

Up to now, in this essay, I have been following Frank rather closely, and his ideas of Chaucer's narrative ability, his leaving the strict courtly love code, ~~xxxx~~his use of abbreviation, and his problems of artistic choice should be fairly clear as applied to the first three legends. For the rest of the legends I will omit the synthetical material between his outstanding critical statements, although I will have to again become more thorough in his last two chapters that are pure criticism removed from ~~the~~ ~~xxxx~~ individual exploration of ~~the~~ Chaucer's text. 2001

...Hypsipyle and Medea... demonstrates still a fourth method (of narrative), the peicing together of incident or detail from several sources. A combination of the methods used in Cleopatra and Dido, "because "Chaucer was ... attempting to achieve a variety of effects with his legends." (p. 79) Frank agains notes a problem with material, that may stem from the fact that the poem "is about Jason." He feels "it is a blurred poem, certainly not first class, but certainly interesting." (p. 80) "The concentration on Jason here is not an arch and awkward effort to be funny. It occurs, I believe, because Chaucer saw this as a way of unifying his narrative material and because Jason intrigued him," (p. 81) but is also a tactic used to "unify the two separate but connected stories of Hypsipyle and Medea by centering attention on Jason, the betrayer of both." Here he compares the number of lines given to the three participants in the story which can be found by anyone who is interested. Frank also notes that the slighting of the women is inconsistent with the sources.

The problems of creating the narratives for the two women is now focused on in Franks chapter on Hypsipyle and Medea. The sources available to Chaucer have little narrative material on either of the two women, and, "The limitations of his sources and a concern for narrative unity seem the major considerations that pushed Chaucer into minimizing his heroines and making Jason the dominant figure." (p. 84)

Frank also believes that "Chaucer became interested in Jason. He becomes, almost, the emblem of the lucky one, the magically successful man," but "Chaucer condemns Jason, but he does so without moral indignation. There is, after all, something comic about such a phenomenon if seen from the proper perspective. The rascal is amusing; the arch rascal comic." This inconsistency, however, "accounts for some of the blurred effect of the poem." (p. 85) Another is because "Some of the language and imagery deflate whatever serious tone has developed, by association with the vulgar rather than the courtly." Pelles' plotting against him is nothing "ominous," as Pelles is defeated by Medea's art. "Indeed, undramatic is hardly the adequate word. Anticomic- heroic is this bedroom warrior who masters the enemy because his lady is such a mistress of arts." "Most effectively comic is the portrait of Jason as the meek, sly man who answers the messenger from Hypsipyle 'mekely and styll', afraid to have anyone know he is in love. He is also found by Frank to be comic in his plot to "beaute" the queen and in "His mealy-mouthed speech to Medea." Hand and hand with his comic side is Jason's mastery of courtly love procedure, and Hercules as the Amis who is a "pandarus twice removed."

Frank sums his thoughts on this tale focusing on its romantic failure and its blurriness. "(T)he business of love is presented here too realistically to qualify as courtly love... suggestions of courtly love seem not irenic here... but accidental, details imposed by his material or remnants of the familiar manner not yet discarded." Frank feels "the root of the poem's failure... lies in Chaucer's attempt to incorporate comic and unromantic