



Eduardo Martínez Viqueira
Lieutenant General of the Guardia Civil
PhD Contemporary History

HONOUR AS AN EMBLEM: A STRATEGIC VISION OF THE GUARDIA CIVIL VALUES

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Abstract: The initial deployment of the *Guardias civiles* commenced in the autumn of 1844, with their specific regulations being augmented the following year by the renowned *Cartilla*, an ethical code that anchored the Institute's value system in ethical honour. The rigorous adherence to these regulations, coupled with a commanding style that was fitting, swiftly propelled the Guardia Civil to high service efficiency and a leading position in Spain's public security. This foundational ethical framework fostered a genuine institutional culture within the Guardia Civil, reinforcing a true esprit de corps. Presently, the Guardia Civil is dedicated to implementing a new code of conduct that preserves its military essence, drawing upon the enduring values and principles that have historically shaped its ethical path. Consequently, it is imperative to examine the relevance of these historical values in contemporary times. It raises pertinent inquiries: What does honour signify for the Guardia Civil today? Is honour still a valuable concept in the present day? If so, what are the metrics for it? Additionally, the origin of the nickname '*Benemérita*' and its connection to honour warrants exploration. It is evident that a strong correlation exists at the strategic level between the *culture* of an organization and the *ethos* of the *Guardias civiles*, both historically and presently. Honour consistently emerges as a fundamental element in this context.

Resumen: El primer contingente de guardias civiles inició su despliegue en el otoño de 1844. Su reglamentación específica fue complementada un año después por la célebre *Cartilla*, código deontológico que basaba en el honor ético el sistema de valores del Instituto. La observancia estricta de esta reglamentación y un acertado estilo de mando, facilitaron que la Guardia Civil alcanzara pronto unos altos niveles de eficacia en el servicio y se situara en el primer plano de la seguridad pública en España. Sobre aquel modelo ético fundacional se fue construyendo una auténtica cultura institucional en la Guardia Civil, que contribuyó a consolidar un genuino espíritu de cuerpo. Actualmente, la Guardia Civil ha apostado por adoptar un código de conducta novedoso, aunque manteniendo su impronta castrense y basado en los valores y principios tradicionales que jalonaron siempre su trayectoria ética. Por ello, de cara a su implementación efectiva, es preciso analizar en qué medida siguen siendo válidos hoy aquellos valores de antaño. Qué

significado tiene hoy que el honor siga siendo la principal divisa para quienes integran la Guardia Civil. Surgen, así, varias preguntas: ¿Tiene sentido hoy valorar el honor? Si es así, ¿cómo se mide? Más aún: ¿De dónde proviene el sobrenombre de *Benemérita*? ¿Tiene algo que ver con el honor? Resulta evidente la gran identidad en el plano estratégico entre lo que se denomina la *cultura* de una organización y la *forma de ser* de los guardias civiles de antes y de ahora. De nuevo, aparecerá al fondo el honor.

Keywords: Guardia Civil, *code of conduct*, *ethics*, *values*, *honour*.

Palabras clave: Guardia Civil, código de conducta, ética, valores, honor.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since its creation, the Guardia Civil, a military institution founded in 1844, has had a specific code of ethics, set out in the *Cartilla del Guardia Civil*, the system of values of which is based on ethical honour. Such high moral standards, together with effective performance, soon earned the corps the trust of the institutions and enormous public prestige. Furthermore, this ethical framework was the basis upon which a corporate identity with a strong sense of belonging was built.

Configured thus, this ethical framework, in which the military Ordinances and a successful style of command had their place, soon became a key aspect of the organisational culture of the Guardia Civil that has survived to the present day. A more tangible outcome is the fact that it has allowed the Guardia Civil to maintain high levels of efficiency in the service, positioning it at the forefront of public safety in Spain.

We are living in an era of increasing demand for effective ethical regulation as an added value in all institutions, making ethical conduct both more demanding and more demanded. This is so much so that the values that both public and private corporations defend as their own, and the way in which they integrate them into their organisational culture, acquire a strategic character of the first order.

In this scenario, the Guardia Civil has complied with the mandate of its Personnel Regime Law by approving a Code of Conduct, which was published by royal decree in March 2022. The implementation of this standard in all its aspects amounts to the development of a new institutional ethical framework adapted to current deontological exigencies, which must converge with the Integrity System of the General State Administration itself.

To this effect, the Guardia Civil faces the challenge of updating the ethical model that has given it prestige and internal cohesion since its foundation in such a way that makes it effective for the times in which we live, but without breaking with traditional culture. The Code of Conduct is based on values, principles and rules that are clearly identifiable and recognisable in terms of the traditional culture of the Institution, and which must also respond to the *know how to be* of today's guardsmen. It is a timely moment to see how far the values of yesteryear, headed by honour and serving as a reference point for its members, are still valid today.

In this regard, we must analyse what honour continuing to be the main emblem of the men and women who make up the Guardia Civil means to the current personnel of the corps, the institutions and the general public; in other words, to find out how this is perceived and whether or not there is a clear understanding of what we call *honour*.

And leading on from this, if the traditional and updated ethical precepts are indeed found to be perceived, valued and internalised, to investigate the extent to which they acquire a strategic character for the Guardia Civil at this time, such that they contribute to making the corps be seen as more trustworthy, prestigious and generally effective.

2. THE FUNDAMENTAL ETHICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE GUARDIA CIVIL

2.1. THE FIRST REGULATION

Once the first contingent was organised and deployed across the country in the autumn of 1844, the guardsmen of the new corps began to act against banditry and other forms of delinquency, replacing the army patrols and the by then disbanded National Militia.

For this, it was first necessary to complete the training of the aspiring guardias civiles in their training barracks. In addition to the required moral training, they had to acquire or improve their literacy, receive military instruction and specific instruction in the case of cavalry personnel, and learn the use of arms. Training was also provided mainly to sergeants and corporals in how to draft service reports and police reports.

It was also essential to provide the new corps with a regulation governing the performance of the service and to establish the functions of the corps and those of the different posts, as well as the system of personnel. In fact, both the Royal Decree of 28 March 1844 and the Royal Decree of 13 May 1844, the two founding regulations, provided for the preparation of guardsmen through regulations, thereby filling this gap. These were the Service Regulations and the Military Regulations of the Guardia Civil, respectively.

The military nature of the Guardia Civil, with its link to military jurisdiction, and the provision of its special service under the orders of the civil authority, certainly conditioned the regulations by which it was to be governed. This singular regulatory duality was confirmation that, in accordance with its dual nature and its dependence on the Ministries of War and the Interior, the Guardia Civil had to accommodate its personnel statute and its service regulations under different but complementary rules¹.

The Service Regulations, which the Duke of Ahumada did not take part in drafting, were drawn up based on the prior work done by Patricio de la Escosura with the new government of Narváez before his resignation as Undersecretary of the Interior at the beginning of May 1844. Heading this Ministry was Pedro José Pidal, a personal friend of General de Loja, who wanted to give the regulations a certain provisional character², guided by prudence until the functions, relations and dependencies of the new corps were more clearly defined.

The Service Regulations were approved on 9 October 1844³ in mid-deployment of the initial contingent of *Guardias civiles*. As one of the relevant aspects for our study, it is noteworthy how already in the preamble of this regulation one of the distinctive signs of the Guardia Civil is reflected, namely its benevolent nature, which was to become a true hallmark of its identity⁴. In this regard, the body was urged to: "*to begin to perform*

¹ Martínez Viqueira, E. (2019). *Narváez El duque de Ahumada y la fundación de la Guardia Civil*, p. 239-240.

² Martínez Viqueira, E. (2018). *La definición de un modelo de liderazgo en la etapa fundacional de la Guardia Civil*, p. 256-257. Doctoral thesis.

³ Royal Decree of 9 October 1844, approving the Regulations for the Guardia Civil Service. Gaceta de Madrid, no. 3679, 10 October 1844. Historical collection of the Official State Gazette (BOE).

⁴ The term "protector" is not equivalent to the term "benemérito" [merit, although it has long been identified as such to refer to the Guardia Civil, for reasons that will be explained below.

its important task without delay, and to be able to do so from the outset in harmony with the protective and beneficent character of this institution". This spirit was further developed in article 32, which set out in detail when the *Guardias civiles* were to act in terms of assisting those in need. The regulations also included important precautions for the conduct of officers towards citizens, such as article 56, which obliged the Guardia Civil *"to conduct himself with the utmost prudence and restraint"*.

For their part, the Military Regulations of the Guardia Civil were approved a few days later than the Service Regulation⁵. The Duke of Ahumada had been working on an initial and extensive draft, which he delivered on 16 May⁶, meaning that he must have written it in parallel to the second royal founding decree. However, many of Ahumada's proposals in this draft, such as those relating to the provision of service and, above all, his latest attempt to fully integrate the Guardia Civil into the army, were rejected.

The final text of the Military Regulations was drafted by a commission of four officers from the Undersecretariat of War and representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Grace and Justice, following the recommendations of the prior opinion of the Supreme Court of War and the Navy⁷. Also in this document we can highlight some aspects of ethical and institutional relevance, such as its Chapter VI, dedicated to discipline, and in particular article 1, which highlighted its great importance in the Guardia Civil, along with other principles required due to the dispersed nature of the units of the corps. With only slight variation, this article kept the original wording, inspired by the 1829 Regulations of the Carabineros de Costas y Fronteras, until the latest version of the Military Regulations of 1942.

2.2. CONSOLIDATION OF THE INTERNAL REGULATION: THE *CARTILLA DEL GUARDIA CIVIL*

This first regulation was complemented with various royal orders issued by the General Inspectorate, and with circulars addressed by the Duke of Ahumada to the heads of the *tercio* and subordinate units to improve service performance. They also included from the outset a number of moral precautions that advanced the ethical line the Duke of Ahumada wanted to inculcate in the first *guardias civiles*.

There are many good examples of these early rules, but we will cite just a few by way of example. A royal order of 5 October 1844, just as the territorial deployment of the first guardsmen was starting, already made clear reference to the formality and gravity that should preside over the actions of guardsmen in the service, displaying a high dignity before citizens, which would give them a natural authority. Another circular dated 20 December 1844 sought to instil the motivation and commitment so important at the start of any undertaking of this scale. Later, a circular dated 4 May 1846 underlined the close relationship there should be between commanders and subordinates, thereby demonstrating mutual trust and appreciation. These aspects would be frequently

⁵ The Military Regulations for the Guardia Civil were approved by Royal Decree on 15 October 1844. Gaceta de Madrid, no. 3685, 16 October 1844. Historical Collection, BOE.

