

Born 1993, Monza (Italy), Italian-British nationality
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Thea Sommerschild

1 Education

- 2021 – 2016 : **DPhil in Ancient History, University of Oxford – degree completed**
Supervisors: Professor Jonathan Prag, Professor Josephine Crawley Quinn.
“*Breaking Boundaries: a study of socio-cultural identities in Archaic and Classical western Sicily*”.
- 2016 – 2015 : **MSt in Greek History, University of Oxford – Distinction**
Supervisor: Professor Robert Parker.
- 2016 – 2012 : **MA in Humanities, School of Advanced Study of Pavia IUSS – First Class Honours (top 1% of cohort)**
Supervisor: Professor Livia Capponi.
- 2015 – 2012 : **BA in Classics, University of Pavia, Ghislieri College – 110/110 cum laude (top of cohort)**
Supervisors: Professor Cesare Zizza, Professor Livia Capponi.

2 Academic Positions

- 2021 – 2023 : **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia**
Project: *PythiaPlus: Machine Learning for the Study of Ancient Epigraphic Cultures*, November 2021–2023.
- 2021 – 2022 : **Fellow in Hellenic Studies, Harvard University**
Center for Hellenic Studies (CHS), July 2021–2022.
- 2021 : **A. G. Woodhead Fellow, Ohio State University**
Center for Epigraphical and Palaeographical Studies (*)
- 2020 : **Visiting Fellow on the Study of Ancient Writing Systems, University of Cambridge**
Contexts of and Relations between Early Writing Systems (CREWS) (*)
- 2020 : **CACHE Post-Doctoral Visiting Research Fellow, Macquarie University**
Centre for Ancient Cultural Heritage and Environment (CACHE) (*)
- 2020 : **Raleigh Radford Rome Awardee, The British School at Rome**
Project: *Sibylla – Machine Learning for the restoration of Latin epigraphic texts*, January–March 2020.
(*) awarded, incomplete owing to COVID-19

3 Research Projects and Collaborations

- 2021 : **Research collaborator: *I.Sicily – A digital corpus of Sicilian inscriptions.***
University of Oxford-ERC. Director and principal researcher: Prof. Jonathan Prag.
- 2020 : **Project lead: *Sibylla – Machine Learning for the restoration of Latin epigraphic texts.***
Research funded by the British School at Rome.
- 2019 : **Project co-lead: *Pythia – Restoring ancient text using Deep Learning: a case study on Greek epigraphy.***
University of Oxford – DeepMind collaboration. Co-authors: Dr Yannis Assael; Prof. Jonathan Prag.
- 2018 – 2017 : **Project lead: *ISicDef – A digital corpus of Sicilian curse tablets.***
Independent research conducted at the University of Oxford, published in Sommerschild 2019.
- 2016 : **Volunteer collaborator: *Collection Digitisation – Greek and Roman provincial coins.***
The Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum.

4 Publications

- In preparation : *Iscrizioni anforiche di Himera* (forthcoming 2021).
: *Defixiones: EpiDoc editions for I.Sicily* (forthcoming 2021).
- 2021 : Prag, J., Sommerschild, T. “Sicilia epigrafica: dai depositi alla valorizzazione.” In R. Panvini, et al. (eds.) *Beni Culturali: dai depositi alla valorizzazione. Modi, forme, esperienze, norme.* Mesogheia: 117-136.
- 2020 : Sommerschild, T. “Restoring Ancient Text Using Machine Learning: A Case-Study on Greek and Latin Epigraphy. Raleigh Radford Rome Awards.” In *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 88: 387-388. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

- 2019 : Assael, Y.,* **Sommerschild, T.**,* Prag, J. "Restoring Ancient Text Using Deep Learning: A Case Study on Greek Epigraphy." In *Proceedings of the 2019 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP 2019)*. Association for Computational Linguistics. 6369-6376 [***equal contribution**].
- 2019 : **Sommerschild, T.** "A New Sicilian Curse Corpus: A Blueprint for a Geographical and Chronological Analysis of Defixiones from Sicily." In Boardman, J., et al. (eds.) *Greek Art in Motion: Studies in Honour of Sir John Boardman on the Occasion of His 90th Birthday*. Oxford : Archaeopress. 489-501.
- 2016 : **Sommerschild, T.** "A Long Way from Home: The Pertinence of Pilgrimage to Ancient Greek Religion." In *PONS AELIUS, Newcastle University 13*: 25-34.

