Alternate names: Toruń [Pol], Thorn [Ger], Toruń [Cz], Torń. 53°02' N, 18°36' E, 90 miles S of Gdańsk (Danzig), 26 miles ESE of Bydgoszcz (Bromberg), on the Vistula. Jewish population: 1,371 (in 1890). This city in northern Poland on the Vistula River with population over 207,190 in 2006 is the second largest city of the Kujawy-Pomerania Province. The medieval old town is the birthplace of Nicolaus Copernicus. Previously, it was a capital of Toruń Voivodeship (1975-98) and Pomeranian Voivodeship (1921-45). Since 1999, Toruń has been a seat of the self-government of Kujawy-Pomerania Province and, as such, one of its two capitals (together with Bydgoszcz). [July 2009]

CEMETERY: The exact date of its creation is unknown, but the cemetery existed as early as 1723. In 1810, at the request of Torun kahal, the prohibited grazing cattle in the cemetery by the Christian population. The cemetery was divided and landscaped into four quarters. The Jewish cemetery at 2-6 Jakubskim Przedmiescie between the streets Antczak, Pulaski, and Konopackich had a beit tahara, apartment for the watchman, vegetable garden, stables and coach house leased to a private person after the war. Matzevot were arranged in three different sections, but few remain. One classical shaped gravestone has a pedestal and finial. Another is stele-shaped. The newest gravestone dating from the beginnings of the 20th century is an obelisk. The cemetery was NOT destroyed during WWII although the Nazis planned to do so. Supposedly under the care of the city, gravestones were stolen and the cemetery vandalized in the 1950s and 1960s. Although landmarked, vandals torn down pieces of the beit tahara until it just disappeared. A 1966 decision to liquidate the cemetery was carried out in 1975 with the land leveled and a park created. more information, rabbi, Photos.

UPDATE: I visited Torun for 3 days in May 1999. I spoke in English with Michael Jozefowicz, who translated remarks of Edward Sulek. My notes are qualified by language-barrier. The former Jewish cemetery is now a respectable bare park with no marker or sign identifying it as a former Jewish cemetery. No gravestones remain. Only a few bits of the original wall and gates remain with no Jewish markings. The park is clean and quiet, frequented by respectable
residents of the surrounding apartment buildings. It is my impression that some of those mid-1970s buildings were built on the grounds of the Jewish cemetery but not over gravesites with the agreement of the Jewish Community of Poland. The former Jewish cemetery is across the street from the present Christian cemetery and about a 20-minute walk from the Old Town of Torun. The gravestones were all removed in 1975, despite the strongest possible opposition, including a ruling to the contrary by the then and present Torun Conservator: Zbigniew Nawrocki; Tel. ++48---56--214-79; ++48---56--216-70 (Languages: Polish; not English.) His card reads: Urzad Miejski w Toruniu, Mgr. Zbigniew Nawrocki, Miejski Konserwator Zabytkow, ul. Podmurna 15, Tel. 552-189; FAX: 216-70. Apparently, in 1975, the Torun Conservator was unable to obtain support from the Jewish Community of Poland (in Warsaw) in his opposition to removal of the gravestones. I gather that he carefully photographed all the gravestones/matevot before they were removed; and that one could obtain a copy of those photographs. The gravestones are now stored and very carefully conserved in the storeroom of the Torun Conservator at 85/89 Podmurna. The Conservator of stones is: Daniusz Sobou(?), Mobile phone: 0601--615-70. I would suggest that any questions regarding the Torun cemetery and its gravestones be routed via Yale Reisner reisner@plearn.edu.pl of the Lauder Foundation Jewish Geneology Project (Jewish Historical Institute) Poland. Their projects include maintaining an archive of cemetery matzevot. Edward Sulek is the most knowlegeable about the history and present status of former Jewish community of Torun. He is the listed publisher of a booklet (in Polish only) on the former Jewish community of Torun. Contacts: Edward Sulek, Piaskowa 1, Torun 87100; Tel/FAX: ++48---56--622-6697; Polish only. Source: (Professor) Michael Jozefowicz, ul. Krasinskiego 63A m.4, 87-100 Torun; Tel. ++48---56--621-0152 may be reached via son's e-mail. (Polish; fluent in English. Lawyer; qualified as Judge; former Professor of Law at Torun U. Translator.) Steve Amdur ; [date?] confirms the update details above.

Alternate German name: Thorn. Located in Torunskie province at 53º02' N 18º36' E, 40 km from Bydgoszcz(y), and 211 km from Warszawa(y). Cemetery location: ul. Rilaskiego. Present population is over 100,000 with 10-100 Jews.


The earliest Jewish community dates from the end of the 18th century. 1920 Jewish population was 200. In 1939, there were 800 Jews, 1%. In 1847, the Prussian government enacted a law giving the Jews equal obligations followed by rights equal to those of the Christians. In 1847, the synagogue was built at 12 Szczytna St. Living here were (1) Mosze Kaliszer, (2) Mosze Szlomo Kaliszer, Tzaddik, who was buried in the cemetery in 1865, and (3) Gumman Meir. The Jewish cemetery was established in the 19th century with last known Jewish burial in 1937. Landmark: Register of Monuments for the Voivodship of Torun. The urban flat land, separate but near other cemeteries, has a broken masonry wall and unlocked gate. Reached by turning directly off a public road, access is open to all. The size of the cemetery before WWII and now is 1.2 ha. No gravestones are visible. Removed stones were used to build the obelisk at Nowickiego St. Less than 25% of the stones are broken. There is a pre-burial house. The municipality owns the property used for park. Adjacent property is recreational. Rarely, local residents. The cemetery was vandalized during World War II and in 1975. Within the last 10 years, local/municipal authorities cleared vegetation and fixed the wall. There is a slight threat of weather erosion.