

Preface from the co-editor

It is with pleasure that I write this preface to introduce the fourth volume of the series “Interdisciplinary Animal Ethics” as its co-editor. Unlike the other co-editor and author of this book, I am not a theologian but a moral philosopher. Hence, I would like to contextualise Michael Rosenberger’s book “Crown of Creation?” within the present animal ethics debate. I will do this by outlining three remarks regarding Christian theology’s role in the animal ethics debate.

By looking at the research published on animal ethics and human–animal studies, one can notice that Christianity and its prominent thinkers, like St. Thomas Aquinas, are portrayed as the main culprits of the human–animal divide. And many authors simplify the issue by blaming medieval theology for driving a wedge between the human–animal and non-human animal world. Even Peter Singer, in his new and thoroughly updated edition of *Animal Liberation*, falls into this trap: When explicitly referring to the times before Christianity, he proceeds by introducing the chapter *Man’s Dominion... a short history of speciesism* with a quote from the Old Testament (Gen 1:26 and Gen 9:1–3) and immediately rushes to medieval theology and Aquinas after three pages. The chapter *Man’s Dominion* ends by dealing with the question “Can Christianity redeem its past and become a non-speciesist religion?” Singer lists a few progressive theological accounts. As the reader of this book will realise, the short history of *Man’s Dominion* is too short indeed. Too short, that is, if one wants to understand present anthropocentric thinking and Christianity’s role in it. Rosenberger’s book counters the frequently told tale that Christianity is the main cause of anthropocentrism and speciesist maltreatment of animals today. The author provocatively argues that we would have ended up with anthropocentric thinking anyhow, even without Christianity and medieval theology. The straightforward reason for this is that anthropocentrism was well-established before Christianity and that Christian theology found itself in an anthropocentric landscape and built on what was there already.

Second, the theological debate within human–animal studies has become a visible and growing research area itself. The reason why this is not always recognised can—at least in part—be found in the fact that the whole animal

Preface from the co-editor

ethics debate is dominated by contributions in English. Hence, authors do not always engage with and rarely acknowledge research published in other languages. This translation of Rosenberger's book bridges this gap by making the lively theological debate in German-speaking countries accessible to English-speaking scholars.

Third, I would like to remark that Christian theology is not only part of the problems stemming from anthropocentrism but can become part of the solution: The thorough analysis of anthropocentrism's origin and its genealogy that we find in this book does not only provide a better understanding of what we are precisely facing in our attempts to overcome moral anthropocentrism. It might also provide insights that can be utilised to newly address the problem and to find better solutions.

With these observations and thoughts, I would like to end with a wish and a certainty: I wish for a wide readership of Rosenberger's book, now available both in English and in German. My hope is that both language gaps in the animal ethics debate and the moral divides between human and non-human animals that were and have been intentionally or unintentionally maintained in Christian theology will be increasingly overcome. And I would like to end with expressing the certainty that this book will further clarify the role of Christian theologies in the animal ethics debate. As illustrated by this book, theologians have supported the doctrine of anthropocentrism, but they have started to develop ways to think anew and formulate a wholehearted critique of their intellectual predecessors and religious doctrines.

Vienna, November 2023

Herwig Grimm

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Foreword	11
1 Anthropocentrism as Christian patrimony. About the question of this book	13
1.1 The current Roman Catholic position on the moral status of animals	15
1.1.1 The 1991 Catechism of the Catholic Church	15
1.1.2 The 2015 encyclical <i>Laudato si'</i>	17
1.2 Clarification of the term “anthropocentrism”	20
1.3 The central question of this book	25
1.4 Ten core theses of this study	30
1.5 The structure of this book	36
2 Prehistory 1: Animals in the pre-Hellenistic writings of the Bible	41
2.1 Animals in the older Creation narrative (Gen 2–8): Companions and Fates	42
2.2 Animals in the younger Creation narrative (Gen 1–9): Co-habitants and covenant partners	44
2.3 Animals in the instructions of the Torah: addressees of justice	53
2.4 The vision of the peace of creation	55
2.5 Contribution: Anthropocentrism in the pre-Hellenistic Bible?	57
3 Prehistory 2: Animals in Greco-Roman Philosophy	59
3.1 Setting the course in the pre-Socratic era	60
3.2 Theological Anthropocentrism in Socrates	62
3.3 Reason as the driver in Plato’s work	64
3.4 Broad development of the aloga thesis in Aristotle	66