⁶ Personal file of the Duke of Ahumada. S1^a/CELEB, Box 067, EXP. 13. General Military Archive of Segovia (AGMS).

⁷ Martínez Viqueira, E. *La definición de un modelo de liderazgo...*, op. cit., p. 263.

emphasised, with references to mutual respect, outward displays of discipline and the example of officers.

Regarding how the service was to be provided, documents were regularly issued that pressed upon the need to act with responsibility and initiative, promoting self-demanding behaviour, and to be extremely correct in terms of treatment, showing a vocation for charity. The basis for this would be unblemished integrity, honesty and righteousness as principles of conduct which, in the perspective of the early years, would serve as a basis for ethical leadership.

The publication of these two regulations facilitated the launch of the Guardia Civil, and the frequent royal orders and circulars issued were an important doctrinal and ethical complement. However, it is logical to think that Francisco Javier Girón felt a certain frustration at how little influence he had ultimately had on the final drafting of the regulations, despite all his efforts. It must be said that the texts did not meet his expectations, his imprint on them limited - and this was no small thing - to the proposal of royal orders and the issuing of circulars. After the first months of the corps' existence, Ahumada felt that the service needed more regulation, the first regulation having proved to be insufficient. Furthermore, the military status of *guardias civiles* men also gave them a role closer to that of a replacement soldier under the guidance of their commanders, in the spirit of the Ordinances for this personnel, than to that of a law enforcement officer with the capacity and authority to act alone. The new policing system imported from the Royal Gendarmerie, based on patrolling in pairs, required much more demanding and precise regulation.

But above all, the Duke of Ahumada needed a code of conduct to guide the behaviour of these men in a very delicate service that was invested with authority and for which they bore arms. To this effect, the founder of the corps signed one of his first circulars on 16 January 1845⁸, the intention of which was to imbue the newly incorporated commanders with the moral qualities that *guardias civiles* men should have, and to explain how they should be insisted on and checked for in the regular reviews. This circular shows how the Duke of Ahumada was contemplating the drafting of a new, more ethical regulation that would complete the organisational trilogy.

To this effect, the Duke of Ahumada spent the summer of 1845 drafting the regulation that would bear his unmistakable stamp: the *Cartilla del Guardia Civil*. The text was immediately sent to the government for approval, but was sent back in October for corrections. It daringly departed in some respects from the Service Regulation, even considering the *post* as an organisational unit with a certain autonomy. In this regard, it established an extensive regulation on the functions of its chief: the *post commander*, a key element in the provision of the Guardia Civil service from its beginnings. Nonetheless, these figures did not feature in the founding decrees and their implementing regulations. Perhaps for this reason, for the regulation to be approved Ahumada had to include the more than 32 articles of the novel regulation on the post commander in a separate section in the first edition of the *Cartilla*, setting it apart from the initial version.

⁸ Circular of 16 January 1845, which served as the basis for the drafting of the *Cartilla del Guardia Civil. Recopilación de las reales órdenes y circulares de interés general para la Guardia Civil...*, volume I. Servicio de Estudios Históricos de la Guardia Civil (SEHGC).

The amended text was re-submitted to the Government on 13 December and the Cartilla was finally approved a week later, by Royal Order of 20 December 1845⁹.

The normative compendium that made up the first edition of the Cartilla del Guardia Civil consisted of three titles. The first, under the same name, was divided into three parts: the first part was the Cartilla, the second contained the functions of the post commanders, and in the third were models of summary reports (“atestados” or “diligencias policiales”) and forms frequently used in the service. The second title consisted of the texts of the Military and Service Regulations, in that order. And the third title contained the corporal and infantrymen's' Obligations, as well as those of the cavalry and dragoons, which were contained in the Military Ordinances.

With regard to the specific text of the Cartilla, the most well-known is the first chapter, dedicated to *general precautions for fulfilling the obligations of guardias civiles*, since it is the one that summarises the basis of the Institution's code of ethics. He began this chapter with his most famous article, which in a way summed up the spirit that the Duke of Ahumada wanted to instil in the members of the Corps: "*Honour must be the civilian guard's main emblem; he must, therefore, keep it unsullied. Once lost, it can never be regained*". Ahumada clearly developed his idea of the *guardias civiles* man in this chapter, explaining in detail how the members of the corps should behave on all occasions, the prudence and proportionality of their response to the complex and uncertain situations they had to face, and the benevolent spirit that should move them to help anyone in need or in danger.

The second chapter of the Cartilla was devoted entirely to the provision of service on the roads, a key task to which the first *Guardias civiles* were to devote their efforts to eradicate banditry. The remaining ten chapters of the text referred to other functions entrusted to the Corps: the regulation of weapons; passports; hunting; fishing; forests and rural police; the capture of deserters from the army, and fugitives from forced recruitment and the garrisons; action in the event of fires, floods and earthquakes; prohibited games; the repression of contraband and prisoner transport services. Last, aspects specific to the Guardia Civil service were developed, which had been omitted in the Regulation intended for this purpose.

After the publication of the Cartilla, *guardias civiles* men were now not only in a position to perform their functions effectively, but they also had the moral guidance needed for their actions, set out in its first chapter as an unparalleled and demanding code of ethics.

3. THE CARTILLA DEL GUARDIA CIVIL AT A TIME OF CRISIS OF VALUES

3.1. THE CONCEPT OF HONOUR IN THE SOCIAL AND MILITARY CONTEXT OF THE PERIOD

Dazzled by Napoleon's military successes, *Alfred Victor*, Count de *Vigny* (1797-1863), joined the French army as an officer in 1813, but resigned as a captain in 1827, disappointed by his experience in the military. Later, he became one of the greatest poets

⁹ *Cartilla del Guardia Civil*, drawn up by the Inspección General del Arma, approved by S. M. in the Royal Degree of 20 December 1845. SEHGC.

of French Romanticism. A controversial moralist, he defended contradictory approaches to military morale and the performance of duty¹⁰. But as a counterpoint to the rationalist positions prevailing at the time, he also sacralised the concept of honour, raising it with his pen to the highest level. He coined suggestive conceptions of honour, which he said "*consists in making beautiful that which one is obliged to do*", and which he came to identify as "*the poetry of duty*". Moreover, he stated:

*"Honour is conscience (...). It is self-respect and respect for the beauty of life carried to the purest elevation and to the most ardent passion". "It is a thought (...) independent of time, of place, and even of religion; a proud, uncompromising sentiment; an instinct of incomparable beauty. This faith, which seems to me to exist in everyone still, and which reigns supreme in armies, is that of HONOUR"*¹¹.

He even went on to ask, "*is it not, above all, of sovereign beauty when practised by the man of war?*"¹².

The organiser of the Guardia Civil did not meet the French writer, although they were contemporaries, but it is very likely that he knew his literary works. But what is certain is that this conception of honour, stemming from different moral convictions, was undoubtedly close to what the Duke of Ahumada conceived for those first *guardias civiles* men when he wrote the *Cartilla*. Honour as an inner awareness of doing the right thing at all times. To do good. To feel the intimate satisfaction of having fulfilled one's duty.

However, also conceived was an external dimension of honour, one that was much more widespread at the time than the one conveyed to us by Count de *Vigny* because it is more closely linked to *ancestral honours*, which we will talk about again later, and which have not always had a true ethical dimension. This meaning of honour is the one that conveys to others the reputation and honourability that one's actions arouse, which translates into a good name or reputation. And it is this dimension that *Arthur Schopenhauer* (1788-1860), one of the most influential philosophers of the 19th century, of German origin and contemporary of the Count of *Vigny* and the Duke of Ahumada, defended in the same era. *Schopenhauer's* conception of honour was quite different from that of the French Romantic. Pessimistic about life, he argued that "*the secret of not being too unhappy is not to expect to be too happy*". He was a great admirer of *Goethe*, *Homer*, *Shakespeare* and the writers of the Spanish Golden Age, especially *Francisco Suárez* and *Baltasar Gracián*, whom he translated into German and whom he always read and quoted in Spanish. He reflected on honour, condemning the chivalric conceptions he considered to be totally outdated in his time, postulates that he expressed in a well-known and very practical booklet called "*The art of making oneself respected*", which he himself used to refer to as "*A treatise on honour*"¹³. In brief, *Schopenhauer* had a much simpler conception: "*Honour is the opinion others have of us*".

In the midst of the philosophical debates of the time, the Duke of Ahumada had deeply internalised this and other values intrinsically linked to honour, including personal dignity and integrity. In fact, we could say that in Ahumada's ethical framework, honour,

¹⁰ De *Vigny*, A. (2003). *Servidumbre y grandeza militar*. See in this respect: *Vigón*, J. (1979). *El espíritu militar español*, p. 193 and ss.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 107.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 108.

¹³ *Schopenhauer*, A. (2005). *The art of making oneself respected*.

dignity and integrity form a triad of *supra-values* that transcend all ethical behaviour and underpin the exemplary behaviours of ethical leadership the organiser of the Guardia Civil wanted to instil from the outset. Through his forebears, Francisco Javier Girón had been educated in these values, in accordance with a long military tradition, and he had exercised them on the basis of the solid human and intellectual training he had received, giving continuity to an ancient family lineage and to the noble status he had inherited.

With the ideas that came with the Enlightenment, this concept had acquired different distinctions, including the consideration of honour as a moral code of conduct and its embodiment in a bourgeois sense of life, which appealed to the dignity of the person. It was a new understanding of individual identity through professional performance, and economic independence as a reflection of social status. In this regard, an individual's projection was manifested through their public image and recognition in the eyes of others¹⁴.

And so, in the 19th century, a new sense of honour had been forged that was fundamentally linked to the elites, to the bourgeoisie, to people of a certain social level and class, who were the only ones that at the time recognised "persons of honour". Furthermore, although the role of justice as an instrument for defending personal honour was strengthened, there were still moral guidelines that relied on codes of honour for its defence in the most intimate spaces by certain classes, which led to the creation of special jurisdictions, including the courts of honour¹⁵. Last, the slowness of the justice system in resolving the growing number of cases of crimes linked to the honour and good name of individuals contributed not only to the continuity but also to the great boom that the practice of mourning acquired in the 19th century¹⁶, as an effective and decisive way of repairing sullied honour in the "field of honour". In a way, the "chivalrous honour", which was a "*child of the time when fists were more dexterous than the ability to judge*", as Schopenhauer called it, once again took shape.

