

The subject class (re'aya) included everyone in the Ottoman Empire who did not belong to the ruling class. Its function was to produce the wealth of the empire. Herders and peasants, miners and builders, artisans and merchants, were all re'aya. Their cohesion was strengthened by trade guilds, Sufi orders, and athletic clubs (groups of men who did calisthenic exercises together). Their political and social organization was the millet, or religious community. Ottomans used it to give minority religious communities within their Empire limited power to regulate their own affairs, under the overall supremacy of the 46 Ottoman administration