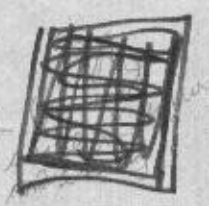


Preston also notes Chaucer's comment on "Ovid's relish of horrors that still have the power to corrupt." In these more serious stories "There is no farcical engagement...with the naughty male. Chaucer is propounding a serious problem; the problem of evil. As for Good Women, Ovid would have told him they knew (to little *Sp-dicta*) (poor dears) of either the Art of Love or its remedies." (pp. 76-77)

The first element we see missing in Preston's analysis is depth in the backing up of his generalities with more of his own thinking. He gives us a sentence or two of critical description and then a long passage from the Legend. He expresses himself in no uncertain terms, but this does not lead to a clarity in his thought. We are at a disadvantage in looking at Preston's comments on the Legend because it is from his 1952 book, and we don't have his fully developed vision of Chaucer in this essay extracted from the book. He recognizes a number of things in the Legend that have been Frank's major concerns, including what he calls the "Fresh verse-form," and agrees with Frank in the idea of Dido's reduced stature. It is too bad that his book falls out of my time range, for his quickness of mind would undoubtedly produce a contrasting conception of Chaucer's art at the time of the Legend. Compared to Frank's progressive didacticism Preston seems in this excerpted essay to border on the facetious and his comments seem mere skimming.



Frank's last chapter is entitled "The Lessons Learned," and in it returns after his review of the Legend to basic Chaucerian problems in it and around it. He feels "There yet remains the question of the significance of the Legend in Chaucer's career." He tries to place the Legend chronologically and speculates that "The Canterbury Tales project was probably not well under way much before the last legend, Hypermnestra."

