AGAIN it is Ernst Curtius who points the way! In the Excursus IV on “Jest and Earnest in Medieval Literature,” he raises the question as to whether there can be jest in hagiographic context, and he cites examples from the passions of St. Lawrence and St. Eulalie as they are related in the Peristephanon of Prudentius. It is the purpose of this study to explore the problem further by examining a metaphoric expression in the Old French Cantilène de Sainte Eulalie against the background of hagiographic conventions, and an incidental result of the analysis will be the suggestion of yet another solution for the controversial word pulcella.

The line of martyrological traditions of which the Old French Eulalie is a product can be traced in the monumental researches of the erudite Bollandist, Hippolyte Delehaye, who has made a contribution of inestimable value for literary studies in his definitions of the hagiographic genres. Reduced to its barest essentials, the ordering which Delehaye proposes would classify the literature of the passions of the Christian martyrs under two main headings: the historic passions and the artificial, or epic, passions. The historic passions are assigned two subcategories: eye-witness accounts of the martyr-
dom itself and panegyric eulogies in high rhetorical style pronounced by the fathers of the early post-Constantinian period of the state church. The artificial passions are of a later period and comprise recitals in which the sparse facts of the historic event are augmented by fictitious elaborations. They were composed, for the most part, by anonymous authors and begin to make their appearance in that epoch of intellectual decadence which accompanied the decline of the empire after the fourth century. 

Contemporaneous records of the acts of the Christian martyrs are rare, and evidence that martyrdom occurred is usually provided only by the date of the anniversary observed by a small community of mourners who gathered at the place of interment to commemorate the event, often using the tomb as an altar. The dates and locations were recorded much later in martyrlogical calendars, where a few bare facts of the passio might also be recounted. However, some recitals of the acts of the martyrs which were written immediately after the event have come down to us in the form of encyclical letters, recorded verbal testimony, and, at times, in a little book. Delehaye shows that such records manifest realism of detail and a rich variety of material which falls into no special traditional pattern, and he points out that such characteristics argue strongly for authenticity.

When Christianity became a state religion, the timid rites of commemoration of the period of persecution blossomed into joyous celebrations of the anniversary at which the presiding bishops eulogized the martyr in panegyrics in the best tradition of sophistic epidictic. The model of the oration was elaborate. After a preamble containing appropriate expressions of humility and modesty, the speaker would treat: (1) the country,
town, or race to which redounded the honor of having produced the martyr; (2) his family; (3) his birth, especially if accompanied by some miraculous sign; (4) his natural qualities; (5) his education; (6) his childhood; (7) his manner of life and occupations; (8) his acts; (9) his fortune; and, lastly, (10) comparisons.

To the credit of the antique good taste which still prevailed, the speaker would gracefully pass over any of the topoi (race, birth, family, education, etc.) on which he had no information, but, as could be expected, the virtues of the martyr were expounded in elaborate hyperbole, as were also the cruelty of his torturers and the horror of his passio. Outstanding among the martyr's virtues were his eagerness for martyrdom and the superhuman courage—even joy—which he manifested under torture: he would walk on burning coals as if they were roses, he would throw himself into the fire as if it were cool water.

The stoic fortitude of the martyr was set in further relief by extensive and detailed descriptions of the tortures inflicted on him and by enumerations of the instruments. Amplification of the horror was accomplished by long lists of the tortures which the judge or executioner customarily employed, but the panegyric did not indulge in the excess of having one individual undergo all the tortures in the list, as did the later accounts in the artificial or epic passions.

Another device of the panegyric was the apostrophe of the martyr, who harangued the executioner in impeccable rhetoric on theological matters, demanding imperiously that all the tortures be brought on quickly, for he was avid for his martyrdom.

In his concluding comments on the hagiographic panegyric,
Delehaye remarks that “l’élément fourni par l’histoire y occupe l’arrière-plan” (Genres, p. 232), and he implies that the demands of epidictic rhetoric have already somewhat distorted fact and begun to forge the rigid topoi of what will later become the conventional martyr, subjected to a traditional “persécution déchaînée par des monstres de cruauté qui versent le sang à torrents” (Genres, p. 233).

Even before that waning of the golden age of Latin Christian eloquence concomitant with the decline of the general level of culture of the disintegrating empire, there began to appear a corpus of mainly anonymous literature which, it would seem, derives from the antique panegyric, but which also embodies some new characteristics. In this literature, the historic facts of martyrdom are so richly ornamented as to become veritable tissues of fiction, and the forms of the stereotyped topoi become so rigidly conventionalized as to confer on the composition the quality of a product of assembly-line manufacture (Genres, p. 237). From such “artificial” or “epic” passions is derived the hagiographic form of the Latin and vernacular lives of the saints and martyrs which survives in the Middle Ages.³

The Old French sequence relating the passion of Saint Eulalie stands as our earliest (882–890 A.D.) monument of belletristic literature in the Romance vernacular. A re-reading of the text, provided here for convenience of reference, will serve to recall the naïve simplicity of a story whose charm has not dimmed through a millennium.

