# Medieval Lighthouses
## 15F - Site Survey
*by Dr Ken Trethewey*
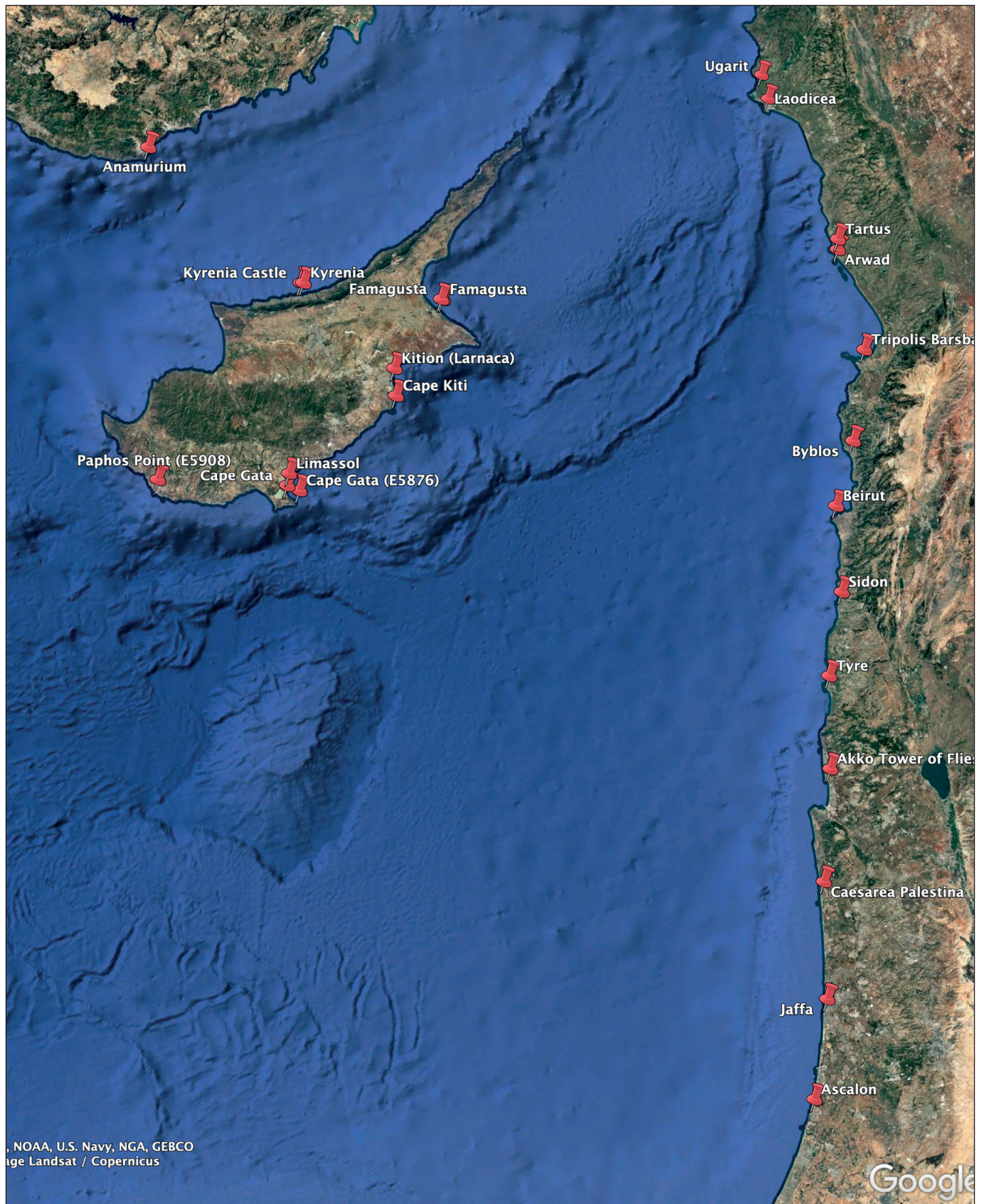
# Cyprus

### Kyrenia (15c)
Alternative Names: Cerines
Location: Girne
Lat/Lon: 35.342, 33.3216
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Beacon light
Light Form: Built structure with brazier
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes - The Round Tower
Notes: Kyrenia is the northern port below a Byzantine castle (6th–7th c.) that has been in continuous use. It was controlled by the Lusignans (1192–1489) and Venetians thereafter. The chronicle of Amadi (early 14th c.) records "la tor de lo fanal de Cerines" used to signal to St Hilarion castle. Venetian fortification plans still mark "Torre del Fanal." Foundations of a round tower found within the modern harbour wall correspond to the described location. Kyrenia is therefore a documented medieval lighthouse serving both navigational and military signalling functions.
References: Anon: Derrotero de los Mares de Levente, Biblioteca Nacional de Espana, MS2790; Amadi, Francesco. Cronaca di Cipro, ed. Luigi de Mas Latrie (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1869), 205; Cessi, Deliberazioni del Senato marittimo, 1: 417; Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Disegni di Cipro, c. 1560. P. Megaw, "The Fortifications of Kyrenia Harbour, " Annual of the British School at Athens 49 (1954): 242–60.
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: Yes; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: Yes; Genoese: No; Ottoman: Yes; Islamic: Yes; Local: Yes; Activity Index: 3

### Nea Paphos (-550, 1888)
Alternative Names: Paphon
Location: Paphos
Lat/Lon: 34.75411, 32.4106
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1888 - British)
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local lanterns and fires
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes
Notes: An important trading port in the time of Ptolemy, the confidence that it had a lighthouse like the Pharos is high. There are several possible ruined structures that might have been the lighthouse. A Greek acropolis here may also have acted as a navaid. The only documentary evidence is a light symbol on a portolano of 1339.
References: Strabo: Geographica 14, 6; Diodorus Siculus: Bibliotheca Historica 20, 49; Luke: Acts 13, 13; Antonine Itinerary; Stadiasmus: Maris Magni 272; Strabo: 14.6; Diadorus: Hist 20, 49; Luke: Acts 13, 13; Antonine Itinerary; Stadiasmus Maris Magni: 297; Giardina (2010), p70-71.
AL References: 282
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: Yes; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 3

### Cape Gata (6c, 1864)
Alternative Names: Cape Greco
Location: Akrotiri
Lat/Lon: 34.564, 33.024
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1864)
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Island - Waypoint/Landfall
