The Primacy of the Image in Northern European Art, 1400–1700

Essays in Honor of Larry Silver

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Dürer's *Rhinoceros* Underway: the Epistemology of the Copy in the Early Modern Print

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With its armored plates, horns, profuse speckling, and stark profile, Albrecht Dürer's woodcut from 1515 visually epitomized the rhinoceros for early modern Europeans who had never seen one, and even those who had. Dürer's visual presentation of the rhinoceros carried with it a cachet that later copyists saw fit to preserve. As this essay will argue, Dürer's woodcut ripened in future repackaging through its copies. First, copies confirmed the beast's actual appearance through multiple citations. Second, perhaps more importantly, copies sensitized viewers who were increasingly able to recognize the animal as it charged into a host of new settings. The rhinoceros connected diverse genres and audiences by means of a recognizable and highly particular image. Outfitted with persuasive rhetorical guarantees, Dürer's rhinoceros was dressed for any occasion and became a touchstone for how print functioned in early modernity. This essay examines the knowledge-making properties of the copy and the role of stock images in sharpening visual literacy.

The Epistemology of the Copy

Sent as a gift from Gujarat via the governor of Portuguese India to King Manual, the pachyderm that became Dürer's image sunk aboard a ship not far from Lisbon. But a new and more tenacious afterlife in print was just beginning, traversing boundaries of both geography and genre. Featured in several broadsheets, miniaturized in a triumphal arch, incorporated into coats of arms, the rhinoceros made cameo appearances in physiognomies, travel accounts, even becoming a functionary of natural history.1 Dürer invested his original image

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1 Susan Dackerman, *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Art Museums, 2011), 172. Just a smattering of appearances include iterations by Enea Vico (1548); in Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* (1544); Lycosthenes, *Prodigiorum* (1557); Paolo Giovio's encyclopedia and emblem book *Dialogo dell'imprese military e amorose* (1559); Ambroise Paré, *Des monstres et des Prodiges* (1573); and Thevet, *La Cosmographie*

with a venerable degree of detail that made it look convincing, but appearances in Albrecht Herport's *Eine kurtze Ost-indianische Reiß Beschreibung* (1669); Conrad Gessner's *Historia Animalium* (1551–8); and Della Porta's *De physiognomia humanae* (1602) only reinforced the authority of Dürer's image through the related epistemological stakes of these genres. This paper parses the rhetorical and visual practices of printed genres that agitated for the copy's credibility. This essay will consider three contributions of Dürer's print and its copies to epistemology. First, the rhinoceros's striking particularity and implicit eyewitness claims underwrote its use in travel literature. Secondly, new confidence in images to convey credible information spurred their proliferation through copies. Books whose job it was to catalogue knowledge, such as natural histories, relied on images to authorize their claims, reinforcing, in turn, the authority of the accompanying images. Thirdly, new cognitive practices of visual verification and comparison encouraged by images activated the copy as an important metric of observational practice. While Renaissance art history has tended to focus on moments of originality and invention, this paper will credit the conventional nature of prints as critical to the development of visual literacy. Repetition encouraged and standardized knowledge. Only by acknowledging the conventions in which printed images traded, I would argue, can we truly pinpoint their contributions to epistemology.

Particularity and the Eyewitness

How this rhinoceros suited itself to diverse printed genres lies somewhere between the capacity of particularity to credit claims of authenticity and the promotion of this authenticity via copies. Particularity was not a priority of the earliest prints; many printers concocted images whose non-specific nature lent them to repurposing. The kind of repetition that we witness in early printed images, as the skylines recycled in the *Nuremberg Chronicle* show well, exemplifies expedient print-shop practice before image were invested with a high degree of epistemic authority.2 Later generations of prints distinguished by their particularity enticed pirates with their authoritative nature

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Universelle (1575). See also Hermann Walter, "Contributi sulla recezione umanistica della zoologia antica: nuovi documenti per la genesi del "1515 RHINOCERVS" di Albrecht Dürer," in *Studi umanistici piceni* 9 (1989): 267–275.

