

THE TOMBSTONES OF THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY CEMETERY AT MACAO: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

JOHN P. O'REGAN

It was Macao's privilege to save their names from oblivion, and looking at these epitaphs you realize that "They, being dead, yet speak".

J. M. Braga (1940)¹

Introduction

In a quiet corner of the former Catholic Portuguese colony of Macao, China, away from the bustle and hum of the surrounding streets, there is to be found a small nineteenth century burial ground for Protestants – British and American in the main, but also including French, German, Danish, Dutch, Swedish and Armenian graves. The ground is entered via a narrow gate off the *Praça Luis de Camões* (Camoens Square), above which is a white tablet bearing the legend: 'Protestant Church and Old Cemetery [East India Company 1814]'. The date is in fact erroneous, as the burial ground did not open until 1821, and the land was only purchased in the same year.² Here beneath shaded canopies of bauhinia and frangipani lie 164 men, women and children each of whom died in the service of their nation in a foreign land, either as soldiers, merchants, sailors, medics, diplomats, civil servants, entrepreneurs, missionaries, wives, mothers or innocents. The maladies of which the cemetery's residents died were numerous, and all too typical of life in the tropics. Their death certificates, and in some cases their gravestones, indicate malaria, cholera, typhus, dysentery, falls from aloft, drowning, death in battle, suicide and murder. Only a few would be able to claim to have died of old age. The 'Old Cemetery', although originally intended to serve the needs of East India

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

Company employees and their dependents only, was soon open to Protestants of all persuasions, and the interred include Baptists, Methodists, Quakers and Presbyterians. Amongst those buried here are the Reverend Dr Robert Morrison (1782-1834), the first Protestant missionary in China and translator of the Bible into Chinese; Thomas W. Waldron (1792-1844), American Consul for Hong Kong and Naval Storekeeper for the US East India Squadron; Lord Henry John Spencer Churchill (1797-1840), British naval commander (and ancestor of Winston Churchill and Diana Spencer); and George Chinnery (1774-1852), the China Trade artist, whose famous Macao portrait of Miss Harriet Low³ hangs in the Peabody Museum in Massachusetts. The Old Cemetery formally ceased its function at the end of 1857 with the inauguration of a 'New Protestant Cemetery' a mile distant to the north. Despite its closure, the occasional burial still took place here, with three in 1858 and one in 1859.⁴ There are 164 graves relating to this period on this site,⁵ and 161 are marked by a gravestone of some kind, usually in the form of a headstone, a slab, a box tomb, or a column set upon a plinth.⁶ A number of the box tombs and the columns are surmounted by an urn. On most of these structures, and often on more than one side, loved ones, friends or colleagues have arranged for words to be inscribed which, in addition to recording the names and dates of the dead, have also placed 'on record' their attitudes towards concepts such as faith, love, marriage and death, and the fundamentals of a Western way of life.⁷ This has been done by means of formulaic encomiums of loss, in verse and in scripture, and through biographical accounts of the life of the deceased. *Apropos* the reader, these verses and accounts have a didactic intent. In this paper, the language in which this intent is framed, and specifically the lexical and grammatical modalities by which it is cued and conveyed, are the principal objects of study, and this is what distinguishes this investigation from other types of gravestone research where the emphasis has tended to be on the inscription as an object of design, literary curiosity or wit.⁸ In this paper the aesthetic worth or curiosity of the

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

inscription itself has been put to one side in favour of an analysis of the linguistic functions through which inscriptional language *positions* readers within shared systems of assumption and belief. It is through such positioning, particularly in contexts of deep cultural salience (such as cemeteries), that processes of human identity formation or enculturation may be said to occur. This paper is therefore also about such processes as they impacted upon perceptions of Western identity amongst the foreigners⁹ of early nineteenth century South China. The linguistic analysis of sepulchral inscriptions and their role in the construction of the identity of the living is an area which has received little attention to date and this is what recommends the subject to this journal. But before moving to the analysis which this observation suggests, I would like to elaborate briefly on the history of the foreign settlements in China as this forms an important backdrop against which the existence of this cemetery and the memorials of its residents may be brought into greater relief and discussed.

Foreign Communities on the South China Coast 1557-1842

Prior to 1842, and the founding of the British colony of Hong Kong, there had been Western trading communities in South China for many years. In 1557 Portugal had been given leave to occupy the territory now known as Macao, a tiny promontory forming part of the deltaic island of Heungshan at the mouth of the Pearl River, as a reward for clearing the delta of pirates; and from the early 1700s Canton, 50 miles upriver, operated as a commercial clearing house for foreign companies in the China trade, a practice which became formalised as the 'Canton System' after 1757.¹⁰ During the trading season foreign traders and officials were permitted to reside at Canton so long as their stay was temporary. During the off-season from May to July they were required to leave, and most departed to Macao. The main object of the trade under the Canton System was opium; but despite official Chinese disapproval and various Imperial edicts against it, the trade in opium flourished and enormous fortunes were made both by the Western traders and by well-placed Chinese merchants and political

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

functionaries who worked within the system. At Canton the foreign merchants were confined to 'factories' (a type of trading house) along a narrow strip of land on the waterfront outside the city, and their movements were carefully scrutinised and controlled. Foreigners were not permitted to leave the factory compound unattended and were forbidden leave to pass within the perimeter walls. In the compound there were thirteen factories in all, each representing a different nation. They included Swedish, Danish, Dutch, French, American and British concerns. The largest of these was the 'Imperial Factory' of the English East India Company which held a monopoly on the foreign trade to China and through which all the other Western nations and their representatives were required to administer their trading arrangements. In addition to the restrictions on their movements, the foreigners were not permitted to bring their wives or families to Canton with them. In fact, all foreign women were expressly forbidden to travel to Canton, although they were allowed to reside at Macao. The traders and the representatives of Western nations who came to Canton were thus obliged to leave any family members in Macao until such a time as their business was concluded or the trading season came to an end, when they would leave Canton and rejoin them in Macao.

The Portuguese authorities tolerated more than encouraged the influx of foreigners into Macao during the off-season, but over the years, and particularly after 1757, an identifiably Western community of foreign nationals became established here. While it was a small community, numbering not more than 500 persons, not including the members of the Portuguese administration and their families, the main character of this community was European and to a lesser extent American, with the majority of the non-Portuguese Europeans being British. In addition to the merchant traders, ships' captains, missionaries, and their wives and children, there was also anchored around Macao and at points further up the Pearl River a sizeable sea-going community of sailors, soldiers and naval officers who were

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

attached to the mainly British 'men-of-war' which frequently passed through the area on diplomatic and, in later years, military missions.

When a person belonging to one of the 'barbarian' nations died, as the foreigners were known, there were not very many options available for disposing of the body. At sea, the dead would either be launched headlong into the abyss of the ocean, or a funeral party would be despatched to a nearby island where the price of an oblong of ground would be negotiated with a local landowner followed by the burial of the deceased. Over the years the bodies of thousands of foreigners, many the victims of fever and accidents aboard ship, were disposed of in this way at places like Danes Island, French Island, Whampoa, Tung Koo, Capsingmoon and Lintin in the Pearl River. At Macao foreign death created its own special difficulties. Until 1821 the Portuguese authorities did not recognise the rights of non-Catholics to burial in Macao. The reasoning was that Macao was a Catholic territory and only Catholics could be buried in Catholic soil. In practice this regulation was enforced only within the city walls. Followers of other religions and Christian denominations were permitted to bury their dead on the hillsides without, in the open area known as the *Campo* between the northern city wall and the border with China. In 1821, following intensive lobbying of the local Portuguese administration, the English East India Company was given leave to purchase a plot of land within the city walls which in time became the Old Protestant Cemetery of Macao. Mrs Mary Morrison, a cholera victim, and the wife of the Company interpreter and part-time missionary, Dr Robert Morrison, became the first person to be interred here. At the time of her death she was twenty-nine years old. Of the funeral itself, Morrison wrote that:

Mr Livingstone & Mr Pearson, the President and Committee of the English factory,
Mr Urmston; Sir W^m Fraser, &c., bore the Pall. All the Gentlemen of the factory;
also Councillor Pereira; Sir Andrew Ljungstedt; the Russian Consul and other

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

Foreigners in Macao, attended the funeral. Mr Harding Chaplain to the Factory read the funeral service at the grave; and the whole detail of the funeral was conducted with decency and respectability by the English servants of the Factory.¹¹

