



## Atimia: Interpretation of Honor and Disgrace and Political Ethics in Ancient Greece

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**Abstract:** *Atimia is a high-frequency vocabulary in ancient Greek works. The meanings of atimia in different works in every period are varied. It was originally limited to the meaning of disgrace or shame in the category of moral culture, and later extended to the partial or total loss of civil rights in the field of political ethics. Through the research of different works before the Hellenistic period, it can be seen that the process of the word's transformation from moral culture to political ethics is not a linear development, and a situation where multiple meanings of a word appear in parallel in a certain period. This phenomenon is a portrayal of the relationship between social culture and civil rights in Greek at the time, and it also reflects the process of Greek social evolution.*

**Keywords:** *Atimia, Ancient Greece, Interpretation of Honor and Disgrace, Political Ethics, Democratic Reform*

Ancient Greece is one of the sources and cornerstones of modern Western civilization. The extremely important aspect of political system in Greek civilization provides a blueprint for the development of the political system of later generations. The prominent character of democratic politics in the Greek world is that citizens participate in city-state activities. The citizens mentioned here are exclusive and privileged. Generally speaking, only adult male citizens have the rights and duties conferred upon the city-state; women, foreigners, children and slaves, as well as those who violate the city-state laws, are excluded. But this does not mean that adult male citizens can fritter away their rights. “Yet though there certainly existed significant differences among these *poleis*, they were all united by certain values that enabled them to share a common Greek identity.”<sup>1</sup> This kind

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<sup>1</sup> Edward M. Harris, *Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens Democracy and the Rule of Law in Classical Athens: Essays on Law, Society, and Politic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 4.





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of value identity is similar to *nomos* in ancient Greece what is generally called collective behavior standard, which includes both moral discipline in the ethical category and legal punishment of political field. The two elements complement each other in city-state life; and *atimia* in the text is a typical example to explain the relationship.

*Atimia* is a compound word, the first letter “a” is one prefix, which is equivalent to English affix “un”, and “timia” means respected and valuable, so *atimia* originally meant shame and disgrace, later the word extended to deprivation of privileges.<sup>2</sup> The various meanings of the word are involved in many tragedies, historical books and speeches in ancient Greece. These are enough to show that *atimia* has a certain degree of discourse power in the construction of ancient Greek thought system. Generally, traditional views believe that *atimia* in the archaic period is a punishment in the legal sense, and those who are implement such punishment are regarded as deprived of legal rights. In the classical period, this meaning turned into a partial loss of citizenship privileges. Some scholars put forward different opinions based on the original text.<sup>3</sup>

The effective use of extant archaeological materials and inscriptions by others is also an important method for researching the connotation of *atimia*.<sup>4</sup> What is more, someone clarifies the complex interpretation of *atimia* from both social group and textual interpretation.<sup>5</sup> To sum up, many scholars have based on the interpretation of different classical texts and archeological materials, giving the word diversified meanings. However, scholars rarely discuss the ethical aspects of this term. We know that a behavioral norm or punishment mechanism is inseparable from its specific

<sup>2</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott and Henry Stuart Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon, with a Revised Supplement*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Brook Manville believes that the evolution of the term is not linear. He starts with the details of Solon's legislation and concludes that *epitimia* in the law evolves from the term *atimia*, by sorting out speeches and inscriptions in the classical period, discussing the deprivation of rights in the archaic period and its subsequent complex influence from the legal point of view. See Brook Manville, “Solon's Law of Stasis and Atimia in Archaic Athens”, *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, vol. 110 (1980), pp. 213-221. Moreover, Hermann Wankel focuses on the details of the Demosthenes' text to discuss some of the interpretation of *atimia*. See Hermann Wankel, “Demosthenes 51,12 und die partielle Atimie”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 85 (1991), pp. 37-39. Furthermore, Dominique Lenfant based on Pseudo-Xenophon's text to illuminate illegal cases of *atimia*. See Dominique Lenfant, “LE PSEUDO-XÉNOPHON ET LES DÉLITS ENTRAÎNANT L'ATIMIE DANS L'ATHÈNES DE SON TEMPS POUR UN RETOUR AU TEXTE DES MANUSCRITS (CONSTITUTION DES ATHÉNIENS III, 13)”, *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol. 127, no. 2 (Juillet-Décembre 2014), pp. 255-270.

