

Crystal Healing

The Ancient Tradition

The Therapeutic Power, Magic and
Mystery of Gems, Stones and Crystals

Andreas Guhr
Jörg Nagler

Foreword by Michael Gienger



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Andreas Guhr and Jörg Nagler
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The Roots of Crystal Healing

Michael Gienger

Some 20 years since its first publication, *Myths of Crystals* has become a standard reference work gaining in regard year by year. The book provides a clear, understandable description of the roots of crystal healing, which is now on the cusp of being recognised as a valid naturopathic treatment. Whilst 20 years ago healing with crystals was known to “initiated circles” only, nowadays it can no longer be dismissed from naturopathy. This is all the more reason therefore to become familiar with its roots and ancient origins.

The ancient tradition of crystal healing is still an important source for a full understanding and appreciation of the nature and effects of crystals and gems. Its ancient tradition is the essence of experience gained over a very long period of time. As such, that healing tradition is one of an ongoing encounter and interaction between humans and stone – and what happens during these encounters.

The role of crystals, stones and gems has been central to many pictures, myths and legends. Quite often, the name of the crystal or gem is itself actually derived from a myth. For example: “amethyst” is the “one who is not drunk” (from the Greek amethyein, “to safeguard against drunkenness”); “diamond” is the “invincible one” (from the same meaning in Greek, adamas); “haematite” is the “blood stone” (Greek haemateios, “bloody”); and there are many more.

Modern research into crystal healing is barely twenty years old, so the treasury of knowledge concealed in the myths about crystals and gems is a particularly valuable resource. Many of the properties and healing effects of crystals that have been handed down have turned out to be confirmed in modern practice.

For this reason, it is advisable for all those who work with crystal healing – whether as laymen or therapists – to know something about the roots of the old traditions.

In such a context this is, then, a particularly important book, as it gives a detailed, historical account of the best-known myths and legends surrounding crystals, gems and stones. Unfortunately, there appear to be too many authors nowadays who invent myths purposely in order to support their own (often spurious) work of similarly invented and alleged effects of the crystals with their manufactured “pseudo-histories”. The Tiger’s Eye for example, did not arrive in Europe from South Africa until the nineteenth century, yet was mentioned in connection with Arab and classical Greek traditions.

This is where the book becomes a great help in “separating the wheat from the chaff”. It has been correctly, scientifically researched and all the sources verified – so that it also debunks those phoney myths and any associated and dubious crystal properties.

I venture to say that you hold in your hands a book that is a truly valuable asset for all who love crystals and stones and actually use them. Realistically, it is only through direct personal encounters and experiences with crystals that one will truly understand the traditions collected and presented here. Nevertheless, this book will open an extra world of knowledge, providing the reader with the important heritage of our long history and cultural relationship with stones, gems and crystals – maybe long forgotten, but now once again at our disposal and for our benefit.

*Michael Gienger
Tübingen, Spring 2005*



What is often termed "The "Riddle of Carnac" in Brittany has never been solved. Thousands of granite monoliths stand in the landscape

row upon row, bearing witness to a highly developed culture around 3000BC. Some of these stones weigh more than 350 tonnes.

From Stones to Gems

From the beginning of the Palaeolithic period, or Old Stone Age (about 200,000 to 100,000 BC), our ancestors adopted a hunter gatherer lifestyle. Stones with sharp edges, which could be shaped into tools, hand axes, and stone blades, made it possible to overcome a relative physical weaknesses and also to shape the environment to a much greater degree than ever before. This adoption of stone, with its pre-eminent importance in both use and function, was a process that took hundreds of thousands of years. Nevertheless, it resulted in humans incorporating stone into religions and thereby conferring stone with outstandingly important significance. Even the early peoples of the Palaeolithic period tried to enlist the help of stones through the medium of scratching magical symbols and thereby bestowing certain meanings on the stones carrying such markings – and all this long, long before the existence of even the first rudiments of writing.

Consequently, a magic, holy or sacred stone was a ritual object. Heaps of stones, such as cairns, indicated the location of sites of worship. Stone balls from the Palaeolithic Mousterian period (named after their find site, Le Moustier in the Dordogne region of France) have been dated to between 150,000 and 60,000 BC. They are probably some of the first known evidence of such cult sites and may well be interpreted as symbols of the Sun. Here, for the first time, something emerged in human history that was not immediately connected with survival. Stone balls similar to these have also been found in the Charente region of western French and in North Africa.

