Introduction

This book seeks to understand what masters of theology at the University of Paris in the thirteenth century had to say about similarities and differences between humans and animals. It explores the ways in which they related similarities and differences to each other, holding them in productive tension, so as to construct a boundary between humans and animals, or to query and blur such a boundary.

In recent years some wonderful work has been published on the representation of animals in the vernacular literature of medieval Europe. Literary scholars have offered many insights into the ways in which animals and humans were understood in relation to each other. To give just three of the most outstanding and recent examples, Susan Crane, in her *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*, has argued that the 'binary conception' of a boundary between animals and humans 'must now melt into a multiplicity of intersecting and competing distinctions that better reflect medieval ways of thinking', pointing to 'the plurality and density of medieval thought about animals'.[1] She identifies 'an exploratory mode that takes man and other beasts to be unsettled categories coming into definition through relationship'.[2] Peggy McCracken has argued that medieval 'literary texts use human–animal encounters to explore the legitimacy of authority and dominion over others', and that 'human dominion over animals is revealed as a disputed model for sovereign relations among people: it justifies exploitation even as it mandates protection and care, and it depends on reiterations of human–animal difference that expose the tenuous nature of human exceptionalism even as they reinstate its claims', with the 'uncertain boundary

[1] Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia, 2013), p. 8.
[2] Crane, *Animal Encounters*, p. 169.

between animal and human' frequently 'at stake'.[3] Using literary material for the most part, but also some scholarly and legal works, Karl Steel has argued that such texts reveal the way in which 'acts of violence and of differential allocation of care [...] are central to distinguishing humans from animals and indeed to creating the opposing categories of human and animal', and he focuses on 'the violence against animals through which humans attempt to claim a unique, oppositional identity for themselves', violence that was individual, systemic and linguistic.[4] There has been a tendency amongst both literary specialists and historians to suppose, however, that medieval theologians and philosophers, writing in Latin, all shared a very straightforward view of animals as simply lacking reason, with all other differences from the human arising from this deficiency. The research for this book was stimulated by the hunch, informed by study of many other areas of medieval intellectual culture, that learned men were unlikely to be so out of step with vernacular writers. Nor indeed did it seem probable that their approach to animals would be so much more one-dimensional than their work on just about every other issue they addressed. They did not all say the same thing about anything else, so why would animals receive unanimous appraisal?

Very significant revision of our understanding of scholarly attitudes to animals has been provided in recent years by the immensely valuable work of historians of philosophy, notably Theodor W. Köhler, Tobias Davids and Anselm Oelze.[5] In his monumental and magisterial volumes surveying and collating thirteenth-century scholarly work on issues of natural philosophy, Köhler has amply demonstrated that attempts to define the human, frequently in relation to animals, were

[3] Peggy McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast: Sovereignty and Animality in Medieval France* (Chicago, 2017), pp. 1, 161.

[4] Karl Steel, *How to make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Columbus, Ohio, 2011), pp. 14, 15; see 17 for a succinct discussion of the types of violence with which he is concerned.

[5] Amongst many publications, key works include: Theodor W. Köhler, *Homo animal nobilissimum. Konturen des spezifisch Menschlichen in der naturphilosophischen Aristoteleskommentierung des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts,* vol. 1 (Leiden, 2008) and *Homo animal nobilissimum. Konturen des spezifisch Menschlichen in der naturphilosophischen Aristoteleskommentierung des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, vols. 2.1 and 2.2 (Leiden, 2014); Tobias Davids, *Anthropologische Differenz und animalische Konvenienz: Tierphilosophie bei Thomas von Aquin* (Leiden, 2017); Anselm Oelze, *Animal Rationality: Later Medieval Theories 1250–1350* (Leiden, 2018).

far from uniform and that significant similarities between humans and animals were identified, many involving intelligent animal behaviour.[6] With regard to animal cognition, Oelze has shown 'the depth and diversity of the medieval discussion', and that it was the view of some medieval philosophers and theologians 'that certain highly developed species of nonhuman animals can engage in rational *processes*, such as basic forms of reasoning although they lack intellect and reason'.[7] Davids has revealed how, for Thomas Aquinas, the difference between rational humans and non-rational animals had transformative effects on the similarities that humans and animals shared as sentient beings.[8]

