

In Memoriam: Joan Vives i Duran (1918-2000)

E. Vives

On 15 November 2000, the Catalan entomologist Joan Vives i Duran died in his hometown of Terrassa. He leaves behind him his extensive work on entomology and hundreds of entomologist friends in many countries throughout the world.

Joan was born into a family of bakers in Terrassa on 6 November 1918. He was the second of four children and his love for nature became evident even as a small child. His father Manuel Vives i Casanovas was a baker like his father before him, who owned an old bakery founded in 1893. Joan's mother was Carme Duran i Martí. Joan's admiration for the beauties of nature and art bloomed early and, by the time he was twelve, he was collecting small animals and plants, which he kept in terrariums he made out of tin and glass. He was also an avid collector of postcards and photographs of Classical art.

He soon focused his studies on insects and began a collection in 1932 that was sadly lost during the difficult years of the Spanish Civil War. In 1936 he published his first entomological works and began specializing in Coleoptera. This specialization led to his meeting the Terrassa entomologist Professor Eugeni Ferrer i Dalmau (1871-1934), who transmitted his own interest in Cicindelidae to Joan, especially his interest in Carabidae.

Joan Vives studied at the "Col·legi dels Pares Escolapis" (Piarist Fathers School) in Terrassa and when he was 16 he enrolled in the "Escola Municipal d'Arts i Oficis" (Municipal School of Arts and Crafts), where he focused on Textile Studies and Fine Arts under the guidance of his teacher, Joan Rigol Fornaguera, who taught him how to draw and make models.

In 1933 Joan made contact with a group of naturalists at the "Centre Excursionista de Terrassa" (Excursionists' Center of Terrassa), where he met the Terrassa arachnologist Domènec Ventalló and his long-time excursion companion Joan Galí, with whom he embarked on a number of entomological campaigns. In 1935 he met Professor Francesc Español i Coll, who encouraged him to attend the meetings at the "Museu d'Història Natural de Barcelona" (Barcelona Museum of Natural History) (now the Zoology Museum) and transmitted his entomological wisdom to the young adolescent in such a way that Joan can be considered Español's first and most loyal follower. He learned all the good things that such a wise professor can teach, especially how to be rigorous about his work methodology, the need to be careful when describing new taxons and, even more particularly, how to provide friendly instruction to the young enthusiasts who visited the Barcelona Museum. In those years he met R. Zariquiey, J. M. Mas de Xaxars, R. Jeannel and M. Antoine during the period they were at the Museum. It was also there that he met the entomologist Joaquim Mateu, whose friendship, based on the study of ground beetles, would last his whole life.

By the time Joan finished secondary school, the Spanish Civil War had broken out. He was drafted in 1938 and sent to the front in Lleida. In 1939 he began his military service in a punishment detachment in Barbate (Cádiz). Joan took advantage of those two years to collect insects in cigarette boxes, which he sent to his family in Terrassa. During that period, he also met his good friend José Ramírez, from the nearby town



Joan Vives with Francesc Español in the library of the Zoology Museum of Barcelona, summer 1988.

of San Roque. Their friendship and exchange of insects would last their whole lives and allowed Joan to become very familiar with Andalusian coleopterological fauna.

Joan moved back to Terrassa in 1942 and started working as head dyer at the "Manufactura Textil de Terrassa" (Manufactura Textil company in Terrassa). He worked there until 1948, when he married Maria Teresa Noguera i Barceló. But his enthusiasm for beetles continued to grow, as did the number of children the couple had (5). After his first collection was lost, he started a second one and acquired a great deal of material through his extensive network of correspondents throughout Spain who he equipped with insect specimen bottles. His frequent business trips for the family business allowed him to carry out campaigns to collect insects on the Iberian peninsula and in the Canary Islands. He made many exchanges and personal

campaigns with his indescribable companion and Curculionidae specialist Manolo González (1931-1972), with whom he gathered beetles in the most interesting and least explored biotopes on the Peninsula. Joan constantly received specimens from his nearly a hundred correspondents, and in just a few years he had compiled the largest private collection of Iberian beetles in Spain, with more than four hundred thousand specimens in 1965, most of which were studied and classified by the leading specialists of the time.

