



Polycarp of Smyrna



CULTURE AND FAITH
TOURISM ASSOCIATION



İZMİR BÜYÜKŞEHİR BELEDİYESİ

HIS NAME AND LIFESPAN

- Polycarp means “fruitful” in Greek (Πολύκαρπος). The dates of his life are approximately AD 69 to 155.

HIS LIFE

- The Church Father Irenaeus, a native of Smyrna and disciple of Polycarp, shared personal memories of his teacher: “For when I was a boy, I saw you in Asia with Polycarp.... I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he taught, and his goings and comings, and the manner of his life, and his physical appearance, and his teachings to the people, and the accounts which he gave of his conversations with John and with the others who had seen the Lord” (Letter to Florinus).
- Polycarp was a historical link to the teaching of Jesus: “And as he remembered their words, and what he heard from them concerning the Lord, and concerning his miracles and his teaching, having received them from eyewitnesses of the Word of Life, Polycarp related all things in harmony with the Scriptures” (Letter to Florinus).
- Polycarp was also a historical link to the teaching of the apostles: “But Polycarp was also not only instructed by apostles and conversed with many who had seen Christ... He always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles (Against Heresies 3.3.4).
- Irenaeus observes that Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis from around AD 85-130, was likewise “the hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp” (Against Heresies 5.33.4)

HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH IGNATIUS

- Around 116 Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch, visited Polycarp while a prisoner on his way to martyrdom in Rome. Ignatius mentions Polycarp in two of his letters.
- “Smyrna, from where I am writing to you, with thanksgiving to the Lord and love for Polycarp as well as for you” (Ephesians 21.1).
- “The Ephesians greet you from Smyrna, from where I am writing you.... they have refreshed me in every respect, together with Polycarp, the bishop of the Smyrnaeans” (Magnesians 15).
- Ignatius later wrote a letter to Polycarp from Troas commending his fellow bishop: “I am approving of your godly mind, which is grounded on an immovable rock. My praise is great since I was judged worthy to see your blameless face” (Polycarp 1.1)

HIS WRITINGS

- Only one writing of Polycarp has been preserved—The Letter to the Philippians. Written around 117, it is Polycarp’s response to a letter from the church there asking for his advice and requesting copies of Ignatius’ letters. Polycarp encourages the Philippian Christians to reject the example of a greedy presbyter named Valens. Instead, they are to maintain their beliefs and behavior based on the teachings of the apostles. Polycarp encourages the Philippians: “Stand fast, therefore, in these things and follow the example of the Lord, firm and immovable in faith, loving the family of believers, cherishing one another, united in the truth, giving way to one another in the gentleness of the Lord, despising no one” (10.1).

HIS TRAVELS

- Around AD 153 when Polycarp was an elderly man, he traveled to Rome to meet with Anicetus, the bishop of Rome. At that time, the Eastern and Western Churches celebrated Easter on different days. This became a controversy that risked dividing the Christian community. Rather than separate, the two bishops agreed that each custom should be allowed and respected.

HIS INFLUENCE

- Pothinus and Irenaeus, disciples of Polycarp, accompanied him to Rome. Pothinus was then sent to Lugdunum (modern Lyon) to evangelize Gaul and serve as its bishop. Irenaeus was later dispatched to assist Pothinus. In AD 177 Pothinus was martyred during the great persecution of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, and Irenaeus became the bishop. The church in Lyon today attributes its establishment to Polycarp and the church in Smyrna.

HIS CONFESSION

- Around 155 Polycarp was arrested and tried by the Roman authorities. He was brought into the stadium where he beheld a pagan mob clamoring for his death. Motioning toward them with his hand, he cried, “‘Away with the atheists!’ But when the magistrate persisted and said, ‘Swear the oath, and I will release you; revile Christ,’ Polycarp replied, ‘For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?’” (Martyrdom of Polycarp 9.2–3).

HIS MARTYRDOM

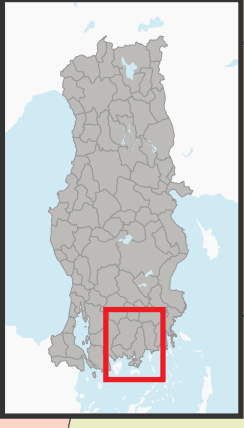
- Refusing to offer incense to Caesar as a god, Polycarp then uttered his final prayer: “I bless you, God, because you have considered me worthy of this day and hour, that I might receive a place among the number of the martyrs in the cup of your Christ, to the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and of body” (Martyrdom of Polycarp 14.2). He was burned at the stake, but a miracle happened and the flames were quenched. The executioner then plunged a dagger into Polycarp’s side, killing the bishop.

