**In Lord Poprad’s Valley**

**Theme:** the Poprad River valley offers a wealth of landscapes, cultures, flavours, and active sightseeing: quests. Finding a new treasure apart, the itinerary along the Poprad River opens a gateway to multiple pedestrian (hiking) quests.

**Expedition start line:** near lime trees in the Stary Sącz market square. GPS co-ordinates: 49.563913, 20.635633

The quest includes QR codes useful in finding and downloading other pedestrian (hiking) quests with a focus on cities, villages and towns on your route. We’d like to encourage Explorers to plan their travels to include one or more hiking quests – inspiring participants to leave their cars and learn more about at least one chosen location. Completing other quests is not essential to completing the motorised (driving) quest.

*Safety requirement*: should your driver decide to join the game, make sure he/she reads the relevant verse(s) in advance, or appoints a designated passenger narrator.

Hello and welcome, my Dear Explorer.

Am so happy to be joining you as a storer

of memories, having been here for ages, I swear:

I remember Sącz receiving the Order of Saint Clare.

Saint Kinga, a princess, was the founder of the town.

Poor Clares helped the location go down

In history as one of the first towns in Poland,

the princess settling here, having given her soul and

life to the order. Now: the tallest house in the square

holds your first clue. And a restaurant’s there!

Its name? ***MARYSIEŃKA*** (emblem on the balcony). E-13

Look around for buildings with great history

Under wooden roofs. One catches the eye

With white walls and two storeys. You can drop by:

***MUZEUM REGIONALNE*** (Regional Museum) reads the sign. E-7, R-11, N-23

In the background – a spire of the local shrine:

the Poor Clares’ nunnery, a nearby wooden gate

a symbol of Hungarian-Polish friendship great,

as Kinga was Hungarian. Now back to your route!

Jana Sobieskiego is the street that you’ll take out

of the town. Take past the railway crossing a right,

Mount Radziejowa quite a wondrous sight.

You’re leaving Stary Sącz, another clue you’re owed!

The next town? ***BARCICE DOLNE***, stretched along the road. B-12, O-22

I, the River, am flowing between two mountains here,

though Jaworzyna Krynicka’s hidden by houses, I fear.

At the entrance to Barcice – a Great War cemetery,

graves of many victims, who have here been buried.

To the right – a former site of a church that burned down,

priceless altars saved by people of the town.

Barcice is also famous for annual Balkan sounds –

the *Pannonica* Festival a treat for folk music hounds!

Beyond Barcice I am immediately to your left.

Keep looking there: if sufficiently deft,

you’ll see a viewing platform that they call *“the Snail”*,

a wind turbine ahead – this without fail.

Black sheep may be spotted on your driving quest,

these lands are their home. Black sheep are the best!

Before Makowica you’ll need to take a right.

A hilltop castle should soon come into sight.

In Jagiellonian times, here in Rytro town,

Starosts ruled the lands on behalf of the Crown.

Park behind the railway station, worth a quick peek.

All stations in my valley have glorious physique.

Pass the station on foot: an orange map’s on your quest.

Find ***SZCZAWNICA***-Zdrój, the town most to the west. C-21, N-4

You can stay in Rytro in hiking quest mode –

details are available under QR codes.

Take the main road south once back in the car.

I am to your left, no need to look far.

Drive along my bank, find the Młodów station

and a lay-by to your right, for further narration.

Look at the monument. The story is fraught

with wartime and death. How many Poles were shot

right here? ***28*** – the first number on the plaque.

Spell it: twenty-***EIGHT***. Now you’ll need to track H-19

The digit *“1”* across the site. Look for it in dates.

What’s the count? ***15***. Found them all? That’s great.

A cheerier clue awaits, the local Hollywood!

White letters on the slope – gaze around, you should

Spot it soon. *“Sunny Slope”*, or: ***SŁONECZNY STOK*** C-26, O-1

in Polish. Now, if you feel like a walk

in land of mineral water, Saint Kinga’s Spring its mark –

watch for a board depicting the Poprad Landscape Park:

***POPRADZKI*** Park Krajobrazowy – white letters on red. P-2, I-15

Drive on. Beyond a graveyard – look straight ahead,

and Mount Kicarz, a giant’s sleeping knoll behold!

