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978-1-107-02287-4 - The Cambridge Companion to Life and Death

Edited by Steven Luper

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
LIFE AND DEATH

This volume meets the increasing interest in a range of philosophical issues connected with the nature and significance of life and death, and the ethics of killing. What is it to be alive and to die? What is it to be a person? What must time be like if we are to persist? What makes one life better than another? May death or posthumous events harm the dead? The chapters in this volume address these questions, and also discuss topical issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. They explore the interrelation between the metaphysics, significance, and ethics of life and death, and they discuss the moral significance of killing both people and animals, and the extent to which death harms them. The volume is for all those studying the philosophy of life and death, for readers taking applied ethics courses, and for those studying ethics and metaphysics more generally.

STEVEN LUPER is chair of the philosophy department at Trinity University. He is author of several books, including *A Guide to Ethics* (2001) and *The Philosophy of Death* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), and most recently editor of *The Sceptics: Contemporary Essays* (2003) and *Essential Knowledge* (2004).

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107022874

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First published 2014

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

The Cambridge companion to life and death / edited by Steven Luper.
 pages cm. – (Cambridge companions)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-02287-4 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-60676-0 (pbk.)

1. Life. 2. Death. I. Luper, Steven, editor of compilation.

BD431.C225 2014

128–dc23

2013036667

ISBN 978-1-107-02287-4 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-60676-0 Paperback

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The idea for this book was formed back in 2007, when I was working on a book about the philosophy of death and it occurred to me that it would be worthwhile to bring together some sharp people to write about the full range of issues concerning death. I was soon reminded that these issues very often are related to puzzling issues concerning life. The most obvious example is that to understand what it is to die, it is crucial to understand what it is to be alive. Similarly, to get clear about what it is to cease to exist, it is crucial to know what sort of thing we are. So the scope of the book grew. Fortunately, Hilary Gaskin at Cambridge University Press supported the project, and has helped in numerous ways to get it done. The result is before the reader. I am grateful to her, and to all of the contributors to this book.