

Location -

The temples can be found at the base of Mount Olympus in Dion, which is a village of the Piera region within the Archaeological Park of Dion.

The sanctuary of Demeter is built up from several temples in close vicinity and has been dated as far back as the Archaic period. Here it is evident that **the temple of Demeter was linked directly to the temple of Asclepius (Asclepius)** and this connection between the two sanctuaries **has been found at other archaeological sites** in Greece.

Another building known as the Asclepion was built later in the fourth century BC close to water as it was necessary in the practices and rituals of the Asclepion cult. This building was used for healing the sick of their ailments.

The temples of Demeter and Asclepius were connected through their religious purposes. This viewpoint is supported through their **positioning and location** in Dion.

History -

Dion became of huge religious importance in Macedonia around the Hellenistic period. This is because of the sanctuary of Zeus that was built there and the Olympic games were held in honour of Zeus and the Muses at this place.

It also extended its fame when Alexander the Great made sacrifices to Zeus before then campaigning against the Persians.

The Aitolians destroyed Dion in 219 BC but it was immediately rebuilt by Philipp V.

It was then taken over by Romans in 169 BC who then continued to build their own sanctuaries.

Natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods began the decline of the city of Dion as well as continual raids from neighbouring tribes from the mid third century AD onwards.

In the fourth century AD, Dion became the official seat of a Bishop but then deteriorated in history before being rediscovered in 1806 by William M. Leake.

Archaeology/Architecture -

English explorer William M. Leake rediscovered the ancient structures of Dion in 1806.

The discovery was then confirmed in 1855 by Léon Heuzey where he marked out the remains of the city wall, located and noted inscriptions upon tombstones and also as well as finding the foundations for ancient towers.

From 1912 onwards the ancient ruins of Dion became of popular interest with archaeologist G. P. Oikonomos collecting and publishing the inscriptions he found in the vicinity of Dion.

The first excavations began in 1928 and were led by Georgios Sotiriadis, a professor of archaeology at the University of Thessaloniki. Several **tumuli** were found within the city walls as well as a **basilica** from the early Christian period. Most notably a fourth century BC vault was excavated however the primary aim was to locate the temple of Zeus. Excavations were discontinued in 1931.

In 1961 excavations were resumed and more of the ancient site was recovered into the year of 1962 such as the Roman theatre which extended from the Hellenistic theatre. Further excavations continued from 1973 and continue even to this day under the University of Thessaloniki's direction.

Dion- Temples of Demeter and Asclepius

Another factor that links these two temples together is their **purpose**. Both were used as a stepping stone to communicate with the gods and their dedication to Demeter and Asclepius allowed offerings and prayers to be given in order to communicate with the gods.

Purpose -

Specifically at the temple of Demeter, **offerings** would be given to the goddess so that they might be **granted a bountiful harvest** and to keep away **famines**.

In the temple of Asclepius, it's purpose was used to **heal the sick and wounded** and bring them back to health. Prayers, offerings and rituals would be performed in order to **ask the god's favour** and have him heal any that entered his temple.

Not only would these temples be built for practical purposes, but also as a **declaration of devotion** to their specific gods to honour them as deities, therefore these temples had both a **practical and a religious** purpose.