

Some of these slides have been borrowed from Dr. Paul Lewis, Dr. Joe Felsenstein. Thanks!

Paul has many great tools for teaching phylogenetics at his web site:

<http://hydrodictyon.eeb.uconn.edu/people/plewis>

# Markov chain Monte Carlo

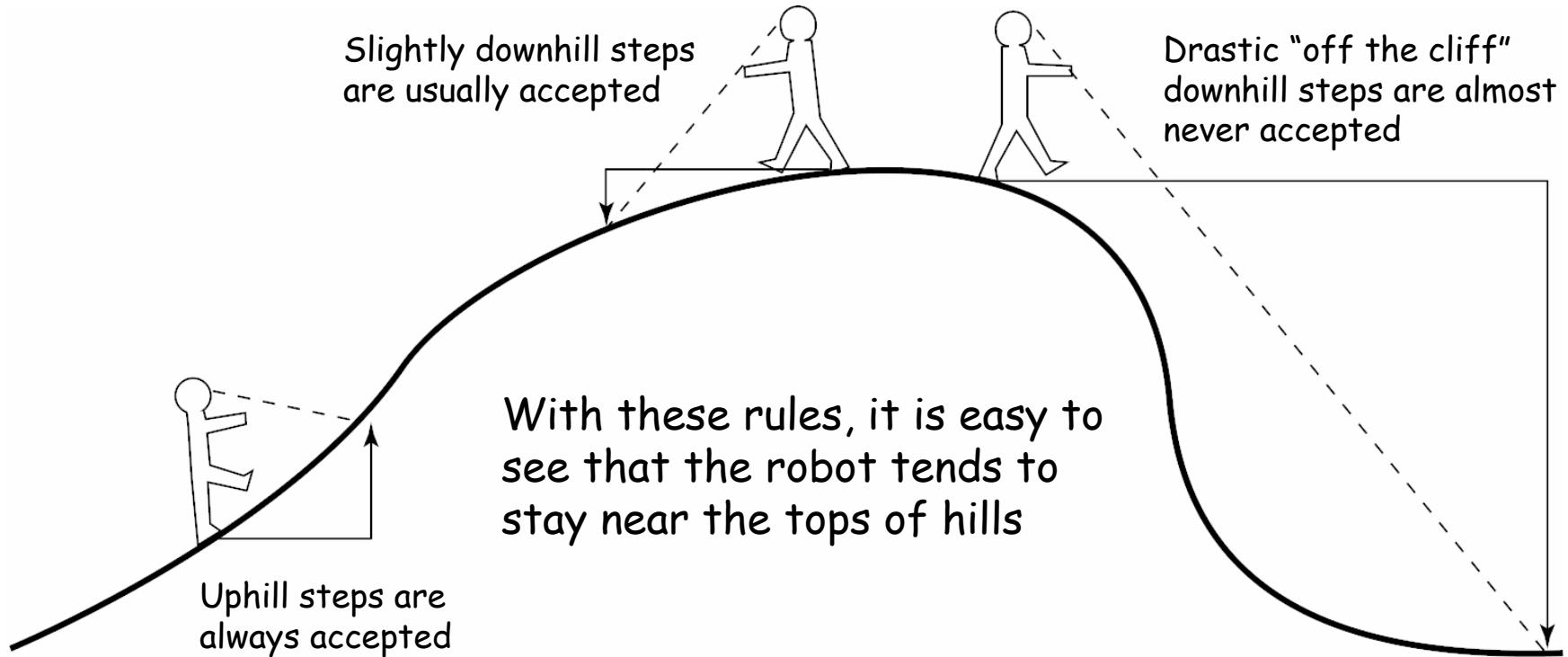
- Simulates a walk through parameter/tree space.
- Lets us estimate posterior probabilities for any aspect of the model
- Relies on the *ratio* of posterior densities between two points

$$R = \frac{Pr(\text{Point}_2|\text{Data})}{Pr(\text{Point}_1|\text{Data})}$$

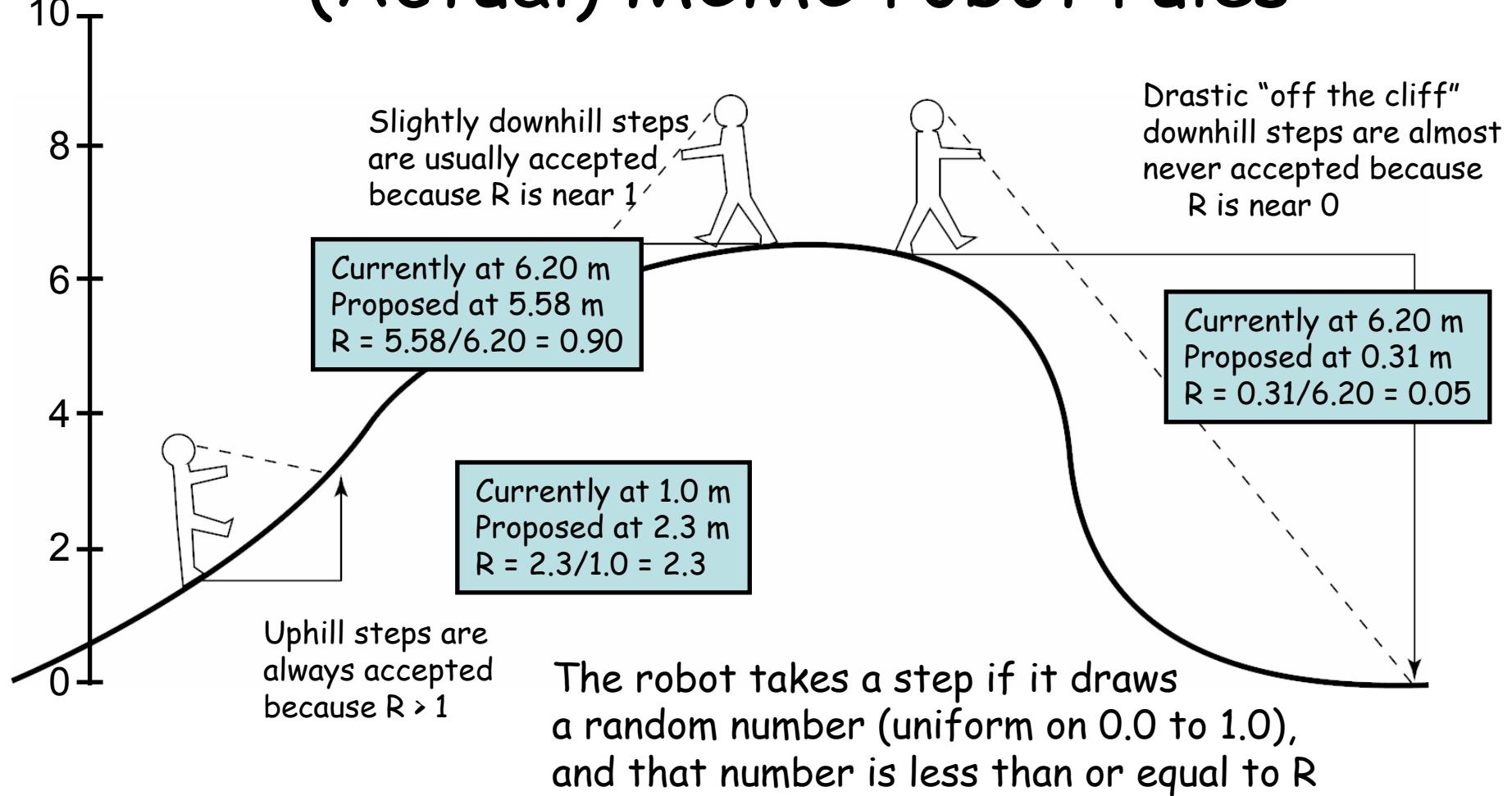
$$R = \frac{\frac{Pr(\text{Point}_2)L(\text{Point}_2)}{Pr(\text{Data})}}{\frac{Pr(\text{Point}_1)L(\text{Point}_1)}{Pr(\text{Data})}}$$

$$R = \frac{Pr(\text{Point}_2)L(\text{Point}_2)}{Pr(\text{Point}_1)L(\text{Point}_1)}$$

# MCMC robot's rules



# (Actual) MCMC robot rules

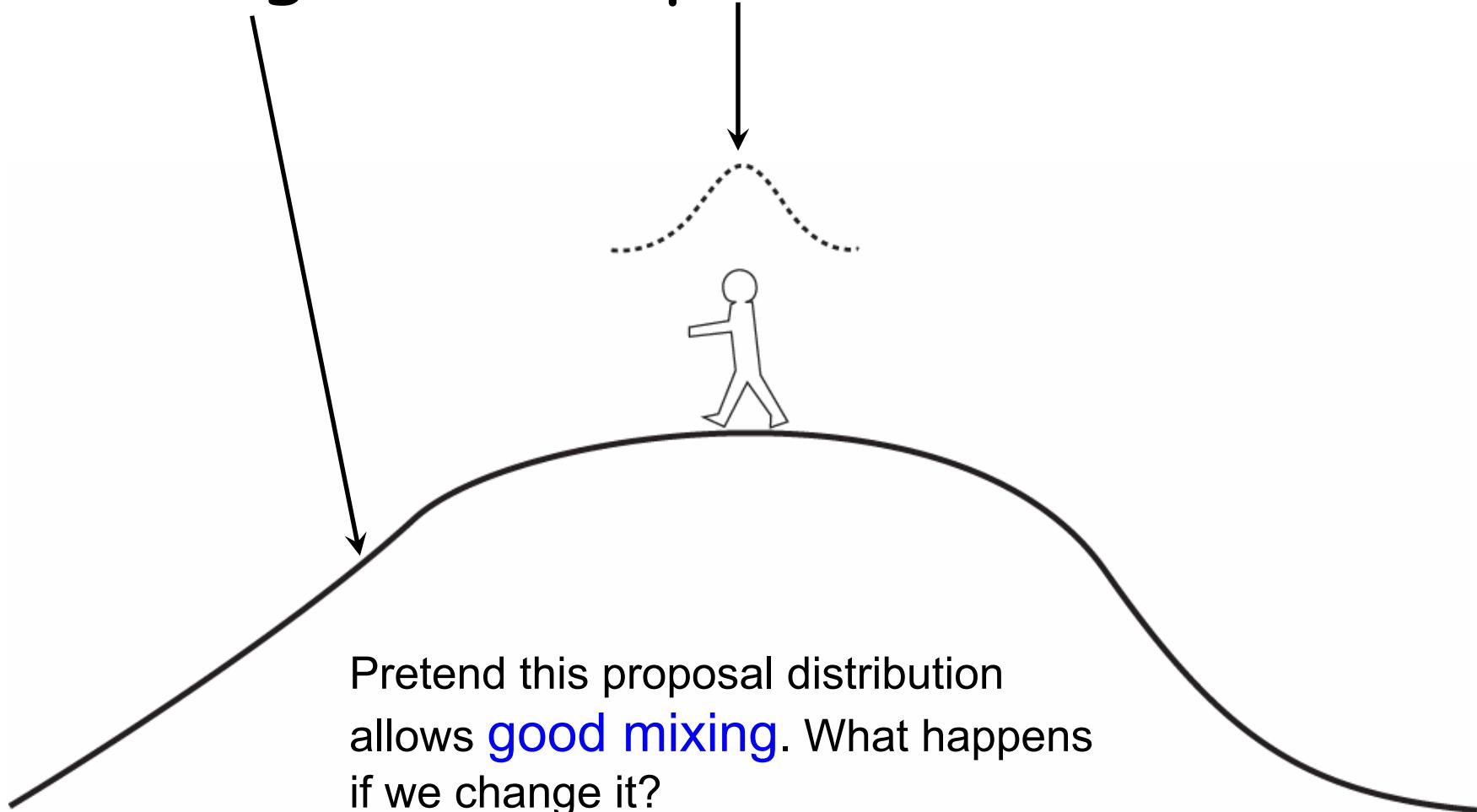


# Target vs. proposal distributions

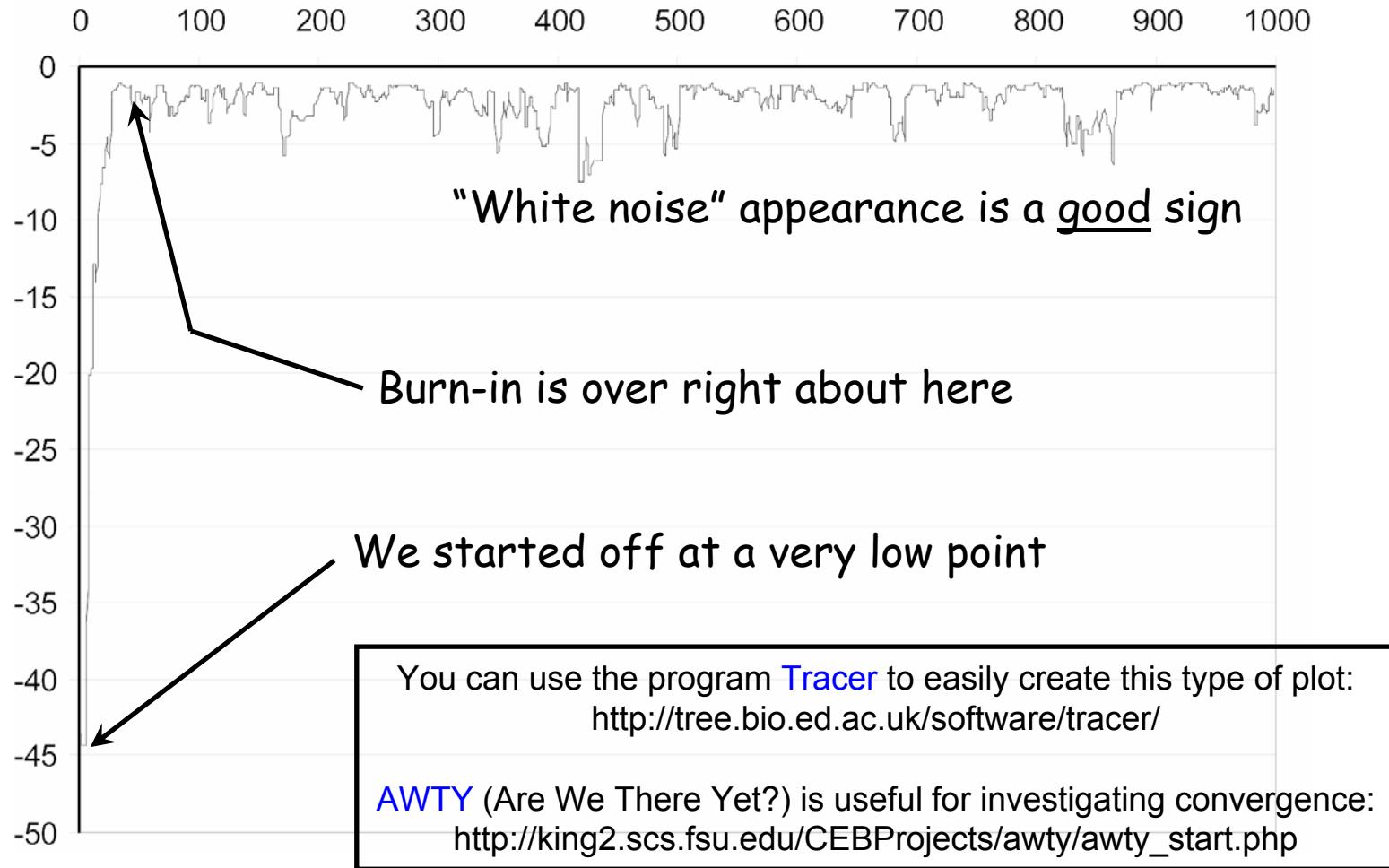
- The **target distribution** is the posterior distribution of interest
- The **proposal distribution** is used to decide which point to try next
  - you have much flexibility here, and the choice affects only the **efficiency** of the MCMC algorithm
  - MCMC using a **symmetric** proposal distribution is the Metropolis algorithm (Metropolis et al. 1953)
  - Use of an **asymmetric** proposal distribution requires a modification proposed by Hastings (1970), and is known as the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm

Metropolis, N., A. W. Rosenbluth, M. N. Rosenbluth, A. H. Teller, and E. Teller. 1953. Equation of state calculations by fast computing machines. *J. Chem. Phys.* 21:1087-1092.

# Target vs. Proposal Distributions



# Trace plots



# Target vs. Proposal Distributions

Proposal distributions  
with **smaller variance**...



