

# MANUEL MEDRANO

PhD student, Department of History  
Harvard University  
Robinson Hall, 35 Quincy Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

<http://medranomanuel.com/>

[mmedrano@g.harvard.edu](mailto:mmedrano@g.harvard.edu)

 0000-0001-8931-4281

---

## EDUCATION

- 2022 – PhD in Latin American History, Harvard University
- Fields: Colonial & Modern Latin America, Global History of Science, Book History, History of Philology.
- 2022 MPhil in Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews
- 2019 BA in Applied Mathematics, Harvard University, *magna cum laude* with highest honors. Minor in Archaeology.

## BOOKS

- 2021 *Quipus. Mil años de historia anudada en los Andes y su futuro digital*. Lima: Planeta
- Nominee, 2022 Peruvian National Literature Prize, non-fiction category.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES (\* = PEER-REVIEWED)

- In press \**“How Can Data Science Contribute to Understanding the Khipu Code?”* *Latin American Antiquity* (1st author, with Ashok Khosla).
- 2024 \**“A New Naming Convention for Andean Khipus.”* *Latin American Antiquity* (corresponding/5th author, with Carrie J. Brezine, Jon Clindaniel, Ivan Ghezzi, and Sabine Hyland). <https://doi.org/10.1017/laq.2023.71>.
- 2021 \**“Khipu Transcription Typologies: A Corpus-Based Study of the Textos Andinos.”* *Ethnohistory* 68(2): 311–341. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-8801912>.

- 2021 \*"Testimony from Knotted Strings: An Archival Reconstruction of Early Colonial Andean Khipu Readings." *History and Anthropology* 32(3): 289–311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2020.1854749>.
- 2018 \*"Toward the Decipherment of a Set of Mid-Colonial Khipus from the Santa Valley, Coastal Peru." *Ethnohistory* 65(1): 1–23 (*1st author*, with Gary Urton). <https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-4260638>.

#### BOOK CHAPTERS (\* = PEER-REVIEWED)

- 2023 \*"The 'Paper Khipus' of the Early Colonial Andes." In *Bookkeeping Without Writing: Early Administrative Technologies in Context*, edited by Lucy Bennison-Chapman, 200–230. Leiden: Netherlands Institute for the Near East [[link](#)].
- 2023 "The Khipu in Tawantinsuyu." In *The Inka and Their Tawantinsuyu: The Land of Four Quarters*, edited by Izumi Shimada, 307–317. Beijing: Cultural Relics Press [in Chinese].
- 2020 "Información sobre tributos en un documento colonial y en un archivo de khipus del Valle del Santa, Perú." In *Khipus*, edited by Cecilia Pardo, 146–159. Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima [[link](#)].

#### REFERENCE SOURCES

- Under contract "Andean Khipus." In *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of World Textiles III: Non-Wovens*, edited by Elena Kanagy-Loux, Muhammad Tausif, and Tracy Cassidy. London: Bloomsbury (*1st author*, with Sabine Hyland).
- 2023 "Quipu." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Latin American Studies*, edited by Ben Vinson. New York: Oxford University Press (*1st author*, with Galen Brokaw). <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199766581-0175>.

#### BOOK REVIEWS

- 2024 "Reading the Illegible: Indigenous Writing and the Limits of Colonial Hegemony in the Andes" by Laura León Llerena. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 104(1): 123–124. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-10942921>.

#### POPULAR AND WEB

- 2024 "Historical Notes: Numerical Knots on Andean Quipus." *Mathematics Today* 60(1): 22–24. Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, February.

- 2023 “Collecting History.” *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*. David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies [\[link\]](#).
- 2022 “Keys to Mathematical Treasure Chests: Andean Khipus.” *Convergence* 19. Mathematical Association of America [\[link\]](#).
- 2022 “¿Hacia el quipu digital?” *Jugo de Caigua* [\[link\]](#).
- 2021 “What Do We Know About Khipus? / ¿Qué sabemos sobre los khipus?” *Google Arts & Culture* [\[link\]](#).
- 2018 “The Khipu Code: The Knotty Mystery of the Inkas’ 3D Records.” *Aeon Magazine* (1st author, with Gary Urton) [\[link\]](#).

#### AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS (\* = EXTERNAL)

- 2023 \*Bernard Amtmann Fellowship, Bibliographical Society of Canada.
- 2023 Clive Fellowship Research Funds, History Department, Harvard University.
- 2023 Jens Aubrey Westengard Research Grant, Harvard University.
- 2023 Summer Research Travel Grant, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University.
- 2022 \*Co-Investigator, Quipu Research Grant, Google Inc. (with Sabine Hyland).
- 2022 Graduate Prize Fellowship, Harvard University.
- 2021 \*Short-Term Research Grant, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) [canceled due to COVID-19].
- 2020 \*Santander and St Leonard's Postgraduate College Research Mobility Award, University of St Andrews [canceled due to COVID-19].
- 2019 \*Marshall Scholarship, Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission.
- 2019 Thomas T. Hoopes Prize, Harvard University (for undergraduate thesis).
- 2019 Captain Jonathan Fay Prize, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University (awarded to the Hoopes Prize recipient with most outstanding undergraduate thesis).
- 2019 \*Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha Iota Chapter.
- 2019 \*Rhodes Scholarship Finalist, Rhodes Trust.
- 2018 Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science Research Scholarship, Harvard University.
- 2017 Detur Book Prize (highest academic standing).

- 2017 John Harvard Scholar (highest academic standing).
- 2017 Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science Research Scholarship,  
Harvard University.

#### INVITED TALKS AND COLLOQUIA

- 2023 “Aritmética en los quipus: Nuevos datos de Montreal.” Facultad de Letras y Ciencias Humanas, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Peru, 25 August [online, [link](#)].
- 2023 “Contabilidad (y más) en los quipus.” El Rincón de Pacioli lectura series, Facultad de Ciencias Contables, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, 28 June [online, [link](#)].
- 2023 “New Horizons in Bibliography: The Andean Khipu.” Cambridge Bibliographical Society, Cambridge, England, 8 June.
- 2023 “Avances recientes en el estudio del quipu.” IV Cielo Virtual de Charlas Arqueológicas, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, 28 April [online, [link](#)].
- 2023 “¿Hacia el quipu digital?” Inaugural lecture of the Laboratorio de Humanidades Digitales de la Facultad de Letras y Ciencias Humanas, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima, 5 April [online, [link](#)].
- 2023 “Reflections on Structure in Andean Khipus.” European Textile Network Conference, *Codes: Stories in Textiles*, Łódź, Poland, 3 March [online].
- 2022 “A Survey of Andean Knotted String Records in the Open Khipu Repository.” Uppsala University Centre for Integrated Research on Culture and Society Conference, *TextWorlds: Digital Perspectives on the Composition and Distribution of Writing from the Ancient World*, Uppsala, Sweden, 16 June.
- 2022 “Quipus: aproximaciones al corpus.” Sociedad Peruana de Epistemología y Lógica International Conference, *Día Mundial de la Lógica / Inceptiones et Receptiones 2022: Tras el rastro de la lógica, la razón y las matemáticas*, Lima, Peru, 14 January [online].
- 2021 “Knot Just Numbers: Mathematics and More in Andean Khipu Strings.” British Society for the History of Mathematics (BSHM) Annual Gresham College Lectures, *Numbers in Different Languages and Cultures*, London, England, 20 October [[link](#)].
- 2021 “Corpora of Knotted Cords: Inka-style Khipus in the Digital Age.” Uppsala University “TextWorlds” Seminar, *Khipu Record-Keeping in the Andes*, Uppsala, Sweden, 31 March [online].

- 2021 “The ‘Paper Khipus’ of the Early Colonial Andes.” Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO) Annual Conference, *Bookkeeping Without Writing: Early Administrative Technologies in Context*, Leiden, the Netherlands, 5–6 February [online].
- 2020 “Andean History in Knotted Cords: Khipu Decipherment from the Past to the Future.” University of Exeter Centre for Latin American Studies and Digital Humanities Lab, Exeter, England, 21 October [online].
- Ad hoc Presentations to undergraduate courses at Georgetown, Vanderbilt, NYU Gallatin, Scripps College, and CUNY Hunter College.
- 2019 “Detecting Memory in Transcribed Cords: A Computational Reconstruction of Early-Colonial Khipu Narrations.” Fyssen Foundation Colloquium, *Enacting Social Memory: Cognition, Image-Making and Ritual Action*, Paris, France, 7 December.
- 2018 “Khipu Histories: Giving the Inkas Their Own Voice.” Ethnological Society of Hannover and Lower Saxony State Association for Prehistory, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover, Germany, 21 August.
- 2018 “The Santa Valley Khipu: Directions for Decipherment of Colonial Khipus.” Dumbarton Oaks Pre-Columbian Studies Program Colloquium, *Sign Formations in Wari, Inka, and Colonial/Republican Khipus: The State of Understanding in 2018*, Washington D.C., 3 August.

## CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2024 “Refining Khipu Chronology via Bayesian Modeling: New Radiocarbon Evidence from the ‘Santa Valley Archive.’” Institute of Andean Studies Annual Meeting, Berkeley, CA, 12–13 January (2nd author, with Ivan Ghezzi).
- 2023 “Internal Arithmetic in Khipu: Where Do We Go from Here?” Boundary End Archaeology Research Center Symposium, *Symmetry, Repetition, and Pattern Recognition in Andean Khipus*, Barnardsville, NC, 8–14 August.
- 2021 “‘As if their knots were letters’: Uncovering Analogy in Colonial Accounts of Andean Khipu Mathematics.” British Society for the History of Mathematics and La Société Canadienne d’Histoire et de Philosophie des Mathématiques Joint Conference, *People, Places, Practices*, St Andrews, Scotland, 12–16 July [online].
- 2021 “Distant Testimony: Considering Khipu-Based Evidence in Early Colonial Andean Court Transcripts.” Association of Social Anthropologists Annual Conference, *ASA2021: Responsibility*, St Andrews, Scotland, 29 March – 1 April [online].

## OTHER TALKS

- 2023 “Paper Khipus: Colonial-Era Transcriptions of Inka and Post-Inka Khipus.” Boundary End Archaeology Research Center Symposium, *The Andean Khipu: Current Knowledge After a Century of Scholarship*, Asheville, NC, 12 August.
- 2021 “Conversatorio sobre *Quipus*.” Presentation of *Quipus* (Planeta, 2021). In conversation with Alejandro Neyra. *Planeta* and *Buensalvaje*, 30 November [online, [link](#)].
- 2021 “Nueva interpretación de los quipus.” Invited Presentation of *Quipus* (Planeta, 2021). In conversation with Ulla Holmquist. *Hay Festival*, Arequipa, Peru, 7 November [online].
- 2021 “Presentación de *Quipus*.” Book launch event for *Quipus* (Planeta, 2021). In conversation with Rafael Dumett. *Planeta*, 28 October [online, [link](#)].
- 2021 “Quipus: Estado de la cuestión.” Huaycán Cultural Series, *Charlas Culturales*, Huaycán, Lima, Peru, 23 October [online, [link](#)].
- 2021 “El estudio de los khipus coloniales: físicos, transcritos y digitales.” Museo de Arte de Lima Online Public Program for Exhibition: *Khipus. Nuestra historia en nudos*, Lima, Peru, 17 February [online, [presentation](#), [paper](#)].
- 2020 “Displaying the Large Basel Khipu: Social Memory in String.” Invited Public Lecture at the Museum der Kulturen, Basel, Switzerland, 2 September [canceled due to COVID-19].
- 2020 “El khipu digital: estudios de cuerdas andinas por medio de la tecnología moderna.” Exhibition Opening at the Museo de Arte de Lima, Peru, 20 March [canceled due to COVID-19].

## LANGUAGES

Spanish: Native

German: Reading & B1 speaking

Portuguese: Reading

Quechua: Elementary

Latin: Elementary

## DIGITAL HUMANITIES AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Analytical: R (primary), Python, SQL

Markup: HTML, XML, LaTeX

Teaching: Mathematics and Statistics Tutor, University of St Andrews Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development (2019–2021); Mathematical Economics Tutor, Harvard University Bureau of Study Counsel (2017–2019)

Employment: Research Assistant, Harvard University Dept. of Anthropology (2016–2019)

## MUSEUM AND EXHIBITION WORK

- Ad hoc      Quipu-related consultations for specimens in Bryn Mawr College Library Special Collections (2023), Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University (2023).
- 2020      Associate Specialist for Museo de Arte de Lima Exhibition: *Khipus. Nuestra historia en nudos*. Public program contributor ([paper](#) and [recording](#) of talk).

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND MENTORSHIP

- 2023 –      Co-convener, Harvard Andean Working Group.
- Ad hoc      Manuscript Reviewer: *Current Anthropology* (2023), *Latin American Antiquity* (2024), Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos (2023).
- 2023 –      Resident Tutor, Mather House, Harvard College.
- 2022 –      Organizing Committee, Harvard Council on Digital Education and Scholarship.
- 2021 –      Advisory Board Member, Open Khipu Repository.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6908343>.

## CONFERENCE AND PANEL ORGANIZATION

- 2023      Co-organizer, Boundary End Archaeology Research Center International Symposium, *Symmetry, Repetition, and Pattern Recognition in Andean Khipus*, Barnardsville, NC, 8–14 August.

