

The han dynasty and the roman empire

[History](#), [Empires](#)



The Han dynasty stressed effectiveness in their tools, as well as using technology to prevent natural disasters and thrive in their society. The Romans, however, marveled at their civilization's innovations, but rejected idolizing those who worked with tools and crafts. The control of water was significant in both the Han dynasty and the Roman Empire (Docs 1 and 8). Han officials believed water conservation officers and hydraulic engineers should work together to prevent flooding (Doc 1). The writer requested the formation of water conservation officers in each district, and inspections of waterways, walls, etc.

Along with necessary repairs (Doc 1). Document 1 is a letter from a Han government official concerning flood prevention. Considering the status of the writer of document 1 and the fact that the letter is instructional, it seems reasonable to assume he knows what he's talking about. The Romans also used water engineering, aqueducts, to supply the cities with water (Doc 8). Frontinus boasted about the abundance of water for " public and private uses (Doc 8). " As a water commissioner, the writer of document 8 only talks about the positives of the water system, possibly to make himself look respectable in the eyes of his superiors.

An additional document from a common citizen of Rome describing how aqueducts positively affect their life would support Frontinus, who only provides an official government point of view. Both the Roman and the Han officials wanted to use technology to control water for the benefit of the citizens, but for the Han dynasty, it was more necessary to thrive. Huan Tan, an upper-class Han philosopher, speaks of Fuxi, the wise emperor and

inventor of the pestle and mortar (Doc 3). After Fuxi's invention, there was an improvement in technology with the creation of water power (Doc 3).

The attitude toward technology in this document is as technology as a "gift" from enlightened emperors. Huan Tan, because a philosopher, would praise technology from the emperor as Confucian philosophy views the emperor as a kind father-figure. Huan Tan may have written this document praising the emperor as a way of flattering the current government in hopes of achieving a higher official position. Like Fuxi, Tu Shih, governor of Nanyang, was also a wise and enlightened leader (Doc 4).

Tu Shih developed a water-powered blowing-engine that was a labor-saving device, to facilitate cast-iron agricultural implements. "Tu Shih loved the common people and wished to save their labor" (Doc 4). Technology in this document is also seen as a "gift" from enlightened leadership. The writer of this document could have been trying to please the emperor in order to reach a higher position in office. Both of these documents show that the Han dynasty saw technology as a way to improve in their society and for the goodness of their people.

Cicero, an upper-class Roman political leader describes those who work with their hands as vulgar or common, believing that gentlemen do not work with their hands (Doc 5). Cicero speaks of hired-workers and craftsmen as having unfit occupations (Doc 5). Technology is perceived as necessary in this document, but not fit for enlightened minds. Cicero cannot accurately judge technology's impact because he is a member of the elite and does not work with technology. According to Seneca, an upper-class Roman philosopher, technology takes being smart, but not enlightenment (Doc 7).

Seneca does not believe in the importance of individual technological creations and believes there is a difference between those who work with their hands and those who work with their minds (Doc 7). Both documents show negative Roman attitudes and are degrading towards technology. Huan Guan, a Han government official, suggests that good government should correct the situation of sub-standard tools (Doc 2). Rather than him being negative towards technology, he is being negative towards the government's role. He believes that technology is vital to peasant production and is the government's responsibility to support it (Doc 2).

Plutarch, a Roman high official describes Roman leader, Gaius Gracchus' improved road building in a glorifying report (Doc 6). Technology according to this document has a practical side, but also one of aesthetics (Doc 6). As a high-ranking official, Plutarch praises another political leader possibly yearning to obtain a promotion. Both documents show technology as necessary, but the Han dynasty shows a need for technology and the Roman empire makes improvements that are not necessarily vital to their society.

Additional documents by women would have been helpful in exploring whether there are similarities or differences in Han and Roman attitudes according to gender. Also, documents by workers or the lower class would have given different perspectives toward attitudes and views on technology, instead of high officials who do not personally work with technology. The Han dynasty, because of natural disasters and the good of their civilization, were pushed to improve on technology while the Roman empire admired their great, unneeded innovations.