

NOTE AND DOCUMENT

# ‘*Scripture Extracts*’: An Early Catholic Burmese Translation

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*Roman Catholic missions preceded Protestant missions in Burma by three hundred years. Scripture extracts is the only known extant Burmese translation of portions of the Bible by the earlier Catholic missionaries. Produced by the Italian Barnabite missionary Guiseppe d’Amato, Scripture extracts represents the Catholic missionary strategy of inculturation. It was printed by the British Baptist missionaries to Burma, Felix Carey and James Chater, in Serampore in 1811, and passed on to the American Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson. Scripture extracts was an important resource for Judson’s translation of the entire Bible into Burmese, although he employed a different translation approach.*

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In 2022, near the end of a six-month sabbatical from Laidlaw College spent researching early translations of Scripture into Burmese, I discovered *Scripture extracts* languishing uncatalogued in the BMS (Baptist Mission Society) archives in the Angus Library of Regents Park College, Oxford.<sup>1</sup> *Scripture extracts* represents the hitherto missing link between the Bible translations of earlier Roman Catholic missions and those of later Protestant missions to Burma.<sup>2</sup> Following the global course of missions’ history, missions in Burma were carried out solely by Roman Catholics from 1500 to 1800, with vigorous Protestant missions beginning in the

My thanks to Zin Mar Myo Swe for her help in analysing the Burmese text of *Scripture extracts*, and to Rebecca Shuttleworth and the Angus Library and Archive, Regents Park College, Oxford. The extract from *Scripture extracts* is reproduced by kind permission of the Angus Library and Archive.

<sup>1</sup> Giuseppe d’Amato, *Scripture extracts*, ed. James Chater and Felix Carey, Serampore 1811, Burmese collection, Baptist Mission Society Archive, Regents Park College, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> For this historical treatment I will refer to modern-day Myanmar as it was known in the past, as Burma.

early 1800s.<sup>3</sup> While the Protestant missions have been much celebrated, especially the American Baptist mission pioneered by Adoniram and Ann Judson, the earlier Catholic missions are somewhat of a forgotten story.<sup>4</sup> Yet the three hundred years of prior Catholic mission laid important foundations for the later Baptists to build upon, particularly in the articulation of biblical and Christian concepts in the Burmese language, concepts which are represented in *Scripture extracts*.<sup>5</sup>

### *Background*

Catholic missions to the New World, which began at the turn of the sixteenth century, did not translate the entire Bible into the new languages they encountered. The beginning of these missions coincided with the Reformation and vernacular translations of the Bible were a topic of great controversy within the Catholic Church. The Council of Trent attempted but was unable to formulate a policy on vernacular translation, being held to a stalemate by significant minorities who vociferously advocated for or opposed such translations.<sup>6</sup> The issue was taken out of the council's hands when Pope Paul IV produced his *Index of forbidden books* in 1557 and 1559, which allowed individuals to own European vernacular translations only with written permission from the Inquisition.<sup>7</sup> Yet in the midst of these heated arguments, attitudes towards vernacular translation of the Bible were nuanced. Even those ardently opposed, through fear of heresy resulting from common people reading the Bible, considered some parts of the Bible appropriate for vernacular translation, such as Proverbs, Psalms and the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>8</sup> Over two hundred years later, *Scripture extracts* would follow this pattern: a translation of relevant portions of Scripture rather than a translation of the entire Bible.

Catholic presence in Burma began with chaplains to immigrant Portuguese communities in the early sixteenth century. Although missionary

<sup>3</sup> For an overview see Dana L. Robert, *Christian mission: how Christianity became a world religion*, Chichester 2011, 72ff., and Bernard de Vaulx, *History of the missions*, London 1961, 65ff.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Joseph Schmidlin devotes one paragraph to the earlier Catholic missions in Burma and half a paragraph to the later one hundred years of the Barnabite mission: *Catholic mission history*, ed. Matthias Braun, trans. William Hall Robertson and Thomas J. Kennedy, Techny, IL 1933, 309–10, 488.