Buona pulcella fut Eulalia,
bel aurct cors, bellezour anima.
Voldrent la veintre li deo inimi,
voldrent la faire diaule servir.

5    Elle non eskollet les mals consellers,
qu’elle deo raneiet, chi maent sus en ciel.
    Ne por or ned argent ne paramenzen,
    por manatce regiel ne preiement.
    Niule cose non la pouret omque pleier,

10   La polle sempre non amast lo deo menestier.
    E poro fut presente de Maximiien,
    chi rex eret a ccls dis soure pagniens.
    Il li enortet, dont lei nonque chielt,
    qued elle fuiet lo nom christiien.

15   Ell’ ent adunet lo suon element
    melz sostendreiet les empedementz,
    Qu’elle perdesse sa virginitet:
    poro s furet morte a grand honestet.

20   Elle colpes non auret, poro no s coist.
    A czo no s voldret concreidre le rex pagniens:
    ad une spede li roveret tolir lo chief.
    La domnizelle celle kose non contredit
    volt lo seule lazier, si ruvet Krist.

25   In figure de colomb volat a ciel,
tuit oram, que por nos degnet preier,
    Qued auuisset de nos Christus mercit,
    post la mort et a lui nos laist venir
    Par souue clementia.7

"Eulalie was a good little girl. She had a beautiful body, a
more beautiful soul. The enemies of God wanted to conquer
her, they wanted to make her serve the devil. She does not
listen to the evil councils that she deny God. . . . " and so
forth. The facts of the unadorned narrative are recounted
without connectives—declined, one might almost say—as the essential facts of the life of Christ are enumerated as articles of belief in the Credo. Yet, when viewed in the light of Delehaye's exposition of the stereotypes of hagiographic tradition, almost every statement could, if it were desired, be traced to a conventional topos of the mainly fictitious epic passion.

In his edition of the Peristephanon, Lavarenne states that it is Prudentius (ca. 400) who provides us with the earliest document on Eulalie, naming the city of her birth as Emerita (Mérida) in southwestern Spain and informing us that she was martyred at the instigation of Maximian. Lavarenne (p. 53) cannot accept the mention of Maximian as definitive indication of an approximate date for her passion, however, because, since the persecution unleashed in 304 by Maximian and Diocletian was generally considered the most violent of all, it was a convention to attribute all martyrdoms of uncertain date to the reign of these emperors. The hieronymian martyrology lists Eulalie's celebration under the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth of December, but Delehaye (Culte, p. 363) deduces that the tenth should be the proper day, since that is the date which appears in both the Carthaginian and the Mozarabic calendars.

Delehaye remarks (Genres, p. 312) that in the writings of the Cappadocian fathers and of St. John Chrysostomos, and especially in the Peristephanon of the Spanish writer Prudentius, are to be found perhaps the earliest works which served as models for the anonymous, artificial, or epic, type of passio. He signals out particularly the hymns to St. Vincent (V), St. Eulalie (III), St. Lawrence (II), and St. Roman (X) as compositions which typify the genre. Thus, the events of the extensive narrative which Prudentius relates concerning
Eulalie's childhood, her dialogue with the persecutors, and so forth, are to be interpreted in the main as stereotyped *topoi*, clustered around a small nucleus of fact. But however small the kernel of historical truth may be, there can be little doubt that it was Prudentius who delineated the major outlines of Eulalie's literary portrait for the Middle Ages.

Of especial interest to the purpose of this study are the manner of her death and the events immediately preceding it. In a thirty-line apostrophe to the judge (lines 66–95), Prudentius has Eulalie call Maximian every nasty name in the book, accusing him of feeding on innocent blood and gluttonously coveting the bodies of the pious as he tears their sober flesh. The judge then threatens her with torture and death by either the sword, or wild beasts, or burning, unless she consents to touch the salt and incense of the altar. For reply she spits in his face, breaks the holy idols, and tramples on the sacred flour. Two executioners then tear her chest and flanks with iron claws, while she counts her wounds and announces to Christ that His victories and name are written on her in the purple of blood. The executioner then holds burning torches to her sides and chest; her sweet-smelling hair slides over her body to preserve her modesty. The flame flies to her face and embraces her head, and she drinks in the fire. Suddenly a dove, whiter than snow, is seen to come from her mouth and fly off to the stars: it is the soul of Eulalie—white as milk, swift, and innocent. It cries out in triumph in heaven. The judge and the executioner see the miracle and, fearing their crime, flee from the place. Then winter covers her body with snow as if with a shroud.

