

NEW INSIGHTS INTO THE BIOGRAPHY AND SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND OF NICOLAS DALLY (1795-1862), FATHER OF KINESIOLOGY (1857)

Roland Renson

*Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy
Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Belgium*

Original scientific paper

UDC: 796.012:929 Dally, N."1795/1862

Abstract:

Kinesiology has recently gained more and more credibility as a proper academic denominator for the field, which has traditionally been labelled as physical education and more recently also as sport or exercise science. It seems therefore appropriate to shed more light on the biography of Nicolas Dally and his scientific background.

In collaboration with one of our students (Celis 1998), we have recently started to dig deeper into the rather obscure period of Dally's exile in Belgium from 1817 onwards until 1843. Some of these findings throw a new light on his complex personality and his wide ranging scientific interests.

It is amazing that, in this period from 1817 to 1843, we did not come across one single sign of evidence pointing to Dally's interest in gymnastics, physiotherapy or 'cinésiologie' as he would later entitle his magnum opus of 1857.

Neither do we have evidence that Dally had already collaborated with the French 'gymnasiarch' Henri Triat, during the latter's stay in Brussels, where he had opened a private gymnasium in 1841.

We intend to continue our investigation both on Triat and Dally and hope to be able to bring further clarification on this collaboration between a gymnasiarch and a kinesiologist.

Key words: Nicolas Dally, kinesiology, biography

NEUE EINSICHTEN IN DEN LEBENS LAUF UND DIE WISSENSCHAFTLICHE GRUNDLAGE VON NICOLAS DALLY (1795-1862), DEM VATER DER KINESIOLOGIE

Zusammenfassung:

Kinesiologie hat neulich mehr und mehr Zuversicht gewonnen, als akademischer Begriff für den Bereich, der traditionell als Körpererziehung und später auch Sport- oder Körperübungswissenschaft genannt wurde. Deswegen scheint es geeignet, die Biographie von Nicolas Dally sowie seine wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen besser darzustellen.

Im Zusammenarbeit mit einem von unseren Studenten (Celis (1998), haben wir neulich begonnen, in den ziemlich obskuren Zeitabschnitt Dallys Verbannung in Belgien, von 1817 bis 1843, tiefer einzugreifen. Einige dabei gefundene Daten zeigen seine komplexe Persönlichkeit und seine weitreichenden wissenschaftlichen Interessen im neuen Licht.

Es ist wundervoll, dass wir in diesem ganzen Zeitraum keinen einzigen Beweis Dallys Interesses für Gymnastik, Physiotherapie oder "cinésiologie", wie er später sein Meisterwerk aus 1857 betitelte, finden konnten. Ebenso haben wir keinen Beweis dafür, dass Dally mit dem französischen "gymnasiarch" Henri Triat, zur Zeit dessen Aufenthalts in Brüssel, wo er 1841 ein Privatgymnasium öffnete, bereits zusammengearbeitet hat.

Wir beabsichtigen, unsere Untersuchung über Dally sowie Triat fortzusetzen und hoffen, weitere Erklärungen der Zusammenarbeit von dem "gymnasiarch" und dem Kinesiologen zu ermöglichen.

Schlüsselwörter: Nicolas Dally, Kinesiologie, Biographie

Introduction: the name of "our father"

Nicolas Dally (1795-1862) published *Cinésiologie ou science du mouvement* in Paris in 1857. He defined *kinesiology* as:

"...the science of human movement in its relation with education, hygiene and therapy" (Dally 1857: III).

Kinesiology has recently gained more and more credibility as a proper academic denominator for the field, which has traditionally been labelled as physical education and more

recently also as sport or exercise science. It seems therefore appropriate to shed more light on the biography of Nicolas Dally and his scientific background. Some recent revelations on his eventful life - especially on his period of exile in Belgium - allow us to put the person and his oeuvre in a more precise historical and epistemological perspective.

Only scanty information is available on the life cycle of the father of kinesiology. Moreover the bits and pieces, which are found in encyclopedias (Dechambre 1880; Catalogue générale 1908; Hirsch 1962; D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965) are fragmentary and

often contradictory. Contributions on Dally in monographs (Demený 1909; Vigarello 1978; Andrieu 1981, 1988, 1992; Arnaud 1991; Laty 1996; Zoro 1986; Renson 1995) suffer from the same shortcomings.

