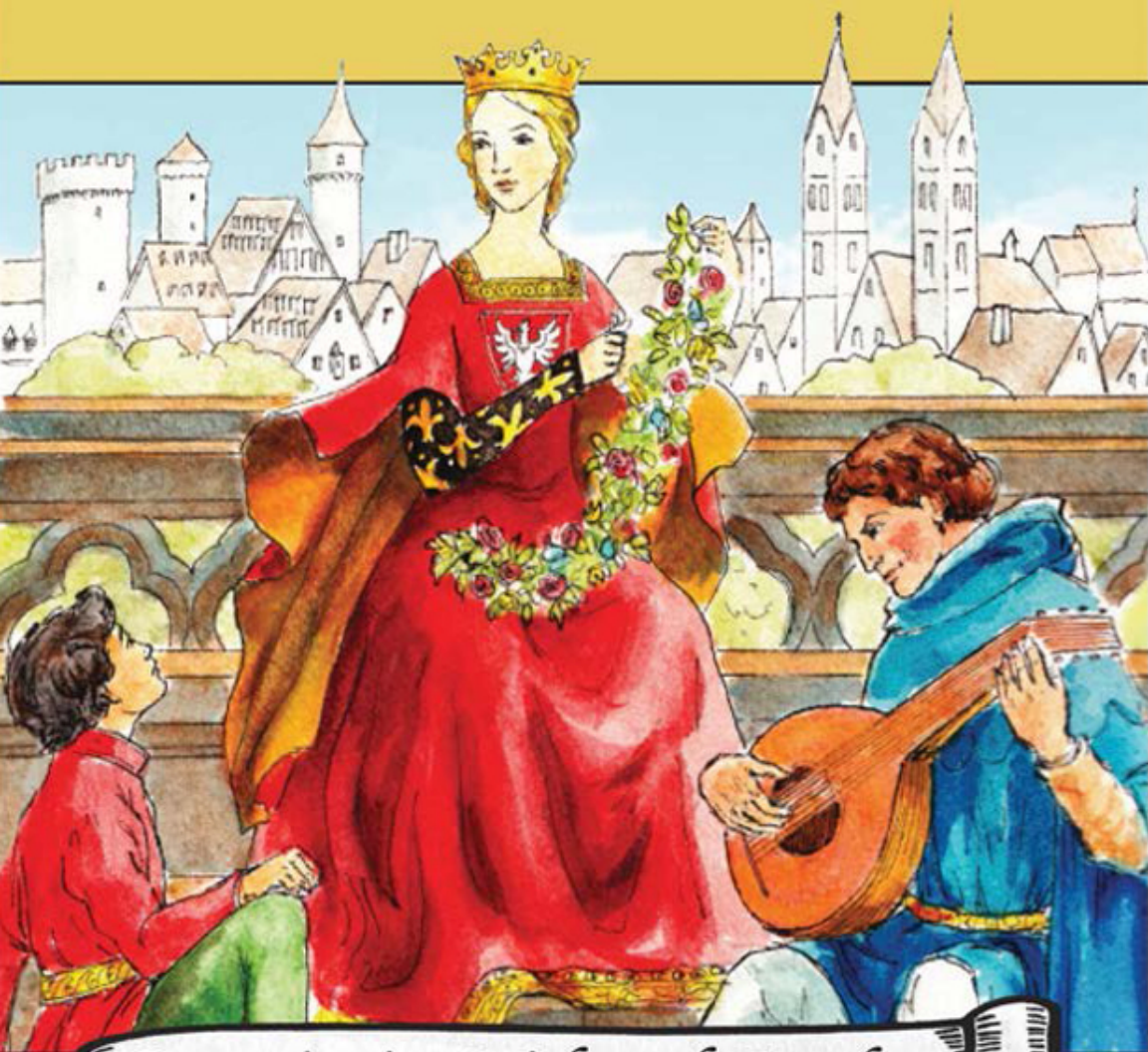


So Young a Queen

Jadwiga of Poland



Portraits in Faith and Freedom

Lois Mills

So Young a Queen



Jadwiga of Poland

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Portraits in Faith and Freedom

SET 2: POLISH ADVOCATES OF HOPE AND NATIONHOOD

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Statement on Portraits in Faith and Freedom

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Web Resources

To access printable maps, a timeline, and pertinent internet links, visit <https://www.bethlehembooks.com/so-young-queen-jadwiga-poland-819>

To My Sister
CAROL MILLS

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Preface

“Jadwiga,” is the Polish form of “Hedwig.” Namesake of St. Hedwig of Silesia (and Bavaria) she was born in Buda, Hungary, the daughter of King Louis I of Hungary and Elizabeth of Bosnia. Jadwiga’s birth date is recorded variously as 1373 or 1374. Her coronation took place in 1384, her royal wedding in 1386.

Pronunciation Guide

Pronouncing a Few Names and Places in This Book

Jadwiga = Yahd VEE gah

Jagiello = Yag YELLO

Krakow = KRAK ow

Wawel Castle and Cathedral = VAH vel

In Appreciation

I am happy to record my gratitude to all the friends in this country and in Poland who have generously helped in the preparation of this book.

