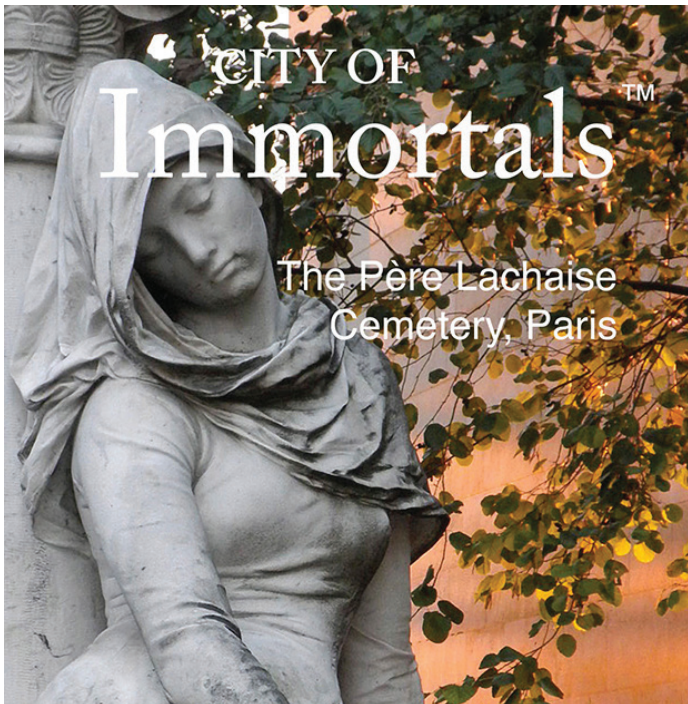


## Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris: Where the Dead Come to Life



City of Immortals: The Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris.  
Carolyn Campbell.

Everything that makes Paris so rich in memories is distilled in the hundred acres of Père Lachaise Cemetery. Nowhere can you find a more stellar collection of Parisian celebrities from the Middle Ages (Héloïse and Abelard), to such latecomers as Oscar Wilde, and Jim Morrison of The Doors. Angels rise from shady walks to mourn artists whose work endures. Frédéric Chopin, Georges Bizet, Edith Piaf, and Maria Callas supply the music. At every turn you find the tomb of a famous painter (Delacroix and Modigliani), actor (Sarah Bernhardt and Simone Signoret), or writer (Colette and Marcel Proust). The architecture is equally encyclopedic. Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Art Nouveau crypts are interposed with pyramids and obelisks. A wealth of statuary, bats, skulls, and draped urns make this a place of visceral awe and wonder—especially for artists and architects.

Père Lachaise is the fourth most popular destination in Paris for the 65 million annual visitors, and it has been a popular resort since it opened in 1804. Before he was buried here, Honoré de Balzac remarked, “I seldom go out, but when I feel myself flagging I cheer myself up in Père Lachaise...while seeking out the dead I see nothing but the living.” It was Napoleon who decreed a new burial ground to relieve overcrowding in the city’s churchyards, and Père Lachaise became the model for landscaped cemeteries around the world. Molière and La Fontaine were relocated here to add a note of distinction but entry is as democratic as Napoleon wished: any resident can rent a plot.

Carolyn Campbell has lived in Paris and the hundreds of hours she has spent in the cemetery over the past 30 years have generated a fold-out map and a GPS tour app to guide visitors through this 107-acre labyrinth, and locate the tombs of 77 cultural icons. There’s a brief history and general information to enrich your visit.

*City of Immortals: The Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris.* Carolyn Campbell. Map \$9.95 and app \$2.99. Available from website, [cityofimmortals.com](http://cityofimmortals.com), and the Apple and Google app stores.



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Michael Webb Hon. AIA/LA has authored more than twenty books on architecture and design, most recently *Moving Around: A Lifetime of Wandering*, *Architects' Houses*, and *Building Community: New Apartment Architecture*, while contributing essays to many more. He is also a regular contributor to leading journals in the United States and Europe. Growing up in London, he was an editor at *The Times* and *Country Life*, before moving to the US, where he directed film programs for the AFI and curated a Smithsonian exhibition on Hollywood.