

TECHNICAL REPORT

THE TECHNICAL REPORT

Compiled by

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TECHNICAL PAPERS AND READING SESSIONS

1. Aberkals, Sandra and Ilene Fox “*To Caret or Not To Caret, That is the Question*” (Paper–Appendix A)
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REPORT

The technical section of the twenty-second biennial conference dealt with Kinetography Laban (KIN) and Labanotation (LN) practices, conventions, and usage in sessions during which participants read notated movement examples as well as sessions in which technical papers were presented. Together, these sought to foster unification through the examination and understanding of commonalities and differences in KIN and LN by presenting areas in which both are identical as well as areas where differences exist. The technical sessions also sought to clarify current usage and to encourage refinements to the system.

The technical portion of the conference began with a reading session presented by Jacqueline Challet-Haas, Christine Eckerle, and Anja Hirvikallio which responded to requests made at the twenty-first biennial conference held in Barcelona asking for exploration of “KIN/LN issues, especially how floorwork is handled by both systems” and “sessions on use of hands and fingers, especially for writing sign language and Asian dance styles”. Additionally, this first session addressed Barcelona conferees request for “Jacqueline Challet-Haas, to continue exploration of KIN/LN differences” (XXI ICKL 1999, pp. 18-19).

The second technical session was a presentation by Sheila Marion of “*Movement Signs Across Contexts*” that additionally responded to requests from the Barcelona conference as noted above as well as its request to present “‘reviews’ which look at signs from the same category, such as pins, when used in different contexts” (ibid, p. 19).

The third session was given by Ray Cook, who similarly, in response to requests emanating from the twenty-first conference, conducted an examination of “ad lib” usages and interpretations as evidenced in notated examples.

Each of these first three presentations sought to illuminate ways in which KIN and LN use notation. Sessions were informational in nature and employed examples from the notated literature to guide discussion and exploration. Although these meetings were not intended to introduce proposals for changes to the system or to unify practices, and therefore did not call for members to vote, the sessions did provide topics for further exploration and offered an initial examination of issues to address at future conferences.

The two remaining technical presentations took up the balance of the technical sessions at the conference. The first of these, Sandra Aberkalns and Ilene Fox’s paper “*To Caret of Not to Caret, That is the Question*” was supported, in part, by the Ann Hutchinson Guest Research Fund established at the Dance Notation Bureau to support research by DNB staff notators. In their paper Aberkalns and Fox summarize current practices in KIN and LN related to the use of the caret and identify practices that are the same and those which differ. In summarizing these practices, the authors sought to explain theory and the underlying logic and philosophy governing usage in KIN and LN

and to propose changes that unify usage where differences exist. Thus, this session entailed voting on a proposal presented by the authors. The results of this voting are reported below.

The final technical sessions were given over to Ann Hutchinson Guest for presentation of her paper "*Space Measurement – New Signs*". Hutchinson Guest's work clearly identified the benefit to be derived from adapting symbols that distinguish between movement that is focused in the body and that which deals with space. In her paper, she acknowledges that she did not expect "a decision on this topic (to) be reached at this conference". Nonetheless, a straw vote of members was taken to determine whether or not her observations merited further exploration. The results of this voting are also reported below.

All technical presentations accepted for inclusion at the conference were rigorously reviewed by the Research Panel of ICKL. Members of the Panel returned comments to presenters at developing stages of their work and authors responded to these comments, incorporating suggestions into their final presentations. The authors merit the gratitude of conferees and of ICKL for their first-rate presentations. Each presenter gave a clear exposition of their topic, which fostered informed discussion and reasoned argument from conference attendees.

