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TECHNOLOGY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Abstract: *This paper examines the archaeological and anthropological significance of the Göbekli Tepe complex, whose emergence at the onset of the Holocene (ca. 9600 BCE) compels a profound re-evaluation of the standard narrative concerning the origins of monumental architecture and religious complexes. Contrary to the widespread assumption that such constructions become possible only with the rise of agriculture and permanent settlements, the case of Göbekli Tepe demonstrates that hunter- gatherer communities possessed advanced forms of social organization, technological knowledge, and symbolic thought. The arrangement of the "T-pillars," together with their relief depictions of animals and abstract symbols, is interpreted as materialized mythopoesis—a religious complex serving to shape and consolidate the collective identity of a broader community. The paper further suggests a connection between climatic changes following the end of the Last Glacial Maximum, the transition from nomadic to more sedentary modes of life, and the emergence of a "surplus of free time" redirected toward collective architectural undertakings and ritual practices. Parallels with megalithic monuments such as Stonehenge, as well as with the development of Neolithic cultures in Europe— especially the Vinča culture as the apex of the European Neolithic—indicate that*

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technological advancement has, from the very beginning, been inseparable from the value-laden choices of a community. Ultimately, the study challenges the stereotype of the "primitiveness" of the Stone Age and points out that a high level of social consciousness and communal responsibility preceded many later forms of civilizational development. It concludes that the contemporary imbalance between technological progress and social awareness calls for a critical re-examination of the motivations and consequences underlying our technological choices.

Keywords: *technology; myth and ritual; collective identity; social consciousness.*

1.Introductory Remarks

The present study may be regarded as a natural continuation of my previous contribution to this journal, entitled *The People of Vinča*[2]. This time, the discussion proceeds through an exploration of archaeological investigations and their interpretation, with the aim of illuminating the problem of the disproportion between technological development and the evolution of consciousness within Neolithic communities.

I will begin by presenting several illustrative examples that clarify the broader contextual framework, and will subsequently offer an interpretation which, in my view, provides the most compelling explanation for why certain technologies were favored while others were marginalized. I shall also outline several anthropological and philosophical implications that may assist us in

[2] See (Janković 2025).

deepening, and where necessary, reinterpreting our established knowledge.

Let us therefore begin.

2. Understanding the Wondrous

Following the end of the Last Glacial Maximum and with the onset of the Holocene (ca. 9600 BCE), in the region of present-day southeastern Turkey, at the site of Göbekli Tepe (Göbekli Tepe), there emerged—according to the prevailing view among researchers—one of the most enigmatic architectural and sculptural creations of the Stone Age.[3] This archaeological site, discovered in 1994 near modern-day Urfa[4], triggered a genuine scientific revolution and fundamentally altered the existing understanding of the earliest human history.

The German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt (Klaus Schmidt), in his search for Neolithic sites, identified a hill previously believed to be a natural formation. It soon became clear, however, that it was a massive, artificially constructed stone platform beneath which lay complex architectural structures. Excavations revealed monumental T-shaped stone pillars, up in concentric circles and decorated with reliefs of animals— lions, wild boar, scorpions, birds of prey—as well as abstract symbols (see Schmidt 2009: 189). These iconographic motifs unequivocally indicate the religious and symbolic

[3] See more on this in (Schmitt 2009: 187–188).

[4] Urfa (Şanlıurfa) is located in southeastern Turkey, 80 km east of the Euphrates.

character of the complex, which is today recognized as one of the earliest known cult centers in human history.

An additional enigma lies in the fact that the builders themselves, after centuries of use, eventually intentionally buried the entire complex beneath enormous quantities of earth and rubble. Although no traces of agriculture or domesticated animals have been found at the site, the presence of gazelle bones, bird remains, and other wild fauna indicates that its builders were exclusively hunter-gatherer communities (Schmidt 2009: 190). Since no permanent settlement has been discovered in the immediate vicinity, Göbekli Tepe must be interpreted as a ritual and religious center serving a broader community. This discovery is particularly striking, for it demonstrates that hunter-gatherers were capable of developing the technology and organizational capacity necessary to erect monumental structures, without the wheel, metal tools, or domesticated animals, something considered impossible prior to the discovery of this site.

This leads to a fundamental question: what motivated hunter-gatherer groups to construct structures of such scale?

