Ronit Meroz

**'On the Time and Place of Some paragraphs of Sefer Ha-Bahir'**

Da'at 49 (2002), pp. 137–180.

Gershom Scholem was indecisive about the sources of *Sefer HaBahir* and raises several possibilities thereof. It seems that the dominant view in his writings is that although this work was based on some Eastern sources (among them some sentences that retained their original wording, such as those derived from the book of Raza Rabba), those were reworked in Provence, so that the present character of the book and its ideological message were established in Europe.

This paper, however, argues (after reviewing Scholem's various views, as well as a selection of the views of other scholars) that part of the book was actually written within the framework of a Jewish-Babylonian community in the 9th century or, at the latest, the beginning of the 10th century. This statement relies, among other things, on the observation that some paragraphs in this work are based on the use of the Babylonian upper vocalization system, which was unknown in Europe. In these paragraphs stand out other features that sustain this claim, namely the use of Babylonian Aramaic and a tendency towards Arabisms. Moreover, the writers of the text must have been deeply rooted in the world of scribed of Scriptures – in addition to the vocalization, they were aware of the shapes of the letters and biblical accentuation and they also showed familiarity with early notions of the more systematic study of the Hebrew language.

The main focus of the article is the time and place of the given paragraphs. The literary features of the parables, as well as the ideological characteristics of these paragraphs, are discussed here only partially and will be further elaborated in my forthcoming papers.