<sup>5</sup> See John de Jong, 'Adoniram Judson's Burmese Bible: dependency and development', *Church History* xcii/4 (2023), 822–44. I discovered *Scripture extracts* after completing this article but the same concepts of intertextuality apply, i.e., that the author of *Scripture extracts* was rewriting earlier Burmese Catholic texts in the creation of this new text, rather than starting with a blank slate.

<sup>6</sup> Robert E. McNally, 'The Council of Trent and vernacular Bibles', *Theological Studies* xxvii/2 (1966), 204–27.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 226.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 218.

efforts were made to the Buddhist Mon (known as Peguan) and Burmese ethnic majorities in Burma, little impact was made until the arrival of the Barnabites.<sup>9</sup> The Barnabite Burmese mission began in 1721 when the Barnabite priest Sigismondi Calchi accompanied Clement XI's papal legate, Carlo Ambrogio Mezzabarba, to China and was sent to Burma upon the failure of that embassy.<sup>10</sup> The Barnabite missionaries focused on producing catechisms and prayer books in the Burmese and Mon languages, writing dictionaries and grammars in those languages, and also translating portions of Scripture.<sup>11</sup> The most accomplished scholar of the Burmese Barnabites, Giovanni Maria Percoto, was in Burma from 1761 until his death in 1776. Acknowledged by the Burmese themselves as a master of both the Burmese and Pali languages, Percoto is said to have translated Genesis, Tobit, the Gospels and the New Testament Epistles. Yet for all of this productivity, almost none of the Barnabite texts have survived, as they were written by hand on perishable materials. Adoniram Judson, for example, mentioned that he had 'by mere accident, discovered a copy of a translation of Matthew, on palm-leaf, by a Roman Catholic Padre', which, he said, 'affords me great assistance'.<sup>12</sup> Two of Percoto's works were published in Rome: a catechism and a book on the Burmese alphabet.<sup>13</sup> The only translation of Scripture in the catechism is the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. *Scripture extracts*, then, constitutes the

<sup>9</sup> Details of the Catholic missions to Burma can be found in Peter J. Wilkinson, 'Mission to the Burmese Buddhists: a case-history of the nineteenth-century apostolate of Paul-Ambroise Bigandet, M.E.P', unpubl. PhD diss. Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Rome 1970, 64–106, and Vivian Ba, *The early Catholic missionaries in Burma*, Rangoon 1964. See also Aung Myo Tun, 'Arrival of early Catholic chaplains in Myanmar before Nyaungyan period', *University of Mandalay, Research Journal* xi (2020), <<https://meral.edu.mm/records/5598?community=um>>, and Me Me Shwe, 'History of founding Roman Catholicism in Myanmar', *University of Mandalay, Research Journal* xi (2020), <<https://meral.edu.mm/record/5603/files/History%20of%20Founding%20Roman%20Catholicism%20in%20Myanmar.pdf>>.

<sup>10</sup> Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the east: the Jesuit mission to China, 1579–1724*, Cambridge, MA 2007, 184–98. The circumstances in which the Barnabite mission became established in Burma share some similarity with the later American Baptist mission. Adoniram and Ann Judson had planned to start missionary work in Penang but ended up in Burma when they had to sail on the first ship leaving the Madras port to avoid deportation to England by the East Indies Company. The ship was going to Burma. See Francis Wayland, *A memoir of the life and labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson*, i, Boston 1853, 114–21.

<sup>11</sup> Ba, *Early Catholic missionaries*, 3–7.

<sup>12</sup> Adoniram Judson, 'Letter from the Rev. Adoniram Judson, American Baptist Missionary in Burmah, to a minister in London. Rangoon, March 30, 1817', *Baptist Magazine* x (1818), 74–5.

