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## **The Testamentary and Philanthropic Value of the Settlement Bequeathed to All Saints' Monastery by Its Founder, Saint Anthim the Iberian, Metropolitan Bishop of Wallachia**

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**Abstract.** Anthim the Iberian (1650 -1716) was a Georgian theologian, scholar, calligrapher, philosopher and one of the greatest ecclesiastic figures of Wallachia, led the printing press of the prince of Wallachia, and was Metropolitan of Bucharest in 1708-1715. Alongside his literary output, the cleric was the builder of the All-Saints Monastery in Bucharest - nowadays known as the Anthim Monastery in his memory. Established between 1713-1715 years, the monastery was bestowed by the founder with properties, necessary for the maintenance of the monastic congregation and the assistance of those in need. The holy metropolitan endowed it with an extremely inspired and coherent organizational status. This Settlement with a Testamentary value contains a number of 32 chapters whose content represents a veritable spiritual monument in which cult and culture, liturgy and philanthropy, homily and school, serving God and people are admirably interwoven. By his will, the Metropolitan ordained a beautiful work of social assistance from the monastery's income. This testament may be considered a rule to live by, a guideline to the organization and management of living together both for monks and for family men, which has not lost its present interest.

**Keywords.** Anthim the Iberian, status of organization, All Saints' Monastery, 32 chapters, philanthropy, social assistance.

### **Introduction**

The Church of Jesus Christ the Saviour, which was founded on Pentecost through the descent of the Holy Spirit, was involved in the social sphere since the earliest days of its existence, following the apostolic model of the diaconate, of charity and philanthropy, placing itself in the service of fellow humans. The followers of the apostles who acted as missionaries on the territory of our country served not only the holy altar but also people, especially the needy. Although in the beginning their actions did not take an institutional, organised form, they remained in the collective memory and were preserved in church tradition, which led to the establishment of a strong foundation for social actions.

In the early Middle Ages, supporting the needy in the Romanian Principalities represented a Christian preoccupation left to the Orthodox Church and its institutions. The social activity of some monasteries followed the example of the Byzantine Church [1], where the concept of hospital and social care institutions first appeared.

As early as the 13th century there are testimonies about asylums for the ill, the destitute and the invalids called “bolnițe”, which were established in the vicinity of monasteries. Many of these monasteries were erected by princes or a number of boyars as symbols of gratitude towards God for the blessings they received or for their victories over the enemies of the country.

Until the 16th century most of the charitable activities directed to helping different underprivileged groups were done in monasteries and religious congregations.

The terms encountered to designate the assisted were “mișel” for those who presented physical infirmities and “nemernici” for social elements: beggars, vagabonds and that of calici [2] with reference to destitute beggars.

Among the settlements organised under the patronage of the Church, one may mention: hospital churches belonging to monasteries in Putna, Bistrita de Valcea, Cozia (16th century), followed by those of the monasteries Dragomirna, founded by Metropolitan Anastasie Crimca [3] (1619), Sadova (1692), Hurezi (1696), Sfântul Spiridon Iasi (1757), Precista Mare-Roman (1787), the mental health hospitals of Neamț Monastery (the end of the 18th century), etc.

One may notice that the princes who developed and financially supported social assistance did not encourage idleness and social dependence since there are many legends which present the punishment of both those who undeservingly benefited from such advantages and those who had become accustomed to living on charity, in “the culture of poverty”.

Along the same line of social programs, a document from Wallachia which dates back to 1686 reveals that the Orthodox archpriest of Bucharest was supposed to present to the treasury the list of the poor people in the town who received a Turkish “para” a day. The monetary value received was enough to buy one or two breads. In 1695, during the reign of Constantin Brancoveanu, the first two major hospital units which also performed social assistance activities (Coltea and Pantelimon) are built. A number of taxes and duties specifically intended to solve certain social problems are subsequently introduced.

Until the Regulamentul Organic regime (1831) [4], the general measures taken with respect to social assistance consisted in applying the few precepts found in the laws. There is no state social welfare organization.