<sup>4</sup> Wout make up for the interpretation of *atimia* from the view of material objects by sorting out the *ostrakon* and the curse tablet in the Athens *agora*. See P. Evelyn van't Wout, “Neglected Evidence for the Nature of *atimia* Agora P 17615 and DTA 107”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 176 (2011), pp. 126-134. In addition, Rainer collates the *atimia* in ancient Greek inscriptions to analyze meaning and background on the term. See J. M. Rainer, “Über die Atimie in den griechischen Inschriften”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd.64 (1986), pp. 163-172.

<sup>5</sup> Gerald researches the exiles group about the *Ezra* and post-biblical texts, interpreting meaning of *atimia* from the perspective of religion. See Gerald J. Blidstein, “Atimia: A Greek Parallel to Ezra X 8 and to Post-Biblical Exclusion from the Community”, *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. 24(July 1974), pp. 357-360.





historical background and theoretical roots. My article will focus on the interpretation of honor and disgrace as well as the derived political ethics about the evolution of *atimia* in the extant original Greek texts.

## I. Interpretation of Honor and Disgrace: The Ethnic Psychology of Ancient Greeks

Throughout the cultural core of ancient Greece, there are countless explanations of honor and disgrace. This concept of honor and shame in Greek culture affects different levels of society. This interpretation of honor and disgrace can be traced back to Homer's epic. As we all know, the values and world outlook reflected in Homer's epic have a profound and direct impact on later generations of Greeks. The concepts of honor and disgrace mentioned in the epic is a strong sense of seeing the world. In the *Iliad*, the swift-footed Achilles said to Odysseus, "I think Agamemnon who is son of Atyrius cannot persuade me, nor yet the other Danaaos. I keep fighting with the enemy outside, but no one appreciates me and grants me honor. Those who stay in the homeland can enjoy a victory. This means that the coward and the brave will share one honor."<sup>6</sup> It can be inferred that at Homer's times, fighting bravely for one's own country is an honor. However, those who live in their homeland or are afraid of fighting is a manifestation of weakness and deemed to be a shame. This reflects the concept of honor and disgrace of the early Greeks from the perspective of war, and the interpretation in the text can be regarded as the beginning of concept of honor and disgrace in the ancient Greek.

Dodds explains briefly the concept of honor and disgrace at Homer's time, and its core is to discuss *tīmē*. "The strongest moral force which Homeric man knows is not the fear of god, but respect for public opinion, *aidos*".<sup>7</sup> The above term is originally a sense of humiliation, and it extend to respect for the other, which indicates that people at Homer's time are supervised by a certain general will. Although the epic is full of gods' help or obstruction, but this did not affect the dominance of group trends in the war. Even if the military leaders in the war are given great power, they are also restricted by the voice of the soldiers. Leaders such as Agamemnon have the autonomy in action, but they consciously obey the moral law. Relying on the background of the military democracy at that time, it develops an early and simple concept of honor and disgrace, which greatly esteems the group will and shames on acting stubbornly without permission.

Other interpretations of honor and disgrace on the level of war can be found in Herodotus's *Histories*, such as Chapter 7, the Persian King Xerxes said to his general

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<sup>6</sup> Homer, *The Iliad*, IX.315-320.

<sup>7</sup> Eric R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p. 18.





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Artabanus, “For your craven performance, I lay upon you such shame that you are not allowed to join the army against Hellas, and you stay here with the women.”<sup>8</sup> The Spartan generals led the Greek allies to block the Persian army at the Battle of Thermopylae, and Aristodemus who is a Spartan soldier survived. “When he returned to Lacedaemon, he was dishonored and disgraced.”<sup>9</sup> The above example is not difficult to understand. As a general, it is a shame to flee timidly, while the Spartan soldier Aristodemus returned to his homeland from the battle that use the few to defeat the many, he incurred the humiliation of some people. The Persian army invaded at that time, and the Spartan warriors fought hard to kill the enemy, but as being outnumbered, the allied forces almost all died. Even if Aristodemus survived and delivered the battle report to everyone in time, Herodotus also praised the soldier as the bravest, he was regarded as a deserter who feared the battle and caused everyone to spurn him in the end.

Speeches of the classical period also mentioned such event. Lycurgus of Athens wrote the *Against Leocrates*, in which he praised Spartan poet Tyrtaeus’ elegy was excessively inflammatory, “the noble died in charging, and fighting for the motherland has turned into his obsession... He concealed his noble appearance and became a victim of fear and disgrace.”<sup>10</sup> This kind of war interpretation shows the prevailing view of honor and disgrace that the soldiers on the expedition should face death unflinchingly. It also reflects that dedication to motherland is a kind of glory, and it is a type of shame to escape from cowardice. This dual relationship is similar to coupling of the rights and obligations of the citizens.

