

EDUCATION NOTES

INVESTIGATING KEY ARTWORKS IN THE GALLERY
www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/education

VisAsia 
Celebrating Asian Art and Culture

ART
GALLERY
NSW

THE FIRST EMPEROR: CHINA'S ENTOMBED WARRIORS



**THE FIRST EMPEROR:
CHINA'S ENTOMBED WARRIORS**

CHARIOTEER

Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE)

terracotta

height 194cm, weight 220kg

excavated Pit 1, Qin Shihuang tomb complex, 1983

Reproduced with kind permission by Qin Shihuang
Terracotta Warriors & Horses Museum



THE FIRST EMPEROR: INHERITANCE AND LEGACY

**'Great is the virtue of our Emperor
Who pacifies all four corners of the earth,
Who punishes traitors, roots out evil men,
And who with profitable measures
brings prosperity.'**

Imperial inscription on Mt Langya (28th year of reign)

Over two millennia of fact, myth and legend have indelibly inscribed Qin Shihuang into the annals of Chinese history. Villain, tyrant, vandal, brute, barbarian, despot, hero, revolutionary, activist, saviour, leader and, above all, founder of a united Chinese empire, the self-proclaimed First Emperor has been thus and diversely described. Extraordinarily, all those descriptions may indeed be legitimately applied to this almost mythical figure from China's ancient past.

Born in 259 BCE, the eldest son of the king of the small state of Qin, then occupying territories in present-day Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, he was given the name Zheng, meaning 'upright'. He was born in a time of turmoil in China's history, so aptly termed the Warring States period. The traditional heartlands of ancient China, north of the Yangzi, had for centuries since the collapse of the city-state rule of the Shang and Western Zhou dynasties been divided among fluctuating and contending states, a condition which promised not only unending war but also promoted extraordinary debate; for, in spite of such unsettled circumstances, the era in which the First Emperor was born was in many and unexpected ways an exciting and romantic phase in China's history. It was an era of heroes, warriors and sages; a time of upheaval and creativity that fostered a multiplicity of ideas and surprising intellectual and inventive energy. It was, for example, in the early 5th century BCE that such diverse attainments as the ox-drawn iron plough, lacquer varnish, coinage, the crossbow, the use of natural gas as a fuel and even the chopsticks came into being.

Above all this was a time of fervent and wide-ranging philosophical discourse and it may be claimed that the foundations of Chinese political, social and ethical values were laid during these turbulent

times. Itinerant philosophers roamed these independent states advising rulers and promulgating their views and strategies for bringing peace and harmony to a fractured nation. As it turned out, of course, it was less philosophical and more military might that eventually brought unity to the Middle Kingdom. Nonetheless philosophic debate played a hugely influential role in the framing and evolution of political thought and attitude, not just at the time but in the establishment of a system of values, sentiment and hierarchy that has endured to the present day. The towering figures of Chinese thought lived through these turbulent times: Confucius (born 551 BCE) and his most faithful later followers Mencius (372–289 BCE) and Xunzi (c298–238 BCE); the determined reformist Shang Yang (died 330 BCE), the prime minister of the State of Qin in its pre Qin Shihuang days, who was the original mind behind the ruthless political philosophy of Legalism, and his even more influential follower, Han Feizi (died 233 BCE); and the idealist of universal love, utilitarianism and uniformity, Mozi (?470–391 BCE). It was also the time when that sole representative of the more metaphysical speculation that was the domain of the Daoists was born and promoted by, above all, Zhuangzi (c369–286 BCE), whose colourful evocation of Daoist thought through allegory, notions of paradise and fantasy was in some contrast to the pragmatic writings of the time. The central Daoist text on the relationship between man and nature, the Dao Dejing, was probably completed around 300 BCE.

With the retrospect of two millennia, how extraordinary it is that these various philosophical schools of thought should have so defined the Chinese attitude. Whilst eminently debatable they do, with the exception of Daoism, essentially address worldly as opposed to metaphysical matters demonstrating a vital concern with the circumstances of the human presence. It was into this world of conflict, contention, division and fertile debate that Qin Shihuang was born – a turmoil of thought brought on by the distress and uncertainties of war.