As I emphasize in my text *The People of Vinča* (Janković 2025: 223), anatomically modern humans during the Last Glacial Maximum lived under harsh conditions, dependent on the migrations of animal populations and forced into a nomadic mode of life that did not allow for the construction of permanent dwellings. With the dramatic climatic changes at the end of the Ice Age and the stabilization of environmental conditions at the beginning of the Holocene, many animal species became more stationary, which in turn enabled human groups to transition to semi-sedentary or fully sedentary forms of life.

It is precisely in this context that the early builders of Göbekli Tepe must be understood. Greater stability in food acquisition and a reduced need for constant mobility created the conditions for the emergence of a "surplus of time," which was directed toward the materialization of myths and symbolic representations shaped over generations. Myths constituted the foundation of a community's identity, and participation in their materialization through the erection of monumental structures was an act of collective reaffirmation of belonging.[5] This monumental endeavor may be compared to modern artistic colonies in which a community jointly participates in the creation of a symbolic space—importantly, with no evidence of coercion.

A similar motive can be discerned in the construction of Stonehenge, whereas in the case of the Egyptian pyramids it is clear that we are dealing with a state-organized, hierarchically coordinated undertaking aimed at demonstrating power and enacting the apotheosis of the ruler.

Stonehenge represents only one in a series of megalithic structures erected on the territory of present-day Britain. This famous Neolithic monument, located near Salisbury[6], was constructed approximately six millennia after Göbekli Tepe (Richards, 1990). It is characteristic that the majority of megalithic complexes on the British Isles were dismantled after only a few generations, pointing to a complex and dynamic cultic

[5] On the role of identity as the foundation of the individual and the political community, see (Bodin 2024: 196).

[6] Salisbury, situated at the confluence of the rivers Nadder, Ebble, Wylye, and Bourne with the River Avon, on the edge of the Salisbury Plain.

practice. Particularly significant for understanding this phenomenon is the fact that the period of construction and dismantling coincides with the moment when Neolithic communities i Britai abandone already-agricultural production and reverted to foraging—especially the gathering of hazelnuts, one of their primary food sources. This return to pre-agricultural subsistence strategies likely stimulated a revival of Mesolithic ancestral myths, whose materialization was realized in the construction of these monumental structures. Thus, the burial and dismantling of the complexes at Göbekli Tepe and Stonehenge may be interpreted as the need of each new generation to insert a part of its own identity into collective tradition through the physical, ritualized renewal of myth.

Parallel to these developments, *Homo sapiens* at the beginning of the Holocene in Eurasia faced a gradual reduction in game resources. After the retreat of the ice sheets and under more favorable climatic and ecological conditions, human populations expanded dramatically, while hunting reserves were rapidly depleted. Although the process was not sudden, it was sufficiently perceptible for early communities to become aware of impending scarcity. It is from precisely these circumstances that agriculture emerges as a long-term adaptive response to limited hunting resources. Contrary to the frequently repeated view in archaeological literature, this was not a "Neolithic Revolution," but a gradual, multigenerational transition to farming and herding. Mesolithic communities adopted this change at different times, depending on local circumstances. The key precondition was a stable and predictable climate, which was established in the Near East much earlier than in Europe, explaining the later appearance of the Neolithic on European soil (Janković 2025: 220).

Approximately four millennia after the emergence of Göbekli Tepe, between 5300 and 4500 BCE, the region of present-day Serbia and the central Balkans became one of the leading cultural centers of prehistoric Europe. At the site of modern Vinča, a remarkably large and well-organized settlement developed, described in scholarly literature as the *metropolis* of the culture within which the European Neolithic reached its zenith (Srejović, 1994). With the discovery of the technology for processing copper ore, members of the Vinča culture became pioneers of the earliest European metallurgy (Radivojević 2012). By mastering the complex processes of material transformation, the early Vinča metallurgists laid the foundations of future European civilizational trajectories.

The Vinča culture entered the historical stage in the second half of the Neolithic. At that time, thanks to a new technology, the enrichment of exhausted soil through manuring, a community was, for the first time, able to live in the same place for many tens of generations, thereby conceptualizing the dwelling as a permanent residential structure (Janković 2021).

One of the most distinctive features of the Vinča culture is its advanced architectural ingenuity. By combining clay, sand, and chaff, they produced a high-quality composite material (plaster) applied to the wooden framework of walls and to floor surfaces over supporting beams. The presence of chaff in this plaster rendered it a powerful thermal insulator[7]. A sophisticated

[7] Within the project "Mali Dunav," carried out by the Center for Fisheries and Applied Hydrobiology (Faculty of Agriculture,

heating system, with furnaces and smoke-venting installations, enabled their houses to achieve a remarkable level of energy efficiency (cf. Janković, 2021).

