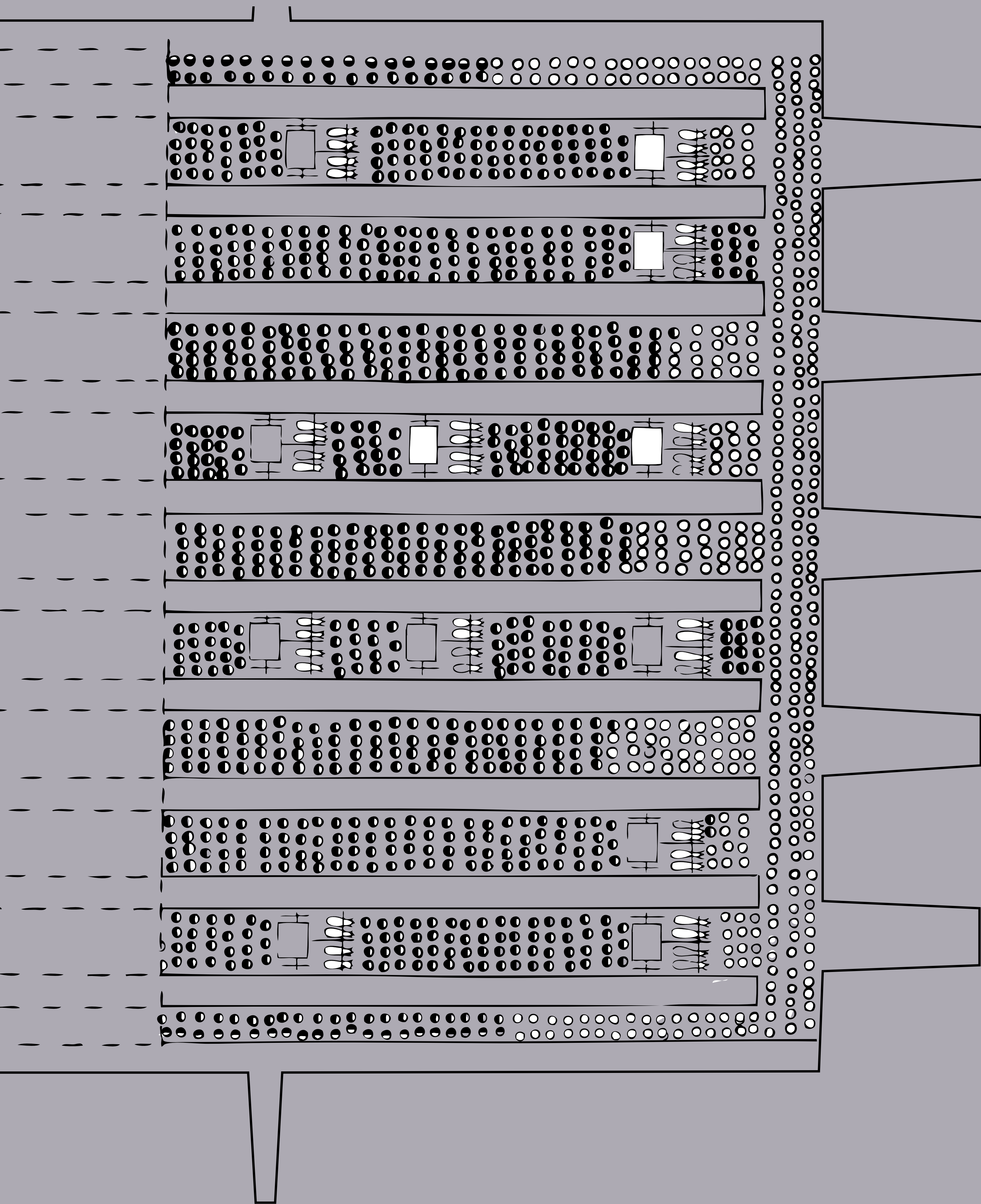


Battle Formation of the Terracotta Army



- ⊕ high-ranking officer
- ☐ chariot with horses
- ⊖ armored charioteer
- light infantry/standing archer
- armored infantry/guard
- ⊗ kneeling armored archer
- ⊕ armored cavalry
- 🐎 cavalry horse
- ∇ ramp

Covering an area of more than six acres, the terracotta army pits are estimated to contain 7,000 life-size warriors, 140 chariots, 560 chariot horses, and 124 cavalry horses. To date, more than 2,000 warriors have been unearthed, along with many thousands of weapons, all real and many still razor sharp. From Pit 1 alone, over 40,000 weapons and arrowheads have so far been recovered.

