

Vernant's classic analysis of the myth of Prometheus in terms of the structural division of offerings between mortal and immortal portions has become standard in the interpretation of the significance of Greek sacrifice. However, the assumption that meat constitutes the "diet of thoroughly mortal beings" creates a basic difficulty in reading the Prometheus episode within Hesiod's *Theogony*, which Giulia Sissa and Marcel Detienne have pointed out, when they ask, "Why should Zeus have been angry if he did not feel offended at having been denied meat?" (Detienne and Sissa 75). A better assumption, therefore, is that the gods do in fact desire meat. As Sissa and Detienne boldly state: "The Greek gods were carnivorous. Ambrosia and Nectar were of course their special, Olympian forms of nourishment, but they were by no means averse to the meat of animals, provided it was served up to them in the form of an odor" (Detienne and Sissa 75). The fact remains that the Prometheus episode does not give any details as to the origins of burning offerings to the gods, only that Zeus did not physically consume the portion offered to him because he was deceived by Prometheus and that the practice of burning results from Prometheus' act of deception. The aim of this paper is to consider how the Prometheus episode of the *Theogony* does not speak directly to the institution of sacrifice so much as it ties into the larger narrative of Zeus' ascension to power through an emphasis on the connection between deception and consumption. In particular, I shall argue that Prometheus' deceptive offering to Zeus is prefigured by Rhea's deceptive offering to Kronos. The stone wrapped in swaddling clothes (*Theog.* 485-6) corresponds to the bones wrapped in fat (*Theog.* 540-1). Where Hesiod describes Kronos picking up Rhea's deceptive offering with his hands, so Zeus is also described as picking up Prometheus' deceptive offering with both hands (*Theog.* 553-4). Finally, where Kronos does not recognize Rhea's trick and swallows it without hesitation (*Theog.* 487-491), Hesiod explains that Zeus did not fail to recognize Prometheus' trick (*Theog.* 551-5), employing a double negative with the express purpose of contrasting Zeus' success with Kronos' failure. By considering the Prometheus episode as a response to the Kronos episode we see that Prometheus' act of deception is not consummated because it is not consumed. Finally the correspondence between Rhea's deception of Kronos and Prometheus' attempted deception of Zeus is confirmed in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, which employs the exact same language in Apollo's recognition of the baby Hermes as Zeus' recognition of Prometheus' deceptive offering (*H. H. to Hermes* 244-6). Within the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, Apollo is thus simultaneously associated with Zeus for his recognition of a deception at the same time that Apollo is contrasted with Kronos for recognizing the child Hermes, hidden in "deceptive folds." While Vernant and Detienne have linked Kronos swallowing his children with Zeus swallowing Mêtis, the present analysis allows us to consider the Prometheus episode of the *Theogony* as the passage which mediates between the two in order to differentiate Zeus from Kronos. By considering the role of the Prometheus scene, its foregrounding with Rhea's deception of Kronos, and its logical conclusion with Zeus consuming the goddess Mêtis, we see that food offerings, the act of consumption, and sacrifice itself function as a primordial site of power relations according to Hesiod's *Theogony*.

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