The ancestor trace and family relationship in early Greece are reflect in different interpretations of honor and disgrace. Glaucus of the Greek allied forces and Diomedes in the enemy have a long dialogue in the *Iliad*, narrating the chronicle of the ancestors. When Diomedes listened to Glaucus’ lineage, “He inserted his spear and spear into the fertile land, and said in a gentle tone to the lord of the shepherds, ‘You were indeed a guest of my father in the early period’, and then Diomedes began to talk about the descent, and declared that we have been friends since our fathers. Eventually, they jumped off the chariots and pledged their friendship.”<sup>11</sup> We can conclude that even if the two armies are confronting each other on the battlefield, mentioning that their ancestors will beat swords into plowshares. This kind of descent interpretation of honor and disgrace can be also seen in the later Greek world, especially in the classical period. The upper class through intermarriage to

<sup>8</sup> Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, VII.11.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., VII.231.

<sup>10</sup> Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates*, 107.

<sup>11</sup> Homer, *The Iliad*, VI.212-233.





control city-state activities, thus the noble family reflects the concept of honor and disgrace and the rights of polis have different approaches but equally satisfactory results.

The implementation of interpretation of honor and disgrace in family relations is first reflected in the *Odyssey*. Zeus, the cloud-gatherer spoke to the god of earthshaking Poseidon, “Ah, what a thing you have said. The gods have never despised you. It is a hard thing to assail you who is the highly respected god.”<sup>12</sup> This kind of prestigious members not only apply to the supreme status in the family, but they have great control of family affairs. Herodotus mentioned Cassandane who is Cyrus’ wife, “Although I gave birth children of which such a character, Cyrus still dishonors me, and makes a pet of the new Egyptian woman.”<sup>13</sup> The above shows that the monopoly of patriarchy is prevalent in early Greece and foreign countries. This similar interpretation of honor and disgrace is also reflected in the classical period. In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, when the ruler of Athens accused Socrates of various crimes, which said that “Socrates taught his disciples to dishonor not only their fathers, but their other relatives as well”.<sup>14</sup> It can be seen that the juniors, women, and children attached to the family’s male is an honor at that time, and it would be a shame to disobey or despise the patriarch.

This interpretation of honor and disgrace in early Greek is in line with the psychological comfort of ethnic group. The both basic emotions of glory and humiliation endow new marked meanings under the different historical background, and thus manifested in various kinds of levels of society, such as wars, ancestors, and families. With the development of the democratic reforms in Athens in the classical period, the awareness of citizens’ demand for rights has been strengthened. *Atimia* extends to the field of political ethics at this time, and begins to express some behaviors that are deprived of citizenship, such as treason and bribery, cowardice in face of enemy, perjury in a lawcourt, and against some citizenship laws<sup>15</sup>. But this does not mean that the interpretation of honor and disgrace of the term has been completely replaced. The concept of honor and disgrace in early Greece inherits and develops in the classical period, and part of it is turned into a sharp weapon for the city-state to discipline and punish citizens. *Atimia*’s interpretation of honor and disgrace and the role of political ethics it plays in this period are not contradictory and complement each other.

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<sup>12</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, XIII.140-142.

<sup>13</sup> Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, III.3.

<sup>14</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 49.

<sup>15</sup> N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970, p. 143.





## II. Political Ethics: The Rights' Persuasion of City-State Citizens

In the archaic period, the Great Colonial Movement greatly broadened the Greeks' vision about overseas, and gradually formed their own ethnic identity. Under the circumstances, the interpretation of honor and disgrace in early Greece began to blend into life of city-state citizens. Some city-states accordingly adjusted to the demand of politics and economic development. The typical representative of this kind is the Solon's Reforms, the core of which whose was to straighten out the relationship between the city-state, citizens and the laws. A series of democratic reforms made the citizens of the middle and lower classes have the opportunity to participate in or decide on city-state affairs, thus they cherish the rights that are given. Being deprived of their rights to the citizens themselves for some reason can be regarded as a shame. This concept of honor and disgrace in the early Greek evolved into a kind of awareness of rights in a broad sense. *Atimia* is from a single interpretation of honor and disgrace to the category of political ethics, and the gains and losses of rights are the sign of this ethics.

