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## The horses had marble mangers...

**It is worth visiting the town of Opatów, formerly called Żmigród. It was an important point of the medieval trade routes linking the Black Sea, Hungary, Ruthenia and Northern Europe. According to the chronicler, Jan Długosz, the first Polish property of the Templars' Order was established in Opatów by Duke Henryk Sandomierski.**

It can be seen in the Opatów coat of arms, in which the letter "T" is an important element. "T" is a first letter of the name of the Templars' Order.

The monuments of Opatów are impressive and mysterious, including Saint Martin's Collegiate, the Warsaw Gate with the remnants of the defensive wall, the town hall, the Bernardine Monastery, and an underground route running under the market square.

When exploring the most interesting places of the Świętokrzyskie region it is impossible to overlook Krzyżtopór Castle. A monumental structure called the “palazzo in fortezza” is an example of the seventeenth-century constructors’ solution combining an elegance of residence, owned by the mighty Ossoliński gens, with a defence direction. The name of the castle is related to a cross (Polish: krzyż) - - the Christian religious symbol, and an axe (Polish: topór) - the owner’s family’s coat of arms. The castle was modelled on the idea of a calendar. The palace had 365 windows - a number corresponding to the number of days in a year; 52 chambers - corresponding to the number of weeks; 12 ballrooms that were dedicated to different months; 4 towers that represented the 4 seasons. The guests admired the luxury of this stately castle. The horses in the stables had marble mangers and could see themselves in crystal mirrors. The ceiling in one of the ballrooms was an aquarium, in which there were exotic fish. Nowadays, the ruins of Krzyżtopór castle come alive during the numerous knightly tournaments which take place there.