Contrarily, the revitalisation of the sense of honour in certain spheres that took place during the 19th century was not necessarily reflected in the ethical codes of the time, and even less so for professionals who came from neither the aristocracy nor the emerging bourgeois classes in the new liberal state.

In fact, at that time codes of ethics focused and limited to professional activity were beginning to be developed. The experience of virtues and values that should accompany work performance gave way, on the moral level, to the fulfilment of the duties inherent to its exercise, in accordance with Kantian deontology. To this effect, virtue was relegated to a volitional reinforcement at the service of the fulfilment of duty¹⁷. The consequence was that bourgeois thinking, dominated by economic and mercantile values, ruined the little prestige that virtues had previously had, elevating the zeal for work, a sense of thrift,

¹⁴ Sánchez García, R. (2020). Conflicting rights: Honour, freedom of expression and everyday life in nineteenth-century Spain, p. 510-511. *Revista Electrónica de Historia Constitucional*, 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 528-529.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 529.

¹⁷ Rodríguez Luño, A. (1977). *Immanuel Kant: Metaphysical foundation of morals*, p. 173-183.

property ownership and respect for social conventions to that level, leaving aside aspects such as moral excellence¹⁸.

If we transfer this model to the military institution, we must necessarily look at the aforementioned *Royal Ordinances of His Majesty for the regime, discipline, subordination and service of his armies*, promulgated by Charles III in 1768. We must begin by saying that the first project, started under Ferdinand VI, had been published in 1764 as the General Collection of Military Ordinances, but Charles III commissioned that they be completed with the inclusion of ethical principles that would persevere over time and constitute a moral reference point for the military. It would take a further four years for the publication of the definitive Royal Ordinances, which were not received passively either by the military who advocated the rationalist ideas of the Enlightenment, or by those who were more anchored to the postulates of the Ancien Régime. In other words, these modern Ordinances were born to set the old model of the aristocratic officer against the new bourgeois officer, who emerges from the people¹⁹ whom he is to serve.

Once these initial controversies had been overcome, several attempts were made at the beginning of the 19th century to modernise and adapt the provisions of the Ordinances to the times, some of the regulations of which had become obsolete. The most decisive provision was made during the *Liberal Triennium* and can be found in article 169 - the last one - of the Constitutive Law of the Army of 1821, which ordered the government to reform the Military Ordinances to bring them into line with that law, to consolidate in them the dispersed royal orders and to submit the resulting text to the General Courts for approval, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of 1812. But the truth is that these updates were not carried out.

It goes without saying that, as far as the issue at hand is concerned, the fundamental values of the military institution were reserved above all for officers, in whom honour and military spirit resided, indissolubly linked as an ethical reference point for their actions. In terms of regulations, this moral requirement was absent for the troop classes. In the part of the Ordinances concerning the duties of the corporal and the soldier, the very few references to honour that can be found are addressed to the officers. This was, however, in keeping with the social conventions of the time, to which we have already made mention, and with the social background of the replacement troops, who always came from the most disadvantaged and less cultured classes. This social reality was one of the most obvious consequences of the practice of cash redemption to avoid compulsory military service by the families who could afford it among the nobility and the bourgeoisie.

Moreover, the concept of honour, devalued in society and almost confined to the sphere of reparation for personal affront, differed from military honour, which was considered in the military sphere to be of greater recognition and worth. In this regard, twenty-five years after the creation of the Guardia Civil, Almirante (1869) distinguishes in his *Diccionario Militar (Military Dictionary)* honour in the abstract from honour that is proper to the person, implies quality and is brought to the military "*from the parental*

¹⁸ Trigo Oubiña, T. (10 December 2020). *El concepto de virtud en la tradición filosófica y teológica*. <https://www.almudi.org/recursos/virtudes/9680-El-concepto-de-virtud-en-la-tradicion-filosofica-y-teologica>.

¹⁹ Fernández-Montesinos Aznar, F. and Feliú Bernárdez, L. (2020). "Valores y cultura militar en las Fuerzas Armadas: Las disciplina", in: AA. VV., *Los principios y valores: La ética*.

home". Above that would be military honour, which "is far from the honour of the duelist (...). There is a higher and more philosophical idea in military honour than the simple satisfaction of honour or, often, of outraged "self-respect". He conceives the honour of the military man in terms of his behaviour in combat, as part of his unit, standing side by side with his comrades until victory or death. And again, the Napoleonic conception: "The glory and honour of arms, so warmly inculcated by Napoleon I as a sure pledge of victory, is the noblest and loftiest of sentiments, because it has nothing of the personal or of self-interest"²⁰.

3.2. THE CARTILLA, A SOLID ETHICAL REGULATION IN THE 19TH CENTURY

To analyse the scope and dimension of the Cartilla del Guardia Civil at the time of publication, we must relate it to the military ethic of the time and its philosophical substratum.

Let us start with normative ethics, which we can define as the branch of ethics concerned with the different criteria applicable to determine when an action is or is not morally correct. In other words, normative ethics seeks arguments based on general principles that explain why certain rules should be adopted and what their ethical content should be.

There are three fundamental theories or currents in normative ethics, which affect the approach to the different moral dilemmas in their normative regulation.

The first of these currents is "virtue ethics", of Platonic origin and perfected by Aristotle, which still has a fundamental place in our Western culture. It is based on the idea that people's actions are ethically correct in the measure that they act based on their inclination towards the good, the internalisation of values and virtues, and the formation of character²¹. Indeed, virtue is the operative incarnation of value, to which it gives stability by ensuring that its experience is prolonged over time, because it is constructed through the repetition of good behaviour or habits, which come from within the person. In short, the values referred to here - honour, integrity and loyalty may be good examples - need virtue to be translated into ethical behaviour, because virtue is precisely the ethical decision to put values into practice. This strand of virtue ethics was deeply rooted and clearly predominant in ethical thought in Western European culture until the advent of the Modern Age. It was then that Aristotelian ethical thought hit a crisis, swept along by the ideas of the Enlightenment and unable to recover until well into the 20th century.

The second theory is the Kantian-rooted "ethics of duty", which has its origins in Enlightenment rationalism. It is based on the categorical imperative defined by Kant, which is universal and for all people. This is deontology, according to which moral action derives from the fulfilment of a duty to which one is obliged, regardless of whether or not its consequences are favourable to the subject who performs it. In addition, the observance of moral norms makes it possible to counteract natural impulses which, in the Kantian

²⁰ Admiral Torroella, J. (1869). *Military etymological, historical, technological dictionary*, p. 704.

²¹ "Character" can be understood as the set of inherited or acquired psychic and affective qualities that influence a person's behaviour, inclining them to act in a particular way and defining their particular way of being, which distinguishes them from others. Sonnenfeld, A. (2013). *El nuevo liderazgo ético: la responsabilidad de ser libres*, p. 136.

view, would lead to deviations from duty. Discipline, in the abstract, can be seen as a principle that fits fully into *Kant's* ethics. At the beginning of the 19th century, ethics applied to the practice of different professions was forged on the basis of ethical principles and rules of behaviour. This is also the origin of the Royal Military Ordinances of Charles III, which as a military code of ethics was applied to the Guardia Civil from the outset.

The third current is that of "*consequentialism*", and in particular in the form known as "*utilitarianism*", which also originated at the end of the 18th century, formulated by *Jeremy Bentham* in 1789, the year in which the French Revolution broke out. This theory considers the situation as a key factor in making the most correct decision, thereby considering that actions are to be judged morally according to the outcome of their consequences and the extent to which they are favourable to the majority. A clear example can be seen in the appropriateness or otherwise of the use of force, and criteria for its limitation and restraint, depending on the situation.

Although there are examples of these three theories of normative ethics in military ethics and, therefore, in the regulation of the conduct of the Spanish military throughout history, the fact is that they have mainly focused on deontological norms (the ethics of duty)²². At the same time, the values and certain military principles, rooted in virtues, have been the subject of more cross-cutting learning, both in military training and in the day-to-day performance of the units themselves. The same applies to the assessment and judgement of the outcome and consequences of actions in the service.

As we have seen, virtue ethics had been seriously questioned, especially since the Enlightenment. The virtuous life, as the fullness of human life, no longer had a place in the modern mentality, which shied away from establishing a unitary and global vision of life in order not to interfere with personal freedom and the project of each individual, constraining itself to seeking norms of collaboration, indispensable for achieving social peace, well-being and utility. The virtues thereby came to be seen as means or instruments to achieve the improvement of civil society, and as a reinforcement of the will in the service of the fulfilment of duty²³. As we have seen, this gave rise to the Kantian and utilitarian currents.

It is also important to remind ourselves of the key aspect of the flourishing of the bourgeoisie and its thinking at the dawn of the 19th century in Spain, driven as it was, and as explained above, by economic interests. The virtues went down another rung from their original conception, to give way to new values such as zeal for work and the importance of saving and taking advantage of opportunities to make a fortune, taking the sense of private property to hitherto unknown levels.

And it was in this new scenario that the Guardia Civil was born, and not by chance. Once the war that paralysed development in Spain, and more recently the first Carlist war, had ended, the creation of the corps was seen by many new property owners as a unique opportunity to safeguard their interests. But Ahumada's Guardia Civil aspired to much more: to become a guarantee of security and stability - including economic stability - for the whole of society without exception, and not only for those with wealth, be they

²² AA. VV. (2019). *Cómo preparar el liderazgo militar futuro*, p. 180-181. Working Document 05/2019. Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies.

²³ Trigo Oubiña, T. *El concepto de virtud...*, op. cit.

decadent or emerging. And the performance of this role was going to demand very high ethical and moral standards from these public servants.

Having outlined the ethical framework of the society in question, we will focus on the Cartilla del Guardia Civil, which was clearly born at a time when public morale was at a low ebb. We have already mentioned that this regulation contained, mainly in its first chapter, what we could call the basic moral code by which the corps' personnel would hitherto be governed. This chapter contained thirty-five articles which, in a rather unsystematic regulation, and grouping different concepts in the same article, included a series of rules not only of conduct in the service, but also of civility, military courtesy and protocol, aimed largely at dealing with the corps superiors and those outside it, as well as with civilian authorities and the general population. But the most relevant aspect of this chapter is the consideration, in a rather direct manner, of a full list of values, some more explicit and others less so, as well as a series of principles and rules of behaviour. We can hereby identify in the Cartilla this triple division in ethical regulation: values, principles and norms, each with their different nuances, describing them from general to specific, or from abstract to more concrete.