It is worth reflecting on this social, political and philosophic climate for, in spite of the natural urgency imposed by conditions of war, there was equally cogent and compelling argument for debate as to how a sophisticated and materially impressive culture, distinguished by its technically and artistically mature bronze culture,

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY OF THE FIRST EMPEROR?

FIRST EMPEROR

Born in 259 BCE with the name Zheng Ying, he became king of the state of Qin at the age of 13. After defeating the last of his rival states in 221 BCE, he declared himself Qin Shihuang, the First Emperor, of a unified China. With brutal determination, he implemented a series of reforms and building works that laid the foundations for four centuries of relative peace, stability and expansion under the following Han dynasty and remained evident in the governance of China until the early years of the 20th century. He was a merciless ruler, renowned for allegedly burning books and burying alive all who displeased him. He was also obsessed with his own immortality and made a number of extravagant excursions in search of the 'elixir of immortality'. It was on one such journey that he died in 210 BCE.

had descended into such social and political disorder. This descent provoked great debate which fell into three broad spheres of concern; firstly, the consideration of what it was that had so effectively held society together and could do so again; secondly, the apparent necessity for the imposition of structure, law and order; and, thirdly, the instincts, momentums and spirits, those unseen and indeterminate forces, that arbitrate between the human and the natural worlds. In equally broad terms, the first concern became the ideological territory of Confucius, Mencius, Mozi and their followers; the second of Shang Yang, Han Feizi and the Legalists; and the latter, the territory of the Daoists.

Most of these known figures of China's philosophic past served, at some time, as government officials and frequently for more than one administration. They were indeed itinerant scholar-officials, proselytising their thoughts and ideas to the rulers of those contending independent states and moving on when their voices went unheard and their advice ignored. It is a fact that most of these sages who gave such an enduring ideological framework to Chinese society were, in their time, political failures. Confucius served various administrations mainly in his home state of Lu in Shandong province; his principal follower Mencius spent most of his life visiting one court after another in search of a sympathetic royal ear, but mostly failed. The third great Confucian protagonist of the day, Xunzi, who in spite of his divergent belief that the human animal was born fundamentally evil as opposed to good as both Confucius and Mencius believed, was nonetheless, like them, concerned with the pragmatic application of Confucian orthodoxy. In the story of the First Emperor, Xunzi plays a more direct role in that he was the teacher of Li Si, the prime minister who was by Qin Shihuang's side as he battled and succeeded to unify the empire.

Confucian moralising may have been a source of comfort and wisdom in a disintegrating world but not of course to all, and especially not to those who believed that the return to stability and unified grandeur could only be achieved through the implementation of law, order and authority. This indeed was the basic premise of Legalist thought, unquestionably the greatest influence on political life at the time. One of the crucial figures in the history of Legalist thought and practice was Shang Yang, who

had served as prime minister of the State of Qin, in pre Qin Shihuang times. His ideas are recorded in the *Shangjun shu* (book of Lord Shang), which is widely considered to be a source of dubious authenticity, but not so the records of the more persuasive voice of Han Feizi, whose writings are the principal and reliable sources of Legalist theory. In the founding of the unified Qin empire, Han Feizi played a critical role with his colleague and, allegedly, schoolmate, Li Si, who became the First Emperor's prime minister.

