

Mackinley “Mack” FitzPatrick

Anthropology Ph.D. Candidate

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

South America (Andes); Record Keeping Systems (Khipu); Chaîne Opératoire; Computational Archaeology; Ancient Media; Fiber Technologies

EDUCATION

- 2020– Ph.D., Anthropology, Harvard University.
Dissertation (working title): *Structure of the Khipu Code: A Chaîne Opératoire Approach to Understanding Inka-Style Khipus*.
- 2022 M.A., Anthropology, Harvard University.
- 2020 B.A., Computer Science (with a minor in Archaeology), Harvard University.

PUBLICATIONS

Articles (* = peer-reviewed)

- 2024* **FitzPatrick, Mackinley**. “New Insights on Cord Attachment and Social Hierarchy in Six Khipus from the Santa Valley, Peru.” *Ethnohistory* 71(4):443–469.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/00141801-11266328>.
(Recognized by *Ethnohistory* as one of the journal’s five most-read articles of 2024)
- 2022* Hammer, Emily, **Mackinley FitzPatrick**, and Jason Ur. “Succeeding CORONA: declassified HEXAGON intelligence imagery for archaeological and historical research.” *Antiquity*:1–17. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2022.22>.
- In press* Beck, Jess, Rowan Flad, Bridget Alex, Ari Caramanica, Andre Costopoulos, Nicholas C. Kawa, Ben Marwick, Christina Warinner, Dana Bardolph, Lewis Borck, Kristina Douglass, Alan Farahani, **Mackinley FitzPatrick**, Lars Fogelin, Laura E. Heath-Stout, Scott Hutson, Matthew Magnani, Natalia Magnani, Ana Cecilia Mauricio, Lisa Overholtzer, Matthäus Rest, Daniel Scott Souleles, and Renata Verdun da Silva Carmo. “Changing the Landscape of Archaeological Publishing.” Accepted to *Current Anthropology* on July 16, 2024.

In press* **FitzPatrick, Mackinley.** “Knot Tricks: What Mathematical Knot Theory Can Reveal about the Structure of Khipu Knot Encoding.” Accepted to *Latin American Antiquity* on August 2, 2025.

Book Chapters

In press **FitzPatrick, Mackinley.** “Primary Questions: A Survey of Inka-Style Khipu Primary Cords.” In *The Andean Khipu: Current Knowledge After a Century of Scholarship*, edited by Kylie E. Quave, Jeffrey Quilter, Jeffrey C. Splitstoser and Gabrielle Vail. Ancient America Special Publication 3, David Stuart, Gabrielle Vail and Jeffrey C. Splitstoser (general editors). Boundary End Archaeology Research Center, Barnardsville, N. C. [[Preprint Link](#)]

Popular and Web

2025 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley,** and Jeffrey C. Splitstoser. “From Flock to Footnote.” *Penn Museum Voices Blog*. July 1. [[Link](#)].

2025 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley.** “The Khipu Effect.” *In Situ: News and Events of the Harvard Standing Committee on Archaeology*:4–7. Spring Semester. [[Link](#)].

2024 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley.** “The Daily Life of a Khipologo.” *In Situ: News and Events of the Harvard Standing Committee on Archaeology*:8–12. Fall Semester. [[Link](#)].

2024 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley.** “Into the Cloud Forest.” *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*. David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. [[Link](#)].

2024 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley.** “Khipus at Harvard: Misadventures with Khipu Naming Conventions.” *In Situ: News and Events of the Harvard Standing Committee on Archaeology*:20–24. Spring Semester. [[Link](#)].

2023 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley.** “Why Knot Chacha? A Summer with the Khipus of Lagunas de Los Cóndores”. *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*. David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. [[Link](#)].

2022 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley.** “Field Notes and Notes on Feeling: Mental Snapshots from an Archaeological Excavation in Peru”. *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*. David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. [[Link](#)].

2022 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley**. “Khipu, the ancient Inka accounting system”. *ADP ReThink Quarterly* (6). [[Link](#)].

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION (* = forthcoming)

Papers

- 2025* **FitzPatrick, Mackinley**. “Beyond Decipherment: An Archaeology of Inka Khipus”. Presented at the *42nd Northeast Conference on Andean and Amazonian Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, Penn Museum, Philadelphia, PA, November 15–16.
- 2025 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley**. “Reading the Knots: The State of Khipu Studies and What Lies Ahead”. Presented at the British Academy Conference *Deconstructing the Inca: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Empire in the Andes*, University of Reading, UK, September 2–3. [[Link](#)].
- 2025 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley**. “What Good is a Broken Cord? Beyond the Study of Complete Inka Khipus”. Presented at the *Society for American Archaeology (SAA) 90th Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO, April 23–April 27.
- 2025 Robles, Erika Lucero, **Mackinley FitzPatrick** and Solsiré Cusicanqui Marsano. “A Case of Looting and Alteration of Archaeological Objects: An Andean Dressed Figurine at Harvard's Peabody Museum”. Presented at the *Society for American Archaeology (SAA) 90th Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO, April 23–April 27.
- 2024 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley**. “The Andean Khipu and a Pre-Columbian Computer System: A Postcolonial Perspective”. Presented at the *Society for American Archaeology (SAA) 89th Annual Meeting*, New Orleans, LA, April 17–21.
- 2023 **FitzPatrick, Mackinley**. “Primary Questions: A Survey of Inka-Style Khipu Primary Cords”. Presented at the *Symposium on the Andean Khipu at the Boundary End Archaeology Research Center*, Barnardsville, NC, August 8–14.
- 2022 Caramanica, Ari, Renata Verdun de Silva Carmo, **Mackinley FitzPatrick** and Ana Mauricio. “A Continental Divide: Barriers to Publishing in American Journals for Latin American Scholars”. Presented at the *Society for American Archaeology (SAA) 88th Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL, March 30–April 3.

