

ANSWERS TO 2 QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE PRESENTATION ABOUT 3,000 YEARS OF EGYPTIAN ART, CLOTHING, AND JEWELRY

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Why aren't there any remains of the red and white Pharonic Crowns ?

The Pharaonic Crowns — Materials and Evidence

The White Crown of Upper Egypt (the Hedjet) and the Red Crown of Lower Egypt (the Deshret), and the combined Double Crown (the Pschent) are actually one of Egyptology's enduring mysteries. Despite being among the most iconic symbols of pharaonic power, **no actual crown has ever been found**. Not one. This is remarkable given how many other artifacts have survived.

The leading theories about materials are:

- The **White Crown** was likely made of **leather, linen, or woven fabric** — possibly stiffened with starch or gum. Some scholars suggest it may have had a padded or basketwork inner structure.
- The **Red Crown** is even more puzzling because of its distinctive flat top and tall thin spike or wire curving upward at the back. That wire or rod element has led to suggestions of **copper, bronze, or reed** for the frame, with the body perhaps being stiffened fabric or leather.
- The combined **Pschent** would have been a composite of both.

The reason none have survived is almost certainly the materials themselves — organic materials like linen, leather, and reed simply don't last 3,000+ years the way stone and gold do. Interestingly, solid gold or stone crowns are almost never depicted either, which strongly suggests they were NOT made of precious metals.

The best evidence we have comes from **artistic depictions** — paintings, reliefs, and statuary — which are extremely consistent across centuries, suggesting the crowns had very fixed, well-known forms. Some researchers have also pointed to what appear to be **crown-shaped impressions or fittings** found in tomb contexts, but nothing conclusive.

What are The Origins of Egyptian Religion and Its Extraordinary Complexity?

The short answer is that Egyptian religion evolved over **thousands of years** by layering, absorbing, and synthesizing, rather than being invented all at once. A few key drivers:

Geography and local origins — Egypt was not always one unified culture. Different regions (called nomes) each had their own local patron deity. When Egypt unified and those communities merged, their gods didn't disappear — they were all absorbed into an ever-growing pantheon. This alone accounts for enormous multiplication of deities, many of whom overlap in function.

Natural world observation — The Nile, the sun, the desert, animals, the annual flooding cycle — Egyptians were extraordinarily observant of natural patterns and personified them. The sun alone generated multiple deities (Ra, Aten, Khepri, Horus) representing its different phases and aspects through the day.

Political theology — As pharaohs and priesthoods rose and fell in power, they elevated their local or favored deities. The priests of Amun at Thebes eventually made Amun the king of the gods. This was partly religious and partly political power consolidation.

The Book of the Dead specifically grew from even older texts — first the **Pyramid Texts** (the oldest religious texts in the world, carved inside pyramids around 2400 BC), then the **Coffin Texts**, and finally the more democratized Book of the Dead around 1550 BC. The ideas about the afterlife, the weighing of the heart, the 42 assessors — these accumulated and refined over more than a thousand years of theological development.

Cross-cultural contact also played a role — trade and conquest brought Egyptian religion into contact with Nubian, Semitic, and later Greek ideas, all of which left traces.

The fascinating thing is that Egyptians didn't see contradictions the way we might — two completely different creation myths could coexist because each was seen as capturing a different *aspect* of a truth too large for any single story.