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Twenty years ago, in 2003, Berghahn Books launched the series “Explorations in Culture and International History.” Its purpose was and continues to be to showcase innovative work, notably on the part of younger scholars who have labored in the vineyard of culture and international history while providing cross-disciplinary insights. To date, the series includes twelve volumes, ranging from Alan McPherson’s 2005 volume *Anti-Americanism in Latin America and the Caribbean*, to Nadja Klopprogge’s forthcoming study, *Intimate Histories: African Americans and Germany since 1930*. We are proud to celebrate the 20th anniversary with the present volume dedicated to *Visions of Humanity*, and extend our profound gratitude to Marion Berghahn and her stellar team. Throughout the years, she has provided encouragement, patience and support along with a sense of belief in the series and the topic that went far beyond the call of duty. *Herzlichen Dank dafür!*

The idea for this volume goes back to many conversations between the three editors—over work, lunch, team meetings, and joint travels—on the practical meanings of historical thinking in a world fractured between humanitarian commitments and processes of social polarization, marginalization, and violence. The three of us all came into this conversation from different backgrounds—the history of slavery, the history of global humanitarianism, the history of culture and international relations—but we all felt the need for a historical reflection that would make sense of what it means to be human in the modern world and, more important, what limitations and pitfalls we run up against when we claim to act “human” or in the name of “humanity.” Spirited discussions at various workshops at the Freie Universität Berlin encouraged us to further develop these ideas within the framework of a joint volume. This project was funded of the Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script” (EXC 2055, Project-ID: 390715649), funded by the Deut-
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