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Theophilus and His Life with Scripture

The great body of New Testament scholarship uncovers much about first-century Christian thinking and experience. Brilliant Christian writers such as Origen, the Cappadocians, and Augustine draw scholarly attention to the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. But oddly, despite this flood of attention to both the first century and to the third to fifth centuries, the second century often escapes notice, despite its almost living memory of Jesus and his apostles from only a generation or two prior. Yet we bypass the second century only to our own loss.

Theophilus was one of the foremost second-century Christian leaders, bishop of the church at Antioch, capital city of the eastern province of the Roman Empire. We know little of his life. In what little of his writings that survive, he mentioned that at one time he did not believe in the possibility of resurrection, but he later changed his mind and that by encountering the Jewish Scriptures, he came to believe in the God of whom they spoke.[1] Eusebius, the ancient church historian, mentions Theophilus's service as the sixth bishop of Antioch. He and Jerome thought well of Theophilus's writings against various heresies. Jerome mentions various writings by the bishop which he considered quite suitable for building up the church. Sadly, virtually all of Theophilus's writings named by Eusebius and Jerome are now lost.[2]

1. Theophilus of Antioch, *Autol.* 1.14.

2. Helpful introductory overviews of Theophilus are provided in Parsons, "Theophilus of Antioch"; Quasten, *Patrology*, 1:236–42; and Zeegers, "Theophilus von Antiochien."

The second century was a dangerous time to be a Christian. Local persecutions sometimes arose unexpectedly and with little warning. One infamous local persecution was in the year 177 C. E., close to when Theophilus wrote his third letter to Autolycus, when the Romans executed the elderly overseer of the church in Lyons and some of his flock.

Martyrdom was not sought, and Christians were to flee persecution if they could. But if they were taken, they were frequently given a choice of renouncing Christianity and worshipping the emperor in exchange for freedom, or else suffering public torture and death. Christians encouraged one another to remain steadfast, since they regarded it better to suffer the brief tortures of the Romans and receive the reward of eternal life, than to escape Roman torture only to face an eternity of suffering.

The most renowned of the martyrs of Lyons was not a member of the clergy or a prominent citizen, but a humble slave girl named Blandina. She was not expected to remain very steadfast because she was small and weak. The crowd in the amphitheater was therefore astounded to observe that Blandina lasted so long under successive tortures. Her endurance encouraged her companions, and ultimately encouraged Christians throughout Asia Minor who read of her sufferings when an eyewitness account came to them.[3]

When she would not recant her faith, Blandina was hung from a stake, in a rather fitting way given her religious identity, as if she were hanging from a cross. Dangerous beasts were released around her, but they did not attack. At the end of the day, she was taken back to prison. Again she was brought into the arena. There, before the crowds, she was successively whipped, exposed before dangerous animals, and baked on a large skillet (*τήγανον*) over a fire.[4] Rather than renounce her faith, she confessed her allegiance to Christ and her own innocence of wrong-doing. Finally, she was enclosed inside a net so that she could be repeatedly tossed and gored to death by a bull.

Not too long after the torture and execution of Blandina, Theophilus complained to his pagan Roman friend Autolycus that Christians were being persecuted unto death daily.[5] In light of the severity and recurrence of Roman persecution, it would not have been surprising if Theophilus had adopted a bitter or fearful tone toward Roman non-Christians, or if he had refused to correspond with any of them.

3. Extracts of the eyewitness account are preserved in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.1.

4. While Eusebius spelled the term *τήγανον*, the alternate spelling *τάγηνον* appears in some other ancient writings.

5. Justin made a similar complaint only a few decades prior. See *Dialogue* 18.

It is therefore surprising to find Theophilus a decade or two before the end of the second century sending three treatise-length letters to his pagan friend Autolycus.[6] With these letters, he endeavored to persuade Autolycus to forsake worship of Greco-Roman gods and to embrace Christianity. These three letters are collectively entitled *Ad Autolycum*, or in English, "To Autolycus." As for Autolycus, none of his letters or other writings survive.

