

Article

Contemporary Critical Reflections on Ion Bria's Vision for Ecumenical Dialogue

Doru Marcu 

Faculty of Orthodox Theology, University of Craiova, 200585 Craiova, Romania; doru.marcu@edu.ucv.ro

Abstract: In this study, I will expose the perspective of the ecumenical dialogue in the theology of Fr. Ion Bria, one of the well-known Romanians involved in the ecumenical movement. In the first part, after a short introduction, I will present the most important biographical milestones of the Romanian theologian, as well as some details about his activity in the World Council of Churches. Then, in the second part, I will critically present the most important aspects of Bria's ecumenical theology, as well as the reception of these ideas in contemporary Orthodox theology, in discussion with common witness and eucharistic communion within ecumenical dialogue. In the last part, I will present the critical remarks on ecumenism in Bria's theology. Through this analysis, I will emphasize important directions that the ecumenical dialogue can exploit today to overcome some historical, cultural or theological preconceptions and misunderstandings.

Keywords: Ion Bria; Romanian Orthodox Church; ecumenical dialogue; World Council of Churches

1. Introduction

Currently, the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) is actively involved in bilateral ecumenical dialogue or in various ecumenical forums, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) or the European Conference of Churches. Moreover, some of the members of the higher clergy had the opportunity to study abroad and better understand the phenomenon of ecumenism, both theologically and culturally–historically. An important moment for the affirmation of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the communion of autocephalous Orthodox churches remains, without a doubt, the participation in the Holy and Great Synod of Crete, held between 16 and 26 June 2016.

Among the prominent names of Romanian Orthodox theology involved in ecumenical dialogue, we can mention Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Fr. Ion Bria, Fr. Viorel Ioniță, Fr. Ioan Sauca, Fr. Daniel Buda, His Eminence Nifon of Târgoviște, His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Church, and many others. I can say that with the enthronement of His Beatitude Daniel, a new stage of the relationship with the WCC began, but also with prominent representatives of other churches or Christian denominations. I recall important moments for ecumenical dialogue, such as the visit to the Patriarchal Residence of His Excellency, Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, on 17 June 2015, at that time Secretary General of the WCC, or the visit of Pope Francis to the Palace of the Patriarchate with His Beatitude Father Patriarch Daniel and the members of the Permanent Synod of the ROC on 31 May 2019. The ROC accepted that Fr. Dr. Ioan Sauca, one of its representative theologians, was to be Interim and Acting General Secretary of the WCC between April 2020 and December 2022. Also, His Eminence Archbishop and Metropolitan Dr. Nifon, from the Archdiocese of Târgoviște, was elected as a member of the Central Committee at the 11th Assembly of the WCC, held in Karlsruhe, Germany, from 31 August to 8 September 2022. Officially, at least, the ROC continues to be represented at the highest level in ecumenical forums. It remains to be seen to what extent these official positions will also have an effect at the local level. As a general impression, the attitude of the Romanian Patriarchate towards ecumenical dialogue is positive, with theologians dedicated to this commitment.



Citation: Marcu, Doru. 2024. Contemporary Critical Reflections on Ion Bria's Vision for Ecumenical Dialogue. *Religions* 15: 369. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15030369>

Academic Editor: Razvan Porumb

Received: 26 December 2023

Revised: 28 February 2024

Accepted: 15 March 2024

Published: 20 March 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Ion Bria is one of the well-known Romanian Orthodox theologians involved in the ecumenical movement. Beyond his administrative involvement in the WCC, in recent years, his theology has attracted the attention of several Romanian and foreign theologians. Certainly, the history of the ecumenical movement will hold a special place for him in terms of ecumenical dialogue in the Orthodox and Romanian spheres. I will present some biographical details, his activity in the WCC and also his theological ideas about ecumenism.

