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# SOFTWARE TOOLS IN THE SERVICE OF MONUMENTAL HERITAGE CLIMATE CHANGE CONSERVATION

**Bojan Branković**

ORCID iDs: Bojan Branković https://orcid.org/0009-0009-2247-7815

**Abstract**. *This paper analyzes the dual threats of climate change and anthropogenic development on regional cultural heritage, demonstrating that industrial activities must be radically realigned with sustainable development. Using participants' research rezults with multi-disciplinary, the study develops a socio-technical framework for systematic heritage monitoring and mitigation without requiring prior technical expertise from community participants. The resulting policy model proposes key legislative and structural reforms: the mandatory integration of Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA), the extension of the "Polluter Pays" principle to fund permanent site remediation, the creation of a dedicated Climate Risk Heritage Protection Fund, and the enforcement of rigid "greening" reclamation standards for extractive industries. Grounded in inclusive governance and social principles, the study outlines how public data accessibility and mandatory public hearings protect vulnerable demographics and historical landscapes. Ultimately, the paper concludes that cultural heritage preservation is a strategic investment in collective memory, proving that environmental resilience and identity continuity are inextricably linked to democratic, community-driven resource management.*

**Key words**: *Cultural Heritage Preservation, Climate Change Adaptation, Sustainable Development, Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), Participatory Governance.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The current trend of global warming, driven primarily by anthropogenic activities, is advancing at a rate unprecedented in the last 1300 years, posing a direct threat to the preservation of monumental heritage. However, assessing these localized risks is severely limited when relying on Global Circulation Models (GCMs), as their coarse horizontal resolution, historically ranging from 125 to 400 km – averages out vast geographical areas into single computational grid cells. Consequently, these macro-models fail to simulate critical microclimatic phenomena and physical processes that directly impact cultural sites, such as the localized behavior of river valleys, the orographic effects of mountain ranges, or moisture-trapping temperature inversions in basins. Because a GCM cannot detect whether an individual historical structure situated in a specific valley will face devastating flash floods or accelerated material degradation, there is an urgent methodological need to

* * * * * Received: (this line will be written by the journal; the lines below by the author(s)).
**Corresponding author**: Bojan Branković
E-mail: bojan89.brankovic@gmail.com

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transition toward high-resolution Regional Climate Models (RCMs) capable of downscaling global climate data into actionable, site-specific risk assessments for preventative conservation. [1, 2, 3].

Regional Climate Models (RCMs) were developed specifically to overcome these spatial limitations. RCMs are nested within GCM simulations, utilizing the GCM output data as external boundary conditions. The core value of RCMs lies in providing a much finer horizontal resolution, which enables the explicit representation of local processes, such as the direct modeling of microclimatic phenomena like convection or orographic precipitation that previously had to be parameterized. Furthermore, it allows for more precise coupling of the atmosphere and land surfaces, which is essential for modeling local hydrological vulnerability and extreme precipitation events [4]. The use of RCMs is therefore indispensable for accurate localized risk assessments, such as vulnerability analyses of the Rasina District or other regional case studies, and for guiding adequate adaptive strategies in the preservation of cultural heritage.

From a computational perspective, global and regional models are essentially highly complex software tools and mathematical algorithms. They are executed on supercomputers and utilize massive datasets along with fundamental laws of physics and chemistry, such as fluid dynamics and thermodynamics, to simulate how air, water, energy, and pollutants move and change over time. Consequently, these tools do not represent physical measuring devices, but rather highly complex mathematical simulations of atmospheric and climate processes [5].

To conceptualize the application value of this software, climate models are viewed through the lens of spatial resolution, where the Earth's surface is covered by a grid of computational cells. Resolution represents the side length of that square, measured in kilometers, meaning that a smaller number indicates a higher resolution and a more detailed simulation. Global Models (GCMs) feature a coarse resolution, often around 100 km by 100 km, meaning a single cell averages out vastly different geographical features, combining mountains, river valleys, and urban areas. Because of this, a GCM cannot detect microclimatic specificities, such as those in the Rasina District, nor can it determine whether a localized flood will impact a specific valley where a monastery is located.

