

**DR. ZSÓFIA TORMA**

THE FIRST FEMALE MAGYAR (HUNGARIAN) ARCHEOLOGIST,  
WHO DISCOVERED THE **TORDOS** CULTURE

Written by *Dr. Enikő Madarassy*

2012

Translators: *Susan Tomory* and *Margaret Botos*

***Details***

*The whole writing will be found at <http://www.mas.ncl.ac.uk/~a3700152/>*

With this work, we would like to call to the attention of the scientific world and interested individuals the important work of this researcher, which has fallen into oblivion.

***I. Dr. Enikő Madarassy: The work of Dr. Zsófia Torma, its significance and its message for us.***



Dr. Zsófia Torma in 1870

**1. Background**

*”She took part in the founding of the Kolozsvár Museum and became a member of several anthropological and archeological societies. The duplicate pieces of her finds she gifted to societies, and, even though she did all her expensive research without any outside help, at her own expense, her generous hands were always able to give to noble causes. She gladly gave to the building of schools, cultural institutions, and established a Magyar public school on her own estate.”<sup>4</sup>*

In her activities she always gave preference to her environment, abdicating her own comfort and well being. She was member of several scientific and charitable groups. She attempted to compensate for the bitterness that had accumulated in her life filled with struggles, with the beauty of nature and her scientific work.

## 2. Her significance

We have no knowledge at this time about any lady-archeologist who worked earlier than Zsófia Torma in archeology using scientific methods. So we can state with confidence that Zsófia was the first female archeologist in the world.

*”She considered her first task to thoroughly research the settlements of the tertiary period in her home county, Hunyad. The result of this work was a rich collection of the fauna formations of the tertiary basins. She was so lucky in her geological and archeological research also, that the number of her finds at this time is over 15 thousand. This is a collection that has no equal in private collections and which was one of the prides of Budapest in the 1876 and also the Berlin Archeological Congress of 1880.”*<sup>4</sup>

Zsófia Torma was a member of the Board of Directors of the Erdély Museum Society. After her death, her collection of archeological materials was given to the Erdélyi Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtára (Erdély Museum’s Medal and Antiquities collection) for safekeeping.

Her greatness is also reflected in the fact that she was brave enough to stand by her daring statement, according to which the unknown signs in the pictographs preserve for us Europe’s oldest written memories. Zsófia already showed in 1879 that there is a connection between the Tordos signs and the Assyrian-Babylonian writings, an opinion that was honored by A. H. Sayce (Harmatta János: *Neolitikori írásbeliség Közép-Európában? / Neolithic Literacy in Central Europe? AntikTanulmányok/ Antique Studies* 13. 2. 1966. 235-238).

∩ Y Y ↑

Rovás (runic) signs can be found in great numbers in her collection. In her letter to A. H. Sayce,<sup>1</sup> she brought to his attention four ancient Székely-Magyar rovásírás (runic) signs (which are the ny, zs, t and c characters). She studied with great attention these unique, and frequently occurring characters and, in her Curriculum Vitae she also attempted to decipher these mysterious signs.

The Romanian archaeology also begins to acknowledge the significance of Zsófia Torma.<sup>8</sup>

We hope that they are going to support the search for Zsófia's main work, its restoration and publication, and also that they help to place Zsófia's legacy and collection into the place of her choice, where she took an active part in its foundation, the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület/Egylet (The Erdély Museum Society), which honored her work so very much.

### **3. The beginning and the Stone-Age settlements which were researched by her.**

At the beginning she was drawn more to geology, such as the a Bujtur/Bojtor (today Rumania, Buituri), Nándor (today Rumania, Nandru), Simaság (today Rumania), and Felső-Lapugy (today Rumania, Lăpugiu de Sus) and busied herself with studying the geology of their tertiary valleys. This led her to the steady research of the ancient archeological sites of the town of Tordos, research that lasted twenty years.

In her study: *„A Tordosi őstelep és hazánk népe ősmýthosának maradványai „(The Ancient Tordos Site and the Remnants of the Ancient Mythical Past of the Magyar People )<sup>9</sup>, ”* we learn that she started the excavations of the Tordos Stone Age in 1875. We can also read Zsófia's first discoveries concerning Tordos in Gerő Deák's <sup>10</sup> paper: *Magyar polgár (Magyar Citizen)*, which was published in Kolozsvár in 1875.

She was also engaged with the research of other ancient settlements, like Zsosza <sup>11</sup> (in 1876, today in Rumania, Josani), Algyógy <sup>11</sup> (in 1876, today in Rumania, Geoagiu), Nándor-Válya <sup>11</sup> (the ex Ság, in 1876, today in Rumania, Valea Nandrului), Nándor <sup>11</sup> (in 1876/77?, we have only the name, no date, today Rumania, Nandru), in the towns around Vajdahunyad<sup>1</sup> (1877), Nándori cave <sup>1/11/12</sup> (in 1876, today in Rumania), where she found artifacts carved from the antlers of the ancient deer and collected clay remnants from the cave's silt layer. <sup>1</sup>), in Felpestes<sup>1</sup> (in 1876, today in Rumania,), the Mandori cave (in 1876/77? today Rumania, with just the name, but no date), Kersetz <sup>11</sup> (in 1876, today in Rumania, Cârjiți ), Kudu <sup>11</sup> (in 1876, today in Rumania, Coldău). Gyula Rácz, who was the owner of Kudu at that time found it; here the name of the original finder is mentioned, but no exact date is marked for this find, when she discussed the studied objects of archeological places.