<sup>13</sup> Giovanni Maria Percoto, *Compendium doctrinae Christianae idioma Barmano sive Bomano*, Rome 1776, and *Alphabetum Barmanum seu Bomanum Regni Avaë finitimarumque regionum*, Rome 1776. See further de Jong, 'Judson's Burmese Bible'.

only extant translation of significant portions of Scripture from the early Catholic missions to Burma.

Percoto also wrote, in Burmese, *A dialogue between a phongyi* [Buddhist monk] *and a Christian*, an early work on interreligious dialogue, which was published in Rangoon in 1837.<sup>14</sup> Percoto's works show that the Barnabites followed the inculturation model developed by the Jesuit missionaries in India, Japan and China beginning in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>15</sup> It is somewhat ironic that the same pope who had sent the Barnabites to Burma, Clement xi, had also ruled against the missionaries during the Rites Controversy in China in 1704.<sup>16</sup>

*Scripture extracts* was the work of the Italian Barnabite priest, Guiseppe d'Amato, who arrived in Burma in 1784 and remained there until his death in 1832. D'Amato squarely fitted into the Barnabite missionary profile, and the extent of his immersion in Burmese culture is demonstrated by the high regard in which he was held when the First Anglo-Burman war broke out in 1824. The handful of foreigners who happened to be in Upper Burma at the time, including Adoniram Judson, were imprisoned and sentenced to death. D'Amato was also arrested, but soon released on the king's orders, who said, 'he is like a God, why should we molest him?'<sup>17</sup>

*Scripture extracts* only survived because the British Baptist missionaries to Rangoon, Felix Carey (son of William) and James Chater, printed it in Serampore in 1811. The British Baptist mission was short-lived. It was established in 1808 but in 1811 Chater left for Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Carey had left the mission to work for the Burmese king.<sup>18</sup> Carey and Chater received their copy of *Scripture extracts* in 1809, writing, 'We lately met with a book of scripture extracts which we find very useful. It was translated by an Italian missionary who resides at Ava, and has been in the country five and twenty years.'<sup>19</sup> They printed it two years later: 'We have printed two

<sup>14</sup> Ba writes that a copy is in the Propagation of the Faith Library in Rome: *Early Catholic missionaries*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Aylward Shorter, *Towards a theology of inculturation*, New York 1988, 152–63.

<sup>16</sup> Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 185.

<sup>17</sup> 'Memoir of Guiseppe D'Amato, missionary in Ava. (Extract of a private letter from Major H. Burney, resident at the Burmese court, dated Ava, 9th April 1832)', *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China, and Australasia*, n.s. x (Jan.–Apr. 1883), 274–6 at p. 275. Ba, *Early Catholic missionaries*, 37, found Burney's quotation in the *Annali della Propagazione della Fede* vii (1841), 344. Ba's rendition, however, is not accurate: 'This holy man is like a God, why should we harm him?' Perhaps the quotation had been translated into Italian and Ba was re-translating. The original meaning of the statement is probably more like, 'He is like a (Buddhist) monk/holy man, why should we molest him?'

<sup>18</sup> For background on the British Baptist mission to Burma see de Jong, 'Judson's Burmese Bible'.

<sup>19</sup> James Chater, 'Letter from Mr. Chater and Mr. Felix Carey, Rangoon, July 31st, 1809', *Baptist Magazine* ii (1810), 584–6. Ava was the Burmese royal city at the time.

pamphlets in Burmese. One 20 pages of extracts from the New Testament, and the other 136 pages from the New and Old Testament.<sup>20</sup> It is the latter 136-page document which is now held by the Angus Library, with the inscription, ‘William Ward, 1818’.<sup>21</sup> The British Baptists handed over the mission station to the Judsons and the American Baptists, and with it a copy of *Scripture extracts*. A printing press and the Burmese fonts used at Serampore to print *Scripture extracts* were later gifted to the American Baptist mission by the British Baptists, meaning that Judson’s earliest translations of Scripture used the same fonts as *Scripture extracts*.