The notion that stone is the seat of the divine can also be found in many later religions. The sacred stone of the Canaanite religion was called beth-el, meaning “house of God”, and gave the name to the village mentioned in the New Testament as well as being within the name of Bethlehem. Additionally in Christianity, Jesus appears as the “corner stone” and the community of the Church” as “living stones”.

If a stone is seen as the “House of God”, then it is not so large a step to a stone altar on which sacrificial offerings are made to the god(s). Stone as the “House of God” functioned as “the protective”, “the giver of fertility”,



The pyramids – five-thousand-year-old symbols of the highly advanced civilisation of Ancient Egypt.

“the immortal”. Its durability allowed it to become the most important element of a cult of death. The presence of stone was intended to ensure eternal existence, but also prevent access to the world of the living by the inhabitants of the kingdom of the dead. From a simple stone tomb to the pyramid – all these manifestations of stone are based on this idea about stone. Our present-day tombstones serve to keep alive our remembrance of the dead for generations to come.

In Neolithic western Europe (c. 5000 to 2000 BC), there was a spread of cultures that were characterised by sites of worship with megaliths structures that represent the best known of all evidence of the veneration of stones and their use: Dolmens and menhirs (chamber tombs made of stone arranged in a table-like fashion), passage graves, roofed tombs and the stone rows of Carnac in Brittany, which are 200 to 1500m (656 to 4,921ft). Finally, there is one of the most impressive sites of all, the gigantic stone circle of Stonehenge in southern England, which presumably also served as a means for astronomical calculations.

Further Neolithic finds in south-western England are the two famous holed stones of Men-an-Tol at Madron, in Cornwall. The openings in the centres of these stones have diameters of 40cm (16 inches) and 53cm (21 inches), respectively and it is assumed that sick children were passed through the holes for healing purposes, to quasi (“strip off”) their illness. This is only one of the many example showing how deeply rooted were the ancient peoples’ ideas, about the healing effect of stones.

Where naturally occurring formations of holes in stones or rock were present – often caused by inclusions of sedimentary fossils or other types of rock – they were always considered to be something magical. The use of stones in this way goes back to the Palaeolithic period, from which there have been finds of stone beads used for necklaces, etc. Later, with the evolution of more advanced cultures and their associated, improved technologies, humans managed to bore holes in stones themselves. This was an important step, as it then became possible to create jewellery deliberately for body decoration and even place stones in settings. So was born the amulet made of stone and crystal.

Carnelian is the only gemstone which we are certain was worked during the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) being made into the most delicate, sharp blades in the region of Durddanskaya and Akcha in Siberia. In some prehistoric tombs, carnelian was also found in the shape of tiny balls with holes drilled through them, i.e. for use as beads. The possession of such beads must have been of great importance and may well have contributed to the warding off of evil spirits.

Sumeria

“O ye gods here present!
Just as surely as I shall not forget
This lapis lazuli upon my neck,
So I shall remember these days,
Never forgetting them.”
The Epic of Gilgamesh

The Sumerians, whose origins are still unknown, settled in Mesopotamia, the “land between the rivers” Euphrates and Tigris. As early as the fourth millennium BC, they were familiar with the art of working precious stones and gems. They had already used them as “miracle stones”, which were imbued, so they believed, with magical powers. So, here already is a belief in the healing powers of crystals and stones. Some of them were believed to be effective against illnesses, others were used for love problems, and others even to protect the owner or wearer from thieves. The cylindrical seals that were in use in Mesopotamia from about 3300 BC and which had replaced stamp seals, were made out of crystals such as lapis lazuli, serpentine and haematite. They were used for sealing the storage chambers in the temple precinct, with different sized seals being given to the different dignitaries. The gods were provided with cylinder seals with lengths of up to 16 cm (just over 6 inches); a prince, by contrast, could only claim a seal with a size of about 6cm (about 2 1/2 inches). Archaeological digs gradually



Reconstruction of the golden headdress of the Sumerian Queen Shub-A, who died in about 2700 BC.

brought to light countless such cylinder seals. Since most of them were made out of precious stones, it is justifiable to assume that crystals and gemstones were in everyday use in Mesopotamia – at least for members of the upper classes. The Assyriologist Samuel Noah Kramer has described some of these seals as follows: “One of the favourite subjects for gem cutters in southern Mesopotamia was a scene in which a man is introduced to one god by another god; probably the owner of the seal was being introduced to his personal patron divinity. Further north, in Assyria, the gem cutters developed an entire repertoire of objects and styles with heraldic motifs, animal fight scenes and stories about the gods.”

