



Experts unearth new terracotta warriors

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By Agencies



Archaeologists clean the newly unearthed terracotta warrior at the No.1 pit of the Museum of Terracotta Warriors and Horses of Qin Shihuang in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, on Saturday. Photo:CFP

Experts have found more terracotta warriors and wares in a new round of archaeological excavation at the Emperor Qin Shihuang's mausoleum, as well as evidence that the mausoleum was once set on fire, according to the site's management authority.

The Museum of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses of Emperor Qin Shihuang (259-210 BC) announced on Saturday that in the third round of excavation, archaeologists found more than 310 relics at the northern part of the No.1 pit, including 120 terracotta figurines and 12 horses.

Among the findings is a giant warrior that is 2.5 meters tall with a pair of 32-centimeter feet and a lacquered leather shield 60 centimeters long and 40 centimeters wide, twice the size of a bronze shield found in the 1980s in the No.1 pit.

New findings have shown that each terracotta figurine has its own facial expression. In another finding, the terracotta armor on the figurine of a general had been produced more intricately than those of other figurines.

Experts have found a large number of wares with well-preserved color paintings on them, and colors were also found on terracotta clothes, said Xu Weihong, an excavation team leader, the Xi'an-based Sanqin Daily reported.

"We first speculated that the colors on the relics would not be well preserved, but now we are finding lots of colorful paintings on the terracotta wares and lacquered wares," Xu said.

"Experts thought all the colors would fade, but so many colorful paintings were found," said archaeologist team leader Shen Maosheng.

Archaeologists found that the figurines in the passageways had been burned out of shape and some had even melted. They also discovered white ashes, caused by a high-temperature fire, proving that someone had deliberately set fire to the terracotta warriors, archaeologists said.

"The figurines were broken by humans, and the fire caused different degrees of damage to the figurines at different places," said Shen.

Xiang Yu, a prominent military leader during the late Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), is believed to be the one who ordered the mausoleum to be set on fire, Shen Maosheng said, an assertion most archaeologists agree with.

The new round of excavations started June 13, 2009, with authorities arranging for protective measures and exhibitions to be held continuously in the past three years. About 1.4 million visitors have visited and observed the excavation at the site.

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