

Do you think there is more to the prologue?

The target audience may not be so well informed. I suppose they've seen a version of Mark and wondered at its down market style. They may never have come across Matthew's Gospel. They've probably got some collection of sayings like the Gospel of Thomas (likely with even more difficult and inscrutable Jewish sayings than we have) and while chances are none of them met Peter or Paul they've probably spoken to someone who has spoken to them so they have some oral tradition and some letters. They've got some form of liturgy material (Didache like) - I wonder what their liturgy meetings were like?

The grand style of the introduction suggests that this fluid and varied source material was an embarrassment to Luke's thoroughly educated and respectable audience. Johnson makes the point that Luke is a consummate story teller (p3) and goes on to suggest he is using this talent as an apologetic historian (p10). I suppose the literary imperative is as you say, to make it acceptable to the literary supplement reading section of Greco-Romans society. Apart from the chance to exercise the considerable editing and creative skills he possesses, the need for the task at all suggests a fluid and messy heritage that needs tightening up if Theophilus is to have confidence in what he is living. As an aside that makes the concern for the poor all the more remarkable - the style goes up the food chain and the concern downwards.