## INTERVIEWS AND PRESS

- 2022      “Khipu Transcription Typologies.” Podcast interview with Rebecca Dufendach. *New Work in Ethnohistory*, October [[link](#)].
- 2021      “The Khipu Keepers / Los guardianes de los khipus.” *Google Arts & Culture*.  
<https://artsandculture.google.com/project/khipus>.
- 2021      “¡Somos libros, seámoslo siempre!”: recuento de las publicaciones peruanas más destacadas de 2021 [We are Books, Let’s Always Be: A Recap of the

- Most Outstanding Peruvian Publications of 2021].” *Revista Caretas*, 26 December.
- 2021 “El enigma de los quipus andinos, cada vez más cerca de ser descifrado [The Enigma of the Andean Quipus, Ever Closer to Being Deciphered].” Interview for *EFE Noticias*, 29 November.
- 2021 “Intérprete de los quipus [Quipu Interpreter].” Interview for *La República*, 28 November.
- 2021 “*Quipus*, libro de Manuel Medrano.” Interview for *Radio Filarmonía*, 26 November.
- 2021 “Investigación: los quipus son una tecnología administrativa de altura [Research: Quipus Are a High-Level Administrative Technology].” Interview for *Diario El Peruano*, 23 November (syndicated by *Agencia Andina* 24 November).
- 2021 “EntreLibros: Quipus.” Interview for *Radio Nacional del Perú*, 21 November.
- 2021 “El matemático de Harvard que desanuda mil años de historia de los Quipus e imagina su futura decodificación [The Harvard Mathematician Who Unravels a Thousand Years of Quipu History and Imagines Their Future Decipherment].” Interview for *El Comercio*, 16 November.
- 2021 “Muchos españoles veían a los incas como analfabetos porque los quipus no coincidían con lo que ellos entendían como escritura [Many Spaniards Saw the Incas as Illiterate Because the Quipus Did Not Match What They Understood to be Writing].” Interview for *BBC Mundo*, 7 November.
- 2021 “Perú, nudo indescifrable [Peru, An Indecipherable Knot].” *El Comercio* (El Dominical), 31 October.
- 2021 “Der geheime Code der Inka: Ist das Rätsel der Knotenschrift bald entschlüsselt? [The Secret Code of the Incas: Is the Riddle of Knot Writing Soon to be Deciphered?].” Interview for *Der Tagesspiegel* (Berlin), 2 May.
- 2019 “Der vergessene Code der Inka: Im Reich der Knotenschnüre [The Forgotten Code of the Incas: In the Empire of Knotted Cords].” Podcast interview for *Deutschlandfunk*, German National Radio, 25 December.
- 2019 “Se plantean nuevas hipótesis para la interpretación de los quipus [New Hypotheses are Proposed for the Interpretation of Quipus].” *El Comercio*, 25 August.
- 2019 “Révélations monumentales [Monumental Revelations].” Television documentary feature on *RMC Découverte*, 21 July.
- 2019 “Reading Between the Lines.” *Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences*, 22 January.



- 2019 “Short Stuff: Khipu.” *iHeartRadio: Stuff You Should Know* podcast, 2 January.
- 2018 “How to Read Inca.” *New Scientist*, 29 September.
- 2018 “De mystérieuses cordelettes incas enfin décryptées [Mysterious Inca Cords Finally Deciphered].” *Science & Vie*, 15 February.
- 2018 “Los quipus incaicos guardan mucho más que solo números [Inca Quipus Hold Much More than Just Numbers].” *El Mercurio*, 5 January.
- 2017 “Harvard Student Cracks Incan Code.” Radio interview with Ari Shapiro. *National Public Radio: All Things Considered*, 28 December.
- 2017 “Harvard Undergrad Cracks Code of Knotted Inca Rope Used as ‘An Ancient Excel Spreadsheet.’” Radio interview with Helen Mann. *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: As It Happens*, 28 December.
- 2017 “Harvard Student Helps Crack Mystery of Inca Code.” *Boston Globe*, 26 December.
- 2017 “The College Student Who Decoded the Data Hidden in Inca Knots.” *Atlas Obscura*, 14 December.
- 2017 “Un estudiante de Harvard logra descifrar seis quipus [A Harvard Student Succeeds in Deciphering Six Quipus].” *El Comercio*, 2 September.
- 2017 “Voices from the Incas’ Past.” *The Harvard Gazette*, 25 August.