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## Stopnica - a Royal Town

The place famous for a historic city church, it also used to be one of the Royal Burghs. The beginnings of Stopnica date back to the turn of the 11th and 12th century.

The historians classify it as one of the oldest sites in the area of Sandomierz. It is said that king Bolesław Wstydlivy (Bolesław V the Chaste) had a mansion here in the 13th C. In 1360, king Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir III the Great) gave Stopnica municipal rights, he was also the founder of a stone castle which, according to the 15th C. documents of Jan Długosz, was built around 1350. On the break of the 14th and 15th C. the Stopnica castle hosted Polish

monarchs and used to be a residence for the magistrate court of the Sandomierz Voivodeship.

During the Swedish Deluge, the city was almost entirely burnt down, while the later invasion of Rakoczy in 1657 completed its damage. In 1787, king Stanisław August Poniatowski, the last king of Poland, stayed here. In the 19th century Stopnica was a residence of the district, famous for the production of cloth, as well as cattle and poultry trade. Unfortunately, in 1869 it lost the municipal rights. It has also greatly suffered during WW II, being devastated twice - once in 1939, and next in 1944.

Nowadays, the tourists can still admire a gothic church, built in 1362, which belongs to the series of atonement sanctuaries of king Kazimierz Wielki (Casimir the Great). It is made of dressed freestone and has a rectangular corpus, two pillars, and a polygonal presbytery. There are also two chapels attached to the temple: one late-gothic and one early-baroque. Despite the severe damages it underwent during World War II, the whole church preserved its original outlook. The inside is especially remarkable for the originally preserved ribs, keystones and corbels, additionally, there are some interesting epitaphs and murals. It is definitely worth to visit this small town to see this temple.