Menahem ben Solomon ha-Meiri was born in Provence in 1249 and died after the year 1314. He was apparently called ‘ha-Meiri’ after one of his ancestors named Meir. He lived most of his life in the city of Perpignan, in the region of Languedoc. Ha-Meiri was among the leaders of the Jewish community in Perpignan, interacting with many of the most important rabbis in Provence and Spain – most significantly, Rabbi Solomon ben Abraham ibn Aderet (*Rashba*). He apparently earned his living by lending money for interest. Ha-Meiri’s works include interpretation of the Talmud, halakhic monographs, and Bible commentaries. Only his commentaries to Proverbs and Psalms are extant, though according to direct and indirect testimony, he wrote a comprehensive commentary on the book of Job, and perhaps also on Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ecclesiastes. He also wrote commentaries on the esoteric passages known as the Account of Creation and the Account of the Chariot, apparently taking an alegorical-philosophical approach.

Ha-Meiri belonged to a school of Provencal commentators that included David Kimhi, Levi Gersonides, and Joseph Ibn Kaspi, who integrated the plain meaning of the biblical text with deep philosophical meanings. Like other commentators in Provence during this period, Ha-Meiri penned long introductions to his works, in which he discussed the authors of the books, their purposes, and their intended audiences.

His commentary to Psalms was not distributed widely and was first printed in 1936; it is possible that this was due to its being overshadowed by David Kimhi’s commentary to Psalms. The commentary takes a *peshat* approach (i.e. it is concerned with identifying the plain meaning of the text). In most instances, ha-Meiri followed in the footsteps of David Kimhi in the latter’s commentary to Psalms, and his commentary often seems to be a reworking or expansion of Kimhi’s. Abraham Ibn Ezra’s commentaries on Psalms also influenced him. Nevertheless, he retained interpretative and intellectual independence, often proposing his own interpretations. Ha-Meiri aspired to identify as many psalms as possible as prophetic, discussing exile and redemption. His aim was to provide encouragement to members of his generation who had been in a prolonged exile.

The commentary to Proverbs, which was very popular, was printed as an incunabulum in 1492. Ha-Meiri divided the book into five parts, with each further divided into smaller units with their own titles. Afterwards, he commented methodically on each verse, offering an exoteric *peshat* interpretation, followed by a philosophical interpretation. In his *peshat* interpretation, one can identify the influence of Joseph Kimhi, while on the philosophical level, one can see the influence of Maimonides. Similarly, one can also see the influence of Jacob Anatoli. It is possible that ha-Meiri’s aim was to make Anatoli’s ideas accessible to a broader audience who did not understand arcane works of philosophy, but were able to comprehend a commentary arranged according to the biblical verses.

Ha-Meiri dealt substantially with the wording of the biblical text and its language. He attempted to offer explanations based on context, philology, and logic. In many instances, he points to stylistic phenomena, such as repetition of a matter in different words; a ‘reversed’ verse; abridgement; and the interchange of letters, words, and grammatical forms in the biblical text.

His sources were highly diverse. Ha-Meiri was knowledgeable in both Talmuds, works of halakhic and aggadic midrash, Geonic literature, and the writings of the sages of Spain, Provence, and France. In the area of Jewish thought, he based himself on the writings of Maimonides (especially the *Guide of the Perplexed*), Saadia Gaon, and Judah Halevi. In the field of biblical commentary, he based himself, as noted, on the works of Joseph Kimhi, David Kimhi, Abraham Ibn Ezra, and Jacob Anatoli. He was very familiar with the grammatical works of Judah ben Hayyuj and Jonah Ibn Janah. It seems that Rashi’s commentaries were the only ones he used from among those by French commentators.

His commentaries were printed in the Mikraot Gedolot Haketer edition published by Bar Ilan University Press.