The authority of Peter Bartholomew and Stephen of Valence was greatly enhanced by the decisive victory of 28 June 1098. Not only was the result of the battle an indication for contemporary eyes of God’s judgement, but also during the course of the battle, Stephen’s predicted divine aid was said to have materialised in the form of the three fighting saints leading a detachment of troops.\(^1\) Bruno of Lucca was one of those who claimed to have seen divine intervention during the battle. On 20 July he left Antioch and returned home to describe his experiences, which were put into a letter by the clergy and people of Lucca and widely circulated. He claimed that the crusaders entering battle saw a wonderful white standard and a countless host of knights.\(^2\)

There was a great deal of plunder arising from the victory about which Guibert of Nogent wrote that if a *pauper* took something that he wanted, no wealthier man (*ditior*) tried to take it from him by force, but each permitted the other to take what he wanted without a fight.\(^3\) Whether or not this was one of the insertions by Guibert of actual historical material from returned eyewitnesses, it is interesting testimony that Guibert considered the conditions on the First Crusade at this point unusual because the rich were not taking wealth by force from the poor. By contrast Raymond of Aguilers reported conflict over property then took place among the *princes* and their followers. He wrote that in the period after the victory *discordia* shook not only the *principes*, but thefts and robberies took place among their households.\(^4\)

Social tension between rich and poor did not ease once the battle with Kerbogha took place, but rather it found different expression. The key issue that now made manifest this social tension was that

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\(^1\) GF 69.

\(^2\) Letter of the clergy and people of Lucca to the faithful, Hagenmeyer, *Epistulae et Chartae*, p. 166.

\(^3\) GN 243.

\(^4\) RA 136 (262).
of whether the expedition was to continue to Jerusalem or not. The princes, wanting to avoid plague in Antioch and to consolidate their local gains, scattered throughout the region. Firstly though, they did make an offer to the poor. In a very interesting passage, describing an offer by the princes after the victory over Kerbogha, the author of the *Gesta Francorum* wrote: ‘the princes had it announced throughout the whole city that if by chance there should be present someone *egens* in that place, and lacking in gold and silver, if he wished to remain, having made a compact with them, he would be retained with pleasure.’

To whom was the offer being made? Clearly it was addressed to persons experiencing poverty, but did the princes, after their stunning victory, want to consolidate a labour force or a military following? Were they appealing to non-combatants, footsoldiers, or knights? Some insight on the matter is offered by the reworking of the incident by one of the later authors. Baldric of Dol interpreted the offer as deriving from a concern by the princes for the welfare of the *pauperes* and while this is possible, it has to be borne in mind that Baldric used every opportunity to portray the First Crusade as displaying social harmony between rich and poor. Baldric did, however, offer a clarification of the offer of the princes. His version of the same passage distinguished between those *egeni* who were vigorous (*corpore vegetus*), whom the princes wished to take away into service, and those too weak to leave the city, who were instructed to be maintained from public stipends until recovered. So, according to Baldric’s interpretation of this passage of the *Gesta Francorum*, even though the language used by the anonymous author had overtones of a feudal legal contract of vassalage, particularly with the use of the verb *retinere*, it was addressed, in fact, to the lower social order. The offer does not seem to have been a popular one. Instead, when Raymond Pilet attempted prematurely to lead an expedition against Ma’arra in July 1098, a great number of poor from Antioch and local Christians unused to combat attached themselves to him. In large part it was their presence that resulted in Raymond Pilet’s forces

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5 *GF* 72-3: *Feceruntque principes preconari per urbem universam, ut si forte aliquis egens illic adesset et auro argentoque careret, conventione facta cum illis remanere si vellet, ab eis cum gaudio retentus esset.*

6 *BD* 80.

7 *BD* 80: *Dispersi sunt ergo duces et familiae per finitimias regiones et egeni eos subsequebantur, vivendi causa. Dixerunt enim duces: ‘Si quis egens est et corpore vegetus, jungatur nobis, et nos omnibus, datis unicumque stipendii, subsidiabimus; informi publica stipe donec convaluerint, sustententur.’*