The army's location (nearly a mile east of the burial mound) and orientation (facing east, away from the tomb) confirm that it was meant to guard and secure the entrance to the First Emperor's tomb.

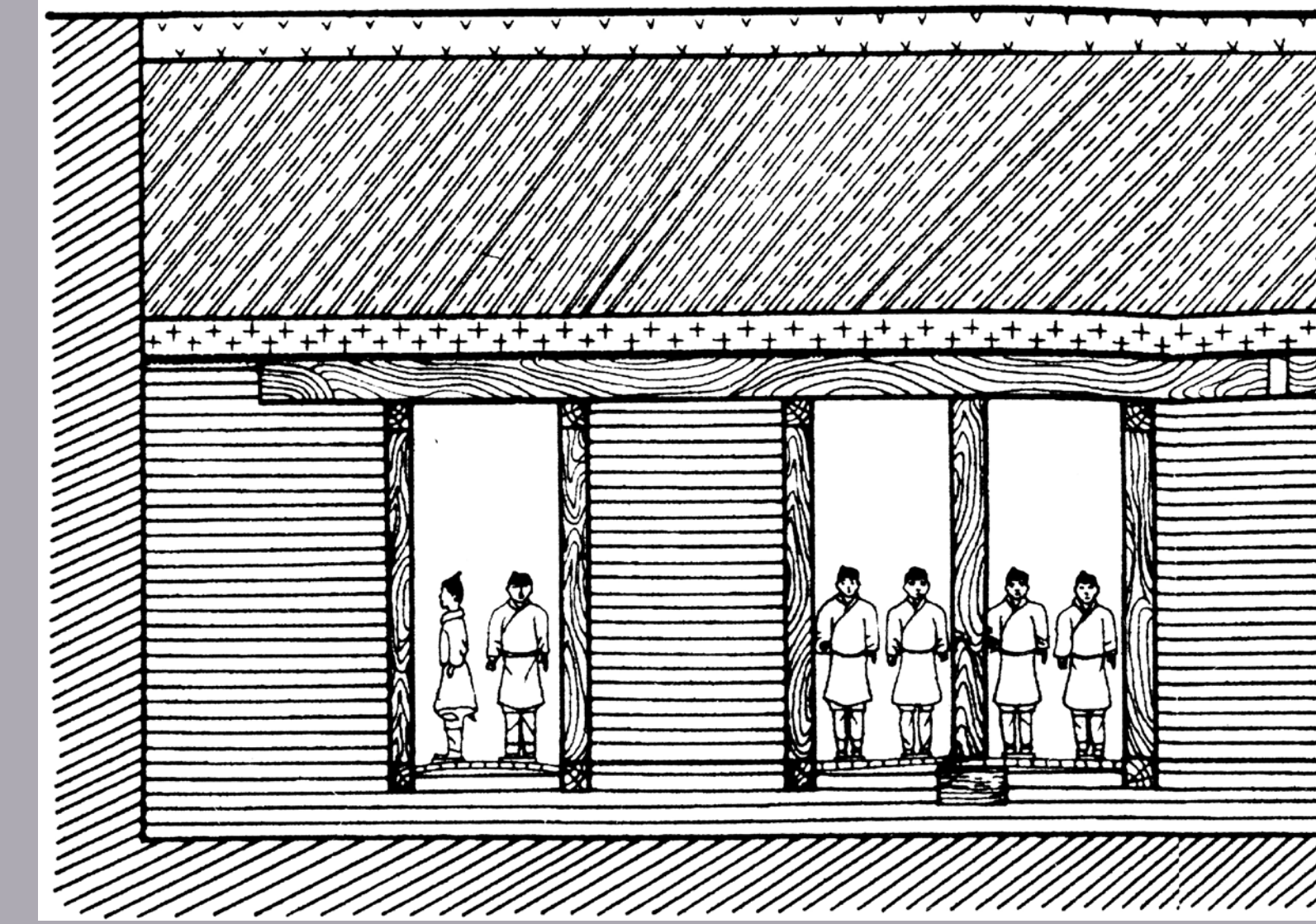
Making the Figures



Faced with a project that had no precedent, the officials put in charge of making the terracotta army turned to established processes and techniques. They commissioned workshops expert at producing ceramic building materials (such as the roof tile ends and bricks displayed in the previous galleries). In the workshops, teams made up of master and craftsmen divided the process into a series of steps, using molds and prefabricated modules where possible.

In general, the figures were built up from foot to head. The base, feet, and hands are solid. The bodies, heads, and arms are hollow, each made separately in molded, slab, or coiled segments and joined before firing. Also before firing, each figure, human and horse, was covered with a fine layer of clay to allow details to be carved by hand. Pigment remaining on many of the figures indicates that they were painted after firing.

Constructing the Pits



The pits containing the terracotta army lie about 15 to 20 feet below current ground level. The figures are placed in tunnels along an east-west axis. The floors and walls were reinforced with rammed earth. A wooden framework of pillars and cross-beams enclosed each tunnel, supporting a ceiling of reed mats, clay, and rammed earth; the floors were paved with pottery bricks. Ramps gave access to the pits so the warriors could be moved into position. Once the army was installed, the entire structure was covered with topsoil.

During uprisings at the end of the Qin dynasty, the emperor's burial complex was plundered by rebels. It was almost certainly at this time that the terracotta army in Pit 1 was damaged and parts of the timber framework set on fire, causing the tunnels to collapse, smashing some of the warriors into pieces.

