



The *Yahad*—What is in a Name?¹

Arie van der Kooij

Instituut voor Godsdienstwetenschappen, Universiteit Leiden, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA
Leiden, the Netherlands
a.van.der.kooij@religion.leidenuniv.nl

Abstract

What does the noun *yahad* in 1QS and related documents mean, and to what does it refer? In this article, which focuses on 1QS, it is suggested that the term *yahad* is best understood against the background of the expression “sitting together” as attested in 11QT^a 57:13 (about a council in session). Furthermore, regarding the question to what kind of organization the term refers, it is argued that two patterns are to be distinguished in 1QS, the first of which is comparable to the *demos*, the national assembly, as attested in 1 Maccabees, whereas the second one is marked by the emphasis on leading priests as guardians and interpreters of the Law. The conclusion is drawn that in 1QS the noun *yahad* does not refer to the movement at large, but to the community of the fully initiated (male) members who lived at several localities.

Keywords

1QS, *yahad*; sitting together; council; organizational pattern; *demos*

I

It is a disputed question how to understand the term יָהָד (*yahad*), mainly to be found as a noun in 1QS and related documents, and to what it may refer. Does it signify the community at Qumran, or is it “an umbrella term

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for several communities of variable size”?² How to interpret related terms such as “the council,” “the Many,” “the multitude”? What do they tell us about the nature and organization of the *yahad*? Are the terms “the Many” and the *yahad* to be taken as synonyms, or are both terms to be distinguished, the *yahad* being “the word for the movement in its broadest sense,” and “the Many” as referring “to the gathering of the fully-fellowshipped members for judicial purposes”?³

An important part of the current debate concerns the interpretation of 1QS 8:1—“In the council of the community (there shall be) twelve men and three priests”: Is this note meant to describe the “council” of the community in the sense of an inner council,⁴ or is it to be seen as “an elite group” within the council of the *yahad*, on the assumption that “the council of the *yahad*” is the *yahad* itself,⁵ or is the number twelve plus three rather to be taken “as a reference to the full membership of the community” as a whole?⁶

In this contribution to the discussion, I will comment on two topics, first on the term *yahad*, and secondly on the way the structure of the *yahad* is described in 1QS. In dealing with this second point, I will distinguish two types of description as attested in 1QS. In order to understand the organizational models involved, the data will be compared with evidence to be found in other writings of the time both Jewish and non-Jewish. Because of the complexities of the relationship between 1QS and related texts such as 4Q256 and 4Q258, the focus of this article will be on 1QS. Only in a few cases I will refer to these texts.

² John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community. The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 67.

³ Alison Schofield, *From Qumran to the Yahad. A New Paradigm of Textual Development for the Community Rule* (STDJ 77; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 146.

⁴ See, e.g., J. M. Baumgarten, “The Duodecimal Courts of Qumran, Revelation and the Sanhedrin,” *JBL* 95 (1976): 59–78; Moshe Weinfeld, *The Organizational Pattern and the Penal Code of the Qumran Sect. A Comparison with Guilds and Religious Associations of the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (NTOA 2; Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1986), 16; *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1:134 (Charlesworth).

⁵ Collins, *Qumran Community*, 71.

⁶ Sarianna Metso, “Problems in Reconstructing the Organizational Chart of the Essenes,” *DSD* 16 (2009): 388–415 at 411f.; cf. Michael A. Knibb, “The Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Introduction,” *DSD* 16 (2009): 298–308 at 307.

II

The term *yahad* is well-known from the Hebrew Bible where it is used adverbially, conveying the notion of “together.” This usage is also attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), but the remarkable thing is that it also occurs as a noun in these writings, mainly so in 1QS. Usually the word is taken by scholars in the sense of “togetherness,” i.e. “community,” be it the community in Qumran, or at other places. As to the question of whether this term might go back to the Hebrew Bible, two passages in particular have been suggested from which the label *yahad* might have been drawn: Exod 19:8, and Deut 33:5.

In the Sinai narrative of Exod 19, it is stated that the people answered “together/as one (*yahdaw*),” in saying: “Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do” (v. 8). This passage is seen by some scholars as providing the background of the term *yahad* because, like the people of Israel, the Qumran covenanters “were also living together in the wilderness and [...] solemnly pledged the same loyalty to the entire Mosaic law.”⁷ Others think of Deut 33:5 (“When the heads of the people were assembled, *yahad* the tribes of Israel”) on the assumption that the term here figures as a noun—i.e., the *yahad* of the tribes of Israel—and not as an adverb. Additionally, it is taken as a parallel to the Hebrew word for “assembly” in the preceding verse (“the assembly of Jacob”).⁸

It is to be asked, however, whether these two passages in the Hebrew Bible provide a clue for the way the word *yahad* is used in 1QS and other documents belonging to the DSS. The difficulty is that these writings do not provide any evidence which might support any of these references. Moreover, it is far from certain that *yahad* functions as a noun in Deut 33:5 because, just as elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible where *yahad* occurs at the beginning of a clause, it is easily understood as “together” (“together

⁷ James C. VanderKam, “Sinai Revisited,” in *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (ed. M. Henze; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005), 44–60 at 51. See also Schofield, *New Paradigm*, 140f.; Knibb, “Introduction,” 306; D. Timmer, “Sinai ‘Revisited’ again: Further reflections on the Appropriation of Exodus 19-Numbers 10 in 1QS,” *RB* 115 (2008): 481–98 at 484f.

