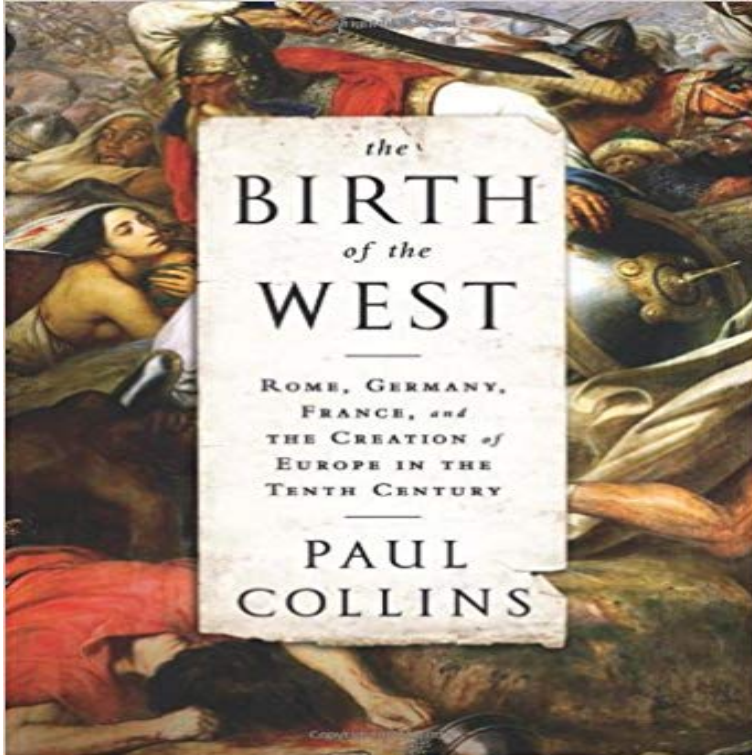


The Birth of the West: Rome, Germany, France, and the Creation of Europe in the Tenth Century



Stimulating, encyclopedic, and often downright funny, this is a book worth remembering. Stephen OShea, *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Canada) A lively, full-to-bursting history of the turbulent tenth century in Europe. Collins presents chaotic upheaval across Europe in an organized and riveting fashion. Kirkus (starred review) The tenth century dawned in violence and disorder. Charlemagne's empire was in ruins, most of Spain had been claimed by Moorish invaders, and even the papacy in Rome was embroiled in petty, provincial conflicts. The stability once provided by Imperial Rome had dissolved, leaving a perilous landscape behind. Yet the story of the tenth century is the story of our culture's birth. This was the moment that civilization emerged from the Dark Ages into the light of day. *The Birth of the West* tells the story of a transformation from chaos to order, exploring the alien landscape of Europe in transition. It thoroughly renovates older conceptions of feudalism and what medieval life was actually like. The result is a wholly-new vision of how civilization sprang from the unlikeliest of origins, and proof that our tenth-century ancestors are not as remote as we might think. *The Birth of the West* is a re-making of what we think we know about the end of the Dark Ages. It is also the gate to the utterly unexpected cosmos of European forebears. The characters who people *The Birth of the West* are as familiar as relatives as indeed they are groping their way to a cohesive Western culture. *The Birth of the West* is thus the tale of our birth, and Collins tells it with a narrative grace and elegance which will make readers cherish it. Thomas Keneally, author of *Schindler's Ark*

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