2. The Historical Personality of Ion Bria

Ion Bria was born on 19 June 1929, in the locality of Telega, Prahova County, Romania. His parents were Ion Gheorghe and Maria. Between 1936 and 1940, Fr. Bria attended the primary school in his village. He attended middle school between 1940 and 1944 and high school between 1944 and 1948 in Ploiești. After graduation from high school, Fr. Bria entered, in turn, the Faculty of Petroleum and Gas and the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences in Bucharest. For political reasons, he had to give up both. But in December 1950, he enrolled at the Theological Institute in Bucharest, where he graduated with excellent results in 1954. Accepting the advice of the rector, Prof. Ioan Coman, he entered the MA or magisterium courses at the Theological Institute in Bucharest, completing them in the period 1955–1957. Upon the recommendation of Fr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, the graduate Ion Bria was appointed professor at the Theological Seminary “Bishop Chesarie” in Buzău. In November 1962, he was transferred to the Theological Seminary in Bucharest, where he would stay, with interruptions, until December 1964.

The Romanian professor and theologian Ion Bria had the opportunity to pursue higher studies in the West. He was sent to Great Britain to the Anglican College “St. Augustin” in Canterbury between October 1962 and June 1963. There, he had the chance to meet Lesslie Newbigin, Nicolas Zernov and William Chadwick. Between March and June 1966, Deacon Ion Bria was sent for a new training period at the Faculty of Theology “St. Chad” in Durham, UK. That scholarship was the result of an intense dialogue between the Romanian Patriarchate and the Anglican Church. Visibly, those two scholarships had the role of opening the ecumenical vision of the theologian Ion Bria, who thus had the opportunity to attend courses of renowned professors, to meet Orthodox theologians from abroad and to access the libraries of those theological institutes.

After the West experience, Fr. Bria returned to Romania, where he would continue his teaching activity. Prof. Ion Bria applied for PhD courses in November 1960, but the defense of the thesis with the title “Aspecte dogmatice ale unirii Bisericii creștine” (Dogmatic Aspects of the Union of Christian Churches) would only take place on 18 June 1968. The thesis coordinator was Prof. Nicolae Chițescu, and Fr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae was also part of the committee (see [Bria 1968](#)). Moreover, at the beginning of January 1965, he would be appointed assistant at the Theological Institute in Bucharest. On 30 January 1965, he was ordained deacon, and later, in April 1972, priest by His Beatitude Justinian Marina, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Another stage in Fr. Ion Bria’s missionary journey, which will mark his career, was his appointment to the staff of the World Council of Churches. That unique opportunity arose in the context of Fr. Bria’s participation in the World Missionary Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, which took place between 31 December 1972 and 7 January 1973. There, Bria, as a delegate of the Romanian Patriarchate, met with important theologians of the Commission, among whom we can mention Anastasios Yannoulatos, Jürgen Moltmann, Philip Potter, Jacques Rossel and Emilio Castro. A short time before, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism had established a new office called *Orthodox Studies and Relations*, coordinated for a short time by Archimandrite Yannoulatos, who was meanwhile appointed to head a missionary studies center at the University of Athens. In that context, Fr. Bria was asked to take over the WCC Office for *Orthodox Studies and Relations*. Fr. Bria’s final answer was given after returning to Romania, where he had a meeting with His Beatitude Patriarch Justinian. Fr. Bria was officially employed by the WCC in Geneva since April 1973, when he moved with his wife Ecaterina and son Alexandru.

The theologian Ion Bria's activity in the WCC can only be summarized. Officially, Fr. Bria worked on the basis of a contract in the WCC for no less than 21 years and 3 months, between April 1973 and June 1994. In the Council, Fr. Bria held various positions. Firstly, he served as *Executive Secretary* at the Office for *Orthodox Studies and Relations* between April 1973 and December 1986. Another important position was that of *Deputy Director* at the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. The position was officially advertised as vacant starting on August 31, 1980. Unfortunately, I have not officially identified the date of the appointment, but in 1982, when Fr. Bria edited the volume "*Jesus Christ—the Life of the World*", he appeared with the full title of Deputy Director of the Commission and Executive Secretary at the Office of Orthodox Studies and Relations (Bria 1982b). According to my research, he would hold this representative position until December 1986. In January 1987, Bria became the *Director* of the Renewal and Congregational Life sub-unit. After 1991, Bria was appointed *Interim Convener* of Unit I: Unity and Renewal and *Executive Director* from April 1993 to June 1994, when he retired.