Following in the ideological wake of Shang Yang, Han Feizi rejected the traditional virtues of humanity and Confucian righteousness and insisted that unity could only be achieved by force and sustained by law. There is, in his writings, a chapter 'On the dominant system of learning' in which he criticises both Confucian and Mohist doctrines for their indecisive teachings and their moral and political latitude, claiming their arguments to be full of uncertainties and contradiction. Han Feizi writes, 'as ice and live coals cannot share the same container for long, or winter and summer arrive at the same time, so, too, motley and contradictory doctrines cannot stand side by side and produce a state of order'.¹ It is a typical quote and intriguing in its echo of more recent political cant in Mao's China and the Cultural Revolution, a time of course when the achievements of Qin Shihuang and the Legalists were frequently invoked. A political philosophy that legitimised the absolute authority of the centralised state certainly suited Chairman Mao. It was, for example, Han Feizi who wrote a section in his thesis wonderfully titled, 'The Five Vermin of the State': firstly, the scholars who don the conceits of good clothes and manners and praise former ways; secondly, the speechwriters who promulgate false schemes and foreign ideas to cast doubt upon the rulers; thirdly, the freelance fighters who band together and challenge the authority of the state; fourthly, the courtiers who flock to the houses of the powerful and influential in order to exploit such contacts and avoid military service; and finally, the artisans who make useless luxury goods and thus exploit the farmers.²

SHANG YANG

Prime minister of the state of Qin in the 4th century BCE, Lord Shang played a vital role in galvanising the Qin's military and administrative strength. His reforms underpinned the aggressive expansion of the Qin state in the years leading up to and during the First Emperor's reign.

The son of a concubine in the royal house of the neighbouring state of Wei, Shang Yang was soon recognised as a man of unusual ability. In 350 BCE he left Wei and entered the service of Duke Xiao, then ruler of Qin, thus beginning his long and influential role in Qin's rise to power. Under the ruthless political philosophy of Legalism, he put in place a series of strict laws, which are set out in a work of dubious authenticity, *The book of Lord Shang*. Finally discredited for the harshness of his policies, Shang Yang was killed along with his entire family in 338 BCE.

LÜ BUWEI

Originally a merchant from the neighbouring state of Zhao, Lü Buwei was a man of cunning and opportunism. After engineering his way into the Qin court at a time when the state was increasing its serious quest for power, he served as chancellor to the First Emperor's father. He then served as regent (*zhong shou* or 'second father') to the young king, becoming the virtual ruler during the early years of the First Emperor's reign. But intrigue was second nature to Lü Buwei. Initiating a number of subversive liaisons involving the emperor's mother, with whom he had illicit relations, he was condemned to death, but instead committed suicide (in 235 BCE). Lü compiled a number of treatises on 'everything of significance in heaven and earth', *The annals of Master Lü*. In the words of the grand historian Sima Qian, Lü Buwei 'was surely the sort of man whom Confucius described as one whose good reputation was belied by his conduct'.

'The emperor, never hearing his faults condemned, is growing prouder and prouder while those below cringe in fear and try to please him with flattery and lies.'

Qin court scholars Hou and Lu,
Records of the grand historian, 89 BCE

In 247 BCE Qin Shihuang's father died and the young prince ascended the throne at the tender age of just thirteen. He inherited a kingdom of relatively modest size but one that was regarded as 'progressive', having already developed ideas of a central administration and the application of uniform rules and regulations; just those concepts for which the First Emperor was to become renowned. At such a young age, Qin Shihuang was in no position to exercise the authority invested in his position as king and it fell to a certain Lü Buwei, originally a merchant who became the lover of the First Emperor's mother, to assume the hugely powerful and influential role of chancellor. Lü Buwei was a canny opportunist whose mischievous dealings are well chronicled in Sima Qian's *Records of the grand historian*, written in the 1st century BCE. However such was his acumen that Lü served for over eight years as chancellor until all manner of intrigues, largely stemming from his illicit relations with the queen dowager, implicated him in threats to the young king. He was banished to an outlying fiefdom south of the Yangzi and thus far from the centre of power, where, in 235 BCE, he finally confronted the inevitable, took poison and died in ignominy. As Sima Qian noted, 'he was surely the sort of man whom Confucius described as one whose good reputation was belied by his conduct'.³

