

## History of the Jews in Sahy (Ipolysag)

By Krisztina Kapusta

The history of the Jews of Ipolyság dates back to 1850, when Jewish settlers began to arrive in larger numbers in the seat of Hont County. The founding members of the community, established by Samuel Glück and Philip Winter, came from the area of Nyitra and Balassagyarmat. Salamon Deutsch, who later left for Nyitra, was the Chief Rabbi of the community and of Hont County from 1851 to 1869. After the Hungarian Jewish Congress of 1868/69, there emerged a progressive Neolog, a conservative Orthodox, and a third, much smaller movement, called the Status quo, which insisted on maintaining the conditions that existed before the congress. In order to avoid the split, the people of Ipolyság defined themselves as the status quo. Despite their efforts, a small group broke away from the core community in 1876 and an Orthodox community was formed under the leadership of Márton Berczeller. Later, Lajos Berczeller and then Mano Schmidl were elected president of the community. In addition to the members of the Berczeller, Schmidl and Deckner families, who played a prominent role in the religious and secular leadership of the community, Ignác Polgár, the owner of a printing press, and merchants and landowners from nearby small villages, such as Miksa Widder from Ipolynyék, Ármin Glück from Kelenye, József Langer from Palást, and Dávid Groszmann from Százd, are buried in the Orthodox cemetery. The tomb of the community's rabbi, Antal Weisz, is in the middle of the cemetery, next to his mother's tombstone. He served his congregants from 1876 until his death in September 1938. He was replaced by Philip Weisz, who was later murdered in Auschwitz. The Holocaust sealed the fate of the flourishing Orthodox and status quo communities, which lived side by side in peace. Less than 20% of the Jewish population of Ipolyság survived the concentration camps and labour camps. After the war, the survivors were united in one community. After Fülöp Singer, who had brought the community together, emigrated to Israel in 1949, the small community was left without a rabbi. The last record of the practice of the faith is in 1971, the exact date of the community's demise is unknown. The Jewish community of Ipolyság has disappeared, but the legacy they built remains. Visitors to the town can still find the former synagogues, the former Jewish elementary school building all converted and the Jewish cemetery at opposite ends of the town.

In addition to a more extensive historical summary, this book reports on the results of the analysis of the Orthodox cemetery founded in 1910 and includes the civil records of the deceased and their families up to the date of publication. The 1,100 m<sup>2</sup> cemetery contains 100 identified gravesites. There are 84 gravestones in 19 rows and 18 columns. The analyses are complemented by a cemetery register drawn in 1939 and a map made using a drone photograph. The photo supplement includes photographs of all the gravestones visible today, a visualisation based on the original floor plan of the demolished mortuary, and the only known photograph of the Orthodox synagogue built in 1929.