

# The Nature of Species

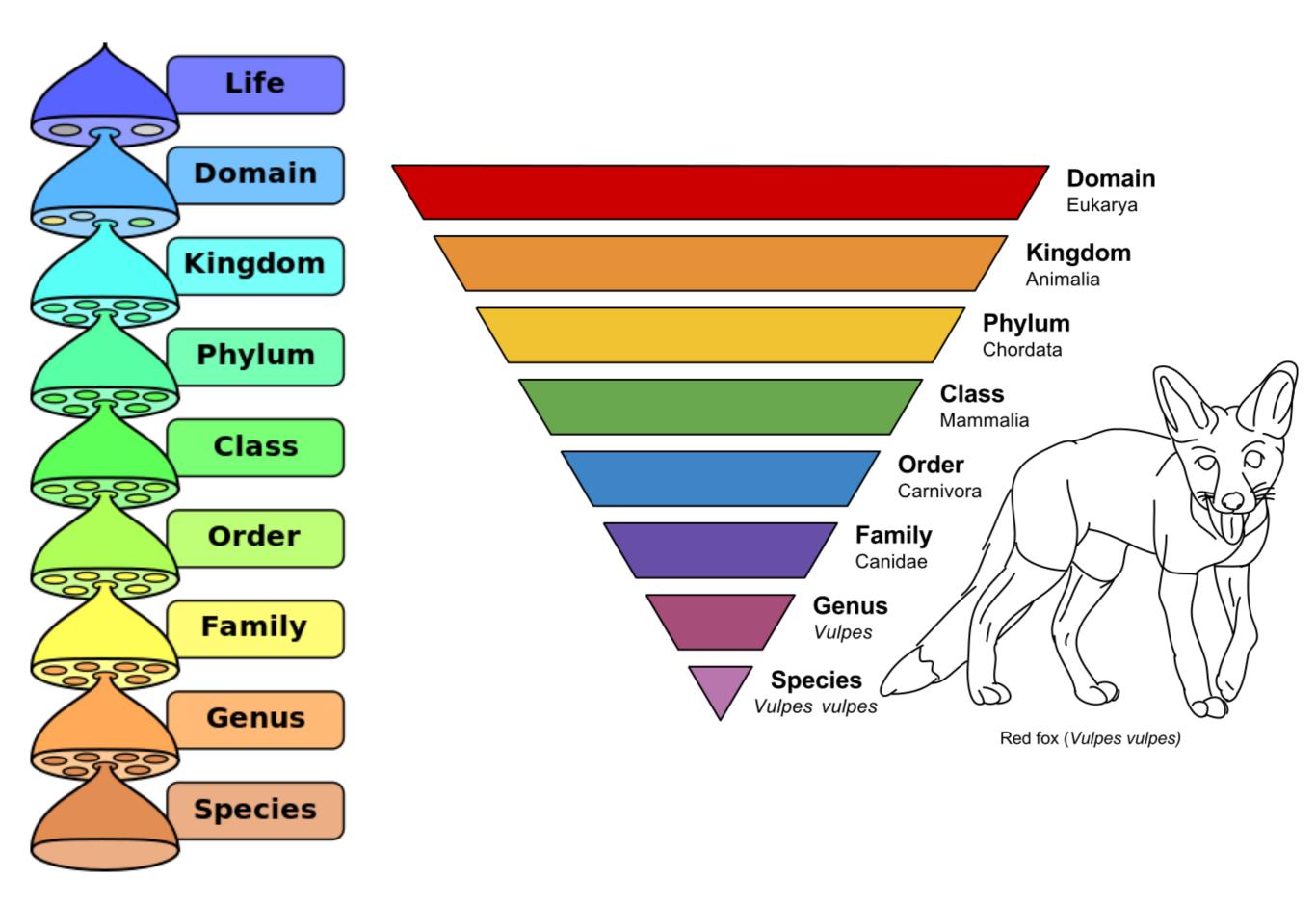
- -two problems regarding biological classification:
- -> how to **divide** organisms into **species** 'the species problem'
- -> how to **classify** species into **higher-level categories** 'the problem of systematics'
- -different problems are raised by these two issues
- -general philosophical issues:
- a) why classify at all? (Locke on general terms)
- b) why have a *hierarchical* classification?
- c) are our classifications 'real' or 'conventional'? -do they 'carve nature at its joints'?
- d) is essentialism about biological taxa correct?
- e) is there one true way to classify, or not

## The Linnaean Hierarchy

- -biologists use the Linnaean system to classify organisms
- -> organisms are grouped in **species**; species in **genera**; genera in **families**; families in **orders**; orders in **classes**; classes in **phyla**; phyla in **kingdoms**

#### rank

- -e.g. grey wolf species Canis Lupus
- -genus: Canis; family: Canidae; order: Carnivora; class: Mammalia;
- **phylum**: Chordata; **kingdom**: Animalia
- -species names indicate the genus to which the species belongs
- -> hierarchical nature of classification
- -> many biologists feel that species are 'real' in way that higher taxa are not



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## The Species Problem

-why a problem?

answer (i): because of evolution, sharp discontinuities **may not exist** 

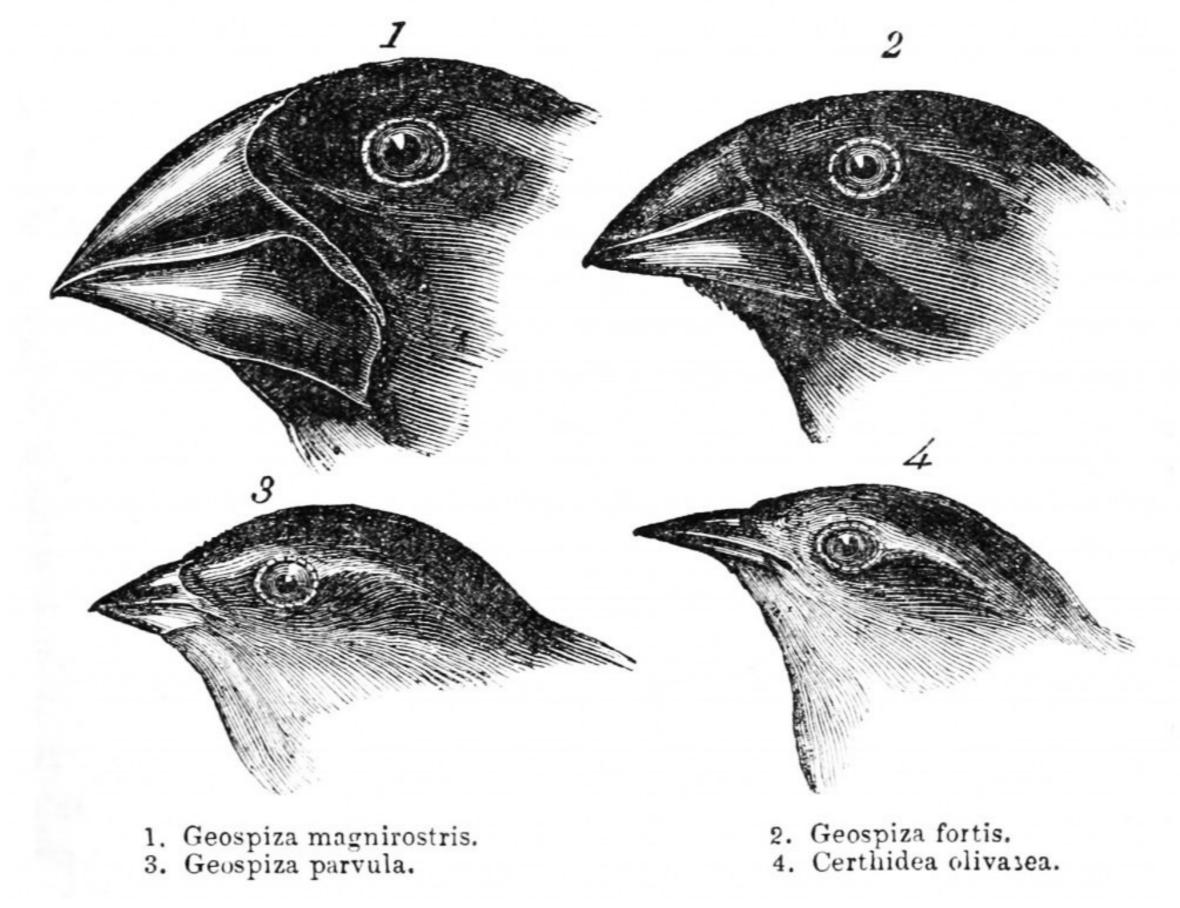
#### Maynard-Smith:

'any attempt to divide all living things, **past and present**, into sharply defined groups, between which no intermediaries exist, is foredoomed to failure'

- -taxonomists are 'faced by a contradiction between the practical necessity and the theoretical impossibility of their task'
- -> division of **contemporary** organisms into species is less problematic



Μίμος



Σπίνοι των Γκαλαπάγκος -από το βιβλίο του Δαρβίνου Journal of researches into the natural history and geology of the countries visited during the voyage of H.M.S. Beagle round the world, under the Command of Capt. Fitz Roy, R.N. (1845).

Δαρβίνος (Καταγωγή, κεφ. 2):

I look at the term species as one **arbitrarily given**, for the sake of **convenience**, to a set of individuals closely **resembling** each other, and that it **does not essentially differ from the term variety**, which is given to **less distinct** and **more fluctuating** forms.

## The Species Problem

answer (ii): because the species concept is meant to satisfy multiple desiderata

e.g. we want con-specific organisms to:

- i) look similar
- ii) interbreed only with each other
- iii) be genetically similar
- iv) constitute a 'real' evolutionary unit
- v) occupy a single ecological niche

unclear whether a single concept can do all this work -> **pluralism** about species concepts

#### 2 ζητήματα:

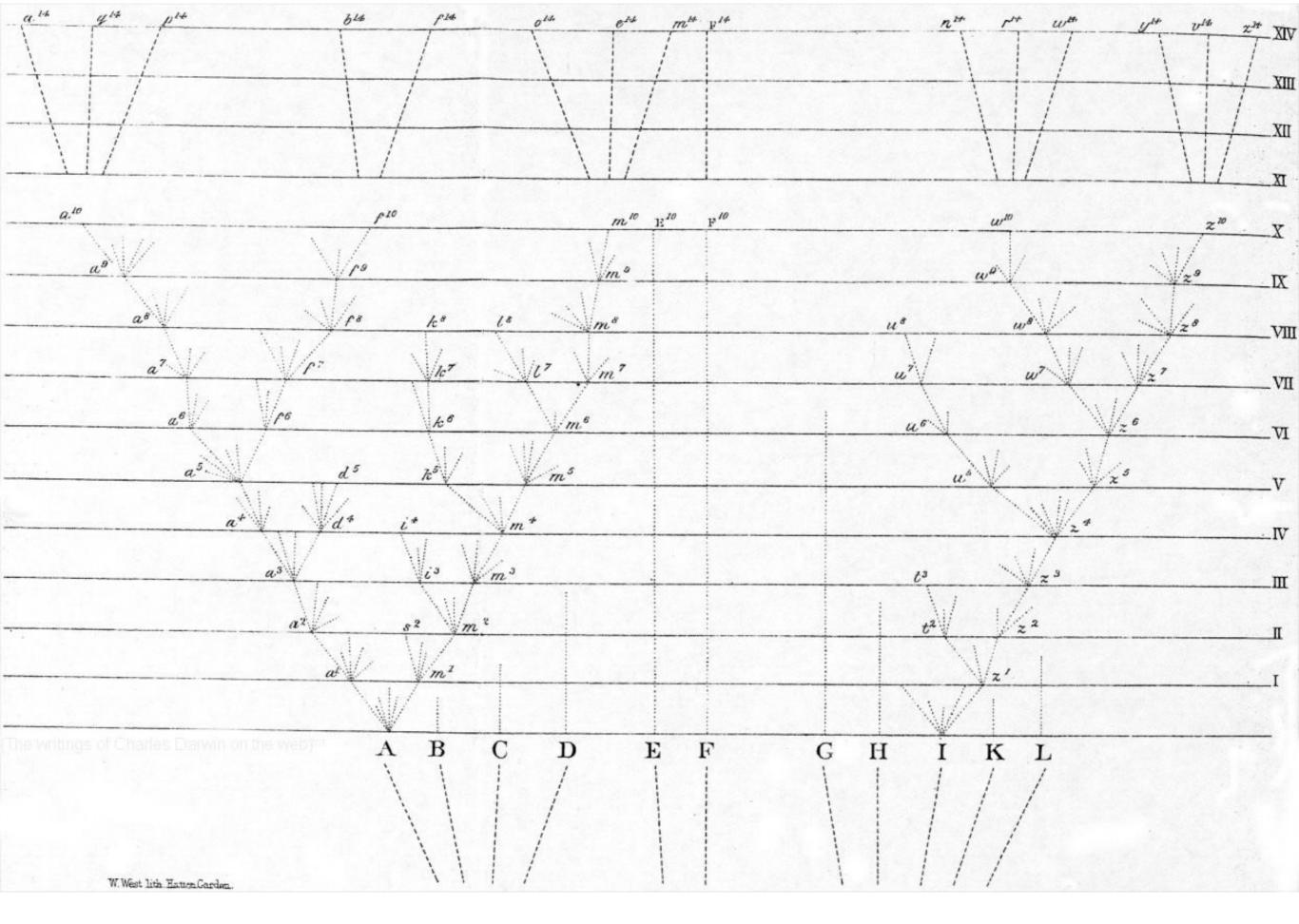
-> ποια είναι τα **κριτήρια ομαδοποίησης**; δλδ, πότε 2 οργανισμοί ανήκουν στο <u>ίδιο</u> είδος;

-> ποιο είναι το **οντολογικό status** του είδους;

- -τυπολογική άποψη είδους
- -> τύποι οργανισμών, με χαρακτηριστικές ιδιότητες
- -> **ουσιοκρατική** θεώρηση (**essentialism** ουσιοκρατία) [essential property = ουσιωδης ιδιοτητα / essence = ουσια]
- -> δύσκολο να συμφιλιωθεί με δαρβινική εξέλιξη
- -> τα είδη ως 'πράγματα' με αρχή και τέλος (αλλά με ασαφή όρια), που προέρχονται από άλλα είδη
- -> ποικιλομορφία μέσα σε ένα είδος, όχι απόκλιση από τύπο, αλλά η 'κανονική' κατάσταση