Already in 1909 Georges Demený, the first real scientist in the physical education lineage of France, made the following statement:

“*Cinésiologie* is a mine of materials from which modern authors can still draw for a long time; this publication compensates its poor structure by its documentary richness; it offers a complete history of the question and presents a broad conception of the topic. He [Dally] links life science with all the other sciences and shows their mutual interrelations.

It is a miniature encyclopedia, which should be continued at present. It is surprising that such a publication, which is no longer available for some time, has not drawn more attention. It must have come well before its time like so many others” (Demený 1909: 104-105).

With the increasing interest in kinesiology, both as a concept and term, Dally's work seems to be ready for a revival. At the first International Scientific Conference on Kinesiology in Dubrovnik in 1997, Franjo Prot (1997) gave an interesting overall overview entitled ‘Nicolas Dally: life and work 1795-1865’. Prot justly stated that Dally's work cannot be reduced to mere biomechanics, but that it should encompass “... the exercising process in education, sports, recreation and kinesitherapy”.

In collaboration with one of our students (Celis 1998), we have recently started to dig deeper into the rather obscure period of Dally's exile in Belgium from 1817 onwards until 1843. Some of these findings throw a new light on his complex personality and his wide ranging scientific interests. I will therefore give a summary of these new biographic discoveries.

From Sampigny to Saint Petersburg and back (1795-1817)

Nicolas Dally was born as “...the son of Jacques Dally and Reine Collot on the 25th Vendémiaire of the IVth year in the municipality of Sampigny, in the District of St.-Mihiel, Département de la Meuse”. When we convert the French Republican Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar, then his birthday is Saturday the 17th of October 1795¹. We could check this information through a photocopy of the original birth certificate, which we received from the Archives Départementales in Bar-le-Duc. Sampigny is located between St.-Dizier and Metz, a few kilometers South of St.-Mihiel in the Département de Lorraine. The birth certificate shows that he was originally not named Nicolas but Claude, probably after his grandfather. Later, two other daughters Marie Jeanne Victorine and Catherine and one other son François were born in the Dally family.

At the moment of the marriage of his parents on the 12th December 1792, the first year of the French Republic, father Jacques Dally's profession was that of ‘charon principal’ (main cartwright), the same as his grandfather Claude, who was qualified as ‘cartwright’ tout court². However, at Nicolas Dally's birth, his father's profession had changed into “[.....] in the military transpo[rts]...”³.

With a lack of other primary sources we had to rely on secondary sources from encyclopedias to reconstruct the period of his youth and adolescence. Two sources mention that he studied at the Ecole de Santé Militaire. The *Dictionnaire encyclopédique* even states precisely that he studied medicine and obtained his ‘certificat’ (Dechambre 1880: 366). He then participated in Napoleon's Russian campaign as (medical) ‘aide’ or ‘sous-aide’ (Dechambre 1880; Hirsch 1962). Both Larousse (1870) and the *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (1965), mention, on the contrary, that he enlisted in the cavalry as

¹ Larousse (1870) as well as the *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965: 6) and Renson (1995) wrongly mention Pompigny instead of Sampigny as Dally's birthplace. Both the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales* (Dechambre 1880: 966) and the *Biographisches Lexikon* (Hirsch 1962: 171) speak of 1792, which actually was the date of his parents' marriage.

² Marriage certificate of 12 december 1792, received from the Archives of Bar-le-Duc.

³ Larousse (1870) contends that his father was a colonel in the corps of engineers.

warrant-officer [adjudant] in the 15th Dragoons. He was taken prisoner during the crossing of the Berezina river and remained two years in captivity (D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965: 5)⁴. Larousse (1870) specifies that he resided two years in Saint Petersburg, where "He did not miss any occasion to study and compare the characteristics of languages and races". He was released in 1815 and returned to France.

