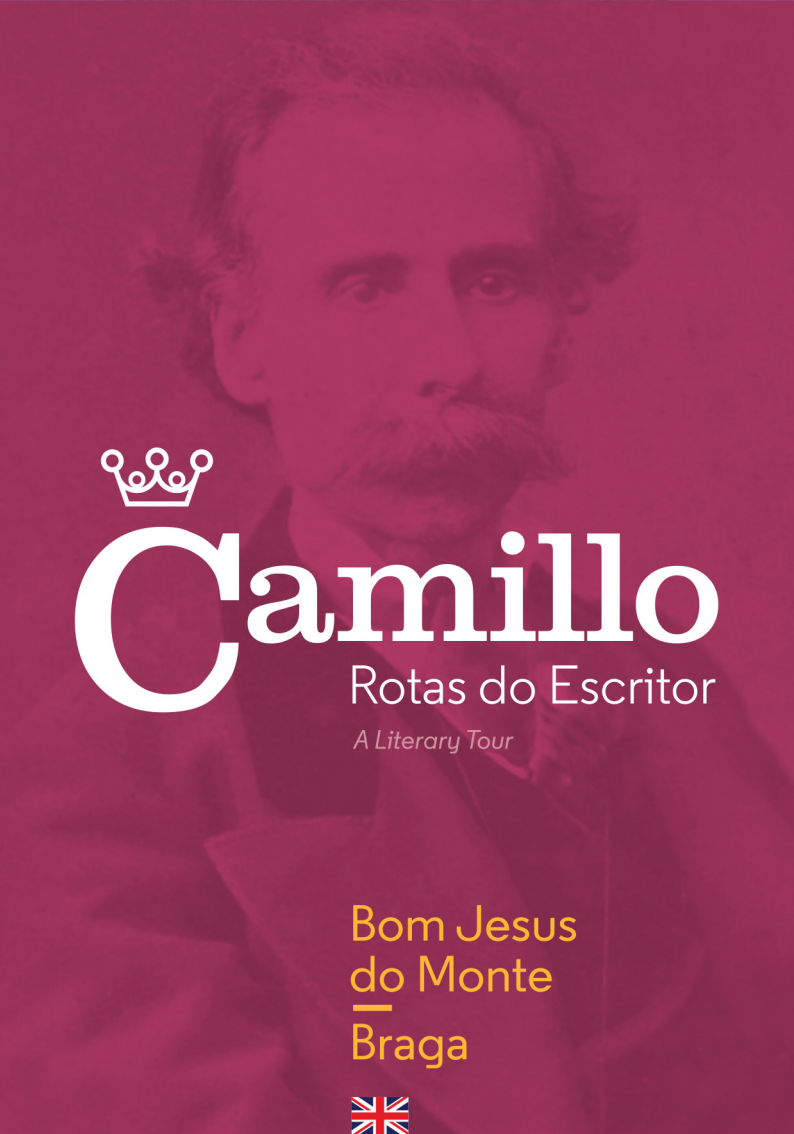


A faint, monochromatic portrait of Camilo de Castro, a man with a mustache and wavy hair, serves as the background for the entire page.A small white crown icon is positioned above the letter 'C' in the word 'Camillo'.

# Camillo

Rotas do Escritor

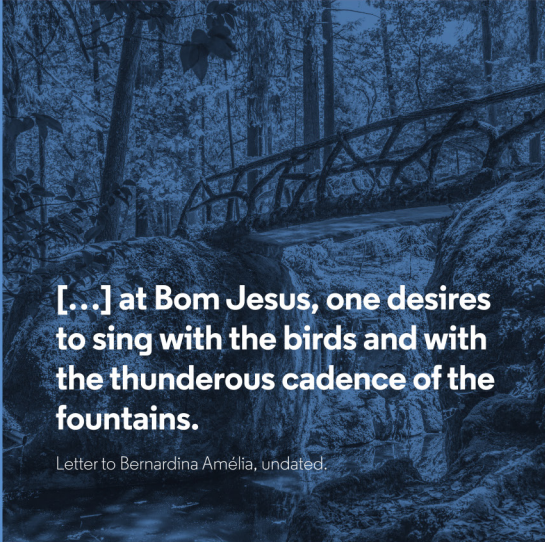
*A Literary Tour*

Bom Jesus  
do Monte  

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Braga





**[...] at Bom Jesus, one desires  
to sing with the birds and with  
the thunderous cadence of the  
fountains.**

Letter to Bernardina Amélia, undated.

This leaflet provides the visitor with an idea of the long, deeply felt, lived and fictional relationships that Camilo had with Bom Jesus do Monte in Braga, the City of the Archbishops. Throughout his life, and especially in periods of the greatest anguish and ill health, the Edenic airs of the site, the solitude of the woods, and the hearty companionship of his close friends delivered a reinvigorating breath of fresh air in the *via crucis* of the writer.



#### **Camilo Castelo Branco**

Lisbon, 16 March 1825

São Miguel de Seide

(Famalicão), 1 June 1890



“I was ten years old when I went to Bom Jesus do Monte for the first time”. Thus commences a text by Camilo Castelo Branco to commemorate the centenary of Bom Jesus do Monte in 1884. Camilo was born in Lisbon on 16 March 1825, but he barely knew his mother, and after he was orphaned of his father at ten years old he was sent to Trás-os-Montes to be raised by his paternal aunt, Rita Emília.

41.5547° N  
8.3771° W



#### **Basilica**

Building designed by the Braga architect, Carlos Amarante. It is a prime example of Portuguese neoclassical architecture, and it was built to replace the previous building, which was designed during the lifetime of D. Rodrigo de Moura Teles and demolished in 1788.



