

Medieval Lighthouses

15B - Site Survey

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This coastal survey from the Baltic to Brittany demonstrates with unusual clarity that navigational lighting before 1700 was far rarer, more conservative, and more institutionally constrained than is often assumed. In the earlier centuries of the Middle Ages, across the southern Baltic, the Low Countries, and the Channel coast, navigators never expected to benefit from any kind of network of lights, but were simply grateful for any recognisable indicator of their position. Daymarks were reliable, but at night, any light that could be attributed to a coastal location was a bonus. Even in the later centuries leading up to 1700, the overwhelming norm was not the building of lightstructures but a spectrum of lower-intensity practices: ecclesiastical daymarks, with or without lighting; intermittent signal or warning fires; regulated but low-level harbour lights; and river-mouth beacons designed for local access rather than offshore navigation. True lighthouse structures - purpose-built towers carrying a continuous navigational fire - were confined to a very small set of exceptional sites,

typically at major river gateways with stable ground, sustained international traffic, and strong civic or state sponsorship (notably Neuwerk, the Stenen Baak at Brielle, and a handful of early modern successors such as Goeree). Even where massive towers existed (Dunkerque or Calais, for example), or where geography strongly favoured lighting (Cap Fréhel, Skagen or Kullen), lights before 1700 were conditional, tactical, or defensive, and never regarded institutionally as permanent seamarks. Busy ports such as Dieppe, Ostend, Le Havre, and Nieuwpoort relied on pilotage and harbour fires rather than offshore beacons, while prominent ecclesiastical structures were overwhelmingly visual rather than luminous. The survey therefore shows that pre-1700 lighthouse construction was not a gradual, coastline-wide diffusion but a highly selective response to specific navigational problems. A marked discontinuity around 1700 reflects not technological discovery but a fundamental shift in administrative priorities, state capacity, and the conceptualisation of navigation itself.

Norway

Lindesnes (1655, 1720, 1915)

Alternative Name: The Naze

Lat/Lon: 57.982, 7.046

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Lindesnes (1915)

Light Type: Island Waypoint/ Landfall

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Although this was certainly the first lighthouse in Norway, its life was very short. After being first lit with Danish authority in 1655, it was extinguished again a year later after complaints about ineffectiveness. A new light was not shown again until 1720.

Refs: Stevenson p42; Monrad-Krohn, 1997; Bjørkhaug Vol1, p131.

Store Færder (1696)

Alternative Name: Færder

Lat/Lon: 59.065, 10.526

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Light Type: Island Waypoint/ Landfall

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Notes: A (Danish) Royal Charter of 1696 granted Jacob Wølner permission to build a lightstructure on the island of Store Færder at his own expense. He was then allowed to charge ships 2 shillings per cargo. The light was later moved to Lille Færder.

Refs: Stevenson p42; Bjørkhaug Vol1, p77.

Sweden

Nidingen (1230, 1624, 1834)

Lat/Lon: 57.303, 11.902

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1834)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Two Fire towers - Vippefyrs or swape lights

Notes: Two towers with open fires were erected here by Denmark. Jens Pedersen Groves introduces the vippefyr or lever light at various Location:s in the Kettegat from 1624 to 1629. There is no clear description of the 1624 lights but it is generally assumed that they were vippefys. The two stone towers we see today were built under Swedish administration in 1832-4. They were heightened in the 1840s and remained in simultaneous operation until 1946 when their lights were permanently extinguished as part of the transition to a single modern light in a new concrete tower built close to the others. The new lighthouse was completed and first lit in 1946-47, using a 3rd-order Fresnel lens transferred from one of the old towers.

Refs: Stevenson p41; Zemke, p26; Thunman;

Johannessen, Finn E. "Early Modern Lighting of a Main European Sea Route." *Business History* (2025) Taylor & Francis Online; Lindberg, Erik. "The Swedish Lighthouse System 1650–1890: Private versus Public Provision of a Public Good." *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 63, no. 1 (2015): 65–86.

Kullen (1230, 1563, 1585, 1900)

Lat/Lon: 56.301, 12.451

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1900)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Because of difficulty transporting large amounts of fire wood, an early vippefyr was replaced in 1563 to a low brick tower with leaded roof, glazed windows and 12 candles. A further tower was built in 1585 with a covered lantern because of poor placement of the light. Then in 1624 the light was made by burning coal.

Refs: Stevenson p41; Zemke p31; V2-11; Thunman; Hillberg (1999) p10; Hermansen (2001) p11; Admiralty List of Radio Signals 1960; Fyrbesökshandboken, Svenska Fyrsällskapet 1999.

Kolabacken (1202, 1224, 1635, 1796)

Alternative Name: Falsterbo

Location: Falsterbo at the SW tip of Scania.

Lat/Lon: 55.38333, 12.83333

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1796)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Claimed as the first lighthouse proper in northern Europe. Established by the city of Lubeck in support of Hanseatic League. Shown in winter. Falsterbo is a term that describes the wider area; Kolabacken refers to a specific site. Early lights here were probably in the general area and not in once precise place, hence are usually called Falsterbo. Kolabacken is the hill at the SW end of the peninsula. The present lighthouse at Falsterbo, on Kolabacken, was erected between 1793 and 1796 to designs by Olof Tempelman, with the light first brought into service on 20 September 1796. This new masonry tower replaced the older coal-fired vippfyr on Kolabacken, which local antiquarian tradition and the Fornsök inscription date to 1222–1796.

Refs: Stevenson p27, 41, 42; Zemke V2-11; Hague & Christie p11, Zemke p26; Thunman; Hillberg (1999) p10; "Falsterbo Fyr," *Sevärt i Skåne / Greater Copenhagen*, citing Vellinge kommun, accessed December 8, 2025; "Falsterbo Fyr – Lighthouse in Falsterbo," *Guidebook Sweden*, accessed December 8, 2025.

Ölands Södra Udde (1677, 1785, 1948)

Alternative Name: Ottenby

Lat/Lon: 56.196, 16.399

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1948)

Light Type: Waypoint/ Landfall

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: An ineffective swape light was built here. Also called "Lange Jan", with its partner "Lange Erik" as Öland's Norra Udde. Öland's Södra Udde, later known as Ottenby, was one of the most hazardous maritime headlands in the central Baltic. While no medieval or early modern masonry lighthouse is documented before 1700, the presence of the royal estate at Ottenby and the site's strategic importance make the use of open warning or signal fires highly probable from the Middle Ages onward. These fires, likely lit on simple platforms or cairns, served as hazard indicators rather than precise navigational lights. Only with the technological and administrative advances of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did Södra Udde develop into a formal lighthouse station. The present lighthouse at Ölands södra udde (Ottenby) was constructed in 1948, replacing the earlier masonry lighthouse of 1906 as part of Sweden's post-war modernisation of major Baltic navigational lights.

Refs: Sellmann, p175.

