

Tourism Potential in the Middle Euphrates Governorates (Karbala, Nabul, and Najaf) and Ways to Develop Them

Athraa Abdel Hadi Zwead

Technical Institute of Najaf, Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University, Department of Tourism
athraa.zwead@atu.edu.iq

Abstract: Many countries and tourist attractions in the world seek to develop tourism products and elements of tourist attractions because of their importance in the economic, social and political aspects, and the study of the tourism potential in the central Euphrates provinces of Iraq, represented by the governorates (Karbala, Babylon and Najaf) is of great importance at the level of the country and the region. The study for what it provides in terms of providing job opportunities, reducing unemployment and attracting internal and external investment.

It appears from the study that Karbala governorate ranks first in terms of the number of tourist visitors, as it owns (8) religious sites (4 sites) of nature and (5) archaeological sites where tourists come to, while Najaf governorate ranks second in terms of the number of visitors and the number of Tourist hotels and the number of tourist sites (24) a tourist site where the natural sites number (2), archaeological sites (9) and religious sites (13), and Babylon governorate comes third in terms of the number of visitors and the number of tourist hotels despite the large number of many tourist sites, including (20) A tourist site, including the archaeological sites number (4) and the lower sites (16).

Chapter one

The Theoretical Framework of the Research

Introduction

Tourism has become one of the critical economic activities because of its economic, social, environmental, and cultural returns that reflect positively on the tourist destination area in particular and any country in general. The foreigner, relying on being like tourism, is a developed and multi-faceted industry with economic and social activities, either directly or indirectly.

Problem of the Study

Determining the problem of the study is an essential function in forming the research structure and its scientific method. The scientific method aims to track the phenomenon in all its aspects to reach a solution to the problem, representing the study's focus. The main question is:

(Are there tourism potentials (natural, archaeological, and religious) capable of developing and sustaining tourism activity in the study area (Karbala, Najaf, and Babel))?

Hypothesis of the Study

The study's hypothesis is a preliminary solution to the research problem and that the governorates of Iraq (Karbala, Najaf, and Babil) have tourism potentials that help them develop tourism activity and sustain it if it is invested in the required and correct manner.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research are to identify the natural, archaeological, and religious tourism potentials within the study area and to determine its role in the development of tourism activity to achieve optimal investment for this economic activity as well as access to sustainable tourism that has a vital role in the study area on the one hand and the country on the other hand.

The importance of the Study

The importance of the research is highlighted by highlighting the reality of tourism in the study area (Karbala, Babylon, and Najaf) and identifying the natural and human potentials that need to be given the necessary attention to invest them in a fruitful economic manner.

Methodology of the Study

The research relied on the descriptive approach by describing the tourist sites, whether natural or human, within the study area by depending on the field study represented by observation, as well as relying on the comparative approach in comparing the tourist sites in the study area.

The boundaries of the study area:

1 – Spatial boundaries:-

The boundaries of the study area are represented by the administrative borders of the governorates of Karbala, Najaf, and Babel (Map 1), as Karbala governorate is located between latitudes (9° - 32°) and (50° - 32°) north of the equator and between longitudes (10° - 34°) and (18° - 44°) east in the western part of the sedimentary plain and east of the desert plateau in the central region of Iraq, with an area of (5034 km²).

The boundaries of the study area are represented by the administrative boundaries of the province of Najaf, and the astronomical location of the region is determined between latitudes (50° 29 32 21') north and longitudes (50 4244 44') east. Its place in Iraq is marginal on the edge of the western plateau and the extreme southwestern end of the northern section of the sedimentary plain at a distance of (10) km west of the Euphrates River, as it is bordered from the north by the provinces of Babylon and Karbala, from the east by Al-Qadisiyah governorate, from the west by Al-Anbar governorate, and from the south It is bordered by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and from the southeast by the Muthanna Governorate, with an area of (28,824 km²) from the site of Iraq amounting to (435,052 km²). At the same time, the Babil Governorate is located between latitudes (7° - 32°) and (8° - 33°) to the north and between Longitudes (43° - 42°) and (45° - 50°) with a total area of (5119 km²).

2- Time limits:-

The temporal limits are represented by the status of the study, with reliance on some relevant data from the previous years.

3 - Objective limits: - The objective limits are represented in the study of the tourism potentials in the holy governorates of Karbala, Babel, and Najaf.