*„Meanwhile, the archeological society found in Hunyad County, in the company of Zsófia Torma's archeological excavation, the ruins of a church dedicated to Mithras, along with a slab of marble with the Mithras motive and inscriptions, further on a group of statues, made of marble and sandstone in different sizes and positions and several other marble statuettes and altars inscribed with the names of five Syrian gods and a family. Among these, one family name and the name of one of the gods were also found in the Palmyra inscriptions. ”<sup>4</sup>*

*„The antiquity collection of Zsófia Torma, which is housed temporarily in the museum, was visited by Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Education in those days. As we already mentioned, the antiquities are from the vicinity of Hunyad County’s Tordos and Nádor-Válya locations. The collection caused a general sensation. Zsófia Torma exhibited these in August, at the Frankfurt Anthropological Congress and held a lecture about them. Schliemann, the noted researcher of Troy, saw this collection and declared that it would do honor to any European museum, because it sheds new light upon science. Lindenschmidt also spoke with acknowledgment about it, stating, that Zsófia Torma rendered a service to science by assembling this collection, like Schliemann with his Trojan researches. The world of science was taken aback with the high level of similarity between the Trojan and the Erdély (Transylvania) finds. The most interesting parts of the collection were the cultic objects, the idols, the suspended idol pieces, and the viewing of these by the lay communities is very educational.”<sup>13</sup>*

#### **4. The work of the researcher.**

Her first archeological study, entitled *„Neolithic Settlements of Hunyad County”*,<sup>11</sup> along with this lecture, gained acknowledgment in professional circles. This work was followed by her study entitled: *„The Cave groups of Nádor”*,<sup>11</sup> which gave her the opportunity to take part in the great Conference of German Anthropologists in Berlin on August 15, 1880.

#### **5. Her connection with different scientists.**

Her finds aroused great appreciation from Fraas O., L. Lindenschmidt, A. H. Sayce, H. Schliemann, and in the circle of other scientific colleagues. Even so, she was often the subject of jests in scientific circles, and her work was excluded, or omitted. The Science Academy of Budapest was also negative about the new lines she represented, and did not recognize the outstanding activities of Zsófia.

Herrmann A., with the mention of Zsófia’s name, invited the great scientist, R. C. Virchovo to Szászváros in 1898, who, after looking at the Tordos ancient settlement, talked with great acknowledgment of the Hungarian lady-scientist, Zsófia Torma.

Her exclusion in her homeland was compensated by the intellectual support and recognition from outside of Hungary, which already began at the Budapest International Congress. She had friendly connections with A. H. Sayce, Langenschmidt, R. C. Virchow, H. Schliemann and many others, due to her discovery of the ancient culture, a theory which was counted as brand-new, introducing the possibility of the common roots of the Tordos-Troy-Mesopotamian cultures. Her

excellent intuition was supported by the masses of her archeological finds. Her far-reaching correspondence with scientific circles also bears witness to these.

Influenced and supported by H. Schliemann and the ground-breaking English orientalist and linguist, A. H. Sayce, Zsófia declared that the drawings of the Tordos finds and their runic signs were the first manifestation of European literacy.

R. C. Virchow: „*With great friendliness, Miss Torma showed me her museum, which occupies the entire upper level of her home. Since she, herself, is preparing a lengthy publication with many illustrations, I too am limiting my remarks that this settlement reaches back surely to Neolithic times, and this age determination is supported by masses of convincing evidence.*”<sup>16</sup>

The number of her letters that deal with scientific matters <sup>17</sup> is over 300. Her correspondence with the following important persons: H. Finaly, I. Goldziher, J. Hampel, K. Herepi Sr., A. Herrmann, P. Hunfalvi, G. Kuun, F. Romer, G. Téglás and A. Török preserved her thoughts. (These letters are in conjunction with Hungarian and Erdély related matters.) We should also mention two letters written by Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894), Premier of Hungary, from exile in Turin in 1884. (Translator of this article would like to add, that Lajos Kossuth, while in exile in the U.S.A. was the first foreigner who was invited to speak in Congress. He held speeches in several American locations, and a town in Wisconsin was named Kossuth after him.)

Those who were the greatest obstacles to Zsófia's scientific success were the members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, abr. MTA). Zsófia's views were so progressive, that some scientists could not imagine these even on the level of hypothesis. Such were J. Hampel, F. Pulszki, P. Hunfalvy and many others, who contributed to the disregard toward Zsófia, and made her research difficult.

Among her friends and supporters was Dr. A. Hermann, who was Zsófia's great admirer from the beginning. The two had opportunities to exchange ideas, both in congresses outside Hungary and also in her homeland. Mr. A. Hermann had an opportunity on such occasions to admire Zsófia's language skills in foreign languages and ease of conversation about her brilliant theories.

## **6. Her research method:**

She worked quietly and without any desire for publicity. First, she made a list of her finds and, later, she organized them. By studying the works of foreign researchers, she compared their works with her own collection and formulated different theories from these. At these times, she used the mythology, customs and traditions of different peoples, and depended on her ethnographical studies and history of religions. She was an enlightened researcher, who knew very well the views of contemporary scientists. This was made possible first of all by her studies in her well-equipped private library and also other libraries.

The multitude of scripts and signs in her archeological collection led her to the conclusion that there was a connection between Tordos and Troy; moreover, the similarities led even farther, all the way to the Sumerians.

## 7. Congresses

Zsófia displayed her studies and made her views known in both Hungarian and international meetings.

She held her readings at the meetings of the Erdély Museum Society (Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesületi (Egyleti)) and at the meetings of Hunyad County's Historical and Archeological Society in Déva. Reports of these conferences can be found in the yearbooks of these two associations.