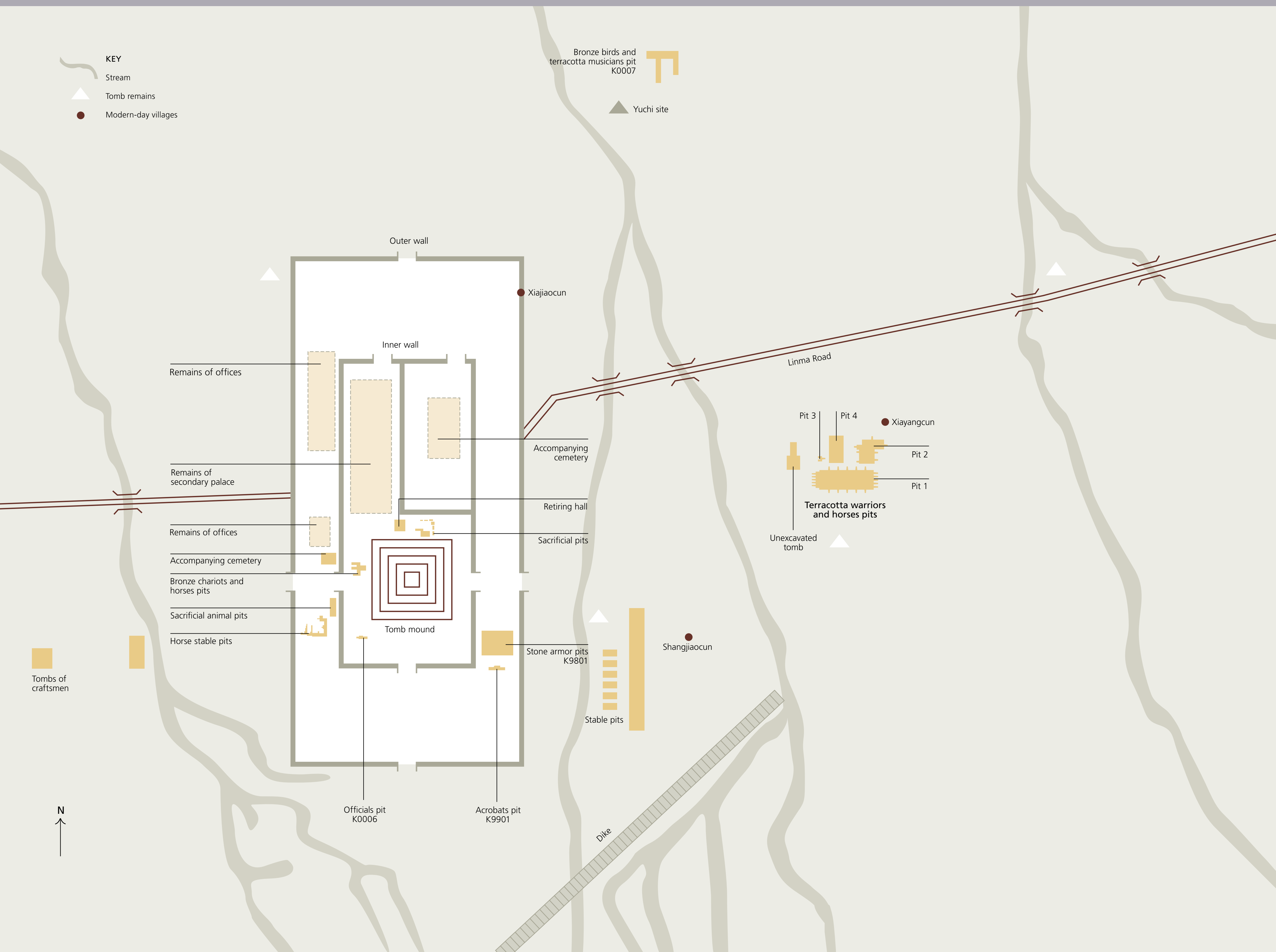
Discovery and Excavation

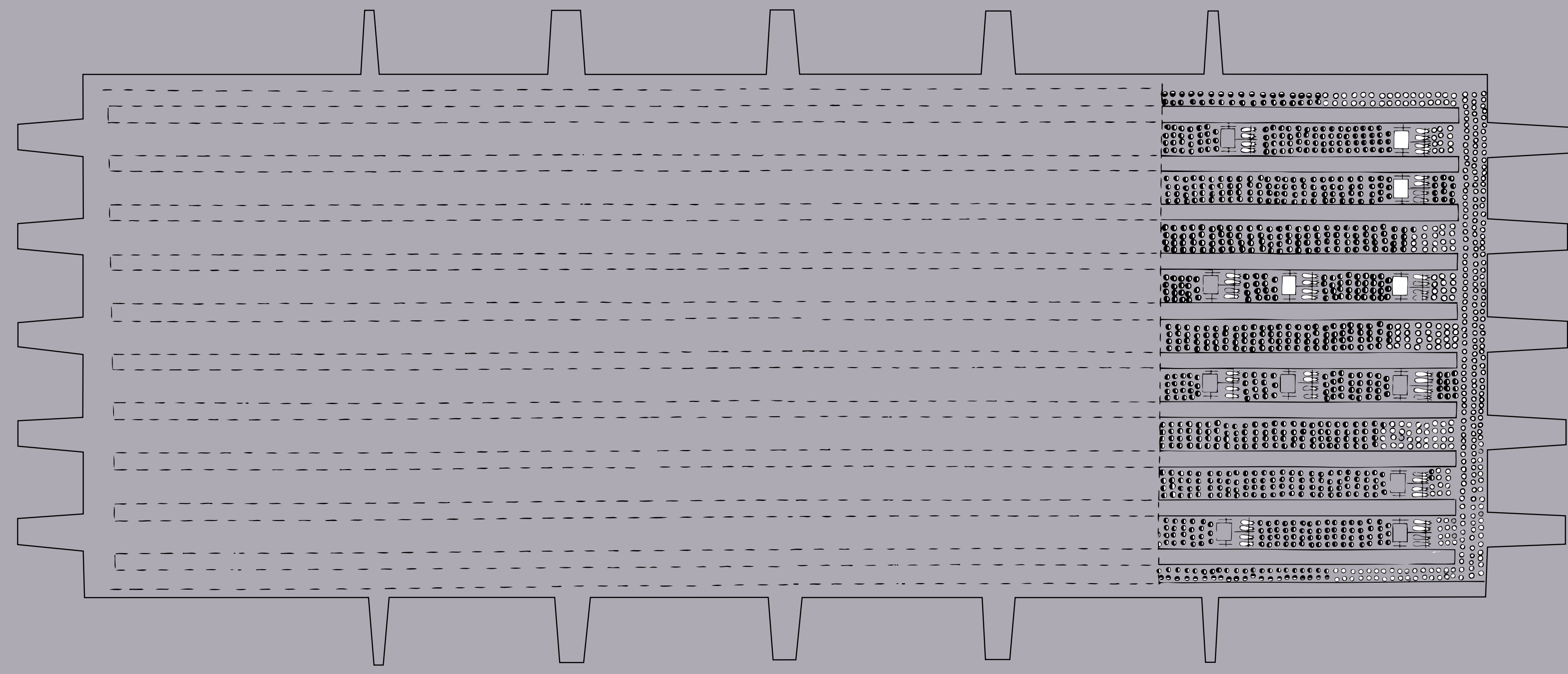
WHEN I FIRST SAW THE HEADS IN THE GROUND I THOUGHT WE HAD DUG UP SOMETHING RELATED TO AN ANCESTOR. I THOUGHT MAYBE WE WERE DISCOVERING OUR GRANDFATHER.

