

# **The Commercial Dimension Of The Ports Of The Province Of Skikda: Historical Context And Current Port Activity**

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## **Abstract**

*As visualized nowadays, the City of Skikda is the result of a radical urbanization process that evolved from the core of a Phoenician commercial port to a port pole. Besides, its historical context makes clear the emergence of three ports that arose through successive time stations that had an impact on the development of the port function of the city, in which there were numerous activities, specialization and spheres of influence. However, the paper dealt with a brief presentation on the commercial role played by the ports of Skikda through the ages, together with discussing the current reality of ports in terms of classification thereof according to their economic activity, their capacities, the quantity of cargo, the number of imported containers and incoming ships, along with addressing the issue of the port function of the city and globalization, as well.*

**Keywords:** *commercial dimension, historical context, city of Skikda, port activity, port hub, globalisation.*

## **1. Introduction**

Essentially, the western basin of the Mediterranean Sea stands is of great natural geographical importance, as many civilizations have developed along its coasts since the beginning of history, the fact of which <sup>1</sup>was reflected in the Algerian ports that have emerged through the ages in the field of trade, commercial exchange and the diversity of historical and urban monuments in its coastal cities. As consequence, o the history of ports on a simple scale symbolizes the history of the city and civilization.

If truth be told, our choice in this paper fell on an ancient historical city located in the northeast part of the Algerian coast overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, the City of Skikda, which has been the scene of trade exchange since ancient history, as the urban and commercial growth and development thereof have been linked to the development of its port activity, which has witnessed deep radical transformations. Nonetheless, the problem of this study stands for revealing the commercial dimension of the ports of the City of Skikda together with monitoring the process of development of its port function through the most important historical stations thereof, in addition to finding out to which extent the city has been able to attain economic development and integration into the global economy? In this respect, we will be based here on several scientific methods, the most important of which corresponds to the descriptive and historical method, and the use of statistical methods for analysis, as well.

**Firstly:** The historical context of the ports

## **1. The Phoenician era**

In fact, the Phoenicians founded several ports on the coasts of the Maghreb in the form of coastal trading centres. Nevertheless, the Phoenicians chose for the most part for their ports the natural bays protected from the northern winds to which the coasts of North Africa are exposed (Ghanem Mohamed El Saghir, 1988, p.50), as the Mediterranean Sea became wide open for Phoenician sailors to trade with all the Peoples located on its shores (Lieusson M.A, 1850, p80). Furthermore, the centre of Stora located near the quiet Bay of Stora, at the western side of the SafSaf Valley (Fenech E.Y, 1852, p.14) is nowadays known as Stora, bearing in mind that is of Phoenician origin. In addition, it is considered as one of the gateways located at the west of Ras Bouharoun that was founded along the Mediterranean coast by the Phoenicians in order to be used as markets or trading stations (Julien Charles André, 1978, p.80). Further, it is very likely that this was performed after they founded Carthage in the seventh century BC and settled therein. On this basis, the establishment of the port on the Gulf of Stora, a wide Bay on the Mediterranean Sea known as the Numidian enclave (Feroud Charles, 1896, p.18) that was probably in the seventh century BC. In a consequence, Stora existed with the existence of its port whereat its name remained popular throughout all time as it occupied an impregnable position and a protected harbour well-founded over time for the docking of merchant ships.

In light of which, the name of Stora stands for an ancient Phoenician name for the site being soon after occupied by the Romans. However, there exist archaeologists who derive the name of Stora of the port of Skikda from the name of the Phoenician gods "Astorath". Moreover, it is known that the word "Astorath" means the gods of Venus in the Phoenician language. Consequently, they called the name of Stora (Vars. Charles 1896, p.18) on the port in memory and blessing of these gods. In this respect, Charles Vars says that the name of Stora has shown to be associated with many Phoenician cities (Vars. Charles, 1896 p.18.). In addition, the site of Stora has later became the port of the Holy colony of Russicada, which was alike named to shine up to Venus, the Queen of Love and Beauty of the Romans, as they found no conflict in retaining the ancient name of Stora in their colloquial speech.

## **2. The Roman era**

Importantly, the Roman city of Russicada was founded by the Roman colonization in 45 BC (Salhi Taoufik, 2008/2009, p.17) during the reign of Julius Caesar, which became an urban and commercial centre of great importance; above and beyond, it was one of the four constituent cities of the biographical Sertean Confederation (Aggoun.I, 2008, pp.57-67.), and represents an important maritime trade centre similar to the Phoenician port of Stora, whereat the Romans expanded the city with a layout in line with the topography of the location and the severity of the slope, relying on the materials available in the area, in respect such as stones and raw materials existing in this region, like ceramic and white and coloured marble extracted from the Mountain of Filfila, located at eastern side of the city, at a distance of 23 km. More to the point, they made the port of Stora an integral part of Russicada with a road adjacent to the sea that they named the port as "Veneriae", i.e. the holy, which may stand for a translation of the Phoenician Venus "Astorath" or "Astora". In addition, Stora is only about 03 km to the northwest of Russicada (Feroud Charles, p.87), whereat the Safasaf Valley symbolizes the agricultural linebacker of the city, which represents a plain centre characterized by the extension of river terraces being of economic and spatial importance in the middle of rich and diverse soils and lands of high agricultural value (BOUCHAMA Lydia, 2013, p.106.). Nevertheless, the port of Stora played an important role in the Roman era, whereat all the products of the territory "Annone" were collected in its warehouses from the annual crop returns of some Roman investments and being related to all kinds of food supplies, in respect such as oil and grain), which were

