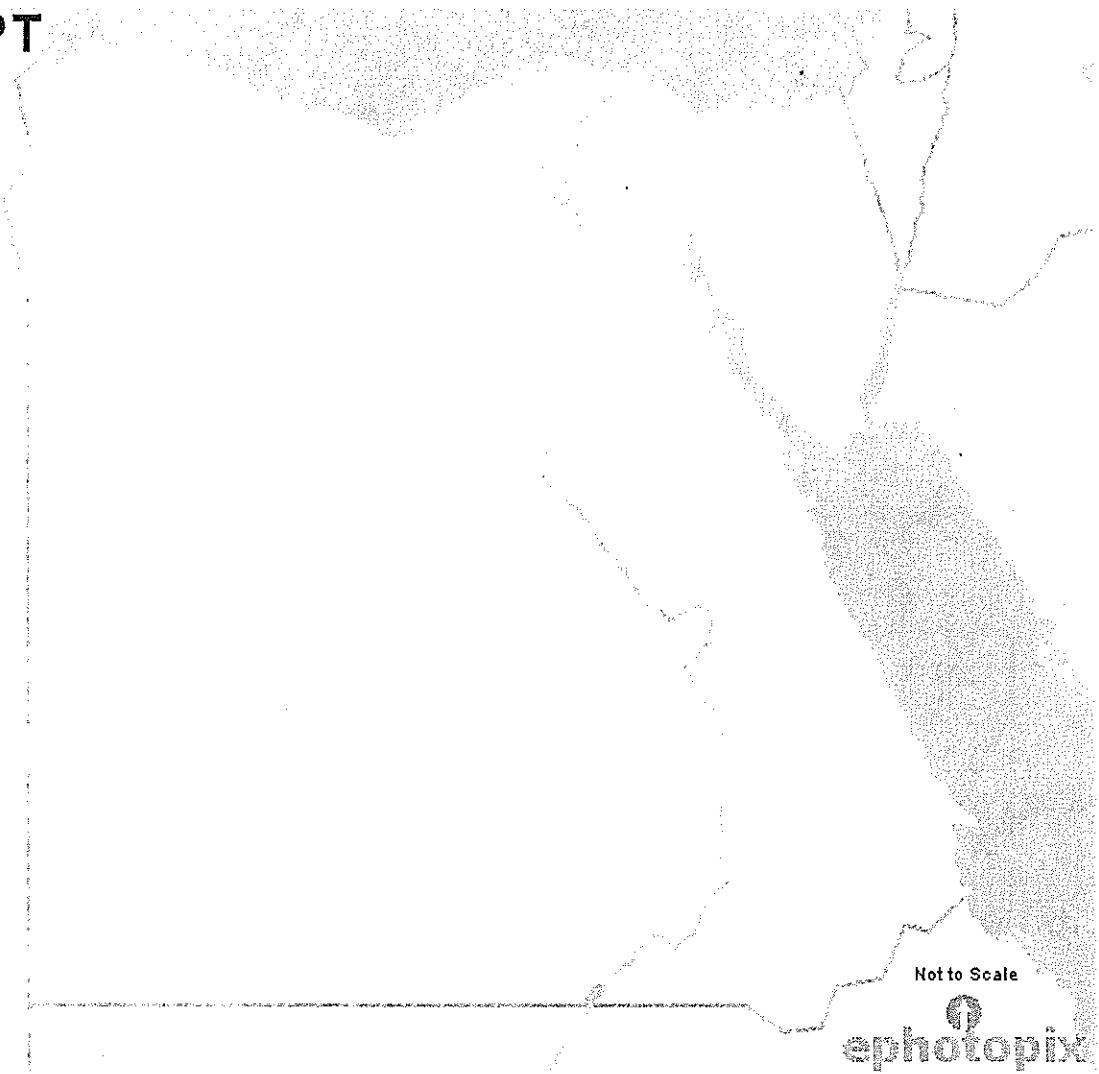


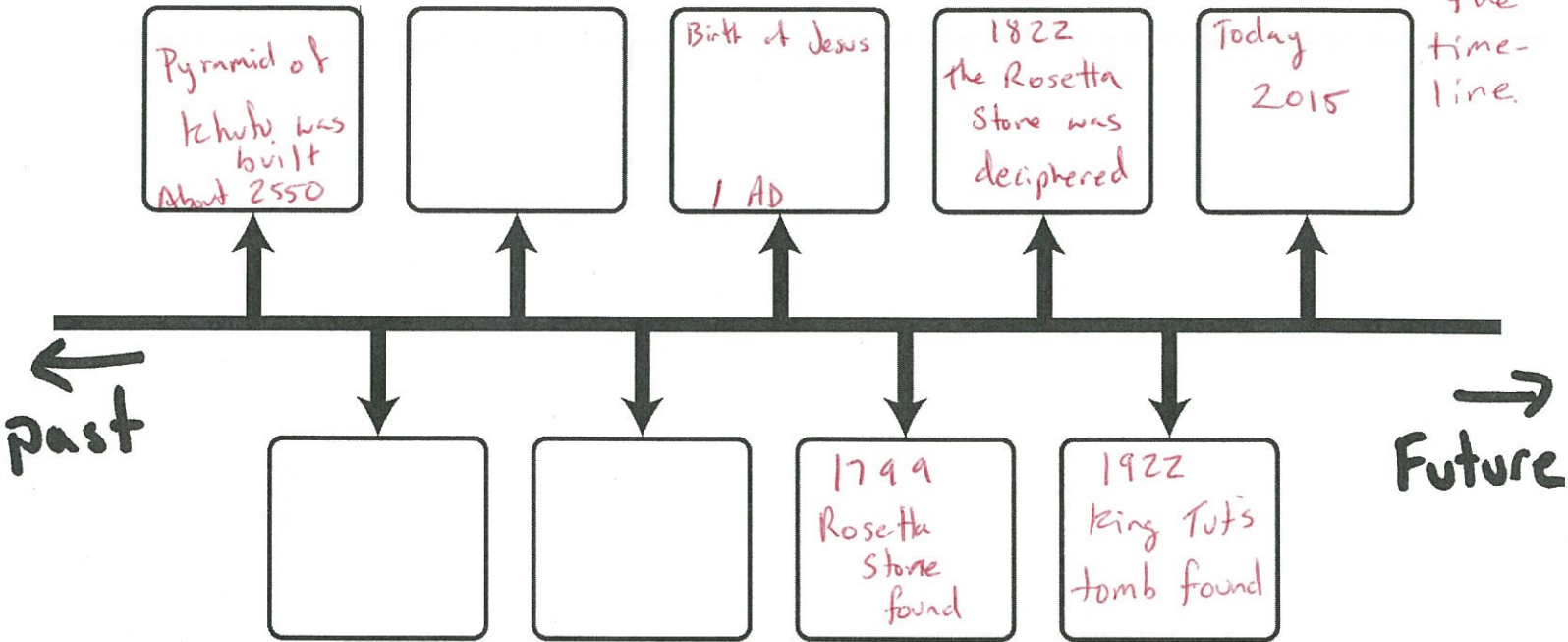
EGYPT



Use the map from Tuesday to label the following places. You can create a key if you would like.

1. Cairo
2. the Nile
3. the Red Sea
4. Giza
5. the Mediterranean Sea
6. *Thebes

Homework
Find three dates from the reading and add them to the timeline.



Please label the following events of history:

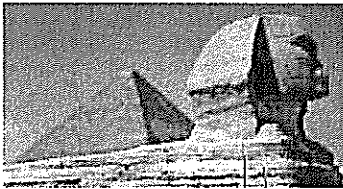
1. The building of the Great Pyrami
2. the birth of Jesus
3. April 9, 2015

- 1) **Course Introduction and Brief History of Ancient Egypt. Mohamed Ali.** A series of select readings provide background on why Egypt has always played a pivotal leadership role in the region. This includes Egypt's movement from a historical position of regional dominance, to being under the influence of European and Russian powers, to once again becoming a regional power. (Oct 21)

Ancient Egypt

Overview

The basic element in the lengthy history of Egyptian civilization is geography. The Nile River rises from the lakes of central Africa as the White Nile and from the mountains of Ethiopia as the Blue Nile. The White and Blue Nile meet at Khartoum and flow together northward to the Nile delta, where the 4000 mile course of this river spills into the Mediterranean Sea (see [map](#)).