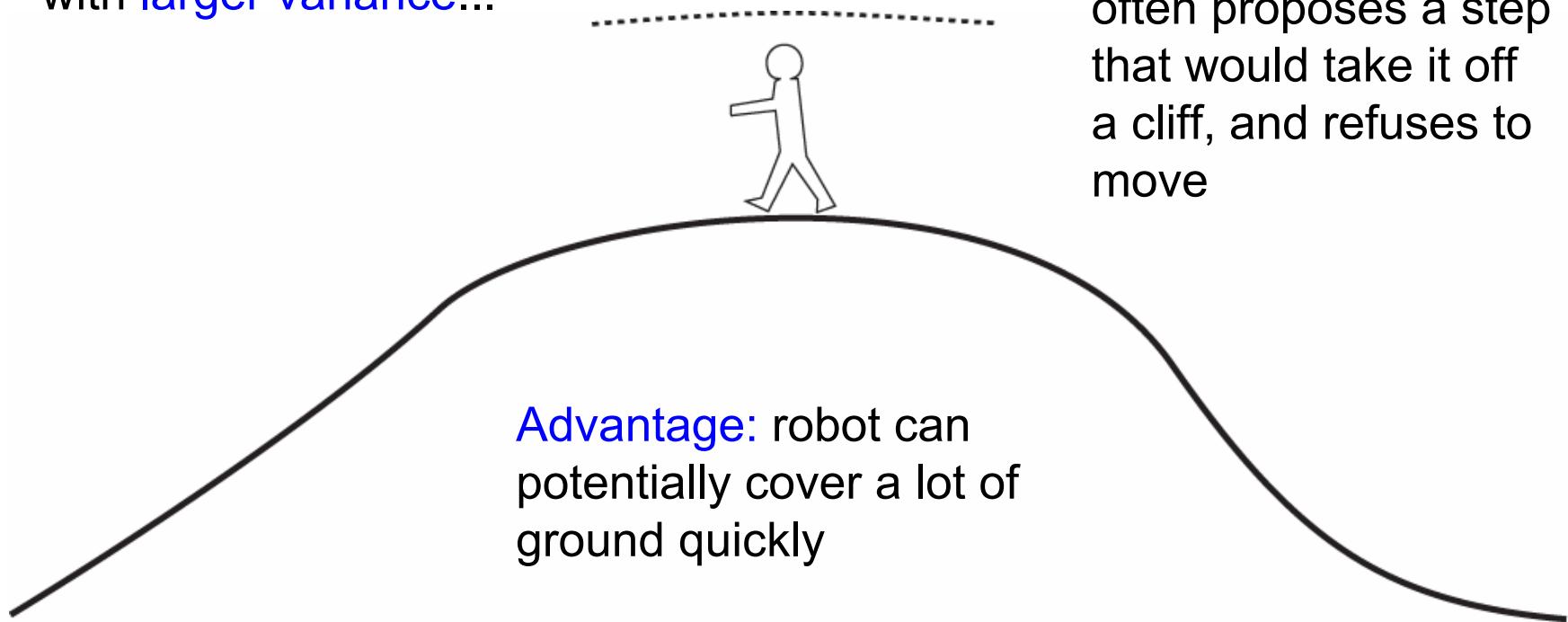
**Disadvantage:** robot takes  
smaller steps, more time  
required to explore the  
same area

**Advantage:** robot seldom  
refuses to take proposed  
steps

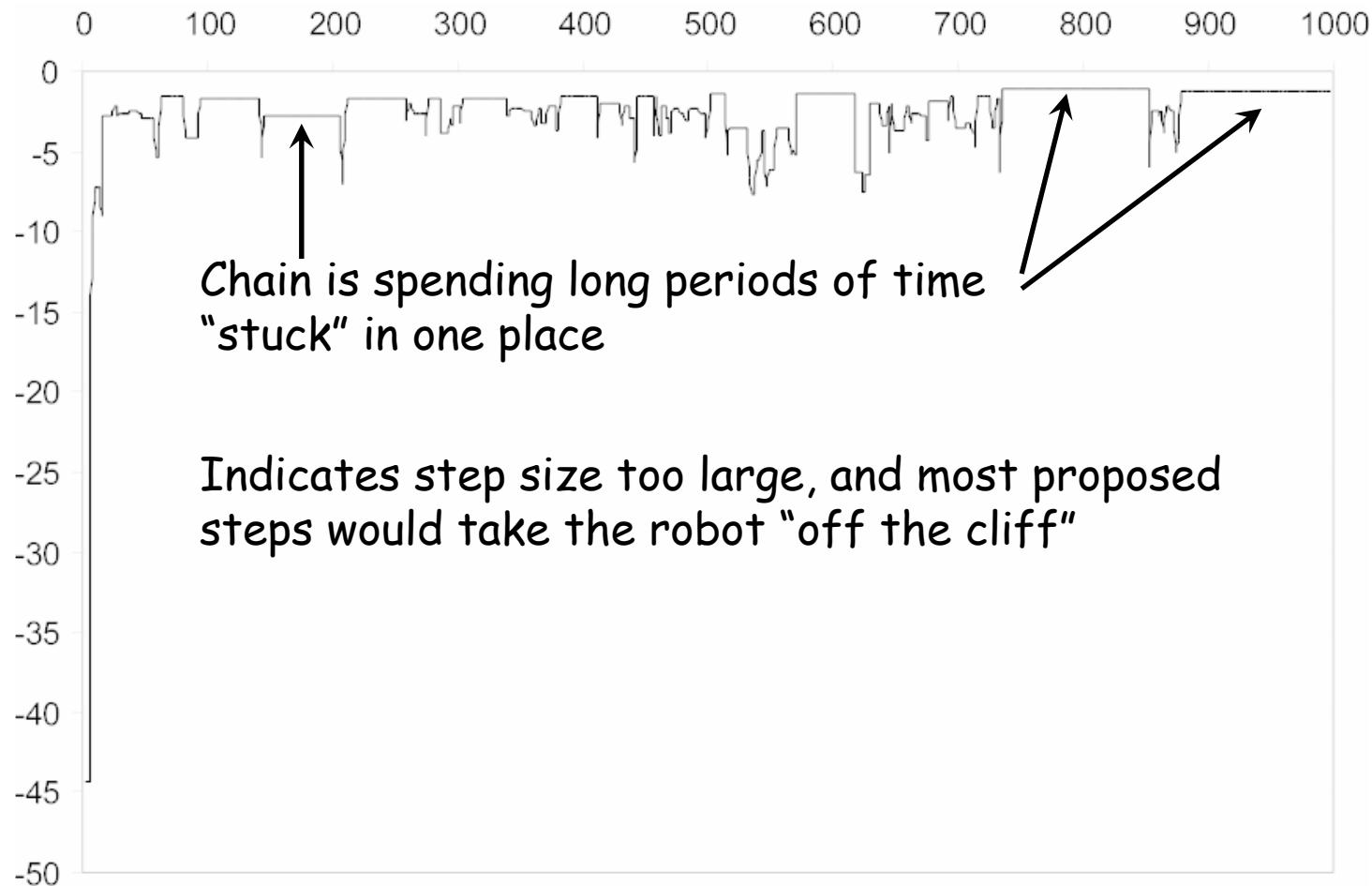
# Target vs. Proposal Distributions

Proposal distributions  
with larger variance...

**Disadvantage:** robot  
often proposes a step  
that would take it off  
a cliff, and refuses to  
move

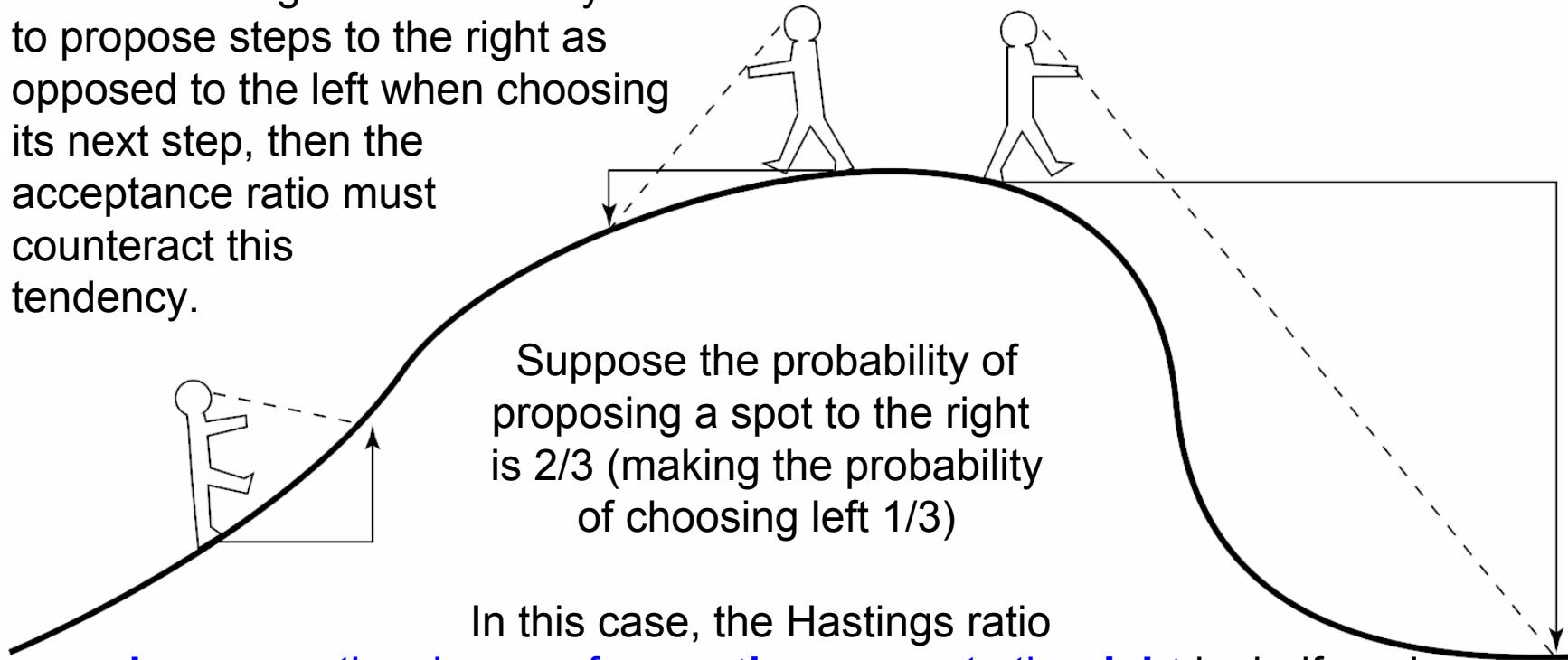


# Poor mixing



# The Hastings ratio

If robot has a greater tendency to propose steps to the right as opposed to the left when choosing its next step, then the acceptance ratio must counteract this tendency.



In this case, the Hastings ratio **decreases the chance of accepting moves to the right by half, and increases the chance of accepting moves to the left (by a factor of 2), thus exactly compensating for the asymmetry in the proposal distribution.**

Hastings, W. K. 1970. Monte Carlo sampling methods using Markov chains and their applications. Biometrika 57:97-109.

# MCRobot

Windows program download from:

<http://www.eeb.uconn.edu/people/plewis/software.php>

# Metropolis-coupled Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMCMC, or MC<sup>3</sup>)

- MC<sup>3</sup> involves running **several chains simultaneously**
- The **cold chain** is the one that counts, the rest are **heated chains**
- Chain is heated by raising densities to a power less than 1.0 (values closer to 0.0 are warmer)

Geyer, C. J. 1991. Markov chain Monte Carlo maximum likelihood for dependent data. Pages 156-163 *in* Computing Science and Statistics (E. Keramidas, ed.).

## What is a heated chain?

---

$R$  is the ratio of posterior probability densities.

Instead of using  $R$  in the acceptance/rejection decisions, a heated chain uses  $R^{\frac{1}{1+H}}$

Heating a chain makes the surface it explores **flatter**.

In MrBayes:  $H = \text{"Temperature"} * (\text{The Chain's index})$   
The cold chain has index 0, and the default temperature is 0.2

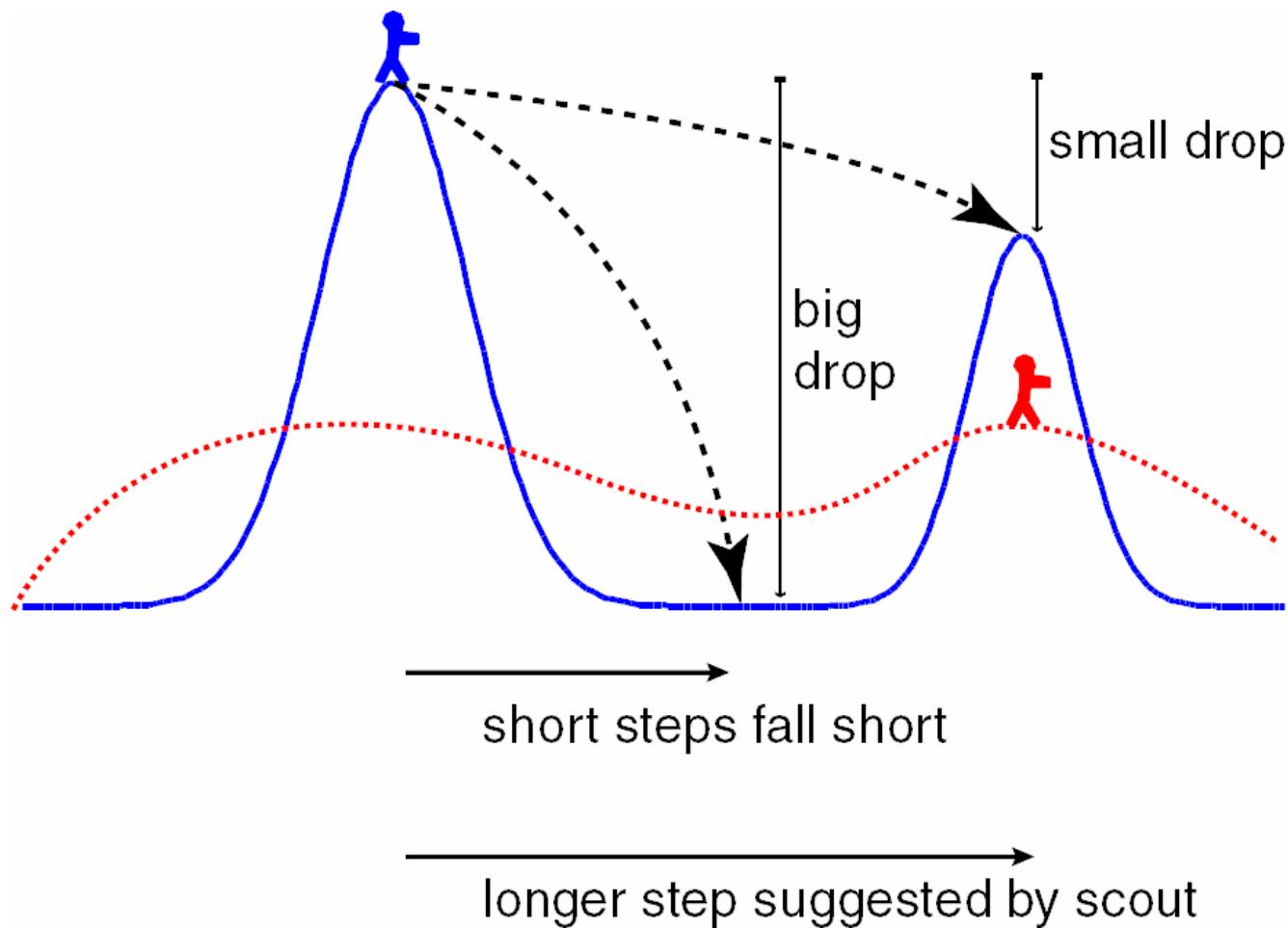
Acceptance Probability for chains with Temp = 0.2

$R$	Chain			
	1	2	3	4
1.2	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
0.8	0.8000	0.8303	0.8527	0.8600
0.4	0.4000	0.4660	0.5197	0.5640
0.01	0.0100	0.0215	0.0373	0.0562

Acceptance Probability for chains with Temp = 0.5

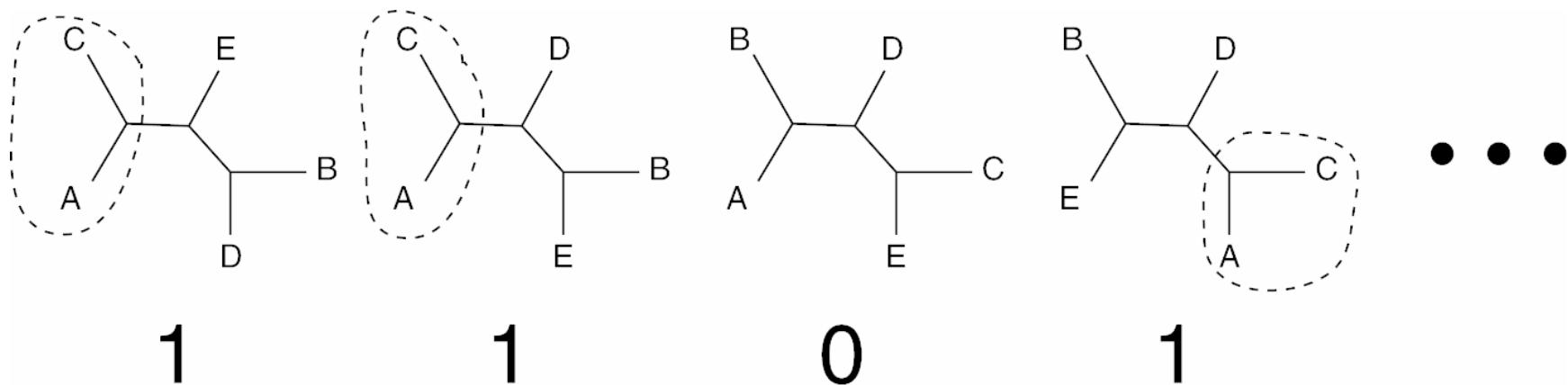
$R$	Chain			
	1	2	3	4
0.8	0.8000	0.8618	0.8944	0.9146
0.4	0.4000	0.5429	0.6325	0.6931
0.01	0.0100	0.0464	0.1000	0.1585

# Heated chains act as scouts for the cold chain



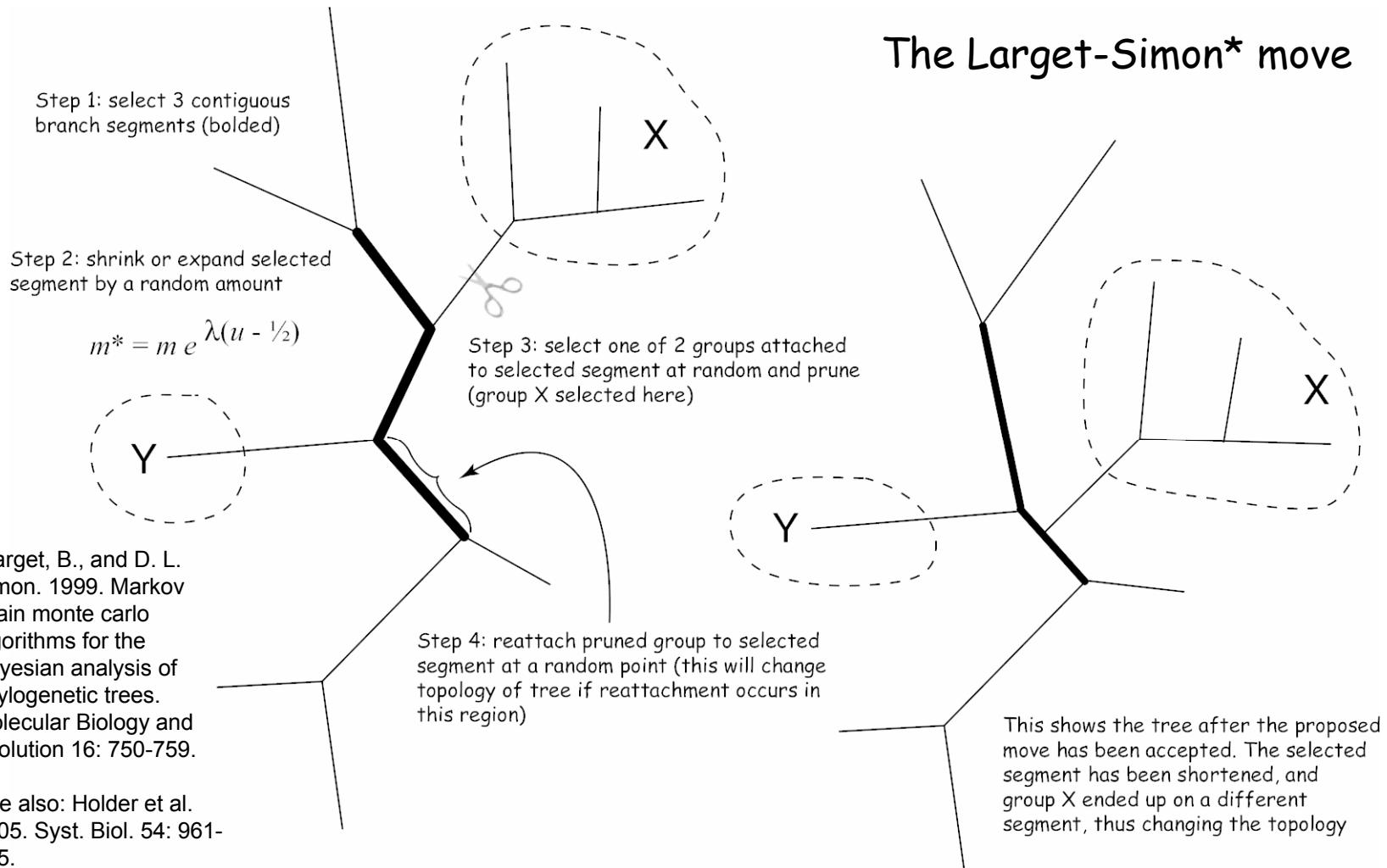
(the following slides come directly from Paul Lewis' lecture at the Woods Hole Workshop on Molecular Evolution – thanks, Paul).

