

## ...and beyond

The cultural scene that began to develop in the 1960s deserves a thorough review on its own merits, owing to the extremely interesting work that was produced by individual poets or literary projects and the growing number of initiatives embarked upon. There is space here to mention only a few names, but those that belong to authors in more recent years are enough to outline a fresh flowering of Friulian literature. The anguished title alone of *Libers... di scugnî lâ* ("Free... to have to leave"), Leonardo Zanier's first foray into poetry, immediately calls to mind the wound caused by emigration. Zanier's poetry is unmistakable, in both its tone and content, as well as in the local dialect used (the Carnic dialect of Maranzanis, Udine), whose blend of lyricism and irony expresses the anger and hope that grips the younger generations. *Salustri*, published in 1968, is a collection of poems by Umberto Valentini, an extremely subtle writer who has explored the rich vein of his inspiration in a profound series of poems. The trauma caused by the earthquake (1976) and people's ensuing need to rediscover their "roots" led to a wealth of writings in general and poetry in particular, with several authors converting or returning to their mother tongue – after initially writing in Italian, Amedeo Giacomini, Elio Bartolini and Siro Angeli all turned to local languages and dialects for a more authentic voice.

In view of the inexorable demise of the peasant culture in which the Friulian language developed, some accepted the challenge of modernity. Among Clape Culturâl Aquilee's many initiatives was a series edited by Gianni Nazzi in which foreign classics could be read in Friulian translation, thus underlining the local idiom's status as a language in its own right. The process of enriching the language through translations (and by introducing a number of neologisms and contemporary expressions) gave rise to a number of lively collectives, from which emerged another notable author, Angelo M. Pittana. But alongside the many examples of writers backing the Friulian language's claim to be recognized, demanding it be supported and urging that it develop a literary standard, other voices were singing to a different tune and for these "Friulian was a private idiolect" (Pellegrini). The Sot/Sora group that would meet in the library of Montereale Valcellina, where Rosanna Paroni Bertoja, Federico Tavan and Antonio De Biasio would discuss issues before going their separate ways, was virtually a small academy. Though later moving to Milan, Beno Fignon was also from Montereale. Others – Elsa Buiese, Celso Macor, Lionello Fioretti, Giacomo Vit (an entertainer in the Majakovskij group in Corcovado), Francesco Indrigo, Nelvia Di Monte and Giorgio Ferigo – necessarily have to remain only names here, although each had his own strongly individual personality. In concluding this brief overview, it is worth mentioning Ida Vallerugo and Pierluigi Cappello, who, in spite of their differences, had much in common in their innovative energy. They shared a passion for creating a language of their own (Vallerugo's very special idiom being derived from the Friulian dialect variant spoken in Medino, Cappello's more select and closer to the standard language), a depth and urgency that are the stuff of poetry, and the interweaving of life and poetic reflection that led to the creation of the "Biblioteca di Babele", a poetry publishing venture founded in Meduno in 1999.

Literary competitions, the best known of which are the Premio San Simon and the Premio San Simonut in Codroipo, the Concorso Zâl par Furlan in Spilimbergo, Emotions d'ingjustri in Basiliano, the Celso Macor in Romans d'Isonzo, the Glemone îr, vuei e doman in Gemon, In trê

riis dei Colonos in Villacaccia, the Renato Appi literary prize in Cordenons, the Premio Giso Fior international Friulian poetry competition in Verzegnis, the prize for the translation of Greek and Latin into Friulian of the Società Filologica Friulana with the Gli Stellaniani association, the Concorso Lenghis – Società Filologica Friulana, the Concorso Estroverso of Tavagnacco and the Concorso Vôs de Basse of San Giorgio di Nogaro, certainly hold a mirror up to the present literary scene.

Franco Marchetta, who died in 2014, was the author of fiction and plays in both Italian and Friulian and three times the recipient of the San Simon prize, which since 1980 perhaps best reflects the state of literature in the Friulian language. His many works include the novels *Madalene* (1997) and *Gilez*, and the essays *Il sium di chescj furlans in fughe*, *Cronichis di Saveri Sengar* (2011), *U-* (2012), *Achì no ai viodût une pavee* and *Il numar 1089*. According to Marchetta, in order for Friulian to be a proper language it needs first of all to produce fiction that bears comparison with Italian and international works. His own works were fashioned in the most ingenious manner, by forcing himself out of the straightjacket of traditional Friulian fiction and exploring new approaches to prose composition.