shipped in a special fleet and reached the port via the Cirta road which was created during the reign of Emperor Hadrian (118 ad – 137 ad) along 72 km passing through the Safsaf Valley. Additionally, through archaeological evidence along the Roman road connecting Cirta to the sea, the Romans have undoubtedly established small villages, dug wells and exploited quarries (Monograph of El Harrouch, 1956, p.1), whereat Russicada represented a commercial warehouse of the province of Cirta (Gsell Stéphane, 1997, p.12). Throughout history, ports have controlled the ports of land routes (Cheniti Mohamed Bachir, 1999, pp. 45-48).

Definitely, the port of Russicada was one of the ports dedicated to the supply of Rome “Annonary Ports”, whereat the trade exchange between them was of remarkable strength, as it exported to the same grains, woods, oils and some animal products, as Russicada became a gateway for communications between Rome and the province of Numidia, reflecting its strategic and commercial importance, as Skikda and Collo represent the main sea ports of the province on the outside (Haris Muhammad Hadi, 1995, p.213).

### **3. The Islamic conquest**

Certainly, Skikda did not receive any attention in the middle Ages from the rulers who succeeded in different periods, as Skikda remained shrouded in mystery until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, seeing that we have just lines about it in the books of some Arab and European travellers who visited the region in different periods. Further, the name of the Stora continued to circulate even after the destruction of the Roman city of Russicada after the year 429 ad by the vandals and reached afterwards the writings of Arab travellers. Likewise, the Moroccan geographer Abou Obeid Allah El Bakri (Abou Obeid El Bakri (without date), P83) described Stora that he wrote as “Istora” in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by stating that “Istora is the port of the city of “Taksida” (which is the local name for Skikda according to Al Bakri), which is an ancient proto-city with traces that in the beginning gives the impression to be wondrous. Further, he described the region in general as a territory containing loads of minerals and fruit trees, prairies and rivers, from which the column of the line is exported to Africa. Similarly, he pointed out the abundance of markets and ports in the coastal region and failed to refer to the urbanization of the city, which means that Skikda was not built during the reign of Al Bakri should we exclude the small port of Stora being exchanging goods with some European countries”. However, with regards to the Arab traveller Hassan ibn Al-Wazzan Leon the African (Leon the African 1952, p.43) who visited the region in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, taking in his biography the same Roman Road between Cirta and Russicada that he compared to the roads of Italy, he indicated that there was commercial activity in the area.

Additionally, the port of Stora in the late middle Ages supplied Italian sailors with African goods. Besides, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the main trade of Stora was in the hands of Southerners, including wines, grain, leather, carpets and the like, until the southern names became famous in the North of Constantine (Hamada Salah, 1979, p.44).

### **4. The Ottoman era**

Despite the entry of Algeria into the Turkish sphere of influence and the growth of the Algerian fleet during the reign of the Aroudj brothers and those who came after them, Skikda did not receive attention from the Turks notwithstanding the threat of European fleets to the coasts of Algeria for three centuries, and with the proximity of Skikda to the capital of the eastern province Constantine along with its importance as an excellent seaport for docking fleet units, care did not extend thereto, the fact of which is conceivably due to the weak control of the Turks over the North of Constantine’s region known for revolutions, or they were unaware of the importance of the port.

Unquestionably, the situation continued to deteriorate and stagnate until the coming of the French invasion in 1830 and their occupation of both the port of Stora and Skikda in 1838 after the subjugation of the City of Constantine on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1837, according to Solal.E description (Solal Edouard, 1957, p.32) the rich and equipped Philippeville (the name of Skikda in the French colonial era) during the Roman presence was not the same for the Turks, as the entire area extending from El Harrouch to Saint-Antoine (currently El Hadaiek), the entrance to the city in 1837 was flooded with dangerous swamps, whereat the cultivation of wheat and some olive trees were centred outside the Safasaf Valley depression.

In reality, there are many tribes living in the region of Skikda, including the Zeramna tribe, the Alma Maasla tribe, the Beni Bounaim Safisfa... as tribe of Beni-Mehanna is the most important tribe in the region of Skikda, with an estimated number of 3,000 people in 1837 (BOUCHAMA Lydia, 2001, p.39.), which is spread over 40,000 hectares.

