

Marco Ferrante

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Research Areas

My long-term research goal is to make Indian philosophy part of a ‘world philosophy’, trying to highlight the similarities of themes, methods, and results it shares with the Euro-American traditions, without minimizing its distinctive traits. This approach is crucially founded on a philologically sound grasp of the original texts and of the languages in which these texts were composed.

More specifically, my Areas of Specialization (AoS) are the following:

- Epistemology, ontology, linguistics and philosophy of mind in premodern Hindu Philosophy.
- The philosophy of the grammarian Bharṭṛhari.
- Indian monistic traditions, in particular Advaita Vedānta and Pratyabhijñāṅ.

In addition, my Areas of Competence (AoC) are:

- Interaction between Hindu and Buddhist traditions
- Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā traditions.
- Comparative and cross-cultural philosophy, especially in the fields of epistemology and philosophy of mind.

Academic Employments and Qualifications

May 2020 – Feb 2021 Austrian Academy of Sciences, Research Fellow. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia, Vienna (Austria). “Reasoning Tools for Deontic logic and Applications to Indian Sacred Texts”. Project Leaders: Agata Ciabattoni, Elisa Freschi. Funded by Vienna Technology and Science Fund.

<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/ikga/research/indology/third-party-funded/deontic-logic/>

Mar 2018 – Feb 2020 University of Oxford, Research Fellow. Berggruen Fellow in Comparative Philosophy. Wolfson College. Project Leader.

2018–2027 Italian Habilitation as Associate Professor (‘Abilitazione Scientifica Nazionale’).

- Sep 2017 – Mar 2018 University of Vienna, Temporary Lecturer. Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies.
- Aug 2015 – Feb 2018 Austrian Academy of Sciences, Research Fellow. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia, Vienna (Austria). “A Śaiva interpretation of the Buddhist theory of exclusion” Project funded by the Austrian Research Funds. Project Leader: Doz. Dr. Marion Rastelli.
<http://www.ikga.oeaw.ac.at/Pratyabhijñā>
- Nov 2013 – Feb 2015 Austrian Academy of Sciences, Research Associate. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia, Vienna (Austria). “Language and action in early Brahmanical philosophy”. Project funded by the Austrian Research Funds. Project Leader: Prof. Vincent Eltschinger.
http://www.ikga.oeaw.ac.at/Early_Brahmanical_Philosophy.

Education

- Dottorato di ricerca in ‘Civiltà dell’Asia e dell’Africa’. Sapienza University of Rome. (Ph.D. in Civilisations of Asia and Africa). Title of the Thesis: “Vṛṣabhadeva’s *Sphuṭākṣarā*: an alternative perspective on Bhartṛhari’s metaphysics”. Supervisor: Prof Raffaele Torella. 12 June 2013.
- Laurea Specialistica in Lingue e civiltà orientali (MA in Oriental Languages and Cultures). Sapienza University of Rome. Mark: summa cum laude. Title of the Thesis: “La *Paddhati* di Vṛṣabhadeva: una differente prospettiva sul Bhartṛhari metafisico”(Vṛṣabhadeva’s *Paddhati*: a different perspective on Bhartṛhari’s metaphysics). Supervisor: Dr Vincenzo Vergiani. 22 July 2008.
- Laurea Triennale in Lingue e civiltà orientali (BA in Oriental Languages and Cultures). Sapienza University of Rome. Mark: summa cum laude. Title of the Dissertation: “Arabo e lingue indoarie: elaborazione di elementi linguistici arabi nella lingua hindī” (Arabic and Indo-aryan languages: traces of Arabic in the hindī language). Supervisor: Prof Claudia A. Ciancaglini. 19 July 2005.

Publications

Monographs

1. *Indian Perspectives on Consciousness, Language and Self. The School of Recognition on Linguistics and Philosophy of Mind*. London: Routledge. 2021.

Articles and Book Chapters

2. “The Pratyabhijñā on Consciousness and Self-consciousness: a Comparative Perspective”. *Accepted for Felicitation Volume*. Forthcoming in 2020.
3. “The Place of Language in the Philosophy of the Recognition” in A. Graheli (ed.) *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Philosophy of Language*. Bloomsbury: London, 2020, 135-149.

