Table of Contents

1  About This Document..........................................................................................................................3
1.1  Licence...........................................................................................................................................3
2  Glossary.............................................................................................................................................4

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Front page image:
Barkcloth objects in a display case from the Barkcloth: Revealing Pacific Craft exhibition held at The Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, 2019
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1 About This Document

This glossary was produced by Situating Pacific Barkcloth in Time and Place, a research project based at the University of Glasgow between 2016 and 2020 and funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project was a collaboration between three institutions: the University of Glasgow, represented by the Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History and The Hunterian; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; and the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), part of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, USA.

The terms included in this glossary cover different aspects of barkcloth making in the Pacific region, including regional naming, materials, and historical context.

1.1 Licence

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2 Glossary

aati
A type of Society Islands barkcloth; coarse and strong, it is made from breadfruit bast.

‘ahuapi
A type of Society Islands barkcloth that has been ‘quilted’ (by pasting together doubled layers) to produce a thicker cloth.

apā
A type of Society Islands barkcloth that is extremely thick and multi-layered; considered a sacred tapa, it was often red in colour.

areva
A type of Society Islands barkcloth; fairly thin and white, it is finished with a coarse-grade beater mark of 5-8 grooves per centimetre.

autea
A type of Cook Islands barkcloth made on Rarotonga and Mangaia from paper mulberry bast; high quality and white.

bast
Inner bark of trees; fibrous material from a plant.

beater markings
Marks made on cloth using grooved beaters in the final stage of beating; visual and aesthetic in purpose, there are different beater mark grades depending on the face of the beater and the culture in which this practice takes place.

colonialism
The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically; the Pacific region was colonised multiple times by many different powers, each leaving a lasting influence and legacy into the present.
colourant
Also referred to as dye or pigment; materials used to colour natural cloth, either fully (such as in immersion dyeing) or as decorative patterns and motifs.

fabric
A Western term used to describe barkcloth/tapa; ‘fabric’ is not used in this way in the Pacific, and refers there to woven textiles such as cotton, etc.

fusing
A technique in which two sheets of tapa are overlapped at the edge by a few centimetres and then beaten vigorously to join their fibres together (without the aid of paste or glue).

gatu vakatoga
A type of Fijian barkcloth made by women of the Lau Group (Eastern Fiji) that is made using kupeti (rubbing boards or tablets); it is indistinguishable from Tongan ngatu tāhina.

gatu vakaviti
A type of Fijian barkcloth first made in the Lau Group (Eastern Fiji) which incorporates both stencilling and rubbed Tongan-style designs.

ha‘imanawa
A type of white Hawaiian barkcloth that is finer than punana but not as diaphanous as kalukalu.

heapa
A type of Society Islands barkcloth dyed a deep yellow colour, probably with turmeric.

hiapo
Local name for barkcloth in Niue and ‘Uvea (Wallis Island).

hopū
A type of Society Islands barkcloth; the finest grade of white ‘ahu tapa is produced from a mixture of paper mulberry and breadfruit bast.
ike
An implement used to beat barkcloth; used in conjunction with an anvil on which the raw material is placed to be beaten.

inaina
A type of Cook Islands barkcloth made on the island of Aitutaki out of breadfruit bast; white and painted with coconut oil to create a shiny surface.

kaha
A type of black Hawaiian barkcloth; it is produced by one of the most complex of all Polynesian colouring processes.

kalukalu
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth that appears lace-like because it is beaten out as thin as possible; there are a range of complex beater marks in the ‘lace’.

kapa
Local name for barkcloth in Hawai’i.

kapa māmaki
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth made from māmaki bast; māmaki was also mixed in with paper mulberry-based kapa in some instances.

kapa moe
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth sleeping quilt; the quilts were composed of multiple layers of many different types of kapa.

kapa po'ulu
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth made from breadfruit bast.

kikiko
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth decorated with stem-stamped dots.

kiokio
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth described as ‘variegated tapa’.
**kupesi**
Rubbing board or tablet used in Tonga; placed underneath barkcloth, pigment is rubbed onto the cloth and the relief pattern comes through.
*see also:* kupeti, ‘upeti

**kupeti**
Rubbing board or tablet used in Fiji; placed underneath barkcloth, pigment is rubbed onto the cloth and the relief pattern comes through.
*see also:* kupesi, ‘upeti

**lalani**
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth which describes all kapa printed with liner stamps.

**māmaki**
A small tree that is native (and an endemic species) to Hawai‘i; a member of the nettle family it has been used in Hawaiian kapa, mixed with paper mulberry bast to create a hybridised cloth.

**masi**
Local name for barkcloth in Fiji; also the local name for the paper mulberry tree. Note, however, that barkcloth from the Lau Group (Eastern Fiji) made in the Tongan style is called gatu.

