

A history of the Beja tribes goes back to the antiquity. The Beja nation represents one of the oldest known African nations. Exploring foreign countries and nations, was mainly for Greek historians, connected with several problems. Strange civilizations were described in more or less unreal colours, as for example headless or without other parts of the body. The change in viewing "the others" came in the Middle Ages thanks to Arab scholars to whom we are obliged for their valuable information about the Beja tribes. Unfortunately, we do not have a rich information base from the ancient times. We can get some information from the rock inscriptions, but there are only few relevant sources describing the Beja tribes.

Especially German speaking travelers and scholars of the 19th century play an important role in learning about the Beja. Their records can help us to look at their history and to know a bit from their everyday life. From the 20th century we have a lack of records and direct resources. That is the reason why reconstruction of the modern Beja history can be difficult. It is surely interesting to consider how the view of the Beja was changing throughout the times. First of all, they were seen as the "wild ones," dangerous nomad nation which is an enemy of all its neighbours. Then, especially in the modern times, there is a worry about their integrity because the political situation in the Sudan is not clear for them. Throughout their history, the Beja tribes have been several times under the reign of someone else, the Egyptians, The Funj, Turks or Arabs.

Nowadays, there is no great chance to improve their position in the Sudanese society.

Despite that some steps have been made (e.g. the First Congress on Beja language which took place in Cairo, 1999). The main problem that still remains is the lack of education among the Beja. Unfortunately, there is no great will to support the Beja schools from the government.