# So, what's all this got to do with phylogenetics?

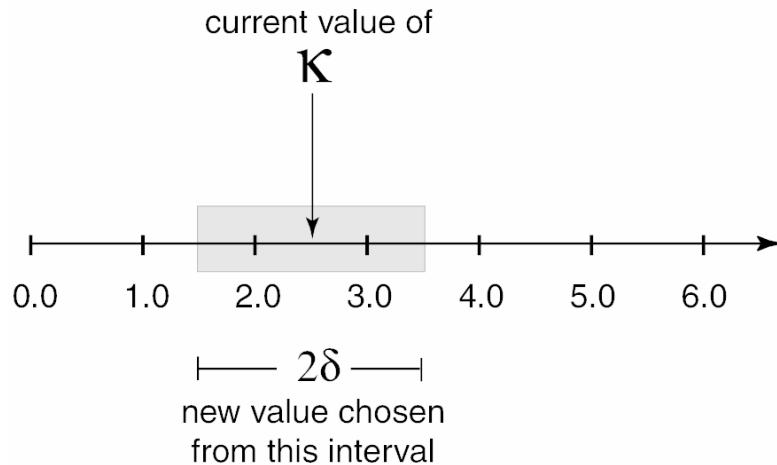


Imagine drawing tree topologies randomly from a bin in which the number of copies of any given topology is proportional to the (marginal) posterior probability of that topology. Approximating the posterior of any particular attribute of tree topologies (e.g. existence of group AC in this case) is simply a matter of counting.

# Moving through treespace

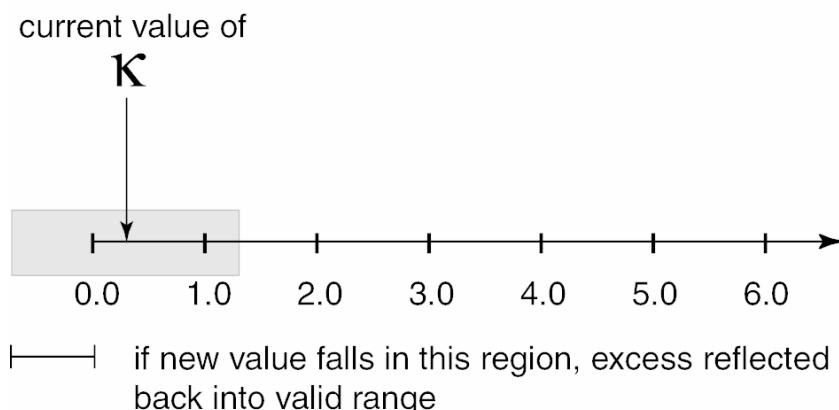


# Moving through parameter space



Using  $\kappa$  (ratio of the transition rate to the transversion rate) as an example of a model parameter.

Proposal distribution is uniform from  $\kappa-\delta$  to  $\kappa+\delta$

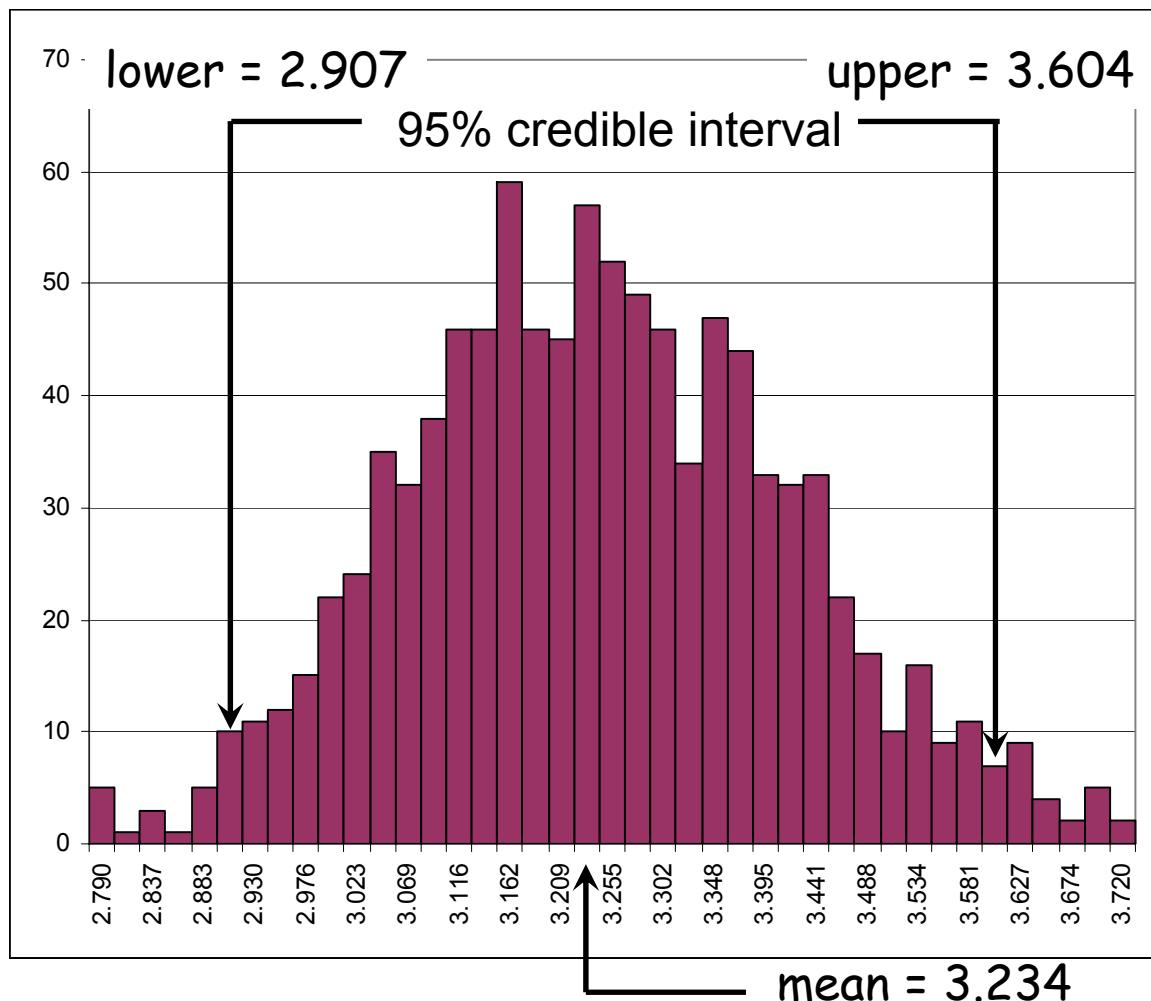


The “step size” of the MCMC robot is defined by  $\delta$ : a larger  $\delta$  means that the robot will attempt to make larger jumps on average.

# Putting it all together

- **Start with** random tree and arbitrary initial values for branch lengths and model parameters
- **Each generation** consists of one of these (chosen at random):
  - Propose a **new tree** (e.g. Larget-Simon move) and either accept or reject the move
  - Propose (and either accept or reject) a **new model parameter value**
- Every  $k$  generations, save tree topology, branch lengths and all model parameters (i.e. **sample the chain**)
- After  $n$  generations, **summarize sample** using histograms, means, credible intervals, etc.

# Marginal posterior distributions



Histogram created  
from a sample of  
1000  $\kappa$  values.

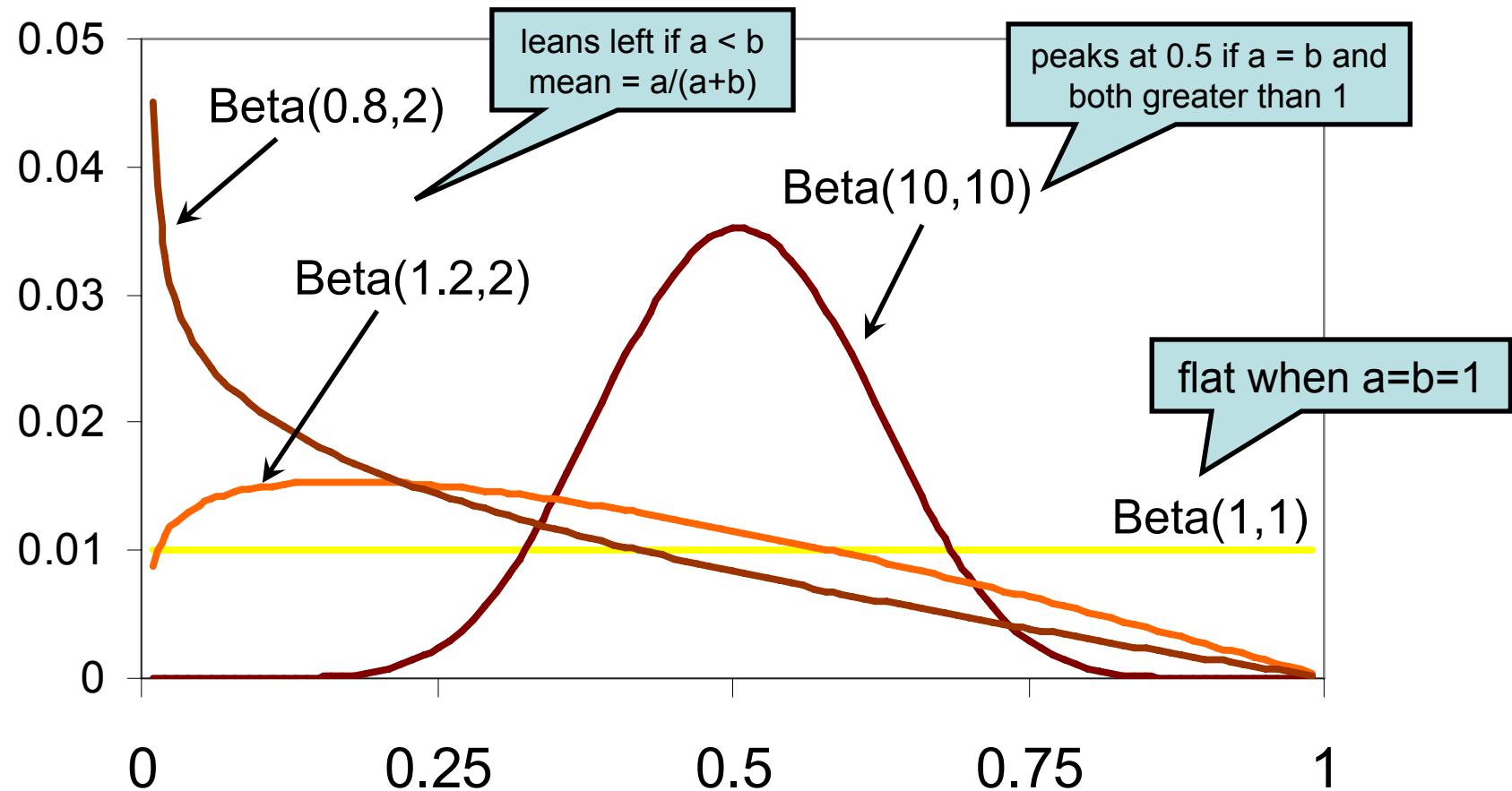
From: Lewis, L., and Flechtner,  
V. 2002. Taxon 51: 443-451.

## IV. Prior distributions



# Commonly-used Prior Distributions

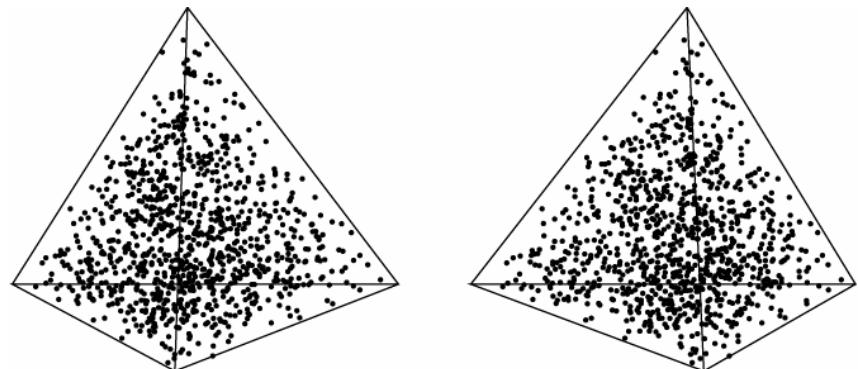
- For proportions (e.g. pinvar): Beta( $a, b$ ) distribution



# Commonly-used Prior Distributions

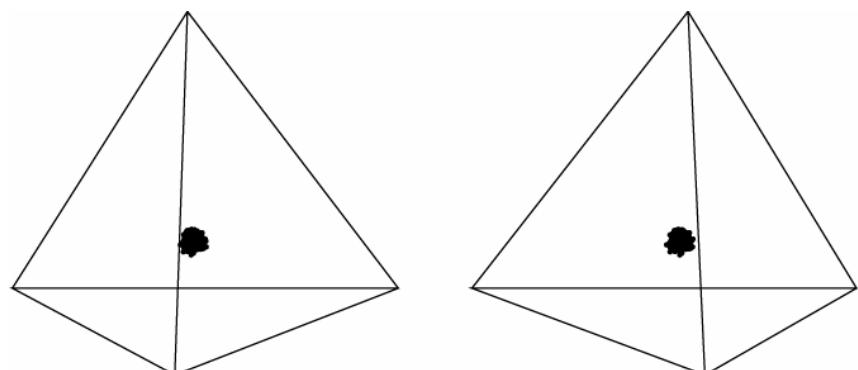
- For **base frequencies**: Dirichlet( $a, b, c, d$ ) distribution

$$a \rightarrow \pi_A, b \rightarrow \pi_C, c \rightarrow \pi_G, d \rightarrow \pi_T$$



Flat prior:

$$a = b = c = d = 1$$



(stereo pairs)

Informative prior:  
 $a = b = c = d = 300$

(Thanks to Mark Holder for pointing out to me  
that a tetrahedron could be used for plotting a  
4-dimensional Dirichlet)

# Commonly-used Prior Distributions

- For **GTR model relative rates**: Dirichlet( $a,b,c,d,e,f$ ) distribution
  - $a \rightarrow r_{AC}$ ,  $b \rightarrow r_{AG}$ ,  $c \rightarrow r_{AT}$ ,  $d \rightarrow r_{CG}$ ,  $e \rightarrow r_{CT}$ ,  $f \rightarrow r_{GT}$
  - flat when  $a=b=c=d=e=f=1$
  - all relative rates nearly equal to each other if  $a=b=c=d=e=f$  and large (e.g. 300)
  - to create a vague prior that makes the rate of transitions slightly higher than the rate of transversions, could choose  $a=c=d=f=1$  and  $b=e=2$
  - mean for  $r_{AC}$  is  $a/s$  where  $s=a+b+c+d+e+f$
  - variance for  $r_{AC}$  is  $a(s-a)/[s^2(s+1)]$
  - Beta( $a,b$ ) equals Dirichlet( $a,b$ )

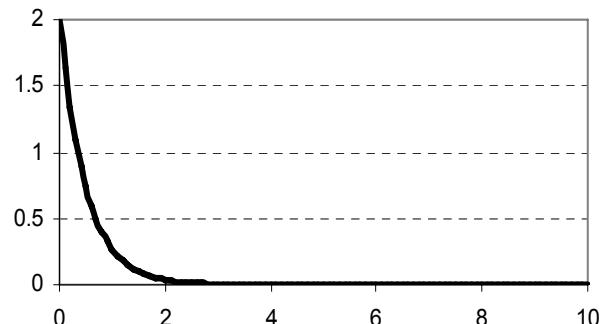
# Common Priors (cont.)