On behalf of the Research Panel, I would like to thank the presenters and authors, Sandra Aberkals, Jacqueline Challet-Haas, Professor Ray Cook, Professor Christine Eckerle, Ilene Fox, Anja Hirvikallio, Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest, and Dr. Sheila Marion. Thank you also to the Research Panel members, Sally Archbutt, János Fügedi, Jean Jarrell, and Sheila Marion for their careful review of the papers submitted and for their insightful and thoughtful comments to the authors. With this conference, Sally Archbutt and Sheila Marion complete the second two years of their four-year terms and warrant special thanks for their inspired contribution to the Panel. Conferees elected Anja Hirvikallio to join the Research Panel.

Session chairs contributed to the exceptional efficiency of the conference and for this they are greatly appreciated. Session chairs at the twenty-second conference were Professor Odette Blum, Wendy Chu, Jack Clark, Ray Cook, Patty Harrington Delaney, Christine Eckerle, Ilene Fox, János Fügedi, Billie Mahoney, Sheila Marion, Agusti Ros, Leslie Rotman, Thomas Schallmann, Muriel Topaz, Anna Karin Ståhle-Varney, Professor Lucy Venable, and Professor Carl Wolz.

The clear and comprehensive notes of sessions taken by scribes has been of immense assistance in assembling this technical report and I am greatly indebted to them for their effort. Scribes at the twenty-second conference were Julie Brody, Professor Mary Corey, C. Noelle Partusch, Noelle Simonet, and Meghan Western.

SUMMARY OF VOTING ON TECHNICAL ITEMS

Voting followed the ICKL constitution, which states:

Any resolution involving a Technical Matter. . . shall require for its adoption the separate approval of a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the Fellows present at a meeting of members of the Council If more than two thirds (2/3) of the members present oppose the outcome of the vote by the Fellows on the same resolution then the Fellows shall be required to reconsider the resolution.

I. PROPOSAL PASSED

(Votes of the Fellows are recorded first; the votes of the members follow in parentheses)

	<u>votes for</u>	<u>votes against</u>	<u>abstentions</u>	<u>blank ballot</u>
1. Use of carets	16 (23)	0 (0)	0(2)	0(1)

II. DISCUSSED AND STRAW VOTE TAKEN TO GAUGE MEMBERS SUPPORT FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION AND POSSIBLE PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL AT FUTURE CONFERENCE

(Matter not involving a proposal but rather a consensus of members' support for further exploration, therefore only total votes of all present is shown)

	<u>votes for</u>	<u>votes against</u>	<u>abstentions</u>
2. Space Measurement – New Signs	28	3	6

(Members agreed: “that it would be beneficial to distinguish between when movement is focused in the body and when it is dealing with space”, and to support Dr. Hutchinson Guest’s further pursuit of the topic. A consensus of conferees agreed that it was too early in the exploration process to consider symbology.)

III. DISCUSSED BUT NOT INTENDED FOR VOTING

3. Readings in Kinetography Laban – KIN usage relating to column consistency, floorwork, pins, and indications for the hand and its parts.
4. Movement Signs Across Contexts.
5. Indications for Freedom of Interpretation.

TECHNICAL REPORT

I. THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS OFFICIALLY ACTED UPON AND PASSED AT THE 2001 ICKL CONFERENCE.

The statement enclosed by the solid lines was formally voted on at the conference and accepted into the system.

A summary of the discussion of this item follows the statement enclosed by the solid lines. This summary does not represent the official decision but is included to provide information on the issues raised for those who were not present at the conference.

1. Column consistency facilitates our understanding of which part of the body is moving. Certain columns are designated for specific body parts (supports, leg gestures, upper body, and arms). When these columns are used for other parts, pre-signs and carets are necessary. In support columns, repeat the pre-signs; do not use carets

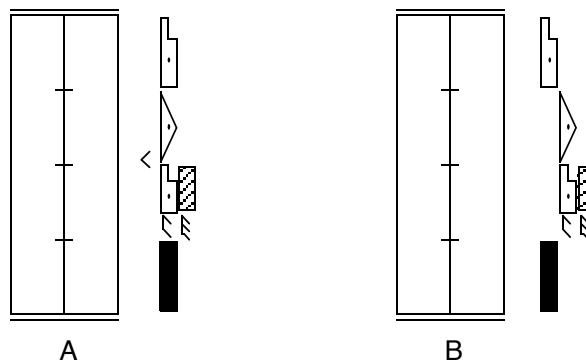
Pre-signs give temporary designations to all other columns. No carets are needed for subsequent movements. A new body part pre-sign gives a new, temporary designation. All subsequent movements will be for the new body part.

