

order to quiet them it might be good if you would just stop and look around there on your way." Schaeffer stopped at Ras Shamra and was so impressed by what he found that he carried on excavations there that continued for a number of years.

At Ras Shamra, Schaeffer found a library containing hundreds of clay tablets, in an altogether new type of cuneiform writing. Most cuneiform writing is based upon the system originated by the Sumerians early in the third millennium B. C. This system has about 300 common signs and quite a few less common ones. Most of the signs represent syllables, though many indicate entire words. On the tablets found at Ras Shamra only about 30 different signs were used. Copies of a few of the tablets were soon printed and distributed to various scholars.

One day Professor W. F. Albright, who was then the Director of the American School of Oriental Research<sup>x</sup> at Jerusalem, received a paper from Germany in which there was an article by Professor Hans Bauer of the University of Halle, reporting on his study of the Ras Shamra material, and stating his belief that the language it contained was a Semitic language. He worked out a suggested interpretation for about two-thirds of the signs, but not enough to be able to make much headway in the reading of the language.

Dr. Albright took the German paper and went to the headquarters of the French Dominicans in Jerusalem, a group of men who had for many years been doing excellent work in the study of Palestinian archeology. There he showed it to Pere E. Dhorme, whom he knew to be interested in this type of subject. Dhorme told Albright that he had already himself done a good bit of work on the published Ras Shamra material and had worked out about two-thirds of the