⁸ On Deut 33:5, see S. Talmon, “The Sectarial יחד—A Biblical Noun,” *VT* 3 (1953): 133–40 at 134f.; Schofield, *New Paradigm*, 140, and Collins, *Qumran Community*, 55.

[were] the tribes of Israel”).⁹ Hence, it is unlikely to consider *yaḥad* as parallel to the Hebrew word for “assembly” in the preceding verse. The passage of Exod 19 may represent an important one from a theological perspective, but from a philological point of view it is not clear how the expression “to answer together” might have given rise to the usage of *yaḥad* in the DSS, the more so since the word used there is *yaḥdaw*, and not *yaḥad*.

Instead of looking for the background of the term in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁰ I would like to make a proposal which is based on a particular passage to be found in the DSS, 11QT^a 57:13. It reads thus:

And twelve princes of his people shall be with him, and twelve priests and twelve levites, who shall sit with him *together* (*yošebim* . . . *yaḥad*) for judgment and for the law.

This passage of the *Temple Scroll* contains the expression *yašab yaḥad* which is not used here in the sense of “dwelling together,” but of “sitting together” because it clearly refers to the meeting of a council, a council in session.¹¹ This sheds light on the term *yaḥad* in 1QS, the more so since the *yaḥad* is depicted in this document as a community sitting together for judgment; see, e.g., 1QS 6:9. True, the sitting together for judgment is not the only thing they did together:—“They shall eat together, together they shall bless and together they shall take counsel” (6:2–3)—, but it is to be noted that the noun *yaḥad* is mainly used for people gathered together as a council. That is why the *yaḥad* is often described as “the council of the *yaḥad*,” i.e.,

⁹ For *yaḥad* at the beginning of a clause, see, e.g., Micah 2:12; Ps 98:8. The Septuagint of Deut 33:5 testifies to a reading in the sense of a preposition (“together with”), whereas the Targumim took it as an adverb.

¹⁰ The only instance in Scripture where *yaḥad* seems to have been used as a substantive, is 1 Chron 12:8, but this passage (about the heart of David as being “at one” [*leyaḥad*] with others) does not shed light on the usage in the DSS.

¹¹ Cf. Dwight D. Swanson, *The Temple Scroll and the Bible. The Methodology of 11QT* (STDJ 14; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 134. The complete wording in the passage quoted is *yošebim ‘immo yaḥad*, “(they shall) sit with him (i.e., the king) together.” The rendering in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (“who shall sit together with him”) is a bit confusing and misleading as it suggests that they will sit “together with him,” instead of: they all will sit, including the king, together. The expression used is *yašab yaḥad*, whereas the preposition ‘*im* has been added in order to include the king as a member of the council.

the *yahad* as council. As has been argued by scholars, and rightly so in my view, “the council of the *yahad* is simply the *yahad* itself.”¹² See, e.g., 1QS 2:24–25: “a *yahad* of truth” // “a *council* of holiness.”

Furthermore, the “sitting together” in council reminds one of yet another expression in 1QS, “the session (*mošab*) of the Many” (6:8, 11; 7:12; see also 1QSa 2:11). The term *mošab* is not meant here in the sense of “dwelling,” but conveys the notion of an assembly, just as the verb *yašab* in the expression noted above (*yašab yahad*).¹³ As stated above, it is disputed whether “the Many” refers to the same group as the *yahad* (as council), or whether, alternatively, both terms should not be taken as synonyms. However, 1QS contains evidence they were considered as referring to the same group. For instance, in 6:9–10 “the Many” is used parallel to “the council of the *yahad*.” The same applies to 6:16 where the expressions “council of the Many” and “council of the *yahad*” occur side by side.¹⁴

Thus, the term *yahad* makes perfect sense if understood in the light of the expression attested in the *Temple Scroll*, *yašab yahad*. If so, one can imagine that the noun *yahad* was created in order to designate a group of people “sitting together” in the sense of a council in session. The use of the term *mošab* is fully in line with this idea, the more so since there is reason to believe that the phrase “the *session* of the Many” refers to the *yahad* as council.¹⁵

¹² John J. Collins, “Beyond the Qumran Community: Social Organization in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *DSD* 16 (2009): 351–69 at 362. See also Charlotte Hempel, “Community Structures in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Admission, Organization, Disciplinary Procedures,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years. A Comprehensive Assessment* (ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1998–1999), 2:68–92 at 78; Metso, “Problems in Reconstructing,” 403f.

¹³ The word *mošab* also occurs in CD (12:19, 22; 13:20; 14:3, 17), but except for 14:3 (cf. “to sit” in 14:6!) it is not clear whether it should be translated in the sense of “dwelling,” or as “assembly.” For instance, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* offers “assembly” in most instances, but “those who live in the c[amps]” in 14:17.

¹⁴ See also Weinfeld, *Organizational Pattern*, 14; Sarianna Metso, “Qumran Community Structure and Terminology as Theological Statement,” *RevQ* 20/79 (2002): 429–44 at 442.

