In the late twelfth century exegetical activity underwent a revival in Provence, combining new knowledge from the Muslim world, with the exegetical local substrate which flourished particularly in the eleventh century.

The passage through the south of France of scholars from Spain allowed the dissemination of grammatical, lexicographical, and philosophical works written in Judeo-Arabic. Among these scholars, who performed the triple role of teachers, translators, and writers, were Abraham Ibn Ezra in the middle of the twelfth century, the grammarian and philosopher Jacob ben Eleazar in the late twelfth century, and the poet Judah al-Harizi in the early thirteenth century. The latter transmitted valuable information about the communities he visited. Other scholars settled in Provence, such as the family of Judah Ibn Tibbon and Joseph Qimhi. Likewise, it was not uncommon for Provençal scholars to travel to Spain in order to consult rabbinical authorities or examine famous manuscripts. David Qimhi, for example, went to Zaragoza to see the biblical codex, Sefer Yerushalmi, as he specifically mentions in the Mikhloth. These exchanges contributed to a revival of Provençal exegesis: in addition to traditional midrashic interpretations (probably allegorical) taught by Moses ha-Darshan, there developed a philological and rationalist exegesis.

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1 Born in Andalusia (ca. 1105–1170), he immigrated to Narbonne in 1150 due to the Almohade persecutions.

2 David Qimhi, Sefer Mikhloth, ed. Isaac Rittenberg (Lyck, 622 [1862], repr. Jerusalem 1966), ff. 46v, 164v, 164v and David Qimhi, Shorashim, p. 337: מִשְׁפַּט. However, it is not clear that David Qimhi traveled to Toledo to examine the Sefer Hilleli; see Talmage, David Kimhi, p. 216, n. 302.

3 Eleventh century in Narbonne. See Abraham Epstein (ed.), Moses ha-Darschan aus Narbonne: Fragmente seiner literarischen Erzeugnisse nach Druckwerken u. mehreren Handschriften (Pressburg: Druck von A. Alkalay 1891); Israel M. Ta-Shma, Rabbi Moses Hadarshan and the Apocryphal Literature (Jerusalem: Touro Graduate School of Jewish Studies, 2001); Hananel Mack, "Madua‘a ne’elmu sefaraw shel Rabbi Moshe ha-Darshan [Why did the writings of Rabbi Moshe ha-Darshan disappear?]," Alpayin 32 (2008), pp. 149–176 (Hebrew); Id., The Mystery of Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan (Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 2010) (Hebrew).
inaugurated in Narbonne by Joseph Qimḥi and continued mainly by his youngest son David and one of his disciples, Menahem ben Simeon of Posquières.

The question thus arises as to Joseph Seniri’s place in the exegetical landscape of Provence and the nature of the ties that bind him to better known authors. This problem requires a preliminary analysis of Seniri’s exegesis that will seek to outline its main features and define its nature. This will be followed by a comparative study of the influence that the work of his predecessors or contemporaries—Rashi (1040–1105), Ibn Ezra (1092–1167), Menahem ben Simeon and David Qimḥi (1160–1235)—may have exerted on Seniri. Finally, the analysis of the Seniri’s exegetical terminology will help place him in an intellectual circle and a chain of transmission.

2.1. JOSEPH SENIRI’S EXEGESIS

Joseph Seniri, as mentioned above, issued from a family of scholars, renowned for their mastery of the Hebrew language and the quality of their liturgical works. Skill in poetry and mastery of grammar were usually characteristic of the same scholars, as evidenced by famous poets including Isaac b. Levi Ibn Mar Saul (early eleventh century), Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1164), Moses Ibn Gikatilla (second half of the eleventh century) and Jacob ben Eleazar. They were also passionate about the linguistic aspects of the biblical text and engaged in literal and grammatical exegesis. Therefore, Seniri’s work probably reflects the family tradition of Bible study and is the outcome of an analytical work on the historical books. Without an introduction or

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5 Concerning the diffusion of Rashi’s commentary, see Penkower, “The Canonization of Rashi’s Commentary”.
7 Moses Barol, *Menachem ben Simon aus Posquières und sein Kommentar zu Jeremia und Ezechiel* (Berlin: Mayer und Müller, 1907); Raymond Furth, "Le commentaire de Menahem ben Shim'on de Posquières (1191) sur le livre de Jérémie" (PhD diss., Université Jean Moulin de Lyon, 1984); Davidovitz, *Menachem ben Simon’s exegetic method*.
8 Cohen, “The Qimhi Family.”