4. “Studies on Bhartṛhari and the Pratyabhijñā: Language, Knowledge and Consciousness”. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 48 (2): 147–159. 2020.
5. “Studies on Bhartṛhari and the Pratyabhijñā: the case of svasaṃvedana”. *Proceedings of the Conference of the Society for the Tantric Studies. Religions* 2017 8, 145; DOI: [10.3390/rel8080145](https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8080145), 2017.
6. “Bhartṛhari and verbal testimony. A hyper-antireductionist approach?” in D. Cuneo–E. Freschi–C. Formigatti (eds.). *Not Far Afield: Asian Perspectives on Sexuality, Testimony and Print Culture*. A Coffee Break Project. Kervan 21: 227-246, 2017.
7. “On ṛṣis and yogins: Immediate and Mediate Extraordinary Cognitions in Early Brahmanical Thought”. In R. Torella–M. Franceschini–T. Pontillo–C. Pieruccini–A. Rigopoulos–F. Sferra (eds.). Proceedings of the Meeting of the Italian Association of Sanskrit Studies. *Rivista degli Studi Orientali. Supplemento 2*, vol. LXXXIX, 2016, 41-62.
8. “Vṛṣabhadeva on the status of ordinary phenomena: between Bhartṛhari and Advaita Vedānta”. *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 43 (1): 61-83, 2015.
9. “General introduction” in A. Keidan (ed.) *The Study of South Asia between Antiquity and Modernity. Parallels and Comparisons. Rivista degli Studi Orientali. Supplemento 2*: 9–11. DOI: [10.1400/234721](https://doi.org/10.1400/234721), 2014.
10. “Language as a way of Salvation. An Introduction” in A. Keidan (ed.) *The Study of South Asia between Antiquity and Modernity. Parallels and Comparisons. Rivista degli Studi Orientali. Supplemento 2*: 113-116. DOI: [10.1400/234726](https://doi.org/10.1400/234726), 2014.
11. “How to obtain salvation through Language? Bhartṛhari on Śabdapūrvayoga” in A. Keidan (ed.) *The Study of South Asia between Antiquity and Modernity. Parallels and Comparisons. Rivista degli Studi Orientali. Supplemento 2*: 161-176. DOI: [10.1400/234729](https://doi.org/10.1400/234729), 2014.
12. “Vṛṣabhadeva’s Sphuṭākṣarā on Bhartṛhari’s metaphysics: commentarial strategy and new interpretations”. *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 41 (2): 133-149, 2013.

Encyclopedia Entries

13. “Bhartṛhari” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. To be published online in September 2020.
14. “Yogic Perception” in *Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion*. Forthcoming in 2020.

Book Reviews

15. Review of E. Franco–I. Ratié (eds.), *Around Abhinavagupta. Aspects of the Intellectual History of Kashmir from the Ninth to the Eleventh Century*. Zurich LIT Verlag, 2016. *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, vol. XCII 1-2: 201-205, 2019.
16. Review of E. Freschi–P. Maas, *Adaptive Reuse. Aspects of Creativity in South Asian Cultural History*. Harassowitz. *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, vol. XC, 1-4: 191-195, 2017.
17. Review of A. Graheli, *History and Transmission of the Nyāyamañjarī. Critical edition of the Section on the Sphuṭa*. Verlag der Österreichischer Akademie der Wissenschaften. *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, vol. LXXXIX, 1-4: 105-109, 2017.

Invited Lectures

1. “Reading Vākyapadīya 1.13”. invited lecture at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, *University of Oxford*. Trinity Term 2020. 02.06.2020
2. “Do we really need pramāṇas”? invited lecture for the Workshop “The Pramāṇa Theory in the Gupta Period”. *School of Oriental and African Studies*, London. 12.5.2020. Postponed because of the COVID-19 outbreak.
3. “Is Language Necessary to Consciousness? An Ancient Indian Approach”, invited lecture at Wolfson College, University of Oxford. 21.11.2019.
4. “What is the meaning of a word?” invited lecture for the Sanskrit Reading Room. Worcester College. *University of Oxford*. 14.11.2019.
5. “Knowledge, consciousness and language: a dialogue between Bhartṛhari and the Pratyabhijñā”, invited lecture for the *Sanskrit Reading Room*. *School of Oriental and African Studies*, London. 23.5.2018.
6. “To omniscience through language: Bhartṛhari on epistemology, soteriology and grammar”, invited lecture at *The Van Leer Institute Jerusalem /Hebrew University of Jerusalem*. Discussant: Prof. Yigal Bronner. Jerusalem. 10.5.2017.
7. “Vṛṣabhadeva on Bhartṛhari’s metaphysics: an evaluation”, invited lecture at *Universität Leipzig*. Leipzig. 08.5.2013.