Unless tied to the support column, the inner subsidiary column functions as an extra leg gesture column and follows the same practice.

Recommendations:

If a gap between movements makes it difficult to see in which column a symbol is placed, repeat the pre-sign. Ease of reading should always be the priority.

Example A is not preferred writing. Movements such as this should be written as in B.



Clarification:

This is a unification of KIN and LN. Primarily it changes LN practices. One change also affects KIN.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

- 1.1 Conference discussion centered on caret usage for subsequent movements of the same body part in columns requiring a pre-sign. Currently, there are some differences between KIN and LN caret usage in this context.
- 1.2 In both KIN and LN, symbols placed in the first, second, third, and fourth columns are understood to be for supports (when referring to supporting on the feet); whole leg (when referring to the whole leg, including ‘butterfly’ symbols written entirely in the whole leg column); upper body (when referring to the upper body); and, whole arm (when referring to the whole arm including ‘butterfly’ symbols written entirely in a whole arm column), respectively. [AHG pp. 22 and 23, Figs. 4 and 5; DKL 9].
 - 1.2.1 Some LN practitioners questioned the designation of the third column as the ‘upper body’ column, asking if this indicated a euro centric or stylistic bias in the system. Other LN and KIN practitioners responded that upper body involvement was part of “natural human movement”. Conferees suggested that future conferences examine the notion of upper body movement across cultures.
 - 1.2.2 It was noted that the practices governing caret usage in the Inner Subsidiary Column were clearly defined in the *Proceedings of the Twelfth Biennial Conference*:
 - “A. Gestural symbols (such as rotations, flexions) and modifiers (such as hooks, pins, dynamic indications, spatial retention signs) that modify either a support or a leg gesture can be written in the Inner Subsidiary Column (ISC) without a body part pre-sign.
 - “B. Any direction symbol in the ISC pertaining to a gesture, other than an attached symbol, must be preceded by a body part pre-sign.
 - “C. Any symbol in the ISC pertaining to the support column OTHER THAN those referred to in Section A, above must be tied to the support column with a bow.” [XII ICKL 1981, p. 23]
- 1.3 Both KIN and LN currently require either repetition of a pre-sign or carets in the columns listed at 1.2 above, for movements of other body parts. The use of carets in the support column sometimes gives rise to confusion where the reader might interpret either the ‘same spot’ or the ‘same body part’. Repetition of pre-signs rather than use of carets in the support column, when connoting ‘same body part’ is, therefore, clearer.

