

Hebrew of the Old Testament. They can be dated to the 15th and early 14th centuries B.C.

The Ugaritic tablets contain quite a variety of types of material, many of them being mythological poems about Canaanite gods and heroes. They give us a vivid picture of the Canaanite religion of Ras Shamra in the 15th century B.C.

Previous to this discovery almost all that was known of Canaanite religion consisted in the references to it in the Old Testament, which often refers to the leading god of the Canaanites under the name of Baal, and to their leading goddess as Asherah, translated "grove" in Judges 3:7; 1 Kings 15:13; 18:19; 2 Kings 21:7; 23:4, 6, 7 in the King James Version. Both of these names occur frequently in the Ugaritic tablets. The Old Testament refers to their religion as a very corrupt and sensuous system of worship, against which the Israelites were very strongly warned. The Ugaritic texts contain several long Canaanite epics, which depict the activities of their gods. These corroborate the picture that the Old Testament gives, showing that it was a religion with many gross and offensive features, very inferior to the ethical monotheism of the Old Testament.

The Ugaritic texts have added to our knowledge of the history of that part of the world, and have vastly increased our understanding of its religion and culture. At many a point they collaborate the Biblical picture of the Canaanite religion.

During the last fifty years there has been a constant effort to find the origin of Christianity or Judaism as a development from some purely human or natural background. This trend which has lately been conspicuous in the attitude of certain writers toward the Dead Sea Scrolls, has also exerted a very strong in-