## **5. Skikda under French colonization**

Subsequent to the French entrance to Constantine, the French minister of War Bernard ordered on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1837 the governor of Constantine to establish a military naval administration in Stora to be connected to Constantine by paving the roads laid by the Romans during their existence in the region (Solal Edouard, 1957, pp.36-37).

In fact, the location element has played a major role in choosing the right place to establish a port city, whereat historical and strategic circumstances have contributed to this choice since October 1838, when the French expedition landed its travellers at the remains of the City of Russicada and the final occupation of Stora (Solal Edouard, 1957, p.53). However, the goal was the same for both the Romans and the French, which the aim to secure navigation and link the coast inland (H. Boukerzaza, 1991, p.310).

Undeniably, the City of Philippeville (the city of Louis Philippe, King of France at the time of the occupation of Algeria) was a fortified fortress with some military teams present therein, as a garrison participated in the conquest of the North of Constantine, and did not have a port in the first years of occupation except for a small port "Débarcadère" of modest wood and exposed to winds and storms. As consequence, the main reliance was on the port of Stora in the West, as it enjoys natural protection, whereat ships dock, built of iron and steel columns, so as ships can unload directly on its floor and then carry goods on flat wagons, which are delivered to the city. More to the point, 459 commercial ships entered the port of Stora in the period from 16<sup>th</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1839, whilst 456 ships departed of the same. More and more, the trade of the Skikda region rivalled that of Tunisia, whilst trade between Skikda and Constantine was also active with several caravans; in fact, Skikda became the financing of Algiers, as the amount of trade increased by 2000 tons in the first four months of 1840, whereat 200 head of cattle were sold on daily basis in the city market, along with sales of leather, wool and wood (Salhi Taoufik, 2008/2009, p.193).

In consequence of the importance enjoyed by the Skikda region on agricultural, commercial, geographical and even military basis, thus making it one of the important centres that the French colonization and the accompanying European settlement had attained benefits therefrom. Further, demographic growth is considered a basic factor that made the City of Skikda renew its urban area, architectural style and population composition after the drying of the swamps of the Zeramna plains (BOUCHAMA Lydia, 2001, p.28) together with Safasaf with a new imported view that brought about a radical and sweeping change in the areas with an acceleration in the pace of urbanization and the number of dwellings, as the number of completed houses went from 251 in 1839 to 330 at the end of 1840 and the city expanded rapidly between the years 1852 and 1858 according to the desire of the centenarians and Europeans (Solal Edouard, 1957, p.127), whilst human

regiments of many European nationalities were brought from different geographical areas, whereat the number of Europeans reached 11,941 inhabitants in 1866. Nevertheless, it was clearly considered to establish a port project befitting the new City of Philippeville, which at that time seemed necessary and urgent, as the topographical engineer “Lonzo” was assigned to conduct study thereon, who had then submitted a preliminary project in 1871. Above and beyond, the importance of this project increased after connecting the city with the railway line and entering into service on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1860 (BOUCHAMA Lydia, 2001, p.45), in addition to building a 01 km long tunnel to cross the railway towards the sea, as well as the creation of the ancient Roman Road towards Constantine after its construction and expansion on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1870 as a land passageway encouraging economic and trade exchanges between the coast and the interior (BOUCHAMA Lydia, 2001, p.46). In addition, the port was built at the vicinity of the City of Philippeville on an area of 42 hectares protected by a barrier extended into the sea instead of the port of Stora, which is located 03 km west, which has become associated with marine fishing activity, whereat Italian fishermen sailors represent the majority, as it finances the city’s markets and has known rapid development in the seventies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was able to compete with the port of Calle (Salhi Taouik, 2008/2009, p.165).

Beyond doubt, Skikda became a district belonging to the Department of Constantine, as the area of the municipality of Skikda endowed with its full powers reached 23,311 hectares (Salhi Taoufik, 2008/2009, p.195), whereat the colonial city witnessed important spatial and urban transformations, seeing that its commercial port had a special colonial character by exploiting the field, playing the role of an intermediary or a transit point between the linebacker of the port, which is represented by the territories producing natural wealth and agricultural crops, and between the correspondent, which is considered a natural gateway to the sea towards various European ports in general and French ones in particular. Above and beyond, the construction of the port of Philippeville officially ended in 1895, which was expanded with the growth of its business activity by building covered areas and new docks between 1930 and 1957 for the purpose of receiving an increasing number of ships and double the export activity and commodity flows, as the port played a strategic role for Constantine’s entire labour, financed by various products, in respect such as: Coffee, sugar, soap, oven, food, glass, porcelain, as evidenced by the movement of the ports of Skikda and Annaba in 1925 (Salhi Taoufik, 2008/2009, p.195), whilst the export represented oils, fruits, vegetables and animal products, especially wines, whereat an average of 78,619 quintals were exported between 1907-1914 (R. Arru, 1985, p.95), whilst total volume of exports and imports reached in 1960 the 1,320,000 metric tons (Salhi Taoufik, p.191). In light of which, the port of Philippeville has become one of the most important doors to enter Algeria’s world economy and trade of a colonial nature, which provided the City of Skikda with vitality, commercial and urban activity during the French colonial era, as its population reached 67,685 people in 1954, among which 28,326 were non-Muslims (1998,ONS).