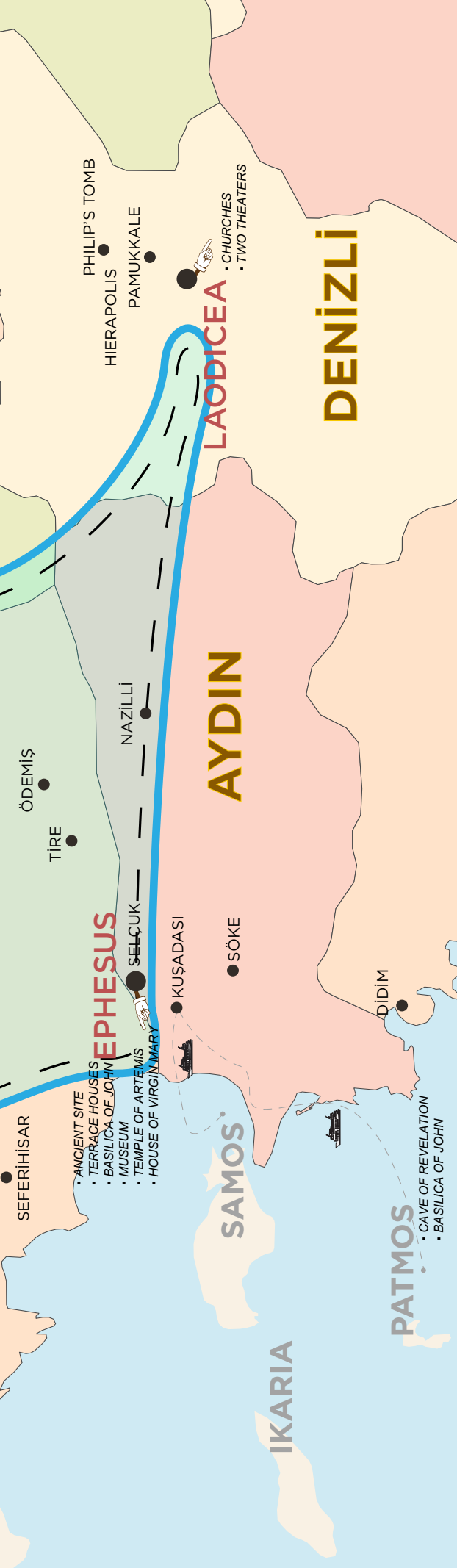
HIS STORY

- Around 156 a Christian scribe in Smyrna wrote an account of Polycarp’s death and placed it in the church’s archives. A year later the church in Philomelium (modern Akşehir) requested a copy, which was shared with many other churches including those in Gaul. The Martyrdom of Polycarp is the first example of martyr literature in church history.

HIS LEGACY

- The Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Greek Catholic Churches celebrate the feast day of Saint Polycarp on 23 February each year. Saint Polycarp Church was built by Catholics in Izmir in 1625 to honor its former bishop. Because of earthquakes and fires, the basilica has often been repaired and restored in the centuries that followed. In the 1890s frescos were added that depict the life of Saint Polycarp. The church remains active and is open to visitors.





SEFERİHİSAR

- ANCIENT SITE
- TERRACE HOUSES
- BASILICA OF JOHN
- MUSEUM
- TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS
- HOUSE OF VIRGIN MARY

ÖDEMiŞ
TİRE

NAZİLLİ

HIERAPOLİS
PAMUKKALE

PHILIP'S TOMB

KUŞADASI

SÖKE

AYDIN

LAODİCEA

- CHURCHES
- TWO THEATERS

DENİZLİ

DİDİM

SAMOS

PATMOS

- CAVE OF REVELATION
- BASILICA OF JOHN

İKARIA

MAP OF İZMİR AREA

SMYRNA



Te
Mother C

Basmane Railroad Station
Built in 1876

Caravan Bridge

Hellenistic Walls

Magnesia Gate

Saint Polykarpos Church
Built in 1625

Fort

Ancient port

Agora

Konak Pier
Built in mid 17th century

Mosque of Konak
Built in 1754

Clock Tower
Built in 1901

Shore 1850

Ancient Roman bath, gymnasium from 2nd century





Theater

Acropolis
Mount Pagos

St. Polycarp
Memorial Site

Archaeological
Museum

Ancient Road

Temple of
Zeus Akraios

Aqueduct

Stadium

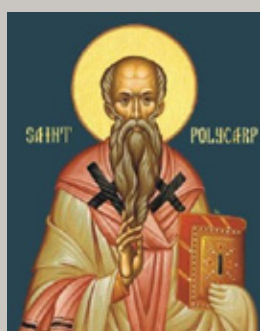
Ephesus
Gate

Aqueduct of Veziroğlu
Built in 1674

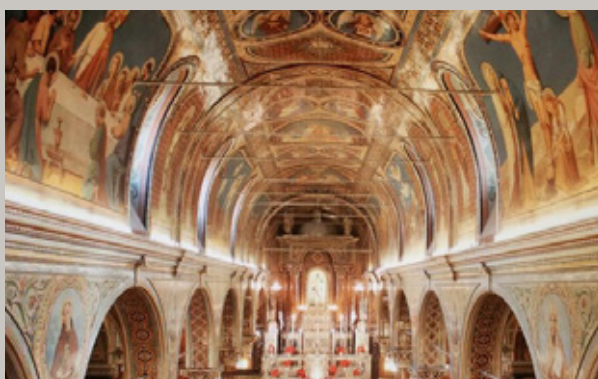


KÜLTÜR VE İNANÇ
TURİZMİ DERNEĞİ

HIS IMAGES



THE CHURCH OF ST. POLYCARP



St. Polycarp Memorial Site

Design and Layout



CULTURE AND FAITH
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Levent Oral
Sinan Efe Ozsahinler
Cuneyt Oral

Edited By

Dr. Ben Witherington III
Dr. Mark Wilson
Dr. Jason Borges

Publisher



CULTURE AND FAITH
TOURISM ASSOCIATION



İZMİR BÜYÜKŞEHİR BELEDİYESİ

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means - electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or any other - except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the author only.



CULTURE AND FAITH
TOURISM ASSOCIATION



İZMİR BÜYÜKŞEHİR BELEDİYESİ