Menahem ben Simeon was active in the city of Posquières, in Provence, in the second half of the twelfth century. He was a student of Joseph Kimhi in Narbonne. During his lifetime, interest in identifying the *peshat* – the plain meaning – of the Hebrew Bible by means of linguistic study was increasing, as a result of the immigration of Andalusian scholars to Provence and the translation into Hebrew of works about language that had been written in Arabic. Menahem’s studies under Joseph Kimhi influenced his own work, inclining him toward philological *peshat*-basedinterpretation.

Only Menahem’s commentaries on Jeremiah and Ezekiel are extant, having survived in just two manuscripts. The commentary on Ezekiel must have been written prior to that on Jeremiah, because in the commentary on Jeremiah he refers several times to the commentary on Ezekiel (15:11; 22:19; 49:31; 52:3). The commentary on Jeremiah was written in 1191, according to the colophon at the end of the manuscript. It is possible that Menahem chose to write commentaries on these two biblical books specifically because Abraham Ibn Ezra did not write commentaries on them, and Menahem wished to fill this gap.

Menahem’s approach was decisively philological and *peshat*-based, eschewing both midrashic interpretation and philosophical speculation. In this respect, he was similar to his contemporaries in the *peshat* school in Provence – Joseph Kimhi, Moses Kimhi, and Moses ben Sheshet. These commentatorsè aimed to transmit the Spanish tradition and their linguistic heritage to the sages of Provence, who were not knowledgeable in Hebrew grammar. Menahem’s commentary is organized and tidy, staying close to the language of the text. He deals extensively with matters relating to language and style. He arranges his comments from the particular to the general. His method is to clarify a difficult word in its own right, and then to incorporate it into a full interpretation of the verse in which it appears. Menahem espoused inner-biblical interpretation, making extensive use of parallel verses in his interpretations. He endeavored to examine precise manuscripts of the biblical text (Jeremiah 2:31; 50:11; Ezekiel 26:17; 39:26).

Menahem opposed anthropomorphism (Jeremiah 1:9). He interpreted the prophetic acts of the prophets as having taken place in visions and dreams (Ezekiel 4:4).

Menahem drew on a broad range of sources, including traditional commentaries, Talmudic and midrashic literature, and the philological commentaries of the sages of Spain and North Africa up until the twelfth century. He was influenced primarily by the Spanish grammarians, who were inclined toward philology and *peshat*. His main sources were Judah ben Hayyuj, Jonah Ibn Janah (whose books served as a foundation for his linguistic approach), his teacher Joseph Kimhi, Moses Kimhi, and Abraham Ibn Ezra. From among the commentators of Northern France, the only one he mentions is Rashi.

Menahem’s commentaries circulated only in a very limited fashion. He is only mentioned in *Sekhel Tov*, a work by Moses ben Sheshet, his brother’s son. His commentaries were apparently abandoned in light of his extreme commitment to *peshat*, their limited scope, and their philological character.