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Guest artists: Abel Barandela, Fernando Búa, Manoli Martínez,
Paula Aboal, Rosana Boullosa.

THE ROUTE OF FATHER SARMIENTO TO SANTIAGO

across Salnés



Edited by the Salnés Union of Municipalities

Cover art by **Ana Cancela**.

Edition coordinators: **Ana Cancela**
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Text: **Marcelino Agís Villaverde**

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Note: The edition referred to throughout the book as Father Sarmiento's Travels through Galicia, is by Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745), Edition and study by J.L. Pensado of the University of Salamanca, Noia (A Coruña), 200

Preface I

The Benedictine monk, Father Martín Sarmiento, has been a key XVIII century figure since taking his route from Pontevedra. It is well known that he undertook three journeys to Galicia in 1710, not only to visit his relatives, and because of his love of Galicia, particularly Pontevedra, about which he used to say “I am a son of the Kingdom of Galicia, from Buena Vila, Pontevedra”, although he was in fact born in Vilafranca del Perzo, but also for his passion for research and knowledge. During his journeys, he kept records about the places he passed, describing the geography and topology, as well as the different species of vegetation he found alongz the way, noting down all their names. He also did this with each man-made element he came across, whether it was architectural, archaeological, or historical.

Of particular interest to us, is the journey he made to Galicia in 1745, specifically the one to Santiago, where he left Pontevedra on the 19th of July and travelled through the whole of the Valley of Salnés: the route we now know as the Route of Father Sarmiento. He arrived in Santiago on the 22nd of July, in time for the Jubilee, and noted that there was such a multitude of people, a particularly Portuguese, that the elderly residents were quite neglected. He later recorded that on the day of his arrival, there were 30,000 people congregated in the cathedral.

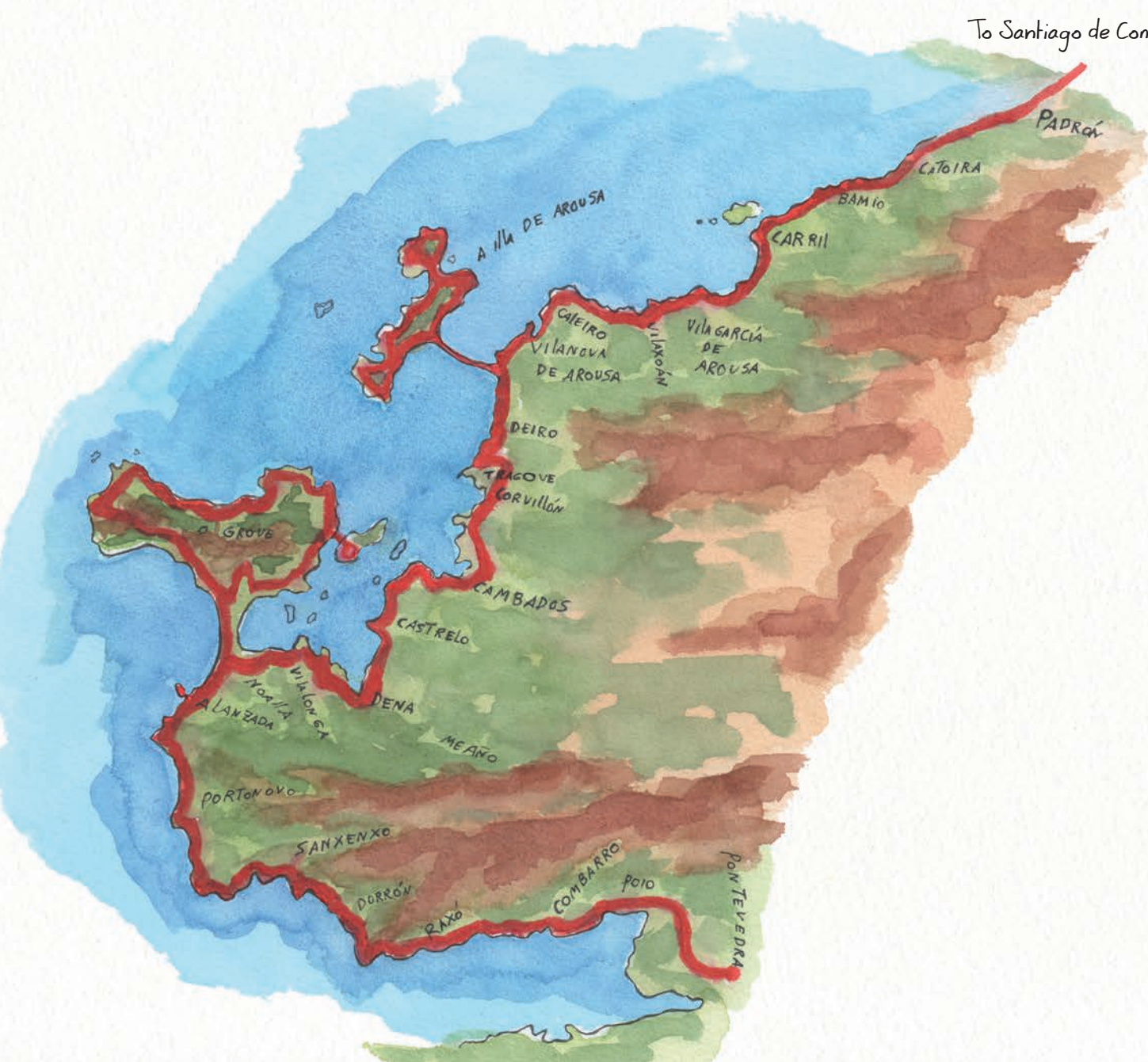
The Salnés Union of Municipalities is celebrating Father Sarmiento’s route, we believe rightly, not just because it draws attention to a trail already wonderfully described by the friar, but because it also provides an alternative route for pilgrims taking the Portuguese Way, who may wish to reach Santiago by following this ancient historical path. Father Sarmiento recollects many corners and areas of Salnés in his writing.

In this new publication, with text by Marcelino Agis and illustrations by Ana Cancela, we explore the itinerary from Pontevedra to Santiago, where the friar ends his trip.

I congratulate the authors and the Salnés Union of Municipalities for this unfailing support of the heritage and culture of the beautiful Valley of Salnés.

CELESTINO LORES

PRESIDENT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE PORTUGUESE WAY TO SANTIAGO



To Santiago de Compostela



Preface II

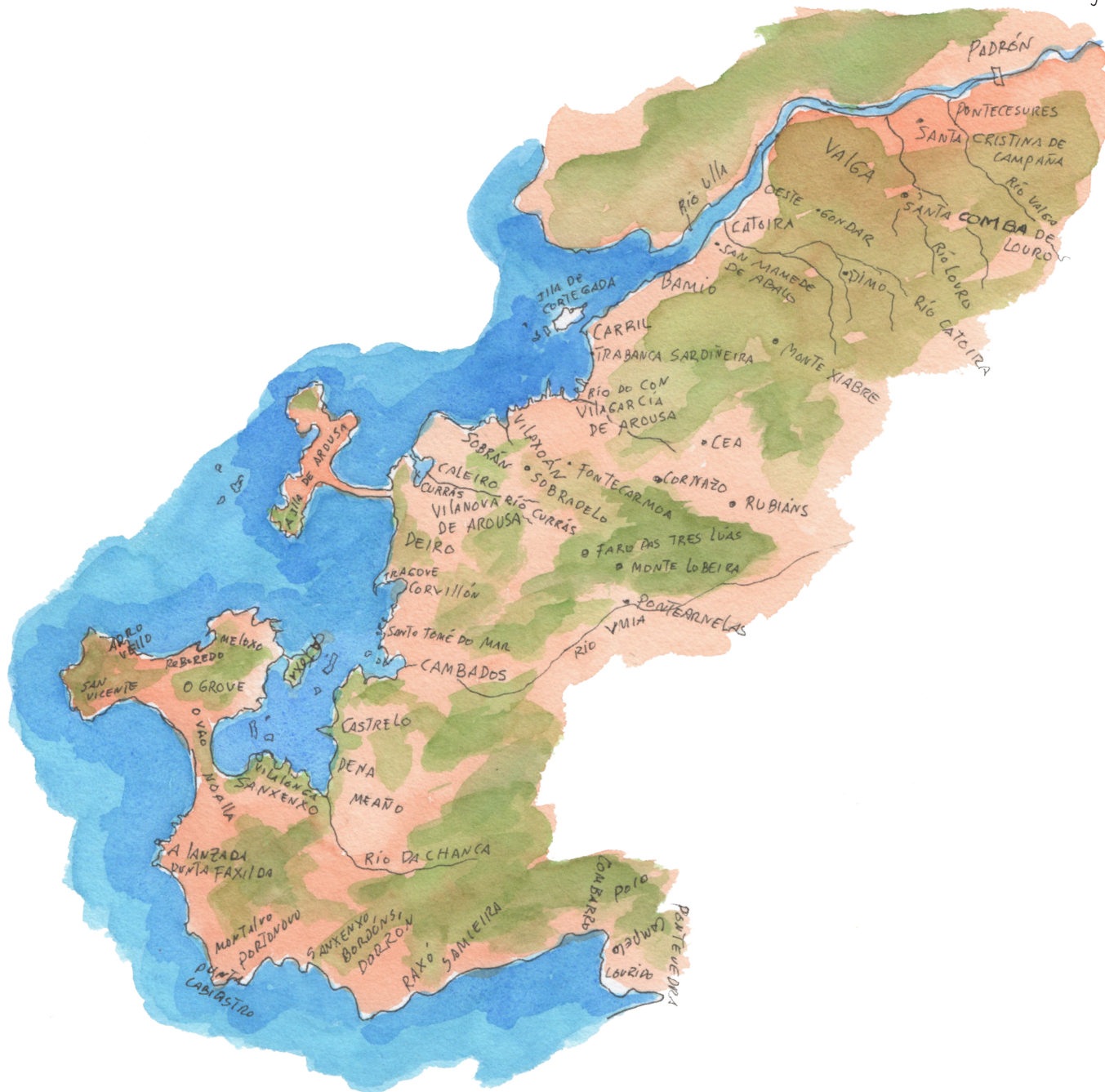
Almost three centuries ago, in 1745, Father Martin Sarmiento deliberately chose the Region of Salnés for one of his trips to Galicia, to discover an elusive experience, unique to these lands. With his simple walk from Salnés to Santiago de Compostela, he built on the legacy of a pilgrimage that culminates with the arrival at the Compostela cathedral, and discovered the true essence that thousands of people who choose to visit or live in this region share. His words, captured in his book, *Travels to Galicia*, touch on aspects such as the history, culture, heritage, countryside, and hospitality of our people who, together with our gastronomy, wine, and climate, are still today the main reason why Salnés is a prime tourist destination in Galicia. Salnés' numerous resources enable us to proudly explore and get to know this paradise, through numerous national and international initiatives.

I invite anyone who wishes to find themselves, at some point in their lives, in this increasingly globalised world, to try and relive Father Sarmiento's experience and travel this route, a variation of the Portuguese Way, along our coastline.

I thank everyone who, in any way, has contributed to this book, helping to celebrate the beauty we know as O Salnés.

GONZALO GONZALO PITA

DELEGATE FOR TOURISM FOR THE SALNÉS UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES



Introduction

We offer with this route from Padre Sarmiento to Santiago, across Salnés, the route taken by the Galician illustrated thinker Frei Martín Sarmiento (1695-1772) in the year 1745 to win the jubilee.

Sarmiento was 50 years old when he started the pilgrimage that would take him from Pontevedra to Santiago, travelling all the way through the region of Salnés. Why such a unique journey? We know that Sarmiento had, until that time, been a learned cleric and librarian. After so much scholarly work, his eyes were tired of reading and writing and he wanted to expand his world; to breathe, and come into contact with nature and the people of the region, who he had a deep desire to meet and get to know properly; the region of: O Salnés.

This is the first journey where Father Sarmiento left a written record. The journal that he kept on his travels is twenty sheets long. As on previous occasions when he trusted in his prodigious memory to record interesting facts and events, he now systematically noted every stage of his journey, with place names and things of interest that he came across. Sarmiento clearly proves that knowledge can be gained by experience, by walking on one's own feet, but he also continues to record his discoveries, so that the knowledge he obtains is not lost in the haze of memories.

He left Pontevedra on 19th July and arrived at Santiago on the 22nd, after crossing the Pontevedra and Arousa estuaries and visiting all corners of the Salnés region. In so doing, he inaugurated a very attractive alternative to the Portuguese Way to Santiago, from the point of view of the countryside and heritage of the route, which just like the Portuguese Way, is a gift for any pilgrim or hiker.

We are grateful to the Salnés Union of Municipalities for bringing this project together. Thanks to his support, this work is published that reconstructs, with drawings and explanatory texts, the steps of an enlightened friar, and lover of Galicia.

MARCELINO AGÍS VILLAVERDE
PRESIDENT OF THE GALICIA MILLENNIUM FORUM



Recreation of Pazo das Raposeiras, home of Father Sarmiento. Cerdedo. Drawn by Fernando Búa

Our illustrious wise man is said to have been born in a humble pazo in the parish of San Xoán de Cerdedo, in the Pontevedra region of Terra de Montes. A place of strong cultural ancestry and deep-rooted traditions.

There is even a route bearing its name, starting on a medieval carriageway that had been used by the Romans, and passing through various churches in the Cerdedo region, such as the ones in Santo Tomé de Quireza and in the centre of San Xoán Bautista.

Carballo de Santa Margarida, Mourente. Pontevedra



Father Sarmiento spent many childhood hours under the shade of the infamous Santa Margarita oak tree, in the Pontevedra parish of Mourente,

Monastery of San Salvador de Lérez. Pontevedra



Not far from Father Sarmiento's house, across the river Lérez, we find the ancient Monastery of San Salvador de Lérez. Situated on a small hilltop, thousands of devotees visit during the festival of Santo Benitiño, as, according to a popular couplet, was the most miraculous site.

Family home in Mourente. Pontevedra

On a sharp bend in the road was his family home, in which he dwelt from four months old, until he was fifteen.

A marble slab at the entrance of the Mosteiro de Lérez commemorates the fact that Father Sarmiento studied there. He would spend hours in its archives and its library, and also visited before embarking on his visit to Salnés.



Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Painted by Rosana Boullosa

1. Departure from Pontevedra to Poio

“ On Monday 19 July I left Pontevedra for Santiago, travelling all across Salnés, Porto Santo, and Puntal point, Lourido, los Gallos point. Campelo, Río del Roboa, Río da Serpe. Combarro. Río de Cela.

Chancelas and sand bank and Costoiras point. Samieira. Río de Ama. Arén. Ragió – Armenteira Priory. Bois de Raxó, Island of Tambo; from the sea peeks a tiny bud of an island, called Tenlo, facing Marín.”

Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)



Legend tells of a virgin who left Éfeso on a pilgrimage to Santiago. Upon arriving at Pontevedra, she rested and drank water from one of the city's fountains, using a scallop shell.

In the mid-XVIII century, when Sarmiento began his journey, the veneration of the Virgin of The Way was just beginning in the city, which later became the congregation of Our Lady of Refuge and of the Divine Pilgrim, the promoter of the construction of the Pilgrim's sanctuary, which is a church built in the shape of a scallop shell.

Although the origin of the Pilgrim's chapel can be traced back to 1753, the year in which the congregation of the Virgin of the Way started, its construction wouldn't start until 1778, and it celebrated its first mass on the day of Our Lady of Angels.

Church of the Virgin Pilgrim. Pontevedra. Drawn by Fernando Búa



Basilica of Santa Maria. Pontevedra

Father Sarmiento's path could not begin without bidding farewell to the Virgin Maria and entrusting himself to Christ of the Good Journey.

The basilica of Santa Maria la Mayor was built in the XVI century, by order of the Seafarers' Guild.



Burgo Bridge. Pontevedra

He left Pontevedra, crossing over some of the old bridges, "pontem veteranam" that give the city its name, and headed towards Poio.

Columbus House. Porto Santo. Póvoa



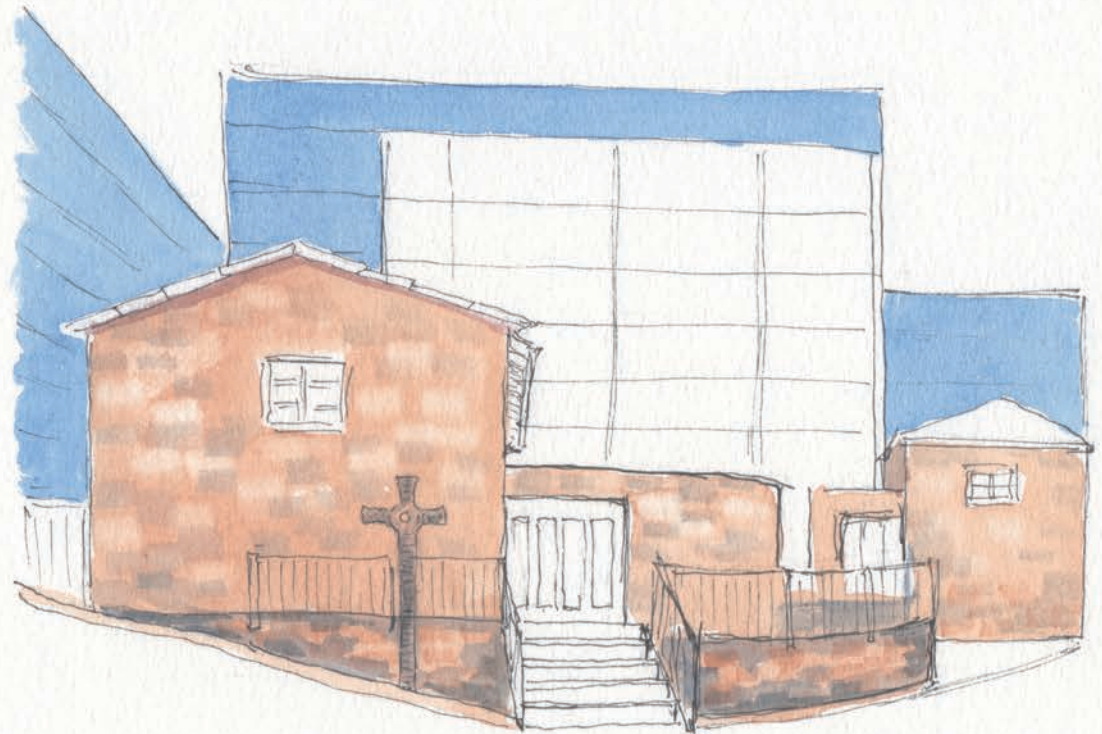
First, he passed through Puerto Santo, in the parish of San Salvador de Póvoa, where it is said that Christopher Columbus was born.

In an inscription, it read "Juan Colón R. Year 1490".

There, the ancient stones of the Admiral's house had stood up to the centuries, next to a crucifix.



Inscription on the crucifix



After the renovation and construction of the Columbus museum.



Following the coastline, he arrived in Lourido, in the parish of San Salvador de Rio.

From the Lourido sand banks, one can look out at the Island of Tambo and the Islet of Tenlo, with its beacon facing Marín, which Father Sarmiento remarks on.

And from Lourido, where the pine trees grow right up to the sea line, he travelled onwards to Campelo, with its sandy shores rich with clams and cockles.

Lourido. San Salvador de Rio



Campelo. Rio

The Island of Tambo can also be seen from Campelo, a fishing and shellfish-gathering village that every July, celebrates a clam festival. In Campelo's small harbour, the long push nets hang from the boats, ready to go out gathering shellfish.

Mosteiro de San Xoán de Boio.

Founded in about the VII century as a Benedictine monastery by San Fructosos or one of his disciples, in the XII century, Queen Urraca gifted it the "parish of Boio" and the port of Combarro. Some time later, Carlos V granted it special privilege to inaugurate the Higher College of Theology, which included among its masters, Father Feijóo of the Benedictine order, Father Sarmiento's guide and inspiration.



The Baroque water fountain in the old Renaissance Cloister of the Processions, (XVI century), still flows with pure, fresh water, to refresh anyone who passes.

Camino de Santiago Mosaic



In the Baroque cloister of the crucifix we can gaze upon the impressive mosaic, measuring more than 200 square metres, by artist Antonin Marec Machourek, from the Czech Republic, representing the most symbolic points along the Camino de Santiago, from Roncesvalles to Compostela.

The Monastery reveals true cultural treasures: architecture, sculpture, and a museum containing delicate carvings such as this one of the Virgin

View of Combarro, in the region of R  o, a town that still maintains the seafaring aura of yesteryear. The historical site of Combarro was declared of cultural interest and it contains a large number of crucifixes and traditional granaries. Combarro's granaries, on the edges of the sea, evoke a seafaring and agricultural life.



Combarro. R  o



San Roque church. Combarro

This old Combarro church is dedicated to San Roque, one of the most venerated saints in Galicia.

Combarro crucifixes.

On the seven Combarro crucifixes, the Virgin Mary, protector of seafarers, gazes out to sea.



Plaza da Fonte, in Combarro, whose altar does not want for crucifixes

Santa María de Samieira church. Boio



Father Sarmiento talks of the Ama river (today known as the Ríodama), where the route leads past the Samieira mills. There are 23 mills situated on the Freiria river. In times gone by, they milled many sacks of corn, but nowadays they stand idle, in contemplation of the passing hikers enjoying the ethnographic heritage deep in the heart of nature.

Following the coastal road, along which the ancient royal path wound its way, Father Sarmiento passed Chancelas and saw its sand banks, on his way to Samieira.

The Santa María de Samieira church is infamous in the area for its devotion to Santa Lucía, champion of the local surroundings. At the foot of the church is a fountain, with a Mercy, as many of the Galicians call the Virgin of Suffering.

Legend tells of how the Moors stole the Santiago cathedral bell and buried it in Samieira. A local discovered it while tending to his cattle and it was returned to the cathedral. Today one can still see the hole in the shape of a bell that was left in a stone close to the Fountain of the Women.



Route of the Samieira mills. Boio

Raxó church. Poio



The church and crucifix at San Gregorio de Raxó, the final parish in the Poio region. A village with seafaring roots, filled with tourists in the summer months.

Situated on the Pontevedra ria, between the town of Marín and the Poio municipality. In the XVII, the Tambo pilgrimage in honour of San Miguel used to be famous. The festival is known as the "dedication to Saint Michael" and is celebrated every 29th of September. Everything needed for the mass was carried from the Poio monastery. Only a couple of badly deteriorated walls still remain standing of the hermitage that used to be there. There also used to be a Benedictine monastery, which was apparently destroyed by the pirate Francis Drake.



Island of Tambo



Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Drawn by Rosana Boullosa

2. Route through Dorrón, Bordóns, Sanxenxo, Portonovo, Noalla

“Festiñans point, in the old quarter of Magaláns. Sandbank and parish of San Xoán de Dorrón. To the right, San Pedro de Bordóns and on the other side Simis. (50v.) Carabuxeira and Santilifonso sandbank, Panadeira, San Xenso, Silgar sandbank, Vicaño point, Portonovo sandbank. Portonovo. Midday. Three leagues. Santa Catalina point and fort. Caneliñas sandbank and Rinxela point. Canelas sandbank. Arra and its sandbank. Cabricastro point. Aios and its sandbank. San Martiño de Santiago priory. Magos point and sandbank opposite the Peña Faxilda escarpment that looks out at Centulo, part of the large Ons Island; and the smaller Onza Island facing Morrazo. Soutullo, with its viewpoint and flame, is now part of Noalla. Our Nuesta Señora de A Lanzada, with a Roman-era beacon that is now destroyed, on a viewpoint with the hermitage. Outeiro de Lopas and escarpment (51 r.)”

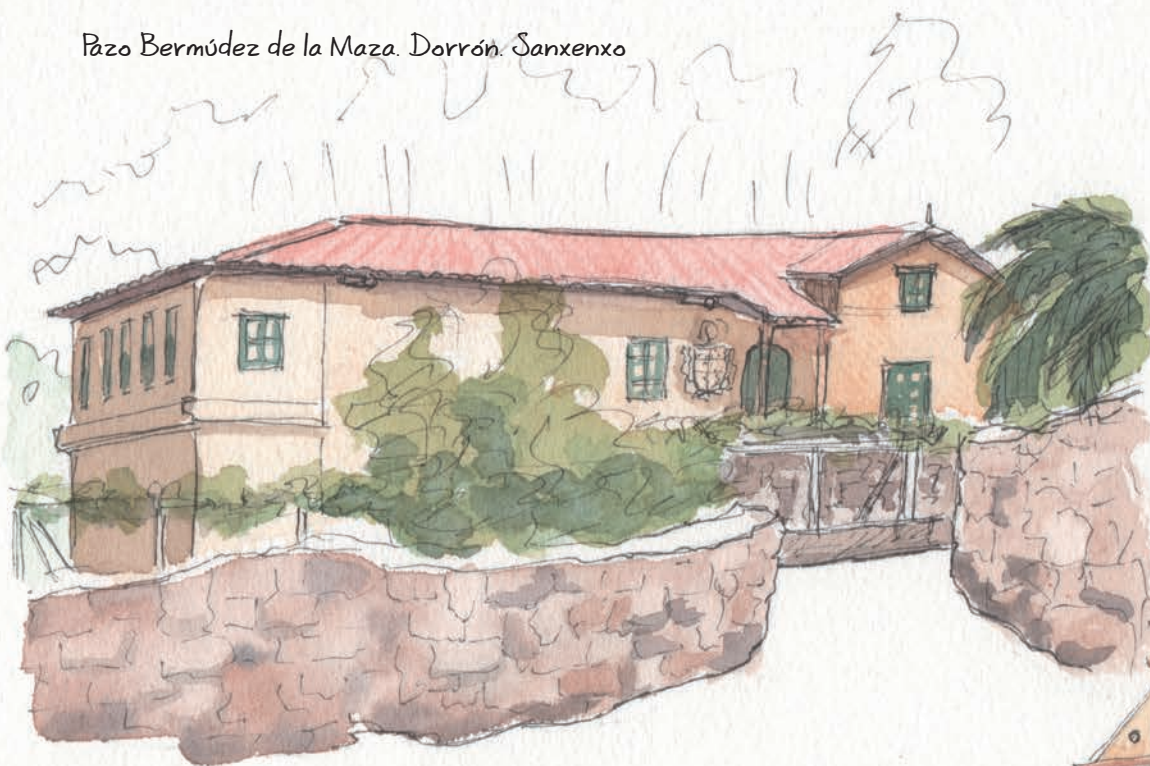
Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)

Granxa lookout point. Dorrón, Sanxenxo. Painted by Paula Aboal



The lookout point at Granxa, previously known as Granxa de Lérez, as it belonged to the Benedictine monastery of the same name, is a balcony over the Pontevedra river, from where one can soak up the view of the tourist town Raxó, whose name comes from *raxeira*: a place for enjoying the sun. A stone balustrade with a large scallop shell presides over the Granxa lookout, located above the Santa Mariña point, in Dorrón, the first parish of the Sanxenxo region.

Pazo Bermúdez de la Maza. Dorrón. Sanxenxo



Pazo Bermúdez de la Maza, is an original secular rest house belonging to the current parish of Dorrón and its valley.

The San Xoán de Dorrón church dates back to the time of Father Sarmiento. Inside, the Virgin of Carmen is particularly noteworthy, with an effigy that is borne on processions. During the festival of Carmen, the Virgin is paraded on a triumphant throne and in past times, she would have been surrounded by children dressed as angels.

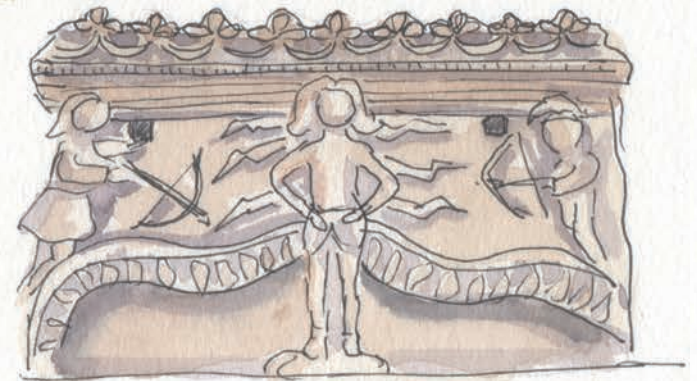


San Xoán de Dorrón church. Sanxenxo

San Pedro de Bordóns church. Sanxenxo.



The San Pedro de Bordóns church may be in the smallest parish of the Sanxenxo region, but has no small amount of charm.



Baldaqino panels

The reliefs of the martyrdom of San Sebastián and the Holy Entombment of Christ, part of an ancient canopy, adorn the entrance wall of the precinct.



San Xínés de Padriñán church



San Xínés shrine

The Calixtino Codex recommends a devotional visit to Arles (France), which has a marble column where Saint Xínés was tied and his throat slit. On a beautiful silver shrine, guarded in San Xínés de Padriñán (Sanxenxo), a relic of the saint lends any visit to Sanxenxo a Jacobean element.

The new church of Sanxenxo, with its hexagonal footprint and staggered canopy, is the work of architect Joaquín Robles Echenique. Construction was begun in 1965 and completed in 1976, overseen by father Ramón Somoza Castro, a well-known Sanxenxo priest who passed away in 2014, after 57 years in the parish.



