

In Memoriam, Ginés López González

(1950, Huércal-Overa, Almería – June 24, 2024, Madrid)

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The emotional emptiness that comes with the separation from family or close friends is difficult to process. Particularly challenging is this task when it pertains to those who have had a profound impact on our professional lives, guiding us along a meaningful and fulfilling journey. Ginés López

González, a pharmacist and botanist from Almería (Huércal-Overa, 1950), and an embraced Madrileño, is eulogised in all of the latter.

In 1977–1978, while I was a second-year pharmacy student at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, I had the pleasure of meeting Ginés. A deep and abiding love of botany (in the widest sense) led me to become acquainted with the young professor responsible for the 1973 Botany course outline, which, in those days, lasted an entire academic year. He co-led our afternoon schedule class with professor Miguel Ladero. By introducing me to the extensive literature on the subject, Ginés opened my eyes to the intriguing and sophisticated world of botany. Ginés enabled me to access a wide range of botanic publications in the 1978–1979 course he was teaching, including the *American Journal of Botany*, *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society*, *Candollea*, *Preslia*, *Taxon*, *Willdenowia*, and many more. As a passing reference, Miguel Ladero directed me towards the published *Flora Europaea* volumes, in English of all things, so I could use them to identify materials that he gathered in Extremadura.

Ginés López earned a Bachelor of Science degree (1973) and a Doctor of Philosophy degree (1977) in pharmacy from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM), where he was awarded an honours mention. While working on his PhD thesis, Ginés was a student of Salvador Rivas Goday, an eminent academic and former director of Madrid's Royal Botanical Garden (CSIC).

He made an important breakthrough in the geobotanical understanding of a relatively unexplored territory in 1976 with the publication of his PhD thesis,

“Conocimiento al estudio florístico y fitosociológico de la Serranía de Cuenca” (Study of the floristic and phytosociological aspects of the Cuenca mountain range, in English). Along with Profs. Miguel Ladero and Salvador Rivas-Goday, his tribunal included Salvador Rivas Martínez, who was instrumental in bringing vegetation science to Spain during its heyday in Europe, as well as his father, Rivas Goday. The 418 pages of Ginés's PhD thesis represent his laborious work, which helped to internationalise our botanical discoveries from the 1970s and to raise the visibility of these new territorial studies in our nation. In two lengthy monographs published by the ‘Anales del Instituto Botánico A.J. Cavanilles’, which is now called *Anales del Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid*, Ginés was able to publish his groundbreaking research on the geobotany of the Cuenca Mountain range, in English titled:

- Study of the floristic and phytosociological aspects of the Cuenca mountain range, Part I. Fruticose Communities: woodlands, scrublands, thyme fields and thyme-meadows. *Anales Inst. Bot. Cavanilles* 33: 5–87. 1976.
- Study of the floristic and phytosociological aspects of the Cuenca mountain range, Part II. Herbaceous communities: Rock and meadow vegetation; communities of aquatic vegetation; wet meadows and reedbeds; Meadows and grasslands; ruderal weeds. *Anales Inst. Bot. Cavanilles* 34(2): 597–702. 1978.

Ginés was a botany professor at the Complutense University of Madrid's Faculty of Pharmacy from 1973 to 1978 (subsequently promoted to tenure-track professor), and at the Autonomous University of Madrid's Faculty of Biology from 1978 to 1979. He joined the staff of the Royal Botanical Garden of Madrid in 1979, a global reference for botanical studies and a division of the Spanish Council for Scientific Research.

Ginés devoted his career to plant taxonomy while working as a permanent researcher at Madrid's Royal Botanical Gardens, with an emphasis on species native to the Mediterranean and the Andean-Patagonia regions. But his studies of the Comunidad de Madrid's flora were never abandoned. The *Flora Ibérica* Project, of which he was a co-founder, has just come to a close with the release

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of volume XIX. In this renowned publication, he edited numerous important families, such as Fagaceae and Pinaceae, and authored genera with intricate taxonomy, such as *Arenaria*, *Carduncellus*, *Helianthemum* or *Rumex*. Furthermore, Ginés researched the origins of many plant species' epithets and consistently emphasised the requirement of adhering to the rules laid out in the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature in order to provide vascular plant names the stability they needed. With a solid foundation in Geobotany, Ginés never lost his passion for researching the distribution and

habitat of species native to the Iberian Peninsula. In addition to publishing fundamental identification guides with exquisite rigour, he was a remarkable advocate for the botanical sciences and the author of over a hundred academic contributions.

His scientific contributions and reputation have been recognised on a global scale. Although he is no longer with us, his legacy will live on in the hallowed halls of Botany and forever in our memories.

Rest In Peace