

Synesios von Kyrene

Polis - Freundschaft - Jenseitsstrafen

Briefe an und über Johannes



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Synesius of Cyrene (approx. 370-413 AD) was one of the most remarkable personalities of his time. Born into the local elite of the Cyrenaica, he became not only a philosopher-writer with a very personal perspective on Neoplatonism, but also defended his home town as a military commander in local wars and, finally, was made a bishop with multiple administrative and pastoral duties. Synesius' epistolographic work shows his literary erudition and sophisticated rhetorical skills, but also reflects the social, political, religious and intellectual climate of his age. This volume presents nine of his letters, all of which are addressed to or mention a person named "Joannes" (it is not known if this is always the same person). The longest piece (Ep. 43), an exhortatory oration in the form of a letter, enjoins "Joannes," who is said to have committed murder, to hand himself over to the judges. Here more popular religious beliefs are subtly combined with a superb blending of otherworldly images from Plato's dialogues. The volume addresses itself equally to readers seeking a first approach to the multifaceted letters of Synesius as to those already acquainted with Late Antique Literature. The literary, historical and religious background of the texts is discussed in 6 interpretative essays.

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