

On the Tracks of the Malinowskis in Oberbozen and Bozen

Daniela Salvucci – Free University Bozen-Bolzano

Abstract

Using biographical bibliographical sources, especially Wayne (1995b), in the frame of the history of anthropology, this chapter contributes to trace the presence of Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942), his wife Elsie R. Masson (1890–1935), and their children in Oberbozen and Bozen in the 1920s and 1930s. It focuses on the houses where the family lived, such as the villa they bought in Oberbozen, and the flats they rented in Gries (Bozen), highlighting the historical and sociocultural context of these places.

Drawing on the correspondence of the couple, published by their daughter Helena Malinowska Wayne (1925–2018), on some of their writings, and on newspaper articles of that period, this article describes both the local and the cosmopolitan social networks in which the Malinowskis were involved during the time they spent in Oberbozen and Bozen. It reconstructs the relations of the couple with friends, relatives and colleagues who used to visit them, as well as those with new friends, acquaintances, and neighbours in Oberbozen and Bozen, paying special attention to Elsie Masson's relationships and to her critique of the Fascist regime, looking at the Malinowskis' family story within the context of the history of this Alpine region.

1. Family Stories Within the History of Anthropology

In line with a biographical (Carsten et al., 2018; Lohmann, 2008) and relational theoretical frame (Salvucci et al., 2019; Strathern, 2018), this chapter looks at life trajectories, family stories, and social networks, highlighting the collective, material, and narrative dimensions of the history of sociocultural anthropology. Through the correspondence of Bronislaw Malinowski and his wife Elsie R. Masson, published by their daughter Helena Malinowska Wayne

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in 1995, it follows the family's presence in Oberbozen and Bozen¹ in the 1920s and 1930s, retracing the social network of the couple within the reconstruction provided by Wayne (1995b). These networks are both connected to the territory, thereby including new friends, acquaintances, neighbours, and employees in Oberbozen and Bozen, and international, involving Malinowski's friends, relatives and colleagues who lived in different cities throughout Europe and Australia, and used to join the family in holiday.

Following the tracks of the Malinowskis in Oberbozen and Bozen, therefore, means to deepen into the history of these territories and contextualize at a social and historical level the places dwelled by the family and its networks, such as the upper-class village of Oberbozen with its *Sommerfrischhäuser* (holiday houses) on the Ritten-Renon plateau, and the *Kurort* (spa town) Gries in Bozen-Bolzano. Such an attempt also entails looking at local social environments and class relations, those between upper-class and peasant neighbours, and between local people and cosmopolitan visitors of the Malinowski family. The Malinowskis have been considered as cosmopolitans themselves (Gellner, 1998), according to their international biographies, connected to the Polish territories of the Habsburg Empire in the case of Malinowski and to the British Commonwealth and the migration from Scotland to Australia in the case of Masson. Cosmopolitanism also refers to the lifestyle of the Malinowskis and their international visitors. These upper and middle-class people used to move throughout Europe, visiting each other, meeting in Paris, London, Vienna, gathering for holiday in Southern French Riviera or in the Alps. As a network of liberal intellectuals, they shared a "romantic" imaginary and a kind of "bourgeois-bohemian" sensibility, as we would say nowadays. They praised science as well as arts, literature, and music, and appreciated travelling by being both fascinated with "exoticism" and pleased with comfort, being part of that "culture of cosmopolitanism", which has been developing in the Alps through middle and upper-class tourism since the second half of the 19th century.

1 In their private correspondence, Malinowski and Masson usually referred to Bozen-Bolzano and Oberbozen-Soprabolzano using the German names. Nevertheless, Malinowski used the Italian names in the address as we can see in several letters he wrote to friends and colleagues, which are held in the archives at Yale University (Bronislaw Malinowski papers (MS19), Sterling Memorial Library, Yale, CT, United States).

This chapter is based on ongoing research on the tracks of the Malinowskis in Oberbozen and Bozen, which aims to contribute, on the one hand, to the debate on the biographical approach within the history of anthropology. This approach underlines the production of “anthropological data” (Lohmann, 2008) through the study of life stories and family stories of anthropologists, stressing parallels with the biographic approach as an ethnographic resource in anthropology (Carsten et al., 2018). On the other hand, this research promotes the study of the local society and history through the lens of personal and family stories, looking at the interconnection between local networks and cosmopolitan ones.

As a first step of this research, I retraced the Malinowskis’ network of both local inhabitants and international visitors in Oberbozen and Bozen following the biographical reconstruction produced by Helena Malinowska Wayne (1995b). In fact, the most important documents testifying to the presence of the Malinowskis in Oberbozen and Bozen are the letters they exchanged in the 1920s and 1930s, a wide selection of which were edited and published by their youngest daughter in two fundamental volumes (Wayne, 1995a, 1995b). Drawing on these as well as on other letters exchanged by Elsie Masson and her relatives, Selleck (2013) too reports on the story of the Malinowskis in South Tyrol within his consistent reconstruction of the story of the Masson family (Selleck, 2013, pp. 285–286, 288–291, 307–330). References to the presence of the Malinowskis in Oberbozen can also be found in the writings of Malinowski’s students, such as Raymond Firth (1957, p. 10) and Hortense Powdermaker (1966, pp. 43–44), who used to visit Malinowski in Oberbozen, together with other colleagues (Cole, 1977, p. 350; Kuper, 1996, p. 20; Wayne, 1985, p. 536; 1995b). Other extremely valuable biographical sources on Malinowski and Masson do not tend to focus on the period the couple spent in South Tyrol (Drucker-Brown, 1988; Ellen et al., 1988; Gellner, 1998; Gross, 1986; Richardson, 2016; Skalník, 1995; Stocking, 1995; Young 2004; 2018).²

2 At a local level, in the past years, several attempts to document the presence of Bronislaw Malinowski in Oberbozen and Bozen have been made, since a symposium was organized in October 1993 in Lengmoos (on the Ritten plateau, above the city of Bozen) to honour his memory. On that occasion a commemorative plaque was attached to the façade of Malinowski’s house in Oberbozen. Helena Malinowska Wayne took part in the symposium, speaking on “an English-Polish couple in Oberbozen”, together with local intellectuals and

As we know from the letters they exchanged (Wayne, 1995a, 1995b), Elsie Masson and Bronislaw Malinowski, who referred to each other as “Elsie” and “Bronio” (Bronislaw’s nickname), met in Melbourne in 1916, after he had come back from his first fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands.³ They then started working together⁴ and socialised with the same group of friends that included Hede and Paul Khuner, an Austrian Jewish couple who had been stranded in Australia during the First World War, Marnie Masson, Elsie’s sister, their close friend Mim Weigall, and others. This group used to call itself

other scholars from Budapest and Innsbruck (*Dolomiten*, 1993, October 15, p. 20; October 16, p. 7). In 2006, the Polish journalist and author Ryszard Kapuscinski was invited to visit the city and give a talk at the Centre for Peace of the Municipality of Bolzano. In his public speech, he referred to Malinowski and to his stay in Oberbozen and Bozen, revealing this story to a wider local audience as well as to the local press. Kapuscinski also went to Oberbozen and visited Villa Malinowski. To commemorate the anniversary of Kapuscinski’s death, in January 2017 the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano organized a conference entitled “Kapuscinski and Malinowski: on the traces of the other”, and the Municipality placed a plaque in memory of Malinowski in front of the old Municipal house in Gries, the Bozen neighbourhood where the Malinowskis lived from 1926 to 1929. The Municipality also dedicated a tree to the famous social anthropologist on the “Hill of the Sages”, a public park area in the southern part of Bozen-Bolzano, which celebrates the memory of prominent personalities connected to the city who were committed to improving knowledge and common good (*Alto Adige*, 2017, January 22, <https://www.altoadige.it/cultura-e-spettacoli/a-bolzano-sulle-tracce-di-malinowski-1.365225>). Although these efforts aimed to celebrate Bronislaw Malinowski as a great and well-known anthropologist, they omitted reference to his wife, Elsie Masson. Since its foundation in 2016, the MFEA-Malinowski Forum for Ethnography and Anthropology (<https://mfea.projects.unibz.it/>), coordinated by Elisabeth Tauber and Dorothy Zinn at the Free University Bozen-Bolzano, has aimed to investigate the story of the Malinowski family in South Tyrol, paying special attention to Masson and to her work, highlighting her role in Malinowski’s own scientific production (Salvucci, 2017, 2021, 2022; Salvucci et al., 2019, 2022; Tauber & Zinn 2018, 2021).

