

Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China

Educators' Resource Guide



Standing Archer

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Earthenware

Excavated from Pit 2, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1997

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 002818

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How to Use This Guide

The resources in this guide present important exhibition themes and provide historical context for key objects. The information and activities relate most directly to the Virginia Standards of Learning for History and Social Science for Second and Third Grade and World History I.

- We have selected three – four objects from each of the three sections of the exhibition. The information can be used to help you prepare for a visit, or as a guide during your visit.
- There are a variety of themes that can be explored throughout the exhibition:
 - Animals
 - Materials
 - Technology
 - Power
 - People
 - Funerary Practices
- **Note that the exhibition is not displayed in chronological order.** It opens with an introduction to the First Emperor and objects found in his mausoleum complex. The second section covers 500 years of Qin (state) history, before the First Emperor was born. The third section highlights terracotta figures and weapons found in the Emperor's mausoleum complex.
- **TIP:** If you plan to use this guide during your visit, encourage students to look closely at the objects and talk about what they see. **You can use the activities at the end of the packet** to encourage close looking, observation, questioning, describing, and exchanging knowledge with a partner or in small groups. We want students to combine what they see with what is known about the object to form a deeper understanding of the object's importance.
- We hope to spark curiosity and creativity and if students come away wishing to know more about ancient China and the First Emperor, we consider that a successful visit!

Please make sure you have arranged for your group's visit ahead of time, reserved a docent if desired, and secured your tickets by visiting our website or contacting Tour Services at (804) 340-1419 or tourservices@vmfa.museum

Docent-Guided Tours: FULL AS OF 12-1-17 *Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China* exhibition guided tours are led by VMFA docents and are available to student groups of ten or more. If you have planned a docent-guided tour, consider using this guide in the classroom to prepare your students for the visit.

Teacher-Directed Tours: Teachers are welcome to lead student groups with adult chaperones. Students in grades 5 -12 can break into small groups and use the floor plan of the exhibition (see page 5) to locate and investigate key objects. We recommend that teachers and/or chaperones facilitate the visit with students in grades K - 4. We require one adult for every ten students and ask that you divide your students into groups of no more than ten students, each accompanied by an adult chaperone.

Activities for your Teacher-Directed Tour: Each teacher and chaperone should print and bring a complete copy of the resource guide in order to read additional information as needed. Activity sheets for students can be found on pages 31-38. Each student should have a clipboard, pencil, and appropriate activity sheets. The activities provided in this guide may be used with most objects throughout the exhibition. *Note: Tour Services has a limited number of clipboards and pencils available upon request.*

Audio Guide Transcripts: Transcripts and audio files of the Adult and Family audio guides are available on VMFA's website. Audio tours are free if streaming from your own device, and wands can be rented at the entrance of the exhibition for \$5 each.

- Adult Audio Guide: <https://vmfa.museum/tours/terracotta-army-general-audio-tour/>
- Family Audio Guide: <https://vmfa.museum/tours/terracotta-army-family-audio-tour/>

Film: There is a short film shown in a room at the beginning of the exhibition. There is no voiceover, and it is not a required stop. You may preview the video here:

<http://education.asianart.org/explore-resources/video/from-state-empire>

Qin Dynasty: From State to Empire

Run time: 3 min, 15 sec

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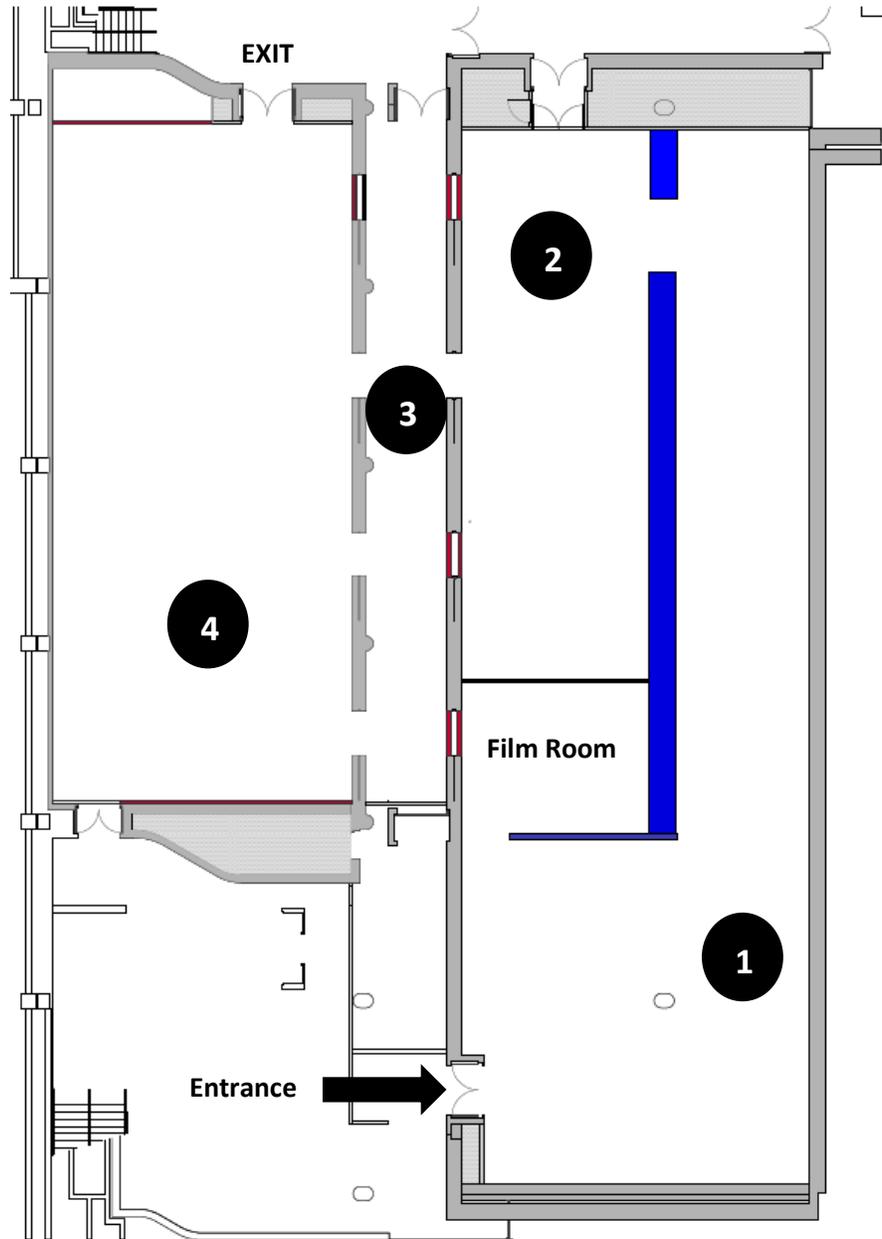
Floor Plan