It is not unreasonable to think that this correspondence between Theophilus and Autolycus was genuine and more than a mere literary invention, although such invention was not impossible. At any rate, it is likely that the content of *Ad Autolycum* accurately reflects actual Christian/pagan dialogues. Neymeyr shows that Christian teachers in the second century were in fairly harmonious contact with churches, but also had frequent interaction with non-Christians as they answered questions during their public lectures. Therefore, Theophilus would likely have been well aware of specific challenges to Christian teaching from Greco-Roman religionists, not only those which he learned directly via friendships with non-Christians such as Autolycus, but also those he learned second-hand from Christian teachers and others in his community who also dialogued with non-Christians.[7]

In Theophilus's three letters to Autolycus, he exhibited neither anger, bitterness, nor fear towards Autolycus on account of Roman persecution

6. Scholarship has followed Harnack's view that the final letter of *Ad Autolycum* was composed sometime shortly prior to the death of Emperor Commodus, since its chronology records the deaths of Commodus's predecessors but not his own (*Autol.* 3.27). However, Erbes disputes Harnack's claim that Theophilus would not have omitted Commodus' death if it had already occurred. According to Erbes, Theophilus did not want to record up to the present. He only desired to explain major currents of history. Recent events were not relevant to his purposes. Erbes mentions that Eusebius similarly excluded recent entries from his bishop chronicle (Erbes, "Lebenszeit des Hippolytus," 630–31; Harnack, "Theophilus von Antiochien und das Neue Testament," 1–21). Accordingly, Erbes argues that *Ad Autolycum* was written relatively late, no earlier than 200 C.E., since Clement did not know it circa 200–202, and since Theophilus's statements about persecution appear to reference persecutions of 203 C.E. (Erbes, "Lebenszeit des Hippolytus," 630). However, this argument by Erbes has not been accepted by most scholars. One indication that Theophilus was concerned not merely with major historical events but also with recent details appears at the end of *Autol.* 3.27, where he meticulously recorded reigns of recent emperors such as Titus, Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, and Verus. Since his chronology is not only quite comprehensive but also very detailed, even including many recent emperors, it is likely that he meant to treat the entire range of history. Also, a comprehensive history would well satisfy his explicit (*Autol.* 3.1) goal to demonstrate inadequacies of pagan chronologies.

7. Neymeyr, "Christliche Lehre im 2. Jahrhundert," 158–62.

against Christians.[8] While he sharply critiqued Greco-Roman religious ideas in the letters, he nonetheless maintained a friendly tone towards Autolycus.[9]

This is not the only surprise that we find in *Ad Autolycum*. In his entire defense of Christianity, he did not once mention Jesus by name in reference to the historical Christ.[10] Nor did he discourse on the earthly ministry of the historical Christ, the Incarnation, or the Cross. Neither did he emphasize the theme of divine grace. Not only so, the organization of *Ad Autolycum* sometimes appears curious, haphazard, and somehow less than adequate to the modern reader. For these reasons, Theophilus has been regarded by various scholars as being a disorganized writer who did not understand very much of Christian teaching.

However, this stereotypical picture of him is deceptive. Actually, he contended for his faith in a sophisticated and sure way according to the conventions of *his* age. If we truly grasp the protreptic form of his letters, we would be better able to comprehend his actual thought. And even if modern readers are sometimes unimpressed with the structure of *Ad Autolycum*, it would have made a second-century rhetor proud. And we shall see that Scripture played a central, fairly unique, and essential role in this truly brilliantly-conceived structure.[11] If we miss the ancient rhetorical role of Scripture in *Ad Autolycum*, we misunderstand Theophilus himself.

8. For critical editions, modern language translations of *Ad Autolycum*, and important studies of it, see Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis*, 1:472–73; Quasten, *Patrology*, 1:236–42; Zeegers, "Theophilus von Antiochien."

9. It was apparently typical in the second century for Christian apologists such as Theophilus to enjoy friendly interreligious dialogue with pagans and non-Christian Jews. For example, Justin and Trypho likewise enjoyed friendly intercourse even as they strongly disagreed with each other on multiple issues. See Justin, *Dialogue* 8–9.