5 Professional Roles

- Present : Cultrice della Materia (Associate Researcher), Department of Humanities – *Ca' Foscari University of Venice*.
- Present : Associate Researcher, Faculty of Classics – *University of Oxford, UK*.
- Present : Epigraphy.info Steering Committee elected member – *Epigraphy.info*.
- Present : Scientific translator (Italian-English) and editor of Roman History book – *Ca' Foscari University of Venice*.
- 2021 – 2009 : Italian and English language Tutor – *Self-employed, Oxford, UK*.
- 2020 – 2017 : Student Convenor and Representative of the Ancient World Research Cluster – *Wolfson College, UK*.
- 2020 – 2015 : Outreach Volunteer – *University of Oxford, UK*.
- 2019 – 2015 : Digital Content and Administrative Assistant – *Faculty of Classics and TORCH, University of Oxford, UK*.
- 2017 – 2016 : Tour Guide and Front of House Visitor Host at the Bodleian Libraries – *Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, UK*.
- 2016 : Welfare Officer – *St Hugh's College, Oxford, UK*.
- 2015 – 2012 : Outreach Officer – *Ghislieri College and University of Pavia, Italy*.
- 2015 – 2012 : PR Representative, Public Engagement Officer, Interpreter – *Ghislieri College, Pavia, Italy*.
- 2015 – 2012 : Usher and Translator – *Ghislierimusica, Pavia, Italy*.
- 2014 – 2012 : Teacher of Cambridge English Qualifications & IELTS – *Cairolì, Maino, Cardano Colleges of Pavia, Italy*.

6 Teaching & Supervision Experience

- 2021 : **Co-supervision MSc thesis** – *Department of Statistics, University of Oxford*.
Project: "Ancient authorship attribution", with Prof. George Deligiannidis, Dr Yannis Assael.
- 2020 : **Sunoikisis Digital Classics Seminar** – *Institute of Classical Studies, London & University of Leipzig*.
Lecturer and convenor for the Computational Linguistics session. [Lesson stream here](#).
- 2020 : **Co-supervision MSc thesis** – *Digital Methods for the Humanities, Athens University of Economics and Business*.
Project: "NLP and Greek Epigraphy", with Prof. Ion Androutsopoulos, Prof. Ioannis Pavlopoulos, Dr Yannis Assael.
- 2020 : **Epigrafia Latina** – *Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università Ca' Foscari* (Director: Prof. Lorenzo Calvelli).
Guest lecturer, also covering Digital Epigraphy and Machine Learning methods for Epigraphy. 10 students.
- 2020 : **Roman Epigraphy** – *Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Sapienza Università di Roma* (Director: Prof. Silvia Orlandi).
Guest lecturer, also covering Digital Epigraphy and Machine Learning methods for Epigraphy. 15 students.
- 2014 – 2012 : **English for Cambridge English Qualifications and IELTS** – *Centro Assistenza Studenti, Università di Pavia*.
5 40-hour courses, 20+ students/class.
- 2014 – 2012 : **Latin and Greek tutoring** – *Private tutor*.
5+ students over 2 years.
- 2020 – 2007 : **English language tutoring** – *Private tutor*.
Reading, speaking and writing proficiency. 100+ students over 13 years, currently 2 students.

7 Skills and Languages

Programming	Python (also for NLP), EpiDoc TEI in XML, XSLT, JSON.
Machine Learning & NLP	Statistical language models, neural language models, non-trivial text pre-processing, text mining.
Data Management	Tableau Public, CakePHP, MySQL, Beautiful Soup.
Other	Word-press, HTML Responsive Web Design, CSS, Agisoft PhotoScan pro, 2D coin digitisation with Captur; InDesign, Adobe Photoshop, Google GIS, QGIS, ArcGIS.
Modern Languages	Italian - English (Bilingual); Spanish; French (reading); German (reading); Modern Greek.
Ancient Languages	Ancient Greek; Latin; Phoenician (basic).