¹⁵ For this usage of *mošab*, compare Psalm 107:32 (“the congregation [*qahal*] of the people” // “the assembly [*mošab*] of the elders”).

III

I now come to my second subject matter: the issue of the way the composition of the *yahad* is presented in 1QS. As has been shown in current research, the way the *yahad* is organized, is marked by a strict hierarchy. It has also become clear that priests, “the sons of Aaron,” also referred to as “the sons of Zadok,” carried special and high authority within “the Many.”¹⁶ I will not go into the discussion on the expression “the sons of Zadok,”¹⁷ but would like to comment on the idea of an “elite group,” as proposed by Collins on the basis of 1QS 8:1–2. This passage reads thus:

In the council of the community (there shall be) twelve men and three priests, perfect in everything that has been revealed from all the law to implement truth, justice, judgment, compassionate love and unassuming behaviour of one to another.

The first issue at stake here is the question how to interpret the preposition “in” (“*in* the council of the community”). Does the text mean to say that the council of the community consists of twelve men and three priests, or does the passage refer to a special group “within” the community council? According to Collins the latter option is the preferable one for two reasons. First, the word “council” should not be taken in the sense of an inner council, but as the *yahad* itself (see above), and secondly, this is how they—the twelve men and the three priests—are understood in the immediate context where it says that “they shall be set apart as holy/holiness *in the*

¹⁶ Cf. Collins, *Qumran Community*, 63. See also Nathan Jastram, “Hierarchy at Qumran,” in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues. Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies Cambridge 1996. Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten* (ed. Moshe Bernstein, Florentino García Martínez, and John Kampen; STDJ 23; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 349–76.

¹⁷ On this issue, see Heinz-Josef Fabry, “Zadokiden und Aaroniden in Qumran,” in *Das Manna fällt auch heute noch: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie des Alten, Ersten Testaments* (FS E. Zenger; ed. F. L. Hossfeld and L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger; Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 201–17; Charlotte Hempel, “The Sons of Aaron in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Flores Florentino. Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (ed. A. Hilhorst, E. Puech, and E. Tigchelaar; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 207–24; eadem, “Do the Scrolls Suggest Rivalry Between the Sons of Aaron and the Sons of Zadok and If So Was It Mutual?” *RevQ* 24/93 (2009): 135–53; Metso, “Problems in Reconstructing,” 408–10, and Collins, *Qumran Community*, 60–65.

midst of the council of the men of the community” (8:11). Regarding the “they” in this passage he then states: “In the extant text, the antecedent is the group of twelve men and three priests.”¹⁸

This statement raises the question of the relationship between the “they” in 8:11 and the special group of 8:1. The extant text, 8:1–12, which is marked by a number of additions, is not easy to understand, but the following observations may suffice in order to answer our question.

1QS 8:11 is preceded by the following clause: “When these have been established in the foundation of the community... (then they will be set apart etc.)” This clause clearly refers to the passage of 8:4–10 which is introduced by the following passage: “When these are in Israel the council of the community shall be established in/on truth.” Both passages have some elements in common, namely the demonstrative “these,” and the verb “to establish” (*kwn*). Since “these” in 8:4 seems to refer to the group of twelve men and three priests in the primary section, 8:1–4, the same can be said of the “these” in 8:10, which in the whole sentence of 8:10–11 is best understood as being the same as the “they” in 8:11. Hence, it is plausible indeed that the “they” of 8:11 refers to the group of people mentioned in 8:1.

At the same time, however, the wording of 8:10—“When these have been established in the foundation of the community”—is related to what is said in 8:4–10 as a whole. The interesting thing is that this section speaks of “Aaron” and “Israel,” twice:

- in 8:5: a house of holiness for Israel
and an assembly of the holy of holies for Aaron;
- in 8:8–9: the dwelling of the holy of holies for Aaron,
a house of perfection and truth in Israel.

The distinction between “Aaron” and “Israel,” which is also typical of other passages in 1QS (see below),¹⁹ reflects a view which goes back to the priestly source in the Pentateuch. In the book of Numbers, “Israel” is depicted as the lay people consisting of twelve tribes (the list does not include the tribe of Levi!) (Num 1–2), whereas Aaron/Levi is taken as a separate group of people (Num 3–4). This means that the expression “a house... for/in Israel” stands for a particular group²⁰ of laymen, whereas the terminology

¹⁸ *Qumran Community*, 71f.

¹⁹ See also CD 1:7; 6:2.

²⁰ Cf. “house for/in.” On the term “house,” see further below.

concerning Aaron evokes the idea of a particular group of priests. Laymen and priests—this is precisely the way the group in 8:1 is described, twelve men, i.e. laymen, and three priests. One may even go further by claiming that the fifteen are to be equated with the Aaron-Israel references in 8:4–10. This is likely indeed, because first, as noted above, the “they” of 8:11 are related to the group mentioned in 8:1, secondly, the idea of being set apart as “holy/holiness” in the midst of the council of the community (8:11) fits the way “Aaron” and “Israel” are designated in 8:5–6 (a house of *holiness* for Israel, and an assembly of *holy of holies* for Aaron),²¹ and thirdly, “Aaron” and “Israel” are presented in 8:5–6 as “witnesses of truth,” that is to say, they embody the truth on which the council of the community will be established (8:5). The Aaron-Israel group of people is seen as the foundation of the community. If they have proven themselves in two years time to be of perfect behaviour they will be set apart as holy/holiness in the midst of the council as a whole (8:10–11).

