

“Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu  
Faculty of de Social and Human Sciences

# **DOCTORAL THESIS**

## **- ABSTRACT -**

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# Zsófia Torma and the settlement of Turdaș – Luncă, Hunedoara County

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## ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Zsófia Torma, Turdaş – *Luncă*, Transylvania, Troy, prehistoric archaeology, CIAAP 1876, dissemination, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte, coresspondence, academic network, nationalism.

Zsófia Torma (1832-1899) was a pioneering Hungarian archaeologist from nineteenth-century Transylvania. Today, she is known among archaeologists for her archaeological collection and the researches she undertook at the site of Turdaş – *Luncă*. However, little is known about her life. From the information we have today, she is the first female archaeologist in Austria-Hungary, as well as in today's Romania and Hungary. In her time, Transylvania was part of Austria-Hungary, which is why her activity must be analyzed and discussed in the context of Hungarian archaeology. Zsófia Torma had a significant role in the development of prehistoric archaeology in Transylvania, especially through the researches she carried out at the prehistoric settlement of Turdaş – *Luncă*, located in Hunedoara County. Due to its large size and richness of finds, Turdaş – *Luncă* is one of the most important archaeological sites in today's Romania and even Europe. Thanks to Zsófia Torma, this site, which was for a long time associated with Troy, became very famous in Europe beginning with the 1880s. Zsófia Torma is the first person who excavated this site, starting with the autumn of 1875. She discovered numerous artifacts which allowed her to create an impressive archaeological collection in her house, in the town of Orăştie. Soon, her collection became renowned not only in Hungary, but also internationally. Towards the end of her life, this collection that is now hosted by The National History Museum of Transylvania consisted of more than 10000 objects. For all these reasons, Zsófia Torma's scientific activity and experiences in a field that was at the dawn of its development, in a society where women's scientific preoccupations were disregarded, are very important for the history of Hungarian, Romanian and European archaeology. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to reconstruct Zsófia Torma's scientific biography in the cultural, social and political context of nineteenth-century Transylvania.

This thesis is the result a complex research that has been undertaken during the past three years, in seven institutions from Romania and Hungary, which hold archival materials concerning Zsófia Torma's personal and scientific life. These institutions are as follows: The National Archives of Hunedoara County (Deva, Romania), The National History Museum of Transylvania (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), The Szekler National Museum (Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania), The Brukenthal National Museum (Sibiu, Romania), The National Széchényi Library (Budapest, Hungary), The Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest, Hungary), and The Hungarian National Museum (Budapest, Hungary).

This research topic was suggested to me by Professor Sabin Adrian Luca, who conducted systematic excavations at the site of Turdaş - *Luncă* between 1992 and 1998, as well as preventive ones in 2011. The discoveries resulted from these excavations have revealed the necessity of re-evaluating Zsófie Torma's scientific activity through archival sources. Initially, my research resulted in a bachelor's degree dissertation titled *Jurnalul Zsófie Torma. Traducere, analiză și interpretare* (Zsófie Torma's Diary: Translation, Analysis and Interpretation), which was supervised by Professor Sabin Adrian Luca and defended in Sibiu, in July 2011. The aim of the dissertation was to transcribe, translate and analyze a diary from The National Archives of Hunedoara County (ANDJH, Fond Zs. Torma, dos. 3/1880-1899, f. 212-274), which belonged to Zsófia Torma and dates from her last years of life (Coltofean 2011; 2012; 2014). In the autumn of 2013, after a break of two years during my master's degree, I restarted my researches about Zsófia Torma's biography on my enrollment on PhD studies.

The thesis has nine chapters and two appendixes. My research had numerous objectives. Firstly, using the few surviving documents, I aimed to reconstruct Zsófia Torma's life before 1875, the year when she started excavating at Turdaş – *Luncă*, in order to examine the way in which the decisions and events from that period influenced her later life, both on a personal and professional level (Chapter II). Secondly, I wanted to examine the role that the eighth edition of *Congrès international d'anthropologie et d'archéologie préhistoriques* played in the development of prehistoric archaeology in Transylvania, through Zsófia Torma's researches at Turdaş – *Luncă* and her participation in this event. This Congress (abbreviated as CIAAP 1876 in the following) took place in Budapest, in 1876, and was a turning point not only for Hungarian archaeology, but also for Zsófia Torma, marking the beginning of her archaeological career (Chapter III). Another aim was to present and analyze the “marketing strategy” that Zsófia Torma developed after returning from CIAAP 1876, in order to disseminate her researches, discoveries and theories, on a national and international

level. Her main ways of dissemination included: participating in international scientific congresses, donating archaeological materials, publishing articles, as well as corresponding with Hungarian researchers (such as Flóris Rómer, József Hampel, Ignác Goldziher, Pál Hunfalvy, Aurél Török, Jenő Nyáry, Lajos Haynald, Gábor Téglás, Géza Kuun, Antal Hermann, Frigyes Riedl, Áron Szilády, and others), and especially foreign (Heinrich Schliemann, Johannes Ranke, Matthäus Much, Otto Helm, Friedrich Lindenschmit, Eduard Krause, Friedrich Kurtz, Abraham Lissauer, Albert Voss, Paul Reinecke, John Lubbock, Archibald Henry Sayce, Francis Haverfield, and others).

