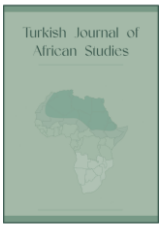

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Research Article

Major Aziz Bey: Ottoman Insights and Observations During the South African War (1899–1902)

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Abstract: In 1900, Major (Binbaşı) Aziz Bey, an Ottoman military *attaché*, embarked on a significant journey to South Africa to observe the British army's operations during the South African War (1899–1902). His assignment provided a unique perspective on a conflict pivotal to colonial history. Stationed alongside Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Aziz Bey's observations were preserved through contemporary war correspondents. In 1901, Britain gave him a medal in appreciation of his observations and achievements. Aziz Bey's experiences, including his admiration and critique of the Boers' combat tactics, accentuate the personal and logistical challenges faced by foreign military observers and reflect the broader geopolitical interests of the Ottoman Empire. This article explores Major Aziz Bey's role and contributions as an observer, shedding light on the intersection of Ottoman and British perspectives during a crucial period in imperial dynamics. Through historical accounts and personal correspondence, the article uncovers the Ottoman Empire's stance and strategic interests in the South African War, contributing to a deeper understanding of its African policy.

Keywords: South African War of 1899–1902, Second Boer War, Anglo-Boer War, Major Aziz Bey, Ottoman-British Relations

1.Introduction

In the tumultuous early months of 1900, Major Aziz Bey, an Ottoman military *attaché*, embarked on a remarkable journey to South Africa. Tasked with observing the operations of the British army during the South African War, Aziz Bey's assignment offered a rare and compelling perspective on a conflict that shaped the course of colonial history. Stationed in British camps alongside Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Aziz Bey's insights, though not directly recorded, have been preserved through the writings of contemporary war correspondents like James Francis Harry St. Clair-Erskine and Colonel Lionel James. During his time in South Africa, Aziz Bey observed and recorded both admiration and criticism for the Boer fighters. He described the Boers' combat tactics with vivid metaphors, likening their approach to the cunning of a fox and the swiftness of a hare, reflecting the agility and strategy that repeatedly challenged British forces. His experiences as a foreign observer were not without difficulties; he faced logistical and financial challenges, and his commitment to maintaining neutrality in the midst of a highly polarised conflict added further strain.

This article explores Major Aziz Bey's role and contributions as an observer in the South African War, shedding light on the interplay between Ottoman and British perspectives in a conflict pivotal to the imperial dynamics of the early twentieth century. The research draws on primary sources, including periodicals, war correspondents' accounts, and personal correspondence to reconstruct Aziz Bey's experiences. Ottoman archival records and historical documents further provide context on the objectives behind his deployment and the Ottoman Empire's policy in South Africa. Through this combined methodological approach, this study demonstrates how Aziz Bey's observations enhance our understanding of Ottoman foreign policy at the turn of the century.

2.Ottoman Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa

By utilising its dominance over North African regions like Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, the Ottoman Empire forged important and strategic links with Muslim sultanates in sub-Saharan Africa (Hazar, 2011). These connections extended to various states including the Emirate of Harar in the Horn of Africa; the Funj and Darfur sultanates in modern-day Sudan; Kanem-Bornu, Bagirmi, Bulele, and Wadai

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in Chad; Hausa states and the Kano Sultanate in present-day Nigeria and Niger; and the Zanzibar Sultanate along the East African coast (Gökgedik, 2024; Özdemir, 2017; Peacock, 2012).

The Ottoman influence in these regions was multifaceted. In military and defence matters, the Ottomans provided support against European colonial powers and local threats. For example, they provided guns and trained local men to defend the Emirate of Harar against incursions by the Portuguese and the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia. Additionally, the Ottomans captured Mombasa from the Portuguese in the late sixteenth century, demonstrating their strategic military reach in the region (Hess, 1969; Özgün, 2018; Pankhurst, 1997). Diplomatically, the Ottomans maintained their influence through emissaries and special missions. Notably, Sultan Abdülhamid II dispatched Muhammad Başala to regions like Morocco and Bornu to promote the power and prestige of the Ottoman Caliphate. This helped strengthen the Ottomans' religious and political ties across the continent (Deringil, 1991).

The Ottoman Empire's role in international diplomacy was also evident at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, where it held observer status. This participation showed its interests and influence in Africa amid the European colonial scramble (Minawi, 2016). Despite the Berlin Act of 1885 facilitating European expansionism, the Ottomans maintained their ties with African Muslim sultanates into the early twentieth century. In the early years of the Turkish Republic, Muslims from Madagascar and Mauritius contributed money to Ankara, demonstrating this long-lasting tie (Minawi, 2016). Overall, the Ottoman Empire's involvement in Africa was marked by strategic military alliances, diplomatic missions, and religious leadership, ensuring its presence and influence in the region throughout various historical periods.

This influence is further featured by an 1862 request from the Cape Muslim minority in South Africa, who petitioned the Cape Governor to bring in a scholar from a Muslim state (Orakçı, 2007). The British Parliament and Queen Victoria became involved, forwarding the matter to Müsürüs Pasha, the Ottoman envoy in London, who then brought it to Sultan Abdülaziz's attention. In 1863, Sultan Abdülaziz appointed Abu Bakr Effendi to travel to the Cape Colony to address internal religious conflicts among Muslims living there. Abu Bakr Effendi addressed these conflicts by founding two Ottoman theological schools in Cape Town, one for boys and another for girls, to educate the community. Fifteen days after his arrival, the boys' school was established and enrolled more than three hundred students within just twenty days, including descendants of the renowned Islamic leader Tuan Guru (Imam Abdullah Qadhu Abdus Salaam) (Uçar, 2001). Abu Bakr Effendi also visited other cities in South Africa, along with Mauritius and Mozambique, in response to requests from Muslim communities in these regions (Orakçı, 2007).

Abu Bakr Effendi, seeking to forge strong connections with South African Muslims, acquired proficiency in both English and Afrikaans, a dialect of Dutch.[1] Effendi authored two notable works: *Bayan ud-din* (1869), a concise translation of İbrahim b. Muhammed el-Halebi's *Mülteka'l-Ebhur*, and *Marasid ud-din*, both composed in Afrikaans with Arabic script. *Bayan ud-din*, recognised as one of the earliest examples of Arabic-Afrikaans or Ajami literature, was published in Istanbul in 1877 with 1,500 copies distributed among Muslims in the Cape, while *Marasid ud-din* was never published (Bruinessen, 2000). Effendi's students, while accustomed to Afrikaans, were only able to read Arabic script for religious reasons and did not actually speak Arabic. Additionally, they were unfamiliar with the Latin script used for Afrikaans (Cornelissen, 2013). Effendi's letters, which included information about the Cape Colony's economy, politics, history, topography, climate, and culture, were published in the Turkish newspaper *Mecmua-i Fünun* between 1863 and 1880, providing valuable insights to Ottoman intellectuals (Orakçı, 2007). Up to his death in 1880, he carried on with his religious and educational pursuits.

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[1] Originated in South Africa and Namibia, Afrikaans is a language that has primarily evolved from Dutch. It developed from the Dutch dialects that Dutch immigrants brought to the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth century. Later, it was impacted by the languages of native African communities, slaves, and other settlers. Afrikaans, one of South Africa's eleven official languages, is unique while having a close relationship to Dutch. Approximately 7 million people speak it as their first language today, and many more speak it as a second language, particularly in South Africa and Namibia. Compared to Dutch, Afrikaans is renowned for having a simpler syntax and a distinct lexicon. For many South Africans, particularly Afrikaner, 'Coloured', and other Afrikaans-speaking populations, it is an essential component of their cultural identity (Ponelis, 1993; Roberge, 2002).