Despite these important contributions, there is more work to be done. Entirely understandably, these historians of philosophy focus especially on the relationship between medieval thought and ancient authorities, above all Aristotelian works that had recently become available, and they seek to identify dominant trends and the most original thinking. Oelze and Davids offer a process of critique, reconstruction and evaluation, piecing together what a scholar said in different works, assessing the plausibility of different versions that can be imagined, sometimes asking questions of medieval scholars that they did not actually consider, and often going beyond what the scholar actually said to make claims about what he must actually have thought. This approach is governed in part by a desire to relate medieval philosophy to contemporary philosophical concerns, and to evaluate medieval theories accordingly. These ways of interpreting medieval scholars are entirely legitimate and deeply fascinating, but

[6] Köhler, *Homo animal nobilissimum*, vols. 2.1 and 2.2, pp. 920 ('In ihren Untersuchungen stellen die Magister weitreichende Gemeinsamkeiten bzw. Kontinuitäten zwischen Mensch und Tier fest. Das ist naheliegenderweise vor allem in somatischer Hinsicht der Fall und auch in Bezug auf die (äußere) Sinneswahrnehmung, emotionale Reaktionen und soziale Verhaltensweisen nicht unerwartet. Darüber hinaus aber erstrecken sich die von ihnen angenommenen strukturellen Gemeinsamkeiten zum Teil durchaus weit auch in den Bereich intelligenter Verhaltensweisen hinein und weisen hier in Bezug auf einzelne Akte mitunter dichte graduelle Annäherungen an menschliche Intelligenzleistungen aus'), 923 ('Der Beitrag der einzelnen Magister zu den in ihren Untersuchungen behandelten Fragestellungen ist erwartungsgemäß kein einheitlicher, sondern insgesamt – auch bei gemeinsamen Grundpositionen – unterschiedlich und insbesondere auch von unterschiedlichem philosophischen Gewicht').

[7] Oelze, *Animal Rationality*, pp. xi, 235 (his emphasis).

[8] Davids, *Anthropologische Differenz und animalische Konvenienz*, pp. 215–16: 'die anthropologishe Differenz, rational/nicht-rational, verändert nämlich teilweise dasjenige, was Menschen und Tieren als Sinnenwesen gemeinsam ist'.

this book is more straightforwardly historical. My approach is based on extended close reading of texts, my concern is as much with how medieval theologians said things as with what they said, and, rather than focusing on any one philosophical or theological issue, I try to capture what they had to say about animals wherever it cropped up in their more wide-ranging works. In similar ways, my approach also differs from the work of scholars who seek to adapt and modify medieval thinking so as to incorporate modern scientific knowledge and construct theologically informed, especially 'Thomistic', theories relevant to current concerns about animals and animal rights.[9]

Several other historiographical trends are worth mentioning at the outset because they have been in my mind as I researched and wrote this book, and they perhaps therefore shape what I have written. First, many medievalists, literary specialists and historians, have suggested that, although they did not explicitly frame their work in these terms, thirteenth-century scholars were embarked upon a grand project to define the human, a project that extended beyond the universities. To give just a few examples, Alain Boureau has written that in the thirteenth century 'a new anthropology, derived both from naturalist knowledge and from Scholastic reflection, explored the strengths and weaknesses of human nature'.[10] For Shirin A. Khanmohamadi, 'the thirteenth century, an era of hope for the conversion of Asia to Christianity through missionary activity, was the age of elaborating the discourse of Christianity and defining the "human." In a range of discourses, both popular and elite, the thirteenth century evinces a heightened interest in establishing the contours of the human. New theorizations of what constituted the human emerged from scholastic thinkers like Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas.'[11] Susan Crane refers to 'high medieval philosophy's ongoing project of delineating the human'.[12] Tobias Davids reflects that comparison with animals became an important philosophical method because the contours of

[9] See, for example, Judith A. Barad, *Aquinas on the Nature and Treatment of Animals* (San Francisco, 1995); John Berkman, 'Towards a Thomistic theology of animality', in Celia Deane-Drummond and David Clough (eds.), *Creaturely Theology: On God, Humans and Other Animals* (London, 2009), pp. 21–40.

[10] Alain Boureau, *Satan the Heretic: The Birth of Demonology in the Medieval West*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago, 2006), p. 143.

[11] Shirin A. Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another's Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages* (Philadephia, 2014), p. 20.