Through the grinding and polishing of stone, Neolithic *sapiens* produced exceptionally sharp blades (adzes, axes, picks) (Antonović2003). The technology of stone polishing significantly improved life in the Neolithic. Stone tools were frequently drilled with great precision to allow the fitting of handles. Drilling was accomplished with the aid of a bow-drill mechanism and tubular bits (reed or elder) filled with sand (abrasive), with periodic additions of water. The unquestionable ingenuity of Neolithic craftsmen reveals that *Homo sapiens*, from the moment of his appearance, was an intelligent and inventive being**.** Even when dwelling in caves, he exhibited genius—he survived the Ice Age. Bears and many other animals possess enormous strength, fur, claws, or natural weaponry such as horns or tusks; humans possess none of these traits. In comparison with most animals that inhabited the world during the Last Glacial Maximum, humans were physically inferior (see Scheler, 2011: 24). What did humans possess that other animals lacked? They possessed high intelligence and inventiveness. Had they been undeveloped or primitive, they would not have survived the Ice Age. Our existence today is owed not to their physical strength or advantages, but to their genius.[8]

University of Belgrade) in Radmilovac, three houses representing the three most significant prehistoric cultures of the Serbian Danube region were reconstructed (the Lepenski Vir culture, the Starčevo culture, and the Vinča culture). The project team consisted of Prof. Zoran Marković from the Faculty of Agriculture in Belgrade; architect Hristivoje Pavlović; Radoljub Nikolić, a master builder specializing in traditional materials; and archaeologist Dragan Janković, curator of the Belgrade City Museum.

[8] In egalitarian societies, all members of the community have access to information and knowledge, allowing everyone to

3.The Genius of Neolithic People in Choosing Their Desires

If Neolithic *sapiens* were ingenious enough to devise a method for drilling with precision even the hardest stone, then the question arises whether there is anything they could not do. They were capable of satisfying every one of their real needs. Here I wish to emphasize the word need**.** The reason is that today we are witnessing a persistent confusion between needs and desires.

A need, for example, is to have a house or an apartment; a desire is to own a palace, a yacht, and so forth. A need must be satisfied, whereas a desire need not be—and we shall not be deprived of anything essential if it is not fulfilled, even though someone may have implanted in us the "worm of doubt" that palaces and yachts are truly indispensable. Should we nevertheless "take the bait," our life may pass by, only for us to find, at its end, that we have finally obtained a palace and a yacht. Are a palace and a yacht worth anyone's life? Of course they are not. It is therefore crucial to distinguish clearly between needs and desires, in order to block—or at least reduce—the space available for manipulation.

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participate in problem-solving and the development of technological solutions. In such societies, the community collectively arrives at solutions that may be truly ingenious. In stratified societies, divided into those who work and those who think, the majority of sapiens are unfortunately excluded from this process (as the modern saying goes: "it's not your job to think, but to work"). In societies organized around a division between workers and thinkers, it is individuals—not the community—who use all available resources and knowledge to arrive at ingenious solutions.

The imposition of desires as if they were vital needs is one of the most common forms of manipulation.

To understand our Stone Age ancestors properly, we must take into account this relation between needs and desires. From its very appearance, *Homo sapiens* successfully developed technology in accordance with its needs. As long as they were on the move, hunter-gatherers needed to create only those things they could carry with them. Once they became sedentary, their needs changed.

Given that Neolithic communities possessed impressive knowledge and technology, a logical question suggests itself: why did they not use the wheel? It is far more ingenious to design a mechanism for precision drilling in stone than to construct and produce a wheel. It is highly probable that they were aware of the wheel and the advantages of its use; yet it seems to me that their "feasibility study" yielded a negative answer. Why? For the use of wheeled transport with draught animals, it is necessary to build an extensive network of roads that must be regularly maintained. They realized that such an undertaking would require such an enormous investment of labor and population that it would jeopardize the satisfaction of their primary needs, leaving them with no time for anything else. The amount of work required and the benefits gained were dramatically disproportionate, and this is why the wheel did not pass their "feasibility study."