In January 1994, in Johannesburg, South Africa, the retirement of Fr. Ion Bria was reminded during the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Central Committee. At the commencement of the Executive Committee meeting on 18 January 1994, Fr. Ion Bria led the opening service as a sign of appreciation for the activity carried out. Between 20 and 28 January 1994, at the meeting of the Central Committee, also in Johannesburg, South Africa, Fr. Bria's retirement was noted, and official thanks were given to him. In Geneva, on 30 June 1994, the farewell celebration took place in the presence of Mr. Konrad Raiser, the new General Secretary of the WCC since 1992.

After his official retirement from the WCC activity, Fr. Bria continued to participate in various consultations and conferences from the WCC and even the Romanian Patriarchate. In October 1995, at the invitation of Fr. Prof. Mircea Păcurariu, Dean of the Faculty of Theology "Andrei Şaguna" in Romania, Fr. Prof. Ion Bria accepted the position of Associate Professor within the Department of Dogmatic and Ecumenical Theology, where he would remain until the end of the academic year 1998–1999. The Sibiu project would result in the publication of some works and also in the training of theologians who are still active in the Romanian theological school today (see Marcu 2022b).

On 2 July 2002, at the age of 73, Fr. Ion Bria passed to eternity after a heart attack. His body would be brought from Geneva and buried on 8 July 2002 in the cemetery of Cernica Monastery, near Bucharest, Romania. The funeral service was attended by a group of bishops and priests, relatives and close friends (Tia 2002; Moşoiu 2002; Necula 2002).

3. Ecumenical Theology and Dialogue Promoted by Ion Bria

Bria, the pioneer of ecumenism in the Romanian Orthodox Church. Regarding the theological reception of Fr. Bria, different theologians actively involved in the ecumenical movement consider him a pioneer. In recent years, his ecumenical theology has become the subject of research at the level of master's and doctoral studies or for articles. An interest in his theology can be seen in the circles of evangelical theologians in Romania, but also from abroad (see Oborji 2006; Tulcan and Ioja 2009; Simuţ 2010; Moşoiu 2010, 2014; Ubeivolc 2011; Tapernoux 2011; Papathanasiou 2011; De Mey 2012; Vassiliadis 2013b; Stan 2013; Njoroge 2013; Tosi 2015; Fibişan 2015; Toroczka 2016, 2018; Bates 2016; Morariu 2019; Păţcaş 2019; Freishyn-Chirovsky 2019; Boldişor 2019; Moşoiu 2020; d'Aloiso 2020; Sonea 2020; Marcu 2022a).

Fr. Bria was one of the theologians passionate about ecumenism and the effort of mutual recognition of Christians who belong to different churches or Christian denominations/groups. In the course of five decades of theology at the highest level, he earned a reputation for speaking on these sensitive subjects, sometimes even contradicting his initial personal premises. What are the most important elements of this vision about church boundaries, ecumenism and eucharistic communion in the thinking of Fr. Ion Bria? In the following lines, I will critically present these topics and the vision of Bria regarding ecumenical dialogue.

First of all, Fr. Bria identifies the Orthodox Church, which manifests itself as local Orthodox churches, with the historical Church, *Una Sancta*, which was formed at the time of Pentecost as the mystical Body of Christ, the Head of the Church. This church is confessed by the Nicene–Constantinopolitan Creed. In other words, “the universal Church is the Orthodox Church; the universal Church is one, but it is embodied in local Churches” (Bria 1989, p. 181). Consequently, the identity of the Orthodox Church is unique. Therefore, Fr. Bria believes that placing the Orthodox Church in a confessional triangle limits its identity as an ecumenical church. At the same time, in a paradoxical way, Fr. Bria claims that “the Church—*Una Sancta* does not exist without the Orthodox, but it is not the property of the Orthodox” (Bria 1997, p. 3). Hence the opinion of Bria about “our confessional pride”, which has, as a consequence, insensitivity towards the status of other Christians.