A few personal reminiscences of the period survive which record people's impressions of the Old Cemetery during the years that it was open. In 1839 an American naval chaplain leaving the capacious gardens of the East India Company's main residence, the *Casa*, behind him wrote of a place 'of yet deeper stillness, soft beauty and death. It is a spot like most of the burial places I have seen in the East, possessing a rural beauty, and still calm, and green richness and softness, which makes you feel that if you were to die abroad you would choose to be placed in such a spot'.¹² The American diarist Rebecca Kinsman, whose husband Nathaniel (d. 1847) is interred here, wrote in 1844, 'I had never seen this burial ground till one evening, when I was out with Capt. Gore and his wife, at the Camoen's Cave Garden.¹³ I proposed to them to go in, as it is very near – and we were very much pleased to find it a sweet, shady, secluded spot, containing many handsome monuments'.¹⁴

The Inscriptions

Let us now turn to the monuments of which Mrs Kinsman speaks. By the time she wrote these words in her diary, the cemetery would have been about half full, and on later walks with other friends and acquaintances it is likely that she will have lingered awhile, like many before and after her, reading the inscriptions on the memorials and reflecting upon the lives of those whom they remembered. Perhaps she felt some solace in the familiar Christian surroundings, such that the tombs and headstones would have reminded her of home.¹⁵ As for the words which she found herself reading, perhaps like many in her position she reflected upon the finality of death, the lives of the persons described, their character and achievements, and the circumstances in which they died. Whether, for example, they had

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

managed to make peace with their maker, to share with their loved ones some final words of comfort and resignation before submitting to God's will. Perhaps she might have felt humility at the sacrifices of some and the bravery of others, righteousness that like the dead beneath her feet hers was the true God forsaking all others, and sorrow that so many had died so young. What she might not have noticed, or been fully aware of, was how the language of the inscriptions was responsible for positioning her to receive these meanings by triggering within her well-choreographed cultural sentiments into which she would have been socialised from birth. These would have informed her that she belonged to this community, if not necessarily by dint of nationality, then by dint of cultural commonality and experience, by being a Christian and a Westerner in a non-Christian and alien land. In respect of the perceived character of the foreign community's Chinese hosts, the following appraisal from the pen of Robert Morrison is not untypical of Western attitudes at the time:

For with all their antiquity, and their literature, and their arts and refinement, they are still infatuated idolaters; they are still given up to what to what Heaven regards as abominable idolatries and to vile affections, working that which is unseemly. Not liking to retain God in their knowledge, they worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator; they are haters of the true God, are filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, and wickedness. With all their civilisation, still envy and malice, deceit and falsehood, to a boundless extent, pride and boasting, a selfish, ungenerous, scarcely honest prudence, and a cold metaphysical inhumanity, are the prevalent characteristics of the people of China. (Robert Morrison, 1835)¹⁶

It is not known whether Mrs Kinsman precisely shared Morrison's opinions, but what is certain is that, like any competent reader, she would have responded to how the wordings of the cemetery's inscriptions suggested certain *dispositions* which she as a Westerner was expected to be able to recognise. Dispositions about, for example, God, love, duty, friendship,

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

life, death, and the Chinese. This expectation existed because, in the minds of the persons responsible for producing the inscriptions, readers like Mrs Kinsman would have been assumed to share them. In this way, in the act of recognising these dispositions, Mrs Kinsman and other readers like her would have had them simultaneously reaffirmed. To examine how these dispositions were cued linguistically, I subjected the inscriptions to a 'corpus-based' linguistic analysis.¹⁷ This involved an examination of the lexical and grammatical themes of the inscriptions (i.e. the words, phrases and grammatical structures) on each of the 161 tombstones erected in the Old Cemetery between 1821 and 1859. To produce the corpus, a web-based concordance was used to sort the inscriptions according to the frequency with which individual words were found to occur.¹⁸ A small number of inscriptions written in European languages other than English, such as French and German, were also entered into the concordance. This generated a corpus for the gravestones of 5782 words with 1410 different word types appearing (including words in other languages). The following is an example of how individual items are listed in it.¹⁹

2462. resignation departed this life after a short **ILLNESS** of 14 hours bearing with her to the GRAVE
2463. BEEN SEVERELY WOUNDED He died after a short **ILLNESS** on the 6.th of Sept.^r 1817 in the 25
2464. died at Macao after a painful and lingering **ILLNESS** SEPTEMBER 25th 1835, AGED 27 YEARS
3431. WARREN Aged 22 Years. Who was **MURDERED** on Board The Schooner "KAPPA" By Chinese

This example shows three incidences of the item 'Illness' and one of 'Murdered' in the corpus. The numbered line in which the item appears is known as a 'token'. In addition to highlighting the word item, each token also reveals the immediate lexical and grammatical environment in which the item occurs. In order to make individual items stand out in the corpus, the key word always appears in capitals and boldface. Apart from this illustrative effect of the programme, the orthographic style of each token reproduces that of the original inscription.²⁰

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

I have adopted a critical discourse model of analysis for dealing with the corpus.²¹ This methodological framework analyses textual data according to discrete categories of meaning and interpretation. Under textual meaning there are 'interpersonal meanings' and 'ideational meanings' to consider. Interpersonal meaning refers to the relationship the text creates with the reader; for example, through making direct reference to the reader using the pronoun 'you' or by including the reader with the writer through the use of 'we'. Interpersonal meaning helps to set the tone of the text, that is, its level of formality. Ideational meaning, for its part, is perhaps the more significant aspect of meaning for this discussion because it refers to assumed shared knowledge between the writer and the reader. Ideational meaning in a text specifically refers to the ideas and assumptions which the text seems to have about the nature of the world, about how it works, and about the people and the things in it that make the world work in the way that it does. Writers assume that they can use this knowledge as an unspoken backdrop against which the story they want to tell can be told. In other words, it fills in the context for the text to make sense. So, when the word 'Remains' is mentioned in an inscription, for example, the reader is not going to think 'What are Remains?' because their ideational knowledge has already filled this in for them, and the writer knows this so he or she does not go to any lengths to explain it. Ideational knowledge is needed for texts to make sense, otherwise they become opaque and difficult to understand. Ideational and interpersonal meaning are significant to the coming discussion and will be referred to at points in order to show how the memorial inscriptions positioned readers, and to describe the assumptions on which key elements of the inscriptions seem to be based. Facilitating the discussion of meaning are two aspects of interpretation: 'representative interpretation' and, incorporated within the latter, 'social interpretation'. The representative interpretation considers the lexical and grammatical features which appear in the inscriptions (i.e. what

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. Markers XXVI. *Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

these are) and the social interpretation the relevant meanings which are associated with them.²²

For the purposes of this analysis, it is important, in the first instance, to distinguish between language used in biblical and literary-type inscriptions, and the inscriptional language which is used elsewhere. Of the 161 markers analysed, twenty seven include a biblical or literary-type inscription, and two of these are in German. These inscriptions account for 280 of the 1409 different words types to be found in the corpus, that is, approximately a fifth. The biblical inscriptions, as might be expected, are preoccupied with references to 'God', 'Heaven', 'Jesus', 'Christ', 'death' and 'resurrection'. The following is from the headstone of Mrs Harriett Duddell (d. 1857), a Hong Kong showroom proprietor, and is representative of this type of dedication: 'FOR IF WE BE DEAD WITH HIM WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM'. This is taken from the Book of Timothy (2:10-12). Others biblical dedications are taken from Psalms, Matthew, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Corinthians and Revelation, but only in six is the precise source given. In comparison with these, the literary-type dedications are fewer in number (10), and the sources of the texts are not given on the tombstones. Four are extracts from famous poetical works – two from Byron, one from Coleridge and another from Thomas Moore.²³ The dedication below, from Coleridge's *Epitaph on an Infant* (1794), is to Thomas Richardson Colledge, who died in 1837, aged 18 months.