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1. The Betrothal

THE PRINCESS JADWIGA had often traveled from one castle to another with her father, King Louis the Great of Hungary, and her beautiful mother, Queen Elizabeth. But she had never gone on a journey as important as the one which was to begin on this summer morning in the year 1378. For this journey was to end, not in another of the twenty castles scattered over her father's vast realm, but in the walled city of Hainburg, a hill town on the border between Hungary and Austria. Here she would meet Prince William of Austria to whom she had been promised in marriage, and their betrothal ceremony would be as much like a real wedding as it could be, with promises of faithfulness, love, and loyalty.

The sun was mounting in the sky when at last the long procession wound out of the courtyard onto the flower-fringed road. The royal ladies, Queen Elizabeth and the mother of King Louis, who was called Queen Mother Elizabeth, rode in the golden Coach of State with the young princesses, Jadwiga and her sister Mary. King Louis rode beside them on a superb war horse. His silk robe blew in the morning wind and displayed the red and white colors of Hungary. His coat of mail shone like silver.

Jadwiga and Mary leaned from the window of the coach to admire the regal figure of their father. They had to look up to see his face beneath his shining helmet from which ostrich plumes waved like pennants as his horse stepped along at a spirited pace.

The two princesses would always remember that day.

Following the coach were many knights who had shared the battles of King Louis and now had come from distant lands to honor him and his family. With them came squires and pages in suits of silk and velvet matching the chosen colors of the knight they served.

As they rode westward along the highway from the Hungarian capital, Buda, another royal retinue rode east from the Austrian capital, Vienna. This one was led by the Archduke Leopold, ruler

of Austria and father of Prince William. It rivaled the procession of the Hungarians in numbers and in costly apparel. Bishops wearing rich vestments of purple and scarlet, knights in armor inlaid with silver and with gold, monks in robes of blue and brown and black, all rode together toward the hill town, bright with the banners of two kingdoms.

They were coming these great and noble ones, to witness the betrothal of two children: Princess Jadwiga of Hungary and Prince William of Austria.

In these days of many wars, the best way that had been found to keep peace between neighboring countries was to promise their young princes and princesses in marriage to each other.

And a union of Austria and Hungary was a matter of great importance. The blue waters of the Danube which washed the shores of the two countries, separating one from the other, would some day flow through the midst of one nation, strong enough to withstand both Turks and Tartars. One nation over which Jadwiga and William should rule together. This united realm was the dream of King Louis—this was the ambition of the Archduke Leopold.

A pact such as this must be made secure by every means. Princes and nobles in each country had signed the parchment scroll bearing the terms of the agreement. The Pope in Rome had approved it. The great wax seals of Austria and Hungary had been affixed. Now to make sure the pact could never be broken, the seal of the Church would be added in the betrothal ceremony.

All day long the citizens of Hainburg had been watching the hill road, waiting for the coming of King Louis and his family. The square in the center of the city was so crowded that no one could move to right or left unless his neighbors moved with him.

Cries of joy arose when in the late afternoon the people saw Jadwiga riding like a fairy princess in her gilded coach. Jadwiga was glad to see their happiness, for she was happy too. She had been riding all day in the Coach of State. She was a happy princess, yes, but she was also a tired little girl, for with all its beauty, the gold coach had no springs!

“God save the King! God save the Queen! God bless the sweet Princess Jadwiga! May she live in peace!” shouted the people the next day as the princess rode through the streets with her father and mother. When she entered the Cathedral, wearing a long

white dress like a bride's, everyone exclaimed at her beauty. Her wavy hair fell below her shoulders, and as she walked slowly down the long aisle her little golden crown shone in the light from the hundreds of candles which glowed like stars in the gray stone church.

Jadwiga felt too shy to look at the slender young prince who knelt with her before the altar. She understood very little of the long ceremony. When the Archbishop Dimitri placed her small hand in William's and blessed them, she did not understand why the response rolled like thunder from every corner of the Cathedral.

"Amen, amen!" Hungarians and Austrians shouted together. This union of two young lives meant to them the joining of the fate of two nations.

But Jadwiga did understand that some day she and this young prince would have a home together. She closed her eyes and prayed in her heart that it might be happy, as happy as her own, which was the home of the most loving royal family in Europe.

When the service ended, a wonderful banquet was served in the Castle of Hainburg. The little princess had her first chance to really look at William, for they sat together. She thought he was handsome—handsomer than any of the pages at her father's court. He wore a velvet suit and cape and a small sword which was beautifully jeweled. She saw how proudly he fingered it, so she asked, "Is it real?"

"Yes," he replied. "My father had it made for me in Damascus. When I am grown I'll have a large one like his. Then I can fight the heathen as my father does. My father is very brave."

"My father is brave too," Jadwiga said quickly. "He fought the Turks many times. He even went to fight the heathen, Jagiello."

King Louis was listening quietly as the children talked, for he wanted them to become acquainted. But when he heard the name Jagiello he struck the table with his fist and cried out, "Jagiello, that Scourge of the North! Can no man convert this heathen?"

"Jagiello." The name was repeated down the long table until the farthest knight touched his sword.

William put his hand to his sword, too, and said confidently, "When I am a man I'll go to fight him. I'll take my knights and make a Christian of him, sir."