In order to drill a hole in these seals, which were of great value to the owners, the Sumerians employed drilling tools that made it possible to work even the harder types of gem. The seals were threaded on a string, either lengthwise or may have been carried on the owner’s belt. Thus was taken the next step in manufacturing jewellery.

The famous royal tombs, which were uncovered in 1922 in the ruins of the ancient city of Ur at Sumer, also yielded gems of the most beautiful workmanship. In a total of sixteen burial installations of the kings and princesses or priestesses, among the grave offerings were found pieces of jewellery of great perfection. Also found were the remains of other burials, such as of guards and ladies-in-waiting, who had accompanied the King and the priestesses in death – voluntarily or otherwise! C. W. Ceram described one of these finds in more detail: “On a thickly padded wig were found lined up three strings of lapis lazuli and red carnelian. The lowest one had golden rings hanging from it, the second had gold beech leaves, and the third had willow leaves and golden flowers. Above these, a comb with five teeth had been inserted; it was decorated with golden flowers and lapis lazuli.”

As a gaming board found in the royal tombs demonstrates, items of the royal inventory were also decorated with precious gems. Sumerian inscriptions contain numerous names of gems, which can be connected with this find and other similar ones. For example, the golden robes of statues of gods, as of the creator and sun god, Marduk of Babylon, were encrusted with precious gems.

As is known from the excavations of the royal tombs of Ur, in addition to the obligatory linen strips for the royal interments, precious gems were also enclosed. Later, gems were also used in architecture. Thus, King Nebuchadnezzar had the roof of the temple at Borsippa decorated with gold and precious gems. Jasper was one of the decorative stones most used by the Sumerians. It was employed both as a material for carving figures of the gods, as well as for protective and healing purposes. Pregnant women often used jasper in order to ease their pregnancy and labour.

Other much-used gems were the midnight blue, gold-flecked lapis lazuli, the delicately coloured beryl, the green emerald, and the diamond. The Casite kings (sixteenth to twelfth centuries BC), used lapis lazuli as an important trade item to exchange with Egypt for gold. Green malachite was also very popular and a piece of this mineral was found in the form of a tiny bag, among others items of grave goods, in the vault of a Babylonian queen.

In surviving literary inscriptions from the Sumerians – for example, in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which was recorded about 1200 BC – crystals and gems are mentioned on a number of occasions. Thus, Gilgamesh is looking for the “precious gem trees” of the garden of the gods:

“Upon seeing the bejewelled shrubs, he approaches them. The carnelian bears its fruit, And hung it is with goodly vines. The lapis lazuli bears leaves; Lush fruit also hangs from it. It is fine to the eye.” The highest-ranking goddess swears by her amulet made of lapis lazuli, and a goldsmith creates an image out of this stone, which turns up again and again in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*; obsidian is also mentioned. Precious stones are also referred to as the material for making precious items of use: “On the horizon there appeared the first intimations of dawn; Gilgamesh ... brought out a large table of elammaqu wood, took a carnelian bowl, filled it with honey, took a lapis lazuli bowl, filled it with milk curd...”

A Sumerian hymn describes a temple that was built entirely out of silver and lapis lazuli and the foundations of which contain red carnelian. Precious stones were also equated with luck and positive forces, both in the literary texts, as well as in the spoken language. The notion that the stars were connected with precious stones and that they could beneficially influence them was also intimately connected with these beliefs. The star cult, in turn, was closely connected with the belief in gods, so that the Sumerian-Babylonian cuneiform symbol for “star” and the ideograph for “God” were identical.

Astrology, which originated in Babylon, tried to decode the constellations among the stars and to fathom their connection with the fate of humans.

Egypt

“I have taken possession of the Ureret crown;
Ma’at (i. e., right and truth) is in my body;
its mouths are of turquoise and rock crystal.

My homestead is among the furrows
which are [of the colour of] lapis lazuli.”

Egyptian Book of the Dead

This is from the translation by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge of the Ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, based on various papyri (including the Papyrus of Ani) when he was Keeper of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities at the British Museum, and first published 1899.

The belief in a continuing life after death evolved particularly in ancient Egypt – the “gift of the Nile”, as Egypt was referred to by Herodotus. So, there is no real surprise in the many references to crystals and gems in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. To the Ancient Egyptians, these gems and stones symbolised all that was immortal – things that would not lose their beauty or brilliance, even after death. From this belief stemmed the concept that the deceased should be able to move around in pleasant surroundings and feel comfortable in the Otherworld. The clear separation between life and death that is very familiar to us these days was far removed from the Egyptian view of the world. A stone, especially a crystal or precious gem, symbolised the eternal. Thus, it was quite normal to allow any stone or gem, which had already adorned the wearer in his or her lifetime, to accompany him or her as protection and adornment on a path that led into the Unknown.