Light Form: Beacon fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: There is no evidence of a lightstructure here before 1700, but the likelihood that beacon fires were lit for the waypoint cannot be excluded.
Antiquity: No; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: excluded. 0

### Limassol (7c)
Alternative Names: Lemessos, Neapolis
Lat/Lon: 34.669, 33.0353
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Limassol became Cyprus's main western port after the decline of Amathus. Crusaders landed here in 1191; the Lusignan kings developed the harbour through the 13th–14th c. A Venetian pilot book mentions "fanale di Limisso." and a Venetian Senate record gives a repair of "la torre del fanal di Limisso." Archaeological excavations in 1997 found a square tower footing (4 × 5 m) at the Old Port breakwater. No earlier Byzantine text names it, but continuous harbour occupation from 7th c. onward makes an earlier beacon plausible. Thus this is a confirmed medieval/early modern light with a possible Byzantine antecedent.
References: D. Christou, "Harbours and Seaways of Medieval Cyprus, " Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus (1997): 55–69; Cessi, Deliberazioni del Senato marittimo, 1: 311–12. Portolano di Benedetto Bordone, 1528; Venetian Sente: Senato Mar, ff. 62–63, 1514; Benedetto Bordone, Isolario di Benedetto Bordone (Venice: Nicolini da Sabbio, 1528), map 33.

Antiquity: No; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: Yes; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 3

### 🗼 Cape Kiti (1474, 1864)

Alternative Names: Meneou, Kition, Kittim, Citium, Qart Hadasht
Location: Larnaca
Lat/Lon: 34.81703, 3360296
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (1864)
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Built structure
Light Form: Tower with beacon fire
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: This is a coastal headland southwest of Larnaca, an early site of Byzantine and later Venetian watchtower. A Venetian chart (Grazioso Benincasa, 1474) marks "Capo Cito" with a tower emitting fire. A later Ottoman lighthouse sits on an earlier rubble base, identified by D. Christou in 1997. We conclude that this was a probable medieval beacon, functioning as approach light for Larnaca Bay.
References: Moscati (1988a), p152-165; Rita Farioli Campanati, I fari veneziani dell'Adriatico e dell'Egeo (Venice: Istituto Veneto, 1990), 212–15. D. Christou, "Medieval and Ottoman Lighthouses of Cyprus, " RDAC (1997): 91–103. Strabo: Geographica 14, 6; Diodorus Siculus: Bibliotheca Historica 20, 49. Grazioso Benincasa, Atlante nautico dell'Adriatico e dell'Egeo (Venice, 1474). AL References: 102, 107,
Antiquity: No; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: Yes; Genoese: No; Ottoman: Yes; Islamic: No; Local: No; Activity Index: 3

