completing the symbols of the colonial city. This edifice stands apart from the surrounding urban fabric. Comprising a two-story block that houses administrative offices, it is crowned by a clock tower that rises to approximately 40 meters in height and features a sounding clock on each of its four sides. With its modern architectural style and prominent location at a city corner that is visible from all entry points, it plays a significant role in shaping the image of the city as a modern colonial centre. This underscores its impor-

tance as a noteworthy symbol of urban development and progress.

– **Coastal character of the city** – Due to its coastal location and its isolation from the rest of the country, the city has capitalized on these specificities to remain a popular urban holiday destination (as depicted in Fig. 9). These two aspects have been translated into architectural and urban achievements to create an identity for the city (Ben Jemia, 2014; Marchand, 2005; Meo, 2007; Galland, 1993). The uniqueness of the city is exemplified by the construction of a hotel on the beach, which serves the dual functions of accommodation and a casino, further enhancing its tourist appeal. The design of the hotel was undertaken by two architects, Mr. Dumoulin and Mr. de La Chapelle, who were based in Constantine. The construction of the hotel was carried out by contractors Staletti and Yotti, with work commencing in January 1936. This collection of achievements and symbols has been communicated through postcard images and has become a definitive representation of the city in all its facets. These postcards accurately capture the essential urban characteristics of the city and have helped to establish the city of Jijel's identity (Sechi, 2018).

THE SYMBOLIC URBAN IMAGE OF JIJEL AND ITS DURABILITY

The visuals disseminated through communication channels of the past, particularly post-

FIG. 6 PHOTO OF SAINTS SIMON & JUDE CHURCH

FIG. 7 OLD AND RECENT PHOTOS OF THE FISHERMAN'S STATUE

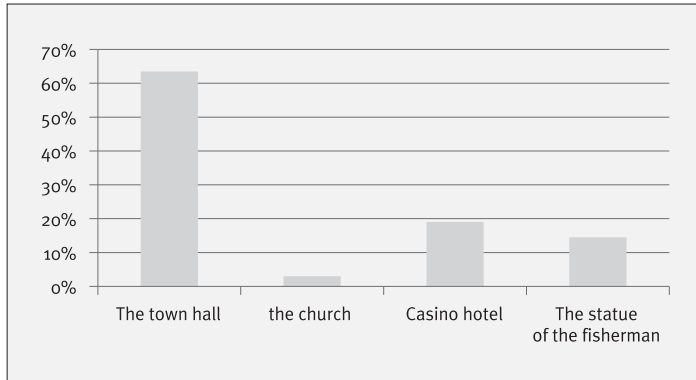FIG. 8 OLD PHOTO OF THE TOWN HALL

FIG. 9 POSTCARD FROM THE CASINO HOTEL

7A   *La statue du Pêcheur (1898) et le phare,*   7B

8

9

Fig. 10 The overall result of the survey

Table II Table of survey results

Urban images	Number	Percentage
The seat of the town hall	254	64%
The church	12	3%
The Casino Hotel	76	19%
The statue of the fisherman	58	15%
Total	**400**	**100%**

