

WAR + ARCHITECTURE

THE STORY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AS EDITED BY CONFLICT



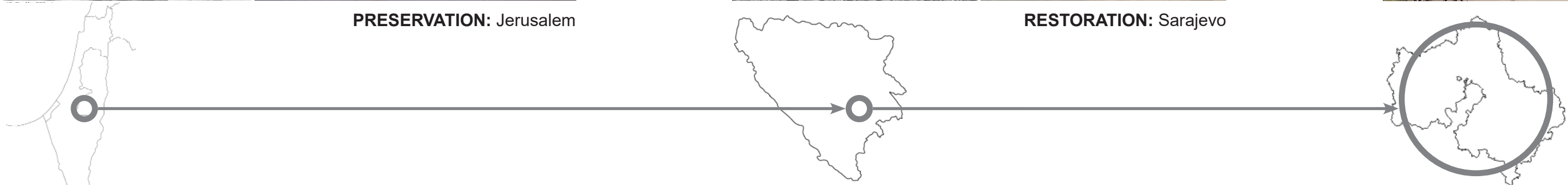
PRESERVATION: Jerusalem



RESTORATION: Sarajevo



DEMOLITION: Moscow



“The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has to surrender to it completely and explain itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time.” – Walter Benjamin

There is no greater influence on the formation and preservation of the built environment than culture, be it global or regional. The built environment symbolizes a shared history among its people and, therefore, becomes their common story. The personal and cultural memories we project onto the buildings around us form this environment, shaping our places of business, education, governance, worship and home - powerful symbols that create a sense of place and permanence.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that these symbols – the buildings that represent the political, economic, and/or religious institutions of a region – are typically the first to fall in times of conflict; those institutions that are typically erected as the most fortified elements of the built environment are simultaneously the most vulnerable.

There is no greater ‘edit’ to the story of architecture and the built environment than war. The most immediate consequence of war is the loss of human life; but this is only one part of story during a conflict. War is more than just the physical destruction of life and its context: it is most, and foremost, the immediate and long-term psychological break-down of the living. There is no faster way to demoralize a people than to destroy their common story – one that is so deeply ingrained and woven into their built environment over generations.

Through my research and travels to the cities of Jerusalem, Sarajevo and Moscow, I hope to identify and learn about the way in which the stories of the built environment are edited by conflict; more specifically, the way war is written into a people's common story and, most importantly, what motivates their approach. There are three main edits for the aftermath of war:

1. **Preservation:** Adapting the Ruins (Jerusalem)
2. **Restoration:** Rebuilding the Old (Sarajevo)
3. **Demolition:** Building the New (Moscow)

The proposed documentation for this trip would involve photography, mapping, sketching and audio/visual recordings of stories as told by those who have lived them.

I conclude with my main thoughts behind the exploration of the topic above: the cycle of war in human history has yet to be broken, and it is arguable that our built environment would exist at its current level of complexity without it. It is not my position to justify war, but rather to understand that war and architecture are forever intertwined, for as we build and expand, rebuild and protect, level and start anew, we keep writing an ever more complex story.

Budget: Flights (\$2,700), Ground Transport (\$300), Lodgings (\$1,200), Food (\$800) = \$5,000