It is evident that, in the Old French version of Eulalie's passion, the narrative of Prudentius is greatly condensed and
also somewhat changed. It is now the emperor, Maximian himself, who acts as her judge (line 13: "Hi li enortet"), and the content of the long dialogue with the judge is reduced to a few brief statements of the essential facts; the spitting episode is suppressed. The method of torture is also changed: no mention is made of tearing the flesh with iron claws, and, although fire is used, the actual death comes by decapitation. The snow is not mentioned.

The motif of death by the sword seems to have been introduced into the story at least before the date of the martyrology of the Venerable Bede (672–735 A.D.), where an entry for December 10 by Bede himself reads:

Natale S Eulaliae virginis in Barcelona civitate Hispaniae, sub Daciano praeside, quae cum esset tredccim annorum, post plurima tormenta, decollata est, et resilient ab ea capite, columba de ejus exire visa est. 

It is not known how this motif became a part of the legend, but two possibilities are suggested. The first (and, in my view, less likely) source could be a misunderstanding of the praetor’s threat to punish the maiden by means of torture, either to cut off her head with a sword, or to tear her limbs by beasts; or, her form exposed to torches, her relatives the while tearfully grieving, to reduce her to ashes (lines 116–20: “aut gladio ferire caput, / aut laniabere membra feris, / aut, facibus data fumificis, / flebiliterque ululanda tuis, / in cineres resoluta flues”).

It has occurred to me that a more probable explanation would lie in contamination with the passion of the virgin St. Agnes (Peristephenon, XIV), whose story in many ways
resembles that of Eulalie, and who stands beside her in the company of the martyred virgins. The Prudentius passage concerning the death of St. Agnes (lines 85–93) reads as follows:

Sic fata Christum vertice cernuo
supplex adorât, vulnus ut imminens
cervix subiret prona paratius.
Ast ille tantam spem peragit manu,
uno sub ictu nam caput amputat;
sensum doloris mors cita praevenit.
Exutus inde spiritus emicat
liberque in auras exilit; angeli
saepsere euntem tramite candido.

Thus Prudentius has Agnes bend her neck in prayer, the better to receive the blow. Then the hand of the executioner fulfils all her hope: with one stroke he cuts off her head and quick death prevents the sense of pain. Her soul flies from her body and freely bounds in the air; angels surround it on its shining route.

Also of import to this study is a subtle difference between the way the French and Latin versions of the passion of Eulalie describe the miracle of the dove. In the Latin text, after the dove issues from the martyr’s mouth and flies off to heaven, it is specifically stated that “this was the soul of Eulalie, milky white, swift, and innocent” (lines 164, 165: “spiritus hic erat Eulaliae / lacteolus, celer, innocuus.” The French version, however, does not mention the soul at this point, and seems to say simply that Eulalie herself flies to heaven in the figure of a dove (line 25: “In figure de colomb volat a ciel). One would naturally suppose that anima (cf. line
is implied as the subject of *volat*, but this may really have not been the intent. We are reminded that, in the vernacular version, Maximian and his praetor are condensed into one person. May there not also be a similar, but much more ambivalent, telescoping here, indicating a lack of desire to distinguish between the maiden and her soul?

Although figuration of the soul leaving the body as a dove flying to heaven impresses us today as the most banal of commonplaces, this was probably not the case in the early Christian period. One looks first to Biblical texts for authorization for the *topos*, but to my knowledge the figuration is not found in its complete form in the Bible, although it is suggested, as for example in Psalm 55:5–6, where David laments:

> Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me and horror hath overwhelmed me.
>
> Oh that I had wings of a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.

and again in Psalm 74:19:

> O deliver not the soul of thy turtle dove [David] unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor forever.

The descent of the Spirit of God in the form of a dove on Jesus at the time of his baptism (Matt. 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:32) also suggests the *topos*, since the Spirit would be expected to leave the earthly form at the moment of death, but no specific mention is made of the dove when Christ gives up the Ghost at the crucifixion. It is also worthy of note
that, in the fourteen hymns of the passions in the Peri­
stephanon, Prudentius reserves the dove exclusively for Eu­
lalie’s soul. (It will be recalled that no figure is provided for the 
departing spirit of St. Agnes.)

In its connotations of purity, innocence, and fidelity in love 
(Eulalie was a bride of Christ), the figure is so suitable for the 
little Spanish maiden that it is really not difficult to 
conceive that popular imagination would, as the vernacular 
passion of Eulalie seems to have done, confound the maid 
with the miraculous sign that identifies her as a saint. It is thus 
implicied that Eulalie, within her beautiful body, is a more 
beautiful dove (cf. line 2: “bel auret corps, bellezour anima”), and that death releases her, the dove, from her prison. In this 
way the attribute of the martyr is confounded with the martyr 
herself.