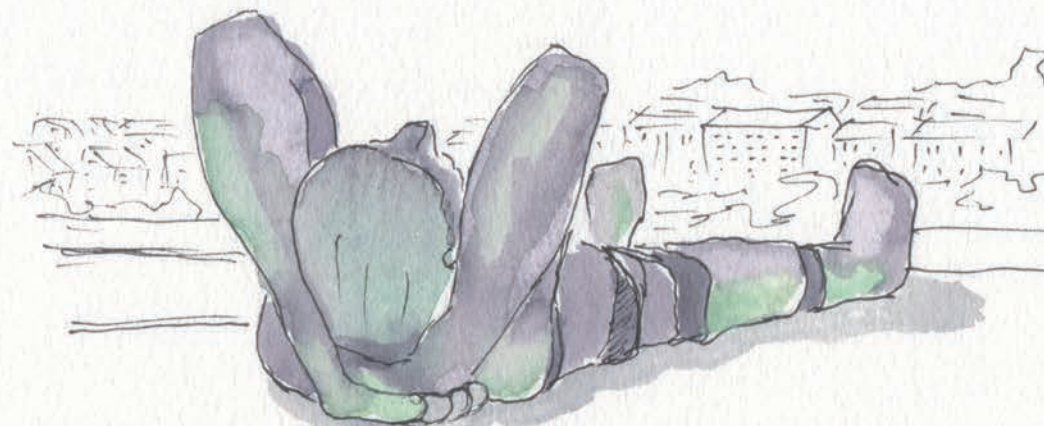
New church of Sanxenxo

The Madam of Silgar, Sanxenxo. Drawn by Fernando Búa

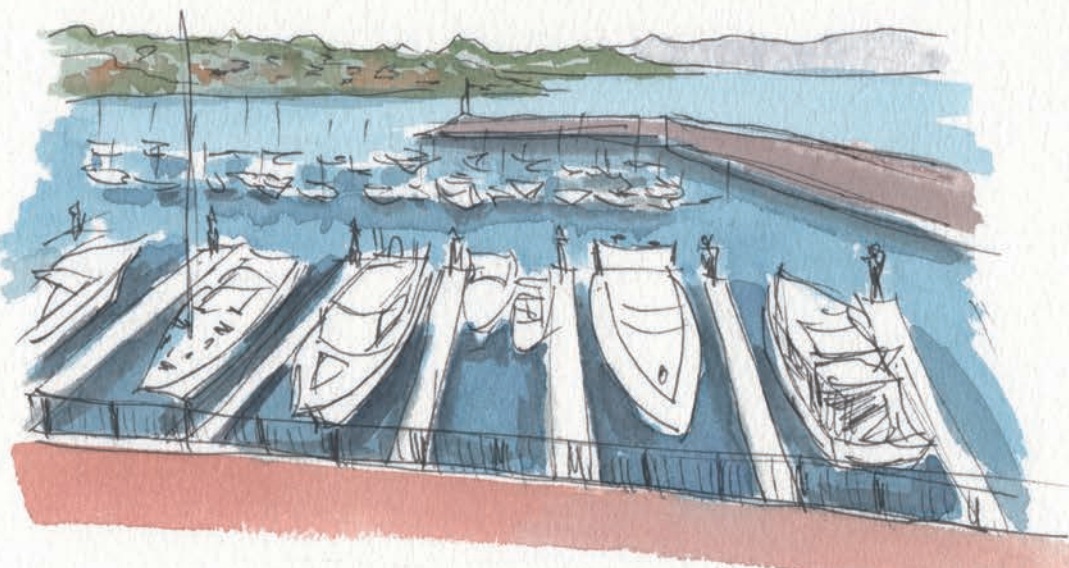


The Madam of Silgar, a sculpture by Alfonso Vilar Lámelas located in front of Silgar beach in Sanxenxo, has become a symbol of this beautiful location, the centre of Galician tourism.

The bronze giant resting in Sanxenxo port does not stir, even with the commotion of children playing on top of him, or the crashing of the waves. He is the sculpture known as El Atlante, by sculptor Francisco Leiro.



O Atlante, Sanxenxo



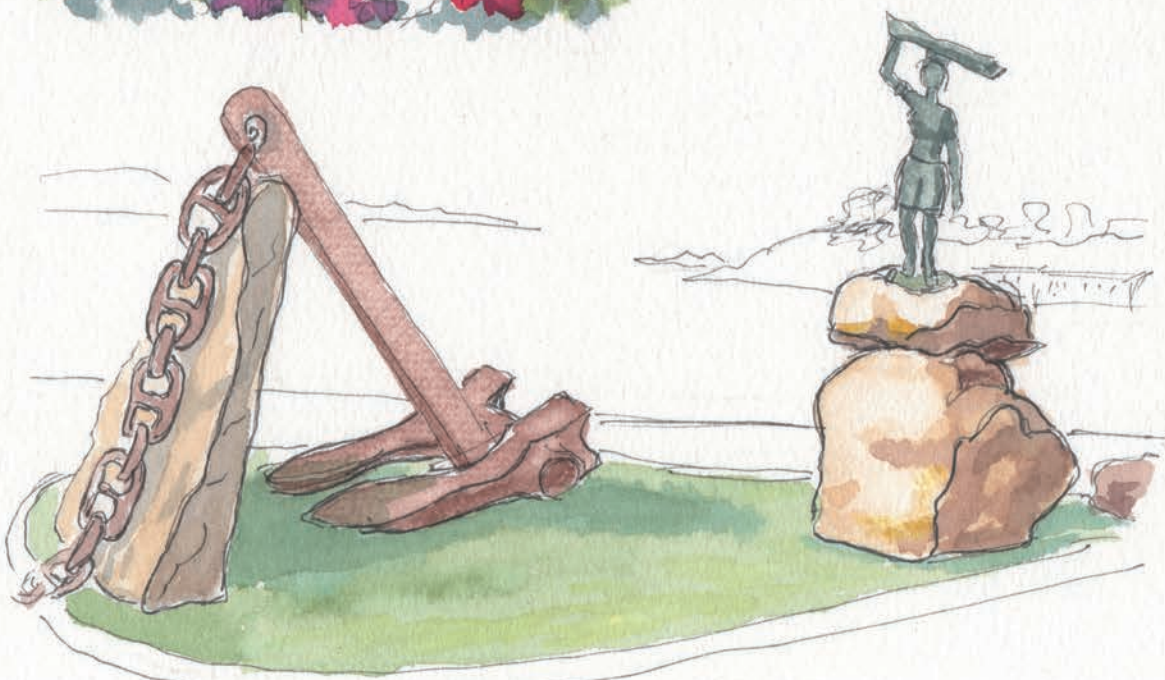
Sanxenxo sports a marina, for mooring up after traversing the Pontevedra ria, or approaching the Atlantic islands.



Santa Catalina church in Bortonovo, is situated on a raised walled area, reminiscent of the ancient fort that Father Sarmiento talked of.



Santa Catalina church. Bortonovo



Caneliñas viewpoint. Bortonovo. Sanxenxo

The viewpoint at Caneliñas in Bortonovo, above the beach of the same name, offers spectacular views over the port and the tip of the Pontevedra ria, which Father Sarmiento would also have seen on his journey along the coastline.

Canelas beach in Portonovo, where the mountains still reach the sea.



Priory of Arra. Portonovo Fifteenth century building, where winery monks lived who collected the tributes of the neighbors in grapes.

Punta Cabicastro. Portonovo. Sanxenxo



The waves of the Atlantic Ocean still lash at the escarpments of Punta de Cabicastro, just as they did in the XVIII century.

A mere two nautical miles away lies the island of Ons, which, due to its geographical proximity, used to belong in the XIX century to the municipality of Sanxenxo.

The islands of Ons, Onza and the reef of El Centulo, of which Padre Sarmiento speaks, located at the entrance of the Ria de Pontevedra, belong to the Atlantic Islands National Park and are a natural protection from the storms of the west and southwest.

The island of Ons from the Punta Faxilda viewpoint, where everything is blue.

A Lanzada. Noalla. Sanxenxo



A Lanzada walled tower and hermitage, an ancient site with prehistoric remains, legends and millennial rites for female fertility. During the last weekend of August pilgrims visit the hermitage of Our Lady of A Lanzada, to lift their prayers and take part in the ceremonial bath of the nine waves.

San Estevo de Noalla church. Sanxenxo



Main façade

The San Estevo de Noalla church, with its bell tower, still has Romanesque remains, with two pointed archivolts on the main façade. On the tympanum is a XVIII Calvary.

Nestled in the wall of the parish rectory at San Estevo de Noalla, there used to be a stone sculpture of Saint James that nowadays is kept safe inside the house.

Chapel of San Tomé de Gondar. Noalla.



Chapel of San Tomé de Gondar, the saint who was made to wield a lance instead of a stick. Take care!

The Pazo de Quintáns, located in the parish of Santo Estevo de Noalla was recently acquired by the municipality of Sanxenxo. In a small exterior oratory, near the entrance, a beautiful carving has been miraculously preserved in granite, of the Virgin with a rosary in her hand.

The popular refrain says "a true Pazo has dovecote, chapel, and cypress". The one in Quintáns also boasts a large granary and a beautiful fountain in its garden.





Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Drawn by Rosana Boullosa

3. Route through O Grove

“The Vao or Vado isthmus at O Grove is a very long sand bank with lively waves, joining the San Vincenzo and San Martin Groves to make a peninsula. Arca de Cruz. Sebosa. (Laxe de los Raeiros. These days it seems English has arrived here).

Cons da Aguieira. The westernmost point of O Grove and a league away by sea is the island of (Sárbora or Sálvora), which measures one league in its circumference and is by the point of Carreiros at the Corrovedo side. There is a legend that it used to be attached to Carreiros. “Escarpments” mean “sorrows, risks” maybe from “coin” in French, cuneu “steep angle” = Conus or cautes.

Castríño y Pombeiro Point.

San Vicente de O Grove on the same shores as Castríño.

Meloxo Point. Reboredo, hamlet of San Vicente, Orxo point, O Corgo point (51 v.).

San Martiño de O Grove harbour and place. Night here; and three leagues. Here the river divides: they collide and the main one veers to the left, to Padrón; and the right goes all at once to the ria, to Noalla, and San Tomé del Mar, but I came here around the estuary mouth and the O Grove sandbank.

In the large ria, at the foot of O Grove, there are two and more islands: the Touris Island, and island of Mariñas, small; Louxo, which looks like a continuation of the sea, and Toxa, which it is thought continues to San Tomé del Mar, and another islet called Veiro.

From O Grove I went to its hamlet Graña. From Graña to Ardea. Before entering the Vao sandbank, on the right are three mountains, and on the summit of the middle one, two hooks, and among them is the famous fig tree; because in O Grovethere is (52 r) a legend that the women hanged El Meco there, so I sent for some branches of the fig tree to be cut, to take to Madrid as a joke.”

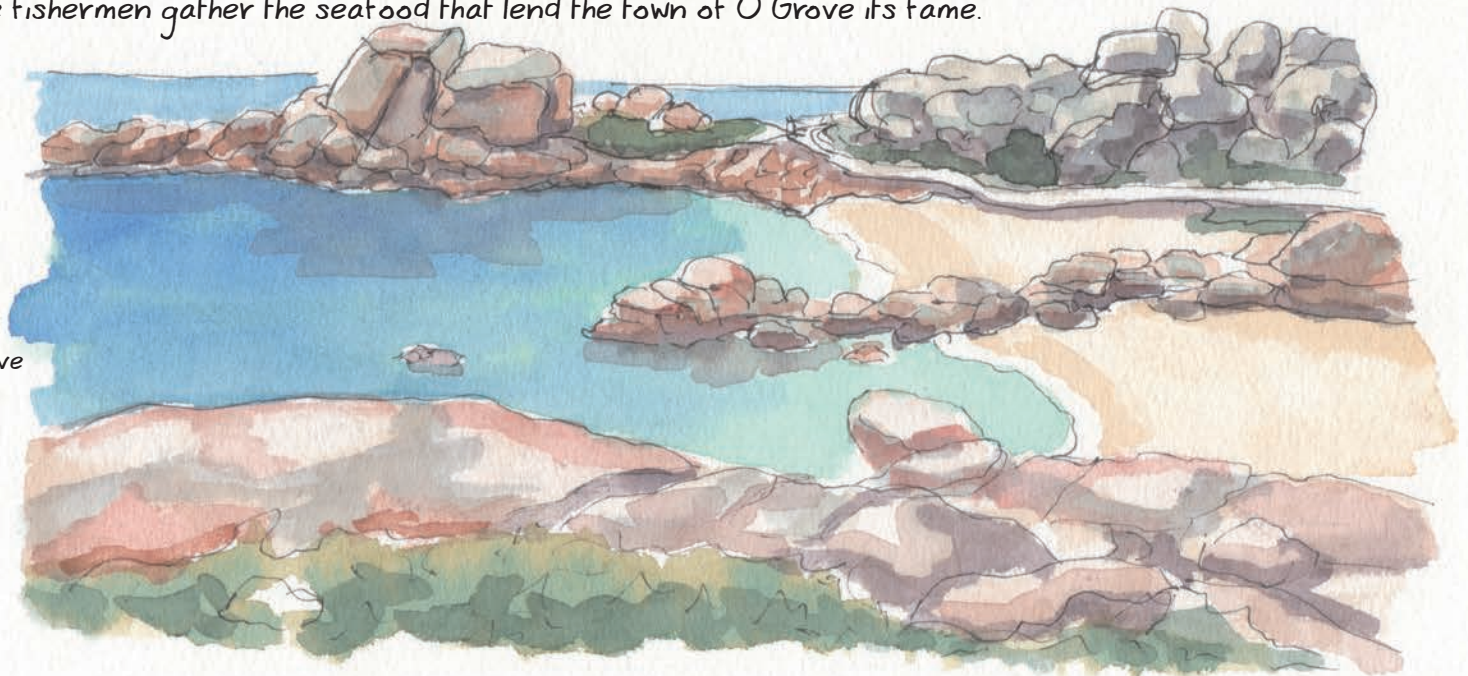
Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)

O Vao cove. O Grove



The cove at Vao is a sanctuary for many birds and is traditionally the place where seaweed was gathered as fertiliser for the land.
The ria at Arousa is where fishermen gather the seafood that lend the town of O Grove its fame.

Escarpments at Aguireira. O Grove



The cliffs at Aguireira are, as Father Sarmiento says, at the most western point of O Grove.

The archaeological remains of old Arlo, beside the Sendero beach, demonstrate continuous occupation from the I century to the XVIII.



Old Adro. O Grove

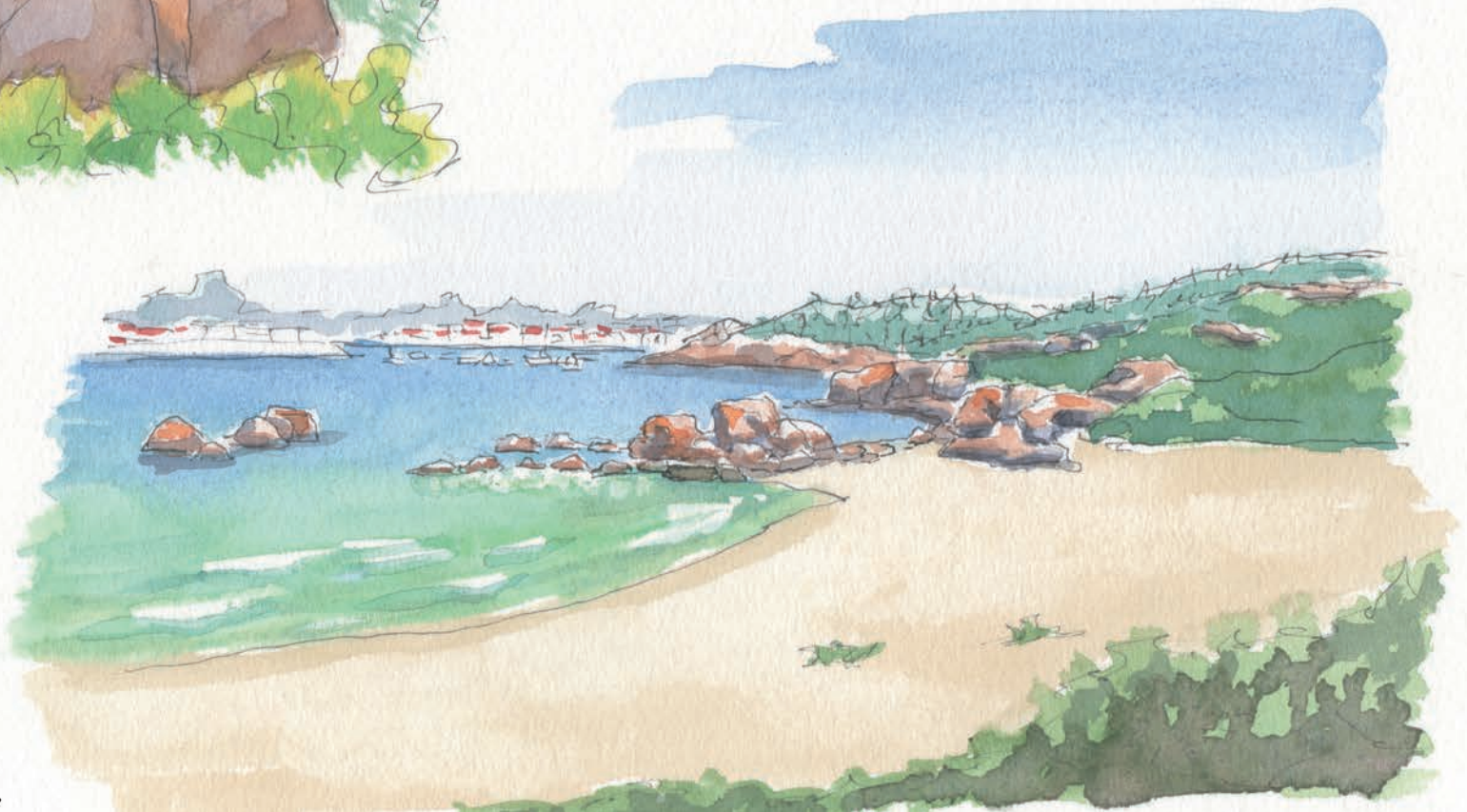
The San Vicente de O Grove church, built in 1770 on the remains of another older church, breaks with Christian symbolism, as its threshold faces the east to the sun. The sunsets must be impressive at San Vicente de O Grove!

There, we find a fort dating from the Middle Ages, an ancient floor of a Visigoth church (VI and VII century), updated in the XVIII century, a necropolis, and a Roman villa with the remains of a fish salter.



San Vicente de O Grove church

In the village of Reboredo there are outcrops so large
that they could, if they wanted, swallow a person, but
such a thing has never been heard of.



Reboredo beach. O Grove

Meloxo port. O Grove



Meloxo port. Painted by Rosana Boullosa

Port of O Grove

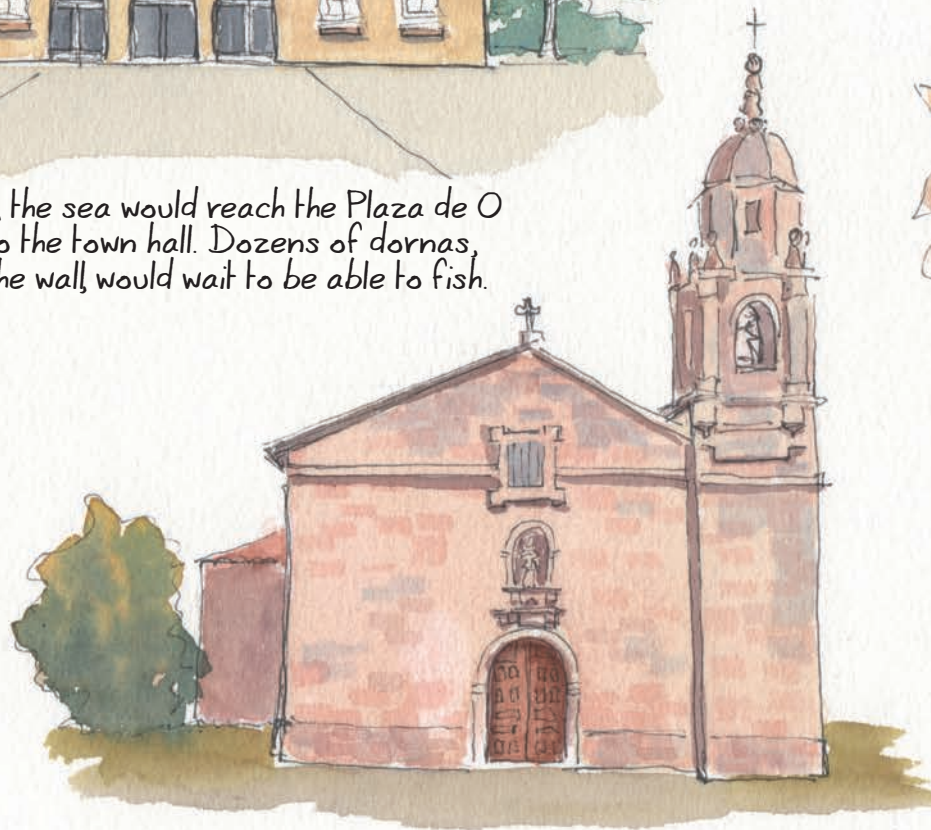


Fishing and tourist boats fill the Port of O Grove. The nets wait for the sardines to return. Fishing and shellfish gathering, together with tourism, are more than a way of making a living, they are a way of life, and a way of belonging to the world.

O Grove city hall



On occasions, the sea would reach the Plaza de O Corgo, home to the town hall. Dozens of dornas, stranded on the wall, would wait to be able to fish.



San Martiño de O Grove church

On the 11th of November, the San Martiño church celebrates its patron saint. The town of O Grove is filled with the scent of roasted chestnuts and new wine, while the autumn dresses the earth and the sea with its chills.



Sculpture by Alfonso Vilar Lamelas

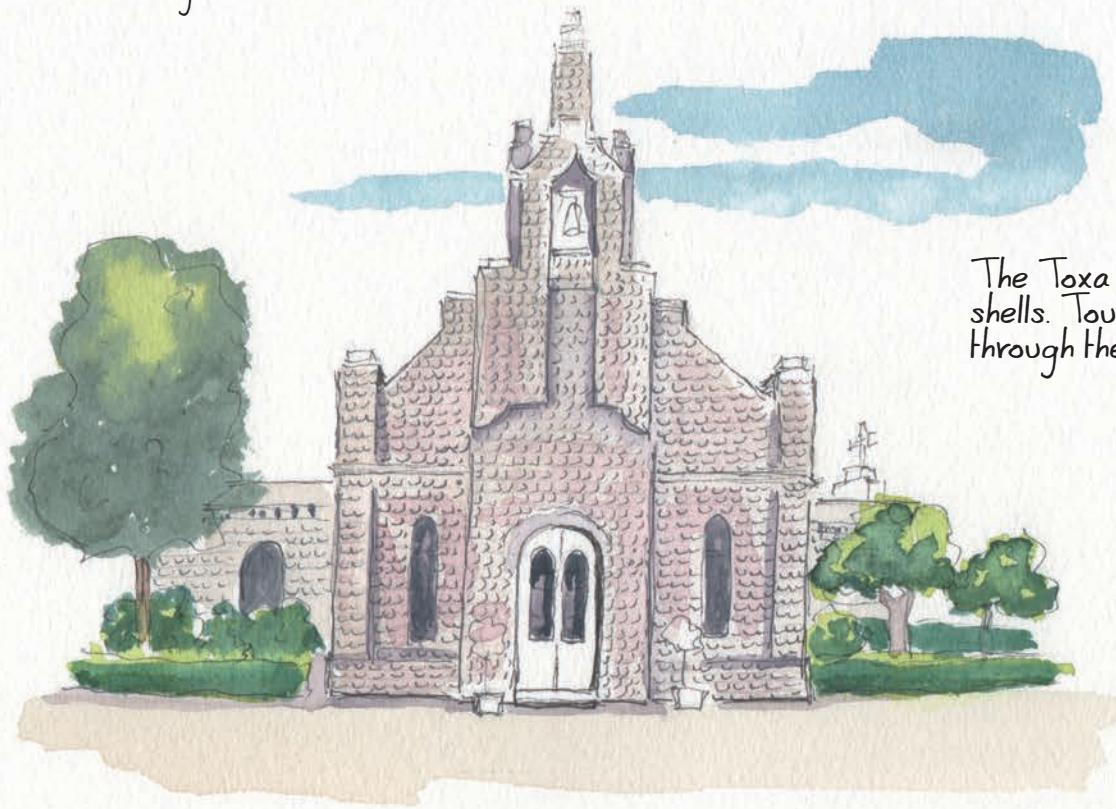
"The family of shellfish gatherers" that Alfonso Vilar Lamelas positioned in the Plaza de O Corgo in 1972 is an homage, in the heart of O Grove harbour, to the people of the sea.

At the end of the XIX century, a man abandoned his donkey, done in by the years and hard work, on the island of Toxa. After a time, he returned and found it alive and well thanks to it having bathed itself in the medicinal waters. Nowadays, the donkeys at the entrance to Toxa testify to this legend. The first spa was opened at the turn of the XX century, prompting the thermal tourism that has made the island famous and which continues to this day.



Old spa of A Toxa

Toxa hermitage. O Grove

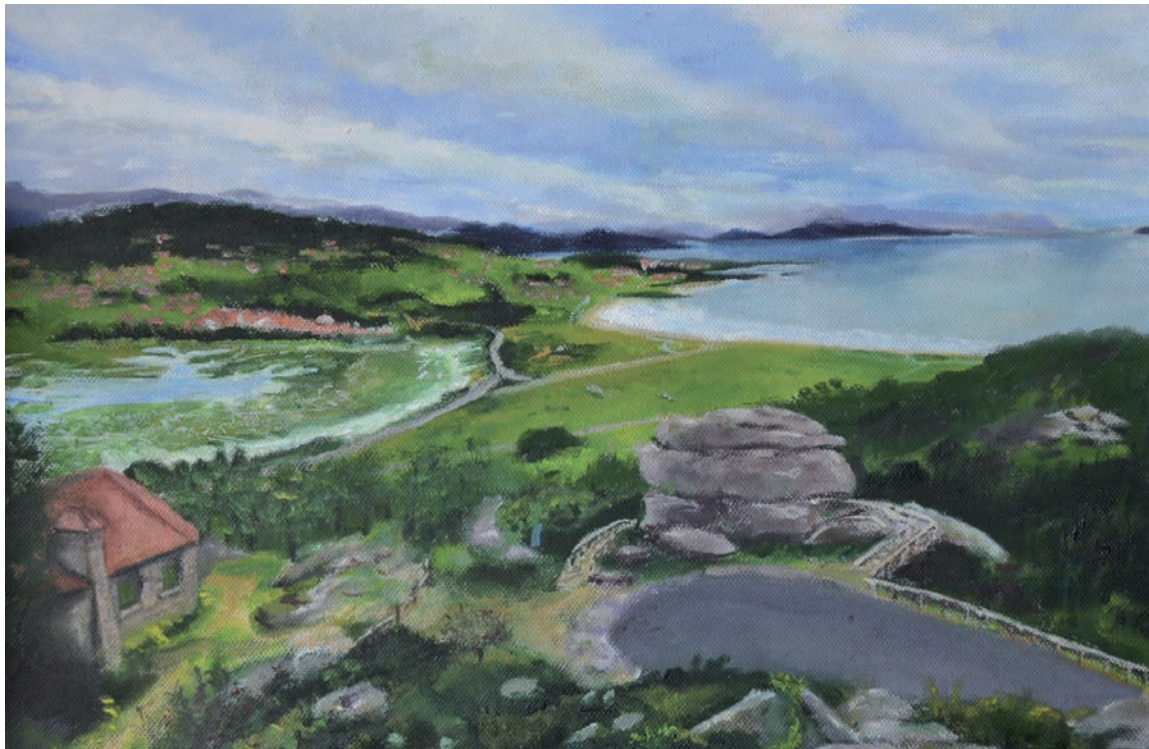


The Toxa hermitage is covered in scallop shells. Tourists tend to commemorate their path through the island by doodling on the poor shells.

In the centre of the main altar, a large scallop shell holds the Virgin of Carmen, patron saint of seafarers. She is illuminated by two stained glass windows representing the Santiago pilgrim on the right, and Queen Saint Elizabeth of Portugal on the left, holding the roses that she showed to an incredulous King Denis

On the island of Toxa, a popular tourist spot since the end of the XIX century, visitors can find hostel facilities and spas. There is also a splendid golf course. Golf lovers can enjoy more than six thousand metres of course alongside the Arousa ria, with incomparably beautiful views and magical sunsets.





Mount Siradella lookout point. O Grove
Painted by Rosana Boullosa

From the 900 metre high summit of Mount Siradella, in the municipality of O Grove, we can contemplate the stunning view of the Arousa ria and the Atlantic Ocean. Many people have climbed to this natural lookout, towered over by gigantic boulders, stacked haphazardly by the forces of nature. Not far from here, legend has it that the women of O Grove hanged El Meco from a fig tree, from which Father Sarmiento sent for "three branches to be cut to send to Madrid as a joke"





Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Painted by Rosana Boullosa

4. Leaving O Grove, Noalla, Vilalonga, Dena (Meaño), Cambados

“ Noalla salt flats, one league from San Martiño de O Grove. Pines. Vilalonga (San Pedro). Quintáns, Xunca Blanca. Arnosa. {I left; to my right Padín, Revel, Tomé de Gondar, Altamira}.

Saint Eulalia de Dena. From Vado, one league, and here there is a creek, the Chanca river. I saw a large taray. Coirón. Sarantelos (Serantelos), Armenteira priory. Santa Cruz de Castrelo, Umia River, and reaching right to here, is the ria from Ponte Arnelas which is a league away, but it is just the second river, entering the Noalla River.

San Tomé del Mar (burg) and the same as in front of the Gobre or the Grove, almost three leagues behind. There is a Tower. Cambados. Burg right on the seashore and by San Tomé. Midday. Fefiñáns immediately by Cambados.

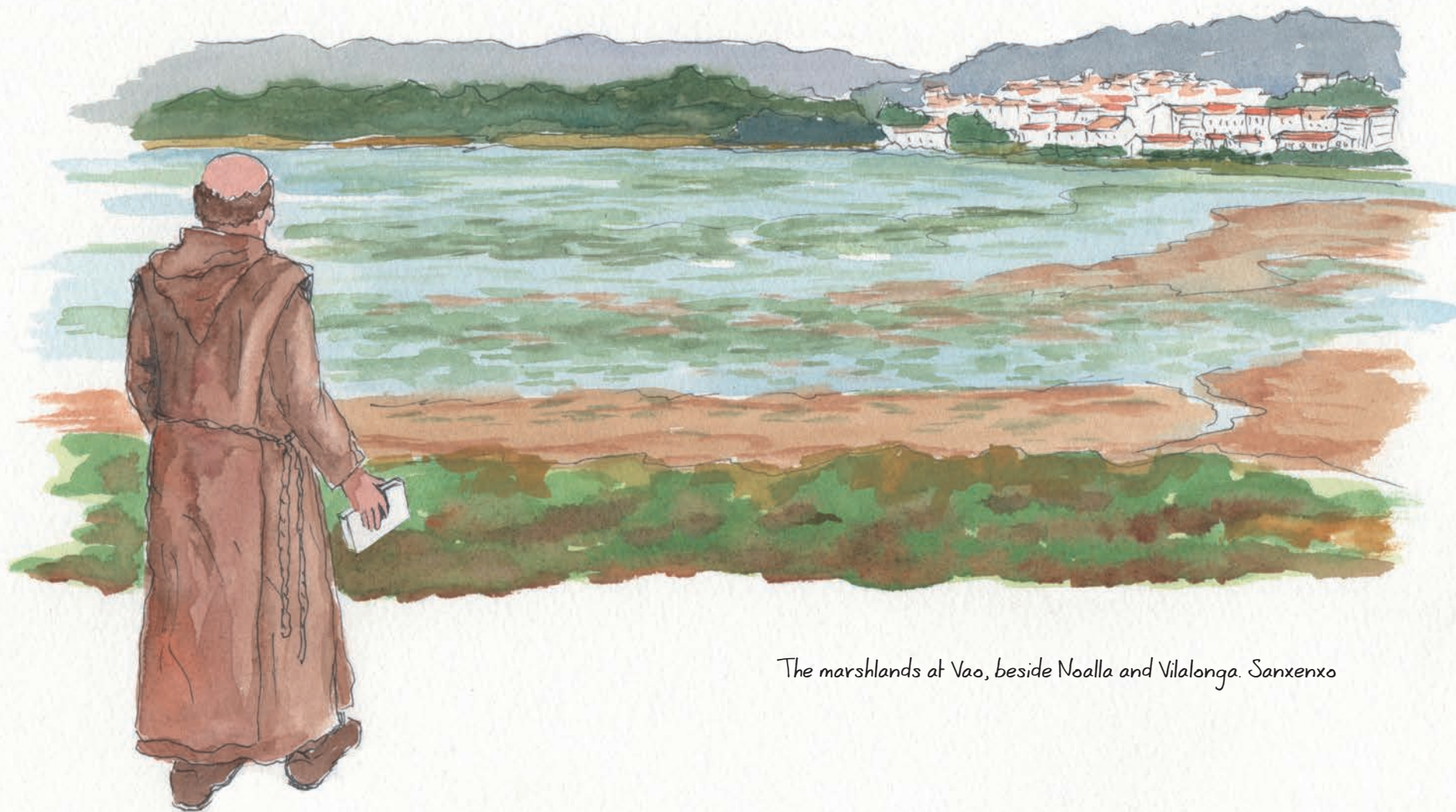
The ria becomes a sort of sack and they call the land in between it and the point of the river Tragrove (is this from the words Behind O Grove?) Corvillón parish.”

Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)

View from O Grove to La Lanzada



Below, Father Sarmiento of Monte Siradella holding a branch of the fig tree from which, according to legend, El Meco was hanged. His eyes reflect the blue of the ocean. The islands of Ons and Onza, just discernible in the distance, and further still, the Cies islands are not even specks. The broad sand bank stretches all the way to the church of Our Lady of La Lanzada, without betraying any hint of the geographical politics that led this beautiful beach to belong to the municipalities of both Sanxenxo and O Grove, dividing a natural space that knows nothing of borders.



The marshlands at Vao, beside Noalla and Vilalonga. Sanxenxo

The isthmus at Lanzada, a timid strip of sand pressed together by the passing of the centuries, separates the strong, majestic waters of the Atlantic Ocean from the calm silent Arousa estuary waters that come to rest in the Vao inlet. It is a haven for thousands of birds, who use it to replenish their strength before continuing on their southbound journeys.

The Noalla salt flats in 1753.

Our district of Salnés draws its name from the salt mining that in Father Sarmiento's time, still showed signs of a golden age. One of these historical salt flats was in Noalla, today engulfed by sea and sand, where they competed, in production and quality, with the mining in Vilalonga. There must have been significant numbers of salt flats for Father Sarmiento to have mentioned them at Leirós, Paderne, Barro and Arnosa.



The Noalla salt flats. Sanxenxo



The space that used to be occupied by the Noalla salt flats is now a salty wetland, with dunes and wild trees. Researchers from the Noalla Mountains Community group attempt to verify its location and markings, engulfed by nature. Who knows if one day we will be able to pinpoint where they used to be.



Recreation of men working on the salt flats

Salt was vital for preserving and transporting food. Specialist hands worked on extracting it from many points along the Galician coast as far back as Roman times.

In the Middle Ages, due to the scarcity of salt, the construction of salt pans was promoted, especially in what was called "Territorium Saliniensē" nowadays the Salnés region, with a great boom from the 6th century until the 18th century.

Vilalonga salt flats, Arnosa. Sanxenxo.

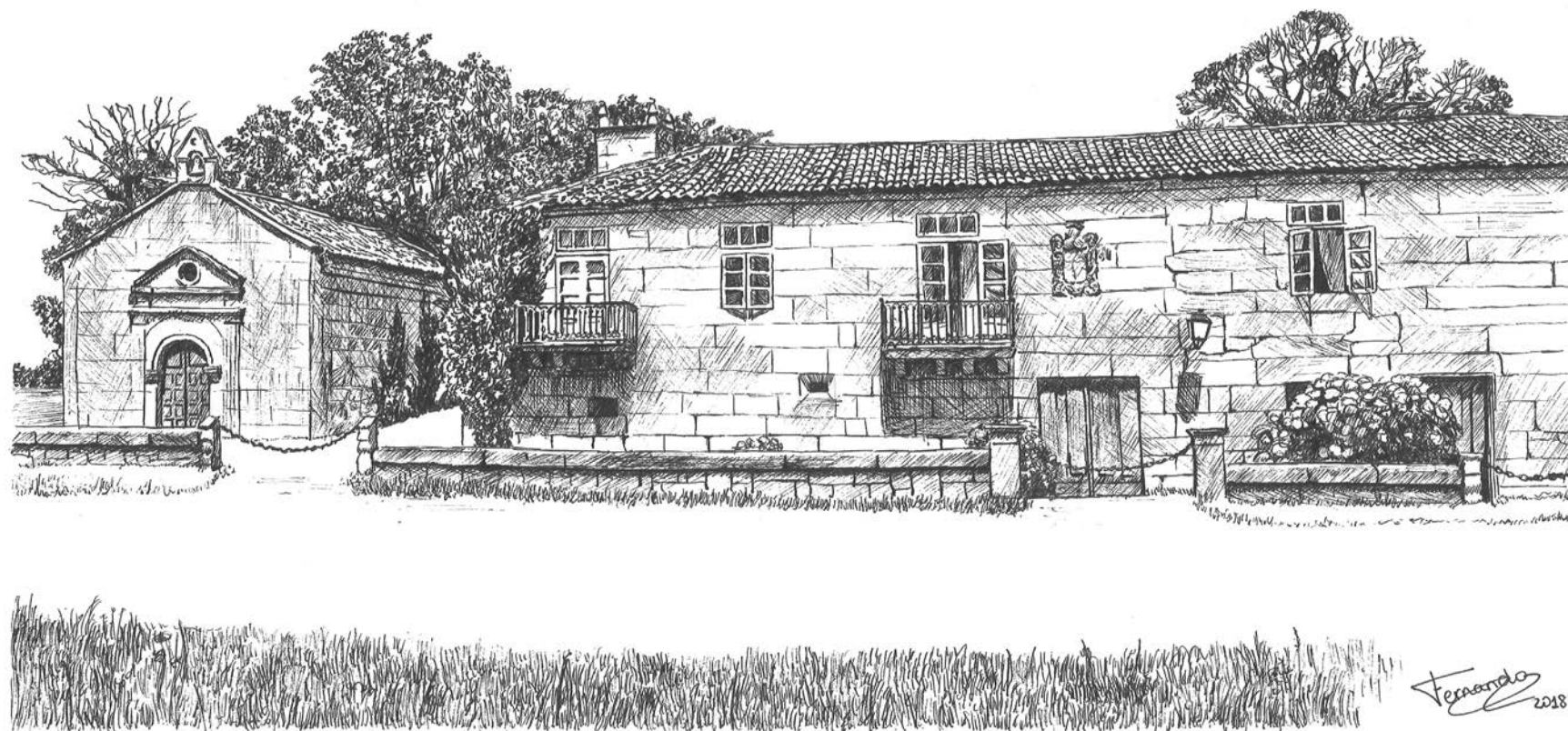
The Arnosa salt flats used to produce a somewhat dark salt, more flavoursome and filling. It seems that the surroundings of stone and earth gave it its characteristic colour. From the heavens, Saint Peter also watched over the fields where corn and wheat were sown for bread, a staple in the local diet together with seafood.



Pazo Revel. Vilalonga. Sanxenxo. Drawn by Fernando Búa



Pazo Revel, in Vilalonga (Sanxenxo), and Pazo de los Pardo, with its chapel, transport us to the world of the Galician rural nobility in the XV and XVI century.



Pazo de los Pardo house and chapel. Vilalonga. Sanxenxo. Drawn by Fernando Búa

Vilalonga marshland, facing Toxa



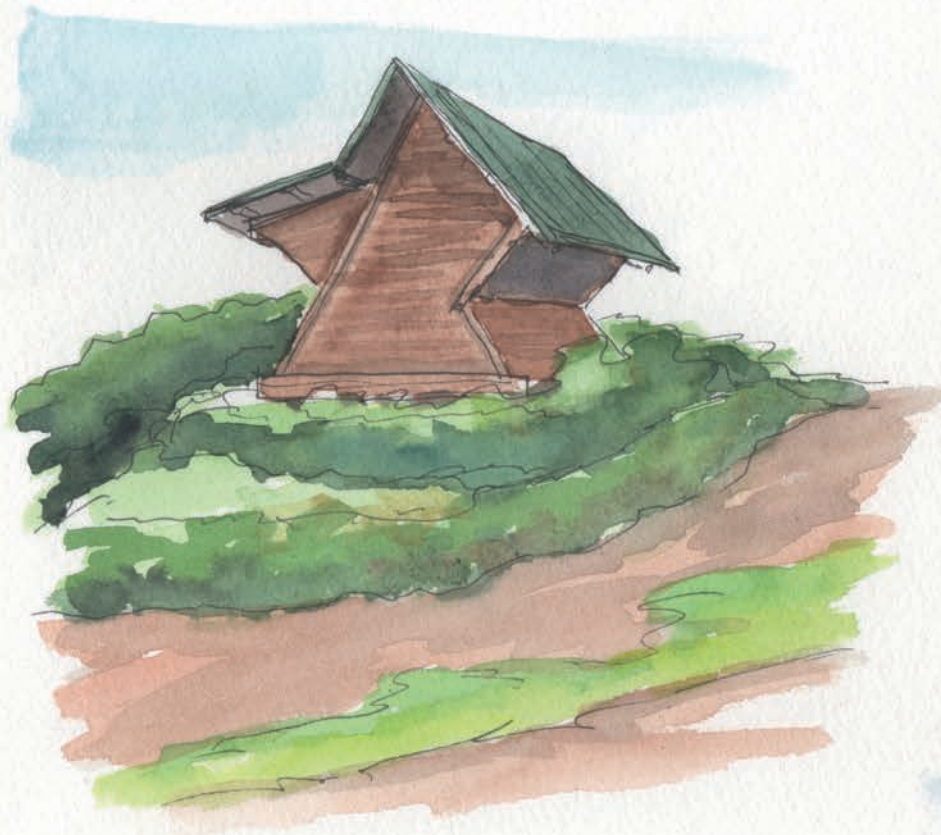
The Vilalonga marshlands, lying alongside the Island of Toxa, bore silent witness to the bubbling of the medicinal springs that cured the spent donkey, said to be the origins of the Toxa spa. Due to its natural value as an ornithological reserve, the intertidal area of Umia-O Grove is considered one of the most important wetlands in Galicia.

The Rouxique or Cachadas lagoons are situated in the coastal area of Vilalonga. A rather overlooked wetland, it has great ecological value due to the large variety of flora and fauna. The pools, originally excavated for collecting clay, have become lagoons full of life, where various species of duck nest and live.



The lagoons at Rouxique Vilalonga. Sanxenxo

Arnosa and La Fienteira, on the outskirts of the Rouxique lagoon, are privileged spots for ornithology fans. From the wooden hides, one can observe a huge variety of aquatic birds, as they rest or feed. The intertidal reserve at Umia-O Grove is one of the world's most significant wetlands.



Bird hide in Arnosa Vilalonga.

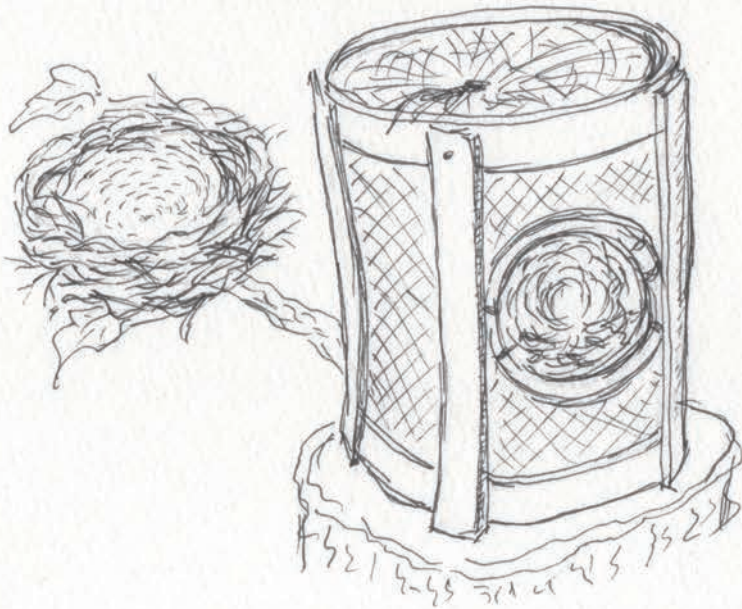


Interpretation centre at Telleiras, Sanxenxo. Chanca river wetlands



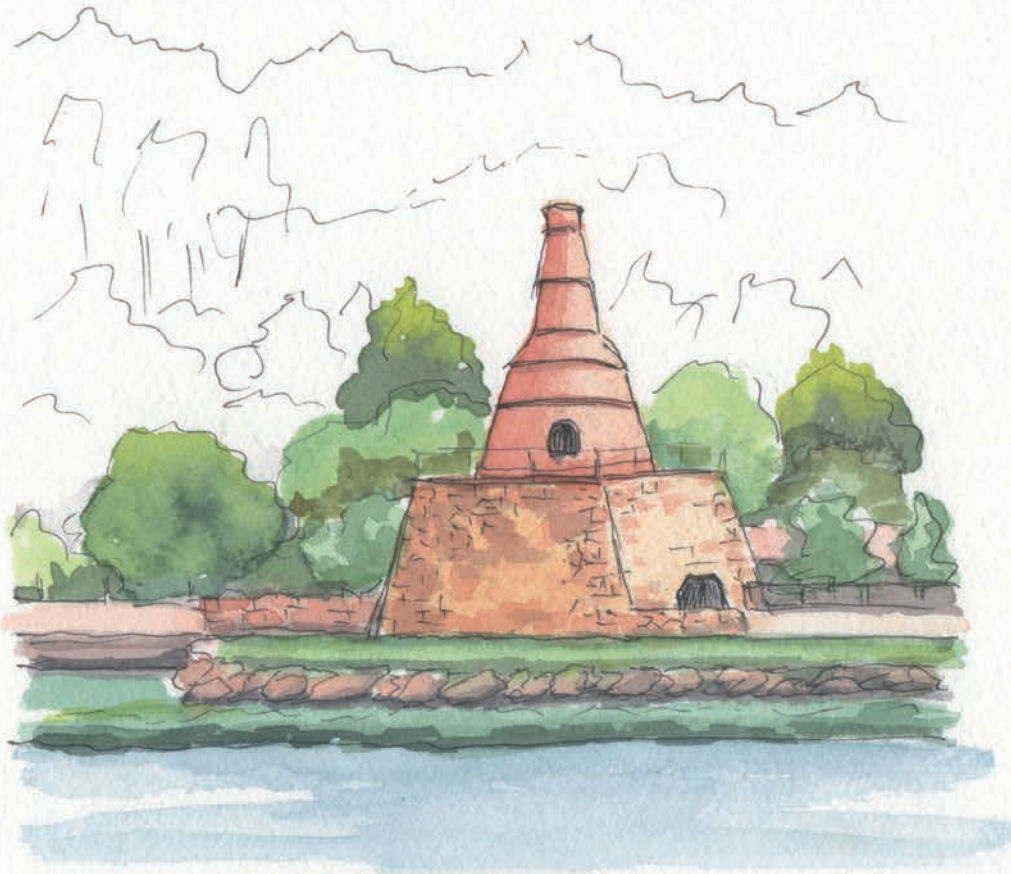
This education and information centre was launched by the Sanxenxo municipality to honour the memory of the artisanal industry, which for many years was dedicated to the extraction of clay for manufacturing earthenware, in particular bricks and tiles. From those roots, comes the name Telleiras. In the centre, school children are taught the secrets of this industry.

It includes a collection of 69 nests, belonging to 25 different species of birds, donated to the Education Centre CEIP El Crucero de Sanxenxo by the teacher José Manuel Hermida.



Nest collection from master Hermida



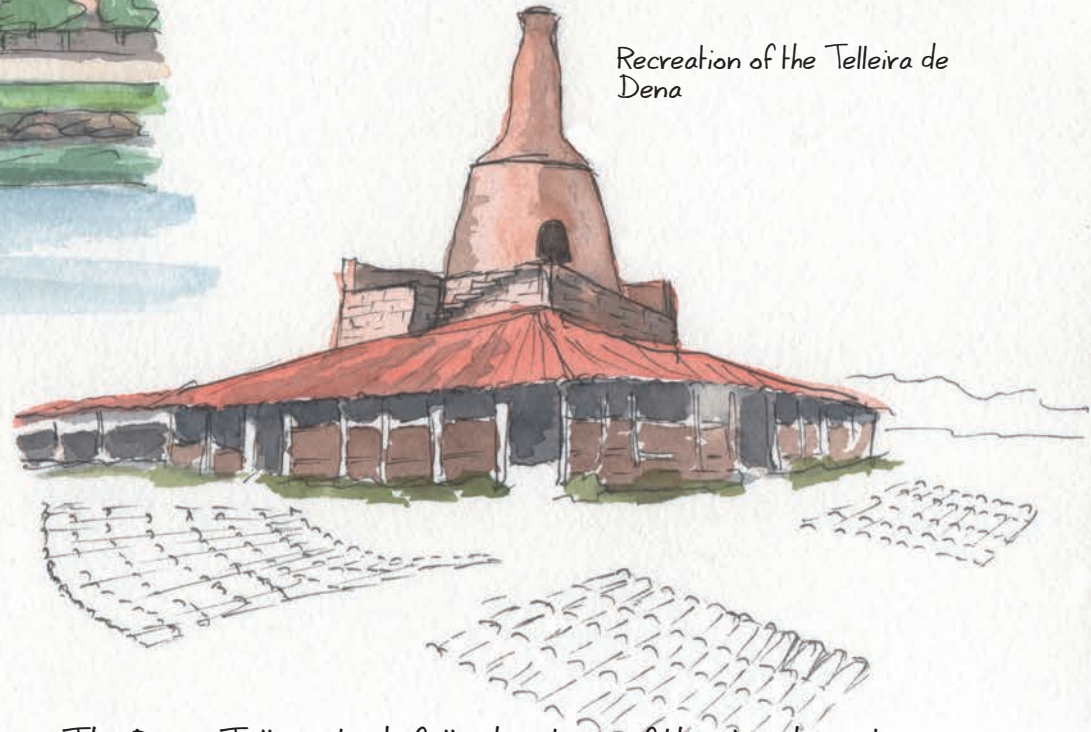


Telleira de Dena. Meaño. Chanca river wetlands

The Telleira de Dena used to be dedicated to the artisanal production of bricks and tiles. Between April and October, the clay workers would extract the clay. It was hard work, involving kneading the sludge, drying it and baking it to make different types of earthenware items. Many Telleiras had jetties for transporting their goods by sea.



Recreation of the Telleira de Dena



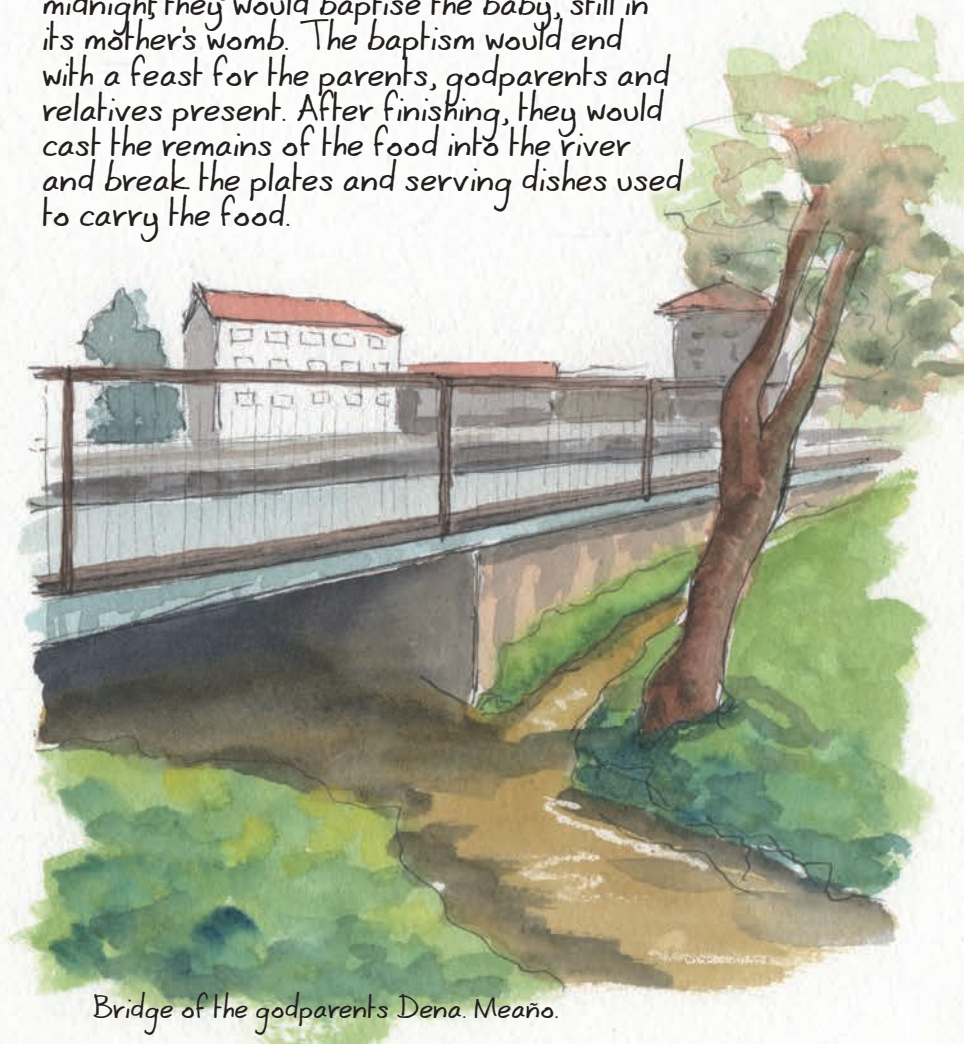
The Dena Telleira took full advantage of the clay deposits in the Chanca river, which flows between Sanxenxo and Meaño, creating a small ria known as the Dena ria.

In addition to the contribution the wetlands make to the local environment and the use of its waters for stone mills, the Chanca de Dena bridge used to be part of traditional pre-Christmas rituals.



Mills on the Chanca River Dena, Meaño.

Mothers suffering complications with their pregnancies would approach the confluence in the water where the Chanca river waters joined the Fondón creek waters, under the Chanca Bridge. Once they had reached it at midnight they would baptise the baby, still in its mother's womb. The baptism would end with a feast for the parents, godparents and relatives present. After finishing, they would cast the remains of the food into the river and break the plates and serving dishes used to carry the food.



Bridge of the godparents Dena. Meaño.



Route of the Meaño and Ribadumia mills

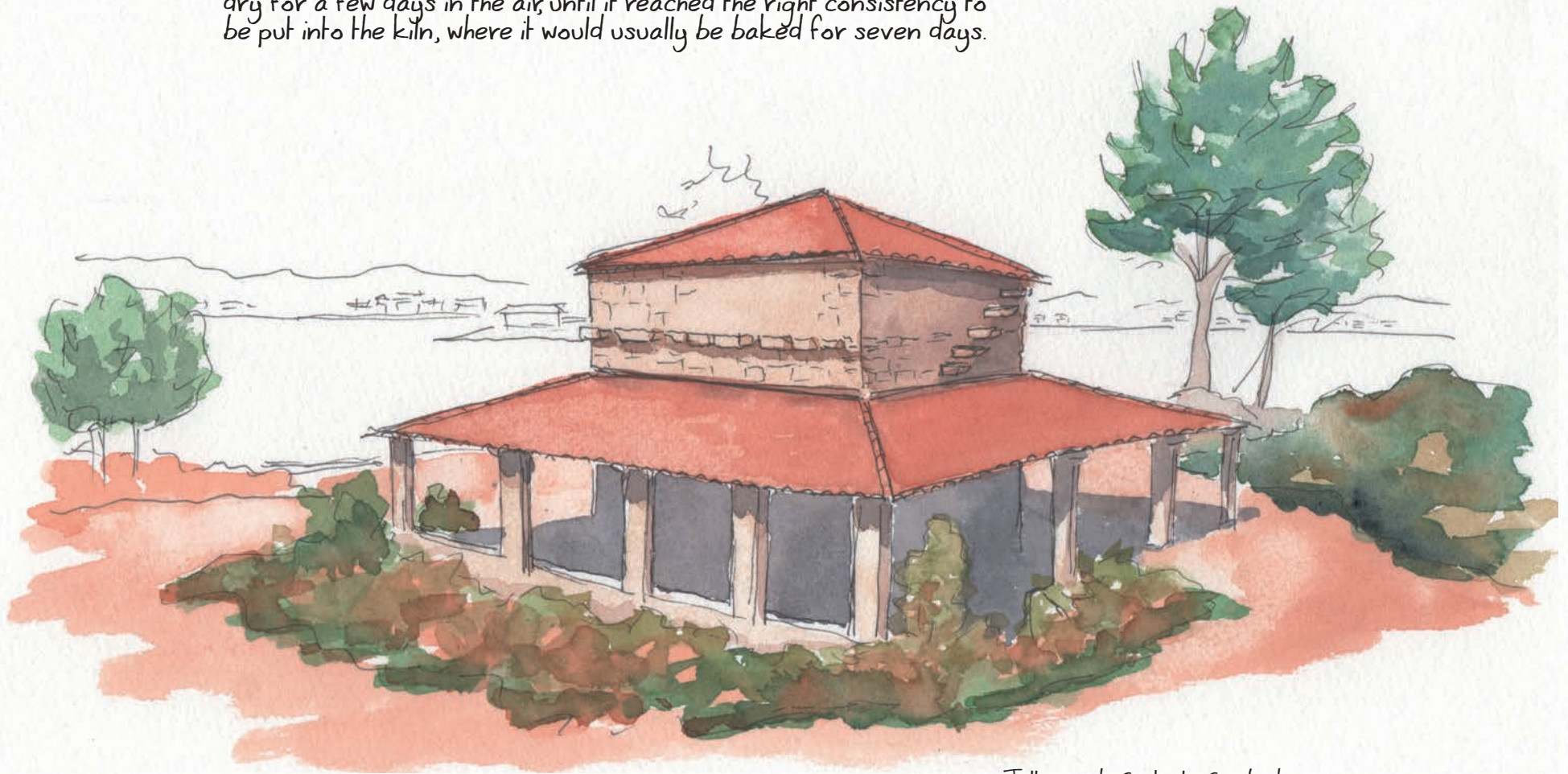
Also known as the route of the Chanca river mills, this is a beautiful walk along the riverside, where we come across 14 excellently preserved water mills. There is also a public toilet made of stone, and benches along the way. An information panel allows visitors to start the route, with clearly marked areas for rest and recreation. On the borders of the Meaño, Ribadumia, there is also a beautiful water mill route known as the "Route of stone and water", which links Ribadumia with Armenteira (Meis), a route with more than 50 mills.



Taray. Medicinal plant

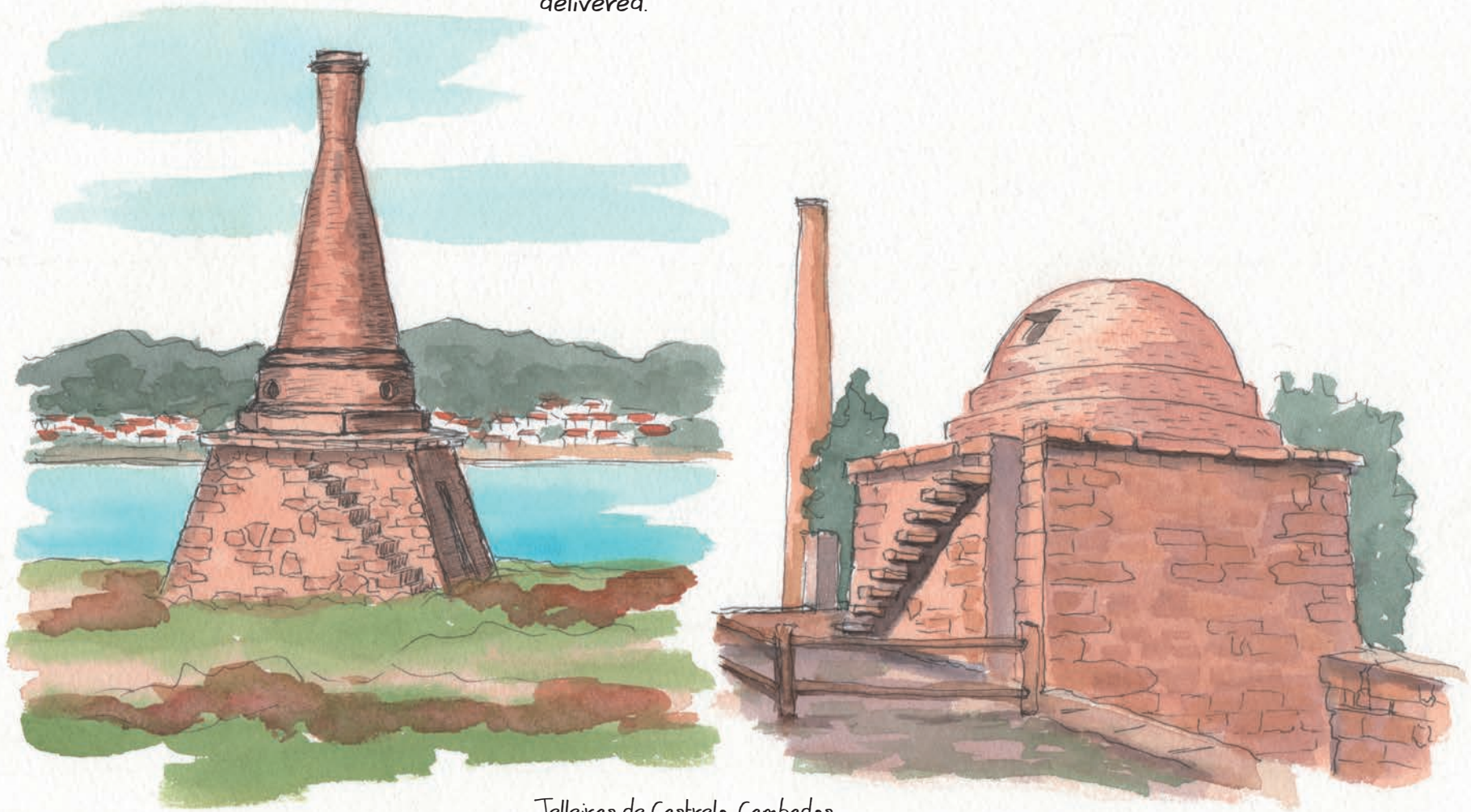
At the foot of the river that pushes the sails of the Meaño mills, a shrub with medicinal properties grows, called *Taray, which Father Sarmiento talks about on his journey.

In the parish of Castrelo, we can see the recovered remains of three ancient Telleiras, with their large kilns for baking the tiles. The process would begin by kneading and mixing the clay mass. Once it had good plasticity, it was thrown onto the workbench. Later, the clay was placed into a rack by hand, ready for casting, and passed over with a levelling rod, to eliminate any excess material. The mass was placed on a mould so that it would take on the shape of a tile. It would dry for a few days in the air, until it reached the right consistency to be put into the kiln, where it would usually be baked for seven days.