Room 1
Section I: The First Emperor and Unification of
China

Room 2
Section II: Birth of the Qin Empire

Room 3
Section II: Birth of the Qin Empire

Room 4
Section III: Quest for Immortality



Lower Level

Exhibition Overview

China's terracotta army, consisting of nearly 8,000 life-size figures, is one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the 20th century. After farmers outside of Xi'an in 1974 stumbled upon shards of terracotta figures, archaeologists unearthed the astounding army created to accompany Ying Zheng (259-210 BC), China's First Emperor, or Qin Shihuang, in the afterlife. Presented in three sections, this exhibition explores Qin Shihuang's rise to power, the history of the Qin state, and the emperor's quest for immortality. The First Emperor's legacy endures in the archaeological treasures on view in the exhibition as well as the bold and lasting reforms of his historic, pivotal reign, which ended years of turmoil and unified China. The exhibition presents more than 130 works, drawn from fourteen museums and archaeological institutes throughout Shaanxi Province, where major Qin capital cities once flourished.

Pronunciation Guide

Chinese pronunciations related to *Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China*

Qin: chin

Ying Zheng: ying jeng

Qin Shihuang: chin shu-hwong

Xi'an: see-an

Zhou: joe

Shaanxi: shan-see

Quick Facts:

- The First Emperor's mausoleum complex is a necropolis, or a large cemetery of an ancient city, and measures approximately 38 square miles in its entirety. That is more than half the size of the City of Richmond!
- The First Emperor's mausoleum complex sits at the foot of Mount Li, near Xi'an.
- More than 700,000 workers constructed the mausoleum complex over 38 years of Ying Zheng's reign as both king and emperor, from about 246 – 208 BC.
- The mausoleum complex includes the tomb mound, ritual structures, a palace, an armory, an entertainment arena, stables, and a garden pond, as well as **three pits containing the terracotta army**.
- The discovery of the terracotta army was made in 1974--farmers digging a well in a village one mile east of the mausoleum's wall uncovered shards of terracotta sculptures. This led to the excavation of the terracotta army. Nearly 8,000 life-size sculptures are estimated to be buried in these three pits.
- To date approximately 20 percent of the figures buried have been excavated—that's about 1,300 of the 8,000 estimated to be buried in the three pits.
- The figures were originally painted in bright colors, which have peeled off or faded over time.
- Today the Emperor's **tomb remains undisturbed**, and its contents are a mystery.

Introduction

Spanning more than 500 years of history, from 800 to 200 BC, the exhibition furthers our understanding of Qin culture and its impact. Although the Qin dynasty collapsed shortly after the First Emperor's death in 210 BC, his influence shaped succeeding dynastic systems in China for two thousand years. These objects not only tell the story of the Qin state and its expansion under the leadership of the First Emperor, but they also reveal ancient Chinese burial customs and belief in the afterlife.

Many of the objects in this exhibition were discovered in tombs and intended to serve their owners in the afterlife. The First Emperor had been preparing for the afterlife since ascending the throne as king of Qin at age thirteen. The mausoleum complex represents Qin Shihuang's goal of preserving his legacy as well as his deep belief in the afterlife; everything the emperor had in life was to accompany him into the afterlife. While the practice of burying funerary objects with individuals dates as far back to China's Neolithic period (c. 10,000 – 2,000 BC) and carried over to later periods, the First Emperor's terracotta army and their astounding level of detail and realism was unprecedented in ancient Chinese sculpture and funerary artwork.

Section I: The First Emperor and Unification of China

Introduction to Section I

At the age of thirteen, Ying Zheng (259-210 BC) became king of Qin, one of seven states ruled by the Zhou dynasty. In a series of military campaigns, the Qin conquered the other six states, ending the Warring States period (475-221 BC). When Ying Zheng proclaimed himself the First Emperor of Qin, or Qin Shihuang, he established China's imperial system. In one of his first measures to ensure the success of his reign, the First Emperor turned to Chinese cosmology and its Five Elements (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth), selecting water and its corresponding color, black, to represent the Qin dynasty.



Five Phases of Chinese Cosmology

In forming China's first centralized government, the First Emperor implemented a series of cultural, political, and economic reforms.

- He divided his empire into thirty-six districts.
- To further unify and strengthen the new nation, he ordered the creation of a universal system for writing, a national currency, and standard units for weights and measurements to promote trading across the empire.
- He also ordered construction of a national network of roads and the Great Wall.

Section I Overview

- Section I recounts the First Emperor's rise to power out of the Qin state, as well as the political, economic, and cultural reforms implemented by the Qin court after the unification of the country.
- Presented in this section are objects excavated from the First Emperor's mausoleum complex, including a bronze chariot, battle bell, weapons, and gold and silver horse ornaments.
- Also shown are bronze coins, units of weight and measurement, seals and sealing clays with Chinese characters in seal script, and a model of granary, representing agricultural development in the Qin dynasty.