2   See Stephen Orgel, "Textual Icons: Reading Early Modern Illustrations," in Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday, eds., *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 59–94.
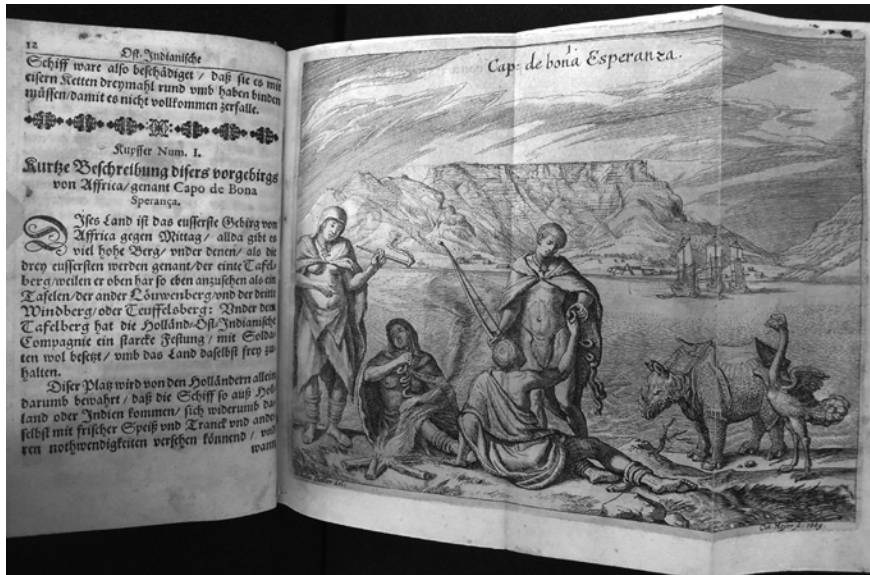
FIGURE 19.1   *Wilhelm Stettler*, Cap de Bona Esperanza (*Cape of Good Hope*), engraving
(*plate no. 1, after page 12*), *Albrecht Herport, Eine kurtze Ost-Indianische Reiß-
Beschreibung* (*Bern: Georg Sonnleitner, 1669*), *Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, Sig. Q
295, with permission of the Zentralbibliothek Zürich.*

and knowledge-making claims. Here, print's growing particularity probably
prompted the act of replication. On the one hand, the rhinoceros' authority
came from its particularity: its articulated carapace, the spectrum of texture
across its body, the detailed head and the graduated horn made the image strik-
ingly unique. On the other hand, the profile view, the stark contour, the sparse
background, and the close cropping designed it for transfer and circulation.

Specificity helped Dürer's rhinoceros survive the journey through the cen-
turies visually intact. In a somewhat later example, the rhinoceros was enlisted
to certify a 1669 report of the Dutch stronghold at the Cape of Good Hope,
Albrecht Herport's *Eine ku(r)tze Ost-Indianische Reiß Beschreibung* (Bern:
Georg Sonnleitner, 1669) (Fig. 19.1).[3] Like many travel accounts, Herport's re-
port of the VOC colony on India's Malabar Coast and its various ports of call
staked its credibility on eyewitness authority. The visual rhetoric of particu-
larity in Dürer's image matched accrediting mechanisms also active in travel
literature. Travel writers frequently relied on the tales of others whose claims

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3   Albrecht Herport, *Eine kurtze Ost-Indianische Reiß Beschreibung* (Bern: Georg Sonnleitner,
1669); the print was designed by Wilhelm Stettler and engraved by Conrad Meyer.

of first-hand experience were critical in shoring up the truth-value of their fictions. The testimony of the eyewitness, whether real or forged, was bolstered by a specificity of description, a particularity that was tantamount to "truth." Readers who recognized Dürer's rhinoceros could be more confident about Herport's other sightings and their accompanying empirical guarantees.