### *Scripture extracts*

The contents of *Scripture extracts* (see [Table 1](#)) reveal a didactic and missionary focus on the part of d’Amato. The 136-page work consists of twenty-nine chapters, each chapter a separate portion of Scripture. Although there are twenty-nine chapters, two chapters are entitled ‘Chapter 18’, hence the final chapter is entitled ‘Chapter 28’. In addition to this, the sixth chapter is entitled ‘Chapter 7’, but the seventh chapter is also, correctly, ‘Chapter 7’. These were probably typological mistakes made during the printing process in Serampore.

*Scripture extracts* begins with the creation and fall, focuses on Jesus’ life and ministry, death and resurrection, then finishes with the Gospel going out to all peoples. It is apparent that it was created, not as a Bible translation to be placed in the hands of the common people, but as a didactic tool to assist in explaining the Christian religion in a literate culture that knew nothing about that faith. It is a missionary text.

### *Translation approach and style of Scripture extracts*

The claim that *Scripture extracts* was a didactic tool for missionary work in a culture with no previous knowledge of Christianity is supported by d’Amato’s translation style. John Barton describes two main approaches to Bible translation: taking the reader to the Bible and bringing the

<sup>20</sup> James Chater, ‘Letter from Mr. Chater, missionary to the Burman Empire to Mr. I— of London. Prince of Wales’ Island, 4th July, 1811’, *Baptist Magazine* iv (1812), 225–6.

<sup>21</sup> William Ward was one of the ‘Serampore Trio’, along with William Carey and Joshua Marshman, the founding British Baptist missionaries in India. It appears that Ward had a close relationship with Felix Carey, and the year of the inscription is significant, as it was in 1818 that Ward met with Carey in Chittagong and persuaded him to return to Serampore from his self-imposed exile. See D. G. E. Hall, ‘Felix Carey’, *Journal of Religion* xii/4 (1932), 491.

Table 1. *Contents of Scripture extracts*

Chapter 1	Genesis i–iii. Creation and fall.
Chapter 2	Exodus xx. The Ten Commandments.
Chapter 3	Isaiah lv.1–11. Call to seek God.
Chapter 4	Isaiah vii.10–15. The Emmanuel prophecy, with an additional paragraph explaining how this prophecy was fulfilled 740 years later.
Chapter 5	Matthew i.18–25. Matthean birth story.
Chapter 7	Luke ii.1–20. Lucan birth story.
[ <i>sic</i> ]	
Chapter 7	Luke ii.42–52. Twelve-year-old Jesus at the Temple.
Chapter 8	Matthew iii.13–17. Baptism of Jesus.
Chapter 9	Matthew iv.1–11. Testing of Jesus in the wilderness.
Chapter 10	John i.29–34. John’s testimony about Jesus.
Chapter 11	Matthew v.1–10. The Beatitudes.
Chapter 12	Matthew xviii.15–22. Church discipline and binding and loosing on earth.
Chapter 13	Matthew viii.1–13. Healing of a leper and faith of the centurion.
Chapter 14	Matthew viii.23–7. Calming of the storm.
Chapter 15	Matthew xxi.1–17. Triumphal entry and cleansing of the temple.
Chapter 16	Luke xi.14–28. Jesus and Beelzebul.
Chapter 17	John vi.1–15. Jesus feeds the five thousand.
Chapter 18	John ix.1–39. Jesus heals the man born blind.
Chapter 18	John xi.1–45. Raising of Lazarus.
[ <i>sic</i> ]	
Chapter 19	John vii.14–31. Jesus teaches at the Festival of Tabernacles.
Chapter 20	John viii.12–38. Dispute over Jesus’ testimony about himself.
Chapter 21	John x.22–38. Jesus at Feast of Dedication.
Chapter 22	Luke xviii.31–43. Jesus predicts his death; heals blind man at Jericho.
Chapter 23	Matthew xvii.1–9. The Transfiguration.
Chapter 24	Matthew xv.31–46. The final judgement.
Chapter 25	John xviii–xix. Jesus’ arrest, trial and crucifixion.
Chapter 26	Mark xvi.1–7. The empty tomb.
Chapter 27	John xxi.1–14. Jesus’ third post-resurrection appearance to his disciples.
Chapter 28	Acts ii.1–11. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost; Acts x.33–44. The conversion of the Gentile Cornelius.

