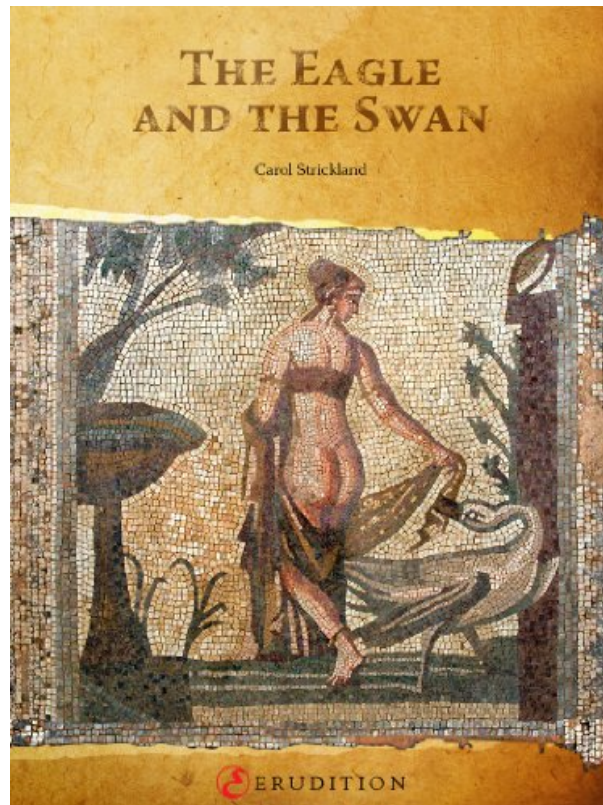


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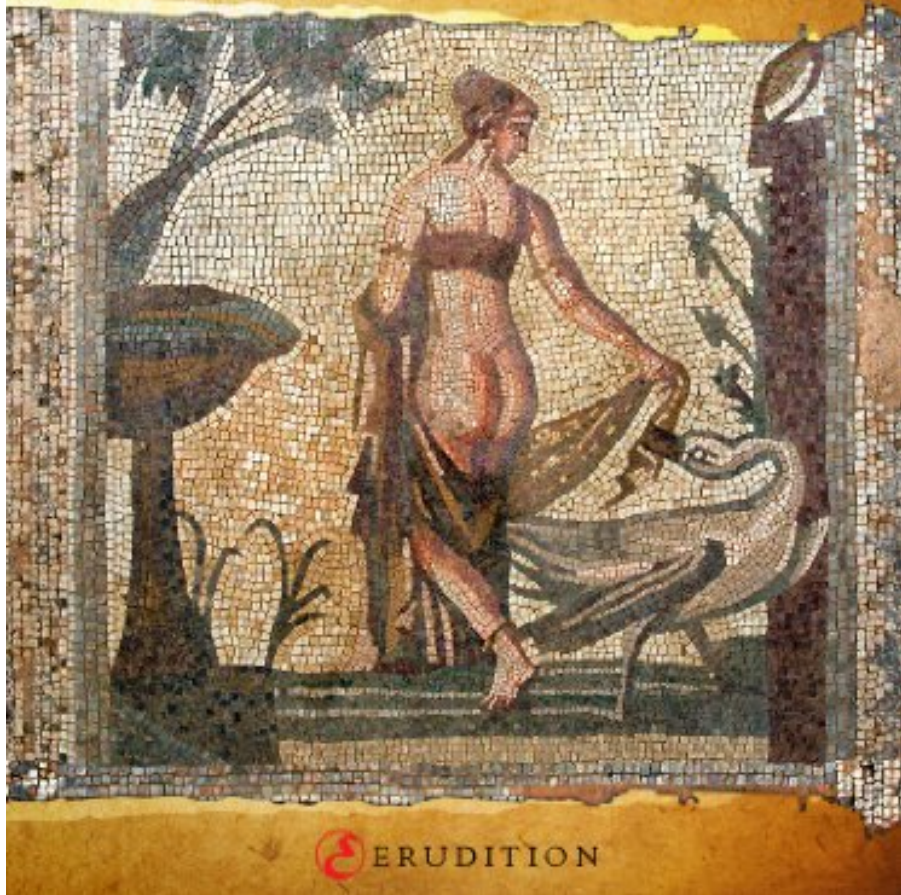


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Within a manuscript that has not been read for a millennium and a half, there are secrets that will rewrite the history of an Empire...

It is AD 518 in Constantinople at the heart of the Byzantine Empire. A beautiful courtesan dances in the Imperial Palaces; stirring hearts, rousing desires, and changing the course of history indelibly. Theodora was a circus performer and daughter of the bear-keeper, until she caught the eye of a clever young military officer. The soldier and the swan dancer set out on a treacherous path to power that would lead all the way to the throne. The events that ensue, amid the struggles and politics of a society in flux, will leave a city in smouldering ruins.