- For other **model parameters** and **branch lengths**: Gamma(a,b) distribution
  - Exponential( $\lambda$ ) equals Gamma(1,  $\lambda^{-1}$ )
  - Mean of Gamma(a,b) is  $a \times b$ 
    - mean of an Exponential(10) distribution is 0.1
  - Variance of a Gamma(a,b) distribution is  $a \times b^2$ 
    - variance of an Exponential(10) distribution is 0.01

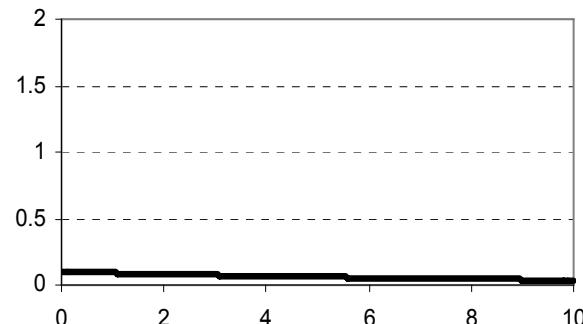
Note: be aware that in many papers the Gamma distribution is defined such that the second (scale) parameter is the *inverse* of the value b used in this slide! In this case, the mean and variance would be  $a/b$  and  $a/b^2$ , respectively.

# Priors for model parameters with no upper bound

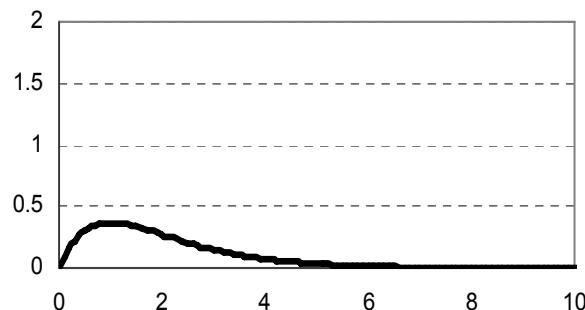
Exponential(2) = Gamma(1,½)



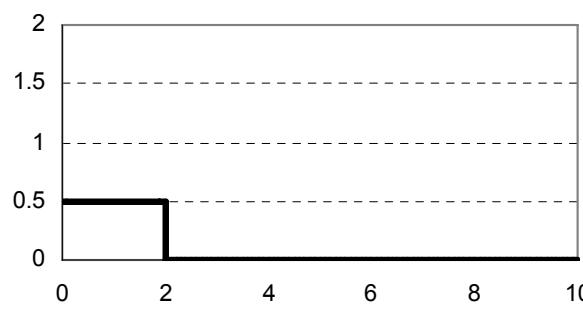
Exponential(0.1) = Gamma(1,10)



Gamma(2,1)



Uniform(0,2)

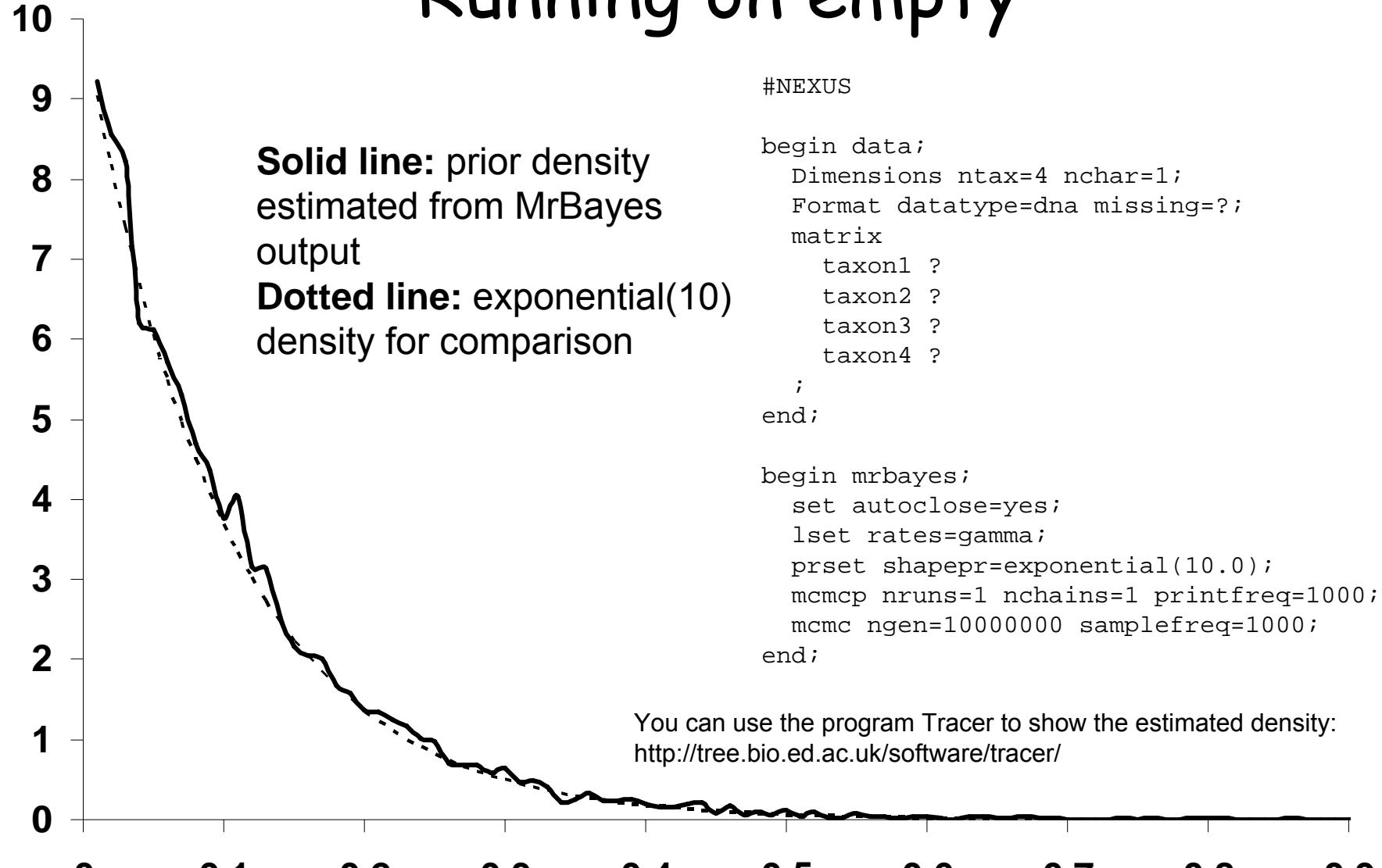


See chapter 18 in Felsenstein, J. (2004.  
Inferring Phylogenies.Sinauer) before using.

# More About Priors

- Running on empty
- Prior as enemy
- Prior as friend
- Flat vs. informative priors
- Proper vs. improper priors
- Hierarchical models
- Empirical Bayes

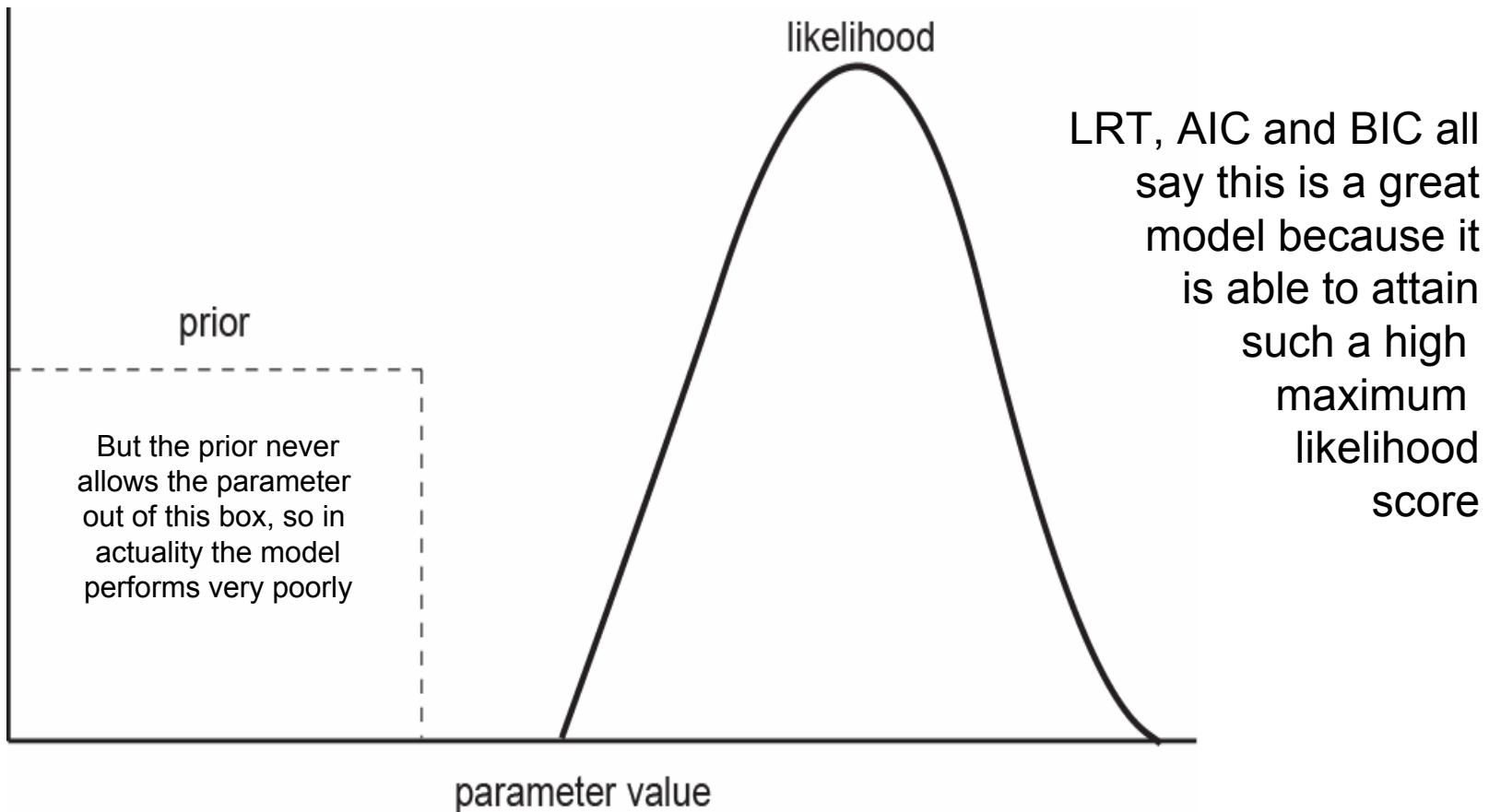
# Running on empty



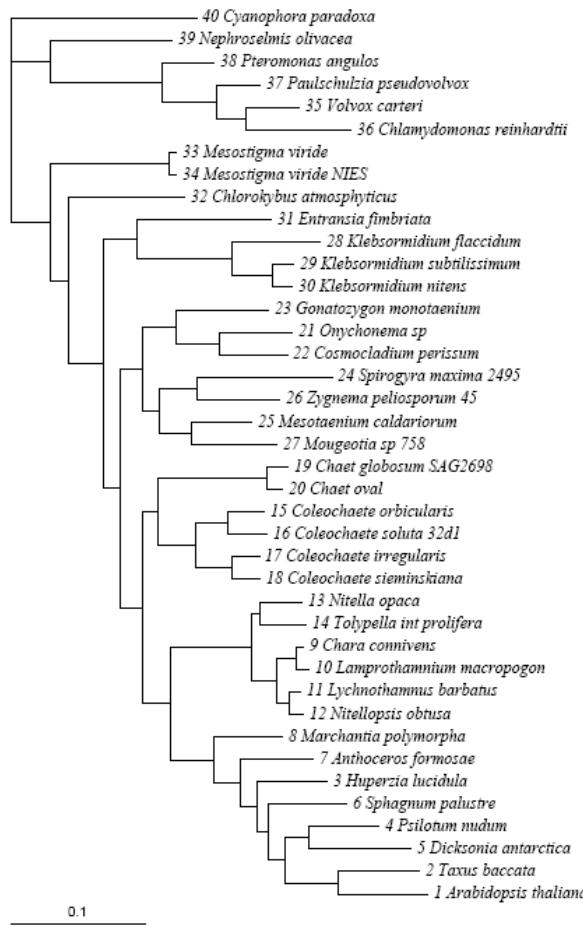
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# The choice of prior distributions can potentially turn a good model bad!

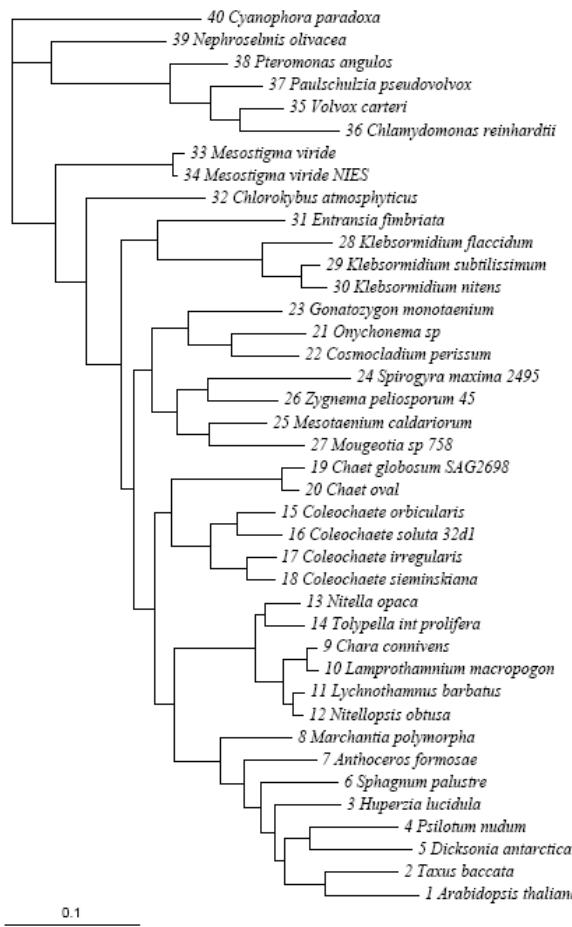


# Internal branch length prior mean 0.1



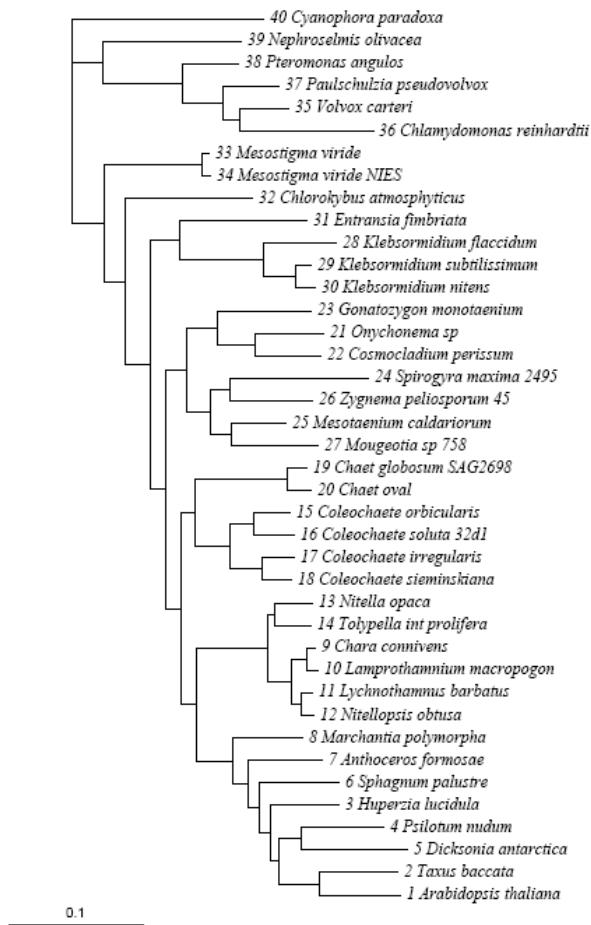
This is a reasonably vague  
internal branch length prior

# Internal branch length prior mean 0.01



Not much effect yet...

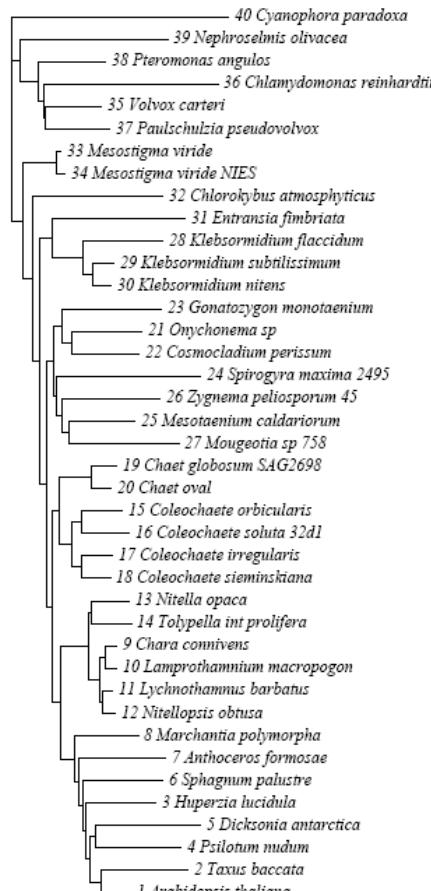
# Internal branch length prior mean 0.001



Notice how the internal  
branch lengths are  
shrinking...

