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Antonio Lazcano (UNAM, Mexico City) UNAM) was twice President of the International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life, the first Latin American scientist to occupy this position. He has studied the origin and early evolution of life for over 50 years and is the author of several books published in Spanish, including *The Origin of Life*, with over 800,000 copies sold. His current research interests include the chemistry of the origin of life, and the use of phylogenomic databases to reconstruct early stages of cell evolution

Prebiotic Chemistry and the Origin of Life: The Miller Experiment

Following the model of the primitive atmosphere published by Harold C. Urey in 1952 and drawing on A. I. Oparin's hypotheses concerning the heterotrophic origin of life, in 1953 a young doctoral student in chemistry at the University of Chicago conducted an experiment that simulated conditions on the early Earth using an atmosphere of methane, ammonia, water vapor, and hydrogen. Using electrical discharges as a source of free energy, Miller reported the synthesis of several protein amino acids, hydroxy acids, and urea within a week. Published just a few weeks after the DNA double helix model, this experiment marked the beginning of origin-of-life research, a field that has developed remarkably rapidly through multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches spanning various scientific fields. Less well known is the social and political context of an experiment published during the Cold War, which illustrates the complex interactions between science and the context in which it is conducted.