DISCUSSION

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V.V. Bogatov's paper presented below contains, in fact, his critical comments on an article by I.S. Sergeeva et al. (2008),* in which it is claimed that all European freshwater pearl mussels (genus *Margaritifera*) belong to the same species *M. margaritifera*.

The dispute between Bogatov and Sergeeva et al. is more of a "theological" character, since it can be boiled down to the question of creed: to what extent is the comparative method suggested by Logvinenko and Starobogatov (1971)* reliable for species-differentiation. There is no unity of opinions on the subject within the malacologist community.

Sergeeva et al. ignore this method, whereas Bogatov belongs to the circle of its supporters. Therefore, it is

desirable to consider additional taxonomical characteristics (such as the structure of glochidia) for solving the problem about the number of species. At the same time, Bogatov justly points out that Sergeeva et al. use indices that are different from those on which Starobogatov et al. (2004) was based in classifying the three species of pearl mussels.

Nevertheless, I consider it reasonable to publish Bogatov's criticism because at the very least it attracts zoologists' attention once again to the problems of taxonomy (in particular, the taxonomy of Bivalvia and their system, which this far remains under dispute).

* See the references in Bogatov's paper.

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