3 In line with the biographical sources (Wayne, 1995a; Young, 2004), Orme Masson, Elsie’s father, a Scottish professor at Melbourne University, together with other colleagues, introduced Malinowski to the University’s social environment and to the families of the University scholars. At that time, Elsie Masson, who had already visited the Northern Territories and written her book (Masson, 1915), was attending a training course as a nurse at Melbourne hospital. As Malinowski had already read her book, having been himself interested in Australian aboriginal cultures (Malinowski, 1913), he asked her for help to process the ethnographic material he had collected in the Trobriand Islands during his first fieldwork.

4 According to several sources (Firth, 1988, 2004; Malinowski, 1967; Selleck, 2013; Wayne, 1985; 1995a, 1995b; Young, 2004) and to the already mentioned MFEA research project (Salvucci, 2021; Salvucci et al., 2019; Tauber & Zinn, 2018, 2021), there is evidence that Masson supported her husband’s successful career, assisting him as a reader, a discussant, and a copy editor of his manuscripts. Before meeting Malinowski in 1916 and then moving to Europe with him in 1920, Masson travelled throughout the Australian Northern Territories in 1913–1914, taking part in explorations, and writing newspaper articles on her travelling, which were later collected in a book (Masson, 1915). Her work focused on colonial society and the colonization process of this part of the country, looking at the situation of aboriginal people, and fostering a new humanitarian concern toward them (Lydon, 2016).

“The Clan” (Selleck, 2013, p. 202; Wayne, 1995a, p. xvii; Young, 2004, pp. 457–460) and remained closely linked even after most of its members left Australia to move to Europe. They kept in touch by letters and visited each other in Vienna, where the Khuners lived and where Mim Weigall moved to after marriage, or in London where Malinowski worked or in Oberbozen where the Malinowskis chose to make their home in the 1920s. After the couple moved to South Tyrol in 1922–1923, as early as 1924, Malinowski started living between Oberbozen and London, where he taught at the London School of Economics, whereas Masson resided permanently in Oberbozen, and later in Bozen, together with their three daughters. Although the Malinowskis moved from Oberbozen to London in 1929, they continued to holiday in Oberbozen and to host their friends there in the 1930s.⁵ After the Second World War, the daughters took on the management of the house in Oberbozen, where they and their families holidayed and even lived for longer periods. Today, the Malinowskis’ grandchildren take care of the family house in Oberbozen. Their social networks in the village include some of the offspring of their parents and grandparents’ friends, neighbours, and acquaintances.

2. Houses and Neighborhoods in Oberbozen: A Social and Historical Contextualization

The Malinowskis arrived in Oberbozen following a suggestion of the Khuners’ friend, Hans Busch (Wayne, 1995b, p. 27), who became a close friend of the Malinowskis too, together with his wife Berta (Wayne, 1995b, p. 245).⁶ In Oberbozen the Malinowskis rented an apartment in a house near the little

5 In this period Masson went to Oberbozen when travelling to spas in central Europe, where she attempted to cure her serious illness, diagnosed as multiple sclerosis, which led to her death in 1935 in Natters, near Innsbruck. A few years later, in 1938, Malinowski went to the USA as a visiting Professor, and at the outbreak of the Second World War he decided to remain there, where his daughters and his new partner, then second wife, Valetta Swann joined him. He was appointed to teach at Yale University, where he died prematurely in 1942.

6 As reconstructed by Wayne (1995a, p. 169) Elsie Masson visited the Khuners as well as the Buschs in Vienna in November 1925. They corresponded with each other and after the rise of Nazism in 1933, she kindly wrote to the Buschs supporting them and the Jewish cause. When Masson, already seriously ill, stopped in Vienna in May 1935 during her trip to a spa town on the border between the Czech Republic and Germany, the Khuners, the Buschs and Mim Weigall together with her husband, Hans Pollak, visited her at the hotel where she stayed (Wayne, 1995b, p. 225).

church of Maria Schnee for the winter of 1922–1923. As they liked the place very much, they decided to buy the cottage they could see from their window, which was for sale. In 1923 they bought this house “with meadow and pasture” from Dr. Benedikt Pobitzer, a lawyer in Bozen, for 35,000 Lire⁷, as reported by the local newspapers.⁸ The Malinowskis could afford this purchase thanks to Paul Khuner, who came to visit them in Oberbozen and supported them financially (Wayne, 1995b, p. 29). They also had to refurbish and fix some parts of the house. The firm Gebrüder Bittner from Bozen made the work for a final cost of 18,787.90 Lire, according to the invoice dated November 27, 1923 (Bronislaw Malinowski papers [MS 19]).

The house, which was called “Villa Amalia” (Bronislaw Malinowski papers [MS 19]) and then became known as “Villa Malinowski”, was an example of a *Sommerfrischhaus*, a holiday cottage for the upper class. According to Malinowska Wayne, it has changed very little over the years, with a veranda on the ground floor and a balcony on the first floor, both looking towards the Dolomites, a sloping roof, white-painted walls (today they are painted in light pink), and green-and-white wooden shutters (green today), according to the local style (Wayne, 1995b, p. 29).

In the 1920s, Oberbozen was an upper-class resort, well connected, since 1907, to the city of Bolzano by a cog train, where the *Bauernhöfe*, the peasants’ houses and farms, were close to the aristocracy and affluent bourgeois holiday cottages. Indeed, since the 16th century at least⁹ the upper-class members of Bozen had started building their summer residences, the so-called *Sommerfrischhäuser*, on the Ritten-Renon plateau, in the villages of Klobenstein, Maria Himmelfahrt, and Oberbozen (Hoeniger, 1968; Hosp, 2005; Rampold, 1970; von Braitenberg, 1994).

7 Nowadays, this could approximately correspond to 33,600 €, according to the purchase power convertor of Il sole 24 ore <https://www.infodata.ilssole24ore.com/2016/05/17/calcola-poteredacquisto-lire-ed-euro-dal-1860-2015/>

8 *Bozner Nachrichten*, 1923, August 7; *Volksblatt*, 1923, August 11, p. 6; *Der Burggräfler*, 1923, August 11, p. 6.

9 In a document dated 1237 a place called “Oberpoazen” is mentioned, and it seems possible that the custom of moving to the plateau for the summer was even more ancient than the 16th century (Hoeniger, 1968, p. 169; Rampold, 1970, p. 330).