Kapelludden (13c, 1872)

Location: Oland

Lat/Lon: 56.819, 16.845

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1872)

Ecclesiastical: Yes

Light Type Harbour-focused

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Kapelludden on Öland's eastern coast represents a type of medieval maritime lighting rooted in ecclesiastical and harbour practice rather than state lighthouse administration. While no written source explicitly describes a navigational light, the presence of St. Birgitta's chapel from the thirteenth century, combined with archaeological evidence of a functioning harbour and burial ground for seafarers, makes the use of a simple open fire or lamp for nocturnal guidance highly probable. Such a light would have served as a local harbour marker rather than a long-range warning beacon. No evidence exists for the development of Kapelludden into a formal lighthouse site before or after 1700.

Landsort (13c, 1535, 1651, 1689)

Location: Öja

Lat/Lon: 58.74, 17.866

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1689)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Landsort, situated at the southern entrance to the Stockholm archipelago, is the earliest securely documented lighthouse site in Sweden. A state-maintained coal-fire beacon was established there in 1535, following earlier use of warning and signal fires in the late Middle Ages. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the light remained in continuous operation, though housed in relatively modest medieval structures supporting open fires rather than enclosed lanterns. The oldest lightstructure was a wooden tower with a light consisting of candles and a reflector, built by Johan van der Hagen. Unfortunately, after three years, it was burned down. The Swedish Admiralty took overall lights in 1652 and this was the first Swedish-built lighthouse that was not Danish built.

Refs: Stevenson pimg41, 42; Thunman; Hillberg (1999) p10; Fyrbesökshandboken, Svenska Fyrällskapet (1999).

Örskär (1686, 1740)

Lat/Lon: 60.526, 18.373

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1740)

Light Type: Island Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Örskär, situated off the Uppland coast at the northern approach to Stockholm, developed into a lighthouse site relatively late by Scandinavian standards. While earlier warning fires cannot be excluded, the first securely documented navigational light was established in 1686 as a state-maintained coal-fire beacon. This light operated continuously into the eighteenth century, when more substantial masonry lighthouse Medieval Structures were erected and later modernised. A wooden beacon with five parabolic mirrors, each with two colza oil lamps was built here. Burnt down after a lightning strike and rebuilt in stone. Reported in 1736 to have 12 rapeseed oil lamps and six polished reflectors of 60 cm diameter it was probably built with this installed. Refs: Stevenson p42; Thunman, Sellmann, p67; Hillberg (1999) p10; Admiralty List of Radio Signals 1960; Fyrbesökshandboken, Svenska Fyrällskapet (1999).

Estonia

St Olaf's Church (14c)

Location: Talinn

Lat/Lon: 59.441, 24.747

Notes C3842

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical Yes

Medieval Structure: Ecclesiastical - Built structure

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: St Olaf's Church in Tallinn functioned as an ecclesiastical navigational light rather than a purpose-built lighthouse. Its exceptionally tall tower served as a major daymark from the later Middle Ages, and comparative evidence indicates that lamps or fires were periodically shown from the tower as harbour-recognition lights for ships approaching Reval. These lights were civic–ecclesiastical in nature and should be distinguished from later state lighthouse installations such as Keri.

Refs: Carl Russwurm, *Eibofolke oder die Schweden an den Küsten Esthlands und auf Runö* (Reval: Kluge & Ströhm, 1874), vol. I.

Köpu (1531)

Alternative Name: Dagerort, Köppu, Hiumaa

Lat/Lon: 58.915, 22.2

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1531)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: One of the oldest surviving lighthouses in the world. Originally lit by coal. Altered in 1805 & 1990. Köpu lighthouse on Hiumaa represents an exceptional case in Baltic maritime history. Situated on a high inland hill commanding major shipping routes, it was conceived not as a harbour or hazard light but as a long-range landfall beacon. Construction of a massive stone tower began in the early sixteenth century and the light was first shown in 1531, making Köpu one of the earliest purpose-built lighthouses in Europe still standing. Operated initially with an open summit fire, the lighthouse remained in use throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was later modernised with an enclosed lantern and optical apparatus, while the original tower structure continued in service.

Refs: Zemke p27; Zemke, p27. Mercantile Marine Office, 1925; Stevenson, 1959; Luige, 1982; Admiralty List, 1999; Aleksejev, 2000; Eesti Tuletornid website.

Sörve (1646, 1796, 1960)

Alternative Name: Swalfer Ort, Zerel, Saaremaa

Lat/Lon: 57.91, 22.055

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1960)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Built structure with brazier

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Under Swedish administration, a state-maintained coal-fire beacon was established at Sörve in 1646, marking one of the earliest organised gateway lights in the eastern Baltic. This fire beacon remained in use through the late seventeenth century, but only in 1796 did the site receive a permanent masonry lighthouse. The current landmark, a reinforced-concrete

tower, was erected in 1960 after the destruction of the earlier lighthouse during the Second World War.

Refs: Mercantile Marine Office, 1925; Luige, 1982; Admiralty List, 1999; Aleksejev, 2000; Eesti Tuletornid website; Enn Tarvel, *Eesti ajalugu II: Eesti keskaeg* (Tallinn, 2010), for Saaremaa maritime context. Reino Pullat, *Tallinna merekaubandus ja laevandus* (Tallinn, 1999), on eastern Baltic navigation and coastal aids; Nils Erik Villstrand, *The Swedish Empire and the Baltic* (Cambridge, 2011), for Swedish-era coastal Latvia

Daugavgrīva (1205, 1650, 1721, 1819, 1863, 1921, 1957)

Alternative Name: Dunāmund

Lat/Lon: 57.061, 24.031

Notes C3526

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1957)

Ecclesiastical Yes

Light Type: Harbour light

Medieval Structure: Various fires

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Daugavgrīva, situated at the mouth of the Daugava and controlling access to the port of Riga, developed as a navigational light site in the early modern period rather than the Middle Ages. Although medieval monastic and military installations almost certainly employed signal fires for watch and control, no dedicated lighthouse is documented before the seventeenth century. Under Swedish administration, a coal-fire beacon was established at Daugavgrīva in the mid-1600s to mark the river entrance. This early river-light remained technologically simple until later Russian-period consolidation. The present lighthouse, a reinforced-concrete tower, was constructed in 1957 following the destruction of earlier structures during the Second World War.

Refs: Zemke, p27

Kaliningrad

Pillau (1306, 1724, 1813, 1953)

Alternative Name: Baltiysk

Location: Entrance to the Vistula lagoon.

Lat/Lon: 54.697, 20.911

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1953)

Light Type: Harbour light

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Pillau, at the sole outlet of the Vistula Lagoon, developed as a harbour-entrance lighting site rather than as a medieval lighthouse location. Early fires served primarily military and signalling purposes. Organised lighting began only in 1724 following improvements to the channel, and a permanent masonry lighthouse was

erected in 1813. The present lighthouse at Baltijsk is a reinforced-concrete tower constructed in 1953.

Refs: Zemke, p27; Fritz Rörig, *Vom Werden und Wesen der Hanse* (Leipzig, 1926), sections on Prussian ports and approaches; Carsten Jahnke, *The Hanseatic League* (Leiden, 2014), esp. navigation and port control in Prussia; Richard W. Unger, *Shipping and Economic Growth 1350–1850* (Leiden, 2011), Baltic lagoon entrances and port marking practices.