10. His two uses of the name refer to Joshua the son of Nun, whose name in Greek (Ἰησοῦς) is identical to Jesus.

11. While Theophilus knew no formal New Testament canon, he knew most of the books that later compose such canons, and he regarded them to have authority very close or identical to that of the Old Testament. However, it is cumbersome to constantly use phrases like "books which later compose the New Testament." Therefore, "New Testament writings," "New Testament books," "Bible," "biblical," and the like are freely used in the present study, even though explicit references to a New Testament canon only begin to occur during Theophilus's lifetime, and even though unequivocal evidence for use of the term διαθήκη, "testament," as a book title only first appeared in Christian writings with Clement of Alexandria (Kinzig, "Καινὴ διαθήκη," 519–44, shows that διαθήκη occurred as early as Justin as a theological concept, but only later as a book title). It is likewise cumbersome to constantly use phases like "νόμος texts, by which Theophilus means writings which are later called the Old Testament." Therefore, phrases like "Old Testament" or "Hebrew Scriptures" are sometimes used in the present study, even though Theophilus often simply referred to these as the words of the prophets, or referred to Old Testament texts, even some outside the Pentateuch, as God's

Not only misunderstanding the force and content of his argument, modern readers sometimes denigrate the biblical exegesis of Theophilus and other early apologists. For example Dulles asserts, "When they insist on the perfect accord among the Biblical authors, they gloss over important differences between mutually opposed traditions."[12] He suggests that the reason for these excessive glosses is that "they wrote before the dawn of critical history."[13] However, his discussion does not fully consider ancient rhetorical and theological reasons motivating them to emphasize biblical unity. But by exploring ancient rhetorical and biblical motives for Theophilus's exegetical moves, we can gain a more nuanced appreciation of them, indeed a more historical view of them, and thus be less inclined to fall into anachronism.

We will see in what follows that Theophilus knew some prominent Jewish exegetical traditions. But did he study the Hebrew Scriptures in their original languages? This is not likely. We find several reasons to suspect that he did not know Hebrew. For one thing, so many of his quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures use either the identical or only slightly modified Greek wordings of ancient Septuagint translations, this indicating that he relied upon them. For another thing, in places we find ignorance on his part about Hebrew grammatical nuances which are obscured in Greek translations. For example, Hebrew texts of Gen 4:10 present the Hebrew word for "blood" in the construct plural Hebrew grammatical form. Ruzer shows that exegetes of the patristic period who knew Hebrew noticed this form of the word and commented upon its theological significance, but Greek-speaking exegetes ignorant of Hebrew did not.[14] Neither did Theophilus. He only dealt with Gen 4:10 when he discussed the blood of Abel in his account of humanity's early generations.[15] While he made much of the loca-

νόμος (for example, *Autol.* 1.11; 2.8; 2.33). While such phrases as "Old Testament" and "New Testament" are therefore used, these will refer to the texts considered inspired by Theophilus himself. Thus, these terms will not necessarily be restricted to texts contained in present-day canons. Most typically, the phrase "inspired texts" is used to refer to certain Old Testament and New Testament books, plus some others, simply because Theophilus stated throughout *Ad Autolycum* that such writings are produced by writers who were inspired by the Spirit of God. Sometimes the term "Scripture" is used, because Theophilus used the Greek equivalent of this term to refer to various Old Testament books.

12. Dulles, *History of Apologetics*, 30.

13. Ibid.

14. Ruzer, "*Cave of Treasures*," 263–64.

15. *Autol.* 2.29. Theophilus seems to have followed an exegetical tradition in his discussion of Abel's blood. He asserted that the land rejects the blood of murder victims starting after the murder of Abel. This is striking since a rejection of blood by the land is not explicitly mentioned in Genesis 4. However, a rejection of dead flesh by the land does appear in the Greek text of the *Life of Adam and Eve* 40.4–5, where the

tion from which Abel's blood cried to the Lord, Theophilus did not notice or comment upon the construct plural form of the word denoting Abel's blood, apparently because the Septuagint uses a singular word to denote Abel's blood. One might think that Theophilus knew Hebrew because he did discuss the etymology of some Hebrew words, asserting for example that the Hebrew word for "Eden" means "luxury" (τρυφή).[16] But beyond these few Hebrew etymologies, there are simply no other suggestions in *Ad Autolycum* that Theophilus knew Hebrew, and his few Hebrew etymologies were all traditional and already known among Greek-speaking Jews.[17] And so it is no surprise that his Hebrew etymology connected to the word "Eden" was already expressed by Philo.[18]

