The book is devoted to the study of G.B. Piranesi as a scholar of Roman antiquities and to his polemic against the philhellenic 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.


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 Mandelstam and on Russian non-conformist art.

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PIRANESI
AS INTEPRETER OF ROMAN ARCHITECTURE
AND THE ORIGINS
OF HIS INTELLECTUAL WORLD