The key point in this regard is that because this regulation was drafted by Ahumada, against all odds precepts linked to the ethics of virtues were recovered as a further step in the organisation of the Guardia Civil which, in the middle of the 19th century, would shine like a beacon in terms of moral and professional regulation. Let's look at this point in more detail.

First, and presiding over the entire content of the Cartilla, honour is clearly recognised as the main hallmark of the Guardia Civil's identity, and the consequent responsibility an officer assumes to preserve it unblemished. In the first book on the history of the Guardia Civil, Díaz Valderrama (1858) explains the overriding relevance of this precept from its beginnings in the ethical postulates of the Guardia Civil. Commenting on the articles of the Cartilla, he defines it in this way when referring to the first of them:

"Honour is the sum of all the good deeds by which a man earns the esteem of his chiefs or superiors, and even of his equals or inferiors: it must never fail in terms of the flag that has been sworn allegiance to, in the word that has been given, in the duties that our status imposes on us; no crime must ever be committed that would make us lose our honourable condition; we must always conduct ourselves with circumspection, modesty, and fine manners. And he who is a liar, he who is a habitual drunk, he who is a cheat, he who tries to evade his duties, has no honour. The man of honour is everywhere; he who does not have it never has others' full trust. Honour is the emblem of all that is great and good; and dishonour, the all-shadowing cloud, the root of all evils. The uniform without honour has no moral strength; the brave become cowards. In the crucible of honour, the most heroic deeds fade into nothingness. A man of honour never turns his back on danger. A man without honour is an entity without a shadow; honour has no constraints in a man; and if, moreover, he is a man of genius, neither flattery, nor calumny, nor dangers can dent his bronze soul"²⁴.

Here we see a much broader concept of honour than the one we talked about in the previous section. In line with Ahumada's conception, in this feeling of honour so

²⁴ Díaz Valderrama, J. (1858). *Historia, servicios notables, socorros, comentarios de la Cartilla y reflexiones sobre el Cuerpo de la Guardia Civil*, p. 44.

beautifully described by the author, we can clearly distinguish not only the facet of military honour, but also of upright and unblemished conduct outside of arms, of the desire to do the right thing at all times and to show oneself as a virtuous person before others.

The *Cartilla* also stresses - in no less than six articles - the importance of personal dignity, of preserving integrity and honesty, and of the Aristotelian cardinal virtues of temperance (four articles), prudence, fortitude and justice. Also included are personal responsibility, loyalty, accuracy in the performance of duty and, insistently, vocation of service (four articles) and, of course, courage (another six).

In terms of principles, discipline and subordination, prestige and moral strength (authority), comradeship and the spirit of service and merit (in four more articles) stand out. These are permanent principles whose observance would enable the *guardias civiles* men to perform effectively and, of course, ethically.

Further, the rules of behaviour include the importance of serenity and self-control, and the proportional use of force in actions, aspects on which the result of these actions and their consequences (utilitarianism), presided over by the virtue of prudence, hinge. Five articles are also devoted to correct treatment and military courtesy, complemented by another five dedicated to grooming, public image and the composure that should preside over actions, not only in the service, but at all times. The last fourteen articles contain different rules for the provision of the service, which take as a basis for conduct the set of values and principles that precede them.

All these postulates described, although of a high order and demanding, could certainly constitute the code of ethics of a modern police organisation with sufficient historical, professional and social prestige. However, transferred to the turbulent Spain of the first half of the 19th century, they were absolutely revolutionary²⁵.

But that is not all. We have already mentioned the fact that these were not pertinent times to flaunt either collective or personal values like these in a mandatory regulation. Their observation, moreover, implies and presupposes the existence of a wide range of personal virtues, which manifest as their operative representation. But the most surprising thing is that a regulated moral requirement like this was not expected among the underprivileged classes of society among which the first *guardias civiles* men had had to be recruited. This was not because it was more difficult to find virtuous people from a less privileged social background - honesty being one of the most recognised virtues among the most deprived social strata - but because of certain collective values that society did not cultivate in that environment. To recognise and demand values such as honour and dignity for rank-and-file military personnel such as *guardias civiles* men up to the rank of first sergeant was certainly as surprising as it was revolutionary in 1845.

At a ground roots level, honesty was the basis of the behaviour of the *guardias civiles* men and perhaps the quality most appreciated. A deep respect for people and their property was based on this virtue. This sensibility, therefore, was clearly in line with the emerging bourgeois conception of society in the nascent liberal state, and with the

²⁵ Martínez Viqueira, E. (2010). *Atlas Ilustrado de la Guardia Civil*, p. 29.

importance that private property and its protection had attained following the recent disentanglement processes.

There were also other chapters of the Cartilla that contained highly ethical precepts regarding the behaviour to be observed among *guardias civiles* men. The ninth chapter, dedicated to intervention in fires and other disasters, underlines the duty to provide all assistance available to the Guardia Civil in these situations. But what is most striking is the rigour of the language used in chapter twelve concerning the transport of prisoners. These prisoners, generally under the authority of the army, the National Militia or other regional or provincial bodies, were frequently subjected to abuse and mistreatment by the population in the places through which they passed, which is why Ahumada categorically states that the Guardia Civil "*must perish*" rather than allow any kind of degrading treatment or humiliation of the people in their custody. Again, the mandate to protect the vulnerable and the relevance of personal dignity stand out above all else.

This overarching ethical requirement of the Cartilla placed a *Guardias civiles* man on a level clearly above his fellow citizens, representing a great responsibility for its chiefs, the commanders of the corps who had to ensure its observance. Moreover, the high moral standards demanded and common to all led to a strong commitment on the part of a *guardias civiles* man to live up to what was expected of him, both by his superiors and by the citizens, contributing without doubt to raising self-esteem.

The effect on the way of being and acting of the first *Guardias civiles* leads us to conclude that if we had to highlight an outstanding aspect in the founding stage of the Institute that was incorporated as an identifying feature in the institutional culture of the corps, it was undoubtedly the la Cartilla²⁶. We can conclude that, in terms of ethical regulation and for the provision of the service of this singular military collective, the Cartilla was shaped as a high-level addition to the Military Ordinances and to the regulations themselves, making it a regulatory document that was ahead of its time. Moreover, it contributed definitively to forging an enormously prestigious corps within the military institution that was unique among police forces in the 19th century.

3.3. AN ESPRIT DE CORPS GROUNDED IN VALUES

The starting point of the Cartilla in terms of learning and internalising values, character formation and the consequent exercise of virtues by the first *Guardias civiles*, had its continuity in the precise internal regulation, the exemplarity of the commanders and the self-demand -with a strong ethical component- of an increasingly cohesive collective with an ever more defined corporate identity. All of the above, underpinned by the identified *supra-values* of honour, dignity and integrity, was enough to form a true esprit de corps, an institutional culture that facilitated the establishment of an enduring ethical leadership.

It is important to remember that an institutional culture based on values, as the Guardia Civil has done since its beginnings, has above all an anthropological basis; that is, it is based on the reality of how people are and how they act. Confucius said: "*I have seen men incapable of science; but I have never seen them incapable of virtue*". And it

²⁶ Martínez Viqueira, E. *La definición de un modelo de liderazgo...*, op. cit., p. 271.

really is so. Likewise, Aristotle stated in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that "*the good is the end of all man's actions*". You just have to time it right and present it in the right way.

While at the time they were not known as values, today we identify them as benchmarks for ethical behaviour. To this effect, we need to place them in context, so that they make sense when we refer to the men who paved the way for the Guardia Civil in the middle of a turbulent 19th century. Bearing in mind that we have already noted that in reality values are constructs that we use to identify what we want to achieve and to become at any given moment, it would be absurd to fall into the moral superiority of those who believe they have their own values, since one's values are manifested in their daily conduct. In short, *we are what we do*, then as now. Beyond conventionalisms and varyingly precise definitions, this is what unites the Guardia Civil of the first contingent that went into action in 1844 with those that exercise the profession in the first quarter of the 21st century: their effective behaviour, their way of dealing with a specific situation.

In this light, we can consider that values conceptualise what is identified as correct when it comes to reasoning and acting. On the rung below this are attitudes, which is the mental response or disposition towards a certain behaviour. And on the rung below attitudes are behaviours, the way we act - behave - in a given situation. Moreover, values and attitudes operate on a feedback loop, such that the former generate positive attitudes which, in turn, reinforce the values (Rovira, 2021).

A key factor for the internalisation of these values by the *guardias civiles* men was the excellent choice of first chiefs and officers made by Ahumada and his team. The high degree of commitment readily assumed by the officers, as we noted at the beginning, was an energising and motivating element for the men, many of them illiterate, who followed their young officers - lieutenants, second lieutenants and ensigns - into situations involving all kinds of risks, which they would never have done alone.

Relationships were based on personal dignity, mutual respect and the consistent example of officers who, at the same time, showed the utmost concern for their subordinates and upheld these values in their actions. This requirement stemmed from the way the units were dispersed, necessitating a great deal of initiative on the part of the pairs or small patrols of *Guardias civiles*, who were often faced with complex situations that they had to resolve alone. It was an initiative which, of course, went hand in hand with personal responsibility for one's actions. In this way, a balance was forged between authority, discipline and paternalism in the exercise of command; a style of command that is as genuine as it is effective in the Guardia Civil

An authentic corporate identity was gradually consolidated, based on these shared values. Interrelated feelings of a strong sense of belonging, internal cohesion and a strong esprit de corps naturally emerged, which translated into action, generating attitudes towards excellent performance in an environment of trust, commitment and loyalty in the group. And above this was the exercise of exemplary leadership, especially in dealing with critical situations, with a high sense of honour as a constant guide for behaviour.

Another very important element of cohesion, especially in the early days, was the existence of the barracks, the singular mixed-use buildings for the Guardia Civil service itself and housing for the *guardias civiles* men and their families, where almost everything had to be shared, including hardships and privations. These facilities became authentic

schools of human relations, where the utmost respect was demanded among all the inhabitants.

We have spoken of *esprit de corps*, a crucial aspect in the military world of the time if an army was to conduct itself with a truly winning morale, or if a particular corps was to face its mission with a certain guarantee of success in terms of its outcome.

This is how Commander Francisco Villamartín (1833-1872), another contemporary of the Duke of Ahumada, and one of the greatest military thinkers of the Spanish 19th century, understood and brilliantly expressed it:

*"confidence in the courage of comrades and the skill of the leader, the satisfaction of joining the ranks of a glorious corps, the pleasure of facing dangers and fatigues together with men united by the bonds of affection created by this esprit de corps, the resignation in the face of privations, the joy on happy days, sustained by this same companionship, are a guarantee of victory"*²⁷.

