Ma‘aseh Alexandros is a Hebrew translation of the Greek story of Alexander known as Pseudo-Calisthenes. The text contains many Greek words and exhibits a first hand knowledge of that language; it is therefore established that it was translated directly from the Greek. Ma‘aseh Alexandros exists in one manuscript, but it is also found as an interpolation in some versions of Sefer Yosippon, which was originally composed in the south of Italy in the year 953. We do not know when exactly Ma‘aseh Alexandros was inserted into Sefer Yosippon, but this was certainly there before 1448, since in that year Judah Hadassi testifies that he saw an Alexander story in Sefer Yosippon.

In Ma‘aseh Alexandros, between the death of Darius and Alexander’s campaign in India, there is a sequence of short episodes describing the travels of Alexander in various legendary places. In one such place he meets people with long necks, in another he sees a hairy man eating a woman and in yet another he finds animals with five legs. The last episode in this sequence is Alexander’s travel into the Land of Darkness.

In this land Alexander meets two big birds (תופוע) who have human faces and speak Greek. The birds tell Alexander to leave this land, since it is the place of the Holy Ones of God (ד böyle את אלוהים); one bird utters a prophecy concerning Alexander, saying that he will rule the east. Indeed, following this scene Alexander starts his Indian campaign, not before building gates on the border of the Land of Darkness, sealing it away from human reach.

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2 D. Flusser, Yosippon II, 226; idem, Ma‘aseh Alexandros, 165-184.
4 Ibid., 79-98.
5 Ibid., 217.
In this episode of the Land of Darkness we come across the Rechabites. The Rechabites are the descendants of Yonadab son of Rechab. They play a major role in the biblical book of Jeremiah in chapter 35, where they appear as a pious group that should serve as a model for the Judeans. In post-biblical Jewish sources they are portrayed as mourning for the Temple and in still later sources it is told that they will return together with the Ten Lost Tribes. It is possible that there was a non-rabbinic Jewish text about the Rechabites, which is now lost. We also find a text about the Rechabites embedded in a Christian monastic story from the Byzantine era, *The Journey of Zosimos*. 

In *Ma'aseh Alexandros* the Rechabites are mentioned in a short sentence introducing Alexander’s journey into the Land of Darkness: it is them that Alexander wants to see:

וונג במקוה ו(strpos נשא על אריא שגיטט, ותפינו קרב השלאה זורא נברא
ضارף, והבר יתמה בערכו, ויתינו אנא בויה לארא שגו רשל演化יא נברא

and he [= Alexander] arrived at the Place of Darkness, where the sun does not shine; and he wished to go there and see the people who are called *makarioi*, which are the sons of Yonadab son of Rechab, and he took counsel with his colleagues to go there with 1300 soldiers.

The parallel sentence in the Greek text reads:

After we have advanced for another two days, we came to a place where the sun does not shine. This is, in fact, the famous Land of the Blessed.

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7 M. Ish-Shalom, *Pesikta Rabbati*, Tel-Aviv 1963, addendum, section 5.