## 8. „Symbols”, signs of writing, symbolic writings.

Zsófia's discovery that the symbols of writing were already in use in the most ancient times brought acknowledgment from scientists outside of Hungary.

Before the publishing of the *„Ethnographische Analogien”*, the scientific community, including professor A. H. Sayce, believed the letters on Zsófia's finds to be either the marks of owners or different decorative motifs.

The hooked cross was also part of the Trojan and Tordos finds. Zsófia Torma deduced an explanation between these and the number signs of the Sun gods and Moon gods, as well as the Trinity.

*“... the letters, if they are not proven identical to the Cyprus syllabary, are without doubt identical to the original near-Eastern syllabary, from which not only the people of Cyprus, but the Near Eastern, Trojan and Dacian people's writing also originates. 'A new horizon has opened up for Science!' writes Sayce in his report.”*<sup>4</sup>

## 9. Ancient cultures.

*„She recognized on her Tordos finds the type of culture, which was formed from Babylonian-Chaldean culture-elements, and which was evolving further in Syria, along with the Egyptian art, which was similar to the Thracian culture of Troy, and which was not preceded here in Dacia -- according to archaeologists -- by the Gallic-Celtic, Pelasgian – Greek and Etruscan – Roman culture.”*<sup>2</sup>

*„We may deduce from the testimony of history only that our country was occupied at one time by the Thracian people, and that the Romans here were preceded by the Dacians and Agathyrs.”*<sup>33</sup>.

On Dr. Zsófia Torma's Tordos finds we can find written texts, similar to those on the

Tatárlaka finds.

### **The Turanian character of the Sumerians:**

Zsófia Torma supported with archeological data the Sumerian expansion into the Carpathian Basin. The revolutionary aspect of her studies consisted in that, on the basis of her collection, she formulated a truly new hypothesis, based upon ancient archeological data, according to which the Sumerians spoke a Turanian language. Her conclusion that the Sumerian-Akkadian people belonged to the Turanian race was shared by the French archeologist F. Lenormant (1837–1883) and the French linguist, orientalist and archeologist J. Oppert (1825 - 1905).

Supported by her archeological finds and related sciences, legends, and folk customs, she succeeded in proving that the *„Sumerian people spoke a Turanian language; in other words, they cannot be counted as either Aryan or Semitic people.”*<sup>6</sup>

She did not surrender to the statements of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences of her time. Her conviction did not let her to do that.

She wrote to Hampel: *„I imagine that the authors of academic works assemble and write about everything that they know, according to the best of their conviction and what they are able to write. The opposite of this never entered my mind!”*<sup>6</sup>

*„As I mentioned earlier, this Adonis cult and myth also originated in Babylon. Atunis – Atums = Atuni are deduced forms of the Sumerian-Akkadian Thammuz-Dumuzi. On one Etruscan mirror, which is in Paris, we can see Atuni, who formed a unit with Turán and this word 'Turán', according to professor Melzl, is identical to the Scythian word 'Taranis'.”*<sup>1</sup>

### **10. Magyar (Hungarian) motifs.**

*„The tulip was one of the special main motifs of the ancient Magyar decorations and it reminds us of the tulips in today's Magyar folk art and the Turul-bird, or more correctly, Attila's „Karuly”. The tulip was used in the Babylonian religious sacrificial ceremonies by the priests (image 103 in the original text). If the bird was flying above the Babylonian tree of life, then it was the symbol of the Sun, or more precisely the fire of the Sun, and then the Karuly-bird on Attila's flag was the expression of the Sun-cult .”*<sup>1</sup>

### **11. Tradition**

Zsófia, with her findings, shed light on the fact that we can understand the ancient past much more easily, if we take into consideration and study the life, customs, ceremonies and traditions of the people who lived in that age. These preserve and

reflect the memories of the prehistoric age, within the remaining *Sumerian-Akkadian* symbols, which show us their beliefs.

*„For me, the only possible way to reach back all the way to ancient Babylon was through these remaining memories; through their ancient myths and legends, I could examine and discover religious and cultural movements in their spiritual environment, facts which survived not only in the lives of the people in ancient Erdély, but are present even today, after nearly six-thousand years, guarded as a holy tradition, which forms the very valuable remnants of an exquisite time.”<sup>1</sup>*

The wheel, star and half-moon signs placed on top of one another at the front of the roofs of Székely houses symbolize the ancient holy trinity used by the magi.

*„ Today the triangle decorates the top of the roofs of houses in Székely towns. The Székelys are a Magyar group, who – as remnants of Attila’s Huns – settled in the eastern border mountain region before Árpád’s Magyars entered and they still live there. Their ancient language, customs and institutions still survive with several, special characteristics, as shown on insert 23 (the original text’s image). I present a star, carved of wood, under it the Sun-disk and above it a star is visible, which decorates the top of a house.”<sup>1</sup>*

*„The ornamentation of the Székely-doors, which show eastern origin, is frequently represented in the cylinder-seals, which are in horse-shoe form and so the decorative elements of Erdély may already have originated from here.”<sup>1</sup>*

## **12. Her main work: "Dácia a római foglalás előtt" (Dacia before the Roman Occupation.)**

It is our important task to search out and restore Zsófia’s main work, which she so carefully enlarged and considered very important. It may be possible that it can be found in some of the archives of the Kolozsvár Museum.