Fig. 11 Representative image of the population over 40 years old

Fig. 12 The representative image for the population under 40 years of age

cards, are indicative of Jijel city and have contributed to its urban identity in the absence of historical records. The purpose of this study is to identify the most enduring and representative image of Jijel city, and to determine if it embodies the city's identity. [41,42,43]
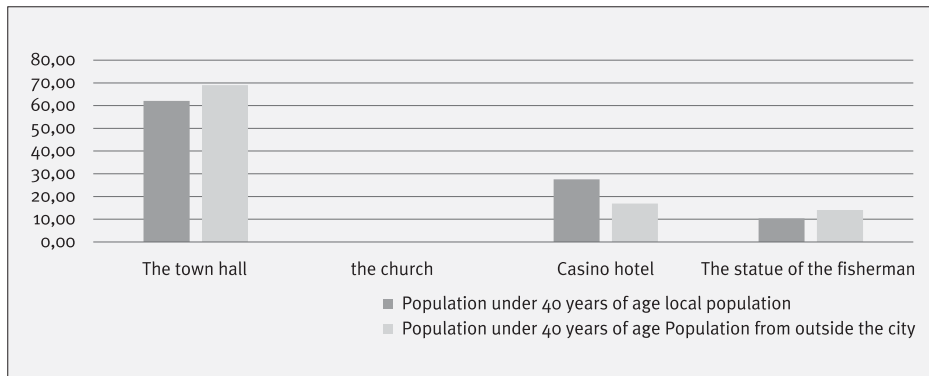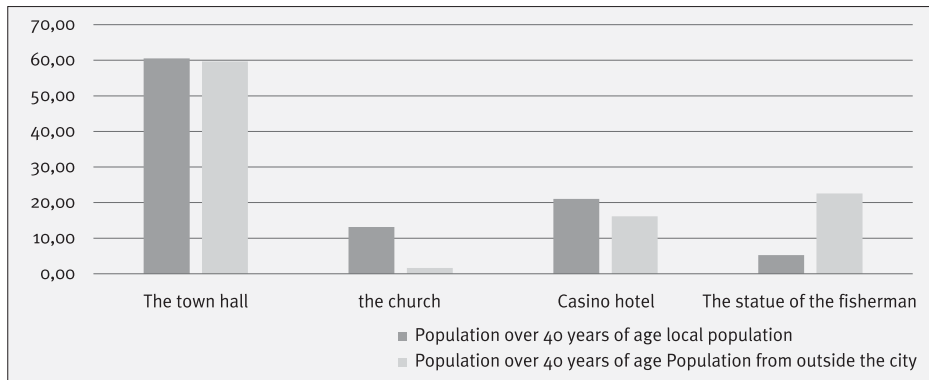
To investigate this matter, we conducted a random survey of 400 individuals, divided equally between city residents and tourists from various regions of the country. The survey targeted 50% of respondents over 40 years of age and 50% under 40 years old. Our objective was to establish whether the most representative urban or architectural image, selected from the four images shortlisted in the first stage of the study, is the most durable representation of Jijel city. Respondents were requested to rank the images according to their perceived representativeness of the city.

– **The most representative urban image** – The findings from the survey, as presented in Table II and Fig. 10, provide insight into the prevailing image of Jijel among its population. Notably, the city hall emerges as the most representative image, with 64% of respondents ranking it as their top choice. The hotel casino follows with 19% placing it in second position, while 15% of respondents place the image of the fisherman in third position. The church "Saints Simon & Jules" is ranked last, with only 3% of respondents choosing it as the most representative image.

These results confirm that the urban image of Jijel is predominantly architectural, with the city hall being the most iconic building, according to both local and foreign populations. This finding suggests that the population places significant value on architecture. This is particularly noteworthy given the evident poverty of the city's architectural landscape, with few notable buildings beyond the city hall standing out as well-designed or protected.

– **Sustainability of the urban image** – To assess the sustainability of the representative urban image, we divided our surveyed population into two age groups: those over 40 years of age and those under 40 years. The latter group comprises individuals who did not experience the city of Jijel as it existed during the French period, as the city underwent substantial growth from the 1990s onwards, resulting in the loss of many of its architectural and urban landmarks.

Our survey results (Fig. 11) for these two age segments indicate that the architectural and urban image is perceived differently depending on age. Accordingly, we have divided the population into two categories: those over 40 years of age and those under 40 years of age. For each category, we have considered a proportion of the local population and the remainder from outside the city.

Among those over 40 years of age, the image conveying the city's heritage that resonates with both the local population and visitors is the city hall headquarters. Nearly 60% of respondents regard this image as representative of the city of Jijel. The local population

also ranks the Hotel Casino image second, followed by the church and the statue of the fisherman, whereas visitors place the statue of the fisherman in second place, the Hotel Casino in third place, and the church last. This ranking is attributable to the church's fate, which was demolished in the 1990s and is now only a memory that is much more vivid among locals than unknown to foreigners.