2.1 The Summer Residences

As a strategic point of connection between the Southern German regions and the Northern Italian ones, Bozen had been developing since the Middle Ages as a trade and mercantile city, where annual fairs were held and valuable products such as wine, oil, and textiles were exchanged. In a city map drawn in 1645, the merchants' warehouses, overlooked by their houses, appear following one another along the city streets, between the convents of the various religious orders, including the Teutonic Order, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, amongst others, with their own vineyards and gardens.¹⁰ Since the city was bordered by two rivers, as it is today, which had not been reclaimed at that time, the air often became unhealthy in the summer due to the floods, the swampy areas, and the sultriness. After the various plague epidemics of the second half of the 16th century, the wealthy merchants of the town, many of whom obtained titles of nobility, began to move to the plateau for the summer, building their holiday houses, the *Sommerfrischhäuser*, there, first in Klobenstein and Lengmoos, on the other side of the Ritten plateau, near the ancient *Kaiserstraße*¹¹, and then in Oberbozen.¹² At that time, these territo-

10 City map of Bozen by Matthäus Merians "Topographia Provinciarum Austriacarum", 1649 (Hoeniger, 1968, p. 177), see also Museo Mercantile Bolzano.

11 The "Emperor's way" through which the German Emperors used to travel southward to be crowned by the Pope in Rome, until a new shorter way along the Eisacktal (Eisack/Isarco valley) was opened in 1314.

12 "So finden wir schon im Jahre 1584 die Bozner Tuchhändler Elsasser, 1588 die Rottenbacher, 1590 die Eyrl, 1607 die Trojer, 1611 die Familie Eberschlager, Postmeister in Bozen, 1633 die Giovanelli, dann 1653 die Kaufleute Gumer, 1666 die Mayrl, 1699 die Atzwanger, alle aus der Elite des Bozner Bürgertums, als Besitzer eigener Sommerfrischhäuser in Klobenstein, von denen aber bald darauf die drei letzteren Familien ihre Sommeraufenthalt nach Oberbozen verlegten, das, obgleich ohne jeden besonderen Anziehungspunkt, gleichsam als Neuschöpfung typisch boznerischen Patrizierkreise im 17. Jahrhundert einen unglaublich raschen Aufstieg nahm. ... Schon Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts treffen wir die ganze gute, das heißt reiche Bozner Gesellschaft, die Zallinger, Menz, Mayrl, Eberschlager, Gumer, Graff..." (von Braitenberg, 1994, pp. 15–16). Translation by the author: "Thus, as early as 1584 we find the Bolzano cloth merchants; the Elsassers, 1588 the Rottenbuchers, 1590 the Eyrls, 1607 the Trojers, 1611 the Eberschlager family, postmasters in Bolzano, 1633 the Giovanellis, then in 1653 the merchants Gumer, 1666 the Mayrls, 1699 the Atzwangers, all from the elite of the Bolzano bourgeoisie, as owners of their own summer residences in Klobenstein, but soon after, the latter three families moved their summer residences to Oberbozen, which, although without any particular point of interest, was a new creation of the typical Bolzano patrician circles in the 17th century which took an unbelievably rapid rise. ... Already at the end of the 17th century we meet the whole well-to-do, i.e. rich, Bolzano society, the Zallingers, Menzs, Mayrls, Eberschlagers, Gumers, Graffs ..."

ries were mostly administrated by the Teutonic Order to whom the dwelling peasants had to pay a fee (von Braitenberg, 1994, p. 15).

The members of the upper-class society from Bozen used to spend 72 days on the Ritten plateau, from the Day of St. Peter and Paul (June 29) to the Nativity of Mary Day (September 8) in their “fresh” summer residences, which they reached travelling by horse-driven or oxen-driven carts, called *Penmen* (Hoeniger, 1968, p. 171; von Braitenberg, 1994, p. 16).

In 1668, one of the richest merchants and summer residence’s owners, Matthias Kreizer, funded the building of the Maria Himmelfahrt church, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin, which gave the name to this neighbourhood of Oberbozen (Hoeniger, 1968, p. 169; von Braitenberg, 1994, p. 17). That same year, on July 5, the neighbours¹³ founded the “*adelige Schützen Gesellschaft*”, the aristocratic shooting society, for “the preservation of good friends and neighbours” through “the knightly exercise of target shooting” as they wrote in the foundation protocol.¹⁴ Since then, the aristocratic shooting society has promoted the consolidation of close relationships amongst the dwellers of the summer houses in Maria Himmelfahrt in Oberbozen, strengthening friendships, fostering marriages, as well as business and political alliances amongst the families. Since the foundation of the shooting society, its members started the custom of commissioning painted shooting targets to be given to the society, which they then used to shoot at together as a sign of good luck when celebrating family events, such as marriages and births. All these precious painted targets, the *Schützenscheiben*, are still collected in the Pavilion of the aristocratic shooting society, which was built in 1777. Close to the holiday residences, the Schluff tavern opened in 1778 (Hoeniger, 1968, p. 170), becoming an important meeting and networking place for the upper-society members and their guests; which continues to this day.

The aristocratic lifestyle of the *Sommerfrische* people has therefore produced a very exclusive social group, stressing its “distinction” from the lower social sectors of the city. The *Sommerfrische* people would relax together and

13 Amongst these, there were Matthias Kreizer, four members of the Zallinger family, two members of the Menz family, the City Mayor von Atzwanger, and later also the Eberschlagers, the Graffs, the Gummers, and the Mayrls (Hoeniger, 1968, p. 170, von Braitenberg, 1994, pp. 16–17).

14 „zu Erhaltung böster Freundt und Nachbarschaft diß Ritterliche Exercitium des Scheiben Schießen angefangen“ (von Walther, 1994, p. 7).

visit each other, play sport, and the men would hunt together. They would also organize parties and other events such as concerts and theatre plays, and celebrate the *Kirchtag*, the festival celebrating the patron saint on August 15, dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin¹⁵. For this occasion, the shooting society still organizes a procession with the clergy, and the *Sommerfrische* people dress in their distinctive *Ritten Mantel*, a white woolly cloak with a black or red collar, depending on whether they own a summer residence in Klobenstein (black collar) or Oberbozen (red collar).¹⁶ According to the Malinowskis' grandchildren¹⁷, Wanda Malinowska, the Malinowskis' second-born daughter, who holidayed and lived for a period in the family Villa in Oberbozen after the Second World War, used to wear her *Ritten Mantel* and participate in the *Kirchtag* procession.

For a magazine article published in August 2021, the journalist Verena Pliger interviewed some of the current owners of the *Sommerfrischhäuser* in Maria Himmelfahrt. As she reported, in most of the cases they are the offspring of the ancient patriciate of the city, even though there are also a few new owners who have bought their houses from the older ones. According to one of the interviewed inhabitants, interested in local history and genealogy, most of the ancient family names have been disappearing due to the custom of usually giving the holiday residences on the *Ritten* plateau to the daughters as a part of their inheritance¹⁸, whereas the sons inherited the family house

15 As Inga Hosp (2005, pp. 60–70) has highlighted, descriptions of the lifestyle in Oberbozen as a *Sommerfrische* resort at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century were offered by the medical doctor Karl Kreutschneider in a text collected in the local Journal of history and folk studies *Der Schlern* in 1937, as well as by the writer Hans von Hoffenthal in his novels *Abschied von Oberbozen* published in 1907 and *Moj* (1915).

16 This *Ritten Mantel*, which still today is perceived as a sign of distinction and prestige, is worn on several occasions through the year and seems to have originated from the local shepherds' cape, although other sources connect it to the cloak of the ancient Austrian Empire Dragoons' uniform (Rampold, 1970, p. 330) and to that of the Teutonic Order (Hosp, 2005, p. 60).