## **6. Ports of the City of Skikda after independence**

In 1969, major works began and turned the port (Philippeville Port) into a dual port for goods and fuel, whereat the works were completed in 1972. However, in order to increase the port’s reception capacity, the preparation and restoration operations began in 1981, mainly the “Marielle” Quay, which increased the length thereof by 290 m.

Unquestionably, upon choosing the City of Skikda as a National Industrial Centre and a Pole of Development according to the decision to create an Industrial Zone in 1968 (H. Boukerzaza, 1991, pp.333 – 313) on the plain of Larbi Ben M’Hidi, at the Eastern side of the Safsaf Valley outlet, with a total surface of about 2,000 hectares (H. Boukerzaza, 1991, p.314). Further, the location of the construction of a new port specialized in hydrocarbons was determined, whereat the works began in January 1970, and a main barrier was built

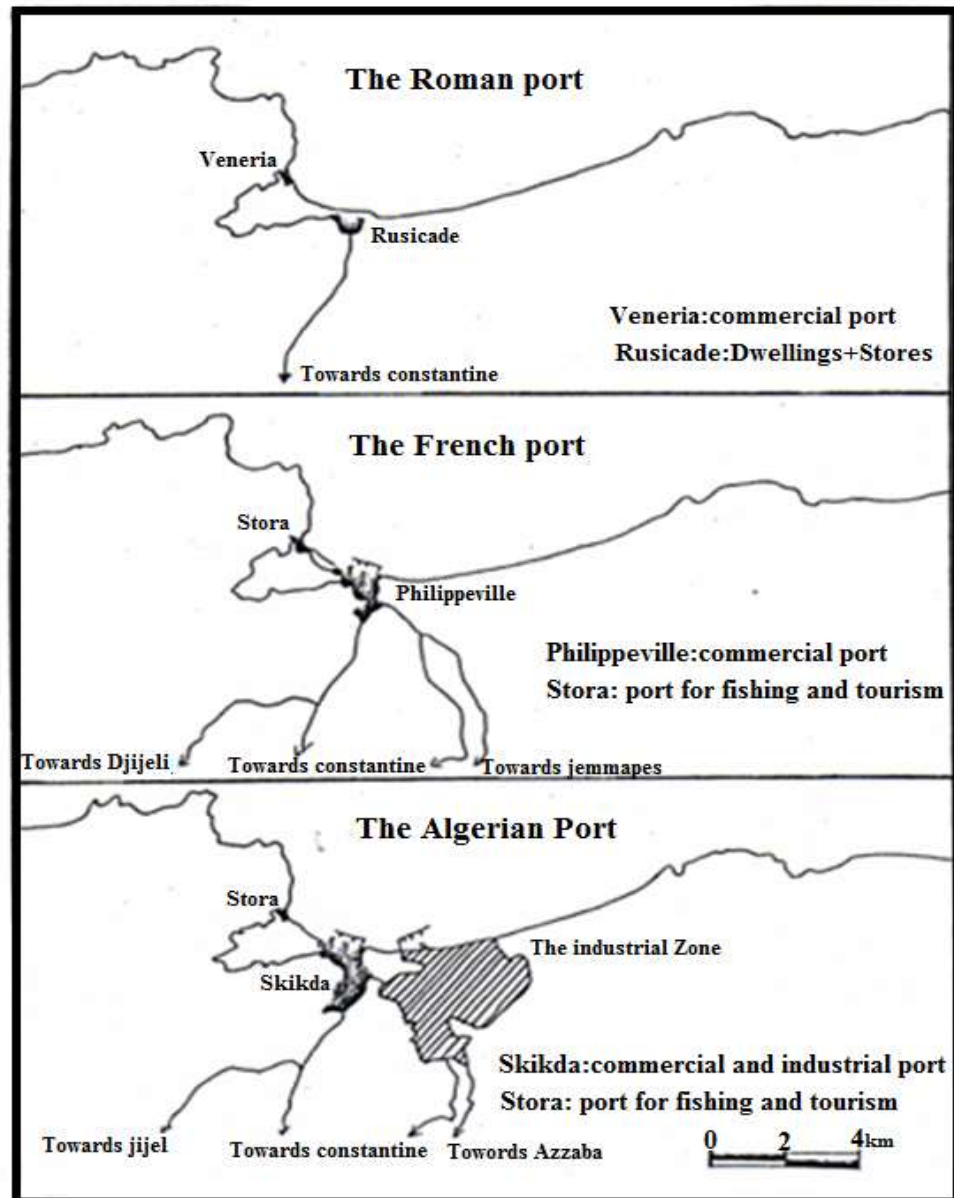
extending along 1,887 m, together with another secondary one extending along 650 m leaving a 250 m wide strait of entry. Consequently, the works ended in the port in 1973.