Section I: The First Emperor and Unification of China (Room 1)



Chariot No. 1 with Horses (replica)

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Bronze, pigment

H. (59.9 in.) L. (88.6 in.) W. (70.5 in.)

Excavated from Pit of Bronze Chariots, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1980

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, MMYL007

Themes:

Power: The chariot served not only as one of the most important weapons used by the Qin army, but also as a status symbol. Luxurious chariots, which would have belonged to Qin Shihuang, royals, and nobles, were drawn by four horses and decorated with metal and pigment.

Technology: The Qin excelled in many vital technologies, including sophisticated chariot production. Archaeological data reveals that a Qin chariot drawn by two or four horses would have featured two wheels with wooden spokes, a carriage, and a single shaft with a horizontal drawbar.

- The First Emperor planned to continue his rule in the afterlife, so he wanted to make sure everything that surrounded him in life was buried with him, including weapons and armor.
- The chariot was an important part of the Qin army. Four types of chariots have been excavated from the First Emperor's Mausoleum Complex, each of them serving different purposes.
- Heavy or command chariots would have had charioteers armed with dagger axes. This half life-size bronze chariot is a copy of what is known as a light or a tall chariot.
- This chariot is drawn by four horses and driven by an unarmored, standing charioteer equipped with a sword. A crossbow is mounted on the side of the chariot box and an umbrella serves as a canopy to protect the driver from the sun.
- Although the original chariots are too fragile and precious to travel outside of China, on view throughout this exhibition you will see real pieces from the Emperor's chariots—such as gold buttons for horse harnesses, bridle ornaments, and horse bells.

Note: This object is also featured on the Adult and Family Audio Guides.

Section I: The First Emperor and Unification of China (Room 1)



Long Sword

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Bronze

L. (37.2 in.)

Excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1990

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 002522

Themes:

Materials: Bronze was the most important metal used in Qin Shihuang's time. A mixture of copper and tin, bronze was used to make tools, weapons, and ritual vessels.

Technology: The Qin used bronze to make many of their weapons. Bronze-casting in ancient China took many steps and required a specialized workforce of miners, metallurgists, and craftsmen.

- One of the ways the First Emperor showed his power was through the military strength of the Qin army.
- Bronze swords were an important weapon in the Qin army and the military issued swords only to high-ranking officials.
- Nearly 40,000 bronze weapons have been excavated in the First Emperor's mausoleum complex and many of these swords are still razor-sharp!
- Both the handle and blade of this example were formed in a single bronze cast and treated afterward with chromium oxide. This chromium coating process strengthened the blade and prevented corrosion, predating the modern usage of oxidized chrome by over 2,000 years.

Section I: The First Emperor and Unification of China (Room 1)



Battle Bell

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Bronze

Overall H. 10.2 in.

Excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1980

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 00879

Themes:

Material: Bronze was the most important metal used in Qin Shihuang's time, even more important than gold. A mixture of copper and tin, bronze was used to make tools, weapons, and ritual vessels.

Animals: Representations of animals are some of the earliest forms of decoration in Chinese art. Animals are often used as symbols that have a special meaning.

- This battle bell was excavated from the First Emperor's mausoleum.
- The Qin military used bells and drums on the battlefield to signal commands and formations.
- The bell would have been mounted upside down on a wooden shaft and struck with a mallet to make sounds: different parts of the bell produce a distinct tone when struck.
- Where and how many times the bell was struck conveyed commands to pause, retreat, or cease fire.
- This bell has ornate dragon designs covering the surface. Dragons are believed to symbolize luck, power, and wisdom in ancient China.

Section I: The First Emperor and Unification of China (Room 1)



Weight Inscribed with Two Edicts, 209 BC

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Bronze

H. (2.9 in.) Dia. (2.1 in.)

Excavated from the Administrative Site, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1975

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 2787

Themes:

Power: Qin Shihuang exerted his power through remarkable innovations that helped consolidate his rule and unified the country.

Materials: Bronze was the most important metal used in Qin Shihuang's time, even more important than gold. A mixture of copper and tin, bronze was used to make tools, weapons, and ritual vessels.

- This bell-shaped weight is an example of one of the ways the First Emperor unified the states and made trading easier.
- The First Emperor issued an order that weights, measurements, money, and writing must be the same, or standardized, throughout the empire.
- Before the First Emperor came to power, each state used their own system of weights, measurements, and money. Imagine what it would be like if every state in the U.S. used different coins and measured things differently? It could make it very difficult to purchase items from other places.
- Bell-shaped weights like this one became the standard units of measurement. The weight would hang on one side of a balance scale while what was being measured would sit on the other side. Once balanced, you knew how much something weighed and therefore cost.
- Following the First Emperor's regulation of systems of measurements, his successor, Huhai (r. 209–207 BC), ordered that bell-shaped weights be cast to serve as standardized units for measuring. Chiseled onto the exterior of this hollow seventeen-facet weight are two sets of official edicts: a forty-character edict issued in 221 BC by the First Emperor and the sixty-character edict issued in 209 BC by Huhai. The following is a translation of the inscription:

(In the 26th year [221 BC], the Emperor unified all vassal states under heaven and the people are in great peace. The title of Emperor is established and the edict is issued to chancellors [Wei] Zhuang and [Wang] Wan to regulate standardized measures and weights, clarifying the incoherent, missing, and confusing and transforming variety into oneness.)

- This particular weight is one of three excavated from a site of offices and housing for administrative officials, situated between the western inner and outer walls of the mausoleum complex.

Note: This object is also featured on the Adult and Family Audio Guides.