Several recent studies have exposed the work of print in shaping knowledge-based disciplines. Chief among these are prints' role in fixing the parameters of emerging disciplinary sciences of anatomy and botany, the pursuit of knowledge across the disciplines, and the visualization of that knowledge.4 One of these strategies was the rhetorical claim of *conterfeit*, popular in these genres and also announced in the caption accompanying Dürer's rhinoceros where it was rendered as *abcondertfet*. The accrediting mechanism of *conterfeit*, or the *imago contrafactum*, had a special relationship with print, where this term often appeared in the text adjacent to an image. Rather than implying an image made in the presence of an actual specimen, Peter Parshall thinks of the *imago contrafactum* instead as an image with an antecedent, that is, an image referring to an earlier image.5 Although Dürer's rhinoceros was worked up from second hand textual and visual descriptions, the term *conterfeit* did carry with it a cachet that was important to the rhinoceros's copiers. *Conterfeit* claims were often attached to high-contrast, stark-contour images of intense visual interest, often positioned against a shallow background. When affixed to single-leaf broadsheets, a medium that routinely lobbied for the veracity of its portrayals, the claims became more vociferous. The look of printed images conspired with labels such as *conterfeit* to create guarantees of veracity more substantial than mimesis. Thus, the formal characteristics associated with a reliable image helped outfit the rhinoceros for credibility.

In travel accounts, where guarantees measured by particulars were increasingly important, what better way to assert the veracity of the account than by inserting an iconic image? An image already associated with the idea of *conterfeit* was even better. This rhinoceros was probably already familiar to

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4   Susan Dackerman, *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.; New Haven [Conn.]: Harvard Art Museums, 2011); Sachiko Kusukawa, *Picturing the Book of Nature: Image, Text, and Argument in Sixteenth-Century Human Anatomy and Medical Botany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Pamela H. Smith, Amy Meyers, and Harold Cook, *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge*, 2014; Ashley West, *Hans Burgkmair and the Visual Translation of Knowledge in the German Renaissance* (Brepols-Harvey Miller, forthcoming).

5   Peter Parshall, "Imago Contrafacta: Images and Facts in the Northern Renaissance," *Art History* 16, no. 4 (December 1, 1993): 554–79; Alexander Marr, "Walther Ryff, Plagiarism and Imitation in Sixteenth Century Germany," *Print Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (2014): 131–43.

Herport's readers via maps and zoologies that simply transferred the authority derived from Dürer's original woodcut. The engraving's designer Wilhelm Stettler linked back to the authorized rhinoceros and thus conferred authenticity on Herport's descriptions of local customs and sightings—these details were critical to establishing the credibility of the eyewitness. This remained true, even if Dürer's "Indian" rhinoceros fit uncomfortably into the African coastal scene. Clearly, the image was more stable than the caption of the original broadsheet that located this ferocious beast in India where he charged elephants. Herport's account stripped the rhinoceros of the "facts" of his ferocity and his Indian origin but resisted changing the rhinoceros' precise texture or its profile view. These were the details most essential to shoring up the veracity of the sighting.

Frequent citations of this motif, and the "sightings" of multiple eyewitnesses implicit in them, standardized the view for audiences increasingly able to recognize the quadruped.6 By the time it surfaced in Herport's account, the rhinoceros had already appeared in Gessner's natural history, and in Della Porta's physiognomy—its nature or location was not important in these contexts, but we can see that veracity associated with *conterfeit* was. Copies helped to support an interpretation of images tagged as *conterfeit* (or *ad vivum, naar het leven*) as ones enabling a subject to be summoned by sight, or ones that were recognizable, as Sachiko Kusukawa has nuanced this term.7 Visual familiarity with the rhinoceros generated by copies no doubt assisted its prodigious trajectory in print.

The Primacy of the Image

With the publication of Conrad Gessner's *Historiae Animalium* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1551–8) (Fig. 19.2), Dürer's rhinoceros encountered a rhetorical practice of authenticating images that further raised its profile.8 Fidelity to pictorial antecedents was essential to Gessner's method of cataloguing specimens. Gessner poached heavily from circulating images in travel accounts and zoological literature, such as in works by Bernard von Breydenbach, Pierre

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6 Campbell Dodgson, "The Graphic Work of Albrecht Dürer" BM, 1971, Nos. 211–212, for the eight editions of the woodcut.

