

# In the Cradle of Orthodox Mission in Late Modernity

When Photios Kontoglou met Ruben Spartas

*Historic Scrolls*

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The more one digs into the history of the emerging missiological awareness in mid-20th century Greece, the more one uncovers hidden treasures—indeed, raw diamonds. This awareness was systematically nurtured by two distinguished figures: the current Archbishop of Albania, Anastasios Yannoulatos, widely recognised for his exceptional missionary activity and his contributions to mission theory and praxis; and the late Professor of Missiology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Elias Voulgarakis. Voulgarakis is regarded as the founder of Orthodox Missiology in modern times, since he organised the subject on a solid scholarly basis, harmonising patristic theology with contemporary missiological thinking at the ecumenical level. Besides these prominent figures, a number of other individuals have made their contribution to its development, and a complex set of historical circumstances has resulted in a significant wave, indeed a tide, of interest in Greek Orthodox mission.

The mission of the Church is an ecclesial, thus collective, endeavour. It is, in fact, God's mission. Given that the Church is the Body of Christ, we, as human persons, interconnected in this Body, are as individuals mere workers in the field. Pride cannot be taken in serving a task which is considered the breath of the Church, integral and life-giving in its very essence.

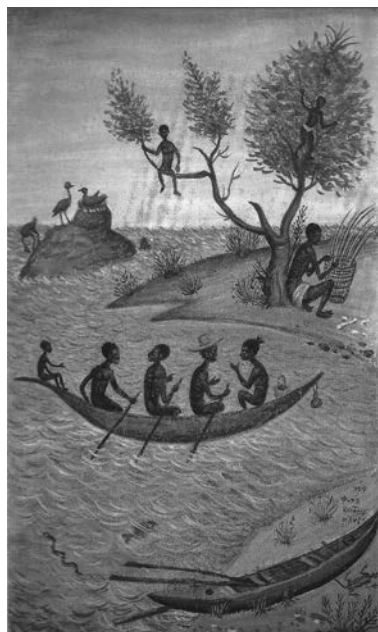
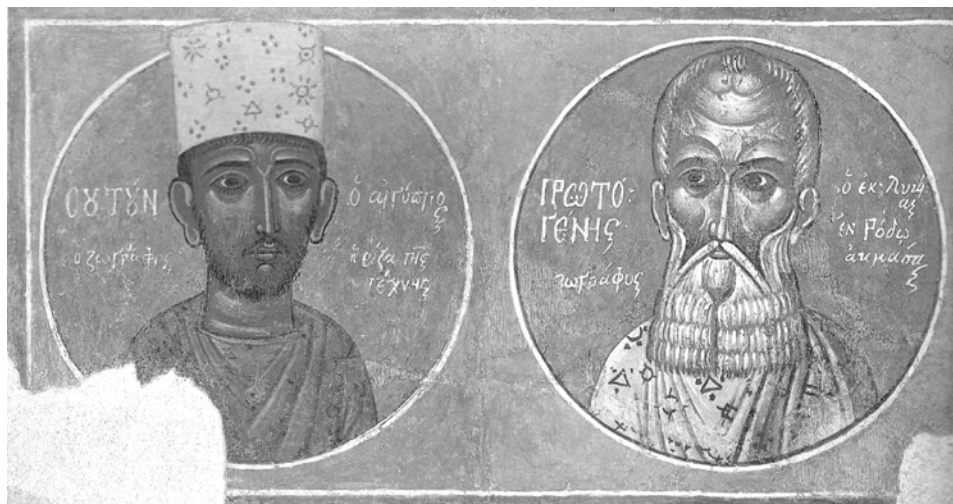
It is with great joy that we recently discovered such a worker—a personality who transcended theology and mission, and is widely recognised as a preeminent figure in literature and the arts. This intellectual and pioneer has had a significant influence on modern thinking in Greece, marking a departure from the mere mimicry of Western tropes in 19th-century romanticism. Instead, he fostered a new

understanding of self, associated with modernism and a reappreciation of Greek and Byzantine tradition.

