

CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE  
**AZORES**

*Personalities*



**VITORINO  
NEMÉSIO**



Vitorino Nemésio Mendes Pinheiro da Silva, who would be known in the world of Portuguese culture by his two given names, VITORINO NEMÉSIO, was born on December 19, 1901 in Praia da Vitória, Terceira Island, into a family whose origins date back to the first settlers of the island, as he repeatedly stated. Nemésio enjoyed distinction in 20th century Portuguese culture, developing a career as journalist, professor, writer, essayist and particularly as a mass communicator; he was the first Portuguese intellectual who utilized the mass media, radio and television, to reach an audience beyond newspaper and book readership.

Nemésio finished his primary education in Praia da Vitória in a school that was located near the beach, at the end of Rua da Alfândega, where nowadays a roundabout leads to Avenida Álvaro Martins Homem. He completed secondary school in Angra do Heroísmo and in the town of Horta, Faial Island. At eighteen, Nemésio was drafted into the Infantry Regiment of Angra do Heroísmo and was later transferred to Tancos and then to Lisbon. After military service, in 1921, he began his career as a professional journalist in the newspaper *A Pátria*, enrolling soon after at the University of Coimbra Law School, later pursuing a degree in history and geography at the Faculty of Humanities of the same University, while simultaneously fulfilling the duties of proofreader for the University's Press. In 1924, he abandoned his course of study and enrolled in Romanic Philology; however, in 1930, in conflict with the University of Coimbra, Nemésio transferred to the University of Lisbon Faculty of Humanities, where he obtained his bachelor's degree the following year and was hired to teach Italian literature as assistant professor. He received a Doctorate in Humanities from the University of Lisbon for his dissertation, entitled *A Mocidade de Herculano até à volta do Exílio [The Youth of Herculano until Returning from Exile]*, was *chargé de cours* [lecturer] at the University of Montpellier, moving to the University of Brussels some years later, where he was *maître de conférences* [senior lecturer] and *professeur agrégé* [associate professor]. In 1939, Nemésio competed for and achieved the rank of full professor at the University of Lisbon Faculty of Humanities. He taught in several Brazilian universities (Bahia, Ceará, Rio de Janeiro) and participated in the curriculum reform of the Faculties of Humanities. He was elected permanent member of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences (1963), was granted an honorary degree by the University of Montpellier (1965), receiving the National Literature Award the same year for his work as a whole. In 1969, Nemésio began his regular collaboration with Portuguese television RTP, with a programme entitled "*Se Bem me Lembro*" [*If I Recall It Correctly*"], which resulted in him becoming extremely popular; many Portuguese continue to remember Nemésio nowadays as a result of these programmes, rather than of his literary works and essays. On December 12, 1971, Professor Vitorino Nemésio gave his final lecture at the University of Lisbon Faculty of Humanities and received the Montaigne International Award from the Freiherr von Stein / Friedrich von Schiller Foundation in Hamburg. Meanwhile, between March 28, 1973 and May 14, 1977, he wrote a series of erotic poems which he dedicated to his late-life and final love Margarida Victória, Marchioness of Jácome Correia, which would be published posthumously under the title *Caderno de Caligraphia e Outros Poemas para Marga* [*Notebook of Calligraphy and Other Poems for Marga*].

Nemésio died in Lisbon on February 20, 1978.

His literary works made him renowned and include poetry, fiction, essays and diaries. The novel *Mau Tempo no Canal [Stormy Isles: An Azorean Tale]* is considered to be one of the greatest works of Portuguese literature, alongside Eça de Queiroz's *The Maias* and, at a time when biochemistry was just beginning as a science, *Limite de Idade [Limit of Age]*, one of his last

books of poetry, pioneered the idea that “science is a source and simile of poetic creation simply because all acts of science, all new discoveries in the field of exact knowledge will fatally be acts of beauty” (Maria Lúcia Lepecki). In this book, Nemésio, as he had already been doing through his television programmes, transformed biochemistry into the material of poetry.