7 Sachiko Kusukawa, "Conrad Gessner on an 'Ad Vivum' Image," in Smith, *Ways of Making and Knowing,* 338–339.

8 F. J. Cole, "The History of Albrecht Dürer's Rhinoceros in Zoological Literature," in *Science, Medicine and History,* vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 337ff.

FIGURE 19.2 De Rhinocerote, *woodcut (page 953), Conrad Gessner, Historiae Animalium, vol. 1 (Zurich: Froschauer, 1551).*
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE.

Belon, and Guillaume Rondelet.9 Facts accrued to images, and striking images lent those facts tenacity. Gessner's first edition specifically invokes Dürer's rhinoceros: "This is a picture by Albert Dürer, in which that illustrious painter.... depicts most admirably the rhinoceros sent to Emmanuel, king of Portugal, at Lisbon, in the year of grace 1515, from the district of Cambay in India. We have lately seen an image of a rhinoceros ... and without doubt Aug. Justinianus refers to the image which we reproduce here."10 Gessner implies that another witness, Justinianus, the orientalist scholar and one time bishop in Corsica, recognized Dürer's image as the rhinoceros's true likeness.11 Gessner's dropping of Dürer's name and those of additional witnesses was his attempt to "record a chain of custody or proof of its reliability."12 Certifying information through plausible visual sources and credible witnesses was built into the framework of Gessner's text. Gessner's collecting of relevant information and etymologies were critical to establishing historical provenances for the samples under consideration.13

Pictorial antecedents authorized Gessner's entries; his deference to the pre-existing image illuminates his thinking about the copy in general. The similar strategy he uses to certify beasts of dubious origins can be seen as exemplary for his choice of Dürer's rhinoceros. A copied image explains the presence of the hydra in Gessner's *Nomenclator aquatilium animantium* (1560); the hydra was a patented fake, but a beast with a documented history of sightings.14 Although his text explicitly interrogates the likelihood of the hydra's existence,

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9   Sachiko Kusukawa, "The Sources of Gessner's Pictures for the Historia Animalium.," *Annals of Science* 67, no. 3 (2010), 238ff.

10   Thanks to Barbara Tramelli and Guido Giglioni for assistance with the translation.

11   See Francis Herrick, "Dürer's 'Contribution' to Gesner's Natural History," *Sciences,* 30:764 (1909), 232–235; esp. 233.

12   Kusukawa, "Sources," 311.

13   Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). See Ogilvie for Gessner's practices of crediting images, esp. 238 ff, as well as "The Humanist Invention of Natural History," 87–138.

14   See Conrad Gessner, *Nomenclator aquatilium animantium. Icones animalium aquatilium* (Zurich: Christoph Froschauer, 1560), f. 362–3. The printed hydra was already known from its appearance in Conrad Lycosthenes, *Prodigorum ac ostentorum chronicon* (Basel, 1557), 538–539, Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum, accessed 04 January 2017, http://daten .digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00087675/image_556, and would appear later in Ulisse Aldrovandi's *History of Serpents and Dragons*. See Paula Findlen, "Inventing Nature: Commerce, Art, and Science in the Early Modern Cabinet of Curiosities," in Smith, Pamela H., and Paula Findlen. *Merchants & Marvels: Commerce, Science and Art in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 308ff.

Gessner does not doubt the veracity of the image's antecedent. The image was highly particular, made striking through the sheer amount of scales, multiple heads, and its lolling tongues.15 Drawing attention to the hydra's "ears, tongue, nose, and faces ... different from the nature of all species of serpents," Gessner celebrates the image's diverse details and unique qualities."16 Even as he suspects it to be a fraud, he admires the cunning of its artificer.17 The artistry and surfeit of recorded detail substantiated the hydra; like the rhinoceros, its existence was corroborated through a steady repertoire of copies.