For individuals under the age of 40, the primary symbol of the architectural heritage of Jijel is still the town hall building. This finding is particularly pronounced among visitors, as nearly 70% of respondents ranked it as their top choice (see Fig. 12).

Meanwhile, the Casino hotel ranked second, with 27% of locals and 17% of visitors selecting it. The fisherman statue was more popular with visitors, at 14%, than with locals, who selected it at a rate of 10%. The church was not included in the survey results for this age group, as it no longer exists and respondents were not familiar with it.

These results indicate that both local and visitor populations across the two age groups surveyed regard the city hall building as the most representative image of Jijel. Despite the lack of urban marketing via postcards for nearly four decades, this symbolic urban image has endured. Its longevity is not attributable to nostalgia or fleeting trends, but rather reflects the popular consensus among the city's inhabitants. Thus, until further notice, this urban image remains the defining and enduring representation of Jijel.

The significance of choosing this building as a representative image of the city lies in its neutrality. The building is a part of the modern architectural movement, which is a universal movement that does not reference any particular culture, identity, or civilization. In contrast, the "status of the sinner" is an element of French culture, and of the church of Saint-Simon and Jude, demolished during the 90s for ideological reasons. The population's preference for this building reflects their rejection of identity-based representations, a topic that continues to be debated. This raises the question of which aspects of colonial heritage are acceptable and appropriate for the population to appropriate.

ARCHITECTURAL READING OF THE URBAN IMAGE OF JIJEL

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the most emblematic urban symbol of Jijel city is the town hall building. Constructed in the 1930s as a representative example of modern architecture, this building has maintained its original purpose throughout the years. Its conservation has been a priority for
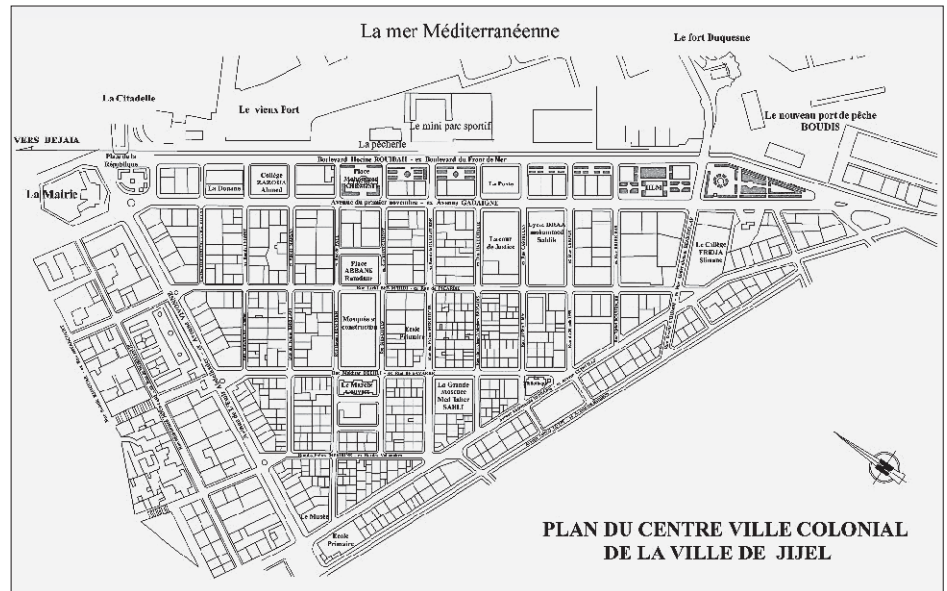

local authorities who have regularly undertaken maintenance and restoration efforts. Furthermore, the longevity of Jijel's urban identity can be attributed to the building's function as a centre of power, along with its architectural elements that enable it to stand out in the urban landscape. These elements include: its location, being part of an architectural trend, and the monumentality of the clock tower.

According to the results, the town hall building's strategic location at the intersection of two major avenues (Fig. 13) grants it high visibility from both city entrances, setting it apart from the surrounding architecture with its modern aesthetic and striking white colour that stands out against the skyline. Its uncluttered design, characterized by simple forms and uniform openings, is further enhanced by a 35-meter clock tower (Figs. 10, 11 and 12), emphasizing its unique status and visibility within the urban landscape.

