Juan Ruiz, as a Christian cleric living in Castile-León, lived in a world whose social paradigms were still largely defined by feudalism and by the division of the estates into nobility, clergy, and commoner. While the Christian conquests of al-Andalus, as we have seen, created significant wealth and opportunity for non-nobles, the sophistication and volume of commercial activity had yet to produce a significant population of what moderns would describe as bourgeois: lawyers, traders, and other specialized professionals whose income afforded them a standard of living previously known only to nobles. However, in the fifteenth century, bourgeois culture was very much a part of life in Valencia, where physician Jaume Roig practiced medicine and wrote. More than some 100-odd years separate Ruiz from Roig: the former was a Castilian cleric who lived in a socio-political atmosphere that was as yet (relatively) tolerant of Jews, while Roig’s Valencia was home to some of the worst violence in 1391 (the crucial tipping point for Christian-Jewish relations in Christian Iberia) and 1413–1414 (during the Disputation of Tortosa). Ruiz’s Toledo had been an imperial city and important intellectual center for centuries; Roig’s Valencia was just coming into its own as an important literary town during his lifetime.

The literary boom in Valencia during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was fueled by a mercantile economy that no longer adhered to the values of medieval feudalism. Because many writers no longer depended upon or aspired to courtly patronage, some of them (with Roig leading the way) produced works that reflected their middle-class experience and distanced themselves from courtly genres and conventions. In our discussion of the Arabic *maqāmāt*, we have seen that innovation in narrative fiction often accompanies significant socio-political upheaval. The Arabic *maqāma* genre was a product of the shift between (Arab) ‘Abassid and (Persian) Sasānīd dynasties in Iraq. In al-Andalus, al-Saraqāṣṭī wrote his own *maqāmāt* during a time when the courtly patronage of the *mulik at-tawā‘if* (Sp. *Reyes de Taifas*, ‘Party Kings’) gave way to that of the far more socially conservative Almohads (Ar. *al-muwahhiddūn*). Critics of the Spanish picaresque novel
have long associated its emergence with the changing social and economic conditions of sixteenth-century Castile. Some of these same conditions obtained in fifteenth-century Valencia, where Jaume Roig wrote his long and curious narrative poem, the *Spill* (ca. 1455). The *Spill* is a fiercely misogynous first-person narrative relating the misadventures of the narrator at the hands of four consecutive wives. In the *Spill*, Roig adapts the narrative resources of the Hebrew *maqāma* to reflect the angst generated by a powerful emergent Valencian bourgeoisie (including a large population of *conversos*) that edged out the nobility on the political stage. His work portrays a world of self-made knights, merchants, physicians and lawyers, whose moral cynicism and material indulgence reflect the angst of a new class defined by personal and professional success rather than by hereditary title and property. As in the *maqāma*, Roig’s itinerant first-person narrator relates his repeated misadventures in an effort to educate the reader. As with the *maqāmāt*, Roig writes in a highly restrictive rhymed prose in a display of rhetorical virtuosity, and we read his story through the eyes of an author/narrator/protagonist. However, while narrators of *maqāmāt* tend to blame their repeated misfortune on “Time” or “Fate” (although it is clearly a result of their own stupidity), Roig’s narrator blames women, who in his view are responsible for (or at the very least represent) the worst excesses of bourgeois materialism and moral decrepitude. In this way, Roig unites the narrative and stylistic conventions of the Arabic and Hebrew *maqāmāt* with the Iberian tradition of misogynist literature and prefigures the picaresque

1 Although the *Spill* circulated in several manuscripts, only one survives. (Ms. Vat. Lat. 4806), which Chabás dates between 1490 and 1492, and Carré i Pons between 1479 and 1505. The early printed editions are as follows: (Valencia: Francesc Diaz Romano, 1531), (Barcelona: Jaume Cortey, 1561), (Valencia: Joan de Arcos, 1561), (Valencia: Carles Ros, 1735), (Barcelona: Francesch Pelay Briz, 1865). See the modern editions of Carré i Pons, Miquel i Planas, and Chabás i Llorente, the Castilian translation of Miquel i Planas, and the English translation of Delgado-Librero. The latter includes a detailed textual history in pages 38–49. In the present study I cite the original Valencian (by verse number) and the English translation (by page number), both from the edition/translation of Delgado-Librero.

2 According to Martín de Riquer, the *Spill* is “profundament burguesa” (“profoundly bourgeois”) as a work of literature in that the sole objective of the protagonist is to live in Valencia “ben considerat, amb una muller bona i fidel i voltat de fills” (“well thought of, with a good, faithful wife, and surrounded by children”) (3: 240–41).

3 “L’Espill és una obra molt il·lustrativa i simptomàtica de les tensions culturals viscudes per tot arreu d’una Europa que, des de la cosmovisió medieval, s’obrí cap a les expectatives del nou ordre burgés” (“The *Spill* is a work very illustrative and symptomatic of the cultural tensions experienced all over a Europe that, from the medieval worldview, was opening itself up to the expectations of the new bourgeois order”) (Vellón i Lahoz 20).