The Ottoman Empire's connections with South African Muslims were also greatly improved by Abu Bakr Effendi, which had a huge effect on the Muslim population in Cape Town. Sixty Muslims in the Cape Colony thanked Sultan Abdülaziz in 1863 for bringing the Islamic scholar Effendi to the Cape Colony (Uçar, 2001). Following Effendi's arrival, the Ottoman Sultan's name was mentioned in Friday sermons, and Cape Muslims began celebrating the Sultan's birthday (Uçar, 2001). For instance, in 1867, they marked Sultan Abdülaziz's birthday with great ceremony, demonstrating the Ottoman Caliph-Sultan's charismatic influence (Uçar, 2001). Effendi's presence cemented the Ottoman Sultan's religious sway over the Muslim community in Cape Town, and subsequently in Port Elizabeth and the Transvaal. In 1882, Abdullah Agmat, one of Effendi's pupils, founded the Ottoman Cricket Club in Cape Town, which is still going strong today. Effendi, as the sole Islamic scholar selected by the Ottoman authorities to educate non-Ottoman communities abroad, held significant importance for both the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim population of South Africa (Argun, 2000).

After Abu Bakr Effendi passed away, his sons took up his Islamic initiatives in South Africa. Achmed Ataullah Effendi became the head of the Kimberley Ottoman Hamidiye School and later led the Ottoman Theological School in Cape Town, demonstrating his strong connections with Indian Muslim communities (Orakçı, 2007). His brother, Hisham Nimetullah Effendi, who received his education in Turkey, was a distinguished scholar. He authored religious texts in Afrikaans and played a key role in fostering ties between the Ottoman Caliphate and the Muslim community in South Africa (Argun, 2000). The Ottoman Empire supported these efforts by funding mosque constructions and establishing schools and mosques across the region (Orakçı, 2007).

The rulers of the Ottoman Empire were mainly driven by religious and political motives in their efforts to support South African Muslims. The Ottoman Empire attempted to put pressure on Britain, especially after 1878, by using the caliphate's stature as a major Islamic power (Özcan, 1997). At the time, Britain governed a substantial Muslim population within its dominions, most notably in India. Indian immigrants, who began arriving in South Africa in 1860, made up the majority of the country's Muslim population. Through his pan-Islamist policies, Sultan Abdülhamid II significantly politicised Islam, using the caliphate's power to subvert British interests. Pan-Islamic propaganda found a key platform in South Africa. With the help of its intellectuals and consular agents, the Ottoman Empire sought to foster positive ties with the Muslims of South Africa (Orakçı, 2007). In 1899, Abdülhamid II intensified the pressure on Britain by dispatching a military observer to South Africa's armed forces as part of his strategy.

3.The South African War: The Dawn of Modern Guerrilla Warfare and British Imperial Hubris

European settlement in South Africa commenced in 1652 when Jan Van Riebeeck, on behalf of the Dutch East India Company (DEIC), founded a supply station at the Cape of Good Hope. This marked the beginning of a significant European presence in the region. The British annexation of the Cape Colony in 1806, during the Napoleonic Wars, initiated enduring British-Boer[2] hostility. The tension was further intensified by the abolition of slavery in 1833, which caused labour shortages and led to the Great Trek of the Afrikaners (Boers) seeking autonomy. This migration resulted in the establishment of the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (also known as the South African Republic or Transvaal) in 1852 and the *Oranjevrijstaat* (Orange Free State) in 1854.

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[2] The term 'Boer' refers to Dutch-descended farmers who settled in South Africa, while the term 'Afrikaner' represents a broader and more inclusive identity adopted by the Boers over time. While 'Boer emphasises the agricultural sector, 'Afrikaner' encompasses all Dutch-descended South Africans.

The discovery of the world's richest diamond deposit in 1871 and the richest gold deposit in 1886 within the smallest Afrikaner states heightened British-Boer tensions. These discoveries culminated in the First Boer War (1880–1881), followed by the South African War (Second Boer War) from 1899 to 1902. The British Empire, recognising South Africa's economic and strategic significance, exerted increasing pressure on the Boer republics from the 1870s onwards. The growing demands and threats from Britain galvanised Boer nationalism, ultimately leading to conflict. The war between the formidable British Empire and the diminutive Boer states was described by Pakenham as 'the longest, the costliest, the bloodiest and the most humiliating war for Britain between 1815 and 1914' (1979, p. 3).

The first African 'freedom struggle' of the twentieth century was the South African War, which lasted from 1899 to 1902. It was also considered as the most pivotal conflict in the European scramble for Africa and blueprint for modern colonial ventures in Africa (Nasson, 2010, p. 27; Wessels, 2011, p. 137). Additionally, this battle marked the twentieth century's first guerilla struggle against colonialism (Pakenham, 1979). The war incurred a cost exceeding 200 million pounds, twenty times the expected amount, leading to an increase in income tax (Warwick, 1983). For nearly three years, Britain armed, assembled, and maintained the largest army ever deployed overseas (Smith, 1996). 88,000 Boer soldiers and 450,000 British Empire soldiers participated in the battle (Warwick, 1983). The conflict led to the deaths of around 22,000 British soldiers, 7,000 Afrikaner combatants, and more than 15,000 coloured and African people (Warwick, 1980). The British significantly outspent the Boers on weaponry, investing 1,000 pounds each Boer fighter, whereas the Boers spent merely fifteen pence each British soldier (Smith, 1996).

The Second Boer War was precipitated by Britain's demands for political rights for British immigrants in the Transvaal, which were rejected. Initial Boer victories led to a shift towards guerrilla warfare following British occupation of the Boer republics. The British response, led by Lord Kitchener, included scorched-earth tactics and the establishment of concentration camps for Boer civilians and Africans, resulting in significant civilian casualties (Wessels, 2011). The Treaty of Vereeniging in 1902 concluded the war, making the Transvaal and Orange Free State British colonies.

Although the war underscored Britain's military and financial dominance, it was achieved through brutal methods against resilient Boer forces. By the end of the war, tens of thousands of Africans and Afrikaners had been placed in concentration camps (Lowry, 2000). More than 50,000 civilians, both black and white, died in these camps during the conflict. Approximately 28,000 Afrikaner civilians, including nearly 22,000 children, died out of a total Boer population of 219,000 in the Transvaal and Orange Free State (Wessels, 2011). Sixty-six refugee camps were set up to accommodate Africans, with the primary goal of utilising them as a source of manual labour. The conditions in these camps were typically more severe than those experienced by white civilians (Lowry, 2000). Here, more than 14,000 Africans lost their lives (Warwick, 1980). By the end of the war, the camps were home to no fewer than 140,000 African people (Wessels, 2011). Later in his memoirs, Paul Kruger, the President of the South African Republic (1883–1902), stated:

> The war in South Africa exceeded the limits of barbarism. I have fought against many barbarous *Kaffir* tribes in the course of my life; but they are not so barbarous as English, who have burnt our farms and driven our children into destitution, without food or shelter (Kruger, 1902, cited as Nasson, 2010).

Despite their victory, the British made a significant political error by establishing gruesome concentration camps. These camps, notorious for their horrendous conditions, even stirred the British conscience and divided public opinion. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a British statesman and leader of the Liberal Party, condemned the British tactics as 'methods of barbarism' (Lowry, 2000, p. 2).

Many new technologies were used throughout the conflict, such as machine guns, magazine-fed rifles, and automatic handguns. Additionally important were the traditional means of transportation and communication including steamships, railroads, horses, and the telegraph (Warwick, 1980). Britain gained crucial experience fighting the highly experienced and well-armed Boer commandos, who were proficient marksmen and snipers, during this battle. It is possible that the First World War would have had a different conclusion without the lessons learnt from this previous battle (Craig, 2024).