#### (Ernst Mayr: typological vs population thinking)

- -> πληθυσμιακή σκέψη
- —> <u>ποικιλομορφία + ασαφή όρια</u>



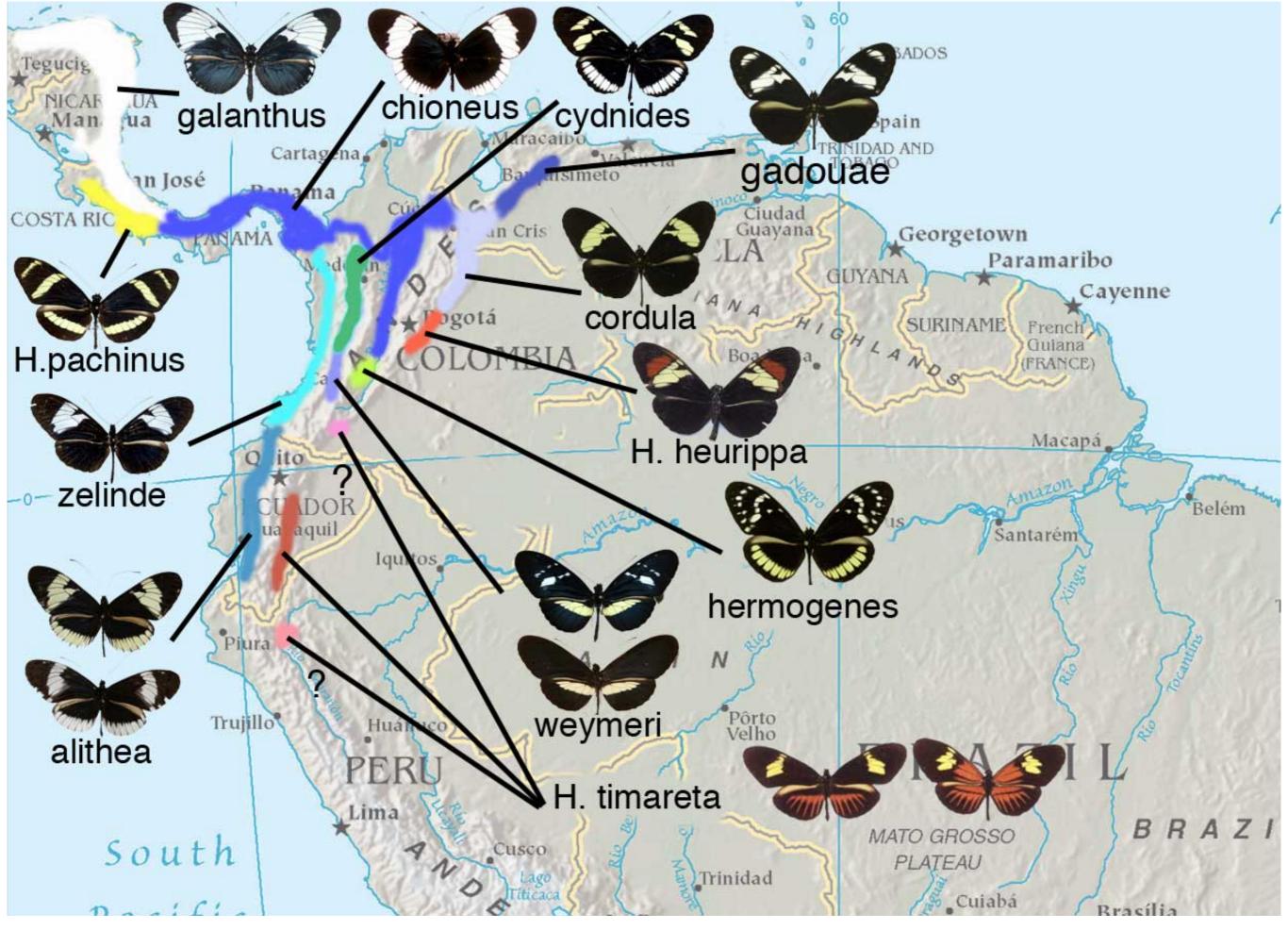
Το δέντρο της ζωής, η μοναδική εικόνα της Καταγωγής

- -φαινετική άποψη είδους
- -> <u>συνολική ομοιότητα</u> το σημαντικό
- -> έχει εργαλειοκρατικό χαρακτήρα
- -> ταξινόμηση ελεύθερη από θεωρία για 'πραγματικές' ομαδοποιήσεις

#### προβλήματα:

- -sibling species (αδελφικά είδη)
- -polytypic species (πολυτυπικά είδη)
- -διαφορά μεταξύ αρσενικών-θηλυκών

