

Diversity in unity? The public administration's personnel in matters of public architecture

Any imperial-royal Minister for Public Works (the office existed from 1908 to 1918) who opened a door in the wall panelling of his official bureau in Vienna, could get a quick overview of the ministry's departmental structure and its personnel.¹ The inside of this door contained a flexible organisation chart arranged according to the ministry's departments with insertable cards carrying the typewritten names of the (senior) civil servants. Next to them, someone had added the letters 'C' and 'Slo' or 'Slov' in pencil.



The photographic records of this object form a remarkable time capsule when the dual monarchy had already collapsed and its successor states been founded. They document that the staff, who had previously worked in a single building complex in Vienna and had been responsible for the whole of Cisleithania, now either had to remain civil servants in Austria or become civil servants in one of the newly founded states due to the individual "Heimatrecht". From now on, the paths of former office colleagues diverged.

Based on the personnel of the ministry's departments which were responsible for public architecture, my paper discusses how the state administration functioned in a coherent and at the same time very differentiated cultural area. To what extent did centralised unifying ideas shape state buildings or did local responsibilities at provincial level dominate? What understanding of this cultural space can we recognise in the professional and linguistic qualifications, the individual work processes and tasks as well as the individual careers of the civil servants involved?

¹ Unknown to the public and unrecognised by researchers until just before their destruction, this door, as well as all other wall-mounted fittings of the former minister's office, existed until the summer of 2023, when they became the irretrievable victims of a radical renovation by the current owners.