

Hermesianax's peculiar diction is legendary. Many of the words found in his one substantial fragment (*Collectanea Alexandrina* 7) are rare borrowings from earlier texts, and require a close examination to determine their nuance. Such an examination was, in a sense, begun by P. Kobiliri in her 1998 book, *A Stylistic Commentary on Hermesianax*. While her work searches out a number of useful sources, especially in Homer, it is notably eccentric in its treatment of textual issues, and does not examine whether any meaning exists in Hermesianax's employment of Homeric (or, for that matter, non-Homeric) vocabulary. In my 15-minute paper, I show that Hermesianax did not simply collect peculiar words for a sort of menagerie: rather, he often used his wording to signal his interest in deeper, more complex issues. Closer examination of his potential sources can allow the reader to discover these issues. A few examples demonstrate the possibilities.

In the first couplet of fragment 7, Hermesianax names Orpheus's wife as "Argiope," a name otherwise unattested for her. This name is not common by any means, but it is known as the name of a nymph who was the mother of Thamyris by Philammon (Pseudo-Apollodorus 1.3.3). Has Hermesianax shifted Argiope from Philammon to Orpheus? There is every reason to believe he has: in fact, he is likely referring to a *zetema* attested in the scholia to Apollonius of Rhodes (1.23). We learn there that Pherecydes believed that Philammon, not Orpheus, was the singer aboard the *Argo*. By naming Argiope in connection with Orpheus, Hermesianax implicitly makes the two rivals in love, as well as in music.

Even a phrase as relatively nondescript as διὲκ μεγάλων ... δονάκων from line 6 of the fragment proves to be a portentous allusion. The word διέκ is found thirteen times in the Homeric epics, and four more times in Homeric hymns. The usual object of this preposition is μέγαροιο, but twice, in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, it takes μέγαρων. No pun could be closer to διέκ μέγαρων than διέκ μεγάλων; Hermesianax clearly is referring to the two passages from the Hymn to Demeter, lines 281 and 379. Tellingly, each of these passages has to do with incomplete escape from death. In the first, Demeter rushes from the house of Metaneira, after failing to make Demophoön completely immortal; in the second, Hermes escorts Persephone from Hades, right after she has eaten the pomegranate seeds that will ensure that she must return. While line 6 of Hermesianax's fragment 7 ostensibly does nothing more than refer to the flow of water, its context is Orpheus's retrieval of Argiope from Hades: it can be no accident that it refers so closely to passages in which this escape is shown to be impermanent.

Hermesianax presents unusual difficulties because most of his riddles leave too many blanks to be filled. For instance, the marked position of φημί in fr. 7.21, beginning a section on Hesiod, leads the reader naturally to think of Hesiod's use of the form φημί. When speaking in his own voice, he uses it only once, in *Works and Days* 656, in the course of his description of his only voyage on a ship. In this voyage, Hesiod makes for Chalcis, a place he describes elsewhere as καλλιγύναιξ (see Athenaeus 13.89). A Homeric scholion (*ad Il.* 3.75) informs us that, at least in one case, this word does not represent an assessment of the general character of the women in a locale, but rather implies that the speaker is thinking of one particular beautiful woman. (Other Homeric passages tend to confirm and generalize this conclusion.) A clever Hellenistic poet might have made an implication that Hesiod sailed to Chalcis for romantic reasons; Hermesianax is certainly too clever: he goes one step farther, recounting an opposite journey (on land, at that), to Ascra for the love (ludicrously enough) of Ehoie. Later Hellenistic authors tend to signal argument over a word by at least citing the relevant word; Hermesianax demands deeper digging.

In my paper, I connect Hermesianax's significant allusions. When connected, they present a consistent picture of an author, more complex than Callimachus, with an often too-well-hidden message.