This interpretation of rights reflects on religious worship of the ancient Greeks, which embodies in this-worldly concern, and presents in the form of festivals and competitions. The ancient Greeks could carry out different recreational and sports activities on festivals, such as chariot races and poetry competitions, and sacrifice is the core of these activities. Cattle, sheep and pigs are sacrificed to the gods in the solemn ceremony. After the ceremony, the roasted meat is distributed to the citizens. This relaxed and pleasant atmosphere implies the complicated relationship between rights and city-state. In Euripides' *Heracleidae*, where talked about the scene of the battle between the herald and the Iolaus who is nephew of Hercules. Iolaus shouted, "Ah, native dwellers of Athens, please help us, we are the supplicants of the Zeus of marketstead, which have been evil-entreated and our holy wreaths have been defiled. This is a disgrace to the city and to the gods."<sup>16</sup> It can be seen from this text that Euripides quotes Iolaus' words to express the right to religious worship. If this right is trampled, the individual shame rises to disgrace of city-state. The relationship between civil rights and the nature of city-state is also a reflection of personal judgment of honor and disgrace and the interpretation of city-state rights.

Furthermore, ancient Greeks pay more attention to the real life, and the theme of life that how to live decently. Xenophon mentions the profound meaning of the philosophy of life in the *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians*. "I think it is not surprising that a coward bears such a load of shameful, and death looks like a more

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<sup>16</sup> Euripides, *Children of Hercules*, 69-72.







dishonored and ignominious.”<sup>17</sup> This view shows that it is a right for a person to choose to live, and this is a supreme honor that he can lay down his life to protect the family or to defend the city-state. However, aimless death is a kind of shame. It is inferred that at the level of ancient Greek philosophy, personal honor and disgrace and interpretation of rights can be organically combined.

Thucydides enriches the right connotation of *atimia* in his *History of The Peloponnesian War*. In the fifth book of the work, the war between the Delian League headed by Athens and the Peloponnesian League headed by Sparta lasted ten years, due to both sides suffered heavy losses, they temporarily ceased the war and signed the Peace Treaty of Nicias. After returning to their homeland, the punishment was meted to the captives and surrenders of Spartan army. “If these people continue to enjoy franchise, and it may cause a turmoil, thus they need to be disfranchised, even though some of them still in public office. With such a disfranchisement that they neither hold office, nor have the legal right to trading.”<sup>18</sup> *Atimia* mentioned by Thucydides closely connects with the citizenship of the city-state. The term gradually generalized to the interpretation of rights in the classical period, which began to discuss from the perspective of political ethics. This complicated interpretation of rights is mostly manifested in numerous speeches.

After the establishment of Alexander’s Empire, Alexandria officially integrated and revised a large number of ancient texts before Hellenization. This title of Ten Attic Orators was established during this period. Five of these ten major orators mentioned the right connotations of *atimia*. It can be seen that the word is fully expressed in the field of political ethics and legal interpretation in the speeches.

The first more standardized definition of *atimia* was found in Andocides’ *On the Mysteries*. “This is a form of disfranchisement, and the delinquents lost all personal rights but retained his property. This class included all those convicted of theft or accepting bribes, which contended that they and their descendants should lose their personal rights. Similarly, people who abandoned on the battlefield and coward who were found guilty of evasion of military service, and the trierarchs who withheld a fleet action in the warfare, those who discarded their shields and who were convicted of perjury three times, and who wrongly endorse a summon, or those who convicted of abusing their parents. These people also deprived of their personal rights while retaining their property.”<sup>19</sup> These above-mentioned facts are relevant to people who deprived of citizenship rights. Not only lose their personal rights, they also bring disaster to offsprings. It is worth noting that although these people have lost the

<sup>17</sup> Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians*, IX.6.

<sup>18</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, V.XXXIV.2.

<sup>19</sup> Andocides, *On the Mysteries*, 74.





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benefits of citizenship, their personal property have not been confiscated, and they can still keep it. This form is similar to the measure of the exile who is the unwelcome in the classical period.