Conversely, Regional Models (RCMs) offer a detailed resolution, typically around 10 km by 10 km, acting effectively as a computational magnifying glass. An RCM utilizes the macro-calculations of a GCM but downscales them for a smaller region, allowing it to precisely model local topography, the influence of mountains on rainfall, and the exact concentration zones of moisture and pollution [6, 7]. In the context of cultural heritage protection, while a GCM provides information that a broader region will experience warming, an RCM identifies exactly where a landslide might occur and the specific degree of flood risk facing a e.g. monasteries in the West Morava River valley, making regional climate modeling an essential tool for preventative conservation.

## 2. Technological Adaptation: Moisture Management and Material Consolidation

High-resolution Regional Climate Models (RCMs) identify moisture and accelerated erosion as the primary vectors of degradation for medieval heritage, particularly within river valleys such as those in the Rasina District. In response to these

climate-driven risks, modern conservation strategies increasingly rely on innovative materials designed to enhance resilience without compromising the historical authenticity of the structures [8]. Active moisture control is achieved through the application of advanced hydrophobic mortars and binders, which play a critical role in safeguarding historic wall paintings, such as the frescoes in the Ljubostinja Monastery. These specialized formulation systems are engineered to be highly compatible with original medieval materials, such as historical lime mortars, while incorporating additives that significantly improve resistance to water penetration. Nanotechnology-driven applications utilize silane and siloxane-based compounds, which are either integrated directly into the mortar mix or applied as surface coatings. These treatments exert a strong hydrophobic effect that repels liquid water while maintaining high water-vapor permeability, or breathability. This capability is a fundamental conservation requirement, as it prevents moisture entrapment within the masonry, thereby effectively blocking biological growth and salt efflorescence [9, 10, 11].

For structural reinforcement and the protection of stonework against thermal fatigue and aeolian erosion, advanced consolidation and stabilization methods are applied. Modern consolidants based on ethyl silicates or nanostructured materials penetrate deeply into the porous stone sustainability, where they chemically react to strengthen the material from within. This internal crystallization renders the stone highly resilient against abrasion, freeze-thaw cycles, and cracking induced by thermal stress, all while preserving the original appearance, texture, and historic patina of the substrate [12, 13].

To ensure the long-term efficacy of these hydrophobic materials and structural consolidants, systematic, real-time monitoring through sensory networks is required for predictive maintenance and early warning capabilities. Non-invasive, wireless Internet of Things (IoT) sensors are deployed within highly vulnerable medieval monuments throughout the Rasina District to continuously monitor key parameters driving fresco and stone degradation. These devices track indoor and outdoor temperature and relative humidity, internal moisture content within the walls – which is critical for identifying potential salt crystallization and biological threats – and the concentration of atmospheric pollutants such as sulfur dioxide (SO2) in more urbanized zones. When measured parameters breach predefined critical thresholds, such as prolonged high humidity levels, these integrated systems automatically transmit alerts to conservation professionals, facilitating rapid, targeted interventions before irreversible structural or artistic damage occurs [14, 15, 16].

## 3. Innovative Conservation Methods: A High-Tech Battle Against Degradation

In direct response to identified climate-driven risks, modern conservation practice adopts two key high-tech methods for the reversible and precise remediation of damage.

First, laser cleaning and ablation represent a highly advanced technique for removing surface contamination, corrosion, and biological growth, such as lichens and algae, from delicate historical surfaces. This technique utilizes the phenomenon of ablation, where a precisely calibrated laser pulse evaporates exclusively the target contaminant. During this process, the energy transferred to the underlying original substrate remains strictly below its damage threshold, making this method ideal for the delicate restoration of historic stone carvings and architectural decorations.

Second, electrochemical desalination, or electrophoresis, directly targets the removal of soluble salts, which remain the most destructive agent for ancient masonry in high-moisture environments. By establishing a mild electrical field across the damp masonry, salt ions are driven toward the surface or into sacrificial poultices, effectively extracting them from the structural core. This specific method is critical for treating foundations and the lower sections of walls within the humid zones of the Rasina District, where aggressive mechanical cleaning is strictly prohibited, and where salts from capillary moisture continuously threaten the structural integrity of both historic mortars and medieval frescoes [17]. Monitoring and modeling must be employed to ensure success in implementation.