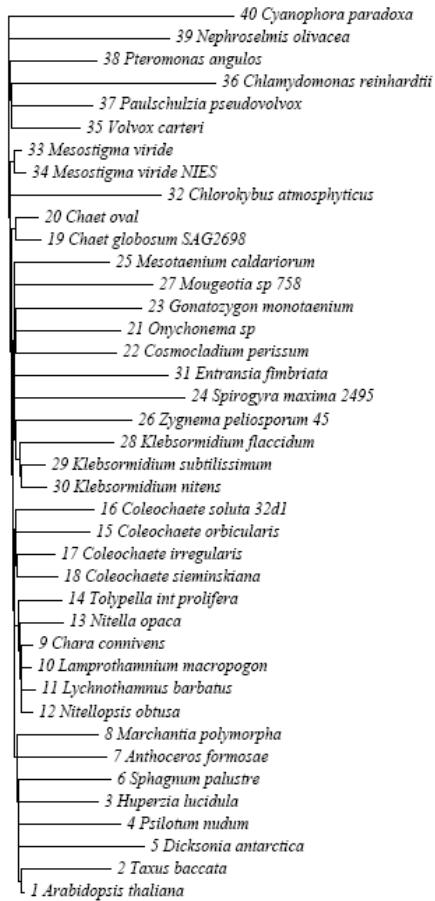
(Trees in this series are  
drawn to same scale)

# Internal branch length prior mean 0.0001



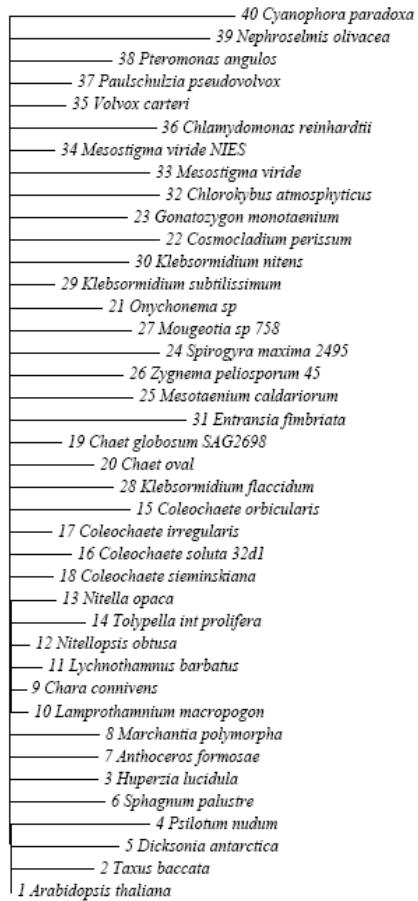
Model compensating  
for small internal branch  
lengths by increasing the  
external branch lengths...

# Internal branch length prior mean 0.00001



Internal branch length prior now so informative that it is beginning to noticeably override the likelihood...

# Internal branch length prior mean 0.000001



The internal branch length prior is calling the shots now.

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# Too many parameters, too little information

H H T T T T H

7 coins flipped once

$$3/7 = 0.43$$

1 parameter model  
behaves well

1.0    1.0    0.0    0.0    0.0    0.0    1.0

7 parameter model  
behaves badly

Under maximum likelihood, parameter values tend to go to extremes if there is too little information.

Priors *add information* and can keep models in check

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# Flat prior: posterior proportional to likelihood

$$\begin{aligned}\text{posterior} \longrightarrow f(\theta|D) &= \frac{f(D|\theta)f(\theta)}{f(D)} \quad \leftarrow \text{constant} \\ &\propto f(D|\theta)f(\theta) \quad \leftarrow \text{constant} \\ &\propto f(D|\theta) \quad \leftarrow \text{likelihood}\end{aligned}$$

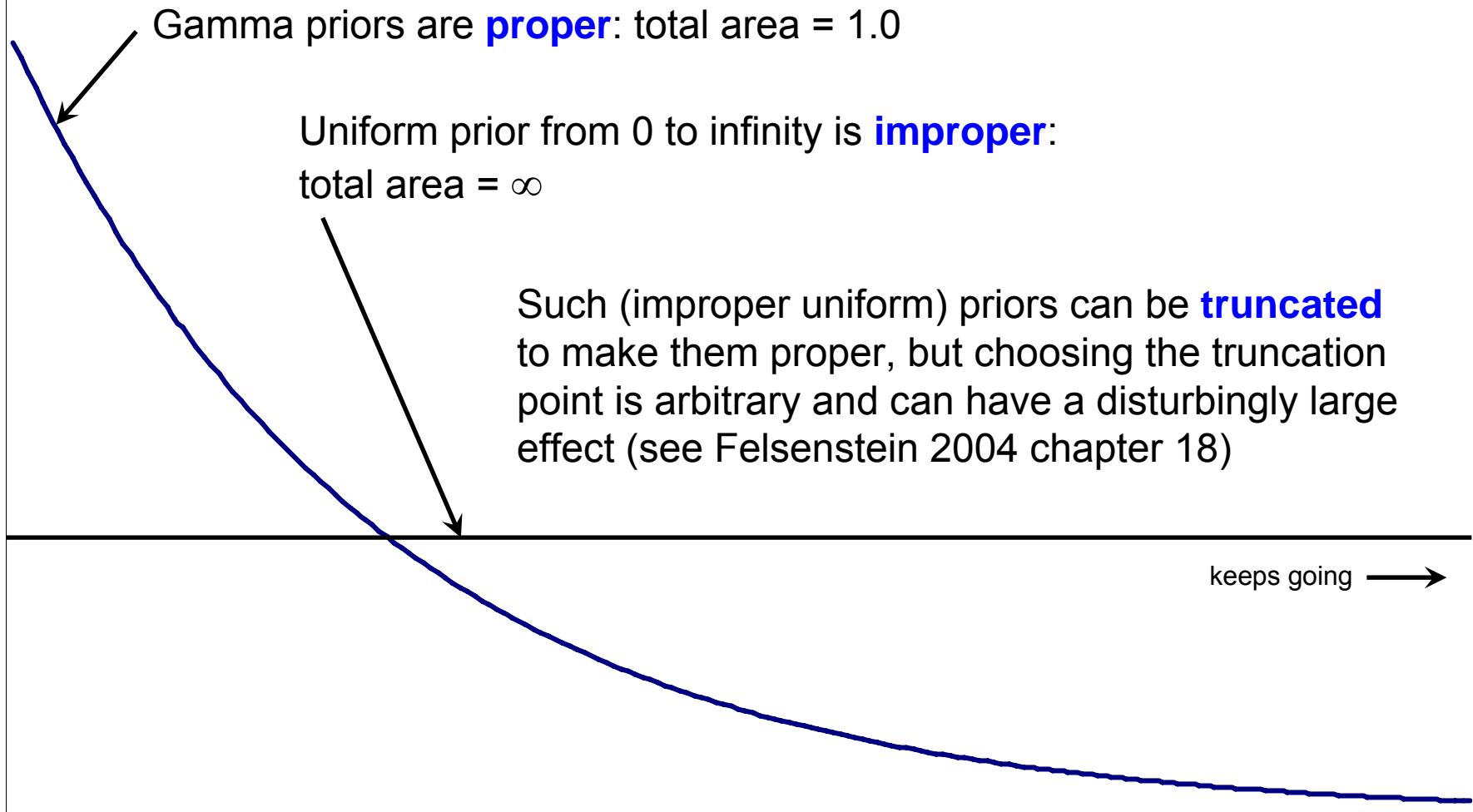
Under a flat prior, the posterior distribution *peaks* at the same place as the likelihood function, but:

- posterior mean usually differs from the maximum likelihood estimate
- flat priors are not possible for most parameters

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# Proper vs. improper priors



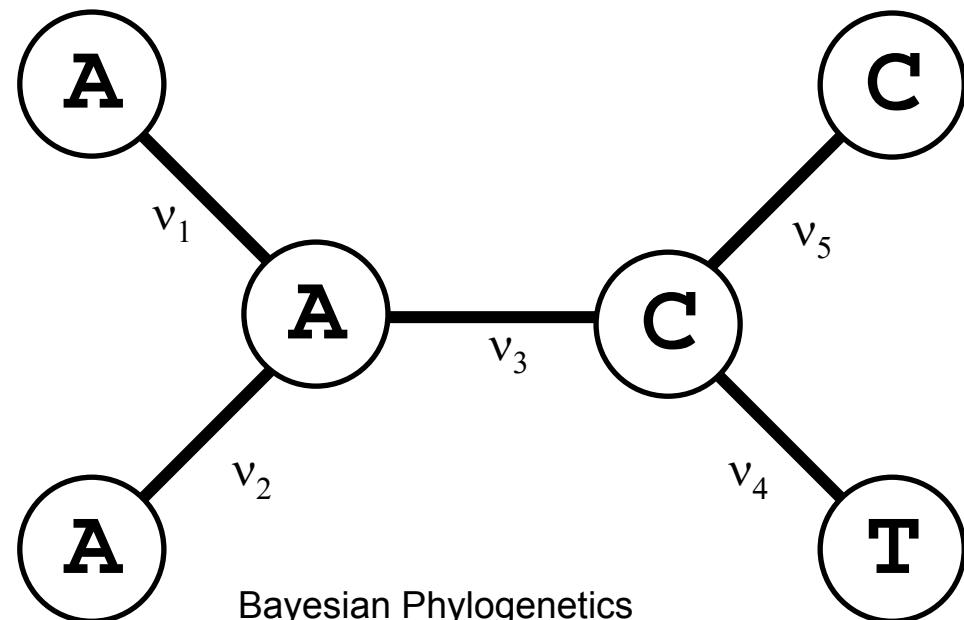
# More About Priors

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In a non-hierarchical model, all parameters are present in the likelihood function

Exponential(mean=0.1)

$$L_k = \frac{1}{4} \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4v_1/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4v_2/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{4} e^{-4v_3/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{4} e^{-4v_4/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4v_5/3} \right]$$



# Hierarchical models add hyperparameters not present in the likelihood function

$\mu$  is a hyperparameter governing the mean of the edge length prior

hyperprior  
InverseGamma(mean=1, var=10)



Exponential(mean= $\mu$ )

$$L_k = \frac{1}{4} \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4\nu_1/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4\nu_2/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{4} e^{-4\nu_3/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{4} e^{-4\nu_4/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4\nu_5/3} \right]$$

For example, see Suchard, Weiss and Sinsheimer. 2001. MBE 18(6): 1001-1013.

# Empirical Bayes

This uses some aspects of the data to determine some aspects of the prior, which is not acceptable to purists, who prefer using the hierarchical approach.

An empirical Bayesian would use the maximum likelihood estimate (MLE) of the length of an average branch here

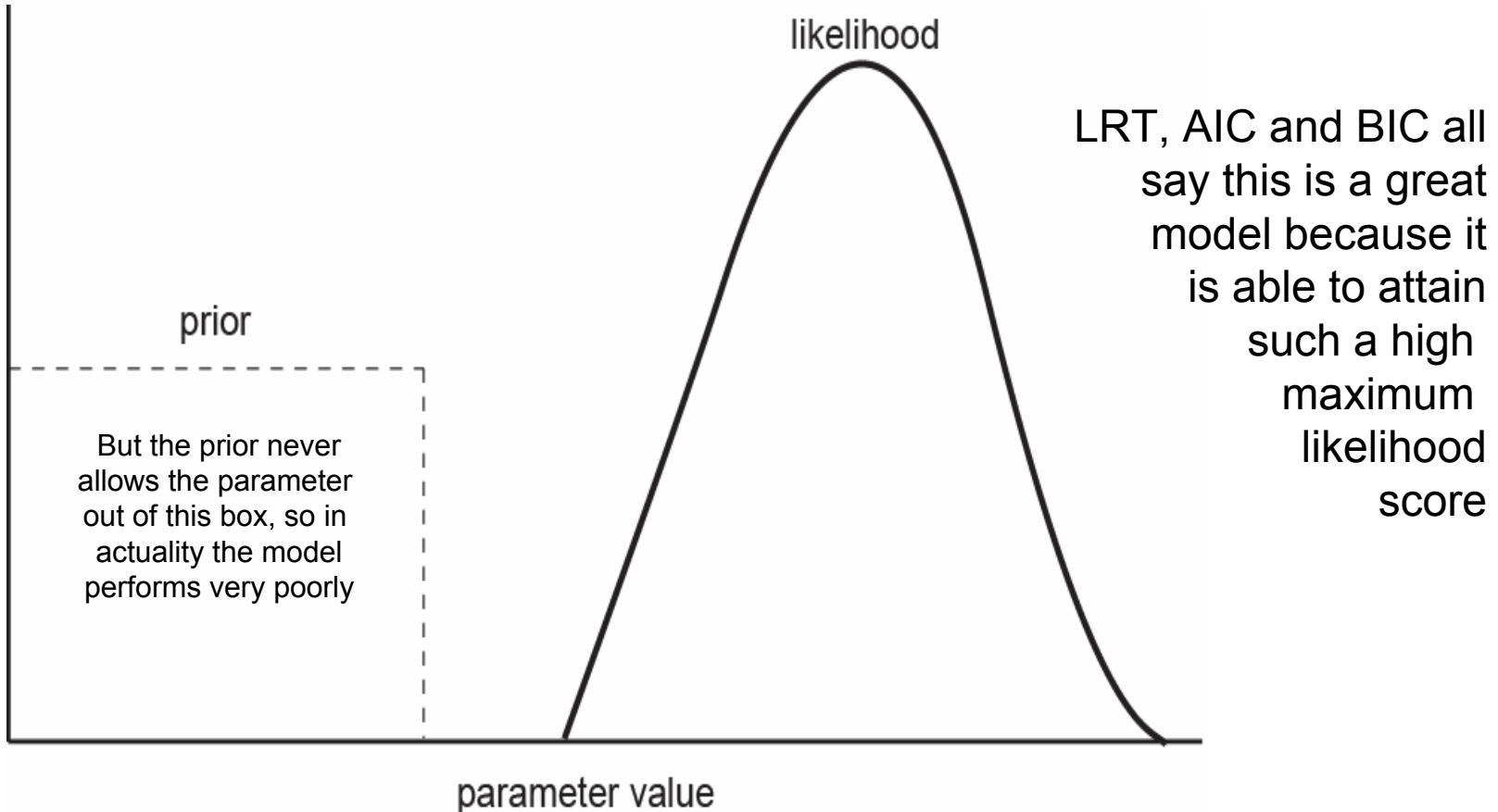


Exponential(mean=MLE)

$$L_k = \frac{1}{4} \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4\nu_1/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4\nu_2/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{4} e^{-4\nu_3/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} - \frac{1}{4} e^{-4\nu_4/3} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{4} e^{-4\nu_5/3} \right]$$

# V. Bayesian model selection

LRT, AIC and BIC only evaluate *part* of a Bayesian model (i.e. the likelihood)



# Marginal probabilities of models

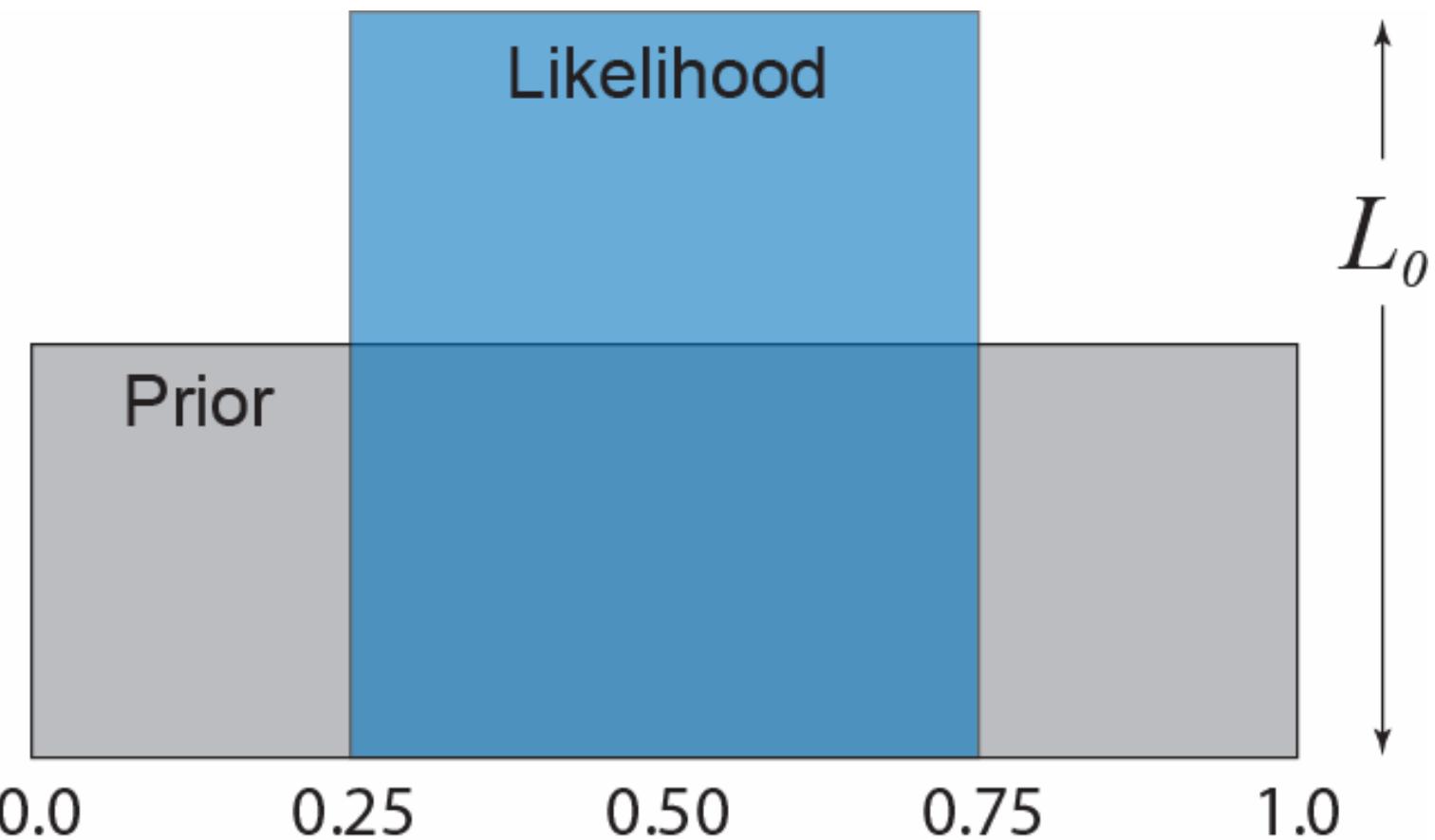
$$\Pr(D) = \int_{\theta} f(D|\theta) f(\theta) d\theta$$