### **All Saints’ Monastery and the status of organization**

On the 5th of February 1713, on Saint Agatha’s feast day, following a divine discovery, the Metropolitan Bishop Anthim the Iberian decides to build a monastery where an old wooden church dedicated to Saint Nicholas used to be, where the Holy Myrrh was kept. Saint Anthim uses all his fortune to erect this holy place:., Out of my many toils, printing books and the alms of merciful Christians, we proceeded to raise the foundations of a beautiful church here, in Bucharest, unto the glory and thanksgiving to Himself who in the Trinity glorifies Him, God and in honour and praise to all the saints, so that it can exist and be named the most honourable All Saints’ Monastery, dedicated and erected in their name, so that we can relentlessly feast in it, in veneration and honour, with praises and hymns, as fiends of God and helpers and benefactors of all orthodox believers [5]”.

Besides his personal fortune, Metropolitan Bishop Anthim is either gifted or purchases various lands and properties from Christians who resided not only in Bucharest but also in other cities. The monastery was built in “the slums of Ivașco’s priest”, not far from the Metropolitan Hill, around two hundred meters westward. The consecration of the church occurs in 1717 in the presence of prince Ștefan Cantacuzino. Hierarch and founder of the monastery, he drafted the plans for the monastery himself, two of which remain to this day, namely: the original plan of the church, written on paper, attached to his relative testament in

the monastery and another plan, written on a scroll (in 1713) within the settlement of the monastery [6].

Pleased that he managed to give Wallachia one of the most beautiful masterpieces in architecture, sculpture, painting and religious objects, Metropolitan Bishop Anthim writes a testament through which he makes arrangements concerning the organisation and administration of the buildings and possessions of the monastery. He begins writing the testament on the 24th of April 1713, when the construction of the monastery begins, and completes it on the 15th of March 1716 [6].

Being aware that foreign orthodox Patriarchs had the custom of interfering in those times, in the administration of the monastic settlements of Wallachia, the Metropolitan Bishop took all necessary measures so that his foundation would benefit from total independence and autonomy. Hence Anthim wanted “that this holy monastery that I erected and embellished at my own expense should be free, rule itself, own itself and obey nobody except God and the saints it is dedicated to. There should be no patriarchal dominion, neither under royal mastery (authority), nor under the dominion of the high priest of the country, of any boyer, of any large or small monastery, but only the canonical name of the Most Holy Metropolitan Bishop should be mentioned in it according to church ordinance and the monastery should rule itself and to justify in everything only the abbot and the five churchwardens with one accord, following the ordinance I have placed in the 32 chapters”[5].

Established between 1713-1715, the monastery was bestowed by the founder with properties, necessary for the maintenance of the monastic congregation and the assistance of those in need. His organizational status reproduced in the form of a testament is entitled “Teachings for the Settlement of the Venerable Monastery of All Saints, meaning 32 Chapters, which should Encompass all the Livelihood of the Monastery and the Ordinance of the Determined Alms to be Given Annually to the Destitute and Deprived from the Home Revenue”, presents the provisions of the founder to support those in need, who would ask for help from this holy abode [7].”

This Settlement with a Testamentary value contains a number of 32 chapters whose content represents a veritable spiritual monument in which cult and culture, liturgy and philanthropy [8], homily and school, serving God and people are admirably interwoven.

What follows are the titles of the chapters and their summaries rendered almost entirely in an international language.

### **The settlement of the Anthim Monastery [9]**

**Ch. 1. For the monastery not to be submissive (dependent).** Saint Anthim wishes for the monastery to be free, independent, autonomous in relation to the civil authorities, ecclesiastical authorities or private individuals from within or outside the country and for it to not be committed to other monasteries according to the customs of the time. That who dares do so will be defrocked (excommunicated), unforgiven and forever anathemised.

**Ch. 2. For the abbots.** The abbot of the monastery has the obligation to manage the internal and external problems of the monastery, preoccupied with increasing its fortune in collaboration with the five churchwardens.

**Ch. 3. For the churchwardens.** They are elected from among the merchants and have the obligation to help the abbot. Twice a year, on St. George’s Day and on St. Dumitru’s Day, in spring and autumn, they have the duty to meet with the abbot and make a financial analysis of the manner in which monastery money has been managed and record it in a register. They also have to check if the abbot gave alms to the poor according to the testamentary provisions. If the churchwardens find signs of negligence from the abbot, they are invited to offer

counselling so that he may correct his administrative errors. If two years in a row they will conclude that the abbot is not able to add value to the monastery but, on the contrary, he causes a loss, the churchwardens have the obligation, with the approval of the prince and the Metropolitan Bishop, to elect a new abbot after a detailed audit. The former abbot must be punished as a lazy and cunning servant, thief of all things holy and oppressor of the destitute.

