



*T. Shurany, I. Ravid*  
*Evaluation of Polygraph Charts: Formats,*  
*Criteria and Scoring*  
[T.I. Publications 2004, 150 pp.]

Even though published a few years ago, the book reviewed here is worth recollecting, as its reception so far in the polygraph milieu seems to be inefficient, while the significance of the questions tackled by the Authors is of fundamental importance for polygraph examinations.

The Authors filled in the gap that is present in virtually all polygraph manuals that devote relatively (let me emphasise: relatively!) little space to the evaluation of polygraph charts. And yet an expert, especially while still a beginner, needs knowledge in this scope, much like an experienced one eager to confront his views and habits with the experience of others.

The book is composed of parts covering the following: first, the rules of evaluation are briefly discussed in reference to C. Backster's numerical method. This part to a certain extent is decisive for the profile of the entire book, as the Authors in fact do not consider any matters of interpretations other than the ones designed by C. Backster. The presented set of rules is exceptionally detailed and drawn with precision that can be found nowhere else in literature of the subject. (BTW: The book includes a personal recommendation from Backster)

Another significant element of the book is the listing of interpretation criteria for the most important polygraph techniques and tests. We find here highly detailed step-by-step description of phenomena occurring during the reaction, their progress, and the way they are reflected in charts. The recording of the process of breathing, skin galvanic response, and heartbeat are discussed separately.

It is the following part that deserves the reader's special attention, as it presents phenomena similar to the reactions to test questions, that nevertheless are the result of earlier reactions, or even the very fact of asking the previous questions. The authors carefully analyse the reason for such phenomena that are defined – to use the terminology introduced by J.A. Matte – as "relief tracing segment" (p. 47). Worth mentioning here is the fact that these are the achievements of J.A. Matte that, besides C. Backster's concept, provide the theoretical background for the entire book.

The following chapter brings a detailed discussion of the artefacts encountered in evaluation of charts. The authors use here the causal criterion, and therefore discussed here are the artefacts caused by the following types of behaviour of the examinee: movements of hands and legs, talking during the test, clearing the throat, laughter, etc.

As the basic part of the book discussed above is devoted to the comparative questions tests, the authors provided a special chapter devoted to the peak of tension test. Such a solution is fully justified if one concerns entirely different rules of interpretation that specifically govern this test.

What beyond doubt is the most precious part of the book in question is its last (and most spacious) chapter that contains an abundant set of case studies in test evaluation practice. On more than 70 pages, we find reproductions of tests (in very careful visual arrangement), together with their evaluation made by eminent experts. These tests come from authentic cases, and their results were corroborated in a manner independent from polygraph examinations. This highly precious material was edited in such a manner that a reader can assess individual tests on his or her own, and later compare their results to those of masters in the field. Beyond doubt, this is the most important part of the book, a particular combination of a collection of cases with a set of exercises with the key to solve them. As far as I know, this is the only such a collection in world literature, at least the literature generally available in the open market.

If one were to make some critical remarks about the book discussed, they should include a certain theoretical one-sidedness, if not evasion of theoretical considerations as such. Nevertheless, it does not need to be a drawback; assumption of the concepts of J.A. Matte and C. Backster – after all, the classics of our discipline – for the basic ground is nothing wrong, and it provides the book with clarity of the thought, and the furthest going practical application of the work, which the Authors aimed at.

*Evaluation of Polygraph Charts...* should be found in the library of every polygrapher.

Jerzy Konieczny\*

---

\* jerkonieczny@wp.pl