

"Orthodox animals theology in Tatyana Goricheva's essays" is an interdisciplinary scientific project on the border of literary studies, theology and philosophy with a special focus on the study of human-animal relations in scientific perspective. The project also deals with new research subdisciplines, e.g. zootheology and zoocritics. The first deals with the place of animals in Christian history of salvation, and the second studies non-anthropocentric representation of animals in literature.

The project is dedicated to Tatiana M. Goricheva - a contemporary Russian theologian, philosopher, writer and animal activist. It assumes a detailed analysis and interpretation of T. Goricheva's "animal" publications: *Svyatye zhyvotnye* (1993), *Molchanie zhyvotnyh* (2008), *Blazhen izhe i skot miluet* (2010), *Govoryaschie "Da"* (2020), which were not published (with a few exceptions) and are not known in Poland, or a monographic study of her theological and philosophical thinking about animals. The author presents in them a biocentric position towards the world, stating that all living beings have inherent value and are valuable by themselves, and human is one of many equivalent elements of the created world. There appears a link between biocentric (non) religious ideology and the pantheism of unorthodox Orthodoxy and Christian theology.

The aim of the project is to define the place of animals in Orthodox theology according to the author of *Sacred Animals*; presenting the theological and philosophical worldview in terms of animal studies, as well as the opposition between Orthodoxy and Catholicism emerging from her works. The project, therefore, assumes a comparative methodology in the interpretation of the zootheological reflection of these religions. Goricheva keeps repeating accusations against the theology and philosophy of the West related to the cruel and objective treatment of animals (and nature) by humans and emphasizes the "superiority" of Eastern Orthodox theology. The project involves an objective and honest reflection on the attitude of Orthodoxy and Catholicism to the animal world, and especially reflection on the constantly recurring idea that antagonizes both these denominations. The project also aims to revise the radical position of some researchers who, like Jan Wawrzyniak, believe that Franciscanism "plays the role of an ideological "Switzerland" and an alibi for Catholicism.

The topic of the project retains in the reflection on zootheology, which is mostly the domain of Western researchers in relation to Catholic, Protestant and less often to Eastern theology. In Polish scientific sources, the term "zootheology" is either not used (e.g. by clergy theologians and ethics) or is rarely used. Therefore, the project assumes the validity of defining zootheology (and wider - ecotheology) as new research disciplines. The project belongs to a discipline that has already been institutionalized in the West (e.g. The Institute for Theological Zoology in Münster, Germany) and is part of studies conducted by Western scholars (e.g. Andrew Linzey, Anton Rotzetter), yet in Poland, zootheology has not been thoroughly researched.

The assumption of the project is to organize the conceptual apparatus and to reflect critically on the legitimacy of the use of the term "zootheology"/"animal theology", to justify the belonging of Tatiana Goricheva's "animal works" to the essay genre, and then to study and discuss the Orthodox theological and philosophical concept of the "sacred animality", which the Russian writer has consistently developed in the above-mentioned works, in the context of the development of Western zootheology. The result of the research will be a doctoral thesis, which is the first monographic study on T. Goricheva as a forerunner of Orthodox zootheology, and at the same time the first Polish research attempt on zootheology as a new research discipline.