Poland

Weichselmunde (1482, 16c, 1698, 1894)

Alternative Name: Wisloujscie

Location: Weichselmund

Lat/Lon: 54.396, 18.679

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1894)

Light Type: Fortress Harbour light

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Lights have been shown here since before records began. Problems with silting at the mouth of the river Wisla (Vistula) caused the skippers to be unhappy about the Location: of this lighthouse and new ones were built. A lantern was shown in the tower of the fortification from 1482–1758. Weichselmünde (Wisłoujście), at the mouth of the Vistula controlling access to Gdańsk, developed as a fortified river-entrance lighting site rather than as a medieval lighthouse location. While medieval and early modern defences almost certainly employed watch and signal fires, no dedicated navigational light is documented before the late seventeenth century. A purposeful harbour-entrance light was established in 1698 within the Weichselmünde fortress, marking the transition from military signalling to navigational lighting. This light and its successors remained closely integrated with port control and pilotage until the construction of the Nowy Port lighthouse in 1894, which represents the first fully modern lighthouse tower at the Vistula mouth.

Refs: Hague & Christie p11; Zemke, p27; Ger p184–5; Lysejko, 1998.

Danzig (1341, 16-17c, 1894)

Alternative Name: Gdańsk

Lat/Lon: 54.406, 18.661

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1894)

Light Type: Harbour light

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Danzig (Gdańsk) developed as a harbour-lighting centre rather than as a lighthouse site. Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, navigation relied on quayside fires, lamps, and prominent church towers as daymarks, while entry from the open Baltic was controlled at the Vistula mouth at Weichselmünde.

Despite the city's wealth and maritime importance, no freestanding lighthouse existed within Danzig before 1700. Modern navigation is provided by an integrated system of harbour and range lights, established in its present form in the early 1950s, while the prominent nineteenth-century lighthouse serving the approach remains the Nowy Port tower of 1894.

Refs: Marian Biskup, *The History of Gdańsk* (Gdańsk, 2011), sections on port administration and river navigation; Paul Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig* (Danzig, 1913), esp. harbour and crane infrastructure; Richard W. Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy* (London, 1980), on Baltic port entry practices.

Hel (1482, 1634, 1670, 1826, 1942)

Alternative Name: Hela

Location: Entrance to the Gulf of Gdańsk.

Lat/Lon: 54.599, 18.813

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1942)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: As the port of Gdańsk grew in importance, fires were first lit on top of the parish church to guide ships around the peninsula and into port. Fires were lit on the tip of the Hel peninsula as Gdańsk grew in importance in the 16th and 17th centuries, sometimes on the top of the parish church. The present tower was badly damaged in a defensive operation in 1939 and rebuilt in 1942. When lights on the local church were felt to be unsatisfactory, a formal lighthouse was built in 1670 on the shoreline outside the village. This was known as a bliza by the local people. However, it was lit only occasionally so after a number of groundings on the sandbanks, a permanent light was demanded. This resulted in a new lighthouse to the east of the existing one and this was lit on 1st September 1790. A further stone lighthouse was built and lit in 1827 and is in use today after suffering extensive damage in WWII. While medieval seamarking relied on pilotage and occasional signal fires, a documented coal-fire navigational light was established at Hel in 1634 to assist shipping routes into and out of the gulf. This open-fire beacon remained in use through the seventeenth century.

Refs: Zemke, p27; Lysejko, 1998; Richard W. Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy* (London, 1980); Marian Biskup, *Prusy Królewskie w XIV–XVI wieku* (Gdańsk, 1959).

Rozewie (1620, 1790, 1824)

Alternative Name: Rixhöft

Location: The most northerly point in Poland

Lat/Lon: 54.83, 18.336

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1824)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: This is a confirmed medieval light site as a coastal beacon, but little is known about it. The present lighthouse came into operation on 15 November 1822, but was rebuilt several times. Rozewie, a prominent clifftop headland west of the Hel Peninsula, developed as one of the earliest long-range coastal lights on the southern Baltic. No medieval lighthouse is documented, but in 1620 an open coal-fire navigational light was established, marking Rozewie as a recognised headland beacon. This fire beacon remained in use throughout the seventeenth century, before being replaced in the late eighteenth century by a masonry lighthouse. The present lighthouse tower, substantially rebuilt and raised between 1822 and 1824, remains in service and preserves the early nineteenth-century architectural form.

Refs: Lysejko, 1998; Ryszard Mielczarek, *Latarnie morskie polskiego wybrzeża* (Warsaw, 2003), for historical tradition and early mentions; Richard W. Unger, *Shipping and Economic Growth 1350–1850* (Leiden, 2011), on Baltic headland lights and landfalls; Marian Biskup, *Prusy Królewskie w XIV–XVI wieku* (Gdańsk, 1959), for regional maritime context.

Darlowo (14c, 1885)

Alternative Name: Rugenwalde

Lat/Lon: 54.44, 16.378

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1885)

Light Type: Harbour light

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: As a port town that was important to the Hanseatic League, Darlowo may well have had a light to guide ships into port. However, this is unproven so far. Rebuilt in 1927 and heightened to 23 m. Darlowo, situated at the mouth of the Wieprza River on the Pomeranian coast, developed as a harbour-lighting site rather than as a medieval lighthouse location. Although temporary fires or lanterns were probably used in the harbour during the late Middle Ages, no dedicated navigational lighthouse is documented before 1700. Formal lighting followed only with nineteenth-century harbour engineering works, culminating in the construction of a brick lighthouse at Darłówko in 1885 to mark the river entrance. This 1885 tower, later modernised but not replaced, remains the standing lighthouse structure at the site.

Refs: Lysejko, 1998; Marian Biskup, *Prusy Królewskie w XIV–XVI wieku* (Gdańsk, 1959), for coastal and port hierarchy context; Richard W. Unger, *Shipping and Economic Growth 1350–1850* (Leiden, 2011), on minor Baltic ports and marking practices; Ewald Christiansen, *Die Schifffahrt der Ostsee* (Hamburg, 1908), for regional navigation practices (contextual).

Kolobrzeg (13-15c, 18c, 1866, 1948)

Alternative Name: Kolberg

Location: At the mouth of the river Parseta.

Lat/Lon: 54.186, 15.554

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1948)

Light Type: Harbour light

Medieval Structure: Structure with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Kołobrzeg (Kolberg), situated at the mouth of the Parsęta River, developed as a harbour and fortress port rather than as an early lighthouse site. Although medieval and early modern navigation likely relied on temporary harbour fires and pilotage, no dedicated navigational lighthouse or ecclesiastical light is recorded before 1700. Systematic lighthouse provision followed only after nineteenth-century harbour engineering, with a purpose-built lighthouse constructed in 1866. The present lighthouse tower, rebuilt in 1948 after wartime destruction, continues to mark the harbour entrance and represents the first permanent lighthouse structure to survive at the site.

Refs: Ebelt - Lighthouses of Europe, p30; Lysejko, 1998; Fritz Rörig, *Vom Werden und Wesen der Hanse* (Leipzig, 1926), on Pomeranian ports and approaches.

Carsten Jahnke, *The Hanseatic League* (Leiden, 2014), Baltic port administration; Richard W. Unger, *Shipping and Economic Growth 1350–1850* (Leiden, 2011), harbour-light practice in the southern Baltic.