If truth be told, the City of Skikda was elevated to the status of a Province in 1974 and witnessed an important industrialization movement accompanied by a large urbanization movement that had an impact on the field, as its population moved from 91,395 inhabitants in 1977 to 145,203 inhabitants in 2008 (Summary Table of Municipalities of Skikda, 1998, ONS), which is equivalent to 90% of the population of its municipality and 19% of the population of the Province; as for the port of Stora, it was set up for fishing and recreation since February 1981.

Within the scope of the organization and management of the ports sector, the Port Institution of the Province of Skikda was established by virtue of the Decree No.82/284 dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 1982 to supervise ports and keep pace with developments in the field of the global market and became a Public Economic Institution on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1989.

As consequence, Skikda is a historical city in which the importance of the commercial port of Skikda emerged, in particular after the Phoenician and Roman presence, and then the city witnessed an urban and commercial prosperity, culminating in the construction of the port of Philippeville in the French colonial era, which had then taken its port activity from a new commercial and industrial turn after independence, as the port of Skikda witnessed a functional shift towards fishing and tourism; in virtue of which, Map No.01 demonstrates the development of the port function of the City of Skikda through its most important historical stations.

**Map No.01 :** Evolution of the port function of Skikda



Source: H. Boukerzaza, 1991, p.311.

In the light of the historical context, three ports have emerged that require determining their place and location.

- **The Stora port for fishing and tourism:** the port is located in Stora Bay, 03 km west of the city of Skikda at the intersection of latitude  $36.54^{\circ}$  North and longitude  $6.53^{\circ}$  East.
- **The old commercial port:** the old commercial port (built in the French colonial era) is located at the outlet of the old stream of the Safasaf Valley, at the intersection of latitude  $36.53^{\circ}$  North and longitude  $6.54^{\circ}$  East. Further, the port is located in the Bay bounded between the island of Srigina and the Cape of Filfila.
- **The new commercial port:** the new commercial port is located 05 km east of the old commercial port at the intersection of latitude  $36.53^{\circ}$  North and longitude  $6.57^{\circ}$  East. Above and beyond, it represents the port of independent Algeria specializing in



hydrocarbons, located on the plain of Larbi Ben M'Hidi in the area bounded between the outlet of the Safasaf Valley and the centre of Larbi Ben M'Hidi.

## **Secondly: The current port activity: The global and regional trade dimension**

Considering that the port is a coastal facility that represents a node in a network consisting of the linebacker and the export destination, we will endeavour to find out the counterpart through the current port activity and determine the linebacker of the ports of the City of Skikda after their change and development of their port function, together with the nature and volume of exchanges, based on the data of the port institution of the Province of Skikda, and the results of the field investigation, as well.

### **1- Counterpart through the movement of port activity:**

The counterpart of any port is part of the global land area corresponding to the water surface served by the port and brings its customers from and to the same, as the movement of port activity is one of the most important large-scale movements, depending on the type of movement of the latter, which in turn varies depending on the type of activity. Nonetheless, among the port movements in the old and new commercial ports of Skikda, we find general maritime traffic, the movement of goods of both types, general cargo, hydrocarbons and traffic of containers. In addition, the sphere of influence of ports in commercial transactions at the international level will be identified through exports and imports.

#### **1-1. General maritime traffic**

In total, the old and new commercial port of Skikda recorded the movement of 3,180 (Skikda Port Institution, Statistical yearbook, 2016, p.15) ships upon entry and exit in 2016, of which specialized in hydrocarbons with 1,442 ships. However, the ports of Skikda are considered one of the most important Algerian ports for trade exchanges of goods of all kinds by sea, particularly hydrocarbons, whereat the total volume of conditioning was estimated at the entry and exit of ships transited at the ports of Skikda 20,026,712 tons in 1999, which volume has increased in 2008 to 23,202,985 tons, reaching 27,093,945 tons in 2016, of which 22,924,419 tons were hydrocarbons, thus an increase of 84.61%.

#### **1-2. General cargo traffic**

Indeed, the movement of general goods outside of hydrocarbons and oil products has witnessed a remarkable development, moving from 2,062,019 tons in 2006 to 4,169,526 tons in 2016 (Skikda Port Institution, Statistical yearbook, 2016, p.12). Nonetheless, these general goods represent agricultural products and processing materials, which accounted for 66% of the total general goods in 2016, in addition to foodstuffs, construction materials, fertilizers, chemical products and mining materials (pipes).

#### **1-3. Movement of hydrocarbons**

As a general rule, the movement of hydrocarbons is affected by the extent of global demand thereon, reaching 22,924,419 tons in 2016, most of which are refined hydrocarbons by 84.85% (Skikda Port Institution, Statistical yearbook, 2016, p.10).

