Sanballat and Tobiah Challenging Boundaries in the Book of Nehemiah

Abstract: Sanballat and Tobiah are presented as opponents of Nehemiah in the Book of Nehemiah. Simultaneously they are interacting with Judahites. This challenges the paradigm of exclusivism which this book has been read from. It relates to different strategies of either assimilation, where the people of Judah interacted with their neighbours or separation, where they tried to maintain their distinct identity. What is at stake, is the very identities of Judeans and Israelites in a community at odds with itself.