In his ninth year as king, Qin Shihuang came of age and, as the records note, 'was capped and girded on a sword'.⁴ It was in the following year that Lü Buwei was dismissed and the adamant Legalist Li Si, an old schoolmate of the doubtful Confucianist Xunzi, became the chief minister. It was indeed at Li Si's urgings that the young king embarked on the campaigns that were to eventually

end in the successful establishment of the unified empire and the elevation of Ying Zheng from stately king to First Emperor. At Li Si's instigation, the First Emperor carried out a series of reforms and innovations, the most fundamental of which was the abolition of feudal ranks and the disarmament of private individuals, thus removing the threat of uprisings and the emergence of local warlords of the kind that had in effect been ruling China for the last few centuries. His other reforms included the standardisation of coinage, measurements, weights, axle-widths, writing, and a range of seemingly unimportant measures which nonetheless brought uniformity and thus authority to the central government of the empire.

In order to substantiate his claim as founder of the Chinese empire, history had to be doctored, or eliminated. Here the ruthless henchman Li Si played a crucial role. According to the grand historian Sima Qian, in 213 BCE the First Emperor held a banquet in his palace at the capital, located at present-day Xianyang near Xi'an in Shaanxi province. On that occasion, one scholar was critical of the emperor, implying that he was not sufficiently respectful of history and ancient precedents. To this Li Si replied in harsh tones, criticising scholars who opposed modern rule. Writing a century or more later, the not-always reliable Sima Qian described Li's tirade against the scholars as follows:

If anyone who is not a court scholar dares to keep the ancient songs, historical records or writings of the hundred schools, these should be confiscated and burned by the provincial governor and army commander. Those who in conversation dare to quote the old songs and records should be publicly executed; those who use old precedents to oppose the new order should have their families wiped out; and officers who know of such cases but fail to report them should be punished in the same way.

If thirty days after the issuing of this order, the owners of these books still have not had them destroyed they should have their faces tattooed and be condemned to hard labour at the great wall. The only books which need not be destroyed are those dealing with medicine, divination and agriculture.⁵

LI SI

Also a man of unforgiving ambition, Li Si played a central role in the rise of the Qin state as the First Emperor's prime minister, a position he held from 214 BCE until his death by torture following charges of treason in 208 BCE. It is said that his body was 'sawn asunder' in the marketplace.

Born in the state of Chu, Li served in a number of official posts there before leaving in 247 BCE to enter the service of Lü Buwei. A follower of Shang Yang and his Legalist philosophy, Li is renowned for allegedly initiating the infamous 'burning of the books' in 213 BCE, declaring that history as enshrined in the *Classics* should be obliterated so that it would begin with the reign of the First Emperor. It is also alleged that he had 460 scholars buried alive for using the language of the ancients.

HAN FEIZI

Han Feizi was a prince of the ruling house of the small state of Han and a schoolmate and colleague of Li Si. Although less effective as a politician, he nonetheless became the leading Legalist ideologue of his time and compiled the most complete and authoritative writings on the subject (titled *Han Feizi*). Han followed his friend Li Si into the service of Qin, where he exercised ever-increasing influence on the young king with his Legalist ideas of centralised authority. In section 8 of *Han Feizi*, titled 'Wielding power' Han writes, 'Do not let your power be seen; be blank and actionless. Government reaches to the four quarters, but its source is in the centre'. Li Si became jealous of Han's increasing power and schemed his downfall. Imprisoned, Han Feizi drank poison and died in 233 BCE.

This is a description of the 3rd century BCE but what ominously Orwellian tones of Mao's Cultural Revolution it evokes. It was Li Si's outburst that provoked the First Emperor's infamous 'burning of the books' and the burying alive of recalcitrant scholars. In order to achieve an empire 'that would endure for ten thousand generations', Qin Shihuang firstly had to ensure that the challenge of history was obliterated. History, both factual and literary, was purged in this cause. But of equal concern was his pursuit of his own immortality. How strange that a man, a ruler of such power and pragmatism, should be so obsessed with the unlikely opportunity of his own immortality. Indeed mortality was forever on his mind. The historical records are clear that on his ascendance to the title of First Emperor in 221 BCE, Qin Shihuang began planning his own enormous burial and spent huge resources perambulating around his empire in vain search of the elixir of immortality. Yet, paradoxically, nowhere is that quest for immortality more emphatically proclaimed than in the First Emperor's tomb; a legacy which in death has given him the immortality he so sought. Few if any discoveries of any part of the ancient world have created such interest and fostered such intrigue as the discovery of Qin Shihuang's extraordinary mausoleum, the tomb of which has yet to be excavated. Sima Qian describes its origins thus:

As soon as the First Emperor became King of Qin excavations and building had started at Mt Li [the location of the tomb and the buried army], while after he won the empire more than 700,000 conscripts from all parts of the country worked there... they dug through three subterranean streams and poured molten copper and bronze to make the outer coffin, and the tomb was filled with models of palaces, pavilions and offices as well as fine vessels, precious stones and rarities. Artisans were ordered to fix up crossbows so that any thief breaking in would be shot. All the country's rivers, the Yellow River and the Yangtze were reproduced in quicksilver and by some mechanical means made to flow into a miniature ocean. The heavenly constellations were shown above and the regions of the earth below. The candles were made of whale oil to ensure their burning forever ...

This same record then continues to declare that Qin Shihuang's son:

The Second Emperor, decreed: 'It is not right to send away those of my father's ladies who had no sons'... accordingly all these were ordered to follow the First Emperor to the grave. After the interment someone pointed out that the artisans who had made the mechanical contrivances might disclose all the treasure that was in the tomb; therefore after the burial and sealing up of the treasures, the middle gate was shut and the outer gate closed to imprison all the artisans and labourers so that not one got out. Trees and grass were planted over the mausoleum to make it seem like a hill.⁶

'The resources of the empire were exhausted in supplying the Emperor's government, and yet were insufficient to satisfy his desires.'

Qian Hanshu (history of the former Han dynasty), 1st century CE

Qin Shihuang inherited a nascent state conditioned both by its defence against contending and belligerent neighbours and by its own ambition to expand and to conquer those states. Many of the achievements attributed to the First Emperor, from centralising government to the building of the Great Wall, were well under way before his time but, nonetheless, it was he who achieved the unification of the empire and he and his administration that instituted a form of government of discipline and authority that was to remain largely unchanged until the sweeping changes of the Sui and Tang dynasties some 800 years later. Furthermore the ramifications of the First Emperor's structural and centralist administration have filtered down to the present-day.

The First Emperor and his brief Qin dynasty are remembered in Chinese history as much for their positive achievements as for Qin Shihuang's acts of infamy. His dynasty may have been short-lived – just 15 years – but its real achievements were revealed in the succeeding Han dynasty, which for four centuries flourished under the administration it had inherited. This was a pattern of a ruthless and determined leader unifying a fragmented empire but

SIMA QIAN

Renowned as the grand historian of China, Sima Qian and his *Shiji* (records) are the principal written source of China's ancient history and the most reliable, if at times prejudiced, history of the First Emperor and the Qin dynasty. Among the *Shiji's* most fascinating sections are its accounts of people, usually interspersed with snippets of conversation which must have been largely imagined and reinvented from hearsay. Despite devoting himself to the seemingly sedate pursuit of history, Sima Qian also became embroiled in political intrigue and was sentenced to death, a sentence he had commuted to mutilation. He died in 86 BCE.

being unable to maintain their rule. In the 2nd century BCE, shortly after the fall of the Qin, the Han dynasty poet and statesman Jia Yi (201–169 BCE) wrote an essay titled *Guoqin lun* (the faults of Qin) in which this pertinent observation is made:

Qin, beginning with an insignificant amount of territory, reached the power of a great state and for a hundred years made all the other great lords pay homage to it. Yet after it had become master of the whole empire and established itself within the fastness of the pass, a single commoner opposed it and the ancestral temples toppled, its ruler died by the hands of men... why? Because it had failed to rule with humanity and righteousness and to realize that the power to attack and the power to retain what one had thereby won, are not the same.⁷

Rulers in war are not necessarily the rulers for times of peace.