That the imagination of the Middle Ages especially liked to 
dwell on the attributes of saints is demonstrated by the 
profusion of iconographic symbols manifested in the medieval 
period of Western Christendom in comparison with the 
relative scarcity of them in the art of Byzantium and the 
period of early Christianity. Delehaye discusses the fact that, 
in the iconography of Christian antiquity, characteristic em­ 
blems were only occasionally associated with the images of 
saints, as in the case of St. Peter with his key and St. Lawrence 
with his grill. He mentions specifically (Méthode, p. 129) 
that, in the procession of virgins in the Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo 
(St. Eulalie was among them), only St. Agnes is distinguished 
by her symbol—all the rest have to be recognized by reading 
the inscription. He maintains, however, that it was in the 
West during the Middle Ages that the predilection for the 
figuration of personal characteristics expanded.
Delehaye then enumerates the sources from which the medieval artists derive their characterizing emblems. That one of these sources was the name of the saint suggests a sort of mystic identification of the name of the thing symbolized with the symbol. The lamb, for example, which accompanies St. Agnes from the time of her earliest representations is, of course, a translation of her name. St. Christopher ("bearer of Christ") carries Christ on his shoulders; in Switzerland, St. Maurice is represented as a Moorish warrior; and the Baltic St. Brandan carries a taper in his hand, the word branden being associated with the name Brandan by folk etymology. This kind of thinking is, of course, typical of that etymologizing period which believed that the higher spiritual meaning of the thing could be explained through its name. Metaphor becomes more than a figure of speech: it becomes reality, just as the enumerations of antique hyperbole became facts.

Thus it can be seen that, although the vernacular text only implies the fusion by which the dove of St. Eulalie is Eulalie, the mystic identification is complete in the case of St. Agnes: Agnes is the lamb, a figure which, I might add, is comparable with the dove in such respects as whiteness, purity, innocence, association with Jesus, and so forth. It would, therefore, seem logical to propose that a state of mind in which the name of the person is merged with the word for the symbolic attribute of the person would be conducive to the production of fields of semantically related terms for the person, which have as their center the word for the symbol.

Thus, it could have been the idea of the dove which determined the choice of the word polle ("chicken") as a metaphoric term for Eulalie in line 10. This metaphor is
clearly an innovation of the vernacular version and does not appear in the *Peristephanon*, where she is called *virgo* eight times, *martyr* three times, *femina* twice, and *pusiola, puella, and puellula* once.

The word *polle* comes directly from the Latin *pûllus, pûlla*, which had the primary meaning “young animal,” especially “chicken.” It is attested in the familiar letters of Cicero with reference to doves, and it has, since Classic Latin, been used as a term of endearment for a young human being. At first a word of rustic language, it was usual in Plautus and Ennius, and, with the exception of Roumanian, is universal in Romance.18 A semantic sequence, *dove : young dove : young chicken*, is thus established that entrains a concomitant shift in connotations from those of *colomb* (“Holy Spirit” “soul” “innocence” “candor” “purity”) to those of *polle* (“young dove” “youth in general” “endearing qualities”). We have now arrived at Eulalie the human being before martyrdom, a nice little girl, a dear young thing, caressingly called a “young chicken” by a speaking population which always opted for the affective word and rustic, concrete expression.

What then of *pulcella* in line 1? Was this word felt to be related to *polle* and thus connected with the semantic sequence, “dove” : “chicken”? The problem devolves on the question as to whether the word *pulcella* would be understood by a ninth-century speaker of Old French as related to *polle* “chicken,” and therefore associated with the semantic area “birds or fowl.” In other words, could *polle* be understood to have as a diminutive *pulcella* through addition of the suffix -cëlla or -ëlla? The suffixes -cëllu -a, and -ëllu -a offer no difficulty. Both were viable at that period, and, it would seem, quite productive in names for birds. Thus starting with
avicellu > aucellu > OF oisel > MF oiseau (REW 827), there may be mentioned CL türtürilla > türtürëlla > F tourterelle (REW 9010); *hirundella (<hirundo) > hirondelle (REW 4146); as well as passereau, moineau, corbeau, and also paonneau ("young peacock") and pigeonneau ("young pigeon"), where the sense of the diminutive suffix is still understood today. Agneau and dominizella might also be mentioned, since these words function within the context of the general stylistic pattern: agneau, the attribute of St. Agnes, and dominizella, another vernacular term for Eulalie.