All in all, the interpretation of “within” in 8:1 as proposed by Collins turns out to be the right one. The group of fifteen, twelve laymen and three priests, forms a special group within the council of the community, a group which is also designated in 8:4–10 with expressions containing the names of Aaron and Israel respectively. Although it is true that the aims of this group can hardly be distinguished from those of the broader *yahad* which was supposed to pursue a life of holiness,²² it is plausible, as Collins points out, that the “elite” group is marked by a higher degree of holiness (cf. 8:11).²³

The next question which presents itself concerns the function of this group within the *yahad*. What was the role played by this group? Collins is of the opinion that they are not to be seen as an administrative body, but rather set aside for special training.²⁴ This view is based on the idea that beside the passage of 8:1–12 there is no other evidence in 1QS “for the

²¹ The terminology used here evokes the image of the temple. On this aspect, see, e.g., Francis Schmidt, *La pensée du temple. De Jerusalem à Qoumrân. Identité et lieu social dans le judaïsme ancien* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 153; Joseph L. Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 86; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 89 (he speaks of the community “as the animate embodiment of the image of the ideal temple”).

²² Metso, “Whom Does the Term Yahad Signify?” 230.

²³ Collins, *Qumran Community*, 73.

²⁴ Collins, *Qumran Community*, 71.

existence of an elite group within the *yahad*.²⁵ However, in my view there are other passages in 1QS which are important for the issue of the role the special group may have played.

To begin with, 1QS 9:5–6 offers a statement which is of interest to our topic:

At that moment the men of the community shall set apart a holy house for Aaron, in order to form a community of holy of holies, and a house of community for Israel, those who walk in perfection

According to this passage “the men of the *yahad*” shall set apart “a holy house for Aaron” and “a house of community for Israel.” The verb used (*bdl*) has a Hiphil form, and is therefore to be translated as they “shall set apart,” and not as they “shall separate themselves.”²⁶ This passage is in line with the picture presented in 8:1–12. Just as in the latter a special group consisting of priests and laymen are said “to be set apart” (*bdl* in 9:5 as well as in 8:11) in the midst of the community (so 8:11), or by the men of the community (so 9:5–6) respectively. Just as in 8:1–12, the passage of 9:5–6 distinguishes between three groups within the *yahad*: a house for Aaron, a house for Israel, and the men of the community at large.

Other passages that testify to the same organizational pattern are 1QS 5:6–7 and 1QS 6:8–9. The former reads thus:

They should make atonement for all who freely volunteer
for holiness in Aaron and
for the house of truth in Israel and
for those who join them for community.²⁷

And the latter is about the rule of “the session (*mošab*) of the Many”:

Each one by his rank:
the priests will sit down first,
the elders next, and
the remainder of all the people will sit down in order of rank.²⁸

²⁵ Knibb, “Introduction,” 307.

²⁶ For this rendering, see DJD 10:173, and Collins, *Qumran Community*, 71 (hence, he is of the opinion that this passage does not refer to the “elite” group).

²⁷ Cf. 4Q256 and 4Q258.

²⁸ For a similar picture, see 1QSa 2:11–17.

The terminology in these passages varies, but they all share a composition of the *yahad* which consists of three groups:

- (1) the priests (6:8; 8:1); “a house/assembly/dwelling for Aaron” (5:6; 8:5–6, 8–9);
- (2) the elders (6:8); the “men,” i.e. laymen (8:1); “a house for/in Israel” (5:6; 8:5, 9);
- (3) “the remainder of all the people” (6:8–9); “those who join them for community” (5:6); “the men of the community” (9:5–6).

The passage about the seating order (6:8–9) displays a terminology which is in line with other sources of the time (see next section), whereas the other instances represent a way of describing the organization which obviously reflects priestly tradition (“Aaron”-“Israel”; see above) and which seems to have been typical of the community itself. Both types of description, though using different terms, refer to the same organization.

The passage about the seating order clearly reflects the idea of ranking and hierarchy. So “the priests” are the most important figures, followed by “the elders,” and in the third place, by the remainder of the community. There may be, however, more to it. In Antiquity the order of seating has also to do with the issue of function and position within a larger body. The fact that the priests together with the elders next in rank are seated at the most important places evokes the idea that they are the rulers or presiding officers of the assembly at large.²⁹ As I will argue in the next section, there is evidence which lends support to this suggestion.

Finally, a note on terminology may be in order. In the passages quoted above, the term “house”—a house for Aaron, a house for/in Israel—plays a prominent role. It seems to convey a specific connotation referring to a particular body of authorities, just as in the case of the term *sod*, “assembly,” which occurs as a synonym (1QS 8:8).³⁰ It brings to mind the modern expression “the House of Commons.”

²⁹ Compare for instance the use of *proedros en sumproedros* in the document quoted by Josephus in *Ant.* 14:150. Also the verb *prokathemai* in 1 Esdr 1:30; 5:60; 9:4 is of interest in this regard.