- 1.4 In KIN, movement indications in any other column require a pre-sign, but require neither the repetition of this pre-sign nor the use of a caret to connote the 'same body part' for subsequent indications.
- 1.5 In LN, movement indications in any other column require a pre-sign and always require either the repetition of this pre-sign, or the use of a caret to connote the 'same body part' for subsequent indications.
- 1.6 In and of itself the caret does not provide information as to what body part it references. The caret serves as a reminder to the reader. It means "the same" and tells the reader that the indication tied to the caret is for the same body part previously identified by a pre-sign [AH p. 238 Figs. 336 (b) and (c); DKL **58** Fig. 560f]. Its use in this context avoids the need to constantly repeat the pre-sign, streamlining the notation, and facilitating reading.
 - 1.6.1 Reading ease is diminished, however, when a caret occurs after a lengthy gap in the notation, requiring the reader to go back through the score to find out to what body part it refers. Similarly, streamline writing is difficult to achieve for complex movement where the lack of room on the page prohibits using carets consistently (see Appendix A, example 2a).
- 1.7 LN conferees noted that in one context or another all had not always followed the practice described in 1.5, above. This was especially true with regard to palm facings and movements for the head.
- 1.8 Some LN practitioners also noted that the caret was sometimes overused in LN scores. One example was given: in the effort to accommodate carets, the whole arm column might be situated further away from the center line. This was particularly the case in scores where notators were required to use extra columns to show complex torso movement. Others expressed comparable experiences when notating complex arm or leg movements.
- 1.9 KIN conferees noted that meaning is derived from context. Where context is unclear, pre-signs are repeated or carets used.
- 1.10 Discussion gave rise to the notion that the governing principal in caret use should be ease in determining column use. If column use changes, pre-signs rather than carets lead to easier reading.
- 1.11 Column consistency was described as an operative principal for KIN practitioners. Once a pre-sign has been used to designate movement for a specific body part, subsequent movements for this body part are easily read when placed in the same column. If a lengthy gap occurs, the pre-sign is repeated. When movement for a

new body part takes over use of the column, the pre-sign for the new body part is used.



- 1.12 Designating a column at the beginning of the score for use by a particular body part was another method employed to establish column consistency. However, even with this option, repetition of the pre-sign is practiced at the beginning of a new page, or after a lengthy gap in movement.
- 1.13 Notwithstanding some discussion favoring different practices for columns within the staff (whole leg gesture) and those immediately outside the staff (upper body and whole arm gesture), conferees agreed that in the interest of consistency, the proposal as stated above, would best aid the development of the system. The proposal was therefore passed.

II. **DISCUSSED AND STRAW VOTE TAKEN TO GAUGE MEMBERS SUPPORT FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION AND POSSIBLE PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL AT FUTURE CONFERENCE**

Summaries of discussions of this item and those in Section III follow. These summaries do not represent official decisions but are included to provide information on the issues raised for those who were not present at the conference. Readers are encouraged to consult the papers themselves, (annexed at Appendices B through E) for the main points dealing with clarification and underlying reasoning and philosophies.

2. “*Space Measurement – New Signs*”, by Ann Hutchinson Guest
 - 2.1 In presenting the core concepts of her paper, Hutchinson Guest, put forward two examples that could currently be analyzed using flexion/extension principles (X and ∨). The first example is that of stretching – as one does in the morning, to get the kinks out of one’s joints. One executes this action purely on the body level – it is concerned with stretching the limbs, there is no awareness of space. The second example is reaching for something. In this second instance, space is directly addressed; the actor seeks to bridge the space between himself/herself and the thing for which he/she reaches.
 - 2.2 Given confusion experienced by generations of students in learning to use flexion/extension analysis to cover the two different concepts – those focused in the body and those relating to space – and given that in his *Dictionary of Kinetography Laban*, Knust provides far more usages of X and ∨ to describe the physical actions of flexing and extending the joints, i.e., akin to her first example

above, in her paper, Hutchinson Guest suggests new signs to describe actions whose intent is spatial awareness.

- 2.3 Conferees acknowledged that relying on the same analysis to describe both actions illustrated in 2.1, above, inhibited the reading of nuance important to the proper performance of each. They questioned, however, whether or not current provisions in the system were sufficient to handle the examples described and whether the signs Hutchinson Guest proposes to express actions whose intent is spatial awareness (Z and H) were appropriate.
- 2.4 In response, Hutchinson Guest noted that in Leeds, Knust proposed ⊗ ⊙ for actions related to the body and ⋄ ⋄ for actions related to space [VII ICKL 1971].
- 2.5 During discussion, other signs were suggested including:  or , etc. The first, which combines a direction symbol with the flexion sign, would indicate attention to space. By placing the extension sign inside the body indication, the second would instruct that the movement was focused in the body. High and low level could be given in these proposed symbols in the same way they are for 'Third Way Point' symbols, by leaving a space in the center of the direction symbol to allow room for the space or body indication.
- 2.6 Hutchinson Guest acknowledges in her paper that: "it is not expected that a decision on this topic will be reached at this conference." Nevertheless, a straw vote was taken to gauge whether "members agree that it would be beneficial to distinguish between when movement is focused in the body and when it is dealing with space" and to support Hutchinson Guest's further pursuit of the topic. The majority agreed.
- 2.7 Some of those abstaining commented that they required further time to reflect on whether there was a need to differentiate between the two types of action, and/or whether the system already provided sufficient ways to distinguish them.
- 2.8 A consensus of conferees agreed that it was too early in the exploration process to consider symbology.