Gessner likewise pirated prior source material for the hydra, perhaps even a wash drawing of a "serpent" drafted against a sparse field by a south German artist, probably c. 1530. Gessner's text reprises the quantification and specifics of the drawing's inscription: a serpent brought from Turkey to Venice in the year 1530, rendered here in correct form and color. We learn that the serpent was of the dimensions shown, that it was given as a gift to the French king, and that it was valued at 6000 ducats.18 This data exposes the mercantile eye and purse in sizing up the exotic, a strategy explored by Pamela Smith, Paula Findlen, Larry Silver, and Daniel Margócsy, especially the merchant's role in defining the parameters of those particulars. But by the time it arrived in Gessner's text, the merchant's unbridled array of facts had already been disciplined by an unambiguous and unforgettable image. In the presence of such an image, the specifics of their captions rarely required repeating.

Gessner's refusal to omit the specious hydra from his zoology reveals the pre-eminence of the image over the signified. It was obviously important to Gessner to include this copy of the hydra, even if he suspected the specimen itself to be a fake. In fact, even after Gessner downgraded the veracity of several specimens in his text, he was likely to still include their images.19 We should see Gessner's complicity as an example of the image's truth over the text's. Like the hydra's own self-generating heads, new generations of hydras were produced

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15   For the relationship of mnemonics to striking images, see Peter W. Parshall, "The Art of Memory and the Passion," *The Art Bulletin, 81 (1999)*, 456–72.

16   Smith and Findlen, *Merchants & Marvels*, 308.

17   "But if the author of such an invented natural thing were not ignorant, he would be able, with great artifice, to trick observers." Ibid., 308.

18   The pen and ink wash drawing of the *Hydra Valued at 6,000 Ducats* is preserved in Munich's Graphische Sammlung, Inv. Nr. 32438. "Als man zalt 1530 Jr im jener yt ayn Sarbent aus der Turkey gen Venedig gepracht mit aller fromb und gestalt wie hye verzeichnet ist mit allen farben, dermassen und yt furpas gefurt in Frankhreich dem künig geschenkht worden Und diser Würmb ist, der gros und lenge wie hye bezaichnet und ist geschätz auff 6000 ducaten."

19   Kusukawa, "Sources," 324 ff.

as copies. Hydras' inclusion in volumes that exposed their subjects to analysis and categorization, such as zoologies and books of prodigies, further assisted in authorizing the sign. To exclude the hydra would be to deny a fact-heavy presence already sanctioned by its recognizability. The umistakeable nature of the image itself overrode the messy ambivalence of the specimen it signified.

Primacy given to images like Dürer's can also be explained by the rising capacity of the medium of print to help viewers make visual judgments. Print's growth in the domain of discernment can be tracked in Reformation dialectics in prints recording unusual happenings. These prints frequently called attention to their own surfaces to either prove or disprove the veracity of the claims they staked. Lorraine Daston, Svetlana Alpers, Ulinka Rublack, Todd Olson and Paula Findlen have all characterized visual practices that cropped up around Reformation broadsheets. These were newly informed by the power of the printed image to mediate debates about the way their subjects looked. Prints of strange happenings, such as monstrous births or unscheduled astronomical events, began to draw as much attention to themselves as representational systems as they did to the subjects they referenced.[20] Printmakers self-consciously referenced their surfaces and invited the viewer to develop visual skills by distinguishing between various kinds of markings. Thus, early modern deliberations about the fraudulent nature of prodigious occurrences were worked out on the printed page itself.[21]

Similarly, the rhinoceros's insistent signs of facture also drew attention to the artist and the material trace of his labor. The rhinoceros's sculptural carapace was uniquely conditioned to reference the woodcut process, according to Susan Dackerman, and the technical investment of Dürer's hand was advertised by the dorsal horn's pointing insistently towards his monogram.[22] This reading of Dürer's rhinoceros as a metapicture perhaps partly explains why it lent itself to iconicity: the rhinoceros was empowered by its agility as a graphic sign and an emblem.[23] Thus, the print's surface itself assumed agency in establishing viewing practices, sharpening visual acuity, and habituating the eye.