Bible to the reader.<sup>22</sup> ‘Taking the reader to the Bible’ is the formal equivalence approach to translation, where emphasis is placed on preserving the original form of the source text as much as possible while still producing an intelligible text in the target language. This approach has also been described as ‘foreignising’, because the reader recognises that the

<sup>22</sup> John Barton, *The Word: on the translation of the Bible*, London 2022, chs ii–iii. Barton (p. 30) derives his categories from Schleiermacher: ‘Either the translator leaves the writer as far as possible in peace, and moves the reader towards him; or else he leaves the reader as far as possible in peace, and moves the writer towards him.’

translated text is not a product of their own language and culture. ‘Bringing the Bible to the reader’ is functional equivalence, where concepts in the source text that are alien to the target culture are translated into concepts that belong the world of the reader. The resulting translated text reads as though it had been written by a native speaker of the target language. This approach has been described, derogatively, as ‘domesticising’ the original text.<sup>23</sup>

*Scripture extracts* represents a quite extreme functional equivalence approach to translation. D’Amato’s translation of Matthew xvii.4, part of the Transfiguration account, is a good example:

1. Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings [σκηνη= ‘tent’] here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’ [Matthew xvii.4 NRSV].
- 2.

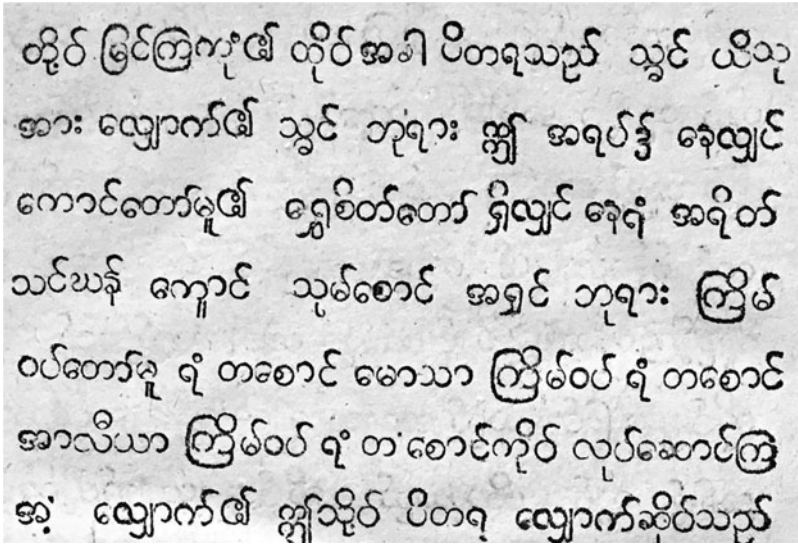


Figure 1. *Burmese version from Scripture extracts*

3. At this time, Peter supplicated the Lord Jesus, ‘Divine Lord, if this place is good for the divine dwelling, if it is your golden will, three monasteries, one for the Divine Lord to recline in, one for Moses to recline in, one for Elijah to recline in, we will build’ [author’s translation of Matthew xvii.4 from *Scripture extracts*].

<sup>23</sup> So Lawrence Venuti, *The translator’s invisibility*, 2nd edn, Abingdon 2008, 16–17.



The translation of σκηνή ‘tent’ as ‘monastery’ stands out as a domesticising element. Buddhist monasteries are an ancient institution in Burma, the place where monks reside. Furthermore, this passage uses typical language that is reserved for the Buddha, Buddhist monks and royalty. Thus:

1. ‘supplanted’ (*shawt*) is always used when common people address monks, not the common verb ‘to say’ or ‘speak’ (*pyaw*); ‘divine Lord’ (*thakin paya* and *a-shin paya*) are typical vocatives used when addressing monks.
2. ‘golden will’ is an archaic term but understandable in context as referring to the will of a royal or divine person.
3. ‘to recline’ is the verb used for the Buddha or a monk to sit or stay somewhere. The common verbs are not used in this context.
4. Untranslatable honorific particles are attached to verbs and nouns which are associated with Jesus in this verse, just as they would have been to royal figures and still are to monks.