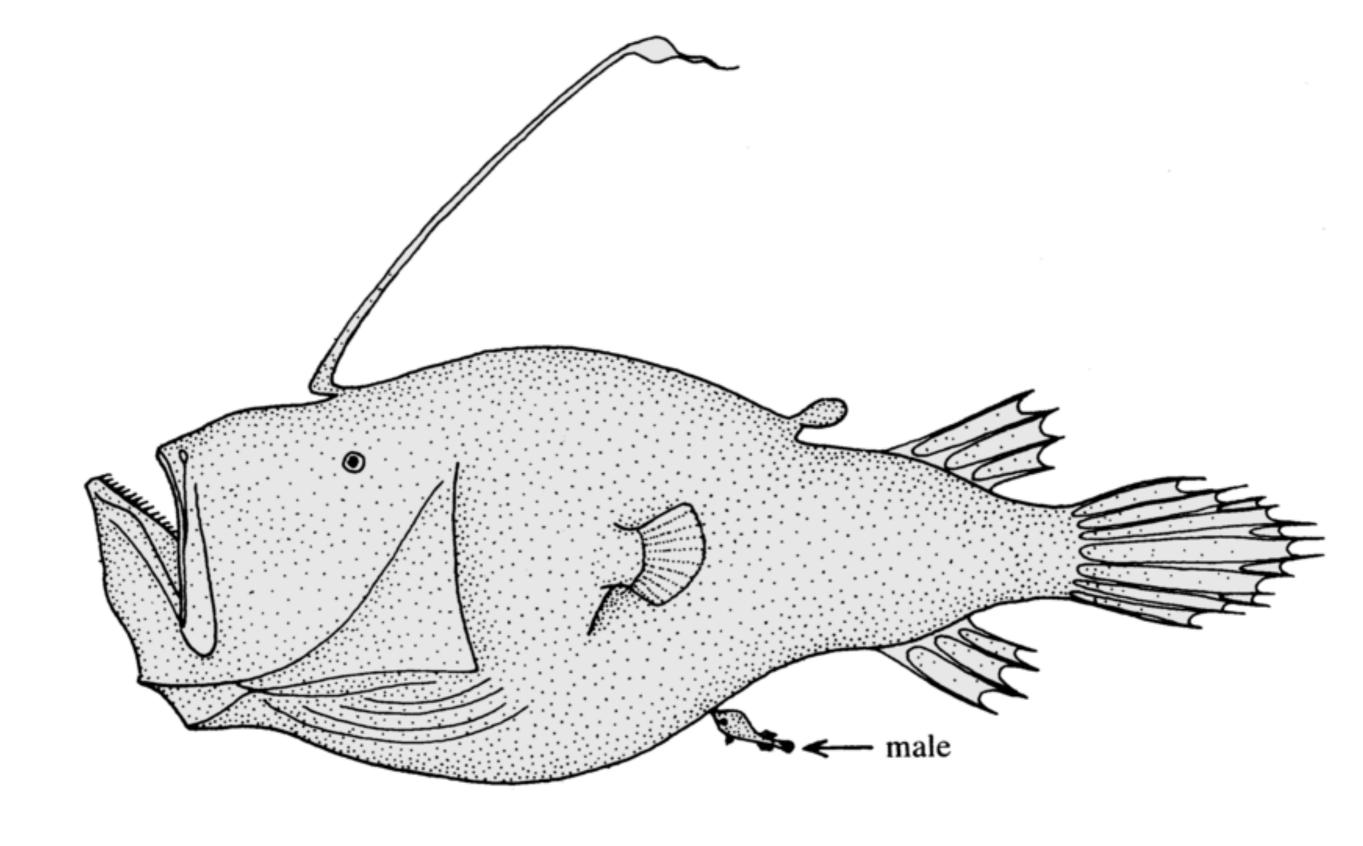




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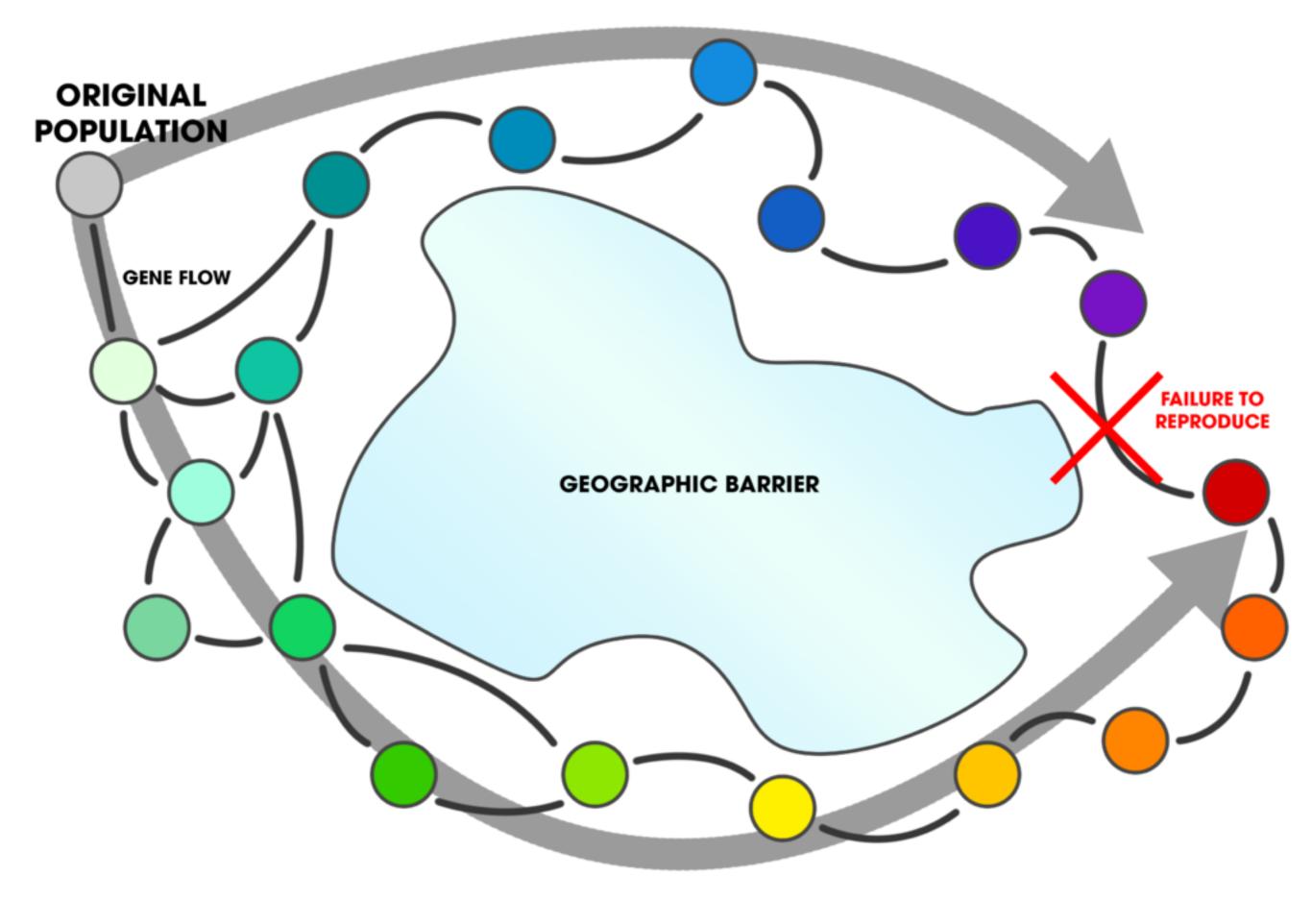
- -**βιολογική** άποψη είδους (Mayr)
- -> τα είδη ως αναπαραγωγικές κοινότητες reproductive isolation

'groups of actually or potentially interbreeding natural populations which are reproductively isolated from other such groups'. (Mayr)

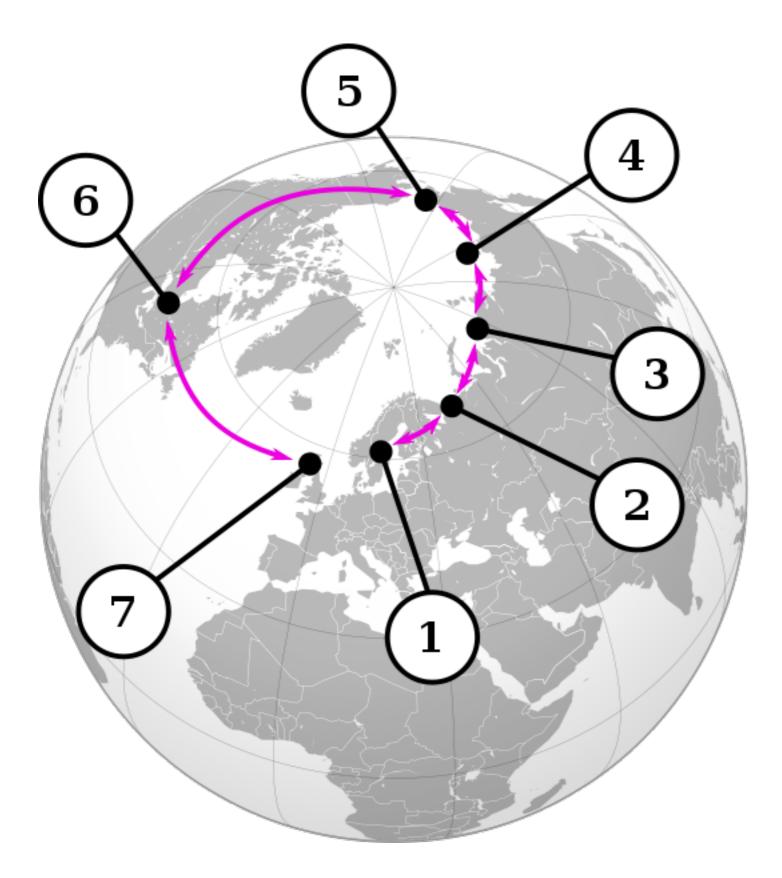
- -είδη πραγματικά, άλλες ταξινομικές κατηγορίες όχι το ίδιο πραγματικές (συλλογές από είδη για λόγους ευκολίας)
- -> είδη: συλλογές οργανισμών με την ικανότητα να μοιράζονται απογόνους

#### προβλήματα:

- -hybrid zones
- -ring species
- -βακτήρια (και γενικά αφυλετικοί οργανισμοί)
- -συνεκτική άποψη είδους (Templeton)
- -> συνεκτικοί μηχανισμοί που δίνουν συνοχή στο είδος -όχι μόνο αναπαραγωγή, αλλά και οικολογικοί παράγοντες
  - -> **οικολογική** άποψη είδους (van Valen)