ERE SIN COULD BLIGHT OR SORROW FADE
GOD WITH A FATHER'S CARE,
THE OPENING BUD TO HEAVEN CONVEYED
AND BADE IT BLOSSOM THERE

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

Of the other literary-type inscriptions, two are seafaring verses on the headstones of seamen, and four are religious homilies. An example of this latter type can be found on the tomb of young Arthur Urmson, who died in 1854 at the age of just three months. His epitaph informs the reader that “He sleeps under the shadow of the Cross”. Although religious in sentiment, like the other three of this type its source is not biblical. In Urmson’s case his parents have chosen a metaphor which was popular in nineteenth century religious tracts, sermons and funeral addresses.²⁴ The biblical and literary inscriptions suggest a range of ideational themes. These include a desire to communicate the shared certainty of an afterlife and a resignation to the will of God. There is also the implication of a degree of consolation in knowing that the deceased has reached Heaven, is safely protected by his or her faith and will see and meet God. Interpersonally, the inscriptions strike a fairly formal tone which is also inclusive of the reader, particularly in the use of the personal pronouns ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘you’, which are used to appeal to a common ground existing between the reader and the writer. These uses often position the reader as being within the same circle of Christian believers as the memorialiser. For example:

5568. MACAO July 31st 1857, FOR IF **WE** BE DEAD WITH HIM **WE** SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM
5569. And died at Macao 24th October, 1843. *For if **WE** believe that Jesus died & rose again, even so them*
5894. Have toss’d me too and fro By God’s decree **YOU** plainly see I’m anchored here below Where we
5895. September 29 1838 aged 17 months, I SAY UNTO **YOU** THAT IN HEAVEN their angels do always

Taken as a whole, the biblical and literary inscriptions direct the reader towards the certitude of God’s existence and the promise of eternal salvation in exchange for earthly piety and belief.

Representative and Social Interpretation

The lexical and grammatical choices which have been made in the inscriptions can be said to contribute to the impression which the inscriptional language – as a text – has on the reader.

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

A range of dispositional features have been focused upon. These are dealt with under two main headings: 'Adjectives and Nouns', and 'Verb Forms'. The features considered under adjectives and nouns include states of being and transition, and values and beliefs. Under verb forms they include agency, tense, and meaning modification with adverbials. The way in which these features are employed in the inscriptions suggest certain predispositions on the part of the memorialisers in respect of the understandings which they wished to convey.

1. Adjectives and Nouns

Fig. 1 Adjectives and nouns with three or more mentions according to theme

| Values and Beliefs | Time | Place | Relations |
|--|--|---|---|
| Memory 139 Sacred 93 Respect 11 Beloved 8 God 8 Tribute 8 Esteem 7 Token 7 Jesus 6 Lord 6 Affectionate 5 Honble 5 Heaven 5 Service 5 Christ 4 Lamented 4 Royal 4 Testimony 4 Blessed 3 Affection 3 Amiable 3 Hope 3 | Years 93 Aged 93 Late 28 Life 39 Day 10 Age 11 Year 8 Days 7 A. D. 5 Last 3 | Ship 26 On board 13 Barque 5 Fleet 5 Brig 4 Factory 4 Frigate 4 Schooner 3 | Wife 19 Son 15 Daughter 11 Brother 8 Friends 8 Infant 8 Messmates 7 Husband 6 Friend 5 Shipmates 4 Father 3 |
| Status | Memorial Structures | States of Being and Transition | Work |
| Captain 17 Commander 16 Officers 16 Seaman 9 Es 8 Esq 8 Mrs 8 Officer 7 Lieutenant 6 Missionary 6 Capt 5 Native 12 Chief 4 Consul 3 Surgeon 3 | Monument 13 Stone 6 Grave 5 Tomb 5 | Life 39 Remains 13 Dead 3 Death 3 Illness 3 Mortal 3 | Navy 5 Squadron 5 Co 3 Company's 3 Civil Service 3 |

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. Markers XXVI. *Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

In Fig. 1 key adjectives and nouns have been categorised in order of mention. Only items with three or more mentions have been included on the basis that multiple mentions are a form of foregrounding, and therefore seem more indicative of the principal interests of the memorialisers, and by extension of the foreign community at large. The items have been categorised according to theme; these are – *values and beliefs; time; place; relations; status; memorial structures; states of being and transition; and work*. The themes indicate certain preoccupations, for example with regard to the importance of personal status, and the place and nature of the deceased's work. Two of the more prominent themes are 'states of being and transition', and 'values and beliefs'. Let us consider these in turn.

Adjectives and Nouns Indicating States of Being and Transition

States of being and transition, particularly in respect of death, are naturally a predominant theme. That said, the concept of death itself is much more common in verb form – for example, as 'died' (106 in English; 13 in other languages), than it is as an adjective or noun, i.e. 'dead' (3) or 'death' (3), for referring to the quality of not being alive, or non-life in the abstract. 'Death' is included under the theme of 'states of being and transition', along with 'Life' (39), 'Remains' (13), 'Dead' (3), 'Illness' (3), and 'Mortal' (3). These items all have the quality of *passage* about them. Life passes to death – often as a result of illness, and mortality in its affinity to perishability represents the ephemeral nature of the human condition. Life, in other words, is temporary, but the cemetery's memorialisers wish the reader to be reminded that death is not final; the human soul, being immortal, migrates while the earthly body *remains* behind. The use of the noun 'Remains' (13) to refer to that which is left behind after the soul has departed is prominent within the inscriptions and is a nominalisation of the verb 'to remain'.

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

4164. THIS MARBLE IS PLACED OVER HER **REMAINS** BY HER DISCONSOLATE HUSBAND AS A
4165. Macao Roads *on the 21.st of September 1825 Aged 21 And whose REMAINS lay interred on this Spot.*
4166. Here lie the **REMAINS** of Andrew Ljungstedt Knight of Wasa Scholar and Philanthropist. He was born
4167. HERE LIE THE **REMAINS** OF HENRY JAMES OSBORNE 4TH Son of Geo Osborne Esqur.
4168. THE **REMAINS** OF EDMUND ROBERTS ESQ SPECIAL DIPLOMATIC AGENT OF THE UNITED
4169. THE **REMAINS** OF ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL ESQ WHO DIED AT MACAO IN THE COMMAN
4170. IN THE VAULT BENEATH LIE THE **REMAINS** OF G. W. HARRISON Midshipman U. S. Navy
4171. Obiit 25.th May 1836 *ÆTAT. 31 YEARS* THE **REMAINS** OF HER SISTER MRS DURANT ARE
4172. HERE LIE THE **REMAINS** OF CHRISTIAN CATHRO Spouse of JOHN WALKER (Bombay Country
4173. To the grief of the disconsolate Husband and Sons here lieth the Mortal **REMAINS**, of M^{RS} DISHKO
4174. BENEATH THIS SARCOPHAGUS ARE DEPOSITED THE **REMAINS** OF DANIEL BEALE ES^{QR}.
4175. HERE LIE THE MORTAL **REMAINS** OF SANDWITH B. DRINKER A NATIVE OF Philadelphia
4176. WHO DIED AUGUST 24.th 1842 *This Stone Was Placed over his REMANS*²⁵ BY HIS SHIPMATES

The effect of this usage is to reinforce and affirm the reader's belief in the afterlife. The textual function of 'Remains' is ideational; its purpose is to neutralise the threat which the corruption of the body presents to the soul after death, and to impress upon the reader the conviction that the true meaning of life lies beyond the body; that is, *outside* human existence.

Adjectives and Nouns Indicating Values and Beliefs

The largest grouping amongst the adjectives and nouns are those which seem to indicate types of value and belief, or social disposition. The list in the table at Fig. 2 incorporates the adjectives and nouns in this category from the table in Fig. 1. To these have been added further items from the full corpus which appear relevant to it. These have been further classified according to three ideational subcategories – *Faith*, *Sentiment* and *Duty*, as these seem to be the principal themes into which this dispositional lexis may be organised. A difference between the table in Fig. 2 and the table in Fig. 1 is that for many items numbers have also been included in rounded brackets. The bracketed numbers indicate the number of times an item appears in either a biblical or a literary-type inscription, or possibly both. For example, there are 8 occurrences of 'God' in the corpus, and the table shows that all 8 are to be found within this group.