### 🗼 Famagusta (15c)

Alternative Names: Torre del Fanale, Ammochostos, Canbulat
Location: Famagusta
Lat/Lon: 35.12747, 33.94366
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Built structure
Light Form: Built structure with brazier
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes - Othello's Tower
Notes: Famagusta was a Byzantine port from the 7th c.; later expanded under Lusignan rule and fortified by the Venetians (1489–1571). Lusignan Assises of the Kingdom of Cyprus (13th c.) mention port dues "pro fanal et torres maris." There is firm documentary and structural evidence of a medieval harbour light, maintained across Byzantine–Lusignan–Venetian periods. A Genoese notarial act (Archivio di Stato di Genova, Notai Giustiniani, 1373) records sale of oil "pro lumine portus Famagoste," whilst a Venetian Senato Mar decree (1505) orders repair of "il fanale di Famagosta, alla punta della torre del mare." Archaeological remains are thought to be the base of a square tower (4.2 × 4.2 m) at the end of the Mare Gate mole and thus as a light tower base.
References: Graziani: Giovanni Mariti. Cronaca di Cipro (1472-1570). Benedetto Croce (Ed) Naples, Tipografia dell`Accademia Reale (1925); Archivio di Stato di Genova, Notai Giustiniani, vol. 237, f. 41 r (1373); Assises de Jérusalem et de Chypre, ed. Arthur Beugnot (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1843), II: 322; Roberto Cessi, ed., Deliberazioni del Senato marittimo (Venice: Deputazione di Storia Patria, 1937), 1: 245; D. Michaelides, "The Port of Famagusta in the Middle Ages, " Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus(1989): 141–52.
Antiquity: No; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: Yes; Genoese: Yes; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: Yes; Activity Index: 5

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# Syria

### Laodicea

Alternative Names: Lattakia
Location: Latakia
Lat/Lon: 35.51317, 35.76989
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Built structure with brazier
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Evidence of a harbour lighthouse appears on numerous coins. The lighthouse seems to have been a replica of the Pharos. A Syrian port south of Antioch, Laodicea flourished in Roman times. There is no firm evidence of a light maintained before c1100.
References: Zemke (1992), p10, 22, 23; Hague (1974), p2; Giardina (2010), p67-68; Strabo: Geographica 16, 2; Stadiasmus: Maris Magni 137.
AL References: 102, 286
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 3

### Tartus (Antiquity; 12c continuing)

Lat/Lon: 34.8951, 35.8743
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour and Military
Light Form: Beacon fires and local lanterns
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Tartus exemplifies a fortress-harbour lighting model in which navigational guidance was inseparable

from military control. From its Classical role as Arwad's mainland port through its Crusader zenith as Tortosa, the harbour's towers and mole provided ideal platforms for lanterns or beacon fires, regulating night entry while serving surveillance and defence. The architectural and strategic context makes functional harbour lighting overwhelmingly likely, positioning Tartus as one of the most credible Syrian mainland sites for sustained pre-modern navigational light use.

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: Yes; Genoese: navigational light use. No

Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: Yes; Activity Index: 3

### Arwad (Antiquity continuing)

Lat/Lon: 34.8567, 35.8571
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Island fortress
Light Form: Beacon fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Arwad represents the clearest Syrian example of an offshore beacon site, where topography and military occupation combined to make fire- based signalling both inevitable and durable.The island's function as a fortified maritime hub makes the sustained use of beacon and watch fires overwhelmingly likely. In contrast to Cyprus's largely harbour- bound lights, Arwad demonstrates a more strategic, island-based lighting approach, shaped by surveillance and defence as much as by navigation.

Antiquity: No; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 1

## Lebanon

### Barsbay Tower (Antiquity continuing)

Alternative Names: Bersbey, Tower of Lions
Location: Tripoli
Lat/Lon: 34.4498, 35.8305
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Fortified harbour light
Light Form: Beacon fires and local lanterns
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes
Notes: Tripoli exemplifies the Levantine civil-harbour lighting tradition, distinct from both offshore beacon islands and tightly integrated fortress-ports. From its Phoenician origins through Crusader, Mamluk, and early Ottoman phases, the harbour at El Mina required consistent visual guidance across a shallow, exposed coastline. The evidence supports the long-term use of harbour-mounted fires or lanterns, administered

locally and pragmatically, rather than any monumental lighthouse establishment. Tripoli thus reinforces the pattern observed at Latakia: quiet continuity of functional lighting, essential to navigation yet largely invisible in the monumental record. The Barsbay tower is likely to have been a significant lightstructure for navigation.