The clock tower, also referred to as the "belfry", is of a grandiose design and can be seen from various arterial routes in the city. This feature adds to the building's significance and monumentality (Figs. 13 and 14). The clock tower serves a functional purpose, in that it provides visual and auditory cues for the city's temporal organization. It marks the passage of time, and its ringing serves to regulate and coordinate the city's activity, appealing to the visual, temporal, and sensory senses.

It is unsurprising that the design for the "Djidjelli" town hall project was showcased in the 1936 Modern City exhibition in Algiers alongside other notable public buildings such as the Rivet sanatorium, Miliana hospi-
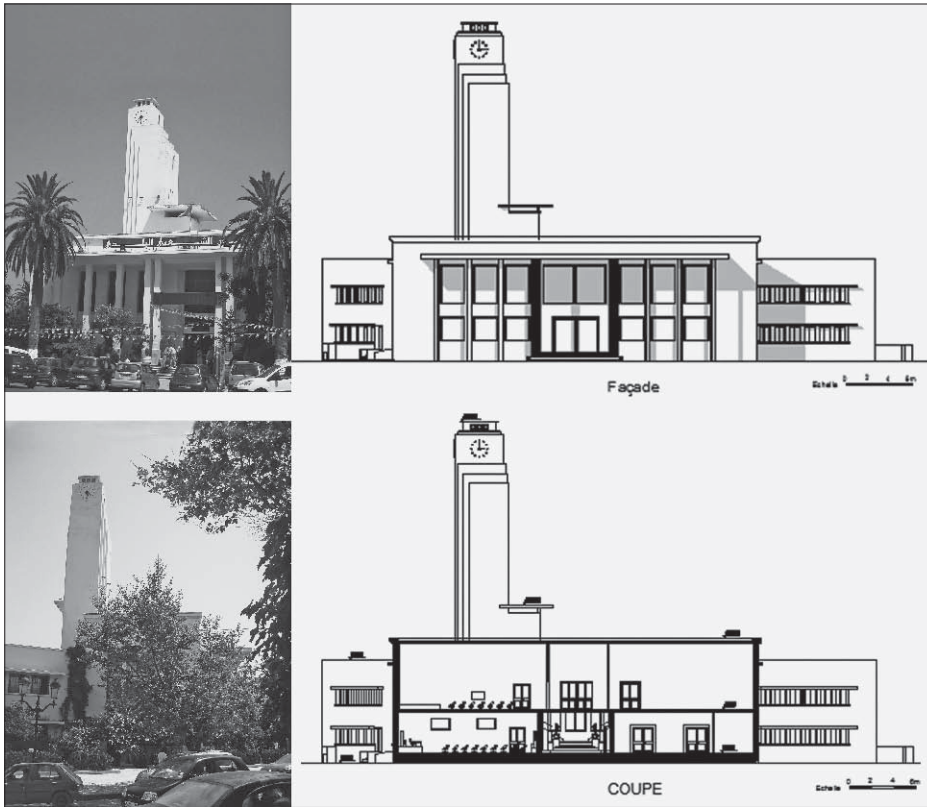
Fig. 13 Location of the town hall in the city

Fig. 14 The town hall

tal, Béni-Messous orphanage, Algiers and Djidjelli town halls, Philîppeville station, swimming pools, and schools. These structures were distinguished by their austere lines and striking white volumes (Benzerra et al., 2012). The General Commissioner's report on the exhibition was subsequently published in the May 1936 issue of the Architecture d'Aujourd'hui review.

READING URBAN SPACE AND ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE URBAN IMAGE

Spreading over an area of 34 hectares and following the shape of the flat land near the old city, the colonial city was organized according to a regular form based on the principle of route. Its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea and its seaside character have been materialized in the city plan and give an important place to the orientation of the roads and the implantation of the equipment. This is confirmed in the syntactic analysis carried out on the urban space and allows an understanding of the functioning of the colonial urban fabric to demonstrate the urban mechanisms and parameters that favour the emergence of city images.