And as he so eloquently put it:

*"To belong to this body is to feel honoured, and to have an intimate conviction of the morality with which it is administered, of the justice with which it is governed, and of the rightness with which it is commanded"*²⁸.

This is how the first *Guardias civiles* embodied their *esprit de corps*.

4. EVOLUTION OF THE ETHICAL REGULATION

4.1. THE ETHICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE GUARDIA CIVIL IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND THE FIRST THIRD OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The *Cartilla del Guardia Civil* was updated in 1852, as were the two regulations governing the Institution. It was a year of important changes in the administration that resulted in the institutional backing the Guardia Civil required to establish itself as the hegemonic security corps throughout the century. This was an attempt to adapt to the evolution of security and the performance of new functions, including the duties of the line, section and provincial commander, the regulation of service in the field and the surveillance of rail transport, which was still in its infancy. Other useful documentation for the service, such as texts describing how to treat different authorities, a metric booklet with the equivalences of the new system of weights and measures (the decimal metric system had been adopted by law in 1849), and a manual with the main diseases suffered by horses and how to treat them, were added to the *Cartilla's* compendium, which was studied and carried by the *guardias civiles* men in their wallet.

The *Cartilla* subsequently incorporated some updates, but remained virtually unchanged until the end of the Civil War in the early 1940s. This survival and stability

²⁷ Villamartín, F. (1863). *Nociones del arte militar*, p. 50-51.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

are testament to both the wisdom of the initial drafting of this doctrinal document and of its strong roots in the organisational culture of the Guardia Civil and in all its members.

Around the same time, on 29 November 1878, the Constitutive Law of the Army was enacted, bringing about a change in the personal status of the *Guardias civiles* by providing in article 22 for the full integration of the corps into the army, but without altering its missions. Years later, this regulation would be complemented by the Additional Law to the Constitutive Law of the Army of 26 July 1889. This approximation of the Guardia Civil to the army's statutory regulations meant a certain degree of normative dispersion, but did not diminish one iota the application of the Cartilla as a normative ethical reference as an ever-present distinguishing feature.

Of course, the Military Ordinances also continued to apply in this period for both officers and troop classes. The profuse issuance of instructions and orders for better performance of the service and the behaviour of the personnel also continued, complementing the Cartilla.

4.2. THE REGULATION FROM 1940 ONWARDS

After the brief parenthesis of the Second Republic, when the Guardia Civil was integrated into the Ministry of the Interior, at the end of the Civil War the organic dependence of the corps on the army was consolidated. By the Law of 22 September 1939, which organised the Ministry of the Army, the General Inspectorate of the Guardia Civil came under this ministry.

The decision was also taken to significantly increase the number of *guardias civiles* men, such that between February 1940 and the following year, ten thousand former members of the army were invited to join the corps, an offer that was later extended to a further six thousand new recruits.

At the same time, the Law of 15 March 1940 brought about the integration of the Carabinieri Corps, with its personnel and functions, into the Guardia Civil. For its part, the functional dependence of the service continued to depend on the Ministry of the Interior, through the civilian governors in the provinces, although its character as a public order force with command, discipline and military jurisdiction was also underlined.

This law also included an important incorporation into the Guardia Civil of commanding officers from the army, who were mainly assigned to the Coast and Frontiers Triads, which were set up with that law. The General Staff of the Guardia Civil was also created in April of that year, fully staffed by qualified army officers. In short, this set of organisational measures led to numerous additions to the ranks of the corps, thereby more than doubling in size to 54,304²⁹. For a time it also meant a certain denaturalisation of the Guardia Civil, which affected both its own identity and that of its members, although this dissipated with the passage of time and there was a gradual return to normality, especially from the 1960s onwards. These were difficult years of post-war strife and struggle against the maquis, which was a drain on the corps' strength and tied up important resources in a large part of the national territory for many years.

²⁹ López Corral, M. (2010). Franco's Guardia Civil, p. 14-15. *Cuadernos de la Guardia Civil*, 42.

The internal regulations of the corps also underwent important changes in these years. In 1942 and 1943, respectively, the Military Regulations and the Service Regulations were updated, both replacing the previous regulations and absorbing the old Cartilla. Its first chapter, albeit with several additions and updates, was renamed Chapter One - General Preventions - the Rules of Procedure for the Service, now containing 47 articles. The main ethical content of the Cartilla was elevated to the status of a royal decree, and although kept alive through this article, it effectively disappeared as an independent regulation.

The two regulations remained in force until the laws defining the statutory framework, born under the protection of the 1978 Constitution, made them obsolete. Nonetheless, they were never expressly repealed, helping to keep alive the provisions of the Cartilla contained in the Service Regulations.

The quarters of the Guardia Civil were maintained throughout Franco's regime. The Organic Law of the State, of 10 January 1967, stipulated in its article 37 that the Armed Forces of the Nation were also to include the Forces of Public Order, with the mission of "*guaranteeing the unity and independence of the Homeland, the integrity of its territories, national security and the defence of institutional order*". However, this strong link to the army gradually disappeared over time, especially from the 1970s onwards³⁰.

On another note, after the end of the Second World War, the international community understood the need to implement a catalogue of minimum rights, respect for which should be enforceable in every society, a claim that came to fruition with the approval in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by Resolution 217 A (III) of the United Nations General Assembly. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which entered into force in 1976, together with the Optional Protocols implementing both documents, subsequently completed the body of norms known as the International Bill of Human Rights.

As a consequence of these historical changes and the evolution of democratic societies, the need to dictate regulatory standards on deontological aspects directly related to the development of public security action became an obligatory moral commitment.

4.3. THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF 1978

In the first half of the 20th century, there were some attempts to revive virtue ethics, which had effectively been in gradual decline since the Enlightenment. However, the true reevaluation of virtue ethics in thought came about in the second half of the century, with a new generation of philosophers, including *Anscombe* and *MacIntyre*.

Elizabeth Anscombe, an Irish-born Catholic philosopher, published an article in 1958 that has traditionally been thought to mark the beginning of the contemporary debate on duty and virtue, and the start of the return to virtue by the philosophical community, especially in the Anglo-American sphere. In this and later studies, *Anscombe* criticised modern moral theories of utilitarianism and Kantian-style deontology, advising that the

³⁰ Martínez Viqueira, E. El marco estatutario de la Guardia Civil... *op. cit.*, p. 291.

development of moral philosophy requires a rediscovery of the concept of virtue³¹, prompting an increase in the number of studies on the matter.

In 1981, the Scottish philosopher *Alasdair MacIntyre*, considered the most important author on the resurgence of virtue in contemporary ethics, published his work *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (published in Spanish as *Tras la virtud*), one of the most important on the contemporary debate on virtue ethics, in which he questioned modern ethics resulting from Enlightenment ideals and liberal individualism³².

A new concept of public ethics thereby emerged, the aim of which was to guide the actions of public officials. A contributory factor in this regard was the *Watergate*³³ political scandal in the United States in the early 1970s, and the resulting awareness of the problem of corruption among public authorities.

This revival of the virtue-based approach to ethics did not go unnoticed by the international community in its application of normative ethics in the professional field. To this effect, the *Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly through Resolution 34/169 of 17 December 1979, and condensed into eight articles, constituted a first reference for the values, principles and behavioural guidelines that should govern the exercise of police functions: compliance with the law, respect and defence of human rights and the dignity of the person, service to the community, protection of the citizen, restrictive and proportional use of force, and confidentiality.

In the same year, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted the 1979 Resolution 690, the *Declaration on the Police*, which established ethical criteria for the performance of police duties, defined the status of the police, and outlined the role of police officers in states of emergency, war and territorial occupation by a foreign power. Its practical application in Spain was embodied by the Agreement of the Council of Ministers of 4 September 1981, in the *Basic Principles of Action of the Members of the State Security Forces and Corps*, published by Ministerial Order of 30 September, thereby becoming fully applicable to the Guardia Civil.

Prior to this, the Guardia Civil had been experiencing another period of uncertainty. While making the corps dependent on the Ministry of the Interior, Law 55/1978, of 4 December 1978, on the Police appeared in some way to demote its deployment and functions. With no other higher-ranking regulation recognising the nature of the Guardia Civil, the old controversy over the civilian-military nature of the institution and, by extension, the role it was to play from then on in the security map was reopened. This was a decisive matter considering that the drafting of the new Constitution was fully under way³⁴.

In the end, the Spanish Constitution of 1978 reinforced the values and ethical principles that were to govern the entire civil service. To this effect, under Articles 103.3

³¹ Trigo Oubiña, T. *El concepto de virtud... op. cit.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ The *Watergate* affair was a political espionage plot in the US administration that forced the resignation of Republican President *Richard Nixon* in 1972.

³⁴ Martínez Viqueira, E. El marco estatutario de la Guardia Civil..., *op. cit.*, p. 292.

and 149.1.18 of the Constitution, the bases for the statutory regime of civil servants in all public administrations were able to be established. The all-encompassing nature of these bases meant that they also covered officers of the Armed Forces and the Security Forces and Corps³⁵.

In development of article 104.2 of the Constitution, the Guardia Civil became part of the State Security Forces and Corps as an armed institution of a military nature, in accordance with Organic Law 2/1986, of 13 March, which definitively brought the debate on its military nature, reopened in 1978, to an end. Furthermore, article 5 of this law stated the basic principles of action common to all members of all police forces. Among these elementary criteria, and in the form of a code of ethics, several of the legal principles implicitly reflected both in United Nations Resolution 34/169 of 1979 and in the Order of 30 September 1981 can be clearly recognised. They include the principles of legality, impartiality and the limitation of due obedience in cases where the orders given entail the execution of acts constituting a crime or that contravene the legal system.

Almost simultaneously with the Constitution, the Royal Ordinances of the Armed Forces of 1978 were passed by law³⁶, the moral content of which was basically centred on what we have called the *ethics of duty*. It hinged largely on highlighting as values of its own the principles that characterise military organisations, particularly those of discipline, hierarchy and unity³⁷, developed in articles 10 to 13 of the first title of the law.

