



## A review article on the topic by the historian Ahmed Naji Al-Ghariri in his book 'The Historian Abbas Al-Azzawi Al-Muhami: A Study in His Intellectual Efforts'

Asia Kazem Obaid

College of Arts, University of Kufa, Iraq

\* Corresponding Author: Asia Kazem Obaid

---

---

### Article Info

ISSN (Online): 2582-7138

Impact Factor (RSIF): 8.04

Volume: 07

Issue: 03

Received: 06-04-2026

Accepted: 04-05-2026

Published: 02-06-2026

Page No: 843-846

### Abstract

This article seeks to provide a critical historical review of studies concerning the historian Abbas al-Azzawi by examining various aspects such as his personal biography, his writings, and his methodology in writing history. The article adopts an analytical review approach by classifying previous studies that focused on examining the figure of the Iraqi historian Al-Azzawi, who had a significant influence on the course of history. This was evident in the historical works published by Al-Azzawi, which demonstrated his great ability to record historical events and provide important information to researchers, as his writings contributed to laying the foundations of the documentary historical methodology for researchers and became indispensable primary sources for the study of modern Iraqi history, particularly during the so-called 'Dark Age', as they contained original sources and raw material from the medieval period.

**Keywords:** presentation, researcher, book, article, studies, historian

---

---

### Introduction

Contemporary Iraqi historians are among the intellectual figures who have provided important information for the study of fundamental aspects of modern Iraqi history by recording the events and developments of that history and presenting material to researchers preserved in significant works, which they use as a sound basis for scholarly study in their fields of expertise. Among these historians was Ahmad Naji al-GhRiri, whose scholarly efforts focused on chronicling the history of Iraq and the prominent figures within that history. This resulted in numerous important works examining the history of Iraq and the accompanying political and intellectual developments, notably his book entitled \*

(The Historian Abbas al-Azawi, the Lawyer: A Study of His Intellectual Endeavours) which included a review of the figure of the only Iraqi historian of his time, who travelled to various parts of the world in search of historical information, delving into books and manuscripts, enabling him to publish a number of books and works that were later considered essential historical sources relied upon by researchers in the history of modern Iraq, Some researchers focused on the figure of the historian Abbas al-Azzawi and examined the nature of his methodology in historical writing, highlighting the extent to which he enhanced this methodology over the traditional approach, while others have examined aspects of his historical writings on the modern history of Iraq; his eight-volume encyclopaedia \*Between Two Occupations\* provides an account of the political, social and economic events in Iraq, particularly during the years of Ottoman occupation up to the beginning of the British occupation.

This article aims to present a critical and analytical historical review of the Iraqi historian Abbas al-Azzawi from al-Ghariri's perspective, focusing on the diversity of the methodologies employed. Consequently, the article seeks to guide researchers towards new avenues for studying this subject within a broader historical context. This review comprises three sections. The first section is entitled: Previous studies on the historian Abbas al-Azawi, which includes a review of some of the literature on the subject. The second section reviews the content of what the researcher al-Ghariri has written about the figure of the historian al-Azawi and the scholarly legacy he left behind, which contributed to the formation of Iraq's historical identity. The third and final section is a critical analysis of the historical study presented by researcher Al-Ghariri, based on critical analytical review, the classification of studies related to the subject, and an analysis of the methodologies used in that study, such as the descriptive

and historical approaches.

The review of the article drew on a range of sources and references relevant to the subject, including primary sources dealing with the personal life of the historian Al-Azzawi and his writings, as well as recent studies such as peer-reviewed articles published in historical journals that have examined Al-Azzawi's personality, his works and his methodology.

### **The first section: Previous studies on the historian Abbas al-Azzawi.**

#### **First: Abbas al-Azzawi: His Life, Works and Historical Methodology (1891–1971) by Tariq al-Hamdani**

This section focuses on presenting previous studies that have addressed the historian Al-Azzawi, such as an article published in the journal *Al-Mukharriq Al-Arabi* by the author Tariq Al-Hamdani, entitled 'Abbas Al-Azzawi: His Life, Works and Historical Methodology (1891–1971)'. The article covered several aspects of his personal life, his writings and his historical approach to recording historical events. Al-Azzawi was considered one of the most distinguished scholarly figures in the field of writing and publishing, having produced a variety of intellectual works covering political, social and economic history, literature and biographies. His work *\*The History of Iraq Between Two Occupations\** is considered one of the finest works on the political history of Iraq. Its eight volumes provide an account of the events witnessed by Iraq over a period spanning more than seven centuries, reflecting the image of Iraq under successive Mongol and Ottoman occupation. This illustrated the weakness of local resistance, which emerged through the rule of certain families and their hold on local authority. However, the resistance was unable to withstand the occupying power, which indicates the influence of environmental factors, including the weakness of the intellectual movement that would have paved the way for the emergence of liberation movements. The article concludes by discussing the scientific research methodology adopted by Al-Azzawi, explaining that it is a method familiar to researchers, namely the annalistic approach, which involves recording historical events chronologically by year, particularly in his historical work *\*The History of Iraq Between Two Occupations\**. The researcher explains that the criticism levelled at this historical method is based on the lack of thematic unity and analysis of events, which has sparked criticism of his writings; consequently, Al-Azzawi had to adopt a scientific approach to writing based on gathering and classifying information, and then critiquing and analysing it.

