

---

BOOK REVIEW

---

*The Cookbook of Life (New Theories on the Origin of Life)*

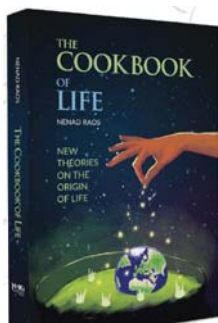
Nenad Raos

Publisher: Croatian Society of Chemical Engineers, Berislavićeva 6, HR-10000 Zagreb

Editor: Prof Nenad Bolf, PhD

Month and year of publication: April 2018

ISBN: 978-953-6894-60-4



The most exciting conclusion which I simply have to put as the first sentence in my presentation of Dr Raos' book *The Cookbook of Life* is its clear added value in the articulation of data on the origin of life in a new hologram that offers unlimited options of development of different life forms in space!

The study of the origin of life is a complex interplay between chemistry, physics, biology, geology, astronomy, and other fields. That is why it was important that the book is the result of the author's thorough investigation of different sources. Even if at some points it may seem that the author digresses about certain chemical processes, it becomes clear in the following chapters that we have to learn or remind ourselves of certain formulas in order to understand the crucial segments of life initiation. However, the book offers a short dictionary of terms, which helps and additionally enriches the reader's knowledge.

The flourishing variability of chemical mixtures, their interactions, and non-random clustering are presented in a most skillful way. Briefly summarizing between chapters already presented theories on origin of life through history, the author gives to each scientist a significant position in the net of knowledge that throughout history tried to find the very first spark of life.

Within the last decade, several very good books with similar topics were published and a number of conferences were organized in order to contribute to answering simple question given by Addy Pross' book title *How Chemistry Becomes Biology*. Dr Raos' book gives insight into the

history of theories and hypothesis of origin of life weaving them into a single, as long as human history, need for an explanation of our origin and at the same time reason behind our existence. It is very important to stress that the author is open-minded to all current hypotheses. Thus, although the backbone of Dr Raos' book is carbon/water-centric life origin, this does not mean that he cages readers into believing that this is the only possible option. Just the opposite. The book gives solid bases for developing one's own theories and food for thought and discussion with colleagues or friends.

The described recent accomplishments of the Mars mission challenge the reader to search for more information on biosignatures on its surface. Our aim to find our own origin by following energy sources, sulfur, iron, and hydrogen logically points to Mars with an iron and sulfur-rich planetary crust, ancient hydrothermal activity, and hydrogen.

Instead of being illustrated with fancy photographs and schemes, the book relies on charming sketches mirroring the narration which looks more like an enthusiastic conversation among friends who happen to be chemists and who between two glasses of wine lose their train of thought and include small fragments of his life which who knows why remind him of deep sea volcanic activities or primordial soup.

This book definitely deserves to become a must have title for those who have an educational background in natural sciences or are in love with chemistry and/or biology.

*Aleksandra Fučić, PhD  
Institute for Medical Research and Occupational  
Health, Zagreb, Croatia*