What is actually the intention of ecumenism? Fr. Bria talks about several types of ecumenism (integral, local, spiritual), but all of them refer to the attempts of Christians who belong to different churches/denominations/Christian groups to get closer. Ecclesial unity must be the most important concern of ecumenism. Any deviation from this goal entails a disregard for ecumenism itself. Obviously, this unity involves “a full consensus in the fundamental truths of faith”. Today, Christians find themselves in a state of separation, for theological and non-theological reasons. To resolve these misunderstandings, dialogue is the only working method. Fr. Bria does not believe that “the dividing walls between religious beliefs are raised to the sky”, but he believes that an active involvement of the entire Orthodoxy, clergy and laity, is not optional but vocational. Fr. Bria is also aware of the voices in the Orthodox churches that do not agree with the contemporary ecumenical movement, but he believes that they “like to live in the comfort and isolation of the past”. In other words, for Bria,

“ecumenism does not mean erasing the doctrinal divergences and cultural tensions created by ‘non-theological factors’, but to reset confessional and cultural particularities in their historical, local and universal context, to find a ‘catholic’ space of communion and solidarity, to inspire an evolution towards a synthesis in the form of a consensus” (Bria 2003, p. 88).

Bria’s perspectives on common witness and Eucharistic communion. Fr. Bria talks about the importance of a common witness for credibility in front of the world. We must acknowledge that the current separated life of Christian communities constitutes the most massive obstacle to the credibility of the Gospel for our contemporaries. The lack of unity among Christians acts like a screen, preventing the manifestation of Christ Himself. Unfortunately, the reception of ecumenical convergences raises great problems of communication and accountability. Fr. Bria says explicitly that, most of the time, these theological results are not taken into account by the leading clergy and are not brought to the attention of the members of the Church. He believes that,

“nevertheless, common witness is a unique ecumenical chance, especially for small communities, with important value for people struggling not only with the old and new confessional isolations, but also with the new political alienation and ideological restrictions. There are situations where common witness is an urgent need for individuals and established communities. The task of the churches is therefore to encourage the common witness experience as an immediate living form of our historical, possible, already-given conciliarity. The large Christian fellowship desires to live today, now, as one people of God” (Bria 1982a, p. 396).

The greatest impasse of the lack of unity among Christians is seen in the Holy Eucharist. The Orthodox Church does not accept communion with anyone who is not an official member of the church. Beyond the various names—eucharistic hospitality, intercommunion, eucharistic concelebration—I believe that the expression eucharistic communion is the most comprehensive. Fr. Bria states repeatedly that it is not possible to have eucharistic communion with other Christians, even Catholics, as long as we do not share the same

faith, the same creed. However, there is a unique statement by Fr. Bria where he claims that Orthodox priests can offer Holy Communion to believers from traditional churches: the Roman Catholic Church, the Old Catholic Church and the Oriental churches. Interestingly, this statement is found only in English. Moreover, it does not appear at all in the Romanian version of that work (Bria 1996a):

“It is the priest’s responsibility to encourage all people who take part in the offertory and the anaphora to come for holy communion. At his discretion he may give communion to members of Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Old Catholic churches without formal conversion to the Orthodox church. Of course, the way for full eucharistic communion needs solid preparation” (Bria 1996b, p. 29).

Fr. Bria’s statement was commented on by two Romanian Orthodox theologians from abroad: Viorel Coman and Fr. Radu Bordeianu. Regarding Coman’s criticism, we should note the pertinent observation that Fr. Bria did not express whether it was possible for an Orthodox believer to receive communion in other churches, such as those already specified (see Coman 2019, p. 236). Fr. Bordeianu did not agree with the lack of approval from the episcopal authority, in the absence of which the gesture of an Orthodox priest to offer Communion to a Catholic could entail his defrocking (see Bordeianu 2019, pp. 15–16). I believe that a possible answer to this attitude must be correlated with a question that Fr. Bria formulated a few years before. According to his words,

“could the eucharist be shared not only to consolidate a proper ecclesial life and celebrate the reunification of divided Christians, but also to challenge exclusive, historically organized communities to transcend their visible institutional limits in order to share the “common bread and cup” in a more catholic way, with others and for others who need the bread of life?” (Bria 1991, p. 79).

I could say that the desire to see a real rapprochement between churches is characteristic of those who participated in so many ecumenical meetings and conferences:

“We waited with hope not only for unconditional forgiveness between Churches, but also for the opening of the Altar doors for those ‘outside’, who have clothes of a different color, we mean we waited for mutual Eucharistic communion” (Bria 2005, pp. 286–87).

In a personal testimony, the Greek theologian Petros Vassiliadis points out Fr. Bria’s enthusiasm but also the disappointment that the eucharistic communion between the Orthodox and the Orientals did not take place:

“In a private conversation we had during our last meeting in Geneva, a few months before his death, he openly confessed to me his disappointment that at least some sort of intercommunion had not taken place between the Eastern and the Oriental Orthodox churches; and with all humility, he put the blame on us theologians!” (Vassiliadis 2013a, p. 67).