— **Urban attributes and syntactic evaluation of the urban entity built during the French oc-**

cupation: An intelligible urban space — The utilization of the all-line analysis technique in the reconstruction of Jijel after the flood of 1856 is considered a ground-breaking method for characterizing urban spaces. This approach involves identifying various aspects of urban organization that contribute to the development of a particular urban image.

Primarily founded on the concept of axiality, urban syntactic analysis allows for the modelling of urban system configurations by applying topology and mathematical graph theory (Lathuillière, 1936; Lehmann, 2010; Mori & Christodoulou, 2012). By using specialized space syntax software such as "Dephtmap", the axial map of the urban system is revealed. Through syntactic simulations, this map discloses significant indicative values that relate to various urban attributes, such as system depth, connectivity, integration, and intelligibility (Hillier & Hanson, 1984). The obtained numerical results can be displayed in the form of graphs or maps, with colour gradients as an indicator of the different syntactic measures obtained (Hillier et al., 1993; Mokrane, 2011).

The application of the all-line analysis technique to the city of Jijel during the French period provides an effective diagnosis of the structure and spatial configuration of its urban system. This urban entity is primarily characterized by its regularity and formal simplicity, represented by a triangular shape, which confers good spatial legibility to the system.

— **Overall integration and depth of the urban system** — Considered as the most important property of the urban grid, integration is defined as the path requiring the minimum of directional changes, and crossing the maximum of nodes. It expresses the degree of spatial accessibility of a street relative to others in the same city (Lynch, 1960; Hillier, 1996; Attar & Saraoui, 2022). A well-integrated urban entity is one that tends to draw all the other urban spaces around it towards it (Obad Ščitaroci et al., 2019).

According to the results of the syntactic simulation, the map inherent to the global HH integration at radius n (Fig. 15), reveals a good integration in the whole urban system analysed, with an average value of 3.13 and an average depth of 2.11 steps. This average depth reflects a permeable and distributed grid urban system. However, the Avenue du 1er Novembre (ex Rue Cartegène) appears with a red color on the map, meaning that it is indeed the most integrated axis of the system with an integration value equivalent to 6.62, making this axis an important pedestrian and mechanical traffic area. With the Abdelhamid Ben Badis axis (ex Clerville Street)

Fig. 15 Full integration (HH)

Fig. 16 Connectivity and route choice

Fig. 17 Choice of routes
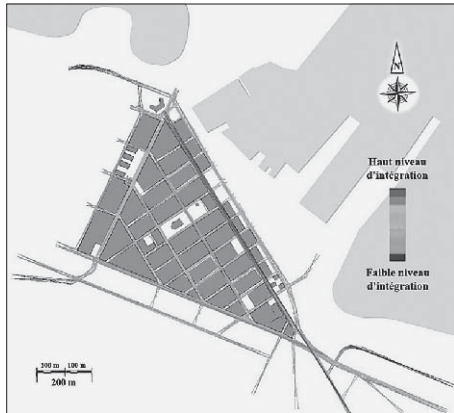
and the Amir Abdelkader axis (ex Vivonne Street), a trunk road constituting the integrating core stands out in the urban system by its important integration values. This gives the system a good physical permeability on its entire perimeter.

– **Connectivity, permeability and route choice** – The connectivity map provides information on the urban axes belonging to the system that are best served by the road network through a cluster of colours going from the most connected in red to the least connected in blue (Fig. 16). Following the syntactic simulation carried out, an average connectivity of 8.73 per axis emerges, with a maximum value of 25 connections found on the axis of Avenue of November 1st (ex Avenue Gadaigne). As for the rest of the urban axes, the connectivity values were close, indicating an urban system that we can describe as multiple rings. The spatial configuration thus offers a considerable variety of routes for the benefit of pedestrian and mechanical mobility (Fig. 17), once again ensured by good permeability.

