

Straddling two centuries

In the mid-19th century and the first part of the following century it becomes difficult to follow the developments of written Friulian from close. Zorutti's example prevails as far as poetry is concerned, but authors with more pronounced sensitivity emerge, Italian influences are perceived though with some delay (Giovanni Pascoli writes alongside Giacomo Leopardi), and writers search for new expressive possibilities. This latter aspect is especially evident in translations, that are attempted by both classical and modern writers, including foreign authors.

As regards the Friulian language there is an alternating of those who adhere to the central rule and those that opt for the variant. Pietro Bonini (1844-1905), in his *Versi friulani* (1898) and *Nuovi versi friulani* (1900), beside sonnets that reflect the influence of Leopardi, Foscolo and Carducci, presents a significant number of versions that meet the desire to «show the possibilities of the Friulian language». Pieri Corvat (i.e. Pietro Michelini, 1863-1933), is known for *Il Quarantevot*, a «tragicomic» description in sonnets, though with a strong sense of reality, of the Udine movements. Vittorio Cadel (1884-1917), painter and aviator who died in Macedonia, left love compositions, sonnets and villotte, mainly in the Friulian language spoken in the Fanna area.

Also Giuseppe Malattia della Vallata (1875-1948) exploited a western variety of Friulian, spoken in the Barcis area, in his verses and in the curious collection of Villotte friulane moderne. Very peculiar is the work of V.G. Blanch (Luigi Rodaro, 1859-1932), who through his *Linguaggio friulano* (1929), besides its original verses should be noted for the broad and new choice of translations. As a practical demonstration of the similarities between Catalan and Friulian, these include a series of versions with parallel text by Catalan authors that overall anticipate the «discovery» made by Pasolini two decades later (Pellegrini).

Still taking account of the individual experiences, here it is worth mentioning Emilio Nardini (1866- 1932), Enrico Fruch (1873-1932), Argeo (Celso Cescutti, 1877-1946), Giovanni Lorenzoni (1884-1950). Fruch, from Rigolato, abandons the Carnia version in favour of Central Friulian. Starting at the end of the 19th century, he starts from Zorutti's stance that slowly refines itself, and his verses display some sort of humanitarian socialism that is near to Pascoli's ideology. Pascoli's lesson (Giovanni Pascoli of the Poemetti) is deeper in Lorenzoni, though within poetry that has a «comforting rather than difficult» character (A. Ciceri). Emilio Nardini is not devoid of suggestions, whilst Argeo, whose more intense production dates back to the early 20th century, is far from Zorutti's playful easiness.

In this first part of the century, prose experimentation is still limited. The interweave of literary works and folk stories, with interest prevailing more or less in ethnographic data, is more strongly felt in the work of Luigi and Giovanni Gortani from Carnia.

Thus, the literature of the years preceding 1915-18 is more serious and considered, but does not allow for clean breaks with tradition or precise trendy definitions, except for the

spur to follow the footsteps of Italian poetry. However, the second half of the 19th century witnessed the flourishing of studies on Friulian.

The regard for folklore produces collections of songs, proverbs and sayings (the publishing of villotte or «Friulian folk songs» by Leicht, Gortani, Teza, Arboit, Ostermann. The works of Jacopo and Giulio Andrea Pirona help the creation of the project of a Friulian vocabulary, published in 1871, and in 1873 G.I. Ascoli, a glottologist from Gorizia, gives the Friulian language its first scientific description in the *Saggi ladini*. At the turn of the centuries some magazines that collect precious contributions on language, literature and folk traditions become valid tools for research and the collection of ideas and common efforts. After the season of the «*Pagine friulane*» published in Udine by Domenico Del Bianco (1888-1907), Gorizia becomes the birthplace of «*Le nuove pagine* », edited by Giovanni Lorenzoni, which are short-lived (from 1907, for six issues) and replaced, with the help of Ugo Pellis, by «*Forum Iulii*» (1910-1914), an extremely rich periodical magazine that, in addition to historical and artistic topics, also deals with studies on language as well as texts and versions in Friulian.

Thanks to these initiatives and their promoters, both before and during the Great War, Gorizia shows its Friulian character, and it is here that in 1919 the Friulian Philological Society is established and then moved to Udine with the aim of preserving Friuli's heritage of language and traditions. However, within the Society some of the choices made are in line with Fascism that turns this north-eastern region into the bulwark of Latinity against the Slavic-German world. But also provocative dissenting voices are heard in the twenty-year period concerned.

Here worthy of notice is Giovanni Minut (1896-1967), author of harsh social protest and anti-Fascist poems. Also Giovanni Schiff (pre Zaneto, 1872- 1947) and Giuseppe Driulini (Siôr Barbe, 1854-1949) enter in a controversy with fascism on the pages of catholic magazines. A number of literary experiences are worthy of notice among those gathering around the Friulian Philological Society, giving rise through their studies to a phase of important scientific liveliness (initiatives include the publication in 1935 of the *Nuovo Pirona*, edited by G.B. Corgnali and E. Carletti, that extends the vocabulary of 1871, integrating it with the material by G.A. Pirona). Bindo Chiurlo (1886-1943), editor of the *Antologia della letteratura friulana* (1927), as well as significant editions (Colloredo, Percoto, Zorutti), is a refined poet, that however uses the Friulian language only for minor compositions. Ugo Pellis (1882-1943), untiring collectors for the Italian Linguistic Atlas (*Atlante Linguistico Italiano*) is also the author of verses, interesting rhythmic prose and unpublished translations in the Friulian language spoken in the Aquileia area. Finally, Ercole Carletti (1877-1946), with his irregular verses, the sudden repeated onomatopoeias and symbolism that is the symptom of a restless feeling, reaches the climax of Friulian poetry in this period, announcing the change of the aftermath of the Second World War.