

Jarosław ירוסלב

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Name in Polish: Jarosław**Name in German:** Jaroslau**Name in Ukrainian:** Yaroslav**Name in Hebrew:** ירוסלב**Name in Yiddish:** (Yareslov) יאַרעסלאָוו

Population Data: Year	General Population	Jewish Population
1872	(?)	More Than 450
1880	11422	4474
1890	18065	4820

1900	22660	5705
1910	23965	6154
1921	19973	6577
1931	22195	6272

External links: [Yaroslav Yizkor Book](#)
[Yaroslav in JewishGen](#)

Remarks:

Jarosław is located on the western bank of the San River, one of the tributaries of the Vistula River, on the road between Lvov and Krakow, about 100 km. west of Lvov and 25 km. north of Przemyśl. We do not have exact information about the year in which the city was founded, but its name would appear to be connected to that of the Russian prince Yaroslav "the Wise" (1019-1054). During the 12th and 13th centuries the Russians and the Poles fought for control of the Przemyśl region, a struggle that concluded in 1340 following the conquests of the Polish king Kazimierz III the Great, who bestowed local city rights on Jarosław, and even annexed further territories to it. Between the years 1372 and 1378 the city was granted Magdeburg city rights, which greatly aided its development. During the 15th-16th centuries, the city suffered from invasions of the Vlachs and the Tatars, and in 1502 the city was almost completely destroyed. Despite this, Jarosław very quickly became an economic center, with the large trade fairs held in the city attracting merchants from many different countries, from Spain in the west to Persia in the east. The city's geographical location, on a central thoroughfare and on the banks of the San, effected the passage of merchandise through the city. Barge construction businesses developed in the city for the transportations of merchandise and produce to the fairs in Danzig (Gdańsk), as well as businesses for the import of merchandise from Danzig. At the beginning of the 17th century, the city had approximately 3,000 inhabitants, but during city fairs about 30,000 merchants would converge there. This fact contributed to the continued economic flourishing of the city until the second half of the 17th century, despite many disasters the city sustained throughout the century: A number of fires that destroyed significant amounts of property and killed many people, and epidemics that took many lives. In 1631 there were around 11, or perhaps even 20 professional unions in about 24 different fields, and many artisanal workshops. Alongside this, however, beginning in the second half of the 17th century, Cossack attacks on the city and invasions by the Swedes and Hungarians inflicted significant damage on the city and led to a continuous decline in its economic standing.

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The Austrian conquest of Galicia in 1772 was injurious to Jarosław, which was cut off from its commercial ties with the western regions of Poland, which were transferred into Prussian hands. As a result, merchants began leaving the city. At the beginning of the 19th century, however, came a turning point in the city's history, with its designation as a free city and the district capital. During this period, the footwear industry developed in the city, and in a census from 1881 about 400 shoemakers and 300 suppliers of the industry were counted. In addition, from 1867 to the outbreak of the First World War, the city was a site of consistent, significant infrastructural work: Among other projects, yards and streets were straightened out, and in 1900 gas lighting was installed throughout the city. The train track built to connect Krakow and Przemyśl passed through Jarosław.

With the outbreak of the war, the San became a battlefield between the Austrian and Russian armies, and the city passed back and forth twice between the combatant sides. These transfers of power obviously had a ruinous effects on the remaining population of the city, and brought about much destruction.

The Jews of Jarosław

We know of Jews living in Jarosław as early as 1464, but Jewish settlement in the city did not develop at that point, and in 1561 there were only two Jews residing in the city. Why did Jewish settlement in the city not develop further at this time? It is difficult to know. But in 1571 the owner of the city determined that no Jews would be allowed to settle in the city beyond the existing two families. This type of prohibition was enacted in various cities in Poland during this time, but it was particularly well enforced in Jarosław, and even King John Sobieski, who was known for his tolerant attitude toward the Jews, renewed the city's rights to limit its Jewish inhabitants in 1676. In 1608, Rabbi Meir of Lublin (the Maharam) testified that there were no Torah scrolls or synagogue in Jarosław, and that a scroll was therefore brought in from Przemyśl to serve the Council of the Four Lands that convened at a trade fair in the city. Jews settled primarily in the city suburbs, and a synagogue and Jewish cemetery were built in the Ukrainian suburb. Despite the prohibition, in 1613 there were 5 Jews residing in Jarosław, and mid-century we find mention of several Jewish names in various documents. There Jews are listed as leasers of wheat mills, tax officials and tariff collectors, and a number of Jewish artisans were already organized in professional guilds similar in structure to the Christian guilds, from which Jews were prohibited.

The Jewish community of Jarosław was under the jurisdiction of the Przemyśl community beginning in 1638, and the construction of the first Jewish cemetery in Jarosław at the beginning of the 18th century was a significant step toward communal independence. Toward the end of the 17th century there were already several powerful Jewish merchants in the city, including those who traded in produce, food, leathers and textile, who maintained trade relations with the fairs of Danzig. In 1723, a Christian inhabitant of Jarosław testified that 'there is no Christian merchant among us; the Jews command the entire field of trade.' The development of the Jewish settlement during this period led also to serious friction between the Jewish population and their Christian neighbors. The Jews began purchasing homes, and a Jewish street was slowly formed. The Jewish-Christian tension reached a head in 1686, when Queen Maria Kazimiera was forced to personally intervene and resolve the dispute between the two sides, and in 1687 an edict limiting the geographic spread of the Jews in the city was publicized. It is probable that the synagogue was constructed during this period, but we have no positive proof of this.

