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This page is about the meaning, origin and characteristic of the symbol, emblem, seal, flag, coat of arms and cultural history of the Amethyst.

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Like many gemstones, the amethyst possesses a number of different symbolic meanings.

Amethyst is a variety of the mineral quartz, whose purple coloring is due to trace amounts of iron found in the stone. For many centuries, amethyst was counted as one of the most precious of all gemstones- one of the so-called "cardinal gems" along with diamond, ruby, emerald and sapphire. In the 1700's, however, significant amounts of amethyst were found across the New World in places such as Brazil, so the stone lost much of its status.



Among the ancient Greeks and Romans, the key symbolic meaning of amethyst was a guard against drunkenness. In fact, the word amethyst comes from the Greek 'amethystos' meaning "non-intoxicating". Since in a cup or vessel made of amethyst, ordinary water bears a resemblance to red wine, a person could drink all they wanted without fear of getting wasted. An amethyst stone placed under the tongue or bound elsewhere on the body often served the same purpose when actual wine was consumed.

This connection with sobriety also gave the amethyst important meaning in Christianity, where it was the stone of choice for bishops as well as symbolizing the wine of the communion.

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Amethysts are also the traditional birthstone for the month of February.

Categories: [Gemstones and Natural Substances \(/category/59\)](#), [Miscellaneous \(/category/16\)](#).

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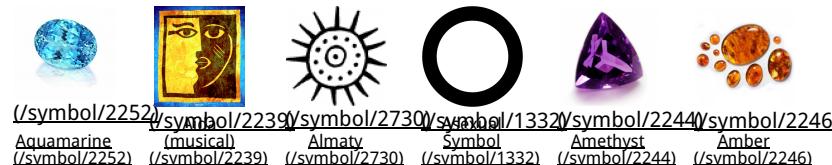
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