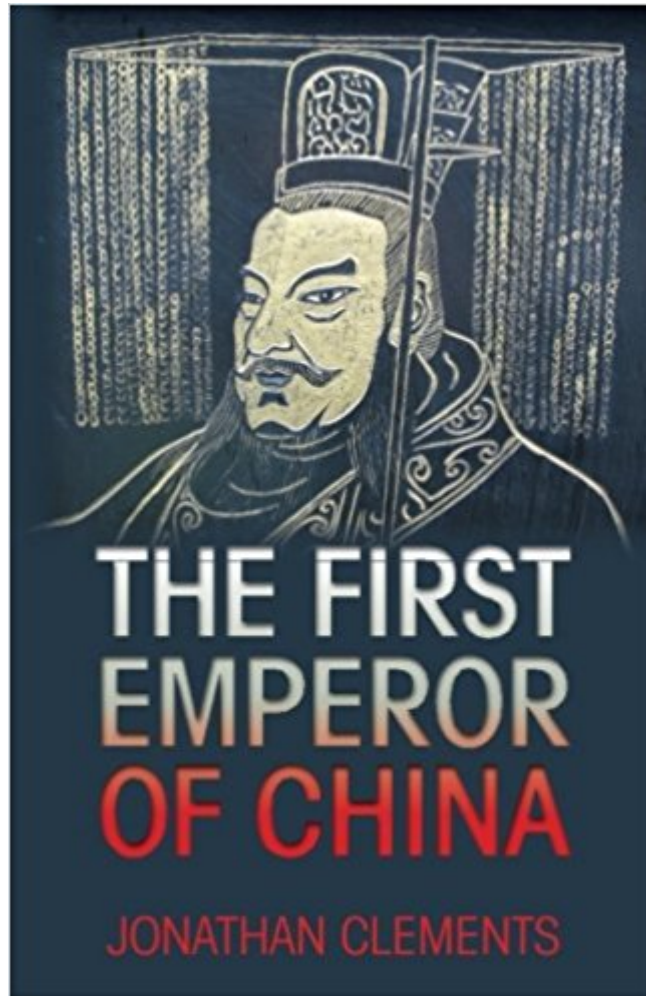




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The First Emperor Of China



Synopsis

The First Emperor In 1974, Chinese peasants made the discovery of the century's greatest archaeological find: thousands of terracotta soldiers guarding the tomb of a tyrant. Ying Zheng was born to rule the world, claiming descent from gods, crowned king while still a child. He was the product of a heartless, brutal regime devoted to domination, groomed from an early age to become the First Emperor of China after a century of scheming by his ancestors. He faked a foreign threat to justify an invasion. He ruled a nation under 24-hour surveillance. He ordered his interrogators to torture suspects. He boiled his critics alive. He buried dissenting scholars. He declared war on death itself. Jonathan Clements uses modern archaeology and ancient texts to outline the First Emperor's career and the grand schemes that followed unification: the Great Wall that guarded his frontiers and the famous Terracotta Army that watches over his tomb. Published in 2015, this revised edition includes updates from a further decade of publications, archaeology and fictional adaptations, plus the author's encounter with Yang Zhifa, the man who discovered the Terracotta Army.

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Customer Reviews

Jonathan Clements is a Visiting Professor at Xi'an Jiaotong University, China. His other books include biographies of Confucius, Khubilai Khan and Empress Wu, and a new translation of Sun Tzu's Art of War.

It is a good primer book that is a basic book on the subject. The author does inject some speculation and some of the author's bias.

A fascinating epic story.

Great book to read for fun as well as for historical knowledge. The author carefully weighed the historical facts as well as the stories written about the First Emperor and gave a balanced story. I enjoyed reading the book

Well produced and well edited--although the "facts" are somewhat suspect.

Clements has done the historian job right updating the narrative with discoveries. I believe this is the fourth update. It's a superb rendering from the available sources with deviations among the 2 narrative writer's narrators noted. That's all very interesting, but this story of the first Emperor is utterly consuming. External internet info sources are a mandatory exploration and in the total, it becomes a long and considered read. Chinese history is at minimum a 5-star rated. School boys at Exeter aren't likely exposed to bronze age China dynastic normality. The Vikings and Plantagenets have nothing of nearly similar reference. So I've wander around China seeking archaeology points of interest as I can on biz trips. There just aren't many. The nature of the Chinese history destroys and dissembles the Heavenly Ruler from the past generation. I've spent time reading the dynastic narrative but it's fantastical relative to the Western patterns of history. Little remains to evidence the catastrophic warfare of the past. There is no Roman forum, there is no Acropolis. Chinese imperial and kingdom warfare utterly obliterated the past. The 1st emperor appears out of chaos contemporary with Rome's Carthaginian wars as Greece was reconciling with Macedon after Alexander. Chinese history is written and rewritten by the victors. It's amazing that the last centuries Chinese discoveries are delineating the mythological most ancient Shang's into the somewhat intelligible Chi dynasty of the first actual emperor. The person of the 1st Emperor is completely obscure in the narrative. He was a mighty warrior, a seeker of metaphysical wisdom in a pure Legalist framework and a dupe driven insane for the elixir of earthly eternal life. We catch few clues about the person of the man shielded by minions of eunuchs in a prison of conquered, agitated states. Clemmons illuminates in great detail the narrative of those that surround him and these are the first person witnesses whose writings we attempt to understand the whole of the terracotta army's absolute

monarch. There is nothing more. This is a tough read for the Western reader used to artifice comports to narrative. The West has nothing akin to the story. For mature readers, the relative horrors of Chinese history are, as usual, staggeringly incomprehensible to the Western mind. Start your Chinese history read here. The legacy of the first emperor promulgates directly to Mao.

It's not about one man rule. China's first emperor was able to enlist a great many people to fight for, create and fund a single empire governing what was the civilized world at that time. His empire was starting to fragment into warlordism even before his dead body was cold, though he invented the imperial title most later contenders would use to style themselves. This book took me into a world long ago & far away, into the power sources of a one-off revolution, a political and military super anticyclone that swept death, slavery, rule of law, free trade and other monsters along the storm, like the Yellow River whipped, fast and terrifying, in flood across China's known world.

I purchased *The First Emperor of China* by Jonathan Clements for research. As such, I looked forward to a rather dull and uninteresting book - and found it to be fascinating. While not necessarily a 'page burner', it certainly held my interest (a good thing). I decided to read it before reading my other purchase, *Records of the Grand Historian - Qin Dynasty* by Sima Qian, Translated by Burton Watson. For me, that was a good decision, as *The First Emperor of China* is a much more 'readable' book of the same period and person. If your interests lie in Ancient China, I heartily recommend this book. It gives a flavor of the people, the customs, the culture, even the architecture. And it is a marvelous introduction to the Emperor as he was, rather than as the movies make him out to have been. My one gripe about *The First Emperor of China* is the use of Endnotes. I absolutely HATE having footnotes relegated to the back of the book.

Loved it! The writing style was great and the research was obviously well done. Definitely recommend this to those interested in history.

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