



Softcover reprint of the original 1st ed. 1983, X, 324 p. 21 illus.

Gedrucktes Buch

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Bernd-Olaf Küppers

Molecular Theory of Evolution

Outline of a Physico-Chemical Theory of the Origin of Life

The subject of this book is the physico-chemical theory of the origin of life. Although this theory is still in statu nascendi, it has been developed in recent years to the point where a coherent presentation is possible. The book is intended as an introductory text for students of physics, chemistry or biology. This interdisciplinary aim has necessitated a choice of material based on the lowest common denominator of physicists and biologists. In particular, the predominantly mathematical and biological sections have been presented at the most elementary level possible. The less mathematically inclined reader can omit Sections (5.3)-(5.5), (5.7)-(5.10), (6.2), (6.3), (9.1)-(9.3), (12.1) and (13.3) without losing the overall view. For critical reading of the manuscript, for discussions and for many useful suggestions I wish to thank M. Eigen (Göttingen), w.e. Gardiner (Austin), D. Porschke (Göttingen), P. Schuster (Vienna), P.R. Wills (Auckland) and P. Woolley (Berlin). The translation of the original, German manuscript into English was kindly undertaken by Paul Woolley. During this and subsequent stages of revision he introduced a great many improvements in the text and the presentation of material. My particular thanks are due to him for his decisive contribution to this book. Last of all I wish to thank Ingeborg Lechten for typing the text in its various stages of evolution. The completion of this book is largely to be attributed to her patience and efficiency.

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