

LOLA KANTOR-KAZOVSKY

PIRANESI

AS INTERPRETER OF ROMAN ARCHITECTURE AND THE ORIGINS OF HIS INTELLECTUAL WORLD

The book is devoted to the study of G.B. Piranesi as a scholar of Roman antiquities and to his polemic against the philhellene trend in the aesthetic thought of the Enlightenment. This polemic, as becomes clear in the light of new documents, concerned not only Greek and Roman architecture, but also the methods of historical study, which were being questioned anew by 18th-century French scholars. Piranesi's anti-Hellenist position was a result of his exposure to the Renaissance architectural theory according to which Rome, not Greece was considered the pinnacle of architectural development in



antiquity. This position was rooted in the aesthetic approach formulated in the Renaissance, according to which the principles of structural simplicity and decoration were not seen as mutually exclusive, as they later came to be. The book contains an analysis of classical and Renaissance concepts of Roman architecture and explores their influence on Piranesi's artistic work, especially on the *Prisons*. The analysis of Piranesi's mature views highlights his unconventional approach to the origin and meaning of the architectural orders and his debt to the architectural theories current in early 18th century Venice.

Dedicato a G.B. Piranesi, studioso di architettura romana, il volume analizza la sua polemica contro gli studiosi ellenisti di antichità alla luce di nuovi elementi. L'autrice rintraccia dei precedenti, riguardo alle idee di Piranesi, nei classici e nella letteratura e architettura rinascimentale, evidenziando la presa di posizione tradizionalista di Cato Major espressa attraverso l'architettura bugnata come fonte di ispirazione per l'artista. Le vedute di Piranesi sono esaminate nel contesto di altre teorie architettoniche dell'Italia del Settecento.

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Lola Kantor-Kazovsky was born in 1957 in Moscow and studied art history at Moscow University. She worked as a curator in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts and wrote on 18th century European art, as well as on contemporary artists. Since 1992 she has been living in Jerusalem, where she wrote her doctorate on Piranesi with late Prof. Moshe Barasch. She currently is a lecturer in art history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her publications include articles on architectural history, on European art and architecture as reflected in the poetry of Mandelötam and on Russian non-conformist art.

Pocket Library of Studies in Art, vol. 36

2006, cm 15 × 21, 314 pp. con 65 ill. f.t. English Text.

[ISBN 88 222 5476 7]

CASA EDITRICE

Casella postale 66 • 50100 Firenze

E-MAIL: celso@olschki.it • pressoffice@olschki.it

Tel. (+39) 055.65.30.684



LEO S. OLSCHKI

P.O. Box 66 • 50100 Firenze Italy

orders@olschki.it • INTERNET: www.olschki.it

Fax (+39) 055.65.30.214