During the time of the Han Dynasty and Roman Empire large centralized land empires were developing and expanding for the first time such as the Persians in the Middle East and Mauryan in India. During this time long distance trade was occurring, for example the Silk Road and Mediterranean Sea routes, which helped strengthened and increased the wealth of these expanding land empires. The Han and Roman both shared positive attitudes towards technology, seeing it as a way to assist the government and further establish its power. However the Han and Romans differed in their view of the workers using and creating this technology.

The Han Dynasty had a positive view of technology it was used to both strengthen the power of the government and improve the life of their citizens. A Han government official in the 2nd Century BCE describes the way the government assisted in creating and managing flood protection technology, which demonstrates the positive view of technology by the Han government as a way to improve the lives of its citizens. As an official the author of this document is likely concerned with being clear about the type of work and workers required to ensure flood protection is effectively provided.(Doc1). Over the next 400 years Han philosopher Huan Tan and a government sponsored history of the Han Dynasty describe advancements in technology relating to food and metal production. The History of the Early Han was written somewhere around 200 C.E. when the Han Dynasty was in its decline and because it was a government sponsored history it might be trying to convince others in the empire that the Han Dynasty still held the Mandate of Heaven and should continue to rule. Both of these documents demonstrate how the Han view these advancements in technology positively as they make the lives of citizens easier while also dramatically increase food and metal production, which helps the government controlled economy(Doc 3 & 4).

The Roman Empire viewed technology positively due to it could help the state maintain its power. Frontinus, a Roman general and water commissioner for the city of Rome, describes the system of aqueducts that bring water to Rome from far away mountains with great pride. This document demonstrates the ways in which technology has been used to help to demonstrate the power of the Roman state by comparing its aqueducts to the creations to other great powers and provide the water that was essential to running this state. This document was created during the height of the Pax Romana and can be seen as an attempt by Roman official to demonstrate the extent to which Rome was thriving during this time(DOC 6). The map of the Roman Imperial roads show the size and scope of this road system, which demonstrate the Romans positive view of technology as these roads could be used for both aiding trade and movement of military troops, both of which are important to helping maintain control of Roman territory(DOC 7). The Roman Imperial Road system and the Persian Royal Road system benefited both of these empires in similar ways, as both helped these empires unify a diverse population while also maintaining control of their large empires.

In spite of their similarities the Han and Romans had very different views of the people using and creating this technology, with the Han more positive and the Romans more negative.  A Han government official names Haun Guan describes the production of iron goods and salt. This document demonstrates an incredible amount of respect for the people who created the tools used as the official says they are much worse now that they are being created by government controlled convict labor as opposed to when they were being made by peasant labor(DOC 2). This is contrasted by the Roman Political Cicero who describes the workers and workshops responsible for creating craft goods negatively. He calls the work vulgar and unbecoming, which demonstrates how lowly the creators of these tools and the people who use them are viewed in Roman society(DOC 5). The Roman Empire relied mostly on slave labor for the production of agricultural goods and many craft goods, which caused a lower view of the technology they used and created and also little support from the government to support improvements to these tools. Huan Tan and the History of the Early Han Dynasty also describe the creation and efficiency due to advancements in technology, which demonstrates a concern for the workers and farmers who would rely on these tools and gives credit to the people responsible for their creation.(DOC 3 & 4).

Han and Roman attitudes towards technology were both positive largely because of the way it helped strengthen their government power and control over its citizens. The attitudes of these empires differed dramatically in how they viewed the people who used and created tools and other forms of technology.