The next original document we could locate was the draft list of the class of 1815 of the municipality of Sampigny. Here our 'hero', who by then was 20 years of age, is listed under the name of Nicolas Dally, born in the municipality of Sampigny, Canton Pierrefitte, Département Meuse, on the 26th Vendémiaire of the IVth year 5, residing in the municipality of Dautrich, son of Jacques Dally and Reine Collot. Nicolas had been registered by his mother, who had indicated that his profession was that of 'écrivain' (writer) and that his father was an 'employé'.⁶

Further, our encyclopedia sources mention that he got involved in a political conspiracy in 1817, which is qualified as "... the ridiculous plot of the 'Epingles noires' (Black needles)"; He thus became persona-non-grata in France and he had to seek refuge in Belgium (D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965: 5).⁷

Exile in the United Netherlands (1817-1830)

Here again the available secondary sources are far from precise and they contradict each other. Larousse (1870) claims that he obtained several diplomas in arts and medicine. *The Dictionnaire de biographie française* mentions that during his stay in Belgium he first started medical studies, then opened a primary school which failed, and further that he:

"... published a whole series of publications of minor value, on the steam engine, on several aspects of linguistics, on the mores of the peoples of Asia" (D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965: 5).

Our search traced him back to the city of Tongeren, situated in the eastern most part of the Flemish (Dutch speaking Belgian) part of the United Netherlands⁸. According to the city archives Dally resided in Tongeren from 24th of August 1819 until 28th of August 1823.

He started his teaching career on August 24 1819 as master of the School for the Poor, situated in the former infirmary of the Begijnhof⁹. The same year 1819 on December 24, the city also opened a municipal College (Frère 1961) and Dally was most probably appointed as its director¹⁰. A city document (in French) of 29th August 1822, looking back at the school results of the former year, mentions Nicolas Dally as 'directeur-professeur'.¹¹ Another report of 3 July 1823 (in Dutch) refers to Nicolaas [sic] Dally as teacher-director of the municipal College. About one month later, on the 18th August 1823 he was seriously reprimanded by the members of the Public Education Committee in the following (French) terms:

"We are informed, Sir, with regret, that you make use for teaching the pupils, who were entrusted to you, of other classical books than the ones prescribed by the regulation. We invite you very seriously to adhere firmly to this regulation. We are confident that the present invitation will have its effect and that it will save us the unpleasant task to propose to the Council of this city more drastic measures."¹²

Personally, I am not as confident as the Tongeren Committee members that Dally was the kind of person to stick to the rule book,

⁴ According to the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique* (Dechambre 1880: 366) and the *Biographisches Lexikon* (Hirsch 1962: 171) he was prisoner of war in Moscow.

⁵ This document has confused the day of his registration in the birth register with his actual birthday, which was on the 25th Vendémiaire 1795.

⁶ The *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965: 5) claims that his father was 'colonel de génie' (colonel in the army engineers corps).

⁷ There have been several rumours and accusations of conspiracies in the post-Napoleon period.

⁸ From 1815 onwards, after Napoleon's defeat in Waterloo, until 1830, the Northern (now the Netherlands) and the Southern part (now Belgium) of the Low Countries were reunited into the Kingdom of the United Netherlands. In 1830 the Southern part split off and became the independent Kingdom of Belgium.

⁹ A Begijnhof is a typical Flemish social institution, which origin dates back to the 13th century. It consists of a city within the city, owned by a congregation of religious women. These 'Begijnen' took vows of chastity and obedience, but not of poverty.

¹⁰ A college is a secondary grammar school, where Latin and Greek are taught in combination with sciences.

¹¹ Instruction Publique 1819-27.

¹² Commission de l'Instruction publique 18 august 1823.

adopting the compulsory 'classical books'. Larousse (1870) states literally that:

"After his passage in the military, he did not show any sympathy for military obedience, which is sometimes decorated with the name of discipline".

Soon after this charge he must have left Tongeren and moved to Visé, which is situated only 16 km east of Tongeren and 12 km north of Liège. Visé is a small francophone town on the right bank of the Meuse river. Our research on Dally's residence in Visé was complicated by the fact that all municipal archives of Visé were destroyed during the First World War when the German army set fire to the whole town.

