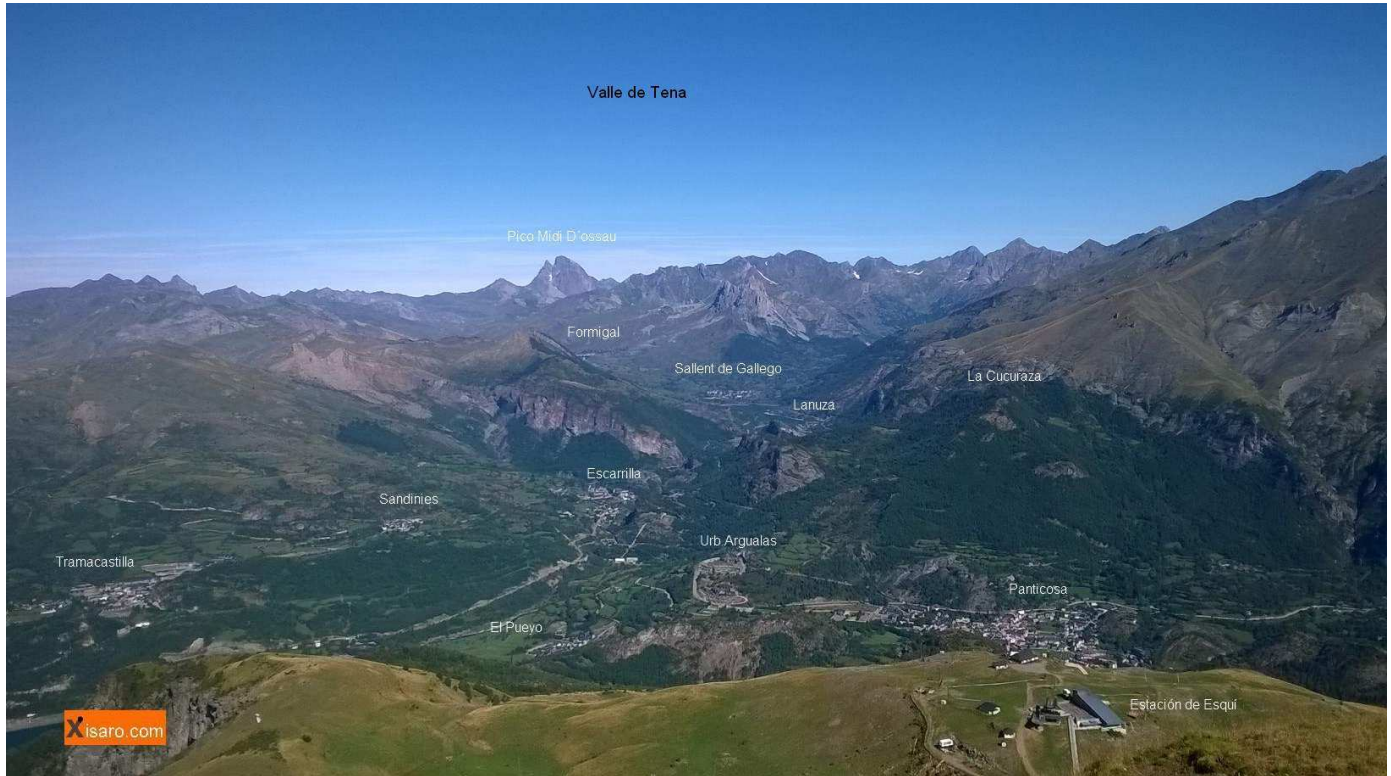


# The History of the Tena Valley

It covers an area of 400 km<sup>2</sup> and is one of the most extensive and populated Pyrenean valleys of the Pyrenees.



It has 8.33 Hab / km<sup>2</sup> (source: Adelpa 2007) Those of us who live in the Valley are "Tensinos" The oldest data in the area is provided by a flint tip from the Middle Bronze found in El Pueyo de Jaca.



Photography: Hermitage of Santa Elena

The entrance to El Valle de Tena is located in the Strait of Santa Elena (they are the remains of an old glacial moraine), popularly called by the locals "Zoque"

Excavated by the waters of the Gállego river between the mountains of Telera and Tendeñera. It is one of the most outstanding religious enclaves of the Aragonese region of Alto Gállego and is dedicated to Elena de

The Valley had a political entity apart from the kingdom of Aragon during the errand of Sancho III in the eleventh century.

At that time there were no towns as we know them now, but groups of pardins or vicos gathered around one or several churches.

In PANTICOSA there were two differentiated nuclei; the vico of San Salvador and the vico of Santa María. Both had their own entity, with independent administration and finances. Today both are still noticeable.

In SALLENT DE GALLEGO there were vicos or neighborhoods like Casadios, Zarratiecho, el Paco, etc.



The Valley from the south, aerial view.

JAVBFrom the Middle Ages the Valley was governed by a council representing the various existing places as a small parliament. Call in the XV century The Brotherhood of Tena and later the General Meeting of the Val de Tena, which remained in force until 1836 and which was chaired by a Justice.

