

Luna Shipwrecks and the UWF Luna Colony Claim

Contact Archeology Inc.

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Recently John Worth of the University of West Florida (UWF) posted an article on his faculty homepage. He stated that:

“The discoveries made at the site of the Luna settlement signify that the two shipwrecks previously discovered in Pensacola Bay were wrecked at the anchorage for the entire Luna fleet.”

Worth is incorrect for a number of reasons concerning his statement. The shipwrecks off Emanuel Point in Pensacola Bay were not anchored based on the research by State Archeologists from Tallahassee as well as UWF marine archeology colleagues of Worth. The shipwrecks could have blown onto the sand shelf from their anchorage anywhere in Pensacola Bay. The anchorage of the shipwrecks of the Luna fleet has not been found, despite the claim by John Worth. Even his own colleagues refute his claim:

“The ship had grounded violently during a severe storm on a shallow bar” (Smith 2009:pg. 79).

“While the locations of these vessels in the same vicinity may suggest that others lie nearby, it still cannot be determined if they were blown to this location by the hurricane, or grounded near their anchorage” (Cook 2009: pg. 98).

The 16th-Century Spaniards also refute Worth’s statement:

“The wind blew ... for twenty-four hours, snapping the moorings of the ships ... there came up from the north a fierce tempest, which, blowing for twenty-four hours from all directions ... did irreparable damage to the ships of the fleet ... all the ships which were in this port went aground” (Priestley 1928: Vol. II, pg. 245).

“... the most terrible storm and the wildest norther that men have ever seen (struck the fleet). As if the cable(s) were string and the anchors were not iron, the force of the wind destroyed them” (Padilla 1596).

The statements of Worth are obviously over ambitious. John Worth has no proof that the shipwrecks off Emanuel Point were located at the anchorage of the Luna fleet. No mariner would ever anchor ships on or near a shallow sand shelf. Galleons, Carracks (Nao), and Caravels of the 16th-Century drafted approximately 10 to 15 feet of water. Consequently, the ships had to have deeper water for anchorage to allow for tides and swinging on their anchor lines with the winds and currents.

Neither has John Worth discovered archeological features such as numerous Spanish burials, structures, and firehearths that would prove the location of the Luna Colony at the terrestrial East Pensacola Heights Site (personal communication, John Worth, 2019) yet UWF continues to disseminate inaccurate articles and lectures.

UWF has a time-honored academic responsibility to present accurate data to their students as well as to the public who pay their salaries. They should do so ... immediately.

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2009 *Luna’s Ships: Current Excavations on Emanuel Point II and Preliminary Comparison with the First Emanuel Point Shipwreck.*
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Smith, Roger

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