*„As I mentioned before, the newer data which have been until now unknown, and which are at my disposition and which would be impossible to enumerate now, I am going to disclose and explain in another archeological work, including 2500 illustrations. This print-ready work, which I have not been able to publish for several years, due to my already mentioned great illness, is going to clarify the often unexpected successes that I achieved in my modest research work.”<sup>1</sup>*

Antal Herrmann mentions in his memorial speech, entitled: „About Dr. Zsófia Torma”<sup>20</sup> – (It was delivered in our society’s general meeting of 1900) the following: „The main work of Zsófia Torma, her great opus, which is the result of her unceasing, feverish work, the fruit of her life and the basis of her immortality, has not yet been

*published. Even its manuscript has not been placed -- where it rightfully and properly belongs, as the explanation of her collection -- in the Erdély Museum."*

*„Zsófia Torma's heart's desire, when she lived her last years like a shadow, turning toward God, was only to publish her great summarizing work, which was complemented by several hundred illustrations by her favorite art teacher, Gábor Szinte, who was also from Déva".* <sup>6</sup>

Our last information about her main work "*Dácia a római foglalás előtt*" (*Dacia before the Roman Occupation*) is from 1961, when N. Vlassa, then a professor at Kolozsvár University, stated to Anna Walter that this work was in a state of deterioration, and the pencil drawings were faded, but even so, Kolozsvár University planned to publish them.

It would have been the duty of Kolozsvár University to restore this significant document. The truth is that this work, which is indispensable concerning the Magyar culture and history, disappeared. It would be important to search for it, to restore it and publish this manuscript.

### **13. Parallels between Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890) and Zsófia Torma (1831-1899)**

At the 1880 Berlin Conference, Zsófia also had the opportunity to meet with the discoverer of Troy, *H. Schliemann*. Both were considered amateurs. The Tordos finds showed great similarity to the Trojan finds, which helped to broaden the scope of their theories with the decipherment of these objects

According to Zsófia's memories: *„When Schliemann took this vessel in his hand, he remarked with amazement: „It seems, as if this Tordos picture had been drawn by the same hand as drew the picture on the altar in Troy."*

### **14. Sumerian traces in Erdély / „*Ethnographische Analogien: Ein Beitrag zur Gestaltungs- und Entwicklungsgeschichte der Religionen: Sofie von Torma.*, Jena, 1894 (with 127 forms and 8 tables)**

First of all, her study in German interpreted the eastern connections of her several hundred finds, accompanied with the help of illustrations. Her critic was Henrik Finály (Erdély Museum, yr. 1894).

Zsófia shows in detail in this work the archeological data upon which her work rests, and on which the present population's belief system, customs, traditions and ceremonies may rest. Through her finds, she found similarities between the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia and the Carpathian Basin.

„Similarly, it was to my great satisfaction, that my illustrated study shown in Jena was reviewed by Dr. Brinton in Philadelphia. .”<sup>2</sup>

Zsófia gave a version of the original Magyar manuscript to Antal Hermann as a sign of her friendship. He donated it, as an honored relic, to the Historical and Archeological Museum of Hunyad County, for their library.

### 15. Zsófia Torma's studies and studies about her:

1879 – Torma Zsófia: *Hunyadvármegye neolith – kökorszakbeli telepek, (Neolithic Age of Hunyad County – Stone Age Settlements)* Erdély Museum (This work gained recognition in the Segesvár /today Rumania, Sighișoara/ National Congress of Historians. This is her first archeological work, her first recognition. 50 pages with 9 tables.)

1880 – Torma Zsófia: *A nándori barlangcsoporthozat, (The Nándor Cave Complex)* Erdély Museum (The precise excavation sites)

1882 – *Torma Zsófia gyűjteményéről, (About Zsófia Torma's collection), Vasárnapi Újság* (no. 625.)

1884 – *Lajos Kossuth*, a letter of salute from Turin

1887 – Torma Zsófia: *A római uralom előtti Dáciának planeta cultusáról (Dacia's pre-Roman Planet Cult)* Erdély Museum

1894 – Torma Zsófia: *Ethnographische Analogien. Ein beitrage zur gestaltungs – und entwicklungsgeschichte der religionen, Erdély Museum* (The effect of this little booklet resulted in several invitations to Europe's universities. European historians, archaeologists, ethnographers and Sumerologiists expressed intense interest in the results of her research.)

1896 – Torma Zsófia: *Hazánk népe ősmythosának maradványai, Deés, (The Remains of the Ancient Myths of the People of our Country, Deés)* She wrote this for the ladies' millennial memorial booklet of Szolnok-Doboka County, expressly for her fellow ladies.

1897 – Torma Zsófia: *A tordosi őstelep és hazánk népe ősmythosának maradványai (The Ancient Settlement of Tordos and the Remains of the Ancient Myths of the People of our Country),* Hunyad County, Monograph, Budapest

1899 – *Dr. Torma Zsófia, a tudós hölgy halálának híre (Dr. Zsófia Torma, the News of the Lady-Scientist's Death), Vasárnapi Újság, Obituaries, no. 47, p. 793, Budapest.*

1901 – Téglás Gábor: *Torma Zsófia emlékezete (In Memory of Zsófia Torma),* Yearbook of the Historical and Archeological Society of Hunyad County, Déva

1901 – *Hermann Antal: Dr. Torma Zsófiáról, (About Dr. Zsófia Torma)* Yearbook of the Historical and Archeological Society of Hunyad County, Déva

1902 - Torma Zsófia: *Hunyad vármegye földjének története az őskortól a honfoglalásig (History of Hunyad County from Prehistory to the time of the Homecoming),* Hunyad County Monograph, Budapest

1941 – Roska Márton: *A Torma Zsófia – Gyűjtemény az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiséggyűjteményében (The Zsófia Torma Collection of the Erdély National Museum's Medal and Antiquities Collection)*, Minerva, Kolozsvár

1972 – *Torma Zsófia levelesládájából, (From the Correspondence of Zsófia Torma), A Selection: Introduction and notes written by Pál Gyulai*, Kriterion, Bucharest

