

"chrysoprase, n.". OED Online. D-cember 2014. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/32641?redirectedFrom=chrysoprasus&> (accessed M-rch 02, 2015).

chrysoprase, *n.*

Pronunciation: /'krɪsəpreɪz/

Forms: In N.T. (*Rev.* xxi. 19) **chrysoprasus** /kri'sɒprəsəs/. Forms: ME **crisopace**, ME **crysopase**, 15 **chrusopasse**, 16–17 **chrysopass**; 16–18 **crysoprase**, 18 **chrysopras**, 16– **chrysoprase**; also ME **crisopassus**, 15 **crysoprasos**, **crusoprasos**, 16 **chrysoprasus**, etc.

Etymology: Middle English *crisopace*, < Old French *crisopace* = Italian *crisopasso*, < Latin type *crisopassus* = *chr̥sopasus*, found in some MSS. of Pliny, beside the etymological *chr̥soprasus*, Greek χρυσόπρασος a golden-green gem, < χρυσός gold + πράσον leek. Schade quotes many medieval Latin examples of *chrysoprasus*, and *-passus*, also *-pastus*, *-parus*, and *chrysopasion*, *-ptasion*, *-pasius*, *-ptasius*, *-tapsus*, corruptions, and partly, perhaps, etymologizing perversions of the name. Since the 16th cent. the English form has been more or less conformed to the original Greek and Latin.

a. The ancient name of a golden-green precious stone, now generally believed to have been a variety of the beryl, or to have included that among other stones of similar appearance. It was one of the stones to which in the Middle Ages was attributed the faculty of shining in the dark.

b. In mod. *Min.* Applied to an apple-green variety of chalcidony

c1275 *Luue Ron* 174 in *Old Eng. Misc.* 98 Smaragde, Beril, and crisopace.

1382 *Bible (Wycliffite, E.V.)* *Rev.* xxi. 20 The tenthe, crisopassus [Tindale & Coverd., Crysoprasos; Cranmer Crusoprasos; Geneva, Rheims, Chrysoprasus].

1398 J. TREVISA tr. Bartholomew de Glanville *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (1495) xvi. xxvi. 561 Crisopassus is a stone of Ethiopia and is hyd in lyghte and seen in derknesse.

a1400–50 *Alexander* 5274 Calcidoynes & crisopaces.

c1400 (?c1380) *Pearl* l. 1012 Þe crysopase þe tenþe is tyȝt.

1567 J. MAPLET *Greene Forest* f. 5^v, The Chrusopasse..In the night time it is flamelike, in the day time yellow or wan.

1646 SIR T. BROWNE *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* II. v. 93 That the wearing of a Crysoprase [will] make one out of love with gold, as some have delivered.

a1711 T. KEN in *Wks.* (1721) II. 163 The Chrysopass with golden spots bespread.

1804 R. JAMESON *Min.* I. 191 May not chrysopras..stand under chalcidony?

1835 *New Monthly Mag.* 43 299 The sky was clear and of the milky cerulean of chrysoprase.

1873 H. W. LONGFELLOW *Azrael* in *Tales Wayside Inn* 25 The signet-ring of chrysoprase..seemed to blaze with hidden fire.

1884 J. D. DANA *Min.* 194.

c. The colour of this stone. Also *attrib.*

1835 N. P. WILLIS *Pencilings* II. xliii. 40 The crysoprase green of the shallows.

1850 E. B. BROWNING *Vision of Poets* I. 239 The lady's face Did melt back in the chrysopras Of the orient morning sky.