Having had his debut as an author at fifteen with the book of poetry *Canto Matinal* [*Morning Chant*], Nemésio authored some of the most remarkable books of 20th century Portuguese literature, namely *O Bicho Harmonioso* [*The Harmonious Animal*], *Eu, Comovido a Oeste* [*I, Moved in the West*], *Mau Tempo no Canal* [*Stormy Isles: An Azorean Tale*], *Festa Redonda* [*Round Feast*] (a book inspired and modelled on the folk literature of Terceira), *O Verbo e a Morte* [*The Word and the Death*], *Limite de Idade* [*Limit of Age*], *Era do Átomo Crise do Homem* [*Age of the Atom Crisis of Man*], and *Caderno de Caligrafia* [*Notebook of Calligraphy*], among others. A man of his time, unlimited by either literary genre or geography, Vitorino Nemésio actively participated in the nation’s public life, enjoying enormous intellectual and civic prestige. Salazar invited him to join the Corporative Chamber, an invitation that he courageously declined. At the end of his life, influenced by Natália Correia, he nurtured the fantasy of being the first president of an independent Azores Archipelago, while maintaining a close relationship with some important figures of European culture, such as Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset and Valery Larbaud.

Enjoying national and international acclaim with the publication of some of his works in other languages, Vitorino Nemésio, as both man and artist, always stated that his roots were in the Azores, especially on Terceira Island, and coined the concept of *açorianidade* [*Azorianity*] (1932):

“Some day, if I can enclose myself within my four walls in Terceira, free of responsibilities to the world and having fulfilled the duties of citizenship, I will attempt to write about my underlying Azorianity, which has only become keener and exacerbated by exile. Before that day of inner liberation, I will barely be able to make myself understood. A loving wave, a faint declaration of insular solidarity, distance is the most that these lines can mean”

Years later, he would reaffirm this concept and complete its definition in the travel journal that served as the guiding principle for this itinerary, *Corsário das Ilhas* [*Corsair of the Islands*]:

“I am an islander and, more so than the island itself, the islander is defined by the surrounding sea. We live of fish and of the time of the tide and watch the ships...”

The texts that make up this guide are based on two main works:  
VITORINO NEMÉSIO, *Corsair of the Islands*, Lisbon: Bertrand, 1956  
VITORINO NEMÉSIO, *Journal*, unpublished



**PATH** of a **CORSAIR**<sup>1</sup> THROUGH the STREETS of ANGRA do HEROÍSMO

*"I mechanically follow the urban trace: one neighbourhood after the other. Two or three mornings are enough to achieve this devout acknowledgement. [...] I ramble around town, from one end to the other!"*



The itinerary starts at Largo dos Remédios

**1 Remédios Manor House** [House of the Provider of the India Armadas]  
 "I was hosted like a family member nearby the houses that used to belong to the providers of the India armadas going through the Atlantic islands. The houses are strategically located on a hill, which overwhelms the city and its mountainous surroundings, as well as the small, but deep bay in the shadow of Monte Brasil and the castle from the Filipina dynasty. And then, without even leaving the garden, I lean over the houses and embody the silhouette of the walls and the church, recalling the restoration of the Portuguese domain in the fortress; to the right, the profile of *Morião* mountain range, sentinel of hidden caves and cattle."

From its northern façade, go around Remédios Manor House and then you will find



**2 Rua dos Italianos**  
 "After a few steps I'm in Corpo Santo, the small and old fishermen's neighbourhood in Angra. The names of the two streets that cross it, and between which I hesitate, still allude to the important city port: *Rua dos Italianos* [Italians' Street] and *Rua do Armador* [Ship Owner's Street]. [...] But the neighbourhood's atmosphere is mostly popular."

Then take the small stairway to the end of the street, turn left and go to



**3 Rocha de Canta-Galo**  
 "I walk to the top of Rocha de Canta-Galo, the steep southwest border of Angra, where the last hovels of the city's fishermen are snuggled up: the *Corpo Santo* and the *Porto de Pipas* fishermen."

Return to



**4 Rua do Faleiro**  
 "I go down the fishermen's neighbourhood, heading to Angra's old stream, through a crooked, hidden alley called *Faleiro*, which was named after the famous local potentate who used to manage here the businesses of the island's ruler, Marquis Castelo Rodrigo."