In these Ordinances, there are references to values such as honour, thanks to the fact that the classic archetypes of the old Ordinances for officers³⁸, which for two hundred years had been the only repositories of this fundamental value, were incorporated for observance by all military personnel. To this effect, article 29 stated that: "*The feeling of honour, inspired by a right conscience, will lead the soldier to the most exact fulfilment of his duty*". However, its article 72 continued to reserve honour as a heritage and guarantee of the officer's upright conduct, indelibly linked to the military spirit, for which the old and magnificent wording of the Carolinian ordinances was retained: "*The officer whose own honour and spirit do not inspire him to always act well is of little value to the service*". Notably, at that time, troops in the armed forces were still non-professional and compulsory military service was still in force.

Turning to the European legal-ethical framework, Recommendation (2001) 10, adopted on 19 September of that year by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the Member States, on the *European Code of Police Ethics*, called on the governments of the countries of the EU to draw inspiration from the principles of the Code developed in the standard to ensure its progressive implementation. Article 63 also requires member states to draw up codes of police ethics, based on the provisions it sets out. Undoubtedly, this recommendation was a forewarning about a pending issue for a military corps but with eminently police functions such as the Guardia Civil

³⁵ Morales Villanueva, A. (2000). Commentaries on the Law on the Guardia Civil Personnel Regime, p. 19-20. *Cuadernos de la Guardia Civil*.

³⁶ Law 85/1978 of 28 December 1978 on Royal Ordinances of the Armed Forces (now repealed).

³⁷ Suárez Pertierra, G. (2000). The significance of the Royal Ordinances in the context of military reform, p. 264. *Revista de Derecho Político*, 48-49.

³⁸ *Ibid.* See also: Pitarch, J. L. (1984). *Military Honour and Honour*, p. 57.

Three decades after the 1978 Ordinances, and in a new scenario of professional armed forces, the current Royal Ordinances of 2009 were enacted, now with the regulatory status of a royal decree³⁹. Here again, article 14 extended the military spirit to the entire military sphere: "*The soldier whose own honour and spirit do not inspire him to always act well is of little value to the service.*" The same applies to article 16 on honour, which is likewise consistently linked to military spirit and the performance of duty: "*One will carry out his duties and obligations with exactitude, driven by the feeling of honour inspired by these Royal Ordinances*".

Last, it should be recalled that like the historical Royal Ordinances, the 2009 Royal Ordinances were expressly made applicable to Guardia Civil personnel. This was reinforced by the amendment introduced by Royal Decree 1437/2010, of 5 November, which provides for their full application, except when they contradict or oppose the provisions of the specific legislation of the Corps, as provided for in article 2.2; and with specific limitations in the terms provided for in the single additional provision of the Royal Decree approving the Ordinances. Furthermore, as we shall see, they would continue to apply in the same terms following the approval of the Code of Conduct for Guardia Civil personnel.

5. GUARDIA CIVIL VALUES IN A NEW ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1. A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR A 21ST CENTURY INSTITUTION

5.1.1. The opportunity for a new code of ethics

The 1990s marked the beginning of a progressive regulatory differentiation in terms of the personal status of the armed forces and the Guardia Civil, materialising with the Guardia Civil Disciplinary Law of 1991⁴⁰, and culminating through the different laws defining their respective statutory frameworks in the latest Armed Forces Disciplinary Law and the Guardia Civil Personnel Regime Law, both of 2014⁴¹; and the common Military Criminal Code of 2015⁴². It must be said that this progressive regulatory differentiation⁴³ did not divorce the Guardia Civil in any way from its military nature. However, it did guide its regulatory development, still with unquestionable parallels to the armed forces, in aspects such as the Code of Conduct.

To this effect, Law 29/2014, of 28 November, on the Guardia Civil Personnel Regime, contemplates for the first time in its article 6 the code of conduct of the Institution, taking as a reference the basic principles of action of Organic Law 2/1986, of 13 March; Titles III and IV of Organic Law 11/2007, of 22 October, on the rights and duties of the members of the Guardia Civil; and the rules of behaviour of the *guardias civiles* men, which are listed in article 7.1 of the Personnel Regime Law. These rules, in turn, and according to the mandate contained in paragraph 2 of the same article, must be subject to regulatory development, constituting the basic rules of this code of conduct. To

³⁹ Royal Decree 96/2009 of 6 February 2009, approving the Royal Ordinances for the armed forces.

⁴⁰ Organic Law 11/1991, of 17 June 1991, on the Disciplinary Regime of the Guardia Civil.

⁴¹ Organic Law 8/2014, of 4 December, on the Disciplinary Regime of the Armed Forces and Law 29/2014, of 28 November, on the Guardia Civil Personnel Regime.

⁴² Organic Law 14/2015, of 14 October, on the Military Criminal Code.

⁴³ For a more in-depth look at the process of statutory development, see: Martínez Viqueira, E. El marco estatutario de la Guardia Civil, *op. cit.*

this end, the new regulation arising from this mandate must, with the necessary adaptations, incorporate the essential rules that define the behaviour of the military, the Ordinances for the armed forces themselves and the code of conduct for public employees, now included in Chapter VI of Title III of the Basic Statute of the Public Employee, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 5/2015, of 30 October.

In the Guardia Civil we have always been taught that values are capable of building identities when they are lived and shared by the members of an organisation. In this regard, the foresight of the Staff Regulations Act provided us with a historic opportunity to return to an institutional code of ethics, not to replace but to revitalise the best of the old, and new in terms of its values, principles and standards. In short, we were faced with the opportunity to once again put pen to paper in terms of how we wanted to continue to be, and how we want to be in the future to preserve our identity.

5.1.2. Values, principles, norms... and a decalogue

It is increasingly clear that a genuine, modern and effective military - and police - ethic must address in a harmonious way all three of the moral approaches discussed above, including in terms of its normative regulation. More precisely, it must be based on virtue ethics and, without losing sight of this and so as not to reduce morality to external aspects of conduct, it must integrate all the ethical and deontological elements provided by other currents to shape codes of conduct. And so the new institutional ethical standard was conceived.

The Code of Conduct for Guardia Civil personnel, approved by Royal Decree 176/2022 of 4 March, was born with the vocation of becoming a support for the institutional culture in its ethical dimension. The observance of its precepts rises above mere behaviour that is not subject to disciplinary reproach. It aspires to achieve professional and ethical excellence in all aspects of Guardia Civiling as an exemplary citizen. It therefore requires coherent living on the part of the corps' personnel: thinking and acting at all times in accordance with what one is, and what one has decided to be.

The articles of the Code of Conduct follow a similar structure to those of the Royal Ordinances, with a double function, expository and prescriptive⁴⁴. The provision in question is set out in each article, followed by an unambiguous prescription for its observance.

However, the structure of the Code is absolutely novel in the legal system, since it is based on the formulation of values, principles and rules of behaviour.

Values, which a person incorporates into their way of being from childhood, can be defined as assets or qualities, as attributes and convictions, which themselves are determinants of people's attitudes and behaviour. Chapter I of Title I contains the *Fundamental Values*, which reflect *how we should be*. It is headed in Article 1 by honour, followed in the next eight articles by integrity, loyalty, dignity, a sense of justice, courage, impartiality and neutrality, a spirit of sacrifice and responsibility.

⁴⁴ This is stated in the mandatory report of the Council of State, prior to the approval of the Royal Decree containing the Code of Conduct.

Principles, which are learned and internalised by the members of an organisation, constitute the fundamental ideas, criteria and norms that govern the thinking, attitudes and behaviour of a given group. Chapter II of Title I contains the *Institutional Principles*, which define *what the attitude should be based on*. Its fourteen articles include those referring to the defence of the Constitution, respect for public rights and freedoms, discipline, hierarchy and subordination, ideological and political neutrality, equality and non-discrimination, respect for Spain's cultural plurality, professional training and competence, cooperation, prestige, the spirit of merit, esprit de corps and comradeship, and respect for the history and traditions of the Corps.

Behavioural norms are those that are observed and manifested in daily life. They are learned and transmitted habits of behaviour, which constitute ways of acting in accordance with a received and consolidated culture. Title II of the Code is devoted to these norms. Chapter I of the Code contains the *General Rules of Behaviour*, which set out *how to behave*. Articles 24 to 32 cover availability and permanent dedication; serenity; prudence and firmness; effectiveness and efficiency; reserve with respect to the service; correctness in the use of the uniform; corporate sustainability; equality, diversity and conciliation; military salute and health care. Chapter II, in articles 33 to 50, contains the *Rules of Conduct during the provision of the service*, which prescribe *how to act in the service* in its multiple aspects of relations, treatment, behaviour in different scenarios and the performance of certain functions.

The articles of the Royal Decree include certain mandates for the application of the Code of Conduct, right from the selection processes for entry into the Corps, and in the training plans and activities of the units, also constituting a reference for the deontological initiatives promoted by the professional associations.

Furthermore, an additional provision incorporates the Royal Ordinances for the Armed Forces into the code of ethics of the Institution, in the terms already established by Royal Decree 1437/2010, of 5 November.

Last, the *Ethical Decalogue of the Guardia Civil* is included in an annex to the Code of Conduct. The ten precepts are a nod to the 35 articles of Chapter I of the Cartilla del Guardia Civil and to some of the most salient features of the Royal Ordinances. It is also a compendium of fundamental virtues for reaffirming institutional identity, capable of synthesising and conveying its formulation in the first person, thereby contributing to increasing personal commitment. These precepts are honour (worded identically to article 1 of the Cartilla), defence of Spain and the Constitution, dignity, respect for rights and liberties, integrity, vocation for service, a spirit of merit, loyalty and esprit de corps, discipline, and serenity and the use of force.

In short, the Guardia Civil has a current code of ethics based on values, in accordance with the new ethical trends and, furthermore, with a novel structure and a formulation of precepts in keeping with the military axiological tradition. The fundamental values and the precepts that condense in the Decalogue the Guardia Civil's *know how to be*, are headed by Honour, demonstrating that nothing has changed since the inception of the corps in terms of the worth of the values for the Institution.

5.2. BENEMÉRITA LINKED TO HONOUR : THE SUCCESS OF A BRAND

The Dictionary of the Spanish Language (DLE) defines the term *benemérito/a*, coming from the Latin term *bene meritus*, as "worthy of award". But what is really striking is that this word has a second meaning in its feminine gender, which is "Guardia Civil", and in this case is written with a capital letter: *Benemérita*. Few words in the dictionary are so expressly identified with a body or institution as the Guardia Civil and its nickname *Benemérita*, by which prestige and recognition of its work is conveyed⁴⁵. But where does the Guardia Civil's nickname "Benemérita" come from?