Coin from Qin Inscribed with “Banliang”

Warring States period (475–221 BC) - Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Bronze

Diameter: (1.1 – 1.4 in.)

Excavated at Yuchi site, Qin Shihuang’s Mausoleum, 1978

Gift of Chen Zunxiang, 1981

Emperor Qin Shihuang’s Mausoleum Site Museum, 005529

Shaanxi History Museum, 81.149(2)

Themes:

Power: Qin Shihuang exerted his power through remarkable innovations that helped consolidate his rule and unified the country.

Material: Bronze was the most important metal used in Qin Shihuang’s time. A mixture of copper and tin, bronze was used to make tools, weapons, and ritual vessels.

- Another reform made by the First Emperor during his reign was the standardization of currency.
- Before the First Emperor unified China, people used a variety of items for money, including tortoise and cowrie shells, pearls, and textiles. People also used coins, but each region made them in different shapes, including knives and spades. You can see examples on-view in this case.
- When the Emperor made it a law that everyone had to use the same money, these other forms of money were banned and replaced with single Qin currency. The standard Qin coin is known as **banliang** [ban-lyon] or half-ounce coin. It is a round bronze coin with a square center.
- The circle and square shapes were ancient Chinese symbols of heaven and earth, but the shape of the coin also served a practical purpose. People could carry several coins easily with a cord strung through the center. The **banliang** remained a popular design for Chinese coins until modern times.

Note: This object is also featured on the Adult and Family Audio Guides.

Section I: The First Emperor and Unification of China (Room 1)



Model of a Granary

Warring States period (475–221 BC)

Earthenware with pigment

H. (11.9 in.) (Dia. 15.1 in.)

Excavated from Panjiazhuang, Yantaqu, Xi'an, 2003

Xi'an Museum, SjxcM185:22

Themes:

Funerary Practices: The ancient Chinese considered the afterlife a continuation of life on earth. Tombs were outfitted with real life objects and models of real life objects in order to provide sustenance for the deceased.

Material: Earthenware is a term for fired clay. Earthenware objects are among the most ancient material remains created by people. Earthenware was a material used in ancient China for a variety of purposes.

- Ceramic/clay models were created to accompany the deceased in a tomb burial to help provide them with the comforts and necessities the ancient Chinese believed would be needed in the afterlife.
- A granary is a storehouse for grain. Depending on the region, the major grains produced at this time were millet and rice, wheat and barley.
- This model of a granary reflects ancient Chinese burial customs and the Qin's growing emphasis on agricultural development and private land ownership.
- Agricultural growth and production is thought to have helped the Qin defeat their rivals and granaries were considered symbols of strength and survival in this world. Models of granaries may therefore have been expected to fulfill the same function in the afterlife.
- This earthenware model of a granary from the Eastern Zhou dynasty is not life-sized, as many of the objects created for Qin Shihuang's mausoleum were, but a small-scale replica produced for a growing population who wanted to enjoy the burial privileges of the wealthy.

Section I: The First Emperor and Unification of China (Room 1)



Stele of Mount Yi

Qin dynasty (221-206 BC), re-carved in 993

Photograph of a rubbing

Attributed to Li Si (280-208 BC)

Stele H. 218 cm, W. 84 cm

Themes:

Power: Qin Shihuang exerted and maintained power throughout his lifetime in various ways. During the First Emperor's tours throughout his empire stone steles with inscriptions were constructed at important locations to commemorate the achievements of the Qin state and The First Emperor. Writing is another important tool the First Emperor used to maintain control and power. He enforced one writing system to be used throughout the empire.

- This large image is a photomural of a rubbing from a stone stele.
- The stele of Mount Yi, a monument that recorded the accomplishments of the Qin, was originally erected in 219 BC when the First Emperor visited Mount Yi in Shandong Province.
- This image demonstrates the standardized Qin writing style, one of the First Emperor's reforms. The text contains fifteen vertical lines with fifteen characters in each.
- These steles with accomplishments listed, reminded The First Emperor's people what he had done and how powerful he is.
- The universal script is known as Qin script, with its simplified strokes, balanced square forms, and even brushwork.
- This administrative and cultural measure effectively improved communication, trade, and education across the unified country.

Section II: Birth of the Qin Empire

Introduction to Section I

The Qin first settled on the western frontier of China where, as a tribe, they made a living herding and breeding horses. During the Zhou dynasty, the Qin achieved statehood in 771 BC when Duke Zhuang of Qin was rewarded with a noble title and land in western Shaanxi Province for successfully escorting King Ping of Zhou to the new capital at Luoyi. In the centuries that followed, the Qin state grew in power and influence, both politically and economically. By expanding eastward to fertile land with river access, the Qin developed in farming and transportation. Increased trade and economic growth paved the way for Qin's ultimate success in ending an era of turmoil and forming an empire after defeating rival states.

Archaeological findings showcased in this gallery shed light on the lives of the Qin royalty, aristocrats, commoners, and neighboring nomads and present more than 500 years of Chinese history, from the 8th to 3rd centuries BC. These works offer evidence of Qin migration eastward and the stylistic influences surrounding feudal states and nomadic peoples.

Section II Overview

- Section II recounts the evolution of more than five hundred years of Qin people, evolving into a powerful empire.
- The objects in this section present how the Qin adopted Zhou traditions, mingled the styles of its neighboring states and nomadic cultures, and established its own distinctive style.
- Archaeological examples include objects excavated from aristocratic, secular, and nomadic tombs.
- Highlights include ritual musical instruments and vessels, costumes accessories, and household objects.
- Architectural components are decorated with mythological animals and botanic designs to convey their symbolic meaning in ancient China.

