

## **Bishop Stephen I of Famagusta and his time (1244-1259)**

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In a previous paper I presented (with Emmanuel Grelois) two Latin bishops of Famagusta who lived in the middle of the thirteenth century: Hugh of Banson and Georges (*cf. Επετηρίδα του Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*, XXXI (2005), pp. 39-71). Their successor seemed to be, according to the Cypriot documentation, Bishop Stephen, who subscribed a charter of February, 1247. Recent research allowed me to identify his family and the context of his coming to Cyprus. Stephen of Mezel was a close relative of Archbishop Eustorge of Montaigut and a canon of the cathedral chapter of Clermont. He wrote his will in July, 1244: “*volens ad partes transmarinas adire*”. He did not intend to take part in the Seventh Crusade, like a lot of Auvergnat knights, because King Louis IX of France had not decided yet to go on crusade at that time.

The purpose of this paper is to present Stephen of Mezel’s regional background and career in the East, by presenting archival documents relative to his life. Stephen of Mezel belongs to the Alvernocracy which dominated the Cypriot Church during the long pontificate of Eustorge of Montaigut. He was one of the last victims of the war of Saint Sabas in 1259, but had the image of a pious canon in the Auvergnat memories. His eastern opening contaminated obviously one of his nephews, who became Grand Commander of the Hospital in 1264.