With their associations and equation with immortality, the use and importance of crystals and gems was part of Egyptian mythology from a very early stage of its development. A particularly interesting aspect of all this is that the considerable number of known types of crystals nevertheless had only a few names in the ancient Egyptian language. One reason may be that all of the main crystals used were merely designated in a few

Polished as a cabochon, this configuration is revealed as an embedded, six-pointed star, in the form of fine, black lines.

(See EMERALD for Healing effects and Astrology)

Name: trapiche emerald

Group: beryl group

Colours: emerald green; light green; green; dark green

Mohs hardness: 7.5 – 8

Specific gravity: 2.67 – 2.78

Crystal system: hexagonal

Crystal shape: six-sided prisms in long columns

Chemical structure: $\text{Al}_2\text{Be}_3[\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{18}]$ aluminium beryl silicate; green colouration from chromium admixtures

Areas of formation: in hydrothermal gangues

Major deposits: Columbia; Zambia

TURQUOISE

The natural colour of turquoise is reminiscent of that of the sea. This feature made it a sacred stone for the Tibetans, for whom it symbolises the infinity of the sea and the heavens. The Native Americans, especially the Navaho, also prized it highly and still wear it as protection against negative forces.

The Ancient Egyptians, too, knew the turquoise. They discovered rich deposits in the Sinai Peninsula and exploited their finds from very early times.

The name “turquoise” actually derives from “Turkish stone” and would seem to indicate that the gem reached Europe through the returning Crusades – probably after being obtained from Turkish tribes whom they had encountered in Asia Minor.

It almost certainly arrived in Turkey through trade routes with Persia, where the gem was particularly revered at the time of Zoroastra. In this context, the Roman historian, Pliny, recorded that this light green stone was particularly popular as a decorative gem in a part of southern Persia called Carmania, where it was thought to bring luck. Pliny quotes from Al

Kazwini, a Persian scholar as follows: “The hand that wears a turquoise and uses it as a seal will never become poor”.

Thus, Persian kings wore turquoise around their necks and on their hands, especially as they believed that the wearer would be protected from sudden, unnatural death. It was also maintained that the gem would become pale when its owner died.

Further east, turquoise was often placed within a frame of pearls and worn on the turban in order to protect the wearer from the “evil eye”.

Even as recently as the end of the eighteenth century, turquoise was believed to be fossil teeth or bones that had been affected by strongly colouring substances. It became the popular fashionable gemstone of the “Biedermeier” period in Germany and of the Victorian era in Britain.

In astrology, the turquoise is considered to be the lucky stone of Aquarians, in whom it is said to enhance intuition and independence. It is also worn as a stone of friendship, being believed to ensure fidelity and constancy. It is also reputed to enhance a natural ability to tune in to meditative and healing vibrations.

Healing effects: for throat infections and diseases of the lungs.

Astrology: Aquarius; strengthens the bonds of friendship and encourages creativity.

Name: turquoise (callacite)

Group: -

Colours: sky blue; blue green; turquoise blue

Mohs hardness: 5 – 6

Specific gravity: 2.6 – 2.8

Crystal system: triclinic

Crystal shape: usually grape-bunch-like aggregates

Chemical structure: $\text{CuAl}_6[(\text{OH})_2/\text{PO}_2]_4 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$ alkaline aluminium containing copper

Areas of formation: in clefts of strongly eroded Al_2O_3 -rich rocks in association with copper deposits

Major deposits: Poland (Silesia); north-east Iran (Nishapur); USA (Arizona).

TOURMALINE

“The tourmaline is dark,
and what is said there [about it]
is very dark.”

Adalbert Stifter, Turmalin

After being almost forgotten, this most colourful of all precious gems was brought back to Europe from Sri Lanka by Dutch seafarers at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Thus, it was practically “rediscovered”. One very interesting quality of this gem soon became talked about: the tourmaline builds up a static charge through being rubbed and will then attract small, light particles (such as tobacco ash)– a property that fascinated folks of the time.

Because of its almost unlimited variety of shades of colour, tourmaline soon became another favourite gem of the Biedermeier and mid-Victorian period. During that time, it was also attributed with having secret powers and magical qualities; – and was even believed to maintain chastity.