Less than two inches of rain per year falls in the delta and rain is relatively unknown in other parts of Egypt. Most of the land is uninhabitable. These geographical factors have determined the character of Egyptian civilization. People could farm only along the banks of the Nile, where arid sand meets the fertile soil. Of course, each summer the Nile swells as the rains pour down and the snow melts on the mountains. The river overflows its banks and floods the land with fresh water and deposits a thick layer of rich alluvial soil. The land would then yield two harvests before winter. This yearly flood determined more than just the agricultural needs of early Egypt. It also determined the lifecycle of society and helped to create the world view of ancient Egyptian civilization.

The basic source of Egyptian history is a list of rulers compiled in c.280 B.C. by Manetho for the Macedonians who ruled Egypt. Manetho divided Egyptian kings into thirty dynasties (a 31st was added later) in the following manner.

NAME	DYNASTY	YEARS
Archaic Period	1-2	3100-2700 B.C.
Old Kingdom	3-6	2700-2200 B.C.
Intermediate Period	7-10	2200-2050 B.C.
Middle Kingdom	11-12	2050-1800 B.C.
Intermediate Period	13-17	1800-1570 B.C.
New Kingdom	18-20	1570-1085 B.C.
Post-Empire	21-31	1085-332 B.C.

Early Egypt was divided into two kingdoms, one in Upper Egypt (Nile Valley), and one in Lower Egypt (Nile delta). Remember, the Nile flows from south to north.

Egyptian Dynasties

Menes (or Narmer) unified Upper and Lower Egypt and established his capital at Memphis around 3000 B.C.. By the time of the Old Kingdom, the land had been consolidated under the central power of a king, who was also the "owner" of all Egypt. Considered to be divine, he stood above the priests and was the only individual who had direct contact with the gods. The economy was a royal monopoly and so there was no word in Egyptian for "trader." Under the king was a carefully graded hierarchy of officials, ranging from the governors of provinces down through local mayors and tax collectors. The entire system was supported by the work of slaves, peasants and artisans.

The Old Kingdom reached its highest stage of development in the Fourth Dynasty. The most tangible symbols of this period of greatness are the three enormous pyramids built as the tombs of kings at Giza between 2600 and 2500. The largest, Khufu (called Cheops by the Greeks), was originally 481 feet high and 756 feet long on each side. Khufu was made up of 2.3 million stone blocks averaging 2.5 tons each. In the 5th century B.C. the Greek historian Herodotus tells us that the pyramid took 100,000 men and twenty years to build. The pyramids are remarkable not only for their technical engineering expertise, but also for what they tell us about royal power at the time. They are evidence that Egyptian kings had enormous wealth as well as the power to concentrate so much energy on a personal project.

The priests, an important body within the ruling caste, were a social force working to modify the king's supremacy. Yielding to the demands of the priests of Re, a sun god, kings began to call themselves "sons of Re," adding his name as a suffix to their own. Re was also worshipped in temples that were sometimes larger than the pyramids of later kings.

In the Old Kingdom, royal power was absolute. The pharaoh (the term originally meant "great house" or "palace"), governed his kingdom through his family and appointed officials. The lives of the peasants and artisans was carefully regulated: their movement was limited and they were taxed heavily. Luxury accompanied the pharaoh in life and in death and he was raised to an exalted level by his people. The Egyptians worked for the pharaoh and obeyed him because he was a living god on whom the entire fabric of social life depended. No codes of law were needed since the pharaoh was the direct source of all law.

In such a world, government was merely one aspect of religion and religion dominated Egyptian life. The gods of Egypt came in many forms: animals, humans and natural forces. Over time, Re, the sun god, came to assume a dominant place in Egyptian religion.

The Egyptians had a very clear idea of the afterlife. They took great care to bury their dead according to convention and supplied the grave with things that the departed would need for a pleasant life after death. The pharaoh and some nobles had their bodies preserved in a process of mummification. Their tombs were decorated with paintings, food was provided at burial and after. Some tombs even included full sized sailing vessels for the voyage to heaven and beyond. At first, only pharaohs were thought to achieve eternal life, however, nobles were eventually included, and finally all Egyptians could hope for immortality.

