

media outreach on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs. Karner does offer one close reading of a 2017 Heinz-Christian Strache Facebook post in which nationalist argumentative strategies (in this instance, anti-Turkish ones) are presented in an “ironic register” (209). This would be a promising lead to follow: how does the informal, irreverent, even snarky tone acceptable on social media—as compared to the traditional press—feed certain kinds of nationalist expression?

The author is speaking to (at least) two scholarly audiences: sociologists and historians. My hunch is that sociologists will find the first half of the book most useful, while historians will find the post-1945 chapters and analysis of deeper discursive roots undergirding recent Austrian electoral politics to be thought-provoking and highly informative.

doi:10.1017/S0008938922000140

## Imaginary Athens: Urban Space and Memory in Berlin, Tokyo, and Seoul

**By Jin-Sung Chun. Translated by Youngjae Josephine Bae. New York: Routledge, 2021. Pp. 402. \$128 (HB). ISBN: 978-0367639921.**

Ricky W. Law

Carnegie Mellon University

What is to be done about politically significant buildings left behind by a toppled government? What does it mean to preserve or repurpose them? Or, if they too are to be toppled, what should be (re)constructed in their place? How authorities in modern Berlin, Tokyo, and Seoul responded to these questions as they built and rebuilt their cities through wars and regime changes is a unifying theme in Jin-Sung Chun’s *Imaginary Athens*. The book uses “a narrative representation of architecture and urban planning” to illustrate “how memories linked to a certain geographical imagery can heavily impact the creation of a country’s capital” (xii). Chun expertly shows that the three cities share not just comparable experiences, but that seemingly coincidental, superficial similarities in their design and structure are, in fact, traits revealing deep genealogical bonds. Berlin had “once served as a model for Tokyo,” which in turn, through Japanese imperialism, “served as a model for modern Seoul” (xiii). By combining histories of German influence on Japanese modernization and Japanese impact on East Asian Westernization, Chun’s book makes innovative and meaningful progress in Asian-German studies.

The book comprises five main parts: a prologue, three substantive chapters, and an epilogue. The prologue lays out the theoretical and methodological foundation that undergirds the book. To consider “the process through which Berlin, Tokyo, and Seoul were turned into modern capitals,” Chun applies Michel Foucault’s discursive formation that “comprehensively embodies architectural design, urban planning, and how citizens react to them” (17).

Chapter one traces the emergence and implementation of the idea of Berlin as “Athens on the Spree.” As Prussia rose from the late 1700s, there was a corresponding need to expand and embellish its capital. The Prussian state architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel was instrumental in molding the appearance of central Berlin. Schinkel was active in the era of Prussian classicism, a “Greek fever” that gripped Prussian elites. Schinkel’s neoclassical portfolio includes the Neue Wache, the Altes Museum, and the Royal Theater. But he is best remembered “as the one who discovered the tectonic order . . . an architectural principle that values a perfect harmony between form and function” (53). Schinkel envisioned tectonics also as a principle of state

organization: “A state should be an organically structured construction . . . each part of a state should serve the whole, like the components essential to supporting a building. All subjects must fulfill their duty to the king” (54). A city quarter with a concentration of government offices may thus be seen as an expression of tectonics in both senses.

Chapter two depicts the propagation of German influence in Japan. Starting in the 1860s, modernizing Japan needed a capital and a constitution to gain Western acceptance. Germany’s role in inspiring the Meiji Constitution (1889) is well known. Related, though less publicized, is that German technical advisers and German-trained Japanese architects brought Schinkelian tectonics to Japan. They incorporated Prussian classicism in their buildings in the new capital Tokyo. A plan was drawn to concentrate government offices, but because of financial constraints and other practical difficulties, it was not realized.

Chapter three explores Japan’s imposition of its modern architecture and urban planning in Korea after Japan annexed Korea in 1910. Whereas Berlin and Tokyo presented obstacles to fully implementing Schinkelian tectonics, colonial Seoul could offer much less resistance. The centerpiece of Japanese architectural and imperialist power was the Government-General Building. It stood on the site of the demolished Kyōngbokgung Palace, a centuries-old complex reconstructed shortly before the Japanese annexation of Korea. The colonial regime built several more public buildings with Prussian classicist influence. Yet even in Seoul, local circumstances obviated a Schinkelian concentration of government offices. A revived Athens in Berlin, Tokyo, or Seoul could only be imaginary. Interestingly, except for iconic pieces such as the Government-General Building, the Western—that is, not overtly Japanese—appearance of some Japanese-built structures contributed to their survival after 1945.

The epilogue compares the management of memory and public space in post-communist Berlin and post-colonial Seoul. In each capital, a politically significant building left behind by a toppled regime—the Palace of the Republic and the Government-General Building, respectively—was toppled and replaced with a reconstructed palace resurrected from the distant past. The book ends with a potential solution for balancing preservation and reuse of a historical structure.

Broad in scope yet rich in detail, *Imaginary Athens* delves into not only the three nations but also global trends in art and architecture, European imperialism, and Asian Westernization. The narrative moves smoothly among history, art history, architecture, urban planning, aesthetics, politics, visual culture, and memory studies. Youngjae Josephine Bae, the translator, rendered a technically meticulous text that should satisfy expert readers but is still accessible to others. The book consults evidence and scholarship in Korean, German, English, and Japanese. It uses diverse primary sources, including official documents, personal memoirs, mass media reports, and visual materials. The text is amply supplemented with illustrations, maps, and photographs. The central thesis—Germany influenced the modernization of Japan, which brought that influence to Korea—is eloquently articulated and persuasive. But the nature of the subject imposes limitations on the strength of the argument. Meanings of visual or physical artifacts can be open to different interpretations. Observers may disagree on whether the style of a building might qualify as fascist. Divining motives from such evidence is still more challenging. Even if it can be established that Japanese architects, administrators, and urban planners adopted Prussian classicism in modernizing Tokyo and Seoul, their reasons are not always clear. Some may question the extent to which Meiji Japan followed “the German model of modernization” (149) or whether one may speak of the “Prussianization of Japan” (151). As Tokyo played an indispensable role in connecting Berlin and Seoul, readers may be disappointed that Tokyo receives the least coverage of the three cities. Still, despite these issues, *Imaginary Athens* is an impressive interdisciplinary work that advances our understanding of the history of German-Asian cultural relations.

doi:10.1017/S0008938922000188