

SUMMARY

Pelagia Astrinidou-Kotsaki, *The Economic Role of the Bezestens in the Ottoman Period: The Bezesten of Thessaloniki*.

This article discusses the economic role of the *bezestens*, indoor markets that were built in large cities in the Ottoman period and marked the «heart» of the commercial centre.

Their economic role was closely tied up with state control both of prices and of the authenticity of metals and fabrics, as also monitoring the parity between the Ottoman currency and foreign currencies. They were inevitably affected by the crisis at the end of the sixteenth century.

The writer also discusses the architecture of the *bezestens*, which were invariably vaulted structures built to a square plan.

Regarding the Thessaloniki *bezesten*, the writer presents the historical data preserved in the sources, which also reveal the economic role played by these markets. An attempt to date the *bezestens*, finally, gives a general idea of their gradual decline.