

The Distribution of the Barolong.

The Barolong are divided into four sections named after the sons of Tau, one of their former Chiefs. Tau actually had five sons namely, Tlou, Tshidi, Seleka, Rapulana and Makgetla. According to tradition after the death of Tau quarrels between the sons over succession to the chieftainship led to the subdivision which resulted in the formation of four separate tribes known as the Ra-Tlou, the Ra-Tshidi, the Boo-Seleka, the Boo-Rapulana headed as their names indicate by the different sons of Tau. Makgetla, however, did not establish a separate section but joined the Ra-Tshidi among whom his descendants are to be found to this day.

These different sections are settled in different parts of the Union of South Africa and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The Ra-Tlou are to be found mainly in the Vryburg district of British Bechuanaland which forms part of the Cape Province of the Union, principally in the Ganyesa and Morokweng Reserves. A considerable number of them reside in the Mafeking district in the Setlagole Reserve and in the Molopo Reserve in which, as a matter of fact, is situated their largest town from the point of view of population, namely Pitsani. In the Lichtenburg district of the Transvaal in the Khunwana Reserve the Ra-Tlou have a fairly large "stad" under the chieftainship of Moswete, a descendant of Tlou. The Tlou are themselves into two or three sections said to have arisen as a result of a quarrel among the sons of Tlou over succession to the chieftainship. Tlou, the story goes, paid the bogadi for his two senior wives on the same day, and as ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ranking of wives depends, among other things, upon priority of payment of bogadi, the relative status of those two women and their eldest sons led, after Tlou's death led to a split in the tribe. The pros and cons of that dispute still form a favourite topic for discussion among the Tlou and other Barolong. On the whole Chief Thibogang of Ganyesa is acknowledged by most of the Ra-Tlou as their senior Chief. Even those who are in the Molopo Reserve--at Tshidilamolomo and Phitsane recognise Thibogang as their Paramount Chief, although they reside in a Reserve which is inhabited principally by the Ra-Tshidi. Cases decided by the lesser Tlou chiefs are taken to him on appeal or

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alternatively he is invited to come and settle them. In other words his section of the Ra-Tlou owe allegiance to him wherever they may have settled down in sufficient numbers to justify their forming a separate village. On the other hand a considerable portion of the Ra-Tlou acknowledge Moswete of Khunwana as their senior Chief. As regards their numerical strength the Tlou living in the different Reserves set aside for them are estimated at roughly 6700 taxpayers, which, according to van Warmelo ("A preliminary Survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa") has to be multiplied by a figure somewhere between 4 and 6 to give an idea of the total population. This excludes the number scattered about on European farms in British Bechuanaland and elsewhere.

The Rapulana are found mainly in the Molopo Reserve (Mafeking) and in the Polfontein Reserve of the Lichtenburg district of the Transvaal. Those in the Molopo Reserve have their central town at Lotlhakane (Rietfontein) less than 20 miles from the central town of the Ra-Tshidi. On more than one occasion the latter have endeavoured to establish their sovereignty over the Rapulana on the ground that they live within Tshidi territory. This dispute has in the past led to hut-burning and bloodshed and finally ended in a protracted lawsuit settled by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa (see *Montshiwa vs Matlaba* A.D. 1917) in favour of Rapulana independence, thus upholding the principle of Barolong law that sovereignty is exercised over people and not over territory. In other words a Chief exercises sovereignty over people only because they acknowledge his sovereignty and not because they happen to ~~reside~~ reside in what he considers his territory. Allegiance to a Chief may be brought about by conquest or by a voluntary surrender of their independence by people individually or collectively. Another case in which the Tshidi have attempted to exercise territorial sovereignty over non-Tshidi elements in the Molopo Reserve is that of a group of Batlharo under Chief Masibi living at Disaneng, about 15 miles from the central town of the Tshidi. These Batlharo settled in close proximity to the Tshidi during the reign of Montshiwa on the understanding, according to them, that they were to retain their independence in return for assistance to the Tshidi in any wars in which the latter

