Early Modern Africa

1. Just like in the Western Hemisphere, Europeans begin to exert their influence in Africa as well and it went about as well
2. One point about Europeans before moving onto Africa - why were the Europeans able to do this while other societies did not or could not?
   1. Most histories argue that this is because Europe was always fragmented into smaller regional kingdoms that were always competing with each other
      1. This led them to always find the best economic deals or innovate or invent deadlier weapons to win wars.
      2. This drive to compete with the other regional states was not present other places because one government controlled the entire area (China, N,S America) or invasion kept the region focused on defense rather than exploration (India, Africa)
3. Early Modern African States
   1. Songhai - was a vassal state to Mali but the city of Gao eventually overtook Timbuktu as the most important trading city in west Africa
      1. Important names to know, Sonni Ali (founder) and Askia Mohammad
      2. Strong military to protect trade routes and Niger River
      3. Eventually a Moroccan army from N. Africa armed with muskets conquered the important trade cities and Songhai was replaced by small regional kingdoms
      4. This was the end of large, successful west African trade empires, as Atlantic trade took some of the money that these places relied on
   2. A similar fate befell the Swahili city states on the east coast of Africa as many were taken over by the Portuguese
   3. Kongo - a centralized state in central Africa that formed an alliance with Portugal
      1. Here, instead of conquering this area, the Portuguese supplied the rulers of Kongo with supplies and weapons to protect their interests (probably because this was one of the first places they encountered)
      2. Kings converted to Christianity and allowed priests to try to convert their subjects, for the same reason that the rulers of west Africa converted to Islam - closer relations with their important trade partners
      3. Portuguese wanted high value trade items, copper, ivory and slaves
         1. Slave trade destroyed Kongo from within - Kongo kings wanted fewer slave raids and the Portuguese defied them, working by themselves or more frequently, other tribes or the subordinates of the kings to get slaves - undermined their authority
      4. Eventually, a Portuguese colony (more on that in a minute) to the south declared war on Kongo and destroyed the Kongolese army
      5. This led merchants to abandon the area as war is bad for business and they went south to Angola
   4. Angola - called Ngola (title of the king), real name Ndongo
      1. In 1575, Portuguese merchants started a small coastal colony in Angola to better facilitate the trade in slaves
         1. By 1611, Portuguese gathered support of neighboring people to supplied slaves and their small colony in Angola grew larger
      2. Queen Nzinga (1623-1663) blocked Portuguese efforts, but could not completely get rid of them - even went as far as to form an alliance with the Dutch to stop the Portuguese
         1. When Nzinga died, the resistance to the Portuguese also fell away and the Portuguese basically took over Angola and began expanding into the surrounding area
   5. South Africa - fewer records than in other parts of Africa, but important area was Great Zimbabwe, which controlled the gold trade in southern Africa
      1. Dutch built a trade post at Cape Town in 1652 and took over a lot of the surrounding area by fighting and enslaving the local people - this became the most prosperous settlement in SSA
         1. This started a long process of European colonization in this manner - English, Dutch, French
4. Religions of Salvation in SSA
   1. Both Islam and Christianity were syncretic in Africa - taking pieces from them and adding pieces from African faiths
   2. Also, both Islam and Christianity spread initially to help facilitate trade
   3. This wasn’t always a positive trend, though
   4. Very devout Muslims (Fulani) from north Africa attempted to stamp out the syncretic Islam seen in west Africa - these are the Moroccans that conquered Songhai
      1. Failed and this started foundation of Islamic statebuilding in SSA
   5. Christianity - magic and evil spirits + Jesus
      1. Antonian movement - a syncretic Christian cult that said JC was an African man, Kongo was homeland for Christianity and Heaven was only for Africans
      2. European missionaries petitioned the king of Kongo to suppress it and he did - the prophetess was arrested and burned at the stake
5. Slave Trade
