



Office of the
Prime Minister

REMARKS TO THE OPENING OF “LUCAYANS: THE VALOR OF THE VANQUISHED” EXHIBIT

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POMPEY MUSEUM
BAY STREET**

12 OCTOBER 2022

The Valor of the Vanquished

Ladies and Gentlemen. We gather here today on a seminal occasion.

Today, we unveil the exhibition: "Lucayans: The Valor of the Vanquished."

On this day 530 years ago, Cristobal Colon, a Genoese explorer in the Castilian crown's employ, drove a sword into the earth on a tiny island called Guanihani, here in The Bahamas. He declared the land property of the Spanish crown and renamed it San Salvador (Holy Saviour). This single act marked the *fons et*

origo for Western Expansion and new world capitalism. Unfortunately, this came at the terrible expense of many peoples.

When Columbus and his crew came on that first voyage, he was discovered by what he described as a "peaceable" people who welcomed them warmly. These Lucayan people, he said, had a primitive culture, and no religion. They, according to his records, were sub-human savages, fit for enslavement. But in truth, the Lucayans were a complex people who were skilled sportsmen, fishermen, hunters, farmers.

Within 30 years of his first contact, these native people of The Bahamas were all killed, or decimated by diseases like smallpox.

Contrary to long-standing narrative, the Lucayan people did not simply lie down and allow themselves to be expunged. These people were in truth, a valorous people who fought bravely to the bitter end.

Today many of us stand here, as people whose story in this Western world began with forced migration and enslavement. We are not the autochthonous people of this land; we inherited

this land, and as people who now claim this earth as our own, we have a duty to honour, and remember its original inhabitants.

This exhibit highlights the importance of preserving the cultural legacy of the Lucayan people, and of rewriting historical inaccuracies.

The Lucayans have left an enduring Legacy for The Bahamas. The names of islands such as Inagua, Mayaguana, and Exuma bear Lucayan origins. Words such as barbeque, hammock and pepper pot originated with the indigenous Lucayan people. Speaking of pepper pot, while

the ingredients used in the original pepper pot have certainly changed over time, the concept and style of stewing with peppers such as bird and bell peppers remains.

So too, has our penchant for consuming seafood, like fish and conch. It was the Lucayans who discovered conch, now our national food!

Though vanquished and all but vanished, the Lucayans have left a tremendous legacy through their artifacts. These artifacts on display in Pompey Museum speak to a

civilization that coexisted with nature, who created amazing masterpieces in clay, stone and wood.

These were a proud people who discovered The Bahamas long before Europeans did. The Lucayans deserve to be celebrated and recognized for their accomplishments.