– **Intelligibility and legibility of the urban structure: Visual perspectives due to a good legibility of urban space** – Intelligibility is a second-level measure that summarizes the notion of legibility developed in the work of Kevin Lynch (Hatt, 2010; Malverti, 1988). An urban system is said to be intelligible when navigation within it is easy. In other words, intelligibility is a quality conferred on any urban space that enjoys good connectivity and good integration in its topological relationship with the other spaces of the urban system. It is therefore a measure detected from the relationship between integration and connectivity expressed in the form of a diagram. A correlation coefficient R2 from this ratio is calculated to determine the degree of intelligibility, if it is greater than 0.50, the resulting scatterplot will approach a 45° line and the system is said to be intelligible. If R2
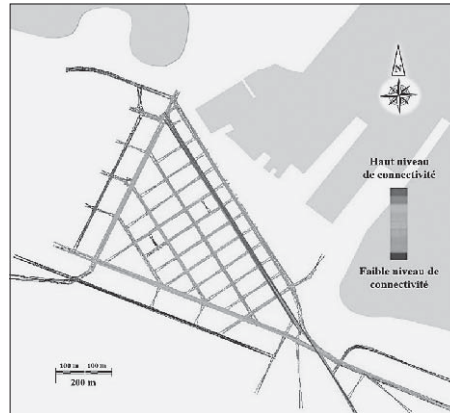
is less than 0.50, the system is said to be unintelligible (Hillier, 1996)

Regarding the overall intelligibility of the system in our case study, the graph (Fig. 18) reveals a correlation coefficient R2 of 0.927 with a cloud of points well grouped around the trend line, meaning that the system is very intelligible.

This being the case, the reading and analysis of the urban organization of the French city of Jijel reveals a very good legibility of the urban space. Indeed, the urban grid offers visitors and walkers deep urban perspectives. Oriented mainly towards the sea, the different avenues connected between them allow a strong legibility of the urban space and are connected mainly to the main Avenue of November 1st (ex Avenue Gadaigne).

DISCUSSION

The city district as an asset for travel – The French city currently "downtown" of Jijel is distinguished by a well circumscribed urban organization and houses a set of facilities like the principle adopted in European cities where the city had five basic facilities necessary for an urban space which are: the city hall, the church, the courthouse, the school and the health centre; add to that other establishments according to the size of the city, such as: the police station, the theatre and the hospital. A variety of local shops such as the market, food and clothing stores, as well as service facilities (post office, banks) are located all along the streets and avenues. The arrangement of these structures and shops in the urban fabric allows for ease of movement and a very short travel time to move in its urban environment. Thus, the city designed as a city district whose living spaces are intertwined in the centre enables the creation of urban routes and promotes the notion of wandering. The short distances between homes and facilities, shops and services significantly encourage walking or cy-
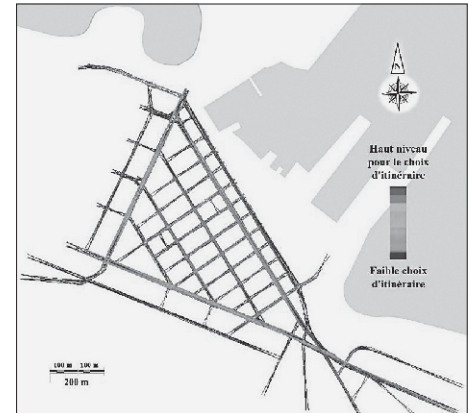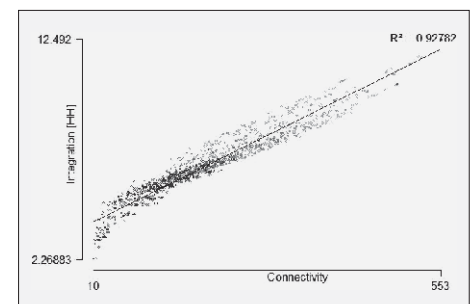
Fig. 18 Global intelligibility graph

cling, which do not exceed 15 minutes. According to our syntactic analysis, it emerges that the integrating core in its triangular urban form offers a choice of high-level itineraries on the city's structuring axes, particularly on the main avenue (Avenue du 1er Novembre). This analysis shows us the proximity-distance relationships generated by the configuration of the circumscribed urban space.