Roundtables

- 2024 Roundtable discussant for "New Approaches to Historical Evidence: Rethinking Indigenous and Non-European Sources". *History of Science Society (HSS) 100th Annual Meeting*, Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico, November 7–10.

Workshops

- 2025* "Khipu Workshop". Led by **Mackinley FitzPatrick**, Jeffrey C. Splitstoser, and Anne Tiballi. Hosted at the *42nd Northeast Conference on Andean and Amazonian Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, Penn Museum, Philadelphia, PA, November 14.
- 2025* "Eleven Hundred Years of Writing Without Words: The Dumbarton Oaks Khipu Collection". Dumbarton Oaks Graduate Student Museum Study Day. Co-taught by Thomas B.F. Cummins, Juan Antonio Murro, Jeffrey C. Splitstoser, **Mackinley FitzPatrick**, and Manuel Medrano. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C., November 21.

GUEST LECTURES

- 2025 "Investigando los quipus de la Laguna de los Cóndores." Guest lecture for Dr. Cecilia Pardo's class *Modelos Digitales*, and again later for faculty and staff at Universidad del Pacífico during the event *¿Qué son los khipus? Una introducción visual e interactiva*, Universidad del Pacífico, Lima, Peru. September 23.
- 2025 "Los quipus en la colección del Museo Leymebamba". Seminar for local guides and community members at Museo Leymebamba. July 5th.
- 2024 "Inka Khipus". Guest lecture for the class *ANTHRO 1179: Rise of the Sun and Gold Empire: Archaeology of the Central Andes* at Harvard University. April 11th.
- 2023 "Inka Khipus: Knot what you think?". Guest lecture for the class *Americas before Columbus* at Boston University. April 19th.
- 2023 "Khipu Primer". Guest lecture for the class *ANTHRO 2177: Rise of the Sun and Gold Empire: Archaeology of the Central Andes* at Harvard University. April 14th.

PUBLIC TALKS

- 2025 "Empire of String: Unraveling the Enigma of Inka Khipus" for the *2025 Harvard Horizons Symposium* at Harvard University's Sanders Theatre. April 8th. [[Video Link](#)]

- 2025 “Decoding the Inka Khipus of Laguna de los Cóndores, Peru” at the Minocqua Public Library. January 9th.
- 2024 “Investigando los quipus y la colección del Museo Leymebamba” for the Seminar Workshop *Explorando el Mundo de los Quipus de la Laguna de los Cóndores* at Museo Leymebamba. October 5th.

GRANTS and FELLOWSHIPS

- 2025 John G. Owens Fellowship (\$4,775)
- 2025 Jens Aubrey Westengard Scholarship (\$750) — *awarded but declined by the recipient*
- 2025 Harvard University Department of Anthropology Summer Research Grant from the Charlene C. LeFebre Fund (\$5,920)
- 2025 Harvard University Department of Anthropology Professional Development and Conference Funding from the Teschmacher Fund (\$750)
- 2025 Harvard Horizons Scholar (\$1,000) [[Link](#)]
- 2025 John H. Coatsworth Latin American History Fellowship (\$12,000)
- 2024 GSAS Merit/Graduate Society Term-Time Research Fellowship (\$20,415)
- 2024 John G. Owens Fellowship (\$4,000)
- 2024 Harvard University Department of Anthropology Summer Research Grant from the Hemenway Fund (\$4,730)
- 2024 David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Summer Research Travel Grant (\$4,500)
- 2024 Harvard Kenneth C. Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Student Council Spring Conference Grant (\$487)
- 2024 Harvard University Department of Anthropology Professional Development and Conference Funding (\$500)
- 2023 Bliss Symposium Award in Pre-Columbian Studies (\$600)
- 2023 Harvard University Department of Anthropology Summer Research Grant from the Barbara Bell Fund (\$5,000)
- 2023 David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Summer Research Travel Grant (\$4,500)
- 2022 Harvard University Department of Anthropology Summer Research Grant from the Charlene C. LeFebre Fund (\$5,000)
- 2020 Alex G. Booth '30 Traveling Fellowship (\$2,500)
- 2018 Harvard Global Health Institute Summer Internship Fund (\$1,500)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Harvard University (Served as Teaching Assistant)