³⁰ This connotation may be based on the usage of “house” in the sense of reigning house; hence, a group or body of leading people. Compare *Tg. Isa* 8:14: “two houses of *leaders* of Israel” (for MT “two houses of Israel”).

IV

In order to reach a better understanding of the role of the special group within the community, it seems best to look for analogous organizations in the Hellenistic period, both in Judaism and elsewhere, which may shed light on the organizational pattern of the *yahad* as outlined above. Weinfeld has drawn our attention to voluntary associations in the Hellenistic world which provide analogies for the Qumran community, in particular as far as regulations are concerned.³¹ The correspondences are obvious, and it can be said that the associations referred to by Weinfeld share with the Qumran community the feature of being a voluntary movement. However, these parallels do not help us understand the references to the priests/house of Aaron and the elders/house in Israel in 1QS as presented above. Given this specific feature it is more appropriate to look for an analogy within the context of Judaism.

In my view, the group consisting of priests and laymen/elders is best understood in the light of the Jewish polity of the time, that is to say, of the way the leadership of the Jewish nation was organized. Priests, under the supreme direction of a High Priest, together with a college of elders (the *gerousia*), were heading the nation. Several documents testify to this structure. For instance, in one of the documents found at Elephantine, dating to the Persian period, we read:

(we sent a letter to your lordship and) to Johanan *the high priest and his colleagues, the priests* who are in Jerusalem, and to Ostanes the brother of Anani, and *the nobles of the Jews* (Cowley 30,18; italics mine).

A story told by Josephus may also serve as an illustration. It is the story about the meeting between Alexander the Great and the High Priest of Jerusalem (Ant. 11,329–339). When the latter, Jaddus, learned that Alexander was not far from the city, “he went out with *the priests and the body of citizens*” (Ant. 11.329; italics mine). In addition, there are several instances in 1 Maccabees which refer to “priests” and “elders” as being the representatives of the Jewish nation. For instance, 1 Macc 7:33 speaks about “some of the priests from the temple” and “some of the elders of the people.” Other instances are 12:6; 14:20, 28, 44, 47. The passage of 14:28 is interesting as it is part of the Honorary Decree dating to the year

³¹ Weinfeld, *The Organizational Pattern*. See also Collins, *Qumran Community*, 79–85.

140 B.C.E. It refers to “(the great assembly of) the priests and the people, the rulers of the nation and the elders of the land.” The phrase “elders of the land” is an explicitation of “the people” (cf. “the elders of the people” in 7:33), hence it is likely to regard the expression “the rulers of the nation” a specification of “the priests.”³²

All these passages have in common that the polity of the Jewish nation consisted of a body of representatives, made up by the priests being in office in the temple (cf. “Aaron”), as well as by the lay people, the elders (cf. “Israel”).

But what about the third group referred to above, “the remainder of all the people” (1QS 6:9)? This element too can be understood in the light of 1 Maccabees. Passages such as 12:6 and 14:20 speak not only about the priests and the elders, but mention also a third group, designated as “the rest of the *demos*.”

We touch here upon an important matter, the *demos* of the Jewish nation, i.e., the national assembly, which played a major role in 140 B.C.E., by electing Simon High Priest and Leader. Although it may seem that according to 1 Macc 14:28 (see above) the expression “the great assembly” consisted of “priests” and “people,” there is reason to believe that the phrase envisages a wider group of people. As stated in the same verse (v. 28), the decision taken at the meeting of this assembly, presumably held in the temple, was made known “to us.” Who are the “us”? The “us” is to be understood in the light of v. 25 where it is said that the *demos* asked themselves “how they could show their gratitude to Simon and his sons.”³³ The “us” then has to do, in one way or another, with the *demos*. Our passage is easily explained in the light of the political organization which was typical of Hellenistic cities of the time.³⁴ Seen from this perspective, the “great

³² See my forthcoming “The Claim of Maccabean Leadership and the Use of Scripture,” in *Jewish Identity and Politics between Maccabees and Bar Kokhba* (ed. Benedikt Eckhardt and Clemens Leonhard; Leiden: Brill, 2011).

³³ Cf. Jan Willem van Henten, “The Honorary Decree for Simon the Maccabee (1 Macc 14:25–49) in Its Hellenistic Context,” in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (ed. John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling; Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series 13; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 116–45 at 120.

³⁴ The situation as attested in 1 Macc 14 seems to differ from Hellenistic cities, because the text does not speak of an assembly of the city (Jerusalem) only, but also includes the country (cf. “the elders of the land”).

assembly” is the gathering of the *demos*, whereas the “priests” (“rulers of the nation”), and “people” (“elders of the country”) were the ones who preside this important meeting (cf. the *boule* in cities like Athens and Alexandria).³⁵

In light of these data, it is my proposal to regard the *yahad* analogous to the *demos*, the general assembly of the Jewish nation. This explains the marked presence of “priests” and “elders”/“men” in the community council.³⁶ Just as with the role “priests” and “elders” played in the constitution of the Jewish nation it is reasonable to assume that the special group within the *yahad* also had the position of leading authorities and functioned as the board of the *yahad*.³⁷ For a parallel outside the context of Judaism one may think of the constitution of a city like Carthage where “kings” (or “suffetes”) and “the house of Elders” (*to gerontion*) made up the leading and aristocratic component of the *demos*.³⁸