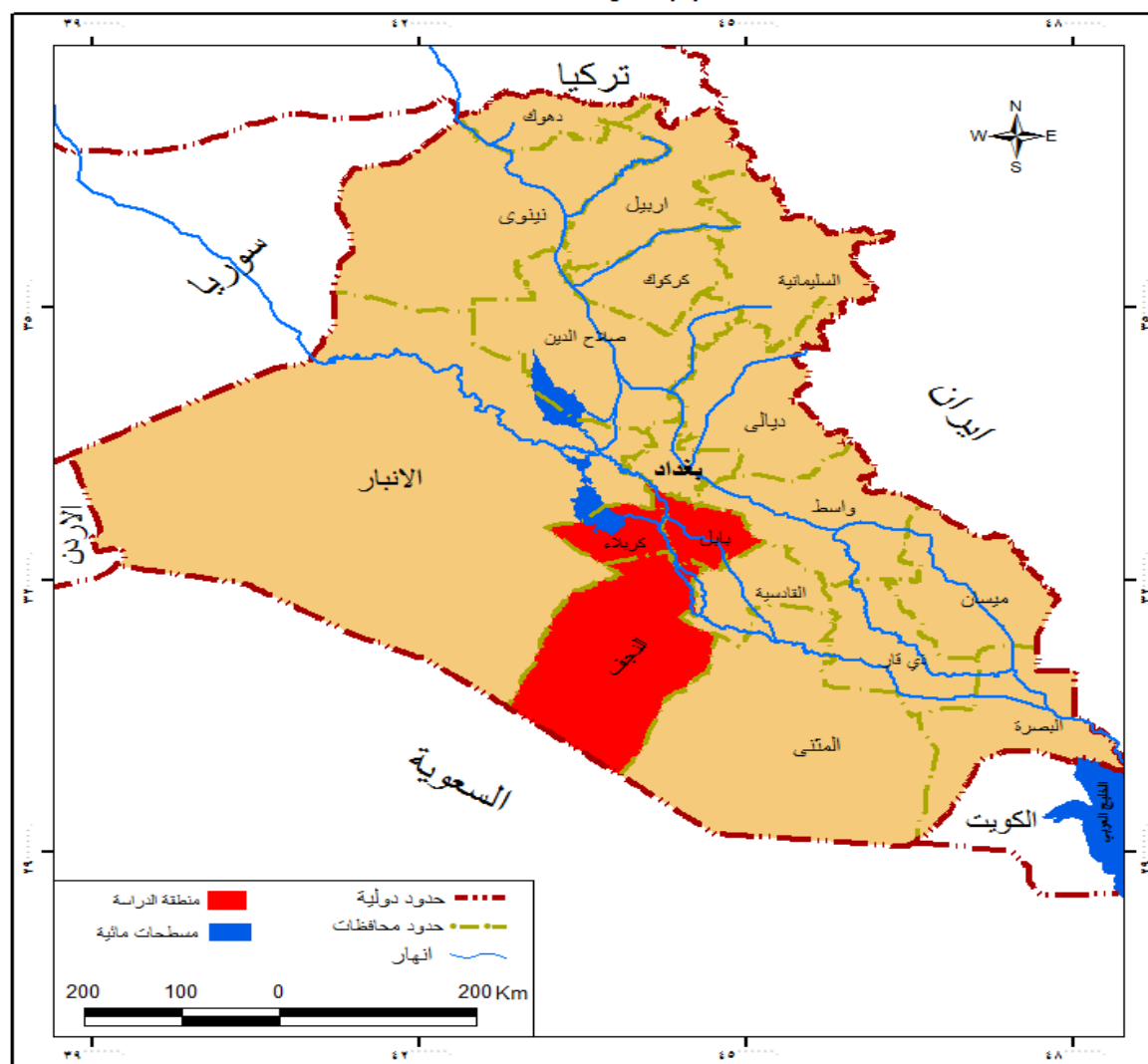
Structure of the Study

The research was divided into four sections. The first section dealt with the study of the theoretical framework of the research. It focused on (the research problem, the research hypothesis, the research objectives, the importance of the investigation, the research methodology, the limits of the study area, and the research structure).

While the second topic was to study the natural tourism potentials in the governorates of Karbala, Najaf, and Babil, the third topic concerned with exploring the human tourism potentials in the governorates of Karbala, Najaf, and Babil, and the fourth topic dealt with a study of analyzing the reality of tourism potentials in the study area, and the research ended with a set of conclusions and recommendations.

Map (1)

Location of the study area of Iraq



Source: The researcher's work, relying on the General Authority for Survey, Baghdad, the administrative map of Iraq, 1997.

Chapter Two

Natural tourism potentials in the governorates of Karbala, Najaf, and Babel

The geographical distribution of any phenomenon occupies excellent importance in geographical studies when the matter does not stop at the limits of distribution only but rather goes beyond it to analyze its patterns and find mutual spatial relationships between centers of one type or between centers of multiple types. When it is based on scientific foundations in research, then the study is beneficial (1). In addition to what the Iraqi land possesses of a cultural heritage that it advances from other regions of the world, the oldest civilizations of the world were born in Iraq, and multiple and diverse cultures succeeded on its land. This will undoubtedly provide areas for tourist attractions and pillars and ingredients for internal and external tourism (2).

Tourism activity has received significant attention from many countries of the world through economic studies of the components of tourism activity. It identifies areas for investment to achieve financial returns and returns as well as its positive impact on the balance of payments and buying at local prices, confirming the importance of operating the tourism sector economically (3).

First: Karbala Governorate:

Karbala Governorate is located in the central region of Iraq on the eastern edge of the desert plateau west of the Euphrates River. Thus, it is situated astronomically between longitudes (42)° and (30) to (33)° and (35) north of the equator. Desert. Hajjah from the north and west is Anbar Governorate, which is 112 km away

from its center, and Ramadi and Babil are 42 km away from its center, which is 42 km away from its center. Najaf is 78 km from its city center, located to the west of the capital, Baghdad, with (106 km) (4).

Karbala is one of the holy cities for Muslims. It embraces the shrine of Imam Al-Hussein bin Ali (peace be upon him), and its name was mentioned as "Kur Babel," which means a group of Babylonian villages. (Peace be upon him) in the year 61 AH (5).

Karbala Governorate is full of many tourist and natural sites, as follows:

1. Razzaza Lake:

Al-Razzaza Lake is one of the largest water bodies in Iraq and the Arab world and the eighth in the world. It was formed in its current location in 1941 after the flooding of the Euphrates River, as it merges the Abu Dubai depression and the Salt Sea. The lake is located south of Habbaniyah Lake, northwest of the city of Karbala, and thus, it is situated in the administrative borders of the provinces of Anbar and Karbala. The area of the lake at its highest level, which is (42 m), is (1810 km²) and has a water volume of (25750 billion cubic meters), of which (844 km²) and a percentage of (46.6% is within the borders of Karbala Governorate and (966 km²) and (53.4%) is within the administrative boundaries of Anbar Governorate, noting that its lowest level is (+17) m above sea level. Al-Razzaza Lake is one of the most essential natural formations and one of the attractive areas for eco-tourism, especially in the spring and summer seasons. It is characterized by its blue waters and picturesque geomorphological formations (6).

It has importance as it is considered one of the important bird areas in Iraq and one of the wetlands of international importance. This lake has many aspects of interest, including tourist, religious, economic, historical, social, and environmental. The water that enters it and from which it evaporates, in addition to the ground absorption, and the rate of evaporation in it is 1-2-1.5 meters deep during the year, especially the summer months, where evaporation is estimated at 2 cm per day (7).

2. Watery eyes:

The water springs are concentrated in the center of the Ain al-Tamr district (80) km northwest of Karbala, that green oasis on the eastern edge of the northern Badia plateau. The district of Ain al-Tamr, through its provision of water for the groves of palm trees and citrus, is visited annually by tens of thousands of tourists, whether from inside or outside Iraq. 15) km north of the center of Ain al-Tamr district.

3. Euphrates River (Shatt al-Hindiya):

The Euphrates River penetrates Karbala Governorate in the eastern parts of it along a length of (32) km. Within this extension, it is called the Hindiya River. It is characterized by a large corniche within the Hindiya district center (Tuwairij), in addition to the presence of several river islands that the people invested in making restaurants and cafes, and this area attracts A large number of tourists to escape the summer flames (8).

Third - Al-Najaf Governorate:

Al-Najaf Governorate is one of the most essential governorates that contains several holy shrines. Al-Najaf Governorate is one of the governorates of the Middle Euphrates. Its center is the city of Najaf. It has a religious character and is located on the edge of the western plateau of Iraq, southwest of the capital, Baghdad. It is about 161 km away. The city rises 70 meters above sea level. From the north and northeast is Karbala, and from the south and west is the Bahr al-Najaf depression. We can show the most essential natural tourism potentials as follows:

1. Bahr Al-Najaf:

The Bahr al-Najaf occupies a transitional location between the western plateau and the sedimentary plain, as it is a tongue penetrating the plateau of the west. One of the most important natural phenomena in the province. The area of the Bahr al-Najaf depression and its adjacent lands is estimated at 421.9 km², and the height of the land in the depression ranges between (9) meters above sea level at the Abyssinian Marshes (9).