- 2025 Graduate Fellow at the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning. [\[Link\]](#).
2025 Anthro 99A: Senior Tutorial for Thesis Writers in Anthropology. Instructed by Damina Khaira.
2024 Anthro 98B: Junior Tutorial for Thesis Writers in Anthropology. Instructed by Damina Khaira.
2024 Anthro 1080: American History Before Columbus. Instructed by Matthew Liebmann.
2023 GenEd 1105: Can we know our past?. Instructed by Rowan Flad and Jason Ur.
2023 GenEd 1178: Mexico and the Making of Global Cuisine. Instructed by Jennifer Carballo.
2022 GenEd 1105: Can we know our past?. Instructed by Rowan Flad and Jason Ur.
**Awarded Student Recognition of Teaching by the GSAS Office of Academic Programs.*

FIELD WORK and RESEARCH PROJECTS

- 2025– *Academic Specialist.* Proyecto Khipus (Universidad del Pacífico & Museo de Arte de Lima). Providing expertise on documentation and analysis of the Temple-Radicati quipu collection. [\[Link\]](#).
2025 *Dissertation Research.* 1.5 months studying and analyzing the khipus housed in the Museo Leymebamba. Amazonas, Peru.
2024 *Dissertation Research.* 3 months studying and analyzing the khipus housed in the Museo Leymebamba. Amazonas, Peru.
2023 *Pre-dissertation Research.* 1 month studying and analyzing the khipus housed in the Museo Leymebamba. Amazonas, Peru.
2022 *Unit Lead.* Proyecto de Investigación Arqueológica de la Colina Santa Apolonia (PIACSA). Cajamarca, Peru. PI: Solsiré Cusicanqui Marsano.
2021 *Field School Student.* Central Wyoming College / Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Archaeological Field School. Casper and Bighorn Mountains, WY. PI: Todd Guenther.
2020–22 *Research Assistant.* GIS Mapping for Jason Ur. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
2019–20 *Research Assistant.* Khipu Database Manager for Gary Urton. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
2019 *Field School Student.* San José de Moro Archaeological Field School. La Libertad, Peru. PIs: Luis Jaime Castillo Butters and Gary Urton.
2018 *Field School Student.* Sol de Campinas Archaeological Field School. Acre, Brazil. PIs:

Eduardo Góes Neves and Gary Urton.

PUBLIC OUTREACH and COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 2022– Member of the Peabody Museum’s “Virtual Archaeologist in a Classroom” program. Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Cambridge, MA. [[Program Link](#)].
- 2025 “Conversando con los khipus”. Guided tour open to the public. Museo de Arte Lima, Lima, Peru. September 24.
- 2025 “Explorando los Khipus Inka.” Community education and outreach program for local school children. Museo Leymebamba, Amazonas, Peru. June 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, and 30.
- 2025 “Amazing Archaeology Fair at Harvard.” Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Cambridge, MA. April 6.
- 2024 “Explorando los Khipus Inka.” Community education and outreach program for local school children. Museo Leymebamba, Amazonas, Peru. October 10 and 16.
- 2024 “Amazing Archaeology Fair at Harvard.” Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Cambridge, MA. April 7.
- 2023 “Los Khipus Inka.” Community education and outreach program for local school children. Museo Leymebamba, Amazonas, Peru. July 24.
- 2023 “Amazing Archaeology Fair at Harvard.” Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Cambridge, MA. March 26.
- 2022 “International Archaeology Day: Meet an Archaeologist.” Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Cambridge, MA. October 15.
- 2022 “Amazing Archaeology Fair at Harvard.” Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Cambridge, MA. March 27.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE and MENTORSHIP

- Ad hoc Reviewer: *Advances in Archaeological Practice* (2024); *THURJ - The Harvard Undergraduate Research Journal* (2025)
- 2025– Administrator and Advisory Board Member for the Open Khipu Repository. [[Link](#)].
- 2022– Co-organizer of the Harvard Andean Working Group. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- 2025– Editor in Chief of *In Situ*, produced by the Harvard Standing Committee on Archaeology. [[Link](#)].
- 2024 Mentor for two high school seniors from the Community Charter School of Cambridge during their Senior Internship Program, Harvard University,

Department of Anthropology, Cambridge, MA. January 31–May 29.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS and AFFILIATIONS

Khipu Field Guide (Contributor and Affiliate) [[Link](#)]

Society for American Archaeology (Member)

History of Science Society (Member)

Endangered Writing Network [[Link](#)]

Script Keepers Network

PROFICIENCIES

Languages: English (Native) and Spanish (Intermediate)

Software: ArcGIS Pro, QGIS, SPSS, Python, C, R, Java, SQL, Ocaml, Javascript, HTML, CSS

INTERVIEWS and PRESS COVERAGE

2025 “The Knots that Bind.” *Colloquy Podcast*. August 15. [[Link](#)].

2025 “Unraveling the Secrets of the Inca Empire.” *The Atlantic*. May 26. [[Link](#)].

2025 “Cutting drug costs, embracing aging, demystifying AI — and more research ideas.” in *The Harvard Gazette*. April 11. [[Link](#)].

2025 “Cords of History: The Inkas.” Video feature in *Research Matters*, Harvard Griffin GSAS monthly newsletter. March 27. [[Link](#)].