**Ch. 4. For the monks.** The space of the monastery shall be divided into two courtyards in which the servants of the monastery shall live. If a Christian who is a merchant, boyer or belongs to another important social class wants to join this convent, he shall be received. The abbot and the churchwardens can hire staff according to necessities. The staff shall be fed and paid by the monastery to their satisfaction.

**Ch. 5. For the priests.** As a reward for the priests who have served in the former wooden church where All Saints' Monastery was built, Saint Anthim offers the clergy his blessing to continue to fulfil their liturgical-missionary vocation in the new place of worship. Two priests are therefore ordained to serve in the Romanian language and annually receive a salary of 20 thalers without the right to receive anything else from church income other than a thaler for each "sărindar" (memorial 40 days).

**Ch. 6. For the teaching of children.** Three poor children aged between 10 and 15 years who want to study receive for 4 years six coins a day for food and at Easter they each get a wool coat worth 2 zloty, a fur cap and a pair of boots. And if one of them wishes to become a monk and remain in the convent, he shall be received.

Once they finish their studies they shall each be sent a letter from the abbot which guarantees an aid worth fifteen thalers when they decide to get married. And if any of them wishes to be a priest, then he shall be offered an additional amount of 13 thalers; eight thalers for the ordination as deacon and priest and five thalers for him to give to the Church for 40 days in memory of 5 names: Ioan, Maria, Macarie the hieromonk, Theodosie the high priest and Anthim the sinful high priest. The children had to be educated by one of the two priests and had the duty to participate in the Church service from the monastery. If any one of them abandoned school, he would not benefit from the other right stipulated in the testament. The schoolbooks shall be at the expense of the monastery.

**Ch. 7. For the burial of the dead.** When a pauper, a beggar on the streets dies, three hundred coins must be spent from the funds of the settlement. Two hundred coins shall be used to buy candles and cloth and other necessities, while the other hundred coins shall be received by the priest of that Church who will bury the pauper, will hold the procession and 3 liturgies; on the third day, on the ninth day and after 40 days. And the priest who does not perform those liturgies will be held responsible on judgement day.

**Ch. 8. For the mercy of those in prison and the poor.** In the 52 Saturdays and Sundays which are in a year, 20 coins shall be given to the prison on Saturday and 13 coins shall be given to the poor on Sundays; but the poor shall not be the same persons each week, but on a rotational basis; some on a Sunday and some on another. And in order to avoid disorder, a record shall be kept.

**Ch. 9. For clothing the naked.** On Maundy Thursday the poor will each receive a coat and three destitute girls will each receive a dress and a pair of boots. These gifts will not be given to the same persons but on a rotational basis.

**Ch. 10. For the marriage of a young woman.** Each year, on the second day after Saint Dumitru's Day, a destitute girl who wishes to get married shall be offered fifteen thalers. Nevertheless, she shall not be one of the girls who were mentioned above. She shall be chosen via open-outcry in the Church. Three Sundays in a row, before the day of her marriage, the abbot shall invite that young woman who wants to get married to come and say her name. And

if by chance three or four young women will come, to avoid conflicts and suspicions, they shall draw lots. The winner will receive from the abbot a letter of guarantee and when she wishes to get married she shall come and collect that sum of money.

**Ch. 11. For the care of strangers.** If three foreigners from another country shall be lodged, they shall be given alms, they shall be hosted for three days in the monastery, shall be given food and drink and on the third day they shall each receive 30 coins; but no other foreigners shall be received simultaneously. After three days have passed they shall go somewhere else and tend to their own needs.

**Ch. 12. For the candles.** Three candles shall burn incessantly, day and night: one at the holy altar before the holy ark of the covenant, the second one at the All Saints' icon and the third one at the icon of the four saints, namely Saint Nicholas, Saint Anthim, Saint Alexie, the man of God and Saint Agatha.

**Ch. 13. For the four saints and for "sărindar" (memorial 40 days).** Church service shall be officiated each year in honour of the four saints from the icon placed in the small lectern and alms shall be given to the poor.

On the day the guardian saint is celebrated on the 3rd of September, a beautiful koliva shall be made for Saint Anthim and a candle shall be placed before the icon; an ort shall be distributed to 40 churches so that their priests may hold Mass and mention the prince to be, the high priest and these 5 names: Ioan, Maria, Macarie the hieromonk, Theodosie the high priest and Anthim the sinful high priest.