A reddish variant of tourmaline comes from Siberia and is often called Rubellite – being a derivation from the Latin *rubellus*, “reddish”.

Astrologically, it is assigned to those with the sign of Scorpio and whose “inner fire” is believed to be renewed by the gem. Indigolith is a blue variety of tourmaline and is believed to endow Librans with inner harmony and emotional stability. Green tourmaline is a lucky stone of the sign Capricorn, especially in professional or business matters.

Healing effects: Maintains chastity and general good health; strengthens mental powers.

Astrology: Scorpio (rubellite); maintains “inner fire”. Capricorn (indigolith); a lucky stone.

Name: tourmaline (indigolith, rubellite)

Group: tourmaline



Tourmaline (multi-coloured sceptre crystal), Brazil



Tourmaline, Brazil

Colours: colourless; pink; brownish; yellow; deep brown; greenish; reddish; violet; polychrome; black

Mohs hardness: 7 – 7.5

Specific gravity: 3.0 – 3.2

Crystal system: trigonal

Crystal shape: usually as longish prisms

Chemical structure: $(\text{Na, Li, Ca}) (\text{Fe, Mg, Mn, Al})_3 \text{Al}_6[(\text{OH})_4/(\text{BO}_3)_3/\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{18}]$

Areas of formation: in pegmatites

Major natural deposits: Sri Lanka; Madagascar; Brazil; Mozambique; Angola; USA; Namibia; Pakistan; Afghanistan; Russia.

ZIRCON

Orange-coloured to reddish brown zircons were often called “hyacinths” in earlier times. According to Greek legend, a discus thrown by Apollo killed the young Hyakinthos, and a lily grew up out of his blood. No doubt, it probably seemed appropriate to name a precious gem after a flower.

In magic, the so-called “hyacinth” was highly regarded, as it had the reputation of bringing peace. Whoever wore it was believed to be able to forget previous sorrow and attain an inner contentedness. In the Middle Ages, it was believed that whoever wore a zircon would also be able, in turn, to help another sufferer to attain a similar sense of calm and harmony. Red zircon was also believed to be beneficial to anyone with “diseases of the blood”, as it was termed at the time.

In crystal therapy, zircon is used as a tranquillising agent. In astrology, it is assigned to the sign of Taurus and is believed to help a Taurean find spiritual equilibrium and stability.

Healing effects: has a calming effect. Helps with liver and kidney diseases.

Astrology: Taurus; stabilisation of spiritual equilibrium. Leo; a lucky stone. Sagittarius (blue zircon); a protective stone.

Name: zircon

Group: -

Colours: colourless; yellow; red; brown; brown green; blue; pale clove brown

Mohs hardness: 6.5 – 7.5

Specific gravity: 3.90 – 4.71

Crystal system: tetragonal

Crystal shape: short, squat, four-sided prisms

Chemical structure: $\text{Zr} [\text{SiO}_4]$ zirconium silicate

Areas of formation: typical accompanying mineral in acidic magmatite and metamorphic rocks (granites)

Major deposits: Sri Lanka; Cambodia; Australia; Thailand; Myanmar (Burma); Norway.

The Authors

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Andreas Guhr with a large citrine crystal of some 660 kg (approx. 1445 lb).

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Michael Gienger

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EARTHDANCER

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The ancient Greeks first coined the word 'crystal' (κρυσταλλός, (krystallos), meaning 'ice' and 'rock crystal', because they believed quartz was permanently frozen water. In ancient China, jade beads were so important culturally that they were assigned their own written characters and 1000 years ago emperors were buried with jade armor, masks and horses, similar to how rulers were being buried in Mexico. New Age Stone and Crystal Traditions. Today, when we see pop up ads and banners offering crystals for sale, they are generally presented alongside spirit guides, and in particular, angels. The traditional use of stones and crystals for protection and healing lost its religious quotient and fell into the realms of old world superstition across Europe. Popular Uses for Healing Crystals in Early Civilizations. Minerals, gems, and crystals have been used for millennia to enhance emotional, physical and spiritual balance. How the ancients knew, we may never know for sure, but these cultures certainly considered stones a major aspect of their existence. Traditions in India: Aryurvedic medicine in India considers crystals valuable for healing emotional and metaphysical imbalances. The use of various healing crystals is documented within the pages of the Hindu Vedas, which also references each stone's specific healing abilities. Ancient Japanese Beliefs: Scrying was a common practice in early Japanese culture, and it is very similar to looking into a crystal ball as we see some psychics do today.