On the frontispiece of his 1826 publication *Essai de grammaire générale*, Dally is quoted as director of the boarding school and the institution [sic] of Visé. Dally stated that this was his very first essay. He had been inspired by the work of Lemare, which had fallen into his hands while he was himself doing some research on how to facilitate the learning of a particular grammar by analysing its structure and unraveling its logic. He claimed that he had obtained excellent results with this new method within twenty days to one month, even with very young pupils or pupils of only mediocre intelligence. He was of the opinion though that it was of little use to start learning a grammar before the age of 8, 9 or 10 years.

"While learning another language, one will no longer study another grammar, but only a derivation of a unique source, namely that of the general grammar."
(Dally 1826: preface)

Dally's approach now sounds very modern and reminds us of the structural linguistics of authors like Ferdinand de Saussure or Avram Noam Chomsky and others. We are unable here to go into further details on his grammar didactics, but we would like to draw the attention of linguists to Dally's work in order to judge its originality and validity.

All we could further find on Dally's stay in Visé was a citation of 31 December 1829, mentioning him as headmaster of the boys school of the Public Education Institution of the city. Moreover, his spouse occupied the same function in the girls school.

He had married Mélanie Masson most probably while residing in Visé, which explains why no marriage certificate could be retraced.

The *Dictionnaire encyclopédique* (Dechambre 1880: 366) as well as the *Biographisches Lexikon* (Hirsch 1962: 177) mention that by 1823 he lived in Liège, where he would have obtained a doctoral degree in philosophy. This seems to be a fabrication. All we could trace back is that in 1829 - at the age of 34 - he was enrolled as Nicolaus [sic] Dally at the University of Liège in the Faculty of Philosophy, matriculation no. 109, while still residing in Visé. This document did not mention his earlier educational curriculum vitae - as for the other students- but the notice that he had been admitted "ex auctoritate Regis"¹³.

However, Dally did not appear among the students who passed their exams that year, neither did he reappear on the university roll after 1829. That very year, his son Frédéric-Jules-Michel-Aristide (30th march 1829 - ca. 1901) was born in Visé. The latter would later build a military career in France. He fought in the 1870 French-Prussian war as captain and was later promoted to lieutenant-colonel in 1880 (D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965: 5).

Teacher and school director in Brussels (1831-1843)

Soon after the birth of his first son and his short 'passage' at the University of Liège, he must have moved to Brussels. Belgium had declared its independence of the Northern Netherlands in October 1830 and Brussels had become the capital of the new state. Dally was appointed teacher at the Brussels Royal Atheneum for the course of 'grammaire générale' on 28th February 1831¹⁴. His course was qualified as "... a test case, initiated by the government."¹⁵

Dally became a prolific writer. In 1833 he published *Description de la machine à vapeur*, with an introduction on the history of steam and on the communication routes in Antiquity. Inspired by Nodier, author of *L'histoire de la parole et de l'écriture*, he published in the

¹³ "Ex auctoritate Regis" means that he had been admitted to the university by special permission of the King.

¹⁴ Tableau du personnel de l'Athénée royal de Bruxelles à l'époque de janvier.

¹⁵ A Monsieur le Gouverneur du Brabant méridional, 24 march 1831.

same year *Mécanique de la formation des langues* (Larousse 1870).

The official 1834-35 programme of the Brussels Atheneum listed Dally's course [probably as an optional one], together with drawing, writing, gymnastics and music. Its content was described as follows:

"GRAMMAIRE GÉNÉRALE

Professeur, N. Dally

Grammaire générale - Langue hébraïque

Traduction des trois premiers chapitres de la Genèse, de quelques psaumes et des proverbes de Salomon

Langue sanskrite-Elémens. [sic]

Traduction d'extraits du Mâmava-Dharma-Sâtra.

N.B. La leçon a lieu tous les jours.¹⁶

It seems interesting to notice also the content of the gymnastics class:

"CLASS OF GYMNASTICS

Professeur, M. Bouillon, senior

Where the physical capacities of the pupils are developed by different kinds of progressive exercises, adapted to the diverse constitutions, with the aim of making the youngsters more flexible, more agile and more vigorous".¹⁷

Listed below is the payroll of teachers, which allows one to evaluate the academic hierarchy of the courses taught¹⁸:

A. Paid by the city of Brussels:	
Baron: rhetoric, director	3174.60 BEF
.....	
De Genst: Flemish language	1058.20 BEF
.....	
Bouillon: supervisor	1058.20 BEF
.....	
Larcier: janitor	423.28 BEF
B. Paid by the State:	
Guillers: mathematics & physics	3809.52 BEF
.....	
Vauthier: French language	3174.60 BEF
.....	
Bech: general history	2539.68 BEF
.....	
Dally: general grammar	1269.84 BEF
.....	
Bouillon: duty-master	634.92 BEF
.....	
Snel: singing	634.92 BEF ¹⁹

Like in Tongeren, ten years before, Dally must have gone 'his own way' again, now by teaching his own favourite topics instead of general grammar. This provoked the following negative evaluation:

"This course which counted only two or three pupils last year and where - instead of grammar in the proper sense of the term - only superficial knowledge of Sanskrit and Hebrew is taught, yields no result and seems to me completely useless at the Atheneum".²⁰

On January 13 of 1833 his second son Alexandre Eugène Félix Dally was born in Brussels.²¹

Already in 1834, Nicolas Dally appeared in the *Indicateur administratif de Bruxelles* (pp. 96-97) both as teacher of general grammar in the Atheneum and as director of the Ecole de Commerce et d'Industrie. The establishment of this institution was announced in a 15 - page prospectus, edited by Nicolas Dally in 1833. He was at that time both director of the new school and teacher at the Atheneum (Dally 1833). The prospectus presents a variegated curriculum including the knowledge of European and oriental languages in combination with commercial, mathematical, natural and astronomical, geographical-historical-archeological, and graphical sciences. No mention is made of gymnastics. Moreover, Dally also advertised his intention to found a 'Société orientale' (pp. 10-15), which would put special emphasis on Sanskrit and Chinese²². For the teaching of these languages he referred to his own 'general grammar' method:²³

"... in order to introduce the unity of principle and method into this part of the program, one has to simplify all particular grammars which are used, by linking them to one sole and singular [une seule et même ...] general grammar" (p. 3).

It is quite remarkable that he taught four out of the sixteen courses offered. He thus covered commercial arithmetics (1st part); geography-geology; French, and Latin and Greek (Dally 1834).

¹⁶ Programme des Cours de l'Athenée royal de Bruxelles, 1834-35: 123.

¹⁷ Programme des Cours de l'Athenée royal de Bruxelles, 1834-35: 123.

¹⁸ Two teachers named Bouillon figure in this list. One is supervisor (surveillant) and the other is duty-master (maître d'études). We don't know which one of them is Bouillon senior (père), who was also teaching gymnastics.

¹⁹ 4^{me} Bureau, Athénée royal de Bruxelles, Rapport à Monsieur l'Echevin Vanvolxem: Traitement des professeurs.

²⁰ Anonymous handwritten report, evaluating the school year 1832-1833 and 1833-1834.

All in all, it seemed that by 1835 he had made his passage to his newly opened School of Commerce and Industry and that he left the Atheneum "...per amore o per forza". Minister of Education Jean-Baptiste Nothomb (1845: LXXV) mentioned general grammar as part of the 1832 Atheneum curriculum, but added in a footnote: "This course has been removed in the meantime". Dally's general grammar seems to have been taught only from 1831 to 1836 (Soyer 1958; Tihon 1970: 268). In 1836, he must have published also a contribution, named *Psychologie* (Larousse 1870).

Dally then disappears out of our sight again. He reappears in 1842, when he published his first ethnological work in Brussels. We were, however, unable to retrace this publication, entitled *Moeurs, coutumes et usages de tous les peuples du monde* (cit. in Dechambre 1880: 367). Two other ethnological publications are also mentioned: *Elements de l'histoire du genre humain*, also published in Brussels in 1842, and *Moeurs, usages et costumes des peuples d'Asie*, which appeared in Brussels in 1843²⁴. These books clearly show his interest in the study of mankind from a broad cultural - anthropological perspective.

He also produced a high quality geographical map in 1843 on the Belgian colony of Santo-Tomas in Guatemala (Dally 1843a; Danckaert 1977: 65-67).²⁵

We do not know, however, whether Dally had travelled to Asia or whether he had been on board the schooner Louise Marie of the Belgian Navy, which first explored the Santo-Tomas area in 1841 before the Belgian colonists left for Guatemala in 1843.

