

## **Death as the transformation of personhood: Relationality beyond the grave**

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Is death the end of a person? This question can be answered in the negative from many different perspectives, in both religious and secular circles. In this address, I will explore some of the myriad ways that aspects of deceased persons come to endure after death, both through activities that are conventionally described as ‘funerary’ or ‘mortuary’ in nature, and others that are not. In doing so, I will explore death as a transformation in personhood, arguing that differences in how personhood is formulated in life relate closely to patterns in how persons are transformed during and after death. I will adopt the view that personhood is always relational, but in varying ways. This presentation will explore how relationality operates ‘beyond the grave’: i.e. both by considering mortuary practices other than burial in single graves, and also by examining how relations vital to a deceased person may persist, reconfigured, well after death, and will draw on a range of examples from contemporary, historic and prehistoric communities.