MacLean’s work on Anglo-Ottoman encounters and decided to investigate the similarities and differences of these distinct, yet intimately connected, areas of British interest. Post-colonial theory provides a good point of departure for tackling this project, but ultimately fails to do justice to the complexities, vicissitudes and idiosyncrasies of cross-cultural encounters.

The study grant I was awarded by the British Institute at Ankara has enabled me to spend two months in Ankara to consolidate my research on the Ottomans, as well as providing an opportunity to map out further research on Anglo-Ottoman, or, more generally, European-Ottoman, interaction. Europeans experiencing the great eastern empire, which straddled three continents in its heyday, returned to their homelands with a plethora of impressions of its cities, landscapes and peoples. Accordingly, the Islamic Mediterranean, the desert as transnational contact zone, and both commercial and cultural traffic are essential ingredients in this research project. Further research on Europeans travelling in Ottoman lands may bring to the fore how the histories of Europe and the Middle East are inextricably intertwined, especially in an age in which many politicians and public intellectuals seem to believe the contrary.

Bibliography