Section II: Birth of the Qin Empire (Room 2)



Ritual Bell with a Looped Handle, 7th century BC

Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC)

Bronze

H. (17.7 in.) Weight 47.4 lbs.

Excavated from Taigongmiaocun, Chencang, Baoji, 1978

Baoji Bronze Ware Museum, IA5.7 (02758)

Themes:

Material: Bronze was the most important metal used in Qin Shihuang's time. A mixture of copper and tin, bronze was used to make tools, weapons, and ritual vessels.

Technology: Bronze-casting in ancient China took many steps and required a specialized workforce of miners, metallurgists, and craftsmen.

- Music was integral to ancient Chinese entertainment and ritual life. This bronze bell (*yongzhong*) and the stone chime located across from the bell are examples of ancient Chinese instruments.
- In ancient China, where a sophisticated musical culture was developing, a full set of bells formed the core of a conventional ensemble. This bell may have been housed in a royal palace or ancestral temple.
- Bronze bells were made in a variety of sizes, some of the larger ones weigh several hundred pounds! This particular bell would have hung from a wooden rack alongside other bells. Ancient musicians played the instrument from a sitting or kneeling position, striking the outside of each bell with a wooden mallet.
- The inscriptions on the bells record Qin history, providing invaluable information on Qin rituals, music, writing script, and bronze casting during the 7th century BC.

Note: This object is also featured on the **Adult and Family Audio Guides**.

Section II: Birth of the Qin Empire (Room 2)



Stone Chime, 573 BC

Spring and Autumn period, Duke Jing reign (r. 576–537 BC)

Limestone

L. (14.8 in.)

Excavated from Tomb of Duke Jing, Fengxiangxian, 1985

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 004778

Themes:

Funerary Practices: The ancient Chinese considered the afterlife as a continuation of life on earth. Tombs were outfitted with real life objects and models of real life objects in order to provide sustenance and entertainment for the deceased.

- The object in the case across from the bell is another ancient instrument, an L-shaped chime made from limestone.
- Stone chimes were played with a set of bronze bells at state banquets and ritual events. Like bronze bells, chimes were played by being struck with wooden mallets.
- When struck with mallets, chimes produced different musical tones according to their varying dimensions and thickness. Most likely, these chimes were suspended on a one- or two-tiered rack at a performance and stored in wooden crates thereafter.
- Inscriptions engraved into the edges reveal these chimes were played for a king of Zhou at a state banquet hosted by Duke Jing in 573 BC. Duke Jung was the thirteenth ruler of the Qin state.
- The fact that these chimes were found in a tomb are evidence music was an important part of Chinese entertainment and ritual life even in the afterlife.

Note: This object is also featured on the Adult and Family Audio Guides.

Section II: Birth of the Qin Empire (Room 2)



Tiger Weight

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Gilded bronze

L. (7.9 in.) H. (4.4 in.)

Excavated from East Bank of Ba River, Baqiao, Xi'an, 1974

Xi'an Museum, 2gt14

Themes:

Technology: This gilded bronze weight in the shape of a tiger reveals the skilled workmanship of Qin goldsmiths. Gilding is a term for the decorative technique of applying a thin coating of gold to a solid surface, such as bronze.

Animals: Animals play an important role in ancient Chinese art and are often used as symbols that have a special meaning.

- Tigers are symbols of power and authority, although they are still found in China today, they are very rare.
- During the Qin dynasty, people still sat on floor mats rather than chairs. Weights such as this were used for keeping household floor mats in place.
- The Chinese consider the tiger “the king of beasts” and greatly admire its fierceness. Despite its well-worn features and flaking gold coating, this tiger still shows its majestic spirit. This reclining tiger, with its hind legs tucked under its body and front paws resting on the ground, is realistically modeled with a slightly open mouth.
- Based on the inscription on the bottom, this weight belonged to the Deng family. Mat weights were frequently designed as a set of four in animal motifs, such as bears, tigers, and deer, and they sometimes took the shape of human figures.

Section II: Birth of the Qin Empire (Room 2)



Left:

Dragon Pendant in Shape of Lantern

Spring and Autumn period,
Duke Jing's reign (r. 576–537 BC)
Nephrite

H. (2 in.) W. (1.9 in.)

Excavated from Tomb of Duke Jing, Fengxiangxian, 1986
Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, 000924

Middle:

Bracelet, 6th century BC

Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC)
Agate, nephrite

L. (3.7 in.) W. (2.2 in.)

Excavated from Tomb 2, Yimencun, Baoji, 1992
Baoji Municipal Archaeological Team, BYM2:211–220

Right:

Necklace

Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC)
Nephrite, agate

L. (11.8 in.)

Excavated from Tomb 9, Bianjiazhuang, Longxian, 1986
Longxian County Museum, 86LBM9:41



Left:

Thumb Ring, 8th century BC

Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC)

Nephrite

L. (1.8 in.) W. (1.3 in.)

Excavated from Tomb 27, Liangdaicun, Hancheng, 2005

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, M27:229

Middle:

Bracelet, 8th century BC

Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC)

Nephrite, agate, faience

L. (4 in.) W. (1 in.)

Excavated from Tomb 26, Liangdaicun, Hancheng, 2008

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, M26:267

Right:

Standing Figure of Woman

Western Zhou dynasty (1046–771 BC)

Nephrite

H. (2.2 in.) W. (1.4 in.)

Excavated from Tomb 26, Liangdaicun, Hancheng, 2008

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, M26:186

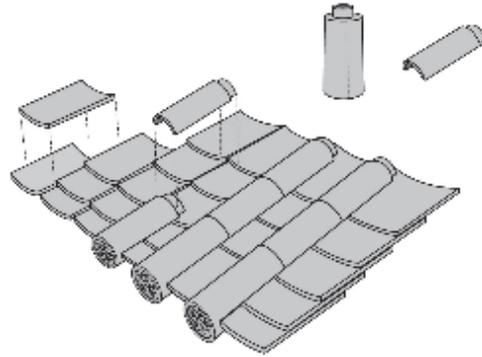
The jade objects in these cases shed light on the lives of the Qin royalty and aristocrats. These works offer evidence of Qin migration eastward and the stylistic influences surrounding states and nomadic peoples. Each case contains three objects; we suggest taking a closer look at the object(s) of your choice.