Renowned for a large number of literary works, he is most celebrated for his painting. A humble spiritual figure, he reshaped the orientation of Modern Greek culture, particularly through his commitment to reevaluating and repossessing the Byzantine iconographic style.<sup>1</sup> His impact extends beyond narrow nationalism, for he also breathed new life into the cultures and peoples of the East. From his portrait of the Egyptian painter Soussoun, a wall painting in his private residence now displayed in the National Gallery, to the naive primitive painting 'Away from Civilisation', it is apparent that the world of Photios Kontoglou was not confined to one particular culture—whether European or Greek. His work reflects his welcoming eye for all cultures, primarily those of the East, but extends further, encompassing the entirety of the human condition. If one reads Kontoglou mostly as a traditionalist,<sup>2</sup> or even considers him as a forerunner of later trends such as anti-western fundamentalism, one will miss significant aspects of the historical context. This is because the return to Byzantine tradition was in fact part of a modernist movement, in the face of the romantic policy to ignore the whole Byzantine era and in

<sup>1</sup> Ιωσήφ Βιβιλάκης [Joseph Vivilakis], ed., *Φώτης Κόντογλου, εν Εικόνη Διαπορευόμενος: Αφιέρωμα Εκατό Χρόνια από την Γέννηση και Τριάντα από την Κοίμησή του* [Photis Kontoglou, Passing through in an icon: A Tribute One Hundred Years since his Birth and Thirty since his Death] (Athens: Ακρίτας [Akritas], 1995). Νίκος Ζίας [Nikos Zias], *Φώτης Κόντογλου, Ζωγράφος* [Photis Kontoglou, Painter] (Athens: Εμπορική Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος [Commercial Bank of Greece], 1991).

<sup>2</sup> George E. Demacopoulos, "The Recent Invention of 'Traditional' Orthodoxy", in *Orthodoxy and Fundamentalism: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Davor Džalto and George E. Demacopoulos (Lanham — Boulder — New York — London: Fortress Academic, 2022), pp. 9-10 [7-18]. Demacopoulos is right to highlight the rigidity and the persistence on a formalist aspect of the Byzantine art in Uspensky (who also took up literally the legend of Avgar) as well as the close relations between Uspensky and Kontoglou. Nevertheless, Kontoglou was full of contradictions, insisting on the preservation of tradition on the one hand, and the dynamic use of the vernacular language on the other. To reconcile these contradictions, one needs to have a deep understanding of the spirit of the time. For some assistance, besides the celebratory albums of note 1, see (in Greek): Αθανάσιος Παπαθανασίου, 'Παράδοση και Λαμπαφούρες: Ο Θεολόγος Φώτης Κόντογλου' [Athanasios Papathanasiou, 'Tradition and Lampafoures: The Theologian Fotis Kontoglou'], *Νέα Εστία* [Nea Estia] 1788 (2006): 701-718] ('Lambafoures' is a dismissive term denoting modernists, which might be of local Asia Minor origin, or simply made up, since it is not mentioned in any dictionary) and Άγγελος Καλογερόπουλος, 'Ο Συντηρητισμός του Φώτη Κόντογλου' [Angelos Kalogeropoulos, 'The Conservatism of Photis Kontoglou'], *Νέα Εστία* [Nea Estia] 1788 (2006): 694-700. Actually, the Kontoglou Archive, donated—classified and digitised—to the Christian and Byzantine Museum in Athens by Kontoglou's grandson Fotis Martinos, is the source of reference par excellence for the full work of Kontoglou.