**masi bolabola**
A type of Fijian barkcloth made in the province of Cakaudrove which can take the form of long narrow pieces or large rectangular sheets. Its decoration is distinctive and commonly composed of large and long interlocking geometric shapes but also feature stars, rosettes, cross-hatched patterns and more. Masi bolabola are decorated using freehand painting and also stencilling.

**masi kesa**
A type of Fijian barkcloth produced across Fiji (with regional variations) and decorated with stencilled patterns and motifs. The stencilling technique is unique to Fiji.
masi ni tubetube e na soqo
A type of Fijian barkcloth that is no longer produced and hasn’t been since at least the mid-20th century. Specific to the highlands of Viti Levu, it is decorated using bamboo tube rollers and linear stamp-printed lines. Uniquely, masi from the highlands was beaten by women but decorated by men.

masi seavu
A type of Fijian barkcloth most often left white; it is very fine and lace-like, often being described as gauzy or diaphanous. It can contain distinctive ‘lapped tabs’ which create a diamond-like effect on the cloth.

masi vulavula
A type of Fijian barkcloth that is of a standard grade and named so because of its natural colour (vulavula = white).

Melanesia
One of three socially-constructed regions which comprise the Pacific region (also known as Oceania); Melanesia extends from New Guinea island (West Papua and Papua New Guinea) to Fiji and includes the island nations in between.
see also: Micronesia, Polynesia

Micronesia
One of three socially-constructed regions which comprise the Pacific region (also known as Oceania); Micronesia is made up of thousands of small islands including the nations/territories of Guam, Palau, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and more.
see also: Melanesia, Polynesia

missionaries
People sent on religious missions, especially those sent to promote Christianity in a foreign country. Barkcloth production in the Pacific was greatly affected by the introduction of Christianity in the region.

ngatu
Local name for barkcloth in Tonga.

ngatu tāhina
A type of Tongan barkcloth that is one of two main classes of ngatu; locally it is considered a ‘white’ cloth, but it is almost always rubbed with a light brown decorative pattern that comes from kupesi rubbing tablets.
see also: ngatu ‘uli
ngatu tapa‘ingatu
A type of Tongan barkcloth and a genre of ngatu tāhina; its background lacks rubbed kupesi patterns that have not been overpainted by hand, meaning that any decoration that has been rubbed is not evident in its natural relief form. Rubbed decoration may also be completely absent.

ngatu ‘uli
A type of Tongan barkcloth that is the rarer of the two main classes; it is ‘black’ cloth which is rubbed with light brown kupesi rubbing tablet motifs and then glazed with a glossy black pigment.
see also: ngatu tāhina

ora
A type of Society Islands barkcloth made from the bast of the banyan tree’s aerial roots.

pateatea
A type of Society Islands barkcloth made from breadfruit bast. A finer quality, the name comes from the preferred variety of breadfruit bast (called Patea), which produces a whiter cloth than paper mulberry.

pokuru
A type of Cook Islands barkcloth made on Mangaia from breadfruit bast.

Polynesia
One of three socially-constructed regions which comprise the Pacific region (also known as Oceania); the term is used here to describe the islands largely situated in the triangle between Aotearoa New Zealand, Hawai‘i and Rapa Nui.
see also: Melanesia, Micronesia

pūhiri
A type of Society Islands barkcloth; a dark brown Tahitian cloth that has been coloured using the immersion dyeing technique.

punana
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth; a single layer, white paper mulberry bast kapa that is beaten to the standard thickness.
retting
Soaking in water to soften fibres.

salalu
A type of Futunan barkcloth garment that is worn around the waist like an apron; made from a type of barkcloth called sala.

siapo
Local name for barkcloth in Futuna (one of many) and Samoa/American Samoa.

siapo ema
A type of Samoan barkcloth that is highly glazed and black painted.

siapo mamanu
A type of Samoan barkcloth that is always hand-painted and generally has a broad composition of parallel bands infilled with geometric motifs and, later, repeating leaf vines.

siapo tasina
A type of Samoan barkcloth that is decorated with brown rubbed ‘upeti pattern board motifs. The rubbed motifs that are rather light in shade come from leaf-based ‘upeti, while darker motifs come from carved wooden ‘upeti (these emerged in the last 20 years of the 19th century).

tapa
Generic name given to barkcloth across the Pacific region and is used interchangeably with barkcloth; the term tapa cloth is also commonly used in the Pacific region.

tikoru
A type of Cook Islands barkcloth made on Rarotonga and Mangaia from paper mulberry bast; white and very thick.

tiputa
A garment that is equivalent to a poncho.
u‘au‘a
A type of Hawaiian barkcloth which is a strong yellow colour.

‘upeti
Rubbing board or tablet used in Samoa; placed underneath barkcloth, pigment is rubbed onto the cloth and the relief pattern comes through. 
see also: kupesi, kupeti
More information on the *Situating Pacific Barkcloth in Time and Place* project is available at https://www.tapa.gla.ac.uk, via Twitter @UofG_Barkcloth, and via Instagram @pacificbarkcloth.