

Numbers and Losses at Ch'ng-pú 城濮

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Abstract. There is little direct evidence for the size of Spring and Autumn armies. For the battle of Ch'ng-pú, fought in 0632 between Jìn and Ch'ǔ, which offers the rare possibility of a check with archaeology, I here compare: (1) the Ch'ūn/Chyōu 春秋 (CC) chronicle, (2) Dzwǒ Jwàn 左傳 (DJ) figures for Jìn chariots and Ch'ǔ captives, and (3) details from the Pú-yáng 濮陽 site, probably the Ch'ǔ cemetery at Ch'ng-pú. These agree in implying modest sizes for both armies.

CC (Syī 28). Relevant events are: (1) In spring, the Lord of Jìn entered Tsáu and invaded Wèi. (2) A noble of Lǚ failed to guard Wèi [against Jìn]; Lǚ put him to death. (3) A Ch'ǔ force arrived to relieve Wèi. (4) 3rd month, the Lord of Jìn seized the ruler of Tsáu and gave him to Sùng. (5) 4th month, Jìn (with allies Chín, Chí, and Sùng) fought with the Ch'ǔ force; the Ch'ǔ force was defeated; (6) in the same month, Ch'ǔ put to death its noble D'v-ch'ín 得臣 [the leader of the defeated force], and (7) the Lord of Wèi fled to Ch'ǔ. The interval after the arrival of the Ch'ǔ force was probably used by Jìn to gather allies, assuring it of numerical superiority and thus victory. The severity of the Ch'ǔ defeat is shown by the execution of its leader, and by the fact that CC records no later Ch'ǔ military action until 0624, when it besieged a small border state, Jyāng 江, which it had previously threatened; no great military exploit.

DJ (Syī 28:3).¹ The Jìn force is said to number 700 chariots; Ch'ǔ perhaps 600 (the number they were said to have used in 0666). In Syī 28:8, Jìn presents to the Jōu King 100 chariots and four-horse teams, and 1,000 footsoldiers (駟介百乘，徒兵千), implying 10 foot to 1 chariot.² If these were captives, the allies had captured one-sixth of the Ch'ǔ army (17%), implying disorder and suggesting a rout.³ The Jōu King gives to the Jìn ruler 300 guardsmen (虎賁三百人); this would have been the infantry complement of 30 chariots. If this was meant to compensate Jìn's losses (the "gift" may have been a ceremonial fiction), then those losses were 30 of 700 chariots, or 4%.

¹The DJ is not a primary source, but its figures for army size are self-consistent. They range from 600 chariots (Ch'ǔ, 0666) through 800 (Jìn, 0589) to 1,000 (Jìn, 0541). These points define a straight line on graph paper, implying calculated values. No single-state army in DJ is credited with more than 1,000 chariots, a level which is reached in the mid 06c. The 4,000-chariot forces displayed or threatened in Jāu 5:4 (0537, Jìn) are drawn from 400 administrative districts 縣, an anachronism; those in 12:11 (0530, Ch'ǔ) include 1,000 each from Ch'v'n and Tsài, and those in 13:3 (0529, Jìn) are "the forces of the lords 諸侯之師," not of Jìn alone. The 1,000-chariot DJ ceiling on armies *in battle descriptions*, as versus rhetoric, thus seems plausibly imagined.

²The 1:10 ratio is explicit in DJ 4/2:5 (0660). So also 11/4:1, but this speech refers to the early Jōu dynasty; this is probably a rule of thumb, though not necessarily an inaccurate one.

³Though this is not specifically meant by the CC term bà-jī 敗績; see now Brooks **Defeat**.

Pú-yáng. At this site,⁴ near one conjectured location of Chýng-pú, were found 32 regularly aligned pits, each containing 18 corpses (total: 576) of males between the ages of 20 and 25 who had suffered violent deaths; some had severed heads. There were no weapons or grave goods. The report notes that the site need not be that of Chýng-pú, and that not all graves were necessarily found. The argument for the Chýng-pú link is: (1) the mass graves, narrow age range, violent death, and lack of conventional grave goods imply a military cemetery; and (2) probably a Chǔ one, since most allied casualties could have been returned home for burial, whereas the invaders could not practicably have carried corpses back to Chǔ. (3) Any associated weapons and chariots might have been kept for reuse, hence the lack of military grave goods.

A chariot complement included elite warriors, probably older than the foot soldiers. No such corpses are reported at Pú-yáng; officers may have been buried separately. The 576 infantry corpses imply 58 chariots and their complement; these plus 100 units seemingly captured make a total loss of 26%. This also implies a Chǔ rout.⁵

A Chǔ force besieging Jǐng in 0666 is said in DJ (Jwāng 28:3) to have had 600 chariots. That siege was raised by joint action of the nearby states Chí, Sùng, and Lǚ, but there was no Chǔ disaster. Chǔ in 0632, presumably with the same size force (the DJ story gives reasons why it was not augmented), was not prepared for the nonlocal response force which Jǐn in fact was able to bring together from both east and west. The error of Chǔ consisted in giving Jǐn time to assemble that force.

Conclusion. The battle of Chýng-pú ended in an avoidable rout of the Chǔ force. Those engaged were perhaps 600 chariots for Chǔ and 700 for Jǐn and its allies; total 1,300. The agreement of contemporary and archaeological evidence for Chýng-pú implies that DJ figures for Spring and Autumn army size, however schematic, are in a realistic direction. Those figures imply a slow growth from a maximum 600 chariots at the beginning of the period to 1,000 toward the end.⁶ The “10,000 chariot state” mentioned in Wèi Lyáudǐ 8 (from the late 03rd century), though it is probably even more schematic, implies a revolution in the underlying political and military structures. That revolution seems not to have taken place until the Warring States period.

I end by suggesting that such a revolution *defines* the Warring States period.

Works Cited

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⁴KG 1989 #12 1057-1066; von Falkenhausen **Waning** 543.

⁵Routs imply disorganization. Confederate casualties at Shiloh on 6-7 Apr 1862 were 24% (9,735 of 40,335 engaged; Livermore 142). The higher level of 30% losses (see Dunnigan 246) was reached by Confederate casualties at Gettysburg on 1-3 July 1863 (Livermore 142).

⁶LY 16:12 (c0284) attributes 1,000 chariots to Chí Jǐng-gūng (d 0489; see CC Aĭ 6:5).