Fig. 2 Dispositions – adjectives and nouns denoting values and beliefs

| Faith | Sentiment | Duty |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Sacred 93 | Memory 138 | Service 5 |
| God 8 (8) | Respect 11 | Testimony 4 |
| Lord 7 (7) | Beloved 8 | Labour 2 (1) |
| Jesus 6 (4) | Tribute 8 | Zealous 2 |
| Heaven 5 (5) | Esteem 7 | Acting [resident] 1 |
| Christ 4 (4) | Token [of | Advancement 1 |
| Sav(i)our 3 (3) | respect/regard] 7 | Arduous [duties] 1 |
| Holy 2 (1) | Affectionate 5 | Care 1 (1) |
| Name (of God) 2 (2) | Honble 5 | Conduct 1 |
| Peace 2 (2) | Lamented 4 | Consent 1 |
| Truth 2 | Blessed 3 (1) | Devoted 1 |
| Way 2 (2) | Hope 3 | Disposition 1 |
| Victory 2 (2) | Affection 3 | Energies 1 |
| Redeemer 2 | Amiable 3 | Exemplary 1 |
| Resurrection 2 | Brave 2 (2) | Fervent 1 |
| Christian 1 | Devoted 2 | Instruction 1 |
| Cross 1 (1) | Disconsolate 2 | Upright 1 |
| Glorious 1 (1) | Fond 2 | [In the] Command of 2 |
| Incorruptible 1 (1) | Good 2 (1) | |
| Father 1 (1) | Happy 2 (1) | |
| Father's 1 (1) | Humble 2 | |
| Heathen 1 (1) | Kind 2 | |
| Angels 1 (1) | Sincere 2 | |
| Belief 1 | Regard 2 | |
| Faith's 1 | Worth 2 | |
| Funeral cry 1 (1) | Amity 1 | |
| God's 1 (1) | Bereaved 1 | |
| Light 1 (1) | Calm 1 (1) | |
| Last Trump 1 (1) | Confident 1 | |
| Shadow 1 (1) | Dear 1 | |
| Sin 1 (1) | Deserving 1 | |
| Spirit (1) | Distinguished 1 | |
| Spirit's 1 | Esteemed 1 | |
| Triumph 1 (1) | | |

(i) Faith

The table shows that references to faith are largely a property of biblical and literary-type inscriptions. There are only a small number of faith items which are to be found in other contexts. These are 'Belief', 'Christian', 'Faith', 'Holy', 'Jesus', 'Redeemer', 'Resurrection', 'Sacred' and 'Truth'. Of these, only 'Holy' and 'Jesus' appear in both biblical and literary-type inscriptions and in the wider corpus. An example of each follows:

1096. He died in the confident **BELIEF** of that truth which for so many years he affectionately & faithfully
 1433. As a Man he was amiable & affectionate, As a **CHRISTIAN** upright, sincere, & humble-minded;
 2003. SHE DEPARTED THIS LIFE young in years but full of hope and **FAITH** in her REDEEMER
 2412. laboured alone on a Chinese version of THE **HOLY** SCRIPTURES which he was spared to see
 2712. He sweetly slept in **JESUS**. *He was born at Morpeth in Northumberland January 5th 1782 Was sent*

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

4150. spent in extending the Kingdom of the blessed **REDEEMER**, during which period he completed and
4204. HERE RESTS In the hope Of a joyful **RESURRECTION** The Mortal part of GEORGE CRUTTENDE
4323. **SACRED** TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. ELIZABETH C. VROOMAN WIFE OF REV. DANIEL
5406. 19.th June 1848 She was a native of Fifeshire, Scotland, and a humble witness of the **TRUTH**.

A notable aspect of these faith references is that they are confined to a small number of tombstones. For example, tokens 1096 and 1433 are both from the tomb of the missionary Samuel Dyer (d. 1843),²⁶ and 2412, 2712 and 4150 are all from Robert Morrison's. It is also noticeable that 'Redeemer' appears in addition to 'Faith' in token 2003. This excerpt is from the tomb of Mrs Christian Cathro Walker, who died in 1838. Token 5406 is from the tomb of Margaret Hutchison (d. 1848), who in addition to being 'a humble witness of the truth',

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
THE REV.^D SAMUEL DYER
Protestant Missionary to the Chinese
Who for 16 years devoted all his energies
to the advancement of the Gospel.
among the emigrants from China
settled in Pinang Malacca & Singapore.
As a Man, he was amiable & affectionate,
As a Christian, upright, sincere, & humble-minded;
As a Missionary devoted, zealous & indefatigable.
He spared neither time, nor labour, nor property,
in his efforts to do good for his fellowmen.
He died in the confident belief of that truth
which for so many years he affectionately & faithfully
preached to the Heathen.
He was born 20th February 1804.
was sent to the East by the London Missionary Society in 1827
And died at Macao 24th October, 1843.
-
*For if we believe that Jesus died & rose again,
even so them also which sleep in Jesus
will God bring with him.*

shares with both Morrison and Dyer the distinction of sleeping 'in Jesus'. Indeed, the tombs of both Morrison and Dyer, relative to the other memorials in the cemetery, seem to be responsible for a disproportionate number of the faith and sentiment lexical items in the corpus. That Dyer and Morrison were both religionists as well as noteworthy biblical scholars would

seem to explain this. Their reward was that their memorial inscriptions are amongst the most lengthy and didactic in the cemetery. Dyer's inscription confers many positive qualities upon him and incorporates all three of the ideational themes of faith, sentiment and duty. Like the tombs of Morrison, his wife Mary and a small number of others – military in the main – Dyer's inscription is an exemplar of the emotional psychology of the foreign community that inhabited this corner of South China in the first half of the nineteenth century. Not only does

it combine faith, sentiment and duty, but in the choice of the word 'Heathen' it also disparages the unbelieving Chinese. Dyer's inscription is therefore a model of sorts for the emotions to which the less grandiloquent cemetery inscriptions aspired. Although most of these other inscriptions are less prolix, usually for the dual reasons of the costs involved and the lesser personal distinction of the deceased, the majority seem to exhibit a markedly similar dispositional range in the lexical choices that they make. This is a feature which clearly comes through in the corpus.

(ii) Sentiment

By far the largest grouping under values and belief are adjectives and nouns which suggest human sentiments. For example, adjectives like 'Beloved' (8), 'Affectionate' (5), and 'Devoted' (2), and nouns like 'Respect' (11), 'Tribute' (8) and 'Esteem' (7). A notable feature of these choices is the surfeit of emotion which they encode and which they project onto their readers. The immediate explanation is that these items serve to emphasise the pain and sorrow of absence which is experienced by the living when someone close to them dies. A less obvious explanation is that the loss may also be understood as a bereavement of memory,²⁷ that is, as a negation of new memories of the deceased. The fact of death has the consequence that this type of memory can no longer be formed. Bereaved memory is thus what is left to those whose life is extant at the time of another's death, and it is in the passage from living memory to bereaved memory that human beings become mourners; not only for the loss of another's life, but also more especially for the loss of their ability to create new memories of the person who has died.

(iii) Duty

Under this category we find items which are suggestive of acts of personal sacrifice and commitment, for example in the interests one's faith, country or personal relations; the

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. Markers XXVI. *Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

epitaphs of missionaries, military officers and wives are good examples. Memorial inscriptions which contain one or more lexical items in this category have the interpersonal effect of instructing the reader in the importance of hard work, commitment and devotion to a good greater than the self. Ideationally, lexis related to duty has the purpose of orienting the

IN MEMORY
OF ELIZABETH FEARON, WHOSE TRULY AMIABLE
DISPOSITION HAD ENDEARED HER TO ALL WHO KNEW
HER,
AND WHOSE CONDUCT AS A WIFE AND MOTHER
DURING AN
UNION OF
20 YEARS WAS MOST EXEMPLARY. THIS MONUMENT
IS ERECTED BY HER SORROWING HUSBAND
Llewelyn & Co
-
"THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY:
BLESSED BE HIS HOLY NAME."
-
BORN IN LONDON
22 OCTOBER 1794

DIED AT LINTIN
31 MARCH 1838

reader towards an approved model of social conduct in the progress of one's life. That it should, for instance, involve institutional loyalty and dedication, and the setting of an example to others, The memorial inscriptions and the structures on which they appear act as *traces*

and *cues* for these constructs, which in the process of being triggered are thereby simultaneously reaffirmed. In this way, in common with the other lexical themes, the lexis of duty plays an inculcating role as a mechanism of identity formation and practice. The above inscription is from the tomb of Mrs Elizabeth Fearon, whose husband, Christopher, was an opium merchant.²⁸ Elizabeth Fearon's grave is marked by a plain box tomb.²⁹ In Mrs Fearon's case the institution to which she devoted herself was that of marriage, in which, according to her memorial, she excelled both as a wife and as a mother. In the words of the inscription, '[her] conduct ... during an union of 20 years was most exemplary' (*sic*). By this account Mrs Fearon, like many of the other women buried in the cemetery, is attributed with qualities which correspond to an ideal vision of wifely duty and with which readers of her memorial are being invited to concur. The conferral of attributes upon women and actions upon men is significantly marked in the cemetery epitaphs.