1973/ 2008 – *Torma Zsófia: Sumér nyomok Erdélyben (Sumerian Traces in Erdély)*, Magyar Ház Publ., 2008, Budapest Reprint *Sumerian Traces in Erdély (Ethnographische Analogieen. Ein Beitrag zur Gestaltungs- und Entwicklungsgeschichte der Religionen*, translator István Foyta, co-writer Gábor Jáki) Magyar Őskutatás - Anna Fehér Publ. Buenos Aires, 1973

1992 – László Attila: *Torma Zsófia és régészetünk kezdetei (Zsófia Torma and the Beginnings of our Archeology)*, A HÉT

1999 – *Holt lóra patkó - tanulmányok Torma Zsófia (1840?-1899) emlékezetére, Horse-shoes on a Dead Horse - Studies in memory of Zsófia Torma (1840?-1899)*, edited by János Makkay, Budapest

2007 - Friedrich Klára: *Zsófia Torma, a woman in the service of Hungarian archeology.* (Honlevél, Magyarok Világszövetségének lapja, Journal of the World Federation of Hungarians, 2007/july)

2008 - Torma Zsófia: *Ethnographische Analogien – Sumér nyomok Erdélyben (Sumerian Traces in Erdély)*, Magyar Ház Publ., Budapest

2009 - Friedrich Klára: *Torma Zsófia, egy asszony a magyar régészet szolgálatában (Zsófia Torma, A Woman in the Service of Magyar Archeology)*, Erdélyi Örmény gyökerek, yr. XIII, pp.149-150, Budapest Ancient Armenian roots, yr. XIII, pp.149-150, Budapest

## 16. Zsófia Torma Collection, National State Archives - Subsidiary in Déva <sup>24</sup>

Dr. Sabin Adrian Luca <sup>24</sup> is a professor at the Nagyszeben (Sibiu) *Lucian Blaga University*. In his book, we can read about some examples of Zsófia's collection and legacy, which can also be accessed on the Internet, as seen below:

Sabin Adrian Luca: *Așezări Neolitice pe valea Mureșului (II) Noi cercetări la Turdaș – Luncă (Neolithic Settlements in the Valley of the Mureș (II) New archeological research at Turdaș-Luncă, I. The 1992–1995 Campaigns.)* (Bibliotheca Mvsei Apvlensis XVII, ISBN 973-590-514, EdituraEconomică, 2001)<sup>24</sup>

<http://arheologie.ulbsibiu.ro/publicatii/carti/cpvm/anexa1.htm>

(The Zsófia Torma Collection from the National State Archives – Deva Branch/Fondul Zsófia von Torma de la Arhivele Naționale ale statului – filiala Deva)

(Materials have been studied by Alexandru Sonoc (Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu) <sup>24</sup>  
 Collection: Hunyad megyei Történelmi és Régészeti Tudományok Társasága – Dr.  
 Torma Zsófia <sup>24</sup>  
 (Fond: Societatea de Științe istorice și arheologice a Comitatului Hunedoara – Dr.  
 Zsófia von Torma./ Collection: The historical and archeological society of the  
 Hunedoara County - Zsófia von Torma, Ph.D.) <sup>24</sup>

### **17. How can we erect a worthy memorial for the first Magyar lady-archeologist?**

Why is Dr. Zsófia Torma's work important?

- 1) She was the first to uncover the Neolithic TORDOS culture, which she unceasingly examined for twenty years.
- 2) We can ascribe to her the discovery of the first European writing, through the examination of 6-7,000 year old potteries.
- 3) Zsófia already demonstrated in 1879, that there was a connection between the Tordos signs and the Assyrian – Babylonian signs

At that time she brought attention to the rovás (runic) signs found in her collection, showing a comparison between these signs and the ancient Székely-Magyar rovás signs (for example the letters „ny, zs, t and c” ).

- 4) The rovás signs she studied, which today we call the Székely-Magyar rovás writing, attest to the fact that the Magyar presence in the Carpathian Basin goes back to ancient times.
- 5) Based on her archeological finds, she discovered similarities between the cultures of the Carpathian Basin and Mesopotamia.
- 6) It is our moral duty to preserve for posterity the results of Zsófia Torma's scientific achievement, her spiritual legacy, her works, letters, publications and notes and, last but not least, her once existing, rich collections.

**The Tordos finds increased to several thousand pieces (10,387).**

Zsófia's Tordos archeological collection was acknowledged and valued Europe-wide.

Her collection and manuscripts can be found in the following libraries: The Erdély Historical Museum in Kolozsvár (Muzeul de istorie a Transilvaniei din Cluj) <sup>24</sup> , also in the Enyed (Aiud; inv. 1151-1275,3313-3325) <sup>24</sup> , Déva (archives, see in Anexa 119)

<sup>24</sup>, the Arad (as part of Márton Roska's excavations from 1910) <sup>24</sup>, the Budapest, and Berlin libraries.