#### **Secondly – The Safavid State (1501–1736) in Abbas al-Azzawi's chronological chronicle: a historical-analytical study by the historian Amjad Saad Shalal**

Numerous studies have addressed this topic from various angles; some have focused on certain works by the historian Al-Azzawi, including *\*The Safavid State\**, which constitutes an important source on the modern history of Iraq during the Ottoman era in general, and a chapter in the history of modern Iran during the Safavid era in particular. The study thus occupied an important place in the thinking of Iraqi historians in the early 20th century, as it contained valuable information regarding that state and its historical roots. The researcher concluded that it was a state of Turkmen, not Persian, origin which

came to power and declared its statehood at the beginning of the 16th century, adopting Twelver Shi'a Islam as its official doctrine, distinguishing itself from its predecessors and contemporaries among the surrounding Islamic states, such as the Ottoman Empire, and continuing until the 1730s, following a succession of some fifteen shahs who ruled Iran, divided between shahs who officially ruled the country—some eleven shahs—and four shahs who ruled Iran in name only. The Safavid state enjoyed great power and extensive influence, and an account of its relationship with the Ottoman Empire in Iraq following the parties' experiences of war, peace and the treaties concluded between the two states, as well as the consequences and tragedies that ensued for the people of Iraq. The researcher drew upon the work of the historian Al-Azawi, specifically the well-known eight-volume chronicle *\*The History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (656 AH/1335 AH – 1258 AD/1917 AD)\**, and in particular volumes three, four and five, noting that the origins of that state lay in the Sufi orders prevalent in Persia. With the ascension of the Sufi leader Ismail Safavi to the head of state, he began to transform from a Sufi sheikh into a shah ruling the country with the assistance of his followers, having charted a course for himself that led to legitimate rule through the adoption of the Twelver Shi'ite doctrine, thereby transforming his country into a Shi'ite state in Iran to this day, leading to the emergence of shahs who ruled the Safavid state and enjoyed extensive influence, particularly during the reign of Shah Abbas I the Great, when he succeeded in conquering Baghdad and killing its governor, Bakr Subashi, and the consequences of that conflict on the two states.

### **The second theme: Historian Al-Azawi in the writings of Naji Al-Ghariri**

#### **1. The personal and intellectual life of the historian Al-Ghariri**

He is Professor Dr Ahmad Naji Nima, born in 1959. He grew up in the city of Al-Thawra (formerly Al-Sadr), where he was born, and attended school until he completed his secondary education. He was then accepted into the Higher Institute of Health in the province of Nineveh, from which he graduated in 1982. Another opportunity for further study arose, so he completed the sixth year of the literary stream and enrolled at the Ibn Rushd College of Education, graduating with distinction with a grade of 79%. However, his academic ambition did not stop there; he applied for postgraduate studies at the same university and obtained a Master's degree with his thesis entitled 'The Historian Abbas al-Azawi: His Life, Works and Methodology in Writing History' in 1994. He then pursued his academic ambitions further to obtain a PhD, which he achieved with his thesis entitled 'The Historian Majid Khadouri: His Life, Works and Methodology in Writing History'. He moved into university teaching and was appointed at the University of Kufa through the intervention of Dr Hassan Isa al-Hakim, which afforded him the opportunity to attain the academic titles, the last of which was the title of 'Professor'. He has authored numerous works, including *\*Hikmat Suleiman: A Study of His Political Career\**, a political study of the overall activities of this important figure in the history of modern Iraq, as well as a book entitled

*\*The District of Manadhira: Name and Modern*

Formation\*, the idea for which was conceived whilst the author was living in that district as part of a summer teaching programme in a municipality within it; during this time, he became acquainted with the city's plans, so his book became a study of the historical stages of the district's formation. Another book is entitled \*Sheikh Ahmad al-Waeli: His Life, Works and Writing Style\*, which compiles a review of his biography and works, and outlines his role in establishing a committed school of rhetoric, among other publications. He has numerous studies and research papers published in both peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed journals. Al-Ghariri has supervised many master's theses and doctoral dissertations, examined them at several universities, and participated in numerous academic conferences.

