

MANUEL MEDRANO

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EDUCATION

- 2022 – PhD in Latin American History, Harvard University
 - Exam fields: Colonial & Modern Latin America, Global History of Science, Book History, History of Philology.
- 2024 MA in History, Harvard University
- 2022 MPhil in Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews
- 2019 BA in Applied Mathematics, Harvard University
 - *Magna cum laude* with highest honors in field. Minor in Archaeology.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Harvard University

- 2025 Head Teaching Fellow, History of Modern Latin America, spring. Instructed by Kirsten Weld.
- 2024 Head Teaching Fellow, “Texts in Transition” (history of writing/book history survey), fall. Instructed by Ann Blair and Leah Whittington

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 **“String Theories: Astral Numerology, Scientific Internationalism, and Inca Quipu Decipherment at the Göteborg Museum, Sweden.” *Isis: A Journal of the History of Science Society* 117(2).

- In press “Schreiben mit verknoteten Schnüren? Ein peruanisches Quipu im Landesmuseum Hannover.” *Die Kunde. Zeitschrift für niedersächsische Archäologie* 73.
- 2025 **“Indigenous Accounting and Exchange at Monte Sierpe (‘Band of Holes’) in the Pisco Valley, Peru.” *Antiquity* (5th author, with Jacob Bongers, Chris Kiahtipes, David Beresford-Jones, Jo Osborn, Ioana Dumitru, Christine Bergmann, José Román, Carito Tavera Medina, Henry Tantaleán, Luis Huamán Mesía, and Charles Stanish). <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2025.10237>.
- 2024 **“How Can Data Science Contribute to Understanding the *Khipu* Code?” *Latin American Antiquity* (1st author, with Ashok Khosla). <https://doi.org/10.1017/laq.2024.5>.
- 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)

- In press **“Internal Arithmetic in Khipus: Where Do We Go from Here?” In *Symmetry, Repetition, and Pattern Recognition in Andean Khipus*. Barnardsville: Boundary End Archaeology Research Center.
- In press **“Refining the Absolute Chronology of Khipus via Bayesian Modeling: New Evidence from the ‘Santa Valley Archive.’” In *Symmetry, Repetition, and Pattern Recognition in Andean Khipus*. Barnardsville: Boundary End Archaeology Research Center (2nd author, with Ivan Ghezzi, Dominika Sieczkowska-Jacyna, Fiona Petchey, Alan G. Hogg, Andrés Chirinos Rivera, and Alcides Alvarez).
- 2023 **“The ‘Paper Khipus’ of the Early Colonial Andes.” In *Bookkeeping Without Writing: Early Administrative Technologies in Context*, edited by Lucy Bennis-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

- 2025 “Who Wrote in the Inka Empire?” *Pasts Imperfect*, 28 August [[link](#)].
- 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)

- 2025 John H. Coatsworth Latin American History Fellowship
- 2025 *American-Scandinavian Foundation Fellowship
- 2024 Pre-dissertation Summer Research Grant, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.
- 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].
- 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.

INVITED TALKS AND COLLOQUIA

- 2025 Co-instructor, Dumbarton Oaks Graduate Student Museum Study Day, *Eleven Hundred Years of Writing Without Words: The Dumbarton Oaks Khipu Collection*, Washington D.C., 21 November.
- 2025 “Khipus prehispánicos: El estado de la cuestión.” Keynote lecture for *Khipus: Registro, análisis y puesta en valor de una herramienta de gestión del periodo prehispánico*, Universidad del Pacífico, Lima, Peru, 24 September [[link](#)].
- 2025 “Keeping Count with Knotted Strings: Quipus and Histories of Inca Numeracy.” University of Graz Department of History Roundtable, *Tally Sticks: Forgotten Media of Culture?* Graz, Austria, 10–12 April.

- 2024 “Quipus, matemáticas y ciencia de datos: Nuevos avances en la tipología y el desciframiento.” Viernes Arqueológicos, Museo de Arqueología y Antropología, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Peru, 21 June [[link](#)].
- 2024 “Los quipus: Archivos y testimonios de la historia andina y colonial.” Keynote address, I Encuentro de Archivos y Archiveros Andinos, Archivo General de la Nación and Gobierno Regional, Cusco, Peru, 11 June.
- 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 lecture 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 Ciclo 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

- 2025 “History from Knotted Strings: Quipus, Inca Numeracy, and Accounts of Andean Conquest.” History of Science Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, 13–16 November.
- 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 Khipus: 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].

CONFERENCE AND PANEL ORGANIZATION

- 2025 Co-organizer, Harvard-Yale-Brown Book History Graduate Conference, *Collecting and Recollecting*, New Haven, CT, 5 May.
- 2023 Co-organizer, Boundary End Archaeology Research Center International Symposium, *Symmetry, Repetition, and Pattern Recognition in Andean Khipus*, Barnardsville, NC, 8–14 August.

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

French: Reading

Portuguese: Reading

Swedish: 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).

2023–2024 Graduate student co-curator for Harvard Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments exhibit, *Measuring Difference*.
▪ Joint winner, 2024 Exhibiting Excellence Prize, large exhibition category, British Society for the History of Science.

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

Ad hoc Manuscript reviewer for *Science Advances* (2024, 2025), *Current Anthropology* (2023), *Latin American Antiquity* (2024), *AlterNative* (2025), Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos (2023).

- 2023 – Co-convener, Harvard Andean Working Group.
- 2024–2025 Graduate student co-convener, Harvard Early Modern History Workshop.
- 2023–2025 Resident Tutor, Mather House, Harvard College (Non-Resident Tutor since Fall 2025).
- 2022–2023 Organizing Committee, Harvard Council on Digital Education and Scholarship.
- 2021 – Advisory Board Member, Open Khipu Repository.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6908343>.
- 2021 – Affiliate, Khipu Field Guide. <https://khipufieldguide.com/>.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Bibliographical Society of America
- History of Science Society
- Asociación de Historia de la Medicina Peruana

INTERVIEWS AND PRESS

- 2025 “Who Made These Knotted Records During the Inca Empire?” Interview for *NPR*, 13 August.
- 2025 “A Single Lock of Hair Could Rewrite What We Know About Inca Record-Keeping.” Interview for *Science Magazine*, 13 August.
- 2025 “Unraveling the Secrets of the Inca Empire.” Interview for *The Atlantic*, 26 May.
- 2024 “The Australia Museum’s Machu Picchu and Golden Empires of Peru Exhibition Shows Complex Accounting Devices.” Interview for *The Australian Financial Review*, 21 November.
- 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: Will the Enigma of Knot Writing Soon 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. *NPR: 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.