History may well declare that the First Emperor's greatest achievement was in laying the foundations for the enduring, gregarious and culturally expansive Han dynasty but the discovery of this remarkable buried army is a potent legacy that brings his image and that of ancient China to vivid life in the present day, some 2000 years after his demise. Essentially the art of Bronze Age China gave little credence to realism; it was an art determined by the requirement of ritual and its decorative partner symbolism. In such a context images of the human figure were few and far between, and those few that do exist betray strong symbolic as opposed to realistic values. With the gradual decline of traditional ritual art, mainly in the form of bronze vessels and accoutrements, in the later Bronze Age and the shift from the temple aura of ancestor worship to the more commonplace but real world of the family grave came the beginnings of realism in the arts of China. Whilst the First Emperor's buried army has revealed the art of realism in the ancient arts of China on a dramatic scale, the seeds for such initiative were sown in the immediately preceding centuries.

Nonetheless what is so remarkable about the First Emperor's buried army is not only its immense scale but its authenticity and its realism. For here we are confronted not by the distortions of ritual and symbolism but with images of the scale, presence and

detail of real people that are totally without precedent. There is nothing of such scale, such accuracy, such attention to prosaic detail and such intent to replicate a worldly reality in pre Qin dynasty Chinese art. These imposing figures may have played a symbolic role in guarding the entrance to the spirit road to the First Emperor's burial but they also evidently sought to recreate the real thing. Much has been made of the individual qualities of each and every one of the many thousands of figures made and buried, thus enhancing the notion that they seek to represent actual individuals, however unlikely that may seem. What is undeniable is that in their individual finish of detail, from hairstyles, headgear and facial features to boot laces and armour, they hint at the idea of the individual, of every soldier, cavalryman, Bowman, officer and general once having been a very fact of life. The even more meticulous and technically accomplished half life-size bronze chariots and horses, with painted, gilded and silvered details, discovered in 1980 in a pit located just 20 metres to the west of the actual burial and thus well away from the buried army, are testimony to this quest for a lifelike representation.

This new reality echoes, perhaps, the spirit of pragmatism of the times but its greatest achievement was to progress 'art' from the confines of hierarchy to the opportunities of expression and even individuality. During the succeeding Han dynasty, for example, stone relief carvings, impressed bricks, tomb wall paintings and painted lacquers depict human figures from daily life with a realism that borders on specific identity just as do the figures from the First Emperor's burial. This was a momentous shift in artistic purpose and inspiration, from the role of art in the service of hierarchy and ritual to one that sought to reflect and represent an earthly reality. Originally driven by the desire to represent with some accuracy the earthly world in the burials of deceased rulers and nobility, in which notions of realism were a given, these initiatives laid the foundations for a florescence of the arts of China in the Han and later dynasties. For all his military vigour, his administrative reforms, his unification of an empire, perhaps the First Emperor's greatest legacy was in precipitating a revolution in art.

Edmund Capon

Reprinted from the exhibition catalogue *First Emperor: China's entombed warriors*, by Liu Yang and Edmund Capon, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney 2010

Notes

- 1 *Han Fei Tzu: basic writings*; section 50 'The eminence of learning', Burton Watson (trans), Columbia University Press, New York 1964, pp 118–29
- 2 Han Feizi in Watson 1964, pp 96–117
- 3 Szuma Chien (Sima Qian), *Selections from records of the historian*, Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (trans), Foreign Languages Press, Beijing 1979, p 158
- 4 Szuma Chien in Hsien-yi & Yang 1979, p 161
- 5 Szuma Chien in Hsien-yi & Yang 1979, p 178
- 6 Szuma Chien in Hsien-yi & Yang 1979, p 186
- 7 Quoted in WM Theodore de Bary, *Sources of Chinese tradition*, Columbia University Press, New York 1971, p 15

