

# Han and roman attitudes toward technology

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From the around second century B. C. E. to the third century C. E. the Han and Roman attitudes toward technology were different in how they took pride in some of their inventions with the Han accepting the role of the craftsmen and their technology they created showed in documents 1-4. However, the Romans did not do as much of this and did not care as much about the technology and how it could be utilized. This was shown in documents 5-8. Both Han China and the Romans did show a similarity in how their technology, even though it was viewed differently, helped to develop their Empires.

Throughout these eight documents, everyone one of these had male from the upper class writing the document. I think an additional document that could be useful in answering the question of what the Han and Roman attitudes toward technology were would be a person from the lower class. This document would be useful because that the upper class did not show interest about the technology that a commoner might have used such as hand tools and other common working items. The Han utilized their technology more to the fullest and took pride in what they invented.

In Document 1 it shows that technology was not just used as a luxury, but was used a necessary way to help prevent disaster. In this case the Han were trying to prevent flood and had walls canals and pools. There were also people assigned to inspect and repair these technologies to help their people by preventing floods. The Han took pride in ability to keep their people safe from floods and other disasters. Document 2 focuses more on how the government monopolized the making of tools and made them more cheaply and with less quality than the actual workers themselves did.

Then the government raised prices on iron and some of the poor had to digress to older technology. Two examples of this is iron became too expensive and wooden plows were now being used instead of iron. Another example is that salt was too expensive and they couldn't afford to season their food. Huan Guan takes pride in the technology and feels that the government is not utilizing it proper and feels that the technology is going to waste. Document 3 shows pride in their invention of the pestle and the mortar and how it helped to create very useful technology where, " The efficiency was ncreased ten times" then later on, " Benefit was increased a hundredfold. "

Document four commends the technology and its usefulness directly contrasting with Document three's point of view. A reason this may be is that it is government-sponsored and the government is trying to make itself look good. The Romans, however, were not as interested and shows little regard with how technology can affect them. Document five shows this where Cicero shows no admiration of craftsmen or any of their inventions. He says, " All craftsmen spend their time in vulgar occupations. Cicero and the upper class don't really have interest in craftsmen technology. Document seven suggests craftsmen did something that anybody could have done and does not really respect them. He is implying that if the upper class doesn't need the technology, it isn't important. Now, Plutarch, on the other hand, was very satisfied with the technology of the roads and how nice they are in document six. He brags of Mile Markers and how this technology can be used by everybody. Frontinus was also very proud of the technology in Rome. He

specifically boasted of the aqueducts and said that they were better than the pyramids of Egypt.

This opinion may be a little bias though, because he is the water commissioner for the city of Rome. Even though the Hans and Romans had different views on the use of technology, both of these empires benefitted greatly from the technology that was invented in this time. Plutarch was very excited about the roads in document six, and he had very good reason to be. The roads were kept in very good condition that allowed them to travel throughout their entire empire. This was useful for delivering food across the empire in time of famine and also helped them to travel easier and quicker in time of battle.

The Han's technology also helped them to grow as an Empire and keep their people safe as shown in document one. They had walls, canals, and workers specifically designated to prevent floods. What is shown in these documents is that the Han and Romans have different values placed on technology, but also shows how they view the craftsmen and the people that may benefit from the technologies. The Han valued their technology more and therefore placed more respect on the people who invented, whereas the Romans didn't not value the technology or the craftsmen nearly as much.