**'The immediate fate of Zsófia Torma's collection'** Erdély Museum, 1900 Kolozsvár.

*„Following Zsófia Torma's death, it became necessary for her collection of antiquities, which had already been purchased by the Erdély Museum Society, to be taken over by the Medal and Antiquities section. Due to the lack of space, the only resort was to package the collection into crates and deliver it to Kolozsvár, where it was preserved, unopened, in a space appointed for this purpose.”<sup>7</sup>*

*„The size of our archeological section increased greatly, following the death of Dr. Zsófia Torma, through the material brought here. We are going to place aside one day to her memory, for she is mourned not just in the Magyar scientific circle, but the entire world, with the participation of the public; beyond this, her memory is forever kept alive in the Society of her creation, and can never be forgotten.”<sup>25</sup>*

*„We received the news of Dr. Zsófia Torma's death at the end of this year, on November 14, from Szászváros. Her important historic archeological collection was already obtained in 1891 by our society and we could bring it home now, after her death. Our society was also represented at her funeral, and we will save her honored memory in our heart and her love for sciences will be preserved by her rich collection, for later generations too. With her death, the surplus of the buying price of 800 forints is freed and can be used to cover other needs.”<sup>25</sup>*

**„The immediate fate of the Zsófia Torma library'**, the Erdély Museum, 1903. Kolozsvár:

*'László Makray from Felpestes, Hunyad County donated a part of Zsófia Torma's library to the library of the E.M.E. (Erdély Museum Society), namely 177 works in 238 volumes, valued at 227 Crowns. The donor was elevated to the status of founding member.”<sup>26</sup>*

After the **forceful nationalization of the Erdély Museum Society in 1950**, Zsófia Torma's material was distributed among different state institutions. The Medallion and Antiquities collection, together with the Medieval collection and the Early Neolithic stone collection, found a home in the Historical Museum of Kolozsvár, which is presently called Erdély's National Historical Museum (*Muzeul National al Istoriei Transilvaniei, MNIT*). There was an exhibition of these materials organized in 2009. There is great probability that Zsófia Torma's remaining works can be found here, such as her notes and her writings that have survived in manuscript form.

The Erdély Museum Society's own archives (which also contain the purchase documents of buying) were transferred after 1950 to the Kolozsvár branch of the

National Archives, presently: Kolozs County Branch of the Rumanian National Archive Directory -- Directia Judeteana Cluj a Arhivelor Nationale) and, since 2008 the material can be researched.

In the periodical of the *Erdély Museum*, one can read the published Zsófia Torma works on line too. (The periodical was digitized by the Erdély Museum Society.)

<http://eda.eme.ro/browse?value=Torma%2C+Zs%C3%B3fia&type=author>.

*Márton Roska* showed the Zsófia Torma collection in detail in his 1941 study. It can be read in Online format here:

[http://adatbank.transindex.ro/html/cim\\_pdf1079.pdf](http://adatbank.transindex.ro/html/cim_pdf1079.pdf), <http://tormazsofia.ro/rola.html>

The history of the collections of the Erdély Museum Society was published on the occasion of its jubilee in 2009, even though historian Zoltán Vincze's collection of the Medal and Antiquities chapter mentions *the very important collection of Zsófia Torma only sparingly*.

In the 2009 jubilee exhibit<sup>28</sup>, its curator and historian, *Dr. Mihai Rotea*, mentioned that Zsófia Torma's collection can be found at the Erdély Historical Museum (Muzeului Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei /MNIT) in Kolozsvár, (its address: Bástya / Daicoviciu u. 2. sz).

*„(Zsófia Torma) discovered neolithic dwellings in Torda, and several ceramics, tools, religious pieces and jewelry.” stated historian Michael Rotea. “Torma's activities took place mainly in Szászváros, where she founded an archeological and ethnographical museum.”*<sup>28</sup>.

*Zsófia Torma's material and notes were preserved at MNIT. She donated her manuscript collection to the Museum of Kolozsvár and its founder stated this was the most important collection of this institution. Moreover, she finished her studies in Kolozsvár and it is there she received her university appointment too .”*<sup>28</sup>

*The Erdély Digital Databank is the digital archive of the Erdély Museum Society, which was started in July of 2011. After the 1950 forced nationalization, the Society started out again in 1990. So presently it is occupied with the digitization and internet placement of the old collection.*

The following documents can be found -- among others -- in the Kolozsvár University Library's collection, according to catalogs:

- Hunyad-County's Neolithic finds (1879)
- Hunyad-County's Neolithic settlements

- Review of her excavations in the Nándor cave complex in the 1880 publication.
- The 1894 "*Etnographische Analogien*".

Zsófia Torma's honorary degree can be found in all probability in the Archives of Kolozsvár University, among the various documents of the Kolozs County Branch of the Rumanian National Archive Directory. The University Yearbooks can be a lot of help in finding them.

*The Historical and Archeological Society of Hunyad County* does not exist under this name any more, but the *Déva Museum*, which the above society created in 1880, is operating today as the *Museum of the Dacian and Roman Civilization*.

We can express our respect for this truly highly important legacy by saving it, or organizing it. (Her archeological collection's 10,387 pieces were bought by the Erdély National Museum's Medal and Antiquities department after she separated from them in 1891 for five thousand forints and 800 forints a month payments for life.)

*Besides her published books, the results of her research are also manifested in the spectacular collection that she created, which contained not only the Neolithic material, but also material from the Paleolithic era, the Bronze Age, Hallstatt and also the Dacian, Roman and Slav objects too. The collection was acknowledged Europe wide, and it was valued, and presently her manuscripts and also her rich correspondence are kept in safe conditions in the Erdély Historical Museum in Kolozsvár. (Muzeul de Istorie al Transilvaniei din Cluj).<sup>29</sup>*

It is absolutely necessary to erect and dedicate a memorial building to her with the goal of preservation, in which Zsófia's and also her brother Károly's, along with their father's studies would be collected, and also all objects that were connected with them. It would be good, if researchers and interested people could find in one and the same place the father's, son's and daughter's works. This future building could fill the need of a museum, and also an open house. This rich collection could this way help the work of researchers. In order to execute this, and to preserve Zsófia's works legally, it would be well to create a FOUNDATION.