17 For this personal communication, as well as for many other insights and relevant information, for their helpful collaboration, their generous hospitality, and their supporting interest in this research, I sincerely thank Patrick Burke, Rebecca Malinowska Stuart, and Lucy Ulrich.

18 The complex relations amongst inheritance practices, kinship and family systems and gender in Medieval and Modern South Tyrol have been analysed in a critical and comparative approach by several scholars, such as in the case of the special issues on these topics published by the Journal *Geschichte und Region/Storia e Regione* (Clementi, 2010; Clementi et al., 2010; Clementi & Maegraith, 2018; Lanzinger, 2010; Mantl, 1992).

in the city (Pliger, 2021, p. 47). In line with this magazine article, the *Sommerfrische* people still form an exclusive upper-class group: holidaying in this resort they continuously visit each other, networking and promoting family and business relations, although they now spend shorter periods of time in the village than their ancestors, gathering in Maria Himmelfahrt-Oberbozen, as cosmopolitans from Vienna, Paris, London, New York, etc., just for a few weeks during the summer.

2.2 The New Visitors and Dwellers

Between the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the “discovery” of the Dolomites (Gilbert & Churchill, 1864) as a holiday place for mountain walking and trekking brought to Oberbozen, as well as to other villages on the Ritten plateau, several upper-class visitors, and tourists especially from Vienna, Zurich, Berlin, and other European cities. Probably the most famous among them is Sigmund Freud who holidayed in Klobenstein, where he wrote part of the texts collected in his book *Totem and Taboo*, published in 1913 (McGuire, 1974, pp. 436–442).

In this period, also thanks to the new railway, new hotels and new *Sommerfrischhäuser* were built, especially for the new urban bourgeoisie from Bolzano, also by transforming older local buildings such as haylofts and peasant houses, combining traditional aesthetics and the new modernistic style of the Arts and Crafts movement, such as in the works by the architectural firm from Bozen Amonn & Fingerle, including architects Marius Amonn, his wife Hedwig Amonn-Fröhner, and August Fingerle. In Oberbozen, they designed and built Villa Emil Amonn in 1911, which Marius made for his brother Emil, the Gloriette for Walther Amonn in 1918–1920, the cemetery in Maria Himmelfahrt, Villa Staffler in 1929 and the Holzner Café in 1931, near the Villa Malinowski (Mayr-Fingerle & Mascotti, 1985; Mayr-Fingerle & Mayr, 2019). Marius Amonn (1879–1944) also worked on the extension of his family house, Villa Marienheim, in Gries, which had been built by the German architect Sebastian Altmann, who also had planned a new neighbourhood in the ancient city of Bozen in 1875 (Obermaier, 2009, p. 24). In 1928, the Malinowskis rented a flat in this villa and, as highlighted by Malinowska Wayne (1995b, pp. 124, 248), the owner of the Villa, Mrs. Amonn, became one of their friends.

3. The Malinowskis' Apartments in Gries, Bozen

Although very close to Bozen, the village of Gries had been an autonomous municipality until 1925, when it was attached to the main city. In the first half of the 19th century, since the Aufschneiter family had built a villa to host foreign well-to-do people, followed by other local owners who opened new exclusive auberges (Malfér, cit. in Tiefenbrunner, 2008, p. 25), Gries rapidly became a health resort where the aristocracy from the Hapsburg Empire and beyond gathered to enjoy the warm climate, the mountain landscape, and a new offer of health treatments. To improve this trend, a local spa committee was founded in 1850s to raise funds and provide the village with a new infrastructure, such as a proper road, a spa hotel, promenades along the vineyards, and gardens with both local and exotic plants, making it more attractive for upper-class tourists and promoting it as a *Kurort*-spa town through advertisements and publicity throughout Central Europe. In the second half of the 19th century, several affluent foreign visitors started building their own holiday residences in Gries and investing there in building hotels and spa. Amongst the new villas built in this period, there are the two in which the Malinowskis rented a flat some years later: villa Elisabeth (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 78, 86), where the Malinowski family lived from 1926, and Villa Marienheim, where they lived from 1928 (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 115, 119, 124–125). Villa Elisabeth (in via E. di Savoia) was built in 1896 by architect Josef Jrschara in the garden of the Pension (Villa) Bellevue, a “luxury hotel” owned by Elisabeth Überbacher¹⁹ (Malfér, as cited in Tiefenbrunner, 2008, p. 27)²⁰. Villa Marienheim (in via della Torre) was built in 1875 and renovated in 1885 by the architect and owner Sebastian Altmann²¹. The Villa belonged to Altmann’s heirs

19 She is named Else Überbacher in the building plan of the villa, in the Bauakten, Stadtarchiv Bozen (p. ed. 505, Gries, b 5, fasc. 47, prat. 2, n. 474/1895), whereas in the „Häuserverzeichnis der Marktgemeinde Gries“ 1901 (1905, pp. 26–27) she is named Elisabeth Überbacher.

20 Both a historical photo and a recent one of Villa Elisabeth could be found in Tiefenbrunner, 2008, pp. 140–141.

21 „Plan für den Umbau der Villa Marienheim“ (1885). Stadtarchiv Bozen. Altmann Sebastian, p. ed. 131, Gries, b 4, fasc. 36, prat. 2, n. 1/1885.

until Emil Amonn bought it in 1911 and asked his brother Marius to extend it²² in 1912²³.

Although, after the First World War and the annexation of South Tyrol to the Italian Kingdom, Gries lost most of its aristocratic visitors and some of the spa hotels converted into bourgeoisie residences, it maintained several aspects of a winter spa town, such as the presence of private clinics, holiday residences and promenades which are still in use, such as the Guncina promenade.

4. The Malinowskis' Network in Oberbozen and Bozen

In a newspaper note on the symposium organized in 1993 in Lengmoos to celebrate the memory of Bronislaw Malinowski in Oberbozen, Helena Malinowska Wayne recalled that her parents made friends in Oberbozen and in the little neighbourhood of Maria Himmelfahrt, as did she and her sisters, as children. When they were children, she recalled, they used to play with the children of their neighbours and would take part in the religious procession on August 15 every year, dressed in white according to the local code, despite their non-believer parents.²⁴ As reported in the newspaper interview, according to Malinowska Wayne, her mother Elsie Masson considered Oberbozen to be the very family's centre and her first true home.

Immediately after the move to Oberbozen, Masson was able to build relationships with the local inhabitants of the same upper-class and intellectual middle-class, although she also seems to have criticized some aspects of this social environment. Referring to 1925, Malinowska Wayne underlined that "Elsie had by now build up a social life with friends both local and foreign, predominantly women, a life she described as one of "aimless amiabilities and un-amiabilities" (Wayne, 1995b, p. 48).

22 Stadtarchiv Bozen. Amonn Emil, p. ed. 131, Gries, b 17, fasc. 63, prat. 44, n. 2719/1912. Anbau.

23 Both a historical and a recent photo of Villa Marienheim can be found in Tiefenbrunner, 2008, pp. 117-118. More historical photos of Villa Marienheim are published in Faustini 1981, p. 115.

24 "Bronio und Elsie fanden Freunde in Oberbozen und Maria Himmelfahrt, die Kinder fänden [sic] die ihren, nahmen auch an kleinen Spielen in Himmelfahrt teil und gingen trotz ihrer nichtreligiösen Eltern in korrekten weißen Kleidchen bei den Festprozessionen des Jahreslaufs mit". (*Dolomiten*, 27 November, 1993, p. 9).