8 Funding, Grants and Awards

2021 – 2023	MSCA Standard European Individual Fellowship	€ 171,473.28
2021	Fellowship in Hellenic Studies, Harvard University	\$ 9,000
2021 awarded, incomplete for COVID-19	CACHE Fellowship, Macquarie University	AUD 4,000
2021 awarded, incomplete for COVID-19	Center for Epigraphical and Palaeographical Studies, OSU	\$1,600
2019 – 2016	Oxford - Wolfson Graduate Scholarship in Ancient History	Full scholarship, 3 years
2019 – 2017	Craven University Fellowship	£ 6,000
2019	Wolfson College Course Fee Bursary	£ 366
2019, 2017	Craven Committee Travel and Fieldwork Grants	£ 2,000
2019, 2018, 2017	Lorne Thyssen Research Fund for Ancient World Topics Bursary	£ 2,500
2019, 2018, 2017, 2016	Wolfson College Fieldwork & Travel Abroad Grants	£ 1,500
2018	Samuel H. Kress Foundation Travel Award	\$ 500
2017	Digital Scholarly Editions Initial Training Network Bursary (DiXiT)	€ 400
2016 – 2015	St Hugh's College Scholarship	Full scholarship, 9 months
2015	Giornata del Laureato – Best graduate prize	Prize
2016 – 2012	School of Advanced Study (IUSS) Pavia Scholarship	€ 6,000
2015 – 2012	Ghislieri College Scholarship	Full scholarship, 3 years

9 Invited Seminars

- 5.6.2020: "PYTHIA: a deep neural network for the automatic restoration of ancient inscriptions". [Livestream here](#). *Digital Classicist London seminar, Institute for Classical Studies.*
- 25.5.2020: "Digital Epigraphy: approaching Greek Epigraphy with NLP and Deep Learning". *OIKOS National Research School in Classical Studies in the Netherlands.*
- 25.11.2020: "Restoring ancient text using deep learning: A case study on Greek epigraphy". *The Oxford Epigraphy Seminar, University of Oxford.*
- 15.1.2018: "A geo-chronological and textual study of Greek defixiones from Sicily". *The Oxford Epigraphy Seminar, University of Oxford.*
- [Postponed due to COVID-19 outbreak] "A Digital Humanities approach to Classics and Ancient History". *Ertegun House, University of Oxford.*
- [Postponed due to COVID-19 outbreak] "Cross disciplinary applications of Machine Learning". *XML Research Cluster of Wolfson College, University of Oxford.*

10 Invited Conference Presentations

- **2021 Jun** Memoria, spazio, identità. *University of St Andrews & Università di Palermo - online.*
- **2020 Nov** Ancient History e Digital Humanities: Strumenti e Prospettive. *Università di Milano - online.*
- **2020 Nov** Epigraphy.info Workshop V. *University of Leuven - online. [Published poster here](#).*
- **2020 Feb** Beni Culturali. Dai Depositi alla Valorizzazione. *Soprintendenza per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali di Catania.*
- **2019 Nov** EMNLP – IJCNLP: Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing and 9th International Joint Conference on Natural Language Processing. *Hong Kong.*
- **2019 Nov** Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Deep Learning in Archaeology Conference. *British School at Rome.*
- **2019 Jun** The 2nd International Samson Eitrem Seminar on Magic in the Ancient World. *Norwegian Institute at Athens.*
- **2019 Jan** Joint Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America and the Society for Classical Studies. *San Diego.*
- **2018 Feb** Ancient World Research Cluster Colloquium. *Wolfson College.*
- **2018 Jan** Joint Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America and the Society for Classical Studies. *Boston.*
- **2017 May** Conference in honour of Sir J. Boardman on the occasion of his 90th birthday. *Gulbenkian Foundation Lisbon.*
- **2017 Mar** AMPAH: Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient History. *King's College London.*
- **2017 Mar** 8th UK Punic Network Graduate Workshop. *University of Oxford.*
- **2017 Jan** Oxford - Princeton Ancient History Colloquium. *University of Oxford.*
- **2016 Oct** People of the Ancient World International Conference. *University of Cluj Napoca.*
- **2016 Jan** Oxford - Princeton Ancient History Colloquium. *Princeton University.*
- **2014 Dec** Ghislieri College – St John's College Graduate Workshop. *University of Cambridge.*