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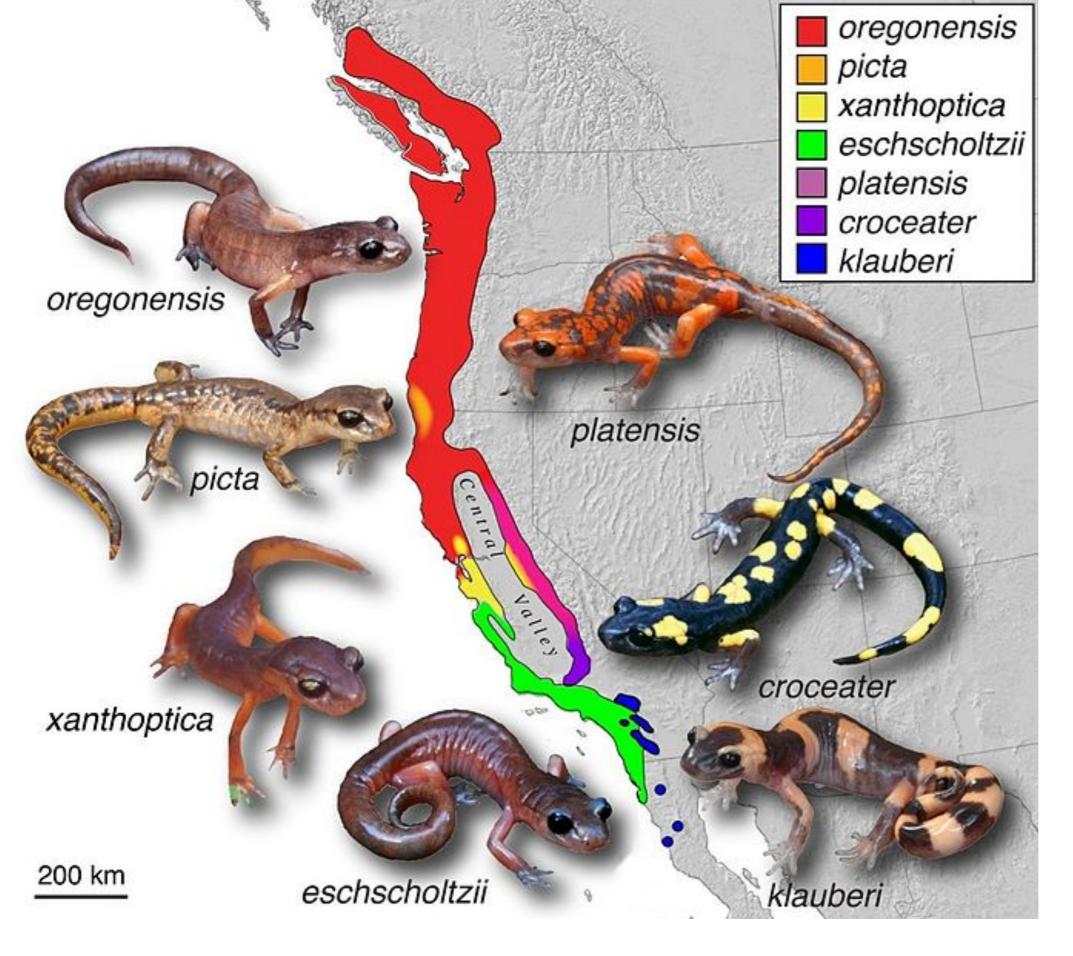




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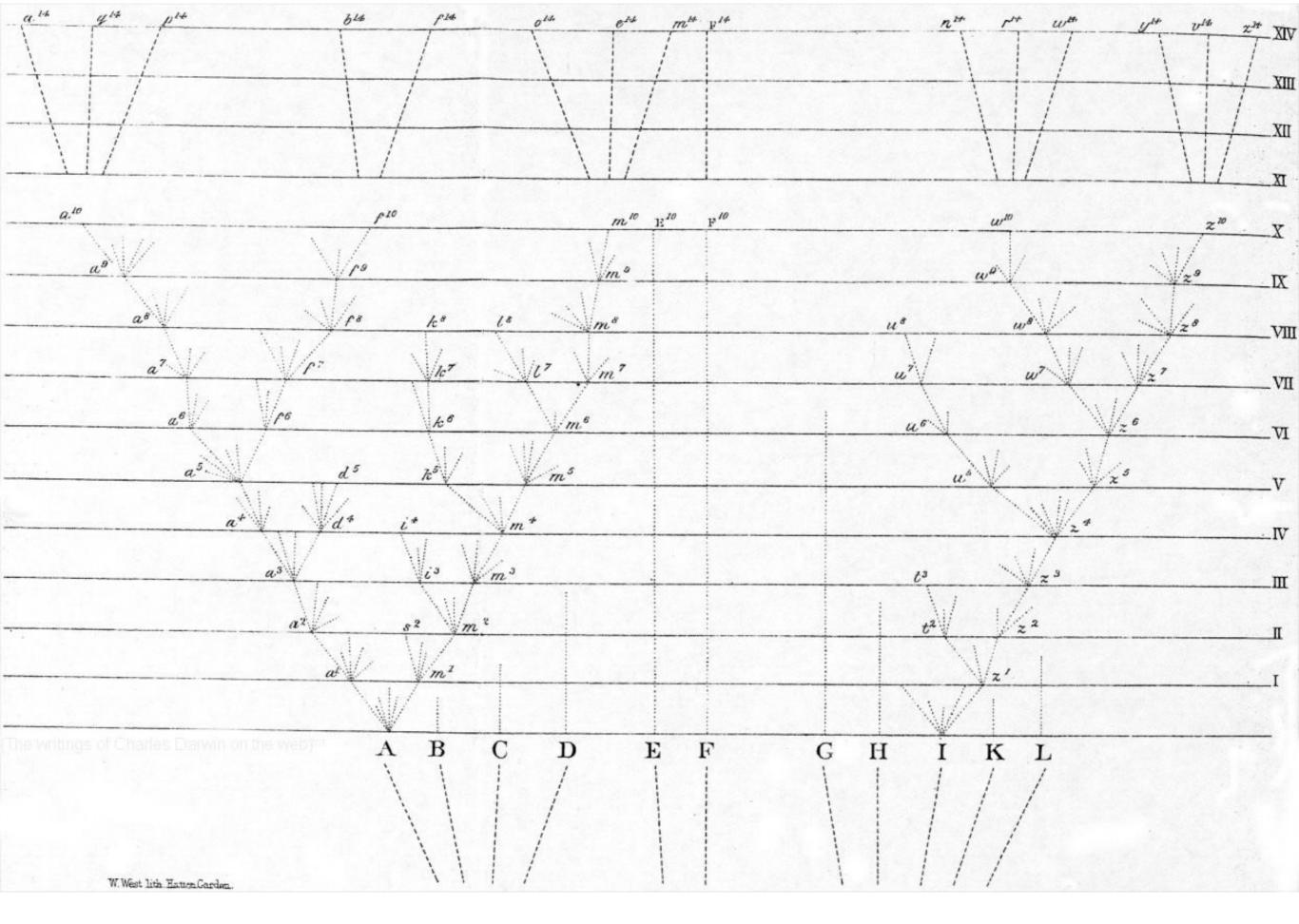
Author: Thomas J. Devitt, Stuart J.E. Baird and Craig Moritz

-> όλες οι παραπάνω απόψεις δυσκολία με <u>διαχρονικές</u> συγκρίσεις μεταξύ οργανισμών

-φυλογενετική άποψη είδους φυλογένεση phylogeny

- -δέντρο της ζωής
- -αναπαριστά όλες τις σχέσεις προγόνου-απογόνου
- -το σχήμα του είναι <u>μια σειρά από διακλαδώσεις</u>
- -> τα είδη είναι <u>τα κλαδιά μεταξύ διακλαδώσεων</u>

Willi Hennig -> κλαδιστική προσέγγιση στη βιολογική ταξινόμηση



Το δέντρο της ζωής, η μοναδική εικόνα της Καταγωγής

- -> λύνει πρόβλημα με οργανισμούς που δεν μπορούν να αναπαραχθούν π.χ. εργάτριες μέλισσες
- -τερματισμός είδους σε κάθε διακλάδωση;
- -όχι ειδογένεση χωρίς διακλάδωση; (cladogenesis vs anagenesis)
- -βακτήρια; πάρα πολλές διακλαδώσεις!
- -φαινετική άποψη υιοθετείται από μικροβιολόγους
- -γενετική ομοιότητα αντί για συνολική;
- -> αλλά γενετικό προφίλ μπορεί να αλλάξει διαχρονικά

-> 4 απόψεις στη σύγχρονη φιλοσοφική βιβλιογραφία για την έννοια του είδους:

1: -> πλουραλισμός

-> διαφορετικές έννοιες είδους για διαφορετικούς σκοπούς

2: -> όχι πολλές έννοιες είδους, αλλά η έννοια του βιολογικού είδους έχει καταρρεύσει

3: (ποικιλία της 2ης) -> το να μιλάμε για είδη χρήσιμο, αλλά τα είδη δεν είναι πραγματικές μονάδες στον κόσμο -δεν υπάρχουν πραγματικά

4: επιμονή σε μονισμό

-> πχ Queiroz: **General Lineage Concept:** τα είδη είναι "separately evolving metapopulation lineages" (2005, 1263)