As reported by Helena Malinowska, when Elsie went to Feldthurns, near Klausen-Chiusa, along the Eisack-Isarco Valley, together with her daughters to visit the family of her maid, Maria, at the end of February 1925, she “contrasted the place favourably with Oberbozen which had, since the arrival of the cog railway, become something of a tourist resort”. Writing to her husband on this excursion, she recalled the perplexities shown by their upper-class neighbours regarding her purpose of visiting her maid’s family in a peasant farm: “Of course the Oberboznern and Boznern think I am simply mad to come here but it is a madness you would share, I am sure.” (Masson, from Gasthaus Oberwirt, Feldthurns bei Klausen, 24/02/1925, Wayne, 1995b, p. 39, underlining by the author). The generous hospitality and the simple and pleasant manners of the local people in the rural village reminded her of those of the Australian peasants she had appreciated in her youth: “Maria’s family spread us each a slice of bread with thick butter in the nice, simple way that Australian farm people would do...” (Masson, from Gasthaus Oberwirt, Feldthurns bei Klausen, 28/02/1925, Wayne, 1995b, p. 40).

Some months later, she warmly and explicitly stressed her feeling of sympathy toward her domestic helpers Maria Dorfmann²⁵ and Theresa, as well as toward Franz, Maria’s fiancé, asking Bronio to bring them some presents from London: “They are all three awfully nice and decent, and lay the family interest to heart and I feel are the only people I care a damn about in O.B.” (Masson from Oberbozen on 18 June 1925, Wayne, 1995b, p. 45).

Two years later, Elsie organized another excursion with the two elder children to visit their former maid Anna, married von Feckel, in Birchabruck-Ponte Nova, a little village in the Eggental-Val d’Ega Valley. They stayed in the house of Anna as special guests and visited the peasant farm of Anna’s mother. Elsie reported enthusiastically on this experience, highlighting the warm attention they received and the intimacy of the whole situation:

Anna seems to have a very tender feeling for us and all Oberbozen. She gave us an enormous and very well cooked meal in her little kitchen and that night we slept in the best bedroom. In the evening, which was moonlit and smelt deliciously of evergreens and hay and river, we visited the old peasant mother in a picturesque

25 *Bronislaw Malinowski papers* (MS19, Box 32), Yale University Library, CT, United States.

farmhouse overhanging the Eggentaler Bach [stream] ... Von Feckel himself comes from an old peasant Stamm [clan] which has been in that neighbourhood since 1500. (Masson, from Gries, June 8, 1927, in Wayne, 1995b, p. 94)

Bronio replied highlighting his disagreement with these practices of “fraternizing with peasants” (Wayne, 1995b, p. 95), and Elsie had to clarify that social distance was anyway maintained. It seems he was much more concerned with social distinction than she was, as appears from a letter he wrote to her in 1929, saying he prevented their daughter Józefa, who had left Oberbozen that year to attend school in England, from writing letters to the maids of Villa Malinowski (Wayne, 1995b, p. 136)²⁶. Malinowski, it seems, had confidence in Anton Friedl, the owner of the Hofer Hotel in Oberbozen (Bronislaw Malinowski papers [MS 19]).

Elsie also established good relations with the neighbours of Villa Malinowski, such as the Eccel family, and Luise and Hans Pattis, who rented out rooms to tourists. They visited and supported each other, such as when Elsie, who was supposed to move to Gries together with the children at the beginning of October 1927, had to remain in Oberbozen due to a sudden sickness. While she stayed at the Villa in Oberbozen with her younger daughter, Helena, and the maid, Maria, assisted by the local doctor, Dr. Kuhn, (Wayne, 1995b, p. 97), the elder children, Józefa and Wanda, were sent to Bozen to attend school, in the company of the governess, Paula Tomasi, a relation of the Pattises, previously involved in hotel management (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 153–154). When the children went back to Oberbozen, Frau Pattis also took care of them.²⁷ These forms of support, as well as visits amongst neighbours in Oberbozen were frequent. Even the night before Masson was eventually able to move to Gries in October 1927, she invited the Eccels to her home, whose children used to play popular music in front of the door during summer, thereby disturbing Malinowski’s work, as she recalled to her husband with

26 “J. [Józefa] told me about the letters she wrote to you and Maria, and I warned her not to write to Pepi and Mitzi [the other maids] any more. In a way I appreciate her general democratic kindness, in another, I would like her to get to realize social distinctions and distances early ...” (Malinowski from London, February 1, 1929 in Wayne 1995b, p. 136).

27 “The children and Fril. Paula were here ... Of course, once they had greeted me and shown me their school books they had not much to tell me, and are now off to have their supper with Frau Pattis. ...They began Italian yesterday...” (Masson from Oberbozen, October 5, 1927, in Wayne, 1995b, p. 99).

both fun and nostalgia (Wayne, 1995b, p. 247)²⁸. In the summer of the previous year, in 1926, Elsie had written to Bronio about these “musical efforts of all Oberbozen” (Wayne, 1995b, p. 77), likely referring to the new foundation of the village *Musikkappelle*, the music band²⁹.

It was in that year, 1926, during the summer, that the Malinowskis made the decision to move down to Bozen and rent a flat in Villa Elisabeth, in Gries, for the winter, also because Elsie had manifested symptoms of illness since the birth of her third daughter in 1925. Then from October 1926 they started living in Gries. The elder daughters began learning German; Jósefa took private lessons, whereas Wanda was sent to a German kindergarten, one of the so-called *Katakombenschulen* of that time, since the teaching of the German language had been forbidden by the Fascists (Wayne, 1995b, p. 86). Fräulein Rosa Rudolf, Wanda’s German teacher, became an acquaintance of the Malinowskis.³⁰ They also remained in touch with “Tante” (Aunt) Käte Helm, who was also a teacher in Gries (Wayne, 1995b, p. 177).

Despite her love for her little home in Oberbozen, Elsie seemed to have enjoyed life in Bozen-Gries too, as she reported in her letter to Malinowski, in which she gave the following description of the pleasant atmosphere in the neighbourhood.³¹

I am writing now on the balcony...The sun is just over Kohlern, the Rosengarten begins to glow slightly, the air is warm, still and mellow, the deep-toned bell of Gries cloister is giving tongue. It is really marvellous here; on the balcony I think of your pleasure in it ... The children are very amused with life and so easy to manage. (Masson from Gries, October 11, 1927, in Wayne, 1995b, p. 101)

28 In her letter to the husband, Masson nostalgically writes: “The last night in our little home for a good long time! how I love it. When the last remaining Eccel plays ‘Rum-tum-tum-tum-tiddy-tum-tum’ I could have tears in my eyes for the ghost of our summer together. So a last goodnight from Oberbozen, my beloved” (October 7, 1927, in Wayne, 1995b, p. 100).

29 See the website of the *Musikkappelle Oberbozen*: <http://www.mk-oberbozen.it/de/geschichte.htm>

30 For instance, in 1927 she lent Elsie a book, *Goethes Liebesleben*, which then Elsie discussed with Bronio by mail (Wayne, 1995b, p. 92).

31 Although a few days later, after having returned to Gries from a visit to Oberbozen, Masson confessed: “I had a curious feeling as I went about deserted Oberbozen: ‘What have I to do in this forlorn little place perched on the top of a mountain that has nothing whatever to do with me, my past, my real life?’” (Wayne, 1995b, p. 107).