Telleiras de Castrelo. Cambados

The so-called Telleira de Vietes or Facho, which was functional until 1973, is the one in the best maintained condition, and in it one can still recognise the kiln and the pallet where the tiles used to be stored. The complex, dating from the XVIII century, also has a chimney at the edge of the river, and the remains of a jetty, from where the goods would have been loaded, or where the wood for the kiln would have been delivered.



Telleiras de Castrelo. Cambados



Surrounded by vines growing albariña grapes tinted antique gold by the sun, the Santa Cruz de Castrelo church reaches into the sky. A Baroque jewel that Father Sarmiento could see from the side of the rectory. On the first weekend in May, the festival of Santa Cruz is celebrated. Young and old, dressed in white and with hats dangling multicoloured ribbons down their backs, dance in honour of Santa Cruz.

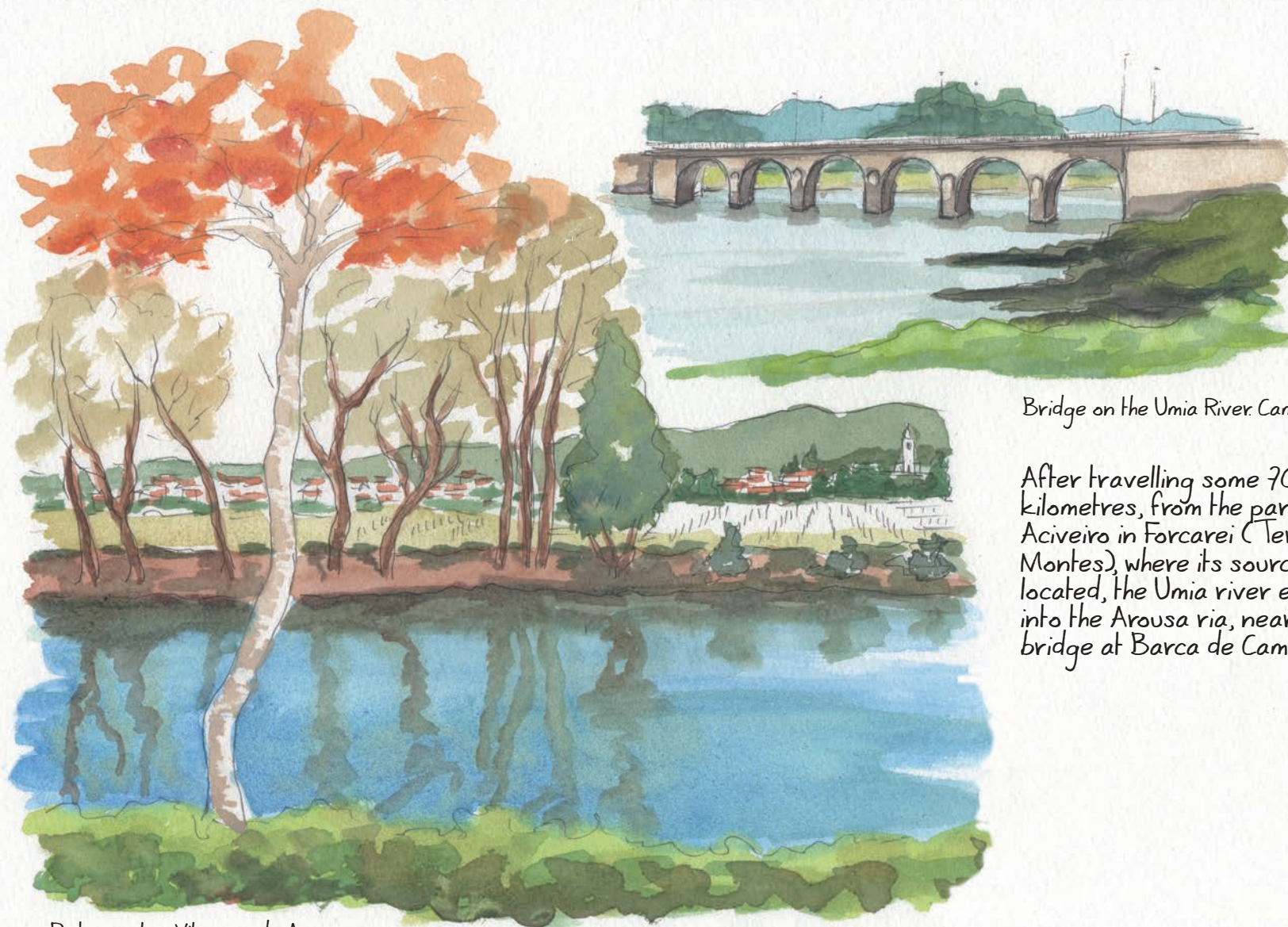
Santa Cruz de Castrelo church. Cambados



Pazo de Serantellos was originally a priory, under the authority of the Abbey of Our Lady of Armenteira. In 1837, out of fear of the disentailments by Mendizábal, it passed into the hands of the State. The property, acquired by public auction, changed hands until the building and land were eventually donated to the Salesian congregation for social works. The work by the Salesians throughout all these the years attests to the success of that decision.



Pazo de Serantellos. Cambados



Pontearelas. Vilanova de Arousa

Bridge on the Umia River. Cambados

After travelling some 70 kilometres, from the parish of Aciveiro in Forcarei (Terra de Montes), where its source is located, the Umia river emerges into the Arousa ria, near to the bridge at Barca de Cambados.

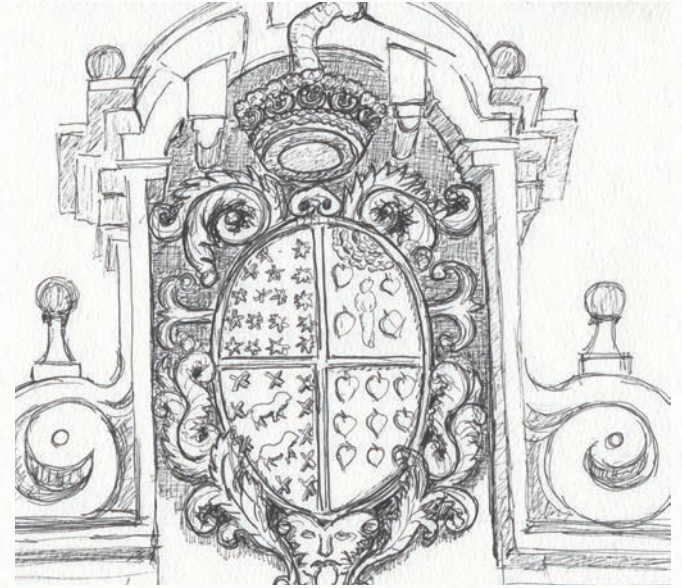
At its mouth, the Umia river forms idyllic landscapes such as the one at Pontearelas. One strip of the river belongs to the parish of Baión, in the Pontevedra municipality of Vilanova de Arousa; the other belongs to Ribadumia. Of course nature knows nothing of such limits, and it continues to enchant any hikers who visit this beautiful spot.



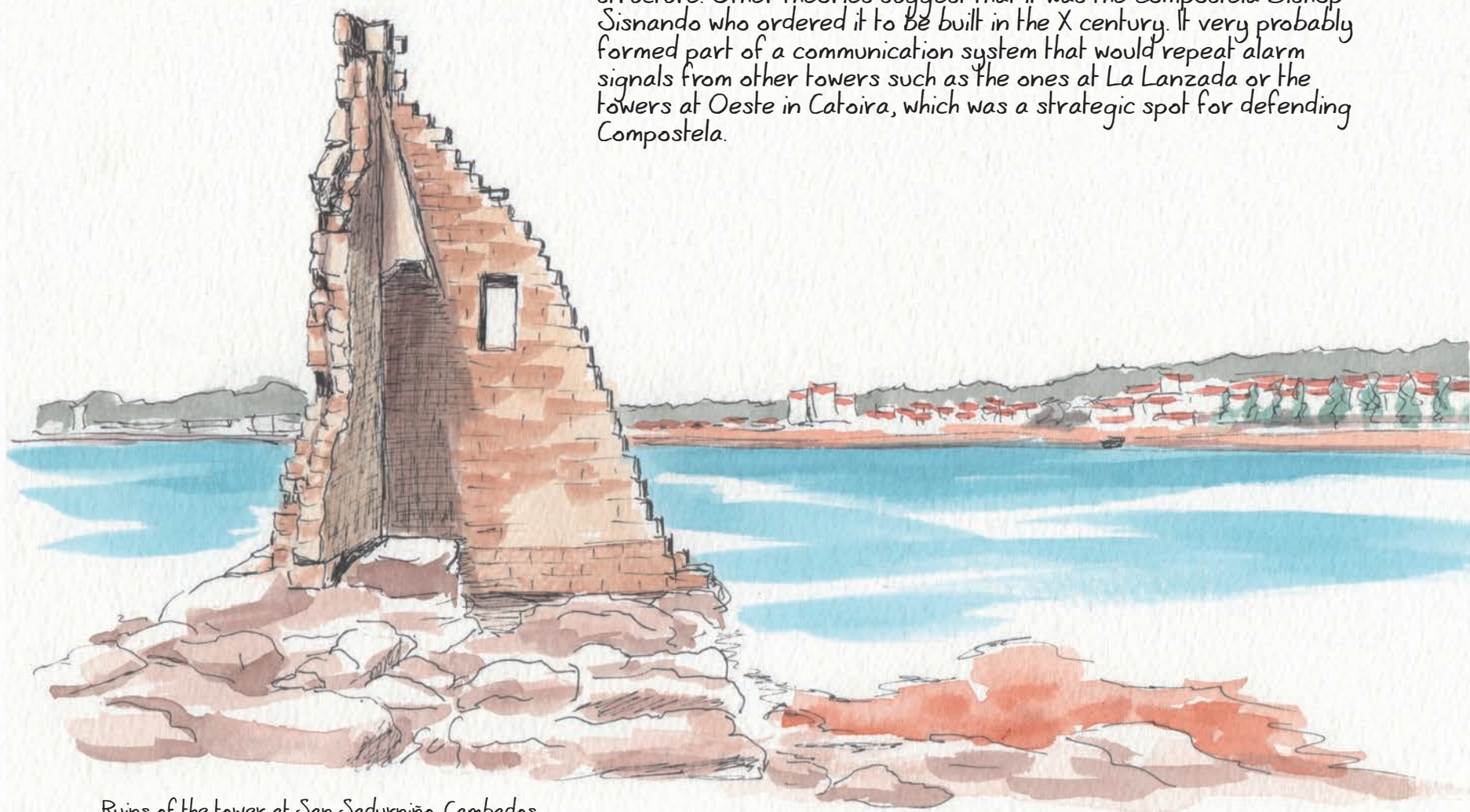
Pazo de Montesacro and the chapel at Valvanera. San Tomé del Mar

The sailors' district in San Tomé del Mar constitutes the oldest hub in Cambados. It is called the "Villa Vieja" and dates from the XII century. The pazo at Montesacro and the chapel-annex to the Virgin of Valvanera, currently a refuge, were constructed by the first Marquis of Montesacro, Don Diego de Zárate y Murga, at the start of the XVIII century.

The front of the pazo bears the coat of arms of the marquises of Zárate y Murga, sealed by the cross of Saint James and the Marquises crown, out of which reaches an arm wielding a sword. An image in stone of the Virgin of Valvanera, patron saint of Ríojá, who the Marquises of Montesacro brought to Cambados, can be seen on the façade. Presiding over the magnificent baroque altar in the chapel is another image, of a seated Virgin of Valvanera, much loved by the Cambados people, who honour her with a festival every 7th and 8th of September.



The beacons and towers, ravaged by the Galician coast, are defensive structures from time immemorial that protected the villages and hamlets from maritime assault. The tower at San Sadurniño, in the region of Cambados, dates from the VIII or IX century, but it is possible that it was built on the remains of another even older structure. Other theories suggest that it was the Compostela Bishop Sisnando who ordered it to be built in the X century. It very probably formed part of a communication system that would repeat alarm signals from other towers such as the ones at La Lanzada or the towers at Oeste in Catoira, which was a strategic spot for defending Compostela.



Ruins of the tower at San Sadurniño. Cambados

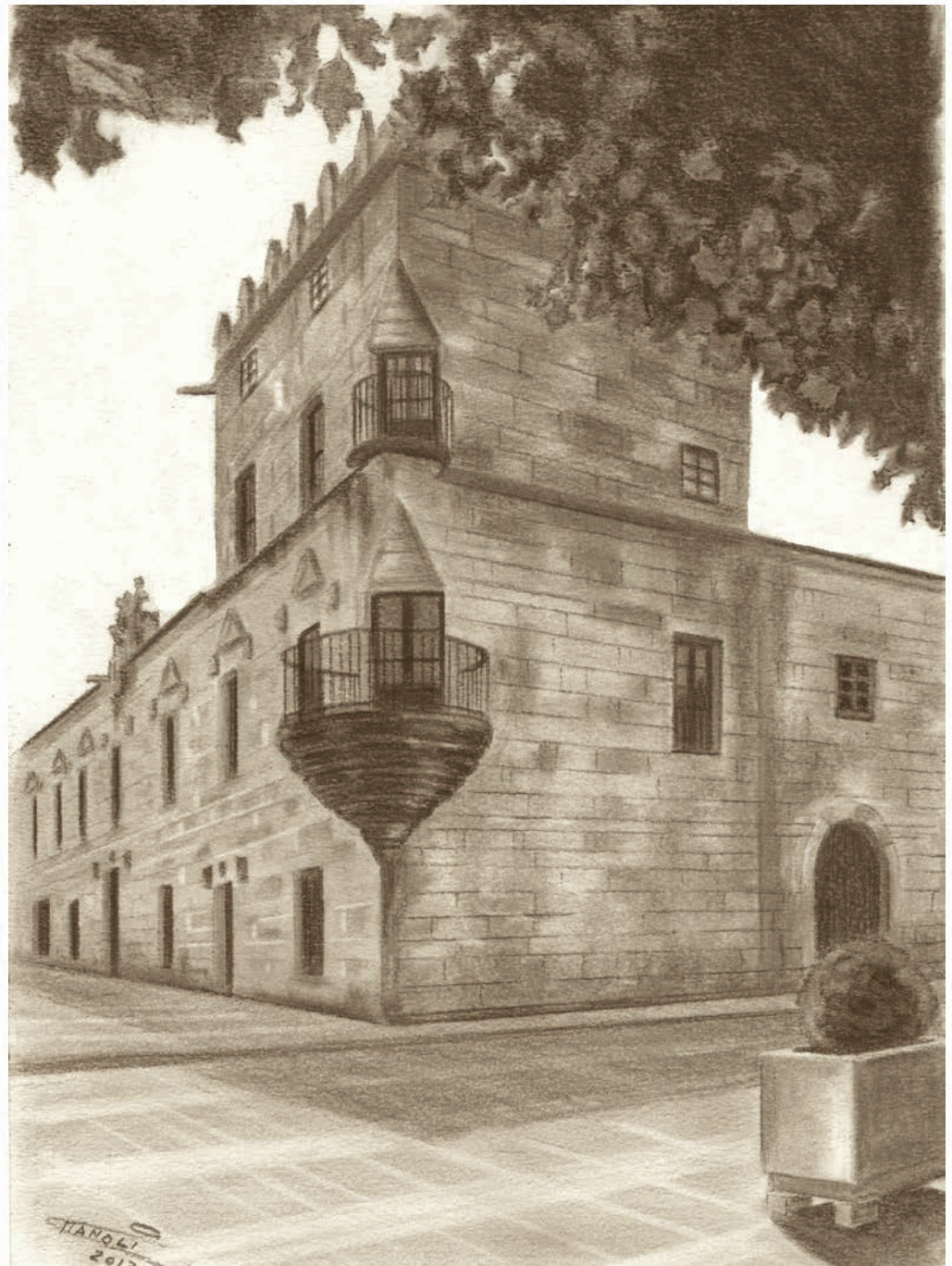
It was rebuilt in the XII century by Diego Xelmírez, Archbishop of Santiago, as it was a strategic place for controlling his lands from incursions by sea. In the XV century it was torn down, during the Irmandiña uprising. Rebuilt, it fell again in the earthquake of 1755, which affected the western coast of the Iberian Peninsula. Nowadays it is one of Cambados's most emblematic monuments; a silent witness to the work of fishermen and shellfish gatherers during low tide.





Arched bridge at the Pazo de Fefiñáns. Cambados. Drawn by Manoli Martínez

In the heart of Cambados, we come across Fefiñáns plaza, formed by the pazo, with its arched bridge (the only one still remaining from its original four), its watchtower, known as Tribute Tower, on the Camino Real, and its church, San Benito. It is one of the most impressive historic-artistic sites in all of Galicia, and was declared a site of Special Cultural Interest in 2012. Construction started in the XVI century, when Juan Sarmiento y Valladares, adviser to Felipe II and the prime minister of Fefiñáns, recruited the best stonemasons to break ground. He didn't live to see the final pazo, as work continued until the XVII century. The delicate nature of the frontage is reminiscent of Italian renaissance architecture, featuring original pieces such as the two circular balconies, located at each end of the building. A large crenelated tower and a Baroque-style archway complete the complex. This historical property also owns albariño vines. It was the first vineyard to brand and label this white wine from the Rías Baixas.



Pazo de Fefiñáns. Cambados. Drawn by Manoli Martínez



Ruins at Santa Marina de Dozo. Cambados

The ancient parochial church of Santa María de Dozo, patron saint of Cambados, is right at the foot of an old fort on Pastora mount and remained standing until the mid XIX century. In 1838, worship at the church was moved to the San Francisco, due to the risk of the building's collapse. Eventually the walls did collapse and people mourned the loss of their beautiful rose window. The ruins were declared a National Monument in 1943, and in 2014 the Santa Marina de Dozo Ruins were chosen as the most notable memorial monument in Spain.



San Francisco convent

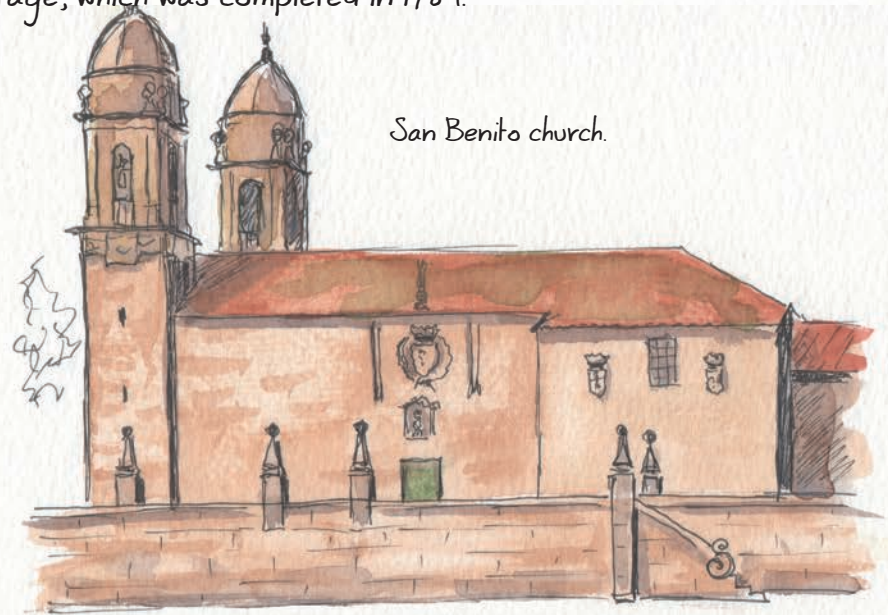
The church attached to the old San Francisco convent founded in 1588, is the current Cambados parish church. On the frontage we can see five Franciscan scenes, like the figures of Adam and Eve, standing naked, as a symbol of the earthly, mortal nature of humanity. In a oratory pose, there is a depiction of the founders, with their respective coats of arms. Whoever said stones can't speak!



Santa Margarita chapel

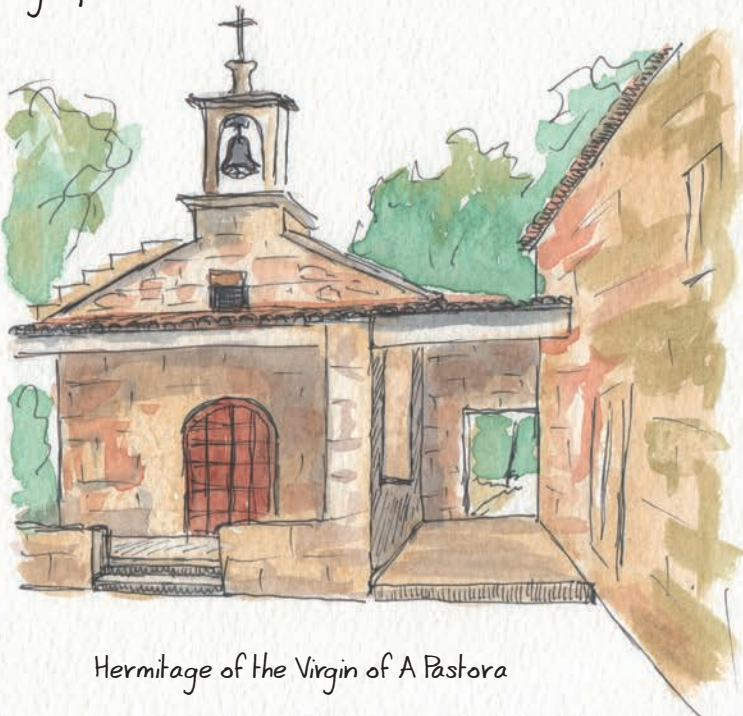
This little chapel, previously known as San Roque, is the only one surviving from the pazo belonging to the Abrales family, which was demolished in the XVIII century. On one side of the pazo there used to be a crucifix, which was painstakingly moved, stone by stone, to the right hand side of the chapel wall. For as long as it remains, we will remember the place where the pazo used to stand.

San Benito church was originally a Romanesque temple, and was redesigned at the start of the XV century then rebuilt two centuries later, under the orders of Gonzalo de Valladares, first viscount of Fefiñáns. The most recent structures to be built were the towers, with their Baroque bell towers, and the frontage, which was completed in 1784. In one of the side chapels we come across the tombs of Viscount Gonzalo and his wife María Ozores y Silva. They are guarded by two stone warriors, with maces and swords.



San Benito church.

Almost at the summit of the Monte de la Pastora, home of an ancient fort, sits the Hermitage of the Virgin of la Pastora, built in the XVI century, under the patronage of a town notary by the name of Xoán Fariña. Every 5th of August, the festival of San Xusto and San Pastor are celebrated, and the saints are paraded through the streets holding their respective branches in prayer for a good grape harvest.



Hermitage of the Virgin of A Pastora



Pazo de Ulloa. Cambados



A cast iron gate with stone pillars protects the entrance to Pazo de Ulloa, a typical XV building, in the centre of Cambados. It was built by María Sánchez de Ulloa, on the plot where her family already had another, older house. In it lived her son, Diego de Acevedo, a military man, and somewhat later, Alonso III de Fonseca y Acevedo, Archbishop of Santiago and Toledo and former student of the University of Santiago de Compostela. The slightly askew coat of arms above the entrance archway shows the lineages of the Acevedo, Ulloa, Fonseca and Castro families.



Pazo de Torrado. Cambados

This stunning structure, dating from the mid XVIII century, originally belonged to the Torre de Asadelos family. Its frontage is notable for both its outside staircase, in granite, and the family coat of arms. It was formerly the residence of Joaquín Antonio Achicharrado, mayor of Cambados and one of the most active defenders of the Salnés region against the French invasion in 1809. The building was first donated in 1939, as a home for the elderly and, after having been outgrown for that purpose, it was acquired by the town for use as an exhibition space.

Pazo Bazán. Parador de Turismo. Cambados



This historic building, currently the Cambados Parador de Turismo, was ordered to be built in the XVII century by the parish priest. It was restored in XVII by Pedro Bazán de Mendoza. His son, Pedro Pablo Bazán, a liberal writer and translator of Voltaire, also lived there, as did the great grandmother of Emilia Parxo Bazán. In the 1960s it was bought by the Ministry of Information and Tourism and renovated for use as a Parador de Turismo.



This beautiful promenade was inaugurated in 1852, to connect the old burgs of Fefiñáns y Cambados. It was built using stones from the San Francisco convent and in 1960, a bronze sculpture was unveiled on it dedicated to the Cambados poet Ramón Cabanillas, sculpted by another eminent local sculptor Francisco Asorey. The promenade is bubbling with life during the albariño festivals and beyond, to such an extent that Cambados was named European City of Wine in 2017.

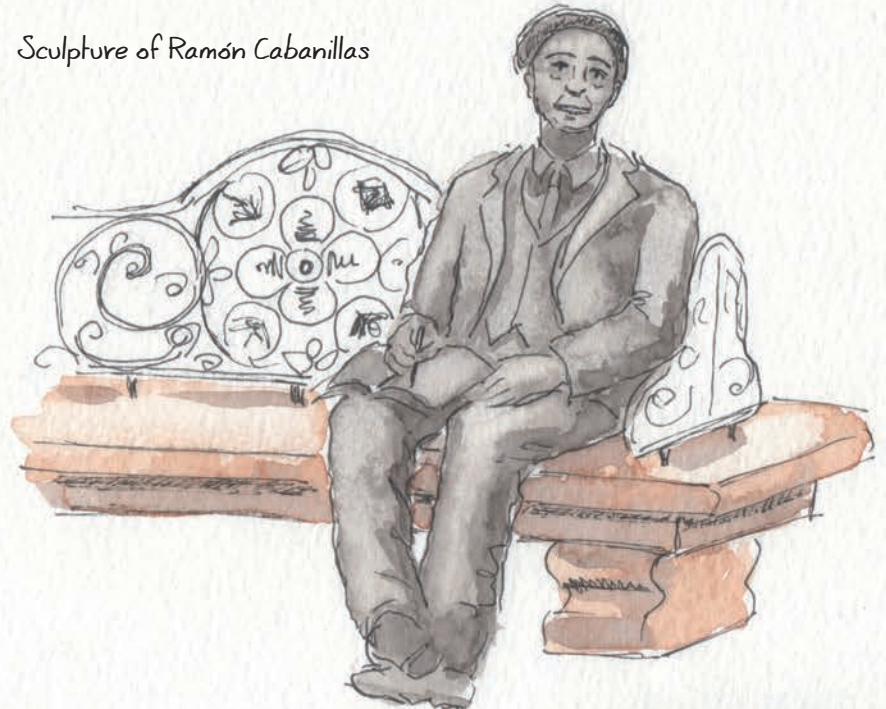
Paseo da Calzada. Cambados



Cabanillas House. Cambados

In 1998, in the Fefiñáns quarter, the birth place of poet Ramón Cabanillas opened its doors, converted into a house museum. This humble house, built in the seafaring tradition, protects the memories of the writer known as "the poet of the Galician race" displaying some of his personal objects, furniture, drawings, and photographs. Visitors can experience, first hand, the lyricism of the author of "Popular Galician Songs" and see the first editions of the author's works, on display in the house.

He has been seated on a bench, beside the Cambados town hall, looking out to sea, since 2011. Lifting his quill from the page, he dreams, in the way that only poets can. A friendly smile adorns his face as he contemplates the children playing, and watches over the comings and goings of the Cambados people. Unaffected by it all, he dreams of a Galicia scattered along the edges of the sea; of that path...



Sculpture of Ramón Cabanillas



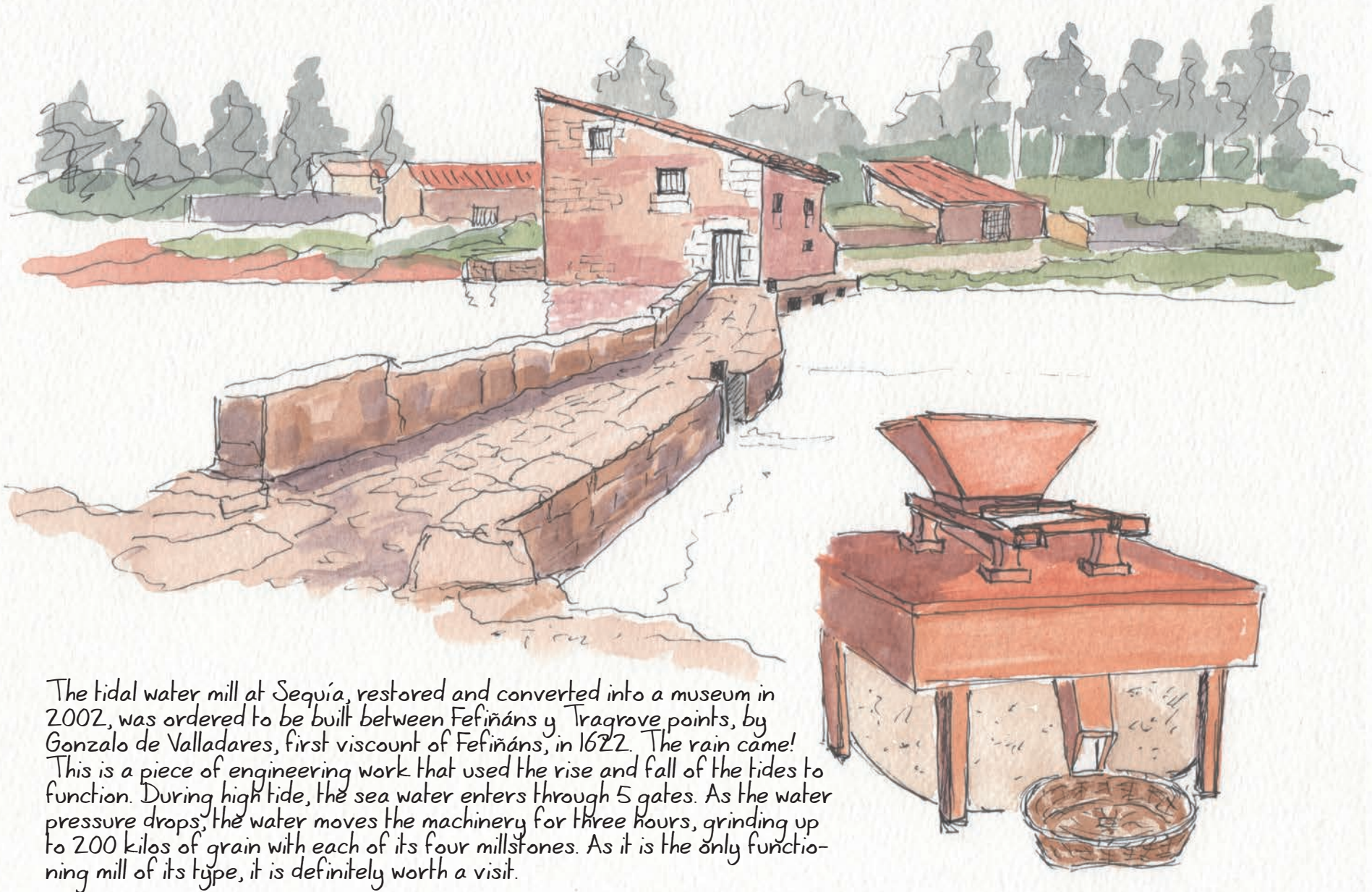
Cambados is said to have been created by the union of three ancient burgs: Cambados, Fefiñáns and San Tomé. There's no end to the stories, legends and adventures experienced in the harbour over the centuries. Each day, it delivers delicious seafood from its waters.

