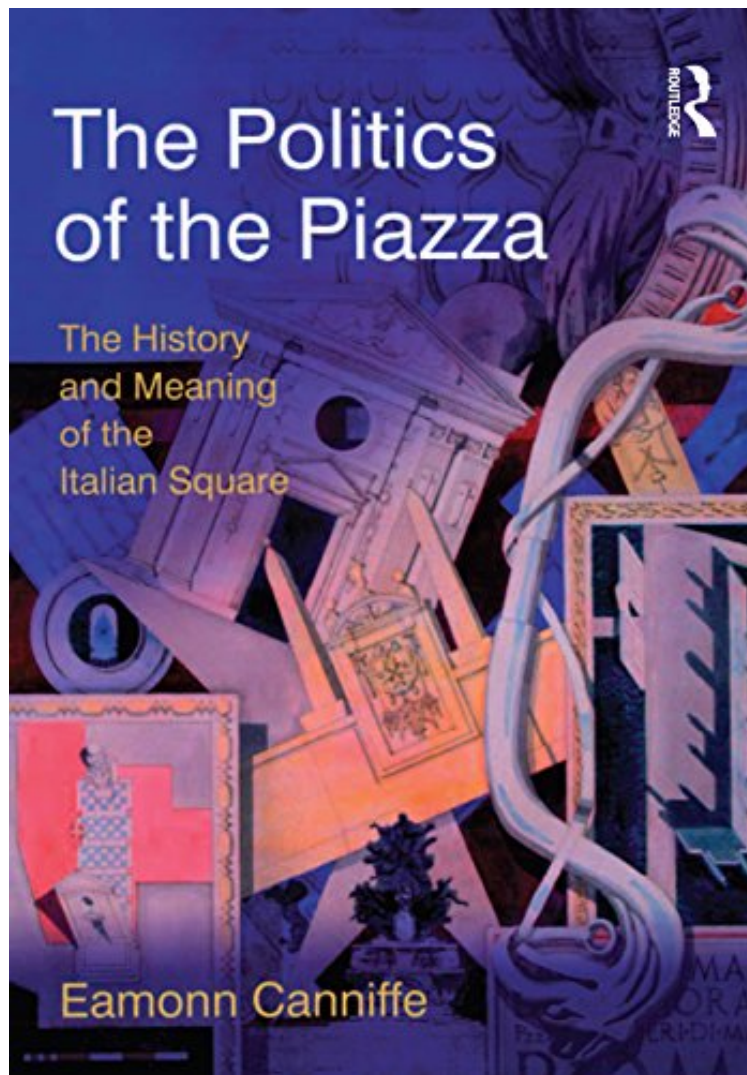


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## The Politics of the Piazza: The History and Meaning of the Italian Square (Design and the Built Environment)

*Eamonn Canniffe*

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2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. the "strangely fascinating power of the piazza"By David VoglerThis is a wonderful book. I would highly recommend it to anyone who has traveled to Italy or would like to, to anyone interested in Italy in general and it's fabled sense of la dolce vita, and to anyone interested in cities, history,

architecture, art or the impact of technology on social life. Canniffe provides an excellent history of the political meaning of the Italian piazza from the Roman forum to the postmodern. The book reflects years of research transformed into a cohesive well-written text filled with beautiful photographs of Italian piazzas. The authors' enthusiasm for and extensive direct experience in piazzas throughout Italy is something that all readers will appreciate, regardless of the particular interests that bring them to the book.

Through a detailed study of the principal spaces of Italian cities, this book explores the relationship between political systems and their methods of representation in architecture. Illustrated by contemporary photographs and analytical drawings, it examines significant piazzas and situates these examples in their social and political contexts, highlighting the urban evidence of shifts between autocratic and democratic forms of government through history. The ideological role of political architecture is analyzed through the work of various theorists including ancient sources, Renaissance thinkers and modern critics. The complex evolution of individual spaces over time is represented by their physical layering from ancient times to the present day. Other examples connect the development of different characteristic types of Italian urban form in chronological sequence, categorized by art historical and political periods.

Prize: A Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2009 'The Politics of the Piazza makes an important contribution to our understanding of the changing political landscapes that have influenced public space in Italy. The study succeeds in both being a chronological survey, demonstrating a breadth of knowledge of critical developments from ancient Rome to the present, and a series of insightful case-studies.' Nicholas Temple, University of Lincoln, UK 'Eamonn Canliffe's book is very important. It describes the spatial, political, and historical characteristics of Italy's heterogeneous public spaces...for any architect in search of inspiration it is tempting to see this as the most relevant book on Italian urban space since Camillo Sitte wrote 'City Planning According to Artistic Principles' in 1889 Architecture Today '...The book is thoroughly researched, appropriately referenced, precisely written, highly reliable, and genuinely insightful...fills an important gap in the study of the history of cities and is a welcome addition to the literature on urban space. It should be of great interest to a broad audience, including students, tourists, scholars in various disciplines, and professional urban designers, and a welcome addition to many libraries...Highly recommended.' Choice '[I] recommend the book to a variety of readers. Not only to those who are interested in the Classical examples of Italian square...but also to those who are looking for information on recent developments in the public spaces of Italy...Caniffe has provided a well-structured and well-partitioned book on the politics of the piazza. Not only is Italy the place to be for such empirical work, but also the case-studies in the different chapters are exemplary and insightful and illustrate very well the dominant political discourse in a specific period.' Bulletin of the Italian Politics '...The Politics of the Piazza is an important publication that provides a coherent, comprehensive, and fascinating account of the evolution of the public square through the complicated political, social, and religious life of the Italian peninsula and the islands, spanning more than two-thousand years. In the process Eamonn Canniffe deftly intertwines expertise in the critical analysis of architectural forms and their relationship to the spaces they occupy, with knowledge of momentous historical events that have come to define the nation.' Quadern: D'Italianistica 'The Politics of the Piazza...works best as in in-depth study of architectural forms and urban morphology, and specialist will find it a valuable contribution to the literature.' Traditional Dwellings and Settlements '...The Politics of the Piazza offers a unique analysis of a subject that should be a matter of concern to all practitioners-the purpose and origins of the piazza, a component of urbanism that, although particularly significant in Italy, remains recognizable throughout the western urban tradition...This book...successfully merges architecture with urbanism into a serious and refreshing academic reflection worthy of review by all professionals engaged in the creation of public space.' Sacred Architecture Journal 'Without doubt this book is impeccably researched and has a rich nine-page bibliography worthy of follow-up study by interested professionals. There are few books that tackle the subject with the depth of knowledge and insights displayed by the author.' Town Planning '... the book is a good read and will be an ideal addition to any collection focusing on the politics of urban spaces, urban culture, and history. The richness of use of visual materials is another positive feature: the book is illustrated with numerous black and white photographs, as well as plans and diagrams. Finally, The Politics of the Piazza is well-referenced, without getting bogged down in distracting debates and literatures: the focus here is always on the slippery subject at hand, the piazza in all its manifestations.' Space and Polity About the Author Eamonn Canniffe is a lecturer at the Manchester School of Architecture, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.