The previous four chapters have been devoted to exploring the use and application of the prophetic titles nābī, ‘visionary,’ and ‘anointed one’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls. I have tracked the development of the terms from their biblical contexts through their employment in the Qumran corpus. In particular, I have focused on the modified literary forms in which some of these terms appear. Thus, for example, the terms ‘visionary’ and ‘anointed one’ appear in the Qumran corpus as prophetic designations in ways generally unknown in their original biblical contexts. By contrast, nābī reflects little literary development, since by the late biblical writings it had already come to be understood as a general designation for all types of prophets. Alongside the analysis of these literary forms, I have concentrated on the portrait of the ancient figures as they are recontextualized in the Qumran texts. The conceptualization of the ancient prophets spans across the various titles employed. Thus far, the ancient prophets have been assigned two primary tasks: to foretell the future and to mediate divine law.

The present chapter continues this same approach by focusing on the final two prophetic designations that appear in the Qumran corpus: ‘man of God’ and ‘servants.’ Both of these terms regularly appear in the Hebrew Bible as prophetic epithets. They likewise appear in several places in the Dead Sea Scrolls as prophetic designations. Unlike the use of ‘visionary’ and ‘anointed one,’ however, the employment of the terms ‘man of God’ and ‘servants’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls follows closely their application in the Hebrew Bible. In particular, the range in which the term ‘man of God’ is used in the Qumran corpus is closely related to its appearance in late biblical writings.
The Prophetic ‘Man of God’ (איש האלהים): From the Bible to Qumran

The ‘Man of God’ in the Hebrew Bible

The expression אֵלֶּה אִישֵּׁיinea appears seventy-six times in the Hebrew Bible.1 The individuals who are thusly identified include Moses,2 Samuel,3 David,4 Elijah,5 Elisha,6 Shemaiah,7 Hanan b. Igdaliah,8 as well as five anonymous individuals.9 There is a strong clustering of this term in the prophetic narratives found in the books of Kings, with a small smattering of uses in other Deuteronomistic literature and late biblical texts. Scholars have long speculated on the full meaning and implications of this term, though no consensus has been reached. In particular, the apparent overlap with the more general term נָבִי often frustrates attempts to define more precisely what makes specific individuals ‘men of God.’ Likewise, etymological analysis (usually applied to the other prophetic titles) supplies little due to the restricted semantic range of the title.10

Scholarly attempts to ascertain the precise meaning of ‘man of God’ fall into two larger trajectories: those that view the expression as specific to prophetic activity and those that widen its possible referents beyond prophets. Among those that understand it as a prophetic title, some discount the possibility that there is any special meaning for the term. Rather, it is merely a synonym for the more general prophetic

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2 Deut 33:1; Jos 14:6; Ps 90:1; Ezra 3:2; 1 Chr 23:14; 2 Chr 30:16.
3 1 Sam 9:6–10.
4 Neh 12:24, 36; 2 Chr 8:14.
5 1 Kgs 17:18, 24; 20:28 (?); 2 Kgs 1.
6 2 Kgs 4; 5:8, 14–15, 20; 6:6, 9–10, 15; 7:2, 17–19; 8:2, 4, 7, 8, 11.
7 1 Kgs 12:22; 2 Chr 11:1.
8 Jer 35:4. This passage refers to “Hanan b. Igdaliah, the man of God.” I understand the title to apply to Hanan, rather than his father.
9 Jud 13:6, 8; 1 Sam 2:27; 1 Kgs 13; 2 Kgs 23:16–17; 2 Chr 25:7, 9.
10 Some scholars have appealed to non-biblical philological parallels, though with little success. See Edouard Dhorme, “Première Traduction des Texts Phéniciens de Ras Shamra,” RB 40 (1931): 36 (Ugaritic evidence); Lindblom, Prophecy, 60–61 (Akkadian evidence).