It is noted that the depression has advantages and natural and human data that can be invested in tourism, as the depression has a wide area of water bodies. These honest and human potentials available in the Bahr al-Najaf depression make it a fertile ground for tourism investment in a way that provides an economic resource and a tourist outlet and benefits from it on special occasions. Religious visitors abound, as the governorate center cannot accommodate these large numbers. It is possible to invest in the vast, flat lands within the depression, such as establishing hotels or restaurants and recreational areas. Still, some

obstacles hinder investment during the depression, including the presence of excesses, including (primitive floorball), so because of the importance of this region and its tourist and religious location, Z requires care and attention in its revival, which requires removing the damage to these areas through the competent authorities closing the factories in preparation for the repair and investment of the region (10).

2. Surface water:

Water resources of all kinds, fresh or mineral, and from all sources, are the main tributary for tourist attractions. It is essential for them that the water is suitable and adequately available for the needs of the destination area in a way that allows the tourist to practice water activities such as swimming, rowing, fishing, and using motorboats, including sailing and sailing. The surface is represented by the Euphrates River, which passes through the northeastern side of the governorate, as the extension of the Euphrates River in the administrative area of the governorate is about 70 km. One of the urban centers in the province, as is the case in the district of Al-Mashkhab, as well as the passage of Shatt Al-Kufa near the city and the holy shrines, as palm trees and orchards are spread on both sides, which help in attracting tourists, and at present it witnesses local trips in the spring and autumn seasons, and that the only exploitation of the river is the establishment of the Al-Kufa Corniche Which contains several cafes and places for picnics, and that the most significant proposals are the expansion of the banks of Shatti and the exploitation of the areas adjacent to it and the establishment of resorts and include several hotels and the establishment of river ports that encourage the use of them (11).

Third: Babil Governorate:

Babil Governorate is one of the governorates in central Iraq, south of Baghdad's capital. Its lands sloping towards the south rise 35 m above sea level. A desert climate prevails, characterized by low rainfall and high temperatures in summer, which reach 50 m. Warm weather stays in winter. Religious elements and the province of Babylon are considered one of the most essential Iraqi provinces in the archaeological aspects, as an ancient civilization appeared on its lands in ancient times, the effects of which still exist. One of the most important archaeological areas in the province (12) and perhaps the most critical natural tourism resources in the region of Babylon that can be exploited for tourism are:

1- Natural plant

The distribution of vegetation is affected by many natural and human factors, and its density, types, and height vary depending on these factors (temperature, amount of precipitation, and winds laden with water vapor). The western and southern mountain slopes of northern Iraq have abundant forest density, while the forest density is less in the north slope And the eastern for falling under the rain (13).

The importance of natural vegetation, especially forests, appears in the emergence and development of tourism, and they are natural refuges to shelter many birds and animals. Therefore, they are considered one of the natural ingredients for the emergence and development of tourism, in addition to being one of the promising areas for leisure time, exercising, and hiking due to the purity of its air and its absence of various industrial pollutants.

As for the forests located in the province of Babylon, which can become good tourist places if some tourism services are available, such as (resting places and restaurants), they can be clarified through Table (1).

Schedule (1)

Distribution distribution of forest sites and their area in Babil province

The site	Area/acre	Forest name	١
Mahaweel District	1392	beep	1
Mahaweel District	657	Abu Sadira	2
Mahaweel District	432	Victory	3
Mahaweel District	402	Khatunia	4
Mahaweel District	898	Mouradia	5
Mahaweel District	298	protoplasm	6
4079		The total	

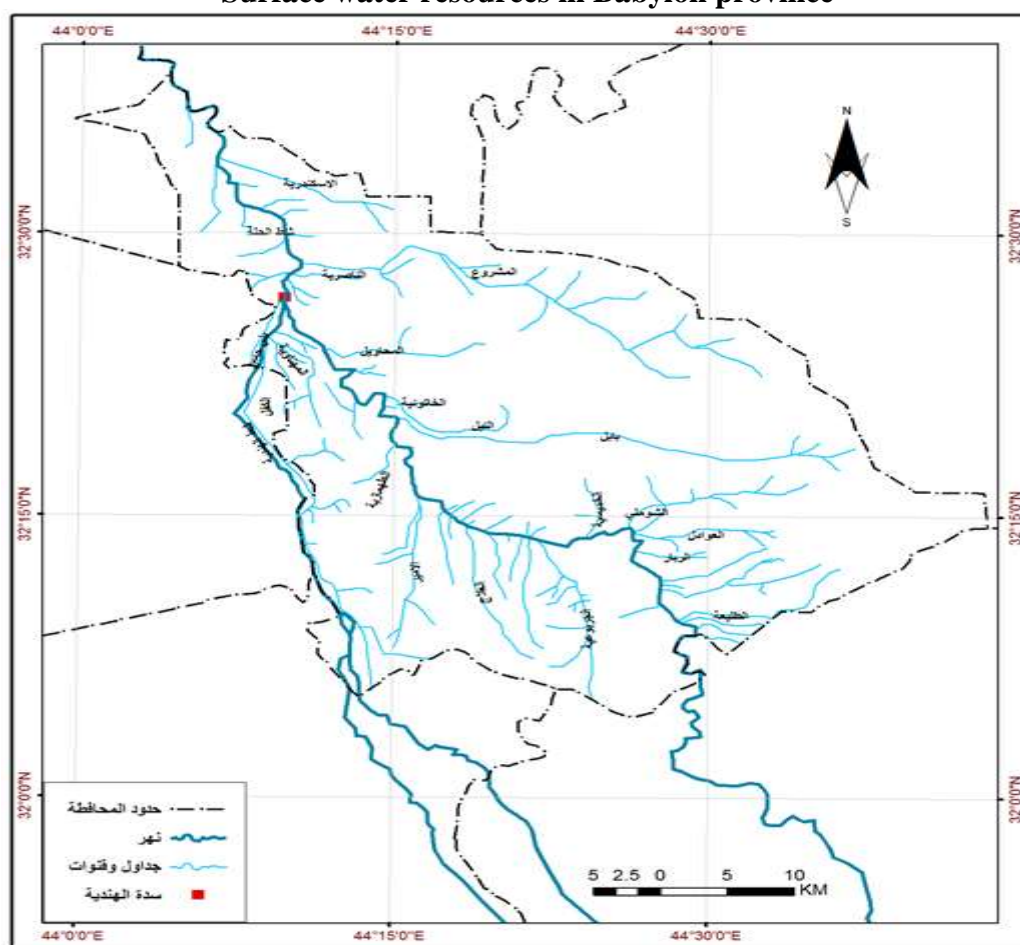
Source: (14) Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate of Agriculture in Babel Governorate, Division of Prevention, Horticulture and Forestry, (unpublished tables).