The Egyptians also developed a system of writing. Although the idea may have come from Mesopotamia, the script was independent of the cuneiform. Egyptian writing began as pictographic and was later combined with sound signs to produce a difficult and complicated script that the Greeks called hieroglyphics ("sacred carvings"). Though much of what we have today is preserved on wall paintings and carvings, most of Egyptian writing was done with pen and ink on fine paper (papyrus). In 1798 Napoleon invaded Egypt as part of his Grand Empire. He brought with a Commission of Science and Arts composed of more than one hundred scientists, engineers and mathematicians. In 1799 the Commission discovered a basalt fragment on the west bank of the Nile at Rachid. The fragment is now known by its English name, the Rosetta Stone. The Egyptian hieroglyphics found on the Rosetta Stone were eventually deciphered in 1822 by Jean François Champollion (1790-1832), a French scholar who had mastered Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and Coptic. The Rosetta Stone contains three inscriptions. The uppermost is written in hieroglyphics; the second in what is now called demotic, the common script of ancient Egypt; and the third in Greek. Champollion guessed that the three inscriptions contained the same text and so he spent the next fourteen years (1808-1822) working from the Greek to the demotic and finally to the hieroglyphics until he had deciphered the whole text. The Rosetta Stone is now on display at the British Museum in London.

During the period of the Middle Kingdom (2050-1800 B.C.) the power of the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom waned as priests and nobles gained more independence and influence. The governors of the regions of Egypt (*nomes*) gained hereditary claim to their offices and subsequently their families acquired large estates. About 2200 B.C. the Old Kingdom collapsed and gave way to the decentralization of the First Intermediate Period (2200-2050 B.C.). Finally, the *nomarchs* of Thebes in Upper Egypt gained control of the country and established the Middle Kingdom.

The rulers of the Twelfth Dynasty restored the power of the pharaoh over the whole of Egypt although they could not control the *nomarchs*. They brought order and peace to Egypt and encouraged trade northward toward Palestine and south toward Ethiopia. They moved the capital back to Memphis and gave great prominence to Amon, a god connected with the city of Thebes. He became identified with Re, emerging as Amon-Re.

The Middle Kingdom disintegrated in the Thirteenth Dynasty with the resurgence of the power of the *nomarchs*. Around 1700 B.C. Egypt suffered an invasion by the Hyksos who came from the east (perhaps Palestine or Syria) and conquered the Nile Delta. In 1575 B.C., a Thebian dynasty drove out the Hyksos and reunited the kingdom. In reaction to the humiliation of the Second Intermediate Period, the pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, most notably Thutmose III (1490-1436 B.C.), created an absolute government based on a powerful army and an Egyptian empire extending far beyond the Nile Valley.

One of the results of these imperialistic ventures of the pharaohs was the growth in power of the priests of Amon and the threat it posed to the pharaoh. When young Amenhotep IV (1367-1350 B.C.) came to the throne he was apparently determined to resist the priesthood of Amon. Supported by his family he ultimately made a clean break with the worship of Amon-Re. He moved his capital from Thebes (the center of Amon worship) to a city three hundred miles to the

north at a place now called El Amarna. Its god was Aton, the physical disk of the sun, and the new city was called Akhenaton. The pharaoh changed his name to Akhenaton ("it pleases Aton"). The new god was different from any that had come before him, for he was believed to be universal, not merely Egyptian.

The universal claims for Aton led to religious intolerance of the worshippers of other gods. Their temples were closed and the name of Amon-Re was removed from all monuments. The old priests were deprived of their posts and privileges. The new religion was more remote than the old. Only the pharaoh and his family worshipped Aton directly and the people worshipped the pharaoh. Akhenaton's interest in religious reform proved disastrous in the long run. The Asian possessions fell away and the economy crumbled as a result. When the pharaoh died, a strong reaction swept away his life's work.

His chosen successor was put aside and replaced by Tutankhamon (1347-1339 B.C.), the husband of one of the daughters of Akhenaton and his wife, Nefertiti. The new pharaoh restored the old religion and wiped out as much as he could of the memory of the worship of Aton. He restored Amon to the center of the Egyptian pantheon, abandoned El Amarna, and returned the capital to Thebes. His magnificent tomb remained intact until its discovery in 1922.