In October 1927, Elsie started a new treatment of electric baths at the Grieserhof, the clinic of Dr. Fritz Rössler, who had already attended her in 1925 for an eye problem, after her third child's birth (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 45–46). She felt attracted to him as her correspondence with Bronio, based on an agreement of reciprocal openness, shows, although she was disappointed quite early (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 104, 105). In a letter written from Gries in November 1927, Elsie told Bronio about Dr. Rössler.

We have quite cultured talks from time to time ... and he makes the impression of a non-Boznerisch person, with aspirations to a wider culture. At other times ... I have the feeling that he resents the war and its consequences with a deeply beleidigt [offended] bitterness. (Masson from Gries, November 15, 1927, in Wayne, 1995b, p. 108)

In 1927–1928, the Malinowskis gathered in Gries for a winter holiday, then Elsie went to London with Bronio until March 1928 for a complete medical examination, which was when her illness was diagnosed as multiple sclerosis (Wayne, 1995b, p. 110). In March and April Bronio was back in Gries and helped Elsie to find a new flat, choosing one in Villa Marienheim, on the ground floor and with a terrace, which could be more comfortable for Elsie's worsening health conditions (Wayne, 1995b, p. 115). The family moved to Villa Marienheim in June 1928, then Elsie went to London for medical treatment and came back to Oberbozen and Bozen to continue the treatment with Dr. Rössler at the Grieserhof. It seems that Elsie enjoyed her time in Villa Marienheim, where she made new friends, such as Frau Amonn (Wayne, 1995b, p. 124) and Frau Weidenhaus (Wayne, 1995b, p. 154). Helena Malinowska wrote that when Bronio decided to buy a house in London, to gather all the family there, as Jósefa too had been in England since January 1929 to attend a boarding school, Elsie "gave up the flat in Villa Marienheim with regret" (Wayne, 1995b, p. 146).

In June 1929, Bronio bought a house in Oppidans Road 6, in Primrose Hill, Hampstead, near Regent Park, in London, thanks to the financial support of some friends, amongst them Paul Khuner and Helen Sexton (Wayne, 1995b, p. 146). For the summer he went to Bozen and up to Oberbozen, while Elsie remained in Gries to complete her treatment. The Malinowski family moved to

London in early October 1929. They employed Fräulein Paula Tomasi to accompany them, whereas Maria eventually decided to not move to London. At that time, Elsie started needing to use a wheelchair. Nevertheless, as Helena Malinowska put it, “her London life was busy with friends and activities” (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 146–147).

The Malinowskis’ Visitors in Oberbozen and Bozen

The Malinowskis used to receive many visitors, above all in the summer periods, and amongst them there were relatives, friends, colleagues, and many of Malinowski’s students. I will retrace these visits following Wayne’s reconstruction (Wayne, 1995b).

In the summer 1923 Paul Khuner’s visit was decisive for the purchase of the Villa Malinowski (Wayne, 1995b, p. 29). The next summer, in 1924, Orme Masson and Mary Stuthers, Elsie’s parents, visited the family in Oberbozen (Selleck, 2013, pp. 290–291; Wayne, 1995b, p. 31). In the previously mentioned newspaper article on the symposium in 1993, Helena Malinowska Wayne recalled her grandparents’ visit to Oberbozen, saying that her grandfather, Orme Masson, had bought a travel guide of the Dolomites there, which was then passed down to her, and in which, as a word game, he nicknamed his grandchildren Jósefa and Wanda, Helena’s elder sisters, “the Dollymites”.

In the winter of 1925 Elsie received a visit from Doretta Wilson, the niece of a London friend, with her family, and a visit from Doris Gaggin, an old friend of Elsie’s from the Melbourne Hospital where they trained and worked together as nurses (Wayne, 1995b, p. 36). That same year, in March, Raymond Firth, Malinowski’s student and later his assistant and successor at the LSE, came to Oberbozen together with a friend from New Zealand, staying at the parish house in Maria Himmelfahrt (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 38, 41). In the spring of 1925 Helen Sexton, an Australian family friend and a medical doctor who was living in Europe, arrived to help Elsie with her third childbirth in May 1925 in Bolzano, together with Elsie’s aunt Lucy (Wayne, 1995b, p. 42). In the summer of 1925, other friends, such as the Khuners, Malinowski’s students and colleagues came to Oberbozen to visit the family (Wayne, 1995b, p. 48).

The Malinowskis also used to visit their friends around Europe. In autumn 1925, Masson went to Vienna with her two elder daughters until the

second half of December to receive medical treatments. There, she socialised with the Khuners and the Buschs and visited Aunt Lucy who was living in Vienna at that time (Wayne, 1995, p. 48).

In June 1926, a family friend from North Germany, Gräfin Asta Münster, who was in South Tyrol for improve her health, came to Oberbozen to visit Elsie, and lived in Villa Malinowski for a month (Wayne, 1995b, p. 76). Elsie's Aunt Lucy and Aunt Tina came from Edinburgh to visit their niece in that period, staying at a guesthouse in Oberbozen, until Aunt Tina became ill and had to move to Villa Malinowski, as described with a certain amount of humour by Elsie.

There was a very funny scene when she (Aunt Lucy) had to be brought here. Franz and Karl Ramoser [heir to a large farm] came direct from Fronleichnam procession [Corpus Christi] in full Tracht [costume] and carried her up the road on a rigged-up stretcher with Aunt Tina in her full black following behind and myself carrying a flask of brandy and medicine glass following in the rear. It looked like the tattered remnants of the real procession Madonna della Sedia and caused some astonishment among the passerby... (Masson from Oberbozen, June 6, 1926, in Wayne 1995b, p. 76)

In the summer of 1926, Raymond Firth visited the Malinowskis again, as did Hortense Powdermaker, a student of Malinowski's, since the beginning of September (Wayne, 1995b, p. 77).

After the winter holiday 1926–27, Elsie went to London together with Bronio from the middle of January to the end of February 1927, whereas her friend Asta Münster stayed in Oberbozen to look after the Malinowski children (Wayne, 1995b, p. 89). In the spring and summer of 1928, family friend Dr. Helen Sexton visited Elsie from Florence (Wayne, 1995b, p. 123).

During the winter holidays in 1928, Bronio came to Bozen from London together with a friend, Dr. Paul Wilkinson (Wayne, 1995b, p. 127). In January 1929 he went to London again together with his eldest daughter Józefa, who had to start attending school in England (Wayne, 1995b, p. 128). In late February, Elsie's Australian friend Doris Gaggin visited her for a second time, and even accompanied her to Innsbruck for a medical treatment (Wayne, 1995b, p. 137) and then back to Bozen, to Villa Marienheim (Wayne, 1995, p. 142).

In July 1930, once again in her house in Oberbozen, Elsie wrote to Bronio about her feelings of being at home at Villa Malinowski in Oberbozen: "I have such a feeling of relief and joy to be in my own house, and in this little one, so perfect from my point of view" (Masson from Oberbozen, July 8, 1930 in Wayne, 1995b, p. 155). In that summer 1930, Bronio arrived in Oberbozen via Vienna together with Paul and Hede Khuner at the end of July 1930. Then, in August 1930, Edith Clark, Bronio's research assistant from Jamaica, Doris Gaggin, and Lucy Mair, Bronio's student at the LSE, also came to Oberbozen on holiday (Wayne, 1995b, p. 156).

The Malinowskis came back to Oberbozen the next year (1931) for the summer vacations, when Bronio worked on his volume *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*, eventually published in 1935 (Malinowski, 1935), together with his research assistant Edith Clark and his Polish student Józef Obrębski, before the family moved to Tamaris in Southern France for Bronio's sabbatical year 1931–1932 (Wayne, 1995b, p. 159).