Germany

Warnemünde (13c, 1772, 1897)

Location: Warnemünde

Lat/Lon: 54.16667, 12.08333

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1897)

Light Type: Harbour

Medieval Structure: Built structure

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Warnemünde's position at the mouth of the Warnow made it a critical maritime threshold for Rostock from the High Middle Ages onward. While no evidence supports the existence of a permanent lighthouse before 1700, the intensity of Hanseatic trade, combined with a hazardous and shifting approach, makes the use of temporary or situational lights highly probable. As elsewhere in the Baltic, navigational safety depended less on monumental towers than on pilots, local knowledge, and ad hoc signaling. Hanseatic commerce thus increased the likelihood of lights in practice, but delayed the emergence of a true lighthouse until the modern period.

Refs: Stevenson p27, 28; Zemke p26; V2-11; Hague p11.

Denmark

Wismar (13c)

Location: Wismar
Lat/Lon: 53.911, 11.448
Notes C1391
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical
Light Type: Harbour light
Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Wismar developed as a protected Hanseatic harbour within Wismar Bay and did not form part of the medieval or early modern lighthouse network. Throughout the Middle Ages and early modern period, navigation relied on pilotage and intermittent quayside lighting rather than on a dedicated beacon. No navigational lighthouse is documented before 1700. Modern guidance is provided by a system of harbour-entrance and range lights, established during nineteenth- and twentieth-century port development, rather than by a single lighthouse.

Refs: Stevenson p27; Hague & Christie p11; Carsten Jahnke, The Hanseatic League (Leiden, 2014), Hanseatic port administration; Richard W. Unger, The Ship in the Medieval Economy (London, 1980), harbour lighting practices; Philippe Braunstein, "Ports and Navigation in the Baltic," in The Hanseatic World (2012).

Travemünde (1226, 1539)

Location: Travemunde
Lat/Lon: 53.96667, 10.86667
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Light Type: Ecclesiastical
Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes
Notes: Marking the entrance to Lübeck, this was part of the Hanseatic League network. The first lighthouse in Germany. The earliest year when a light was shown from Travemünde was in 1226. The first record of it was in 1330. Danish troops destroyed the first lighthouse in 1534. The round brick tower that stands today completed 433 years of continuous service. This second tower was built by Dutch masons. First lit with an open wood fire, it was later changed to hemp oil lamps with gold-plated reflectors. The upper part of the tower was badly damaged in a fire from a lightning strike in 1827 and then repaired and fitted with petroleum lamps. Electrified with arc lamps in 1903, incandescent lamps were used from 1937.

Refs: Stevenson p27; Hague & Christie p11; Zemke p26; leuchtturm-travemuende.de/en

Højerup (13c-15c, 1878)

Alternative Name: Stevns Fyr
Lat/Lon: 55.281, 12.439
Notes C2099
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1878)
Ecclesiastical: Yes
Light Type: Waypoint
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Højerup, situated atop the high chalk cliffs of Stevns Klint, occupied one of the most visually prominent positions on the eastern Danish coast. The medieval church at Højerup, constructed in the thirteenth century directly above the sea, functioned as a powerful daymark for Baltic shipping. Although no medieval source explicitly records the display of a navigational light from the church, its location and comparative Scandinavian practice suggest probable intermittent ecclesiastical lighting. No formal or state-maintained beacon existed before 1700. Modern lighthouse provision began only in the nineteenth century with the construction of Stevns Fyr in 1878, which remains the active lighthouse serving this stretch of coast.

Refs: Zemke, p27

Køge (15c)

Alternative Name: St Nicholas Church
Lat/Lon: 55.457, 12.182
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: Yes
Light Type: Ecclesiastical
Medieval Structure: Ecclesiastical - Built structure
Notes: St Nicholas Church contains a small bay window where a light was placed in the 15c. In the church tower there are traces of a flue and a suspension for the lamp. Køge possessed a medieval harbour-side church dedicated to St Nicholas. While no surviving medieval source explicitly records the display of a navigational light, the site accords closely with documented Danish practice whereby town churches served as landmarks and occasionally displayed fires or lanterns to assist harbour approaches. The presence of an ecclesiastical light at Køge before the modern period is therefore plausible but not directly attested.

Refs: Zemke, p27, Hermansen, (2001), p11

Helsingør (13c, 14-15c, 15-17c, 1844)

Alternative Name: St Olai's Church
Lat/Lon: 56.0389, 12.62155
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1844)
Ecclesiastical: Yes
Light Type: Waypoint
Notes: Helsingør, located at the narrowest point of

the Øresund, developed as one of the most important navigational-lighting sites in northern Europe. From the medieval period, St Olai's Church and associated town. Medieval structures functioned as prominent seamarks, and documentary traditions indicate the display of lights for maritime traffic. With the establishment of Kronborg Castle and the Sound Dues, navigational lighting became increasingly regulated and continuous, marking the transition from ecclesiastical and municipal practice to royal control well before 1700. This long-standing function was formalised architecturally with the construction of a purpose-built lighthouse in 1844, which remains the foundation of the modern lighting system at Helsingør.

Anholt (1561, 16-17c, 1785, 1818)

Lat/Lon: 56.7374, 11.6505

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Type Island Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Structure with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Hermansen says that Anholt retained its vippefyr until 1788. He also reports that a shortage of wood caused the light to be fuelled with cod liver oil until 1606 when tallow candles were used. Anholt, an isolated island in the Kattegat lying directly on major Baltic–North Sea routes, was long recognised as a serious navigational hazard. Despite this notoriety, no ecclesiastical or state-maintained navigational light is documented before the eighteenth century. Early modern fires lit on the island were irregular and sometimes deliberately misleading and cannot be regarded as aids to navigation. Organised lighting began only in the late eighteenth century, culminating in the construction of a permanent lighthouse at Knudshoved in 1818. This tower remains the present lighthouse on Anholt and represents the transition from ad-hoc signalling to systematic state control.

Refs: Stevenson p41; Zemke p27, V2-11; Hermansen (2001) p11.

Skagen (1561, 1624-9, 1747, 1858, 1892)

Alternative Name: Scaw, Skaw

Lat/Lon: 57.729, 10.607

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1892)

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Vippefyr with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes (replica)

Notes: Hermansen says the vippefyr was retained until 1747. The first brick tower was built here in 1747.

Refs: Stevenson img41, 41; Zemke p27, V2-11; Hermansen (2001), p11.

Germany

Heligoland (1630, 1679, 1796, 1902)

Alternative Name: Heligoland

Location: Heligoland

Lat/Lon: 54.186 , 7.886

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1902)

Light Type: Island - Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Heligoland, a high and isolated island in the German Bight, functioned throughout the medieval and early modern periods as an unmistakable daylight landfall rather than as a lit navigational beacon. Despite its prominence and the acknowledged danger of surrounding waters, no contemporary medieval or seventeenth-century source records the maintenance of a navigational light or beacon on the island. Any fires shown there before 1700 must be regarded as ad-hoc and non-institutional. Heligoland entered the formal lighthouse system only in the late eighteenth century, with a regulated light established in 1796.

Refs: Stevenson p41; Zemke p51; V2-11.

Neuwerk (1310, 1558, 1644)

Location: Neuwerk. At the mouth of the River Elbe.