   1. Portuguese tried to get slaves from the moment they arrived in Africa, but soon realized they could just buy them - a part of African society and economy for a long time
   2. Needed them for their sugar plantations in the Caribbean and Brazil
      1. Production and profits soared as a result
   3. Other Europeans began using African slaves as well, but not as extensively as the Portuguese
      1. Because the demand for slaves was so high and slaves died so frequently, some African leaders went on raids to capture people to sell into slavery
         1. Dahomey is an example of an African state that became really wealthy due to trade in slaves - bought European weapons and became powerful
   4. Triangular Trade - European three legged trade
      1. 1st leg - European manufactured goods (textiles, metalwork, firearms) and horses to Africa
      2. 2nd leg - slaves from Africa to S. America, N. America, Caribbean
      3. 3rd leg - sugar, molasses, American raw materials to Europe for manufacturing
      4. Slave portion - called the Middle Passage - was especially brutal, 2 month journey
         1. A horrendous ordeal, cramped, foul conditions, little food or water - meant to maximize profits
         2. Mortality was around 50% - eventually conditions were made better to keep the slaves alive so that more could be sold and mortality dropped to around 5%
         3. Over the course of the entire slave trade, 12 million Africans died travelling across the Atlantic, or ¼ of the total slaves taken from Africa
   5. Political Effects of Slavery on Africa
      1. Effects were not universal - some benefitted from the trade and others were exploited
         1. Others were untouched, because they were too far inland to be used as slaves
         2. The most effected were those on the west coast - Senegal to Angola
      2. Young men were those that were taken
         1. Because new slaves couldn’t always be made in the WH, there was a constant need for new ones
         2. In Africa, women began taking up men’s roles - in Angola, women became soldiers
         3. Polygyny became an important social practice - men having more than one wife
      3. Some African states began wars just for the purpose of capturing slaves - Dahomey became powerful doing this
   6. African Diaspora
      1. Africans were forcibly moved all over the Western Hemisphere and one way that they resisted was by retaining their African cultural traditions
         1. This created a hybrid or syncretic culture in their new homes
      2. Creole languages were created by merging African and European languages
      3. Religions, too, Voudo in Haiti and Santeria in Cuba - combination of African ideas and Christian structures
         1. Churches and personal salvation + spirits, drumming, dancing, animal sacrifice
      4. Music - call and response, drumming and banjos becomes African spiritual music (Gospel music, jazz and blues today)
         1. Slave owners banned this because it appeared to them that the slaves were communicating and trying to rebel - it didn’t stop the Africans
      5. Food, too - African vegetables (like okra) were added to European and American foods to create Creole food, like gumbo
   7. End of the Slave Trade - lots of reasons
      1. Slave resistance
         1. Slaves did not work very hard or very quickly
         2. Slaves that escaped (Maroons) gathered in remote regions and sometimes attacked plantations
      2. Slave revolts
         1. Slaves far outnumbered everyone and revolts could be especially deadly
         2. Only successful once - French colony of Saint Domingue (Haiti) in 1793 - more on this in a while
         3. Freed slaves often tried to free other slaves through other means, like buying them or writing books to try to sway public opinon
      3. All of this made slavery too expensive to continue
         1. It was actually cheaper to pay workers a salary than to house and feed slaves
         2. Military forces were necessary to quell slave revolts
         3. Slaves didn’t produce as much as salaried workers
      4. Produced a shift in European shifts towards Africa - pay the Africans to secure raw materials in Africa, pay them for it and Africa becomes a market for European goods
      5. Some dates
         1. Denmark first to abolish slave trade in 1803, rest of Europe followed in the early 1800s
         2. Abolition of slavery took longer - 1833 in British colonies, 1865 in US, 1888 in Brazil, 1960s in Saudi Arabia and Angola
         3. While official slavery was abolished, forms of slavery still exist today
            1. Debt bondage (like land peonage), servile marriages, fake adoptions, sex trafficking