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: Yes; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 4

### Byblos

Lat/Lon: 34.1223, 35.6427
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local lanterns
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Byblos illustrates the non-inevitability of navigational lighting, even at one of the Mediterranean's oldest ports. Its long maritime history unfolded within a navigational culture that privileged daylight sailing, small-scale harbour geometry, and local knowledge, rather than permanent night guidance. Unlike later Roman and medieval ports shaped by artificial basins and state-managed traffic, Byblos never generated the institutional or architectural conditions that produced sustained harbour lights or lighthouse towers. Its importance to lighthouse history lies precisely in this absence, demonstrating that maritime antiquity alone did not give rise to navigational lighting.

AL References: 96-7, 101-3, 105

Antiquity: No; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 3

### Beyrouth, Ras (Antiquity continuing)

Location: Beirut
Lat/Lon: 33.9, 35.4699
Modern Lighthouse On Site:
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local lanterns and fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Beirut represents the clearest Levantine case for sustained, institutional harbour lighting before 1700. Unlike Byblos or Ugarit, Berytus possessed the urban scale, administrative continuity, and engineered harbour works that elsewhere consistently generated routine navigational lights, even in the absence of monumental lighthouse towers. From the Roman period through Crusader and Mamluk phases, Beirut's harbour lighting is best understood as a continuous, utilitarian practice, embedded in civic and military infrastructure rather

than expressed through a single iconic structure.
AL References: 103
Antiquity: No; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: Yes; Activity Index: 3

### Sidon (Classical continuing)
Alternative Names: Sidon Sea Castle
Lat/Lon: 33.5672, 35.371
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Fortified structure
Light Form: beacon fires and local lanterns
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes - Sidon Sea Castle
Notes: Sidon represents a transitional lighthouse culture on the Phoenician coast. While early Phoenician navigation did not institutionalise permanent night lights, the city's dual harbours, reef-strewn approaches, and later Roman and medieval harbour engineering created strong practical incentives for harbour-mounted lighting. From the Roman period onward, Sidon likely maintained routine navigational lights, integrated into fortifications such as the Sea Castle, without developing a monumental lighthouse tradition. Sidon thus bridges the gap between Byblos's minimal lighting regime and the more institutional harbour lighting evident at Beirut and Tripoli.
AL References: 45, 96, 97, 100-3
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: lighting evident at Beirut and Tripoli. No Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: Yes; Activity Index: 5

### Tyre (Antiquity continuing)
Lat/Lon: 33.2686, 35.1959
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Waypoint and Harbour light
Light Form: Beacon fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Tyre represents the clearest Levantine case for long-term continuity of navigational lighting, driven by geography rather than ideology. From its origins as an offshore island city to its later artificial harbours formed by Alexander's causeway, Tyre consistently presented complex, hazardous approaches that strongly favoured the use of beacon fires and harbour- mounted lights. The cumulative evidence across Phoenician, Roman, and medieval phases supports a model of persistent, utilitarian lighting, embedded in harbour and fortress architecture. Tyre thus stands at the apex of the Phoenician coast's lighting logic, where island morphology, harbour engineering, and institutional continuity converged, but without a specific light structure.

AL References: 4, 21, 96-103, 107-10, 113, 118, 120, 139
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: Yes; Activity Index: 5

# Israel

### Ake (12c continuing)
Alternative Names: Akko, Acre, Ptolemais (Greek), Antiochia Ptolemais, Tower of Flies
Location: Acre
Lat/Lon: 32.91863, 35.0723
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Beacon fires
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes - Tower of Flies ruin.
Notes: Acre is a focus of Crusader navigational lighting practice. Unlike earlier Phoenician or Roman ports, the Crusader harbour at Acre operated under explicit military and administrative control, making regulated night lighting a functional necessity rather than a convenience. The likely use of a harbour-mouth light on the Tower of Flies marks a decisive step toward institutionalised harbour lighting, even though this did not take the form of a freestanding monumental lighthouse. Acre thus stands as the clearest Latin antecedent to later early modern harbour-light systems in the eastern Mediterranean. It reputedly served as a lighthouse, reported by Naish to be an early light. Its origins are ancient and it may have components built in Phoenician times. The Tower of Flies was a medieval guard tower or fort at Acre. It overlooked the harbour from a small island and protected maritime trade. Part remains today.
References: Naish (1985).
AL References: 286
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: remains today. No Venetian: Yes; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 5

### Caesarea Maritima (-22 to -10 continuing)
Alternative Names: Drusion, Druseion, Drusus tower, Caesarea Maritima, Caesarea Palestina
Location: Caesarea
Lat/Lon: 32.50343, 34.88813
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light/ fortified structure
Light Form: Local fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No - underwater ruins
Notes: The location was originally founded by the

Phoenicians, and Caesarea became the most important port in Judea. Herod redeveloped the site into the great port of Sebastos. All that remains are archeological and underwater. Herod's grand project here resulted in a significant harbour construction with a pharos called Drusion. It probably provided lights into the 8th c making it the most long-lasting formal structure, apart from the Alexandrian Pharos. Several towers were built, the tallest being a replica of the Pharos. There are good indications of two lighthouses on moles marking the entrance to the port. The tower known as Drusion was probably developed on the the site of Straton's Tower. After major coastal erosion occurred the harbour was destroyed by earthquakes and storms.