In agreement with these positions, we must be aware that an important point is the differentiation of dialogue partners. We need a more accurate classification because, at the popular level, most of the time, the differences or qualities are standardized. It is not possible, theologically and historically, to accept the mixing of differences and similarities. We should highlight that there is a difference between traditional churches, such as the Roman Catholic or Oriental Churches, and those that have been formed much more recently. This classification would help us, at a theological and pastoral level, to have a much more achievable dialogue.

Critical remarks in Bria’s theology about ecumenism. Fr. Bria considers that the issue of accepting or rejecting the ecumenical dialogue in the Orthodox communities, in Romania especially, should be related to the position of the hierarchy. At the institutional level, the attitude towards ecumenical dialogue has a double standard. More precisely, in some

situations, theologians or hierarchs who represent the voice of the Orthodox Church are reserved in transmitting, promoting or applying the decisions approved in ecumenical forums. What is more, there have been situations when, in their position as lay theologians, they have been open to ecumenical dialogue, but when they became members of the higher clergy, they changed their attitude. In this sense, the impression conveyed by some hierarchs is interpreted as anti-ecumenism and against dialogue. In Bria's words,

“unfortunately, the results of consultations such as these seem often to disappear en route to Orthodox theological schools, parishes and other centres. Or they go quickly into the filing cabinets of ecclesiastical offices, never to be taken out again” (Bria 2000, p. 255).

Another critical point, related to the former, is the problem of translating and presenting the results of the ecumenical dialogue. Here, an important role belongs to the institutional church, which should transpose the common agreements at the local level. In practice, many reports or consultations are translated late and without genuine intention to implement them. Reception in some cases does not exist, hence the hostile attitude towards what was not present at the right time and in the right context. In this regard, Bria is among those who noticed this situation and pointed out the imposture in which the Orthodox can find themselves in relation to their ecumenical partners:

“For Churches that do not have a proper ecumenical experience, ecumenical convergences can occur as something imposed from outside. There are situations in which the church authority does not allow ecumenical perceptions and experiences to reach the level of believers and parish communities. The question is therefore whether, currently, the laity is trained, excluded or denied in this process of reception” (Bria 1985, p. 133).

In Orthodox communities, the word *ecumenist* or *ecumenism* has become a pejorative one. When you categorize someone as an ecumenist, it can mean that they have lost their faith in the Church. In the perspective of some, the one who is an ecumenist must be considered a traitor of the Orthodox teachings and needs to repent and be re-accepted in the Church (see Kalaitzidis 2014, pp. 134–52). For example, in the documents of the Holy and Great Synod, although they speak of ecumenical dialogue, the word ecumenism is not used even once. If Romanian theology had been consistent with the ecumenical language, the current reaction of those who do not accept ecumenical dialogue would have been much more moderate. Before 1989, but also after the fall of communism in Romania, Bria published a lot of articles, both in Romanian and foreign languages, in which he encouraged the involvement of Orthodoxy and Orthodox people in ecumenical dialogue. At least for the Romanian Orthodox space, he is the theologian who wrote the most about ecumenism and its implications.

The anti-ecumenical position in the Orthodox Church in general and the Romanian Orthodox Church in particular must be presented with a lack of a common vision towards the ecumenical dialogue of all the autocephalous Orthodox churches. Moreover, the anti-ecumenical attitude of the monks of Holy Mount Athos is increasingly accepted as the norm and considered an indisputable spiritual position. Although the Holy and Great Synod of Crete presented a balanced image towards ecumenical dialogue, the reception of these positions suffers mainly from the lack of unity of all the autocephalous churches. In Bria's words,

“of course, there are pious groups and theologians who like living in the comfort and isolation of the past, and who try to avoid the controversial issues by withdrawing and by-passing the present ecumenical structure. This attitude is understandable since all of us have had both positive and negative experiences in the ecumenical movement. But it is not a sound enough reason for weakening Orthodox participation in the present struggle for ecumenism” (Bria 1981, p. 322).