Marginal probability of the data (denominator in Bayes' rule).  
This is a weighted average of the likelihood, where the weights  
are provided by the prior distribution.

$$\Pr(D|M) = \int_{\theta} f(D|\theta, M) f(\theta|M) d\theta$$

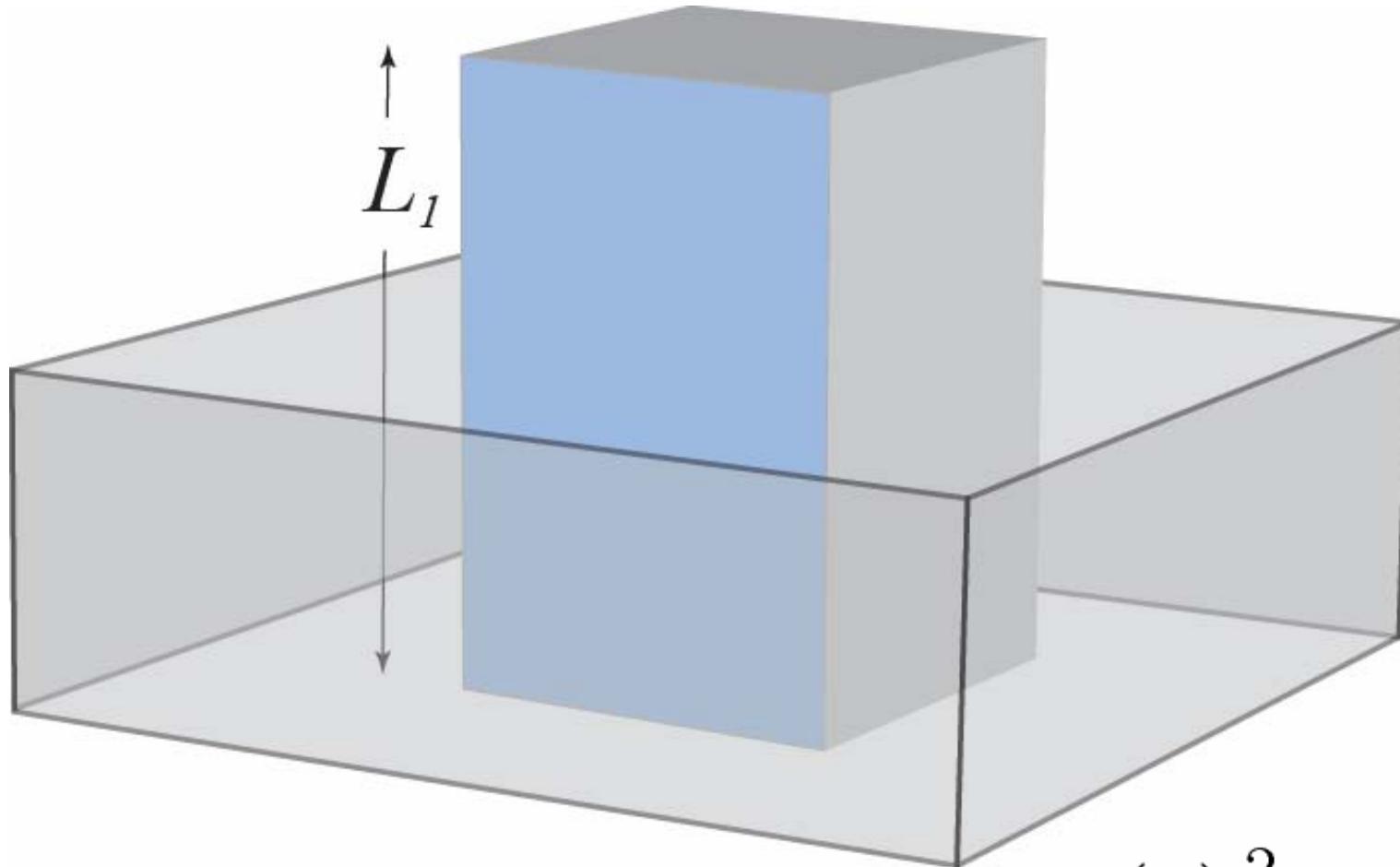
Often left out is the fact that we are also conditioning on  $M$ , the model used.  
 $\Pr(D|M_1)$  is comparable to  $\Pr(D|M_2)$  and thus the marginal probability of the  
data can be used to compare the average fit of different models as long as  
the data  $D$  is the same.

# Bayes Factor: 1-param. model



$$\text{Average likelihood} = \left( \frac{1}{2} \right) L_0$$

# Bayes Factor: 2-param. model



$$\text{Average likelihood} = \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^2 L_1$$

# Bayes Factor is ratio of marginal model likelihoods

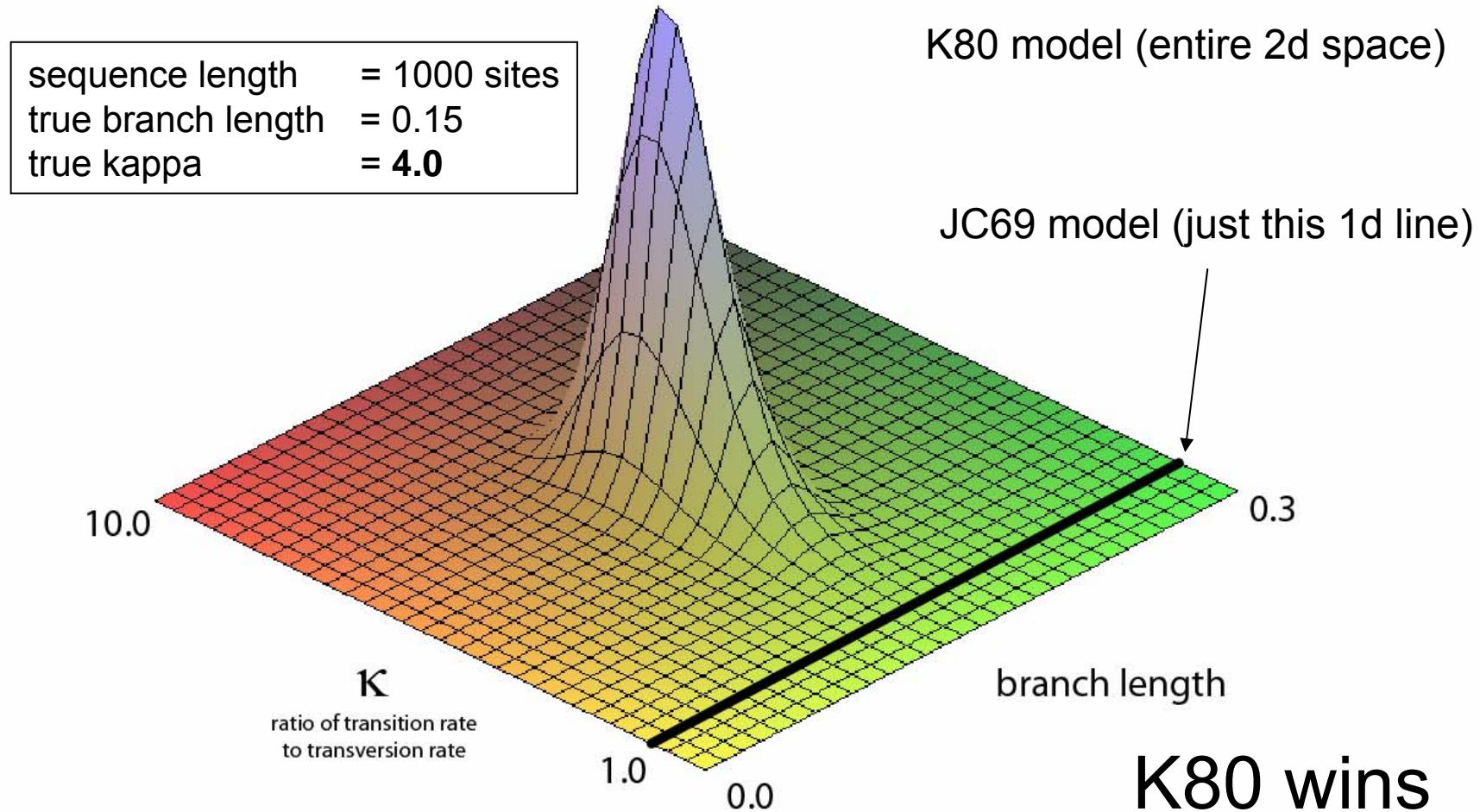
1-parameter model  $M_0$ : ( $\frac{1}{2}$ )  $L_0$

2-parameter model  $M_1$ : ( $\frac{1}{4}$ )  $L_1$

Bayes Factor favors  $M_0$  unless  $L_1$  is at least *twice* as large as  $L_0$

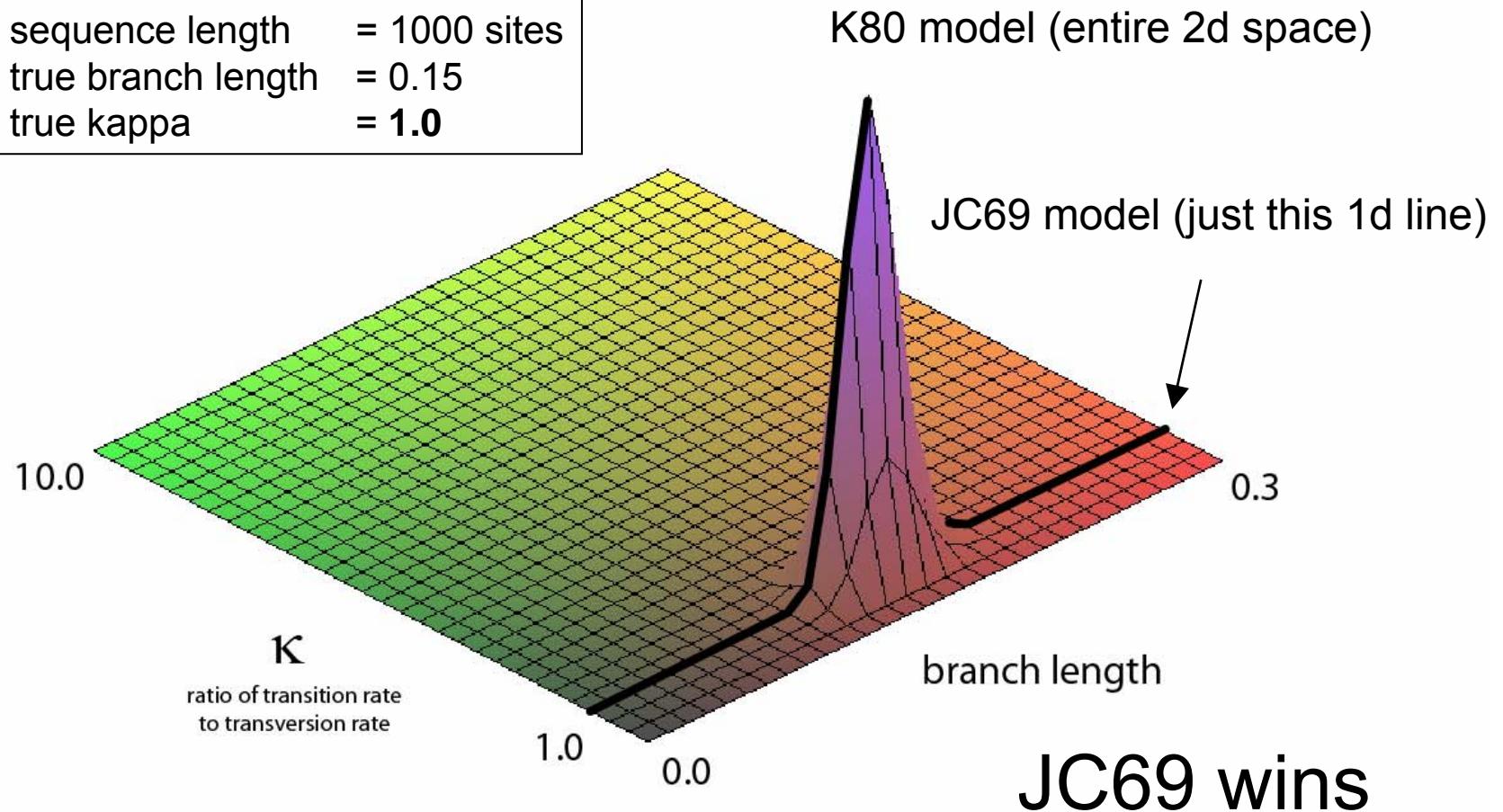
All other things equal, more complex models are penalized by their extra dimensions

# Marginal Likelihood of a Model

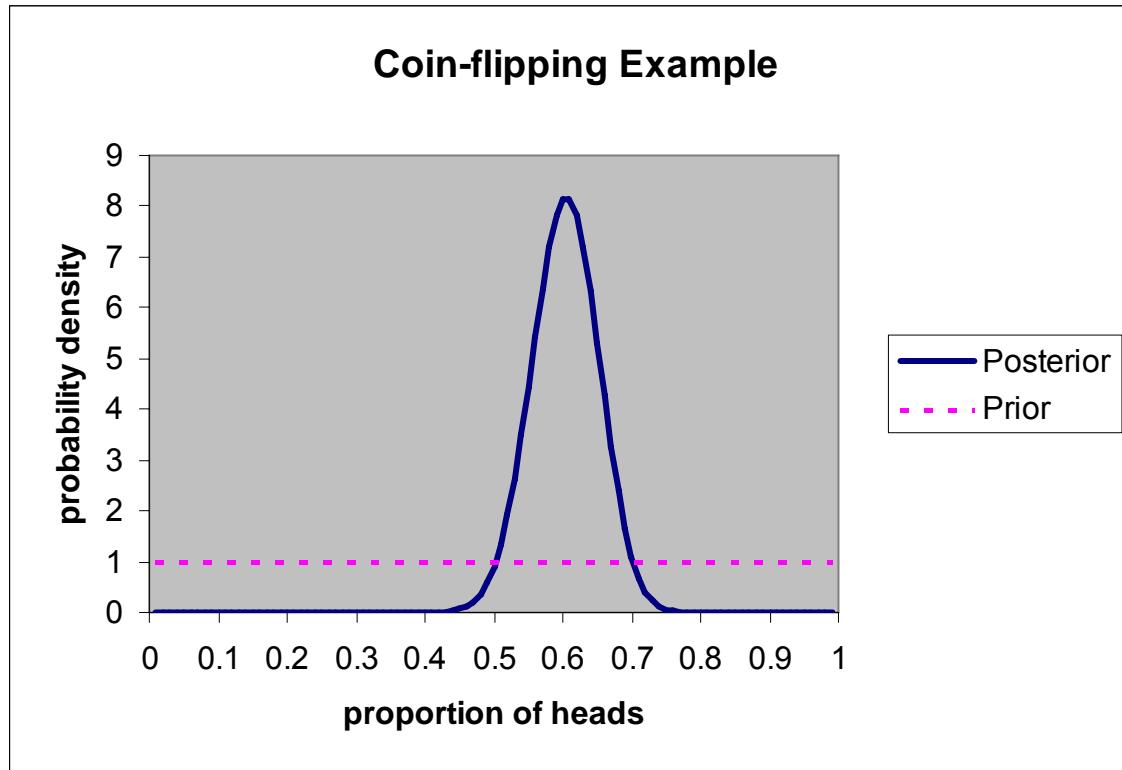


# Marginal Likelihood of a Model

sequence length	= 1000 sites
true branch length	= 0.15
true kappa	= 1.0



# Direct Method



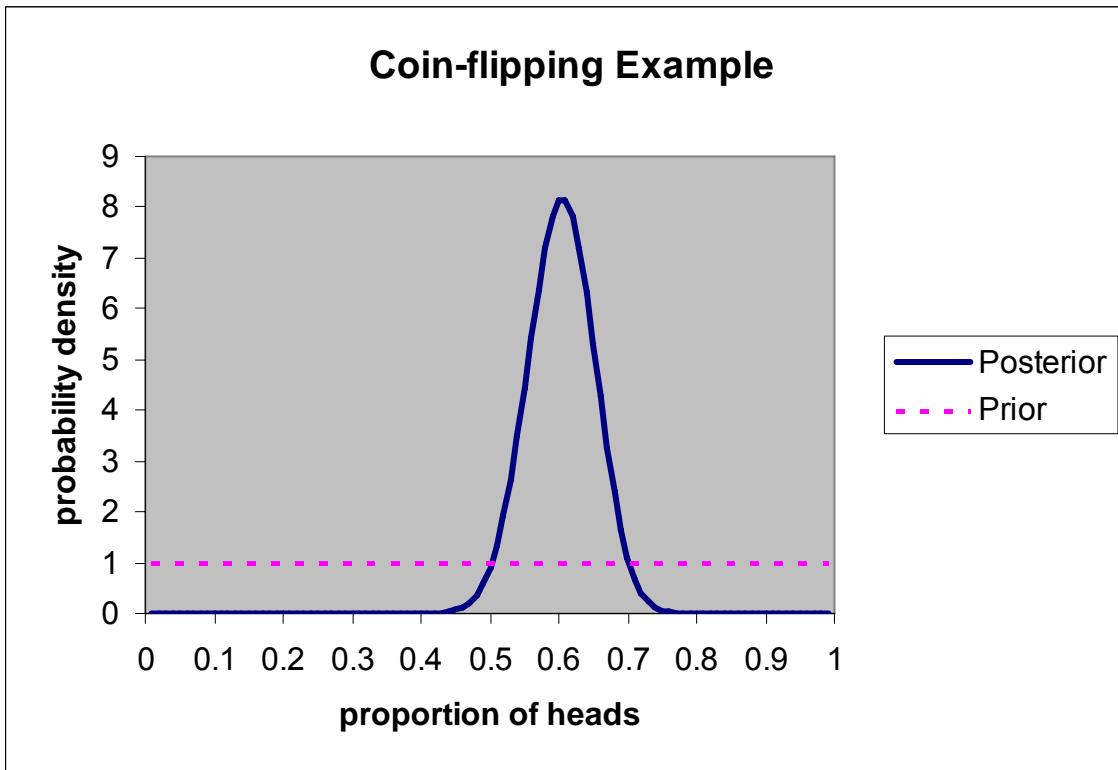
Sample values from the **prior**. In this case, draw proportion of heads from  $\text{Uniform}(0,1)$

Compute likelihood for each point drawn from the prior

Marginal likelihood is the **arithmetic** mean of the sampled likelihoods

Problem: tends to **underestimate** marginal likelihood because **few draws** from the prior will be in the **highest** part of the likelihood

# Harmonic Mean Method



Sample values from the **posterior**.