- -μια απάντηση: τα βιολογικά είδη (species) είναι **kinds** (είδη!) natural kinds (φυσικά είδη)
- -> kind: συλλογή από πράγματα με κοινή/ές ιδιότητα/ες

[νόμοι της φύσης = laws of nature - natural kinds]

- -Ghiselin + Hull: τα βιολογικά είδη είναι **άτομα**!
- -> the individuality thesis
- -> είναι καθέκαστα (particular), αντικείμενα που έχουν συγκεκριμένη χωροχρονική θέση

#### The ontological status of biological species

#### **Hull/Ghiselin argument:**

- -natural kinds are spatiotemporally unrestricted, e.g. gold
- -but species aren't, unless we accept a phenetic account, but phenetic accounts don't work
- -species have a birth and a death, just like organisms therefore, species are individuals
- -relation between Charles Darwin and *Homo sapiens* is like the relation between a cell in Charles Darwin's hand and Charles Darwin himself

(implicit assumption: 'natural kind' vs 'individual' is an exhaustive dichotomy)

#### The ontological status of biological species

(alleged) consequences of individuality thesis:

- a) once extinct, always extinct
- b) reality of species not compromised by impossibility of finding necessary and sufficient conditions for species membership -not to be expected
- c) essentialism about species refuted (perhaps)

-essentialism: kinds have essential properties, e.g. gold has essential property of having atomic number 79

(Locke, Aristotle, Kripke)

- -> if essences have to be **intrinsic** properties, then essentialism about species is wrong
- -> but if they can include **relational** properties, it's much less clear
- -individuality thesis reconciles the *reality* of species with the impossibility of finding necessary and sufficient conditions for species membership
- -analogy between cells/organs and the whole organism, and organisms and species
- -part/whole relationship doesn't require essences, in a sense

- -κεντρικό επιχείρημα: μόνο ως καθέκαστα, μπορούν να εμφανίζονται, να αλλάζουν, να εξαφανίζονται
- -> οι οργανισμοί δεν είναι **μέλη** τους είδους τους, αλλά **μέρη** του είδους τους
- -3 τρόποι ομαδοποίησης:
- -σύνολο μέλος
- -όλο (άθροισμα) -μέρος
- -ιδιότητα
- -> kinds (είδη) καμιά φορά θεωρούνται ως σύνολα με μέλη, άλλες ως ομάδες με αντικείμενα με κοινή ιδιότητα
- -είναι τα βιολογικά είδη kinds, σύνολα, ή καθέκαστα (particulars);

- -> επιχείρημα <u>Godfrey-Smith</u> (στο κεφ. 7):
- είναι τα βιολογικά είδη <u>kinds, σύνολα, ή καθέκαστα</u> (<u>particulars</u>);
- τίποτα από τα 3!
- τα βιολογικά είδη είναι όψεις της οργάνωσης του κόσμου, που μπορούμε να τις σκεφτούμε με 3 διαφορετικούς τρόπους
- [-Churchills vs διοξείδιο του άνθρακα]
- -> διαφορετικά οντολογικά πλαίσια, χρήσιμα για διαφορετικές ομαδοποιήσεις

- -> εγγενείς vs εξωγενείς ιδιότητες (intrinsic vs extrinsic)
- -> <u>φυλογενετικές</u> και <u>οικολογικές</u> ιδιότητες -> **εξωγενείς**
- -> <u>φαινετικές</u> και <u>γενετικές</u> -> **εγγενείς**
- -> **Kitcher**: τα βιολογικά είδη είναι <u>σύνολα</u>
- -> <u>πλουραλισμός</u> για έννοιες είδους
- -> ουσιοκρατία (essentialism)
- -> εξωγενείς ουσίες; (Okasha)

# Systematics and Classification

#### The Problem of Systematics

- -systematics is the modern name for taxonomy
- -basic issue: how to organise species into a classification system?
- -i.e. into higher taxa or not?
- -not exactly analogous to the species problem
- -> for many biologists, species are real, but higher taxa are not why?
- -especially in 1970s and 80s, massively controversial subject
- -one point of agreement: should be hierarchical
- -why?
- -one possible answer: evolution is a branching process, and classification must reflect that process
- -but not everyone accepts this

#### The Problem of Systematics

- 3 competing schools in systematics:
- a) pheneticists
- b) cladists (phylogenetic systematics)
- c) evolutionary taxonomists

#### The Problem of Systematics

**pheneticism**: defines taxa by overall similarity

cladism: classification must reflect evolutionary descent

evolutionary taxonomy: a kind of mixture of phoneticist and cladism

(though it came first)

- -> dispute is about methodology of classification
- -> but also practical application
- -> this dispute isn't about species (we treat the species problem as solved)

#### example:

- -humans, chimpanzees, gorillas, bonobos, orangutans and gibbons are classed together as members of the **Hominoid** superfamily
- -but baboons are not counted as Hominoids
- -why?
- -cladists and pheneticists would answer this question differently

## Phenetic Approaches

- -also called 'numerical taxonomy'
- -aim: classify on the basis of 'overall similarity'
- -pheneticists would say that the Hominoid species share traits that the baboons lack
- -e.g. absence of tail
- -hence baboons should be excluded
- -underlying philosophy: empiricism
- -biological taxa must be operationally definable
- -classification should be 'theory free'

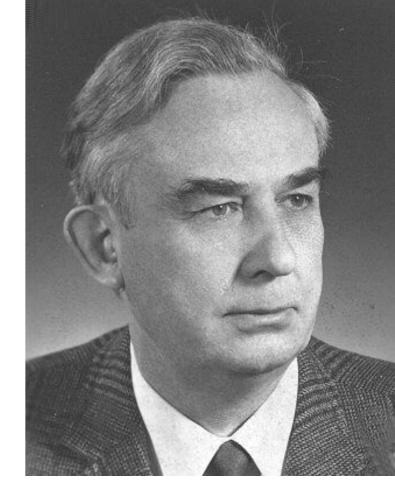
## Phenetic Approaches

- -problem: similar in what respects?
- -what is overall similarity
- -> different similarity measures yield different classifications
- -no way of choosing between them
- -is 'theory-free' classification possible?
- -many say no
- -> pheneticism about higher taxa faces similar problems to pheneticism about species
- -note that pheneticism doesn't care about genealogical relationships of species to one another
- -but only about observable phenotypic traits

- -key idea: classification must reflect evolutionary relationships
- -cladists insist that all taxa must be