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Research great leaders in history. Compare them to Qin Shihuang. Consider the social, political and philosophical developments of their time. From your research, discuss how these leaders were similar, and how they differed.
- Research some of the great philosophers in Chinese history, many of whom were active around and during the time when the First Emperor came to power: Confucius and his followers Mencius and Xunzi; the ruthless Shang Yang and Han Feizi with their doctrine of Legalism, and Mozi advocating morality and order through universal love (Mohism); and the Daoist Zhuang. Investigate and compare the philosophies of Confucianism, Legalism, Mohism and Daoism. How are their different ideas and beliefs represented in art?
- Along with several of his advisors, Qin Shihuang believed that history needed to be obliterated in order to create a unified China. He reputedly ordered that all historical records be destroyed and that any scholars who opposed him be buried alive. Why did the First Emperor consider history a threat? How significant is history in our understanding of the present and for the future?
- Consider the accuracy and reliability of accounts such as Sima Qian's *Records of the grand historian*, written more than 100 years after the events he describes occurred. What issues, biases and factors would you need to consider in interpreting his records? Compare written records such as this with archaeological evidence in terms of the nature and reliability of the information that can be gained from them.
- When Qin Shihuang became king at just 13 years of age, work began on his magnificent tomb. The role of the army was to guard and protect the entrance to the First Emperor's tomb. Collect information about what archaeologists believe to be in and around Qin Shihuang's tomb and create a visual interpretation of your research. Compare your interpretation with those made by others in your class.
- In Bronze Age China, ritual objects had symbolic references. In comparison, the entombed warriors display a sense of realism. What is the significance of exploring realism and how does this compare to the symbolism of ritual objects? Select a ritual object and an object rendered with realism from the exhibition. Discuss their purpose and function within the society which created them.
- Consider the role of the archaeologist. What do they do and how does their work contribute to our understanding of art and culture. Consider the significance of exhibiting archaeological artefacts in art galleries. Why are audiences so captivated by them?
- Create a case study on an important archaeological discovery of the 20th or 21st century. Consider the importance of this discovery for audiences today. What have we learnt from ancient civilisations? What human trace will our society leave for future generations?

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING/VIEWING

Books

- Allan, Sarah (ed). *The formation of Chinese civilization: an archaeological perspective*, Yale University Press in assoc with New World Press, Beijing 2005
- De Bary, W D (ed). *Sources of the Chinese tradition*, reprinted in 2 vols, Dover Books, New York 1971
- Loewe, Michael. *The government of the Qin and Han empires 221 BCE – 220 CE*, Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis & Cambridge 2006
- Loewe, Michael & Shaughnessy, Edward. *The Cambridge history of ancient China: from the origins of civilization to 221 BCE*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999
- Portal, Jane. *The First Emperor: China's terracotta warriors*, British Museum, London 2007
- Watson, Burton (trans). *Records of the grand historian of China: from the Shih Chi of Ssu-ma Chien*, Columbia University Press 1958, reprinted 1961 & 1993 ... or ... Yang, Hsien-yi & Yang, Gladys. *Selections from the records of the historian* written by Szuma Chien, Foreign Language Press, Peking 1979
- Twitchett, Denis et al. *The Cambridge history of China: the Ch'in and Han empires 221 BC – 220 AD*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1986
- Wood, Frances. *The First emperor of China*. Profile, London 2007

Film and DVD

- Hero*, film based on the story of Qin Shihuang, directed by Zhang Yimou, 99 mins, Beijing New Picture Film Co, 2002
- The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army* DVD British Museum

Websites

- National Museum of China
<http://www.china.org.ch>
- China Culture
<http://www.chinaculture.org>
- Minnesota State University eMuseum
<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/china/index.html>
- Washington National Gallery of Art
www.nga.gov/education/chinatp_pt4.shtm

Acknowledgements

Essay by Edmund Capon
Notes and editor Jennifer Blunden
Issues for consideration by Leeanne Carr, coordinator secondary education programs and Victoria Collings
Senior coordinator of Education
Design Matt Nix

Cover: Charioteer (detail)

Produced by the Public Programs Department:
Art Gallery of NSW
© 2011 Art Gallery of New South Wales