Interestingly, as to the leading role of a group of priests and laymen there is some evidence in other DSS which testifies to the same idea. For example, in CD 10:4–8 we read:

And this is the rule of the judges of the congregation. Ten men in number, chosen from among the congregation, for a period: four from the tribe of Levi and of Aaron and six from Israel, learned in the book of Hagy and in the principles of the covenant, between twenty-five and sixty years. And no-one over sixty years should hold the office of judging the congregation.³⁹

This passage is about a body of four priests (from the tribe of Levi and of Aaron)⁴⁰ and six men of “Israel,” who are designated as the “judges” of the

³⁵ As to Alexandria, see P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* I, Text (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 93–95.

³⁶ It is also interesting to note that an expression such as “the Many” was used in Greek sources of the time (*hoi polloi*) as a reference to the *demos*; see, e.g., Polybius, *Hist.* 6.11.12.

³⁷ It is to be noted that, unlike the term *boule* in Greek documents (*boule* in distinction from *demos*), Hebrew *‘esab* in 1QS and related documents does not refer to the board of the *yahad*.

³⁸ See Polybius, *Hist.* 6.51.1, and see also Aristotle, *Pol.* 2.8.2.

³⁹ Cf. 4Q266 and 4Q270.

⁴⁰ It seems to me that the note on “Aaron” was added in order to make clear that “priests” were meant (cf. “sons of Aaron”), and not levites.

congregation, thus clearly conveying the notion of a leading position. The congregation is here referred to as *‘edah*, and not as *yahad*, but this makes no difference since *‘edah* is virtual synonym to *yahad* or to “the council of the *yahad*” in 1QS and 1QSa.⁴¹

V

It is important to note, however, that the pattern discussed above is not the only one according to which the organization of the *yahad* is presented in 1QS. This document also testifies to an organizational type which is to be distinguished from the type dealt with so far. For instance, 1QS 5:9–10 contains the following statement:

in compliance with all that has been revealed of it to the sons of Zadok, the priests who safeguard the covenant and interpret his will, and to the multitude of the men of their covenant who freely volunteer together for this truth and to walk according to his will.

This and other passages (5:2–3, 21–22; 6:19)⁴² are marked by the distinction between two groups, “the priests,” on the one hand, and “the multitude of the men of their covenant,” on the other. The priests, also called “the sons of Zadok” as in 5:2, or “the sons of Aaron” in 5:21, are said to be the ones who safeguard the covenant, and who interpret “his will,” that is to say, the will of God as expressed in the law of the covenant, doing so in the light of what has been “revealed” to them.

The second group is called “the multitude of the men of their covenant,” i.e., of the covenant safeguarded by the priests. They are the men who follow and obey the priestly authorities. Who are these men? In 1QS 5:3 they are described as “the multitude of the men of the *yahad*.” So the question arises to which part of the *yahad* the phrase alludes. Since it goes together with the mentioning of “the priests” it should not be taken as an equivalent of “the Many,” since the latter term includes “the priests.”⁴³ It is rather a

⁴¹ See, e.g., 1QS 5:20; 1QSa 2:11–12 (“the community council” // “the congregation of Israel”); see also Schofield, *New Paradigm*, 142 note.

⁴² See also 1QSa 1:2–3 (but without the term “multitude”).

⁴³ Cf. Metso, *Textual Development*, 122; Collins, *Qumran Community*, 63. As is well known, the passage of 4Q258 2:1 which runs parallel of 1QS 5:2–3, offers “the Many” only.

reference to all the members of the *yahad* with the exception of “the priests.”⁴⁴

According to this pattern, priests are the leading authorities within the *yahad*. This is in line with other passages, such as 1QS 9:7, where it is stated that only the sons of Aaron will have authority in the matter of judgment and of goods. The idea that priests were having a leading position is well known from other sources of the time. According to Hecataeus of Abdera, a Greek historian of ca. 300 B.C.E., the priests were selected by Moses “to head the entire nation.” They should not only occupy themselves with the temple and the sacrificial cult, but were also “appointed to be judges in all major disputes.” It was to them that Moses entrusted “the guardianship of the laws and customs.”⁴⁵ They did so, of course, under the supreme direction of the High Priest. Or to quote Josephus: “With his colleagues he [i.e., the High Priest, vdk] will sacrifice to God, safeguard the laws, adjudicate in cases of dispute, punish those convicted in crime” (*Ag. Ap.* 2.194). Thus, a most important duty of the priests, together with the High Priest, was to “safeguard the laws.” This duty is described in 1QS as “safeguarding the covenant” (5:2, 9): “the priests” are presented here as the guardians of the covenant and its laws; they are the ones who “interpret his will” (5:9), which implies that they were authorized to interpret the laws of the covenant.⁴⁶

But who were these leading priests? A large number of priests, and levites, were engaged in the temple service, but given the strict hierarchy a particular group is to be looked for as carrying the highest authority. One has to think here of the priests, who are designated, both in the New

⁴⁴ Cf. H. Huppenbauer, “רב, רוב, רבים in den Sektenregel,” *TZ* 13 (1957): 136–37. The expression “the multitude of men” is typical of 1QS 5:3, 10, whereas 1QS 5:22 and related passages in 4Q258 and 4Q261 speak of “the multitude of Israel.” The passage of 4Q258 1:2, parallel to 1QS 5:2–3, offers “the Many” instead of the twofold expression “the sons of Zadok, the priests [...], and the multitude of the men of community” in the latter. Since “the Many” equals the priests + the multitude of the men of the community, as argued above, the difference is not a matter of content, but only as a kind of explicitation in 1QS.