The Anglo-Boer War was not only a 'white man's war' or a 'gentleman's war', as is commonly believed. It had a major effect on hundreds of thousands of people from different ethnic groups. Since just one-fifth of South Africans were white at the start of the conflict in 1899, it was essentially a 'South African War' (Warwick, 1980). Despite their early intents to the contrary, both the British and Boer forces used non-Europeans from the beginning of the conflict (Nasson, 1999). Non-Europeans were used in defensive or passive capacities as spies, messengers, blockhouse watchmen, transport drivers, scouts, guards, and servants. These groups included Blacks, Asians, and Coloured people (Siwundhla, 1984). But as the conflict continued, the British increasingly employed non-Europeans in combatant roles, with an estimated 30,000 black soldiers fighting alongside British forces by the war's end (Warwick, 1980; Wessels, 2011). The Boers' failure to secure significant African support was a major factor in their defeat (Nasson, 2010).

The Cape Colony had a population of 2,939 coloured people, while Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State had 4,618 natives. Lord Kitchener stated that as of November 1900, 10,053 non-Europeans were reported to be involved in the conflict (Siwundhla, 1984). An estimated 120,000 African, Indian, and coloured men participated in non-combatant capacities, and 14,000 of them were commando auxiliary (Nasson, 2010). The number of Africans recruited by the British army ranged from 10,000 to 30,000. A British major observed that they were 'fighting black men, not white ones' as Boers also armed African people (Nasson, 2010). In this fierce battle, at least 20,000 black people lost their lives.

4.The South African War's Impact on Early Twentieth Century Geopolitics

The campaign had a considerable international impact and left a lasting legacy. The point to which the war drew public attention was incredible. More people throughout the world were aware of it than anything else that had happened in South African history at the time, owing to a newly globalising world that fostered an international public opinion (Lowry, 2000). It was not yet another of 'Victoria's small battles', given the unparalleled global press coverage and advances in telegraphy and photojournalism. Indeed, the South African War was one of the few major wars fought by major powers in the early twentieth century that were closely followed by the international media. Syndicated news agencies competed for valuable and dramatic scoops. At the end of the nineteenth century, war was the most attractive and reputable topic for all news agencies (Lowry, 2000, p. 269).

The conflict was observed by America, France, Germany, and Japan, along with the British and Boer troops; the Boer soldiers were accompanied by Norwegian and Russian *attaché*s (Evans, 2000). It also made a strong impression on the Ottoman Empire despite the fact that the empire was geographically distant from the far southern region of Africa. The Ottoman press covered the struggle broadly.[3] The Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II requested to station major Aziz Bey as an observer. Aziz Bey, who served as the military *attaché* in Washington, was ordered to observe the conflict from the British camp in the Transvaal during his tenure under Marshal Lord Roberts (BEO, 1734/ 130001, 1 Recep 1319). On 26 February 1900, he was dispatched to South Africa with a stipend of 200 *lira* to carry out his duties in this role (İrade Hususi, 2 Rebiulahir 1317, no. 9; İrade Hususi, 26 Şevval 1317, no. 43).

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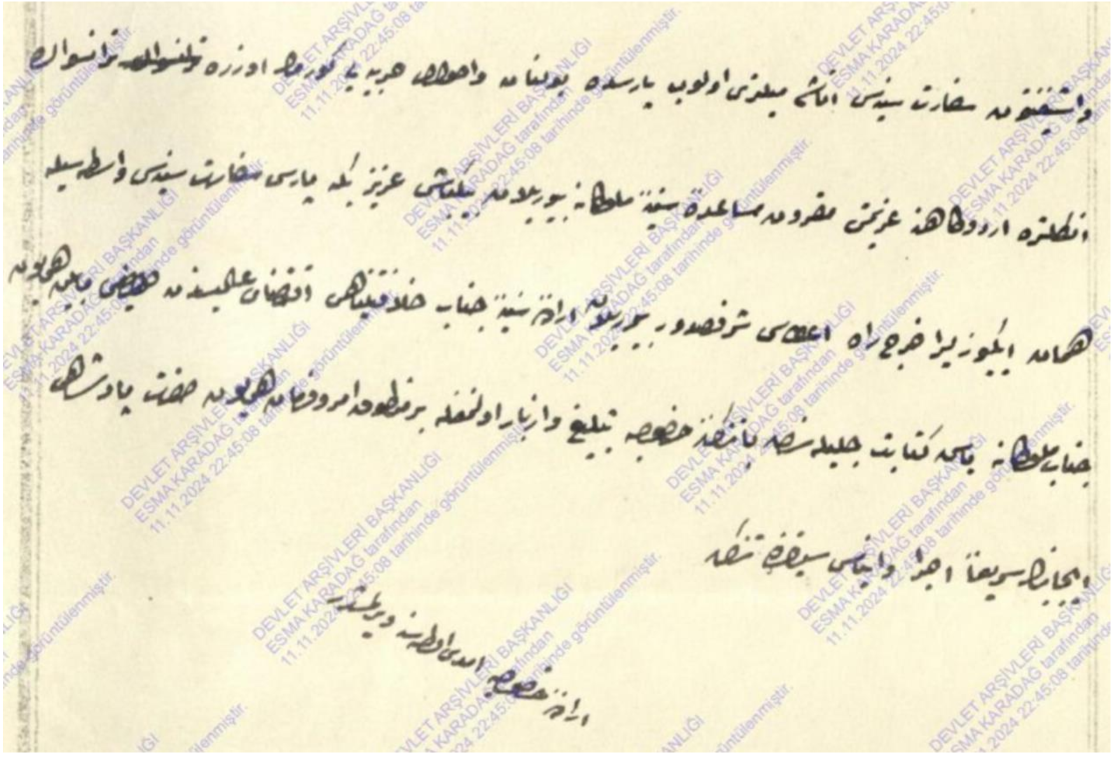
[3] For a more detailed examination of the topic, see Karadağ, E. (2024). *Positioning in turbulent times: Ottoman intellectuals and the South African War (1899-1902). South African Historical Journal.* https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2024.2380279. The article explores Ottoman intellectuals' pro-British stance during the South African War (1899-1902), focusing on Ismail Kemal Vlora's writings. It examines their support for British imperialism and their views on colonialism, imperialism, and civilisation, highlighting the war's global impact and its significance for the Ottoman discourse.

Figure 1

A Document from the Ministry of Finance (Maliye) for the Allocation of a Daily Allowance to Major Aziz Bey, Currently in Paris and Serving as the Military Attaché at the Embassy in Washington, for his Visit to the British Camp in Transvaal to Observe the State of the War, Dated 19 February 1900



DEVLET ARŞİVLERİ BAŞKANLIĞI ESMA KARADAĞ tarafından 11.11.2024 22:45:08 tarihinde görüntülenmiştir.

Source: The Ottoman Prime Minister’s Archive, BEO 1443 – 108207, 13 Şevval 1317.

5.Shifting Alliances and Strategic Calculations: Ottoman–British Relations and the South African War

Even though Istanbul observed the war with the British forces, the empire remained impartial. According to Ottomans, if Boers won the war, South African Muslims could have experienced more religious restraints, same as the practices during the Dutch East Indian Company’s administration (Uçar, 2001).

In addition, one of Great Britain's main goals prior to the idea of realpolitik taking front stage in Europe was the notion of Ottoman development supported by Europe (Mardin, 1983). From the British point of view, the global presence of the Ottoman Empire was crucial since the Ottomans were occupying the routes to India and the eastern Mediterranean. During the nineteenth century, London supported the integrity of the Ottoman territories to maintain the balance of power in Europe (Çiçek, 2006). Additionally, Turkey was seen by British policymakers as a stopgap between Russia, England’s then-powerful foe, and England. One of the key policies of the British statesmen was the Ottoman progress with European support (Mardin, 1983). So, London made an enormous endeavour to ‘reform’ the Ottoman Empire.