Lat/Lon: 53.91667 , 8.5

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1310)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Built structure with brazier

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: The burghers of Hamburg agreed in 1300 on a major project in the mouth of the Elbe. A very difficult and dangerous place for navigation, this place badly needed navigational aids, so it was decided to build a tower and a small fort on a sand island just south of the Scharhoorn Reef. A group of men would be housed here and would salvage wreck goods, rescue shipwrecked sailors, and possibly keep a signal fire on top of the tower at appropriate moments. The building was completed in 1310. The establishment of a permanent light here probably occurred in around the mid 16th century. Neuwerk, located at the outer approaches to the Elbe, represents one of the clearest and earliest examples of a medieval lighthouse in northern Europe. A massive stone tower was constructed around 1300 under the authority of the city of Hamburg, and contemporary records confirm that navigational fires were shown from the tower to guide shipping through the hazardous Wadden Sea channels. Throughout the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries the Neuwerk light functioned continuously as part of Hamburg's regulated maritime system. Unlike many offshore hazards that remained unlit before 1700, Neuwerk demonstrates that institutional support and economic necessity could sustain a true lighthouse well

within the medieval period. The medieval tower remains the core structure of the lighthouse to this day.
Refs: Stevenson p27, 28; Zemke pV2-11; Hague & Christie p11, Zemke Ger p14; Naish, 1985.

Ochsenturm (13c)

Location: Bremen
Lat/Lon: 53.615 , 8.517
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Light Type: River light, Waypoint
Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes
Notes: The Ochsenturm, erected in the thirteenth century on the Weser near Bremen, functioned as a riverine seamark and navigation control tower rather than as a coastal lighthouse. Historical sources indicate that a fire or lantern was displayed from the tower to assist vessels navigating the tidal river approaches to Bremen. Throughout the late medieval and early modern periods the Ochsenturm formed part of the city's regulated maritime infrastructure, combining navigational, administrative, and jurisdictional roles. Although later rendered obsolete by changes in river engineering and navigation practice, the Ochsenturm provides clear evidence for organised inland navigational lighting before 1700.
Refs: Zemke, p12.

Wangerooge (15c, 1602, 1856, 1969)

Location: Wangerooge
Lat/Lon: 53.789 , 7.911
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1969)
Light Type: Waypoint
Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: As ships in the German Bight steering for the Weser and the Jade rivers turned south they entered particularly difficult waters. Fires are thought to have been used here in the 15c but no documentary evidence exists. Wangerooge, a low and highly unstable East Frisian barrier island, did not develop as a navigational lighting site during the medieval or early modern periods. Despite the acknowledged dangers of the surrounding waters, no documentary evidence records the maintenance of a beacon or seamark on the island before 1700. Navigation in the Jade-Weser approaches relied instead on pilotage, daylight sailing, and shifting channel knowledge. Wangerooge entered the lighthouse network only in the nineteenth century, with the construction of a lighthouse in 1856
Refs: Stevenson p41; Zemke pV2-11; Zemke Ger p15, p83; Toussaint (2009) p26-28

Borkum (1576, 1780, 1879)

Alternative Name: Borkum Alter
Lat/Lon: 53.588 , 6.671
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1879)
Ecclesiastical: Yes
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes (1576)

Notes: Borkum, situated at the western edge of the East Frisian Islands near the approaches to the Ems, represents one of the earliest sustained navigational lighting sites in the German Bight. Originally, a fire was lit here to serve the German port of Emden. As a church it was probably an ecclesiastical light at some point. The stone tower existing today was built in 1576 but, although a significant landmark, lit only from 1817 to 1879. It was called the Whalers Church because of a fence made from the jawbones of whales. Although no medieval lighthouse existed, a purpose-built beacon tower displaying a coal or wood fire was erected on the island in 1576 to assist navigation to Emden. This light was maintained, with interruptions, throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and constitutes a genuine early modern lighthouse in functional terms. Later technological developments culminated in the construction of the present lighthouse

Refs: Zemke pV1-13, V2-11, 16; Zemke (Ger) p14; Toussaint (2009) p13-14;

Netherlands

Brandaris (1323, 1594)

Location: Terschelling
Lat/Lon: 53.36 , 5.214
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1594)
Light Type: Waypoint
Medieval Structure: Built structure
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes - 1594

The Brandaris lighthouse on Terschelling guards the principal approaches to the Zuiderzee and ranks among the most important early lighthouse sites of northern Europe. Beacon fires were maintained on the island from at least the late Middle Ages to aid navigation for shipping bound to Dutch inland ports. In 1594 these earlier structures were superseded by a purpose-built stone lighthouse tower, designed to carry a permanent coal fire. Brandaris was continuously operated throughout the seventeenth century and remains in use today, making it the oldest surviving lighthouse tower in the Netherlands.

Refs: Stevenson p26, img40; Hague & Christie p11; Zemke, p27.



the Marsdiep entrance to the Zuiderzee, developed as an early modern beacon site rather than as a medieval lighthouse location. No evidence exists for navigational lighting before 1600, but a regulated fire beacon (vuurboet) was established there in 1609 to assist shipping through the hazardous tidal approaches. Throughout the seventeenth century this beacon functioned as part of a broader entrance-lighting system supporting traffic to Amsterdam and the Zuiderzee ports. Huisduinen never acquired a permanent lighthouse tower; later navigational authority shifted toward Den Helder, where a separate lighthouse was constructed.

Refs: Hague & Christie p11; Zemke, p27.

Texel (16c, 1864)

Alternative Name: Mararmano, Manarmani

Location: Hoge Berg near Den Burg on the island of Texel

Lat/Lon: 53.04148, 4.825152

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1864)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Vuurboet

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Texel, commanding the Marsdiep approaches to the Zuiderzee, developed not as a medieval lighthouse site but as a major early modern beacon zone. From the mid-sixteenth century, regulated fire beacons (vuurboeten) were maintained on the island to assist navigation to Amsterdam and the inner Dutch ports, forming part of a coordinated gateway system together with Huisduinen, Vlieland, and the Brandaris on Terschelling. These lights persisted throughout the seventeenth century but remained structurally modest and mobile. A permanent lighthouse tower was constructed only in the nineteenth century, with the completion of the Eierland lighthouse in 1864, reflecting a shift toward open-sea coastal navigation.

Refs: Zemke p27; Hague & Christie p11, Zemke, p27

Urk (1915)

Location: Urk

Lat/Lon: 52.661, 5.592

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1915)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Built structure

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Urk, formerly an island in the Zuiderzee, functioned throughout the medieval and early modern periods as a prominent daymark rather than as a navigational lighting site. Despite continuous habitation and maritime activity, no documentary evidence records the maintenance of a beacon or navigational fire on Urk before 1700. Any fires shown on the island were incidental and locally oriented.

Refs: Stevenson p40.

Vlieland (16c, 1909)

Alternative Name: Vuurduin

Lat/Lon: 53.296, 5.058

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1909)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Vlieland functioned historically as a secondary beacon site marking the Vlie approaches to the Zuiderzee. Although no medieval lighthouse or ecclesiastical light is documented, regulated beacon fires were maintained on the island from the late sixteenth century as part of the Dutch system of navigational aids supporting intense traffic to inland ports. These early lights were modest in scale and subordinate to the Brandaris lighthouse on nearby Terschelling. A permanent lighthouse tower was only erected in the twentieth century, with the construction of the present Vlieland lighthouse (Vuurduin) in 1909.

