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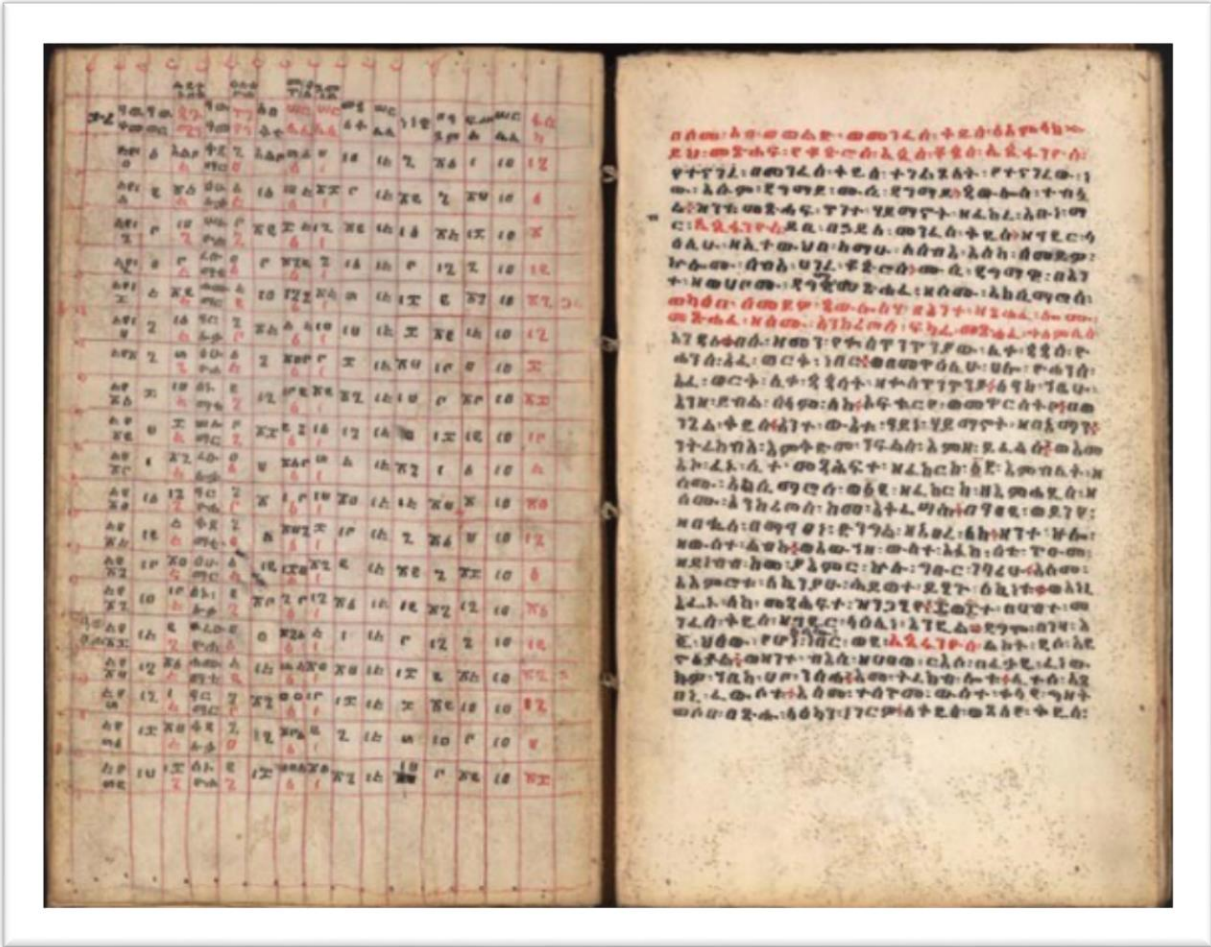
## **Happy International Archives Day, everyone!**



*By Tewodros Abebe\**

Well, every day, in my view, should be considered an international archives day—at least among archivists and supporters of archives around the world. What each of us, as an archivist, does on a daily basis forms a critical piece within the vast, beautiful mosaic of human heritage. Our profession, no matter how local it may seem, always has a global dimension to it. Humanity's interconnectedness is the foundation for that quality. As an Ethiopian, who is well aware of my own motherland's struggles to preserve its history dating back to Biblical times, the issue of proper archiving is near and dear to my heart.

My duties at an American university constantly remind me of the far-reaching aspects of archival work. It is fascinating, for example, when someone in South Africa, or China, or Scotland, or Mexico contacts me (by the way, these are real scenarios) with an inquiry which usually reveals the subject's unique connection to the university. The discovery oftentimes leaves me awestruck and compels me to appreciate archival work even more. It is a gratifying feeling and one that I take as a priceless fringe benefit.



*Bahera Hasab, (Computus). Manuscript #23 in the Thomas Kane collection. African and Middle Eastern Division, Library of Congress. This Ethiopian manuscript, in the languages of Amharic and Geez, is open to a page explaining the mathematical system for fixing the movable feasts and fasts of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Select the image for a larger version. Stephanie Hall, Ethiopian Christmas and the Ethiopian Calendar System, Folklife Today, Feb. 22, 2016, <https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2016/02/ethiopian-christmas-and-calendar/>*

There is a compelling reason, therefore, for archivists to look beyond their own institutions, particularly in today's technologically advanced global order. Archival records and special collections, regardless of their type and size, contribute to the preservation of a nation's treasures. At a larger scale, national archives, regardless of their prestige and funding status, are indispensable custodians of world heritage. It is for these reasons why archives with an abundance of talent and resource need to stretch helping hands to those in disadvantaged regions of the world.



*Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela, 13th century, UNESCO World Heritage list, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/18>*

In this regard, the sharing of information and knowledge is an essential collaborative endeavor. Empowering needy archival organizations by connecting them with the right funding agencies is another critical task. Implementing a program whereby experienced archivists travel to archival sites where skills are desperately needed to help and train local staff will be another. This can be setup as a two-way exchange program that benefits both sides. In fact, many tasks can be performed through the utilization of information and communication technology. The possibilities for collaboration are numerous.

SAA, particularly its IAAS membership, is uniquely positioned to take a leading role in such initiatives. The wealth of experience in this forum alone can significantly improve the conditions of many endangered archival treasures around the world. Pursuing and accomplishing such a task will certainly be an outstanding service to the human race. With the right planning and collective goodwill, it can be done.

I wish a happy 70th birthday to the *International Council on Archives* whose creation, on 9 June 1948, is the reason why we celebrate [International Archives Day](#).

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