## 2. A historical overview of Al-Ghariri's work

Several factors contributed to the emergence of Al-Ghariri's literary output, including the intellectual and academic environment in which the researchers worked, the fact that some of them were employed in journalism or in state institutions—which gave them access to official records and documents—and the scientific and literary circles they frequented, and their interaction with the outside world, which shaped their cultural outlook through the numerous articles and books they produced across various fields of knowledge, including those recorded by the researcher Ahmad al-Ghariri in his book specialising in the field of biographies and translations, which are considered a literary genre that recounts the life of one or more individuals, with the writer either delving deeply into the subject or treating it superficially, depending on the social context in which the translation was written, and depending on the culture of the biographer and their ability to paint a complete and accurate portrait of the subject. Consequently, biographical writing has attracted considerable attention from researchers focusing on religious, Islamic, philosophical, local, Arab and international figures who have had a significant impact on society. These translations were of such importance that they enabled readers to acquaint themselves with their legacies through the presentation of their works and the status they attained in society at that time. Consequently, the book by the researcher Al-Ghariri, entitled (The Historian Abbas al-Azzawi, the Lawyer: A Study of His Intellectual Endeavours) is considered one of the important historical works chronicling the life of the Iraqi historian Abbas al-Azzawi, who demonstrated a remarkable ability to record history and present raw information, to the extent that his works are regarded as primary historical sources relied upon by researchers in the history of Iraq. The book centres on combining historical and artistic aspects, with its contents organised into five chapters. The first chapter details the personal life of the historian, his upbringing and early life. Abbas bin Muhammad al-Thamer al-Muhammad al-Azzawi was born in 1890 in Diyala Governorate and attended Ottoman primary schools. He subsequently enrolled at the Faculty of Law, graduating in 1921. He practised as a lawyer whilst simultaneously embarking on his academic career. The researcher Al-Ghariri highlights the extent to which Al-Azzawi was influenced by religious education, particularly by his teacher Sayyid Ali Alaa al-Din al-Alusi, and Mahmoud Shukri al-Alusi. The researcher went on to outline his cultural qualifications and describe his

relationships with thinkers, writers and historians, including his correspondence with Orientalists such as Massignon, Ritter and Kipp. The second and third chapters presented the historian's written works across various fields, including the political sphere, as seen in his book \*The History of Iraq Between Two Occupations\*, a historical, political and cultural encyclopaedia that addressed historical events and the social, cultural and political ties between Iraq and neighbouring states, as well as the administrative and military structures in Iraq. written by the historian Al-Azzawi in 1937 and reprinted in multiple editions across the Islamic world. It consists of eight volumes: the first volume is known as The History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (The Mongol Government, 1258–1338), the second volume as the Encyclopaedia of the History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (The Jalayirid Rule, 1337–1411), the third volume as the Encyclopaedia of the History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (The Turkmen Governments, 1411–1523), the fourth volume as the Encyclopaedia of the History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (The First Ottoman Period, 1534–1639), Volume 5 of the Encyclopaedia of the History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (The Second Ottoman Period 1638–1750), Volume 6 of the Encyclopaedia of the History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (The Mamluk Government 1740–1831), and Volume 7 of the Encyclopaedia of the History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (The Third Ottoman Period 1831–1872), and Volume 8 of the Encyclopaedia of the History of Iraq Between Two Occupations (The Final Ottoman Period 1872–1917) In it, he undertakes an exhaustive study of a period spanning eight centuries of Iraqi history, through which he unveils obscure chapters of modern Iraqi history. The researcher Al-Ghariri also highlights the historian's contributions to the social sphere by reviewing his book \*Encyclopaedia of the Tribes of Iraq\*, a documents the genealogy, history and locations of Arab, Turkmen and Kurdish tribes. The first part is devoted to Bedouin tribes; Al-Azzawi gathered his material from primary sources, most of which were drawn from accounts preserved by tribal leaders who would visit Baghdad from time to time on private or official business. The second part focuses on Kurdish tribes, examining aspects of their social life, their numbers, their tribal branches and their history, whilst a section is devoted to the study of settled Arab tribes, Meanwhile, the fourth chapter provides an overview of the sources from which the historian drew his historical material, which varied between manuscripts and printed works and ranged from Arabic to Persian and Turkish. These sources held great importance for historians in recording their historical material, such as Ibn al-Athir's \*Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh\*, which contained discussions addressing the events of the Tatars, presented in a clear and sequential manner. Although the author was affected by the events surrounding the occupation of Baghdad, he did not shy away from recording the facts, thus proving himself a committed historian whose historical material has become a reference for researchers documenting the events of Islamic history. It was first printed in Bulaq, followed by a series of subsequent editions. As for the fifth and final chapter, it addresses the nature of the historical methodology employed by the historian in recording historical events. Al-Ghariri explains, based on his

examination of Al-Azawi's works, that the author did not introduce a new methodology in writing his historical material; rather, his style was an extension of that adopted by earlier historians such as Suleiman al-FAQ and Al-Zarki. Al-Ghariri also highlighted that the historian did not rely on Western accounts, as he did not consider them reliable due to his scepticism regarding their sources. Nevertheless, his works were regarded as raw historical material, particularly for researchers studying various topics in history.