However, beyond the middle of the nineteenth century, ties between the Ottomans and the British did not remain cordial. After a number of significant incidents, the British public’s perception of the Ottoman reforms grew more dubious. These incidents were the Herzegovina uprising (1875–1877), the April uprising in Bulgaria (1876), the Ottoman defeat in the Russo-Turkish War of 1878, the

Congress of Berlin (1878), and the Armenian incidents in Istanbul (1896) (Çiçek, 2006). By 1876, the response to these events had caused pro-Turkish sentiment in Britain and throughout Europe to turn anti-Turkish, partly due to propaganda from Radical-Liberal groups in Britain (Badem, 2010). Consequently, British policy shifted towards a strategy aimed at fragmenting the Ottoman Empire. This approach was intended to facilitate British acquisition of Ottoman territories (Çiçek, 2006; Mardin, 1983). For instance, the Stop the War Committee condemned Turkey's actions in Armenia and Bulgaria, describing it as a 'campaign of extermination', similar to how the South African War was criticised. The networks established by the Pro-Boers were later utilised to create the Balkan Committee in 1903 (Perkins, 2015).

For the Ottoman Empire, a stronger Britain could leverage its position to create significant challenges in global politics (Orakçı, 2007). Conversely, a weakened Britain would be less inclined to intervene in Ottoman internal affairs, especially as British influence waned over Muslims in its own territories (The Ottoman Prime Minister's Archive, Y.A. Hus. 400/127). As the Caliph of all Muslims, Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II was convinced that a single statement from him could seriously undermine British authority in India as he remarked, 'It is a well-known fact that a word from me as the Caliph of all Muslims would be sufficient to inflict considerable harm on British rule in India'. Abdülhamid II proposed that Russia, Germany, and France should use the 1899–1902 South African War to hold Great Britain accountable for its oppression of Indians and its aggressive actions against other nations. He lamented that this opportunity was missed but remained confident that Indian Muslims would eventually succeed in breaking free from British rule (Karpat, 2001).

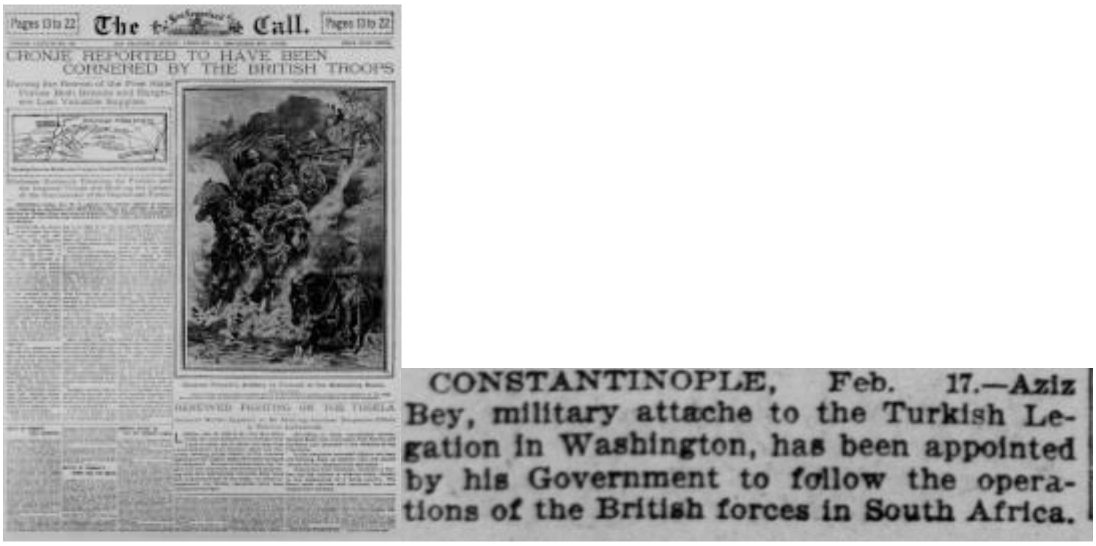
Istanbul sought to gauge British military strength, particularly given the modern equipment used by the British army in contemporary conflicts. England was a potential adversary, and the Ottomans wanted to assess Britain's capabilities during its vigorous engagements. To achieve this, Sultan Abdülhamid II dispatched a war observer to South Africa to accompany British forces. This move was also intended to signal to London that the Ottomans were closely monitoring British activities. Consequently, Abdülhamid II sent one of his army officers to South Africa for this purpose.

6.Major Aziz Bey's Role and Reflections

According to an article published in *The San Francisco Call* on 18 February 1900, Major Aziz Bey was placed there to monitor the British army's activities throughout the conflict (*The San Francisco Call*, Vol 87, No 80, 18 February 1900, 13). He was sent to South Africa on 26 February 1900. Under the commander-in-chief, Field Marshall Lord Roberts, Major Aziz Bey spent six months in British camps following the South African War.

Figure 2

The San Francisco Call's Article on Major Aziz Bey's Assignment to Monitor the Conflict in South Africa



Pages 13 to 22 The Call. Pages 13 to 22

CRONJE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN CORNERED BY THE BRITISH TROOPS

CONSTANTINOPLE, Feb. 17.—Aziz Bey, military attache to the Turkish Legation in Washington, has been appointed by his Government to follow the operations of the British forces in South Africa.

Source: *The San Francisco Call*, Vol 87, No 80, 18 February 1900, 13.

Major Aziz Bey's views on the South African campaign can be gleaned from the contemporary accounts of war correspondent James Francis Harry St. Clair-Erskine, the 5th Earl of Rosslyn. Writing for *The Sphere* and the *Daily Mail*, Erskine detailed Major Aziz Bey's perspective on the combat capabilities of the Boer forces in his book *Twice Captured: A Record of Adventure During the Boer War*. Erskine claimed that Major Aziz Bey aptly described the Boers' fighting strategies with a striking metaphor: '*Le Boer se batte (bat) lâchement. Il se cache comme un renard, et il court comme un lievre!*' 'The Boer is fighting cowardly. He hides like a fox, and he runs like a hare!' (Rosslyn, 1900, p. 466). This vivid description underscores the perceived elusive and evasive nature of the Boer fighters, reflecting a keen observation of their unconventional warfare strategies.

Colonel Lionel James, in his book *High Pressure: A Record of Activities in the Service of the Times Newspaper*, shares vivid accounts of his experiences with Major Aziz Bey, whom he describes as 'an eccentric Turk' who became an invaluable ally on the battlefield. James recounts how Aziz Bey, dissatisfied with the constraints of neutrality, was eager to join the fight, wanting to 'slip the irksome role of a neutral' and become a warrior. His enthusiasm led him to accompany James into the heat of battle (James, 1929, p. 173).