But would it be possible for a ninth-century speaker to equate phonemically the nexus /-ül/ (<ûl) with /-oll/ (<ûll) through some awareness that they could be alternated? In other words, were derivatives from Latin words having the two forms—long vowel plus single consonant and short vowel plus double consonant—still felt to be related? Cûpa > cuve (REW 2401) and căppa > coupe (REW 2409) tell us nothing in this case since cuve and coupe have different meanings, the former "large barrel or drum for storing wine," and the latter, "cup or drinking vessel." However the derivatives of camēlus and camēllus survived in France as true doublets, since the Old French forms chamoil and chamel (> MF chameau) both have the meaning "camel." But in this example the doublet alternation occurs in the tonic syllable. Is there an example for the countertonic?

By far the most convincing analogy is offered in another derivative from pûllu, where pûllu plus the diminutive ending -cînu (<-cënu) > pûllicinus, which produces MF poussin ("a newly hatched chicken"). But the variant forms, OF pulcin, attested in the Cambridge Psalter of 1120, and pucin, in the Ysengrinus, in the meaning "petit d'un oiseau quelconque,"
point to a proto-Gallo-Roman doublet \( \text{pùlïcînus} : \text{pùllïcïnus} \).\(^{21}\n\) It might be mentioned also that the Cassel Glosses show “pulli, honir, pulcins, honchli,” \(^{22}\) which would seem to support an argument in favor of the viability of a doublet when one form is in the simplex and the alternate in the derivative. To put the matter another way, the speaker was aware in this case that \textit{pulcin (“little chicken”) was a diminutive of polle (“chicken”).}

So it would seem that, given the ambience, \textit{polle : pulcin}, the speaker could relate \textit{polle} to \textit{pulcella} by sensing that, if a \textit{-çinus} diminutive of \textit{polle} can be \textit{pulcin}, then a \textit{-çella} diminutive can be \textit{pulcella}. Therefore, it can be posited that the evidence available on the synchronic plane can support the assumption that \textit{pulcella} of line 1 in the \textit{Eulalie} can be included in the semantic chain “dove” : “chicken” and that \textit{pulcella} could have the meaning “little chick,” as a caressing term of endearment for a young girl.

The earliest (ca. 511 A.D.) attestation of the word \textit{pucelle} occurs in the Merovingian Salic Law as \textit{pulicella}. Here \textit{pulicella} is equated with \textit{ancilla (“servant”)}, and would seem to connote a sort of junior rank (“ancilla . . . si pulicella fuerit” vs. “vero ancilla cellaria”).\(^{23}\) The word is also attested in the \textit{Lex romana utinensis}, 89, 24, and the \textit{Leges alamannorum}, 82, 2, as \textit{pulicla}.\(^{24}\) There are numerous Romance cognates of this word, and the meaning seems to be universally “maiden,” “young girl,” with “virgin” connoted. The various forms suggest a vowel shift \( û < > ù \) in proto-Romance as well as \( l > n \) and \( l > r \) dissimilation.\(^{25}\) The forms in the Gallo-Roman area all seem to have derived from the prototype in \( û \).

Since the time of Diez (258), \(*\text{pùllicèlla} \) has been proposed
as the etymon of *puelle, and Meyer-Lübke suggests a contamination with *pūtus to account for a ū > ū shift. The FEW favors Meyer-Lübke’s proposal, but Spitzer (p. 101) points out that *pūtus is a Virgilian hapax and maintains that the evidence for its productivity in Gallo-Roman is questionable. Wallenskold has proposed an etymon in *pueliacella, but it must be objected that *puer and *puella have been unproductive in Romance, and that his argument for shift ue > u needs more support than the analogy of a verb form like fuerat (>furet, Eulalie, 18).

Leo Spitzer brings new evidence to the support of the much ridiculed idea which Foerster (ZRPh, 16, 254) advanced for a derivation from *puelicella (<pulex) in the sense “little flea.” This etymon would be phonologically impeccable for the derivatives manifesting a ūl prototype, found mainly in the Gallo-Roman area, and Spitzer proposes a contamination with dominicella to account for the forms manifesting o and n. (Von Wartburg offers the objection in the FEW that “die formen mit o keineswegs immer auch n haben.”) Spitzer offers a mass of material in support of a semantic evolution which I take the liberty of summarizing: “little flea” (>“self-effacing servant” >“self-effacing Christian”) >“servant” >“servant of Christ” >“noble Eulalie,” and he sets up as the ambience of the development a formula of Christian humility such as is found in St. Jerome, “ego pulex et Christianorum minimus,” and which derives ultimately from a “climat de politesse orientale exagérée.”

Somehow I cannot quite hear St. Jerome’s austere pronouncement, “Oh flea that I am and the least of Christians,” echoing in the Merovingian scullery. Spitzer also seemed to sense an incongruity, but then suggests that, since the early
Christians are presumed to have chosen for themselves pejorative proper names such as Sterculus, Babosa, Tineosus, Vespula, Porcella (were these really self-imposed?), it could be imagined that the servant in the kitchen, through Christian humility, would call herself "ego pulicella," "moi petite puce," and that her masters would accept her self-imposed designation and then speak of her as a "pulicella." He then shows that the semantic transition "servant" > "young girl" > "noble young girl" can be supported by many analogies.