Torma- home in Csicsókeresztúr, in the past and today <sup>30</sup>

Károly Torma's house in Csicsókeresztúr along with his estate was sold in 1877 to the Naszód (today Rumánia, Nazad) school foundation <sup>30</sup>.

The FOUNDATION should call the attention of the scientific society to the ground-breaking activities of Zsófia Torma, the places of her research, her findings and the significance of her studies, about which she held lectures at international conferences. Her published works, collections and her correspondence with highly-regarded scientists attest to all this. It would be a matter of honor to fulfill Zsófia's big dream, the publishing of her work, entitled „*Dácia a római foglalás előtt*” (*Dácia before the Roman Occupation*). Based upon Zsófia's references, this big work contains many important deductions and two thousand illustrations, which would need to be restored first, since in 1961 N. Vlassa, the archeologist of the Kolozsvár Historical Museum mentioned, that quality-wise, they are in an unpublished state. For eight years, Zsófia sent petitions on this subject to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, but in vain.

Among the drawings in the already presented material, one can identify some objects from Zsófia's collection, and on them Zsófia's name should be shown. These are finds that she collected with so much hard work.

We also would like to bring attention to the mistakes of the Academy of Sciences of that time, which did not dare then, and today does not dare to support Zsófia's advanced views.

In Szászváros, on the house that Zsófia once owned house a tablet marked the name of its famous occupant. After the restoration, today's Rumanian owner did not give permission to replace this tablet. <sup>32</sup>

So, instead of a dedication ceremony for this tablet, on April, 28, 2012, Zsófia's followers remembered this outstanding Magyar archeologist in the Téglás Gábor School in Déva and on the next day, at the Szászváros Reformed Church <sup>32</sup>.

In addition, on April 29, 2012, to commemorate the lady-archeologist's 180th birthday, a lecture was held in Szászváros, in the meeting hall of the local Reformed Church and in Zsófia Torma's former house. The theme of the lecture was *The life and work of Zsófia Torma*, and concerned the dedication of the memorial tablet. <sup>32</sup>

Lecturers were: Júlia Fülöp, local historian of the city of Szászváros, Friedrich Klára and Szakács Gábor rovás (runic) writing researchers from Budapest.

## 18. Source Material

- 1 Torma Zsófia: *Sumér nyomok Erdélyben (Sumerian Traces in Erdély)* – Translation by István Foyta (Jenő Mátyás Fehér and Anna Fehér, in "Magyar őskutatás" (Magyar ancient research), Buenos Aires, 1972, "Sumér könyvek" (Sumerian books) , published in three parts)

- Part I. , Gábor Jáki's study entitled: TORMA ZSÓFIA ÉLETE ÉS MUNKÁSSÁGA (ZSÓFIA TORMA's LIFE AND WORK); Part II., Zsófia Torma: SUMÉR NYOMOK ERDÉLYBEN (SUMERIAN TRACES IN ERDÉLY) – translated by István Foyta f; Part III., Gábor Jáki's work entitled: SUMÉROK MAGYAR FÖLDÖN (SUMERIANS ON MAGYAR LAND)
- 2 Torma Zsófia: *Hazánk népe ősmýthosának maradványai, (The remnants of the ancient myths of the people of our country)* Memorial publication of the Szolnok-Doboka Women, pages 33-36, (edutir Dezső Veress ) 1896, Deés
  - 3 Friedrich Klára: *Torma Zsófia régész nő pontos születési ideje, Honlevél, 2012 január (The exact date of birth of the lady-archeologist, Zsófia Torma, Honlevél, January 2012*
  - 4 Vasárnapi Ujság (Sunday Paper), 39th issue, September 24, 1882, Budapest
  - 5 Friedrich Klára: *Zsófia Torma, a woman in the service of Hungarian archeology.* (Honlevél, Magyarok Világszövetségének lapja, Journal of the World Federation of Hungarians, 2007/july)
  - 6 Bánffy Ernő dr: *Torma Zsófia*  
<http://blog.xfree.hu/myblog.tvn?SID=&from=0&pid=&pev=2012&pho=07&pnap=&kat=2251&searchkey=&hol=&n=lambert>
  - 7 Vasárnapi Ujság, (Sunday paper) no.49, December 3, 1899, Budapest
  - 8 (A [www.CIMEC.ro](http://www.CIMEC.ro) által ajánlott kulturális események),  
<http://cimec.wordpress.com/tag/tartaria/>
  - 9 Torma Zsófia: *A tordosi őstelep és hazánk népe ősmýthosának maradványai, (The remnants of the ancient myth of the ancient Tordos Settlement and of our people)* Hunyad County's Monograph.: pp.3-16 , 1897, Budapest
  - 10 Deák Gerő: *A tordasi régészeti telepről (From the ancient settlement of Tordos)* Magyar Polgár, Kolozsvár. vol.IX.. (1875) no. 254.
  - 11 Torma Zsófia: *Neolith kőkorszakbeli telepek Hunyad megyében, (Neolithic settlements in Hunyad County.)* Erdélyi Museum, no. 5 , pp. 129-155, no. pp. 190-192, no. 7, pp. 193-211, Published by the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1879, Kolozsvár
  - 12 Torma Zsófia: *Ősrégészeti újabb leletek, (Newer ancient archeological findings)* Erdélyi Museum, no.10, p.311, Published by the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1879, Kolozsvár
  - 13 Vasárnapi Ujság, (Sunday Paper) no. 41, October 15, 1882, Budapest
  - 14 Winn, Shan M. M.: *Prehistory knowledge (Virtual Museum of the Inscriptions), The Global Prehistory Consortium at Euroinnovanet, <http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/winn8.htm>*
  - 15 Friedrich Klára – Szakács Gábor: *Kárpát – medencei birtoklevelünk, a ROVÁSÍRÁS, (Our letter of ownership is the ROVÁS WRITING)* <http://www.scribd.com/doc/60313572/9/Torma-Zsofia-igazsaga>