In this way, he made contact and established a long-lasting entomological relationship with specialists such as: S. von Breuning, L. Straneo, M. Burlini, J. Nègre, A. Pardo Alcaide, L. Baguena, A. Cobos, G. Zaballos, J. C. Jeanne, G. Pecoud, J. Becchyne, J. Baraud, P. Bonnadona, H. Coiffait, P. Raynaud, C. Besuchet, E. Rivalier, A. Evers, H. Franz, F. Hieke, H. Sawada, R. Darlington

Jr., F. Cassola, T. Ueno, Z. Kaszab, K. Mandl, W. Witmer, P. Basilewsky and many more. He learned something new from each one and had solid friendships with all of them. In 1958 he published his first work on Carabidae, an article that provided a review of Spanish *Styracoderus*. He would continue producing publications on beetles until his death. Starting in 1976, he published his "Notas sobre Carabidae" with his son Eduard, also an entomologist. He produced a total of 32 articles, mainly on Carabidae and other Coleoptera. This is the bibliographical legacy he has left us, and it includes some important studies, such as his article on the Iberian halophilic Carabidae, and especially his study of the fauna of the Aragon region of Los Monegros, a place that always fascinated him. In fact, one of his last monographs was his *Catálogo de los Coleoptera: Carabidae de Aragón*. At the time of his death, he was working on five different articles with descriptions of various new specimens. These articles will be published in the near future.

Because of his discrete and simple way of working with entomology, Joan Vives was always an enemy of distinctions and protocol. In time, this characteristic earned him recognition as a wise and welcoming teacher who was always ready to study his colleagues' material or provide encouragement to the young enthusiasts that constantly visited him at home to consult his enormous collection. This contact allowed him to collaborate on many doctoral theses of the then young Spanish carabidologists. It is also very common to find Carabidae classified by J. Vives in Spanish collections and in many Spanish and European museums. Until his death, he was a regular collaborator with the Zoology Museum of Barcelona, where he ordered and completed the Carabidae collection, which had been damaged extensively during the Civil War. Also noteworthy was his activity as collaborating entomologist at the Department of Animal Biology of the University of Barcelona's Faculty of Biology where he participated in campaigns and in the study of the department's material. He also participated as associate entomologist in various entomological campaigns for the Iberian Fauna Project, where he worked on Chrysomelidae and Cerambycidae.



Joan Vives classifying Carabidae in the laboratory of his studio, March 1989.

As a result of his good relations with his entomological colleagues, 38 species and subspecies of Carabidae, Staphylinidae, Scarabaeidae, Meloidae, Malachiidae, Tenebrionidae, Cerambycidae, Chrysomelidae and Curculionidae were named after him in the form of *vivesi* or *durani*.

Joan was a member of most of the Iberian entomological associations and held the title of Honorary Member in some of them. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the European Association of Coleopterology and a member of the advisory board of the journal *L'Entomologiste* (Paris). In 1981 he was distinguished by his hometown as "Terrassenc de l'Any" (Terrassa Resident of the Year) in recognition of his extensive work on entomology. He regularly attended most entomological conferences held in Catalonia and was an assiduous participant at the Entomological Conferences of the "Institució

Catalana d'Història Natural" (Catalan Institute of Natural History) and a number of national and international conferences, the last being the one held in Zaragoza in July 2000.

But Joan Vives' most outstanding feature was always the warmth and friendliness with which he treated everyone who came to consult him. Without boasting about his erudition and profound knowledge of biology and the systematics of Coleoptera, especially the Carabidae, he knew how to deal with all the consultations that arrived regularly from all parts of Europe, either in person or by letter. His file of entomological correspondence started in 1944 contains more than 9,600 letters and handwritten documents in nine different languages. He replied to every letter and opened every package sent to him for consultation.

Joan has left us forever, but we still have the memory of a warm man, his publications, his entomological library with more than 6,000 titles and his collection of Coleoptera, with more than a million specimens prepared and studied and millions more on file. He also leaves us his permanent smile, which he wore even in the most difficult moments during the months after the death of his wife in 1999. He continued to visit the Zoology Museum until twelve days before his death, dealing with even the slightest consultation with his customary affable affection.

In short, Spanish entomology has lost a great entomologist, and Spanish entomologists have lost a great friend.

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