During that same year of 1843, Dally published *Voyages des missionnaires dans toutes les contrées du monde ou lettres*

édifiantes écrites des missions catholiques ... (Dally 1843b). In his introduction, he comes up with a surprising theory on the structure and division of the Earth:

"In the natural system which we are presenting here, there is but one and only point of departure ... That point of departure of each geographical study is situated in the middle of the Bering Strait ... There, and only there, lies the free intersection of the two great basins which cover the surface of the Earth."²⁶ (Dally 1843c)

These speculative ideas on the division of the 'two worlds' stand in strong contrast with his pledge for rigorous geographical observation and precise mapping of the Earth.²⁷

The *Dictionnaire de biographie française* states that Dally returned to France in 1843 (D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965: 5). There he would further develop his 'holistic' ethnological perspective in *Aperçu de la méthode géographique, ou division naturelle de la surface de la terre, dans ses rapports généraux avec la géographie, la phytologie, la sociologie etc.*, which appeared in Paris in 1844.

This publication, in which he anticipated in some way the so called 'diffusionist' schools in later anthropology, was mostly based on wild imagination and pure phantasy and it has been heavily criticised.²⁸

Discussion: Dally's early scientific conception (1817-1843)

The term *conception* stands here for the process of the forming of a person's ideas and beliefs. After his medical training in the

²¹ Acte de naissance de Alexandre Eugène Dally [sic], born 13 january 1833, registered 14 january 1833. Son of Nicolas Dally, teacher at the Atheneum and Mélanie Masson. Eugène Dally (1837-1887) was a medical doctor who became one of the pioneers of physical anthropology and physiotherapy in France (D'Amat & Lamouzin-Lamothe 1965: 5-6; Demeny 1909: 105-106).

²² We are not sure that this Oriental Society was actually established in Brussels. Later, after his return to Paris, he became the cofounder of the Société Asiatique (Dechambre 1880: 366).

²³ See his 1826 publication *Essai de grammaire générale*

²⁴ Cit. in <http://duke.kbr.be/~eddyvd/america/fr/fr51.htm>

²⁵ Cit. in <http://duke.kbr.be/~eddyvd/america/fr/fr51.htm>

²⁶ Dally would repeat these weird ideas in his *Aperçu de la méthode géographique ...* (1844) and even in *Cinésiologie ...* (1857: 50).

²⁷ "... the surface of the earth is yet only little known ... Without exact registration of all these geographical elements, one can never hope to obtain the real offprint of the surface of the earth" (Dally 1843b: 5-6).

²⁸ "... il émettait sur la formation et la constitution du globe les opinions les plus abracadabrantes ..." (D'Amat & Limouzin-Lamothe 1965: 5).

"Dally manque de rigueur scientifique et défend parfois des théories hasardeuses comme en connut le XIXe siècle .. il expose des vues assez surprenantes sur la formation et la division de la terre" (<http://duke.kbr.be/~eddyvd/america/fr/fr51.htm>).

military and his misadventure in Napoleon's Russian campaign, Dally was forced into exile in The United Netherlands (later Belgium) because of his Bonapartist sympathies.

The contention that he took up medical studies could not be confirmed - so far - by any available evidence. On the other hand, the fact that Dally opted for - or was forced into - a teaching career is well documented. We could not find out though why and how he turned up as school director first in Tongeren and later in Visé.

Although he started philosophy studies at the University of Liège, he never graduated.

Dally's concept and teaching method of 'general grammar', published in 1826, shows certain common traits with what would be qualified nowadays as a 'structuralist' approach. This contribution of Dally to linguistics, together with the figure of Lemare, the author of *Cours de langue française*, certainly deserves further investigation.