Tragove harbour. Cambados

Net menders and binders repair equipment with skill and great care. Without their work, which often goes unnoticed, there would be few auctions at Tragrove fish market.



Tidal mill at Sequía. Corvillón, Cambados.



The tidal water mill at Sequía, restored and converted into a museum in 2002, was ordered to be built between Fefiñáns y Tragrove points, by Gonzalo de Valladares, first viscount of Fefiñáns, in 1622. The rain came! This is a piece of engineering work that used the rise and fall of the tides to function. During high tide, the sea water enters through 5 gates. As the water pressure drops, the water moves the machinery for three hours, grinding up to 200 kilos of grain with each of its four millstones. As it is the only functioning mill of its type, it is definitely worth a visit.



Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Drawn by Rosana Boullosa

5. Route through A Illa de Arousa and Vilanova de Arousa

“ San Miguel de Deiro. Santa María de Caleiro. Currás, hamlet. Fonte Usa, tiny Currás River.

Vilamaior parish. Vilanova, right by Vilamaior. Vilanova is a priory of Saint James and a league from Cambados. I spent the night here. Arousa Island is half a league ahead.

Arousa. I enquired, in Vilanova, on the status of the island, which is a little more than half a league away. It is thought it was a continent with Tragove territories, as it is almost reachable at low tide. It must be a league in circumference, and it is long.

In the Order’s house, which is on the island, to pick fruit in the direction of the Vilanova priory, which is near to a little hill. There are some preserved stones that were from a very old tower, which was to the east, a rifle shot away.

There was one fifty years old that was still standing and one six years old that was blown over by the wind. It was almost square, about 25 feet. Its structure was similar in every way to the tower at La Lanzada and the ones at Torres del Este (which I am sure is Turris Augusti de Mela). The spot where the house was is called the place of the tower.

I think, and with good reason, that the Arousa tower was a beacon or lamp for the entry way, since from there one can see the island of Sálvora, some two leagues away, and from Aroza or Arousa one can see Ara Augusta.

One of the hills on the island is called Bertolo and here there is parish; all the island belongs to San Martiño de Santiago. From Vilanova to: *Corón, Galanes.”

Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)



Xufre harbour Island of Arousa



The harbour at Muelle is the most notable of the five on the island of Arousa, and it is the one with the most fishing activity. Alongside it is the Xufre boatyard and fish market. Precious cargoes of mussels are unloaded here, that have been cultivated in these waters and have been awarded Designation of Origin. A maritime walk gives visitors the chance to get to know the port, its boats, and the hustle and bustle of daily life for the local seafaring people.

The effigy of the Virgin of Carmen, erected by fishermen in Xufre harbour, is even respected by the thunderstorms. From her pedestal, she gazes upon the octopus-catching dornas who chat about navigation and traditional fishing methods. Associations like the traditional Sailing School on Arousa Island make sure this rich heritage doesn't get lost in the midst of progress.

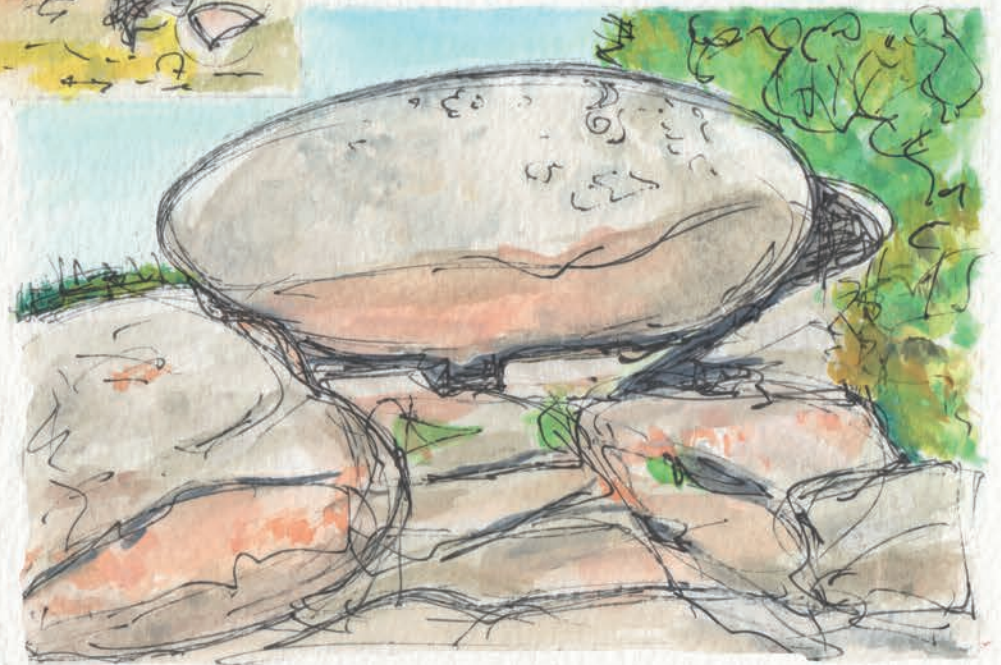




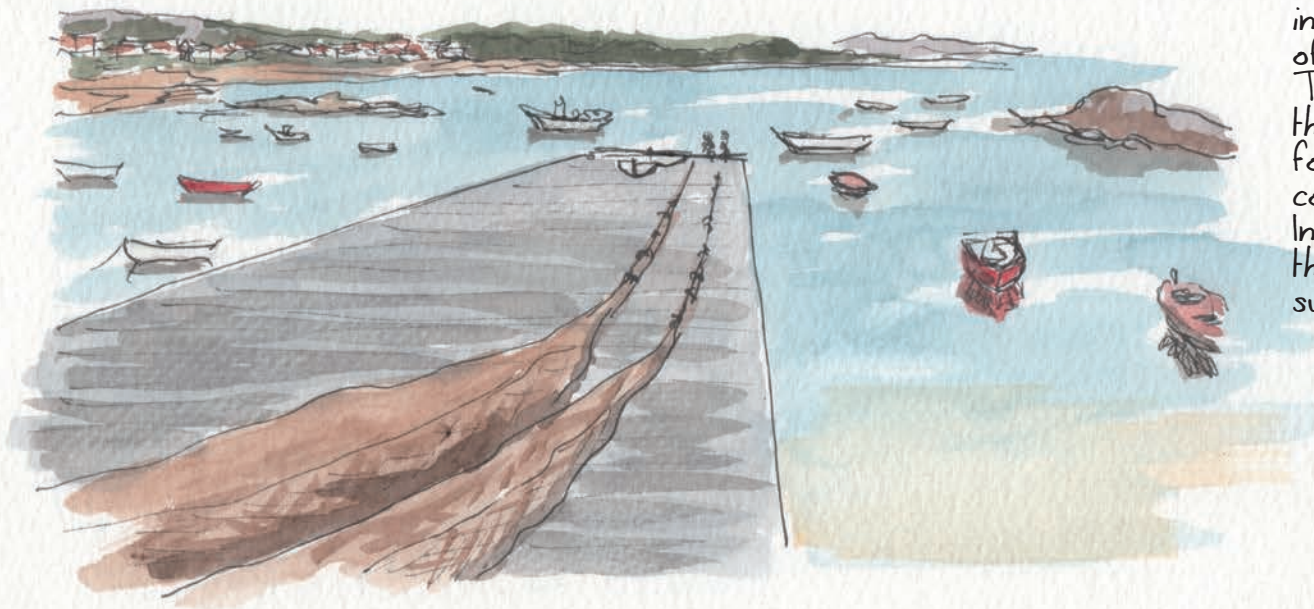
Punta Caballo Lighthouse. Island of Arousa. Painted by Paula Aboal

Like a mirage emerging from the rocks, the Punta Caballo Lighthouse was erected in 1952, at the hands of the engineer Celedonio de Uribe. From the time it switched on its first light on the 19th October 1853, two keepers have made sure that its light safely guides travellers. Like many other things, it suffered with the advent of automisation and changes in the XX century, but it still stands; now with a restaurant that enjoys superb views that whet the appetite for sampling Arousa's seafood

Escarpments at Punta Caballo. Island of Arousa.
Painted by Paula Aboal



Once I saw at the Escarpments of Punta Caballo, huge, like the stones of gods, the photographing of newlywed couples. There's no landscape prettier than this to use as a photographer's backdrop on such a happy day.



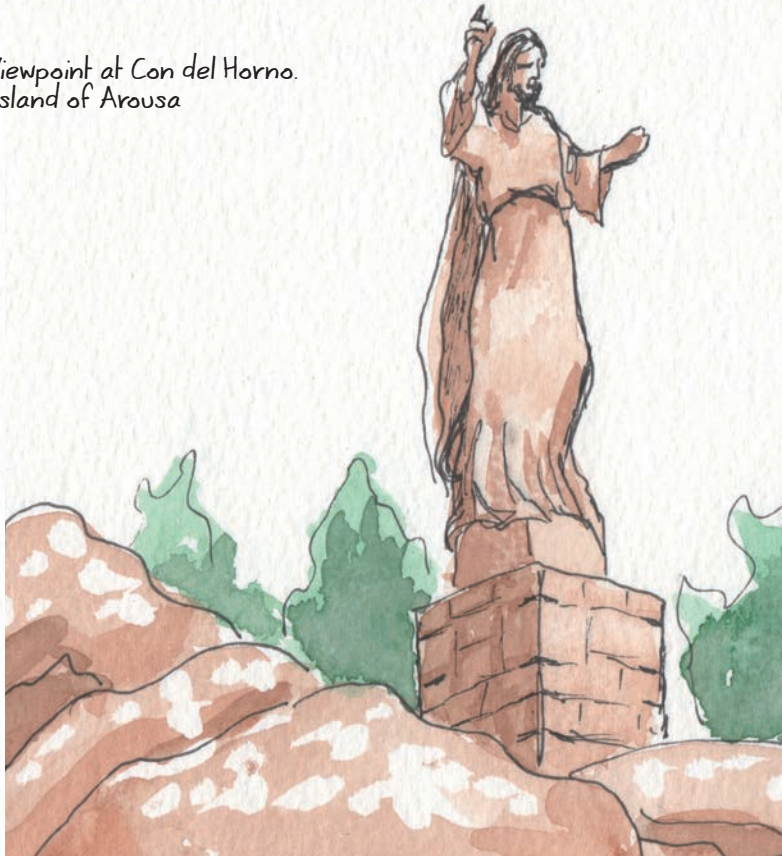
Palo Dock, made out of wood at the start of the XX century, initially started life in the service of the preserves factory Goday. Today it has been renovated, thanks to a municipal initiative, for use as a museum and conservation information centre. In 1881, King Alfonso XII visited the factory and named it a supplier to the Royal Household.

On a rise on Pedrouzo mount we come across the only remaining windmill on Arousa Island. There were apparently others, which gradually disappeared, like the one in the Aceñas area. This one in Pedrouzos, dating from the XVII century when corn was introduced to Galicia, fell into disuse many years ago. It must have become tired of so much milling and now prefers to enjoy the splendid views of the Arousa ria.



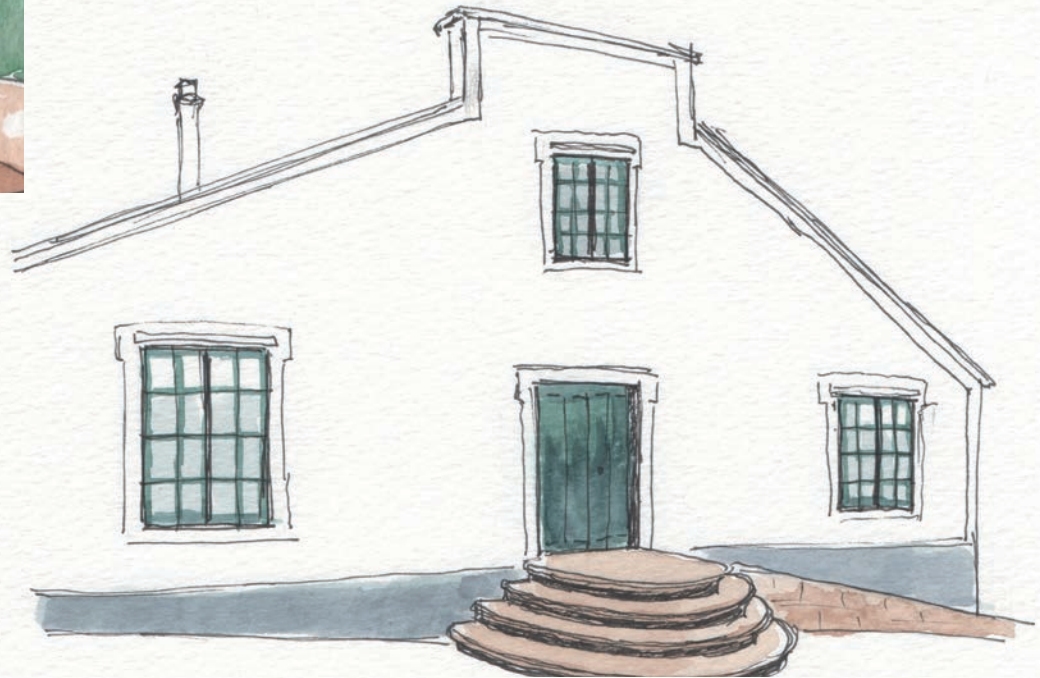
Windmill. Monte de Pedrouzo. Island of Arousa

Viewpoint at Con del Horno.
Island of Arousa



In September of 1962, on the highest point of the island of Arousa, on top of the Horno Escarpments, an effigy of the Sacred Heart was installed, known locally as "The Saint". It had to be constructed in 5 pieces, which were carried one at a time by the "Cachondä", the first motor vehicle that there had ever been on the island. The 63-metre high viewpoint provides the best view over the island and the Arousa ria.

Museum of Preserves. Island of Arousa



Juan Goday Gual was one of the first Catalan entrepreneurs to immigrate to Galicia in the XVIII century, to set up a fish-salting business. In 1879 this business became the first preserves factory in Galicia to carry the name of its founder, Goday. All the original elements of the old factory, including its steamer, are meticulously reconstructed.



Tidal mill at Las Aceñas. Island of Arousa

In Brava cove, to the west of Arousa Island, lies the tidal mill at Aceñas, one of the best maintained in Galicia. Using the pressure of the water dammed at high tide, its three wheels would start turning; one to mill the wheat and the others the corn. If the innovation of harnessing the hydraulic energy of the tides was a significant development on mainland Galicia for milling large quantities of corn and wheat, it was even more so on the island, which needed self-sufficient production processes for its resources.



Carreirón Nature Park. Island of Arousa

On the south of Arousa Island is the Carreirón nature park, which has been declared a specially protected area due to its huge ecological value. It forms part of the Umia-O Grove intertidal reserve. There is a large variety of ecosystems here: dunes, marshland, shrubs, and pine groves. There is also a rich underwater landscape that although it can't be seen, fills the coastline with life. A vast variety of aquatic birds can be spotted from any of the hides dotted around the area, as well as all kinds of flora and fauna, terrestrial and amphibious: rabbits, lizards, frogs... A gift from nature that must be preserved for future generations.

This unique route starts on the isthmus at Punta Carreirón and crosses the dunes in the nature reserve of the same name. It carries on along the coastline, south of Brava cove, where, in winter, we can see hundreds of wading birds feeding along the shore. Further south, there is a little rocky escarpment where tiny inlets have formed in between the rocks, with fine, white sand.



Pilos route. Island of Arousa



The wind, the tides and the waves have sculpted whimsical figures out of the rocks, which by popular imagination have been dubbed amusing names like "three-footed cliff", "cliff the pig", and "cliff the crocodile". A world where fantasy enhances the privilege of the Arousa landscape, creating an imaginary nature park full of mythical creatures.

Route of the Escarpments. The Tres Pies escarpment. Island of Arousa



Bridge on Arousa Island

Inaugurated on 14th September 1985, the bridge symbolises a before and an after for the island. At 1980 metres, it was then the longest bridge in Spain, and cost 6 million Euros. Nowadays that might seem a minor amount but at that time it was a huge budget for bringing an end to the isolation of the 4 thousand island inhabitants. The bridge prompted an economic and social surge; production activities diversified, and the island opened up to tourism. The youngsters who ride the waves on their kite-surfing boards perhaps don't realise it, but the shellfish gatherers under the bridge certainly do.

There are few signs left of the ancient Pazo de Cardalda. The Cardalda family used to own land in Cardalda de Deiro, Vilagarcía, and also Vilaboa. Their surname has appeared on notarial documents and on venues ever since the XV century. In the XVI century Fernando de Cardalda was owner of the pazo. Everything gradually eroded and disappeared with the passage of time, and the figures of Adam and Eve shown on the Cardalda crucifix column are extremely worn.



Pazo de Cardalda. San Miguel de Deiro. Vilanova de Arousa



Santa María de Caleiro church. Vilanova de Arousa

Santa María de Caleiro church is of Roman origin although, as is often the case, over time it has gone through modifications and additions. Only a part of the south wall, the door of the western façade, and the apse remain from the original church, in which the cantilevers, featuring Visigoth-influenced geometric faces and shapes, stand out.

The church was closed for eleven years due to its poor state of repair, and it was restored in 2016, thanks to public funding of the works.

Pazo de Vista Real. Caleiro. Vilanova de Arousa

Few names are as well deserved as this one, the XVIII-century pazo known as "Royal View". Located in the parish of Caleiro, in Vilanova de Arousa, it commands views fit for a king, across the whole of the Arousa ria.



It has a chapel and a dovecote, and gardens stretching over 40 thousand square metres and including many vineyards, centennial trees and a number of ponds. Since 2010 it has belonged to the Vilanova municipality. It seems that the whole village wonders about the legend that it has an extraordinary library, buried under the pazo's gardens. Who knows!



The mill at Currás is close to the sea, in the estuary of the river Currás, also known as the Rego de Tarrío.

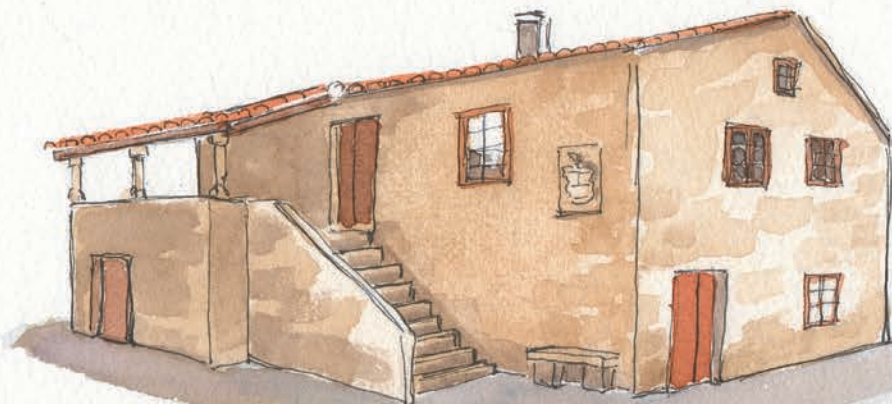
It was renovated not long ago by the students of a workshop used by the Salnés Union of Municipalities, in an attempt to restore a mill that had been abandoned for almost a century.

Currás mill. Vilanova de Arousa

The brothers Julio (1882) and Francisco (1884) Camba Andreu, famous writers and journalists, were born in a house in the Vilanova quarter of Vilamaior, which Father Sarmiento passed through on his pilgrimage. It is a little stone house, built in the seafaring style, with outside steps to climb to the first floor and a noble emblem on the front.

In this stone house in Vilanova de Arousa's old town, known as the "Casa del Cuadrante" one of the most remarkable writers of the XX century, Ramón María del Valle-Inclán, was born, on 28th October 1866.

The noble house was declared a National Historic Monument in 1976, and dates from the XIX century. It has his maternal family's coat of arms on the façade, and it was here that he learned to love the smell and the legends of the Arousa sea. It belongs to the category of house best described as a large urban property, with two floors, and built in an L shape. After suffering a fire in 1994, it was acquired by the municipality and converted into a house museum in honour of the writer.



Vilamaior. Camba brothers house museum

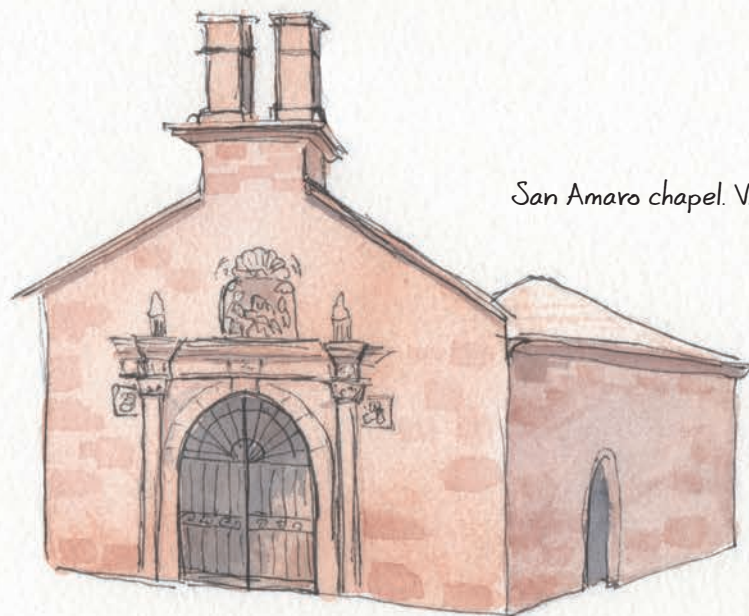


Pazo del Cuadrante. Valle-Inclán house museum

Pazo de Alvarelos is particularly noteworthy within the architectural heritage of Vilanova. It is a large house made of stone on the outskirts of Pastoriza, a few metres from where Valle-Inclán was born. The only thing contrasting with the unremarkable traditional style of this noble home is a little hanging balcony.



Pazo de Alvarelos. Vilanova de Arousa



San Amaro chapel. Vilanova de Arousa



The ruins of the Roman chapel of San Amaro, a Benedictine Abbot from the VI century, are close to the San Cibrán church. On its wall there is a sculpture representing a Mercy. In the interior, are the remains of the old church from the Cálago monastery, which is still in its original site in Vilanova. Its festival is celebrated every 15th January, with 8 masses and a large pilgrimage that attracts many people, as it is the first gastronomic festival of the year, and includes tripe tasting and a cockerel auction.

Vilanova routes. San Cibrán de Cálogo church.



An interesting addition to any visit to the Valle-Inclán house museum is to take one of the tours. The urban tour takes us around the Vilanova old town. Coming down Valle-Inclán Street we see the San Cibrán de Cálogo church, built in the neoclassical style of 1947.

Carrying onwards, the Pastoriza church is worth a visit, situated in Pastoriza, and built with stones from the Cálogo church, which was originally in Vilanova de Arousa. This XVIII church was the parochial church of Vilanova, until the XX century, and is where Valle-Inclán was baptised. Although it has not been used for worship for more than half a century, the locals have campaigned to preserve the dignity of this lovely building.



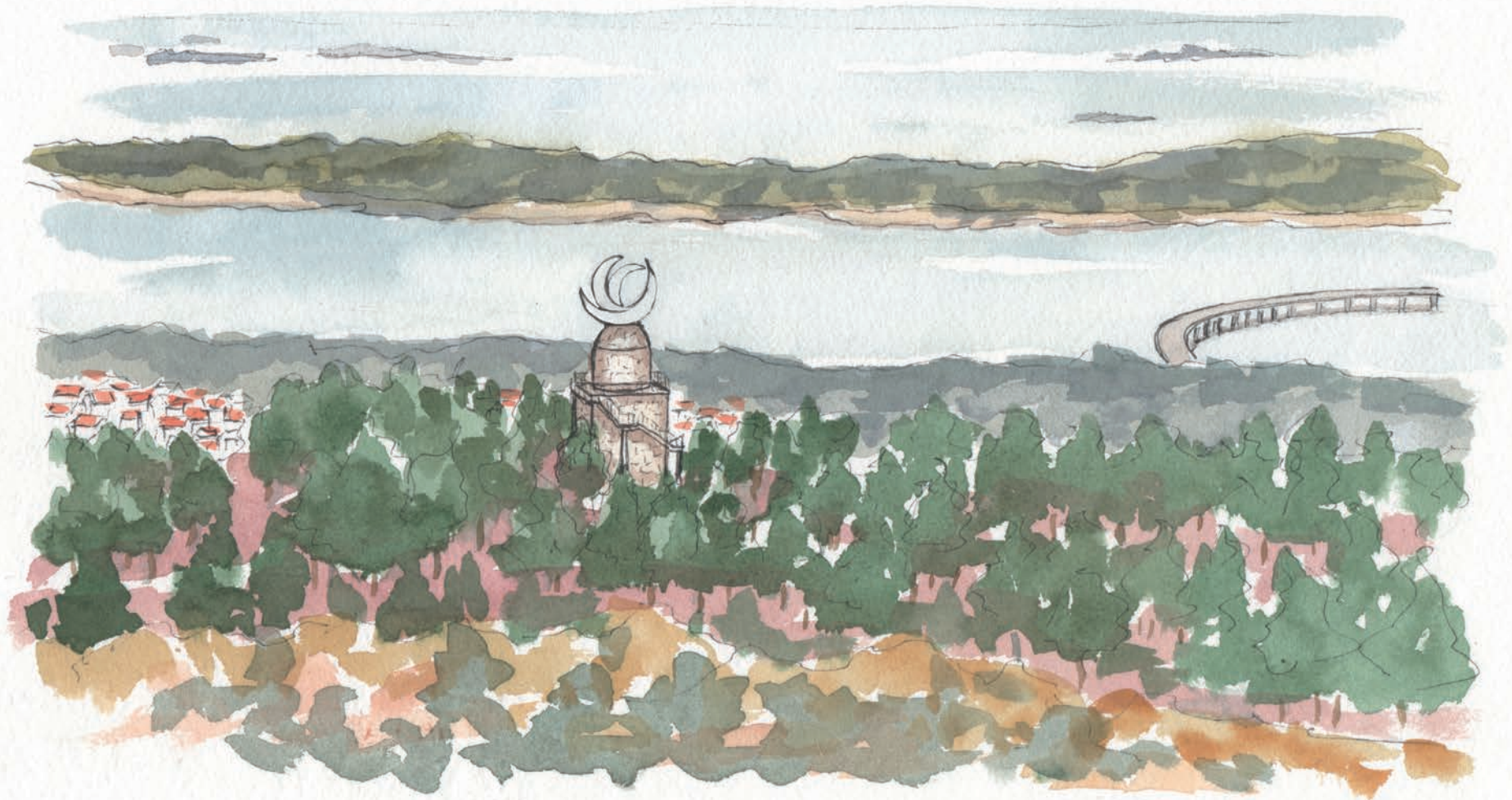
Pastoriza church. Vilanova de Arousa.

Cálogo Tower. Vilanova de Arousa



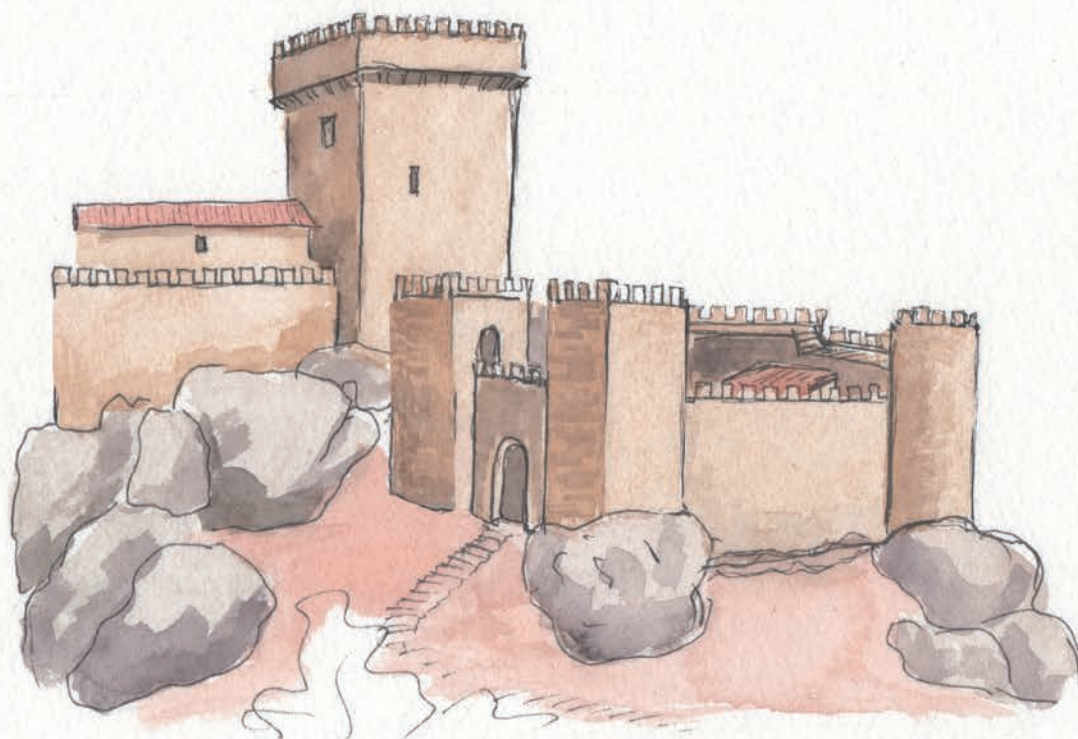
If the stones of this old Cálogo steeple could talk, we would be able to learn all about the origins of Vilanova de Arousa. History credits the founding of the Cálogo monastery to San Fructoso, a travelling monk from the VIII century. The bell tower is the only vestige remaining of the ancient San Cibrán de Cálogo monastery. It was attacked and destroyed by the Normans in the IX century and again by Almanzor at the end of the X century. In modern times, the monastery was a priory belonging to the San Martiño Pinario monastery, but it was neglected and eventually collapsed. There is a photograph of the church in the early XX century, taken by experts from the Pontevedra Archaeological Society. Although this and the Torre de Cálogo stones can't talk, they speak volumes.

Moon lookout point. Vilanova de Arousa



Also known as the moon beacon, this monolith rises out of the summit of the hill 1 kilometre west of Mount Lobeira. It owes its name to the stainless steel sculpture created by the Vilagarcia artist Manolo Chazo in 2002, representing three moons in the waning phase, arranged in such a way that the sun reflects off them in differently according to the time of day. It is possible to climb the metal steps to the top of the lookout. On the balcony at the top is a plaque that reads "listen to the ria and embrace the earth".

