



**A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom:
Compiled for the Bechuanaland Protectorate
Administration (Classics in African Anthropology)**

Isaac Schapera

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When Professor Isaac Schapera was asked in 1934 by the Protectorate Administration to compile a record of the traditional and modern laws of the Tswana tribes he had already been working since 1929 on a comprehensive ethnographic study of the Kgatla, and his investigation was therefore based on a thorough previous knowledge of the social structure as a whole. Schapera gives a picture of what Tswana law was like in former times, and shows that, contrary to expectation, modern European contact and the administration of tribes by the then Protectorate Government ended the original uniformity of the system, and created considerable diversity. Schapera conscientiously kept within the original mandate of the Administration and produced an authoritative, straightforward compilation. Despite its modest title it has deservedly become a classic and far exceeds its primary object, which was to serve as a handbook for the information and guidance of government officials and administrators of the law. This is a reprint of the first edition published in 1938.

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