[12] Crane, *Animal Encounters*, p. 43.

the human appeared more clearly in contrast with the animal.[13] When considering why medieval theologians wrote about animals as they did, I have had this possible answer at the back of my mind.

I have also had in mind my own work on medieval academic discourse. When analysing quodlibetal disputations relating to money and to sex and marriage, I have previously argued that academic discourse was sometimes unstable, operating at different levels and offering much more than the grand normative statements that usually receive attention. Many ideas about money were understated or simply implied, built into the conclusions drawn when considering particular scenarios. Their means of denoting gender permitted considerable slippage in terms of focus on women and men. These strategies enabled them to respond to shifting social realities while respecting past authority.[14] This is why, in reading what the theologians had to say about animals, I have been as interested as much in how they expressed their ideas and arguments as the actual ideas and arguments themselves.

More generally, two other significant approaches must be mentioned, the cultural history of animals and critical animal studies. This book sits comfortably alongside, and indeed contributes to, the cultural history of animals which seeks to study animals 'as subjects in their own right', but fully recognises that their history is bound up with human history and must be researched chiefly through sources generated by humans, a point made explicitly and put into practice in Brigitte Resl's exemplary edited volume, *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age*.[15] Although, as will be apparent, Parisian theologians were not concerned with animals in their own right, their attitudes and ideas must be taken into account in writing the cultural history of animals in medieval Europe. This book does not, however,

[13] Davids, *Anthropologische Differenz und animalische Konvenienz*, p. 215. See also Köhler, *Homo animal nobilissimum*, vols. 2.1 and 2.2, pp. 911, 913.

[14] Ian P. Wei, 'Gender and sexuality in medieval academic discourse: marriage problems in Parisian quodlibets', *Mediaevalia* 31 (2010), pp. 5–34; 'Discovering the moral value of money: usurious money and medieval academic discourse in Parisian quodlibets', *Mediaevalia* 33 (2012), pp. 5–46; *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University c.1100–1330* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 272–92, 348–55.

[15] Brigitte Resl (ed.), *A Cultural History of Animals in the Medieval Age* (Oxford, 2007); see esp. Resl, 'Introduction: animals in culture, ca. 1000–ca. 1400', pp. 1–26 at 1–3 for discussion of the aim to study animals 'as subjects in their own right' and the difficulties of doing so (quotation at 2).

make a direct contribution to critical animal studies. Outstanding work in this field, especially by Jeffery J. Cohen and Sarah Kay, has frequently stimulated my thinking and prompted me to define the nature of my endeavours more precisely, though not in ways that can be recognised in conventional footnotes.[16] Significant disciplinary and methodological differences divide us because for me as a historian the whole point is to try to explain past ways of thinking in their own terms. I trust that scholars in the field of critical animal studies will nonetheless find this book useful when they relate the ideas of medieval theologians to the conceptual frameworks that inform their own thinking.

With one exception, I have selected texts in which theologians tackled a broad range of theological issues, with the aim of exploring their treatment of the differences and similarities between humans and animals in varied intellectual contexts. Individual theologians and texts will be introduced more fully at the start of each chapter. Briefly, however, Chapter 1 looks at two works by William of Auvergne, a secular theologian and bishop of Paris, his *De legibus* and his *De universo*. Chapter 2 analyses two Franciscan works, the Summa Halensis and Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Sentences*. The third chapter focuses on works by two Dominicans, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Albert's *De animalibus* is the exception amongst the chosen texts because it is not straightforwardly theological, takes animals as its subject, and does not seek to address issues unconnected with animals. It seemed unwise, however, to neglect the work of the theologian most committed to the study of natural philosophy and animals as subjects in their own right, and he offers a distinctive strategy when placing animals and humans in hierarchical relationship. Two works by Aquinas are discussed, the *Summa contra gentiles* and the *Summa theologiae*.