Themes:

Material: Different materials were used for different purposes in ancient China. The objects in these cases are made from a mineral called nephrite, more commonly known as jade. Jade is rare, comes in many different beautiful colors, and is very hard, making it difficult to carve. Because of these characteristics, it was one of the most highly prized materials of ancient China. Jade was often associated with material wealth and the afterlife and was popular for personal ornamentation, rituals and use in burials.

Technology: Working with jade is a time intensive and laborious process; since jade is a hard stone it cannot be easily cut. In order to shape, decorate and polish jade, smaller tools made from wood, bamboo, or metal were coated in abrasive sand to wear away the surface. It would have taken a lot of time and skill to carve the elaborate pieces in these cases.

Section II: Birth of the Qin Empire (Room 3)



Roof-Tile End with Water Design

Warring States period (475–221 BC)

Earthenware

Dia. (5.7 in.) D. (2.7 in.)

Excavated from Doufucun, Fengxiangxian, 2006

Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology, BE000585

Themes:

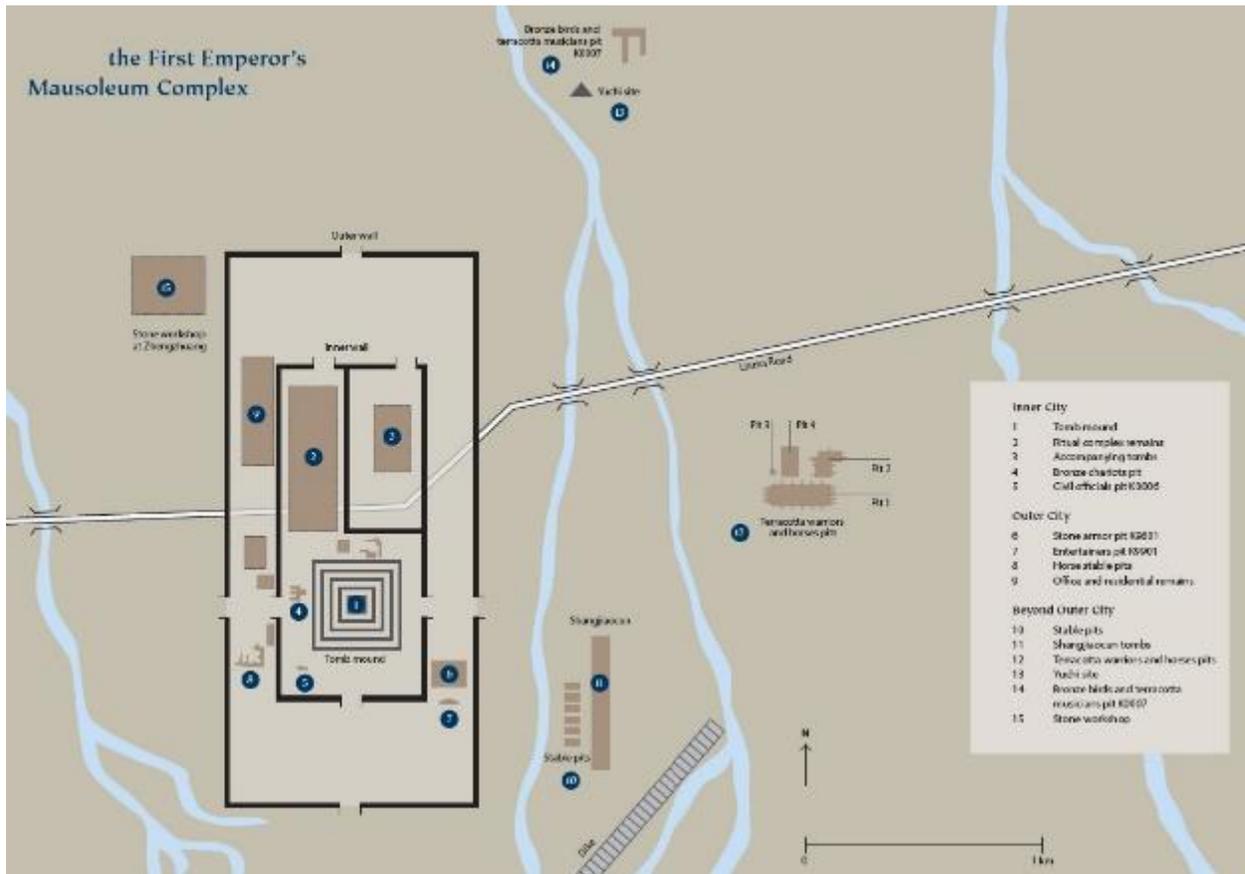
People: The First Emperor had many people working for him in various roles. Architectural elements like this tile end would have been made by the artisans and craftsmen in tile workshops that produced ceramic building materials for the First Emperor's numerous construction projects.

Technology: The Chinese were skilled in ceramic technology. Many architectural materials were necessary for The First Emperor's construction projects. Artisans and craftsmen working in workshops and factories utilized clay molds which allowed for large scale production of earthenware objects.

Material: Earthenware is a term for fired clay. Earthenware objects are among the most ancient material remains created by people. Earthenware was a material used in ancient China for a variety of purposes.