This raises another logical question: how did they transport important resources from distant regions (salt, obsidian, stone raw materials, and so forth)? For transport, they likely used something that, until recently, was still used in regions lacking

roads: the load was placed on crossed branches of deciduous trees, and such a "drag" or travois was then pulled by draft animals. In areas with snow during the winter season, sledges (large sleighs) could be used. Transport along waterways is attested by the discovery of *monoxyla* (dugout canoes), and we may also assume the existence of rafts intended for one-time use.

The communities that built the Göbekli Tepe complex had sufficient free time and resources to materialize their myths through monumental construction. With the adoption of agriculture, Neolithic communities no longer possessed so much free time, and the materialization of myth ceased to be monumental in character. In Neolithic agricultural cultures, myths and religious cults were materialized through abstract symbolism and the modelling of various figurative representations of relatively small dimensions, executed primarily in fired clay. In other words, we can discern a rationalization of time.

The thousands of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, face lids, altars, and ritual vessels discovered in Vinča culture settlements testify to a developed capacity for myth-making and an elaborated religious thought (Срејовић, Д.,1984). These objects are the most precious material witnesses to the spiritual life of Neolithic people. In Neolithic communities, survival no longer depended on the hunter and warrior, but on the fertility of fields and crops. Bearing in mind that the mother is the primary symbol of life and birth, the great number of female figures is readily explained. The celebration of life, birth, and fecundity forms the basis of Neolithic cults (Janković 2021).

On the faces of anthropomorphic figurines, in the vast majority of cases, overdimensioned eyes dominate, and mouths are not depicted. This, too, can be interpreted through the symbolism of the mother. The mother is a symbol of birth, but also a symbol of vigilance and care. The mother does not sleep when her children are sick or in trouble; she is the one who keeps watch and protects. It is entirely plausible that, within their religious system, these figurines also had a protective function. The omission of the mouth serves to emphasize the eyes, that is, wakefulness. It is evident that Neolithic sculptors, in modelling their figurines, did not place the highest value on formal likeness but rather on the essence and symbolism of the mother (Janković 2021).

Alongside anthropomorphic figurines, prosopomorphic lids (lids with a face) rank among the most distinctive phenomena of the Vinča culture (Stanković 1986). Prosopomorphic lids, which appear in the Neolithic only within the Vinča culture, are exceptionally striking and aesthetically powerful objects of high artistic craftsmanship. On the lid are depicted eyes, nose, and ears, whereas the mouth is never shown. These lids closed amphorae; beyond this practical function, their cultic role appears to have been far more significant. The exaggerated eyes and ears serve the function of vigilance and protection of the vessel's contents. Evidently, it was not their intention to represent the face of a cat, an owl, or any other specific animal; rather, their aim was to highlight the essence—to be awake, that is, to be responsible.

The success of Neolithic communities can be explained precisely by their insistence on vigilance, that is, on responsibility—toward the family, the community, themselves, and also toward nature. In our relation to

nature, we must constantly remain awake (responsible) so as not to disturb or damage something. We, unfortunately, ceased to remain awake long ago, and since then we have disrupted a great many things. It seems to me that the complex and intriguing symbolism of the prosopomorphic lids indicates that, within their value system, being awake—in an essential and symbolic sense—means protecting the other and others from one's own irresponsibility and destructiveness. We defend ourselves from others by instinct; but in order to protect others from ourselves, a very high level of consciousness is required (Janković 2025: 232- 233).

Beyond the need to resolve existential problems, our species has, in all periods, faced other equally important needs. Before the advent of writing, knowledge was transmitted orally. Even complex technological knowledge can be memorized and passed on orally. For a body of knowledge to be remembered, it must first be translated into symbols, and these symbols must be embedded in a song, a tale, a story, or a myth. We still use this method today for rapid and effective learning, and we have declared it to be the most modern method. It is indeed the most effective method for rapid learning, but it is by no means the most modern one: this method has been used from the very beginning, since the emergence of *Homo sapiens*. This mode of transmitting knowledge, through symbols and symbolism, is at the same time the creation of oral literature. Literature arose precisely from the need to preserve important knowledge and transmit it to future generations.

When *sapiens* transmitted knowledge orally, knowledge was accessible to all; with the appearance of

written knowledge, it became available only to a select few. Thus, during the Stone Age (Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic), knowledge was shared with everyone; knowledge at that time was a common good. It was not jealously guarded, as in certain later periods. In societies where everyone knows everything, each member of the community can participate on equal terms in discussion and decision-making. Under such circumstances, every member of the community feels equal. Economic equality alone is not sufficient; without equality in decision-making, there is no genuine equality. Here we can see how genius is not reserved for the individual, but for the community.

