Giambattista Della Porta Encyclopedia Article

Giambattista Della Porta

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Giambattista Della Porta

1535-1615

Italian philosopher and scientist who, while employed as a writer of dramas, also did scientific work making optical instruments. He wrote on a variety of topics: optics, cryptography, mechanics, squaring the circle, steam engines, military engineering, the camera obscura, agriculture, chemistry, hydraulic machines, medical cures, demonology, and magnetism. He formed a short-lived scientific society, which was closed by the Inquisition, and built a personal museum. Although della Porta joined the Jesuits, the Inquisition banned publication of many of his writings.