We have to go back to the War of Independence to see when the term *Benemérito de la Patria* first began to be used as a recognition or award. It was an honorary title whose first recipients were the inhabitants of Saragossa who defended the city during the second siege, and which was awarded to them by Royal Decree on 9 March 1809. The following year, it was also granted to the defenders of the city of Girona⁴⁶.

Once the war was over, the title continued to be granted with some discretion, and there were various attempts to systematise the criteria for awarding it. During the reign of Isabella II, royal orders were issued, at least in the military sphere, to define who could be awarded the title of *benemérito*. In this regard, the Royal Order of 18 February 1839 recognises the "*right to be declared a meritorious [benemérito] citizen of the homeland*", as a purely honorary title⁴⁷. In fact, although the use of a medal representing this title became widespread, it was never made official, which is why its use on the uniform was banned on several occasions until being discontinued entirely at the end of the 19th century.

The term "benemérita" was also used to highlight certain institutions during the 19th century as being worthy of award or recognition, which is in fact the meaning of the term, as already mentioned. To this effect, the National Militia is referred to as "benemérita" in various writings of the first third of the century, its use -as is still the case today- also extending to numerous institutions in Latin America and to specific personalities.

So when the Guardia Civil was founded in 1844, starting to operate notably and effectively throughout the country in January 1845 and greatly impacting public opinion with its never-before-seen efficiency, it is not surprising that it quickly received this prestigious appellation. In the 20 January 1845 edition of the Cadiz newspaper "*El Comercio*", the chronicler refers to a meritorious action by some *guardias civiles* men, describing it as "*an event that honours the Guardia Civil for many reasons, because it shows how much the pundonor [point of honour] and delicacy of the individuals*

⁴⁵ This second meaning of the term (*Benemérita* as Guardia Civil) was incorporated into the Diccionario de la Lengua Española in its 1992 edition, and was maintained in the 2001 and current 2014 editions.

⁴⁶ Martínez Llorente, F. (2013). "Cómo si del Rey de tratase: el ejercicio de Regalías Premiales por las Juntas Supremas, Regencia y cortes de Cádiz (1808-1814)", in Palacios Bañuelos, L. and Ruíz Rodríguez, I. (comp.), *Cádiz 1812: Origen del Constitucionalismo Español*, p 210-211.

⁴⁷ Prieto Barrio, A. (2018). "Otras Condecoraciones hasta 1930", in *Compendio Legislativo de Condecoraciones Españolas*, p. 80.

*representing the Corps borders on the meritorious*⁴⁸. There are other writings in the following years in which we can find this appellative used to refer to the Guardia Civil in laudatory terms, but its use certainly declined towards the end of the century at the same time as its official personal recognition fell into disuse. However, neither the Guardia Civil nor - as far as we know - any of the other contemporary institutions for which the appellative "*benemérita*" was used were ever granted official recognition of any kind.

The 20th century saw the reorganisation of the Civil Order of Charity by Royal Decree of 29 July 1910, which would now include the Cross of Epidemics. The significant number of humanitarian services provided by the Guardia Civil led to decorations of this order being awarded in their different categories to guardsmen for meritorious services from the 1890s onwards, as was also the case with the Carabinieri Corps. Their concession was so prolific that in May 1925 General Burguete, Director General of the Corps, ordered by circular the creation and annual updating of a "list of distinguished personnel", which would include all those who had joined the Order. A few years later, by Royal Decree of 4 October 1929, the Guardia Civil was awarded the Gran Cruz de la Orden Civil de Beneficencia [Grand Cross of the Civil Order of Charity], which shortly before had also been awarded to the Carabinieri Corps. It was awarded in the Grand Cross category distinguished by a black and white badge, which rewarded "*charitable acts with personal risk*", due to- according to the title of appointment- the "*innumerable selfless, humanitarian and heroic acts and services carried out on the occasion of fires, floods and rescue of shipwrecked persons*". This award was a public and institutional recognition of what the meritorious Guardia Civil Corps had been doing effectively and without fanfare since its foundation.

On the occasion of the awarding of the Grand Cross, the then Director General of the Guardia Civil, General Sanjurjo Sacanell, issued a general order congratulating his subordinates on this collective award, ending with the words: "*You are worthy of those who were capable of earning the Institution the title of Benemérita*". The order stated that the *guardias civiles* men then in the ranks, those who their Director General was addressing, were worthy heirs to the prestige gained by their predecessors, who had earned the title of *Benemérita* for the corps

The word "benemérita" is not mentioned either in the regulation governing the Civil Order of Charity or in the Scale of Distinguished Recipients of this award, the term bearing no relation to this decoration beyond the meritorious recognition it implies. However, the truth is that an interpretation - in my opinion, erroneous - of the words Sanjurjo addressed to his *Guardias civiles* revived the nickname "Benemérita", which was by then falling into disuse, making it heard once again in the last decades.

For the same reason mentioned above, the meaning of the appellation "benemérito" began to blend with that of "benefactor", such that the meritorious spirit came to be identified with a beneficent vocation, which was ever present in the daily work of the *guardias civiles* men. Underlining the use of this *new* meaning, the Code of Conduct itself

⁴⁸ Cited in: Núñez Calvo, J. (2021). *El predicamento de la Cartilla del Guardia Civil en las fuerzas y cuerpos de seguridad de los países hispanoamericanos*, p 36-37. Admission speech to the Real Academia Hispanoamericana de Ciencias, Artes y Letras. Cadiz.

includes in its article 21 the *meritorious spirit* as an institutional principle with this beneficent air.

That said, and however it came about, the Guardia Civil has managed to revitalise the nickname "*Benemérita*" as a hallmark of success, integrating it into popular lore which recognises the Institution as a prestigious body that is close to the people and dedicated to charitable work. And that is also what honour is: prestige towards others, a vocation to do good and a special sensitivity towards the vulnerable. It is a sign of identity that fits perfectly with a *benemérita* Guardia Civil.

5.3. HONOUR, VALUES AND INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

5.3.1. The structure of honour

We have explained how honour was understood in the founding stage of the Guardia Civil and, as a seal of identity that encompassed the ethical precepts of the Cartilla, how over time it was translated into the daily performance of its personnel, forging an undeniable prestige. We have also mentioned the desire to incorporate honour as a preferential value in the current Code of Conduct in a serious attempt to ensure that it does not remain a rhetorical resource or become devoid of content.

In the light of this, it is pertinent to ask ourselves what honour means in current society, and to what extent it is still considered a value to be upheld; and if so, then how to manifest it.

In a recent survey conducted among a considerable number of students studying for a degree in psychology as part of a pilot project undertaken at a Spanish public university commissioned by the Guardia Civil, participants were asked to rank the nine core values of the Code of Conduct from most to least important. As a criterion for establishing this ranking, they had to fill in two columns: the first reflecting the order of importance they considered the values to be for the general population, and the second the priority which, in their opinion, the values had for Guardia Civil personnel. The result placed values such as *responsibility* and a *sense of justice* at the top, which considered in the abstract makes logical sense. Much more striking was the ranking assigned to *dignity*, at 4th place for the general population down to 7th place for the *Guardias civiles*. There is no doubt that a *supra-value* such as dignity needs to be better explained. But most surprising of all was the position given to *honour*: 8th for the general population and 9th - or last - for corps personnel. This result demonstrated that there is still much work to do to explain what honour is for citizens and why it is so important in the Guardia Civil.

Soon afterwards, and as part of the same project, a survey was carried out among Guardia Civil personnel belonging to three different groups: a reserve unit, teachers and students at a training centre. The results showed explainable differences, and this time honour was at the top of the list. In any case, it is undoubtedly important to inform the corps personnel about what we understand honour to be today and, most importantly, what conduct is to be expected from a *guardias civiles* men when we tell him that honour must be his emblem, the seal that endorses all his actions.

Table 1

Survey conducted among psychology students on the relative importance they attach to the values of the Code of Conduct of the Guardia Civil.

	Población general	Guardia Civil
Más importante	Responsabilidad	Sentido de la justicia
	Sentido de la justicia	Responsabilidad
	Integridad	Imparcialidad y neutralidad
	Dignidad	Integridad
	Lealtad	Valor
	Imparcialidad y neutralidad	Lealtad
	Valor	Dignidad
	Honor	Espíritu de sacrificio
Menos importante	Espíritu de sacrificio	Honor

Note: Prepared by the authors based on the results of the survey.

Obviously, the *honour* we consider in our study - and to which the survey referred - is an ethical honour, an honour of integrity, which manifests itself in doing the right thing at all times. A magnificent - and up-to-date - description of honour is offered by the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy (DRAE), in its first meaning, as the "*moral quality that leads to the fulfilment of one's duties with respect to others and oneself*". In its second meaning, it offers us the reverse side of the coin of honour: the "*glory or good reputation that follows virtue, merit or heroic deeds, which transcends the families, people and actions of the person who earns it*"⁴⁹.

David Cerdá (2022), one of the modern-day philosophers who has delved most deeply into the concept of honour, provides an accurate and provocative vision of how to interpret the concept in our times. First of all, he distinguishes *ancestral honours* (tribal, meritorious, privileged and honourable), based on what others think of us, as opposed to *full honour*, wherein the person who professes to have this value considers it to be a fundamental aspect of his life, to the point that being a *person of honour* is something that characterises him as an individual⁵⁰. On the basis of this integral honour, and incorporating the best of the ancestors honours, *ethical honour* is configured as the most advanced version of honour in moral terms, to become a form of integrity. In short, ethical honour is fulfilment, service, sacredness of the given word, active defence of the weakest, courage to do the right thing⁵¹.

⁴⁹ The first meaning was incorporated into the DRAE in the 1884 edition and the second in the 1817 edition.

⁵⁰ Cerdá, D. (2022). *Ética para valientes: el honor en nuestros días*, p. 12-20.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 22.

We also know that moral behaviour is not possible if set apart from feelings. In fact, the structure of honour - of ethical honour, the only one that has any place today - is based on moral feelings. To this effect, honour is a feeling, but one directed towards the good. Because we know that while we cannot fully control our emotions, we can control the feelings that arise consciously about those emotions.

And here Cerdá describes the three moral feelings that are vital for measuring honour: shame, or discomfort in the face of the inferior; compassion, as special proximity to the equal; and reverence or admiration in the face of the superior.