The main argument of those who do not accept ecumenical dialogue is related to the truth of faith. They say that through dialogue with others, there is a possibility that the teachings of the Church can be changed or altered. As the only true Church of Christ, the Orthodox Church has the sacred duty not to change anything from the teaching received from Christ, the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers. Orthodox theologians who accept ecumenical dialogue, like Ion Bria, understand the Church in the same sense, but they want to offer others the opportunity to appreciate the testimony of the Orthodox Church.

The ecumenical movement is not sufficiently studied in the faculties of Orthodox Theology in Romania. Moreover, others are presented only from a negative, schismatic or sectarian perspective. Their theology is presented only through the lenses of triumphalist and theoretical Orthodoxy. In the past, the discipline was called Missiology and Ecumenism. Today, it is called Orthodox Missiology. I personally believe that a Catholic, a Protestant or any other theologian from another Christian group or denomination would present the theology of his church or his community much better than any Orthodox professor. This is where the unresolved issue of proselytizing comes into play. Many Orthodox suspect that others have only the intention of converting members of our church. Bria insisted on ecumenism being taught in Orthodox Theology faculties:

“Ecumenism has to become a theological discipline in its proper sense. While many faculties of theology have accepted ecumenism in the academic curriculum, it is practically limited to the history and development of the ecumenical movement. The doctrinal profiles of other churches are still described according to the old apologetic model of confessionalistic comparison” (Bria 1996c, p. 209).

In the Romanian Orthodox Church, there is a need to give voice to the new generation of theologians. Moreover, as Fr. Bria said, we need to train theologians who are able to dialogue with others. My impression and experience are that there is no careful concern for those who may represent the Orthodox position in the future in these dialogues. Also, I think it is time to recover the Romanian Orthodox theologians from the diaspora, who have come to understand dialogue with others much more clearly and honestly than us. Bria always claimed that the mission of the Church is fulfilled through various factors, but an important place is occupied by the work of theologians and theology. Without theology and theologians, the Church lacks a vital dimension to its work.

4. Conclusions

An important deduction of this study is related to the outstanding personality of Ion Bria, a pioneer of ecumenical dialogue in contemporary Orthodoxy. Today, his studies on ecumenism are being re-evaluated and proposed for study by the new generation of Orthodox theologians. In particular, in the Orthodox faculties in Romania, Bria's theology is intensively studied. The discipline of missiology is marked by Bria's vision, and most of the Romanian professors of missiology continue Bria's legacy. Certainly, much more needs to be done in the continuation of this work.