## 4. Non-Invasive Diagnostics: Detection of Hidden Vulnerabilities

As a fundamental step in predictive conservation, it is essential to detect hidden structural damage and internal fissures within monumental heritage utilizing strictly non-invasive methods. Two key techniques in this domain are Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and Infrared Thermography (IRT). GPR is utilized to scan substrates and masonry using high-frequency electromagnetic waves, allowing researchers to uncover buried foundations and distinct archaeological strata, while also identifying concealed cracks, voids, or zones of high moisture retention deep within the thick masonry walls of medieval monuments.Complementarily, Infrared Thermography records the surface temperature profile of a structure. Because damp sections of masonry conduct and emit heat differently than dry zones, thermography can accurately map internal moisture distribution and thermal anomalies without requiring any physical intervention or material disruption. Both techniques are vital for the efficient mapping of subterranean archaeological remains prior to excavation, as well as for diagnosing hidden moisture pathways and structural fissures across historical monuments, thereby ensuring that adaptive conservation strategies target the precise coordinates of structural degradation [18, 19, 20, 21, 22].

## 5. Mechanisms of Material Degradation

While climate change presents a fundamental, existential threat to cultural heritage, it is equally necessary to analyze the direct anthropogenic pressures arising from economic development, which can be just as destructive. The preservation of cultural heritage demands that intensive industrial activities, such as mining, waste management, and hydropower development, be radically redefined and aligned with the principles of sustainable development. Uncontrolled models of resource exploitation, manifested through the physical destruction of archaeological strata, chemical pollution, and the drastic disruption of river hydrological regimes—such as those observed in the Rasina

District—stand in direct opposition to heritage protection goals. Consequently, a way out of this spiral of destruction must be found through the implementation of integrated policies that prioritize cultural sustainability, ensuring that short-term economic benefits do not generate an irreversible loss of collective memory and local identity [23, 24].

### 5.1. Preservation of Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability

The claim that the preservation of cultural heritage and economic sustainability are inherently opposed represents a false dilemma. The true solution lies in the application of rigorous, integrated scientific planning and the adoption of sustainable development principles, thereby minimizing the risk of economic destruction.

### 5.2.Integrated Scientific Planning

The integration of conservation science into the very planning phase of economic development projects is crucial. This approach demands a focus on preventative measures rather than retroactive damage control. Furthermore, it is essential to implement the principle of cost internalization, whereby the contractor bears full responsibility and financial obligation for field-based environmental and heritage monitoring, ensuring that the external costs of pollution and destruction are not shifted onto society. Consequently, any corporation planning mining projects or other intensive economic activities must fully fund comprehensive archaeological investigations on the designated terrain prior to the commencement of any works. This obligation extends to financing the remediation or physical relocation of the threatened heritage [25, 26, 27].

## 6. Principles of Sustainable Development and Scientific Assessment

Scientific methodologies must serve as a regulatory barrier before any high-risk projects threatening heritage can be approved. Prior to the authorization of mining or other industrial developments, a mandatory, impartial archaeological and conservation impact assessment must be conducted using rigorous scientific approaches. These assessments must utilize the previously defined non-invasive diagnostic methods, such as Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), to reliably detect the presence and establish the historical value of hidden archaeological strata before ground is broken. This proactive approach preemptively eliminates the risk of accidentally destroying unrecorded heritage assets [28, 29, 30].

A truly sustainable economy dictates that economic growth is not achieved through the destruction of irreplaceable treasures, but is instead built upon asset valorization through cultural tourism and regional development. Accordingly, legal frameworks must strictly mandate that all archaeological research and heritage mitigation efforts are fully funded by the investor as an intrinsic component of the overall project costs. In the long term, state institutions must recognize that cultural heritage is an irreversible resource and the cornerstone of collective identity; therefore, heritage preservation is not an economic drain, but a foundational investment in societal identity and long-term sustainability.