Although Jarosław was also captured by cossaks during the Khmelnytsky Uprising of 1648-1649, the Jews in the city were not harmed. This, despite the fact that the city's Christian inhabitants were robbed, churches and monasteries were harmed, and the entire city was almost torched down. Legend has it that the Jews of Jarosław fled the city before the invasion and returned only after the danger had passed.

The Jewish community of Jarosław developed slowly, but despite this Jarosław and Lublin served as the central meeting sites of the Jewish leadership of Poland-Lithuania. Jarosław was awarded this status due to the large trade fairs held there during the summer months. During these meetings disputes between different communities were settled, the taxes required of each community determined, marriage contracts signed between the aristocrats of different communities, halakhic disputes settled, ordinances formulated, etc.

In 1737 the Jews of Jarosław were accused of murdering a young Christian woman for ritual purposes, and several Jews confessed to the murder after undergoing severe torture and were put to death cruelly. One of the accused took his own life during the examination process. Alongside this, we know of several instances of cooperation between the Jesuit order of Przemyśl and the Jews of Jarosław in trade and the import of wood to Western Europe around the middle of the 18th century.

The first rabbi of Jarosław was apparently R' Yeshaya b. Rabbi Nathan Neta of Krakow, who functioned as the rabbi of Jarosław until the 1680s, during the time that the city was under the authority of the Jewish community of Przemyśl, as was he himself. Until the 1780s several rabbis served as the community of Jarosław, among them Rabbi Zecharia Mendel Frankel, a student of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk and the author of the Hassidic behavioral pamphlet '*Darkhei Zedeq*.' With the Austrian conquest, the Jews of Jarosław were made fully independent of the Jewish leadership of Przemyśl, and were recognized as an independent community in 1774. In 1785 the Jews of surrounding villages were also placed under the jurisdiction of Jarosław. The first rabbi of the

independent community of Jarosław was Rabbi Moses Yehoshua Levi Horowitz, and four additional rabbis served the city before 1820, including two of Rabbi Zecharia Mendel's sons-in-law. In 1811, during the tenure of one of these sons-in-law, Rabbi Naftali Hirz Harif, the great synagogue of Jarosław, the first synagogue within the city limits, was built and inaugurated. Toward the end of the 18th century, Rabbi Jacob Meshulam Orenstein, author of '*Yeshu'ot Yacov*,' grew up in the city. Rabbi Jacob Meshulam was active in the city as a teacher until he was appointed the rabbi of Zhovkva, and later of Lvov.

Both the Hassidic and Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskala*) movements gained a foothold in Jarosław. Already in the middle of the 18th century two of the city's Jewish inhabitants – Rabbi Aharon Jaroslaver Togendhold and Rabbi Aharon Friedental – were personal friends and students of Moses Mendelssohn in Germany, and even took part in his '*Biur*' project of translating the bible into German. At the end of the century the two returned to Poland and took part in founding various institutions in the spirit of the Enlightenment in Galicia. At the beginning of the 19th century, the *maskil* Isaac Erter was active in Jarosław. Erter later became a teacher at Joseph Perl's school in Ternopil. Aryeh Lieb Kinderfreinder of Zamosc, a poet, was also active in Jarosław, and beginning in 1845 the Jewish community of the city was headed by Dr. Maurici Frankel, who was very active in spreading the Enlightenment amongst the community. In 1864, when the city's rabbi, Rabbi Isaac Jacob Horowitz, passed away, the *maskilim* in the city wished to appoint a rabbi of more 'progressive' orientation, who would sermonize in German and in the spirit of the Enlightenment. No successor was appointed until 1870, when Rabbi Samuel Waldberg was named the city's rabbi, but a dispute with leading figures in the community led to his dismissal a year later, and he was only reinstated following intervention by outside forces. Alongside all this, several personages of Hassidic orientation continued to thrive in Jarosław, such as Rabbi Simon Mariles (Jaroslaver) and Rabbi Mendel Hasid, both of whom were known as miracle workers and scholars, and religious scholars could be found even amongst the *maskilim* of the city, such as Rabbi Wolf Weiler, author of '*Binyamin Ze'ev Aharon*,' which was printed in three volumes in Jarosław and Przemyśl (in 1899, 1900 and 1903) and contained halakhic responsa and innovative Talmudic insights.