Compute likelihood for each point drawn from posterior

Marginal likelihood is the **harmonic** mean of the sampled likelihoods

Problem: tends to **overestimate** marginal likelihood because **few draws** from the posterior will be in the **lowest** part of the likelihood

# Thermodynamic Integration<sup>1</sup>

- Special MCMC analysis performed in which the distribution explored slowly changes from posterior to prior
- Produces much more accurate<sup>2</sup> marginal likelihood estimates:

<b>log(marg. like.)</b>	<b>MSE</b>	<b>Method</b>
-167.316	29.62	Harmonic mean
-172.783	0.01	Thermodynamic Integration
-172.743	0.00	True value
- More computation needed than for typical Bayesian MCMC analysis

<sup>1</sup>Lartillot & Phillippe. 2005. Computing Bayes factors using thermodynamic integration. *Syst. Biol.* 55:195-207.

<sup>2</sup>Work in collaboration with Wangang Xie, Meng Hui Chen, Lynn Kuo and Yu Fan. In this case, model and tree were simple enough that the marginal likelihood could be determined analytically (i.e. the true value is known).

How would we like our phylogenetic inference methods to behave?

Ideally, the methods would return the true tree with strong support for every grouping in the tree.

Why is this perfect performance not possible?

- systematic errors
- sampling errors

What properties are important when choosing between methods? Assessments of support for different aspects of the tree should be:

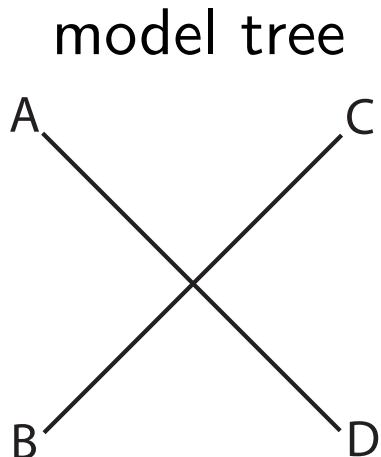
- interpretable
- reliable
- if we do not feel that the statements of support are always believable, then we may prefer to be conservative

Ways to make Bayesian statements of support more conservative:

- Polytomy prior
- data-size dependent priors
- majority-rule consensus trees
- more complex models, robust Bayesian techniques

## Simulating from stars

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inferred trees	“expected” support
	$\frac{1}{3}$
	$\frac{1}{3}$
	$\frac{1}{3}$

## Results of star tree simulations

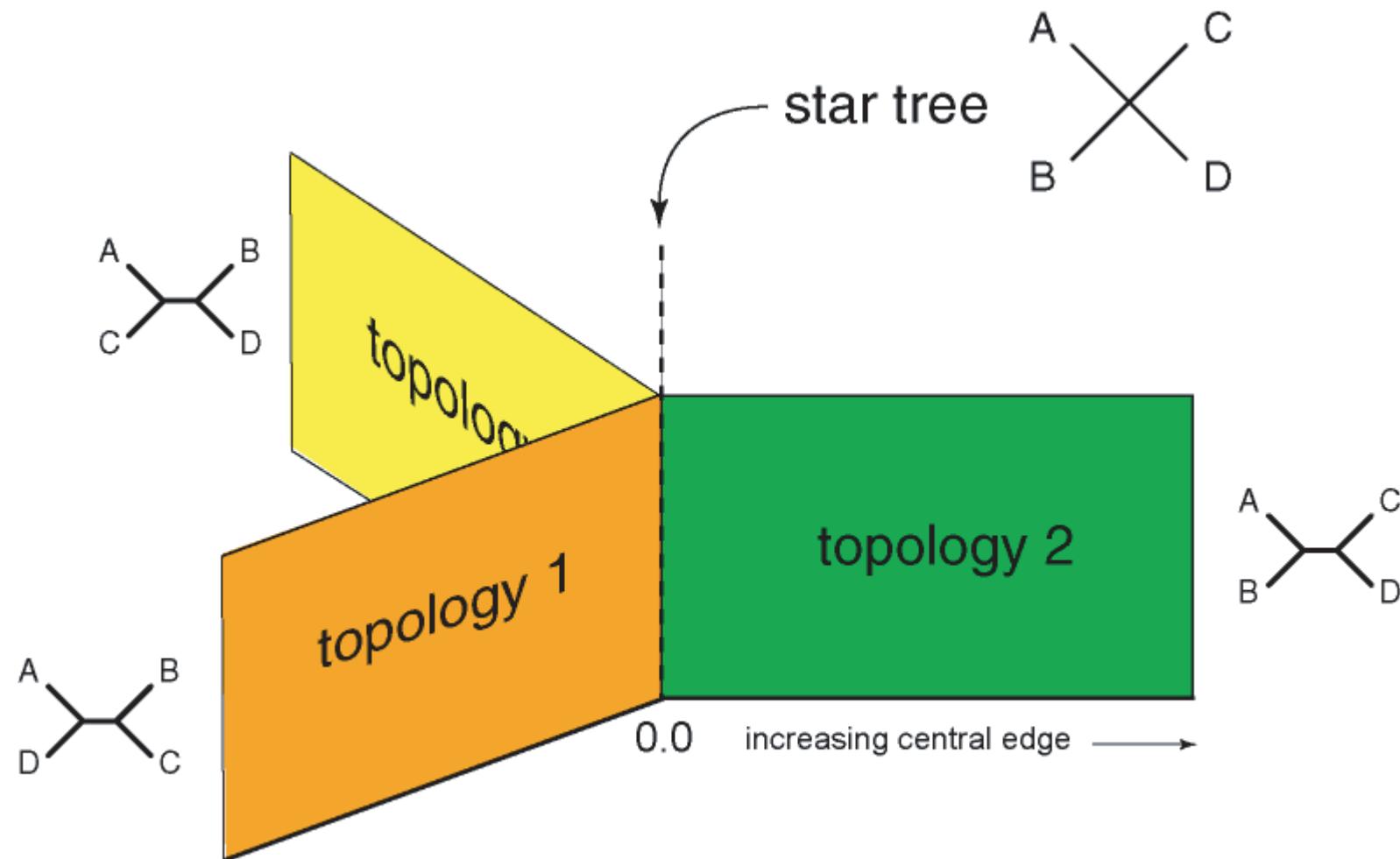
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100,000 sites simulated

Tree 1	Tree 2	Tree 3	Tree 1	Tree 2	Tree 3
0.3029	0.2922	<b>0.4049</b>	0.2990	0.3288	<b>0.3722</b>
<b>0.4607</b>	0.1362	0.4031	0.3172	0.0464	<b>0.6364</b>
<b>0.6704</b>	0.0975	0.2321	0.1584	<b>0.7969</b>	0.0447
<b>0.6120</b>	0.1852	0.2028	<b>0.4625</b>	0.3600	0.1775
<b>0.3605</b>	0.3570	0.2825	<b>0.7077</b>	0.0881	0.2042
<b>0.5455</b>	0.2505	0.2040	0.0884	0.0262	<b>0.8854</b>
0.4253	<b>0.4254</b>	0.1493	<b>0.9551</b>	0.0422	0.0027
0.1595	<b>0.7465</b>	0.0940	0.1826	<b>0.5511</b>	0.2663
<b>0.4436</b>	0.1697	0.3867	0.3043	<b>0.4224</b>	0.2733
<b>0.3994</b>	0.3904	0.2102	<b>0.6559</b>	0.0707	0.2734
0.1151	<b>0.5912</b>	0.2937	0.0073	<b>0.9892</b>	0.0035
<b>0.8333</b>	0.0951	0.0716	0.2703	<b>0.4112</b>	0.3185
<b>0.8317</b>	0.0736	0.0947			

# Tree geometry

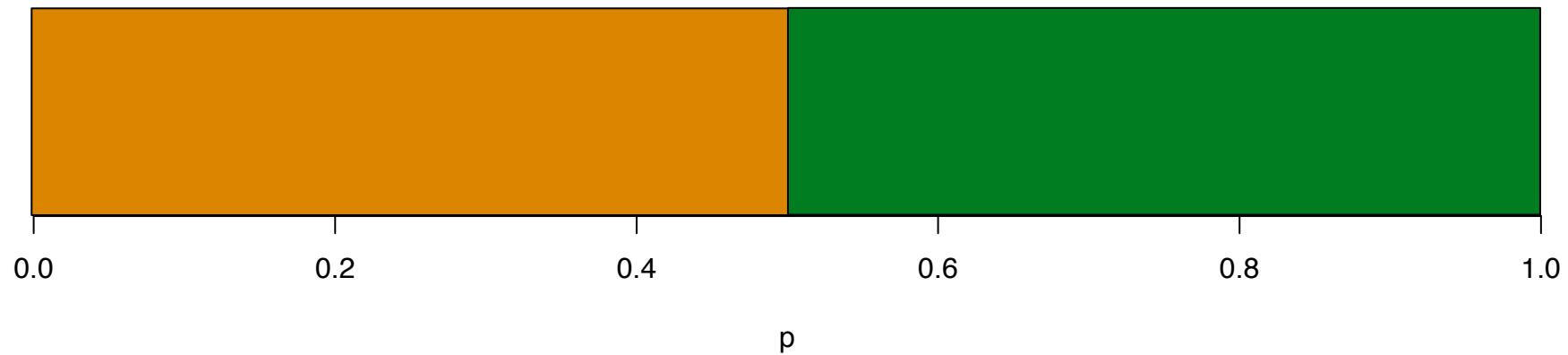
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## Coin-flipping analogy

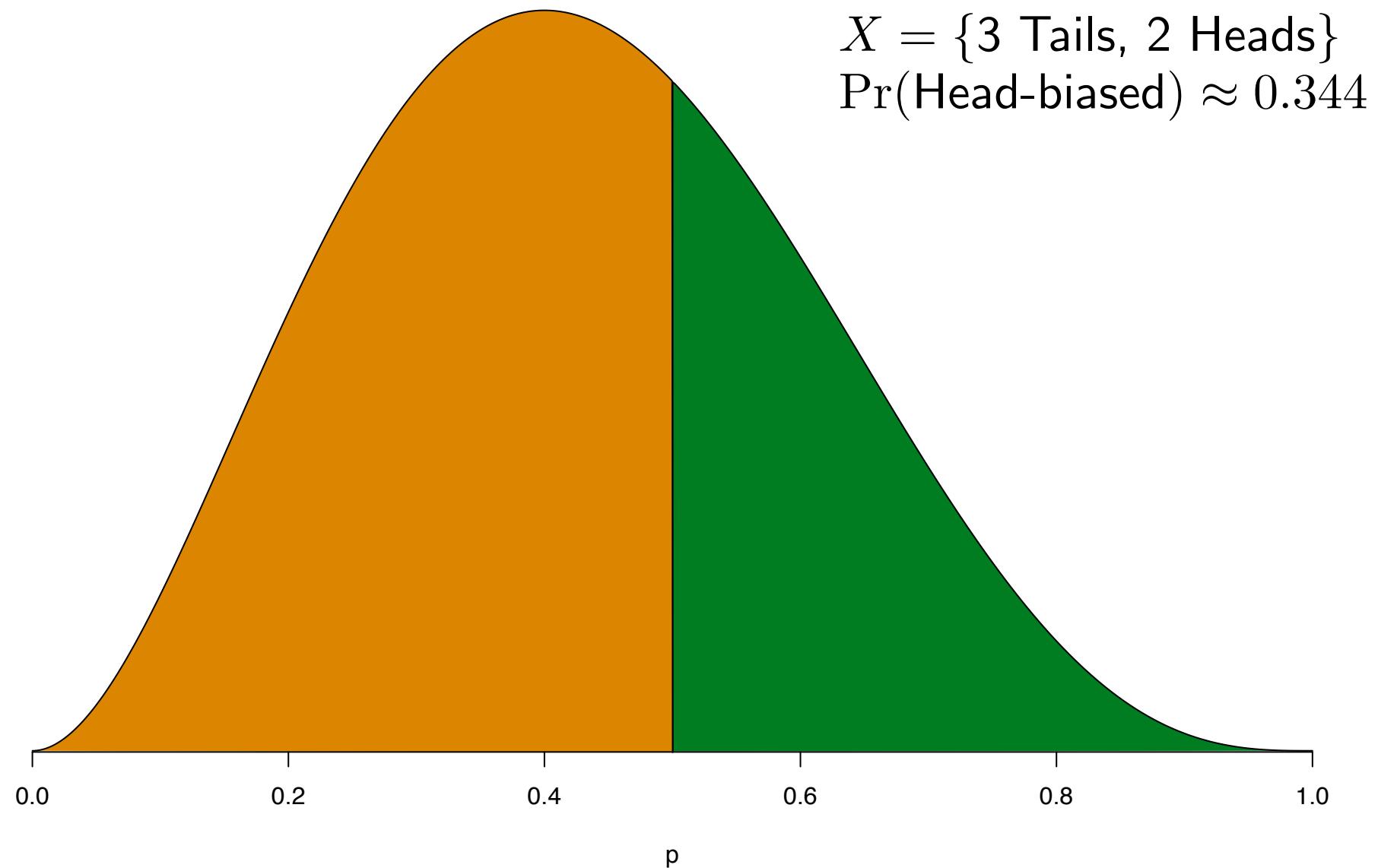
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$p$  is the probability of Heads  
Uniform prior, no data.  
 $\Pr(\text{Head-biased}) = 0.5$



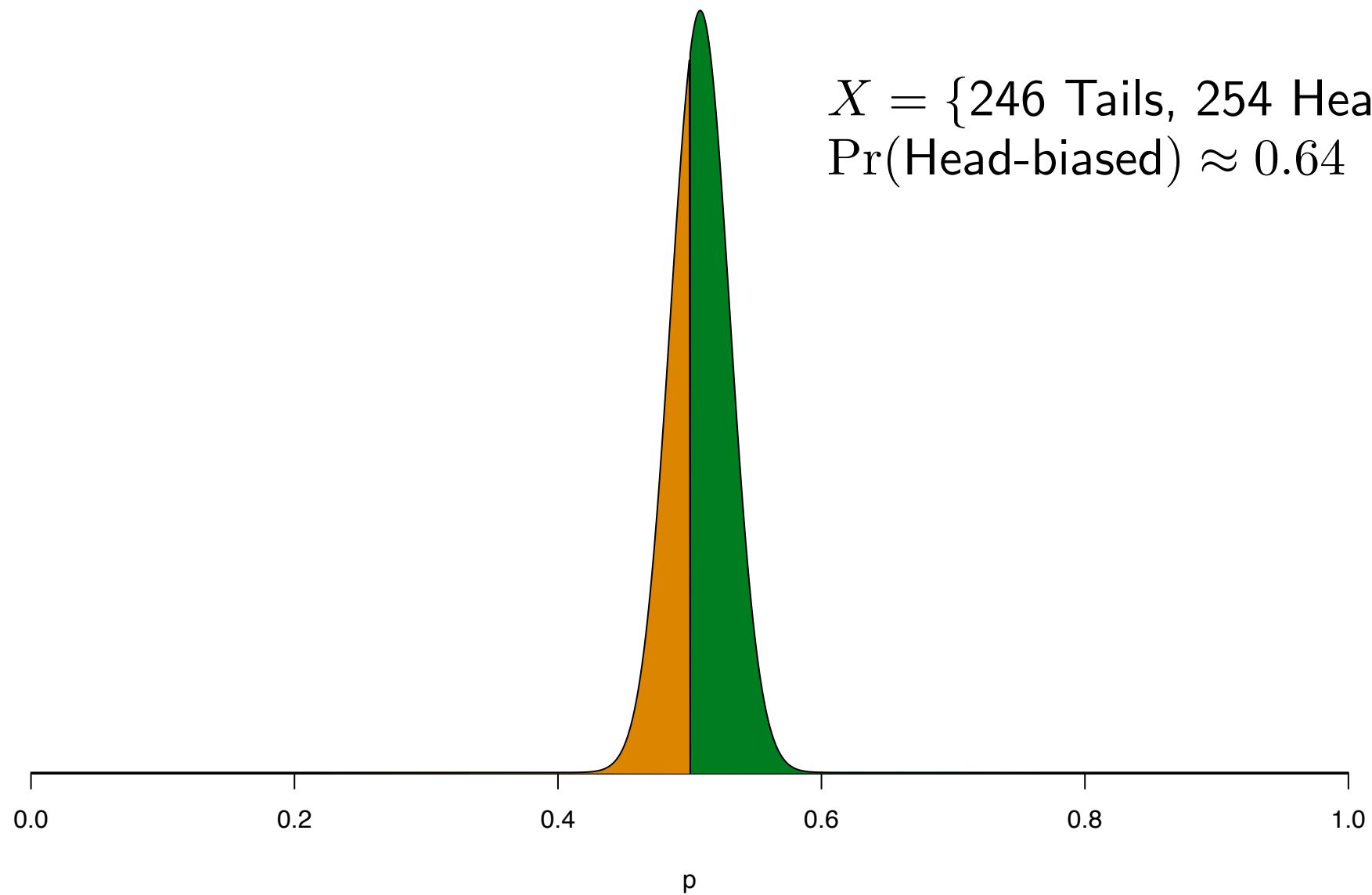
## Coin-flipping analogy

---



## Coin-flipping analogy

---



Despite the fact that  $p = 0.5$ :

$$\Pr(\text{Head-biased}|\text{Data}) \sim \text{Uniform}(0, 1)$$

even as the sample size  $\rightarrow \infty$ .