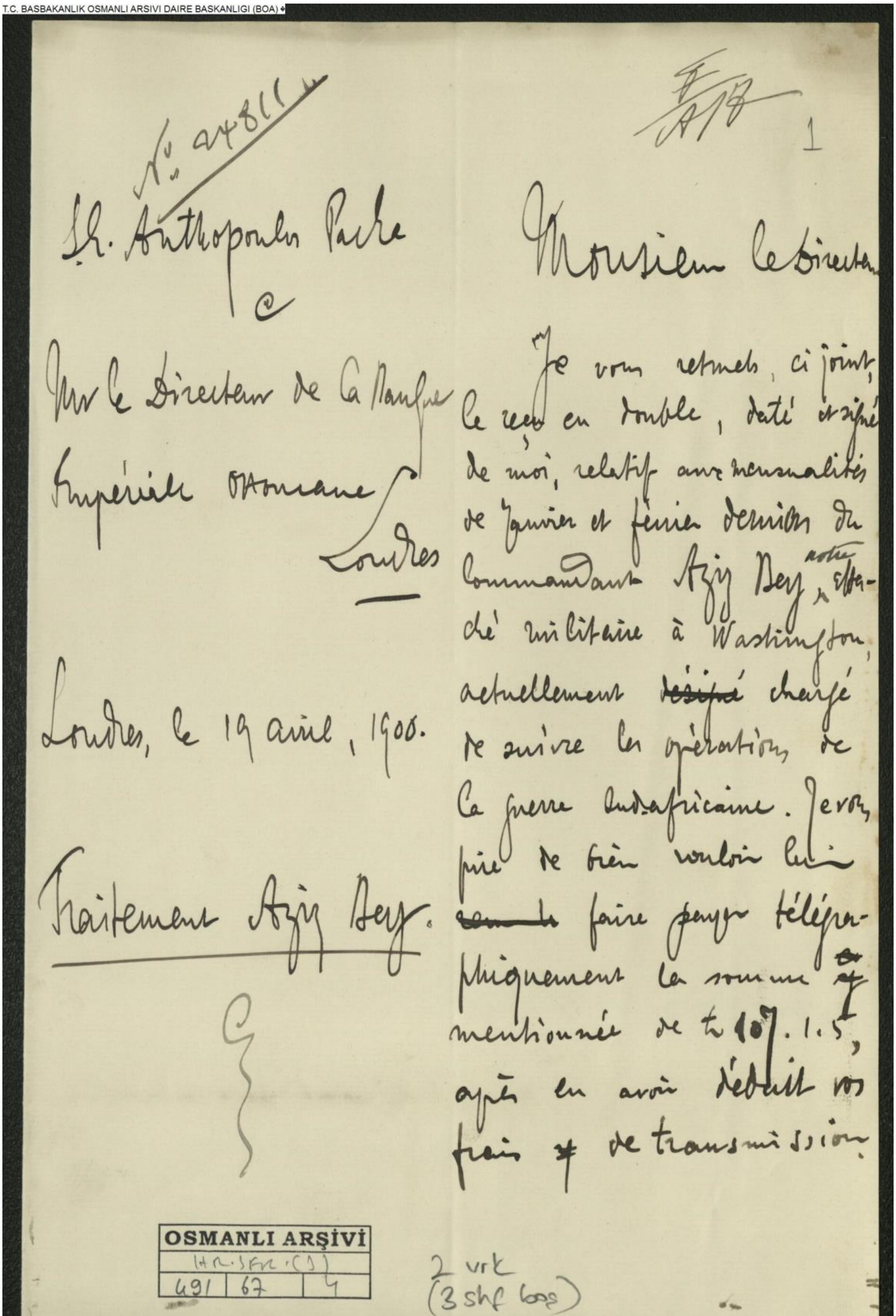
James provides several anecdotes about Aziz Bey, painting a picture of his unique personality and unorthodox methods. These stories not only offer insights into Aziz Bey's character but also highlight his role in the conflict. However, it is important to approach these accounts with caution, as James's narrative may contain embellishments or subjective interpretations as many historical data could do, potentially casting a fictionalised light on Aziz Bey's actions and intentions.

Through Anthopoulos Pasha, the Ottoman Ambassador to London, Aziz Bey wrote two separate letters to Constantinople outlining his financial situation. Since sending coded telegrams was prohibited in the British quarter, and using an open telegram would tarnish the empire's reputation, he opted to write a letter instead. Aziz Bey noted that the other war observers were provided with travel expenses and a semi-annual stipend, placing them in a more advantageous financial position compared to his own (The Ottoman Prime Minister's Archive, Y. MTV 202/3; Uçar, *140 Yıllık Miras*, 280).

Figure 3

Allowance for Major Aziz Bey, Tasked with Overseeing Military Operations in South Africa, Dated 19 April 1900, in French

T.C. BASBAKANLIK OSMANLI ARSIVI DAIRE BASKANLIGI (BOA)



No. 24811

1

S.E. Anthopoulos Pacha

à

Mr le Directeur de la Banque Impériale Ottomane

Londres

Londres, le 19 avril, 1900.

Traitement Aziz Bey.

Monsieur le Directeur

Je vous remets, ci joint, le reçu en double, daté et signé de moi, relatif aux mensualités de Janvier et Février derniers du Commandant Aziz Bey, notre attaché militaire à Washington, actuellement ~~désigné~~ chargé de suivre les opérations de la guerre Sud-africaine. Je vous prie de bien vouloir lui ~~comme~~ faire payer télégraphiquement la somme sus mentionnée de £ 107.1.5, après en avoir débité vos frais de transmission.

OSMANLI ARŞİVİ
HR.SFR.(3)
491 | 67 | 4

2 vrk
(3 shf boş)

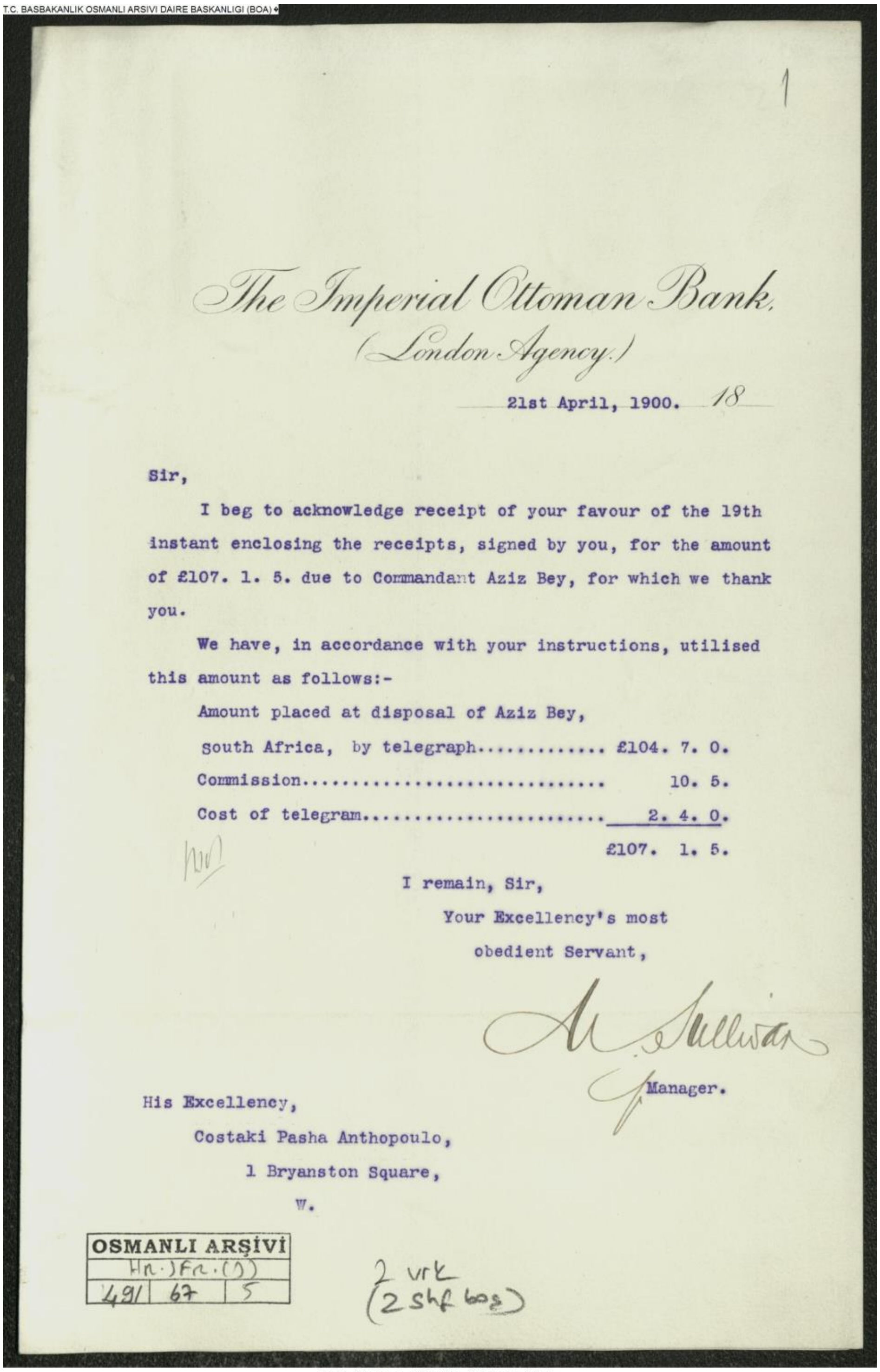
HR.SFR.3.00491.00067.004

Source: The Ottoman Prime Minister’s Archive, HR. SFR. 3. 491/ 67/ 4.