Scholarly dialog about Theophilus's use of Scripture has been advancing for some time. In 1859, Karl Otto recognized the importance of biblical allusions, not just quotations, for properly understanding Theophilus's use of NT texts.[19] His survey of the allusions is helpful partly because it references four quite plausible allusions not listed even in Marcovich's superb index of biblical quotations and allusions in *Ad Autolycum*. These four biblical allusions are considered in chapter 5, since they are included in the database used by my ACTS software that was used to comprehensively identify possible use of testimony sources.[20]

Adolf von Harnack argued in 1890 that Theophilus had no New Testament canon, and that although he knew some New Testament epistles, he

land declares after the murder of Abel that it will not receive any dead body until the death and burial of Adam. The writer mentioned this rejection by the land in order to explain why Cain was not able to hide the body of Abel in a grave. And an exact parallel is provided by Pseudo-Philo (*Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 16.2). The writer explained that, after God drove out the murderous Cain, God commanded the land to no longer swallow blood, saying, "No more would you swallow blood" (*Non adicias ut deglutias sanguinem*). The treatise was likely composed in Palestine sometime between 135 BCE and CE 100. See Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:298–300.

16. *Autol.* 2.24.

17. Bardy, *Théophile d'Antioche*, 10. As for Theophilus's etymology in *Autol.* 2.29 of the name "Eve," this could have been constructed using knowledge of Semitic words, as Zeegers argues. However, it is also not impossible that this etymology is based instead on Greek words, as Zeegers herself acknowledges. See Zeegers, "Satan, Eve et le serpent," 152–69.

18. Philo of Alexandria, *Legum allegoria* 1.45–46.

19. Otto, "Gebrauch neutestamentlicher Schriften bei Theophilus," 617–22.

20. These four allusions are Matt 5:8 in *Autol.* 1.2; Matt 7:12 in *Autol.* 2.34; Eph 4:18 in *Autol.* 1.7 and 2.35; and Titus 2:12 in *Autol.* 3.9. See chapter 5 regarding ACTS software and an innovative computational method for identifying ancient testimony sources.

did not regard them to be Scripture.[21] In Harnack's view, Theophilus nonetheless understood these books to be inspired by the Spirit, and specifically, paraphrases of God's Word.

Robert M. Grant in 1947 provided a helpful discussion of the biblical text-types of Theophilus, and also which books Theophilus considered to be Scripture.[22] He remarked that scholars have been unable to identify Theophilus's Septuagint text with any one text-type.[23] Grant's inability to identify Theophilus' biblical text-type is entirely understandable, since we now know that during the second century, the LXX was still in great flux, and there were a multitude of now-lost versions of it.[24] He also presented a point-by-point refutation of Harnack's argument that Theophilus did not consider New Testament epistles to be Scripture. He argued that Theophilus considered twelve and possibly fifteen of the New Testament books to be inspired, but not quite as authoritative as the Hebrew Scriptures. He also presented a detailed analysis of Theophilus's biblical chronology.[25] Grant provided helpful insights into Theophilus's use of biblical texts in his 1957 essay, "Scripture, Rhetoric and Theology in Theophilus."[26] He argued that although Theophilus placed a good deal of explicit biblical quotation with accompanying exegesis in his second letter, he elsewhere used Scripture quite differently, alluding rather than quoting explicitly. Grant explained that these frequent allusions to biblical texts functioned rhetorically for the bishop and allowed him to construct theological arguments. While Grant did not provide the detailed rhetorical analysis of *Ad Autolycum* that I provide in chapter 4, he did open the gate leading toward that productive avenue.

Grant's 1947 response to Harnack demands further attention here, because it establishes how Theophilus viewed what was later called the Old and New Testaments. Harnack's and Grant's viewpoints revolve around terminology that Theophilus used as he defended Christians from ominous charges of treason against Rome. And indeed, the need for his defense was quite urgent. As a provincial capital, Antioch hosted a temple to Rome and to the emperor where regular religious sacrifices were offered to him.[27] It

21. Harnack, "Theophilus von Antiochien und das Neue Testament."

22. Grant, "Bible of Theophilus," 173–96.

23. Ibid., 177. For a recent exploration of the text-type of Theophilus's Genesis 1–3 text, see Prostmeier, "Genesis 1–3 in Theophilos von Antiochia," 359–94.