## 7. Methodology and Interdisciplinary Research

The successful implementation of strategies to preserve cultural heritage from climate- and anthropogenically-induced threats demands a fundamental democratization of

decision-making processes and the abandonment of insular management models. In this regard, all decisions concerning major economic projects that potentially threaten heritage assets – such as mining and hydropower developments – must be absolutely transparent and accessible to the public. To establish ethical accountability and collective oversight, all relevant stakeholders must be proactively integrated into the decision-making and monitoring phases. This includes local communities, who serve as the primary custodians of ethnological connection and are the first to face the socio-economic consequences of heritage degradation, alongside specialized expert organizations [30, 31].

Among these professional bodies, Institutes for the Protection of Monuments are essential to guarantee conservation integrity, while women's and environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must be included to provide impartial oversight and multidisciplinary expertise in assessing multi-sectoral impacts on heritage and the environment. Ensuring this level of public participation and transparency serves as a vital democratic mechanism to control short-term economic interests, ultimately guaranteeing that cultural heritage is treated as an irreplaceable public resource rather than merely a line item within a project's private capital budget.

## 8. Draft Proposals for the Legislation: Integration of Heritage, Ecology, and Sustainability

To establish long-term protection for cultural heritage and effectively resolve the tension between economic growth and environmental preservation, it is essential to reform the existing legislative framework by implementing legally binding mechanisms [30].

### 8.1. Mandatory Integration of Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA)

The primary regulatory measure involves the mandatory integration of cultural heritage evaluations directly into the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) framework. Under this statutory update, a comprehensive Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) must be legally required for all large-scale infrastructure and construction initiatives before any zoning or building permits can be issued. Furthermore, the legislation must establish a definitive veto mechanism against irreversible harm; projects whose HIA models conclusively demonstrate that they will inflict unmitigable damage upon archaeological sites or monuments of exceptional national and global importance must be automatically denied execution permits [31, 32].

### 8.2. Financial Accountability and the "Polluter Pays for Heritage" Principle

The updated legislation must enforce the internalization of protective and remediation costs, effectively expanding the established "Polluter Pays" principle to fully encompass cultural heritage assets. Under this fiscal mandate, investors bear comprehensive financial liability for the entire lifecycles of mitigation efforts, including initial exploratory research, specialized scientific studies, and permanent site remediation. To fund proactive adaptation against environmental pressures, the draft proposes the creation of a dedicated Climate Risk Heritage Protection Fund, which would be continuously capitalized through targeted surcharges and a statutory percentage of resource extraction royalties (mining rents) directed specifically to this independent facility [31, 33].

### 8.3. Protection of Vulnerable Groups and Ecofeminism

An integrated approach to heritage conservation must also systematically address the social dimensions of risk, explicitly recognizing that climate change and aggressive economic degradation do not impact all demographic segments equally. The law should mandate the incorporation of gender-sensitive impact analyses into all major project evaluations, assessing specific socioeconomic outcomes with an emphasis on women. Grounded in the principles of ecofeminism, which illustrate how the marginalization of specific social groups is structurally linked to the destruction of the natural and cultural environment – this framework guarantees the active inclusion of vulnerable demographics in adaptive planning and local recovery strategies, ensuring an equitable distribution of resources, environmental safety, and technical knowledge [34, 36]

### 8.4. Transparency and Public Participation

Beyond formal regulatory compliance, transparency must be operationally secured through rigorous technical and procedural channels. All critical data regarding project impacts, archaeological mitigation results, and environmental monitoring feedback must be published in a digital, highly accessible format on a centralized public platform. Additionally, the regulatory approval pipeline must include mandatory public consultation phases conducted in direct coordination with a Community Advisory Body, establishing an open democratic mechanism for genuine local participation and community consensus-building before any industrial or infrastructural interventions are approved [35, 31]

### 8.5. Implementation of Green Standards in Extractive Industries

To complement cost internalization, the legislative framework must institute rigid, mandatory land reclamation and environmental rehabilitation standards for the mining and resource extraction sectors. Ecological and landscape restoration of terrains impacted by mining activities must be legally codified as compulsory "greening" standards. This ensures that heavily degraded landscapes are comprehensively revitalized post-exploitation, thereby minimizing the long-term ecological damage, heavy metal contamination, and visual footprint of industrial activities on surrounding historic landscapes [37, 31]

## 9. Methodology and Research Objectives

The methodological framework of this study was based on empirical focus group research, strategically integrating the dual perspectives of multi-disciplinary subject-matter experts and local collaborators.

