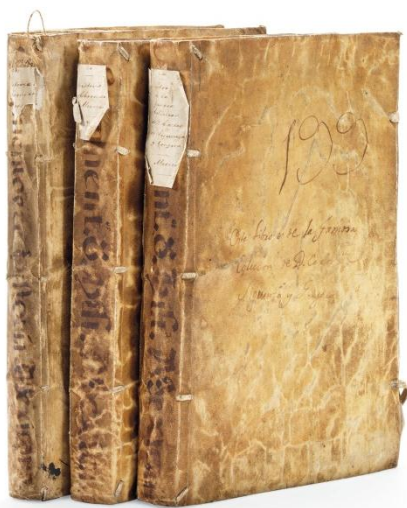


# CHRISTIE'S

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## 17TH CENTURY MANUSCRIPT DETAILING EARLY HISTORY OF AZTEC NATION MAKES A CELEBRATED RETURN TO MEXICO

- **THE CODEX CHIMALPAHIN, A HANDWRITTEN, THREE-VOLUME MANUSCRIPT, TO GO ON PUBLIC DISPLAY IN MEXICO BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 18**
- **CHRISTIE'S FACILITATED THE PRIVATE PURCHASE OF THE CODEX FOR MEXICO EARLIER THIS YEAR**



**New York/London** – Christie's is pleased to support the return of the Codex Chimalpahin to Mexico, where it will go on public display at the Museo Nacional de Antropología beginning today, September 18. The three volumes of hand-written, indigenous accounts vividly document the history of Aztec Mexico in Pre-Hispanic and 16th Century New Spain. It was returned to Mexico in a private sale facilitated by Christie's earlier this year.

The Codex will go on public view at the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City from September 18, 2014 until 11 January, 2015 as part of the exhibition *Codices de Mexico, Memorias y Saberes*. The Codex takes its place among the most important archives in the Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia and in the future will be made available for further

study by scholars.

**Steven Murphy, Christie's Chief Executive Officer**, commented: *"This is a superb outcome and we are proud to have assisted in securing the long term future of this important historic manuscript. Christie's welcomes the opportunity to discuss matters relating to cultural property and while this is often a highly complex area, we have successfully found solutions which have resulted in the return of important objects. We are working increasingly regularly with clients, cultural organizations and governments on such matters."*

INAH (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia) contacted Christie's in May of this year, prior to the London auction in which the Codex was originally consigned, to make a private offer. The manuscripts had been long part of the archives of the British and Foreign Bible Society who were very supportive in helping facilitate the return of this historic object to Mexico. The negotiations were co-ordinated by Martin Wilson, Chairman of Christie's Cultural Property Committee, Gabriela Lobo, Christie's Managing Director in Mexico, and Margaret Ford, Christie's International Head of Books.

The manuscripts contain largely unpublished, original indigenous accounts written in the hands of two of the great figures of the time – Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin (also known as *"runs Swiftly with a Shield / Rises Like an Eagle"*) and Fernando de Alva Ixtlixochitl – concerning native life, society and politics in pre-Hispanic and 16<sup>th</sup> century New

Spain. Written in Nahuatl (Aztec) and Spanish, they were part of the famed library of Don Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, historian, poet and cartographer and one of the first great intellectuals born in the Spanish viceroyalty of New Spain.

The Codex Chimalpahin was officially welcomed back to Mexico as part of a ceremony on September 17 that also celebrated the 75th anniversary of the INAH and the 50th anniversary of the Museo Nacional de Antropología. The ceremony, which included an unveiling and celebration of the Codex's return, was attended by public officials representing the President of the Republic (see [related INAH press release](#)). The acquisition increases Mexican bibliographic heritage and represents the first repatriation of a founding document of the nation.

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#### About Christie's

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Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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*Images available on request*

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