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Abstract

The textbook discusses the role and the development of religious and pilgrimage tourism, focusing on its historical, cultural, and economic importance, particularly in Greece. Religious tourism, one of the oldest forms of travel, blends spiritual experiences with cultural and economic benefits. Especially in Greece, which has a rich religious heritage, religious tourism contributes significantly to both cultural development and the local economy. The textbook highlights the evolution of organised travel for religious purposes since the 19th century, with the establishment of agencies like Thomas Cook & Son. It also discusses the role of the Orthodox Church in promoting religious tourism through organised pilgrimages, visiting monasteries, churches, and sacred

places. The Greek government has legislated to differentiate religious tourism from cultural tourism and support its growth, ensuring sustainable development. A major theme is the challenge of balancing spiritual experiences with the commercialisation of tourism. While religious tourism is a significant economic contributor, the textbook puts emphasis on the need to protect religious sites from over-exploitation. Maintaining the spiritual authenticity of these experiences is essential, and there is a growing focus on the protection and preservation of religious heritage sites. In conclusion, religious tourism remains a crucial element of Greece's cultural and economic landscape, reflecting the deep connection between spirituality, culture, and tourism

