

Abstract

Dublin Easter Rising of 1916 is widely recognized as an example of an intersection between nationalism and religion due to its use of the Christian symbolism of redemption via sacrifice. The religious aura, surrounding its leader and main ideologue, Patrick Pearse, was both a source of his posthumous “triumph” – the Irish independence shaped to a large extent by his legacy, and his “black legend” of the spiritual father of the sectarian violence in the twentieth century Irish politics. Due to the high degree of politicization of the debate over Pearse’s role in Irish history, his intellectual legacy was rarely treated *sine ira et studio*.

After a delineation of the problematic legacy of Pearse in the context of Irish Studies and the general introduction to the theme of the relations between nationalism and religion, this work proceeds to the re-examination of the place of religion in Pearse’s thought. Pearse’s conceptualization of Irish nationalism should be perceived as a synthesis emerging from the interplay between his deep indebtedness to the religious mind-frame and the Romantic and modernist influences that shaped the atmosphere of the pre-1914 Europe. It is based on a structural analogy between the Church and the nation. The analogy is created by means of a mechanism of the transposition of words, images and concepts from the realm of theology to the context of Irish politics which I call *translatio sacrii*. The working of the mechanism of *translatio* is demonstrated by means of the analysis of both Pearse’s political pamphlets and literary texts with a special attention given to the last period of his public career, from (roughly) 1910 to 1916. Nevertheless, the catalyst for this transposition was provided by impulses external to the realm of theology. Pearse’s thought is therefore analysed in the context of the tradition of Romantic national messianism, represented by Adam Mickiewicz, and the politics of modernist revolt against modernity, exemplified mainly by Carl Schmitt. Pearse’s writings, however, differ in their consistent effort not to break the connection with the religious source and to sacralise the national cause without replacing with it the Christian narrative.