During the Middle Ages, on the high point of Mount Lobeira, there used to be a defensive fort, probably built using the stones from an old castle. Due to its strategic vantage point, it meant the ria could be controlled and defended from Viking and Muslim sieges. It was in this place that Bishop Iria Flavia Teodomiro was born. The Bishop is who legend credits with the discovery of the tomb of Saint James the Apostle, in the IX century. This castle was destroyed in the Irmandiña uprising and thus ended Compostela's hold on power in this strategic corner of Salnés, although in 1896, a large cross was erected to remember the victims of the shipwrecks.



Recreation of the castle at Monte Lobeira. Vilanova de Arousa



Monte Lobeira

Pazo Baión. Vilanova de Arousa



Although Pazo Baión dates from the XV century, in connection with the Soutomaiors, its current appearance is down to renovations made from 1928 by Adolfo Fojo Silva, a returning emigrant who made his fortune in Argentina and began acquiring property. It was this renovation that gave it its Vitoriano appearance, forever losing its sober pazo-like style. In 2007, by public auction, it passed into the hands of the Conde de Albarei albariño vineyard.

Pazo Rúa Nueva is situated between the Vilanova y Vilagarcía municipalities. It dates from the XVIII century and includes a tower, chapel and further annex building. The chapel is dedicated to Saint Michael, whose effigy presides over the entrance portico. The pazo has connections with Valle-Inclán's paternal family and, in fact, the writer spent various seasons here, visiting his grandparents. Literary critics have identified it from many descriptions within 'A Romance of Wolves', one of Valle-Inclán's most notable works.



Pazo de Rúa Nova. Vilanova de Arousa

Vilanova walkway and current shellfish scene



Construction of the pedestrian walkway linking Vilanova de Arousa old town to Terrón beach, in around 2007, was a huge success. Not just because it connects the centre of Vilanova with the island of Arousa, but because it also provides another beautiful view of the town and its maritime activities. Many tourists and pilgrims use the walkway to enter Vilanova and it is not unusual to see them leaning on the railings to watch the shellfish gatherers working at low tide.



As Sinas beach. Vilanova de Arousa

Vilanova de Arousa has 14km of coastline and many beaches. The most well-known are El Terrón, a quiet beach on the front end of Arousa Island, with a lush forest that provides good shade on the hottest summer days, and Las Sinas, a well-sheltered beach with fine golden sand, calm, clean waters, and the welcome cool of the surrounding trees.



Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Drawn by Rosana Boullosa

6. Route through Vilaxoán and Vilagarcía de Arousa

“ Sobrán, parish and its hamlet Faxilde, Villa-Joan, half a league from Vilanova, port. Sobradelo, Fonte Carmoa. Vista Alegre. Augustinian convent and palace of the Marquis of Vilagarcía.

Vilagarcía, half a league from Villa-Joan, Bragueixa. Marción. Priory of the Order. Today to Florida, with the Laxe stream, which flows into the pocket of the sea that surrounds the Augustinian monastery. And the parish of all of this is Santa Eulalia de Arena Larga.

To the right is the Lobeira tower, el Pico, at half a league is Cornazo, Ribiáns, San Pedro de Cena, Trabanca-badiña, *Trabanca-sardiñeira and Mount Xabre.

Carril, port town, a quarter league from the priory. In front of Carril is the island of Cortegada, a little smaller than the island of Tambo. This is the Corticata de Plinio, opposite the Rianxo ria.

San Xenxo de Bamio, a quarter league from Carril. {Y*perto the Meadelo tower}”

Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)



Pazo de Sobrán and San Martiño de Sobrán church. Vilaxoán. Drawn by Fernando Búa



Pazo de Sobrán. Vilaxoán de Arousa

One of the most outstanding aspects of Vilaxoán is that despite its small area, it has three magnificent pazos: one in Sobrán, one in Pardiñas and one in Rial. The oldest of the three is in Sobrán. In 1496, Xoán Marino de Sotomaior, credited with founding this area (hence the name Vilaxoán), gave his great-nephew the medieval tower and the plot where the pazo would eventually be built. The two medieval towers and their sober decorations hint towards their original defensive and military purpose.

San Martiño de Sobrán church. Vilaxoán (Vilagarcía de Arousa)

The XII century church at San Martiño de Sobrán used to be part of a monastery that is mentioned in records as far back as the X century. It is said that the door on its north wall used to lead into the ancient monastery. The church is rectangle-shaped and has only one nave. Inside, beneath an arcosolium, is the tomb of Xoán Marino, topped by a recumbent sculpture adorned in Bishop's attire and mitre, as befitting a good Archdeacon and server of the church. A bell tower breaks the symmetry of the main façade, and was a later addition.

This urban pazo still maintains its pazo-style identity, from the XVI century. It was ordered to be built by the married couple Xoán del Valle and María Pérez Leiro Romero, who also sponsored the convent at San Francisco de Cambados.

In the XVII century it passed, by marriage, to the Pardiñas family. The appearance of the pazo was changed, with the addition of its main tower and a granite and ironwork balcony supported by grand corbels. Due to urban development its walled garden was demolished to make way for a public highway. That's progress!



Pazo Pardiñas. Vilaxoán. Vilagarcía de Arousa



Pazo Rial. Vilaxoán (Vilagarcía de Arousa)

Pazo Rial was built in 1696 by Xoán Antonio Marino de Lobeira and it is a superb example of baroque architecture.

It has a small chapel, beautiful dovecote, an old granary, and a crucifix. It was renovated and extended in the 1970s, for conversion to a luxury hotel.

Vilaxoán harbour Vilagarcía de Arousa.



The ethnographer Fermin Bouza-Brey theorised that the harbour at Vilaxoán was from the Roman era. His theory is based on the fact that a large quantity of amphora remains have been discovered, which, according to him, come from cleaning the boats moored in the dock. Since time immemorial, this port has harboured fishing boats from the Arousa ria and since the XVIII century it has been vital for the logistics of the salting industry and the general fishing economy within the town. Every 16th July, the festival of the Virgin of Carmen emerges from the port, in honour of the Virgin, patron saint of sailors.

The San Salvador de Sobradelo church is the result of two structures, built at two different times. According to the inscription on the wall that has since been painted red, the first was finished in 1640.

San Salvador de Sobradelo. Vilagarcía de Arousa



The addition on the side was probably from the XVIII century, and was built to extend the size of the original church. Standing out on the buttresses is an enormous serpent-headed gargoyle, although he no longer strikes fear into the heart, as he is so eroded by time.

San Pedro de Fontecarmoa church. This is a small church, with one nave, that still contains a primitive XII-century apse. In the oratory there are some very well-preserved murals of figures from the XVI century, representing the Annunciation, the Apostles Peter and Paul and Santa Faz. There is also a small polychrome sculpture of Santa Lucía, which may well be from the primitive church.



San Pedro de Fontecarmoa. Vilagarcía de Arousa

On a hill called "El Montillã" by the Pazo de Vista Alegre, the remains of a fortified settlement have been preserved; possibly the first seeds of what would later become Vilagarcía. The fort was originally very close to the sea, although nowadays the construction around the port means that it is considerably further back from the waves.

The small excavated area has unearthed dwellings, trenches, and the parapet or the top of the fort where there are various stacks in the rock. Roman remains have also been discovered, such as an altar and a salter.



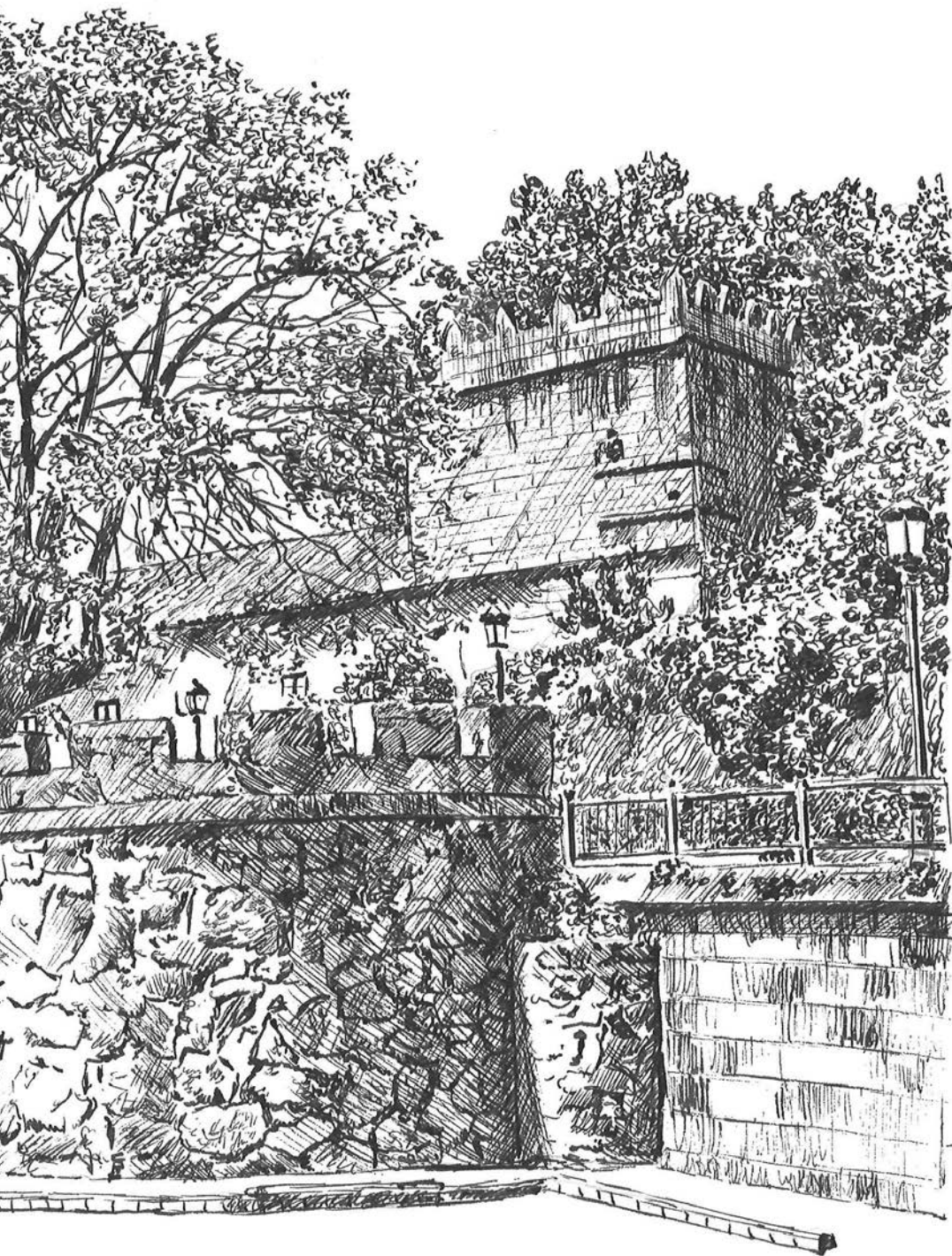
Castro de Alobre. Vilagarcía de Arousa.

The old Vista Alegre Bridge over the Con River, is situated in Vilagarcía old town and leads to the land belonging to the magnificent Vista Alegre pazo.



Old Vista Alegre Bridge over the Con River.





Vista Alegre pazo and its convent are part of
 the origins of Vilagarcía. The town owes its
 name to the Compostela Cardinal García de
 Soutomaior. It was he who, in 1461, authorised the founding of a village on
 the outskirts of the Vista Alegre fort, possibly
 known as San Cristovo fort, as there had been
 a hermitage dedicated to that saint since the X
 century. The Cardinal established his fiefdom
 there. It was one of his heirs, Alvaro de Mendoza
 Soutomaior who built the first pazo in the XVI
 century. A century later, Archbishop Fernando
 Andrade founded the Augustinian Recoletas
 convent which connected to the pazo by an
 archway, and the San Cristovo church. The
 complex has now been declared a historic artistic
 monument.

Convent at Vista Alegre. Vilagarcía de Arousa.
 by Fernando *Búa

Santa Baia de Area Longa. Vilagarcía de Arousa

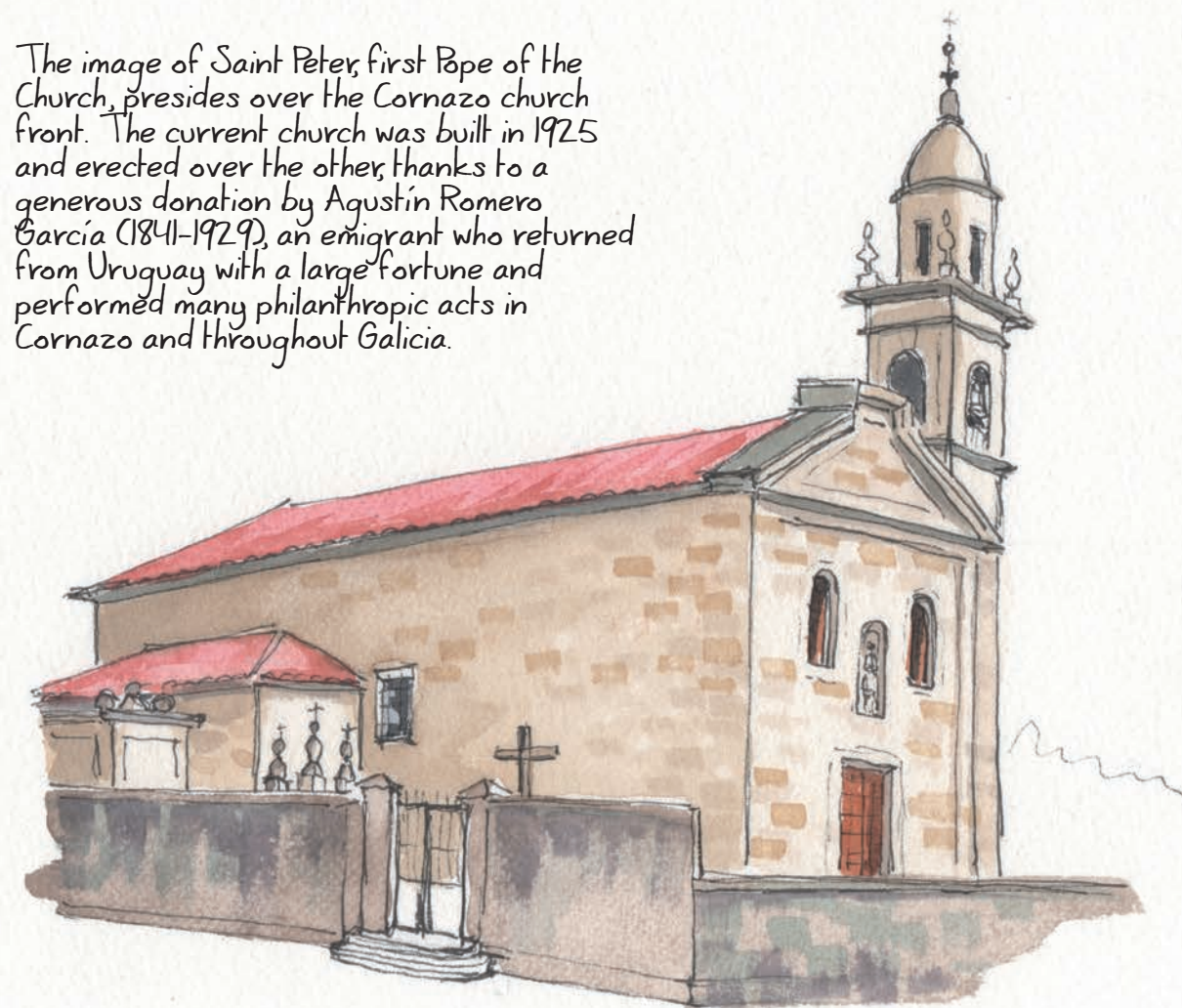


Santa Baia de Arealonga church was promoted by the Compostela Archbishop Fernando de Andrade y Soutomaior, who was born in the Vilagarcian pazo Vista Alegre in 1578. Work began in around 1662 and it was completed before the turn of the century. It has a much understated Baroque-style frontage, topped by two small bell towers. Its lintelled door is particularly noteworthy, with a recessed image of Santa Baia. Above it a rectangular window carries light into the church and on either side, the coats of arms of Andrade Soutomaior and Caamaño, patrons of the work. It is built in the shape of a cross and has two main interior chapels: the Virgin of the Rosary and the Saint Michael, also known as the Pilar. Until the XIX century it was connected to the Vista Alegre pazo.

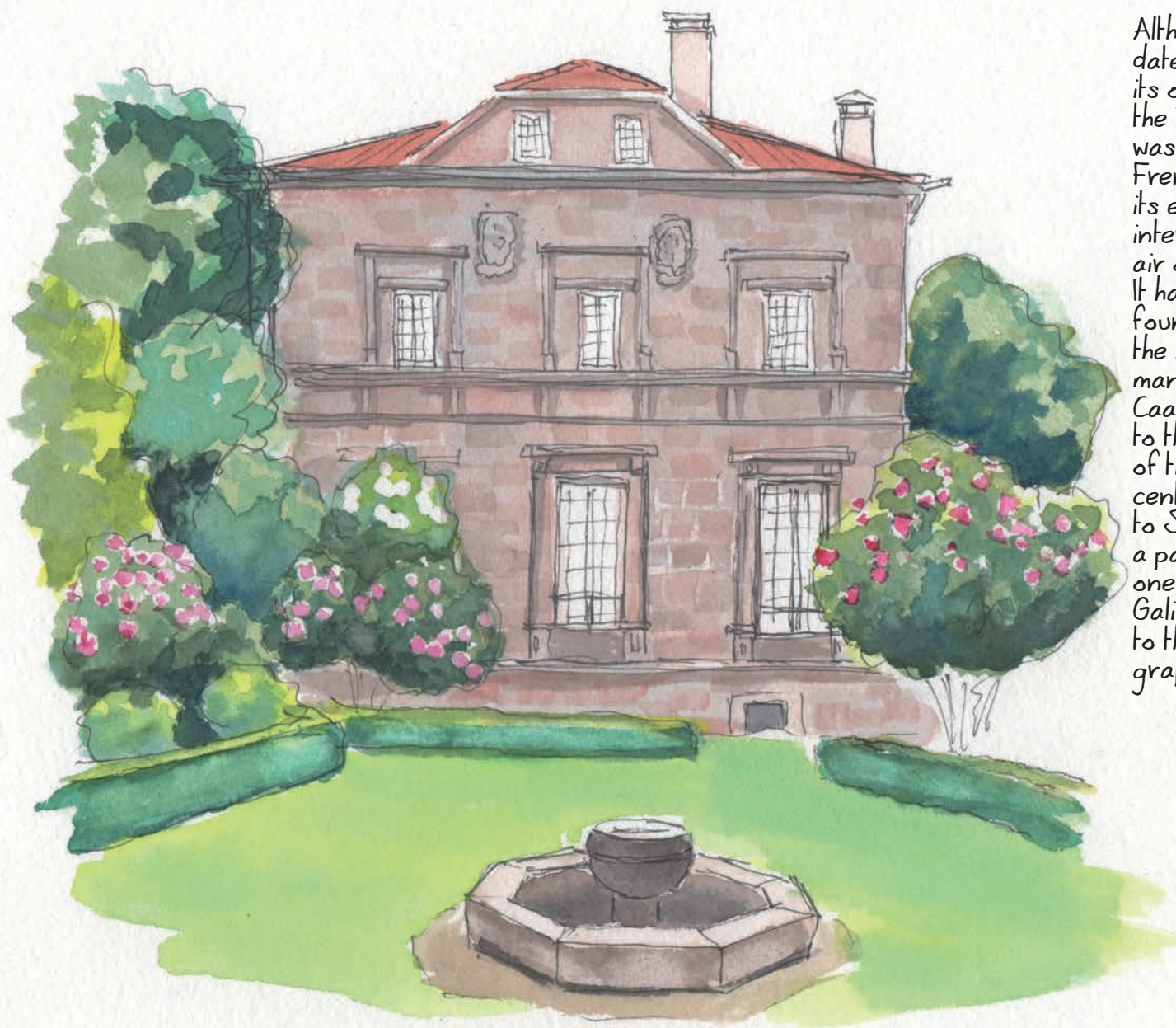
Monte Lobeira. Vilanova de Arousa



From the lookout point at Mount Lobeira, at 289 metres high, one can see the panorama across Vilagarcía, the whole Arousa ria, and a good part of the Salnés lands. The viewpoint's crucifix stands tall over these old rocks, where previously the medieval Lobeira castle stood, demolished in the Irmandiño revolts.



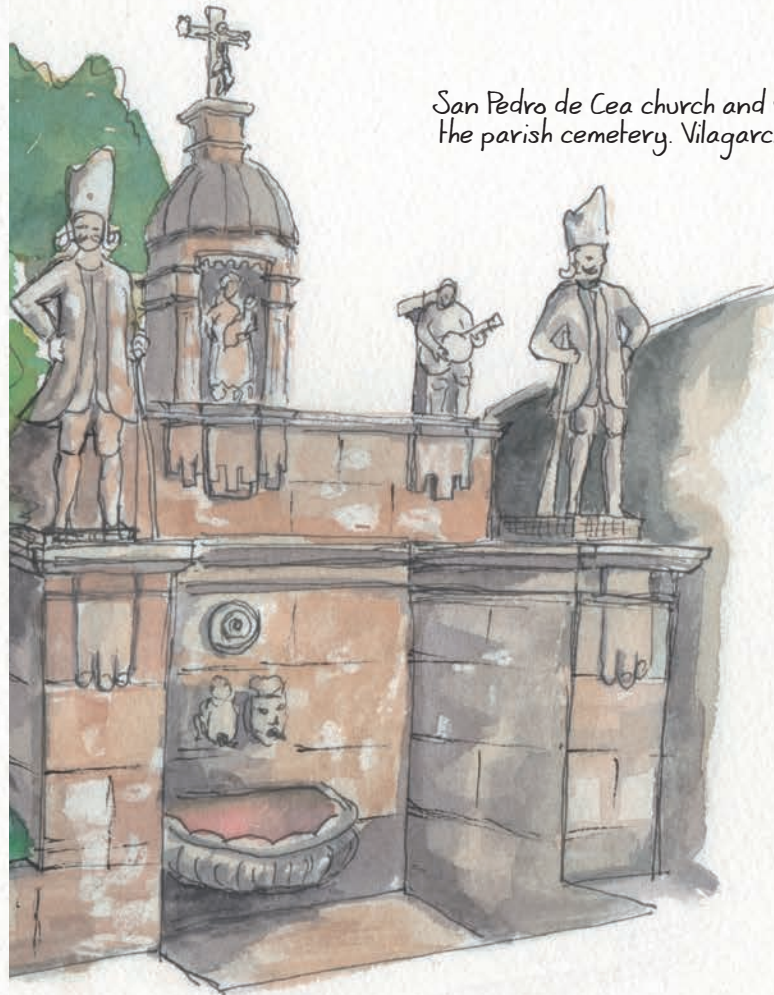
Cornazo church. Vilagarcía de Arousa



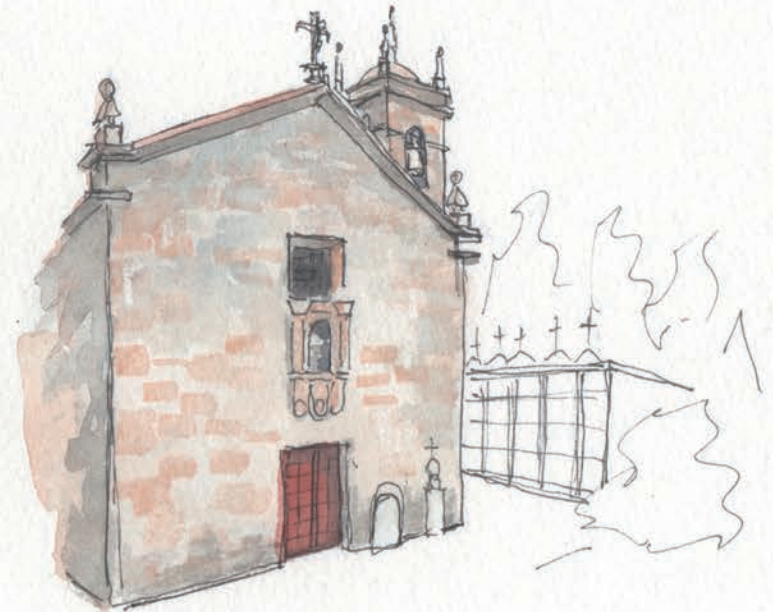
Although the Rubiáns pazo dates from the XVIII century, its old tower was erected in the XV century. The work was commissioned to a French architect and both its exterior and its luxurious interior rooms exude an air of French 'châteaux'. It has connections to the founding of Vilagarcía, as the inhabitants of this grand mansion were the García Caamaño family. In addition to the architectural elements of the house, and a XV century chapel dedicated to San Xosé, the garden is a particular highlight. It is one of the most beautiful in Galicia, with areas dedicated to the cultivation of albariña grapes and to camellias.

Pazo de Rubiáns. Vilagarcía de Arousa.

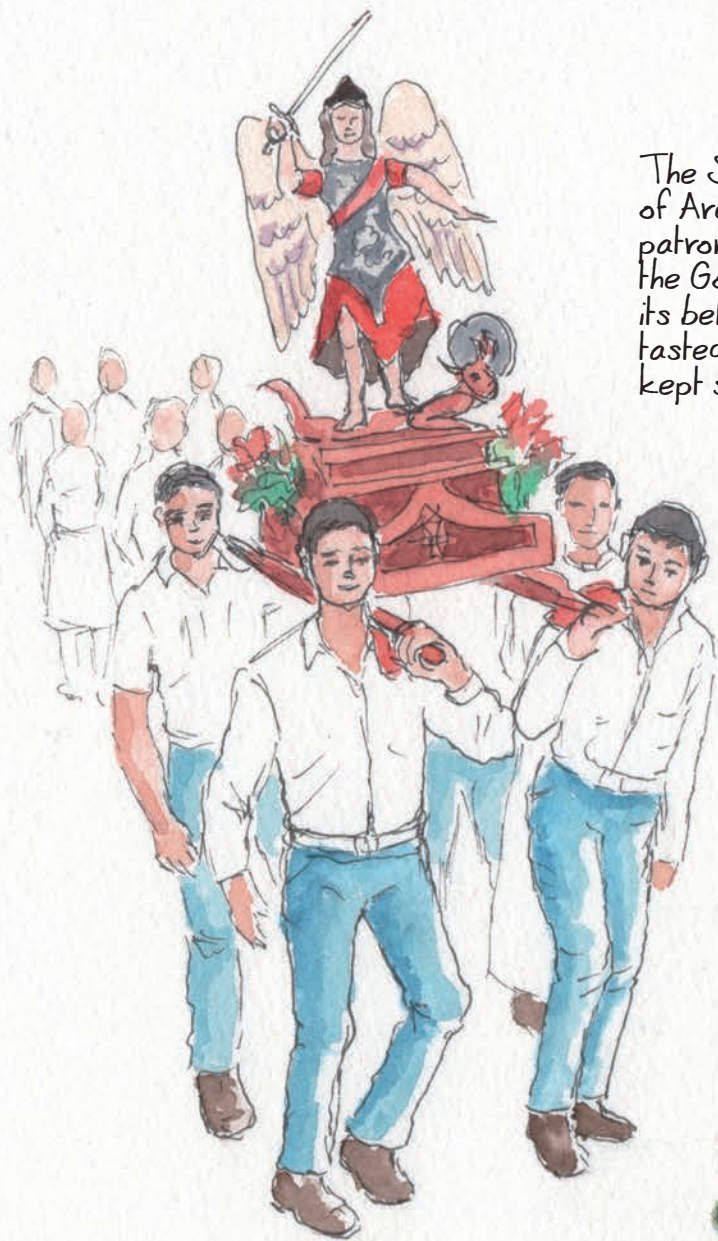
de Cea is the parish furthest away from the sea. It has a small but very pretty church dedicated to Saint Peter. Despite its unremarkable façade, with a little flat bell tower, it reveals various surprises and treasures.



San Pedro de Cea church and water fountain in the parish cemetery. Vilagarcía de Arousa

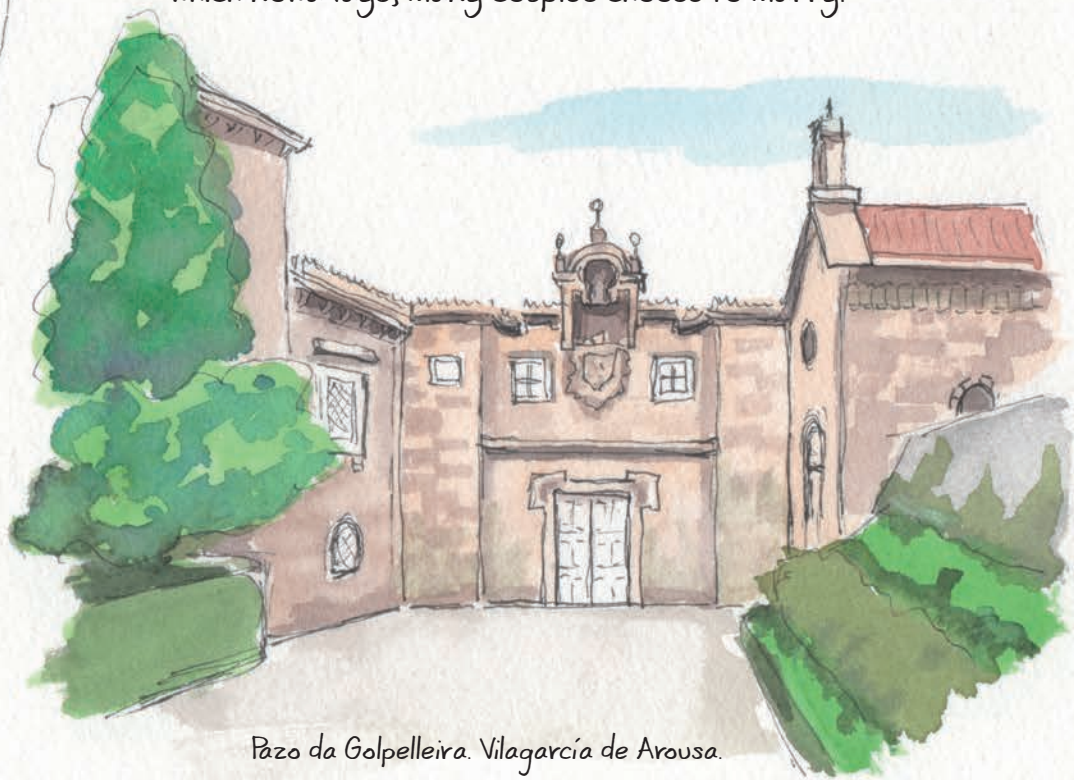


Fountain in the courtyard of the church, next to the cemetery, is a delightful piece of fun, decorated with two musicians from the era. Water spouts from two nozzles: one in a man's mouth, the other in his bottom. Each person chooses which one to drink from.