In February 1932, Fräulein Rosa Decall from Austria joined the Malinowskis in Tamaris "to be Elsie's companion and to help with the children" (Wayne 1995, p. 161) as a governess, on the recommendation of a friend. She and Elsie matched very well as Elsie wrote to her sister Marnie: "she (Rosa) is the most devoted creature (...) [there is] material for a life-long family friend in her" (Masson, November 2, 1932, in Selleck, 2013, p. 321). Rosa accompanied Elsie in the following years, supporting her in managing the house in London, as well as assisting her when travelling to visit spas and medical doctors for treatments in Germany, the Czech Republic, and Austria. In the last years of Elsie's life, due to the severe worsening of her health conditions, Rosa also helped her to write letters to Bronio and to the family, which Elsie dictated to her in English (Selleck, 2013, Wayne, 1995b). In a letter Rosa sent to Elsie's parents, after Elsie's death, Rosa wrote: "...She was my best friend and we got so used to each other..." (Rosa Decall to Mary Masson on November 15, 1935, Selleck, 2013, p. 329).

In late May 1933, after Bronio had come back from the USA³², Elsie and Rosa went from London to Bad Oeynhausen, a spa in Northwestern Germany, for a month, although Elsie did not like going to Germany since she was

32 From late February 1933 to April 1933, Malinowski was in the USA for the second time to lecture in different universities in New York and Chicago (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 165–166).

very critical of Nazism (Wayne, 1995b, p. 169). From there, Elsie and Rosa went to meet Bronio in Brussels, where he had travelled to attend a conference, and came back to London together, from where they moved to Oberbozen for the summer in July 1933. This was the last time Elsie lived in Villa Malinowski. Two of Malinowski's students visited the family on that occasion, Sjoerd Hofstra from Holland and Günter Wagner from Germany, who stayed at the priest's house in Maria Himmelfahrt. During this vacation, Elsie became ill and had to go to Leipzig for treatment (Wayne, 1995b, p. 176). On September 29, 1933, Bronio wrote to her from their beloved house in Oberbozen for Elsie's 43rd birthday:

This is a very sad birthday which I am celebrating in lonely autumnal weather and atmosphere, without you and with the thought of you all the time. I am using your room a great deal – I sleep with the door open and your window and balcony door also open. In the morning I have my breakfast in your room, at your bed and think of the many lovely mornings when we used to look at the landscape together.
(Malinowski from Oberbozen, September 29, 1933, in Wayne, 1995b, pp. 177–178)

From September 1933, the Malinowskis lent the Villa in Oberbozen to Otto Schulzinger, a businessman from Bolzano, and his wife, until the next summer (Wayne, 1995b, p. 179, p. 250). In the meantime, the Malinowskis realized that it would have been impossible for Elsie to move again to Oberbozen for a holiday, due to the severe worsening of her health conditions and the many difficulties associated with the trip, as well as the lack of easily accessible medical help on the Ritten plateau (Wayne, 1995b, p. 187). As the Malinowskis were unable to spend any time in Oberbozen in the summers of 1934 and 1935, the Schulzingers rented Villa Malinowski, and they continued to do so in the following years, and even during the Second World War, apart from the summers of 1937 and 1938, when the Malinowski family, after Elsie's death went to Oberbozen (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 190, 251). The Malinowskis also had a lawyer in Bolzano, Anton Kinsele, who took care of the family interests there (Bronislaw Malinowski papers [MS 19]; Wayne, 1995b, p. 219).

For the summer vacations in 1934, Rosa suggested the village of Natters near Innsbruck as a holiday place (Wayne, 1995b, p. 187).

In May 1935, Elsie and Rosa went to St. Joachimsthal, a spa in the Czech Republic, stopping in Vienna for a day, where Elsie's friends came to visit her. They were Hede Khuner with her daughter Hilda, (Paul had died in November 1932), Hans and Berta Bush, Mim Weingall and her husband Hans Pollak. The Malinowski family gathered again in Natters in summer 1935, until Elsie died in September 1935, assisted by Rosa and Bronio (Wayne, 1995b, p. 236).

Villa Malinowski in Oberbozen was confiscated by the Fascists in 1940, which was also reported by the local newspaper³³, as the Malinowskis were of English nationality since July 1931 (Wayne, 1995b, p. 159). The house was administrated by a bank during the war and given back to the Malinowskis' daughters after the war (Wayne, 1995b, p. 242).

5. A Story Within a Troubled History

Living in Oberbozen and Bozen in the 1920s, Elsie Masson witnessed the politics of Fascism in South Tyrol and their dramatic consequences for minority groups (Gatterer, 1968/1999) on the local population.³⁴ Being close to the German speaking upper and middle class, as well as the peasant people who worked for the family in Oberbozen and in the neighbourhood Gries in Bozen, she, as well as her husband, sympathized with them and condemned the promotion of a "forced Italianization" of the region by the new regime.³⁵ After the First World War and the St. Germain treaty, South Tyrol, which had belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the war, was given to the Italian Kingdom, despite the majority of its inhabitants being German-speaking Tyroleans. Before the rise of Fascism and the rise to power of Benito Mussolini, the previous Italian government had left the ruling of this region in

33 *Dolomiten*, 1940, March 8, p. 3.

34 The fragments of the letters that Masson wrote to Malinowski in the 1920s and 1930s on the political situation and the abuses of Fascism in the South Tyrol, reported in this article, have been selected by the MFEA from Wayne's book and also publicly read (through reading recording) and presented together with pictures of Bolzano in the fascist period, taken from the City Archive, in an audio-visual installation produced by the researchers of the ABC collective at the Faculty of Design and Art of the Free University of Bolzano, with the scientific supervision of the MFEA, during the "Long night of research" in September 2019.

35 During the Fascist regime, not only the German-speaking Tyroleans, but also other local minorities have been subjected of discrimination and terrible violence, such as in the case the Sinti and Roma people (Tauber, 2005).

the hands of the local Tyrolean administrators, and was not concerned about the people speaking German and the local dialect, nor the running of German schools and the German-language press (Di Michele, 2003; Gatterer, (1968/1999); Steininger, 2019).

In an article she wrote for an Australian magazine, entitled "Viva il Fascio! Black Shirts at Bolzano", Elsie Masson (1923) described her first encounter with a Fascist in Bozen, underlining the new political attitude of the regime in comparison with the previous Italian government.

My first sight of a flesh-and-blood Fascista was on autumn evening in the little Tyrolean town of Bozen, or Bolzano, as the young Black Shirt himself would certainly insist on my calling it. Bozen, once a proud part of the Austrian Tyrol, but, since the Treaty of Versailles, torn off from its motherland and given over to Italy, to the helpless indignation of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, the Italian rule has so far not lain heavy upon it. German is freely spoken ... But the Italian Government was one thing and the Fascio another. ... When I returned three weeks later to Bolzano (Bozen) things had gone much further. The Fascisti had seized the municipality, dissatisfied with the not sufficiently Italian way things were being carried on. ... The statue of Walther von der Vogelweide, the famous Tyrolean Minnesänger, which looks down, inartistic and stiff, but not without a certain simple dignity, on the main place of Bozen, the Walther Platz, had two flags of red, white and green, thrust impudently through the passive arms. ... Within a week came the Coup d'Etat, the proclamation of martial law, its withdrawal and the triumph of Mussolini.

