BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *H.I.T.: A Manual for the Classification, Filing and Retrieval of Palmprints*

The H.I.T. manual for filing, classifying, and retrieving palmprints appears to have been researched fairly well. The author breaks the palm into three separate areas, the hypothenar, interdigital, and thenar areas. From these areas a three-part classification formula is arrived at. This formula is used for filing and retrieving the palmprints much as a classification formula is used with fingerprints. The hypothenar is the area below the upper palm crease (distal transverse crease) and to the little-finger side of the center palm crease (radial longitudinal crease). The interdigital area is the part of the palm bounded on the top by the lowest finger joint creases (metacarpophalangeal creases) and on the bottom by the distal transverse crease. The thenar area is that part of the palm located to the thumb side of the radial longitudinal crease, bounded on the bottom by the wrist crease (carpal crease). From these three areas the author uses a standard finger-print-sized card on which are located an area for personal descriptors, an area to code in the type of pattern that appears in each of the palm areas (*H.* for hypothenar, *I.* for interdigital, and *T.* for the thenar area), and an area for references to each of the H.I.T. sections.

The hypothenar area is coded first. There are 14 possible classifications that can be given to this area, each bearing a numerical representative that is punched out, using a standard hand-held punch, on the H.I.T. palm card. The interdigital area is coded next. In this area are ten possible classifications. These are also represented by a numerical value that is punched out on the palm card in the same manner as with the hypothenar area. The thenar is the last area coded and has a possibility of twelve different classification types. These are also represented with a numerical symbol and punched in the same manner as the aforementioned areas. Since 95% of all the thenar patterns are classified as absence of pattern or plain arch, the author uses what she refers to as a Brownie Triangle to further break down this area. When the entire code is determined, the appropriate areas on the H.I.T. palm card are punched out and filed according to numerical code, smaller numbers first.

The author has come up with some good research ideas in the area of classifying palm-prints. The punch card system for searching and retrieving palmprints may prove to be

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too cumbersome for a large file and some other method would have to be developed. In its present form, the method of using the Brownie Triangle leaves open room for error, that is, each technician may place the triangle at a slightly different spot or position it at a different angle that would throw the bifurcation count off enough to place the class in an extension area that might be missed, even if referenced. Generally, rolled palmprints as well as latent palmprints are placed in files and not examined until such time as a suspect has been named for a specific offense.

In summary, the manual has presented a system that enables a technician or examiner to rather rapidly code and search a given latent palmprint against a previously established palmprint file. This book is recommended to any agency comtemplating the establishment of a palmprint system.