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20   Smith and Findlen, *Merchants & Marvels*. Paula Findlen sees the basilisk as exemplary for this phenomenon, 307ff.

21   See Todd Olson, "Markers: Le Moyne de Morgues in Sixteenth-Century Florida," in Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette Favrot Peterson, eds. *Seeing across Cultures in the Early Modern World* (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 204.

22   Dackerman, *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge*, 164 ff.

23   On the emblematic tradition of the rhinoceros, see Craig Ashley Hanson, "Representing the Rhinoceros: The Royal Society between Art and Science in the Eighteenth Century," *JECS Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33, no. 4 (2010), esp. 555.

Long glossed over by generations of art historians invested in originality, these tasks assume a new relevance for the modest medium of print and its lowbrow associate, the pirated copy.24

Copies as Metrics of Observation

While they might challenge concepts of originality and invention at the root of Renaissance art, recycled images performed overlooked but important tasks for epistemology: prints enabled the rise of observation and conditioned it by providing parameters for visual investigation. Citations through copies standardized viewing practices by instructing the viewer what to look for and perhaps even how to look, not unlike the way multiple sightings of a thing condition experience of it. The kinship of a handful of genres in which copies consistently reappear, like zoologies, travel accounts, and physiognomies, confirms the use of images to recommend visual analyses such as close scanning and comparative looking. The genre of physiognomic literature shows this especially well: once a set of printed portrait heads meant to illustrate character types were produced, copies of those same profiles appear in other volumes, sometimes with only remote relationship to the symptoms they were supposed to represent.25 Prints of conventional portraits distilled the text into sets of visual tools—the profiles represent the metrics by which user's observations should be calculated. This matched the genre's self-consciously stated goals to direct and collect observations. These images were particularly invested in verifying knowledge—their repetition through copies served to habituate the viewer's eye.

This kind of visual training promoted recognition. Copies were also frequently employed to help their viewers perform special kinds of visual tasks, such as comparison. Bronwen Wilson claims that the comparative function of images in physiognomies underwrites the sharpening of optical authority claimed by prints, an authority which established a new cognitive role for

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24   Efforts to rehabilitate the copy have been underway, cf. Lisa Pon, *Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi: Copying and the Italian Renaissance Print* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2004); Debra Taylor Cashion, "The Art of Nikolaus Glockendon Imitation and Originality in the Art of Renaissance Germany," vol. 2:1–2 (2010), *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art,* 2010; Lisa Voigt and Elio Brancaforte, "Traveling Illustrations of Sixteenth-Century Travel Narratives" in *PMLA*, 129, no. 3 (2014), 365–398.

25   Stephanie Leitch, "Visual Acuity and the Physiognomer's Art of Observation," *Oxford Art Journal* 38, no. 2 (2015): 187–206 (doi:10.1093/oxartj/kcv010).

images.26 For example, physiognomy encouraged the reader to weigh subjects between two visual prompts. This close study of profiles thus promised to develop the viewer's skill in distinguishing among faces. In this case, familiarity offered by the copy was quickly becoming a virtue when it came to honing visual acuity and the making of visual decisions.

New cognitive skills promoted by the copy likely governed Giambattista della Porta's choice to place a rhinoceros next to a damning portrait of Angelo Poliziano in *De humana physiognomonia libri IIII* (1602) (Fig. 19.3).27 This visual strategy was vested in both the value of antecedents and in the suggestion of empirical practice. In this comparison, Della Porta asked his readers to draw specific parallels between the two images presented. Juxtaposing Dürer's rhinoceros with the humanist and poet Poliziano, Della Porta announces, "Reader, you have here the great nose of the rhinoceros, from whose center springs a horn, with the living likeness of Angelo Poliziano."28 The citation of the horn set up a character assassination of Poliziano that included quick and prejudicial assessment of others, intolerance, and a twisted character that could be read from his "ignoble face, dark cavernous eyes, and enormous nose."29