2- Water resources

The availability of water resources is necessary for the emergence of tourism, and the province of Babylon depends on obtaining its water requirements from this type of water resources on the Euphrates River, which flows in the area of Anbar after entering the Iraqi lands and then enters the province of Babylon from its northwestern part, heading Towards the southeast, it branches off in the Al-Hindiya Dam into two large branches: Shatt Al-Hillah, which runs in a southeastern direction, and Shatt Al-Hindiya, which takes its course in the southern tip. Hindi in 1913 AD (15).

Map (2) shows that Shatt al-Hindiya, south of al-Kifl, is divided into two branches, namely (Shatt al-Kufa and Shatt al-Abbasiya), and it is also clear that the waters of the Euphrates River are distributed throughout the study area. The Euphrates River and the right bank of the Shatt al-Hindiya branch out into the Husseiniya stream and the Bani Hassan stream, which walk a short distance within the study area and then heads towards Karbala Governorate. At the same time, several streams branch out from the left bank of the Euphrates River, the most important of which are the Alexandria stream to the north of the Hindiya and the creek Al-Musayyib Al-Kabeer project, the Al-Nasiriyah stream that branches from the Euphrates River in the Al-Musayyib area, as well as the Al-Kifl stream that branches from the left bank of the Euphrates River at the front of the dam, and which runs south along the Al-Hindiya Shatt, in addition to the Al-Hilla river that runs in the study area for a distance of 104 km, which branches At its end, it is divided into three main components: Shatt al-Diwaniyah, Daghara, and al-Hurriya (16).

Map (2)
Surface water resources in Babylon province



المصدر : جمهورية العراق ، وزارة الموارد المائية ، مديرية ري بابل ، خارطة لمشاريع الري والبزل، بمقياس ١/٥٠٠٠٠٠ ، لسنة ٢٠٠٧.

Chapter Three

Human tourism potentials in the governorates of Karbala, Najaf, and Babel

First: Human tourism potentials in the holy governorate of Karbala:

The most essential human tourism potentials in the holy governorate of Karbala can be studied as follows:

1 - The potential of archaeological and heritage tourism in the holy governorate of Karbala

A- Al-Ukhaydir Palace:

It is also called (Fort Al-Ukhaidir). This palace is located in the desert, 152 km southwest of the city of Baghdad and 50 km southwest of the city of Karbala—Arabian island.

Al-Ukhaidir Palace contained multiple building facilities, including the walls, the main entrance, the Great Hall, the large corridor, the mosque, the honor yard, the Throne Hall, the bathroom, and the four houses, and it contained three walls. Several art festivals were held in it; the first festival was in 1972 when the Academy of Fine Arts had it. There is a church in this palace that belongs to Christians, and it must be revived because it brings benefits. This is all archaeological tourism because this land is a mine for tourism and must be exploited.

B- Khans:

It is one of the resting stations built during the rule of Harun al-Abbasid, and then the old means of transport stopped to perform various works that helped the continuation of travel and provide comfort for travelers and from the inns.

T- Khan Al-Atishi:

It is located northeast of Karbala in the center of the Al-Husayniyyah sub-district on the secondary road (Karbala - Al-Husayniyyah - Al-Hindiya Dam) (17).

D- Khan Al-Rub':

It is called (Al-Nakhila) and is located southeast of Karbala in the center of Al-Hussainiya district on the secondary road (Karbala - Najaf) with a distance of 226 m. It is now there, but it is closed.

C- Al-Tar Caves:

It is located near Karbala, near Lake Al-Razzazah, and dates back to ancient times. It has defied the factors of erosion and extinction with all forces. It is located within the longitudinal concave torsion of the Arabian Gulf to the south, passing through the regions of Al-Hirah (18).

It is located about 40 km to the southwest of Karbala. It is called Al-Tarid because it rises by more than 65 m from the ground. The same name calls the areas above the marshes because they rise from the ground. The number of these caves reaches 400, which dates back to the Paleolithic era—the oldest settlement in the history of Iraq (19).

H- Heritage houses and palaces:

The ancient cities, especially the Islamic cities, abound with heritage evidence that links to the present and the heritage houses, including in the shops (Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Taqqa, Bab Baghdad, al-Abbasiya, and in the center of al-Hindiya district. Essential architectural elements characterize them in houses, alleys, and markets. They are represented by materials, Buildings, channasheels, and columns, which today represent a title for the extent to which the population has coped with the development of life. Recent years have witnessed a significant and dangerous deterioration, in reality representing three cases, the first being its conversion into hotels being the center of the city, the second being its demolition and conversion into modern homes, and the third, it was demolished and consumed by the two Husseinia general secretariats (20) And converting them into service sites within the expansion program of the Two Holy Mosques.

As for the shortcomings, the most important ones can be mentioned:

1. Thirsty Palace:

Atshan Palace is located in the Western Badia, around 30 km southwest of Khan Al-Nuhaila. This palace has no paved road, and it is challenging to reach. The site of the court is considered a station for caravans that connect the street to Darb Al-Sa'i and the Euphrates-Aleppo road. It also connects caravan stations with the old Hajj road - bowl trail.

2. Shimon Palace:

It is located about (90) km west of Karbala. The palace is called by its owner, Shamoun bin Jaber Al-Numan bin Al-Mundhir. What remains of the castle are some substantial high walls, meaning that it is currently neglected, and the natural erosion factors took themselves to dissolve this historical tower (21).

2- Religious tourism potential in the holy governorate of Karbala:-

A- Al-Hussainiya Rawda and the shrine of Imam Al-Hussain (peace be upon him):

The most essential characteristic of the Husayniyyah kindergarten is the capacity of the courtyard and the large number of beautiful iwans. The area of the yard is about (15,000 square meters), which is the distance between the outer doors and the sanctuary. The hall is (600 square meters), which is the distance confined between the gates of the cover and the holy shrine, and it includes (65) rooms used for burial. Science and

millions of visitors frequent the sanctuary, and it is the shrine of the Imam, our master Habib bin Mazhar Al-Asadi, and our master Ibrahim Al-Mujab.

B- The shrine of Al-Zainabiyyah Hill:

It is located on the western side of the shrine of Imam Al-Hussein (peace be upon him) near the Zainabiyah Gate. This hill overlooks the death toll in a kinder incident, and its importance is highlighted by the fact that it represents one of the most prominent sacred places, which has a significant impact on the souls of visitors who go to the city to seek blessings and fulfill their spiritual needs (22)).

