THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

The excavation of the tomb of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of China, began in 1974 and lasted for over a decade. The tomb was discovered during the construction of a well, and the site was quickly identified as a major archaeological find.

The tomb is located in the city of Xi'an, in Shaanxi province, and is believed to have been the primary burial site of Emperor Qin Shi Huang. The site covers an area of over 32 square kilometers and includes a series of pits filled with bronze weapons, jade artifacts, and other treasures.

One of the most significant finds at the site was the discovery of the Terracotta Army, a collection of over 8,000 life-size terracotta sculptures that were intended to protect the emperor in the afterlife. The army was buried in three pits, each containing thousands of soldiers, horses, and chariots.

In addition to the Terracotta Army, the tomb site also contained a series of other burial pits and chambers, each filled with various types of treasures. The site has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site and is one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 20th century.
FACT FILE

Each warrior took about 150 days to make, from shaping and firing the clay to painting the finished figure.

The terracotta warriors were originally painted in bright colours. Art restorers are studying the composition of the paints used so they can eventually re-create them.

The Emperor’s tomb

About 1.5 kilometres from the site of the Terracotta Army is the burial mound of Emperor Qin. It is covered by a huge artificial hill. The Emperor is buried deep inside, perhaps surrounded by rivers of flowing mercury. Archaeologists are not yet ready to explore the tomb but they have proved the soil and sand traps of mercury – just as an ancient writer said. It’s exciting to think of what treasures might still be hidden there.

"No man who knew the thing, told another the name of it, for fear they should lose the treasure."

— Secretary of the Emperor’s Tomb Minister