⁴⁵ See Menahem Stern, ed., *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. Vol. 1: *From Herodotus to Plutarch* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974), 28.

⁴⁶ Cf. 1QSb 3:22–24. For the priests as interpreters of the law, see also texts such as Deut 33:10; Sir 45:17, and *Jub.* 31:15.

Testament and by Josephus, *archiereis*, “chief priests.” They were the ones who constituted the highest level of the priests acting in the temple, as we know from Josephus and rabbinic sources.⁴⁷ As has been stated by Jeremias, the “chief priests permanently employed at the Temple formed a definite body who had jurisdiction over the priesthood and whose members had seats and votes on the council (i.e. the Sanhedrin, vdK).”⁴⁸ One of the writings from Qumran, 1QM, contains a passage which is illuminating in this regard: 1QM 2:1–3 provides the following picture of the priestly hierarchy in the temple:

- The chiefs of the priests behind the High Priest and of his second (in rank), twelve priests to serve continually before God;
- The twenty-six chiefs of the divisions;
- The chiefs of the Levites to serve continually, twelve;
- The chiefs of their divisions.

The “chiefs of the priests,” representing the highest rank, are to be equated with the “chief priests” just mentioned.⁴⁹ They were the ones who, together with the High Priest, were making up the priestly rule of the Jewish nation.

In the light of these data it can be said that “the priests” of 1QS 5:2 and related passages are to be seen as leading priests having a position like the chiefs of the priests in the temple. (Interestingly, another document of Qumran, 4Q164, to which Metso has drawn attention,⁵⁰ contains a reference to “the twelve [chiefs of the priests]” as being part of the community council).⁵¹

Unlike the pattern consisting of priests, elders, and the remainder of all the people, the way of describing the structure as composed of “the priests” and “the multitude of men” reflects a strong focus on the role of the priests—without the elders—as the most important authorities. It is to be

⁴⁷ See Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus. An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (London: SCM Press, 1976), 147–80.

⁴⁸ Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, 180.

⁴⁹ Arie van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches. Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (OBO 35; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1981), 201.

⁵⁰ Metso, “Problems in Reconstructing,” 411.

⁵¹ As indicated, the phrase “the chiefs of the priests” is a reconstruction, albeit a very plausible one.

noted that this presentation is related to the role of the leading priests as the guardians of the covenant and interpreters of its laws.

As noted above, in two of the relevant passages in 1QS (5:2, 9) these priests are designated as “the sons of Zadok,” whereas in 5:21 the more common expression “the sons of Aaron” is employed. Both wordings seem to be used here synonymously,⁵² but it may well be that the former is meant to mark the legitimacy of “the priests” as the leading authorities on the basis of Ezek 44:15.⁵³

VI

In the final section, I would like to make the following concluding remarks and comments.

1. The term דן employed as a noun in 1QS makes perfect sense if understood in the light of the expression of “sitting together” in 11QT^a 57. This usage fits the *yahad* as council (cf. “the council of the *yahad*”), and is also supported by the fact that the *yahad* is presented as a community of people who were sitting together (cf. *mošab* in 6:8).⁵⁴
2. Instead of comparing the *yahad* with associations or guilds of the time, as Weinfeld has proposed, it seems more appropriate to regard the *yahad* (as council) in 1QS analogous to the *demos* in the sense of the national or general assembly. This explains the description of the organization as consisting of priests, elders, and the remainder of all the people.
3. In the light of this analogy, the special group (Collins: “elite group”) consisting of priests and laymen—i.e., representatives of the temple (priests; house of Aaron) and of the lay people (men; elders; house of/ in Israel)—is best understood as a board within the *yahad* as a whole.

⁵² This seems also to be the case in 1QSa. For the expression “the sons of Aaron,” see also the related passage in 4Q258 2:1.

⁵³ There is of course more to be said on this issue. For literature on the topic, see note 17. As to Ezek 44:15, see also CD 3:21–4:4.

⁵⁴ I fully agree with Jutta Jokiranta that 1QS has more to do “with assemblies than with communities” (Jutta Jokiranta, “An Experiment on *Idem* Identity in the Qumran Movement,” *DSD* 16 [2009]: 309–29 at 328).