Refs: Stevenson p40; Hague & Christie p11; Zemke, p27.

Huisduinen (1609)

Alternative Name: Lange Jaap

Location: Huisduinen, near Den Helder

Lat/Lon: 59.95222, 4.726111

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Vuurboet

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Huisduinen, located on the mainland coast near

De Ven (15c)

Location: On the headland of Enkhuizen

Lat/Lon: 52.742 , 5.282

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1700)

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Waypoint

Light Form: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: This was one of three original lights to guide ships into Amsterdam. De Ven was restored after a fire in 1834.

References: Zemke pV2-36;

Marken (1650, 1700, 1838)

Alternative Name: Paard van Marken

Lat/Lon: 52.46 , 5.139

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1839)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Private house

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: The Paard van Marken, located off the former island of Marken in the Zuiderzee, has no documented history as a navigational lighting site before the nineteenth century. Neither medieval nor early modern sources record the presence of a beacon or navigational fire at the site, despite intensive shipping in surrounding waters. Navigation relied instead on established outer beacons and pilotage. The lighthouse known as the Paard van Marken was constructed in 1839 as part of a modern programme of channel marking and represents an entirely new intervention rather than the continuation of an earlier lighting tradition.

Callantsoog (1670, 1929)

Lat/Lon: 52.835 , 4.692

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1929)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire - A firehut or vuurboet

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Callantsoog, situated on the exposed North Holland coast between Huisduinen and Texel, developed as an early modern coastal beacon site rather than as a medieval lighthouse location. From the sixteenth century onward, regulated fire beacons (vuurbaaken) were maintained on the dunes to warn shipping of the low sandy coast and to assist night navigation along the North Sea shore. These lights persisted throughout the seventeenth century but remained structurally modest due to shifting sands and redundancy with larger beacons elsewhere. A permanent lighthouse tower was constructed only in the twentieth century, with the completion of the present Callantsoog lighthouse in 1929.

Refs: Stevenson p40.

Petten (17c, 1988)

Lat/Lon: 52.769 , 4.662

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1988)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Petten, located on the exposed North Holland coast, developed as an early modern coastal beacon site rather than as a medieval lighthouse location. No evidence exists for navigational lighting before 1600, but from the seventeenth century regulated fire beacons (vuurbaaken) were maintained on the dunes to warn shipping of the low and dangerous coast. These lights were necessarily temporary and frequently relocated due to severe coastal erosion. Petten never possessed a pre-1700 lighthouse tower; the present lighthouse was constructed in 1988 following modern coastal stabilisation.

Refs: Zemke, p27

Bergen aan Zee (1670)

Location: Bergen aan Zee

Lat/Lon: 52.6605 , 4.6281

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Light Type: Waypoint and Harbour light

Medieval Structure: A firehut or vuurboet

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Bergen aan Zee, situated on an exposed section of the North Holland coast between Petten and Egmond, does not appear in medieval or early modern records as a navigational lighting site. Neither ecclesiastical lights nor regulated coastal beacons are attested there before 1700, despite intensive maritime traffic along nearby routes. Navigation relied on offshore sailing and on established beacons farther north and south. The construction of a lighthouse at Bergen aan Zee in 1922 represents a purely modern intervention rather than the continuation of an earlier lighting tradition.

Refs: Stevenson pp 40;

Egmond (15c, 1834, 1946)

Alternative Name: JCJ van Speijk

Location: Egmond-aan-Zee

Lat/Lon: 52.619 , 4.622

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1946)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Egmond aan Zee, despite its proximity to one of the most important monastic centres in medieval Holland, does not appear in medieval or early modern sources as a navigational lighting site. The Benedictine abbey of Egmond lay inland and shows no evidence of functioning as a coastal seamark or ecclesiastical light. Although fires were occasionally lit along the

coast during storms and wreck events, these lack the characteristics of regulated navigational beacons. Egmond aan Zee entered the Dutch lighthouse system only in the nineteenth century, with the construction of a lighthouse in 1834.

Refs: Hague & Christie p27; Zemke, p27.

Vijk (1670, 1875, 1951)

Alternative Name: Vijk-an-Zee

Location: Vijk aan Zee

Lat/Lon: 52.492 , 4.589

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1951)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire - A firehut or vuurboet

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: A similar situation about a firehut onshore, as at Bergen. Wijk aan Zee, situated on an exposed stretch of the North Holland coast between Egmond aan Zee and IJmuiden, does not appear in medieval or early modern sources as a navigational lighting site. Neither ecclesiastical lights nor regulated coastal beacons are attested there before 1700, and navigation relied on offshore routing and on major lights farther north and south. The site entered the Dutch lighthouse system only in the late nineteenth century with the construction of a lighthouse in 1875. That structure was destroyed during the Second World War and replaced by the present lighthouse, built in 1951.

Refs: Stevenson p40.

Noordwijk (1923)

Location: Noordwijk-aan-Zee

Lat/Lon: 52.249 , 4.434

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1923)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure:

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Noordwijk, situated on an exposed stretch of the Holland coast, does not appear in medieval or early modern sources as a navigational lighting site. Neither ecclesiastical lights nor regulated coastal beacons are attested before 1700, despite local fishing activity and frequent shipwrecks. Navigation relied on offshore routes and on major lights farther north and south. The lighthouse at Noordwijk was constructed only in 1923.

Refs: Zemke, p27.

Katwijk (15c, 1605)

Alternative Name: Calla, Lugdunum Batavorum, Brittenburg

Location: Katwijk aan Zee

Lat/Lon: 52.2002 , 4.3909

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes - 1605

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: The Romans had a lighthouse here but the tradition was kept alive by a fire shown here from 1628. The location is at one of the ancient outlets of the River Rhine. This formed the seaward end of a chain of defences created by the Romans to form the Empire's northern border. Originally Lugdunum Batavorum, it became Brittenberg in the 15th. century. Katwijk aan Zee represents one of the clearer early modern navigational lighting sites on the Holland coast. While no medieval lighthouse or ecclesiastical light is documented, regulated fire beacons were established near the river mouth by the early seventeenth century to assist vessels approaching the Rhine outlet. These lights were functionally tied to river navigation and water management and remained structurally modest and mobile. Katwijk did not acquire a permanent lighthouse tower until the modern period; the present lighthouse dates from 1950.

Refs: Zemke p21, 22, 23, 27.

Scheveningen (1636, 1875, 1951)

Location: Scheveningen

Lat/Lon: 52.104 , 4.268

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1951)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Scheveningen represents one of the clearest cases of organised coastal fire use on the Holland coast before 1700. From the late sixteenth century, fires were deliberately lit in the dunes to support fishing operations, beach landings, and local night navigation. These lights were recurrent and locally supervised but remained low in elevation and limited in range, and they were not intended as continuous aids for through-shipping. Scheveningen therefore occupies an intermediate position between incidental coastal fires and true navigational beacons, entering the formal lighthouse system only in the nineteenth century.

Refs: Stevenson p40.