Bria's pro-ecumenism positions and the solutions offered are in the process of implementation and re-evaluation. There are several solutions for rebooting ecumenism, among which we mentioned its introduction as a theological discipline in theology faculties, the training of theologians and bishops who know the rigors of ecumenism, informing Christians in parishes or local communities, etc. Most of the time, at the non-academic level, the intentions and objectives of dialogue are not translated or presented clearly enough. But theologians and hierarchs must take on the task of learning and explaining the role of ecumenical dialogue correctly. In this sense, the legacy of Ion Bria's theology remains relevant and offers opportunities for the new generation of theologians.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Bates, Dana. 2016. Christianity with and for the Younger Generation: A Case Study in Orthodox Youth Mission. In *Mission in Central and Eastern Europe. Realities, Perspectives, Trends*. Edited by Corneliu Constantineanu, Marcel V. Măcelaru, Anne-Marie Kool and Mihai Himcinschi. Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series; Oxford: Regnum Books International, vol. 34, pp. 168–89.
- Boldișor, Adrian. 2019. *Ortodoxia ieri, azi, mâine. Teme intercreștine și interreligioase pentru secolul XXI*. Craiova: Publishing House of Mitropolia Olteniei.
- Bordeianu, Radu. 2019. Eucharistic Hospitality: An Experiential Approach to Recent Orthodox Theology. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 54: 5–24. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bria, Ion. 1968. Aspecte dogmatice ale unirii Bisericii creștine. *Studii Teologice* 1–2: 3–169.
- Bria, Ion. 1981. Ecclesial Unity in the Ecumenical Movement: Theology and Expectations. *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 4: 314–24.
- Bria, Ion. 1982a. The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community. *Mid-Stream* 3: 388–97.
- Bria, Ion, ed. 1982b. *Jesus Christ—The Life of the World: An Orthodox Contribution to the Vancouver Theme*. Geneva: WCC Publications.
- Bria, Ion. 1985. Receptarea convergențelor în credință, rezultate din dialogul ecumenic. Orientarea teologică ortodoxă privind receptarea documentului despre Botez, Euharistie, Preoție. *Studii Teologice* 1–2: 127–34.
- Bria, Ion. 1989. *Destinul Ortodoxiei*. Bucharest: The Missionary and Biblical Institute's Publishing of the Romanian Orthodox Church.
- Bria, Ion. 1991. *The Sense of Ecumenical Tradition. The Ecumenical Witness and Vision of the Orthodox*. Geneva: WCC Publications.
- Bria, Ion. 1996a. *Liturghia după Liturghie. Misiune apostolică și mărturie creștină—azi*. Bucharest: Publishing House of Athena.
- Bria, Ion. 1996b. *The Liturgy after the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective*. Geneva: WCC Publications.
- Bria, Ion. 1996c. Time to Unfold the Orthodox Tradition. *The Ecumenical Review* 2: 203–11. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bria, Ion. 1997. Biserica—Una Sancta în lumina tradiției ortodoxe. De la convergențe teologice ecumenice spre ‘comunitatea conciliară’. *Revista Teologică* 3: 3–68.
- Bria, Ion. 2000. Looking Anew at Orthodox Theology. Three recent consultations. *The Ecumenical Review* 52: 255–60. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bria, Ion. 2003. *Teologia Ortodoxă în România contemporană. Evaluări și Perspective*. Iași: Publishing House of Trinitas.
- Bria, Ion. 2005. *Al doilea botez: Itinerarele unei credințe și teologii de deschidere*. Alba Iulia: Publishing House of Reîntregirea.
- Coman, Viorel. 2019. *Dumitru Stăniloae's Trinitarian Ecclesiology: Orthodoxy and the Filioque*. Lanham, Boulder, New York and London: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic.
- d'Aloiso, Christophe. 2020. *Institutions ecclésiales et ministères chez Nicolas Afanassieff*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain.
- De Mey, Peter. 2012. Mission and Unity: The Common Witness of Separated Churches? In *Mission and Unity: Common Witness of Separated Churches? Proceedings of the 16th Academic Consultation of the Societas Oecumenica*. Edited by Peter De Mey, Andrew Pierce and Oliver Schuegraf. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, pp. 21–47.
- Fibișan, Răzvan Emanuel. 2015. Valoarea Tradiției Ortodoxe în perspectivă ecumenică, în gândirea Fr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria. Ph.D. thesis, Faculty of Orthodox Theology “Ilarion V. Felea”, Arad, Romania.
- Freishyn-Chirovsky, Antony Maria. 2019. A Liturgical Approach to Ecumenism: An Examination of Ion Bria's Liturgy after the Liturgy and a Proposal to Widen His Approach. Master's thesis, Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies/Cambridge Theological Federation, Cambridge, UK.
- Kalaitzidis, Pantelis. 2014. Theological, historical, and cultural reasons for anti-ecumenical movements in Eastern Orthodoxy. In *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism. Resources for Theological Education*. Edited by Pantelis Kalaitzidis, Thomas Fitzgerald, Cyril Hovorun, Aikaterini Pekridou, Nikolaos Asproulis and Dietrich Werner. Oxford: Regnum Books International, pp. 134–52.
- Marcu, Doru. 2022a. *A Critical Analysis of the Theological Positions and Ecumenical Activity of Ion Bria (1929–2002)*. Craiova: Mitropolia Olteniei.
- Marcu, Doru. 2022b. *Relația Dintre Misiune și Ecclesologie în Viziunea Pr. Prof. Ion Bria*. Craiova: Mitropolia Olteniei.
- Morariu, Iuliu-Marius. 2019. A Romanian Contribution to Contemporary Ecumenism: Father Ion Bria: 1929–2002. *The Ecumenical Review* 71: 205–15. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Moșoiu, Nicolae. 2002. In memoriam. Preot profesor universitar doctor Ion Bria 1929–2002. *Revista Teologică* 3: 57–76.
- Moșoiu, Nicolae. 2010. *Relevanța operei Părintelui profesor Ion Bria pentru viața bisericească și socială actuală: Direcții noi de cercetare în domeniul doctrinei, misiunii și unității Bisericii*. Sibiu: Publishing House of University “Lucian Blaga”.
- Moșoiu, Nicolae. 2014. Fr. Ion Bria. In *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism. Resources for Theological Education*. Edited by Pantelis Kalaitzidis, Thomas Fitzgerald, Cyril Hovorun, Aikaterini Pekridou, Nikolaos Asproulis, Guy Liagre and Dietrich Werner. Oxford: Regnum Books International, pp. 194–200.
- Moșoiu, Valentin-Ionuț. 2020. *Dimensiunea filantropică a expresiei “Liturghia după Liturghie” în gândirea părintelui profesor Ion Bria*. Sibiu: Publishing House of Agnos.
- Necula, Nicolae. 2002. Preotul Prof. Univ. Dr. Ion Bria a trecut la cele veșnice. *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 7–9: 201–5.
- Njoroge, Kosmas (John) Ngige. 2013. Incarnation as a Mode of Orthodox Mission: Intercultural Orthodox Mission—Imposing Culture and Inculturation. In *Orthodox Perspectives on Mission*. Edited by Petros Vassiliadis. Edinburgh Centenary Series; Oxford: Regnum Books International, vol. 17, pp. 242–52.