During the second half of the 19th century several dramatic events took place, effecting the Jewish community of Jarosław. On March 25, 1869, the Jews of Jarosław were attacked by a group of thugs, who rioted in the Jewish quarter until April 5th. Local authorities prevented the army from intervening, and it was only outside intervention that led to a suppression of the riots. At the same time, the mayor of the city sought to prevent the Jews from participating in public auctions in the city. The Jewish community of Jarosław continued to grow despite these events, and in 1872 the number of Jews in the city reached around 4,500. In that same year we know of the existence of a Jewish hospital, which was maintained from the proceeds of a Jewish bath house. In 1874, when Jews were first allowed to participate in municipal elections, 12 Jewish representatives were chosen, out of 36 total representatives. In 1876 the structure of the Jewish communal committee changed, and 16 committee members were chosen in democratic elections. By 1905 a *beit midrash*, old age home and modern school (named after Baron Hirsch) existed in the city.

Zionist activity in Jarosław began already at the beginning of the 1890s. A branch of the '*Kadima*' association, '*Eretz Israel*' association and the organization 'For the Settlement of Israel' ('*Chevrat Yishuv Eretz Israel*') were established in the city. By 1913 a large number of organizations and branches of different Zionist parties, such as '*ha-Shahar*,' '*Po'alei Zion*,' '*Ivriyah*,' '*ha-Mizrahi*,' etc., existed in the city, and in 1906 an association 'for the Revival of the Hebrew Language,' which organized courses in Hebrew and in Jewish subjects, was founded, followed in 1913 by the '*Kinor David*' association for musical tutelage.

First World War

During the First World War, the Jewish community of Jarosław maintained a charity fund for the needy of all backgrounds (not only Jewish), and in 1917 a Jewish orphanage was built in the city. With the end of the war, several anti-Semitic events took place in the city, including the shattering of windows in Jewish institutions and Jewishly-owned shops. The communal committee cooperated with different political parties to combat this phenomenon. In 1921 the community turned its attention to

the election of a city rabbi, after an almost 15-year period with no one filling this position. Rabbi Isaac Steinberg was elected to the position and served as Jarosław's rabbi until its destruction in the Second World War. During this period the institutions of Torah study flourished in the city, numbering several hundred students, and in 1923 a *yeshiva* was opened. Rabbi Steinberg also headed the charity association in the city, which provided interest-free loans for merchants and operators of booths in the city market. He also worked to help Jewish soldiers who served in the Polish army on the many army bases in the vicinity of Jarosław.

Financially speaking, the Jews of Jarosław continued to control a majority of the city's economic activity, with around 80% of the factories in the city under Jewish ownership or shared Jewish and Christian ownership. A number of sport associations also existed at this time: '*Maccabi*,' '*Dror*' and '*ha-Po'el*.' Between the two world wars, in 1928, about 16 Jewish representatives served on the city council, out of 48 total representatives, with two serving as deputy mayors. In the final election before the Second World War, in 1939, two Jewish parties ran for office, one headed by Rabbi Steinberg and including several Jewish communists and assimilated Jews.

The Second World War

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Jarosław was bombed and some of its Jewish inhabitants, mostly youngsters, fled east toward Soviet Union territory. After about a week, the Polish government representatives left the city, and robberies of municipal institutions and stores, primarily those owned by Jews, began. With the entry of the German army into the city, the Jews were forced to provide laborers for forced labor projects and the community and its leaders were forced to pay high ransoms, with about 50 of the community's members and leaders held hostage until the ransom was paid. The hostages were evicted eastward from the city as soon as the ransom was paid, with some murdered on their way to the eastern side of the San, including the chairman of the community, Elimelech Reich. About three weeks after the German conquest, the Jews of Jarosław were gathered in the Polish sport field 'Sokol' with limited supplies. After they were robbed of their valuables, the Jews (around 7,000 people) were sent to the eastern side of the San, and those Jews who remained in the city were exiled to the Soviet Union over the following few weeks. Only the ill and handicapped remained in the city, joined by Jewish soldiers of the Polish army who returned from captivity. All of these people were concentrated under a regional Judenrat situated in Łańcut and headed by a Jew by the name of Rottenberg. In June 1942 the last remaining Jews of Jarosław were sent to Sieniawa, and their fate was shared with the Jews of that town. After the war, some of the surviving Jews returned to Jarosław, but several murders of survivors by nationalist Polish gangs in the vicinity led to their eventual desertion of the city.

(Roe Goldshmidt)

Sources:

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220-213.

ישראל היילפרין, פנקס ועד ארבע ארצות: שמ"א-תקכ"ה, מהדורת ישראל ברטל ותוספת מבוא מאת שמואל אטינגר, ירושלים תש"ן.

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67-59.

See additional information about the community of Jaroslaw on the site [Massa le-Galicia](#) (in Hebrew)

Historical-cultural region: Western Galicia

Items relevant to the community

Title	Type of item	Years
"Umowy prywatny", oraz kwity, kontrakty i akta ...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1628 до 1759
"О лицах иудейского вероисповедания, служащих...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1915
"О неблагонадежном элементе Галиции", в т.ч. ...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1915
- Wahl von Rabbinern und Bewerber zur Gemeinde...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1834
1. Doniesienia o pogromach i incydentach antyse...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1881
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, korespondencja i inn...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1898
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, korespondencja i inn...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1898
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, korespondencja i inn...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1882
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, korespondencja i inn...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1882
1. Okólniki, sprawozdania, korespondencja i inn...	Картки Центрального архіву історії єврейського народу в Єрусалимі	1882

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