Hoek Vuurtoren (1893)

Alternative Name: Hoek van't IJ, Hoge Vuurtoren

Location: Hoek van Holland

Lat/Lon: 51.98 , 4.118

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1893)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Hoek van Holland occupies the modern seaward outlet of the Maas but has no medieval or early modern history as a navigational lighting site. Before the nineteenth century the river reached the sea through

shifting and inland outlets, and the present coastline at Hoek van Holland had not yet stabilised. Consequently no beacons, fires, or ecclesiastical lights are attested at the site before 1700. The lighthouse at Hoek van Holland was constructed only after the opening of the Nieuwe Waterweg, with the first lighthouse erected in 1893 to serve the newly fixed river entrance.

Stenen Baak (1280, 14-15c, 1650) Extinguished: 1836

Alternative Name: Stenen Baak; den Briel; Helinio

Lat/Lon: 51.928 , 4.1406

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes (1280)

Notes: The Stenen Baak at Brielle represents one of the earliest purpose-built navigational light towers in the Low Countries. Constructed in stone in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, the tower was explicitly designed to display a fire marking the seaward approaches to the Maas. Documentary evidence confirms the continued maintenance and use of this light throughout the medieval and early modern periods under municipal authority. Unlike many Dutch coastal sites that relied on temporary dune fires, the Stenen Baak functioned as a permanent lighthouse-type structure well before 1700, and its medieval masonry remains incorporate within the surviving tower.

Goeree (1515, 1552, 1822)

Alternative Name: Goedereede, Westhoofd

Location:

Lat/Lon: 51.818 , 3.976

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1822)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: A stone fire beacon

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: A fire on the dunes is said to have been shown here in the 13th c. Then a fire was burned from a tower attached to a church in 1512. Zemke claims it was the first in Holland to be converted to a lighthouse in 1552. Goeree occupies a key position at the outer approaches to the Maas system and developed as a navigational lighting site earlier than most of the Holland coast. Beacon fires are recorded there by the late Middle Ages, and in 1515 a stone tower—the Westhoofd near Goedereede—was constructed explicitly to carry a permanent navigational fire. This beacon remained in active use throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries under civic and provincial supervision, functioning as a companion to the Stenen Baak at Brielle. Although the medieval tower does not survive intact, the present lighthouse on the site dates from 1822 and represents continuity of function rather than fabric.

Refs: Stevenson p26; Zemke pV1-27; V2-35.

Westkapelle (1370, 1458-70, 1875 (Lage Licht), 1906 (Hoge Licht))

Lat/Lon: 51.529 , 3.447

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1906)

Light Type: Waypoint

Medieval Structure: Beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Westkapelle, located at the western extremity of Walcheren, functioned throughout the medieval and early modern periods as a critical headland marking the southern entrance to the Scheldt. While no lighthouse tower is documented before 1700, regularly lit beacons are recorded from the sixteenth century onward, serving to warn shipping and indicate the Scheldt approaches. These fires were displayed from simple beacon structures associated with the coastal dyke system rather than from masonry towers. Westkapelle entered the true lighthouse phase only in the nineteenth century, with the construction of permanent lighthouse towers in 1875 and 1906.

Refs: Zemke pV1-26; V2-39.

Belgium

Blankenberge (1366, 1467, 1525)

Alternative Names: Wenduine

Location: Blankenberge

Lat/Lon: 51.32787 , 3.168551

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: A hut showing a light

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Blankenberge, situated on the open Flemish coast, developed historically as a fishing settlement rather than as a navigational focal point. No medieval or early modern sources report to the presence of a lightstructure, coastal beacon, or ecclesiastical light at the site before 1700. Maritime access to Flanders relied instead on inland channel systems and later on Scheldt-oriented ports. References: Stevenson p26; Zemke pV1-27, V2-34; Hague & Christie p11, 22.

Ostend (1284, 1366, 1413, 17c, 1771, 1947)

Alternative Names: Lange Nelle

Location: Ostend

Lat/Lon: 51.23333 , 2.916667

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1947)

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: A hut showing a light.

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Ostend developed as a fortified harbour town

of growing military and maritime importance from the later Middle Ages onward. While no medieval lighthouse or ecclesiastical navigational light is reported, organised harbour and military fires were in use by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, particularly during periods of intense naval activity and siege warfare. These lights were institutionally controlled and served local harbour access and operational needs rather than long-range coastal navigation. Ostend entered the true lighthouse phase only in the late eighteenth century, with the construction of a lighthouse in 1771; the present lighthouse dates from 1947.

References: Stevenson p26; Zemke pV1-26; Hague & Christie p11, 22.

Nieuwpoort (1284, 16-17c, 1841)

Alternative Names: Lombardsijde

Location: Lombardsijde, the Old Sea Dyke.

Lat/Lon: 51.155 , 2.73

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1841)

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: Local beacon

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Nieuwpoort, situated at the mouth of the IJzer, developed from the twelfth century as a planned harbour town and river outlet. While no medieval lighthouse or ecclesiastical light is documented, organised fires and lanterns were in use by the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to mark harbour access and control navigation at the river mouth. These lights were institutionally supervised and navigational in intent but remained low-level and local in range. Nieuwpoort did not acquire a true lighthouse tower until the nineteenth century, with the construction of a lighthouse in 1841 when a stone tower replaced the wooden Groote Vierbote destroyed by fire.

References: Stevenson p26, 40; Zemke pV1-26; Hague & Christie p11, 22.

Nieuwpoort West (1284) (1413)

Alternative Names: Nieuwpoort, Groote Vierboete

Location: Nieuwpoort

Lat/Lon: 51.155 , 2.73

Modern Lighthouse On Site:

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Hague says two vierboeters were built here in 1284, confirmed in 1366. Stone towers with pointed slate roofs. See text p201. Nieuwpoort, situated at the mouth of the IJzer, developed from the twelfth century as a planned harbour town and river outlet. While no medieval lighthouse or ecclesiastical light

is documented, organised fires and lanterns were in use by the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to mark harbour access and control navigation at the river mouth. These lights were institutionally supervised and navigational in intent but remained low-level and local in range. Nieuwpoort did not acquire a true lighthouse tower until the nineteenth century, with the construction of a lighthouse in 1841.

References: Stevenson p26, 40; Zemke pV1-26; Hague & Christie p11, 22; Fichou, p34.

France

Dunkerque Leughenaer (1365-6, 1402)

Alternative Names:

Location: Dunkirk

Lat/Lon: 51.0383 , 2.3775

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: A medieval octagonal decorated brick tower in the harbour.

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes (1402)

Notes: Dunkerque possessed several substantial tower structures before 1700, notably the Tour du Leughenaer (c.1400) and the Tour du Risban (mid-sixteenth century), from which fires or lights were occasionally displayed. These towers functioned as elements of the harbour's defensive and signalling system rather than as purpose-built navigational lighthouses. No evidence exists for the continuous or institutionally maintained display of a navigational light at Dunkerque

References: Stevenson p26; Hague & Christie p11, 22; Zemke, p26; Fichou, p20.

