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What if ...

Humans are not the first intelligent species to dwell on this planet. Until about one billion years ago, there was another species which left no trace. Or did it?

Geologists have long known of crystalline rocks which appear in distinct layers, almost like sheets, instead of the common manifestation in which the structure is the same in every direction. Recently, a deposit of such layered crystalline rock was discovered on the Isle of Rhum. What set this find apart from others was the thinness of the layers and their apparent uniformity. Scientists became even more intrigued when two of their number experienced uncomfortable sensations in their heads whenever they approached the samples.

It was worse for Zila Magor than for her colleague, Calan Chow. Dr Magor reported that, along with a pain in her head, she thought she experienced images and sounds. When Dr Magor went into the field at Skaergaard, she experienced faint symptoms similar to those she suffered in the lab near the Rhum rock samples. Her instinct was to stay as far away from this area in Greenland as she could, but, as a scientist, she wanted to investigate further.

One outcome of Dr Magor's sensitivity and research was the discovery of a distinct body of the distinctive thin-layered crystalline rock, roughly cylindrical, about one metre in diameter and half a metre high. Because of its difference from the surrounding rock, an effort was made to extract it intact. From its position, it was estimated as being between one and one-and-a-half billion years old. On the ship taking the rock back to the lab, Dr Magor experienced vivid hallucinations, involving images and sounds.

It turns out that a select group of sensitive people were able to 'pick up' emanations from this special rock. Some had vivid dreams that they could recall in detail, others had images in their minds, accompanied by what they described as 'notions' – not words or language but concepts. It was concluded that this chunk of rock contains impressions from a society that died out some time in the Mesoproterozoic Era. Details were slowly pieced together and this is what is now known.

This ancient society left no fossil record because its members had no internal or external skeletal structures and they were soft-bodied. There is no indication whether they evolved on Earth or elsewhere. They were able to use sound to move themselves and other objects and were able to manipulate tools through telekinesis. Their communication was through a form of telepathy. It was through this telepathy that they left behind the records in the rock.

These highly evolved invertebrates started to suffer from the changing composition of the atmosphere – transpiration becoming gradually more difficult. They predicted that their kind would eventually die out. They knew of the existence of other life forms – tiny single-celled creatures. These had been around for millions of years and seemed to adapt to changing atmospheric conditions quite readily. The intelligent invertebrate race saw this humble life form as the only hope of any life continuing on this planet. However, they recognised one hurdle to this – the single-celled organisms had never evolved out of their single-celled status.

The best intellects were put to work on how to stimulate the single cells to move on and become the basis of advanced life forms which could adapt to future calamitous changes and, hopefully, give rise to another intelligent, sapient and self-aware species. Eventually they experimented with introducing one type of single cell into a larger one. It took almost a millennium to 'create' a chimera which showed promises of rapid evolution towards something more complex. They produced several types, some by incorporating one 'foreign' cell, others by introducing two or even three. One in particular showed a propensity for adapting to environmental conditions by clumping together and cooperating.

Unfortunately, the intelligent invertebrates died out before they could see if they had succeeded. However, they did leave behind a record of what they did, in the finely layered crystalline rocks of Rhum and Skaegaard, the importance of which was finally discovered. There is more in that record about the ancient race. Despite there being a lot missing, the team of 'sensitives' who are tuning in to the crystal records, is slowly bringing to light more details of this amazing race, about which we knew nothing – not even that it had existed.

What has been gleaned from the rocks has thrown surprising light on our own origins and the origins of most life that currently inhabits this planet.

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