

bottom of the pits a *kanot*. The pits are not what we understand by wells, being merely the means by which the tunnelled aqueduct is made, and by which it is from time to time cleared out and kept in repair. Most of these *karaizes* now in use are, like many others in ruins, the laborious and costly work of very ancient times; for modern Syrians possess neither the means, enterprise, nor ingenuity to construct them.

By the men of the *Adwan* tribe of *Bedaween* Arabs, who were my escort on the plains of Moab, and who have long been settled on this spot, I was gravely informed that these lines of basins were earthworks thrown up in connection with military operations, and once played a very important part in a campaign which took place in remote ages, with which they connect a certain sheikh Zeer, who was possessed of miraculous powers. They appeared wholly incredulous when I told them, apparently for the first time, the true purpose for which undoubtedly they were constructed. But this legend connecting them with a great battle is most significant, the more so as their very nature is unknown to the *Bedaween*, who have held this district for so many centuries.

Nothing like these remains, so far as I have been able to ascertain, is to be found in any other part of Palestine, for what at first was thought by those who made the survey of Western Palestine to be a similar ruin near *Kurn Surtubeh* appears, from the account in the Memoirs of the Survey Map (vol. ii. p. 397), to be merely some three rock-cut *beers*, or ordinary underground water cisterns, connected with one another by a rock-cut channel. Nowhere else in the Holy Land, east of the mountain ranges of Moab, Gilead, and Bashan, have we any trace of these pits save in this one spot in the Jordan Valley, just to the south of which the latest criticism and the most recent discoveries agree in locating the Cities of the *Kikkar*.

Who can now fail to draw the deeply interesting conclusion that these, together no doubt with many other such lines of pits, which, in ancient times, formed the extensive system