

The Origin of Life on Planet Earth

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Life is full of mysteries. For example, one mystery is how life originated on our planet. In one hypothesis, called the Primordial Soup theory, life is thought to arise spontaneously in the primitive earth atmosphere induced by lightning strikes. In 1950, Stanley Miller performed an experiment by putting ammonia, methane and hydrogen into a sealed glass apparatus containing boiling water, and simulated lightning with a high-voltage induction coil. Within a few days the water and glass were stained with reddish goo. This material was later chemically analyzed and found to contain amino acids.

But this theory has led to several dead ends. And well it should because this was not the process. The beginning of life was hidden. It originated in the fire pits of hell: ovens of melted rock, under bone crushing pressures, far away from the light of the sun.

To unravel this mystery, I must first discuss one of the most enlightening and virtually unknown theories in the 20th century called the "Russian-Ukrainian Theory of Deep Abiotic Petroleum Origin". There have been more than four thousand articles published in the Soviet scientific journals dealing with this theory but very little discussion in the West. According to this theory, petroleum is not a fossil fuel. Petroleum comes from hydrocarbons that were basic components in planet creation. These hydrocarbons exist in a stable form under extreme pressures and temperatures on the underbelly of the Earth's crust.

If the Russian-Ukrainian Theory is applied to underwater volcanic eruptions, it produces an interesting observation. Small amounts of these hydrocarbons bleed into the magma during volcanic eruptions. Hydrocarbons under intense magma temperature that contact seawater undergo a natural cracking process that produced aromatics and terpenes. The result is an almost endless variety of carbon chain molecules including the first living creatures.

A team of scientists from the United States, Norway, Canada and South Africa (*Early Life Recorded in Archean Pillow Lavas* Harald Furnes, Neil R. Banerjee, Karlis Muehlenbachs, Hubert Staudigel, and Maarten de Wit, **Science** 2004 **304**: 578-581) recently discovered evidence of the earliest forms of life on Earth. This evidence was carbon traces from lava-burrowing archaea in 3.5 billion-year-old lava in South Africa's Barberton Greenstone Belt. The lava was pillow lava, which is formed underwater at a volcanic seam. Archaea are extremophiles, organisms living in radically extreme environments.

The earliest forms of life that created a foothold on our planet lived in extremes under tremendous temperatures, pressures and in pitch-blackness. Life began miles underwater at the bottom of the ocean where cracks in the Earth's crust allowed lava to seep out. They were formed by a natural petroleum cracking process from primordial hydrocarbons released into the early oceans during volcanic activity. This life fed off hydrocarbons, sulfur and iron and drew their energy from the thermal (infrared) heat in the magma.