Conference Papers

6. “I speak therefore (I know that) I am: the Pratyabhijñā on language and self-consciousness”. 17th World Sanskrit Conference. Vancouver. 10.7.2018.
7. “For the sake of another. Altruism in South Asian Religions and Philosophies: an Introduction”. Paper presented at the 2018 Coffee Break Conference. Universität Tübingen. 10.4.2018.
8. “The role of language in the thought of the Pratyabhijñā”. Saphala Workshop. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia, Vienna. 20.12.2017.
9. “Between Language and Being: Bhartṛhari on reality and appearance”, paper presented at the Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions. University of Oxford. Oxford. 08.4.2017.
10. “Bhartṛhari and the Pratyabhijñā: the case of self-awareness”, paper presented at the Conference of the Society for the Tantric Studies. Northern Arizona University. Flagstaff. 24.9.2016.
11. “Bhartṛhari’s legacy within the Pratyabhijñā”, paper presented at the scientific colloquium of the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna. 06.9.2016.
12. “A Śaiva interpretation of the Buddhist Theory of Exclusion, paper presented at the Scientific Advisory Board Meeting of the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna. 02.6.2016.
13. “Knowing the unknown: extraordinary cognitions in Brahmanical philosophies: an introduction”, paper presented at the 6th Coffee Break Conference, Sapienza University. Rome. 18.9.2015.

14. “Bhartrhari on the *śiṣṭas* as omniscient persons”, paper presented at the 16th World Sanskrit Conference. Bangkok. 29.6.2015.
15. “Cognizioni straordinarie e onniscienza nella speculazione brahmanica antica”, paper presented at the Sedicesimo Convegno Associazione Italiana di Studi Sanscriti. Università di Bologna. Bologna. 27.3.2015.
16. “A city ruled by a villain or by a lawful king? A short note on the description of Lankā in Rāmāyaṇa’s Sundarakāṇḍa”, paper presented at the 8th South Asian Studies Association Conference, Westminster College. Salt Lake City. 12.4.2014.
17. “Language and Action in Early Brahmanical Philosophy”, paper presented at the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna. 04.2.2014.
18. “Vākya-padīya 1.13: Bhartrhari on the ‘true activation’ of meaning”, paper presented at the 5th International Indological Graduate Research Symposium. Ruhr Universität. Bochum. 17.10.2013.
19. “Between the Scylla of reason and the Charybdis of testimony. Bhartrhari on epistemological problems”, paper presented 4th Coffee Break Conference. University of Turin. Turin 04.9.2013.
20. “How can we get salvation through language? Bhartrhari on the concept of *śabdapūrvayoga*”, paper presented at the 3rd International Indological Graduate Research Symposium. Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3. Paris. 29.9.2011.
21. “Language, Salvation and their Relation: the Soteriological Goal according to the Ancient Indian Grammarians”, paper presented at the 2nd Coffee Break Conference. Sapienza University. Rome. 08.9.2011
22. “Language as a Way of Salvation. An Introduction”, paper presented at the 2nd Coffee Break Conference. Sapienza University. Rome. 08.9.2011.

Workshops and Seminars (with active participation)

- Saphala Workshop– South Asian Philosophy and Language. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna, 18-20.12.2017.
- “What is the sentence meaning? Sucarita’s developments of Kumārila’s theories”. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna, 29.5-2.6.2017.
- “What is the sentence meaning? Kumārila’s Ślokavārttika”. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna, 13-17.6.2016.
- “Language as an independent means of knowledge in Kumārila’s Ślokavārttika”. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna, 1-5.6.2015.

Organization of academic events

- Co-organizer of the 11th Coffee break Conference. International conference on Asian Studies. Universität Wien/Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna. Convenor of the panel: “Conceptuality in Perceptual Knowledge: Philosophical and Philological Perspectives”. 25-27.6.2020.