- Oborji, Francis Anekwe. 2006. *Concepts of Mission. The Evolution of Contemporary Missiology*. Maryknoll and New York: Orbi Books.
- Papathanasiou, Athanasios N. 2011. Tradition as Impulse for Renewal and Witness: Introducing Orthodox Missiology in the IRM. *International Review of Mission* 100: 203–15. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Pățcaș, Sorinel. 2019. O perspectivă protestant-evanghelică asupra eclesiologiei lui Ion Bria. Ph.D. thesis, University “Aurel Vlaicu”, Arad, Romania.
- Simuț, Corneliu C. 2010. *Traditionalism and Radicalism in the History of Christian Thought*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sonea, Cristian. 2020. The “Liturgy after the Liturgy” and Deep Solidarity. The Orthodox Understanding of Christian Witness and its Implications for Human Society. *Mission Studies* 37: 450–75. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Stan, Florin. 2013. Cercetare și strategie misionar-pastorală în Biserica Ortodoxă Română contemporană. Ph.D. thesis, Orthodox Theology Faculty of Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
- Tapernoux, Christoph. 2011. The Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches (WCC)—Background of a Process as Reflected in some Contributions by Father I. Bria. *Teologia* 15: 100–19.
- Tia, Teofil. 2002. S-a stins din viață părintele Prof. Univ. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ion Bria—Geneva. *Credința străbună* 7: 7.
- Toroczkaï, Ciprian. 2016. Secularization and Its Influence on the Work of Two Orthodox Scholars. *The Ecumenical Review* 68: 258–271. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Toroczkaï, Ciprian. 2018. *Literatura teologică românească în secolul XX: Accente, sinteze și repere bio-bibliografice*. Cluj-Napoca: Publishing House of Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- Tosi, Eric George. 2015. ‘Our favourite task’: Equipping the saints from an Orthodox perspective. In *Reflecting on and Equipping for Christian Mission*. Edited by Stephen Bevans, Teresa Chai, Nelson Jennings, Knud Jørgensen and Dietrich Werner. Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series; Oxford: Regnum Books International, vol. 27, pp. 106–15.
- Tulcan, Ioan, and Cristinel Ioja. 2009. *Omagiu. Fr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria (1929–2002). The Reception of His Theological Thinking and Its Relevance for the Overpass of the Ecumenical & Missionary Deadlock*. Arad: Publishing House of University Aurel Vlaicu.
- Ubeivolv, Vladimir. 2011. Rethinking Missio Dei among Evangelical Churches in an Eastern European Orthodox Context. Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague, Czech Republic.
- Vassiliadis, Petros. 2013a. A Theology of Mission from an Orthodox Perspective. In *Foundations for Mission*. Edited by Emma Wild-Wood and Peniel Rajkumar. Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series; Oxford: Regnum Books International, vol. 13, pp. 154–62.
- Vassiliadis, Petros, ed. 2013b. *Orthodox Perspectives on Mission*. Edinburgh Centenary Series; Oxford: Regnum Books International, vol. 17.

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.