III. DISCUSSED BUT NOT INTENDED FOR VOTING

3. “*Readings in Kinetography Laban – KIN usage relating to column consistency, floorwork, pins, and indications for the hand and its parts*”, a reading session conducted by Jacqueline Challet-Haas, Christine Eckerle, and Anja Hirvikallio (Notation excerpts at Appendix B).
- 3.1 Some LN readers expressed difficulty in “synthesizing” their vision of the movement in the examples from *Hyper Ballad* and *Übungen aus Modernunterricht von Ph. Dahlmann*, because of KIN’s practice of placing torso indications so far to the right of the staff. Others preferred this writing, noting that it enabled the reader to receive information about the notation at different levels – first, transfers of weight, then gestures, then torso movements. This way of reading allowed readers to assemble the movement from the simple parts to the complex whole.
- 3.2 Anja Hirvikallio responded that writing the torso in this manner avoided using carets and usually followed an order of whole torso, shoulder section, chest, pelvis, etc. She also noted that reading preferences were probably a matter of familiarity. As she had always read scores in which torso parts were placed away from the staff in this way, she had no difficulty in visualizing the movement so described.
- 3.3 For *Modern Übung von C. Wittmann*, readers asked about the level of kneeling shown for the somersault that begins at the end of measure 2 and continues through measure 3. Similarly, questions were raised about the arms during this movement. The notator agreed to take readers’ comments into consideration in determining whether or not to revise the notation.
- 3.4 Also for *Modern Übung von C. Wittmann*, readers asked why the turn sign was drawn over both support columns for the first movement in measure 5, if in the final movement of measure 4, the support is shown on only one part/side of the body. Readers offered alternate suggestions shown at Figures 1 and 2.

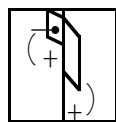


Fig. 1

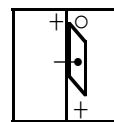


Fig. 2

3.5 For *Übungen aus Modernunterricht von Ph. Dahlmann*, readers asked why there was a hold sign on the foot hook for the knee turns in measure 2. The notator and readers offered alternate suggestions shown at Figures 3 and 4, respectively. As swiveling will occur on the knee, it was agreed that Figure 3 best represented the desired movement.

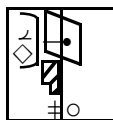


Fig. 3

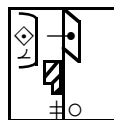


Fig. 4

3.6 For *Caput et Ludi*, readers suggested using ‘addressing’ for the palm rather than minor direction pins at the introduction (*vortakte*) and throughout.

3.7 For *Tanz aus Sinkiang* at measure 33, LN readers noted that the head would be written as in Figures 5 or 6.

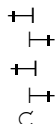


Fig. 5

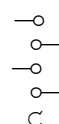


Fig. 6

3.7 For *Hyper Ballad*, readers suggested using the ‘zed’ (>) caret rather than the caret (>) in the supports at measure 69. (As a result of agreement on the proposal at 1, above, the use of the caret in this context is now proscribed.)

4. “*Movement Signs Across Contexts*”, by Sheila Marion (Appendix E).

4.1 Conferees offered alternate grouping to those given by Marion in her paper including organizing the examples in two distinct categories of those relating to position and those relating to movement.