As one of the most famous orators in the classical period, Isocrates has two main meanings about interpretation of *atimia*. In the *Concerning the Team of Horses*, Isocrates defended Alcibiades the Younger who is son of the Athenian statesman Alcibiades, “although same penalties are all prescribed by our laws, different situations occur for different people. On the contrary, the rich only need to pay a fine. In my case, people who are living in a difficult life in danger of disfranchisement. In my opinion, this is an unfortunate worse than exile. For it is a far more miserable fate to live among one’s citizens of disfranchisement than to live a strange land among foreigners.”<sup>20</sup> Although the above defense is strongly subjective, it reflects the inequality of civil rights in practice. The rich just need to pay a fine and exempt from punishment, while the poor have to be deprived of their citizenship and left to the court. To some extent, there is alienation between implementation level and reality on the *atimia*.

Compared with personal affairs, Isocrates pays more attention to the fate of city-state and Greek world. In the *Panegyricus*, in order to emphasize the great role played by the Athenians in the Persian War, he reproved the Spartans’ cowardice at the beginning of the war. “They (the Athenians) are not fight alone indeed, for the Peloponnesians put to shame by our bravery, and thinking that if the Athenians should suffer great losses, the Peloponnesians could not be free of destruction, and that if the Athenians should succeed, the cities of Spartan would be involved in disgrace, and the circumstances forced them to share the dangers.”<sup>21</sup> This seemingly contradictory argument is in line with his neutral idea of international affairs, which strongly opposes city-states seek to hegemony, and advocates unity of city-states to resist foreign enemies. This dual interpretation of that personal honor and disgrace and gains and losses of right rises to the group level. Only the whole Greek world is free from foreign invasion, and every Greek may suffer less humiliation and disgrace to ensure the operation of individual rights.

Isaeus, who was active in the fourth century BC, and he was a disciple of Isocrates. Most of his speeches involve marriage inheritance and civil rights. His *On the Estate of Aristarchus* mentions the transfer of inheritance about *atimia*. “When other people have suffered monetary losses indeed, and they foster their children in other families in order that they may not shoulder their parents’ loss of citizenship.”<sup>22</sup> This is the first

<sup>20</sup> Isocrates, *Concerning the Team of Horses*, 46-47.

<sup>21</sup> Isocrates, *Panegyricus*, 97.

<sup>22</sup> Isaeus, *On the estate of Aristarchus*, 17.







time that it has expressed the subtle relationship between inheritance of children and civil rights, and develops the interpretation of rights from an economic level. In the case of depriving the parents' citizenship, transfer of custody rights can minimize the loss of children.

Demosthenes studied rhetoric from Isaeus in his early years. Theoretically he was influenced by his teacher, and his main views should be similar to Isocrates, but in fact he was a fanatical Athenists, who were famous for advocating resistance to Philip II of Macedonia king in the Greek world. In addition to some suggestions concerning the city-state, there are also a number of private litigation cases involving interpretation of rights about *atimia*.

In the *On the Crown*, the Macedonia King Philip II talked about *atimia* in his reply to the Athenians. "After hearing statement of ambassadors, I agree to your request and prepare for conclude an armistice. If you will dismiss your evil conspirators, it is best to give them appropriate punishment and disgrace."<sup>23</sup> The removal of public employment not only brings physical and mental humiliation, but means partial loss of civil rights, which can be deemed as the combination of individual honor and disgrace with political rights. Faced with the constant provocations of Philip II, he delivered a morale-boosting speech. "Those who regard as attach to their parents, which only wait for his natural and destined end, and the hero of motherland would rather die than be enslaved by others, it would be considered as the outrages and indignities, which a country in subjection is compelled to endure as more terrifying than death."<sup>24</sup> This is similar to Isocrates's claim of resisting foreign enemies, which reflects that the rise and fall of city-state are closely related to the life of citizens, and the expression of personal honor and disgrace and interpretation of rights that belong to trends and decisions of the group.

Interpretation of rights is related to civil inheritance and property division, which reflects in some speeches by Demosthenes. In the *Against Timocrates*, some of the punitive measures in the law of the classical period were involved. "Someone who will be inherit disfranchisement, if anything happens to his father, and he does not deem to pay his father's debt ... According to these laws, he means the disfranchisement because he cannot afford a small amount of money."<sup>25</sup> The above shows that a citizen is defaulting on debts for some reason result in deprivation of citizenship, and affects the inheritance right of children. The citizens who are granted citizenship cherish this right. In the *Against Aphobus*, "not those who rob so roughly others goods, but those who have been deprived of my inheritance for a long time

<sup>23</sup> Demosthenes: *De Corona*, 166.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>25</sup> Demosthenes, *Against Timocrates*, 201.