2. Verb Forms

Fig.3 Verbal lexis according to theme

| Active agency | | | Passive agency |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Died 120 (1) | Deplore 1 | Sleep 1 (1) | Erected 43 |
| [Was] Born 38 | Devised 1 | Slept 1 | Lamented 6 |
| Departed 37 | Devoted 1 | [He] Spared 1 | Beloved 5 |
| D.[ied] 6 | [Had] Endeared 1 | Spent 1 | Interred 3 |
| Lie 6 | Erects 1 | Took Place 1 | Esteemed 2 |
| Knew 5 | Executed 1 | [Have] Toss'd 1 (1) | Loved 2 |
| Rests 5 | Fade 1 (1) | Weeps 1 (1) | Placed 2 |
| Die 3 (3) | Follow 1 (1) | | Regretted 2 |
| Lies 3 | Founded 1 | | [Was] Sent 2 |
| Rest 3 (1) | Giveth 1 (1) | | [Was] Spared 1 |
| Arrived 2 | Labour'd 1 | | Anchored 1 (1) |
| [Have] Caused 2 | Lament 1 | | Called 1 |
| Come 2 (2) | Lieth 1 | | Circulated 1 |
| Completed 2 | Live 1 (1) | | Contracted 1 |
| [Have] Erected 2 | Lived 1 | | Deposited 1 |
| Fell asleep 2 | [To] Love 1 (1) | | Destined 1 |
| Gave 2 (2) | Meet 1 (1) | | Drowned 1 |
| See 2 (1) | Opened 1 (1) | | Driven 1 (1) |
| Sleeps 2 (1) | Passed 1 | | [Are] Felt 1 |
| [Hath] Taken Away 2 (2) | Perished 1 | | [Are] Furl'd 1 (1) |
| Assisted 1 | Pray 1 (1) | | Inscribed 1 |
| Bade 1 (1) | Preached 1 | | [Be] Made 1 (1) |
| Believe 1 (1) | Published 1 | | Murdered 1 |
| Blight 1 (1) | [Has] Reached 1 | | [Be] Put 1 (1) |
| Blossom 1 (1) | Ride 1 (1) | | [Be] Raised 1 (1) |
| Blows 1 (1) | Rose 1 (1) | | [Is] Reached 1 |
| Bring 1 (1) | Saith 1 (1) | | Received 1 |
| Cometh 1 (1) | Say 1 (1) | | Settled 1 |
| Commenced 1 | Serve 1 (1) | | Taken 1 (1) |
| Conveyed 1 (1) | [Has] Served 1 | | Wounded 1 |
| Depart 1 | Set Sail 1 (1) | | |
| Imperatives | Truth claims | Modifiers | Present participles |
| Behold 1 (1) | Is 24 (7) | Deeply 4 | Belonging 2 |
| Rest 1 | Be 10 (6) | Deservedly 2 | Bearing 1 |
| Suffer 1 (1) | Shall 5 (5) | Truly 2 | Anticipating 1 |
| Tell 1 (1) | Are 5 (3) | Cheerfully 1 | Believing 1 |
| Watch 1 (1) | Have [caused/erected/ toss'd] 5 (1) | Faithfully 1 | Commanding 1 |
| | Do [follow/... behold/ good] 3 (2) | Fitly 1 (1) | Composing 1 |
| | May [rest/he rest/the stranger ... pray] 3 (1) | Gallantly 1 | Deserving 1 |
| | Know 2 (2) | Plainly 1 (1) | Extending 1 |
| | [God] Doeth [it] 2 (2) | Quickly 1 (1) | Lingering 1 |
| | Has [reached/served] 2 | Safely 1 (1) | Living 1 |
| | Hath [taken away] 2 (1) | Severely 1 | Opening 1 |
| | Had been 1 | Sincerely 1 | Leaving 1 |
| | Had endeared 1 | Suddenly 1 | Setting up 1 |
| | Can [be put] 1 (1) | Sweetly 1 | Storming 1 |
| | Could [blight] 1 | Unhappily 1 | |
| | Didst [it] 1 (1) | Universally 1 | |
| | Should [fear] 1 (1) | | |
| | Will [God bring] 1 (1) | | |
| | Must [set sail] 1 (1) | | |
| | I'm [anchored] 1 | | |

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. Markers XXVI. *Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

Within the category of verbal lexis the principal focus of interest are the main verbs and how these seem to cue certain dispositional perspectives on the part of the reader, while also acting as a trace of the ideational preoccupations of the memorialisers. In relation to the grammatical environment, the focus is on the structural character of the inscriptions with reference to features such as agency and tense. Some of the more obvious aspects of the verbal lexis, such as the use of 'Died' and verbs for indicating the cause of death have already been commented upon. Now let us consider the verbal lexis more closely by taking a similar approach as was done for the nouns and adjectives. This will enable us to see what the principal verb forms are which appear in the memorials and, as before, to categorise them.

The table in Fig. 3 (above) includes all the verb forms which have been identified in the cemetery inscriptions. As before, numbers in rounded brackets show whether these items appear in either a biblical or a literary context. In the table the verbal lexis has been taken to include main verbs and derivatives of them, such as adverbs and present participle 'ing' forms. These have been categorised according to grammatical theme. From the table it can be seen that the verbal lexis has been divided into six principal categories: active agency; passive agency; imperatives; truth claims and auxiliaries; modifiers; and present participles. It is not possible to deal with all of these categories here and so this discussion will concern itself only with indicating certain key elements. These relate to agency, truth and modification.

Agency in Active Clauses

By far the largest category in the verbal lexis involves usages where it is possible to identify a subject agent that is working on the main verb. In the following corpus excerpt, the verbs have been highlighted in addition to their subjects.

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

2259. the blessed REDEEMER during which period **HE completed** and **published** A DICTIONARY OF TH
2265. Testimony of his Worth AND THEIR REGRET. **HE died** in Macao Roads. September 9th 1823. *Aged*
2270. 14th January 1844 In the 31Year of his Age **HE lived** beloved and respected and **died** lamented by all
4519. LOVED BY ALL FOR HER INESTIMABLE WORTH **SHE DEPARTED** THIS LIFE ON THE 18TH.
5617. W. RIDDLES MASTER MARINER **WHO DEPARTED** THIS LIFE. AUGUST 21st, 1856, AGED 41
5659. infant son of ANTHONY S. AND HARRIET DANIELL **WHO died** at Macao MAY 15th 1836. AGED
5592. Canton August, 1st. 1834. Blessed are the dead **WHICH die** in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the

A variation on this is when the agent is 'dislocated' to the right of the main verb and the verb complement (usually a demonstrative or a prepositional phrase) is placed before it.

2895. IN THE VAULT BENEATH **LIE** THE REMAINS OF G. W. HARRISON Midshipman U. S. Navy
2897. ICI **REPOSE** MARGARET BOVET AUSSI UNIVERSELLEMENT, AIMEE ESTIMEE & RESPEC³⁰
4202. HERE **RESTS** In the hope Of a joyful Resurrection The Mortal part of GEORGE CRUTTENDEN
4429. Spier **SCHLUMMERT** CHRISTIAN JOHANN FRIEDRICH JPLAND Geboran zu Apenrade den 30

This order reverses the more usual order in English, French and German, in which the subject is placed before the verb and an object or verb complement is placed after it. Hence, rather than, 'IN THE VAULT BENEATH LIE THE REMAINS OF G. W. HARRISON', a more standard formulation would be, 'THE REMAINS OF G. W. HARRISON LIE IN THE VAULT BENEATH'.

