



Economic Life in the City of Kannauj; Trade as a Model

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Abstract

We chose the topic (Commercial Life in the City of Kannauj, Trade as a Model), in which we showed the most prominent internal trade and its most important routes (river) and external trade and its most important routes (sea) in the city of Kannauj, in addition to the markets, the method of dealing, and the scales and measures in that city. Trade flourished in that city, especially after the Ghaznavids and Ghurids took control of it, and that control continued until the era of the Lodis. Trade played a special role in the city of Kannauj, as there was economic activity with different countries and states, and the diversity of agricultural crops contributed to the revival of trade in the city of Kannauj.

Keywords: Life, Economy, Kannauj, Trade.

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Introduction

India in general witnessed the diversity of economic life and there is no doubt that agriculture in medieval societies was considered the backbone of economic life, as it is the oldest activity practiced by man since time immemorial, while the city of Kannauj in particular reached its maximum expansion, in which we showed the most prominent internal and external trade routes, as Kannauj had economic activity with various countries and states, and the title of the research came (Economic Life in the City of Kannauj Trade as a Model) which contained several sections, perhaps including internal trade and its most important river routes in the city of Kannauj, and external trade and its most important sea routes in the city of Kannauj, in addition to the markets and commercial systems in the city of Kannauj. The methods of commercial dealings were through cash dealings, bills of exchange and checks, in addition to weights, measures, standards, goods and commercial merchandise.

Economic Life in the City of Kannauj; Trade as a Model

The researcher in economic life finds that the city cannot flourish except through the revival of its economy, as its internal and external trade has become the main pillar in the development of the economy. Moreover, despite the fact that this city is isolated, economic life has flourished in it due to its geographical location, which made it the focus of merchants, especially after the control of the Ghaznavids (350 AH-583 AH / 961-1187 AD) in the year (409 AH / 1018 AD) over it, as it was previously one of the remote regions in the middle of the Indian forests and deserts. Trade in the city of Kannauj was divided into two types, perhaps the most prominent of which are:

1- Internal trade and its most important routes (river) in the city of Kannauj:

The city of Kannauj was distinguished by its internal trade, as the trade in gold and silver was one of the most important things it was known for because it was between its mountains, and agricultural crops of various types, and food products such as sugar, and grain trade, especially rice. Kannauj was known among the Indian cities located in northern India with its trade, it was also famous for the trade of swords,

perfumes, sandalwood, incense, cloves and camphor, especially in the Qamron Mountains located in northern India within the mountains of the city of Kannauj. As for its internal roads (riverways), there were several roads, including:

- A. The road from Kiz Makran then to Qanbali then goes to the port of Debal then Mansoura then Multan then Kannauj.
- B. It starts from the road of Malabar and its ports and heads north to Multan heading towards Kannauj.
- C. The road extending from Kannauj to the port of Gujarat, to Kanbaia then the port of Mali, one of the ports of the city of Malabar.

2- Foreign trade and its most important routes (sea) in the city of Kannauj

Foreign trade played an effective role in the city of Kannauj in the movement of economic activity, as it is a movement of communication with different countries and countries, as it is the lifeline with those countries, and the diversity of agricultural crops in the city of Kannauj contributed to the revival of its trade, as the incoming merchants carried their goods and resided in the markets to sell them, perhaps its most important external routes:

A- External land routes: The famous Silk Road was one of the most famous trade routes in the Middle Ages at all, and it passed through the cities of the Islamic East, and remained the communication route between Europe and the East and gave Kannauj commercial importance due to its proximity to it, and it is a rugged and thorny road due to its extension across the desert, high plateaus and high mountains, and extends a distance of five thousand miles, and was exposed to bandits and thieves, then it heads through the city of Kabul, then to the village of Suleiman, then heads towards Punjab, then heads to the city of Multan and then to Kannauj. This road extending from Khorasan to India was arduous and difficult, except that the trade caravans were continuous between Khorasan and Sindh, and from Sindh to India.

B- The sea route: Ships were heading from Basra to India to Sohar and Muscat, two ports on the coast of Oman that were crowded with commercial traffic and commercial ships arrived at them from the port of Aden and from there the ships headed to India and from the port of Muscat the ships were supplied with fresh water, then headed towards the Indian Ocean until they reached the port of Kulm in the south of the Malabar coast in India and from there towards Multan and if the merchants wanted to continue their way towards Kannauj, the journey from Multan makes it clear that the commercial ships heading towards Kannauj started from Multan by all land and sea routes.

