Eduardo Matos Moctezuma to Deliver Lecture in Cambridge on April 10

Cambridge, MA – March 19, 2018. Harvard University is honored to welcome Professor Eduardo Matos Moctezuma on April 10, 2018 to deliver the lecture, “Eduardo Matos Moctezuma Discovers Himself: Excavations of the Great Aztec Temple,” at 6 pm at the Geological Lecture Hall (24 Oxford Street). This is the first lecture on campus as part of the five-year Eduardo Matos Moctezuma Lecture Series; the inaugural lecture in the series was delivered at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City this past October and was covered extensively by the press. With the Eduardo Matos Moctezuma Lecture Series, Harvard seeks to celebrate the excellence of Mexican archaeology and history and aims to build and strengthen existing educational and research ties with Mexico. In subsequent years, other world-renowned experts on pre-Hispanic Mexico will be chosen to deliver the Matos Moctezuma lectures in Mexico City in the fall and at Harvard in the spring.

The Eduardo Matos Moctezuma Lecture Series is made possible thanks to the generosity of José Antonio Alonso Espinosa and the initiative of Davíd Carrasco, Neil L. Rudenstine Professor for the Study of Latin America at the Department of Anthropology and Harvard Divinity School. This is the first such series to be named after a Mexican in Harvard’s nearly 400-year history. It is the product of almost four decades of close collaboration between Professors Matos and Carrasco on the excavation and research projects surrounding the Templo Mayor at Tenochtitlan. The Lecture Series comes out of collaboration among the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies offices in Cambridge and Mexico City, the Harvard Divinity School, and the Moses Mesoamerican Archive and Research Project.

The lecture this April will be hosted by the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. A livestream will be available on the Facebook page of the Harvard Museums of Science and Culture. As a prelude to Professor Matos Moctezuma’s lecture, program attendees are invited to a special presentation at 5 pm in the Ocarinas of the Americas exhibit, located on the 3rd floor of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Musician and anthropologist José Cuellar, who curated the exhibit of these ocarinas, will speak about this collection of indigenous instruments that featured prominently in rituals of pre-Hispanic societies, including the Aztecs and Maya. The exhibit will be on display and open to the public until June.

On the day following the lecture, April 11, Dean David Hempton of the Harvard Divinity School and Professors Carrasco and Matos will unveil a painting by celebrated
Mexican-American artist George Yepes, commissioned to honor Professor Matos and symbolize the lecture series. The painting, “Caballero Águila,” or “Eagle Warrior,” is inspired by images related to Matos’ work at the Templo Mayor. An original copy of the painting was presented to Matos as a gift during the inaugural lecture in Mexico in October. The original painting was acquired by Harvard Divinity School and will be unveiled during a ceremony featuring Yepes himself at HDS’s Andover Hall (45 Francis Avenue) at 2 pm on April 11.

“Last year the Divinity School marked the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Next year (2019) the School will remember an even more significant 500th anniversary for the future of religion and culture in the Americas, namely the beginning of the beginning of the ‘great encuentro’ between the Spaniards and the Aztecs in Mexico,” said Harvard Divinity School Dean David N. Hempton. “This painting symbolizes the scientific and cultural findings that Eduardo Matos Moctezuma has painstakingly uncovered, which has led to the development of new knowledge about a flourishing Aztec civilization before the arrival of the Spanish in 1519. We are excited and honored to have it here on display at HDS. George Yepes’ brilliant work, in addition to the inauguration of an important new lecture series, celebrates our growing ties to Mexico and Latino America. Having this beautiful painting here reminds us about the importance of the connections we are making between our School and Mexican cultural institutions.”

Eduardo Matos Moctezuma is considered a national treasure of Mexico and Professor Emeritus at the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH) in Mexico City. He received a master’s degree in Anthropological Sciences from ENAH and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Beginning in 1978, Professor Matos coordinated the Templo Mayor Project, which revolutionized understanding of the religious and political character of the Aztec empire. He has taught at ENAH since 1968 and also teaches at the Escuela de Restauración, Conservación y Museografía “Manuel Castillo Negrete.” He has been honored by universities and governments in Latin America, Asia, and Europe. Matos has given over 1000 public lectures, and among his most prominent books are Muerte a filo de obsidiana; Life and Death in the Templo Mayor; Teotihuacan: The City of Gods; The Aztecs; El Templo Mayor de Tenochtitlan; La casa prehispánica; Las piedras negadas; and Estudios mexicas.