'The Egyptian painter Soussoun and the ancient Greek painter Protogenis from Rodos'. Wall painting. Left: 'Away from Civilisation' (Egg tempera, 62 x 38 cm)

some transcendent manner link modern Greece directly to ancient Greece, which was certainly the preferred policy of the ruling powers that recognised Greece as an independent state after the Greek Revolution (War of Independence) of 1821. It was extremely convenient, from both cultural and ideological perspectives, to attach the new Greek state to the idea of classical Greece, with its ancient cities, small in scale, picturesque and seemingly pluralist and democratic in culture. Classical Greece had been highly esteemed since the Renaissance, thanks to the relocation of Greek scholars from Byzantium, the appreciation of Greek philosophy by the Arabs, and the internal paradigmatic evolution that had taken place in the late Middle Ages, which paved the way for a new humanistic spirit to flourish and new entrepreneurial social classes to appear. It also served geopolitical interests to disregard an empire which had proudly existed for centuries in the European East, overshadowing the West.

It is clear that those who discovered Byzantium before it was fashionable<sup>3</sup> had a

<sup>3</sup> Averil Cameron, *The Use and Abuse of Byzantium: An Essay on Reception, An In-*

dynamic grasp of tradition and history and understood the way it evolved through different phases: antiquity, the middle ages, the Ottoman period and the modern age. This is also seen in the modernist artistic choices of Kontoglou and a whole generation of his successors, and in particular their references to French expressionism, applying also more broadly to the revival of Byzantine icon painting.<sup>4</sup>

There was certainly an anticolonial aspect in this movement, particularly on the Greek (and broader Balkan) side, since these people refused to exchange the liberation from the Ottoman empire to political subjugation to the Western patrons of the new Greek (and other) state(s).

This anticolonial aspect of Kontoglou's thought may have been a significant factor, among others (such as the genuine expression of his faith and the international outlook referred to above), for him to express a very specific interest and actual involvement in mission, dating back to 1948. This was very early, at times hardly anyone knew about Orthodoxy in Africa. It coincided with the very earliest appearance of the Orthodox Church in Uganda, soon after the formal admission of the East African leaders as priests and Patriarchal commissioners in 1946 by the Patriarchate of Alexandria—steps that were directly associated with the anticolonial struggles of the peoples of Uganda (and Kenya).<sup>5</sup>

Kontoglou's involvement was recently highlighted again by a much-reposted internet post, which included an article he wrote entitled 'The Negro Orthodox and Father Spartas'.<sup>6</sup> Fr Ruben Spartas was an Orthodox bishop from Uganda, named Christopher, who played an important role in the growth of the Orthodox Church in Africa. (It should also be pointed out that the term 'Negroes' did not have any disparaging connotations in the Greek language in Kontoglou's time).

I turned to Fotis (Photios) Martinos,<sup>7</sup> Kontoglou's grandson, trustee, and suc-

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*augural Lecture* (London: School of Humanities, King's College, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Uroš T. Todorović/ Ouresis Todorovich, *Byzantine Painting through Contemporary Eyes: Hermeneutics of Spiritual Vision* (Alhambra, California: Sebastian Press, 2023), p. 10. More broadly on Byzantine art and its relation to modernity, see Taroutina, Maria, *The Icon and the Square: Russian Modernism and the Russo-Byzantine Revival* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2018). <https://doi.org/10.5325/j.ctv14gp6z7>. Roland Betancourt and Maria Taroutina, eds., *Byzantium/Modernism: The Byzantine as Method in Modernity* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Evi Voulgaraki-Pissina, 'Orthodoxy in East Africa beyond Decolonisation', *Salt: Crossroads of Religion and Culture* 1 (2022), 159-205, DOI: 10.57577/1-22A11.

<sup>6</sup> It appears that the initial internet reference, with multiple reposting, is found on the website of the Holy Monastery of the Pantocrator in Melissochori, Serres, Macedonia, the original source remaining elusive: URL <https://www.impantokratoros.gr/pater-spartas.el.aspx?fbclid=IwAR3WiAmanztEOy3v2NCAHWBxplq37OtURyKYp2VvLWVs3RI61VT36r7P-wh0>, last accessed March 30, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Thanks to a mutual friend, Yanis Bitsakis.

successful administrator of his grandfather's intellectual legacy to help me identify the first publication of the article. Fotis Martinos promptly responded to my question, confirming that the article was originally published in the newspaper *Ελευθερία* (Eleftheria: Freedom) on December 12, 1948. He also generously provided us with a scan of Kontoglou's original sketch of Father Ruben Spartas, which we feature on the cover of Issue Nr. 2. We express our gratitude for this invaluable contribution. However, there was more—significantly more—on Kontoglou's contribution and an intriguing new chapter on the old history of mission, shedding light on Spartas's depth of knowledge of Greek and Orthodox affairs as well.

