

## What the Empire Lost

For over 600 years, the Ottoman Turkish Empire had been either a growing or a large power in the Balkan States, in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. However, by 1683, the Ottomans had reached their peak size. From that time on, they lost prestige, power, and land. What follows is a role call of some of the major areas lost by Turkey and the reasons for their loss.

### Hungary

After entering a war to expand their European territory, the Ottomans found that they had overextended themselves. They suffered a series of military defeats at the hands of the Hapsburg king of Austria. The results were a great loss of prestige and land including Hungary for the Ottomans by 1699. This represented a doubling of the lands for the Austrians who now called their country Austria-Hungary.

### Greece

Following the tide of nationalist feelings in the early 1800s, the Greeks revolted against the Ottoman Turkish rule of their country. The Greeks had an ancient culture, were Christians, and did not like being occupied by the Moslem Ottoman Turks. With the idea of nationalism firmly in their minds, the Greeks started a revolt in 1821. The powerful Ottomans were just about to crush the Greeks when England, France, and Russia intervened. Popular support in Europe was on the side of the Greeks. The French, British, and Russians sent in a combined naval force which badly defeated the Turkish navy and forced the Ottomans to give Greece complete independence in 1829.

### Romania and Serbia

In 1878, the Ottomans became involved in another war with the Russian Empire. The Russians were fighting the Turks for two reasons: one, they felt they were aiding Christians in the Balkan areas; and two, the Russians had territorial ambitions of their own. The Turks lost this war, as a result of the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Serbia, Romania, and Montenegro were granted independence. The Russians did not gain land from this war, but did gain friendly allies in these new nations, and, of course, great influence and prestige in the Balkan area.

### Bulgaria

In 1908, as a reaction to the continuing decline of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, a group of young Turkish military officers called the "Young Turks" overthrew the sultan whom they saw as corrupt, ineffective, and responsible for the decline of the Empire. In the confusion of this internal revolt in Turkey, the Bulgarian nationalists saw an opportunity to revolt and claim independence. They did so in 1908 and founded the kingdom of Bulgaria. The Turks, who were having enough trouble at home and in other areas of the Empire, did not have the strength to force the Bulgarians back into the Empire.

### Albania

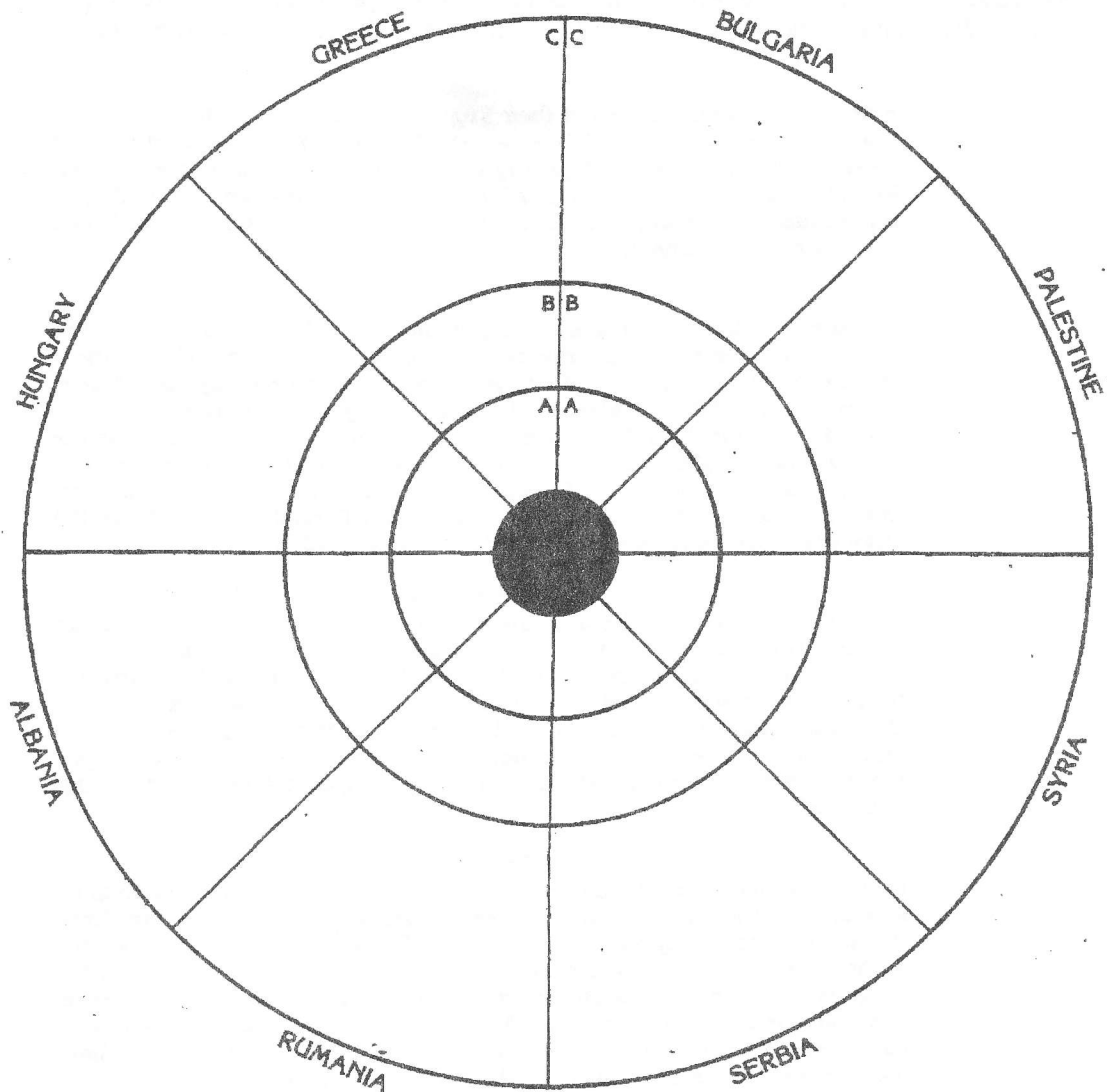
With Turkey weakened by the revolt of the "Young Turks," the Balkan nationalists saw an opportunity to free all of the Balkans from Turkish rule. In 1912-1913, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro fought and beat Turkey in the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. After their success, there was a period of fighting between the Balkan countries, but eventually a peace treaty was signed. Nearly all of the Balkans, including Albania, were independent nations in 1913.

### Syria and Palestine

During World War I, the Ottomans entered the war on the side of the Germans and Austrians. This was mainly because these were the enemies of Russia who was a hated enemy of Turkey. After the loss of the war by the German-Austrian-Turkish alliance, Turkey was forced to give up more territory. This time, Syria was given to the French and Palestine to the British. Both became protectorates of the British and French in 1922.

A protectorate is a kind of colony in which the stronger power agrees to eventually grant independence to the colony that it is "protecting" until it is ready for independence hence "protector-ate." The British and French received these lands because they were on the winning side of the First World War.

## Ottoman Empire: A Turkey Shoot



**Fill in the following:**

- A. Date that province or country was separated from the Ottoman Empire
- B. Status of the area—Examples: independent country, or taken over by another country (e.g., protectorate, colony)
- C. Reason that the country or province separated or was lost to the Ottoman Empire