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**Biodiversity in Africa and Europe:  
the case of Spiders (Araneae)**

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Based on the catalogues of ROEWER, BRIGNOLI and PLATNICK, we established the number of species described per decade since 1750 up to 1980, separately for Europe and Africa. Whereas the number of species presently known from Africa is known to be only a fraction of the real number of spiders, we expected the European fauna to be fairly well known.

For both continents there is a high peak of the number of spiders described at the end of the 19th century, coinciding with the activities of E. SIMON. The total number of species is near to 3500 for Europe and approximates 6000 for Africa. The big surprise is that nor for Africa, nor for Europe the Average number of spiders described per decade tends to decrease. The curve describing the cumulative number of species shows a steep slope up to the present for both continents. This indicates that even for Europe a large number of species remains to be described.