The San Miguel festivals at Trabanca Badiña, in the Vilagarcian parish of Arealonga, are very well known. Every 29th of September, day of the patron saint, the men parade Saint Michael from the San Miguel chapel to the Gorpelleira pazo, which receives the saint with a sonorous pealing of its bells. In the Patio de Armas, folkloric groups dance and the new wine is tasted. The effigy is guarded in the pazo, in memory of when it had to be kept safe against French invaders to avoid being destroyed.

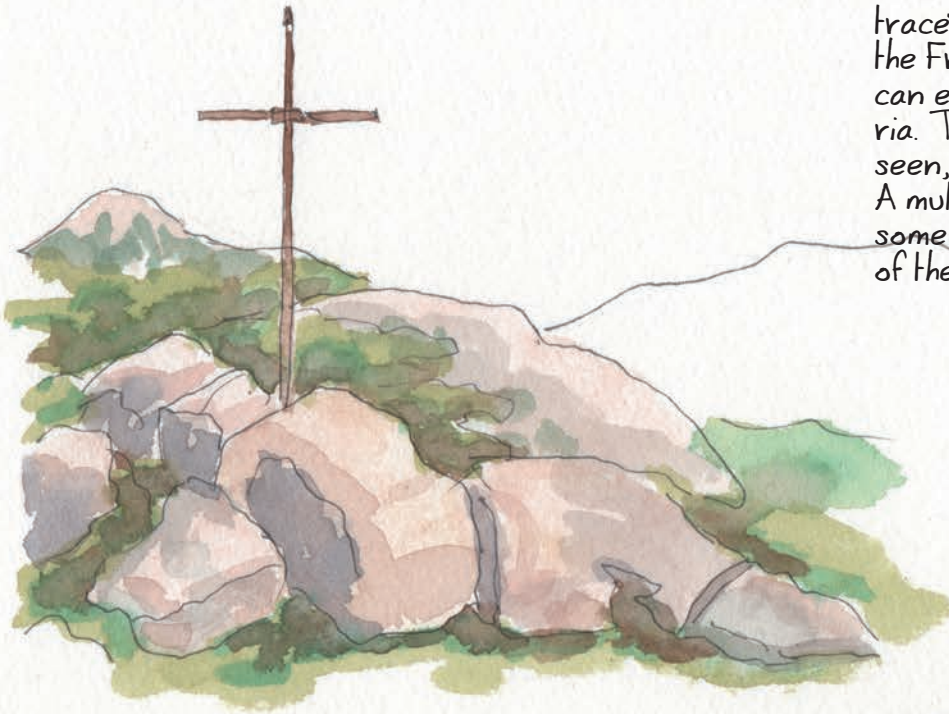
Gorpelleira pazo, in the Torre quarter, used to be a fort in the XVI century. Over the course of various restorations it gained the noble air it still possesses. It has a chapel, which has an effigy of the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe on its altarpiece, and a romantic garden measuring more than six thousand square metres, in a French geometric style, in which nowadays, many couples choose to marry.



Trabanca Badiña. Vilagarcía de Arousa.

Pazo da Gorpelleira. Vilagarcía de Arousa.

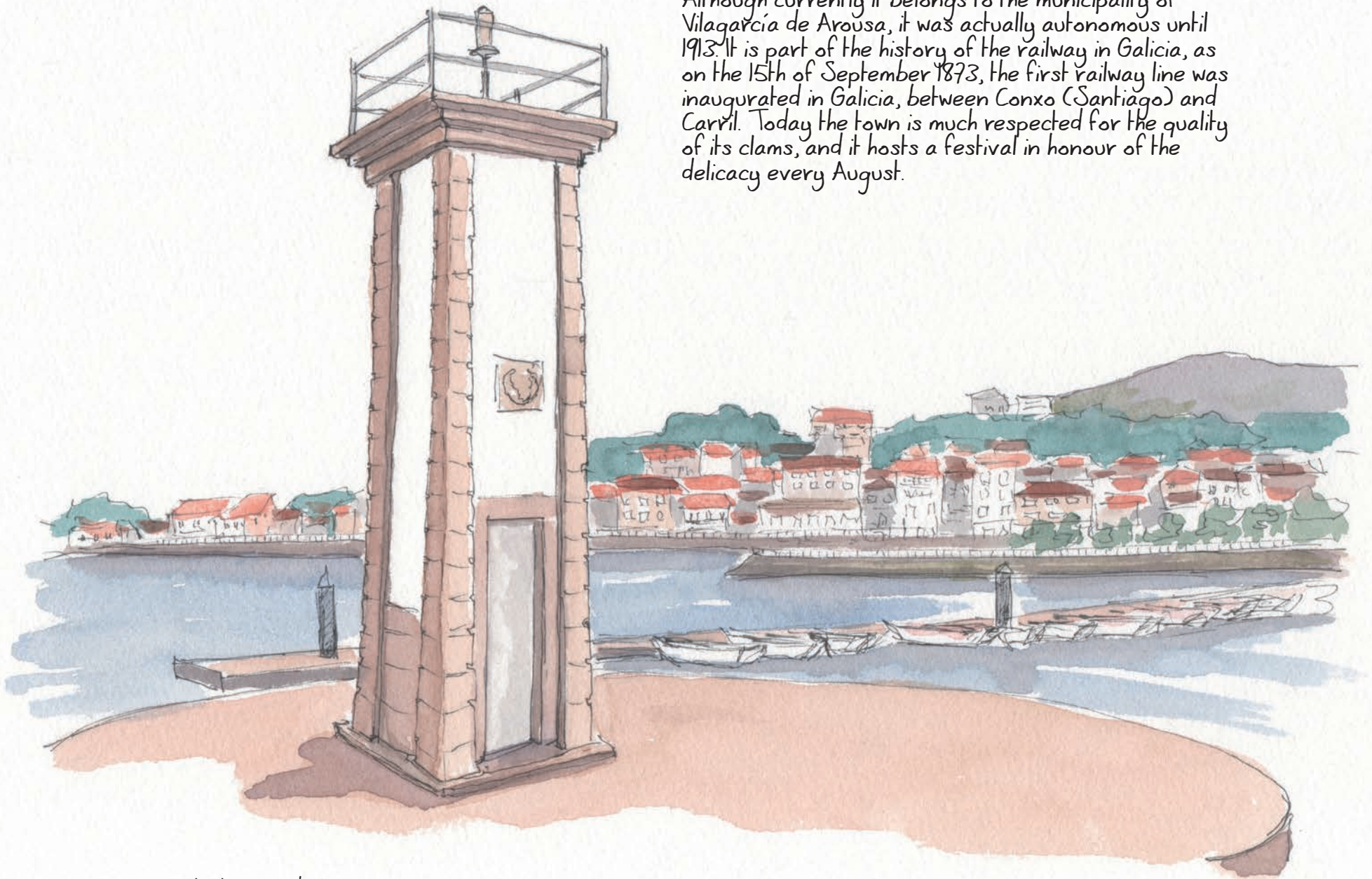
Monte Xiabre, at 641 tall, is part of the municipalities of Vilagarcía de Arousa, Caldas de Reis and Catoira. It is the highest mountain in this range. Various rivers can be traced to their sources up here, such as the San Cibrán, the Freixeiro, the Beco and the Con. From the summit one can enjoy views of the town of Vilagarcía, and the Arousa ria. The regions of Arousa and Caldos de Reis can also be seen, and even part of the Rías Baixas and the Ulla valley. A multitude of petroglyphs remain from its prehistoric past; some were discovered after the fires that destroyed much of the vegetation.



Monte Xiabre

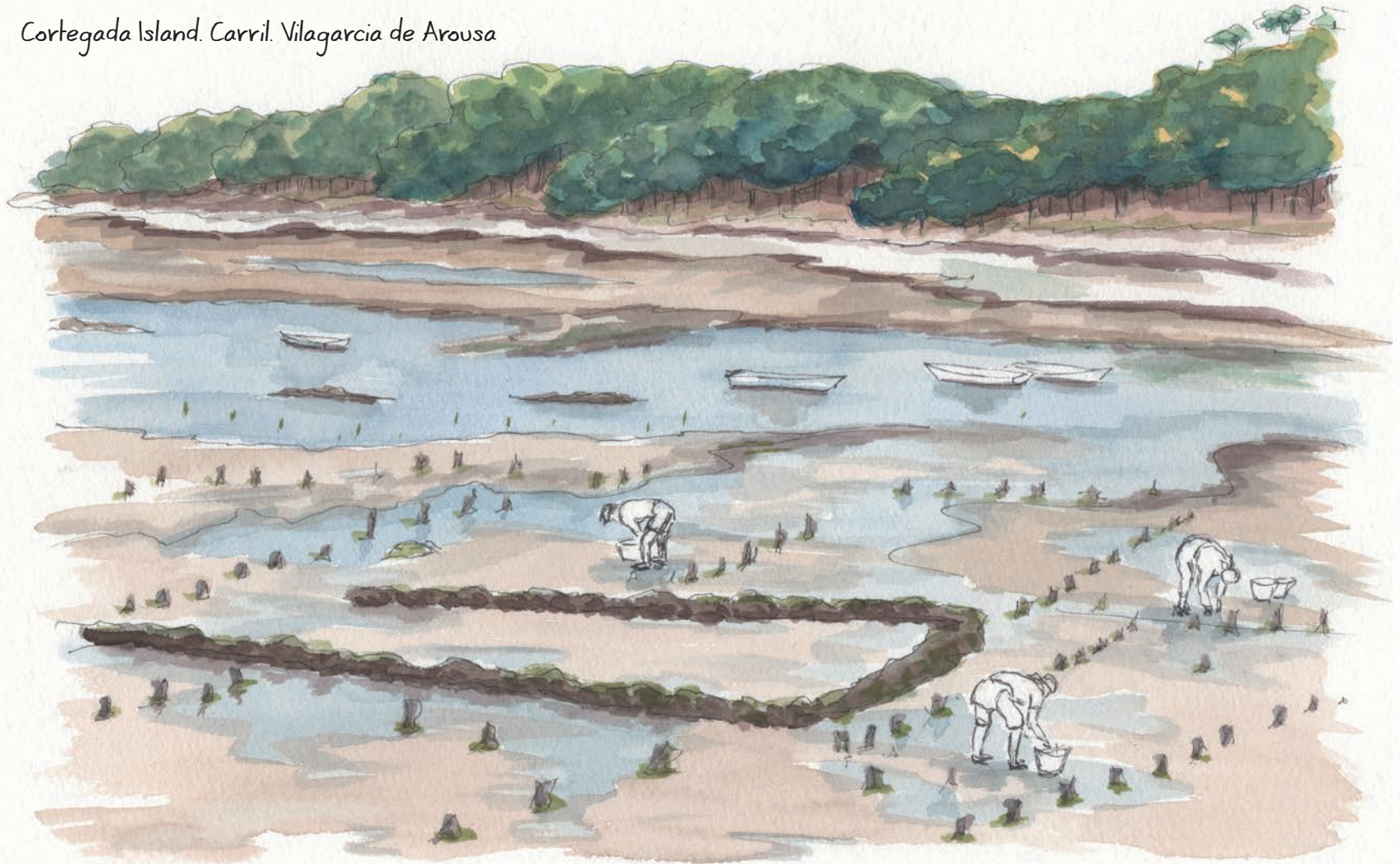


Carril is a complex of houses alongside the seashore. Although currently it belongs to the municipality of Vilagarcía de Arousa, it was actually autonomous until 1913. It is part of the history of the railway in Galicia, as on the 15th of September 1873, the first railway line was inaugurated in Galicia, between Conxo (Santiago) and Carril. Today the town is much respected for the quality of its clams, and it hosts a festival in honour of the delicacy every August.



Carril. Vilagarcía de Arousa

Cortegada Island. Carril. Vilagarcia de Arousa



Never has an island as small as Cortegada, located behind Carril, had so much history. In the Middle Ages it provided shelter for pilgrims arriving by sea, on their way to Santiago. It also had a defensive tower for protecting the surroundings from invasions by the Normans and the Muslims. A hermitage was built in dedication to the Virgin of the Miracles, in the XIV century and, at its side, a Lazaretto for sailors who arrived at Carril port. It was bought as a gift for King Alfonso XIII in 1910, and during the II Republic it was expropriated by the State. The Franco regime returned it to Juan de Borbón in 1953. Sold to a developer in 1978, there were plans to turn it into a golf course, but these were never followed through. In 2002 it was included in the Galician National Park of Atlantic Islands, and in 2007, it was expropriated by the Xunta de Galicia to be returned to use by the public so that the largest bay forest in Europe could be opened up to visitors.



Santiago Carril church. Vilagarcía de Arousa

The Santiago de Carril church was built in the XVI century. However, different architectural elements and styles were added over the years, and so we can recognise original Gothic aspects blended with Renaissance and Baroque. As well as the main door, it has an ogival side door on the south wall. Inside, there is a stunning altarpiece from Santiago cathedral, and on the exterior wall, a crucifix, with Adam and Eve on its shaft, watching for demons in the form of serpents, which Castaleo describes in "Stone Crosses in Galicia".



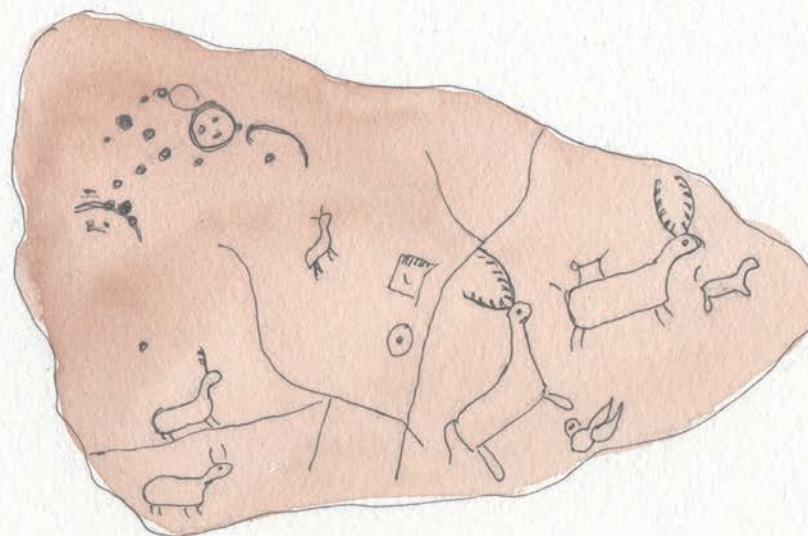
Also called San Xenxo de Bamio, this tiny XVIII-century church is situated in Campanario, in the Vilagarcian parish of Bamio. In this case, it doesn't take too much imagination to work out why an area like this might be named after a bell tower, as it has a bell, without the need for a large parochial church, where two smaller but much embellished bells hang. It was named Campanario after the alerts that used to warn of hostile invasions. Very close to the bell tower and the church, is one of the oldest crucifixes in the municipality. Dated 1683 on its base, it carries a representation of the Virgin of Anguish.



San Xenxo de Bamio. Vilagarcía de Arousa



Meadelo tower. Recreation. El Salgueiral. Vilagarcía de Arousa.



Prehistoric art station at Los Ballotes and Meadelo. Bamio

The great rock at Meadelo, also known as the Stone of Charms, is a rock covered in petroglyphs that was studied by authors such as Bouza Brey, among others. It is calculated that the engravings on this archaeological site are between four and five thousand years old, and they have been carved all over a rock facing out to the Arousa ria. The stone was broken some years ago, when the motorway was built. The Ballotes petroglyphs combine geometric shapes with representations of small and large animals; some horned. This can be considered an authentic prehistoric art station.

Salgueiral used to be home to the fortified Meadelo tower, also called Miladelos or Miradelos, which was sister to the others at La Lanzada, San Sadurdiño, Arousa Island, and Cálogo. These structures, scattered along the coast were erected to watch over and protect the villages and hamlets from maritime invasions. There are theories that suggest the towers communicated with each other by lighting fires to warn of the arrival of invaders.

7. Route through Catoira



Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Drawn
by Rosana Boullosa

“ Santa Eulalia of the East. On the left are the towers of the East. There is a big bulrush and a dam, bridge and dock that bears the towers. These are on a top, promontory or point accessible at low tide, and isolated from everything when the sea is out. It was low and so I could go down to the leaves and I went, I touched them, and I recorded them.

There are five buildings and a hermitage dedicated to Saint James. There are two towers very undone, and that, like the Fort at la Lanzada there is only a fraction left. They are on the end of that species of promontory, such that their bedrocks touch the water, even at low tide. They are Roman buildings and within them are two other {Roman} buildings in ruins, and they are part of two types of castles or towers where one can see there were some sort of beacons. It is also known as a Roman factory, and it can be seen that their arches are perfect semi circles that, not being from any modern factory, must have preceded the factory or Gothic Order.

The fifth building is more or less earth and it is, or are, ruins of a great castle or fortification that seems to be of the same antiquity, although with signs of having been fixed later and ruined everything. The hermitage is small and although old, is not as ancient as the others. It is dedicated to Saint James. I entered within, and on the altar is a cross, to the right an effigy in stone from old Santiago, but with this very modern title: The Devotion of Pedro Rodrigo. To the left a stone like the stone with the relief of Santa Ana, teaching Our Lady, and this placard: “Santa Ana”, and the whole hermitage is unadorned.

In all the land around the Towers there is only that and one other property, blocked with stones that have fallen from the five buildings. The hermitage is in the shadow, or very near to one of the castles. A boy told me that he had heard, not long ago, that some workers digging here had found some tarins, and a type of stained glass. Undoubtedly they were these spectacular stones, and they were Roman denarius.

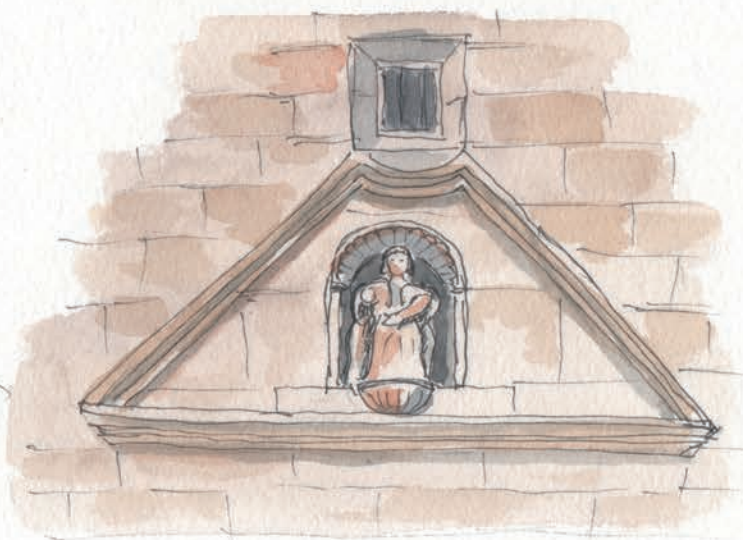
He added that when the sailing boats passed by the two points or near to where the towers were, they lowered their sails so as not to crash and that there were big pools here and they never fished in the beach in front of the towers. A little further to the east there is a species of island in the middle of the ria, a structure or group of structures that they call Castrivello, that must have been at some time a fortification.

Of that place, it is said that the name Towers of the East is a corruption of the Turris *Augusti and late Turris Augusti, which they call Pomponio Mela, close to where the rivers Sar and Vía (o Vela) or, according to Lee Isaac Vossio, Uliá enter; and it is certain that the two rivers do meet there, near to San Xoán (Xulián) de Requeixón Port. Meaning Achicharre de Augusto, Torredausto, Torredaosto, {Achicharre doste}, Achicharre del Este, like the Valley in Aosta in Saboia is Valley of Augusto the August. To believe that Of the East alludes to the wind seems to me ridiculous and even more so that Saint James’ disciples built those towers. On the other side is Isorna. Gondar. Hamlet in the same parish of the East and to the right of San Pedro de Dima, parish.”

Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)

Windmills are not very common in Galicia and even less so, those with double blades like the mills in in Balanceo, in the hills of Catoira. They are made from stone and have a circular base. The shaft, the blades, and the doors were made of wood. The canopy was of tiles and stones. Although the day may be clear, up there where the mills are set, the wind is always blowing.

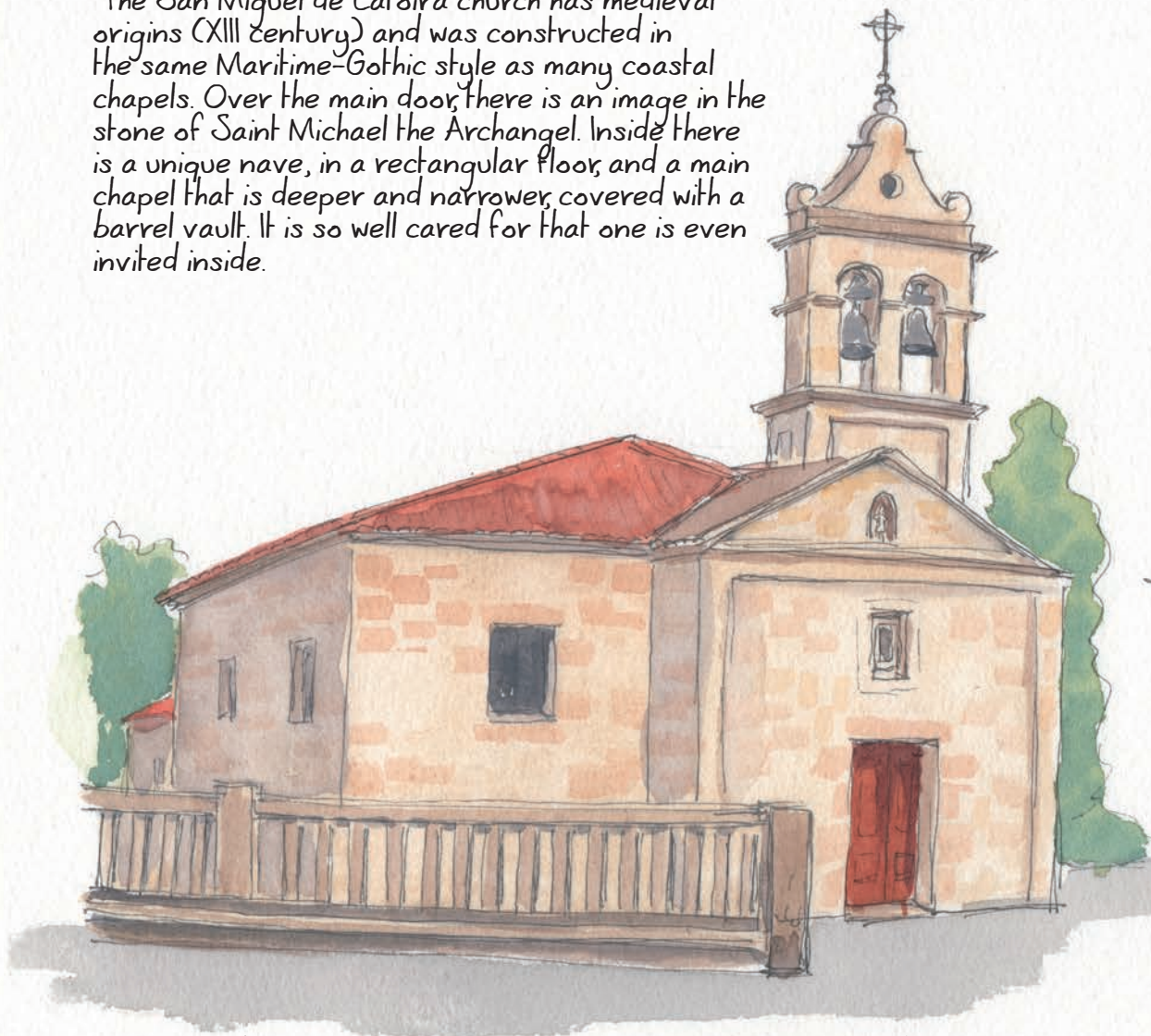
Catoira. Abalo windmills



San Mamede de Abalo. Catoira.

The parish church San Mamede de Abalo dates from the XVI century. The only aspects preserved from that era are the remains of a stony canopy and a lintel over the door at the side of the Gospel. Breaking the sombre façade, there is a triangular gable, from which an image of San Mamede hangs. It has a XII-century baptismal font, older than the church itself, and an image of the Immaculate. These elements evoke the era when the church and the mountain all belonged to the Order of the Benedictine monks.

The San Miguel de Catoira church has medieval origins (XIII century) and was constructed in the same Maritime-Gothic style as many coastal chapels. Over the main door, there is an image in the stone of Saint Michael the Archangel. Inside there is a unique nave, in a rectangular floor, and a main chapel that is deeper and narrower, covered with a barrel vault. It is so well cared for that one is even invited inside.

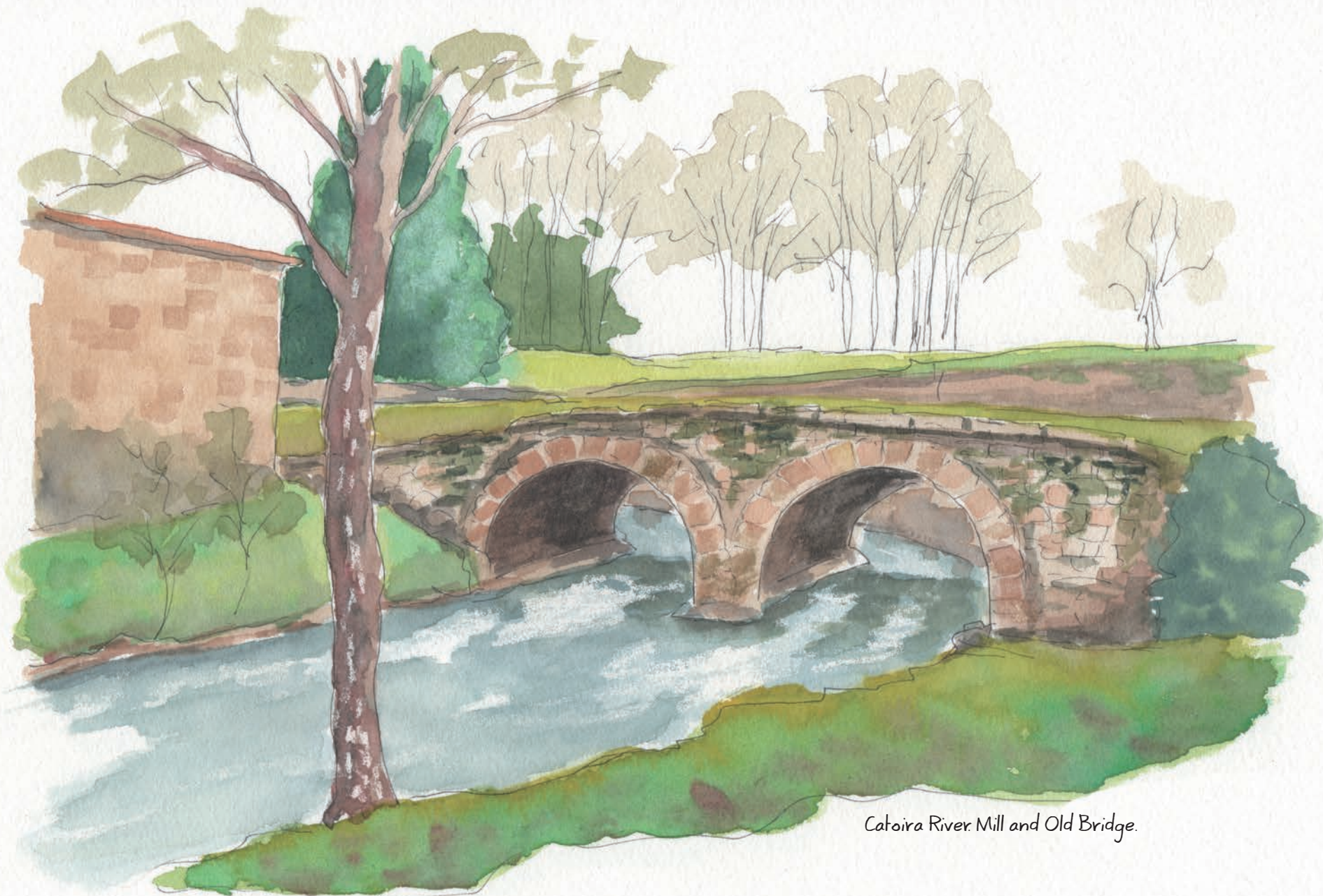


San Miguel de Catoira



Nosa Señora da Barca. Catoira.

Legend tells of a Catoira sailor called Roque del Río who, grateful for having survived a storm, ordered this effigy of the Virgin of the Boat to be built and placed in a church. She is a young, delicate Virgin, holding the Baby Jesus with motherly love. Although it is from the XVIII century, it mimics other, older workshops.



Catoira River Mill and Old Bridge.

In the park at Fonte Gaitera in Catoira, there is a beautiful corner where a medieval mill and bridge join over the river Catoira. It is said that in times past the Soutelo pipers used to play there. Today, it is a place for relaxing, surrounded by trees, and the only sound is of the River Catoira, on its path to the sea.



Tidal mill. Catoira

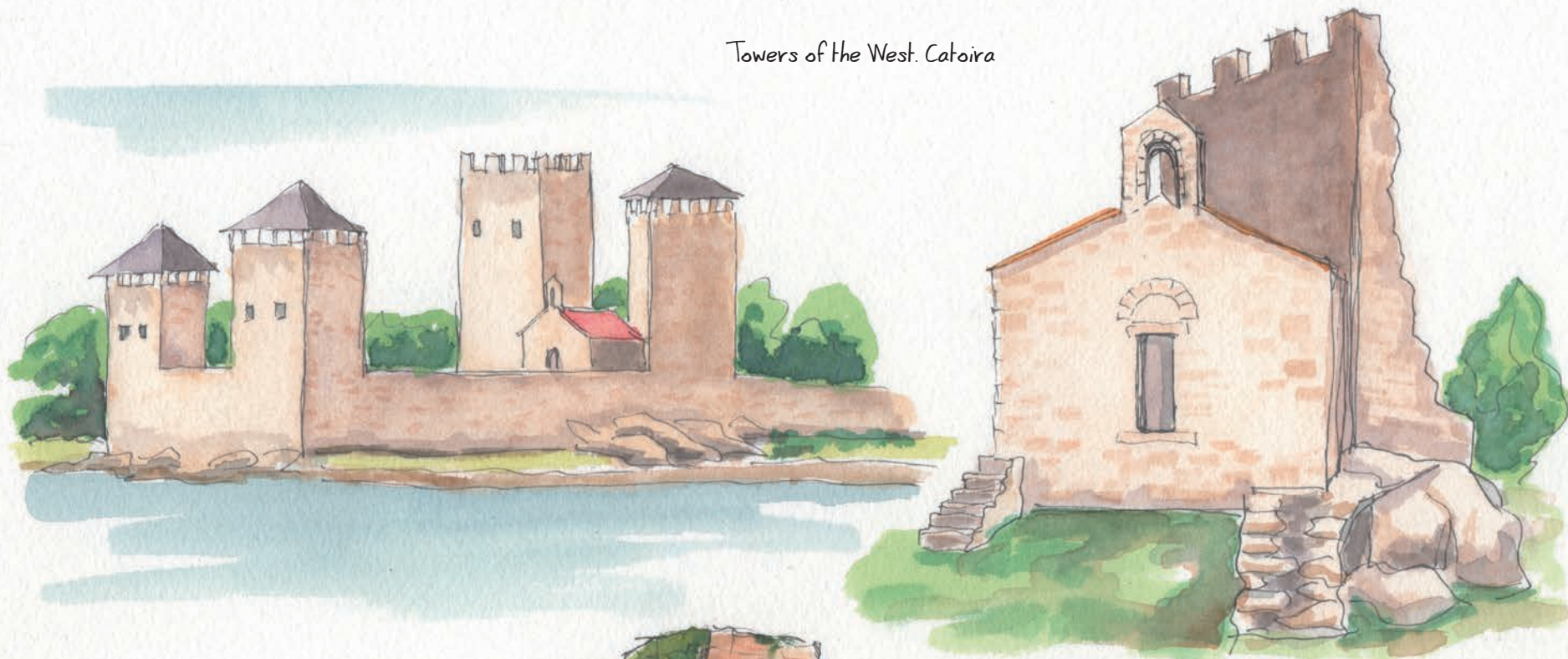
The Cura mill, or Machón mill is a unique specimen, as it combines traditional river-mill methods with the technology of harnessing the tides. As much due to its position on the mouth of the river Catoira, where the Arousa can just be glimpsed, as for the nature of its combined river and sea mill, it is an important piece of history that should be preserved.