Writing to her husband from Oberbozen, she reported on the censorship of the Italian newspapers (Wayne, 1995b, p. 46) and the new law which forbade any open and public criticism of Mussolini in 1925 (Wayne 1995b, p. 51). In a letter Elsie Masson addressed to her husband from Villa Elisabeth in Gries between late October and early November 1926, she gave a picture of the situation, underlining the new celebrations introduced by the Fascists as a form of propaganda, the censorship of the local press, the restrictions on passports, and also the worry of their friends about the general situation (Wayne 1995b, p. 86).

In 1927 she continued observing the transformations imposed by Fascism,

highlighting how much the prohibition of the teaching of the German language impacted negatively on the local people, and above all on the peasantry.³⁶ She also provided her husband with description of the new activities promoted by the regime, such as the sport events at the new stadium in Bozen:

The *Turnhalle* [sports hall] was beset by *balilla* [Fascist youth movement] who lined the path to the door. There was a large crowd of officials at one end of the hall and various groups under their different masters performed before them. Every performance opened of course with the 'Roman greeting' [Fascist salute]. The *balilla* girls looked charming, like an operetta chorus, in their costume of white blouse with black tie, short black bloomers and white shoes. Outside they wear a dashing cap and cape, also black. But their gymnastics, under an Italian mistress, were footling ...

Every day the papers – obviously directly inspired – seem to be setting to work to inflame public feeling against Jugo-Slavia and set things in the direction of war. Is it possible to be so foolish nowadays? People here say it's the only way out for the Govt. in view of the amount of people out of work and general discontent. But what a way. Well, I know you hate me to talk politics to you ... (Masson from Gries, November 25, 1927 in Wayne, 1995b, p. 109)

During her visits to different spas in Austria and Germany, Elsie wrote to Bronio on the abuses of Nazism, describing military parades, censorship in Germany, and the discrimination against Jewish people, including a brilliant medical doctor who attended her (Wayne, 1995b, pp. 172, 174, 176, 179, 181, 191, 192, 193).

From Natters, where she spent her last year, she reported to her husband about the news from Bozen she had gleaned from the press, feeling very depressed not only due to her illness but also due to the dramatic historical period they were involved in.³⁷

36 "It is pathetic how everyone begins at once to speak about the schools and tells how even the smallest amount of private schooling in the mother tongue is forbidden – there is no doubt that step has touched the peasantry as no other would have done" (Masson from Gries, June 8, 1927 in Wayne, 1995b, pp. 94–95).

37 "The papers just now are so depressing I simply don't want to look at them. It seems to me war is absolutely inevitable within a few years – and it all depends on where you happen to be whether you are caught by it or not. Let us hope it coincides with your next sabbatical

The Italians have now taken away the statue of Walther von der Vogelweide [the great medieval Minnesinger, native of Tirol] from Walterplatz in Bozen... they are moving it to the corner of via Roma and via Dante which is far down beyond the courthouse, known to me from the times I had to go there about my dogs, and is a spot where no foreigners ever go and few Boznern. ... I feel I never want to go back to Bozen again. That statue is associated with our earliest time there when we used to go down from Oberbozen early and have breakfast at the Stadt Café. (Masson from Natters, March 18, 1935 in Wayne, 1995b, p. 222)

Through the published letters, it is possible to learn much more from Masson on the political situation in South Tyrol under Fascism than from Malinowski, because it was she who was living there, being in close contact and empathizing with the local people. These letters also show the asymmetrical gender relation within the Malinowski couple, as highlighted in previous articles (Salvucci, 2021; Salvucci et al., 2019): he was the university professor who travelled throughout Europe, USA and Africa, giving lectures and meeting colleagues, students and audience, while visiting his family only a few months a year. She was “the wife”, who, although very intelligent, educated and also very “liberated” for the time, stayed at home, in charge of the children and the servants, socializing with the neighbours.

However, Malinowski too strongly condemned the violence and the danger of Fascism and Nazism in his last work, published post-mortem (Malinowski, 1944), and in his public conferences (Stone 2003). In the late 1930s he was also attacked within the Fascist Italian press for his support of the Jewish cause, as highlighted by his student, anthropologist Felix Gross.

During the interwar period, he strongly opposed any form of totalitarianism. In the Italian fascist press he had an honorable place next to Freud, Hirschfeld, and others as a corruptor of youth. I remember there was an article in 1938 in the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* by professor Cipriano Crispi entitled “Il Problema del Semitismo” in which Malinowski was very strongly attacked as a Jewish corruptor of society. The same charge, if I recall, appeared in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, a Fascist newspaper (on the right side in italics you could find short editorials by Mussolini). (Gross, 1986, pp. 562–563)

leave and that we can go away and spend it on some very unimportant island” (Masson from Natters, March 20, 1935 in Wayne, 1995b, p. 222).

After he had moved to the USA together with his daughters, Malinowski continued to support his Jewish colleagues in Austria and Poland, as well as helping Jewish refugees in the USA (Gross, 1986), as many letters collected in the Yale archive demonstrate (Bronislaw Malinowski papers [MS 19]).

6. Conclusion

Referring mainly to the correspondence between Malinowski and Masson, published by Malinowska Wayne (1995b), this chapter has followed part of the Malinowskis' social relations in Oberbozen and Bozen, paying special attention to those involving Elsie Masson. She settled there while her husband was teaching in London and came back only for a few months a year for a holiday. According to Wayne (1995b) and Selleck (2013), Masson was active in the local socio-cultural environment, relating with her neighbours, such as the Pattises and the Eccels, the local inhabitants as the Ramoser peasant family, the domestic helpers, Anna and Maria and their families, the children's teacher Fäulein Rosa Rudolf, the medical Dr. Fritz Rössler (from when the symptoms of Masson's illness appeared), the owners of the rented flats in Bozen, such as Frau Amonn, and later also Fräulein Rosa Decall from Austria, Elsie's companion and nurse from 1932, among others.

Moreover, the story of the Malinowski family in Oberbozen and Bozen includes many of their relatives and friends, and even colleagues and students, who used to be connected to them, visiting them, and supporting them in several ways. In the 1920s and 1930, Villa Malinowski in Oberbozen became a meeting place for a wider network of cosmopolitan friends and relatives living in various other countries, being part of that culture of cosmopolitanism in the Alps, which has been developing since the second half of the 19th century. Amongst the Malinowskis' visitors there were many of Malinowski's students, some of whom later became protagonists within the discipline, such as Raymond Firth, Lucy Mair, Hortense Powdermaker, Audrey Richards, Isaac Shapera, amongst other. The houses in which the Malinowskis lived in South Tyrol acted as connection points between the family, its international social network, and the local society, which above all Elsie Masson was able to experience and even describe in her letters to her husbands (Wayne, 1995b) and her parents (Selleck, 2013).

Following the footsteps of the Malinowski family in Oberbozen and Bozen, and their social connections at both the local and the international level, contribute to highlight those aspects of the history of the anthropology connected to biographic trajectories, social networks, and local settings, in line with a biographical and relational theoretical framework (Carsten et al., 2018; Lohmann, 2008; Salvucci et al. 2019; Strathern, 2018). Moreover, although Malinowski and his students did not study society and cultures in South Tyrol (Cole 1977), and a specific alpine anthropology only started after the Second World War (Cole & Wolf 1974; Viazzo, 1989; Viazzo & Zanini 2022), their presence there influenced other scholars, such as in the case of Lucie Varga, who carried out an historic and ethnographic research in a Vorarlberg Valley, supported by Malinowski (Varga, 1936).

Finally, tracing the presence of the Malinowskis in Oberbozen and Bozen in the 1920s–1930s and recovering their comments on the local situation could help to reinforce the documentation of a dramatic historical period, looking at the history also through accounts of personal lives and family stories.

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