

## Terracotta Army - How mass production shaped history

## The soldiers standing for eternity

In 1974 a group of farmers were **digging** a **well** in a **parched** field when they **unearthed** a fragmentary **clay** figure which had remained underground, undisturbed for 2,000 years.

The first emperor's Terracotta Army is one of China's greatest treasures.

I want to understand how the thousands of artisans who worked here were able to produce so many soldiers to such a high **standard**.

*The eternal Army – How **mass production** shaped history*

The Terracotta Army is one of the earliest examples of something we still associate with modern China.

Highly skilled production on a colossal scale.

*Experts estimate three **pits** east of the emperor **tomb** contain over 7,000 soldiers, 130 **chariots** with 520 horses and 150 **cavalry** horses. Over 40,000 weapons have also been recovered.*

*In recent years the discovery of a **trigger mechanism** has revealed new evidence about the origins of this extraordinary site.*

Archeologist Dr Li Xiuzhen is taking me behind the scenes to the site's research department to share her latest discoveries.

This is what I'd like to show you: the trigger, the **crossbow triggers**. It looks really precisely engineered and created.

Yes. So this each part they were **cast** in the ceramic **mould** to fasten with two **pins**, we can see the two pins here, so and that's fixed in the wooden **stalk** of the crossbow.

So is this a working trigger?

Yes, a working trigger. In Chinese characters this is the number five.

What's the significance of that? That means that it's for the **assembling sequence**.

An early example of a kind of **assembly line**? You're right.

*700,000 people built the mausoleum over 40 years. Looking at the soldiers more closely reveals astonishing detail.*

As soon as you get down into the pit itself it completely transforms the way you think about the Terracotta Army because at first **glance** up above you see these massed **ranks** of soldiers standing to attention for all eternity.

It's a very **eerie** sensation, but when you are in among them suddenly instead of uniformity you start to see **glimpses** of individuality.

There's a sense here of an artisan's approach within that bigger concept of mass production.

So someone has specialized in thinking of particular facial features putting the **cheekbones** in a certain place, perhaps adding a **beard** in other cases changing the shape of an **eyebrow**. And then you can find **underneath** some of the warriors a **stamp**, a stamp of approval, a stamp of quality control telling you this piece was made in the imperial workshop and this man is ready to guard the emperor for eternity.

The Terracotta Army is one of the greatest archaeological **finds** of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the tools, skills and techniques developed by people working on that 2,000-year-old production line have **resonated** through the ages

## VOCABULARY

**Dig** /dɪg/ past tense, past participle **dug** = to turn up (earth) with a spade etc, make (a hole) in this way. Excavate (slang) understand fully: *Do you dig what I mean?* - like, enjoy, or appreciate

**digs** = informal (BE) lodgings: "*they are looking for new digs*"

**well** = A deep hole sunk into the earth to obtain water, oil, gas. A container or reservoir for a liquid, such as ink. -

**wishing-well** = a well which is supposed to have the power of granting any wish made when one is beside it.

**parched** /pɑːtʃt/ = dried out with heat, as dry as a bone, bone dry, dried up, arid, waterless extremely thirsty.

**Unearth** [ʌn'ɜːθ] = dig up out of the earth, reveal or discover, esp by exhaustive searching, uncover

**Clay** /kleɪ/ = a stiff, sticky fine-grained earth that can be moulded when wet, and is dried and baked to make bricks, pottery, and ceramics, terracotta - **Feet of clay** is an expression now commonly used to refer to a weakness or character flaw in a person otherwise revered. - An **Achilles' heel** or **Achilles heel** is a weakness in spite of overall strength, which can lead to downfall.

## Standard:

**bog standard** = Conventional: a bog standard phone—nothing fancy.

come up to standards = improve enough to meet a certain requirement or expectation: *Does this ice cream come up to your standards?*

**Up to standard** = good enough.

**Mass production** = the manufacturing of large quantities of standardized products, often using assembly lines

**Pit** /pɪt/ = 1. a large hole in the ground; a place from which minerals are dug (a chalk-pit);

**Pits / pit box / pit stop** = a place beside a motor race track for repairing and refuelling racing cars.

**Pit against** = to set (a person or thing) against another in a fight, competition etc. *He was pitted against a much stronger man.*

**Pitfall** = a possible danger.

**The pits** (Slang) The worst: *New York politics are the pits*

**Tomb** /tu:m/ = a large vault, typically an underground one, for burying the dead, burial chamber

**grave** suggests "to dig" (graveyard), so graves are under the ground. Any hole in the ground can be a grave. –

graveyard /'grɛvja:d/ = a burial ground, especially one beside a church

**tomb** = a small building (or "vault") which can be above or below ground (the original word suggests that it's visible and above ground).

