

# Coral Temple



This is the Choral Temple. Until 1940, there were 14 houses of prayer in Braila, temples and synagogues included. The Frankishe Schul synagogue, today's Choral Temple, was built in 1837. It was rebuilt in 1862. The Main Synagogue was built on Coroanei St. no. 25 (today, Mihail Sebastian St.) in 1833. There were 2 representative synagogues in the city, among which was the Main Synagogue as well, which has been dismantled in the meantime and the plot of land was sold, and turned into Hotel Corona nowadays.

The Jewish Community of Braila always had presidents, for it is first and foremost a legal entity. During the war, it was called the Jewish Central, and then it resumed the name of the Jewish Community of Braila. Its higher structure is the Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania, and the communities can do absolutely nothing without the approval of the central structure. There were several rabbis along the years in Braila, who had a vast Hebrew culture. There were also religious performers, there were choir singers, and on holidays they sang so nice you could say it was an opera recital. They sang in Hebrew using opera arias.

During the persecutions, Joseph Schmidt, the famous singer, was a refugee here, he was coming from his native city in Moldova; he ran for the position of performer here, in Braila. Yet he was rejected by the president of the community of that time who was an illiterate person and didn't appreciate Schmidt because he was a short person and wore high heels. In order to earn his living, he traveled through various places across the country, and that's how he ran for a position in Braila, as the population here was richer and they could pay him a salary.

Mayer Thenen was the penultimate rabbi [Editor's note: Rabbi Dr. Mayer Thenen one of the great personalities of the Braila Jews and of all the Romanian Jews, who was a pastor until 1940; he was the author of the first Romanian translation of the Ros Hasana and Yom Kippur prayers.

[http://www.romanianjewish.org/en/mosteniri\\_ale\\_culturii\\_iudaice\\_03\\_11\\_1...](http://www.romanianjewish.org/en/mosteniri_ale_culturii_iudaice_03_11_1...)], followed by the last rabbi, Michel Dobruschim, during 195-1954, when he left to Israel. There is also a photograph at the Community of Braila's last rabbi and the former chief rabbi of all the Jews of Romania, Rosen. I met him myself. However, Thenen is more famous and compiled a Siddur of his own, which was republished in Israel. The rabbi didn't only officiate weddings, but was also the patron of the Jewish community on holidays. I attended marriages officiated by a rabbi myself. Formerly, religious wedding ceremonies were performed, and we were invited as well. There was a different rabbi, Mihailovici, and I was actually a witness, which is to say I signed that document, which is called a ketubbah in Hebrew. I also had my father's sister wedding document, which was officiated in Bacau, for she married a man from Bacau, his name was Hertanu. It was a very beautiful document, written with elaborate letters.