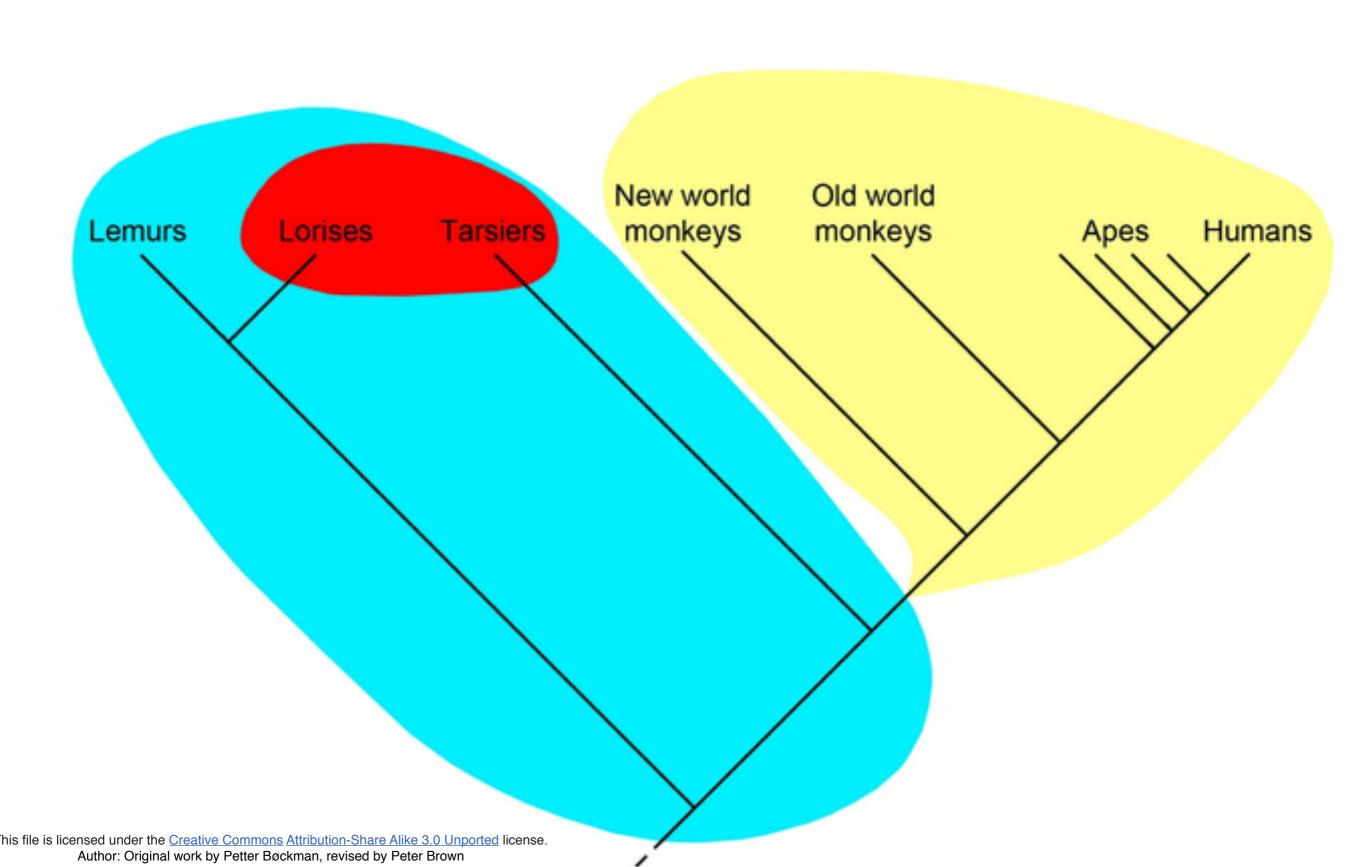
#### monophyletic

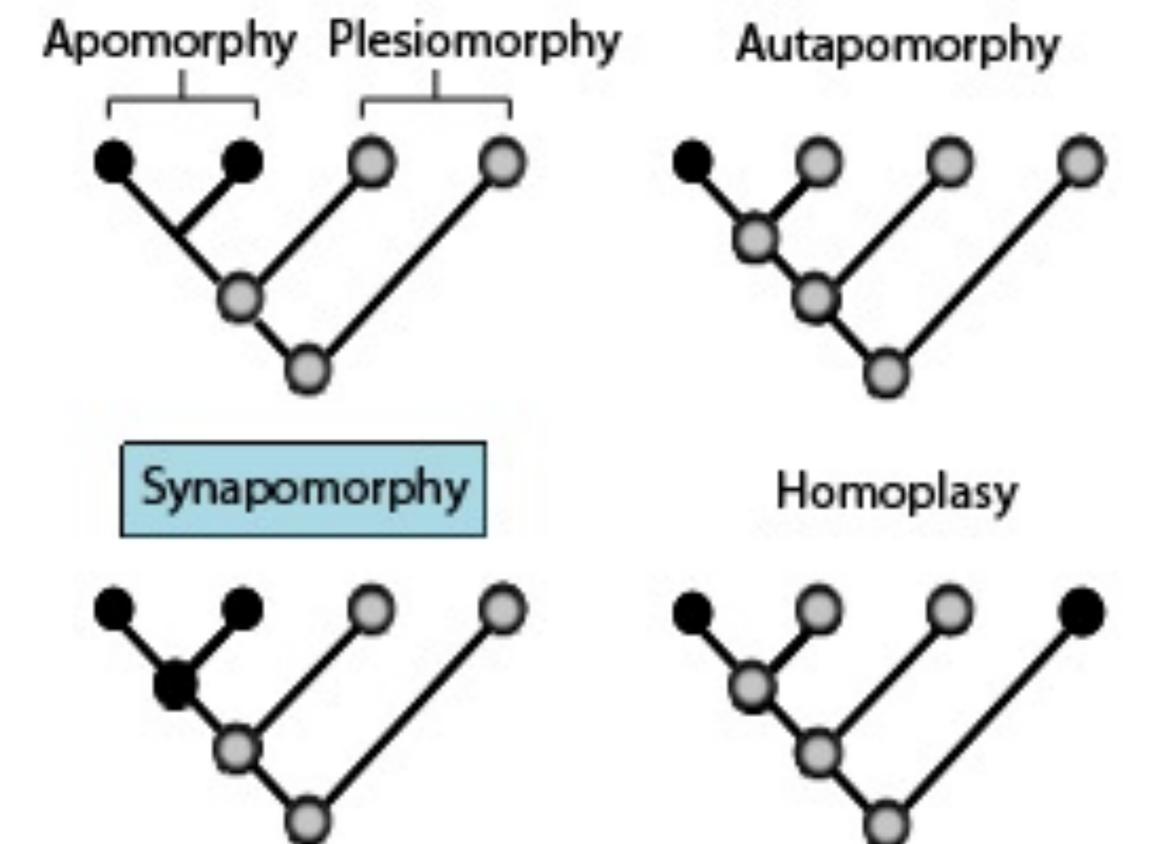
-according to them, any non-monophyletic taxa are not real, but mere artificial groupings



Willi Hennig 1913-1976

- -concept of **monophyly**
- -a monophyletic group is a group composed of an ancestor species, **all** of its descendants species, **and no-one else**
- -> when we ask if a group of species is monophyletic, this doesn't mean 'do they share a common ancestor?'
- -the answer to that question is always yes
- -rather, it means 'do they share a common ancestor that's *not* ancestral to any species outside the group'
- -> cladists don't care about the phenotypic appearances
- -for them, classification should go exclusively by evolutionary relationship