It should be noted that when in Paris these men lived in what might be regarded as a very small world. They all worked in Paris while William of Auvergne was bishop, Bonaventure said that he was taught by Alexander of Hales, and Thomas Aquinas was definitely a student of Albert the Great. They must surely all have known each other

[16] See, for example, Jeffrey J. Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2003); Sarah Kay, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chicago, 2017).

because the Paris schools occupied a very small space, there were never more than ten to sixteen masters of theology at any one time in the thirteenth century, and they were all caught up in the complex institutional structures of the developing university. On the other hand, they were leading figures in an international community that trained men who taught, preached, heard confession and held high ecclesiastical office all over western Europe, and they shared a grand vision of themselves exercising authority at the summit of a hierarchy of learning with a duty to minister to the needs of the entire Christian world. Their words were potentially significant far beyond Paris itself.[17]

Finally, three points about terminology must be made. First, all Parisian theologians regarded humans as animals: the human species belonged to the genus of animals. It would therefore be most correct to distinguish between humans and non-human animals. For the sake of economy in writing, however, I have referred to non-human animals simply as animals, except where confusion might arise. Second, the Latin *homo* is gender neutral, though it was loaded with patriarchal assumptions that often meant that a man was envisaged. Without wishing to ignore those assumptions, I have as much as possible referred to humans and the human, making it easier to point up those occasions on which texts used gender specific terms like *mulier* and *vir*. Third, when the theologians discussed that part of the soul which was shared only by animals and humans (and not by plants), they referred sometimes to the *anima sensibilis* and sometimes to the *anima sensitiva*, and when they considered that part of the soul which was particular to humans, they sometimes called it the *anima intellectualis* and sometimes the *anima intellectiva*. Rather than standardise, I have referred to the 'sensible soul' or the 'sensitive soul', and to the 'intellectual soul' or the 'intellective soul', depending on the usage in the theological text under discussion.

[17] See Wei, *Intellectual Culture*, pp. 87–124, 174–84, 228–46; Ian P. Wei, 'The self-image of the masters of theology at the university of Paris in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 46 (1995), pp. 398–431.

1 *William of Auvergne*

William of Auvergne was an immensely significant figure in the institutional development of the University of Paris in its first decades. He also played a crucial, though often underappreciated, intellectual role because he was one of the earliest Parisian theologians to make substantial use of newly translated Aristotelian works and related Arabic texts. All that is known of his early life is that he was born around 1180 or in the 1180s, and that he probably came from Aurillac. He was a secular cleric, rather than belonging to any religious order; by 1223 he was a canon at the cathedral of Notre Dame, and by 1225 a master of theology in Paris. When Bishop Bartholomew died in 1227, there was a disputed election and William went to Rome to appeal against the appointment that had been made. Pope Gregory IX resolved the issue by appointing William as bishop in 1228, which he remained until his death in 1249.

William continued to write prolifically while playing significant roles in secular and ecclesiastical politics. A prominent figure at the Capetian court and frequently acting on the pope's behalf, he was nevertheless highly independent and willing to stand up to both royal and papal power when he judged it necessary. His relationship with the growing University of Paris was highly fractious, not least because he sided with the royal authorities in 1229 when their heavy-handed response to student violence led to a strike and many students and masters departed from Paris, a dispute that was only resolved when Gregory IX issued the bull *Parens scientiarum* in 1231, granting the university privileges that significantly diminished the powers of the bishop of Paris. William nevertheless did much to shape the future of the university by giving crucial support to the friars just as they were seeking to establish themselves in the university. During the strike, while the secular masters were largely absent, the friars did not suspend their studies and even taught some secular students who had not joined the strike, and William made Roland of Cremona a master of theology,

thus creating the first Dominican chair in theology. William was also responsible for the first Franciscan chair in theology when a secular master, Alexander of Hales, joined the Franciscans and William let him remain a master.[1]

William's *De legibus*, paired with a treatise *De fide*, and his *De universo* were parts of a vast work that William called his *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale*.[2] The *De legibus* sought to explain and compare Jewish, Christian and Muslim laws.[3] Especially in his discussion of Old Testament precepts, he had much to say about animals. The *De universo* was a wide-ranging discussion of the created universe, both material and spiritual, and animals featured in many different places.[4] William's writing is not always easy to follow. His use of images to

