Hm… What on Earth is archaeology?

• Archaeology is the study of anything left behind from other cultures and societies.
• The objects and other remains of the culture give us better understanding of who we are today and how we have developed since ancient times.

What about excavation? What’s that?

• Excavation is simply digging up old stuff, also known as artifacts.
• Any artifacts discovered could easily help us figure out what our ancestors were like.
Primary and Secondary Sources

• Primary sources give direct insights into the past and are actually part of the original discovery. Sometimes these objects or documents, and sometimes even structures, can be inaccurate, damaged or incomplete.

• On occasions primary sources are also badly conserved.

• Secondary sources are from after the time being studied, and can also sometimes be inaccurate.

• Generally they fill in gaps about primary sources and are often prepared by experts in that topic.

• Secondary sources show how evidence can be put together to build representations of the past.
Many people don’t know much about the Terracotta Army, or archaeology, but you’re about to discover a lot...

What is the Terracotta Army?

• This collection of life-sized pottery figures was made for the First Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, to protect his tomb in what Chinese believed was the ‘afterlife’.

• The Army was buried with the Emperor between 209-210 BCE, according to records, and is thought to be created in the late 100s.

• They were found in 1974 by farmers and they face towards the east, as if to protect from the regions that the Emperor had already conquered.
Where are they and what is the Army like?

• About 1.5 kilometres east of the Emperor’s tomb mound, in the Shaanxi region of China, are the four main pits of the Terracotta Army.
• Each one is about 7 metres deep and most of the pits are full of soldiers, although more is still to be excavated.
• Altogether, professional calculations estimated that 8,800 figures are unearthed.
• The first pit contains the majority of the collection, all 11 corridors totalling to approximately 230 metres long and 62 metres wide.
• Pit one contains an estimated 6000 figures, most of them being soldier units.
• Pit two has cavalry (horses) and infantry (soldier) units, including a few war chariots, and experts believe it represents a military guard.
• The third pit resembles an army’s command post, as it contains high-ranking officers and another war chariot.
• Unfortunately, pit four is empty, and the studies of archaeologists suggest it was never finished by its builders.
Well, what do people think?

- Many archaeologists believe that the Army was arranged to Emperor Qin’s own battle strategy formation.
- It is believed that an Emperor from later times, Xiang Yu, burned it down and looted it, which may explain many missing weapons as well.
- The wooden rafters sheltering the Terracotta Army are in pieces, which, archaeologists conclude, may be why the Army itself was discovered in fragments and has been rebuilt.
- Dr. Mair of the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, through much research, states that Ancient Chinese believed in afterlife and the figures were also made to show the power of the Emperor.
So, why does this matter?

• I see from this that the Chinese culture around this time believed strongly in afterlife.
• Besides the Army, a whole necropolis (city for the dead) has been found buried under 2000 years of soil around the emperor’s tomb mound.
• It also shows that the Army has not come to life to protect the emperor after he died, which shows that it is a complete waste of time and effort to build an army and city for your king.
• Another thing shown through this is the fact that their religion is very different to our faith in Jesus; they do believe there is a second life, though, but what they believe does not exist.


Tim Woodham, (2005), Terracotta Warrior Xiam China [ONLINE]. Available at: http://www.flickr.com/photos/timwoodham/132263009/in/pool-1067468@N21/