3.5	Perfecting rationalist anthropocentrism in the Stoia	70
3.5.1	The oikeiosis doctrine as a framing theory	71
3.5.2	Animal Behaviour as Natural	71
3.5.3	Rationality as a proprium of the human being	73
3.5.4	Teleologically strict anthropocentrism	77
3.5.5	No legal community between humans and animals	81
3.5.6	Summary: The Core Aspects of Stoic Anthropocentrism	82
3.6	Criticism of the Stoic Mainstream by a Minority	85
3.6.1	Tiberius Iulius Alexander	86
3.6.2	Plutarch of Chaironeia	89
3.6.3	Sextus Empiricus	94
3.6.4	Kelsos	95
3.6.5	Porphyrios of Tyros	98
3.6.6	Summary	100
4	Prehistory 3: Pre-Patristic Traces of the Hellenisation of Biblical Animal Ethics	101
4.1	The late Old Testament texts	104
4.2	Philon of Alexandria	111
4.3	The testimonies of the New Testament	123
4.3.1	Jesus of Nazareth	124
4.3.2	Paul of Tarsos	126
4.3.3	The Gospels	128
4.3.4	The late New Testament epistolary literature	131
4.3.5	The Early Church's Detachment from the Commandment of Ritual Slaughter	132
4.4	On the threshold from the biblical to the patristic period	135
5	Traces of animal ethics in early Christian literature	137
5.1	Tatian	142
5.2	Theophilos of Antioch	145
5.3	Irenaeus of Lyons	149
5.4	Clement of Alexandria	155
5.5	Tertullian	162

5.6	Origen	165
5.6.1	About the beginnings	167
5.6.2	The Homilies on Genesis	169
5.6.3	The treatise against Kelsos	172
5.6.4	Summary	182
5.7	Lactance	183
5.8	Aphrahat	188
5.9	Ephraim the Syrian	191
5.10	Cyril of Jerusalem	198
5.11	Basil of Caesarea	202
5.11.1	Sermons on various topics and occasions	204
5.11.2	The nine homilies to the Hexaemeron	209
5.12	Gregory of Nyssa	215
5.13	Ambrose of Milan	220
5.14	John Chrysostom	223
5.15	Nemesios of Emesa	229
5.16	Pseudo-Athenagoras	236
5.17	Jerome	244
5.18	Augustine of Hippo	251
5.18.1	First approach to determining the differences between humans and animals	252
5.18.2	Appreciation of animal skills	254
5.18.3	The specifically human capabilities	256
5.18.4	Humans' and animals' relationship to God	259
5.18.5	Ethical consequences for humans and animals	262
5.18.6	The question of meat consumption	267
5.18.7	Valuing even the least creatures	269
5.18.8	Weak anthropocentrism and cautious criticism of anthropocentrism	270
5.18.9	Summary	274
5.19	The Animal Ethical Impetuses of Early Christian Theology in the Context of Hellenism. A Summary	274
5.19.1	The Church Fathers and the Fixed Points of Stoic-Hellenistic Philosophy	275

Inhaltsverzeichnis

5.19.2 The Church Fathers and Biblical Animal Ethics	281
6 On the (further) development of Christian animal ethics	289
6.1 You are wanted! The question of God's providence	295
6.1.1 Historical Philosophy/Theology	296
6.1.2 Systematic theological	300
6.2 Saved as the Body of God. The Question of Man's Endowment with Reason and his Relationship with Christ	305
6.2.1 Ethological	306
6.2.2 Christological	317
6.2.3 Eschatological	331
6.3 "The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us" (LS 83). The question of the teleological interpretation of natural processes	334
6.3.1 Particular teleonomies and comprehensive teleology	334
6.3.2 Biocentrism as the most appropriate teleology	339
6.4 Body signals for the good. The question of the importance of feelings	344
6.4.1 Greek scepticism towards feelings	344
6.4.2 Feelings as a Constitutive Component of Reason	346
6.5 "Come to me, brother wolf!" The question about animals and plants	351
6.6 Crown of Creation? A conclusion	356
Source texts of the Church Fathers	359
Literature	363
Bible passages register	375
Register of Magisterial Documents	378
Register of Persons	379