

Vortrag von Manny Medrano (Harvard University) IN ENGLISCHER SPRACHE

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Organisiert von der EGH in Kooperation mit dem Landesverein für Urgeschichte

Title:

Khipu Histories: Giving the Inkas Their Own Voice

Abstract

The Inka Empire (AD 1400-1532) is notable among the world's ancient civilizations in its use of khipus, knotted string devices which encoded numerical and narrative information. The twisted cords of the khipus were integral to the functioning of the empire before its conquest by the Spanish in 1532, containing entries ranging from bureaucratic census information in the quantitative khipus to Inka histories and philosophies in the so-called narrative khipus. We have known since the early 20th century that numerical khipus follow a base-10 quantitative schema. Yet, after over 100 years of scholarly study, the narrative khipus are yet to be fully deciphered. The talk will survey the state of khipu research, tracing both recent developments in Andean studies and future prospects for deciphering the khipus. While study of the khipus rests at the intersection of mathematics, linguistics and anthropology, the ultimate motivation stands alone: to hear the Inkas in their own voice.