Spitzer maintains further that *pulcella* "est sur le même niveau de style que la domnizelle," both words presumably implying nobility—the one of the Christian order, the other of the social—while *polle*, as a familiar expression of endearment, is on an entirely different plane. He does not discuss *colomb*.

I have the feeling that, perhaps for fear of casting aspersions on the *pucelle d'Orléans*, entirely too much anxiety has been expressed generally over the connotations of nobility in the word *pulcella* of the *Eulalie*. Eulalie's exalted state is guaranteed by the designation *la domnizelle* in line 23, and this, together with the fact of her martyrdom, should be sufficient to confer on the word *pucelle* enough social status for the needs of any saint who comes after her. If the word *pucelle* was not noble before it was used in the *Eulalie*, Eulalie made it so. I submit, therefore, that the semantic chain that I have proposed—*colomb* : *polle* : *pulcella* (or "soul/dove" : "young girl/chicken" : "maid/endearing young chick")—establishes an integrated affective metaphor in the ambience of birds, and that it was meant to oppose the connotations of social order implied in *domnizelle*.

It seems to me that there is really no need to assume contaminating words to explain the Romance derivations.
They can be made without difficulty simply from a pair of doublets, *pùlicella : *pùllicella, the former accounting for the forms in u, the latter for the forms in o. The analogy of would answer the question as to whether a ûl<>ull altered in pulcin, pucin vs. poussin<*pùlicinus vs. *pùllicinus nation in the counter tonic provides doublets in Romance. Finally, the forms manifesting n and r (puncella, etc., and pur-šela) can be explained as simple dissimilation by analogy with the coexisting Vulgar Latin forms cultellus and cuntellus (REW 2381), a possibility which Spitzer considered, but rejected in favor of his semantic solution. Thus, cultellus> cuntellus (l - l>n - l) and cultellus> Venetian kortello (l - l>r - l).

The semantic cluster “dove” : “chicken” : “little chick,” which has been established as an integrated group of metaphoric terms for Eulalie, functions in conjunction with another, rather strange, semantic cluster in a way that produces a very startling image. It is stated in line 13 that the little chicken Eulalie does not become excited (literally “get heated up” ) at the exhortations of Maximian:

Il li enortet, dont lei nonque chielt.

Later, in lines 19 and 20, we are told that “they threw her into the fire in order that she burn to toast” and that “she had no sins, for that reason she did not cook”:

Ens enl fou la getterent, com arde tost.
elle colpes non auret, poro no s coist.

Finally, they had to cut her head off with a sword.
The word *chielt* is derived from *calere*, which literally signified “to become warm or heated” and already in Classic Latin had acquired the figurative meaning “to become excited.” However, the word *coist* derives from *coquere*, which means simply “to cook” in both Latin and the Romance derivatives. The word *tost* from *tostum*, the past participle of *torrere* (“to burn”), gives us MF *tôt* (“quickly”) (cf., “se laisser griller”), but also produced an Old French verb *toster* (“to grill”), whence English *toast*. Since *tost* is in assonance with *coist*, it would seem that here both words were intended as cooking terms. The idea implied thus becomes: “Eulalie did not cook,” or, when Eulalie is supplanted by her cluster of metaphoric equivalents—“dove” : “chicken” : “chick”—“the chicken did not cook!”

It has already been shown that the vernacular text differs from the Prudentius hymn in the manner of Eulalie’s torture and death. In the *Peristephanon*, she is torn with iron claws and then burned; in the French text they try to burn her, but since she had no sin, they could not, and so they cut off her head. The lack of success of the torturers in their first attempt to destroy Eulalie by fire is a thoroughly traditional *topos*, which seems to have had its origin in the *amplificatio* of the early panegyrics, where the atrocious cruelty of the pagan judge was characterized hyperbolically by a long list of the tortures he *customarily* employed. In the epic passions, however, the hyperbole was taken literally, and it is not unusual to find one poor martyr enduring all the tortures in the list, one after another. The cumulation of horror on the head of one individual was made to seem reasonable by presenting the sequence of torture either as a demonstration of the saint’s
fortitude, or as a manifestation of the inefficacy of the power of evil over the power of good. In the latter case, which is, of course, that of the Old French Eulalie, a miracle occurs which confers on the martyr complete insensibility, so that the executioners cannot destroy him until God wills that his soul be released. Frequently the executioners get so tired that they have to stop for a rest.