The multitude of decorative, utilitarian, and artistic objects found in all periods bears witness to yet another fundamental need. The need for beauty is a genuine need of every human being at all times. For the greater part of our species' existence, all *sapiens* were able to satisfy this need, whereas in some later periods this need was denied to many (to slaves and cheap labor). They were no longer in a position to fulfill this need.

If the motivations underlying the creation of technologies are oriented toward the well-being of all members of the community, then such technologies are acceptable, and social consciousness keeps pace with technological development. However, if the motives for creating technology arise from desires (and no longer from needs)—from the desire to display power, to subjugate others, to plunder, to manipulate—then a disbalance emerges between technology and consciousness, and social consciousness begins to decline.

The construction of the Great Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops) arose from the desire to display the Pharaoh's power, just as the building of Trajan's Bridge over the Danube arose from the desire to plunder and subjugate

Dacia. Certain technologies that stemmed from such problematic desires did, at some historical moments, bring benefits to our species, but the underlying motive—and the technologies placed in the service of that motive—produced a decline in social consciousness.

4. The Contemporaneity of the *Stone Age*

In addressing major ecological challenges, contemporary science is attempting to develop alternative sources of food. Some influential modern-day *sapiens* advocate for new technologies for the production of artificial meat. As justification for this idea, it is often claimed that cows emit large quantities of methane during digestion. What remains unspoken, however, is that the problem of methane emissions in cattle has arisen due to inadequate feeding practices and the inhumane conditions in which domestic animals are kept on farms—farms predominantly owned by large corporations. The motivation behind this idea has not emerged from a genuine need to resolve ecological problems or to secure the survival of our species; rather, it is a product of their desire for profit and dominance in the global food market.

Mesolithic hunter-gatherers, at a certain point, chose to transition to agriculture out of necessity—to find an alternative to diminishing game resources. This transition required a significantly greater amount of labor than hunting and gathering. They consciously chose the "harder path" in order to secure the future of their species.

What would this "harder path" be for us now, the modern day, so powerful *sapiens*?

We now live in an era of digital technologies that have, in many respects, made life easier. These technologies have undeniably enabled us to enjoy a level of comfort far superior to that of previous epochs. Yet, we have also become excessively dependent both on these technologies and on the comforts we have acquired. Because of ever-increasing comfort, we have begun to consume even those resources that do not belong to us— resources that belong to future generations. And it is precisely through the excessive consumption of resources, for the sake of surplus comfort, that we jeopardize the future of our species.

Such behavior demonstrates that despite our astonishing technological achievements, our social consciousness remains at a very low level. The least we can do to secure the future of our species is to relinquish, not comfort itself but rather the excess of comfort. Renouncing surplus comfort would constitute our own (contemporary) "harder path." Is this too much to ask of us? Can we overcome our "selfish essence" and "selfish genes"? Is our species selfish, and are our genes selfish?

These are crucial questions that we must answer if we truly wish to take the "harder path" and survive as a species. Our species, in its essence, is not selfish, nor are our genes selfish, contrary to the claims of Richard Dawkins (Dawkins, 1976, p. 23). Who, then, is selfish?

The system is selfish. The vast majority of social systems— from the formation of the earliest states to the present day— have been created through the imposition of the will of a minority upon the majority. In modern

consumer society, the system rests precisely on selfishness. The more selfish we are, the more useful we become—not to ourselves, but to the system. Modern systems have privileged selfishness. The more selfish a person is, the more "successful" they appear to be. This is why the system constantly encourages selfishness (See Janković 2025: 234).

It is entirely reasonable and legitimate to ask whether, in a system that rests on something so questionable, social consciousness can keep pace with accelerated technological development. When social consciousness lags so far behind technology, the conditions become ideal for all manner of manipulations. Although the system has been imposed upon the majority by a minority, this cannot absolve us of responsibility. By accepting the "benefits" of modern civilization and the evident manipulations perpetrated by the system, we become accomplices in a crime against the future.

What then are we to do? Is an answer discernible? Yes, it is necessary to change the system. Without panic: it is both legitimate and historically normal to change a system, or at the very least, to make it better and more humane. How can this be accomplished? On what do these imposed systems rest?