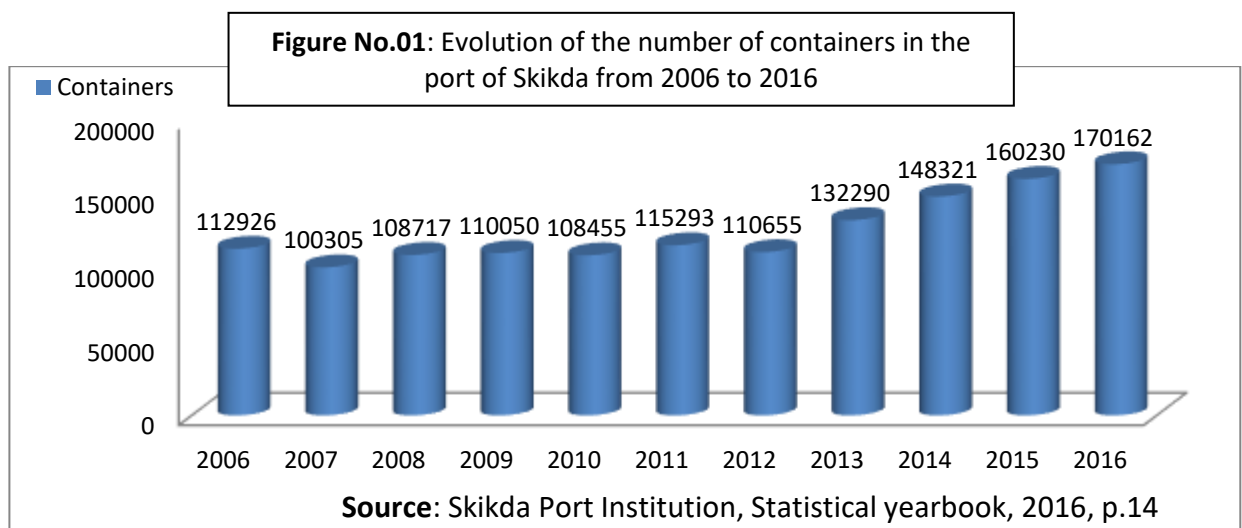
#### **1-4. Containers' traffic**

During the Seventies and Eighties of the last century, the maritime transport sector witnessed a technological revolution represented under the form of using the door-to-door container system in the transportation process of general goods, whereat the new means of transporting various goods in huge quantities, aimed at activating international trade flows.



Accordingly, Algeria, like other third world countries, sought to enter the circle of capitalist globalization and keep pace with the same, as well as participate in the economic event industry growth – development – sustainable development by enacting an arsenal of laws, using all aspects of economic and financial activity on the one hand, and on the other the provisions approved in international legislation by joining various international agreements, in respect such as the customs agreement on containers in Geneva, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1972, ratified by the Decree No.78/01 dated 21<sup>st</sup> January 1978. In general, the method of transporting goods by containers has developed at an increasing pace in Algeria, as the old port of Skikda ranks first at the level of the eastern territory and third at the national level after the port of Algiers, which occupies the lead in the exploitation of containers passing through the same, and then the port of Oran in the West ranking in the second place.

Most importantly, container traffic has recorded an increase in the number of containers, thus reaching 22,646 containers with a total weight of 154,735 tons in 1999, which number has increased to 108,717 containers in 2008 with a total weight of 752,881 tons, thus bringing the number of containers to 170,162 in 2016 with a total weight of 1,151,405 tons. Additionally, the surface allocated for receiving containers in the port of Skikda is 31.5 hectares with a total capacity of 34,500,000 tons (Skikda Port Institution, Statistical yearbook, 2016, p.7). In consequence, Figure No.01 demonstrates the evolution of the number of containers in the port of Skikda from 2006 to 2016.



### 1-5. Imports and exports of goods

**A- Imported products by size and geographical origin:** Imported products include general goods and oil products with an estimated volume of 4,879,717 tons in 2016, most of which are agricultural products, in particular cereals, mining materials and fertilizers by 54.34%, in addition to timber, sugar, chemicals and hydrocarbons... (Skikda Port Institution, Statistical yearbook, 2016, p.24) an important number of countries in the world deal with the Old Port of Skikda in more than 20 countries. Nevertheless, the largest volume of imported general cargo in 2016 was from Italy, i.e. by 13.46% of the total volume of imported goods followed by China by 11.81%, then Spain by 11.28%, France by 10.59% and Brazil by 5.03%... As for oil products imported mostly from Italy, France and the Netherlands (Skikda Port Institution, Statistical yearbook, 2016, p.32–33)

**B- Exported products according to their size and destination:** Algeria's transactions with foreign countries in exporting non-hydrocarbons are limited, as oil products represent about 99.03% of the total exported goods, estimated at 22,214,228 tons in

2016, of which only 214,651 tons belong to general goods outside oil products, in respect such as cork, fruits, marble and tractors by 0.97%.

In effect, the ports of Skikda depend for most of their exports on petroleum products, as the new commercial port is mainly dedicated to the movement of liquid fuels (refined + crude oil) together with gaseous fuels in the form of Methane gas, Butane gas, and Ethylene gas. However, this port ranks second in exports at the national level after the port of Arzew in the West, whose exports amount is 67.04 million tons (Mohamed-Cherif Fatima-Zohra and Fouzia Rumini, 2009, p.169).