- As is also indicated by the seating order in 1QS 6, the priests and the elders were the most important people within the *yahad*.⁵⁵
4. To add a note on the issue of equivalents in Greek: It has been suggested that the term *yahad* equals to *koinon*.⁵⁶ However, it seems to me that *to sunedrion* corresponds to *yahad* as it also conveys the notion of sitting together, whereas *to koinon* is rather to be seen as the equivalent of Hebrew *heber*, a term which is well known from Hasmonean coins (“the *heber* of the Jews,” presumably a reference to the *demos*).⁵⁷
 5. In light of the above, the “men of the *yahad*” in 1QS are not to be seen as making up the movement as a whole, but as referring to the fully initiated members, i.e., those who were admitted to have a seat in the *yahad*.⁵⁸
 6. The issue of celibacy is a debated matter.⁵⁹ How to explain the silence on this matter in 1QS? In my view, the silence is fully understandable because women were not supposed to be member of the *yahad*, just as this was the case with a general assembly (*demos*). The “men of the *yahad*” were just men, but not celibates.
 7. Beside the organizational type consisting of three groups (see 2), 1QS also speaks of the *yahad* as consisting of “the priests” and “the multitude of Israel/men.” This way of describing the community does not reflect another tradition, but is meant to underline the authority of the leading

⁵⁵ The numbers of the members of the board—priests, and men/elders—vary: 3 + 12 in 1QS (cf. 4Q265), 4 + 6 in CD (cf. 4Q266 and 4Q270), 12 + 12 in 4Q164 (see also 11QT^a). They all are of a symbolical nature.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., Weinfeld, *Organizational Pattern*, 13.

⁵⁷ Tessa Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (AGAJU, 48; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 54. For the term *heber*, see also J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*. Part One (HdO, 1. Abt., Bd. 21; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 347 (“community, kind of collegium or senate”).

⁵⁸ Compare Josephus, *J. W.* 2.129: “they gather together in a private dwelling place, into which none of the uninitiated is permitted to enter.” He is referring here to the common meals. For the relationship between Josephus’s Essenes and the Qumran community regarding the communal meals, see Kenneth Atkinson and Jodi Magness, “Josephus’s Essenes and the Qumran Community,” *JBL* 129 (2010): 317–42, esp. 329–33. On the meals, see also Benedikt Eckhardt, “Meals and Politics in the *Yahad*: A Reconsideration,” *DSD* 17 (2010): 180–209.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., Eyal Regev, “Cherchez les femmes: Were the *yahad* Celibates?” *DSD* 15 (2008): 253–84; Collins, *Qumran Community*, 150f.

- priests, the “chief priests,” as the guardians and interpreters of the covenant and its laws.
8. It is to be noted that 1QS testifies to a third way of describing the *yahad*, not dealt with above. This type reflects a perspective different from the two descriptions mentioned above, as it is marked by a listing of particular categories of people within the community: “priests,” “levites,” “all the people,” i.e., laymen (1QS 2:19–22). For a similar case, see CD 14:5–6 (including “the strangers,” or “proselytes,” as fourth group).
 9. The terminology to be found in 1QS 6:8–9—priests, elders, and the remainder of the people—is in line with what is known from other sources of the time. However, the wording in the other passages (1QS 5:6–7; 8:5; 8:8–9; 9:5–6) seems to be typical of the community itself. It clearly reflects priestly interests since it is not only based on the distinction between “Aaron” and “Israel,” but is also marked by expressions related to the temple (cf., e.g., “the holy of holies” in 1QS 9:6) as well as by a strong emphasis on the notion of holiness.
 10. Finally, I would like to make a brief comment on the passage about the Ten in 1QS 6:3–4:

In every place where there are ten men of the community council, there should not be missing amongst them a priest

I agree with Collins that the preposition *min* should be understood here as partitive.⁶⁰ But how to read this passage? It is clear that this passage presupposes a number of places where the men of the *yahad* were living. According to Collins, “members living in villages and towns . . . were just as much members of the *yahad* as those in a larger community” (68). Hence his idea that *yahad* is “an umbrella term for several communities of variable size” (67). As may be clear from the above, I do not share the idea of *yahad* as an umbrella term for the movement as a whole, but as a term which refers to a particular group of people, namely, “the men of the *yahad*” as defined above (see 5). So, if ten men belonging to this group, who happened to live

⁶⁰ Collins, *Qumran Community*, 68. The passage on the Ten is debated. For a summary statement of the current debate and the divergent views that has been put forward, see Charlotte Hempel, “Shared Traditions: Points of Contact between S and D,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts* (ed. Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller; STDJ 92; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 115–31 at 124 (lit.).

together at the same place—be it a city or a camp—were to meet at their own locality,⁶¹ then a priest, being an expert of the law, should not be missing.⁶² However, when the large assembly, the council of the *yahad*, was going to meet, one can easily imagine that the “men of the *yahad*,” though living at several places, gathered at a particular place (Qumran?). “Sitting together” as a council in session does not necessarily imply the living together of all its members at one and the same locality. To give an example: all those who were attending the large assembly in the year 140 B.C.E., in the temple, were not living in Jerusalem because at least some of them, “the elders of the country,” came from elsewhere. Interestingly, the distinction between a large assembly and small groups of ten is in line with what Josephus tells us about the Essenes (*J.W.* 2.145–146). According to this passage, the former should be an assembly of “not less than one hundred members,” and only the decisions reached by this meeting were immutable.

⁶¹ Compare Josephus, *J.W.* 2.146: “if ten are sitting together.”

⁶² See also CD 13:2.