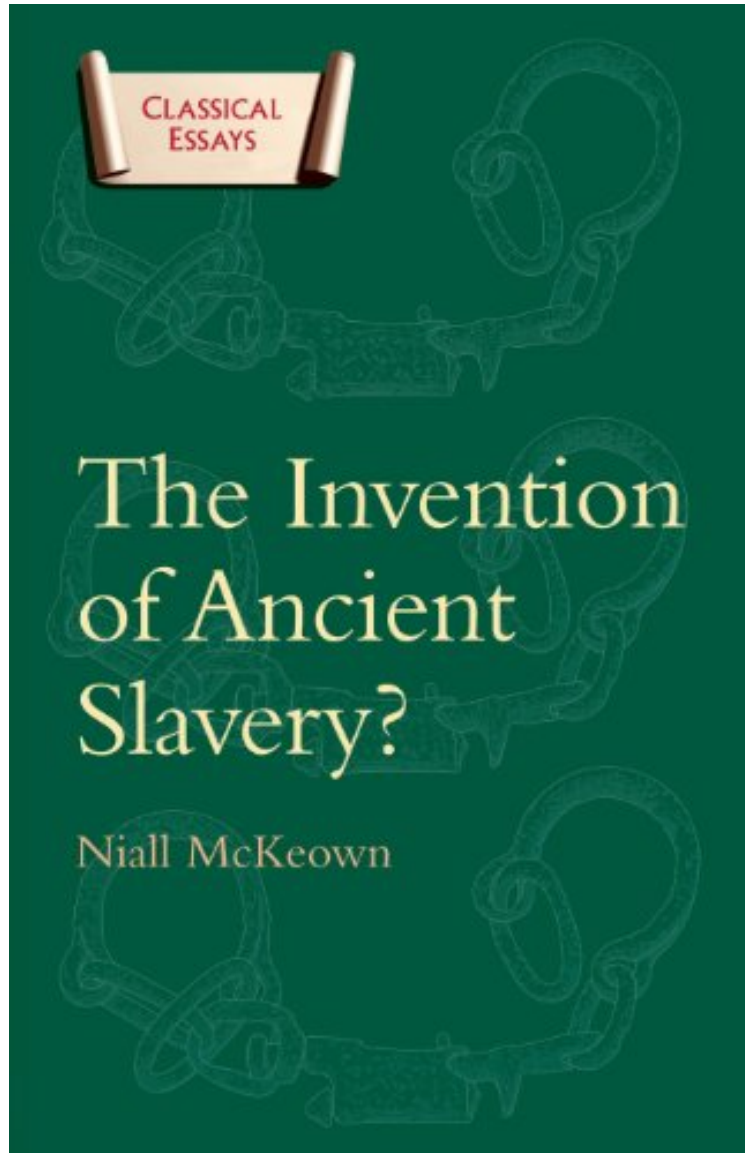


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The Invention of Ancient Slavery (Classical Essays)

Niall McKeown

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Niall McKeown : The Invention of Ancient Slavery (Classical Essays) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Invention of Ancient Slavery (Classical Essays)*:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A scholarly, meticulous discussionBy Midwest Book ReviewNiall McKeown (Lecturer in Ancient History, University of Birmingham) presents *The Invention of Ancient Slavery?*, a sampler of modern theories concerning ancient slavery as circulated among scholars and students today. In the quest to uncover the "reality" of ancient slave life, *The Invention of Ancient Slavery?* examines surviving evidence

(particularly where Roman slavery is concerned) such as ancient drama, legal regulations, poetry, letters, philosophy, inscriptions, and the work of Greek and Roman historians. How should modern historians reconstruct the past from such materials, and what effect does the nature of the evidence have upon their job? To what extent do modern preconceptions affect our understanding of ancient sources? A scholarly, meticulous discussion especially recommended for college libraries and ancient history courses, written to stoke critical thinking of human history.

Slavery was a fundamental institution in the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans. It has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, but little agreement. The modern debate has sometimes been bitter - unsurprisingly, given its background in the abolitionist atmosphere of the 19th century. As we enter the 21st century the battleground has started to shift: can the historian hope to reconstruct the life of ancient slaves, or just fragments of their image in Greek and Roman literature? More than most topics, the ancient slave has therefore attracted constant modern redefinition. But how far do we see the slave better, and how far do we, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, use the idea of the slave to offer a refracted image of ourselves?

McKeown has written a stimulating book that will challenge its readers to reflect on the difficulties inherent in writing the history of ancient slavery. Scholars who specialize in ancient slavery will inevitably disagree with some of McKeown's interpretations of both the ancient evidence and modern scholarship, but will still benefit from his critical orientation. Arguably, the book will be of most use to those who teach classes on ancient slavery, for it will force students to deal head-on with questions of methodology that are central to any effort to reconstruct the past. About the Author Niall McKeown is Lecturer in Ancient History, University of Birmingham.