- After he was enthroned, the First Emperor launched ambitious construction projects ranging from palaces and shrines to his mausoleum complex and the Great Wall. Almost one million people, close to one-tenth of the population, labored on these projects, which remain unmatched in Chinese history in terms of scale, quantity, and labor.
- Of all the designs found on Qin tile ends, wave patterns are probably the most distinctive Qin creation.
- The wave patterns on this roof-tile end relate to ancient Chinese cosmology and the Five Phases (or Elements) of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth (see diagram on page 9).
- The craftsman of this tile end successfully captured the beauty and eternal rhythm of waves using only simple curvilinear patterns.

Section III: Quest for Immortality



Map of the First Emperor's mausoleum complex

Introduction to Section III

After the unification of the country, the First Emperor made five imperial tours across the seven former states. On his journeys to the east, he went in search of an elixir for immortality and made visits to Mount Tai, where he worshipped heaven and nature. The First Emperor died on his last tour in 210 BC and was laid to rest in his mausoleum, thirty miles from Xi'an.

Construction of this 13,900-acre complex took thirty-eight years to build, from 246 to 208 BC. Little was known about the extent of the First Emperor's necropolis until 1974 when farmers digging a well in a village one mile east of the mausoleum's walls uncovered shards of terracotta sculptures. An estimated 8,000 life-size terracotta figures lay buried there; only approximately 20 percent have been excavated.

The terracotta army depicts the Qin military both in size and organization, and each figure bears a rank and individualized facial features. The practice of burying grave goods with human sacrifices in the tomb of the deceased was a common practice in ancient China. The First Emperor's tomb marks a change in burial customs - the terracotta army served as terracotta surrogates rather than human sacrifices. Every figure was made as life-like as possible, and the figures convey individuality.



Tomb mound of the First Emperor

The First Emperor's tomb itself also remains unexcavated. Its contents and the burial chamber have remained a mystery for thousands of years. The earliest mention of the myth surrounding the emperor's tomb was written in 91 BC in Sima Qian's Records of the Grand Historian:

"The tomb was filled with irreplaceable goods and priceless treasures. Crossbows with arrows have been installed for shooting anyone who intends to enter the tomb. The ground is filled with mercury to emulate the rivers and the sea. The ceiling is painted with stars and zodiac constellations, the ground covered by geographic features. The candle lights burn eternally in the tomb."

The dangers of mercury, as well as fear of damaging what is inside the tomb have caused archaeologists to avoid excavating the tomb itself. Some of the finest examples of the terracotta warriors and other objects such as limestone armor and weapons, excavated from the First Emperor's mausoleum complex, are on view in this gallery. These objects represent not only burial furnishings for his afterlife but also the artistic creativity of ancient Chinese people.

Section III Overview

- The First Emperor's mausoleum was listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1987.
- The largest tomb site in China, the emperor's mausoleum consists of ritual structures, an imperial palace, armory, entertainment arena, stables, sites of animal burials, and a garden pond with nearly forty bronze birds, revealing the emperor's desire for eternal life.
- This section will display ten life-size terracotta figures, including warriors and a cavalry horse, stone armor, bronze weapons, and a bronze water bird, all excavated from the mausoleum complex.
- Through examination of the strength of the Qin military and the layout of the mausoleum, the section explores the evolution of royal burial customs and the First Emperor's pursuit of the afterlife.

Section III: Quest for Immortality (Room 4)



Dagger-Axe with Inscription

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Bronze

Overall (10.6 in.)

Excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 2005

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 005803

Themes:

Material: Bronze was the most important metal used in Qin Shihuang's time. A mixture of copper and tin, bronze was used to make tools, weapons, and ritual vessels.

Power: To reinforce his power and control of his empire, the First Emperor had a large army that was equipped with high quality weapons.

- When looking at the terracotta figures you might notice that none of the soldiers carry weapons, however, some of their postures indicate that they originally did. It is likely that some pits surrounding the First Emperor's mausoleum were looted after the fall of the Qin Empire.
- Up to 40,000 bronze weapons and arrowheads have been found in Pit 1 where this bronze dagger-axe was excavated.
- The dagger-axe is an example of a type of weapon that had already been in use in Bronze Age Chinese warfare. The flat, curved shape of the dagger-axe was ideal for countering cavalry and chariot units in battle.
- This object bears an inscription specifying the official workshop that oversaw their production and distribution.

Section III: Quest for Immortality (Room 4)



Armored Infantryman

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Earthenware

H. (72.8 in.) W. (25.6 in.)

Excavated from Pit 1, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1992

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 002753

Themes:

People: The life-size terracotta figures excavated from the First Emperor's mausoleum complex are unique, each designed with individual features. The terracotta army imitates the real Qin military-- both in size and organization. You can look at the clothing or armor that they wear to figure out their position or rank in the army.

Technology: The terracotta warriors were created in an elaborate three-step process that involved thousands of craftsmen. Warriors were probably fully assembled before being fired at high temperatures (1700–1900 degrees Fahrenheit). The fired warrior figures were painted with rich, brilliant colors: purple, red, green, blue, brown, orange, yellow, white, and black. Qin-dynasty artisans had experimented to develop these intense colors, of which only traces remain.

- Vital to the success of the Qin military was the infantry (soldiers who fought on foot), which is the best-represented rank in the terracotta army pits.
- This armored infantryman from Pit 1 stands attentively with both arms at his side and an austere expression on his face.
- His detailed terracotta rendering includes hair tied tightly in a topknot, a robe with a neck-guard, short trousers, boots, and plated armor covering his torso and shoulders.
- Some terracotta infantryman brandished spears and halberds, while others, such as this example, were equipped with only a crossbow and positioned behind the defensive lines of unarmored infantry and chariot groups.
- Hundreds of infantryman figures, both armored and unarmored, have been excavated from all three pits.

Section III: Quest for Immortality (Room 4)



Cavalryman

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Earthenware

H. (72.4 in.)

Excavated from Pit 2, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1977

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 002763

Themes:

People: The life-size terracotta figures excavated from the First Emperor's mausoleum complex are unique, each designed with individual features. The terracotta army imitates the real Qin military-- both in size and organization. You can look at the clothing or armor that they wear to figure out their position or rank in the army.