References: Zemke pp 16, 22, 23; Hague & Christie p2; Vann, Robert L.: The Drusion - A Candidate for Herod`s Lighthouse at Caesarea Maritima. International Journal of Nautical Archaeology, Vol. 20 No.2 (1991), pp123-139; Oleson: Building for Eternity; Giardina (2010), p63-65; Strabo: 16.4; Josephus Flavius: Guerre 1, 21; Antiquities 2, 2 and 15, 9; Stadiasmus Maris Magni: 272.

AL References: 235, 286

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 4

### Stratonos Pyrgos (-330)

Alternative Names: Straton`s Tower, Caesarea Maritima, Caesarea Palestina
Location: Caesarea
Lat/Lon: 32.50151, 34.89132
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Built structure
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: This early lighthouse was made redundant by Herod's redevelopment of the port. The new lighthouse known as Drusion became the main harbour light. Built on the site of the ancient pagan city of Pyrgos Stratonos (Straton`s Firetower). A major port established by Herod the Great with at least one lighthouse modelled on the Pharos of Alexandria. In 134 AD the town was renamed Casarea Palestina.

References: Zemke pp 16, 22, 23; Hague & Christie p2; Giardina (2010), p63-66; Raban, Avner; Kenneth G. Holum: Caesarea Maritima - A Retrospective After Two Millennia. (Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui), Brill, Netherlands (1996). ISBN: 9789004103788; Strabo: 16.4; Josephus Flavius, Guerre, 1, 21 and Antiquites, 2, 2 & 15, 9; Luke, Acts, 18.22 and 21.8; Stadiasmus, 272.

AL References: 287

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 2

### Jaffa (12c diminishing)

Lat/Lon: 32.0536, 34.7492
Modern Lighthouse On Site:
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Military and signalling
Light Form: Local fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Jaffa exemplifies a beacon-based navigational regime tailored to an inherently dangerous roadstead. Unlike Acre or Caesarea, the site's geology precluded the development of harbour-mounted lights, forcing reliance on intermittent beacon fires and visual signals that communicated conditions rather than providing pilotage. During the Crusader period in particular, such signalling was indispensable for coordinating arrivals at the principal maritime gateway to Jerusalem. Jaffa thus highlights an important distinction in pre-modern lighting practice between guiding entry into engineered harbours and managing risk at exposed anchorages.

Antiquity: No; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: Yes; Genoese: No; Ottoman: Yes; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 2

### Ascalon (12c diminishing)

Alternative Names: Ashkelon
Lat/Lon: 31.6828, 34.5583
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local lanterns
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Ascalon represents the extreme militarisation of coastal lighting on the Crusader frontier. Lacking a true harbour, the city did not support navigational lights in the pilotage sense; instead, its fires functioned as beacons of surveillance and warning, tightly integrated into fortress defence. In contrast to Acre's regulated harbour lights and Jaffa's risk- management beacons, Ascalon's lighting regime was fundamentally strategic rather than navigational, illustrating how the function of coastal lights could shift decisively under conditions of sustained warfare.

Antiquity: No; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 1

# Egypt

## 🟩 *Damietta (1650)*

Location: At the Damietta mouth of the Nile, now removed from the sea.
Lat/Lon: 31.69829, 31.07843
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: River navigation
Light Form: Local lanterns and fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Damietta illustrates a distinctly Egyptian mode of navigational lighting, shaped by the challenges of river-mouth navigation rather than open-sea landfall. Before 1700, lighting here functioned primarily as a tool of regulation and control, marking channels, signalling access, and coordinating defence, rather than guiding ships from afar. In contrast to Alexandria's monumental lighthouse, Damietta relied on small-scale, locally managed lights, embedded in fortifications and river infrastructure. The site thus demonstrates how Egyptian lighting practice diversified according to environment, producing a spectrum that ranged from the symbolic and monumental to the pragmatic and highly situational. There are suggestions that lightstructures were built here but no evidence has yet been found. Mention of a Nile light in a medieval diary. Probably a vippefyr with an oil lamp.
References: Stevenson p31, img32; Naish, John M: p17. ISBN: 0540073091. Pliny the Elder: The Natural History 5, 10 & 6, 26; Findlay 1861.
AL References: 287
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 2