C- The camp:

It is the place in which Imam Al-Hussein (peace be upon him) said, "This is the place of Karbala, and it is located at the back of the holy Al-Hussainiya shrine, so it occupies a special importance in the hearts of visitors."

D - The shrine of our master Al-Abbas (peace be upon him):

The shrine is located on the banks of the Alqam River, at a distance of (350) meters from Imam Al-Hussein (peace be upon him), which was lost due to geographical factors, and this river branches out from the Euphrates River.

C- The position of Imam Al-Mahdi (may God be pleased with him):

The Maqam building is located at the end of Sidra Street and a distance of (480) meters north of Al-Hussainiya Rawda (Bab Al-Sidra). The most beautiful carnival of folk rituals is held at this shrine on the evening of the fifteenth of the month of Sha'ban, the anniversary of Imam Al-Mahdi's birth (may God be pleased with him), where thousands of visitors greet this night.

H- The shrine of Al-Hurr bin Yazid Al-Riahi:

K - It is 5 km away from the city of Karbala to the north, and the importance of this shrine is highlighted by the critical and great position that Al-Hurr occupies in the hearts of visitors because he fought until he was martyred in defense of Al-Hussein (peace be upon him).

There are several shrines, including the shrine of Mr. Ahmed bin Hashim, located in the southwestern corner of Bahr al-Malh (Lake Al-Razzaza), which is a public shrine, and the shrine of Aoun bin Abdullah, situated on the road leading to the city of Baghdad, 11 km from the city center of Karbala. It is visited by visitors heading to the town of Karbala. There is also the Qattara of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), which is a rocky area within the right edge of Lake Razzaza (23).

Second: Human tourism potentials in Al-Najaf Governorate:

1 - The potential of archaeological and heritage tourism in the province of Najaf:

A- Khan Al-Shilan:

It is located in the center of the noble city of Najaf, beginning with Al-Khawaranq Street. It dates back to the end of the Ottoman era in 1899, on a land area of (1500 square meters). After the British occupation, it became a barrack for the British army, and during the period of British rule, several inscriptions and drawings were decorated on it. It also contains unique treasures. Bronze statues were placed in the middle of the Khan's courtyard, and it was prepared to be a museum that opened its doors to the public and tourists to be one of Iraq's most important archaeological museums. The Iraqi Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities included the museum in the schedule of visiting tourist delegations coming to the city, making it one of the essential landmarks of Najaf (24).

B- The big market:

The Great Market is located east of Imam Ali's honorable shrine (peace be upon him), and it forms part of the old city within the center of the Najaf district. It is distinguished by its symmetrical borders with Zain Al-Abidin and Al-Sadiq Streets, which were divided in the fifties of the last century. It is a historical market with many shops and small markets branching out of it, such as the goldsmith's market, the al-Safa fair market, the rosary and perfume market, and the money exchange market.

C- Najaf Wall:

The wall of Najaf is the boundary between the old city and the revival of the new Najaf, as the city's location on the edge of the western plateau made it open to the desert and vulnerable to invaders. Based on the importance of the security provided by fortifying the city, the wall was considered one of the primary essential means that helped maintain security and stability. The date of its construction dates back. The

division of (1802) was high and impregnable, and its importance lies in the fact that it represents the history of the city of Najaf and a buffer that mentions steadfastness and courage.

D - Najaf Tires:

The word tires means the highlands that overlook the very lowlands in the Bahr al-Najaf region from its eastern side, extending from the Technical Institute in the south and heading towards Karbala in the north. Caves were used as housing for people in ancient times, but at present, they have become tourist areas that people go to on holidays And in spring.

C- Khan al-Musalla (Khan al-Rub’):

This Khan is about 20 km from Najaf, a quarter of the distance between Najaf and Karbala. Visitors used it to sleep and rest when visiting the holy shrines, but at present, Khan needs to find that interest from the government (26).

H- Khan al-Hamid (Khan al-Nass):

This Khan is located in the middle of the distance between Karbala and Najaf on the right side of the street, which connects them within the district of al-Haidariyya. Modern maintenance operations have been carried out to make it a destination for tourists to receive and invest in within a plan developed by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, as a development plan must be put in place to support these two sides due to their separation from the road between Najaf and Karbala. It can also be developed by carrying out the maintenance process for archaeological sites and making them. Among the essential archaeological museums is also interest in the surrounding areas, planting them, and establishing tourist facilities such as restaurants, parks, and waterfalls, which makes them a resting place for visitors.

H- Khan Al-Rahba:

Khan al-Rahba is located in the southwestern part of the village of al-Rahba, as it is situated on a small canal that feeds the town with water for maintenance and reconstruction operations.

D- Umm Al-Quran Lighthouse:

The lighthouse is located 55 km south of the city of Najaf on the land road (the old Hajj road). The distance between it and the village of Al-Rahba is about 10 km to the south of it. These lighthouses were built on desert roads to indicate and control the locations of the roads when traveling. The lighthouse was built on high ground, for the purpose of viewing it from a distance.

A- Emirate Palace:

The Principality Palace is located next to the Kufa Mosque, and its history is linked to the city of Kufa in the year 17 AH, where the Azari and al-Tabari mentioned in their narrations that the construction of the Principality Palace coincided with the beginning of the planning of the city of Kufa. Attacks such as the Qarmatians on the town of Kufa affected the palace's construction and its collapse. Now, there is nothing from the court except its foundation, but what can be noticed on this site is the scarcity of visitors coming to it, as it is only visited by researchers and those interested in historical affairs, and this is due to beliefs and traditions, as this place It does not hurt their beliefs and practices (27).

2- Religious tourism potentials in the holy city of Najaf

A- The Holy Garden of Al-Haydaria and the shrine of Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

Al-Haydariyya Rawdah, or the shrine of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), is one of the most important religious sites in Najaf and Iraq. The shrine contains the tomb of Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib; peace be upon him.

B- The shrine of Muslim bin Aqil (peace be upon him):

He is the cousin of Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) and his ambassador. His holy shrine is located next to the Kufa Mosque from the southeastern side and has a tall dome. It is visited by visitors from inside and outside Iraq to seek blessings.

C- Kufa Mosque:

The mosque is located in the city of Kufa, and the mosque flourishes with many corridors and shrines, and tourists flock to it enormously.

D - The House of Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

The Imam's house is next to the Kufa Mosque, near the Emirate's Palace, about 100 meters from the southwestern corner of the mosque. Inside it is a well where visitors seek blessings by drinking and washing (28).

C- The shrine of Hani bin Urwa:

The shrine of Hani bin Urwah bin Nimran al-Muradi al-Madhaji was built opposite the shrine of Muslim bin Aqil, and a tall dome was constructed over his sanctuary.