Delehaye summarizes the sequence of tortures of numerous martyrs. One example, that of St. Christine (Genres, p. 285), will more than suffice:

Elle est frappée à coups de pieds par quatre hommes, jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient à bout de forces; chargée de chaînes et d'un carcan, suspendue, raclée, déchirée, attachée à la roue audessus d'un grand feu alimenté par de l'huile, précipitée à la mer une meule au cou, jetée dans un poêle remplie de matières enflammées, enfermée durant cinq jours dans une fournaise ardente, exposée aux morsures des serpents. On lui coupe les seins, puis la langue; des pointes sont enfoncées dans tous ses membres. Elle pérît par le glaive.

The martyr always endures his tortures courageously and frequently asks for more with appropriate Christian fervor. It is not unusual for him to express joy, as in the passion of St. Vincent (Peristephanon, V), where it is said that, when they tore him with iron claws, the soldier of God would laugh (line 117: "ridebat hacc miles Dei"), and that, when the executioners were exhausted, St. Vincent was that much more happy (line 125: "ast ille tanto lactior"). Joy makes him agile, and he hastens to get to his [next] torture before his judges do (lines 211 and 212: "ipso que pernix gaudio / poenae min-
istros praevenit”). When boiling fat is poured on him, he remains immobile as if he feels no pain (lines 233, 234: “Haec inter inmotus manet, / tanquam dolorum nesciens”).

At times the martyr will joke. Delehaye (Genres, p. 289), citing from the Passio SS Timothei et Maurae in the Acta Sanctorum, relates that St. Maura, when plunged in boiling water, jokingly tells the governor that he is making her take an unfortunately cold bath. The governor, trying the water, learns at his own expense that his orders have been well executed. Ernst Curtius discusses at length the passage, now a classic of gruesome humor, from the passion of St. Lawrence (Peri­stephanon, II, lines 401–8), where the martyr, as he is burned on a grill, says:

“Converte partem corporis
satis crematam ingiter
et fac periculum, quid tuus
Vulcanus ardens ergerit.”

Praefectus inverti iubet:
Tunc ille: “Coctum est, devora,
et experimentum cape,
sit crudum an assum suavius.”

(“Turn over on the other side that part of my body which has been sufficiently exposed, and test the result obtained by the heat of your fire.” The judge gives the order to turn him over. Then St. Lawrence says: “Eat, and see if it is nicer raw or roasted.”)

It was quite usual to portray the pagan judges and executioners as monsters avid to eat the bodies and drink the blood of their victims, and animal sacrifice was also mentioned as
one of their social customs. (The passages cited here were taken at random from the *Peristephan*. ) In the passion of Emeterius and Chelidonius (I, lines 97, 98), the pagans are described as demons who, like wolves, eat the entrails of those whom they catch ("daemones, / qui lupino capta ritu devorant praecordia"). In the passion of St. Vincent (V, lines 98–100), the judge calls out, "Give me quickly some executioners, those Plutos of the accused who feed on the cut-up flesh" ("rap­timque licotres date, / illos reorum Plutones / pastos resectis carnibus"). St. Vincent tells the executioner (lines 151–52), "Put your hands in [my wounds] and drink the scalding streams of my blood" ("manus et ipse intersere / rivosque feruentes bibe").

In the passion of St. Eulalia itself (III, lines 28–30), Prudentius speaks of the persecution as ordering Christians to burn incense and to offer over the fire of the altars to death-bringing gods the liver of an animal "christicolas que cruenta jubet / tura cremare, iecur pecudis / mortiferis deis"). In her tirade to the judge (lines 87–88), she says that Maximian feeds on innocent blood, lusting gluttonously for the bodies of the pious accused ("sanguine pascitur innocuo, / corporibusque piis inhians").

Thus the Christians accused the pagans of eating the bodies and drinking the blood of the martyrs who, in the *passio* of their death, reinacted the *passio* of Christ.

If, before, the idea that Eulalie did not cook seemed horrible, I should imagine that, in the awareness of the tradition from which the idea stems, it would now seem mild indeed—as a matter of fact, even gently humorous: The chicken didn't cook—what a nasty trick to play on the executioner! How ridiculous he must have felt—how frus-
trated! And how the Christians laughed at his disappointment! And how silly he was in the eyes of his pagan friends, too! This, I think, is what Freud would call "tendential wit": a joke directed against an aggressor which is designed to make him appear ridiculous before an audience, so that laughter is prejudiced in favor of the person making the joke. In the English translation of Freud's essay "Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious," the editor, Brill, inserts the following story to demonstrate the role that wit plays in hostile aggression:

Wendell Phillips, according to a recent biography by Dr. Lorenzo Sears, was on one occasion lecturing in Ohio, and while on a railroad journey going to keep one of his appointments met in the car a number of clergymen returning from some sort of convention. One of the ministers, feeling called upon to approach Mr. Phillips, asked him, "Are you Mr. Phillips?" "I am, sir." "Are you trying to free the niggers?" "Yes, sir; I am an abolitionist." "Well, why do you preach your doctrines up here? Why don't you go over into Kentucky?" "Excuse me, are you a preacher?" "I am, sir." "Are you trying to save souls from hell?" "Yes, sir, that's my business." "Well, why don't you go there?"