Second: Markets in the City of Kannauj

Markets played a major role in the prosperity of economic life, as they are an important center for attracting trade, and a vital area for financial activity, and thus they are an essential element in the prosperity and economic prosperity of the city. The market was the center of buying and selling, and deals were concluded there, and the economic state of the country was decided, as the market is the most prominent field for disposing of agricultural and industrial production, especially since most of Kannauj's areas and lands are agricultural, and Arab merchants used to go to the markets of Kannauj to dispose of their goods, as the city was considered one of the land trade centers leading to India. The markets in the city of Kannauj were numerous, perhaps the most important of which are:

A- Permanent Markets: Kannauj is famous for having major markets for tobacco, perfumes and rose water, and for having many trades, and these markets are internal (permanent) in its cities "Braz, Ramzan, Rowin and Barwar".

B- Temporary Markets (Seasonal): The city of Kannauj was famous for its external (seasonal) markets known since ancient times, as Al-Hamdani said about it, "Between the last borders of this side and Kannauj, there were kingdoms of India connected by borders, and merchant caravans crossed them for a whole year if they continued to travel," as seasonal products were sold in a wide area and this was done with precision due to the huge size of the products that were displayed, especially spices, elephants, horses, and others.

C- Specialized Markets: The city of Kannauj was rich in its diverse markets, as it was a huge market of great splendor. A special market was allocated for each craft or trade, containing different types of goods and commercial products, and shops and warehouses were allocated for them to preserve their goods. Each type had its own market and each category of merchants worked in selling specific goods and products, such as the market of bakers, cobblers, food and barbers (who practice the profession of cupping at times), service workers in baths, butchers and fishmongers, mat makers, and the weapons market. Society in different eras looked down on some of those who practiced these professions because they are lowly professions, which some people refuse to work in. The same applies to the Kannauj market for animals, especially elephants, horses and birds, and the market for livestock and other animals.

Third: Commercial systems in the city of Kannauj

A- Methods of commercial dealings

1- Cash dealings

2- Dealing with bills of exchange and checks

A- Bills of exchange: Bills of exchange were used between the merchants of the city of Kannauj and other regions. They are a transfer or a financial letter written by money changers and contain a specific amount of money that can be exchanged anywhere by the clients and experts of the person who has the bill of exchange for the value of the money, and he carries it on his long journey. This process is safe because the exchange is only for the owner of the bill of exchange. The merchants used it in the Indian ports, especially in the port of Debal, which witnessed its widespread use due to the expansion of commercial operations in the port. Thus, the merchants were able, through bills of exchange, to carry a lot of money without fear of pirates and thieves who were spread near the ports and on the roads leading to the cities of India, including Kannauj. The distance between Kannauj and other regions, as Al-Hamdani mentioned about the trade of the Kannauj region, saying: "Between the last borders of this side and Kannauj, there were kingdoms of India connected by borders, and the caravans of merchants crossed it in a whole year if "They kept on walking."

B-Checks: Cheques were widely used in the city of Kannauj, one of the important commercial centers during that period, because the large commercial caravans coming from the cities of India passed through this city, and they came to it for its religious sanctity and the spread of Hindu temples in it, and they brought with them fabrics and spices for blessing, and the caravans also came to Kannauj, so the checks spread among the merchants in a big way, in addition to the checks issued by the kings for construction and reconstruction work in all the Indian cities, especially Kannauj.

3-Weighing and Measures and Scales

A-Weighing and Measures: Different types of weights and measures spread in the markets of Kannauj, especially after its conquest by the Muslims and the spread of Islam, and the weights and measures in the city of Kannauj did not differ from those that were spread in all the cities and regions of the Islamic East and the countries of India; The (Suran) and (Tula) were used to weigh jewelry, three-quarters of (Suran), and every eight (Suran) was called (Bal), and every thousand (Bal) was called (Bahar), and it was used to weigh heavy tools, and from the measures and weights (Man), and (Qarstanat) was used to weigh fixed goods, and (Rumanat) were moved with hangings on numbers and lines, and the scale was called (Tala), and the Mikayal (i.e. Abel) was a measure equal to about a yushk of rice, and the Kila was a container in which grains were measured, and agricultural products such as wheat and barley were estimated; as the Qafiz was approximately eight Makakik, from the measures of dry things, and its amounts differed in the Islamic countries in different eras, and small, precise scales were used by money changers and goldsmiths to weigh small and valuable pieces of jewelry. The dirham was the basic currency on which different weights were measured. The weight of the Islamic dirham was fourteen carats: the Islamic dirham = 20 + 11 + 10 = 41 carats. The dirham weighed one mithqal and was used to estimate agricultural products such as wheat, barley, dates and bread. The load was one of the common weight units in all the cities of Kannauj;

the pound was also one of the common weight units in the city of Kannauj, and the "jarib" is a weight equivalent to ten qafza.

