



## START OF INVESTIGATIONS

### A STRATEGIC LOCATION

Located 1.5 kilometers northwest of Artieda, the archaeological site occupies a flat agricultural field on the edge of the escarpment on the left side of the Valley of the Aragón river. The field, with an oblong shape and cultivated until recently with cereals by Sebastián Iguácel, has a total surface area of approximately 4 hectares. The deposit is delimited by two deep ravines, located at the east and the west of the field, and the north edge is defined by an escarpment up to between 20 m and 30 m over the valley of the Aragón river. A man-made moat closes the southeast side of the archaeological site close to the shrine of San Pedro, separating El Forau de la Tuta from the adjacent agricultural area called "Caseta del Royo"

The close relationship of the site with the road that ran in Antiquity and the Middle Ages along the left bank of the Aragon River is indisputable. In Roman times, it corresponds to the section of the road that linked, from east to west, the civitates of *Iacca* (Jaca) and *Pompaelo* (Pamplona). This segment of the road survived in the Middle Ages as one of the parts of The French Way or Tolosa Route of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, and is currently known as the Royal Way from Ruesta to Mianos (Camino Real de Ruesta a Mianos).

Classical authors such as Strabo (II, 4, 10), Pliny (N. H., III, 3, 29) or Ptolemy (II, 6, 3-9), testify about Roman cities, mansions and settlements (many of them not yet identified), situated in the Pre-Pyrenees. Some of them were identified long ago: *Andelos* (Andión), *Calagurris* (Calahorra), *Cara* (Santacara), *Cascantum* (Cascante), *Gracchuris* (Alfaro), *Iacca* (Jaca), *Iturissa* (Espinal, Burguete, Navarra), *Oiasso* (Irún) and *Pompaelo* (Pamplona). Together with these certainties, there are two unknowns in this territory: firstly, the existence of sites whose monumentality proves that they were important urban places but whose ancient names we do not know, is the case of Santa Criz (Eslava, Navarra), Lumbier (Navarra), Cabezo Ladrero (Sofuentes, Zaragoza), Campo Real-Fillera (Sos del Rey Católico-Sangüesa) and also now El Forau de la Tuta. Secondly, we have the opposite case, cities cited by various classical sources whose exact location is unknown, for example, *Curnonium*, *Iluberi*, *Nemanturista*, *Tarraca*, *Ergau(k)a*, *Muskaria* and *Araceli*. It is important to remember that until an epigraph that confirms the name of the city is found, all the proposals fall within the field of the hypothesis.

### ENRIQUE OSSET MORENO (TOLEDO 2 APRIL 1929, JACA 21 JANUARY 1971)

The first testimonies about the existence of this site come from the clergyman J. Traggia, collected in the Voice of Thermae within the report Apparatus of the ecclesiastic history of Aragon, T. II, 1791, 224-225 and, in more detail, the reports of the priest Mateo Suman who, in 1802, in his Notes for the geographical dictionary of the kingdom of Aragon. Region of Cinco Villas, according to ms. 9-5723 of the RAH [J802], (J. Salvo Salanova and A. Capalvo, eds. [2015]), attests to the presence of several vestiges in this place.



However, the initiation of the in-depth investigations is due to the Commander of the Infantry, Enrique Osset Moreno, from La Mancha, who arrived in Jaca in 1953. There he married Marisa Vicente and formed a family feeling fully integrated in Jaca until his premature death at 42 years old. Especially in the summer, the bond between the family and this territory was strengthened. It was in the summer of 1963 when the names of Artieda and Osset were definitively linked, thanks to the discovery of what we know today as the Roman villa of Rienda, whose vestiges, mainly a polychrome mosaic, had been fortuitously exhumed a few months before, by Francisco Iguácel's tractor. Enrique Osset had the wisdom to notify the finding to the competent authorities who quickly determined to send the archaeologist Antonio Beltrán. Together they presented the discoveries at the VIII National Congress of Archaeology (Sevilla-Málaga, 1963) under the title "Report about Roman findings in Artieda de Aragón (Zaragoza)", also echoing the news in various media of the time. His interest also extended to other sites in the municipality of Artieda, such as Campo del Royo or La Viña del Sastre. Especially important was the documentation of remains in what he already sensed was an archaeological site, today known as the site of El Forau de la Tuta.

This invaluable work was conveniently published in various studies, such as «Archaeological findings in Artieda de Aragón», AEspA 38, 1965, p. 97-105; «The Roman villa of Rienda, in Artieda de Aragón (Zaragoza)», AEspA 40, 1967, p. 120-129, but more valuable is, if possible, the documentation generated by Enrique Osset after several years of meticulous work, documentation which has been carefully guarded by the Osset family, without which the current investigations would not have been possible. A tribute to his figure and his research was published by José Luis Ona González in 2011. Important for the current research are the archaeological surveys and the delimitation of sites in Artieda, carried out in 2009 by J. Delgado and J.R. Martínez, collected in a report delivered to the Department of Education, Culture and Sports of the Government of Aragon.

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