## 🟩 *Rosetta*

Lat/Lon: 31.4791, 30.3667
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: River navigation
Light Form: Local lanterns and fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Rosetta exemplifies the non-monumental, regulatory strand of Egyptian navigational lighting. Before 1700, lights at the western Nile mouth were not intended to draw ships from the open sea, but to manage entry into a shifting and hazardous river channel. As at Damietta, lighting functioned as a tool of port control, embedded in fortifications and customs infrastructure and maintained by guards and officials rather than specialist keepers. Rosetta thus reinforces the contrast within Egypt itself: alongside Alexandria's iconic lighthouse tradition existed a quieter, adaptive system of riverine lights, equally essential but fundamentally different in form and purpose.
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 2

## 🟦 🗼 *Alexandria (280 BCE) (-280, antiquity continuing)*

Alternative Names: Pharos, Portus Magnus
Location: Alexandria
Lat/Lon: 31.21418, 29.88568
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Waypoint and Harbour light
Light Form: Built structure with beacon fire
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great as a focus for traffic into and out of Egypt via the River Nile. This was the first lighthouse of its kind, this was a monumental building and famous engineering achievement. It was originally on the site of Fort Qaitbey. The Pharos continued its major role as a lighthouse throughout the Dark Ages and probably into the 11th c. Remained operational well into the Islamic period; repaired by early caliphal authorities (e.g., by the 8th–10th c). One of world's busiest harbours it was maintained by state-level authority (Caliphate) and later the Mamluks.
References: Empereur (1998); Clayton (1988b);

Stevenson pp 2, 5, 8, 9, 11; Zemke pp 11, 12, 13, 17, 22,; Hague & Christie pp 2, 9, 11, 63-4, Empereur, Jean-Yves: Le Phare d' Alexandrie, La Merveille Retrouvée, Découvertes Gallimard (1998) 112pp. (In French). ISBN: 9782070303793; Clayton, Peter A.: The Pharos At Alexandria; Thompson, DJ: "The Pharos, " in Alexandria and the Ancient World (2010).

AL References: 135-196

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: Yes; Greek Classical: Yes; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 6

# Libya

## 🗼 Apollonia (-632, antiquity to 12c, 20c)

Alternative Names: Cyrene, Kyrene, Cyrenaica
Location: Susah, Susa, Soussa, Sozousa, Shahhat
Lat/Lon: 32.90587, 21.97231
Modern Lighthouse On Site: Yes (20c)
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Built structure with brazier
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Founded by Greeks from Thera, Apollonia was the ancient port serving Cyrene, now a UNESCO World Heritage site at Shahat in Libya. One of the five pentapolis cities of Cyrenaica. Confidence is high for a lighthouse here but it may have been post-Pharos that significant structures were built. Much of the ancient site is now underwater. The ancient lighthouse is thought to have been located on a small island remaining just offshore. As a strong Byzantine port this site is a good candidate for having lights until the 7th century. Apollonia exemplifies the Hellenistic–Roman harbour-light tradition of Cyrenaica: practical, locally administered, and architecturally modest. Serving as the maritime gateway to Cyrene, its rocky approaches and engineered harbour works strongly favour the use of harbour-mounted fires or lanterns, maintained as part of ordinary port operations rather than as monumental statements. The site's later abandonment underscores a recurring pattern in lighthouse history: navigational lighting endured only as long as the harbour and its institutions survived, disappearing rapidly once urban continuity was broken.

References: Laronde, André: Apollonia de Cyrénaïque. Archéologie et Histoire, Journal des savants, no 1 (1996), pp3-49; Muckelroy, K.: Archaeology Under Water - An Atlas of the World`s Submerged Sites, London, (1981). Giardina (2010), p55; Strabo: Geographica 17, 3; Stadiasmus: Maris Magni

AL References: 262-3, 288

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: Yes; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 5

## 🗼 Ptolemais (-252)

Alternative Names: Barce, Barca, Barraca, Tolmeta, Tolmeita, Tulmaythah, Tolemaide
Location: Ptolemais, Tolmeita
Lat/Lon: 32.71524, 20.94503
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Built structure with brazier
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: A typical sheltered ancient harbour has been found to the east of a headland in this town. Originally known as the harbour at Barca. Ptolemais became a city under the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt, famous for medicinal herbs. The city was a major urban centre in late Antiquity and there was a substantial harbour that continued in use into the Byzantine period. Port lights are probable here. The latest research suggests that the modern lighthouse was built on top of the ancient tower on the headland in this port. Ptolemais represents the typical Hellenistic–Roman harbour-light model in Cyrenaica: navigational lighting integrated quietly into planned urban and harbour infrastructure, without architectural monumentality or textual emphasis. As a provincial capital with an engineered harbour on a rocky coast, the city almost certainly maintained routine harbour fires or lanterns as part of ordinary civic administration. Its later abandonment reinforces a consistent pattern across the Mediterranean: lights endured only where cities and ports endured, disappearing rapidly once institutional maintenance collapsed.

