



The Last Apocalypse: Europe at the Year 1000 A.D.

James Reston Jr.

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Enter the world of 1000 A.D., when Vikings, Moors, and barbarians battled kings and popes for the fate of Europe.


As the millennium approached, Europeans feared the world would end. The old order was crumbling, and terrifying and confusing new ideas were gaining hold in the populace. Random and horrific violence seemed to sprout everywhere without warning, and without apparent remedy. And, in fact, when the millennium arrived the apocalypse did take place; a world did end, and a new world arose from the ruins.

In 950, Ireland, England, and France were helpless against the ravages of the seagoing Vikings; the fierce and strange Hungarian Magyars laid waste to Germany and Italy; the legions of the Moors ruled Spain and threatened the remnants of Charlemagne's vast domain. The papacy was corrupt and decadent, overshadowed by glorious Byzantium. Yet a mere fifty years later, the gods of the Vikings were dethroned, the shamans of the Magyars were massacred, the magnificent Moorish caliphate disintegrated: The sign of the cross held sway from Spain in the West to Russia in the East.

James Reston, Jr.'s enthralling saga of how the Christian kingdoms converted, conquered, and slaughtered their way to dominance brings to life unforgettable historical characters who embodied the struggle for the soul of Europe. From the righteous fury of the Viking queen Sigrid the Strong-Minded, who burned unwanted suitors alive; to the brilliant but too-cunning Moor Al-Mansor the Illustrious Victor; to the aptly named English king Ethelred the Unready; to the abiding genius of the age, Pope Sylvester II--warrior-kings and concubine empresses, maniacal warriors and religious zealots, bring this stirring period to life.

The Last Apocalypse is a book rich in personal historical detail, flavored with the nearly magical sensibility of an apocalyptic age.

James Reston, Jr., is the author of ten previous books, including *Galileo: A Life* and *Sherman's March and Vietnam*. He has written for *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *Vanity Fair*, *Time*, *Rolling Stone*, and many other publications. His television work includes three "Frontline" documentaries, including "Eighty-Eight Seconds in Greensboro." The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars provided him with a Visiting Fellowship during the course of his work on this book. Reston lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

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