**Chariot** /'tʃæriət/ = a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by horses, used in ancient racing and warfare.

**Cavalry** /'kæv(ə)lri/ = (in the past) soldiers who fought on horseback.

Trigger mechanism = a device that releases a spring-loaded mechanism; a small projecting lever that activates the firing mechanism of a weapon

**crossbow triggers** ['krɒs,bəʊ] = a medieval type of bow fixed to a shaft with a mechanism for pulling back and releasing the string (balestra)

**Cast** /kɑ:st/ =

1. throw. *These facts cast new light on the matter;*

2. shape (metal etc) by pouring into a mould. *Metal is melted before it is cast*

3. give a part in a play etc to/ select the actors. *She was cast as Lady Macbeth.*

4. give (a vote). I cast my vote for the younger candidate.

5. something made by moulding. *The doctor put a plaster cast on his broken leg.*

6. a mould. *The hot metal is poured into a cast.*

7. the complete set of actors in a play, opera etc. the whole cast of the play.

**Castaway** = a shipwrecked person.

**Cast iron** = unpurified iron melted and shaped in a mould. (Ghisa)

**Mould** /məʊld/ =

1. container into which liquid is poured to create a given shape when it hardens, shape, form, design, or pattern

2. soil which is full of rotted leaves etc. (Rotten is an adjective: the wood is rotten. Rotted is the past tense of the verb to rot: The wood has rotted)

3. a growth on stale food etc. This bread is covered with mould.

**Pin** = a short, thin, pointed piece of metal used eg to hold pieces of fabric, paper etc together, ornamental object

**pins and needles** = a tingling feeling in one's hands, arms, feet or legs

**pin down** = make (someone) give a definite answer. *I can't pin him down to a definite date for his arrival.*

**Stock** /stɒk/ the wooden part by which a rifle or shotgun is held against the shoulder during firing

**Stalk** /stɔ:k/ = the main stem of a herbaceous plant, stem, shoot

1. (Hunting) to follow or approach (game, prey, etc) stealthily and quietly

2. to pursue persistently and, sometimes, attack (a person with whom one is obsessed, often a celebrity)

**assembly line** = a series of workers and machines in a factory by which a succession of identical items is progressively assembled.

**Glance** /glɑ:ns/ = take a brief or hurried look, peek, peep

**at first glance** = when seen or considered briefly and for the first time.

**Rank** /ræŋk/ = a position in the hierarchy of the armed forces - classify, align,

**Eerie** or **eery** /'iəri/ = inspiring a feeling of fear; strange and frightening; mysterious, sinister

**glimpse** /glɪm(p)s/ = a momentary or partial view: *she caught a glimpse of the ocean* - brief look  
quick look, glance, peek, peep, sight

**cheekbone** /'tʃi:kbəʊn/ = the bone below the eye.

**Beard** /bɪəd/ = a growth of hair on the chin and lower cheeks of a man's face.

**Eyebrow** /'aɪbraʊ/ = the strip of hair growing on the ridge above a person's eye socket

**Underneath** /ʌndə'ni:θ/ = under, situated directly below (something else): *our bedroom's right underneath theirs* - concealed by: *money changed hands underneath the table*

**Under** is used when something is directly under another. Under is used more often than underneath

**Underneath** is often used to say that something is covered by another thing.

**Beneath** has the same meanings as under or underneath, but it's a formal, literary word.

**Below** is preferred when something is in a lower position, but in the same building, hill, part of the body etc.

*The sun disappeared below the horizon.    Temperatures were below normal all week.*

*The game is suitable for children below the age of 10.    There some fish below the surface of the water.*

**Stamp** /stæmp/ = bring down (one's foot) heavily on the ground: *he stamped his foot*

2. impress a pattern or mark on a surface, object, or document: *the woman stamped my passport*

a small adhesive piece of paper to show that an amount of money has been paid, in particular a postage stamp.

**Find** = a discovery of something valuable, typically something of archaeological interest.

**resonate** /'rez(ə)neɪt/ = produce or be filled with a deep, full, reverberating sound.