Such are its origins, in ancient legends told.

As you enter Piwniczna-Zdrój, the giant sleeps on.

Find the market square and rest here, whereupon

a king will welcome you at a well with a date

beneath him. Look closely: ***1348***.

Walk around the well, watching for guild signs:

Smiths (***KOWALE***) and furriers (***KUŚNIERZE***) have been aligned O-9, E-20

near the eagle. The info board close by is your next quest thing,

the second word – ***KAZIMIERZ*** – reveals the name of the king I-25, E-3

who welcomed you to town. He founded it, you know.

The next riddle is Italian, and it goes to show

that the ice-cream parlour in the market square

is named after Florence. ***FLORENCJA***. Right there. N-16

I hope you’re interested in a local hiking quest.

If in no particular hurry, do visit the best

place for local hints that all travellers love:

the Tourist Information Office. Take a look at gloves

(*“catch gloves”*) featured on the domestic UNESCO list

of intangible cultural heritage. They shouldn’t be missed.

And back to the main road. From the bridge take a look:

you may see some rafters – of rivers kings, and brooks.

I will lead you now to the next roundabout.

Pull over to the lay-by, words you need to scout.

Look at the road sign board, rectangular and green.

The word ***ZDRÓJ*** (or “spring”) twice here can be seen. D-8

*Pierogi* in Łomnica are said to be the best,

hailed at the local festival. There also is a quest

you can follow along a mineral springs route.

Now take the first exit off the roundabout.

Am still here next to you – half-Slovak, half-Pole.

My ever-sharper twists and turns can really take a toll

on the senses. Wierchomla will be your nearest stop.

Many skiers and tourists are certain it’s tops,

and cannot be matched. Turn at the parking lot.

You may be amused by the knowledge and thought

that the local orthodox church is choc-full of bats,

rarest in Europe. Once you’ve pondered that,

drop by the shepherds hut. It affords a great view

of the Tatras, if skies vibrant and clouds are but few.

Back to the main road. There’s a beast at the station.

Count its legs: ***6***. For further narration

You’ll need to pass Zubrzyk. There’s an orthodox church

built by the Lemkos. In vain might you search

for original wood. Now it’s all brick.

Żegiestów’s ahead, with its footbridge quick

across the border. ***ŻEGIESTÓW***-Zdrój is next. T-5

A lay-by on the right. To your left, look for text:

***DOM ZDROJOWY*** (Spa House) – on the white building a sign. O-10, D-17

Now for the roof of a bus stop for a local line,

the coat of arms with a date: ***1846***.

Once you have found it, you’ll need to fix

your gaze on the nearby information board,

The first number (***170***) the age of the place, and your score

for the next riddle. We’ll now go to the *“Spades”*,

the shape of my turns and meanders splayed.

One Polish, one Slovakian. You will see them soon.

At the fork in the road, a floral sculpture pruned

points to an education path and a board in green.

The third word? ***ŁOPATA*** – spade. And birds can be seen! T-27

How many? **5**. Spell it: ***FIVE***. Look at number fifteen, V-24

and the first word: ***HISTORIA***. A tree story means H-6, T-18

that the end of the educational path is quite near.

Just like your Treasure! Now back to what’s here:

A historical railway tunnel is beneath your feet.

Its history brutal, its beauty hard to beat.

Leading to Andrzejówka, it now has but one track.

That’s your direction too. Watch out for back-to-back

Orthodox churches. There are many on the way,

before you reach Muszyna, a lovely place to stay,

a seat of Cracow bishops’ starosts for many centuries.

To the right – a leisure district, its name pure wizardry:

*Zapopradzie* – behind the Poprad. You are on the bridge

across Muszynka River. This means that in a smidge

the starosts’ courtly manor will be straight ahead.

Your way to the market square is easy, enough said:

A left at the traffic lights, then take the first right.

Park the car. That’s the square, and a pillory comes to sight,

a place of penance. On the plaque – what’s the fifth last word?

***CHŁOSTA*** – flogging! For centuries unheard. H-14

Add all numbers from the trail for your final toll;

find the Treasure in the dungeon in the nearby town hall.

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***PASSWORD*: OPEN THE DOOR BEHIND THE CONVICT**

**3418** (28+15+1348+6+1846+170+5)