Apart from the archaic ‘golden will’, all of the religious language in this verse is still commonly used in modern Myanmar, even in newspaper articles reporting on Buddhist monks.

*Scripture extracts* represents an extreme functional equivalence approach to translation, which fitted into the Catholic missionary strategy at the time of inculturation. The translation style fits the form of the document as a missionary text created to explain the Christian faith in the context of an ancient and sophisticated society with no prior knowledge of Christianity.

### *Significance of Scripture extracts*

*Scripture extracts* is significant in its own right as the only known extant translation of Scripture from the early Catholic missions to Burma. Although produced by d’Amato, the vocabulary and discourse of *Scripture extracts* represents a Burmese Catholic tradition that had been developing since the early sixteenth century. But *Scripture extracts* also had an indirect impact on the growing nineteenth-century Protestant Church in Burma. This impact was mediated through Adoniram Judson’s translation of the Bible, completed in 1840 and today still the most widely used Bible in modern-day Myanmar.<sup>24</sup>

Adoniram Judson, who arrived in Burma in 1813, wrote in January 1816:

I am now beginning to translate a little. I am extremely anxious to get some parts of scripture into an intelligible state, fit to be read to Burmans that I meet with. I have nothing yet that I can venture to use. The Portuguese<sup>25</sup> missionaries have left a

<sup>24</sup> See John de Jong, ‘A nineteenth-century New England exegete abroad: Adoniram Judson and the Burmese Bible’, *Harvard Theological Review* cxii/3 (2019), 319–39.

<sup>25</sup> Judson associates the Catholic missionaries with the Burmese Catholic communities which had descended from the early Portuguese migrants.



version of some extracts of Scripture, not very badly executed, in regard to language, but full of Romish errors. This, however, will afford me some assistance.<sup>26</sup>

Judson's reference to the 'extracts of Scripture', i.e. to *Scripture extracts*, is interesting for several reasons. At the time of this letter Judson had already had for over two years the Burmese translation of Matthew by the British Baptist missionaries, James Chater and Felix Carey, who had arrived five years before him in Burma.<sup>27</sup> Not only did Judson consider this translation to be of no use to him at the time of this 1816 letter, in another letter a year later he would describe it as 'quite unintelligible to Burmans'.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to his low esteem for the Baptist translation, for Judson, taciturn in character and a resolute Calvinist, 'not very badly executed, in regard to language' is high praise for the Catholic *Scripture extracts*. His criticism of the text as 'full of Romish errors' is probably a reference to the extreme functional equivalence approach to translation in general, and to particular translation decisions in the text.

Judson's own translation of the Bible into Burmese was quite different from *Scripture extracts*. Whereas *Scripture extracts* inhabits the far end of the functional equivalence spectrum, Judson's translation represents a moderate formal equivalence. For example, sometimes Judson would create a Burmese term to express a biblical one, such as 'sky-ceiling' for the 'firmament' in Genesis i.6.<sup>29</sup> It is evident, however, that every page of *Scripture extracts* provided Judson with ready-made terms to express biblical and Christian concepts that he reused in his own translation, such as 'Lord God'; 'Holy Spirit'; '(divine) glory'; '(divine) power'; 'salvation'; 'sin'; 'faith'. Yet Judson took up terms from *Scripture extracts* discerningly. *Scripture extracts*, for example, consistently translates 'angel' as *thi-kyā*, which are supernatural beings from Buddhist mythology, consistent with the inculturation approach. Judson rejected this term and instead translated angel as *ḥ man-daw*, 'divine envoy'.