Due to the large amount of documents and information, I dedicated a chapter to each of these means of dissemination (Chapters IV-VII). The diary which I studied in 2010 and 2011 for my bachelor's degree dissertation shows that Zsófia Torma's last years of life were troubled on a personal level, but also on a family and professional level. During those years a series of events took place that were decisive for the way in which her collection and scientific activity were perceived after her death in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Such events were the following: the sale of her archaeological and paleontological collections; the publishing of the *Ethnographische Analogien* volume (Jena, 1894); her efforts to finish and publish her last work, *Dacia vor der römischen Occupation (sic!; Dacia before the Roman occupation)*; the family conflicts; as well as the award of the *doctor honoris causa* title. Thus, another objective of my research was to examine the previously enumerated events, in order to understand the context in which they were produced and how they influenced the unfolding of her last nine years of life (Chapter VIII). In addition to this, I also aimed to trace the history of archaeological researches undertaken at the settlement of Turdaş – *Luncă*, from the twentieth until the twenty-first century, in order to see how this site was researched after Zsófia Torma's death (Chapter IX). The site of Turdaş – *Luncă* holds a special place in the history of the archaeological school of the "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu. Through the systematic archaeological researches carried out by professor Sabin Adrian Luca between 1992 and 1998, this site has contributed to the development of the university's first generations of archeologists. These are part of the legendary "golden generation", whose image was repeatedly and nostalgically evoked by professors. The students of recent years, including myself, have grown with stories about these past generations. Driven by curiosity, as well as the thought that such an objective might be useful for future researches about the history of Romanian archaeology, I also aimed at documenting through oral history interviews the daily life on the field school of Turdaş – *Luncă* in the above mentioned period,

as well as the experience of Sabin Adrian Luca, as an excavation leader, and his former students (Chapter IX).

The history of researches concerning Zsófia Torma's biography and the research methodology are presented and discussed in Chapter I. As I mentioned before, the thesis ends with two large appendixes. Appendix I includes the interview guides and the interviews made with professor Sabin Adrian Luca and several of his former students – dr. Marius-Mihai Ciută, dr. Aurel Dragotă, dr. Alexandru Sonoc and Adriana Țuțuianu on their experience at Turdaș – *Luncă*, during the systematic researches undertaken between 1992 and 1998. Appendix II was created as a volume of Hungarian documents. It contains the transcription of some documents that I researched at The National Széchényi Library, The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, The Hungarian National Museum, The National Archives of Hunedoara County, and The Szekler National Museum.

At the beginning of my doctoral studies, I hoped to translate most of the documents that I identified and studied. However, I soon realized that this was impossible to achieve in three years, especially in the context in which other phases of document processing, such as transcription, required much time. Therefore, I preferred to translate into Romanian only the document fragments that I quoted in the chapters. The quotes are numerous and I tried to choose the most relevant ones. In the future, I aim to translate into Romanian and/or English most of the documents concerning Zsófia Torma's life and scientific activity, and to gather them in a volume of documents. These documents are extremely valuable for the history of Hungarian and Romanian archaeology, as well as for the history of prehistoric archaeology in Europe. Thus, it is important for these documents to be linguistically accessible not only for Hungarian researchers, but also for Romanians and foreign. Moreover, the translation of these documents would enable future researches about the same topic or could be a starting point for other researches.

In 1998, Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Marie Louise Stig-Sørensen were emphasizing the fact that, in many studies on the history of European archaeology, women are ignored, as if they did not have any contribution to the development of this discipline (Díaz-Andreu, Stig-Sørensen 1998, 2). The book, *Excavating Women. A history of women in European archaeology*, edited by the two archaeologists, is a reference point in the historiography concerning women's participation in archaeology. Since then, in Western Europe, the number of books, studies and websites dealing with this topic has risen considerably (see, for example, Davies, Charles 1999; Ruiz 2006; Carr 2012; Fries, Gutschmiedl-Schümann 2013; Rebay-Salisbury 2013-2014, and other). On the other hand, from this point of view, Eastern

Europe remains for the most part unknown. In Romania, besides commemorative writings and necrologues, the only contributions to the historiography of women in archaeology, are some studies of researcher Nona Palincaş from the “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest, one of Romania’s leading names in gender archaeology. However, her studies mainly focus on women’s social status and gender relations in contemporary Romanian archaeology (Palincaş 2008; 2010). My research tries to fill the above mentioned gap and to recover women’s contributions in the development of archaeology.