<sup>1</sup> Referring to Vitorino Nemésio's *Corsário das Ilhas*.  
<sup>2</sup> Charity organisations.



Go down to **Rua do Santo Espírito**



**5 Igreja da Misericórdia**  
 "Like the compliant water is taken to the stream, my steps, almost estranged by the steep alley, lead me to *Santo Espírito*. This place is the most primary invocation of the island's *Misericórdias*. The one from Angra, right in front of the port, has an impressive church with two austere, massive, baroque towers, flanked by a granary from which you can feel the 17th century inspiration of the Restoration architects."

Turn left to



**6 Pátio da Alfândega**  
 "The Angra stream, flowing from the Canta-Galo spring and by a castle called *São Sebastião*, almost dies in its own *Pátio da Alfândega* sided by the *Misericórdia*, whose deep foundations are touched by the *Moinhos Stream*".

Go on to



**7 Miguel Corte-Real Square**  
 [View over São João Baptista Castle]  
 "Apart from El Escorial, it is hard to find a more expressive monument from the Filipina dynasty other than this castle at the isthmus of Monte Brasil. It seems to overwhelm only the city of Angra, but in truth, and especially considering this is a poor shepherd and farmers island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, it raised against the growing power of the British Empire, which was threatening the sails of the galleons and the Flemish tercios of the Sunset Empire, the Empire of Charles V."

Go up **Rua de São João** and turn left to



**8 Rua da Rocha**  
 "Lost in my thoughts, I find myself going from *Rua das Frigideiras* to *Rocha*..."

Head to **Rua do Salinas**, to the corner with **Rua da Sé**, nearby the



**9 See Stairway**  
 "We sit by the See stairs, me and my old friends. Since one of us is a meteorologist, I always think of us as graduated devices that register the thickness of the night's darkness. However, we all sit there amused. This is the assembly of quietness, disinterest, the assembly of wasted time..."

Climb **Rua da Sé** to the fountain in



**10 Alto das Covas**  
 "*Alto das Covas* covers the whole residential area of Angra's suburbs and, behind a couple of giant araucarias towering the exit the city, there is the shade of a distant island peeking through another island: it is the cone of Pico Mountain striped by the grey and purple line of São Jorge Island. Sometimes, one can clearly see that snowy and cloudy hat and its formidable bulkhead; other times, everything is uncertain, blurry and false. Is the island the cloud or is the cloud the island?"

Observe the



**11 Angra do Heroísmo Cultural and Congress Centre, where the former São João Bullfighting Arena used to be**  
 "The bullfighting arena, at the root of Canada Nova, is the town's coliseum."

Go back to **Rua da Sé**, turn left to **Rua Duque de Bragança** and you will see



**12 Duque de Bragança Market**  
 "I don't want to see any more landscape. I'm going to the market to see Trovão's melons and Facelita's torresmos..."

Go on through **Rua da Esperança**, passing by



**13 Prior do Crato Square**

Towards

**14 Duque da Terceira Garden**  
 "I enter the garden (and relapsed...). But what I want is to sail through this landscape! I recognise the places, the rocks and how they are related — and that's all!"

Climb the stairs and go to



**15 Tanque do Preto**  
 "Let's go see that black fountain. It is made of stone and it throws water through a tube: it was the first profane sculpture that I have ever seen in my life! I climb a bit more and hear the old, small stream of the watermills: I hear the pure and strong water singing going through the island's interior."

Towards



**16 Memória**  
 "And so I came to Memória (old Moinhos castle), to the top of the city. [...] From here I have and I embody everything that was once mine or, at least, that I once dreamt would be mine. Very easily mine. I could be the ruler of the Cabras islet or the owner of Fradinhos. But what happened to Facho, the highest point in Monte Brasil? Who is now making signs to the ships? [...] To the west of me, there are the towers of São Mateus and the old little pewless church which the winter waves threaten to cover and evict. And behind me there are São João de Deus, Pateira, Reguinho — the pastures and the antlers."

Leave from **Castelo de São Luís Square** and go down to

**17 Rua do Pisão**  
 "I want to get lost in this Pisão, this Pereira, this Desterro — in the small houses of these traditional and foreign neighbourhoods, in this historical city which perfectly combines its pride with the bourgeois gift of joy."

