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**What Did Plato Read?**

Plato's ambivalence about writing in face of his own usurping of non philosophical prose formulations shows that he himself did not escape the influence of fifth century literary proliferation. Despite the reservations about writing that Plato expresses in *Phaedrus*, he may have been a "reader" with a range of published literature available to him.

Denniston's book *Greek Prose Style* points out that the last quarter of the fifth century were years of fevered experimentation with language and word formation. New compounds were being formed and new usages such as use of the article which is capable of making a substantive out of an adjective or a verb (as in Heraclites' writing when he speaks of *the* universe and *the* logos) were in vogue. The ubiquitous use of analogy as in Homeric poetry is an example of a formal element found in Plato's own writing.

Techniques of persuasion and methods of argument in the written speeches of the Sophists, led to development of logic as G.E.R. Lloyd points out. J. Goody suggests that certain types of writing (tables, lists, formulas, recipes) as *aides-memoire* may have stimulated certain types of questions and problems such as those of classification, later a feature of philosophical definition. Plato, in communication with traveling scholars, in his effort to free the language of philosophy from poetry, myth and fantasy, made use of his access to many types of Ionian prose writing. The evidence concerning the manufacture and publication of books in the fifth century is poor, G. E.R. Lloyd contends, but we do know that Anaxagoras' cosmological treatise could be bought easily for one drachma. Zeno's appearance in Athens with his written composition (*grammata*) in tow at the beginning of *Parmenides*, as well, documents a ready availability of texts. Technical subjects such music and medicine, architecture and geography, geometry and astronomy took written form and libraries certainly existed in Fifth century Athens. This paper will then try to recreate a sketchy picture of the kind of library available to Plato, and second, give examples of the effect of non-philosophical prose writing on philosophical coinage in Plato. Certain of Plato's formulations can be traced to the influence of increasingly sophisticated acts of representation that one finds in early cartography, astronomy, and cosmology and to accounts of tours of the known regions by travelers, as well as to cosmological treatises of the Physicists. Anaxagoras use of "alone by itself (*monon eonta eph heautou*) of Nous and the term (*metechei*) "share" contribute to Plato's description of the forms as *auto kath auto* is an example. At the same time, then as Plato calls writing a charm and contends that those who use texts "... are providing your pupils with the semblance of wisdom not the reality," he himself adapted the forms and structures of the written language around him to enhance and facilitate his own formulations.