Bom Jesus do Monte  
On the left side of the  
nave is a chapel in  
which a full-size image  
of Jesus Agonising  
stands out. It was  
included in the earlier  
church and sculpted  
in Italy.

So it was that, in 1836, Camilo and his sister Carolina accompanied the maid Carlota Joaquina on her pilgrimage to fulfil a promise that she had made to the Senhor do Monte in the midst of the affliction caused by a storm that impeded the steamship Jorge IV, which was carrying them from Lisbon, from entering the Douro, thus obliging them to dock at Vigo from where they travelled to Vila Real: "I came, with the other pilgrims, from Vigo where a storm on the high seas had hit us prow-on. My maid, who loved life dearly, had made a promise to Bom Jesus; and, in fulfilment of her word, en route to Trás-os-Montes, she had invited several of her companions on the journey to climb to the top of the forest to thank the miraculous Lord for their salvation". This is how Camilo came to visit Bom Jesus do Monte for the first time – the first of many. In effect, the sanctuary in Braga came to be intimately linked to the novelist in the various romantic chapters of his life: the silence, the peace of those groves that made such an impression on the child later became the bucolic setting for his idylls with Ana Plácido; the pleasant nooks and the hotels that were the sites for conviviality with his friends; the freshness of those health-giving airs that were a balm for his illnesses; the solitude of the forest that soothed his aches and pains; the chapels of the Way of the Cross, the image of the footsteps of his embittered existence.

The Camilo Castelo  
Branco Garden  
(Jardim de Camilo)  
Plaque in homage  
and gratitude to  
Camilo Castelo  
Branco placed by the  
confraternity of Bom  
Jesus.



It is no surprise that Camilo dedicated many pages of his oeuvre to Bom Jesus do Monte. He even devoted an entire book to that space: *No Bom Jesus do Monte*, published in 1864. In addition to the church, he also refers to the chapels, whether in a general sense or more specifically, when he describes the individual statues that adorn their interiors. Some of the other statues that decorate the space are also mentioned in the text, with great precision: "As soon as I arrived at the 'Stairway of the Five Senses' I saw the girl, with a gaggle of others, seated on the first flight up, next to the fountain where, on the pedestal of a statue of a shepherd, this Latin from ECCLESIASTES can be read: *Vir prudens, quasi in somnis vide et vigilabis*".



Stairway of the Five  
Senses  
The stairway starts next  
to the Fountain of the Five  
Senses. Following this are  
five fountains in rococo  
style allegorising each of  
the five human senses,  
and which pour water  
through the respective  
organs of the sense that  
each one represents.

#### The Yard of the Evangelists

In this harmonious, octagonal yard there are three hexagonal chapels of *rocaille* architecture, and four fountains, which are decorated with sculptures of the four evangelists (St. Luke, St. Mark, St. Matthew, and St. John).



**Fountain of Tears**  
This is located near the Chapel of Unction (or of Tears). It has also been described as "erratic" because it has no inscriptions or figures.

The statue of St. Longino, along with those of Solomon, Pilate, Noah, and Jeremiah, receives special mention. Reference is made to the Fountain of Saturn, as well as the Fountain of Tears: "And I drank two gulps of water from the Fountain of Tears". Another of the fountains is mentioned by reference to its figurative mythological emblem: "A noseless Bacchus on one of the fountains exclaims, mocking the holy patriarch: 'The Deluge is not of water...!'. Other spatial elements are represented in the text, including the rear of the sanctuary: the Yard of the Evangelists, the Fountainhead. The Hotel da Boavista also merits more than one mention, to say nothing of the portico and the Stairway of the Five Senses. These abundant references are charged with impressions and the expression of feeling. Several other texts by Camilo contain references to Bom Jesus, from the short tale *Do Porto a Braga* to the longer narratives *O filho natural*, *O sangue*, *O santo da montanha*, or *Eusébio Macário*. That is not to mention the many references in his copious correspondence, which show no shortage of his idiosyncratic humour, such

as in the allusions to the statues of Jews placed inside the chapels to represent the passion and death of Christ, and which are depicted with a horrifying look that became proverbial: "My longer excursions are to Our Lord of the Mount – a pilgrimage that perhaps would be beneficial to my atrophied nerves were it not for those ugly Jews, bothering me and ridiculing me, right there, before the granite beards of those patriarchs" (Letter to Silva Pinto). In a letter to his daughter, Bernadina Amélia, who was staying in Buçaco at the time, Camilo compares that location with Bom Jesus do Monte, highlighting the advantages of the latter in a summary of the natural, artistic, and religious characteristics that merited the more recent nomination of the Minho resort as a world heritage site and which justify a (re)visit to this place with its fascinating connection between nature and spirituality: "At Bom Jesus there is more art; but the nature is more astounding and less severe. It is good to pray there like the friars who lived there; at Bom Jesus, one desires to sing with the birds and with the thunderous cadence of the fountains".



The surrounding land, known as the forest of Bom Jesus, is an idyllic place that delights the spirit. Here, the visitor may enjoy the many features that invite rest or meditation.



**The Equestrian Statue of St. Longino**  
First-century martyr, Roman centurion, and commander of the soldiers who took Christ to Calvary. It is said that he wounded Jesus's side with a strike of his sword. After the Passion, he converted to Christianity.

Vigo  
Braga  
Famalicão  
Oporto

Lisbon



[www.rotascamillo.pt](http://www.rotascamillo.pt)

Posto de Turismo de Famalicão

tel.: +351 252 312 564

email: famalicaoturismo@famalicao.pt

Casa-Museu de Camilo

tel.: +351 252 327 186

email: geral@rotascamillo.pt

### Partners

Câmara Municipal de Ribeira de Pena

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