This participatory research structure provided deep architectural insight into localized information-sharing processes, creating a robust and valuable database for defining future strategies to preserve the regional cultural narrative. The educational segment was implemented through a modern, extra-curricular framework that heavily affirms group work, digital literacy, and critical systems thinking. Through post-session group discussions and interactive digital mapping modules, theoretical discourse was successfully transformed into a practical, data-driven platform. This process significantly strengthened the functional integration of regional culture, architectural conservation, and environmental data science.

By specifically raising community environmental awareness regarding acute climatic impacts on heritage sites, citizens are elevated from passive observers to active participants in defining localized protection and mitigation processes. The participants' critical assessment, cross-referenced with regional climate projections, allowed for the precise identification of models for direct local community engagement. Ultimately, this paper synthesizes these collaborative inputs to define a comprehensive strategy for systematic, real-time monitoring and the sustainable development of architectural heritage under conditions of global climatic imbalance [38].

## 10. RESULTS

This research structure provided deep insight into localized information-sharing processes, creating a robust, structured database designed for defining future strategies to preserve the regional cultural narrative. The educational segment was implemented through a modern, extra-curricular framework that heavily affirms group work and critical systems thinking. Through post-session group discussions, theoretical discourse was successfully transformed into a practical, action-oriented platform. This collaborative process significantly strengthened the functional integration of regional culture, architectural conservation, and environmental data science.

By specifically raising community environmental awareness regarding acute climatic impacts on heritage sites, citizens are elevated from passive observers to active participants in defining localized protection and mitigation processes. The participants' critical assessment allowed for the precise identification of models for direct local community engagement, without requiring prior technical or digital expertise from the local collaborators. Ultimately, this paper synthesizes these collaborative inputs to define a comprehensive strategy for systematic monitoring and the sustainable development of architectural heritage under conditions of global climatic imbalance.

## 11. CONCLUSION

Extensive research confirms a structural link between regional cultural heritage degradation, macro-environmental trends, and climate-driven cultural disintegration. By identifying the most devastating physical processes and socio-economic risk categories, this study emphasizes that robust regulatory systems and targeted policy interventions are the primary mechanisms for conserving vulnerable historical infrastructure. Addressing these interconnected complexities requires a decisive transition toward integrated scientific planning and a fundamental paradigm shift in how heritage assets are conceptualized and valued. Key legislative and structural reforms must include the redefinition of legal frameworks and the realignment of institutional responsibilities regarding climate extremes, coupled with the establishment of a dedicated Heritage Protection Fund to secure continuous resources for systematic risk management.

Consequently, modern adaptation strategies must prioritize preventative conservation achieved through innovative diagnostic methodologies and advanced material technologies. In identified high-risk geographic zones, the implementation of rigid environmental standards and technological transitions such as non-invasive tracking

systems and hydrophobic treatments stands as an immediate imperative. Beyond these purely technical solutions, fostering community environmental education through interactive, participatory assessment frameworks is crucial for permanently embedding heritage preservation within broader sustainable development principles.

Furthermore, operational monitoring systems demand absolute transparency in public decision-making processes and an administrative flexibility that ensures structural safety and long-term durability. The institutionalization of mandatory public hearings, multi-stakeholder participation, and open digital data accessibility are essential structural pillars for achieving truly inclusive governance. Ultimately, cultural heritage preservation must not be viewed as an economic liability or a sunken expense, but rather as a strategic, irreversible investment in regional identity. A resilient natural environment and the meticulous nurturing of historical assets remain inextricably linked to ecological awareness, collectively ensuring the survival of community memory and long-term cultural continuity.

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