References: Yorke, Robert A.; David P. Davidson: The Harbour at Ptolemais - Hellenistic City of the Libyan Pentapolis. The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology (2017).

AL References: 230-1, 286

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 4

## Berenike (-500, antiquity continuing to 12c)

Alternative Names: Berenice, Euesperides, Hesperidae
Location: Benghazi
Lat/Lon: 32.1245, 20.0637
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local lanterns
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: A Roman signal station may have exhibited a

light. Berenice was a prosperous city under the Romans and remained inhabited into Byzantine times. It may have shown lights in the early centuries after the fall of Rome. First colonized by the Greeks around 500 BCE, the city became known as Euesperides, one of the five important cities. (Pentapolis) in Cyrenaica - the others being Cyrene and its port Apollonia, as well as Taucheira (Tocra) and Ptolemais (Barca). Possible reactivation after 1100. Berenice illustrates how harbour morphology directly shaped lighting practice in Cyrenaica. Unlike the rocky, mole- defined ports of Apollonia and Ptolemais, Berenice's lagoonal harbour favoured low-level, adjustable lights marking channels and anchorage rather than fixed beacons visible from afar. This adaptive approach aligns closely with Roman navigational pragmatism and anticipates later river-mouth lighting regimes in Egypt. Berenice thus completes the Cyrenaican picture by demonstrating that, even within a single region, navigational lighting diversified according to local environmental constraints, while remaining institutionally modest and embedded in ordinary port administration.

AL References: 153, 287

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: Yes; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 5

### Leptis Magna (193)

Alternative Names: Lepcis Magna
Location: Lebdah, Labdha, 130 km east of Tripoli
Lat/Lon: 32.63786, 14.30007
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Built structure with brazier
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: There is a long tradition of a port at this site from Phoenician times and through the Roman period. There may have been several lighthouses here but there is no doubt of at least one in Roman times (2-3rd c.), remains of which can still be seen. Though once an important site, its value diminished due to silting and lights were not likely after the 6th c. Leptis Magna demonstrates the limits of Roman lighthouse monumentalism. Despite possessing one of the largest and most ambitious harbours in Roman Africa, the city never developed a freestanding lighthouse comparable to Alexandria. Instead, navigational lighting remained embedded, utilitarian, and environmentally constrained, tailored to a silting river-mouth harbour where near-field guidance mattered more than distant visibility. The site thus reinforces a central theme of Mediterranean lighthouse history: monumental lights were exceptional political statements, not the inevitable outcome of harbour scale

or imperial investment.

References: Stevenson pp 2; Zemke pp 16, 22, 23; Hague & Christie pp 2, 66; Giardina (2010), p53-55; Vann, Robert L.: The Drusion - A Candidate for Herod`s Lighthouse at Caesarea Maritima. International Journal of Nautical Archaeology, Vol. 20 No.2 (1991), pp123-139; Pliny the Elder: The Natural History 5, 4.

AL References: 288

Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 5

### Tripoli (14c)

Lat/Lon: 32.9, 13.2018
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local lanterns and fires
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Tripoli marks the reconnection of the Mediterranean lighting network west of Cyrenaica. Unlike Leptis Magna, whose harbour ambitions collapsed under environmental pressure, Oea/Tripoli combined a viable anchorage with uninterrupted urban and administrative continuity. This allowed harbour-based navigational lighting to persist, adapt, and ultimately intensify under medieval and Ottoman regimes. Although never monumentalised in the Alexandrian sense, Tripoli's lights exemplify a durable, institutionally embedded harbour-light tradition, restoring continuity to the North African coast and enabling the westward transmission of navigational practice into Ifriqiya and beyond.

