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*Papaver*

*Papaveraceae*

*Papaver* is a classical Latin word for ‘poppy’. It is also said by some authorities to be the sound of the seeds being chewed, and some have pointed out that ‘pap’ is derived from *papa*, a Celtic word that means ‘thick milk’ – apparently the Celts mixed poppy juice from *Papaver rhoeas* (the Common poppy which contains no morphine) with gruel and gave this to fractious babies – which could be a reference to the latex found in the stems of most species in this genus.

Poppy is said to have been one of the at least 36 ingredients used by Mithridates (c.132-63 BC), the 1<sup>st</sup> Century King of Pontus (northern Turkey), in a poison antidote (known as Antidotum Mithridaticum or Theriac) which he took daily to acquire an overall immunity – an important consideration if it is remembered that he gained his position of power by poisoning his opposition.