Technology: The terracotta warriors were created in an elaborate three-step process that involved thousands of craftsmen. Warriors were probably fully assembled before being fired at high temperatures (1700–1900 degrees Fahrenheit). The fired warrior figures were painted with rich, brilliant colors: purple, red, green, blue, brown, orange, yellow, white, and black. Qin-dynasty artisans had experimented to develop these intense colors, of which only traces remain.

- This cavalryman (soldier who rode on horseback) figure is portrayed with a small and sturdy build, wearing a pleated robe, trousers, a hide skull cap, and high-waisted, sleeveless armor. The short armor and pleated skirt on this figure--which would have made riding a horse easier-- identifies him as a cavalryman.
- In the Qin army, cavalrymen were often assigned scouting missions--and would have to travel long distances to obtain information about enemy forces.
- With his arms at his sides, the cavalryman's now-empty hands once held a crossbow and the reins of a horse; perhaps attached to a terracotta horse like the one next to him on-display.
- The use of cavalry within ancient Chinese warfare is something the Qin are credited with introducing on a large scale. This has to do with the geographic location of their homeland---the practice was learned from nomadic peoples with whom the Qin shared borders.

Note: This object is also featured on the Adult and Family Audio Guides.

Section III: Quest for Immortality (Room 4)



Cavalry Horse

Qin dynasty (221–206 BC)

Earthenware

H. (67.7 in.) L (82.7 in.)

Excavated from Pit 2, Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum, 1977

Emperor Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, 003160

Themes:

Animals: The horse played a significant role in the early development of Qin society and throughout China's history. Horses transformed society by speeding up travel, making long-distance trade feasible, and intensifying warfare.

Technology: Terracotta horses were assembled in increments from the bottom up, beginning with the legs.

- Cavalry horses (horses that carried soldiers) in the mausoleum pits are rare - less than half of the horses found so far are from the cavalry.
- Unlike the bare backed horses which draw chariots, cavalry horses are each saddled and individually paired with an armored cavalryman.
- The saddle is very detailed with straps, tassels, buckles and a blanket, and the bridle components--the bits and reins were detachable pieces made of bronze or carved stone. Like the cavalryman, this horse is an individual - he has an expressive face, alert ears, and a braided tail.
- The large hole in this example's abdomen provided ventilation while it was fired in a massive imperial kiln.

Note: This object is also featured on the Adult and Family Audio Guides.

Student Activities

The following pages include activity suggestions and questions for students. Teachers and chaperones, please use your full resource packet for information that can be used for facilitating discussion and activities.

Students can engage with objects in meaningful ways by participating in these exercises. We provided suggested objects in this guide, but you can use any works in the exhibition. You may wish to do the same activity with more than one object and want to print more than one activity sheet.

The activities encourage close looking, observation, questioning, and describing. Below are some sample questions that can be used with any object. You will find similar questions within the worksheets on the following pages.

- **What do you see?**
- **What do you see that makes you say that?**
- **What are you curious about?**
- **What details do you notice?**

Many of the following activities are adapted from *Harvard's Project Zero Artful Thinking Palette*, licensed under *CreativeCommons.org*.

Looking (10 x 2)

This exercise should be done before reading the label or related information.

Partner with a classmate and choose a work of art to observe and interpret. For at least one minute, quietly look at the artwork. Let your eyes focus on the object. What do you see? After you are finished looking, list ten words or phrases that describe the artwork. When you are finished, share and compare your list with your partner's. Look at the artwork again and try to add ten more words or phrases to your list. Do you notice anything new about the artwork after you've talked with your partner?

1. _____

1. _____

2. _____

2. _____

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10. _____

10. _____

Sketching idea: Patterns

Artists frequently use patterns in works of art. Patterns are created by repeating shapes and lines.

Find pattern in a work of art, and sketch it. Is it exactly the same? Does it add texture? Once you've sketched the pattern, you can also create your own pattern by changing the one you sketched. How would you make it different?

Sketching idea: What's in a Detail?

Choose a work of art with a lot of detail, such as patterns, designs and shapes. Many of the objects in the exhibit are covered with decorative designs. Study the surface design and decoration of the object for at least one minute, then select a detail and sketch it.

What did you choose to sketch and why? Did your classmates choose the same detail, or area, to sketch? What do you think the artist may have intended by adding certain details?

Post-Visit Activity Suggestions

1.) Practice writing in Qin script:

The First Emperor is known for remarkable innovations that consolidated his rule and unified the country. Under his orders the empire adopted a universal writing system. The universal script is known as Qin script, with its simplified strokes, balanced square forms, and even brushwork. You can refer back to the Stele image on page 16, or look on the internet for samples of Qin script.

2.) Create your own coin:

Before the First Emperor came to power, each state used their own system of weights, measurements and money. Imagine what it would be like if every state in the U.S. used different coins and measured things differently? It could make it very difficult to purchase items from other places. The type of coin the First Emperor made standard is known as **banliang** [*bahn-leeon*] or half-ounce coin. It is a round bronze coin with a square center. The circle and square shapes were ancient Chinese symbols of heaven and earth. If you were in charge of designing a coin that everyone would use, what would it look like? What shape would it be?

3.) Design your own roof-tile end:

In classical Chinese architecture, tile ends were fitted onto half-cylindrical roof tiles and used to shield eaves from wind and rain. Numerous round tile ends have been unearthed from Yongcheng—the Qin capital for more than 300 years. The exhibit had a variety of roof tiles decorated with symbolic designs of cloud or water patterns, plants and animals. Imagine an architect is building a palace for you – what decorative symbols would you want on your roof-tile ends? Design it!