[1] The only monograph surveying William's life and works is Noël Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne, évêque de Paris (1228–1249): sa vie et ses ouvrages* (Paris, 1880). For more recent summaries of his life, see Steven P. Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century* (Princeton, N.J., 1983), pp. 27–9; Ernest A. Moody, 'William of Auvergne and his treatise De Anima', in his *Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Science, and Logic: Collected Papers 1933–1969* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 1–109 at 1–6; Lesley Smith, 'William of Auvergne and the law of the Jews and the Muslims', in Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman (eds.), *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 123–42 at 123–4; Roland J. Teske, 'Introduction', in William of Auvergne, *The Universe of Creatures: Selections Translated from the Latin with an Introduction and Notes*, trans. Roland J. Teske (Milwaukee, Wis., 1998), pp. 13–29 at 13–14; Roland J. Teske, 'William of Auvergne', in Jorge J. E. Gracia and Timothy N. Noone (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 680–7 at 680. For comment on his close relationship with the Capetian court, see Lindy Grant, *Blanche of Castille: Queen of France* (New Haven, 2016), esp. pp. 187, 190–3, 210, 215, 267–8. For his relationship with the University of Paris and in particular the events of 1229–31, see Spencer E. Young, *Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris: Theologians, Education and Society, 1215–1248* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 40–43, 81–7, 100–101, 205–6, 222.

[2] On the nature of the *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale*, see Guglielmo Corti, 'Le sette parti del Magisterium divinale et sapientiale di Guglielmo di Auvergne', in *Studi e Ricerche di Scienze Religiose in onore dei Santi Apostoli Pietro e Paulo nel xix centenario del loro martirio* (Rome, 1968), pp. 289–307; Josef Kramp, 'Des Wilhelm von Auvergne "Magisterium divinale"', *Gregorianum* 1 (1920), pp. 538–616 and 2 (1921), pp. 42–103, 174–95; Teske, 'Introduction', pp. 14–17.

[3] For discussion of the purpose of the *De legibus*, see Smith, 'William of Auvergne and the law of the Jews and the Muslims', pp. 126–8.

[4] For an outline of the structure and content of the *De universo*, see Teske, 'Introduction', pp. 17–28; Teske, 'William of Auvergne', pp. 682–3.

argue by analogy can seem imprecise. Lengthy digressions can make it hard to be sure of any coherent structure. His Latin is idiosyncratic, with the subject of successive verbs often changing without being specified, though his way with words is often highly imaginative.[5] Writing about his work leaves the historian caught between offering a clarity that William did not himself present and replicating apparent confusion. Nevertheless, the breadth of his interests and his capacity to make surprising connections make the effort thoroughly worthwhile.

De legibus

Many of the Old Testament precepts that William of Auvergne sought to explain in the *De legibus* concerned animals, so he necessarily discussed the relationship between humans and animals in considerable detail, and he consistently assumed or implied a hard boundary between them. In the first chapter, he stated very clearly that the law of Moses was elevated by having God as its author and maker. There was therefore nothing useless, pointless or absurd in it, and nothing in it, whether precept, prohibition, statute or story, that did not have rational cause and sufficient reason, whether hidden or manifest.[6] William then set out the main purposes that the laws served. Some laws were obviously useful because they honoured God or established the framework for human life. Others prevented bad things happening or ensured peace. Still others permitted but did not require various practices which were not in themselves desirable, thus ensuring that

[5] For comments on William of Auvergne's style of argument and expression, see Peter Biller, *The Measure of Multitude: Population in Medieval Thought* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 64–7; Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste*, pp. 30–32; Beryl Smalley, 'William of Auvergne, John of La Rochelle and St. Thomas Aquinas on the Old Law', reprinted in her *Studies in Medieval Thought and Learning from Abelard to Wyclif* (London, 1981), pp. 121–81 at 137–56 [first published in *St. Thomas Aquinas, 1274–1974: Commemorative Studies* (Toronto, 2 vols., 1974), vol. 2, pp. 11–72]; Smith, 'William of Auvergne and the law of the Jews and the Muslims', pp. 125–6.

[6] William of Auvergne, *Opera Omnia*, ed. F. Hotot (Orléans and Paris, 2 vols., 1674); *De legibus*, 1, p. 25A: 'Apparet igitur ex omnibus his legem Moysi Deo authore, et conditore editam esse. Quare nihil in ea inutile, nihil supervacuum, nihil absurdum. Nihil igitur in ea vel praeceptum, vel prohibitum est, nihil vel statutum, vel narratum, quod non habeat causam rationalem, et sufficientem rationem, sive occultam vel manifestam.' For a partial summary of the chapter, see Smith, 'William of Auvergne and the law of the Jews and the Muslims', pp. 128–30.