According to an e-mail from Fotis Martinos sent to me on October 21, 2023, Spartas actually visited Photios Kontoglou at their home on October 24, 1959. There is a handwritten address to him by Kontoglou and there are also two more articles on the subject, published in a series, one in 1958 and another the following year. We hope to publish this material in an upcoming issue of *Salt*. Kontoglou and Spartas met spiritually and figuratively in 1948, or even prior to that, but only in 1959 did they meet in person.

This aspect of Kontoglou's involvement, at such an early stage, has not been recognised by the many scholars studying his work (as painter and author), nor has its place in the history of mission and the emergence of missionary awareness in Greece been sufficiently appreciated. Even though I myself have been researching the history of missionary awareness in Greece for many decades, to my bewilderment and regret I have to acknowledge that I had no idea that such a significant personality of Photios Kontoglou had written this article, or that such an article would have been possible so early, even before academic theologians had begun to take the subject of mission into serious consideration.<sup>8</sup>

The official report of Ruben Spartas's tour in Greece was written by Anastasios Yannoulatos in the bilingual mission journal *Porefthentes* (Go ye), Issue Nr. 5 (1960): 9-13,<sup>9</sup> under the title 'Father Spartas visits Greece'. However even though the report gives a full programme of Spartas's visit, as well as a list of the personal contacts he made, there is no mention of Kontoglou. Thus, questions arise as to the actual veracity of the report. It seems to exaggerate the role of *Porefthentes*

<sup>8</sup> It was brought to my attention by my postgraduate student, Archim. Gabriel Yanopoulos, who came across an online version. Athanasios Papathanasiou, *op. cit.*, p. 706, note 18, knows the article from a later reprint of 1954 in the journal *Κιβωτός* [Kivotos] 26 (1954): 28-31. However the fact that it was written as early as 1948 had escaped [our] attention.

<sup>9</sup> 'Father Spartas visits Greece', *Go Ye* (Porefthentes) 5 (1960): 9-13. The particular early issue of the mission journal was released before *Porefthentes* was officially founded as a non-profit association [and before Elias Voulgarakis, later Secretary of the association for many years, was involved. He was still studying in Germany at the time].

as the exclusive guide and facilitator of Ruben Spartas's visit to Greece, whereas it is clear that the Ugandan leader made more contacts on the sidelines. His visit to Kontoglou was reported in the press and attracted significant publicity, but there is no mention of this in Yannoulatos's report. This issue deserves further exploration in future discussion of mission historiography, but in this article we will focus on Kontoglou's first reference to Spartas, and offer a translation of the 1948 article. ■

## The Negro Orthodox and Father Spartas

By Photios Kontoglou

IN AFRICA there is a country called Uganda, near Lake Victoria Nyanza, which is inhabited by several tribes. Most of the natives are the so-called Baganda, some are called Bunyori, others Hamites: all are jet black Negroes. In the forested areas live a multitude of those little people called pygmies, who are the old indigenous tribe, for the others moved there from other parts of Africa. From the time of the explorer Stanley, who went to find Livingstone in 1875, a few of the blacks<sup>10</sup> began to be baptised and become Christian. At first the missionaries who went there were English, followed later by Catholics. But before them the Koran had arrived in Uganda, for Arab traders had been travelling to these remote places from long ago. Islam was firmly rooted, and the Christians engaged in a great struggle to draw people to the religion of Christ, and in the end they prevailed. Today, out of a hundred black Ugandan,<sup>11</sup> thirty are Christians, four are Mohammedans and the rest are pagans.