Token 4429 is an extract from an epitaph in German. The full text reads, 'Spier Schlummert CHRISTIAN JOHANN FRIEDRICH JPLAND Geboran zu Apenrade den 30 Juni 1818 Gestorben Macao den 5 October 1857', which translates in English as 'Here sleeps Christian Johann Friedrich Jpland Born at Apenrade the 30 June 1818 Died Macao the 5 October 1857'. The demonstrative 'Here' which also appears in tokens 2897 and 4202, when it takes the subject position, is noticeable for being mostly collocated with the verb 'Lie' (9), in the singular and the plural, as in 'Here lies X' and 'Here lie the remains of X'. Other combinations include 'Here Rests' (5 in total – 2 in German, 1 in Dutch, 1 in Latin, 1 in English), and in Jpland's memorial, 'Here Sleeps' (1), all in the singular. These are common

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

collocations in Victorian cemeteries. Variations on the theme of repose include the metaphor 'Fell asleep' (2) and the antiquated 'Lieth', as in, 'Here Lieth the Mortal Remains' (1). These usages all project onto the reader the ideational notion of death as a temporary repose from which the dead will one day wake. According to the Christian tradition this occurs on the day of judgement at the end of the world (*cf.* Rev. 20: 12-13). It is therefore in the linguistic projection of cemeteries as 'waiting rooms' and 'places of rest' that a belief in resurrection is ideationally posited to the reader. It is a function of this usage that this should be its effect, and in this way, for the faithful, this belief is reaffirmed.

It is not surprising to find that a large number the subject references in the corpus are to the deceased, who when alive 'Devised', 'Devoted' and 'Executed', and now in death 'Lies', 'Sleeps' and 'Rests'. Less expected, is that references to women as subject agents of a main verb are confined to 'Departed' (2) and 'Died' (1). If participle 'ing' forms are included, women are also to be found 'anticipating [a mother's joy]', 'bearing [with her to the grave]' and 'believing [on her Saviour]' (*sic*). The first and second of these latter examples come from the tomb of Mary Morrison; the last from that of Mary Sutherland Clark (d. 1858). This lack of agency is in contrast to men who are given much more active roles in the inscriptions.

2257. of that truth which for so many years **HE** affectionately & faithfully preached to the HEATHEN.

2258. 1857, AGED 31 YEARS. **HE** ASSISTED IN SETTING UP THE FIRST MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH

2259. during which period **HE** completed and published A DICTIONARY OF THE CHINESE LANGUAGE,

2260. 12TH 1836 AET. 50 **HE** devised and executed for their law under instruction from his government

2273. As a missionary devoted, zealous & indefatigable. **HE** spared neither time, nor labour, nor property

1476. MEMORY OF CAPTAIN WILLIAM MORGAN late **COMMANDING** the British Ship General Wood

1987. of twenty-seven years cheerfully spent in **EXTENDING** the Kingdom of the blessed REDEEMER,

4663. from the effects of a wound received while gallantly **STORMING** the enemy's battery at CANTON.

It might be argued that the reason for this difference is that there are fewer women than men in the cemetery – twenty seven if children are not counted. But a much more likely explanation is that the inscriptions simply reflect the social reality of the time, which was that

outside marriage and motherhood women were not expected to have independent roles. This is also the reason why references to women in the inscriptions are almost wholly focused on their attributes as wives and as mothers rather than anything else.

Truth Claims: Aspect, Tense and Reference

All clausal grammatical structures encode some form of 'truth claim'. This means that the form of a verb which is chosen by a text producer is revealing of the text-producer's attitude towards the meaning content which a sentence or utterance articulates. For example, if the text producer says, 'Happy is he who dies in the Lord', this entails something different to, 'He is dying happily in the Lord'. The first tells us that the speaker considers that the action being described is universally true. The second tells us that the action being described relates to some moments 'around now' and that the speaker expects the action to be a transient one. In descriptive grammars this property of language is sometimes referred to as 'aspect'.³¹ Aspect is often related to notions of completion, routine, temporariness, activity and prediction in the selection of tenses, whether present, past or future. Aspects suggest an attitude towards truth on the part of the language user, who makes a choice between grammatical forms in order to express the meaning he or she wishes to convey.³² In this respect, aspects are each interpretations of reality from the perspective of the language user, that is, of how the user sees the reality he or she wishes to describe.

In the table in Fig. 3 the verb forms which have this type of interpretative effect are listed under the heading 'truth claims'. These forms are, with a few exceptions, responsible for articulating the aspect interests of the text producer within the clauses in which they appear. They include instances of proclamation and of prophecy. Proclamation is articulated, for example, through the *present perfect tense* in the passage, 'The Lord gave and the Lord *hath taken away*', where 'hath taken' operates as an act of news giving or proclamation to the

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

reader. Similarly, in the passage, 'their characters as deserving Seamen *have caused* the name of his Fellow sufferers to be inscribed on his tomb', this news giving effect of the present perfect tense is evident again. Prophecy, on the other hand, is cued by means of the auxiliary 'Shall', in passages such as:

4513. FOR IF WE BE DEAD WITH HIM WE **SHALL** ALSO LIVE WITH HIM

4514. I know that whatsoever God doeth, it **SHALL** be for ever

4515. In a moment at the last trump,- The dead **SHALL** be raised incorruptible.

4516. THEY **SHALL** WALK WITH ME IN WHITE. Rev. 3. 4.

The prophetic use of 'Shall' for referring to the future is a special type of truth claim because the claim it articulates is universalising, that is, its intention is that it should be interpreted as being valid in all circumstances and for the rest of time. This universalising property is also shared with certain uses of the *present simple tense*, especially with the verb 'to be' (e.g. Women *are* the fairer sex; Hong Kong *is* an indivisible part of China). It is through prophetic 'Shall' and, more commonly, the present simple tense, that universalising truth claims are expressed.³³ In the inscriptions claims of this sort can be found in religious passages such as 'Heaven is a Happy Land', 'There is a tear for all that die', 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord' and 'As for God his way is perfect'.³⁴ It is the present simple form of the verb 'Be' which makes these claims universal. Universalising truth claims, if not prophetic, are always expressed through the present simple tense due, in part, to the cultural association which this tense has with the articulation of truths in science and canonical law. This association makes the claims of the present simple tense, when it is used in this manner, difficult to contest because they are by definition unarguable.

Complementing these types of truths are 'exophoric' (i.e. referring outside) uses of the definite article '*the*' to refer to a known world, and to assumed ideational concepts, meanings and beliefs in that world. These include references to 'The Blessed Redeemer', 'The Lord',

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

‘The Son of Man’, ‘The Father which is in Heaven’, ‘The Gospel’, ‘The Holy Scriptures’, ‘The Cross’, ‘The Dead’, ‘The Deceased’, ‘The East’, ‘The Empire of China’, ‘The China Seas’, ‘The Chinese’, ‘The Chinese Language’, and to institutional groupings such as ‘The British Fleet’, ‘The Honourable East India Company’, and ‘The Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca’. These references can be seen to cover assumed shared knowledge and understandings of faith, religious symbolism, death, geography, institutions and the Chinese, who, apart from references to ‘China’ and ‘the Chinese’, are also projected as ‘the enemy’ and ‘the Heathen’ in the inscriptions.³⁵

4846. Fitzgerald, who died of a wound received while gallantly storming **THE enemy’s** battery at CANTON.
4861. belief of that truth which for so many years he affectionately and faithfully preached to **THE Heathen**.

Modification with Adverbs

The final category in this analysis concerns the adverbial items which modify verb forms in clauses. This category is reproduced in the table below (Fig. 4). In this table the lexical items which have been affected by the modifier are indicated in square brackets.

Fig. 4 Modifiers

| | |
|--|---|
| Deeply [Lament/Lamented] 4 | Safely [Ride] 1 (1) |
| Deservedly [Lamented] 2 | Severely [Wounded] 1 |
| Truly [Amiable/Respected/Regretted] 2 | Sincerely [... Lamented] 1 |
| Cheerfully [Spent] 1 | Suddenly [... Departed] 1 |
| Faithfully [Preached] 1 | Sweetly [Slept] 1 |
| Fitly [May the Stranger ... Pray] 1 (1) | Unhappily [Perished] 1 |
| Gallantly [Storming] 1 | Universally [Loved, Esteemed and Respected ... as Regretted] 1 |
| Plainly [See] 1 (1) | |
| [Behold I Come] Quickly 1 (1) | |

As their name suggests, the purpose of modifiers is to modify the meaning of the items to which they are applied. In most cases the item is a verb form; for example, ‘Suddenly Departed’, ‘Unhappily Perished’, etc. In these two examples the adverbs tell us something additional about the acts of departing and perishing. But adverbs also modify adjectives and adjective-noun combinations as well. Elizabeth Fearon’s tomb tells the reader that she had a

‘truly amiable disposition’. In this phrase the adverb ‘truly’ modifies ‘amiable disposition’ by intensifying Mrs Fearon’s amiability. In this intensifying effect there is the sense that we are gaining access to a higher order of amiableness, that is, to a purer, more concentrated, and truer understanding of the term. In this example, the selection of ‘truly’ as the modifier particularly has this effect due to its association with absolutes – e.g. ‘truly awful’, ‘truly delicious’, etc. But this property is not only confined to ‘truly’, it is common to all intensifying adverbials. The movement of the adverbial towards purity in meaning is not unlike the migration of the soul towards salvation. Where the adverbial longs for the presence of pure meaning, the soul longs for the presence of the Redeemer. There is an appropriate symmetry in this which seems less than contingent.