AL References: 103, 232, 233, 288

Antiquity: No; Phoenician: No; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: No; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: Yes; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 2

### Sabratha (-750)

Alternative Names: Sabrata, Abrotonon
Location: 65 km west of Tripoli.
Lat/Lon: 32.80816, 12.48225
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local lanterns
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: Archaeological investigations of partly-submerged remains have been interpreted as a lightstructure. The port was much used in Roman times and almost certainly had a light-tower. An ancient city established by the Phoenicians, there is a substantial amount of archaeological remains of the old port underwater, between the beach and an offshore reef. The value of

Sabratha as a port declined significantly after the Roman Empire fell and the likelihood of lights being shown here is slight after the 6th c. Sabratha illustrates a crucial negative case in Tripolitania: a city of remarkable Roman urbanism that never generated a sustained navigational lighting tradition. Its open roadstead, limited harbour engineering, and early abandonment meant that any coastal fires were episodic and informal, rather than routine harbour lights. In contrast to Tripoli's continuity and Leptis Magna's infrastructural ambition, Sabratha demonstrates that urban monumentality alone did not produce lighthouse culture; sustained lighting required viable harbour morphology and long-term institutional maintenance.

References: Di Vita, A.: Sabratha. In: Libya, the Lost Cities of the Roman Empire, Cologne (1999), p146-175. Giardina, p52-3, 218; Dallas and Yorke (1968); Pliny the Elder: The Natural History 5, 4; Pseudo-Scylax: Periplus.
AL References: 288
Antiquity: No; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: No; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 3

# Tunisia

### Hadrumetum (-330, 859)

Alternative Names: Adrymetum, Honoriopolis, Justinianopolis
Location: Sousse, Susa
Lat/Lon: 35.82832, 10.64029
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local fires
Medieval Structure Exists: Yes - Khaled Tower
Notes: An original Phoenician colony from the 9th c. BCE, Adrumeto pre-dated Carthage. It stands on present-day Sousse. The city allied itself with Rome during the Punic wars and escaped major damage. This was an important port under the Byzantines who were used to displaying lights and so we might consider this a likely site well into the 7th c. Strong but circumstantial evidence suggests the use of lighthouses here over a long period. The Kasbah of Sousse features an old tower, the Khalaf al-Fata tower (or Khaled tower) built in the 9th century (859 CE) by the Aghlabids. This medieval tower served as a lookout and signaling light (beacon) for sailors, acting as a lighthouse in conjunction with the city's Ribat. Foucher found archaeological remains that he proposes to be a lighthouse. Hadrumetum exemplifies the quiet continuity of harbour lighting in Ifriqiya. From its Punic and Roman foundations through Late Antique survival and Islamic transformation, the port sustained routine, low-scale navigational lighting, embedded in quays, towers, and later the ribat of Sousse. Unlike Alexandria or even Carthage, Hadrumetum never monumentalised its lights; instead, it demonstrates how effective maritime guidance could be maintained through institutional continuity and architectural reuse, with lights managed by port officials, soldiers, and religious-military personnel rather than specialist lighthouse keepers.

References: Foucher, L; Hadrumetum, Paris (1964); Giardina (2010), p52.
AL References: 289
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 5

### Carthago (Antiquity to 12c)

Alternative Names: Karthago, Latomiae, Hermaia, Carthage
Location: El-Haouaria
Lat/Lon: 36.84198, 10.328
Modern Lighthouse On Site: No
Ecclesiastical: No
Light Function: Harbour light
Light Form: Local fires and lanterns
Medieval Structure Exists: No
Notes: There are suggestions that lighthouses were built by the Carthaginians, but there is no evidence in their culture for specific lighthouse structures. Despite its destruction in Roman times Carthage was always a strategic location and so in Byzantine times it probably used harbour lights for navigation purposes into the 7th c. Carthage represents a distinct alternative to the Alexandrian lighthouse model. Its maritime power rested on a system of enclosed, highly regulated artificial harbours. Across Punic, Roman, and Late Antique phases, Carthaginian lighting was almost certainly routine, controlled, and embedded in harbour architecture, maintained by naval personnel, port officials, and later civic or ecclesiastical authorities. The site demonstrates that even the most powerful maritime states did not inevitably monumentalise navigation lights; where harbour geometry allowed close control, distributed, low- visibility lighting proved sufficient and durable. The continuous Mediterranean lighting system effectively ends at Carthage. West of this point, lights become episodic, strategic, and non-institutional, marking a real boundary in the history of pre-modern navigation.

References: Zemke (1992), p16, 22, 23; Hague (1974), p2.
AL References: 95-103, 111-33, 289-300
Antiquity: Yes; Phoenician: Yes; Greek Colony: No; Greek Classical: No; Roman: Yes; Byzantine: Yes; Venetian: No; Genoese: No; Ottoman: No; Islamic: Yes; Local: No; Activity Index: 5