



# THE GOLDEN WINE OR THE FIFTH ESSENCE

9  
NOVEMBER  
2023  
5.00pm CEST

## JOHN OF RUPESCISSA'S MEDICAL ALCHEMY

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The golden wine is the most famous panacea of medical alchemy, whose penetration, in the Occitan-Catalan area, began in the 12th century and continued until the 16th century, involving the refined queens and kings of the Crown of Aragon and the elites, but not only. The data, I have collected, on practicing alchemists in the area reinforced the idea of the existence of a real “school of alchemists” in the region, interested in

wellness and health care. They could also be friars, in particular linked to the reforming movement of the spiritual Franciscans and, between them, the most famous name, but not the only one, is Joan de Rocatalhada (1310-1365) better known as Johannes of Rupescissa, an Occitan friar interested in alchemical projects, focused on transmutation and on a quest for a spiritual renewal underpinned by social aims as well as by

a strong utopian and prophetic yearning. The importance of Rocatalhada for medical alchemy derives from the fact that, in his work, he produced a fusion between pharmacological distillation and the alchemical doctrine of the elixir, which he described as a “golden wine” and explained how to obtain it. This talk focuses on Rupescissa’s medical alchemy and, more generally, on the development of medical alchemy in the Occitan-Catalan area with an emphasis on the analysis of a partial, but significant, critical edition of the Pseudo-Lullian *Alchemical Testament* which I prepared for my doctoral dissertation.

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