Immortality was central to ancient philosophical reflections on the soul, happiness, value, and divinity. Conceptions of immortality flowed into philosophical ethics and theology, and modern reconstructions of ancient thought in these areas sometimes turn on the interpretation of immortality. This volume brings together original research on immortality from early Greek philosophy, such as the Pythagoreans and Empedocles, to Augustine. The contributors consider not only arguments concerning the soul’s immortality, but also the diverse and often subtle accounts of what immortality is, both in Plato and in less familiar philosophers, such as the early Stoics and Philo of Alexandria. The book will be of interest to all those interested in immortality and divinity in ancient philosophy, particularly scholars and advanced students.

A. G. Long is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Classics at the University of St Andrews. He is the author of Conversation and Self-Sufficiency in Plato (2013) and Death and Immortality in Ancient Philosophy (2019). He edited Plato and the Stoics (2013) and translated, with David Sedley, Plato’s Meno and Phaedo for Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (2010).
IMMORTALITY IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

EDITED BY

A. G. LONG

University of St Andrews
Contents

List of Contributors  page vii

Introduction  1
  A. G. Long

1 The Soul and the Celestial Afterlife in Greek Philosophy before Plato  12
  Simon Trépanier

2 Pythagorean Immortality of the Soul?  41
  Phillip Sidney Horky

3 The Philosopher’s Reward: Contemplation and Immortality in Plato’s Dialogues  66
  Suzanne Obdrzalek

4 Pre-Existence, Life after Death, and Atemporal Beings in Plato’s Phaedo  93
  Catherine Rowett

5 The Immortal and the Imperishable in Aristotle, Early Stoicism, and Epicureanism  118
  A. G. Long

6 Socrates and the Symmetry Argument  143
  James Warren

7 Immortality in Philo of Alexandria  161
  Sami Yli-Karjanmaa
vi

Contents

8 Plotinus on Immortality and the Problem of Personal Identity  178
   Lloyd P. Gerson

9 Truth and Immortality in Augustine’s Soliloquies and
   De Immortalitate Animae  196
   Sebastian Gertz

Index of Passages  215
Index of Names and Subjects  225
Contributors

Lloyd P. Gerson is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Toronto. He is the author of many monographs, articles, and reviews on ancient philosophy including *Platonism and Naturalism: The Possibility of Philosophy* (2020). He is the editor and translator (with five others) of *Plotinus: The Enneads* (2017) and the editor of *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (2010).

Sebastian Gertz is an independent scholar living in New York City. He has published a translation with commentary of Plotinus’ treatise against the Gnostics (2017) and a monograph (*Death and Immortality in Late Neoplatonism*, 2011). He has also translated Zacharias of Mytilene’s dialogue *Ammonius* (2012) and three ancient introductions to philosophy (2018) in the Ancient Commentators on Aristotle series.

Phillip Sidney Horky is Associate Professor of Ancient Philosophy at Durham University. He is author of *Plato and Pythagoreanism* (2013) and has edited the volume *Cosmos in the Ancient World* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). He is currently completing *Pythagorean Philosophy: 250 BCE–200 CE*, for the series Cambridge Source Books in Post-Hellenistic Philosophy.

A. G. Long is Senior Lecturer in Classics at the University of St Andrews. He is the author of *Conversation and Self-Sufficiency in Plato* (2013) and *Death and Immortality in Ancient Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). He also co-edits with Voula Tsouna the series Key Themes in Ancient Philosophy for Cambridge University Press.

Suzanne Obdrzalek is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Claremont McKenna College. She is the author of numerous articles on ancient philosophy; her current research focuses on Plato’s philosophy of mind.
List of Contributors

Catherine Rowett has been Professor of Philosophy at the University of East Anglia for fifteen years, having previously worked in the Classics Department at Liverpool and the Philosophy Department in Swansea. She is the author of books and articles on many areas of ancient philosophy, including *Knowledge and Truth in Plato: Stepping Past the Shadow of Socrates* (2018). In 2019 she was elected as a Member of the European Parliament for the East of England, for which she stepped aside from her academic career for nine months, returning in February 2020 when the UK left the European Union.

Simon Trépanier is Senior Lecturer in Classics at the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of *Empedocles: An Interpretation* (2004), and various articles on ancient philosophy. His main areas of interest are Early Greek philosophy (also known as the Presocratics), Plato, literary papyrology, and, more recently, Epicureanism and Lucretius. He is currently co-editing, with Professor M. M. McCabe, the proceedings of her 2019 A. G. Leventis conference on Plato, Re-Reading the Republic.


Sami Yli-Karjanmaa is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki. He is the author of *Reincarnation in Philo of Alexandria* (2015) and has conducted research into Philo, Jewish and Christian beliefs about the afterlife, and Alexandrian church fathers.