

Series of conferences about Nuragic civilization and presentation of Giovanni Ugas' book : Shardana e Sardegna. I Popoli del Mare, gli alleati del Nordafrica e la fine dei Grandi Regni (XV-XII secolo a.C) – Brisbane and Sydney.

The recent book: "Shardana and Sardinia. The Sea Peoples, the North African Allies and the End of the Great Kingdoms (15th-12th century BC)" was presented at a series of Australian conferences in Brisbane and Sydney. The author of the volume is Giovanni Ugas, an archaeologist, who has taught Prehistory and Protostoria Europea at the University of Cagliari. In his research on the subject, the result of nearly forty years of studies, Ugas supports the theory that Shardana, an ancient population mentioned and represented in some Egyptian texts and reliefs of the New Kingdom and recorded on documents from Ugarit and Byblos, were Sardinian Nuragic peoples who sailed to the Eastern Mediterranean in search of new lands and fortune.

The event was organised by *Filef Sardinia*, represented by Honorary President Carlo Lai, by the *Queensland Sardinian Culture Club "Ulisse Usai"* of Brisbane chaired by Fausto Zanda that on this occasion was also celebrated the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the same club and by the *Associazione Culturale e Sociale Sarda di Sydney* chaired by Teresa Spada. A third conference was held at the *Dante Alighieri Society* in Brisbane. These meetings were attended by a receptive and various audience, consisting of first-generation Sardinian emigrants, their children and grandchildren, Italian immigrants from other regions, and Australians, students and not, all excited about Sardinian past.

The conferences were held by PhD Fabio Serchisu who introduced the most significant elements of Nuragic Civilization to the public. Subject of the presentations were the Nuragic towers, the dwellings, the religious and funerary architectures and the artefacts of both domestic and artistic uses. The theme of the Shardana and the Sea Peoples followed. The documents that recorded the Sea Peoples were discussed and their archaeological connections with the Nuragic Sardinia were shown. According to Giovanni Ugas, the Shardana moved from Sardinia to Egypt and the Near East and had an aggressive politics of piracy and war against the Egypt, the Hittites, and the small Levantine kingdoms. However, on some occasions, Shardana were allied to the Pharaohs. They were recruited into the Egyptian army and served as the king's personal guards. For these services, Shardana received prizes honours and lands, settling permanently in Egypt and in the ancient lands of Retenu (today's Lebanon and coastal Syria) and Canaan (today's Palestine).

These events produced a radical change in the political equilibrium of the eastern Mediterranean between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age. To demonstrate his hypothesis, the author of the book has collected, analysed and interpreted an impressive collection of archaeological, historical, artistic, literary and linguistic data, including mythological, anthropological and genetic references. The subject certainly has stimulated the curiosity of beginners and the debate between specialists and it shows once more the importance of ancient history and its knowledge for our community.

Fabio Serchisu