On the 6th of December a koliva shall be made for Saint Nicholas and a candle shall be placed before the icon and 40 coins shall be distributed to the poor in memory of the old church dedicated to St. Nicholas.

On the 5th of February, on Virgin Martyr Saint Agatha's Day, another impoverished young woman, not the same as the aforementioned, wearing the Romanian blouse, a dress, boots, girdle, shall be given 30 coins in memory of the revelation that Metropolitan Bishop Anthim had to erect the Monastery.

On the 17th of March, on Saint Alexie's Day, the man of God, a pauper shall be dressed with a shirt, underclothing, wool coat, trousers, boots, fur cap and belt; he shall also be given 30 coins because on the day this saint is remembered, he was ordained as bishop.

**Ch. 14. For liturgies.** Beginning with the first day of November, for five consecutive days (Monday-Friday), the Holy Mass will be officiated and alms shall be given for various purposes.

On Monday, for all educators and teachers of the Metropolitan, and the poor shall receive 40 coins.

On Tuesday, for all spiritual fathers and advisers he had during his lifetime. The poor shall receive 40 coins.

On Wednesdays, for all acquaintances, people he met during his lifetime and all his friends and benefactors. The poor shall receive 40 coins.

On Thursday, for all his servants and collaborators who served him throughout his existence, both laymen and clergymen. The poor shall be given 40 coins.

On Friday, for all the people he saddened, vexed, wronged or badmouthed. And the poor shall receive 40 coins.

This churchly service and this benefice I leave under a curse that it shall be performed incessantly as long as the church shall exist.

**Ch. 15. For the wages of burial the servants and their.** I put a great curse that all those who serve in this monastery, regardless of their moral stature, shall be paid and nothing shall

be deducted from their payment and if the abbot shall cast one of them out, he shall receive in addition to his salary a thaler and 3 breads for his journey.

And if by chance one of them dies, the monastery shall spend 300 coins for his burial and shall hold 3 liturgies without receiving payment: the third and the ninth day and after 40 days. And if he has possessions, they shall not be detained by the monastery but shall be returned to his parents if he has any, or to his relatives so that they can do with it as they please. And if he has no one, they shall be distributed to the poor for his soul, only if he has not expressed a clear desire to leave something to somebody.

**Ch. 16. For those who have mercy on the house.** The names of all benefactors, donors and all the merciful towards the church shall be mentioned in church every Saturday; a memorial service with koliva will be held, all their dead relatives will be remembered. And every month, on a Thursday, a liturgy for the living will be held. For they are equally considered founders since they had mercy on the church. And on the day one of them dies, an unpaid liturgy will be held.

**Ch. 17. For the printing press.** Settles the payment and the number of copies the printing presses have a right to. The monastery must pay for the repairs to the printing presses. If a typographer shall wish to print at his own expense, he can do that with the approval of the abbot and the churchwardens, on condition that he should donate to the monastery one fourth of his sales revenues. The typographer shall not dare print any book against the church or the law of the land, regardless of how large the sum of money he receives shall be. And if he should break this order, he shall be anathemised! And if he does this, the prince shall be informed and he shall be punished. One of the duties of the typographer was to pass on the trade to his apprentices in service of the country and for the aid of the church.

**Ch. 18. For the library.** The Metropolitan Bishop forbids the estrangement of the books from the library of the monastery, both Romanian and foreign. He accepts reading and consulting them only as a loan.

**Ch. 19. For the renewal of the charters.** The abbot and his successors have the obligation to raise the matter with local authorities so that they renew and revalidate this testament, together with all the fortune and privileges that the monastery has acquired over the years. And all the donations received throughout the years shall be recorded in a great registry, made for this purpose, so that it does not deteriorate or disappear.

**Ch. 20. For the living situation of the high priests.** If a metropolitan bishop wishes to quit ruling his diocese and retire in the monastery founded by the Metropolitan Bishop, he shall be granted permission and shall be honoured, given food, four servants and two horses belonging to the monastery. He is not allowed to interfere in any of the affairs or change any of the monastic ordinances or testamentary provisions of this document.