Every such system is sustained by two fundamental mechanisms: repression and manipulation through privileges. Repression cannot be countered with repression—not in the long term; I do not recommend it. What remains, then, is the second mechanism.

His Majesty, the Privilege itself.

Privilege, how enticing it sounds! Wars have been fought for it, not for the beauty of Helen of Troy. Because

of privilege, many have accepted everything; because of privilege, we have agreed to cease being rational beings (*Homo sapiens*—the rational human). If there was a true trap for *sapiens*, it was the moment we accepted privilege and everything that inevitably followed from it.

The entire "game" can be reversed if our motivation for education and social engagement ceases to be privilege and becomes responsibility. The more of us *sapiens* renounce privilege, the more we shall diminish the space for manipulation through privilege. By undermining this second mechanism, we will transform both the system and social consciousness; only then will many contemporary technologies acquire their proper meaning.

We have seen, through examples from the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic, that knowledge and technology were not used for manipulation or for the acquisition of power and privilege. Knowledge was evidently not experienced as power but as responsibility. All of this indicates that our "primitive" and "undeveloped" ancestors of the Stone Age possessed a remarkably high level of consciousness.

It is no surprise that many modern *sapiens* are confused by this conclusion and repeatedly ask: where did our Stone Age ancestors acquire such a high level of consciousness? Why do we ask this question? (Most likely) because the humanities have begun from a false assumption—that early *sapiens* possessed a low level of consciousness and that it increased over time. Archaeological data demonstrate quite the opposite: human consciousness was once at a very high level, and it is we who have declined. And it is crucial that we

recognize that we have declined. When someone has fallen, they cannot rise again until the information reaches the brain that they have fallen. Today we live under the illusion that we stand very high—and indeed we do, technologically. Yet when it comes to consciousness, we are not at an enviable level. It is precisely this disbalance between advanced technology and underdeveloped consciousness that poses a profound problem for us today.

The only way for us to survive as a species is to elevate our consciousness so that it stands on par with our technology, something to which the archaeological data of our successful past continually call our attention.

5. Conclusion

The preceding discussion has sought to illuminate a fundamental and often overlooked dimension of human prehistory: the profound alignment between technological development and social consciousness in Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic communities. Archaeological evidence—from Göbekli Tepe to the megalithic landscapes of Britain, and from the metallurgical innovations and symbolic repertoire of the Vinča culture—demonstrates that early *Homo sapiens* did not merely survive; they cultivated an enduring equilibrium between their technological capacities, their mythopoetic imagination, and their ethical responsibilities toward the community and the natural world.

In stark contrast to many assumptions prevalent in modern theory, the data do not suggest that early humans were beings of "low consciousness" whose awareness gradually increased over millennia. The evidence points

decidedly in the opposite direction: early human societies possessed a sophisticated and highly developed consciousness, capable of sustaining communal responsibility, distributive knowledge, and a respectful relationship with the environment. Their technologies, however advanced, were firmly rooted in the needs of the community and not in the desires of individuals.

What we observe today is not the culmination of a continuous upward trajectory, but a fall**,** a widening historical gap between technical capacity and social consciousness. Our civilization has attained extraordinary technological power yet remains constrained by ideologies, systems, and incentives that elevate desire over need, privilege over responsibility, and individual accumulation over collective well-being. The imbalance created by this discrepancy has placed the future of our species in jeopardy.

The archaeological record provides not merely a window into our past, but a warning: the survival of *Homo sapiens* has always depended upon the harmonization of knowledge, responsibility, and technological action. When technology outpaces consciousness, societies become vulnerable to manipulation, exploitation, and ecological collapse; when consciousness guides technological development, communities flourish, myths cohere, and cultures endure.

To secure a viable future, contemporary *sapiens* must reclaim the ethical orientation that marked the success of our prehistoric ancestors. This does not require a romantic return to the past, but a conscious elevation of our social awareness to the level of our technological achievements. It requires the renunciation of surplus comfort, the dismantling of privilege as a mechanism of

manipulation, and the reaffirmation of knowledge as a shared responsibility rather than a tool of domination.

In essence, the lesson of the Stone Age is neither primitive nor obsolete. It is profoundly contemporary. The survival of our species will depend, as it once did, on our capacity to balance technology with responsibility, innovation with humility, and power with consciousness. If we fail to achieve this balance, no technological advancement, however brilliant, will suffice to secure our future. If we succeed, then the wisdom of our early ancestors will once again become the foundation of human flourishing.

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