H- The shrine of Al-Mukhtar Al-Thaqafi:

He is Al-Mukhtar bin Abi Ubaidah bin Masoud Al-Thaqafi. His shrine is next to the shrine of Muslim bin Aqil (peace be upon him), and buildings have been built on it in recent decades.

K- The shrine of Maytham Al-Tamar (may God be pleased with him):

A great companion, one of the disciples of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), was martyred in Kufa and was buried near the Kufa Mosque, 500 meters away.

D- The grave of Mrs. Khadija, daughter of Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

Her grave is near the Kaffah Mosque, and it is said that her mother is Umm Al-Banin (may God be pleased with her).

The shrine of the two prophets Hud and Salih (peace be upon them both):

It is located in the north of Najaf, a prominent building in the middle of the Peace Cemetery. They are the two messengers of God Almighty to the people of Ad and Thamud, and they are in one sanctuary visited by all Muslims (29).

R- Al Hanana Mosque:

The mosque is located close to the shrine of the companion Kamil bin Ziyad, one of the mosques visitors flock to to seek blessings.

G- The shrine of Kumayl ibn Ziyad al-Nakha'i al-Kufi:

He is Kamil bin Ziyad bin Nahik bin Al-Haytham bin Saeed bin Malik bin Al-Harith bin Sahban bin Al-Nakha', and the shrine has a beautiful mosque, one of the old and famous mosques.

Q- Valley of Peace Cemetery:

It is one of the largest cemeteries in the world, where burial began before the death of Imam Ali (peace be upon him). Muslims, especially Shiites, bury their dead in this cemetery and come to visit their dead on holidays and special occasions.

U- Al-Sahla Mosque:

Al-Sahla Mosque is located on the northwestern side of the Kufa Mosque, about 2 km away. This mosque was built during the time of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), and it was called the Al-Safar Mosque in the past (30).

Third: Human tourism potentials in Babil Governorate:

1 - The potential of archaeological and heritage tourism in Babil Governorate:

A- The ancient city of Babylon:

It is located 5 km north of the city of Al-Hillah and is considered the most famous city in the ancient and modern world. It became a wonder of the ancient world. It witnessed expansions at the hands of the famous Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar until it became the title of the civilizations of the Mesopotamian Valley. It is called Mesopotamia and Babylonia (Babylona) (31). Its walls and hanging gardens are considered one of the World's Seven Wonders. The city's area is (4,477 dunams), and it contains landmarks, including the Qusayr Presidential Complex, located on Mount Saddam (228 dunams), and museums, including the Nebuchadnezzar Museum and the Hammurabi Museum. Tourists from various governorates and abroad flock to this city (32).

B- Bursippa City:-

The city of Bursippa is located 1 km southwest of the city of Hilla, towards the road leading to Najaf. Its square tower is a defining sign on the road between Hilla and Al-Kifl. It is 47 meters high at ground level. Similar to Bahr al-Najaf, the area of the city is 350 dunams, and among its most important features are the ruins of Nimrud and Al-Waqara, in addition to the birthplace of the Prophet of God, Ibrahim (peace be upon him).

A- Kabsh City:-

These ruins are located at a distance of 13 km from the city of Hilla and 6 km from the east of the city of Babylon.

B- The ruins of Kutha (Mount Ibrahim):

The ruins of Kouthia are located 50 km northeast of Hilla, within the Al-Mashrou district of Al-Mahaly district. Historical inscriptions indicate the antiquity of these ruins. It was a center of religious indoctrination, meaning it had no political status.

2 - The potential of religious tourism in the province of Babylon:

A- The shrine of God's Prophet Job (peace be upon him)

He is the Prophet of God, Ayoub Ibn Malas, Ibn Razih bin Al-Ais bin Ishaq bin the Prophet of God, Ibrahim Al-Khalil, and his tomb is located near Al-Raranjiyyah, within (9 km) from the Al-Kifl area and about (15) km from the center of the province.

B- The shrine of the Prophet of God, Dhu al-Kifl (pbuh).

He is the Prophet of God, Yehuda bin Yaqoub bin Ishaq bin Ibrahim Al-Khalil, and his shrine is located in the village of Al-Kifl, which belongs to Hilla, and there is a shrine for his companions next to his shrine and a shrine for Al-Khidr (pbuh) (33).

T- The shrine of Al-Qasim (peace be upon him):-

He is Al-Qasim bin Imam Jaafar bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Al-Hussein bin Ali bin Abi Talib. His shrine is located in the city of Al-Qasim, named after him, and is about 40 km from the center of the province.

D- The Western Shrine of Al-Hamzah:-

He is Abu Ali Hamza bin Al-Qasim bin Ali bin Hamza bin Al-Hussein bin Obaidullah bin Abi Al-Fadl Al-Abbas (peace be upon him). His shrine is located near the village of Al-Mazydiya, one of the villages of Hilla in the Al-Medhatiyah district. It is 35 km from the province's center, and visitors visit it everywhere.

C- Shrines and other shrines

The shrine of the sons of Muslim bin Aqeel (peace be upon him). Their shrine is located on the eastern side of the Musayyib district, at a distance of (3 km). The shrine of Imran bin Ali bin Abi Talib, the Commander of the Faithful, is located in the village of Al-Jumjama. And he is one of his six sons, and Visitors come to him to visit and reward him (34). The shrine of Bakr bin Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (peace be upon him) and his shrine is located to the left of those going from the village of Al-Kifl, about 7 km from the center of Hilla. (Peace be upon him), and the shrine of Asma bint Amis bin Ma'ad bin Tamim bin Al-Harith bin Ka'b bin Malik bin Qahfa Al-Khashamiya, who is the wife of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), and her shrine is located in Al-Qasim district within the Hashemite district. The shrine of Zaid the martyr (peace be upon him) bin Al-Hussein bin Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) is located within the district of Al-Kifl, at a distance of 7 km and about 6 km from the center of the province. The shrine of Abdullah bin Zaid (peace be upon him) bin Ali bin Al-Hussein bin Imam Ali (peace be upon him) is about 30 km away from the center of the governorate. It is located on the Hilla-Najaf road. The shrine of Rashid Al-Hijri is one of the companions of Imam Ali; peace be upon him, and his surname, Al-Hijri, is attributed to the city to which he belongs. His shrine is located in the Al-Kifl district, 2 km from the town of Al-Kifl, and he specialized in the knowledge of calamities and disasters (35).

The shrine of Ali bin Al-Hussein (peace be upon him) bin Al-Qasim bin Al-Hamza bin Al-Hassan bin Al-Abbas (peace be upon him). His shrine is located in the Imam district of Al-Mahawil district, which is about 37 km from the city of Al-Hilla.