Poliziano's own facial traits also derived from a chain of copies. Paolo Giovio's portrait collection in Como supplied the *ur*-image and caption that told of the subject's envious nature, wandering eye, and disproportionate nose.30 Della

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26   Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice Print, the City and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 208; Bronwen Wilson, "Learning How to Read: Giovanni Battista Della Porta, Physiognomy, and Printed Portrait-Books," paper presented at *Visual Knowledges Conference*, University of Edinburgh, 17–20 September 2003.

27   Giambattista della Porta, *De humana physiognomia libri IIII* (Naples: Tarquinium Longum, 1603).

28   Della Porta, 73.

29   Katherine MacDonald, "Humanistic Self-Representation in Giovan Battista Della Porta's 'Della Fisonomia Dell'Uomo': Antecedents and Innovation," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 2 (2005), 403–5. Della Porta's physiognomy lifted entire passages from Paolo Giovio and made no claim to originality. While Giovio's *Elogia* (Basel, 1571–1596) were firmly in the lineage of biographical collections like Vasari and Thevet, Della Porta's cribbing shows the symbiosis between physiognomy and the cinquecento portrait books.

30   Fu il Poliziano di costume censurabili. Ne ebbe aspetto gradevole, per que I suo naso spropositato e l'occhio losco che davano al viso un'aria assai poco benevola. Di natura accorto e sottile, rna pieno d'invidia malcelata, da un lato si faceva continuamente beffe delle opere altrui; dall'altro non poteva sopportare che nessuno, per quanto mosso da buone ragione, osasse criticare Ie sue.' Paolo Giovio, *Ritratti degli uomini illustri*, 119. *Poliziano had a censurable behaviour. He also lacked fair features, because he had a disproportionate nose and an eye that looked askew, which gave the face quite a malevolent air. He had a wise and watchful nature, full of inconcealable envy. On the one hand, he was always*

FIGURE 19.3   De Naso, *engraving (plate XXI, page 73), Giambattista della Porta, De Humana Physiognomonia (Naples: Tarquinium Longum, 1602).*

Porta borrowed Poliziano's features from woodcut copies of Giovio's portraits by Tobias Stimmer produced for *Musaei Joviani imagines* (Basel: Petri, 1577).31 Both Stimmer's and Della Porta's images focus their critique around Poliziano's nose; from these Della Porta's text shapes a general thesis about the nose's capacity to drive character.32 Della Porta requests his reader to scan images of the rhinoceros and Poliziano very closely for similarities. Of course, Della Porta had already strategically manipulated Poliziano's nose to more closely resemble that of Dürer's rhinoceros.33 Arguably, the manipulation could have gone in either direction—the nose job might have just as easily been performed on Dürer's specimen in order to more closely resemble Poliziano's crooked proboscis. But because the image with the most traction was the one already enshrined in print as a recognizable antecedent, Dürer's rhinoceros ultimately controlled the comparison.

Conclusion

As we have seen, stock images played an important role in conditioning the eye for early modern viewing. Copies informed and sensitized the viewer to otherwise unfamiliar things, even ones with a dubious relationship to reality. Such mental creations were especially difficult to dispel if a striking image was already in place—indeed when the hydra and basilisk were routed in the

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natural histories and zoologies, other genres like prodigy collections stood at the ready to absorb them. The highly particular nature of the rhinoceros shaped a credible identity for him in graphic technology, one so tenacious that even the introduction of photography was at pains to dispel it. As we have seen, Dürer's rhinoceros trampled through a host of genres, collecting the empirical warrants of travel accounts and zoology as he went. His identity burnished through copies only enhanced his popularity. When he arrived in the pages of Della Porta's physiognomy, he was so familiar that the viewer could mentally fill in the missing parts. For early modern travel writers, naturalists, and physiognomists, the rhinoceros *was* Dürer's rhinoceros.[34]

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