Following the course of the old



**18 Ribeira dos Moinhos** [Rua do Pisão | Rua Frei Diogo das Chagas]  
 "The old torrent, called Ribeira dos Moinhos, witnessed the city's birth by the hands of Álvaro Martins Homem in the beginning of the third quarter of the 15th century, and fed the watermills of the Corte Real family, who were both the designated rulers of Angra do Heroísmo and the New Land pioneers. However, the torrent is now condemned to dry. The atomic era does not want anything to do with millstones. The water that once brought bread to the city's grandparents is now bringing fluorescent lighting to their grandchildren."netos".

To



**19 Museum of Angra do Heroísmo**

And the itinerary comes to its end.

PRAIA DA VITÓRIA



**PATH** of a **CORSAIR** THROUGH the **STREETS** of PRAIA da VITÓRIA

*“For me, Praia da Vitória is the tower of the City Hall and its inert, sedating clock. The towers of the Mother Church, planted in the town hill, were higher than the town itself. Their tall profile had a much vaster, sharper urban sense.”*



scale: 1/10 000  
source: DRT, 2006

Rua – Street  
Avenida – Avenue  
Caminho, Canada – Road  
Largo, Praça – Square

The itinerary begins at **Rua de São Paulo**



- 1 The house where Vitorino Nemésio was born** [R. da Cadeia, currently R. de S. Paulo].  
"I was born on Rua da Cadeia..."

Go through **Rua da Misericórdia**, turn left to **Rua Conde Sieuve de Menezes**



- 2 The house where he was brought up** [Quarta Rua do Paúl, currently Rua Conde Sieuve de Menezes].



- 2a** The young Nemésio used to sleep in the highest room in the house (picture), facing Rua Cons. José Correia de Mesquita] "...but my parents soon moved to another house owned by my great-uncle Mateus de Menezes, which he inherited from his mother, my great-grandmother D. Rosa."

Return to **Rua da Misericórdia** and walk to the small square where you will find



- 3 Casa das Tias** (Aunts' place) [R. da Misericórdia]  
"I spent part of my youth in my aunts' manor house, which used to overwhelm the small fishermen houses on Rua de Baixo, in Praia da Vitória, on the Island".

Go up **Rua da Misericórdia** and turn left to **Rua do Hospital**, where you will be able to see the portal and the cloister of the old



- 4 Misericórdia Hospital**

Once again, go back to **Rua da Misericórdia**, turn left, go up and turn left again to **Rua de São Paulo**, until you get to



- 5 Francisco Ornelas da Câmara Square, where the City Hall is:**

"Forty years ago, this Square was just the City Hall standing there, the guardsmen raised headquarters, the rich-family house, sold and covered in cement, the old prison of Jerónimo Luis, The Mean, and Priest António Vieira. If he was still alive, he would notice that only earthquakes respect prisons. The beautiful stairway that made the square a monument is gone, and so are the arcades where we used to shelter from the rain, and the big, robust fountain. Only the belfry survived".

Go on through **Rua de Jesus**, turning to the first street to the right, where



- 6 The nobles império was located** [currently Rua da Matriz]

"On the square, and then on *Rua do Rego*, in the middle of *Rua de Jesus* – the heart of the city's bourgeoisie –, there used to be the nobles' *império*, probably founded during the Era of Francisco de Ornelas, our Restorer, who, regretting the misfortune of the minister Francisco de Lucena, had received the miracle of good judgment from the Holy Ghost."

Climb the small stairway to the



- 7 Mother Church**  
"Like school, also the environment in the Mother Church's vestry, among choir boys, priests, janitors and sextons, has been very important for me. But the belfry used to scare me..."

which reminds us of the constant destruction and reconstruction process the town went through



- 8 Mother Church Façade**  
"This was the old Praia, three times resurrected, almost as Nineveh and other devious cities, on the foothills of a Vesuvius that we didn't even have."

