The term “osteobiography” refers to an individualized approach that emphasizes the identity and life histories of ancient persons. For a field that typically takes population level approaches and gained its earliest positions by focusing on biology and health, osteobiographies enrich bioarchaeology by providing a more intimate view of individual past lives in social contexts.

The ancient Greek world is frequently studied through historical documents that shine a light on individuals, especially the elite. Osteobiographies are eminently compatible with these accounts, yet are underexplored. This study explores the lived experiences of three individuals buried in the mass graves from the Battles of Himera. By using isotopic analysis, we are able to look beyond the elite generals who have been well recorded in history, and focus on typically takes population level approaches and gained its earliest positions by emphasizing the identity and life histories of ancient persons. For a field that “Immortal, though he lies under the ground”: Osteobiographies of three individuals from the first Battle of Himera (480 BCE)

### Greek Warfare in Sicily

The city of Himera (Fig. 1) was founded in 482 BCE by culturally Greek settlers and commanded the sea routes along the northern coast of Sicily and a major land route across the island1. Located between the Phoenician and Greek sides of the island, Himera became an important connection between these different political and cultural groups that would lead to economic prosperity at times, and violent encounters at others. Numerous research on Greek warfare has focused on mainland Greece, using the battle tactics and practices well documented by historians as models for the rest of the Greek world. This research will bring new focus on warfare in a Greek colonial context. The political and social structures differed dramatically from mainland Greece during the 5th century BCE, most notably due to the presence of tyrants in charge of most Greek city-states on Sicily, rather than the democratic systems in mainland Greece.

### The Battles of Himera

The Battles of Himera were two violent conflicts between Greeks and Carthaginians in Sicily: 480 BCE, victorious alliance of Greeks from all over Sicily defeat Carthaginians (Diod. 11.20-22). 409 BCE: Himera is left unaided and is destroyed by Carthaginians (Dios. 13.64).

Mass graves likely from the battles: “Fossa Comune” (FC) 1-7 from 480 BCE. (Fig. 2) - have been well documented with historical, archaeological2, and osteological3 approaches with emphasis on population perspectives4-7,8-10.

Data is presented for all three individuals alongside the rest of the soldiers from 480 BCE and 409 BCE (Fig. 3-4). Second molars were sampled for $^{87}$Sr/$^{86}$Sr, $^{13}$C and $^{15}$O and Pb isotopes.

### Conclusions

- Greek soldiers in later periods were given centrally controlled rations, but during this time period soldiers would have been responsible for provisioning their own meals, such as transporting them from home and then acquiring them through local community resources11. The dietary compositions here show that while one individual (W461) had a diet consistent with local Sicilian Greek values, W396 and W403 likely spent time away from Sicily because of the greater C4 consumption.
- One of the main exports of Sicily was wheat, a C3 plant, so evidence of wheat consumption is less common in local communities12.
- W403 and W396 have high $^{13}$C values indicating a similar diet to that of other mass graves from 480 BCE. W461 has a different diet from the remainder of the soldiers that may have been due to his higher Sr isotopic signature representing the diet of his homeland. The evidence of isotopic differences among the soldiers suggests a cultural and geographic background.