Based on the data received from the Port Institution of the Province of Skikda in 2016, we find that the new and old ports each deal with an important number of countries in the world, estimated at more than 20 countries, as the export destination of general goods is represented by European countries, particularly to Spain with 40.33% of the total exported goods, followed by Malta with 36.62%, Italy with 8.07%, France with 7.91% and Germany with 2.83%, in addition to other countries, in respect such as Belgium, Great Britain, Portugal, Japan and Morocco...

As for oil products, Algeria is considered to be in the forefront of exporting countries to various parts of the world, through the port of Skikda, as most of them go to the United States of America by about 23.88% and Brazil 14.27%; European countries: Spain 9.47%, France 8.48%, Netherlands 5.34%, Italy 4.31% and Belgium 4.07%; East Asian countries: China 3.44%, South Korea 2.43% and Singapore 1.53%; in addition to other countries such as Cuba, India, Tunisia, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco... (Skikda Port Institution, Statistical Yearbook, 2016, p.34).

## **2- Determining the linebacker of ports:**

In reality, the real linebacker of any port is part of the land area served by the port, which brings its customers, and it is everything that is located behind the coast, in general, whereat the port structures and equipment are located.

### **2-1. Distribution of the total volume of imported products through the old commercial port:**

In point of fact, the volume of imported products was estimated at 4,879,717 in 2016, distributed at the national level to 27 provinces, which include all the provinces of the east of Algeria, 06 provinces from the centre (Algiers and its suburbs), two provinces from the West and two provinces from the south. As consequence, the spheres of influence of this port reach outside the eastern territory.

Additionally, according to the number of frequencies, which is a key factor in highlighting the spheres of influence of any port, the provinces of the North-Eastern Region record the highest frequencies by 76.70%, chiefly the City of Constantine and its suburbs, in respect such as: Setif and Batna...

### **2-2. Sea fishing activity and spheres of influence of the port of Stora:**

Most importantly, the port of Stora ranks first in fish production in the Province of Skikda with 1,602.86 tons in 2016, ahead of both the port of Collo and the Marsa in the province. Nonetheless, this is due to its historical importance, in addition to the number of workers, which amounted to 1,247 workers along with the production of certain types of fish, in respect such as Blue Fish and high-priced Whitefish, in addition to Crustaceans, which characterize the fishing activity in the port.

More to the point, the linebacker of the port of Stora was determined by a field investigation conducted in June 2016 with the wholesalers about the most important areas to which the fish product is destined. In virtue of which, the obtained results highlighted that the distribution of fish is carried out within the municipalities and districts of the Province of Skikda, as an important part of the local needs of the province is secured. Likewise, they are distributed outside the province, principally in Constantine, Setif and Batna, which are major inland provinces, with some coastal provinces, such as Annaba, which take certain types of fish to major hotels and restaurants.

In general, this sector still needs more attention from the authorities to raise the level of qualification of fishermen, develop technical capabilities and encourage investment in this sector so as to have a large-scale commercial dimension.

### **3- Ports of the City of Skikda: Multi-functionality and spheres of influence:**

#### **3-1. The port of Stora:**

In fact of matter, the port of Stora is the first core for the ports of Skikda, specializing in the activities of marine fishing and tourism. However, the sphere of influence thereof is local compared to the other two ports, as the distribution of fish includes the municipalities of the Province of Skikda in addition to some provinces, in respect such as: Batna, Constantine and Setif. Nevertheless, with regards to tourism and entertainment, its sphere of influence has shown to be wider, as it witnesses an active tourist movement, in particular during the summer season, seeing that it receives tourists from the inland provinces in the Algerian East, in respect such as: Constantine, Batna, Setif, Oum El Bouaghi... and even from the southern provinces, in respect such as: Biskra and El Oued (field investigation, August 2016).

#### **3-2. The old commercial port:**

Historically, it symbolizes the second core and stands for a double port, but it specializes in the transportation of goods and alike aspires to specialize in containers. Besides, it has a regional influence as it is characterized by a wide linebacker that comprises all the provinces of the East of Algeria, and extends to the provinces of the Centre, West and South.

#### **3-3. The new commercial port:**

Historically, it is the third core, whilst in terms of area, it is the largest core of an energy orientation specializing in the export of hydrocarbons only. In a consequence, it has a national and global function of valuing hydrocarbons and providing the country with hard currency; further, it has national influence through its relations with oil fields and some other Algerian ports, together with having global influence as its linebacker extends to several countries in the world.

Indeed, the City of Skikda is a port pole characterized by a multiplicity of cores; i.e., a multiplicity of ports, as we find that each port is personified by its history, its activity, its sphere of influence and its special relations, which increases its presence in economic development, as well as openness to the world economy and integration in the context of globalization.