Go down the steep **São Francisco Street**, turn right to **Rua de Jesus** and then turn left to **Rua Dr. Sousa Júnior**, where you will find



- 9 Império do Rossio**  
"Peasants would recluse to the *império* on *Rua do Rego* or to the *império* of *Rossio*, the artisans' bulwark..."

or turn right to **Rua Gervásio Lima**, walking to



- 10 Império da Caridade** [Figueiras do Paim]  
"...or to the charity food distribution, to Figueiras do Paim or Portão do Barreto, the farmers' realm and the footpaths for those who leave the seat of the municipality".

Instead, you can also go down **São Francisco Street**, go on through **Rua Dr. Alexandre Ramos** and **Rua dos Remédios** and then turn left, to **Rua Serpa Pinto**, where there used to be the



- 11 União Praise Philharmonics** [Rua Serpa Pinto]

*Filarmónica União Praise De casados, solteirinhos... Realejo de Chinchelárias, Ramada de passarinhos!*

*Filarmónica fundada Pelo Sr. João das Neves: Se das nome à nossa Praia, O que vales, a ele o debes!*

Then go to



- 12 Poço da Areia** [Batalha Square]  
"Praia da Vitória used to be so much more than this. We are children twice in our lives: this is my second childhood and now Poço da Areia is just in my imagination."

And now this journey through the memories of Praia da Vitória, and some of Nemésio's memories from his hometown, comes to its end.

- 1901** **19 December:** Vitorino Nemésio was born in Praia da Vitória in the family home in Rua da Cadeia (currently Rua de São Paulo). While still a child, his parents moved to another family home in Quarta Rua do Paúl (currently Rua Conde Sieuve de Menezes), where young Nemésio occupied the “high room.”
- 
- 1912** Primary education in Praia da Vitória. Published *Canto Matinal* (poetry, Angra do Heroísmo). High School in Angra do Heroísmo and, later, in Horta (Faial Island). Military service as a soldier in Angra do Heroísmo.
- 1919**
- 
- 1920** Transferred to Tancos with the rank of first corporal. Published *A Fala das Quatro Flores* (poetry, Angra do Heroísmo) and the play *Amor de nunca mais* (Angra do Heroísmo).
- 
- 1921** Began his career in professional journalism as a reporter for the newspaper *A Pátria* (Lisbon).
- 
- 1922** Published *Nave Etérea* (poetry). Completed secondary education in Humanities and enrolled at the University of Coimbra Law School.
- 
- 1923** Proofreader for the University of Coimbra press. Enrolled in history and geography at the University of Coimbra Faculty of Humanities. Collaborated in the magazines *Bysancio* and *Conímbriga*. Travelled to Spain (Salamanca, Valladolid, Madrid) with the university singing group *Orfeão Académico* and met Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset.
- 
- 1924** Published *Paço do Milhafre* (short stories, with a preface by Afonso Lopes Vieira). Left his law studies and enrolled in Romanic Philology at the University of Coimbra Faculty of Humanities. Founded the magazine *Tríplico* together with Afonso Duarte, Branquinho da Fonseca and João Gaspar Simões.
- 
- 1925** Participated in political activities promoted by the *Seara Nova* group, in whose magazine he collaborated.
- 
- 1926** Published *Varanda de Pilatos* (novel). Visited Raul Brandão, whom he greatly admired.
- 
- 1929** Began an exchange of correspondence with Miguel de Unamuno.
- 
- 1930** Moved to the University of Lisbon Faculty of Humanities, maintaining his residence in Coimbra. Collaborated in the magazine *Presença*.
- 
- 1931** Bachelor's Degree in Romanic Philology from the University of Lisbon Faculty of Humanities, being hired immediately to teach Italian Literature as assistant professor. Continued to live in Coimbra with his wife and children.
- 
- 1932** Published *Sob os Signos de Agora* and “*Açorianidade*” (essays).
- 1933**
- 
- 1934** Doctorate in Humanities from the University of Lisbon, with the dissertation *A Mocidade de Herculano até à volta do Exílio*.
- 
- 1935** *Chargé de cours* at the University of Montpellier. Published *La Voyelle Promise* (poetry written in French). Published *Relações Francesas do Romantismo Português* (essay), *Isabel de Aragão*, *Rainha Santa* (biography), *A Casa Fechada* (fiction), *O Bicho Harmonioso* (poetry) and *Études Portugaises* (essay in French). Launched and directed the magazine *Revista de Portugal* (published until 1940).
- 1938**
- 
- 1939** *Maître de conférences* and *professeur agrégé* at the University of Brussels.
- 
- 1940** Full professor at University of Lisbon Faculty of Humanities. Published *Eu, Comovido a Oeste* (poetry), *Gil Vicente*, *Floresta de Enganos* (essay), *Mau Tempo no Canal* (novel), *Ondas Médias* (radio programme about authors and works of Portuguese literature), *O Mistério do Paço do Milhafre* (short stories), *Festa Redonda, décimas e cantigas de terreiro oferecidas ao povo da ilha Terceira* (poetry), *Nem Toda a Noite a Vida* (poetry), *O Segredo de Ouro Preto e Outros Caminhos* (travel journal), *O Campo de S. Paulo*, *A Companhia de Jesus e o Plano Português do Brasil (1528-1563)* (historical study), *O Pão e a Culpa* (poetry), *Corsário das Ilhas* (chronicles).
- 1956** Director of the University of Lisbon Faculty of Humanities.
- 
- 1958** Taught at various Brazilian universities (Bahia, Ceará, Rio de Janeiro). Published *Conhecimento de Poesia* (essay)
- 1965** and *Retrato do Semeador* (chronicles), *O Verbo e a Morte* (poetry) and *Vida e Obra do Infante D. Henrique*