4.2 With regard to the author’s review of pins: examples from the paper, 1a through 1n, were seen as being related to examples 2i through 2l and 2r and 2q in that all expressed relationships to body parts, the center line, etc.

4.3 In discussing the author’s review of vertical bows, KIN practitioners noted that the example given at 3n in the paper would be written as Figure 7 in KIN.



Fig. 7

4.4 Members questioned the placement of the X in example 4e, noting that positioning it at the end of the gesture went against convention.

5. “*Indications for Freedom of Interpretation*”, by Ray Cook (Appendix C).

5.1 Cook examined the derivation, various meanings, and uses of the ‘ad libitum’ sign and its offshoots. By doing so, he expounded the thesis that, the concept of ‘ad libitum’, which once had a relatively narrow range of meanings attached to it, has now lost its import through overuse and/or misuse. The misapplication to ‘ad libitum’ signs of the notion of “freedom to do anything one chooses” as opposed to “freedom to do something similar” contributes to confusion about meaning. The notation of contemporary forms such as ‘contact improvisation’, where outcomes of movement sequences are completely unpredictable, also gives rise to different uses of ‘ad libitum’ signs.

5.2 He illustrated his thesis by giving examples of the sign’s diverse usage in published texts. Additionally Cook distributed excerpts from *Ulysse* (Choreography by J.C. Gallota, Notation by G. Reynaud: “Depart des Chassés et Cuisine” section, measures 30 – 35); *Scenes from Charles Ives* (Choreography by Anna Sokolow, Notation by Ilene Fox, “Hallowe’en” section, measures 34 – 37); and, *Dreams* (Choreography by Anna Sokolow, Notation by Ray Cook, “Deserts” section, phrases 1 and 2).

5.3 Conferees read these excerpts and through the different solutions readers came up with when encountering the various manifestations of the sign contained therein, Cook was able to demonstrate the confusion experienced by even ‘elite’ readers when confronting ‘ad libitum’ signs.

5.4 As an example, the notated excerpt of *Ulysse* contains six uses of the ‘ad libitum’ sign. To facilitate reference these are extracted below as Figures 8 through 13.



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

5.5 Figure 8 elicited responses of “perform more or less 1/8 of a counterclockwise circle” as well as “each person circles counterclockwise until finishing facing as shown in the floor plan in the area marked ‘Cu’”.

- 5.6 Some readers interpreted Figure 9 to mean “do anything” with the arms, other understood it to mean do arm movement “similar” to what has been written before. Cook responded that in his reading of published texts he had not come across any reference that gave the ‘ad libitum’ signs the meaning of “do anything”.
- 5.7 Figure 13 is written across the center line of the staff (supports) and follows two forward steps. Some conferees read it to mean: “continue in the same manner”. In other words, continue stepping in the same direction and at the same rhythm. However, some readers stepped in the same rhythm as the previous two steps, others did not, some stepped in any direction, and still others did any forward (i.e., similar) movement.
- 5.8 Diverse interpretations were also given for figures 10, 11, and 12.
- 5.9 Examples cited above as well as others drawn from the other excerpts circulated during the conference confirmed Cook’s conclusion and that of many conferees that ICKL must revisit, examine, and redefine the uses of the ‘ad libitum’ sign.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

- AH Labanotation, by Ann Hutchinson, New York 1970
- DKL Dictionary of Kinetography Laban, by Albrecht Knust, London 1979
- XXI ICKL Proceedings of the Twenty-first Conference of the International Council of Kinetography Laban, compiled by Marion Bastien, Paris 2000
- XII ICKL Proceedings of the Twelfth Conference of the International Council of Kinetography Laban, compiled by Billie Mahoney, Columbus 1981
- VII ICKL Proceedings of the Seventh Conference of the International Council of Kinetography Laban, “*Body Narrowness and Wideness and Space Narrowness and Wideness*” by Albrecht Knust, Leeds 1971

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Brown, Hong Kong, December 2001