24. See Law, *When God Spoke Greek*, 75–79.

25. Grant, "Bible of Theophilus," 183–84, discusses which books Theophilus considered inspired. The chronology is discussed on 189–95.

26. Grant, "Scripture, Rhetoric and Theology in Theophilus," 33–45.

27. Concerning temples to Rome and to the emperor in provincial cities, see

would have been strikingly obvious to city residents that their Antiochene Christian neighbors refused to bow the knee to the emperor. The civic loyalty of Theophilus and his flock would have been continually under suspicion. They could not simply capitulate to emperor worship, since doing so would sabotage their claim of worshipping the only true God. Nonetheless, Theophilus could not side-step responding to the charge that Christians are politically subversive on account of refusing to worship the emperor. His solution to this quandary was to compose a rich series of allusions, recollections, and short quotations mostly from Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2, plus one citation of an Old Testament text, Prov 24:21–22, all of which reinforced his point that Christians are good citizens, since they are commanded to obey, honor, and pray for kings and other governing authorities.[28] Regarding these uses of Christian inspired texts[29], Harnack claims that although Theophilus knew various NT epistles, he did not regard them to be Scripture.[30] Harnack does not deny that Theophilus considered such epistles inspired, but objected to the claim that Theophilus referred to them as Scripture.[31]

But the crucial point is not really whether Theophilus *referred* to the epistles as Scripture, but whether he indeed *considered* them such, notwithstanding his terminology. He implied in the opening line of *Autol.* 3.12 that the prophets and the gospels exist on the same level in regard to both inspiration and authority. He claimed that the prophets and the gospels are consistent precisely because every inspired one (πνευματοφόρος) spoke by the one and same Spirit of God. And he was not the first to understand OT writings and the gospels to be entirely consistent, for it is obvious to all

Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 211–12.

28. Book two of Josephus's *Contra Apionem* provided essentially the same answer that Theophilus did. While the Jews do not worship the emperors, they pray for them. Jews as well as Christians had to answer this charge of subversion.

29. Since ancient writers typically alluded to Scripture and other texts more often than they explicitly cited them, we necessarily rely on verbal parallels when identifying uses of Scripture in ancient texts. So as to draw from some degree of scholarly consensus regarding use of Scripture in *Ad Autolycum*, uses discussed in this study unless otherwise noted are those appearing in both Marcovich's and *Biblia patristica*'s biblical indexes. This approach is analogous to Bingham's method for reliably identifying distinctly Matthean uses of gospel texts by Irenaeus. See the discussion on verbal parallels in chapter 3 as well as Allenbach, *Des origines*; Bingham, *Irenaeus's Use of Matthew's Gospel*; Marcovich, *Theophili Antiocheni*. I do not attempt to confirm or critique Grant's discussion of what OT and NT books Theophilus knew, for which, see his "Bible of Theophilus."

30. Harnack, "Theophilus von Antiochien und das Neue Testament," 17–18.

31. Indeed, perhaps a few years after Theophilus corresponded with Autolycus; Irenaeus was the earliest Christian writer to clearly denote the four Gospels to be "Scripture" (Bingham, *Irenaeus's Use of Matthew's Gospel*, 5–6).

students of *1 Clement* that the author sees a seamless continuity between Judaism and Christianity.[32] Theophilus's stated theory of inspiration that one Spirit of God inspired both prophets and inspired Christian writers, with the result that all of the inspired texts are consistent with one another, was indeed a traditional early Christian theology of inspiration.[33]

Harnack himself traces outlines of a theology of inspiration in *Ad Autolycum*, arguing on the basis of *Autol.* 2.9, 22; 3.12–14 that Theophilus considered not only the NT writings, but also other works such as the christianized *Sibylline Oracles*, to have the same level of authority as the Old Testament.[34] Harnack demonstrates varying estimations of the Sibyl in second-century Christianity, and then uses this variety to argue against Zahn's contention that a stable NT canon had developed by CE 160. Harnack is appalled by Zahn's thesis, because he sees the use of inspired writings in the second century to have been profoundly buffeted by historical forces. Accordingly, Harnack maintains that there was greater diversity of opinion among second-century Christians concerning which works were inspired than Zahn admits.[35]

But even if Harnack admits that Theophilus considered NT writings to be inspired, he nonetheless insists that Theophilus did not consider them to be Scripture. Harnack bolstered this view by claiming that Theophilus's defense against treason did not depend essentially on such passages as Rom 13:1, but only on Prov 24:21–22. Texts from NT epistles such as Rom 13:1 only supported the argument by re-expressing through paraphrase the content of Prov 24:21–22.