**Cap. 21. For the gifts offered to the ruler.** St. Anthim asks his successors to have mercy on this monastery and watch over its wellbeing to receive the blessing of all the saints. He also begs them to hold the Holy Mass every year, on feast day and the day after, and receive a gift together with a priest and two deacons. And if he does not hold the Holy Mass, he shall not receive any gift. It is also settled that the abbot shall offer a gift to the Metropolitan Bishop of Romania, a gift with a fixed value, four times a year, on Christmas, Easter, Saint Constantine's Day and when he is invited to celebrate the patronal feast day of the church. The metropolitan bishop shall be presented with a gift on Saint Dimitrie's Day, for two regular priests who will guard the church, two pieces of gold.

**Ch. 22. For making inquiries about the ill.** When the abbot, or any other priests from the monastery, hears that somebody is ill, they shall go and inquire about the ailing person and advise him with comforting words to confess, to receive the Sacrament of the Holy Unction,

to commune and to write his will. This document shall be drafted according to the laws in force. The sufferer shall be advised to leave some of his fortune to the Metropolitan church, as much as he wishes, because the Metropolitan church is the mother of all churches and community. This inquiry about the souls of the parishioners shall also be done for the gypsies and their children, since they are also baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity and are Christians as well.

**Ch. 23. For the burial of the abbot.** If the abbot has amassed a sum of money before his admission in this monastery he is advised to leave that fortune after his death, if he wishes, to the monastery in his remembrance. And if he wishes to give alms to other parties or relatives, he shall be granted permission. However, he is not given the blessing to distribute the money he earned from the monastery. For the funeral of the abbot the 5 churchwardens must ask the metropolitan bishop to officiate the burial service. While the position of abbot is vacant, the churchwardens must name an administrator to tend for the monastery. The deceased abbot will be remembered in memorial services held for 40 days after his death, six months and a year after his death. And after three years a memorial service will be held for the bishop.

**Ch. 24. For the safeguard of churchwardens.** The 5 churchwardens have the obligation to make sure that after their death they have as successors other churchwardens, God-fearing men who stood out through their kindness. In case one of them did not choose a replacement in time, the other 4 may select one in order to keep the number. These must tend with mercy to the monastery, contributing to its development without changing anything which has already been decided.

**Ch. 25. For the tithing.** The abbot must set aside a tithe of all the cashing and income of the monastery in the vault of the church which was ordained for this purpose. This sum of money must be used only in exceptional cases, in troubled times, natural cataclysms, fires or when the monastery is at a standstill and cannot benefit from any other source of income. Afterwards, when it is possible and the situation improves, the sum of money will be put back in the vault to be used during other difficult times.

**Ch. 26. For the election of the abbot.** The 5 churchwardens, after the death of the abbot, can elect as a successor any one of the two hieromonks ordained to serve the church, on condition that this man should be a good, God-fearing man and good administrator and another hieromonk shall be chosen in service of the church to replace him.

If neither of the two candidates fulfils the conditions, another Greek or Romanian abbot is elected. The abbots should avoid choosing a foreign hieromonk as abbot, meaning those who come from Mount Athos, Mount Sinai or Jerusalem because of the problems they would cause.

Before settling, the new abbot will have to first sign an act which functions as an oath in front of the churchwardens through which he makes the commitment to work for the wellbeing and development of the monastery and that after his death he will be buried in the monastery.

**Ch. 27. For the income of the church.** Churchwardens, who supervise the manner in which the abbot spends church money, shall give him a certain sum of money for current expenditure, and the rest of the money shall be stamped with their seals and added to the vault of the church, together with the money from tithing. The abbot always takes money for the monastery only after he has announced the churchwardens, without touching the tithe.

In addition, the money from the tithes shall be counted by the churchwardens and sealed in a separate bag and placed in the vault again. And the churchwardens shall start two registries in which they shall write the amount of money received from tithing and from other sources of income.

And the churchwardens shall sign both registries, one shall be placed in the vault and the other one shall be in the possession of one of the churchwardens. Another churchwarden shall have the stamp which is put on the money bags, another one shall have the key to the vault, another one shall seal the vault with his stamp and another one shall write in the registry.

**Ch. 28. For the hermitage.** The abbot and the churchwardens shall be preoccupied with the use and prosperity of the hermitages dedicated to this monastery just as much as they handle the monastery, inspecting them twice a year and helping them overcome their hardships and shortages.

**Ch. 29. For remembering the dead.** In all Sundays and feast days of the year, there shall always be a public mention, in the middle of the church, of the names of lovers of Christ, dead and alive, who had mercy on this holy place and will continue to be merciful, as it is divinely ordered, and be mentioned in church.