At that time the Val de Tena was formed by twelve places grouped in three Quiñones; Panticosa (Panticosa, Hoz, El Pueyo and Exena, disappeared in the sixteenth century), Salient de Gallego (Sallente and Lanuza) and La Partacua (Tramacastilla, Piedrafita, Sandinies, Saqués, Bubal with Polituara, the annexes of Casa de Artosa and the Estarlengo Pardina of unknown location).

ARTOSA is now flooded by the Bubal reservoir and you can still see some of its houses in ruins when the water level drops.

The symbol of the union and organization of the three quiñones and where the documentation and privileges of the Valley were kept is the Ark of the Privileges.

Text: Máxim Izquierdo Sanz

The Ark had a triple lock and each chiñónon had one of the keys and could only be opened jointly.

The photograph: Arca de los Privilegios that is still preserved today in the Hall of Sessions of the City of Panticosa.



Ark of Privileges

In 1386 Pedro IV, in attention to the services that the tensinos lend defending the borders of the kingdom against invasions of Gascones, English and other uncomfortable neighbors that prey on them, invade and mistreat, confirms them in their rights and orders the royal officials to leave to bother them and do not demand illegal exactions of their earnings.

From 1300 to 1391 the documents reflect the constant struggle of the tensines against the invasions coming from ultrapuertos, as well as the efforts of the monarchs to content them and, by means of concessions of privileges, exemptions and rewards, to avoid that so brave defenders of the Aragonese borders emigrated to other places.

In 1390 an especially serious invasion of the high valley of the Gallego was registered and the entrance of foreign armed people who came to totally destroy Biescas. In 1391 there was another invasion by the captain of Lourdes with Bigorreses who occupied the valley of Tena and inflicted as many damages as possible. Juan I remembers the good services that from the time of his ancestors the tensinos had lent in the defense of the border and orders to the captain of the mountains of Jaca, Gonzalo Forcén de Bernaldes that erect a palisade in the border to prevent the entrance of the invaders .

The mountaineers, good connoisseurs of the difficult Pyrenean terrain, excellent hunters and, therefore, well armed with crossbows and spears, and faithful to the death of their king and lord, constituted for the Aragonese monarchs a guarantee of defense of the kingdom's borders. Therefore the successive kings compensated them for the damages and losses received in their service, with tax exemptions among others.

The tensinos used the argument of depopulation as blackmail against the king, whom they knew to be sensitive to this threat.

To give an example of some of the privileges of those who used the Tensinos, when they were going to go on a trip, either with their cattle or their merchandise, they asked the justice or notary of the valley to send them a legalized copy of this privilege, so to be able to exhibit it before the collectors of the taxes of which they were exempt, especially the ones of step, pontaje, and toll, to those who were finding themselves in the way. The abbreviated notes for the issuance of certificates of "the openness of Tena" for the transport of goods or the lowering of cattle to flat land are frequent in the Tensin protocols.

A curious and singular privilege is granted by the infant Juan, son of Pedro IV, by which he allows the tenants to import wine wherever they wanted and could, taking into account that "the val of Tena is located at the ends of the Kingdom of Aragón, is very sterile and in the territory the vines do not grow and neither wine is produced, which only its inhabitants can obtain with great work and expenses. For this privilege the infamous repeal other orders or rules given in the opposite direction, in order to guarantee to the tenants the supply of wine, which then, for its caloric contribution, was an important element in the diet of the mountaineers.

As a curiosity in El Pueyo, a market was held every two Wednesdays starting in March. There was also a privilege as a guarantee of real protection to those who went to it, and said that currency forgers, sodomites, bandits, thieves and criminals of lese majeste were excluded. The real protection extended to that the competitors to the market could not be pledged, arrested or captured.

The market was located at the apex of the Y that form the Gállego and Caldarés, crossed by the royal road and, therefore, easily accessible to all tensitos and strangers. They say the documents that should have had little life, since it is not mentioned in the documentation of the fifteenth century and successive centuries. Perhaps it was extinguished with the black plague or was overwhelmed by the Biescas.

Text: Documents of Valle de Tena 1291-1398, archive of Casa Lucas by Manuel Gómez de Valenzuela.

The appearance of the Valley changed completely with the construction of the Búbal Reservoir, also called Bubal Reservoir, which collects the waters of the Gállego River, a tributary of the Ebro, as well as other small streams and torrents descended from the mountains of the valley, such as the Caldarés or the Lana Mayor. Its dam was inaugurated in 1971 and allows to impound a total capacity of 64.26 hm<sup>3</sup> of water. With its construction, 234 hectares of land devoted mainly to pastures were flooded.

This supposed the disappearance and expropriation of some towns like Bubal, Saques, Polituara and the hamlets of Lartosa completely flooded. In the Pueyo de Jaca a handful of neighbors remained until their reversion to the former owners.

Polituara, Bubal and Saques with the Caserio de La Artosa were located on the route to France, forming part of the Camino Real that ran from north to south across the Tena Valley, some of them as a Polituara was always a place of passage, of inns and shops, where travelers expected to climb to the top of the valley, especially in winter due to the inclement weather.

Out of curiosity, you can see "Last names of Valle de Tena" in the book published by the Pánicouto Juan José Guillén Calvo.

We hope you liked it.

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