(biography), *Poesia* (1935-1940) – the three books of his poetry that he deemed most important, prefaced by the essay “Da Poesia”, *Almirantado e Portos de Quatrocentos* (historical essay), *O Cavalo Encantado* (poetry), *Andamento Holandês e Poemas Graves* (poetry) and *Ode ao Rio ABC do Rio de Janeiro* (poetry).

- 
- 1965** Honorary degree from the University of Montpellier. Received the National Literature Award in recognition of his work as a whole.
- 
- 1966** Published *Canto de Véspera*, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of his first book, *Canto Matinal*, *Viagens ao Pé da Porta* (chronicles), *Violão de Morro* (poetry) and *Caatinga e Terra Caída*. *Viagens no Nordeste e no Amazonas* (travel journal).
- 1968**
- 
- 1969** Began the programme “Se bem me lembro” on the Portuguese television RTP.
- 
- 1971** **12 December:** “Final Lesson” at the University of Lisbon Faculty of Humanities.
- 
- 1972** Published *Poemas Brasileiros* and *Limite de Idade* (poetry).
- 
- 1973** **28 March:** first dated poem dedicated to Margarida Victória, Marchioness of Jácome Correia – “*Não cantarei a virgem que o cavalo | Com um xairel de sangue arrebatou*” [“I will not sing the virgin that the horse | With a blood saddle pad snatched”].
- 
- 1974** Received the Montaigne International Award from the Freiherr von Stein/Friedrich von Schiller Foundation in Hamburg. Published *Jornal do Observador* (chronicles).
- 
- 1975** Director of the newspaper *O Dia* (Lisbon).
- 
- 1976** Published *Sapateia Açoriana*, *Andamento Holandês e Outros Poemas* (poetry), and *Era do Átomo Crise do Homem* (radio programme).
- 
- 1978** **20 February:** died in Lisbon at the CUF Hospital and was buried at the Santo António dos Olivais Cemetery in Coimbra. Posthumously honoured for the first time by the *Diário Insular* of Angra do Heroísmo.
- 
- 1985** Posthumous edition by David Mourão-Ferreira of *Quase que os Vi Viver* (joint edition of previously published biographical essays).
- 
- 2003** Posthumous edition by Luiz Fagundes Duarte of *Caderno de Caligraphia e Outros Poemas a Marga* (poetry).

“...o mar do ilhéu do Esparteiro, que, sombrio e apertado dos rochedos, parece um tinteiro entornado ou uma alma penada que, não podendo mais, rebenta.”



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Governo dos Açores

PRESIDÊNCIA DO GOVERNO  
Direcção Regional da Cultura

CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE  
**AZORES**

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