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and treated me brutally, which in danger of disfranchisement.”<sup>26</sup> It can be seen that the persuasion of citizenship has a far-reaching impact on citizen behavior. Only if citizens do not offend *atimia*’s punishment mechanism, the rights granted by the city-state can survive.

Demosthenes’ personal speeches are blazing and emotional. His *On the False Embassy* mainly meant to prosecute his rival Aeschines. He condemned Aeschines as a member of the Macedonian ambassador for misleading the Athenian diplomacy, and Demosthenes mocked the latter, “if some people’s behaviour properly and others are badly, but it seems the well-conducted must obey a discourtesy provoked by those who are deceitful people”,<sup>27</sup> “Now I explain that our city is falling into shame owing to Aeschines’ deception and hypocrisy.”<sup>28</sup> In Demosthenes’ view, a morally flawed person such as Aeschines do not deserve citizenship, which he puts the whole city-state to shame. The shame refers to here that has a double meaning, and the sacred citizenship cannot be violated and defiled.

Most of the above-mentioned interpretations of honor and disgrace and suitable exhortation about *atimia* come from tragedies, historical works and speeches. In addition, there are also detailed narratives in some philosophical works, such as Plato and Aristotle’s assumptions about polity and the establishment of city-state. However, in view of the research on citizens and polis in the works of the two philosophers by scholars have countless monographs and papers, this article will not repeat them.

### Conclusion

Throughout the development of *atimia* that from the initial disgrace and shame to expand to the loss of civil rights in the classical period. The interpretation of honor and disgrace and the right persuasion about this word are not inconsistent, thus peeping into the long and tortuous of political evolution in the ancient Greece.

The actual power of city-state in the early Greek was in the hands of the upper-class nobles. Ordinary citizens could hardly govern the affairs of the city-state, and were only forced to perform their civic duties. With the development of the colonial movement, many citizens gained a lot of wealth through overseas trade, and correspondingly proposed to improve their political status. In addition, the nobility went against people’s shared aspiration at this time, and therefore people’s call for reform in all aspects was becoming stronger. Democratic reform of Athens took effective measures, which the whole body of citizens was to play a decisive and

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<sup>26</sup> Demosthenes, *Against Aphobus*, 68.

<sup>27</sup> Demosthenes, *De Corona*, 32-33.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.



permanent part in the conduct of public affairs.<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that the citizenship of Athens is rooted in the unique city-state culture, which is strongly exclusive and special. After the Solon's Reforms, all the citizens of Athens were freemen, but these who were not necessarily all Athens citizens. The metics admired the prosperity of Athens and came here to run business. They could participate in festivals or religious ceremonies, but they had no right to involve in political activities, and they were not simply native Athenians.

This political interpretation of civil rights includes the concept of honor and disgrace, reflecting the close connection between rights and obligations. The speeches in the classical period truly reflect the current social conditions, and many of them discuss the civil rights. During this period, *atimia* initially creates new meaning and regulates actual intention, which emphasizes the rights and obligations of citizens always accompanied. For individuals, the essence of city-state is a high degree of unity of rights and obligations. They are people who own the land and have the right to participate in the religious and political activities. When city-state encounters a threat from the foreign enemies, it has the right to defend the homeland, but the above-mentioned right is also part of the fulfillment of civil obligations. If one's certain obligations are not fulfilled, or violated the city-state laws, his citizenship will be partially or completely deprived. The kind of power persuasion closely related to city-states gradually fade with the chaos of international hegemony in the late classical period. After the Kingdom of Macedonia controlled the Greek world, the city-state political civilization was subordinate to the imperial civilization. *Atimia* became insignificant in the interpretation of rights and returned to its original meaning again.

In sum, many changes about the meaning of *atimia* took place, and it constantly adapted to the social development. From the concept of honor and disgrace that the Greeks in the early period viewed the world to the complete or partial loss of civil rights in the classical period, and the mere venting of emotions evolved into the interpretation of rights at the political and ethical level. The scope of the word's meaning is shrinking on the surface, but it is more profound in nature. Since then both interpretations about *atimia* complement each other in language use, which reflects the strong tolerance and adaptability of ancient Greek world, and the flexible meaning of the word just confirms the connotation of this civilization.

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<sup>29</sup> J. B. Bury and Russell Meiggs, *A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great*, New York: Palgrave Press, 1975, p.136.