B- Measurements: Regarding the common measures in the city of Kannauj; the most important of them were the arm and the span, which is called in Persian dasti, the foot, which is called kam and ashal, and the fist, which is equal to one-sixth of an arm, and one of the most important units for measuring long distances (mile).

2- Prices: The cities of India, including the city of Kannauj, were distinguished by their cheap prices. Al-Maqdisi said: "A spacious city, a profitable store, and every morning, and bananas are cheap..." This indicates the cheapness of products in the city's markets.

Prices in Delhi in general and Kannauj in particular were cheap, as meat, bread and ghee were cheap and inexpensive. However, prices rose during times of war and economic hardship, especially during periods of drought, until the price of a ton of wheat reached six dinars during the reign of the Tughluq dynasty. The situation reached the point where the residents would cut up the skin of a hippopotamus after its death and eat it, as the skins were cooked and sold in the markets. It even reached the point where if a cow was slaughtered, the residents would take the blood and eat it. Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq sought to find a solution to rid the residents of the crises, so he ordered that all residents of the city be given six months' allowance, and in order to ensure that everyone was fair in distributing these expenses, he made it under the supervision of the jurists.

Fourth: Commercial goods and merchandise

A- Exported goods and merchandise

The city of Kannauj exported many agricultural crops, especially rice, pepper, seeds (millet), sesame, wheat, barley, bananas, pomegranates, apples, coconuts, Indian amber, camphor, musk and Indian oud, slippers and leather products, camel and cattle hides, carpets, pottery, silver and wooden products, precious stones (gold and silver), and ivory products, through the port of Gujarat.

B- Imported goods and merchandise

The city of Kannauj imported several goods and food products, including Iraqi dates that came from Basra, oil and almonds, and also imported industrial products such as cotton fabrics from Egypt and Iraq, fur from the Romans, swords that the city of Kannauj exported or imported, coconuts, wood, animals, especially elephants, purebred Arabian horses, and many types of spices and aromatic perfumes and other goods.

Fifth: Commercial Systems

A-Money

Money represented the legitimate authority of the state. It was natural that its characteristics and technical features would have an impact on the people's view of the ruling authority and the extent of its prestige. It is closely related to political and social systems and trends. It is also a record of titles and mints that shed light on many political events. It proves or denies the subordination of sultans and governors to the caliphate. It is also official documents whose value is not easy to challenge. In addition, it sheds light on the economic conditions experienced by the countries in which it is minted. Its weights and standard were affected by that situation. It was supervised by a responsible chief known as the Mint Supervisor. Due to the importance of currency in spreading confidence in transactions, the highest supervision over the mint was for the judge, especially after the Muslims took control of the city of Kannauj during the Ghaznavid conquest in the year (409 AH; The reason is to guarantee the legitimacy of the dinars and dirhams issued by the mint in their names, i.e. the names of the sultans and rulers, whether in terms of the permissibility of the standard or weight. The mint in Kannauj was not far from the authority, but was under their supervision and they created several positions and specializations for residents, including: about the formulas of commercial dealings, markets and ports that often contributed to activating the movement of commercial exchange, in addition to his reluctance to mention currencies and prices, except for what he

mentioned about the currency in the city of Kannauj, as he said: "And their dirham weighs two-thirds of our dirham and is known as Fahzi, and they have money that they deal with." Also, the currency circulating in the market was one of the factors of stability, which led to the stability of the market, as well as the non-implementation of the monopoly policy by monitoring prices and balances from the factors of economic stability in the state, which is what made the Kannauj Mint in the heart of the city due to its location near the markets.

Conclusion

1- It has become clear to us through our study of the commercial life in the city of Kannauj that the city flourished with its internal and external trade and its most important river and sea routes, especially after the Ghaznavids took control of it, so it was one of the remote regions in the middle of the Indian forests and deserts. The gold and silver trade was one of the most important things it was known for because it was between its mountains, and what the Arab merchants provided in terms of trade facilities to the city of Kannauj led to an increase in Arab trade with India, especially in the city of Kannauj.

2- Foreign trade played an effective role in the city of Kannauj in the movement of economic activity with different countries and countries, and the diversity of agricultural crops in the city of Kannauj contributed to the revival of its trade, as goods were carried to the markets for disposal. The Silk Road played a prominent role as one of the most famous trade routes in communication between Europe and the East and gave Kannauj commercial importance.

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