### **Thirdly: The City of Skikda: The port function and globalization**

Incontrovertibly, ports have an important place in the world economy and account for more than 80% of global trade exchanges. Besides, transport in general and maritime transport

in particular has been affected by globalization and affected the same, as the transport revolution has deepened globalization economically (Hammam Nizar Obeid). Nonetheless, the City of Skikda occupies a good position within the framework of Algeria's integration into globalization, and has shown to be one of the National Ports that occupy an optimal position in the regional and global context through the characteristics listed below:

**1- The port of hydrocarbons has a global dimension:**

Definitely, the presence of the fuel port of the City of Skikda, which ranks second nationally in navigational traffic, has allowed the city to form broad relations with many countries of the world. Besides, through the export of hydrocarbons, the city has gained international experience by marketing its products to more than 20 countries, and consequently the City of Skikda is used to practicing international relations. However, the port has become an economic lever that keeps pace with the global trend, as it is characterized by its competitiveness and dynamism that makes it an active part of the international trade process within a global network of production and consumption. Above and beyond, this port is considered one of the most important sources of income for the State.

**2- The import process:**

Millions of tons of imported goods from several points of the world pass through the old commercial port of Skikda on annual basis, including a regular line connecting it with the port of Skikda. In this respect, there are around 17 lines and others with irregular lines.

**3- Modern means of transport:**

In fact, the trend towards the adoption of container technology has become inevitable in light of the complexities occurring in the field of economy, which is mainly related to the impact of economic globalization and the emergence of new technologies. Nevertheless, since the invention of containers, the real era of globalization has begun (Hammam Nizar Obeid). As for the port of Skikda, it seeks to activate the system of trade exchange through containers, whose movement is increasing from year to year, whereat the port of Skikda ranks third nationally in container traffic, whilst the development of the port in this area reflects its development with the pattern of World Trade (Hichem Salah Mohsen, 2012, p.350), together with their implications for the national economy.

**4- The wide linebacker of the port of Skikda:**

It was alike mentioned that the old commercial port has a wide linebacker that includes major cities in the Algerian East, in particular Constantine, as well as Setif and Batna, as one of the largest cities in the country will receive increased investments therein. Consequently, every investment made within these cities increases the port's traffic as an intermediary between these cities and the cities of the world, the fact of which is reflected in the decisions of economic, development and urban planning therein.

Above and beyond, the implementation of the road project linking the ports of Skikda and the East-West Highway through the Interchange of El Harrouch at a distance of 31 km (under completion) will increase the positive features that distinguish the same and ensure the flexibility of movement in the direction of the linebacker.

**5- The presence of foreign companies:**

In addition to the export of hydrocarbons, the presence of foreign companies investing in this sector and other sectors further strengthens its relations with the world market. Moreover, the petrochemical industrial zone forms an economic pole associated with the

port, an attraction for investment and a producer of job opportunities, an important part of production outputs are directed to export as well as to supply the national market, the most important of these industrial units are (Skikda Industrial Zone Management Institution, 2016)

- High-density Polyethylene Plant (PEHD) belonging to the mixed company for the production of raw materials and for the transformation of plastic "POLYMED" with a capacity of 130 thousand tons per year for export and supply to the national market (agriculture, fishing nets, irrigation, food packaging, cosmetics);
- Production and marketing unit of liquid nitrogen "ENGI" (National Company of Industrial Gas) belonging to a mixed Algerian-German company with a production capacity of 80 m<sup>3</sup>/day;
- Helium unit for the production of heavy helium;
- Units for the production of Ethylene with a capacity of 120 thousand tons/year, low-density polyethylene with a capacity of 48 thousand tons/year, and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) with a capacity of 35 thousand tons/year.

### **Conclusion:**

In the light of the facts set out above, the City of Skikda, thanks to its fortified and distinctive Mediterranean location, has passed through several important historical, urban and commercial stations, whereat the importance of the port of Stora was manifested during the stages of Phoenician and Roman presence, on the one hand, whilst it suffered from shrinkage and neglect, on the other hand, in the middle period, and then an urban and commercial advancement in the French colonial era, mainly after the establishment of the commercial port of Philippeville.

Moreover, the activity of the port of Stora has shifted towards sea fishing, and its port function has taken on a new dimension after independence as a multi-activity port pole and spheres of influence, sea fishing and recreation for the port of Stora, petrochemical industry and trade for the port of independent Algeria in addition to the activity of the old commercial port. Nowadays, the city has several privileges and a pivotal position in the global competition market by attracting an important part of international trade traffic, the ports have allowed it, in particular the old and new, to connect internal relations with its vast linebacker and other external ones with several countries; in addition to the continuous development in container traffic, which is considered an effective means of transportation and a symbol of globalization. Nevertheless, all these factors increase the integration of Skikda and accordingly Algeria in the context of globalization, like the rest of the major ports therein. As a consequence, it is necessary to strengthen its competitiveness and the fusion mechanisms thereof in its regional and international environment, support its economic position, optimize the valuation of its infrastructure and improve its performance by encouraging innovation through involvement in global logistics networks.

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