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R O M E

GIOVAN BATTISTA DELLA PORTA'S NEAPOLITAN  
MAGIC & HIS HUMANISTIC METEOROLOGY

### Renaissance Naples

Naples and Paris were the two largest cities of Renaissance Europe, and for most of this period Naples was probably the largest.<sup>1</sup> From the late fifteenth century onward the Neapolitan population had been growing steadily: historians estimate that the town had around 100,000 inhabitants shortly before 1500, but the population had reached around 300,000 one century later.<sup>2</sup> The increase was due to a constant influx of impoverished farmers from the countryside, who were attracted by the tax exemptions granted by the sovereign of the Kingdom of Naples to the citizens of its capital.

In the late fifteenth century the Kingdom of Naples, which extended over Southern Italy and Abruzzo, was ruled by a secondary branch of the dynasty that reigned over

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<sup>1</sup> The most recent treatment of the political history of the Kingdom of Naples in the Renaissance can be found in Giuseppe Galasso, *Storia del Regno di Napoli, vol. 2: Il Mezzogiorno spagnolo (1494–1622)* (Turin, 2006). Further works on the political history of Renaissance Naples that I used are Raffaele Colapietra, *Il governo spagnolo nell'Italia meridionale (Napoli dal 1580 al 1648)*, in: *Storia di Napoli*, vol. 5,1 (Naples, 1972), pp. 161–278, here pp. 181–193; Guido D'Agostino, *Il governo spagnolo nell'Italia meridionale (Napoli dal 1503 al 1580)*, in: *Storia di Napoli*, vol. 5,1 (Naples, 1972), pp. 1–159; Cesare De Seta, *Napoli* (Bari, 1981), pp. 95–163; Giuseppe Galasso, *Alla periferia dell'impero. Il Regno di Napoli nel periodo spagnolo (secoli XVI–XVII)* (Turin, 1994), p. 5–216; Aurelio Lepre and Pasquale Villani, eds., *Il Mezzogiorno nell'età moderna e contemporanea*, vol. 1 (Naples, 1974), pp. 1–45; Tommaso Pedio, *Napoli e Spagna nella prima metà del Cinquecento* (Bari, 1971).

<sup>2</sup> On the growth of Renaissance Naples see D'Agostino, *Governo spagnolo*, pp. 105–110; De Seta, *Napoli*, pp. 113–114; Galasso, *Regno di Napoli*, pp. 688–691; Lepre and Villani, *Mezzogiorno*, p. 4; Ulrich Rosseau, *Städte in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Darmstadt, 2006), p. 11.