Santa Baia of the West. Catoira.

The origins of the parish church at Santa Baia del Oeste, in Catoira, can be traced to the XVI century. The vaulted chancel is from this era, as is the chapel of the Virgin of the Lo and the funerary chapel containing the tomb of Jácome de Sixirey y Escudero, the founder of the church, with an armed effigy in repose. It was gradually updated over the years; the last time in 1904, when it lost its Baroque frontage.

Towers of the West. Catoira



This must be what the defensive fort was like, that Alfonso III ordered to be built in the IX century on the ruins of the old "Castellum Honesti" that the Romans raised, where the River Ulla joins with the Arousa sea.

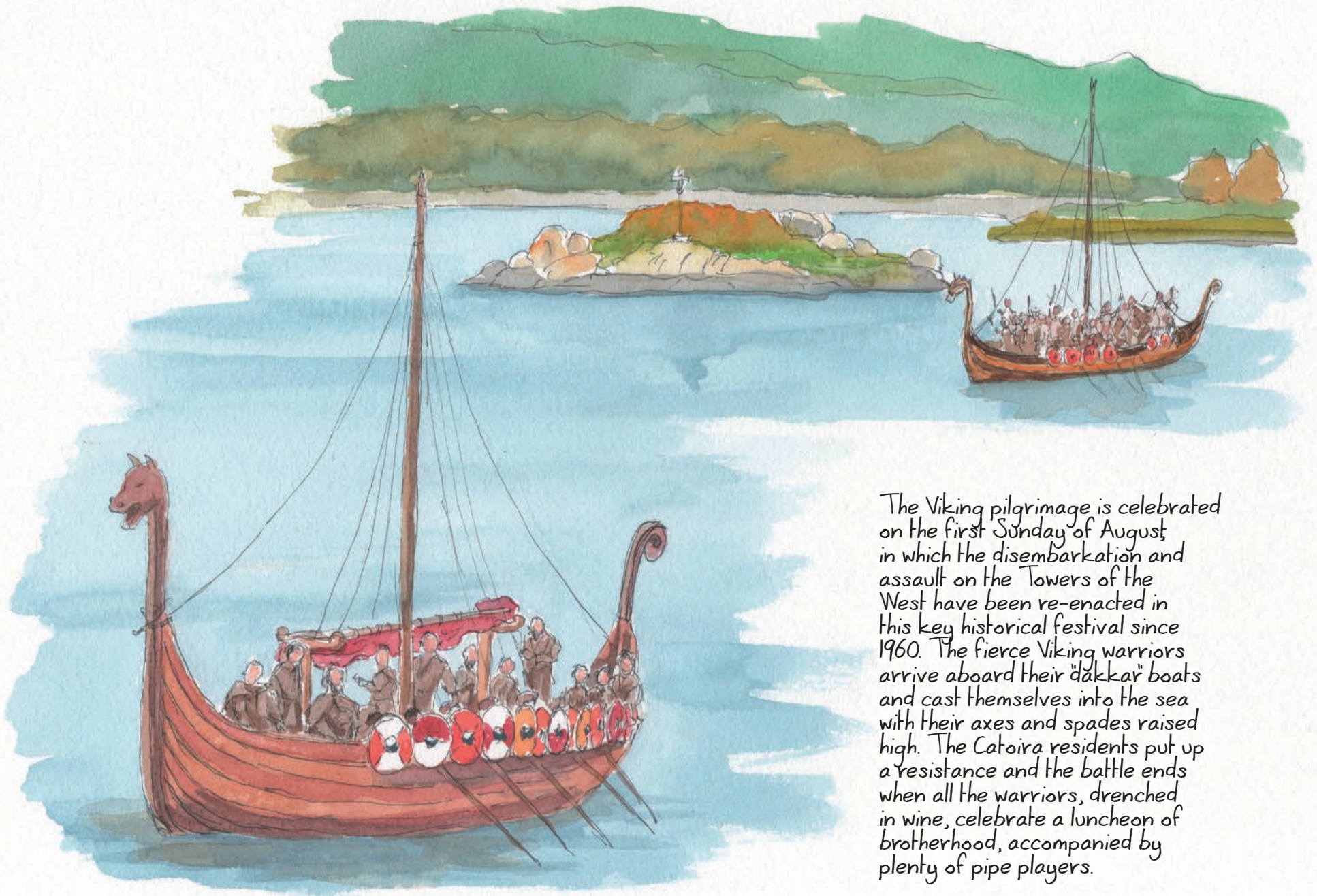


During the IX and X century the fort defended against Norman and Saracen incursions that threatened the Apostle's city. It was rebuilt in the XI century by Alfonso V, who named Xelmirio, father of the first Compostela Archbishop, warden of the castle.

Although only two towers and the Santiago church, which Archbishop Xelmírez ordered be built, are standing, precariously, the structure of the castle in the XII century consisted of an walled elliptical complex with seven towers, situated on the outskirts of Ulla, to protect the entrance to Padrón and Compostela with a thick chain. The largest of the towers was paid for by the town of Lugo and was called the Lugo Tower. These remarkable ruins were declared a national monument in 1970.



Towers of the West. Catoira



Viking Pilgrimage Catoira

The Viking pilgrimage is celebrated on the first Sunday of August in which the disembarkation and assault on the Towers of the West have been re-enacted in this key historical festival since 1960. The fierce Viking warriors arrive aboard their *dakkar* boats and cast themselves into the sea with their axes and spades raised high. The Catoira residents put up a resistance and the battle ends when all the warriors, drenched in wine, celebrate a luncheon of brotherhood, accompanied by plenty of pipe players.



San Cibrán Hermitage. Catoira

In this area there is a hermitage dedicated to San Cibrán, one of the first Christian saints venerated in Galicia. It is situated in the parish of Dimo, in a leafy oak grove that grew in one of the dips of Monte Xiabre. In this little hermitage, there is a large pilgrimage on Pentecost Sunday. Near to this recreational area there is also a workhouse, where at the end of July the Xiabre "rapa das bestas" festival is held.



San Pedro de Dimo. Catoira

The parish church San Pedro de Dimo, on the north of the Catoria municipality, is of medieval origins, although the older elements, like the western door and part of the frontage, are from the XVI century. In fact the effigy of Saint Peter is reminiscent of the style and taste of the era in which the Royal Hospital of Santiago was built.



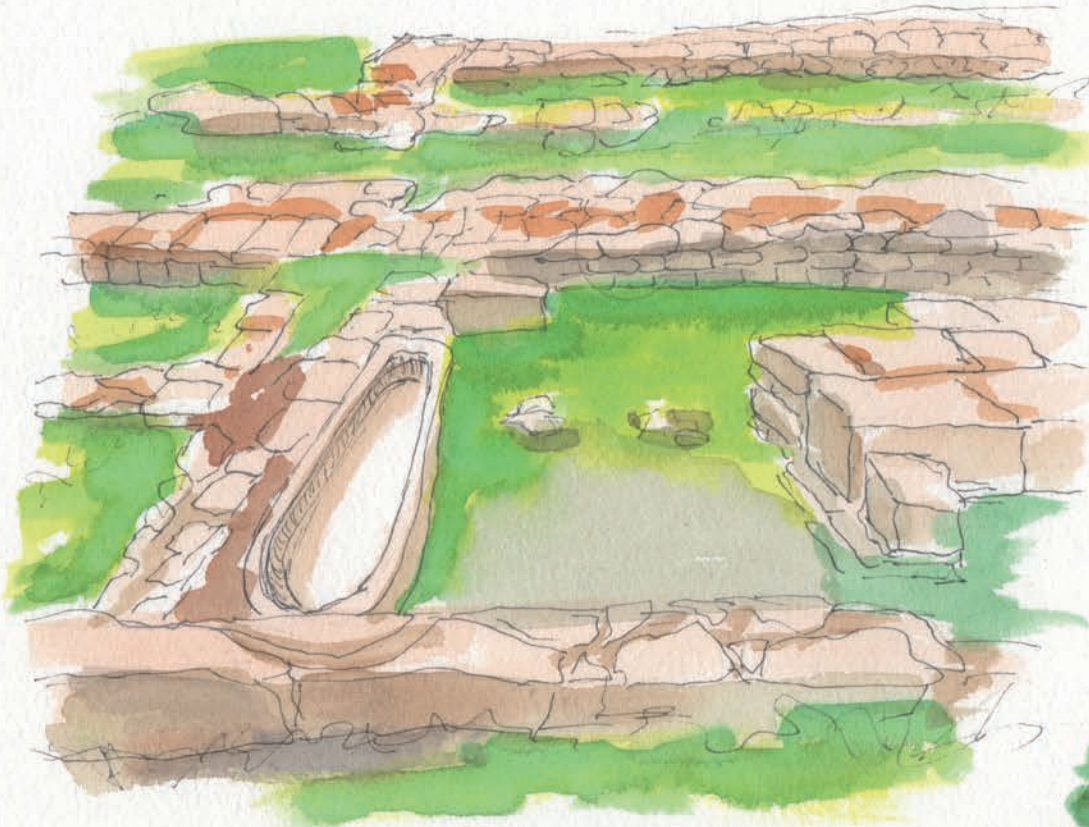
Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Drawn by Rosana Boullosa

8. Route through Valga, Pontecesures and Padrón

“ Santa Comba de Rubio. Bridge and River Horno.
Santa Cristina de Campaña
San Xoán (Xulián) de Requeixón Port, on the opposite side
between Sar and Sarela together with the Ulla and ria.
La Calzada de Pontecesures.
Padrón. And from here onwards to Santiago. Midday.”

Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)

The architectural site here is a veritable encyclopaedia of local history from the IV century right up until the XVIII. A spot venerated by the Romans, and Christianised in the fifth century with the construction of its first church, which was extended in the VIII and IX centuries. In XVI, a sacristy and side chapel were added. It also has a necropolis with 16 tombs made from pieces of one rock in medieval times. In 1730 the old church was dismantled and moved to its current position. Legend has it that on excavating, a water spring appeared: a sign that announced the place where the head of Santa Comba was buried.



Old church at Santa Comba de Rubio. Archaeological site. Valga

The new Santa Comba church, by Xoán Fontenla, is in Cordeiro and was built in the XVIII century, in the Baroque style. It formed part of a monastery that has since disappeared. It has a beautiful sun dial.



New church at Santa Comba de Rubio. Cordeiro. Valga



Santa Cristina de Campaña. Valga

The Santa Cristina church, in the parish of Campaña, is a church that has honoured its original Roman roots, from the XII century, when the Archbishop Xelmírez linked the church to the Compostela monastery of San Martiño Pinario. During renovations to restore the apse wall, Gothic paintings were uncovered, when the altarpiece was moved. Their preservation was a miracle that allows us to enjoy a huge Annunciation dating back to the XV-XVI centuries. It also contains a relic of the saint who arrived from Italy in 2010.



Roman bridge over the Valga river

Many bridges that we refer to as Roman, are from the medieval ages. Either way, they are sufficiently ancient to be admired, such as the bridge crossing the river Valga, which forms part of the Royal Way and leads from Santiago to Tui.

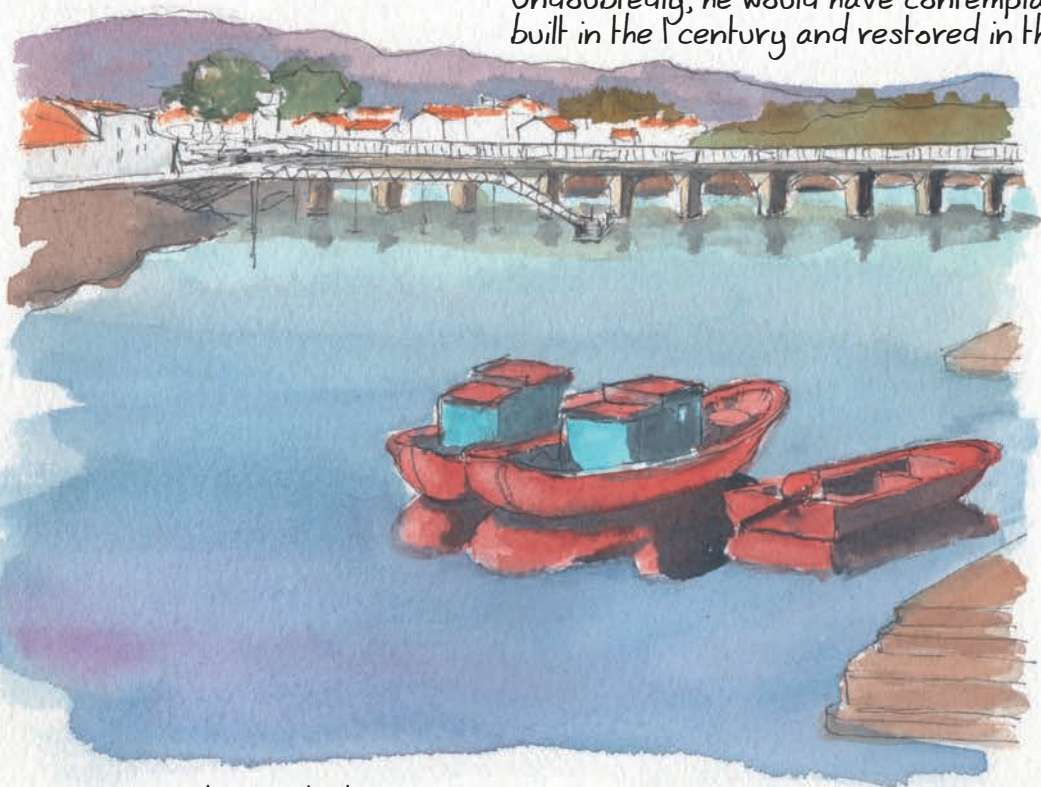


Mills and waterfall on the Valga river

The waterfall at Ruxidoira earns its name when the river is full. Wooden walkways have been built to facilitate visits to this natural setting, adorned with two mills and little cascades.

The village at Pontecesures bid farewell to Father Sarmiento, before he entered Padrón. Undoubtedly, he would have contemplated the docile flow of the river Ulla from the Roman bridge, built in the I century and restored in the XII by Master Mateo, creator of the Portico of Glory.

The bridge is still in use in the XXI century, uniting the provinces of Pontevedra and A Coruña, which the river Ulla separates. From the port at Compostela, a historically significant site for defending the city of the Apostle, we can enjoy a splendid view of the bridge over the Ulla.



Port and Roman bridge at Pontecesures.

Compostela Bishop Diego Xelmírez ordered that the San Xulián de Requeixón church be built. Ground was broken in 1116 but it is known that there had been other structures dedicated to worship in the spot previously. In 1918, an altar dedicated to Jupiter was discovered, as well as other religious pieces from the Roman era.



San Xulián de Requeixón, Pontecesures



Carme fountain. Padrón



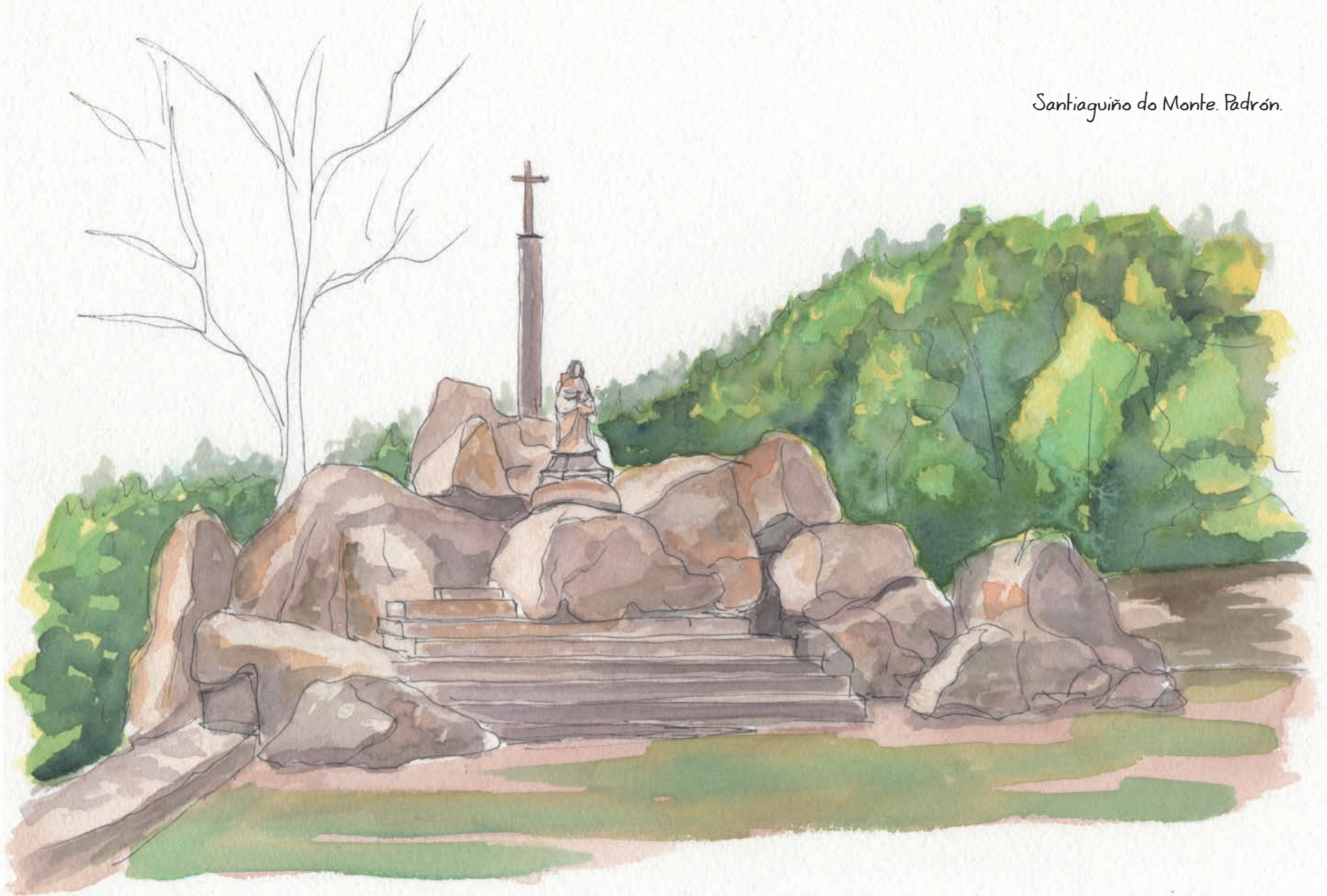
Padrón is a burg with medieval origins, connected to apostolic worship. Pilgrims can replenish their strength at the water fountain at the foot of the Carmelite convent, while contemplating the Jacobean prints. The centre depicts the boat transferring the body of Saint James's arrival into Padrón, being watched over by the two disciples Atanasio and Teodoro. On the upper part, the Apostle is baptising Queen Lupa, who converted to Christianity. And on the lower, the Virgin, who has so encouraged the preaching of Saint James in Spain, in her advocacy against sorrows.

Father Sarmiento doesn't just say that he was in the Santiago de Padrón church, but that he saw the column of a large stone or "pedron" under the altar where, according to tradition, Saint James' disciples tied the boat carrying the remains of the Apostle. When Archbishop Xelmírez ordered it to be built in 1133, he considered it another Jacobean element of this church, which they fronted with a neoclassic façade, despite it being of Roman origin.



Santiago de Padrón Church

Santiaguíño do Monte. Padrón.



Every 25th July the Santiaguíño del Monte pilgrimage is celebrated in the place where it is said the Apostle used to preach. Young and old follow the procession carrying Saint James to the hermitage and the promontory where there is a cross and an effigy of the saint at the spot where the pulpit is placed. Many pilgrims follow the tradition of passing through the three holes in the cliffs, which represent the entrances to hell, purgatory and Heaven. The festival continues with a traditional country meal, and plenty of pipe playing.



Portrait of Father Sarmiento. Painted by Rosana Boullosa

9. Arrival at Santiago

“SANTIAGO. I arrived on Thursday 22nd at Santiago, keen to beat the Jubilee. I did my diligences on the same Saint’s day and on the Saturday I went to the bulls or xovencos in the morning and in the afternoon, to the college of San Xerónimo. I slept in the same college to see the fires by night, and they lasted nearly two hours.

The multitude of people, particularly the Portuguese, was such that they didn’t pay us elders any attention. I heard the Penitentiary Father Goyri tell that on the day of the Apostle there were more than 30,000 people congregated in the cathedral, and many others gathered in other churches, and on the day of Pentecost, there were 22,000 people.

On the Saint’s day I made the offering to the judge of the court Saura de A Coruña. I registered at the archives of San Martiño where I am staying due to the kindness of Master Friar Pedro Mera, a Bishop and my co-disciple in matters of language. There are many precious Gothic instruments, and more than one hundred of them are judged useless.

I registered at the archives of the monks at San Pelaio or San Paio and I went inside two times. Most of the parchments, and there are many, are in the Galician tongue.”

Father Martín Sarmiento: *Travels to Galicia* (1745)



View of Santiago de Compostela and Calle de las Huertas street. Painted by Abel Barandela

Compostela is a city that grew around a tomb: the tomb of the Saint James the Apostle. In times gone by, pilgrims could stand anywhere in the city and glimpse the cathedral towers, pointing to the heavens. Today there are fewer. It is a small city that takes its place in one's heart, as Risco used to say. And it has the unusual charm of having countryside and orchards right in the heart of the city, as is the case with the street of the orchards, called de las Huertas. Compostela is a capital city that has not lost its human element.



Compostela streets. Painted by Abel Barandela



The Compostela streets and porticos were designed to be walked through while remaining dry, although the rain makes every effort to decorate the city's stones. The two main streets are the Calle del Vilar and Calle Nueva, which has been called 'New' for more than 800 years. The medieval layout of Compostela means that all roads lead to the cathedral. There are few things as pleasurable as strolling through its old streets and plazas, contemplating the houses of yesteryear, the shops and the book stores, while the people come and go to the pealing of the bell in Berenguela tower.



Santiago Cathedral seen from the alameda, and the Platerías door. Painted by Abel Barandela

Santiago cathedral is structured in the particular style of a pilgrimage church. As well as the main entrance on the Obradoiro wall, it has two side doors, named after the medieval burgs to which they used to grant access: the Acibechería door and the Platerías door. In Holy or Jubilee Years, when the 25th July falls on a Sunday, the Holy Door stays open, leading onto Quintana plaza. Platerías Door hides a secret written in a symbolic code. The letters omega and alpha are reversed, to indicate to leaving pilgrims that their pilgrimage has ended and another now begins: the journey of life.





Since the hermit Pelaio discovered the grave of Saint James the Apostle back in 814, and the event was verified by Bishop Teodomiro and King Alfonso II the Chaste, every effort has been made to protect the tomb with the highest possible dignity. Initially it was with a humble chapel, and later a small church, in 829, until finally, construction began on a cathedral in 1075, during the reign of King Alfonso VI and under the patronage of Bishop Diego Peláez. Almost a century later, in 1168, Master Mateo was commissioned to build the crypt and the Portico of Glory, one of the jewels of Roman sculpture. In 1738 the baroque façade was erected, that protects the Portico. Throughout all those centuries, a plaza served as the workshop for the stonemasons: Obradoiro plaza, heart of the old city.

View of the Santiago Cathedral façade and Obradoiro square.
Painted by Abel Barandela

Arrival at Santiago.

The city of Santiago that Father Sarmiento entered on 22nd July 1745, arriving in time to celebrate the Jubilee after crossing the whole of Salnés, was not the same as it is in the XXI century. On the eve of the Apostle's festival, he was able to watch a bull fight which used to be held in Obradoiro Plaza. He was also able to sleep in the College of San Xerome, the rectory at the University of Santiago's administrative headquarters, so that he could watch the Fires of the Apostle during the night.

What remains exactly the same, almost three centuries later, is the vast amount of pilgrims who congregate in the city on the Apostle's day. On that Holy Year in 1745, he was particularly surprised at the multitude of pilgrims arriving from Portugal.





Embracing the Apostle

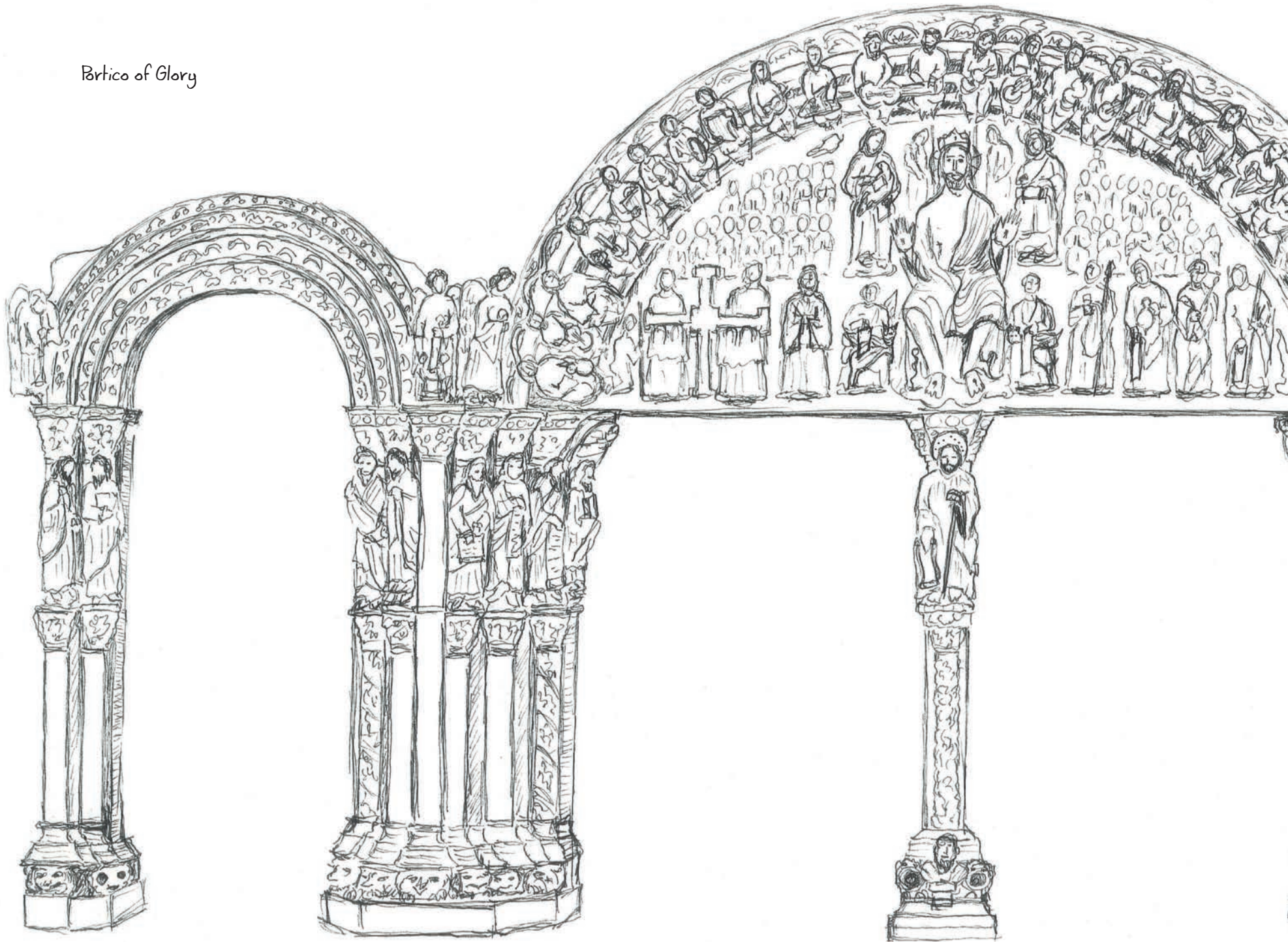
The Compostela cathedral is "the home of Saint James" and so one of the most ancient rituals pilgrims perform is that of embracing the effigy of the Apostle who presides over the main altar. The effigy is in a chamber over the crypt containing the urn with Saint James' relics. Pilgrims can enjoy a privileged view over the central nave of the chapel.

Another recognisable element of the Compostela cathedral is its "botafumeiro": an enormous incensory, used since the Middle Ages, which eight "incense pullers" fly in front of the altar, in a pendular motion that sways from one end of the nave to the other, perfuming the chapel with its incense. Mere words cannot describe it. One has to be there to truly experience it.



O botafumeiro.

Portico of Glory





The Portico of Glory, completed by Master Mateo in 1188, is a masterpiece of Romanesque sculpture. It is a complete allegory of the Celestial City, depicting figures from the Old and New Testament, including prophets and apostles, and symbols taken from the book of the Apocalypse of Saint John. Its depictions are spread across three levels. On the lower part, the earthly world, the portico, or entrance door to the church, represents the final judgement and the upper level is the Glory. Each of the three archways grants access to the cathedral nave. The central archway is the largest and is divided by a central column, with a seated figure of the Apostle holding a parchment in which one can read: *Misit me Dominus* (The Lord sent me) and the ancestry of Jesus. It contains a depiction of heavenly Jerusalem, with Christ resurrected and surrounded by the four evangelists. The archway of the right hand door has a representation of the final judgement and the New Testament saints. On the archway over the left hand door there is a depiction of the righteous from the Old Testament who await the coming of the Saviour. Over the archivolt, there are 24 elders, who are spoken of in the book of the Apocalypse, with musical instruments of the era. Although it seems incredible, this portico was open during the Middle Ages.



It has been almost three centuries since Father Sarmiento completed the final stage of his pilgrimage, but the beauty of this journey to Santiago, across the Salnés countryside, continues to captivate travellers and pilgrims alike. We hope that you will enjoy this ancient tour, full of charm and culture.



This book "The Route of Father Sarmiento to Santiago, across Salnés", was finished in October 2018.

