



2nd Levantine Heritage Foundation Zoom lecture gathering with guest speaker Diana Darke
16 December 2020, 5pm (UK time)

Stealing from the Saracens: How Islamic Architecture shaped Europe

Against a backdrop of Islamophobia, Europeans are increasingly airbrushing from history their cultural debt to the Muslim world. But this legacy lives on in some of Europe's most recognisable buildings, from Notre-Dame Cathedral to the Houses of Parliament.

This comprehensively illustrated [book](#) reveals the Arab and Islamic roots of Europe's architectural heritage, tracing ideas and styles from vibrant Middle Eastern centres like Damascus, Baghdad and Cairo, via Muslim Spain, Venice and Sicily into Europe. Darke describes how medieval crusaders, pilgrims and merchants encountered Arab Muslim culture on their way to the Holy Land; and explores more recent artistic interaction between Ottoman and Western cultures, including Sir Christopher Wren's inspirations in the 'Saracen' style of Gothic architecture.

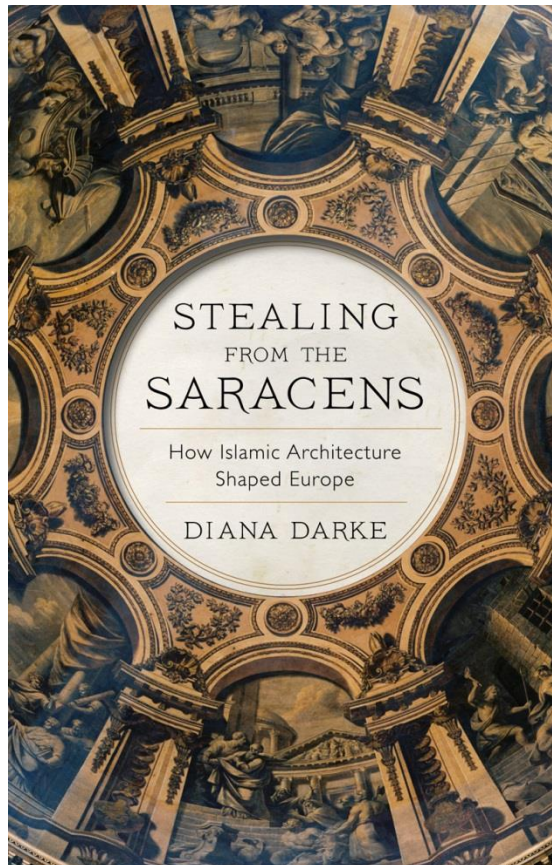
Reviews:

An exhilarating, meticulously researched book that sheds light on centuries of borrowing, tracing the roots of Europe's major buildings.' — The Guardian

'This persuasive study argues that northern Europe's greatest gothic buildings are deeply indebted to the Arab world ... [it is] a useful reminder of the interconnectedness of civilisation.' — The Observer

'An extraordinarily ambitious work, part cri de coeur and part textbook on Islamic architecture and its influence on the West.' — Times Literary Supplement

'Intriguing and eye-opening.' — Asian Review of Books.



Book cover



Diana Darke is an Arabist and cultural expert who has lived and worked in the Middle East for over thirty years with both governmental and commercial sectors. She is the author of *The Merchant of Syria: A History of Survival and My House in Damascus: An Inside View of the Syrian Crisis*. She holds degrees in Arabic from Oxford and Islamic Art & Archaeology from SOAS, London. She tweets as @dianadarke.

The book is available at a 25% discount direct from the [publishers' website](#), using the code SARACENS25. UK postage is free, to Europe is £5 and to the rest of the world £7.50.

Booking essential: <https://diana-darke-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk>

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