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Sommario/riassunto	Jews are typically viewed as urban dwellers. However there was a considerable Jewish presence in villages from the very beginning of their settlement in Eastern Europe in the 12th century, up until the Holocaust. The presence of a large Jewish population in villages was, in fact, one of the most distinctive features of East European Jewry. The colourful personality of Jewish leaseholders of the production and sale of alcoholic beverages was often depicted in Polish, Russian and Jewish literature of the 19th century, but the real knowledge about the East European rural Jews beyond the stereotypical view is still at large. The book presents the results of a systematic survey, the first of its kind, on the rural Jews in the Minsk Guberniya, from its establishment as a major administrative unit within the Russian Empire in 1793, to the

outbreak of the First World War in 1914. The present study is based mainly on systematic sources, which produced, for the first time, a full picture of Jewish settlement in the countryside in one particular region of the Russian Empire.