- 16 Hermann Antal: *Virchow Rudolf jelentése erdélyi útjáról*, (*Report of Rudolf Virchow's trip in Erdély*) Erdélyi Múzeum, no.10, pp.634-647, published by the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1899, Kolozsvár
- 17 Gyulai Pál: *Torma Zsófia levelesládájából* (*From Zsófia Torma's correspondence*) (Bucharest, 1972)
- 18 Finály, Henrik: *Ethnographische Analogien-recenzió*, Erdélyi Múzeum, no. 8, pp.560-563, Published by the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1894, Kolozsvár
- 19 Roska Márton: *A Torma Zsófia gyűjtemény*, (*Zsófia Torma's Collection*) Az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárában, (In the Erdély National Museum, Medal and Antiquities Collection) 38 pictures and 151 tables, (Kolozsvár, 1941):  
[http://adatbank.transindex.ro/html/cim\\_pdf1079.pdf](http://adatbank.transindex.ro/html/cim_pdf1079.pdf)
- 20 Hermann Antal: *Torma Zsófiáról*, (*About Zsófia Torma*) Yearbook of the Hunyad County Historical and Archeological Society, 1901, Déva
- 21 Torma Zsófia: *A római uralom előtti Dáciának planeta cultusáról*, (*Dacia's Planet Cult Prior to Roman Rule*) Erdélyi Múzeum, no. 4, pp.73-7, Published by the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1887, Kolozsvár
- 22 Torma Zsófia (Géza Kuun, Gábor Téglás): *Hunyadvármegye földjének története az őskortól a honfoglalásig*, (The history of Hunyad County's soil from ancient times to the Homecoming.) Hunyadvármegye Története. I. kötet, (History of Hunyad County, vol. I) Athenaeum Publisher, 1902, Budapest
- 23 Torma Zsófia: *A nándori barlangcsoportozat*, (*The Nándor Cave Complex*) Erdélyi Múzeum, no. 6 pp.153-171, no.7, pp. 206-209, Published by the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1880, Kolozsvár
- 24 Sabin Adrian Luca: *Așezări Neolitice pe valea Mureșului (II) Noi cercetări la Turdaș – Luncă (Neolithic Settlements in the valley of the Mureș (II) New archeological research at Turdaș-Luncă, I. The 1992–1995 Campaigns.)*, Bibliotheca Mvsei Apvlensis XVII, ISBN 973-590-514, Editura Economică, 2001, <http://arheologie.ulbsibiu.ro/publicatii/carti/cpvm/anexa1.htm>
- 25 A Torma Zsófia gyűjtemény közvetlen sorsa, (The immediate fate of the Zsófia Torma collection) Erdélyi Múzeum, no. 17, Published by the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1900, Kolozsvár
- 26 A Torma Zsófia könyvtár közvetlen sorsa, (The immediate fate of the Zsófia Torma Library) Erdélyi Múzeum, no. 5, p.282, Published by the Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1903, Kolozsvár
- 27 Bálintné Kovács Júlia: *Torma Károly régész, akadémikus*, (*Károly Torma archeologist, academician*) Erdélyi Örmény gyökerek (Armenian Roots in Erdély) (brochure), yr. XIII, pp.149-150, 2009, Budapest

- 28 Prima femeie arheolog s-a școlit la Cluj (Az első régész nő tanulmányait Kolozsváron végezte)  
(The first lady-archeologist completed her studies in Kolozsvár),  
<http://ziuadeclj.realitatea.net/eveniment/prima-femeie-arheolog-s-a-scolit-la-cluj--24206.html>
- 29 Diana Sztancs, Lucica Păcurar: *Zsófia von Torma (1832-1899)*, (Buletinul Cercului de Istorie Veche și Arheologie), <http://web.ulbsibiu.ro/silviu.purece/cerc/publicatii/buletin%201.pdf>
- 30 Torma- udvarház Csicsókeresztúr, (Torma home in Csicsókeresztúr)  
<http://lexikon.adatbank.transindex.ro/muemlek.php?id=392>
- 31 Friedrich Klára tanulmánya alapján, *180 éve született Torma Zsófia, az első magyar régész nő*,  
(According to Klára Friedrich's study, *Zsófia Torma, the first Magyar lady-archeologist was born 180 years ago.*)  
<http://budahazijudit.hu/mult/magyar-mult/796-180-eve-szueletett-torma-zsofia-az-els-magyar-regeszn>
- 32 Hunyad Megyei Magyar Napok:  
[http://www.rmdszhunyd.ro/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=171%3Aiii-hunyad-megyei-magyar-napok-program&catid=1%3Afriss-hirek&lang=hu](http://www.rmdszhunyd.ro/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=171%3Aiii-hunyad-megyei-magyar-napok-program&catid=1%3Afriss-hirek&lang=hu)
- 33 Dr. Zsófia Torma: *Hunyad vármegye őskori történelméhez* : (Addenda to the ancient history of Hunyad county.) Three readings and one proposition / by Zsófiá Torma, Published: Athenaeum, 1882, Budapest

The rovás writing has a great heritage in Scandinavia and is greatly honored there. It gives us great joy that Zsófia Torma was discussed in this light by Klára Friedrich, runic writing researcher: [www.rovasirasforrai.hu](http://www.rovasirasforrai.hu) Kitekintő rovat – Torma Zsófia