An anagram of the word “sium” forms the name for the group Usmis, a cultural movement of young people from Friuli that gravitated around the magazine of the same name and revolutionized the Friulian cultural scene, breaking away from traditional stereotypes and introducing a new mentality and a fresh sensibility that was open to the most varied new cultural influences. Usmis was the crucible that forged many of the “new” artists and intellectuals in Friuli, such as Maurizio Mattiuzza, who is extremely active in Friuli’s cultural circles, both through Usmis and with the Trastolons, a poetry collective of which he is a founder member. Mattiuzza has published two collections of poetry, *La cjase su l’ôr* (1997) and *L’inutile necessitâ(t)* (2004). He has contributed lyrics for the songs of the singer-songwriter Lino Straulino and together they released *Tiere nere* and took part in *Mosaic*, a live recording of Lino performing at the RTSI auditorium in Lugano.

The Trastolons are a group that deserve close attention. These anarchic poets from lowland Friuli broke away from Usmis to develop their concept of writing in a language with no rules – only those dictated by poetry – and the result, “*trastolon* Friulian”, is how they believe they can best express themselves. Thus they produce what amounts to poetry with multiple authors, using an open, mixed, hyperbolic, musical, Babel-like language. The collective began producing their first literary efforts in 1996 and their first book was published in 1998, with the poetry manifesto *Tons trastolons*, followed in 2001 by the post-ironic book-cum-cd *Tanamai*, in which the first authors Lussia di Uanis (aka Lucia Pinat), Raffaele BB Lazzara, Stefano Moratto, Maurizio Mattiuzza, Fabian Riz, Guido Carrara and Vera Puema were joined by various other figures engaged in the linguistic “movement” and associated with the free cultural circles of Friuli. Several subsequent collaborations and cross-fertilizations led to the “Tavan poetic strike” of 2014.

Stefano Moratto, who writes both poetry and prose, especially in the Friulian language, is also a member of Usmis and of the Trastolons poetry collective, as well as contributing to magazines and anthologies. He has published: *Tons trastolons, poets cence leç par une lenghe caraibiche* (Trastolons 1998), *Tananai* (Trastolons 2001), *Donald dal Tiliment* (2001), which was adapted in 2007 as a radio play broadcast on the regional radio station of Rai (Italy’s

national tv and radio broadcaster), *Mugulis, I ultins piratis dal Tiliment* (2005), *Isulis* (2010) and *Kebar Krossè* (2016).

The collective also includes Checo Tam (Francesco Tami), who won the San Simon literary competition in 2000 with *La maree nere e altris contis*, as well as the CEC screenplay prize for *Viatores*. He published the science fiction novel/radio play *Sense* (2002) and various tales in *La Comugne*, a now defunct literary magazine, travel pieces in *La Patrie dal Friûl*, a Friulian-language magazine, and music reviews. After collaborations with the Trastolons poetry group in *Tananai* (2001) and narrating the Friulian poem *Biello Dumlo* in *Lingua*, a cd produced by the English band In the Nursery (1998), he became the lead singer in the Friulian band Francis and the Phantoms, which was awarded the 2008 Premio Friuli.

Already mentioned above, the magazine *La Comugne*, which was founded in 1997 and whose final issue – no. 25 – came out in 2015, was another important innovative conduit for literary expression. The idea behind this periodical was to provide an “open space” that would welcome unknown writers as well as established authors. The magazine would accommodate all kinds of genres, ranging from fiction and cartoons to essays and scripts by the young and the not-so-young who felt at home in a publication that was always prepared to help anyone looking for a means of self-expression. Several authors cut their teeth on the magazine at one time or another. The last issue saw pieces by Marco Cuoco, Laurin Zuan Nardin, Santiago Zanier, Giacomo Trevisan, Gianfranco Pellegrini, Stefano Gasti, Raffaele Serafini and Luca De Clara.

Contecurte, a blog consisting of short stories designed to be read, commented upon and perhaps improved, appeared in 2009 as an interesting new arrival in the field. The blog format is ideal to ensure a “free” approach to this activity. In this platform, authors and readers are able to meet face-to-face, so to speak, and a story can be altered even after it has been published if the author believes it can be improved. The blog’s creators and managers are also keen to contribute in their small way to the development of the Friulian language, trying to stick to the official spelling and doing a little editing on the stories to help those who don’t yet feel up to writing in the Friulian language, although they speak it. And the “contecurtârs” are not few in number, which goes to show that there is indeed a considerable interest in writing in Friulian. One of the creators and “hosts” of Contecurte is Raffaele Serafini, who has published pieces in several collections and won the San Simon prize in 2015 with *Soreli jevât a mont* and again in 2017 with *Contis sot spirt*, going on to publish his own collections of short stories: *Contis di famee* and *Altris contis di famee*. Serafini is full of enthusiasm and energy and a desire to share experiences with others – all things that help literature move forward.

The field of poetry is certainly not short of outstanding figures, such as Anellina Colussi, Eddi Bortolussi, Egle Taverna, Enzo Driussi, Franca Mainardis, Giacomina De Michieli, Giuseppe Mariuz and Novella Del Fabbro, whose works enrich and enliven the contribution of the Friulian language to the genre.