might be involved. Since the death of Montshiwa and with the disappearance of the necessity for Masibi's assistance in tribal wars, the Tshidi have tried to insist that Masibi and his people should turn out for tribal labour on the fields of the Paramount Chief, which would imply a surrender of their independence. This Masibi refused to do and only the ~~xxxxxxx~~ existence of European control terminated the dispute. Masibi is to be removed elsewhere. To return to the Rapulana, they number about 1000 taxpayers, three-quarters being resident at Lotlhakane, while the rest are at Polfontein. Chief Matlaba of Polfontein is recognised by them all as their senior Chief. Cases based on Native Law and Custom which Chief Mthibi of Lotlhakane is unable to settle he calls in Chief Matlaba to ~~xxxxxx~~ deal with the dispute.

The Seleka Barolong separated from the main group in the early part of the 19th century and are today settled at Thaba Nchu in the Orange Free State. Their numerical strength is estimated at approximately 4000 taxpayers, to which must be added a fair number of people of Seleka extraction scattered throughout European farms in the Orange Free State. The Seleka fled from their ancestral home in Bechuanaland owing to invasions by various marauding Bantu tribes such as the Manthatisi of Sekhonyela, the Bataung under Moletsane and the Matebele under Mziligazi. It was during their trek southwards that they first came into contact with the Methodist missionaries--Broadbent and Hodgson --who introduced them to Christianity and western civilisation generally at a place in the Free State now called Plaatberg. They later moved to Thaba Nchu where they were found by the first party of emigrant Boers--the Voortrekkers--about 1834. They were later joined by the Tshidi Barolong who were also being harassed by the Matebele. The Tshidi found shelter under the Seleka Chief Moroka and did not return to the Molopo region until after the overthrow and expulsion of the Matebele who were forced to trek further north to what is now known as Southern Rhodesia.

The Ra-Tshidi Barolong outnumber the other sections of the Barolong, but as far as seniority is concerned they take second place after the Ra-Tlou. They are to be found principally in the Molopo Reserve (Mafeking district) where they have roughly

10000 taxpayers, and in the Setlagole Reserve where they have a avillage of considerable size (700 taxpayers) at Mareetsane. Some of the Ra-Tshidi are settled in the Lobatsi district of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in what are known as the Barolong Farms, roughly 1400 taxpayers. Their Paramount Chief Lotlamoeng, a grandson of Montshiwa, has his headquarters at Mafikeng Stad, the largest Barolong town, taxpayers being estimated at well over 7000. The tshidi have probably wandered over different parts of British Bechuanaland to a greater extent than any other section of the Barolong. During the period of the Matebele wars already referred to, they fled to Thabe Nchu and lived with the Seleka for a time. They returned to the Molopo region after the Matebele had been driven further north, only to find that they had to deal with a new enemy, the freebooters of the Transvaal. Under the leadership of Montshiwa a large section of them took to the road again and went further north into the Bechuanaland Protectorate where they settled for about 40 years in the country of the Bangwaketse. The remainder at Mafeking stayed under Molema, younger brother of Montshiwa, who returned south about 1877. In 1885 the British declared a protectorate over British Bechuanaland and appointed a Land Commission whose terms of reference included, among other things, "to mark off inalienable locations for Native Chiefs and tribes in British Bechuanaland and adjudicate on all European land claims" within the boundaries of British Bechuanaland. In terms of the Report of this Commission land was set aside for the Tshidi in the Molopo Reserve. British Bechuanaland was annexed to the Cape Colony in 1896. The Tshidi on the Barolong Farms in the Lobatsi district of the Bechuanaland Protectorate remain under British Administration, but as many of them have homes in the central town at Mafeking, they fall under both Union and Protectorate administration, especially for purposes of taxation.