Years ago, some English travellers went to Uganda, to a place called Nagona Kosubi. A black chief had a son and gave him to the English to learn English. And indeed, this black boy had a great aptitude for letters and the English loved him. When the time came for them to leave Uganda, they left their pupil with the few books they had with them. Among these books were an Old Testament, a Gospel and a short history of ancient Greece. When the black boy read this story, he was so enthused, especially by the bravery and simple life of the Spartans, that he talked about Sparta all the time and changed his name to Spartas. He is still called Spartas to this day. So he asked what religion the Greeks of today had, and when he found out that they were Orthodox Christians, he wrote in response on a large piece of paper, 'Orthodox Community of Sparta'. He did not wish to be baptised

<sup>10</sup> The actual word is ἀράπηδες, literary meaning Arabs, but commonly used to denote all dark-skinned people of Africa from Egypt and below.

<sup>11</sup> The same, as in the previous note. It applies all over the article.

by the Catholic priests or the Anglicans, but decided to wait for one of our priests to go to Uganda to baptise him, along with a few others whom he had also made into philhellenes.<sup>12</sup>

He waited for years and years, always asking the few Greeks who were in Uganda when an Orthodox priest might pass by. This was told me by a Greek missionary who travelled in Africa for a long period of time and we got to know each other a few years ago because he happened to have read some of my books.<sup>13</sup> He told me that the blacks love our Orthodox Church very much, and are very enthusiastic about Byzantine chanting. Although they saw pictures of the Virgin Mary everywhere in the Catholic Church, they were not impressed, but when they saw a Byzantine dark-haired Virgin Mary which he had with him they were eager to worship her and kissed her with reverence; as soon as he put on his vestments and took the silver Gospel in his hands, they were quite jubilant with excitement. What contributed greatly to this, was that he had a beard and hair, for these tribes are rare. He told me that if we had missionaries to send to Africa, we could bring more black people to Orthodoxy. And because I was chanting Byzantine hymns with him, he said that we should go to Africa together, because he chanted alone and celebrated the liturgy alone.

In due course this missionary went to Uganda to baptise the children of Greeks who lived there, and they told him the story of Spartas. So he went to the place where he was staying. Spartas was overjoyed. So the missionary baptised him and his followers in a river and gave them Orthodox names, like John, Nicholas, Constantine, George, Gregory, Chrysostom, Mary, Catherine, Helen, Barbara, etc. After a year or two, Spartas was ordained a priest and the poor fellow had to make vestments out of whatever cloth he could find. He then dedicated himself to religion and struggled on behalf of Orthodoxy.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> As to the veracity of these events, see the note 14.

<sup>13</sup> As already mentioned, Kontoglou was also a renowned author.

<sup>14</sup> This story is not historically accurate. Spartas was baptised much earlier, and he was first ordained by the South African Bishop Daniel Alexander of the independent self-proclaimed African Orthodox Church, long before he met any canonical Orthodox priest. The Greek priest mentioned was most probably Nikodimos Sarikas. (Voulgaraki, *op. cit.*) It is interesting how the narrative is altered to suit a Greek audience at the time. Kontoglou certainly drew on an existing oral narrative to construct his story, although it is possible he knew more than he chose to describe. Here, his identity primarily as a storyteller rather than a scholar influenced the account. The complex religious landscape, with its ecumenical elements, as well as aspects that might be seen as disorderly or deviating from traditional Orthodox perspectives of a well-established majority church, were rarely reflected in popular Greek narratives about missionary work. The recurring theme of a humble and sincere African seeking Orthodoxy and enduring great hardships to realise his desire to join the Orthodox faith resembles a plotline from an adventure novel, where the

