

Italo Greek Traditions

St. Elias the Speliot was a younger contemporary of Elias the Younger. He was born in Reggio between 860-870, and died in his monastery in Melicucca on Sept. 11th around the year 960.



One day while praying a monk approaches him and exhorts him to give up his fancy clothing and to put on the robe of incorruption. At the age of 18 the Lord repeats this call, quoting Luke 14:33. The Lord then calls him to go to St. Auxentios Church in Sicily.

Because of sadness at a friend's death, the poor partially crippled Elias (he only has the use of one hand) goes to Rome. It is here that Elias finds an elder, Ignatios, who teaches him the monastic life. He then sends Elias back, where Elias finds Arsenios, a monk, who gives him the monastic schema.

They move to Greece for a short time, but God warns them of the Saracen invasion, so they move back to Southern Italy. In Reggio they come across St. Elias the Younger and Daniel. When Arsenios hears about St. Elias the Younger's miracles he declares himself to be nothing at all. St. Elias the Younger assures him that because of his priesthood he has a greater gift than prophecy and during the celebration of the D.L., Arsenios is found surrounded by spiritual fire. Furthermore, before his death, Elias the Younger tells the people they will not be abandoned but will find a father in Elias the Speliot, who will lead them in the way of virtue.

In time, St. Elias Speliot's spiritual father, Arsenios, dies. His body remains incorrupt in his priestly vestments. Daniel invites St. Elias to live with him. His great virtue helps Daniel find greater propensity for the ascetic practices.

Elias stays with yet another spiritual elder, Kosmas, who saw in a vision that St. Elias would have a great following of monks, who would be cave-dwellers. In time this comes true, so many monks come that Kosmos decides to leave and St. Elias develops a great monastic community. Elias spent the rest of his days in prayer, copying manuscripts, visiting the tomb of Elias the Younger. After his death, his holy relics, clothes, and even personal belongings bring about many miracles.