

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *Identification of Thumb Impressions and Cross Examination of Fingerprint Experts*

REFERENCE: Mehta, M. K., *Identification of Thumb Impressions and Cross Examination of Fingerprint Experts*, N. M. Tripathi, Bombay, India, 259 pages, Rs 65.00.

Unless you are a thumbprint examiner or handwriting examiner in India, this book will not be of much use to you. In the preface, the author states that "the book contains all about fingerprints." In fact, it deals only with one small part of the field of fingerprint identification. The author has limited his book to the identification and comparison of inked thumbprints to inked thumbprints as they appear on documents of questioned authorship and does not touch on any of the other types of fingerprint identification. In fairness to the author, his field of expertise is important in India and other countries with a high illiteracy rate, but it is not a field used much in the United States.

The most useful part of the book is the first three chapters, which deal with the origin of fingerprint identification, types of finger impressions, ridge characteristics, and pattern types. These subjects are covered well, but the same information can be obtained from any other book on fingerprint identification.

In the sections on photography and comparison, the author states, "The case of magnified photographs is almost indispensable in locating the sequence of matching ridge characteristics." This practice of making an identification from enlarged photographs instead of from the original items of evidence is one that is not advocated by most identification agencies.

Mr. Mehta also maintains that "fragmental ridges have no value in the identification of thumb impressions," when, in fact, any ridge detail that consistently reproduces is of value in making identifications.

The section of the book dealing with cross-examination of fingerprint experts is very good as far as it goes, but again it is limited to inked thumbprint identification and questioned documents.

Through no fault of the author, the paper and printing of the book detract from the content.

This book could be enjoyed by someone interested in fingerprint identification, but the practicing fingerprint examiner would not find much new information contained in its pages.

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