### Thirdly: A critical analysis of Al-Ghariri's other historical study

These historical writings reflected the interest of the Iraqi intellectual class, who were concerned with recording the history of Iraq in its various aspects; and by virtue of their intellectual and cultural background, the historical method became clear to them in a way that enabled them to write on various aspects. Among those who wrote about historical figures who had a significant impact on the history of Iraq, he followed a specific method derived from his experience in the field of writing; he did not subject his writings to any philosophical school of history other than his own personal experience, which was characterised by his mastery of the subjects. Al-Ghariri documented his study of the historian Al-Azzawi, who left a scholarly legacy that contributed to the formation of Iraq's cultural and historical identity, in his book entitled *\*The Historian Abbas Al-Azzawi, the Lawyer: A Study of His Intellectual Endeavours\**, in which the researcher reveals his view on the reader's documentation of such a figure, as he actively contributed to preserving the history of Iraq during the modern era. However, despite the variety of research methodologies used in writing about figures—whether political, social or religious—and the fact that each researcher has their own analytical tools, and upon reviewing some of what has been written about the historian Al-Azzawi in the sources mentioned in the previous section, we find that their authors relied on various historical methodologies in their treatment of the subject, which is based on the collection of historical data from primary and secondary sources, and defined it within a temporal and geographical framework. This approach is characterised by a precise narration of the historical event and a description of the historian's personality and his works without an in-depth intellectual and social analysis of that personality, as well as a lack of critical examination of the historical events addressed by the historian in his works. However, the excessive reliance on historical narration has meant that some studies, particularly those concerning traditional historical writing, have not been subject to the specific principles of critical historical writing, nor have they fully utilised historians' ability to interpret the historical phenomena addressed by those figures. as this approach allows for a critical analysis of the historical study, focusing on the descriptive and historical methodology, so that we may benefit from this study, identify the strengths and weaknesses of previous studies, and assess the extent of that figure's contribution to the course of history, whilst providing material for the researcher to draw upon in various aspects of history, Hence the need to incorporate more modern approaches by studying the figure of the historian Al-Azawi and his works, relying on modern critical analysis and integrating

it with classical scholarship, thereby creating a broad field for further research, as each author requires in-depth analytical study.

### Conclusion

After studying the author Al-Ghariri and his examination of the figures and works of historians, it becomes clear that his historical thinking in his studies is shaped by the orientation of the figure he is writing about, whether religious or political. It is also noted that his writings went through two phases prior to (2003), as publications were subject to strict censorship; or towards the state, which was secular but dominated by sectarianism. Al-Ghariri therefore sought to strike a balance between the state's orientation and scientific historical documentation. During the period in which our researcher, Al-Ghariri, was studying, he was subject to a nationalist orientation, particularly in historical studies, in addition to the war between Iraq and Iran, and his studies from that period were influenced by this orientation. As for the second phase, which allowed for a degree of freedom in writing, his writings were more scientifically rigorous, despite being influenced by the social environment in which he lived.

### References

1. Nima, AN. *The Historian Abbas al-Azzawi: A Study of His Intellectual Contributions*. Hilla: Dar al-Sadiq Cultural Foundation; n.d.
2. Farhoud, AR. *Najaf al-Ashraf: Its Literature, Books and Historians 1950–2000*. Makkah: Al-Nabras Foundation; n.d.
3. al-Azzawi, A. *Encyclopaedia of the History of Iraq Between Two Occupations*. Vols 1–8. Beirut: Arab House of Encyclopaedias; 2004.
4. al-Azzawi, A. *History of the Tribes of Iraq*. Vols 1–4. Baghdad: Unpublished; 1956.
5. Basri, M. *Figures of Intellectual Awakening in Modern Iraq*. Vol 1. Baghdad: Dar al-Hurriya Printing House; n.d.
6. Anonymous. *Published research and articles in journals*.
7. al-Mahawili, AS. *The Safavid State (1501–1736) in the Cities of Abbas al-Azzawi: A Historical and Analytical Study*. *Al-Qadisiyah Journal of Humanities*. 2020;23(1).
8. al-Hamdani, TN. *Abbas al-Azzawi: His Life, Works and Historical Method (1891–1971)*. *The Arab Historian Journal*. Issue 56; n.d.

### How to Cite This Article

Obaid AK. A review article on the topic by the historian Ahmed Naji Al-Ghariri in his book "The Historian Abbas Al-Azzawi Al-Muhami: A Study in His Intellectual Efforts". *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation*. 2026;7(3):843-846.

### Creative Commons (CC) License

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BYNC-SA 4.0) License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.