The end of the El Amarna age restored power to the priests of Amon and to the military officers. Horemhab, a general, restored order and recovered much of the lost empire. He referred to Akhenaton as "the criminal of Akheton" and erased his name from the records. Akhenaton's city and memory disappeared for over 3000 years to be rediscovered by accident about a century ago.

Egyptian Religion

Religion was integral to Egyptian life. Religious beliefs formed the basis of Egyptian art, medicine, astronomy, literature and government. The great pyramids were burial tombs for the pharaohs who were revered as gods on earth. Magical utterances pervaded medical practices since disease was attributed to the gods. Astronomy evolved to determine the correct time to perform religious rites and sacrifices. The earliest examples of literature dealt almost entirely with religious themes. The pharaoh was a sacrosanct monarch who served as the intermediary between the gods and man. Justice too, was conceived in religious terms, something bestowed upon man by the creator-god. Finally, the Egyptians developed an ethical code which they believed the gods had approved.

J. A. Wilson once remarked that if one were to ask an ancient Egyptian whether the sky was supported by posts or held up by a god, the Egyptian would answer: "Yes, it is supported by posts or held up by a god -- or it rests on walls, or it is a cow, or it is a goddess whose arms and feet touch the earth" (*The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, 1943). The ancient Egyptian was ready to accept any and all gods and goddesses that seemed appropriate. For instance, if a new area was incorporated into the Egyptian state, its gods and goddesses would be added to the pantheon of those already worshipped.

From its earliest beginnings, Egyptian religious cults included animals. It is no accident that sheep, bulls, gazelles and cats have been found carefully buried and preserved in their own graves. As time passed, the figures of Egyptian gods became human (anthropomorphism)

although they often retained the animal's head or body. Osiris, the the Egyptian god who judged the dead, first emerged as a local deity of the Nile Delta in Lower Egypt. It was Osiris who taught the Egyptian agriculture. Isis was his wife, and animal-headed Seth, his brother and rival. Seth killed Osiris. Isis persuaded the gods to bring him back to life, but thereafter he ruled below. Osiris was identified with the life-giving, fertilizing power of the Nile, and Isis with with the fertile earth of Egypt. Horus, the god of the sky, defeated the evil Seth after a long struggle.

But Horus was only one kind of sky god. There was also Re, the sun god, later conjoined with Amen, and still later Aten. The moon god was the baboon-headed Thoth, who was the god of wisdom, magic and numbers. In the great temple cities such as Heliopolis ("city of the sun"), priests worked out and wrote down hierarchies of divinities. In the small communities of villages, all the forces of nature were deified and worshipped. One local god was part crocodile, part hippopotamus, and part lion.

Despite the ever-increasing number of deities which could be added to this hierarchy of deities, one thing is certain: Egyptian religion, unlike the religion of Mesopotamia, was centralized. In Sumer, the temple was the focus of political, economic and religious organization. Indeed, it was often difficult to know where one aspect began and another ended. By contrast, the function of an Egyptian temple was focused on religion.

We are certain that ancient Egyptians were preoccupied with life after death. They believed that after death each human being would appear before Osiris and recount all the evil that had been committed during one's earthly existence: "I have not done evil to men. I have not ill-treated animals," and so on. This was a negative confession and justification for admittance into the blessed afterlife. Osiris would then have the heart of the person weighed in order to determine the truth of their confession.

The Egyptians believed not only in body and soul, but in *ka*, the indestructible vital principle of each person, which left the body at death but which could also return at other times. This explains why the Egyptians mummified the dead: so that the *ka*, on its return, would find the body not decomposed. And this also explains why tombs were filled with wine, grain, weapons, sailing ships and so on -- *ka* would find everything it needed, otherwise it might come back to haunt the living.

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The Holy Quran:

Egypt in the Quran:

<http://strongmail.real.com/track?t=c&mid=3358&msgid=407&did=1288904500&sn=1244662364&eid=mohamedaali@gmail.com&uid=77397&extra=%%2001%%&http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfIzyg1-MIE&feature=related>