Yang Xinman, the farmer who discovered the terracotta army in March 1974

In March 1974, local farmers digging a well in the village of Xiyang in Lintong, Shaanxi province, struck a number of large pottery fragments. The chance discovery brought to light the existence of the First Emperor's guardian army, previously undocumented and unknown.

In revealing an ancient undertaking of epic proportions, the discovery also began a new story of remarkable achievement: the ongoing excavation of the First Emperor's burial site. Working continuously for more than thirty-five years, teams of archaeologists have gradually been piecing together a picture of this underground eternal city and its extraordinary material and symbolic content.





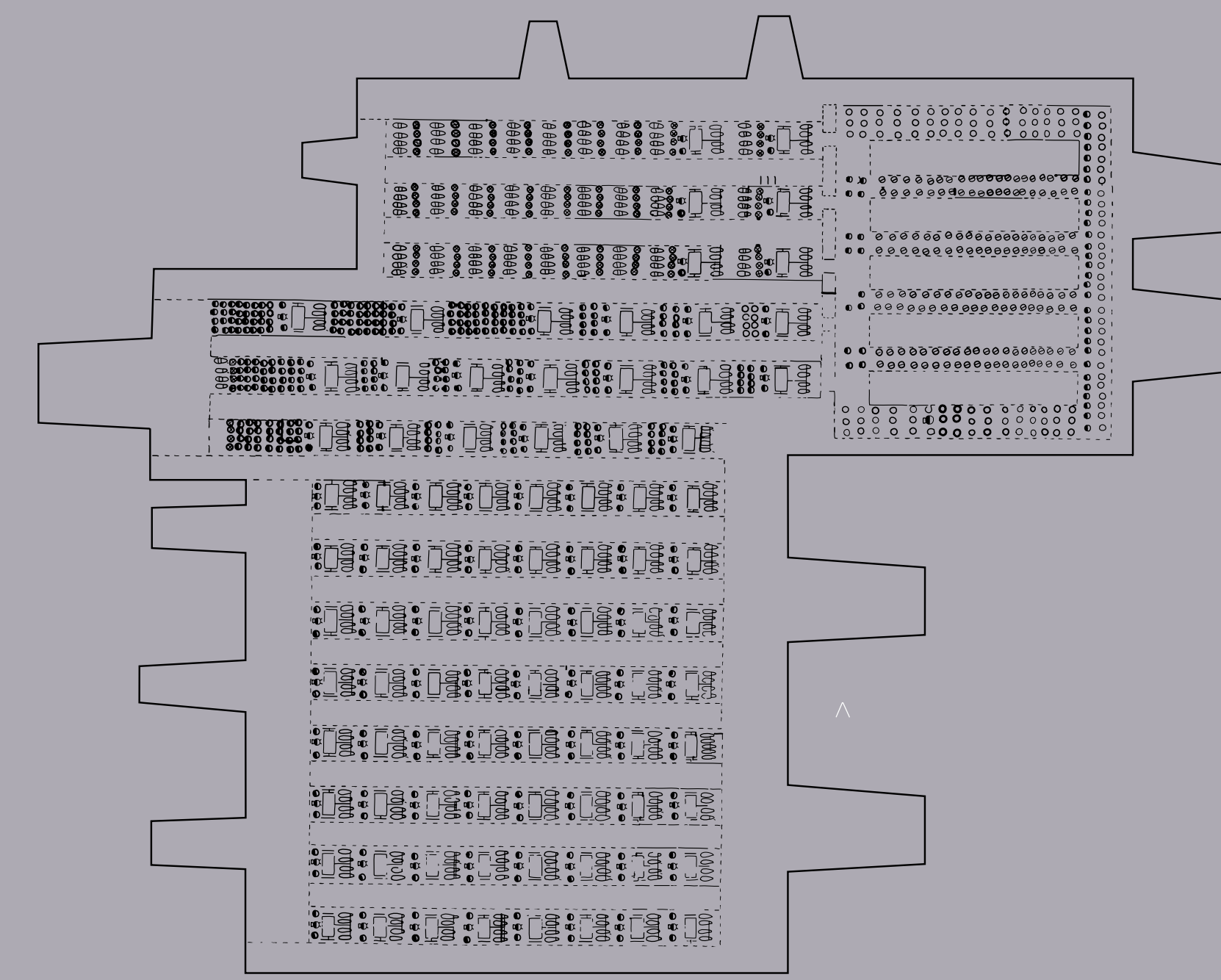
Pit 1

Area: 3½ acres

Contains (estimated): 6,000 figures and chariot horses, 50 chariots

Excavated to date: 1,900 figures, 22 chariots, 88 chariot horses

Pit 1 holds the main army, arranged in a combat formation called *fangzhen* (rectangular formation) in classical war treatises of the time. Long-range weapons are placed in front, short-range weapons at the back, and “able men and strong crossbows provide cover for the left and right.”



Pit 2

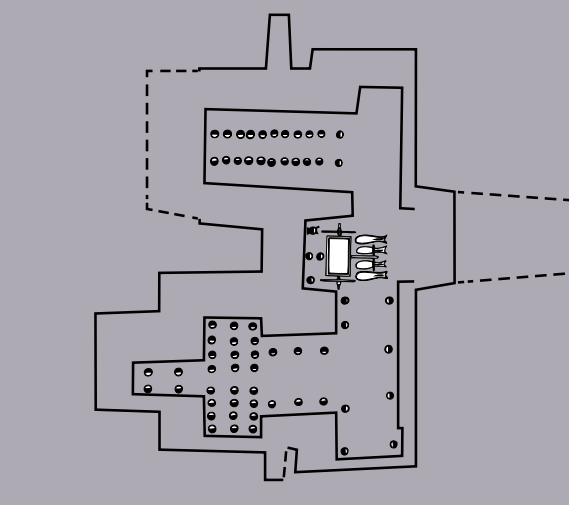
Area: 1½ acres

Contains (estimated): 939 figures, 89 chariots, 356 chariot horses, 124 cavalry horses

Excavated to date: 164 warriors, 11 chariots, 28 charioteers, 67 chariot horses, 32 cavalry horses

Pit 2 is divided into four sections. At the eastern end is a formation of crossbow units with both kneeling and standing archers. The southern end holds a chariot unit in square combat formation. In the center is a rectangular combat formation of chariots, cavalry, and infantry. And at the northern end is a cavalry unit.

As a whole, this is a formidable combat formation, possessing both offensive and defensive capabilities. Each section can function independently, allowing reconfiguration to counteract enemy attack.



Pit 3

Area: Slightly over ¼ acre

Contains: 68 figures, 1 chariot, 4 chariot horses

The only pit fully excavated, Pit 3 is thought to be the command post for Pits 1 and 2. Missing, however, is the commander in chief. No such figure has so far been found in any of the pits.

The figures in Pit 3 are not in battle formation but stand against the walls facing each other, as if guarding or greeting. Although armored, they hold ceremonial weapons. The role of the chariot may have been to declare the intention to fight.

A fourth pit was found empty, suggesting that the army was unfinished at the time of the emperor's death.