- Co-organizer of the 8th Coffee Break Conference. International conference on Asian Studies. Universität Tübingen. Convenor of the panel: “For the sake of another. Altruism in South Asian Religions and Philosophies”. Tübingen. 9-11.4. 2018.
- Convenor of the lecture by Vincenzo Vergiani (University of Cambridge). “Reflecting on the limit of the sentence: Some linguistic insights of Bhartṛhari’s in the second book of the *Vākyapadīya*”. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna, 7.12.2016.
- Convenor of the workshop: “Bhartṛhari and self-awareness of cognitions”. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna, 5-6.12.2016.
- Convenor of the lecture by Anna Bajželj (The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute). Title: “Hemacandra on Omniscience: Analysis of *Pramāṇamīmāṃsā* with *Svopajñāvṛtti*”. Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia. Vienna, 15.7.2016.
- Co-organiser of the 6th Coffee Break Conference. International conference on Asian Studies. Sapienza University, Rome. Convenor of the panel “Knowing the unknown: extraordinary cognitions in Brahmanical philosophies”. Rome, 17-19.9. 2015.
- Co-organiser of the 2nd Coffee Break Conference. International conference on Asian Studies. Convenor of the panel “Language as a way of salvation”. Sapienza University. Rome, 8-10.9. 2011.

Courses taught

- “Śaivism: history, rites and philosophy”. University of Vienna (Winter Semester 2021). Standard course (Vorlesung) for MA students.
- An Introduction to Hindu Tantrism: History, Rituals and Philosophy. University of Vienna (Winter Semester 2018). Standard course (Vorlesung) for MA students.
- Bhartṛhari’s *Vākyapadīya* and Vṛṣabhadeva’s *Sphuṭākṣarā*. Part II. Seminar for MA and Ph.D students. Sapienza University of Rome (Spring 2013).
- Sanskrit Grammar (1st to 4th semester), Sapienza University of Rome (2011–2012).
- Bhartṛhari’s *Vākyapadīya* and Vṛṣabhadeva’s *Sphuṭākṣarā*. Part I. Seminar for MA and Ph.D students. Sapienza University of Rome (Spring 2011).
- Vṛṣabhadeva’s *Sphuṭākṣarā*, the opening stanzas. Seminar for MA and PhD students. University of Cambridge, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (Fall 2010).

Research Travels

- Cambridge, UK, University of Cambridge. Visiting student at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (April–June 2012) .
- Cambridge, UK, University of Cambridge. Visiting student at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (September–December 2010).
- Pune, Maharashtra, India. Reading and research on Bhartṛhari’s *Vākyapadīya* with Prof. Saroja Bhate, former head of the Sanskrit Department of the University of Pune (January–April 2009).

Grants and Fellowships

- Berggruen Fellowship in Comparative Philosophy. Wolfson College, University of Oxford (March 2018-February 2020).
- “Lorne Thyssen Research Fund for Ancient World Topics”, Wolfson College, University of Oxford. 980 GBP Travel Grant, 2018.
- “Research Fellow Academic Fund”, Wolfson College, University of Oxford. 545 GBP Travel Grant, 2018.
- Ph.D. program, full scholarship awarded by Sapienza University of Rome after public competition. (November 2009 – October 2012).
- Scholarship at the library of the Department of Oriental Studies awarded by Sapienza University of Rome (October 2005 – September 2007).

Teaching Areas

History of Indian philosophy, Indian epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of language. Buddhist philosophy. Religions of South Asia: Hinduism, Indian Buddhism, Jainism.

Other Academic Activities

- Spoken Sanskrit Summer School. Heidelberg Universität (August 2009).
- Peer-Reviewer for The Journal of Religion (University of Chicago); Philosophy East and West; Religions (MDPI); The Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health; American Philosophical Association: Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies.

Languages

European Languages: Italian: native. English: fluency. German: intermediate (B1/B2 CEF). French: basic. Latin: good (8 years study). Ancient Greek: good (5 years).

Asian Languages: Sanskrit: excellent. Vedic Sanskrit: good Pāli: basic. Tibetan: basic. Hindi: intermediate (4 semesters). Arabic: basic (6 semesters).