Figure 4

Allowance for Major Aziz Bey, in Charge of Monitoring Military Operations in South Africa, Dated 21 April 1900, in English

T.C. BASBAKANLIK OSMANLI ARSIVI DAIRE BASKANLIGI (BOA)



1

The Imperial Ottoman Bank.
(London Agency.)

21st April, 1900. 18

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 19th instant enclosing the receipts, signed by you, for the amount of £107. 1. 5. due to Commandant Aziz Bey, for which we thank you.

We have, in accordance with your instructions, utilised this amount as follows:-

Amount placed at disposal of Aziz Bey, South Africa, by telegraph............	£104. 7. 0.
Commission............................	10. 5.
Cost of telegram......................	2. 4. 0.
	£107. 1. 5.

I remain, Sir,
Your Excellency's most
obedient Servant,

A. Sullivan
Manager.

His Excellency,
Costaki Pasha Anthopoulo,
1 Bryanston Square,
W.

OSMANLI ARŞİVİ
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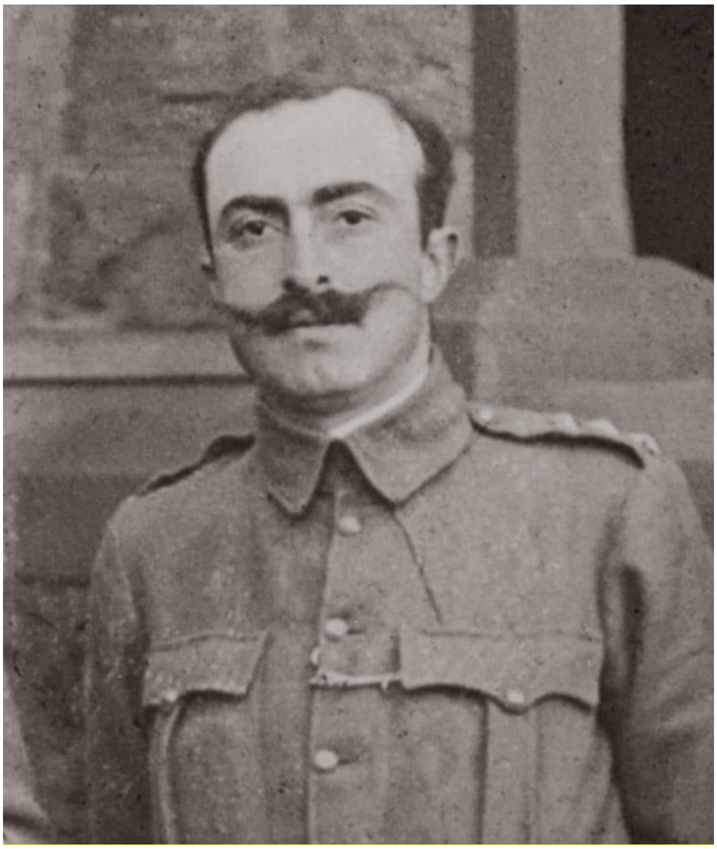
(2 shf boş)

HR.SFR.3.00491.00067.005

Source: The Ottoman Prime Minister's Archive, HR. SFR. 3. 491/ 67/5.

Figure 5

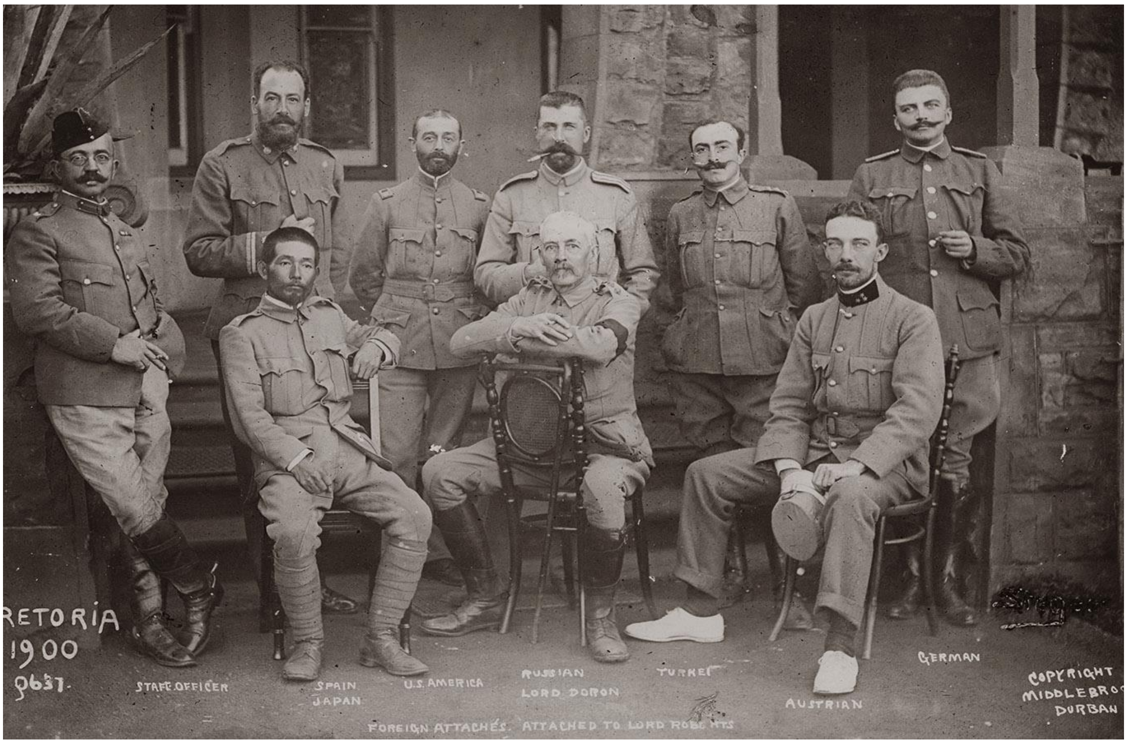
Major Aziz Bey, Turkish Military Attaché, Pretoria, 1900



Source: National Archives of South Africa, TAB Photo Ref. 32833.

