

# Foreign Nations in the Wisdom of Ben Sira: A Jewish Sage between Opposition and Assimilation (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies)

Marko Marttila



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The biblical concept of Israel as the Chosen People raises the difficult question about the fate of other nations. Earlier wisdom literature did not argue in national terms but in Ben Sira we have the first known sage who combined wisdom instructions and the history of his people. Ben Sira s work gives valuable insight into the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the first quarter of the second century BCE. Ben Sira attempted to defend the religious and cultural heritage of the Jewish people in order to avoid assimilation, but at the same time he acknowledged wisdom traditions of other nations.

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