All in all, Dally must have been a pedagogical authority in those days because, right after the independence of Belgium in 1830, he was appointed teacher at the newly established Royal Atheneum of Brussels. It seems that he cherished rather original didactical ideas. This pertness had already earned him a serious reprimand in Tongeren. The content of his course on 'general grammar', which he taught in Brussels, must have been either quite eccentric or... well before its time! His teaching method was indeed severely criticised and considered to be worthless. Dally then opened his own 'modern' School of Commerce and Industry for which he developed an innovative curriculum. He also launched the idea of creating an Oriental Society. It must be said that his academic interests were always strongly oriented towards the Orient. He taught for instance Hebrew and Sanskrit in his general grammar classes. Moreover, Dally published several books on ethnological and geographical topics in which he tried to link biological, geographical and sociocultural aspects within a holistic fabric. He launched daring - not to say absurd - theories on the diffusion of the different races, on the physical

structure of the Earth and the drift of the continents. Doing so, he was - very much like in his teaching of linguistics - a 'premature' forerunner of the schools of cultural diffusionism and ecological anthropology of the 20th century. We lack evidence whether Dally was well travelled (Guatemala? China ?)²⁹ or whether he was just an armchair scholar.

It is amazing that, in this period from 1817 to 1843, we did not come across one single sign of evidence pointing to Dally's interest in gymnastics, physiotherapy or 'cinésiologie' as he would later entitle his magnum opus of 1857. It is even more striking that gymnastics had been on the programme of the Brussels Atheneum where he taught for a while, but not on the 1833 curriculum of Dally's own new School of Commerce and Industry.³⁰

Neither do we have evidence that Dally had already collaborated with the French 'gymnasiarch' Henri Triat, during the latter's stay in Brussels, where he had opened a private gymnasium in 1841. However, Triat's gymnasium in the de Ligne Street 7, was not far from the School of Commerce and Industry, and this well advertised institution was well known by the 'beau monde' of Brussels. Therefore it seems more than reasonable to believe that the later collaboration in Paris between the two French compatriots Dally and Triat, had its origin in Brussels before their return to France ca. 1843 and ca. 1846 respectively. Dally referred in the announcement of the foundation of the *Société milonienne pour l'Exploitation de la Gymnastiq* in Paris in 1847 to the period that they both resided in Brussels:

"...the studies which Mr. Triat has carried out indefatigably in almost all regions of Europe [sic], and which he has most recently applied in Belgium on more than three thousand persons, have convinced us that it is feasible to actualize his project completely..." (Dally 1847).

We intend to continue our investigation both on Triat and Dally and hope to be able to bring further clarification on this collaboration between a gymnasiarch and a kinesiologist.

²⁹ Prot (1997) stated that Dally had visited China, but we did not find any mention of such a voyage in his publications.

³⁰ A prospectus of the Central School of Commerce and Industry from 1848, mentions A Lemoine, author of *Traité d'éducation physique* (1857) as teacher of gymnastics. The school of which Dally had been the first director, now also possessed an outdoor gymnasium with impressive climbing equipment (Ecole Centrale 1848). But by that time Dally had already returned to France.