The shrine of Al-Sharifa, daughter of Al-Hasan Al-Sibt (peace be upon her). Her shrine is in the middle of a palm forest on the outskirts of Al-Hillah in the central area of Abu Gharqa. Her shrine is about 7 km away from Al-Hilla Street - Karbala. She is called by the people of Al-Hilla (the doctor of the Ma'alulites), and visitors come to her from all places, whether outside Or inside Iraq.

Also, the shrine of the Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him). He is the shrine of the Prophet Ibrahim, the father of Netarkh bin Tagore, Bensarug bin Arfil bin Nabalq bin Amer, and Huni, one of the prophets of the Most High. He was born in Babylon in the area of the remnants of Babylon and the shrine of Imam Ali (peace be upon him)—the view of the sun. The shrine is located in Al-Hillah, Al-Hakam neighborhood, on the road to Hilla (peace be upon him). Bab Al-Hussein - Karbala) The shrine contains an antique minaret of the Seljuk style (36).

Chapter Four

Analyzing the reality of tourism potential in the study area

Table (2) and Map (3) show the geographical distribution of the governorates (Karbala - Najaf - Babylon), that is, the availability of a suitable place that helps attract large numbers of tourists, as most tourists to Karbala are of Iranian nationality, Lebanese nationality, and other nationalities.

Karbala Governorate comes in first place regarding the number of tourist visitors. The reason is that Karbala Governorate is more of a religious governorate than an archaeological or natural one, despite the presence of wild places such as Al-Razzaza Lake, orchards, springs, and bodies of water, and visitors come to it from all countries of the world, i.e., inside or outside the government of Iraq. Natural sites (4) Archaeological sites (5) Religious sites (8) Sites The archaeological sites in Karbala have a significant impact as tourists visit them. Still, these areas could have greater importance and need restoration and maintenance operations. The religious sites in Karbala have great significance. The shrines of Al-Rawda Al-Husseiniyah and Al-Abbasiyah are visited by millions of visitors, especially when they visit Al-Ar Ain annually and on other days. Therefore, it is considered one of the most important tourist attractions and has several hotels in 2015 (411).

As for the Najaf Governorate, it comes in second place in terms of the number of visitors, the number of tourist hotels, and the number of tourist sites (24), with the number of natural sites being (2), archaeological sites (9), and religious sites (13). Najaf Governorate possesses natural and human components, but it lacks maintenance.

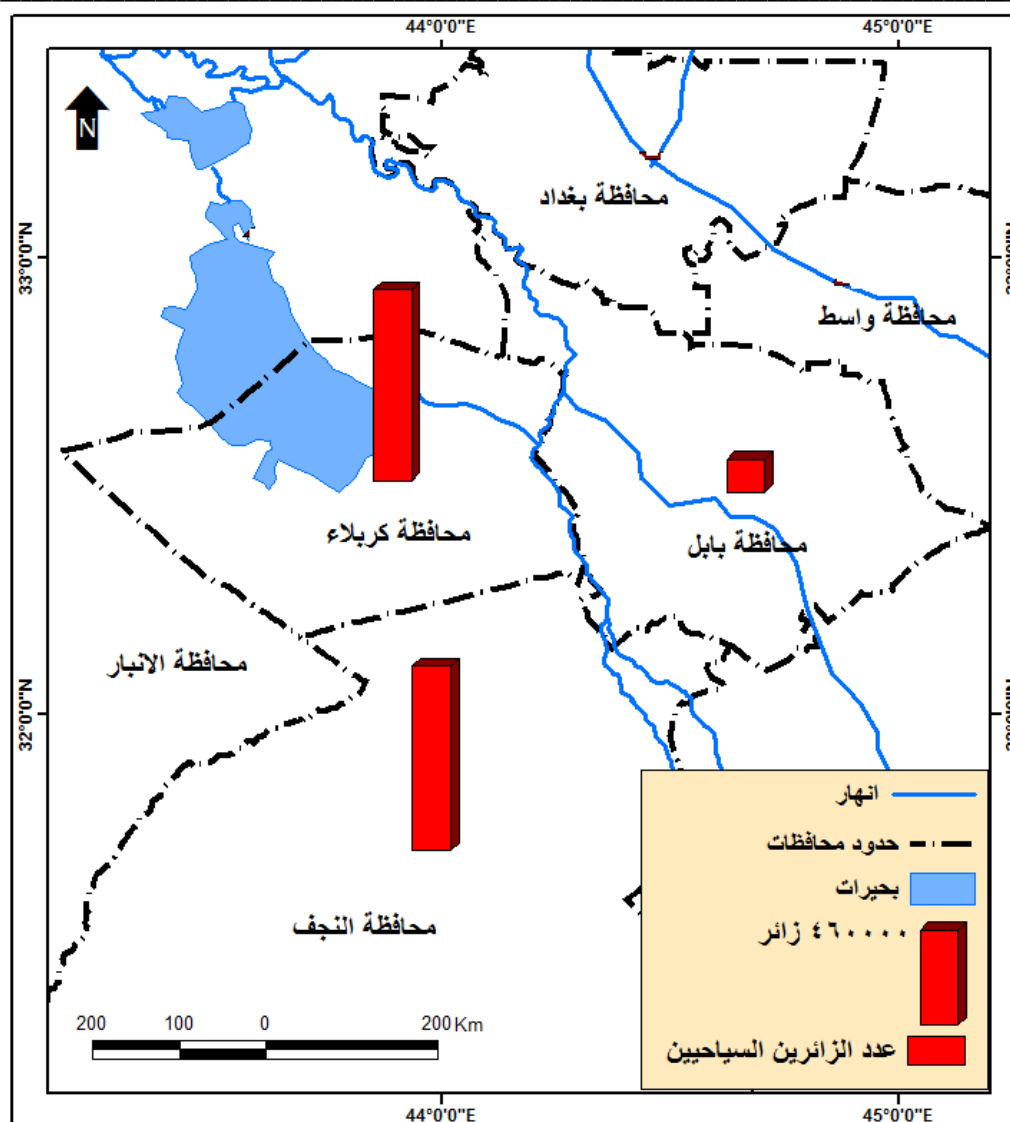
Babylon Governorate comes in third place in terms of the number of visitors and the number of tourist hotels despite the large number of tourist sites, including (20) tourist sites, (4) archaeological sites, and (16) religious sites, because Babylon Governorate has many holy shrines and shrines, so it has spiritual tourism components. It is archaeological, as it attracts large numbers of visitors, but at the same time, it lacks excellent and comfortable services. Therefore, we need to pay attention to all tourist sites for them to appear correctly for the governorate and the country in general.

