

Location



Zifias is a small village built on a hill, further down from Agios Georgios Sikousis, about eight kilometers away from the city of Chios. The village's pronunciation was different from village to village: The people who lived in Vassileoniko used to call it "Zofia", those who lived in Agios Georgios called it "Joufia".

It was also mentioned as Zofades or Zifia. Some people believe the name comes from the last name Zizifias and some others from the "zuffe", the Arabian "zuffore".

It is an old village, even older than Agios Georgios. This is proved by written testimonies which say that the village Agios Georgios was constructed by the citizens of **Zifias**. The Monastery of Agios Georgios Sikousis, which was then called "old Monastery", was built at the border of the two villages. There lived the three Agioi Pateres (=Holly Fathers), who lived a hermit's life. Later they erected the monastery of Agioi Pateres, which has their name, and with the financial help of the Byzantine Emperor Konstantinos Monomachos, they built the famous monastery of Nea Moni, which even today remains a very important religious monument for the Christians.

Walking through the narrow paths of **Zifias**, what most impresses the visitor is the way in which the houses are built, really close to each other. These houses were constructed in bad times, when the island suffered from conquerors, so the citizens had to built their houses in a way that they could jump from roof to roof in order to escape.

One can still read the date of construction on the old houses, which remained intact. The date is written on plaques of marble, usually on the wall above the main entrance. A typical one is found above the wooden door of the old municipal school (1869).