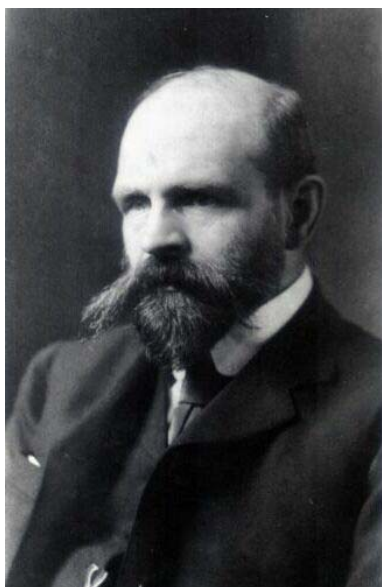


## Kuno Meyer (1858-1919) and Peadar Ó Laoghaire (1839-1920)

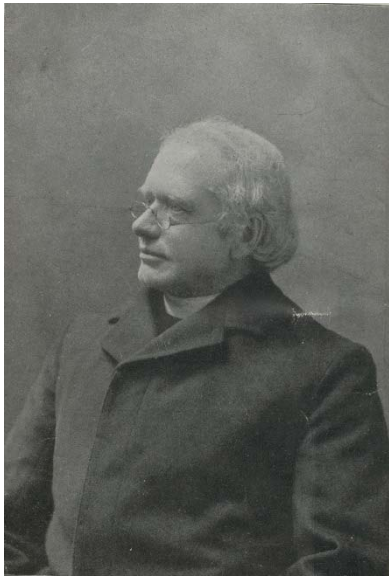
Post by Olive Morrin, Special Collections & Archives

In Special Collections we hold a reproduced copy from the June edition of *Studies* 1920 titled *Canon Peter O'Leary and Dr. Kuno Meyer* by [Douglas Hyde](#). Their names had already been linked in June 1911 when on the same day Dublin Corporation conferred the Freedom of the City on both men and Cork City followed suit the following September. Douglas Hyde writes “*It seems altogether reasonable to couple Father Peter with Dr. Kuno Meyer.....because these two, each in his own way ...did work for Irish nationalism through the medium of Irish literature, which nobody else did.....Kuno Meyer established the School of Irish Learning, bringing us back into the long past centuries. Father Peter grasped us as we are in the present, and by his masterly handling of the living speech projected us along the road which we must travel.....*”



[Kuno Meyer](#) was a German scholar of Celtic languages who translated early Irish literature for English and German readers. In 1884 he became a lecturer in German at Liverpool University. During this time he published his English translation of *Aislinge Meic Conglinne* (The vision of MacConglinne) which is also held in Special Collections. Later he became professor of Celtic Studies and in 1903 he founded the [School of Irish Learning](#), Dublin and the following year he founded and edited its journal *Ériu*. He became professor of Celtic Studies at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Berlin in 1911 and also in the same year was made a freeman of both the cities of Dublin and Cork along with Peadar Ó Laoghaire who was a key figure in the revival of modern Irish.

When war broke out in 1914 Kuno Meyer travelled to the United States where he lectured in universities and other venues. In December 1914 he gave a pro-German speech to [Clan na Gael](#) on Long Island which caused outrage in Britain and Ireland. This speech resulted in the severing of his connections with the University of Liverpool and he resigned as Director of the School of Irish Learning and editor of *Ériu*. He remained on in America and continued lecturing. While recuperating after a railway accident in 1915 he met and married 27 year old Florence Lewis. Their marriage was unhappy and short lived and although she went to Germany in 1916 she later moved to Switzerland. After Meyer's death Florence returned to America with the financial assistance of Meyer's sister Toni. On the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1915 his name was expunged from the Roll of Freemen by the Irish Parliamentary controlled Dublin Corporation in spite of determined opposition from [William T. Cosgrave](#) and likewise in Cork. These decisions however, was reversed in 1920 after Sinn Féin won control of Dublin Corporation on a motion from Cosgrave and Cork followed shortly afterwards. It came too late for Kuno Meyer who died in October 1919 in Leipzig.



[Peadar Ó Laoghaire](#) grew up in an Irish-speaking area near Macroom and attended St. Colman's College in Fermoy before going on to [St. Patrick's College Maynooth](#) where he studied for the priesthood and was ordained in 1867. It was only after joining the [Gaelic League](#) in his mid fifties that motivated him to take up writing in response to a demand by revivalists for reading materials in Irish. For the rest of his life Peadar Ó Laoghaire embarked on a prolific writing career that produced numerous books and articles including *Séada* (1904) and *Mo scéal féin* (1915). Many Irish scholars agree that Peadar Ó Laoghaire brought the language of the people into modern literature. He advocated the use of the living language - *caint na ndaoine* whereas Kuno Meyer's focus was on ancient Irish literature. Peadar Ó Laoghaire spent the last twenty years of his life as parish priest of Castlelyons in the diocese of Cloyne and died there on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1920.

Special Collections and General Collections hold books and pamphlets on both scholars.

## References

Google images

Kuno Meyer, 1858-1919 by Wilhelm Schulze reproduced from *Studies* 1920 pp. 291-297.SP 1894

Canon Peter O'Leary and Dr. Kuno Meyer by Douglas Hyde reproduced from *Studies* 1920 pp. 297-301. SP 1894

Mo scéal féin - an t-Athair Peadar Ua Laoghaire do scriobh

Dictionary of Irish Biography

Kuno Meyer 1858-1919: a biography by Seán Ó Lúing

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