Table (2) Geographical distribution of tourist sites in the study area (2015)

number of tourist sites	Number of tourist hotels	percentage	Number of tourist visitors	Governorate	ت
18	411	%46	929,751	Karbala	1
24	295	%45	898,751	Najaf	2
20	7	%8	161,656	Babylon	3

Sources:

- 1- Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Iraqi Tourism Authority, Babil Governorate, unpublished data
- 2- Zainab Kazem Jawad Shukr, Environmental Potential for Tourism and Sustainable Development in Al-Najaf Governorate, Master's Thesis in Geography, University of Kufa, College of Education for Girls, 2015.
- 3- Map (3) Number of tourist visitors to the governorates of Karbala, Babel and Najaf for the year 2015



Source: General Authority for Survey, Baghdad, Administrative Map of Iraq, 1997.

Conclusion

- 1- The study area has a great diversity of tourism products, whether natural or human, which contributed to the influx of tourists to it.
- 2- There is an apparent discrepancy in the number of tourist arrivals to the governorates of Babel, Karbala, and Najaf, as Karbala Governorate had the first share in terms of the number of tourists, then Najaf Governorate, and then Babel Governorate.
- 3- Religious tourism in the study area is the most attractive for tourists from inside and outside the country. It has the largest share compared to other types due to the desire of tourists on the one hand and the large number of religious destinations and their importance in the hearts of tourists, especially in the governorates of Najaf and Holy Karbala.
- 4- Lack of interest in improving the tourism sector, especially archaeological tourism, on the part of the responsible authorities in the governorates of Babylon, Karbala, and Najaf, despite their great heritage.

Recommendations

- 1- Pay attention to the diversity of tourism, whether religious, recreational, therapeutic, or others, because this diversity provides a significant financial return that helps revitalize the local economy of the country and the study area.

- 2- Providing appropriate means of transportation to transport visitors to and from tourist attractions in the study area, especially at peak times, as it is noted that the study area suffers in providing appropriate means of transportation to transport arriving tourists, especially on religious occasions.
- 3- Explaining the importance of the status of the study area from the Islamic, historical, scientific, and cultural perspective due to the scientific and cultural center it contains, such as mosques and heritage and archaeological sites through exhibitions and theaters and activating the role of the media aspects.
- 4- Provide tourist map brochures that include all information about the status and importance of shrines, archaeological and natural sites, and identify the roads leading to them in various languages.
- 5- Educating community members about the challenges facing the tourism sector so that investing in tourism activity can achieve the best results.
- 6- Conduct further studies and statistical studies in various fields of tourism to address the obstacles and search for the best elements of tourism in the study area.

References

1. Al-Rubaie, Saad Obaid Judah, Recreational and tourism services in Baghdad, doctoral dissertation, University of Baghdad, College of Arts, Department of Geography, 1991.
2. Al-Mousawi, experienced professor Dr. Ali Sahib, The Tourism Geography of the Arab World, first edition, 2015.
3. Yusra Muhammad Hussein, Dina Tariq Ahmed, research on the economic importance of religious tourism in the governorates of Karbala and Najaf, Baghdad College of Economic Sciences, issue thirty-five, 2013.
4. Riyadh Muhammad Ali, Environmental and archaeological Tourism in Karbala Governorate and its Investment in Achieving Sustainable Development, Journal of Geographical Research, Issue (18), University of Karbala, College of Education for Structural Sciences, Department of Applied Geography, 2013, p. 112.
5. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Karbala Governorate Tourism Directorate.
6. Al-Masoudi, Riyadh Muhammad Ali Odeh, previous source, p. 118.
7. The same source, p. 122
8. Riyadh Muhammad Ali Odeh Al-Masoudi, previous source, p. 119.
9. Ali Sahib Al-Musawi, Geography of the Arab World, Tourism, previous source, p.
10. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Najaf Governorate.
11. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Babil Governorate.
12. Abdul-Sahib Naji Al-Baghdadi, Amir Kamel Jawad Al-Rubaie, Ecotourism in Karbala Governorate and its Impact on Spatial Development, College of Urban Planning, University of Kufa, Babylon University Journal of Construction Sciences, Volume 24, Issue 1: 2016.
13. Muhammad Abd al-Razzaq Musa al-Baghdadi, The Tourism Geography of Iraq, University of Mosul, Dar al-Kutub for Printing and Publishing, 1991, p. 99.
14. Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate of Agriculture in Babil Governorate, Prevention, Horticulture and Forestry Division, (unpublished tables).
15. Ali Karim Muhammad Ibrahim, Maps of the environmental potential for grain crop production in Babil Governorate using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Master's thesis (N.M.), College of Arts, University of Baghdad, 2007, p. 104
16. Amin Kazem Abboud Al-Khuzai, previous source, p. 68.
17. Anis Ziyada Mohi, Hadeel Muwaffaq Mahmoud, highlighting the role of planning for sustainable tourism development in Karbala Governorate, University of Technology, Department of Architecture, p. 143.
18. Abd al-Sahib Naji al-Baghdadi, previous source.
19. Riyadh Muhammad Ali Odeh, previous source, p. 1120.
20. The same source, 121.
21. Nofal Abdel Redha Alloun, The Holy City of Karbala and the Possibility of Improving the Level of Religious Tourism There, Journal of Management and Economics, Issue Sixty-Six, 2007, p. 10.
22. The same source, pg. 14.

23. Zainab Kazem Jawad Shukr, Environmental Potentials for Tourism and Sustainable Development in Najaf Governorate, Master's Thesis in Geography, University of Kufa, College of Education for Girls, 2015, p. 68.
24. The same source, p. 68.
25. Raouf Muhammad Ali Al-Ansari, Tourism in Iraq and its role in development and reconstruction, p. 33.
26. Zainab Kazem Jawad Shukr, previous source, p. 69.
27. Yaqoub Safar Ali, Planning to Rehabilitate Religious Tourism Services and Activities in Najaf Governorate, p. 13.
28. Nisreen Awad Abdoun Al-Jasani, The Development of Religious Tourism in Najaf Al-Ashraf, Journal of Geographical Research, Issue Five, 2004, University of Kufa, College of Education for Girls, p. 44.
29. Zainab Kazem Jawad Shukr, previous source 76.
30. Talib Hadi Talib, Elham Khudair Shubar, and others Research the elements of tourism development and indicators of its development in Babil Governorate, 2012, p. 88.
31. Ali Sahib Talib Al-Musawi, Geography of the Arab World, Tourism, previous source
32. Talib Hadi Talib, Elements of Tourism Development and Indicators of Its Development in Babil Governorate, previous source, p. 55
33. Ali Sahib Al-Musawi, Geography of the Arab World, Tourism, previous source, p.
34. The Iraqi Tourism Authority, Babil Governorate, previous source.
35. Talib Hadi Talib, Elements of Tourism Development and Indicators of Its Development in Babil Governorate, previous source, pg. 56.
36. Talib Hadi Talib and others, elements of tourism development and indicators of its development in Babylon Governorate, previous source, pg. 66.

