

by ordinary methods. Since there were not more than thirty different signs, it was a good guess that it was some sort of an alphabetic system. Professor H. Bauer, a German scholar who had worked on decipherment of enemy codes in World War I, was able to interpret a number of the signs. The paper in which he gave his attempted decipherment reached the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, and Dr. W. F. Albright, the then Director of the School, took it over to the French Ecole Biblique and showed it to Professor E. Dhorme, who had worked with the French army deciphering enemy codes. Dhorme had already been studying these tablets and had worked out quite a number of the letters. Putting together the ones he had worked out and the ones that Bauer had worked out, the foundation was laid for reading this new kind of writing. It was based on the cuneiform type of writing, but written by people familiar with the Canaanite alphabet, who had made an artificial alphabet of their own. The tablets were in a language closely related to Hebrew, and many of them contained epics and other religious literature of the ancient Canaanites.

The name of the city at that time was shown to have been Ugarit; so the language is now called Ugaritic. The study of the Ugaritic tablets throws much light on Canaanite religion prior to the coming of the Israelites. The material has been avidly studied by those who wish to show that Israelite religion is taken over from the Canaanites. However, most of the alleged relationships of this type disappear on close examination. It is true that there is considerable cultural relationship and occasionally forms of expression are common to both, but the religious ideas are actually very different. The study of Ugaritic is a very extensive study. Possession of this large body of religious material, in a language so close to Biblical Hebrew, is sure to give valuable help in the understanding of Hebrew words and expressions. Much remains to be done, not only in examining the