Calais - Tour du Guet (1214)

Alternative Names: Calais Beffroi

Location: Calais

Lat/Lon: 50.959 , 1.85

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: Tower with beacon fire

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: The tower is believed to have been built in 1214 as part of the town's fortifications. As its name implies, it was a watchtower for most of its existence. The light was replaced by the main Calais Lighthouse in 1848. The lantern is no longer in the tower, which is now classified as a historical monument. The Tour de Guet at Calais, erected in the thirteenth century as part of the town's fortifications, functioned as a lookout and signal tower rather than as a navigational lighthouse. Although fires or lanterns were at times displayed from its summit, these



served defensive and harbour- signalling purposes and were neither continuous nor institutionally designated for maritime navigation. No medieval or early modern sources describe the Tour de Guet functioning as a regular seamark or lighthouse.

References: Fichou, p20.

Boulogne (1c, 1825)

Alternative Names: Tour d'Ordre, Turris Ardens, Turris Ordens, Port Bononiensis, Bononia,

Location: Boulogne

Lat/Lon: 50.7334 , 1.5965

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: Octagonal stone tower with twelve reducing stages

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: This Roman lighthouse is represented by an octagonal structure of twelve reducing stages. Stevenson records that Charlemagne ordered repair in 800 and it was in regular use thereafter. The lighthouse was destroyed in 1644. Boulogne-sur-Mer is distinguished by the presence of a Roman lighthouse, the Tour d'Ordre, constructed in the early imperial period as a purpose-built navigational aid for Channel crossings. Although the tower survived as a structure into the medieval period, there is no evidence that it continued to function as a lighthouse after late antiquity. Medieval and early modern navigation at Boulogne relied instead on local harbour lights, temporary fires, and pilotage rather than on an elevated coastal beacon. The Roman tower collapsed in 1644. References: Stevenson pp 2, 11, 12, 21; Zemke pp 21, 22, 23; Hague & Christie pp 2, 7, 9, 11, De Montfaucon, Dom Bernard : L'Antiquité Expliquée et Representée en Figures, vols. 1-15, Paris (1719-1724); Bromwich, James Stephen: The Roman Remains of Northern and Eastern France; Giardina (2010), p117-119.

AL References: 250-4; 263

Dieppe (1389, 16-17c, 1775)

Alternative Names:

Location: Dieppe

Lat/Lon: 49.92 , 1.08

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1775)

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: Fire Tower

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Stevenson reports a light in 1389. Repairs carried out in 1475. Dieppe emerged from the twelfth century as one of the most active harbours on the Norman coast, yet it did not develop a lighthouse tower in the medieval or early modern periods. Navigation relied instead on organised harbour fires, lanterns on quays, and pilotage, which provided sufficient guidance for local entry while avoiding the risks and costs of fixed offshore beacons. Although lighting at Dieppe was frequent and institutionally managed, it remained harbour-scale in function and range. The port entered the lighthouse era only in the late eighteenth century, with the construction of a lighthouse in 1775.

References: Stevenson p20, 26; Hague & Christie p11.

Fécamp (11-15c, 16-17c, 1836, 1952)

Lat/Lon: 49.7674 , 0.3692

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical: Yes

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Fécamp developed from the early Middle Ages as a monastic and fishing port dominated by the abbey church of the Holy Trinity and, above the harbour, the cliff-top chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Salut on Cap Fagnet. Both buildings served as prominent daymarks, and nineteenth-century guides emphasise the chapel's value to mariners as a "point de reconnaissance" rather than as a site of night-time lighting.

Tour des Castillans (1364)

Alternative Names: Groing de Caux; Caux; Le Havre

Location: Harfleur

Lat/Lon: 49.505 , 0.1989

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: This fire tower was part of medieval fortifications on the western side of Harfleur near the old Porte aux Cerfs and close to the Lezarde river. Groing de Caux was a small village between Cap de la Heve and Harfleur. Following agreements with Spain, the king ordered locals to tend the fire. Harfleur, the principal seaport of north-western France from the Middle Ages until the sixteenth century, functioned as the inland outport of Rouen on the Seine rather than as a sea-cliff harbour. Although it possessed significant fortifications and played a major role in the Hundred Years' War, there is no evidence for a lighthouse tower, stone beacon, or ecclesiastical navigational light at Harfleur before 1700. Navigation relied on tidal pilotage and channel marks within the Seine estuary, while basic harbour lanterns and signal fires sufficed for local access. When silting rendered Harfleur increasingly impractical, royal investment shifted to the new port of Le Havre at the river mouth.

References: Stevenson p20.

Havre, Le (1540, 17c, 1775)

Alternative Names: Hève, Cap de la

Lat/Lon: 49.512 , 0.069

Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1775)

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: Grey 8-sided tower, with red top

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: Le Havre, founded in 1517 as a royal harbour at the mouth of the Seine, developed rapidly as a naval and commercial port but did not acquire a lighthouse in the medieval or early modern periods. Navigation relied on pilotage and on harbour lanterns and fires displayed from quays and fortifications, which sufficed for local access but were not intended as long-range coastal aids. Despite its strategic importance, no lighthouse tower or permanent elevated navigational light is attested at Le Havre before 1700; lighthouse construction began only in the late eighteenth

References: Stevenson p20.

St Malo (1667)

Location:

Lat/Lon: 48.649 , -2.018

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Harbour light

Light Form: White tower, with red lantern

Medieval Structure Exists: No

Notes: This light proved ineffective and was replaced

by one at Cap Frehel in 1695 Saint-Malo, despite its prominence as a medieval and early modern maritime power, did not develop a lighthouse tower before 1700. Navigation into its hazardous harbour relied on pilots and on signal fires displayed from the city's fortifications, notably the Tour Bidouane, which functioned as a watch and harbour-signalling tower rather than as a continuous navigational seamark. These lights were intermittent and situational, serving local operational needs rather than long-range coastal navigation.

References: Stevenson p36.

England

Ecrehou Reef (1309)

Location: Channel Islands

Lat/Lon: 49.283 , -1.933

Modern Lighthouse On Site: No

Ecclesiastical: Yes

Light Function: Ecclesiastical

Light Form: Ecclesiastical - Built structure

Medieval Structure Exists:

Notes: An ecclesiastical light provided by an isolated religious community.

References: Woodman, R.; Jane Wilson: The Lighthouses of Trinity House, Thomas Reed Publications (2002). ISBN: 190405000X.

France

Fréhel, Cap (1685, 1847, 1950)

Location: Côtes d'Armor

Lat/Lon: 48.684 , -2.319

Modern Lighthouse On Site:

Ecclesiastical: No

Light Function: Waypoint

Light Form: Stone tower 33 m high

Medieval Structure Exists: Yes

Notes: Fichou gives an image of this first light. By having two towers damp and dirt was excluded from keepers quarters that would have entered from the open top with the grate. Cap Fréhel served throughout the early modern period as a landmark and signalling point rather than as a lighthouse site. While warning and watch fires were almost certainly used on the headland, there is no evidence for a continuous navigational light or purpose-built lighthouse tower before 1700. The transition to true lighthouse logic occurred only in the early eighteenth century, when a state-sponsored wooden lighthouse was erected in 1702. The present lighthouse, rebuilt after wartime destruction, dates from 1950 and has no structural continuity with earlier signalling practices.

References: Stevenson p36; Fichou, p53.