## The nature of the phenomenon

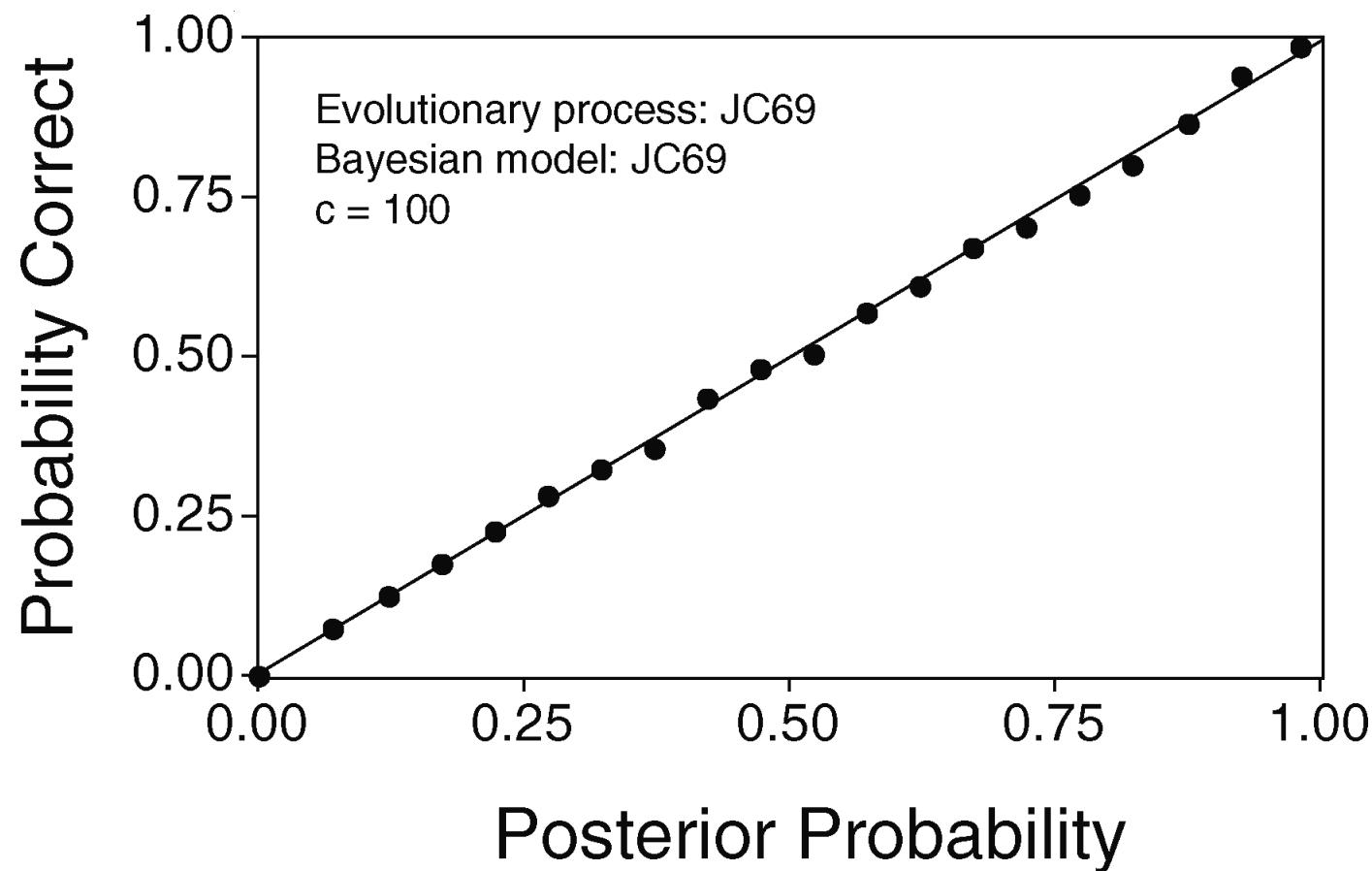
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- Polytomies are given 0 prior probability.
- We are asking methods to choose between several *incorrect* answers.
- *Not* a damning flaw in Bayesian analyses (or an indication of a bug in the software).

## Behavior of Bayesian inference on trees drawn from the prior

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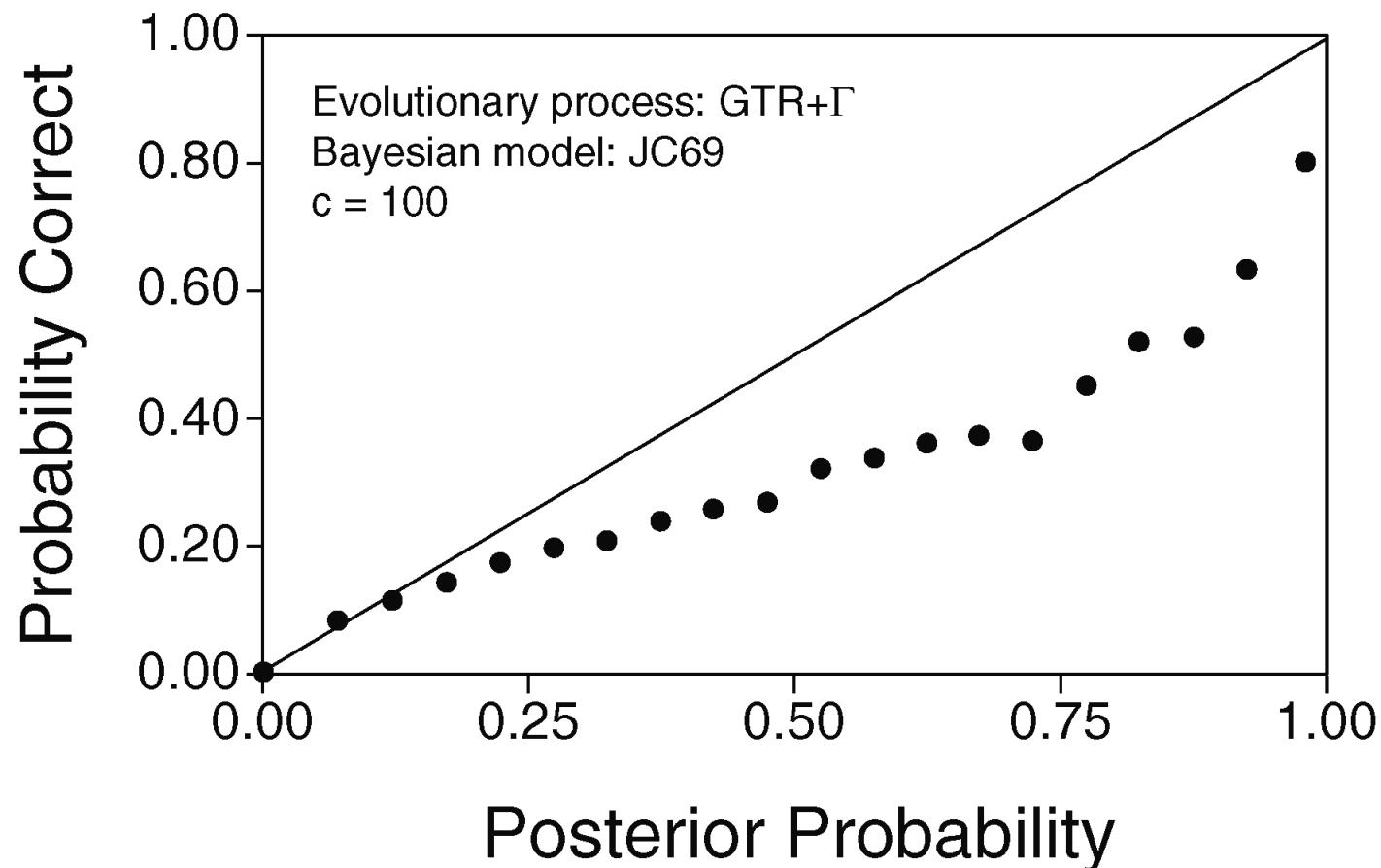
From ?:



## Behavior of Bayesian inference when the inference model is too simple

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From ?:



## **Creating a more conservative analysis**

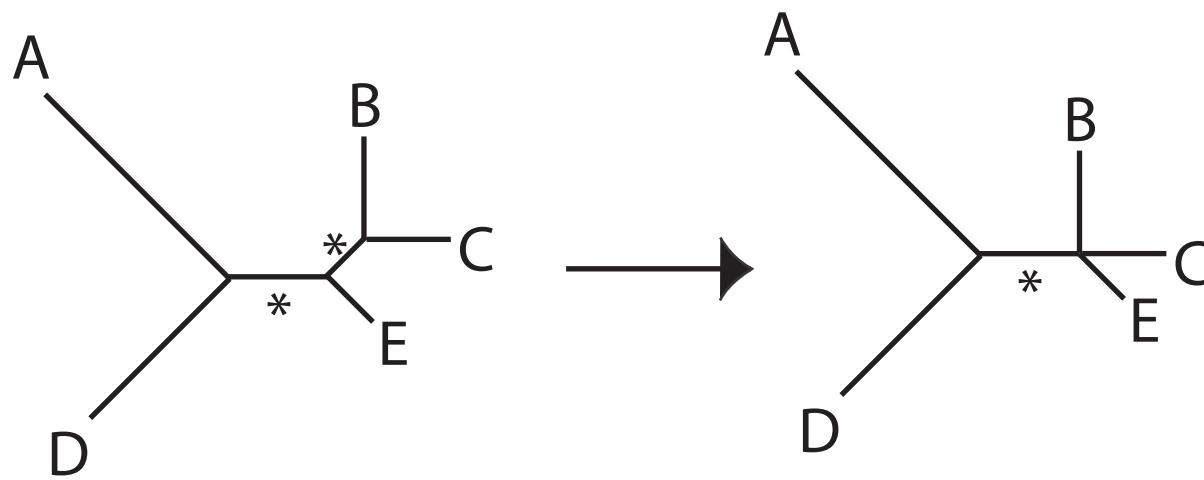
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Allowing for polytomies in Bayesian analyses:

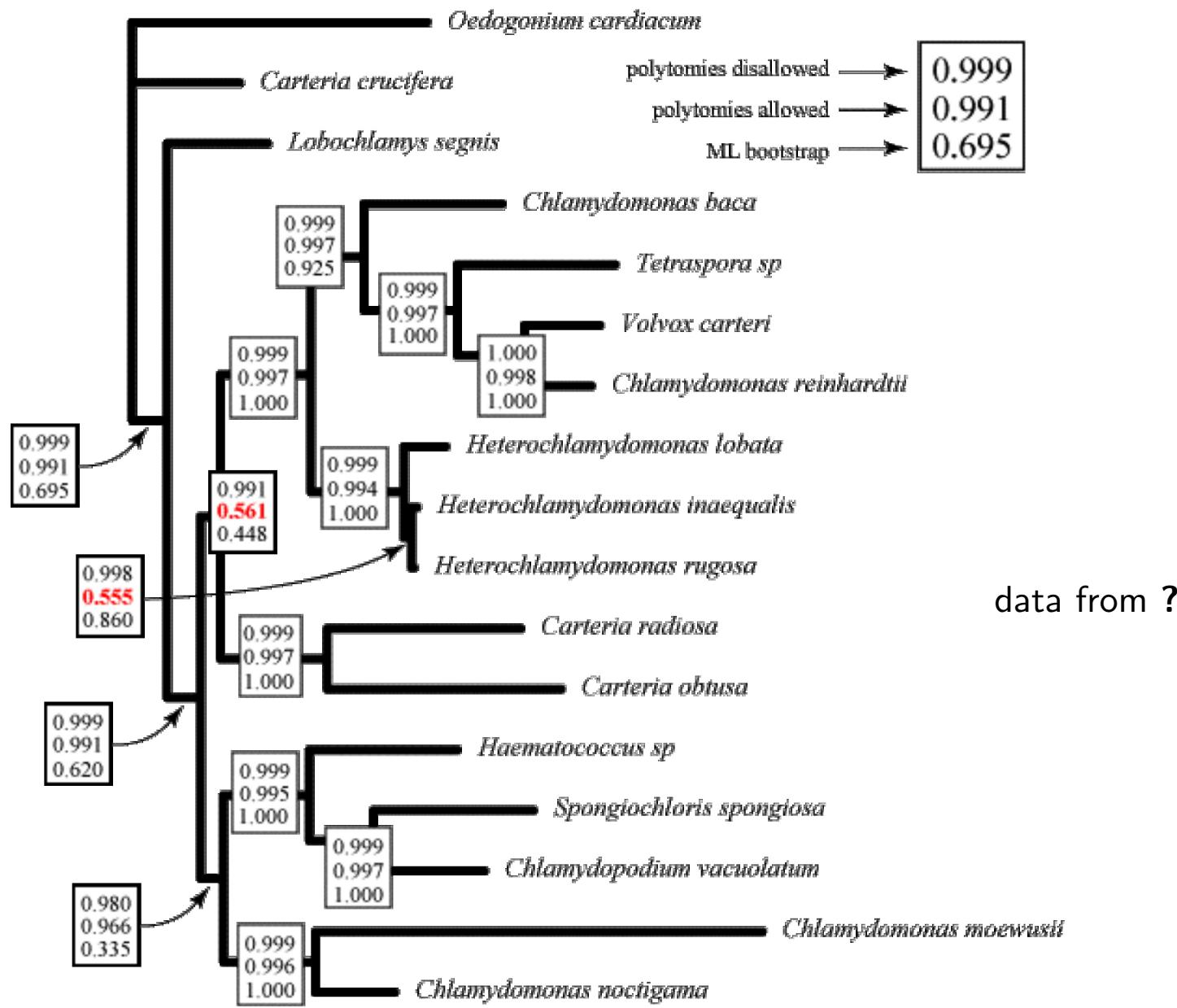
- polytomies express uncertainty
- must place a prior probability on unresolved trees
- new MCMC proposals must be invented (see ?, for details)

## Delete Edge Move

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# Effects of allowing for polytomies



## Polytomy MCMC Wrap up

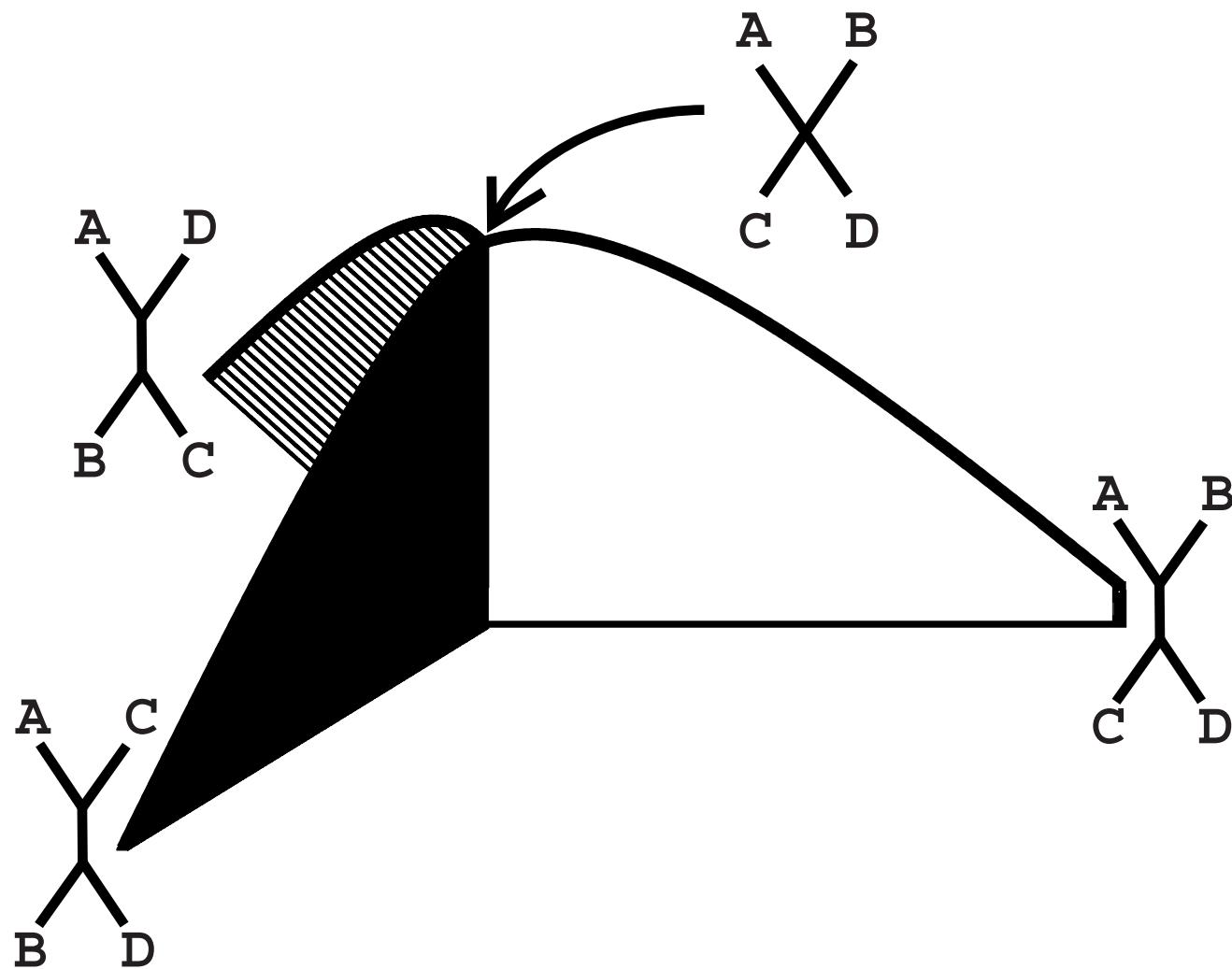
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- Allowing unresolved trees is one way to make the Bayesian tree inference more conservative
- Even strong priors in favor of polytomies do not give up too much power

## **Different priors on the internal and external branches**

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? suggested using strong priors that favor short lengths for the internal branches of the tree. This can lower the support for potentially spurious groupings.



# Log-Likelihood for 3 trees