References

1. Andrieu G, 1981, Antoine-Hippolythe Triat (1813-1881), in Arnaud P (ed), *Le corps en mouvement: précurseurs et pionnier de l'éducation physique*, Toulouse: Privat, 187-199.
2. Andrieu G, 1988, *L'homme et la force*, Joinville-le-Pont: Actio.
3. Andrieu G, 1992, *Force et beauté: histoire de l'esthétique en éducation physique aux 19^{ème} et 20^{ème} siècles*, Bordeaux: Presses universitaires de Bordeaux.
4. Arnaud P, 1991, *Le militaire, l'écolier, le gymnaste: naissance de l'éducation physique en France*, Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon.
5. Catalogue général, 1908, *Catalogue générale des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque nationale: auteurs: Tome 25: Da-Daudeteau*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale.
6. Celis JB, 1998, *Een bijdrage tot de biografie van Nicolas Dally (1795-1862), conceptualisator van de kinesiologie* (Leuven: KULeuven; Licentiate thesis physical education).
7. Dally N, 1826, *Essai de grammaire générale, basée sur les procédés idéologiques et analytiques de Lemare*, Liège: H. Dessain.
8. Dally N, 1833, *Ecole de Commerce et d'Industrie*, Bruxelles: J.B. Champon.
9. Dally N, 1834, *Programme des examens qui auront lieu le jeudi 20 mars 1834 ...*, Bruxelles: s.n.
10. Dally N, 1843a, *Nouvelle carte physique, politique, industrielle et commerciale de l'Amérique centrale et des Antilles ... de la Compagnie belge de colonisation dans l'Amérique centrale, Etat de Guatemala*, Bruxelles: Cie belge de Colonisation.
11. Dally N, 1843b, *Voyages des missionnaires dans toutes les contrées du monde, ou lettres édifiantes écrites des missions catholiques ...* Bruxelles: N. Dally.
12. Dally N, 1843c, Introduction géographique aux voyages des missionnaires ou nouvelles théorie géographique d'après les formes extérieures du globe ..., in *Voyages des missionnaires dans tous les contrées du monde ...*, Bruxelles: N. Dally, 1-8.
13. Dally N, 1847, *Société milonienne pour l'exploitation de la gymnastique appliquée à la réhabilitation physique de l'homme d'après la méthode de M. Triat de Nîmes*, Paris: Monain.
14. Dally N, 1857, *Cinésiologie ou science du mouvement dans ses rapports avec l'éducation, l'hygiène et la thérapie ...*, Paris: Librairie centrale des Sciences.
15. Danckaert L (ed), 1977, *Belgica in orbe: Belgen in de wereld*, Brussel: Gemeentekrediet van België.
16. Dechambre A, 1880, *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences médicales*, Paris: A. Lahure.
17. Demeny G, 1909, *L'école française*, Paris: Fournier.
18. D'Amat R; Limouzin-Lamothe R (eds), 1965, *Dictionnaire de biographie française: Tome dixième: Dallier-Desplagnes*, Paris: Letouzey & Ané.
19. Ecole Centrale, 1848, *Ecole Centrale de Commerce et d'Industrie*, Bruxelles: NJ Slingeneyer Jeune.
20. Frère M, 1961, Het onderwijs te Tongeren begin 19^e eeuw: kort overzicht, *Limburg* 40: 286-288.
21. Hirsch A (ed), 1962, *Biographisches Lexikon der hervorragenden Aerzte aller Zeiten und Völker*, München: Urban & Schwarzenberg.
22. Larousse P, 1870, *Le grand dictionnaire universel*, Paris: Larousse.
23. Laty D, 1996, *Histoire de la gymnastique en Europe de l'antiquité à nos jours*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
24. Lemoine A, 1857, *Traité d'éducation physique avec atlas...*, Gand: G Jacquain.
25. Nothomb ŠJBČ, 1843, *Etat de l'instruction moyenne en Belgique*, Bruxelles: E Devroye.
26. Prot F, 1997, Nicolas Dally: life and work (1795-1865), in *Proceedings 1st international conference on kinesiology: the present and the future* (Dubrovnik; 1997), 15-17.
27. Renson R, 1995, Homo movens: lichamelijke opvoeding, kinesitherapie en academische identiteit, *Onze alma mater* 49: 141-163.

28. Renson R, 1998, Kinesiology: paradigm found or newspeak for sport science? In Sargent AJ; Siddons H (eds), *From community health to elite sport* (Proceedings of third annual congress of the European College of Sport Science; Manchester; 1998), Manchester: Centre for Health Care Development, 425.
29. Soyer M, 1958, *L'organisation de l'enseignement moyen à Bruxelles de 1830 à 1850* (Louvain: UCL; Licentiate Thesis Philosophy and Arts).
30. Tihon A, 1970, *Le clergé et l'enseignement moyen pour garçons dans le diocèse de Malines (1802-1914)*, (Louvain: UCL; Doctoral thesis Philosophy and Arts, History of modern times).
31. Triat H, 1842, *Ecole Normale de Gymnastique pour les deux sexes ...*, Bruxelles: Polack-Duvivier.
32. Vigarello G, 1978, *Le corps redressé: histoire d'un pouvoir pédagogique*, Paris: Delange.
33. Zoro J, 1986, *Images de 150 ans d'EPS: L'éducation physique et sportive à l'école en France*, s.l.:Association des Enseignants d'EPS.

Received: October 15, 1999

Accepted: April 10, 2000

Correspondence to:

Prof. Roland Renson, Ph.D.

Research Unit Sociocultural Kinesiology

Faculty of Physical Education & Physiotherapy

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

Tel. + 32 (016) 32 90 52

Fax: + 32 (016) 23 23 03

E-mail: roland.renson@flok.kuleuven.ac.be