Figure 6

Major Aziz Bey is Shown Second from the Right in the Back Row of the Photograph of the Foreign Attachés

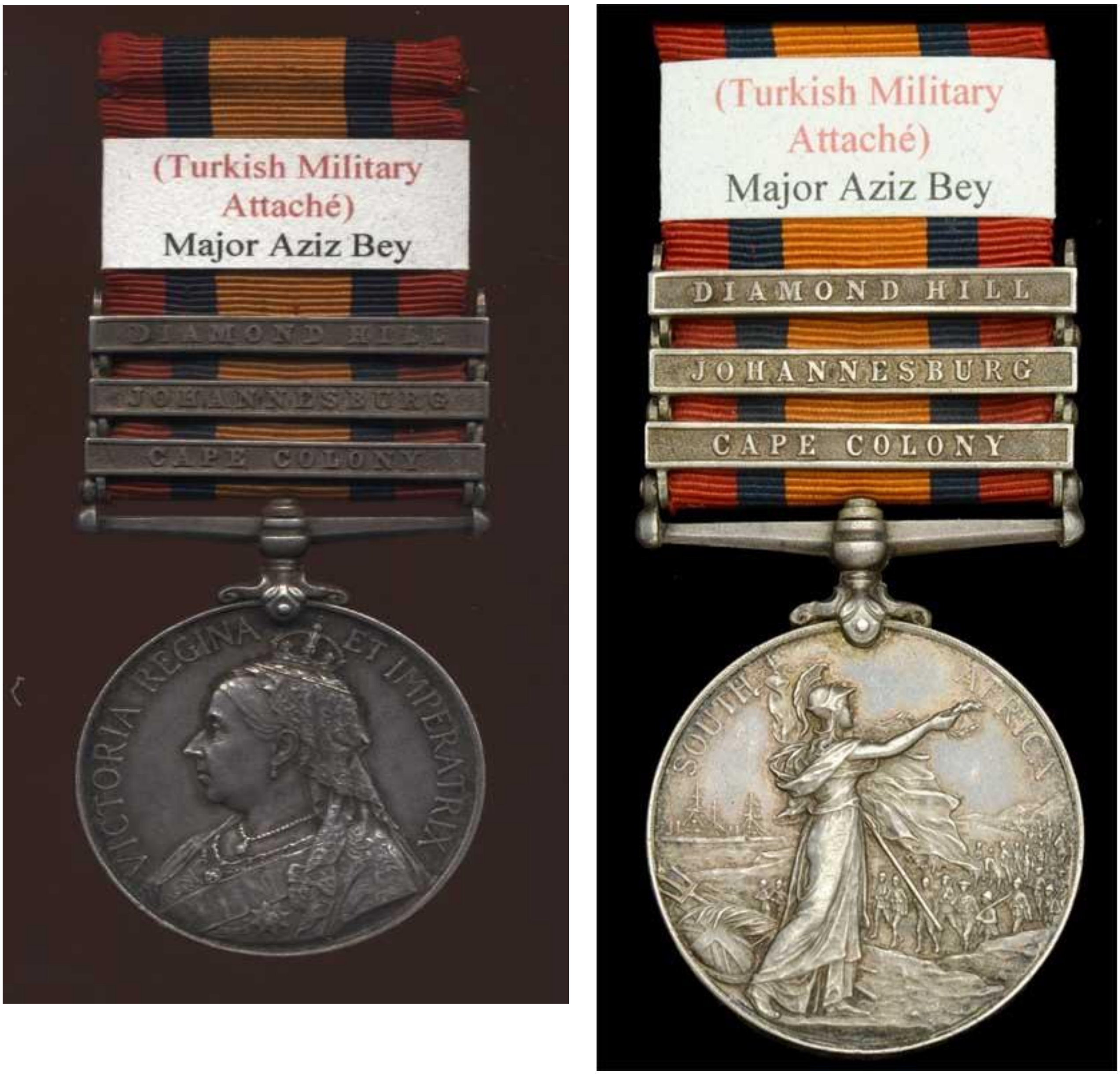

RETORIA
1900
9637.
STAFF OFFICER
SPAIN
JAPAN
U.S. AMERICA
RUSSIAN
LORD DORON
TURKEY
AUSTRIAN
GERMAN
COPYRIGHT
MIDDLEBRO
DURBAN
FOREIGN ATTACHÉS. ATTACHED TO LORD ROBERTS

Source: National Archives of South Africa, TAB Photo Ref. 32833.

Major Aziz Bey went to Cape Town during the period of inaction. He received the Queen's South Africa (QSA) Medal with three clasps (Diamond Hill, Johannesburg, and Cape Colony) as a form of recognition for his service during the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902). These medals and clasps were generally awarded by the British to soldiers and individuals who took part in specific campaigns or battles during the war. His award of the QSA Medal in 1901 suggests that, despite being from a different country, he was recognised for his involvement in specific engagements or locations that were significant in the British campaign. This unusual recognition for a foreign officer also highlights the complex alliances and international interest in the South African conflict during that era. In the recent auction, the QSA awarded to Aziz Bey was sold for a hammer price of GBP 4,200. The final totals for the transaction amounted to GBP 5,410, which translates to R 119,040, USD 6,720, and EUR 6,070. This information is sourced from a discussion on the *Anglo-Boer War Forum* (AngloBoerWar.com, n.d.).

Figure 7 and 8

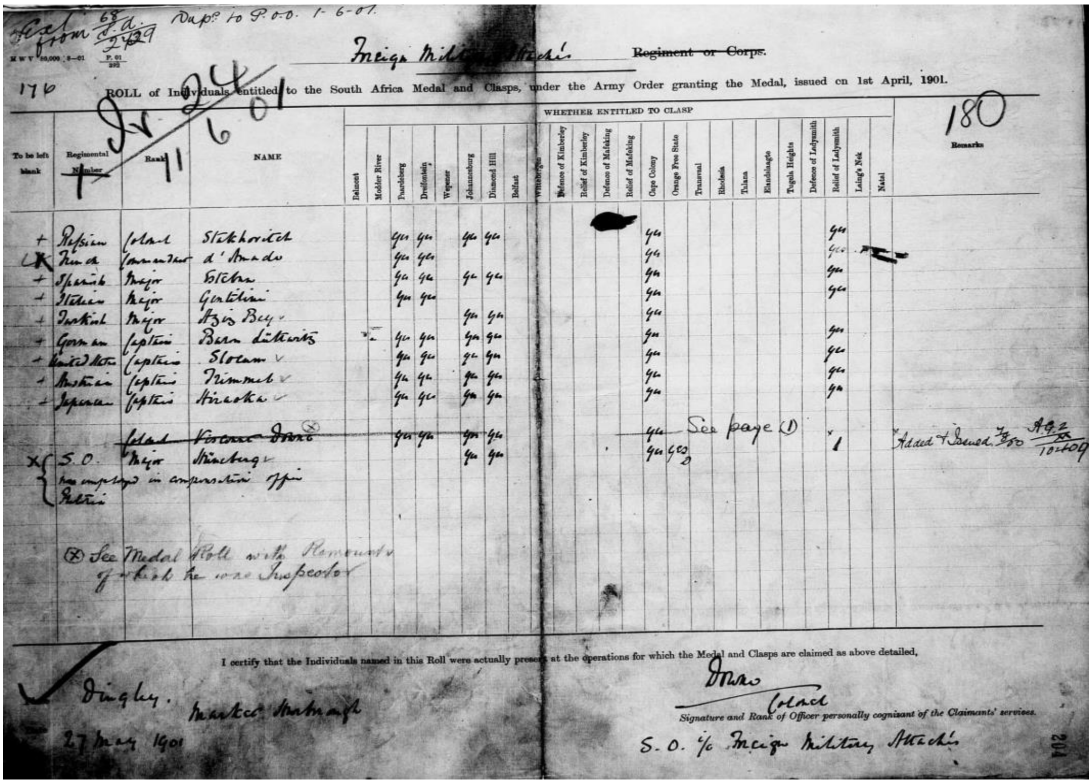
Aziz Bey's Three-Clasp Medal, Bestowed by British Queen Victoria


(Turkish Military Attaché)
Major Aziz Bey
DIAMOND HILL
JOHANNESBURG
CAPE COLONY
VICTORIA REGINA ET IMPERATRIX
(Turkish Military Attaché)
Major Aziz Bey
DIAMOND HILL
JOHANNESBURG
CAPE COLONY
SOUTH AFRICA

Source: AngloBoerWar.com, n.d.

Figure 9

Document of Granting Medal to Major Aziz Bey



Extd from S.A. 68/2429 Desp. to P.O.O. 1-6-01.

M W V 50,000 6-01 P. 01/293

Foreign Military Attachés ~~Regiment or Corps.~~

176 ROLL of Individuals entitled to the South Africa Medal and Clasps, under the Army Order granting the Medal, issued on 1st April, 1901.