However, Grant adequately answers Harnack here by showing that (1) Theophilus indeed called texts quoted from certain NT epistles the "the divine word" (ὁ θεῖος λόγος) in *Autol.* 3.14; (2) since he considered the prophets to include the gospel writers in *Autol.* 2.34, he might well have included Paul; (3) at roughly the same time as Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria numbered the apostles among the prophets; (4) the phrase introducing the use of the NT epistolary texts in *Autol.* 3.14, "and moreover" (ἔτι μὴν καί), put those texts for Theophilus at essentially the same level of authority as

32. For this consistency in *1 Clement* (not Clement of Alexandria), see Skarsaune, "Development of Scriptural Interpretation," 381–82.

33. *Autol.* 3.12. Similarly see Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus haereses* 2.28.3; and Pseudo-Justin, *Cohortatio ad gentiles* 16.

34. Harnack, *Neue Testament um das Jahr 200*, 39–40.

35. See especially the thesis statement in Harnack, *Neue Testament um das Jahr 200*, 4–7. Throughout the monograph, Harnack criticizes Zahn for undervaluing variations in second-century attitudes concerning canon.

OT texts and the gospels.[36] Thus, while Theophilus never called certain NT epistles "Scripture" (γραφή) in a technical sense, he essentially treated them as such on a functional level. Since he regarded them as inspired, this should not be surprising.

Massaux showed in his masterful 1950 dissertation on the use of Matthew up to the time of Irenaeus that Theophilus knew Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, and a number of Paul's letters. Massaux analyzes all of the distinctly Matthean texts and notes that Theophilus often reproduced nearly the exact text of Matthew in his quotations although sometimes with minor wording variations, this indicating a literary dependence on Matthew. Massaux sees in *Ad Autolycum* a predominant dependence on Matthew over the other canonical gospels.[37]

Simonetti presented a helpful analytical overview of Theophilus and the inspired texts in his 1972 "La sacra scrittura in Teofilo d'Antiochia." Contra Harnack, and agreeing with Grant, Simonetti held that Theophilus used the phrase "divine word" (θεῖος λόγος) in reference to New Testament texts themselves. He also observed that Theophilus's exegesis of Genesis highlights a principle of patristic exegesis in general: difficulties encountered in controversial passages are decided according to theological distinctives of various communities.[38] A major strength is Simonetti's judicious description and assessment of the use of the inspired texts in *Ad Autolycum*. One of the few weaknesses of this piece is that, being an older study, it relied on overly-simplified exegetical categories such as "letterale" ("literal") and "allegorica" ("allegorical"). Another weakness is simply that limitation imposed by the short length of his essay, so that although he produced a well-balanced and very helpful overview, a detailed treatment of the use of the inspired texts in *Ad Autolycum* is lacking.

Zeegers-Vander Vorst's 1975 essay, "Les citations du Nouveau Testament dans les Livres Autolycus de Théophile d'Antioche" is an important survey of Theophilus's general use and understanding of the NT.[39] While she did not deal with his use of the NT in connection with Greco-Roman rhetorical standards, she did supply a particularly helpful overview of Theophi-

36. Grant, "Bible of Theophilus," 183–84. Grant here cites Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.6.38. Grant does not think that Theophilus viewed the Pauline texts exactly as he viewed OT texts, since he asserted on pp. 188–89 that they were inspired and were probably "on the way to becoming scripture."