The Avenue of November 1st (Ex Avenue Gadaigne) occupies an important place in the urban structure realized during the French period. It is the backbone of the city due to its legibility and connectivity and is an obligatory passage in the majority of route choices. At the end of this avenue, the headquarters of the town hall is erected. This modern style building, rising to more than 30 m from the ground, representing the administrative power and located on an urban axis that constitutes the backbone of the city is the representative urban image of the city of Jijel.

CONCLUSION

The French colonization of Jijel has bequeathed a significant legacy and heritage that faithfully reflects the city's urban and economic characters, which are those of a seaside and fishing town. However, the symbol of the administration, which comprises both the colonial and Algerian eras, is presently the seat of the city hall (formerly known as the city hotel), and it conveys the image of Jijel. Whether this work can be classified as Jijel's identity is still the subject of ongoing debate. The identity of an urban space should not be limited to the work itself but should also express a connection to a more distant past and the memory of places.

This image, although appreciated by the population and visitors, is a product of colonization and belongs to a neutral architectural register that does not reference any other identity, cultural, or civilizational parameters, but rather represents the renewal of the city and its modern aspect. The attachment of the population to this work, as evidenced by the survey results, reveals certain nostalgia and a default choice in the absence of other more identity-affirming works, representative of an era older than the colonial period. Additionally, the architectural work is part of a universal architectural movement known as "modern architecture" that transcends all civilizational, identity-based, and religious references.

In the 19th century, the city of Jijel, formerly known as Djidjelli, suffered a devastating fate. In 1856, a tidal wave struck, destroying over 80% of the old city. The authorities at the time, namely the French, requisitioned the old city to create a military zone and chose to construct a new city on a previously undeveloped plot of land adjacent to the old city. This allowed for an opportunity to express urbanism in a new way. The French-built city was designed to replicate small French cities, consisting of five main structures: the church, town hall, market, court, and dispensary, forming a triangular shape. Representative images of the colonial city of Jijel, selected through postcards both old and recent, reflect an association of these urban images with high places, architectural styles, and landscapes, rather than places of memory.

In the colonial urban marketing applied to the city of Jijel, references to the local economy, such as the status of fishermen and the hotel casino, can also be discerned. These representations remain faithful to the urban specificity and regional character of the city. Even today, they are still representative images of Jijel in the minds of its residents and visitors, demonstrating the longevity and effectiveness of urban marketing.

The city hall's headquarters building is the quintessential urban representation of Jijel. Its architectural style, belonging to the modern architectural movement, along with its central location on the city's main avenue

and function as administrative power, contribute to this image. This architectural style provides excellent visibility in a comprehensible urban space, making the image a symbol due to its architectural aspect, function as a seat of power, and visibility in the urban landscape.

It represents the city of Jijel's revitalization and full incorporation into the modern architecture movement, as it is the only architectural work in the city associated with this universal movement. The building's enduring popularity among the population since its inception has elevated its status to that of a heritage site.

French colonization played a significant role in the international recognition of urban identity in the Mediterranean basin as a distinct cultural space with a rich history. Jijel exemplifies this phenomenon. Under colonial influence, the city underwent significant transformations that shaped its urban and cultural landscape. Infrastructure improvements, such as the construction of modern buildings, roads, and port facilities, contributed to establishing Jijel as a regional economic hub, fostering trade and interactions with other Mediterranean cities. Concurrently, French colonial architecture left a distinctive imprint, with public buildings and residences that have left a lasting mark on the urban scenery. This presence also facilitated cultural exchanges between the local population, the colonizers, and other Mediterranean communities, giving rise to a unique urban identity for Jijel.

The architectural work's neutrality has ensured its durability. Thus, this urban image of the city of Jijel, created during the colonial period and subsequently appropriated, is not subject to debate on heritage, identity, and religious notions. Rather, it falls under the category of the legacy of a universal architectural movement, despite its association with French colonization, and of which some Algerian cities were platforms of expression.

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