SV 24/6/01 11

180

To be left blank	Regimental Number	Rank	NAME	Belmont	Modder River	Paardeberg	Dreifontein	Wepener	Johannesburg	Diamond Hill	Belfast	Wittebergen	Defence of Kimberley	Relief of Kimberley	Defence of Mafeking	Relief of Mafeking	Cape Colony	Orange Free State	Transvaal	Rhodesia	Talana	Elandslaagte	Tugela Heights	Defence of Ladysmith	Relief of Ladysmith	Laing's Nek	Natal	Remarks
+	Russian	Colonel	Stakhovitch			yes	yes		yes	yes							yes								yes			
+	French	Commandant	d'Amade			yes	yes										yes								yes			
+	Spanish	Major	Stetra			yes	yes		yes	yes							yes								yes			
+	Italian	Major	Gentilini			yes	yes										yes								yes			
+	Turkish	Major	Aziz Bey						yes	yes							yes											
+	German	Captain	Baron Lüttwitz			yes	yes		yes	yes							yes								yes			
+	United States	Captain	Slocum			yes	yes		yes	yes							yes								yes			
+	Austrian	Captain	Trimmel			yes	yes		yes	yes							yes								yes			
+	Japanese	Captain	Hiraoka			yes	yes		yes	yes							yes								yes			
		~~Colonel~~	~~Viscount Downe~~ ⊗			~~yes~~	~~yes~~		~~yes~~	~~yes~~							~~yes~~	See page (1)										
×	S.O.	Major	[illegible]						yes	yes							yes	yes							×1			×Added + Issued 7/3/10 A.G.2/XX/10409

was employed in compensation office Pretoria

⊗ See Medal Roll with Remounts of which he was Inspector

I certify that the Individuals named in this Roll were actually present at the operations for which the Medal and Clasps are claimed as above detailed,

Dingley.

27 May 1901

Downe
Colonel
Signature and Rank of Officer personally cognizant of the Claimants' services.

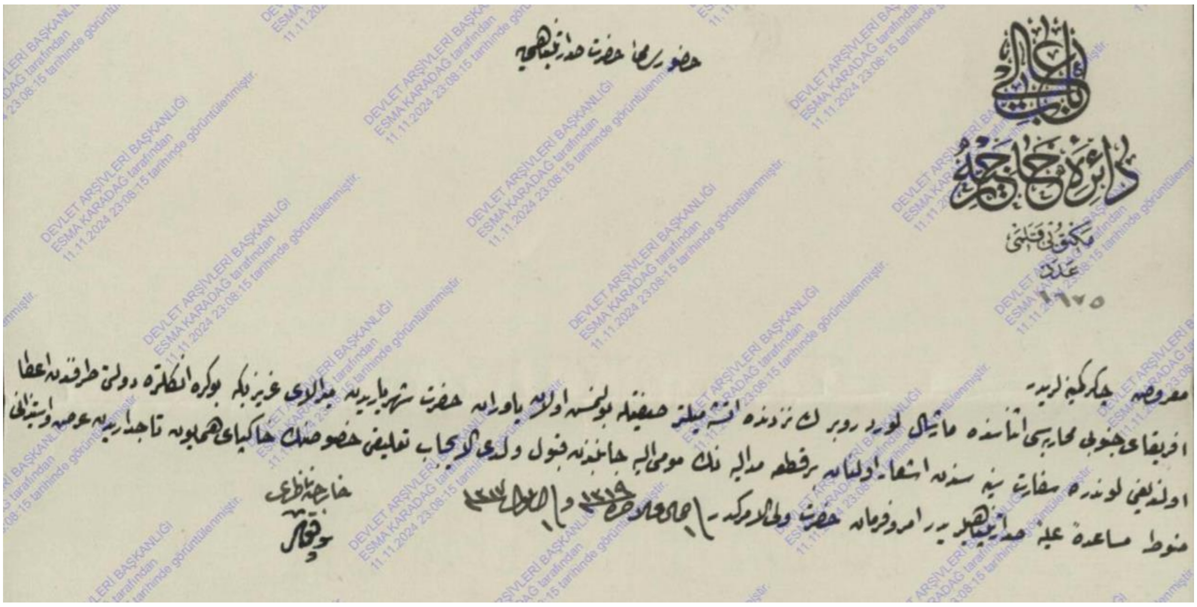
S.O. i/c Foreign Military Attachés

204

Source: British National Archives. WO 100/299, 27 May 1901, 204.

Figure 10

The Acceptance and Conferment of the Medal Awarded to Colonel Aziz Bey, Aide-De-Camp to his Imperial Majesty, by the British Government, Dated 11 October 1901



DEVLET ARŞİVLERİ BAŞKANLIĞI ESMA KARADAĞ tarafından 11.11.2024 23:08:15 tarihinde görüntülenmiştir.

Source: The Ottoman Prime Minister’s Archive, İ..TAL. 262/ 53, 27 Cemaziyelahir 1319.

7.From Diplomatic Discontent to Domestic Duty: The Evolving Role of Aziz Bey Post-1908

Aziz Bey was called to Constantinople in August 1900, while the war was still ongoing. He resumed his duty as Washington military *attaché*. According to Lionel James, this capacity suited his quaint temperament ideally. However, Aziz Bey was angry with Abdülhamid II due to the reason that his salary was paid spasmodically. Thus, he wrote insulting epithets about Abdülhamid upon the postcards in Turkish script. One of them reached the Ottoman Sultan and he was ordered to return to Constantinople and Aziz Bey was dismissed.

After the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, Aziz Bey became sub-chief of the Istanbul police. Lionel James, who maintained a friendship with Aziz Bey, found him with the civilian kit in this capacity. James expressed that Aziz Bey was average looking in comparison to his 'pristine friend the popinjay *sabreur* of the Mount Nelson Hotel' (James, 1929, p. 174). During the South African War, the British used the Mount Nelson Hotel as their headquarters for coordinating military strategies. Prominent figures such as Lords Roberts, Kitchener, and Buller were regulars within its halls. Winston Churchill, stationed there as a war correspondent, described the hotel as 'an excellent and well-appointed establishment, which is especially appreciated after a sea voyage'.

Figure 11

Mount Nelson Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa

MOUNT NELSON HOTEL
MOUNT NELSON HOTEL, CAPETOWN
ENTRANCE GATEWAY.

Source: Belmond, n.d.

Aziz Bey's frustration over irregular salary payments and subsequent use of insulting epithets about the Sultan reflect the strained relationship between the Ottoman government and its overseas representatives. This episode underlines the bureaucratic dysfunction and personal grievances that were prevalent in the late Ottoman administration. His dismissal after one of these disparaging messages reached the Sultan illustrates the precarious nature of political and diplomatic positions in an era of intense autocratic control.

8.Conclusion

In conclusion, 1899–1902 South African War, through the observations of Major Aziz Bey, provides a crucial lens into the Ottoman Empire's strategic mindset and its evolving role in global politics at the turn of the twentieth century. Major Aziz Bey's appointment to South Africa during the war not only reflect the Ottoman Empire's keen interest in staying relevant amidst a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape but also reveal its nuanced approach to managing both internal and external challenges. The empire's decision to deploy an observer, despite its own domestic and external crises, underscores its commitment to understanding and influencing global events. By examining Major Aziz Bey's insights, one gains a deeper appreciation of how the Ottoman Empire sought to navigate and adjust to the complexities of international relations, shedding light on its broader strategic ambitions and policy orientations. Further exploration of Major Aziz Bey's observations promises to enrich our understanding of Istanbul's African policy and its broader geopolitical strategies during this transformative period.

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AngloBoerWar.com. (n.d.). *Foreign attaches.* AngloBoerWar.com. Retrieved November 28, 2024, from https://www.angloboerwar.com/forum/11-research/8824-foreign-attaches?start=12#91044

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