Conclusion

This paper has been about a linguistic analysis of tombstone inscriptions. At a related level it has also been about processes of Western identity formation in early nineteenth century South China. Its route into this has been through the texts which foreigners living in the region inscribed upon the tombstones of their dead. I have attempted to show that in their desire to memorialise the dead these persons also imparted something of themselves in the inscriptions which they caused to be cut. They did this because language use carries within it certain constraints on how meaning can be constructed and expressed – a grammar must be employed, tenses and wordings must be selected, positions must be taken up. In making these decisions, producers of texts leave traces of the assumptions and predispositions which lie behind their choices. At the same time these traces cue corresponding dispositions which are to be taken up by readers. I have shown how these traces and cues are encoded in the discourse choices of the memorialisers’ texts. Equally, and this is crucial, the constraints within which the traces are realised and the cues taken up are to a great extent unconsciously entered into; that is, they are an accepted part of the linguistic patterning of language, and

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

thus also of texts. It is in the act of constructing and processing texts that these constraints and these positions are adopted. Writers do this by making selections from the linguistic repertoires available to them, and readers do this by adopting the position which will best enable them to process the text. This positioning is largely unconscious because as writers and as readers we have been socially conditioned to do this, and so we are able to take up these positions without really having to think too much about them, but take them up we must if meaning is successfully to be created and conveyed.

Meaning construction between writers and readers is in some ways like a carefully-choreographed waltz to which each partner knows the steps but without really understanding or being overly concerned with how they learned them. By coming together the partners reproduce the steps and so reproduce the waltz in addition to their roles as partners in it. What this paper has attempted to show is how the production of identity involves this type of mutual choreography, but of meaning rather than dance. In the circumstances of South China in the early nineteenth century there were many systems of meaning which foreigners entered into. The most significant of these were those systems which conferred upon them the sense of belonging to a group with shared cultural assumptions and beliefs. To be 'Western' in South China it was not enough simply to be a foreigner, although that was a start, you also had to partake in social practices which identified you as one, whether that meant wearing a frock coat, breeches and a white cravat;³⁶ dining 'Western style'; attending social functions; or, in our case, visiting cemeteries. In all of these practices foreigners were involved in acts of positioning, either as creators or receivers of meaning, and through which they not only became Western, but also sought and received affirmation of that fact.

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

Fundamental to the systems of meaning surrounding death in this period were the inscriptions which foreigners placed upon the tombs and headstones of their dead. In their construction, foreign burial grounds were Western spaces to which foreigners would repair in the immediate aftermath of another's death. Rather than being a peripheral space for disposing of dead persons, the Old Cemetery was, in the vicarious circumstances of death in China in the nineteenth century, an inevitable focal point for foreigners to gather and commune. On other occasions foreign graveyards might be visited for the purpose of paying one's respects, or as often seemed to happen in contemporary accounts, for the quiet and contemplative pleasure they afforded the visitor, as well as for the curiosity of the fact that they were there at all. But as I have attempted to demonstrate, this is not all that foreign graveyards were, because in the act of visiting them foreigners would also have found themselves reading the inscriptions, and for this reason so did they unconsciously reengage with the processes of positioning into which they had been habituated. By retracing these culturally familiar steps they therefore in some manner reproduced themselves and the community to which they belonged.

This paper has been focused on the inscriptions which were recorded on the tombstones of the Old East India Company Cemetery at Macao between 1821 and 1859. The Old Cemetery was, and still is, a preeminent foreign burial ground for being one of the first of its kind in China to be enclosed. It is also probably the only pre-1840 foreign cemetery in China which survives where it was founded, the others having been moved at best, or erased by politics and time. The linguistic analysis shows that in respect of the inscriptions which appear the cemetery exhibits a range of meanings which were important to the community it served. These are in the main centred upon a belief in God, resurrection and salvation, but also include shared understandings of the importance of particular social values and beliefs in the conduct of one's life. It has been argued that the linguistic patterning of the memorial

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

inscriptions is responsible for the way in which these shared dispositions are suggested and simultaneously reproduced, and that this patterning is especially noticeable in the grammatical choices concerning agency, tense, exophoric reference and modification. To facilitate this analysis a corpus-based analysis has been adopted which has made it possible to identify the principal lexical and grammatical themes on the tombstones, in addition to some thematic aspects of meaning which might otherwise not be so readily apparent, such as the inanimate use of 'which' to refer to the dead, the notions of journey and transference in respect of references to death and deity, and the symmetries which seem to exist between adverbial modification and conceptions of Christian deliverance and eternal life.

Visitors to the *Praça Luis de Camões* may still pass through the cemetery gate and descend to the graveyard below; there they will find the sepulchres much as they were in 1859. If the caller reflects for a while, they will see that Braga was only partly correct. Looking at these gravestones and reading their inscriptions, they will realise that not only do the dead who 'yet speak' lie beneath their feet, they also lie in different lands. It was these others, now long departed, who mostly arranged for these structures to be erected and for their inscriptions to be inscribed. Although they are no longer present, either geographically or corporeally, these persons also speak; – their Being, and that of the persons who lie here, continues to permeate this space. Visitors might wish to think on this, for to tarry here awhile is to depart with at least some of that Being within them.

Notes and References

¹ Braga, J. M. (1940). *The Tomb-Stones in the English Cemeteries at Macao*. Macao: Macao Economic Services Department. (p. 4). The biblical reference is to Hebrews, 11: 3-5.

² The earlier date appears to be a reference to the British government's renewal of the Company's charter to trade in China. See Ride, L. (1963). *The Old Protestant Cemetery in Macao: A Lecture Delivered on 7 May*,

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

1962. *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3, 9-35 (p. 14); also Ride. (1996). *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao*. Bernard Mellor (Ed.). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. (p. 64).

³ Harriet Low, a bright and vivacious young woman from Salem, Massachusetts, lived in Macao with her uncle and aunt from 1829-1834, and kept a detailed daily journal of her life. George Chinnery was a regular visitor and in 1833 he painted the portrait of her which is now in the Peabody Museum. In addition to knowing Chinnery, Harriet Low made the acquaintance of many others who, with Chinnery, later became residents of the Old Cemetery, including Robert Morrison, Sir Andrew Ljungstedt and Elizabeth Fearon. She quite broke the heart of the East India Company Chaplain, George Harvey Vachell, by spurning his advances. Between 1829 to 1838 Vachell officiated over nineteen burials in the cemetery. See Ride (op cit). *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao*. (p. 38 & passim). For personal recollections of Chinnery, see Hodges, N. P., & Hummell, A. W. (Eds.). (2002). *Lights and Shadows of a Macao Life: The Journal of Harriet Low, Travelling Spinster*; (2 vols.) Woodinville, WA: The History Bank; also Hunter, W. C. (1885). *Bits of Old China*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co. (pp. 264-75).

⁴ There is even a gravestone marked 1889. This commemorates the infant Agnes Gilman, the daughter of American missionaries based in Hainan. Her short epitaph has not been included in this analysis.

⁵ Not including Agnes Gilman's. See note 4.

⁶ For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that in the 1970s the gravestones of a number persons who had been buried on hillsides outside the city walls were relocated here. Some of these go back to the late 1700s. The figure of 161 therefore only includes tombstones which were in situ between 1821 and 1859. It should also be noted that a small number of these 161 were themselves relocated from other places in Macao shortly after 1821. For this reason it is possible to find amongst this group markers with earlier dates on them. The earliest of these commemorates the American merchant George W. Biddle, who died in 1811. The inscriptions on these pre-1821 markers have all been included in this analysis.

⁷ The terms 'West', 'Western' and 'Westerner' when used in this paper refer to the regions of Europe and North America or to persons of that origin. See also note 9.