Shame for one's own wrongdoing; for the wrongdoing of others if it is in our power to prevent it; and power to protect attacks on our dignity. And linked to honourable shame is the guilt which, in its rightful measure, is experienced as a result of actions or omissions that involve the transgression of the values that serve as a reference point when they are filtered by upright moral conscience⁵². Therefore, we can state outright that the *complete scoundrel* is the one who has no honour whatsoever. And that is why self-respect and self-esteem, which are essential for a life of integrity, are important here. There is, therefore, a complete symbiosis between ethical honour and the true dignity of the person which, together with integrity, constitute the *supra-values* that we already identified as characterising the foundational stage of the Guardia Civil.

Compassion is a feeling that goes far beyond mere empathy for others, beyond the attempt to put oneself in their place, because it required that one do something for them. *Schopenhauer* comes to regard compassion as the sole source of morally valuable actions⁵³. Linked to compassion, of course, is respect and once again placing people's dignity on a higher plane. This strong feeling of compassion (ethic of compassion), together with the ethic of care and embedded in the most ethical honour, acquires a special relevance in the military institution, which translates into the success and prestige achieved by our armed forces and the Guardia Civil when they deploy on humanitarian missions or face major epidemics, catastrophes or public disasters. Because even in the case of armed conflict, "*outrages to the weak only demean the strong who inflict them*"⁵⁴. Focused more on the identity of the Guardia Civil, we now have a better understanding as to why the benevolent spirit that was instilled in its first members - the "benemérito" spirit, in the new generally accepted meaning - is so integrated into the essence of the Institution, as part of the honour that shines brightly as the emblem of its members.

Reverence or admiration is the feeling which we a priori most easily identify with honour, elevating and inviting us to emulate those we consider an example to follow because of their highly honourable conduct, thereby leading us to be better. And then to a higher degree there is recognition and admiration for heroic actions so typical of the military institution; for those who, in a sublime display of honour, have fallen bravely in the line of duty. This feeling leads us to show deep pride in those who preceded us, in the history of the Institution, reinforcing the sense of belonging and the esprit de corps of which we have spoken. Therefore, without honour there would also be no place for bravery and heroism and, in general, for those who should serve as reference points for

⁵² Rocamora García-Valls, P. (2016). *Perspectiva neurocientífica de la conciencia*, p. 70. Opening speech of the 2016-2017 academic year. Royal Academy of Doctors of Spain.

⁵³ Schopenhauer, A. (2002). *The two fundamental problems of ethics*, p. 234.

⁵⁴ Villamartín, F., *op. cit.*, p. 55.

following in the right direction. So any attempt to equalise down to the point of mediocrity, to renounce admiration, to downplay what really moves us, to wipe out or relativise what makes us great, is a direct attack on honour and all that it represents.

Throughout this paper, we have highlighted the importance of values in forging a true *esprit de corps*, but always in the measure that they are lived and translated into behaviour, that they are manifested in daily conduct. And by the same token, honour cannot be seen as the most important value alone, nor as an accumulation of values, but rather as a *set of actions*⁵⁵. Because let us not forget, *we are what we do*.

This *materialisation of* honour into honourable actions is closer and more perceptible than it might seem because it is only when extreme situations arise are extreme sacrifices required. On a day-to-day basis, honour will be demonstrated by doing one's duty, even if the cost of doing so is high, even if no one is watching us or can monitor whether or not we have done it, and even if no one thanks us for it and we only experience the intimate satisfaction of duty done (what we call *pundonor*). By always acting in this way, outward honour, recognition and reputation from others will come of its own accord.

5.3.2. Values and institutional culture

We have seen how noble and good-oriented feelings facilitate honour. Moreover, with the channelling of each person's temperament, these feelings lead to the forging of an honourable character, which is established with the progressive acquisition of virtues. This will give us the courage and bravery to act with righteousness, with consistency in what we think is the right thing to do. With integrity. And honourable behaviour will thereby follow when the time comes to act.

We should also remember that the shared values of an organisation are one of its most important elements of cohesion. As *Alasdair MacIntyre* (1981) argues, morality, as a social practice based on the cultivation of character and the pursuit of the common good, is capable of mobilising people around a common project⁵⁶. Aligned with this approach, *MacIntyre* develops concepts such as communitarianism and corporatism, today with somewhat distorted meanings, but which we could translate as a sense of belonging or *esprit de corps*, in line with what we have been defending.

Going a step further, we can introduce the increasingly widespread concept of *culture* to explain, in brief, what makes organisations strong, reliable and attractive, whatever their structure or the purpose of their existence. And here, values are once again of growing strategic importance. The "*mission, vision, values*" triad brings together the three elements that shape strategy and culture in leading corporations.

Organisational culture can be defined as an organisation's way of being as an organisation, which in turn is what gives it the most value. *Edgar Henry Schein*, a Swiss-born American social psychologist and researcher, developed his well-known model of organisational culture from 1980 onwards to make culture more visible in organisations. In this regard, *Schein* (1990) stated that: "*The survival of an organisation is linked to its history, to the motivations of its founders, to the symbolisms that move within it*

⁵⁵ Cerdá, D., *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁵⁶ MacIntyre, A. (2013). *Behind the virtue*.

dynamically, and to the respect of its rules and regulations"⁵⁷. On analysing this sentence in detail, we discover how these four defining elements of organisational culture correspond perfectly with what the Guardia Civil has always been and continues to be and, therefore, with its *institutional culture*.

To understand the extent to which culture is conceived today as a cohesive element and a real support for organisations, Alex Rovira explains the case of the American company IBM when it was verging on bankruptcy in 1993. That year, *Louis Gerstner* was appointed CEO with the difficult task of pulling the company back from the brink. In a reasonable time he managed to clean up the profit and loss account and make important changes to the business model, but he realised that while important this was not sufficient. A major cultural change needed to take place in the company and its employees to make it truly viable. It was only when he succeeded in doing this that IBM was fully reborn, leading to Gerstner stepping down in 2002. Such was the importance Gerstner attached to company culture that he defined it simply and bluntly: "*Culture is what people do when no one is watching*. Does this statement ring a bell? Of course it does. It is nothing other than what we have been calling honour since our foundation as a body: it is to do our duty at every moment, even if no one is watching or monitoring us; even if no one congratulates us or thanks us for it.

Along the same lines, Alex Rovira defines culture as the translation of our values into behaviour, the way we put them into action, our integrated habits. Honour put into action. This culture, moreover, becomes so important that it can drive - or hinder - an organisation's strategy, especially in times of change. The Guardia Civil, which has undergone changes and has successfully adapted to the times since its very beginnings, knows a lot about this.

It is also important to highlight trust and commitment as key elements to ensure the cohesion of a human group, whether large or small, and the fulfilment of the objectives entrusted to it. They are therefore also essential to ensure an institutional culture.

Last, the importance of feelings must again be emphasised. The existence of a code of conduct, however demanding it may be, is not enough to ensure practical ethics in external behaviour in different situations. Because it is not possible to live and demand the fulfilment of values and principles by relying on reason alone. Feelings - manifestations of honour in its different forms - are decisive.

Like so many other aspects we have covered, the importance of feelings for ethical conduct is not new either. Commander Francisco Villamartín, to whom we have already referred, provides a statement that is as forceful as it is accurate, on how to treat people to stir their noblest feelings: treating subordinates not as they are, but as they ought to be, by leading their courage, igniting their enthusiasm, fostering esprit de corps you manage to have an immense moral power over them, and you influence their hearts in such a way when the time comes that you make a hero out of each and every one of them⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ Schein, E. (1990). Organisational culture. *American Psychologist*, 45(2).

⁵⁸ Villamartín, F., *op. cit.*, p. 52.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The *Cartilla del Guardia Civil* complemented the Institute's own regulations with a specific code of ethics that was complementary to the military Ordinances, but was entirely authentic. Furthermore, recognising and demanding values such as honour and dignity for military personnel such as the *guardias civiles* men - excepting officers - was highly revolutionary for the time.

With the observance by its members of these regulations and of the provisions that insistently reinforced them, the Guardia Civil managed to forge an esprit de corps based on the values it professed, what today we might call institutional culture, soon making the institution cohesive and more effective and trustworthy in the eyes of the general public.

There is no doubt of the importance of the entire cast of values that the Guardia Civil has been able to live and transmit to the new generations of *guardias civiles* men up to the present day, at times under the protection of favourable ethical currents and at others under adverse conditions, through regime changes and other circumstances that has put its true identity at risk.

With the Code of Conduct adopted in 2022, the Guardia Civil has undertaken a review of its ethical framework, with the aim of keeping its prestige intact and raising its ethical standards in certain aspects. The corps is aware that the professional excellence of its members is inseparable from unreserved moral standards, which is why this aspect takes on strategic dimensions.

The new Code of Ethics of the Institution has been shaped on the basis of values, principles and norms as clearly representative precepts headed by honour, in accordance with the traditional regulation of the old *Cartilla*.

It seems that some transcendental values, such as - precisely - honour, are not clearly perceived by society. However, other perceptions are well established, such as the Guardia Civil's nickname "*benemérita*", implying the very relevant presence of an ethical honour among its members. Effort therefore needs to be made to explain what these values are and how they manifest themselves in everyday behaviour, and in the ethical challenges and dilemmas the agents face. These tenets include what honour is, how it manifests itself, what the real scope of integrity in the way we act is, how far loyalty should go, the spirit of sacrifice, comradeship, and so on and so on, with each precept enshrined in the Code of Conduct.

Whatever the case, we have seen that honour materialises more perceptibly and closer to our everyday lives than it might seem. On a day-to-day basis, it is demonstrated by doing one's duties, even if no one is watching us or can monitor our performance; and even if no one acknowledges it and we only experience the personal satisfaction of having done the right thing.

The most important corporations in terms of their size and trajectory have long since been linking their values to their institutional strategy, through what they call their *culture*. In the Guardia Civil, this concept has much to do with the way *of being* of its components, of a body with eminently police functions and of a military nature. And, above all, because of the strong ethical component that has always been present in the conduct of its staff

when both on and off duty. As an example, and as explained in this paper, we were able to see the similarity -if not the identical nature- of concepts associated with the culture of an organisation, in its ethical aspect, and the concept of honour that has always been inculcated in the Guardia Civil.

Therefore, we can also conclude that honour, together with the other values traditionally embodied in the Guardia Civil, are not only useful as a reference for defining what today's *guardias civiles* men should be like, but also clearly constitute the ethical veneer of its institutional culture at the highest level compared to other organisations.

The new ethical framework will be completed with the regulatory development of the Royal Decree approving the Code of Conduct for its effective application, and will be materialised in an institutional Integrity System, in line with the one published for the General State Administration, a Professional Ethics Action Plan, protocols of good practices. All food for thought for future works on the matter.

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