In 1942 the Patriarchate of Alexandria sent Metropolitan Nikolaos of Axum on a tour of East Africa. When he arrived in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, he was welcomed by Father Spartas, together with another priest and his entourage. They knelt and kissed his hand and received his blessing. They were filled with joy to see a bishop of the Orthodox Church, whom this innocent flock had been awaiting for so many years. They took him to Nagona Kosubi, on the edge of Kampala. Instead of bells, there were drums. Their little church was a long mud hut, like the ones they call *tekuls*. They had the iconostasis dividing the church in the middle like in our churches and it was made of reeds. In the sanctuary they had set up the Holy Altar and the prothesis. Everything was poor and simple, as it is in our remote little chapels. In the sanctuary there were two or three icons with Greek letters. The children lined up in two rows, so that the bishop could pass between them to go to the church. There was a large crowd gathered around the church. With the drums beat steadily, the bishop processed with Spartas and his retinue into the church, while the readers and the catechumens chanted Psalms 120 and 135, saying:

[120] *I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.  
the sun will not harm you by day,  
nor the moon by night.  
The Lord will keep you from all harm—  
he will watch over your life;  
the Lord will watch over your coming and going  
both now and forevermore.*

...

[135] *He remembered us in our low estate  
His love endures forever.  
and freed us from our enemies.  
His love endures forever.  
He gives food to every creature.  
His love endures forever.  
Give thanks to the God of heaven.  
His love endures forever.*

How great and unfathomable are the mysteries of God! As far as Uganda went the fragrance of Christ, as far as the land thirsty for the water of life, the great river,

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protagonist faces challenges and triumphs heroically. This narrative is often constructed for pastoral purposes.



David I say, the prophet, poured out, and slated thirsty souls with its sweetest water, black lips, black mouths. Lord, who hath not thirsted from Thy 'living water, changed to everlasting life'? Black tongues sing of Thee with joy in Nyanza, in Toro, in Agole, in Kenya, and say, 'May his mercy last forever'. And in this new heritage of Thine, there rejoices and shakes another Hermon and another Tabor and another Lebanon: Mount Ruvenzori, Mount Mfiburo and Mount Elgon, which throws fire from its summit.

In the middle of the church a wooden throne was set up and there sat Bishop Nikolaos, with the two parish priests, Fr Spartas and another on his right and left. And as soon as the chanting ceased, Spartas stood before the bishop and greeted him with words full of faith and fervent love in the Orthodox Church of Christ. He greeted him on behalf of the honorary presbyters of Uganda, the priests, deacons and readers, the seminarians, the commissioners and the entire Orthodox community of Uganda. He painfully recounted their sorrows, struggles, and spiritual orphanhood, saying that they had been waiting for fifteen years to see their spiritual pastor and they were begging him to give them rest from their sufferings, to open the door with the key of salvation and bring them into the holy Orthodox Apostolic Church. "Thy work," he said, "is to bring the lost sheep into the fold and present it a pure sacrifice before God. No gift is so pleasing to God as a saved soul. The whole world," Father Spartas said, "is not worth as much as a soul. We are lost souls. We thirst for our salvation... May God bless your mission and open the door for us to unite with the holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church, with the throne of the Apostle and Evangelist Mark."<sup>15</sup> Bishop Nikolaos thanked him and assured him that with the help of God, the desired union would take place. When he had finished speaking, the whole crowd passed by and kissed his hand, kneeling down and making the sign of the cross. Then they went to see the schools. The boys' school had 160 students, who were learning the local Luganda language as well as English. They then went up to a low hill, on which Spartas wished to build a large church.

The next day the bishop left, and Father Spartas bade him farewell with two deacons. But after a little while, Bishop Nikolaos went again to Kampala to be present at the coronation of the new King, Kabaka.<sup>16</sup> This time they took him to Bule-

<sup>15</sup> The apostle Mark is considered the founder of the throne of Alexandria.