Free Enhanced Preview

Visit www.theeagleandtheswan.com/readers-club for a free enhanced preview of Part One of The Eagle and the Swan. The enhanced edition unites text, context and subtext with art, design elements and in-depth info for a visual and cultural history of the Golden Age of Byzantium. It provides an enticing preview for prospective readers as well as an illustrated catalogue for the complete story.

Praise for The Eagle and the Swan:

“A fascinating time in Byzantium made more fascinating by Strickland’s compelling storytelling.”

“I look forward to reading much more about Theodora and her climb from the bottom of the ladder to its top rungs. Thank you to Carol Strickland for uncovering her history and making her come so vividly to life.”

“How wonderful to be able to read about brilliant and beautiful women in history who had the courage of their convictions. Thank you Mrs. Strickland!”

“This is a great read and story. Characters are fully realised and the prose is fluid and moves you along with lovely metaphors and similes. Ms Strickland is on top of her game!”

About the Author

Carol Strickland is an author, screenwriter and regular correspondent on art, architecture and cultural topics for various publications such as The Christian Science Monitor, New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, The Nation, Art in America and Art & Antiques. She is the author of the acclaimed art history book The Annotated Mona Lisa: A Crash Course in the History of Art from Prehistoric to Post-Modern, which sold over 400,000 copies. She has a home on Long Island in New York.

- Sales Rank: #914180 in eBooks
- Published on: 2013-11-07
- Released on: 2013-11-07

- Format: Kindle eBook

Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

A beautiful literary Renaissance of the Byzantine Empire

By Wolf-Dieter Schleuning

Since Gibbon's "Fall of the Roman Empire" Byzantium has suffered from a bad reputation. It is primarily remembered for subtle theological disputes, sometimes concerning only one letter (Homoousios vs. Homoiousios in the controversy about the human and divine nature of Christ) or one word ("filioque" the Western addition to the Nicene creed considered anathema by the Orthodox). Nevertheless the results of these disputes are a hallmark of Christianity even today. In German, the term Byzantine is a paraphrase of bizarre court rituals like the obligatory proskynesis in front of the emperor that survives in the Muslim prayer tradition. However, the Byzantine or late Eastern Roman Empire had also a glamorous side which Carol Strickland brings back to life in her historical novel "The Eagle and the Swan ". The heroine and main character is Theodora, the daughter of a circus bear keeper who started her career as a strip dancer and prostitute and ended up as Empress and one of the most influential women of late antiquity. Theodora is credited for important social reforms that improved the life of the poor and had a mitigating influence on the absurd theological disputes that split the empire. The novel, constructed as a story within a story in the tradition of Chaucer and Boccaccio, is full of excitement and crackling eroticism, painting a vivid picture of the time in which the Roman Empire under Theodora's husband Justinian briefly rose to old grandeur after the Goths in Italy and the Vandals in Africa had been defeated by his generals Belisarius and Narses. In Theodora's times Constantinople was the biggest city in the world, with trade relations reaching from China to Scandinavia. The church of Haghia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) was the world's largest building. The palace guard consisted of Vikings (Varaegians) that had migrated to Constantinople from Scandinavia through today's Russia (a runic graffiti can still be seen today in the Haghia Sophia). Hence Carol Strickland's novel is not only highly entertaining but also profoundly erudite and offers the reader a thrilling lesson in history. Some historic novels have become world bestsellers, e.g. "Sinuhe the Egyptian" by Mika Waltari or I Claudius, Emperor and God by Robert Graves. In my mind Carol Strickland's work has a similar potential.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

A true page-turner!

By Fran Zak

When I first saw the Amazon entry for "The Eagle and the Swan," I was intrigued with the idea of a novel which takes place in the 6th Century in a far off land with a little-known history. Once I started it, I couldn't stop. I can't recommend it highly enough; it's a real page turner. Carol Strickland's tale of 6th Century love, lust, court intrigue, and the rise to power and position of two extraordinary commoners, is riveting. Theodora was a very early and admirable feminist: capable, smart, shrewd, savvy, and...beautiful as well. She had it all. Strickland depicts Theodora, as well as Justinian, as complex, multi-faceted characters who prevail in a highly charged political context.

I am also impressed by this "new face of publishing," a digital book with links to all sorts of related materials. Reading the material on or from the links provides the reader with a fuller and richer 'picture' and understanding of the text. The links also explain and clarify much of the language and settings of the book. The interactive book; what a great idea; a very "today" departure from traditional publishing in our tech-driven world. Readers of "The Eagle and the Swan" are in for a treat; try it; you'll be glad you did.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

EAGLE AND THE SWAN IS VERY GOOD!

By Isaac Dye

It's a book rife with detail and passion. If you like historical fiction this book hits on all cylinders. The level of detail in terms of prose and historical relevance is engaging. And THEN the plot is what's moving. The love and lust combined with a compelling story, taking on universal themes from a cross section of history, makes for a gripping work. Although I might lean more towards fantasy and science fiction, this book engaged me from a more thoughtful and deliberate perspective, focusing on the power of desire and the sometimes overwhelming force of human relationships. I really, really enjoyed the book.

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