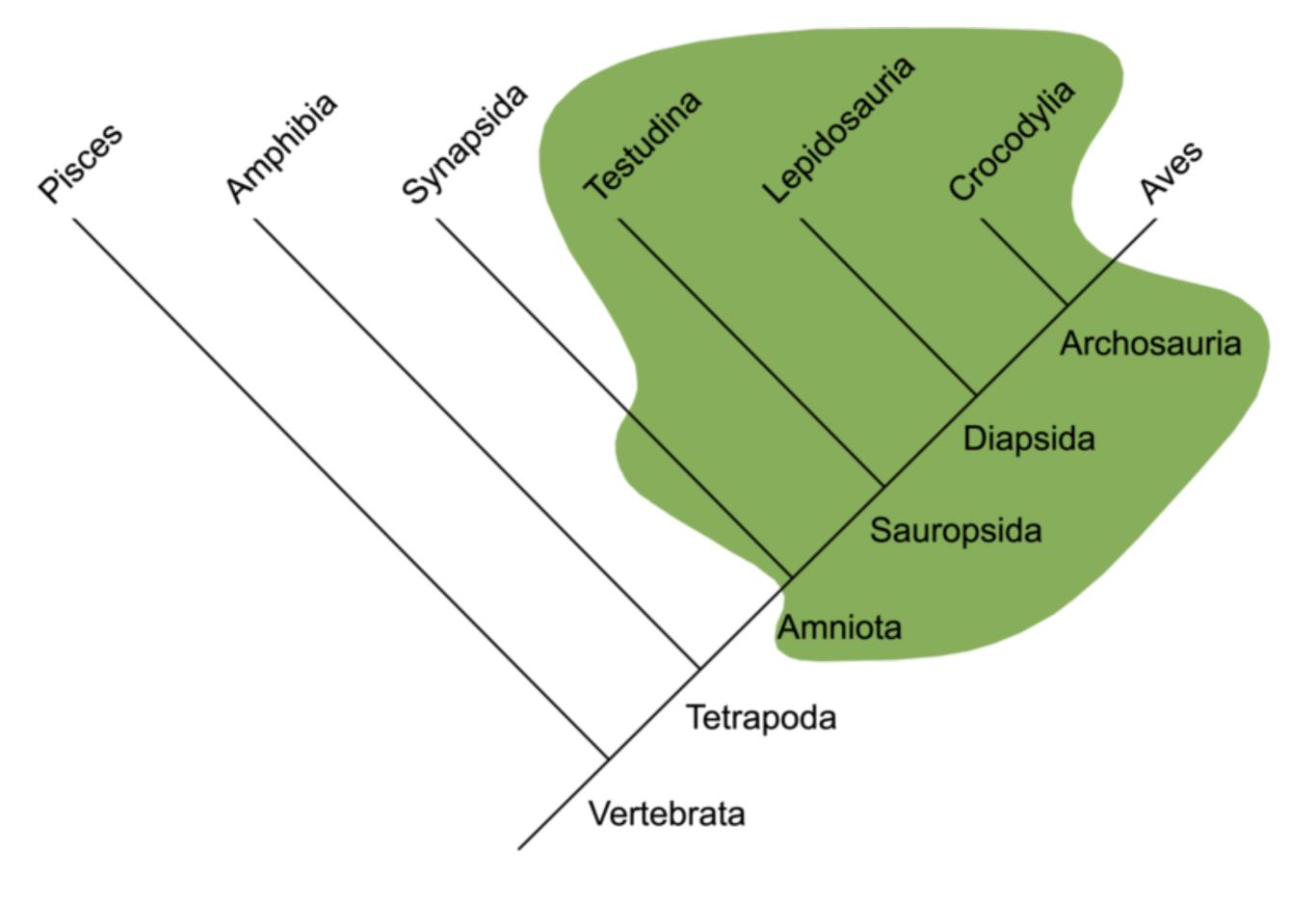




Ancestral trait ( )

Derived trait ( )

- -> this is not just an academic dispute
- -example of *Reptilia* (reptile class)
- -cladists insist that Reptilia should be abandoned
- -because it's not monophyletic
- -pheneticists say that's crazy
- -in practice, unlikely that Reptilia will be abandoned



- -cladists attack others for allowing paraphyletic and polyphyletic groups (which are accepted by evolutionary taxonomists)
- **-paraphyletic** groups contain only descendants of a single ancestral species, but not all of them
- -polyphyletic groups contain species that share no common recent ancestor
- -how to decide whether a **monophyletic** group is a genus, family, class, order etc?
- -most cladists say, it's totally arbitrary
- -i.e. ranks in Linnaean hierarchy are just conventions
- -> rank-free taxonomy
- -> cladism provides a clear justification why classification should be **hierarchical**:
- -apply criterion of monophyly to a branching process, and you get a hierarchical classification
- -> branching process and a reticulate process
- -pheneticists have no comparable justification for the hierarchy assumption
- -there is no obvious reason why similarity relationships should be nested

#### advantages of cladism

- a) it's unambiguous, at least in principle
- b) implies there's a uniquely correct way to classify
- c) justification for hierarchical classification
- d) in a way the most 'natural' view -something intuitive about the idea that only monophyletic groups are 'real'

#### disadvantages of cladism

- a) very revisionary
- b) has radical implications, e.g. abandon Reptilia
- c) how do we find out if a group *is* monophyletic or not? -this is the 'problem of phylogenetic inference'

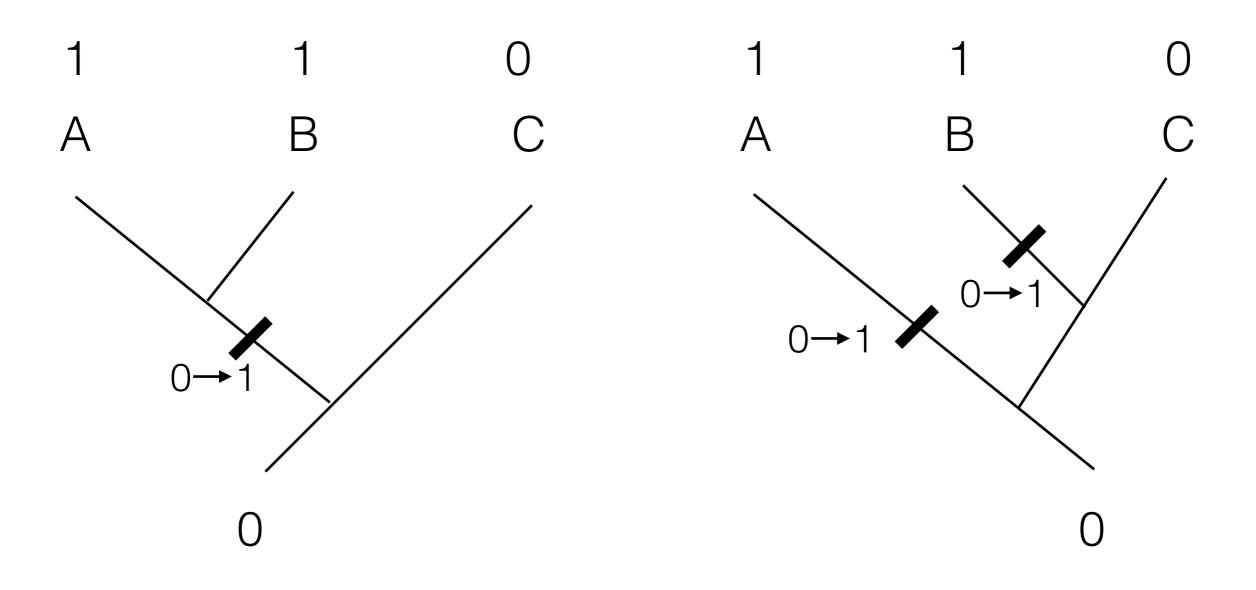
## Evolutionary taxonomy

- -> evolutionary taxonomists: genealogy sometimes can override overall similarity, but not always
- -aim: to include paraphyletic groups, but exclude polyphyletic groups
- -method: use derived *and* ancestral homologies to identify groups, rather than just the latter
- -> cladists use only shared derived homologies to determine classification
- -neither group uses analogies

## The Problem of Phylogenetic Inference

- -basic issue: how to discover the phylogenetic (evolutionary) relations between species?
- -e.g. three species A, B and C
- -two possible hypotheses
- -how to decide which is most plausible?
- -key cladistic idea: we use the principle of **parsimony**
- -we pick the hypothesis that requires the **fewest number of evolutionary changes**
- -> but two problems:
- i) how do we discover the **primitive** state of the character?
- ii) is there any real **justification** for the principle of parsimony?

# The Problem of Phylogenetic Inference



Hypothesis (AB)C

Hypothesis A(BC)

## Για περαιτέρω μελέτη:

- -Godfrey-Smith, Φιλοσοφία της Βιολογίας, κεφ. 7
- -https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/species/
- -https://www.nature.com/scitable/topicpage/reading-a-phylogenetic-tree-the-meaning-of-41956
- -https://www.nature.com/scitable/topicpage/trait-evolution-on-a-phylogenetic-tree-relatedness-41936
- -O'Hara (1997) Population thinking and tree thinking in systematics. *Zoologica Scripta* 26, 323–329
- -Baum & Offner (2008) Phylogenies and tree thinking. *American Biology Teacher* 70, 222–229

- natural kinds species
- higher taxa ανωτερα ταξα
- metapopulation
- Richard Boyd
- HPC homeostatic property cluster kind