11 Media, Impact and Public Engagement

- **Council of Europe** 12/11/2020 ([link](#)): *Pythia* presented at the 9th Plenary Session of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) in Strasbourg.
- **Financial Times** 01/07/2020 ([link](#)): “How AI helps historians solve ancient puzzles”.
- **British School at Rome Blog** 07/07/2020 ([link](#)): “Digital Epigraphy at the British School at Rome”.
- **YouTube Digital Classicist** 05/06/2020 ([link](#)): “PYTHIA: Machine learning for epigraphic text restoration”.
- **Data Skeptic podcast** 01/12/2019 ([link](#)): “Ancient Text Restoration”.
- **The Times** 04/11/2019 ([link](#)): “Oracle of AI solves classic ancient conundrums”.
- **University of Oxford Blog** 31/10/2019 ([link](#)): “Restoring ancient Greek inscriptions using AI deep learning”.
- **La Repubblica** 24/10/2019 ([link](#)): “Non solo Go: l’Ai di Google batte anche gli archeologi”.
- **Η Καθημερινή** 20/10/2019 ([link](#)): “«Πυθία»: Ο γόνος της Google και Ελληνα ερευνητή που «διαβάζει» μισοκατεστραμμένες αρχαίες επιγραφές”.
- **RaiNews** 20/10/2019 ([link](#)): “Pythia: l’algoritmo che batte gli studiosi nel decifrare le iscrizioni antiche”.
- **NewScientist** 18/10/2019 ([link](#)): “DeepMind AI beats humans at deciphering damaged ancient Greek tablets”.
- **TechCrunch** 18/10/2019 ([link](#)): “Ai is helping scholars restore ancient Greek texts on stone tablets”.
- **DeepMind Blog** 15/10/2019 ([link](#)): “Restoring ancient text using deep learning: a case study on Greek epigraphy”.

12 Institutional Collaborations

- DeepMind.
- Athens University of Business and Economics, Athens.
- The British School at Rome, Rome.
- Istituto Siciliano per la Storia Antica "Eugenio Manni", Palermo.
- Istituto di Storia Antica dell’Università di Palermo, Palermo.
- Museo Archeologico Regionale "Antonino Salinas", Palermo.
- The Ancient World Research Cluster (AWRC), Wolfson College, Oxford.
- Missione Archeologica a Mozia, Sapienza Università di Roma, Mozia.
- Soprintendenza Archeologica della Sicilia Occidentale, Palermo.
- Soprintendenza BB.CC.AA. di Palermo, Palermo.

13 Excavation and Fieldwork

2019 – 2017	Archaeological fieldwork based in Palermo and Siracusa (Sicily), <i>University of Oxford</i> .
2017	Archaeological excavation season in Mozia (Sicily), <i>Sapienza Università di Roma</i> .
2012	Field survey in Papia Vegia (Pavia), <i>University of Pavia</i> .

14 Summer Schools

2018	Summer School in Ancient Greek and Roman Numismatics. <i>National Hellenic Research Foundation</i> , Athens.
2017	Summer School in Digital Humanities and Digital Editions. <i>Université Grenoble – Alpes</i> , Grenoble.
2011	Summer School in Philology and Iconography. <i>Veneranda Biblioteca Pinacoteca Ambrosiana</i> , Milan.

15 Society Membership

Present – 2020	The British Epigraphy Society
Present – 2020	Epigraphy.info
Present – 2019	Association for Computational Linguistics
Present – 2019	The British School at Rome
2020 – 2017	Archaeological Institute of America
2020 – 2017	Society for Classical Studies

16 Interests

Academic	Ancient history, Machine learning and NLP, Epigraphy, Digital Humanities, the ancient Mediterranean.
Other	Island hopping, Alpine trekking, Tour guiding, Classical & techno music, Dogs, the modern Mediterranean.