<sup>16</sup> Kabaka is the title of the king of Buganda. On 19 November 1942, Mutesa II was crowned Kabaka at Buddo on his eighteenth birthday. Buganda is the central part of Uganda, which at the time was still a Protectorate within the British Empire. The detail given in the account, six years after the events took place, show that Kontoglou did a good deal of research, and possibly drew on written sources. The most plausible hypothesis is that he took into account the book by Nikolaos himself, Νικόλαος Μητροπολίτης Αξώμης, *Τριλογία Αναμνήσεων από την Ανατολικήν Αφρικήν. Α' Αποστολή παρά τοις Μαύροις Ουγάνδας*.

mezi, a few miles from Kampala. Here there was another Orthodox parish and seminary. They were welcomed by the parish priest Obadiah Basajjakitalo,<sup>17</sup> who was also director of the school. The people and the students of the school, about thirty in all, were waiting for the bishop. The readers were there too, chanting. They entered the church, and the same ceremony took place as in Kosumbi. The school is named after Saint John Chrysostom. The students there learn the Catechism and Church History. On their way back, Orthodox Christians in various villages greeted them, with a deacon wearing a black robe and a prayer rope around his neck with a cross similar to those of Mount Athos.

Spartas continually implored the bishop to recognise them through the Patriarchate so they could find peace.

“To be worthy of the light of the true Church,” said poor Spartas, “we consider greater than any other blessing.

He gave the bishop a report to submit to the Patriarch. In it was written the history of the Orthodox Church of Uganda, which is the youngest, only 20 years old.

The Orthodox Christians number over 10,000 souls. Although alone and unprotected, they do not waver in their faith.

“As a devout people, we are ready to endure every temptation with patience. We must row our boats joyfully and eagerly.”

In the whole of Uganda there are 58 Orthodox churches, 20 schools with 985 students and a seminary. They are asking for teachers to teach them Greek so they can read religious books, they are asking for a printing press, they are asking for holy vestments and vessels or even samples to make them themselves. They ask for a bishop and priests: “The Lord’s field is wide, and two priests alone are not sufficient for the work. May all creation praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever.”

Another report was given to the bishop by Fr Gathuna, from Kenya, asking for a bishop, Orthodox books, holy myrrh, and the right of theologians to study in Alexandria. He says there are 53 Orthodox churches in Kenya with 15,000 Christians.

Before the bishop left Uganda, there was a liturgy at the church in Kosumbi, and

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Β'. Στέψις Καβάκα Βουγάνδας. Γ'. Ελλήνων Ταγκανίικας Συνέδριον [*Metropolitan Nikolaos of Axum, Trilogy of Memories from East Africa. 1. Mission to the Black Ugandans. 2. Stepis Kavaka Buganda. 3. Greek Tanganyika Convention*] (Cairo, Fotos Press, 1947), 96 pp. The first part is available in English, in a later edition: Nikolaos of Axum, “Memory Trilogy from Eastern Africa—Cairo 1947: The Orthodox Church in Uganda—An Appeal by Native Christians to the Patriarchate of Alexandria,” in *Yearbook and Review 2004*, ed. Makarios Tillyrides (Archbishop of Nairobi) (Nairobi: Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Kenya and Irinoupolis), 172-201.

<sup>17</sup> Ovadiah Basajjakitalo was Spartas’s brother-in-law, and likewise a very significant figure in the Orthodox church.



At Kontoglou's home on 24 October 1959, the day of the visit of Reuben Spartas. Two Ugandan students, Kostas Tsiropoulos, the renowned author and publisher, Maria and the publisher Alekos Papadimitriou, the latter sat and holding the issue of *Κιβωτός* [Kivotos]. The young Fotis Kontoglou (the grandson) is also present, to whom we owe this photograph.

choosing corresponding portions for each. At the end of the service, it was noticed that they chanted the 'Axion Estin'.

Father Spartas travelled to Alexandria, where he received the Patriarch's blessing and the title of 'Patriarchal Commissioner in Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika'. In Egypt they sent two scholars from Uganda and they finished the Greek Gymnasium. When they returned to their homeland, Spartas had them translate a few letters from the Church's books into their language.

May God bring it about that I can go to Uganda to decorate the church they are going to build in Nagona Kosubi and inscribe on the building sign: "This holy church was raised from the ground up and painted during the tenure of the reverend Spartas, patriarchal commissioner of the Orthodox Eastern African Church". ■

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