Brill remarks that "the assailant hurried into the smoker amid a roar of unsanctified laughter," and notes that Phillips not only belittled the aggressive clergymen and turned him into ridicule, but by his clever retort "fascinated the other clergy­men, and thus brought them to his side." 28

In the Eulalie, the powers of good play a trick on the powers of evil to make evil seem ridiculous. As a result, the audience is won over to the cause of good through the laughter released by the witty substitution implied in the metaphor "the chicken
did not cook" for "Eulalie did not burn." This, then, is why God, through his good in Eulalie, acts as the Joker in his Divine Comedy of the epoch when tragedy could not be.

An illustration from another epoch is to the point. My husband tells me that, during the troubled times in Russia after the October revolution of 1917, a little song, which originated in the cabarets of Odessa, had great popularity. The tune is that of a cheerful folk melody, and he remembers one verse of which the translation runs: "A little chick, a skinny chick, the chick wants to live. They chased it, and arrested it, and ordered it to be shot!"

The wit, of course, lies in the ridiculous contrast evoked by the image of a firing squad of twenty-four men aiming at one scrawny little chicken. But the chicken symbolizes the average citizen ensnared in the horror of political persecution, and the humor is the ironic humor of tragedy. Thus, in modern times the chicken does cook, so to speak, for, since tragedy is again possible and since comedy now can only be human, divine intervention no longer plays jokes on the forces of evil.

2. Hippolyte Delchayc, S. I., Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires (Bruxelles, 1921); Les Origines du culte des martyrs (Bruxelles, 1933); Cinq leçons sur la méthode hagiographique (Bruxelles, 1934). For convenience of reference these works will be abbreviated: Genres, Culte, and Méthode.
9. Curtius, p. 427, would seem to classify the unladylike spitting incident as a topos of humor in hagiography.

10. Venerable Bede, The Complete Works, ed. J. A. Giles (Historical Tracts, Vol. IV [London, 1843]), p. 164. Also in the Bede calendar under the date February 12, left empty by Bede and filled in by Florus in the ninth century, there appears the entry: “Barcelona Eulalieae virgines et martyris” (p. 35). Lavarenne (p. 53) explains the discrepancy as to the place of birth as due to the probable existence in Barcelona of a church erected in honor of Eulalie of Mérida, which gave rise to a belief in a local saint of this name.

11. In Culte, p. 327, Delehaye mentions Eulalie and Agnes in the procession of Saint Martin in Caelo Aureo in Rome (now Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo), and (p. 342) he calls attention to a basilica founded in Biternea (Béziers) in 455 by the priest Othis “in honorem sanctorum martyrum Vincenti, Agncts, et Eulaliea.”

12. The vastly inferior Latin sequence which immediately precedes the Old French version in the ninth-century MS 143, fol. 141, of the Bibliothèque de Valenciennes, uses the exact wording of Prudentius: “spiritus . . . innocuus.” See Foerster and Koschwitz, Altfranzösisches Übungsbuch (Heilbronn, 1884), p. 147.

13. Cf. also mention of the dove as a sacrificial animal and sin offering in Genesis 15:9 and Leviticus 12:6 and 14:22.


15. Compare the parallel syntax but completely different tone of Prudentius’ opening lines 1 and 2: “Germinex nobilis Eulalia, / mortis et indole nobilior” (“Eulalie, noble by lineage and by manner of death more noble”), where the vernacular “body” is to the Latin “lineage” as the “soul” is to the “manner of death.”


17. It is not implied that the profused flowering of the etymological emblem in the Middle Ages did not have its roots in an earlier period. One thinks, of course, of the fish used by the Christians of the catacombs as a symbol for Christ because the Greek initials ΙΧΘΥΣ standing for ΣΗΜΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΣ could be read as an abbreviated form for the word ΙΧΘΥΣ (fich”). The symbol served as a secret sign in this period of persecution.


20. FEW, s.v. pūlicēnus.


23. Leo Spitzer, “Pucelle,” Romania, LXXII (1951), 100-107. On this point Spitzer cites I. Pauli, “Enfant,” “Garçon,” “Fille” dans les langues romanes (Lund, 1919), a work which was not available to me.


25. REW 6819: “*pûlicëlla ‘Mädchen’. Amall. polçella, ponçella, obw. pursela, valenc. poncella; serbokr. þnçela; . . . +pûtus 6890: frz. pucelle (>ait. pulcella), prov. piuzela (>apg. pucella), akat. þncella (>asp. þncella).”