*Scripture extracts* no doubt also assisted Judson in developing an appropriate discourse and register, and in the use of honorific language, which exists in Burmese in the form of honorific particles as well as specific words for divine and royal persons. True to form, Judson is more measured in the use of honorific language than *Scripture extracts*, which draws heavily on Buddhist language. An example is the translation of 'disciples', which

<sup>26</sup> Adoniram Judson, 'Letter from Mr. Judson to Mr. Ward, Rangoon, Jan. 18, 1816', *American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer* n.s. i (1817), 28–9.

<sup>27</sup> Published in Serampore in 1812, and lightly revised in 1815, attributed to Chater. See de Jong, 'Judson's Burmese Bible'.

<sup>28</sup> For an analysis of why Judson disliked Chater and Carey's translation see John de Jong, "'I have nothing yet that I can venture to use": Adoniram Judson's rejection of James Chater's Gospel of Matthew in Burmese', *The Bible Translator* lxxiv/2 (2023), 284–98.

<sup>29</sup> Hebrew מַלְאָכִים; Burmese *moe-myet-na-kyet*.

Judson rendered *l'pet-daw*, in which *l'pet* is 'disciple' and *-daw* is the suffixed honorific particle. The honorific particle does not denote any quality inherent in the disciples but is attached because they are Jesus' disciples. In Matthew v.1, d'Amato translates 'his disciples' as *l'pet-sangar-daw*, with *sangar* meaning 'order of the Buddhist monks'. D'Amato's translation portrays the closest disciples of Jesus as ordained monks themselves, as Gautama Buddha's original disciples were. This complicates the issue of the honorific particle, which is now required by *sangar*/monk, who are considered holy in and of themselves and may be an example of Judson's complaint about 'Romish errors'. In contrast to *Scripture extracts*, Judson used honorific language more moderately but appropriately for the context in which he was translating.<sup>30</sup> Comparison of *Scripture extracts* and Judson's Bible translation bears out Lamin Sanneh's assertion that Protestant missionary translations often built upon earlier Catholic work, and that the Catholic missionaries were more focused than Protestants on indigenising the Christian faith to the new local contexts.<sup>31</sup>

*Scripture extracts* is the only known extant translation of significant portions of Scripture into Burmese from the early Catholic missions to Burma. As such it represents not only the work of its translator, Guiseppe d'Amato, nor only the work of his Barnabite colleagues, but also a developing Burmese Catholic tradition which had begun in the early sixteenth century. *Scripture extracts* was created to assist in teaching the Christian faith, rather than the Protestant missionary approach of translating the entire Bible and placing it in the hands of the local people. While the Protestant missionaries saw the Bible as the sole locus of truth, for the Catholics it was the catechism which 'represented their teaching authority',<sup>32</sup> allowing d'Amato to engage in such a free translation. This does not imply a lower view of the Bible than that of the Protestants, but rather a different approach to it. D'Amato's own motives and objectives for his translation of *Scripture extracts* were to produce a teaching tool to supplement the catechism in his communication of the Christian faith. Thus, d'Amato was more open to a freer translation of Scripture as part of the process of explaining the truth of the Gospel in a culture with no previous knowledge of Christianity. The freer translation represents the Catholic missionaries' strategy of inculturation.

*Scripture extracts* represents a meeting point of diverse Christian missionary endeavours. A product of the early Catholic missions to Burma, it was

<sup>30</sup> The use of Burmese honorific language, which derives from Burmese culture, is a fraught topic for modern Burmese translations of the Bible, which are mainly read by non-Burmese ethnic minority speakers of Burmese: de Jong, "Nothing yet that I can venture to use", 294 and references there.

<sup>31</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the message: the missionary impact on culture*, 2nd edn, New York 2009, 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

printed by the short-lived British Baptist mission in Burma, an extension of the Serampore mission, and in this way preserved for posterity. Adoniram Judson received *Scripture extracts* from the British Baptist mission, and it was an important resource for his project of translating the entire Bible into Burmese, even though his approach to translation was markedly different.