**Ch. 30. For honouring the churchwardens.** For their commitment, the churchwardens, besides being mentioned in written form, shall be remembered aloud in all services during litanies through a special request. The abbot shall honour them with a gift twice a year, on St. George's Day and St. Dimitrie's Day, to which they should also add as a blessing two golden pieces.

**Cap. 31. For the multiplication of the alms.** Saint Anthim the Metropolitan Bishop advises the abbot and the churchwardens that, in case the income of the monastery will rise considerably in time, the alms given to the poor and those who make the object of the testament shall be doubled.

**Ch. 32. For reading the chapters.** The abbot has the duty to ordain the reading of these 32 chapters, four times a year in the four fasts and to make sure that all is accomplished. The person who would dare change anything which has been decided risks to fall under a divine curse. St. Anthim settles some rules which should be respected, with the same value as the 32 chapters:

1. When a priest of the monastery shall go and confess as a Christian, he must wear an epitachelion and phelonion, hold Holy Lamb at his bosom with devotion and honour, in the chalice. Before him 2 children shall walk holding two candles and another two children shall follow him, reciting Psalm 144. The children shall be chosen from among those who study with the aid of the monastery.

2. If any of the Christians shall desire, before death, to bequeath a large sum to the monastery for charity and remembrance, the abbot shall do respect every year the wishes of the deceased. So that the amount of money multiplies and continues to suffice each year, he shall donate with interest to the guilds who will want it, based on an act, according to the wishes of the deceased.

3. The abbot shall not dare, by no means, hide in the monastery merchandise belonging to laymen or servants of the monastery so that they are exempt from taxes, so that the good name of the monastery is not ruined or the monastery is not at a loss. And is he dares, let anathema be!

4. If anyone shall have property next to that of the monastery, or vineyards in the vicinity, or orchards or grassland, under no circumstance must he mix foreign land with that of the monastery.

5. In the church, tombs and candlesticks shall not be made of stone; only the ordered candles will burn. Trunks filled with clothes will not be received in the church either so that it may remain clean.

6. In the first courtyard of the monastery, near the church, no tombs shall be dug because they spoil the place and narrow the space. In addition, the access of animals in the first courtyard is forbidden. Storing merchandise in cells for better preservation is also forbidden in order to keep the monastery and the cells clean. The merchandise will be stored in the second courtyard.

7. Every year the abbot shall name and remunerate the priests and the hieromonks who serve, shall mention the Metropolitan Bishop Anthim for 40 days, starting with Easter and ending with the Ascension of the Lord.

8. If by chance someone gives the abbot for safekeeping money or things, he shall keep them with care and return them in perfect condition.

### Conclusions

Few legal institutions have such an intricate and emotionally charged content as the testament. Analysing the contents of a testament, we can practically state that we analyse the historical moment of the society at the date it was drafted from a legal, cultural and religious perspective. The testament remains an extremely useful and valuable source of information, both for the history of law and for the historical evolution of a society [10].

Beginning with the moment when practically the testamentary dispositions were transmitted with dying breath, continuing with the emergence of a rudimentary written form, namely “diată” (“zapis”, “carte” or “izvod”), the institution of the testament can be traced in every stage in the development of our society, increasingly articulated and regulated.

The content of the Settlement of the Monastery founded by Saint Anthim the Iberian is more than a legal testament. It represents the bequest of a lasting legacy to posterity in the form of an exceptional spiritual, social and cultural heritage.

In this testament, which is as spiritual as it is practical, we find the mark of the author, a man of great erudition, an exceptional servant, a man of letters, an unparalleled polyglot, a talented artist, an accomplished philanthropist, more patriot than the natives, defender of the canonical order and state laws, opponent of the occupiers and martyr of his faith. He was not only an encyclopaedist and a humanist. The Metropolitan Bishop Anthim the Iberian was above all a man of God, lover of all things holy and honourer of the saints, weaving in his person his merciful love for all creation with a sense of justice and responsibility. This testament constitutes by virtue of its content a true testimony of measure, balance, discernment and the judicious manner the founding Metropolitan Bishop thought about the management of issues within the monastery. No significant detail was overlooked. Everything was designed in extreme detail, which shows the reliability and steadfastness which characterized the Metropolitan Bishop and his foundation. I can safely state that this testament may be considered a rule to live by, a guideline to the organization and management of living together both for monks and for family [11] men, which has not lost its present interest.

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