37. Massaux, *Influence of the Gospel of Saint Matthew*.

38. Simonetti, "La sacra scrittura in Teofilo," 197–207.

39. Zeegers, "Citations du Nouveau Testament," 371–82. Her *Citations des poètes grecs* has become the standard reference for those interested in how well Theophilus and other Christian apologists knew the Greek poets they so often cited.

lus's use of the NT. She concluded that while Theophilus used of most of the books typically included in various NT canons, and while he considered the gospels as authoritative equals of the Hebrew Scriptures, he mostly relied on the Hebrew Scriptures. She shows that Theophilus was profoundly informed by the Hebrew Scriptures whenever he interpreted NT writings. She argues that Theophilus's reticence to use gospel texts, and his use of Pauline literature in arguments which she characterizes as "antipauliniens," could not be explained by ignorance, but rather, by his apologetic purpose and his profound sense of the unity between the Hebrew Scriptures and the gospel message.[40] She provided a different sort of analysis in her 1976 "La création de l'homme (Gn 1, 26) chez Théophile d'Antioche."[41] While her former essay provided a general and comprehensive analysis of how Theophilus used NT texts, she gives in the latter a detailed analysis of exegetical traditions and Theophilus's innovation regarding a single verse, Gen 1:26. She shows that he was informed by a rich set of Jewish exegetical traditions, but also that he adopted them in a distinctly Christian direction.

Schoedel observed in 1993 that while Grant argued in his earlier writings that Theophilus's exegesis was rabbinic, he argued in his later writings that the bishop's exegesis fed both from early rabbinic exegesis and from Philo's Hellenistic Jewish exegesis.[42] Schoedel shows that the sixteen parallels in *Ad Autolycum* to rabbinic exegetical traditions that Grant identified are actually not as close as Grant thought. Schoedel thus persuasively argues that Theophilus appropriated Hellenistic Jewish exegetical techniques rather than rabbinic ones.

This conclusion by Schoedel that *Ad Autolycum* lies closer to Hellenistic Jewish exegetical traditions than to Palestinian ones is not surprising in light of the analogous case of Justin Martyr. Günter Stemberger observes that Justin indicates personal familiarity with Jewish thought.[43] Although Justin was born in Samaria and so might have known early rabbinic traditions, it has not been established that he himself debated with the rabbis. Confirming Skarsaune, Stemberger shows how the evidence indicates

40. Ibid., 374–77, 382.

41. Zeegers, "Création de l'homme," 258–67. The literature on early patristic use of Gen 1:26 is illuminating. Besides Zeegers's essay, see especially Nautin, "Genèse 1,1–2, de Justin à Origène," 61–94; and Winden, "Der Anfang," 3–48.

42. Schoedel, "Theophilus," 279–97. Schoedel responds to arguments of his mentor, Robert M. Grant, that Theophilus was a Jewish-Christian. He shows that Grant's claim that a form of Jewish Christianity had developed in Antioch is based on tenuous evidence.

43. Stemberger, "Exegetical Contacts," 569–86.

instead that Justin debated Scripture not with with rabbinic Jews, but with Diaspora Jews.[44]

None of the above-mentioned studies of Theophilus and Scripture provide a comprehensive, monograph-length treatment of how Scripture functions in his writings. To my knowledge, we have not yet seen a single monograph on Theophilus and Scripture. The stereotypical view of Theophilus as a disorganized writer with a tenuous grasp of Christianity does not square with historical reality. Rather, Theophilus cast Scripture in his profoundly protreptic letters to play a compelling, and very central and indispensible role in his classic and precise rhetoric of witness interrogation. When we judge by second-century standards rather than modern ones the intent, potency, and coherence of Theophilus's writings, the persisting stereotypical view of him must fall away. The approach we will take also engages dynamics of ancient orality and recollection as well as contributing to the new emerging portrait of patristic exegesis, one avoiding anachronisms of older scholarship, through renewed awareness of ancient literary practices. Scripture functioned in a particular and distinctive way in second-century apologies, a way that scholarship has not yet truly perceived.

Apart from offering in chapter 5 a comprehensive treatment of evidence of Theophilus's use of some biblical testimonia and other testimony sources, and supplying some footnotes about exegetical traditions connected to some key biblical passages, I probe no further into exegetical traditions. While there remains much more to be said about Theophilus and exegetical traditions, a full treatment would require a vast exploration extending far beyond the scope of this study.

44. Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 429. There is a good amount of literature on the question of whether Justin was anti-Jewish. Recent representative views of both sides of the debate are given in Sanchez, *Justin apologiste*; and Wilson, *Related Strangers*.