⁸ See Walker, G. A. (1839). *Gatherings from Graveyards*. London: Longman & Co.; Cansick, F. T. (1869-72). *A collection of curious and interesting epitaphs: copied from the monuments of distinguished and noted characters in the ancient church and burial grounds of Saint Pancras, Middlesex*; (2 vols.) London: J.R. Smith; Holmes, B. (1896). *The London Burial Grounds*. New York: Macmillan & Co.; Andrews, W. (1899). *Curious*

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. *Markers XXVI. Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

Epitaphs. London: W. Andrews & Co.; Burgess, F. (1963). *English Churchyard Memorials*. London: Lutterworth.

⁹ Unless the context suggests otherwise, the terms 'Foreign' and 'Foreigner' when used in this paper refer to persons and things originating in, or having some relationship to, Europe or North America. *See also* note 7.

¹⁰ *See* Van Dyke, P. A. (2005). *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

¹¹ *Letter to John Morton Esq. and to Mrs Morton; Macao, China, June 12, 1821*. Robert Morrison Correspondence. CWML. South China and Ultra Ganges Incoming Letters, 1807-1874, Box 2. School of Oriental and African Studies: London. We may note that of the persons mentioned Fraser and Ljungstedt were themselves later buried here in 1827 and 1835 respectively. Urmston's son George (d. 1813) and Livingstone's daughter Charlotte (d. 1818) are amongst those whose remains were relocated here once the cemetery was open.

¹² Cited in Ride (op cit). *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao*. (p. 68).

¹³ Legend has it that the great Portuguese poet Luis de Camões (1524-1580) composed part of his epic work *Os Lusíadas* (The Lusíads) in Macao while enjoying the view from a rocky cleft overlooking the inner harbour. The *Jardim de Luis de Camões* (Luis de Camoens Garden) with its celebrated grotto commemorates the spot and is today a public park and shrine complete with a bust of the poet. In the 1820s this area was also open to visitors but was rather less public than it is today as the land formed part of what were then the grounds and gardens of the English East India Company's main residence in Macao, the *Casa*. The house still survives, and is today a municipal museum and gallery of contemporary art. The house overlooks the Old Cemetery next door.

¹⁴ Cited in Ride (op cit). *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao*. (p. 68).

¹⁵ With perhaps one difference, which is that there are no crosses or statues in the cemetery. True to its non-conformist roots the cemetery is simple and unostentatious in style. Ostentation in memorialisation was held to be a Catholic vice, and so the cemetery sought to demonstrate its independence from Rome through the eschewal of 'popish' symbols on its gravestones. Urns and columns on the other hand were pagan, and due to the fact of being non-Catholic were all the more acceptable for this reason.

¹⁶ Memoir of the Rev. Robert Morrison. *Missionary Sermons*. Vol. 12. (1835). London: The London Missionary Society. (p. 71).

¹⁷ For the purposes of producing the corpus, the inscriptions which were entered into the concordance were taken from Ride (op cit). *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao*. This gives a full rendering of the inscriptions appearing on each of the 1821-1859 tombstones.

¹⁸ *The Compleat Lexical Tutor* at <http://132.208.224.131/>

¹⁹ In order to make the examples as clear as possible, minor formatting amendments have been made to some of the numbered corpus excerpts, or 'tokens'. So, for example, words at the beginning and end of a token have sometimes (but not always) been 'finished off' where the concordance has cut them in half. On other occasions either the first few words or the last few words of the token have been deleted in order that the words appearing beyond and before the particular token can be inserted into the space available instead, and thereby make for a more 'rounded' excerpt. In one or two tokens an additional word has been highlighted where it has seemed appropriate to do so. These are the only changes which have been made.

²⁰ When entering the data into the concordance, every effort was made to replicate the specific orthography of the inscriptions as they appear on individual tombstones. This was done in respect of language, case, spacing, punctuation, spelling and italics. For the reason that epitaphs in German, French and Dutch, for example, have not been translated into English but entered as they appear, the count for word types is slightly higher than would otherwise be the case. In addition, the programme has also counted initials in names and in abbreviations, when they are followed by a space or a full stop, as single words. Another consideration are the idiosyncrasies of spelling on some tombstones, so that 'Newyork' is to be found as a single word, as well as misspellings of which there are also a small number, e.g. 'piece' instead of 'peace', and 'testamony' for 'testimony'. The indicated word and word-type counts should therefore be considered estimates at best. As far as possible, these anomalies have been taken into account so that their impact on the relative distributions of items which the corpus reveals, as well for as the lexical and grammatical themes identified, has been kept to a minimum.

²¹ See O'Regan, J. P. (2006). *The Text as a Critical Object: On Theorising Exegetic Procedure in Classroom-Based Critical Discourse Analysis. Critical Discourse Studies*, 3(1), 179-209; also Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and Power* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.

²² In this paper interpretation and analysis are treated as synonymous on the grounds that all social enquiry is speculative. For approaches to discourse analysis which have influenced this study, see Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Martin, J. R. & Rose, D. (2003). *Working with Discourse*. London: Continuum; and Gee, J. P. (2006). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

²³ The Byron can be found on the tombstones of Edward Fitzgerald (d. 1841) and George W. Harrison (d. 1844); and the Moore on the headstone of Frederick Duddell (d. 1856). See Ride. (op cit). *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao*. (pp. 105, 178, 185 & 213).

²⁴ See, for example, the funeral address at the burial of Mrs. J. Lloyd Breck, conducted by Bishop Whipple (1822-1901), at Faribault, Minnesota, on April 8, 1862. Whipple says, 'What a dark grave this would be without its hope! What sorrow in this grave if it had no shadow of the cross' (<http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/jlbreck/jane.html>). See also Simpson, A. B. (c. 1890). *The Cross of Christ*, at <http://hillcrestalliance.org/abscross/cross2.html>.

²⁵ This is an engraver's error, of which this is not the only one in the cemetery (see also note 20). It appears on the headstone of Nathaniel Simpson, a US seaman.

²⁶ Dyer was born in England and was a close acquaintance and protégé of Robert Morrison, who was responsible for encouraging him in the study of Chinese. Dyer was based in Singapore but was struck down by 'Hong Kong Fever' following a conference there in 1843 to discuss the London Missionary Society's work in China. He fell sick in Canton, making it back first to Hong Kong and then to Macao before being seized by a debilitating attack which proved the end of him.

²⁷ See Derrida, J. (1986). *Memories for Paul de Man*. New York: Columbia University Press. (pp. 21-2).

²⁸ Elizabeth Fearon also had the distinction of being one of three women who on April 8, 1830, became the first to flout the Chinese restriction against foreign females travelling to Canton. See Ride (op cit). *An East India Company Cemetery: Protestant Burials in Macao*. (p. 163); and Hunter, W. C. (1882). *The Fan Kwae at Canton: Before Treaty Days 1825-1844*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co. (p. 120).

²⁹ The name 'Llewelyn & Co' which appears on Mrs Fearon's box tomb refers to a firm of stonemasons based in Calcutta. The firm was responsible for two other tombs in the cemetery – Commander Donald MacKenzie (d. 1839), and Captain John Crockett (d. 1837).

³⁰ In English the full text reads, 'Here lies Margaret Bovet as Universally Loved, Esteemed & Respected during her Life as Regretted after her Death'.

³¹ See Leech, G. & Svartik, J. (1994). *A Communicative Grammar of English* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.

³² See Kress, G. R. (1993). Against Arbitrariness: The Social Production of the Sign as a Foundational Issue in Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 4(2), 169-191.

³³ See Gee, J. P. (1991). *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. Basingstoke, Hants: The Falmer Press.

³⁴ These passages can be found on the grave markers of Elizabeth Vrooman (d. 1854), Lieutenant Edward Fitzgerald (d. 1841), Robert Morrison (d. 1834) and Abby L. Kerr (d. 1855).

O'Regan, J. P. (2009). The tombstones of the English East India Company cemetery in Macao: a linguistic analysis. Markers XXVI. *Journal of the Association of Gravestone Studies*. 88-119.

³⁵ The tombstone of Lieutenant Edward Fitzgerald (d. 1841) refers to 'the enemy', and that of the missionary Samuel Dyer (d. 1843) to 'the Heathen'.

³⁶ In this context, the following excerpt from *The Canton Register* is instructive: '[T]he Chinese are barbarians because they wear long hair, wide dresses, and thick shoes, instead of crops, cocked hats, tights, stiff cravats, pumps & shoe buckles'. See *Supplement To The Canton Register*. Saturday, October 18th, 1828.